

## Modern Art

Ron Nagle

*Conniption*, Helmet Row, EC1  
*Extraterrestrials*, Bury Street, SW1

17 November–20 December 2023

Modern Art is pleased to announce Ron Nagle's third exhibition with the gallery, which takes place across two presentations: 'Conniption' at Helmet Row, and 'Extraterrestrials' at Bury Street. The exhibition includes new sculptures and a suite of new drawings. A catalogue, including a commissioned text by writer and curator Zully Adler, will accompany it.

Nagle is internationally acclaimed for his inimitable sculptures. Across his oeuvre, almost none of Nagle's compact works measure more than 16 cm in diameter, but they each contain multitudes of unique visual combinations of colour, texture and form. Each work is meticulously hand-made using a combination of traditional mediums such as porcelain and ceramic in combination with more modern materials including catalysed polyurethane and epoxy resin. As well as bringing together these disparate technical approaches, Nagle draws inspiration from a wide range of cultural sources, both high and low, including Brutalist architecture, the Japanese aesthetic philosophy of Shibui, Instagram 'food porn', the work of Giorgio Morandi and Philip Guston, and hot-rod cars of the US West Coast.

Nagle's presentation at Helmet Row, entitled 'Conniption', conveys Nagle's interest in colour and textural design in the built environment, especially in the transition from modernism to more contemporary paradigms. The works which come under the subheading 'Brutish', are in part inspired by the Mexican architect Luis Barragán - whose work managed to harmonise the unlikely combination of Brutalist design with what he called "emotional architecture" - through the use of playful, contemporary colour and texture combined with traditional raw materials of wood and stone. Nagle's sculptures, on their characteristically miniature scale, evoke something of the atmosphere of Barragán's built environments. In these works, the hard-edge geometry of Brutalism is both built upon and toyed with by a light and mischievous use of texture, colour, and form, which offers a visual experience that is at once confounding and seductive. At Modern Art's Bury Street gallery, 'Extraterrestrials' marks a departure for Nagle. If his works until now have evoked upright, architectural forms, these new sculptures are flattened out, their elements dispersed across a kind of pockmarked, lunar-like landscape, punctuated with oozing mounds and sinking orifices.

He began his career as a studio assistant of Peter Voulkos, and soon became a protagonist of the California Clay Movement that formed around his teacher. Throughout his artistic career Nagle has written music, releasing several albums of his own, including *Bad Rice* (1970; reissued in 2015), and *Introducing the Many Moods of Ron Nagle* (2018). In 1965, he founded the 'The Mystery Trend', a garage rock band, with a group of friends while at the San Francisco Art Institute. He has also contributed to several films with music and sound design, including *The Exorcist* and *Cat People*. He continues to work symbiotically on both sculpture and music.

Ron Nagle was born in 1939 in San Francisco, where he lives and works. His work has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (2020); Secession, Vienna (2019); Fridericianum, Kassel (2019); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2015); and the San Diego Museum of Art (2014). A survey of four decades of his practice was mounted at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, in 1993. In 2013, he was included in Massimiliano Gioni's The Encyclopedic Palace at the 55th Venice Biennale. Nagle's works are held in collections including LACMA, Los Angeles; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; SFMOMA, San Francisco; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

On Thursday 7 December (6-8pm) there will be a launch of the exhibition catalogue, where Zully Adler will lead a walk-through of the show.

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