

Media Release

JamFactory Icon 2016 Gerry Wedd: Kitschen Man

Willow pattern submerged in political jibes, classic urn's decorated with lyrical portraits, garniture figurines poised in confrontational narratives, Wedd's work is a day at the beach - with a smash of home-baked reality pie in your face for good measure. Traditional ceramic styles imbued with meaty metaphor and peppered full of personal gusto burst the seams of this solo exhibition of new and staple works, showcasing the breadth of this iconic artist's career.

In 2013 JamFactory launched the first in a series of solo exhibitions celebrating the achievements of South Australia's most outstanding and influential craft and design practitioners. Each exhibition presents leading practitioners with significant national and international profiles and considerable influence in their chosen field. Held annually during the SALA (South Australian Living Artist) Festival before touring nationally the fourth in this series is JamFactory Icon 2016 Gerry Wedd: Kitschen Man. The exhibition will tour nationally to 12 venues from 2016 to 2019, with the support of Australia Council's Contemporary Touring Initiative.

Gerry Wedd enjoys a national reputation in Australia for his hand-built blue and white ceramics that brim with a dry wit oscillating from the humorous to darkly disturbing. From his beginnings at the kitchen table, guided by his Mother's hobby-obsession through to formal training at University of South Australia and his studio tenancy at JamFactory, Wedd draws his craft out of his own inspirations, interest and experiences. The exhibition will also feature works from an ever-changing personal collection of inspirations, work made by family, friends, colleagues and mentors such as Jo Crawford, Peter Johnson, Philip Hart, Lesa Farrant, Lincoln Kirby Bell, Chris Headley, Toni Warburton and Stephen Benwell.

Although choosing ceramics as his predominant vehicle, Gerry's signature style has also danced across metal, jewellery and graphic design. In the late 1980s as a young surfer and artist, Wedd came to the attention of Mambo Graphics, the iconoclastic surf-wear company. With his sense of humour, his subject matter, his encyclopaedic knowledge of surfing culture, and his 'scratch board' style of drawing, Wedd found a spiritual home in Mambo and helped build the developing Mambo ethic. Working for Mambo until 2006, Wedd designed and created designs for ceramics, textiles posters, clothing, metalwork and surfboards. He was an archetypal piece of the iconic Australian surfing label, Mambo.

It seems fitting (or is it ironic?) that Wedd's two predominant pastimes are elementally different yet perfectly paired in the complexity vs simplicity that nature affords us. Drawn to the ocean and the unpredictability of the sea, Gerry surfs almost every day, whilst his craft-practice affords him a grounded space (working literally with earth) calling for more measured decisions and outcomes. For Kitschen Man, Wedd will show new works influenced by the ceramics collection at the V&A, London on a recent Australia Council Residency as well as quintessentially "Gerry" pieces from a career spanning close to 40 years.

Gerry Wedd has won several awards including the Hobart Art Prize in 2010 and the Sidney Myer Fund International Ceramics Award in 1998. In 1990 Wedd, with other ceramists, established the Jamboree Workshop in Adelaide. He is represented in public collections around the country including the Art Gallery of South Australia, Australian National Gallery in Canberra, and the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. Wedd currently lives and works in Port Elliot.

This exhibition is curated by JamFactory's Senior Curator Margaret Hancock Davis and accompanied by a 20-page exhibition publication designed by James Brown of local Adelaide graphic design firm MASH, with words by Anne Brennan and Ken Gelder, and photography by award winning photographer Andrew Cowen.



Images from left: *Gram Jar*, 2016, Coil built, Terracotta, Coloured slip decoration, 1120°C, *Papaver Bowl*, 2016 Hand built, Coloured slip, Coloured slip decoration, 1220°C, 2016, *Midget Jar*, 2016, Coil built, Terracotta, Coloured slip decoration, 1120°C, Photography by Andrew Cowen