

**G16**

**JIM MELCHERT**  
RETHINK, REVISIT,  
REASSESS, REENTER

**SEPTEMBER 10-OCTOBER 31, 2021**  
**OPENING RECEPTION Friday September 10, 5–8PM**

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*I like words that start with re: rethink, revisit, reassess, reenter. I think that's how our minds work—we keep circling the same issues, but with increasing clarity and depth. -Jim Melchert*



Gallery 16 is honored to announce an upcoming exhibition with Jim Melchert. Over his fifty year career Melchert has cast a remarkably long shadow of grace and influence in the Bay Area art community. This exhibition will be a survey of sorts, not an all encompassing view of his 50 year career, but rather a selection of works that span from the 1970's to present day. Jim Melchert's work "can be described, at once accurately and poetically, as a transcendent exploration of mending. Using commercially-manufactured floor tile as his primary material, Melchert engages in deliberate breakage and consequent, system-based repair and elaboration." *Maria Porges*

A powerful concept that has guided Melchert's explorations over the past three decades is reminiscent of the Japanese tradition of Kintsugi, a process of mending something broken. The concept of mending can also be seen as a political action against the increasing pressure of our consumerist society. In his work we see a Zen-like interaction, an acceptance of change as aspects of human life. "When clay is broken, the gift it gives you is discovering the interior structure. It's like someone who has just made a first move in chess—it's a challenge... you move, then the other person makes a move. Whatever I do, the tile comes back with a response." *Jim Melchert*

Melchert was born in 1930 in Ohio, and he received degrees from Princeton and the University of California, Berkeley, studying ceramics under Peter Voulkos as his teaching assistant. He taught at SFAI and is a Professor Emeritus at U.C. Berkeley. In 1977, he was hired by the National Endowment for the Arts as Director of the Visual Arts Program. In 1984, Melchert became the Director of the American Academy in Rome. "The arc of an artist's career is usually described in such a way that the more mundane parts, such as employment (since most artists today do have other work besides their studio practice) remain magically invisible. In Melchert's case, these other activities are inextricably interwoven with the objects and ideas he has produced over the past five decades. His commitment to a larger community through leadership and teaching never altered his intense interest in making art." *Maria Porges*



"Carthage" 2007, broken and glazed porcelain tile mounted to plywood, 18 x 36" (2 panels)

Melchert's work has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum and the Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Museums of Contemporary Art in Houston, and Los Angeles; at the Museums of Modern Art in San Francisco, Tokyo, and Kyoto; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and Documenta 5 in Kassel, Germany.