

GUILD GALLERY

ROMAN AND WILLIAMS GUILD GALLERY
PRESENTS
RICK HINTZE: BORN OF THE SOIL

FEBRUARY 17 - MARCH 26, 2022
321 CANAL STREET, NEW YORK, NY

Guild Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of the ceramic works of artist Rick Hintze February 17 - March 26, 2022. This is the second exhibition of the newly opened Guild Gallery at 321 Canal Street, following the successful solo show of ceramic artist Akiko Hirai. Hintze was born in Peoria, Illinois, and received an M.F.A. in Ceramics at the University of Notre Dame. He taught ceramics and sculpture before establishing his own studio in Johnson Creek, Wisconsin. This exhibition explores his powerful hand-built coiled vessels made over the last ten years, which merge the ancient and the modern.

The artist uses a coil and pinch method to build large, statuesque, finely balanced works that stand with a classical solidity. Even when they have nothing in them, his pots are full. They have a generous heft, a directness of address, and their monumentality is that of a great cooking pot, made for food stuffs shared over generations, or of the water jar. They are hand-built. And because they are actually empty, they are elemental: earth and air, fire and water. These are ageless pieces of hearth and altar.

“I am interested in the coiling method because of the irregularity of the results,” says Hintze. “Imperfection animates the pieces and gives them energy.” The artist paddles and scrapes each joined coil, one at a time, to the pot of his coiled vessels. Slight variations in the curve of the pot wall lend a vitality. Intentional markings are made on the surface, but many marks are incidental, formed by the action of shaping. “These process marks have a strong kinetic quality, revealing the speed, direction, or force with which they were made,” says Hintze. Iron oxide stain and a coating of a clay and wood ash slip highlight the textural markings. With clean lines and warm surfaces, these timeless works evoke memory through the ages.

In the tradition of the Midwestern School of Pottery, Hintze is inspired by the natural beauty of the local landscape and the geometric simplicity of the vernacular farm architecture. He follows in an esteemed line of Midwestern master potters; his mentor was potter Henry Joe who studied with Warren MacKenzie, who brought Japanese folk-art pottery to Minnesota. MacKenzie apprenticed with the influential British



studio potter Bernard Leach, who championed the simple, utilitarian forms of egoless, anonymous Japanese pottery. The quiet mystery and eternal immediacy of Neolithic Chinese pots and African pottery also inspire Hintze, and in particular the 2005 exhibition “For Hearth and Altar: African Ceramics from the Keith Achepohl Collection” at the Art Institute of Chicago.

His works contain knowledge, wisdoms passed on from potter to potter over decades, centuries. His pots hold lineage. They show how profoundly Hintze knows himself as an heir to ample traditions. He studied art history; he knows all about learning from teachers, and about the global looking that can happen through the travels of art and artists and museum collections. In his works, lineages meld, unfaltering, steady, flowing into one another. Hintze’s pots have scale and stature; they are acts of citation, emulsion, homage. He is himself a container of craft and lore.

“The most inspirational of all is the act of making, translating ideas into material,” says Hintze. In producing each work, he shapes the posture of the piece -- its neck, shoulders, belly, foot. He considers the strength of the shoulder and how the neck sits on top of the pot. As a result, his vessels grouped together can look like figures in conversation. They become animated with their own spirit and inner energy; the pots are brought to life. Hintze strives to produce work that has its own presence, its own power. In Hintze’s hands, the clay becomes alive.

Rick Hintze was born in 1944 in Peoria, Illinois. He received a B.A. in Art from Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois, an M.A. in Art History from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, and an M.F.A. in Ceramics from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. After teaching ceramics and sculpture at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he moved to Wisconsin to establish his studio in Johnson Creek and opened his gallery in the fall of 2002. He has received numerous awards, including a National Endowment for the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship, an Iowa Arts Council Artist Project Grant, and an Award of Excellence from the American Craft Council. His work is in the collections of the Racine Art Museum, the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, and Southeastern Louisiana University, and various regional and national private collections.