SEAFORMS
A SCULPTURAL ENVIRONMENT

An abstract submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Art
by
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I love you all.
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"There's nothing constant in the universe,  
All ebb and flow, and every shape that's born  
Bears in its womb the seeds of change."

OVID  
Metamorphosis  
XV (A.D. 8)
ABSTRACT

SEAFORMS
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by
Karen Ring Mealiffe
Master of Arts in Art

The Sea when viewed by the naked eye offers forth a grandeur that has tempted the creative instincts of many artists. That part of the sea visible under a microscope provides an additional realm of form, texture, and color largely unknown to most humans.

The forms of my imagery emulate a rarely viewed beauty of nature: a microscopic sea environment. My sculptures are conical configurations that reflect forms which change with the ebb and flow of the ocean; they reflect the responses I feel for the life and shapes of forms which exist under the sea. The multiplicity of their contours suggest many anatomies and crustaceal formations. The soft poetic undulations and the muted hues of the sea creatures have all been my inspirations.
The imagery represents the ever-changing positions of life in sea water. The sculptures also reflect the escarpments and faults that come from subtle shifts of undersea landscapes.

The imagery also deals with human life. Likewise it provides a viewpoint of the microscopic as potentially viewed through a "macro" photographic lens. Such a vision allows explorations of other life pathways by revealing beauty of structure, response or adaptation to environment (not only during the life span of the forms, but over a long period of time). These life patterns provide exciting departures for creative exploration. Wherever one looks there are spirals varying from the celestial to the submicroscopic. The transparencies, pigments, hues, and tinctures of blues, greens, browns, and violets in combination with forms diametrically opposed to one another represent the way in which shifts and changes result when the environment interacts and causes its effects on such undersea life.

The final sculptural environment is made from forms consisting of slightly altered three-dimensional slip cast stoneware pieces. My intention was to alter the forms yet to preserve the natural rough earthy quality of clay, to develop a synthesis of clay form and sea form response, yet to give the appearance of fluid underwater forms. Employing the slip cast mold method enabled me to achieve
a more dynamic size, as opposed to the limitations of wheel-thrown pieces. This, in turn, emphasized the detail as a "macro" lens might present an undersea environment.

These works represent a progressive development from the simple and rigid cone shapes pulled from the molds to the more complex fluid and biomorphic forms of the underwater environment. The forms also portray the progressive changes that occur both in organic or biomorphic forms and in human life. We live, and as we live, each cell changes. We dream, and as we dream, our dreams change. This is a metamorphosis.

Growth is a transition, and to me, being able to make the transition from creating fantasies and imageries in my mind to creating realities or works of art, reflects the progression of my own maturation.

These art forms, then, are symbolic of my own interpersonal relationships with others. The progressions or developments the forms take characterize the development I have experienced. As the sculpture develops and reacts to the currents and surges in its environment, so have I responded to the forces exerted on me.

These reflections are the unifying concepts in my sculpture. They, in conjunction with the beauty, the balance and rhythm, the light and dark dancing shadows portray a harmony similar to music.
The importance of light to the sculpture enhances the colors, the texture, and the form itself. In sculpture it seems to be an extension of the "stereoscopic sensibility." Through lighting comes the possibility of inducing those evocative responses that seem a part of primeval life which is necessary to a full comprehension of space and volume. The light on the forms seems to induce full play of our "tactile" sense through the vitality of the forms experienced by our eyes. A number of the forms have subtly related tensions because I felt the total environment should be inhabited with a vital and dynamic strength, a certain rhythmical articulation, and thus, the "Seaforms" exist.


APPENDIX A

CONE 10 Stoneware Slip Recipe

10,000 grams . . . . . . . Greenstripe fireclay  
6,000 grams . . . . . . . Kentucky Ball Clay  
3,000 grams . . . . . . . Red Horse Clay  
1,000 grams . . . . . . . Kingman Feldspar

20,000 grams  
add  
13,960 grams . . . . . . . water  
180 grams . . . . . . . Sodium/Silicate  
40 grams . . . . . . . Soda Ash

Engobe Recipe

20 percent . . . . . . . Colemanite  
20 percent . . . . . . . Silica  
30 percent . . . . . . . Kaolin  
10 percent . . . . . . . Wood Ash

Add individually or in combination:

5 percent . . . . . . . Iron  
5 percent . . . . . . . Ochre  
1 percent . . . . . . . Cobalt  
2 percent . . . . . . . Copper  
6 percent . . . . . . . Manganese

{ Colorants

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