



Smithsonian American Art Museum
Renwick Gallery

Beth Cavener Stichter

Born in Pasadena, Calif., 1972; lives in Portage, Ohio

Beth Cavener Stichter's animal sculptures in clay combine the natural and the surreal. Her zoomorphic portraits take on a human dimension as they move beyond the physical realm into the psychological. Stichter's animals are caught up in complex situations which the artist leaves open to interpretation. Her creatures are both portraits of specific individuals, or self-portraits, as well as metaphors for the human condition.

"The sculptures I create focus on human psychology...gestures that betray intent and motivation," Stichter explains. "I rely on animal body language in my work as a metaphor for these underlying patterns, transforming animal subjects into human psychological portraits."

Stichter graduated from Haverford College in Haverford, Penn. with a bachelor of arts in sculpture in 1995, and later studied at the Appalachian Center for Craft at Tennessee Tech University in Smithville, Tenn. In 2002, she completed a master of fine arts in ceramics at Ohio State University in Columbus. In addition to her academic training, Stichter apprenticed with a sculptor in Nashville, Tenn. and at the Charles H. Cecil Studios in Florence, Italy.

Several artist-in-residence programs have allowed Stichter to focus on her work and to experiment with techniques, especially residencies at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Mont.; The Clay Studio in Philadelphia; and most recently at Pottery Northwest in Seattle, Wash.

Stichter's work has appeared in both solo and group exhibitions across the United States, including shows at the Contemporary Crafts Museum in Portland, Ore. and the Garth Clark Gallery in New York City. She has been recognized with numerous awards and honors, such as Best in Show at the juried St. Petersburg Clay National 2003 in St. Petersburg, Fla., an Emerging Artist Grant from the American Craft Council, an artist fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council and the prestigious first-prize award from the Virginia A. Groot Foundation in 2005.