

RICHARD SLEE

'Perfect Pie by Richard Slee at Hales Gallery, New York', Blouin Artinfo,
8 February 2019



Richard Slee, *Hammers*, 2010 - ongoing, Photo by Stan Narten

Hales Gallery New York presents Richard Slee: *Perfect Pie*, the third solo exhibition of renowned British ceramic artist Richard Slee with the gallery. This exhibition showcases a selection of the artist's work spanning two decades.

Talking about the artist and his practice, the gallery states, "Merging humor and irony with profound technical ability, Slee challenges the conventions of the studio pottery tradition, transcending its utilitarian roots and paving the way for a new genre of ceramic art."

As described by the gallery, "*Perfect Pie*" presents an overview of nearly two decades of the artist's career (the exhibition's centerpiece "*Hammers*" remains ongoing). The selection highlights themes that recur across Slee's substantial oeuvre: the great outdoors and the domestic interior (or "the great indoors," as he prefers to call it). Slee integrates fabricated references to the decorative, the ornamental, and the symbolic—both from past histories and within contemporary culture. These eclectic sources reposition and reframe everyday objects in novel contexts.

Describing Slee's works in further details, the gallery adds, "In works like *Hammers* (2010 – ongoing) and *Anvil* (1986/2003/2018), tools lose their intended purpose, instead parading an ironic fragility. Slee continuously toys with the

hierarchy culturally embedded in materials—for example, the lavishness of porcelain versus the utilitarianism of brick clay—as he subverts the idea that one material should be valued over another. By casting hammers in glistening glaze, Slee is, in his own words, "making a tool useless by making it precious."

Richard Slee was born in 1946 in Cumbria, UK. He studied ceramics at the Central School of Art & Design, London and was awarded MA from the Royal College of Art, London. Slee lives and works in London. His oeuvre has been showcased in solo exhibitions including at Studio Voltaire (UK); Hales Gallery (UK); Garth Clark Gallery, New York; Victoria & Albert Museum; and the recent U.K. touring exhibition, "*Work and Play*"(2014).

"Often tinged with irony, these juxtapositions of material and form reveal Slee's interest in our phenomenological understanding of common objects. Interpretation of the works hinges on the gap between taking the object at face value and the implied meaning that kicks in as Slee's intriguing formal and visual choices come into focus", says the gallery.