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A Potter's Point of View

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A POTTER'S POINT OF VIEW

Kathy J. Baldwin, B. S. Ed.

A Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Lindenwood College
In Partial Fullfillment of the
Requirements for the
Degree of Master of
Art

1990



ABSTRACT

A mature artistic style in ceramics has the capability of reflecting the potter's ideas, feelings, and philosophy. Many influences may effect the formation of this style. As the artist reacts to various influences a new level of development or maturity may begin. The work displayed in my Graduate Exhibition at Lindenwood College represents six phases of development. Skill in creating wheel-thrown pottery was developed in the first phase by doing production pottery work. The technique of faceting was introduced in the second phase as a result of the influence of Rosalyn Tynge. A more sophisticated appearance was achieved through the use of applied design and airbrush technique in the third phase. Marla Martinez and work produced by Japanese artists influenced surface design in the fourth and fifth phases. Individual style emerged in the final phase by altering the clay body. An analysis of each phase in the evolution of my artistic style is presented in the following thesis.

A POTTER'S POINT OF VIEW

Kathy J. Baldwin, B. S. Ed.

A Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of
the Graduate School of Lindenwood College
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Degree of Master of
Art

1990

COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY:

Professor Dean Eckert

Professor John Wehmer

Professor John Pohlman

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Committee In Charge of Candidacy	1
II.	Introduction	1
III.	A Potter's Point of View	3
IV.	Design Problems and Evolution of Style	
	A. The Production Potter	7
	B. Introduction to Faceting	19
	C. Introduction to Applied Design and Airbrush Technique	24
	D. Pattern Design Influenced by Maria Martinez	26
	E. The Theme of Nature as Influenced by Japanese Aesthetics	28
	F. Altering the Clay Body	32
V.	Conclusion	39
VI.	Notes	41
VII.	Glossary of Terms	42
VIII.	Slide Registry of Works Exhibited	44
VIV.	Vita Auctoris	46

INTRODUCTION

This thesis paper is presented as part of the culminating project which also includes my Graduate Exhibition held in the Harry D. Hendren Gallery, at Lindenwood College, from January 7-21, 1990. The exhibition consists of thirty-three pieces of stoneware pottery constructed over a period of four years while working toward a Master of Art degree.

The goals in pursuing a Master of Art degree were three-fold. First, was to increase historical knowledge of ceramics as well as to gain a broader understanding of work by contemporary ceramists. Second, was to become proficient in creating three-dimensional works taking the form of wheel-thrown pottery. Third, was to develop an individual style which is an expression of the inner self.

To achieve excellence in the field of ceramics one must have an understanding of the elements of art and how they relate to three-dimensional pottery. It is important that the pot be proportioned in such a way as to create a sense of balance. Texture and pattern should enhance rather than disrupt the form. The rhythm

of the pot should help the observer's eye to move easily throughout the composition. Glaze color should be used to express an idea or feeling.

In viewing the artwork presented one will discover how other artists influenced the manner in which these elements were applied. A discovery should also be made as to how the artist's personal style evolved in these works.

A POTTER'S POINT OF VIEW

The decision to study pottery in lieu of ceramic sculpture as a vehicle for creative energy originates from a distinction between the two. Ceramic sculpture makes use of additive or subtractive processes to communicate and express artistic ideas. Because pottery is growth by evolution, it becomes an extension of the total self. Both the clay and the potter go through a metamorphosis as the clay changes from one form to another. Truly, the clay and potter become one, each interacting with one another. In his book "Raku Pottery" Robert Plepenberg writes, "Potting is more than technique, it is more than the forming of clay and the making of objects. It is in many ways, the forming of the self." (1)

Reflecting upon the creative process, the potter begins to question, "Am I molding the clay or is the clay molding me?" Surely both resolutions are true. As the potter molds and alters the clay, the creating process molds and alters the potter. Changes are made in keeping with the potter's views of his work and life.

Pottery comes from deep within the core of the potter's soul. The essence of the inner self is exposed and becomes vulnerable to the world. When the potter reaches deep into the body of clay and begins to pull it is as if the potter is reaching into his soul and pulling life from it. This is not just a creation but a rebirth of the self. The whole body is used to create a work of art. The potter's feet are used to kick the flywheel, while every muscle in the upper body is employed in the pulling and forming of the pot. Terms which are used in describing pottery exemplify that clay is an extension of the self. The foot, lip, neck, belly, and shoulder are body parts of both the artist and the artwork.

Procedures used to ready clay for throwing resemble one's attempts to achieve a future and harmonious life. All the ingredients of clay are mixed evenly, producing a body that is ready for further evolution. Centering the clay and getting one's life in order parallel each other. When life is on center everything becomes even and uniform just as the walls of the pot become uniform in thickness and in height.

Pottery is not only a reflection of the artist's ideas or feelings, it is also a

reflection of the soul; as the creating processes change and evolve from one form to another, there is a evolution in style as well as an evolution of the self.

Ceramic sculpture is not simply hung on the wall or placed on a pedestal to be viewed and admired; it becomes a part of the user's life. The potter wants the user to be wholly involved with the piece as an extension of the self. Through the basic acts of eating and drinking, the ware becomes a vessel from which life is sustained. The favorite cup, created from the soul, can become a part of the person using it. Each time the cup is used, its line, shape and movement are contemplated. When held, the hands mold around the ware, discover its form, and then interlock with the handle. Drinking is more pleasurable when it is done from creative ware. Robert Plepenberg explains this concept when he describes the interaction of people with his pottery, "They quietly look inside the piece, turn it over, inspect the foot, follow the glaze, and then carefully return the pot to rest. I often sense that they are looking for some insights into the maker."⁽²⁾ When becoming involved with and gaining knowledge about a piece of pottery through

the sense of touch, one gains knowledge and insight into the potter's inner self. This knowledge completes the cycle of interaction between clay, artist, and user.

DESIGN PROBLEMS AND EVOLUTION OF STYLE

The Production Potter

In order to become proficient in throwing and finishing pots of high quality, the potter must first throw repeatedly to become a production potter. My first two years of graduate study were spent doing production pottery work; ten to twenty pieces of varying forms and functions were completed. With each new piece knowledge was gained about how various finger movements, tool techniques, or glaze applications resulted in variations in form or surface design. It is this type of practice that fine tunes skill and enables a potter to produce close fitting lids that rest on uniform flanges, spouts that pour easily and do not drip, and handles that not only conform to the shape of the pot but also make for easy drinking and pouring. David Bernard stressed the importance of productive pottery in a workshop held at the St. Louis Community College. "The repetitive making of form known as production pottery is really the only way to become skilled enough to express oneself eloquently, just as other art disciplines such as dance and music

require constant practice." (3) Through practice there is a natural growth of technique and skill leading to individual expression. Rhythm which is so essential in producing a pot with "life" becomes much more refined. Each series of pots is created as an investigation of an idea.

"Taupe Jar" (slide 1) was an investigation of the circular shape with the use of a lid. The intention was to create a functional ware that would appear to float up and around from the bottom to the lip of the pot in a curved motion; the lid was designed to complete the circular form. To achieve this goal it was essential to choose an appropriate clay, one which had sufficient plasticity and strength to be thrown as very thin ware. After experimenting with many clays a satisfactory clay was found. A pre-mixed commercial, stoneware clay that fired from cone 5 to cone 6 (2201-2246 degrees Fahrenheit) could be worked and reworked continuously without collapsing.

Even though the clay was pre-mixed and in a wet state, preparing the clay through wedging is necessary to assure that the clay contains no air pockets. Spiral kneading is the method used in the wedging process. While kneading, pressure to

collapse air pockets is exerted on the clay with the right hand pushing down; as the clay is rolled forward, the left hand holds the clay in place as it is moved in a circular motion. A cone or spiral shape results from the wedging (fig. 1). The four-pound ball of clay is then ready to be centered on the bat of the potter's wheel. To center the clay one must apply pressure vertically and/or horizontally to a ball of clay causing it to revolve in the middle or center of the bat (fig. 2). Steadiness of the arms and hands are essential in centering a ball of clay. Locking the elbows into the hip joint and working the arms as if they are a wooden brace is the method used to achieve this steadiness. The entire body leans into the clay and acts as a single unit. The clay must be centered to ensure that the walls of the pot will be of uniform thickness and height.

Opening the clay is the next step in forming the Jar. The clay is opened up by locking the thumbs together at the joints, holding the hands in a vertical position (fingers resting outside of the clay), and pushing the thumbs down into the clay to make a depression (fig. 3). To expand the opening, pressure is applied from the inside

forcing the opening to become wider and the walls of the vessel to emerge (fig. 4).

As in most thrown forms, a cylinder is pulled from the opened clay. While bracing the inside wall, pressure is applied (with the use of a wet sponge for lubrication) from the outside of the clay with the right hand. Both hands move in an upward motion simultaneously (fig. 5). At least four pulls are usually needed to obtain the correct height for the cylinder. A circular form begins to take shape when pressure is first exerted at the bottom of the cylinder from the inside and then continues in a flowing even manner, slowly reversing to the outside of the wall (fig. 6). The shoulder and lip complete the form, adding emphasis to the circular shape. The upturned flange is formed by splitting the lip and pushing down on the inside surface with the thumb.



(fig. 1)
Spiral wedging
causes the clay
to become cone
shaped.



(fig. 2)
Centering the
clay.



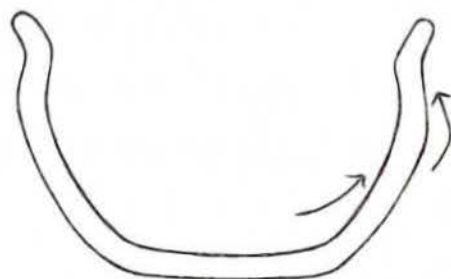
(fig. 3)
Opening the
clay.

(fig. 4)
To expand the opening,
pressure is applied
from the inside forcing
the opening to become
wider and the walls of
the vessel to emerge.



(fig. 5)
Both hands move
in an upward
motion
simultaneously
to pull a
cylinder.

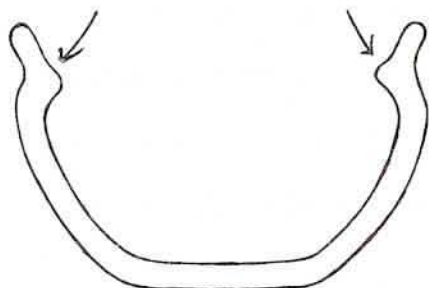
(fig. 6)
Pressure is first
exerted at the
bottom of the cylinder,
then reverses to the
outside of the wall.



The flange serves as a ledge on which the lid may rest (fig. 7).

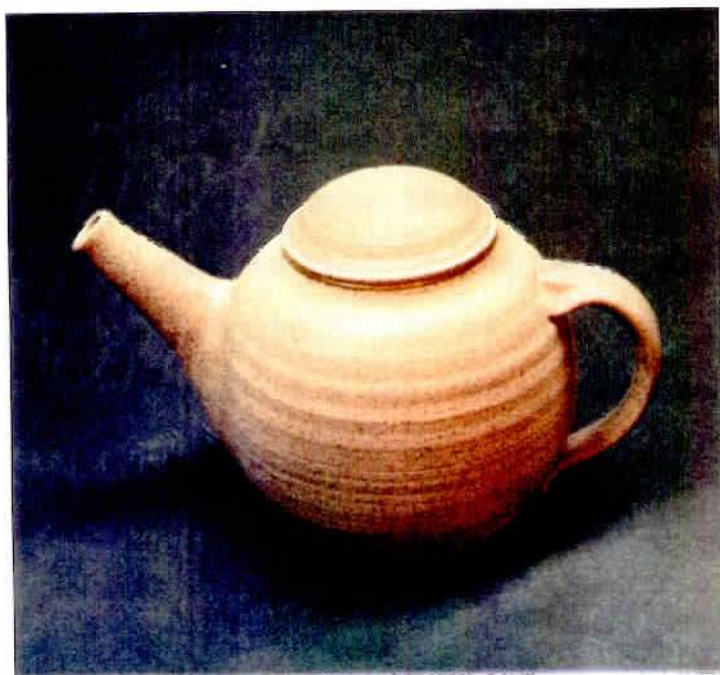
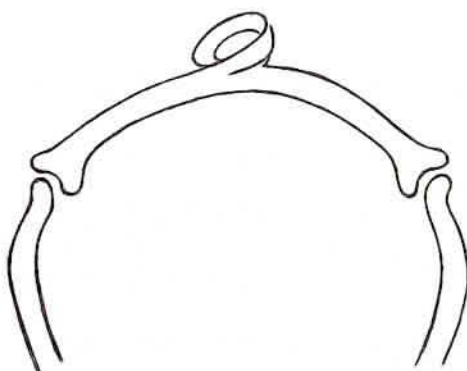
Because lids are much flatter forms, the lid of "Taupe Jar" was thrown in a manner similar to a plate. After one-half pound of clay was centered, a very low cylinder was thrown and pulled outward instead of upward. With the use of callipers the lid was measured and trimmed for a tight fit. As a finishing touch, and to accentuate the circular form, a loop was pulled from a ball of clay and attached to the lid to serve as a handle.

"Taupe Jar II" (slide 2) was the second in a series of three done to explore the circular form. To create a slight variation in this circular form, pressure was applied on the inside surface of the shoulder causing the jar to become somewhat elongated. When viewing this pot the eye moves upward in a curved motion, but the crest of the curve now lies at the shoulder area. In an attempt to create a more continuous movement the lip of the jar was finished without a flange. Instead the flange was constructed on the underside of the lid, allowing the lid to be flush with the lip and virtually invisible (fig. 8).



(fig. 7)
A flange constructed
on the lip of the pot.

(fig. 8)
A flange constructed
on the lid.



(fig. 9)
A dome shaped
lid.

Thus the eye could move up into the curve of the lid without interruption. Again a loop handle, reminiscent of the curve in a grape vine, was attached to the lid. The ends of the loop were finished in such a way as to create a line which leads the eye to follow a path back down into the pot.

"Taupe Teapot" (slide 3) marked the final investigation in this series. Like Jars I and II, "Taupe Teapot" was an interpretation of the circular form. Because the lid for the teapot needed to be smaller, the body of the teapot became more spherical. Again the flange was located on the lid. The lid was thrown as a dome to enhance the spherical body. The edges of the lid slightly overlap the lip of the opening (fig. 9). To make sure that the shape of the lid complemented that of the body, the lid was trimmed while resting on the teapot.

Spouts are intricate, important parts of a teapot. They are thrown as a cone shape tapered toward the top. When the clay is leather hard, a diagonal cut is made at the base of the spout allowing the spout to fit at a sixty degree angle on the body of the pot. Careful planning must be taken when the spout is fitted to the body. When

the correct position is found the body is marked and several small circles are cut to serve as a strainer for tea (fig. 10). To assure proper pouring the conical spout is positioned so that the end is slightly higher than the opening of the body. The spout is then attached in such a way that it appears to grow from the body (fig. 11).

The final step in the making of the teapot is forming the handle. The handle is first pulled from a ball of clay, and then attached to the teapot (fig. 12). It appears to grow out of the pot and flow back into it at the bottom of the circular body. The curve of the handle complements that of the spout, thus completing the circular design of the teapot.

In order for all three pots in this series to be functional, a glaze was applied to seal the clay and make it water tight. Taupe, a speckled matt glaze, was chosen for its purple tone; its color and texture completed the statement that this series of pots tried to convey. Since this glaze could be fired at cone 6, it vitrified the clay, sealing the pot and enhancing the outside surface.

(fig. 10)
Several small circles
are cut to serve as a
strainer for tea.



(fig.11)
The
spout is
positioned
so that the end is
slightly higher than
the opening of the body.

(fig. 12)
The handle is pulled
from a ball of clay.



With each interpretation of the circular form, knowledge was gained about how certain changes in form could consciously control movement of the viewer's eye. Because of this knowledge, closer attention was paid to how the eye moves when viewing works by other ceramists.

Introduction to Faceting

The work of Rosalyn Tynge inspired a series of faceted teapots. Faceting modifies surface design by slicing off thin layers of clay, leaving flat planes with sharp edges. These sharp edges create crisp lines which control eye movement. When viewing examples of Rosalyn Tynge's work entitled "Porcelain Vases" I became intrigued by the movement in her work and gained an appreciation of faceted wares. "White Stoneware Teapot" and "Stoneware Teapot" were the result of this influence.

"Stoneware Teapot" (slide 4) was first thrown as a low cylinder form. To facilitate faceting the shoulder of the cylinder was flattened. The combined action of slicing the clay (with a wire) while slowly turning the wheelhead created a movement typical to that seen in Rosalyn Tynge's work. Care must be taken when faceting a clay body. The thickness of the slice must be precise or the wire will cut through the pot. Each cut must be equal in width in order for the pot to appear uniform (fig. 13). The spout must be positioned in such a way the movement in line is enhanced rather than disrupted.



(fig. 13)
The width and thickness
of the faceted slice
must be precise.



(fig. 14)
The handle was first
thrown then attached
to the upper portion
of the pot.

The lid of "Stoneware Teapot" resembles that of a small bowl. The recessed area gives weight to the lid and holds it in place when pouring. Unlike "Taupe teapot", the handle was first thrown then attached to the upper portion of the pot (fig. 14). The curve of the handle induces a continuous eye movement throughout the pot.

The technique of faceting is also employed in "White Stoneware Teapot" (slide 5). Facets on this teapot are wider and result in the body appearing square-like. "White Stoneware" makes use of a cane handle that wraps around loops formed from coils of clay. Again the curve of the handle continues the eye movement created by the faceted edge.

The lid for "White Stoneware Teapot" duplicates that of "Stoneware Teapot" in size and shape. To facilitate lifting, a small knob-like handle was thrown inside the lid.

Both teapots are glazed with Alfred's Blue and Seafoam White, but the applications differ. A thin layer of Seafoam White was first brushed on "Stoneware Teapot." Alfred's Blue was then applied by brush as a second layer. When fired the two coats fused to create a transparent turquoise glaze. "White Stoneware Teapot" was

dipped in Seafoam White then dipped again in Alfred's Blue. The angle at which it was dipped contrasted to that of the faceted edge. There was also a sharp contrast in color. This contrast added a dramatic element to the teapot.

Faceting created another challenge in controlling the movement of the eye. The sharp diagonal cuts made by faceting create a masculine appearance in contrast to earlier feminine circular forms.

Introduction to Applied Design and Airbrush Technique

Additive and subtractive processes characteristic of ceramic sculpture are employed in pottery in the form of applied and incised design. Applied design adds clay to produce projecting relief areas while incising removes clay and forms sunken relief areas. These decorative techniques were used in "Flower And Leaf Vase" (slide 6) to communicate a feeling of personal attachment to a rose bush. The intention was to establish a sense of dimension to a basic cylindrical form by incorporating relief design. The leaves and flower emerge from the cylinder and become the relief motifs in this composition. Incised grass serves as a background and heightens the sense of depth. Because the decorative design follows the concave shape of the cylinder, unity in shape and design result.

In my earlier work glaze was treated not as an important factor since the final success of a pot was at the mercy of the glaze. This attitude changed with the creation of "Flower And Leaf Vase." To achieve an illusion of depth greater control of glaze application was necessary. Using

an airbrush to apply glaze permitted more control over the glazing process. By this technique thick layers of Alphred's Blue could be gradually blended over a layer of Seafoam White. Dark tones in the leaves and flower helped establish these areas as centers of interest. The use of this glaze created an overall harmonious composition.

Another example of airbrush technique is "Jar With Lid" (slide 7). The control of the airbrush allowed a gradual change in color. Alphred's Blue appears dark and opaque at the top of the pot then slowly is transformed into a light transparent tone. The airbrush technique increased the possibilities of innovative glazing. This technique prompted a conscious effort to include glazing in planning of the overall design.

Pattern Design Influenced by Maria
Martinez

Through study and viewing her pottery first-hand I have gained a great respect for the work of Maria Martinez. Her black-on-black polychrome plate entitled "Black Matte Plate With Feather Design" has had an impact on my work. It makes use of an unusual feather design that encompasses the entire plate and allows the eye to follow the feather in a circular motion that is never ending and ever moving. "Bowl With Textured Design" (slide 8) is my response to Maria's feather plate. It is a shallow eleven inch bowl with four flutes which permit a break in the symmetrical shape. A band of dark Textured Tan glaze recedes into the interior of the bowl and creates a pattern reminiscent of flower petals. As in Maria's plate the repeating petal design moves the eye in a circular motion. Lines that alternate in length draw the eye to the center of the bowl. The total effect of the bowl is very satisfying.

"Globe With Texture Design" (slide 9) is an investigation of the way in which the repeated petal pattern might conform to a globe shape.

Again a large band of dark glaze surrounds the top of the pot. Instead of applying a carefully painted design, the glaze was dripped down the walls of the globe to produce a less controlled, more spontaneous feeling. Because of the thickness in application, the dark glaze formed an interesting pebble texture when fired. This design over a globe was as successful as the controlled design in the bowl.

"Ginger Jar With Textured Design" (slide 10) also makes use of the petal pattern. The long cylindrical shape accentuates the alternating lines. A lid glazed with Texture Tan completes the form.

Each pot in this series was first sprayed by airbrush with a light colored Oatmeal glaze, then painted with a dark Textured Tan glaze. The two glazes contrast in color and add an extra element to the design. Unlike in earlier work, glaze now played a major role. Rather than being a vehicle by which the ware was enhanced, it became the main idea that was being conveyed.

The Theme of Nature as Influenced by Japanese
Aesthetics

The Japanese have long been noted for their reverence of nature. It is at the core of Shinto religion. The theme of nature can be seen throughout the history of Japanese art. Animal ornaments and incised animal design appear in prehistoric Jomon pottery. Panoramic landscapes demonstrate nature in paintings completed during the Kamakura and Muromachi Periods. Decorative screens of the sixteenth to eighteenth century were filled with many varieties of plants and animals. This study of Japanese art has encouraged me to include nature as a theme in my work.

A series of bowls with incised grass motif were influenced by a late sixteenth century Shino ware entitled "Bowl With Design Of Reeds And Wild Geese." In this bowl wild geese which surround a group of weeds are given movement by the contrasting colors of glaze. A patch of white glaze against a background of blue makes a path for flight and leads the eye around to the inside of the bowl. Like the Shino ware bowl the areas of incised grass in "White And Blue Grass Bowl" (slide 11) create a similar movement. Three

blades of grass are carved into the bowl and are placed in such a way as to lead eye movement around and down into the bowl. A contrasting blue on white background helps define the image of grass. The colors are reversed in "Blue And White Grass Bowl" (slide 12). Like its counter-part the theme of nature is implied by the three blades of grass. A contrast of positive and negative designs is created when the bowls are placed side by side.

In early Shinto religion trees were considered sacred objects for worship. Trees were the major subject studied in many works of Japanese art. A seventeenth century ware entitled "Plate With Pine-Tree Design" is one study that pays homage to the tree. With the use of an overglaze enamel a brown tree with green leaves is set off by a bright yellow patterned background. The green rim of the plate becomes a frame for the entire composition. "Taupe Tree" (slide 13) was inspired by this brilliant colored ware. Like the Japanese plate it serves as a canvas on which a tree is painted. The sharpness in image is achieved by the use of a stencil. After first being bisque-fired a tree shape was cut from masking tape and adhered to the plate. An

airbrush was used to spray a thin layer of Taupe glaze to the surface of the plate. After removing the tape the raw clay body was exposed and an image of a tree was evident. Finally a thin layer of Textured Tan was brushed on the unglazed clay. A monochrome color scheme was achieved with the use of both glazes.

Japanese prints have influenced many modern artists. One of the most impressive series of prints was "The 36 Views Of Mount Fuji" by Katsushika Hokusai. These prints inspired me to create "Plate With Wave Design" (slide 14). Again, a flat plate form became the surface in which the wave was drawn. Incised lines carved in patterns simulate the curves and movement of a wave. After being bisque fired a thick layer of cream glaze was sprayed over the plate. Textured Blue Gray was then brushed over the rough waves to enhance the feeling of water.

Raku pottery is made of a light sandy clay and employs a rapid firing process. Japanese potters from the sixteenth century created this ware for use in the Japanese tea ceremony. The simple spontaneous appearance of raku reflects the spirit of the ceremony. The word raku signifies enjoyment, contentment, pleasure and happiness.

"Raku Weed Vase" (slide 15) utilizes this rapid firing method to convey a simple, rustic feeling. Carved weeds on a tall cylinder represent nature captured in a moment of time. The entire pot was glazed in Ferguson's Blue except for the incised weeds. A single gas burner kiln was used to fire the ware. When the temperature matured, the pots were quickly pulled from the kiln, placed in a tub or bucket, packed in sawdust, and covered with a lid to be air tight. This container reduced the amount of oxygen in the air and caused a change in glaze color. After smoking in sawdust for ten minutes the pot was submerged in water to set and retain the color in the glaze. As a result of the long smoking period much of the pot appeared copper along with several patches of opalescent color. The absorption of smoke turned the unglazed areas black. The overall effect created is a simple, rustic appearance that has made raku famous.

Altering the Clay Body

Up to this point each phase of my work was strongly influenced by other artists. There was now a desire to discover an original style. Isolation from other influences was necessary in developing an individual style. Drawing upon the knowledge I had gained earlier, a new direction was undertaken.

Working without a pre-determined idea was a new experience. Through experimentation I discovered a thrown form could be altered by placing unusual pressure on the inside or outside of the pot. "White Flared Vase" (slide 16) was the first ware created by altering the clay body. A seven inch-cylinder was flared at the top to obtain a triangular appearance. After completing the throwing process the vase was "pulled" by placing three fingers on the inside of the pot, two on the outside and lifting in a curved upward motion (fig. 16). This motion modified the entire pot and created a unique form. There was an interplay of light and shadow which added emphasis to the altered body and induced a feeling of strength and elegance.

"Amber Vase With Flower Arrangement" (slide 17) was formed in a manner similar to "White Flared Vase." The new element here is in the large scale. A perpetual struggle throughout my earlier work was the inability to make large forms. In a determination to overcome this difficulty a decision was made to join two thrown forms together to create one large pot. After joining the pieces, a rib was used to smooth the outside surface to make the seam invisible. In order to alter the form the clay needed to be more pliable; therefore, rewetting the clay through spraying was necessary. Four parallel pulls created an interesting change that enriched the form. The smooth Amber glaze created subtle changes in light and shadow which added polish to the finished piece.

Success in overcoming barriers in size was finally achieved in "Tulip Punch Bowl" (slide 18). Because of its functional nature this bowl could not be pieced. It had to be constructed as one unit. After several frustrating attempts it became possible to use the weight of the body to center and throw a large amount of clay. The intention was to create an altered form that resembled a tulip and functioned as a punch bowl.

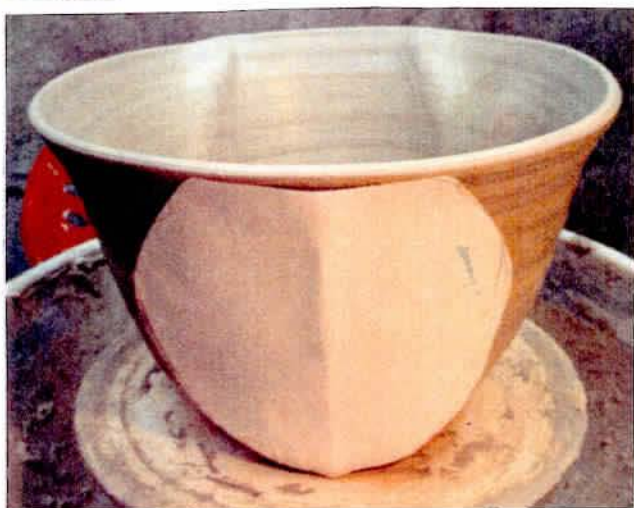
A completely disciplined mind was needed to steady the hands and throw a thin bowl shape. Once the form was completed, a pattern cut from paper in the shape of a tulip petal was placed on the outside surface (fig. 17). A pull tracing the outline of the pattern was made by applying pressure inward, causing an indentation (fig. 18). The same design was duplicated on the opposite side of the bowl. The bowl now resembled a tulip. Again a glaze of light value was chosen to capture subtleties in light and shadow.

"Baby Blue Incised Jar" (slide 19) combined the techniques of altering the clay body and incising a design. As with "Tulip Punch Bowl", a pattern was used to modify the shape. This ensured that the modification would be uniform throughout the entire pot. Although the Jar was made from a much lower cylinder, the altered shape was similar to the tulip. To create a more refined look an incised design was carved on the end of each pull. This same design was repeated on the lid to unify the entire piece.



(fig. 15)
The vase was "pulled" by placing three fingers on the inside of the pot, two on the outside and lifting in a curved upward motion.

(fig. 16)
A pattern was cut from paper and placed on the outside surface of the bowl.



(fig. 17)
A pull tracing the outline of the pattern was made by applying pressure inward, causing an indentation.

(fig. 18) A section was cut from the upper portion of the pot to create a negative space that emphasizes the center of interest



A double loop handle attached to the lid accentuates the curves in the design and creates a delicate elegant appearance. Control over the airbrush allowed the Textured Blue glaze to become gradually thicker in the recessed areas. This darker value added emphasis to the altered form and engraved design. The overall appearance was very feminine and elegant.

"Bud Vase With Leaf Pedestal" (slide 20) was the most sculptural of all pieces. The intention was to recreate a flower bud on a stem with a leaf. The tall cylinder, narrow neck, and flared lip simulate the contour a flower. The altered clay gives the impression of petals ready to bloom. A separate section was thrown to serve as a pedestal for the flower bud. The narrow middle section suggest that it is a stem which supports the flower. Applied clay in the shape of a leaf controls the movement of the eye throughout the bottom section of the pot. The eye is led around the pedestal and up toward the bud. Recessed areas in the flower continue to move the eye to the tip of the bud. Both the pedestal and the flower bud complement each other and create a unique form.

The most satisfying of all my accomplishments was "Mauve Vase With Pedestal" (slide 21). This work of art exemplifies quality of construction and originality of style. The pot was constructed of two cylinders. The bottom cylinder was turned upside down and joined with a second longer cylinder. A sense of balance was achieved by increasing the proportion of height in the second cylinder. After joining both cylinders, the form was rewet and altered. A recessed line in the form of an s-curve was pulled in an attempt to control the eye movement of the viewer. An extra pull was made near the lip of the pot and caused this area to become the focal point of the entire piece. This s-curve also established a pleasing rhythm. A section was cut from the upper portion of the pot to create a negative space that emphasizes the center of interest (fig. 18). The thinness of form, long tapered body, and curved line all helped in establishing an elegant flavor to the ware.



CONCLUSION

Working on my Master of Arts degree has been an enlightening and stimulating experience. It has caused me to realize both my strengths and weaknesses. By achieving the goals set forth in the introduction I have enhanced the strengths and overcome some of the weaknesses.

Knowledge gained from the study of both historical and contemporary ceramics has become a basis for future artistic expression. Many pieces by other artists influenced my work. Rosalyn Tyng inspired me to use the technique of faceting. Incorporating pattern in design was a result of studying the work of Marla Martinez. The use of nature in Japanese pottery influenced its application to my work. These influences became part of an evolution of style.

Proficiency in creating three-dimensional art is a result of careful instruction and skill increased through practice. Through instruction I learned how to incorporate the elements of art to express myself artistically. Constant practice enabled me to produce pots of various shapes with handles, spouts, and lids that function properly and also enhance the form. Striving to throw pots

of a desired thinness, size, and elegance helped in achieving this goal.

The most important objective was to develop an original style that expressed my thoughts and feelings. This major objective was the result, in part, of accomplishing the above mentioned goals. When viewing this entire body of my work one will discover how nature has been the source of inspiration for many pieces. The style that has evolved from four years of study presents nature in its simplest form. Quality in construction and the mastering of the art elements to create elegance and strength are characteristics that make my style original.

NOTES

1. Robert Plepenburg, Raku Pottery (New York, Macmillian Publishing Co. Inc., 1972), pp. 8,9.
2. Robert Plepenburg, Raku Pottery (New York, Macmillian Publishing Co. Inc., 1972), p. 8.
3. Linda Mosley, "The LEACH Tradition," Ceramics Monthly (March, 1988), p. 22.

Glossary Of Terms

- AIRBRUSH. A mechanical device that uses compressed air to spray glaze on pottery.
- BISQUE. Fired clay that is unglazed.
- FIRE. The process of heating and cooling clay. The clay becomes hard, rocklike, and impervious to water when fired.
- FLANGE. A rib or rim that serves as a ledge for a lid.
- GLAZE. A glass-like substance that is used to coat or seal clay.
- JOMAN POTTERY. Japanese pottery that was made in the Neolithic age prior to 200 B.C.
- KAMAKURA PERIOD. A period of Japanese history from 1185 to 1333.
- MONOCHROME. A color or colors relating to a single hue.
- MUROMACHI PERIOD. A period of Japanese history from 1333 to 1573.
- NEGATIVE SPACE. A space that is empty or unfilled. Clay that is removed from a piece of sculpture or ceramics.
- RIB. A flat tool used to refine shapes being thrown on a potter's wheel.
- SHINO. Pottery that is made from white clay and is covered with a white glaze. This Japanese pottery was made during the Momoyama period (1573 to 1614).
- SHINTO RELIGION. A Japanese religion that means "way of the Gods." This religion dates back to primitive time and originates with nature worship.
- STONEWARE. Clay that is fired at high temperatures, is vitreous, and is gray, brown, or tan in color.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Mikami Tsugio. The Art Of Japanese Ceramics. New York: Weatherhill, Heibonsha, 1972

Mosley Linda. "The LEACH Tradition," Ceramics Monthly, March, 1988.

Plepenburg Robert. Raku Pottery. New York: Macmillian Publishing Co. Inc., 1972

SLIDE REGISTRY OF WORKS EXHIBITED

1. "Taupe Jar I"
2. "Taupe Jar II"
3. "Taupe Teapot"
4. "Stoneware Teapot"
5. "White Stoneware Teapot"
6. "Flower and Leaf Vase"
7. "Jar with Lid"
8. "Bowl with Textured Design"
9. "Globe Vase with Textured Design"
10. "Ginger Jar with Textured Design"
11. "White and Blue Grass Bowl"
12. "Blue and White Grass Bowl"
13. "Taupe Tree Plate"
14. "Plate with Wave Design"
15. "Raku Weed Vase"
16. "White Flared Vase"
17. "Amber Vase with Flower Arrangement"
18. "Tulip Punch Bowl"
19. "Baby Blue Incised Jar"
20. "Bud Vase with Leaf Pedestal"
21. "Mauve Vase with Pedestal"
22. "Alphred's Jar"
23. "Teapot with Textured Design"
24. "Peach and Blue Grass Bowl"

26. "Bud Vase"
27. "Mauve Vase with Flower Arrangement"
28. "White Vase"
29. "White Pitcher with Cups"
30. "Oatmeal Punch Bowl"
31. "Baby Blue Incised Teapot"
32. "Baby Blue Incised Vase"
33. "Cream Pulled Vase"