



Top Athletes
1993

Above A is for Acrobat
1993
Both KEVIN STAFFORD (Canada)

Kevin Stafford, from Winnipeg, Canada, offers us 'A is for Acrobat' and 'Pinkie', 1993, both based on a reworked and recontextualised child's toy, who now offers himself for a different type of play, with no ambiguity, in a gesture of complete availability. The opening in the figure brings us back to the anthropomorphism of pottery forms with all the associations around penetration and the inside/outside dynamics of pots. As with all containers, the opening gives access to an empty void that begs to be filled. His impaled figure hanging from a chain as well as his welcoming Tantric figure, are both sexy and sexualised and embody liberation, either through physical restraint or by abandonment to overwhelming possession.

With a very different agenda, Seattle artist Patti Warashina, whose work might easily be analysed within the context of feminism (in Chapter Three: Giving Meaning), presents a small original modelled figure in stark contrast to Kevin's appropriated and reworked casts. Her nude female figure is unsexy and it is clearly gendered; the inherent political content removes the potential eroticism of the work. Her 'Domestic Breakthru', 1970s, illustrates a different liberation, and the necessity for psychological emancipation. It is often said that art is about theory and it could be said that craft is about processes. Usually, ceramics is about certain processes – throwing, glazing, firing, etc. In the case of these two artists, the processes are not technical, but sexual and psychological.