

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Ron Nagle: Getting to No

May 2 – June 15, 2019

Opening: Wednesday, May 1, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Ron Nagle: Getting to No**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 522 West 22nd Street.

The exhibition features twenty-six new sculptures and fifteen related drawings. Most are no larger than six inches in any dimension, but at this scale, Nagle says, an object “can allude to a much bigger place, because it’s so small your imagination has to fill in all that space that’s not there.” Nagle makes his exquisitely crafted, jewel-like sculptures by hand, and although he works in traditional mediums like ceramic and porcelain, he combines them with other materials, including epoxy resin and catalyzed polyurethane, to create forms that cannot be achieved in clay alone. This merging of incongruous elements also extends to his titles, which are loaded with puns and wordplay: *Egregious Philbin* (2017), for example, or *Quartersan* (2018). “I’m trying to create a hybrid,” he explains. “You can’t quite put your finger on it.”

Inspiration for Nagle’s work often comes from unusual sources, like the roadside tombstones of Hawaii, the custom paint jobs of 1960s hot-rod cars, or the stucco houses of the San Francisco neighborhood where he grew up. Even a deformed tree or a stain on the sidewalk can spark an idea. But his work is also grounded in tradition. He frequently cites the influence of *shibui*, an aesthetic of contrast and balance that is highly prized in Japan. When Nagle makes a sculpture, the proportion of each color is essential; the most vibrant hue might be confined to a thin stripe along its base. “That’s the zinger,” he says. “In music they’d call it a hook. Your eye will go there in reference to the other colors.”

Nagle (born 1939) lives and works in San Francisco and began working with ceramics in the 1950s, while still in high school. He apprenticed to Peter Voulkos in 1961 and later exhibited alongside Voulkos, Ken Price, and other innovative West Coast artists working in clay. His first one-person exhibition took place in 1968, and since then his work has been shown at numerous museums, including one-person exhibitions at the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, the San Diego Museum of Art, and the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. Later this year the Fridericianum in Kassel, Germany, and the Secession in Vienna will open exhibitions of Nagle’s work. Early next year the Berkeley Art Museum will present a survey of his work, which will later travel to the ICA in Boston.

Ron Nagle: Getting to No is on view at 522 West 22nd Street from May 2 to June 15, 2019, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please contact Jacqueline Tran at 212-243-0200 or jacqueline@matthewmarks.com