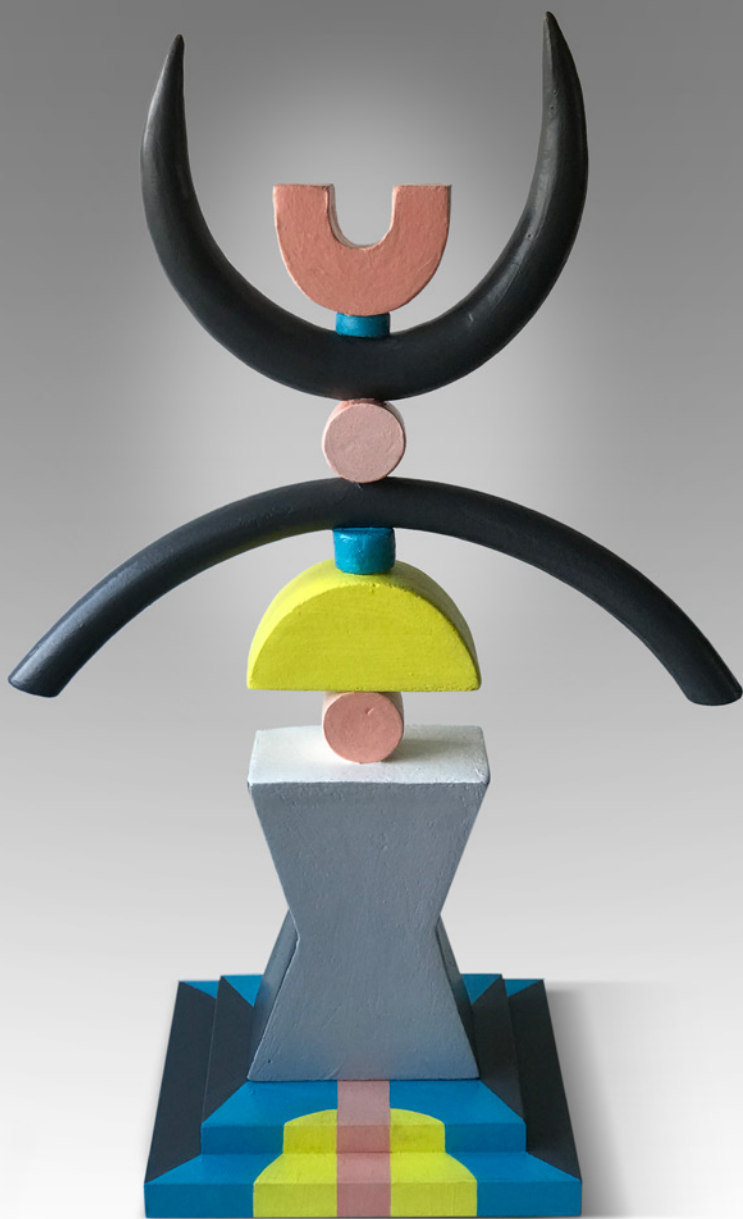


PATRICIA VOLK

CORNUCOPIA

18 APR - 10 JUN 2022



Lobby, One Canada Square,
Canary Wharf, London E14 5AB



Cornucopia By Patricia Volk FRSS RWA

Curated by Jacqueline Creswell

Visitors entering the newly refurbished lobby of One Canada Square will find the expanse transformed into a lively, invigorating and uplifting environment, surrounded by a *Cornucopia* of vibrant colours and shapes. Sculptor, ceramicist and painter, Patricia Volk has created work that fills the space with carefully placed arrangements of dynamic sculptures which challenge the viewer to find their inner child. Multi-award-winning conceptual artist, Jeremy Deller says, "We need to see more playfulness in our cities and public spaces," and *Cornucopia* plays to that theme. However, on another level her work is more complex, and on further reflection we see that Patricia's forms artfully combine strength with fragility and stability with a surprising precariousness. Volk likens this to our own interpersonal relationships and the complexities and challenges we face in our journey through life.

The artist reveals that she is obsessed with form, line and colour, playfully implementing these in her distinctive ceramic creations. Working in clay she uses a variety of techniques including coiling and slab building. Patricia explained that each piece is made differently, pushing the versatility and diversity of the material to the limits, while allowing the process of making to, "take on a life of its own," often surprising her with what transpires. The sculptures maintain an exacting combination of complexity and precision. After the pieces are fired, she painstakingly mixes shades of acrylic paint to finish each element before combining them to create the dialogue. Every piece is a unique and individual work of art that surprises and delights. This mid-career retrospective comprises over 40 sculptures which span three decades of the artist's work, including a selection of sculptures that have never previously been exhibited.

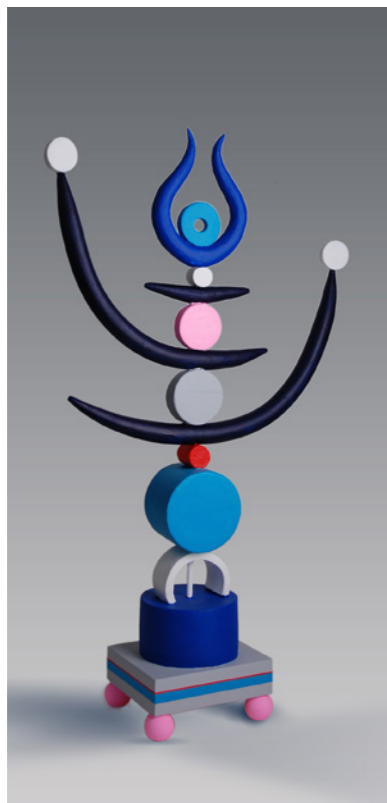
Embrace, 2019



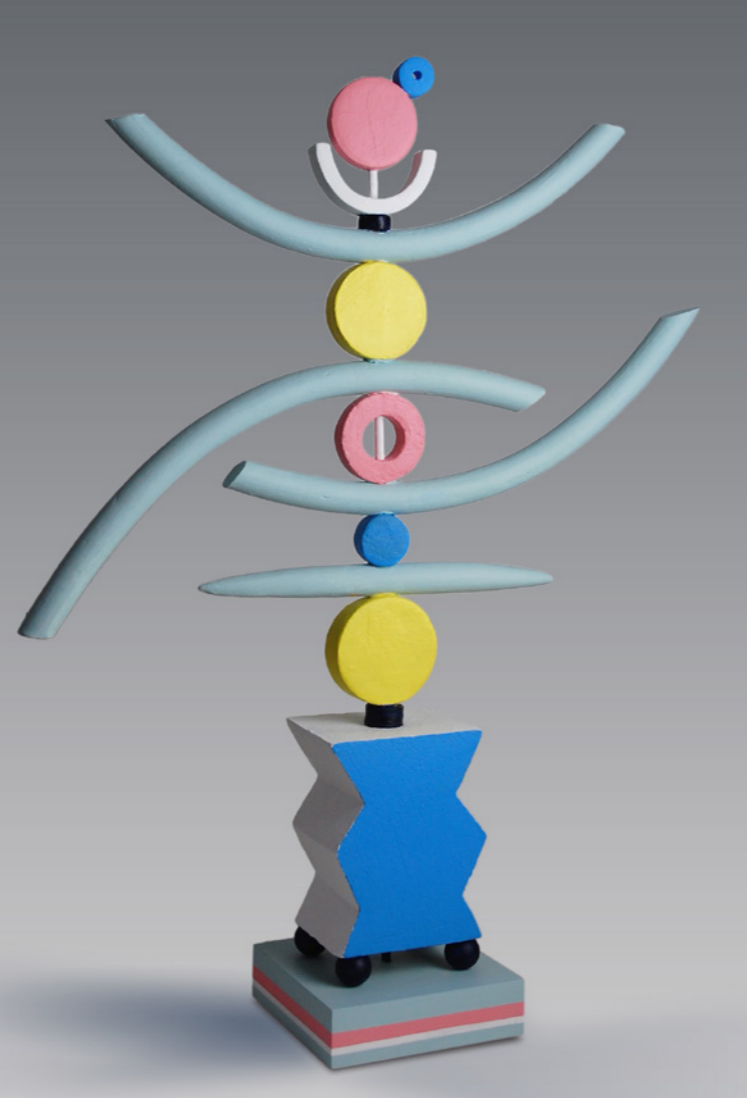
Cog (TBL), 2019



Embrace (D.Grey), 2019



Tower (1), 2016



Tower (2), 2016

Patricia's experimental and unconventional approach has led to a diverse body of work. *Hero*, the only portrait in the exhibition, but one of a larger body of work created between 1989-2000, is a majestic portrait reminiscent of a Zulu Warrior covered in war paint, perhaps celebrating a recent victory. It is fascinating to witness her evolution over three decades, moving from figurative work to pure abstraction, the only constants her application of vivid colouring and her interrogation of human behaviour and interaction.

Patricia Volk's work recognises the influences of American ceramicists such as Ron Nagle with his small ceramic sculptures, composed of multiple elements in compelling bright colours, and Ken Price, whose abstract ceramic sculptures are not glazed, but are intricately painted with multiple layers of acrylic paint. We can see many of these elements incorporated and explored in Patricia's sculptures. In her work one can also recognise the distinctive interlocking forms of Eduardo Chillida and the influence of Japanese ceramic artist Jun Kaneko. His dynamic, strong graphic motifs and pattern making can be seen in Patricia's Heads and some of her earlier works.

The Individuals, 2011 is a ceramic installation comprising seven spherical, ovoid shapes. This installation is located in the newly landscaped area of Harour Quay Gardens. Historically this grouping was curated to sit together in a linear configuration, however, in this new context they are truly individual as they play hide and seek with each other between the tall grass plants. Each sculpture is carefully sited to continue a conversation with the next, creating a spatial rhythm, united through their related curving forms and monochrome tonal palette, which is divided between the blue-green spectrum and red to yellow.

Source, 2012 These two large elongated spherical sculptures, painted vivid turquoise-blue, monochrome but for a distinctive tear of paint artfully seeping from the neck in a line to the base. The forms rest elegantly on precariously tiny bases. Although created in 2012 they bear a strong relationship to the Reliquary series, in stature, structure and tonal qualities. These elegant caskets standing over 74 cm high, historically used as containers to hold the remains of a saint or martyr in the Christian faith, are believed to be endowed with healing properties. All three sculptures rise elegantly from a small geometric pedestal, which sits on an even smaller footprint, creating a long and graceful silhouette. The lid of each urn is mounted with a phase of the moon, to symbolise the rhythm of time, the cycle of life. The phases of the moon symbolize immortality and eternity, illuminating the darkness to come.

The precariously assembled *Towers* or *Totems* display the greatest tensions between the constructed forms. Sweeping arms, perilously balancing spheres teetering on tiny bases. These works appear playful on the surface. Patricia likens these sculptures to her upbringing in Northern Ireland during the Troubles in the early 70's. Relations between families, friends and factions were tense and precarious. Patricia confided that the atmosphere of this time is ever present in her daily life.

As early as 2005, Patricia Volk began experimenting with the *Construction* series combining separate elements, which later evolved further into *Embrace* and *Cogs*. These sculptures reveal and communicate a personal side of human relationships. In *Embrace* the soft, smooth forms are locked in a complex configuration, tightly entwined in an embrace. Each separate appendage parts to accommodate another, even the tonal palette is more intense.

Portal, 2021



Hero, 2001

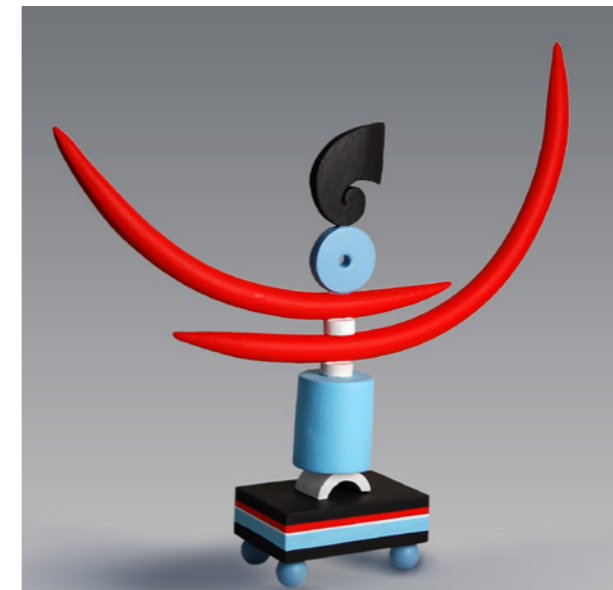


Source Turquoise, 2013



Construction (2), 2021

Signal, 2016



The *Cog* sculptures combine smooth intertwining forms with geometric angular sections, reminiscent of teeth, disrupting the effortless fluidity of the interlocking surfaces. There is a darker tension in these works, but it is for the viewer to discern whether they represent a complex struggle or sinister entanglement.

During the Covid pandemic, Patricia spent time alone in her studio near Trowbridge, Wiltshire. This productive period marked a dramatic progression, taking the *Construction* sculptures to another level. Scale, shape and rhythm combine to create much larger assemblages. Every individual geometric section is carefully composed. Several amalgamated elements in dialogue with the other, colours harmonise or contrast creating an energetic and engaging composition. Different vantage points offer alternative viewing perspectives and perhaps this relates to the artist's views on life: "We all have to rub along together, to survive and thrive."

Patricia Volk is a Royal West of England Academician and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Sculptors. She studied at Bath Spa University receiving a MA in Ceramics and has won many awards including, Regional Winner in 2007 in the Discerning Eye Exhibition at the Mall Gallery. Her work can be found in private, national and international collections including the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery.

Words by Jacqueline Creswell

Individuals, 2011 - Harbour Quay Gardens Wood Wharf

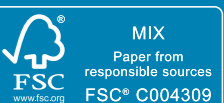


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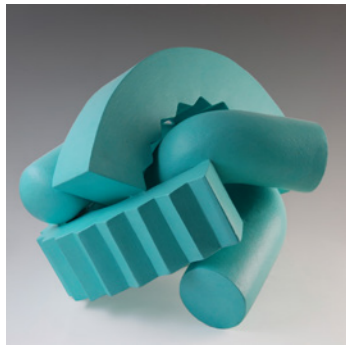




Embrace (Apricot), 2019



Source (L.Blue), 2012



Cog (Teal), 2019



Embrace (Peach), 2019



Signal, 2016



Horizon, 2017

Reliquary (1), 2017



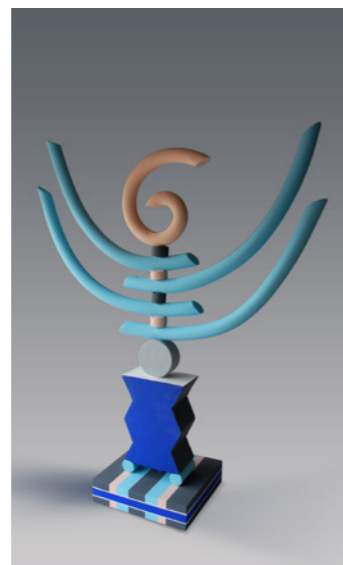
Reliquary (2), 2017



Reliquary (3), 2017



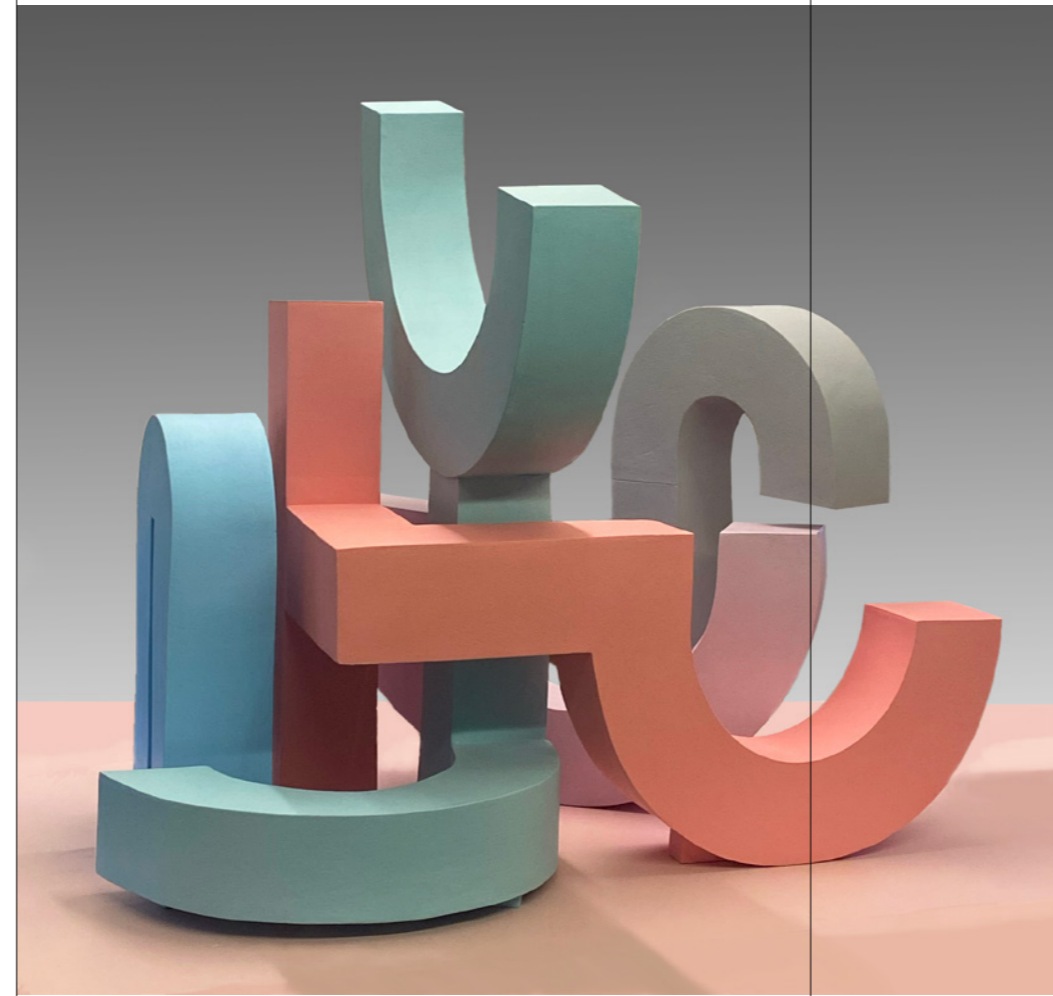
Reliquary (4), 2017



Tower (4), 2017



Totem (4), 2016



Construction (pastel), 2021



Bauhaus (2), 2019



Pieta, 2021



Taurus, 2021



Breaker, 2020



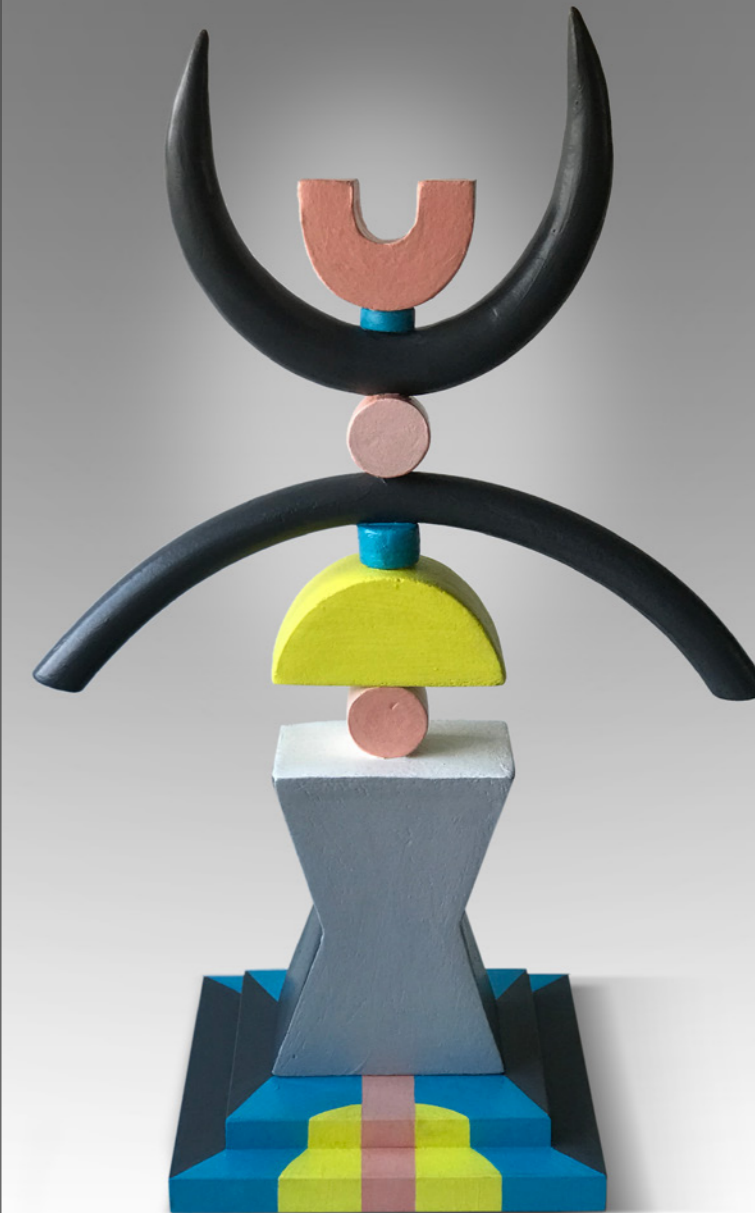
Grace, 2020



Clutch (2) Yellow, 2020

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