

Parry works now on display at Museum of Ceramic Art

12/14/04

An exhibition of work by the late William Parry, a professor of ceramic art at Alfred University, is now on display at the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred. William Parry (don't forget to) Wonder will remain on view through April 1, 2005, in the museum, located on the second floor of Binns-Merrill Hall on the AU campus. A reception will be held from 4:30-6 pm Jan. 27, 2005, in the museum. This special exhibition features 12 works by Parry, who died in February at the age of 85. Most of these sculptures are part of a recent gift from Elizabeth Parry. The exhibited work spans the years of 1965 through 1993. Included will be examples of his Knife, Fork, Spoon series and his Off-Butterfly series. Three sculptures that combine the use of clay and metal will also be exhibited in addition to other early work. Parry, who received his BFA degree from Alfred University's School of Art & Design in 1947, taught at the School from 1963 until his retirement in 1989. Prior to that he taught at the Philadelphia College of Art (now the University of the Arts). His career as an artist and teacher extended more than 50 years. He was the first president the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts. Parry was an active supporter of the Alfred museum and a member of its development council. His work is in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Everson Museum and Museum of Art and Design (originally the Museum of Contemporary Crafts), as well as the Museum at Alfred. He also exhibited nationally and internationally. Of his own work he wrote: "...less and less I have been able to visualize the end results in advance; more often the resolution is found on the way. The variety and importance of different materials change on the basis of their structural roles. Forms arise and as they develop, questions arise about what they want to become and how they are to be called, in what becomes self-dialogue rather than the execution of plan. The problem I set for myself has become one of expression rather than illustration." Parry regarded himself as much a teacher as an artist "As a teacher of sculpture I am an expediter - a facilitator - rather than an oracle on the source of the mysteries. I want to help establish the climate in which the student can try to create forms which will stand for his/her mental images - in other words to help her/him externalize those relationships of form which constitute sculpture," he said. "At last, at long last in my teaching experience, my aim in teaching is to put some things within your reach - to put them in your hands is to rob them of importance to you," he said toward the end of his career at the University. "We will not die through lack of power but one may die through lack of wonder," Parry said. "Don't forget to wonder."