

## **PATTI WARASHINA (1940 - )**

Patti Warashina, along with Robert Sperry and Howard Kottler were instrumental in bringing the Seattle ceramic scene to prominence, heading up the department at the University of Washington, Seattle, as well as producing pieces that took inspiration from the Funk movement in the Bay area but with their own interpretations. Warashina is best known for her figurative sculpture – pieces that tell stories which are often dream-like or fantasies – and ranging in size from very small to larger-than-life. She works in low-fire polychrome ceramics, the colors and surface decoration both vivid and animated. While her primarily female figures clearly emerge from her own experiences, Warashina says, “They aren’t me exactly, or any version of me....they represent what I know and what I’m curious about. When I’m curious about something else, I’ll move on.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Hackett, Regina. “Pioneering Ceramic Artist Patti Warashina is Still Standing.” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 18, 2001.  
[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/visualart/50966\\_pattivarashina18.shtml](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/visualart/50966_pattivarashina18.shtml)

### **ARTIST’S STATEMENT – PATTI WARASHINA**

“The human figure has been an absorbing visual fascination in my work. I use the figure in voyeuristic situations in which irony, humor, absurdities portray human behavior as a relief from society’s pressure and frustrations on mankind. At times, I use the figure in complex arrangements so that it will be seethingly alive. I like the visual stimulation of portraying human energy, as a way to compare it to any biological organization found in nature.”<sup>1</sup>

1. “Thumbnails.” Loveed Fine Arts. [http://loveedfinearts.com/thb\\_warashina.html](http://loveedfinearts.com/thb_warashina.html)

### **RESUME – PATTI WARASHINA**

March 16, 1940	Born, Spokane, WA
1958-1962	University of Washington, Seattle, WA, BFA
1962-1964	University of Washington, Seattle, WA MFA
1964	Professor, Wisconsin State University, Platteville, WI
1968	Professor, Eastern Michigan State University, Ypsilanti, MI
1969	Professor, Cornish School of Allied Arts, Seattle, WA
1970-1995	Professor, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

1975, 1986	National Endowment for the Arts Award
1978	World Craft Council Travel Grant Japan/United States Friendship Committee Ford Foundation Grant
1980	Governor's Award of Special Commendation for the Arts, Olympia, WA
1986	Northwest Special Collections Seattle Arts Commission 1% for the Arts Portable Works Collection
1992	Arts/Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Scholar Award Honor Program Award, King County Arts Commission, Seattle, WA
1994	Elected Member to American Craft Council of Fellows New York, NY
1995	Professor Emeritus, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
2001	Lifetime Achievement Award/Woman of the Year (Twining Humber Award,) Artist Trust, Seattle, WA
2003	Distinguished Alumna Award, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
2006	Honorary Member of National Council on the Education for Ceramic Arts

## ***BIOGRAPHY – PATTI WARASHINA***

Seattle artist Patti Warashina (given name: Masae Patricia Warashina) was born in Spokane, WA in 1940, the youngest of three children. Her father was a dentist who had immigrated to the US from Japan, her mother a second-generation Japanese-American. Her family, like others during the war, was caught up in the discrimination directed against Japanese-Americans, and although they were not sent to a relocation camp as other family members were, their home was searched, their bank accounts frozen, and her father prohibited from collecting dental fees for his work. While Warashina was very young at the time, she still remembers the feelings of repression and fear, and at times those memories have come through in her work.

Her father died when she was ten, leaving her mother to raise the family by herself. Warashina credits her mother with teaching the family the value of independence and personal strength. The family home was on a large lot and her mother enjoyed gardening - Warashina remembers topiary, a huge vegetable garden, and meticulously maintained flowerbeds. Warashina sees her own love of gardening and her appreciation of beautiful things as coming from her mother. Later her mother took some classes in

jewelry, another interest they both shared, as Warashina took double masters in ceramics and jewelry making.

Growing up in Spokane Warashina enjoyed art but it was not considered a “serious” subject, and she was encouraged to concentrate on science, math, and English. It was not until she was in college at the University of Washington, Seattle, that she became serious about art, ultimately receiving both her BFA (1962) and MFA (1964) there. After college she married ceramic artist Fred Bauer and they moved to Michigan where they shared a half-time position each at Wisconsin State University at Platteville. The following year Bauer took a position at the University of Michigan and Warashina at Eastern Michigan State University at Ypsilanti. During this period they had two children, Lisa and Gretchen. They returned to Seattle in 1969 where Bauer began teaching at the University of Washington, Seattle. Several years later they divorced, and Warashina remained in Seattle with the children.

Warashina took the position that Bauer had held at the university and remained as a professor until her retirement in 1995. She enjoyed the interactions and energy of working with the students and also appreciated that the steady income allowed her to pursue her art freely without worrying about having to make things to sell.

Robert Sperry and Howard Kottler were also at the university when she joined, and the three of them ran the department, taking it to national prominence. While they were influenced by the California Funk movement in the Bay Area, the three took different directions, with Warashina’s work reflecting both fantasy and feminism. Sperry, whom she had known slightly as a student, would become first her partner for six years and then her husband for another 22 until his death in 1998.

Warashina’s early pieces were high-fire glaze and stoneware, largely functional. In time her work became more sculptural, with elements of the figure appearing, and she shifted to low-fire glazes, finding they gave her more freedom. As her work evolved the parts of the figure became full figures, first small, and then becoming larger and sometimes a part of a larger scene. She was influenced by early art she saw in Italy, specifically Etruscan art, and also the tomb figures of Egyptian art. “I could have stayed with the little figures for the rest of my life, but it just lost momentum for me...It was no longer a challenge...it is a matter of taking the portion of the figure and playing around with it to see what expression you can get out of it...just learning how to build.”<sup>1</sup>

Warashina continues to explore the figure, more recently the male figure as well as the female, and to challenge herself to test the limits of what clay can do. Among her many honors are two NEA Grants; Fellow in the American Craft Council; “Lifetime Achievement Award/Woman of the Year” given by the Artist Trust in Seattle; and a “Distinguished Alumnus Award” from the University of Washington, Seattle. Her work has been seen in many exhibitions, both solo and group, and her pieces are included in the Los Angeles County Art Museum; the American Craft Museum in New York; the Seattle and Tacoma Art Museum; and the Kyoto National Museum of Modern Art, among others.

1. <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/warash05.htm>

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## **GALLERY REPRESENTATION – PATTI WARASHINA**

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Loveed Fine Arts, 575 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022

## **WEB SITES – PATTI WARASHINA**

<http://www.warashina.com>

Official web site of Patti Warashina

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/findingaids/warapatt.htm>

Link to Warashina papers held by Smithsonian Archives of American Art

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/warash05.htm>

Transcript of interview with Patti Warashina September 8, 2005

[http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/visualart/50966\\_pattivarashina18.shtml](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/visualart/50966_pattivarashina18.shtml)

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Brief biography of Warashina

<http://www.howardhouse.net/artists/index2.html?warashina>

Resume of Patti Warashina at Howard House web site

[http://loveedfinearts.com/bio\\_warashina.html](http://loveedfinearts.com/bio_warashina.html)

Loveed Fine Arts web site link to Patti Warashina

August 2007