

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Mathew McConnell

Farmer, Not a Gardener

October 24 — December 19, 2026

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 24, 6–8 pm

Free and open to the public | Artist in attendance

David B. Smith Gallery is thrilled to present *Farmer, Not a Gardener*, a solo exhibition by Fayetteville, Arkansas-based artist Mathew McConnell. Made entirely from unglazed earthenware raku fired for a rich, metallic black surface, McConnell's clutch of abstract sculptures take visual cues from contemporary art publications, borrowing lines and compositions from the work of other artists to create wholly original forms.

Toppling down, looping over, or curiously propped up, McConnell's sculptures capture gestural motion. Starting with sketches taken from the pages of art publications, the seeds of McConnell's sculptural works begin in the studios of other artists. Each ceramic sculpture starts as a drawing, similar to a tracing, that isolates the lines and textures of photographs of other artworks in magazines. Cropping into details of images, for years McConnell has created his work this way, cataloguing visual attributes of art created in this moment—harvesting visual content.



Mathew McConnell, *Upright Hoop with Scattered Pegs*, 2026
Carbonized earthenware, 13 x 13 x 11 in. (33 x 33 x 28 cm)

For nearly two decades, McConnell's process has begun by taking cues from other artists' works, which he "remakes" under a set of constraints that shift with each body of work. His approach is a means of understanding the present moment in art, focused through the measured, physical act of object-making. Far from facsimile, his sculptures manifest the tendencies in his own distinctive hand and psyche that cannot be suppressed, regardless of how much material he borrows. The source material may be broad and interdisciplinary; the details matter less than the conditions McConnell sets for himself in order to remake it; what matters is that the source is contemporary, still "open," and therefore not yet consigned to or classified within art history.

McConnell's process is a translation of lines, shapes, and forms—a practice that utterly transforms images sourced from two-dimensional magazine pages into wholly individual freestanding ceramic sculptures. Distinguishing between the minutiae of the original work and his own parameters and conditions, the pieces result in sculptural forms that the artist considers to be nonprecious; they're essentially the evidence of following through on predetermined constraints.

Unique in his method of sampling two-dimensional lines to create three-dimensional sculptures, the specificity of McConnell's process enables freedom in the creation of sculptures—the imagery he selects is secondary to the creative endeavor as a whole. Similar to a farmer who systematically tends fields row by row, focused on overall yield versus one individual specimen, the artist moves through his studio guided by process itself. In *Farmer, Not a Gardener*, McConnell abstracts authorship, cultivating a signature yield of black, abstract sculptures.

About Mathew McConnell

Mathew McConnell (b. 1979, Johnstown, Pennsylvania) holds an MFA from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and a BFA from Valdosta State University in Georgia. He has presented numerous solo exhibitions, including at Mindy Solomon Gallery (Miami) and the Jane Hartsook Gallery at Greenwich House Pottery (New York). His works have been included in more than 80 group exhibitions nationally and internationally. McConnell has also lectured widely, and has been the subject of feature-length articles in *Ceramics Art and Perception*, *Ceramics Monthly*, and *New Ceramics*. He received an Emerging Artist Award from the National Council on Education in Ceramic Art and has been an artist-in-residence at the Archie Bray Foundation, Greenwich House Pottery, Anderson Ranch Arts Center, CRETA Rome, Belger Arts, and the Kohler Arts/Industry Program. He currently serves as an Associate Professor of Ceramics at the University of Arkansas.

About David B. Smith Gallery

Since 2007, David B. Smith Gallery has been 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).