

LEA ZOLTOWSKI

Artist Statement

guilt and desire

I have always questioned desire and the guilt-ridden actions and inactions to fulfill oneself with objects, resulting in a vicious repetition of the cycle instead of contentment. A transformation of mental awareness and not the incessant buying of surrogate temporary happiness will end in personal fulfillment.

I use deceptively innocent decorative ceramic objects to reveal and critique societal power structures. These powers can be physical, intellectual, emotive, financial, aesthetic taste making, social political, and sexual. Unhappiness and complacency develops when one feels powerless, but I believe any person or object can be made powerful through heightened perceptual awareness. By creating an awareness of primal, pleasure-seeking bodily impulses and the learned repression of them, I can destabilize fixed notions of social taboos and performative behavior.

hunger and the fear of contamination

*Repositioning banal cultural detritus reveals a narrative of movement through the social status sphere from consumption to rejection and the possibility to reverse the cycle. A fusion of sensual organic forms (the body) with cultural relics (environment) is evocative of our movement through and impact on cultural development. The overuse and misuse of 'pretty' unobtrusive surface decoration functions as the overstimulatuous media serves as a distraction for real current events. It is *not* a mere coincidence that the terror level raises and impertinent news events are sensationalized to distract us when controversial political and environmental issues play out.*

Viewer comfort level and interaction varies according to cultural background, education, gender, and age all defining what cultural taboos or tasteful boundaries have been violated. Because the average man takes only 7 seconds to find a person or object desirable, it is essential to instigate and prolong curiosity. I use humor, bright, playful colors and the literal taste of chocolate to increase accessibility and encourage one to lower their guard. This mouth-watering desire is offset by the fear of moral and edible contamination.

These interactive object receptacles fill space with their emanating odor and contaminating, disrupting protrusions. I incite viewer discomfort and empowerment by encouraging socially taboo participatory reactions and bodily interfaces. I want to question passive spectatorship of art and by extension media and life. Real and implied interactions include smelling, tasting, biting into, looking deeply into or staring, picking up and using, and winning to take with you as a souvenir. 'Viewing' my work necessarily destroys, consumes, and subverts viewing expectations and passive complacency. These pieces are my tools to examine the heightened sensitivities of seduction, and the audience is my co conspirator.