

Mary Roehm is known for her creation of paper-thin forms. The piece I selected for review is a piece titled “Bowl”. The piece was created in 1999 from porcelain, and glaze fired in multiple wood firings ¹. The work is a large bowl form that sits on top of a straight, narrow foot.

“Bowl” is a physically simple form, it is a thin bowl shape, with a variety of ridges¹. The size of the work is impressive, at 26 inches wide it is a somewhat intimidating piece. The piece has a metallic appearance formed by the wood ash glaze layered over the porcelain body. The glaze has the color of brass or copper, but the texture of raw porcelain ware. The thin porcelain makes the bowl look very gentle and delicate. The swirling band on the piece gives it a feeling of being taller than it actually is. The height of the foot itself is something that interests me, as it highlights the curve of the bowl. The curve is wide and sweeping, which brings an amount of tension to the work. The bowl seems to be on the verge of collapse, but yet has a sense of stability, which it also receives from its relationship with the foot. The width of the bowl adds to the stress of its structure, giving it a sense of flight. Roehm has an appreciation for the utility of vessels, such as bowls.² The utility of this bowl might be questioned, as its size isn’t practical for many utilitarian purposes. The bowl seems to be more of a “flight of fantasy” for the artist, or perhaps an attempt at breaking any notion that porcelain is for petite and fragile works.

This artist interests me because she creates typical functional ceramic forms and applies changes to them to make them abstract works. She has taken advantage of the stability properties of porcelain to make works that resemble the texture and flexibility of paper. Another characteristic of this artist’s work that interests me is her use of contrast. Many of her works will

¹ The Mint Museums, http://www.themintmuseums.org/collections_detail.php?collection_id=12&item_id=17, Retrieved November 2, 2006

have opposite properties, such as a huge bowl surface and a very small foot, or a black cylinder and a white cylinder. Roehm admits that she likes to create a relationship between the inside and outside spaces of her work, and that she likes to contradict the traditional thoughts about her medium. Roehm has a great desire to create tension in her viewer.² Roehm's theory of porcelain being viewed as refined form is true, especially for me. I think of porcelain being restricted to being a smooth, white, and often delicate material. The piece owned by the Mint Museum is a less interesting piece than some of Roehm's other work. One of the most interesting things for me is the use of primarily wood fire techniques for the work. Wood firing and natural ash glaze are common in North Carolina. They are also my favorite glaze methods to view. "Bowl" and Roehm's other bowls give me many ideas for what it is that I like about my own work.

Roehm is a very talented ceramic artist. She stresses the clay and expands the historical view of her medium, porcelain. In addition, the use of only black, white and natural glaze colors places more focus on the clay itself. I like her use of curves, such as in "Bowl", and folds, as in "Folded Bowl".³

² SUNY Newpaltz, Department of Ceramics, http://www.newpaltz.edu/ceramics/people_faculty.cfm

³ Di Ichi Gallery, <http://www.daiichiarts.com/exhibit.asp?ExhibitID=14>



”Bowl”



”Outside In”



”Shelf of Cups”

Works Cited

Mint Museum of Craft and Design, visit on November 18, 2006

Mint Museum of Craft and Design: Current Collections

http://www.themintmuseums.org/collections_detail.php?collection_id=12&item_id=17

Di Ichi Gallery: Sense & Sensibility: Mary Roehm

<http://www.daiichiarts.com/detail.asp?ImageID=368>

Di Ichi Gallery: Sense & Sensibility: Mary Roehm

<http://www.daiichiarts.com/detail.asp?ImageID=381>

Di Ichi Gallery: Sense & Sensibility: Mary Roehm

<http://www.daiichiarts.com/exhibit.asp?ExhibitID=14>

SUNY New Paltz Ceramics Department, Faculty Information Page,

http://www.newpaltz.edu/ceramics/people_faculty.cfm