

## Kayne Griffin Corcoran



### Peter Shire and Rashid Johnson



Left: Peter Shire Saki Pot As The World Turns, 2011 Whiteware with cone 06 glazes, stainless steel tops 12 1/4 x 9 5/8 x 5 3/8 inches 31.8 x 25.4 x 14 cm (ShireP.1866) Images courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles. Right: Peter Shire Giza, 2018 Kvadrat Divina fabric, aluminum, paint, wood, upholstery material 60 1/4 x 40 x 39 inches 153 x 101.6 x 99.1 cm (ShireP.1886) Images courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles.

Peter Shire, long time resident of Echo Park and one of its more prominent citizens, is an artist who has long used ceramics as a medium for commentary. The only American to be included in Memphis, the Italian post-modern design group, Shire is best known for his form over function teapots. Since the 1970s, he has used their shape as the basis of extreme experimentation. Shire's visual wit and passion for color evolved over the decades into ever more outrageous small ceramic sculptures that only nod in the direction of a utilitarian origin.

A survey of the teapots along with his furniture and other designs was the subject of an excellent small exhibition at Moca's PDC location last year. Peter Shire: Drawings, Impossible Teapots, Furniture & Sculpture reprises some of those career-long themes in more current work at Kayne Griffin Corcoran on south La Brea through May 12. Delightful drawings illustrate his obsession with Krazy Kat comics. Many pieces are shown in series. Chairs aligned on a platform reveal how a single bold color or striped pattern can alter the effect of a shape. Each of these chairs has a cylindrical back, skinny bird legs and slab seats but the surface treatment varies and each emerges unique. Shire's love of puns and word play result in titles for these 2014 chairs: Pecker Eeeny, Pecker Meeny, Pecker Miny, Pecker Mo.

Drohojowska-Philp, Hunter. "Peter Shire and Rashid Johnson." KCRW. 3 May 2018. Web.

In addition to his trademark teapots, some of which reference Bauhaus angularity and architecture, there are a number of saki pots. Shire draws inspiration from the cultural diversity of East L.A., whether in searing Latin color or glittering Asian ornamentation, always pulling from the low brow and the popular rather than the high art source. Go, see and get happy.

As an important figure in the second generation of Southern California ceramicists to deny the boundaries of traditional crafts, Shire has led the way for a surge of interest in ceramics among younger contemporary artists.

Across La Brea Ave, at David Kordansky Gallery, Rashid Johnson's nicely honed exhibition, *The Rainbow Sign*, includes substantial bronze wall pieces incorporating shards of mirror, zebra skin, active sound speakers and plant imagery. All of that is a wonderful palette for the New York City-based artist but the center of the show features something relatively new, dozens of what he calls "ugly pots." Ceramics have often had a minor role in his work but this particular foray into this use of clay benefits from the appearance of being both familiar and fresh. The show is on view to May 19.

—Hunter Drohojowska-Philp