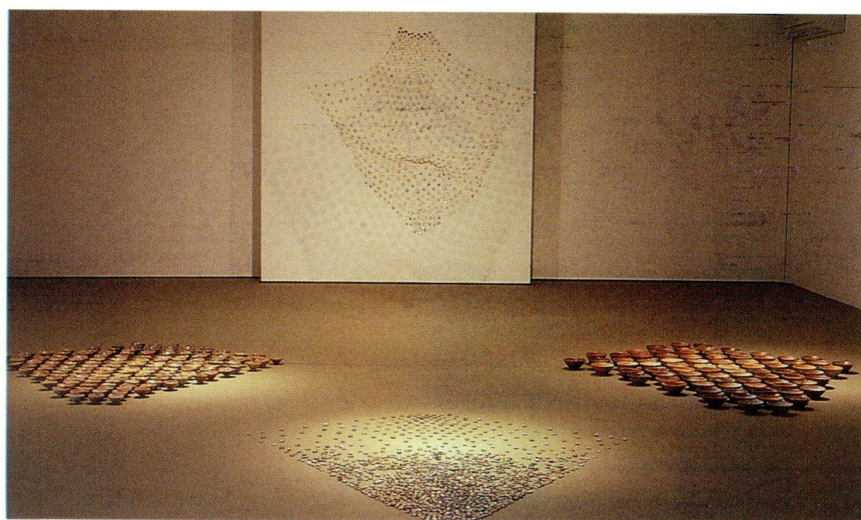


resonance

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Resonance, 2005, woodfired porcelain and copper wire

An exhibition at the Watson Arts Centre

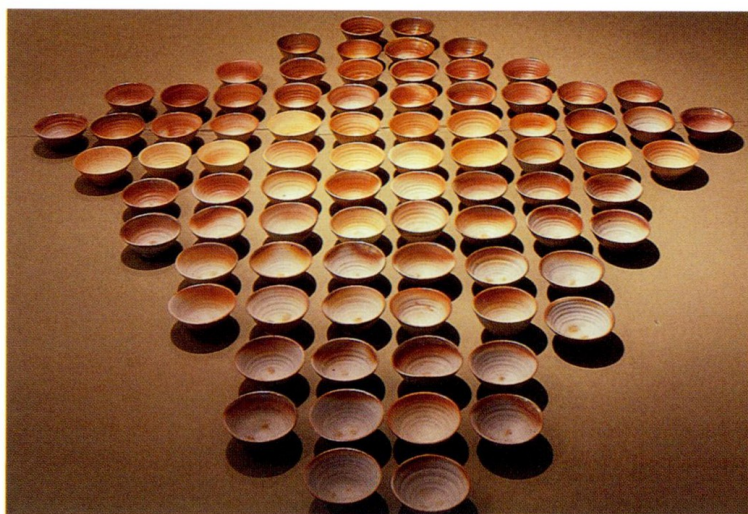
Resonance: "The quality of being resonant; having the ability to evoke or suggest enduring images, memories, or emotions."

Handmade functional ceramic objects for me resonate with echoes of the human body, suggesting the body through form, function and memory. My exhibition *Resonance* held at Watson Art Centre, ACT February 3 - 13 2005 was an exploration of this personal fascination. There are many connections between functional ceramics and the human body. The language used to describe functional work anthropomorphises it by giving the work bellies, lips, necks, shoulders and feet.

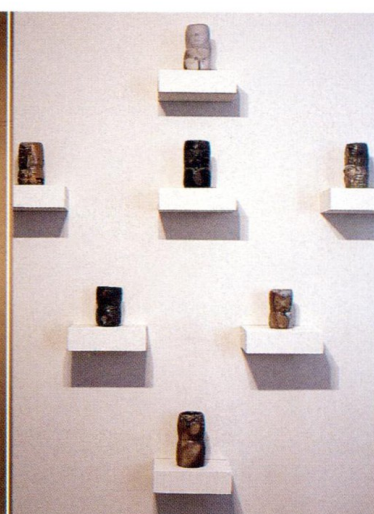
Functional ceramics is fundamentally involved with making objects for the body to use. A cup for example, facilitates an intimate association between body and object. It is made to be held in the hand and touched by the mouth. The shape and size of a cup are determined by the hand of the maker and interact with the hand and mouth of the user. The ceramic object can also engender a deeper physical response, a resonance felt bodily. Handmade objects contain traces of the

body of their maker. Clay captures on its surface residual marks of the making process. These marks become a conduit between the user, the object, the act of making and the maker themselves. The objects I make are evidence of the actions of my body as it engages with the material. The impressions left by my body are a direct referent to the physical process and myself as the maker. These objects gather further layers of meaning through use. The functional object can become resonant with the memory, evoking the absent body of the user and the collected history of its use.

There were two works in the exhibition, the large installation, *Resonance* and the more intimate work *SPAN*. The work *Resonance* consisted of four parts each, covering the space made by the span of my body, from head to toe, arms stretched out. Each part explores a development of an object through the interactions between my body, the material, the process, the form and then the viewer and user. Two of the spans within *Resonance* consist of small beads of clay pinched between my fingers, impressed with



Resonance (detail), 2005, woodfired porcelain, L.1720mm, W.1640mm



Span, 2005, woodfired porcelain
h.1720mm, w.1640mm

my fingerprint. The fingerprint in this work represents the formative gesture of making with the hands. The fingerprints are first separate and then meshed together forming an object the span of my body. The next span consists of cups crudely formed by pressing a ball of clay onto my elbow. This form retains the memory of my cupped hand and my elbow. The last span consists of bowls made on the kick wheel using the momentum of my body. The dimensions of these bowls are derived from my body, the circumference of their rim being equal to the circle formed by touching my thumbs and index fingers together.

The second work in the exhibition, *SPAN*, also covers the space made by the span of my body. It consisted of seven vase forms all approximately 20cm tall arranged vertically on a wall. These wood fired vessel forms physically suggest the body. "The successful pot somehow resonates with one's body. When a pot has good 'posture' the prehender seems to stand straighter as well. You can almost feel the strength or weakness, the heaviness or fragility, the gracefulness or stumpiness of a ceramic work in your own body."¹.

All the works are unglazed yet richly embellished by the firing process. In parallel to how human skin collects marks throughout life and becomes a document of experience, the surfaces of these wood fired vessels are marked by the passage of time and experience of flame and ash within the kiln.

Resonance was my first solo exhibition in Canberra and my first since the completion of my Master of Arts in 2002. The exhibition was supported by an emerging artist grant from arts ACT. It provided me the opportunity to further explore the medium of ceramic installation and incorporate wheel thrown functional elements alongside sculptural work. All the work in this exhibition is made from an unglazed porcelainous clay body that I have formulated for wood firing. The work was fired with pine for between 3 to 5 days in two Anagama style kilns at Old Saint Luke's Studio, Gundaroo.

¹ Sorri Mari, "The body has reasons: Tacit Knowing in thinking and making" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* vol.28, no.2, summer 1994 p.25.