

## JOHN SHEA

b. 1989, United States

John Shea is a ceramic artist based in Little Rock, AR. His vibrantly painted sculptures contain an implicit duality that compounds virtual and material understandings of space and time. The contemporary, almost digital surface aesthetic is balanced by a physicality that might have been geologically formed eons ago. His process involves joining small, cut pieces of clay together, whose seams remain visible through lines and contour. The work's color palette is often drawn from *A Dictionary of Color Combinations* by Japanese painter Sanzo Wada, a book that first appeared in 1932 as part of the development of Japan's avant-garde and which includes numerous color combinations from raspberry and yellow-orange to dusty green and bluish-purple. After firing, Shea sprays each work with enamel oil paints rather than applying a traditional glaze, enhancing the luminescent qualities of his surfaces, which appear as though a colored light were shining on them; the radiant aura is intended to push the viewer's sense of perception and expected experiences.

Shea writes, "The work is an examination of what makes up an object—looking at both an object as composed of individual elements and also as a set of relationships that inform those objects. The forms themselves are a mishmash of organic and geometric shapes that push and pull against each other, a collection of individual parts pressed together. The overall group of pieces has been made under a set of systems that determine how individual pieces relate to each other in the series of work through form and function."

Shea graduated with a BFA from the School of American Crafts at the Rochester Institute of Technology before attending graduate school at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he earned an MA and MFA. He was a resident artist at the University of Montevallo—Alabama, and his work has been shown throughout the United States and internationally.