

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

Annabeth Rosen
*Fired, Broken,
Gathered, Heaped*

JUL 25, 2019–JAN 19, 2020

thecjm.org

**CONTEMPORARY
JEWISH MUSEUM**

About This Resource

This resource explores the innovative work of ceramicist Annabeth Rosen and looks to unpredictability and failure as opportunities for creative inspiration. Students will consider how the broken, the fragmented, and the tossed away might ignite new ideas. This resource guide—suitable for all ages—includes images from the exhibition, an artist video interview, discussion prompts, and activities. Topics covered include failure and potential, organic forms, what's in a title, and 2D to 3D.

About the Exhibition

Annabeth Rosen: Fired, Broken, Gathered, Heaped is the first major survey exhibition of artist Annabeth Rosen, and covers more than two decades of her work as a pioneer in the genre of contemporary ceramics.

In both the studio and the kiln, Rosen embraces unpredictability, chance, and failure as opportunities for invention. Breaking the traditions and “rules” of clay, she often fires broken, dry, and wet pieces of clay together, and may add studio furniture and detritus to the sculpture. By seeking out the limitations of ceramics, Rosen explores the potential of her medium.

In her early work, Rosen sometimes stacked her pieces in layers, referencing the varying strata of earth. Rosen sees these works as inspired by nature and classical ceramic iconography. These abstract sculptures suggest complex ecosystems of flowering plants, birds, and small microcosms.

Rosen's later work explores the performative process of ceramics by creating hundreds of repeated shapes and forms and constructing her sculptural pieces as a painter would paint a canvas. Discrete elements are formed, fired, glazed, and considered individually before being accumulated and bound together with more wet clay, tubing, or wire to create larger sculptures that reveal both the durability and fragility of clay.

Creating densely imagined ceramic environments, Annabeth Rosen uses her kiln as a site of experimentation. The tension created by the chemistry of the medium, along with its unstable nature, allows for both failure and exacting control. Featuring monumental, gravity-defying ceramic sculptures and works on paper, this exhibition examines the radical defiance of the limits of ceramics.

About the Artist

Raised in Brooklyn by a working-class Jewish family, Annabeth Rosen's process—grounded in resourcefulness, endurance, and a strong work ethic—can be traced to her upbringing. Annabeth's father was an engineer and tinkerer, her mother a seamstress and chair of the Fashion Design Department of the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. Drawing from the ethos that everything broken can always be fixed or re-used, Rosen embraces the impulse to rescue or resurrect broken ceramic fragments. She sees both her studio and the kiln as spaces of invention, where process and chance are equally essential elements in the formation of her art.

Failure and Potential

Discuss

Annabeth Rosen works in fragments and embraces the possibility of destruction in the kiln. At times, she intentionally breaks pieces and reassembles them in new configurations. Rosen once reflected on failure, "There's almost no such thing. Everything has potential if you recognize it...The work is the armature I hang my idea on. It could be anything. Everything is a possibility."

Watch the film in which Rosen describes her work



Still from *Annabeth Rosen – A profile by Daniel Traub*, The Contemporary Jewish Museum.
<https://vimeo.com/356935987>

- ▷ What are the boundaries of clay?
- ▷ How does chance play a role in Rosen's works of art?
- ▷ How does failure play a role in Rosen's works of art?

Define kiln: A large oven for firing or burning or drying such things as porcelain, clay, or bricks.

What is ceramics?

Define ceramics: The art of making objects by shaping pieces of clay and then baking them until they are hard.

Ceramics has a long history as objects both for functional use and artistic expression.

- ▷ What are some examples of ceramic objects, historical or contemporary, that serve either functional or decorative purposes? Where do you see ceramics in everyday life?
- ▷ How would you classify Rosen's sculptures?
- ▷ What purpose do they serve?
- ▷ How might her sculptures push the boundaries of ceramics?

Read aloud

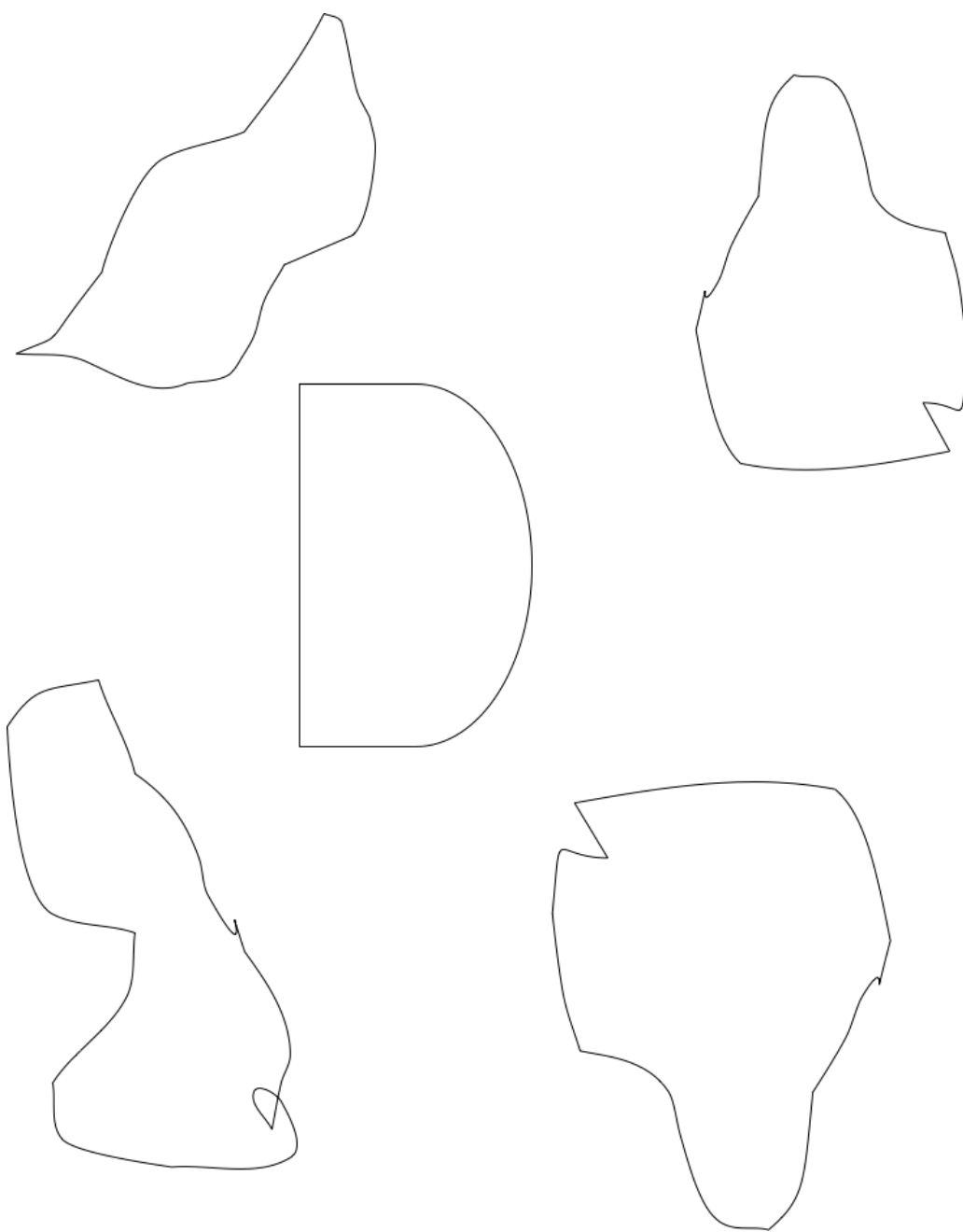
"When my work blows up in the kiln, it's sad, my work is shattered, but it is also exciting. It is beautiful. Everything has potential if you recognize it." –Annabeth Rosen

Note to teachers: You may use Rosen's work as a pathway for your students to practice "Growth Mindset." This term, coined by Stanford professor Carol Dweck, teaches that students who are taught their abilities are malleable, like clay, are more likely to embrace challenges and persist embracing "failure" as moments of learning. (<https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/>). Rosen does not see the binary trap of success and failure, but instead views everything as having potential.

Fragments Activity

Use your imagination to turn the “broken pieces” into something else.

▷ What purpose might your object serve, if any?



Organic Forms and Art

Read aloud

"It's like anything you would find in the sea... like teeth, or a bone, or a remnant of a living thing, or a fossil of a dead thing. You might have found that, but I made that intentionally, deliberately."—Annabeth Rosen

Close Looking

Students receive a handout of the image of the artwork, *Bunny*, 2011.

Prompt: Looking closely for details depicting ecosystems or find plant and animal forms, large or small. Use a pencil and markup the image with responses to the prompts below.

Find something that:

- ▷ Looks like it might have been dug out of the **earth**
- ▷ Reminds you of the **ocean**
- ▷ Has patterns or shapes you might find in **nature**
- ▷ Looks like it is **melting**
- ▷ Would blow over in the **wind**
- ▷ Looks like a **creature**

Why do you think Rosen titled this sculpture *Bunny*?



Bunny, 2011. Fired ceramic, steel baling wire, and steel stand on casters, 46 x 32 x 24 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W., New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.

What's in a Title?

Read aloud

"It's so loopy, the language that we superimpose, that we think, that we dream of, when we're working with objects."

–Annabeth Rosen

Define onomatopoeia: The naming of a thing or action by a vocal imitation of the sound associated with it (such as buzz or hiss) [Merriam Webster]

Hand out "What's in a Title" activity. Ask students to fill in sheet and then discuss using prompts and images provided.

What's in a Title Activity

Draw a picture next to the word of how you imagine it to look.

What feelings, shapes, colors, or sounds do these titles remind you of?

Sloam

Boogaloo

Flume

Brule

Plu

Velo

Brundle

In partners, share your titles and illustrations then discuss the questions below.

- ▷ How do you pronounce your titles? Say them out loud to one another.
- ▷ What do your titles smell like, feel like, taste like?
- ▷ Do you see your titles as an onomatopoeia? How? Act them out for each other.

Make a sentence using any of the words above. Share your sentence with your partner.

I took my _____ for a walk
through a _____. We were
surprised by a _____ and
exclaimed _____!

As a class, look at *Atlas* and *Brundle* by Annabeth Rosen.

- ▷ Reveal the titles, and ask what else this may add to looking at the piece.
- ▷ Describe the elements of the piece.
- ▷ Describe the binding and how it affects the sculpture.

Atlas



Atlas, 2016. Fired ceramic and steel baling wire, 13 x 17 x 13 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W., New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.

Brundle



Brundle, 2012. Fired ceramic and rubber inner tube, 33 x 14 x 23 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W., New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.

2D ⇔ 3D Activity

Getting Ready

Compare and contrast the images of *Wave II* and *Tube II* (opposite page)

Share this quote from the artist: "My drawings used to be two to three years ahead of the work I was making. But now I come back and do a series of drawings from my pieces that are already done and try and fuel the next group. Drawing is how an artist thinks."

Activity

Using pipe cleaners and/or wire and an assortment of classroom supplies and broken, unusable, or random objects, create a sculpture.

Take your pieces and bind them together using the pipe cleaners and wire to create your final product.

- ▷ Draw your composition.
- ▷ Title your sculpture.

Materials: Pipe cleaners, common broken or unusable items such as pencils, pens, food containers, boxes, wire, paper scraps, sketching paper, pencils

Reflection Questions

- ▷ What might your sculpture resemble?
- ▷ How does your title complement or expand upon your work of art?
- ▷ Is your form based around nature? If so, how? Or, how would you characterize your sculpture?
- ▷ What purpose, if any, might your sculpture serve?



Wave II, 2017. Ceramic, steel bailing wire, and steel armature, 28 x 71 x 60 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W, New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.



Tube II, 2012. Acrylic paint, ink, and gouache on paper, 65 x 61 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W, New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.

Tours

Emphasizing unpredictability as an opportunity for invention, tours of *Annabeth Rosen: Fired, Broken, Gathered, Heaped* will consider the “rules” and traditions of ceramics and how Rosen pushes the medium of clay beyond its boundaries. Tours will encounter Rosen’s philosophies of reuse, breakage, and reconstruction through interactive gallery experiences. Students will also play with language and poetry inspired by the onomatopoeiatic titles of the works of art.

All CJM tours are dialogue based, inviting students to observe, create interpretations, and make contemporary meaning from the works of art. Tours are one hour long, and encourage observation, conversation, and reflection. Tours may be combined with an art workshop that explores sculpture and the role of chance in creativity.

Tours and art workshops are open to grades K-12.

To book a tour of *Annabeth Rosen: Fired, Broken, Gathered, Heaped* visit **thecjm.org/tours**, call **415.655.7857** or email **tours@thecjm.org**.

Resources

Annabeth Rosen: <http://www.annabethrosen.net/>

Beautiful Oops Project Ideas: <https://blog.workman.com/share-ideas>



Bunny, 2011. Fired ceramic, steel baling wire, and steel stand on casters, 46 x 32 x 24 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W, New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.



Atlas, 2016. Fired ceramic and steel baling wire, 13 x 17 x 13 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W, New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.



Brundle, 2012. Fired ceramic and rubber inner tube, 33 x 14 x 23 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W, New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.



Wave II, 2017. Ceramic, steel bailing wire, and steel armature, 28 x 71 x 60 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W, New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.



Tube II, 2012. Acrylic paint, ink, and gouache on paper, 65 x 61 inches. Courtesy the artist; Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco; and P.P.O.W, New York. Photograph by Lee Fatherree.