

NINE WEST COAST CLAY SCULPTORS: 1978



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Everson Museum of Art
401 Harrison Street
Syracuse, New York 13202

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Cover

ROBERT ARNESON

"Mountain" photo taken while in progress.

1975

Monument in clay

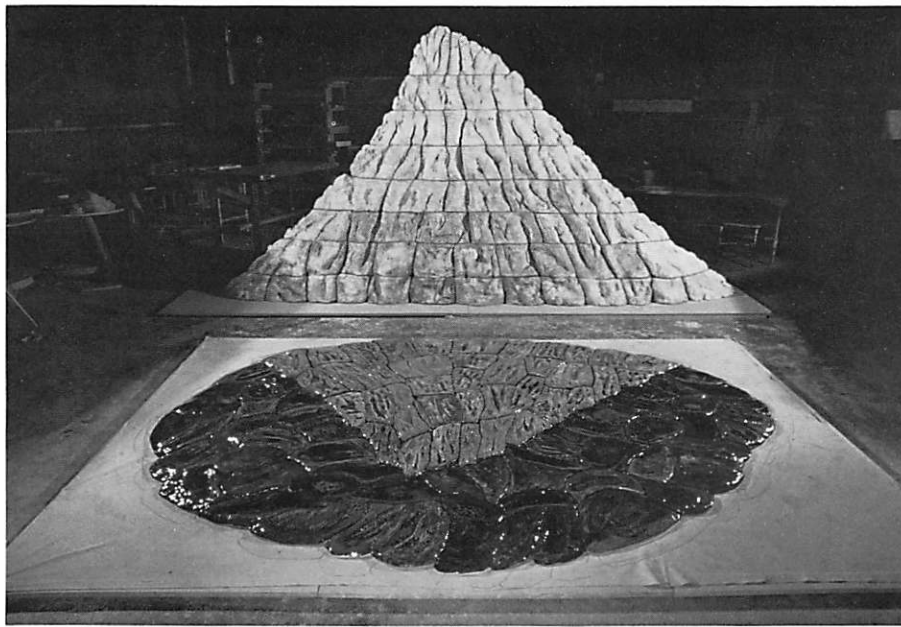
Mountain: 8' x 15' x 3'

NINE WEST COAST CLAY SCULPTORS: 1978

**organized by
EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART
of Syracuse and Onondaga County**

**Everson Museum of Art
Syracuse, New York, September 29-December 3, 1978**

**The Arts and Crafts Center of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, February 24-March 18, 1979**



ROBERT ARNESON

"Mountain and Lake"

1975

Monument in Clay

Mountain: 8' x 15' x 3'

Lake: 7' x 7'

Courtesy Hansen Fuller Gallery

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NINE WEST COAST CLAY SCULPTORS: 1978

ROBERT ARNESON

KAREN BRESCHI

STEPHEN DE STAEBLER

DAVID GILHOOLY

MARILYN LEVINE

DAVID MIDDLEBROOK

KENNETH PRICE

RICHARD SHAW

PETER VOULKOS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since his arrival in Syracuse in 1974, our director, Ronald Kuchta, has been interested in presenting an exhibition of ceramics from the West Coast. Mr. Kuchta had been Curator at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in California for seven years, and was familiar with the ceramics of the California artists and recognized the importance of their work. Because of Everson's commitment and involvement with American clay, Mr. Kuchta felt it was necessary that the West Coast ceramics be shown here. It has been an exciting and rewarding experience organizing this exhibition, and I want to thank Mr. Kuchta for his enthusiasm, encouragement and support.

When we at Everson began the actual organizing of this exhibition eighteen months ago, I invited Judy S. Schwartz to be Consultant to the exhibition and author of the text for the catalog. I met Judy Schwartz a few years ago and knew her as a writer and critic in contemporary ceramics, and as someone who had lectured extensively on the subject in schools and museums across the country. She had written several essays for the catalogs of individual artists as well as magazine articles. Most importantly, she had visited the studios of and interviewed several of the artists in the exhibition and was extremely familiar with their work. I was pleased when she accepted the invitation and felt that her involvement would add insight and dimension to the exhibition.

Judy Schwartz teaches Ceramic Sculpture at New York University and is the Art Advisor in the School's Gallatin Division. She was trained in ceramics at The Ohio State University and holds degrees from Queens College and New York University and is presently completing a doctorate at N.Y.U.

I am grateful to Judy for all her advice and help in selecting the artists and works included in the show, as well as her contribution to the catalog.

Sarah E. Henrich, Graduate Intern at Everson, from the Museology program at Syracuse University was an invaluable

assistant. She worked with me on all the correspondence, and assisted in the catalog preparation and installation design.

The installation presented a challenge because the diversity of the pieces made the design and installation crucial to enhancing and preserving the inherent sensitivities of the pieces. We are grateful to Anthony Murrell for his creative and imaginative approach in designing and installing these varied works of art. I am also grateful to Marina Lary, Registrar, for making the arrangements in the loaning, packing and shipping of the works.

I wish to express a special thank you to Diane S. Hainsworth for editing the catalog.

I extend my gratitude to the artists Judy and I visited for meeting with us and allowing us to see their studios and work. The artists were helpful in every way in fulfilling our requests for photographs, personal information and statements, as well as arranging for their work to be included in the show. Since Judy and I did not have the opportunity to visit Kenneth Price in Taos, New Mexico, we worked closely with his agent, James Corcoran, and used the excellent catalog, "KEN PRICE, HAPPY'S CURIOS" by Maurice Tuchman, Senior Curator of Modern Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, for reference and information.

Throughout the planning of this exhibition we have had the fullest co-operation from the lending galleries. The dealers Rena Bransten, Ruth Braunstein, Ivan Carp, James Corcoran, Helen Drutt, Allan Frumkin, Diana Fuller and James Willis supplied advice, slides, photographs, information and most of the pieces. We wish to express our deepest and warmest appreciation for their efforts in making this exhibition a success.

Finally, we wish to thank THE SYRACUSE SOCIETY of Cultural Progress, Inc. and R. E. DIETZ CO., INC. for their generous contributions and sponsorship of this exhibition.

Margie Hughto
Adjunct Curator of Ceramics

FOREWORD

1972 marked the last of Everson's series of competitive, juried, national shows known as the Ceramic National Exhibitions. From 1932-1972 these were important shows because they were often the only major ceramic shows offered in the United States. They were exhibitions in which new talent was discovered and old talent was reaffirmed. Each exhibition manifested the techniques, standards and involvements prevalent at a given time.

As in all things, time brings change. In 1972, after a forty year existence, the Ceramic National Exhibition had become too vast. In the earlier years there were only a few hundred artists working in clay. By the seventies there were thousands of ceramic artists of varying talent and involvements making thousands of ceramic pieces. With these numbers the logistics and financing of a juried national show became impossible.

In 1974 the Director and staff of Everson decided to change the format of future ceramic exhibitions and, instead, to organize shows with a particular focus. These would be shows of historical nature, innovative exhibitions, one-person or small group shows, but, specifically shows that would present special insight and recognition to ceramic artists and their work. "NINE WEST COAST CLAY SCULPTORS: 1978" is an exhibition which has evolved from this approach.

Some of the most innovative, unique and brilliant American art in the last twenty years has originated from West Coast artists working in the ceramic medium. The focus of this exhibition is to present a selection of the best ceramic sculpture done in the past five years by West Coast artists. Some of the works included are large scale and several are significant major works of art. The artists in this show are well-recognized. Some are the originators of this kind of work, while others are newer to this art scene. Their recent work is shown and sold on a similar scale to that of painters and sculptors. Major museums in the United States and Europe have begun seriously buying and acquiring these works for their collections.

West Coast ceramic sculpture had its beginnings in the mid-fifties. The label "Abstract Expressionist Clay" was later

attached to this work followed in the sixties by work labeled "Funk." The adjectives often used in describing the work were: ugly, utterly useless, senseless, bizarre, sensual, erotic, offensive, primitive, fun, humorous, and unbelievable. These are adjectives often applied to the new and unfamiliar. Think of the early acceptance of the Impressionists, the Fauves, or the work of David Smith and Jackson Pollock. Ceramics in the fifties were vessel-oriented, stoneware, earthy and arty. These particular California artists utilized materials and techniques which were not then considered appropriate to the art and craft of studio pottery. They made use of low-fired bright colored glazes and metallic lusters, decals and lettering, which in ceramic art circles at that time brought to mind dime-store and souvenir items.

In 1978 we experience various kinds of art in the medium of clay and bright colors, low-fired glazes and clay bodies, decals etc. are no longer viewed with disdain. As the work of the West Coast clay sculptors continued to develop and find acceptance we now look at this recent, mature work and might still use the adjectives unbelievable, humorous, fun, exciting, but we would also use the words strength, power, and even elegance.

Why was it that this new art should originate in California? Richard Marshall, who organized an exhibition in 1974 entitled "CLAY," which was presented at the Whitney Museum's Downtown Branch In New York wrote in the catalog of the show: *"The climate in California was particularly conducive for the clay revolution. The Far East has had a strong influence upon ceramic art of the West Coast, and educational programs were geared toward a continuation of that long-standing craft tradition. In addition, California artists were physically and psychically removed from the New York-centered art world and its preoccupation with painting and sculpture as fine art. A less formal life-style encouraged a new kind of personal and artistic freedom to flourish. There existed a willingness in a younger group of artist-educators, who were filling new positions in the expanding California colleges and universities, to explore differing approaches in clay, and to support experimental work of the students."*

Richard Marshall at the time was a Helena Rubinstein Fellow in the Whitney Museum's Independent Studies Program. "CLAY" brought together 83 works by 28 mostly - but not all - West Coast artists that included West Coast ceramic art from 1960-1974. Peter Schjeldahl wrote about the show in the *New York Times* newspaper: *"It would hardly be conceivable as a show featuring a lot of East Coast artists. 'Craft' has long been a kind of dirty word in the New York art milieu, and mention of ceramics in an art context, for a New Yorker, is likely to evoke visions of craftiness and Kitsch."*

"Such connotations obviously hold no terrors for artists at work in the West. Many of them, in fact, seem to delight more in blurring the distinctions between art and craft - or between art and playful improvisation - than in striving for a recognizable 'fine-art' look."

He goes on to note that *"it couldn't have happened in New York, where the achievement of a high style, in whatever medium, is the ruling artistic imperative."* The blurring of the distinction between art and craft is a very important concept to come out of the West Coast ceramic movement. What this work did was to ignore the traditional principles of ceramics in terms of form, content and craftsmanship and give new thought to clay, and in doing so, redefined the medium itself. By transforming ceramics into a sculptor's medium, and extending the role of painting on clay, "Abstract Expressionist" and "Funk" ceramics destroyed the standard distinction between art and craft.

West Coast ceramic sculpture has seldom been shown at Everson, and in fact, not much has been shown on the Eastern Coast. This factor entered into our decision to mount this exhibition. It is work that has been slow in achieving the recognition it deserves, yet its impact in influencing direction and as a pace-setter in new directions is patently clear. It is felt that a significant exhibition here at this time might add to the knowledge, understanding and recognition of West Coast ceramic sculpture.

Margie Hughto

INTRODUCTION

To appreciate the work in this show one must draw upon historical precedent — specifically the traditional role of the ceramic artist in a society. Ceramics, apart from its obvious utilitarian role, traditionally implied a way of doing things, a Zen-like repetitiveness within which diversity was to be found.

Imagine then, if you will, the outrage in the mid-fifties when Peter Voulkos transgressed these traditional constraints by slashing and tearing at clay forms in an attempt to break new ground in artistic expression. In 1961, Rose Slivka attempted to assuage this outrage by publishing an article in *Craft Horizons* entitled "The New Ceramic Presence." In it she gave credence to the work of Peter Voulkos and his students by demonstrating that these individuals were using clay to become "*responsive and susceptible to the startling achievements of contemporary American Painting and Sculpture*".¹

These artists did indeed free themselves from the traditional modes of ceramic expression. They searched for new dimensions in clay - to express new ideas, new forms and new images.

They were not constrained by traditional attitudes regarding clay. For example, they might use paint instead of glaze or use glue to assemble large pieces, but most of all they were not constrained by the need for the work to be utilitarian. The possibility for diversity of expression suddenly became endless.

Looking back at that time, those early artists as well as those presented in this show may be recognized as being at the beginning of a distinctly American ceramic sculpture movement. This movement started with Voulkos in Los Angeles and moved up the coast to the San Francisco Bay area where it took on an added dimension with Robert Arneson and his students. Now it has spread nationwide. Just as Voulkos and Arneson responded to the ideas in Abstract Expressionism, Funk and Pop Art, the artists in this show have responded to other art ideas. Ideas such as surrealism, illusionism, trompe l'oeil, super-realism, minimalism, and conceptualism.

West Coast Ceramic Sculpture makes many statements. These

statements can be highly personal, autobiographical, political, or social, but they can all be characterized as involving incredible versatility, ingenuity, wit, satire, humor, skill, and most of all, diversity. It is within this spirit of individualism and uniqueness that the nine artists in this show have made their contribution.

Voulkos and De Staebler respond to the very nature of clay, with its inherent qualities and limitations, in the most direct way. They focus their attention upon the effects of shrinking, gravity, erosion and heat. They work with clay's essences of plasticity, wetness, dryness, warping, cracking, and slumping.

Arneson, Gilhooly and Breschi, each in their own way, use their quick wit, satirical commentary and wry humor to comment upon themselves and their environment.

Price is sensitive to the essentials of traditional folk pottery and is able to extrapolate those cues which precisely characterize it. He therefore not only heightens our perception of the work, but also of the culture which produced that work.

Levine's work, on the other hand, heightens our perceptions of the life experiences of an individual member of a culture; it is far more personal and far less abstract than the objects of Price's concern.

Middlebrook and Shaw make unusual, illusive environments of contradictory objects creating personal statements which literally force the viewer into new percepts. The idea is to manipulate the viewer into new ways of seeing by juxtaposing improbable physical events.

These nine artists can be viewed as pivotal in helping to establish the contemporary American ceramic sculpture movement. Starting on the West Coast and now a nationwide phenomenon, the movement is experiencing explosive growth. Its diversity has reached proportions which now are beginning to bear testimonial to the infinite variation sustainable within the sphere of artistic endeavor.

Judy S. Schwartz

ROBERT ARNESON

Robert Arneson was born and works in Benicia, California. His influence has permeated every ceramic art department in the country. Like Voulkos, he has taken clay beyond its traditional boundaries. Labeled the "Doyen"² of the West Coast ceramic movement, his demonstration of technical mastery and skill over clay is equal to his representation of important ideas.

It is not enough to be merely concerned with glaze or clay technology, firing ranges and all the countless technological details which makes clay so compelling. For Arneson, the message, the idea, the content of the piece, is paramount. His popularity no doubt rests, at least on one level, with the fact that he consistently demonstrates a wry and delightful sense of humor. Common everyday situations, or most commonly, himself, are presented with visual and verbal punning in such a way that they may be expanded, exposed or exaggerated. Usually intellectual interplays are created between the object and the title, enabling new insights and understanding about the event or the artist himself.

Arneson's ability to handle and manipulate clay adds to his great appeal. Getting intimately involved with the material, he can make it look like all sorts of things, yet still remain clay-like. He doesn't disguise the material - but allows it to express the maximum it can. Whether he depicts a dirty plate filled with leftover food, a mountain of rocks, a shimmering pool of water, old decayed bricks, or the flesh on a self portrait, the surface still remains inherently clay. *"If the clay no longer resembles clay, and it gets pushed into something else,"* he says, *"it probably should have been made in that other material. The material is the most important thing, and it cannot be pushed beyond the idea. The problem with most students today is that the work that they are making should have been made in something else."*³

Arneson's respect for clay's limitations and peculiarities seems to be a reflection of Arneson's personality in general, as he does not personally express himself as anything other than what he is. He can be shy, gruff, mocking or humorous. There is no veneer and no smooth covering. Arneson's work is about being honest - honest about his material, honest about himself, his environment, and his life. His art must take a stand; it cannot be merely decorative.

The pun is basically used as a tool to guide us into a deeper examination of rather wide range of human emotions.

His concerns are serious; they deal with emotion ranging from unabashed laughter to profoundest dismay - from mockery to the highest approbation. They are expressions, or attempts at expressions, or universal truths and thus, when they succeed, become truly transcendent art.

ROBERT ARNESON

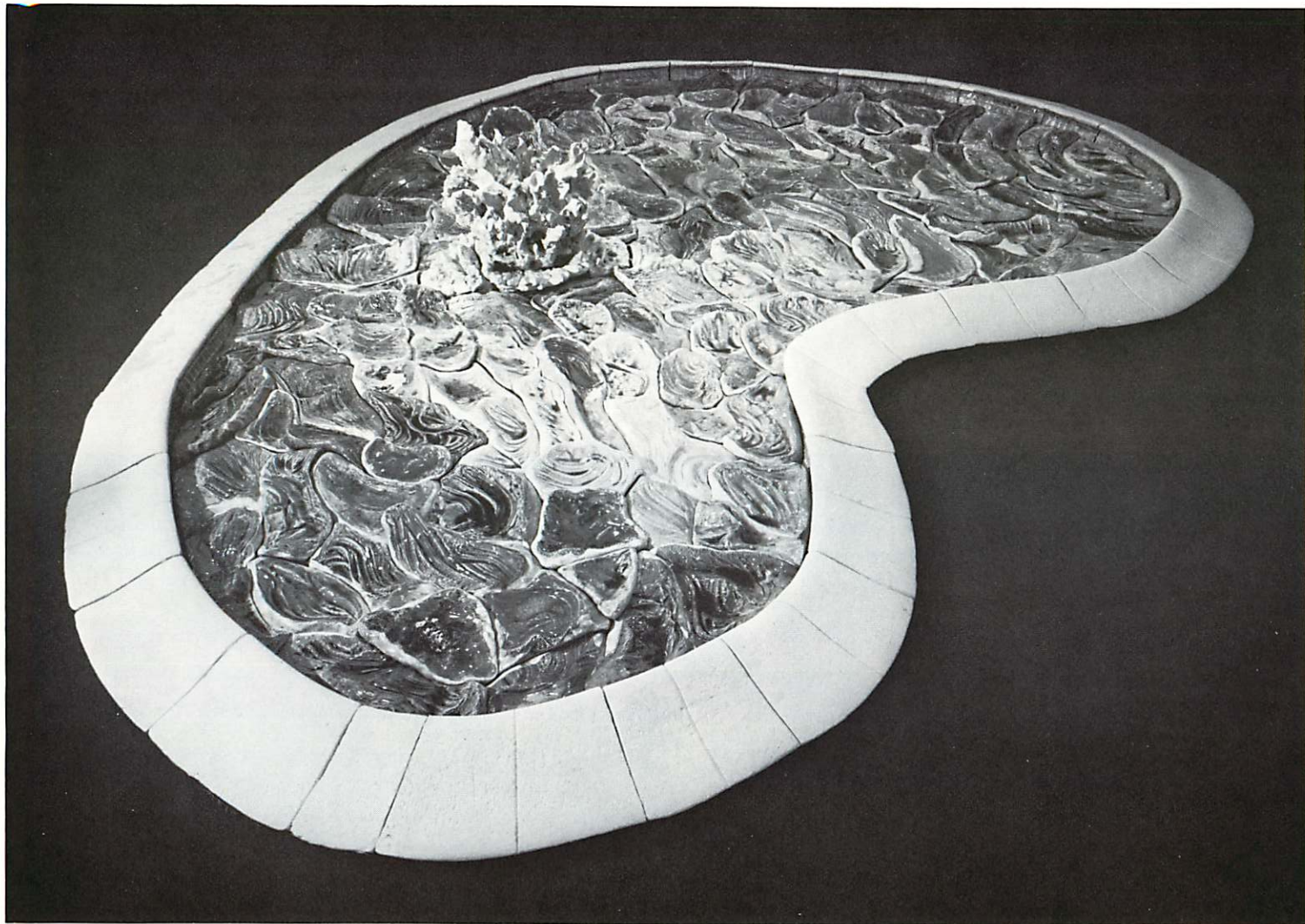
"Pool with Splash"

1977

glazed ceramic

18½" x 145" x 116"

Courtesy Hansen Fuller Gallery



ROBERT ARNESON

"Five Splat"

1976

ceramic

15" x 12" x 76"

Collection of Robert Piepenburg





ROBERT ARNESON
 "Five Splat, detail"
 1976
 ceramic
 15" x 12" x 76"
 Collection of Robert Piepenburg



ROBERT ARNESON
 "Five Splat, detail"
 1976
 ceramic
 15" x 12" x 76"
 Collection of Robert Piepenburg



ROBERT ARNESON
 "Five Splat, detail"
 1976
 ceramic
 15" x 12" x 76"
 Collection of Robert Piepenburg

KAREN BRESCHI

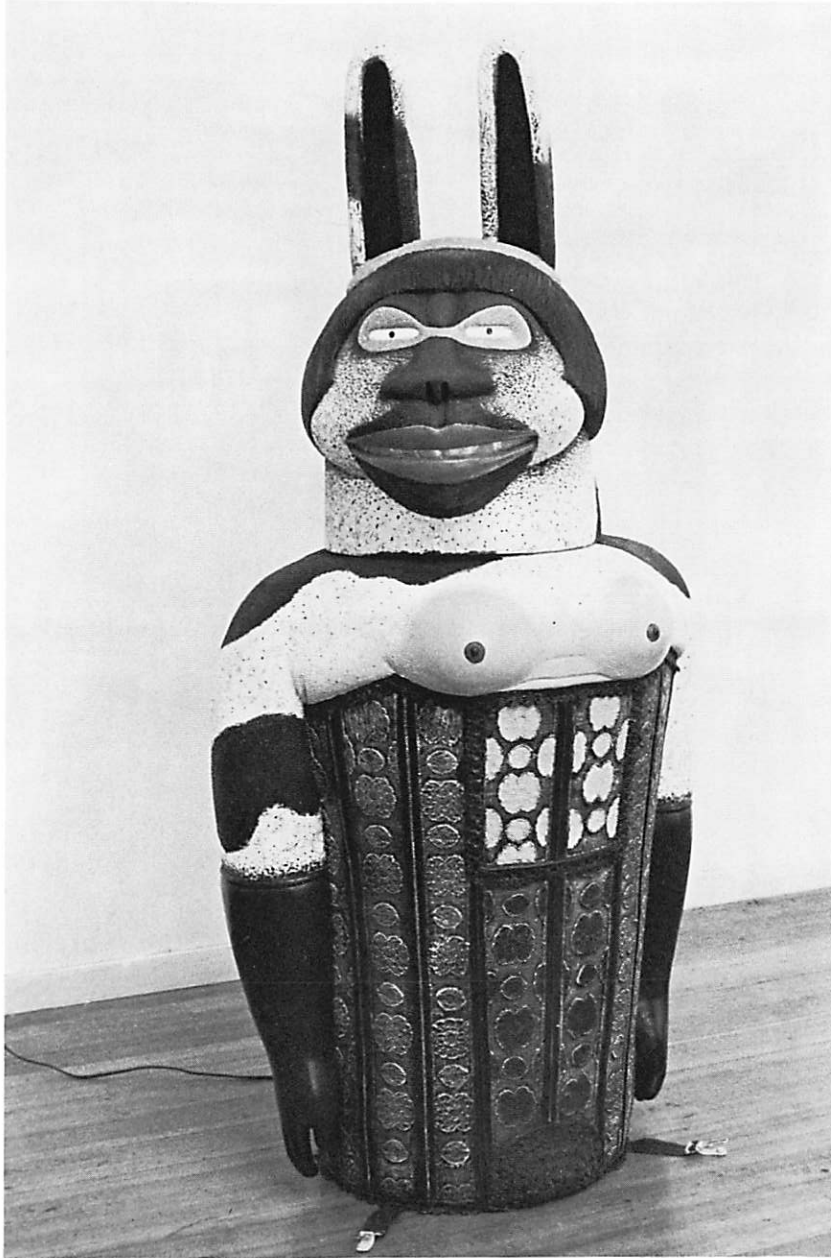
Karen Breschi lives and works in San Francisco. Her work reflects involvement with psychological introspection, mind expansion or reflections of past experiences. She is a student of her dreams and an appreciator of the power of meditation. Therefore her works are reflective of dream images or meditative states. Perhaps her sources come as an outgrowth of the many spiritual and reawakening opportunities which were at first indigenous to California, but have now spread nationwide. Esalen, T.M., Zen, and the Women's Movement, may well have been the catalysts to her bold, chilling, and thought-provoking statements. Her work acts as a diary of conscious and sub-conscious events and is most often surrealistic. At first she focused upon large scale mixed media, eerie lamp bases of hairy legs, or multicolored high platformed shoes. She has the ability to combine materials - acrylic paints, sequins, ropes, wigs, etc. - in ways which create visually dramatic impressions.

Her dreams, as psychoanalytic records, become major statements. Animal forms are used to deal with exposing human traits she finds disturbing, both as a feeling individual and as a feminist. Humor when present is biting.

The intent is to view the dark, less apparent side of human nature, and the frustrations inherent to the process of evolving one's identity. Breschi's works are not easy to understand; they require examination and re-examination. They probe recesses which exist within all of us, recesses which we would often like to repress.



KAREN BRESCHI
"Pig Boss"
1973
ceramic
2' x 1' x 2'
Private Collection, New York



KAREN BRESCHI
"Big Rabbit"
1977
ceramic
4' x 14" diameter
Courtesy of Braunstein/Quay Gallery

STEPHEN DE STAEBLER

Stephen De Staebler lives and works in Berkeley, California. He expresses his profoundly deep and spiritual experiences with clay. His are expressions of love for the material and its inherent qualities. He is unafraid of it, unafraid of its physical limitations, size limitations, and surface limitations. What might exist as problems to others, De Staebler views as avenues for understanding and inventiveness.

His monolithic columns are composed of a series of stacked irregular forms with three of the outer sides appearing as though they have been sheared from some parent rock. Within the fourth, frontal view, human forms appear partially emerged.

His sculptures could be statements which evoke somber images of great antiquity. The forms create the impression of the sudden discovery of a storehouse of ancient Egyptian artifacts. Human forms are encased, yet the encasement appears only temporary, reminding us of the spiritual, evercontinuing process of man's existence. *"Broken bits of man, broken bits of earth: in fragmentation, there is tension. In tension there is action. De Staebler's sculptures do not repose. Instead they yearn."* The idea of fragment is an important element in De Staebler's figure sculpture. He says that the experience of our own bodies is in fragments rather than in the total awareness of our physical presence.

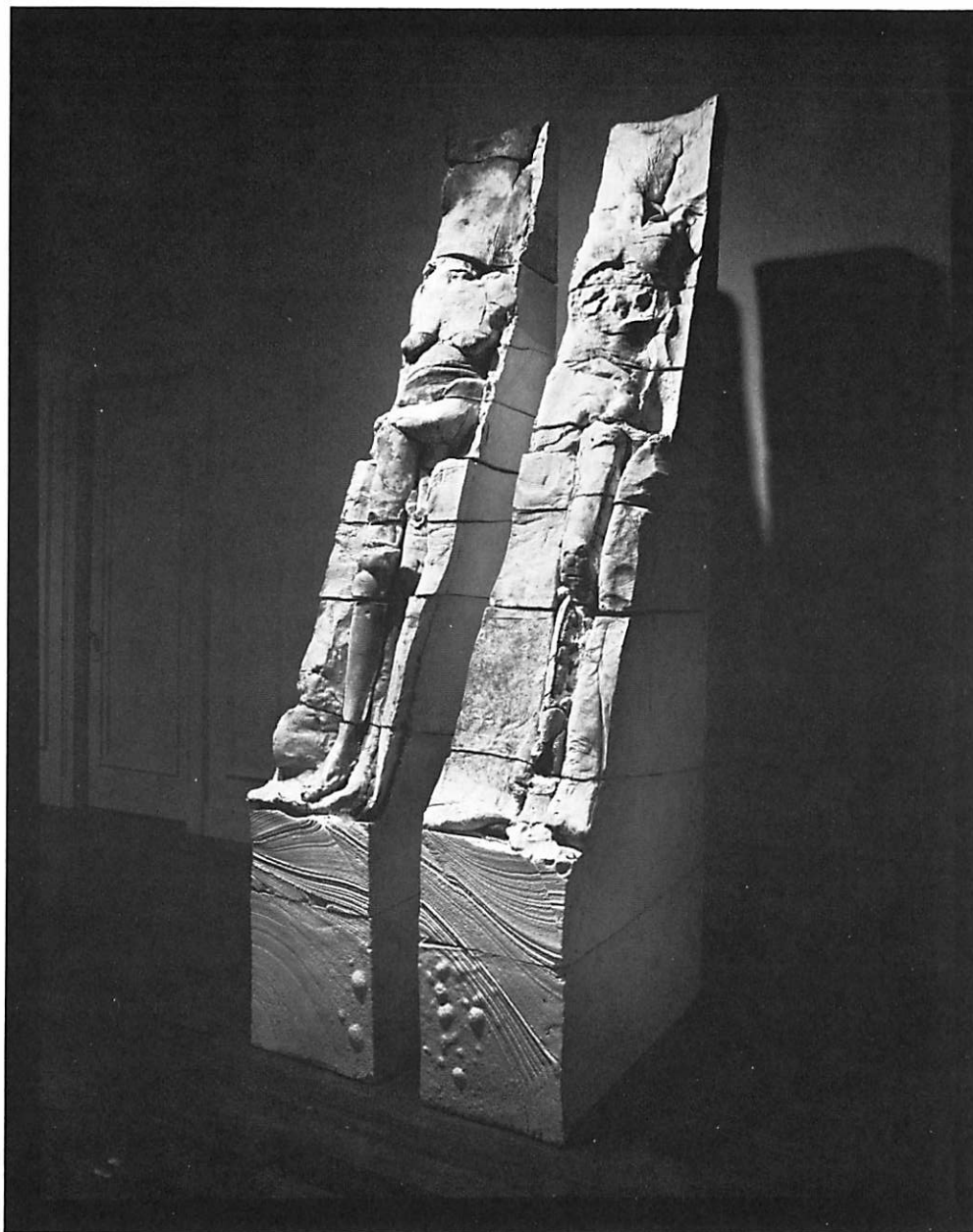
Chair forms are aptly called thrones - but thrones which seem to evoke a powerful brooding feeling - massive thrones upon which sat at some time in the distant past, a great king of a former civilization. There is always a faint hint of the physical impression left in the soft clay of this past-gone spirit, and to follow in its path, to have a seat in one of these forms, is a moving, unforgettable experience.

It is clear that De Staebler is preoccupied with Time and the Earth. His surface and color treatments evoke the impression of weathering - surfaces which appear to have withstood the passage of eons. The viewer feels like some archaeologist standing in awe at the monumentality and significance of these forms. They personify man's existence on earth as timeless. A constant cycle of life and death.



STEPHEN DE STAEBLER
"Lavender Throne"
1977
stoneware and porcelain
3' H
Courtesy James Willis Gallery

STEPHEN DE STAEBLER
"Standing Man and Woman"
1975
high fired clay
96" x 33" x 33"
Courtesy James Willis Gallery



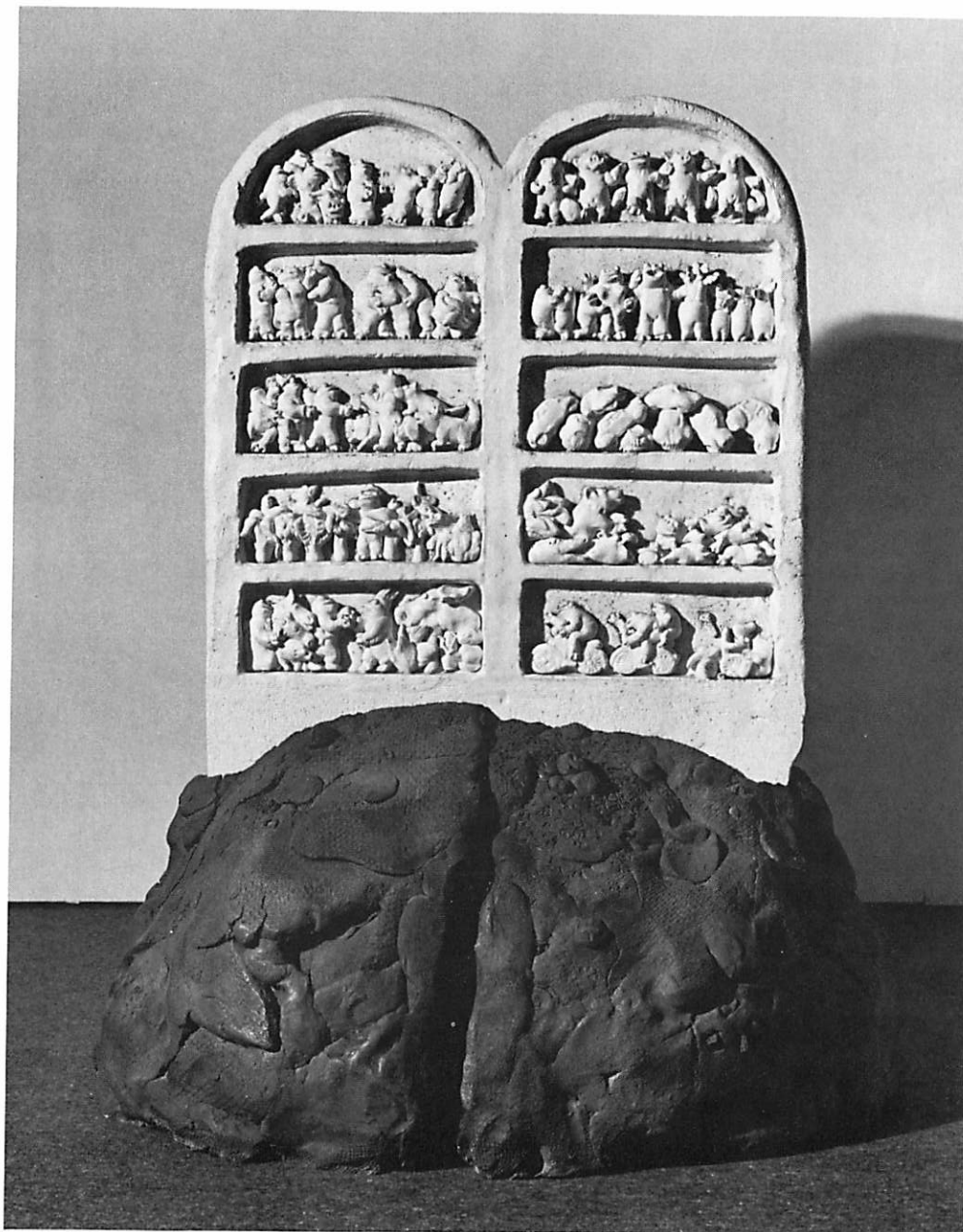
DAVID GILHOOLY

David Gilhooly lives and works in Alberta, Canada, but was born and educated in California and returns there each summer to work. He discovered early in college that he could pursue his multi-discipline fascinations (i.e. anthropology, marine biology, religion, social and political thought) more realistically as a major in ceramic art than he could trying to juggle all the others together. Consequently, Gilhooly fabricated in clay a framework of mythological animals, primarily frogs, to comment upon and satirize man and his cosmos. He has developed a personal account of a frog world - a world having its own history, events and folk heroes which, coincidentally, mysteriously resemble our own.

Producing work at a prodigious rate, he has expressed many well known personalities; *"Mao Tse Toad"*, *"Tantric Frog Buddha"*, *"Queen Nefertiti"* and scenes such as the *"Frog Last Supper"*. His frogs have their own perspectives. For example, their map of North America looks somewhat like ours, except that the Great Lakes and marshy land masses like the Florida everglades are enormous. In the frog world, things are similar, but different in tone, and people take slightly different roles. *"Frog Victoria"* is not only the Queen of the British Empire, she also is a sort of fertility goddess - which forces us to view her in a fresh and very satiric way.

It's an absurdity of form - of fooling around with format. By employing the frog, usually with light-hearted connotations, Gilhooly succeeds in spoofing many hallowed institutions and individuals. The metamorphosis of man into animal as a didactic tool is an old device. He taps a collective unconscious and strikes chords deep within us. When a frog acts like a man, the silliness and perfidity of man's activities, his habits, his rules and regulations, his revered institutions - all become strikingly clear.

Although capable in the preparation and formulation of clay bodies and glazes, Gilhooly chooses to de-emphasize these aspects of ceramic technology and instead often uses commercial products and hires assistants. He would rather spend *his* time making things. *"I use the frogs because they focus our attention on things that our culture feels strongly about. The frogs are no more perfect than we are. They have problems, but I can't say what they are. I admit I don't know everything about the frog world. I learn more about it all the time."*⁵



Frog Moses' *Ten Commandments* express some of the same ritual ideas of the clean and the unclean, the pure and the impure, as do those of the Old Testament Moses. It is a religious order that is imposed from within, a structure for a chaotic world, rules that a nomadic people could carry with them. Because Frog Moses' laws are depicted in tableaux, Gilhooly explains that they mean:

- I. Don't fool around in front of God-Frog.
- II. Thou shalt not step on thy neighbour's toes.
- III. Plant all seeds.
- IV. Thou shalt not keep dogs.
- V. Always give fair exchange.
- VI. All races dance together.
- VII. Stand by your products.
- VIII. Promote highway safety. Or, don't over-consume.
- IX. Never swim alone. Or, prevent swamp fires.
- X. Complete your cycles.

Excerpted from *Artscanada*, June 1975, "David Gilhooly's Mythanthropy" by Dale McConathy, page 7.

DAVID GILHOOLY
"*Ten Commandments*"

1975

glazed ceramic
7³/₄" x 5³/₄" x 6"

Courtesy Hansen Fuller Gallery



DAVID GILHOOLY
"Breadfrog and Pigeons"
1977
glazed ceramic
14" x 20½" x 14"
Courtesy Alan Frumkin Gallery

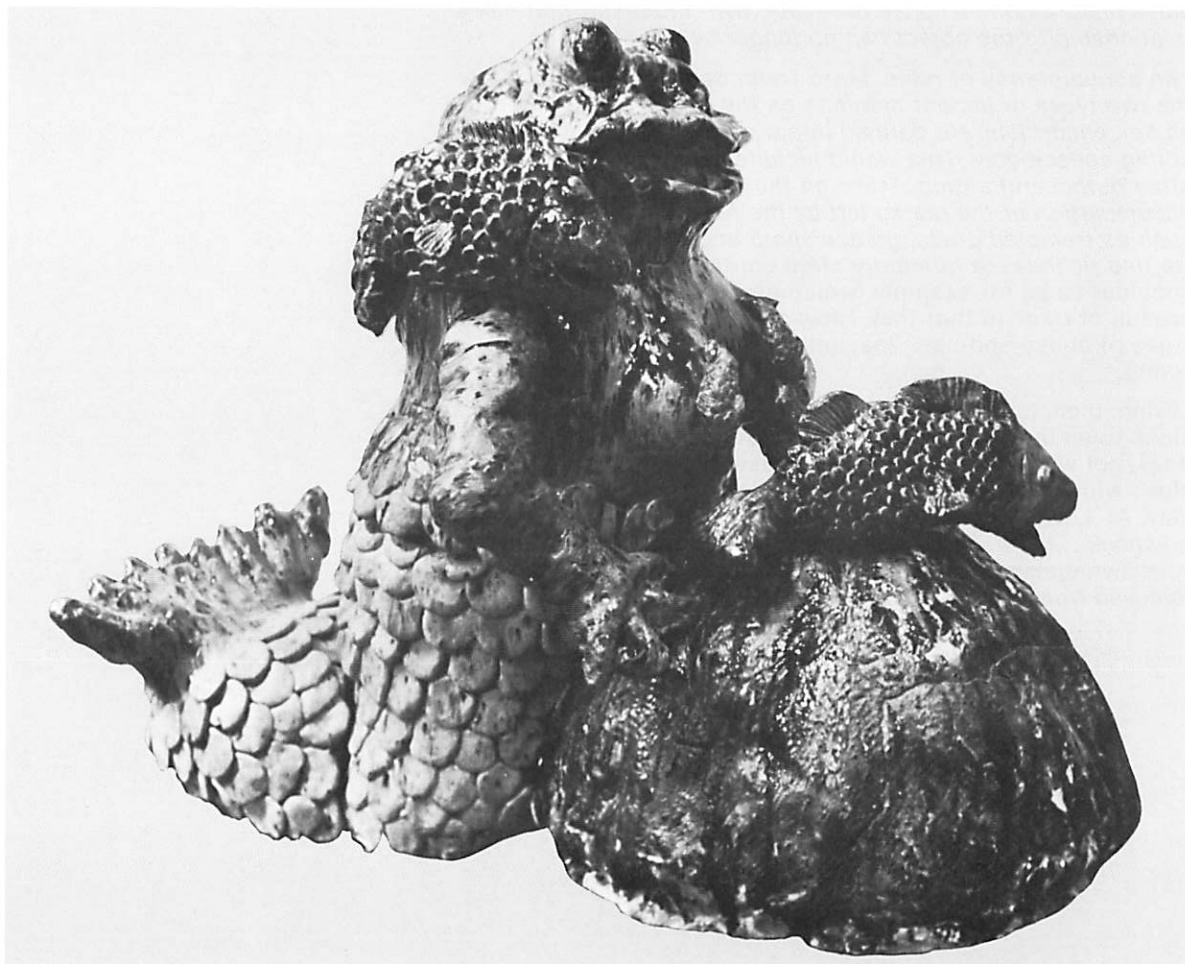
DAVID GILHOOLY
"Merfrog"

1977

ceramic

42" x 29" x 48"

Courtesy Helen Drutt Gallery



MARILYN LEVINE

Marilyn Levine was born in Canada but for the past several years has been living and working in California. She is an ultra-realist. She uses clay reinforced with nylon fibers and rolls thin slabs, which are then used like leather to produce objects made originally from leather. Thus, for example, she creates shoes, briefcases and suitcases with such remarkable verisimilitude that people often want to touch her work to make sure it is clay. It is, in fact, this conflict between visual and tactile that primarily interests her. *"The conflict between visual and tactile clues disturbs one's sense of reality, with the result that one's relationship to the object can no longer be the same."*⁶

*"An acquaintance of mine, Marc Treib, described pretty neatly the two types of impact man has on the world, intent and trace, as he called them. He defined intent as the results of man's acting consciously. This would include design, building and other purposeful action. Trace on the other hand is the accumulation of the marks left by the realization of man's intent, such as trampled grass, grease spots and dirt. In 'trace,' he says, we find richness, a humanity often omitted in intent."*⁷ The shoulder bags, for example, which are included in the exhibition, are full of *trace* in that they show scuff marks, cracks and other signs of abuse and use. They tell you something about the owner.

Levine, then, is concerned with traces found in leather which are clues to an individual's activity. The traces tell us about what he does, not what he says he does. These are the quiet hidden clues which truly reveal one's existence. They are fixed forever in clay. As Levine puts it, *"My work, like photography, freezes a presence.....It's not the permanence itself that is important; it's your awareness of the permanence - of the absolute stillness removed from the time-flux of everything around it."*⁸

MARILYN LEVINE
"Maki's Shoulder Bag"
1975
ceramic
7" x 14" x 13"
Courtesy Hansen Fuller Gallery





MARILYN LEVINE
"Hanging Bag with Rope Strap"
1975
ceramic, wood, metal, rope
32" x 29" x 5"
Courtesy Hansen Fuller Gallery

DAVID MIDDLEBROOK

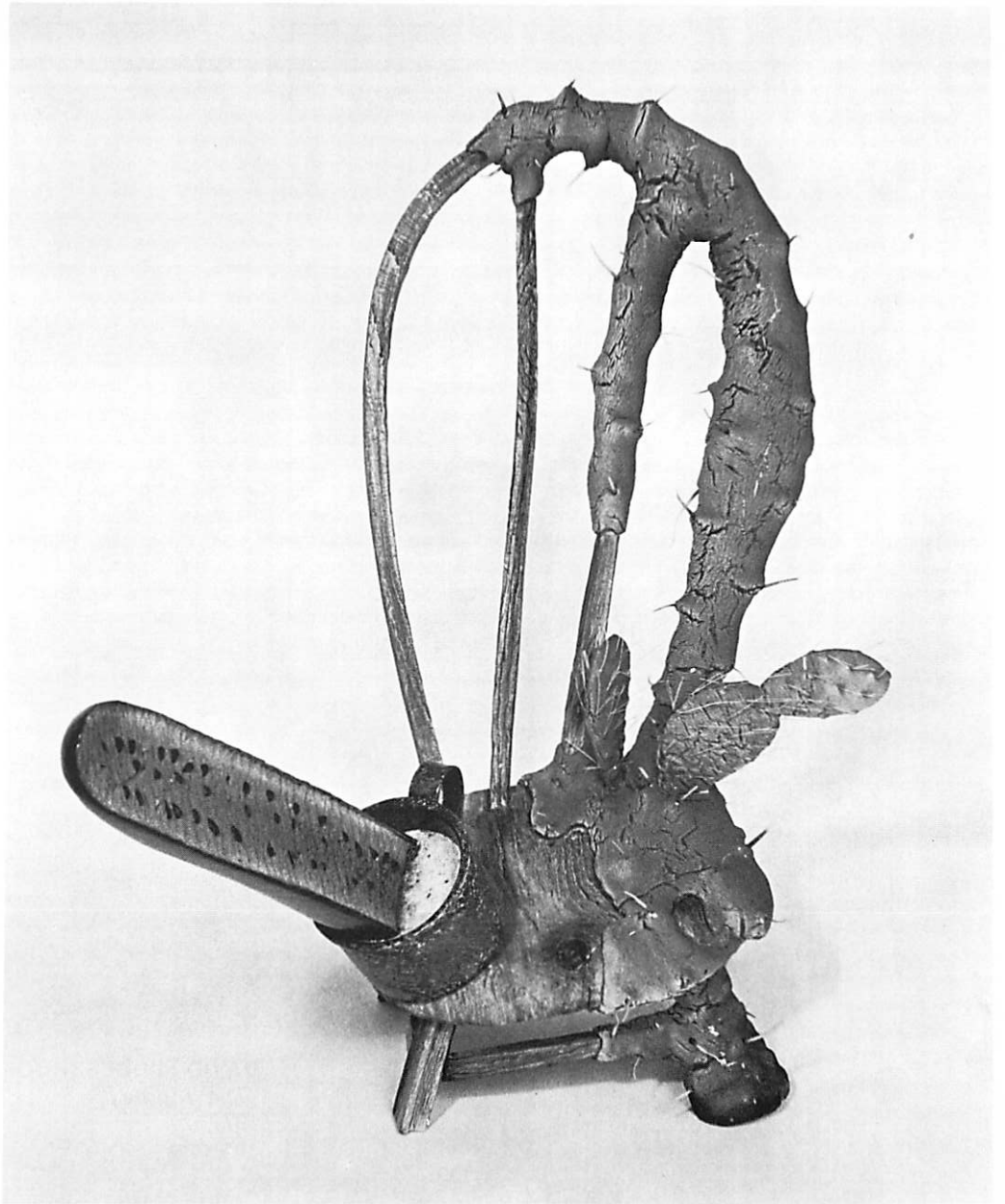
David Middlebrook was born and raised in the Midwest and has been living and working in California. He calls himself a surrealist and seeks to restructure our perception of the world by undermining a rational view of how things are to be. Thus his constructions serve to defy the laws of gravity or may be grossly out of scale or distorted - to force a new perception on the part of the viewer. He feels that we become too unresponsive to our environment because the rational mind has long since accepted conventional three-dimensional forms and thus suppresses them from conscious awareness. But when we see, for example, a cactus in the form of a fourlegged stool, the transformation jars our sense of rational perception and forces a reawakening of our perceptual abilities.

Middlebrook says about his work: "To surprise myself is what keeps me experimenting; to see if I can really accomplish the visual effects I am seeking. My best time in the studio is discovery time, or to research or re-search, and/or re-look at things. Breaking new personal ground is my best hope of doing original art.

*Color and texture have become increasingly important to my work. I am trying to develop appropriate surfaces and a palette for the newest work. I am moving away radically in technique and appearance from traditional ceramic sculpture. As the images become less identifiable as clay they demand special handling that allows them their 'own space to function'. It is very important to me to have consistency in concept and presentation; that integrity is my major objective in my art.'*¹⁹

DAVID MIDDLEBROOK
"Don't Let Your Loaf, Loaf"
1977
ceramic
29" x 11½" x 10½"
Courtesy Quay Ceramics Gallery





DAVID MIDDLEBROOK
"Butterfly"
1977
ceramic
34" x 30" x 23"
Courtesy Quay Ceramics Gallery



DAVID MIDDLEBROOK
"The Journey"
1977
ceramic
6' H.
Courtesy Quay Ceramics Gallery

KENNETH PRICE

Kenneth Price was born and raised in California. As a young man growing up in Los Angeles, he was markedly influenced by the folk pottery he saw in Mexico. He has always been fascinated with Mexican and American Indian images, Japanese formal arrangements and exquisite Chinese pottery techniques.

In 1972, shortly after moving to Taos, New Mexico, with his wife Happy, Price began a new series of work. Completed in 1977, Maurice Tuchman, Curator of Price's 1978 exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, described it as *"a single monumental project."*¹⁰ The exhibition of environmental sculpture entitled *"Happy's Curios"* began with an intense and disciplined effort of *"psychological projection"* with the folk potters of Mexico. Price identified himself with the folk potters who produce roadside monuments and the artisans who produce pottery in over 200 villages throughout Mexico. Tuchman notes that *"this effort of will is central to understanding Price's intentions in the enormous labor that was to ensue."*¹¹ Price imagined becoming many types of individuals - an enormous task - as he determined to make a body of work true in spirit to the folk/cottage industry sensibility - what Price describes as that *"easy, off-hand but utterly assured characteristic"* of *"low-art"* pottery. He worked to achieve the *"very direct, fast line"* of indigenous common ceramics, *"their loose and natural air."* He concentrated on making a long series of basic cups and plates and vases as nearly identical as possible.

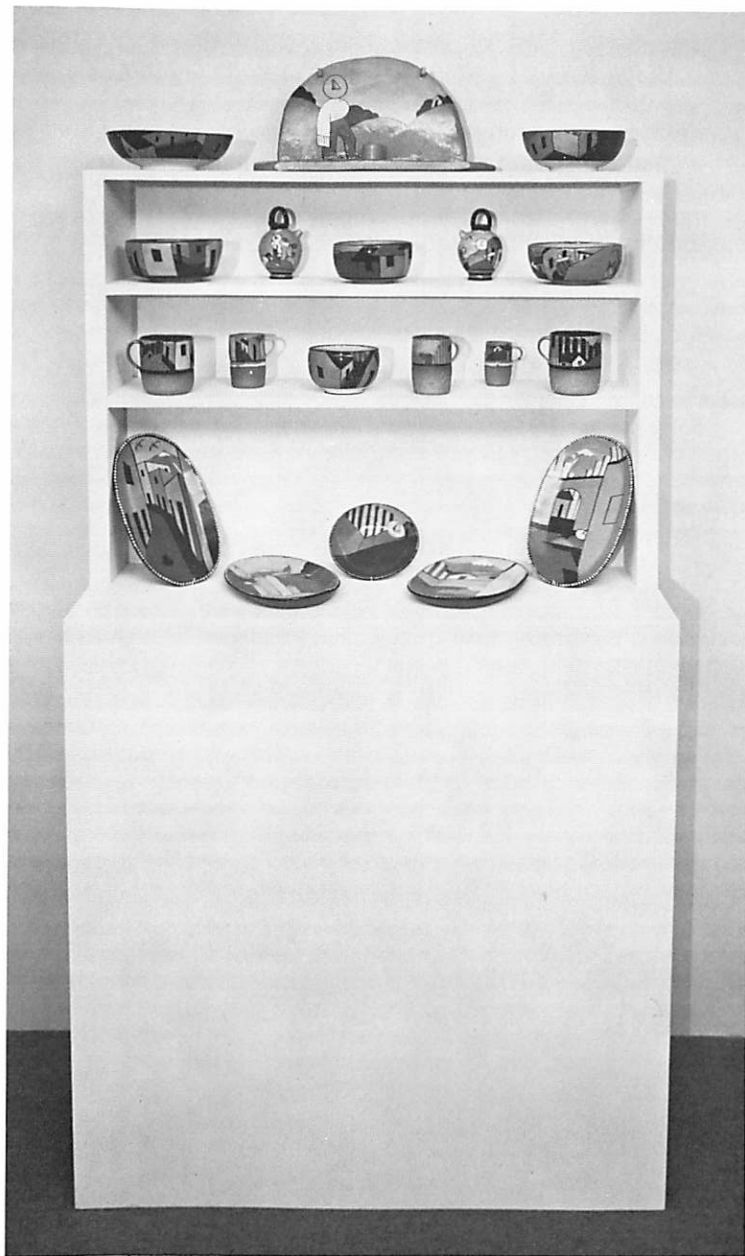
By 1974 and into 1975 Price's commitment led him to envision a *"Curio Shop."* By 1976 he began to conceive the configuration of many *"units"* (cabinets) each containing from eight to twenty or more objects. This project reached its culmination in 1977 and the opportunity to exhibit *"Happy's Curios"* arose. In the catalog introduction Tuchman says *"Happy's Curios" is a work of art about pottery* and *"essentially is a fantasy piece."*¹²

"Death Shrine 2," and *Town Unit 2"* are two pieces from Price's exhibition *"Happy's Curios"* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, April-September 1978.

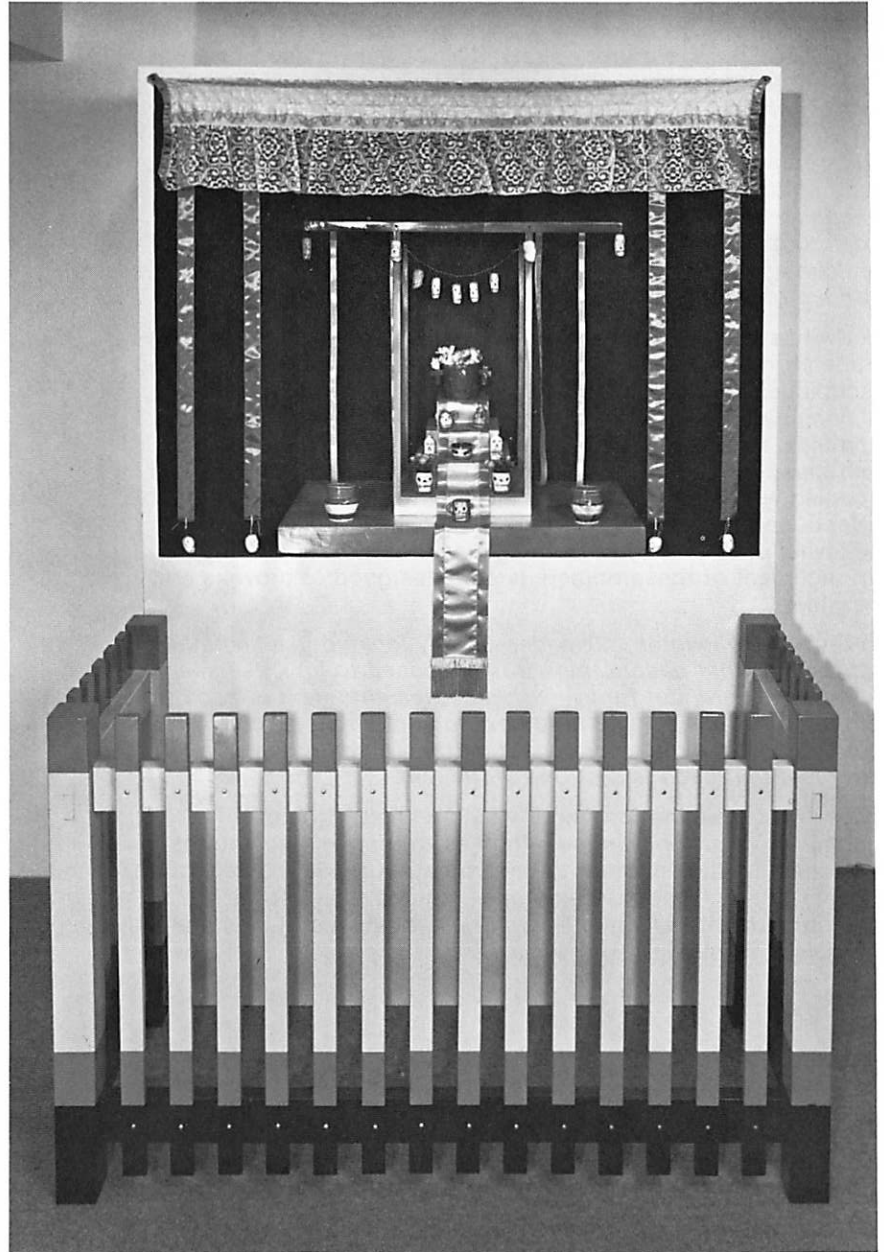
"Price arranges the sculpture in their cabinets so that they seem to sit naturally and with absolute rightness. The design of the cabinet unit has an extremely delicate relationship to the sculpture it contains....They function not in the way a base used to, to set off the sculpture; nor are they what they seem to be at first, merely containers. They are in fact sensitively related to the weight and surface, color and texture, of each object sitting, lying, or hanging in them. Shelf thickness relates to glazing

*density and to the family of shapes....Wood grain is curiously synchronized with the painted and fired surfaces...."*¹³

Each sculpture has a unity and particular inspiration incorporating such aspects as Mexican-liche, death, male-female implications, visual symmetries and an appearance of a long and nameless ancestry. These exquisitely made works are complex and highly sophisticated.



KENNETH PRICE
"Town Unit 2"
1972-1977
ceramic, wood
cabinet, 70" x 39" x 20"
Courtesy James Corcoran Gallery



KENNETH PRICE
"Death Shrine 2"
1972-1977
ceramic, wood
cabinet including fence
84" x 55" x 48"
Collection of the artist

RICHARD SHAW

Richard Shaw was born and raised in California and presently lives there. Shaw says about his development and ideas, *“Being in the right place at the right time had a great deal of influence on my career. In 1963, clay was heading in a definite direction away from functional pots and the big abstract clay sculpture. As a student I had dealt with abstract painting. At this time I began to transfer my painting ideas to pottery and ceramic sculpture. My ideas dealt with images, objects, scale, space, realism and humor. In 1978, I am still dealing with some of these same problems.”*¹⁴

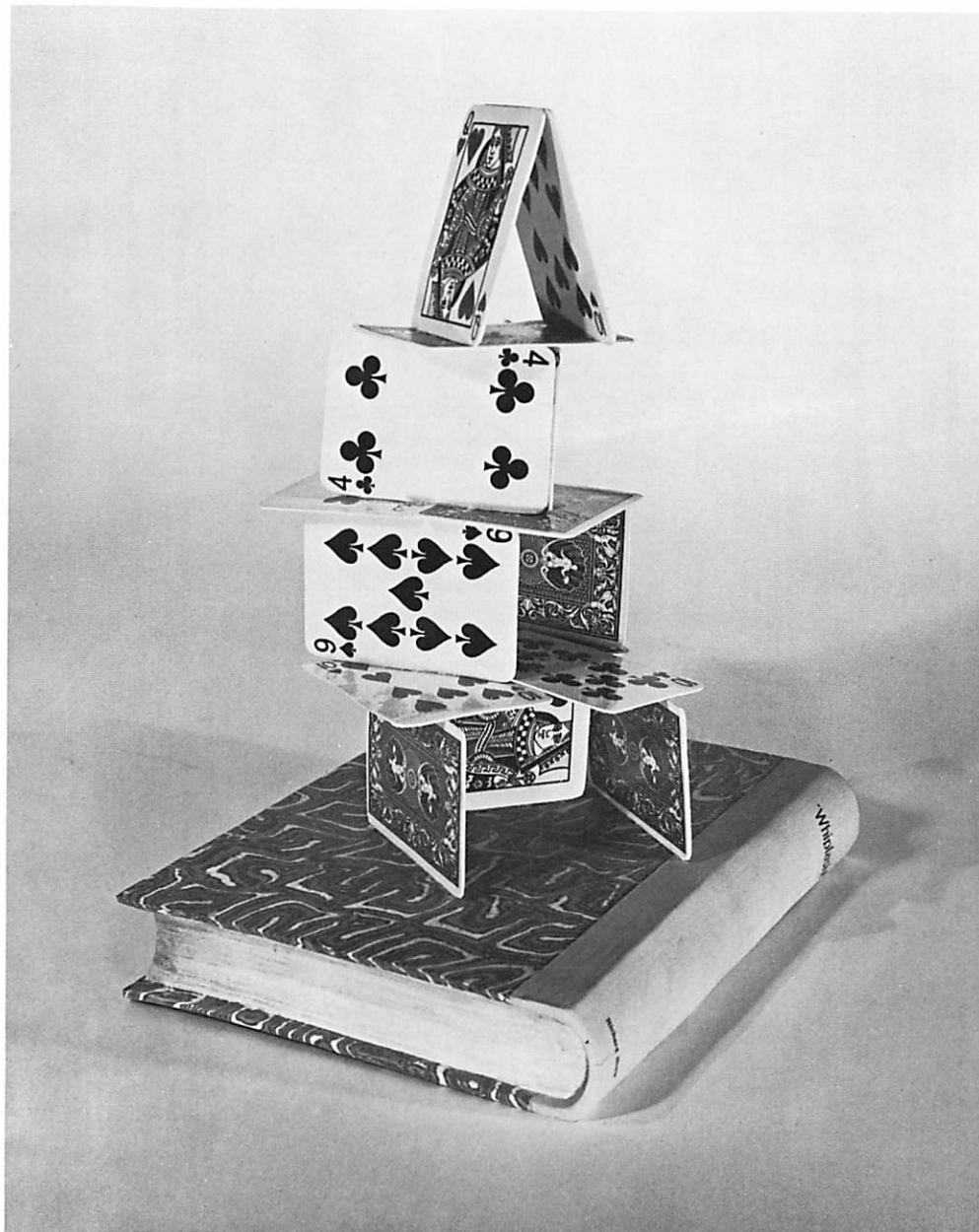
Shaw has perfected a well-known tradition of Trompe l’oeil. By transferring photo silk screen images to clay and using casting techniques, he duplicates textured woods, fabrics, papers, playing cards and other things. He then combines these into complex, small-scale sculptural arrangements. It is this juxtaposition of objects which particularly arrests the eye and, coupled with his use of realism to fool the eye, creates a double effect upon the viewer. Not only is the viewer misled into believing he is seeing something else, but in addition, the arrangement of these objects is also designed to provoke and bewilder.

In Shaw’s own words, *“The idea of clay looking like something other than what people think it is supposed to look like seems not only absurd, but funny. Different elements next to each other, like a torn playing card next to something graphic on a background is a different sensation than an alligator on a hat, yet I feel that each is a strong statement.”*¹⁵

Superficial examination might yield an accusation of gimmickery, but Shaw’s meaning lies deeper. His sculptures express a unique moment in time, a capturing, if you will, of an instant of an individual’s existence, an impression of a highlighted point of view. They are provocative still-lives and can be viewed as such.

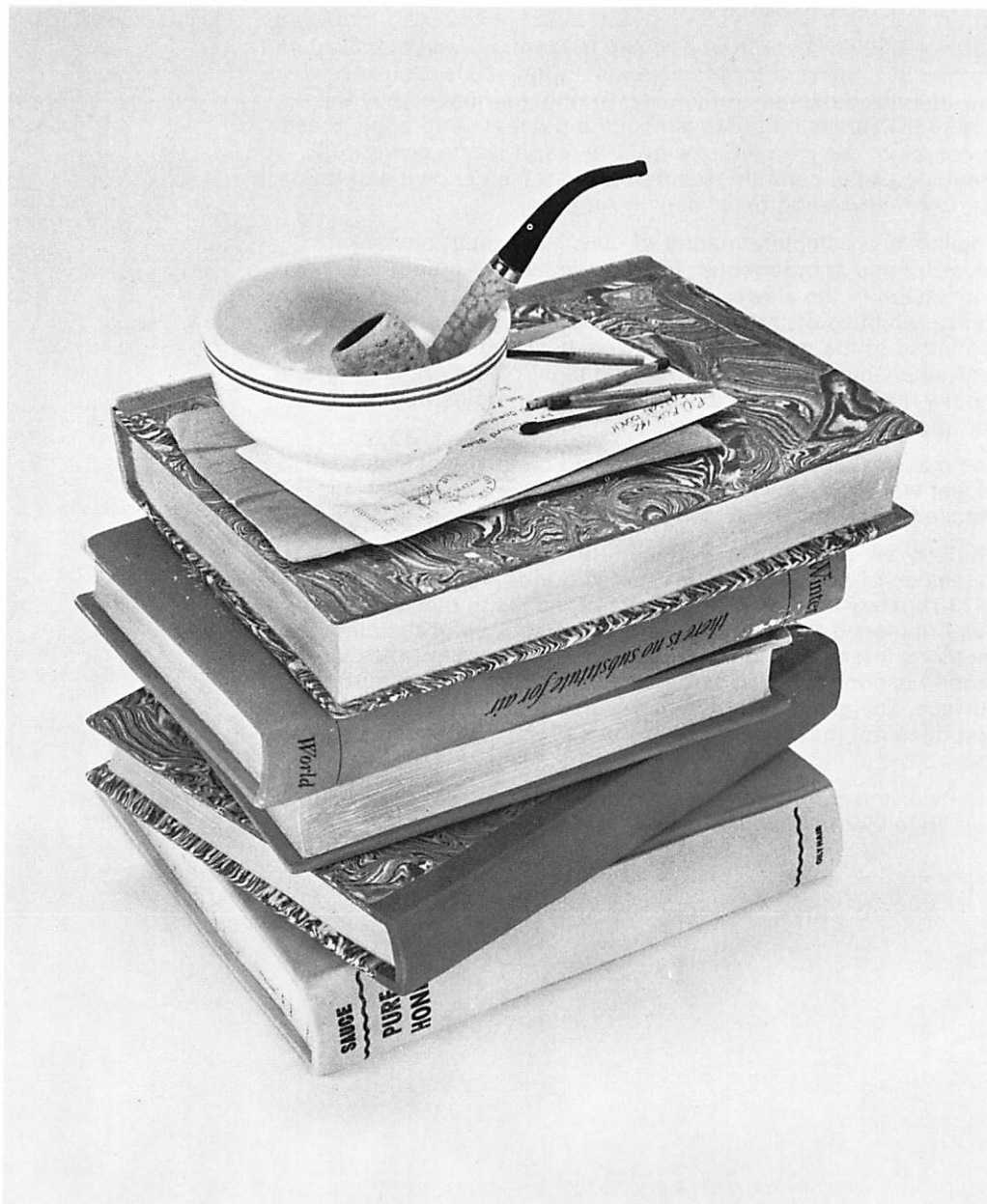
RICHARD SHAW
"Alligator on a Hat"
1974
ceramic
10" x 14" diameter
Courtesy Braunstein/Quay Gallery





RICHARD SHAW
"Whiplash"
1978
ceramic
12" x 10" x 7"
Courtesy Braunstein/Quay Gallery

RICHARD SHAW
"Stack of Books"
1978
ceramic
9½" x 7½" x 13"
Courtesy Braunstein/Quay Gallery



PETER VOULKOS

Peter Voulkos was born and raised in Montana and has lived and worked in California for many years. In the 1950s, Voulkos revolutionized expression in clay. Strongly influenced by the Abstract Expressionist Movement, he proceeded to apply these concepts to the medium of clay. The result was a powerful breaking of the ceramic tradition as was then known and the start of a new tradition of clay in America.

Voulkos is a complete master of clay. His executions are powerful and spontaneous. The finished works create the impression in the viewer of an individual who has fully explored the capabilities of the medium and has conquered them. One is reminded of the grand masters, who, having gone beyond mere craftsmanship, and having explored most of the areas of artistic inquiry, have now decided to focus their energies upon infinite variations capable within a resolved form.

The mastery, power, inventiveness and creativity of Voulkos' recent work is held within the constraints of two forms - the stacked wheel-thrown construction and the plate.

Voulkos' six new clay drawings in this exhibition are an extension of a group that he created during the period of 1973-76. They are larger in size, 22-24 inches in diameter, and he has broadened the gestures across the surface of the clay. The freedom, intensity and force of pushing and pulling the clay around is contrasted by a highly controlled, subdued glaze surface. The glaze, which is barely there, enhances the surface and does not mask the vigor of the piercings, cuts and lines of the work.

The two vessel forms are a counterpoint to the clay drawings and engender the same energies in the round.

PETER VOULKOS
"Gash"
1978
stoneware and glaze
38" x 14"
Courtesy Braunstein/Quay Gallery



PETER VOULKOS

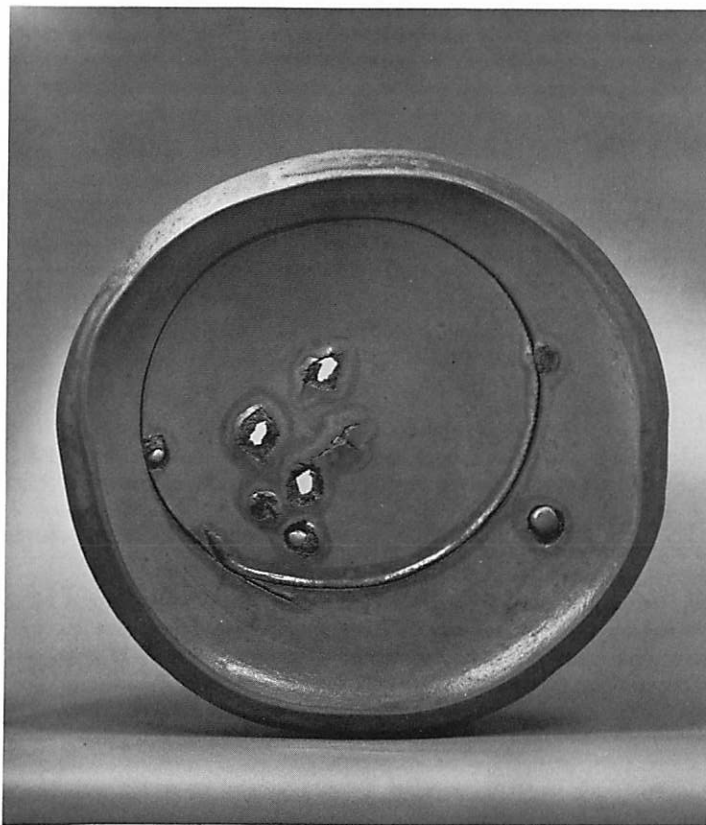
"Plate C"

1978

stoneware and glaze

23" diameter

Courtesy Braunstein/Quay Gallery



PETER VOULKOS

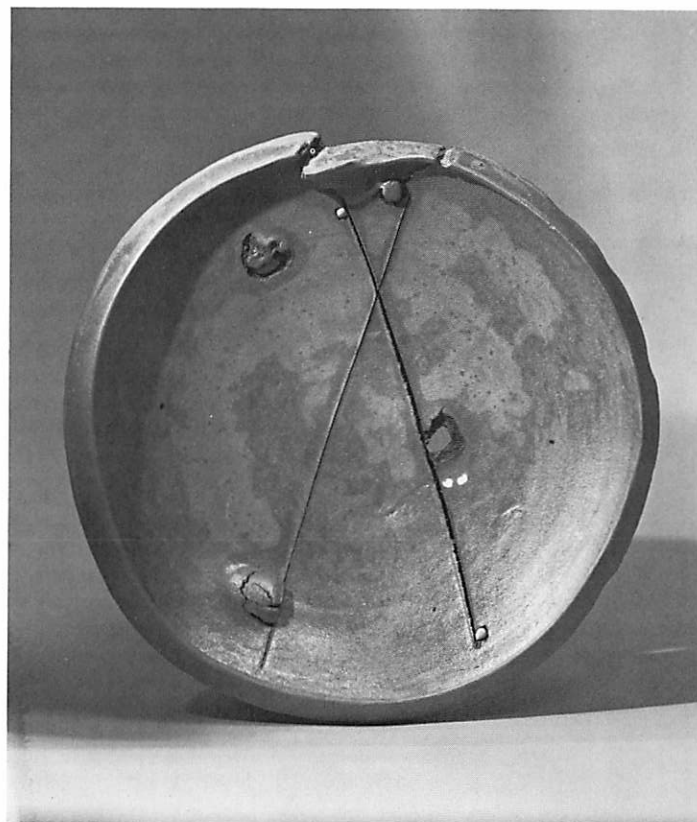
"Plate B"

1978

stoneware and glaze

23" diameter

Courtesy Braunstein/Quay Gallery



PETER VOULKOS

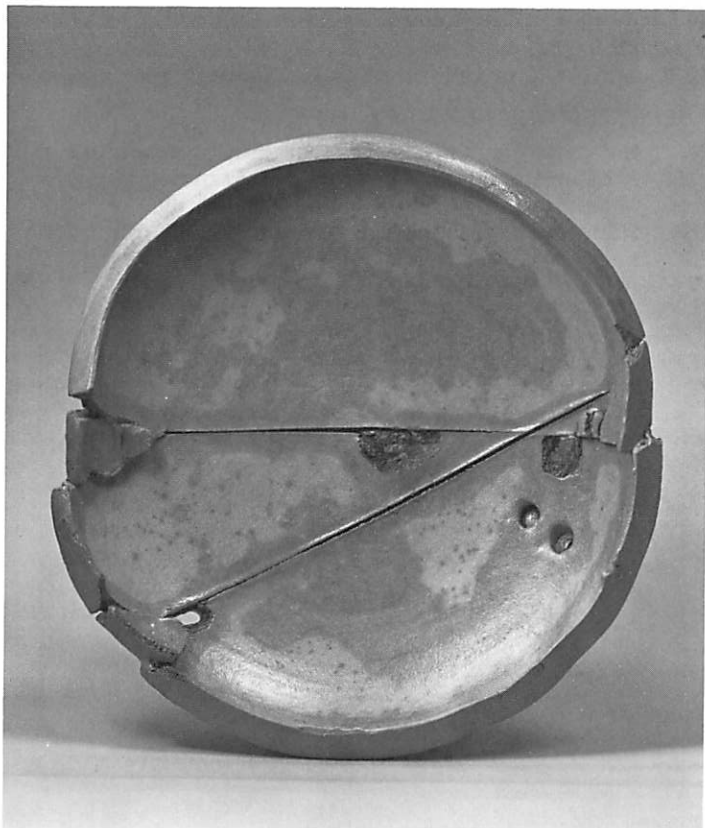
"Plate A"

1978

stoneware and glaze

23" diameter

Courtesy Braunstein/Quay Gallery



PETER VOULKOS

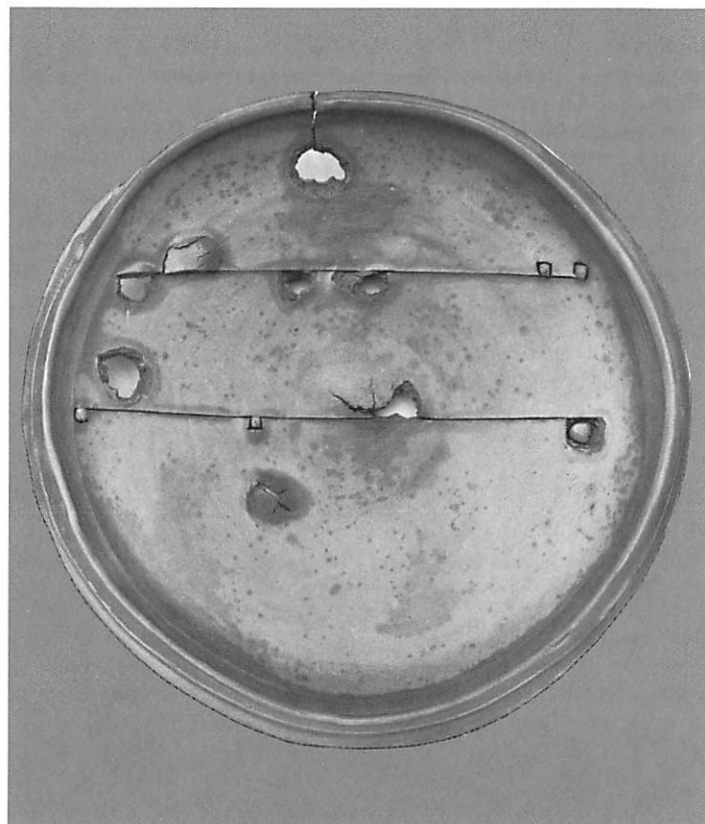
"Ceramic Drawing"

1978

stoneware and glaze

24" diameter

Courtesy Braunstein/Quay Gallery



NOTES

¹Rose Slivka, "The New Ceramic Presence," *Craft Horizons*, July-August 1961, pp. 31-37.

²Malcolm, Janet, "On and Off the Avenue: About the House," *The New Yorker*, vol. 47, September 4, 1971, p. 59.

³Schwartz, Judy S., Taped interview with the artist, Summer 1975, Davis, California.

⁴Indianapolis Museum of Art, "Perceptions of the Twentieth-Century American Art," September 20-November 27, 1977, catalog by Jane Dillenberger and John Dillenberger. Catalog entry by Jane Dillenberger, p. 158.

⁵Schwartz, Judy S., Taped interview with the artist, May 1975, Aurora, Canada.

⁶Foote, Nancy and Marilyn Levine, "Photo-Realists: 12 Interviews," *Art in America*, November-December 1972, pp. 73-89.

⁷Ibid, p. 84.

⁸Ibid, p. 84.

⁹Middlebrook, David, Statement by the artist to Margie Hughto, August 1978.

¹⁰Los Angeles County Museum of Art, "Ken Price, Happy's Curios", April 4 - July 2, 1978, catalog foreword and introduction, Maurice Tuchman, p. 5.

¹¹Ibid, p. 8.

¹²Ibid, pp. 7-8.

¹³Ibid, pp. 10-11.

¹⁴Shaw, Richard, Statement by the artist to Margie Hughto, August 1978.

¹⁵Ibid.

BIOGRAPHIES

ROBERT ARNESON

BORN:

1930 Benicia, California

EDUCATION:

1949-51 College of Marin, Kentfield, California

1954 California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland. B.A.

1958 Mills College, Oakland, California. M.F.A.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1954-57 Menlo-Atherton High School, Atherton, California

1958-59 Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California

1959-60 Fremont High School, Oakland, California

1960-62 Mills College, Oakland, California

1962- University of California, Davis, California

RECENT SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

1974 Retrospective Exhibit, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Illinois and the San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California

1976 Hansen Fuller Gallery, San Francisco, California

1976 Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

1977 Allan Frumkin Gallery, New York, New York

RECENT SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1976 Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York

1977 "Illusionistic Realism," Laguana Beach Museum of Art, Laguana, California

1977 "Modern Era of California," National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.

1977 Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, Memphis, Tennessee

KAREN BRESCHI**BORN:**

1941 Oakland, California

EDUCATION:

1963 California College of Arts and Crafts, B.F.A.
1965 San Francisco State College, San Francisco,
California
1968-71 San Francisco Art Institute

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1971- San Francisco Art Institute, Professor of Drawing
and Painting
1974-78 San Francisco Art Institute, Lecturer and Instructor

RECENT SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

1972 "Dreams and Visions" Berkeley Gallery, San
Francisco, California
1973 "Sculpture," Berkeley Art Center, Berkeley,
California
1975 Braunstein/Quay Gallery, San Francisco, California

RECENT SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1977 "California Clay," Braunstein/Quay Gallery, New
York, New York
1977 "Beauty of the Beast; Animal Imagery in
Contemporary Crafts," Kohler Art Center,
Sheboygan, Wisconsin
1978 "The Great American Foot," The Museum of
Contemporary Crafts, New York, New York
1978 "Ceramic Sculpture Invitational," University Art
Gallery, California State University at Hayward

STEPHEN DE STAEBLER**BORN:**

1933 St. Louis, Missouri

EDUCATION:

1950-54 Princeton University, B.A. in religion
1951 Black Mountain College, studied with Ben Shahn
1958-61 University of California at Berkeley, M.A. in
Sculpture, studied with Peter Voukos

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1961-67 San Francisco Art Institute, teacher of Sculpture
and Ceramics
1967- San Francisco State University, Associate
Professor of Sculpture

RECENT SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

1974 The Oakland Museum, Oakland, California
1977 James Willis Gallery, San Francisco, California
1978 James Willis Gallery, San Francisco, California

RECENT SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1973 "The Plastic Earth," Kohler Arts Center,
Sheboygan, Wisconsin
1974 "Public Sculpture/Urban Environment," The
Oakland Museum Oakland, California
1975 "Ceramics Invitational," University of Colorado,
Boulder, Colorado
1976 "Clay: the Medium and the Method," University of
California, Santa Barbara, California

BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID GILHOOLY

BORN:

1943 Auburn, California

EDUCATION:

1965 University of California, Davis, California. B.A.

1967 University of California, Davis, California. M.A.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1967-69 San Jose State College, San Jose, California

1969-71 University of Saskatchewan, Regina,
Saskatchewan, Canada

1971-75 York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

1975-76 University of California, Davis, California

1976-77 York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

RECENT SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

1976 Matrix Gallery, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford,
Connecticut

1976 Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois

1976 Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British
Columbia, Canada

1977 Galerie Darthea Speyer, Paris, France

RECENT SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1974 "Clay," Whitney Museum of American Art, New
York

1975 "Clay, U.S.A.," Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

1975 "The Small Scale in Contemporary Art", Chicago
Art Institute, Chicago, Illinois

1976-77 "Painting and Sculpture; The Modern Era." San
Francisco Museum of Art, National Collection of
Fine Art, Washington, D.C.

1976-77 National Ceramics Exhibition; Calgary Jurors
Exhibition, Glenbow Alberta Institute, Art Centrum,
Prague, Czechoslovakia

MARILYN LEVINE

BORN:

1935 Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada

EDUCATION:

1957 University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. B.Sc.

1959 University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. M.Sc.
University of Regina, Regina, Canada

1970 University of California, Berkeley, California. M.A.

1971 University of California, Berkeley, California.
M.F.A. in sculpture

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1971-73 University of Saskatchewan, Regina, Canada

1972 University of California, Davis, California (spring)

1973 University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada

1973 Assistant Professor of Art, University of Utah, Salt
Lake, City, Utah

1975 Visiting Assistant Professor of Art, University of
California, Berkeley, California (fall)

RECENT SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

1974 Norman Mckenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Canada
Retrospective exhibition

1974 O.K. Harris Gallery, New York, New York

1974 Morgan Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri

1975 Peale House Galleries, Pennsylvania Academy of
Fine Arts., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1975 Hansen Fuller Gallery, San Francisco, California

RECENT SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1974 "New/Photo Realism: Painting and Sculpture of the
1970's." Wadsworth Atheniem, Hartford,
Connecticut

1974 "Clay," Whitney Museum of American Art, New
York

1974 "Ceramics '74," York University Art Gallery,
Toronto

1975 "Ceramic Conjunction," Brand Art Center,
Glendale, California

1975 "Clay, U.S.A.," Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

DAVID MIDDLEBROOK

BORN:

1944 Jackson, Michigan

EDUCATION:

1966 Albion College, Albion, Michigan B.A.
 1969 University of Iowa, Iowa M.A.
 1970 University of Iowa, Iowa M.F.A.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1970-74 University of Kentucky
 1972 University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.
 1974- San Jose State University, San Jose, California

RECENT SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

1975 "Two Under Fire" with Daniel Lowery, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, Illinois
 1976 Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, New York
 1977 Wabash College Gallery, Crawfordsville, Indiana
 1978 Quay Ceramics Gallery, San Francisco, California

RECENT SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1976 "Illusionistic Realism in Ceramic Sculpture" Laguna Beach Museum of Art, Laguna Beach, California
 1977 Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York, New York
 1978 Group Invitational, San Jose Museum, San Jose, California
 1978 "California Clay II," Braunstein/Quay Gallery, New York, New York
 1978 "Bay Area Ceramicists," Hayward State, Hayward, California

KENNETH PRICE

BORN:

1935 Los Angeles, California

EDUCATION:

1956 University of Southern California B.F.A.
 1956-57 Otis Art Institute, studied with Peter Voulkos
 1959 State University of New York, at Alfred, M.F.A.

RECENT SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

1972 Gemini G.E.L. Los Angeles, California
 1973 Galerie Neuendorf, Hamburg, Germany
 Nicholas Wilder Gallery, Los Angeles
 1974 Felicity Samuel Gallery, London
 1976 Ronald Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis
 James Corcoran Gallery, Los Angeles, California

RECENT SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1972 "West Coast, USA" Kolnischer Kunstverien, Cologne, Germany
 1974 "Cup Show II" David Stuart Gallery, Los Angeles California
 "Clay," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
 1975 "Sculpture: American Directions 1945-1975," Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
 1976 "200 Years of American Sculpture," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

BIOGRAPHIES

RICHARD SHAW

BORN:

1941 Hollywood, California

EDUCATION:

1961-63 Orange Coast College

1965 San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, California B.F.A.

1968 University of California, Davis, California M.A.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1966-78 Head of the Ceramic Sculpture Department, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, Calif.

1970 University of California, Berkeley, California

1971 University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin (summer)

RECENT SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

1976 Braunstein/Quay Gallery, San Francisco, New York

1977 Jacqueline Anhalt Gallery, Los Angeles, California

1973 San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California

RECENT SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1976 "The Object as Poet," Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.

1976 "Contemporary Clay: Ten Approaches" Dartmouth College Galleries and Collections, Hopkins Center, New Hampshire

1977 "Viewpoint: Ceramics," Grossmont College Art Gallery, El Cajon, California

1977 "East to West," Northern Illinois Art Gallery, DeKalb, Illinois

PETER VOULKOS

BORN:

1924 Bozeman, Montana

EDUCATION:

1951 Montana State College, Montana B.S. Applied Art

1952 California College of Arts and Crafts, M.F.A.

1968 Doctorate of Humane Letters, Montana State University

1972 Honorary Ph.D. California College of Arts and Crafts

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1952-54 Archie Bray Foundation, Helena, Montana

1953 Black Mountain College, Black Mountain, South Carolina (summer)

1954-59 Los Angeles County Art Institute, Los Angeles, California

1959- Professor of Design and Sculpture, University of California, Berkeley, California

RECENT SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

1975 Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1975 Braunstein/Quay Gallery, New York

1976 Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, Michigan

1978 Retrospective Exhibition; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, traveling to Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, Texas; Milwaukee Art Center; American Crafts Museum, New York, New York

RECENT SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1975 "Sculpture; American Directions 1945-75" National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C., Dallas Museum, Texas; New Orleans Museum, New Orleans, LA.

1976 Bicentennial Exhibit, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, traveling to Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

1977 "Modern Era Update" Huntsville Museum of Art, Alabama

1978 1st Invitational Ceramic Sculpture Exhibit, Northern Illinois University Gallery, DeKalb, Illinois

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