

State
of the
Art
2008

National Biennial
Ceramics
Invitational

Tactile Poetry



Parkland**Art**Gallery

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Exhibition: February 25–April 2, 2008

Reception: Thursday, March 6, 6–8pm

Gallery Talk by curator Lisa Orr at 7pm

Participating Artists:

Bandana Pottery

Victoria Christen

Josh Copus

Bruce Dehnert

Josh DeWeese

Kowkie Durst

Sanam Emami

Willem Gebben

Jim Koudelka

George McCauley

Andrew Martin

Frank Martin

Lorna Meaden

Alleghany Meadows

Matthew Metz

Georgette Ore

Curated by Lisa Orr

Curator's Statement

POTTERY IS A UNIQUE ART FORM because of the two simultaneous ways it relates to the human body. One, it assumes meaningful gestural form like sculpture or dance, and two, because of the way it feels when handled. It is this second quality I would like to bring into particular focus in this exhibition: Touch. How potters account for the way a pot gives weight, texture, etc. to a hand, finger, arm, or mouth. The interaction triggers the attention of a different part of the brain. Using an excellent tool is a little akin to being with a dance partner. A well-designed utilitarian object has its own correct feel in handling.

For this show, I selected artists whose pottery pieces have created a distinctive intersection of the artistic and the utilitarian. One of the best is Josh DeWeese; his pieces speak openly about references to the human form, and they have appropriate musculature in the handles, and a comfort to the balance when full of beer. Kowkie Durst uses a human-shaped lip on the edge of her softly made mugs, and Andrew Martin's slipcast pieces oddly possess a visible tenderness in the gentle undulations of the forms. Josh Copus plays with the heft, balance, and skin of his tea bowls in original ways, and Bruce Dehnert makes his tea bowls look like sensuous jewels that invite the hand.

Lorna Meaden is a young master with porcelain who similarly references



Salad Plate
earthenware with slips,
sprigs, polychrome
alkaline glazes
8" h x 7" w x 1½" d
2007

the figure but brings in more geometric ideas, a bit like how tight clothing fits the body. She leaves no surface unconsidered in the tactile or visual sense. Sanam Emami's work has more obvious reference to architecture, very pleasing at a distance, at close range, and has a comfortable formality in the hand in contrast to Victoria Christen's work which is much more dreamy visually and rather casual to the touch.

The work of Alleghany Meadows was included because when I encounter it I am somehow reminded of universal building blocks found in nature like the Fibonacci series. This is quiet, contemplative art for the table that is reaching for some essence. I often hate to disturb its sculptural quality to use it, though it is a pleasure to do so. Frank Martin utilizes multifarious layering through the soft pasting together of clay parts to compile a symmetrical form, and then re-shaping yet again with the glaze. Amid the gorgeous complexity, one finds the artist left niches for the fingers and gentle accommodation of the mouth.

Naomi Dalglish and Michael Hunt work together in the style of English and Japanese folk traditions from locally dug materials in North Carolina. Their works have a sturdy, heavy feel and convey generosity and ease in how the natural materials were formed. The works of Willem Gebben show a Mingei influence as well featuring strong, beautiful forms and masterful balance like a good folk potter would have. Matt Metz works along these lines as well. He makes more refined work with clear historical roots elegantly reinterpreted so the forms and decorations sing out anew. Again, the balance of his pitchers is excellent, and the mug lip brings attention to its comfort.

Jim Koudelka makes ware a court jester or circus performer would be proud of. The playful attitude in the work belies his skill. George McCauley has a similarly carefree quality to his forms, and I sense a smile in the deft handling of his decoration. I believe these potters are less troubled about how the hand will meet the pot, which makes the user need to adapt perhaps a little. Lastly, I included Don Pilcher, who with his latest work has assumed the role of Georgette Ore, and becomes a modern day court jester for the world of ceramics. He has turned his intellect toward confounding, entertaining, or enlightening us about the art world all the while producing dazzling ceramic jewels. To handle these is to know that they came from the hands and mind of a virtuoso.

—Lisa Orr, curator

LISA ORR has been a professional potter and student of ceramics for 23 years. She completed an MFA at The New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in 1992 and later received grants including a Fulbright and an MAAA/NEA Fellowship. Her work is in numerous public and private collections including the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco and the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. She teaches, lectures, and shows nationally.

Bandana Pottery: *Michael Hunt and Naomi Dalglish*

“We make our pots using primarily coarse, impure local materials. Our pots are thrown on a slow turning Korean-style kick wheel, and the large jars are made using a traditional Korean paddle and anvil technique. We then fire the pots in a large, Thai-shaped wood kiln. Through this collaboration with powerful materials and processes, we hope to create an environment in which pots can be born with a beauty beyond what is possible with our own hands. Beginning with the geologic processes that form the coarse red clay, passing through our hands and kiln, the life of these pots is continued through years of daily use.”

MICHAEL HUNT was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He began making pots in high school in Orlando, Florida, was a core student at the Penland School of Crafts, and studied in Korea with traditional Onggi potters.

NAOMI DALGLISH grew up in Bloomington, Indiana, and received her BA from Earlham College.

Michael and Naomi live and work in the small town of Bandana in the mountains of western North Carolina.

House Box
wood-fired local clay
with alkaline glazes
12" h x 4½" w x 4½" d
2007



Victoria Christen

“Over the eight years that I have been working in the Northwest, I have seen changes in my work, mostly in the way that I treat the surface of my pots. My plates have become canvases on which I draw, attempting to capture a moment that I experience in the garden: the cherry blossoms floating on the surface of the pond, the wind in the branches.”

VICTORIA CHRISTEN was born in 1955 in Glendive, Montana. She received a BS in K-12 education with a composite art major from Valley City State College in North Dakota. She then went on to earn her MFA in studio arts from the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis. Victoria works as a studio potter, teaching at the University of Portland, Oregon, and presenting workshops around the country.

Lidded Jar
soda-fired to cone 6
7½" h x 5½" w x 5½" d
2007



Josh Copus

“My work with ceramics begins with the clay. By using local materials dug from the river bottoms and mountainsides of western North Carolina, my work gains a connection to place and establishes the materials as a valuable source of influence. However, the physical properties of my materials are not as unique as my experience of using them, and it is the increased participation in the creative process that I have come to value most. There is no real beauty without character, and like the clay that I use to make them, my pots are reflections of my character. As a human being, I am accepting of impression, and each pot I make represents my personality, experiences, and my dreams.”

JOSH COPUS was raised in a close-knit community of farmers and artisans in Floyd County, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of southwestern Virginia. The local traditions of crafts and agriculture, blended with the new ideas and outlook of the alternative community, form the basis of Josh's life philosophy and instill an appreciation for art and nature that strongly influences his current work in ceramics. Josh has developed a personally significant approach to making pottery that values the importance of local materials through his studies of folk potteries throughout the world, focusing specifically on the ceramics traditions of Korea, Japan, England, and North Carolina. Since graduating from UNCA in fall 2007, Josh has continued his involvement in the Clay Space Co-op, a cooperative studio that he founded in the River Arts District of Asheville during 2003. He has also begun establishing his own pottery studio on a newly purchased piece of land in Marshall, North Carolina.

Teabowl

wood-fired local pipe
clay, rice hull ash glaze
2½" h x 6" w x 6" d
2007



Bruce Dehnert

“I am interested in making pots that serve utilitarian purposes but that carry my observations on personal history, culture, and the processes by which my work is formed. Using my Norwegian heritage and my wife’s Sikh heritage as a starting point for the generation of ‘spliced’ motifs, I also allow for glazes that melt, drip, and obscure what has come before. Additionally, my father was an architect whose designs incorporated organic as well as hard, geometric languages; I have tried to bring references to his architecture into my work. For example, my GT2400s, or gin and tonic cups, combine a soft, organic upper portion with a more industrial lower foot region. These contrasting sensibilities continue to feed my passion for making.”

BRUCE DEHNERT received his MFA in ceramics at Alfred University. Beginning his career as a production potter in Georgia, Bruce later opened a pottery studio in his home state of Wyoming, where he produced functional pottery. In 1987, he moved to New York City to teach at Hunter College and Parsons School of Art & Design. He is head of ceramics at Peters Valley Craft Center in Layton, New Jersey. Bruce’s work is in many collections including the White House in Washington, D.C., The Dowse Museum in New Zealand, Yixing Museum of Ceramic Art in China, and The Nicolaysen and State Museums in Wyoming. He has exhibited internationally, receiving a number of awards including three Fletcher Challenge International Ceramics Awards. Bruce’s work has been in many publications; several books have also featured his work.

GT2400s
wood-fired porcelain
5" h x 5" w x 5" d
2007



Josh DeWeese

“I am interested in how pots can be used every day to bring art into our lives, enhancing our experience with food, adorning our homes, and providing a necessary ritual to nourish our soul and mind as well as our bodies. I try to make pottery that is successful in several ways: comfortable to use, enjoyable to look at, and interesting to think about. Perhaps pottery’s greatest power lies in its association with the human body and with being human. The language of pottery is the language of the body, with necks and feet, bellies and shoulders, and lips to touch our lips. The intimate relationship that develops with use strengthens this association... the pots become... reflections of our humanness and help give meaning to our lives.”

JOSH DEWEESE was born in 1963 in Bozeman, Montana. He teaches ceramics at Montana State University in Bozeman, where he and his wife Rosalie Wynkoop have recently built a home and studio. DeWeese served as resident director of the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts in Helena, Montana from 1992-2006. He holds an MFA from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred, and a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute. DeWeese has exhibited and taught workshops internationally, and his work is included in numerous public and private collections.

Covered Jar
soda-fired stoneware
9½" h x 9" w x 9" d
2007



Kowkie Durst

“I imagine my pots in someone's home, tossed from sink to table to shelf. I want them to live with someone and become a part of their everyday life. The physical connection—lips, hands, eyes—that engages a user with the object is essential to the creation of meaning for pottery. The drawings on my pots are cartoonlike abstractions of our contemporary cultural icons, which I use to narrate our intimate relationship with everyday objects as well as to capture everyday moments that may sometimes be overlooked.”

KOWKIE DURST was born in 1968 in Red Hook, New York. She received her BA from Tulane University in 1990 and her MFA from Pennsylvania State University in 2001. Kowkie resides in Portland, Oregon, and when not making pottery in her studio, she teaches part-time at the Oregon College of Art and Craft and Clark College in Vancouver, Washington.

Teapot
salt-fired porcelain
7" h x 6" w x 5" d
2007



Sanam Emami

“My pottery focuses on the potential of function, ornament, and pattern to interact and blur the line between historical conventions and contemporary life. The primary sources of inspiration in my pots are derived from patterns in Iranian and Islamic art and architecture. These patterns are based on elaborate geometric interpretations of nature that, when broken down and taken apart, are often comprised of simple shapes such as the square, the circle, and the triangle. Elements of floral motifs and architectural drawings appear alongside the Islamic patterns, and imbue the work with an imagined sense of time and place. The layers of colors and imagery are drawn from different cultures and time periods. The juxtaposition of ideas and images, east and west, old and new are revealed through the functional pot and reflect my own history of moving through cultures and continents.”

SANAM EMAMI was born in 1971 in Tehran, Iran. She has lived in London, Las Vegas, and McLean, Virginia. In 1993, she received a BA in history—with a minor in ceramics—from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. She completed post-baccalaureate studies at the University of Colorado in Boulder before heading to Alfred University for an MFA in ceramics. Sanam resides in Fort Collins, Colorado, where she is an assistant professor at Colorado State University.

Pitcher & Serving Dish
porcelain, silk-screened
imagery, glaze
12" h x 11" w x 11" d
2007



Willem Gebben

“It is important for me to develop an understanding of the materials I use; because of this, I mix and process my own clay and glazes. I enjoy firing my pots in a wood-fueled kiln, a tradition that goes back thousands of years; I appreciate the connection to those traditions. It is also important for me to work within the traditional role of the potter, making pots that are meant to be used. This aspect of craft separates it from other arts, such as painting or sculpture, for it is through touch and use that communication between the object and the user occurs. In this age of increasing dependence on machine-made objects and the worship of technology, I feel it is very important to still make and use handmade objects as a way for us to communicate with each other.”

WILLEM GEBBEN was born in 1951 in Delft, Netherlands. Gebben attended Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, and served as an apprentice to David Eeles at Shepherds Well Pottery in Dorset, UK. He resides in Colfax, Wisconsin, where he is a full-time potter, producing wood-fired stoneware and porcelain vessels. He has participated in various juried and invitational exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad. His work is in private and public collections.

Tea Pot
wood-fired stoneware,
ash glaze, cone 9
6" h x 7" w x 6" d
2007



Jim Koudelka

“This body of work, *Carnival*, is my interpretation of the overall sensations of the sounds and sights of a carnival spectacle manifested in and on functional vessels. I use bowl forms to represent the arenas, tents, and gathering places of the carnival. The jars, bottles, and cups are the performers and participants. A variety of playful line drawings, geometric shapes, patterns, and vivid colors also reference the visual environments, activities, and participants of the exuberant carnival atmosphere. The wheel-thrown porcelain forms are results of a creative and technical dance between material, process, and myself; it is somewhat choreographed but is also improvisational. Paintings by abstract artists such as Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and Joan Miró inspire some of my style. The richness and complexity of each vessel’s surface involves at least seven steps.”

JIM KOUDELKA was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He received his BFA from Ohio University and his MFA from Indiana University. He is a professor in ceramics at the Oregon College of Art and Craft (OCAC) in Portland, Oregon, having taught there for the past 19 years. Jim has been an artist-in-residence at The Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana, the Bullseye Glass Connection in Portland, Oregon, and Senior Resident at OCAC. His work has been exhibited in numerous national and regional shows, receiving honors and awards, and has been published in a variety of books and magazines. Jim’s recent functional work explores the vessel as a painting in the round, with the form becoming a sculpted three-dimensional canvas.

Carnival Jar
soda-fired porcelain
13" w x 8" h x 7" d
2007



George McCauley

“The sources and influences for my work are complex and varied. I grew up steeped in the mystical traditions of Greece, paralleled by life in the Deep South. My first art course came during my freshman year in undergraduate school in 1967; a class in ceramics set me on a path from which I have yet to deviate. Ritual, mysticism, the folk arts, my heritage as a Greek, and experiences from my travels have played an increasingly prominent role in my work. Although I am primarily a ceramic artist, I work in other materials as well—usually wood and metal—and typically I combine these in some fashion. Without regard to media or object, my work is a personal narrative, an expression of my feelings. I am aware that this approach is specific and not always evident to the viewer. That is, however, not a deterrent to my process. With consideration of ceramic history, the folk arts, ritual, and mythology, I continue to rely on my own work for inspiration.”

GEORGE MCCAULEY, a Greek American potter born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1947, has had 23 solo shows and has been included in 165 exhibitions. The recipient of three National Endowment for the Arts grants and the prestigious Roy Acuff Chair of Excellence for the Arts at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, his pottery and sculpture are included in 47 international collections in 10 countries. His work has been featured in numerous books and periodicals, as well as in film, television, and radio. Mr. McCauley maintains a studio at his home in Helena, Montana where he makes colorful earthenware pots and narrative sculpture, and he teaches at the Appalachian Center for Craft. His new sculptural work is featured in the September 2007 issue of *Ceramics: Art and Perception*. He has taught and conducted workshops internationally.

*She's Got Something
on Her Mind*
earthenware
16" diameter
2007



Andrew Martin

“Beauty is the heart of the work. Drawing it into the world is a mystery, a dance of sorts. Pots aren't made as much as they appear out of process of working and receiving unseen and unknowable forces that manifest as pots. As more pots appear, a sense of gratitude falls from the process as appreciation. Their source imbues them with a magnitude of its own mystery and strengthens as each subsequent pot passes from the process to those that will use it. The collision of beauty-on-beauty is an amplification of human and creative energy sent through filtering channels of brain, experience, and abstractions of memory. How the pots emerge as form and are ‘clothed’ by brush marks, glaze, and color is dependent on those channels remaining open, allowing what is yet unknown or unseen to appear from the ever-riffing river of what is beautiful.”

ANDREW MARTIN received his MFA from Alfred University and his BFA from Kansas City Art Institute. He has shown throughout the country and taught at places from Anderson Ranch in Colorado to Penland in North Carolina. His inspirations come from Chinese, Japanese, and Middle Eastern ceramics. He is the author of a definitive book on mold making for ceramic artists, and is the recipient of two NEA fellowships for artists.

Abundant
slip-cast porcelain,
electric fired, cone 7
13" h x 11" w x 14" d
2006



Frank Martin

“The focus of my work explores the possibility of going beyond the limits of utility. Through the use of color and form, an investigation of the division and the reassembling of disparate elements is considered either for special celebration or for everyday use. I am inspired by the results of process, the interactions of color and form, and the physiognomic perception of an object. In my work, intent of function is vital and inescapable. My goal is to challenge the viewer's notion of an object's ‘use,’ while assuring that the vessel performs flawlessly in its function and beautifully in its appearance.”

FRANK MARTIN earned his MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art. He has taught at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Rhode Island School of Design, The State University of New York at New Paltz, and was departmental director at Chautauqua School of Art, Worcester Center for Crafts, and the 92nd Street YM-YWHA in Manhattan, New York. Martin has been associate professor of art at the University of Tennessee since 2001. His work was chosen for the Young Americans Exhibition at the Museum of American Craft (1988) and is in the collection of the Charles A. Wusum Museum of Fine Arts in Racine, Wisconsin. His work has been included in numerous articles and publications.

Bowl
china clay
3½" h x 8" w x 6" d
2007



Lorna Meaden

“I am drawn to work that is rich in ornamentation, with lavish use of materials—both scarce in a culture of mass production. Historical sources for my work include 18th-century European manufactured porcelain and silver. I draw from these sources, as they are connected to my heritage, and comfortingly nostalgic to the home where I grew up. They are appealing in their elegance of form, utility, and abundance in decoration; the practical and the extravagant. My forms suggest sophistication through their sense of lift and use of exaggerated feet, in contrast to their playful gesture of stance, and the use of animated attachments. My approach to the surface of the work comes from the sensibility of a seamstress; I look at clothing and costume as sources for embellishment, referencing stripes, polka dots, and patterns from the jester costume, such as the diamond.”

LORNA MEADEN grew up in the western Chicago suburb of La Grange. She learned to use the potter's wheel in high school, and then went to college for two years at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois. When she was 20 years old, Lorna moved to southwest Colorado and studied ceramics at Fort Lewis College. After receiving a BA in 1994, she established a studio in Durango. In 2000, she built a kiln and established a community clay center—The Durango Clay Center—where she taught classes and made pots. Lorna earned an MFA in ceramics from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio in 2005. She has recently been a resident artist at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana, and at Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Snowmass Village, Colorado. She is a studio potter in Durango, Colorado.

Coffee Pot
soda-fired porcelain,
cone 10
9" h x 6" w x 3" d
2007



Alleghany Meadows

“Repetition and rhythm in my studio process are similar to autumn leaves on the forest floor, tracks of a bird in wet sand, ice crystals on a frozen stream—such patterns, although composed of repetitive elements, continually change without exactly repeating themselves. I am fascinated by the physical responsiveness of porcelain to my touch, by the plasticity of lines, and the transformation from fluid to solid. The salt-firing process brings together the pliability of wet clay and the rigidity of fired pieces. It adds fluidity to glazes, sliding the concentration of glaze from edges and creating pools on raised areas of the forms.”

ALLEGHANY MEADOWS is a studio potter in Carbondale, Colorado. He received his MFA from New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University; apprenticed with Takashi Nakazato in Karatsu, Japan; received a Watson Foundation Fellowship for field study of potters in Nepal; and was an artist-in-residence at Anderson Ranch Arts Center. Alleghany has presented lectures and workshops at Penland School of Crafts, Anderson Ranch, and Haystack, and exhibits nationally. He is the founder of Artstream Nomadic Gallery, cofounder of Harvey/Meadows Gallery in Aspen, and cofounder of Studio for Arts and Works in Carbondale, Colorado.

Place Setting
porcelain soda-fired
to cone 10
6" h x 11" d
2007



Matthew Metz

“My work is influenced by a variety of sources: Asian pottery traditions, Greek and Roman pots, early American decorative arts, face jugs, and other folk traditions. The images on my pots are decorative. Our culture tends to look at decoration as embellishment without meaning—frosting on the cake. While I resist applying direct narrative and literal definition to my iconography, the patterns and images I choose come from my life and experience. Interest in the natural sciences (evolutionary biology, ethology) and history (archaeology, physical culture) find their way, obliquely, into the work. A coffee cup has as much capacity to carry meaning as any other form of expression.”

MATTHEW METZ was born in 1961 in Kendallville, Indiana. He received his BFA in 1983 from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, and his MFA in 1986 from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. He makes ceramics full-time in Alfred Station, New York. Matthew recently built a new studio and kiln that he shares with his wife, potter, and educator, Linda Sikora.

Lidded jar
wheel-thrown
wood-fired porcelain
8" h x 5" w x 5" d
2007



Georgette Ore

“Ms. Ore explains that the recent bent of her pottery has been inspired by a line from the classic motion picture, *The Graduate*, wherein it is suggested to Benjamin that the future is in plastics. She treats her clay as if it were plastic, heated and malleable. Her pottery appears off-handed and, to some eyes, even inept. Yet upon careful examination, it is clear that each vessel begins as an exquisitely wheel-thrown piece of work which is then animated and transformed by the power of her imagination and her wily fingers.”

GEORGETTE ORE is vague about her age and her past, except to say that she was born in the South and grew up on the Gulf. A guess puts her somewhere between middle age and early retirement, depending on the light and the time of day. She has worked in the pottery field for some time, moving frequently and living an artist's life as America's perpetual guest.

Rascal Ware
ceramic
4" h x 3½" w x 3½" d
2007



Acknowledgements

PARKLAND ART GALLERY had the first State of the Art National Ceramics Biennial in 1996. Since that time, over 100 artists have participated in this tradition. Lisa Orr curates this year's exhibit and the focus is on form and interaction. As a professional potter for close to 25 years, her breadth of knowledge coupled with her fresh response in selecting the artists has given Tactile Poetry its own distinct historical value. The exhibit also illustrates the variety of artwork being made in contemporary ceramics. Selected from all over the country, the artists included in the exhibition speak to the poetics of form and the innate physical desire to make objects that feel wonderful to touch and to use.

Parkland Art Gallery would like to thank the participating artists, Harvey Meadows Gallery for generously loaning artwork, and Lisa Orr for being such an insightful and committed visiting curator. Without the support of our patrons and funding from the Illinois Arts Council this catalog would not be possible; Paul Young, associate professor in Graphic Design, who generously donated his time and talent to design the catalog and promotional material; and Parkland College faculty, staff, and administration. Emily Klein deserves special mention, as the assistant to the director, for her humor, continual focus and overall efficiency in collecting the information necessary for this project; and last, but not least all, of the dedicated and enthusiastic students and lifelong learners who visit the gallery and recognize the importance of art.

—Lisa Costello, Parkland Art Gallery director



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Cover: Lorna Meadon. *Coffee Pot*, soda-fired porcelain, cone 10, 9" h x 6" w x 3" d (2007)

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