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Gourd'geous

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Gourd'geous

A. Noel Slowikowski

**Thesis submitted to the
College of Creative Arts
at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

**Master of Fine Arts
in
Ceramics**

**Shoji Satake, M.F.A., Committee Chair
Robert Moore, M.F.A.
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Rhonda Reymond, Ph. D.
Erika Osborne, M.F.A.
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Division of Art & Design

**Morgantown, West Virginia
2009**

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Abstract

'Gourd'geous

A. Noel Slowikowski

Finding a voice to articulate my passion for making utilitarian pottery has been the central focus of my graduate studies. As a ceramic artist, I strive to make work that celebrates clay's tactile qualities, history, environmental responsiveness, and beauty. My research involved investigating different clay processes, fabrication methods, glazes, and contemporary/historical influences. The end result is a body of work that expresses a balanced blending of clay, nature, and history.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my family, above all, my parents:
Loretta & Thomas Slowikowski
Through their love and support I am finding my way.

Acknowledgements

To my clay professors, Shoji Satake and Robert Moore, and mentor, Jennifer Allen, thanks for pushing me when necessary and supporting me through my doubt. Furthermore I wish to thank all my committee members, Shoji Satake, Robert Moore, Alison Helm, Rhonda Reymond, Erika Osborne, and Jennifer Allen, for their insight and encouragement during my graduate study. I would also like to acknowledge Travis Cowles and TJ Slowikowski who worked tirelessly with me on making my show pedestals a reality. To Ron Hollingshead, my last year of graduate school would not have been the same without you! Thanks for your friendship, sense of humor, and support.

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Personal Statement

The desire to make utilitarian ware combined with my aesthetic disposition defines my approach to making work in the studio. My reason to preserve the utilitarian function in my work stems from my feelings on sustainability: environmental and emotional. My personal aesthetic is identified by visually stimulating, brightly colored, delicate tableware used to trigger memories in the user/viewer.

Utility is a central component of my work. It is important that I interact with people through food via their dishes and am a good steward of the earth. The reusability of pottery handled with care is incalculable. Through archeological discoveries, history proves that objects made of clay can last thousands of years. Pottery can also act as a catalyst for memories of celebrations, people, or places. The ability to create new memories for people is an honor. The emotional sustainability offered through my utilitarian ware is that of intimacy and memories. The intimacy in my work is evident through its size and delicate sensibility. Intimacy also occurs when the user holds one of my wares or through the act of sharing it with another person. Emotional sustainability not only refers to intimacy and memories, but also my own emotional health. Feelings of validation wash over me when someone purchases something that I created. Through my work connections are being formed with people who ultimately help inspire new work.

My formal decisions directly reflect my interests, ambitions and memories. The forms used to make my wares evolve over time to echo my changing life situation and experiences. In his book Ceramics, Philip Rawson describes the way in which artists create objects from “memory traces,” in this manner:

As we live our lives we accumulate a fund of memory-traces based on our sensory experience. These remain in our minds charged, it seems, with

vestiges of the emotions which accompanied the original experiences. The overwhelming majority of those experiences belong within the realm of the sensuous life, and may never reach the sphere of word formation...and yet they probably provide the essential continuum from which evolves everyone's sense of the world and consistent reality, everyone's understanding of what it means to exist. ...It is in the realm of these submerged memory-traces that creative art moves, bringing them into the orbit of everyday life and making them available to the experience of others by formalizing and projecting them on to elements of the familiar world which can receive and transmit them. From the artist's side the projection is done by his activity in shaping and forming. From the spectator's side it must be done by active 'reading' of the artist's forms.¹

I am interested in touch and communication through use. I want my work to operate dually as decorative objects and as domestic ware. Creating visual interest through forms that seem familiar help to keep the viewer/user engaged in the work. The pairing of irregular forms with a rich color palette help to create this visual interest in my work without making it feel too precious to use.

¹ Philip Rawson. Ceramics. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 16.

'Gourd'geous

Words like decadence, whimsy and utility inform my work. Decadence conjures notions of excess, exaggeration, over-the-top decoration, privilege, or self-indulgence. Whimsy is a fanciful creation or endearing oddity. Utility, on the other hand, makes one think of function, sturdiness, daily use, or simplicity. I am interested in what happens when these meanings collide, for instance, when a petite teacup is paired with a large pillow shaped saucer. (figure 1).² This combination makes the viewer question the functionality of the teacup. Is it useful as a teacup, or it is only for display? My research of these ideas came to fruition through dessert specific tableware that blends historical and contemporary influences with natural forms and colors.

Many of the design elements evident in my work were developed in graduate school through the study of Victorian Era and Art Nouveau decoration. Personal memories and life experiences as well as research of contemporary clay artists also drive my decision making process.

The depth of domestic ornamentation present during the Victorian and Art Nouveau periods is what draws me to them. I am inspired by the elaborate configurations of silver hollowware fabricated during the Victorian Era. The unique use of organic imagery found on the facades of building and in ironwork (figures 4-5) during the Art Nouveau period influence the line quality of my work. Both of these style periods have produced objects so laden with decoration that they become difficult to use. The candelabra by Mortimer & Hunt (figure 3) is an example of this type of utilitarian object, whose decoration might hinder the amount of use it gets. *Aperitif Cup and Saucer Set*

² All figures mention with the body of this dissertation are represented in the List of Figures.

(figure 6) address these influences by vertically aligning vine-like architectural trims to create a whimsical saucer whose visual impact supersedes its utility.³

The Victorian era marks the beginning of the polarization of design style into machine-oriented and nature-oriented modes that remain today.⁴ The characteristics of the nature-oriented mode are what interest me the most. In Ann Ferebee's book, A History of Design from the Victorian Era to the Present, she describes the characteristics of this mode in the following passage:

Artifacts affirming the nature-oriented mode tend toward biomorphic forms, curved lines and wood, stone and other natural materials. Such materials lend themselves to hand-based fabrication techniques and result in artifacts that are usually rough-textured. Russet, brown, green and other nature-related shades predominate.⁵

My recent work embodies the essence of the nature-oriented mode. I make work from clay that parodies gourds and is glazed to resemble the colors of flowers. The contemporary artists who make work I am attracted to, also respond to this mode. These artists, usually women, share a common thread of delicacy and decoration in their work. This can be seen in the attention paid to detailed decoration, sensuous forms, and beautiful colors. Elaine Coleman's delicately incised pieces exemplify this mode by blending natural themes with lush glazes (figure7). My work uses a more direct appropriation of nature by retaining the organic shape of the vegetables used to construct the pieces (figure 1). I molded gourds, squash and pumpkins to serves as base shapes for my dessert ware.

³ Italics will be used to refer to specific images within the body of the text also located in the List of Figures

⁴ Ann Ferebee. A History of Design from the Victorian Era to the Present. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1970), 10.

⁵ Ibid., 10.

Other artists who make delicate/decorative utilitarian pottery include Julia Galloway (figure 8) and Kristen Kieffer (figure 9). There is a sense of grace and pattern in their work, which draws the viewer/user in for further exploration. Researching how other artists address decorative issues helps me formulate my own ideas concerning the detail needed to complete my work. “The more the better” has always been my mantra. This desire to excessively decorate my wares works without looking gaudy by paying attention to color choices and surface qualities. Kristen Kieffer uses a monochromatic color scheme with glossy and satin textures to make her exceedingly patterned work appear less busy, while Julia Galloway often limits decorative drawings to particular areas in her work. Artists whose work intrigues me and “pushes the envelope” in terms of decoration and functionality, include Rain Harris (figure 10) and Rebekah Bogard (figure 11). Their early works showcase an abundance of decoration that challenges utility and, at times, the use of non-clay materials hampers utility altogether. Rain Harris examines the ironies associated with excess and wealth through color, pattern, and decoration. With her dainty, diminutive pedestal objects, she explores the tension between elegance and kitsch.⁶ I similarly use elements of color and decoration to express my views on luxury. Regardless of these similarities the end products are drastically different. Rain Harris’s work is made for comment, while my work is made for use.

Like these contemporary ceramic artists, I too push the technical and conceptual boundaries of clay. *Teacup Ottoman* (figure 12) is my first attempt with excessive decoration. This piece blends an abundance of vine-like appendages chosen to resemble decorator trim with dainty lace patterned sections. Together these parts create a domestic vision of an ottoman.

⁶ Leah Kaplan, “Rain Harris: The Process of Addiction,” *Ceramics Monthly* 53 (Feb2005): 59.

The piece that I feel “pushes the boundaries” of clay’s limits and challenges the viewer’s notions of utility the most is *Plate Tower* (figure 13). This piece is constructed from thirteen individual cake plates with animated vine-like legs. My original inspiration for this piece came from the iconic nesting mixing bowls ubiquitous to just about every domestic interior in America. Through further contemplation, my memories of hiking cairns, came to mind. Cairns consist of a pile of stones set at intervals in a landscape to mark the trail for hikers. The cairns I am used to seeing are stacked in ascending order from the largest stones on the bottom to the smallest stones on top. After the *Plate Tower* was assembled I could see other natural inspirations for this work. The Plate Tower resembled a living plant much like the Casa Batllo (figure 4) designed by Antoni Gaudi. Gaudi’s façade with its curvaceous columns and leaf like additions make it look like a living structure.

Memories and feelings gained through life experiences are the intuitive influences that drive my work. The idea of the “familiar” is what I refer to as an intuitive influence. My family traditions and life experiences are my most familiar memories that I call upon. Family influences enter my work through traditions that revolve around food made for specific holiday events. For example my mother never made lasagna any day other than Valentine’s Day. These traditions affect not only the food but also the table setting and types of dishes. These were the occasions when the “good” dishes were dusted off and used.

These “good” dishes included place settings bought by my parents on their honeymoon as well as non-matching service bowls and platters handed down from extended family. These tableware pieces have memories associated with them; memories

that survive long after the dishes have been broken or given away. I enjoy making utilitarian ceramics because of this chance to aid in the creation of memories.

All my dessert pieces are made to encourage the formation of memories. *Aperitif Cups* (figure 14) remind me of winters spent in Vermont. My cousin would make my aunt and me a Kir aperitif (a drink made from crème de cassis and dry white wine) while preparing the meal. My *Aperitif Cups* hold just the right amount of liquid for sipping special drinks, like a good cognac or Turkish coffee. Good conversations usually take place when the dessert drinks come out to be shared. The dessert theme of my work encourages gatherings like these. The theme of my ceramic ware makes me think of parties where memories are made.

Another stimulus to my work is the natural world. My childhood was spent exploring the fields and forests that surrounded my house. This launched a life long love of natural environments. I cherish the progression of each season because of its ever changing colors and textures. I find beauty in the sophisticated designs and patterns of flora and fauna. Water and rock hold many tactile possibilities from smooth to rough. Through my travels I have been influenced by various topographies and vegetations which I then re-contextualize in my work. The organic forms used throughout my work remind me of pumpkin patches and county fair vegetable halls. The architectural trims, used as feet for many of my pieces, resemble Fiddle head ferns pushing up through the ground. The architectural trim assembled to make the saucer for *Aperitif Cup and Saucer* (figure 6) resembles a bramble.

Teacup with Saucer (figure 15) bridges my former explorations of design and content. This work starts to push ideas of utility and whimsy. My interest in Victorian

architecture and Art Nouveau metalwork informed the elongated feet made to support the pillow. At this point in my graduate career started using slip-casting as my main forming process and was thinking of an object that could serve as a pillow. Because nature finds its way into my work often, I turned to the onion for this form. After the success of turning the onion into a pillow, I started to examine other vegetable forms for their formal possibilities.

From *Teacup and Saucer* (figure 15) I was encouraged to push the contrasts between the tiny teacup and pillowed saucer. The small onion pillow soon became the large gourd ottoman seen in *Squash Saucer Teacup Set* (figure 16). As I started looking for more organic objects to make molds of, I became increasingly drawn to gourds and squash for their irregular and undulating shapes. Soon the gourd and members of its family, including squash and pumpkins became the basic forms for the different dessert pieces.

The processes of mold making, slip casting, and press molding were used to make all of my dessert wares. Utilizing the slip casting method, I was able to preserve the original object for the viewer to recognize. This set up a dialog for the viewer to question if the piece is meant to be a realistic looking object or is it a utilitarian bowl? This preservation allows the viewer to read the forms as single objects as well as build a relationship between two or more forms.

Decisions about color were informed by the relationships I saw between the different groups of work. Shuffling my work between my studio and the kilns allowed me to see the work in multiple groups. Through this grouping a connection was made between the shapes and forms of my work and flowers. Because of this association I

decided to glaze the petal portions of the work red, yellow, and blue and the leaves and bases green. These glaze color choices helped make the flower correlations in my work concrete. The *Teacups with Saucers* (figure17) group uses a pale green glaze on the saucers paired with the combination of a blue base glaze with a lavender and yellow cover glazes that mingled during the firing process to generate subtle color shifts on the cups. Together *Teacups and Saucers* help stir memories of new spring flower buds pushing up from the ground. The deep copper red glaze used on the pieces in *Cabbage Rose Stacking Plate Set with Aperitif Cup* (figure18) unite the plates with the aperitif cup to resemble a cabbage rose when stacked.

The many influences and associations made through my work keep me engaged in creating it. I have not explored all the possibilities and combinations of utilitarian work I can make from the gourd molds. I plan to keep working with my ideas of decoration and utility keeping my flowing pieces in mind: *Plate Tower* (figure 13), *Aperitif Cup and Saucer Set* (figure 6), and *Squash Saucer and Teacup Set* (figure1). In the future, I plan to rely more heavily on external decoration, pushing boundaries of function and form.

Technical Information

Slip Casting: A Historical Perspective

This section begins with a brief history on the advancement of molds in pottery production. Molds have been used to aid in the creation of ceramic wares since man started making objects with clay.⁷ The most basic mold is a clay relief lifted from any number of natural objects. The relief then becomes a finished ware or, once fired, becomes a bisque mold. This new bisque mold could be used to cast similar objects exponentially. This method of mold usage has been documented all over the world from China, Egypt and the Mediterranean to Middle and South America.⁸

A specific date for the introduction of plaster molds for ceramic production is somewhat vague due to the fact that plaster disintegrates with time. Scholars date plaster back to the time of the ancient Egyptians, at least 2500 BC, where they were using the material to fill the joints of the Great Pyramid.⁹ The earliest record of potters using plaster to make molds is during the sixteenth-century in Italy.¹⁰ Plaster as an optimal material for making molds gradually developed as peoples' understanding of plaster increased:

...it became known that a properly made and dried mold is microcellular. This means that by capillary action it will absorb water held in suspension in the clay and support the cast until it is dry enough to be handled and subsequently fired.¹¹

At first plaster molds were utilized only as press molds. Slip, the suspension of clay in water, had the undesirable quality of settling out too quickly and therefore making

⁷ Donald E Frith. Mold Making for Ceramics. (Randor, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1985), 3.

⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁹ Sasha Wardell. Slipcasting. 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 7.

¹⁰ Donald E. Frith. Mold Making for Ceramics. (Randor, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1985), 16.

¹¹ Sasha Wardell. Slipcasting. 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 8.

a bad cast.¹² It wasn't until late in the nineteenth-century that the addition of electrolytes, which was found to aid suspension of clay in water, made slip casting a reality. The addition of electrolytes to slip became known as deflocculation.¹³ Through the use of deflocculated slips the process of slip casting could be fully realized for factory mass production.

¹² Donald E. Frith. Mold Making for Ceramics. (Randor, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1985), 24.

¹³ Ibid., 25.

Contemporary Relevance

Slip casting, as a means of creating “one of a kind” artistic wares by studio potters is a relatively new idea. Historically, the method of slip casting was mainly used as a manufacturing method to create ceramic wares quickly and inexpensively.

The development of plaster molds and slip casting in Europe revolutionized the ceramic industry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by allowing mass production of highly refined, often elaborately ornate forms. These developments – and the inexpensive industrial wares that they made possible – wiped out the economy of local cottage-industry potters.¹⁴

The industrialization of ceramic production, through the increased use of molds and slip casting, has unfortunately tainted this technique for many studio potters today. Bernard Leach, the father of the studio pottery movement of the early twentieth century, voiced many anti-mold remarks in his books and through his teachings, but his remarks really could be read as anti-industrial.¹⁵

After researching the historical background of mold making I can now see where these prejudices have shown up in my ceramic education. I never used plaster or had the opportunity of taking a class solely dedicated to mold making and casting before coming to West Virginia University. My entire undergraduate and post undergraduate experience was centered on gaining experience with the potter’s wheel.

I have come to rely solely on the processes of mold making and slip casting for the creation of my tableware. These processes allow me to make unique forms with relative ease that would have been difficult to create using other ceramic fabrication methods. Duplicating forms easily and quickly allows me the freedom to spend time

¹⁴ Andrew Martin. The Essential Guide to Mold Making and Slip Casting. (Ashville, NC: Lark Books, 2006), 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., 5.

manipulating and decorating the casts. Through manipulation I am able to express my personal involvement with each piece. With careful consideration of production methods, slip cast wares can look less industrially made and more like one-of-a-kind work.

The processes of mold making and slip casting are important tools that can be used in my own studio. These processes can free up time used for construction and allow me the luxury of spending more time on embellishments, color choices, and the relationships between different pieces. For me, slip casting is another tool that can be called upon to create utilitarian wares that are visually engaging.

Slip Casting Process

The principle of slip casting is explained clearly by Sasha Wardell in her handbook, Slipcasting, as:

A dry porous mould is filled with liquid clay or slip. The capillary action of the plaster removes a high proportion of the water from the slip adjacent to it resulting in a layer, or skin, of clay being built up on the inner surface of the mould. This remains when the surplus slip is emptied. The thickness of this layer is determined by the length of time the slip remains in the mould.¹⁶

After the cast is removed from the mold the piece can be finished through other processes. These processes include manipulation of the molded piece, addition or subtraction of clay or other molded components, glazing and firing the piece. The mix of clays and fluxes used to make the slip for casting determines the temperature that molded work needs to be fired too. All typical pottery firing temperatures from low fire cone 04 (1940°F) to high fire cone 10 (2340°F) can be achieved with slip cast work.¹⁷

¹⁶ Sasha Wardell, Slipcasting, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 7.

¹⁷ John Britt, The Complete Guide to High-Fire Glazes. (New York: Lark Books, 2004), 172.

Cones refer to small pyramids of ceramic material pressed from precise formulations, designed to melt at a specific temperature in relation to a period of time and rate of rise. Indicates when a ceramic material has matured; also known as a pyrometric cone.

Clay

Because of its versatility a simple 25-Body clay recipe is what I used to create all my dessert ware. A 25-Body clay recipe includes four ingredients each totaling 25% of a 100% batch. The materials used for the percentages consist of clays, flux, and filler. Substituting different clays or fluxes in the recipe can change the mature firing temperature. The clays and flux used in my recipe fire to maturity at cone 10 (2340°F). The choice of using this clay body was made because it included a limited number of ingredients with easy to calculate proportions that would work well as a throwing and slip casting body. This is important for retaining structural integrity when bringing together wheel thrown, hand-built, and slip cast elements to make a single object. This clay recipe produces a dense white body on which my glazes stand out with brilliance and clarity. This clay body can be used in oxidation and reduction atmospheric firings.¹⁸ The addition of paper pulp to this recipe is advantageous at times when green ware strength is needed.¹⁹ Using paperclay aids in reduced cracking along seams and has the desirable quality of making wet to dry attachments possible. The recipe for this clay body is as follows:

¹⁸ John Britt, The Complete Guide to High-Fire Glazes. (New York: Lark Books, 2004), 173.

Oxidation and reduction refer to the atmosphere in the kiln when firing work to maturity. An oxidation atmosphere is where there is more oxygen present in the kiln than is need to burn the fuel. A reduction atmosphere is where there is a deficiency in the oxygen necessary for complete combustion of the fuel.

¹⁹ Ibid.,173. Green Ware refers to an unfired clay piece.

25-Body Casting and Throwing Clay Cone 9-10

EPK (Edgar Plastic Kaolin)	25%
Tennessee #10 Ball Clay	25%
G-200 Feldspar	25%
<u>Silica</u>	<u>25%</u>
	100%

*For making casting slip I mix .2% Darvan 811 into 40% water. (The water and Darvan are calculated as a percentage of the dry mix total.)

*For making paper clay I use the casting slip recipe described above, then to this wet mixture I add 25-40% paper pulp by volume.

Glazes

The glazes used to highlight the dessert wares have both glossy and matte surface qualities. These opposing surfaces stimulate both visual and tactile interest. The glossy surfaces catch the eye like a shiny penny while the matte surfaces create the desire to touch and explore the surface. The use of contrasting colors is another way the work keeps the viewer/user interested. The flower like references in the work are reinforced though the use of bright colored glazes. The following are a variety of glazes recipes with accompanying color swatches used to finish the dessert wares:

Mamo /Weiser White cone 9-10

G-200 Feldspar	53%
Silica	4%
EPK	22%
<u>Dolomite</u>	<u>21%</u>
	100%

add:

Tin Oxide	8%
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*The addition of tin oxide in this glaze produces blushing when copper carbonate is present in the kiln atmosphere.

Shows minimal blushing

Shows substantial blushing

Starshine **cone 10**

G-200 Feldspar	51%
Soda Ash	4%
Gillespie Borate	6%
Whiting	13%
Barium Carbonate	4%
Lithium Carbonate	1%
<u>Silica</u>	<u>21%</u>
	100%
add:	
Macaloid	2%
Tin Oxide	4%
Copper Carbonate	1%

Lanman “Fake” Wood Ash cone 9-10

G-200 Feldspar	15%
Dolomite	9%
Barium Carbonate	9%
Whiting	30%
OM #4 Ball Clay	18%
<u>Silica</u>	<u>19%</u>
	100%
add:	
Red Iron Oxide	4%

Blue Transparent Flowing cone 9-10

NC-4 Feldspar	50.9%
Silica	24%
Whiting	18%
EKP	2.7%
Dolomite	2.4%
Zinc Oxide	1%
<u>Gillespie Borate</u>	<u>1%</u>
	100%
add:	
Bentonite	2%
Cobalt Carbonate	.5%
Manganese Carbonate	5%

Harding Oil Spot Cover cone 10

G-200 Feldspar	45%
Silica	10.5%
Whiting	10.5%
EPK	17.6%
Barium Carbonate	11.8%
<u>Zinc Oxide</u>	<u>4.6%</u>
	100%

add:

Zircopax	15.5%
Yellow Stain	10% for yellow
or	
Lavender Stain	10% for Lavender

*This glaze can be used over any glaze that is slightly runny.

The end result is a an opaque top glaze that is semi-matte,
breaks on hard edges, and seems to float on/in the bottom
glaze.

Lavender cover over Blue
Transparent Flowing glaze

Yellow cover over
Starshine

Salt Yellow **cone 10**

NC-4 Feldspar	20%
Nepheline Syenite	40%
Dolomite	16.8%
Zircopax	8%
OM#4 Ball Clay	3.2%
Bentonite	3.2%
<u>Red Iron Oxide</u>	<u>1.2%</u>
	92.4%

*A fellow potter shared this recipe with me. It does not total 100% because she reduced the percentage of Zircopax from 16% to 8%. Regardless of this, the recipe fits my clay body well and does not produce crazing.²⁰

Shaner Clear **cone 10**

NC-4 Feldspar	32%
Silica	32%
Whiting	16.8%
EPK	14.1%
<u>Dolomite</u>	<u>5.1%</u>
	100%
add:	
Mason Stain Pea Green	2%

²⁰ John Britt, The Complete Guide to High-Fire Glazes. (New York: Lark Books, 2004), 172.

Crazing refers to cracks in the glaze surface caused by a glaze that contracts more than the clay body.

Firing Process

All the glazes used to finish the dessert wares were fired in a reduction kiln to maturity at cone 10 (2340°F). I have come to recognize that no matter what the style or size of kiln to be used, I follow the same basic firing schedule. The kiln is actively fired for about 9 hours. The pilots are turned on the night before. Warming the kiln over night helps to speed up the firing process the next day. A light reduction of the kiln atmosphere is initiated between cone 010 and 08 (1648° and 1748°F). This reduction atmosphere is held until cone 10 (2340°F) bends. At this time the kiln is turned off and the damper closed allowing the kiln to cool at its own pace. Getting pointers on how to fire a new kiln from others is helpful but nothing is as important as gaining experience and consistency through firing the same kiln repeatedly.

Conclusion

During my time as a graduate student at West Virginia University I have explored new ideas involving decadence, decoration, and process. My research involved investigating different clay processes, fabrication methods and glazes. I am happy to be able leave West Virginia University with a cohesive body of work that has endless possibilities for further exploration.

Now that my time as a student is over I look forward to being able to draw on the experiences gained here in Morgantown and at West Virginia University in my professional life. I feel poised for a future of new opportunities and experiences that will add to my bank of memories, and serve to expand my professional knowledge.

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Curriculum Vitae

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Education

- 2008 Master of Fine Arts, Candidate, Ceramics, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
- 2006 Semester study abroad, WVU-Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, Jingdezhen, PR China
- 2003 Special Student, Penn State University, University Park, PA
- 2000 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Studio Art, Summa Cum Laude, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA
- 1999 National Student Exchange, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, CA

Teaching and Clay Related Experience

- 2007-2009 Studio Assistant, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV (duties included: preparing clay and glazes; firing student work in gas and electric kilns; participate in kiln building and general studio maintenance)
- 2007-2009 Teaching assistant for Dr. Ron Aman, Art 103 Materials and Procedures, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
- 2008 Community Arts Ceramic Instructor, Beginning ceramics ages 12-15, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
- 2008 Teaching assistant for Shoji Satake, Art 240 Ceramics, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
- 2000 Work Study student assistant, Art Department, Ceramics, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA
- 1998-1999 Work study student assistant, Art Department, Ceramics, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, CA

Workshops & Conferences Attended

- 2009 NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) 43rd Annual Conference, *Ceramic Interface: From Dawn to Digital*, Phoenix, AZ
- 2008 NCECA Preconference, *Bridging the Gap: East Meets West*, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
NCECA 42nd Annual Conference, *Confluence: Innovation, Community, Environment*, Pittsburgh, PA
Workshop, Kristen Kieffer, Baltimore Clayworks, Baltimore, MD
- 2007 NCECA 41st Annual Conference, *Old Currents/ New Blends: A Distillation of Art and Geography*, Louisville, KY
- 2000 SOFA 2000, International Exposition of Sculptural Objects & Functional Art, Navy Pier, Chicago, IL
Workshop, Working With Porcelain, with Valda Cox, Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA
- 1998 Workshop, Intermediate Wheel, with Dale Huffman, Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA

Exhibitions

- 2009 'Gourd'geous, MFA Thesis Exhibition, Paul Mesaros Gallery, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
- 2008 *Wild and Wonderful*, Asterisk Gallery, Cleveland, OH
- 2007 Graduate Student Summer Exhibition, Paul Mesaros Gallery, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
- 2006 WVU-JCI end of Semester Show, Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, Jingdezhen, PR China

- 2000 Student Honors Exhibition, (Juried) Kipp Gallery, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA
"Industrial vs. Fantasy" Three person metals show, Miller Gallery, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA
 Three Person clay and metals show, Miller Gallery, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA
- 1997-1998 Student Honors Exhibition, (Juried) Kipp Gallery, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA

Awards

- 2009 Tuition Scholarship, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
 West Virginia University Travel Grant used to attend the 43rd Annual NCECA Conference,
- 2008 Tuition Scholarship, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
 West Virginia University Travel Grant used to attend the 42nd Annual NCECA Conference,
- 2007 Tuition Scholarship, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
 West Virginia University Travel Grant used to attend the 41st Annual NCECA Conference,
- 2000 Gold medal recipient for academic excellence, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA
 Indiana University of Pennsylvania ceramic studio tuition award to attend a weeklong workshop at Touchstone Center for Craft, Farmington, PA
- 1998 Indiana University of Pennsylvania ceramic studio tuition award to attend a weeklong workshop at Touchstone Center for Craft, Farmington, PA

Commissions

- 2007 Sign design for Great Gorge Grind coffee shop, Ohiopyle, PA
- 2001 Sign design for Kona's sandwich shop, San Luis Obispo, CA
- 1996 Mural (collaborative) Lackawanna Trail High School, Factoryville, PA

Appendix A:
'Gourd'geous Exhibition Photographs