

## making connections



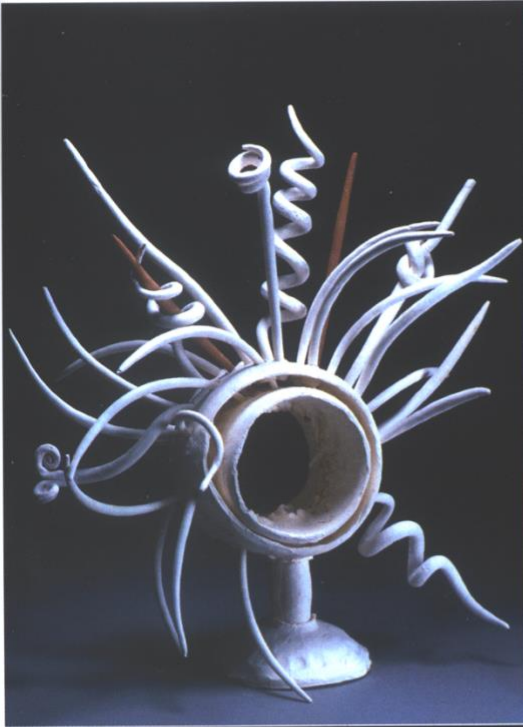
*Frenzy*, earthenware and terracotta paperclay, h.25cm, w.25cm, d.6cm

### Paperclay sculptures by Graham Hay

Graham Hay is a West Australian ceramic artist, albeit New Zealand born. His forms are inspired by architecture and local plants. The paperclay sculptures he creates, as well as the way in which he makes them, are, he says, "an attempt to illustrate an on-going interest in the organisation of the arts and crafts and society."

For some years, Graham has been teaching/lecturing and running paperclay workshops Australia wide, in Perth, Queensland and Victoria in particular. He is recognised as an international expert on the technical aspects of working in paperclay and in this capacity he has been invited overseas as artist-in-residence and/or guest speaker at workshops, seminars and symposiums on paperclay in Hungary, Lithuania, the United Kingdom, Wales, and Scotland.

Earlier this year, Graham was invited to spend four weeks as artist-in-residence/lecturer at the National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan and was also invited to give two workshops in Singapore for the Kampong Glam Ceramic Club. Next year Graham is to be an artist/guest speaker at the NCECA 2007 annual conference (The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) in Louisville, Kentucky.



Clockwise from top left: *Net 1*, earthenware and terracotta paperclay, h.110cm, w.120cm, d.60cm; *Sprouting Circles*, earthenware and terracotta paperclay, h.30cm, w.45cm, d.30cm; *Mixer*, earthenware and terracotta paperclay, h.55cm, w.55cm, d.55cm

Graham is an intensely inquisitive man, persistently probing all manner of subjects in search of answers. He is equally eager in seeking out significant questions to research, to investigate and explore. On thinking about Graham's innate curiosity and intellectual agility, and his need to sort, discern and organise, it has to be said that Graham's art emerges from the very core of his nature.

And one cannot fail to notice that core. At first, these circular forms were a ring or a hoop, the positive and



the negative circular shapes emphatically reiterating the cyclic nature of the work and life. Now, the core is also seen as a disk, sphere or ball which is the literal hub of his ceramic forms. From this core spring all manner of minutiae, single and double ended, sharply pointed, blunt, twisted and piercing.

Sometimes hundreds of tiny parts make up the whole, sometimes not. But always the micro is in full evidence, somehow connected to the hub, fundamental to the whole. The work process of gathering, sorting and organising reveals Graham's need to create order; however, in so doing, he has no desire whatever to hide, or deny, that a chaotic complexity exists.

Indeed, Graham deliberately creates his sculptures out of many parts to suggest the cultural, social, financial and political complexity of our society. Via his way of making, the kind of parts he makes and the material he uses, and then the gathering, sorting and organising, the artist openly adheres to the rigid, cyclic and dynamic nature of society and life during the working process.

The resulting structures intentionally imply social organisation and social cohesion. The overall perception on seeing the finished ceramic works is one of vitality, clarity, unity and refinement.

Moreover, in creating these ceramic forms out of paperclay in particular, Graham embodies his concept into the object itself. The actuality of the material being paper-loaded mimics the paper overload which plagues our contemporary information society.

Graham has said, "I experience this information/paper overload whatever I do – while studying, in an office job, in my art practice and in everyday life; the never-ending pile of office work, junk mail, bills, invitations, correspondence, newsletters, 'important pieces of paper'... and then there's the clippings ..."

Most of us can empathise with that.

Graham's forms emerge from the very core of his nature and, in the making, he somehow manages to include us all.

**Frances Dennis is a West Australian painter and ceramic artist who has taught painting over the last 13 years, in her studio which she shared with Graham Hay for six years, and in community classes for local government. She has also been tutor in Cultural Studies at Edith Cowan University. [www.francesdennis.com.au](http://www.francesdennis.com.au) [frances@francesdennis.com.au](mailto:frances@francesdennis.com.au)**

Top: *Stirred*, earthenware paperclay and steel, h.180cm, w.110cm, d.110cm; Bottom: *Bottlebrush*, earthenware and terracotta paperclay, h.25cm, w.30cm, d.22cm