



MIA LLAUDER
EXPANSIONS · CONFLUENCES
JOAN SERRA

Portraits, a relational art

According to Nicolas Bourriaud in his classic essay *Relational Aesthetics*, art has always been relational to varying degrees, that is to say, a factor of socialization and founder of dialogue. One of the virtual properties of art is its power of linkage or reliance, term taken from the sociologist Michel Maffesoli. Reliance in the sense of reconnecting more than collecting, to link more than to join together. The fact is that a work of art has no useful function - not that it is socially useless, but because it is available and flexible, and has an "infinite tendency" it is devoted to the world of exchange, of communication. The work gives rise to gatherings and meetings, managing its own temporality.

The *Portraits* series recounts the relationships that ceramist Mia Llauder has built over the years with people who have influenced her, friends and acquaintances who have been shaping her life through experiences, both good and bad, but always leaving their mark on her, even when only momentary chance meetings occurred. Thus, the ceramic sculptures by Mia Llauder in the *Portraits* series are relational art in at least three ways: morphologically, owing to the articulated nature of modular pieces that, linked one to another, generate relational structures; emotionally, because each of these sculptures is the portrait of a human relationship that created emotional ties reconnecting the life experiences structuring Mia Llauder's being with that of others; and socially, because, being exhibited, they have been socialized but, moreover, thanks to or because of their articulated nature, have been deployed and developed with the visitor constructing and being constructed, together.

For some time now, Mia Llauder's sculptures have been shaped according the assembling of modules. Porcelain pieces are repeated, coming from the past and meeting again later. Elements that have been made over the years, which have been incorporated in a sampling of basic units that Mia Llauder has stored in a typesetter drawer and which like the lead letters of a graphic artist, are chained together in order to write Mia's stories. In this way, as the ceramist says "I can construct at any time". Only now, in this series the base units have lost prominence, making room to the relationships that link them. In earlier pieces, the ties were subsidiary, imperceptibly white in color, functioning as a base or support situated behind, hidden among the porcelain pieces, subservient to the individual element. Now, on the contrary, the linkages are the main motif. The color red has given them body and the lines they generate connecting the primary elements make a drawing that is in fact the subject.

It is no coincidence that in the works comprising this series, representing human relationships, the ligatures linking the porcelain modules have become protagonists. Because the important thing is not what people are (if indeed identity can have an absolute nature) but what they construct when they meet and exchange. Mia Llauder's portraits cannot be anything but constructive. If Mia Llauder were a writer we would say that in these latest works, she has focused on creating a syntax, rather than on perfecting an alphabet. She has invented a whole series of mechanisms for generating sentences that have allowed her to define her own language.

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