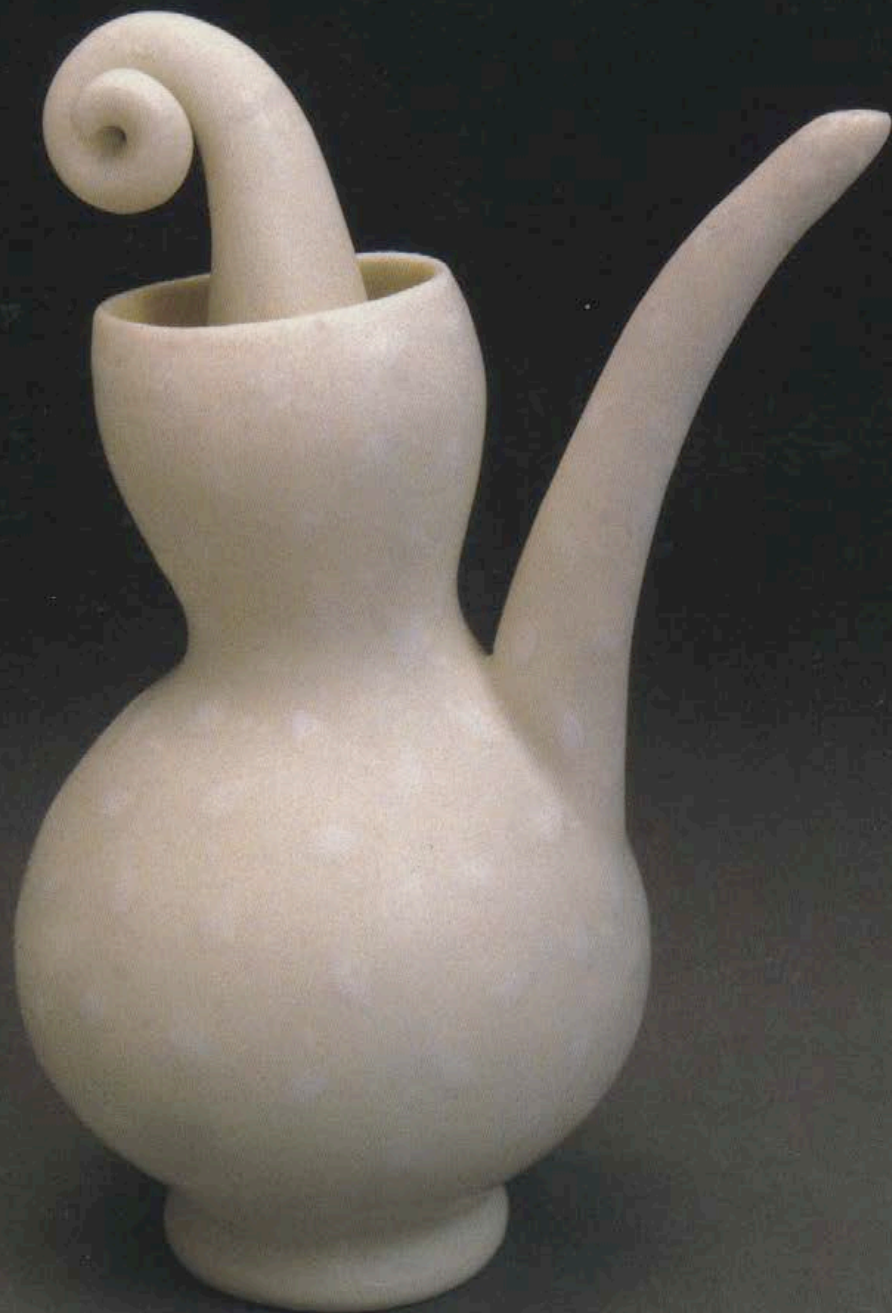


THE ART OF
CONTEMPORARY
AMERICAN
POTTERY



KEVIN A. HLUCH



"Volume, shape, center of gravity, spouts, handles, feet, lids, may be all altered in subtle degrees to change the composition of a pot."
Matt Kelleher

"Four Tumblers (Blue Horizon)," stoneware, 6" high, thrown, soda fired, C. 10.
 Photo by artist.

to discern irregularities that result from production variables.) Certainly it is true that potters, after years of making pots, are adept and highly skilled in a craft, but there are so many variables in the process of ceramics that it is impossible to create two objects with identical characteristics. Furthermore, this is not the aim of creative potters.

It is more the case that artists, whether potters or painters, work in a series of forms whose relationships subtly change over time. These changes are a result of the various influences that affect the temperament of the individual and their reaction to the world around them. The sentient person with

the will to create may, with luck, invest in the work a unique insight only a lack of skill in execution might betray.

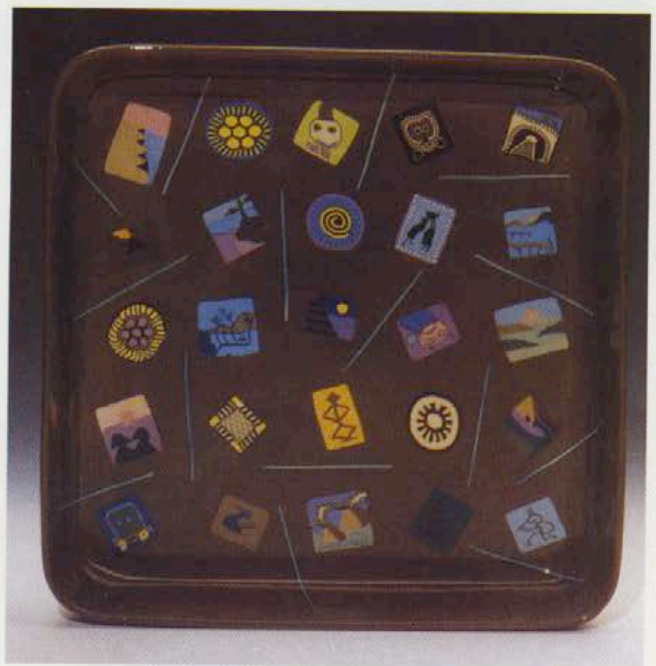
The balance between the repetition required to produce forms that spring fresh from the hand and the repetition that drives the life from pots is a precarious one. Only truly creative artists resist succumbing to the deadening of the spirit. And this is the case whether one is an artist or a potter.

In a series of forms that have been thrown, decorated and fired similarly, it may turn out that only a small proportion of these objects reach a standard that makes them worthy of being called "works of

"I envision my pots residing in more formal settings in which their use may perhaps lend more towards special occasions."

Sam Chung

"Vase," porcelain, 12" x 7" x 5", hand-built and thrown, soda fired, C. 10.
 Photo by artist.



"As a medium, I identify with porcelain. It is temperamental but negotiable; flaws are apparent but the beauty incomparable."

Sunyong Chung

"Platter," porcelain, 14" square, colored clay inlay, hand built, C. 7.
 Photo by Paul Bardagjy.



"A pot that captures my attention over time is not unlike a favorite book, revealing new layers of meaning with each reading."

Linda Christlanson

"Cooking Oil Cans," stoneware, 8" x 7" x 7", thrown and hand built, wire and clay handle, wood fired, C. 10. Photo by artist.

On the other hand, since these mass-produced, negligibly significant items have replaced the omnipresent handmade ceramic items of the past, the craft person's individually created forms naturally become more significant and valuable.

What makes these forms and activities special and powerful are the significant and meaningful references that are made by the artist with these forms. The elements of the human figure and animal forms can be embodied in pouring vessels like pitchers or teapots.

The teapot is one of the most anthropomorphic of all pottery types. That is, with asymmetrical stance, jutting handle and curvaceous forms, the pitcher reminds us of the human body or perhaps some other creature.

The spout of the teapot appears to have undeniable phallic implications that can be more or less obvious. And some artists exploit this characteristic as a fundamental element of their expressions.

There are other nuanced suggestions of body language in the handle of pouring vessels. The handle of the teapot arches away from the body of the



"I have an interest in the tortoise-shell shape simply as a beautiful natural form and its ability to introduce animated qualities into functional pottery forms."

Sam Chung

"Tortoise Teapot," porcelain, 5" x 7" x 3", hand built and thrown, soda fired, C. 10. Photo by artist.

"I place my formal concerns first—while being ever mindful of the need for reasonable function in an object such as a pitcher or teapot."

Joseph D. Van Zandt

"Soy Cruet," stoneware, 6" x 6", thrown and altered, C. 9. Photo by artist.

