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Threshold

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Threshold

by

Alix Knipe

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Peter Pinnell

Lincoln, Nebraska

April, 2013

THRESHOLD

Alix Knipe, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2013

Advisor: Peter Pinnell

My decisions in the studio are tied to my experiences outside of the studio, intertwining the complex relationship of memory and sentience. Each work precariously balances between softness and rigidity, vessel and sculpture, monumentality and intimacy. These tensions transform the familiar into the enigmatic and are an integral part of my philosophical approach to making.

Soft curves and billowing planes are punctuated by the structure of defined edges, hard angles, and areas of dark shadows. This duality suggests two worlds, one of feeling, intuition, sensuality, and dreams, the other of intellect, reason, structure, form, rhythm, and geometry.

By contradicting the visual with the tactile, the surface emphasizes the coupling of softness and rigidity. My surfaces are inspired by looking closely at our physical world, by exploring a Piñon tree as if was a whole forest or wandering through the colorful streets of “old town” Turkey, layers of heavily pigmented paint transforming the mundane into the extraordinary. I am drawn to the crusted and the weathered; objects that have had time transform their visual depth and speak about a layering of living.

The forms relate to architectural spaces, intimacies of passageways opening to sacred spaces, eroded canyons, and the human body conceptualized as a landscape. I am interested in how light and shadow dictate our movements, how they affect the physical sensation in our body as we maneuver through interior

spaces and natural landscapes. My intent is to create beautiful objects that elicit, as the viewer's eye explores the form, a similar corporeal sensation to powerful physical spaces.

By creating vessels that use volume and containment, qualities inherent to pottery, I explore content beyond utility. A vessel has a universality that has a certain familiarity to the viewer making my work more approachable and, by borrowing the language of pottery (i.e. lips, feet, etc), the vessel reemphasizes the reference to the body. Solid forms and unseen voids not only reference physical spaces, but allude to the play between our physical and psychological worlds. Interior spaces do not invite the viewer to fill the space with use, but rather, reference the shadows of our psyche. By limiting visual entry to enclosed volumes, my work evokes mystery, intrigue, and most importantly, the imagination.