

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## DIANE MAYO

November 2, 2012 – January 6, 2013



*The Cypriot Series (II)*, 2012, ceramic, 23 ¾ x 10 ½ x 5 ½ in

*The Cypriot Series (10)*, 2012, ceramic, 18 x 18 x 11 in

Opening November 2, 2012 and on view through January 6, 2013, The Drawing Room is pleased to present an exhibition of new ceramic vessels by Diane Mayo concurrent with a show of Sharon Horvath's mixed media paintings.

A longtime resident of Montauk, **Diane Mayo** has been hand building idiosyncratic sculpture in clay for more than two decades. Inspired by ancient Cypriot pottery, Mayo's recent work fuses her penchant for inventive and whimsical sculptural shapes with a rich new morphology of ancient vernacular forms. From low handled bowls with subtle asymmetrical elements to a towering columnar vessel anchored by a biomorphic tripod base, this colorful body of work reveals Mayo's command of the expressive potential of structure and surface ornamentation.

The curious and commanding clay shapes introduced in this series emanate from Bronze Age vessels Mayo encountered in Desmond Morris's 1985 book, *The Art of Ancient Cyprus*. Through appropriation and reinvention, Mayo imbues each work with a unique sculptural presence, incorporating exaggerated cut-away spouts, multiple swelling curves, and handles that articulate unexpected profiles that both conjure and transcend their ancient ritual origins. Whether elemental or elaborate and multi-bodied, Mayo's Cypriot 'containers' evolve through a long process in which each stage contributes significantly to the texture, color and character of the final form.

(over)

Mayo chose a red clay body with a high grog content to hand build with rolled slabs and coils this collection of structures that measure up to 41 inches tall. These combined techniques allow cylindrical and curving elements to coalesce in unexpected shapes like *The Cypriot Series (11)*. Here, conjoined bulbs at the base sprout elegant twin necks that expand and merge again before stretching toward offset openings. In another hybrid 'jug,' a branch shaped segment bridges two elongated spouts that extend from a colorful oval base punctuated by a pair of circular buds.

Following the first bisque firing, Mayo glazes the convex clay surfaces with lively compositions characterized by a patchwork of multi-colored forms – odes to her affinity for Ghee's Bend quilts and the fine, cracked patterns on restored clay artifacts. Mayo's ability to balance and plan the chemistry behind the glazing decisions and marry each form to the appropriate painting emerges from years in a studio that is a room of tests. While saturated ochres, rich blues and milky greens animate interlocking abstractions on some pots, others are enveloped in blankets of chalk white and buff.

In a small bowl and a taller, drum-shaped work from 2011, another nod to archeology is revealed. Vestiges of iron oxide underpainting contrast bright swaths of Mayo's signature raku glazes. The allusion to the process of conservation is inferred again when Mayo adds lead coated copper patches to the exterior of her vessels. These collaged elements heighten the sculptural presence of the work, inverting a traditional form of repair to engender a new field of discovery.

With this body of work Mayo brings clay sculpture into the 21<sup>st</sup> century while honoring the sacred and mysterious vessels of the past. Mayo's work has been exhibited broadly in solo and group shows in the United States and Germany.

**Please note new gallery hours: Monday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday 10 to 5; Sunday 11 to 5  
Closed November 22, December 24, 25 & 31, January 1.**

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