



# GLOWING IN THE DARK

BENTE SKJØTTGAARD







NOVEMBER, 13th 2020 — NYC — Glowing in the Dark, Bente Skjøttgaard's first solo exhibition in the United States, is opening is at Jason Jacques Gallery.

When Skjøttgaard begins her art-making process, her points of departure are ideas concerning, quite plainly, the material and formal properties of clay and broadly observable principles in nature.

She does not do battle with excess, nor does she wrestle with restraint. Her works are more concerned with becoming— tensions between generation and regeneration. The results are inscrutable, sculptural growths. Swelling polyps and large, wild spores that populate an amorphous world of naturalistic abstractions which seems to have originated itself. It's lush and precambrian; there is something fungal about its dotting reminders of decay as an extant form of life.

And where there is life, there is often light. The lighting fixtures created by Skjøttgaard serenely cast their glow onto the questions surrounding the difference between art and design. Rather than perform the overwrought role of an artist compelled to stage conceptual interrogations, when Skjøttgaard asks “what happens when a sculpture has a function?” she leaves the question suspended beside the object; it is merely a conceptual spectre.

Skjøttgaard sees her work as an on-going development, extending forward into time. The results of her mode of making art lend themselves to formal discoveries, which yield as many questions as they do answers

As cause produces effect, one thing must lead to the next. These sculptures appear before us as though by way of some emergent property of an enigmatic natural process governed by its own perplexing rules and rigors. In the artist's own words, “I will never completely finish— fortunately.”



# STANDING SCULPTURES













JJG: You've named a few sculptures after carbon molecules and it seems as though you work with small, microscopic objects expanded to a human scale. Could you give us some insight on that?

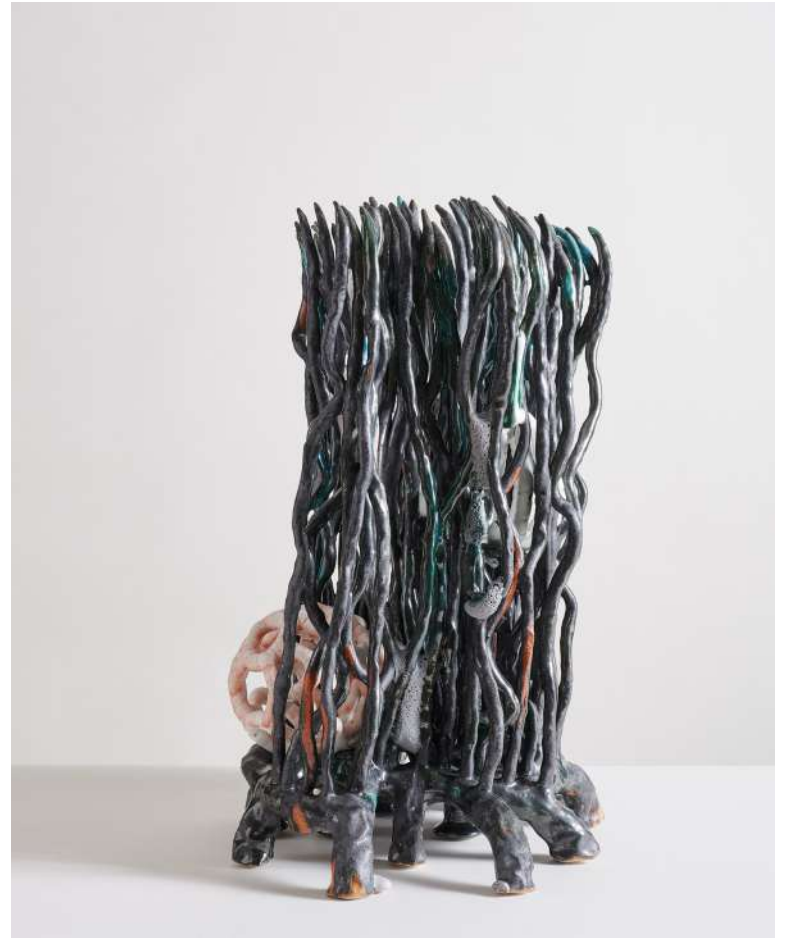
Bente: The inspiration is taken from nature and semi-scientific references are seized, from the smallest microscopic molecular structures to intangible weather phenomena - storms, clouds, waves, jellyfish. It is not a direct narrative description or figuration, but a use of themes, structures, or other natural references to emphasize the poetic or dramatic potential of clay and glaze.

For example. I was looking to construct a round spherical structure and came across (on the web) the C60 fullerene, which is a molecule consisting of 60 carbon atoms, arranged in the same shape as a football. The C60 is also called the world's most beautiful molecule. - Perhaps widespread in the universe in the interstellar dust that is found in large quantities in the space between the stars of the Milky Way!













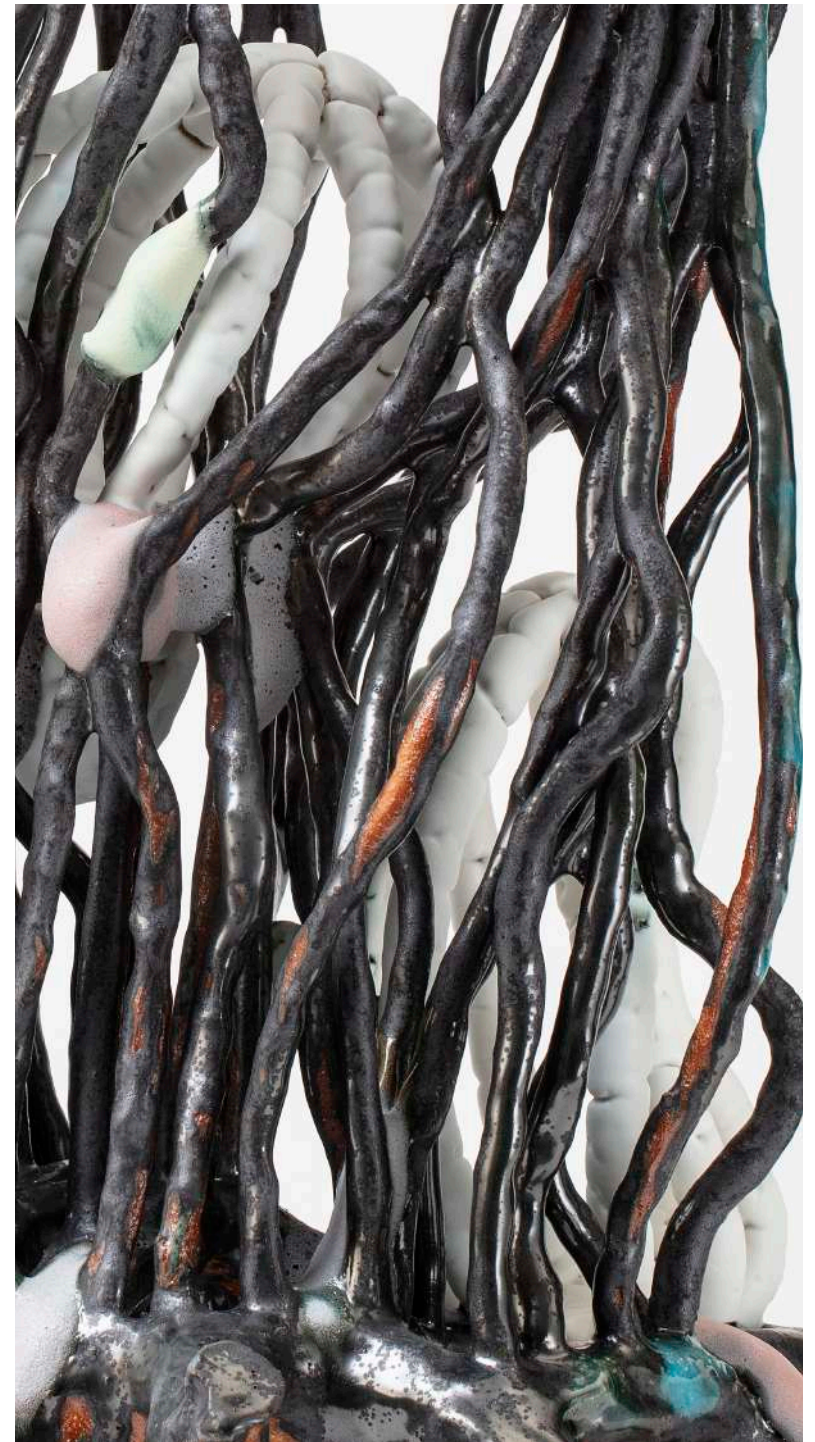
















“I was a creative child and got support from my mother who was a kindergarten teacher. I was born in the 60s, and here you were not so busy making a career, rather unfolding your musical talents. I went to various folk high schools and made ceramics and sewed clothes etc. before I applied to the School of Arts and Crafts in Kolding. I did not consider whether I wanted to be an artist but followed my desires and what I was good at. Since I graduated in 1986, I have worked continuously as a ceramist. - i.e. I have been dealing with clay continuously for almost 40 years!”

-Bente Skjottgaard

“My works flirt with the beautiful but dangerous nature— the duality. Beneath the seductive glazes lies the threat of chaos and possible collapse. I am painfully aware that I cannot save the world with ceramics, but my works are my language.

I use not only the glaze as a surface, but also as a self-forming material. Based on many years of experience, experimentation, and thousands of glaze samples, I work quite freely, but constantly challenge myself and my material to new limits of what is possible. In a way, everything I do is an experiment. If I am too much in control, I immediately start to get bored. It is a bit of a cliché, but it must be exciting to open the kiln every time. I want the works to seem to be made with a “light hand”, even though sometimes an insanely difficult engineering work precedes. The loss of control at the high temperatures, where everything becomes soft again in the kiln, gives the works natural movement and independent life.”

















# WALL SCULPTURES





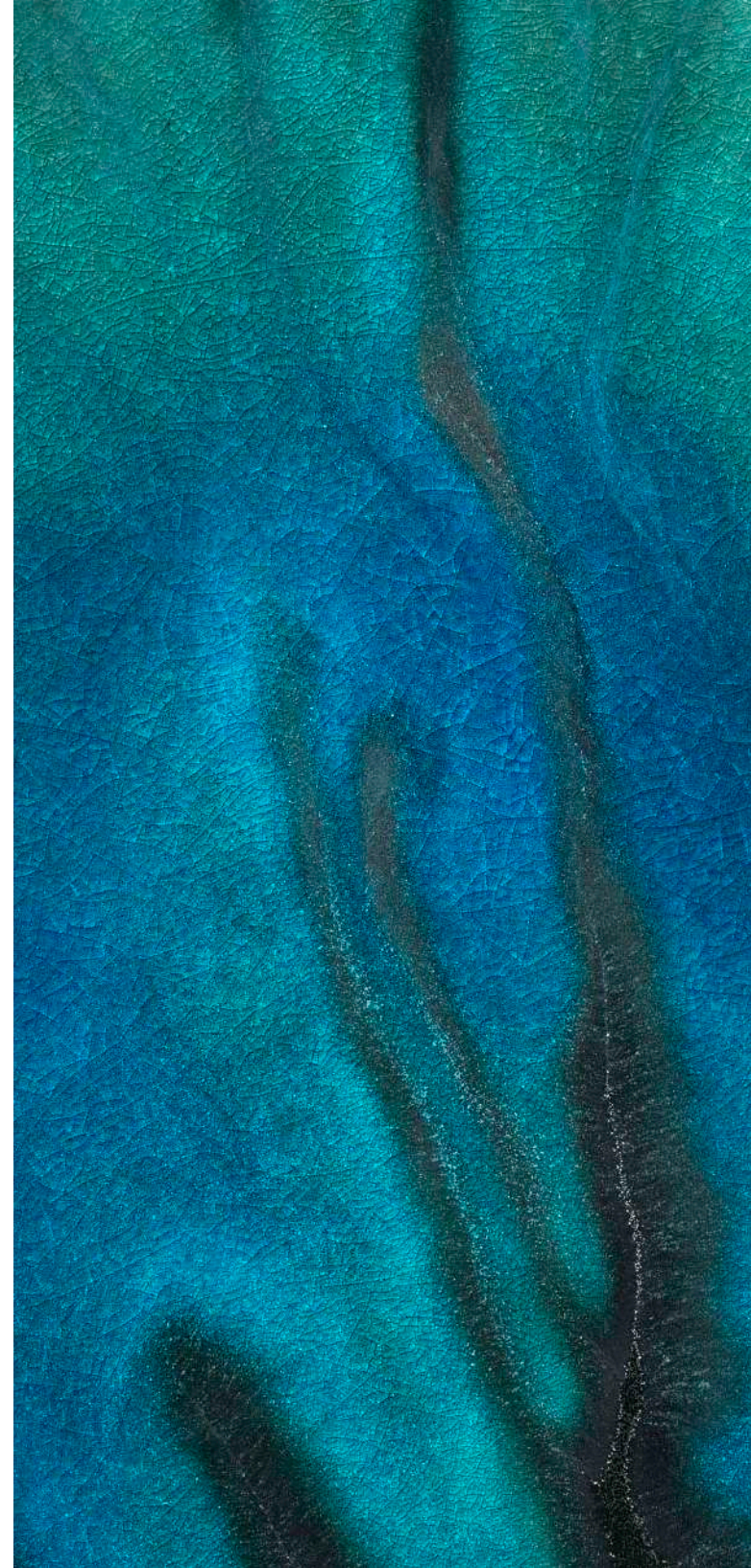








“In Jason Jacques’ highly scenographic black gallery, I want to create an exhibition that must be both poetic and dramatic. The experience must be like being on the bottom of the sea surrounded by strange organic plants and beings. Some of the sculptures glow in the dark.”









# LAMPS



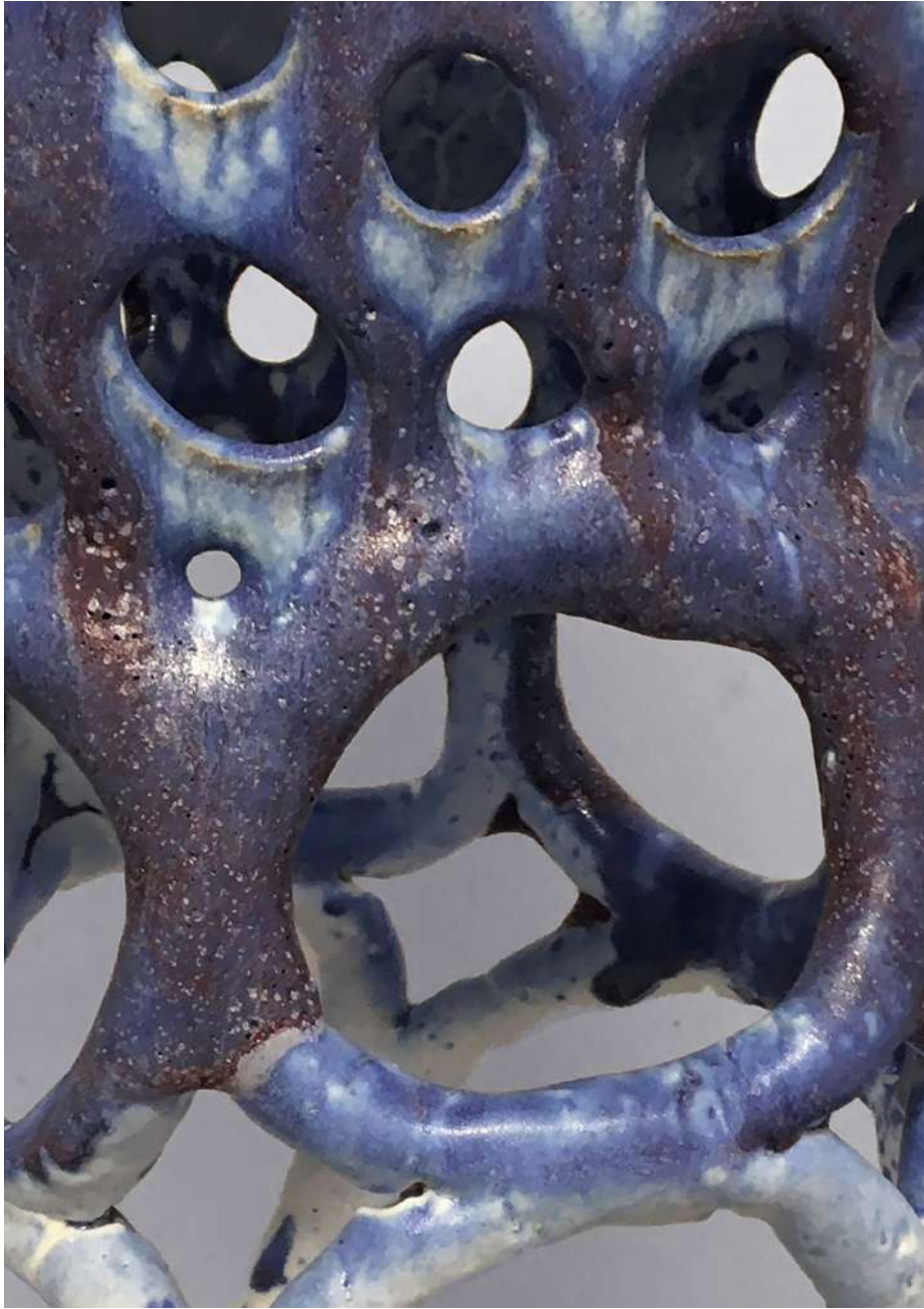


“The Bell lamps are not design objects but sculptures with light in them. I got the idea for the “lamps” together with Jason when we looked at my first Ernst Haeckel inspired sketches together. Or the little oval-shaped transparent comb jelly *Mnemiopsis leidyi*, that glows in the dark. At first, I was fascinated by its simple shape with the 8 ribs, which I saw the opportunity to convert to ceramic shape. But also its quiet weightlessness, and that it is an invasive species (like us) that displaces other species, gave substance and artistic nerve to my work.”













“In my search for the anatomy of the jellyfish, I could not help but encounter the German biologist and philosopher Ernst Haeckel’s overwhelmingly detailed species-determining hand drawings from the mid-18th century. Art and science in rare, beautiful union. I have dived into some of these oldest records of jellyfish and aquatic organisms, seductively mounted on posters that glorify and beautify the symmetry and harmony of nature in “The Art Form of Nature” (1899). The time has come again to focus on the diverse beauty and transience of species.”









Bente Skjøttgaard Lamps at the Jason Jacques Gallery 2020 FOG Booth



Jason Jacques Gallery 2020 TEFAF Maastricht Booth





"I call myself ceramist. In Danish, it covers working with clay. In the United States, one would probably say Ceramic Artist.

I work systematically and always on the premises of the ceramic material, but often balance on the border of the possible, and the studies develop into free interpretations and expressive amorphous nature abstractions, with lots of glaze."



Carbon60 #2016, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
20.08h x 7.48w x 7.09d in  
51h x 19w x 18d cm  
SKB014  
**\$7,200**



Blossom Blue #1945, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
12.60h x 9.06w x 6.69d in  
32h x 23w x 17d cm  
SKB027  
**\$4,500**



Habitat 3D #2057, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
25.20h x 19.69w x 15.75d in  
64h x 50w x 40d cm  
SKB030  
**\$22,800**



Carbon60 #2017, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
20.08h x 9.06w x 7.09d in  
51h x 23w x 18d cm  
SKB015  
**\$7,200**



Green Blossom #2042, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
27.95h x 19.29w x 10.63d in  
71h x 49w x 27d cm  
SKB028  
**\$13,700**



Habitat 3D #2058, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
26.77h x 19.69w x 15.75d in  
68h x 50w x 40d cm  
SKB032  
**\$22,800**



Carbon60 #2014, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
18.11h x 10.63w x 9.06d in  
46h x 27w x 23d cm  
SKB016  
**\$7,200**



Blossom Green #2002, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
22.83h x 12.99w x 9.45d in  
58h x 33w x 24d cm  
SKB026  
**\$8,400**



Flagella #2056, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
32.68h x 16.93w x 13.78d in  
83h x 43w x 35d cm  
SKB031  
**\$21,600**



Carbon60 #2053, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
17.72h x 9.84w x 9.84d in  
45h x 25w x 25d cm  
SKB017  
**\$7,200**



Flagella #2054, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
31.50h x 15.75w x 11.81d in  
80h x 40w x 30d cm  
SKB029  
**\$20,400**

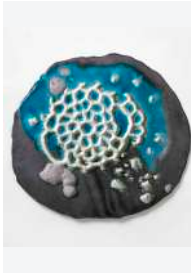


The Fossil #1930, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
27.95h x 18.50w x 19.69d in  
71h x 47w x 50d cm  
SKB008  
**\$21,600**





The Fossil #1926, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
25.59h x 16.93w x 16.93d in  
65h x 43w x 43d cm  
SKB009  
\$13,700



Habitat #2059, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
22.83h x 20.87w x 1.97d in  
58h x 53w x 5d cm  
SKB025  
\$9,400



The Wave #2021, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
26.38h x 20.47w x 2.36d in  
67h x 52w x 6d cm  
SKB012  
\$11,300



The Fossil #1929, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
28.35h x 17.72w x 17.32d in  
72h x 45w x 44d cm  
SKB010  
\$21,600



Habitat #1940, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
23.62h x 21.65w x 1.57d in  
60h x 55w x 4d cm  
SKB021  
\$9,400



The Wave #2027, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
23.23h x 18.50w x 2.36d in  
59h x 47w x 6d cm  
SKB013  
\$11,300



Habitat #2045, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
22.44h x 21.65w x 1.57d in  
57h x 55w x 4d cm  
SKB023  
\$9,400



Habitat #2022, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
22.05h x 20.08w x 1.57d in  
56h x 51w x 4d cm  
SKB022  
\$9,400



Purple Bell #2024, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
26.38h x 17.72w x 17.72d in  
67h x 45w x 45d cm  
SKB018  
\$21,600



Habitat #2046, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
22.44h x 19.69w x 1.57d in  
57h x 50w x 4d cm  
SKB024  
\$9,400



The Wave #2025, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
24.41h x 20.08w x 2.36d in  
62h x 51w x 6d cm  
SKB011  
\$11,300



Light blue Bell #2036, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
20.87h x 12.60w x 13.39d in  
53h x 32w x 34d cm  
SKB019  
\$11,300



Light blue Bell #2038, 2020  
Glazed Stoneware  
17.32h x 12.99w x 12.99d  
44h x 33w x 33d cm  
SKB020  
\$11,300



Indigo Lamp, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
18.90h x 8.27w x 7.87d in  
48h x 21w x 20d cm  
SKB007  
\$7,200



Orange Lamp, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
12.99h x 6.30w x 5.91d in  
33h x 16w x 15d cm  
SKB001  
\$4,100



Purple Lamp, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
11.42h x 6.69w x 6.30d in  
29h x 17w x 16d cm  
SKB002  
\$4,100



Pink Lamp, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
12.20h x 10.24w x 10.24d  
in  
31h x 26w x 26d cm  
SKB003  
\$5,800



Green Lamp, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
18.90h x 9.84w x 9.06d in  
48h x 25w x 23d cm  
SKB004  
\$7,200



Salmon Lamp, 2019  
Glazed Stoneware  
17.72h x 9.45w x 7.87d in  
45h x 24w x 20d cm  
SKB005  
\$7,200