Ceramics as sculpture

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CERAMICS AS SCULPTURE

by

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CERAMICS AS SCULPTURE

My work in clay during the past two years has encompassed a few of the many possibilities concerning the usage of clay. Wheel thrown utility ware; the Raku process, with its accidental quality in regard to the glazes; a rather tight slab series of sculptural ceramics illustrated in this paper both by text and pictures.

For some time I have not considered utility potter; to be an art form. It is a craft and should be left at that. The exploration of this craft does enhance one's technical knowledge of clay and glazes, and for this reason I felt it necessary to deal with this aspect of clay.

The idea of the container became less important as I became involved with the "HeadBox" series. Illustration No. 2, the "Head Boxes," was essentially five sculptural reliefs joined together to function as a sculptural square. The decorations or embellishment of these reliefs stemmed from the so-called psychedelic art and its influence upon.

As my involvement with clay became stronger the necessity for a completely verbal and intellectual approach became less important, as there exists a tremendous gap between my present work, which is the end result of the act of doing and the verbal or intellectualizing that can only
follow the end result or product of the act.

To view the ceramic pieces illustrated in purely verbal terms would be a mistake and in fact can not be done as any understanding of these ceramics must be found on individual sensual terms, and therefore I feel it unnecessary to discuss the sensuality of each piece. I offer as an alternative a brief description of my personal involvement with these ceramics.

I didn't plan a series of work, I merely planned work, to do, to act, using the clay as a basis. As a result, similar forms evolved at the same time in various stages of development. The clay was hurled, thrown, coiled and tossed from one form to another during various stages of my excitement. At times fabric of an interesting pattern was dampened and stretched onto an irregular plas or stuffed burlap form. The clay was then applied leaving an imprint of the fabric when fired. In other acts, the clay was coiled and hurled into existing bisqued* forms. The previously bisqued forms being porous acted as a sponge absorbing the water from the clay and thus promoted drying.

After the pieces were dry they were fired to 1005 Centigrade and when cool were saturated with a cobalt stain in water solution. This solution was then scrubbed from
high or relief portions of the bisqued piece, and then fired to maturity at 1250° Centigrade. The cobalt stain left in the textured areas of the clay fired to a dark blue-black at this temperature.

To further enhance the work and to create a greater visual excitement two subsequent firings were required. The first firing used a low temperature lead glaze. And the second, a firing at extremely low temperature, utilized metallic lusters.

The ceramic pieces were and are the end result of a physical experience with clay.
Fig. 1.—Head Box No. 1
Fig. 2.--Head Box No. 2
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