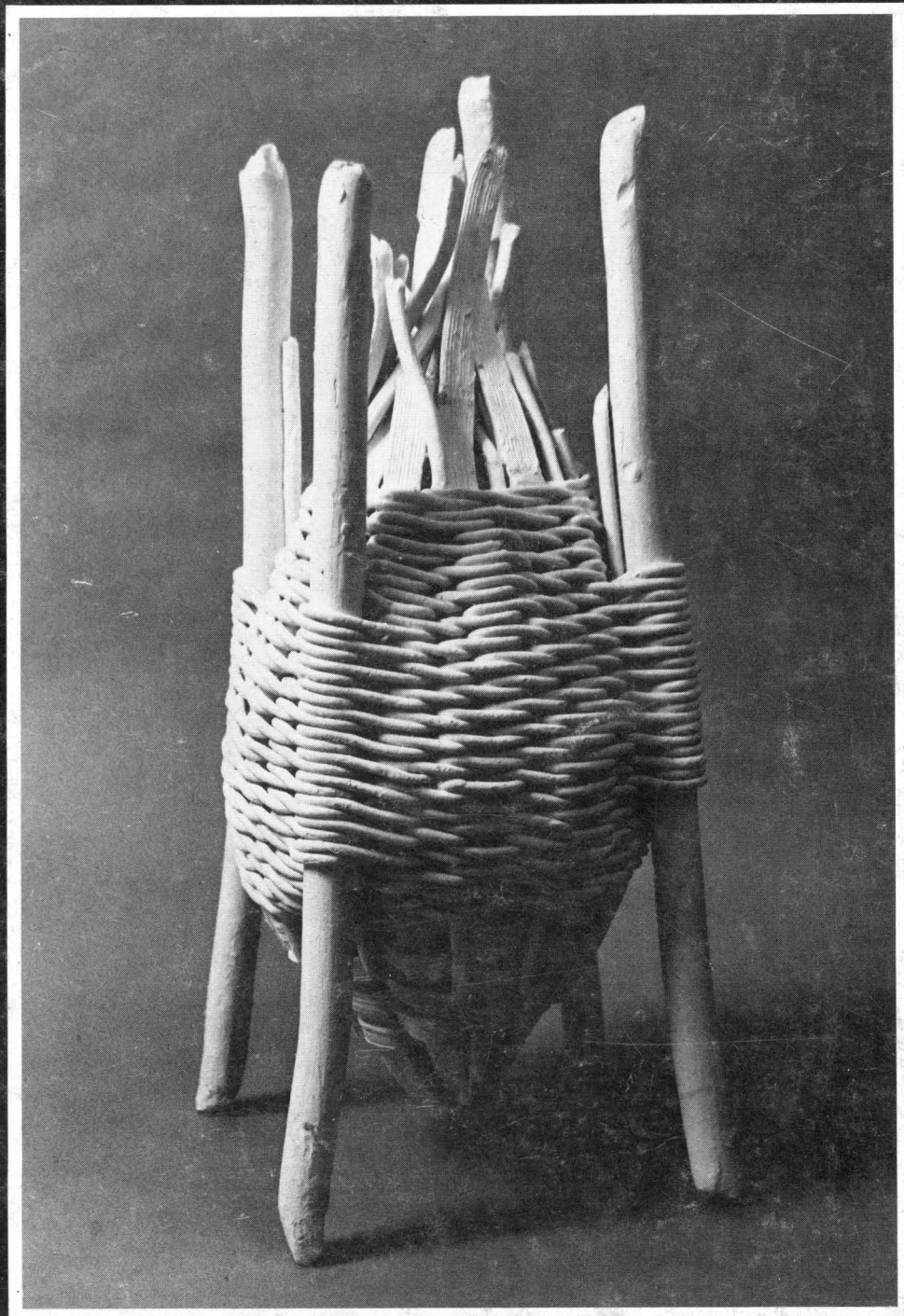


RINA
PELEG

Ceramic
Structures



JUNE 7 – AUGUST 8, 1985
EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART,
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

On the cover:

Ceramic Structure, 1981

Low-fire porcelain;

29 x 15 x 15 in.

This publication was prepared on the occasion of the exhibition **Rina Peleg: Ceramic Structures**. The exhibition was made possible by a generous grant from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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401 Harrison Street
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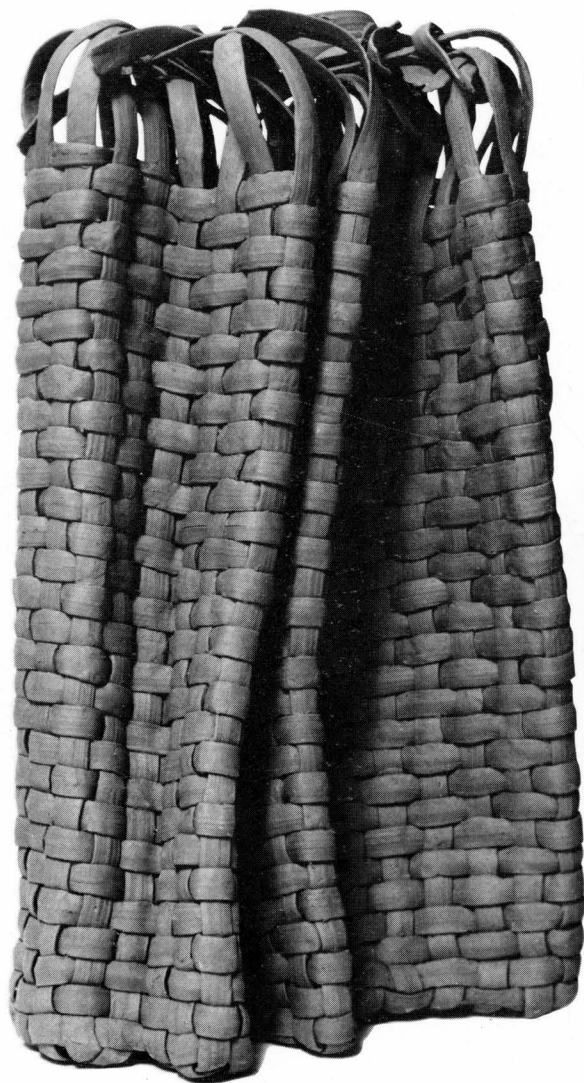
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RINA PELEG

Ceramic Structures



Clay Structure, 1983

Earthenware;

36 × 21 × 11 in.

Rina Peleg

Ceramic Structures

Foreword by John Perreault

Given the increased interest in clay as an art medium and ceramics as an art form, it is a great pleasure for me to introduce the work of Rina Peleg to a museum audience. The Everson Museum of Art, of course, has long had a commitment to ceramic art. This commitment is sustained by exhibitions such as the present one, for Peleg is a serious and innovative artist. Her works are fresh, experimental, yet rooted in the past — the deep past. Since she was born and raised in Israel, this should not be surprising. “I grew up on a kibbutz,” she writes. “Almost everywhere one walked, one practically stumbled over pottery shards. These fragments are sometimes the only evidence of the rich cultures that existed in the Middle East in the past.”

Peleg began as a production potter. After moving to the United States with her family, she continued this pursuit with considerable success; her utilitarian pots and dinnerware have great formal strength. To this day, when she is “stuck” in her art-ceramic efforts, looking for new ideas or a direction, she returns to her potter’s wheel for solace and refreshment. It was,

however, at Alfred College of Ceramics that she found her ceramic art method: extruded coils of clay woven into basket forms. Peleg once taught basketry in Israel and is well aware of the theory that ceramics may have been an ancient offspring of basketry — some of the earliest vessel shards bear woven impressions. Her newly found vocabulary came to her quite naturally.

The current selection of Peleg’s work in the White Gallery surveys the variations she has rung on her chosen theme: fairly straightforward basket forms, collapsed ones, fragments, and the newest exploded and visceral pieces which suggest anatomical parts from some charnel house of the mind.

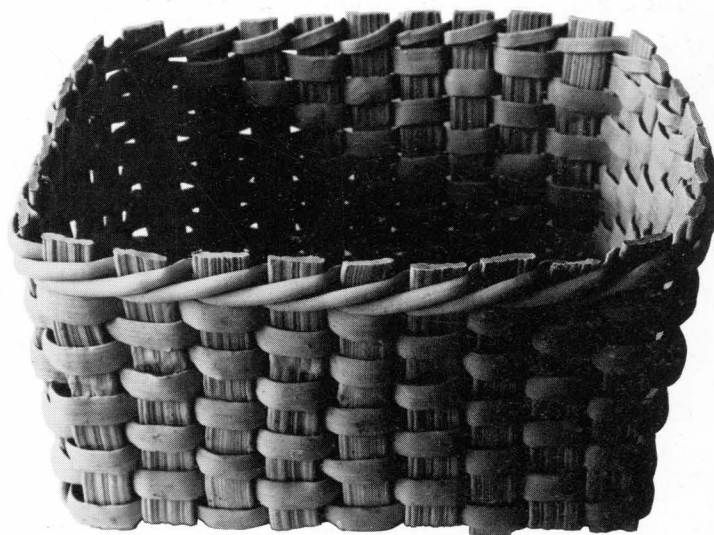
Peleg also produces large-scale, outdoor pieces. Her first was at Artpark in Lewiston, New York, outside Buffalo, where she was an artist-in-residence in 1982. The large, woven pieces were made over a three-week period. She built the kilns, formed the woven structures, and fired them in public view. Similarly, in the Tel Hai Sculpture Conference in Israel in 1982 — which I happened to attend — she created an-

other outdoor piece; this time, however, layers of the brick kiln remained around the coiled structure as a testament to the firing process, becoming an integral part of the artwork. I was impressed by the work itself and by Peleg's ability to deal with the public — or audience — that gathered around her site every day, eager to follow the action. Process Art, as far too many believe, was not invented in the late '60s. Process and the exploitation of the characteristics of materials have always been integral to ceramics.

Because Peleg's outdoor ceramic sculptures are such an important and rapidly developing aspect of her oeuvre, the Everson Museum has sponsored her third outdoor kilnwork, outside the Museum in the Community Plaza. Since the logistics of this project were particularly difficult, I wish to give special thanks to the Director of the Museum, Ronald A. Kuchta; to Thomas Piché, the public information officer and the entire staff; to Lorraine Hoogs and her army of volunteers; to the trustees; and to the New York State Council on the Arts for the grant that was essential.

Ceramic Structure, 1980

Earthenware;
13 x 22 x 19 in.



Rina Peleg

Artist's Statement

I grew up in Israel on a kibbutz. Almost everywhere one walked, one practically stumbled over pottery shards. These fragments are sometimes the only evidence of the rich cultures that existed in the Middle East in the past. My first acquaintance with clay was made through these fragments.

I actually began working with clay after high school, when I discovered the raw material and became aware that almost any shape could be made from the formless mass. At first, I worked with the potter's wheel, making functional pieces to be used at home. I gradually discovered the many possibilities inherent in the material, and began to make explorations in new directions.

Working with clay became a way for me to make contact with the world outside the kibbutz, and, ultimately, outside Israel.

While attending Alfred University, I worked on hand-coiled clay structures that involved a play of unconnected coils within the structures. This experience taught me that a coil could be used the way rope or string is used in weaving and plaiting, and I began to "weave" with these clay coils. Since the woven coils were basically the same sort of coils I had used for the

traditional pinched pots, the transition was simple and involved only a slight change in technique. Past weaving experience made this transition a natural one for me.

The clay baskets I am doing now are made up of plaited coils which are not pinched. The final shape is strong, yet light in feeling. The clay basket "breathes" as a natural basket would.

The connection between basketry and working in clay is, all in all, a very natural one. The straw used in making baskets and clay are both materials mankind has used for ages.

The common theory is that the first clay container came about when a hole was dug in the (clay) ground in which to make a fire. After the fire was put out, it was discovered that the sides of the hole had become, in fact, fired. The hole had become a container for anything, including water. The next step, obviously, was to "remove" the hole from the earth by cutting around it, leaving enough clay to make the new shape self-supporting and portable.

Eventually, it was discovered that the best way to make a pot was not to remove a hole, but to create the structure from clay coils pinched together. The idea of using coils presumably came from baskets. An imprint of a basket

made of coils was found in the clay floor of a home in Jericho from 7000 BC, a time when ceramics was in its infancy (there are no pots dating from that period).

The idea of making clay baskets is also connected to the ancient custom of imprinting mats or other woven material into the surface of clay pots before they were fired. Baskets were also used as molds which were later burnt with the clay. Coils resembling rope are often found as decorative elements on early pots. Old large pots in ancient Egypt often had no handles and were carried in large baskets (much the way some Mexicans and Africans carry their wares to the market today).

As a final example of the affinity between clay and basketry, mention could be made of the fact that clay and straw were probably the first materials used to make huts. The inside of these primitive structures was covered with slip and later burnished. The outside was covered with woven straw mixed with clay which stopped the rain from coming in.

Weaving in clay has become a natural activity for me. The difference between my pieces and the traditional, functional works made of clay or straw is that the pieces I make

are quite impractical. At first glance, my work seems to relate to functional objects with which we are all familiar. However, the works were made without any functional purpose in mind.

I have been concerned for several years with the so called "right" of the ceramist to create non-functional works. My own reason for making such works was, and is, a strong attraction to deal with basic, classical shapes. This clearly came about from a deep emotional need, not practical intent.

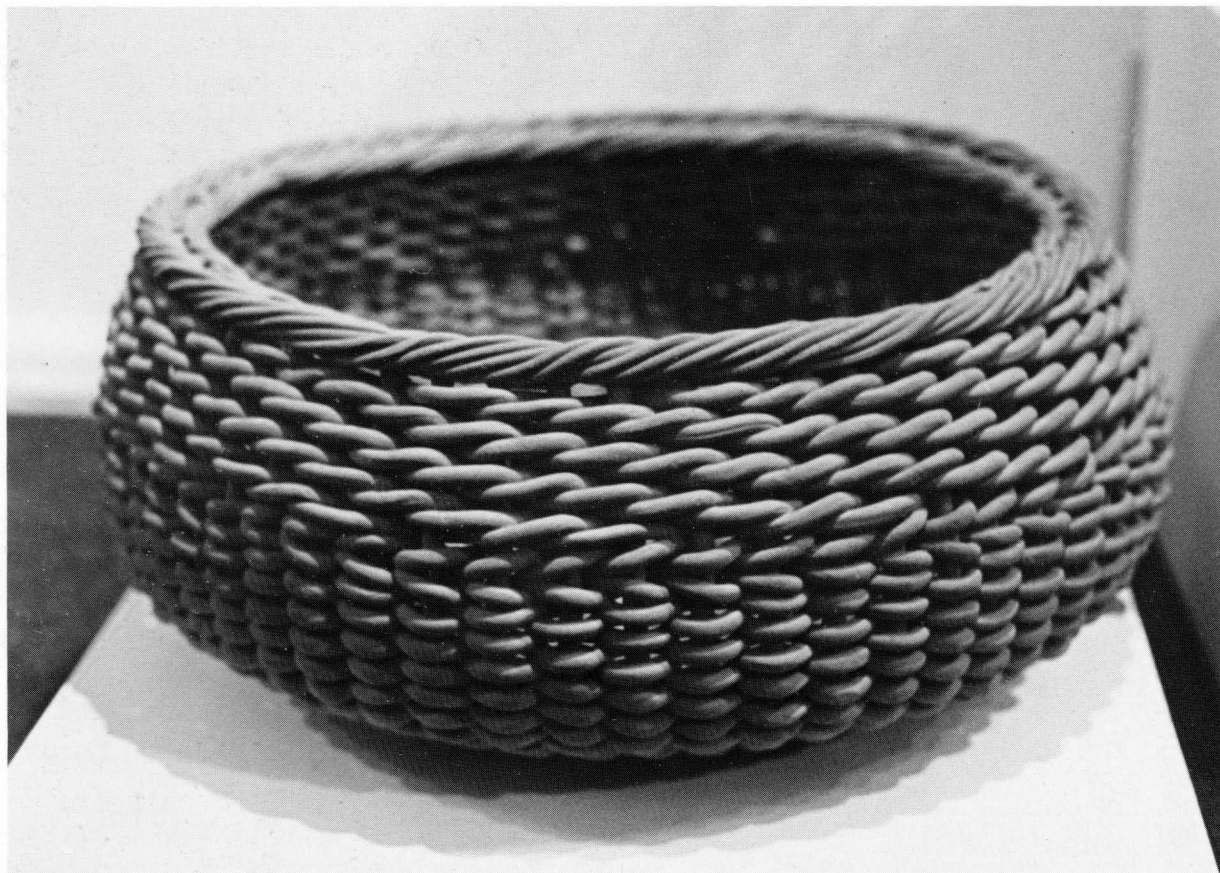
I began to understand some of the sources from which I drew my ideas upon learning about Jung's theory of the collective unconscious. Stated simply, Jung maintains that there is a collective unconscious of the whole human race which manifests itself in each individual through that person's dreams, or, as in my case, through creativity. The basic shapes of ceramic utensils which were used ages ago, as well as the technique of making them, also form part of the collective unconscious.

My need to make the shapes I do can be explained in part, if such explanation is necessary, by Jung's theory, my own acquaintance with the history of arts and crafts, and a strong personal need.

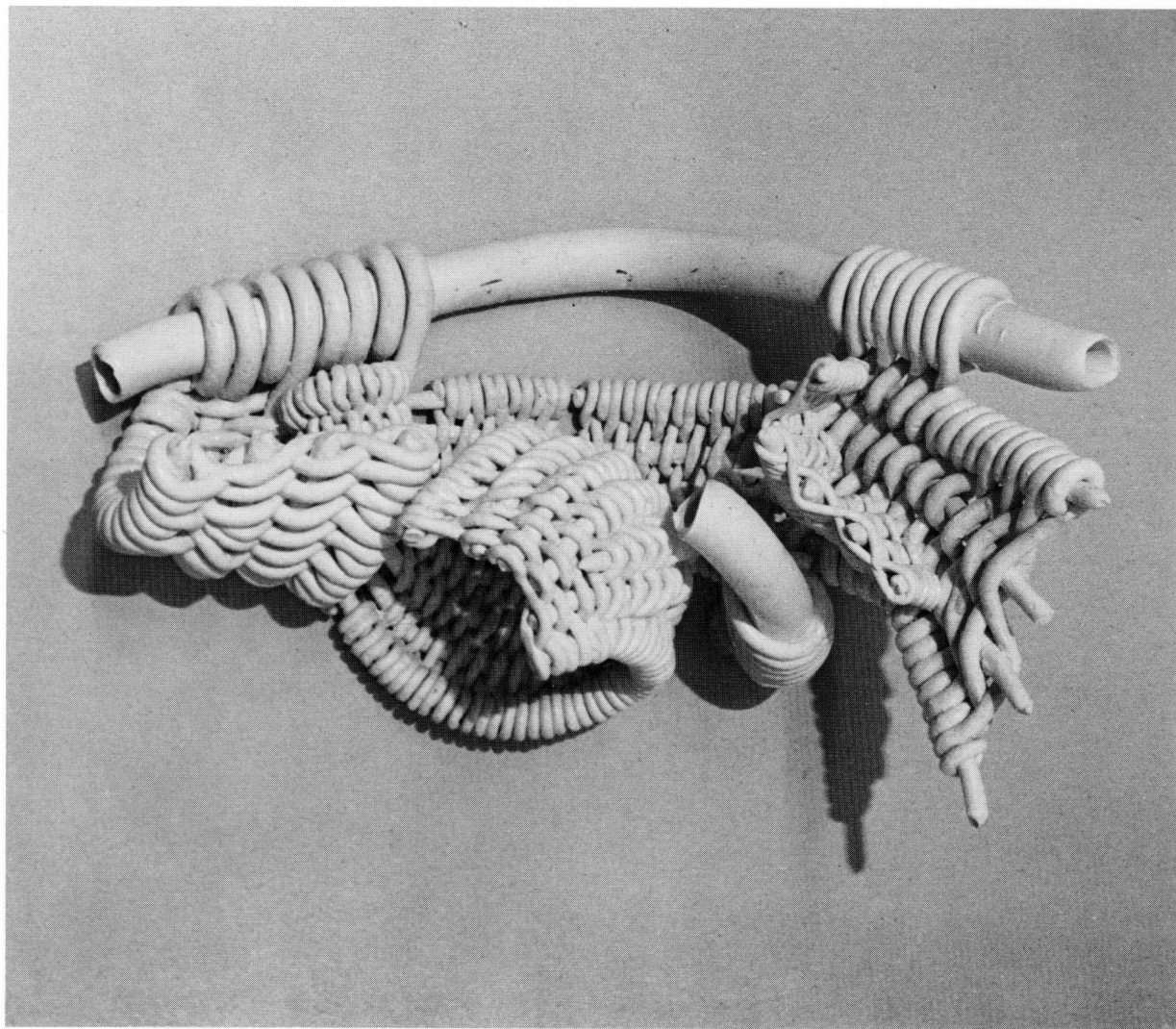
Ceramic Structure, 1981

Earthenware;

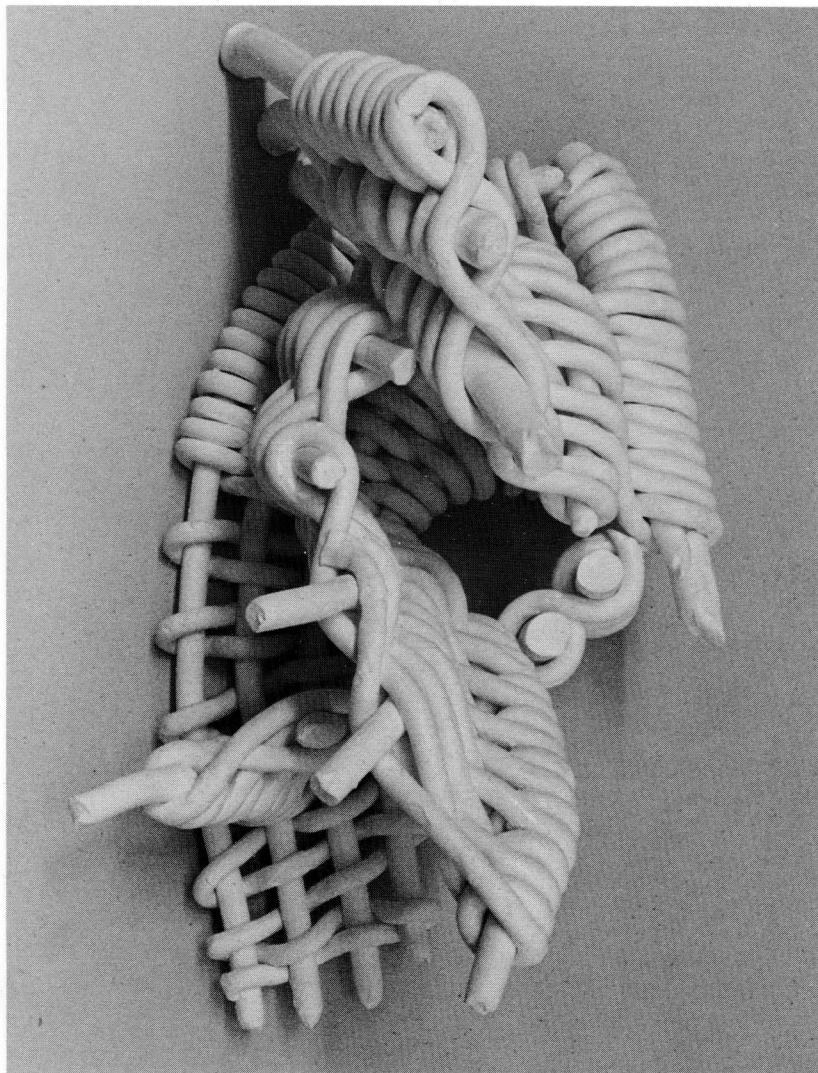
14 × 6 (diameter) in.



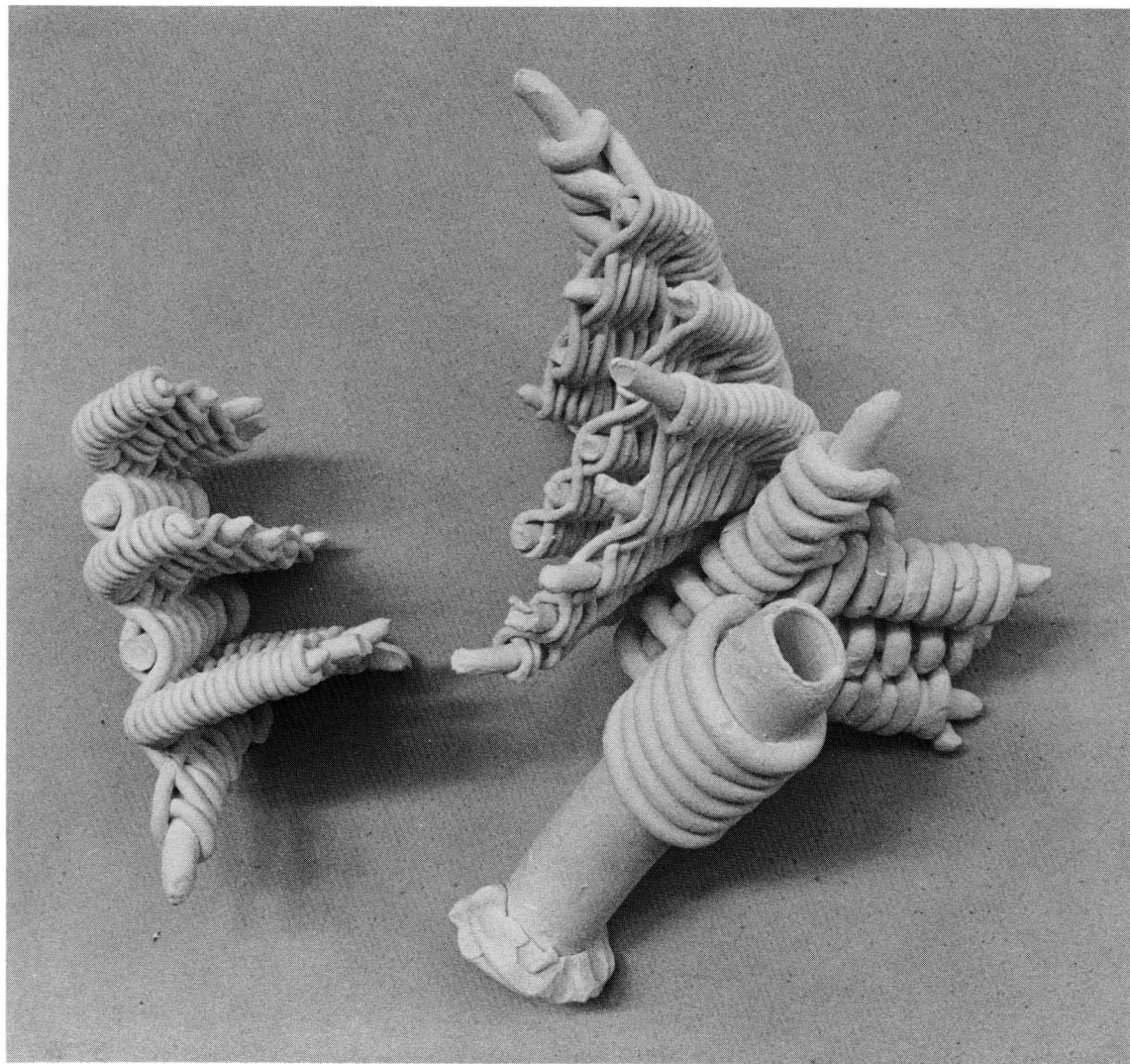
Wall Piece, 1984
Low-fire porcelain;
22 x 11 x 9 in.



Wall Piece, 1984
Low-fire porcelain;
18 x 11 x 8 in.



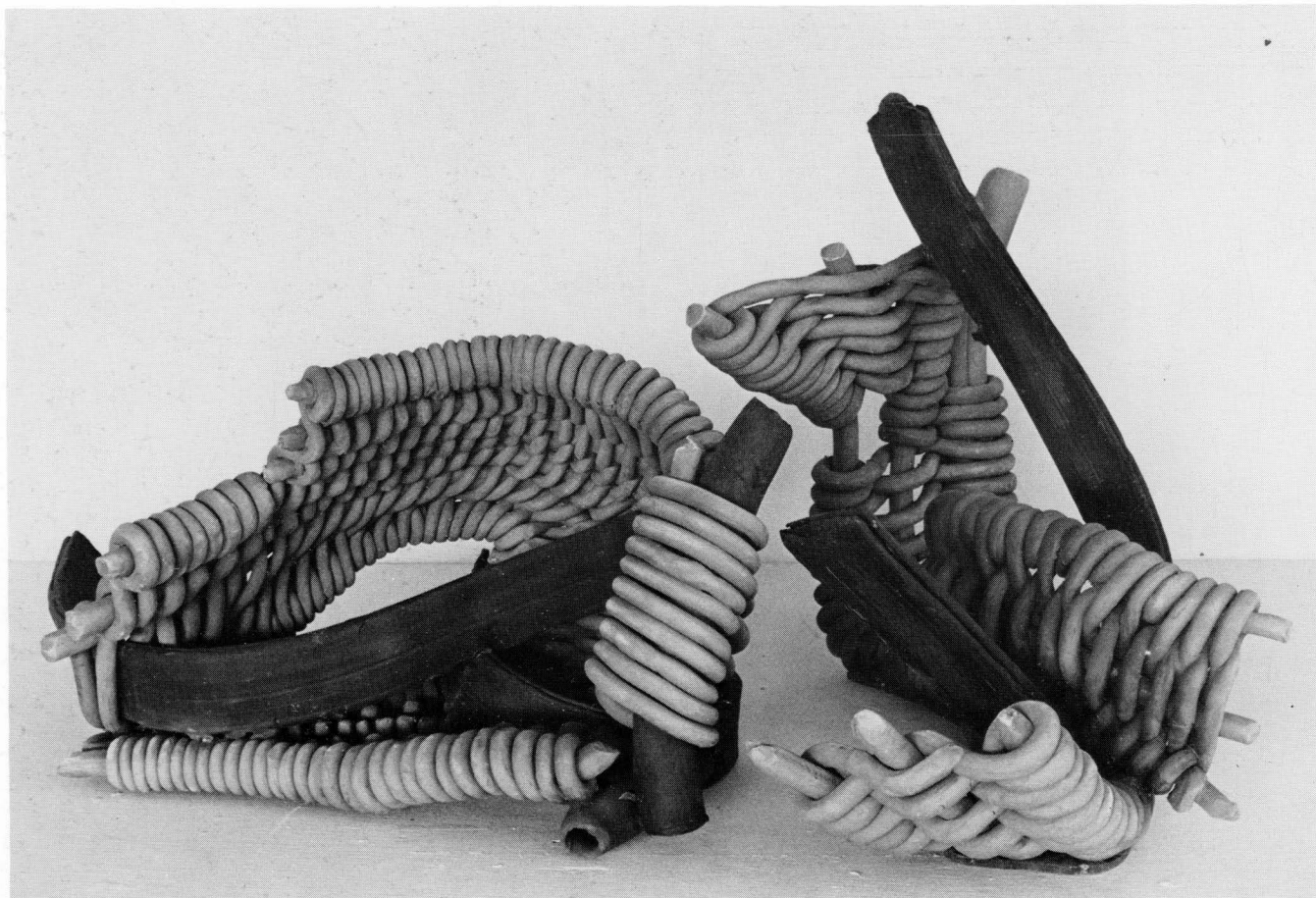
Wall Piece, 1984
Low-fire porcelain;
22 x 23 x 15 in.



Ear System, 1984

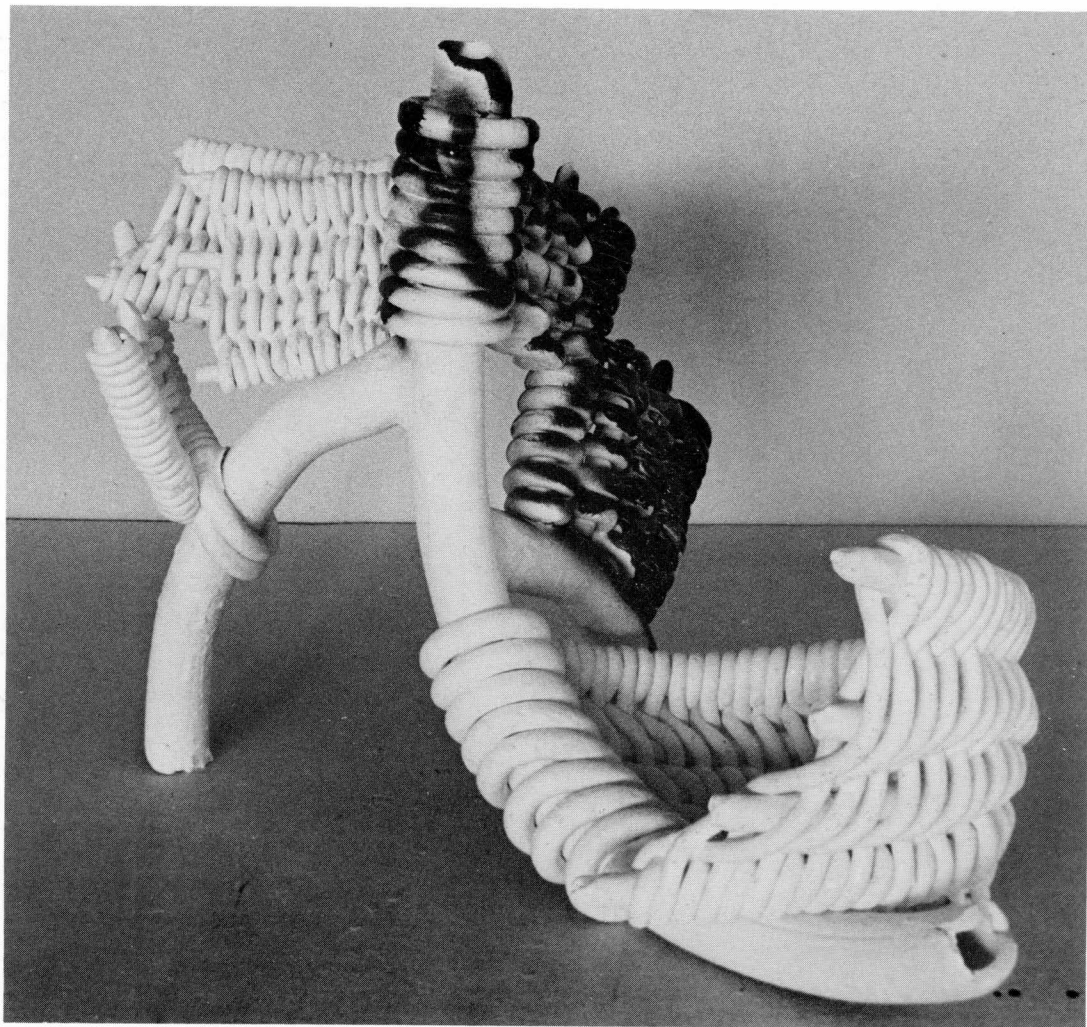
Earthenware;

19 x 40 x 20 in.



Anatomical Parts I, 1984

Low-fire porcelain, glazed;
24 × 18 × 18 in.



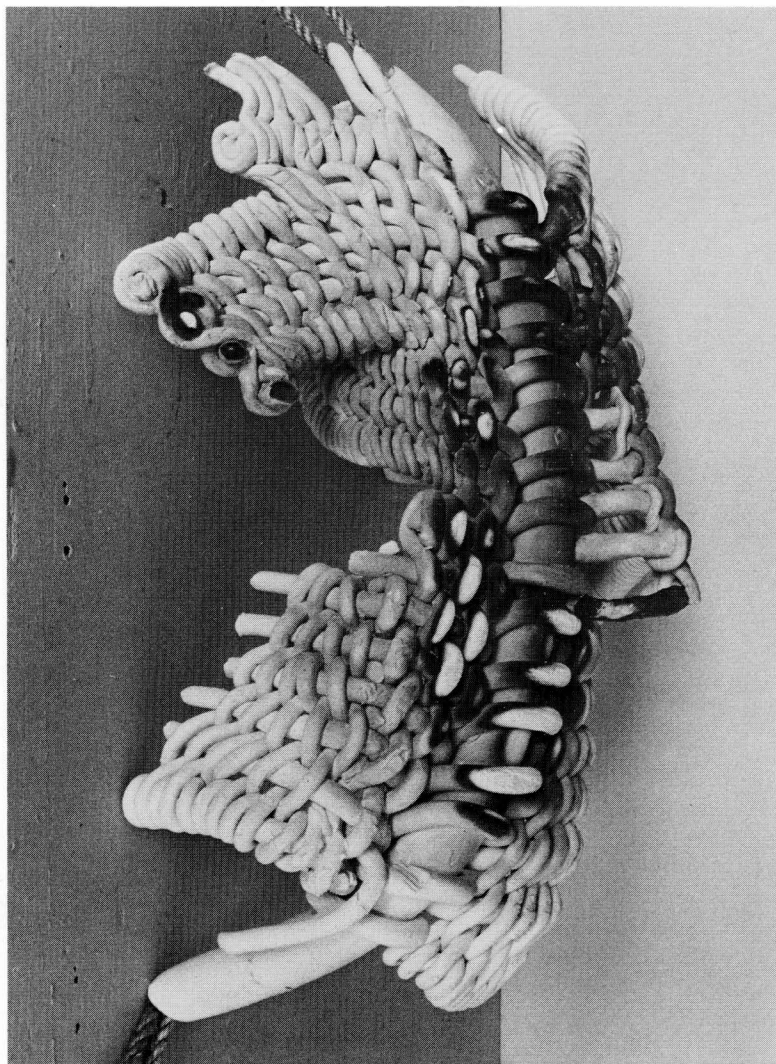
Anatomical Parts II, 1984

Glazed earthenware;

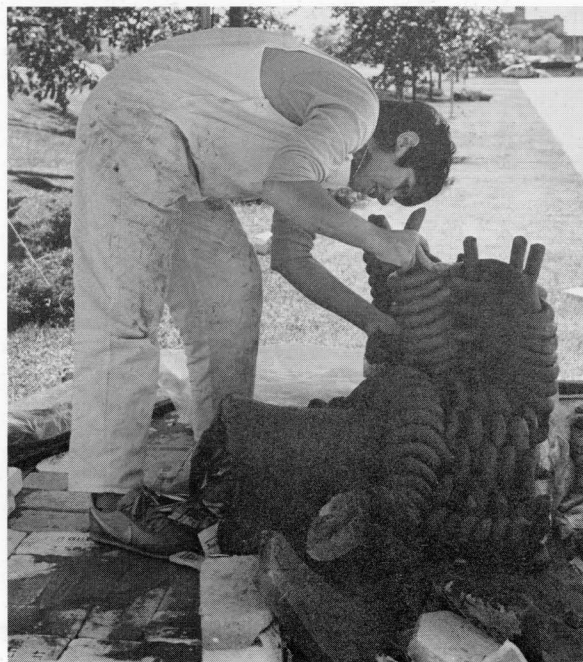
21 x 20 x 17 in.



Skeleton, 1984
Low-fire porcelain;
30 × 16 × 13 in.



The following eight
photographs document the
construction of Rina Peleg's
Everson Museum kiln
sculpture in June 1985.

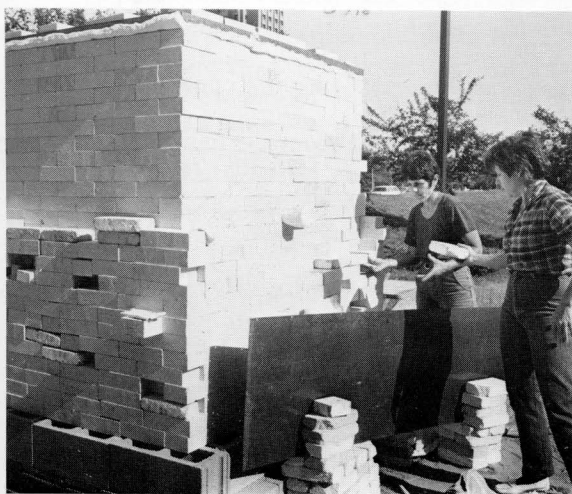


3



Farrago, 1985
Low-fire stoneware;
56×63×43 in.

6



7

8



Photos 2-8 by Mima Cataldo

Rina Peleg

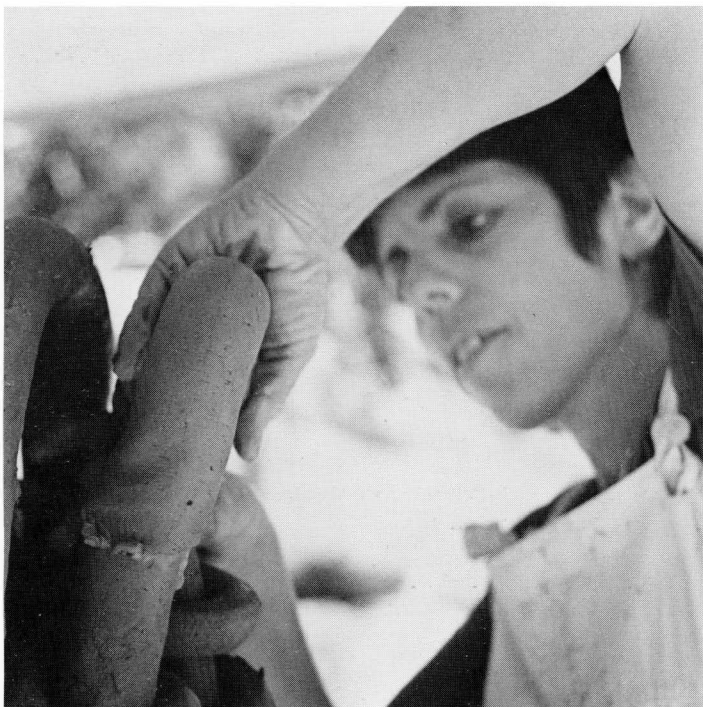


Photo by Mima Cataldo

Rina Peleg was born in 1940 in Israel. She now lives in New York City.

Individual Exhibitions

- 1983** — Robert Kidd Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan.
Heller Gallery, New York City.
- 1982** — Form & Function, Atlanta, Georgia.
- 1981** — Ceramics sculpture, Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, New York.
Ceramics sculpture, Branch Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Ceramics sculpture, Theo Portnoy Gallery, New York City.
- 1979** — **Plaiting in Clay**, Ceramic Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel.
From Clay and From Tradition, Beit Aba Hushi, Haifa, Israel.
- 1976** — Incorporated Gallery, New York City.
- 1972** — American Israel Cultural Foundation, New York City.

Group Exhibitions

- 1983** — Tel Hai Contemporary Art Meeting, Tel Hai, Israel.
Art: Textile Reference, Artifacts Gallery, Indianapolis, Indiana.
- 1982** — **40th International Ceramic Art**, Faenza, Italy.
Ancient Inspirations/Contemporary Interpretation, Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences, Binghamton, New York.
Contemporary Forum in Basketry, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York City.
Contemporary Forum in Basketry, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts.
Renwick Gallery Anniversary, Washington, D.C.
- 1981** — **Basketwork**, John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin.
National Crafts '81, Greenville Country Museum of Art, Greenville, South Carolina.
Lake Superior '81, Tweed Museum of Art, Duluth, Minnesota.
Westwood Clay National, Downey Museum, Los Angeles, California.
Baskets, Thorpe Intermedia Gallery, Sparkill, New York.

- 1980** — **Finger Lakes Exhibition**, Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.
38th Western New York Regional, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.
Westwood Clay National, Parsons School of Art and Design, New York City.
Alfred Graduate Students, Elmira College, Elmira, New York.
Appalachian Craft Center, Smithville, Tennessee.
Westwood Clay National, OTIS Gallery, Los Angeles, California.
- 1978** — **Sculpture in Clay**, traveling exhibit, Israel.
- 1977** — **Discovery in Nature**, Crafts Concepts, Ridgewood, New York.
American Craft People of the Incorporated Gallery, New York City.
International Superior, Tweed Museum, Duluth, Minnesota.

Awards

- 1983** — The Netti Marie Fellowship in the Visual Arts, Lake Placid, New York.
- 1982** — Silver plaque, **40th International Ceramic Art**, Faenza, Italy.
Artist in residence, Artpark, Lewiston, New York.
- 1981** — National Endowment for the Arts, Craftsman Fellowship.
- 1980** — Gertrude H. Moore Award, **Finger Lakes Exhibition**, Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.
First prize, design contest, Alfred University Research Foundation, Alfred, New York.
- 1966** — Award, Israeli Packing and Design Institute, Israel.
- 1965** — First prize, Israeli Packing and Design Institute, Israel.

Selected Bibliography

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- Bannon, Anthony. "Rina Peleg." **American Ceramics**, I, No. 4, (1982), 52-53.
- Commanday, Ramah. "Rina Peleg at Artpark." **Ceramics Monthly**, December 1983, pp. 69, 71, 73.
- Malarcher, P. "Inspired by Fiber." **Fiberarts**, November/December 1983, p. 38.
- Peleg, Rina. "Plaited Clay." **Ceramics Monthly**, February 1981, pp. 52-55.

Collections

- Alfred University, Alfred, New York.
Bank Leumi, New York City.
Davis and Brody Architects, New York City.
Greenville County Art Museum, Greenville, South Carolina.
Israeli Embassy, Washington, D.C.
Dan Jacobs, New York City.
Lanon Foundation, Palm Beach, Florida.
Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences, Binghamton, New York.

Teaching Experience

- 1980** — Ceramics, Alfred University, Alfred, New York.
- 1977-79** — Ceramics, Teacher Training College for the Kibbutz Movement, Oranim, Israel.
- 1977-78** — Ceramics, Haifa University, Haifa, Israel.
- 1973-74** — Ceramics, Crafts Concepts, Ridgewood, New York.

Education

- 1980** — Alfred University, Alfred, New York, M.F.A.
- 1958-60** — Bezalel Academy of Arts and Crafts, Jerusalem, Israel.

Checklist:

All works are in the collection of the artist. Dimensions are given in inches; height precedes width, which precedes depth.

- 1. Ceramic Structure, 1980**
Earthenware;
13 × 22 × 19
- 2. Collapsed Basket, 1980**
Earthenware;
22 × 25 × 25
- 3. Clay Structure, 1983**
Earthenware;
36 × 21 × 11
- 4. Ceramic Structure, 1983**
Earthenware;
51 × 25 × 17
- 5. Ceramic Structure, 1981**
Earthenware;
14 × 6 (diameter)
- 6. Ceramic Structure, 1981**
Low-fire porcelain;
29 × 15 × 15
- 7. Wall Piece, 1984**
Low-fire porcelain;
22 × 11 × 9
- 8. Wall Piece, 1984**
Low-fire porcelain;
18 × 11 × 8
- 9. Wall Piece, 1984**
Low-fire porcelain;
22 × 23 × 15
- 10. Ear System, 1984**
Earthenware;
19 × 40 × 20
- 11. Anatomical Parts I, 1984**
Low-fire porcelain, glazed;
24 × 18 × 18
- 12. Anatomical Parts II, 1984**
Glazed earthenware;
21 × 20 × 17
- 13. Skeleton, 1984**
Low-fire porcelain;
30 × 16 × 13

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