

WILLIAM DALEY

Vesica Explorations



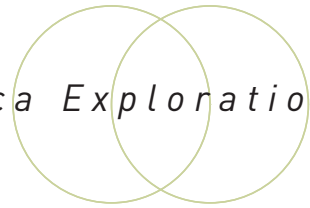


Vesica Vesica II 2007

Unglazed stoneware
24.5" x 20" x 12.5"
Collection of Alfred and Rica Fenaughty
Photograph: John Carlano

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List Gallery

Swarthmore College

September 4, 2009 — October 31, 2009



Lovers Vesica 2008

Two views
25.5" x 23.5" x 11.75"
Unglazed ground stoneware
Collection of Sara Jane Daley
Photograph: Amanda Williams



The Spirit in the Form

I met William Daley the first year I started my job as director of the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. He led a clay workshop in the first session of our season—in June of 1989—and this was my introduction to a community of makers. What better way for me to experience it than to spend time with Bill, who exemplified the best attributes of both community and making.

It was a rainy two weeks—I recall that there were only two days when it didn't rain and even then there were thick clouds. But things were full of light in the clay studio. Bill had created his own festival inside—having students make hats out of newspaper, baking a whole fish encased in clay in one of the kilns, and testing out paper airplane long-flight techniques among other initiatives. At the same time, he was teaching about the architecture of pots, moving from one student to another, one-on-one, as they built molds out of tar paper or as they created their vessels in clay. These were large forms requiring some innovative engineering, and Bill was working alongside his students as they encountered difficulties—sealing cracks with vinegar, temporarily holding the forms together with cloth straps torn from old sheets—to bring them into existence.

At the same time the pots were being built, there was something else going on: Bill was fostering a spirit of creativity and making a home for the unexpected. The studio had become a place with a sense of adventure, a place where technique went on a journey into the unknown. It's the same journey Bill makes in his own studio.

When Bill Daley is creating his large architectural vessels he is traveling back as far as human memory, to the first hands that touched clay, the first makers who created the space between the inner and outer walls of a vessel. Today when we talk about function and use, we might think too literally about what that means. It's not just whether you can drink or eat out of a pot, although those are important uses and once tied to our very survival; we are yearning also to be connected with the profound cycles of our own lives—to keep track of our voyage into life and back to earth. In his vessels, Bill creates a space for that kind of contemplation.

He recalls that the earliest book to shape his thinking was the Baltimore Catechism, which he had to memorize for his first communion when he was seven. Its definition of a sacrament as the "outward visible sign of an inner spiritual grace." While he has read many books since then, and been influenced by his teachers, his family, and his students, the path from that book to his pots is plain to see. He is creating sacred space, with the most elemental of materials, and making between the thin walls of the pot, the inner and outer world, a space where we can move through time differently.

You can sense the ancient time of ritual when you look at one of his pots. The proportions and dimensions are for him a cosmic geometry, and as the viewer I feel as if I am standing on the edge of earthen and stone works in Mesoamerica or in a European cathedral, as if I could walk down the steps and edges of the vessel and enter into a deeper place. The journey is into a place where we are held. We are not falling into an abyss, but finding an order among the stars.

While the ancient life of clay and makers informs his work, he doesn't replicate the past—he brings the past into the present. Each work is another attempt to create 'the outward visible sign,' mediating between a perfect place and the world we live in.

Part of the work that Bill does in creating his vessels is his drawing. I've never been to a meeting or any other event outside the studio where he isn't at work on a drawing—revisiting geometry and creating new spaces made by the intersections of other forms. These combinations take us beyond the expected into a place of transformation. Ultimately the pot is also transformed by fire, becoming stone again. Its scale evokes both the awesome space of a sacred building and the intimate touch of the human hand, forming the edges just so. The pots remind us of how we are connected to our past and to the earth and to our own bodies.

Bill believes deeply in our responsibility to pass on to the next generation what we know, and then let that generation take us to new places. In that way, building the future is much like making art, where skill, tradition, and spirit encounter the unknown.

A few years ago I asked Bill to teach in a program for high school students, an intensive three-day workshop at Haystack, where teens work in six different craft media in a retreat setting, removed from the distractions of bells and school buses. They are in the studios day and night, experiencing the slower time of making.

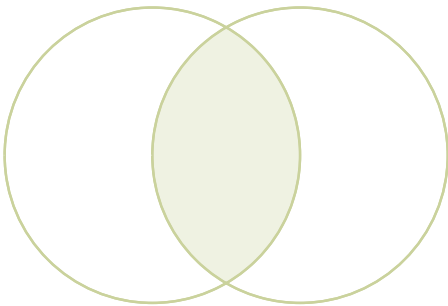
One evening he spoke with the students about the 'thin places' in Irish mythology, those places where the dividing line between this world and the next, between this world and the divine, is thin, like a permeable membrane. While at that moment he was speaking of Haystack, I think he was also saying that any world of serious making is a thin place, a place where we travel back and forth between the inner and the outer worlds, and try to join them together as best we can.

That space between our inner and outer worlds can be vast, or it can be thin, thin as the wall of the pot that Bill Daley is forming with his hands.

— Stuart Kestenbaum
Director, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts

Vesica Explorations

As a maker of clay pots,
I am their tracer of cycles.
Drafting lines in moist clay,
to stone by fire,
become, my telling way
to *mind wonder*.



Classic Vesica Symbol

The geometry of the Vesica is graphed by inscribing the circumference of two equal circles through each other's center points to become a mutual inside/outside unity. It is an ancient icon which informs the mystery of *two as a new one*. Vesica explorations through clay pots are seminal stuff, a kind of material culture for incubating thought.

Like clay pots, primal materials, for me, have personae; they hold secrets, embed traditions and feed the boundaries that nurture change. Consequently, material holds the inherent structure of the *possible becoming*. In studio time, it is a kind of morphology. A quickener of tacit cues which slows down my head to allow the possibility of *seeping time* as I work, tools at hand. I call it practice-the wonderings of *if*. *If*, as add-venturing; *if*, as play, serendipity or chance; *if*, as the alternatives of un-thought, maybe my intuitions: feelings that morph my parts and pieces into *holds*. *Holds* that nudge more pro-found possible for what I thought I was trying to do with *now and then or how and why*.

If the power of *if* informs the *possible becoming* and these inter-restings insist, I know I have realized something useful to pursue and give material evidence to share. Then I enjoy the rush of getting closer to offering a more telling Vesica Vessel-one in which the duality of material and spirit whisper the symmetry of wonder we share together. My thanks to all who help draw the circumference of the center points and assure the future of Possibility-Becoming.

William Daley
June 24 2009



Photograph: Kev Filmore



Appollonian Vesica 2003

Unglazed stoneware
29" x 21" x 24"
Collection of Daniel Jalboot and Jennifer Peterson
Photograph: Amanda Williams



Venture Z Vesica 2007

32" x 29" x 17"
Unglazed stoneware
Collection of William and Catherine Daley
Photograph: John Carlano

Guardian Vesica 2005

Unglazed stoneware
30.5" x 26" x 38.5"
Collection of Thomas Daley
Photograph: Amanda Williams





Vesica Vessel 2001

24" x 17" x 12"
Unglazed Stoneware
Collection of Marlin and Ginger Miller
Photograph: Amanda Williams



Azoic Vesica 2008

32" x 27.5" x 14.5"
Unglazed Ground Stoneware
Collection of Alfred and Rica Fenaughty
Photograph: Amanda Williams

William Daley—an Appreciation

The List Gallery is proud to host *William Daley, Vesica Explorations*. The exhibition features a selection of significant works Daley produced after completing over 30 years on the faculty of The University of the Arts, Philadelphia in 1990.

Bill Daley is internationally acclaimed for his visually complex slab-built ceramic vessels. His architectonic forms explore varied relationships between interior and exterior geometries. Synthesizing ancient spiritual symbols and elements of sacred architecture, especially the vesica form of overlapping circles, Daley's vessels are both iconic and inventive. They speak to the human need for what is both specifically authentic and universal.

Viewers will note that one work, *Turner's Court* (1983), was produced prior to 1990. This vessel was made in honor of ceramic artist Robert Turner (1913–2005), Daley's close friend and Swarthmore alumnus, and is included as a tribute to Mr. Turner.

The exhibition also includes four ceramic tablets, *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John* (1994). These tablets are commissioned studies for the liturgical furniture at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in West Chester, Pennsylvania. The images are derived from the Gospel figures as depicted in *The Book of Kells*, (c. 800), the illuminated Celtic manuscript, where the Apostles are depicted as the perfect man, the oxen, the lion, and the eagle.

William Daley, Vesica Explorations and this accompanying catalog were made possible through a grant from the William J. Cooper Foundation. We also wish to acknowledge the generous support of Carol Lorber '63 and Bennett Lorber '64. This exhibition was also made possible through the leadership of Syd Carpenter, Professor of Art and Chair, Swarthmore College.

The extended Daley family provided invaluable support. We especially appreciate the organizational expertise of Thomas Daley, Barbara Daley Schwab, Charlotte Daley, and Sara Jane Daley '10. We would also thank the individuals who have generously lent their works for public appreciation, as noted in this catalog.

— Andrea Packard
Director, List Gallery

William Daley

Born in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York in 1925

EDUCATION

- 1950 B.S., Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA
1952 M.A., Columbia University, Teachers College,
New York, NY

SELECTED TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 1957-90 Professor, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA

SELECTED HONORS

- 2007 Watershed Inaugural Legends Award,
Newcastle, ME
2004 James Renwick Alliance, Distinguished Educator
Award
2003 American Craft Council, Aileen Osborne Webb
Award for Consummate Craftsmanship
2002 Elected to the Archives of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
1998 Regis Master Award, Northern Clay Center,
Minneapolis, MN
1994 Honorary Doctorate, University of the Arts,
Philadelphia, PA
1989 Distinguished University Professor, University of
the Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
College Art Association, Distinguished Teaching
of Art Award
Honorary Doctorate, Maine College of Art,
Portland, ME
1988 American Craft Council Fellow
1983 National Council on Education for the Ceramic
Arts Honorary Member
1977 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2008 *Architecture and Ceramics: Material, Structure,
Vision*, Northern Clay Center, Minneapolis, MN
2006 *International Architectural Ceramic Exhibition*,
Clayarch Gimhae Museum, Gimhae, Korea
Poetics of Clay an International Perspective,
Philadelphia Art Alliance, PA
2000 *Defining Moments in Studio Ceramics*, Los
Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
1999 *Pioneers and Terriers: Colenbrander, Ohr & USA
Clay Today*, Stedelijk Museum, The Netherlands
1998 *Clay into Art: Contemporary Ceramics, Selections
from the Museum*, Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York, NY
1997-98 Regis Masters Series: The Exhibition,
Northern Clay Center, Minneapolis, MN

- 1996 *Influenced by Nature*, Gallery at Hastings-on-
Hudson, NY
1994 *Working in Other Dimensions: Objects and
Drawings II*, Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, AR
William Daley, Ceramic Works and Drawings,
Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art
Museum, Washington, D.C.
1993 *William Daley, Ceramic Works and Drawings*,
Levy Gallery for the Arts, Moore College of Art
and Design, Philadelphia, PA
1990 Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
1986 *Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical*, American Craft
Museum, New York, NY
Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
1985 Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Garth Clark Gallery, New York, NY
1983 Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
1981 Exhibit A Gallery Chicago, IL
1980 Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
1979 *A Century of Ceramics in the United States
1878-1978*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY
Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1976 Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
1974 Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
1959 Pace Gallery, Boston, MA
1954 *Young Americans*, America House, New York, NY

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, AR
Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL
Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, Racine, WI
Clayarch Gimhae Museum, Gimhae, South Korea
Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
Minneapolis Arts Institute, Minneapolis, MN
Museum of Art and Design, New York, NY
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
National Museum of Art, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
The Saint Louis Museum of Art, MO
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England

Guardian Chamber 1998
26" x 18" x 18"
Collection of Barbara Daley and
George Schwab

Encompassed Vesica 1999
23" x 21" x 15"
Collection of David and
Ligia Slovic

Vesica Vessel 2001
24" x 17" x 12"
Collection of Marlin and
Ginger Miller

Coupled Vesica 2001
27" x 21" x 22"
Collection of James and
Susan Pagliaro

Celtic Vesica 2002
22" x 22" x 34"
Collection of Stephen and
Charlotte Martin

Apollonian Vesica 2003
29" x 21" x 24"
Collection of Daniel Jalboot and
Jennifer Peterson

Vesica Monday 2005
29" x 21" x 22"
Collection of Marlin and
Ginger Miller

Guardian Vesica 2005
28" x 24" x 40"
Collection of Thomas Daley

Venture Z Vesica 2007
32" x 29" x 17"
Collection of William and
Catherine Daley

Vesica Vesica II 2007
Collection of Alfred and
Rica Fenaughty
Azoic Vesica 2008
Collection of Alfred and
Rica Fenaughty

Lovers Vesica 2008
Collection of Sara Jane Daley
New Pot 2009
Collection of William and
Catherine Daley

New Pot 2009
Collection of William and
Catherine Daley

Matthew Tablet 1994
17" x 17" x 3"
Collection of Barbara and
George Schwab

Luke Tablet 1994
17" x 17" x 3"
Collection of Charlotte Daley

Mark Tablet 1994
17" x 17" x 3"
Collection of Samuel Crothers

John Tablet 1994
17" x 17" x 3"
Collection of Thomas and
Donna Daley



Coupled Vesica 2001

Stoneware unglazed
27" x 21" x 22"

Collection of James and Susan Pagliaro
Photograph: John Carlano



Turners' Court 1989

Unglazed stoneware
30" x 28" x 12"
Collection of Thomas and Donna Daley
Photograph: Amanda Williams

Cover:

Guardian Chamber 1992

Unglazed Stoneware
26" x 18" x 18"
Collection of Barbara Daley and George Schwab
Photograph: Amanda Williams