



GEMINI G.E.L. AT JONI MOISANT WEYL

KEN PRICE AT GEMINI G.E.L.:

Prints and Ceramics 1970 – 2005

March 22 – May 10, 2008

Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl is pleased to present an exhibition of the prints and ceramic multiples Ken Price created at the Los Angeles artists' workshop, Gemini G.E.L., beginning with his first collaboration in 1970 to his latest in 2005. Known for his brightly-colored ceramic cups, bowls, biomorphic sculptures and drawings, the Gemini editions offer an exceptional indication of the breadth of Ken Price's career. The exhibition will feature a selection of screenprints as well as the artist's signature cups and more recent ceramic multiples. *Ken Price at Gemini G.E.L.: Prints and Ceramics 1970-2005* will be on view from March 22 through May 10, 2008.

Since his first solo exhibition at Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles in 1960, Ken Price's work has been consistently innovative and inventive. Born in Los Angeles in 1935, Ken Price studied at Otis Art Institute in the late 1950s under Peter Voulkos, who is widely credited with translating an abstract expressionist vision into the material of clay. Ken Price has pushed the boundaries of traditional ceramic techniques, using unconventional materials such as auto enamel and paint, and crafting unusual, sensual, and often erotic shapes. Also skilled at drawing, Ken Price is able to convey remarkably his whimsical three-dimensional clay creations as striking two-dimensional images.



Figurine Cup V, 1970

Working at Gemini in the early 1970s, Ken Price created two bodies of prints, *Figurine Cup Series* (1970) and *Interior Series* (1972), both focusing on his fundamental attraction to cups. For Price, the cup is a primal idiom and a constant theme throughout his forty-plus year career. "When you use a cup," Price says, "it's right in your hand and you actually put it to your mouth and drink warm liquid from it. That is very primal, physical and sensual." In *Figurine Cup V*, from the first print series, the cup handle is transformed into a naked dancer, bending in several states of acrobatic maneuvering. Divided into 8 panes of imagery, the format suggests the bold, graphic nature of animated film strips.

With the subsequent *Interior Series*, Price situated either this figurine-handled cup or a creature cup (lizard or turtle) inside vibrantly decorated 1970s-era rooms. Taking advantage of the dense, clearly-defined forms achievable in screenprinting, these prints include wildly-patterned zebra skin rugs (as seen in *Texas Turtle Cup*) and imaginative furnishings composed of broad swaths of color. Placed on these hugely oversized pieces of furniture, Price's intimately-scaled cups hold their own. When he returned to the subject of room interiors in his 1993 screenprint, *Western Sunset*, he brought the scale of everything down and eliminated the cup altogether.



Texas Turtle Cup, 1971



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In 1991, Ken Price created a suite of six ceramic cups in celebration of the Gemini workshop's 25th anniversary. The Gemini cups were Price's first attempt at making a multiple object and he wanted to imbue them with a "little magic...a little something." The cups were created from molds and then hand-glazed, cementing the formal relationship between color and the shape of the cup. Resting in wooden display boxes, the Gemini cups are quintessentially Ken Price and certainly have that special "something."



Chet, 1991

In addition to the cups, Ken Price has created a handful of other multiple objects at Gemini which correspond to the trajectory of his unique ceramics. *Ming* and *Bolivar*, completed in 1998, are geologically shaped sculptures, painted in iridescent blue and green. Gem-like specimens, these pieces



Ming and Bolivar, 1998

have geometric, flatly-painted incisions in the center of which Price has playfully left open holes that invite the viewer to reach out and poke the dark voids. The sensually shaped *Curley* from 2005 is reminiscent of Ken Price's most recent biomorphic, amoeba-like sculptures. In fact, the making of *Curley* employs the same process as Price's unique works: cast from a mold, each *Curley* was hand-painted with several layers of brightly-colored paint, which were then wet-sanded to reveal underlying hues. Erotic and quirky, *Curley* exemplifies the ever-present duality in Ken Price's work.

By pushing the boundaries of his medium, clay, Ken Price stands as one of the most important contemporary artists – a sculptor whose medium happens to be ceramic. His inventive, inimitable style is unmatched.

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Contacts:

Christina Weyl 212 249 3324 gemini@joniweyl.com

Piper Scalzi 212 249 3324 gemini@joniweyl.com