

# Sight Unseen



EXCERPT: EXHIBITION

## Julia Haft-Candell's Black Clay Infinity Sculptures, On View in LA

by Jennifer S. Li

From the starting point of a knot – a deceptively simple form with a rich history in craft and commerce, on land and at sea – ceramicist Julia Haft-Candell developed the idea of “the infinite,” which acts as both title and concept for her latest show at LA’s Parrasch Heijnen Gallery. Ranging from nascent whorls to fully formed lemniscates, Haft-Candell’s concept of “the infinite” unfolds over more than two dozen black clay sculptures. These loops are punctuated with whimsical iconography that Haft-Candell developed and hand-painted – “the eye,” “the weave,” “the scales,” “the comb,” and more, drawn from mythology, history, and her own experiences – all of which are explained in an impressive, illustrated [glossary](#) that accompanies the exhibition. *Infinity: Burst*, for example, is decorated with a smattering of geometric

shapes, which the artist says is indicative of her creative output, stress, or excitement: "A mayhem or scatter of shapes that came from a burst of excitement. I often can't find appropriate words to express excitement, or the feeling of being overwhelmed, frazzled and excited simultaneously." Many of the other patterns, such as "the chain" and "the knot" help to establish the idea of infinity as feminine and masculine, a recycling of energy, unfixed and ever-changing.

Opposite the loop sculptures are craggy, intriguing lumps, the descendants of Peter Voulkos' avant-garde, boundary-breaking work or Ken Price's pioneering oddities. These pieces, which Haft-Candell calls "Weights," are made using the leftover bits of clay from the infinity sculptures, literally closing the loop on these sculptures in a no-waste cycle. On view through September 7.