

# **Thesis Speech**

## **Introduction**

introduce yourself, hi my name is james Houghton and thank you for coming to participate as a panelist for my thesis. This is a sculptural body of work made from ceramics and accompanied by five ink drawings.

## **Line of Inquiry/initial proposal**

To begin this I want to talk a bit about my initial proposal.

I chose ceramics because it is the medium because I have been working clay most of my life so I really wanted to take this thesis opportunity to really push my own ceramic work and style.

My line of inquiry for this body of work was how functional ceramics can stand outside of its intended use.

**Talk about how you have used clay as a means of making pottery for most of your artistic career so taking this**

## **opportunity to really push the work outside of Function Pottery was important.**

Write off the bat I was looking at functional ceramics but I knew I did what to just continue to make traditional ceramics on the wheel, but I also didn't fully step away from the idea of pots. This has to do with a lot of things but last summer i began working for some production company so throwing on the wheel all day began to feel too much like work and i was enjoying it anymore so when trying create a idea for this project i knew i wanted it to be something that didn't just use the wheel.

That is when I began to form this idea of making scupral objects that were inspired by traditional vase forms but had know use outside of being a sculpture. This is really when I began to think of how I can reference form while completely stepping away from function.

## **Talk about how you began with researching the history of ceramics.**

For the initial research and proposal of this project I began thinking about this long history of ceramics and how it's been used to create functional and usable objects for as long as people have known that clay could be used to contain things.

As my research progressed I became more interested with the time period of the mid 20th century when artists like Peter Volkes were starting to use clay for more than just mean to make function ceramics.

## **Artist Inspirations**

### **Peter Volkes**

Volkes interested me spectly when thinking about this body of work within his method of construction, he was using the wheel as a tool to create these stacked structures, this was something i found helpful when thinking of how to construct my own sculptures.

### **Ken Price**

Another Artist that inspire me when making this work was Ken price, he inspired me less through his use of form but his use of color, he was an artist who had very unique way of capture a tone of coller very

cohesively which is something that i was exploring in the making of this body of work.

## **Kathy Butterly**

The third Artist that I found very relevant was Kathy Butterly, her work really did alot for me when thing about coller and form, she is making work that really quite amazing. She use the wheel to create thing like cups but are sculpture, she use craft in such a beautiful way to create these super familiar object that have become so much more than just a cup. This was something that became very important in the making of my work: how to capture some of the beauty of craft while still making sculpture that didn't have to abide by the rules.

**Talk about the Initial proposal and how that was really restricting in a lot of ways especially when this work is really trying to get away from the rules of craft.**

My intaila proposal created a lot of rules and guidelines that I was going to try and follow. This semester when making my work I realized that by creating all these rules I was being counterproductive to my ideas for this work. One thing about craft is the rules and I feel like the

rules can sometimes take away from creativity and freedom of clay.

That is why when I began to actually make this work I removed all these arbitrary rules I had made for myself and just allowed myself to make them freely.

## **How did i make this work**

- Talk about the making of the glaze Library last semester.
- Talks about the trial and error when figuring out how to create these cage structures
- Talk About creating forms on the wheel to then make molds which are used to create the cage structures.
- Talk about how the wheel became a tool to create other forms to then stack with the cage.
- Talk about handles and this connection to pottery.
- Talk about glaze application and this evolution from brushing to spraying Glaze.
- Talk about the potential of failure when firing at cone 6 but how that became a very important part of the evaluation of this work.

**Talk about how this work functions in the gallery space, how I see people reading this work, and how this might be different whether you have a ceramic background or not.**

One of the most important parts of how this work functions is that it's meant to be seen in a fine arts setting. The body of work on display is a commentary on the buteud of the vessel but is not meant to be seen within a craft setting. That is also the reason I decided to display this work in a very traditle manner, the sculptures are on weight pedestals to allow for the work itself to be the focus.

The work is very bright and commical in many ways. it is not meant to hold some deep and heavy truth within it. In a time when the world seems to be really shity i found it really important to myself to create work that was enjoyable and fun. I think this work can also hold different meanings depending who is looking at the work. For example if you are coming to see this work and you have little to know knowledge about ceramics you will still be able to create this relationship through function. But I also see it as

very funny in many ways because as you the viewer create the relationship through the common knowledge of what a vase may look like they will also be looking at this object that lacks all function as you can see.

## **Glaze and how that plays a role in the conversation between Form lacking function.**

What I feel really starts to steer the viewer away from the traditional vessel is glaze but at the same time glaze it also directly referencing very traditional pottery glaze grounding back in this world of Craft ceramics.

All of the pieces are using a combination of Pottery glazes (like floating Blue or the fo Celcodon) you see throughout my work and sculptural glazes with high vibrant colors that range in texture from large gloop, crawling and foaming glazes.

## **Talk about why i chose to include Drawings**

I want to talk a bit more about the inclusion of these drawings, there are a few reasons why I chose to create and display these

black and white ink drawings. First being they take away all color and allow the form itself be the star of the show, and one thing that happened with the use of all this color and texture within the sculpture, the form itself lost focus, so I felt adding these drawings could help to highlight this form again. The other reason was to allow people seeing these sculptures to have some insight into how I conceptualized these pieces from the beginning. In the early stage of this work I created many sketches to help me visualize how to create what I was imagining, not only did this sketch help me construct the work I also felt they became pieces of their own.

## **The shared Goals of the Artist i talked about and my own when thinking of how this art exist**

One of the connections I have made with my work and the artist that I found inspiring when making this work, is this shared interest in how the work will be received. The artist i referenced we're really making things to be enjoyed by people and to spark curiosity and that is really what i

what people to feel when looking this work. I what them to wonder how it was made or if everything was intentional.

**Whats does this work Mean to Me and How has that evolved of the course making this.**

**Why did I choose to show all of the work I made.**

**What make a Successful/Unsuccessful piece**