

DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

Stephen De Staebler

An important figure in the California Clay Movement, De Staebler's works in both clay and bronze call to mind archetypes of the collective unconscious. Totemic and fragmented in form, the sculptures waiver between the dichotomies of earthly and spiritual, body and landscape and fragility and resiliency.

...despite their apparent antiquity, they speak of a shared humanity that spans cultures and eras. Both tender and tough, these fragmentary figures offer evidence of a sensibility that understands both the inevitability of physical death and the unquenchability of the human spirit.- Rick Newby

What is particularly compelling about this most recent sculpture is that it only could have been created after a lifetime of making work, as it draws from fired fragments from the past four decades. The subtle and varying natural hues of clay counter the raw forms that have now been assembled into figures that reflect Stephen's undeniably original and poetic voice.

De Staebler often pares the figure down to just a leg, referencing the part of the body closest to the earth.

What is exposed in the process are incomplete figurative forms that have a dualistic quality, at once emerging and retrieving into the material. Through his work, De Staebler seeks to achieve equilibrium between integration and disintegration of the form to explore questions of origins, time and the nature of existence. With its profound questioning on the form of our humanity, Stephen DeStaebler's work resonates today because it seeks to capture some of the truth and beauty of our uncertain condition. – Nancy Servis, Richmond Art Center.

Born in 1933, Stephen De Staebler is originally from St Louis, Missouri. He graduated with a degree in theology from Princeton University and a masters in sculpture at the University of California, Berkeley. He has exhibited widely and most recently had solo exhibitions at the Napa Valley Museum, the Palo Alto Art Center and the Richmond Art Center.

He has been awarded numerous NEA grants as well as a prestigious Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. His work is in the permanent collections of many museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, de Young Museum, Oakland Museum of California, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. He is slated for a major retrospective at the San Jose Museum of Art in 2012.