

Reassembling the Sacred

An Exhibition of Clay Spheres and Mandalas by Darrell Oike

Numen Gallery, April 28 – June 20, 2009

Reassembling the Sacred was inspired by Oike's discovery of a fishing float that had drifted across the Pacific from Japan to Haida Gwaii where he was and still is living. The glass ball was accidentally broken and while Oike was stitching it back together again, the idea for *Reassembling the Sacred* was conceived.

Oike created pit-fired clay spheres which he then cracked. A meticulous reconstruction process followed, involving: drilling, firing, sewing or binding, re-firing in a pit and re-sewing. The pieces came to acquire an aged look as if they were the work of artisans from an ancient civilization, bringing forth to mind questions such as: where did they come from, why were they made, what do they mean?

The clay mandalas evolved from the sphere series. For many, the mandala not only is a geometric design mirroring the workings of the cosmos but it also acts as an instrument of meditation and contemplation. It inspires and evokes a sense of wholeness, completeness, and balance. Like song, dance, the drum, and the idea of a divine creative force, mandalas have been created by nearly every culture on earth. Oike is inspired by mandalas as diverse as the Native American medicine wheel, Tibetan tankas, and European cathedral windows.

The mandalas in the exhibit are based upon the sacred geometry of the Hindu *shri yantra* (mystical diagram of Creation) and the Tibetan Buddhist *kalichakra* mandalas (cosmographic representation of levels of reality that is dedicated to peace and balance). In designing his mandalas, Oike has incorporated the common Buddhist motif of the lotus flower and the inscription of the *om mani padme hum*, a sacred Buddhist mantra.

Matter is always engaged in a constant cycle of transformation. Oike's mandalas have been allowed and encouraged to crack. The most important part of his process is the methodical and tedious task of stitching them together again with copper and sinew.

Reassembling the Sacred is about reconciling the creative forces with the destructive forces of the universe. The mandalas and spheres are intended as reminders to himself and others of the nature of impermanence and of our journey to become whole.