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Joan F. Meyer

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CERAMIC SCULPTURE FOR THE WALL

Joan F. Meyer, Candidate for the Master of Fine Arts Degree in the College of Fine and Applied Arts of the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Submitted June 2nd, 1965

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INTRODUCTION

For my thesis project I have chosen to make ceramic sculpture for the wall. Perhaps, the incentive to this began when exploring the vast ruins of Ostia Antica outside of Rome where my son, Michael, and I picked up various stone tesserae. "Hundreds of these black and white tesserae had tumbled into the soil from where they had once formed intricate patterns on the walls.

I have always been interested in wall decoration and ways of making walls beautiful. There is a great deal to see and study when it comes to this subject of how walls have been made interesting in the past. A wall can be very handsome just by its construction alone. The early Mesopotamians showed us this way back in the third millennium with their very pleasing brick walls. They laid their bricks in alternating slanting courses which formed a herring-bone pattern, much like our early cobblestone houses right here in New York State.

A plain brick wall can also be beautiful as can a painted and unbroken surface. However, many walls are much enhanced by the addition of a point of interest. I became fully aware of this while wandering through the ancient cobblestone streets of Italy where one chances upon the most delightful breaks in walled surfaces. Suddenly a clay head
of a lion gazes down upon you which some past-century bricklayer has placed in the wall to please passers-by. Here and there a gate, a doorway, or passage is marked with a sculptured head, an animal, a cherub, a madonna, or a decorative faience tile. Many of these wall pieces were of fired clay with much of the glaze worn off through the ages but retaining nevertheless a certain amount of liveliness. Most of these delightful things seemed incorporated into the wall only as decoration although some may have signified a family name, much as a coat-of-arms does. Some had a large iron ring for tethering the reins of horses but, functional or not, they did most certainly add spark and interest to the wayfarer's journey.

No doubt, all these various things seen on walls were an influence in choosing a thesis project. They were the kind of thing I had in mind; a ceramic piece to enhance one part of a wall or niche. I wasn't interested in making a mural to cover all of a wall nor in building a wall itself.

Some of my wall pieces are flat tiles, others in high relief. Some have definite rectangular shape, others less confined. In making the sculpture I have tried to invent ways of using the clay as much as possible. By 'inventing' I mean finding different methods of using the clay to convey an idea and to keep the vitality of that idea alive. So many times the energy which went into the making is lost by the time the piece is fired and glazed. This is, therefore, one of my chief concerns: to capture and maintain this aliveness of the initial idea.
I consider a direct and spontaneous expressiveness in the use of clay most vital. Ceramic sculpture is not worthy of a wall space or niche if it is dead.
CHAPTER I

My aims in the beginning of the research work were only to find (or try out?) the many different ways clay can be used to express an idea. The important thing was to exploit the clay's plasticity in as many directions as possible and thus make some pleasing sculpture pieces. The sculptures were not made to serve any function necessarily. They were created only as ornaments; as amenities to enhance a space and to add interest to the environment.

I have kept a sort of log book of this first year's daily experiences with clay work. The log covers the work as a sea-farer writes his day-to-day account of procedures, events, wonders sighted, experience gained, progress made or total becalmment. In any log then of this first year's experiences with clay I find that the work divides naturally into groups according to the methods of construction which developed along the way. One piece or group of pieces led into an idea for the next so that the work is linked together in this way. The resulting chain of events thus formed the background for my choice of thesis project at the end.

Wheel-Thrown Sculpture.

One of my early projects began with the desire to make a giant sun-god for an outdoor setting. This idea came about from making a series of small and rather fat bottles. Some of these bottles were made by joining two shallow bowls together, then setting this on the wheel and throwing a spout form on it. (FIGURE 1.) Various ways were tried in making the
desired but flat bottle shape. After joining two soft clay bowls together, the sides could be flattened out or knocked concave with a board or pipe. The extra clay on the outsides, which had been the bottom on each bowl, was formed into finger patterns looking like radiations of the sun. These first bottles were rather small but nevertheless served as a beginning for the larger piece.

The larger sun (FIGURE 2) was carried out in much the same manner. Two large shallow bowls were made on the wheel and joined at the edges. Then since this big round form looked as though it should be up off the ground, a high base was added with thick slabs of clay. Instead of one pouring spout on the top of the sun, it seemed much more exciting to make horns. These were easily formed by rolling the clay into long conical shapes and hollowing them out in the leather-hard stage. The horns gave the sun-face a sort of mystical quality. The sun seems like the first harbinger of spring, especially when branches are placed in the four horns.

The wheel was used to shape most of the following forms for several reasons: throwing them results in defined shapes, freshness and spontaneity, since the clay must be worked while soft. The first were the beginnings for some larger wheel-thrown figures. They were various bottle forms which I visualized as becoming people. If thick clay was left at the bottom portion of a bottle, this (FIGURE 3) could be cut or pushed in various ways to form a more interesting base. The foot section of some of these bottles is divided and cut into divisions then each section pushed in such a way as to give the bottle three or four legs to stand on. To some of the bottle forms
other wheel-thrown pieces were added. One has arms made to look as though they were reaching out (FIGURE 4) by bending when still very soft clay. Most of these bottle forms are painted with colored slips or have parts dipped in glaze such as in The Mermaid. (FIGURE 5.) The pieces were more or less made for fun and were the impetus for exploring further with wheel-thrown shapes on a little larger scale.

FIGURE 6, which is called "Woman at the Finger Lakes Show" was put together from four separately thrown shapes. Only one arm was added as the other seems suggested in the form. It was also a question as to whether the form needed a head as the shape almost seemed complete without further addition. My idea was to suggest the form as being a figure without becoming overly anatomical. The form could have three legs or four arms or one arm. I feel that the sculpture should indicate the mood or action but something should be left to the viewer to imagine. The viewer can imagine the other arm or the face by the slightest indication. If every detail is completed by the artist, there is nothing left for the viewer to visualize and the piece of sculpture is not as exciting as it could be.

The "Two Women at the Cocktail Party" (FIGURE 7) is perhaps an example of this quality. Each of them has a face, two arms, and two legs. One figure wears a dress and the other even has blue jeans carefully delineated. This does not leave much to the viewer's imagination. The story is perhaps told too completely in this sculpture group.

Many more figures were made, some done very quickly and thus having a lively and spontaneous quality in the clay. (FIGURE 8): the man plays a
flute while the girl rests her weight on one hip. These were made in practically no time but somehow capture the mood or action.

At this point, in my investigations with wheel-thrown forms, it seemed necessary to try out other means of supporting these figures. The idea of two legs or a single heavy thrown base gives a rather stiff and rigid look and it is also rather tippy. FIGURE 9 shows the "Woman with a Sash" which was one way of solving this problem. With the rolling pin, a thin length of clay was rolled out and formed into a long sash. It is thicker at the base where it functions as the support.

For fresh ideas some clay sketches were made next of figures sitting in chairs. These seemed to be good ideas for small pieces of sculpture but not for larger. Just the small pieces seemed quite monumental (FIGURE 10). They were made quickly and show the lively and spontaneous nature of clay when worked directly. One of the chairs was simply a cylinder cut in half and turned to form the inverted U-shaped Louis-XIV-style chair.

The main difficulty with wheel-thrown forms is in their unwillingness to become anything other than the cylinder or sphere or cone shape that has just been thrown. As the pot revolves it is the same from every viewpoint. It can be pushed, pulled, poked and cajoled in all manner of ways but will still retain this original shape. This was the challenge then, to overcome in making thrown sculpture. Clay can be very stubborn, especially if given time to harden. The potter and the matador have much in common. They
both must exercise their skill in teasing and coaxing with utmost grace. The potter can make all variety of sketches and plans but until he has really played with the clay and tried inventing ways of using clay to express an idea he won't be successful in making lively sculpture. If the wheel-thrown parts are left to dry and then put together, the piece will look very mechanical and lifeless. Not until he has explored with the clay quite extensively can he arrive at some fresh ideas of how he will go about making an exciting piece. Many times just playing with the clay will bring forth a new idea. At other times a mistake can be profitable. Even dropping a pot is not such a disaster as it could point out a different direction for working.

Mold-formed Sculpture.

In looking for other means of building sculpture, the plaster mold seemed to be a direct method of forming a definite shape. Clay can be rolled flat, then pressed into the mold and left until firm before adding other pieces of clay to it. This method was used to form the rectangular shapes of the "Woman with the Basket of Flowers". (FIGURE 11) Two rectangular molded shapes were put one on the other in such a way as to be off-center. This formed the main part of a figure and it was placed on a substantial wheel-thrown base. For the head of this figure a soft bowl-shape was added. In order to keep the molded and thrown shapes together as a unit the surface was pounded and thus flattened with a wide paddle. The basket of flowers tucked under one arm was added as a light touch. This piece wasn't visualized for any one spot in particular but I think would function well near the
front door as an official doorman. She looks as though she is standing at attention waiting to greet whomever steps in.

Another piece made using this square molded shape was the "Mother with the Child on her Shoulder" (FIGURE 12). This piece was made very quickly one afternoon. The mold-shape was used upright this time and little thick coil pieces of clay were added for feet and arms and decoration to suggest folds. This piece is probably a good example of the sculpture having a certain vitality to it because of the clay being used freshly and directly.

Since quite some time had been spent on figure sculpture it was decided a change to the animal world would be welcome. The same square-molded form seemed very suitable to the heavy square shape of a cow. Thus began the piece seen in FIGURE 13, "The Cows". Only one cow was made at first but then it seemed more natural to have two cows. How often do you see one cow all alone in a pasture? Besides my first cow blew up in the kiln as I had forgotten a very important item: to leave an opening for the air to escape during the firing. The two cows formed a nice arrangement of related rectangles, one shape overlapping the other. These might be interesting against a flat wall background since they are more two-dimensional than three-dimensional. The contours are much stronger than the sculptural forms.

The next project developed from observing and drawing my cat at home. After much sketching I wondered how one could express in clay the grace of this feline. How could the spirit of the jungle animal be combined with the friendliness of the happy
house cat? Small sketches were made in clay. There grew quite a collection of them, all in various attitudes of sitting, walking, eating, just looking or licking their paws. From these studies, some larger cats were made. The first was visualized as walking upon a picket fence, or upon a tree branch. This would be of clay too and could serve as a base to support the cat. This seemed to be a good idea but the plans on the sketch pad were more readily made than the actual piece. It was hard to construct the legs of the cat and to make them look at all natural. The finished product (FIGURE 14) looks rather stiff-legged and forced. The clay also had become overworked, consequently lacks the freshness of a plastic material. What had been planned as a branch or a fence turned out to be a fish. This section was made quickly and directly, thus it is livelier than the piece it supports.

Not feeling at all pleased with this cat, another was started. The long narrow body of the "Tiger Cat with Whiskers", FIGURE 15, was shaped with two molded forms of clay used lengthwise. These were put together giving an elongated curved shape to the cat. The head was formed by pressing a thick piece of clay into a mortar. This heavy open bowl-shape made a good contrast to the larger closed form of the body. With the addition of eyes, nose, and whiskers, this cat developed a real personality. He looks quite pleased with himself as though he had just polished off a good dinner. The piece accomplishes what I had set out to show: the two sides of the cat's nature. It was fired in an oxidation kiln reaching a cone five (2156 degrees) temperature.
FIGURES 16 and 17 show my next pieces of sculpture. The small white stoneware goat was made first of wheel-thrown forms. Sections of the clay were cut away leaving the rib-cage suggested. This little goat stretches his neck as though wondering what he can chew up next. The piece was fired to cone 9 in a reduction atmosphere which slightly mellowed the white clay.

The larger goat was made from a thick slab of red stoneware clay rolled over great wads of newspaper to keep it from sagging. When the clay became firm, the legs, head and horns were added. The head is wedge-shaped like an old-fashioned iron. With the horns jutting forward I call him "That Stubborn Goat" (FIGURE 17). Light ochre slip was painted over parts of the red clay and Albany slip, which becomes a shiny brown at cone 5. The piece was fired at cone 5 in a slightly reduced kiln.

The last project made was a study of a "Young Girl Holding her Cat". A small sketch of this idea had been made while working on the preceding cat sculptures. My interest here was to make a piece of sculpture in the round. To make it really three-dimensional was the aim. FIGURES 18 and 19 show two different views of this piece. The back view with the girl's long braids, I like the better. The heavier shapes contrast with the long thin ones. Black and white slips were painted on the cat and ochre slip painted on the girl's hair. The piece was fired at cone 5 in a reduction kiln.
At the end of the first year's work, it was realized that some of the many ways of working with clay had been investigated, yet many directions had not even been touched.

Most of the first-year sculpture seemed two-dimensional rather than having three dimensions. Most of them did not lead the observer to want to walk around them. With a few exceptions they seemed complete from one viewpoint. Perhaps they would be seen with greatest advantage if placed on a wall. With thought, it was decided that this would be the direction to develop further. To make pieces of sculpture which would be designed for the wall in the first place. The work itself seemed to lead naturally to this conclusion.
CHAPTER II

SCULPTURE FOR THE WALL

The pieces of sculpture which comprise the body of thesis work in this second phase were designed for the wall.

To maintain a flexibility in approach, most of my reliefs were not intended for walls of specific locations. Some suggest one place more than another but if the pieces are at all pleasing, they should be agreeable in a number of settings.

As to subject matter, many of the wall sculptures have stories from the bible as their source. However, the subject matter is not as important to me as the way in which the idea is expressed in the clay.

In the first week I had not only struggles with what to make but I did not want to be restrained to wall "murals" in the strict sense. I wanted to make sculptural things on a small scale for only a part of a wall, things meant to be an interruption in the wall and which would enhance the setting.

My first two projects were made in a rather flat way by rolling the clay out to fit a large rectangular frame. The theme for these tiles was taken from the bible story of Daniel in the den of the lions. The lions were made with thicker clay to stand out in high relief from the rest of the tile. The lion was supposed to have been ferocious-looking but friendly toward Daniel as following the story "wherein the angel closed the jaws of the lion". The lion in FIGURE 20 looks almost too friendly. If he had
been more vigorously done in the clay and with stronger contrasts he may not appear so complacent. The angel subduing the lion is indicated in line with white glaze as is the title "But the Lion was Friendly". Yellow glaze was applied to emphasize the lion. Blue, black and white slips were used in the background. The piece was fired in an oxidation kiln at cone 5.

In the second tile (FIGURE 21) the lions look a little more wild. At any rate they convey a certain vitality by the texture of the clay. In this tile red iron and ochre slips were painted on the lions before a stoneware glaze was applied. Blue slip was painted in the background. They were then fired in a reduction kiln at cone 9. This resulted in the tiles becoming much too dark and much too shiny in places because of uneven reduction. The worst of these were fired again at a lower temperature and the glaze became more matt. One lion fragment took part in an over-fired kiln but came out vastly improved. The fusion of iron and ochre with the glaze had produced some very leonine effects.

The next small relief was also done by rolling the clay out into a flat slab. I wanted to try out the idea of combining wheel-thrown forms on this flat background. Various cylindrical and bottle shapes were thrown on the wheel, some large and some tiny. These were arranged to represent a family group, in this instance "The Fisherman's Family" (FIGURE 22). This was rather fun to try out. Before the piece had dried and with a second look, there seemed to be something further needed. The thrown parts came forward too sharply, they needed softening to blend with the background in some way. The solution came easily this time. A drawing board was pressed firmly down
upon the whole piece, distorting the thrown forms and making them one with the clay background.

More pieces were tried using wheel-thrown shapes in this manner but the first was the best.

The next wall idea was to have three slabs forming one picture much like a triptych. A thoroughly wedged hunk of clay, about the size of a brick was gently rolled into an oblong slab. Within the oblong shape, pieces of kiln brick and other blocky forms were pressed into the clay to leave an imprint. The imprints became shapes of people. One oblong looked like a person doing a jig; another, a woman with a child; the third, a man holding up a beam. (FIGURE 23.) These three are, perhaps, celebrating a barn raising. The two more simply-formed figures are probably the best as they are clearer to see. Using the plainest geometric shape to leave an imprint is most effective. The woman and child has more complicated forms and textures used to press into the clay and consequently is not as pleasing. White slip was poured into the indented shapes for emphasis and stronger contrast. The three slabs were then fired in a cone 5 reduction kiln making the clay a very nice smoky color. The shallow imprints could be made rather dazzling with the addition of melted colored glass. However, I like just the strong earthy quality of the dark clay and the white clay and the white slip without anything more added.

The next project undertaken was quite unsuccessful. The aim was to make a wall piece which would stand by itself. The idea began by taking large slabs of clay and fastening them at right angles to each other so that the piece would not need to be fastened to the wall. In a large version, it would be like a room
divider with something to see on both sides or a continuous story to be told. The subject matter here was the story of Noah. On one end Noah is shown in his yellow raincoat and 'sou'wester' hat, then we see the ark afloat with the dove bringing the olive branch. On the reverse side we see the last of the animals taking leave of the ark. At the opposite end the olive tree is shown complete with stuffed olives!

Something like this would be fine for a children's room or a Sunday-school room perhaps. The large fault with the whole thing is that it is too highly two-dimensional. The clay slabs to start with were only an inch in thickness and looked exactly like plywood. None of the relief parts added were thick enough. The biggest fault was that the subject matter became too important. The piece turned into an exercise of line and color more than with sculptured form. A few parts are plastically done such as the water and the waves and the olive tree. Colored slips were used extensively and a transparent glaze painted over some of these colors.

This project led to a dead end as far as developing the idea further. The whole thing would have needed construction on a larger scale, turning the project into one of wall structure rather than of wall decoration. Since my thesis did not include this direction the idea was abandoned.

At this point it seemed necessary to return to a more three-dimensional way of working. My aim to use the clay in a fresh and spontaneous way mustn't be forgotten either. The ensuing project was an animal made for a garden-wall niche. FIGURE 24 shows the "Lion on the Rooftile". It was visualized to have
really deep relief with pieces of clay coming further out from the wall than any I had made so far. To begin, the general shape of the lion was made by pressing clay into the plaster mold used so extensively the year before. Onto this rectangular form was added an open bowl shape of clay, then jutting outward from this was added a long nozzle-form for the nose. Since the lion seemed to suggest looking down from some height, a piece of clay was shaped into a roof tile for him to perch upon. He does look rather pleased and comfortable on his roost. Further embellishments were open circular pieces of clay.

The question of color and glaze became a larger problem than realized while making the piece. Since earthenware clay had been used, the piece needed only a low firing. The clay color becomes richer, however, at a higher temperature and the yellow glaze I settled on was also higher. Red iron slip was painted on the base, the roof-tile. Blue slip was poured on half of the face and eyes for greater contrast. There are more interesting ways of adding color other than following anatomical divisions (the hair yellow, the eyes blue). Glaze or slip can be poured on forming a defined area immediately from the direction the glaze is poured. Or the piece can be dipped into the colorant many different ways resulting in variations of the glaze according to the overlapping areas.

Unfortunately the many ways of glazing didn't occur until too late. The glaze or slip coloring should be well-thought-out while the piece is still in the head. The design should benefit from the glaze; the clay and the glaze complementing each other. The lion, in this case, was fired three times; the bisque firing, the first glaze firing and another glaze firing with a second application of glaze. To my dismay, the
lions still borders on anemia since the contrasts aren't quite strong enough between the clay and the glaze.

Another smaller-sized lion was made very quickly using the earthenware clay again. I wanted to see if a low-fire glaze was more suitable. This lion (FIGURE 25) looks very plastic. While the clay was soft little holes were pushed up from underneath. The lion was glazed directly from the bisque kiln. The bright blue eyes are the result of tiny pieces of glass melting in the same glaze firing. The mosaic background is filled in with various colored glaze tests.

The idea for the next wall piece was borrowed from the Mexican "Tree of Life" candelabra. In the Mexican tradition the tree is covered with an endless variety of things to hold one's attention. There are flowers, leaves, cherubs' faces and wings, all pressed out from little molds and painted gaily in bright colors. They are quite charming in the naive way they are mastered. I wanted to make my tree for the dining room and to make it in this same blithe-spirited fashion. My "Tree of Life" (FIGURE 26) was seen as a very broad tree with rough bark and gnarly branches, a tree with very strong roots gripping the earth, a tree full of energy before bursting into leaf.

Red stoneware clay was chosen for this project. The clay was used in heavy strips, twisted and turned, then pounded together to form the knotty-looking bark and limbs. The tree was planned, in the beginning, to be brightly painted with majolica glaze colors. However, in the bisque state, it seemed more tasteful to accent the textures with white slip. The slip was poured on, then washed off again, leaving just enough white to show up the tree bark. The clay became very
dark in a reduction atmosphere at cone 5 and the white slip used in this way was better than anticipated.

FIGURE 27 and 28 show two tile pictures made in much the same manner using earthenware clay. A clay background was rolled flat. Thick pieces were applied to this. The "Angel in the Orchard" (FIGURE 27) has strong light-and-dark patterns, from the thickness of the clay. In "The Wedding Feast" (FIGURE 28) the contrasts are in the colors alone, the tile surface being flat. The majolica colors used are quite vivid and are painted on in a bold way. This equals the fun of painting a picture in water color as it must be done freshly and rapidly. The clay, though, serves as a prop only since the clay's natural qualities haven't been revealed at all.

The wall reliefs made near the end of the second year were on a much larger scale. Preliminary sketches were made to actual size with thoughts of how the clay would be used and color handled. The subject matter of this relief (FIGURE 29) is taken from the story of "Christ and the Fishermen" on the Sea of Galilee.

To begin, the clay was thrown into a frame on the floor and packed down tightly, before cutting level with a wire. To facilitate handling and firing, the clay was cut into rectangular sections, some rather narrow and some almost square. Both red and white stoneware glazes are used with the addition of coarse grog for less shrinkage. It was planned to keep the relief rather flat, having the contrasts come from different textures. Some areas would be shiny like the water and have melted glass puddles of brilliant color. Other sections would be matt with only slip colors and the red or white clay used.
As the work progressed, I could see the piece would need more variety in the way clay was added on. Some shapes could be rather large and heavy and others fragile. Some pieces should be definite shapes and others left vague. The boat, the fish, and the waves were made to show definitely. The clouds, the net and partially the fishermen themselves, were not as precisely made. The emphasis being on the large catch rather than on the fishermen, who were told to cast their nets deeper.

I like the clouds at the top being flat pieces of clay torn apart rather than cut. They have an airy softness to them instead of the sharply defined edge had they been cut. Then some of the clouds (or fish) were of the extremely thin shavings of clay left when the wire harp was drawn across the surface. These pieces were flipped on lightly in much the same motion as skipping stones across the water. A light blue slip was poured around these later to make them show a bit more. These fragile pieces contrasted nicely with the heavy waves.

The fish and net areas called for more definite handling. A good many fish were cut out of clay and heaped on but this seemed too jumbled. A piece of wire fencing was pressed over this leaving a net-like imprint helping somewhat but still not solving the problem of confusion. I was becoming enmeshed in the snare. Finally, a thick piece of clay was rolled over the lower part covering up much of the confusion. The rolling pin was used as though a huge wave had swept over the section. This was an improvement. The pieces were then ready for the bisque fire.
Viewing the bisqued tiles from a distance, it was hoped that with glaze and colored slips the piece could be pulled together. The wave sections did not carry across strongly enough. The whole thing needed to be galvanized. The waves were painted various slip colors; green, blue, black and white. Some of these same colors were painted in the center to carry across the composition. Handfuls of blue or green glass was put into areas of the water and between the clouds. These were low-fired and came out quite vividly, especially the emerald green. The problem still remained, however, to tie the whole thing together. The top half was good, very light and fresh-looking. The bottom half needed darkening and perhaps more shiny, watery surfaces.

There is a point wherein a piece of work goes beyond what is originally planned. It becomes a different kind of piece with unforeseen problems. What to do with the existing piece now and how to improve its situation was the dilemma. Not much more time could be spent on the piece. The top half surpassed my expectations but the bottom half was lacking something. Perhaps working on something else would provide an answer.

In the interim before starting the last big wall relief, a sculpture for a garden wall niche was quickly made. This was a sheep (FIGURE 30) formed from a large slab of clay bent gently around a board. A wad of newspaper was stuffed inside until the clay became firm. To make a pattern of light and dark, little chunks of clay were cut and pulled out. A base was formed by using a wide strip of wet clay and bending it back and forth. It gives the impression of rippling water, as though the sheep walks on the water. The sheep
might go well in a church, not necessarily in the
sanctuary but in a niche outside or inside, the
sheep being the symbol of Christ's following.

"Life in the Woods" (FIGURE 31) was the idea for
my last project. Red stoneware clay was again used.
It was wedged with grog and stamped into a frame in
the same way as before. It was not cut up into smaller
sections until later. This tile project was planned
in much stronger relief and was to have small amounts
of intense color contrasting with the more earthly
slip colors. A small clay model was made to go by.
This seemed to make the larger piece progress quite
rapidly since any ideas could be first tried on the
smaller model. Large and shallow wheel-thrown pieces
were added for the leafy parts of trees. Rugged strips
of clay formed the tree trunks. Variety in the
texture came from pounding these on. Flowers and
leaves and ladybugs were added. White opaque glaze was
poured on the three large tree tops and the whole thing
was put into a cone 5 kiln. Later, majolica glaze
colors were painted on a few small sections and these
were refired at a lower temperature. I think this
relief turned out well. The large white sections
carry well against the dark woody textures. The
colors are rather nice and the trees look full of
energy. The piece was mounted in a plywood frame
with plaster. Handfuls of marble chips were added to
the plaster in the border for rough texture.
CONCLUSION

I have carried a number of basic ideas toward a number of conclusions and have striven to keep the methods inventive. The wall sculptures are considered successful only if they are original and enjoyable to see, if they have personality, and if they are fresh and new, and not dull and imitative. Some of the wall pieces achieve this and some fall short completely. There are many which fall in-between these two poles, having their good points but not quite making the grade, in my estimation.

I think I have already indicated which pieces I felt were a success, and which not so successful. Many directions of working were explored yet many ways of using clay remain for future development. Because of limited time, and changing interests, some of the goals set for myself were not reached. But then again in some instances they were surpassed.
TECHNICAL DATA

The technical data here refers to the thesis work of Chapter II only.
The clay body used most extensively for this work is a red stoneware clay made up of the following ingredients:

- Kentucky Special Ball Clay 100
- XX Sager Clay 100
- Cedar Heights Redart Clay 25
- Dalton Clay 25
- North American Fire Clay 25
- Bentonite 3
- Iron 0-6-14

The low-fire clay used where stated in the thesis is a standard Earthenware body which fires between cone 05 and 5. It is made up of the following:

- Cedar Heights Redart Clay 200
- Kentucky Special Ball Clay 25
- North American Fire Clay 50
- Bentonite 7

The colored slips most often used were red, blue, white, and black.

Red Stoneware Slip - Cone 5-9
- Rutile 45
- Red Iron 45
- Frit 3124 5
- Ball Clay 3
- Gum Arabic 2
Blue Slip for Stoneware - Cone 5 to 9.
- Rutile 80
- Cobalt Oxide 10
- Frit 3124 5
- Ball Clay 3
- Gum Arabic 2

Black Slip for Stoneware - Cone 5 to 9
- Cedar Heights Redart 80
- Copper Oxide 5
- Manganese Dioxide 5
- Red Iron Oxide 5
- Cobalt Oxide 2.5

White Slip - Cone 5 to 9.
- CH 3, Base
- Flint 55
- Bainbridge Feldspar 15
- Ball Clay 10
- Frit 3110 15
- Bentonite 6.5
- Opax 6.0

Glaze Recipes for Thesis Projects in Chapter II.
FIGURE 20, "But the Lion Was Friendly"
Iron Yellow Matt Glaze, Cone 5
- Frit 3191 34. grams
- Lithium Carbonate 5. grams
- Kaolin 39. grams
- Flint 20. grams
- Zinc Oxide 23. grams
- Tin Oxide 5. grams
- Black Copper Oxide .5 gram
- Red Iron Oxide 7. grams
FIGURE 24, "Lion on the Roof Tile"
Iron yellow matt glaze same as FIGURE 20 but fired in reduction kiln. Not much change.

FIGURE 25, "Lion with Mosaics"
Low-fire Iron Yellow Glaze, Cone 04.
- Frit P545 56. grams
- Gerstly 12. grams
- Zinc 7. grams
- Kaolin 15. grams
- Flint 12. grams
- Iron 3. grams

FIGURE 28, "The Wedding Feast"
Majolica White Base, Cone 04.
- Frit Gl4 1500 grams
- SnO2 300 grams
- Kaolin 900 grams
- CaCO3 300 grams

Majolica colors: each color must be ground in a mortar before painting over the bases.
- Yellow: equal parts base glaze and yellow #4659
- Brown: equal parts base glaze and Burnt Umber
- Green: to 50 grams of base glaze, 40 grams of copper carbonate.
- Blue: to 100 grams of base glaze, 50 grams of cobalt carbonate.
- Rose: equal parts of base glaze and Rose B.3913
- Purple: to 50 grams base glaze 15 cobalt carbonate, 25 burgundy.

FIGURE 29, "Christ and the Fishermen"
Puddle Glaze Base, Cone 04
- White Lead 25 grams
- Raw Borax 25 grams
24.

Whiting 12.5 grams
Kaolin 12.5 grams
Flint 25. grams
Pearl Ash 10.0 grams

This is a good base glaze to add colored glass pieces to. A handful of glass needs about a tablespoonful of dry base glaze. It can only be guessed at however, since some glass needs diluting more than others. The base glaze helps the glass flow and adhere to the clay. Very dark glass needs a larger amount of base glaze. Kiln-wash was first poured into the puddle areas to make the colors vivid.

FIGURE 30, "The Sheep"

Black metallic glaze, Cone 04 to 5
Frit P545 60 grams
Gerstly Borate 33 grams
Spodumene 87 grams
Kaolin 39 grams
Tin 15 grams
Cu CO₃ 10.5 grams
Gum Arabic 3. grams

FIGURE 31, "Life in the Woods"

Opaque White Matt Glaze, Cone 5
Frit 3191 34 grams
Li₂CO₃ 3 grams
ZnO 23 grams
Kaolin 39. grams
Flint 20. grams
Tin Oxide 5. grams
Transparent Glaze, Cone 5

Frit 658  80 grams
Kaolin  15 grams

Plaster Mounting for Tiles

4 parts of plaster to 1 part of glue. Weldwood Plastic Resin Assembly Glue was used in this case.

Before mixing the plaster it is a good idea to wet the board and frame and the top surface of the tiles too.

After the plaster is mixed it is poured into the frame. It should be spread quickly and evenly. The tiles must then be accurately placed working from one side to the other in an orderly fashion. The excess plaster must be wiped off directly and the pans washed immediately.