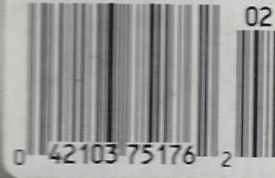


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## Jean-Pierre Larocque

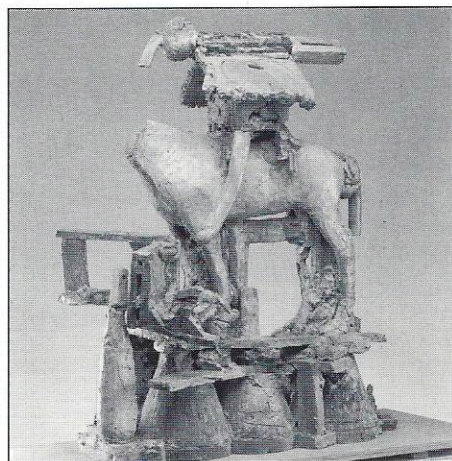
*Revolution: A Gallery Project*  
Ferndale, MI

The horse as metaphor for a materialistic culture entrapped and immobilized by its products is still the central theme in the new sculpture by Jean-Pierre Larocque. The featureless horse is controlled, altered or almost obliterated. Most of the horses still carry elaborate burdens, although several have been relieved of their cargo. As before, the pieces are untitled. There are two major differences between these and the series done two years ago. First, these horses stand on pedestals rather than on mere slabs or skids of clay. The pedestals give the work an architectural quality and add a tension that was not present before. The simplicity of some of the bases are in stark contrast to the organic quality of some of the loads the horses carry; others are more closely related. Second, the works are monochromatic, which serves to pull the elements of burden, horse and base together. Without specific colors to seduce the eye, more attention is paid to each work as a whole.

Larocque wants us to look at everything he has included in each sculpture. He wants us to examine the relationship between the horse and its base and then to zoom in on the details defining that relationship via the objects on, under and around the horse. Whereas previously the horse seemed down-to-earth, now it is elevated as in monuments, memorials or trophies. Is it to be admired, studied or scorned? Is it a symbol immortalizing environmental concerns? A funerary monument to conspicuous consumption? Or a twisted prize for the individual generating the most detritus for the future? Such is the feeling engendered by the headless horse carrying a battered birdhouse on its back and standing on overturned flowerpots behind a broken chair lying on its side. The horse is less a beast of burden than just another cast-off shape, thrown away and unusable.

Thus Larocque mines our imaginations with rich textures and details. He builds and touches every part we see just as we sort, bundle and package every scrap of our own trash and garbage. He makes us read his work and wonder about ourselves.

**Dolores Slowinski**



Untitled (1993), 36" x 27" x 16", stoneware.

## Graham Marks

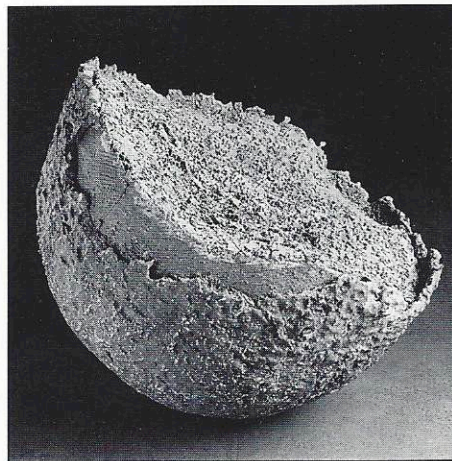
*Habatat/Shaw Gallery*  
Farmington Hills, MI

Marks's best pieces support a profound inquiry into the nature of matter and of life. In form they suggest eggs, geodes, seedpods; their surfaces, termite hills, desert floors, lichen. They are obviously made by hand and many also include small cast-metal objects. Knit together, these associations beautifully express the essential kinship of the mineral, animal, vegetable and the technological "kingdoms." As mysterious forms that have been cracked open, they also read as metaphors for inquiry itself. Dissection is inspired by a search for understanding, yet it requires destruction. We are left to imagine whether Marks's forms might have germinated, hatched or transformed themselves. We don't know what substance has drained from their cavities or evaporated through their fissures. But it is clear that the original potential of these enigmatic objects has been disrupted.

Their continued presence is their power. Violated, they retain their serenity. Only one seems to be actively healing, albeit at a geological pace: shaped much like a worn, ovoid stone axe, it is glazed in Marks's characteristic coppery blue. Since it was formed and fired with the "cut" side down, the glaze flowed slightly over the edge of the "interior," moving gently inward like skin around a wound. Several pieces (Marks leaves his work untitled) have a thin, crumbly skin, peeled away in places to reveal the next layer. Marks often embeds organic materials like sawdust, vermiculite and macaroni in the clay, which burn out in firing, leaving a complex web of interstices. The resulting texture suggests the effect of wind, water, insects or rot. The "broken" edges of most of the new works are skimpy and ragged, cracked away from the core. Yet the forms give a strong impression of resignation, even respect for the process of decay.

The paradoxical aliveness of these broken forms speaks of the interdependence of death and life and the fragility of any given moment. It also refers to the essential mutability of matter, cycling through time in constantly changing forms.

**Jody Clowes**



Untitled (1993), 30" x 29", earthenware.

## Judy Moonelis

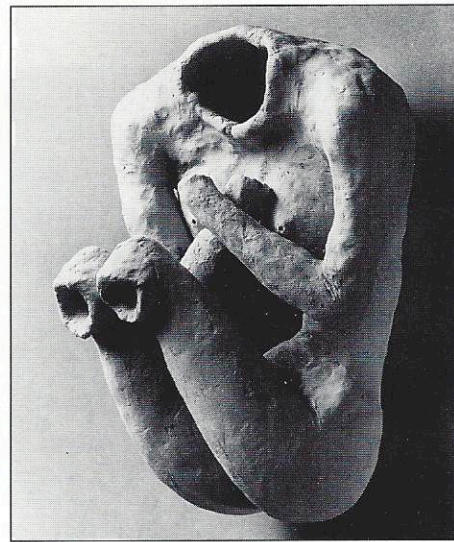
*Hillwood Museum*  
Brookville, NY

Moonelis's clay sculptures and wall installations are comprised of variations and mutations of the female body and carry an emotional impact that is rarely experienced in viewing "traditional" craft forms. Feelings of vulnerability, anguish and death co-mingle with a sense of nurturing, poignancy, even playfulness for a sensitive, sometimes disturbing evocation of the human condition.

Lining the wall are dozens of small androgynous heads, female torsos cut off above the breasts and metal "bodysuits" that suggest armor, a gathering of the wounded and disenfranchised. An installation from 1993 has only 16 elements, larger in scale and all ceramic. These unglazed flesh-colored bodies, "naked clay" as the artist describes them, have limbs but are still without heads, hands or feet. In some, the arms are crossed and legs are drawn up in postures of protection, as if cowering in anticipation of imminent blows. Menacing holes mar the figures' chests, though in at least one the gaping cavity suggests a wide open mouth, with the delicate nipples functioning as eyes, an unexpected touch of humor.

*Cradle*, a freestanding work from 1993, is a two-tiered structure of steel, a material better suited to a cage than the nursery, holds two clay torsos, one upturned on the back of another. Though clearly the bodies of women, they are the size of small children: one reaches up in a suppliant gesture, as a baby crying to be held. There is a tender yet stinging irony in these figures, rendered wombless, thus childless, the mother/protector without power and entrapped. Moonelis's sculptures are timely in light of a growing number of female sculptors concerned with body-oriented issues. Yet there is a timeless quality to the work as well, due in part to her chosen medium, unadorned clay, one of the earliest materials to be worked by human hands. It is Moonelis's own ability to transmute, in both the physical and spiritual sense, that gives her art its staying power.

**Anna C. Noll**



Untitled (1993), 10" x 7" x 6", clay.