

My work celebrates the discovery of the poignant beauty in a pebble, a fragment of concrete, and the snarl of thread on the reverse of needlework. These moments of discovery inspire daydream and recollection – similar to the experiences of finding faces, animals, and narrative in clouds or landscape features. I obsessively collect materials and objects: scraps of discarded clay from the shared studio environment, found objects, and intentionally disfigured and broken handmade clay pieces. Using these collections as building blocks I consider the poetic nature of hidden, unintentional details that move us, but cannot be planned for or reproduced purposefully. The fold of torn clay, the fingermarks on the inside of sculpted walls, jagged cracked forms - I embrace them all to create a sense and celebration of the internal process that brought them to being.

When fired, clay captures time and makes permanent the gesture of pinches, pushes, rips, and tears – capturing the moments of contact between the intentions of mind and hand physical tools and material. Scraps of clay and ceramic are the byproducts of artists toiling clay struggling to find the perfect articulation in form - pushed into recycling bins, trod into the ground, and otherwise discarded through the process of creating. Utilizing byproducts of the creative process in new artwork memorialize decisions in the creative process and create mementos of artistic struggle.

So fascinated have I become with the gesture of broken and discarded clay that I purposely create pieces that I hope will provide breathtaking fragments. I allow myself to work intuitively - forming animals, frequently doodled shapes, as well as abstract and impressionistic studies in clay, color, and line. Pieces are slammed, crushed, and embraced - fulfilling their purpose as fragment farms. This process reveals the unintentional beauty of the internal architecture of ceramic construction. Necessarily incomplete, the abruptness of jagged edges and the rhythmic caverns of broken ceramics beg to be examined, cropped, and framed with additional fragments, surface treatments, and material.

Fragments, scraps, mortar and glaze, wire, slip, foam and epoxy, and slip soaked debris combine with each to create curious collage and architectural structures. Determined combined expressions of the detritus that was cast aside in another context. Contrasting surfaces and forms create painterly compositions that invite the viewer to meander and explore pieces – to find the intentionality in happenstance as well as the rescued individuals of byproduct.

My process demands a certain amount of ambiguity as components are processed, arranged, and assembled infinite number of times. Pieces are complete when poetry is discovered in the arrangement of debris – harmonious if not beautiful, precariously balanced in space.

-Gratia Brown