



Confrontational Ceramics

Judith S. Schwartz

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Those who associate ceramics with functional vessels or charming knick-knacks are in for a shock. Clay may start out soft, but in the right hands it can deliver a hard blow. From British Toby Jugs to Marcel Duchamp's Fountain to a wall of gruesome tiles that forms a portrait of President George W. Bush, ceramic art has the power to provoke and subvert.

Confrontational Ceramics surveys the work of contemporary sculptors, potters, and mixed media artists who have turned the ancient medium of clay into an articulate vehicle for political and social commentary. Educator and curator Judith S. Schwartz gathers the works of more than two hundred artists from thirty different countries into a glossy full-color overview of the radical ceramics scene. Provocative pieces from makers such as Grayson Perry, Robert Arneson, Richard Notkin, Howard Kottler, as well as newer talents, address personal, social, and geopolitical injustices from rape to racism. In their own words, these bold artists discuss the outrage behind their outrageous works. Schwartz provides historical context for current and late twentieth-century protest in the form of ceramics. She also places the artists within thematic groupings: war and politics, the social and human condition, gender issues, the environment, and popular and material culture.

Filled with subtle satire, garish jests, grotesque shock treatments, and moving testaments, *Confrontational Ceramics* is a radical departure from conventional coffee-table ceramics books on decorative housewares or formal abstractions. This art book will amuse, inspire, and possibly offend art historians, ceramics collectors, and anyone with an eye for the outlandish.

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