

Artist's Statement

IN THE PROCESS OF EXPLORING THE VESSEL, IDEAS REVOLVE AND TRANSFORM INTO TANGIBLE SPACE.

The process is a meditative dance, allowing my spirit to wander; automatism unveils a hundred thoughts and visions, the tactile representation becomes a record of the event. In this exploration through clay, I am able to access and retrieve that which is normally intangible. Dreams, feelings, emotions and visions from my conscious and unconscious worlds are retrieved and translated into visual form. The vessel serves as the metaphor.

I am drawn to the scale and methods I have chosen because of the intense physical demands of working with massive amounts of clay on the wheel; the "one-on-one" negotiation with this "partner", and an allure of the large scale raku firing process where risk and chance dominate- a state of magic uncertainty- where automatism, control, and fate strike a bargain!

A variety of contrasting techniques are explored as each piece develops. Subtle, calming lines, or rapid explosive gestural marks may be worked into the wet turning surface. The fluid alteration of the thrown surface adds contrast to the chaste qualities of symmetry.

The sculptural integration of interior space and volume, as well as the exterior surface is critical. I deliberately push the materials to extremes, often until a piece seems pregnant and ready to burst with the energy with which it was made, to reveal an expanding inner space. In this way, a metaphor for our own depth is born. Like a canvas, the surface represents the tactile sensory skin, which defines the space within. The vessels created through this process of negotiating with all aspects of form and volume, allow my imagination to ponder the mysteries of containment as well as the sculptural elements of form.

Through gestural imagery, abstract, animated- figurative markings represent my reflections on various forms of life and are used to suggest or symbolize living forms, elements of nature, and our relationship to these. A minimal use of literal symbolism is sometimes used; for example to suggest a questioning concern for a perceived environmental peril, and man's relationship to it. While observing and photographing killer whales in their habitat, I have sensed their fragile irony from above the surface that defines their world. I have observed the harmony and freedom of these great animals rising just beneath the surface, with magnificence and mystery. And although visually recorded in moments, an indelible mark on my memory allows me to retrieve these images. A line on water that defined a moving sculpture becomes part of a collage mirrored into the surface of the clay. In this way, I attempt to capture the essence of the ephemeral with minimal simplicity.

It is the totality of the process though, the purging of myself through the creative act, the rapport with my unconsciousness, the synthesis of thoughts, visions and dreams, and the manipulation of the material itself that defines my art. The incidental accident in glazing or firing, the act of drawing in wet clay, and the synthesis of methods and materials with ideas of personal philosophy and spirituality collectively form the mosaic of my expression. Art and the process of creation fulfill daily human needs, as do food and sleep. It is through the elements of the earth- clay, water, and fire that I define myself.

—PM 2003