

From

Dust

To

Decadence



February 7th - April 4th, 2008

Reception Saturday February 9th 4 - 6 P.M.

Hours: T 10 - 4 W/Th 10 - 7 F/S 10 - 2

Director's Statement

Joanna O. Bigfeather 1

Curator's Statement

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Kelly Berning 13

Fred Olsen 15

Trent Berning 17

Peter Pincus 19

Rain Harris 21

Charlie Cummings 23

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Jeff Irwin 27

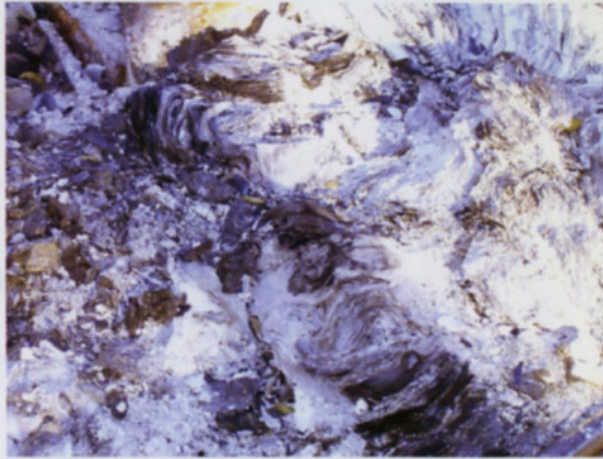
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Detail of, *Garbage Fly*, Charlie Cummings

Directors Statement
Joanna O. Bigfeather

There is nothing like the feel of working in clay, there is a smell, a taste, a feel and an eroticism that comes from no other material. It is the most basic of all materials and one of the oldest. My first introduction to clay was in 1985, when



'What Remains', Joanna Bigfeather's extensive art book collection after California wildfires took her home.

I was enrolled in the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I had decided to study art with the intention of becoming a painter but after my introduction to clay, by Professor Ralph Pardington, I was forever mesmerized with the material. I love how one can manipulate the substance into any shape imaginable. It can be coiled, rolled into a slab, thrown on a wheel, it has the ability to turn into slip then cast into a shape, it can be functional, non functional, it can be a canvas, either one or two or three dimensional. It can imitate an object and the size..... the size can be from teensy tiny to gigantic and always you have that sense, that touch, that familiarity and as an indigenous woman, clay connects me to my past.

In the Boehm Gallery's ceramic invitational, "*From Dust to Decadence*", we see that love and passion by fourteen nationally recognized artists through the objects they form. Their work is a glimpse into what is occurring in today's ceramic world, and with this glimpse is my hope the audience will explore the many possibilities of this exciting field. This exhibition and previous shows have contributed to the fulfillment of the Boehm Gallery's mission which is to introduce a variety of art forms and expressions to our students and to engage the public with current art trends on a regional, national and international level.

Guest curator Sasha Reibstein takes the viewer on an Alice in Wonderland ride through the artist's eye and the work they have created. Each work has a different invitation, some say pick me up, look at me closer, some say move back, look at me from afar as each work has a special intention, a style, a statement which is the artist's particular voice. Reibstein's own preferences appear with each work she has selected. To see their work is to understand her own work as a ceramicist and an instructor. I feel fortunate to have worked with Sasha over the past few months in the planning and implementation of this exhibition. Her fresh ideas and ability to see the possibilities of the ceramic program is an inspiration to us all. Step into the rabbit hole and enjoy Sasha's world.



ITAE1607-post, 23" x 19" x 21", Stoneware, Porcelain & Antlers. 2008 Sasha Koozel Reibstein

Curator's Statement *Sasha Koozel Reibstein*

California's recent wildfires left families homeless with nothing left but ashes and often, ceramic vessels. Pictures in the newspaper showed people standing in the rubble of their homes with porcelain teacups in their hands. This reinforced the reality that as clay artists,

we are creating work that will survive for centuries to come. Ceramics is one of human kind's most basic materials, allowing man the power not only to create but to record. We have used clay as one of the primary means to unearth information about how primitive societies lived through the vessels they used or sculptures they left behind. What will future generations be able to deduce about our lifestyles from the ceramic objects we are now creating? In selecting artists for this exhibition, I wanted to reflect on the answer to that question. These 14 artists have created works that explore aesthetics, technology, genetics, perception, identity, intimacy, humour, fashion, politics, hierarchies, and our relationship with nature and ourselves. Artists Peter Pincus and Charlie Cummings are working traditionally by creating vessels but giving their own unique perspective on the object, form and its function. Peter Pincus' pots address fashion and relationships, the pinstripe suit and polka dot skirt. Charlie Cummings' retro futuristic vessels reflect on modern proclivities with decaded garbage flies, enormous ants and candy colored kiss mark icons and covering their brightly glazed surfaces. Other artists are investigating technology and how it is changing and effecting our lives and identities. Through the use of her large-scale mosaics of pixilated portraits, Megumi Naitoh questions human identity in an age of overwhelming digital communication and scrutiny. Jeff Irwin's all-white animal trophy sculptures and digital toner printed tile works examine our manipulation of nature and both our perceived and actual relationship with the world around us. In a more confrontational approach, Richard Burkett documents and questions our current political situation through his symbolic and graphic relief sculptures. Each of the other artists live somewhere in between creating diverse, evocative works that speak of experiences both personal and universal. Ceramics has evolved to become a material used not only for expression, brick, or food storage but for mechanical parts, implants and tile for space shuttles. This progression is reflected in the work today's artists are using the material to create. Whether in the form of a vessel, sculpture or installation, ceramics continues to prove itself to be a material with incredible potential and continued relevance.

Virginia Scotchie

*I*n my work I am interested in the quality of the familiar thing we see everyday but really don't see because we see them everyday. Then I work at putting the objects I make together. Making objects. It is a habitual activity. The objects I make are often abstractions from the intimately known things that populate my everyday world. My son's toys, my father's hat or an old kitchen funnel. Sometimes objects I make come into being through the act of making, making, making. It is not always about the objects, it is also about the making. This is what I know and what I am passionate about. Then I begin to understand the what I am seeing.



I have an obsession with spouts, handles and knobs. This probably comes from being a potter when I first worked in clay. I think it is also about wanting my work to be verb-like in its reference to the everyday. Because I work with objects I think about the arrangement of these objects in space. This is often an intuitive, spontaneous act. I want the space that my work inhabits to serve as a domain that is halfway between the concrete reality of the things I make and that of the meaning objects acquire when they are perceived in the subjective terms of the self."

Professor, Head of Ceramics, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 1992-present

Education

Alfred University, Alfred, NY MFA 1985
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,
Chapel Hill, NC BA 1977

Annabeth Rosen



"I break almost as much ceramics as I make and I think I learn as much about the work by doing so. By being so focused on a destination for the piece, I overlook shapes and ideas. Much of the work is made with already fired parts broken, reassembled, reglazed and refired with the addition of wet clay elements if necessary. I work with a hammer and chisel, and I think of the fired pieces as being as fluid and malleable as wet clay. Sometimes seemingly disparate things, when they're joined, can be utterly convincing. In studio, there is very little randomness, and most things are set in motion from a multitude of forces, and everything counts. There is a conscience attempt to be aware of unconscious choices. Sometimes, how I've piled the discarded shapes to the side of where I'm working are closer to the unpremeditated and unpredictable elements I'm looking for than the piece I'm making."

Robert Arneson Endowed Chair, Professor of Ceramics, University of California, Davis, CA 1997-present

Education

Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI

Master of Fine Art 1981

NYS College of Ceramics at Alfred University, Alfred, NY

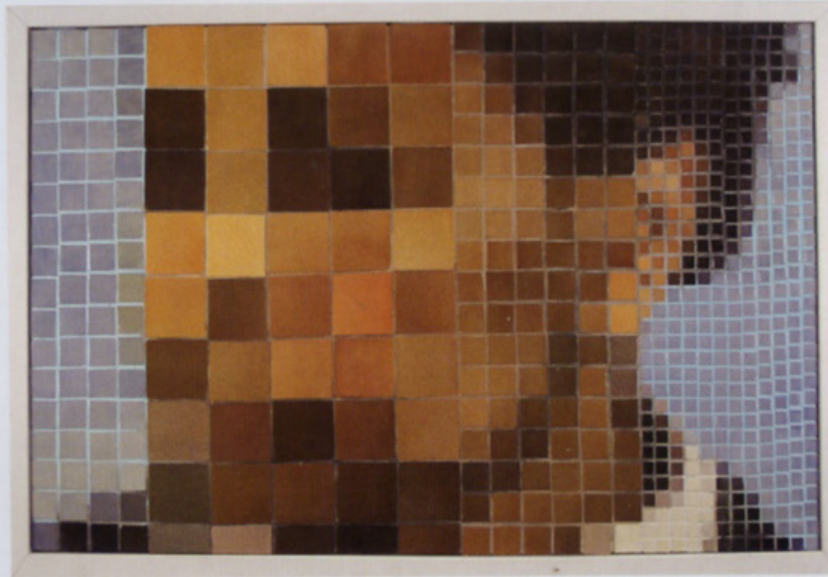
Bachelor of Fine Art 1978



Above: *Untitled #29 (Thumbelina)*, 11" x 13" x 8", Ceramic, 2007 Photo Credit: Lee Featherlee
Opposite: *Untitled #8 (Daisy)*, 12" x 14.5" x 12", Ceramic, 2007 Photo Credit: Lee Featherlee

From

Megumi Naitoh



*I*n our contemporary world, mosaics are not just ceramics, stone and glass, they are also digital. In some respects, the meaning of mosaic has changed over time. Mosaic used to be a technique to reveal design and imagery, yet the idea of the digital mosaic in contemporary society is used almost in an opposite manner. It is used to obscure nudity, obscene gesture or identity. I am intrigued by the contrast of its connotation in the Roman era and contemporary society, and it has inspired me to create this new body of work. As the Romans create mosaics of daily life scenes such as hunting, dining, and sports scenes, I am also creating mosaics of our daily life scenes, in this case, specifically online activity. Online activity has become a large part of our lives. We get on the internet regularly. Many of us probably have more than a couple of alternative online identities to blog, to shop, to pay bills, maybe to meet people, but we never discuss our real names. The current phenomena of 'My Space' and 'You Tube' reminds us of our strong desire to reach people yet we are fearful of revealing our identity. By pixilation and abstraction of the portrait, my work visually expresses the anonymity."

Assistant Professor of Art, Emmanuel College, Boston, MA 2001-present

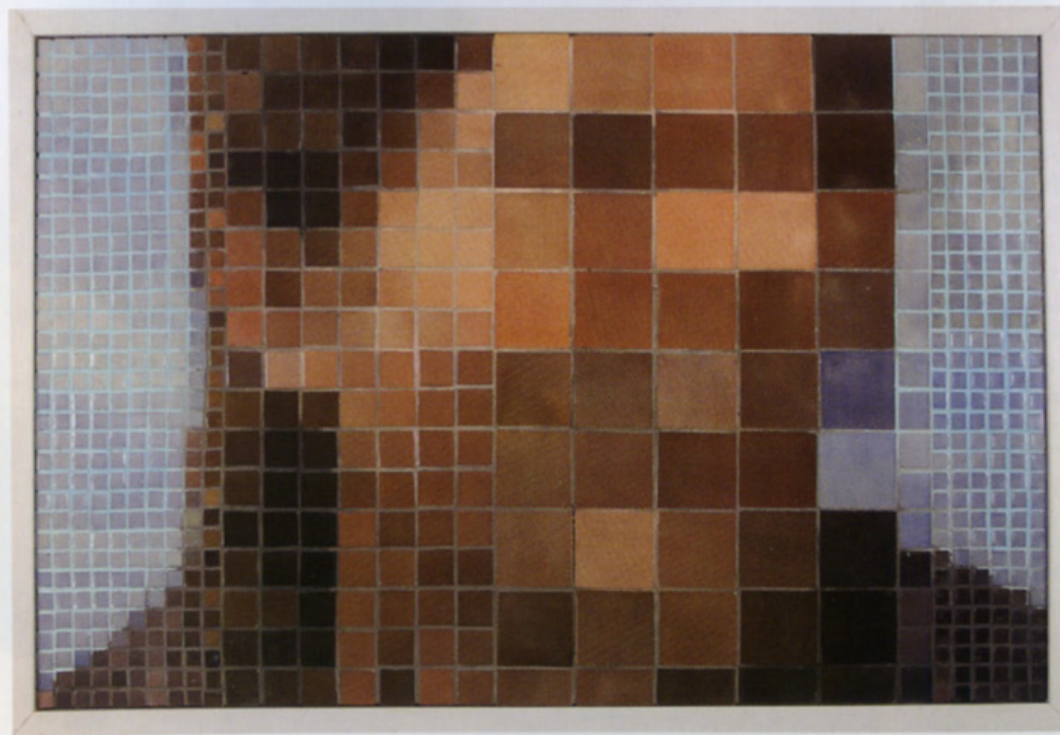
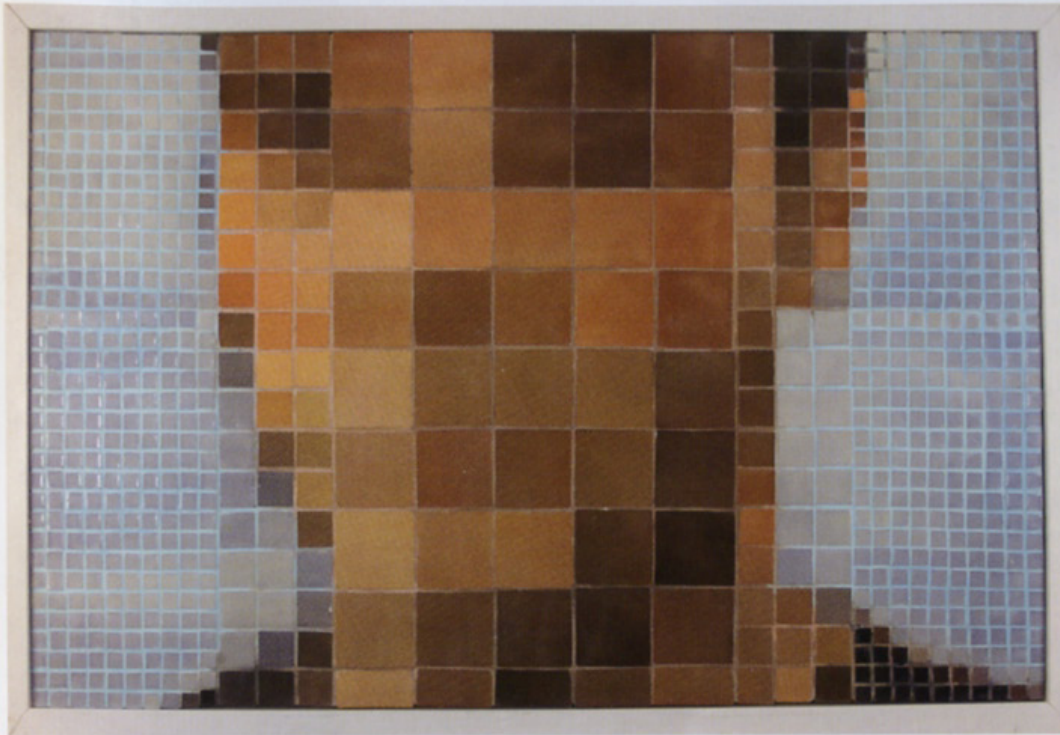
Education

Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA

Master of Fine Art 2000

San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Bachelors of Fine Art 1996



Above From Top: J3240, 20.75" x 30.75" x 1.5", Ceramic Tiles. 2007
S3378, 20.75" x 30.75" x 1.5", Ceramic Tiles. 2007
Opposite: C3295, 20.75" x 30.75" x 1.5", Ceramic Tiles. 2007