



Brenna Kossnar

Fall 2023

Capstone - Pottery

Department of Art and Art History

Artist Statement:

I see my ceramic sculptures as abstract vessels that create the space for a fluid dialogue between themselves and the audience. I create work from a compulsion that allows each piece to become what feels right in the moment. The act of making the art is equally important as the final product. While I manipulate the clay, I am also allowing the clay to manipulate the outcome by moving how the clay naturally wants to move. At the same time, I also like to push what the clay can do, this can be seen in some of these pieces where the extremities are hanging far from center, causing cracking and instability. While working, my mind flips between being completely present with my piece and having the space to focus on something else. I have found this gives me creative freedom, and I let myself truly explore what the clay has to offer.

The craftsmanship of each piece is important to my practice because it signifies the growth of applied knowledge and an advancement in skill. Working with my hands, directly with clay is one of my favorite parts of the process. For this series I used a coiling method which allows for quick height. For the larger vessels I built multiple sections of a piece at once. This discipline allows me to build quicker than I could by building linearly. After letting multiple pieces stiffen to a leather hard stage I score and slip them together into one form. I then could make manipulations to the body, how it leans, contours, added details. During this stage I had multiple other vessels started. I have found working on a few vessels in tandem allows the pieces to form a relationship, they seem to better communicate to each other when made at the same time. The altering of the forms is the most creatively free step, where I can give each piece their own personality.

While my work is abstract, and fueled by the material, I also find inspiration from the natural world. Some elements are inspired by trees and rot, coral animals, bugs, and human bodies. Reimagining natural elements evokes the juxtaposition between the ethereal and the hyperphysical materiality of clay. Inspiration is also found with early mid twentieth century potters. Peter Voulkos' abstract vessels are very large and playful, unlike anything else seen in this material at that time. The work of Claude Horan references the human body while being free from the academic representation of what a body should look like.

Technical Statement:

I used a stoneware clay body with 15% fine grog, and 15% course grog to add stability to the clay body.

Glazes: Spotty Green: VC 71 with 2% Copper Carbonate, and 2% Rutile

Ginger's New Black: Custer Feldspar 52%, Silica 18%, Whiting 17%, Gertsley Borate 13% + Red Iron Oxide 8 %, Cobalt Carbonate 2%, Chrome Oxide 1%

Floating Orange: Nepheline Syenite 37%, Silica 23%, Sodium Borate 15%, Kaolin 11.5%, Whiting 8.5%, Talc 5% + Magnesium Dioxide 4%, Rutile 4%, Bentonite 2%, Red Iron Oxide 2%

Matte Sage Green: Turner Beauty, + 4% Sage Gray Mason Stain

Title	Original Format
Figure 1: Spined Body 1	Stoneware
Figure 2: Spined body 2	Stoneware
Figure 3: Spined Body 3	Stoneware
Figure 4: Coral 1	Stoneware
Figure 5: Coral 2	Stoneware
Figure 6: Decay 1	Stoneware
Figure 7: Decay 2	Stoneware
Figure 8: Reaching 1	Stoneware
Figure 9: Reaching 2	Stoneware
Figure 10: Reaching 3	Stoneware



Figure 1: Spined Body 1



Figure 2: Spined body 2



Figure 3: Spined Body 3



Figure 4: Coral 1



Figure 5: Coral 2



Figure 6: Decay 1



Figure 7: Decay 2



Figure 8: Reaching 1



Figure 9: Reaching 2



Figure 10: Reaching 3