

JUN KANEKO

Dangos and Slabs

June 27 – July 26, 2024

Locks Gallery is pleased to present *Dangos and Slabs*, an exhibition of ceramic sculptures by the Omaha-based artist Jun Kaneko.

For over two decades, Kaneko has created ceramic freestanding sculptures and wall slabs using ancient Japanese ceramics techniques. He is best known for his large-scale, monumental dangos (Japanese for “rounded form” or “dumpling”). Using the unpredictability of the raku firing and glazing process, Kaneko creates intricate patterns of line, color, and texture, ranging from minimalist compositions to expressionist abstractions.

Immersing himself in the process of painting and applying slips and glazes to his ceramics, Kaneko responds to the form of each sculpture. This spontaneous process gives each wall slab and dango a unique personality. The artist remarked, “I start thinking about orchestration of the colors around the work as a whole... sort of like a symphony. Everything has to make an interesting harmony to become one, to be there as one statement.” Some sculptures feature calligraphic lines and drips, while others feature more playful geometric patterns. Dangos range from monochromatic and severe to playful and vibrant, demonstrating the artist’s exploration of spatial relations and the emotional range of the work of art.

Originally trained as a painter, Jun Kaneko (b. 1942, Nagoya, Japan) has pursued a dynamic and varied studio practice in painting, sculpture, ceramic and installation since the 1960s while studying with ceramic artists associated with the California Clay Movement. In addition to his sculptures and installations, the artist has been commissioned to design costumes and sets for leading productions by the Washington National Opera, San Francisco Opera and the Philadelphia Opera Company.

A leader of the field of monumental ceramics, Kaneko has been the subject of solo exhibitions in Finland, Norway, Japan, South Korea, and Canada. His work is in over eighty museum collections throughout the world including Arabia Museum, Helsinki; Detroit Institute of Arts; Los Angeles County Art Museum; Museum of Art and Design, NY; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Phoenix Art Museum and Smithsonian American Art Museum. In 1998, the artist and his wife Ree founded KANEKO, a non-profit cultural organization that hosts educational programs and exhibitions in the Old Market District of Omaha. Kaneko holds honorary doctorates from the University of Nebraska, the Massachusetts College of Art & Design, and the Royal College of Art in London.

This exhibition will be on view during gallery hours, Tuesday – Saturday for the month of June and Monday – Friday for the month of July.

