Jacqueline Lauren Stevens

1949–1956, ceramic and black

1981

1994–1998, had a residency at the Clay Studio, the Wheelwright Museum in Santa Fe, which introduced her work to a broader audience. She has also participated in several residencies and workshops throughout the country, including the LAMA Museum of Contemporary Native Art, the Museum of International Design in Germany, and the Museum of Art and Design in New York.

Stevens has been recognized for her sculptural pots and experimentation with pottery techniques as well as her work in bronze, metal, and painting. She has received numerous awards and grants for her work, including the James C. Mangimeli Grant for Art Education, the Midlands Community Foundation, Omaha Steaks, Omaha Public Schools, the Pottawattamie, County Community Foundation, Fred and Eve Simon Charitable Foundation, and Whitmore Charitable Trust.

Stevens primarily creates work for aesthetic purposes despite some of their resemblance to functional pottery used for storage or cooking. For Joslyn's Untitled Vessel (1997), the artist used clay vessels with flexible branches oflst, and even small beads to create a sense of texture and shape. In this example, the smooth ceramic surface is juxtaposed with the porous reservoirs of water on the vessel's upper portion. The artist created this vessel using her preferred method of coil building the ceramic portion and coating its surface smooth. While many of the artist's works are asymmetrical, this pot is perfectly symmetrical, a testament to the skills with which Stevens is able to manipulate the coil form without using a potter's wheel. The artist added a micaceous clay slip over the finished surface before firing the vessel. This type of slip (a liquid slurry of clay particles suspended in water used to coat the surface of an unfired object) contains a mineral, a material that produces a grayish green color on the surface of the pot once it is fired. Her use of coil building and micaceous clay reflects the Pueblo pottery techniques Hopi artist Clara Chase learned while in New Mexico. Chase, who worked at the University of New Mexico and taught there for over two decades, is known for her use of the micaceous clay slip to create vessels with an asymmetrical shape, using wood and tree bark, and beaded embroidery on bags and moccasins. The artist immediately adopts and combines the practices of other artists in her process, including adding a polished slip to the pot or painting designs onto its surface as well.

Discussion Questions

Why do you think Jacqueline Stevens created nonfunctional vessels instead of functional pottery?

Why does Stevens include non-clay materials in her work?

Do you think Untitled Vessel (1997) belongs to the “traditional” or “contemporary” pottery category at the Santa Fe Indian Market?

Share your rationale.

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JACQUELINE LAUREN STEVENS
Winnebago, b. 1949

UNTITLED VESSEL
1997, micaceous clay, wicker withes, and glass beads
overall: 10 1/4 in. high; 17 1/2 in. diameter (26.04 cm; 44.45 cm)

JOSLYN ART MUSEUM OMAHA, NEBRASKA
Commissioned and given in memory of Shirley Warden
by her fellow docents, 1998.19