Ceramic Object Series

4. Two higher-order units

Solitaire, Fusion, Concretion, Swing, Crumb, Colony, Embryo of a Giant Mountain

The artist based the shape of her ceramic objects on abstracted organic-geometric, bowl-like forms. Her inspiration came from the compositions of wild oyster colonies. These forms may resemble a female vagina, breasts, perhaps flowers, or they may evoke the shape of a human embryo, broken shells, or bird and butterfly wings. She created the objects using an ancient hand-building technique known as “swallow’s nest” construction – modeling by gradually attaching small pieces of clay onto an existing base form. This process was complemented by a South American-inspired method of smoothing the surface of the unfired clay using fingertips and small stones (again, limestone pebbles). During assembly, the individual layers were interlaced and bound with silk muslin, which would shrink and tighten during drying and handling, thereby reinforcing the joints. The fabric was intentionally left to burn away during firing. The butterfly wings – silently hidden within the silk – thus disappeared, sublimated, but before that, they defined the final shape of the extremely fragile and unstable objects. The firing completed the transformation of one material into another; of one state of matter into another; of one organism into material; of many organisms (their bodily shells) into inanimate matter.