

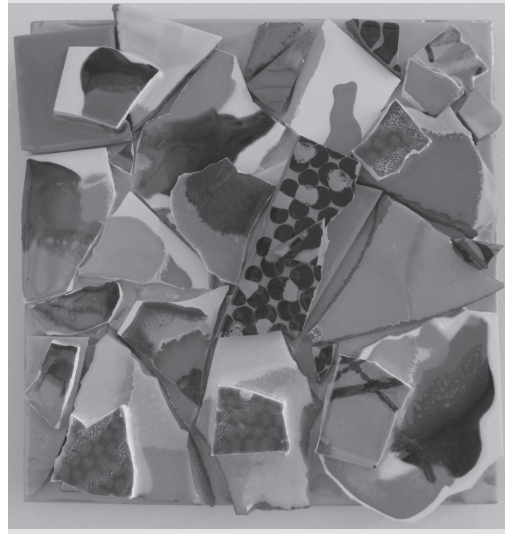
Collection in Focus: Jim Melchert
May 10–September 28, 2014

This exhibition highlights a selection of works from di Rosa's permanent collection by conceptual ceramist Jim Melchert (b.1930). Melchert, along with other Bay Area contemporaries such as Ron Nagle, Richard Shaw, and Peter Voulkos, played a vital role in elevating the medium of ceramics from craft to fine art.

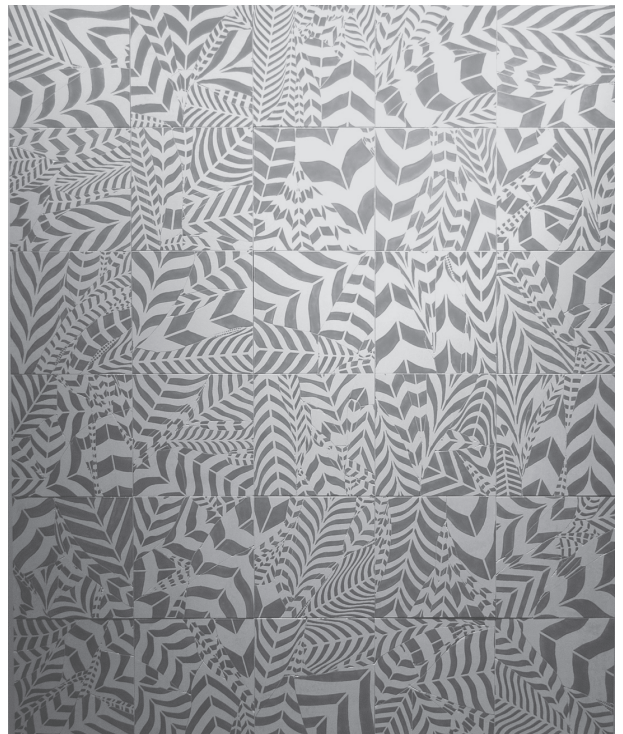
Melchert became immersed in ceramics while studying with Peter Voulkos at the University of California, Berkeley in the 1950s and 1960s. Through the 1970s, Melchert became a master at marrying abstract expressionism and conceptual thought through the underappreciated medium of clay. Melchert's unique method of dropping prefabricated ceramic tiles and reassembling them into new forms became one of his most well-known contributions to the medium. This technique is underscored in the suite of untitled works dating from 1993. They are unimposing in scale and riotous in color, ignore rhythm and logic and pictorial convention, and are visually disruptive in every sense of the word.

These works also reveal the relationship Melchert shared with Rene di Rosa. Gifted to the collection from Melchert, each bears an inscription in verso that alludes to time spent at the lake, advice offered and taken, or the gratitude for a life transformed by a place and a friendship: "For Rene with thanks for making Winery Lake part of our lives" reads one. "To Rene, who inspired me to visit Europe in the '60s" states another. For Melchert, the presence of his work at di Rosa is inextricable from the experience of being at the lake with Rene amongst friends.

Text by Curator Amy Owen and Patricia Maloney,
Director of Art Practical | Daily Serving



Jim Melchert
Untitled Tile #6 of 6, 1995
Ceramic, 11.75 x 11.75 in.
di Rosa collection, Napa



Jim Melchert
Feathers of a Phoenix (Red), 2004
Ceramic, 93.5 x 78 in.
di Rosa collection, Napa