

FROM IMAGE TO MEANING: A SEMIOTIC CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE VISUAL STIMULUS IN CONTEMPORARY WORLD CERAMICS

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Abstract:

At the theoretical level, this research aims to identify the representations of visual stimuli in contemporary international ceramics from a critical semiotic perspective. By seeking to deconstruct the semantic structure of the ceramic image as a visual text open to interpretation. Because ceramics have not remained merely a material or decorative medium, but have become loaded with complex cultural and intellectual discourses in their structural system. This study employs an analytic semiotic approach that combines the concepts of Roland Barthes, Charles Peirce, and Umberto Eco, with the aim of identifying the mechanisms of meaning production within ceramic work, starting from the image as a visual stimulus and its subsequent symbolic and cultural connotations. The research comprised four chapters, beginning with the general framework of the study, which included the research problem, and concluding with the following question: How do the representations of the visual Stimulus in contemporary global ceramics function as semantic patterns that produce meaning through the semiotic structure of the image? The problem was then followed by the importance of the research. The goal of the research, which sought to identify: From Image to Meaning: A Semiotic Critical Approach to the Representations of the Visual Stimulus in Contemporary Universal Ceramics, followed by the limits of the research objectively, temporally and spatially, as well as the identification of the most important research terms, and then the theoretical framework of the research, which was determined by two main topics: The first topic: Structural Semiotics: From Language to Image, and the second topic: Visual Stimulus: from perception to interpretation, while the third topic: visual representations in the artwork, then followed by indicators derived from the theoretical framework and previous studies. Then came the third chapter, which included the research procedures and analysis of the research sample models. The research concluded with the fourth chapter, which presented the research results and their discussion, along with conclusions, recommendations, suggestions, and a list of the research sources.

Keywords: Visual Image, Visual Stimulus, Universal Ceramics, Semiotic Analysis, Meaning in Art.

Research problem :

Contemporary art has undergone numerous radical transformations in its structural and formal systems, whereby visual images in their various forms now constitute a complex discourse that produces meaning not through direct representation, but through their function as signs within a cultural and semiotic system. This transformation has profoundly affected the reading of visual arts, especially those that were not previously considered theoretical or semantic carriers, such as ceramic art. Contemporary ceramics has transcended its traditional function to present itself as a complex visual discourse that invests in formal compositions and visual stimuli to produce multiple meanings related to all areas of the artist's life and society, leading to the need to analyse this art from a semantic perspective within a critical semiotic framework. The problem has been precisely focused on how visual stimuli function as semantic signs within contemporary ceramic art, which requires an understanding of the mechanisms of meaning generation based on the image as a visual semiotic medium. The research question can therefore be formulated as follows: How do visual stimuli function in contemporary global ceramics as semantic patterns that produce meaning through the semiotic structure of the ceramic image?.

Significance of the research:

The significance of the current research lies in its address of a field of art that has long been interpreted within purely formal and technical frameworks, namely ceramics, and its attempt to reinterpret it as a visual discourse open to critical interpretation. Using a semiotic approach, the analysis shifts from a mere description of the artwork to a deconstruction of its semantic structure, enabling a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of meaning production through images. The importance of the research lies in its highlighting of the qualitative shift in the function of ceramics from a mere craft or decorative material to a conceptual visual medium engaged with contemporary issues. It contributes to filling a knowledge gap in aesthetic and critical studies, which often overlook the semiotic dimensions of ceramic images. It provides a scientific addition to those working in art criticism by presenting a new theoretical and analytical framework for interpreting visual meanings in ceramic works. It highlights the interpretive dimension of the works of a group of contemporary ceramists and reconnects them with contemporary cultural contexts. This research also benefits visual artists in general and ceramists in particular, as a source of knowledge that contributes to the development of their readings of artistic works from a critical semiotic perspective.

Research objective :

The current research aims to identify: From image to meaning: a critical semiotic approach to representations of visual stimuli in contemporary global ceramics.

Research boundaries:

Objectivity : A semiotic analysis and study of representations of visual stimuli in a collection of contemporary global ceramic works.

Temporal limits : Spanning from 2012 to 2024, given the abundance of production during this period.

Spatial limits : Represented by ceramic works produced by contemporary international ceramists.

Definition of terms:

1- Image

Language : The word "image" refers to form, and its plural forms are 'images' and "pictures." It is used to mean type and quality, while form refers to resemblance and likeness, and it forms a conception, and its form is a composition of images (1): (Image) Form, three-dimensional statue. In the Holy Qur'an: ((He who created you, shaped you, and proportioned you, in whatever form He willed)) The image of the matter or issue is its attribute. The type is said to be in three forms. The image of a thing: its abstract essence and its representation in the mind or intellect (2).

Conventionally: An image is defined as "a visual representation of a subject." (3) It is also "a special method of expression, or an aspect of meaning, whose importance is limited to the meaning it conveys in terms of specificity and impact. But whatever this specificity or impact may be, the image does not change the nature of the meaning itself; it only changes the way it is presented and how it is conveyed(4) ".

Procedural definition: The researcher defines it as a structural system that is visually perceived as having a deep structure loaded with meaning that transcends its apparent surface structure.

2- Stimulus:

Language :Stimulus: active participle of "stimulate." "War instigator: one who tries to provoke war; panic instigator: one who spreads frightening rumours (5).

Terminology :Stimulus refers to "any external or internal factor that stimulates the activity of a living organism or one of its organs" (6). Stimulus is also generally defined as "an event that an external observer can identify as affecting the behaviour of the individual being observed (7).

Procedural definition :The researcher defines it as all the visual or formal elements of art contained in the structural composition of a work of art that elicit a cognitive, emotional, or aesthetic response from the viewer, whether in terms of composition, color, texture, size, visual rhythm, contrast, and other elements, as they constitute a visual stimulus that arouses the senses and interaction with the artwork.

3-Visual:

Language:Sight: vision, eyesight, plural eyes, which is the eye, the power of sight, and the power of perception (8).

Terminology: The philosophical dictionary defines vision as the act of visual perception, which encompasses the perception of what is spiritual, including revelation and inspiration. Descartes stated that vision is both a mental act based on the power of judgment and a visual act. According to George Berkeley, sight does not perceive the quantities, positions, and distances of things in and of itself, but rather perceives signs and indications of distances, positions, and quantities (9).

Visual Stimulus Procedurally :The researcher defines visual Stimulus as the visual element within a ceramic work that attracts the viewer's attention, stimulating their sensory and visual perception and eliciting a mental or emotional response. It may be a point, a line, a shape, a color, or other elements that have a semantic structure .

4-Semiotics

Language" :Soma, sima and semiotics: the sign. The mark of the horse: to put a mark on it. And He, the Exalted, said, 'Stones of clay marked by your Lord for the transgressors' (10).

Terminology : Semiotics is defined as "the study of signs and symbols in the context of social life, which is part of social psychology and, consequently, of general psychology" (11). The Oxford Dictionary defines semiotics as "the study of signs, symbols, their meanings, and their use (12).

Procedurally : The researcher defines semiotics as the practical study of how meanings are generated through signs and symbols, considering ceramic work to be a semantic structure in which form and content intersect.

Structural semiotics: from language to image

Semiotics is a relatively new science and a self-contained field of knowledge that originated from two directions: the first was linguistic in nature and associated with the Swiss linguist Ferdinand De Saussure (1857-1913) who began in the field of linguistics, when he realized that human communication is not limited to language, but includes a broader science than linguistics that studies all the signs and symbols that humans use in their social contexts (13). Therefore, studies have concluded that this science began with the Swiss linguist De Saussure in his book Lectures on General Linguistics, which De Saussure defined as the study of the life of signs within society, so "we can therefore imagine a science that studies the life of signs within the context of social life" (14). The second trend

was represented by the American philosopher and logician Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). He presented it differently, calling it "semiotics," which is characterized by multi-valued logic, where he expanded the concept to encompass various phenomena, qualities, entities, and necessities. Peirce paid great attention to the process of codification, specifying three basic elements for it: the representative, the subject, and the interpreter. He considered these elements sufficient to establish ten types of signs, which were the result of logical analysis. Thus, Peirce's semiotics was a critical science of various phenomena, whatever their nature, whether social, cultural, intellectual, or otherwise (15). Based on this conception, Peirce considered that the sign represents the other side of the principles of perception. Therefore, semiotics cannot be separated from the process of perceiving the self and the other, as well as perceiving the ego and the surrounding world. The human experience in all its dimensions represents a cradle for signs, for their life, growth, and death as well. To understand this interconnection, it is necessary to identify the elements of the sign and reveal its forms of existence (16). To identify this sign within the process that Peirce called semiosis, which means the process leading to the production and circulation of meaning, it was represented by (signifier, signified, and interpreter), which is the basis of the sign's existence, as the signifier refers to the signified through the interpreter according to the conditions of the compound act of perception (17). In view of this, the researcher sought to identify each element to reveal its role within the triadic structure:

1-The representative :

This refers to the formation or body in which the sign is represented, whether imaginary or material, as the representative does not necessarily have to be a material form (18). Peirce defines the representational or sign as "something that stands for someone in some capacity, that is, it creates in that person's mind an equivalent sign or perhaps a more developed sign, which I call the interpretant of the first sign" (19). Thus, the matheol functions "as a tool we use to represent something else. It only represents; it does not inform us about the thing or increase our knowledge of it. It is the subject of the sign that makes it recognizable and, at the same time, the knowledge assumed through the existence of a sender and a receiver (20).

2- The object:

This is what the signifies, whether this thing represented is real, imagined, imaginable, or completely unimaginable, as he says, "The subject of the sign is the knowledge that the sign presupposes in order to provide additional information about this subject" (21). He distinguishes between two types of objects: the dynamic object and the immediate object. The dynamic object is the thing itself that drives the production of the sign, while the immediate object is the way in which the sign gives the dynamic object meaning (22).

3- The interpretant :

This is the third element in semiosis, as it constitutes "the necessary mediation that allows the signifier to refer to its object under certain conditions. It is not possible to talk about the sign without the interpretant, as it is the element that makes the transition from the signifier to the object possible" (23). Thus, the interpretant is the mediating element that leads the data of pure experience to a legal framework and necessity and thought. Peirce divides the interpretant into three types: the direct interpretant, which is sufficient to provide preliminary information about a subject; the dynamic interpretant, which takes the sign out of the realm of simple designation and into interpretation in its comprehensive sense (24). In addition, there is the final interpreter, which Peirce considers to be the final stage in the process of interpretation, as it is "the effect that the sign produces in the mind after sufficient development of thought (25). Therefore, the interpreter represents an evolved sign that

results from the impact that the subject of the sign leaves on the mind of the interpreter or recipient of the sign (26).

In contrast, French philosopher, literary critic, and semiotician Roland Barthes (1915–1980) brought about a radical shift in semiotics. And through him, semiotics truly branched out into non-linguistic systems, thereby establishing the semiotics of images. He believed that semiotics, with its principles, "is merely a literal transfer of linguistic principles, and from this perspective, he considered it part of linguistics" (27). Barthes, therefore, attributes semiotics to semantics, as he believes that part of contemporary semiotic research goes back to the question of semantics. Psychology, structuralism, and some new attempts at literary criticism all study reality solely as a function, and every semiological system is mixed with language, as he acknowledges that "it is very difficult to imagine the possibility of the existence of meanings of images or things outside of language" (28). This led to a development in semiotics, reversing the equation proposed by de Saussure from "linguistics includes semiotics" to the opposite, making "semiotics a branch of linguistics." He based this proposition on the concept that meaning is not substance but form; i.e., the production of meaning depends on the formal structure of texts and discourses, not only on their apparent content (29).

Peirce's semiotics influenced the Italian philosopher and critic Umberto Eco (1932-2016), drawing inspiration from most of the ideas and concepts he advocated. The sign is one of the first manifestations of semiotic research in Eco's interpretive activity, describing it as "the science of signs or interpretive processes" (30). What distinguishes Eco's semiotics is his ability to read trends and the premises of human thought and to attempt to observe the possibility of collecting and integrating them into his semiotic approach. Therefore, his conception of semiotics and its limits differed, as evident in his book *The Open Work*, which was translated into French in 1972 (31). For him, semiotics represents "the science that studies all cultural phenomena as systems of signs, based on the premise that all cultural phenomena are in fact nothing more than systems of signs, in the sense that culture is essentially communication" (32).

The visual semiotics of the provocative in contemporary art:

1-Image semiotics :

The image is a simulation or reflection of reality, or a transformed visual discourse. It embodies the sensory perceptions of the visual organ, i.e., a direct perception of reality in its luminous appearance. According to Roland Barthes, the image is characterized by its structural independence, as it "is composed of selected elements and processed according to professional, aesthetic, and ideological requirements that give it an implicit dimension, directed at the recipient who simply accepts it and reinterprets it in light of their cultural and symbolic baggage, i.e., based on cultural and civilizational references" (33). The image is a complex visual discourse that expresses multiple meanings and connotations, based on the interaction between different dimensions in nature. Therefore, the content or semantic meanings of the image are the result of creative compositions that combine what is attributed to the iconic dimension (visual representation that refers to the imitation of objects or things from nature) and what is attributed to the formal dimension, represented in human-made compositions and their interaction with natural elements such as colors, shapes, and lines. Understanding and interpreting an image is linked to the viewer's ability to organize all the elements that make up the image's text (34). Therefore, the primary purpose of the image is to extract mental formations that illustrate a type of production, formations that control semiotic patterns, because the image has become a semiological composition containing three components (signifier, signified, signifier, and signified) that compose it and form the

photographic relationship, where the first semiological system is linked to the second to form the production of the sign. According to this, reading images involves a shift from form to content, thereby forming a pictorial level that functions as the basis for the concept of producing meaning (35) ..

Based on the above, all the connotations and meanings evoked by the image through its iconic and figurative dimensions are not the product of symbolic content in and of themselves, nor are they the product of fixed meanings and connotations in unchanging forms. Rather, they are human dimensions derived from human existence itself. Therefore, they do not precede human practice, but are linked to a human discourse that tends to imbue nature with semantic elements that transcend its functional material elements. For this reason, shapes, colors, and lines infiltrate the image, laden with connotations (36).

2-Visual stimuli in contemporary art :

Visual stimuli are any visible elements that stimulate the human visual system, leading to a cognitive or perceptual response. This includes shapes, colors, movement, and unfamiliar elements. Understanding the nature of visual stimuli is essential for designing effective visual environments, whether in advertising, art, or education, where these stimuli are used to attract the viewer's attention and enhance the viewer's experience. Therefore, visual stimuli are defined as "the electromagnetic energy emitted by objects and elements in the environment, which is captured by the eye's network through light that transmits information related to shape, texture, or color, leaving an impression on the recipient" (37). Visual stimuli play a pivotal role in presenting visual content in an attractive way, which helps capture the viewer's attention and enhances their awareness of the content being presented. They also help translate abstract ideas and concepts into tangible images, in addition to their psychological and artistic roles in enhancing the viewer's interaction with visual stimuli. As the viewer needs a variety of visual stimuli to effectively employ their senses and obtain a complete cognitive experience (38), this is crucial.



Figure (1)

Furthermore, the concepts of visual stimuli vary according to the nature of the subject and material presented, the artistic space in which it interacts, the mechanisms of stimulation, the type of Stimulus, and the reactions it generates. These responses vary based on the characteristics of the visual Stimulus in terms of its intensity, diversity of forms, and the resulting cognitive processes in the recipient (39). Based on the above, living beings, especially humans, are exposed to numerous visual stimuli emanating from their surrounding environment, which act as perceptual cues aimed at attracting the recipient's attention and vision. The most prominent of these stimuli can be classified as follows:

1- The bizarre :

The bizarre is a European literary and artistic trend that relies on creating the unfamiliar, transcending the limits of the possible to reach the impossible. This is manifested in the

establishment of unexpected relationships between visual elements, creating a state of surprise and visual excitement (40). In the modern era, artists resorted to producing works that carry a sense of surprise and innovation, where "latent energies explode, and creative desires are liberated in the cognitive revolution, generating astonishing speed, surprising intensity, new ideas, unfamiliar forms, strange compositions, and bizarre masks, leaving some people fascinated by them and others afraid of them" (41). From the above, the researcher concludes that the artist seeks to produce works of art that rely on innovative creative techniques and unconventional forms, characterized by unfamiliarity to the viewer and deviating from what is customary, which contributes to creating visual excitement in the recipient. This is evident in the works of Iraqi potter **Laith Abbas (1970)**, which carry formal and coloristic connotations in the structural system of the work, which contained unfamiliar human and animal forms (with bizarre shapes), where the use of form was not only for aesthetic purposes, but also to achieve subjectivity and objectivity in distortion and suffering, as well as to rework realistic forms into unfamiliar synthetic forms that express his desires and tendencies. As in (Figure 1), it is a fish with a lion's head, which carries a mixture of fantasy and strangeness, as if it were looking for a fish that has the power of a lion or vice versa, which provokes the viewer's vision when looking at it.

2- Dominance :

Dominance refers to the control of a particular visual element in a work of art, whether in form, color, or idea, so that the rest of the elements complement it in achieving an integrated vision (42). For example, colour dominance is achieved through the characteristics and value of colour, its spectral difference, and its brilliance, to achieve visual attraction, as brighter colours stimulate the eye more than less bright colours. The effect of dominance is also achieved through colour contrast, where the difference between two colours in the composition enhances the visual appeal. For example, yellow dominates a blue background, or red dominates a green background, creating a distinctive visual dynamic, as "the more saturated color dominates the less saturated color" (43). The higher the saturation, the greater the visual impact and appeal. As in (Figure 2) by Danish ceramicist **Bente Skjottgaard (1961)**, color dominates her ceramic works, creating visual excitement and a sensory response in the viewer through her use of intense and contrasting colors that invite the viewer to interact with them.



Figure (2)

3- Movement :

Movement is one of the most prominent aspects of art, as it is the first element that the eye captures and responds to, influenced by its intensity and tension. Movement also plays a fundamental role in directing the visual path within the artistic composition and on its visible surface, contributing to the formation of its visual rhythm and enhancing its expressive

effect (44). Therefore, elements characterized by kinetic properties acquire a greater ability to cause visual excitement than static elements, as they form a dynamic element that captures the viewer's attention and arouses their visual interest (45). As in (Figure 3) by potter **John Mason (John Mason 1927-2019)**, whose ceramic works are characterized by movement through his use of shadows and the contrast between smooth and rough surfaces and the repetition of formal units and lines, creating a visual pattern that suggests movement and attracts the viewer's gaze.



Figure (3)

Furthermore, excitement in the visual arts is a crucial element of artistic creativity, as it is closely tied to the diversity of visual stimuli and their ongoing renewal. As much as the artist has a keen eye capable of capturing details and perceiving visual relationships, and a creative mind capable of translating these stimuli into expressive forms with a profound visual impact. Therefore, visual stimuli represent the fundamental starting point for the process of artistic creation, as they are the primary driver that motivates the artist to crystallize their own vision and express their creative personality through their artwork. By drawing inspiration from these stimuli, the artist seeks not only to express himself but also to stimulate the viewer visually, thereby enhancing the visual communication between the artwork and the viewer (46).

The results of the theoretical aspect:

1. The sign is of great importance in conveying meaning, as it represents the basic element through which the recipient communicates.
2. There is a correlative relationship between the signifier and the signified, which is fundamental to understanding symbolic communication.
3. An image is a semantic system that can be analyzed semiotically, where every image or visual artwork can be understood through its components, such as shape, colour, and texture .
4. The meaning of a work of art is influenced by its cultural and social context.
5. In contemporary art, the Stimulus acts as a sign that carries many meanings, such as psychological, social, or aesthetic.
6. The Stimulus is associated with experimentation and challenge, to stimulate thought and the senses .
7. Visual provocation depends on the viewer and their experiences during the perception process.
8. Visual semiotics provides a conceptual framework for contemporary symbolic artworks.
9. Stimuli work to create an integrated visual experience, through which strangeness breaks with the familiar to shock the viewer, dominate their attention, and reinforce

symbolic meaning. At the same time, movement transfers visual energy, creating a sense of time and revealing the artist's strategies for producing meaning.

Research Procedures

1. Research Community: The current research community comprises a collection of ceramic works produced by international potters, consisting of 50 pieces, which the researcher obtained through the artists' personal websites, exhibitions, and other relevant websites.

2. Research Sample: The research sample was intentionally selected in accordance with the research title and its relevance to the research objective, consisting of three ceramic models.

3. Research Methodology: In her current study, the researcher employed a descriptive methodology and content analysis for all sample models.

4. Research tool: To complete the analysis of the sample models, the researcher relied on scientific and technical observation tools, utilizing indicators from the theoretical framework to conduct the technical analysis.

5-Analysis of the research sample:

Model(1)

Potter's name: Hirotsume Tashima

Subject: Organic bananas at the supermarket

Country: United States

Date of production: 2012

Materials used: Multi-fired stoneware ceramic

Dimensions: Actual size 34×36×64 inches

Ref:<https://www.aiciac.org/es/member>

Visual description:

The ceramic sculpture depicts a life-size man standing as if he were shopping, accompanied by a huge, unusual banana-shaped element that bears various consumer products, including cereal boxes, chocolate bars, and other items. The man is holding a drink carton in one hand and what appears to be a cheese carton in the other. Behind the work, the wall is surrounded by miniature figures in various poses, giving a sense of movement. The work is characterized by a dominant palette of yellow, pink, white, brown, and skin tones, as well as the colours of various consumer products.

Analysis:

This ceramic sculpture offers a profound visual study of the concepts of consumption and identity in contemporary society. It depicts a vertical composition of a man in the act of buying or shopping, carrying consumer products in his hands, which gives the composition a sense of stability and dignity. At the same time, the strange and unfamiliar shape of the banana wrapped around the man stands out. This contrast between the familiar human form and the unconventional shape of the banana catches the eye and raises questions in the viewer's mind. The small figures in the background break the monotony of the scene, adding a sense of dynamism. They carry multiple meanings, representing either miniature scenes

from consumer life or miniature versions of consumers in society. In addition to the calm and realistic colours that dominate the work, the yellow colour of the banana catches the eye and evokes warmth and culinary temptation, while the multiple and varied colours of consumer products reflect the chaos and multitude of choices in the supermarket, stimulating the viewer's visual perception and advertising memory. The pink color of the man's shirt stands out as an eye-catching color element that suggests calmness and perhaps gentleness. The texture of its polished and painted surface creates a sense of shine and smoothness. The connotations of this work extend beyond mere direct reference, as the banana itself is a powerful symbol, representing nature or evoking a sense of the natural. It has become part of consumer culture, while the man, who is a symbol of humanity, forms his identity through what he consumes. His body has been transformed into a moving billboard for these goods, indicating a loss of individual identity under the dominance of brands. This work evokes a sense of surprise and strangeness, creating a feeling of tension through the contrast between nature and consumption. It expresses complex ideas and is not just a ceramic work, but rather a set of signs and symbols that refer to the struggle of contemporary man with his identity in the shadow of consumer culture. The potter's mastery in employing shapes and colours reinforces the power of the symbols, provoking the viewer to interact with the work on both an intellectual and emotional level.

Visual description :

The work is a ceramic sculpture of a human head with clearly defined features, resting on a cylindrical base and wearing gold-rimmed glasses. A bundle of paint cans has replaced the hair arranged radially around the head. At the lower jaw, the figure wears a mask resembling a painter's gas mask. The work is dominated by ivory white with random blue spots scattered throughout, as well as gold accents that stand out on the edges. Next to the work is a collection of real or ceramic spray cans in colors that reinforce the meaning.

Model(2)

Potter's name: Adolfo Camacho Silva

Subject: Underground369

Country: Mexico

Date of production: 2020

Materials used:High-temperature ceramic molding and glazing with gilded details

Dimensions: 40×40×40 cm

Ref:<https://www.instagram.com/p/CG11IVpDjk8/?igsh=MWJkZms3d>

Analysis :

The ceramic sculpture depicts a human head, combining realism, imagination, and creativity. Presented in an unusual way, it catches the eye with its multifaceted meanings. The human head refers to identity and the human self, so replacing hair with paint cans can suggest the embodiment of the inner self through art. The use of these bottles as a substitute

for hair in a radial pattern creates a sense of creative energy exploding from the inside out, as if colours and ideas are emanating from within. It also creates a visual movement that draws the viewer in. It is associated with folk art and also signifies protest, so it has transformed from a mere functional tool into a symbol, representing a mind filled with creative or protesting ideas. In addition to the meanings conveyed by the glasses and mask, where the glasses symbolize vision and perception, while the mask indicates protection from the materials in the paints, at the same time, the mask suggests oppression or concealment, as it hides part of the person's identity or refers to the artist's unknown identity. The work is characterized by a monochromatic ivory-white colour, symbolizing purity and tranquillity, with blue spots scattered randomly across the surface as a result of the spraying process. The golden touches on the containers and landscapes give it aesthetic and symbolic value, transforming it from a mere tool to an artistic symbol. This colour contrast is one of the visual stimuli that draws the viewer in. This ceramic work is a visual text with multiple meanings and symbols. The work's visual appeal is embodied in the formal difference between traditional human features and hair made from paint bottles, executed in a sophisticated and unusual ceramic style and creativity. The dynamic distribution of the bottles, the color contrast, the glasses, and the mask give the subject a cognitive dimension, thus transforming the work from a mere imitation of something familiar into a visual discourse that expresses a sophisticated image and an explosive creative energy from the self to the outside world in a surprising and sensual form that stimulates reception and interpretation.

Model(3)

Potter's name: Jackson Shaner

Subject: Tantrum

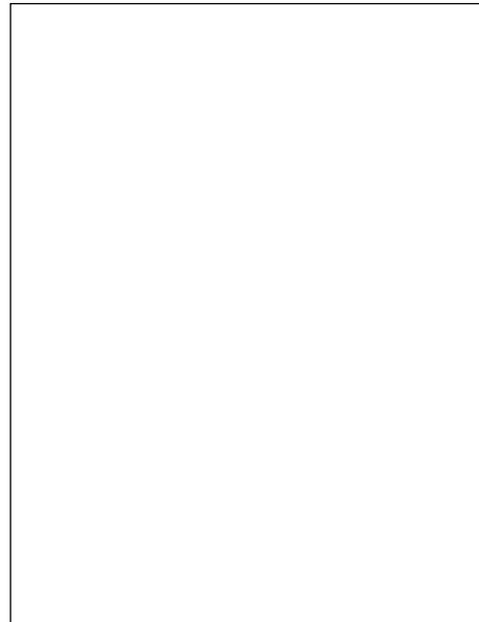
Country: Colombia

Date of production: 2024

Materials used: Ceramic, glaze and underglaze painting, gold glitter

Dimensions: 26×18×13 inches

Ref:<https://www.jacksonshaner.com>



Visual description: The work is a ceramic sculpture of a human figure, bent backwards with an elongated neck and mouth open wide. A twisted, red, organic mass emerges from it, as if the body is in the process of letting out a scream or a forced exhalation. The body is dominated by a cool grey colour, coated with underglaze paint that imparts porosity and colour gradations, mimicking an eroded surface or pale skin. While the organic mass is predominantly dark red, one of the eyes is adorned with a golden sheen, creating a warm and shiny visual effect amid the coldness.

Analysis: This work depicts a ceramic bust with a head, neck, and shoulders, with a twisted red mass emerging from its mouth, as if suggesting an emotional outburst. The red shape can be interpreted as a physical embodiment of an intense scream or a manifestation of emotions such as anger, pain, or pent-up psychological energy exploding outward. The colour red evokes feelings of excitement, danger, and anger, as well as strong emotions or inner pain. This colour contrasts sharply with the cool grey of the statue, which may symbolize rationality or superficial calm. This visual contrast highlights the conflict between external immobility and internal emotion. The golden glint in the eye acts as a visual stimulus that draws attention, suggesting a frozen tear or the remnants of an inner sparkle or inner value that remains untainted despite the emotional breakdown. This ceramic work is a visual text loaded with meanings and symbols, where the artist employs a complex visual language to represent an abstract idea of rage and transform it into something tangible. He has succeeded in clearly conveying his idea through the interaction between the colors, shapes, and materials used, prompting the viewer to reflect on the nature of human emotions and how they are embodied. The visual Stimulus in this work is not merely an aesthetic element but a narrative device. The red colour and upward movement evoke a sense of liberation and explosion, while the grey and gold tones convey connotations of pain and the human value of emotion. The interaction between these stimuli creates visual tension in the viewer, first arousing their senses and then calling on their mind to interpret.

Results and Discussion:

1. The ceramic works revealed fundamental transformations that express the creative energies of the potter, producing contemporary visual discourses that transcend the boundaries of decoration through color contrasts, material treatments, and symbolic meanings that visually stimulate the viewer and encourage contemplation and interpretation, as in all sample models.
2. Some works transcend the boundaries of realistic representation of the human form, as the potter deliberately produces visual compositions laden with meanings related to themes of identity, human emotions, and the creative self in the face of consumerism or oppression, as in sample models (3 ,2).
3. Contemporary artists have deliberately produced complex visual compositions laden with diverse meanings based on the contrast between the familiar and the strange, such as the conflict between nature and consumption and the loss of human identity in the shadow of market culture, which provokes the viewer and raises questions about the relationship between humans and what they consume, as in sample(1) .
4. Some works combined traditional human features with unexpected elements, transforming the work from a mere realistic representation into an imaginative visual discourse that raises questions about the self and its relationship to creativity or protest, as in sample(2) .
5. The works presented are not merely ceramic compositions, but represent a visual language that utilises narrative media to express the nature of human emotions through the potter's creativity in using materials and colours, as if mimicking a psychological or emotional outburst, as in sample (3).

Conclusions:

1. The limits of tradition no longer bind contemporary ceramic art, but rather have transcended them, moving towards

expressive and symbolic dimensions that reflect intellectual and aesthetic transformations linked to human and social reality.

2. The duality of material and meaning holds a fundamental place in ceramic work, as contemporary artists employ materials and techniques not only as formal tools but also as aesthetic and evocative elements that carry symbolic and cultural significance.
3. Contemporary ceramic compositions reflect intellectual and aesthetic dynamism by presenting creative forms that carry a sense of strangeness and existentialism, expressing protest or criticism of lived reality.

Recommendations :

1. Integrate concepts of visual perception into ceramics education curricula by introducing topics such as visual composition analysis and sensory interaction, as well as other topics that stimulate perception, in order to develop critical awareness among students.

Suggestions:

1. The researcher proposes conducting a study on the relationship between visual stimuli and digital techniques in ceramics.

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