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Abstract:

This paper will delve into the dichotomies of clay across multiple landscapes; historical vs. contemporary, natural vs. industrial, mass produced vs. individualistic, and art vs. craft; and how those directly translate into my experience, feelings, and vision as an Alaskan-born ceramic artist working in America today.

The Spaces Between: A Study of the Split Natures of Clay

By

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BFA, University of South Alabama, 2018

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Studio Arts.

Syracuse University

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Introduction:

The landscape of the creation of clay objects has transformed greatly since the first ceramic piece was made in 28,000 BCE. The crafting of clay objects and vessels became a prevalent practice in many cultures throughout the course of history to fill a variety of needs and roles. As a medium with such direct connections to the earth and natural processes, clay was, naturally, a critical element of human development, progress, and artistic and cultural expression, bridging the spaces between function, nature, and art.

Although clay had once served as a fundamental bridge between the natural world and the cultural world cultivated by humans, it began to stray from its origins in ceramic ecology during the Industrial Revolution. The invention of steam engines and capitalism changed the art form to one of efficiency and machination, even though the very nature of clay is one of, well, nature – organic, earthen, and innate.

The Industrial Revolution spurred a new movement, however – one of Arts and Crafts – which called for the return to handmade, one-of-a-kind, and artistic vessels, in direct opposition to the factory-made. Thus began a new era of making that emphasized not only a connection to an artist's hand, but also to the world surrounding an artist – a return to the nature of ceramics, so to say, featuring the natural world as its muse.

Since the Industrial Revolution, our current world has been forever changed by capitalism and mechanization. So, where does that leave ceramics? Does it lie in the realm of art, or of craft? Machine-made or handmade? Fabricated or natural? Or, does it live as a relic somewhere in between, in a nebulous desert much akin to the abandoned factories strewn about the Alaskan landscape where I grew up?

In this paper, I will describe my particular views on the nature of ceramics, exploring the landscape of historical and contemporary ceramics, and where my own aesthetic, processes, and beliefs fit into this landscape.

Universal Nature of Ceramics:

I have always thought of clay and the ceramic pot as a bridge between the worlds of nature and human cultures. Historically speaking, we have been using the natural world to create ceramics since 28,000 BCE, and pottery since 19,000-17,000 BCE. Beyond historical function, though, I've always felt a deep, intrinsic link between the earthen medium that is clay and the human hand that shapes it. The very nature of creating ceramics makes it impossible to deny its connection to the natural world, and thus your own connection as you shape the earth you're touching. As anthropologist Patricia Townsend describes, humans have shaped their cultures, ideologies, and beliefs around nature and the natural world surrounding them – a phenomenon called ecological anthropology, or “the study of relationships between a population of humans and their biophysical environment.”¹ With nature playing a critical part in the formation and development of culture, it has undoubtedly also played a vital role in shaping the objects associated with culture, including ceramics.

Delving further into the relationship between nature and ceramics specifically, this notion has been referred to as ceramic ecology. Author Daniel Albero Santacru, in his book titled *Materiality, Techniques and Society in Pottery Production*, notes that ceramic ecology emphasizes “the natural environment.”² He goes on further to say:

¹ Townsend, Patricia K. *Environmental anthropology: From pigs to policies*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2018.

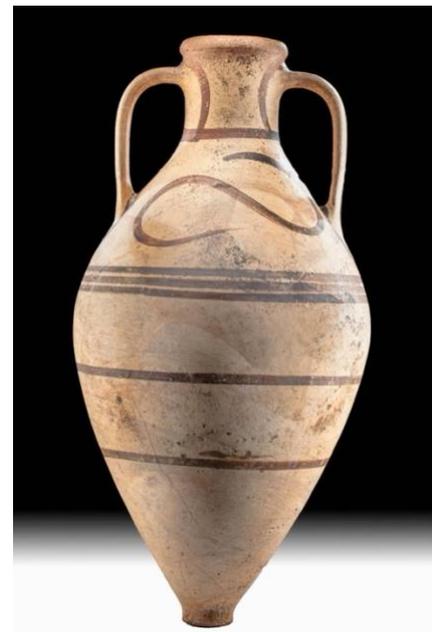
² Santacru, D. (2015). *Materiality, techniques and society in pottery production*. De Gruyter Open.

“This position tries to understand and regulate the dynamic relationships existing between the ceramics as a cultural product and the natural environment as a way to transcend the objects themselves. From an ecological point of view, the adaptation of the pottery to the environment is the primary aspect in determining the physical features of the artifacts. Both the environment and the physical dimension of the objects condition the human behavior developed to create the ceramics.”³

With this fundamental relationship between nature and culture, and thus ceramics, in mind, I have always been interested in how the language of clay is universal. I am fascinated by the fact that many cultures around the globe, separated by time, continents, and language, share a great deal of the same attributes or designs despite their physical remoteness. There is an inherent universal nature to how we as users understand an object.

This concept is also applicable to how craftspeople view an ideal functional form within more than just their own culture. Throughout history we can see that many cultures separated by continents and even centuries have arrived at very similar solutions to a functional need despite their vastly different landscapes. For example, this Greek amphora from the Proto-Geometric period, spanning from 1050 BCE - 900 BCE sets up an interesting comparison of forms.

One of several iconic Greek amphora shapes, this form is one that I have looked to for inspiration throughout my own career as a maker. I have always been drawn to this amphora’s long neck and a tapered foot at the bottom



I. Greek Artists: *Greek Proto-Geometric Transport Amphora*, ca. 1000- 900 BCE. Artemis Gallery.

³ Santacreu, D. (2015). *Materiality, techniques and society in pottery production*. De Gruyter Open.

of the pot, giving the form a smooth design. A functional form used for the transportation and storage of various liquids during the Greek Dark Ages, this vessel also has multiple inner chambers to maximize storage as well as two symmetrical handles on either side of the form stemming from the bellied-out body of the pot. The thing that makes this vessel stand out is the simple geometric design that exemplifies the form's figure-like curves.



II. Incan Artist: *Urpu (Jar)*, ca. 1400-1535 CE, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Across the world and many years later we see within an Incan culture a form, an urpu, which features many of the same functional and aesthetic choices. I enjoy the comparison of the two different interpretations of forms from different eras designed within the same class of object. Both forms are designed to be liquid-holding vessels with narrow feet and level handles on each side. Even the formfitting geometric design is of the same ilk. The urpu was crafted during the height of the Inca Empire, which had no interaction with the outside world until the Spanish Colonization in 1517 CE, yet still shares functional and aesthetic similarities with the

Greek amphora. This interesting universality of clay furthers my belief of the innate links between humans and the natural world, and their intrinsic desire to use their surroundings as inspiration to create art, employ it for functionality, and build culture.

As mentioned earlier, ceramics is one of the oldest modes of creation and production used by human beings. Creations born from need, pottery and ceramic sculpture alike have served many purposes throughout history. From functional wares that were decorated and embellished as vessels used to tell stories, to celebrating tradition and even spreading propaganda, ceramics have been an essential tool used to understand how culture – and nature – have transformed since antiquity. A duality that is still present in the work of contemporary ceramists of today.

These historical forms offer a great deal of inspiration to many of us contemporary makers, myself included, as I view the clay pot as the link between the natural world and the many cultures that interact and inhabit these landscapes. The solutions and choices of the craftspeople who made these inspirational forms offer much insight into the everyday uses and needs of these cultures, and also how they drew from the world around them to inform their artistic choices. Though we have moved beyond making objects and containers strictly out of necessity, craftspeople continue to explore and experiment within the functional landscape, making artful and functional work alike.

At the turn of the century the Industrial Revolution changed much of this. Objects that were made by experienced craftspeople around the globe had their processes simplified and streamlined. Steam-powered engines were used to grind flint and enamel colors, operate crushers, and temper clays. It is true that the Industrial Revolution provided many scientific

advancements in ceramics, with revolutionists such as Josiah Wedgwood elevating “pottery manufacture from a matter of guesswork or procedure by rule of thumb to a matter of scientific measurement and calculation.”⁴ However, nearly simultaneously, the Industrial Revolution also sparked anxieties about industrial life and capitalism. There was a belief that the Industrial Revolution and mechanization of ceramics debased the art form, and thus the Arts and Crafts movement was born out of the advocacy for honest hand craftsmanship and pre-capitalist, artistic workmanship. In direct opposition to the mechanized, mass-produced, and seemingly synthetic ceramics produced during the Industrial Revolution, the Arts and Crafts movement featured depictions of nature, mostly flora and fauna, of many different regions. Artists within the Arts and Crafts movement often traveled to the countryside where, as described by François-Xavier Trancart in an article titled *The Arts and Crafts Movement and the Environment*:

“...they rediscovered the joys of culture, live performance and small-scale creation, sheltered from London’s machinations. The handmade pieces were of an incomparable softness and depicted delicate birds, harmonious foliage, vibrant color palettes... motifs that are reminiscent of their creators’ newfound freedom.”⁵

In a way, the Arts and Crafts movement combined new, scientific developments in clay with more traditional, handcrafted processes and styles, thus furthering a bridge between clay and the natural world and harkening back to the notion of ceramic ecology.

⁴ Thomas, John. “The Pottery Industry and the Industrial Revolution.” *The Economic Journal* 47, no. Supplement_1 (1937): 399–414.

⁵ Trancart, François-Xavier. “The Arts and Crafts Movement and the Environment.” *Artsper Magazine*, January 24, 2023.

Contemporary Craft:

As an art form, it is only since the early 1900s that ceramics in America has begun to be more widely reframed from an industry of production back to a craft art form and the studio potter has flourished. The importance of the connection to clay as a material and the artist's hand in the work was revitalized in many studio artists' practices.

Early on in my artistic education, I was met with the sentiment that the ceramic forms that I make are not truly fine art objects. Rather, that they live within the spectrum of craft, limited by their inherent link to purely functional forms of the past. I have struggled with this idea that an object can only be one or the other: functional or fine art. Thus, the thought of defining myself as a sculptor has never felt right. Ceramics... printmaking... fibers... in my experience, they've all been seen as different or "lesser" forms of artistic making, stuck in the land of functional craft without agency to move to the space of formal art. Currently, we are in an overly modernized, consumer-driven world, so much so that people have shifted back to wanting one-of-a-kind, handcrafted, artistic objects for their home. It's still something that enriches their lives and beautifies day after day, the same as a painting that hangs on the wall.

So what, then, makes a painting different from a pot? A sculpture from a vase? In *A theory of craft: Function and aesthetic expression*, Risatti notes that "my view is one in which most any man-made object can be a work of art. All that is required is for it to possess sufficient aesthetic qualities so that upon viewing it a competent viewer will have an aesthetic experience."⁶ If any man-made object can be a work of art, why can't a pot? Or a vase? Why

⁶ Risatti, Howard. *A theory of craft: Function and aesthetic expression*. Chapel Hill North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

can't art and craft exist in the same landscape, just as the natural and the industrial have? As Gray notes in her essay *Contemporary British Ceramics and the Influence of Sculpture: Monuments, Multiples, Destruction... and Display*, "the explorations at the borders and boundaries of ceramics are not only happening in visibly different ephemeral and performance-based works, but also with traditional pottery forms."⁷ Ceramics, unlike other mediums, has the ability to transcend the boundaries between art and craft, between the handmade and the machine-made, and between the natural and the cultural. Metcalf writes; just as with art,

"Craft is also defined by its past. Each of the craft disciplines has a multicultural history that is recorded mostly as objects, many from societies that have long since disappeared. The history of each craft is far richer and older than that of painting, in spite of the way art history has been taught."⁸

It is nonetheless difficult to define a landscape where art and craft should be delineated in any way and cannot coexist. As Metcalf also suggests, "craft is a series of limitations suggested by tradition. By nature, craft looks backwards, which is no longer supposed to be a virtue."⁹

However, is it bad to "look backwards?" Return to our roots as natural beings? Reject the machination of art? Metcalf goes on – "but all those ancient usages provide a sourcebook from which craft can clarify its essential distinction from fine art. Once that is done, craft can develop its own conceptual approach."¹⁰

⁷ GRAY, LAURA. "Chapter 1: Becoming Partners?" Essay. In *Contemporary British Ceramics and the Influence of Sculpture: Monuments, Multiples, Destruction... and Display*. ROUTLEDGE, 2023.

⁸ Metcalf, Bruce. "Replacing the Myth of Modernism." jeweler. Accessed December 1, 2023. <https://www.brucemetcalf.com/replacing-the-myth-of-modernism>.

⁹ Metcalf, Bruce. "Replacing the Myth of Modernism." jeweler. Accessed December 1, 2023. <https://www.brucemetcalf.com/replacing-the-myth-of-modernism>.

¹⁰ Metcalf, Bruce. "Replacing the Myth of Modernism." jeweler. Accessed December 1, 2023. <https://www.brucemetcalf.com/replacing-the-myth-of-modernism>.

Is there really a need for a distinction between art and craft, though? I do not believe so. I believe that a flower pot and a painting can occupy the same space and both create aesthetic experiences in similar ways, one no more important or virtuous than the other.

Beautiful Beginnings:

I grew up in Fairbanks, Alaska, one of the most polluted cities in the United States. A place where the grand, natural beauty of the mountains and forests found in the vast wilderness is only matched by the large, artificial structures humans have built to harness and process the resources below the surface. Much of the world views Alaska's only true values as oil, metals, and fish harvested to then be packaged and sent off around the globe for consumers needing and wanting materials.

For the people who inhabit these lands however, we view Alaska as so much more than its industrialized uses. Any person can wander for hours down trails and not see another person. Hike on one of the world's few remaining glaciers. Watch bears emerge from hibernation. Yet randomly, strewn about within the dense forests and glorious mountains, there are pockets of deserted industrial factories and run down settlements, reminders of a time of economic prosperity tied so heavily to expansion and colonization. One can become numb to how out of place these remnants of industry are, and they gradually become part of the peripheral landscapes. Having lived much of my life surrounded by the spectrum of colors, textures, and shapes within nature, it is easy for me to set forms and compositions based on trees, mountains, and glaciers. Just as Alaska has tinges of industrialization among its natural beauty, so too did my life, as does my work.

When I was growing up I never had a tough time picturing a life of hard work. Every adult I knew either worked a public service job or worked twelve plus hours a day in a hard-nosed trade job – the realities of living in a harsh climate, with harsh pollution, in a capitalistic society. The cost of living in a place like Alaska is quite high, but not just monetarily. Most of the year the average amount of daylight is between three and five hours. I can remember many times running out to catch the school bus in the darkness in temperatures well below zero degrees. Still, you are stuck with these moments of awe-striking beauty that you almost take for granted. For me it is easy to look back and think of the endless rolling hills covered in blushes of color from all the different types of trees and plant life and see why the work that I am making currently involves colors and textures so reminiscent of those Alaskan landscapes.

I have always thought that growing up with this resilient mindset was what made it so easy for me to imagine a life for myself as an artist. Even though it wasn't a typical road for the blue-collar factory workers in my hometown, I knew it was the perfect trail for me, and I quickly discovered that clay would be my map.

Why clay?

Art class was always a quiet place for me. A place of solace for those of us who were not naturally comfortable in the loud chaos of the school halls. I always felt free of the stress and confusion that was so prominent in my other classes, as well as in my home life.

The first time that I touched clay was when I was in high school. I was lucky enough that I attended the lone public school in my hometown that offered a clay studio. Ceramics was meant to be a "just for fun class," a place where I could get in a few extra minutes to work on my AP Biology homework. Working with clay was something that, like many, I had always

wanted to try, but had overlooked. My preconceived notions of what “real” art was and what I wanted to make made me think that if I was going to invest time in making, I should be making something valuable and profound like a painting – not playing with dirt. After all, making pottery was something my grandmother did to keep herself busy in her endless spare time. Not at all the cool and sexy life of an artist that was depicted in many of the movies I would watch as a young child.

Despite my believed stereotypes about art, I quickly became enchanted by how the clay felt. I was enraptured by the smooth texture of that first ball of clay that was fraught with grains of rough, sand-like grog; the responsiveness of the material and how easy it was to manipulate; the possibilities of the shapes and structures one could build quite quickly out of what was little more than dirt. When working with clay, I realized you can combine so many distinct aspects and aesthetics from different materials like the textures of metal, leaves, or wood. By the end of my first ceramics class, I was encapsulated by clay’s many processes, and the only things occupying my mind were thoughts of what to try next in the studio.

At first working with clay was just for the enjoyment and exploration of the seemingly unending possibilities of the material. Though somewhere along the line, my curiosity rose from the level of fascination to obsession. I learned that the ceramics studio was a place of consistency and control. A place where if I was attentive and patient enough I could make just about anything I wanted. A love for making was awakened within me as I continued to craft objects in clay. There were so many techniques and surfaces to study and experiment with. I was learning a new language, one that made sense to me more than algebra or chemistry ever

could. A universal language of history, earth, and the cultures that preceded me and my relationship to the study.

However, not everything I learned in my clay career came easy. The first time that I tried to learn how to throw on the potter's wheel was a disastrous endeavor. I was frustrated with the messiness and the speed of the tool. At the time, I wanted to figure out how to start building more complex forms, but my making was still distinctly tied to hand building. I was obsessed with teapots during my classes in high school and all I wanted to do was



III. *Magnetic Fields*, 2018, Stoneware, Cone 6 Oxidation.

focus on hand built ergonomic pots. They were bulky, and never poured right. However, once I got to college, I was challenged by my teacher to revisit the wheel and learn about the machine's possibilities as a tool.

There was an immediacy to the wheel that took time to adjust to, a machination that went against my instinct to build by hand. During my undergraduate education, my time in the studio was based much more on learning techniques and how to maximize productivity. My professors were production potters by trade and had a very strict view on what a making practice should look like. As a result, most of my clay education during my undergraduate studies was based around becoming very well versed in the basic ceramic processes, with my

professors' practices revolving around technique and efficiency. This made me realize that the hat of a production artist was never one that fit me well. While I had an appreciation for the techniques such as slip casting or press molding – both methods used in production studios – I much preferred to have my hand reflected within each form.

Making Process:

Along with my love for clay and the ceramic process has come a fondness for traditional forms of pottery, both historical and contemporary. Within my practice, functional work has always played an important role, whether it's production or handmade. As I was trying to learn how to make an interesting piece of pottery, I became encapsulated with technique and how functional pots were made. There is such a wide range of approaches and variation in technique when working with clay. As I have progressed in my career and education, I have come to understand the significance of defining what is important to one's art making, and how that can change the techniques employed. I quickly came to understand that the particular set of connections to a material were always going to be greatly important to my practice and my identity as a maker.

For my work, I think about taking what is an iconic pottery form and putting it into a new conversation and context. By revisiting interpretations of iconic vessels, I can link my series of work to the worldly tradition of pottery and making, but in a new space that is distinctly my own. For example, the pots that I make have both wheel thrown and hand-built elements and in contrast from my beginnings in clay, much of my making process now begins on the potter's wheel.

I start by throwing a simple vessel form, then applying thick layers of different colored slips to either the interior or exterior of the form. Using the combination of revolutions of the wheel and the movements of my hand on the surface of the form, I am able to imbue the pot's surface with a patterned texture. This mode of mark making also exemplifies vibration between my hand and the work and records the gestures I am making, ingraining the piece with my own personal touch and combining the earth with the human. Then, by building the organic elements that spread across the piece using coil building techniques, I begin to respond to and interrupt the form's lines and surfaces to create varying compositions.



IV. *Amalgamation of a Vase II, 2024,* Stoneware, Salt fired, glazed.

Clay pots became a canvas, and a means for me to work through and talk about the world around me. My personal affinity towards the organic and innate versus the mechanized and industrial challenged me to figure out how to make an artful pot that could talk about this conflicting balance on natural growth and manmade objects that has been in my peripheral for so long. This balance between the dystopian growth element and the textured surface of the vessel allowed me to play with the balance of each composition, the duality of manmade and natural, and the negative spaces between, making a piece look as if it was being amalgamated

back into an environment. This enabled me to create a narrative designed to evoke a response to the work's theme of nature versus consumer.

As an artist I hope that someone else will see it as extraordinary and want to adopt it into a new, curated environment. One of the great things about ceramics is that I get to make and beautify objects that people get to use every day. People have the option to buy a cup or a plate or anything that's made from a factory, but there's a very different connection and sensation when looking at an artful cup that you chose that fits your hand really well, that was created by another human being who made their own, conscious choices based on the combination of earthen materials and thousands of years of culture and history. That object is imbued with so much more meaning because somebody made those choices and then personally made that object. That ceramic object, made of dirt and water and heat and history, is functional yet still artistic, utilitarian yet personal, historical yet contemporary.

When I think about functional ceramics and the artists whose work creates these types of experiences, one artist who I continuously return to is Sam Chung. I first became enamored with Chung's work while looking at a book with some of his teapots in them while I was still a high school student. Chung's forms draw inspiration from both his cultural background and historical pottery forms. Chung's work aims to highlight the familiar beauty of traditional vessel forms while transforming them and bringing them into a contemporary conversation. The way in which Chung is able to change the identity of these recognizable vessel forms by altering their contours and then highlighting new lines with his brush work to this level of success is something that has always inspired me to work within the vessel format.



V. Sam Chung: *Cloud Flared Vase*, 2015, China Painted Porcelain.

When studying work like Sam Chung's, it further solidified my belief that a cup or a teapot are no different than a painting and can function equally as art objects just the same. And I think that's something that's always been in the heart for me – that it's craft versus conceptual art – because there is such a wide gap in the perception of craft and fine art. Ceramics, like all craft mediums, has a rich history, but because of its ties to inherent function of forms, it is viewed by many as not as artful or elegant. That just because an object may live within the utilitarian realm, such as in a home, why should that form be less significant in our perception of the world. When in fact just the opposite is true. For a form to live amongst everyday objects within the home, such as a handmade mug might, and still be thought of as artful it must be truly extraordinary to live as ordinary.



VI. Untiled Pierced Bowl, 2019, Stoneware, Cone 6 Oxidation.

Another technique that has become an integral part of my work is the piercing and carving of forms. I have always had a fascination with negative space – empty caverns, vast skies, the space between branches. The removal of material creates a levity by replacing it with light, but also the more that is removed from the composition the more intense the narrative becomes as it harkens on the duality of light and dark, air and earth, space and matter. The removal of so much material from the surface of the form via carving is also a way to incorporate aspects and textures from both the natural world and human-made architectural forms.



VII. Jennifer McCurdy: *CORAL VESSEL*, 2022,
13"x11"x11", Porcelain, Cone 10.

and the engineered. As a result, I see a form or a pot that has become much more activated and an interesting surface has been formed for glaze and atmosphere alike to respond to, reminiscent of the ridges and valleys of the mountainous yet polluted environment of my youth. The soft blushes of color, occurring during the salt firing process, create areas of soft variation that break against the harsh applied textures, strengthening the connection between the natural color variation abundant in many different species of plant life as well as in this body of work. This allows me to foster a relationship between my techniques and the natural and scientific elements at play with clay.

I clearly think a lot about the balance between the natural world around us and how I innately draw inspiration from that, juxtaposed with the stark contrast of the manmade,

A ceramic artist whose work I have always drawn much inspiration from is Jennifer McCurdy. McCurdy's use of piercing creates a form in which there is often more negative space than there is clay. Similar to much of my work, much of the inspiration in McCurdy's practice comes from nature and the world around her.

With the introduction of piercing into my compositions I am able to create elements that reference segmentation and structure found in both the organic

geometric, and mechanical world. As I mentioned before, I was surrounded by that while growing up in Fairbanks – the fight, or coexistence, between the natural and the industrial.

The compositions within these forms are focused around the conflict between the natural world and the ever-expanding world of that which is manmade, and the idea that humans as a species are often invasive and directly impede the natural world and its progression, polluting the world with our desire for consumption. In this consumerist society, objects have become a defining element in many of our cultures and traditions. Many of the objects that we create today will long outlive any human on this planet left behind as relics, much like the pottery shards of old. To be left for the organisms and plants to negotiate with and abut in their own time. To create instances where these artifacts will be amalgamated into these environments and intrinsically become part of the landscape.

In some of my compositions, the carved elements resemble the growth of roots or of fungi that have been forced to grow around and respond to a foreign object left behind. Whereas in others, the same pierced structures seem to invade and consume



VIII. *Convergent Boundaries VI*, 2024, Stoneware, Salt fired, glazed.

an object. The grotesque and the beautiful not only live together within these works, but the two collaborate and become one harmonized landscape living in the spaces between nature and industry, human-made and manmade.

These compositions are then hung on the wall and become an abstract landscape for the viewer to interpret, living specimens that become amalgamated with both a physical space and an artistic space. The inherent function of these pottery forms is removed and they are left to live as artful objects.



XI. *Convergent Boundaries Series I –VII*, 2024, Stoneware, Salt fired, glazed.

Conclusion:

In this exploration of the dichotomies of clay, from historical to contemporary contexts, it is evident that the medium of ceramics serves as a strong link between the spaces of nature and culture. Throughout human’s history on this planet, objects and making have always had a

large role in shaping culture. In today's consumerist and capitalistic society, this has become more prevalent than ever. However, the origin and craftsmanship behind many of the objects we now choose to incorporate into our everyday life often have meaning beyond function.

This has led my artistic practice as a contemporary maker of objects to have several influences. In retrospect, both the juxtaposition of the surroundings of my youth and my preconceptions about contemporary craft have undoubtedly left a mark on my mind as a maker. I have been inspired throughout my career as a ceramic artist to create work that occupies the spaces between by standing on its own as artful objects as well as talking about the world around us.

Within my work I hope to bring a new viewpoint to these traditional pottery forms by creating landscapes to talk about the transformation of our world and what it might look like after the human era on this planet has ended. As makers, the objects we create will long outlive us and will be left for the many species that inhabit the earth to negotiate their existence in and around. I am hopeful that whatever those species may evolve into will continue to build on the thousands of years of rich ceramic history, using their own natural surroundings combined with innovations to further develop the universal language of ceramics as one of both art and craft, function and beauty, and hand-made and manmade, occupying a newly defined space between.

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Curriculum Vita:

Education:

- 2024 MFA, Studio Art, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
2018 BFA, Ceramics, University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama

Teaching Experience:

- 2021- 2023 Professor of Record, Introduction to Wheel Throwing, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
2022 Teaching Assistant to Prof. Margie Hughto, Intermediate/Advanced Ceramics: Introduction to Atmospheric Firings, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
2021 Teaching Assistant to Prof. Peter Beasecker, Introduction to Wheel Throwing, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

Additional Experience:

- 2023-2024 Studio Manager, Department of Ceramics, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
Studio Assistant to Margie Hughto, Syracuse, New York.
Shaped Clay Society President, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
2021-2023 Kiln Technician, Department of Ceramics, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
Shaped Clay Society Vice President, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
2018-20 Post Baccalaureate, University of Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska

Solo Exhibitions:

- 2024 The Spaces Between: 2024 MFA Exhibition, Point of Contact Gallery, Syracuse, New York.
2019 Solo Exhibition, Kathleen McIlwain Public Library of Gautier, Gautier, Mississippi
2018 BFA Thesis Exhibition, University of South Alabama Visual Arts Department Gallery, Mobile, Alabama
2017 Directed Studies Exhibition, University of South Alabama Visual Arts Department Gallery, Mobile, Alabama

Group Exhibitions:

- 2024 Requisite Acts, Navado Gallery, Jersey City, New Jersey.
2023 Reverence, Cortland Repertory Theatre Gallery, Cortland, New York.

- 2022 Visions in Clay 2022, Delta College, LH Horton Jr. Gallery, Stockton, California.
- 2021 Off the Wall Invitational, Syracuse University, Random Access Gallery, Syracuse, New York.
- 2019 Claybody Ceramic Invitational, University of Alaska Anchorage, Hugh McPeck Gallery, Anchorage, Alaska
- 2018 University of South Alabama Faculty, Students, and Alumni Exhibition, Alabama School of Math and Science, Mobile, Alabama
- 2017 Participants Show, Alabama Clay Conference, Boutwell Auditorium, Birmingham, Alabama
- 2016 Teacher and Student Show, Alabama Clay Conference, Gadsden Museum of Art, Gadsden, Alabama.