

My Journey:
From Advertising
to
Finding my language in Ceramics

While in college in the late 80s and early 90s, I got introduced to clay in summer sculpture classes, which led me to learn throwing from a visiting traditional potter. However, once he went back to his village I drifted into the creative field of advertising.

I spent the next two decades as a copywriter. Finally retiring in the year 2010, my last position was that of the National Creative Director, Grey Worldwide.

Soon after quitting, clay became the primary medium of expression for me.

Following are two of the several series of works from that time.

A Series which depicted the disappearing trees from the urbanscape to make way for broader roads.

While the trees were disappearing, I was documenting the phenomenon of life sprouting around them that I had witnessed in our villages and cities alike while growing up.

Be it a small temple, or an al fresco barber shop, or a rustic water cooler for the hot and thirsty, or a charpoy or seating for the old and young to sit and chat and so many more scenarios of what I have seen in my part of the world. A world that is disappearing to make way for a more modern nation, that looks less like itself and more like everything else with the passage of time.









Another series that I was developing at that time was a VIDEO WALL with clay that could be automated to throw countless stories in various permutations and combinations with a limited but varied set of symbols and icons that we encounter at every corner, instructing us to slow down, walk, not walk etc. The idea was to make these symbols that are ubiquitous and almost controlling be seen in a more mirthful and less intimidating way.





However, when I went to do my Masters in Ceramics I had many doubts and questions not only about my skills and abilities, but also about what it was that I wanted to express through my art and my chosen material.

Advertising had trained me to think for products, brands, corporations, even social impact organisations, and in various different tongues, where I was always thinking by putting myself not in my centre but something or somebody else's. How was I to find my voice?

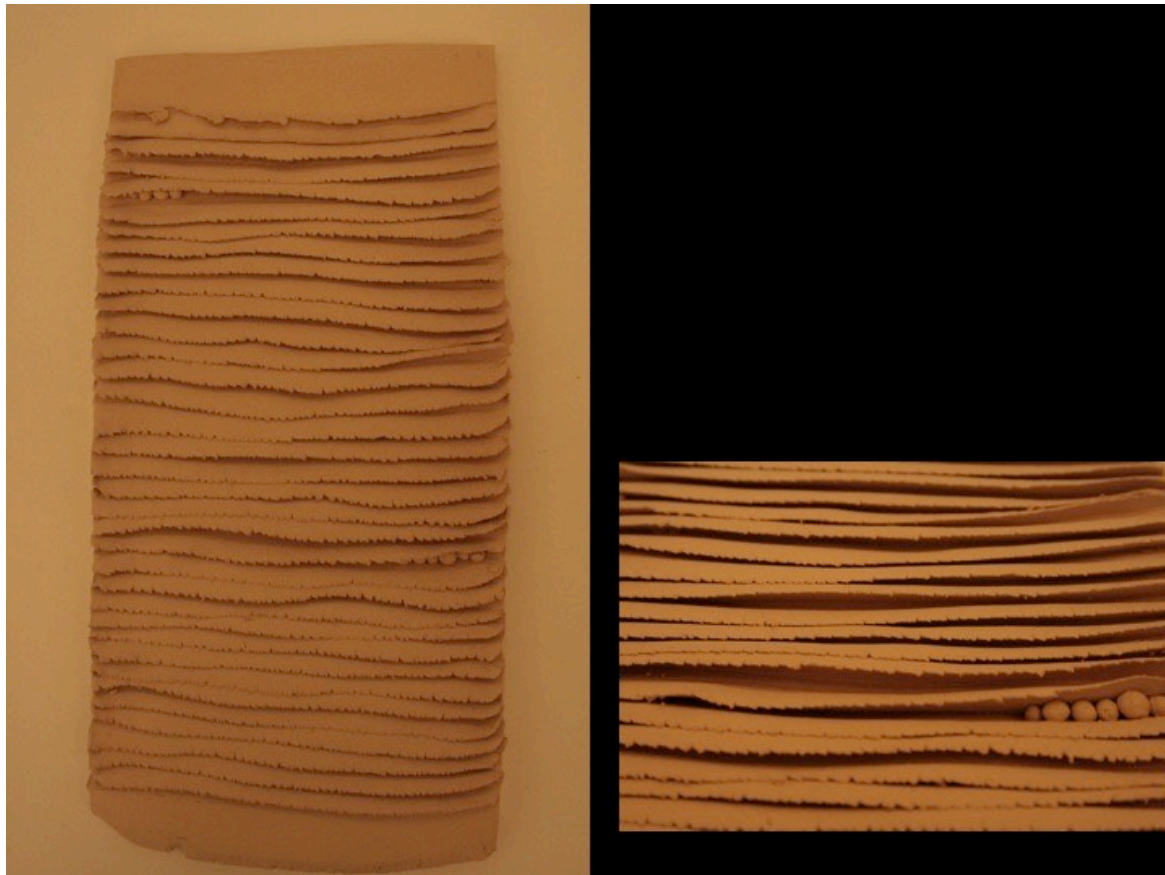
So instead of thinking of ideas that I wanted to execute, I decided to play with clay.



I simply decided to make incisions on clay. Then opened them up. Put objects in the gaps. Photographed them. Cut them in different directions. Added more information by adding colour and then text and images followed by documenting where it led me.

All in all, it took a series of small discoveries, not always in a linear progression that led me to find my my own language in clay.

The following set of pictures illustrate this journey.

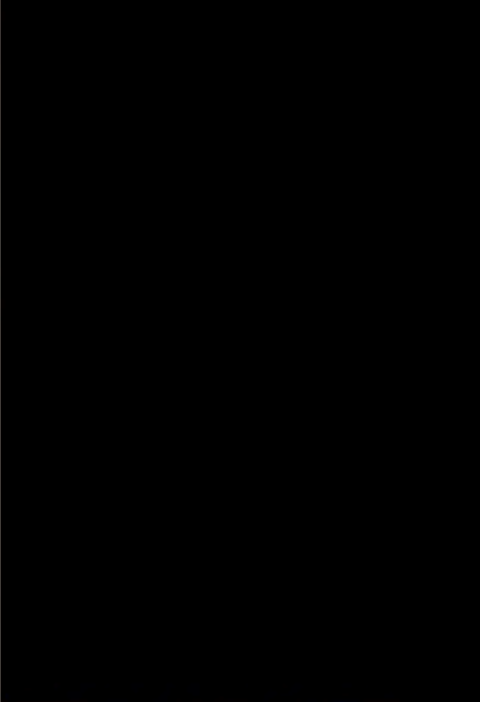
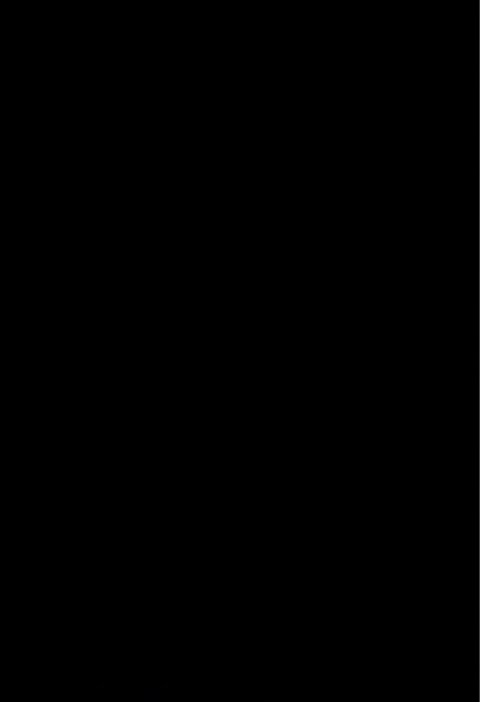












Cutting the clay in different directions led
to subverting the sign of DONT to DO



This is what led to what I'm DOING now.