



Margie Hughto

Loveed Fine Arts
New York, NY

Margie Hughto writes that, "My work is basically abstract, but can convey to the viewer a particular feeling, such as warmth, romance or playfulness." She has given her pieces titles referring to natural phenomena, and images of nature are abundant in the work: slabs bearing the imprint of marine life, faint images of plants, and allusion to landscape.

But Hughto's glazes are not naturalistic as she favors a range of blues from turquoise to cobalt with luxurious touches of gold. The shininess of the glaze also distances the visual experience from pure nature. Instead the viewer must appreciate Hughto's skill as a colorist and remember that she came to clay after studying painting.

In Hughto's *Pale Summer Winds*, the silhouettes of delicate leaves on a matte section read like a ghostly image of wallpaper or maybe ancient linoleum pulled up from a razed house. Perhaps this is why Hughto's new wall works reminded me of Susan Smith's "paintings," also wall works, combining found parts of walls or floors salvaged from buildings and augmented by her own painted areas. Hughto's formal strategy of combining sections in a collage-like fashion is similar to Smith's, even though Hughto fashions each element herself. But like Smith's compositions there is nothing natural, that is to say random, about Hughto's composition. The outlines of Hughto's relief forms translate easily into a pleasing two-dimensional work, revealing how carefully considered her compositions are.

Hughto aspires to impart a feeling to the viewer, and she succeeds. Both Smith's urban images and Hughto's allusions to nature have a romantic and nostalgic vision that overrides their subjects and links them—at least in my eye and mind.

Karen Chambers

Golden Leaves (1999), 35" x 38", glazed ceramic.



Doug Jeck

Garth Clark Gallery
New York, NY

The male nude has been a staple image in painting and sculpture from time immemorial. However, its ubiquity has not assured an understanding of how we comprehend man's corporeality. Is our body a unified whole or an assemblage of variable parts? Is the physical body simply a receptacle for the soul or is it the boundless ontological seat of consciousness that provides meaning to the world? Doug Jeck's large-scale male figures at the Garth Clark Gallery deal directly with these issues.

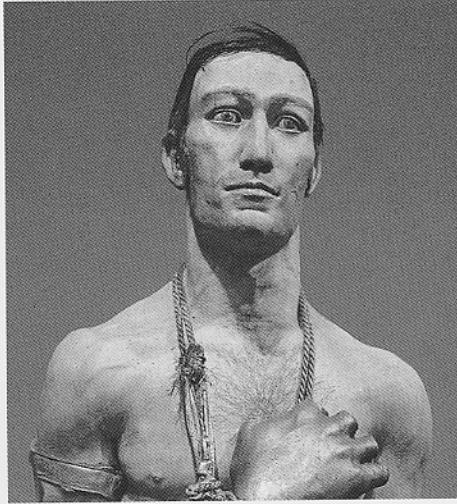
Jeck's sculptures, though based on classical forms, are unidealized and anti-erotic. In *Heirloom* (2000) Jeck confronts us with a man standing on a wooden box missing both his left arm and leg. Covering the man's wounds are dirty scraps of pink lace. Around the man's neck is a rope holding a bronze-colored casting of Jeck's own arm. Jeck adds details like steel wool pubic and chest hair, a wig and wide-open life-like eyes to heighten our experience of this forlorn figure's suffering.

In *Cain and Abel* (2000) one notices that the man's hands have been replaced with baby hands. This may make us think that in some way we carry our personal history within us, and that sometimes that history can manifest itself in our appearance.

The most impressive work in the exhibit is *Study in Antique White (Barricade)* (2000). An attractive male reclines on an antique divan covered in white frilly pillows. Jeck, however, is not interested in exploiting the beauty of his subject. The figure's left hand is made up of unfinished lumps of clay, he is wearing lace underwear and his legs are small and smooth compared to his muscular torso. Is the man comfortable lying here or has Jeck captured a moment of inner-crisis? Jeck allows us to finish the narrative on our own.

Brett Littman

Detail of *Heirloom* (2000), 73" x 17", ceramic, mixed media.



Gustav and Ulla Kraitz

San Angelo Museum of Art
San Angelo, TX

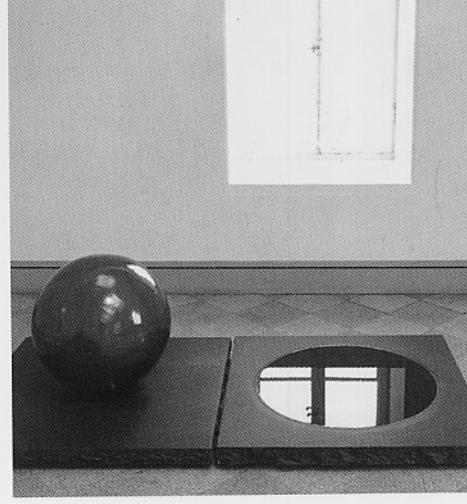
As visitors to the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts walk out onto the rooftop terrace they will enter a ceramic garden of bold, bright, simple objects. One weaves in and out of earth-toned cubes, or a cluster of red spheres varying in size from 10" to 30" in diameter, or a serpentine installment of oxblood hued, oblong shaped pods. This is the work of Gustav and Ulla Kraitz, a Swedish artist couple who often work in collaboration as well as individually. Much of the Kraitz's ceramic sculpture is made to be installed outdoors within the landscape and both relates to and contrasts with the natural environment.

Ulla and Gustav Kraitz use a refined repertoire of basic geometric forms: the sphere, the quadrant and the ellipse, which when exhibited outdoors create an ascetic and universal dialogue with their natural surroundings. Large red and blue spheres remind us of our planet and the circularity of nature. Hollowed out ellipses collect rain water and act as mirrors reflecting the surrounding landscape and sky. The clear, rich glazes in the colors of celadon, oxblood, cobalt blue and temmoku are highly reflective.

Born in Hungary, Gustav Kraitz moved to Sweden after the 1956 Hungarian uprising to escape Soviet oppression. He settled in Stockholm where he met Ulla, who became his wife and partner. For over thirty years the two artists have been working together on their ceramic sculpture, and with time and experimentation have settled upon an ancient Chinese flame firing technique. Under intense heat these sculptures are fired two, three or even four times to achieve the proper color and lustre. Thus the paradox of this work. The arduous and prolonged process belies the essential purity of all of their work.

John Mattson

Reflection (1996), 31 1/2" x 79" x 39 1/2", stoneware, diabase.



Won Kyung-hwan

Rodin Gallery
Seoul, Korea

Won Kyung-hwan is an artist interested in exploring the attributes of clay and its aesthetic beauty as well as expressing these qualities in a modern formative language. Although he initially worked with ceramics, Won is now involved with projects that are more formative in nature. He first began his work in these areas in the early 1980s, utilizing clay as his motif, and ultimately created artistic works that demonstrated a genre-free and highly experimental character while moving between the realms of ceramics and sculpture.

This exhibition is a comprehensive look at how two areas of exploration have evolved. The first room holds a variety of black ceramic objects, reminiscent of ancient earthenware or roof tiles, fired with a primitive technique. In order to emphasize the texture of these objects, they are combined with other materials like metal or wood. *Earth Yields Metal* and *Wood Digs Earth* are pieces symbolic of the artist's interest in the harmony between the generative (sangsaeng) aspects of the five elements of the universe.

In the second room, wet clay is applied to objects and then allowed to dry there to create installation works. Clay columns, which suggest a feeling of vertical ascent, and a wet clay-covered glass wall offer viewers a sample of dried clay's subtle characteristics in the natural cracks that form on their surfaces. Here Won Kyung-hwan expands his expressive range from the artistry of ceramics—clay and fire—to include the union of clay, light and space. Viewers are left with a new understanding of clay not simply by virtue of these rarely seen glimpses into its original beauty but also in its contemporary applications.

Bonsoo Park

Detail of Impressions in Clay (2001), 198 1/2" x 23 3/4" x 23 3/4", unfired clay.



Richard Milette

Nancy Margolis Gallery
New York, NY

Object. Image. Words. One sometimes wonders which registers first in our minds. Is it form, iconography or narrative that gives us the material leverage to understand works of art? Milette has always been interested in exploring the intersection and disjunction of these different signifiers.

Travesty and Parody is a series of five sets of classic Chinese import vessels in white, pink, blue and yellow that have been adorned with rebus (pictograms) on their fronts and backs. The fact that Milette has again chosen historical ceramic forms as the basis for his explorations underlines a certain ironic and subversive stance towards clay's annals and influences. The simple and tranquil garnitures are studies in pure formalism.

Milette's rebus force the viewer to actively participate in a playful decoding of meaning. The fact that each vessel frames a small part of the overall message challenges the viewer to synthesize these fragments into a more complex experience.

In *Garniture with Pink Ground and Rebus* (2000) the rebus on the front of the object read "W VIII Her _, toes RE __ ED," which translates as, "The subtle deterioration of the weather left in a comatose state with no chance of being repaired." Having spent the time trying to figure out the rebus I reflected for a moment whether or not this message had any significance in relation to the artwork. In the final analysis my answer was no. But the rebus did play an important role in how I received the artwork. In the end Milette engaged me in the process of constructing my own meaning and narrative and that should be one of the essential goals of any successful artwork.

Brett Littman

Detail of Travesty and Parody (2000), 10" x 26" x 4", ceramic.



Pit Nicholas

Galerie b15
Munich, Germany

The ceramic sculptures of the Luxembourg-born, 61-year-old artist Pit Nicholas shown in Munich were made between 1988 and 2000. The smaller ones show impressive monumental images, and spectators can hardly resist their mystic appearance, their dignity of architectural structure. His sculptures often look like they are made in twos, either by their construction of two separate elements fitting perfectly together or by the dramatic contrast of the rectangular outline of the outside versus the various elements of motion inside. Those contradictions evaluate the archetypical imagination of these miniaturized monuments. All surfaces show a scale of dull black, gray or white, some with lines or spaces generated through compression of material. Some wall pieces allow only a reduced flow of light through the somber of darkly colored shafts inside: pictorial objects of striking lightness, contradictory in weight and range. Nicholas's raku objects show a lot more energy than the more controlled companion pieces with surfaces structured with grayish scales and looking like miniaturized Phoenician temples. Those flat bodies burnt to a scorched black in the Raku oven remind us of archaic wedges and spearheads or reduced outlines of human thoraxes, other slender objects of ritual boats of Polynesian tribes, but Nicholas's objects are far from any ethno art. Pit Nicholas draws unpretentious ink sketches of all objects in his exhibitions. These are transformed by austere but virtuous treatment of the surfaces into objects of archetypical meanings. They may give, in the artist's own words, occasion for gentle meditation. Pit Nicholas is a sculptor who finds his articulation not by reducing raw products but by construction, solidification and compression of a malleable material.

Thomas Siedhoff

Untitled (2000), 9" x 5" x 8", ceramic.

