Steven Montgomery

Our Piece is an early work acquired by Ron Kuchta

“Uniquely inventive artist working in clay”

Considers himself a sculptor/visual artist, not a ceramist

Process is random, chaotic, impulsive, intuitive

**Artist Statement:**

“Working in clay I have the opportunity to project myself towards a fantasy world where I have a faux experience as an engineer, architect or mechanic despite the fact that I am inept in math and science.”

Machines are an extension of human power.
Science fiction is obviously predicted on that idea. Our ability to create machines is one of the defining differences between humans and animals
I am in awe of machines and the technology and brain power that produced them. It is only too apparent that they are also subject to frailties, flaws, foibles and the ravages of time comparable to that of those who create them. At least in part, I attempt to communicate that observation through my work.
(Compare to Adam Shiverdecker’s wire plane)

**Themes that unify his work**

1. Damage
2. Corrosion
3. Implied impermanence
4. Detritus of human power
5. Stages of decay and dysfunction
6. Entropy, disorder, decomp, decline. Degeneration
**Background**

b. 1954

**Detroit**, Motor Town, a benign neighborhood in a city that was rife with crime, urban decay, sense of danger at every corner

A creative void

Saw the Diego Rivera murals commissioned by the Ford Motor and was struck by the idealized factory environment in the painting and the reality of Detroit in the 60s and 70s.

Ceramics was an accident but he was immediately drawn to the wheel and desired to perfect his skills.

Smashed most of his early pots and loved the fragments

**Moved to NYC 80s**

**Enormous sculptures** of excavated materials from dumpsters, construction sites. Could have mechanized them, added lights and other trendy solutions but ended up throwing them in the Hudson. **Needed a new approach.**

Goal: create a new imagery not like found art sculpture, HUNGRY for industrial imagery

Used photography to reinforce his vision: tunnels, war museums, constr sites

From his home in Brooklyn he watched **9/11 unfold**

1st structural element to fail 15 cm bolt that secured floor trusses

As the heat generated by impact and fire increased the bolts melted

Horrific **pancake** collapse followed

Decided to create a series of nuts and bolts as a monument to the extraordinary responsibility placed on a small ordinary object
**Series**

Nuts and Bolts

Container spills and petro

Compound machines

Cobalt

Arms, Armature

Antiquities

**Why Ceramics as his medium:** Versatility to represent various other materials

**To the Observer**

My sculpture is not recognizable as art when seen on the street

My art mocks representation

When you realize it is fake your reaction changes

Only in the context of a gallery space is it readable as art

Decaying machinery but in Italy, an installation in an old mill space my pieces are perceived differently.

Part of an extraordinary environment

Connected to history

With a slow historic passage of time (vs decay, less romantic)

How categorize?

Post modern
Talks about the outdated modernist tenet that suggests there should be honesty in materials (Brutalism, International Style)

My work is an outright offense to that

**Tour tips**

What is it?

What goes through your mind when I tell you it is not a real pipe?

What questions do you want to ask?

Can you find other objects in the room that might be a trick of the eye.