

POTTERY: ART AS RELATIONSHIP

Fergus P. Moore

Bede Clarke, M.F.A., Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This thesis asserts that pottery is art because of the relationships people form with it. These formations occur on three levels. The first is the human response to the form of the pot. In this case a cup and a plate serve different functions and we choose the form that corresponds with our need: a cup for liquid, a plate for food. Secondly, we form relationships with pots through an aesthetic response. Formal elements and principles such as color, size, profile, texture, imagery, etc., lead us to admire a particular pot. And thirdly, we form relationships because of emotional attachment. This can be due, for instance, to knowing the potter or because the pot represents and reminds us of events in our lives. In this case our attachment to a particular pot is not necessarily based upon the pot's quintessential form for the given function; nor is it necessarily reliant upon its aesthetic appeal – though both of these usually figure into one's relationship with any pot.

This thesis also explores the role of Zen thought in both the making and using of pots. In both cases the pot acts as a pathway to the considered moment whereby the ordinary and even the mundane can be seen in a new light and appreciated. A section is dedicated to the process of making and firing salt-glazed stoneware. A final section details the physical and philosophical nature of the thesis exhibit.