MANNINGHAM VICTORIAN CERAMIC ART AWARD 2013
Finalists Exhibition 10 July - 17 August
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The Manningham Victorian Ceramic Art Award was first established in 2009 and has been developed by Manningham Council to support Victorian studio ceramics and acknowledge the importance that ceramics has in Manningham and the region.

The biennial ceramic award and accompanying exhibition explores current Victorian ceramic art practice. This year 46 artists have been selected as finalists from across Victoria, Manningham and the other Valley of the Arts partners, including Maroondah, Nillumbik and Banyule.

Manningham Council has offered $9,000 for the Ceramic Awards:

- Victorian 1st prize Acquisitive Award ($5,000)
- Valley of the Arts Merit Acquisitive Award(s) (up to $4,000)

The acquisitions from the award form part of Manningham Council’s permanent art collection and will be displayed in public buildings across the municipality and exhibited in the Gallery’s exhibition program.

Manningham Art Gallery is recognised for its focus on ceramics and the development of Council’s public art collection. Alongside the acquisitions secured from the ceramic award, Council would like to highlight two significant holdings: The Halpern Collection gifted by Deborah Halpern and the Walker Collection gifted by David Walker of Walker Ceramics, both through the Australian Governments Cultural Gift Program.

Historically, ceramics has always been of great importance to the local community. In the mid-1800s European settlers used the heavy clay deposits from the Yarra River for domestic and functional purposes. Almost 100 years later in the 1950s, Warrandyte artists worked together to establish the artist co-operative, Potters Cottage. Many of the artists went on to become renowned for their work and were the subject of Manningham Art Gallery’s major exhibition and publication, Potters Cottage: a tribute, celebrating the launch of MC² (Manningham City Square) in 2012.

Manningham Art Gallery is delighted to have enlisted the services of David Hurlston as judge for the 2013 Manningham Victorian Ceramic Art Award. David has worked for the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) since 1993 and is currently employed as Curator, Australian Art and Co-ordinator, NGV Studio. David has curated a number of major exhibitions including, Yikwani: Contemporary Tiwi ceramics (2002-2003), and Deborah Halpern: Angel (2006). David was also responsible for the major touring exhibition Ron Mueck, which opened at NGV Australia in 2010. More recently, he curated the exhibition Thrown: Studio ceramics from the Kenneth Hood Bequest, currently on show at NGV Australia.
From David Hurlston

In the relatively short time since its inception, in 2009, the Manningham Victorian Ceramic Art Award has become one of the most important ceramic prize exhibitions in the country. It recognises excellence in the field of ceramic practice and covers the full range from functional ware through to sculptural and conceptual works.

It was a great honour to be asked to shortlist and judge this year’s award. I was impressed by the enormous number of entries and the extremely high standard overall. The range of entries was wide and reflects the diversity of contemporary ceramic practice. In making the final selection of exhibits I have tried to represent this diversity. I have also selected what I consider to be the best examples in the use of the medium.

The practice of ceramics is, I believe, at an interesting point at present. With a number of tertiary institutions no longer offering ceramics as an area of major study a changing emphasis is becoming apparent. There is a discernible shift away from a formal and disciplined approach, where the focus was on technique, towards a freer use of the medium. Artists are always pushing boundaries but it seems more are now using clay to express themselves in ways that challenge traditional concepts of form, function and process.

This year’s award bears testament to this change and I was particularly struck by the predominance of figurative work, and sculptural pieces generally, that extend the medium and reinterpret the use of glaze and other decorative effects. The inspiration for some of these appears to be based in social commentary while others are more conceptual and others again explore contemporary issues with playfulness and whimsy. The common link is an apparent freedom in process and deliberate lack of inhibition or restriction when it comes to techniques.

While there were a large number of sculptural works there were also many highly resolved wheel-thrown and functional wares submitted. Amongst these were a reassuring number that have their origins in traditional sources and that are bastions of artistry and artisanship.

Manningham and the surrounding area is widely recognised as having attracted and fostered artists since the end of the 19th century. It is particularly notable for the large numbers of potters who, from the 1950s, were drawn to the creative and semi-rural environment of the area and established studios there. With 30% of entries for the 2013 award received from artists living in the region it is clear it is still a popular haven. An aspect of the award recognises the attraction the location continues to have and offers a special prize for local artists.

Manningham City Council must be applauded for their continuing commitment to supporting ceramic artists through this important exhibition and prize. It has been a real pleasure assisting with this year’s award and I thank gallery staff and in particular Megan McEvoy for the opportunity. I commend all applicants for their endeavours and congratulate the shortlisted artists.
Over the past few years my work has been concentrating on and developing the theme of people and place. The way that people affect place, how place forms people, and how people change each other. The ceramic balls featured in my work are representations of these people and, due to the wood firing process, each ball has many varied surfaces. These surfaces reflect the many sides of our personality – some shiny and colourful and others subtle and more interesting when you look deeper into them. The use of slips, glazes and the natural ash enhances the effect. The marks on the clay are influenced by the light and shadow created by the sun flowing through the trees and on the grass outside the studio. They are graphic representations of nature, influencing my environment and myself. *Power Balance* is a reflection on those who are in positions of power – politicians, corporates and empire builders. Large people on large plinths. Some people choose power, others have it thrust upon them and this can result in a mismatch of abilities to responsibilities – the people don’t always match their plinths. This can have a massive effect on the decisions that are made – if we aren’t comfortable in our place, life can be a struggle. There is a tension between the 6 pieces, which changes regularly. Sometimes the balls are all on their plinths, sometimes they are by the side. They respond to what is happening on a day to day basis.

*Power Balance*, 2012
Stoneware, slip, glazes, wheel thrown, hand built, wood fired, 25 x 50 x 75 cm
Inspired by a dollop of cream falling off a spoon, I wanted to create an asymmetric yet perfectly balanced pendant light. *Dollop*, the result of this self-initiated project, is full of contrasts. Made from slip-cast earthenware ceramic, it is matt on the outside but glossy on the inside, slender at the top yet voluminous at the bottom, soft in appearance yet hard to the touch. For the light source, an off-the-shelf low wattage LED downlight was used. I wanted to hide a small, directional light source at the top of the shade and bounce the light downwards off the reflective internal walls. A warm white 10W Ecolume LED fits the bill, and the smooth transitioning of the light adds to the sensual, evocative mood of the light. Dripping off the ceiling, two *Dollops* work well together, as they seem to ‘talk’ to each other.

*Dollop pendant light, 2013*

earthenware, slip, slip cast, 45 x 35 x 40 cm
This piece reflects a contemporary approach to wood firing. The firing cycle has been extended, encouraging deep layers of melted wood ash to build up on the clay. These days I find myself diving into the embers and moving work around, creating my own individual expression out of the fire itself. The firing process has become an aesthetic tool and the division between technique and idea has become blurred.
This work explores the purity in clay, the relationship between malleable clay, raw material additions and fire. This piece is a reflection of belonging and experiencing. It represents the connections between certainty and the indefinite. I have examined over the past 15 years the connections between flame, carbon, oxygen and wood varieties and the raw materials I dig from the ground and have learnt how to find a level of certainty. These are constantly challenged and often enhanced by the indefinite effects of woodfiring. This connection intrigues me and guides my work. Form and balance are always constant considerations of mine when making, as is the aesthetic appearance and the art of capturing and maintaining the malleable qualities of the clay.

Standing Tall, 2013
local clay, quartz stone, hand thrown, fired in anagama kiln, 62 x 23 x 23 cm
Dialogue – to engage in an informal exchange of views. My current work looks at ways of creating relationships and dialogue between two or more pieces of work. The dialogue sought is not necessarily specific to a certain message or idea, however, open to interpretation. Unlike previous work, where the surface has been used to create this dialogue, my current work strips this element away and focuses heavily on form alone. Both positive and negative space is considered. Light also plays a vital role with this current work. I am intrigued with how lighting can transform and change the dialogue between the works, creating various moods that bring the work to life.

At Play, 2013
earthenware, gloss glaze, hand built, slab built, carved, 40 x 30 x 15 cm, Courtesy Skepsi Gallery
I am inspired by the diversity of birds and their evolution. Finely made forms that are altered softly or cut to create layers with smooth bone-like surfaces are important to my work. I am drawn to vessels and objects that have a purpose and I also like to create pieces which may be worn against the skin and are tactile. Museums of natural history often used to hide and display their collections in small drawers and the sense of discovery upon opening such a drawer appeals to me.

_Fragile Things, 2012_  
southern ice porcelain, porcelaneous stoneware, hand built, wheel thrown, altered, 7 x 30 x 15 cm
Alan Constable

Constable’s sculpture is a lyrical interpretation of a technical instrument and the artist’s finger marks can be seen clearly on the clay surface like traces of humanity. In this way, Alan Constable’s camera can be viewed as an extension of the body as much as a sculptural representation of an object.

*Not titled (blue concertina camera), 2012*
ceramic, hand built, 25 x 28 x 15 cm Courtesy Arts Project Australia
Glenn England

Living in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges I am constantly amazed by the diversity of life hidden among the leaf litter on the forest floor. It creates a haven for insects, seedlings, fungus, mosses and lichens. This is my inspiration to create a series of small environments reflecting my sense of place.

‘Forest Floor’ Group (detail), 2013
stoneware, copper glaze, hand built, 60 x 40 x 5 cm
Recently I have begun to realize that what connects seduction and disgust could be termed a social threshold. This is evident through bodily experience, which simultaneously creates separation. In the context of the body, the skin functions as a social threshold. Sara Ahmed elaborates on the skin’s ability to bring us together and separate us from each other. Skin is a very political site. It is what separates the outside from the inside and acts as a protective barrier. It is a site for pleasure and a site for pain. It has a memory and it can be a record of a life lived. I work closely with concepts of seduction and disgust to make installation-based works. These concepts are embedded in philosophy and post structural logics, where they are used to discuss identity, gender and sexuality; as a woman; as a gay woman. I do this by interrogating the sharp contrast between aesthetics and the functioning body. The mediums I use to facilitate these ideas are hair, porcelain and blown glass.

Centre of my Sinitful Earth, 2013
porcelain, hair, glass, slip cast, 20 x 40 x 60 cm, Courtesy Michael Reid Gallery
I like classic shapes and enjoy experimenting with different glazes and slips to acquire particular effects. The fusion of glazes in the red pots evoke the colours of autumn.

Autumn Vase, 2013
porcelaneous stoneware, wheel thrown, glaze on glaze decoration, reduction fired to 1300 degrees celsius, 18 x 15 x 15 cm
My work involves an exploration of elemental porcelain vessels. Through each work, I try to distil an essence of place and evoke notions of quietude and transcendence through the expressive use of glaze and its relationship to form, space and light. The Willandra dry lakes region in southern New South Wales is a World Heritage site of profound significance for its record of geological evolution and human cultural record of earliest Australians. At Lake Mungo the land has been sculpted by climatic changes spanning millennia and the vast basin, silent spaces and ephemeral effects of light, weather and time, inspire my current work. In response to this extraordinary Australian landscape – a place of great spiritual significance – I have gently altered this wheel thrown piece to evoke a poetic sense of the vast topography whilst extending the glaze matrix to achieve subtle shifts in the colour and light on the form.

Neville French

Mungo Light 7, 2012
porcelain, wheel thrown, altered, 24 x 28 x 25 cm, Courtesy Mossgreen Gallery
Still Life! Imagine That... is one of a series of works that express ideas that challenge our habitual perceptions of the world around us. The work sets out to attract and hold our attention as it expresses feelings for the natural world and the multi-faceted relationships we have with it. It is motivated by and responds to the provocation of things seen in passing. I begin by carefully selecting original objects for their associations or, more simply, because of their visual appeal. These objects are transformed through a casting process and subjected to further alterations before being assembled. The casting process itself acknowledges a potential for endless replication and directs attention to the common. This process of transformation necessitates a redesignation of the original object. In this way, the original object is not original at all but simply the subject of the final work. The various components that make up Still Life! Imagine That... generate a window into a narrative that opens up for the viewer to ponder a version of their own story.

Still Life! Imagine That..., 2013
white earthenware, slip cast, decals, platinum lustre, 35 x 45 x 30
For more than 30 years, I have lived in Australia after leaving my home country, Japan. The life in Australia has always reminded me of my origin as Japanese. My passions have been to express the emotions and feelings I have had through the life in Australia into my work. Also, tasks such as working with clay, throwing on the wheel and firing the kiln give me a sense of satisfaction through interacting with nature. They are a source of my inspiration although they can be distressing at times. I have been fascinated by the ash glaze on dark body. This work gives the feeling of harmony of movement and tranquility. I draw upon the Bizen pottery style from Japan which influences my dark surfaces and undecorated forms. I have been experimenting with various methods to fulfill my passions for pottery. I have been excited and thrilled with what I do as a potter.

Facetted vase with triangular top, 2013
stoneware, facetting, 29 x 22 x 22
Ceramics has a long tradition of referencing botanical sources for decoration and my most recent ceramic vessels respond to an interest in site specific plants. My current working method is to produce water colour paintings on paper of selected plants. I transpose the image onto bone dry, hand built vessels by applying layers of ceramic stain. As with botanical illustration, I attempt to depict the life cycle of the plant including the bud, flower, fruit, and occasional pollinating insect. Recent imagery has concentrated on plants found in remnant early colonial gardens deemed necessary for survival. This interest has recently extended to the weeds that arrived with those introduced species, weeds that have proliferated and survived in the harsh Australian climate. What is the impact of these inadvertently planted species and how will they change the natural landscape? My recent vessels attempt to bring such plants into sharper focus and allow us to consider their impact as the landscape adapts to climate change and increased habitation. I like to think of these as useful objects complemented by informative drawings, with a healthy nod to the decorative tradition instilled in utilitarian objects.

Flemington Lemon Water Pitcher, 2012
earthenware, porcelain slip, coil built, porcelaine slip, decorated with slips and stains, 36 x 43 x 18 cm
Courtesy Mossgreen Gallery
Peter Hook

This work represents the haptic influences of the landscape, materials, and cultural and spiritual influences of life, home and travel. From Regional Victoria (with its weathered and rustic materials and traditions) to Asia (where images are often simple), bold communications reflect tradition stretching back to antiquity, with instructions to the Westerner concerned with life’s spiritual dimensions. NAGA represents powerful, long living beings (usually residing in water in the form of serpents and the like) as guardians of the ancient Buddhist scriptures. On a personal level, the image refers to childhood encounters of giant Murray Cod, with memories of its presence and projected wisdom and antiquity.

NAGA, 2013
clay, wood, found objects, press moulded and modelled, multi-fired, underglaze, stains and oxides, earthenware fired, 150 x 100 x 30 cm
I focus on the problem of translating the idea of the satirical or animated cartoon into a complex three dimensional form. Through the process of slip casting I create inter-related 3D cartoons featuring caricatured images of public figures engaging with each other and with the viewer. Sporting arenas, the circus and Hollywood blockbusters offer metaphorical sites for politicians such as Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard and Tony Abbot to compete for their survival. By placing our favourite politicians in bizarre and ridiculous scenarios that borrow heavily from popular culture, I aim to highlight the interaction between the carnivalisation of our cultural experiences, and the increasingly debased character of political debate. By using ceramic to create the familiar in the form of toys and dolls, my work involves the deployment of the innocent, the incongruous and the seemingly banal, as a means of communicating with the viewer in less didactic and more playful terms. Also, by making these comedic pieces in ceramic, I hope to elevate them from lowbrow to highbrow art, changing them from mass-produced kitsch or toys to precious works. While casting a disparaging eye on the world, the work retains a playful, humorous edge. I am not interested in producing depressing or macabre images. Rather, my work sends up and parodies the status quo as though we are glimpsing it through a funfair’s distorted mirror.

*Duel 2013*, 2013
stoneware, porcelain slip, decals, lustres, mixed media, slip cast from self made moulds, hand altered, fired four times, cone 7, 18 x 110 x 18 cm
After a winter spent on Mount Buller, surrounded by the whiteness of the snowy landscape, coming down the mountain to Mansfield in the spring was like stepping from a black and white film into technicolour. The result was a strong urge to play with coloured slips in a riotous and painterly manner. Textures still inform my work, with various techniques such as resist and sgraffito being used to create a layering of colour.

Carnivale, 2013
southern ice porcelain, stains, glaze, wheel thrown, stained slip, glazed and polished, 16 x 51 x 51 cm
These trees are magnificent, but even more magnificent is the sublime and moving space between them, as though with their growth it too increased, poet Rainer Maria Rilke wrote. In my art, I am interested in the presence of my work in its environment and the ways in which it is affected by the work itself. There is a relationship between intimate space and landscape that is alluded to in the placement of forms. The sculpture operates dualistically as both a dimensional space and as an image.

Kate Jones

Dominion, 2013
terracotta clay, terra sigillata, hand built, 60 x 30 x 18 cm
In my current work, figures and objects create a strong narrative capturing fleeting moments and revealing a network of masked identities, fragmented conversations and hidden emotions. I often utilise collected images and objects of our environment to explore the persona and emotional associations with our immediate environment and memories, both real and invented. I am interested in using the figure as a cultural object to project a narrative of surreal reality – a super reality. My work is strongly character-driven and deliberately shifts relationships between human and animal. The symbolism is multi-layered and invites the viewer to embed and integrate personal experiences and memories within the work and actively participate within the piece. This work is infused with symbolism and it personifies imaginary dialogues, deliberately shifting relationships between human and animal qualities while drifting in and out of an augmented reality. Different characters and personalities are captured in a fleeting moment to reveal a network of masked identities, fragmented conversations and hidden emotions. Focusing on the micro the work draws our attention to the small details which are often overlooked. This microcosm highlights the transformation and personification of such images as a means of making sense of our surroundings, our environment and ultimately ourselves.

*Wild Thing*, 2012
ceramic, glazes, hand built, slip cast, altered, multi-fired, 34 x 33 x 19 cm
I am interested in how a particular sense of place is conveyed in ceramics. For the past few years I have been drawn to the urban iconography of freeways. My inspiration derives from frequent travel, often at dusk, along the Western Highway. The soft haze of twilight dissolves the heavy traffic, streetlights and road signs into a richer more ambiguous landscape. In this diffuse half-light these ordinary, even banal, vistas are transformed into landscapes of unexpected and fleeting beauty. Working from reference photographs, I use this imagery as the starting point to produce elemental ceramic vessels that explore notions of mood and atmosphere.

Urban Light, Winter, 2012
stoneware, hand built, reduction fired, 31 x 29 x 13 cm
Humankind has evolved within the natural world. I reason, therefore, that if one can utilise nature’s design rules then the product will rest easy on the human eye that has evolved with it. As the so called ‘golden mean’ or ‘phi’ seems to be what nature uses, each piece is made with this in mind as a guide to structure, with the plastic nature of the clay and the intended glaze contributing to the final form. I constantly work with the ratios of a form’s elements in mind. Thus, much of my work could perhaps be classed as ‘engineered’ structures, with the calculated rhythm of a wave formed rim, and the careful forming of a bowl shape coming close to perhaps a sine wave, a catenary or parabolic curve. Some may see these forms as clinical in their calculated aesthetic, but they are informed by nature as the mathematics behind them is simply the mathematics that falls out of the natural world when we study it. It is the Cartesian mathematics of Descartes, Newton, Venturi and others who simply observed nature in fine detail and sought to explain it in the language of numbers. With an understanding of these rules and a piece constructed to them, I can then break those rules to move beyond this clinical thoughtful foundation and add creative flair unbounded by them. A piece that comes from the soul is thus able to stand proud, as it rests on a solid footing.

Splash 3, 2013
porcelaneous stoneware, wheel thrown, turned, carved and sculpted, 10 x 54 x 54 cm
The journey through years of working with clay has for me mainly been inspired by nature and I continue to explore new ideas using various materials and techniques. The porcelain shapes are displayed in groups or singularly without utilitarian purposes. The interiors have colourful glazes applied and the exteriors remain unglazed with a smooth finish contrasting with the brown of the shelf. Many pieces reference vessels others are more sculptural. Some resemble flower buds or something found in the sea and all are intended to be contemplated purely for the forms, delicacy and relationship between shapes. The method of making is hand forming or pinching except for one piece which is wheelthrown. This technique is both simple and challenging, but also satisfying to accomplish.


Memento Argil for Andy and Ida, 2013
porcelain, wood, hand built, pinched, wheel thrown; shelves by Andrew Potocnik, 21 x 60 x 8 cm
This work speaks of the hundreds of Aboriginal men who were hung for so-called ‘stealing sheep’. In remembering these atrocities, in acknowledging these past wrongs, we avoid repeating the past.

Robyne Latham

Drop, 2013
stoneware, bone, trace wire, saggar fired, 40 x 30 x 30 cm
Vanessa Lucas

A single smooth dark stone among rough grey rocks on a deserted beach in Tasmania suggested the form of these jugs and the dark satin glaze. The jug series has emerged with variations from the primary immutable form, each descending shape seeming to fall naturally from the largest vessel.

Stone Jugs, 2013
porcelain, slip cast, 26 x 46 x 24 cm, Courtesy Woodbine Art
Chris Mason

This work of voluptuously large women is representative of Mason’s style and curiosities. It also demonstrates his level of sophistication within his ceramic practice. This work of Mason’s renders the exterior and underlying structure of the female body and form.

Not titled (two seated nudes), 2012
ceramic, hand built, 18 x 28 x 28 cm, Courtesy Arts Project Australia
I have always wanted to “make”, whether the materials were fabric for clothing or a patchwork quilt, clay for pots, or found objects remodelled or refurbished to return their beauty or function. My passion for working with clay is both enhanced and challenged by troubleshooting and the ‘what ifs’ of this alchemic craft. Most of my ceramic work has been inspired by the seascape of the Great Barrier Reef and bear some resemblance to coral. Charles Darwin described the tropical reef as an ‘oasis in the desert of the ocean’. My *Florid Sessilea* has an abstract resemblance to bleached coral. The delicate leaves surround the bud to form a fragile island or maybe a tangible oasis! My main artistic work is expressed in the sculptured clay medium. These pieces are intended as engaging curiosities that beg the viewer to walk around and around and look inside, and then look some more.

*Florid Sessilea*, 2013
southern ice porcelain, hand built, wheel thrown, altered, fired in an electric kiln, 20 x 40 x 40 cm
From earliest times, humankind has sought to capture the very essence of animals in art – from the enigmatic cave paintings of Lascaux to the indigenous Kimberley rock art through to stunning Egyptian life-scapes and beyond. Art, ancient and contemporary, continues to examine and explore the very nature of animals and their relationship to us. Jock is an inextricable part of our complex menagerie.

Darren McGinn

Jock Koons, 2012
earthenware, coil built, applied surface decoration, 33 x 20 x 30 cm
Utensils have been used by man for millennia. They are useful, practical objects, but the use of tools and utensils is not unique to humans; in fact gorillas, chimpanzees, elephants and birds have been observed using stones, twigs and bone shards to help obtain a desired object or substance. Today, we regard table manners and the ability to wield cutlery as a mark of sophistication. This series of utensils removes all pretention of sophistication in that they are basic, verging on crude, yet as a group, make an elegant statement where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Tracy Muirhead

Utensils, (detail) 2013
porcelain, mount, hand built, 30 x 104 x 4 cm
Last Touch is a ceramic work that includes five sinuous growth forms emerging from a mound of coral-like rubble. This work represents a fragile reef as an ‘other world’ impacted by ocean acidification processes of bleaching and erosion. I invite the viewer to touch the sculptural elements as an immersive experience. This offers the viewer a new way of exploring climate change impacts, as though for the first time.

Fiona Murphy

Last Touch, 2013
raku clay, matt and satin glazes, interior wood support, hand built, 86 x 130 x 120 cm
My work aims to unravel the association between white textures set against different coloured backgrounds and explores shellac techniques with the embossed designs set against the different backgrounds. The embossed work changes its image when placed in a different environment. My free flowing designs are inspired by the art of henna painting, designs that fade and hide within each other, adding colour to the hands that adorn it. When the dry paste is removed it reveals a splash of colour which enhances the delicate and graceful pattern. In this set of two complementary bowls I have chosen a bright copper red glaze and a mottled green to highlight the contrast between the two colours when set against the pattern. The white design strikes out and demands to be noticed. The dilemma here is does the colour of the vessel enhance the design or does the design strike out from within the colour? The shape of the bowls create a space which integrates the delicate designs and enhances and adds another dimension to the visual.

*Fire & Earth*, 2013
southern ice porcelain, wheel thrown, etched design, 9 x 45 x 26 cm
An urban legend tells of Tibbles, an English domestic cat introduced to Stephens Island in 1894, who wiped out an entire bird species – the Stephen Island Wren. Here Tibbles, modelled in the style of the pianist in the 18th century Meissen Monkey Band, is taking a journey to Uluru on the back of a Lesser Bilby, a species now considered to be extinct. In this piece, Tibbles is the epitome of the great crusader, the early settler, the victorious explorer. The Bilby carries the cat to the “red centre” where it is possible that he will not return. This is a story of survival and adaption at a huge cost. My art explores the human condition and our impact on the natural world. My figures embody human and animal traits with semi-autobiographical references to investigate concepts relating to identity and home. I focus on the extinct, the pest, the endangered and the introduced as a way to reveal my concerns of humanity as creator and destroyer.
Using ceramic sculptures, my work examines the physicality of objects from the constructed world and how their movements and function translate into experiences of the internal and emotional. Through a process of mold-making and slip casting I create ceramic reproductions of original objects. Engineered structures that are self-supporting through systems of leverage, tension and counter balance are rendered to the point where fragility and strength are inseparable. The smaller, delicate porcelain sculptures stand self-consciously as a testimony to the strength and assuredness of the original. With the fine detail and imperfections erased through glazing and firing, the casts become ghostly, pared-back representations of something that used to exist. Intrinsic to casting is the idea of the multiple. From a single negative an endless amount of positives can be produced. But just like a photograph, one is only ever seeing a memory that is bias, constructed and incomplete.

*Ceramic Chairs*, 2013
earthenware slip, slip cast, 80 x 150 x 150 cm
My work entitled Témpanos (‘icebergs’ in Spanish) was inspired by the scenery within the Los Glaciares National Park in Patagonia, south of Argentina. The majestic masses of ice move along the water inviting to contemplate and appreciate the beauty that nature offers us. The deep silence is only interrupted by the soaring noise of the icebergs breaking into the deep blue pristine waters. Though the imposing glaciers give an image of strength, in recent years, due to the consequences of global warming, their fragility has become known. Through my work I intend to represent the fragility as well as the beauty of this area with the hope to motivate the viewer to be mindful of what can be done to protect it.

Témpanos, 2013
porcelain, rice paper, refractory brick, slip cast, gauze, paper, ribbon dipped in porcelain slip, incised, carved, 25 x 130 x 30 cm
Anglesea is a celebration of the coastal landscape using the tradition of blue and white ceramic decoration that evokes the contrast of sea, sky and sand. The additions to the main form echo the repeated shapes of the cliffs as they jut into the sea and the laced cutaways at the top of the piece allude to the patterns of erosion by the surf on the rocks and other recurring marine forms.

Anglesea, 2013
white stoneware, underglaze decoration, coil built, 33 x 37 x 37 cm
People often ask me “is it the making or the decorating that you enjoy the most?” When I start with a lump of clay the making becomes the most important thing and I am consumed by it. When I have a piece in front of me, it’s my passion for decorating that takes over and I am in my element. In the piece Cheese Dome I hope to bring together two crafts, the cheese maker and the potter, where dedication and artistry produce joy for the table.

*Cheese Dome, 2013*
white stoneware, underglaze, hand thrown, drape mould, 20 x 25 x 44 cm
Within my work I apply critical comment to contemporary consumerism and the less reputable aspects of our national identity through often flamboyant baroque creations. Decoration is incorporated within the body of the work, weaving, twisting and turning with a confounding plethora of images, motifs and decals. This work showcases the hand built qualities of porcelain and ceramic medium, producing work that illustrates a wonderment of clay. The work is stripped back with no painted surface decoration to confuse or distract from the form’s material quality. The material lends itself to an infinite variety of shapes, and the work can have an infinite number of interpretations. The hand of the artist is never far from one’s consciousness when viewing my work, which is intentionally imperfect, asymmetrical and sometimes seemingly top heavy. Also lingering in one’s awareness is the nature of ceramics; usually pristinely designed and immaculately fashioned and fragile. These two opposing qualities are a reaction to the overriding influence of machines as opposed to the natural. This particular work is also lit from the inside up to highlight marks of the maker.

*Lights Are On, Body is Shown*, 2012
porcelain, LED light, metal and wood stand, hand built, 38 x 30 x 18 cm, Courtesy Nellie Castan Gallery
Recent ceramic practice has focused on the investigation of touch and flow and the convergence of the maker’s hand with the user’s hand through these characteristics in the made object. Through this investigation I am searching for new ways to engage the body in and increase an awareness of the object. The object forms a conduit for connection between the maker and the user and it is this nexus, this moment of meeting through the object, that I am curious to explore. Reference points for much of my work have stemmed from the strong influence of my ceramics training in Japan and growing up beside the Murray River that flowed nearby when I was young. In Japan I was intrigued that each maker’s touch was imprinted in the clay through the nuance of rim, foot, angle or touch. The Murray River, in contrast, is constantly moving and has no such static signature, but the passage of movement and the continuity of flow intrigues and provides a backdrop for a study of movement and connection.

red earthenware, slips, transparent glaze, wheel thrown, cut and altered, 12 x 21 x 59 cm
My new series of work is concerned with the magic of the firing process. The throwing of the bowls is the same, though more refined. The burnishing of the bowls is the same, though more refined. The preparation for firing is as it has always been, but more finely skilled. With this work it is the firing process in the wood-fired kiln where the emphasis lies: the enriching of a surface imbued with flame and smoke markings, extracting from the kiln is visual magic, enhancing the work with kiln mysteries, painting the surface of the bowl with a brush loaded with fire and smoke, creating landscape images in its primal form, returning to the source, something raw with something refined, and there lies the necessary tension in the work; the tension which gets the attention.

*Landscape of the mind*, 2012

clay, smoke, flames, wheel thrown, burnished, wood fired in kiln and manipulated with smoke and flames, 16 x 26 x 26 cm
So, you think they are your cute little loyal puppies?

*Master and Slave, 2012*
porcelain, hand built, 44 x 40 x 40 cm, Courtesy Nellie Caston Gallery
Jasmine Targett

*Crumbling Ecology* was the last work to emerge from the devolved Monash Ceramics Studio; a response from Jasmine Targett, one of the artists impacted by the closure. The work had two distinct aims, the first in its concept, the second in its creation. The concept interrogated the central argument used to justify the closure – that ceramics is out-dated and no longer relevant to contemporary art. The second was to strengthen the industry by inviting artists to contribute. Contributing to the work enabled artists to gain tech skills, network and stimulate independent professional practice. Made with the help of over 100 artists around Australia, *Crumbling Ecology* is an installation of hundreds of delicate hand cast porcelain geranium leaves on the brink of crumbling. In Melbourne, geraniums sit ambiguously in a category between plant and weed – this echoes the ambiguous perception many have of ceramics within contemporary art. The *Crumbling Ecology* unable to regenerate sits within a tenuous space. On the brink of crumbling, the geraniums embody the story of their makers – the artists, teachers and students impacted by the nationwide arts-sector cutbacks. Porcelain is a material known for its strength. Using it in this way comments on the impact the loss of educators (and the knowledge their hands pass on) will have on the industry, reflecting on the beauty and integrity of ceramic practice compromised.

*Crumbling Ecology*, 2012
porcelain, hand cast, 30 x 100 x 100cm
I am an artist who has always been fascinated by the sea and the ships on Port Phillip Bay. Over the years I have enjoyed observing and painting the ships as they sail into and out of the Port of Melbourne. Some of these images I have developed into prints and in recent years I have been more interested in creating three dimensional forms through the use of clay. In creating these sculptural forms I have attempted to replicate my paintings – creating basic, simplistic forms. *Breaking Up* came to me as I was watching the news one night on TV, when I saw a story about a container ship in New Zealand breaking up and sinking. What fascinated me was the way that the containers stayed stacked to the vessel as it sank, pinned to the ship by its supports. I’ve attempted, in my own fashion, to duplicate what I saw that night – a container ship breaking up.

*Breaking Up*, 2013
clay, glazes, pottery plaster, enamel paint, slab built, 30 x 45 x 98 cm, Courtesy Australian Galleries
Quiet echoes – a pause for breath. In my making, I am motivated by a particular interest in functional objects and a search for simplicity, quietness and an essential stillness. I endeavour to make objects that are pared back, serene and deceptively simple. Technical expertise, invention and a diversity of references gently recede, allowing forms to stand innocently and for details and spaces between objects to reflect musical rhythm and even a quiet pause for breath.

*Pair of Tea Strainers, 2012*
limoges porcelain, cast and hand built, pierced, sieves made and fired separately in two sections, joined after firing, handles hung vertically in kiln, reduction fired, cone 13, 21 x 8 x 7 cm, Courtesy Mossgreen Gallery
I have been working with clay for over 20 years now and have had the pleasure of creating artworks in France, China, Japan and India. Over time my work has evolved but primarily the concept is the same. I am fascinated by human behaviour. Currently I am exploring the idea of disguised eccentricities. I am interested in how we as a society require a certain outward appearance to ensure belonging. I find this behaviour interesting. My various roles of wife, mother, daughter, sister, niece, friend, artist and teacher seem to authenticate my own belonging in society. There are, however, times when I desire to be a recluse, selfish or eccentric. Yet I can’t have both, even on a temporary basis, without sacrifice. My current sculpture also references baroque art with its exaggerated forms and patterns and I use this approach as a method for representing eccentricities in my sculpture. These stoneware sculptures use repetition and highly decorated and detailed surfaces to create a tension between the simple colour scheme and flamboyant form.

Absurdity 2, 2013
stoneware, coloured porcelain slip, wheel thrown, hand built, 24 x 30 x 30 cm
This work is the result of a poem by a friend that moved me a great deal and I deemed it very worthy of putting in clay to preserve it for many people to read. In recent years I have been making many of these bowls; starting with a couple made after the black Saturday fires for Marysville and Kinglake that had sentiments from the people in those towns. A bowl about love is a very powerful sentiment.

Love’s House, 2012
stoneware, wheel thrown, 27 x 59 x 59 cm
Challenges and opportunity led me to travel interstate to collaborate with friends. I helped respected potter Daniel Lafferty build a new kiln at a monastery in the Snowy mountains. The vase is from the first firing of the Monastery’s new kiln. It has the monks’ orchard ash glaze applied. The pinch pot was fired in Daniel’s kiln, Corbargo.

Kirk Winter

Small and Sombre, 2013
Jar – local clays, wood ash of the Snowy Mountains; Bowl – local clays, Black Wattle ash of the South East N.S.W. region, wood fired, 28 x 32 x 14 cm, Courtesy Skepsi Gallery
Sculptures, painting and ceramic works are my way to express myself and capture my feelings. My subject matter is our daily life and the environment around us. In recent years I have visited lots of Chinese ceramic artists who inherited the techniques from the masters. They can recreate a traditional vase or figurine faultlessly. The techniques they use and the works they make haven’t changed for hundreds of years. I want to break this convention. I want to create ceramic works using a Chinese pottery technique as inspiration for my own style. The Chinese hollow pottery technique is used to create a see-through dimension. After moving to Australia last August, I have been intrigued by the natural environment and the culture. The work Cockatoo is just a small sample of what I created after living in Melbourne for three months.

Cockatoo, 2013
porcelain, hollow pottery, 39 x 45 x 16 cm
Manningham Art Gallery
MC² (Manningham City Square)
687 Doncaster Road,
Doncaster 3108
Melways ref. 47 F1

Gallery Hours
Tuesday to Saturday, 11.00 am – 5.00 pm
Free admission

Contact Us
p 9840 9367
e gallery@manningham.vic.gov.au