

My Art Forms

Most of my life I have been involved in various types of so-called arts & crafts, in fact one of my earliest memories is of making clay jack-o-lanterns in kindergarten. I have done leather work, lapidary, copper enamel, copper tool, ceramic tile, reed basketry, lanyard weaving, and other crafts in elementary and jr. high. I learned photography while in high school, and dental laboratory in the Air Force (which taught me the principles of lost wax casting of plastic, gold & stainless steel.) I learned to slip cast clay while in the Air Force, and to throw pots in my first semester at Central Michigan University. When I returned to Central after graduation in 1976, I first added an art minor to my teaching degree. I started in ceramics and was gradually drawn into sculpture over the next few years, until I had a dual concentration in both. My road as an artist started in functional ceramics, led into sculptural ceramics, to sculpture in clay, through some video experiments, into computer graphics, and finally into Web Design.

General

Most of my work consists of wheel thrown porcelain forms based on organic patterns of microscopic and macroscopic organisms. Some are based on seed pods, teeth, pollen, sea animals, squash, and even watermelon, but as the development proceeds, they merge and take on new forms of possible and imaginary organisms. All are hand made, one of a kind pieces, usually done in a series, so there might be some similarity among some pieces, but no two are ever exactly alike.

Seed Pods

For most of my life, I have been both attracted to and very allergic to, large numbers of trees, grasses, and bushes. I have refused to become trapped indoors just because of these allergies, and as I began to develop my own sculptural forms, I examined both macroscopic and microscopic forms in nature. By examining the form and structure of seeds and other natural objects, I found great beauty in these simple forms, and developed simple organic sculptural designs, based on slightly abstract versions of these natural objects.

Teeth

Because I had a great deal of dental anatomy at one time, I decided to do some teeth, and try to run it into abstract. So I threw a bicuspid, molar and third molar. I liked them and did just enough detail to hint at teeth. Later I did a few in the white stone ware. But I hesitated continuing into the direction I had started, because it seemed to lead through detail into funk art. I instead tried to be less detailed, more vague and abstract, but I didn't like the product and scraped most of the attempts after looking at them awhile. I may come back to this in the future, possibly with porcelain.

Gumball Machines

I had been looking at gumball machines for some time, trying to figure out how the mechanism worked. Finally several years ago I saw a few wooden machine in the bookstore and it showed the mechanism, so I sketched them and started playing with the ideas on paper and I worked out several ways to do it, simplifying it more and more until I made one out of scraps of wood. Eventually I decided to develop it into a sculptural form, while keeping the functional aspect. I think that working with wood puts certain limits on me, while ceramics could really set me free. I also need to break away from the glass wine bottles too, into another form such as porcelain bottles or hand blown glass, maybe one day. I stopped making them after a local shop class teacher copied some of my designs and started having his class produce them as shop projects. This taught me the value of registering copyrights with the federal copyright office.

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