

## Susanne Fraser Spirited Horses

My love and appreciation of the horse is derived from an association of over 50 years as an owner rider, trainer, competitor and judge. A severe injury I sustained while riding about ten years ago led to a need for a new focus. I replaced my passion for riding with a passion for ceramics.

My work references feminine connections with horses through the relationship of the shape of my vessels and their floral decorative elements. It is an ongoing exploration into this idea using the expressive and plastic qualities of clay to sculpt equine vessels that explore many aspects of the human horse relationship.

In 2005, while undertaking a Visual Arts degree at Southern Cross University, I travelled to China working as an artist-in-residence at Sanbao Ceramic Art Institute in Jingdezhen. There, I had the opportunity to observe the horse in Chinese ceramic art and discovered the wonderful Tang dynasty ceramic horses, many of which line the spirit paths of ancient Chinese tombs.

These 'fat' and 'thin' horses are essentially lidded vessels made from many types of clay, often with inclusions that make the finished work lighter. The saddles can be removed to reveal a container which is elevated on short 'lotus bud' legs or sits on a vessel-style base. I use coiling and modeling techniques to develop my forms; additional decorative elements such as screen print transfers, impressions, layered slips and glazes create unique surface textures and colours influenced by my experience in China. These stylized ceramic horses stand poised on bound feet, mouths open, necks arched and ears flickering, testing the wind, their spirit captured in clay.



*Cultivated Virtue* 2009



detail



*Obedient Chrysanthemums* detail 2009



*Luminous Lotus* 2010



detail



*Treasured Plum Blossoms* 2010 (detail)