

THE PROJECT ROOM at LOIS LAMBERT GALLERY

at Bergamot Station
2525 Michigan Ave E3
Santa Monica, CA 90404
loislambertgallery.com

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Spiraling Out from the *Puzzler* series,
ceramic, 12.5" d x 1" h



Planets (detail) from the *Solar System*
series, ceramic



Vase with interior decoration. ceramic,
7.25" w x 5.5" d x 6" h

JOANNE JAFFE

Ceramics: Ruly & Unruly

November 12, 2022 – January 7, 2023
Opening Reception Saturday, November 12, 6-9pm

SANTA MONICA, CA – Lois Lambert Gallery presents an exhibition of ceramic works by Joanne Jaffe.

Ceramic artist Joanne Jaffe credits Covid with spurring her current series, *Ruly & Unruly*. When the virus struck, Jaffe, like many others, became what she describes as “food-obsessed.” While her husband, Jon, took up baking, she turned her studio practice to dinnerware. “I was practically drowning us in soups and stews, and quickly began to feel a need for all manner of serving pieces,” she explains.

Her previous series, *Applied Geometry* (at Lois Lambert Gallery, Jan-Mar 2019) had been an explosion of bright colors after years of more muted palettes. For that series she had developed a simplified vocabulary of forms and motifs—principally circles, triangles and checkerboards. It was exciting to discover their versatility—that she could deploy them in potentially endless combinations. “Once I got going, I was able to sublimate my Covid woes in clay,” she says. The outcome was a wide array of functional pieces, including a return to some of Jaffe’s perennial favorites, such as vases, pedestal pieces, and sake sets.

But it was from making dinner plates and platters that Jaffe discovered that a large, blank plate could also serve as a canvas. The result was a sub series of nine circular pieces that she considers her most cerebral work to date. “I call them my ‘Puzzlers.’ In each one, I set myself problems to solve, all of which have to do with ways of integrating color with black and white.”

Making sushi plates sparked off her first installation piece, another sub series called “Solar Systems.” Here she created families related by shape and color, each element able to function solo or within a group. Every piece is wall-mounted in such a way that it can be rotated 360 degrees, making the relationships among the pieces totally changeable. (Still thinking of food, Jaffe explains that the pieces can also be taken off the wall to do double duty as hors d’oeuvres plates!)

Previously Jaffe had fired in reduction for a subtler effect, but in the *Ruly & Unruly* series, she opted for oxidation firing, wanting the colors to be bold and happy. The pieces employ a variety of techniques: wheel-thrown, wheel-thrown and altered, and slab built. They are first incised (Jaffe never draws in advance but invents directly on the clay), then painted with underglazes, bisque fired, and finally, covered with a clear glaze and fired a second time. All of the pieces are stoneware, high-fired at cone 10 for durability.

Jaffe has shown at the American Museum of Ceramic Art (AMOCA), the Craft and Folk Art Museum and at the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts in Ojai, as well as at art galleries around California. Her work has been published in the Los Angeles Times Magazine and American Style Magazine, and has been highlighted in Lark Books’ *The Best of 500 Ceramics: Celebrating a Decade in Clay* and *500 Vases: Contemporary Explorations of a Timeless Form*.