

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Smith, Roberta, Art in Review. The New York Times, November 20, 1992

The New York Times

Art in Review

■ Familiar shapes with a twist ■

Andrew Lord

65 Thompson Street Gallery
(near Spring Street)
SoHo

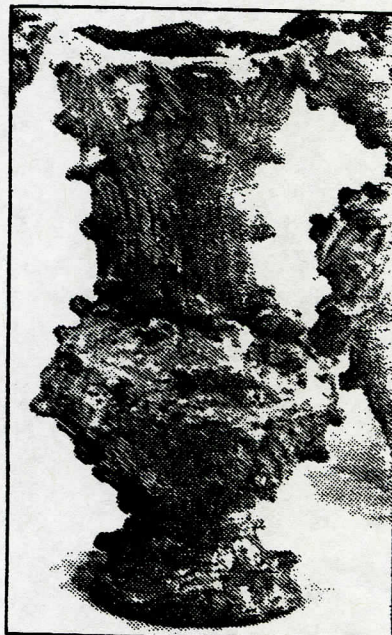
Through Jan. 9

Andrew Lord continues to wreak elegant havoc with the forms, materials and history of ceramics, fashioning waist-high vases and pitchers that easily pass for sculpture, intrude a bit on painting and extend the tenets of early 70's Process Art. His new work is terrific.

Mr. Lord, who was born in England in 1950, has lived and exhibited in New York City since 1981, but he has not had a solo show here in six years. His project seems to be to exaggerate the qualities of the ceramic art until his work transcends it. His pocked and bumpy surfaces — each made by a specifically limited use of palm, fist or fingers that is referred to in each work's title — animate the clay behind his glazes to almost grotesque extremes. His poured and crackling glazes, which range from black and cream to a light, light-filled aqua, extend over such unlimited expanses that we become unusually aware of their visual properties: that the scale of the crackling pattern varies with the thickness of the glaze, for example, an effect the artist exploits repeatedly and well.

And Mr. Lord's quirky, leaning volumes endow the parts of each vessel — foot, body, neck, handle, lid and so on — with a startling autonomy that makes us rethink the history of these forms, especially as they evolved in China and England. All this results in work that can be oddly animated, almost inhabited, but also as deliberate as an early-70's Process piece.

The five vase and pitcher forms of "5 Pieces. Marking. Rouge Flambé." display a characteristic combination of violence and control and of luxurious beauty and near-ugliness. Regularly punctuated with big bumps that have something in common with the work of Eva Hesse, and colored in shifting ratios of rose and tan glaze,



Courtesy 65 Thompson Street

Detail of a five-piece glazed ceramic work by Andrew Lord.

they resemble a wart-covered group of trolls in party makeup.

While 6 of the pieces on view each consist of 5 vessels, the seventh numbers 27 in all — not only vases and pitchers, but teapots, covered jars, a bowl, a cup and two cookie plates. These wonderfully irregular yet familiar shapes, on which the parallel tracks of the fingers contribute most of the surface action, spread before the eye like a closely spaced desert rock garden, an apt association since the vessels' quietly lustrous, subtly varied glazes add up to an extended meditation on the lighter, drier earth tones.

ROBERTA SMITH