

## Wordplay Sculpture

Artists can give everyday ideas new meaning by defying expectations. Humor and surprise are powerful tools that artists use to encourage viewers to embrace new experiences, often through juxtaposition, recontextualization, or abstraction. In this Studio Experience, you will use slab techniques to create a unique interpretation of a phrase, metaphor, or pun.

### Before You Begin

Research sculptures that incorporate humor, surprise, and wordplay. How have artists from the past and present interpreted common ideas in shocking or funny ways? How do the artists use juxtaposition and recontextualization to create meaning? Analyze the compositions and messages to help inform your understanding of the works.

Review the slab techniques presented in this chapter, including different types of

molds. Determine which methods you would like to explore in a sculpture, considering how they can contribute to the meaning you want to express.

### Materials

- paper and drawing materials
- clay with grog
- hand-building tools
- sponge
- slip
- ware board
- newspaper or foam
- molds
- plastic

### Create It

- 1 Brainstorm phrases or words that you could interpret in a sculpture through juxtaposition, recontextualization, or abstraction. Select two or three ideas to sketch, keeping in mind how you

Fig. 5–60. Student work. Victoria Weiner, *Gramophone*, 2019. Slab-built white earthenware, low-fire glazes, 7" x 6" x 10" (17.8 x 15.2 x 25.4 cm). Photo: Christine Colby.



can use slabs to create an artwork. Choose your best concept and plan your final design. Decide how you will incorporate slab building and any molding techniques. Consider how your treatment of the surface, such as texture, relief, and underglazes, will help express your idea.

- 2 Depending on the complexity of your sculpture, you may want to build a small model (maquette) first. Otherwise, refer to your sketches.
- 3 Begin constructing the parts of your sculpture. Roll slabs to the appropriate size and thickness. If using molds, create or source your molds and apply them to your slabs.