

Helge Speth

Corona Series -- Artist Statement

My hand-built clay pieces have always been influenced by forms from nature. While trying to show a close connectedness to the earth, I do not strive to achieve life-like renderings. I rather attempt to capture spontaneous gestures of my inspirations, resulting in works of raw and unadulterated beauty. The Raku method, with its unpredictable surface results created by fire and smoke, accentuates my goal.

The nightmare of the Covid pandemic influenced my work with a sense of urgency. But, due to the social distancing and isolation, Raku firings were placed on hold. I therefore pursued assemblages using clay forms that were fired in the electric kiln, together with wire and nails.

Despite the horror of COVID-19, the minuscule viral particles possess a wondrous beauty that stands in unimaginable contrast to its overpowering evil capacity.

1. Coronials

Iron nails were bisque-fired into clay spheres that were consequently painted and mounted onto a metal armature with a wooden base. *Coronials*, imaginary viruses, in free motion, permeating breathing spaces shamelessly, attacking with merciless vengeance....



2. COVID Turmoil

A wire swirl, dipped into paper pulp, was spray painted and mounted onto a rusty iron base. "Corona viruses" (painted clay spheres with bisque-in nails) are caught in this convoluted torment, representing the pandemic turmoil into which the world has been thrown, so far without a viable resolution.



3. Corona Nightmare

A clay sphere was punctured with large iron spikes, bisque-fired and painted. The spikes, then, were glued into the preexisting holes forming the “virus.” The base consists of a hand-built, painted, lidded container, adorned with fired-in iron spikes. It is filled with concrete, thus stabilizing the rod which connects the “virus” form with its base.



1. Pierced Norm

An organic wire form, dipped into paper pulp, was spray painted and mounted onto an iron base. It was pierced by large iron spikes creating a disturbing image of forceful intrusion, violence and destruction.....a sign of our time?

