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THE WELL CONSIDERED POT

Matthew Lee Kelleher

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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THE WELL CONSIDERED POT

by

Matthew Lee Kelleher

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

May, 1999

The Well Considered Pot
Matthew Lee Kelleher, M.F.A.
University of Nebraska, 1999

Advisor: Peter Pinnell

Utilitarian objects are accessible and universal. Their forms are recognizable and their utility makes them inclusive. I choose to make utilitarian objects in order to use these characteristics as a foundation for my ideas. This decision invites the viewer to discover my visual and tactile interests.

Process is the vehicle I use for expression. When I use the wheel to create form, I respond to the clay as it passes through my fingers and tools. I search for a clean line that displays a balance of volume pushing out and a force squeezing in. When I work with molds, I roll, pound, cut, and throw slabs to produce thick, soft, sharp, or hard edges. Rather than defining my work with a specific construction process, I choose to leave the process a variable and concentrate on my intuitive response to information tools leave on the material.

Utility may seem to require certain formal elements. I use these requirements as a beginning for building form. Then I challenge these assumptions, altering forms to create a new perspective while maintaining the essence of utility. I often explore specific form by playing with the formal elements. Volume, shape, center of gravity, spouts, handles, feet, lids, may all be altered in subtle degrees to change the composition of a pot.

I cover the clay surface with slip. Pouring and layering, I capture the qualities of liquid to show fluidity, motion, and translucency. Glaze is applied over the slip to achieve two different results. On some forms, I choose to pour glaze to mimic the gesture of the slip. On other forms, I arrange glaze with controlled marks to punctuate the composition. The work is fired in a soda kiln. When the soda dampens the surface, the slip warms up and layering is revealed. The relationship between the form, the firing, and my hand is complete.

Simplicity is the key. My work is built on consideration. There is no shock, no glitz, and no glamour. There is a subtle balance of geometry in form, a comparison of symmetry and asymmetry in decoration, and a warm serene surface. Softly, the work asks for the viewers' attention. Each piece is ready for a conversation and willing to be part of a greater surrounding.



















