

when one first sees rahul kumar's ceramics one is easily impressed by the contrast between large heavy-rimmed shallow platters and tall, most often slender, lidded vessels with elegant curves from wide shoulders down to narrow feet. but, it quickly becomes apparent that something has happened to all his forms: the surfaces have been altered and silhouettes interrupted. rahul actively manipulated the clay when it was still pliable by pushing with force into the surfaces and attaching irregular forms where handles would be expected to his traditionally thrown pieces. lids are changed too. they are charged with implied destructive forces and willful manipulations (rahul "forgot" to send me a plane-ticket, so i can only write about his forms without being able to see their presentation and installation, though i have seen all the pieces in his master of arts in art exhibition at the university of dallas).

contradiction is at play with rahul's pieces. at once one sees the desire to make visually pleasing and peacefully functional vessels (check how the lids fit...) as well as the need to present emotional and experimental ways to alter the established volumes.

a similar understanding can be had when examining rahul's use of glazes which cover all pieces. the selection of colors - brown, ocher, dull blue-greens is safely bound by tradition, but the application creates real and appreciated tension. glazes on the outer surface appear fluid, shiny, running in rivulets of liquidity up and down, in and out.

rahul successfully combined in his work and accepted its challenge, the traditional and the experimental, the rational and the emotional. safe handling and risk taking are integral to the harmonious presence of rahul's pieces, whose identical titles (harmonious discord #...) all refer to metaphorical meanings. rahul in the past talked about how he sees and intends to have similarities with his life and his work. in the pieces there is a possibly still missing resolution but a satisfying complexity and completeness.

one hopes that rahul's being and life will have the same.

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