



LIDYA BUZIO

Robert Coolidge Morgan

One of Latin America's most original ceramic artists, Lidya Buzio, comes from Montevideo, Uruguay, and has resided in New York for over thirty years. Over the years she has had many exhibitions in New York City. In the mid 1980s she was given a solo exhibition at the Everson Museum in Syracuse, New York. Moreover, her works have been collected by important museums, mostly in the United States.

Given her propensity for the mostly older, masonry-constructed architecture, it is no coincidence that Buzio currently works in the vicinity of New York. For more than three decades she has been working with slab-built ceramic pots and vessels that become the forms—the structural and visual armatures—by which she paints and constructs her vision of Manhattan.

The process by which they are made is perhaps easier to describe than the actual work. This is due to the exorbitant variety of shapes and lyrical permutations of her vessels. Some rise up in an organic motif—like eggplants in reverse—expanding inward at the top with tiny geometric lips; others are more squashed like Chinatown pork buns from which a complex network of cubistic faceting, miraculously modulated, pulls out from the surface near the base, before culminating sequentially just shy of the top.

The rhythms are most astounding. To see convincing replicas of archetypical buildings from a New York cityscape fully absorbed into the surface of a vessel where the eye forces the mind to move back and forth relentlessly between two and three dimensions is an inexorable experience.

Some of Buzio's ceramic objects are like Art Deco teapots or simulated Coach handbags; but, in general, the recent works are less ordered, less symmetrical and less traditional in their vessel-like connotations. Instead, the recent works are more intent on giving the illusion of bulging, bending prostheses that go over and through convex and concave surfaces into some strange enigmatic architecture. One wonders if Buzio may have a desire to compete, through the artist's tactility of eye, mind and hand, against the digitally schematized concert halls of Frank Gehry. Buzio's forms read as painted slabs or slabs against slabs that match the twisting high-rise geometric towers of a big city. Yet their illusory nature is as endemic to the clay object, in its own terms, as Zen calligraphy is to a raku-fired water jug from the early Edo period.

The effect offered by Buzio, whether in clay or wood, is an illusory one, a magical feast, a poststructural ensemble of playful extruded forms. The illusion of these shapes, colors and linear patterns accumulates, after a stealthy period of euphoric contemplation, into something replete with innuendo, obstreperously shifting in scale and proportion. These ironic architectonic deconstructions resemble a psychic phenomenon, the kind that one may feel in those congested screen sets from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Whatever the phenomenon—whether psychic or aesthetic—Buzio has done it. Her glazed and burnished ceramic spectacles are so carefully calculated that the intuition appears hidden until it suddenly bursts forth.

Robert Coolidge Morgan is an internationally known art critic, writer, poet, lecturer and a direct descendant of President Calvin Coolidge. He is a professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology, and the author of several published books, including The End of the Art World.

Facing page 19: Vessel VII (2003) 13 1/2" x 9", burnished earthenware.

Overleaf pages 20-21: Four Buildings V (2003), 13 1/2" x 21" x 6", dimensions variable, burnished earthenware.