

PATRICIU MATEESCU

S I M E T R I A

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With gratitude to Ion Baroi whose love,
appreciation and support
for my work made possible the publication
of this book



Ceramics is the only art that makes one believe in miracles

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With innovative ingenuity, a feeling for monumental scale and the determination to encompass space, Patriciu Mateescu has succeeded in creating an art of unprecedented originality. The monumental sculpture he has executed out of porcelain or polyester mixed with fiberglass put to new use materials which had previously served only for industry or the production of ordinary objects of art. His early work consisted of naturalistic, figurative sculpture, mainly portraits. However, ten years later he found in the decorative arts a refuge from the official constraints of Socialist-Realism. His experiments with chemical mixtures brought new processes to ceramics which made quite new forms of expression possible. His creations during this period have left their mark due to their modernity, audacity of their geometrical composition and their modular structure.

However, Patriciu Mateescu's inventive genius only came into its own with the artistic freedom he found in the West. In 1979, he began the *California Flowers* and the *Love Flowers* series. These sculptures are truly organic because rooted in Nature, yet defined by their geometrical spirit in the purity and simplicity of modules, the clarity, rhythm and harmony of forms, the rotating dynamism, propelling forces and inner pressure with create an animated surrounding space. Let us consider, for instance, *Crazy Love Flowers* at UCLA which is a fiberglass sculpture, 4 m. high. It seems to grow out of the earth like a plant, magnificent and happy under the California sun. Its wide, curvaceous leaves, both supple and solid, reach outwards as if to grab space in their dizzy dance. Driven by a centrifugal force, some soar skywards, other spread out on all sides, without however dispersing. They obey a law, a will, that governs them in order to form an ensemble which is both lively and harmonious and produces a vitality flourishing in the joy of absolute freedom. Patriciu Mateescu's works thus express his own feelings and take on a human dimension.

He has lately pursued his research further and has experimented with 14 paper reliefs subjected to a special process. Steering clear of the excesses of the present avant-garde movement, he asserts his modernity by always finding new means of expression which enrich the artistic vocabulary of our time.

(Excerpt from *Romanian Artists in the West*, Paris-Los Angeles, 1986)

Critical Survey

Ionel Jianu

Romanian/French art critic & essayist

Nature and Spirit

Anne-Marie Mariën Dugardin
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Mussées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire
Bruxelles, Belgique

Ceramic sculptor, Patriciu Mateescu, was born in Romania in 1927, and has been living in the US since 1980, first in Los Angeles, California, and now in Dayton, New Jersey. When coming to his house and walking into the garden, one discovers with surprise a number of diverse ceramic sculptures that intrigue and amaze the visitor. Mateescu who has a Master of Fine Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts, Department of Sculpture, in Bucharest, Romania, has showed a diversity in his works. He acquired, as early as 1962, the Gold Medal at the International Ceramic Exhibition in Prague. His originality is evident with the *Romanian Flowers*, a work in porcelain bisque that show a delicate blossoming of half-opened petals. The artist returns to the same motif when modelling his *Californian Flowers* created in large scale.

Joy, beauty and gentleness are emanating from his *Love Flowers*, ranging from 2 m. to 4 m. high, sometimes made out of polystyrene, installed at different locations in California: the University of Northridge at Northridge, the University of California, Los Angeles, the Cedar Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. *The Knots*, 0.5 m. in diameter, made from porcelain several years later, again testify the artist's ability to cut volumes according to his mathematical intuition that allow multiple combinations.

The artist, always thinking of his native country, has been affected by the profound political changes that occurred in Romania in recent years. Large-scale monuments in glazed stoneware were being created: *Eminescu*, in 1995, the *New Romania*, 5.6 m. high, placed at the Snagov Monastery, near Bucharest, representing an exceptionally beautiful woman in a dashing motion holding a child in her arms.

A sensitive artist, Mateescu is influenced by the scientific discoveries as well as the international political events of recent years that have caused anxiety yet his creations evolve expressing joy and optimism as he achieves works that are now infused with a force that impresses by its strangeness.

The series of *Black Capricios* have been created from 1998 until 2001. Works of black glazed stoneware, their title is attributed to a similarity of intentions with Goya's etchings, also called *Black Capricios*, whose meaning is that 'when reason is asleep monsters are brought forth into life'. The bizarre forms of the *Black Capricios* come from other planets, such as Mars, or maybe from the darkness of the sea. These sculptures suggest monsters that might have been generated by the pollution of waters, one of the great dangers for mankind. The basic sphere of these works gives a powerful sense of cosmic rotation towards the sun. The sphere explodes into germs of good and evil, of beauty and ugliness.

Les Fleurs du Mal, made in 2000, are large spheres of clay built around a hole suggesting the aura of a young flower on the verge of blooming, or, on the contrary, of fading away. One notices a difference with the white flowers from the beginning. The joyful, decorative exuberance has disappeared as Mateescu arrives at a new expression: more powerful and impregnated with a strange and dramatic sensuality that explains the title of the series and refers, by analogy, to the powerful images and sensuality of the *Fleurs du Mal* by Baudelaire.

Since 1999, the diversity of Mateescu's works tells of the spirit of the artist who has a powerful mind drawing from the actual world. However, he is, from time to time, influenced by past events such as Byzantine religious rites. In 1999, he built *The Inominati*, stoneware coated with brown porcelain slip, that represent the essence and transfiguration of pain suffered through impalement, a common punishment for crime and corruption, in medieval Romania. Dramatically installed on top of high posts, the six brown heads have a tortured expression, with face furrowed by the flow of blue-glazed tears.

Three blue-and-white glazed stoneware sculptures, 1.5 m. high, the *Blue Birds* or the *Gogomaans*, rise in the grass of the garden. Where are their heads? "High up in the sky", answers Patriciu Mateescu. The powerful movement of the elongated but interrupted necks of these birds suggests the journey of the spirit from the material to the sky, the place of divine inspiration. With his *Gargoyles*, the artist expresses his vision of monsters that confront evil in the Middle Ages. He built a series of 13 masks showing different aspects of cruelty and horror.

Often, the artist finds inspiration in events or people which instead of bringing harmony and serenity cause, on the contrary, anxiety. But with his *Heavenly Hands*, his most recent works, black glazed stoneware, 1.5 m. high, he translated the religious symbols of Byzantine iconography into elevated signs of benediction. The artist said that he found their shapes in strange cloud formation in the sky or maybe they came directly from divine transcendence. Through all his work, Patriciu Mateescu shows a powerful monumental expression. This aspect of his creation was evident from the beginning. In 1966 he participated at the Ceramic Symposium in Bechine, Czech Republic, where he built two large armchairs in stoneware that belong now to the Art Museum in Bechine. If one looks at the *Capricios* at the seashore or at *Les Fleurs du Mal* with their poisonous poetry spreading into the environment, one realises that his sculptures are an integral part of nature.

Patriciu Mateescu, ceramic sculptor, started his significant European career in 1958 in Romania, his native country for which he has a profound attachment. He has had a long experience in working with all types of ceramics, and, characteristically, he fires his work at high temperature only once. Marked by our time, by tragic and disturbing events, he creates an original and impressive work that will always unite to nature.

(Excerpt from *Ceramics: Art and Perception*, no. 50, Sydney, 2002)

The Transformative Power of Clay

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Experiencing the art of Patriciu Mateescu is mesmerizing, immersive, and profound. Spanning decades and ranging from small-scale porcelain to large-scale monuments, Mateescu's oeuvre teems with emotions, resonates with nature, and features a complex visual vocabulary. Characteristic of this artist is that the message he conveys through his art is not entrapped within the material, but empowered by the material to blossom and to communicate. Mateescu has developed, over many years, such a close relationship with his medium that it appears that material and idea become one in each of this artist's creations. Both bodily and ethereal, Mateescu's sculptures are embodied thoughts that become the viewer's own.

From two-dimensional works on paper and canvas to public monuments that are set in innovative combinations of materials, the oeuvre of Mateescu is wide-ranging. However, it appears that the artist's creative process occurs when he is in dialogue with clay. In his words, "the pleasure of hand modeling the clay remains the final formal expression of my sculptures."¹ When he works ideas out by modeling the clay, Mateescu fuses ideas and materials inextricably. This process is not unlike the famous case of Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), who "sketched" by making small models of his statuary in clay. Colette Czapski Hemingway, among other scholars, noted how Bernini used clay in the initial stages of sculpting for "its immanent capacity as a medium for creation" and, like other sculptors of his era, for rapidly giving forms to ideas in order to share them with studio assistants and actual or potential patrons.² However, for Mateescu, the results of his interaction with the clay are not primarily preparatory; instead, his ceramics represent a staple component of his oeuvre that activates and highlights the potential of the material. As Mateescu himself put it regarding his *Erosions* series, "My erosions are realized through collaboration between me and liquid clay."³ In the current text, I hope to explore that fascinating relationship and its implications for Mateescu's work in various materials and for the messages that his art conveys. Mateescu's oeuvre is self-referential and process-transparent to the extent to which these qualities showcase the transformative potential of clay.

With consistent effectiveness, Mateescu uses materials to create and to communicate ideas and feelings. This observation brings to mind Michelangelo's neoplatonic notion according to which the artist's role is to release the concept inherent to the raw material through an intellectual and spiritual process that enables the hand of the artist to be guided by divine inspiration. In a well-known sonnet from ca. 1538-44, Michelangelo expressed this notion in verses akin to a manifesto: "Not even the best of artists has any conception/ that a single marble block does not contain/ within its excess, and that is only attained/ by the hand that obeys the intellect."⁴ Beautiful and haunting, Michelangelo's thought has been thought, over the centuries, by many artists, especially other sculptors and ceramists. Mateescu, too, conceptualizes the art making process in a similar way. The artist wrote: "Each new sculpture I create is as independent as breath. Creation is a moment of mystic revelation, of profound love, of ecstasy, it is the moment of the sublime and of the divine."⁵ How independent is

¹ Mateescu, Patriciu. Personal website. Retrieved December 30, 2015. <<http://patrickmateescu.com/portfolio.html>>.

² Colette Czapski Hemingway. "Of Clay, and the Initial Stages of Sculpture." In Gaskell, Ivan, and Henry Lie, "Sketches in Clay for Projects by Gian Lorenzo Bernini: Theoretical, Technical, and Case Studies". *Harvard University Art Museums Bulletin*, 6.3, (1999), 31.

³ Mateescu, Patriciu, 2016.

⁴ Michelangelo. Poem 151. In Saslow, James M., translator. *The Poetry of Michelangelo*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

⁵ Mateescu, Patriciu, 2016.

breath? Each breath we take comes naturally and yet it has no *raison d'être* if divorced from the body that takes it. If breathing is a metaphor for art making, inspiration visits the artist of its own accord, but cannot be grasped and materialized without the awareness and dedication of the artist. A quasi-religious experience, art making thus understood is both a pact and an act of love between the mind and the material.

Outgrowths of their medium, present-day manifestations of Michelangelo's neoplatonic principle of the sculptor who releases the concept hidden in the material, Mateescu's large-scale outdoor monuments seem to be modeled by the very idea that they are meant to stand for. For example, Mateescu's vision for *Eminescu* – the monument dedicated to the nineteenth-century Romantic who became Romania's national poet – appears to be a sculptural distillation of the cultural landscape that Eminescu created and influenced. Singular and yet leaning over as if to reach out to the world, the figure of the poet is an abstraction whose elegant lines and angles aptly illustrate the poetic realm of Eminescu and his followers.

Subtly site-specific and combining unusual textures, Mateescu's outdoor sculptures resonate with their surroundings by creating an environment where the transition from nature to art is as seamless or as violent as that from one natural form to another. His recent *Gilded Thorns* (2015) is a two-piece stoneware structure that, at 2.65 meters high, overwhelms the viewer. Vaguely organic and yet decisively modular, each "gilded thorn" comprises several sections and has an outer white shell and a golden side. The white section makes the sculpture look like a birch tree; the golden area flickers in the twilight like an autumn leaf. As a pair, the two "thorns" appear to be of the same kind, although not identical, and in a dialectical relationship to each other as well as to the natural surroundings.

Never abstract, but always abstracted, Mateescu's sculpture occupies that creatively fertile space between representation and non-representation. His series titled *The Kiss and The Seed* (2014) adopt a highly controlled visual vocabulary comprised exclusively of spheres and halves and quarters of spheres. The combination of angular and round shapes of this modular world takes on human and organic meaning. Adjacent planes kiss and spheres split open to trap smaller spheres in. Additionally, despite the crisp geometry, the artist's handling of the material leads to a contrast between glazed and unglazed as well as between colorful and colorless, thereby creating a rich texture that enhances the shadows that the objects cast and the reflections that animate their surfaces. The artist uses the transformative power of the material to create objects whose geometric and organic qualities exude an exceptional creative energy that complements nature and keeps the viewer engaged.

Mateescu's outdoor sculpture presents a doubly dialectical character, between the constituent parts of the piece as well as between the piece and the site of installation. *Haiku* (2003-4) epitomizes this double relationship by drawing a parallel with Japanese poetry. Like a haiku, Mateescu's sculpture is comprised of two parts – two complementary spirals – that respond to each other in a balanced dance. Devoid of actual subject matter, Mateescu's sculptural haiku is each and every haiku in its basic and all-encompassing form. The choice of the spiral as a motif makes the piece playful and adds a dimension of lightheartedness. This sense of playfulness corresponds to the Japanese aesthetic principle of "karumi," an essential ingredient of haiku-like verse. Through a *mise-en-abîme* effect, the two-part nature of the sculpture and its jocular and dynamic structure recreate the relationship between the piece and the natural environment that surrounds it. Mateescu's Haiku enlivens the garden and transforms it into a three-dimensional support for sculptural calligraphy. The piece thereby becomes a template for the viewer to envision his or her own haiku.

The same controlled tension between sculpture and landscape is at play with Mateescu's *Gargoyles* (2000) and *Heavenly Hands* (2001). Anatomical fragments and abstracted forms of great plasticity at the same time, these two series are not only representational, but also whimsically evocative of other potential referents. For example, one of the "gargoyles" looks like a ram that emerges from the woods in a moonlit clearing. Similarly, as the artist explained, the "hands" are equally calling to mind oddly shaped cloud formations in which one can read recognizable forms and stories. These modern gargoyles and blessing hands function metonymically at several levels. Historically, they bring to mind the protective carvings of medieval cathedrals and Byzantine iconography. Symbolically, they stand for the horrors of today's world, in the case of the gargoyles, and for divine transcendence revealed in and through nature, in the case of the blessing hands. Formally, they match the organic shapes of the environment in which they are inserted. Not unlike masks of the Japanese Noh theater, Mateescu's *Gargoyles* give a character to each tree to which they are attached and thereby create a silent play that nature itself performs, enabled by the sculptor's intervention.

According to Mateescu, the ceramic arts have a miraculous dimension.⁶ I take that to refer to the transformative power of the inspired ceramist, who makes the clay into something that transcends its material. The previously discussed *Blessing Hands* series marries the focus on nature, in terms of the creative tension between sculpture and its environment, with a spiritual dimension that permeates both subject matter and the art making process. The *Hands* have a richly textured surface that calls to mind the decision making of the artist at the time of creation. For the artist, modeling the clay is a spiritual experience; the indexical art he creates allows for this sense of spiritual practice to come across after the piece is completed. In addition, the *Hands* appear to emerge from the ground, thus uniting artistic creation – literally and figuratively earthly – with a state of seeking divine transcendence. Similarly, Mateescu's recent *Madre Deus* (2015) is both an abstracted icon, if you see the smaller white half-sphere as the head of the Virgin and the larger gilt half-sphere as a Byzantine halo, and an abstracted natural structure, evoking, for example, a seeded fruit. Once again, the sculpture combines the natural and the divine through abstracted modular forms and subtle and playful hints to representation.

In line with the transformative and revelatory capabilities of clay, a ceramic portrait is both flesh and clay and neither at the same time. In Mateescu's *Erosions* (1994) series, the subject matter is not the portrait itself, but the eroded surface that removes clarity and replaces it with expressive potential. Janine Antoni's *Lick and Lather* (1993), self-portraits cast in chocolate and soap that the artist licked and washed, have equally eroded surfaces. Antoni's work, like the candy installations of Felix Gonzalez-Torres – piles of candy that "erode" and disappear as visitors consume them –, use the metaphor of erosion to speak to the dynamics of bodily needs and cravings. Mateescu's *Erosions* employ a similar metaphor to challenge the limits of representation in portraiture and to encourage the viewer to participate in completing the work of art. Conceptualizing this portrait series as "relics from a far-distant future" that carry a "spiritual dimension,"⁷ Mateescu intentionally erases detail to create mystery and to stimulate the imagination of the viewer in ways that make the object become a blueprint of what unfolds in the mind. As Antoni put it in an interview, "that removal," or the erosion integral to the art making process, "is a generous act, in the sense that it creates a place for the viewer."⁸ Thus understood, the *Erosions* epitomize the previously mentioned Michelangelesque notion of removing the excess to reveal the concept.

⁶ Personal communication with the artist, November 2015.

⁷ Mateescu, Patriciu, 2016.

⁸ Horodner, Stuart, and Janine Antoni. "Janine Antoni". *BOMB Magazine*, no. 66 (1999), 50.

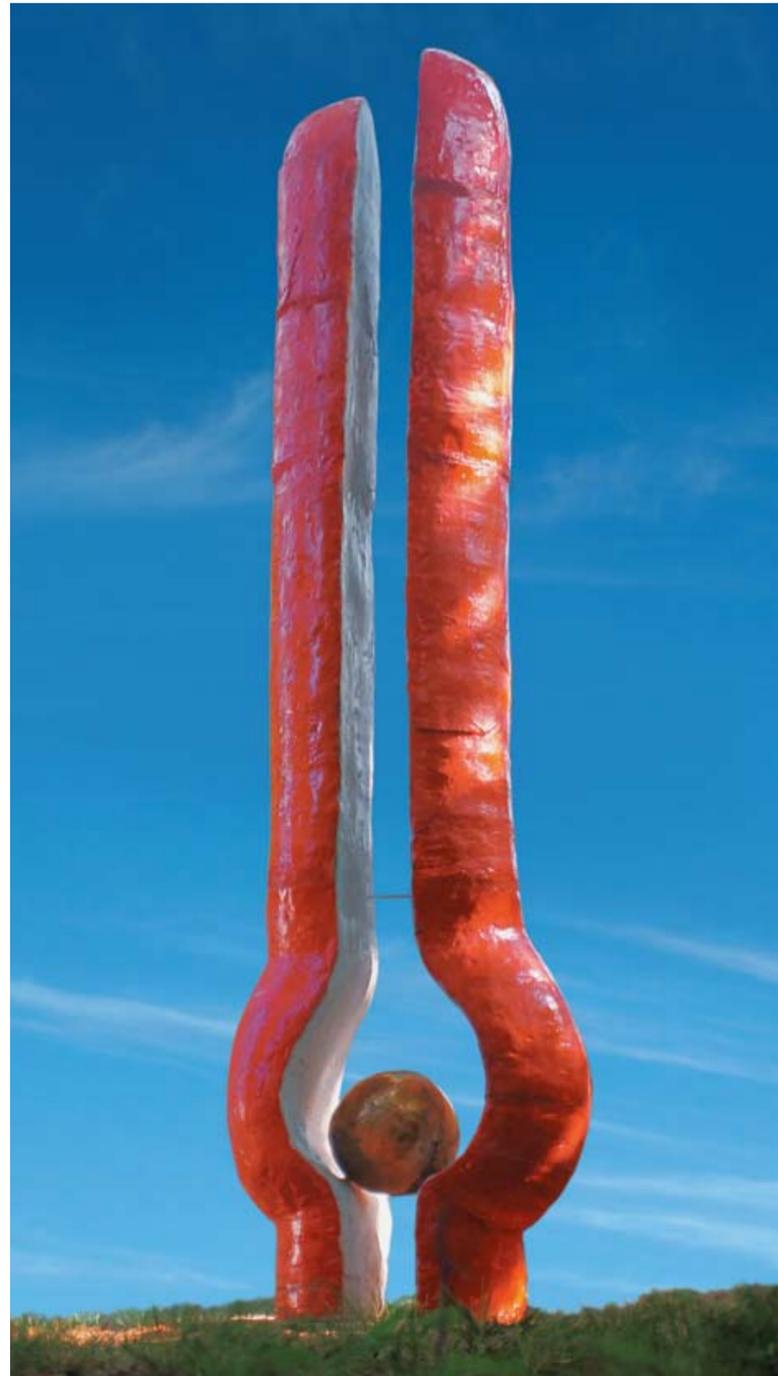
Emotional and transcending like the *Blessing Hands*, spiritual like *Madre Deus*, and similar to *Erosions* in how it exposes the limits and challenges of figuration, Mateescu's *Craters* series represents a meditation on how the ceramic arts can most effectively express dramatic realities and fears that haunt artist and viewers alike. Made in 1987 and revisited in 2010, when the piece titled *God the Savior* was added to the series, *Craters* are large vessels that look like utilitarian ceramic containers. Upon closer inspection, one realizes that the decoration takes over the object. Seemingly arbitrary shapes and colors co-exist, inside and on the surface of these vessels, with clay figurines that appear to climb the walls of the vessels in an attempt to escape. But where would decoration go and what would it become if it leaves its support? In fact, in the case of Mateescu's *Craters*, the decoration is the *raison d'être* of the vessel. The vessel exists so that the figures can try to leave it. A rich metaphor for human struggle, *Craters* speaks to religious feeling that animates and soothes and to fights we fight without knowing why or for the wrong reasons. The clay figurines of the *Craters* evoke the pathos of our own attempts to transcend our condition.

Fueled by love for the material and shaped by a keen awareness of the mechanisms of art making, the oeuvre of Patriciu Mateescu unites the natural and the abstract, the organic and the geometric, and the rational and the emotional in a generative creative tension. Mateescu's sculpture enables and celebrates the transformative power of the material and invites viewers to partake in the celebration.

PLATES



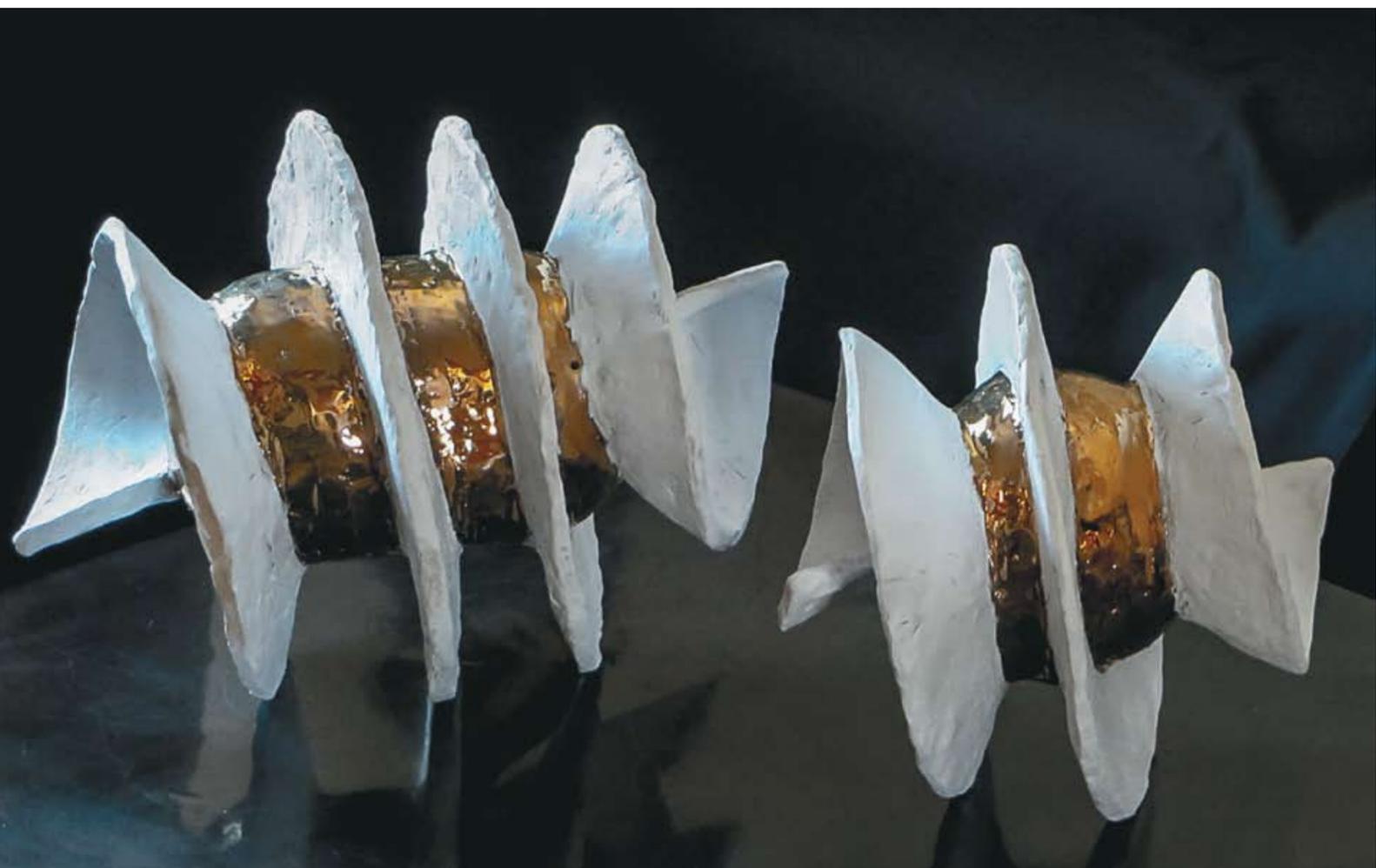
Blue Tango, 2016
glazed and gilded stoneware
2.40 m high



Red Tango, 2016
glazed stoneware
2.5 m high



Madre Deus, 2015
gilded stoneware
55 cm high



Cantata I, 2015
gilded stoneware
40 cm high



Cantata II, 2015
porcelain
45 cm high



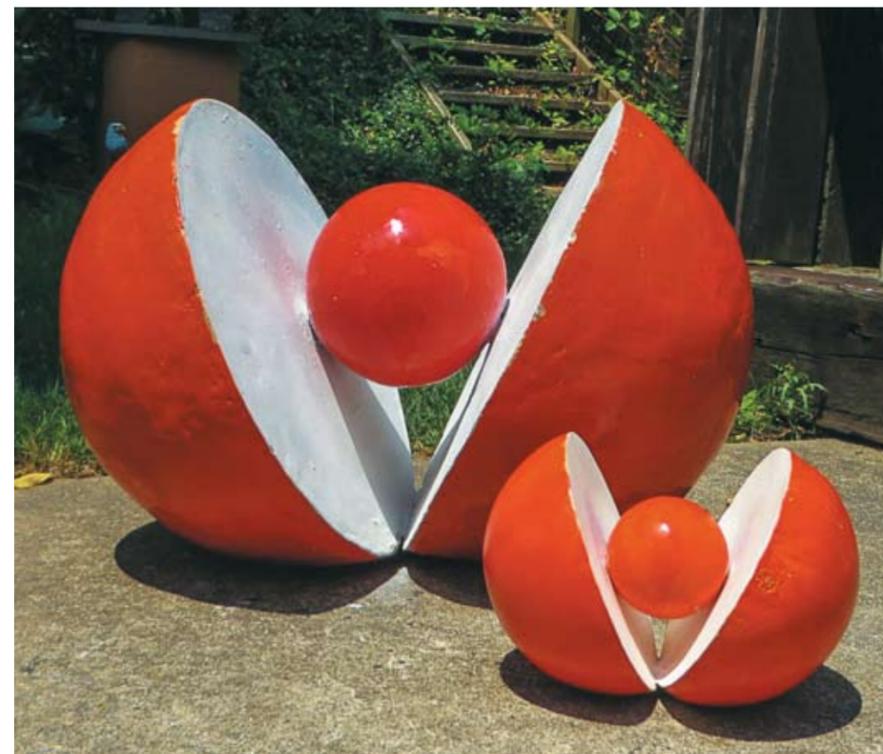
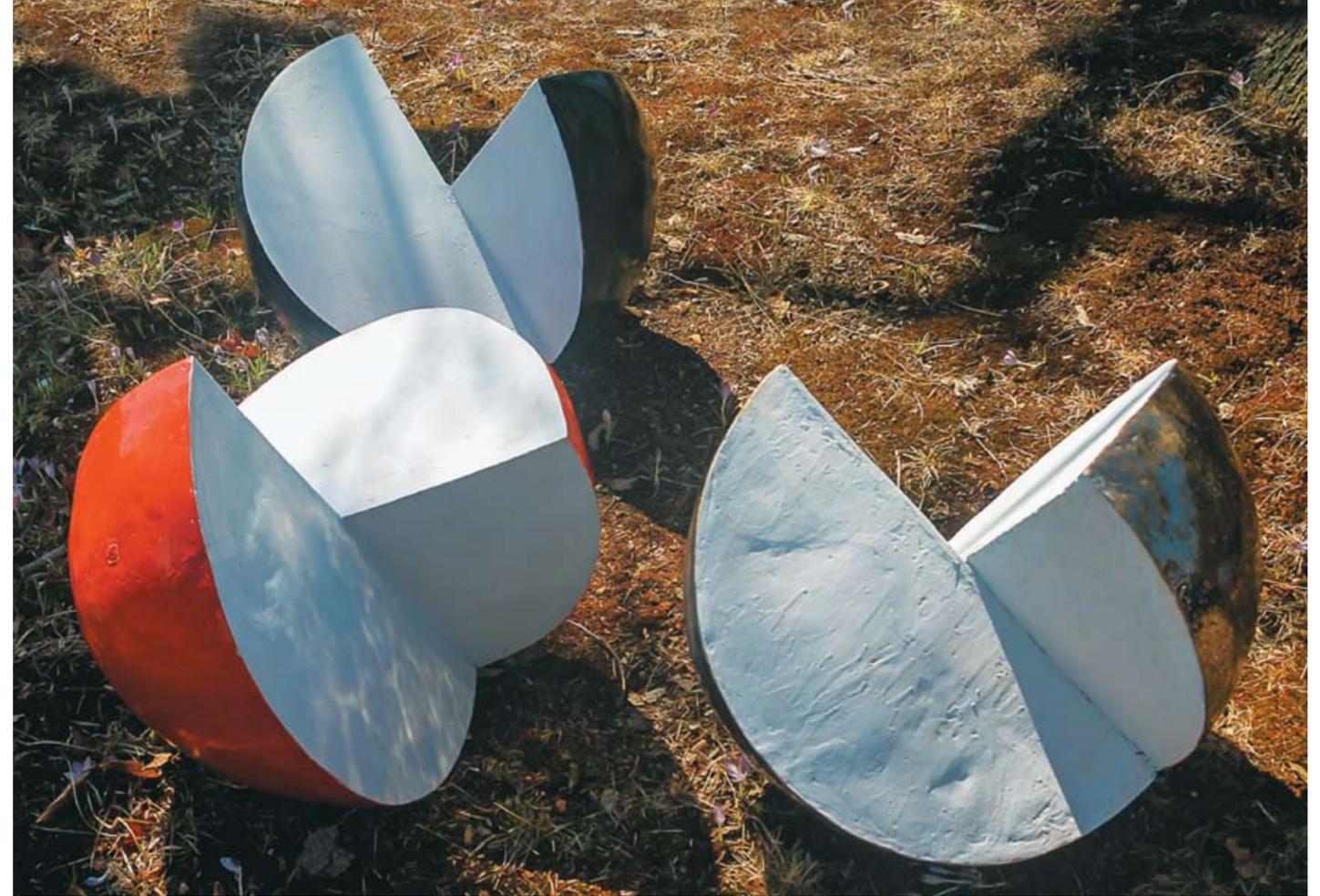
Cantata III & Cantata III Extended, 2015
porcelain
50 cm high



Cantata IV, 2015
porcelain
50 cm high



Cantata V & Cantata V Extended, 2015
porcelain
45 cm high

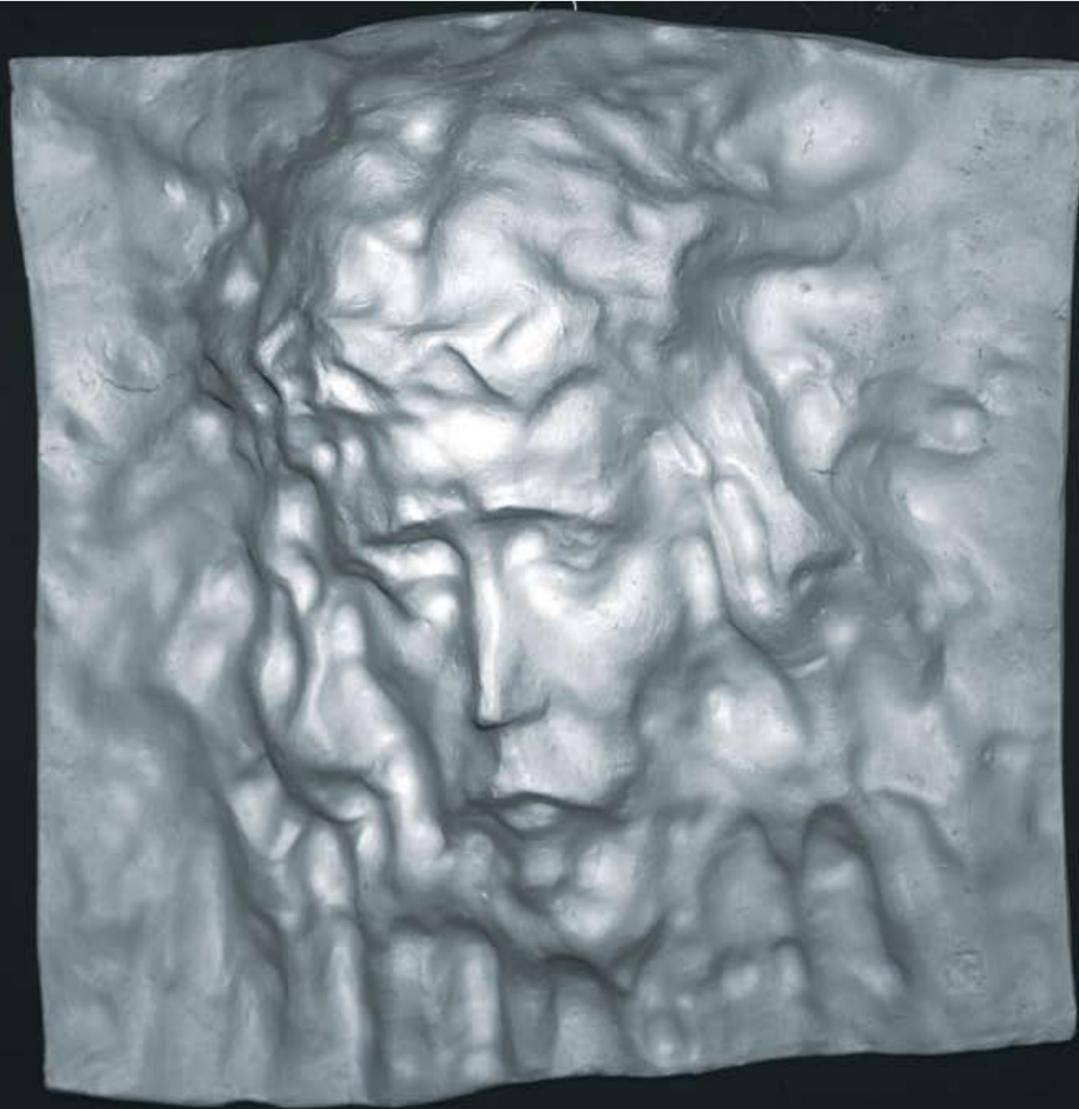


The Kiss, 2014
stoneware
60 cm high

The Seed, 2014
stoneware
60 cm high



Gilded Thorns, 2015
gilded stoneware
2.60 m high



The Shroud, 2001
earthenware
50 cm high



Nightingale, 2005
gilded stoneware
4.50 m high

Twisted Ribbon, 2009
gilded stoneware
4.50 m high



Column for
My Homeland, 2011
gilded stoneware
8 m high



Bird's Flute, 2008
gilded stoneware
3.50 m high

32



33

Obelisk No 1, 2012
platinum on stoneware
4 m high



Obelisk No 2, 2013
platinum on stoneware
4 m high



Rhythm, 2004
gilded stoneware
2.20 m high



Zaraza, 2014
porcelain
1.50 m high



Drawing No 2, 2013
1.06 m x 1.06 m



Onion No 2, 2013
stoneware
1.10 m high



Drawing No 1, 2013
1.06 m x 1.06 m



Drawing No 3, 2013
1.06 m x 1.06 m

Onion No 1, 2013
stoneware
79 cm high



Onion No 3, 2013
stoneware
79 cm high





Drawing No 4, 2013
1.06m x 1.06 m

Onion No 4, 2013
stoneware
74 cm high



Drawing No 5, 2013
1.06 m x 1.06 m

Onion No 5, 2013
stoneware
74 cm high



Drawing No 6, 2013
1.06 x 1.06 m

Onion No 6, 2013
stoneware
95 cm high



Drawing No 3, 2013
1.06m x 1.06 m

Onion No 7, 2013
stoneware
1.12 m high





Hora Staccato, 2012
glazed stoneware
85 cm high



Broken Ring, 2010
glazed stoneware
95 cm high



Open Stage No 1,
2012
glazed stoneware
variable dimensions



Open Stage No 2,
2012
glazed stoneware
variable dimensions



Candy, 2010
glazed stoneware
40 cm high



The Coin, 2012
glazed stoneware
81 cm high



Attitude No 1, 2009
glazed stoneware
1.20 m high



Grace, 2005
gilded stoneware
81 cm high



Friends, 2005
gilded stoneware
81 cm high

Mother and Daughter, 2005
gilded stoneware
81 cm high



Lovers, 2005
gilded stoneware
2.50 m wide



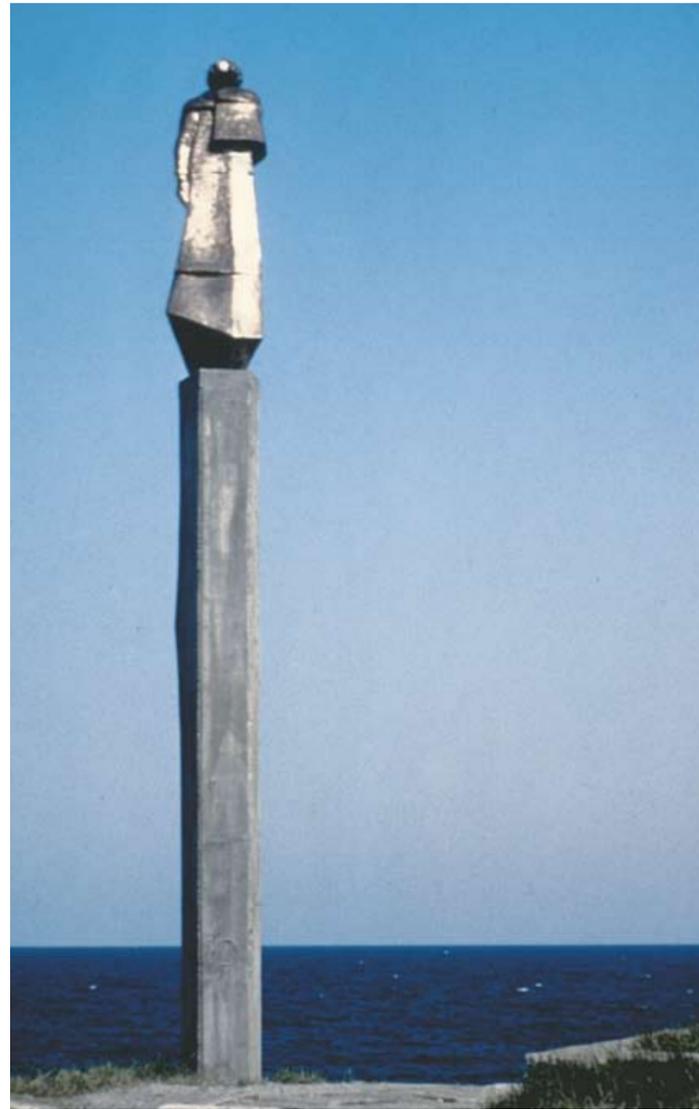
A Man and a Woman, 2005
gilded stoneware
2.50 m high



Eminescu, 1995
gilded stoneware – 3 m high
concrete column – 7 m high
Mangalia, Romania



Eminescu, details





Danubia, 1996
memorial to those killed
trying to cross the Danube
glazed stoneware
7 m high
Orsova, Romania





New Romania, 1998
glazed stoneware
5.60 m high
Snagov Island, Romania



River of Tears, 1999
memorial to women burnt
alive in a prison during the
bombardment of Ploiesti in 1942
glazed stoneware
5.60 m high



Blue Bird, 2002
glazed stoneware
2.30 m high
Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York



Blue Capricios, 2002
glazed stoneware
80 cm high

Black Capricios, 2002
glazed stoneware
1.10 m high

Skidmore College,
Saratoga Springs, New York



Haiku No 1, 2003
glazed stoneware
installation: 1.35 m high and 3 m wide
Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey



Haiku No 2, 2003
glazed stoneware
installation: 1.15 m high and 2.20 m wide



Haiku No 3, 2003
glazed stoneware
installation: 1.25 m high and 3.20 m wide



Haiku No 4, 2003
glazed stoneware
installation: 1.55 m high and 2.90 m wide



Haiku No 5, 2003
glazed stoneware
installation: 1.55 m high and 2.50 m wide



Haiku No 6, 2003
glazed stoneware
installation: 2.80 m high and 4.20 m wide
Panevezys, Lithuania

Olive Trees of Volos,
2006
glazed and gilded
stoneware
79 cm high



Olive Trees of Volos,
2006
glazed and gilded
stoneware
81 cm high



Olive Trees of Volos, 2006
glazed and gilded stoneware
79 cm high



Bleeding Trees, 2007
glazed stoneware
2.40 m high



Blue Hail, 2007
glazed and gilded stoneware
1.50 m high



Fighters, 1987
porcelain
30 cm high, 45 cm diameter

74



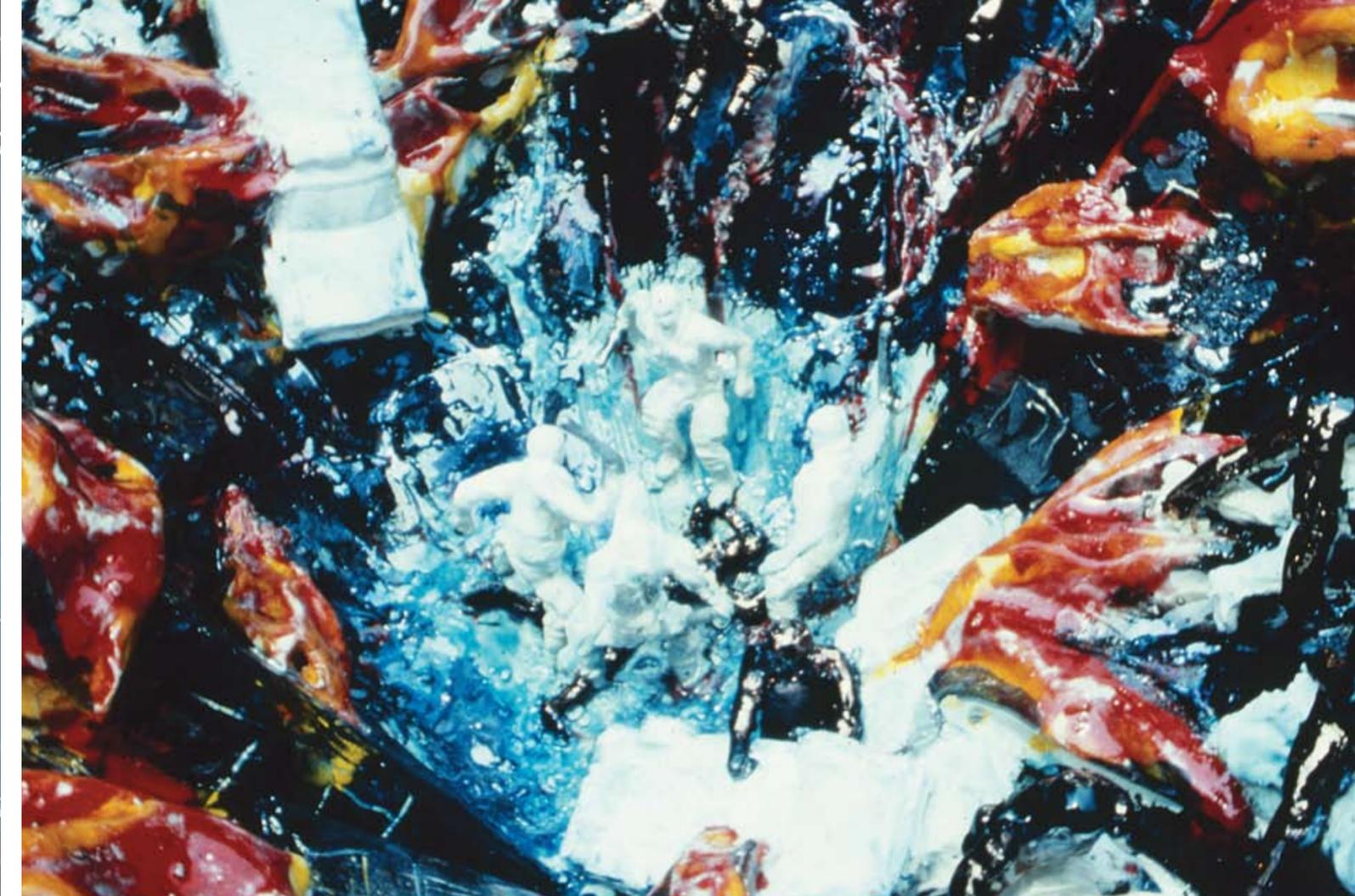
Worshippers, 1987
porcelain
32 cm high, 45 cm diameter

75



In Excelsis Deo, 1987
porcelain
30 cm high, 47 cm diameter

76



Hate, 1987
porcelain
32 cm high, 46 cm diameter

77



The Brides of Earth, 1987
porcelain
29 cm high, 49 cm diameter

78

79



The Golden Rush, 1987
porcelain
27 cm high, 50 cm diameter

79



Golden Horse, 1987
porcelain
29 cm high, 47 cm diameter

80



Children, 1987
porcelain
28 cm high, 51 cm diameter

81



Tobacco, 1987
porcelain
30 cm high, 55 cm diameter

82



God the Saviour, 2010
porcelain
30 cm high, 48 cm diameter

83



Heavenly Hand No 1, 2001
black glazed stoneware
1.30 m high



Heavenly Hand No 2, 2001
black glazed stoneware
1.30 m high



Heavenly Hand No 3, 2001
black glazed stoneware
1.40 m high



Heavenly Hand No 4, 2001
black glazed stoneware
1.40 m high



Heavenly Hands, 2001
maquette



Heavenly Hand No 5, 2001
black glazed stoneware
1.37 m high



Heavenly Hands, 2002
black glazed stoneware
installation ensemble: 2.50 m high
State University of Northridge,
Northridge, California

Erosions

Each new sculpture I create is as independent as breath.
Creation is a moment of mystic revelation, of profound love, of ecstasy, it is the moment
of the sublime and the divine.

This breath, free from past and future, gives my work authenticity.
I am never preoccupied with, nor restricted by continuity.

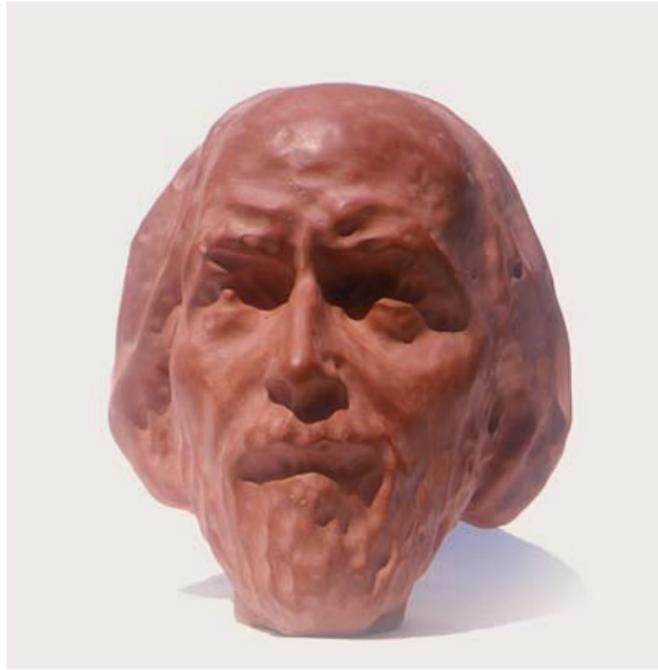
This time, my breath, although short, was deep and took me back to my youth and my love of
the portrait. At first, I made portraits with strong, even aggressive, details. While working, I recalled
the eroded faces on the gothic sculptures of medieval cathedrals. My erosions are realised through
a collaboration between me and liquid clay.

As the sea washes away invasive footprints and purifies the beach, so does the erosions I willfully
create purify and add spiritual dimension to my portraits.

They seem to be relics from a far-distant future.



Eminescu, 1993
terracotta
47 cm high, 60 cm wide



The Prophet, 1993
terracotta
35 cm high



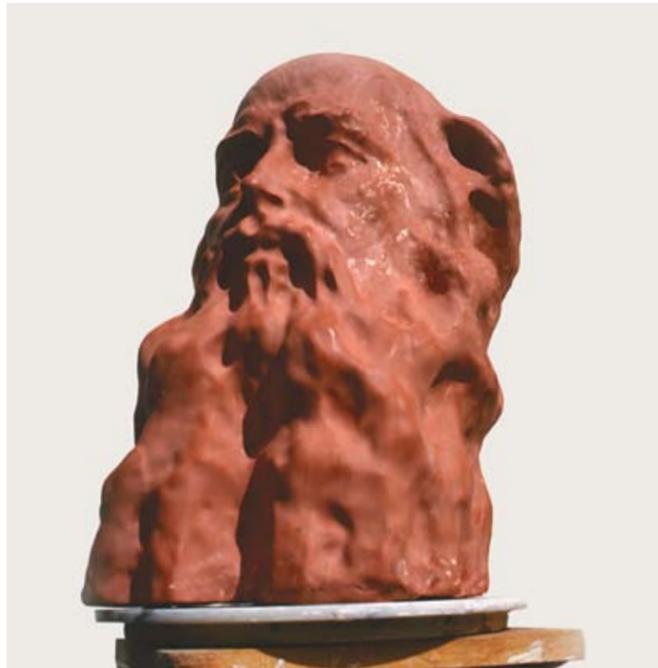
The Preacher, 1993
terracotta
34 cm high



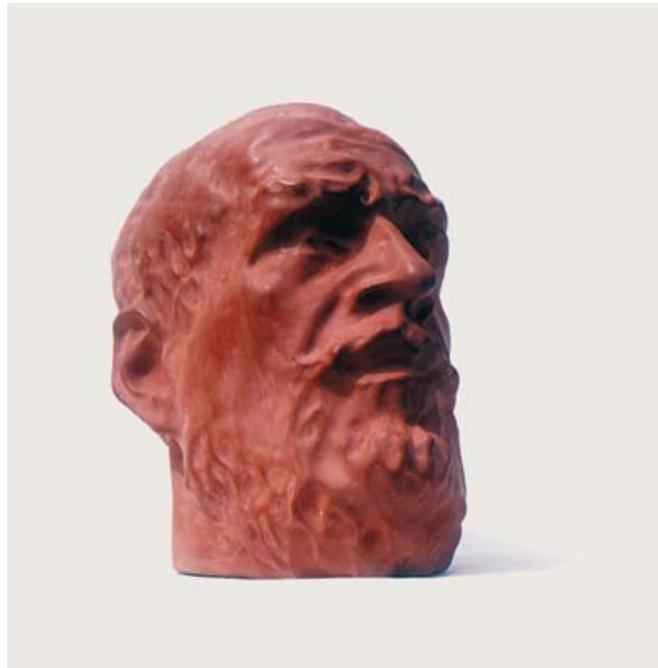
New York Girl No 1, 1993
terracotta
37 cm high



New York Girl No 3, 1993
terracotta
27 cm high



The Patriarch, 1993
terracotta
45 cm high



The Messenger, 1993
terracotta
30 cm high



New York Girl No 2, 1993
terracotta
26 cm high



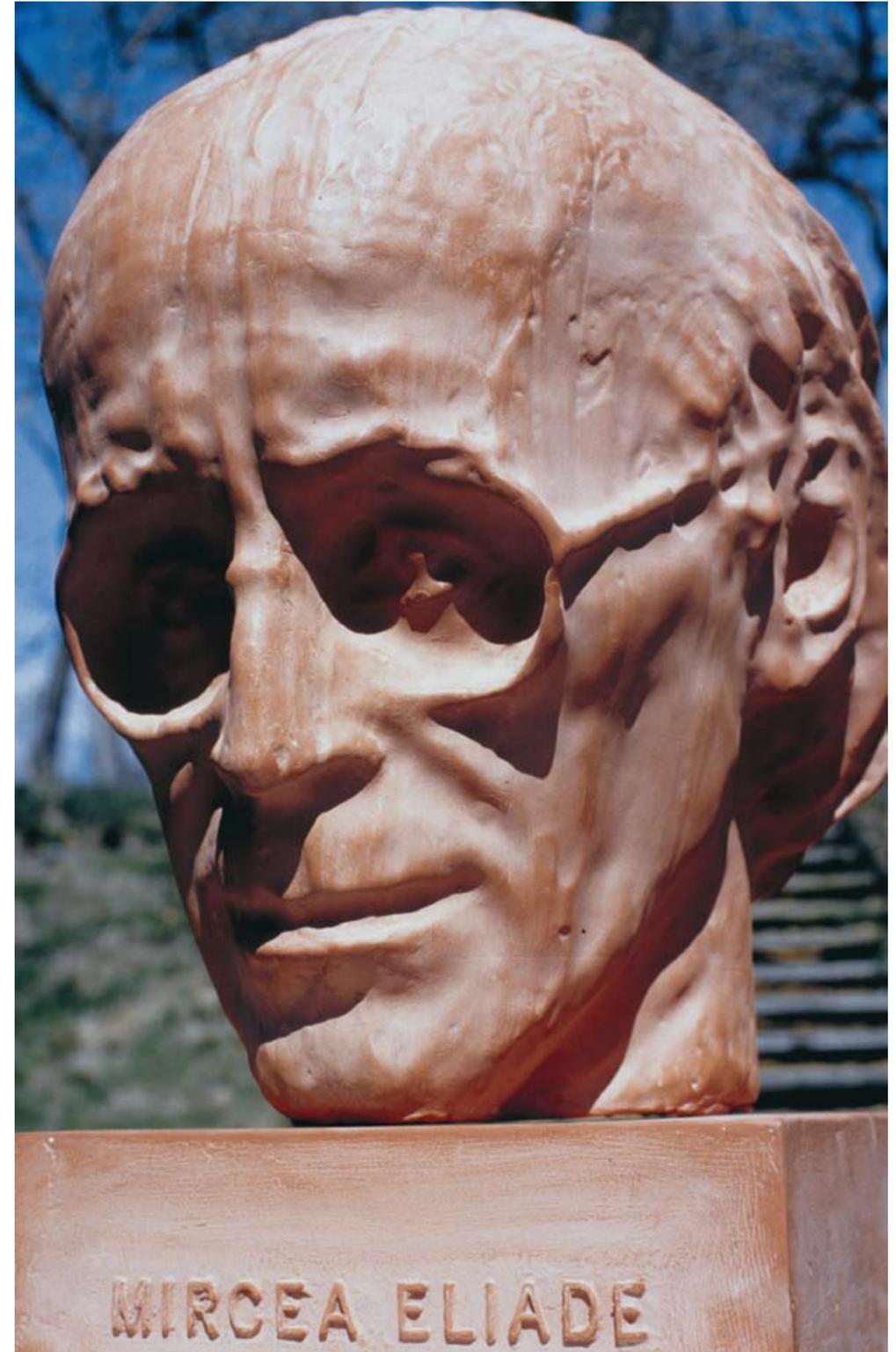
New York Girl No 4, 1993
terracotta
27 cm high



New York Girl No 5, 1993
terracotta
28 cm high



New York Girl No 6, 1993
terracotta
35 cm high



Mircea Eliade, 1993
terracotta
40 cm high



Spins, 2002
black glazed stoneware
installation, variable dimensions



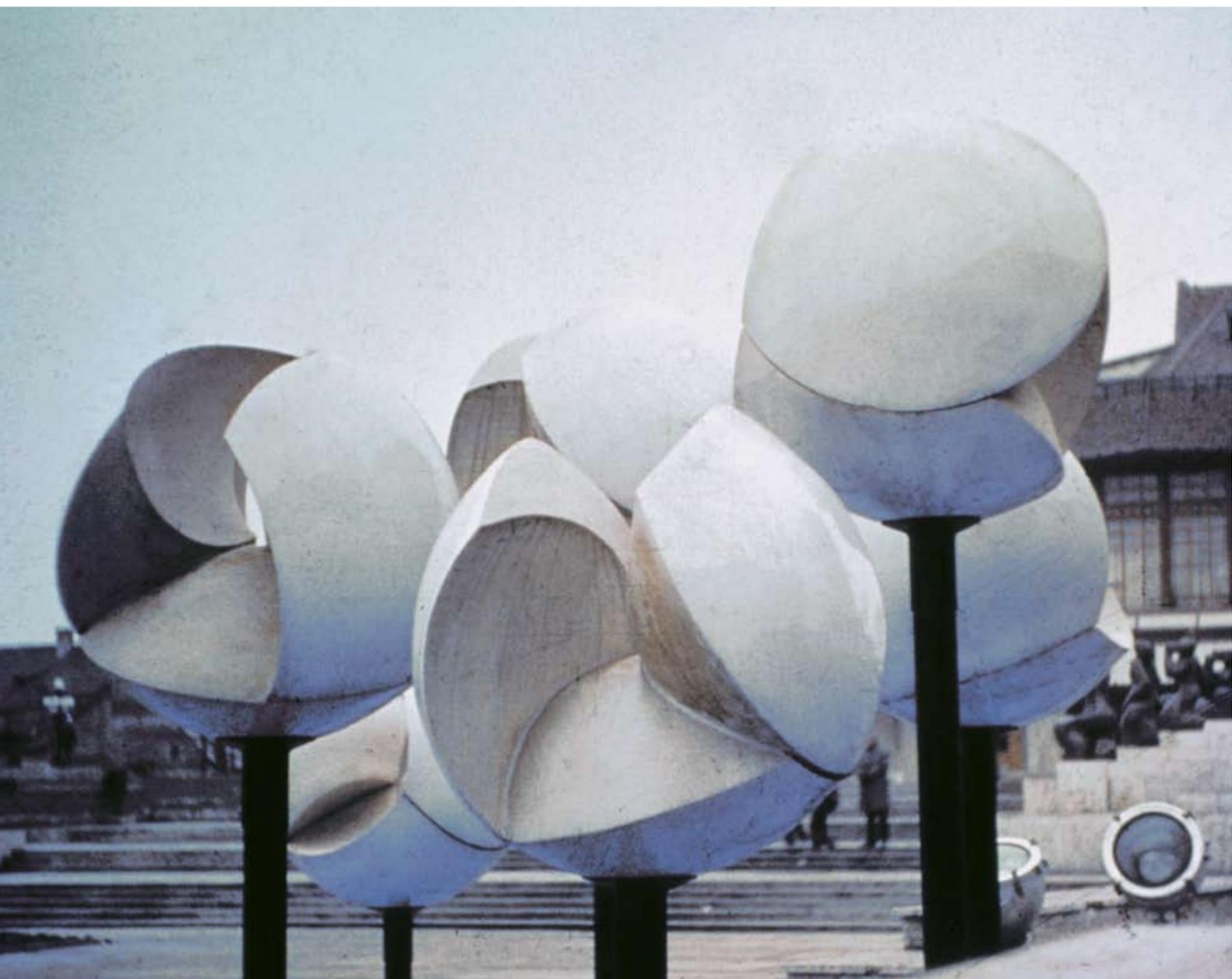
Spins, details



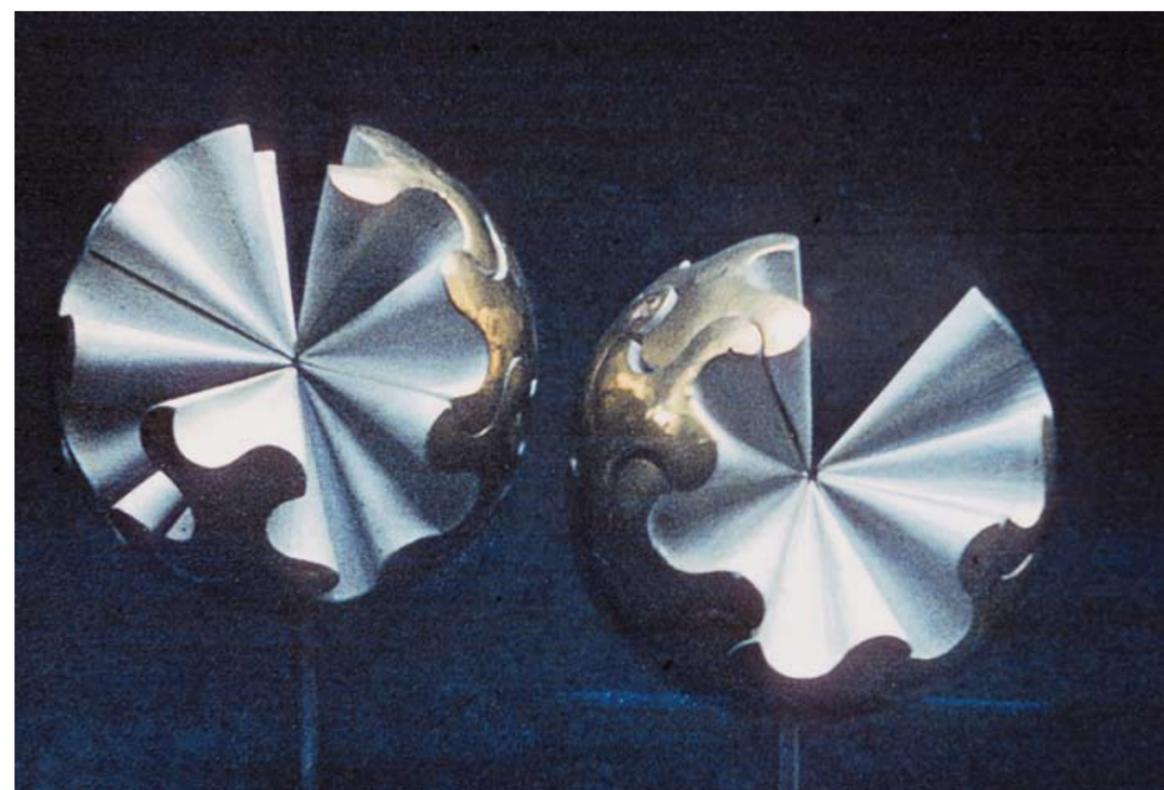
Getta, 1988
glazed stoneware
1.10 m high



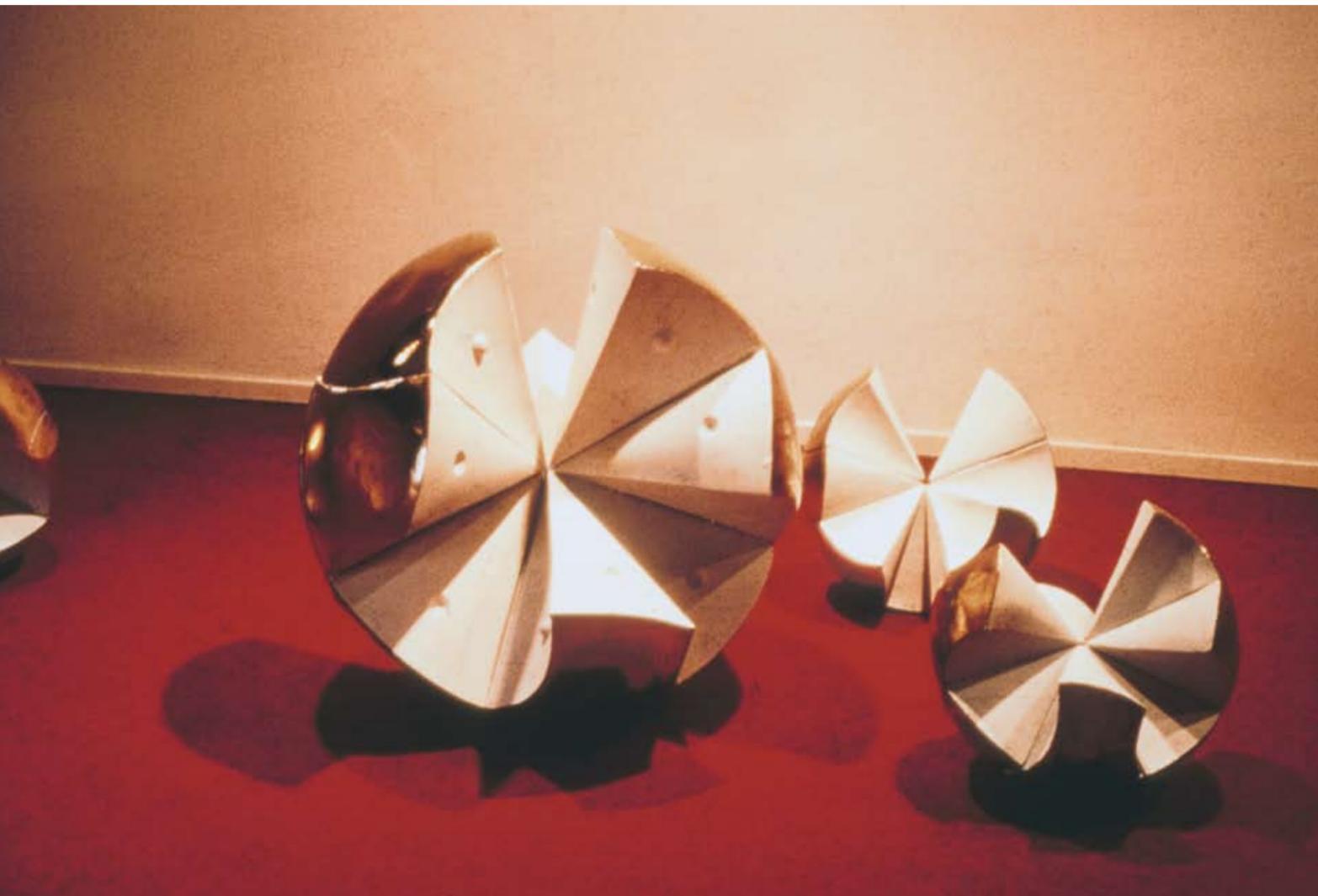
Nabucco, 1988
polyester and fiberglass
2 m wide and 80 cm high



Fountain, 1970
glazed porcelain
Targu Mures, Romania



Untitled, 1970-1972
gilded porcelain



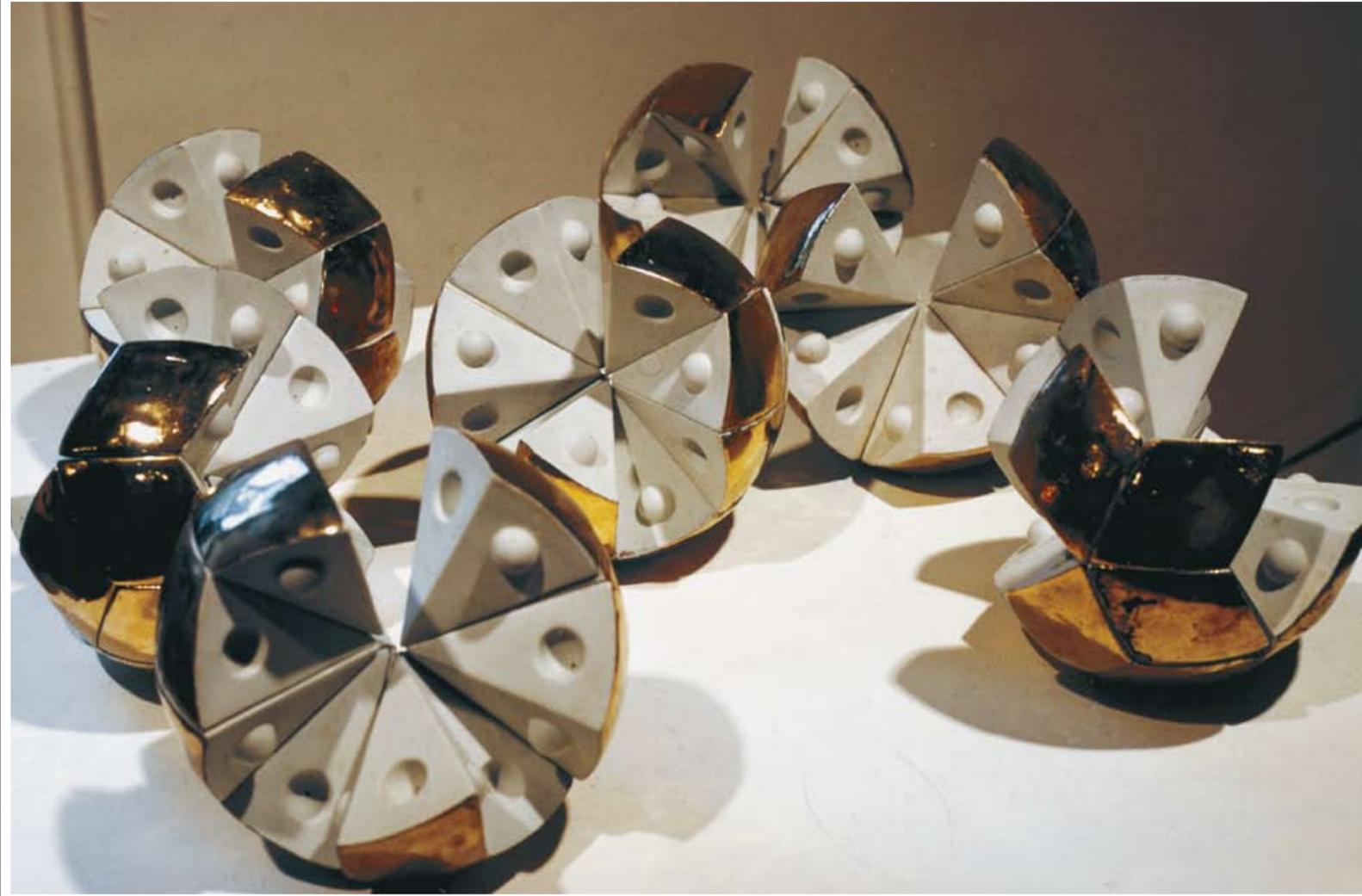
Untitled, 1970-1972
gilded porcelain



Untitled, 1970-1972
gilded porcelain



Untitled, 1970-1972
gilded porcelain



Untitled, 1970-1972
gilded porcelain



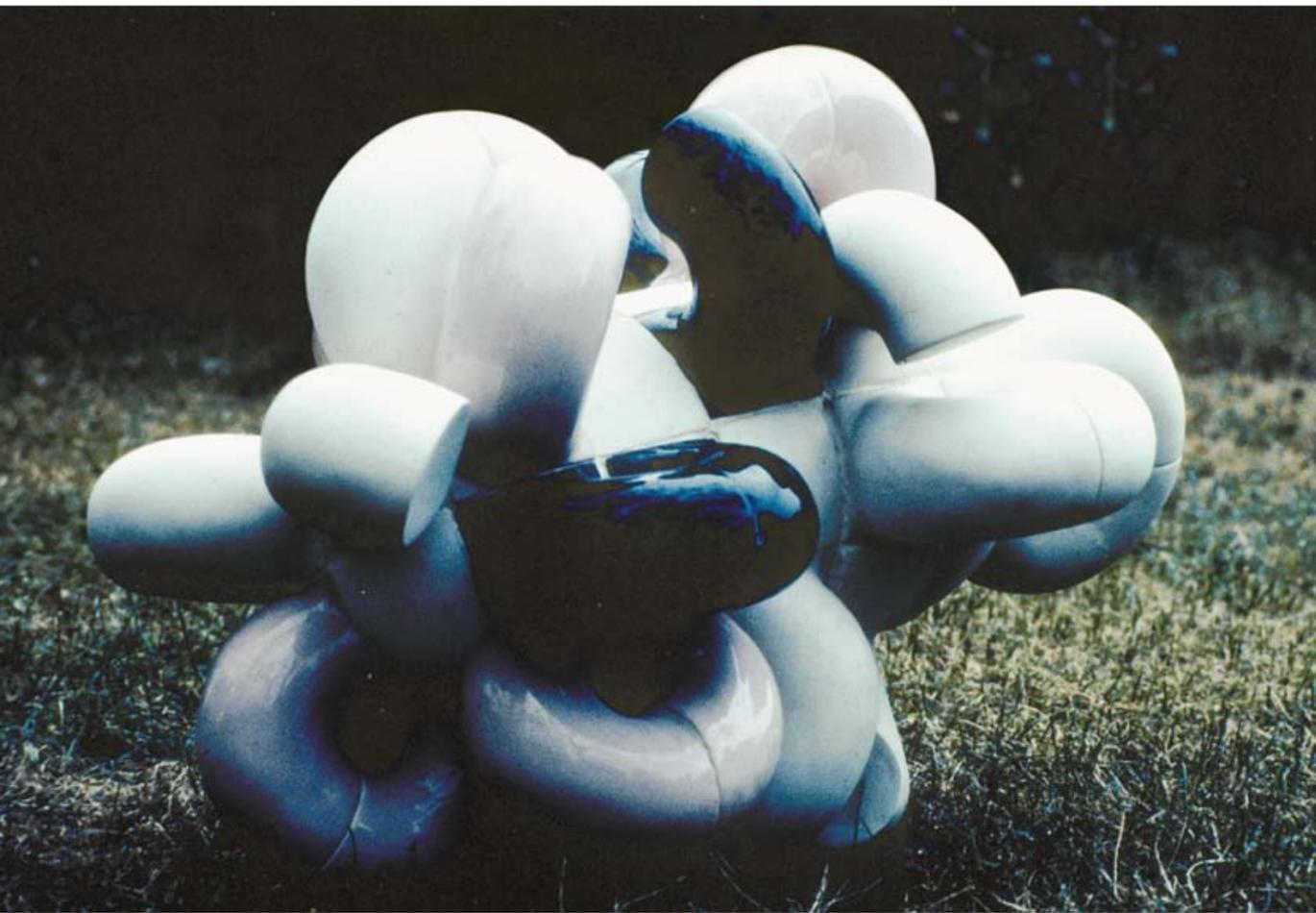
Rooster Comb, 1981
gilded porcelain
45 cm diameter



Yellow Knot, 1983
glazed porcelain
52 cm diameter



Black Knot, 1983
glazed porcelain
45 cm diameter



Long Knot, 1983
glazed porcelain
55 cm high and 1.05 m wide



Column, 1982
glazed porcelain
2.20 m high



Italian Flower No 1, 1979
glazed porcelain
32 cm diameter



Italian Flower No 2, 1979
glazed porcelain
32 cm diameter



Romanian Flower, 1978
porcelain bisque
40 cm diameter



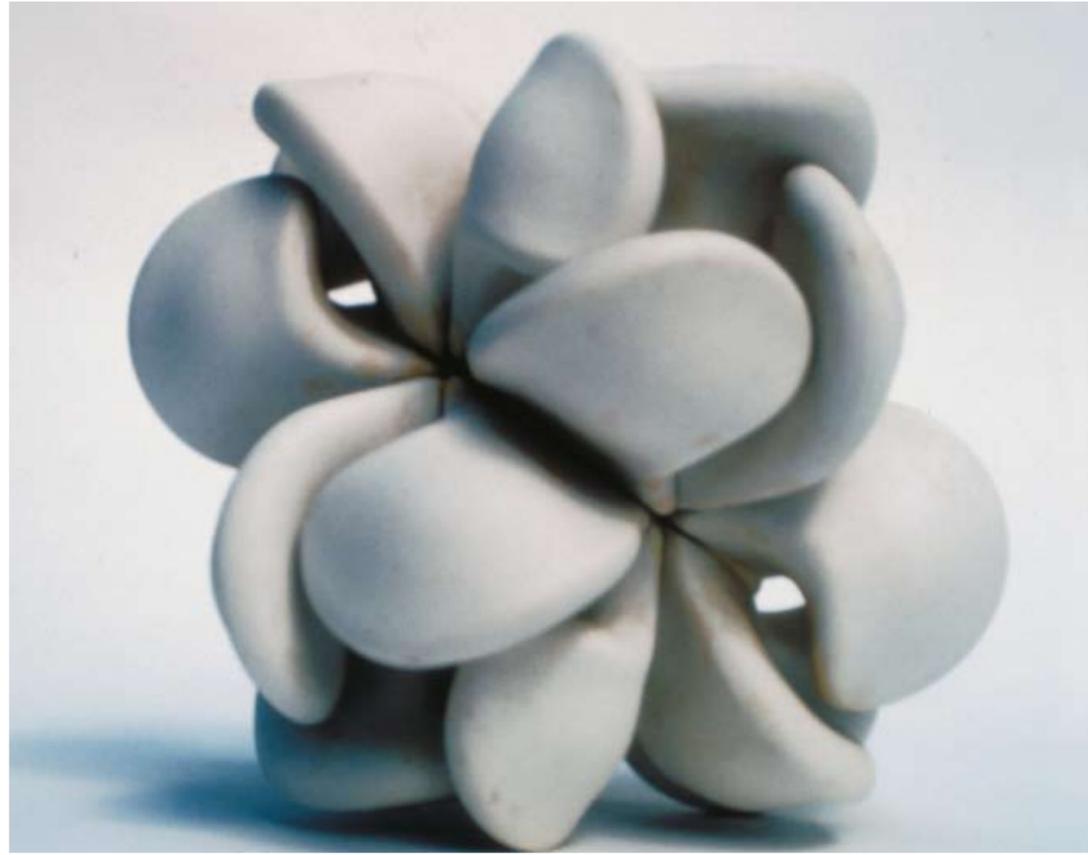
Italian Flower No 3, 1979
glazed porcelain
32 cm diameter



Italian Flower No 4, 1979
glazed porcelain
32 cm diameter



Sea Flower, 1978
black porcelain bisque
40 cm diameter



Oxnard Flower No 1, 1979
porcelain bisque
16 cm diameter



Oxnard Flower No 2, 1979
porcelain bisque
16 cm diameter



Oxnard Flower No 3, 1979
gilded porcelain
16 cm diameter



Oxnard Flower No 4, 1979
porcelain bisque
16 cm diameter



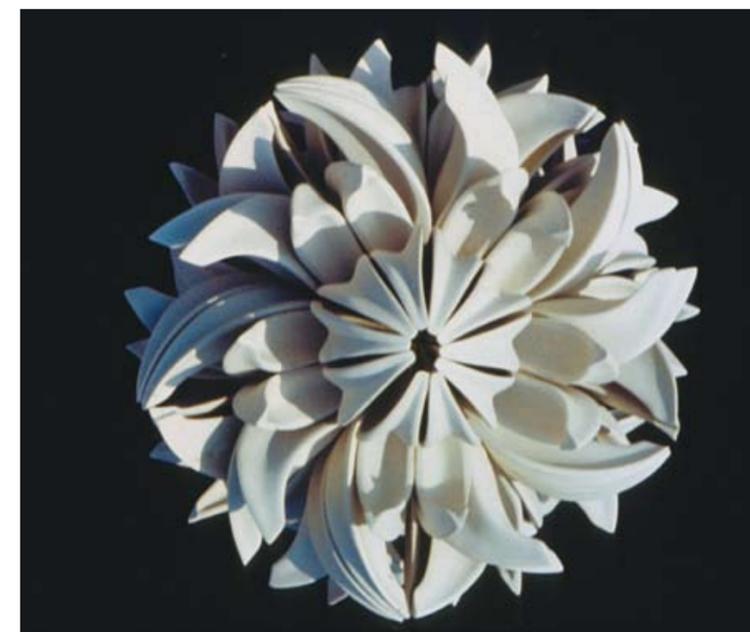
California Flower No 1, 1978
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



California Flower No 3, 1978
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



California Flower No 10, 1978
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



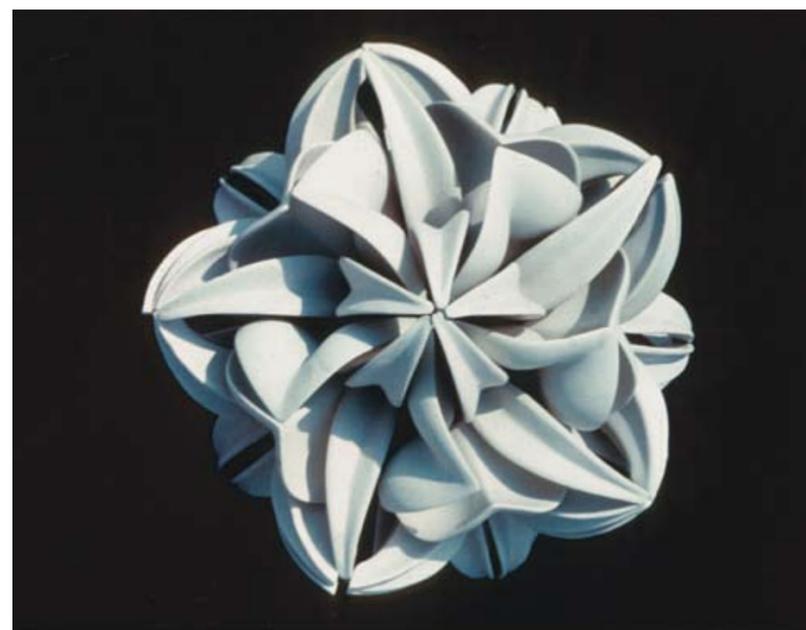
California Flower No 11, 1978
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



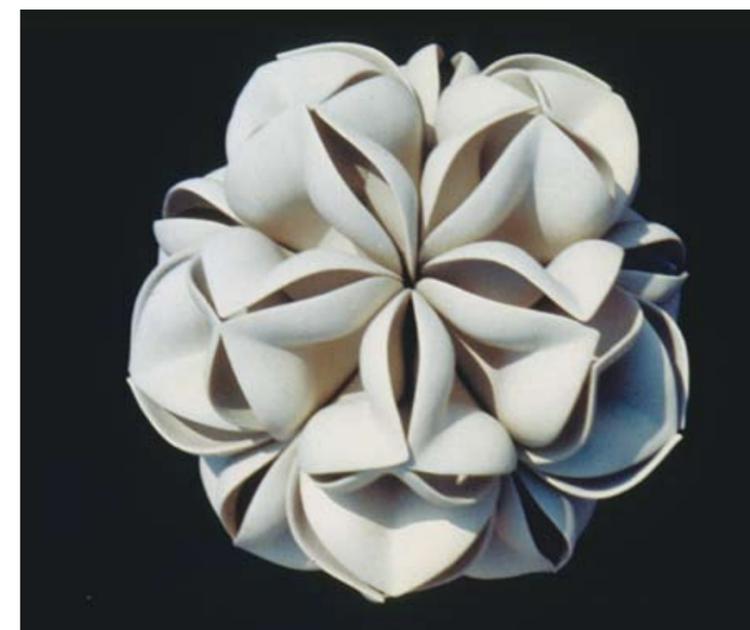
California Flower No 5, 1978
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



California Flower No 8, 1978
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



California Flower No 9, 1978
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



California Flower No 12, 1978
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



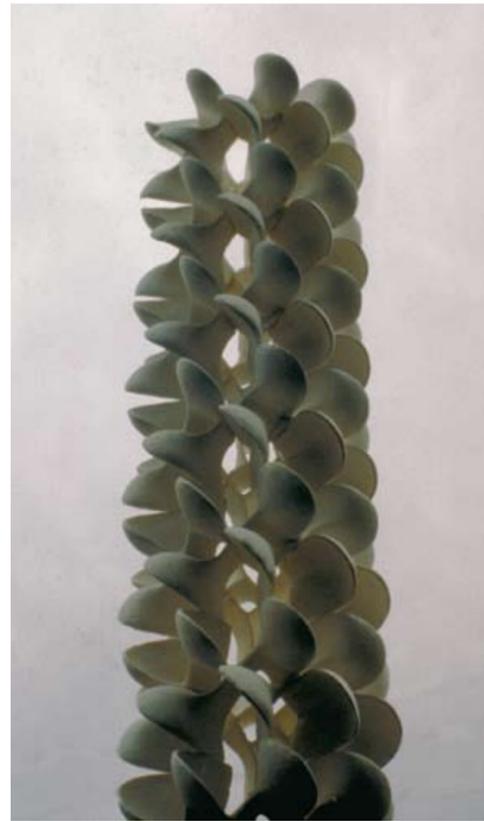
Sun Flower, 1979
porcelain bisque
24 cm diameter



Sand Flower, 1979
porcelain bisque
30 cm diameter



California Column, 1980
glazed porcelain
2.50 m high



California Columns, 1979-1980
porcelain bisque
70 cm



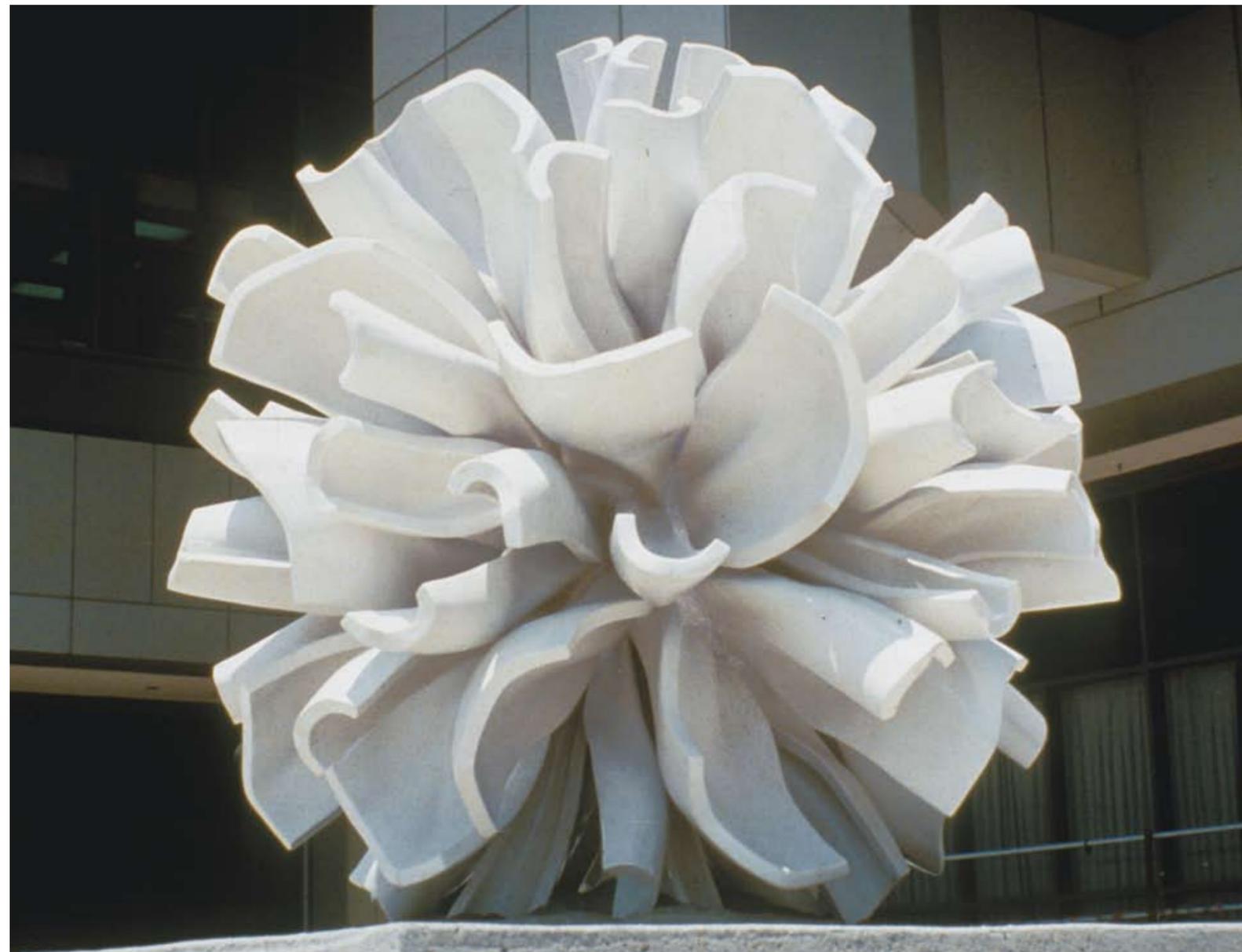
Love Flower No 1, 1980
polyester and fiberglass
4 m diameter
UCLA (University California,
Los Angeles), Los Angeles, California



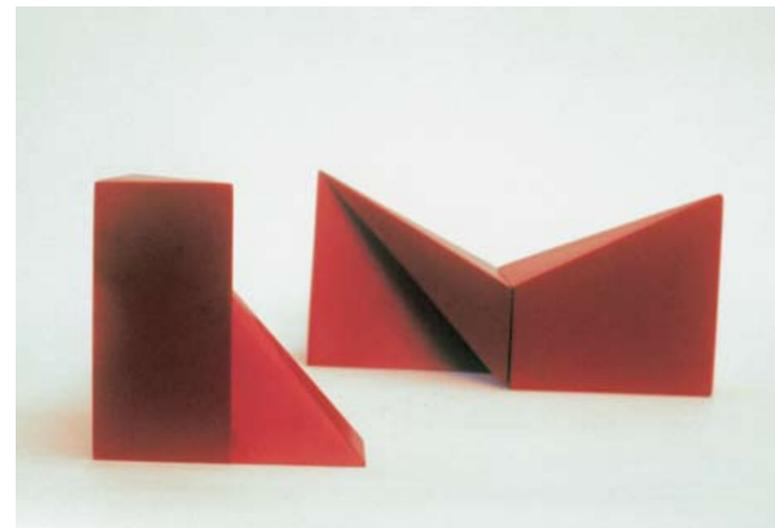
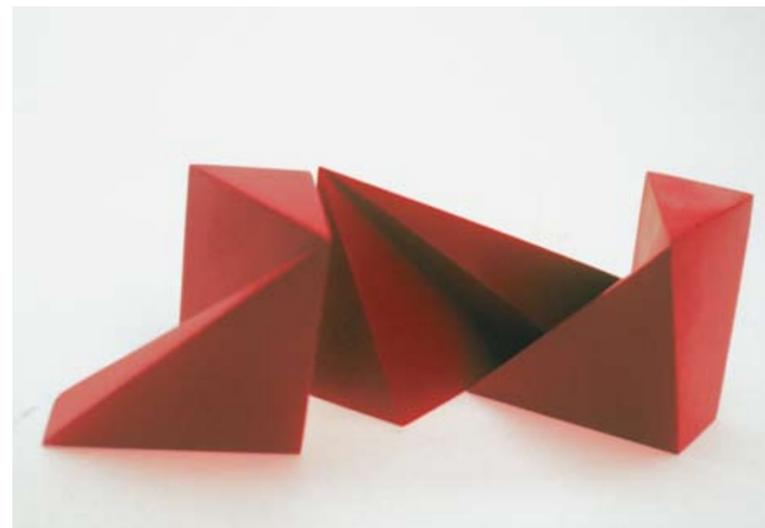
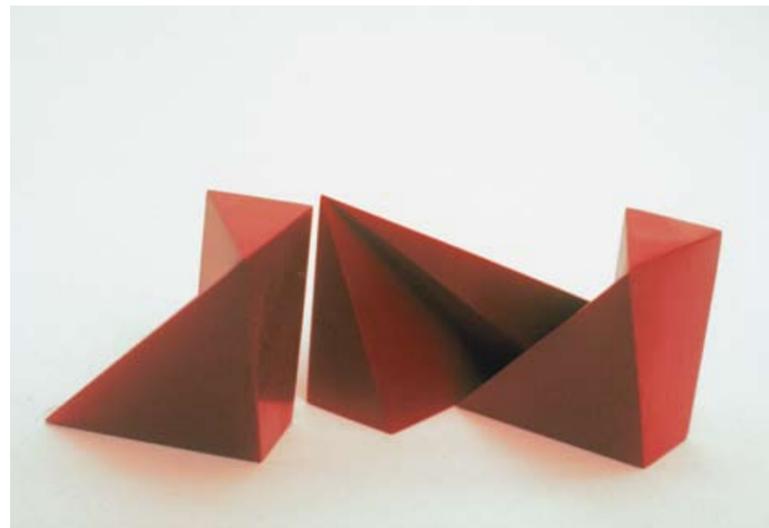
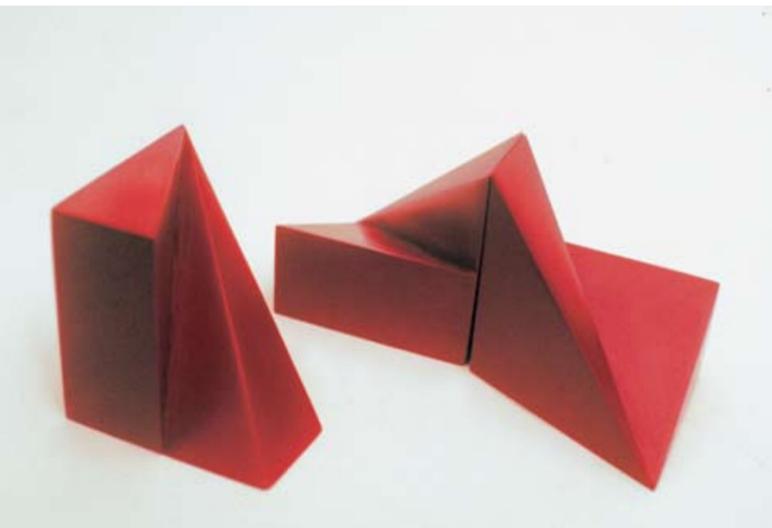
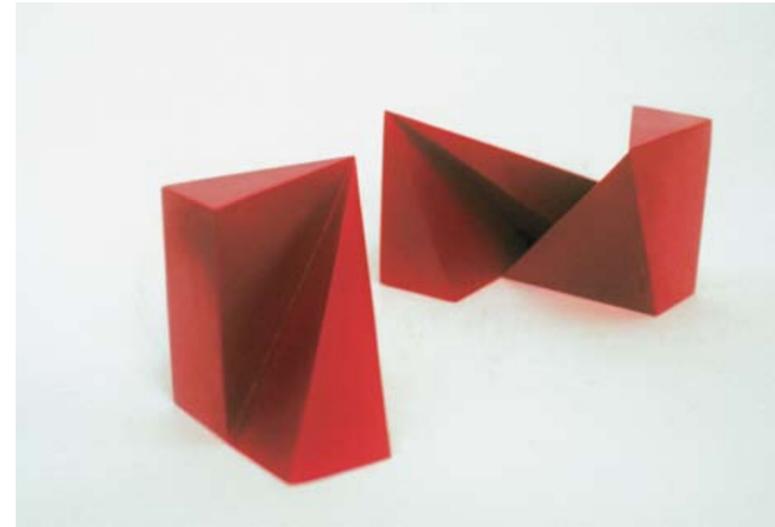
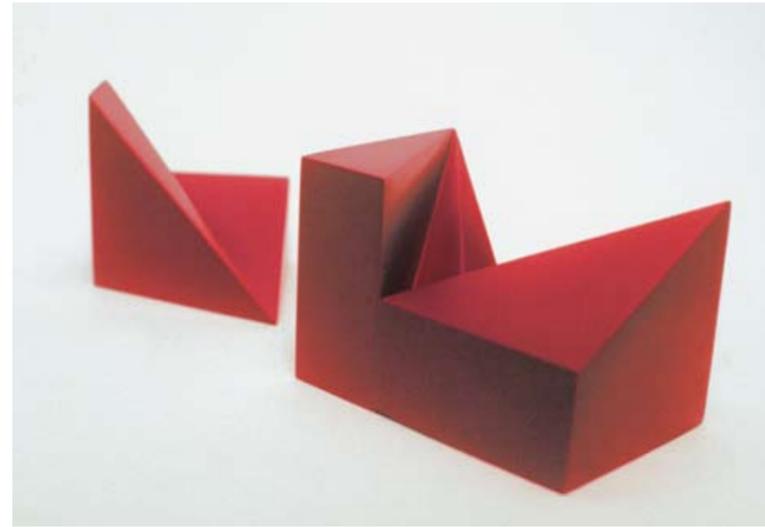
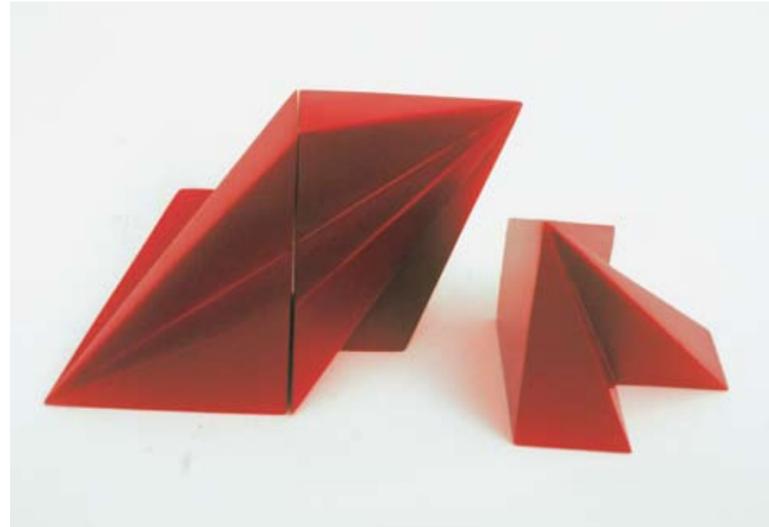
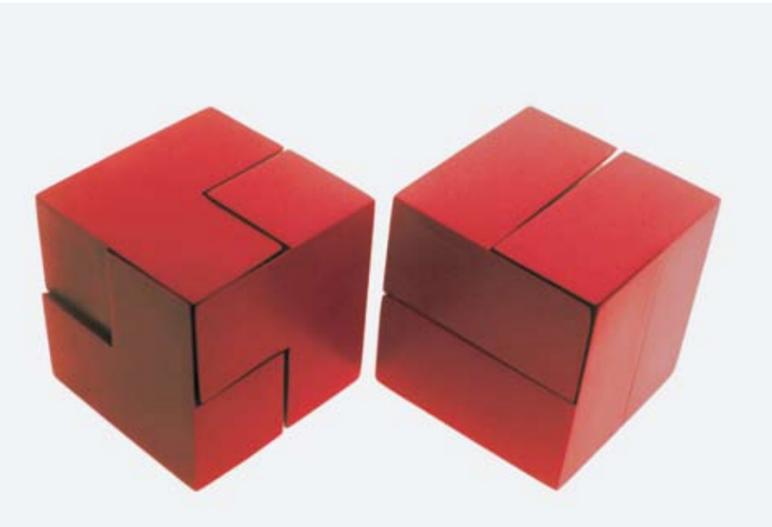
Love Flower No 2, 1980
glazed porcelain
1.20 m diameter

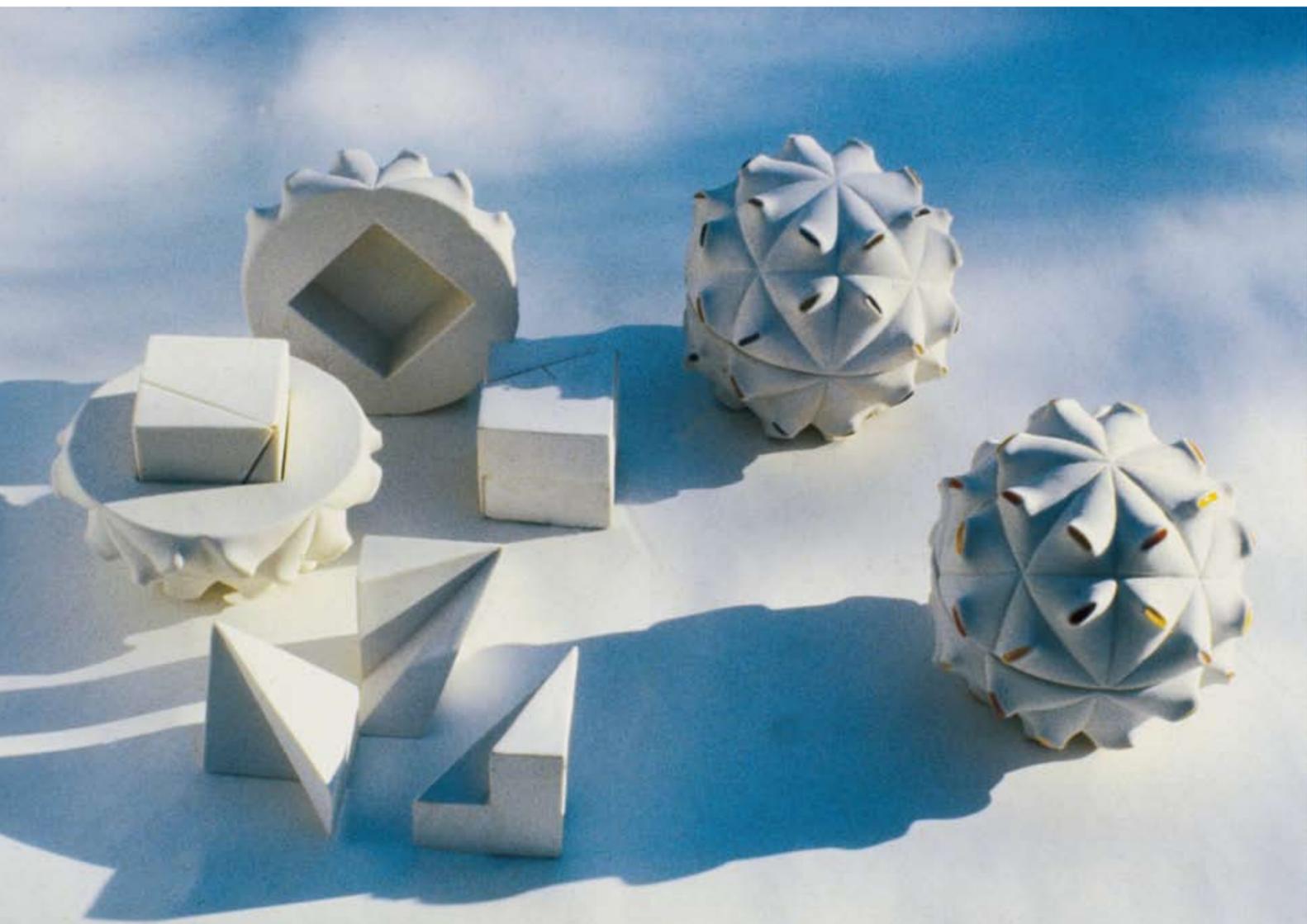


Transylvania Flower, 2016
polyester and fiberglass
4 m diameter
Bistrita, Bistrita-Nasaud, Romania

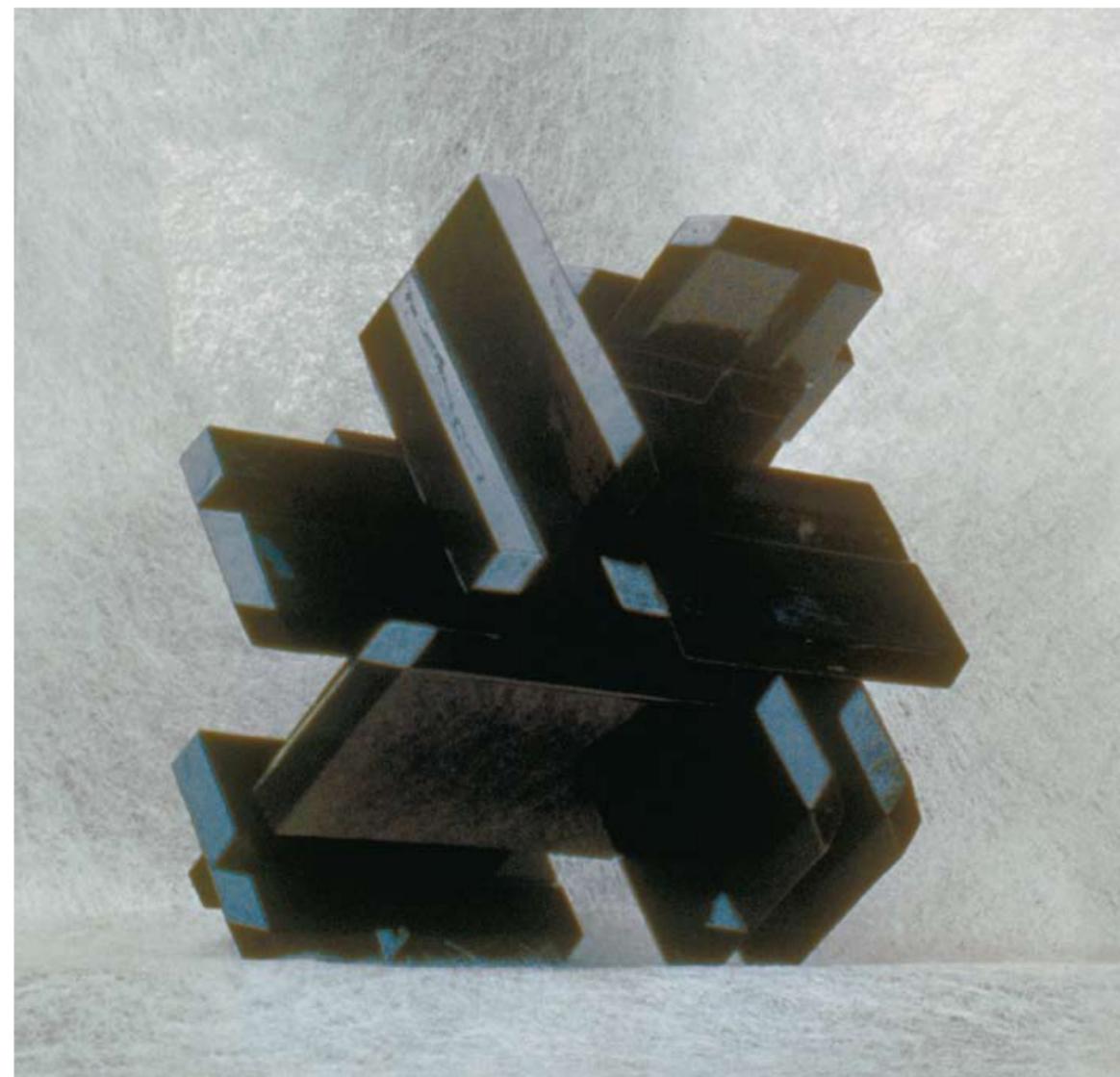


Carpathian Flower, 1979
glazed porcelain
1.80 m diameter
Cedar Sinai Medical Center,
Los Angeles, California





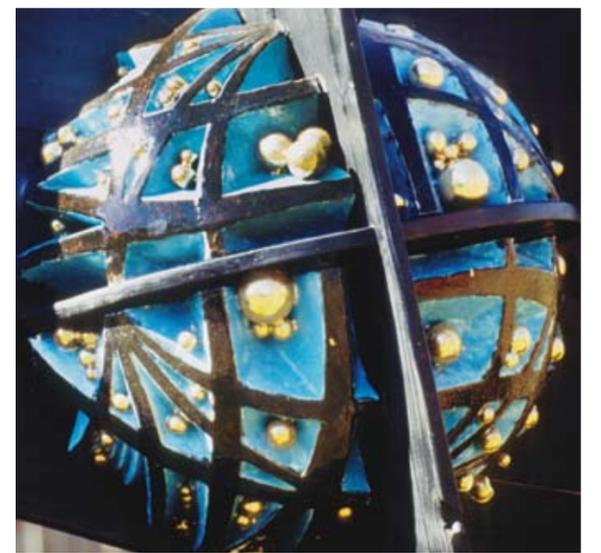
Cube inside a Sphere, 1984
porcelain bisque
17 cm diameter



Butterfly, 1983
glazed earthenware
80 cm high



Black Crystal, 1983
glazed earthenware
96 cm high



Celesta, 1995
glazed and gilded stoneware, wood
1.40 m high



Direction, 1995
glazed and gilded stoneware, wood
1.40 m high



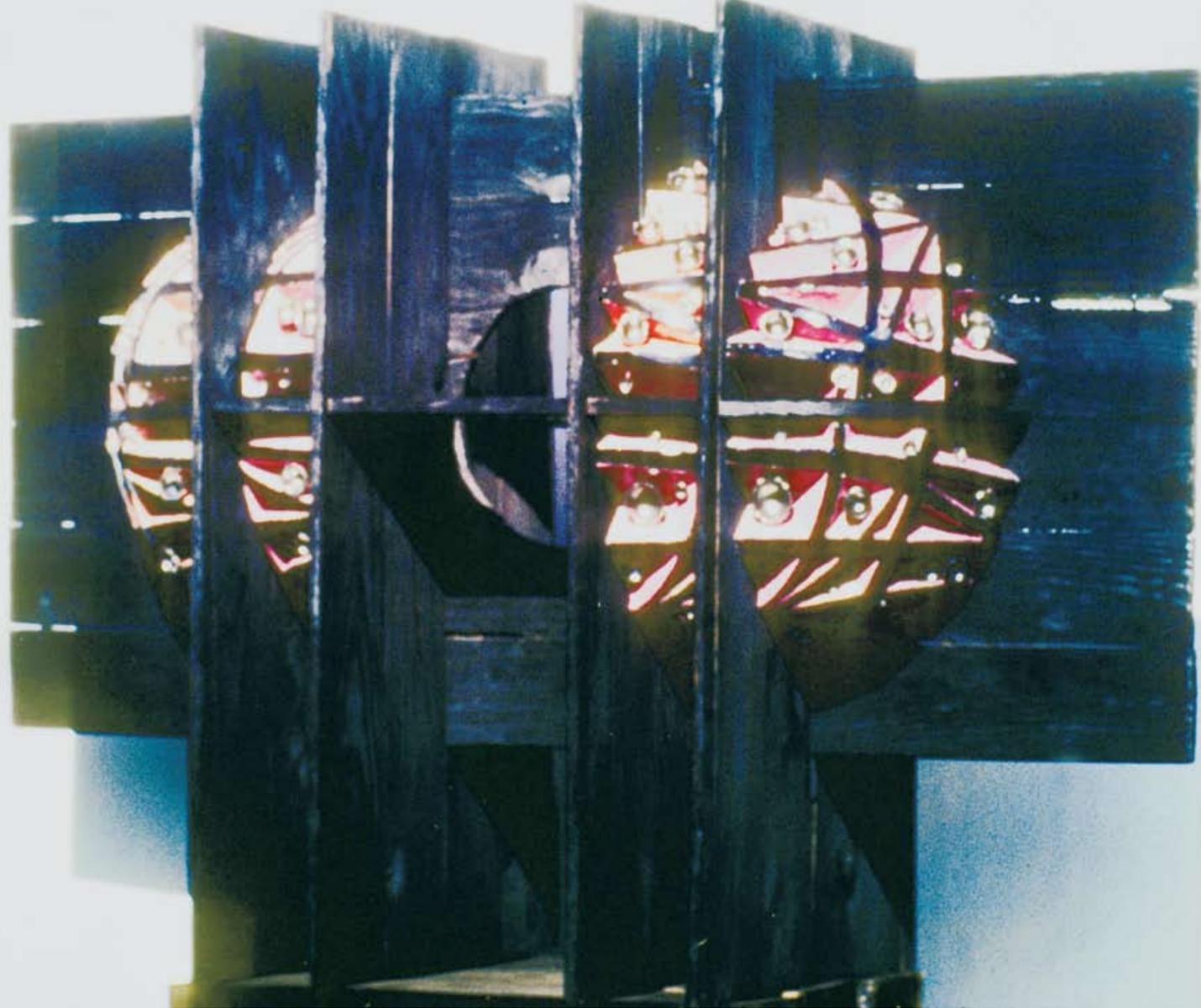
130



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Clepsydra, 1995
glazed and gilded stoneware, wood
2.40 m high



Pink Spheres, 1995
glazed and gilded stoneware, wood
1.60 m high

132



Aspiration, 1995
glazed and gilded stoneware, wood
1.10 m high

133

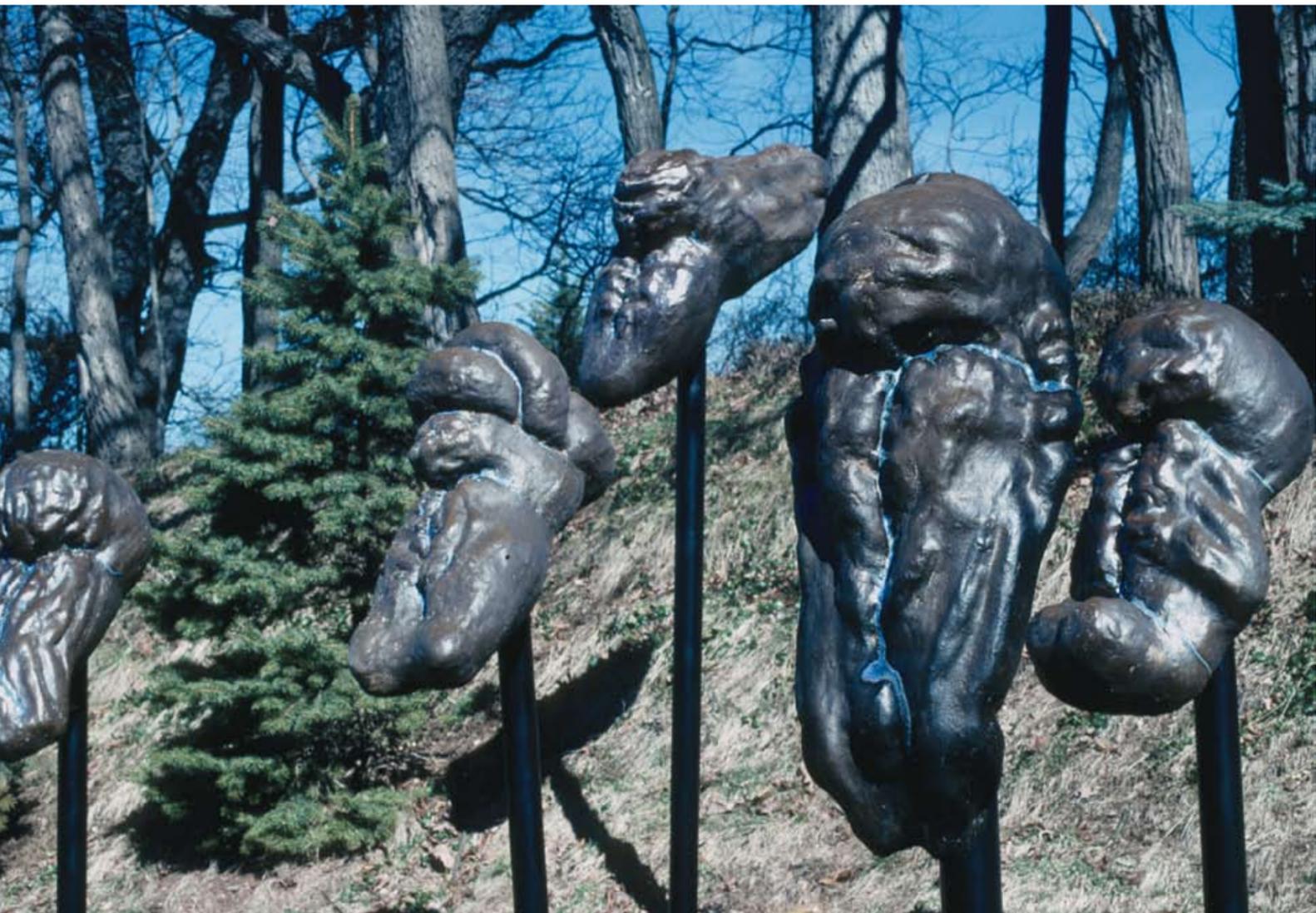




White Column, 1995
glazed and gilded stoneware, wood
2.80 m high



The Gate, 1995
glazed and gilded stoneware, wood
2.20 m high



The Innominate, the Essence and Transfiguration of Pain, 1999
glazed and brown stoneware
60-70 cm high



The Innominate, the Essence and Transfiguration of Pain, 1999,
detail



The Innominate, the Essence and Transfiguration of Pain, 1999, details



The Clouds, 2003
black glazed stoneware
installation, variable dimensions



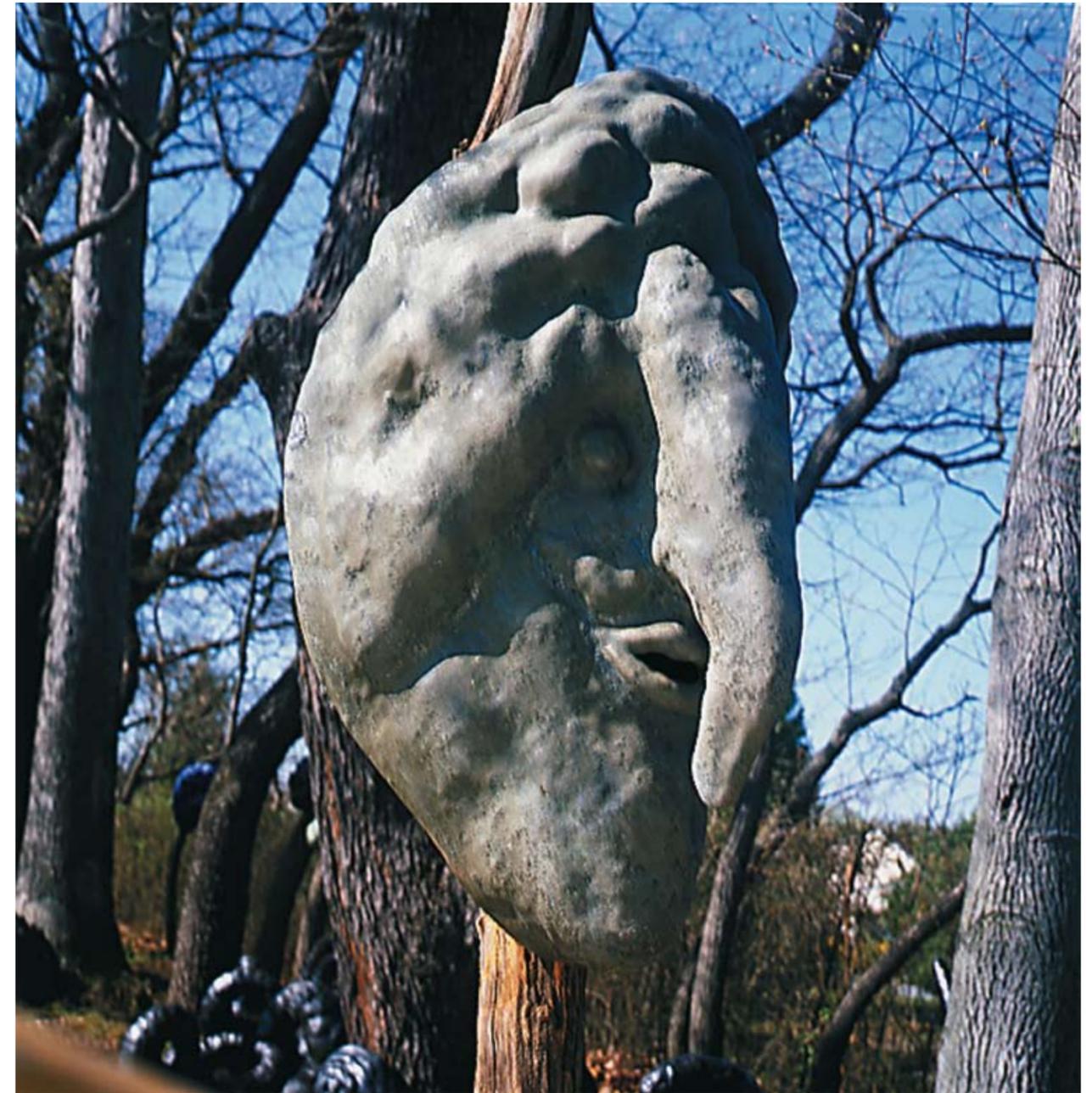
Gargoyle No 1, 2000
glazed stoneware
65 cm high



Gargoyle No 2, 2000
glazed stoneware
55 cm high



Gargoyle No 3, 2000
glazed stoneware
75 cm high



Gargoyle No 4, 2000
glazed stoneware
80 cm high



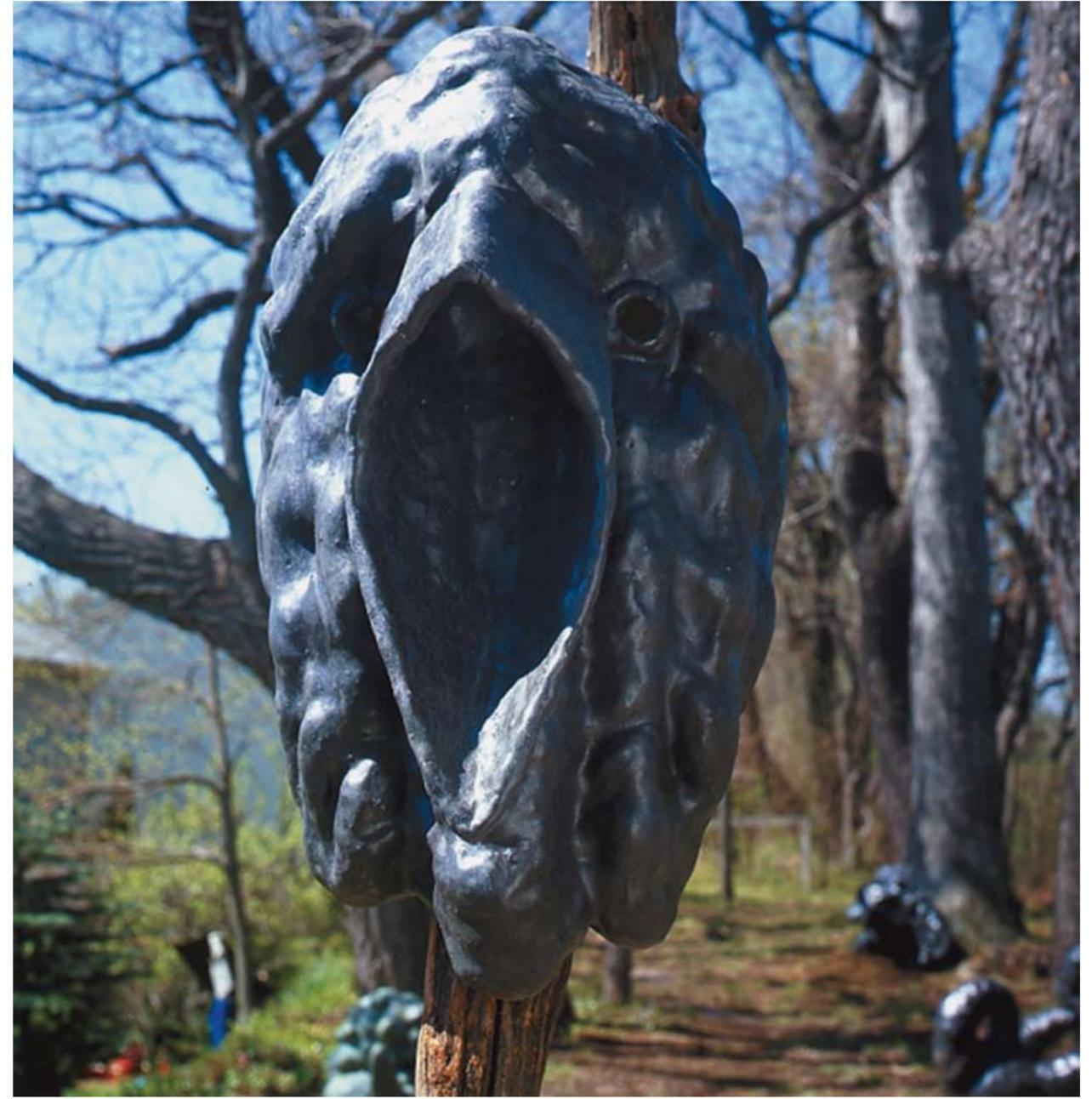
Gargoyle No 5, 2000
glazed stoneware
65 cm high



Gargoyle No 6, 2000
glazed stoneware
63 cm high



Gargoyle No 7, 2000
glazed stoneware
70 cm high



Gargoyle No 8, 2000
glazed stoneware
70 cm high



Black Capricios, 1998
black glazed stoneware
60 cm high





Black Capricios, detail



Black Capricios, details





Cocoons, 2003
black glazed stoneware
variable dimensions





Cocoons, detail



Les Fleurs du Mal, detail



Les Fleurs du Mal, 2001
black glazed stoneware
60 cm high



Gogomaans, 1999
glazed stoneware
1.50 m high





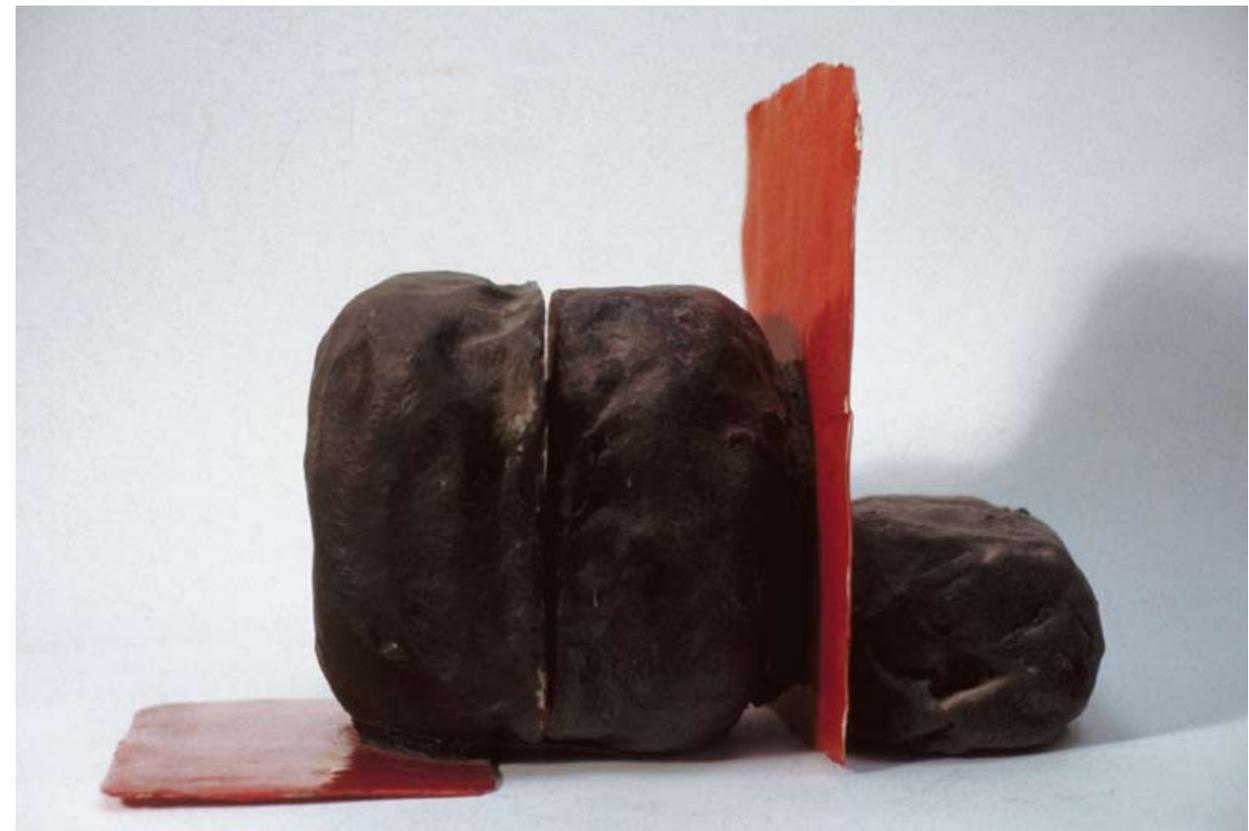
Blue Capricios, 1999
glazed stoneware
60 cm high



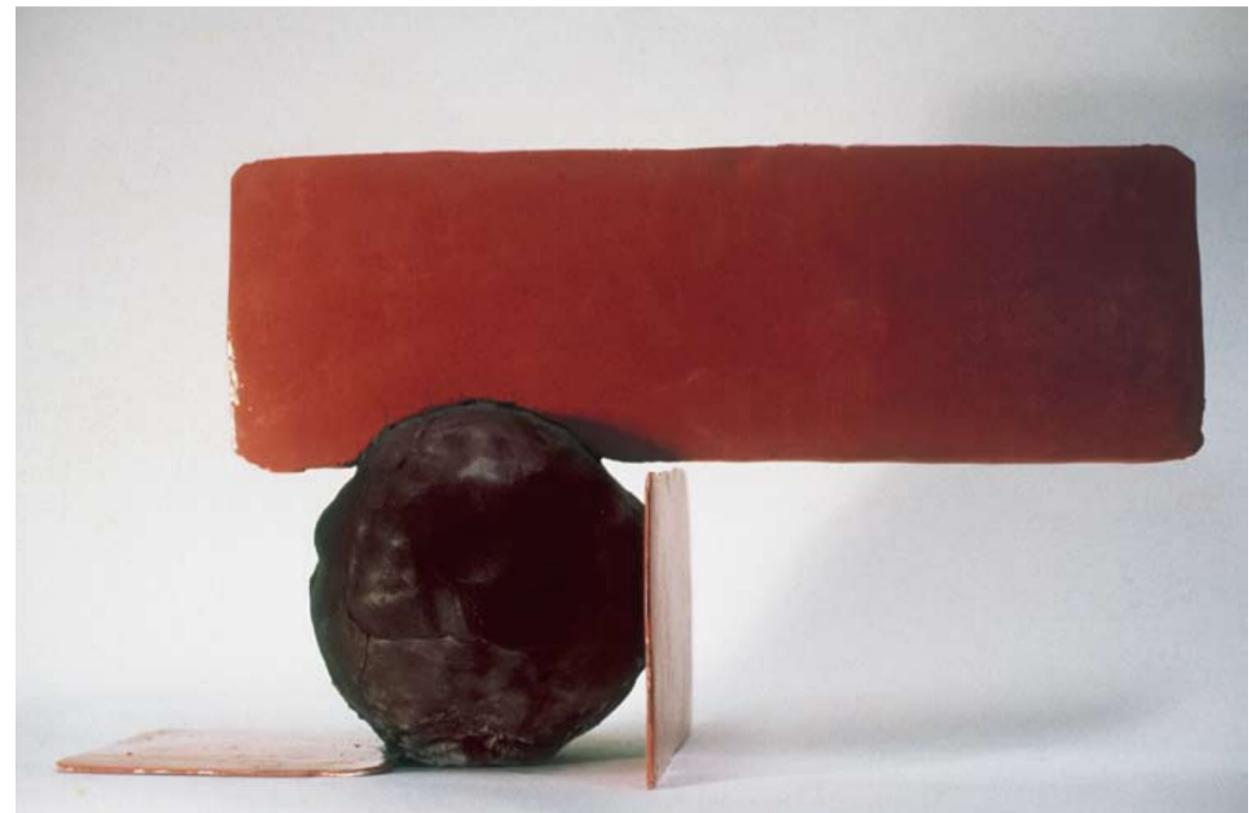


Sliding Planes No 1, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
23 cm high

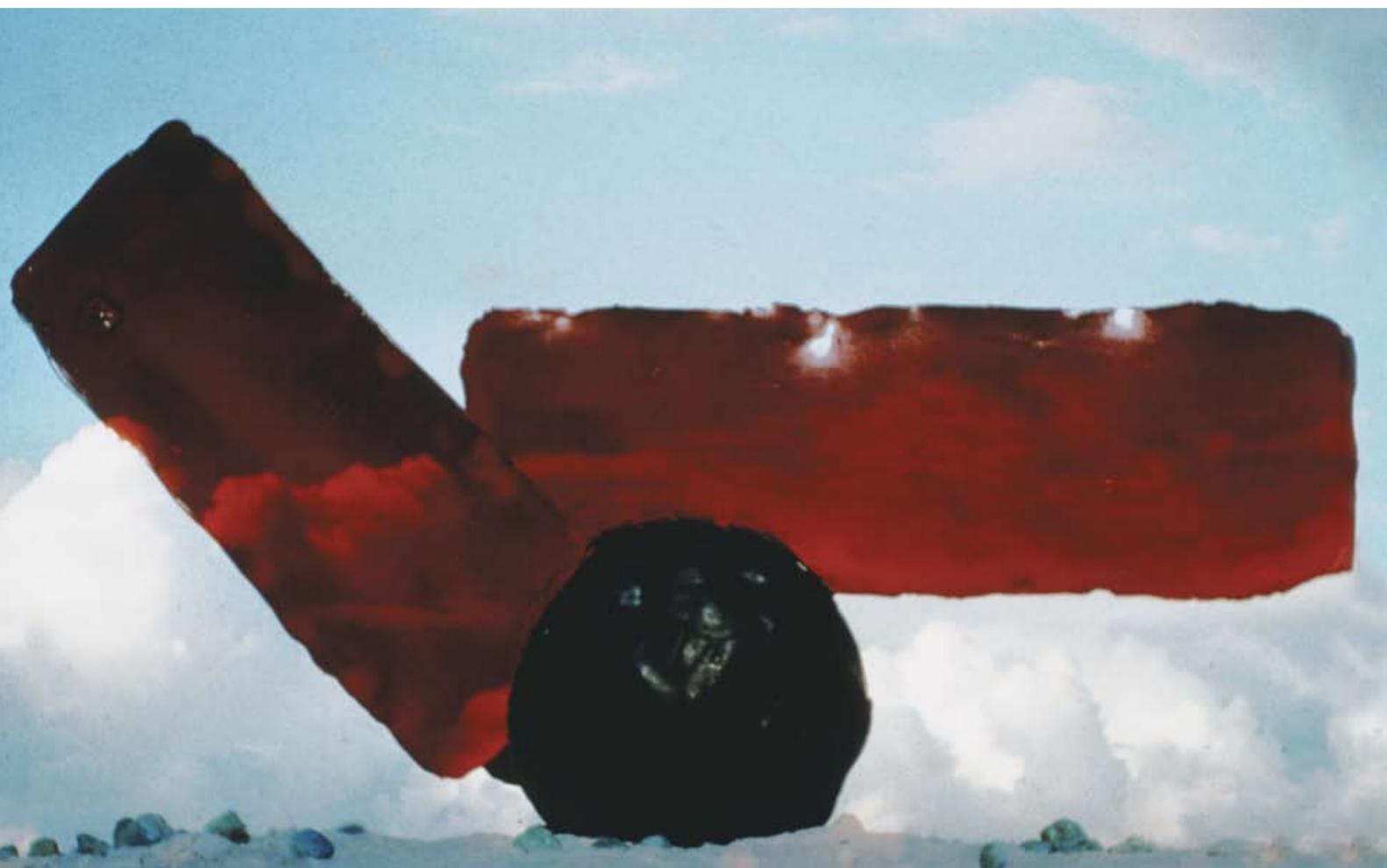
Sliding Planes No 2, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
29 cm high



Sliding Planes No 3, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
26 cm high



Sliding Planes No 4, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
28 cm high



Sliding Planes No 5, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
32 cm high



Sliding Planes No 12, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
28 cm high



Sliding Planes No 8, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
43 cm high



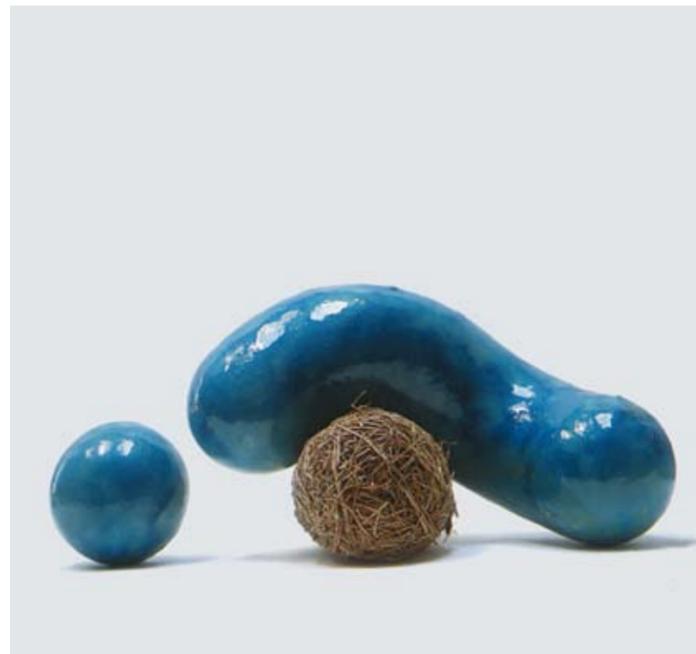
Sliding Planes No 9, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
33 cm high



Sliding Planes No 10, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
30 cm high



Sliding Planes No 11, 1992
glazed and gilded porcelain
29 cm high





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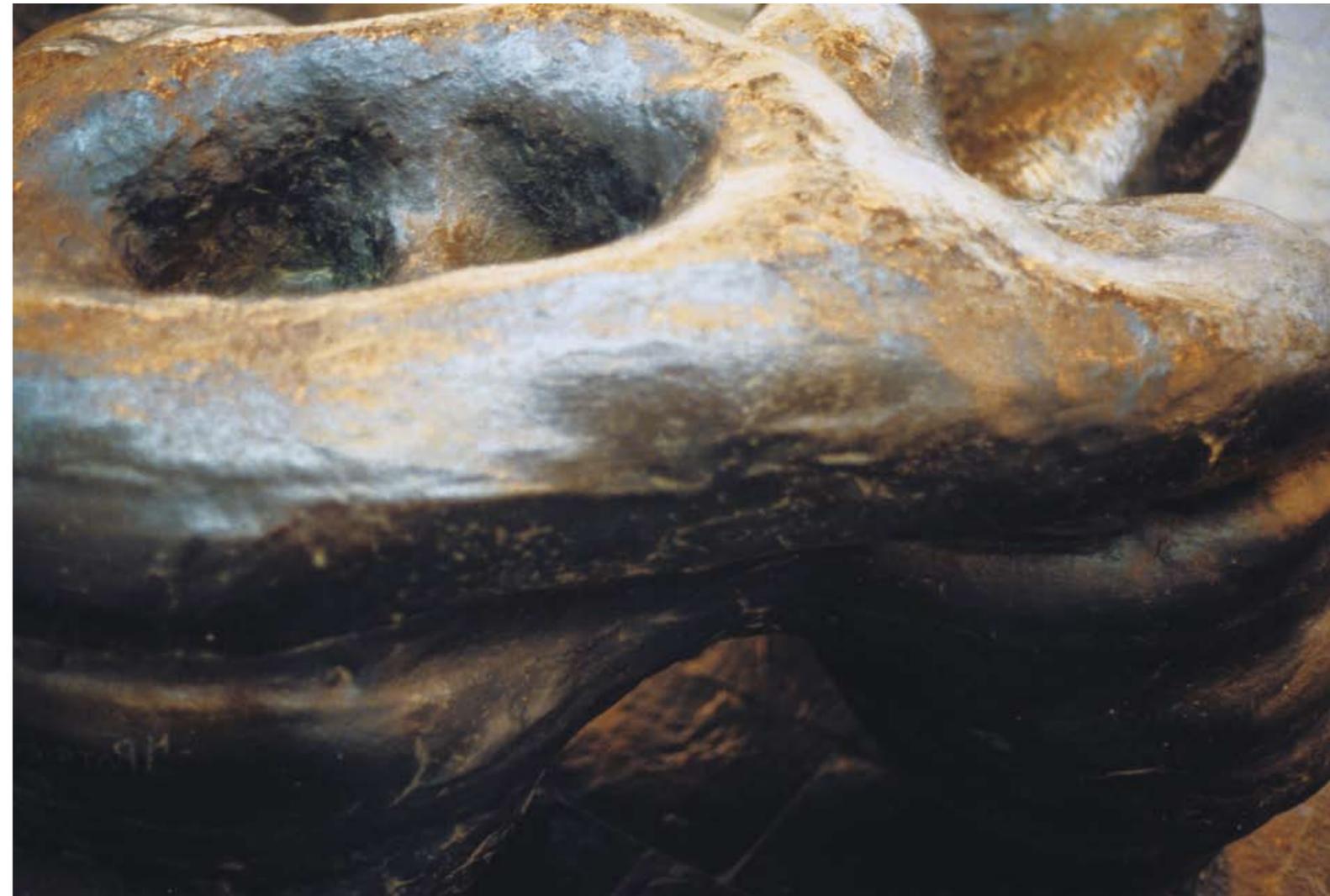


175

Bechthold Chairs, 1964
glazed stoneware
1.20 m & 1.05 m wide



Bechyně Chairs, details





Riders, 1967
glazed stoneware
47 cm high



Horses, 1967
glazed stoneware
40 cm wide



Goats, 1968
glazed stoneware
22 cm high



Wild Boar, 1968
glazed stoneware
45 cm high



Goat, 1969
experimental material
95 cm high

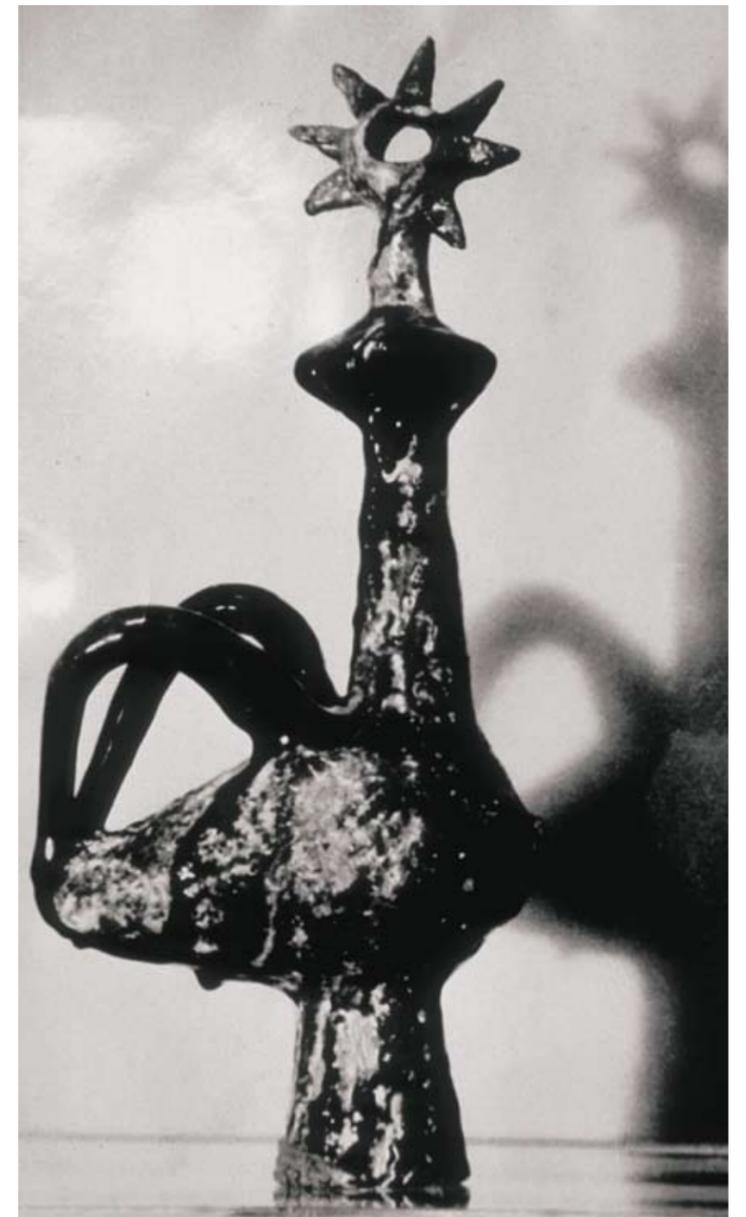


Ram, 1969
experimental material
75 cm high



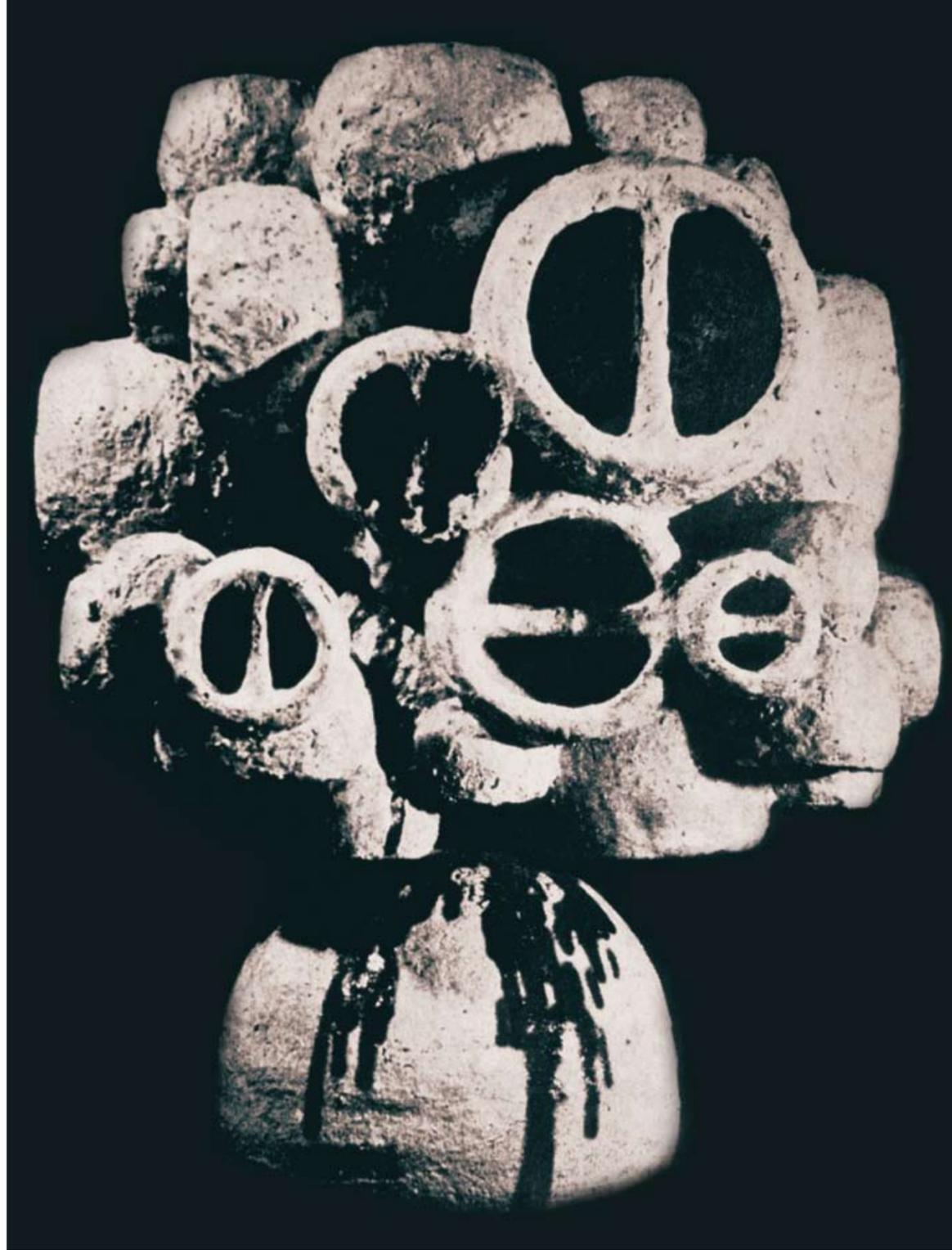
181

Rooster, 1970
stoneware bisque
92 cm high

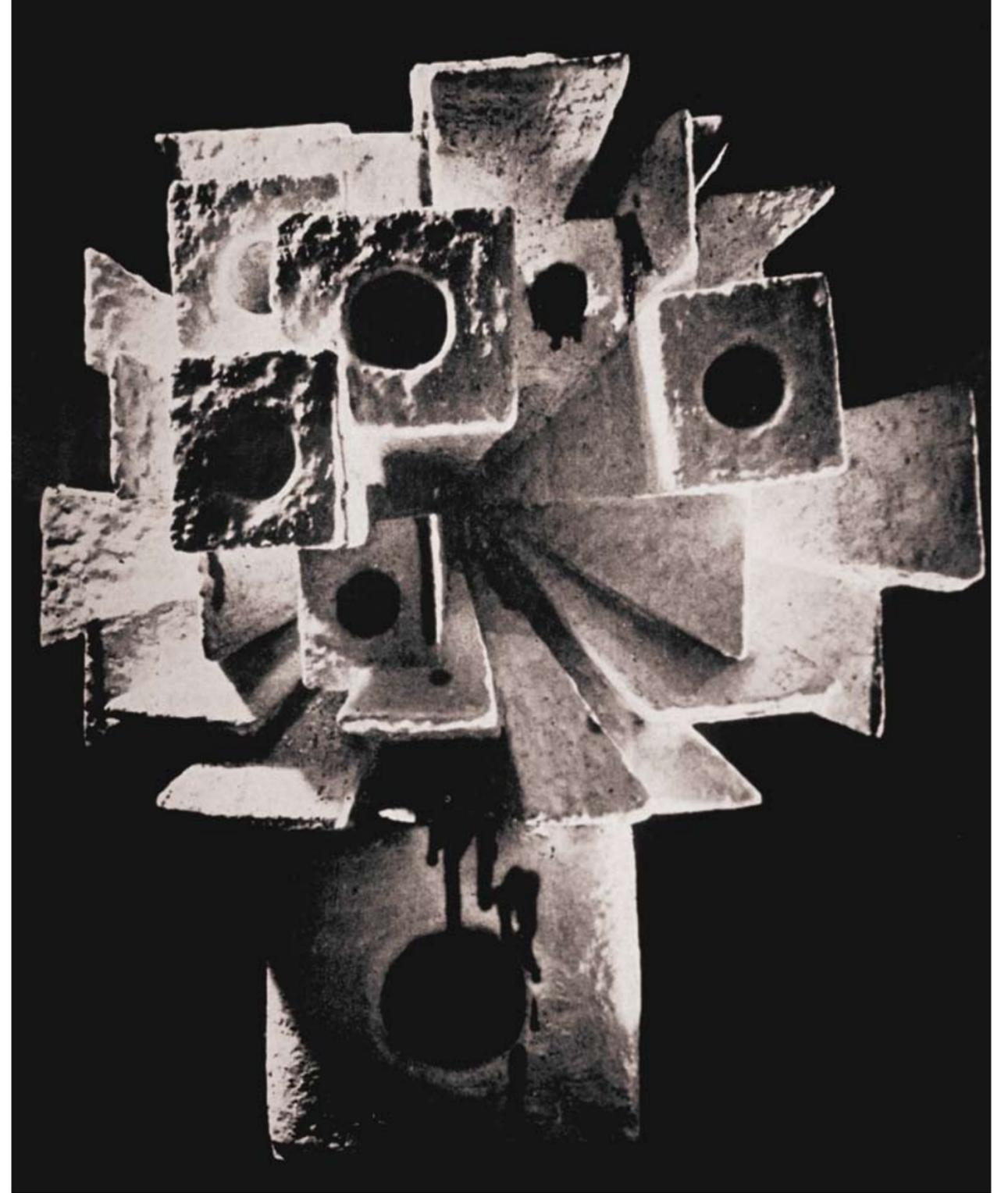


Rooster, 1970
glazed stoneware
42 cm high

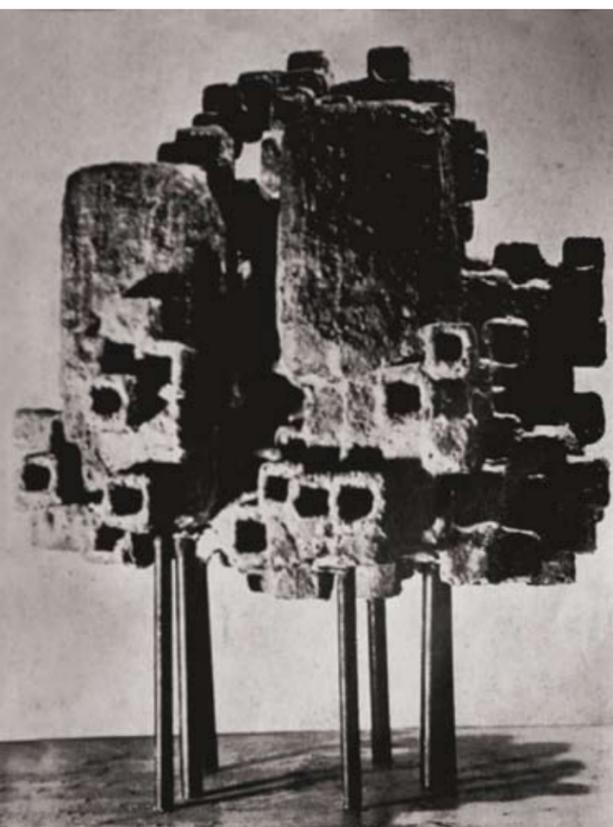
180



Untitled, 1967
glazed stoneware
86 cm high



Untitled, 1967
glazed stoneware
92 cm high



Trees with Flowers, 1968
glazed stoneware and metal rods
72 cm high

Strikers, 1968
glazed stoneware and metal rods
70 cm high



Untitled, 1967
glazed stoneware
78 cm high



Tree with Seeds, 1967
glazed stoneware
80 cm high



Willow Tree, 1968
glazed stoneware
89 cm high



Childhood Swing, 1970
glazed stoneware and wood
1.85 cm high



Woman, 1970
glazed stoneware
52 cm high



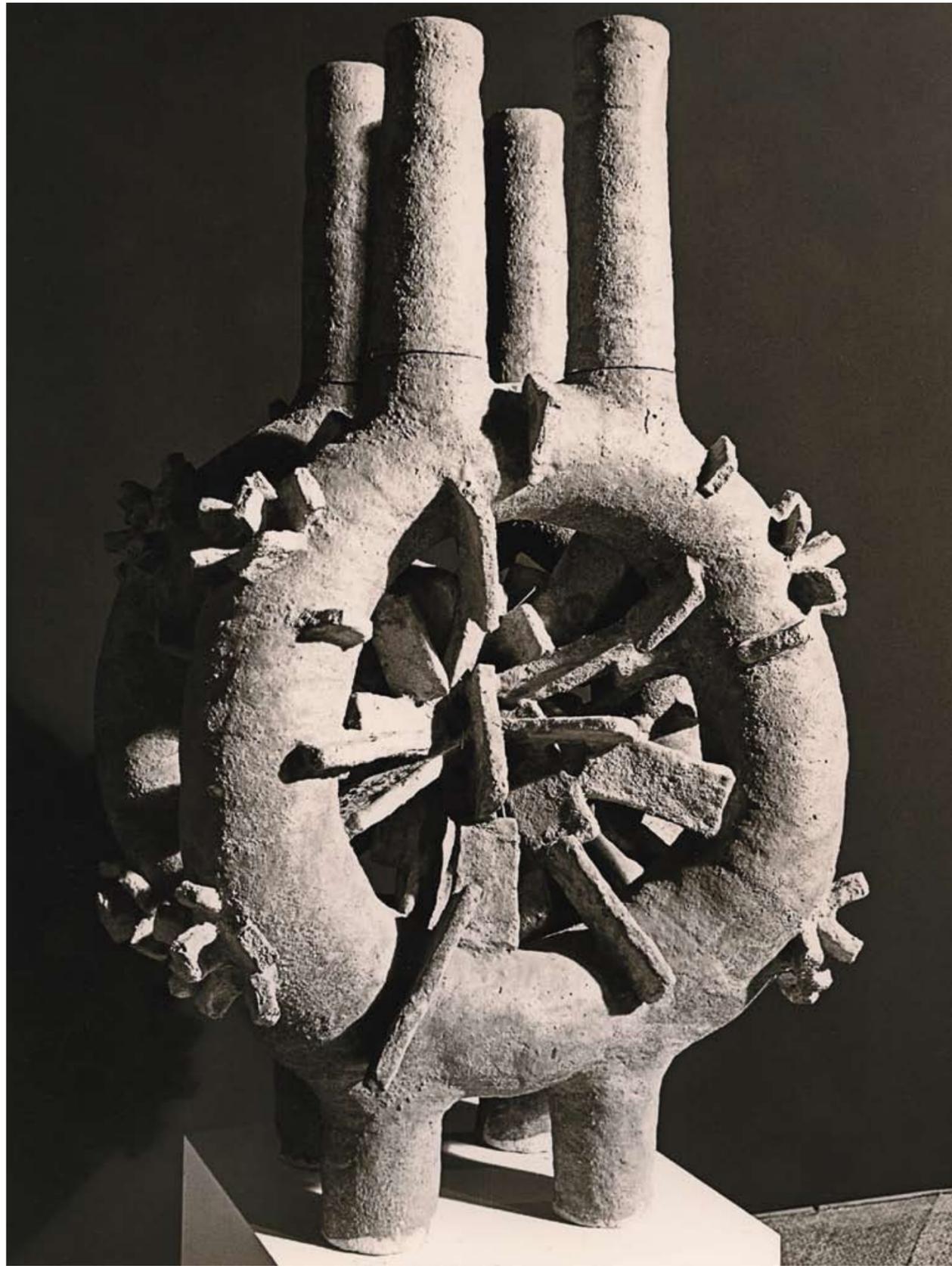
Wind Flute, 1970
glazed stoneware
1.20 m high



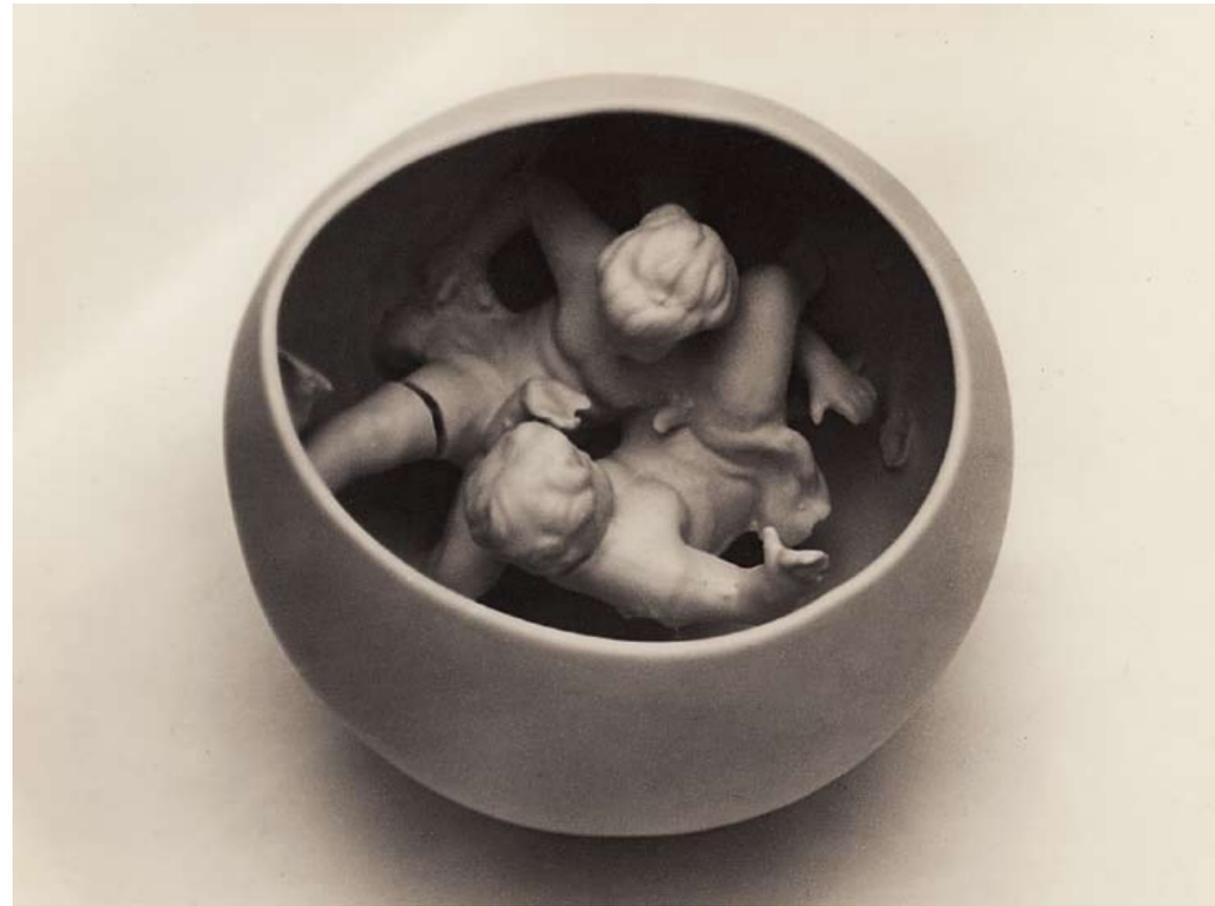
Untitled, 1969
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



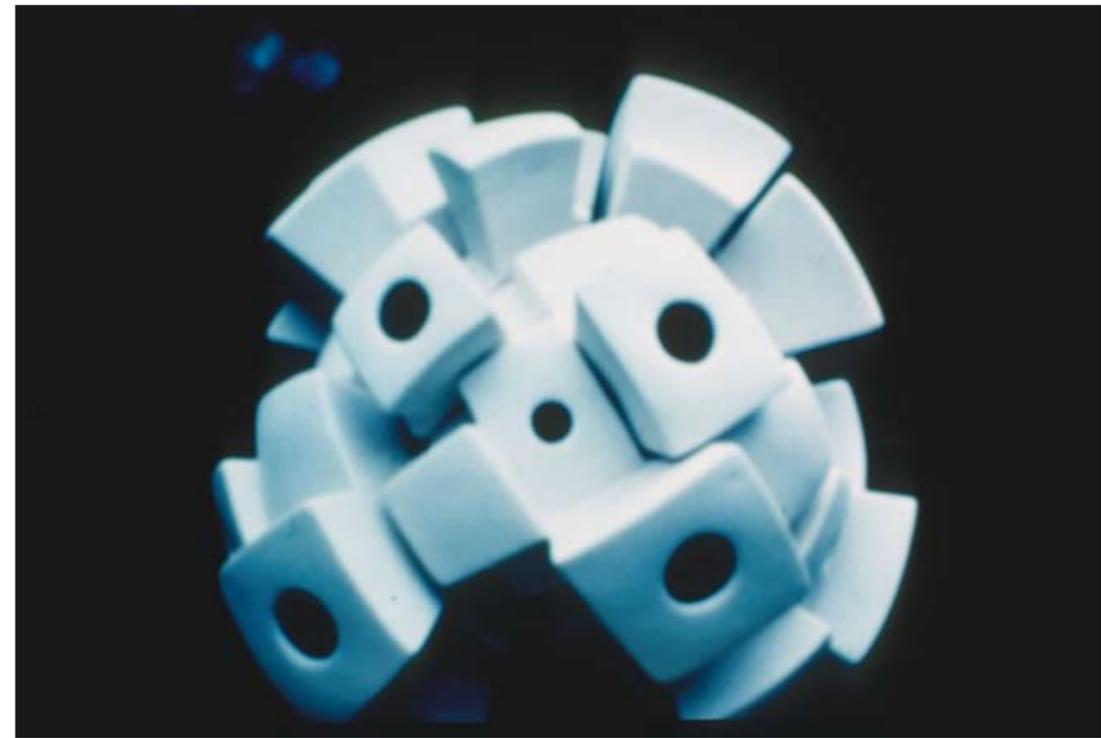
Untitled, 1969
porcelain bisque
72 cm high



Gmunden Tree, 1966
stoneware
1.10 m high



Bassano del Grappa, 1971
porcelain bisque
18 cm diameter



Untitled, 1971
porcelain bisque
38 cm diameter



Untitled, 1971
porcelain bisque
45 cm wide

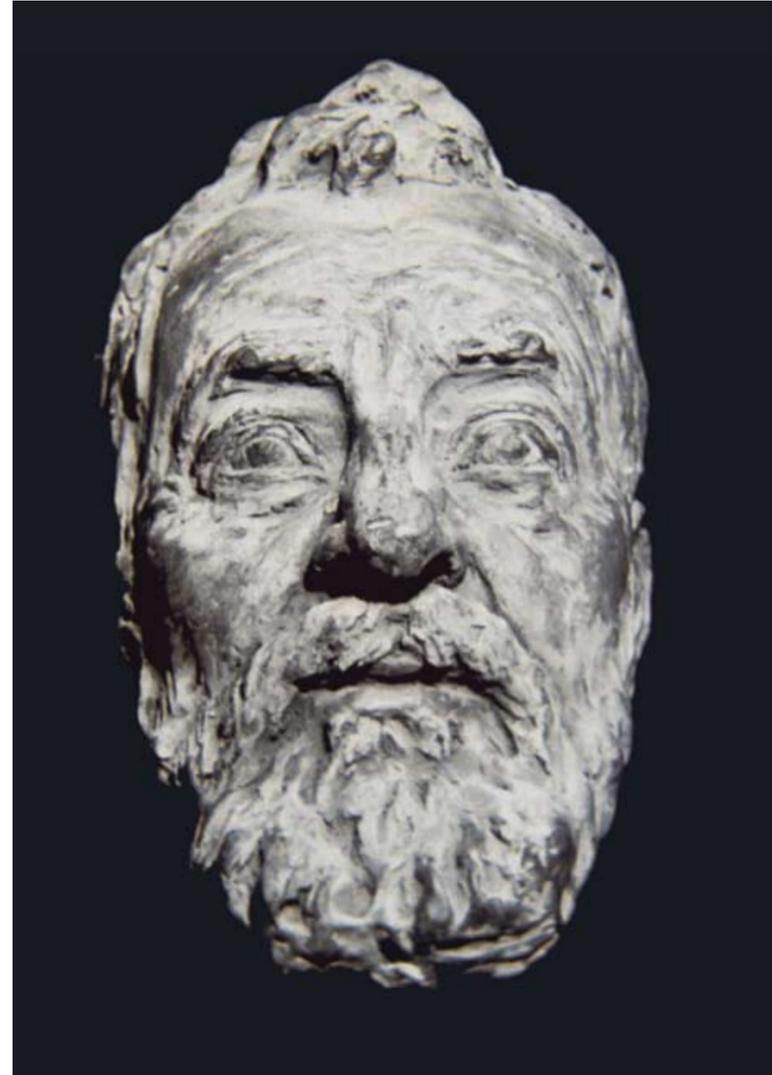


Untitled, 1971
porcelain bisque
45 cm wide each

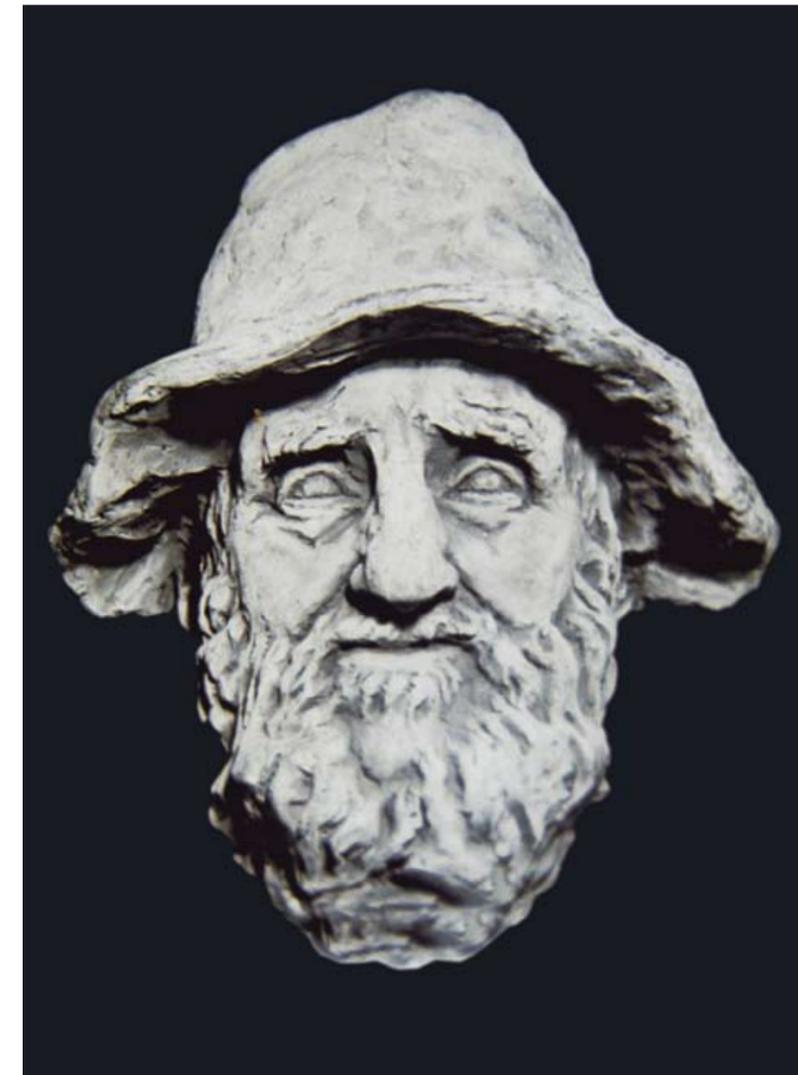


Fantastic Animals, 1967
glazed stoneware
57 cm wide

Beginnings of Ceramics



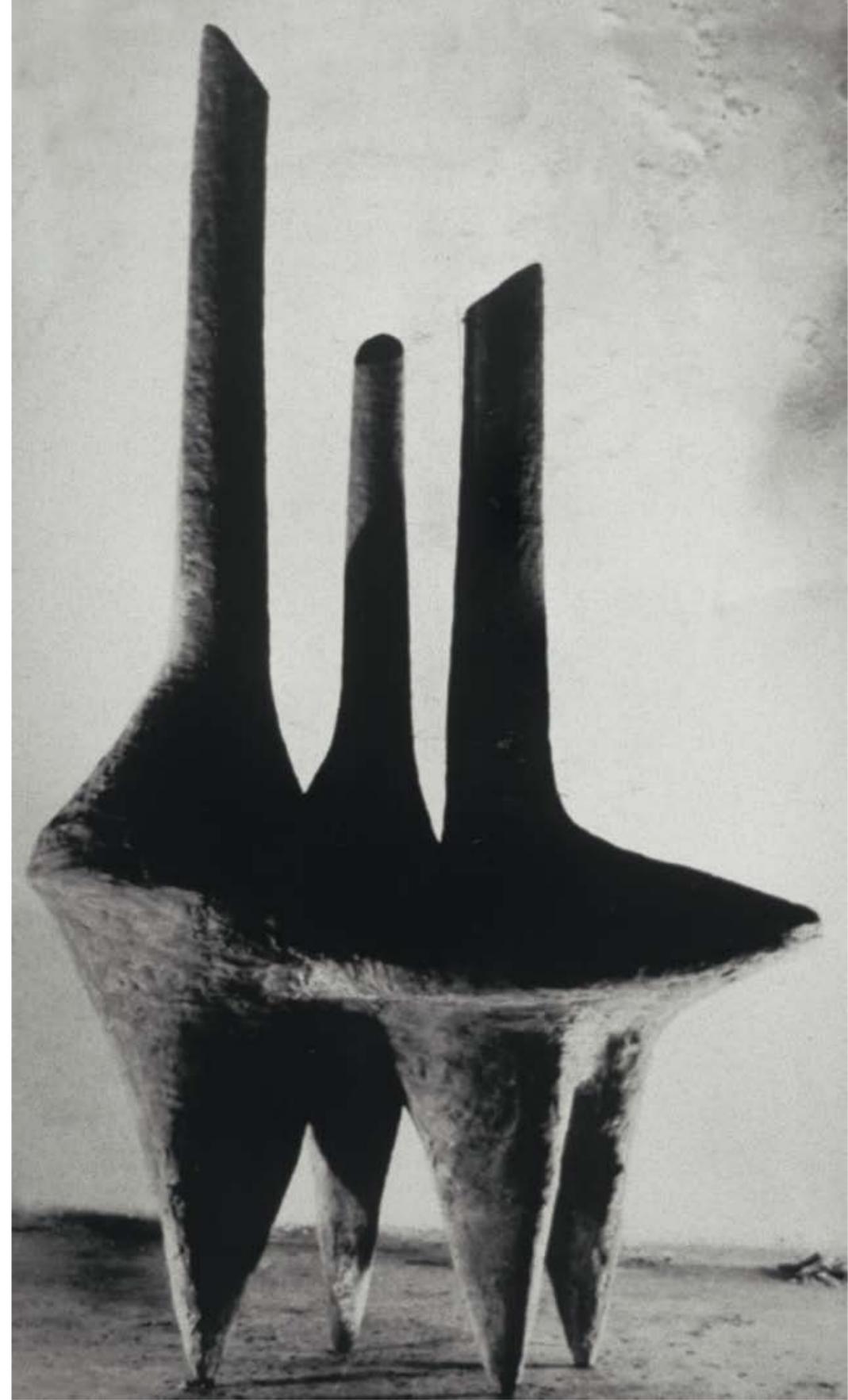
Fisherman, 1958
terracotta
42 cm high



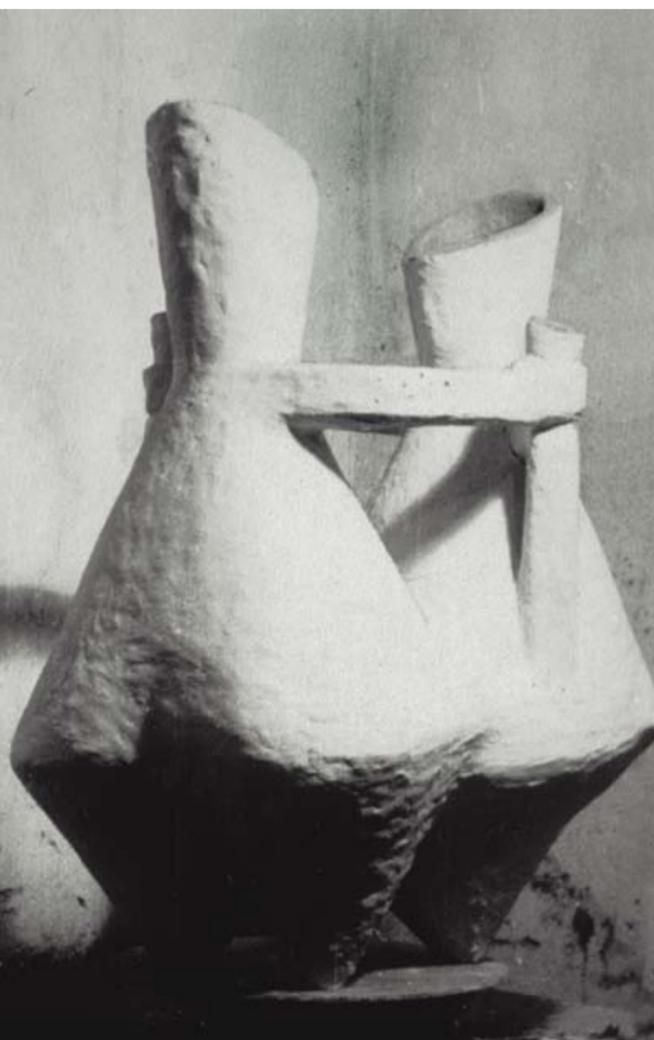
Fisherman, 1958
terracotta
38 cm high



Amphorae No 1, 1960
terracotta
98 cm high



Family, 1961
terracotta
1.20 m high

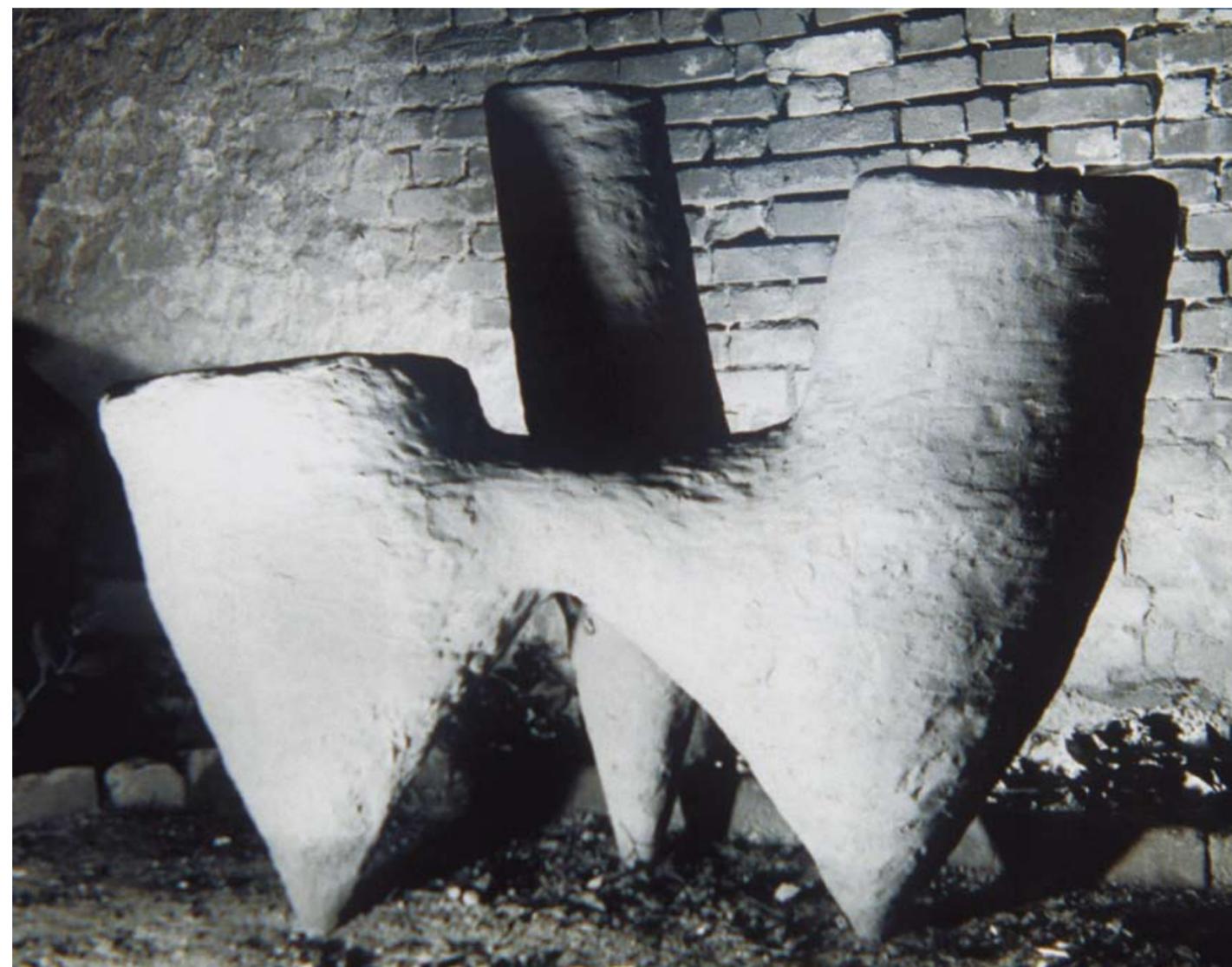


Drinkers, 1960
terracotta
85 cm high



The Connected, 1960
terracotta
87 cm high

200



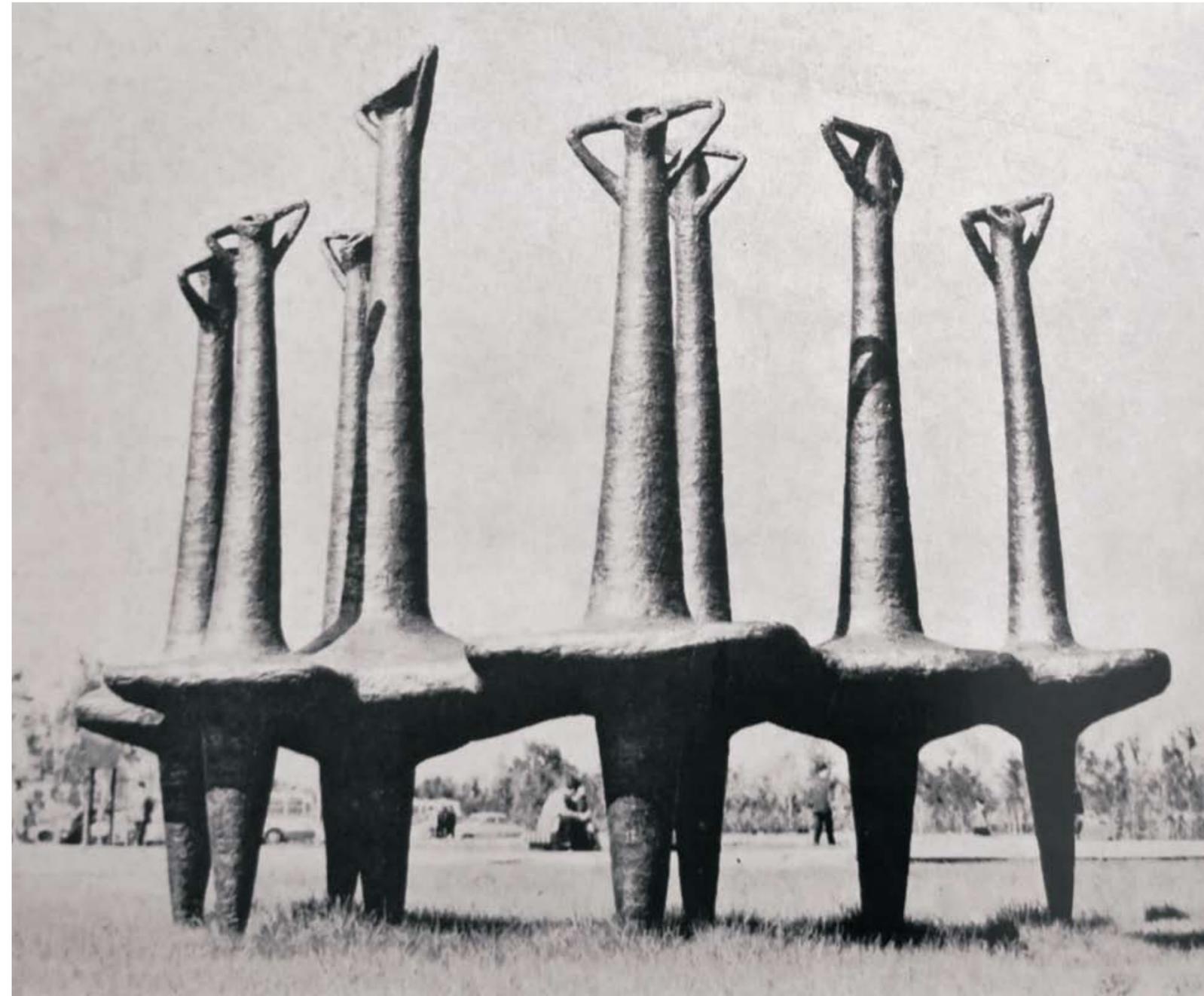
Amphorae No 2, 1960
terracotta
1.20 m high

201



Hora, 1961
terracotta
1.50 m high

202



Ballerinas, 1965
glazed stoneware
2.20 m high, 3.10 m wide
Galati Museum, Galati, Romania

203

Before Ceramics



Trixi Checais, 1952
plaster of paris
60 cm high



Fisherman, 1953
plaster of paris
75 cm high



Stefanescu-Goanga, 1954
plaster of paris
85 cm high



New Romania, 1960
plaster of paris
2.20 m high



Mihai Popescu, 1953
plaster of paris
80 cm high

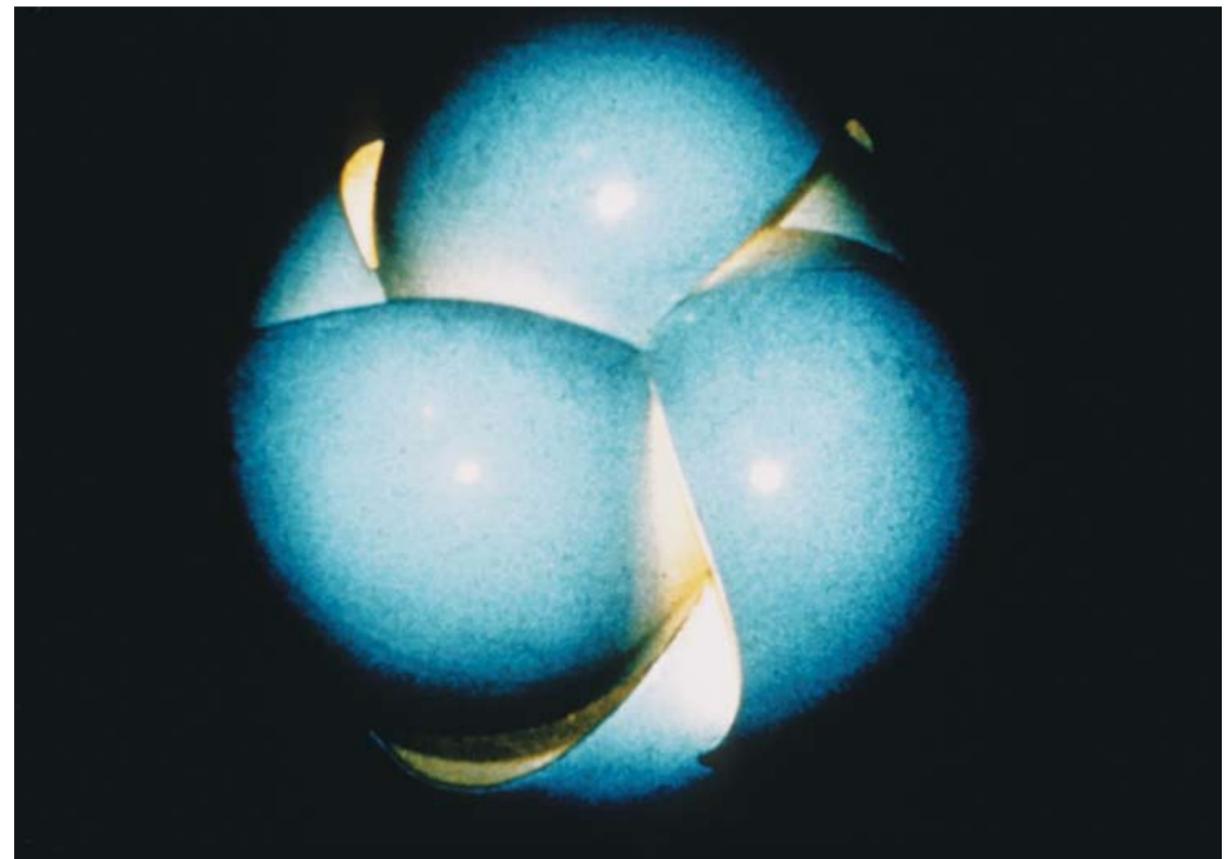


Eminescu, 1955
plaster of paris
95 cm high

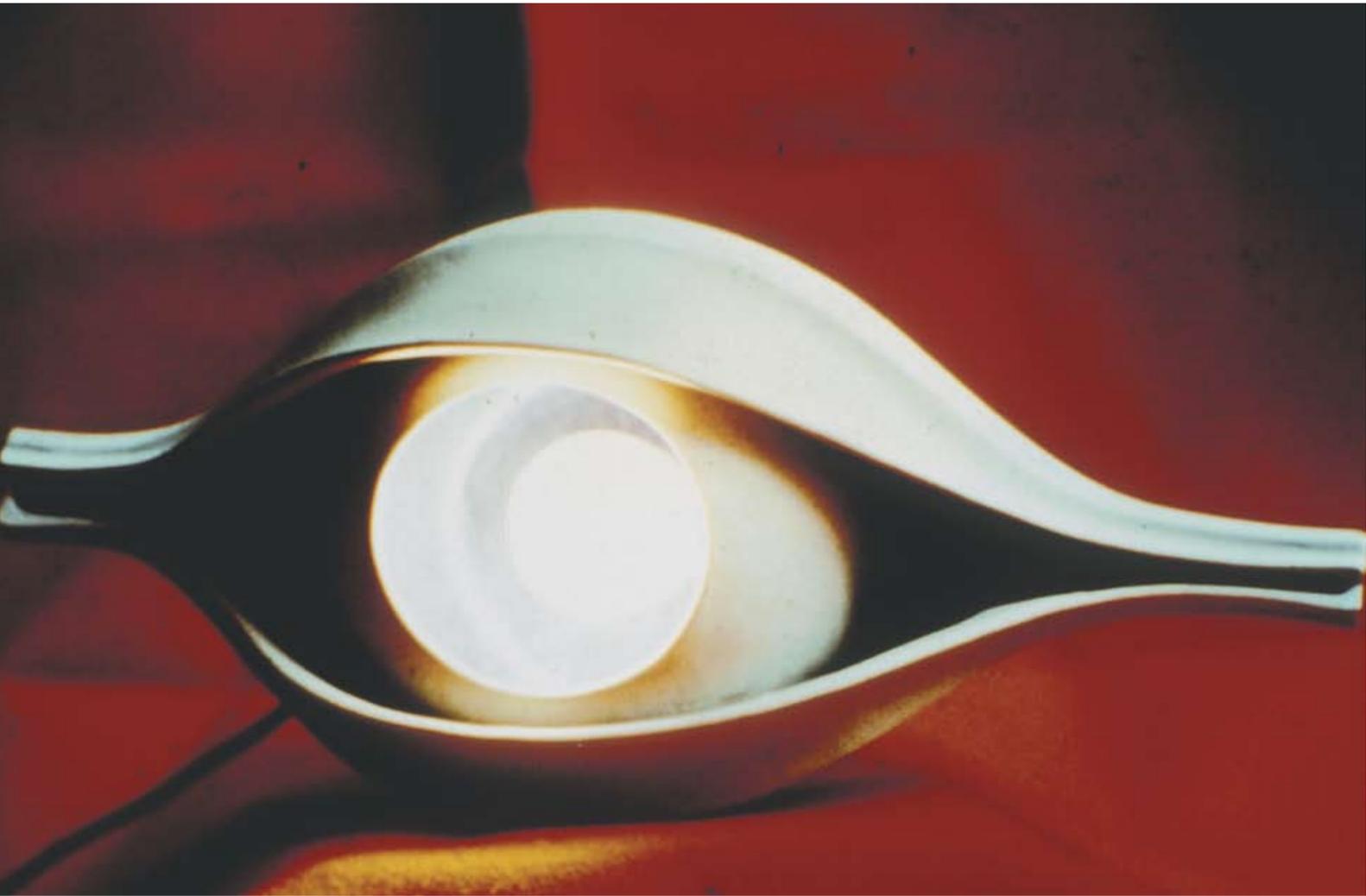
Lamps and Chandeliers



Flower Lamp,
1972
porcelain
50 cm high



Modular Lamp,
1972
porcelain
50 cm high

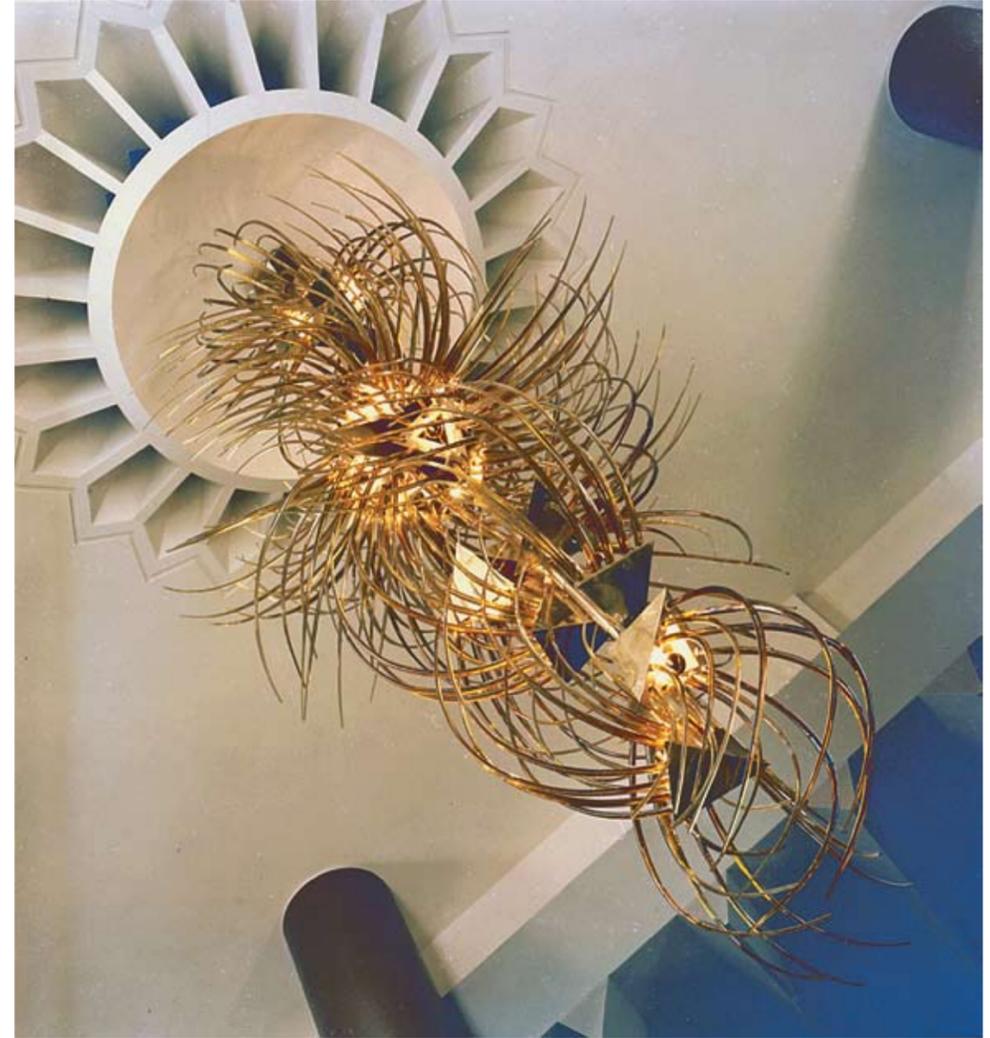


Eye Lamp, 1972
porcelain
34 cm wide

Square Lamp, 1972
porcelain
40 cm square



Modular Glass Lamp, 1970
1.50 m diameter each
Casa de Cultura, Buzau,
Romania

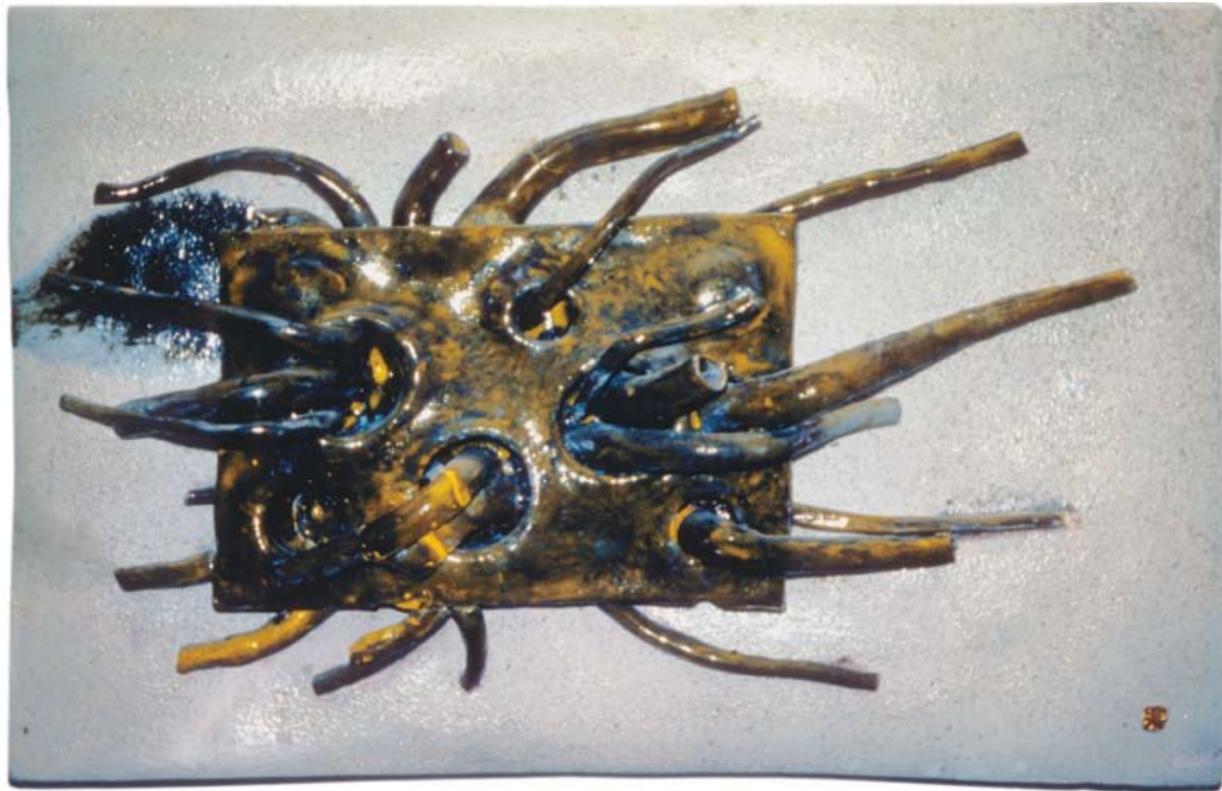


Glass Lamp, 1970
3 m high
National Theater,
Bucharest, Romania

Ceramic Murals



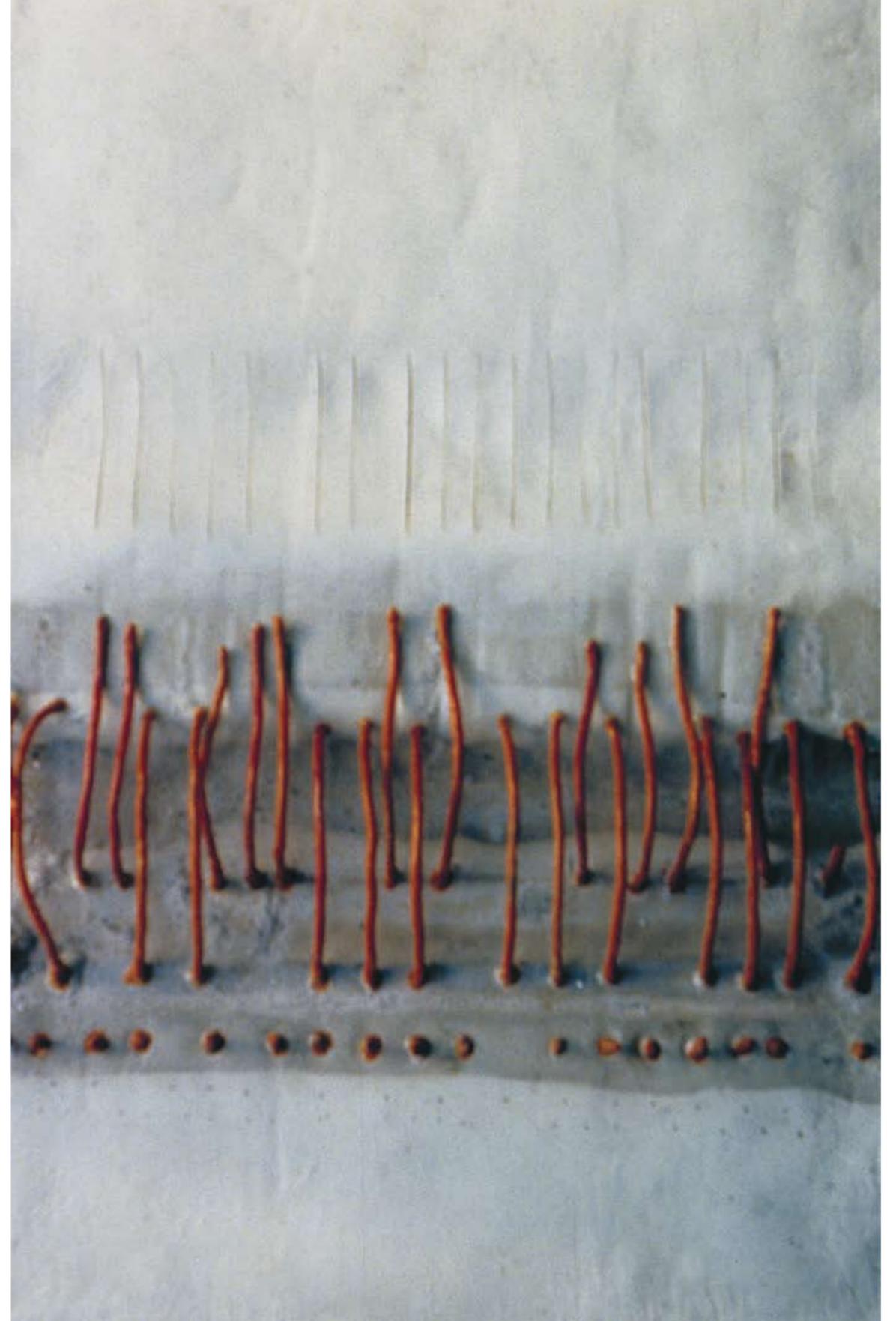
Ceramic Relief, 1969
stoneware
8 m wide
Tiglina, Galati, Romania



Hydra Relief, 1969
glazed porcelain
80 cm wide



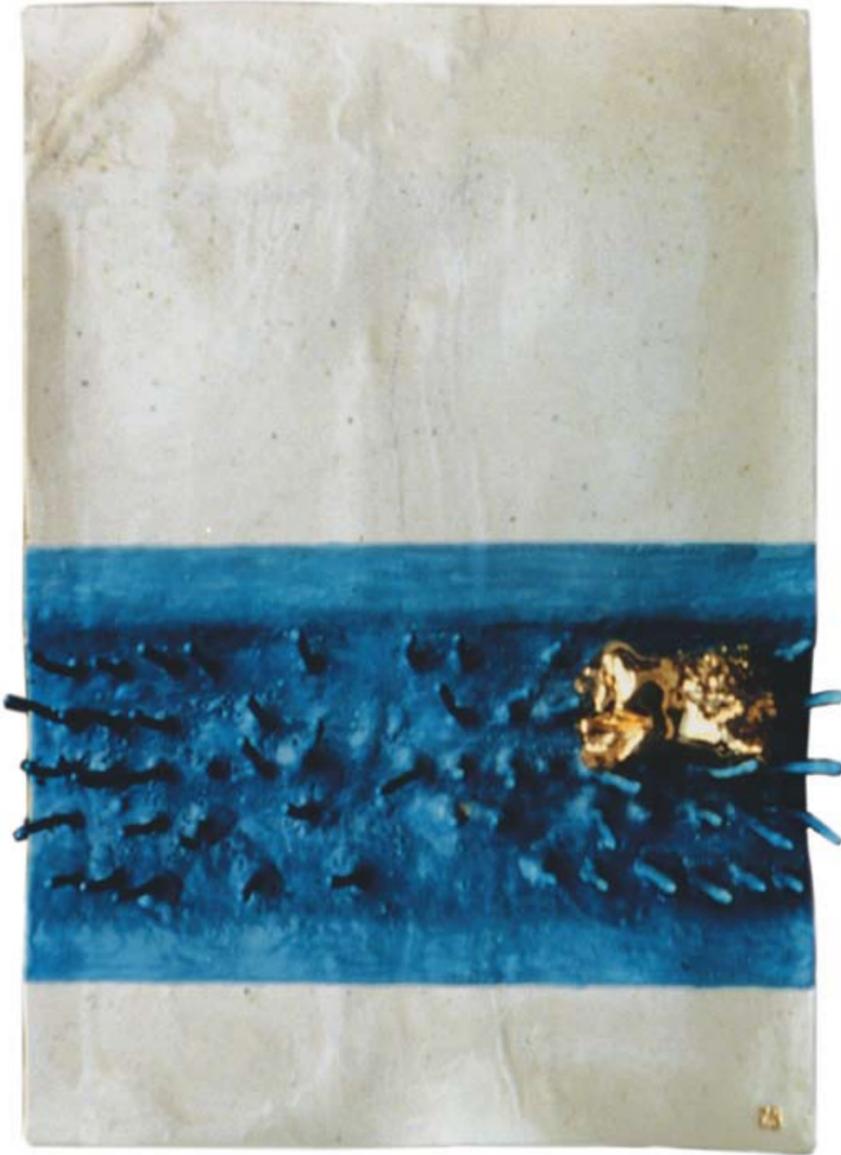
Putti Relief, 1969
glazed porcelain
80 cm wide



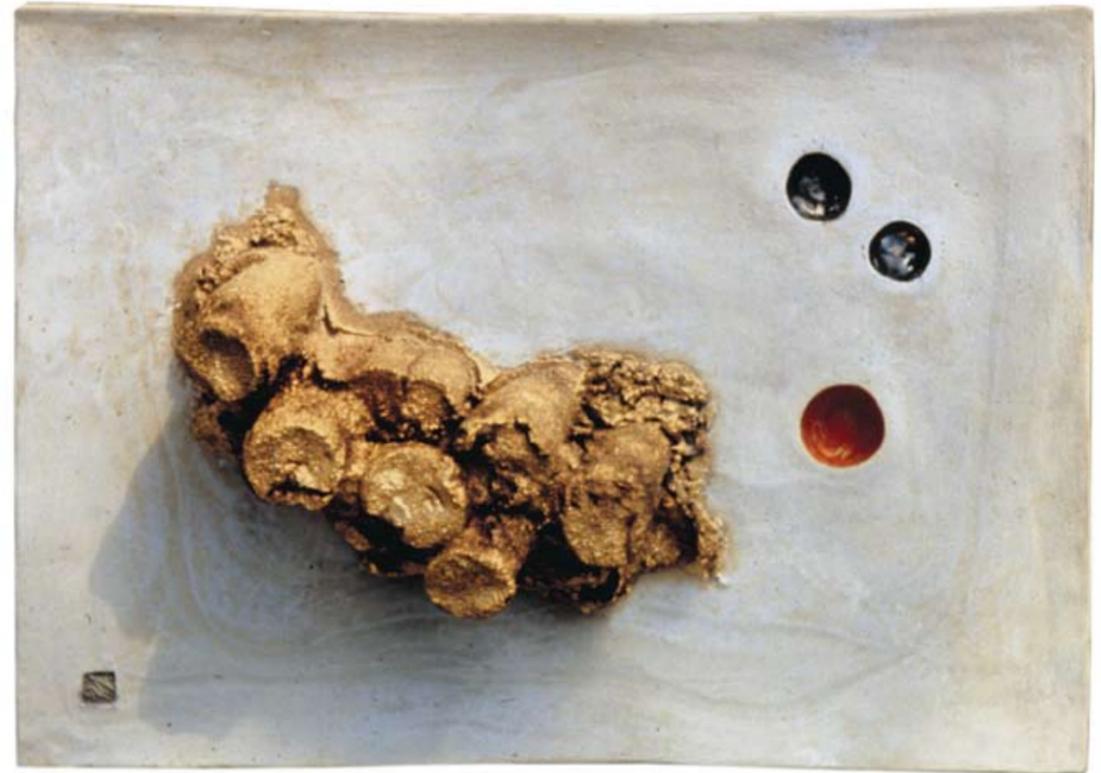
String Relief, 1969
glazed porcelain
60 cm high



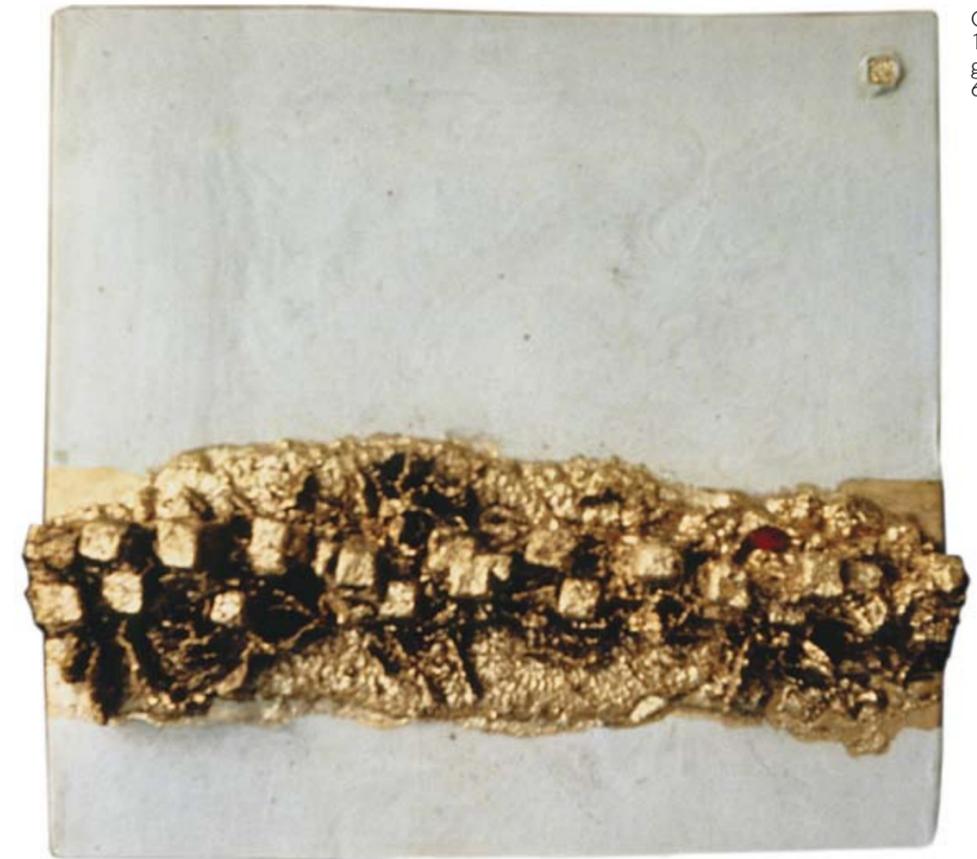
Blue Relief, 1969
glazed porcelain
48 cm high



Blue and Gold Relief, 1969
glazed porcelain
48 cm high



Gold Relief No 1,
1969
glazed porcelain
52 cm wide



Gold Relief No 2,
1969
glazed porcelain
60 cm wide



Breast Relief, 1969
glazed porcelain
82 cm wide



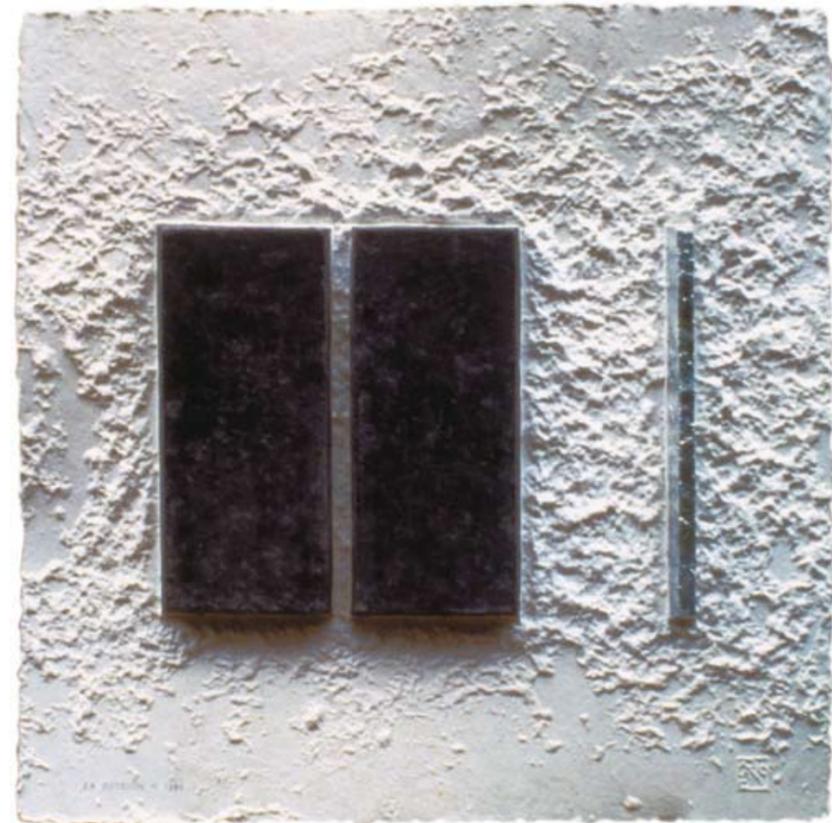
Modular Relief, 1970
porcelain bisque
90 cm high

Paper Works

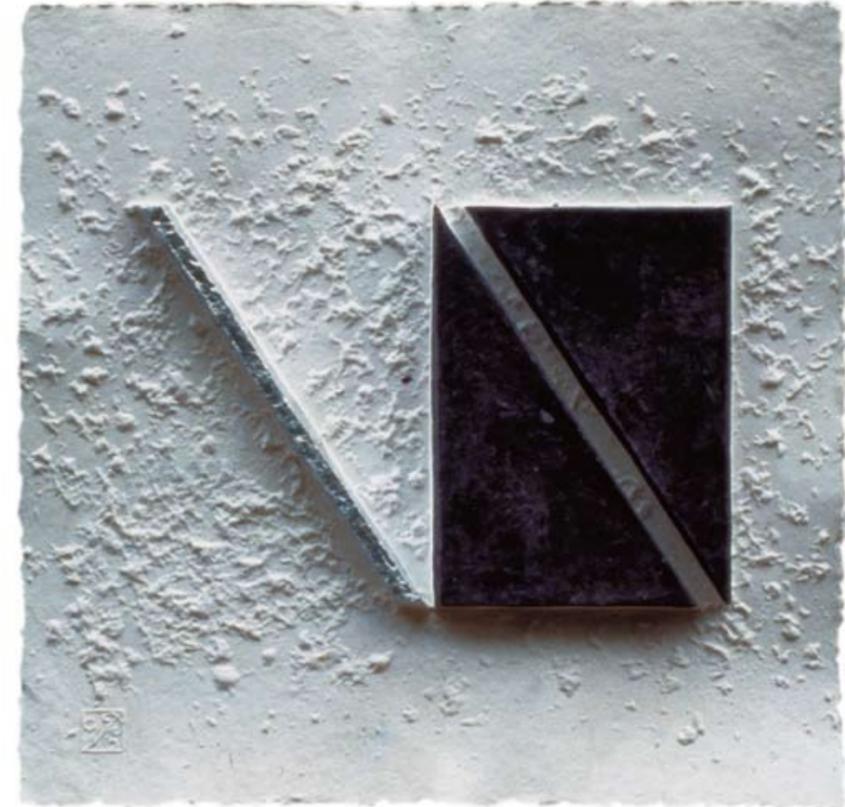




Paper Relief No 2, 1982
hand-made paper
92 cm square



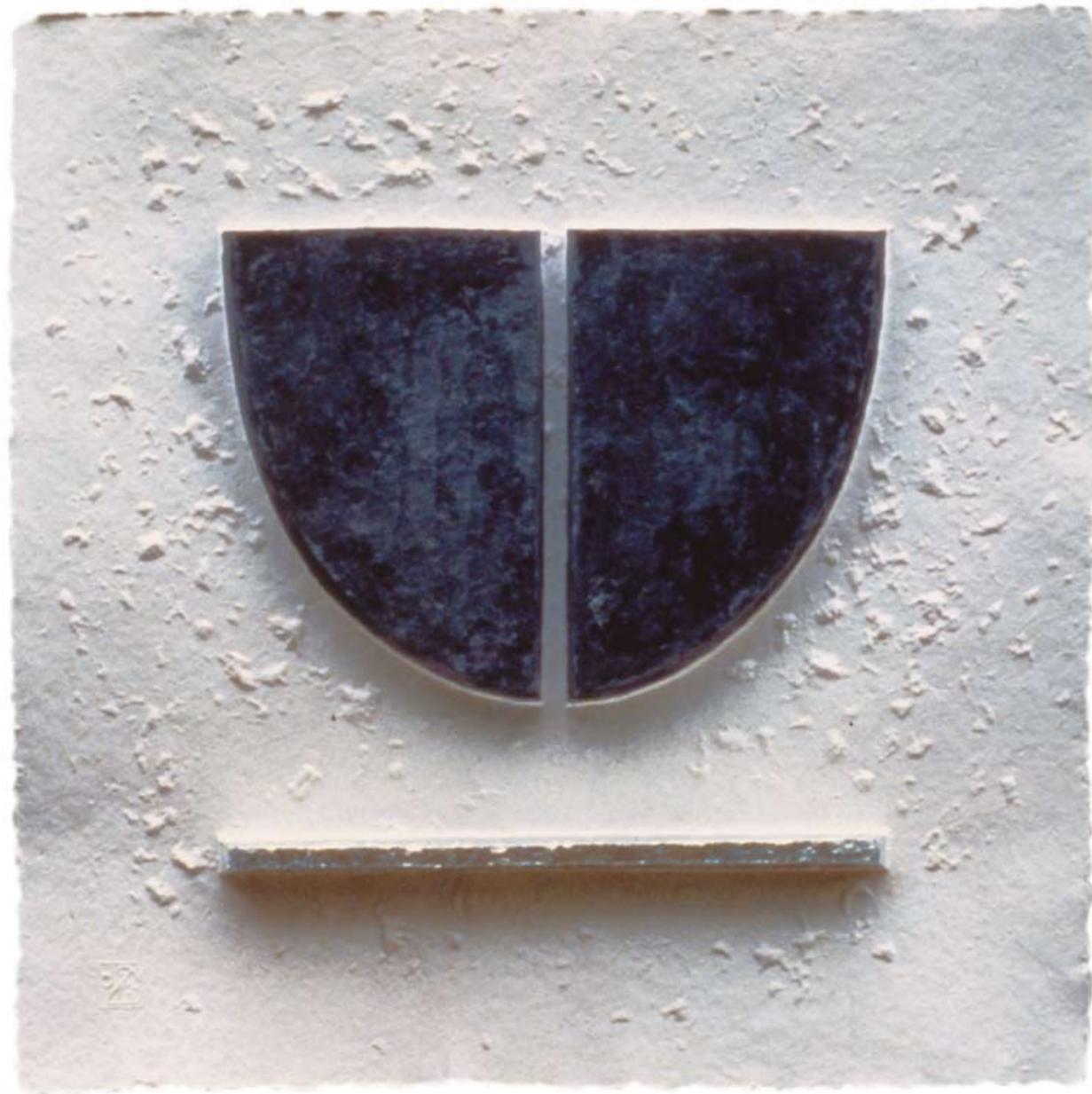
Paper Relief No 3, 1982
hand-made paper
92 cm square



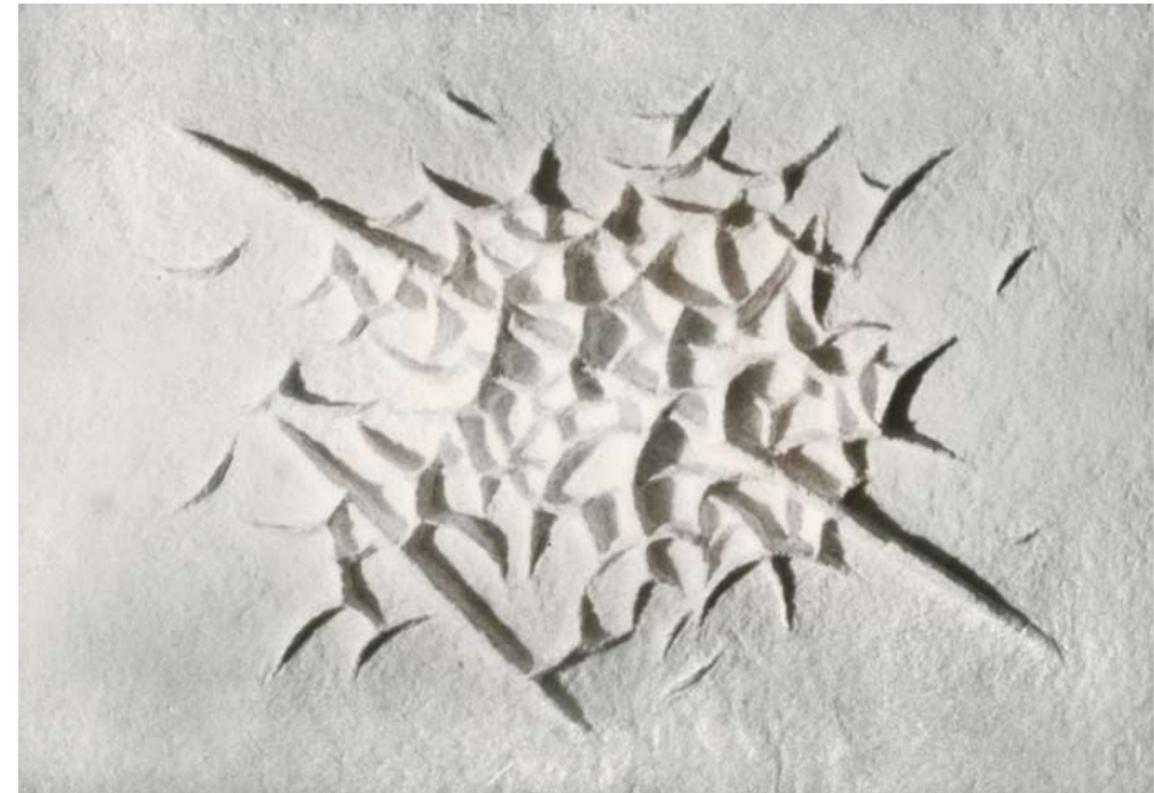
Paper Relief No 4, 1982
hand-made paper
92 cm square



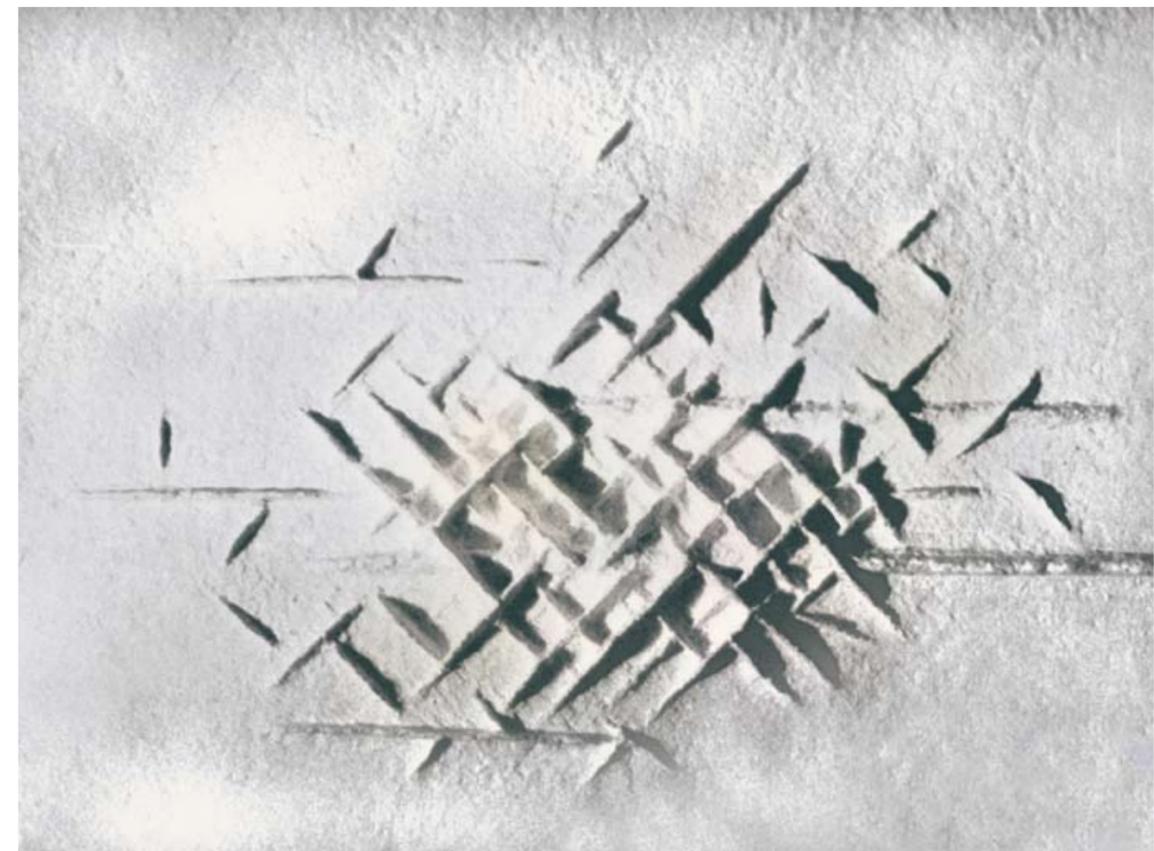
Paper Relief No 5, 1982
hand-made paper
92 cm square



Paper Relief No 6, 1982
hand-made paper
92 cm square



Paper Relief No 7, 1983
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



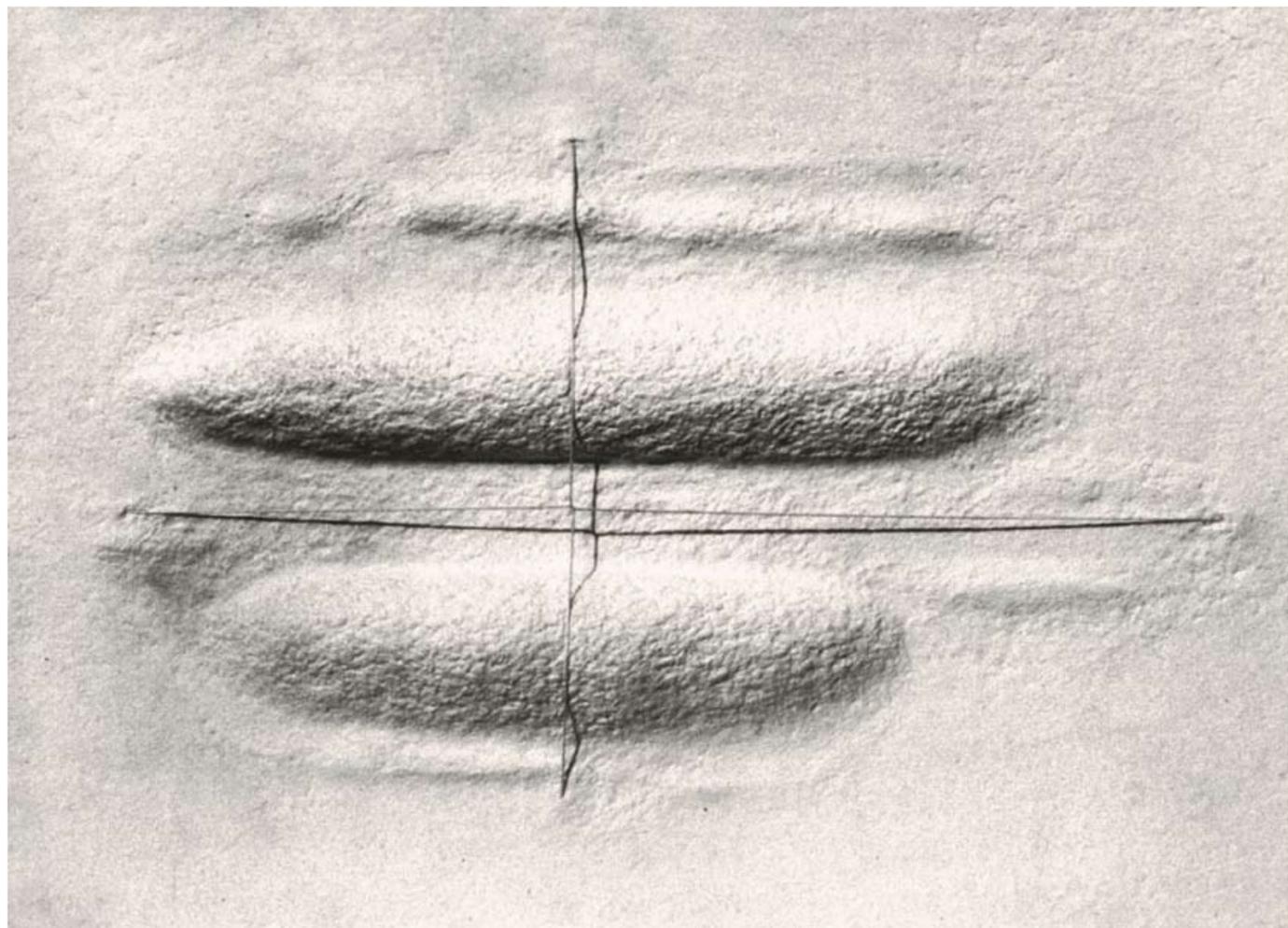
Paper Relief No 8, 1983
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



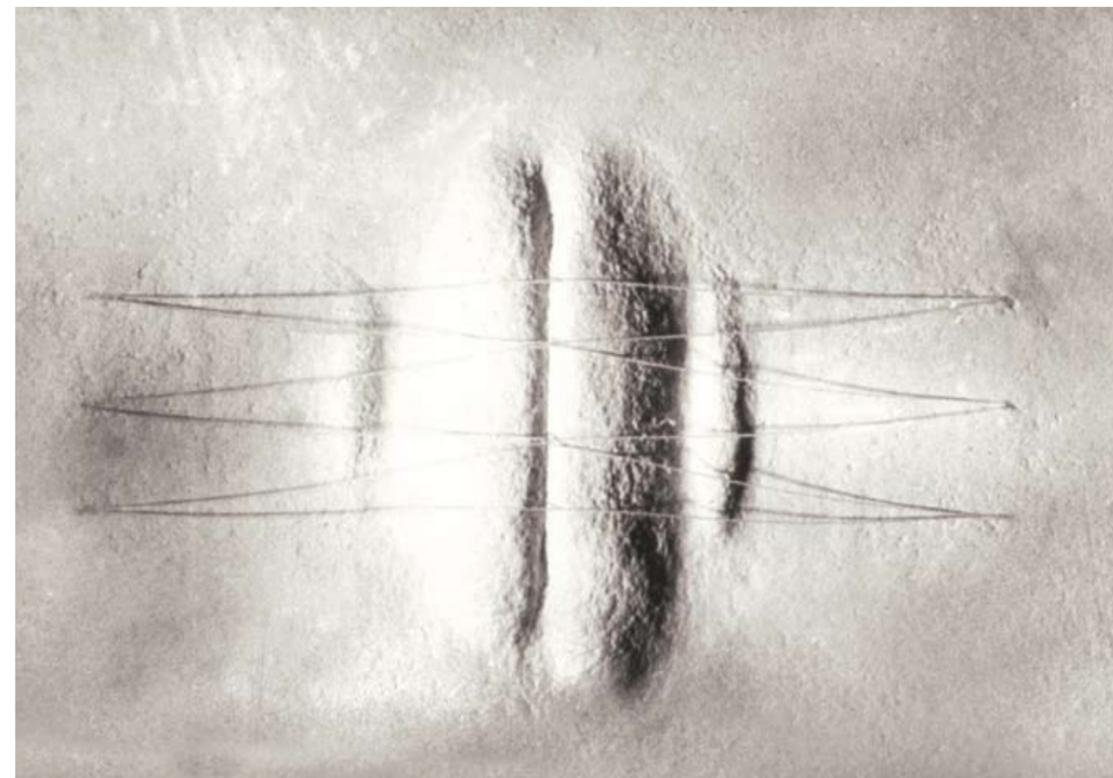
Paper Relief No 9, 1983
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



Paper Relief No 10, 1983
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



Paper Relief No 11, 1983
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



Paper Relief No 12, 1984
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



Paper Relief No 13, 1984
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



Paper Relief No 14, 1984
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high

236



Paper Relief No 15, 1984
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high

237



Paper Relief No 16, 1984
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



Paper Relief No 17, 1984
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



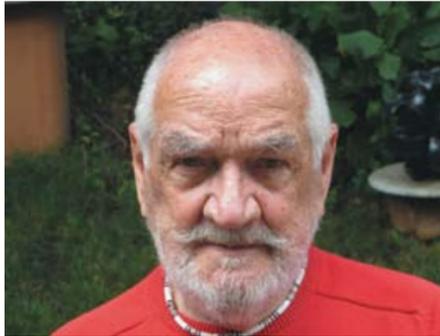
Paper Relief No 18, 1984
hand-made paper
1.17 m wide, 82 cm high



Paper Relief No 20, 1984
hand-made paper
1.10 m wide, 82 cm high



Artist's Studio
Str. Frumoasa Nr 32, Bucharest, Romania



Biographical Notes

Born 19 May 1927, Rachitoasa, Bacau, Romania
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Training

Academy of Fine Arts, Sculpture School, Bucharest, Romania,
1946-1950, Master of Fine Arts

International Symposiums

1966: Bechyne, Czechoslovakia
1967: Gmunden, Austria
1970: Madrid, Spain
1969: Cava dei Tirreni, Italy
1971: Bassano del Grappa, Italy
1972: Medgidia, Romania
1973: Memphis, Tennessee
2004: Panevezys, Lithuania
2005: Volos, Greece

Residences

2000: Love Ladies, New Jersey, USA
Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, USA
2002: California State University, Northridge, California, USA

Prizes, Awards, Honours

1962: Gold Medal, International Ceramic Exhibition, Prague, Czechoslovakia
1965: Prize of the UAP (Visual Artists' Union of Romania), Bucharest, Romania
1966: Gold Medal, Form und Qualitat, Munich, Germany
1967: Henry Reynaud Prize, Istanbul, Turkey
1972: Diplome d'Honneur, Third Biennial of Ceramics, Vallauris, France
1978: Gold Medal, The 36th International Ceramic Show, Faenza, Italy
1979: Fellowship, New Jersey State Council of the Arts, New Jersey, USA
2000: The Order of Mihail Eminescu, Romania

Outdoor Monumental Works

1962: Ballerinas, Galatzi, Romania
1972: Earth Power, Medgidia, Romania
1972: Fountain, Targu Mures, Romania
1978: Carpathian Flower, Cedar Sinai Hospital, Los Angeles, California, USA
1980: Love Flower No 1, University of California Los Angeles, California, USA
1985: Love Flower No 2, California State University, Northridge,
California, USA
1995: Eminescu, Mangalia, Romania
1996: Danubia, Orsova, Romania
1997: Prayer for Romania, Blaj, Romania
1998: New Romania, Snagov, Romania
2002: Blue Bird, Black & Blue Capricios, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs,
New York, USA
2002: Heavenly Hands, California State University, Northridge, California, USA
2003: Westminster Flower, Westminster Choir College, Princeton,
New Jersey, USA
2005: Haiku No 1, Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey, USA
2010: Twisted Ribbon, Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey, USA
2011: Column for My Homeland, Rachitoasa, Romania

Permanent Collections

Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Bruxelles, Belgium
Musée Ariana, Geneve, Switzerland
Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, Czechoslovakia
Museum of Contemporary Arts, Galatzi, Romania
National Theater, Bucharest, Romania
Cultural Center (Casa de Cultura), Buzau, Romania
Museum of Art, Constantza, Romania
Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, Romania

Selected List of Exhibitions

solo (s)
group (g)

- 1948: Exhibition of the Romanian Republic, Bucharest, Romania (g)
 1956: State Exhibition, Bucharest, Romania (g)
 1962: International Ceramic Exhibition, Prague, Czechoslovakia (g)
 1965: International Ceramic Exhibition, Faenza, Italy (g)
 1966: Group Show, Munich, Germany (g)
 1968: International Exhibition, Stuttgart, Germany (g)
 1970: Second Biennial of Ceramics, Vallauris, France (g)
 1970: Feria Monografica, Valencia, Spain (s)
 1971: Apollo Gallery, Bucharest, Romania (s)
 1972: Regarde 17 Gallery, Bruxelles, Belgium (s)
 1972: Romanian Artists, London, Great Britain (g)
 1972: Third Biennial of Ceramics, Vallauris, France (g)
 1973: Stebler Gallery, Geneve, Switzerland (s)
 1975: Romanian Artists, Athens, Greece (g)
 1976: Laurina Gallery, The Hague, Netherlands (s)
 1977: Bergsma Gallery, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA (s)
 Veterans Memorial Cultural Center, Los Angeles, USA (s)
 McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, USA (s)
 1978: Galateea Gallery, Bucharest, Romania (s)
 Grafisches Kabinett Gallery, Saarbrucken, Germany (s)
 1979: Venice Ceramic Gallery, Venice, California, USA (s)
 1980: James West Alumni Center, UCLA, Los Angeles, USA (s)
 1981: Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, USA (g)
 1982: Scipps College, Clairemont, California, USA (g)
 1983: Downey Museum Of Art, Downey, California, USA (s)
 1985: State University Northridge, Northridge, California, USA (s)
 1987: Monmouth County Museum, Marlboro, New Jersey, USA (g)
 1989: Ann Reid Gallery, Princeton, New Jersey, USA (s)
 1991: Grace Building, New York, New York, USA (g)
 1992: The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA (g)
 1993: Romanian Cultural Center, New York, New York, USA (s)
 1994: American Cultural Center, Bucharest, Romania (s)
 1995: Museum of Art, Constantza, Romania (s)
 1996: Robert Martin Blue Hill Plaza, Pearl River, New York, USA (s)
 2000: The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA (g)
 2001: Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts, Love Ladies, New Jersey, USA (s)
 Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts, Love Ladies, New Jersey, USA (g)
 Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey, USA (g)
 2002: Pleiades Gallery, New York, New York, USA (g)
 New Jersey Center for Visual Arts, Summit, NJ, USA (g)
 2003: Guilford Handcraft Center, Guilford, Connecticut, USA (g)\n
 2004: Noyes Museum, Oceanville, New Jersey, USA (g)
 2007: Noyes Museum, Oceanville, New Jersey, USA (g)
 2013: Art on the Avenue Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA (s)
 2015: Bernini Gallery, Glastonbury, Connecticut, USA (s)

- Karel Hettes, Pravoslav Rada, *Modern Keramik*, Prague, 1965
 Rose Slivka, *The Crafts of the Modern World*, New York, 1968
 Neaga Graur, *Patriciu Mateescu*, Monografie, Ed. Meridiane, Romania, 1970
 Polly Rothenberg, *The Complete Book of Ceramic Art*, Crown Publishers, NY, 1972
 Eileen Lewenstein, Emmanuel Cooper, *New Ceramics*, London, 1974
 Hildegard Storr-Britz, *Ornamente und Oberflächen in Keramik*, Hamburg, 1977
 Ionel Jianu, *Romanian Artists in the West*, Los Angeles, 1986
 Leon Nigrosh, *Sculpting Clay*, Davis Publications, 1991
 Susan Peterson, *The Craft and Art of Clay*, Prentice Hall, NJ, 1992
 Luiza Barcan, *Omagiu. Patriciu Mateescu*, Ed. Ilustrator, Rm. Valcea, Romania, 2002
 Anne-Marie Mariën-Dugardin, *Ceramics Art and Perception*, no. 50, Sydney, 2002

Selected Bibliography

