Candleholders in clay

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Candleholders in Clay

What is a candleholder? Anything which holds a candle or candles in an upright position, allowing them to burn can be termed a candleholder. There are candlesticks, candelabras, and chandeliers designed specifically for holding candles, but virtually anything from an empty wine bottle to an old carved bed post can function well for the same purpose. Realizing that there are very few requirements which must be met when designing a candleholder, the artist has an immense amount of freedom in their creation.

Since the first use of candles, there have been a multitude of different shapes created to hold them. Viewing the development of candleholders from their beginnings to those of modern day, there seem to have emerged some basic or traditional shapes from which most of the designs develop. Each country, each age, each artist, made and makes its own interpretation of these basic forms. The same basic shape made by different people or in different media will necessarily show its individuality.

With the idea of the candleholder in mind, the everyday objects of one's surroundings become inspirations for new designs. A book I examined, covering candleholders of metal design. Most of the designs evinced the development from more basic forms. Looking at any man-made object, I have always wondered: "From where did that method of
treatment a basic form come?" Or, in some cases, "Where did the form itself originate?". The pieces I like best, or which intrigue me the most, are those which make me ask both of the above-stated questions.

When I first began to work on designs that I hoped would express my concepts of the candleholder, I did not want to look at those that other people had already made. I thought that I might be too influenced by what I saw; but not having any clear picture in mind, I found it was necessary to look at others. There were a couple of candlesticks by Ginny Cartwright on display in the front showroom of the School for American Craftsmen, so I started looking there. Her candlesticks were made in the raku process and looked faithful to that approach. On one shape, the treatment of the legs looked reminiscent of those of the wooden candleholders I mentioned earlier. Maybe she too was shown the same book, but what she had liked about those candleholders she had used to fit her own concept of design. I tried to understand her feeling for the clay, which I admired, but I realized that it was not entirely my way of expression. Seeking my way, I did not want to be influenced by her candlesticks, or by anyone's else. I wanted to be influenced by myself alone, which was impossible, but that was what I wanted.

My first attempts at making "my" candleholders were conical shaped forms. (see photo #1) Viewing them now, they were as traditional as the candle itself. They looked more like chalices than candlesticks or, as one professor put it, "They look like bugles, see?", as he raised one of them to his lips. My thoughts on these conical shapes were to make variations in the size and shape of the tallow dish on the top of the basic cone: but my variations were not very varied, except for one squatty piece designed for a large candle.
To make the candlesticks, I first threw a cone and then flared the top to make the tallow dish. I intended to make them in one piece, but after completing a number of candlesticks of this type, I found I was unable to have enough clay after throwing the cone, from which to make a dish as large as I wanted. I finally began throwing the cones and the tallow dishes separately and then joining them. By doing this, I could make more variations in the shape and size of the piece, which had been my original intention. However, when joined, the finished product always remained two separate pieces joined together. I tried applying and cutting out designs to give a more complete quality to the pieces, but not working freely enough, the end result was rather stiff and uninteresting. One piece that I like better than most from this period, I made of porcelain with a large conical base and a hand-built tallow dish. I made the dish from thin wedges cut out of a roiled clay sheet which I then draped over a small bowl, covered with burlap to keep the clay from sticking. Overlapping each consecutive wedge, I covered the bottom of the bowl and then pressed the overlapping edges together. When the clay had stiffened sufficiently, I removed the bowl, leaving the clay dish. In joining the hand-built dish to the thrown cone, the result was not unlike my previous attempts: it looked like two separate pieces joined together, but this time it seemed to enhance the piece rather than to detract, with the dish acting as a foil for the base. In the finishing of the candlestick, I used a soft white glaze over the entire surface with some underpainting of cobalt carbonate which bled through. (see photo #3) Unfortunately, the cobalt blue was too strong so that the finished piece is not as pleasing as if it had been glazed all white or with one small area of intense blue.

By the time I had made the porcelain candlestick, I
found I was losing interest in making cones and the whole idea of conical shapes. I stopped making them entirely and started on a completely different approach.

Having been working on the wheel throwing the cones, I decided to switch to making hand-built candleholders. I had found a conch shell which had been broken on top, revealing the spiral passageway of its interior. The spiral of the inside and the sweeping quality of the shell as the inside became the outside, excited me. I began to try to duplicate this feeling in clay, hoping to expand this for use as a candleholder.

To make the shell-like candleholders, I first rolled out a slab of clay: I then cut a diagonal line through the semi-rectangular slab, forming a sort of triangle. I then began rolling up the clay, starting at the larger end of the triangular slab and rolling toward the smaller end. I kept the rolls along the uncut side very tight but flared the rolls on the diagonal cut, forming a cone. Standing the cone on the tightly rolled end, I flared the cut edge even more, almost folding it back on itself until it touched the table to form another point of contact and support. (see photo #4) The finished product had the spiral and sweep of the conch which I had been inspired by, but it was little more than a reinterpretation of the conch in clay. There were limitations in the way I chose to make these forms in that a slab much larger than a foot high and as long as was needed to make the spiral, tended to be very difficult to support during the construction. There was also the problem of the clay cracking and breaking when I rolled it so tightly. I tried using different clays to alleviate this problem. The more plastic ones were better, but they too had a tendency to crack when rolled in such a compact manner.
The outcome of this phase of endeavor appears to be more like sketches for larger pieces. Recreating these same shapes on a larger scale would present still another problem, even if they were to be made out of coils or by some other technique such as slab construction. The small base of these forms, without another support, would be very unstable. Their instability was evident even in the smaller ones I made. The way the small spiral of these "shells" holds the candle at the top as the rest of the form spirals down and around it still seems to be a good approach to be investigated. But like the cones, I became tired of making more or less the same thing over and over and never going much beyond my original concept.

At this time I found myself relying so heavily on the first idea that came to mind, that I could not let the clay speak to me. The cones and shell forms both remain as possibilities, but they have to be more freely executed than the way in which I approached them. In making the last shell-inspired candlestick, I almost recreated in larger proportions the conch shell with which I started out. I really enjoyed making this piece, even knowing that I was doing little more than copying. I had to look more closely at the truly fantastic way that the conch was formed. The snail makes a beautifully designed mobile home for himself so it was rather presumptuous of me to expect that I could improve upon the original when I followed the design so literally.

At another impasse in finding my own way of expression, I stopped making the shell forms and once again set about looking for a new approach that would be my approach.

Not seeming to be able to work directly in the clay to find my designs, I began trying to think out my designs on paper. At first the drawings were nearly
as fruitless as were the actual objects. The advantage however, of drawing, was that I could see more readily the possibilities for variation that I could not see when working directly in the clay. There existed for me the problem of the drawings and the clay working against each other. While drawing, I found it difficult to visualize what I was drawing in terms of clay; and having completed a drawing, I tended to execute it too literally. Because of this problem, I didn't enjoy this period as much as I might have and wasn't as productive as I knew I could be.

The design that came next from my drawing was a candlestick which had at its basis a concept that Frans Wildenhain once talked about, that of cutting a cylinder or bottle in two, and then joining the two halves again in an offset position. This allows one to look at the in-and-out of the form at the same time. I was particularly interested in the point where the inside becomes the outside. By joining the two halves at a point so that a small eye shaped hole is formed between them, a candle can be placed in the hole. I made one plain candlestick like this with just the two halves joined together. It did not seem enough so in the next piece, I varied the design by throwing a separate tallow dish and joining this on top. (see photo #5) The thrown dish on top of the rhythmic base worked fairly well, I thought. When I glazed this piece I used a slip glaze which was made from a red earthenware clay that I had found in Vermont; but I neglected to leave some of the body showing on the candle dish as I had at the base so that the separateness of the two forms is more noticeable than I would have liked. I did not go much further with the halved cylinder idea because I could not fully see this as my expression. I still had a
limited approach to what had been shown me. This summer, I developed this shape further; I joined the halved cylinders together forming an in-and-out patterned wall. The first candleabra made in this way was composed of six halves. All the bases were even, but because of their differences in height, the candle holes which were formed at their joining points were at different levels. Extending this idea a little further, I made cylinders of more varied heights and then joined them at different levels, using the shorter halves as bridges between the larger forms. This broke through the rather solidness of the first solution and allowed one to see through the form. Because I had other newer ideas that I wanted to express this summer, I did not go further with this idea, but it does have many possibilities for other arrangements and ways of cutting and dividing the cylinder. I had found it was necessary to cut more than a half cylinder in order to form a large enough opening at the joining points in which to place a candle. I like the feeling of a whole shape being cut apart and then pieced together in a new way. It is almost what the cubists did in painting.

With the problem of finding a new direction, I again turned to drawing. Though it still was a struggle to do them, again I came up with some new ideas for more candleholders. Having been working both on and off the wheel, I now decided to combine the two methods of working and make some of the shapes I had drawn. At the time, I thought my drawings looked like something I had seen before; however, I did not have a clear idea in mind while I was drawing them. This time they had the appearance of some kind of growth protruding from a stem or trunk. In particular, they reminded me of the
cancerous growths on the sides of trees and plants. Having been hunting in the woods during the fall and undoubtedly having seen some trees with this kind of growth, I may indirectly have some to make designs that resembled what I had seen. In doing these drawings, I was trying to be more fluid in my approach; but my freedom did not come from within me, and my drawings though loose, were rather nebulous. I made many drawings which I was unable to interpret in the clay; but there were some which showed promise.

To reproduce the drawings in clay, I began by making a tubular shape out of a thin slab. On top of the tube I placed one, two, three, or more balls which were thrown on the wheel. In order to make the balls, I first threw a round bottle shape and then closed off the neck, trapping the air inside. With a wooden rib I pushed the form around to create the shape I desired. Making the balls was the fun part of these candleholders. Once again I went into production, making balls this time, but I was more careful this time not to lose sight of what I was doing. Taking the desired number of balls, I placed them on top of the leather hard cylinder. The balls were of various degrees of hardness. When I put another shorter tube of clay on top of them to serve as the candleholder, the softer balls would deform, giving somewhat the cancerous effect that I had wanted. (see photo #6) These candlesticks had a growthy quality which I liked, but they were kind of sad looking things. Aside from their phallic resemblance which was pointed out to me on several occasions, they did not seem to have the kind of life that I wanted in my candlestick. After a time I gave up making this kind of shape; they too became repetitious.

I was able however, to go on from this first idea and began to attach the tubular shapes with their
growths to bases made of large closed forms which I either beat out of shape to resemble a rock, or left just as I threw them. Of the number of candlesticks I made in this way, one piece worked out better than most. (see photo #7) This piece came closest to being what I had in mind; a long tubular neck growing out of a large bulbous base. Using a sort white matte cone 9 glaze which I had developed, I poured it over the top of the piece and allowed it to flow freely to the bottom. My desire was to enhance the gentle upward bend of this shape. As the piece itself had a free feeling, I wanted to treat the glazing in a similar manner by leaving some of the body unglazed and showing the liquid quality of glaze.

Whereas these candleholders had seemed like cancerous growths to me earlier, they now reminded me of trees which sometimes grasp large rocks with their roots and appear to grow from them. I tried adding strips and coils of clay to the rock-like base, to give the feeling of the tree's roots clinging to the rock, but these additions remained only additions. I guess that I tried to interpret too literally. I stopped making these shapes because they did not seem to be progressing. Again, there are many afterthoughts on how I might go further with the idea of the hand-built tubes emerging from the closed, thrown form, but at that time I could go no further.

Rather than abandoning completely the previous idea as I had done before, I tried to retain some of the elements I thought had worked well, the bulbous closed forms and the long bending necks, and tried to expand on these.

In drawing my next designs, I had in mind the flowing, upward reaching nature of some form of sea coral that grows from its rock-like base. The first designs were little more than quick sketches of my
thoughts because I wanted to leave a lot of the designing to the actual making of the candleholders. For the first piece, having the coral-inspired feeling, I simply made a closed ball for the base (rock), then threw long, thin, neck-like shapes and freely attached them to the top of the ball. After the necks had stiffened a little, I bent them into back and forth positions so the total effect was something like the gentle undulation of the coral's tectacles as they move with the underwater currents. (see photo #8) I was now able to use the wheel as a tool for making shapes that could be put together in new ways to create other forms. Following this direction further, I threw two more large spheres and added the wavy, thrown necks to each of them. On seeing this, Frans suggested that the necks, tentacles, and roots might come out of the bottom of the sphere as well as the top. Acting on his suggestion, I inverted one of the closed forms with its necks and then set the other on top of it. The tentacles of the inverted sphere were soft enough so that with some careful bending they evenly supported the upper ball with its thrown necks. They lost the coral-like appearance, but now the whole piece looked more like some strange creature with wild "necks" and "arms", two bulbous bodies, and peculiar long bendy legs. (see photo #9) Seen as an animal, a whole new series of ideas developed for candleabras. It was enjoyable making drawings of these armed creatures because there were so many different ways to make them: short legs, long legs, one long neck, fat arms and legs, skinny arms and legs, big body, small body, one, two, three bodies.

Using a different method of attaching the thrown necks to the body, I first let them stiffen to the point where when bent, they would hold their bend and I could better determine their positioning on the sphere
before joining them. After the weld had partially hardened, I cleaned away the excess clay at the joint to give the appearance that the arms and legs actually grew out of the central form. I did run into difficulty visualizing the appearance of the end product when I was working on the sphere that was to be the legs and lower body of the animal because I was always working upside down attaching the necks to what would later be the bottom of the lower sphere. I usually tried to put the heavier necks on the bottom since they supported the weight, but it was not really until the actual construction that I decided which of my stockpile of necks and spheres were going on the top and which were going on the bottom. I generally had most of the pieces I was going to use at the stiffened stage so that I could make the whole candleabra at one time. Even though I was pleased with the candleabras that I made in this way, it became a much slower process than I would have liked to make one of these animals and a lot of the spontaneity was lost in their execution. I made a number of candleabras with arms and legs; one that I made from white raku clay and which I left unglazed seemed to be the most successful of the two-bodied type. (see photo #10) I decided to change the forms and use a square for the body in place of the round form. This changed the over-all appearance of the piece and opened the door for the use of other geometric shapes and combinations of shapes. The thrown, growthy necks and legs emerging from and passing through the hard geometric form gave the feeling for which I had been looking. Rather than glaze this piece, I chose to paint it with bright acrylic colors, faintly reminiscent of some Mexican candleabras I had seen. (see photo #11, and page 31)

As I made more and more of the animal type candleabras, I became increasingly aware of their function
as ceremonial or festive accessories. Actually, the use of candles is not an everyday occurrence in most places, so even the more simple candlesticks and candleabras had a certain special nature about them. Most of the pieces I made were designed to stand on the floor or on a low table in a place of prominence. Candle use today is less concerned with the amount of light they produce than with the atmospheric quality they present for special occasions. Until I had started making the animal candleabras, the size of most of my pieces was not particularly large, but now having a clearer understanding of their "special" qualities, I began to work in considerably large proportions.

Another thought I had for developing the cube shape further was to cut the hollow block in two, slide the two halves in opposite directions along the same plane, and then to fill in the open areas on either side with another slab to make the shape appear as though it were a solid block that had been cut in two and then offset. I made a candleabra this summer with this design in mind. Unlike the earlier animals, I accented the way I joined the necks to the body, leaving a coil of clay fingered around the joint of the legs. The junction of arms and necks to the body remained clean, as before. I glazed the finished piece by painting it with bright, glassy cone 08 glazes of yellow, green, blue, and red, and trying to contrast the rigidity of the form with a free use of glaze. (see photo #12) One other leftover thought from the earlier period which I completed this summer, was the result of a suggestion by Frans that the thrown arms and legs could grow through a thick slab of clay in much the same way that I had them growing through the spheres and cubes. Executing the slab candleabra, I completed it by dipping the ends of the necks in an
opaque yellow cone 04 glaze and the legs in a mottled green 04. glaze, and painting the edge of the slab with black slip. (see photo #13) Though I am not unpleased with the end results, I realize now that it would have been better for me to express all the thoughts of the earlier period at that time, so that it would not have been necessary to retrace my steps to finish something left undone. It became extremely difficult to be working on past thoughts when my mind was very action oriented to making new designs.

Before I took a leave of absence during the spring quarter, I made more variations of the armed forms by using combinations of the spherical and rectangular shapes with the ever present arms and legs. In the making of one of these pieces, I used a long cylinder of clay, approximately 4 inches in diameter, to join a small block with necks and arms at the top, to a large cube at the bottom with legs. I liked the piece, but unfortunately it was broken. One of my last animals or what was to be another animal, was made from a long rectangular block and two spheres. (see photo #14) I attached the two spheres, one on top of the other to a smaller end of the rectangular block to make the body of the piece. I then cut a circle in the top sphere and inverted the cut out piece, replacing it in its hole to form a shallow dish. With legs growing out of the upright rectangle and arms coming out of the sphere as well as little flame-like coils of clay springing out of the inverted top, the whole candleabra looked a great deal like a symbolic man of many arms with flames rising from the top of his head.

Attracted by the idea of a symbolic form and not having made a candleabra from wheel thrown and hand-built pieces for a long time that did not have the
attached arms and legs, I decided to make a piece composed just of two basic geometric shapes, a round form and a rectangular form. (see photo #15) The rounded form became more oval than round in one dimension, but it seemed to enhance the piece. I built the rectangle of slabs and the flattened sphere was formed of two bowls joined together at their lips. Having placed the sphere on top of the rectangle, I was tempted to add some of my thrown necks but I wanted to do something different without the thrown necks for candleholders so I made three small boxes which I arranged with one in the middle of the top of the ovoid and one on either side. Glazing this, I splashed Rhodes 23 Albany slip glaze on both of the flatter sides of the sphere, to give the appearance that the glaze originated from the center of the round and stretched around it. I made two more of these "symbolic" forms, but using the thrown necks again for the candleholders. One was made by attaching two long necks one on either side of the sphere and placing a smaller neck on top between the two. I chose to paint this piece using an angular pattern of black, yellow, and orange on the rectangular base, and dripping the bright orange from the tops of the three necks, which like the sphere, were also painted black. The finished piece looks a lot like a symbolic bull. The last candleabra had the bull-like horns of the second piece, but no horn in the center. Rather, I attached a long neck which bent upward to one side of the rectangular base and another to the opposite side, which bent downward. These acted as the phallus and tail of the bull. Unfortunately, this piece too was broken. (see drawing P. 15)
During my leave of absence, I did not touch clay nor think too closely about candleholders for almost three months. I spent a lot of time looking at spring and the new awakening that I saw and wanted in myself. I made some drawings of buds and flowers that seemed to be possibilities for candleabra designs but mostly, I looked. I tried writing some of my thesis, but each page was a drudging recall of all the seemingly blind alleys which I had pursued in the fall. I find it hard even now to write about the past because my thoughts about candlesticks are in the present. But I guess it is good to look back and re-evaluate; only in that way does the past fit in with the present, allowing one to move on toward the future.

It took me a little time after three months of absence, to reorient myself with the clay and my surroundings. I think I made the job of reorientation even more difficult by starting off with the left over thoughts from other earlier approaches. It was like having to relive other times which I would rather not have relived. At the same time, however, I felt those approaches had to be carried out because they had been worthwhile ideas when I had thought of them; if I had left them uncompleted, I might not have been able to go forward with my new ideas.

At the same time I was making these "older pieces", I tried to make something new. I was still wrestling with drawing out my ideas, but ideas for the candleholders began to flow more freely. Whenever I had a thought for a new design, I would make a quick sketch.

This summer I wanted to work with thick slabs cut-outs. Not having any clear idea in mind and feeling that I would respond to cutting up a slab, I began.
I soon realized that I was not getting the proper response from the slab cut-outs. I ended by cutting my first slab into blocks of various shapes and sizes and then drawing symbols on the flat surfaces or attaching designs cut out of thinner slabs. I also cut designs out of the blocks themselves. I put holes in some of the blocks to hold candles and when all arranged, they had the appearance of a small city. After my first set-back with cutting the slabs, I held off trying this method again until I had completed my leftover designs.

Returning to a previous idea for candleholders, I started rolling out large thin slabs of clay. I then wrapped and joined the slabs around pieces of newspaper-covered pipe to form a tube of clay. I had used this technique before when I was trying to make a candlestick by the simplest and fastest method possible. I was making the animal forms at that time and this was a relief from the work it took to make a good animal candleabra. I merely joined the clay tube to a square or circle cut from another slab of clay, sometimes stacking one slab on top of another to form the base of the candlestick. I then cut two or three inches off the top of the tube, laid a smaller slab over the base section, and replaced the cut off portion. (see photo #16) I tried making one candleholder in this way using many more slabs between sections of the tube, but I found that the ones that were made from three or four pieces were the most satisfying.

This summer I made a large number of clay pipes of various diameters. I stored them in the damp box and made more every so often. When I decided to make some candlesticks from these pipes, some of them were already quite hard, but the recently made ones were soft. Putting the stiffer tubes together in a cluster with staggered heights and bases, I then wrapped them
together with a coil of clay in much the same way that reed pipe of pan are joined together. (see photo #17) I bent one of the softer tubes into a "V" shape and set it on a larger-diameter upright tube to form a candleabra. (see photo #18) I decided to leave the clustered tubes unglazed, but I did glaze the candleabra. I dipped the two ends of the bent tube and the bottom of the base in a cone 04 mottled green glaze, leaving the rest the color of the red earthenware body. I made a candlestick like those earlier with a tube and two square slabs for the base and tallow dish. The most simple of all the candleholders I made in this way was made from one slightly tapered tube and filling in the top. (see photo #19) I did not begin to touch upon all of the ways one might arrange and connect the tubes, but there do seem to be a goodly number of possibilities.

Having made some progress with getting out some new designs using the clay tubes, I resolved to try working with the slab designs again. By this time, I had begun to make little "mind drawings" of faces and figures. As the days progressed I did more and more drawings. The more I drew, the more I enjoyed it and the better I began to understand now the line created positive and negative space and how that which was positive could become negative and vice-versa. I liked making the drawings and I thought to do similar drawings on slabs of clay and then cut out one of the forms. Trying this approach worked out to my satisfaction except for some alterations in size and overhang of the arms. It was also necessary to make a foot on either side of the slab cut-out in order that it would stand. Looking a little too much like the cut-out that it was, I decided to bevel the edges of half of each side. This I felt changed the space
some and made the piece more sculptural. (see photo #20) This first symbolic man candleabra was faintly reminiscent of the feeling of some Indian sculpture and designs I had seen in Mexico the summer before. When I came back to school from Mexico in the fall, I had thought that all the beautiful Indian sculpture, architecture, and pottery would have had an effect on my work, but just the opposite seemed to be the case until this summer, almost exactly one year later.

Having made the first slab symbolic candleabra, I tried another approach with the cut slabs. Ever since I made the first animal candleabras, I had felt freer to make more sculptural pieces that functioned both as sculpture and as candleabras. Thinking of the candleabra in terms of sculpture also allowed for more freedom with design than I felt in the earlier pieces. Now with the slab technique, I was able to translate my drawings into clay with a few additions.

The second candleabra I made of slab was reminiscent of earlier leg and arm shapes, only using the cut-out slabs and joining their flat surfaces together have a new feeling. Joining the arms and legs on all sides of the central slab made the piece definitely three-dimensional, and it still had some of the symbolic quality of the first piece.

At the same time that I was making the slab cut-outs, I had been working on a much larger piece out of slabs. The basic design of the piece was again the result of an earlier discussion with Frans when I was making the sphere and rectangle candleabras. He suggested that rather than a rectangle as a base for the sphere, the shape below should have a slant or a curve in it to lead one up and around the sphere on top. Cutting out the shapes from one slab, then adding side walls all around the edges, and finally putting another slab on top, the same size as the
bottom, I was able to make the shapes that look to have been cut out of one very thick slab. The base slab had a curve in it which was the same curve as that of the round disk I put on top. To break the space, I left a circular hole in the center of the disk and hollowed out a niche where it was possible to put one candle. (see drawing P. 39) The whole piece looked like a monumental symbol of some kind. The flat surface looked like a good place to try out some of my newly found drawing skills. I had already done some drawings on the side of the disk, but these were only mildly interesting in comparison to the more intricate designs I now drew on the other side. These later designs had some of the character of Mayan Indian stone drawings and carvings. Thoroughly enjoying drawing designs on the clay, I decided to make another symbolic slab figure. Unlike the first one, I left much more surface on which to draw. The design for this piece came almost directly from a drawing of a woman I had made. After cutting out the basic design from one thick slab, I added two small slabs to one side to form the breasts and serve as candleholders. Since one side was a woman and the slab would not stand on its own, I made the other side a man, using his phallus as the other support for the piece. On the woman side I drew a face and designs that were similar in feeling to the drawing I had already done on paper. After I finished with the drawings I filled them in with black slip. (see photo #21) I left the male side of the piece plain until after it was fired, at which time I painted a face and designs on it with bright acrylic colors. I wanted to show the two different ways one could paint and design on the clay. The woman side was done with clay products and shows the strong contrast that is possible with the black slip design set against the buff colored clay.
The male side presented a good flat surface on which to try out the possibilities of very brightly colored designs, which are only possible with some kind of paint.

It was only after having made these pieces that I decided to look at some books on Mexican Indian art, feeling that I was being strongly influenced by the things I had seen in Mexico the year before. Up until this time, I had been unable to give these impressions a means to express themselves in my work. Among the books that I looked in for a better understanding of the design and execution of drawings and form, was a book in my own library, *Pre-Columbian Ceramics* by Henri Lehman. The book covers all the ceramic art of the pre-Columbian Indians. Here was the handbook of how the Indian potters who were so fluid and inventive with their use of the clay, worked in their craft. I had only to look and I could see how something was made or decorated.

There was a fantastic symbolic god (see page 36) on the cover of the Lehman book which apparently was a censor vase for offerings. The way the flowing strips, coils, and sheets of clay were attached to the central pot core, building up the form, really excited me and seemed a good way to go further with the slab technique. The result of having looked at this book and a book on the cave paintings of the Chumash Indians for an evening, and having really studied closely the way the designs were executed, was that I made a candlestick in much the same manner that the cover sculpture was made. (see photo #22) I cut slabs which became long noses; other slabs became the eyes and ears. I used coils to make outlines and finally drew on some of the flat, applied surfaces or on the central clay cylinder, to which all of the other pieces
were attached. What this piece was to look like when finished, evolved during the making. I had the basic guide of the Mayan censor, but I departed from this almost as soon as I started making the piece. I did refer back to the photograph while making the candleholder to check technique that I wanted to incorporate in my design, but the over-all appearance of four different faces emerging from the sides of the central clay cylinder, came from a step by step building from one applied form to the next. I liked working directly in the clay with only a very sketchy idea of what the finished product was going to look like. This method allowed for a great deal of spontaneity in design, and direct reaction to the clay. Though the completed piece is clearly influenced by the Mayan censor, I think I was able to express my own thoughts and create something new. I had planned to finish this piece by painting it in much the same way that the censor was painted; but after firing it, I have decided, at least for now, to leave the buff colored clay unpainted.

Still working with designs to be executed in slabs and having suffered the explosion in the kiln of my large disk candlestick, I made one more candleabra that appeared to have been cut from one very thick slab. (see photo #23) I used much thinner slabs this time for the two faces and side walls, fearing another explosion due to trapped moisture. The design for this piece came from some drawings I did after I had looked at the afore-mentioned book on Chumash Indian cave paintings. (see photo #24) The particular cave paintings which inspired my design were amorphic depictions of either men or animals. Making my own amorphic designs, one particular seemed suited for use as a candleholder. I cut a hole through
the center of the form to break up the solidness of
the piece and put holes in the "toes" and "fingers"
of the "man" to hold candles. Except for the inside
of the perforative hole which is painted with black
slip, the rest of the candleabra is left the buff
color of the clay.

Left with some unused slabs, I made a quick can-
dleabra from a triangular slab. I bent the slab
slightly and put four holes for candles on the in-
clined side. (see photo #25) To complete the piece,
I drew a formal design on one side and a "mind" draw-
ing on the other, painting both with black slip. The
finished candleholder is unglazed with the black slip
decoration set against the buff clay. There are ob-
vviously many other possibilities for cutting out a
basic shape from a slab and then decorating it with
drawn and painted designs, but here as in many of my
last designs, I was only trying to show a direction
in which I could go.

My final piece of the summer was really an ex-
tension of the "censor" candleabra I had done the
week before. This time, however, I did not want to
work from a guide or sketch, but rather to work di-
rectly in the clay and to form the design completely
as I went along. I began by making a large cylinder
of clay which was to be the central core on which to
build. I first used cut-out slabs of clay to set
down the basic form of the piece as I had done in mak-
ing the "censor"; but I soon changed to building up
the form directly with the clay. Not using the slab
cut-outs resulted in a much freer flowing design, but
at times there was the problem that it flowed too
freely and I began to lose control. I had no idea in
mind for this candleabra other than I wanted to make
something in clay with a freedom that was similar to
that of the drawings I was doing. As I added clay,
cut out areas, and scraped away from the form, faces began to emerge. Now that the piece began to show a direction, I worked to further articulate the faces and to have one face flow into another around the many sides of the form. To provide better definitions of the shapes and faces I saw in the piece, I added coils and lumps of clay for eyes and teeth and finally painted on it with black slip, either further defining the shapes or creating new ones. The piece was fired to cone 5, giving the red earthenware clay a deep brown color not dissimilar from the color of the wet clay when I made the piece.

The above-mentioned piece, like many of my last candleholders, was a "one of its kind", and only shows a direction that I might later follow. I feel it was good to take the chance of working directly in the clay without reference to any drawing, but the end product does show some lack of control and I feel it would be better to work from at least a very rough sketch just for a guide line. I did include in this last candleabra most of the ideas which I hope to expand upon in my later work; that of drawing, painting, and applying to a sculptural surface. I did not use bright glaze or acrylics in this last piece, but these also seem to be good possibilities for the decoration and definition of sculptural pieces.
Glazes

When I first began on this project, my first pieces seemed to better lend themselves for glazing than did my later work. As I became more sculptural in my approach to candleholders, other methods of finishing a piece seemed more possible, particularly painting on the form with slip decoration and incising the surface with designs. This summer, for the first time, I tried painting on my candleholders with acrylic polymer paints. I have always liked combinations of very bright colors and using the acrylic polymer paints, I was able to experiment with a full range of colors. The leg and arm candleabras seemed well suited for brightly painted decoration as did the surface of the "symbolic" slab figures.

The intense color of acrylic polymer paints is just not possible to obtain with glaze; but using bright, glassy, cone 08 lead bearing glazes, I had a good palette with which to work. These glazes tend to be quite fluid so I was able to run one glaze over another to get combinations of primary colors. The intensity of cone 04 oxidation glazes also provided the colors with which I preferred to glaze my more sculptural candleabras.

Following are the formulas for glazes that I either used or developed for glazing my pieces.

1. potash 1.5 a semi opaque cone 9 reduction glaze with soda ash 1.5 areas of white crystal carbonate .44 development dolomite 6.6 (see photo #1) kaolin 4.0 flint 7.0
2. Albany slip 60.0
   cornwall stone 25.0
   red iron oxide 5.0
   whiting 10.0
   Rhodes 23- a shiny, deep brown-black cone 9 reduction glaze with green speckles; glaze varies in color from red when applied thinly, to green and black when the application is thick.

3. kaolin 25.0
   flint 30.0
   Tenn. #5 15.0
   nepheline syenite 30.0
   petalite 30.0
   dolomite 10.0
   soft matte white cone 9 or 10 porcelain glaze
   (see photo #3)

4. Vt. earthenware clay 3.0
   frit 3191 1.0
   a dull opaque red brown glaze fired in cone 9 reduction
   (see photo #4)

5. Vt. earthenware clay 3.0
   neph 8.0
   flint 1.5
   cone 9 reduction; clear, glassy, pale green glaze having a tendency to craze where applied thickly
   (see photo #5)

6. Vt. earthenware clay 3.0
   gerstley borate 2.0
   flint 1.0
   a cone 9 reduction glaze tending to be very dark brown where the application is thick and red brown when applied thinly
   (see photo #5)

7. cornwall stone 19.3
   dolomite 2.1
   barium carbonate 18.0
   magnesium carbonate .7
   spodumene 1.9
   kaolin 18.0
   flint 4.5
   cone 9 reduction matte white glaze which tends to crawl when applied very thickly
   (see photo #7)
8. Vt. earthenware
- clay 3.0
- frit P25 5.0
cone 9 reduction red clay brown glaze, turning green where applied thickly

9. red lead
- silica 15.0
- gum arabic 1%
- Epsom salts 1%
- cobalt oxide .5% ----
- lead chromate 1% ----
- black copper oxide 3% ----
- red lead 85.0
- silica 15.0
- gum arabic 1%
- Epsom salts 1%
- cobalt oxide .5% ----
- lead chromate 1% ----
- black copper oxide 3% ----
- a bright clear cone 08 oxidation glaze tending to be very fluid (see photo #12 and 14)

10. red lead
- potassium bichromate 14.0
- soda ash 7.0
- kaolin 26.0
- flint 54.0
- red lead 200.0
- potassium bichromate 14.0
- soda ash 7.0
- kaolin 26.0
- flint 54.0
- bright opaque red cone 08 oxidation glaze (see photos #12 and 14)

11. frit P545
- gerstley borate 12.0
- zinc oxide 7.0
- kaolin 15.0
- flint 12.0
- frit P545 56.0
- gerstley borate 12.0
- zinc oxide 7.0
- kaolin 15.0
- flint 12.0
- a soft opaque yellow-tan cone 04 oxidation glaze (see photo #13)

12. frit 626
- frit 3191 17.0
- lithium carbonate 15.0
- kaolin 29.0
- flint 17.0
- frit 626 19.0
- frit 3191 17.0
- lithium carbonate 15.0
- kaolin 29.0
- flint 17.0
- a sugary mottled green opaque cone 04 glaze becoming deep blue-green over black slip (see photos #13 and 18)

10. red lead
- Potter's Companion: A Guide to the Materials and Methods of Modern Ceramics, by Paul J. Dachsel, reproduced with permission from the publisher.
13. frit G23  40.0  cone 04 oxidation
frit 3191  10.0  metallic green glaze
strontium  8.0  having the tendency
carbonate  8.0  to be slightly fluid
zinc oxide  8.0  (see photo #15)
kaolin  3.0  
flint  25.0  
ultrox  10.0  
lithium  1.0  
carbonate  6.5 
copper oxide  6.5 

Clays

1. Red earthenware
   Cedar Heights Redart  200
   Kentucky Special ball clay  50
   Jordan  25
   NAFC  50
   Bentonite  7

2. SAC stoneware
   Kentucky Special  100
   XX Sagger  100
   NAFC  25
   Redart  50
   Bentonite  3
   Red iron oxide  2%

3. Val Cushing's Stoneware
   Goldart  30
   AP Green  20
   Kentucky special  30
   EPK  5
   Cedar Heights Redart  8
   Buckingham Spar  5
   Flint  5
   Red iron  2%

4. White Raku Body
   Jordan  50
   Goldart  50
   Kentucky Special  25
   Bainbridge Spar  10
   Flint  10
   Fine grog  35
   Bentonite  5

   Basically SAC earthenware with more ball clay for better plasticity

   Without the addition of iron, produces a light buff body:

   Bisque at cone 04 to 1 and glaze at cone 010 to 08
1. cone 9 reduction mat glaze
2. Rhodes 23 Albany slip glaze
3. White porcelain glaze with cobalt carbonate under-painting bleeding through
All three pieces are variations of a glaze made from red earthenware clay found in Vt. and fired in cone 9 reduction.
7. off-white soft matte cone 9 reduction glaze
8. cone 9 reduction variation using red earthenware Vermont clay
9. glossy acrylic polymar paints
above- unglazed white raku clay
below- same as above glazed with bright acrylic polymar paints
10. unglazed white
raku clay fired
to cone 5
11. acrylic polymar paints
12. bright fluid
cone 08 oxidation
lead bearing glazes
13. cone 04 oxidation
yellow tan on top
and mottled green
on bottom over
red earthenware
clay

14. glossy cone 08
oxidation lead
bearing glazes

15. cone 9 reduction
Rhodes 23 Albany
slip glaze
15. cone 9 reduction slip glaze
17. unglazed red earthenware
18. mottled green cone 04 oxidation glaze with black slip underpainting
19. metallic green cone 04 oxidation glaze over red earthenware clay
20. black slip on buff stoneware fired to cone 5
21. black slip decoration on buff stoneware
22. unglazed buff stoneware
23. cutting design for number 24 from a thick slab
24. unglazed buff stoneware with black slip in penetrating hole
25.

un glazed buff stoneware
with black slip decoration

26.

un glazed red earthenware
fired to cone 5 with black slip decoration
Bibliography

Grant, Campbell; *The Rock Paintings of the Chumash*, University of California Press, Berkley and Los Angeles, 1965.