

## home is where the heart is



*Nurture*, 2005, handbuilt paperclay, stoneware, slips, stains, glaze, h.40cm, w.39cm, d.25cm

### Amanda Shelsher's conceptual ceramics

In the first few years my life as an artist was incredibly isolated, but I enjoyed the solitude and freedom that came with the lifestyle. I loved it and all of my early ceramic figurative works were narratives of my previous years travelling the globe.

Now, however, with the emergence of two beautiful children in my life, Jakob three and Indigo 12 months, my focus and works have dramatically changed. The challenge now of combining being a full time mum, and continuing my full time art practice, is really a fine balancing act, with many moments of insanity and joy.

I have always enjoyed working with the human form, especially busts, as they are strongly autobiographical and tell stories about my daily life. Many of my newer works combine the human form with my love of animal and plant forms to portray this miracle of life. Celebrating this new stage in my life, my figures express various themes ranging from fertility, germination, the instinct to nest, creating a home and growth. I try to capture emotions and moments of joy and nurturing, along with depicting our strong protective instincts. Each work is hand-built, using slabs the majority of the time, or building up patches of clay till the figure can support itself. I now mainly use paper clay, due its great strength and versatility, which allows me to work faster.

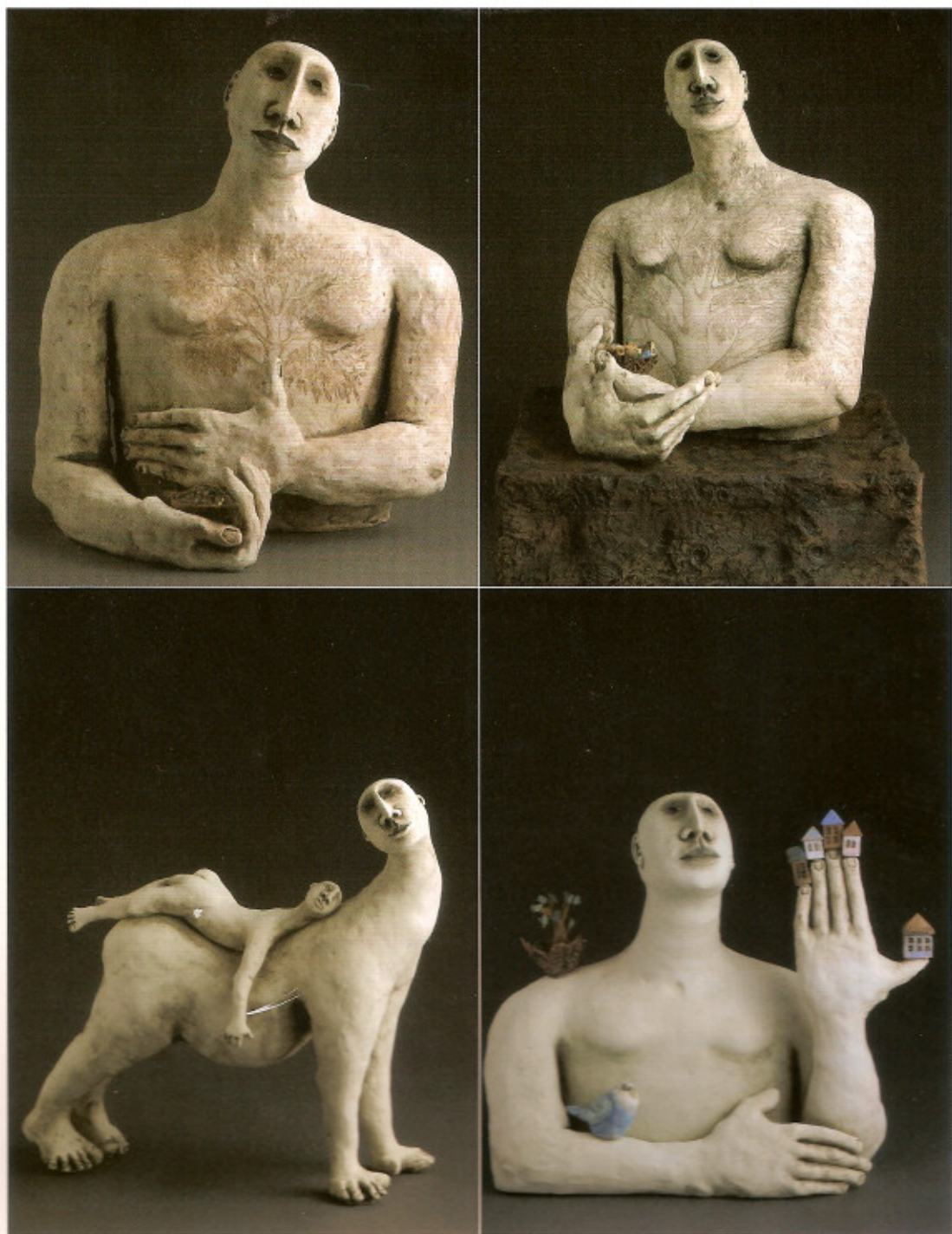
Much of my work is created at night, when I am able to get larger amounts of time. It's fantastic to settle down and really enjoy making and consolidate all my thoughts of the day. The actual making process for me is very meditative. I enjoy working

through, and replaying, thoughts in my head and translating these into new works. At the moment, we are renovating our inner city home. I don't have an actual workspace, just the dining room table, so this is providing new challenges as well. I used to sit under our old patio exposed to the elements, with the dog and-kids, working very simply.

Even though each day is a frantic rush trying to keep all areas of my life afloat, I thrive on making new works for shows, exhibitions and competitions and even though, sadly, my time of personal travel has stopped, the works themselves are travelling far and wide.

I was very fortunate and excited, however, to attend the 10th 'Art Taipei' in Taiwan for five days in April 2006 with Raglan Gallery. Also, three international artists, along with renowned Australian sculptor Patricia Piccinini and myself, were selected by the FUBON Art Foundation to exhibit works in the Fubon Banks buildings for the 18th 'Feast of Mind, Buffet of Art' for a three month period.

Works have recently returned from a brief show in Hong Kong and other works will soon be winging their way to Chicago, again with Raglan Gallery, where it will be the third year that my works will be exhibited at SOFA 2006 (The International exposition of Sculpture Objects and Functional Art). So, with the works going on exciting trips around the globe, I endeavour to catch new moments of inspiration, usually during the middle of the night whilst comforting a crying child in one arm and balancing a pen and visual diary in the other!!



Clockwise from top left: *Gift of Life* 2005, SOFA 2005, hand-built, sgraffito stoneware, slips stains glaze, h.38cm, w.31cm, d.24 cm; *Grow* 2006, Sculpture by the Sea, Cottlesloe 2006, hand-built, sgraffito paperclay, fired stoneware, slips stains glaze, h.72cm, w.57cm, d.54cm, *Home*, 2005, Gold Coast Award 2005, hand-built, paperclay, fired stoneware, slips, stains, glaze h.42cm, w.40cm, d.12cm, *Mother and Child*, 2005, SOFA 2005, hand-built, paperclay fired stoneware, slips, stains, glaze, h.38cm, w.36cm, d.17cm