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GUSTAV and ULLA KRAITZ (Swedish)
Ceramic Sculpture of a Horse, ca. 1960
Glazed stoneware
23” H x 20” W x 8.5” D

35 East 10th Street | New York NY 10003 | 212 343 0471 | info@hostlerburrows.com
6819 Melrose Avenue | Los Angeles CA 90038 | 323 591 0182 | la@hostlerburrows.com

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Gustav Kraitz (b. 1926) and Ulla Kraitz (b.1936) are a husband and wife duo of Swedish sculptors that have been working in collaboration for over 50 years. They are renowned for their playful oeuvre, distinctive by their shimmering glazes, the result of a technique specially developed by the Kraitzes using a kiln fired with both wood and coal.

Gustav was born and raised in Hungary. After winning a student drawing competition, he began studying at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest. His studies were interrupted by World War II, during which time Gustav was among 3,000 prisoners who were forced to labor in coal mines. One of a very few fortunate survivors, he was released in 1949 and resumed his artistic studies to completion in 1952. With the Soviet invasion in 1956, Gustav fled to Sweden and settled in Stockholm. It was there that Gustav met Ulla Kraitz, nee Stenquist, in 1960.

Ulla was educated at the College of Arts in Sweden from 1954-1958 and continued her studies in Spain through 1959, when shortly thereafter she returned to Stockholm and met Gustav. Ulla had an illustrious career independently of Gustav. She was commissioned for three consecutive years to design the artwork for the Nobel Prize diploma as well as the statuette for the Birgit Nilsson Prize for classical music.

The Kraitzes began working as a pair first to produce utilitarian ceramics, and later their practice evolved into the production of more whimsical, sculptural pieces such as stylized animals and fruits in lustrous and vivid colors. The Kraitzes developed their distinctive glazing techniques with the Chinese Ming and Sung traditions in mind. Artworks by the pair are often recognizable for their signature glazes in temmoku (brown-black), celadon, intense cobalt blue, and oxblood.

Their first joint exhibition was at the Röhsska Museum in 1965, the first of many national and international exhibitions within which they would participate. Over the years, the Kraitzes have received numerous public commissions throughout Denmark, Sweden, and the United States. Currently, their Hope Monument is erected in honor of humanitarian Raoul Wallenberg in front of the United Nations in New York, and proposals are underway for the Kraitzes to undertake a project that would bring their sculptures to Roosevelt Island.

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MUSEUMS
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Röhsska Museum, Gothenburg
Malmö Art Museum
National Museum, Budapest
Capital Museum, Beijing
Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC
The De Young Museum, San Francisco

AWARDS
2008 Region Skåne Cultural Award

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phone 212 343 0471 • fax 212 343 0472
info@hostlerburrows.com • hostlerburrows.com