



Three-Dimensional Artist

Kaiser Suidan makes the ordinary worthy of conversation.

By Susan Kehoe, Ph.D.



A real working artist is a fascinating species. Kaiser Suidan is one of those artists who embody the characteristics of a true 21st-century artist. His creativity is out-of-the-box. In fact, he creates three-dimensional boxes of all sorts for wall installations, as well as spheres and artwork such as jacks. Yes, jacks, like those used in a child's street game.

I first saw his work at ArtPrize in Grand Rapids this year. A crowd in DeVos Place was gathering around his wall installation of multi-colored jacks, some trying to buy them right off the wall. The jacks in the installation were all the same size, but no two were alike. They drew you into the display and enveloped you — each one different, complex and subtly elegant. They are simple objects unworthy of attention until you peer at them and begin a conversation. That's what art should do.

Kaiser has installed many of his sculptures all over the country in places such as the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Las Vegas, the Westin Hotel at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, the Baker Furniture showrooms on the East and West coasts and many other commercial

venues and private homes.

Collectors find that his geometric sculptures can be displayed in numerous ways besides wall installations; these sculptures allow the collector to experiment with placement. Imagine a grouping of three jacks on a coffee table, possibly in different sizes, patterns and colors. A single large jack sitting on the floor becomes a sculpture that adds color and depth to an otherwise dead space.

When asked about his popularity, he admits, "It's very unexpected. I like the freedom to do what I want, not just what the market tells me to do."

Among prestigious events in the art world, he exhibits yearly in the Architectural Digest Show in New York City, the Cherry Creek Art Festival in Denver and at SOFA (Sculpture Objects Function Art and Design) at Navy Pier in Chicago. This year at SOFA he sponsored a group of artists from his Next Steps Gallery to exhibit with him. "I want to help young artists develop their careers," he said. "I named my studio 'Next Step' because everyone has his own next step."

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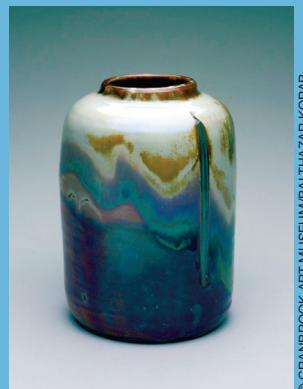
"Simple Forms, Stunning Glazes"

Gerald W. McNeely Pewabic Pottery Collection

Exhibition dates: Dec. 12-Aug. 28, 2016

Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills

This exhibition debuts the Gerald W. McNeely Pewabic Pottery Collection recently donated to Cranbrook Art Museum and never before seen in its entirety. The collection includes more than 117 works, including a Revelation Pottery Vase that predates the founding of Pewabic, and includes works from throughout the career of Mary Chase Perry Stratton, founder of the pottery. The exhibition will also highlight Cranbrook's own collection of Pewabic pottery from the Art Museum and educational campus, which George Gough Booth, founder of Cranbrook, actively collected over his lifetime.



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PHOTOGRAPH BY BALTHAZAR KORAB.

Kaiser exhibits and curates work of exceptional students from the College for Creative Studies (CCS) in his Next Step Gallery. Kaiser, a 1993 CCS graduate, has started a scholarship fund to give back to the school that provided him with a full scholarship and nurtured his dynamic career.

Kaiser lives and breathes art, literally. He began working in a building that was once a detail garage for cars in Ferndale, complete with the I-beams that held a flashing sign with blinking arrows. Over the years, he developed the entire city block into his artistic realm by combining his gallery and studio workspaces, then linking them to his home through an outdoor sculpture garden.

"I always wanted to live very close to my work," he says. "After I found my first studio here, whenever another of these places became available, I took it to expand. I've raised ceilings for the gallery, built a work studio in the old parking lot and put in a kitchen for events — people have actually asked to rent the gallery for weddings or parties."

Walking into this 12,000-square-foot space, it doesn't feel like an industrial area in the middle of the city. It's a one-of-a-kind experience, just like his artwork.

I asked this spirited, energetic and friendly artist how he remained independent and successful for 30 years. "If you want to know how I 'succeed' as an artist," he says, "it's because I don't look at art as a 'product.' An artist creates his own expression. When it resonates with others it feels like you formed a bond and shared a little beauty through your work." **NS**

Holiday Shop At Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center



Starting Dec. 3 (just in time for some last-minute Chanukah shopping!) and running through Dec. 19, more than 3,500 square feet of gallery space is transformed into a unique boutique of one-of-a-kind gift options created by more than 100 artists from Michigan and across the U.S.

The BBAC Holiday Shop offers a variety of functional and decorative handmade pieces, including ceramics, jewelry, scarves, home decor, greeting cards, stationary, glass, paintings, candles, soaps, kitchenware and more.

The annual Holiday Shop also offers assorted Judaica. Proceeds benefit the artists and the BBAC's ArtAccess and education programs.

Open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sunday, noon-4 p.m. (Note: Dec. 3 only, hours are noon-6 p.m.). The BBAC is located at 1516 S. Cranbrook in Birmingham.

A work by artist George Bochnig of Pontiac, available at the Holiday Shop.

Kaiser Suidan
Next Step Studio & Gallery
530 Hilton Road, Ferndale
Nextstepstudio.com