

## **Dennis Gerwin**

### *Artist Statement*

Initially inspired by a social group at a hotel bar, I began referencing big ladies dancing 20 years ago as an undergraduate art student. They gathered on Fridays to celebrate their beauty, which was an unexpected discovery for me at the time. I recognized myself as the "other" in this equation, and I remain grateful for the lessons I learn in a state of vulnerability. My current iterations of these subjects are informed by models who share highly curated images of their bodies to express their pride and promote an idealized beauty. They also acknowledge artifacts created over scores of millennia, illustrating this universal human interest as far back as we can see.

The subject matter remains precarious for me as I engage discussions about sexist objectification, self-objectification, voyeurism, and fetishism with people who are either uncomfortable with the subjects or appreciate that it's being observed and articulated. In the most literal sense, I'm objectifying women's bodies by transforming the malleable substance of clay into durable stoneware that could survive for millennia. Through the lens of cultural context, I'm interpreting contemporary human phenomena while exploring my curiosity about ideal beauty in an expansive lineage of similar observations.