

Ina Kaur and Stephanie A. Rozene

*Soiled Bodies* expands on creative inquiries within the field of ceramics. We aim to highlight creative and conceptual ways artists are addressing and expressing personal, social, cultural, and political concerns of society. Ceramics is a responsive discipline and provides a space for in-depth contextual and critical inquiry. Represented artists, including Kaur and Rozene, work within the expanded field of ceramics using it for its diverse possibilities – literally, figuratively, traditionally, and contemporarily. *Soiled Bodies* celebrates these approaches, whether through the daily utilitarian object, or one of desire.

Ina Kaur

Kaur's studio practice engages with decoloniality as we continue to live in a heightened political, socially unequal, unjust, and ecologically imbalanced system. Her reflective practice and philosophical inclinations seek to find balance with materiality, physicality, and dimensionality. Through meditative repetition, her work utilizes simplicity and structural complexity allowing for unique, hybrid, and pluralistic identities, through complex collective narratives. Reflecting on the theme of the conference, similar to the current and flow of a river; it's water acts as a metaphor for our shared global concerns. Kaur explores the idea of flow, through her ability to move between the mediums of clay, fiber, found objects and print. Her approach is fluid, ever-evolving, and non-rigid; she does this by embracing pluralism in the systems of knowledge and thought that push beyond colonial frameworks. In Kaur's multidisciplinary practice, she seeks to reclaim her space, decolonize, re-define, and be free, requiring her to think otherwise, outside of the categories, hierarchies, and binaries of coloniality. Pluralism as a political philosophy is the

recognition and affirmation of diversity within a political body, which is seen to permit the peaceful coexistence of different interests, convictions, and lifestyles. Her work demonstrates how individual experiential learning brings out authentic (artistic) expression through acknowledging the intersectionality of class, race, nationhood, and history in order to embrace new knowledge and not rigid parameters for worldbuilding and meaning-making.

These ideas are demonstrated by the project *Becoming Unbound* (2022), which moves beyond cultural constructs, freeing from restrictive beliefs that contribute towards otherness and oppressed identities. Works such as *Drifting Mass* (2022) and *Misconstrued Silence* (2022) gather, move, change, and reposition themselves as they celebrate the ever shifting and constantly evolving notion of self. They navigate freely and fluidly within diverse communities and coexist as they claim their own existence, embracing their new unsettled freedom.

Stephanie A. Rozene

In *De Inventione*, the Roman philosopher Cicero defines **Rhetoric** as an art that aims to improve the capacity of writers or speakers to inform, persuade or motivate particular audiences in specific situations that include five canons: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Contemporarily, **Political Rhetoric** has to do with politics that are elaborate, pretentious, insincere, or intellectually vacuous, and **Visual Rhetoric** encompasses the way images and patterns work on their own and collaborate with written text to create an argument designed to move a specific audience.

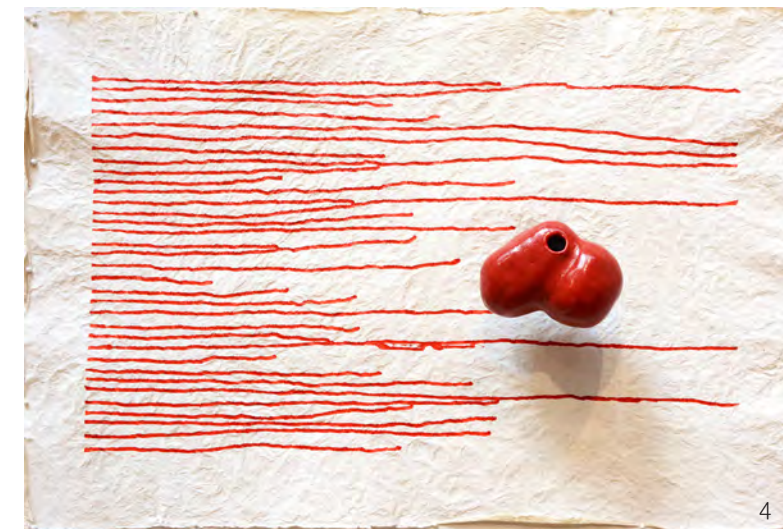
Rozene's research and art making focuses on the exploration of personal relationships through use, and the role that pottery

plays in communicating visual rhetoric. Her utilitarian forms are inspired by and grounded in conceptual, historical, and theoretical approaches to ornament, form, use, and meaning. Through the medium of ceramics, with special attention to pattern, architectural ornament, form, and utilitarian function she has worked to translate contemporary political rhetoric into visual rhetoric using ceramics.

In the series *Les Motifs de la Politique Rhétorique/The Patterns of Political Rhetoric*, (2016-2022) she extrapolates ornamentation from French and American dinnerware, made for and used by American presidents and 18th century monarchs as metaphor for political rhetoric employed by politicians worldwide. Through symbolism and ornamentation, she translates the pretentious, insincere and intellectually vacuous language into visual rhetoric through the repetitive process of wheel throwing, altering, carving and applying a sprigged pattern over the form of a vase. The intensive process itself is a metaphor for our collective obsession with politics and our inability to really make change.

Using the rich history of porcelain and its extravagance, Rozene contrasts the French ornamentation with 19th century Hungarian textile patterns created by the working class. She asks the viewer to investigate these patterns as a visual language reflecting culture, use, spending, consumerism, conflict, and excess promoted through offensive rhetoric. By extrapolating patterns from these source materials, Rozene creates a new visual rhetoric speaking not only to national and international identities but also to the extravagances which governments employ in order to maintain their identities, money's corrosive use in politics and whether or not politicians are representative of the electorate.

Rozene's current body of work, *Cooking and Clay Collaboration* (2020-present), is an extension of this thinking about the politics of culture and identity but through the lens of foodways and cooking with clay. This collaborative project



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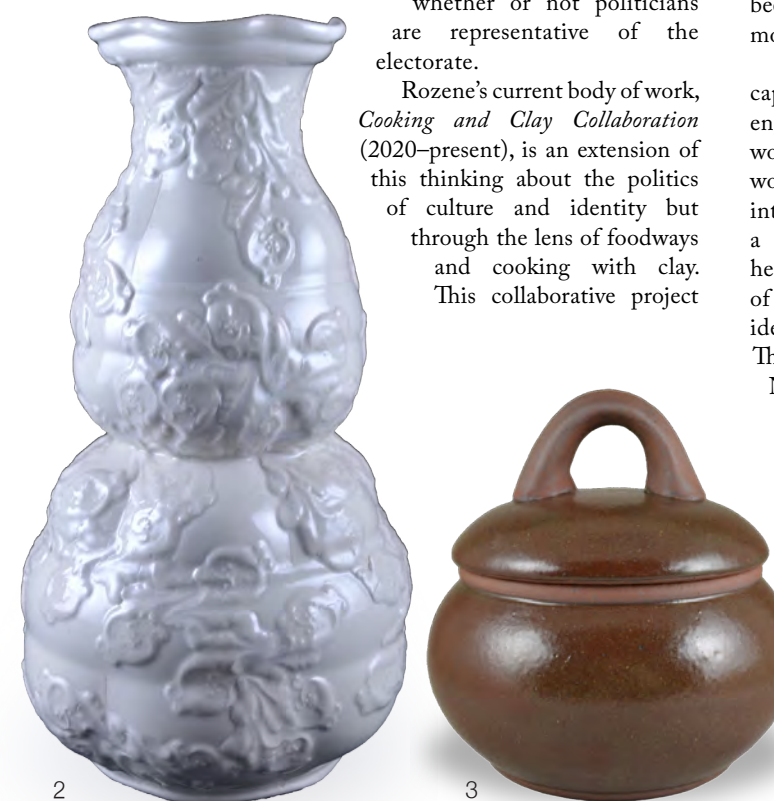
between Rozene as a ceramic artist and several renowned chefs including Norma Listman, Saqib Keval, Maricela Vega and Tamie Cook investigates individual cultural identities and the ways in which those identities are intertwined through food, place, and taste. Often, when we think of food and clay, we conjure up images of a meal plated on beautifully-made ceramics. Although this has been true for centuries, as evidenced by some of the great historical china from around the world, it is not the only way that clay has built a relationship with food. From prehistory into contemporary conversations, clay has been used to cook *with* although that is a story often left out of much of contemporary-thinking utilitarian ceramics and its relationship to food. We are often told it is too difficult to cook with clay, the clay will break, it's not resilient enough, you must only use flamework etc. but, in fact, clay has been used as a tool to cook with for thousands of years. Today more than three million people cook in clay pots on a daily basis.

Rozene and Kaur are investigating clay's multi-dimensional capacity to communicate across traditional boundaries and engage in an in-depth contextual and cultural inquiry. Their work is connected to, and inspired by, the many other makers working in similar contexts engaging with collaborative and interdisciplinary practices within clay. Our lecture will have a particular focus on artists who do not identify as white, heterosexual, and male. These artists express the complex nature of migration and displacement, ideas surrounding freedom and identity, as well as personal and cultural histories through clay. The work of interdisciplinary artists like Japneet Kaur, and Nirmal Raja use the medium of clay in an effective and poetic way to encapsulate personal, lived experiences. Similarly, chefs like Maricela Vega are using clay in their practices by cooking trout wrapped in clay, revitalizing prehistoric cooking techniques. *Soiled Bodies* expands our diverse yet unique creative inquiries into clay as a medium and a vehicle for expression.

1 INA KAUR *becoming unbound*, 2022 Cone 6 stoneware, drawing, thread; (size variable) Photo credit: the artist 2 STEPHANIE A. ROZENE *Truth or Spectacle? II*, 2018 Cone 6 porcelain, (13"x7"x7") Photo credit: the artist 3 STEPHANIE A. ROZENE *Cooking Pot*, StarWorks Dark Star Clay, Cone 6, (9"x 8"x8") Photo credit: the artist 4 INA KAUR *Drifting Mass*, 2022 Cone 6 stoneware, drawing; (14" x 17" x 5") Photo credit: the artist



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# CO-LECTURE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CLAY

Bethany Benson, Stephanie Rozene



1 Harvest Dinner, Gravlax with goat cheese and dill on a crostini, plated on a rectangle tray with fish scales, 2015, porcelain, 3"x 6, designed and produced by Hartwick Students, photo by Gerry Raymond  
2 Hartwick students and professor Stephanie Rozene engaged in a working critique of dinnerware prototypes, 2017, photo by Gerry Raymond  
3 414 empty bowls packed up for contactless pick up following the virtual event at Juniata College, 2020, photo by Bethany Benson  
4 Social media leading up to the launch of Juniata's virtual Empty Bowls Event, 2020, photo by Bethany Benson

A liberal arts education positions students to develop the skills, knowledge, and **values** that lead to ethical leadership in the global community. Although institutions use different terminology, (experiential learning, service learning, community-engaged learning) ceramics faculty at Juniata and Hartwick College have similar demographics of students, are positioned in rural conservative communities and have both developed courses that are rooted in Community Engaged Learning or CEL.

The goal of Juniata's Empty Bowls Practicum and Hartwick's Harvest Dinner Project course is to educate students about

the larger context of food insecurity nationwide and how our local communities are affected by hunger and poverty, and how they can become involved as changemakers. It is important to note that hunger and poverty are not the same: hunger is felt daily while poverty is measured annually. Benson and Rozene's projects allow them to discuss these topics with their students, educating them on how to make change and giving them the tools to interact with community partners, hopefully instilling a lifelong understanding that there are always ways that you can give back to your community.





**Bethany Benson, Professor and  
Department Chair, Juniata College**

The Empty Bowls event has been a community tradition at Juniata since 2007; in 2015, I changed it from an event into a three-credit course focusing on creating food-safe, volume-consistent bowls anchored in community engagement by donating to and volunteering at the event itself. Students study the poverty levels of and resources in students' own hometowns as a way to connect their lived experience with the realities of their communities.

In the fall of 2019, a major revision of Empty Bowls Practicum occurred in order to meet a revised institutional mission and General Education overhaul. The GE designation that EB Practicum now carries is *Local Engagement*. Courses with this designation provide experiences helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need to engage effectively with the local communities they will inhabit throughout their lives. *Local Engagement* options address specific learning outcomes designed to help students contribute their knowledge and skills to their local communities through meaningful engagement.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unthinkable became the ponderable, which then became the reality. Virtual Empty Bowls events were listed across the country, offering a way for communities to connect to and support the resources that those who are food insecure rely on (even more so in 2020). At Juniata we created two options of an Empty Bowls event that would provide bowls via curbside pickup. An idea I had literally stolen from Stephanie Rozene from a conversation we had in late May,

included a grab-bag, drive-thru to pick up a purchased bowl, and the other version was to create an online store. The deciding factor was whether students would be in-person or fully remote from the start of the semester and in early August of 2020 we decided to run the online store with curbside pickup.

Students started in-person, but as the semester progressed, they were in and out of quarantine with a full campus lock-down for a week and a half in mid-October, two weeks before the launch of the online store. Fortunately, the activities required to pull off the online store were flexible—with about half executed virtually. The majority of the physical work, making and photographing bowls, was completed before the all-campus quarantine. During times of personal and all-campus quarantine, students engaged in meaningful conversation with community partners, held discussion sessions focused on social psychology and our propensity to give, and were provided with images of bowls that they inventoried into the online store system. There was enough time between the end of the campus quarantine and pickup day to make sure that all bowls had been packed according to their inventory numbers in a space that was large enough to accommodate social distancing.

By choosing to move forward with the online store, we also recognized that we would have the capacity to reach a much wider audience. We held a social media campaign the week before the store launched, which engaged students, their families, alumni, and





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Huntingdon community members. Students were assigned specific days and times to post on Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat with #soupsonyou as the tagline. People posted soup recipes and were able to connect safely and share their human experiences in ways that were not possible before.

The event was a major success; the store was scheduled to be open for one week and I fully expected we might sell 100 bowls the first day. However, we sold out of 414 bowls within nine hours of the store launch. It was so unexpected and fulfilling to see how the Huntingdon community was supported by people we knew as our *regulars* to those we had never met, living in communities hundreds of miles from zip code 16652.

## **Stephanie Rozene, Associate Professor, Hartwick College**

Last spring my class was in the middle of an Empty Bowls project when Hartwick went into lockdown, due to the COVID Pandemic. We shifted to online learning within the span of a week and I began planning what a virtual Empty Bowls event could look like by leaning into the long history of paper pots as fundraisers. Instead

of finishing the ceramic bowls left in the studio we began drawing bowls that would become the thank-you gift to our contributors to our virtual event. As we readied to launch this virtual fundraiser, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, and as I watched our country rise up through the Black Lives Matter protests it didn't feel like this was the moment to launch our event. Although we did not get that event off of the ground it taught me about what was possible and how I could use what I had learned from the development of this project for the fall semester and how we could engage with and support our community even if we continued to be remote in the fall of 2020.

In the fall I was scheduled to teach The Harvest Dinner Project, a course that was born from a traditional wheel-throwing dinnerware course, pairing enrolled students with a local restaurant and chef in order to create specifically designed bespoke dinnerware for a 50-seat five course tasting menu culminating in a two-night charity dinner to benefit local hunger. I have been fortunate to collaborate with Tim Masterjohn, a local restaurateur, for both of these projects who has been a real partner in the planning and executing of the course(s). Throughout the course we held multiple critiques of the various prototypes with Tim and his staff, so that we could meet





enrollment in “Glaze of Our Lives: Understanding Glazes for the Beginner,” created by Matt and Rose Katz of Ceramic Materials Workshop, accompanied by weekly worksheets that I developed to assess their knowledge. Conceptually, they learned through lectures, guest speakers, readings, and discussions that focused on broadening their understanding of the power of food, memory, and the role that pottery can play in communication. We focused closely on their community on campus and how they could use food, memory, and art to engage fellow students, faculty, and staff. Through our work together we created a community cookbook and coloring book where students shared recipes of memorable meals, with each being accompanied by a contour line drawing of what the meal looks like for community members to color in as a stress reliever.

Teaching this course required constant flexibility and reinvention in real time. Our plan to launch this as a virtual fundraiser with some physical copies of the *Hartwick Family Cookbook: Student's Guide to Cooking and Coloring* was once again derailed as our campus shut down for the last few weeks of the semester, meaning that the physical copies were not made. As I write this article, we are in the process of getting this project launched in February, delivering some needed relief to our local soup kitchen and food pantry. Students walked away with a better understanding of the issues surrounding hunger and poverty, the power of food and pottery as agents of change and a historical understanding of the long use of clay in not only serving food but cooking it.

Our COVID takeaways from these projects taught us the following:

1. We need to trust our communities. Even though the events are different, our communities want to and will help if given the opportunity.

2. Having online components for sales through a website, and social media marketing expanded the ability for larger numbers of people to participate, (i.e.. alumni, parents).

3. Students need to be excited about and engaged in the project in order to become better members of the local community that they are living in (Oneonta and Huntingdon).

4. Our models need to change because we have changed, our relationship to dining has changed and might never be the same. How can we adapt to new circumstances that reflect these changes?

I think that it is fair to say that both of these courses are challenging and rewarding in normal circumstances. The realities of teaching courses that are grounded in community-engaged learning during a pandemic heightened the issues of logistics, which are always humming in the background of CEL. But beautiful things can happen as a result of forced creativity and certainly in the case of Empty Bowls at Juniata, which proves that service learning can continue to happen even with restrictions.

**Bethany Benson** holds an MFA in Ceramics from the Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois, and a BFA from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Massachusetts. She is Professor of Art and Chair of the Art and Art History Department at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

**Stephanie Rozene** is an Associate Professor of Art at Hartwick College, Oneonta, New York, where they teach and make ceramics. Rozene has an MFA in Ceramics and Craft History from NSCAD (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design) University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; and a BFA from Alfred University in Alfred, New York.

their needs as well as the aesthetic design and craftsmanship skill building on the studio side. The enrolled students learn not only the skills and craft to design and make dinnerware for a specific menu but also the specificity of designing utilitarian pottery for a restaurant application, which is somewhat different from designing pottery for the domestic market. They also learn about the history of the American food movement, farm-to-table dining, local food systems, national and local issues about poverty and food insecurity and how food and pottery can be vehicles to speak to social justice and the politics of hunger in local communities. This course directly connects students with what it means to be part of the local community and, due to the restrictions that Hartwick College put into place to maintain a healthy and safe campus, it meant that I couldn't teach this course in its traditional format, requiring a large shift in what I could physically accomplish, and it wasn't through working with clay.

The revised COVID version of this course became Food, Pottery, and the Table, a visual culture class with a side of studio. Students engaged in developing the physical skills of coil building through working with a plasticine oil-based clay, photography for documentation and remote sharing through Google Slides, accommodating all students to work within the same format whether they were in the classroom or learning remotely, and bookmaking to develop a family cookbook that tells their histories through food. They learned theoretically about clay and glaze through their



# Lecture: The Politics of Porcelain

Stephanie Rozene



VARIOUS ARTISTS 1 *The Democratic Cup* porcelain, 2016, available from [www.thedemocraticcup.com](http://www.thedemocraticcup.com), image courtesy of Ayumi Horie NORLEEN NOSRI 2 *CommuniTea Public Art Project* (17"x17"x11") base: cone 03 earthenware, vessels: cone 6 porcelain, glaze, 2016 JESSICA PUTNAM PHILLIPS 3 *Days of Uncertainty and Roses* (14"x14"x2.5") porcelain, glaze, laser decal, vintage commercial decals, China paint, gold luster, 2015

This paper and lecture introduces the history of the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory as it relates to the French courts of Louis XV and Louis XVI, their use of the factory and its wares for their personal pleasure and diplomatic gifts, and their use of porcelain as demonstration of power, wealth, and importance. These French monarchs influenced other royalty to do the same through their ownership of Sèvres Porcelain, beginning a long tradition of using porcelain as a symbol of power and political currency. The idea of porcelain as a political currency will be explored as it relates to contemporary makers who are investigating politics, pottery, and the table as landscape and communicator.

## Historical Context

In the 1740s, the Vincennes Porcelain Factory, already known for their delicate porcelain flowers adorning clocks, captured the attention of Madame Pompadour, mistress of King Louis XV. It was her patronage that allowed the factory to flourish, catching the imagination of the court. Eventually, Louis XV purchased the factory and moved it to the western bank of the Seine River at Sèvres, halfway between Paris and Versailles, and changed the name to the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory. Porcelain in 18th-century Europe was the currency with which one displayed wealth, power, and prestige. Entire porcelain rooms were created to display collections as status symbols — the more porcelain you owned, the more wealth and power you were able to demonstrate to visitors.

Throughout its history, there are well-documented examples of France's monarchs using the Sèvres Manufactory to send diplomatic gifts of china service to foreign heads of state and ambassadors, but none were more extravagant than the use of the factory by Louis XV and XVI. In 1763, Louis XV sent a service to not

only the Duke of Bedford who had negotiated the signing of the treaty ending the Seven Years War, but also an additional dessert service to the Duchess of Bedford. These were highly coveted gifts and demonstrated the power of France and her ability to reward her allies.

Louis XVI would continue this tradition by similarly recognizing the British Ambassador to the court at Versailles, the Duke of Manchester, following his negotiation of the Treaty of Versailles. The King gifted the Duke a traditional diamond-encrusted gold box with a portrait of the king, but he also gifted the Duchess what came to be known as The Manchester Service (1776–83). This service became a well-known and acknowledged symbol of power throughout Europe with its turquoise ground, gold luster, and china-painted flowers.

Possibly the most famous of these services, The Louis XVI Service (1783–93), is known as the most extravagant and costly dinnerware service that Sèvres ever created. Each plate cost 480 livres, which at the time was thirteen times as expensive as the average plate made at Sèvres. The ground was painted dark blue, with roundels presenting images from Greek and Roman antiquity. In addition to a 23-year production schedule, the outrageousness of the service was further exhibited as its sole purpose was for display, not use. By highlighting the talents of its porcelain factory, France would showcase the wealth and grandeur of the Monarchy. While it was not uncommon for the bourgeoisie to display ornate china sets while not in use, what makes The Louis XVI Service unusual was that it was a utilitarian service meant for display only. This ostentatious display by the King would ultimately be a contributing factor to the rise of the French Revolution. Following the Revolution and the execution of the King in 1793, less than half





of the service would be completed as the factory ceased operations for the royal court and none of the service would ever be used. The fall of the French Monarchy had a devastating effect on the factory. Under state control, the factory was no longer royal and much of the luxury items at Versailles were sold, opening the way for purchase and helping to fund the new Republican government.

George IV of England was one of the many foreign monarchs whose attention was captured by porcelain from Sèvres, purchasing his first piece in 1783. The Sèvres porcelain in the Royal Collection of Her Majesty the Queen of England is widely considered to be some of the best in the world. George IV would collect Sèvres throughout his life, much of which was used to decorate his lavish apartments at Carlton House in London. He too would only ever display The Louis XVI Service demonstrating his wealth and power. The service now has a similar function as a part of the Royal Collection and resides on display in Windsor Palace in ornate 18th-century cabinets on view for visitors to admire.

## Contemporary Makers

The following select group consists of artists who work with pottery form, utility, relationship to the table, and politics. Their work is not limited to one of the above categories; in fact, many of them bridge across and blur the lines of several of them. The table has always been a landscape, both physical and metaphorical. It is a place where we gather for fellowship, sustenance, and discourse, all while being informed by the surroundings of utensils and pots that we use. We consume food, converse, and are excited by color, texture, form, and ornament, each telling its own part of the story. While it may seem that historic state dinners of the royal classes have no connection to the makers of today, I argue that the importance of exchange of ideas, and being communicated to, by, and through the objects that we eat with and off of, is no less valid. In the 18th century, this was done by the use of elaborate china services the likes of The Manchester, Louis XVI, and The Catherine the Great of Russia Services. These services, adorned with gold luster, ornate patterns, and highly detailed china painting communicate the importance and power of the table at which you sat. Today, we communicate in many different ways through the use of

objects for the table. Some sit on a mantle, some hang on the wall, others sit in cupboards or sit dirty in sinks. We decorate and curate our interior spaces as did the royal courts of France, Russia, and England. Our work reflects the world we live in, and the conversations that we have while using it.

Contemporary artists embrace these European traditions or opulence and grandeur to mimic, repeat, and re-contextualize their themes. This re-framing of European porcelain traditions is evidenced by the work of the following ceramic artists who are re-contextualizing the table as a way to speak about contemporary diversity/identity/activism, politics/issues of political power, and war/greed.

Chris Antemann spent three years working with and learning from her “colleagues” at Meissen, Europe’s oldest porcelain manufactory, to create the body of work *Forbidden Fruit* (2013), which tells “modern stories of desire.” Her work is informed by the rich history of the Meissen Factory and Augustus the Strong’s (1670–1733) obsession with porcelain. Antemann’s tablescapes seduce the viewer with ornate and detailed decoration reminiscent of the Rococo Style. Her work celebrates wit, pleasure, and playfulness at once, drawing you in, startling you with their seductive nature, and capturing the excessiveness of luxury.

Canadian potter Mariko Paterson makes her work come to life with brilliant colors, energetic compositions, and decals of the absurd smoothly marrying what she describes as “the colliding of historical with the hysterical.” The viewer is bombarded with layers of visual information as Paterson unapologetically juxtaposes imagery capturing the current state of social and political unease. She creates a narrative mash-up of history and pop culture contained to a recognizable form, allowing the user an access point into the work.

Ryan Hurst collides historical form with images of greed, power, and propaganda. He asks the viewer to confront their own relationship with the corruption and greed that undermines and sacrifices our quality of life. Through black-and-white imagery with intentional placement of bright colors, his trophies memorialize a beautiful form married with crude serious imagery.

The *Democratic Cup*, a brainchild of artists Ayumi Horie and Nick Moen, focuses on slow activism by using the handmade cup together with illustrations of political icons and positive messages for social change. It encourages users to share a coffee with someone of a different political ideology. It acknowledges that the most successful way to change a political perspective is through interpersonal interactions of civil discourse about political ideas. The 32 artists and illustrators that Horie and Moen gathered for this project span the spectrum of form and image making, but the work comes together in a powerful way to help counteract the Trump administration’s attacks on civil liberties and civil rights. Particularly powerful images and messages can be found on these cups, like, *What did I do?* which depicts the many faces of young men and women of color affected by violence.

Roberto Lugo, a participating artist in *The Democratic Cup* project, is a Philadelphia-based potter, activist, and educator whose work tackles narrative themes of adversity and racism, which he translates into image and pattern adorning large vessels. These vessels pay homage to the large urns and vases that decorated the sumptuous drawing rooms in the 18th century and were meant to display importance and to dazzle the viewer. Lugo’s work, adorned with rich graffiti-esque ornamentation, requires its audience to deal with the image presented before them. The power of his work is furthered by its physicality and his ability to perform his work





through spoken word.

Norleen Norsi is a Malaysian ceramic artist residing in St. Louis. She creates installations of hundreds of small porcelain cups that display messages of hope. Her project, *CommuniTea*, in 2015, helped students in the Ferguson School District find healing through art following the tumultuous events of 2014. The cups and teapots, inscribed with the students' dreams and well-wishes, remain on view surrounded by dark clay structures that envelope the small cups in a strong foundation, as a memory and hope for the future.

Jessica Putnam Phillips' elegant dinnerware is, at first glance, a beautiful object. Upon further investigation, the work reveals decorative floral motifs that camouflage women in combat. This work is a reflection of her military service and experience of war. Her work requires the viewer to engage the issues facing military women as they conflict with stereotypical assumptions of feminine domesticity.

Ehren Tool also uses his military experience to inform his work. His tumbler-style cups installed on wooden shelves present a story on each surface, addressing the unspeakable atrocities of war. The viewer is unable to separate the content from the physicality of the material acting as a metaphor for the ways in which war permanently alters the experience of our service men and women. The power of the cup comes through the conversation that it starts. His work confronts the viewer in a way that is inescapable and requires

engagement with difficult content.

To *Contain and To Serve* (2017), the collaboration of potter Forrest Lesch-Middleton and Arabic-Persian calligrapher Arash Shirinbab, centers on the "interplay of hospitality, morality, and justice in contemporary culture and media landscape." Using Nisapur calligraphic traditions of inscribing Arabic poems on the surfaces of a vessel, page, or building, they bring awareness of the object. Their intention is rooted in the realities of peace and conflict in our contemporary world that are sourced from tweets of people living through wartime, Sufi and contemporary poetry.

Engaging in interpersonal conversations to bring awareness to marginalized communities, racist ideas, gendered stereotypes, and obsession with wealth and power to effect social change is more important than ever. Each of the represented artists use the media of porcelain in appreciation of its historical context as a modern vessel for political and social commentary. Nearly three centuries after the arrival of native porcelain in the royal courts of Europe, contemporary artists continue to exploit and manipulate its political currency.

**Stephanie A. Rozene** is the department chair and associate professor of art at Hartwick College in upstate New York. She has an MFA from NSCAD University and a BFA from Alfred University, and currently serves on the board of trustees of Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts in Maine.