

Jane Ford

Carol Haerer

Recent Work

14 Nov to 15 Dec 1978

Usdan Gallery Bennington College



Jane Ford

Palisades (First State)
Wind River Series
15'' high, 11'' wide, 3½'' deep

Introduction: Gene Baro

Jane Ford's pottery has complex appeal. The work declares itself immediately. The strong unfussy shapes, with their allusions to traditional ceramic forms, arrest the eye, establishing physical presence in a completely human scale. Then we notice the gradations of surface, but surface with a difference, surface made integral, indivisible. There's no sense of skin in these glazes, but of depth and of light, as if the clay had been made to register space and the shifting visual richness of the natural world. These works hold the mutable sensations of the pictorial to forms that seem timeless as mountains.

I talked with the artist about her work.

GB: What is it that attracted you to ceramics over painting or sculpture?

JF: For me, pottery and painting are very similar, similar in the movement of the medium. I have never been able to get close to sculpture. I think I like the structure of the tradition of potting, the intimacy of size and function. Within the context of the potting tradition, I can still handle three-dimensional form and volume, but also I can infuse my objects with elements of the painterly, through the use of color, for instance.

GB: You mention intimacy. Do you think of your forms as being necessarily limited in scale?

JF: Yes, I see the forms I'm making now as very definitely having human scale, scale of hand. I'm not interested in miniatures that are precious or in monuments that are grandiose. I think that I'm working in a scale that allows a certain vigor, a vitality, but not such as will overwhelm.

GB: Do you aim to project a particular kind of physical or visual experience with these pots? Do you have an audience in mind when you make them?

JF: Maybe you have to know something about art in order to get at the pots, but I don't really think I'm intending them for anyone in particular. The Japanese pottery tradition from Iga, Shino and Oribe were certainly strong influences in the beginning, and even though I have digressed from them, I think that the old sympathy is still at the core of my work.

GB: Can we get into the question of function?

JF: Certainly. The pots are functional, definitely, in two ways. Many of the vase forms I see as holding flowers. This is very important. But I think visual function is equally important: the pots are organized to be looked at.

GB: Obviously the work involves a structural but also an expressive interaction of form with surface. Will you comment?

JF: In doing these pieces I have a general direction; this includes a consideration of the surface texture and the color. I don't regard the glazes as coloring the surface, but as being absorbed into the form, wedded to it inseparably in the visual sense. The source of the feeling or expressiveness begins with the act of holding and containing. In feeling, I think I'm responding to the containment, the sense of relative tightness in the New England environment and psyche, so different from the expansiveness of the West. The work is a kind of equivalent or essentialization of my reaction to place, this place where I now live and work. I don't think I ever understood color until I came here. I don't mean the autumn leaves. I mean the bleak periods between the lushness of autumn and the winter, between winter and the spring. At first glance the landscape seems brown or grey then, but there are nuances of color. The landscape is truly alive with hues that seem part of the forms of things.

GB: Tell me something of your work method. Do you work from drawings or sketches or directly in the clay?

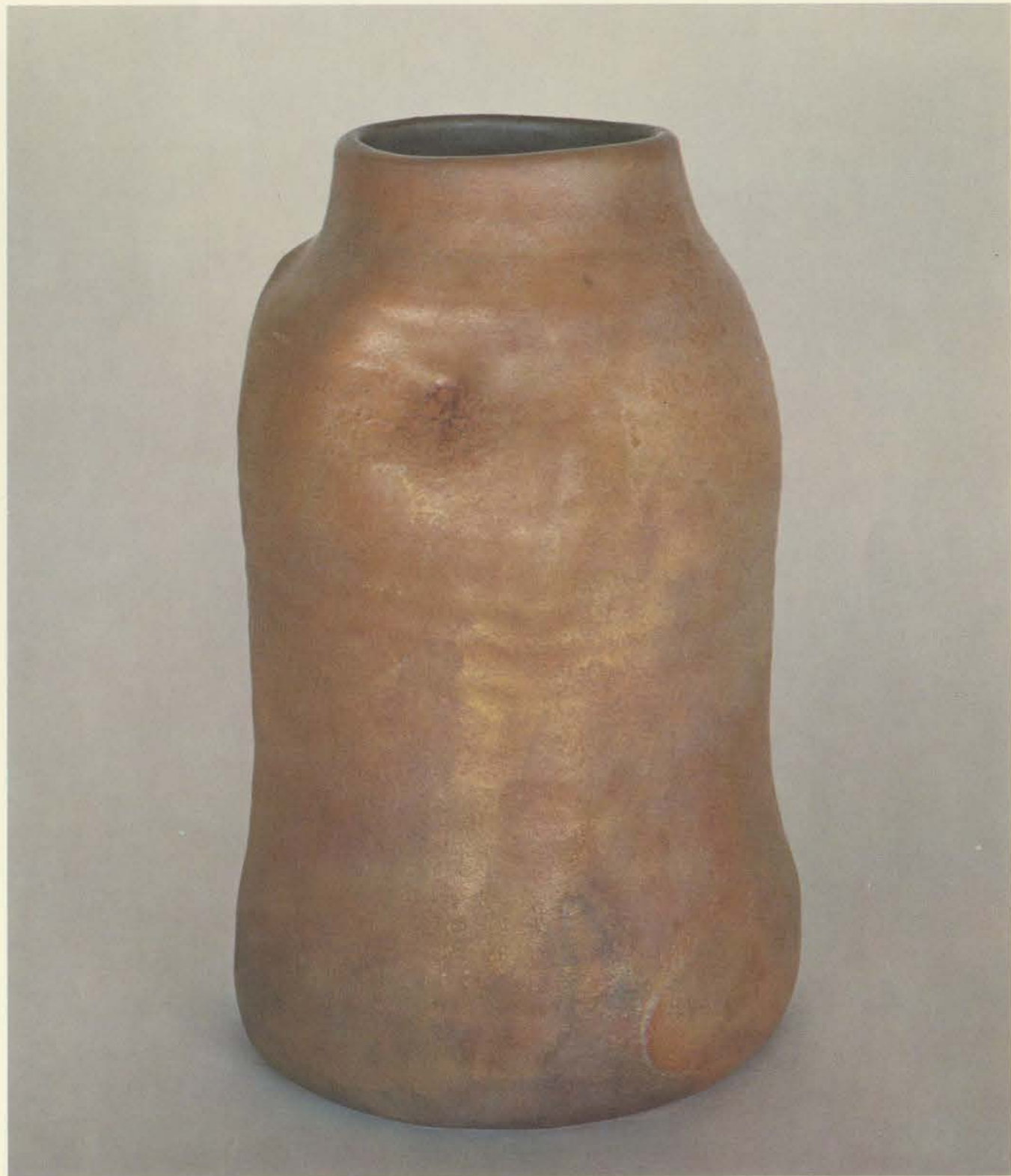
JF: I work directly. The development of my work has encouraged series. My current practise is to work in three basic forms, vase shapes, box shapes and plate shapes. Color series are independent. A color series might involve all three shapes.

GB: As to form, your pots are identifiable with tradition, but they present strong idiosyncrasy and personality when thought of as images. Are you conscious of image?

JF: Right now landscape is very prominent both in my color and in my manipulation of form. Some of this work will have painterly quality. Also there is a series of pots with flowers drawn into the form and glazed, which comes not from landscape but from two different traditions of drawing flowers on pots, the early Korean and the 19th century American.

Salado
East Mountain Series
11½" high, 6½" wide

Photo by Elizabeth Galt





Carol Haerer

Introduction: Gene Baro

Carol Haerer's recent works on paper and her drawings on canvas have an extraordinary directness. Their energy of hand pales the prescriptions of Action Painting and brings calligraphy into a fresh relationship to the issues of contemporary art. Beyond their immediacy, in which literal activity and metaphor are one, these works are meditative and indwelling. They deal with explicitness and illusion. The pulse of the color background is changed by the application of line; line itself shifts visibly as the viewer moves: the whole orchestration of forces and spaces is elegantly controlled or vigorously declared through a full range of feeling. And the relevance to fundamental perception is striking.

I talked with the artist about her work.

GB: Many people will be uncertain whether these works of yours are paintings or drawings. How do you regard them?

CH: I regard them very definitely as drawings. The element of calligraphy is dominant in them, and the flow of energy that continues with some drawing instrument, such as a pencil, gives a completely different sensation to me as the doer and yields a completely different visual effect.

GB: How would you characterize that visual effect?

CH: The sense is of a continuously evolving line, an energy and rhythm going on. With a paintbrush, there are definable brushstrokes, complete in themselves. I've chosen metallic pencils particularly because of the visual separation given by the glint or sheen of the mat surface, which is prepared with powdered pigments.

GB: That interests me. You prepare the surface. Is this invariable? Do you prepare the surface in a standard way?

CH: Not at all. The preparation of the surface is the very important beginning of each drawing. I usually start from a strong intuitive sensation involving a particular color, usually an earth color such as mars violet, burnt umber, Indian red, or a number of blacks and ochres. My drawing papers are prepared with numerous layers of these colors to make a rich deep surface that is absolutely mat. I use numerous colors so that there will be a color pulsation across the surface of the sheet and for a feeling of depth to set off the quality of the metallic line.

GB: How do you put the background colors down?

CH: I work on the floor, having mixed the powdered pigments with the smallest amount of mat medium that will give a bond. The color is applied to the paper with soft rollers or rags. My emphasis is upon preparing a surface; I avoid making the background into a painting. The surface is in the nature of a springboard; if my surface is resonant enough, the line applied subsequently will spring.

GB: Is it only after you have surfaced your paper — or have made your background, to put it that way — that you think of the calligraphy? Or have you the full drawing in mind from the beginning?

CH: The full drawing is never in mind until it's finished. I begin with some hunch as to the configuration, even a hint of the final image. However, this may change totally as the finished surface itself may strongly suggest another evolution of the line than I had originally imagined.

GB: What do you feel to be the source of your imagery?

CH: It comes from kinesthetic feeling, from musicality, from natural rhythms, from reflections on the lake, if you like, and from the calligraphic in art, the joy in line that we find in Persian miniatures and in the work of the pre-Renaissance painters, and from my study of the floor plans of Gothic cathedrals. That's where the frontality and symmetry come in. Of course, these things are not in the forefront of my consciousness when I'm drawing. I go to them in reflection.

GB: But your work is notable for ambiguity of surface, for visual instability, not a heavy part of these traditions, certainly, but clear enough in the natural world.

CH: I perceive the visual order of things as constantly shifting and changing. My drawings are about change and the feelings that accompany a sense of the fleeting and shifting. Move a few paces and the drawing changes, for you can't see the line as the same even with the slightest shift in viewing angle. The minutest shift of light will uncover new sensations.

Carol Haerer

1933 *Born in Salina, Kansas*
1950 *Doane College, Crete, Nebraska*
1951-54 *University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, BFA*
1954, 55 *Fulbright Scholarship, Paris*
1958 *University of California, Berkeley, California, MA*

Selected Exhibitions (One-woman)

1956 *Galerie Prismes, Paris, France*
1958 *Berkeley Gallery, Berkeley, California*
1963 *Gordon Gallery, New York, New York*
1968 *Long Island University, Brooklyn, New York*
1971 *Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, New York*
1973 *Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, New York*
1974 *Park-McCullough House Association, Bennington, Vermont*

(Group)

1955 *"Salon Des Realities Nouvelles," Paris, France*
1956 *"Americans in Europe," Downtown Gallery, New York, New York*
1958 *"San Francisco Annual," San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California*
1965 *"Six Women," Fischbach Gallery, New York, New York*
1969, 72 *Whitney Museum of American Art Annual, New York, New York*
1971 *"Lyrical Abstraction," Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut*
1972 *"Painting and Sculpture Today," Indianapolis Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana*
1974 *"New York Artists," Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon*
1977 *"Cole, Gutzeit, Haerer," Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York, New York*
1977 *"Critics' Choice," Syracuse University Museum, Syracuse, New York*
and Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York
1978 *"Six Sensibilities," Cornell University, Ithaca, New York*
1978 *"On the Edge of Color," Landmark Gallery, New York, New York*
1978 *"Perspectives '78, Works by Women," Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania*
1978 *"Recent Aquisitions," The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York*

Public Collections

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York
Oakland Art Museum, Oakland, California
University of Kansas Museum, Lawrence, Kansas
Sheldon Art Galleries, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska
Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas
United California Bank, Los Angeles, California
The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York

Herald
82" by 67"

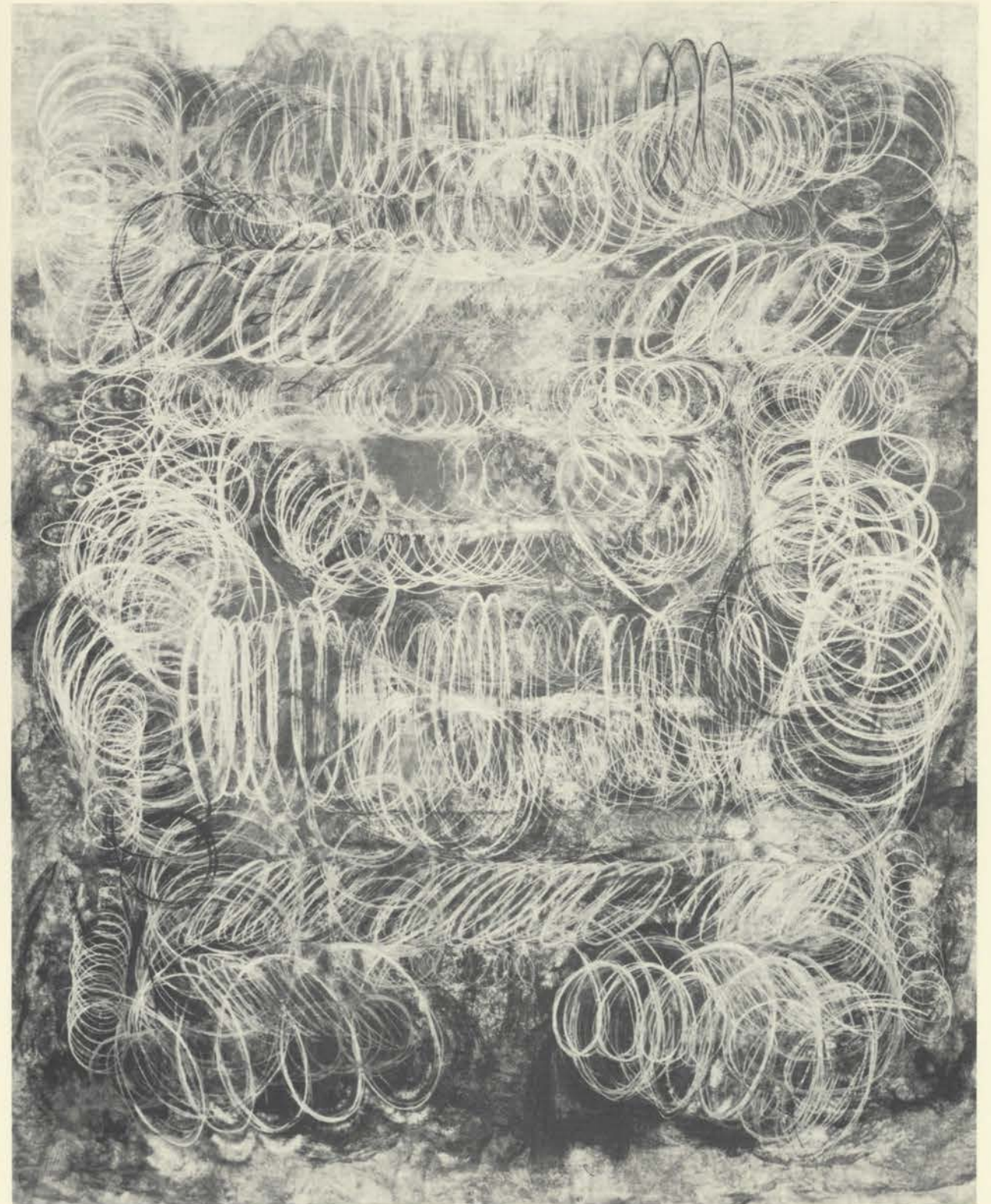


Photo by Elizabeth Galt

Helix
74" by 57"



