

Family Review

Annabeth Rosen:

Fired, Broken, Gathered, Heaped

On view August 19–November 26, 2017



Flume, 2015. Fired ceramic. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W., New York. Photo: Lee Fatherree.

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Annabeth Rosen: Fired, Broken, Gathered, Heaped is the first major survey exhibition for artist Annabeth Rosen and covers more than two decades of her work as a pioneer in the genre of contemporary ceramics.

Rosen embraces unpredictability, chance, and failure in the studio and the kiln as opportunities for invention and experimentation. The artist explores the potential of clay by seeking out its limitations and breaking the traditions and “rules” of clay by firing broken ceramics, wet and dry clay together. She creates both small and large works that challenge the conditions of balance, symmetry, and function that are often present within the discussion of ceramics and craft.

Rosen’s works from the mid-1990s are inspired by nature and feature complex ecosystems of flowering plants, birds, and small microcosms in various states of growth and decay. Her more recent work moves away from representation and explores the physical labor and process of working with clay by creating hundreds of individual shapes and constructing her sculptures accumulatively, similar to the way a painter would paint a canvas. Discrete elements are formed, fired, glazed and considered individually before being carefully

chosen and bound together with more wet clay, tubing or wire to create larger works. She often adds broken pieces of ceramic, detritus, and studio furniture onto the sculptures until they collapse, and then re-builds them with a precarious balance. Her sculptures reveal both the durability and fragility of clay, bound together in simultaneous harmony and disorder.

Rosen is formally trained in ceramics and continues to teach the subject, but is also strongly influenced by painting. Included in the exhibition are works on paper that are created alongside the artist’s sculptures as a way of establishing muscle memory for the shaping of clay. The works on paper were originally drawn with slip, a solution of clay and water, and reveal some of the artist’s process, energy, and intention while working in the studio. Rosen’s recent sculptural work and installation alongside her drawings often extends beyond the field of ceramics to engage in cross-genre discussions of contemporary painting, conceptual art, and endurance-based performance.

Rosen’s work is visually engaging and the exhibition is family-friendly. Visitors should be aware of the fragile nature of some of the works on view, including smaller works on display on pedestals that may be within reach of children. The exhibition does not include any interactive artworks.