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ELLIOTT, CARMEN ALMA. An Involvement with the Dreaming  
Face. (1974) Directed by: Gilbert Carpenter. Pp. 2.

If you allowed me clay to hold  
and in the clay slept my name  
which no man knew save I that  
received it, I would dwell  
in its stone and shape  
beauty with wounding.

I am not an Amarna princess.  
I bear complexion and completion.  
Dreams curl inside me  
and bloom blonde, healing other  
darks and darkness.  
And the small part of me  
that mirrors star  
rests somewhere in my face.

The Egyptian princess knew how  
to keep her eyes open in death.  
For you whose face has not surfaced  
from sea or fire, I say,  
touch my mouth  
while she breathes on me  
and I into her.

AN INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DREAMING FACE

by

Carmen Elliott

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro  
1974

Approved by

  
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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Paul Hedrick

Robert J. Watson

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\_\_\_\_\_

Dec 12, 1974  
Date of Examination

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## CATALOGUE

### CERAMIC PIECES

	SIZE
1. Dreaming Woman, Head Thrown Back	H=7"
2. Daydreamer with Coral-Wing Lips	H=5"
3. Princess with Snowy Mouth	H=6"
4. Woman Piled Up; Out into Dreams	H=6"
5. Taffy Daydreamer with Necklace	H=11½"
6. Rolling Dreamer	H=5"
7. Full-Cheeked Woman with Pink Handle Dream	H=7"

### DRAWINGS

8. Nick's Alma Looking Out (After Parmigiano)	14x17
9. Daydreamer Watching Theatre (Self Portrait)	14x17
10. Dreamer with Three Hair Rolls	14x17
11. Woman in a High Right Dream (Self Portrait)	9x12
12. Old Princess Thinking Inside	14x17
13. Daydreamer Hurt by the Mirror (Self Portrait)	14x17
14. Queen with One Whisker Dreams Back	14x17

I am absorbed in the facial expressions of dreamers. The paradox would seem to be that while one rests, the face is still. Therefore, my emphasis on the readable expressions from a dreamer's face is wholly subjective, a fantasy on the head itself separated from the body and suspended in space. The face of the dreamer becomes a cinema for all the images forming behind the eyes, for all the allure of the uncertain.

The main core of my work is a series of ceramic heads which explore the postures and feelings of the dreamer as he/she responds to the dream. A second part, closely related, is a group of drawings, portraits of imaginary dreamers. In the clay pieces, and the sketches, the main indicator of the dream rests in the rise (the pulse) around the mouth and eyes.

A dream is a private world of immeasurable spaces, a nacreous surface under which one travels and records those travels simultaneously. In the ceramic works, that spatial freedom involves a special luminosity (a soft-glow, the unholdable surfaces of freshly creamed skin)-the use of the pink bisque with powder whites, blondes, "birthday" colors, to de-weight the face so that it lifts (or flies) and reveals the dreamer's expansion into the dream.

While working on this whole series, I have constantly referred to my face in the mirror over my work space. A majority of the pieces hint at my own capacity for dreaming. I begin with a block of wedged clay ranging from the life-size of a female head to one that fits the hand (like a new born child's.) I "smudge on" bits of clay to the main mass and build up cheeks, hair-rolls, features, pudges, and lately, dream images (fish, flowers). I bisque the solid pieces very slowly after they have dried for two weeks or more, then tint the surfaces with pastels, makeup, watercolors, and pencil.

Egyptian, African, and Indian art, as well as the Renaissance Della Robbias and Odilon Redon have been consistent attractions to me in my work. I admire the Egyptian heads from the Amarna period which describe a kind of beauty that wounds because of its clarity; also, a wooden mask with empty eyeholes from the twelfth dynasty that provokes a spiritual (spatial) empathy. In African sculpture, the Spirit Masks of the Ogowe River Valley surge with the same otherworldly energy contained in the river-faced Buddhas of India. And I appreciate the della Robbias' glazed busts and heads with their day-dreaming mouths. But the idea that directs my work is Odilon Redon's insistence that art lie in a reality that is felt rather than only seen. Like Redon, I want "to put the logic of the visible at the service of the invisible."