Gundi Dietz - (1942 - )

Gundi Dietz was born in Vienna, Austria in 1942. She studied ceramics and sculpture at the University of Applied Art in Vienna, completing her program of study in 1970. Following her graduation, she was employed at the Viennese Porcelain Manufactory in Augarten. For over 30 years, Dietz has focused on creating porcelain figures, predominantly female figures that express universal human emotions and existential conflicts. She is probably the best-known Austrian ceramic artist.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT - GUNDI DIETZ

"It takes sensibility to hone in on the inner picture. The material is seductive and technical problems loom large. I have to go into a meditative and concentrated state to stop my visions from running amok. From the variety of my ideas the sculpture was reduced to its essence. This reduction of form, motion and color is central to my work...It is always a challenge to find the right balance between sensitive and strong, light and dark, soft and hard, smooth and rough." 1


RÉSUMÉ - GUNDI DIETZ

1942 Born Vienna, Austria
1965-1969 Ceramic Sculpture, University of Applied Art, Vienna, Austria
1969-1970 Master of Art and Design Teaching
Employed, Viennese Porcelain Manufactory, Augarten.
1973-present Studio Artist
1982 Prize of Lower Austria
1983 Award of the City of Vienna
1993 Honorary Silver Needle Award, Province of Lower Austria
1993-present Member, International Academy of Ceramics
2001 Professor title award, Office of the Chancellor of Austria

BIOGRAPHY - GUNDI DIETZ
Anchored by a foundation of technical virtuosity, Gundi Dietz creates a porcelain world populated primarily by female creatures. They have a family resemblance yet remain distinct individuals. How she came to create such intriguing art is not evident in her history. Very little is documented about her early life other than she was born in Vienna, Austria (1942), had her art education at the University of Applied Art in Vienna (graduating in 1970) and was employed by the Viennese Porcelain Manufactory in Augarten. However, descriptions of her work are rich with observations about the products and processes of her sculpture studio.

Dietz has developed an unmistakable style of figurative porcelain. In addition to making animal figures, she creates mostly female forms, sometimes simply heads and torsos, other times full figures. These female figures are represented in their most natural form, sometimes humorous, naked or semi-naked, sensuous but not lascivious, never seductive. ¹ Their strangely vacant expressions, individual but with family resemblance, evoke a comparison to the terracotta army guarding Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di's tomb in Xi'an, China. Dietz's pieces intentionally face away, refusing eye contact with the viewer, maintaining their mystery and integrity. ²

At the Augarten factory, Dietz has access to wonderful porcelain requiring a temperature of 1460° C. for firing. This medium allows practically no corrections. To this clay she brings great technical proficiency. The same mold made from a clay model is used for a whole series of figures. She pours out the remaining mix of liquid porcelain when the liquid skin in the mold has dried to a depth of 1 cm. She works on the still-soft porcelain, creating the facial features, adding protuberances and eyes, polishing and painting the figure, and treating the cracks in the skin with clamps and bandages. Describing her studio in Mödling, Dietz says it "is as if a crime scene. Again and again, I am drawn there, right into the work. Add to that the natural rhythm, dictated by the nature of the living, breathing material -- porcelain. I can't just leave work sitting there, once started. Here is a concentrated energy that has to be brought to its conclusion."³

Honors bestowed upon Dietz include: Honorary Silver Needle Award from the Province of Lower Austria, acceptance as a Member of the International Academy of Ceramics in 1993, and designation as "Professor" by the Office of the Chancellor of Austria in 2001.

Dietz's works are included among many European collections and in the collection of the Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York.⁴


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY - GUNDI DIETZ
Books and Catalogs

Periodicals

GALLERY REPRESENTATION - GUNDI DIETZ

WEB SITES - GUNDI DIETZ

http://www.gundi-dietz.at
Gundi Dietz's web site. (Site is "under construction" at the time of this writing.)


www.aic-iac.org/members/austria/deitz/deitz.html
Image and listing of Dietz's membership in the International Academy of Ceramics

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