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# Unrestricted Content

## The work of Andrew Casto

*Rationality is what we do to organize the world, to make it possible to predict. Art is the rehearsal for the inapplicability and failure of that process.*

—Brian Eno

*Myth is the public dream and dream is the private myth.*

—Joseph Campbell

**A** harpsichord and hip-hop music have each played a role in the formation of Andrew Casto's aesthetic. Born into a family of freethinkers, Casto grew up surrounded by intellectual fluidity. Opinions were not rigid, and were open to change, and to interpretation over time. A spectrum of materials could come together to make a whole, as in the harpsichord Casto observed his father making by hand for his mother throughout

his childhood, and sampling from other traditions and sounds, as in the hip-hop music that pervaded his adolescence, could enhance discrete and evocative works of musical composition.

Thus, Andrew Casto is happiest when he works without boundaries, moving between materials and integrating conflicting ideas, such as order and chaos, harmony and discord, momentum and stasis, into mysterious and gorgeous artifacts. I use the word "artifact" consciously, because Casto's objects are final agglomerations of heartfelt and labor-intensive process. Casto "samples" the world around him, much in the manner of a musician, incorporating discarded gas pumps and teapot handles, shards and debris into dense constructions that are then embellished with slip and with glaze. The resulting work is then observed and analyzed by the artist, who may add wood, metal or gold to finish the piece.

For Casto, clay is not an inert material but a kinetic force that is mostly between incarnations: cracking, hardening, disintegrating into mud, breaking into shards, converting into expressive form. Each iteration of clay is of equal value in his work. To fight clay's tendencies would be to fight the

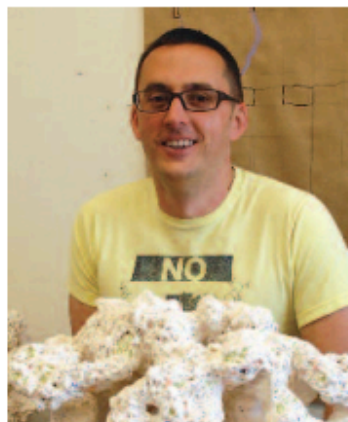


life force. All of nature transforms, and bodies return to soil as ash. Casto embraces this truth, realizing that he is fascinated by the moment just before implosion. Formally, that instant yields originality and pathos; psychologically, it is the second preceding revelation. Thus, through sculpture, the artist captures a spectrum of human experience. The density of the glazes reveals strata of color. Bruised blues peek from beneath creamy, fatty whites, and fleshy pinks flash randomly. The result is color that evokes the body swathed upon forms that describe what is often hidden: organs, teeth, tumors, hideouts, coral reefs, caves and canyons. Hidden within these mysterious shapes are prosaic bones; substructures made from garbage, refuse and broken-down junk. The artist seems

to be telling us that what we discard as having no value, what we think of as muddled or untidy, is in fact what life is like. The pains and losses we all must endure, our inherent entropy, tend to strengthen our characters and our capacity for insight. Thus, Casto caps his works in molten gold. These are sacred artifacts that honor the perfection of chaos. These are maps that help us find our way home.

Above:  
*The Breeders*  
ceramic, stainless steel, epoxy,  
tool dip, gold luster, hardware  
41" x 13" x 13", 2012

Left:  
*The Locket of Circumstance*  
ceramic, wood, plexiglass, epoxy,  
tool dip, hardware, gold luster  
10" x 8" x 14", 2012





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