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Line Language

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Master of Fine Arts Thesis Report

Line Language

by

Albert Avi Arenfeld

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, 2015

Line Language

Albert Avi Arenfeld, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2015

Advisor: Peter Pinnell

I consider utility and beauty in the functional pots that I make. In making pottery I continue a history of typography as ornament and a tradition of making objects by hand. My designs are informed by my personal background as well as cultural and historic influences.

The pots that I make are inspired by anthropomorphic form and architectural structure. I reference the geometry of the human body as well as buildings seen in my travels to Japan and the Middle East. The internal structure of the pot is both bones and framing, the surface of the pot is both skin and façade. To me, lids and finials are like roofs and monuments, miniature pots that finish and function. Ridges and banding represent gates and walls that were at one point my canvas for painting graffiti. Utilitarian and decorative considerations like these bands fitting ergonomically into the hand of the user creates a relationship of form and function. I make pots with utility and consideration for food. I make platters and bowls with interiors that can compliment, display, and present a carefully made meal. My pots function as utilitarian objects and as decoration. Their form, silhouette and presence can adorn an interior space and their use can complete the act of nourishment.

As a child I was instructed in Hebraic calligraphy. Although I didn't fully understand the meaning of the characters that I wrote I was immersed in the formal qualities of the written language. To me, the lines that created curves and edges made up a visual language that stood alone from their assigned meaning. Later, I began writing graffiti and doing so furthered my immersion into the formal and gestural qualities of marks and lines. The meditative practice of writing that I once used in graffiti I now use in the surface decoration on my forms. This extended practice is one of repetition and refinement.

In my work, calligraphy as decoration is drawn from history but allows me to meditate on my own experiences in mark making. Calligraphic motifs are used in my work to define places, under lids, on rims and in feet. I also use these motifs to enhance structure and draw the eye to the movement of form. My brushwork adds gesture and line that fill a frame and highlight specific moments of the pot. Flowers dot open spaces to contribute a natural element and a slower speed to otherwise energetic lines.

My color choices in *Line Language* include the use of black and white. I see possibilities within a finite structure of materials. In combination and alone the two colors create a wealth of cool greys, warm whites and rich blacks that accentuate, frame, and provide a canvas for food and drink. Through the use of color and line, I articulate contrast, gesture, and form.

In *Line Language*, I present a selection of work that represents my development as an artist. Through the process of exploration and refinement I have developed a personal language of making. I explore variation within a structure of limitations in order to create a cohesive line of functional ceramics for use and display.



Platter, 2015



Platter, 2015



Bowl, 2015



Vase with plate, 2015



Line Language, 2015



Line Language, 2015



Line Language, 2015



Line Language, 2015

