



Saskia by Amanda Calhoun

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: "More Than Coincidence: Continuations in Clay"
Where: STC Library Art Gallery, Bldg F, 3201 W Pecan Blvd
When: Through August 11
Hours: 7am-9:30pm Mon-Thurs, 8am-7pm Friday
Info: 956) 872-3488

Eternal and Instant Pleasures

Tegarden and Calhoun see the landscape in unexpected ways

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

This year's South Texas Ceramic Showdown, "More Than Coincidence: Continuations in Clay", again features an exhibition of student work from 12 colleges and universities and a separate exhibition by two professional ceramists, Gregory Tegarden and Amanda Calhoun from Alpine. Their works are displayed in the Library Art Gallery, 2nd floor. Inspired by the weathered rocks of the Chihuahuan desert, Tegarden's large ceramic vessels echo the rock's surfaces worn smooth by millenia of wind and wear; they are the sound of eternal existence; Calhoun's colorful plant and landscape motifs grace the walls, exhilarant in the whimsical here and now. From differing viewpoints, both artists express a love and fascination for the landscape.

Displayed with ageless stability, Tegarden's large vessels claim their space in the small gallery. He sees his works as big rocks and boulders that continue to offer him a playful experience, recalling the large monoliths he once encountered on backpacking hikes with his father in West Texas. His artistic intent is to replicate patinas found on the surface of those beautiful desert rocks, the red rust colors and blacks created by eons in the sun. "That's what I'm trying to recreate in the kiln," he pointed out. "The kiln is like a

geological time machine. The finished pots become snapshots, recording the geological happening in the firing of the kiln." "#51" shows the subtle natural colorations of his intent, where the textured glazed surface was achieved with soda ash sprayed into the kiln at a certain temperature. It flowed through in the kiln like water flows around rocks, mimicking the uneven coverage (Soda ash is closely related to baking soda and salt, and resembles a salt glaze). This process imparts an eroded landscape of textures and colors on the pots that would take millions of years to form naturally. "Each firing seems to capture a glimpse into a newly created world," Tegarden exclaimed, "and it's this final action that drives me as an artist."

Moving from the dignified silence of Tegarden's dry desert to the lighthearted and lively colors of Calhoun's platters and flat wall ceramics, we encounter faces whose heads are bedecked with upbeat imagery. The face series represents the strong women in Calhoun's life - family and friends. With the legendary Carmen Miranda as an inspiration, the elaborate headdresses read like travel posters, food ads, and kitsch related to specific individuals. Aptly, Calhoun says that her work is meant to be a quick getaway and a celebration of happy things. "Stacy" is piled high with red flowers and green foliage, a tribute to Calhoun's mother who made large silk paintings with tropical scenes. "Brandy" is all about fun social get togethers with great snacks. These decorative works have the feeling of ceramics-meets-painting, and Calhoun admits to feeling like she's painting when she creates each piece. Her perfectly even color tones and gradations of colors are the result of layers of glazes. Light colors are applied first and then darker colors, maintaining the mindset from her knowledge of screen printing. "I see the headdresses as dreamscapes," she said, "full of fantasy and possibility."

"More Than Coincidence: Continuations in Clay" is an adventure in artistic contrasts. The students work is displayed in the VAM Gallery in Building B, and effectively demonstrates the different directions offered by various art schools.

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