

Alumnus Robert Winokur to exhibit work at Museum

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A solo exhibition, "Houses, Wedges and Figures," consisting of recent ceramic pieces by Robert Winokur opens at the International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred University on Jan. 25, 2006 and closes on March 31. Winokur will present a slide lecture in Binns-Merrill Hall, Room 106, at 4:30 p.m. Jan. 25. His lecture is sponsored by the Division of Ceramic Art in the School of Art & Design. An opening reception with Winokur will be held at 4:30 p.m. Jan. 26 at the Museum, located on the second floor of Binns-Merrill Hall on the Alfred University campus. Included will be Winokur's ceramic houses that he characterizes as "a unique kind of container, one that is imbued with a deep set of profound, symbolic and multi-layered psychic associations." As Winokur explains in his artist's statement: "To a child a house represents warmth, family, love, security and identity. In the process of doing these houses, by some sort of subtle process of associations, the houses became, for me, a symbol of choice and I have been working with this form for the past five or more years." "I don't know when it was that I became fascinated and enthralled by artwork done by children and in particular with the drawings and paintings done by them of houses. What I find truly compelling about these works was their innocence, exuberance and spontaneity." Those qualities and elements of children's art that inspired me to work with the house soon faded and the sense of playfulness and spontaneity was replaced by a kind of somber introspection. Perhaps it is the color of the clay coupled with the way I choose to construct the houses that abetted this. Houses have become, for me, a kind of abstraction that expresses, on one level, a formal study of variations on the theme and, on another, an exploration of the possibilities that can be wrung from the symbolism inherent in vernacular architecture." Winokur was born in 1933 in Brooklyn, NY. In 1956 he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from The Tyler School of Fine Art of Temple University where he majored in sculpture and minored in ceramics; two years later he earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from the School of Art & Design at Alfred University. In the summer of 1958 he and Paula Colton married, and they moved to Denton, Texas where Robert taught ceramics, as a sabbatical replacement, for one year at North Texas State University. At the end of that year, asked to stay on and teach two-dimensional visual design, he did so for the next four years. In 1964 they moved to western Massachusetts where in exchange for being caretakers on a two hundred-acre farm they were given a vacant barn to build a working pottery. There they produced handmade, utilitarian stoneware pottery as their sole source of income. From 1966 to 2005 Winokur taught ceramics at The Tyler School of Art of Temple University, retiring with the status of professor emeritus after 39 years. The Winokurs continue to maintain their studio and gallery in Horsham, PA. Among his many other honors and awards, Winokur was nominated for induction into the International Academy of Ceramics in Geneva, Switzerland; has received two Fellowships in Crafts from the Pennsylvania Council in the Arts; was inducted into the American Crafts Council College of Fellows; is an Honorary Fellow in the National Council for Education of Ceramic Art; and received a Visual Artists Fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts. His work may be seen in numerous public collections including Houston Museum of Fine Arts; Nickle Arts Museum at the University of Calgary; Contemporary Museum, Honolulu; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Bao International Ceramic Art Work Village and the Ceramics Art Institute, Jingdezen, People's Republic of China; Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam; and Philadelphia Museum of Art.