

Form fired with meaning



Meditative sculptures include deteriorated, frayed or unplugged cords symbolizing the degenerative nature of MS.

by Ryan Moffett

In January 2013, I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis after experiencing extreme fatigue, numbness in my feet and legs, and problems with balance. These symptoms, and my fears about them, prompted me to create my current body of work. My work is mainly constructed with high-fired stoneware using the coil method, where clay is rolled into ropes, called coils, and layered one upon another. After the clay sculptures are fired, I add electrical hardware, lights and found objects to finish the pieces. The large-scale sculptures, inspired by ancient Cycladic stone sculptures originating from the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea between 3300 and 1100 B.C., express a meditative state, making the pieces contemplative and spiritual. The inclusion of deteriorated, frayed or unplugged cords symbolizes the degenerative nature of MS, and how the signals to and from the brain can be weakened. The heart may have deep desires to do one thing, but the brain may send messages of fatigue, doubt, fear or conflicting logic.

My wife and I live in Clearfield, Utah, and we have four daughters. I have been teaching ceramics, sculpture and video production at Murray High School for 20 years. Sharing my love for the arts has always been my passion and source of great joy. I have noticed that since my diagnosis and subsequent sculptures, students as well as others in the community see the value and purpose of the arts on a much higher level. They have watched as my artwork evolved from beautiful forms to beautiful forms with deep personal meaning.

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