

DRIP

John Tinker's
Narrative Sculptures

TEASE



FOREWORD



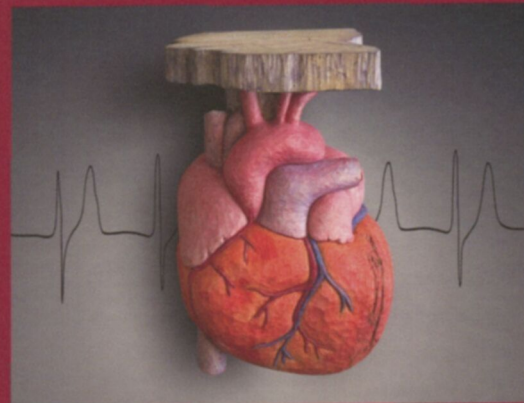
The beauty and complexity of John Tinker's sculptures, and the excellence he demonstrates in the execution of these works, are testimony to a considered eye and a master craftsman's hand.

For more than 23 years, John designed and installed award-winning exhibitions for the Museum of New Mexico. Working with the diversity of art and artists that we encounter in New Mexico, he honed his already sharp vision as an artist.

Perhaps the most compelling factor in John's work is a passion and a need for expressing his deliberately designed and executed works. Despite a full-time schedule of activities at the museums, where he demonstrated his many artistic talents in other ways, he developed a career as an artist that matured and merited him the attention of the New Mexico Museum of Art.

We congratulate John and look forward to his continuing contributions to the world of contemporary art.

Stuart A. Ashman
Cabinet Secretary
Department of Cultural Affairs



Cleveland Rocks! ▲

“Home to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Cleveland, Ohio, is also home to the Cleveland Clinic Heart and Vascular Institute. In 2008, I was the recipient of minimally invasive heart valve repair surgery at this state-of-the-art facility. The damaged portion of the wood and the EKG illustration represent my pre-surgical condition. The form that the heart hangs from is the state of Ohio. *Cleveland Rocks!* documents the most harrowing experience of my life.”

March 19, 2003 ◀

“Compelled by the Bush Administration's invasion of Iraq, *March 19, 2003* denounces efforts to combat terrorism and the 'axis of evil' by trading blood for oil.”



***Midlife: Ripe, Medium, Pitted* ▲**

“By the time middle age rolls around, we are all somewhat ripened, literally at the median point on life’s timeline, and usually pitted to some degree. We may also begin to leak in places for the first time since infancy.”

***Kumquat: Nagami* ▶**

“I have always liked the word kumquat. It sounds vaguely obscene but is simply the given name of a miniature citrus fruit. *Nagami* identifies the oblong shape of this particular variety. *Kumquat: Nagami* is an example of numerous ovoid forms found in the natural world, with its branches assuming the lyrical pose of a dancer. It is also my favorite shape in the inventory.”

John Tinker challenges the public with sculptures that offer droll comments about politics, survival, and popular culture. These works focus on the contradictions of the present moment through allusions to liquids that leak, ooze, or pool. Materials that melt provide the perfect medium for demonstrating the transitory nature of contemporary life.

These sculptures evolved out of high Modernist art at the end of the twentieth century. Sculpture from that period often emphasized simplified forms and exquisite craftsmanship. However, Tinker added narrative titles, an action that prevented his sculptures from being interpreted only as minimal forms. These one-line descriptions assured viewers that these are not empty forms but critiques of the conventional wisdom surrounding the present.

Tinker’s comments in the captions illuminate aspects that might be missed by casual viewers. The tension between his craftsmanship and the subjects of his sculptures creates a surrealist edge to these works. In this way, each drip teases viewers and stirs them to rethink the contradictions of daily life.

Joseph Traugott
Curator of Twentieth-Century Art
New Mexico Museum of Art

CURATOR'S NOTE



NEAR, AND NOT
JOHN TINKER'S SURFACE LOGIC



The first time I saw a John Tinker sculpture its materiality surprised me, out of my peripheral sight, an encounter between suspicion and desire. Poet John Ashbery wrote, in *Self Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, “This could have been our paradise/exotic refuge within an exhausted world/but that wasn’t in the cards/because it couldn’t have been the point.”

To enter the force field of John Tinker sculpture is to allow oneself a similar uneasiness. You didn’t entirely catch the last of the whispered phrase.

As you try to articulate the object familiar — curve gloss matte, motion of the traced motion, split screen, section, “no one can say how it came to be this way/you are allowing extraneous matters to break up your day”— the noise of identification hovers out of reach.

This pose straddling wishfulness and back to reality is very deeply embedded in the experience of viewing Tinker sculpture. Pinging between notorious and banal, the thing remains, inevitably, thing-ly. Shaped. Edgy. Remote. Cool. Especially: Present.



Turning Japanese ▲

“An annoying little song titled ‘Turning Japanese,’ by the British band *The Vapors*, inspired this example of a group of works incorporating a primary form supported by a furniture-like component. The angular base and the soft Hydrostone form reference the Ukiyo-e period of Japanese prints. The mahogany has a finish reminiscent of flexible bamboo, suggesting strength and control.”

Effluent Measure ◀

“Red is often associated with love and passion. Liquid flowing out of itself in the form of a vessel of measure implies the slightly out of control. Love often cannot be measured or controlled, and a ‘shot’ of it is likely to jolt us into believing love might be sustainable even to excess.”



Relief ▲

“I acquired the yellow stool, struck by its beautiful patina from years of use in a previous life. I observed its slow decay as a metaphor for loneliness and despair. Relief was in order in the form of a meringue inspired ‘cushion,’ preferably cooled by refrigeration.”

Mohave ►

“Cast from a vintage streetlight lens, with a mirrored Plexiglas backing to reflect light toward the surface of the form, Mohave is a retinal reference to this California desert’s intense heat and the relentless presence of the sun.”

As sculpture, these objects have a present intensity. They tick between the phenomena of illusion and the capacity of form to make meaning.

A trio of plump bodied koi flash sinuous. A pane of water makes a pun for its gelid ripples so cellophane blue. The impression of Mohave conveys desert light, given off through the cast of a city streetlamp. Flights of fancy await to be excavated from what is, in the Oscar Wilde sense, the superficiality of the work. Indeed, form does spill into effluent in Tinker’s world, the hard liquifies and drips, but what is moist seals into pattern where form scissors an edge, describing all the things the work is near, but is not.

Here indeed, in the space of near yet not, is where John Tinker’s sense of liminality always proves so very interesting. Rooted in the logo-rhythmos of modernism, the work insinuates between a desire to say what is plausible, and the sense of what Ashbery calls the “‘not-being-us’/...all there is to look at in the mirror.”

Ellen Berkovitch

After being a critic and essayist in New York and New Mexico, Berkovitch entered the turf of shorter writing for her new, media art magazine at adobeairstream.com.



EXHIBITION CHECKLIST



Clear Wring

"A form capturing the action of being twisted and wrung out, with evidence of inherent liquid quivering at its tip, *Clear Wring* suggests solidified containment about to release."

At Sea 1980/2002
Polyester resin
16 x 16 x 0.5 inches

Clear Wrung 2009
Polyester resin, glass
5 x 5 x 4 inches

Cleveland Rocks! 2009
Pigmented wood,
with vinyl EKG illustration
13.5 x 116 x 6.75 inches

Cup Narratives 2006 (ongoing)
Found objects with resins
and mixed media
Dimensions vary

Effluent Measure 2005
Epoxy resin, polyester resin
1.5 x 5 x 4 inches

El Tropical 2008
Oil on wood, polyurethane,
acrylic, jute
23 x 16.5 x 5.5 inches
Private collection,
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Kumquat: Nagami 2008
Encaustic with various woods,
epoxy resin
15.5 x 37 x 8.5 inches

March 19, 2003 2003
Polyester resin, 14 karat gold
6 x 2.5 x 2.25 inches
Courtesy of Marsha Swiss
and Ron Costell, Washington, DC

Midlife: Ripe, Medium, Pitted 2004
Painted wood, polyester resin
8 x 19 x 12 inches
Private collection,
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Mohave 2000
Polyester resin, Plexiglas, acrylic gel
12.5 x 12.5 x 8 inches

Relief 2004
Painted wood, found object
26 x 12 x 14 inches
Courtesy of Marsha Swiss
and Ron Costell, Washington, DC

The Three Graces: Radiata Koi 2010
Wood, encaustic, polyester resin,
Plexiglas, paint
96 x 44 x 7 inches

Tuolumne 2000
Polyester resin, glass, Plexiglas
12.5 x 12.5 x 8 inches

Turning Japanese 2003
Hydrostone, painted mahogany
43.5 x 4 x 19 inches

White Wrung 2009
Polyester resin, glass
5 x 5 x 4 inches

Except where noted, all works
are courtesy of Linda Durham
Contemporary Art, Santa Fe.

Photography by Blair Clark.
Graphic design by Monica Meehan.

This publication was made possible by generous contributions and assistance from Sandy Besser and an anonymous donor. My partner, Avra Leodas, has continued to provide immeasurable support for this project and beyond. Thanks to the lenders of works in private collections. My thanks also to Stuart Ashman for offering me the opportunity to exhibit my work at the New Mexico Museum of Art. Special thanks to Blair Clark, Museum of New Mexico Photo services photographer for his unending patience and long-standing, collaborative partnership.

John Tinker



At Sea (detail)

“Conceived as a point of observation from the vantage point of a shoreline or from the deck of a seafaring vessel, *At Sea* is intended to capture the state of contemplation that the vastness of open water often provokes.”

This gallery guide was produced in conjunction with the exhibition *Drip Tease: John Tinker's Narrative Sculptures*, on display August 13, 2010 to January 9, 2011.

New Mexico Museum of Art

107 West Palace Avenue

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

505-476-5072 NMArtMuseum.org



NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURAL AFFAIRS