

TOUCH  
STONE









Cormac

Boydell Cathy Burke Tara

Butler Frey Mike Byrne Mark Campden

Nuala Creed Jack Doherty Isobel Egan Michael

Flynn Sara Flynn Adam Frew Peter Fulop Caroline

Getty Jennifer Hickey Markus Jungmann Alison Kay Frances

Lambe Andrew Ludick Gus Mabelson Ann McBride Aisling

McElwain Claire McLaughlin Deirdre McLoughlin Lucy Morrow

Ingrid Murphy / Jon Pigott Susan O'Byrne Nuala O'Donovan Marcus

O'Mahony Mandy Parslow Owen Quinlain Elaine Riordan Alex Scott Vicki

Sutherland Eleanor Swan Grainne Watts Katharine West Cormac Boydell

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Sutherland Eleanor Swan Grainne Watts

Katharine West Cormac Boydell

Cathy Burke



Susan O'Byrne, Andrew Ludick, Ingrid Murphy / Jon Pigott

This catalogue is published on the occasion of the exhibition

## Touchstone

Ceramics Ireland would like to take this opportunity to thank the following for all their help and support in bringing this exhibition together.

Selectors: Ann Mulrooney, Dr. Audrey Whitty, Professor Andrew Livingstone PhD

Curators: Elaine Riordan and Tina Byrne

Ceramics Ireland committee

Mary Heffernan and the Office of Public Works, Farmleigh Gallery and staff

Karen Hennessy and the staff of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland

Susan Holland and staff at the National Craft Gallery

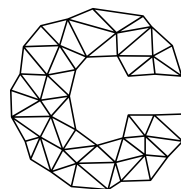
The Heritage Council

Rory Moore for the wonderful photography

Designed and published by Tina Byrne

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Deirdre McLoughlin - Rob Bohle, Eleanor Swan - David Dempsey, Gus Mabelson - *Porcelain Pouring Vessel and Beakers* - courtesy of the artist, Ingrid Murphy / Jon Pigott - courtesy of the artists, Katharine West - courtesy of the artist, Lucy Morrow - *We are Attached* Lionel Flageul, *My Still Life* courtesy of the artist, Mandy Parlsow- Roland Paschhoff, Nuala Creed - *Trans Teapot* - Don Felton, Nuala O'Donovan - Janice O'Connell, Susan O'Byrne - Ian Marshall.





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Clockwise top right: Nuala Creed, Aisling McElwain, Elaine Riordan, Adam Frew, Caroline Getty, Eleanor Swan



Cathy Burke, Isobel Egan, Claire McLaughlin



To quote Chinese Philosopher Lao Tzu

‘Every journey starts with a single step’

Ceramics Ireland has taken many hundreds if not thousands of steps along its journey to be the leading resource organisation for ceramic activity in Ireland. *Touchstone* the exhibition aims to be a benchmark of that progress and I hope you will agree that we have come a long way.

The Craft Potters Society of Ireland (CPSI) was initially set up as a means to unify makers from around the country and create a platform for their work through shared exhibitions, workshops, newsletter and travel. Perhaps it was this desire to belong to a community of makers, to share knowledge and to give creative voice to the medium of clay that has been the connective thread that has ensured the organisations success and longevity over these past 40 years. I am grateful to those potters who had the foresight to take that first step along the road - to start what has become a journey that four decades later, has seen the CPSI blossom to become the national membership organisation that Ceramics Ireland is today. What started, as a small gathering of potters has developed to become a truly dynamic collective - an organisation that has grown not only in numbers but stature and ambition.

The linchpin of Ceramics Ireland’s success has been its people. Founder members - Ron and Pat Wynne, Alan Gaillard Shattock, Paul Martin and M. Coogan, others that deserve praise are the committees down the years, too numerous to mention but each playing a vital role in terms of keeping the momentum going. The members, ranging from the professional maker to students, are all equally enthusiastic and eager to participate in our calendar of events. Our audience, grows annually through our offering of exhibitions, workshops and our biennial International Festival. Our magazine readerships both national and international help champion the cause for Irish ceramic practice at home and abroad. The friends and sponsors continue to show their support both emotional and financial and finally our followers on social media like and share our activities with great enthusiasm. Thank you all.



I first joined the CPSI as a student back in 2002, I was searching for a tribe of like-minded people that I could connect with, people who shared that same drive to create a fertile landscape for clay practice and explore this worthy form of artistic expression. Ceramics Ireland has worked tirelessly to nurture this ground over the years organising annual exhibitions aimed at encouraging the membership to develop their practice. These shows are undoubtedly the forerunner to the development of our triennial series of contemporary ceramic exhibitions and *Touchstone* is further proof of this progress.

*Touchstone* celebrates the breadth of Irish ceramic practice featuring a variety of approaches to working with clay. It promises to be a visual feast exploring form, figure, function and installation-based works. *Touchstone* will provide an opportunity for national and international visitors alike to experience a comprehensive body of contemporary Irish ceramics. An independent panel of three selectors chose the work of 36 makers of and from Ireland from over 100 applications, representing a critical mass of practitioners. *Touchstone*, will celebrate the highest quality of craftsmanship. The selected group includes the work of established makers, alongside makers who are embarking on their careers.

Ceramics Ireland is an impactful membership organisation and this series of exhibitions in tandem with our other activities helps us to prioritise activation, education and promotion of our sector to guarantee the future landscape of ceramics in Ireland, while raising the international profile of Irish ceramics.

*Touchstone* is the third exhibition in the Ceramics Ireland triennial series and coincides with the 40th anniversary of the organisation, founded in 1977. *Touchstone* will include a selection of archival materials celebrating our history. 2017 has also been a year of reflection on what previous generations have achieved and we are working to compile our archival material that documents this legacy. On completion, the archive will be handed over to The National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL) Dublin, where it will be accessible for research by future generations of makers, designers and potters.

*Touchstone* tours to the National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny, November 18th – January 21st 2018

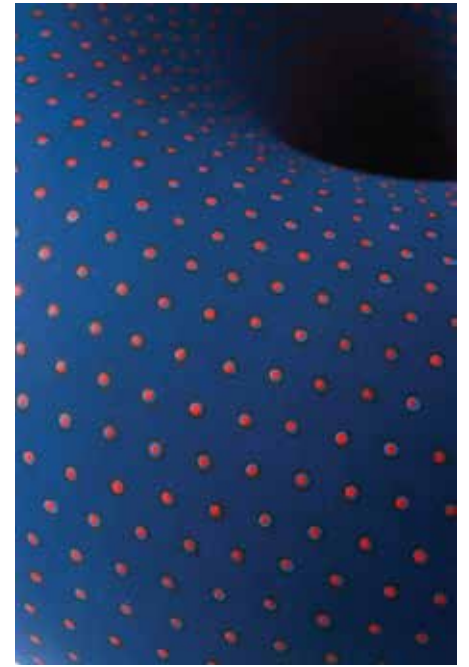
This series of exhibitions is curated Tina Byrne and myself and we are proud of the work that we do and of having played a part in the history of this vibrant society.



Chairperson, Ceramics Ireland

Ann McBride, Lucy Morrow, Gus Mabelson





Alex Scott, Nuala O'Donovan, Grainne Watts

I looked up the word 'touchstone' when preparing to write this, and found that the dictionary definition was different to my own understanding. The Oxford English Dictionary told me that touchstone was 'a standard or criterion by which something is judged or recognised', taken from the original meaning, which described 'a piece of fine-grained dark schist or jasper formerly used for testing alloys of gold by observing the colour of the mark which they made on it.'

I have to admit my own understanding of the word was somewhat different – I always understood a touchstone as being something unchanging that brought you back to yourself and reminded you of who you are. That seems very apt when I think of my own relationship to ceramics; I realise that I have been collecting ceramics long before I was even aware of the principles of collecting. For all my adult life, I've been drawn to objects made of clay, fascinated by the ability to command and transform earth, an act of elemental creation that is as old as humanity. My (modest) collection has travelled with me over the years, making houses into homes, forming a thread of continuity over almost quarter of a century. Each piece contains memories, and each piece still retains for me the joy and pleasure I first experienced on meeting it for the first time. They are all, in my definition of the word, touchstones, always drawing me back to myself. Over my years in the National Craft Gallery, I had the pleasure of getting to know many of the makers, and appreciating at first hand the years of skill, application, hard work and research that go into producing each piece. This adds another layer to my enjoyment, so it is not just a visual and tactile experience, but one that also evokes friendships and relationships, and can instantly transport me back to specific times and places. This is what I love about ceramics, the way each object is not simply a form or a vessel, but also a repository for experience and memory and connection. It always seems to me that there is something about the warmth of clay which 'holds' those intangibles more firmly than other materials - perhaps because it is a material that evolved to meet the needs of being touched and held and used in daily life.

This intimate connection to objects is part of what defines us as human; our capacity to find and ascribe meaning to objects, to understand them as metaphors and signifiers, unspoken expressions of ourselves or others. It's also a complicated two-way relationship; to quote the anthropologist Chris Tilley – 'Things create people as much as people make them', a statement that could be interpreted in many ways, though I like

to use poetic licence and understand that the objects we surround ourselves with, somehow 'rub off' on us, quietly shaping us. I like the thought that the ceramics I share my life with, characterised by poise and balance and delicacy, affect how I live and move through our shared space.

Perhaps the correct dictionary definition of touchstone is a more fitting one than my own for this exhibition which coincides with the 40th anniversary of Ceramics Ireland, an organisation which has indeed become a standard or criterion for recognition of quality. It is a worthy champion for one of our strongest craft disciplines, creating opportunities for ceramicists to exhibit, but also to share and learn and support. The collective endeavours of Ceramics Ireland have played a hugely formative role in Irish ceramics over four decades, creating opportunities for learning and development - and also for sharing knowledge and experience and challenges. Being a creative practitioner is such a difficult business, and finding a source of solidarity and support can make all the difference in the world.

It was an honour to be asked to select this exhibition, but it was also a difficult task. My fellow judges and I, whilst unanimous at times, debated hotly at others. There was a strong appreciation for the discipline across the panel, and we tried not to be swayed by our knowledge of individual practices, but to focus only on the images presented for selection as the fairest selection process. We tried to give an accurate snapshot of the quality and diversity of contemporary practice, and I hope that we succeeded. None of it would have happened without the dedication and hard work of Elaine Riordan and Tina Byrne, who deserve enormous credit for their achievements over many years in sustaining Ceramics Ireland as such a vibrant organisation. If a touchstone is a way of testing for quality (and how appropriate that image is, of hand and tool and craft), then this one has certainly made its mark.

Ann Mulrooney  
Chief Executive Officer, VISUAL Carlow  
May 2017

Markus Jungmann, Frances Lambe, Michael Flynn





Here at the southwestern tip on the Beara peninsula the great ocean currents and the winds make their first landing. There is silence, rawness; it is a good place to work. Craft is something I get on, to journey towards a place.

My hands do the work; I seldom use tools, liking that direct contact with material. I love colour and creating my own recipes because through this I sense the relationship between minerals. Ceramics is full of uncertainty and that's what I love about it. The unpredictability of the kiln: how colours develop, lines move and merge. Journeying through my mental confusions and the unpredictability's of the ceramic processes to the resolution of these and into a place that Heaney worded as 'lying beneath the very floor of memory'.

I like what the poet Paula Meehan wrote last year on craft for the Waterford based artsandhealth.ie: 'I like to think of the craft as something we get on to go somewhere — spacecraft, aircraft, seacraft, landcraft, fit craft for a journey. To learn the craft is to learn to make something that can take us there, take us to the elsewhere the human soul craves'.

Above: Detail of *Walking to Cashelkeelty, Walking to Cashelkeelty* - 49 x 46 x 11cm

Right: *Horned God* - 30 x 28 x 23cm

Cormac  
Boydell





Cathy  
Burke

I recognise the parallels found in working the land and a constant perpetual mortality. Growing up in an ever-changing countryside that passed through several generations of my family, I am connected to the furrows, drills and trees, which bear tangible links to my ancestors. This land is constantly undergoing change and continually returning to the same.

Influenced by my botanical background, I make pieces that portray the sharpness and movement found in tools and plants, and the tangible connections that manifest in nature's decorative trimmings. I investigate detailed plant shapes, develop and manipulate them into forms. The progression of these pieces form a series of works, each individually considered and modeled accordingly. I want every individual piece to depict emotion, movement and decay - illustrating and representing ideas of constant regeneration. To compliment the form, the surface treatment is given equal significance. Each piece is carefully finished with multiple complex and textured glazes to emulate flaking rusts and mossy lichens, referencing a constant cycle of decay and renewal.

In my practice I examine the beauty found in nature's regeneration and the comparison in the continuation of family lines. I take inspiration from looking closely at what is perceived to be grim decay and finding subtle beauty within and strive to express this concept in my work.

Above: *Caloplaca I* - 48 x 43 x 49cm, *Caloplaca III* - 22 x 54 x 33cm

Right: Detail of *Caloplaca III*





We cut into, score and tear the land. We take what nature provides until it has no more to give. With the layers of time exposed, her history told with our own, we hand it back to nature to revive. Memories and stories of many still contained, locked within. The edges and ditches divide and score the bog but this magnificent vessel still holds her precious secrets yet to be told.

My work is about time and place, space and contemplation. I hope to capture a sense of movement and energy of a landscape while still capturing its stillness and meditative qualities. Through these vessels I am exploring a conversation between a creation of space and the existing place, where man and nature converge and our stories become entwined.

Tara  
Butler-Frey

Above: *First Cut* - 19 x 29cm

Right: *Underfoot* - 18 x 19cm







My work explores the edges of, and the connections between design, function and art. The use of a combination of fired clay and other materials, both found and worked, combined with a loose interpretation of the components of the Jug form, is an attempt to erode the boundaries between these disciplines. The way in which we consider familiar objects and their various relationships with symbolism, ceramic history and material culture is also part of the exploration.

The pieces are slab built. The surface patina is the result of the application of multiple layers of engobe or coloured slips. Numerous firings take place until the desired depth of surface is reached. Other elements like the etched copper handles and spouts are attached after the final firing.

Mike  
Byrne

Above: Detail of *Curious Desire*, *Curious Desire* - 45 x 36 x 18cm

Right: *Complex Principal* - 46 x 33 x 16cm





## Mark Campden

Mark Campden's work is distinctive for the skill of his brushwork decoration, rich in imagery inspired by nature. Working in the traditional majolica technique, his pieces are first formed in earthenware clay and covered with a white tin glaze. The surface then becomes a canvas for meticulous decoration. Each detail in Mark's work is hand painted onto the piece in fluid brushstrokes.

For the last few years Mark has been making reduced pigment lustreware, a new direction that is equally rewarding and challenging. This ancient Arabic technique requires great care in all elements of making decorating and firing. Even then due to the variations in the wood fired kiln's atmosphere, the pigments used and the thickness of glaze, no two pots are ever the same. Exploring new ways of decorating within this technique, such as the manipulation of the clay-paste pigment using silicon brushes, his latest work incorporates motifs and patterns of great fluidity and movement.

Constant observation of life in the natural world provides Mark with the endless wealth of imagery which infuses his work. As with the natural world, not all things are obvious. Mark's work engages the viewer to look more closely, and perhaps see something within the decoration that a mere glance might not reveal.

Above: *Golden Teasel Sunset* - 61cm, Detail of *Golden Teasel Sunset*

Right: *Blue / Gold Moth Charger* - 63cm





*Boys Will Be Girls*

These figures were originally inspired by my five years of living in the Castro in San Francisco. The boldness of the drag queens along with the uninhibited spirit I encountered there impressed me. They are memories of characters that I have met or seen in a crowd or on the street. They are the quirky awkward people at a party. They are imbued with the spirit and courage of Drag Queens: to be oneself regardless of criticism.

*Trans Teapot*

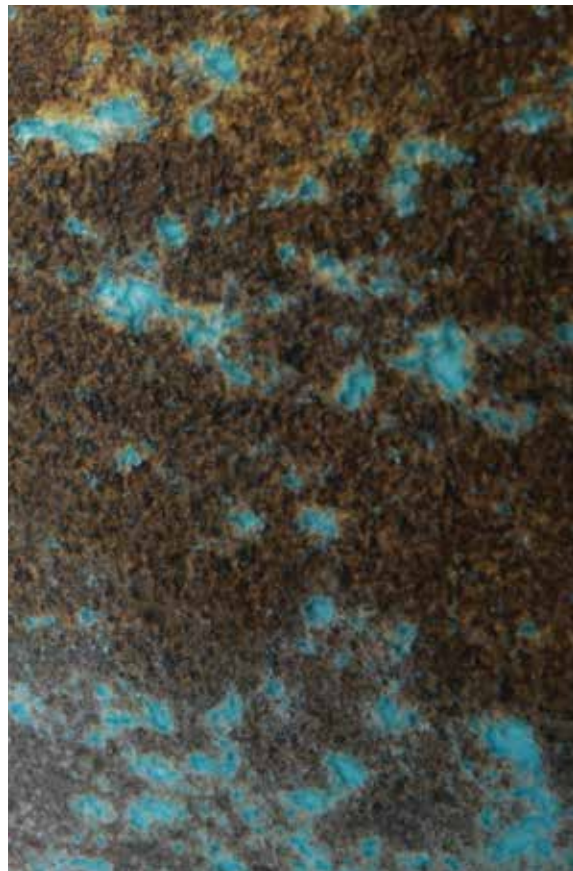
I am using the ubiquitous teapot as a polite entry point to introduce the conversation of transgender people and their plight.

Nuala  
Creed

Above: *Boys Will Be Girls* - 43 x 15 x 10cm, *Trans Teapot* - 25 x 10 x 13cm

Right: *Boys Will Be Girls* - 43 x 15 x 10cm





Jack  
Doherty

I am intrigued and inspired by the potency of archetypal vessel forms. Anonymous and uncomplicated pots from pre-history, which have been used for storing, cooking and keeping people safe through winters by providing protection in the everyday world can also function in other ways. As guardians of emotion and connectors with the spiritual, I want my pots to inhabit our domestic spaces in the light, shadow and darkness with qualities that neither painting nor abstract sculpture can.

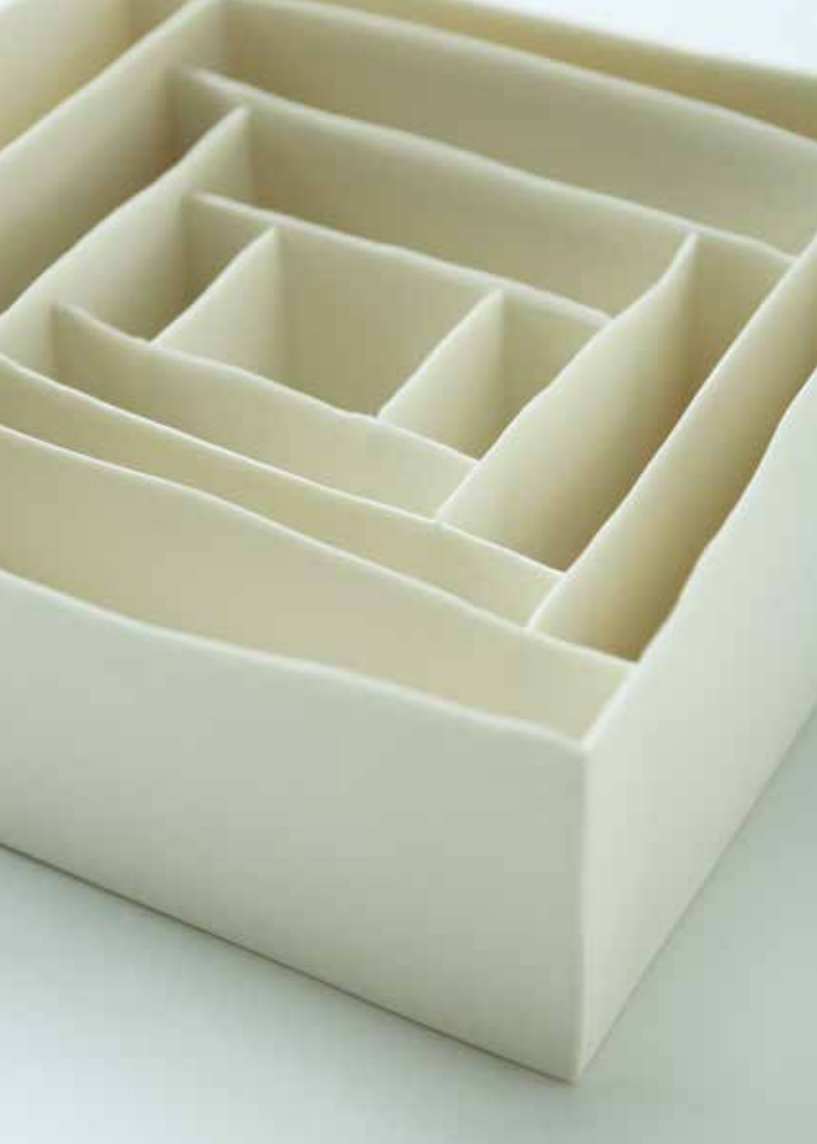
My recent projects such as *Harbouring* and *Waypoint* ask questions about the place of contemporary ceramics in our changing world.

The technical side of my work has focused on using soda firing and the space within the kiln as a creative element in my making process to develop a new palette of colour and surface texture closely integrated with the form. My work is made using one clay, one colouring mineral and a single firing with sodium bicarbonate. Over the years the process has become simpler and more refined in the belief that stripping away the unnecessary can produce work with complexity and depth.

Above: *Guardian Vessel* - 32cm, Detail of *Guardian Vessel*  
Right: *Triangular Vessel* - 19cm







Isobel  
Egan

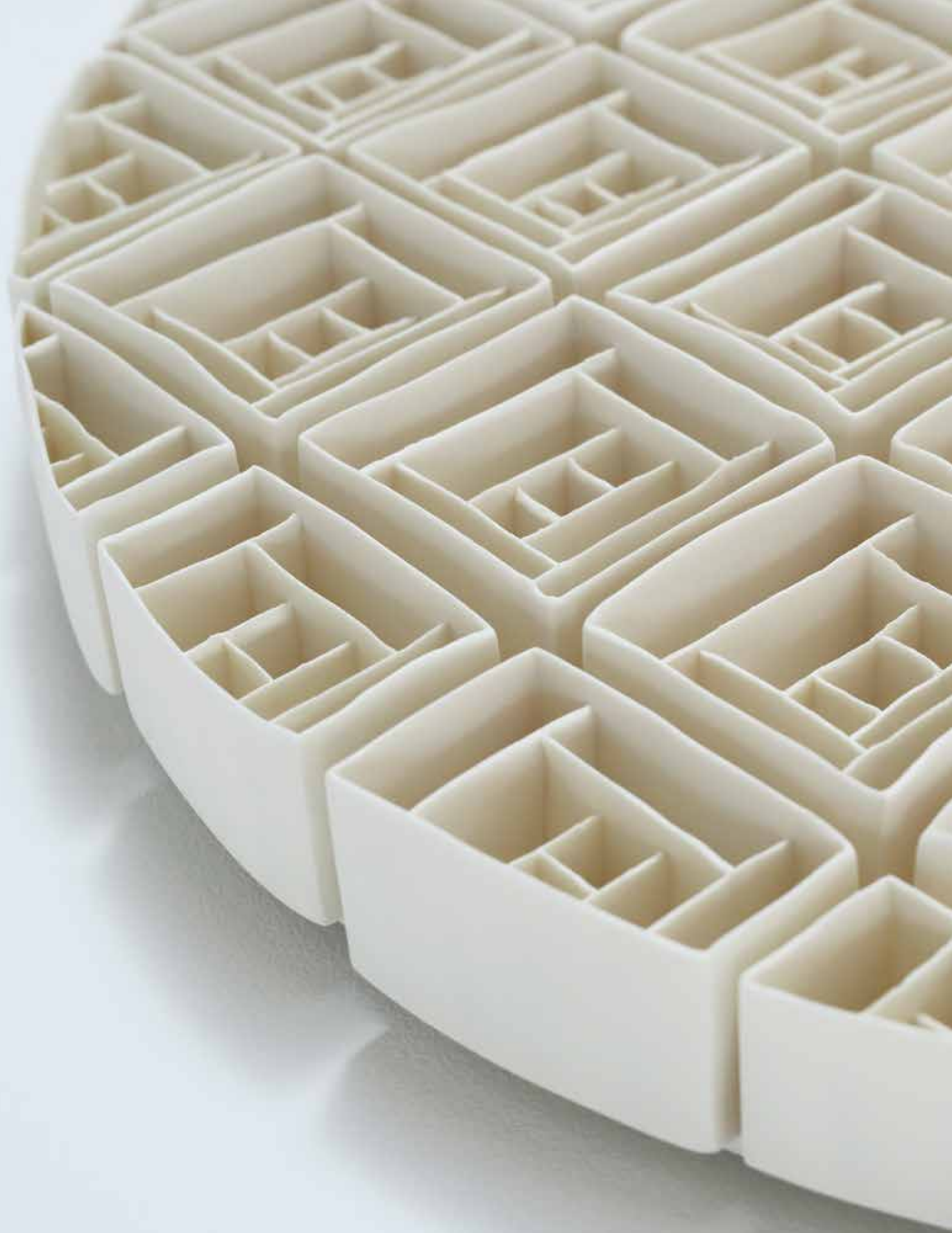
While I have always been inspired by architecture and its multi-dimensional portrayal of form, the inspiration for my work is in fact multifaceted and includes architecture, space, memory and emotion. I work exclusively with porcelain as the intrinsic characteristics of the material, its translucence and delicate paper-like quality enable me to fully realise my concepts.

My work represents a relationship with space and how it shapes us, both physically and emotionally. It also investigates the interrelationships between us and the buildings we inhabit. The structures I make connect these ideas and in doing so, they reflect on the human condition. I aim to pique the viewer's curiosity, inviting them to look beyond the surface where they may discover intimate spaces that are, at first glance, hidden from view.

The fundamental basis of my work is drawn from my life journey; ultimately it encompasses my personal interactions, experiences and observations.

Above: Detail of *Palisade* - 67 x 5cm, *Praesidium II* - 22 x 22cm

Right: Detail of *Palisade* - 67 x 5cm





My work centres on the potters wheel. Traditional eastern forms inspire me, but spontaneity as a means of personal expression is key to my work. The exuberant action of throwing is enhanced by a continued experimentation through process, form and colour. Mark making is gestural and intuitive, sometimes relating to form or the process of making.

Adam  
Frew

Above: Detail of *Blue Pot with Red*, *Blue Pot with Red* - 45 x 45cm

Right: Detail of *Blue Pot with Red* - 45 x 45cm





My work is a means of exploring, developing and expressing ideas about life and death, systems of belief and human frailty. The limitless possibilities provided by clay and its processes make it an ideal medium with which to work.

Michael  
Flynn

Above: *The Dancing Dead* - 40cm, *The King Drinks* - 42cm  
Right: *The Queen Laughs* - 40cm





Play. It's a small word. It conjures up notions of childhood and freedom and silliness. Sounds good to me.

Play is hugely important, as it is fundamental to my thinking and making. As I 'play' with clay in the studio the inevitable result is that my work develops and keeps moving on...and that constant learning, refinement and exploration drives what I do.

When it goes well it is an instinctive interaction rather than a pre-meditated act. It must however, be said that it does not always go well. It seems that ploughing through the days where work is unsuccessful is part of the deal I have made with the material. Then the days come when there are breakthroughs and they are incredibly rewarding.

I used to say that I loved the activity of throwing on the potter's wheel...but it is less important now than ever before. Throwing is simply the start of my interaction with Porcelain which goes on to include cutting, rolling, pushing, rejoining, pulling and general enjoyment and testing of the material and its' qualities.

The pieces that result are Vessels, which are Sculptural in their intent - investigating Form, Volume and Surface Quality.

Above: Detail of *Flection Vessel*, *Camber Vessel* - 33 x 16 x 15cm, *Camber Bowl* - 10.5 x 16.5 x 14.5cm

Right: *Flection Vessel* - 23.5 x 18.5 x 13cm

Sara  
Flynn







Peter Fulop's work in clay is heavily influenced by the Japanese Zen tradition. His experimentation with Raku reduction and wood firing techniques along with his use of calligraphic gesture is a culmination of experiences and time spent with traditional artists in China, Korea and Japan. In his most recent works Fulop pushes the boundaries of the traditional clay vessel seeking to exploit elemental processes of fired material intertwined with the artist's gestural use of brushwork and glazing technique.

The 'Nobu' series of works are inspired by Takesada Matsutani's solo show at the Hauser and Wirth Gallery, NY (2016), as well as Fulop's teacher, Prof. Koie Ryoj, an avant-garde artist working in Japan. Both artists attempt to 'come back to the moment', in the creation of work inspired by the zen approach. Japanese in origin the title *NOBU* translates as 'trust' or 'expend' and refers to how the work emerges from a process of 'conversation' or 'exchange of energy' with the medium and how this 'energy', immanent to the work, is manifested or 'expended' in the viewers experience.

Peter  
Fulop

Above: *Nobu Series*

Right: *Nobu Series*





Exploring weak and strong fragments within day to day living, I am curious as to the combining bond created between two opposite forces - Intrigued as to how they can interlock to work and support each other.

Combining ceramics with soft materials such as paper and fabric to create objects which when fused together create one strong bond; often using bungee cord to emphasize this strain of forces colliding on each piece. Using cool tonal colours give the objects a cold and tense approach; stronger colours portray a more evident awareness of the contrasting material and tension.

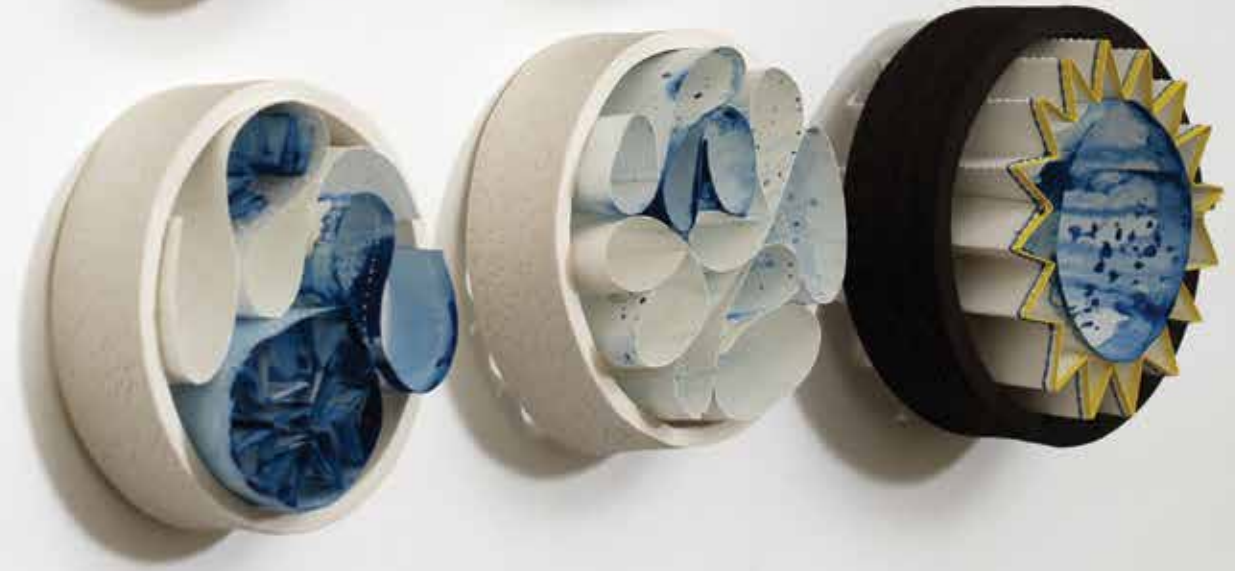
My latest works are collections showcasing both the relations and the personalities clay and paper hold when forced to collide together. The work itself is very much influenced from my own experiences and current day life in which I find myself working within the classroom atmosphere – aware first hand of the different personalities and sensitivities one faces at that vulnerable and challenging age.

With each porcelain object being of the same structure, the insert portrays a uniqueness to each piece. A reminder that in a gathering of people, we all have our own individual personalities – we're only human after all. The contrasting black clay objects symbolize a hollow struggle and test within life's daily circle, a reminder of uncertainties and struggles we face. These objects hold powerful and fragile qualities; I find it compelling how they can work together to support one another in their own unique way.

Above: Detail of *Occupy*, Detail of *Contained* - 1 x 76 x 25cm

Right: *Occupy* - 58 x 58 x 5cm

Caroline  
Getty





I am drawn to the beauty and subtlety of the natural world. Themes of fragility, ephemerality and translucency are central to my work. It is the rituals of making, the physical rhythms, the process and time involved that are very important aspects of my practice. To sense but not to recognise is a common thread throughout my work. The natural properties of my primary materials porcelain and bone china demand particular discipline and delicacy that are a necessary component of the finished pieces. Each piece is made from wafer thin parts that are hand sewn together to create larger sculptural forms.

Jennifer  
Hickey

Above: *Peony* - 17cm  
Right: Detail of *Untitled* - 20cm





I developed a fascination with pottery early in life. At home, we still used old traditional salt-glazed stoneware. Sturdy shapes of grey or beige, made in a traditional country style, these were meant for everyday use. Sparsely ornamented, these had been rounded off by use and ageing as they were handed down from one generation to the next. They spoke of simpler times and I loved them because of how they felt, looked and handled.

My own work is inspired by the simplicity of those unselfconscious country wares. While creating objects for everyday use, and seeking to master the technical challenges of porcelain as a material, the aesthetic remains my key concern. Shapes are often based on geometric volumes. Sometimes these are sliced in half, or intersect with one another; sometimes they are combined in various sizes, to produce functional pieces such as teapots or bowls. Through exploring textured surfaces and experimenting with restrained shapes, the combination of fine porcelain with the unpredictability and tactility of ash glaze is at the core of my practice.

Markus  
Jungmann

Above: Detail of *Teapot and Cups*, teapot - 22 x 11cm cups - 9 x 8 cm

Right: Detail of *Bowls* - 15 x 30cm







My current works are vessel like. An opening shows part of the interior. I create sharp outlines and well-defined curves to give a tautness and volume to the forms. Aerodynamic shapes, plants and architecture are all sources of inspiration. My ideas come through handling the clay and making subtle changes to what has come before.

The pieces are coil built using white Raku clay, then gradually pared back and attentively worked to achieve symmetry in the form. Much experimentation has gone into the use of Terra Sigillata with the addition of subtle colours, which when applied, is burnished to give a rich sheen. After biscuit firing to 1000 degrees, resist patterns are carefully laid onto the surface, and then smoke fired. The piece is then cleaned and polished, revealing the colour beneath. Through this process, my objective is to create forms that are contemporary, while showing references to the past.

Above: Detail of *Wide Green Vessel with off centre opening* - 28 x 42 x 20cm

Detail of *Wide Sky Blue Vessel with with off centre opening* - 30 x 49 x 20cm

Right: *Slim Sky Blue Vessel with with off centre opening* - 34 x 29 x 16cm

Alison  
Kay





An interest in the sea underscores my work.

The ebb and flow of the semi-diurnal tides map time. The interface between the land and the sea is ever changing. Beach rolled stones result from this interaction and constant movement, where angular surfaces are gradually rendered curved and smooth. I have collected beach stones since I was a child. Each selected stone tells its own story, through its colour, form and texture, about its origin and of being sculpted slowly over time.

Smooth curved stones feel good in the hand and connect us to a particular place. They have long been considered special by many cultures and have been used for both secular and spiritual purposes. The Maori in New Zealand have used beach stones for fishing 'sinkers', boat 'anchors' and body ornaments. The Newgrange tomb builders collected granite beach stones from Dundalk Bay and placed them to adorn the entrance to the burial chamber. People in the pre-Christian era believed that some special stones at particular sites had magical powers that could heal or sometimes curse.

Simple ovoid forms with detailed surface patterns are inspired by the underwater environment and beach stones from my 'collection' selected from the east and west coasts of Ireland.

Above: *Black and Gold Oval* - 40 x 21 x 17cm

Right: Detail of *Indented Form* - 43 x 25 x 20cm





## Andrew Ludick

Andrew Ludick's work has slowly evolved towards forms, which illustrate the natural properties of clay and the processes he use to create them. The building of these forms involves coiling and pinching the clay to create vases, bowls and various other shapes. The slow process of coil building and the meditative aspects of pinching the clay take him into a space that allows a natural progression to happen where the form seems to build itself. The act of building with coils is a very organic way of growth.

After the form is built it is decorated using shapes and patterns, which compliment it. A piece for decoration is often either seen as a blank canvas to draw shapes on or an interesting form to compliment with patterns. The final pieces are covered in a clear transparent glaze, which serves to deepen the colours and to seal the clay so it can be used for functional purposes.

Some major influences come from Native American and African Indigenous art and music. Also such artists and musicians as Paul Klee, John ffrench, Peter Bruegel, Lester Young and Thelonious Monk.

Above: Detail of *Untitled Vase I*, Detail of *Untitled Vase II*  
Right: *Untitled Vase I* - 31 x 12cm, *Untitled Vase II* - 32 x 13cm





Gus  
Mabelson

My current work explores function, things that do a job efficiently and well. All functional objects however carry meaning, refer to materials and things that have gone before, but are essentially of the present. The product of numerous decisions about form, proportion, line, surface, edges and colour that have little to do with the mechanics of function but everything to do with how we feel and respond to that object.

Porcelain, a clay yet not a clay, more like white opaque glass. It's whiteness and high shrinkage rate mean glazes sit differently on its surface and if the porcelain and glaze are thin enough a translucent quality is achieved.

The work for this exhibition has involved the production of pouring vessels and beakers glazed with various celadon and white glazes. The colour range is calm, cool and in complete contrast to the fiery copper reds of my previous explorations. These classic Chinese glazes were highly valued because of their likeness to jade and invoke a timeless and transcendent mood.

Above: *Porcelain Pouring Vessel and Beakers, Porcelain Pouring Vessel and Beakers*  
Right: *Porcelain Pouring Vessel - 17cm*







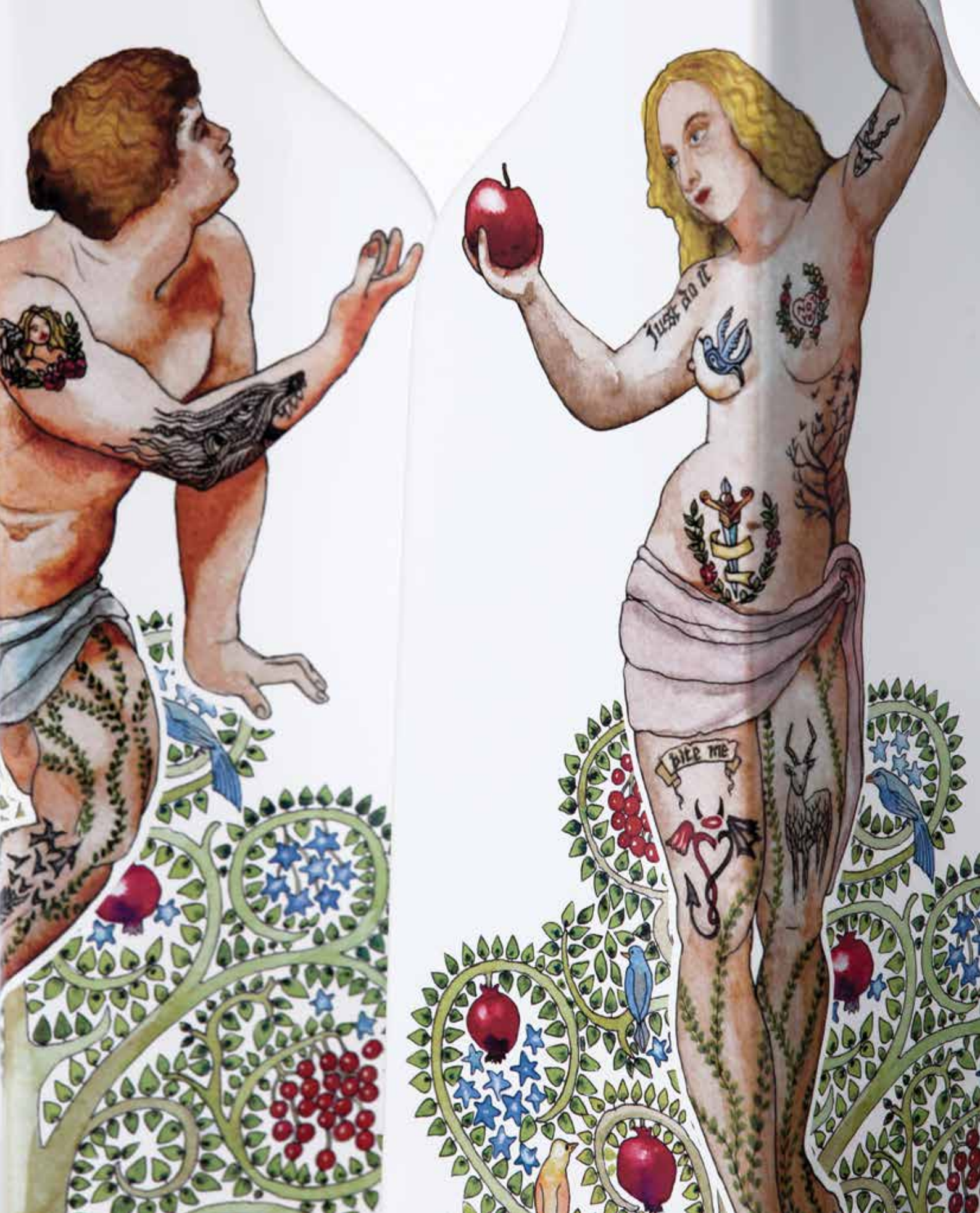
In exploring the nature of the male / female relationship, I was drawn to the 'original' story of love, temptation, and ultimately, the allocation of blame – that of Adam & Eve. My work represents their fate, with a subversive slant on the birth of mankind. It revolves around their story and explores the complexity of their relationship as it unfolded in the Garden of Eden.

My research led me to mediaeval biblical and church illustrations, which were used as an education tool for the illiterate masses. I wanted to subvert the common narrative by altering the way Eve is viewed - turning her into a figure of strength and virtue. Someone to be reckoned with, rather than just a spare rib. I began to focus more on the female aspect in mediaeval bible illustrations. In referencing the female form I chose to overturn the traditional image of Eve by applying contemporary tattoos and attributing a more assertive demeanour to her.

The geometric form used takes its shape from the curvilinear figure of the mantle of the Virgin Mary. It is reminiscent of mediaeval panel paintings when opened. Continuing the theme of subverting the familiar, the narrative is revealed through the layering, interaction and use of a series of everyday objects.

Above: *Eden II* - 34cm complete group (4 sections) 65cm

Right: Detail of *Eden I*





From the first time I tried pottery the appeal of clay was immediate for me; the way the clay reacts and responds to touch and how it can be manipulated to provide endless possibilities to create and design fascinates me. My current body of work spans the gap between functional and ornamental and bridges the past and the present by using classic forms to create timeless pieces that would suit both contemporary and historical spaces.

I create the bowls on the potters wheel using stoneware clay. These are returned to the wheel when they have dried to an almost leather like consistency and then turned to create the desired shape. I use glazes in opulent shades of jade and rich blue hues. Following the glaze firing, gold lustre is applied by brush and the pieces are re-fired. The gold lustre adds the extra element of timeless elegance to the pieces.

Aisling  
McElwain

Above: *Midnight blue gold rimmed bowl* - 25 x 6cm

Right: *Detail of Midnight blue gold rimmed bowl* - 25 x 6cm





Claire  
McLaughlin

Objects that predate our mortal presence can carry a sense of connection to those who have held them, owned them or simply occupied the same space as them. Domestic ceramics occupy a humble space in the home, an intimate space next to the body of the user. They are the paraphernalia of the most formative of the social spaces, the kitchen table. The durability of fired clay means that it survives to tell the story of past lives, even to prehistorical times. The kitchen china that has borne witness to previous generations of family life is richly resonant.

In this work I join domestic ceramics with song, the sort of 'delph' and song I grew up with. In a family of singers, song has a parallel with domestic china as it gets handed down from generation to generation, but it also expresses the transience of a moment in time. For this piece, I have borrowed the title *A Little bit of Heaven* from the song my mother sings to me as a baby. I only became aware of this recording after my mother's death. It is a most precious testament.

I have added my own voice as I listen and learn. The collection of domestic china, some augmented with decals and lustre, is interspersed with bone china versions of domestic ephemera such as the paper doilie referencing permanence and transience. The voice of the mother singing to her baby is simultaneously universal and unique. When coupled with the visual vocabulary of domestic china, the precious, vulnerable, intimate space that is the family home is evoked – a little bit of heaven.

Above: *A Little bit of Heaven*

Right: *A Little bit of Heaven*





My vessel sculptures are series of works that contain an oviform. These sculptures began with the *I am too* series 1999 – 2017 followed by the *Light Gatherer* 2010 - 2015. In this exhibition, though there are years in the interim, *Hole* is a transition work that stands alone and signaled a new group titled *Great Snouted Vessel*.

The vessel sculptures run parallel to other series that are more complex and arise from deeper states of consciousness. I am compelled to work from my multiple selves and it has always been so.

On visiting my studio in 1986 John Hunt of the Hunt Museum, offered me an exhibition with another artist whose name he could not recall. The other artist turned out to be me. The exhibition never happened. I'm not sure why.

Above: *Hole* - 23 x 30 x 18cm

Right: *Great Snouted Vessel II* - 32 x 44 x 16cm







Lucy  
Morrow

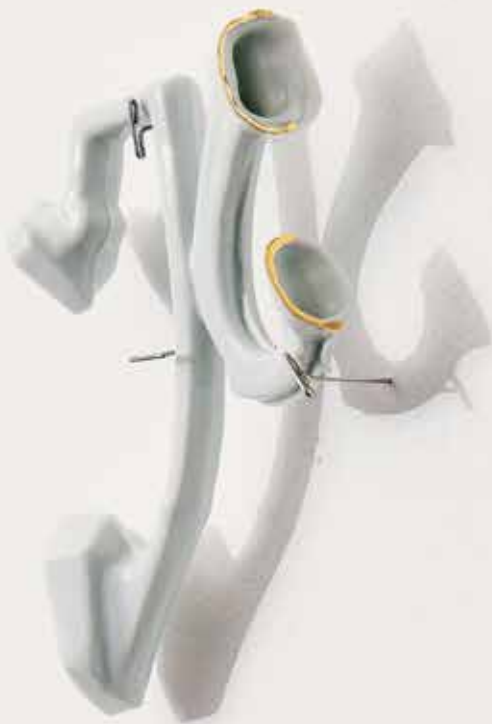
In my recent work I have developed sculptures and installations where I explore the fitting together of ceramic fragments. One could say that these ceramic fragments are constantly trying to be rebuilt! The pieces are sometimes ligatured with rubber, like in the piece 'We Are Attached', emphasizing reparation and evoking the slip casting process. Through this play with fragments, cup handles, and bits of containers, I create new entities and 'useless' fragments pieced together, take on a new physical shape and attain new aesthetic value.

Manipulating the pieces or even simply observing them also gives you a sense that something has been irretrievably lost. The metaphorical dimension of these pieces comes from that fragility, the cracks and faults on which they are built. In this, you could say that it is intuitively a work about the human condition, about both loss and ultimate rebirth. The ensemble 'My Still Life' describes objects which have influenced and driven me in my recent journey in ceramics.

My work is slipcast in Limoges porcelain, glazed and fired to 1230°.

Above: *My Still Life* - 10 x 60 x 50cm

Right: *The Ways We Are Attached* - 90 x 90 x 4cm





## Susan O'Byrne

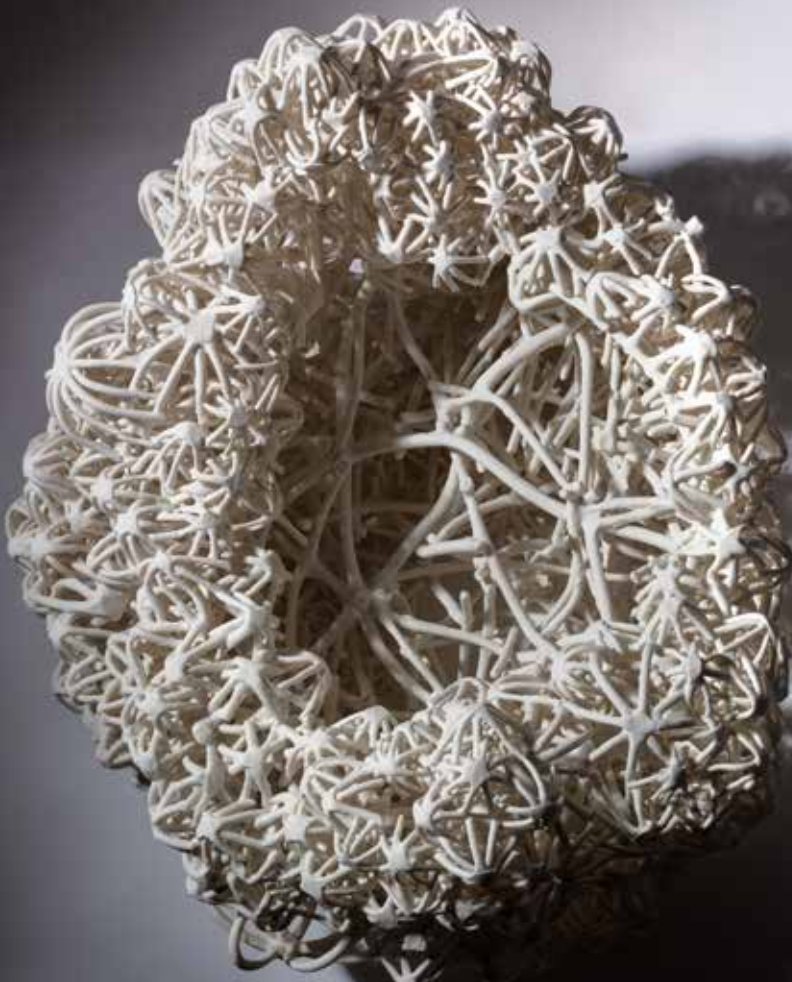
Susan O'Byrne uses the animal form as a vehicle to express human emotions. She is interested in the function and history of animal imagery – its presence in childhood imaginations and its use in storytelling, legends and folklore to simplify the complexities of adult life.

The large ceramic animal forms begin with a high-temperature wire armature. This becomes a three-dimensional line drawing onto which she can apply sheets of thinly cast paper clay. The surface of the work is then veneered with a collage of finely printed and patterned pieces of paper porcelain. O'Byrne makes reference to traditional domestic crafts in her surface decoration incorporating the aesthetics of papier-mâché, bricolage, mosaic and collage with intricate needlepoint patterns.

Above: *Deer with Alphabet Blanket* - 78 x 72 x 31cm

Right: *Deer with Blue Tulip Blanket* - 78 x 72 x 31cm

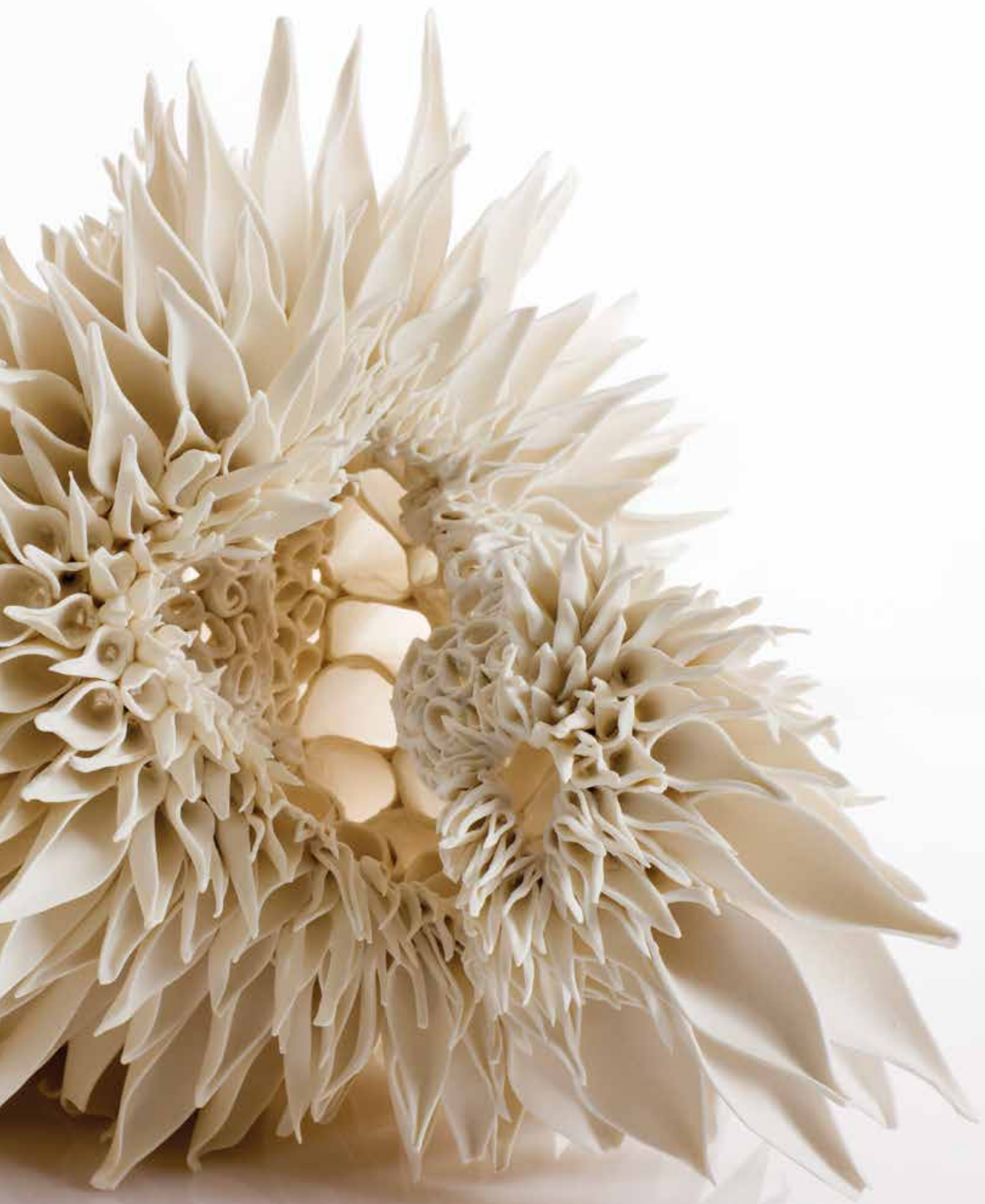




I make sculptural pieces from unglazed porcelain clay. My hope is that my work communicates a sense of energy through a combination of regular and irregular/fractal geometry from natural forms. I am interested in the history of the use of regular geometry in the aesthetics of classical Western art, in particular, the creation of harmonious form by the use of a repeated proportion. I use the principles of classical geometry when deciding on the overall dimensions of my work. I use the principles of fractal geometry as constraints when deciding on the outcome of the forms. The principles of repeated proportions and self-similarity used in the work mean that the patterns and forms could be endlessly repeated as the pattern is replicated in the form and the form can become part of a larger pattern.

Above: *Coral - Hollowed Form* - 52 x 47 x 34cm

Right: *Teasel - Circular Motion* - 52 x 52 x 34cm





I make functional stoneware and porcelain work rooted in the Anglo Japanese tradition of Leach and Hamada. The potter's wheel is the starting point for my work. Generally I use soft clay to encourage a loose plastic character in the pots. Often I alter the work on and off the wheel and use thick slips to further develop the surface. The work is woodfired and has evolved through much experimentation to take advantage of this demanding yet satisfyingly engaging firing method. Creative decisions are made on the placement of pots in the kiln, length of firing, exposure to heat and ash, all of which can profoundly effect the pieces. I aim to make work that is expressive and has a natural feel.

Marcus  
O'Mahony

Above:  
Right:







Ingrid Murphy  
Jon Pigott

The *Syn-Tea-Sizer* is a collaborative work between artists Ingrid Murphy and Jon Pigott. This is the latest in a series of works which brings together ceramic objects and physical computing. Exploiting the conductivity of gold lustre and inlaid copper wire, the pots become capacitive touch sensors, which activate a series of sound sequences when touched by the viewer.

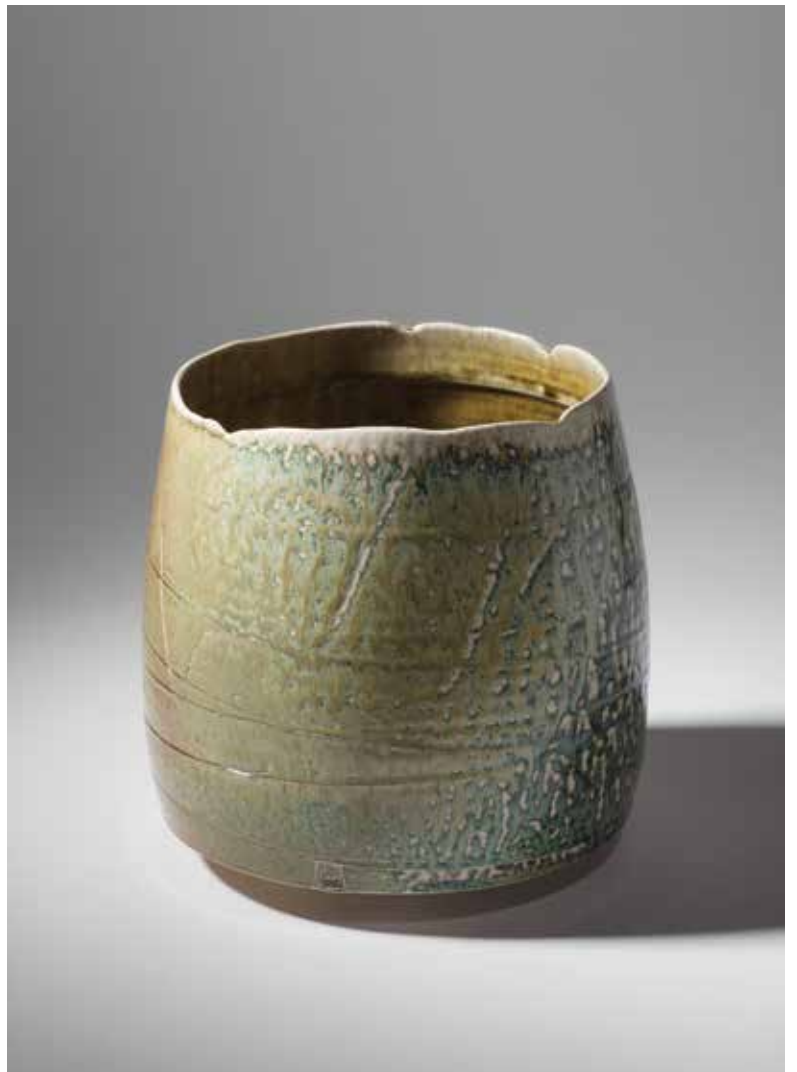
Murphy & Pigott's aim is to create an alternative sensory experience of a familiar object or scene, in this case exploring the aurality of domestic objects strewn across a table. The sounds are inherent to the objects, created by their manipulation, these sounds and the conductive use of the decorative surface expose sensory and material characteristics of ceramic objects which are frequently overlooked. The viewer is invited to touch the objects and explore the soundscape, over time the gold will be rubbed away to reveal the white clay body beneath, leaving a visual trace of the interaction.

The relationship between touch, sound and objects is frequently explored by Murphy & Pigott to create interactive works which explore the concept of facture, to experience or perceive an object differently may provide us with a different understanding of an object's material and its making.

Above: Detail of *Syn-Tea-Sizer*

Right: *Syn-Tea-Sizer* - 64 x 64 x 20cm





Light shifts across the land altering colour, form and texture; varying by the minute, by the season. Marks left by human endeavour punctuate these changes; ploughed fields, meandering paths. Some of these patterns describe ancient cultural landscapes; others show current activity as place continues to be shaped by man and nature.

My practice explores a sense of place through landscape and objects. Forms evolve from the vernacular containers and tools of rural life now preserved in museums. Conserved behind glass, no longer utilitarian, they resonate for different reasons. Rims act like horizons; the liminal space between land and sky, between internal and external.

An exploration of the vessel and the unpredictable technique of wood-firing seem fitting ways to examine these concerns. The rootedness, physicality and close attention over a long time required by the kiln echoes a farmer's knowledge and bond to the land and provides a link with my rural heritage. The firing appears to physically embed place in the work. Each piece is both caressed and assaulted by the flame, ash and salt vapour moving through the kiln in the intense heat of the firing. Their surfaces are a record of this journey.

Above: Detail of *Barrel Series*, *Barrel Series* - 22 x 22cm

Right: *Barrel Series* - 26 x 28cm





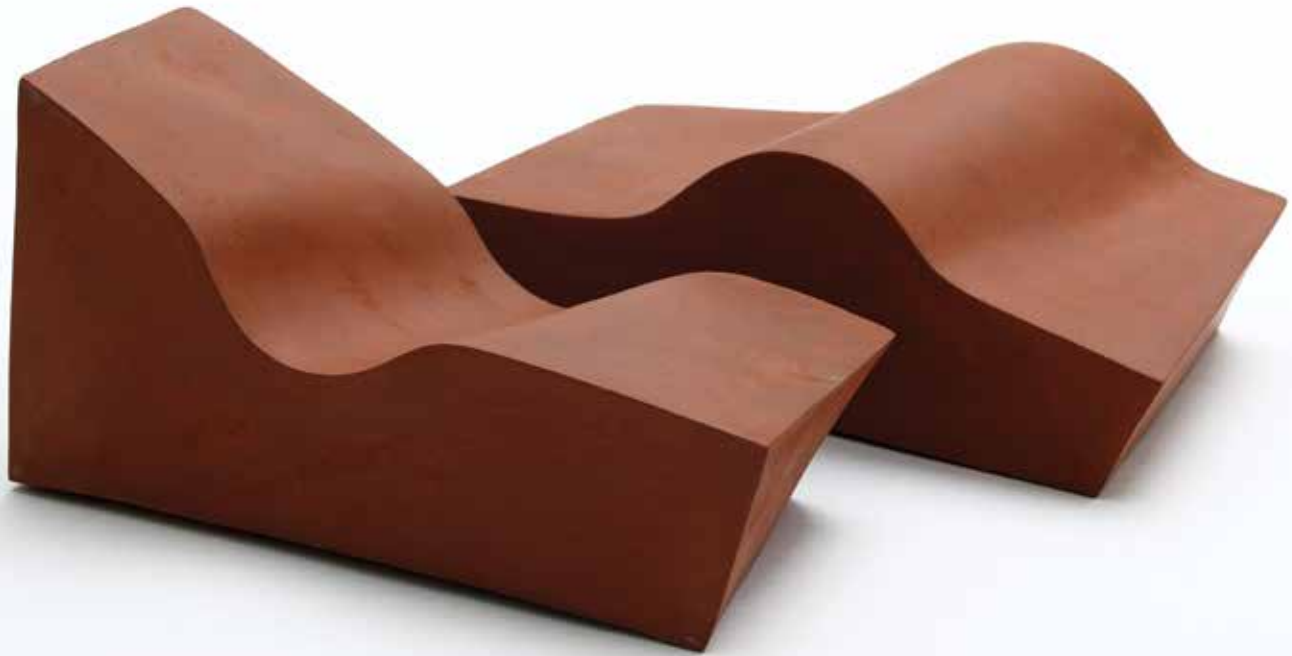
The work for this exhibition is from a series entitled *Animate Objects*. These pieces have been assembled from a combination of found objects and layered ceramic slips and glazes. Made in a methodical and industrial fashion, the subsequent firing is used to weather these forms delivering them to, what I sense as, their inevitable state. The inspiration for this body of work stems from a desire to use ceramic materials and processes to investigate larger phenomena of geology, weathering and time. The depth of historical and cultural association surrounding the ceramic medium itself continues to be a huge influence over my practice, as is the tradition of scholar's rocks and the reduction of landscape from macro to micro.

Owen  
Quinlan

Above: *Animate Object* - 17 x 14 x 15cm

Right: *Animate Object* - 5 x 8 x 22cm





The emphasis of my ceramic work has developed from years of investigations into scale, form, texture and how these elements related to my experience of space as contained and enhanced by architectural structure. Working with terra cotta for this new body of work represents a departure from my preferred porcelain paper clay. These sculptural pieces that I make unify my concerns for space, its containment and release.

This new work is derived from investigations into rural landscape and vernacular architecture. It seeks to explore the dichotomies of positive /negative space, large/small scale, strength/weakness, soft/sharp, inside/outside, presence/absence and urban/rural.

There is a certain ambiguity of scale in the ceramic sculptures I make. Such an ambiguity can lead to a disruption in the perception of the spectator as to the space occupied by the sculpture, themselves and the architecture surrounding them. Ultimately what results are ceramic sculptures that act as spaces that have the power to transport us, the viewer, visually or mentally to experience space, thereby facilitating the exchange between architecture and ceramic art.

Above: *Rural Series* - 25 x 40 x 20cm

Right: Detail of *Rural Series* - 25 x 40 x 20cm







'within the hollow crown  
That rounds the mortal temples of a king  
Keeps Death his court and there the antic sits,  
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,  
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,  
To monarchize, be fear'd and kill with looks,  
Infusing him with self and vain conceit'  
Richard II

This work originated in a response to Shakespeare's history plays, in particular Richard II. As abstracted symbols of nobility, status, beliefs and authority these throne forms exploit rich surface qualities that record the making process and inherent qualities of the clay body. The use of press moulding as an initial starting point allows the forms to respond to the mutability of Power and question what it means to rule.

Driven by process and the innate truth in the materials themselves, these forms evolve to embody the parallel processes of planning, decision-making and their consequential physicality. The surfaces of the ceramic sculptures are integral to their form and in contrast to the grandeur and pageantry of the thrones they depict they often appear flawed, blemished, charred or tarnished.

Above: *Court Throne No.2* - 25 x 27 x 18 cm

Right: *Royal Throne No.8* - 53 x 25 x 27cm

Alex  
Scott





Vicki  
Sutherland

I am a New Zealand born, Irish ceramic artist, interested in memory and forensic, identifying traces left behind in the natural world. I explore the ceramic form as a way of archiving memory.

My latest porcelain work was originally inspired by memories of beachcombing for fern fossils many years ago in New Zealand. The original ferns had been encased in volcanic ash in the Jurassic Era and slowly turned into stone fossils. This led me to create porcelain fossils of plants, in particular ferns, of which I have many varieties growing in my garden. I 'fossilise' plants by encasing them in porcelain clay slip, gradually building up layers and creating elaborate floral sculptures, inspired by 17th Century Dutch still life paintings. When slowly fired, all organic traces burn away, leaving porcelain skeletons. These sculptures are displayed under glass bell jars, similar to those popular in Victorian times for displaying memento mori. As well as protecting the delicate porcelain from damage and dust, this also creates an other worldly, ethereal quality to the piece.

Memento mori were originally intended to remind viewers of the fleeting nature of life, thus supposedly encouraging a life lived in a morally upright manner. I intend no such moralising, aiming to celebrate the cycles of life within nature and therefore life in general. I try to express to the viewer how sculpting is an act of pleading with nature and with permanence, and how remembering is an act of calcifying time.

Above: Detail of *Memento Mori - Flora* - 32 x 19 x 19cm

Right: *Memento Mori - Flora* - 32 x 19 x 19cm





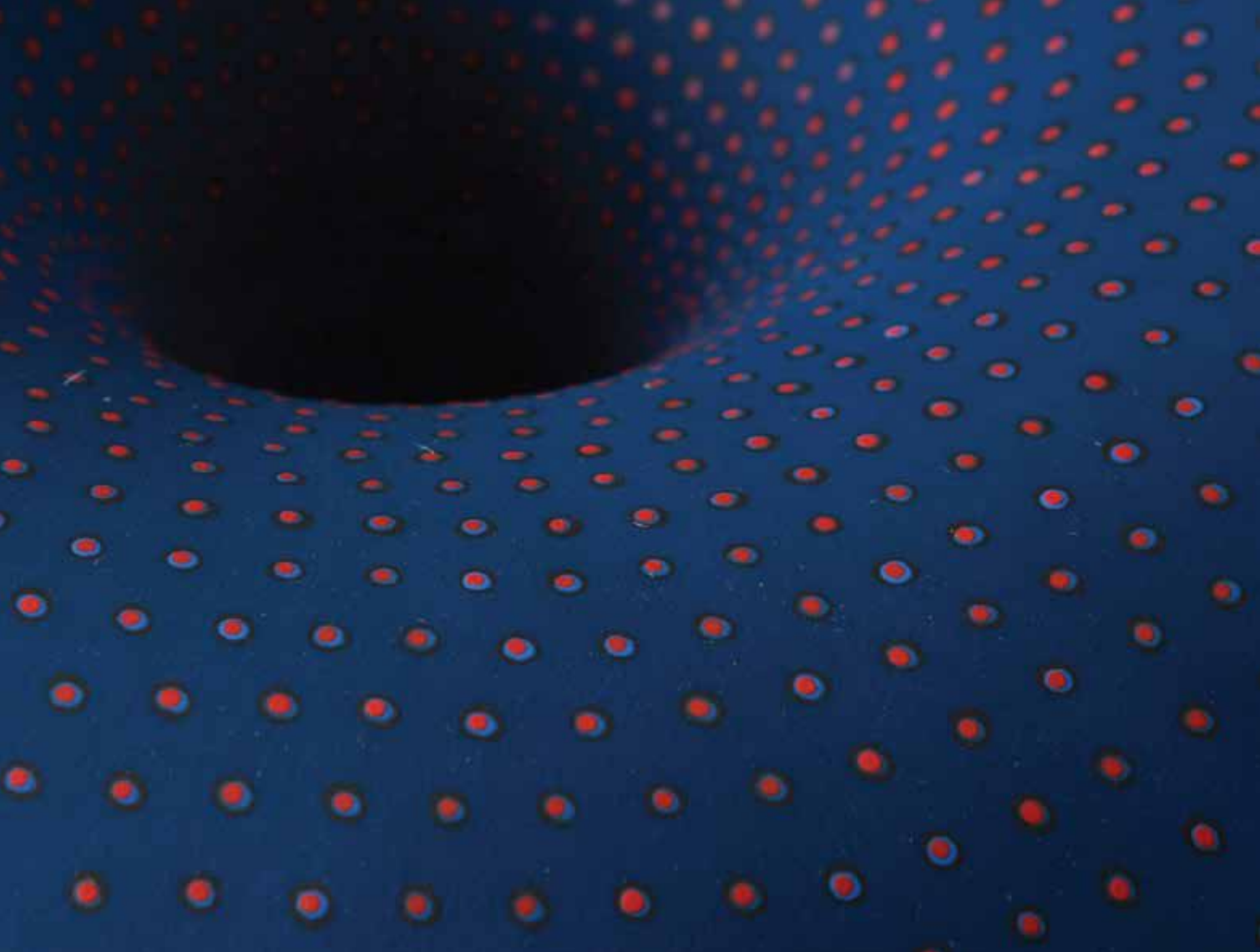
*Ode To A Not Too Distant Past* has a political narrative, a social comment on the devastating effects of the recession on this country. Hopefully we have learned a lesson that excess and greed do not contribute to a healthy economy. We have had to re-assess and re-evaluate how we live our lives, but many years have passed and we are still on the road to recovery.....the Golden Crow... a symbol of creativity and growth... guides us to a more positive future.

Above: Detail of *Ode To A Not Too Distant Past* - 80 x 60 x 120cm

Right: Detail of *Ode To A Not Too Distant Past* - 80 x 60 x 120cm

Eleanor  
Swan





## Grainne Watts

Grainne Watts is an Irish ceramic artist, currently based in Co. Wicklow, making colourful sculptural and decorative vessels.

Her work is inspired by what she finds fascinating about the Natural world, both in the landscape around her and in nature photography. Over the years Watts has cultivated a visual and tactile vocabulary that feeds into the development of her ideas and reflects what she loves... colour, texture, form and elements of humour.

'When I create a piece there are several ingredients, the materials, processes, the idea and the feeling I want to portray... The clay bodies I use are smooth stoneware and porcelain clays. Each form is constructed using a combination of throwing and hand building techniques, which are then decorated using multiple layers of hand painted underglazes. I want my work to evoke an emotional and sensory response and pursue this in my choice of form, refinement of the surface quality and use of vibrant colour that stimulates the viewer'.

Above: Midnight blue *Bindu* - 30 x 48cm

Right: *Double Walled Porcelain Vessel* - 9 x 12cm







## Katharine West

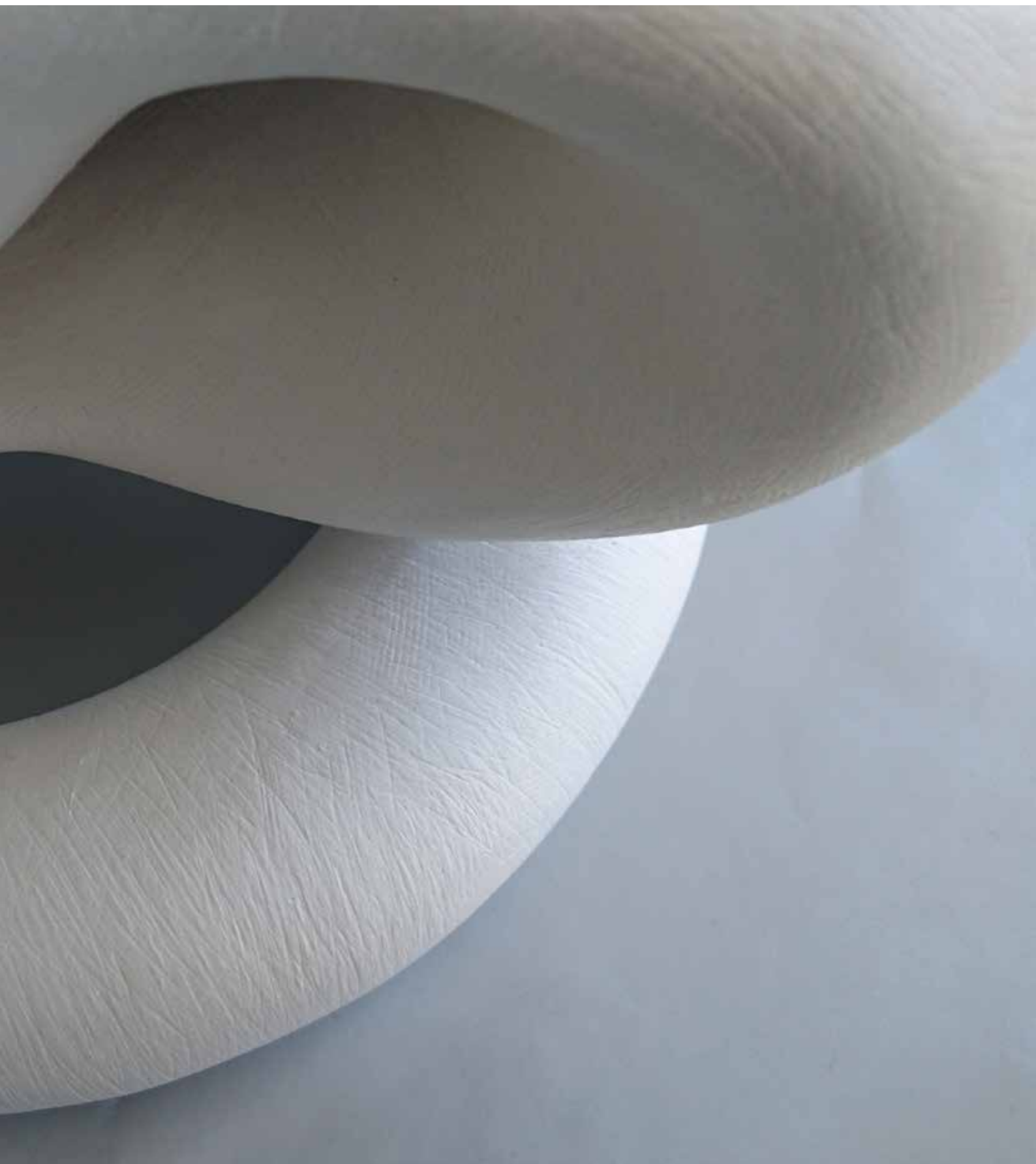
Katharine West is an artist who works primarily in clay. Central to her work are phenomena associated with nature: landscape, seascape and the human body. Archetypal form as it relates to our collective past and memory is exploited in her work, through connections such as artefact, object, process, function, form and material.

Her work is made in series. Each series continues to exploit established concerns in the work such as the resonance of the object, its matter, its fluidity and the tension between its internal space and external form, within the context of the malleability of the material; clay. The objects play with space, light, form and illusion. They contain air and question the solidity of the object itself.

The possibilities inherent in the forms of the 'Link' the 'Loop' and the 'Fold' are explored both physically and metaphorically, in her most recent work. The notion of the 'Lacuna' as an internal space, void or suspended link is played with through a series of pieces entitled 'Throughfold'.

Above: Detail of *Through Fold #3* - 30 x 30 x 32cm, Detail of *Through Fold #4* - 30 x 30 x 40cm

Right: Detail of *Through Fold #3* - 30 x 30 x 32cm





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O'Mahony Mandy Parslow Owen Quinlain Elaine Riordan Alex Scott Vicki

Sutherland Eleanor Swan Grainne Watts Katharine West Cormac Boydell

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