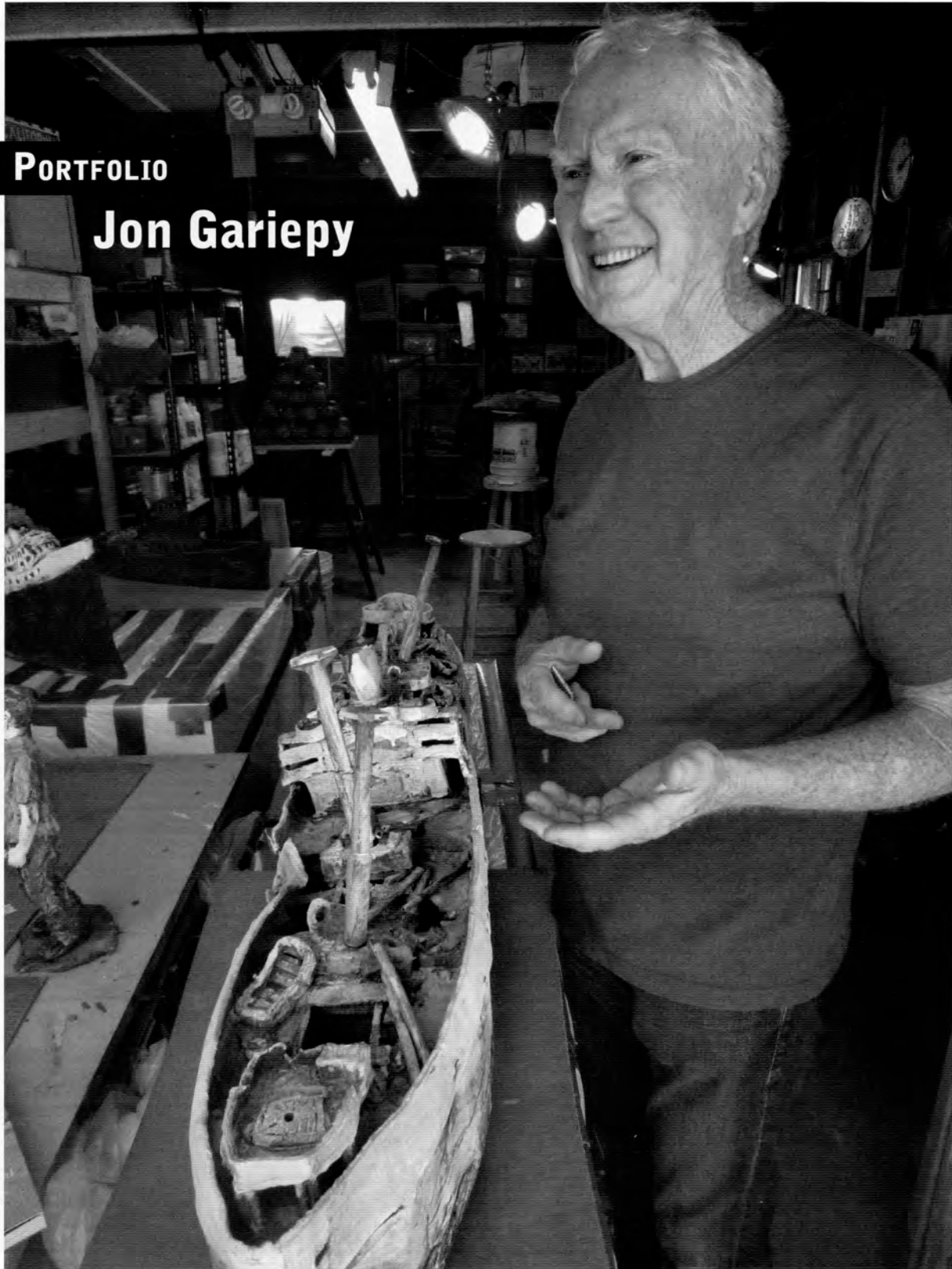


PORTFOLIO

Jon Gariepy



JON GARIEPY IN HIS GARAGE STUDIO WITH *RITE OF PASSAGE*, 2009, FIRED CLAY WITH UNDERGLAZE AND COLD FINISH, 15" X 56" X 10"



FOREGROUND: *HERCULES IN REPOSE*, 2010, FIRED CLAY, 13" X 30" X 10" LEFT: *RITE OF PASSAGE*
CENTER: *SLOUCHING TOWARD PARADISE*, 2008, FIRED CLAY WITH UNDERGLAZE AND COLD FINISH, 10" X 19" X 5"
PARTIALLY HIDDEN: *FREE MARKET TRICKLE DOWN*, 2010



JON GARIEPY, *HELP MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE ON THE WAY*, 2009, FIRED CLAY, 13" X 30" X 10"

Jon Gariepy's work came to my attention via a small postcard. Every now and then one of these jumps out and grabs me and this was one of those times. The card featured a photo of a ceramic tugboat, beautifully falling apart [*Help May Not Necessarily Be on the Way*]. The moment I laid eyes on it, I wondered what other treats a visit with this artist might reveal.

Here are some photos from that visit plus photos by Jon's wife, Carolyn Clover, of two of Gariepy's car sculptures. Gariepy told me he's spent many magical hours exploring harbors and quiet old boatyards. As he writes, "I'm especially moved by aged and battered vessels. There's a kind of meditative energy emanating from them. I imagine that our human energy is absorbed by the objects we love and spend a lot of time with, and then, as they decay these objects release that energy into the atmosphere." I'm reminded of Meredith Sabini's beautiful story, *The Dumpster*, published in issue #16.



JON GARIEPY, *RON'S RIDE*, 2009, FIRED CLAY WITH UNCERGLAZE AND COLD FINISH, 4" X 10.5" X 4.5" PHOTO: CAROLYN CLOVER

In it, she writes "much that is made today is not intended to last and cannot be repaired. *Mana* is unable to fill our possessions. Lacking substance, they cannot become proper vessels for spirit. We may ask where objects come from, but they no longer have stories to tell. They, too, have lost their roots."

Looking at many of Gariepy's works, one feels how deeply he resonates with the objects that *do* have stories to tell, certain old boats that are no longer seaworthy, for instance. In them he feels, as he writes, "the joy of a fair wind and a sunny day, the love of sailing, the love of making a living on the water." And also, as he adds, "there's the sadness at the end of a day for the mortality of all things."

It's easy to see that these same things also apply to Gariepy's loving portraits of old cars. The romance of young men with their cars has to be one of the most commonly shared experiences in our culture, at least among men who came of age in the two or three decades after WW2. Does this still hold true today in our era of computer-mediated cars, so much less accessible to the tinkering of a shade tree mechanic? In the 1950s, tearing an engine down



JON GARIEPY, *AMBASSADOR OF SUBURBIA*, 2009, FIRED CLAY WITH UNDERGLAZE AND COLD FINISH, 5" X 13.5" X 6" PHOTO: CAROLYN CLOVER

and rebuilding it was within reach of most motivated young men. The amount of time and care lavished on cars by freshly-minted drivers, especially in the 1950s and 60s, might compare today with the amount of time many young men spend on computer games.

Somehow the best of Gariepy's ship and car sculptures capture the feeling of the passage of time made visible. But it's more than that. These pieces invoke objects that contain some of our deepest stories. They draw on that for their power to touch us.

He describes his method of working as "almost throwing each piece together." He speaks about a love of ragged edges, rugged surfaces and underglazes that are washed on in broad strokes. Rather than hiding the clay, Gariepy manages to bring its earthy essence forward in ways that amplify the poetry of his work. —Richard Whittaker