

Sherbet Green

(Icon)oclast

BLCKGEEZER & Cas Campbell

18 January - 21 February

Sherbet Green is delighted to present *(Icon)oclast*, a duo exhibition of new ceramics by BLCKGEEZER and Cas Campbell.

The exhibition brings together two distinct practices in their first sustained engagement with clay, exploring how images and symbols gain authority, are broken down, and reimagined. Ancient and bodily, clay carries memory, history, and care — a medium through which queerness, motherhood, illness, and overlooked narratives take shape.

Accompanying text by Mollie Barnes

Icon as anchor. Icon as constraint.

Icons provide a stability to the world. They condense belief into material form, offering reassurance through repetition. A familiar image returned to again and again - anchoring meaning through time.

Yet - icons aren't neutral. They are selected, elevated, and preserved. Through this process, they harden into a hierarchy. What is held up is remembered - and what is excluded slips from view.

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(Icon)oclast, the duo exhibition by BLCKGEEZER & Cas Campbell, begins from this tension. The title splits itself deliberately. Iconoclasm names the act of breaking images, beliefs and institutions: of resisting false idols. The parentheses open another possibility.

BLCKGEEZER dissects contemporary icons, pulling apart figures and themes such as Hello Kitty, bow motifs and Madonna-Child compositions. Campbell explores those overlooked by history, constructing alternative icons from symbols and lives that never entered the canon. Together asking: what do we worship, and why?

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Bringing together two distinct practices in each of their first sustained engagement with ceramics, the exhibition builds on clay as shared ground. Ancient and bodily, clay is a means to explore queerness, motherhood, illness, history and the structures that decide what is neutral, natural, sacred, and worthy of our devotion.

Ursula K. Le Guin's *Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* offers a quiet framework here. Le Guin proposed the vessel - the bag, the bowl, the womb - as humanity's most essential technology, shunning weapons and conquest. The vessel is the technology of holding. Ceramics, among humanity's earliest technologies, belong to this lineage. Clay - a substance that has historically been eaten, applied, and consumed for health - records time on, and in, its surface.

Each work here behaves as a vessel. For BLCKGEEZER, the vessel is inseparable from lived experience. Her practice is shaped by breast cancer, mastectomy, and the aftermath of medical intervention. Clay becomes an analogue for the body under duress: cracked, fired, scarred, and resilient. Working with black clay and porcelain slip, she pushes against familiar ceramic binaries of light and dark, softness and hardness, preciousness and utility, life and death.

For Campbell, the vessel operates across time, in dialogue with the earliest ceramic bodies found: fertility figurines such as the *Venus of Dolní Věstonice* and ritual vessels from early Chinese and Jōmon cultures. These objects carried belief, myth, and systems of knowledge about mortality, reproduction, and the sacred. Each is a holder of stories. Campbell draws on this lineage to observe how meaning survives lifetimes through fashioning new speculative artefacts.

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BLCKGEEZER works in the hyper-present.

Hello Kitty appears throughout her work as a contemporary icon, a mouthless cartoon figure designed to represent a young girl from London. In an ever-growing and homogenised online culture, Hello Kitty's image has taken on the weight of a devotion once reserved for religious figures. Anthropologist Christine R. Yano described Hello Kitty as emblematic of kawaii culture: cute, silent, and endlessly adaptable. In the 1990s, Riot Grrrl feminists reclaimed Hello Kitty as a symbol of cuteness with edgy personas.

BLCKGEEZER, in turn, uses the Hello Kitty icon to ask who gets to be 'just a girl,' and what that phrase can mean in this moment, when girlhood is suppressed, politicised, and reclaimed in a world shaped by war and genocide. Here, 'just' holds a double charge: it signals dismissal of the feminine and girlhood, while rejecting a resistance to softness and care, in conditions that seem to demand hardness.

Across the works, softness appears as something learned late, often reached only after the absorption of masculine codes and the rejection of the feminine. The bow motif extends this thought. A key symbol of childhood and rigid femininity, it also carries the visual language of cancer-awareness ribbons and AIDS activism. For many who are positioned beyond, or in resistance to, normative Western ideals of femininity, the feminine - like the bow - is often something to suppress before it can be cautiously and actively reclaimed. The artist's handwritten texts in clay further gesture toward an archive of girlhood: obsessions, romanticism, and forms of expression often dismissed as kitsch. BLCKGEEZER explores the conflicted process of returning to disallowed symbols and reinhabiting them on her own terms.

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Campbell works in deep time.

Her practice draws from ecology and evolutionary history, from the Cambrian explosion to mass extinction events. Within this vast scale, the idea of a stable natural order begins to loosen. Species emerge, adapt, and disappear.

Deep time offers a place of belonging beyond social categorisation. Campbell is interested in how those who feel outside contemporary social orders might find themselves within this broader evolutionary context. Her sculptures emerge from an archive of invisible lives. Shaped by experiences of growing up autistic - often marked by feeling out of step, alongside early single queer motherhood, her works reflect a search for belonging where social frameworks have failed to offer it. She finds continuity in the natural world and evolutionary history instead. The search extends to historical figures also driven by insatiable curiosity, such as Anne Bonny, Margaret Fontaine, and Mary Anning, each of whose lives suggests that being 'out of step' is not an anomaly.

Rather than proposing replacement icons, Campbell borrows a historical visual framework - from Sainly iconography to figures across science and humanities - and repurposes it to hold stories that have been overlooked or excluded. They behave less like idols than like fossils, with their meanings accrued through repetition, survival, and erosion rather than dominance. In a similar way, she employs flower symbolism drawn from Victorian queer codes: dandelions, lilies, forget-me-nots. Campbell teases these flowers to function as counter-icons: symbols that carry coded histories that both conceal and reveal to their audiences.

The spiral also recurs. Stamped into bows and repeated in ammonite forms. References to fossils, the golden ratio and Uzumaki. It suggests growth through repetition - how an icon claims its place. Across time and cultures, the spiral has signified life, death, reincarnation, hypnosis, terror, cosmic order, and contamination. (Icon)oclast explores the spiral as a shorthand for queer time: nonlinear, recursive, enduring. The ammonite anchors this logic. Discovered and popularised by nineteenth-century fossil hunter Mary Anning - a young working-class woman working outside of institutional authority, whose findings disrupted the Church's six-thousand-year timeline - the ammonite embodies

iconoclasm. Its form expands outward while only the final chamber is ever inhabited. Growth does not require occupying the whole past, and queer existence, like the ammonite, is ancient and adaptive.

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Motherhood threads throughout the exhibition. BLCKGEEZER's works reference the womb through experiences of illness and loss of fertility, while Hello Kitty ties childhood and adulthood into a cyclical loop. The stories Campbell draws on - particularly those shaped by the many forms of motherhood - resonate sharply with contemporary debates around reproductive autonomy. For example, Victorian moral constraints echo the ongoing precarity around abortion rights. Like Dia de los Muertos altars, where skulls sit beside mother-and-child imagery, the exhibition holds both reverence and mortality together. Together, the works consider the link between vessels and those expected to carry life, and what it means to exist beyond that expectation.

BLCKGEEZER breaks icons apart to expose their seams. Campbell assembles new ones from fragments of history left behind. The display reinforces these tensions. Works are elevated on a blackened wooden cross that evokes a shrine, a kiln fire, and an archaeological site. The form references religious iconography without submitting to doctrine. Queer lives embedded in fossils. Vessels holding memory.

(Icon)oclast doesn't propose replacement images. Campbell and BLCKGEEZER invite a re-seeing where icons are not fixed - they are shaped by time, belief, and care.

They can be broken.

They can be remade.