

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Judd Schiffman

Ask the Dust

May 16 — June 27, 2026

Opening Reception: Saturday, May 16, 6–8 pm

Free and open to the public | Artist in attendance

David B. Smith Gallery is proud to present *Ask The Dust*, a solo exhibition by Providence, RI-based artist Judd Schiffman. Featuring a series of Schiffman’s “outlines”—his distinctive wall-mounted ceramic sculpture with ceramic borders enclosing rich low-relief imagery—*Ask The Dust* populates the Main Gallery with ruminations on the nature of the self.

In *Ask the Dust*, Schiffman blends fantastical imagery inspired by literature and geography with that of nature. The exhibition borrows its title from a 1939 novel of the same name by Colorado-based author John Fante (1909–1983), which describes a young male protagonist struggling with his masculinity and delusions of grandeur, avoiding his underlying cowardice. By referencing this novel, Schiffman considers his own relationship to spiritual practice and his personal journey of self-discovery, aging, and acceptance. Connection to nature, a throughline in the exhibition, traces its origin to a decade of Schiffman’s life spent in the Southwest. Now exhibiting in Denver, Colorado, back in a biome that holds special meaning, the significance of place moves to the forefront.

A distinct approach to material and method are among the standout elements of Schiffman’s work. Truly unique in form, Schiffman’s ornately glazed stoneware wall tile arrangements are heavily informed by his drawing practice. Through layers of colored glaze, low-relief ceramic tiles depict figures, flora and fauna, and objects, carrying narratives that speak to the artist’s lived experience and ongoing inquiries. Disarmingly loose in his renderings yet intricately designed and executed, works possess a stylized, illustrative quality met with a mastery of ceramic craftsmanship.

Throughout *Ask the Dust*, complex concepts are communicated through unassuming imagery, often with a nod to the domestic. *Sun in My Heart* depicts a vase brimming with colorful flowers in full bloom and teeming with critters, including a happy snail and a mini Mothman (a stand-in for the artist). Between vibrant, rippled petals and glinting gold accents, life is captured at its peak; decay is imminent and, indeed, implied by its apex. For Schiffman, this work references the complexities of masculinity and the heart of the self as evolving and necessitating care.

The primary inspiration for Schiffman’s unconventional ceramic compositions stems from life, including his experiences with fatherhood, spiritual practice, relationship to nature, and a deep intimacy with the people in his life. Acutely personal and rife with big questions, Schiffman’s own narrative becomes a space for viewer and artist to exchange, resulting in simultaneously bold and heartfelt works. The personal reverberates outward, as Schiffman’s artistic conversations join into a larger cultural narrative focusing on healing our inner worlds as a means to individual and societal growth. Through his sculpture, Schiffman has developed both a visual language and material landscape to explore, connect, and seek. In Judd Schiffman’s *Ask the Dust*, the personal is teased out in dreamlike sequences, fluid in content and solidly grounded in materiality.



Judd Schiffman, *Timeshel, Thou Mayest*, 2026, stoneware, glaze, and gold luster, 30 x 28 x 3 in. (76.2 x 71.1 x 7.6 cm)

Judd Schiffman

Judd Schiffman (b. 1982) is a Providence, RI-based artist working primarily in ceramics. Schiffman received his MFA in Ceramics from CU Boulder, Post-Baccalaureate in Ceramics from UMass Dartmouth, and BA from Prescott College in Holistic Health. Schiffman's work has been exhibited throughout the United States, most recently at Headstone Gallery (Kingston, NY) and Emerson Dorsch Gallery (Miami, FL).

He has lectured at Harvard University Ceramics, Brown University, SUNY New Paltz, and UMass Dartmouth, and participated in residencies at the Zentrum Fur Keramik in Berlin, Millay Arts in New York, and Arch Contemporary in Tiverton, RI. In 2016, he received an emerging artists award from the National Council for the Education of Ceramic Arts, and in 2025, he received the Hopper Prize. Schiffman is currently Assistant Professor of Ceramics at Providence College.

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.

David B. Smith Gallery is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA).

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