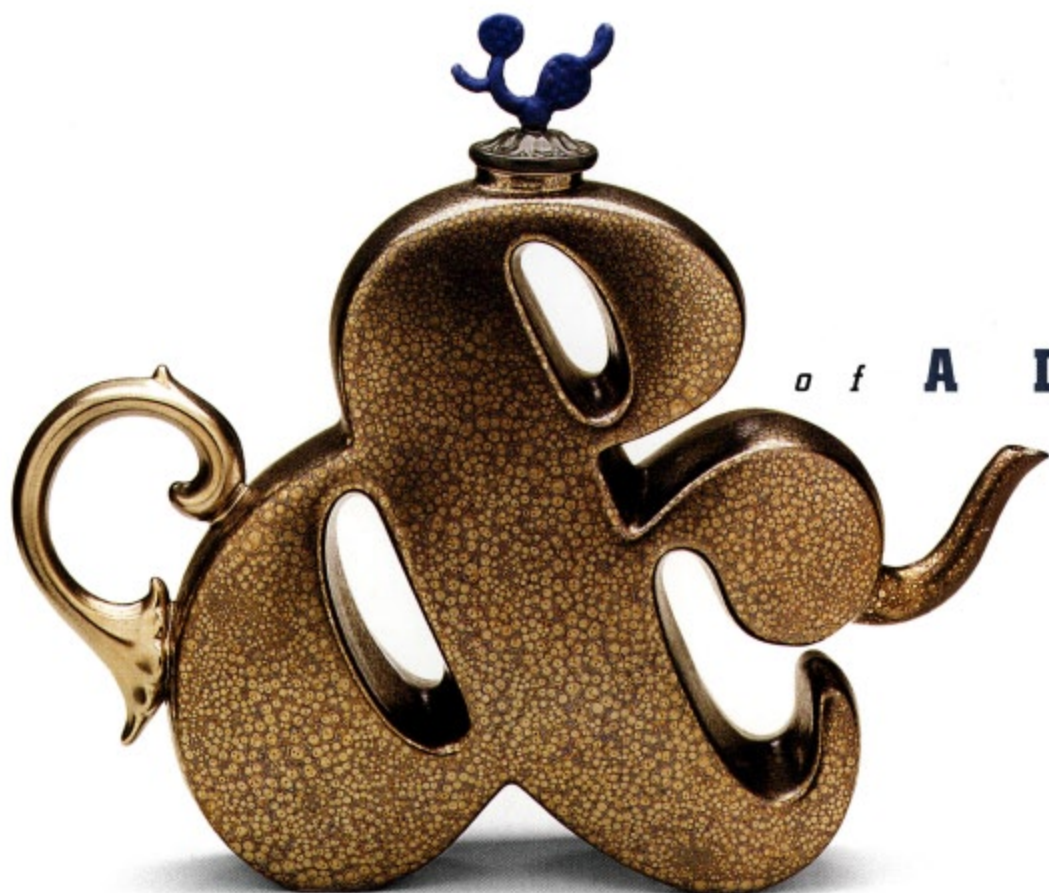


at the **MUSEUM**

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The of ADRIAN

Saxe's work has been influenced by Los Angeles' social and artistic trends as well as European and Asian traditions. For example, Saxe created a series of works reinterpreting conventional Chinese winepots that were made in the shape of the character fu, symbol of good fortune and happiness. In *Untitled Ewer (Fatface Bold Ampersand)* (left), one of a series

of ampersand ewers, Saxe celebrates the "and." He covers the mold-made body in an exquisitely variegated gold and platinum craquelure glaze, and bases the handle on an 18th-century French (Manufacture de Sèvres) model. By topping off his graphically correct ampersand with an incongruous cactus placed amid acanthus leaves, Saxe adds an unexpected element of humor.

In 1981, Saxe started a series of torso-shaped jars, playing on the fact that vessels have long been described in terms of the human figure—neck, shoulder, body, and foot—and extending these implicit anthropomorphic qualities. *Untitled Covered Jar on Stand with Antelope Finial (Lucas)* (right), is a blue-glazed torso form on a stepped raku base, topped with two blue gears and an antelope peering over its shoulder. Saxe uses antelopes recurrently, as an expressive symbol of nature's wild energy. Conversely, gears depict mechanical energy. On the front and back of the jar are dominoes arranged in patterns that refer to the quadrilles of Lucas, a French 19th-

Above: Adrian Saxe (American, b. 1943), **Untitled Ewer (Fatface Bold Ampersand)**, 1989, Collection of T. Dixon Long

Right: Adrian Saxe (American, b. 1943), **Untitled Covered Jar on Stand with Antelope Finial (Lucas)**, 1983, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Leslie A. Ball, Greenwich, Connecticut

CLAY OBJECTS WERE FIRST INTENDED purely for functional use. Over time, however, artists began to experiment with extraneous decoration, even molding objects out of precious materials, until clay vessels reached the status of art. As art, clay need not serve a specific function; its sole purpose can be to display beauty, form, and unusual perceptions of the world about us.

Los Angeles native Adrian Saxe (b. 1943), in turn, raised clay art to an even higher level. His works are spiced with humor, whimsy, and allusions to popular culture that sometimes push the boundaries of accepted good taste. By combining ceramics tradition with nuances from a larger art world, Saxe transforms mere vessels into sculpture.

From November 11 to January 30, 92 of the artist's most engaging and innovative sculptures will be on display on the second level of the Hammer Building. *The Clay Art of Adrian Saxe*, which was organized by the Museum, marks the first major retrospective exhibition of the artist's work.

Clay Art SAXE

century mathematician. With this pot, Saxe both teases and baffles.

Also not to be missed in the exhibition are pieces of a slightly outrageous nature: Saxe's punning raku pieces, *Pie-ku* (1967) and *Cow Pie: Udderly Delicious* (1968); and the black porcelain with platinum lusters *ELVIS/LIVES (Garniture)* (1990).

Adrian Saxe, who is professor of design at UCLA, continues to delight audiences with new, always innovative works.

The Clay Art of Adrian Saxe will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue with essays by exhibition curator Martha Drexler Lynn, the Museum's associate curator of decorative arts, and Jim Collins, associate professor, University of Notre Dame. In addition to this 160-page catalogue, available in the Museum Shop, a limited number of special-edition catalogues are available for purchase; for details, send a postcard with your name and phone number to the Museum, in care of the decorative arts department.

The exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pasadena Art Alliance. Additional support was provided by the All Nippon Airways Co., Ltd. Following its premiere in Los Angeles, the exhibition will travel to the Museum of Contemporary Ceramic Art in the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park in Shigaraki, Japan, and to the Newark Museum.

Tour the exhibition with the Museum's docents at 3 pm every Thursday and Saturday from November 11 through January 29.

