

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Albertz Benda Presents  
*John Mason: Sculpture*

On view November 30, 2017 – January 13, 2018  
515 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY

Opening Reception:  
November 30, 6pm – 8pm



*Spear, Golden Ember, 2015*  
Ceramic, 63 3/4 x 24 1/2 x 26 1/2 inches



*Torque, Dusty Blue, Medium Scale, 2016*  
Ceramic, 30 1/2 x 10 x 8 inches



*Figure Persimmon, 2015*  
Ceramic, 63 3/4 x 18 1/2 x 17 inches

**New York, NY, November 1, 2017** - Albertz Benda is proud to announce *John Mason: Sculpture*, a solo exhibition for the groundbreaking Los Angeles artist, John Mason. Curated by Jennifer Olshin, the exhibition features works from the past two decades, and will open on November 30, 2017 and run through January 13, 2018.

*John Mason: Sculpture* presents a survey of typologies: figures, spears, crosses, torques, and orbs – large-scale powerful works rendered from his latest experiments and research into form, structure, and color. With roots in his earliest forays into the expressive potential of clay, these latest series reflect Mason's enduring interest in mathematics, science, computer applications, and aesthetics but present entirely new and distilled forms. Through trial and error and incessant material investigations, Mason has created a language of geometrical elements, stackable components and high fire glazes that culminate in elegant minimalist forms.

In *Sculpture*, Mason invents new ways of working with his materials and constructions. Through an innovative use of slab construction, the life-size monoliths twist, turn, and spring up from the ground in silhouettes of blue, green, ember, and white - their clay color and clay bodies inseparably bound. Devoid of clear directional stance or apparent logic of construction, the pieces illicit an overall phenomenological reaction that is greater than the sum of any of their parts.

Throughout his career, Mason has created abstract work that echoes -but is never defined by- facets of the world around him. The pieces in *John Mason: Sculpture* are reminiscent of the Nevada desert landscapes and indigenous Indian art he came into contact with in his youth but embody his later influences, including Buckminster Fuller's dyomaxic maps and the pared-down aesthetic of mid-century California architecture. Ultimately, as with all his work to-date, they are mysterious and compelling visions in clay.

### **About the artist**

John Mason was born in 1927 in Madrid, Nebraska. At the age of 22, Mason settled in Los Angeles. He emerged in LA's burgeoning art scene in the 1950s after studying at the Otis Art Institute and the Chouinard Art Institute. It was at Otis, amongst a small group of bold artists, that he pursued clay as an ever-evolving medium for artistic expression.

Unhindered by any hierarchical order of materials, Mason embraced ceramic practice and went on to translate the physicality and intuitive spirit of Abstract Expressionism and other prescient ideas into large-scale clay sculpture. He was recognized almost immediately with solo-shows in 1959-60 at the now-iconic Ferus gallery, The Pasadena Museum of Art, and at the World's Fair of 1962 in Seattle. During the 1950s and 60s, Mason experimented with free-form sculptures and wall reliefs and monolithic, richly glazed forms that had no precedent in contemporary ceramics.

In the 1970s Mason moved to New York and abandoned clay altogether to work with modules, welded steel, and drawings. He created a series of firebrick sculptures that were exhibited across multiple venues including: The Hudson River Museum, Des Moines Art Center, Corcoran Gallery of Art, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and University Art Museum, and The University of Texas. In the 1980s he returned both to California as well as working in clay.

Mason has continually explored the endless potential trajectories of fired earth. His work is represented in numerous major museum collections including the Norton Simon Museum of Art, Pasadena; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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### Media Contacts

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