

## **John P. Donovan**

### **Ceramic Artist and Educator**

4200 Baywoods Drive

Pensacola, FL 32504

[jdonovan@uwf.edu](mailto:jdonovan@uwf.edu)

MFA-Stephen F. Austin State University, 1997

MA-Stephen F. Austin State University, 1996

BFA-Loyola University, New Orleans, 1994

### **Gallery Representation**

~LeMieux Gallery, New Orleans, LA

~M.T. Burton Gallery, Surf City, NJ, Contemporary Ceramic Art

### **Professional Experience**

~Visiting Artist/Professor, University of West Florida, 1998 to present

Teach beginning and advanced ceramics, sculpture, drawing, Visual Arts Experience and several "topic specific" courses of own design;

Mixed-Media Ceramics      Ceramic Sculpture      Ceramic Glaze Research

Sculpture and Works on Paper      Narrative Clay

Maintain kilns, equipment and materials, participate in BFA review program as advisor and admission committee member, promote attitude of experimentation to students

~Visiting Artist Workshop, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL

2-day workshop focusing on pit-firing processes

~Juror, Ft. Walton Beach Art Museum Juried Exhibition, 2000

Annual regional exhibition, single juror, media including photography, painting, sculpture

~*Narrative Clay*, workshop, L.B.I. Foundation of the Arts and Sciences, Loveladies, NJ, 2000

Two-week course focusing on ceramic sculpture of a narrative theme

~Visiting Artist Workshop, University of Costa Rica, 2000

5-day workshop on narrative ceramic sculpture and hand building techniques

~Ceramics Instructor, Okaloosa/Walton Community College, 1999 to 2001

Teach beginning and advanced ceramics courses, working with both wheel thrown and hand built techniques, maintain kilns and studio equipment, order and maintain materials and inventory

~Juror, Gulf Breeze Arts Festival, 1999

Annual national arts festival, selection committee member (one of three)

~Adjunct Instructor, University of West Florida, 1997-1998

Teach ceramics and sculpture courses, maintain materials and studio equipment including gas and electric welding equipment, wood working tools, kilns

**Professional Experience (cont.)**

~Studio Assistant, Penland School of Crafts, 1998

Assistant to artist W.S. Rucker, load and fire kilns, studio instruction

~Visiting Artist Workshop, National University, Costa Rica, 1998

One-day demonstration and lecture on ceramic hand building techniques

~Visiting Artist Lecture, University of Costa Rica, 1998

Lecture on contemporary North-American ceramic artists

~Studio Assistant, Stonehaus Pottery, 1997

Assist in construction, glazing, firing and installation of architectural ceramic works

~Artist, N.B. Cook Arts Magnate School, Pensacola, FL 1995

Ceramics workshop with artists Peter King and Steve Rucker

~Graduate Assistant/Instructor, Stephen F. Austin State Univ., 1994-97

Assist in loading and firing kilns, ordering and stocking materials and general studio maintenance

Teach beginning ceramics courses (hand building and throwing) and glaze calculation course

**Exhibitions**

~*Portraits; Me, Myself, and/or I*, regional invitational exhibition, Gulf (an Alternative Art Space), Mobile, AL, 2002

~Christmas Open House Invitational exhibition, Atelier-Alcaniz, Pensacola, FL 2001

~*Emergence Theory*, national invitational exhibition, Charlotte, NC, 2001

National exhibition featuring artists representing current trends in the field of ceramics (concurrent with 2001 National Council for Education in the Ceramic Arts conference)

~*Hit the Dirt!* Ft. Walton Beach Art Museum, solo local exhibition, 2001

Exhibition of drawings and ceramic sculpture inspired by "army toys"

~*Toys*, D.O.C.S. Gallery, solo regional exhibition, New Orleans, 2000

Exhibition of ceramic sculpture that explores youth activities (game and toys) and the affect they may have upon adult concepts, behavior and judgment

~Lafayette Art Association National Juried Exhibition, 2000

Award Winner

~*King for a Day*, Soho Gallery, solo local exhibition, Pensacola, FL 1999

Ceramic and mixed media sculpture exploring the concept of "temporary royalty," the way in which certain significant dates can make individuals feel superior for a short period of time (i.e. birthdays)

~*Recent Ceramic Works*, D.O.C.S. Gallery, solo regional exhibition, 1998

Exhibition for ceramic sculpture created over a period of 6 months experimenting with symbols and concepts from Catholic upbringing and being raised on the Florida Gulf Coast

~*Laying Hands; Expressions of Religion*, local juried exhibition, Artel Gallery, Pensacola, 1998

Juried exhibition featuring works in all media using religious iconography

**Exhibitions (cont.)**

~Vermont Clay Studio *Emerging Artists of the U.S.*, national juried exhibition, 1998

Exhibition featuring new artists from across the country selected to represent current trends in the ceramics field (3 works exhibited)

~*Recent Works*, Soho Gallery local exhibition, 1997

Exhibition of hand built ceramic sculpture and mixed media works on paper with imagery relating to being raised on the Florida Gulf Coast, experimenting with commercial glazes and other materials

~*Cinco Banderas* local juried exhibition, Artel Gallery, 1997

~*Fishing for History*, MFA Exhibition, 1997

Exhibition of ceramic sculpture exploring the artists connection to the Florida Gulf Coast (specifically fishing) and the use of this imagery as metaphor for current concerns

~*Feats of Clay X*, national juried exhibition, Lincoln, CA, 1997, Ken Ferguson, juror

~*From the Ground Up XVI*, regional juried exhibition, El Paso, TX, 1997, James Watkins, juror

Award Winner

**Awards and Scholarships**

~Award of Merit, Lafayette Art Assoc. National Juried Exhibition, 2000

~Honorable Mention, *From the Ground Up XVI*, 1997

~Graduate Assistantship, Stephen F. Austin State Univ., 1994-97

~Graduate Student Competitive Scholarship, Stephen F. Austin State Univ., 1994-95

~Loyola Univ. Art Dept Outstanding Senior Award, 1994

~Loyola Univ. Ceramics Pyrotechnic Achievement Award, 1994

~Southern Pottery Outstanding Ceramics Student, 1993

**Organizations**

~College Art Association (CAA)

~National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA)

**Collections**

~Office of International Affairs (Relaciones Exteriores), University of Costa Rica

~Collection of the President, University of West Florida

~Outdoor Sculpture Collection, Art Dept., Stephen F. Austin State University

~Loyola University Alumni Association Collection

~Stonehaus Pottery Collection

## Artist Statement – February 2002

John P. Donovan

One of the many functions of art is to play commentary to issues and concerns of the culture within which it is made. Also, present in a work of art should be some perspective or observations of the artist making it. I have, as an artist, a responsibility to make those observations somehow personal and unique. Of even greater importance, I must make the work “beautiful” in some way, be it in concept, material, or both. I seek to create tension between the immediately frivolous appearance of the imagery and a deeper tone of serious concern that faces me as an artist, educator and member of a greater society. For my art to truly vital I feel that it must somehow connect to and speak of concepts that are greater than me alone.

I often use images from childhood within my work, calling to mind a time in life when judgment and values were forming and an outlook on the world was still plastic and changeable. Images from childhood also call to mind, for me, a time of greater security and sense of being protected, a feeling disturbingly absent in recent times of uncertainty. It is this state of child-like curiosity that I search for in my work, where all actions are a discovery of some new mystery. Layers of meaning, under scrutiny, fall away to reveal deeper motives; playful objects become metaphors for current concerns. By recycling images from childhood (toy soldiers, rubber ducks, model planes, tanks and boats) I seek to create a dialog that addresses my current concerns, from violence in childhood toys to paralyzing fears of being left unprotected and defenseless in an angry world.

I hope that, when viewing my work, peeling away layers of light-hearted imagery will slowly excavate and expose the more serious subject matter. Inspired by high-impact artists such as Robert Arneson, I strive to create a dynamic tension between the serious motivating concepts and the naïve, child-like subject matter and images. The work, when done well, can be both threatening and playful at once, a classic dichotomy encountered in daily life. Like an abandoned toy that works its way to the surface of some old sandbox in a child’s backyard, the more serious issues become obvious only after the initial friendly surface begins to wear off.