

## Master Ceramicist Kathy Butterly Is Focus of Tang Opener

Small, quirky works by a master ceramicist will be on view in *Opener 10: Kathy Butterly*, at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery Oct. 1 to Dec. 30, 2005.

The latest in the Tang's series of exhibitions introducing new work and artists to the region, *Opener 10* will showcase nearly a dozen of Butterly's porcelain and earthenware artworks, each packing a colorful, cartoony presence into the pint-sized vessels that ARTnews calls "exquisitely eccentric." The *New York Times* has described Butterly as "a genius of clay, stoneware, and glaze, a miniaturist of Fabergé refinement, and in her own way, one of the best artists of our time."

Butterly's works typically stand less than eight inches tall. Their forms incorporate bases suggestive of classical Asian art, giving them a tongue-in-cheek dignity. Diminutive they may be, but as one critic noted, they are "personality giants bursting with tremendous sculptural and textural complexity."

Butterly begins each piece by forming a sphere or cylinder in wet clay, then poking and pulling it until it folds, collapses, topples, or slumps in amusingly anthropomorphic ways. (*Mask*, made in 2003, is a head-shaped dome of gleaming yellow, sporting a purple nose held on with a cord.) The pieces are finished in a rich array of colors and textures, ranging from the gritty green folds of *Chinese Landscape* (2005) and the warty yellow *Nerfana* (1999) to the shiny pink curves of *Like Butter* (1997), which suggest either buttocks or a pair of pigs' trotters.

Many of her works are frankly "about flesh," Butterly says; *Belly Dancer* (2005), glazed in warm apricot and decked with ropes of beads, suggests the multiple folds of a dancer's belly. Others seem animated by emotion or attitude, such as *Fling* (2004), a dancing swirl of lavender-pink mambo-ruffles set off by rows of little white beads.

Butterly received an M.F.A. in 1990 from the University of California-Davis, where she studied with famed California Funk artist Robert Arneson. Her work has been widely shown across the U.S. and abroad in solo and group exhibitions--including the 2004 Carnegie International at the Carnegie Museum of Art--and appears in many major museum collections.

Public events accompanying the exhibition will include a reception from 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 29, which celebrates the museum's fifth anniversary along with its fall exhibitions. Butterly will deliver an artist lecture at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 27; and Berry will conduct a noon curator's tour on Thursday, Oct. 27. A catalogue will be available at the Tang's Museum Store.

*Opener 10: Kathy Butterly* is organized by Ian Berry, the Susan Rabinowitz Malloy '45 Curator at the Tang, in collaboration with the artist. The *Opener* series is sponsored in part by the New York State Council on the Arts, the Laurie Tisch Sussman Foundation, the Overbrook Foundation, and the Friends of the Tang.