

MEDIUM AS METAPHOR

2011–2012 “CLAY IN CULTURE” EXHIBITION SERIES

EXHIBITIONS

Molly Hatch, October 20 – November 17, 2011

Michael Fujita, January 19 – February 16, 2012

David S. East, March 1 – March 29, 2012

Julia Haft-Candell & Benjamin DeMott, April 19 – May 17, 2012

Hope Rovelto, July 12 – August 9, 2012

Peter Gourfain, September 6 – October 4, 2012

Linda Sormin, October 26 – November 21, 2012

JANE HARTSOOK GALLERY AT GREENWICH HOUSE POTTERY

This catalog, *Medium as Metaphor*, was published in conjunction with the “Clay in Culture” exhibition series held at Greenwich House Pottery’s Jane Hartsook Gallery from October 2011 – November 2012.

Funding for this exhibition series was made possible by the Windgate Charitable Foundation, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, and from our parent organization, Greenwich House Inc.



Greenwich House Pottery
Jane Hartsook Gallery
16 Jones Street
New York, New York 10014
T 212-242-4106
F 212-645-5486
www.greenwichhousepottery.org
pottery@greenwichhouse.org

Director: Adam Welch
Assistant Director: Lisa Chicoyne
Fabrication & Studio Manager: Albert Pfarr
Development Director: Andrea Newman
Grants Writer: Lois Bernstein
Photography: Alan Wiener & Clarence Sormin
Catalog Production & Design: Leslie Miller, The Grenfell Press
Catalog Essay: “Through This Field” by Maika Pollack

PRINTED IN CHINA

©Greenwich House Pottery

INTRODUCTION

The 2011-2012 “Clay in Culture” exhibition series had an exceptional and divergent lineup of artists—Molly Hatch, Michael Fujita, David S. East, Julia Haft-Candell, Benjamin DeMott, Hope Rovelto, Peter Gourfain, Linda Sormin—sampling the wide-ranging facility of the ceramic sphere. Marking its 41st year presenting and promoting ceramics in New York City, today’s series examines the scope of material possibility rather than championing any methodology or artistic canon.

Four decades ago, then Pottery Director Jane Hartsook exhibited work of the likes of Peter Voulkos and Rudy Autio, two artists, though commonplace today, who were making works that offset preconceived ideas of ceramics. The artists in this series are making work that is, at times, equally offsetting to a field that has only recently subsumed the expressionist aesthetic and which remains apprehensive towards aspects of these contemporary artists’ works and ideas.

This series maintains the Jane Hartsook Gallery’s mission to bring to the artworld the diversity and complexity of ceramic practice while supporting emerging and underrepresented artists. With the exception of Peter Gourfain, who has shown in the Jane Hartsook Gallery before, these were the artist’s New York City solo exhibition debuts.

Maika Pollack, Art Critic for the *New York Observer*, has written a rather accurate outsider perspective of the works and artists in this series. Pollack’s essay, “Through This Field,” gets its title from the work of David East, and is the origin of the title for this catalogue “*Medium as Metaphor*,” a telling story of the nature and diversity of the wide-ranging aspect of ceramic practice. Particularly insightful is her commingling of these exhibitions along-side what she sees within the artworld.

Greenwich House Pottery’s unique history encompasses the evolution of American ceramics. Its earliest endeavor as a craft program in a Greenwich Village settlement house, during which time its mission was social welfare, then quickly became a hub of the post-war studio crafts movement. Today, with its diverse program of classes, workshops, lectures and exhibitions serving hundreds of students and tens of thousands of visitors each year, it is New York City’s center for ceramics.

Greenwich House Pottery would like to extend its appreciation to its members, the exhibiting artists and especially to the support from the Windgate Charitable Foundation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation. Additionally, a special thanks to Billy Allen, William Coggin, Brad Parsons, and Derek Weisberg, the Studio Technicians, for their patience in assisting with the installation and the upkeep of the gallery and the Education Coordinator Suzy Obuck and liaison staff – Jenny Blumenfield, Suzy Goodelman, Mari Heinonen, and Deb Reed for their administrative assistance, without whom these exhibitions would not have been possible.

— Adam Welch, Director

THROUGH THIS FIELD

A series of solo and two-person exhibitions by eight emerging and established artists held during 2011–12 at the Jane Hartsook Gallery at Greenwich House Pottery served as a portrait of the current state of clay in new art. Despite being linked by medium, the sequence of shows resisted the proposition that clay has a single, essential quality. The participating artists all work with clay but are not necessarily ceramic artists. In the hands of artist and curator Adam Welch, who organized the series, clay proved a malleable metaphor—sometimes fragile, sometimes durable; democratic or aristocratic; infinitesimally articulated or vast and expansive. Taken as a whole, the exhibitions exemplify four directions in contemporary ceramic practice, harnessing the material to investigate the relationships between applied and fine art, using clay as a populist symbol, exploring historical influences on contemporary practice, and utilizing material fragility to render explicit the cultural networks often seen as ancillary to the fine-art object.

Medium as Metaphor

Baltimore-based **David East** works with a variety of sculptural mediums (MDF, Masonite, plywood, textiles, ceramics) to create installations that call attention to the often-invisible decorative vocabulary of the material world around us. East typically investigates the tacit utopian promise of suburban architectural embellishment. At the Jane Hartsook Gallery, he explored the symbolism of urban graciousness signaled by the ornamental cornices and capitals of Greenwich House’s neo-Georgian columned architecture. Low chrome-foot tables with ovoid tops echoing Eames chairs—or their Ikea equivalents—were set with red gingham cloths and lamps. Gray clay sculptures, such as *Delano’s Foot* and *Aldrich’s Wedge* (all works 2012), placed on the floor and on the tables served as fragmentary evocations of the building columns’ own capitals. The decor was both tasteful and a bit off. Did the copper-green ceramic lamps function? Were the tables plywood? Against a wall of blue tiles (*Through This Field*), a video of potted ferns and flowers played on a mini-DVD monitor (*Florals: Come into the Garden*). We are just as sated and contained in our own pretty prisons, the installation seemed to imply, as plants in pots; clay serves as a metaphor for both the pleasures and limitations of our aesthetic confinement.

Michael Fujita’s ceramic-and-wood installations rely more on the principles of accumulation and chance than East’s ascetic and monumental sculptural interiors. In 2012’s *Insulators*, nine colorful red, orange, yellow, and blue resin-and-porcelain vases on a white wooden shelf call attention to the aesthetic properties of functional objects. Fujita’s zigzagging floor-to-ceiling diagonal of perforated multicolored porcelain rectangles crammed against wooden beams (*Rise/Run*, 2010) evokes a crowded cityscape, each tiny, drilled hole a small window. A ladderlike wooden intervention in the gallery window is echoed by a wooden structure elsewhere in the room that reconstructs that window. The works play with slight visual rhymes and scale shifts and feature clay as a mundane yet evocative material in a set of quotidian conjuring tricks both minor and successful.

The designer **Molly Hatch’s** references, derived from eighteenth-century French painting, drawing, and decorative-art imagery, celebrate visual pleasure. Her frequently functional works seem to double themselves, as if in drag: modern armchairs covered in white canvas on which Rococo chair patterns are printed (*Baroque Chairs*, 2011), forty-five painted porcelain plates hung on a wall in a large rectangle in a decorative display that echoes the rectangular, flat format of painting (*Baroque Garden*, 2011). The works are all surface: painted plates, furniture skins—even Hatch’s figures are silhouettes as flat as cutout paper dolls. Hatch’s work argues for the delights possible in a lack of depth and finds in porcelain a pristine and pretty surface for an amalgamation of historical imagery and contemporary function. The politics of her celebration of pre-Revolutionary style are as perverse as they are unapologetic.

Does clay have a politics? **Hope Rovelto**, in contrast to Hatch, links clay with mass production, pedagogy, and democratic thought. Her installation at the Hartsook Gallery featured five life-size children’s school chairs and desks made from clay (*School Chairs with USA Map*, 2012). In glaze on each student’s desk is a sentiment in childlike scrawl about future aspirations (for example, “When I grow up I want to be a doctor”) situated above

a number of newspaper clippings (for example, about the contemporary American medical system; “I can’t afford health care” reads one headline). The suggestion of a classroom is completed with a chalkboard bearing the neatly written words, “What will you learn today?” A number of glazed ceramic puzzles of the map of the United States appearing under the legend “How well do you know your country?” test a viewer herself on the geography of the fifty states.

Completing the elaborate installation was a display of glazed ceramic red, blue, pink, black, and yellow drinking cups bearing the faces and names of contenders for the presidency in the 2012 election (*Political Party Cups*, 2012): Obama, Romney, Trump, Palin, Gingrich, and Santorum each appeared. Rovelto encourages her viewers to handle her functional ceramics, using the tactile and durable qualities of glazed ceramics to create interactive environments. Her iconography links current politics and education and serves as a critique of American domestic policy.

Peter Gourfain’s solo show at the Hartsook Gallery combined cut-linoleum prints, drawings, wood carvings, cast-metal sculptures, and terracotta ceramics. The figurative, heroic animals and people in his work evoke WPA-era social realism yet look simultaneously Afro-Caribbean. Their poses are often stacked or imbricated: a pile of gazelles, a flat field of laboring figures. The subjects commemorate political and social events important to the Left. Gourfain is a maximalist who uses his facility with materials to explore issues of social justice. Born in 1934, he is the oldest and seemingly the most “traditional” of the artists featured in the exhibition series, yet his interdisciplinary work interrogates, as art historian and curator Lucy R. Lippard has written, how ordinary materials can be used in street protests, demonstrations, and political meetings outside the fine-art museum and gallery context.¹ Here, the choice of rough terracotta underscores his political commitments; it is impossible to imagine his work in oil paint or porcelain.

Julia Haft-Candell and **Benjamin DeMott’s** two-person installation featured similarly slight, fragile-seeming sculptures that draw upon the linear, threadlike quality of finely drawn-out clay. While Haft-Candell’s creations—*Beacon I*, *Cactus*, and *Morning* (all 2012)—made of porcelain, terracotta, thread, steel, wood, and wire, are freestanding, DeMott’s are spun in situ like spider webs between elements of the gallery—*Radiator* and *Trial Screen* (both 2012) exist between the heater, the window, and the floor. Haft-Candell’s sculpted geometries are swooping, linear structures that in their triangulated balance resemble yoga poses; DeMott’s clay is worried, a pretty, fragile, nearly monochrome material. His sculptures are the more introverted and obsessive of the two. They incorporate wads of chewing gum, store receipts, and debris in an omnivorous investigation of materials to create on-site constructions that are, as he describes them in an artist’s statement, “archivally inconvenient” and “unsustainable.” Both artists reject monumental or functional tendencies; their linear constructions seem more closely related to drawing than form. And for both, ceramics convey something fragile, sad and funny, delicate and even abject.

Linda Sormin’s immersive and dynamic floor-to-ceiling installation of seven sculptures in her solo show mixed chinoiserie plum-blossom teacups with Xerox decal transfers, gold lusterware with plywood, found and purchased ceramic items with handmade suturing shapes made of toasted clay. Made on-site, her sculptural groups are full of improvised moments: metal tubes for support, experimental processes. The work’s off-kilter angles and plywood boardwalks remind of Thomas Hirschhorn’s 2012 shipwreck installation, *Concordia, Concordia*, at New York’s Gladstone Gallery. Her use of clay combines a technical understanding of slips, glazes, and multiple high-firing techniques, oversaturated colors and invaginated or latticed surfaces, with a use of the medium’s multiple cultural associations: exotic, refined, kitschy, commercial. Glazed vortices of materials evoke the installations of Matthew Ritchie, while the glitter and sequins on top are reminiscent of the materially sumptuous paintings of Mickalene Thomas. References to Indonesian cut-paper technique, and the presence of crystal, glass, metal, and wood as well as the odd ceramic turtle or bunny, situate you in a world of wide-ranging sculptural references that engulfs the viewer. Titles like *Ancestral Rift* and *Opposite Poles* (both 2012) underscore the installations’ ability to bring together disparate and incongruous allusions. Called *My Voice Changes When I Speak Your Language*, the exhibition suggests through its myriad references a cultural maelstrom in which objects from distinct locations are brought together in a network made material.

CLAY AS PERFORMANCE

Does clay have an essential quality as a medium? To judge from the work on view in 2011–12 at Greenwich House, the answer would have to be no. These artists are not using clay to critique clay. Their practices tend to be extroverted and metaphoric rather than introverted and literal, diverse and inclusive rather than interested in medium-specific “purity.” In their work, clay is often a symbol for other things: fragility or multiculturalism, design or decoration and its function in architecture or domestic life, pedagogy and participatory political engagement. We can’t even say that the shows display great commonality of technique. Some works have been fired, but many incorporate raw clay that has been molded by hand, or clay as a found commercial object; those pieces that have been fired have not necessarily been glazed.

A better question than if clay has a single quality as a medium is, Does medium matter anymore? The art historical evolution toward the postmedium is by now well established. In an essay entitled “Disco as Operating System,” poet and essayist Tan Lin asks, “When exactly did the era of the medium dissolve?” and proposes the disco era, starting in 1973, as the moment the postmedium condition became a fact for the masses. To Lin, “Disco replaced the rock star with a mixing board and session musicians, transforming rock singers into a function of programmers and DJs who ‘play’ them.”² A medium might be paint or vocals, a book or a sculpture, but its disintegration is central to Lin’s assessment of contemporary life. “By 2008 it is clear that however it happened, the dissolution of the medium has become our primary cultural practice, one that hinges on the idea of medium unspecificity and dissolution of an ‘art object,’”³ he writes.

What, then, are we left with when we link a group of shows based on their medium? It was critic Clement Greenberg who in 1965 famously proposed that Modernism’s essence lay in the Kantian use of medium as a means to perform self-critique on a discipline, such that “each art had to determine, through the operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar and exclusive to itself.”⁴ Painting stripped of its “illusionism” might be comparable to clay stripped of its “functionalism.” In this sense, all the artists involved in these exhibitions, with the possible exception of Hatch, make work that is beyond function, in which clay serves as a metaphor for itself. Other contemporary artists’ recent uses of clay—Sterling Ruby’s exhibition of enormous, chunky pots at Metro Pictures (2008), Matt Hoyt’s obsessively arranged shelves of smooth and mysterious ceramic objects at the 2012 Whitney Biennial, Alice Mackler’s folksy glazed ceramic figurines at James Fuentes (2013), all in New York—advance this notion of clay as an art medium whose very antifunctionalism has become an integral part of its aesthetic meaning.

Perhaps we are nostalgic for the very notion of a medium. The most ambitious shows in the series—East, Gourfain, and Sormin, for example—employ a backward-looking thematic in which clay stands in for the handmade. None of the artists have seemingly outsourced their own production (again possibly excepting Hatch, with her screen-printed chair covers). All, including the artists named above not included in the Hartsook shows, could be said to be highlighting the physicality of their own works. Part of the kitchen, the dining room, the bathroom, the home; part of a vocabulary of domesticity and design, clay is indifferent to its “liberation” through medium specificity. It calls us back to an aesthetic bound by craft, decor, nostalgia, and luxuriating in a materiality that is not “pure” in Greenberg’s sense but that is nonetheless difficult to “mix” as tracks are mixed in disco, or “read” as in alternative platforms like the iPhone or the laptop screen. The real analogy for clay, then, is perhaps performance: these shows remind us that when it comes to the art objects, presence is required.

Maika Pollack is the art critic for the *New York Observer*. She is on the faculty in the Program for Language and Thinking at Bard College and full-time lecturer in the Princeton Writing Program.

1. See Lucy R. Lippard and Russell Panczenko, Peter Gourfain: Clay, Wood, Bronze, and Works on Paper (Madison, Wisc.: Chazen Museum of Art, 2002).

2. Tan Lin, “Disco as Operating System, Part One,” *Criticism* 50, no. 1 (Winter 2008), pp. 83–100.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–96.

4. Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” in *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Francis Francina and Charles Harrison with Deirdre Paul (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 5.

MOLLY HATCH



MOLLY HATCH

"mon plaisir"

- 1) Figure 1 and Painting, Edition 1 of 5, 2011
- 2) Figure 2 and Painting, Edition 1 of 5, 2011
- 3) Figure 3 and Painting, Edition 1 of 5, 2011 *(photo page 35)
- 4) Baroque Garden, Edition 1 of 5, 2011 *(photo page 36-37)
- 5) Baroque Chairs, Edition 1 and 2 of 5, 2011

Statement

As a result of coming to ceramics via drawing and printmaking my use of the drawn line as representation of historical imagery becomes instrumental in understanding the work as reference to an aesthetic tradition.

For this new body of work I appropriated imagery from a found historic architectural engraving of a conceptual garden plan. Through cropping the original composition and enlarging the scale, the use of a more contemporary palette and through more developed narratives within the figures in the garden I have remixed and altered the work to bring a new experience to a familiar image.

In order to explore the relationship of painting to object in each figurative composition and to blur the line between two dimensions and three dimensions, I chose to highlight specific figurative narratives by rendering them in unglazed porcelain.

The large plate painting of the garden scene in its entirety encourages the viewer to regard functional objects as contemplative. By hanging 45 plates on the wall in the scale of a large format painting, I aim to push the current trend of hanging plates in the home one step further and claim the functional ceramic surface as a painting surface. It is in this way that I am examining the traditional perception of the role of the decorative arts in the fine art context.





MICHAEL FUJITA



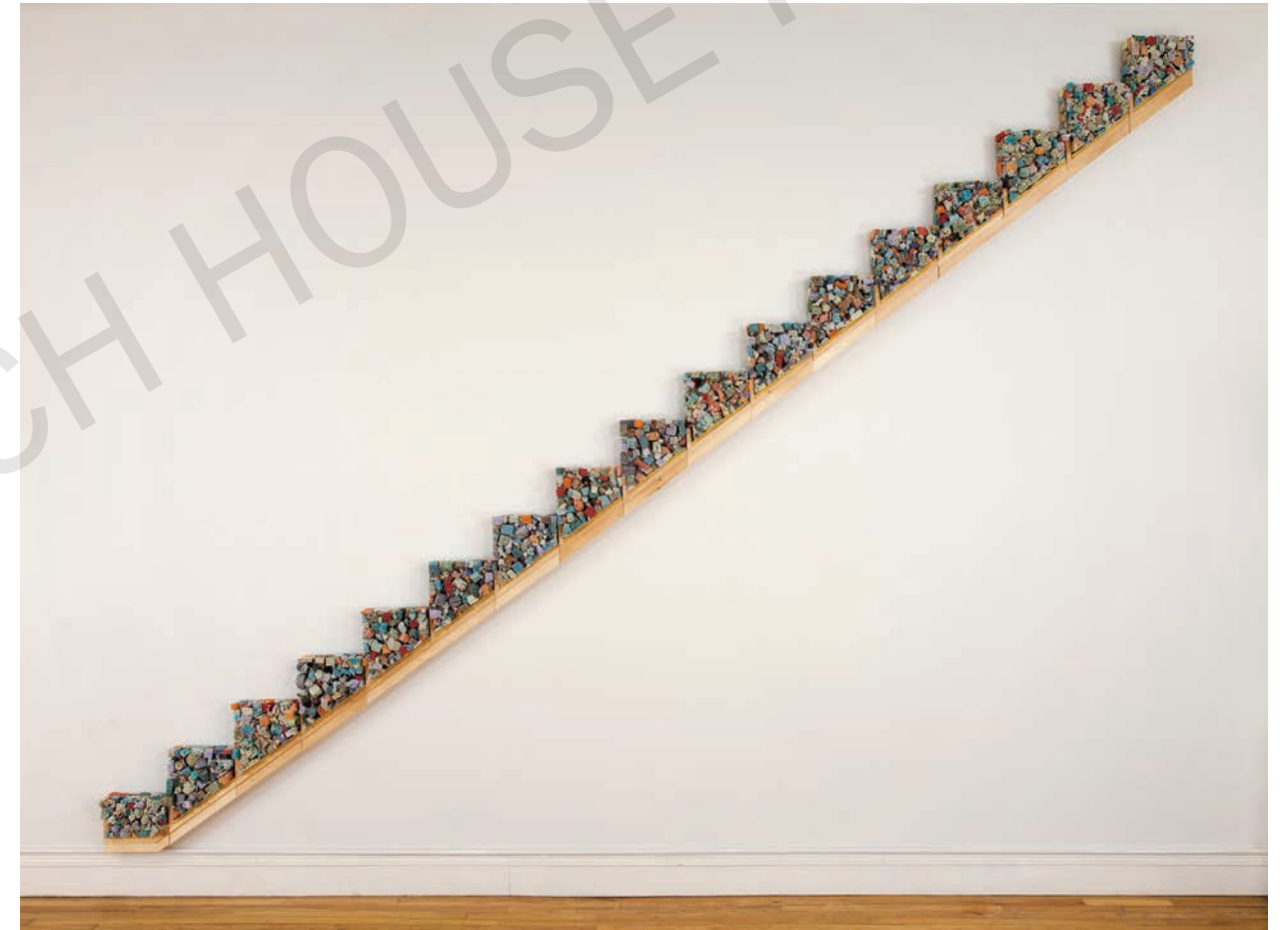
MICHAEL FUJITA

- 1) "Rise/Run", Porcelain, Wood, Carpet Padding, Resin, 2010 *(photo page 31)
- 2) "Uprooted", Porcelain, Wood, Carpet Padding, Resin, 2010
- 3) "Panels", Resin, Glass, Wood, 2011 *(photo page 30)
- 4) "Panels", Resin, Glass, Wood, 2011
- 5) "Panels", Resin, Glass, Wood, 2011
- 6) "Inside Out", Porcelain, Wood, Dried Flowers, Cast Feldspar, Resin, Lacquer, Wet Foam, 2011
- 7) "Mantle", Porcelain, Carpet Padding, Wood, 2011
- 8) "Inside Out", Porcelain, Wood, Dried Flowers, Cast Feldspar, Resin, Lacquer, Wet Foam, 2011
- 9) "Insulators", Porcelain, Resin, 2011 *(photo page 29)

Statement

Visual instances trigger personal interest and curiosity, which serves as beginnings of pieces. Through various processes, materials, and the element of time, those visual triggers take on new meaning and identity as objects. Color plays a critical role in my work transforming the assumed identity even further to a playful offering of my perception.





DAVID EAST



DAVID S. EAST

"Forehandedness"

- 1) *Through This Field*, Ceramic, Wood, DVD Player, Steel, Animation (12 minute loop), 2012
- 2) *Delano's Foot*, Ceramic, MDF, 2012
- 3) *Teak*, Ceramic, 20"x16"x1", 2011
- 4) *Table, A Lamp*, Ceramic, Steel, 2011 *(photo page 5)
- 5) *Forehandedness*, Ceramic, 2012 *(photo page 6)
- 6) *Aldrich's Wedge*, Ceramic, 2012
- 7) *Florals: Come Intro the Garden...*, QuickTime animation (12.5 minute loop), Monitor/ DVD, 2011
- 8) *Provisionally Registered Landscape*, Ceramic, 2012 *(photo page 7)
- 9) *Stack, Lamp and Gingham 2*, MDF, Masonite, Plywood, Fabric, Steel, Ceramic, 24"x30"x15", 2012
- 10) *Gingham Palimpsest 1*, Ceramic, 2011
- 11) *Gingham Palimpsest 2*, 2011
- 12) *A New Feature of Unique Undertaking in which Mrs. Whitney is Interested*, Ceramic, MDF, 2012

Statement

I am interested in the sources and by-products of invented utopian promise, exploring forms that reference the duality of this landscape. The suburbs have been of particular interest to me. They are a place typified by a balance between hope and fear. An invented plan, created mathematically, an idea before a phenomena, the suburbs have become a frame of mind rather than a geographic location.

My own cultural perspective necessarily frames my work, but it attempts to occupy and critique our broader prevalent systems of self-identification often looking into their cyclical patterns throughout recent history. Through architectural and design references my work has revolved around issues of urban planning, architectural ornament and design as signifiers of our cultural history. My work attempts to reveal the positive and negative by-products of our attempts to establish order. As Ebenezer Howard's idealism gives way to white flight and Constance Spry is remade into Martha Stuart as a multi-national, my work attempts to trace these cycles, juxtaposing images and forms that reference architecture and design. These combinations create systems of organization that make up the world under which we operate. The sources and images I have sought out: cheap Styrofoam knock-offs of classic decorative trim, the rosette, the mantle; become a mirror of the phenomena and peculiarities of an "American" point of view.

The approach I have taken attempts to reflect on the monumental within the mundane, and seeks to bore out the middle of modernism to see its split-level by-products. The work rotates around these axes operating as much a strategy of thinking as of making; one that takes ubiquitous, anonymous and mundane forms and presents them for what they are (a flat plane, a marketed mirage) as well as what they promise to be (a moral retreat, a ideal future).





JULIA HAFT-CANDELL
& BENJAMIN DEMOTT



JULIA HAFT-CANDELL

- 1) Beacon 1, Porcelain, glaze, epoxy, silk, thread, wire, wood, steel, rebar, cement, gouache, ink, acrylic, 2012
- 2) Cactus, Porcelain, glaze, epoxy, silk, nylon, thread, wire, steel, gouache, 2012
- 3) Morning, Porcelain, glaze, epoxy, silk, thread, steel, ink. 2012
- 4) Calibration, porcelain, glaze, epoxy, silk, thread, rebar, acrylic, graphite, 2012 *(photo page 18)

Statement

Through my work I am echoing the characteristics of a complex system. Seemingly disparate events align to form a whole that is not predictable from the characteristics of each part. Each element of the system is unique, yet needs the others in order to function, as small changes in a part can drastically alter the integrity of the entire structure. By creating a vocabulary comprised of cells that are repetitively constructed, added, subtracted and rearranged, I can speak of the phenomenal interconnectedness of all things.

Using small components to build larger forms allows me more freedom to continually invent, reassess and make endless decisions about how the work takes shape. The sculpture is a physical record of its making, and a reflection of its own history. Breaking is an essential part of this process. Often I will break apart pieces to reconfigure them, creating collages using three dimensional parts. Once a piece is composed I will put time into mending and drawing on the surface of the piece, reclaiming and giving value to what is broken or distressed. Ultimately the goal is to form a composition that most effectively speaks to the ambiguity of perception and the complexity of being.

BENJAMIN DEMOTT

- 5) "Radiator", Porcelain, glaze, paint, glue, tape, pencil, paper, Sculpey, cardboard, styrofoam cup, plastic bag, wire, eyehook, dimensions variable, 2012 *(photo page 19)
- 6) "Trial Screen", Radiator, porcelain, paper, glue, tape, wood, paint, stickers, bracket, Dimensions Variable, 2012 *(photo page 17)

Statement

Madcap desire, and a longing to crystallize a playful perspective amidst conditions of uncertainty, inspire my dialog with material. Underscoring impermanence, the contingent situational gestures configured through my practice challenge the duration and consequence of their order. Fragile, thread thin ceramic extrusions are tenuously bound to one another by the use of tweezers, glues, props and a fisherman's fly-tying vice. Psychologically compulsive, and meditatively pursued ceramic line, zigs, and zags, splintering into a complex network where familiarity of scale slips from that of the watchmaker to the astronomer. Accumulatively fashioned into handcraft geometries, sinuous three-dimensional line drawings form improvised fragments reconfigurable in spontaneous arraignment. Interspersed within these precarious structures are decorative debris and corporeal citations. Skins of paint, a wad of chewing gum, a torn corner of super market receipt, etc. demarcate space, hover and sag in the shifting operations of scale and composition. I consider these elements a foil and springboard for engaging in a cognitive relationship to the body and the perceptual parameters that govern it. Exploring the discrete workspace of the miniaturist and model maker afford the ripe conditions for a daydream. Gaston Bachelard poetically refers to the phenomena of such musing as "intimate immensity" where imagination challenges and expands the possibilities of perception. Allowing the mind to wander in such a non-objective, un-tethered reverie allows for new questions, revelations, and absurdist levity to surface where it wasn't before. I aim to create a space for such possibilities.





HOPE ROVELTO



HOPE ROVELTO

- 1) Political party cups, 2012
- 2) 2012 presidential party cups pyramid set, 10 cups, 2012 *(photo page 12)
- 3) Pill bottle wall piece, 2012 *(photo page 13)
- 4) USA puzzles maps, 2012
- 5) School chairs with USA map, 2012 *(photo page 11)
- 6) School chair in the corner, 2012

Statement

My work involves contemporary issues in my life as well as those in the world around me. The individual and social topics I choose to depict are global issues that not only serve as a method in which to deal with my own frustrations with my past, present and future, but also serve as away for viewers to think about frustrations in their own experience.

I am influenced by American culture, current media and politics, and what I view as the degradation of the human experience through social and environmental poisons which plague our world. I feel that it is my job as an artist to not only explore these ideas but also present them, provoking an awareness response.

Because I believe that art reflects the world in which it exists, politics and art often intersect. As we approach the 2012 presidential election, I want to create a show that depicts the ever-growing tension in our intense political climate.





PETER GOURFAIN



PETER GOURFAIN

- 1) *Nec Spec*, linoprint, 1996
- 2) *Block with Hook*, wood and metal, 1995 *(photo page 41)
- 3) *My Father Said...*, linoprint, Artist Proof, 1992
- 4) *No Regrets*, linoprint, Artist Proof, 1992
- 5) *Black & Red*, linoprint, Artist Proof, 1993
- 6) *MJRM*, linoprint, Artist Proof, 1993
- 7) *Swift's Epitaph*, linoprint, Artist Proof, 1993
- 8) *Hen Eys Tru lle*, linoprint, Artist Proof, 1993
- 9) *NoHo Pecan*, linoprint, Artist Proof, 1993
- 10) Original Lino Block for NoHo Pecan
- 11) *The Man Who Played 2 Trumpets at Once*, linoprint, Artist Proof
- 12) *Drawing*, cardboard, ballpoint pen, magic marker, 2009
- 13) *Drawing*, cardboard, ballpoint pen, magic marker, 2008
- 14) *Drawing*, cardboard, ballpoint pen, magic marker, 2007
- 15) *Drawing*, paper, ballpoint pen, magic marker, 2008
- 16) *Finnegan's Wake*, linoprint, Artist Proof, 1990
- 17) *Cree Prophecy*, wood dolly, 2001
- 18) *War is not the answer*, wood block print on newspaper
- 19) *New Orleans*, wood block print on newspaper, 2005
- 20) *Open and Shut*, Triptych, cardboard, 1995
- 21) *Manoprint*, cardboard, 1995
- 22) *Manoprint*, cardboard, 1995
- 23) *In the Dog Biscuit Factory*, cardboard, 1995
- 24) *California Urn*, ceramic, 1998
- 25) *Ave Atque Frater*, bronze, 1997
- 26) *Rhino*, bronze
- 27) *Pierce Penniless, Supplication to the Devil*, ceramic, 2009
- 28) *African Vessel*, bronze, 2000
- 29) *African Mortar*, wood, 2005
- 30) *She writes her memoir*, ceramic and chair, 2008 *(photo page 42)
- 31) *Anne Moody*, ceramic, 2011 *(photo page 43) top
- 32) *Seated Man*, ceramic, 2011 *(photo page 43) right
- 33) *Jack Wilton: The Unfortunate Traveler*, ceramic, 2012 *(photo page 43) Left
- 34) *Raftery*, ceramic, 2007
- 35) *Man with a raised fist*, driftwood, 2006
- 36) *Deer*, wood plane, 2007
- 37) *Loon*, wood plane, 1995
- 38) *Evolution*, carpenter's joiner, 2011
- 39) *Orso*, carpenter's joiner, 2005
- 40) *Otter*, wood plane, 2005
- 41) *Caribou*, carpenter's joiner, 2008
- 42) *Otter*, silver
- 43) *African Whistle*, silver
- 44) *African Whistle*, silver
- 45) *Belt Buckle*, silver

"I learned three things in Zurich during the war. I wrote them down. Firstly, you're either a revolutionary or you're not, and if you're not you might as well be an artist as anything else. Secondly, if you can't be an artist, you might as well be a revolutionary. ... I forget the third thing."

— Tom Stoppard





LINDA SORMIN



LINDA SORMIN

"My voice changes when I speak your language"

- 1) Drama Queen, Glazed ceramic and raw clay, 2012
- 2) Continental Shift, Glazed ceramic and raw clay, 2012
- 3) My voice changes when I speak your language, Glazed ceramic, raw clay, painted wood, 2012
- 4) Ancestral Rift, Glazed ceramic and raw clay, 2012
- 5) Manifest Hostility, Glazed ceramic, mixed media, 2012 *(photo page 24
- 6) Party Crasher, Glazed ceramic, 2011 *(photo page 23)(detail page 24)
- 7) Opposite Poles, Glazed ceramic, lally columns, mixed media, 2012

Statement

My voice changes when I speak your language invites an encounter with cultural and familial ghosts. I embroider raw clay through objects pulled and stretched into brittle lattices. Hollow volumes are pierced through with telescoping tension poles. Ceramic things (found and re-purposed) indicate the lives of people who owned and handled them in the past. Forms lean in, draw upwards, flatten against the ceiling, press along the floor. This architecture is unreliable – walls angle away, the floor rises up. Stories from my ancestral Batak Indonesian past cluster and overlap with the experiences of an immigrant moving between cultures.

¹ See Lucy R. Lippard and Russell Panczenko, *Peter Gourfain: Clay, Wood, Bronze, and Works on Paper* (Madison, Wisc.: Chazen Museum of Art, 2002).

² Tan Lin, "Disco as Operating System, Part One," *Criticism* 50, no. 1 (Winter 2008), pp. 83–100.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 95–96.

⁴ Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Francis Francina and Charles Harrison with Deirdre Paul (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 5.





SWITCH HOUSE POTTERY