

## CHARLES LONG

### *Monads, Soul Houses and a Star-Off Machine*

July 6- August 4, 2006

Opening reception: Thursday July 6, 6-8pm

#### Gallery two

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is very pleased to announce *Monads, Soul Houses and a Star-off Machine* the gallery's sixth solo exhibition with Charles Long. This focused presentation of ceramic sculptures and drawings on photographs is the result of Long's recent residency at the Anderson Ranch in Snowmass Colorado. In January of 2007 the gallery will present a major show of Long's sculpture in gallery one.

Perched alone atop spare wooden supports, each ceramic sculpture exhibits its peculiarly autonomous presence in the group. Long refers to these abstract works as *Monads*, a term borrowed from the metaphysics of Leibniz, who defined them as an infinite variety of unique indivisible simple substances "independent of everything but God". Long's sculptures have always explored the experience of the autonomous object from a psychological perspective and more recently from a mystical one.

Some of the ceramic sculptures have an organic architecture to them, with openings into empty interiors. Long likens these to the *soul houses*, crude ceramic model houses dating back as far as 5500 BC. Though made of earth, Egyptians buried them with the dead as dwellings for the spirit.

Long sought the Anderson residency for its remoteness and its serious approach to the basic medium of clay. In his project proposal, he states "I sought a new direction for my art; something based in technology but evermore imaginative and rich in elemental connotation. Somewhere between the ancient and the futuristic, between the sacred and the common. Rather than address my culture directly I chose to work from my inner psychic world and its context, directing it into a daily activity of shaping the tangible. I wanted to make each piece as if it were my one and only day to make art so that it was complete in purpose, process and as an object for others, a soul house for this moment."

While Long's art embraces modernist convention, he also sees it as inseparable from life and as a way of creating pathways between inner and outer realities. In a related project, working with a variety of media (ink, pastel, crayon, marker, sandpaper) Long has made drawings directly on top of photographs he took in the area around his Rocky Mountain studio. On these non-descript but delicate snow-scapes he has overlaid transparent abstract forms, two ostensibly separate worlds, the imagined and the photographic, completing each other without concession.

Long's recent exhibitions include *100 Pounds of Clay*, Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California, 2006 (solo); *The Uncertainty of Objects and Ideas: Contemporary Sculpture*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., 2006 (group); *Gone Formalism*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, 2006 (group); *More Like a Dream Than a Scheme*, David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence, RI, traveling to SITE Santa Fe, 2005 (solo); *The Shape of Color: Excursions in Color Field Art*, AGO/Art Gallery of Ontario, 2005 (group); *Atmosphere*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2004 (group); *Happiness*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2003 (group); Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA, 2002 (solo); *Lateral Thinking- Art of the 1990s*, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA, 2001 (group); *Magasin 3*, Stockholm Konsthall, 2001 (with Ernesto Neto and Siobhan Hapaska); among others.