



Friday, December 30, 2005

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Carpe Argillum: Seize The Clay

An Exhibition of Arizona clay artists
January 19 - March 19

There is probably no material more basic for creating with and so plentiful. If one is ambitious enough, it can be cheap as well; providing you know where to dig. Even the means to firing can be done simply as well; again, if you are willing to exert enough physical labor to do it in a hole in the ground. These days clay artists have many levels of modern convenience to create work and render permanence to their efforts. An electric kiln is easier to use than a gas or wood-fired one. Powered potters wheels take away the efforts involved in foot and leg power. Glaze materials are ground finely enough for immediate use and even pre-mixed glazes may be purchased to apply to surfaces. Using the term “clay artists” is an attempt to elevate what has been known as “just craft” to the public, to the status of “art”. Unfortunately, the general public still views art made of clay at a lower level than that of bronze. Paintings in oil still seem to have the ultimate status symbol. Some clay practitioners do more than pottery alone and of those that do only pottery, many feel they create works as valid and important as the painters or the sculptors in bronze.

Yet many are content to limit their output to functional wares, creating a kind of small scale production and dealing with numerous outlets to sell their work. The work is still hand made without resorting to molds.

Visitors to West Valley Art Museum’s “Seize the Clay” will have a chance to see both types of clay handiwork. Large sculptural works that are not containers, such as the sculptural work of Betsy VanAntwerp entitled “Guardian” or the humorous work of Esmeralda DeLaney such as “Nine Lives Was Just A Myth” are shown along side beautiful porcelain pottery by Lisa Hamish. The variety of approaches evident in this exhibit is nothing short of astonishing.

The pottery can be “thrown” on the wheel or built by hand painstakingly one little pat of clay at a time as in the “Petal Pot” by George Palovich. Vessel forms can have messages as well as in Janet Trisler’s “Paternal Passage” quoting from Shakespeare. Humor, dark and light, or more serious expression, it is all here just as it would be in a painting show or bronze sculpture exhibit. Visitors won’t be disappointed.

West Valley Art Museum is open 10 AM to 4 PM Tuesday through Sunday. The Museum is located at West Bell Road and 114th Avenue. With five exhibition galleries, a Museum Store, *Classic Café*, and regularly scheduled education programs, the Museum welcomes all visitors. There is a small admission charge for non-members. \$7 adults, \$2 students, ages 5 and under are free.



“Nine Lives Was Just A Myth” ceramic by Esmeralda DeLaney



Porcelain teapot by Lisa Hamish



“Paternal Passage” ceramic by Janet Trisler



“Guardian” ceramic stoneware Raku, life-size relief by Betsy VanAntwerp



“Petal Pot With Numbers” ceramic 26” high by George Palovich

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