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## Gallery review: Jun Kaneko's ceramic shapes as canvases

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For The Inquirer

The intensely brilliant glazes on Jun Kaneko's recent ceramic dango (rounded form) sculptures bring them more into the realm of painting than ever before.

Kaneko was certainly headed in that direction in 2008, when he had his first exhibition of dangos on Locks Gallery's roof — and when the Opera Company of Philadelphia staged its production of *Fidelio* featuring his set designs and costumes — but his palette was often black and white and his imagery vacillated between all-over zigzag and dot patterns and arrangements of monochrome blocks. Those works were emphatically monumental, too, like enormous sentinels, as were the ones shown in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Perelman Building between 2009 and 2010.

By contrast, Kaneko's latest dangos, which are arranged in the first-floor gallery at Locks like so many guests at a opening, suggest he's been looking at abstract expressionist paintings, and possibly even at the works of other artists affiliated with Locks. Kaneko's long drips and occasional splashes call Pat Steir's waterfall paintings to mind immediately, for example, and his grid patterns have more than a little in common with Jennifer Bartlett's.

In addition to his new ceramic works, Kaneko is showing modestly scaled paintings in the same gallery that echo the dangos' glazes (and reinforce the connection of the dangos to painting, although the dangos need no such help) and, on the roof, two enormous cast-bronze sculptures of human heads — one patinaed in large squares of indigo blue and white, the other in black and white — mounted on identical steel tables. They're as inscrutable and self-contained as his dangos, and they also hint at the possibility that the dangos are stand-ins for humans.



An untitled ceramic sculpture (2012) from Jun Kaneko's exhibition at Locks Gallery.

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