

Teacher Guide

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.



Atlas, 2016. Fired ceramic and steel baling wire. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W., New York. Photo: Lee Fatherree.

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EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

- *Annabeth Rosen: Fired, Broken, Gathered, Heaped* is the first major survey exhibition of artist Annabeth Rosen and covers more than two decades of her work as a pioneer in the genre of contemporary ceramics.
- Rosen has an elaborate and physically demanding art practice that embraces unpredictability, chance, and failure as opportunities for invention in the studio and the kiln. The artist explores the potential of her chosen medium by seeking out its limitations. She breaks the traditions and “rules” of clay, often by firing broken, dry and wet pieces of clay together, or adding studio furniture and detritus to the sculpture.
- Inspired by nature and classical ceramic iconography, Rosen’s early works include a series of plate and tile-based sculptural objects featuring complex ecosystems of flowering plants, birds, and small microcosms. Rosen also began stacking her pieces in layers referencing the varying strata of earth.
- Rosen’s later work moves away from representation and explores the performative process of ceramics by creating hundreds of repeated shapes and forms and constructing her sculptural pieces as a painter would paint a canvas. Discrete elements are formed, fired, glazed and considered individually before being accumulated and bound together with more wet clay, tubing or wire to create larger sculptures.
- While formally trained in ceramics, the artist is strongly influenced by painting. Included in the exhibition are works on paper created alongside the artist’s sculptures that reveal some of the artist’s process, energy, and intention with their sweeping, open gestures and forms.
- Rosen’s recent work often extends beyond the field of ceramics to engage in cross-genre discussions that interrogate the place of craft and ceramics in the contemporary art landscape. Her sculptures are conceptually-driven to reveal both the durability and fragility of clay, precariously bound together in simultaneous harmony and disorder.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How do failure and chance play a role in Rosen's sculptural compositions?
- Where do you notice evidence of breakage or collapse?
- How are Rosen's sculptures performative?
- What can you learn about Rosen's creative process through looking at her drawings and sculptures together?
- What are some of the shared characteristics of the sculptures and the works on paper? Can you recognize movements and gestures that may have been used in the creation of both the drawings and objects?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

BIOLOGY

Rosen's earliest works in the exhibition are ceramic plate and tile sculptures inspired by nature and the cycles of life and decay. Look closely at the tiles for details depicting ecosystems or plant and animal worlds. How are the tiles an example of a microcosm? In what ways do the tiles indicate the change of seasons? Do you see any other visual evidence of the life cycles in nature depicted in the tiles?

CHEMISTRY

How are ceramic materials, such as glaze and clay, physically and chemically altered by being fired in a kiln? What makes the change permanent? What are the new physical properties of the material? What do you think happens when wet and dry clay are fired together?

ART HISTORY

Pottery and ceramics have a long history as objects both for functional use and artistic expression. What are some examples of ceramic objects, historical and contemporary, that serve both functional and aesthetic or decorative purposes? How does Rosen's work relate to this history of making and ceramics as a decorative art?

LANGUAGE ARTS

Look at several of the work's titles that are words made up by the artist. What words do they sound like or appear to be a combination of? Is the title an onomatopoeia? What feelings, shapes, colors, and sounds does it evoke? How does it relate to the sculpture or drawing?