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The University of Montana

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SCULPTURAL CERAMICS

By

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B. A., University of Montana, 1966

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Master of Fine Arts

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

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Approved by:

Chairman, Board of Examiners

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Any artist working in the visual realm, as opposed to the verbal or conceptual realm, must have some system for the creation of those objects which are the transmitters of his art. This statement assumes that art is dependent upon a union between the world of objects and the world of the mind. The thesis presented here is an explanation of the method I have used in the making of ceramic sculpture.

The materials used are clay and any other material suitable for sculptural purposes. I chose clay as the predominant material because of its plasticity, textural qualities, ability to be either glazed or painted, and its immediacy when trying to attain a given shape. First the clay was used to create sculptural forms which the artist thought were significant. This was done without any intention of having them finished and complete works of art. In other words, the method involves the creation of ceramic forms which are to be used without a specific purpose in mind. The clay pieces have alternative uses according to the wishes of the artist at any given moment. A piece can be used in an assemblage, as collage material, or stand alone as a singular form. It should be noted that there are no restrictions as to how the clay is to be utilized.

The physical process of construction, taking place with fired pieces, is a case of juxtaposing or controlling the spatial relationship between the various forms. This physical manipulation is dependent upon the understanding of perceptual material, such as found objects or clay forms, and limited only by the ability to express that understanding through the medium chosen. The actual communication of this art to the artist's public, centers around the assumption that the artist is capabl
of maintaining a communication or understanding with the world and people around him.

Most art is oriented around some kind of emotion. But the content of emotion can never be wholly expressed in concepts or ideas. Therefore the problem of art becomes one of expressing emotional feelings and emotional understanding through a visual medium. In other words, we are expressing a nonverbal essence in nonverbal terms.

I would maintain that in the process of creating ceramic sculpture according to my method, the conceptual or intellectual level of consciousness is transcended and there comes into play a purely intuitive or higher level of consciousness. The central problem, then, becomes one of effectively representing intuition on a visual and consequently perceptual level. I offer, as an example of this method, some photographs of my recent work.
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