



# KUNSTRAUM RICHARD SORGE

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## Strich & Faden - Heimat, Volkskunst und Travestie

### Charles Krafft (USA)

#### Personal

After years toiling as “the oldest promising young artist in the Pacific Northwest,” Charles Krafft became known internationally in the 90’s for confrontational works in clay that were among the first to invest craft objects with serious and sarcastic content starkly contrasting with their perceived image. In a brilliant conceptual choice, Charles Krafft uses and subverts the inherent ethnocentricity and traditionalism of craft objects to comment on “resurgent regionalism”, war, politics and disaster. The way Charles Krafft eschews the usual careerism in the arts and finds alternative ways, is just as radical and political, as is the choice of influences: 60’s comix, and the aesthetics and themes of Industrial-, surf- and custom car cultures.



#### Artist Statement

**„Charles Krafft is my name, America is my nation, Seattle is my dwelling place, and art is my salvation.“**

For the last 15 years I have been working in ceramics, before that I was a painter. I am now considered a pioneer of the "low brow" Pop Surrealism movement. This is an alternative visual art scene that has its roots in California custom car culture, surfing culture and in '60s era underground comix. It's a streetwise aesthetic that has been evolving and spreading out across the globe while remaining almost entirely unnoticed by most mainstream critics, museum curators and academic art historians. It has only recently begun to be documented. It exists on the internet and by word of mouth in its own parallel universe of events, magazines, galleries, shops and studios in America, Europe, Australia and Japan.

I'm also the inventor of SPONE™ - human bone china - or more precisely crematory ash porcelain. SPONE™ combines “bone” and “Spode.” to reference Josiah Spode the 18th century English inventor of bone china which is actually named for its calcinated cow bone ash content not its white color. Unlike the functional SPONE™ memorial reliquaries my other work, Disasterware™, uses the medium of ceramics to comment on violence, power, capital and catastrophes. I am self-taught. The only art credentials I really have are the “astral apprenticeships” I served under the reclusive painter of startled birds Morris Graves (1910-2001) and the crackerjack Hollywood hot rod legend Von Dutch (1926-1992). Both men were friends and mentors. I can get down with any militantly aesthetic easel painter, multi-media maestro or woolly potter, but when it comes to the mechanics of art making I prefer the company of criminals, undertakers and blue haired grannies.

#### Solo Exhibitions

2008 “LOL, Not your Grandmother’s China”, J.Flynn Gallery, Costa Mesa, CA, USA  
2007 “Artist Rifles Requiem”, Stolenspace, London, UK  
2006 “Ceramic Sabotage”, School of Art & Design, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA, USA  
2005 “Darkness in Delft”, Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane, WA, USA

"New Disasterware", Copro Nason Gallery, Culver City, CA, USA  
 2004 "Final Presentation", Europees Keramisch Werkcentrum, 's Hertogenbosch, Netherlands  
 2003 "Ring of Spone", Queen Anne Columbarium/Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Seattle, WA, USA  
 "Never Look A Giftshoppe in the Mouth", Dirt Gallery, Hollywood, CA, USA  
 2002 "Charles Krafft's Villa Delirium", Grand Central Art Center, Cal. State University, Fullerton, CA, USA  
 Porcelain War Museum", Copro Nason Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA  
 2001 "Charles Krafft's Villa Delirium", Cont. Art Center, Cincinnati, OH, USA  
 1999 Defense Ministry, Ljubljana, Slovenia  
 1994 Metropolitan Mobile Museum, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1993 Garth Clark Galleries, New York, NY, USA  
 Two Bells Tavern, Seattle, WA, USA  
 Davidson Galleries, Seattle, WA, USA  
 Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland, OR, USA  
 1991 Davidson Galleries, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1989 Davidson Galleries, Seattle, WA, USA  
 Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland, OR, USA  
 1987 Davidson Galleries, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1986 Cafe Counter Intelligence, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1983 The Francine Seders Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1982 The Meeting Place in the Market, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1981 The 1429 Grant Avenue Gallery, San Francisco, CA, USA  
 1980 The Junior League Offices, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1979 The 1429 Grant Avenue Gallery, San Francisco, CA, USA  
 1978 The Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1976 The Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1975 The Nagatani Gallery, Burlington, WA, USA  
 1974 The Polly Friendlander Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1971 The Polly Friendlander Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1969 The Richard White Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA

### Group Shows (selection)

2008 "Retinal Delights" – JUXTAPOZ Show, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna, CA, USA  
 "Tresspass Alliance", Andipa Gallery, London  
 "The Diane and Sandy Besser Collection", De Young Museum, San Francisco, CA, USA  
 "Objection", NCECA, Louisville, KY, USA  
 2007 "Bang Bang Trafic d'Armes de St.Etienne a Sete", Musee D'Arte et Industrie, St.Etienne, France  
 "Fragiles", Art Basel/Miami, Miami, FL, USA  
 2006 "The Edges of Grace – Provocative, Uncommon Craft", Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA, USA  
 "Von Dutch Tribute", Copro Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, CA, USA  
 Gallery Group Show, Stolenspace, London, UK, USA  
 "Softly Treathening, Art of the Modern Domestic", Bumbershoot, Seattle, WA, USA  
 2005 "State of the Art, the New Slovenian Avant Garde", Seattle Film Forum, Seattle, WA, USA  
 "Flipside", Artist's Space, New York, NY, USA  
 "Pop Surrealism", Sangre de Christo Art Center, Pueblo, CO, USA  
 "Tale to Tell, Cont. Narratives in Clay", John Michael Kohler Arts center, Sheboygan, WI, USA  
 "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse", The Shooting Gallery, San Francisco, CA, USA  
 2004 "100 Artists See Satan" Grand Central Art Center, Santa Ana, CA, USA  
 "Natural Selection", Santa Fe Clay, Santa Fe, NM, USA  
 2003 "Now & Now", 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual World Ceramics Biennale, Incheon, Korea  
 "Dictatorship of the New", NSK Sound Icons, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy  
 "Gun and Wound", White Box the Annex, New York, NY, USA  
 "Sex and Violence", F.I.N. Arts Inc., New York, NY, USA  
 "Girls and Guns", 31 Grand, New York, NY, USA  
 2002 "Break 12 – Dead or Alive", Kapilica Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia  
 "Blue + White = Radical", Garth Clark Gallery, New York, NY, USA  
 2000 "2000 1/2," Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA, USA  
 1995 "Imagine That!," Lucia Douglas Gallery, Bellingham, WA, USA  
 "Northwest Noir," Vox Populi Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA  
 "Sex and Satan," Two Bells Tavern, Seattle, WA, USA  
 "Project:Exhibit," Maryland Institute, Baltimore, MD, USA  
 1994 "Cult Rapture," COCA, Seattle, WA, USA

- Group Exhibition, Bess Cutler Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- Group Exhibition, Gallery of Functional Art, Santa Monica, CA, USA
- 1993 "Kustom Grafix," The Works Gallery, Costa Mesa, CA, USA
- "Shipwreck Show," Kirkland Arts Center, Kirkland, WA, USA
- 1992 "Skagit Artists," Valley Museum of NW Art, La Conner, WA, USA
- "Futures Past," Port Angeles Fine Arts Center, Port Angeles, WA, USA
- 1990 "Tortures and Tormentsetc.," La Luz de Jesus, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- "Silent Interiors," Security Pacific Gallery, WA, USA
- 1989 "Counterfeit Masterpieces etc.," COCA, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1987 Group Exhibition, Childers/Proctor Gallery, Langley, WA, USA
- Group Exhibition, NBBJ Associates, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1986 "Poets/Painters," Whatcom Museum, Bellingham, WA, USA
- Group Exhibition, Penryn Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1982 Vernissage, Mr. and Mrs. Kirby Torrence, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1981 "Northwest/New York," Bayard Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1980 "Northwest/New York," Bayard Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1979 Group Exhibition, Nagatani Gallery, Burlington, WA, USA
- 1978 Group Exhibition, Nagatani Gallery, Burlington, WA, USA
- 1977 Group Exhibition, Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1976 Group Exhibition, Nagatani Gallery, Burlington, WA, USA
- 1975 "Asparagus Moonlight Group," Second Storey Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA
- Group Exhibition, Nagatani Gallery, Burlington, WA, USA
- 1971 Group Exhibition, Polly Friendlander Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA
- Group Exhibition, Polly Friendlander Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1970 Group Exhibition, 76 Main St, Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1969 Group Exhibition, Richard White Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1968 Group Exhibition, The Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, WA, USA
- Group Exhibition, Rogue Gallery, Eugene, OR, USA
- Group Exhibition, Attica Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1967 Group Exhibition, The Vorpai Galleries, San Francisco, CA, USA
- Group Exhibition, Collector's Gallery, Bellevue, WA, USA
- Group Exhibition, Attica Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA

### **Other Exhibitions/Festivals**

- 2000 Cincinnati Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, OH, USA
- 1989 The 62nd Northwest Annual, COCA, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1986 Seattle Design Association, Traver Sutton Gallery, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1985 Bumpershoot Arts Festival, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1984 "100 Bucks Flat," Langley, WA, USA
- 1983 "100 Bucks Flat," Langley, WA, USA
- 1980 Bumpershoot Arts Festival, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1979 Northwest Invitational, Whatcom Museum, Bellingham, WA, USA
- 1976 The Langley Arts and Craft Festival, Langley, WA, USA
- The La Conner Arts and Crafts Festival, La Conner, WA, USA
- The Edmonds Arts Festival, Edmonds, WA, USA
- 1974 "Skagit Valley Artists," Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1971 The 57th Northwest Annual, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1970 The Edmonds Arts Festival, Edmonds, WA, USA
- The Governor's Invitational, Olympia, WA, USA
- 1968 The 54th Northwest Annual, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1967 The Unitarian Fine Arts Festival, Seattle, WA, USA
- The Anacortes Arts and Crafts Festival, Anacortes, WA, USA

### **Grants/Awards**

- 1995 Arts Liunk/Citizen's Exchange Council Grant, New York, NY, USA
- 1991 D.B. Huston Literary Award, Seattle, WA, USA
- 1984 Reginald A. Fessenden Foundation (Extension), San Diego, CA, USA
- 1983 Reginald A. Fessenden Foundation Grant, San Diego, CA, USA

1982 Reginald A. Fessenden Foundation Grant, San Diego, CA, USA  
1977 Third Place, Langley Arts and Craft Festival, Langley, WA, USA  
1976 Third Place, Langley Arts and Craft Festival, Langley, WA, USA  
1967 Juror's Choice, Unitarian Fine Arts Festival, Seattle, WA, USA

### **Commissions**

1993 Commemorative Plates, Sinclair Lewis/Dorothy Thompson House, Twin Farms Inn, Barnard, VT, USA  
1990 Wall Piece, Wild Ginger Restaurant, Seattle, WA, USA  
1969 Mural, Western Washington State University, Bellingham, WA, USA  
1968 Mural, Jean Paul Sarte No Exit Rooming House, Seattle, WA, USA

### **Books**

1992 "Leeteg of Tahhiti," /CAD, A HANDBOOK FOR HEELS/, Feral House Inc., Los Angeles, CA, USA  
1979 Illustrations, /IN GOD'S COUNTRY/, Glen Turner, Tamarak Press, La Conner, WA, USA  
1975 Editor, /THE TALES OF UNCLE TOMPA, LEGENDARY RASCAL OF TIBET/, Rinjing Dorje, Dorje Ling Publications, San Rafael, CA, USA  
1976 /NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE MASK/, Charles Krafft, Endless Despair Press, Seattle, WA, USA  
1973 /COW TALES/, Seven Fishtown Poets, Gritty Ink, Fishtown, WA, USA

### **Films/Videos**

1986 PARAMOUNT POETS, Alan and Tina Goodin, Seattle, WA, USA  
1976 SKAGIT VALLEY ARTISTS, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA, USA  
1969 EMPTY RIVER (What About Charlie?), Joseph McCarthy, Brooklyn, WA, USA

### **Bibliography**

Puget Sound Mail, La Conner, WA, USA  
Puget Soundings, Seattle, WA, USA  
The Helix, Seattle, WA, USA  
Northwest Passage, Bellingham, WA, USA  
The Sullivan Slough Review, Edmonds, WA, USA  
Skagit Valley Artists, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA, USA  
The Weekly, Seattle, WA, USA  
The Argus, Seattle, WA, USA  
The Seattle Post Intelligencer, Seattle, WA, USA  
The Seattle Times, Seattle, WA, USA  
Northwest Review of Books, Seattle, WA, USA  
Everett Herald, Everett, WA, USA  
Fessenden Review, San Diego, CA, USA  
Northwest Illustrated Art Paper, Seattle, WA, USA  
Reflex, Seattle, WA, USA  
The Rocket, Seattle, WA, USA  
The Stranger, Seattle, WA, USA  
Vision,. A Review of NW Art, Seattle, WA, USA  
America Ceramics, New York, NY, USA  
Art Forum, New York, NY, USA  
Art Alternatives, New York, NY, USA  
Juxtapoz, San Francisco, CA, USA

### **Online**

[www.charleskrafft.com](http://www.charleskrafft.com)