

# WORLD SCULPTURE NEWS

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Australian Ceramics \* Reviews





the robe of the senator. This optical illusion made with copper and steel is unique.

The pièce de résistance is *Michael & J'lo*, made with wood and iron. It reminds one of Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* (c.1508–1512) on the Sistine Chapel's ceiling. Here Khambatta recreates the lyrical quality of the painting; the sensuous flow through the sculpture that is exciting.

*Strangers in the Street* has an exuberance and energy of the three strangers in brass in different postures leaping in the air. The sculptor places them between three wedges of wood, showing the spirit of his subject and complete control of his medium.

Khambatta explores the man/woman relationship with great sensitivity in carved wood in *Full Connectivity*. He captures the poetry and atmosphere of the lovers, through beautifully carved bodies, as they appear to be completely lost in each other.

His appetite for experimentation is clear in *Salva Door*. It is his abstract tribute to Salvador Dali, whom Khambatta has always revered. The blue door takes the form of Dali's body and face as Dali's persona comes alive through the piercing eyes and curled whiskers. Khambatta cleverly drapes Dali's famous clock for his hair. It is completed with metal legs and arms.

*Let's Go Party Tonight*—steel and iron—is full of *joie*



Arzan Khambatta, *Michael & J'lo*, carved wood and iron, 33 x 11 x 32 inches. All images: Courtesy of Art & Soul Gallery, Mumbai.

*de vivre*. The contrast of the metals is a visual treat, infusing great excitement through the movement of the dancing legs. There is a collective movement of several legs in the air like a Can-can performance. In this unique vision he shows his uninhibited zest for life by adding vital rhythm.

Khambatta is well known for his love of horses, which are wild, pensive, and ready to race. The horses' manes are treated in a special way to give diverse appearances. They are made in iron, wood, and scrap. In *The Mane Men* the horse is fashioned in wood while the manes are little men, made in iron, seen jumping and fighting.

For Khambatta making sculpture is a spirited and dynamic act of engaging with different media. Initially he applied his brilliance to making

a variety of textures by welding together scrap materials to make work that he called "sculptures." Khambatta has gained mastery of his technique as he turns raw materials into unique creatures.

Uma Prakash

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## THE UNITED STATES

### Atlanta, Georgia

#### Amy Pleasant at Whitespace Gallery

Amy Pleasant's elegant, spare sculptures, paintings, and drawings reverberate with echoes both from the past and from the Modernist tradition: the restraint of a Japanese Zen-

inspired dry garden, the progressive abstraction of Matisse's celebrated *Backs*, Brancusi's *The Kiss*. Yet, perhaps the most telling parallel to Pleasant's work is Gertrude Stein's literary style, which rejected narrative and plot in favor of what has been termed a "spatial" manner, identifying characters by pre-conscious habits of movement and speech, aiming at what she called "a continuous presence." Borrowing from Edmund Wilson, one might say that Pleasant's esthetic "impulse," if you will, seems closest to Stein's "echolalic incantations." Pleasant describes her work as "writing a letter on canvas," and even the title of her show suggests a literary analogy, *Writing Pictures*.

Two sculptures fashioned from smooth slabs of fired clay are central to the first gallery. Painted white, *Torso 3* (all works except two, 2017) shows only a single cut indicating the space between an arm and the chest, together with dark circles for nipples, hinting at the nourishing forces of the female breast. Joined at a right angle, the slabs, when seen obliquely, cast a shadow on one side, calling to mind the familiar *yin/yang* symbol. Painted black, *Reclining Torso* (2016), itself trilateral, shows a sloping curvaceous form leaning backwards on an elbow bent against the surface at a sharp right angle. A less regular triangular opening sug-



Above from left: Arzan Khambatta, *Let's Go Party Tonight*, steel and iron, 36 x 25 x 35 in. Arzan Khambatta, *The Mane Men*, steel and wood, 58 x 35 x 76 in. Arzan Khambatta, *Strangers in the Street*, 2008, iron and wood, 45 x 43 x 7 in.



gests the space between the body and the arm.

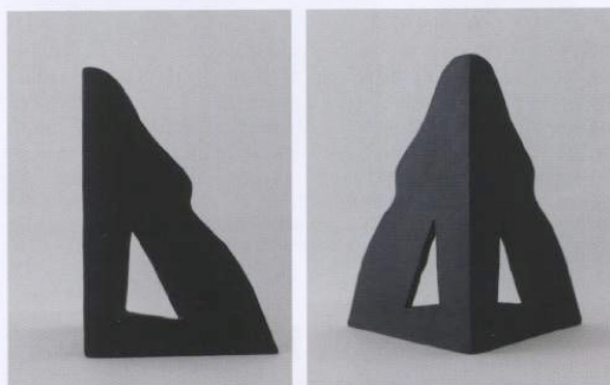
Images on the walls complement the sculptures. The four forms of an oil painting, *Untitled (Heads)* (2016), show on the upper left a shadowy bust in profile, hair tousled, a round for an eye. To the right, a black silhouette leans slightly to the side. Below a more abstracted profile in gray contrasts with a tubular shape in white: a syncopated kind of abstraction in line and in hue, calling attention to the head as the site of intelligence, power, and spiritual values, as opposed to the body which is generally associated with material concerns. Similarly spare are the ink and gouache drawings. *Collection (Busts)* shows dark silhouettes of truncated headless torsos without arms, some in profile; others frontal. In *Untitled (Arms)*, the torsos in gray and in black, though headless, display appendages in a variety of positions.

Contrasting sculptures are also focal to the second gallery. Made from slabs of clay painted black and white, *Head #20* features reiterated undulant lines, inspired by the waving coiffures of Greek sculptures, the lack of facial features calling to mind imaginatively—and therefore more forcefully—the serene beauties of the Classical face. *Head #22* is even more abstracted: irregular rounded slabs of white joined at an angle.

Complementing the sculptures, banners painted in acrylic on canvas with grommets call attention to other members of the body. *Walking, Running, Marching ... II* offers silhouettes of feet, 28 in all: bent at the ball of the foot, leaning back on the heel, flat on the ground. These images bespeak human movement and its attendant emotions, expressed in the words of the full title but in the exhibition omitted and indicated by an ellipsis: “escaping, fleeing, hoping, leaving, burying, reviving,” and on and on, analogous to the stream-of-consciousness technique in literature. The foot, moreover, bears significant symbolism in most



Installation view of Amy Pleasant's exhibition *Writing Pictures* at Whitespace Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia, 2017.



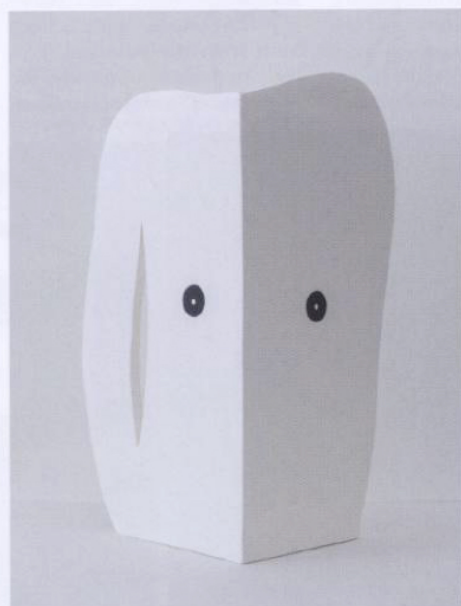
Amy Pleasant, *Reclining Torso*, 2016, fired and painted clay, 15 ¼ x 10 ½ x 10 ¾ x ½ inches. Images: Courtesy of the Artist and Whitespace Gallery.

cultures. The human foot, according to Jean Chevalier on page 399 of *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* (1966), “... leaves its mark upon the

paths which, for good or ill, are chosen by the exercise of free will. Conversely, the foot bears the marks of the path taken, for good or ill.”

Dorothy Joiner

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Amy Pleasant, *Torso 3*, 2017, fired and painted clay, 17 ½ x 9 x 8 ¾ inches.



Amy Pleasant, *Head #22*, 2017, fired and painted clay, 12 x 11 x 9 ½ x ¼ inches.