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Daniel Mandelbaum: *From Dust to Dust*
Jupiter Contemporary
January 15 - February 11, 2023
Opening reception: January 15, 6-8 PM
1217 71st Street, Miami Beach, FL 33141



Miami – January 11, 2023 — Jupiter Contemporary is pleased to present *From Dust to Dust*, Daniel Mandelbaum’s first solo exhibition with the gallery, following the recent announcement of his representation. Through the creation of ceramic sculptures and tiles that capture various objects, symbols, myths, and artifacts of the present, Mandelbaum establishes a distinctive vocabulary that contends with the passing of time and the unavoidable fact that the meaning we ascribe to such things may, one day, be forgotten.

Featuring 9 new ceramic sculptures and 7 wall-based tile works, the exhibition serves as a continuation of the artist’s established practice which brings together a wide array of symbols—from ancient cultural artifacts, celestial bodies, and religious icons to quotidian twenty-first century phenomena, including figures from popular culture, materials found on the

street, and everything in between—to create a distinctive visual lexicon which through its apparent randomness provides a point of entry for a multitude of interpretations to unfold. Mandelbaum thus enables each viewer to take on the process of decoding his language, enlivening new narratives and histories.

Mandelbaum’s handmade ceramic tiles that foreground their own materiality each serve as diaristic imprints of the everyday, reflective of objects and ideas which, when juxtaposed one next to the other, not only engender unexpected connections but create the illusion of a woven tapestry. The tiles comprising, for example, *Tiles 28* (2022) predominantly feature three-dimensional shapes, low relief faces, and personages composed of gestural marks. One might infer that these tell a story of family or friends, ancestry or community, and yet, when combined with other tiles that picture various animals, Pikachu, and forks with faces, such stories may be thrown into doubt while others take shape—such is the ebb and flow of viewing, or rather reading, Mandelbaum’s work.

Instead of creating meaning through juxtaposition, his ceramic sculptures also take the form of cultural references, religious icons, mystical characters, and even emojis like those featured on his tiles, but in these works, Mandelbaum meditates on the fact that certain objects and symbols have lost—or will one day lose—their meaning and become unrecognizable. *Dogū* (2022), for example, which takes the form of a Japanese Dogū figure from the Jōmon period (14,000–400 BC), featuring large protruding eyes and a distinctively bulbous figure, is intriguing to Mandelbaum because the significance of these unusual features has long remained unknown. The same might eventually be true for the figures he renders in *Sphinx* (2022), *Ark* (2022), *Bull 1* (2022), and *Sarcophagus* (2022).

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Such cycles involving the creation and degradation of meaning persist throughout the exhibition and are, as such, reflected in its title. A common biblical phrase used in funeral services, “from dust to dust” is not employed by Mandelbaum to convey a nihilistic perspective regarding the nature of life and death, but rather a time-honored sentiment that that which we have should be cherished and appreciated, because—as evidenced by the dust with which his ceramics are created and to which they will one day return—nothing lasts forever.

About the Artist

Daniel Mandelbaum (b. 1994, Westfield, New Jersey) earned his BFA from Pratt Institute and has exhibited widely in the United States and Europe at V1, Copenhagen; Stems Gallery, Brussels; Sim Smith, London; Europa, New York; Marvin Gardens, New York; The Hole, New York; Stanley’s, Los Angeles; Antennae, New Orleans; Best Western, New York; and Current Space, Baltimore; amongst others. He lives and works in Queens and will be attending the Palmyra Sculpture Centre Residency in Mallorca.

Caption: Dan Mandelbaum *Sun*, 2022 Ceramic 21 by 17 by 11 in. 68.58 by 43.18 by 27.94 cm.
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