



A LARK CERAMICS BOOK

500 PITCHERS



Contemporary Expressions of a Classic Form

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by Terry Gess

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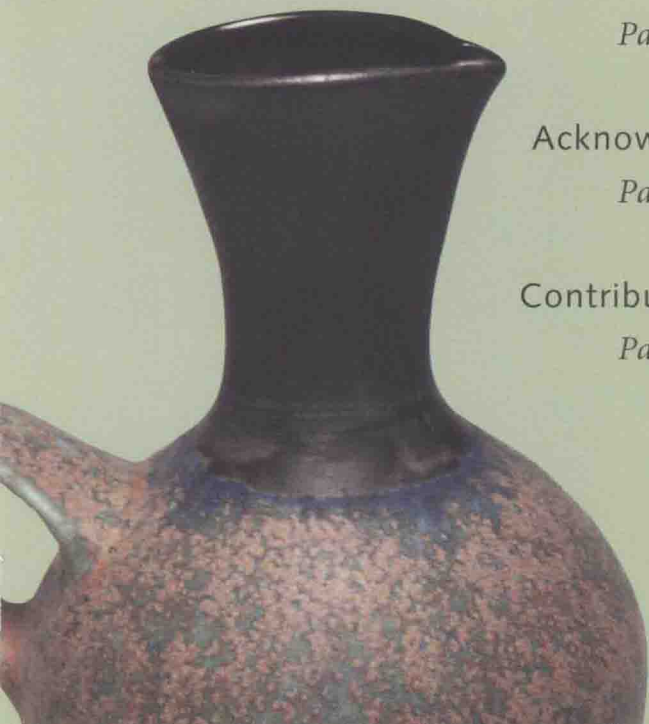
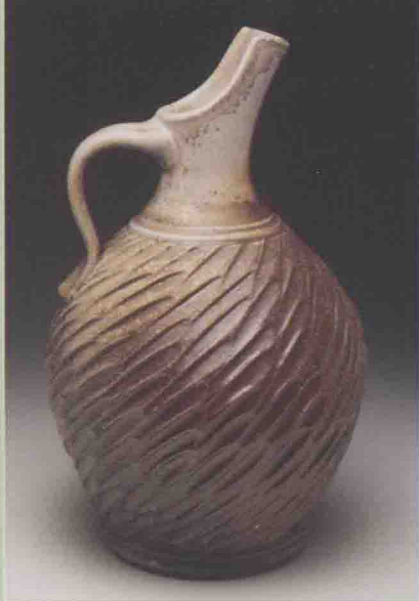
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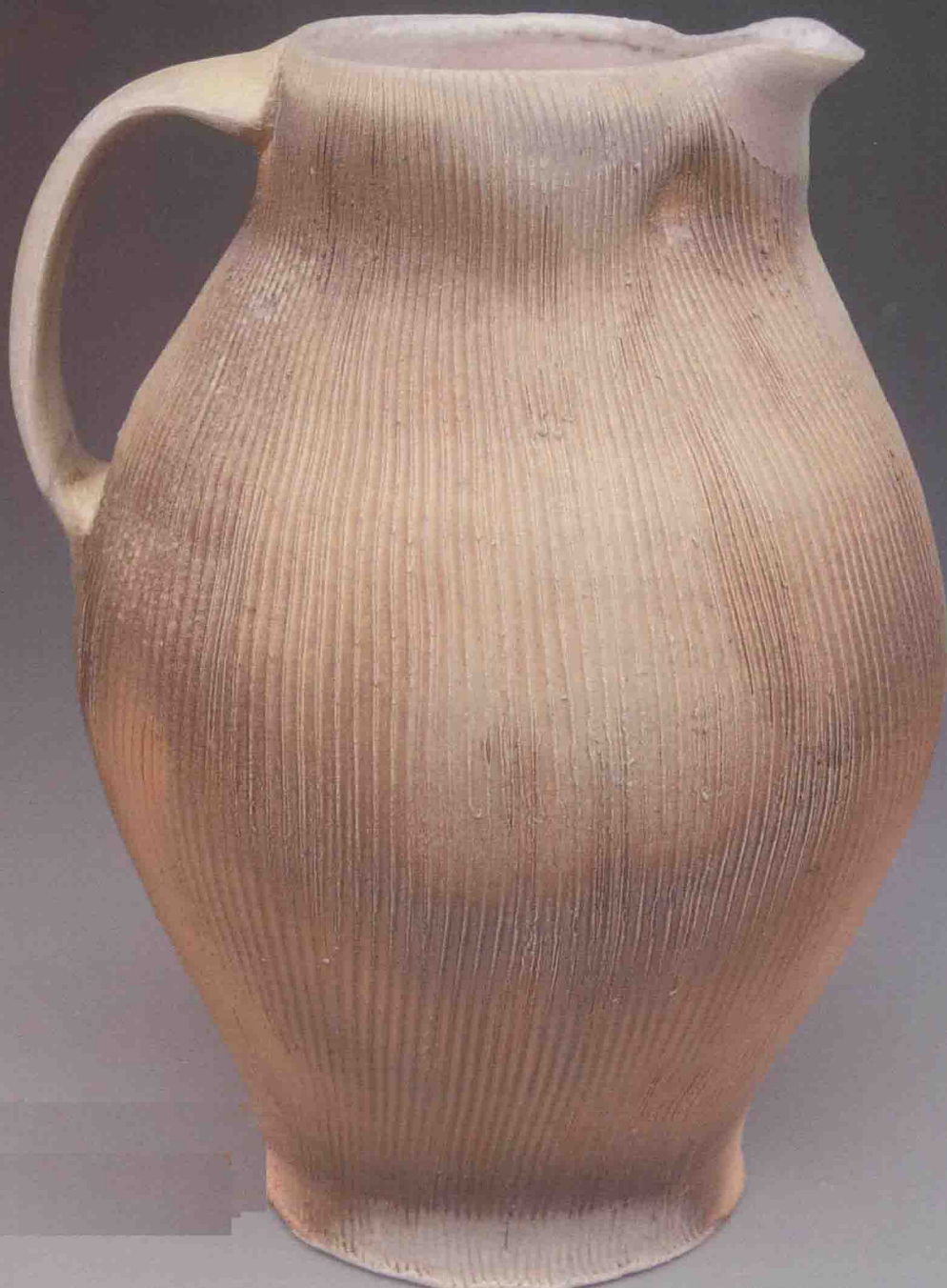
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500 PITCHERS

Contemporary Expressions of a Classic Form



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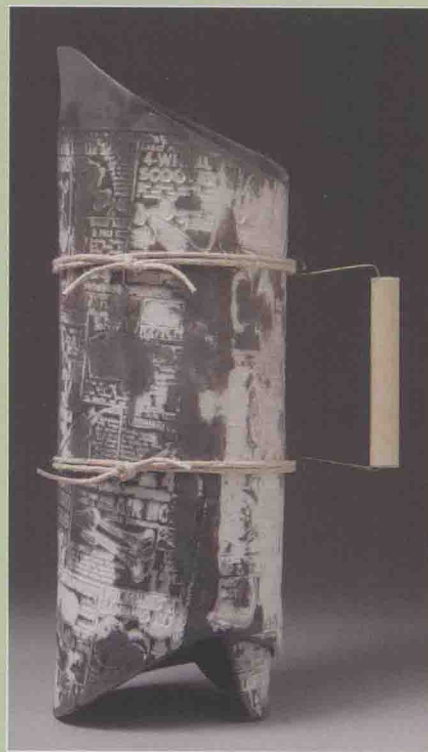
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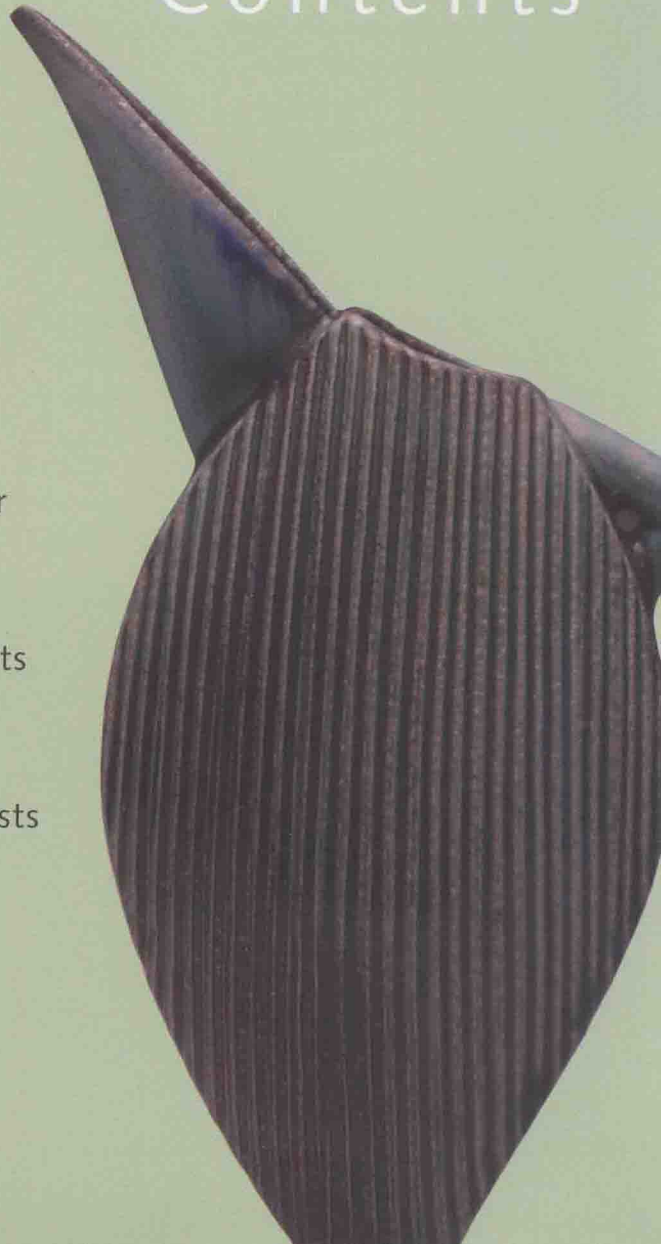
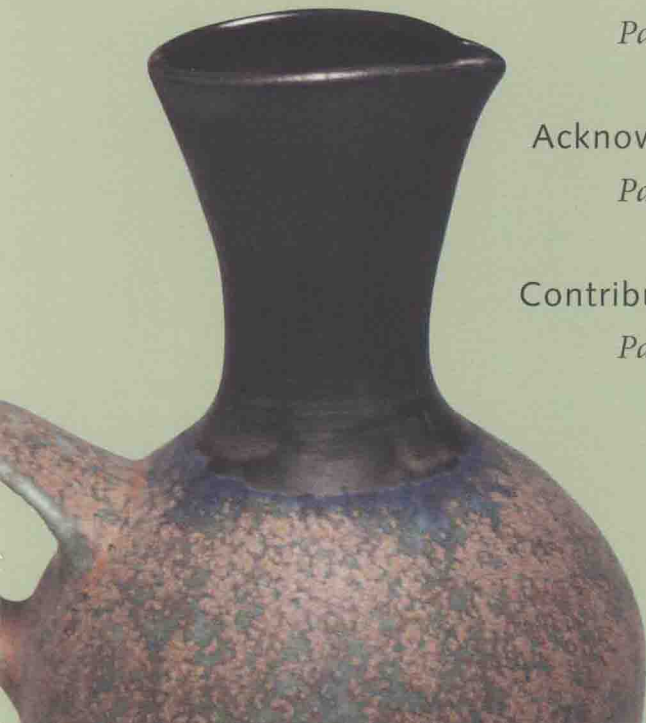
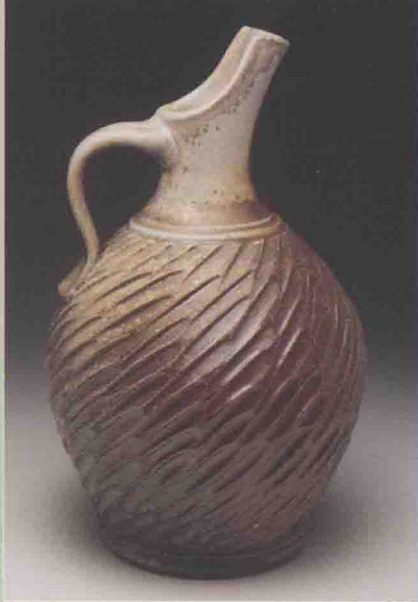
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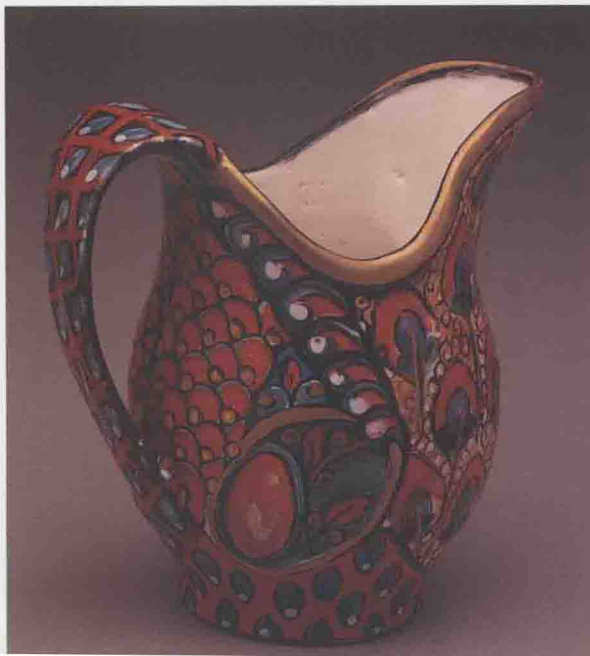


The pitcher is an ancient, useful shape, symbolic as well as practical. It has long played a central role in the ritual and ceremonial life of civilizations worldwide. The vessel itself is often as powerful a symbol of significance and metaphor as the liquid it's meant to contain.

Yet the pitcher is also a deceptively complicated form, full of particular challenges for the potter. Handle and spout, belly and foot all conspire to determine the practicality and personality of each unique piece. And as with any pottery, the visual and tactile qualities that the potter, the clay, and the heat contribute add immeasurably to the finished beauty and success of each pitcher.

The pitcher tradition has been deep and sustaining, with numerous avenues of custom and style, and the interplay between form and function continues to be explored today, as this remarkable collection of contemporary pitchers demonstrates so vividly. One aspect investigated by contemporary studio potters is the pitcher's communal usefulness: unlike the teacup or the coffee mug that soon becomes one person's personal favorite, the pitcher's simple purposefulness holds refreshment and service for several. Some potters also use the pitcher form as a vehicle for their considerable skill at drawing and painting, such as Rosalie Wynkoop's *Majolica Pitcher*; others view it as a means to investigate spatial relationships, as does Scott Dooley's *Zigzag Watering Can*.

Rosalie Wynkoop, *Majolica Pitcher*



Caroline Holder's *A Woman's Hair is Her Crowning Glory* is an example of how still others infuse commentary or narrative into their work.

A potter's work revolves continually around the exploration and development of form. For example, the size and placement of a pitcher's belly indicate the quantity it can hold. Adama Sow's *Shino Pitcher* is spherical and voluminous, while Do-Hee Sung's *Green Bamboo Pitcher* is based on a short, stately cylindrical form. Consider, too, the spout: it is, perhaps, a pitcher's most prominent feature. This collection includes an array of spouts, from exaggerated drama (an untitled pitcher by Lilach Lotan) to the nearly nonexistent (Lois Harbaugh's *Hollow Leg*).

Ceramics history also offers potters a rich and fertile ground for discovery and interpretation. Some artists follow the ancient path of incorporating animal imagery into utilitarian ware, as with Karen Copensky's realistic *Cape Buffalo Ewer*; others follow the equally longstanding tradition of referencing animal posture or gesture, as in the subtle poise of Michael Kline's *Pitcher*.

Whether it's a flagon reserved for sacred ceremony, a humble little oil ewer on the back of the stove, a spirited margarita pitcher, or a family heirloom filled with seasonal garden flowers, each pitcher really comes into its own when it's put into use. For instance, a



Do-Hee Sung, *Green Bamboo Pitcher*

visit to my mother's house usually includes breakfast, when she uses a small cream pitcher that I made and gave to her years ago. It's a short form, wider in the belly, with a handle rising slightly off and away from the lip and a splash of carefully placed sgraffito. Certainly she loves it as her son's handmade gift, but her daily use of it speaks well of the lasting and endearing tradition of pitchers.

I was delighted when Lark Books asked me to review the many excellent entries for *500 Pitchers: Contemporary Expressions of a Classic Form*. With more than 4,000 images to choose from, we chose broadly, attempting to represent the wide range of style and technique that potters submitted for consideration. We were

especially interested in selecting those pitchers that seemed to possess the ability to enhance, fulfill, sustain, or comment on each potter's particular understanding of the pitcher as a cultural object of purposefulness, expression, or beauty.

I am pleased with the variety of quiet, well-designed pitchers—what some potters might refer to as “honest work”—as well as the fine examples of vigorous, sculptural pieces in this book. To add even more value, some images are accompanied by commentary, either from me or from the artist. The collection is interspersed with my insights and thoughts covering the range of themes introduced in this flourishing assortment. Sometimes I compare two pieces on the same spread; at other times, just one. Furthermore, selected remarks by the artists themselves shed light on their inspirations and working methods. May this book serve you well as inspiration, source, and refreshment!

—Terry Gess



Karen Copensky, *Cape Buffalo Ewer*

Dan Anderson

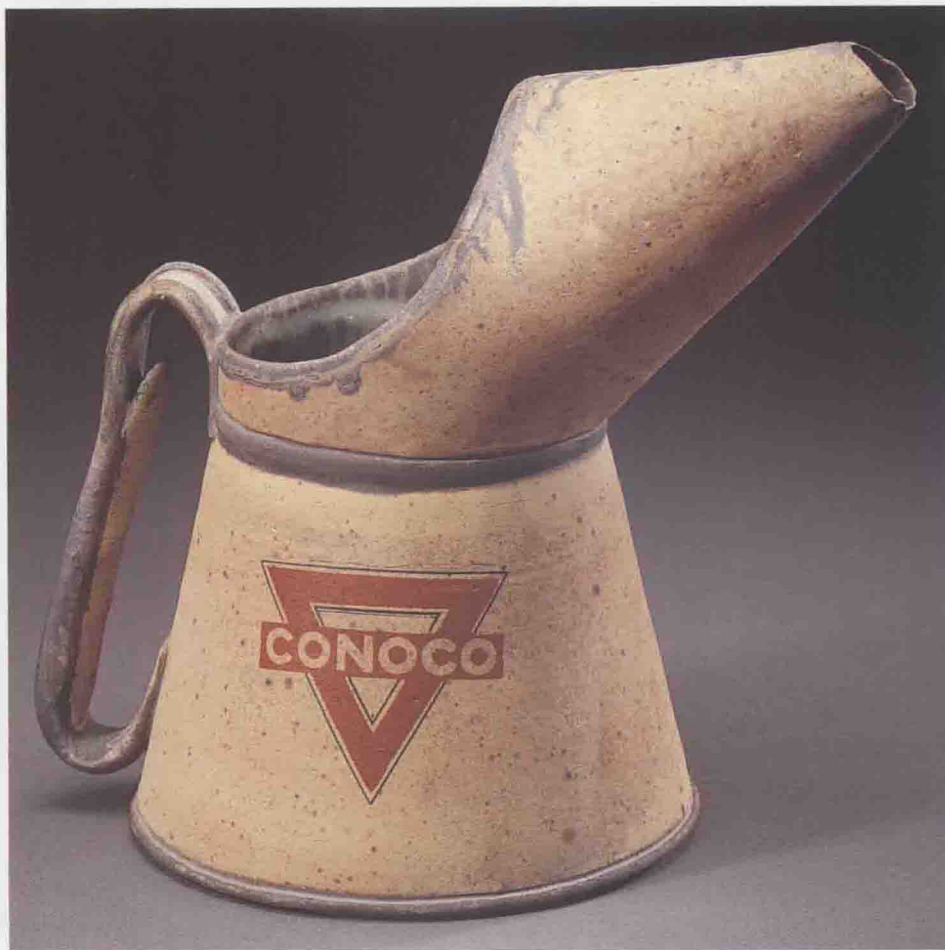
Conoco Oil Pitcher, 2004

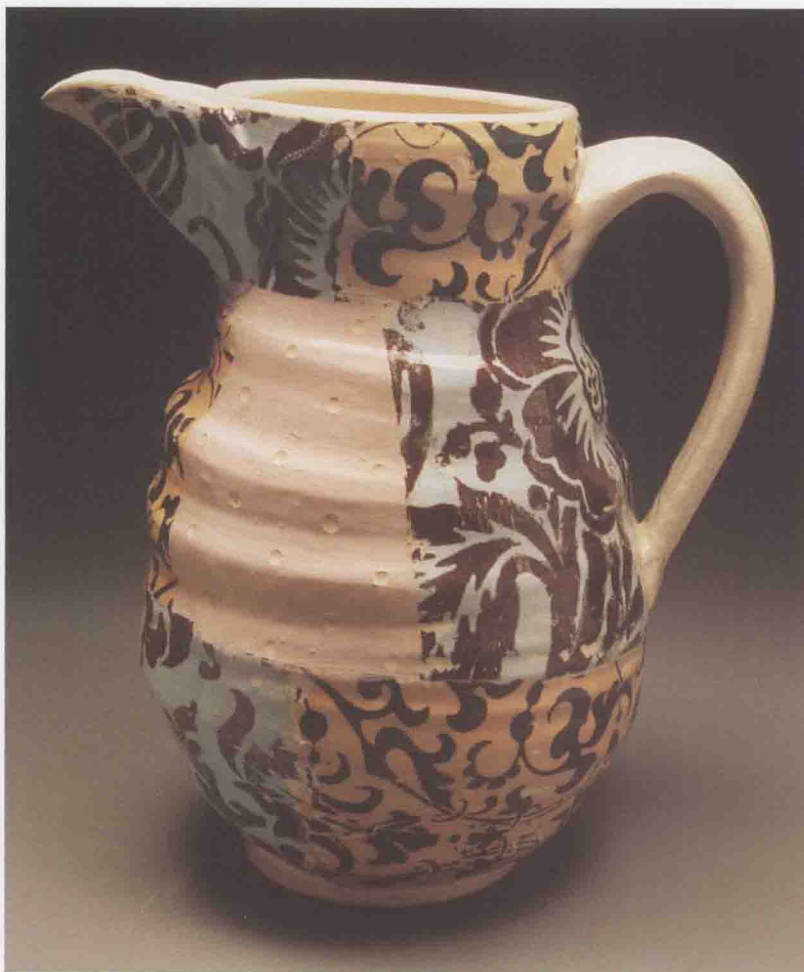
12 x 11 x 6½ inches (30.5 x 27.9 x 16.5 cm)

Slab-built stoneware; soda fired, 1300°F (704°C);

decals fired and sandblasted

PHOTO BY JEFF BRUCE





Kelly McKibben

Untitled, 2005

11 x 9½ x 7 inches (27.9 x 24.1 x 17.8 cm)

Thrown white earthenware; electric fired, cone 04; silkscreen slips, cone 04; clear glaze

PHOTO BY ARTIST

Kelly McKibben used at least three distinct decorative motifs, each one at certain odds with the others. This challenging approach to surface treatment has historical referents in Japanese Oribe ware. —TG

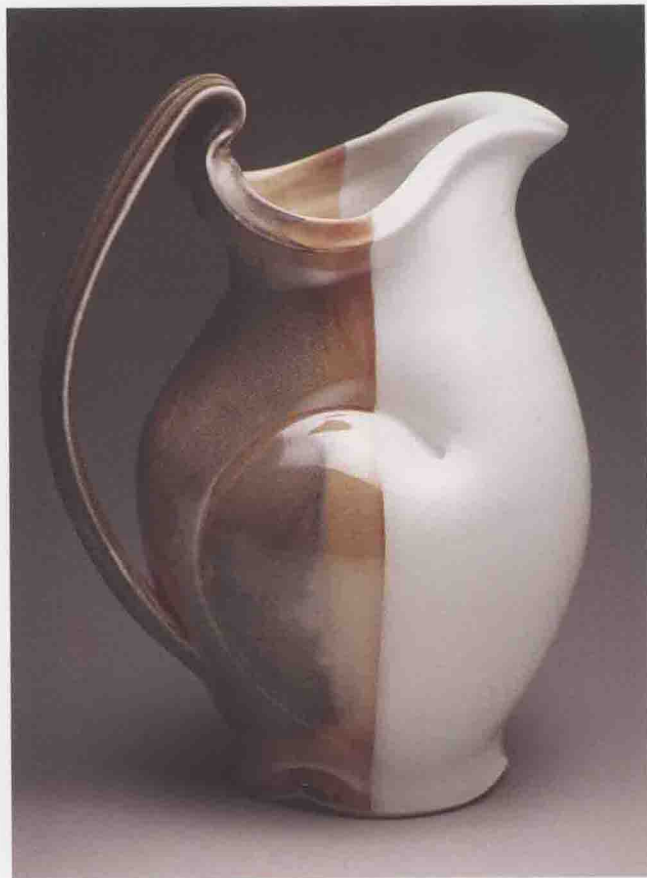
Hide Sadohara

Shino Pitcher, 1994

10 x 6 x 6 inches (25.4 x 15.2 x 15.2 cm)

Wheel-thrown and altered porcelain;
reduction fired, cone 10

PHOTO BY ARTIST



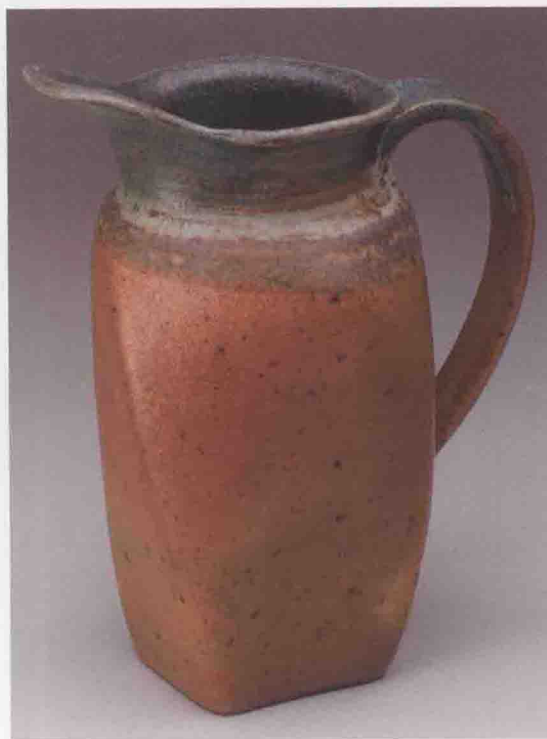
Patti Hughes

Untitled, 2002

7¼ x 5¾ x 3¾ inches (18.4 x 14.6 x 9.5 cm)

Wheel-thrown and altered stoneware;
reduction fired, cone 10

PHOTO BY TIM BARKLEY



G. Michael Davis

| *Grey Pitcher B2, 2005*

11 x 6 x 4 inches (27.9 x 15.2 x 10.2 cm)

Porcelain; reduction fired, cone 10

PHOTO BY ARTIST





Jerry L. Bennett

I Think It's a Bird Pitcher, 2003

15 x 9 x 11 inches (38.1 x 22.9 x 27.9 cm)
Wheel-thrown and altered stoneware paper
clay; single fired in oxidation, cone 6;
slab-built additions

PHOTO BY JOHN CARLAND

Bede Clarke

Pitcher, 2003

13½ x 7 x 4 inches (34.3 x 17.8 x 10.2 cm)

Wheel-thrown stoneware; wood fired in
anagama kiln, cone 12

PHOTO BY ARTIST

Bede Clarke kept the surface of this lean pitcher smooth and largely free of texture so that it would be open to the nuances of flame and ash during firing. —TG



Jeff Kaller

Pitcher, 2004

10½ x 10 x 5½ inches (26.7 x 25.4 x 14 cm)

Wheel-thrown porcelain; high-fired in reduction;
clear glaze with cobalt sulfate decoration

PHOTO BY ARTIST



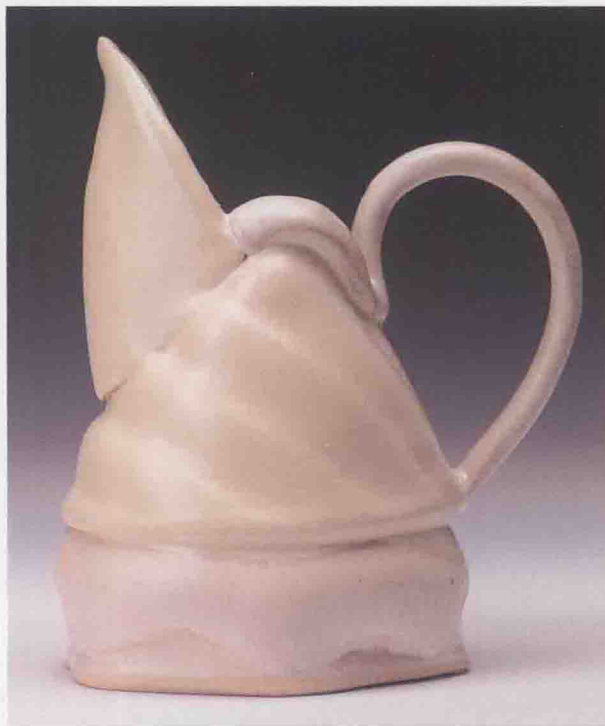
Sarah Raymond

Untitled, 2004

5¼ x 3½ x 3½ inches (13.3 x 8.9 x 8.9 cm)

Soft-slab stoneware; electric fired, cone 6

PHOTO BY VINCENT NOGUCHI



Anne Fallis Elliott

Side Handle Pitcher on a Tray, 2003

Pitcher: 5 x 6 x 4 inches (12.7 x 15.2 x 10.2 cm)

Tray: 10 inches (25.4 cm)

Wheel-thrown, altered, and assembled stoneware;
electric fired, cone 7; ash glaze

PHOTO BY KEVIN NOBLE



Kazu Oba

|| *Sake Pitcher, 2004*

Pitcher: 3 x 6 x 5 inches (7.6 x 15.2 x 12.7 cm)

Wheel-thrown stoneware; electric fired, cone 6

PHOTO BY ARTIST

