AN EXPLORATION OF ASYMMETRIC DESIGN IN CERAMICS

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree Master of Fine Arts

by

Robert Frazier Wilson, B.F.A., M.A.

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Approved by

Paul Bogatay

Adviser

School of Fine and Applied Arts

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TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF FIGURES

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASYMMETRIC FORM AS A POPULAR ELEMENT OF EXPRESSION IN CERAMICS

Rudy Autio highlighted the United States entry to the Third International Exhibition of Contemporary ceramics in Prague, according to the June, 1962, issue of Craft Horizons, with his "rugged asymmetrical forms . . . original and imaginative." The magazine continued to report that the outstanding work of the show belonged to Henry Takemoto and was an enormous garden piece--"a distorted spherical form, standing somewhat obliquely . . . with dynamic poise and strength . . . very forceful."

In June, 1964, Craft Horizons chose 327 pieces of contemporary American craftsmen for their American Craftsmen 1964. Of the ceramic selections in the show, over fifty per cent were asymmetric.

Asymmetry is now new but is comparatively rare in the history of ceramics. The Egyptians made black-top ware with wavy protrusions on the side; the Cretans made false-mouth bottles with spouts off center; the Pre-Colombian Indians made stirrup vases in stylistic animal forms; the Chinese Han Dynasty potters made burial hill jars with mountain-shaped lids; and the Japanese made asymmetric Raku tea bowls. Asymmetry, for the most part, however, has been developed in the Twentieth Century.

In recent years the potter's historical function as a community tradesman has been replaced by machinery and the potter has raised himself to the position of an artist. Today the artist-potter is required to have a "stronger personality and greater amount of talent than in those times when a whole society carried the craftsman."[1] He must "burst the limits of tradition and restrictions of convention and to shatter the limitations of his own routine."[2] It is through such artistic outlooks that asymmetry is being more thoroughly explored and therefore more commonly seen in the ceramic expressions of many potters.

AN APPROACH AND THE METHODS EMPLOYED IN ASYMMETRIC FORMS

The development of this thesis is a result of a strong interest in sculpture and an increasing awareness that a wider range of forms could be attained through asymmetry. The work in this thesis represents a year's exploration of asymmetric design in ceramic forms. The search for expression through asymmetric order has led the work away from traditional symmetry to a more informal and organic form.

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[1]Marguerite Wildenhain, Pottery: Form and Expression. Published by the American Craftmen's Council, 1959, p. 133.

[2]Ibid., p. 58.

The examples presented in this thesis are wheel-thrown and rolled, pinched, pulled, squeezed, scraped, or paddled into final form. Often a number of these methods were used on one piece and many times two or more forms were combined.

Although Marguerite Wildenhain doesn't work with asymmetry in her ceramics, she encourages new explorations in forms when she directs potters

> "to find new ways oftreating materials, of developing forms that are not mere, traditional hand-me-downs or copies from other cultures of other potters; it is essential for the potter to experiment with his material, with form, tools, technique. . . . Outside the boundaries of these forms and techniques handed down by tradition, there are unlimited others, unborn as yet; the imaginative potter discovers them and makes them his own."[3]

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[3]Marguerite Wildenhain, Op. Cit., p. 58.

CATALOGUE

Figure 1. ASHTRAYS	Height 2 in. and 2 in.; diameter 4½ in. and 6 in.
Page 9.	Cone 9 reduction Unglazed outside with white glossy glaze on inside. Sprigged coil decoration on outside. Cone 9 reduction Unglazed outside with black vetreous engobe on inside. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 2. VASE	Height 6½ in.; diameter 7½ in.
Page 11.	Brown unglazed outside with white matt glaze inside. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 3. VASE	Height 7 in.; diameter 7 in.
Page 13.	Mottled blue-green, yellow-green matt glaze with purple specks. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 4. COVERED JAR	Height 6 in.; diameter 8 in.
Page 15.	Green matt glaze decoration with mottled blue matt glaze sprayed over. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 5. VASE	Height 2½ in.; diameter 9 in.
Page 17.	Brown unglazed outside with blue matt glaze inside and on spouts. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 6. VASE	Height 10 in.; diameter 6 in.
Page 19.	Brown unglazed outside with white glossy glaze on inside. Cone 9 reduction

Figure 7. VASE	Height 5 in.; width 11 in.; depth 5½ in.
Page 21.	Mottled blue-green matt glaze with purple specks. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 8. COVERED JAR	Height 5½ in.; width 9 in.; depth 6 in.
Page 23.	Yellow-green matt glaze. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 9. VASE	Height 11 in.; width 6½ in.; depth 4½ in.
Page 25.	Brown unglazed outside with black matt glaze inside. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 10. VASE	Height 7½ in.; width 6 in.; depth 5½ in.
Page 27.	Brown unglazed outside with glossy blue glaze inside. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 11. VASE	Height 8 in.; width 7 in.; depth 6 in.
Page 29.	Brown unglazed outside with black matt glaze inside. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 12. GROUP POT	Height 5½ in.; diameter 8 in.
Page 31.	Brown unglazed outside with glossy blue glaze inside. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 13. GROUP PLANTER	Height 6 in.; width 23 in.; depth 12 in.
Page 33.	Brown unglazed outside with black matt glaze recessed in texture and on the inside. Cone 9 reduction

Figure 14. LIDED GROUP	Height 4 in.; width 15 in.; depth 9 in.
Page 35.	Brown unglazed outside with black matt inside. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 15. WALL DIVIDER	Height 6½ ft.; width 25 in.; depth 4 in.
Page 37.	Brown and gray-green matt glaze in gold colored frame. Cone 9 reduction
Figure 16. COLUMN	Height 76 in.; diameter 15 in.
Page 39.	Mottled white matt glaze with a few brown spots from unglazed areas. Cone 9 reduction

FIGURES

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

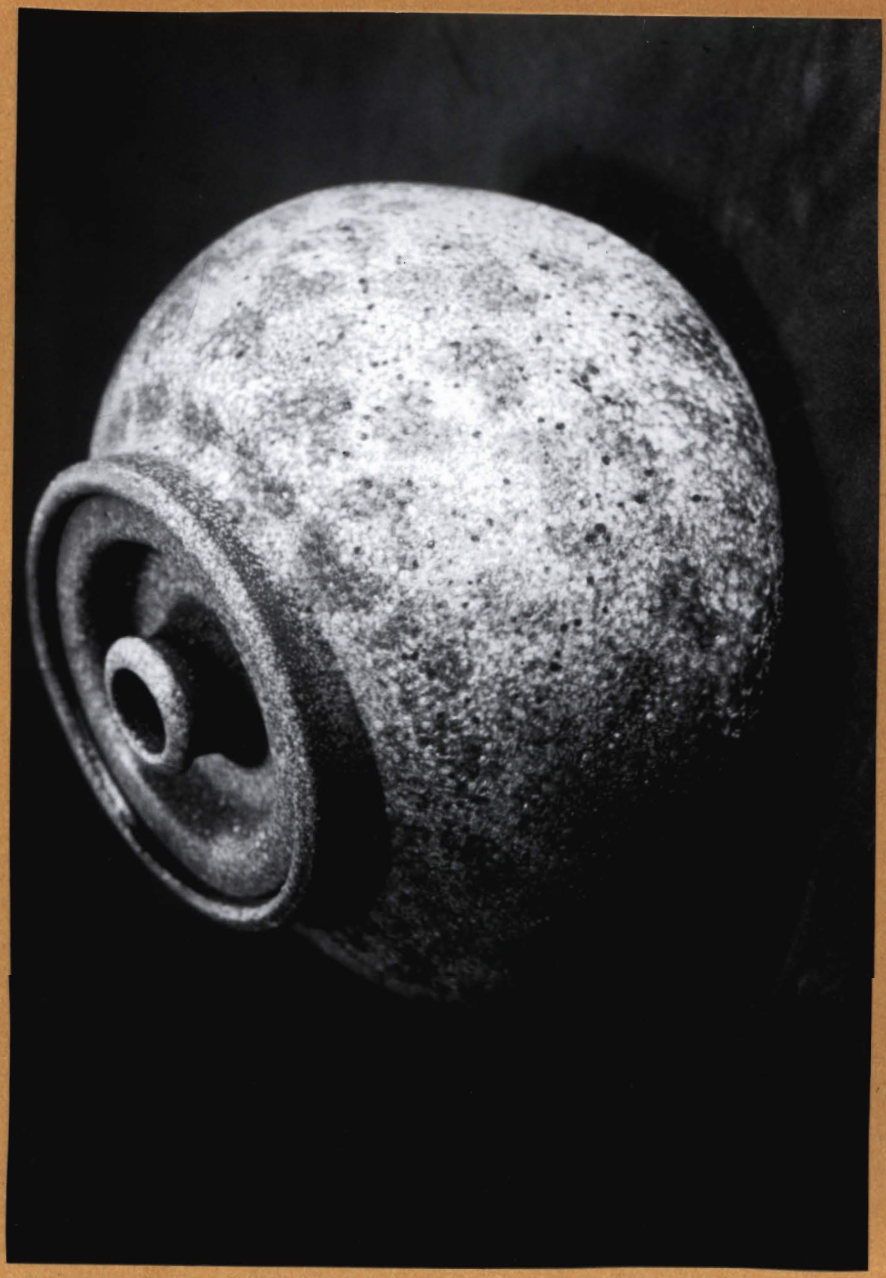

Figure 5

Figure 6

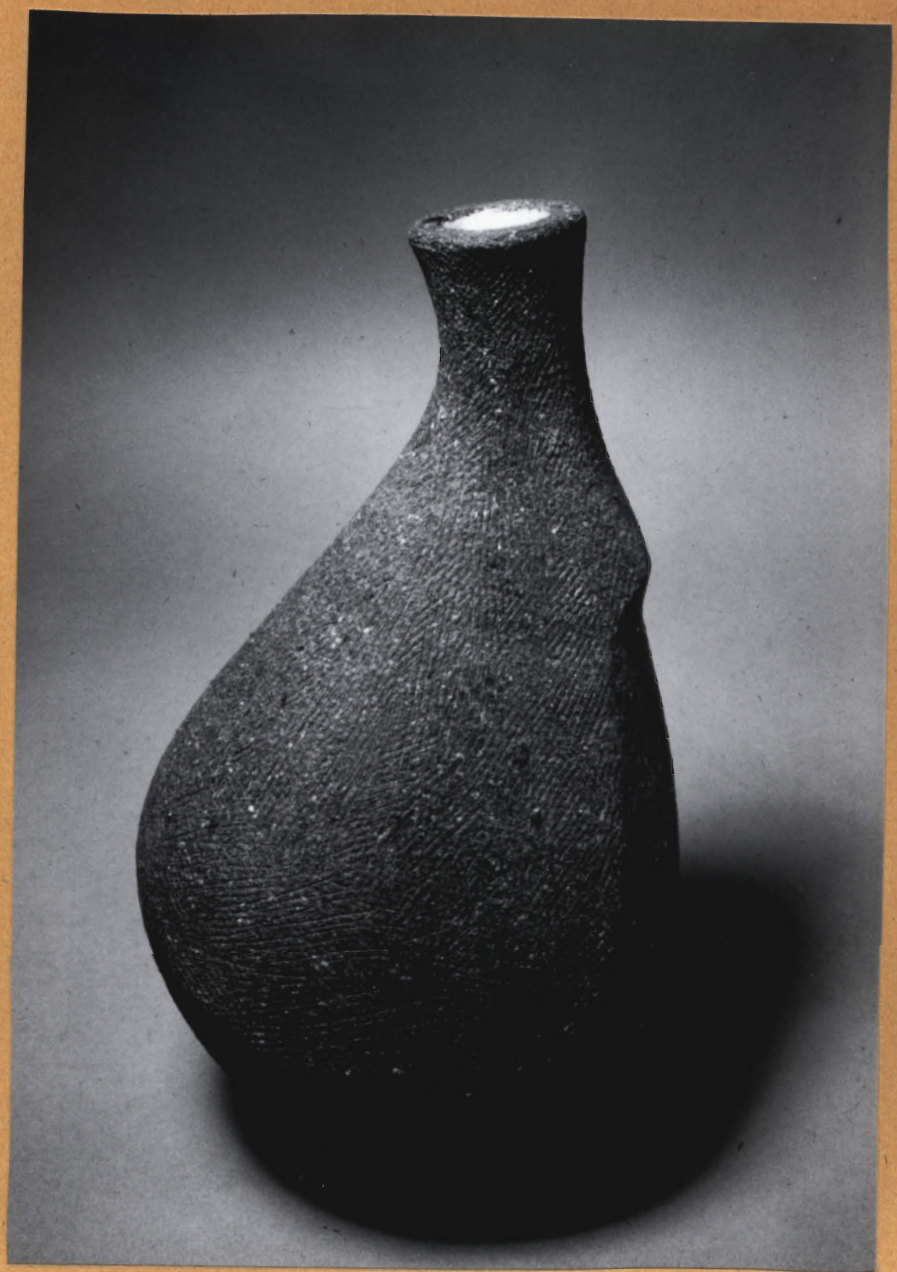

Figure 7

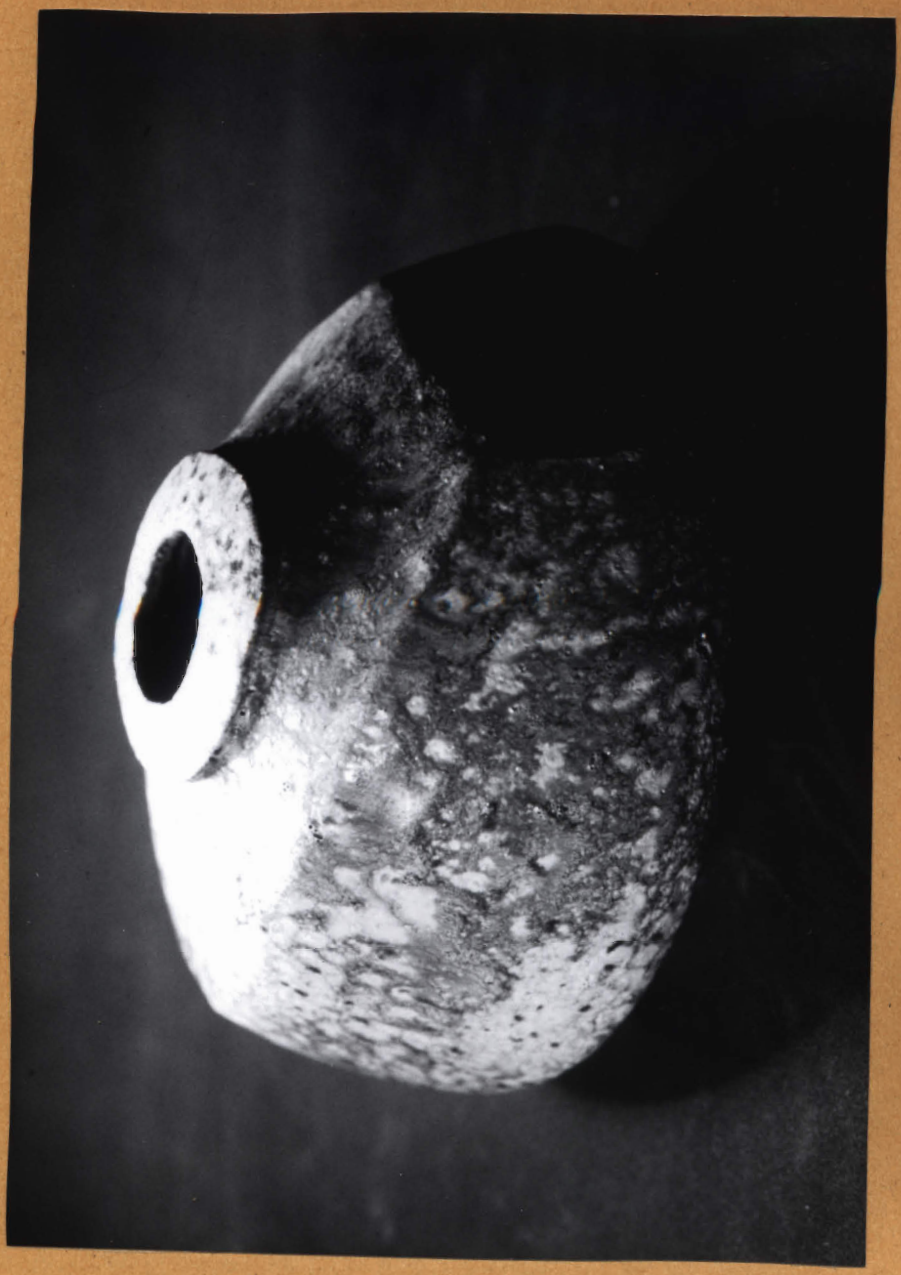

Figure 8

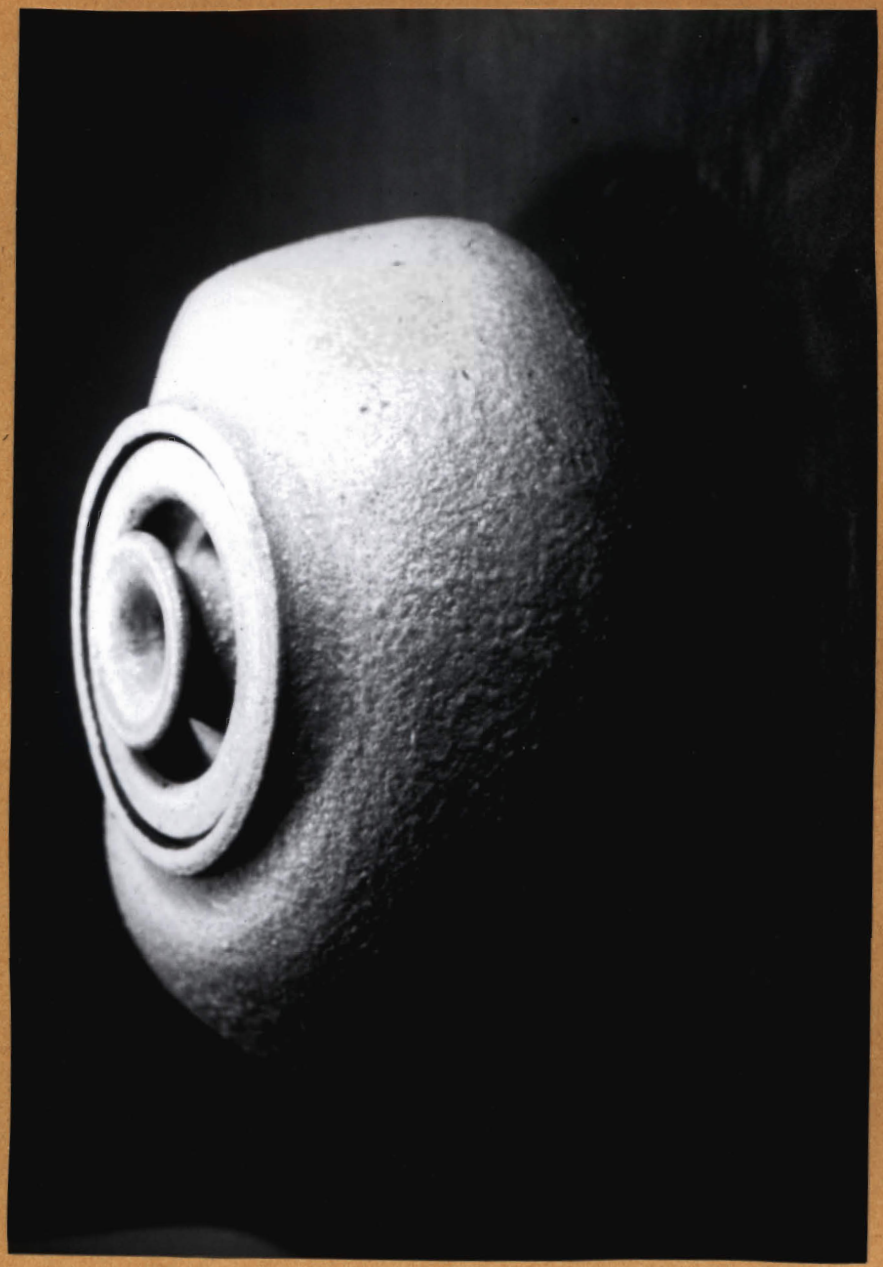

Figure 9

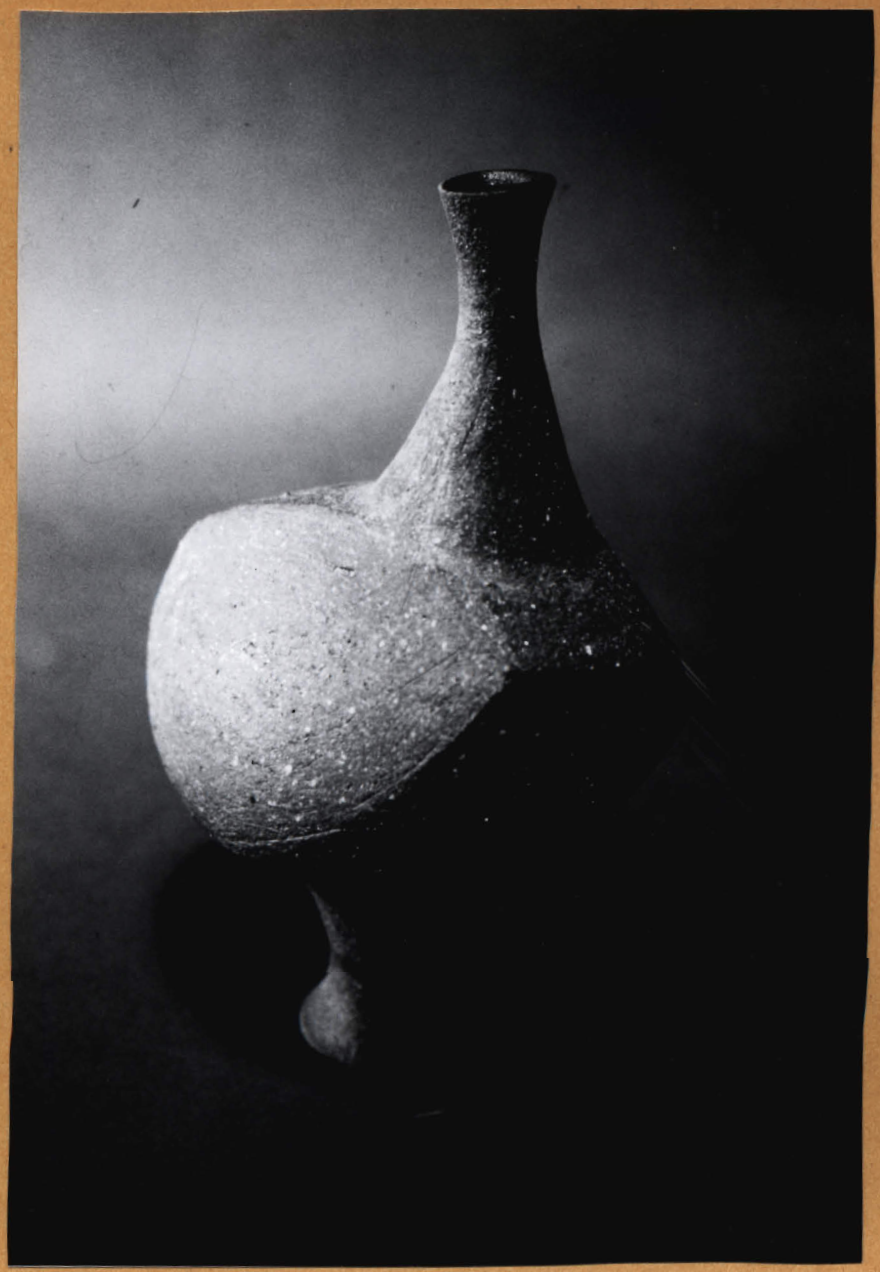

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 15

Figure 16

TECHNICAL DATA

Clay Body

The clay body used is a stoneware with a vitrification range from Cone 7 to Cone 12. Two and one-half per cent of Burnt Umber has been added to give the body a warm brown when reduced. A 15 per cent grog content was used to help reduce warpage and cracking.

Fire Clay	55%
Goldart Stoneware Clay.	15%
Spinks C&C Ball Clay. .	15%
No. 1 Dried Sand . . .	15%

FORMING PROCESS AND DECORATION

The examples presented in this thesis were formed in two ways (1) by combination of thrown parts; and (2) the other, a combination of slab and thrown sections.

The decorations were in wax resist, slip painting, glaze painging, glaze sponging, glaze spraying, and glaze applied by pouring.

GLAZE AND SLIP FORMULAS

Cone 9 reduction

Bird Matt

Neph. Syenite	63.60
Dolomite	21.20
Tenn. Ball #7	4.24
Bentonite	2.54
SnO_2	8.48
	100.06

Plus 2% Fe_2O_3 for brown color

Ball's Mc533 Matt

Neph. Syenite	48.10
Barium Carbonate	37.30
Tenn. Ball #7	7.10
Flint	7.50
	100.00

Plus 2% $CuCo_3$ for blue-green color

Moskoff Blue

Dolomite	5.0
Whiting	8.5
Zinc Oxide	4.5
Custer Spar	46.5
ASP Kaolin	3.0
Flint	33.0
	100.5

Plus 1% Cr_2O_3 and ¼% Co_2O_4 for blue-green color

Youry's Black Vetreous Engobe

Neph. Syenite	15.0
Whiting	10.0
ASP Kaolin	20.0
Tenn. Ball #7	30.0
Flint	25.0
	100.0

Plus 3% Fe_2O_3, 2% Co_2O_4, and 2% MnO_2 for black color

M.T. 3 Matt

Keystone Spar	49.60
Whiting	8.45
Zinc Oxide	7.62
$BaCO_3$	20.01
Tenn. Ball #7	9.57
Rutile	4.77
	100.02

Plus 10% Opax "S" for white color

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