

9. For more information, see the Festival website: <http://www.internationalceramicsfestival.org/>
10. Robert Faulkner, 'Challenging Orthodoxy' in *The International* 1991 (the journal of the International Ceramics Festival).
11. See <http://bitter.custard.org/beyond/beyond/psycho> The performer is Tonia Clarke.
12. Jo Dahn, 'Ceramics as Performance' in *Ceramic Review* No.180 (Nov/Dec 1999).
13. Coiling is a way of building vessels and other forms from sausage like 'coils' of clay.
14. FULL Plan 9, Bristol 22nd October 2005. See also Jo Dahn, 'Sculptor and Figure' (contemporary trends in figurative ceramics) in *Ceramic Review* No.219 (May/June 2006).
15. Conor, Wilson, reflections on FULL, personal communication (April 2007).
16. Wilson, reflections on FULL, personal communication (April 2007).
17. Philip Lee, personal statement (2003).
18. Bruce Metcalf, 'Craft and art, culture and biology' in *The Culture of Craft*, edited by Peter Dormer (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1997), 70-71. Metcalf was referring to James Melchert's *Changes* performance (1972) which took place at Documenta 5 in Germany. See Schwartz, Judith *Confrontational Ceramics* London: A&C Black 2008, P. 122.
19. David Cushway, interviewed by the author (2001).
20. David Cushway, 'Presence and Absence,' conference paper, *The Fragmented Figure*, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff published in *Interpreting Ceramics* edition 8. (See: <http://www.uwic.ac.uk/ICRC/issue008/articles/05.htm>)
21. Clare Twomey, proposal for *The Temporary*, 2007 (personal communication).
22. Cushway, interviewed by the author (2001).
23. Recorded conversation between David Cushway and Clare Twomey at Bath School of Art and Design, England, May 2007. Subsequently used as the basis for Dahn, Jo 'In Conversation: Clare Twomey and David Cushway' in *Crafts* No. 207, July/August 2007.
24. Clare Twomey, application statement for Korea 2001 (personal communication).
25. Jeffery Jones, conference paper: 'Singing the Body Electric: A Brief History of Electricity and Studio Ceramics' in *Situated Knowledges*, Design History Society annual conference, Aberystwyth, Wales, 2002.
26. Andrew Lord, 'Selectors' Comments' in *Ceramic Contemporaries 4* exhibition catalogue (National Association of Ceramics in Higher Education and Aberystwyth Arts Centre, 2002).
27. See Pamela Johnson, 'Out of Touch: The Meaning of Making in the Digital Age' in *Obscure Objects of Desire*, 292.
28. Bonnie Kemske, 'Touching the Body: A Ceramic Possibility' in *Interpreting Ceramics* edition 8. (See: <http://www.uwic.ac.uk/ICRC/issue008/articles/22.htm>).
29. Daniel Allen, untitled, 'the absent figure' series I (2005).
30. Allen, untitled, 'the absent figure' series II (2005).
31. Peter Hobbis, 'The Value of Crafts' in *Obscure Objects of Desire*, 37.
32. For further discussion, see Julian Stallabrass, *High Art Lite* (London & New York, Verso 1999).

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EXTENDING VOCABULARIES: DISTORTING THE CERAMIC FAMILIAR - CLAY AND THE PERFORMATIVE 'OTHER'

Andrew Livingstone

This text aims to explore some key areas that contribute to an extended vocabulary for ceramics with regards to the employment of clay and in particular its juxtaposition with the performative 'other'. The notion of the performative 'other' references the developing spectacle of 'non-ceramic' medium employed by artists working within the ceramics field and one that is often evidenced, although not exclusively, through video, photography, digital-media and performance. These mediums and methods will be discussed through examples and theories aligned to art practice within the ceramics discourse.

The question of authenticity, in this case I refer to the term (ceramic familiarity) becomes perplexed when ceramic is positioned at the digital interface, and most significantly where new media is integral to the artwork. The reading of ceramic both in conjunction with and through another medium, obviously, distorts familiarity where previously interpretation and critique has been applied exclusively to the material first-hand.

The use of video in particular can be evidenced as a growing spectacle within the ceramic domain, where its location moves beyond documental significance to claim an integral position within practice. Contemporary observations can be made towards the ceramic artist that engages video from numerous perspectives, notably when the video image captures either the movement of, or change in, the material clay, (this often visually presents the alteration of clay as a material) and when the development of a narrative references object or location, both address the notion of time-based activity as well as the temporality of material, object and location. These elements can be acknowledged to clay that has the potential to change, a notion that extends beyond the familiar subject of immortalised fired clay. The association, therefore, with the familiarity of the stable ceramic object becomes fluid, where essentially the movement, alteration, or deconstruction of clay, essentially time-based activities work to distort the notion of familiarity that has been constructed within ceramic discourse. This challenge to the materiality of clay through time-based activity suggests, a form of conceptual practice that integrates the artist, medium and idea within the language and arena of ceramic discourse. The absence of the physical ceramic form, presented through representation suggests that clay has become somewhat dematerialised within the familiar taxonomies of ceramic discourse. If the physical form has become dematerialised how then might a medium such as video be interpreted within the discipline of ceramics?

The theory and practice of video art, has developed as a distinct genre, one that is expressed widely within contemporary practice. Several of the critiques and structures applied to video art might possibly be applied to video work emerging from ceramic artists. This might though, become complicated by the location of such

works within artistic arenas that project quite different interpretation. This text will examine the use of video and digital media within ceramic practice and offer a reading from a discipline perspective.

Extended approaches

The ceramic artist's search for the unfamiliar results in both a re-grounding of the characteristics that define craft - applied art, and in the adoption of elements that usually exist outside of applied art discourse. The ceramic artist's approach to unfamiliarity and extended field of ceramic practice, rightly, will include numerous formats where individuals negotiate certain elements of familiarity. The individual may explore several areas of investigation to include material, object, process, function and history. Exploration of these categories will include works that constitute solely the medium clay but this will, however, also extend to works that engage other media and material. With the development of critical language and the progression of ideas-based focused practice, the evaluation of ceramics, in the traditional sense has, overtime, somewhat altered and as a consequence developed extended vocabularies.

Clay in motion - animation as performative 'other'

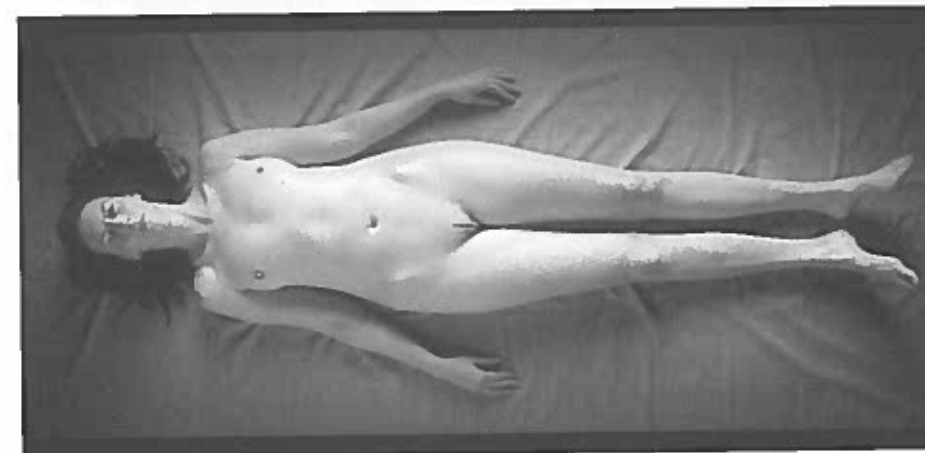
There will be much work internationally that portrays clay through the process of animation, however, given the limited space of this short text I will focus on a few examples.

The work *The Deconstruction of Trade*, 2004, (<http://www.andrewlivingstone.com>) consists of thirteen plates. The plates depict the deconstruction of the familiar willow pattern design into a reconstruction of an urban landscape. The final plate is then animated and projected on a larger scale.

The evaluation of process and technique within the work becomes complicated if we follow the definitions of craft as presented by Metcalf.¹ The primary element, put forward in respect of a definition, is that the work should be substantially, made by the hand. This is difficult to administer, as the thirteen plates that constitute the work are ready-made. The manipulation of the images and the application of the transfers, however, was executed by hand. It should be noted that this process is aligned primarily with industrial processes and, therefore, would not demand a high level of process evaluation and skills critique. The animation was also executed by hand and was part of a complicated process but it should be considered that this artform, however, does not originate or reside within craft practice.

These two elements can be observed within the work, however, these familiar elements have been repositioned. They are elements in transition. The connection with craft's past can be familiarised to the use of the blue and white willow pattern design but this becomes disrupted when the image becomes animated and is projected onto tiled surface. This is also the case if we observe the notion of medium specificity as the work moves from ceramic plate to animation through video projection. Whilst the mediums of animation and video reside outside of the canon of ceramics a continued narrative has been constructed that creates a transition from ceramic to digital media. This transition performs in several ways, on a primary level the static fired image is literally animated as birds fly around the familiar willow pattern design and the crane moves along its axis. In terms of a performative reading, the projection re-animates a historical narrative and extends the reading of the work through an alternative platform, and one where the digital medium has the capacity to perform.

Animation has been evidenced within several works and exhibitions aligned to ceramics over the last decade, many of which engage with the 'clay-mation' process, where small changes/movements within the material are meticulously recorded then speeded up to evidence the change over a given time-period. This process forms part of the work *Absentia* (2011) (Figures 40.1, 40.2 and 40.3)



Figures 40.1, 40.2 and 40.3 *Absentia*, 2010, Susanne Hangaard/Video made in collaboration with: art director: Sofie Fruergaard, cinematographer: Sophie Winqvist, editor: Julian Andersen, recordist: Silje Boel, body painter: Patrick Leis and Minerva Fil A/S.

(<http://www.susannehangaard.dk/uk/projekter/absentia/index.html>) by Susanne Hangaard, where the blue and white Royal Copenhagen fluted motif grows and moves over the artists naked body. Hangaard comments upon the work;

'With Absentia I have chosen to let the clay, as a physical material, play a less significant part of the work. Instead, pictures referring to ceramics as well as sound convey the story. My vision is to challenge the way the audience perceive ceramics and the context in which it appears.'²

In referencing the work it is clear that clay has a minority part to play, yet a direct connection to ceramics, in this case Danish porcelain, is made through other medium, or what we can term the performative 'other'. You may well be asking, how is this considered ceramic, I would argue that a connection with the pattern in this case the blue and white motif, affords an extended acceptance as the narrative extends from object to video carried by an acknowledgment of the familiar.³

Digital media and participant as performative 'other'

The work *Tacit*, (2004), (<http://www.andrewlivingstone.com>) by myself, investigates both process and technique within the context of installation. The work explores the location of these two elements and how significant they might become in relation to the work when they are repositioned. In the work *Tacit* process and technique are central, whether the spectator activates the work physically or mentally. In the gallery space the spectator encounters wet clay, which sits upon a workstation. A set of instructions on how to construct a pinch pot are located beside the clay and around the room yellow signs are placed informing the spectator that the space is being monitored by CCTV. The location of process and technique within the work is relocated to the spectator (in this case a performative 'other'), as they will become significant dependent upon the spectator's skills when constructing a pinch pot. If the spectator chooses not to construct a pinch pot the elements of process and technique also remain significant as they remain with their conscience. This positioning within the work questions the spectator's own technique and process with regard to making thus fundamentally exposing both elements as concept. That is to say that the idea becomes significant as a result of analysing the skills of the spectator. This work questions the authentic position that process and technique hold within ceramic discourse and aims to relocate them within an extended visual and theoretical vocabulary, this notion is supported by the employment of CCTV within the work, an element that is crucial to the conceptual significance. In examining the digital media contained within this work, simultaneously there appears both a disjuncture and juncture when reading the work. CCTV a surveillance tool, is everywhere in our daily lives, observing our movements, it is also commonplace within galleries, a technical assistant, compliant with the taboo 'do not touch'. Within this work the digital media makes us conscious of the space and the actions performed when making a simple clay vessel. It amplifies the viewer's awareness of their craft/making skills, (an intentional construct of this work), as historically these appear in the upper hierarchy of evaluation within craft/applied art practice. As the arena continues to develop and change, this work both embeds skill centrally, and challenges its reading through conceptual approach.

In contrast to the embedded digital medium within the work *Tacit*, *Teatime at The Museum* (2012) (http://www.davidcushway.co.uk/2012/Teatime_at_the_Museum.html) an artwork by David Cushway, utilises the medium of film as an extension of both object and performer (Figure 40.4). Whilst it might be considered that the film is documentary, Cushway's work and research places the film within the context of



Figure 40.4 Teatime at the Museum, 2012/David Cushway.

ceramics through a post-medium, post-disciplinary construct. That is to say he extends the performance and narrative of 'ceramics' through film, a performative 'other'. The artwork is subversive in approach, as the keeper of collections at The National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, is invited to remove a tea service from the cabinet in the museum and take tea with the artist (both performative actions), a subversive act if you consider both curatorial practice and the removed functionality of objects housed in cases in museums. The re-animation of the objects is central to the work and this is conveyed through the medium of film, this links to the questioning of the museum's role in the collection and communication of objects (in this case ceramics), which is experienced through both visual and dialogic narratives.

Material knowledge

The presentation of clay in unfired form - firstly represented through another medium or secondly when supported by non-ceramic media in either the act of performance or time-based activity - works to dislodge familiarity with clay and question the material itself, more often than not through the object that it assumes. In questioning and exploring the materiality of clay within the constructs of the discipline it perhaps suggests that the notion of *conceptual ceramics* much like *sculptural ceramics* is the product of auto-aggrandisement within its own field.

The symbiosis between object and idea is central to a large proportion of contemporary work, particularly the type of work that is evidenced in this paper. Peter Dormer remarks upon this in his discussion about, medium, object and idea:

'Almost any object or part of an object can be put into an assemblage and be described as representing anything that assembler cares to say it represents. What is missing is a congruity between the form and the representation. There is no necessary connection between the medium and the message. It is arguable that much contemporary art, especially installation art, works at this level – the words provide the content and the artefacts are merely pegs. Naturally, in such circumstances, craft knowledge is of secondary or even minimal importance.'⁴

Dormer suggests that there is no necessary connection between the medium and the message and that the object has the capacity to represent a prescribed notion by the artist. This suggestion certainly constructs a valid point that objects exist within complex structures that inform association by familiar recognition.⁵ Although Cushway places the familiarity of objects centrally within his works - in contradiction to Dormer's suggestion regarding installation art - he demonstrates a connection between material and ideas, where the tacit knowledge of ceramic is explored and displayed within contemporary practice. In the case of *Teatime at the Museum*, we are able to place a familiarity with the act of taking tea and have an informed knowledge of both the object and materiality of ceramic. Similarly this is a crucial element within Clare Twomey's work, *Is it Madness. Is it Beauty* (2010) (www.claretwomey.com), where the objects, in this case multiple unfired wheel-thrown vessels, rely on inherent physical properties within the clay to both activate and realise the work. *Is it Madness. Is it Beauty* is a performance-based work that consists of a performer (dancer) who repeatedly fills unfired vessels (situated on a large trestle table) with water and proceeds to clean the space with a mop and bucket as the vessels disintegrate over a period of time. The artwork is collaborative in its construction and can be examined from varied perspectives, however, I would like to concentrate on the theme of this paper and the performative 'other'. In this regard, material and process are central as noted above, this references the idea of 'distorting the ceramic familiar' if we consider a vernacular reading of wheel-thrown vessels, that will usually be fired and glazed. It is interesting to note that the skill within the work has shifted from the maker to the performer and our focus concentrated on the materiality of the clay, experienced within a time-based construct.

In an interview with Cushway we discussed the importance of the materiality of clay especially in this context where it emerged that the success of the idea - or its conceptual significance - was heightened if the spectator could identify with the materiality of clay. This would suggest that an informed knowledge of how the material works would in fact enhance the conceptual element of the work.

Materiality and non-ceramic intervention

To explore the use of video within ceramic practice, it seems appropriate to examine the work of David Cushway, and in particular examples of his work that were made over a decade apart. The chosen works explore his approach and use of clay/ceramic through the medium of video and how he has navigated the material from a different perspective within a thirteen-year time frame.

David Cushway positions the materiality of clay centrally within his work whereby the intervention of other media creates a dialogue with ceramic. Although Cushway primarily engages clay within his works, the dialogue created with non-ceramic media introduces the questioning of both materiality and de-materialisation. The work *Sublimation* (2000), consists of a video piece, which depicts the disintegration of an unfired clay head in a tank of water. The video records the clay object over a period of 15 minutes until the head has disintegrated and the clay returns to its non-characteristic form. This work uses video to capture an event, in this case the breakdown of the clay object in water. The reality that this work exists - after the actual event - as solely a video piece, introduces a number of questions that address the portrayal of clay within contemporary practice.

The integration of other media into the remit of the ceramic artist further develops the notion of the de-materialisation of clay. This approach to the juxtaposition of clay with other media is an area of considerable development within contemporary ceramics in that exhibited works are not solely, or even predominantly, constructed from clay but consist of other media and material.

In Cushway's work *Sublimation* (2000) the process of the breakdown of the clay object is an event that ultimately has three elements of representation. The first is the presentation of the actual artwork. This consists of a one off event that is confined to the memory of those who participated in the spectatorship of the event. The second relies upon the documentation of the event through the media of video that is able to record the time-based element of the work through moving images. The third element is the use of still photography, however, whilst such photography enhances the event it gives no indication of the time element involved. The work presented in the exhibition consists of video format and is, most notable in that there is a physical absence of clay itself. Whilst suggesting the de-materialisation of the object in the absence of the material clay, the focus of the work is directed at the object and the process of the change in material. The only possibility for experiencing a simulated representation of the work after the original event is through the medium of video. The presentation of clay through, or juxtaposed with, another medium introduces the question as to how the theories of craft/applied art locate such work when emphasis is constantly afforded to the physical object and the hand of the maker. The observation that can be drawn from Cushway's work is that the emphasis is not placed upon the object directly but upon the process of change within the material. The work *Sublimation* (2000) can, of course, invite multiple readings that can be attached to the significance of the object and, in this particular case, a cast image of the artist's head. Cushway mentions the connection between the making and the conceptual elements contained within his constructed artworks. He states that the process of making can inform the conceptual and this is of central importance within his work. He feels also that this is the same for other artists operating within the same genre where clay acts as the starting point for their explorations. This leads to the question as to whether knowledge of the materiality of clay is required to conceive of the work as conceptual within the context of ceramic practice?

Video and ceramic - conceptual or documental

In offering a reading of video and ceramic initial observation might conclude that the use of video is as a direct result of documental recording of a performance or event.⁶ The reading of ceramic through another medium, obviously, distorts familiarity where previously interpretation and critique has been applied exclusively to the material first-hand. How, therefore, can a critique be applied to a medium that is somewhat absent from the language of ceramics? Mona Da Vinci comments upon the medium of video where reference is made to the object in art:

'Video successfully bypasses object art, for a new emphasis on connectedness, communication, integers, and vectors, that could potentially lead to a more satisfying and complete synthesis of the artist's full creative powers. Video promises the possibility of providing the intervening conceptual means for the artist to dispense with the artificial or the artifice of art. The medium's capacity for immediacy symbolises "the missing link" that may fill the gap between art and life experience to the contemporary artist. The developmental phase becomes a thing of the past in the video artist's creative output.'⁷

Da Vinci suggests that video contains characteristics that are successful in transcending the object within art. This is to say that video has the capacity to display the conceptual whilst dispensing with the artifice of art. This can certainly be applied to Cushway's work where the video portrays the narrative and informs the conceptual. Particularly, however, with the work *Reconstructing Culture*, (2000) (<http://www.davidcushway.com>).

co.uk/2012/Reconstructing_Culture.html) the physical object is presented within the work as a re-constructed physical element, the remains of an event that is translated through the medium of video.

The event captured by Cushway is the destruction of familiar domestic ceramic objects by a hammer. The event in reality would have taken place once, as such a one off performance. The artist would either have had to consign the artwork to a singular presentation, continuously repeat the act of destruction or represent the actions through a suitable medium. Video is perhaps the most suitable medium as it is one that is able to represent the moving image as an event but then repeat the initial event continuously. A direct observation can be made towards the ceramic artist that engages video, most notably when the video image captures either the movement of, or change in, the material clay. The transformation of the material clay is an indication that an external force will be applied to alter either the material, or an object, whether immediately or over a considerable time distance. This notion can be observed in several works by Cushway, where, in the work *Sublimation*, he records the breakdown of unfired clay in water, and in *Reconstructing Culture* where post kiln-fired ceramic is broken by a hammer. Both works engage video to present the alteration of clay as a material and address the notion of time-based activity as well as the temporality of material and object. In an interview with Dr Jo Dahn, she remarked upon the video element contained within the work *Sublimation*. Dahn made reference to an absence of the experience of the quality of material, this she compared to a dissolved clay object in a tank of water in Cushway's studio. She also discussed the nature of video in the work and it emerged that the experience of time that is portrayed through video, evokes a fascination with the process of disintegration. This could be read in terms of documental presentation, which we seemed both to acknowledge, however, the looped video certainly contributes to the idea over making, therefore, it might also be interpreted as conceptual.

Video and the distortion of ceramic – time-based activity and reading

The work of the artists evidenced in this paper, might be acknowledged as being both performance and installation in its construction. Identification of these elements, in conjunction with video within fine art discourse, are offered by Kristine Stiles:

'Performance, installation and video often appear together in a single work of art, and all three media share common characteristics that may be summarised as follows. First, the content, form and structure of these, often time-based, media require artists and viewers to engage in and observe temporal changes and duration over time. Second, they include a wide spectrum of aesthetic practices from representation to abstraction, as well as an infinite range of styles. Third, they engage viewers in situations in so far as they often entail a consideration of, or attention to, the experience of a person or place, and they enhance reciprocity between art and viewer as interrelated subjects.'⁸

Temporal change and the observation of duration over time, as indicated by Stiles, forms a significant positioning within the practice of the artists evidenced in this paper. The use of video, as integral to the work, allows for the kinesis of the material clay to be presented. The performance of clay, that is to indicate that an event or alteration of the material occurs over a constructed time element, is presented through video, a significant other within the constructs of familiar ceramic discourse. The absence of the physical ceramic form, presented through representation suggests that clay has become somewhat dematerialised within the familiar taxonomies of ceramic discourse. If the physical form has become dematerialised how then might a medium such as video be interpreted within the discipline of ceramics? In the case of the artists evidenced, video can be acknowledged as a visual representation of the time-based activity that has taken place within

the constructed artwork. Whilst this may be considered as fundamentally documental representation, the reinterpretation through the medium of video expands upon the initial event introducing a visual experience that is somewhat unfamiliar within ceramic constructs. Frank Popper offers his views upon the wider significance of video and especially video that expands beyond the notion of documentary:

'In video recordings, the search for dematerialised forms of art, the visual and social perception of the environment, the identification of primordial energies, forces and forms in natural space, and the body as the producer and vehicle of language are highlighted. Video recordings have fixed on tape an image of a living situation, one which is not only documentary but a part of the creative moment, implying a visual and temporal extension of the phenomenon observed.'⁹

Popper contends that video has the opportunity to extend the visual and temporal elements of a living situation. This notion has particular significance to ceramics, especially, when the situation occurs over time.

To explore this further, beyond the physical change and recording of the unfired material clay, the following addresses Popper's notion of extending living situations through the medium of video. *Last Supper at the Glynn Vivien* (2011) and *Teatime at the Museum* (2012) are works by Cushway that explore ceramics housed within museums through the medium of video. These works are 'disruptive' in nature, and whilst they could be considered documentary in execution, the content and narratives move beyond documentary. *Teatime at the Museum* has been discussed previously in this paper, similarly *Last Supper at the Glynn Vivien* engages with narrative, where, within this work thirteen members of the general public are invited to choose and talk about an object from the collection at the museum. In observing the content of the work we experience the members of the public discussing their chosen objects. In the context of Popper, the individuals talk about and reference the objects within an extended time-frame experienced through the reminiscence of childhood memories. This connects with Popper's assertion that video extends a living situation and is part of the creative moment, especially if we consider this in relation to the ceramic object, the performer and the medium of film, as a connected construct. In the context of this paper it is appropriate to consider ceramic as it is central to the discipline that we are discussing. We have explored clay and ceramic in several forms within this paper and its connection to digital media. In reference to the objects contained within *Last Supper at the Glynn Vivien* (Figure 40.5), it is worth noting the validity

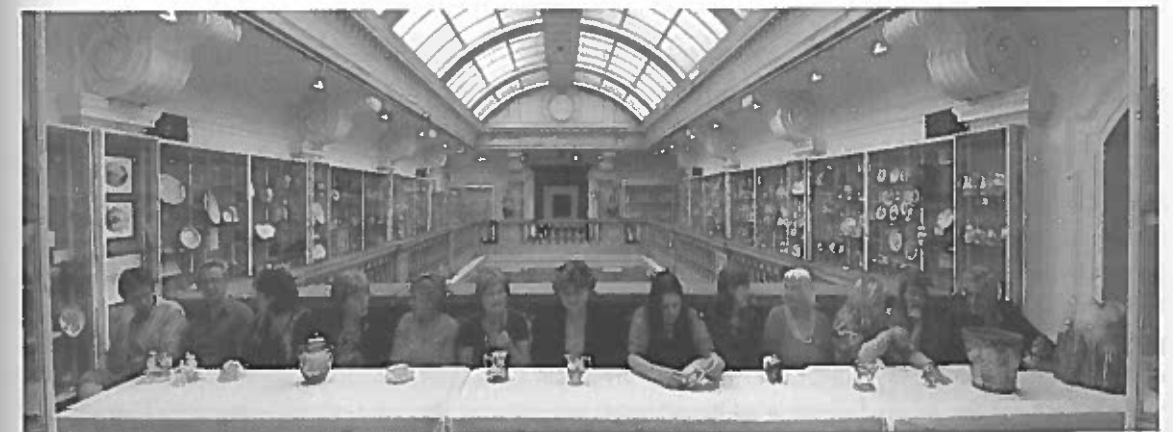


Figure 40.5 Last Supper at the Glynn Vivian, 2011/David Cushway.

of these objects from the collection as 'performative objects' in their own right, a premise articulated by Kristina Neidderer where she argues that;

'performative objects'. ... would make their users perform in a particularly mindful way. The concept of mindfulness refers here to the attentiveness of the user towards the social consequences of actions performed with the object.'¹⁰

In the context of this work 'mindfulness' focuses attention on emotional, thoughtful and sensational occurrences based upon the objects presented within the work. This observation in addition references ceramic objects as holders of semiotic significance, as we are able to identify with it as a familiar image. The qualities of the performative nature of ceramics, demonstrates the properties that ceramics possess in creating 'extended vocabularies' for ceramics as a discipline. In this scenario the familiarity of the object has the ability to perform as a conceptual tool.

To explore the notion of time-based activity and the ceramic object further, the artwork *WR14 2AY* (2010) (<http://www.andrewlivingstone.com>) by myself, draws a two hundred year comparison between the interpretation of landscape, pre and post digital media. This artwork was featured in an exhibition *Parallax View* (2010), which interpreted a collection of historic 18th and 19th century porcelain housed at the Tullie House Museum, in Carlisle, United Kingdom. Within the collection was a ceramic vase created at the Worcester porcelain factory in 1810 that depicted a hand painted vignette of Malvern Priory. This vase was juxtaposed with a Lilliput video screen that portrayed a recorded six minute film of the same vignette, obviously two hundred years later and through the medium of video. The title *WR14 2AY* makes direct reference to the postcode and hence the location of Malvern Priory, in the county of Worcestershire in the United Kingdom. These seven characters are a means by which we are now able to locate and position ourselves in the world using digital locational platforms, this is offered in contrast to the painted scene on the vase, when social mobility was very difficult. For those that are familiar with Google Earth, we can even zoom in and get a view of any global location from the comfort of our own home or even on the move via computers and mobile phones.

The footage on the small screen is of Malvern Priory and is shot from a stationary position as close to the viewpoint of the vignette on the vase as possible. This was to prove tricky as two hundred years later the landscape around the priory had been built up and altered. What the viewer gains from this piece of work is the ability to reference a two hundred year time-frame and engage with the dialogue that is constructed between both formats of the presented image. Within this work an extended re-reading of the porcelain vase is offered through the lens of video as a contemporary performative 'other'.

Video and the dematerialisation of clay

The emergence of video within the discipline of ceramics can be actualised as a contemporary phenomenon with a few exceptions. *Changes* (<http://jimmelchert.com/portfolio-items/changes/>) by Jim Melchert, has been shown retrospectively since its conception in 1972.¹¹ The initial event was a one off performance, witnessed only by those who were present in the room. All consequential experience and spectatorship has been expressed through the medium of video or written evaluation based upon still photography. The piece was conceived and presented in the early part of the 1970's, when the artist was engaged with the wider research into the ongoing developments of conceptualism and performance art. *Changes*, acknowledged as a one off performance, was recorded onto video, an art-form that whilst relatively new, was being widely used within art practice.¹² The

recording of the performance and its retrospective presentation obviously questions the materiality of clay, specifically when reading the work as presented in different formats. Observations will notably be constructed towards the absence of actual physical presence, an element firmly located within the familiar spectatorship of ceramic discourse. This introduces the subject of the transfiguration of the actual three-dimensional form into a reading that invites interpretation through a two-dimensional format. This can be sited as an obvious dematerialisation of the material form, where a two-dimensional presentation can be interpreted as mere representation. The notion of dematerialisation, as mentioned in this text, became an obvious issue, when I discussed the work *Sublimation* (2000) with David Cushway. He said of the work that initially he was working with the idea of just presenting the water tank with the residue of the cast head, however, he felt that the work needed a piece of film, as it brings an immediacy to the work. In our conversation he confirmed that the clay object had become dematerialised as a consequence of the clay constituent being removed, however, he did point out that an informed knowledge of the physicality of clay when placed in water, would contribute to the elevation of the conceptual element within the work.

Conclusion

The use of video and non-ceramic media, whilst acknowledged in both ceramic practice and developing theoretical discussions, occupies a marginalised position in respect of authentic definition. The interrelationship between ceramic and multi-media applications within this paper demonstrates the potential for an extended vocabulary for ceramics, primarily supported by a connection to familiarity (Livingstone: 2008). It is my view that ceramics can be extended through the employment of contemporary 'performative others' which, most notably in this paper, can be associated with digital and new technologies. Although, I have also aimed to demonstrate that there are other strategies that can also be employed and these were evidenced through the performativity of people and objects. In terms of digital media and how we might develop an interpretive language in relation to ceramics - the use of video and digital media within ceramic practice continues to grow and this will no doubt contribute to the development of both the practical and theoretical discourse of ceramics

Notes

1. Bruce, Metcalf. (2000) *The Hand at the Heart of Craft*, *American Craft*, Volume 60, No 4, August/September (2000), p. 54–61, 66. See article for detailed discussion about the practical use of the hand, including scientific and psychological analysis discussed within the remit of craft practice.
2. Susanne, Hangaard. <http://www.suzannehangaard.dk>, accessed 21 February 2015.
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7. Gregory, Battcock. (Editor.) (1978). *New Artists Video A Critical Anthology*, E.P. Dutton: New York. See chapter *Video: The Art of Observable Dreams*, Da Vinci, Mona, p. 17.
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9. Frank, Popper. (1999). *Art of the Electronic Age*, Thames and Hudson Ltd: London. See chapter *Video Art*, pp. 54–77, p. 59.
10. Kristina, Niedderer. (2007) *Designing Mindful Interaction: The Category of Performative Object*, in *Design Issues: Volume 23, Number 1, Winter 2007*.
11. *Changes – Performance with Drying Slip* by Jim Melchert, this film work was shown at Tate Liverpool 2004 as part of the exhibition *The Secret History of Clay – from Gauguin to Gormley*. See exhibition catalogue. Tate publishing: London, pp. 15–17.
12. Edmund, De Waal. (2003). *20th Century Ceramics*, Thames and Hudson Ltd: London, pp. 175–183. See chapter where, De Waal discusses the developments of performance where he states 'Recording the creation or destruction of the object, its reception by the public or its 'life-history' in the gallery through texts, photography or video became commonplace. The art object – and this was increasingly true for ceramics – was becoming 'dematerialised'.

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... AND INTO THE FIRE: POST-STUDIO CERAMICS IN BRITAIN

Glenn Adamson

William Staite Murray versus Bernard Leach, Bernard Leach versus the modernists, professionals versus amateurs, modernists versus postmodernists, Grayson Perry versus just about everyone: British ceramics have always been a subject for intense dispute. In some ways the questions have not changed since the days of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Are values such as functionality and simplicity inherently desirable, or are they simply the shackles of conservative thinking? Should pots embody social meanings, and if so, should they be unique and individualist – bearers of the hand's imprint? Or should ceramics be made inexpensively, in great numbers, through the serial production techniques that were perfected in England's pottery capital, Stoke-on-Trent? What is the place of artistic expression in a craft that was, for most of its history, more or less the creation of anonymous workers?

All these questions – which circumscribe the meanings, aesthetics, and social purposes of ceramic art – have been the subject of passionate and articulate disagreement for well over a century, and they are certainly still worth contemplating today. Yet over the past few years there has been an apparent shift in thinking, one which has more to do with the politics of place than the nature of objects. Sites of ceramic production in Britain have remained more or less constant since the nineteenth century, defined by a stable dichotomy in which the studio and the factory are clear opposites. On the one hand we have small, individualized spaces modeled on artists' ateliers. On the other are the large, highlycapitalized manufacturers, mostly located in Stoke. The diversity of making in studios is enormous, ranging from the humble brown pottery of the Leach tradition to the iconic modernist wares of Lucie Rie and Hans Coper to the iconoclastic avant-garde of the 1970s and 1980s, the generation that includes Richard Slee, Alison Britton, and Carol McNicoll. Despite their diversity, however, all of these independent British studio ceramists have thought of their work places as sites of autonomous production, directly in opposition to industry (even in those rare cases, like Slee's, where industrial wares are a stylistic inspiration).

Again, despite this tremendous variation in approach, it is nonetheless striking how stable the spatial organization of studio ceramics has been for the past century. Many theorists argue that craft objects are the authentic trace of the places where they are fashioned. In this case, British ceramics chart a dispersed geography: a vast network of loosely affiliated cells – urban, rural, and suburban alike – which makers have inhabited while pursuing the goal of personal vision. Occasionally these spaces have attained something like mythic status, as is the case with Leach's buildings in St. Ives, or Rie's workspace. For the most part though, studios are off-stage. Hidden from view, known only to specialized visitors or perhaps clients at a special holiday sale, they have an air of the sacrosanct, a feeling of autonomy which pervades the products that are made there.

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