

PRESS RELEASE

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Kitty Shepherd

Word of Mouth

Messums London

19 October – 18 November 2022



Kitty Shepherd, *Word of Mouth*, 2022

This first major collection of playful ceramic jars, plates and vessels by Kitty Shepherd blurs further the line between vessel and painted iconography, and it does so in high contrast colour.

The centrepiece of the exhibition will be the titular work; 48 ceramic tablets, each illustrating a favourite lipstick, and all framed together to create a burst of colour, at first glance resembling a stained-glass window. In the same manner, the work depicts a journey with each tablet and its

individual lipstick having its roots in a collective nostalgia and open to individual interpretation.

Memory is ingrained in the lipstick, for instance, the association of the lipstick worn to a first concert. Alongside this will be a second installation of 48 ceramic tiles, entitled 'Needle Drop'. In a similar nod to contemporary culture, each tile will illustrate one of a personal selection of popular song titles from the last 60 years. Intended to be viewed together, the subject matter of the two installations represents both the vacuity and triviality of western society, yet at the same time acknowledges their transitory importance.

At heart, 'Word of Mouth' is a simple story of names, colours and social history. Every lipstick chosen for illustration throughout the exhibited works is a reflection of the popularity of cosmetics over the last 75 years and in all cases, a genuine example of an actual cosmetic product and its name. Some of these are discontinued, but many are still current and have retained their eccentric and idiosyncratic naming conventions. In a striking example of how memories really are the markers of time, included is the lipstick of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the late monarch, a celebration at the time of her Jubilee year.

Biography

Kitty Shepherd (b.1960) is a British studio potter and ceramic artist known for her bold use of colour with slip. She describes the natural world and popular iconography in a way that is totally unique in the ceramic discipline. Her studios are based in Granada, Spain.

Fuelled by a global culture, Shepherd is increasingly focused on recording everyday objects and the attachment of emotions that are associated with these items in ceramic. Within her discipline she has become a collector of all kinds of objects and imagery.

Her ideas come to life in her work to form interesting connections between familiar iconic images. The result is a form of art as play, involving the reframing of objects within a world of attention and manipulation of context; a context standing in a metaphorical relation to the world of everyday life. Very Freudian and very fetishistic and entertaining to the viewer.

Shepherd's training began in the arts, but not in ceramics. Her early passions were for the stage studying primarily voice and drama before she first met clay as a minor subject. From the first beginnings of a ceramics A-Level she went on to study Product and Three-Dimensional Design and this set her up to make pots for the rest of her life where she continues her passion for slipware and developing her own unique style.

Shepherd's work is included in public collections including Worthing Museum and Art Gallery; Plymouth City Art Gallery and Museum; CoCA The Centre of Ceramic Art York; Stapflehus Gallery Weil am Rhein Germany and Clarke Hall; Wakefield, Yorkshire. She is represented by Messums, London.



Kitty Shepherd, *Lipstick Jar*, 2022

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