Creative Expression in Built-Up Clay

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CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN BUILT-UP CLAY

An Abstract

Presented to

Dr. Joel Moss

and the Faculty of the Graduate School

Fort Hays Kansas State College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Art Education

by

Darrell McGinnis

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It was the purpose of this study to explore the possibilities of the build-up method of forming clay in relation to the development of a personal expression in the clay medium, and to develop a previously felt affinity for "organic" forms.

This creative thesis grew out of an hypothesis on the part of this individual that the build-up method of forming clay would be best suited to his search for a personal, significant expression.

Because of the technical simplicity of the method, little time was needed to master the method itself, and the search for unique form through the method received complete attention almost from the beginning. It had been expected that stoneware clay would be the dominant material used, however, the limitation which firing facilities placed upon the idea in this material could not be reconciled with the creative desires of this artist, and earthenware clays became dominant. Experimental grog materials were used extensively in an attempt to arrive at unique surface qualities, and finishes were selected solely to enhance the particular form of the expression to which they were applied.

The expressions which are included in this thesis were motivated primarily by preliminary thinking from which resulted the general form of the bottom. Once begun, the piece itself, in conjunction with the artist's unique reaction to this existing fragment of the idea, became the force which determined that which was to follow. Utilitarian function at no time became an influence in the expression. An intense personal desire to arrive at a unique culmination of the form required extensive
experimentation and thought at that particular point in the creative experience.

Influencing all phases in the forming of the expression was a conscious personal preference for bulging, non-geometric forms through which this artist felt he could best arrive at a unique expression. This "organic" influence predominated throughout the thesis, and the attempt to develop it was a major contributor to the resultant forms.

It must be remembered that all conclusions which may be arrived at in this type research are temporary and may be rendered invalid simply through additional creative activity. However, upon completion of this study, it is felt that the build-up method of forming clay is best suited to this artist's creative personality and imposes less limitation upon his personal expression than do any of the other clay-formation methods. The direct contact of hand and material, and the absence of tool or machine result in an instantaneous response of the clay to finger pressure in a manner completely free and undirected by any force other than the creative impulse of the artist. Through this method the size of an idea is unrestricted, however, in larger expressions the time-consuming factor inherent in the method becomes an important personal consideration.

The build-up method was found to be the ideal instrument through which this artist could create and develop the "organic" forms which he feels are the basis of his unique expression. This research produced the examples shown here which this artist feels are the first truly unique, personal expressions of himself, and are the beginning of a life-long search for creative fulfillment.
GLAZED, STAINED AND WAXED EARTHENWARE
REDUCTION GLAZED STONEWARE
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