

## Phosphene

Iren Tete

January 9 - February 13, 2021

Iren Tete presents a collection of recent ceramic sculptures for her introductory solo exhibition with Galleri Urbane. The artworks on view in *Phosphene* build upon established conceptual interests, such as the liminal space between stability and fragility, while also advancing a fascination with the potential found in spaces where logic leaves gaps. Tete invites viewers to reflect on these circumstances through a poetic implementation of color, form, surface and space.

In science, phosphenes are luminous shapes that appear as a result of the physical stimulation of one's eyeball when the eyelid is shut. The logic of seeing, as defined by the presence of light, is dismissed in the mind's processing of these squiggles and zig-zags. It is this kind of "logical tangle" that drives Tete and the ceramics on view, in search of moments where logic might be approached from a less binding perspective. The repeated lattice form found throughout the work, for instance, references the modular, concrete boxes found in the Brutalist architecture of Tete's native Bulgaria. Intended as fences, the structures can also be reimagined as trellises, ladders or windows, liberated from a definitive purpose. The bright yellow lattice in *Ode to Barragán* (2020) offers a direct nod to the Mexican architect's notable understanding of this phenomenon, using the stacked form as both barrier and breezeway. For Tete, the absence of one thing translates to a potential for another thing to exist - both physically and poetically.

*Phosphene Memory* (2020) illustrates another case for acknowledging the promise proposed by ephemerality. The multi-object piece features a ceramic form largely enveloped by silver leaf as well as a wall-mounted panel covered in the same reflective material. The surface invites time and light to become an active component of the piece as it shifts viewer's experience of it at different times of day. It also creates a foggy mirror in which the reflections of the viewer and the piece itself become incorporated. Ever-shifting, the piece encapsulates what Tete has set out to explore through her sculptures.

With many works ambitious in scale and incorporating a variety of materials including gold leaf, sand, and a constellation glaze, *Phosphene* is rich in alluring tactility. The sculptures beckon for an awareness of the senses and ultimately invite viewers to contemplate the magic that exists somewhere between reality, dream, and possibility.

- -

**Iren Tete** (b.1990) is an artist originally from Sofia, Bulgaria who is currently based in Gainesville, FL. She holds an MFA in Studio Art from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Lincoln, NE) and a BS in Kinesiology and Health Sciences from the College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, VA). Her work has been shown nationally and internationally, as well as published by *Friend of the Artist* and *Create! Magazine*. In 2020, she was selected as an Emerging Artist by *Ceramics Monthly Magazine* and as a finalist for the Hopper Prize. Tete will assume the role of Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Florida in 2021 and was recently a Visiting Faculty in Ceramics at the Alberta University of the Arts in Alberta, Canada. Her work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including shows in Nebraska, Texas, New York and Canada. She has recently exhibited with Galleri Urbane at the Dallas Art Fair and UNTITLED, Art Miami Beach.