

## ***RICHARD SHAW - (1941 - )***

California ceramic artist Richard Shaw is well-known for his beautifully crafted trompe d'oeil pieces, some so life-like the viewer is terribly tempted to touch and others so whimsical they invite the viewer to look again – and again. He has pushed the edge of ceramic art to incorporate techniques not usually associated with clay such as silk screening, and in doing so, has helped raise the awareness of clay from a craft form to fine art. In addition to his long career as a studio artist, Shaw has shared his gift as a teacher, presently in the art department at the University of California-Berkeley.

### ***ARTIST'S STATEMENT – RICHARD SHAW***

"I am trying to create a poem about a person, using humor, irony and elegance."<sup>1</sup>

"You can make anything out of clay. People are always saying, "Why don't you make these out of the real thing?" I say, 'Well painters don't do that, they use paint!' No one ever questions that. And clay is the same way. That is my medium."<sup>2</sup>

1. Quoted in Brown, Glen R. "Richard Shaw: Illusion and Absence." *Ceramics (Sydney, Australia)*, no. 58. 2004.
2. Sonoma Valley Museum of Art, Sonoma, CA. Fund Raiser "Wet Paint." 2006  
[http://www.svma.org/svma\\_wetpaint/page4.html](http://www.svma.org/svma_wetpaint/page4.html)

### ***RESUME – RICHARD SHAW***

1941	Born, Hollywood, CA
1961-1963	Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, CA
1965	BFA, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA State University of New York at Alfred
1966	Instructor, San Francisco Art Institute
1968	MA, University of California-Davis, Davis, CA
1970	Instructor, University of California-Berkeley
1971	National Endowment for the Arts Visual Artist Fellowship
1974	National Endowment for the Arts, Visual Artist Fellowship for Crafts
1977	Clayworks, New York, NY, Visiting Artist Grant

1987	Atelier Experimental de Recherche et de Creation, Manufacture Nationale de Sevres, Paris France, Visiting Artist Grant
1988	Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA
1996	Annual Life Member Award, Falkirk Arts Center, San Rafael, CA
1998	Artist in Residence, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA
Present	Professor, University of California-Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

### ***BIOGRAPHY – RICHARD SHAW***

Richard Shaw is among the group of dynamic ceramic artists whose origins were in the young, brash state of California in the middle of the last century. He was born in Hollywood, CA in 1941, and as a teenager he directed home-made movies, earning the nickname “Cecil B. Shaw.” However, his parents were both artists so perhaps it was inevitable that he would follow that path.

He began his art education by attending Orange Coast College followed by the San Francisco Art Institute where he received his B.F.A. in 1965. He continued his studies at State University of New York at Alfred, Alfred, NY, and finally at University of California at Davis, receiving an M.F.A. in 1968.

At Davis he studied under Robert Arneson and William Wiley and is identified with the Funk and Super Object movements of the 1960’s and 1970’s. These movements featured mixed genres, both figurative and abstract, found objects, and unusual materials and processes. Further, they incorporated elements of narrative, humor, personal experience, and pop culture. These artists wanted ceramics to be recognized as a fine art, not a craft, and to achieve parity with the more “traditional” fine arts such as painting.

While these artists were loosely grouped together in this movement, each developed an individual style. Shaw was attracted to trompe d’oeil, the use of art materials to “fool the eye,” and specifically the ceramic traditions of Europe and Asia in the 1700’s. Working primarily with porcelain and using a combination of techniques – slip casting, decals, silk-screening – Shaw created an incredible collection of objects whose appearance belie their reality.

Shaw worked with sculptor Richard Hudson during the early 1970’s, spending a year slip casting a variety of objects, both store-bought and natural. Shaw has always collected “junk,” bits and pieces that catch his eye, and almost all end up being cast. During the partnership with Hudson, the pair made, in addition, a collection of wheel-thrown and hand built forms. From this odd assortment they then assembled teapots, jars, and other traditional vessels, decorating the surfaces with china paints, air brushing, underglazes, and other techniques. The resulting pieces were featured in an exhibition

in 1973 which broke the existing prohibition against the use of slip casting and opened up new areas in contemporary ceramics.

The molds and decals are made either by Shaw or on occasion a professional mold maker. Expanding his horizons he applied for and received a National Endowment for the Arts grant to explore photo silk-screening for reproducing decals. The grant enabled him to work as a professional silkscreen artist and to develop low-fire ceramic inks. The results of this advance can be seen in representations of stamps, labels, playing cards, and others that add depth to his work. While his assemblages often seem loosely piled together, he begins with numerous sketches, moving through a very careful, thought-out development. And although he does indeed produce vessels and containers, their actual utility is conceptual rather than actual; his interest lies with formal rather than functional concerns.

Trompe d'oeil is also at the base of his stick figure work, strange animated figures whose body parts are such things as cans, twigs, paint brushes, and so on. While the individual parts do indeed "fool the eye," the piece as a whole has a surreal but appealing effect and the individual personalities are unmistakable. Shaw's figures often appear to be suspended momentarily in time: "(someone)..finishes his third cigarette, and puts it out in an ashtray set on top of the books he is reading. An artist leaves the paint box open with a half-finished watercolour..."<sup>1</sup> He further explains his role as the artist in these compositions: "I am trying to create a poem about a person, using humour, irony and elegance....(of his or her) taste, pastimes, intellectual pursuits, sins, habits (good and bad,) obsessions or carelessness."<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, however, it is the viewer who interacts with these pieces. Shaw does not provide all the answers but leaves the impression of a "mysterious event posing a question rather than handing out an answer."<sup>3</sup>

Richard Shaw has taught at the San Francisco Art Institute and is presently on the faculty at the University of California-Berkeley. His work has been featured in a large number of solo and group exhibitions as well as in both private and public collections. He is represented in the collections of the De Young Museum of San Francisco; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Mint Museum in Charlotte, NC; The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York; and the Renwick Gallery of National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington D.C, among others. Awards include National Endowment of the Arts fellowships, Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from San Francisco Art Institute, and Annual Life Member Award, Falkirk Arts Center, San Rafael, CA.

1. Brown, Glen R. "Richard Shaw: Illusion and Absence." *Ceramics (Sydney Australia)* no. 58, 2004.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

## ***SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY – RICHARD SHAW***

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Marshall, Richard, and Suzanne Foley. *Ceramic Sculpture: Six Artists*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1981.

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### Periodicals

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"Ceramic Sculpture: Braunstein/Quay Gallery, San Francisco." *Ceramics Monthly* 27 (April 1979): 52-55.

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Kuspit, Donald. "High Kitsch: Poking Fun at the Vessel." *American Ceramics* 13, no. 1 (1998): 12-19.

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\_\_\_\_\_. "Richard Shaw: Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, CA." *American Ceramics* 14, no. 1 (2002): 53.

Lincoln, Joan. "What Do You Do With 314 Pots?" *Ceramics Monthly* 47, no. 4 (April 1999): 68-71.

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White, Cheryl. "Master of Illusion: Richard Shaw." *American Ceramics* 6, no. 2 (1987): 30-37.

Wood, Eve. "Richard Shaw." *American Ceramics* 14, no. 4 (2004): 24-25.

### Video

"Revolutions of the Wheel: The Emergence of Clay Art." Directed and edited by Scott Sterling. Queens Row, 1997. VHS

"Interview with Richard Shaw." Paul J. Karlstrom, interviewer. Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art. April 3 and 6, 1998.

"Richard Shaw, Ceramic Sculptor." Betty G. Bailey, producer. ClaytonBailey.com, 1986.

"Color and Fire: Defining Moments in Studio Ceramics, 1950-2000." Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2000. VHS, DVD.

## **GALLERY REPRESENTATION – RICHARD SHAW**

Braunstein/Quay Gallery, 430 Clementina, San Francisco, CA

Frank Lloyd Gallery, 2525 Michigan Avenue, B5B, Santa Monica, CA 90404

George Adams Gallery, 525 W. 26<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10001

Harvey/Meadows Gallery, Inc., 0133 Prospector Road, Suite 4144 A, Aspen Highlands Village, Aspen, CO 81611

b. sakata garo, 923 Twentieth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Mobilia Gallery, 358 Huron Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138

### ***WEB SITES – RICHARD SHAW***

<http://www.kqed.org/arts/people/spark/profile.jsp?id=4808>

Web site of station KQED which contains a video segment on Richard Shaw originally aired February, 2005.

[http://www.franklloyd.com/dynamic/artist\\_bio.asp?ArtistID=26](http://www.franklloyd.com/dynamic/artist_bio.asp?ArtistID=26)

Biography and photographs of Richard Shaw

[http://www.bquayartgallery.com/artists/shaw\\_bio.html](http://www.bquayartgallery.com/artists/shaw_bio.html)

Detailed resume of Richard Shaw

<http://www.harveymeadows.com/artists/pages/shaw.html>

Artist page for Harvey/Meadows Gallery

<http://www.askart.com/AskART/artists/search/ArtistKeywords.aspx?artist=101404>

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