

Michael Tom

b.1946 - 1999

exhibited in *Biennial IV*

I began my artistic career as a painter.

However, over the years the emphasis of my work changed from 2-dimension to sculpture and most recently a combination of the two. I felt more of a need to physically interact with my artistic medium. After a brief period in which I did not work, I began experimenting with jewelry. The jewelry I made was not intended to be worn, but was a sculptural statement. Jewelry led to metalsmithing, then to sculpture, and finally to mixed media with an emphasis on fabricated metal.

Much of my work is done in copper. I shape and form most of my pieces by hammering metal over large steel stakes and anvils. I will generally leave some evidence of the hammering process on a piece to vaguely suggest human involvement in the making of it.

Working with the vessel form I have come to appreciate both the utilitarian and symbolic function of the vessel throughout history. From earliest times in human history vessels have been a part of both our everyday and ritual lives. They not only contain food and water, but are used in ceremonies marking significant life passages. Vessels carry thousands of years of memories and serve as powerful vehicles for personal interpretation.

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Image of Barrenness, 1987

hammered copper with patina

Collection of the City and County of Honolulu, 1987

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Cup for a Politician, 1994

hammered copper with patina

Collection of the Honolulu Academy of Arts gift of The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, 2011 and Gift of James Jensen (2002.56.3)