

FANTASY



"If you make art based on what is stylish, or acceptably good, then you have nowhere to take it."

– Viola Frey

While some ceramicists used this new freedom from function to explore the possibilities of form, shape, and color, other artists ventured into figuration, narrative subject matter, and manipulation of historical and traditional forms. Using the term “fantasy,” this section aims to encompass a diversity of artistic approaches, from the literal and comical, in works by such artists as David Gilhooly, to the surreal and sci-fi futuristic, in works by Patti Warashina. Other artists have no specific social commentary other than to show the playful and unexpected uses of clay.

Influenced by Pop Art in the 1960s, the Funk Art Movement in ceramics used playful imagery to insert subversive commentary. Robert Arneson was the leader of Funk, a mostly California Bay Area movement whose artists had an irreverent approach to clay, often exploring humor and sexual references. Viola Frey, who was also in the Bay Area during the 1960s, reshaped and defined the use of ceramics as a fine art medium through her sculptures. In the 1970s, after moving to a larger studio, she started to create her signature larger-than-life figures.