

artillery

**Lizzie Gill and
Kristen Jensen**

Geary Contemporary, Millerton,
New York

by Annabel Keenan | Mar 7, 2023



Kristen Jensen, Warm #2, 2021. Courtesy Geary Contemporary.

At Geary Contemporary, an exhibition pairing Lizzie Gill and Kristen Jensen, shows how nuanced, elegant and powerful the two-person format can be. At first glance, Jensen and Gill's work have seemingly little in common. Jensen's *Warms* (2021) sculptures are visually minimal and consist of two components: repurposed heating pads covered in used, mainly white, terrycloth towels and hand-built terracotta vessels. Gill's mixed-media still life paintings contain more colors, patterns and materials (transferred found imagery, acrylic paint and marble dust emulsion). Individually strong, the works on view seem to constantly interact, challenging the viewer to take a closer look.



Lizzie Gill *Vessels (Steeplechase)*, 2022. Courtesy Geary Contemporary.

Though not readily apparent, parallels between the artists emerge. Elements of one body of work slowly reveal elements of the other, providing a new context and expanding the viewer's understanding of both artists. Taking materials as a starting point, subtle visual connections unfold. The color of Jensen's ceramics draws the eye onto Gill's canvases and her vibrant red flowers. Made with marble dust emulsion applied with a cake piper, the thick, raised outline of the flowers pulls the viewer in and draws the eye across the surface to discover additional textures. Her flowers are transfixing; the raised outline of each petal contrasts with the flatness of the paint within.

Looking away from Gill's work, the rich color of Jensen's vessels commands the viewer's attention once again, asking for the same careful consideration of the surface. A closer inspection reveals smooth indentations in the thick ceramics, evidence of Jensen's hand-burnishing technique. Arduously rubbing the dense surface, Jensen slowly creates a beautiful sheen. This burnishing method further links Jensen with Gill, who sands down the paper pulp of vintage magazines and other found imagery, leaving behind only the transferred images that adorn the vessels in her own work. For both artists, the potentially destructive act of rubbing reveals something beautiful in the surface.

The origins of the materials further connect the artists as they embrace existing connotations of their repurposed items and found imagery. Jensen sources her materials from friends and strangers, sometimes finding heating pads on eBay. Using towels, Jensen taps into our intimate relationship with certain items. Often purchased for their function—to clean a body—rather than aesthetics, towels stand in for private aspects of our lives. Combining these with palliative heating pads, also associated with personal care, Jensen creates a bed of nuanced meaning for the ceramic vessels to rest. Gill's found imagery is similarly layered with references, inspired by matriarchal heirlooms. The archaeological and art-historical shapes of her vessels, as well as the domestic settings, each have their own significance in material culture and relate to the places and people who used them.

Viewing Gill and Jensen's work together is an invitation to look deeper into both artist's practice. Their use of ephemera in the style of surrealist assemblage highlights the value and meanings we give to objects and offers new perspectives on familiar materials. The closer one looks, parallels between the artists slowly unfold in an exciting process of discovery. The exhibition shows the power of thoughtful curation.