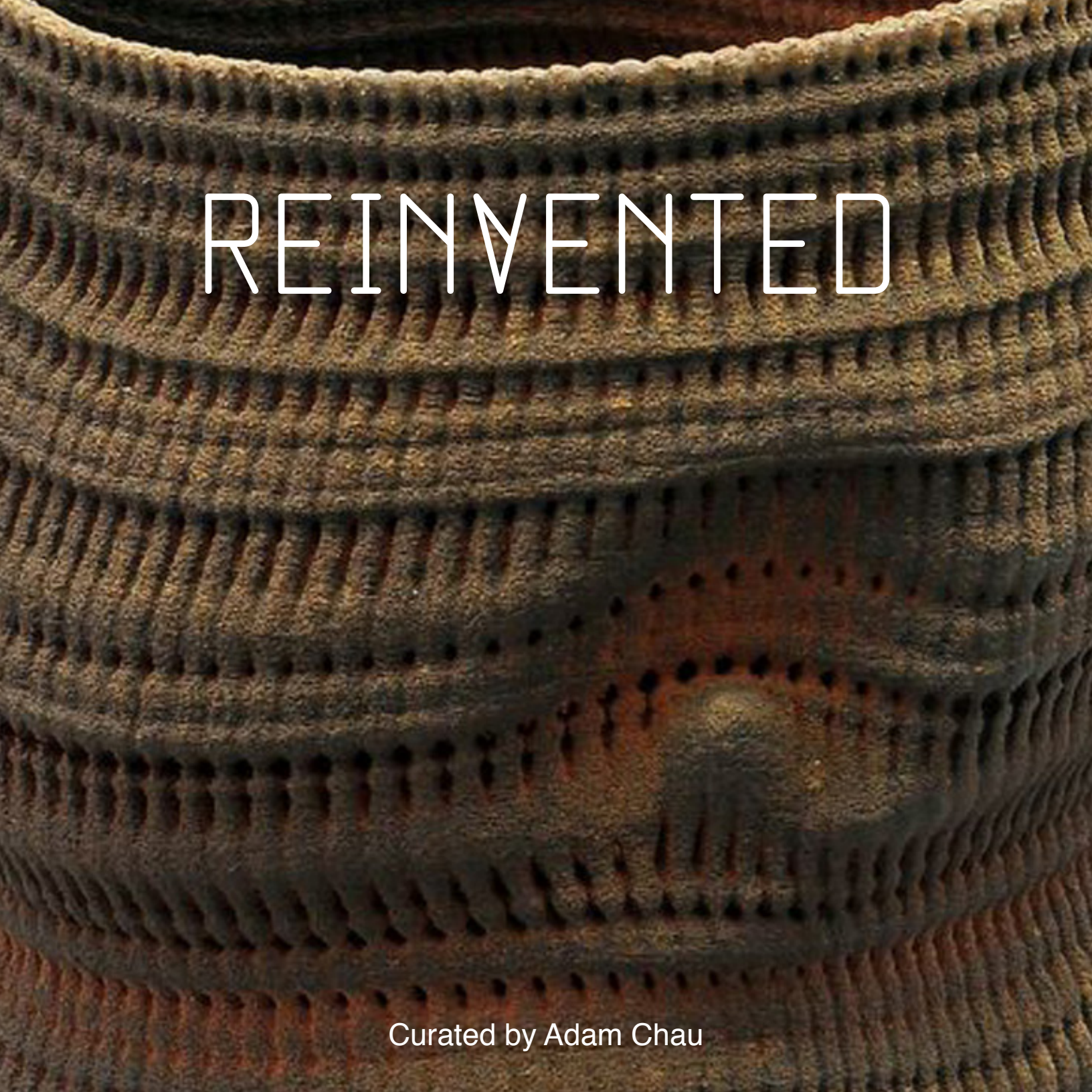

REINVENTED

Curated by Adam Chau

CLAY ART CENTER
1957 - 2017

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REINVENTED was first conceived as a way to cross-pollinate ideas between industrial designers and artists. My frustrations with design stemmed from the lack of emotive and gestural qualities coming from industrial products, while at the same time ceramic artists seemed to be technologically behind production methods of the industry. My research in the subject of digital craft, which started in 2012, opened up a new world to me that turned out not to be a new discussion; Malcolm McCullough's 1996 book, Abstracting Craft, examines how the digital can be seen as a medium in which agents become craftsmen when working with it. It's important to show that these technologies aren't necessarily 'emerging', as the CNC milling machine has been in use since the 1950's and was a progressive evolution from analog machines - the same with many other crafts such as textiles.

My inquiry into the digital began to reveal individuals who were hybridising the two fields of design and craft. I found educational leaders in the field such as Dr. Katie Bunnell, who founded Autonomatic, a design cluster at Falmouth University where research circulates around the possibilities of craft in digital technology. I also discovered that prominent ceramic artists were already dipping into digital manufacturing, like Chris Gustin and his poignant 3d printed teabowls, which stemmed from his simple observation of people talking into his pots to hear resonant sounds. Each of the 13 artists included in this exhibit have an acute understanding of the progression of craft and how to mediate technologies to produce truly contemporary and compelling objects.

ADAM CHAU
Program Manager, Clay Art Center

The concept at the core of REINVENTED is to examine technology as the locus between craft and design. Digital technology has been inherently tied to craft since its inception. The Jacquard Loom is considered the direct precursor to our modern computing systems. Cards were punched with holes that could then guide, or be 'read' by, the loom to weave the preprogrammed patterns in much the same way that we can now program a 3D printer to produce a complex form directly in clay.
The technological innovation of the Jacquard Loom caused a shift in the means of production at the beginning of the 19th century. From these early stages of the Industrial Revolution concern was raised about how best to integrate technology and craft production. Fears of the loss of craft, skill, and tradition created a backlash that gave rise to the Arts and Crafts Movement. That group was the precursor to the Modern Craft Movement. Therefore, in many ways, technological advances produced the Contemporary Craft world as we know it today, and yet we still struggle with the same concerns.

At no other time have artists been better able to obtain new technologies and use creative thinking to produce work in new ways. The innovation that comes from artists using their high level creativity to intersect with technology can create great works of art as well as pathways to solutions to our modern world issues.

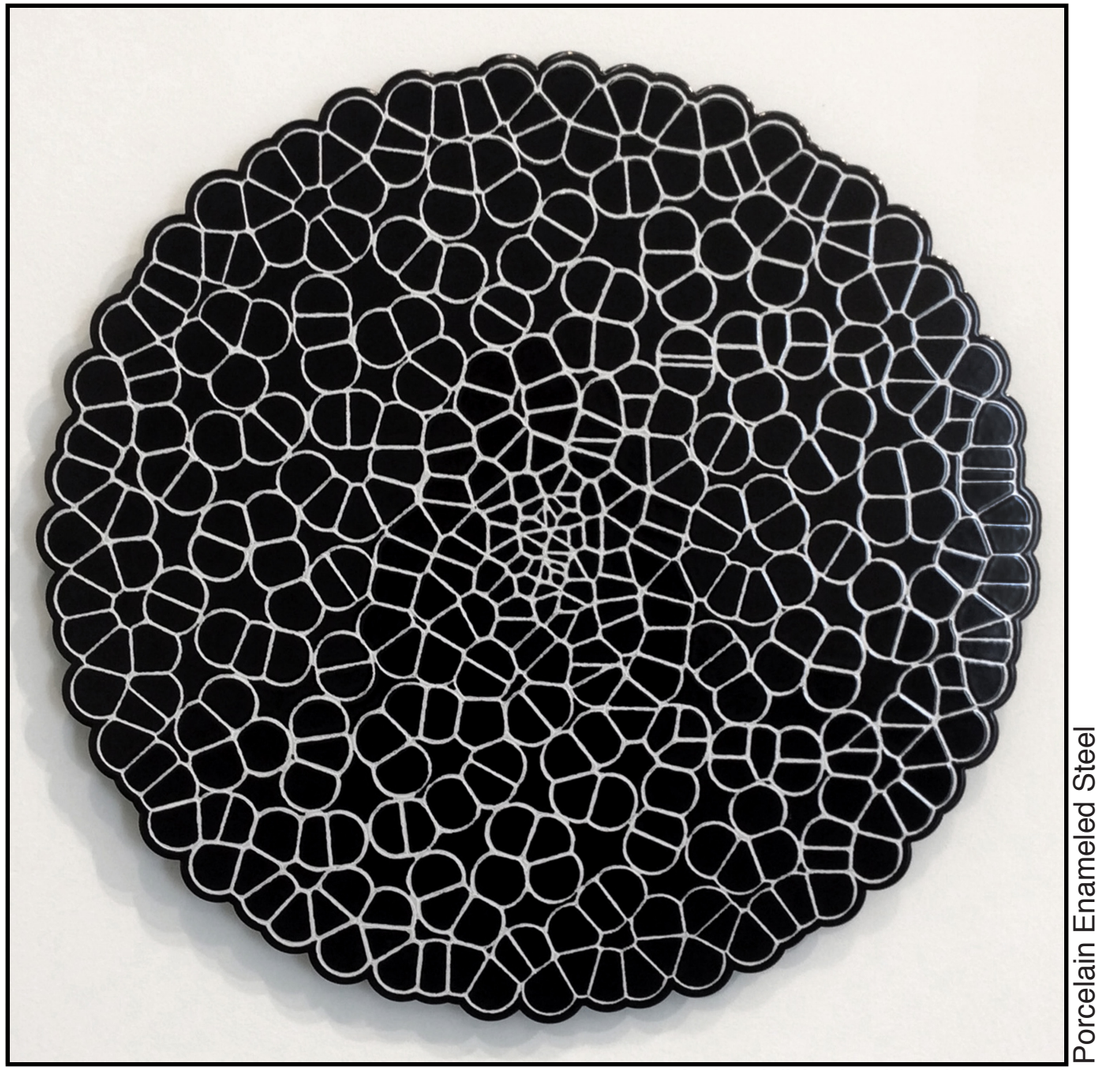
Technology has been inexorably linked to craft since the Industrial Revolution and before. Today, we are experiencing a renaissance moment as the historical tensions between craft, design, and technology have dissipated and access is at a high point. REINVENTED illustrates the burst of innovation in art and culture produced by a deepening connection between craft and digital technology.

JENNIFER ZWILLING
Director of Artistic Programs, The Clay Studio

ANDY BRAYMAN

Brayman's interests in digital production is not limited to one process or methodology. Both prototyping and production utilize technology to achieve surface results that are truly one-of-a-kind. Within a series there are gradients of effects that proposes objects as in-flux, where there are multiple outcomes to any single process. This type of working highlights the capability that technology can provide - a way of creating rapid results.

Brayman uses archetypes such as the vase to let an audience access the work; this sets up an entry to talk about the intent of an artist/designer when producting objects. Brayman's graphic illustrations are often computer generated, eliminating decisions typicaly made by the creator, but also making an opportunity for new ways to compose.



Porcelain Enameled Steel
Photo courtesy of Haw Contemporary

Untitled (black with white lines)

JEREMY BROOKS

Brooks combines traditional Shino glazes with the imagery of advertisements for Shino-brand underwear. While an application of Shino glaze can denote mastery in ceramics due to its uncontrollable surfaces, Brooks parodies the masculine nature in the field of woodfiring with homo-erotic imagery of male underwear. The photo-realistic digital decal is an abrupt juxtaposition to something otherwise seen as traditional studio pottery.

An overt satire of masculinity sublimates a deeper change in paradigm; the digital. The shino surface compliments the decal with iron spots and gradients of color suggesting skin; an effect met to the fullest as an illustrative representation of of the body might not convey the heaviness of patriarchal issues.

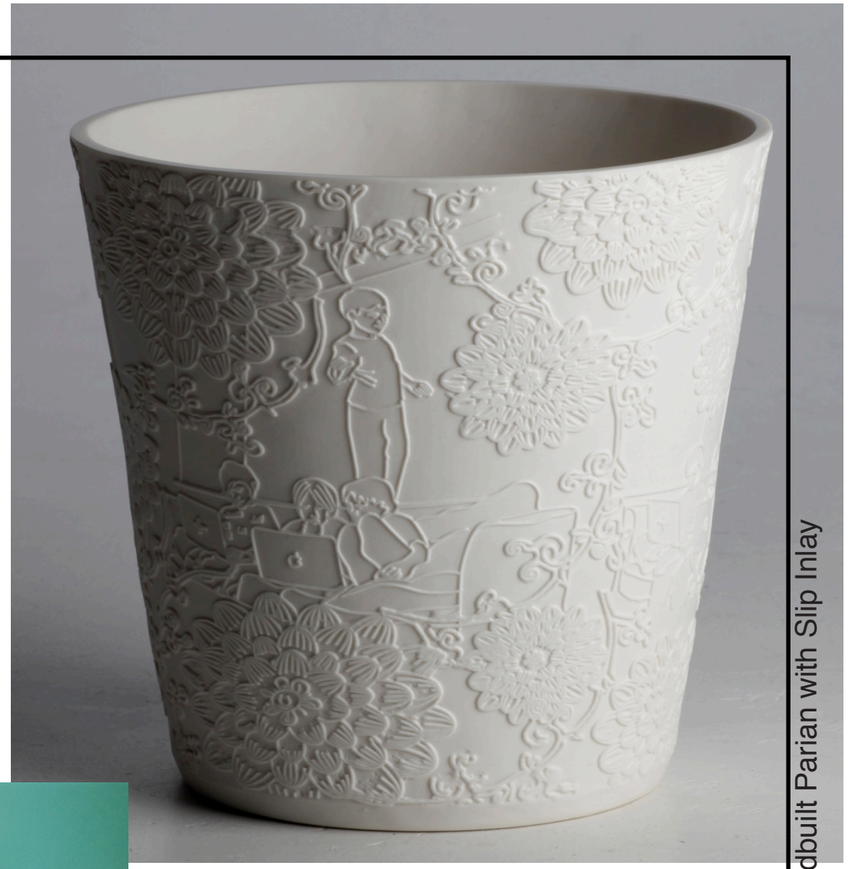
Shinowear (Brief)

Stoneware, Shino Glaze (^10 woodfired), Digital Ceramic Decal

KATIE BUNNEL
PH.D.

Bunnell's relief imagery on her ceramic objects reference both the historic and the digital. In Minecrafting, the figures depicted are engaging with a digital environment while surrounded by large floral imagery. This collage of aesthetics is unified with line-thickness. The process of making this vessel involves hand-drawing illustrations that were then converted into toolpaths to be CNC milled and ultimately slipcast. Bunnell exploits the machined toolpath to create an organic line, showing that the mediation between the hand and machine is a collaborative process.

For the Chongonka series, Bunnell used a 3-axis slip extruder to print a relief image onto plaster. Another color slip was then poured onto the whole image to create a slab that was then folded into the round. This creates an inversed graphic effect compared to Minecrafting.



Left: Cast and Handbuilt Parian with Slip Inlay
Right: Cast Parian

Left: Chongonka
Right: Minecrafting

BRIAN CAPONI

Tape casting involves the suspension of clay in a polymer so it can be worked as a pliable sheet. Caponi utilizes this process by laser cutting architectural blueprints and draping the sheets over molds while firing in a kiln. This creates an organic form that has a spatial reference implying a fluidity in memory of a space.

Two versions of Line and Certainty are displayed, one of Clay Art Center and one of The Clay Studio. While in separate containment, the close proximity of the pieces makes a visual parallel between environments of art-making. The objects, abstracted from the clean and legible lines of its origin, contort into an ethereal (and fragile) substance that makes one aware of the walls and hallways surrounding themselves.

Laser cut Porcelain Tape-Cast, Plexiglass, Drywall, Steel

Line and Certainty

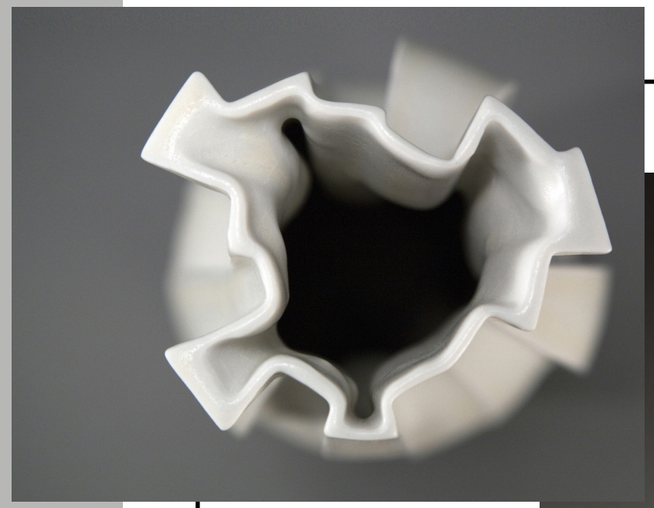
BRYAN CZIBESZ
+
SHAWN SPANGLER

With an extrusion-based 3d printer, Czibesz 3d prints volumetric clay forms that are then given to Spangler to handbuild, throw, and glaze onto. The combination of printing and handwork have a symbiotic relationship where one process could not function without the other. New surfaces and forms are found through this collaborative relationship; the pieces shown have inverse textures from one another, highlighting the capabilities of 3d printing. Minimal glazing creates a visual distinction between the digital and analog, which compartmentalizes each singular process into a clear aesthetic vocabulary.

Hand built and 3d Printed Porcelain, Glaze

Precis Series

SHARAN ELRAN



Cast Porcelain

Unlimited Series

“My goal with this project is to create a unique art piece for every person on earth. For this purpose I designed a mold comprised of 14 different pieces that can be re-arranged in a different sequence before each cast. The total number of unique permutations is 6,227,020,800 which roughly correlates to the current world population.” – Sharan Elran

Elran’s interest in the global population is inherently connected with the digital population; without the internet the evolution of global trade would not be in its present form. Each mold section is modeled digitally, milled (negative form), cast (positive form), and cast again for a slipcasting mold. This system of working is reminiscent of DNA strands and proposes more flexible manufacturing methods than what is currently available on an industrial level.

BRETT FREUND

Freund has described the evolution of his process with digital manufacturing as one that grew out of the mastery of 3d printing, and ultimate disinterest shortly afterwards. As with other processes, developing a foundational knowledge can then grow into innovative methods.

Molds are taken from 3d printed sections in order to attach non-digital components. Conglomerating new surfaces this way makes it indiscernible to any particular process, let alone a digital one as the horizontal lines that are the calling card of 3d printing is abstracted into a finer graphic line, as well as the smooth interior creating a different textural surface. This is an interesting comparison with the Czibesz/Spangler works as Freund has chosen to blend the seams and boundaries in every step.

Cast Porcelain

Proto Pots

CHRIS GUSTIN

"I asked Titilayo Ngwenya, a wonderful singer, to sing into my vessels. We recorded her voice and used the sound patterns as a building block for the 3d prints. We made the sound waves into 3d cylinders on the computer using Maya and then manipulated them into tea bowl forms. I brought them back to my studio in Dartmouth, MA, and fired them in my anagama wood kiln. I was interested in taking a 21st century technology and mixing it up with a 16th century firing process.

This entire project was a good one for me, getting me thinking in ways that opened a new door with my work. I think the difficulty in 3d printing is how you bring the process into your work, where the technology offered actually adds to the ideas you're working with. Most 3d printing that I see does not have a lot of connection to ideas; it seems more tech based, more about the wow. That's what is interesting; how to reconcile the process with the ideas." – Chris Gustin

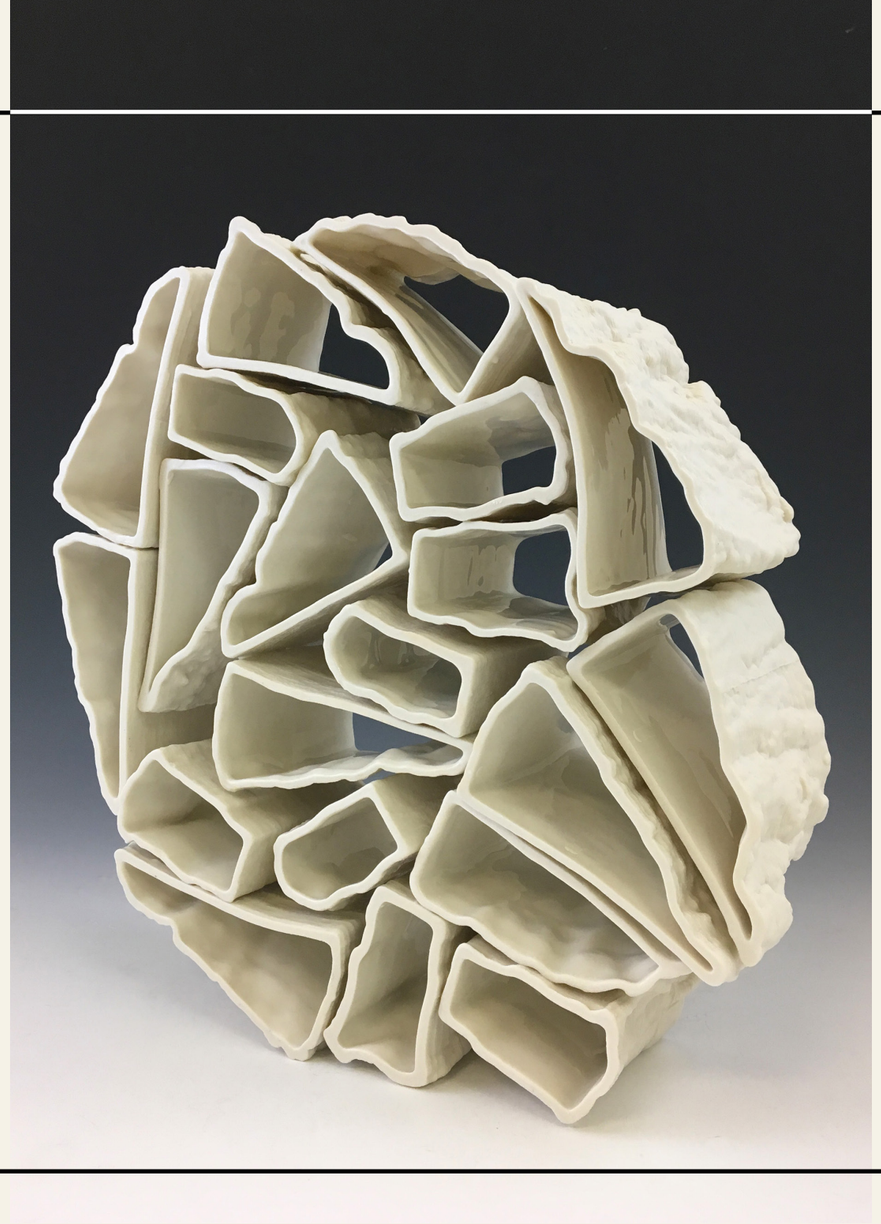
3D printed, Stoneware Clay, Anagama Wood Fired

Soundwave Tea Bowl

MIA MULVEY

Mulvey utilizes photogrammetry (combining multiple photographs to create a 3d model) of organic objects to use as her conceptual material. Slice is made of several models of discarded lumber and rearranged together to reference a full ring of wood. Each piece is 3d printed, which a mold is then taken for slipcasting. This work may imply how sections of data are needed to complete a whole. Using natural objects in combination with digital technology leads into a new territory as digital aesthetics historically have clean and rigid geometry.

Contingent to Slice is Mulvey's ongoing series, Mapping Ancient Trees. Data is collected from 3d scanning trees like the ancient oak in the Nordskov Forest, Denmark called Kongeegan, or The King's Oak, said to be the oldest living oak in Europe with an estimated age of over 1500 years.



Slipcast Porcelain from 3d Scanned and Printed Data

Slice

MEGUMI NAITOH

Naitoh has developed a technique titled Orime Ware, which is made with 3d models and an Origami like technique combined with slipcasting. Naitoh 3d models a form and then digitally unfolds it into a 2d pattern; it is then printed, refolded, cast in plaster, and then slipcast.

Not only is the technique based on innovative digital processes, the content is also ripe with commentary on the digital world. Open source digital models have their own search engines, which Naitoh searches everything from Mushrooms to Peaches, and consequently comes up with natural peaches and Princess Peach from Super Mario, a popular video game. This pulling of engine searches shows how linked objects can be – highlighting how we ourselves make connections with different objects.

Porcelain, Wire

Basket of Mushrooms

PAUL SCOTT
PH.D.

Scott's methodology for artistic creation starts with found objects that have historic resonance. Most recently his subject matter has turned to the 2014 invasion of Palestine. Using an 1840 ceramic platter depicting Gaza, Scott erases half of the idyllic landscape and replaces it with a present-day war-torn image. The juxtaposition of image treatment drives the stark contrast of how war changes physical and emotional landscapes. The use of a digital photo brings in a journalistic approach to the subject, making the platter a photo archive of past and present.

"The crack represents the state of Gaza; I've repaired it by adding gold because there's a lot of money to be made for people selling arms. The gold alludes to the wealth being created by the war and questions the state of affairs."
– Paul Scott

In-glaze Decal, Gold Luster, Adams Palestine Platter c. 1840
Courtesy Ferrin Contemporary

Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s): Palestine, Gaza

JOEY WATSON

At first glance Watson's ceramic objects do not immediately connote an aesthetic of digital manufacturing. The whimsical color combinations and flamboyant protrusions from each vessel shows a playfulness by design. Each component is, however, made through various digital processes such as CNC milling for moldmaking. The finish of the object is made in such a way that the "digitalness" is eradicated so the viewer can digest the composition without a subjective perception over craft hierarchy. This clever strategy shows a brighter future for technology-based artists and designers as the finished object is not chained to its process.

Pigmented Porcelain, Glaze

Cups and Straws

Andy Brayman
Kansas City, KS
www.matterfactory.com

Jeremy Brooks
Carbondale, IL
www.klai-body.com

Katie Bunnell, Ph.D.
United Kingdom
www.autonomatic.co.uk

Brian Caponi
Michigan
www.brian-caponi.com

Bryan Czibesz
New Paltz, NY
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Shawn Spangler
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Sharan Elran
Brooklyn, NY
www.sharanism.com

Brett Freund
Minneapolis, MN
www.brettfreundportfolio.com

Chris Gustin
South Dartmouth, MA
www.gustinceramics.com

Mia Mulvey
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www.miamulvey.com

Megumi Naitoh
Boston, MA
www.meguminaitoh.com

Paul Scott, Ph.D.
Cumbria, UK
www.cumbrianblues.com
Ferrin Contemporary
www.ferrincontemporary.com

Joey Watson
Kansas City, MO
www.joeywatsonspecialties.cool

Clay Art Center is a nationally recognized non-profit center for the advancement and practice of the ceramic arts, in Port Chester, New York. Founded in 1957 by Katherine Choy and Henry Okamoto, our half century of growth and expansion has kept us serving the arts community with studio space and exhibition opportunities, and engage the public and foster new artists through classes for children and adults of all levels. Believing strongly that the arts has the ability to touch and enrich lives; Clay Art Center's mission is to offer a stimulating space for studio practice, exhibition and educational opportunities to better serve the community.

Founded in 1974 by five artists in need of workspace, The Clay Studio was envisioned as a stepping stone for students fresh out of art school, offering affordable studio space and shared equipment. Within a short time, however, Clay Studio artists consciously shifted the Studio's mission from an inward focus to an outward educational and community focus. It was the artists' intention to affirm the importance of the ceramic arts alongside other art forms, as well as to bring clay as an accessible, tactile medium to a broad range of people. In 1979, the Studio became a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational institution.

Design

Adam Chau
www.adamchau.com

Type

QUARTER SANS

DS Graftism

Helvetica

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