

Elisa D'Arrigo



Recommended by Helaine Posner

Elisa D'Arrigo is “attracted to an ugly kind of beauty.” Her glazed ceramic vessels, figurative and abstract, whimsical yet serious, visceral but refined capture the contradictions and dualities that characterize daily life. These small-scale works recognizably reference the human body, its parts, gestures, and postures, as they allude to internal psychological states. D'Arrigo hand-builds her vessels in a quick, improvisational manner, then takes months to create the variously colored, textured, and patterned glazes that adorn them, organically melding surface design with three-dimensional form. In *Wraparound 2* (2017), an impossibly elongated arm wraps around and poignantly protects its mottled, candy-colored head. *P.G. On My Mind 1* (2017) is an homage to Philip Guston’s “Poor Richard” drawings in which Nixon’s nose grows to enormous proportions. D'Arrigo’s work features this bulbous, exaggerated appendage as ballast creating a work that is humorous yet slightly grotesque. In her ceramic works, the artist creates little worlds that manage to pack a big punch.

Helaine Posner, Fall 2020

Bio

Elisa D'Arrigo was born in the Bronx, NY, and currently lives and works in New York City. She received her BFA from the State University of New York at New Paltz. She is represented by the Harris Gallery in NY where she has had numerous solo exhibitions. Her work is in the collections of: the Amoco Corporation; AT&T; The Bryn Mawr Library Collection; The Atlanta High Museum of Art; Mead Art Museum, Amherst, MA; Mint Museum of Craft and Design, Charlotte, NC; The New School for Social Research New York, NY; The Prudential, Newark, NJ; The Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, New Paltz, NY; and The Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greenville, NC. She has also received numerous grants and completed multiple residencies.

Artist Statement

My ceramic works conflate color, surface, and animated form within the context of the glazed ceramic vessel. The pieces begin as variously sized hand-built hollow cylindrical forms which I manipulate and combine while wet, in a period of intense improvisation. The “postures” that result allude to the body in a gestural and visceral manner. My penchant for “in the moment” decisions yields forms that surprise me, yet they seem oddly familiar as well. Unexpected asymmetries generate an intrinsic humor. I am compelled by the way we inhabit and imagine our bodies from the inside out, and by the psychological and corporeal aspects of containment. The inside creates the outside, and vice versa. My intent is to project a physicality that also embodies states of mind. In a catalogue essay for my 2019 exhibition at Elizabeth Harris Gallery *In The Moment*, writer Nancy Princenthal describes my works as “...a series of alarmingly potent little ceramic figures that engage our propensities for reverie, humor and, perhaps most satisfying, deep human recognition...” and she goes on to further refer to them as “incorrigibly unconforming sculpture.”



Elisa D'Arrigo 2020. On the Limb, Glazed Ceramic.



Elisa D'Arrigo (left to right) Googler 1, 2017; PG on My Mind, 2018; Glazed Ceramic.



Elisa D'Arrigo (from top) Pile Up, 2017; Wraparound 2, 2018; Outside In, 2016; Twisted 13, 2016. Glazed Ceramic.