



BEAN

Bennett Bean

THE MATERIAL BOUNDARIES THAT SEPARATE A PAINTING, a sculpture, and a ceramic vessel seem irrelevant to Bennett Bean, whose pieces—nonfunctional vessels and sculptural objects distinguished by a fluid, asymmetrically rhythmic flow of color, line, and plane—pass with breathtaking ease between categories. In Bean's work, geometric abstraction meets biomorphism in a process that—like the confluence of two streams into a single current—amplifies a sense of energy while urging competing elements toward a single, expressive purpose.

Bean, who lives and works in New Jersey, uses a variety of post-firing techniques to embellish his pieces. With stencils, glazes, and acrylic paints, he composes vibrant abstract designs on their surfaces. His vessels have a mesmerizing radiance thanks to the application of gold leaf to their undulating interiors. With an impeccable sense of control, Bean flirts with the potential for visual inebriation, but he holds this tendency in check through the use of exposed, smoky-white earthenware surfaces, which have a rustically calming influence on his vessels.

Bean's work is in the permanent collections of museums around the United States, including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in Massachusetts and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C.



◀ **Pair on Base, Master #1449** | 2007

16½ x 26½ x 15 inches (41.9 x 67.3 x 38.1 cm)
Slab built, thrown and altered; brushed glaze;
terra sigillata, tape and stencil resist, acrylic paint, gold;
electric fired, bisque fired, 1940° F (1060° C), pit fired

Photo by artist

▼ Triple on Base, Master #922 | 2002

14¼ x 24 x 12 inches (36.2 x 61 x 30.5 cm)

Slab built, thrown and altered; brushed glaze; terra sigillata, tape and stencil resist, acrylic paint, gold; electric fired, bisque fired, 1940°F (1060°C), pit fired

Photos by artist





▲ Pair on Base, Master #1106 | 2004

11 x 19 x 10 inches (27.9 x 48.3 x 25.4 cm)

Slab built, thrown and altered; brushed glaze; terra sigillata, tape and stencil resist, acrylic paint, gold; electric fired, bisque fired, 1940°F (1060°C), pit fired

Photo by artist



◀ Triple on Base, AR #43 | 1996

13 x 28 x 13¼ inches

(33 x 71.1 x 33.7 cm)

Slab built, thrown and altered; brushed glaze; terra sigillata, tape resist, acrylic paint, gold; electric fired, bisque fired, 1940°F (1060°C), pit fired

Photo by Bobby Hansson

“ One of my concerns is the idea of control, which, in my case, takes the form of refusing to let the fire have the last word. Much of the work on my pieces is done after they’re fired.”



▲ Pair on Base, Master #1255 | 2005

8 x 12 x 6½ inches (20.3 x 30.5 x 16.5 cm)

Slab built, thrown and altered; brushed glaze; terra sigillata, tape and stencil resist, acrylic paint, gold; electric fired, bisque fired, 1940°F (1060°C), pit fired

Photos by artist



“In my continuing exploration of earthenware vessels, the forms have opened up, creating linear relationships. These forms are less concerned with containment than with movement.”



▲ Pair on Base, Master #749 | 2001

15 x 19 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (38.1 x 49.8 x 26 cm)
Slab built, thrown and altered; brushed glaze;
terra sigillata, tape and stencil resist, acrylic
paint, gold; electric fired, bisque fired, 1940° F
(1060° C), pit fired

Photos by artist



▲ **Open Pair, Master #1452** | 2007

11 x 25 x 15 inches (27.9 x 63.5 x 38.1 cm)
Slab built, thrown and altered; brushed glaze;
terra sigillata, tape and stencil resist, acrylic
paint, gold; electric fired, bisque fired, 1940°F
(1060°C), pit fired

Photos by artist





◀ Vessel, AR #17 | 1983

13¾ x 7¾ inches (34.9 x 19.7 cm)

Wheel thrown; brushed glaze; terra sigillata, tape resist, acrylic paint; electric fired, bisque fired, 1940°F (1060°C), pit fired

Photo by Bobby Hansson

“ I don’t make any distinctions between creating things, cooking, gardening, and building houses. Each cross-pollinates. Ideas are applied in different ways, depending on the medium.”



Vessel, AR #23 | 1988 ▶

6¾ x 9 inches (17.1 x 22.9 cm)

Wheel thrown; brushed glaze; terra sigillata, tape resist, acrylic paint; electric fired, bisque fired, 1940°F (1060°C), pit-fired

Photo by Bobby Hansson



◀ No More Anonymous Wood Series:
Liquor Cabinet with Chippendale Frieze | 1993

62 x 48 x 9 inches (157.5 x 121.9 x 22.9 cm)
Slab built, thrown and altered; brushed glaze; terra
sigillata, tape resist, acrylic paint, gold; electric fired,
bisque fired, 1940°F (1060°C), pit fired

Photo by Bobby Hansson