

MISTY GAMBLE, Oakland, CA

These snapshot sculptures display my interest in questioning the perception of normalcy, morality and appropriateness, while examining human social behavior.

In 2001, I enrolled in a figure sculpture class at Oakland's local art center. There I met Bud Kimbrell, who was instrumental in encouraging me to go on to graduate school and study ceramics. I had worked in clay as a young person, but my experience working with a model was very different. The clay, the figure, the model and me, we all clicked. There was a translation between what I saw in a three dimensional world, carried through my hands and the clay, into a clay object in front of me. It was magic. Practically self taught, I learned how to create life size figures in graduate school. The process by which I build challenges me. Considering how the figure will end, I work from the bottom to the top, building the inside and outside skin. I immerse myself both physically and mentally in a dance between the character that I'm building and myself.

I'm currently a resident at Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts, after which I intend to travel back across the country to California and do another one-year residency, teach at a university, continue showing nationally and eventually have gallery representation.

My long-term goal is to become a respected ceramic artist who contributes a new perspective to the field of ceramic sculpture. I also see myself guiding students in their own discovery of art making and meaning. I want to be remembered as someone who inspired others to create a vision and supported their drive to make it happen.

In my present work, I employ the imagery of children. These life-size children are influenced by the study of sociopaths and horror films that deal with modern everyday insecurities. They live in a world where the line between adulthood and childhood is blurred. At once hideous and beautiful, sweet and terrifying, these free-willed children challenge our notion of innocence when they are presented with a chance to sin. With a lack of self-awareness or understanding of social norms, the child's body expresses exaggerated emotional states. My work continues to be informed by my interests in issues surrounding femininity and set standards of normalcy, propriety and societal expectation.



***Precious*, 59 in. (1.5 m) in height, stoneware, bisque fired to Cone 01, then fired multiple times to Cone 06 with underglazes, stains and oxides. "Sexuality plays a role in Precious' ability to empower herself," explains Gamble. "She seduces and shows off, even though she is considered unattractive. Her toenails are not cut; her skin is not smooth; her nose is too big; her back is not straight; and she wears gloves to cover her ugly hands. She teases and uses sexuality as a weapon when confronted with danger. She wears frilly underwear and pretty gloves. The sin of pride is in her decision."**