

Assignment #1. ICONS & TRANSFORMATION

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This first assignment is difficult for the same reason that it is easy -- its blessing is its curse. That is because it is so open to interpretation. You will try to create meaning by the use of symbols and icons. This can be a very specific narrative, an abstract idea, or a transformation (like film stills) which happens through time (i.e. each object could be morphing slowly). You will deal with one of two very broad themes: 'objects as icons/symbols' and 'transformation'. Some people will choose to solve this problem very literally by creating specific, recognizable objects, while others will choose to create their own objects, or create objects which are collections of objects. Either is acceptable, so are variations in between.

You will make 4 to 6 objects. They should be between 6" and 8" in at least one direction, and 3 dimensional (in the round). They will be slipped, glazed, lustered or decaled to reach your desired effect. These pieces may have to be fired several times to get them right, or they may have to be remade.

(Hint: think about scale; micro and macro. Do not limit your vision to objects that are only the scale in which we are working. Start with a broad theme and idea and work out from there.)

Part I. Research & Development

Collect images. The web, library, magazine cut outs, polaroids, are all acceptable. Take pictures or draw objects, parts of objects, or ideas. Write down words that are connected to your idea. All of this should be done in your journal and should take up 2 to 4 pages. You should have at least 3 viable ideas for your collection of objects. When you have your ideas, you and I will discuss them, and you can start making your work. Note: I don't care what comes first, the idea, the sketches, or the images. You can start working on your project as soon as you have approval from me.

You should have already discussed your proposal with by by _____.

I am reachable by phone, email, or in my studio (located in the major's studio down the hall from the electives room).

Part II. Making

Part III. TBA (I usually tell them this part later)

Make something out of clay that will display the objects that you have made. This object is like a stand, plinth, pedestal, table, etc., except that it is actually part of the project itself...it is part of your sculpture. We can always put the final project on a pedestal, so don't bother making those. It should increase the overall meaning/idea of the pieces you are currently working on. This object might be more or less detailed, might present your objects in a linear fashion, or present them in some other way entirely. We will discuss this as you get closer to finishing your objects.

This piece will be bigger than your others obviously. I will demo how to make larger forms and how to use coils in a more detailed way.

Here are some definitions (from Webster's Dictionary) of 'icon' and 'symbol'.

icon. (n.) 1. a usually pictorial representation. 2. a conventional relic. a conventional religious image typically painted on a small wooden panel and used in the devotions of Eastern Christians 3. an object of uncritical devotion (idol) 4. emblem or symbol (the house became an *icon* of 1860's residential architecture) 5. a sign (as a word or graphic symbol) whose form suggests its meaning 6. a graphic symbol on a computer display screen that suggests the purpose of an available function.

symbol (n.) 1. an authoritative summary of faith or doctrine (creed) 2. something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance; *especially* a

visible sign of something invisible (e.g. the lion is a *symbol* of courage) 3. an arbitrary or conventional sign used in writing or printing relating to a particular field to represent operations, quantities, elements, relations, or qualities 4. an object or act representing something in the unconscious mind that has been repressed (e.g. phallic *symbol*) 5. an act, sound, or object having cultural significance and the capacity to excite or objectify a response.

Any ordinary object takes on a new set of meanings when you change its surroundings, or place it in a context in which it does not ordinarily belong. By taking 'known' objects and setting them in an environment where they are supposed to be considered, contemplated, and compared (i.e. a gallery, mantle, special cabinet, or any space set aside for contemplation); you create new meanings, new metaphors, and new narratives (stories).