



Functional pottery [slide]  
by Frank Bevis Fabens

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts  
Montana State University  
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by

Frank Bevis Fabens

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Fine Arts

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Bozeman, Montana

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Approval

of a thesis submitted by

Frank Bevis Fabens

This thesis has been read by each member of the author's graduate committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

May 13, 1986  
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## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My pottery contains harmony which arises out of contradiction. The pieces do not appear to be traditionally functional, yet they are. The surface is both rigid and soft. The apparent heaviness of the forms is different from the actual weight. These contradictions create a pottery which is intriguing and is not understood at first glance.

An initial visual impression of my sake' bottle contradicts common ideas of a functional object, but upon handling, it becomes an understandable and functional pot. If something feels good or works well, it may change one's idea of the pot; consequently, these pots are to be explored with fingers. The eye and mind accept limited standards of function and nonfunction, while touch is accountable only to itself. A cup that can be held in one hand can be explored three-dimensionally through touch as well as through sight. The viewer using both touch and sight will gain a more complete understanding of my pot's complex planes and surfaces.

I have two different approaches to surface. One surface captures clay's soft malleability and sensitivity to touch. This surface records the spontaneous random textures of clay right out of the bag. The other surface is a rigid pattern imposed on the form. It is a deliberate and open pattern, continuing beyond the boundaries of the form, as if the pot collided with a plane of pattern which impressed itself on the pot.

The pattern becomes sharper in contrast to the softer clay surface, and the crispness of the pattern highlights the random soft clay surface.

My forms are eccentric and stable and have a heavy look. Flat bottoms and/or wide bases create a grounded feeling and reassuring strength. By accepting and fostering the cumbersome nature of a soft, solid lump of clay, I tap into naturally stable forms. When I add a spout, it has the same feeling as the body, thereby unifying the pot. Where a handle goes over a pattern, it takes on that pattern, integrating itself into the form. The pot creates a harmony of balanced parts out of a form which contradicts itself.

It is in the function of these pots that harmony between contrasting elements becomes most apparent and is reconciled. The sake' bottle forms each have one side which is soft and clay-like and very inviting to hold. The patterned side does not invite you to hold as much as to explore, moving your fingers deep into the pattern. The treatment of both of these surfaces implies a weightiness. There is nothing light about the forms and surfaces of these pots until you pick them up. The physical weight is a joy, inspiring use.

Contrast focuses the senses on the possibilities of functional pots. Harmony makes the pots liveable and friendly. My pots expand the everyday view of what is possible in good, functional pots.

## LIST OF SLIDES

1. Blue Tea Set  
Porcelain  
Teapot 10"Hx7"Wx6"D
2. Black Sake' Set  
Porcelain  
Sake' Bottle 5"Hx6"Wx5"D
3. Decanter and Cups  
Porcelain  
Decanter 7"Hx6"Wx4"D
4. Celadon Tea Set  
Porcelain  
Teapot 12"Hx8"Wx6"D
5. Bone Sake' Set  
Porcelain  
Sake' Bottle 6"Hx4"Wx3.5"D
6. Clear Tea Set  
Porcelain  
Teapot 8"Hx10"Wx10"D
7. Coffee Set  
Porcelain  
Coffee Pot 11"Hx8"Wx5"D
8. Honey Sake' Set  
Porcelain  
Sake' Bottle 5"Hx4"Wx4"D



6.



1.



7.



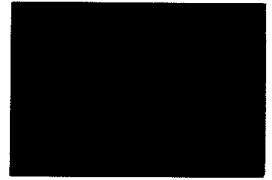
2.



8.



3.



4.



5.





















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