

Master of Fine Arts Thesis

A Study of Space and Time through Matter

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requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts*

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Abstract

This is an invitation to explore the unknown territory of "DAR" -a visionary space that encapsulates the fundamental conceptions of "space", "time" and "matter" through the eyes of the artist. Visually inspired by archeological remnants from the Middle East and the aesthetics of future design, installations of large-scale ceramic sculptures operate as platforms for artistic interaction between the artist and the viewer. The territory of the domestic space is used as case study, to examine the 'habitat' versus the 'domicile' and how personal, local and universal ideas fluctuate and synthesize together.

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Preface

This thesis report outlines the concepts and methodologies I have researched during my graduate studies at the division of ceramic art. Fastidiously analyzed and mapped, this writing attempts to lay out the connecting threads running through my thesis theoretical components as artist statement, sources of inspiration, terminology, history, philosophy, narratives; and the practical aspects as processes, techniques, installation, exhibition.

The writing structure alternately shifts from theory to practice and repeatedly refers the reader to the artwork. From the perception that process and concept are one and the same, the technical statement and the artwork description are embedded within the text, and intentionally doubt and contest the flow of the writing and the manifestation of ideas. In order to deal with the integrating themes and to signify the transitions, some passages, that are part of the body but outside the flow of the narrative text, are boxed in encyclopedic style: boxed text in blue links to the artwork installation and the thesis exhibition, and boxed text in yellow links to the technical aspects and the process. In addition, exemplars from the artwork installation and detailed descriptions accompany the text and referred to images from the thesis exhibition and the process.

Inspired by manifestos of Fin de siècle art movements, this report is written from a third person point of view. As the writing proposes guidelines for the artwork critique, it operates as a stereopticon that projects two experiences simultaneously: of the artist and the viewer. The third voice is yours truly.

Introduction

When Einstein radicalized science with his sensational theory of relativity, our understanding of space and time profoundly shifted. The theory indicated that space and time are woven into a single entity, and predicted a relationship between space-time and matter. Einstein's theory is often summed as follows:

“Space-time tells matter how to move; matter tells space-time how to curve”.¹

When analyzing the definition of space according to classical numerical coordinate systems, an event is positioned in space along the traditional x, y and z axes. Any positioning along these three dimensions sets the conditions for a spatial object.

Classical physics separates time from space and considers it as having a uniform measurement throughout space. In a relativistic context, time cannot be separated from space because it depends on the rate of the object's velocity relative to the observer. Thus, a position of an event in space-time requires 4 dimensions: x, y, z and t – the position in time.

Back in the 17th century, metaphysics questioned the fundamental concepts of space and time in light of philosophical theories. Immanuel Kant, a German Enlightenment thinker, suggested several solutions for us to understand the problem of space-time and matter and its representation, whether as a concept or an intuition:

¹ Wheeler, *Spacetime Physics*

“Space and time seem distinct from substances because they are causally inert, causally inaccessible—their aspects or properties cannot be altered by interacting with any other substance—and imperceptible.”²

While there is no independent general definition of matter, a textbook discussion from 1870 suggests that matter is what is made up of atoms:

“Three divisions of matter are recognized in science: masses, molecules and atoms.

A Mass of matter is any portion of matter appreciable by the senses.

A Molecule is the smallest particle of matter into which a body can be divided without losing its identity.

An Atom is a still smaller particle produced by division of a molecule.”³

Noam Chomsky mocks the attempts of classical physics and the quantum gravity theory of matter to come up with an intelligible theory that would offer a genuine explanation for 'Matter,' by indicating that theoreticians will reinterpret data and even modify their assumptions, to fit the desirable results. Such taunting can also apply to my perception of ceramics as 'Mater.'⁴

² Kant, Handyside, Smith. *Kant's inaugural dissertation and early writings on space*

³ Barker, *Elementary Chemistry*

⁴ Chomsky, *The Architecture of Language*

Space – Time – Matter, Conceptual Metaphors

Inspired by relativistic conditions and potential interplay between disciplines, this study examines the fundamental concepts of Space, Time, and Matter through the eyes of the artist and the viewer. This 'physical trinity' operates, throughout the discussion, as a metaphor that consequently synthesizes scientific methodologies, philosophical perceptions, and artistic notions.

Through the lens of Space, this study inspects the installation of a 'Habitat' event that is positioned within a three-dimensional space. The domestic space territory operates as a case study, to examine the 'Habitat' versus the 'Domicile' and as a platform for artistic interaction between the artist and the viewer.

Through the lens of Time, the installation proposes an experience of the fourth dimension. Visually inspired by archeological remnants from the Middle East and the aesthetics of visionary and future design, the installation components conceptually configure the present time of the viewer against the perceptual time of the artist. Moreover, this discussion explores the feasibility of synchronicity in the flux of time, the transformative experience potential from the artist's point of view, and the unconditional autonomy of the viewer.

Through the lens of Matter, the study examines how morphological vocabulary and technical research demonstrate the predictability and randomness of the process along

with the broad limits of ceramic materials. In addition, the discussion reviews the 'aesth/ethic'⁵ maneuver of reviving ancient techniques and the visual benefit of computer-aided programs within the process.

⁵ The ethics of aesthetics. Aesthetics is concerned with the questions of what is beauty, what is ugliness, and how can beauty improve our lives, while ethics concerns the questions of what is right, what is wrong, and how can we make the best decisions.

Chapter I: Space

“Space is not something objective and real, nor a substance, nor an accident, nor a relation; instead, it is subjective and ideal, and originates from the mind’s nature in accord with a stable law as a scheme, as it were, for coordinating everything sensed externally.”⁶

Habitat versus Domicile

The domestic Habitat is the most appropriate and supportive environment for humankind. From the period of infancy, this is the fertile soil that allows initial abilities of physical and mental orientation in space to naturally develop. The stages of maturity take place in the domestic territory of humans in a very similar way to that of the habitat conditions in nature. According to the National Geographic Society, habitat is a space where an organism makes its home. A habitat meets all the environmental conditions an organism needs to survive. It encompasses all that an animal needs to find and gather food, select a mate, and successfully procreate. In correlation to the habitat, the human’s domicile may meet and fulfill the complete conditions for subsistence, but not necessarily for sustenance.

The domestic habitat is arguably the most authentic influential environment for an artist and a thinker. It may provide the artist with a space for serenity and contemplation, a space to dive into the depths of one’s personality, experience a spiritual enlightenment,

⁶ Kant, Handyside, Smith. *Kant’s inaugural dissertation and early writings on space*

or resolve conflicts. An internal journey prepares the ground of the habitat for sowing the seeds of unconscious concepts and thoughts and growing visual illustrations. Transcendent formative experiences set the ground for an honest and authentic creative process, providing a glimpse into the artist's world. Some people may associate this unconscious process with the Greek Muses.

The domestic habitat is the most inspiring environment for an artist as well as for the art viewer. The domicile space contains the ultimate source for inspiration and for intentional or unintentional examination and investigation of images, symbols, signs, shapes, forms, sound, views, tastes, and smells that are available in one's immediate vicinity to become elements of the artwork, to influence the design, and comprise the final work. Artists may interpret the result as an instinctive need to simulate or impersonate the domicile. Viewers may find similarities and tangential points that possibly inflect their interpretation of the artwork or creates a 'spiritual' connection with the artist. In other words, the domestic habitat is a platform for intersectional experiences and conversations between artists and viewers.

Inhabiting the Installation: Representations of Domestic Objects in Ceramics

As a source of inspiration and as a reflection on the statement above, components from the domestic space are constantly represented in the installation, creating a utopic ensemble of compositions with harmonious interplay.

In a reductive process, domesticated animals are converted into ceramic sculptures that inhabit the installation territory. A dog, cat, bunny, bird, and mouse become semi-abstract objects that function, alongside their visual role, as intellectual triggers for the viewer, activating the space and generating, or simulating a narrative.⁷

The subject matter of the still life installation consists mostly of domestic inanimate objects, man-made tools and mechanical devices that were manipulated into semi-abstract objects. They symbolize the integral and constant influence of the Artist's visual interpretation of the domicile's essence. In the installation space, functional ordinary objects from the artist's mundane life are enlarged into a monumental scale and used as architectural elements to define the domestic territory.⁸

Another architectural element consists of the territory-defining ceramic tiles. The history of ceramics tells us of utilizing ceramic tiles in the domestic habitat for humidity and temperature control, fire resistance, and aesthetic reasons, making the ceramic tiles an integral part of domestic architecture. The Ram-pressed tiles in the installation have two functions:

- To define the habitat territory and to set schematic borders between the viewer's space-time reality and the artwork sphere. In other words, the tiles define the performance stage within the gallery space.

⁷ Figure 1

⁸ Figure 2

- To illustrate the 'natural' environment of the objects and to characterize the habitat conditions. For instance, the silver bubble shaped tiles delineate the imaginable subsistence conditions for the luster glazed objects.

Personal, Local, Universal – Zooming in and out

The provisional nature and the versatility of the artwork space facilitates a spectrum of interpretive levels – from the most specific and personal to the most broad and universal. Zooming in, the internal process of creation and the mental intensity it involved, might lead the artist toward intimate and sensitive conclusions that mirror the artist's personality or reflect internal emotions, feelings, and beliefs. The result could reveal the most intimate secrets and hidden identity components of the artist and could be simultaneously interpreted as a reflection of the local surroundings and be associated with universal ideas.

Zooming out, the artist's personality is greatly influenced by local perceptions and universal values. To achieve professional maturity, the artist is educated in academia to follow global standards and behave according to social values. It requires an adjustment of internal outputs and tuning up the artist statement. Personal symbols and images are adjusted into common frameworks that fit typical templates. Sometimes this process is natural and unconscious, but sometimes the artist has to justify a position and provide a supporting interoperation for the artwork. For a foreign artist, this process becomes

translational and is an integral part of the practice. Aspects of identity coupled with local perceptions are converted into a new representation from a universal perspective. Interpreting the converted artwork, analyzing the “unfamiliar” representations, and tracing the origins might be a challenging task for the viewer that could turn out as either a success or a complete jumble.

Personal, Local, Universal – Exhibiting Aesthetics from the Middle East

As a foreign artist from the Middle East, my artwork attempts to address aesthetics from a point of view that synthesizes my original local setting with my personal themes. The orientation of the artwork, therefore, needs to be adjusted in order to comply with global standards (e.g., the ‘white cube’ gallery settings,) and to make it comprehensible for the viewer. This effort is demonstrated in the installation in two different ways:

- The pattern design on the tile. It is derived from the artist’s fingerprint as a scan of the right index fingerprint has been scaled up and digitality manipulated into an abstract repetitive pattern to evoke a decorative rug pattern. At first glance, the wavy grooves seem like ornamental or architectural elements, however, a careful inspection reveals the friction ridges and fingerprint impression. The unique identifying feature of the body has been modified into an architectural element as a form of indirect interaction between the viewer and the artist as a person.

- The tiles are coated with Terra Sigillata made of local soil from the hills of Jerusalem. Terra Sigillata, usually translated as “sealed earth” is an ancient pottery technique from the Mediterranean basin that was used to achieve glossy surfaces with red slip. In this project, local clay has been imported, processed into fine slip, and applied on the tiles' surface to achieve a smooth silky sheen. The colors of the terra-sigillata surface range from desert sand to earthy tones and refers to the local landscape of the Judaeen Desert. Beside the visual benefit, it provides the concept of locality and emphasizes the spiritual connection of the potter to his land of origin.⁹

Terra Sigillata formula:

400 grams dry clay

11 grams Darvan 7

1 liter distilled water.

Mix well with a drill. Sieve through 100 mesh strainer. Ball mill for 24 hours. Then place the bucket loosely covered, somewhere where it won't be disturbed for several days. After the appropriate settling period, discard the sediment. Measure specific gravity to be 1.15 to 1.2, add water or leave to evaporate if needed.

Typical clay to use:

OM-4 Ball clay

⁹ Figure 3

XX-sagger Ball clay

Red Art

German GRT

any earthenware clay.

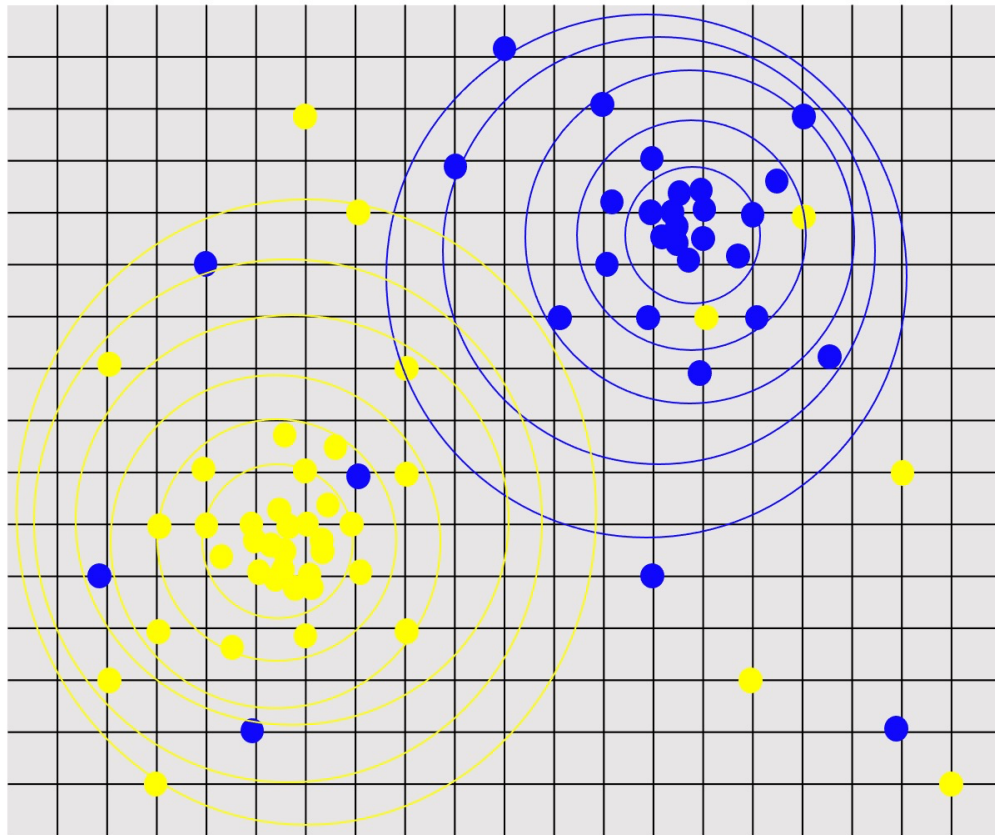
Dispersion, Aggregation, Circulation: Choreography of Ideas, Thoughts, and Images throughout the Installation's Grid

Imagine an artwork installation as an open space of floating fragments that occasionally overlap and fuse together; the fluctuation of the fragments enables the artist and the viewer to freely construct and deconstruct the elements, reassemble them again and solve any 'problem' in a process of trial and error. The mechanism of dispersion and aggregation works simultaneously and provides endless variations and combinations:

- The process of dispersion spreads the concepts and objects over a wide area in space and provides a wider perspective of the general topic, as well as an opportunity to explore the potential power of each fragment as a singular element.
- The process of aggregative structuring may focus the observation and combine the elements into a homogeneous outcome. This process could produce a uniform artwork that speaks in a coherent voice, but at the very same time, is risks missing some vital elements which may result in dissonant eclecticism.

These two approaches circulate together in the installation and develop serendipities: floating fragments and gathering cores can develop, interact, and activate the surrounding space. A 'logical' composition of the artwork promises a flow and a certain rhythm in the space which is necessary for a dynamic experience of the artwork.

Illustration A:



The diagram above, graphically illustrates the fluctuation of ideas, thoughts, and images throughout the installation's grid. Each dot on the space grid represents a concept/idea and an image/object. Throughout the artistic process, some dots randomly fluctuate in the space and other dots move in systematic trails and synchronize. The gathering cores generate a 'magnetic field' that aggregates images and concepts together into a uniform entity. The gathering cores suggest harmony and coherency, while dispersion suggests chances for serendipities. The circles illustrate the collisions between fields and points of tangency, which generate surprising emergences and eclectic synthesis.

Chapter II: Time

"Time is the a priori (pure) condition of all appearance in general."¹⁰

Antiquity and Futurism in the Flux of Time

As an emerging artist, originating from the Middle East, archeological remains, and the vagaries of time are central to my practice. Antiquarian connotations, that abound in my local settings, heritage, and traditions are transformed by contemporary interpretations, that are occasionally associated with cultural and ethnic meanings. Architectural elements and ancient archetypes, unearthed in local excavations or on display in museums, are inspiring objects that can teach of aesthetics, classical proportions, beliefs, and values. Additionally, archeological remains can be great tools for the artist to conceptually explore the condition of time and perceptual time. They raise questions such as: What is the impact of archeological evidence on the current time? Does it influence the way we perceive time? Could contemporary ceramic artwork stand as evidence for future generations? Are we preparing the excavation sites for future archeologist? Such queries may guide the artist (and the archeologist?) to speculate about the perception of time from archeological and anthropological points of view.

Striving to transcend the limits of the present and seize aesthetic qualities of an imagined future, the artist is, nevertheless, unable to overstep the limits of time, which is measured and perceived by an external entity. This restriction further enhances the artist's desire to

¹⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

overcome the condition of time and bring about a futuristic visual vocabulary. The artist's time perception is, whether consciously or unconsciously, entirely artificial as it is mostly inspired by visual and academic experiences from the past. Even futuristic innovations are, in fact, some kind of interpretations that provide a glimpse into the artist's subjective perceptual time.

Following a different rationale, if we see the condition of time as a state of flux then we can be privileged to experience both the past and the future simultaneously. In other words, the future cannot be seen clearly because of continually-changing factors (present as well cannot be seen because of the slight delay). As flux suggests fluidity, this special condition may enable the artist to create, within the artwork, a simulation that can synchronize past and future conditions.

“The arrow of time obscures memory of both past and future circumstance with innumerable fallacies, the least trivial of which is perception.”¹¹

Archeological Perception - Digital Fabrication: Adoption of Digital Aesthetics

Making art in an era of innovation, encourages the artist to react to technological developments and digitize the artistic process. Digitalization could be implemented in the stages of fabrication or even earlier – in the conceptual stage:

¹¹ Shanker, *Only the Deplorable*

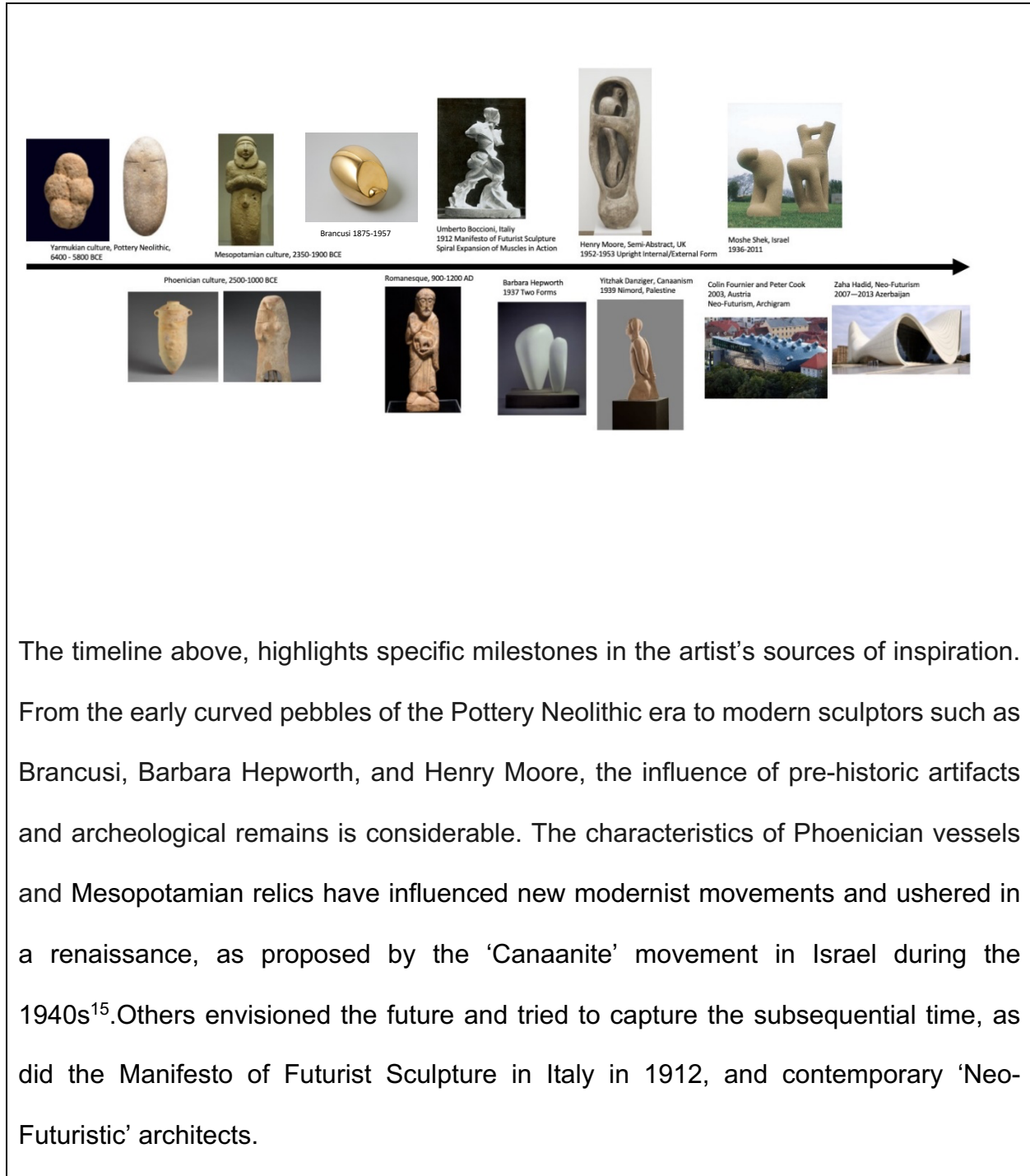
- In the fabrication process, computer-aided machines are great tools for processing materials in a short and accurate manner. The machine follows thousands of positions on the x, y, z axes and complies with the commands. Whether drilling, cutting, or etching, the machine's "handwriting" is visible and becomes part of the work's aesthetics. The tiles in the installation demonstrate the qualities and aesthetics of digital fabrication by a CNC router machine.¹²
- Digitalization could dictate the artist's grammar and morphological vocabulary. Inspired by a virtual-artificial screen space and the flexibility of materials in zero-gravity space, the artist adopts aesthetic elements from the computer program and attempts to apply them to fictional materials. This maneuver could result in unique objects that reflect digital qualities but also preserve the tactility of the human hand. The artwork reveals the influence of a computer-aided design program on the artist's sculptural language, and it is mostly performed in the morphology of the objects.^{13 14}

¹² Figure 4

¹³ Thinking forward to developing installation within digital space, digital time and digital matter.

¹⁴ Figure 5

Illustration B:



¹⁵ Canaanism, a cultural and ideological movement founded in 1939 among the Jews of Mandatory Palestine. It has had significant effect on the course of Israeli art, literature and spiritual and political thought. Much of the Canaanite effort was dedicated to researching the history of the Middle East and its peoples.

The Autonomy of the Viewer

The viewer plays a key role in art installations. The artist is aware of the viewer's point of view, potential interpretation, review, or critique from the early stages of the artistic process, as well as during the creation process. The presence of the viewer can sometimes unconsciously dictate the style of the artwork, its aesthetics, colors, and forms. One can, therefore, clearly state that viewers have an indirect impact on the artistic process or the outcome.

Once the viewers step into the exhibition space, they possess the key to activate the artwork and the artist grants them full autonomy. This unsigned agreement between the artist and viewer is nonnegotiable, and viewers have the freedom to interpret the works as they wish. The viewers are entitled to making up their own narrative, refer to motifs and ideas from their world, and cast them into the interpretation of the artwork. In defense of the viewers autonomy, it allows the artist and the artwork to reach wider audiences, not necessarily educated in the reading and discussing iconographic elements, symbols, or art in general. Contrary to the viewer's autonomy – the artist 'artificially' controls the way the artwork is read, limiting the accessibility and the range of the audience.

Whether the artist admits to being influenced by the viewer's autonomy or not, the position of the viewer within the artwork, as a narrator, as an interpreter, or even as an excuse for the artist to fulfill their fantasies, is very dominant. The viewer is, therefore, part of the artwork itself.

Cycle of Transformation

Viewing the artwork as a transformative experience is subjective and may be understood on a conscious, or on an unconscious level.

Looking at the transformation from the perspective of consciousness, the experience could be interpreted as a learning or exploration session that leads the artist toward a specific result. The physical process of making art is not fully considered as part of the transformative experience, since the artist is fully aware of the technical conditions and the working methods, however, the transformation still occurs throughout the hands-on sessions, while the artist is manipulating form “A” into form “B”. For instance, in the field of ceramic art, the transformation occurs once the artist shapes a lump of clay into a vessel or a figure. This transformative ritual creates dramatic change in the form or appearance of the artwork.

The classical transformative experience occurs on the unconscious level while the artist is fully focused and consumed in the creative process that requires an intense physical and mental effort. Ceramics, same as stone carving, water-color painting, or any other form of art, requires focus and persistence and repetitive continuous action, which could be correlated to a session of meditation. During the physical process, the artist may unknowingly enter a deep meditative state that can influence the quality of the artistic process and the intentions of the artist and leave the artist motivated and ready for the next step.

A deeper transformation occurs once the artist emerges from the meditative state and is ready for the irreversible state. The spiritual change that artists experience are revelation and enlightenment. Revelation in art making is a surprising moment, a moment of epiphany, when the artist discovers a new and unexpected shift in the artwork. Revelations may lead the artist into moments of spiritual and intellectual enlightenment. The feeling of transcendence that follows the enlightenment indicates that transformation took place.

Chapter III: Matter

"A pot thus 'contains' both the reality of materials and process, and the inner realities of man's sense of identity in relation to his own world of meaning".¹⁶

Generism – Configuring the Generic Object

From the Latin words 'gener', 'genus', the word "Generism"¹⁷ defines the act of transforming an ordinary-mundane object into a 'generic' object. In a world of overwhelming information and data, there is no room for 'generic' objects. From early childhood we are educated for individualism and celebrating uniqueness and the differences between us. While every person needs a special and distinctive object that specifically fits their own character, there are no 'regular' or 'plain' objects in the market. The market is flooded with an inventory of symptomatic objects of certain cultures and the 'common taste'. Most of the objects can be referred to leading countries that are financially dominant, globally control and maintain the 'common taste,' and dictate future trends and fashion. In an era of globalization and online trading networks, the artist and designer should consider the idea of a universal or 'generic' design.

In ancient times, empires maintained a 'common taste' among citizens. Dominant culture dictated specific aesthetics and style and artists had to follow the trend. A good example demonstrating this phenomenon is the sculptural representation of the 'cat' in ancient Egypt. Most of the cat sculptures follow the same proportions and outlines, following the

¹⁶ Rawson, *Ceramics*

¹⁷ Made-up word





rational of generic design. The uniform design guidelines of the Egyptians could be considered 'generism'.

Considering the rationale of generic design in our era is necessary as our world gets more and more sophisticated and complex. Generic design could simplify communication between cultures and support the idea of universalism. The generic process suggests a reduction process to eliminate all excessive information and details until the design can be classified as a general representation of the object.¹⁸ Sometimes, a small gesture is sufficient for making an object recognizable – a movement, color, the overall form – mostly elements that exist within the DNA of the object.

However, paradoxical queries may arise from the idealization of generic design. Does this radical action deliver the social values we are aiming for? Or destructs the natural flow of cultural prosperity? On one hand, humanity celebrates cultural diversity and cherishes objects that represent this value. On the other hand, globalization calls for a cultural consensus and a push towards uniformity and standardization. The role of the designer is to generate a compromise between these contradictions and to unify the values.

¹⁸ Conrads, "Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture, Adolf Loos, Ornament and Crime"

Illustration C:

			
<p><u>Egyptian Cat Figurine</u> Copper alloy, Ptolemaic Period (304-30 BCE.) Cats, especially female, were highly esteemed, linked to women, and often depicted as important members of prominent households in ancient Egypt. they were respected for being mysterious, unpredictable, intense, playful, and affectionate. Several ancient Egyptian pantheon deities have cat characteristics including the lioness-goddess Sekhmet, daughter of Ra and protector of pharaohs.¹⁹</p>	<p><u>Cheshire Cat</u> Please would you tell me, said Alice, a little timidly . . . why your cat grins like that? It's a Cheshire cat, said the Duchess, and that's why. An intriguing idea is that British Blue cats, which are known for a 'smiling' expression, are descended from much earlier British cats that may have originated in Cornwall. Lewis Carroll lived for some years in Guildford, Surrey and often visited the nearby village of Cranleigh where a cat-like gargoyle can be found on a pillar in St Nicholas' church. Perhaps Carroll's Cheshire Cat could have been based on that cat.²⁰</p>	<p><u>Maneki Neko</u> An amiable figurine that is placed in clear view of business patrons. Generally representing good fortune and luck, Maneki Neko is popular as a talisman for business success. Maneki Neko is believed to have originated during the Edo Period and had become more documented and widely known through the Meiji period.²¹</p>	<p><u>Uriel's Cat</u> In a reductive design process, the ears, nose, eyes and mouth were removed. The design preserves identifying elements, mostly the motion and the typical morphology of the cat body. The creature operates now as a generic representation of a cat, or as an icon of the species.</p>

¹⁹ Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East. 1931.3.3.

²⁰ "Purr 'n' 'Fur", Cats in Fables, Fairytales and Festivals

²¹ Pho, *The beckoning Cat*

The Metamorphosis of the Human Body in Ceramic Art

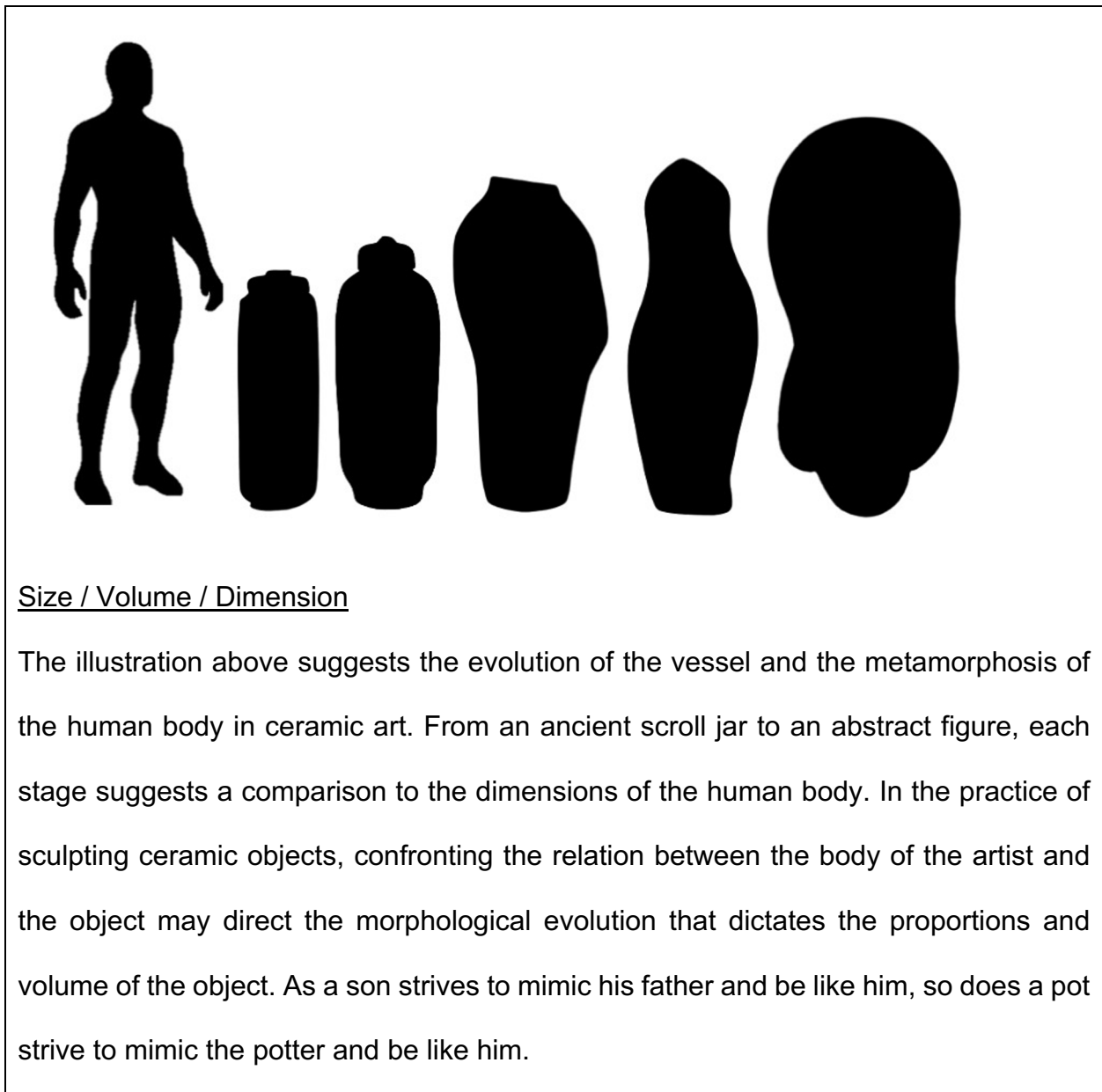
Morphological research in the field of ceramics spans across the spectrum of Vessel – Body - Sculpture. The research traditionally begins on the wheel as a simple rounded closed vessel. Following the gesture of the wheel, different compositions are assembled as the foundation of the object. In this crucial moment, the orientation of the object is generated as a shape that grows from the axis, or as a closed form that could be rotated and repositioned. The figure is not yet completed.

The inner structure of the object is an important element in ceramics methodology. It determines the hollow space within the object and potentially generates revelation. The inner structure can, naturally, be correlated with the body's internal anatomy, a fascinating analogy between the human body and the art of ceramics as in both cases a durable skeleton is essential to support weight and prevent the figure from collapsing.

Another spectrum to consider is "Human - Posthuman - Hybrid". A metaphor that is fit for conceptual perception within the artistic practice in the studio. While processing the morphology of the artwork, when regarding the vessel as a human body, the artist may experience a moment of transcendence and divinity. In other words, the artist is an active participant in the divine creation and has the ability to generate a process of metamorphosis. Following the metaphysical rational, once this spiritual skill is fully achieved and the artist is working in unconditional space and time, the question of matter

is solved. The artist is able to freely move across the "Human - Posthuman - Hybrid" spectrum, 'transforming' a 'human' into a 'post-human' within the frame of the artwork. Experiencing this metaphoric spectrum could lead the artist along an unknown morphological journey beyond the familiar genetics of human nature.

Illustration D:



Fluidity of Ceramic Materials and Technique Perception

In an era of extensive technological development and innovations in the field of material engineering, ceramic materials are at a crossroad. On one hand, clay is one of the most basic and primary material in the human history, with a long cultural heritage across the world. On the other hand, more and more new materials are questioning the eternal role of clay.

As part of technical research of materials and application techniques, the artist is encouraged to stretch the traditional perception of ceramic material and develop new working methodologies. These might be based on traditional and ancient techniques, but at the very same time could celebrate the advantages of new technologies. In other words, the artist could manipulate ceramic materials, by exploring both traditional and innovative procedures. This combination provides a wide range of morphological and technical processing possibilities and may demonstrate the predictability and randomness of the process and the wide limits of ceramic materials. The revival of ancient techniques together with the prosperity of computer-aided design might be a challenging process that might become, besides its visual benefits, a meaningful and ethical step toward for the preservation of ancient crafts.

Inspecting ceramic material research from a contemporary perspective, would demonstrate the versatility of ceramic materials and their aesthetic qualities. The variety of processed raw material and constant global supply, provides the ceramic researcher

with the ultimate playground. Artist could use traditional and innovative techniques to apply ceramic materials in order to achieve unique surfaces and visual effects. Some artists could create visual illusions by demonstrating the potential of clay to mimic other materials.

Ancient Techniques into Contemporary Art

Lusterware- pottery or porcelain vessels with a metallic surface. The surface may look like silver, gold, copper, mother of pearl or an iridescent metallic color. In fact, the surface and the color depend on the optical illusion formed when the light hits the metallic surface.

The first lusters appeared in Egypt in the 6th century AD, mostly on the surface of glass. Records of pottery in metallic colors are from the area of Mesopotamia in the 7th century. The colors have been achieved after many attempts by artisans and potters to produce gold. Alchemy was considered as "science" and involved intense research of pigments and precious metals.

Arabian luster (solutions of metal salts mixed with clay) developed during the Middle Ages along the shores of the Mediterranean. With the Muslim conquests in Spain, the methods and techniques were also known among the Moorish potters. The technique has always been shrouded in mystery and secrecy and was common only among the potters who were also "alchemists".

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the luster technique moved from Spain to Italy, where renaissance scientists continued to study and improve the results and refine the technique.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, luster technique was forgotten, but in the 19th century, with the rise of the English Arts and Crafts Movement, William de Morgan began to experiment with luster application techniques. De Morgan followed translated literature from the Middle Ages and managed to breathe new life into the traditional technique but failed to achieve marvelous results as the Arab and Spanish Luster. In 1962, when Alan Caiger Smith began experimenting with lusters, there were only two books about this subject, two in English and one in Spanish. Every piece of information helped Smith to put the puzzle together and to publish his famous book “Luster Pottery”.

Thanks to the scientific development, the Luster technique has been greatly evolved in the recent decades. Today, luster-iridescent surfaces can be achieved in a variety of techniques: pigment luster, luster glaze, resin luster and fuming. The future of lusters in particular, and ceramic glazes in general, is on the verge of a new era. The development of nanotechnology and the understanding of the surface down to the micro level, facilitate outstanding results under controlled conditions.^{22 23}

²² Smith, *Lustre Pottery : Technique, Tradition, and Innovation in Islam and the Western World*

²³ Figure 6, 7, 8, 9

Basic luster glaze formula, cone 03:²⁴

Ferro Frit 3110 87

Grolleg Kaolin 8

Silica 5

Additives:

Cobalt oxide 3

Silver nitrate 3

Bismuth sub-nitrate 3

CMC gum 1

R_2O & RO	R_2O_3	RO_2
0.64 Na_2O	0.24 Al_2O_3	3.35 SiO_2
0.10 K_2O	0.11 B_2O_3	
0.26 CaO		
<hr/>		
$R_2O:RO$ 0.74 : 0.26		
$SiO_2:Al_2O_3$ 14.01		

'Jarre a la corde' - roughly translated as "jar on the rope" is a traditional pottery technique originating from the Mediterranean. The process begins with a wooden skeleton, shaped to a desired form. Sisal rope is winded around the skeleton as a separating layer between the wood structure and the clay. Then soft clay is layered on the rope. Once the clay is in the stage of 'leather-hard', the skeleton is taken apart and the rope as well. The process of emptying the viscera alludes to human birth. Thanks to the interior skeleton, the technique enables the potter to build large forms in a short time and the method is considered semi-industrial.

²⁴ Daly, *Lustre*

Over the years, this special technique almost vanished, due to extensive industrialization in Europe. Today, only few potteries in the south of France and Pays Basque still practice those technique and preserve this ancient craft.²⁵

Molds – Industrial Fabrication / Personal Duplication

The art of molding clay, earth, or mud originates from the Pottery Neolithic era in which humans began experimenting with clay. Natural elements like leaves, wood, or stones were used as negative forms to shape clay. Later, weaved baskets and fired clay forms were contrived as advanced molding technique. As part of the industrialization in the modern times, molds became a key factor in mass-production industrial manufacturing of ceramics. Nowadays, the rapid development of 3D printing and digital modeling renders the need and efficiency of “traditional” molds technique questionable, aesthetically, and material-wise.

Various modeling techniques are used to form the sculptures:

Press molds – are thin-shell plaster molds that are cast over plaster models, copying the shape and their surface. Models made of metal-wire, foam, and plaster are hand chiseled and formed into the desired shapes, then sanded and smoothed to perfection. Once the model is ready, it is layered with thin strips of plaster and burlap to form two

²⁵ Figure 10

durable thin-shelled mold parts. After releasing the model, clay slabs are pressed into the mold parts and assembled together in what is called the “leather-hard” stage.²⁶

Ram Press Die – a hydraulic press, patented by the Ram Press Company (Ohio), that enables casting clay tiles quickly and efficiently. It is basically a two-part air-release mold composed of a male member and a female member, each consisting of a plaster body with a metal die cast. The novel feature of the Ram press entails the release of the forms tile from the plaster die by blowing air through the die to affect the release. The pressed tile adheres rigidly to the die until released by the air.²⁷

Extrusion – in this process the clay is forced through a die to form elongated shapes that have a constant cross-section. The extruded form could be manipulated and shaped into the desired object during the “leather-hard” stage. During the firing, some extruded forms require the support of kiln furniture to prevent distortion of the shape.²⁸

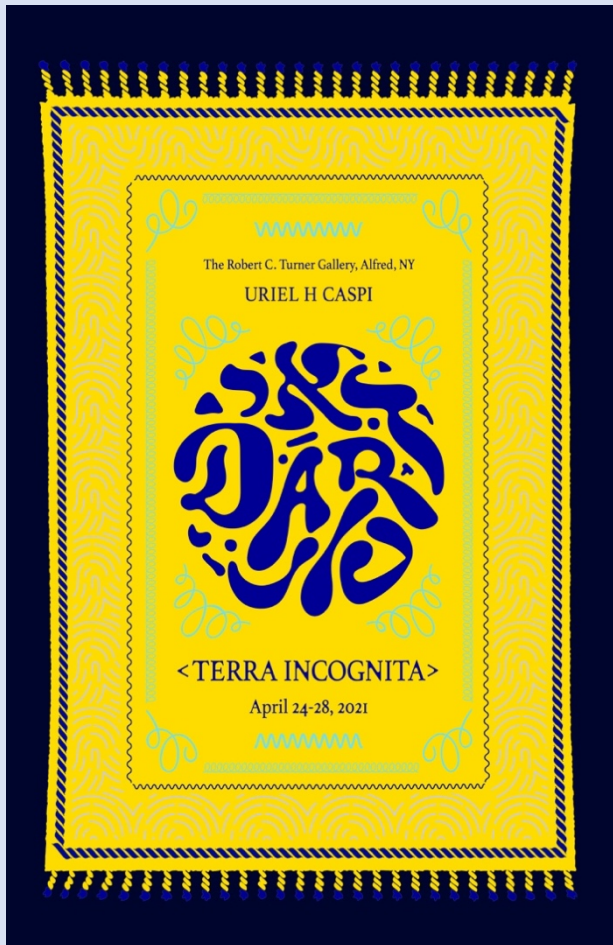
²⁶ Figure 11

²⁷ Figure 12

²⁸ Figure 13

Etymology

Illustration E:



The rug as an icon of Middle Eastern domesticity with typical calligraphy and typography. Ornaments are inspired by elements from the artwork installation.

Dār / دار / דאר

An active participle verb derived from a Semitic root that means “to dwell” or “to live.”

The word is commonly used in various Semitic languages and has multiple meanings:

- In Hebrew, the word is used as an alternative verb for “to dwell” and share the root with the word “apartment” as a synonym for the common Hebrew word “BAIT.”

- In Arabic and in other Middle Eastern languages, the word is mainly used to describe the idea of domesticity, house, and family. In the traditional Arabic culture, each family member belongs to a larger family circle called “Dār”, which indicates their genealogy. The term is also used to define geographical territory, region, country, and habitat.

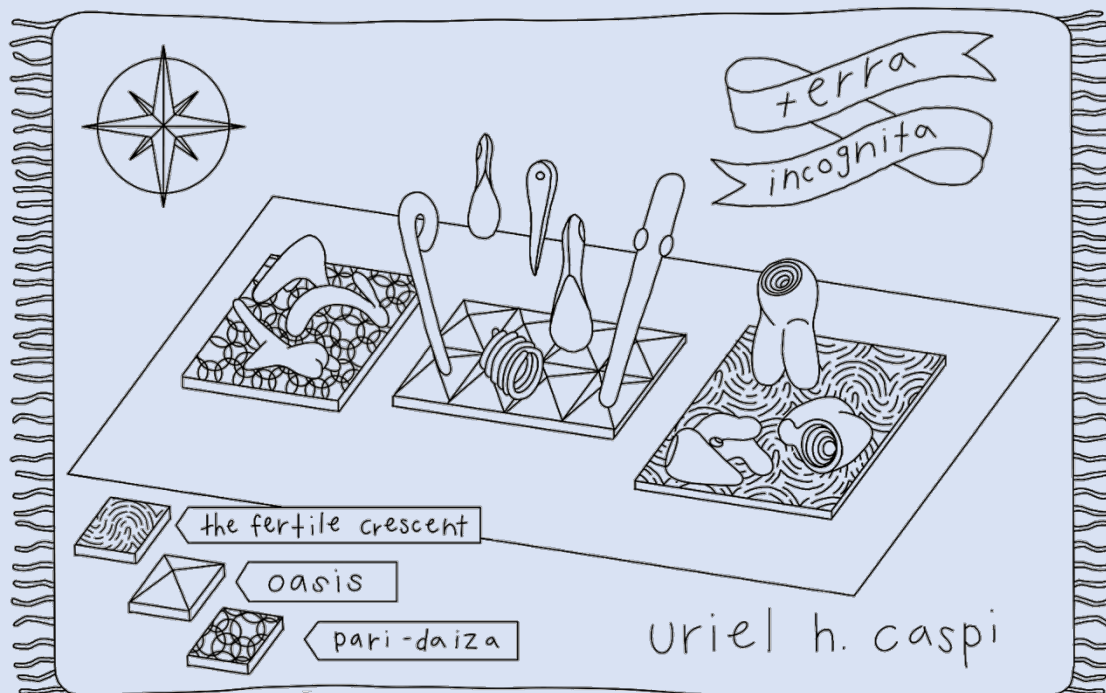
Terra Incognita

Translated from Latin as “unknown territory” and used in the field of cartography to define unexplored territories on the globe. It was first used in the “Mappa Mundi” – European world chart from the Medieval Times.

Land, soil, clay, earth, and territory are different meanings derived from the Latin term that is mostly embedded in religious context (“Terra Santa”) and in Roman mythology it is the name of the goddess of the Earth. In English, the use of Terra as a name for planet Earth is common among science fiction writers. Terra had been used for many centuries in the scientific community due to Latin being the international science tongue. In the field of ceramic art, the term “Terra” is designated as a secondary term for clay and specifically related to earthenware pottery from the Mediterranean Basin. Archeologists consider the pottery from ancient Greece and Rome as “Terra” or “Terra-Sigillata” (sealed earth).

Immersed in the spirit of mystery, the term “Terra Incognita” calls for potential expeditions and tempts the viewer to explore the unexplored, to reveal the unknown, to experience the incognito.

Illustration F:



The Fertile Crescent (space #1)²⁹

This Middle Eastern region spans from Phoenicia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and all the way south to ancient Egypt. The term was popularized by the American archeologist James Henry Breasted in his book *Ancient Times, A History of the Early World* (1916). The lack of a common geographical or political name for this area obliged Breasted to coin the term ‘Fertile Crescent’ for the semi-circle planes between the mountains and

²⁹ Figures 14, 15, 16

the desert bay. According to Breasted, the region is considered to be one of the cradles of civilization because it is where the first farming settlements emerged, domesticating plants as crops. Technological advances in the region include the development of agriculture and the use of irrigation, writing, the wheel, and glass, most of them emerged in Mesopotamia. Early human civilizations such as Sumer and Akkad in Mesopotamia, the Canaanites in Phoenicia, and the Egyptians, flourished as a result.³⁰ The title “Fertile Crescent”, invites the viewer to explore the primitive- earthy environment and to experience the fundamentals of creation and the primary elements of civilization. The installation operates as a research space for investigating the morphological evolution of the objects, analyzing the metamorphosis of the human figure as well as examining the transformation of earth into ceramic sculpture.

Oasis (Space #2)³¹

In the ancient Coptic language, it means a place of dwelling, a fertile area that provides habitat conditions for animal and humans. In the myths, Oases are remarkable places. In the middle of the barren scorched desert, they provide a refuge for life and are considered as a pastoral “Arcadia” on Earth. Inspired by the intense colors of the desert, the yellow-colored monochromatic ceramic installation invites the viewer to dwell within the space. As the oasis is a place where life can exist, so can forms and devices from the domestic space that were converted into sculptural-architectural elements pretend to set the conditions for subsistence.

³⁰ Abt. *American Egyptologist: the life of James Henry Breasted and the creation of his Oriental Institute*, pp. 193–194, 436.

³¹ Figures 17, 18, 19, 20

Pari-daiza (Space #3)³²

From Proto-Iranian "pairi" (around) and "daeza" (wall), a common term for an enclosed space or, specifically, a walled-in garden. The word came to mean a garden that provides a place for protected leisure and spiritual relaxation. The term was adopted by the Christian religion to describe the garden of Eden or Paradise on earth.

Inspired by the geometrical plans of the Median gardens, the third installation suggest an imaginary habitat of flora and fauna. Precious metals mined from the earth crust are formulated to coat the sculptural surfaces, reflecting visionary environment from the future.

³² Figures 21, 22, 23

Conclusion

Carrying the fundamental physics-concepts of Space, Time, and Matter into the context of contemporary ceramic art, seems extraneous and speculative. However, due to the elemental and material nature of this art, this physical trinity links to every step of the ceramic process. It operates, in this study, as an optical apparatus that helps the artist and the viewer observe and inspect the ceramic sculpture in an analytical manner.

An examination of the artworks through the prism of these concepts concludes that in the absence of objective reality, space, and therefore the artwork, are subjective as well. The artwork is a specific coordinate on the space grid that proposes the agency for collisions between subjects and objects. From an epistemological perspective, as there are no absolutes, the desire of the artist to form an artwork that communicates a universal message and holds absolute truth, proves hopeless. In the context of the thesis exhibition, the art installation proposed a variety of positions in space for potential collisions between objects and subjects. For instance: the artist sculpts domicile-related 'objects' that are perceived by the viewer as 'subjects'.

Time is not linear, it is circular. Under the circular time orientation, time is not perceived as a straight line stretching from the distant past to the far future, rather it is seen as a circular system in which events are repeated according to some cyclical pattern.³³ While the ceramic process operates as a transformative cycle, the outcome, the ceramic artwork, memorizes the circular time orientation. The installation exhibited various cyclical

³³ Graham. "The Role of Perception of Time in Consumer Research"

time patterns. Antiquarian and futuristic elements fluctuated repeatedly throughout the installation's grid in a cyclical pattern through aspects of material, technique, or form. The composition in the gallery space requires the viewer to form a circular narrative. As the cyclical time pattern is bidirectional, experiencing the art installation can be clockwise and counterclockwise to simulate the artwork in past and future conditions, or even in combined and synchronize conditions of both.

The viewer is an integral part of the artwork and is perceived as 'Matter' in the installation's 'Space-Time'.

In accordance with the axiom of John Archibald Wheeler, space-time tells the viewer how to move, and the viewer tells space-time how to curve. In other words, the conditions of space and time navigate the viewer along different positions/events on the installation's grid, and the viewer, as matter, narrates the plot structure; the rising and falling action; and the trajectory of the narrative, within the elasticity of the 'Space-Time'.

There is no doubt that observing and reading the art installation through the prism of Space, Time, and Matter require deep understanding of hidden ceramic art processes. Further investigation is needed in order to elucidate the potential of this analyzing methodology and turning it into a legible and appropriate tool for critique. This thesis paper and the exhibition "DAR Terra Incognita" at the Robert C. Turner Gallery attempted to illustrate this methodology and simulate it as a metaphor along predictable and random collisions between the artist and the viewer. It is immaterial whether or not the viewer or

the reader choose to practice this methodology as simply walking around and observing thoroughly is sufficient.

Reflection

“The fireworks went on for nearly half an hour, great pulsing strobes, fiery dandelions and starbursts of light brightening both sky and water. It was hard to tell which was reality and which was reflection, as if there were two displays, above and below, going on simultaneously—one in space-time, mused Max, and the other in time-space.”³⁴

This writing attempts to conclude my graduate studies at the ceramics division and summarize the research I have been conducted over the last two years. Along the exploration of new processes and the preservation of ancient techniques, my main objective was to develop my installation methodology and to set the ultimate conditions to convey my artwork to the audience coherently but still creatively.

In reflection on the thesis exhibition, the intervention of the artwork within the architecture of the gallery space, set the conditions to experience the installation at full capacity, but at the very same time, it coordinated moments of intimacy of semi-enclosed space. The composition challenged the viewer to cross different territories, to analyze the narrative and to experience revelation – the essentials to gain a moment of enlightenment.

Looking forward, the installation structure I have developed could be a fruitful platform for designing visionary enclosed spaces in the future. A space that encapsulates the richness of matter and reveals new horizons of time.

³⁴ Luckman, *Snooze: A Story of Awakening*

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Appendix

Résumé

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Born 1994

Education

- 2021 MFA Division of Ceramic Art, New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred University, Alfred, NY
- 2019 Cranbrook Ceramics, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI
- 2018 BFA Ceramics and Glass Department, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel
- 2017 Spring Semester at the Ceramics Department, Rhode Island School of Design, RI
Summer session at NYSCC, Alfred University, Alfred, NY
- 2014 Military Meteorologist, IAF, Israel

Selected Exhibitions

- 2021 Solo show, Sculpture Space, New York, NY
International Ceramics Biennial Mino, Japan
DAR – Terra Incognita. MFA Thesis Show, The Robert C. Turner Gallery, Alfred, NY
Alfred at Sculpture Space, New York, NY
Come Hell or High Water, The Robert C. Turner Gallery, Alfred, NY
- 2020 NSJE Show at the NCECA Conference, ArtSpace Gallery, Richmond, VA
TLV Biennial for Israeli Art and Design, Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel
Confluence, The Robert C. Turner Gallery, Alfred, NY
The Isrotel Collection Show, Israel
- 2019 Emerging Artist Solo Show, Hecht Museum, University of Haifa, Israel
Material, Object, Belief. Forum Gallery, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI
Tableworks. Bswing Gallery at NCECA Conference, Minneapolis, MN
- 2018 Actual Materiality, Forum Gallery, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI
Terra-Cotta Rave. Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center, Tel-Aviv, Israel
Bezalel Graduate Show. Bezalel Academy of arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel

- Israeli Ceramic Artworks Inspired by Japan, Korea and China. Bezalel Academy of arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel (Curator with Hye Jung Kim)
- 2017 20/30 Gustin Anagama / Watershed Anniversary Exhibition. Chris Gustin Studio Gallery, S. Dartmouth, MA
- A Glimpse – Bezalel Ceramics Department Students at Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel
- Jump into a Mirror. Garnd-Art Gallery, Haifa, Israel
- 2016 The Secrets of Clay. The Rosenfeld Residence, Haifa, Israel

Awards, Scholarships and Prizes

- 2019 The Hecht Foundation Award for an Emerging Artist, Hecht Museum, University of Haifa, Israel
- Blumenthal Award for an excellent senior project in ceramics, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel
- 2018 The Tony Hepburn Merit Scholarship, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI
- Award of Excellence, The Liberal Arts Department, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel
- 2017 The Schatz Family Prize for a distinguished artwork, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel
- Merit Award of the Ceramics and Glass Department, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel

Apprenticeships and Residencies

- 2018 Assistant to the Ceramic Artist Mr. Shama Sam Gibsh, Jaffa, Israel
- 2017 Summer Apprentice to the Ceramic Artist Mr. Chris Gustin, S. Dartmouth, MA
- 2016 Summer Apprentice to the Potter Mrs. Anne Mette Hjortshøj, Bornholm, Denmark

Workshops and Teaching Experience

- Colleague of the Haifa Center of Ceramics and Art, Haifa, Israel (2015-Today)
- 2021 Ceramic Sculpture, NYSCC, Alfred University, NY (TA)
- 2020 Ceramic Tiles, NYSCC, Alfred University, NY (TA)
- Ceramic Sculpture, NYSCC, Alfred University, NY (TA)
- Extravaganza workshop in Black and White at the HCC, Haifa, Israel (Instructor)
- 2019 Foundation, NYSCC, Alfred University, NY (TA)
- 2018 Organic materials and clay combinations workshop at the HCC, Haifa, Israel (Instructor)
- 2017 Porcelove: paperclay and porcelain slip workshop at the HCC, Haifa, Israel (Instructor)
- 2016 Crystalline Glazes Workshop at the HCC, Haifa, Israel (Instructor)

Ceramics Internships

- 2013 Beit Benyamini, Contemporary Ceramics Center, Tel Aviv, Israel
- Meyerhoff Arts Center, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 2012 The Brewery of Ceramic Arts, Kiryat Tiv'on, Israel
- Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa, Israel (2007-2012)

Research, Publication, Press

- 2021 Shimon Bader -The Tableware Designer of Israel (on-going project)
- 2020 Ceramics Now, Contemporary Ceramics Magazine: Artist feature (2020, October 28th) Retrieved from <https://www.ceramicsnow.org/2020/10/28/uriel-caspi/>
- 2019 Calcalist Yediot News, Reut Barne'a (2019, July 7th)
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- 2018 A Metamorphosis by Fire: The Direct and Metaphorical Relation between Cremation and Urns in the West.
"Tripod: Material -Text - Image" E-journal about Crafts, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel. Retrieved from <http://tripod-journal.bezalel.ac.il/en/>
- 2017 Haaretz Gallery News (2017, March 9th). Jump into a Mirror: Heads Production Rav Erev (2017, February 7th). Jump into a Mirror: Heads Production. Retrieved from <https://www.erev-rav.com/archives/45610>

Collections

Isrotel Chain Art Collection, Israel
Bezalel Academy of Art and Design President's Collection, Jerusalem, Israel
The Davidson Family Collection
Private collections

Artist Statement

From early childhood I developed a fascination for clay. I realized that working with clay enlightened me spiritually and emotionally which, in turn, influenced my creativity. Clay became the media in which I could express thoughts and feelings and through the artistic studio practice I develop my own working methodologies and visual vocabulary, mostly within the Vessel - Body - Sculpture spectrum. Creating in this versatile field allows me to manipulate traditional forms into 'embodied objects', either as part of series, or as individual figures. The evolution of the works guides me towards a never-ending morphological research of interior and exterior; color and shape; light and shadow.

As an emerging artist from the Middle East, archeological remains and pre-historic artifacts turned into conceptual aspect in my art. Antiquarian connotations from my local surroundings as well as objects from my personal domicile could be transformed in a process of contemporary interpretation that occasionally associated with multicultural references. Such transformations inspire me to dig deeper into myself and uncover my 'personal-sphere.' These 'inner-excavations' revealed narratives, memories, personal sediments, and identity components that constitute the iconography of my art.

My creative process encompasses visual and the conceptual aspects as well as research into materials and techniques. In an innovative perspective, qualities and aesthetics of traditional techniques demonstrate the predictability and randomness of ceramic materials, their processes, and their broad limits. Revived traditional Mediterranean

techniques and computer-aided design, confluence in a challenging way, are visually enchanting, and can be considered ethical and meaningful devices for the preservation of ancient crafts.

I wish to create interactive installations that would reflect my individual and experimental voice while simultaneously communicating with the viewers and granting them full autonomy to activate my artwork, to form a narrative, and become part of the artwork itself.

Teaching Philosophy

Art education is versatile and multi-sensual, the student is required to process the information and simultaneously integrate visual, auditory, and tactile signals. Although the human brain has naturally evolved to process multisensory signals, the practice of making art is cognitively challenging and requires awareness, at different liminal levels. As an art educator I consider sharpening the students' senses and developing their multi-sensual comprehension extremely important. Once the students accomplished this vital skill, they have the agency to dive into the next stage of reviewing art.

"Tabula Rasa"

Roughly translated as 'Blank Slate', the term is ascribed to Aristotle who used it to describe the mind of a student that is like a sheet of paper ready to be written upon. If we consider the student as a "Tabula Rasa" and consider the potential impression of the educator, the classroom model constantly calls for a rebirth of the intellect. Capturing the process of creating art and experiencing theoretical and practical tutorials would instinctively engage the student's natural intellect. To preserve this momentum, the educator is compelled to fill knowledge vacancy, to satisfy the hunger with evidence, and to maintain the curiosity with predictable discoveries. Once these conditions are fulfilled, the impression is complete.

"Sapere Aude" – The Classroom as a Research Space

From the perspective of the classroom as a natural environment for experiments, the educator dares to accommodate the research attempts of the student: whether navigating the student as a compass or facilitating a method of trial and error. By simulating or demonstrating a process, the educator is responsible for providing the student with the tools for thinking and speculating, which are the fundamentals of conventional research. Following this rationale, the objective is for the students to learn how to develop their own research methodology. This is a precious skill that requires hard work and would pay off in the long run. The support of the educator and a motivating class climate are crucial to ensure the success of the process. 'Dare to know', the motto of the scholars of the enlightenment movement, will not be just a motto once the student achieves the ability to successfully conduct a research.

Homo Sum

Academic achievements of a student not only depend on successful results, but also on the effectiveness of ethical educational progress. Science clearly shows that teaching skills such as empathy, moral code, altruism, and kindness facilitate a fruitful scholarly environment, and at the very same time assure the student's success later in life. By creating conditions for the student to feel connected with others and have the opportunity to practice social and emotional skills, the well-being of the community is guaranteed. An ancient pedagogue said, "educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." An educated heart has developed the proficiency to express individual thoughts and beliefs, as well as the capacity to hear the voice of others, which is a truly invaluable skill.

Diversity in the Field of Ceramic Art, Personal Statement

The issue of diversity in the field of contemporary ceramic art is becoming more relevant and challenging in recent years. Examining it through the lens of history could juxtapose conflicting values and ideas about how we contribute to increasing the diversity in the field.

Zooming Out

The lack of diversity in the field of ceramic art does not correlate to the rich history of ceramics and the cross-cultural essence of clay. Pottery is considered one of the most ancient crafts in human civilization, practiced for thousands of years globally, which gave rise to an expectation that clay as a substance would realize the beauty of multi-cultural confluence of ethnicities and nationalities. It goes back to the nature of clay, which is a primary and elemental material, without economic or social boundaries.

Dictating the Taste

Nevertheless, underrepresentation of multiple ethnicities in the field still exists and it is probably related to the cultural roots of this practice and its ethnographic expansion. Historically, the modern studio practice of ceramic art was established by the English Arts and Crafts Movement that responded to the extensive industrialization in Europe. While museum collections and education programs were dominated by Anglo-American artists, some pottery movements of other cultures were considered “primitive” or “exotic” and were neglected in this field. As a result of this traditional segregation, the common

orientation of taste and style is dictated by certain powerful groups and critics, with minimal deviation or representation of external influences.

The Paradox

Despite the common perception of clay as an affordable and feasible material, the contemporary studio practice of ceramics is accessible only to a fortunate few, artists who can afford the high cost of the facilities required to run a modern pottery studio. This sets a socio-economic boundary and eliminates the potential of diversity. Additionally, the current academization of the arts, and of the field of ceramic art in particular, further enhance the boundaries and the intellectual gaps between the artist and the viewer. On one hand, these ambivalent conditions precariously reduce the chances of achieving diversity in the near future, but on the other hand, the academization of ceramics would pervade social and ethical values into the conversation and emerge pluralism in the far future.

It's in Our hands: Personal Perspective.

As an artist who grew up in a diverse community, the values of diversity shaped my identity and my social perception. The heterogenous social structure I experienced as a young artist in my stomping ground influenced my inspiration sources and embedded multi-cultural references into my artwork. However, with my artistic transition into the field of ceramics, I found myself in a homogenous community, people from privileged background that enjoy the luxury of making art. In 2015, I decided on a course of action

and joined the founding team of the Haifa Center of Ceramics and Art, Israel. I was involved in establishing a regional ceramics center, that caters to the Ethiopian-Israeli immigrants' community. During recent years, while I offered intellectual diversity and my commitment to the community, I developed my teaching experience and learned how to communicate and engage with diverse audiences.

Mahatma Gandhi said, *“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization”*.

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

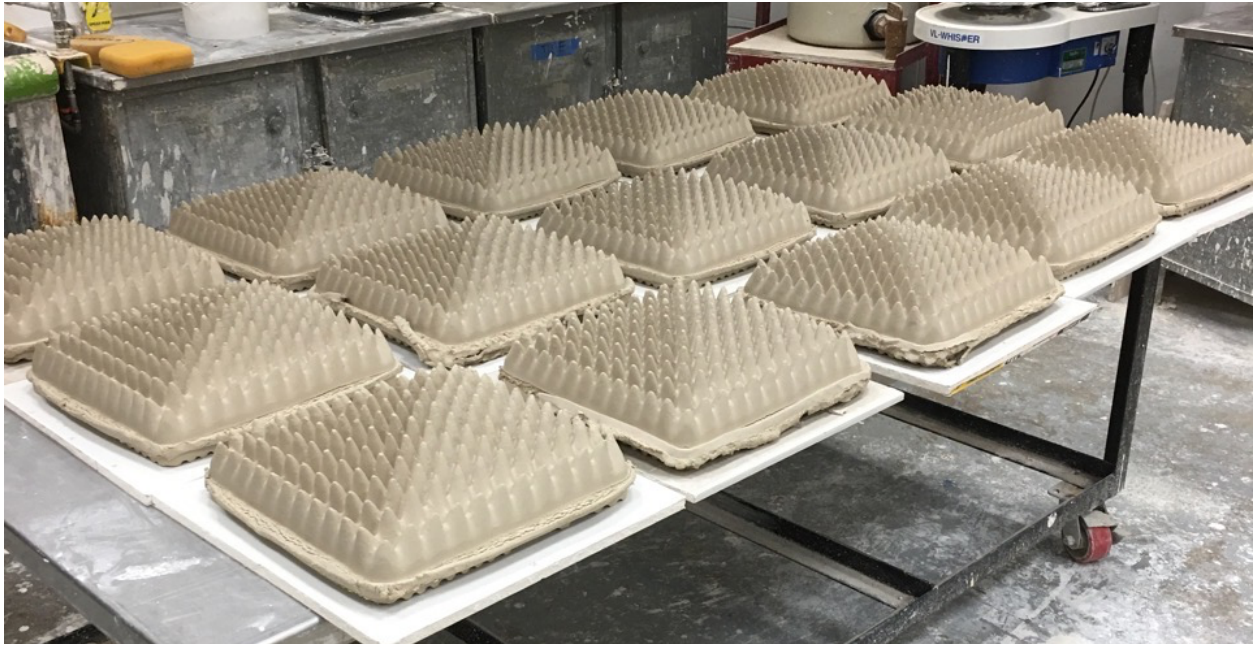


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

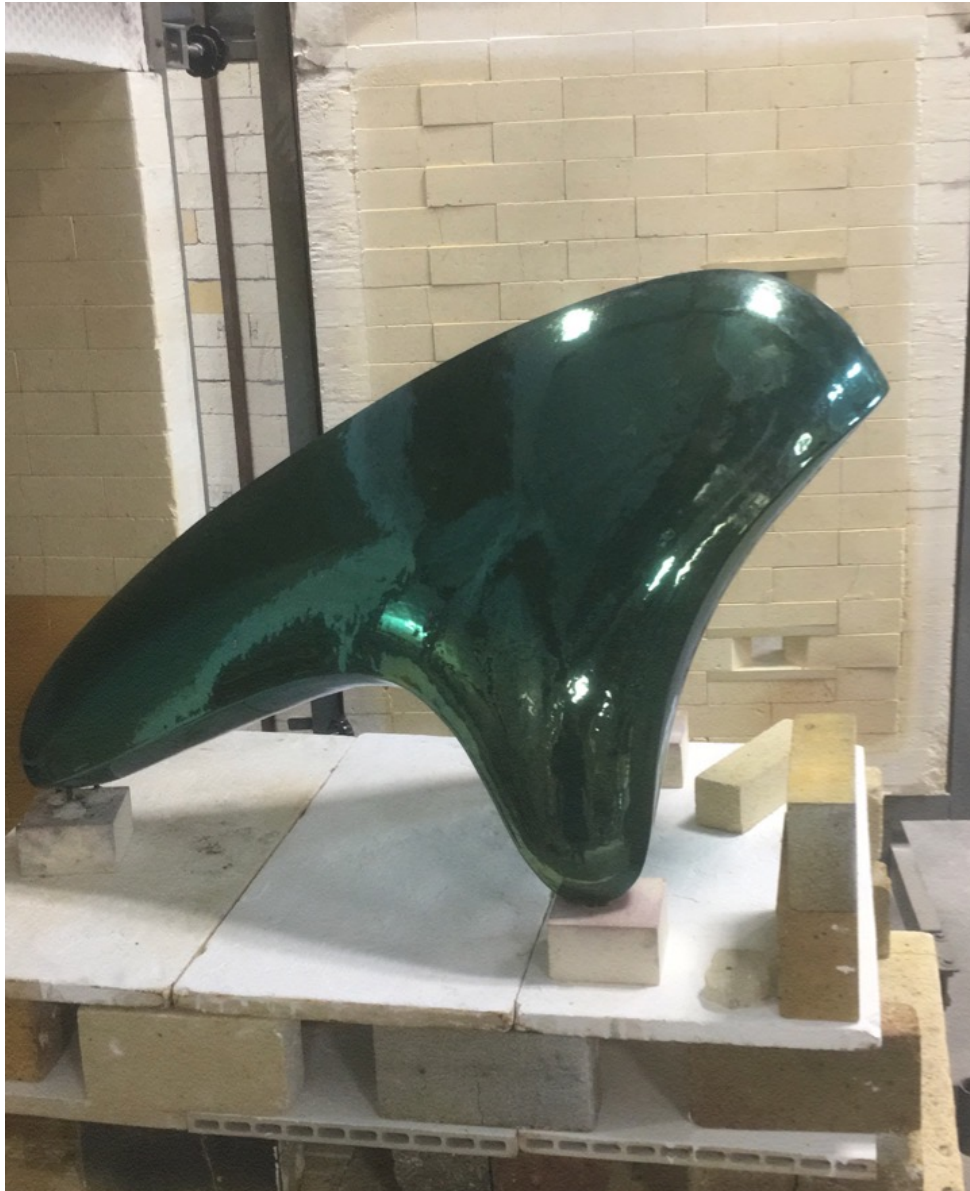


Figure 10

Ancient semi-industrial techniques

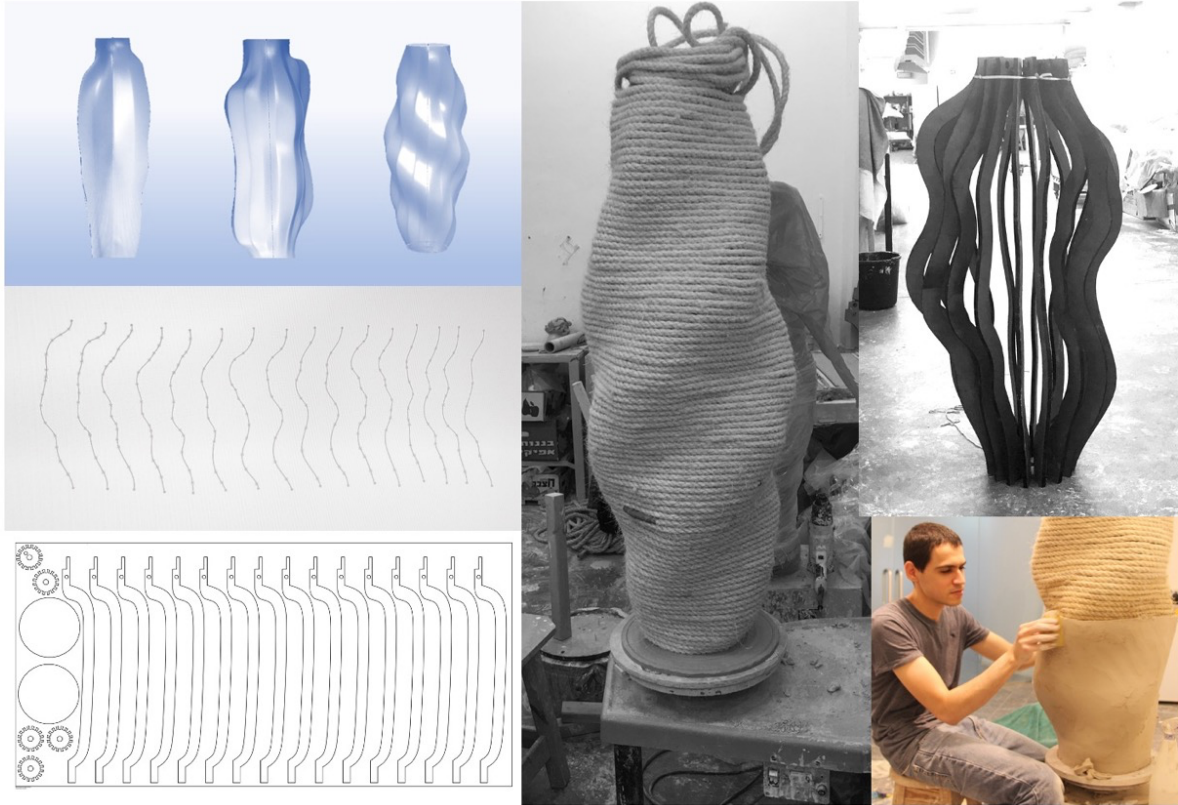


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

