

Hand-in-hand: cups as a space of
extended intimacy

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Attestation of Authorship

I, Joel White, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor any material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed:

Date: 8.05.24

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To the boys I kissed — this is for you.

Abstract

Hand-in-hand: cups as a space of extended intimacy is a practice-led research project that initiates an exploration of the intersection between intimacy, tenderness, memory and domestic space. Intimacy unfolds in the form of queer sexual encounters before being reframed through the lenses of desire, eros, gifting and reciprocity. As time (e)lapses, the heat of intimacy becomes embers of tenderness, and a desire to preserve the event arises. To capture these eclectic encounters and record them in tactile form, I turn to my practice of hand-thrown ceramics.

Intrigued by the paralleling of tender and rough actions embedded in ceramics and the complexity of physical intimacy between lovers, this research explores *desire* as a connective force between both. I ask, how might a ceramic practice emerge in relation to tender moments experienced during casual encounters with other queer men? Are gestures repeated across both, and how might I record my memories of intimacy, tenderness, and desire in clay? Could a ceramic object become a material record of intimate events? And for what purpose? How do time and space intertwine to divulge a deeper understanding of desire, intimacy, and tenderness?

Within this research, the seemingly humble cup has become the binding agent, where tender methods and material tending meet. Throughout, clay is understood and positioned as a conduit for gestural mark-making, memory recording, social connection, and desire. This set of concerns and sub-questions converge to explore the overarching question: How might a cup act as a material record of embodied intimacy, extending and transforming it across space and time?

oops, i like boys
 i see them everywhere (each day), all so handsome in their own way

boys with big noses, a landmark to be lost in
 boys with lips so soft kissing them will be smooth, luscious

boys with shoulders that frame their face just so,
 boys with chins you just have to rest under

boys with skin stretched taut,
 boys with more muscle than you've ever seen,
 boys with teeth you can rest on

boys lighter than air: lift them with your breath,
 boys heavier than the ground: so solid they've reached

boys with smile lines with frowns, with laughing eyes with second glances
 with longing stares, with hungry glances, with raised eyebrows, with furrowed brows

Lonely boys, hungry boys, in-need-of-therapy boys, soft boys, hard boys, older boys,
 generational-differences boys, music boys, tennis boys, NB boys, trans boys, just boys,
 "straight" boys, top boys, bottom boys, keto boys, side boys, no label boys,
 realised boys, sad boys, playful boys, messy boys, still-need-to-grow-up-boys,
 heartbreak boys, heartbroken boys, victim boys, beautiful boys, hustling boys,
 they-ALL-need-hugs-and-love boys, boys looking for boys, boys discovering boys

Boys buying along
 still hasn't found a boy, boy

So, I go on looking at all the boys, liking the boys, watching the boys,
 waiting for my boy(s)

Figure 1. Joel White, 'oops i like boys', poem in black a5 muji notebook, September 2023.

Unearthing: Tender Beginnings

This research started, unknowingly, some years ago. I had begun to intermittently explore my sexuality with other queer men, and the experiences fascinated me: new forms of communication (queer jargon, kinks, an unfamiliar romantic culture), sexual expectations, and navigating the peculiar and particular world of Grindr¹. I turned to a black Muji notebook as my confidant; I had exposed within me a deep need to try and understand, to truly "figure out" why some men left me breathlessly giddy, others left me with feelings of longing or yearning, while still others I desired to erase from my memory.

Within this exploration, the casual sexual encounter became a source of captivation to me. I have experienced moments of tenderness and connection, contained within the before, during and after of casual encounters that transcend the event of physical intimacy. At the same time, there persists a sense of desire left unmet. A hallmark of the casual encounter is its perceived lack of intimacy beyond the physical. Over time, I returned to memories of these encounters, wondering what caused some of them to linger with me long after the event had faded, and well beyond the established point of physical connection.

Through the specificity of each encounter, a space emerges for engagement, interest and tenderness that extends beyond this temporal pleasure. This concept of being responsive to the 'material' at hand has entwined itself into my practice, leading to an impetus to capture these disparate encounters and recollect them through the medium of clay.

¹ Grindr is a phone application advertised as a "dating app" in which users create a profile and can see other members nearby. It is well known as a "hookup app" for queer men and other sexual identities, alongside similar applications such as "Scruff" or "Jack'd".

Hand-in-hand

As stated, desire, intimacy, tenderness, connection, time, and space are the complex and interconnected topics of this research practice. Through my practice as a ceramicist, these qualities are explored and emerge in new forms as ceramic objects. Early on, ceramic processes took position as an unexpected expression of intimacy.

Turning: Tender Methods introduces this tender methodology, which intuitively took shape and was employed throughout this research and practice. It emerges from tender moments in casual encounters, an ethos of care towards others, and the material of my profession, clay. From these elements, I developed an overarching theoretical framework in which the skills of “intimacy” and “pottery” are understood as being analogous, and a growing understanding and ability to “read” and develop both is established through repetition and iteration.

Marbling: Tender Connections brings together key contextual, conceptual and philosophical frameworks. It begins with deeply contemplating desire, as written by Anne Carson in *Eros the Bittersweet*, I consider the etymology of “desire”, to shape an understanding of what desire is and the forms it takes, and the concept of wholeness/holeness are established. A compact history of the cup is investigated through the research of potter Bethany Lamb, contemporary artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres’ work *untitled (Billboard of an Empty Bed)* is observed and analysed as an example of intimacy within art, impressions, and the presence/absence of the body. Finally, the work of Monique Redmond and Harriet Stockman in ‘Budding Vase Subscription’ provides a window into multiplicity, reciprocity, and gift-giving, leading to an exploration of theories from anthropologists Marcel Mauss and David Graeber.

Cracking: Tender Spacings situates the objects in the domestic interior. This space is alighted upon after considering public space and employing Sara Ahmed’s writing on “queer phenomenology” to illustrate the difficulties of operating within public space as a queer individual. The domestic interior and, subsequently, dining table are investigated before turning to the perspectives of ceramic practitioners Edmund De Waal, Richard Beauchamp, and Ben Pyne to achieve a greater understanding of objects and ceramics within space.

Slaking: Tenderness Unmet offers a temporary resting point for the research as the practice continues. At the time of writing, I am underway with crafting a series of cups, each relating to a memory of a person, space, time, and experience.



Figure 2. Joel White, *spiral turned foot on speckled grey cup*, March 2024.

Turning: Tender Methods

Roots

'Tender' stems from the Latin "tener", something soft, delicate, or youthful²; now, however, it is a word with a multiplicity of meanings. You can touch someone "tenderly", you can be "tender", you can "tend" to something or someone, or a house can go to "tender". I began thinking about tenderness because it was not something I saw depicted, or often observed myself, between queer men. Yet, I had experienced moments of what I could only describe as tenderness in the before, during, and aftermath of casual sex. A method of tenderness began to emerge, stemming from my contemplation of intimacy towards others and extending through to the material of my practice, clay.

In *Dialogue in the making: emotional engagement with materials*, philosophy and psychology professors Ingar Brinck and Vasudevi Reddy write, "Clay ... is unpredictable but not accidental, and addressing it demands attention and care."³ This overlap in approach and ethos with my own thinking led to a "tender methodology", in which I define a tenderness as an approach to practice, one concerned with the caring of the subject, be it material or person.

2 "Tender | Search Online Etymology Dictionary," accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=tender>.

3 Ingar Brinck and Vasudevi Reddy, "Dialogue in the Making: Emotional Engagement with Materials," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 19, no. 1 (February 1, 2020): 23–45, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-019-09629-2>.



Figure 3. Joel White, Display of different clays with test glazes in the AUT Wet Labs, April 2024.

Additionally, the methods used within this research and my practice take cues from verbs linked to both ceramics and intimacy:

Building, burnishing, coning, cracking, cutting, digging, drying, fettling, firing, flipping, fluxing, fusing, glazing, grogging, handling, holding, joining, kneading, marbling, opening, packing, pinching, pressing, propping, pulling, quenching, revealing, rolling, scraping, scoring, slaking, smoothing, spinning, stacking, thirsting, touching, turning, unearthing, waiting, wedging.

Clay is employed as an indexical medium for recollection due to its material propensities for inviting tenderness and recording impressions. I therefore regard clay as uniquely compatible for evincing this idea of tenderness. Without being tended to, clay is prone to failure; it is needy, requiring you to watch over it as it is kneaded, formed, dried, glazed and fired.



Figure 4. Joel White, *'how can i hold you?'*, clear glazed porcelain stones shaped in the palm of my hand, January 2024.

Tending to clay

Clay naturally invites tenderness; hands sink in and are encompassed by the pliability of the medium; each finger-press leaves a demarcation and record of touch on its skin. The body is linked to clay through more than metaphor. When speaking of clay, we refer to its “body” when describing properties dependent on the clay’s composition: minerals, particle size distribution, plasticity, firing temperature, and additional additives or materials mixed into the clay. You roll clay, knead it, stretch it, sculpt it, pinch it, pull it, smooth it, scrape it, caress it into responsiveness, and coax it into shape and form. Clay is thirsty; it absorbs the water from your hands as you work with it, gradually leaving them drier and drier. Your body keeps the clay pliable, the water allowing the clay platelets to move and shift, so that you can sculpt them as you desire.

Working with a new clay is like meeting a new person. Just as people have their idiosyncrasies, unique facets, preferences, and manner of working, so too do different clays have their own identities. They differ in elasticity/plasticity, hand-feel, grit, texture, smoothness, colouration, and chemical properties. Temporal processes are likewise embedded in ceramic practice: each part requires its own timespan which cannot be rushed or controlled.

Just as “reading” and throwing clay are developable skills through repetition and experimentation that I have furthered during this exegesis, so too is intimacy. Through “doing” intimacy, one can learn to read another person: memorising actions of pleasure, developing intuition, asking for consent, recognising want, pleasure, and need. The same is true for clay; one begins to predict when it might collapse, when it is too dry, when it will stick to a surface, and how tall one can pull or build it before it fails.



Figure 5. Joel White, mid-fire porcelain clay bowl with compression crack, dried on wheelhead, February 2024.

As one person cares for another during moments of intimacy, I feel a deep sense of care throughout the lifecycle of each piece I make. Each step in the process brings a renewed sense of anticipation, delicious knowledge to be obtained in each stage. Loss is an inevitability, even if you “did everything right”, the kiln can fault, the clay can crack, and the glaze can run, crawl, or shiver.

Intimacy is likewise risky; it invites deep vulnerability. You are opening yourself up, both in a literal and figurative sense, baring your body to another, exposing parts which we term “private”, and discussing desires and/or kinks that can be profoundly personal and exposing. Intimacy establishes a connection between yourself and another, even if briefly. Through working with clay, the potter establishes an intuitive connection, the clay influencing the potter and vice versa.⁴ As I place my trust in the alchemical forces of the kiln—heat forging glass and clay together at a thousand degrees, chemical and clay vitrifying into new life—so too is my trust placed in another person and their treatment of me. My vulnerability is matched. The fear of exposure, in this barest of moments, is witnessed, and—hopefully—accepted.

Sex and throwing clay are both full-bodied physical activities. With throwing, the whole body is involved: the foot pressing the pedal, the legs strong, braced roots, the arms anchored to the thighs, the back broad and steady, the hands and fingers forceful, yet delicate, each action finished with smooth liquidity. My fingers read the clay, providing more information than my eyes—so too do my hands map out a lover. Through the tactile, the clay body and human body yield and offer information.

⁴ Brinck and Reddy.



Figure 6. Joel White, *'how might our bodies blend?'*, Royal blue powder stain kneaded through reclaimed porcelain clay, May 2024.

Marbling: Tender Connections

Objects of desire, intimacy, and distance

Two desires underpin my research practice: desire as it relates to intimate encounters and the desire to experiment and learn clay of all types.

Desire finds its etymological genesis in Latin. “Sidus”: a heavenly body or star. “De”: from, away from, down from, or out of. These combine to create “desiderare”, which can be translated to: “await what the stars will bring”, “to wish upon a star”, or “to want, wish for, or long for”⁵. By definition, “desire” is intrinsically tied to space. To desire something is to “long for” or “feel the absence of” that which is desired. For me, a wonder of desire is that we experience it in relation to many different contexts: people, objects, places, fantasies, and more.

In her book *'Eros the Bittersweet'*, classics professor Anne Carson defines eros as a “want”, “lack” or “desire for that which is missing”⁶. Desire, fuelled by distance, is inflamed; our longing increases until it senses futility or the distance decreases. Tenderness increases exponentially the further away you recede from the moment desire was met. The distance of desire provokes discussion around a further facet of eros: the concept of holeness/wholeness. Carson reasons that when we desire another, we create or become aware that some part of ourselves has been “lost” or “taken”, and that our wanting sets up a reciprocal loop wherein desire leads to loss, and loss leads back to desire.

My practice, emerging from sexual desire, explores how desire is transformed when apart from eros. How does one resolve these feelings of loss and absence? Through reparation? By crafting connection that amends the distance between desire and longing which roils at its centre? Can one mend this lack? Satisfy this want?

5 “Desire | Etymology of Desire by Etymonline,” accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/desire>.

6 Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet: An Essay*, First Princeton paperback printing (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).



Figure 7. Joel White, bowl with handpainted blue underglaze landscape on classic white clay, July 2023.

I first consider that satisfying this desire results (or requires) the erasure of distance. The object of our craving creates in us a desire for wholeness while simultaneously propagating a sense of lack or incompleteness—for something to be, something must be missing. This motivates the pursuit of fulfilling desire, precipitating the return to a state of “wholeness”. Carson argues that we never truly can return to such a state⁷. The quenching of desire, rather than returning one to “wholeness”, leads to the further insight that we cannot satisfy or fill this “hole”. This is the paradox of eros.

Through desire, this inherent space between the self and desire materialises, the edges of our body and being brought into sharp awareness. To close the distance and move into close, physical proximity with a lover can be done with relative ease, yet the erasure of corporeal space does not guarantee that connection will inevitably follow.

Ceramic objects can transcend their utilitarian functions, taking form or acting as conduits for the facilitation of connection between people through the sharing of drinks, meals, or the simple appreciation of a beautiful form. I find deep delight in the knowledge that these objects can gently precipitate events long after they have left my hands as “finished” pieces.

⁷ Carson, 82, 86.



Figure 8. Joel White, 'potion bottle' vase with royal blue glaze stripes on classic white clay, June 2023.

Working the clay

My passion for working with clay led to a further desire to refine my skill in throwing. Initially, I worked with familiar forms: cups, bowls, and vases.

I was first concerned with technical elements: throwing larger amounts of clay, successful pulls for height, and experimentation with glaze application. These helped strengthen my foundation and confidence in throwing.



Figure 9. Joel White, '*i thought about death today*', assorted black & white vases, urns and plate in classic white clay and mirror black glaze, June 2023.

Exploration was still paramount at this stage. I explored carving into and cutting away areas of the form after trimmed, rounding the forms after pulling them, and creating objects around a concept or idea. I had been thinking about death at this and considered the form of the urn, and how a shape could hold death or be symbolically representative of it.



Figure 10. Joel White, 'cups' in classic white clay with blue painted with blue underglaze, July 2023.

I began iterating on a singular form. I had chosen the cylinder as being a foundational shape in throwing, but it also served to initiate the first discussions around cups, owing to their physical dimensions. Abstract mark making and linework painted with a blue underglaze continued throughout following editions as a method adding surface detail.



Figure 11. Joel White, forms in light speckled grey clay, blue underglaze handpainted and pressed on with a needle, August 2023.

Scale became a consideration. I had thrown with large amounts of clay, but what was the smallest I could work with? This period coincided with an exploration of different clay bodies, how it shifted the reception of the object but also raising my own awareness as to how each clay had a different “feel” and required period of acclimation.



Figure 12. Joel White, experimental forms with abstract handpainted blue and red underglaze on classic white clay, August 2023.

Abstract linework came to a head at this time. These objects precipitated a shift, opening the question of how these seemingly abstract, yet meaningful to me, drawings could be applied through different methods other than painting.

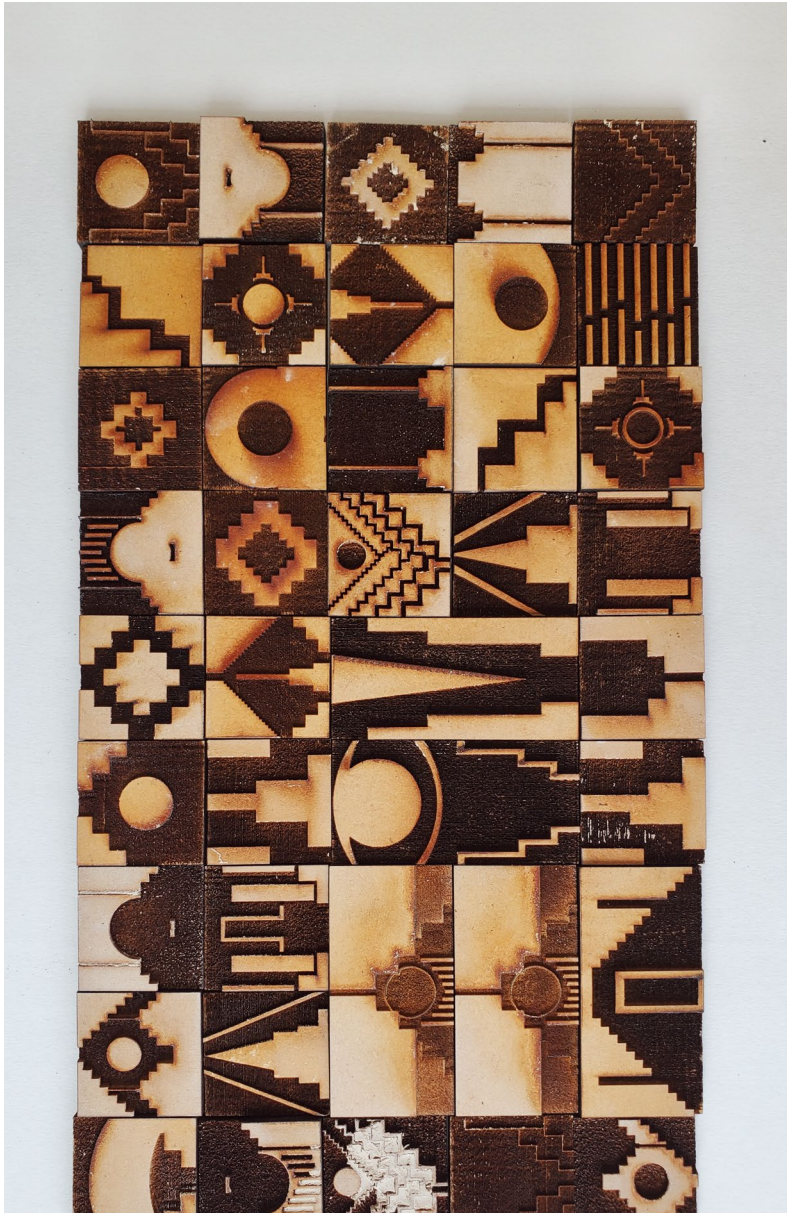


Figure 13. Joel White, plywood and MDF stamps designed in Rhino, laser etched and cut, October 2023.

I designed and laser cut a series of 'glyphs'. Working under the convention of the potter's mark as a small, yet identifiable form impressed on the object. I was also investigating how I could obliquely and subtly embed details of intimate encounters of which I, or whomever I gave the code to, could read onto thrown forms.



Figure 14. Joel White, bisqued classic white clay slab pressed with stamps from previous figure, October 2023.

I tested these glyph stamps on a variety of rolled out slabs of clay, evoking feelings in of cuneiform clay tablets, or hieroglyphic like records to those I showed. While interesting and aesthetically pleasing, the repeated association with hieroglyphs was distinctly separate from the forms I had been working with earlier.



Figure 15. Joel White, detail of Sapphire Float glaze in stamp impression, October 2023.

At this time, I began to further consider the role that glaze could further play to enhance or shift the reading of an object. While formulating my own glaze recipes was outside the scope of this research, I looked further afield for glazes not within the AUT wet labs.



Figure 16. Joel White, brush on test tiles of Weeping Plum, Sapphire Float, Green Shino, Light Shino, and Oolong Gloss, October 2023.



Figure 17. Joel White, brush on test on mid-fire porcelain cup with Weeping Plum, River Birch, Sea Salt and Black Walnut, February 2024.



Figure 18. Joel White, high-fire porcelain clear glazed cups, fired to 1260°
November 2023.

Returning to the cup, I explored further with different clays, landing upon porcelain for its material properties of lightness, its pure white colouration, and the potential of translucency at high-firings. A plethora of forms and scales were investigated: what read like a cup? What fit in the hand? What felt comfortable to drink from?



Figure 19. Joel White, speckle grey cups in matte black glaze, November 2023.

I began to more consistently produce forms that registered or referred to common perceptions of cup-ness. I started to think how the qualities of the cup could be considered reflective or analogous to qualities in the person or memory they were made after.



Figure 20. Joel White, bisque fired high-fire porcelain clay cup, January 2024.

Whilst I started to achieve forms that I felt proud of from a technical perspective, porcelain, which I had been working with for some months, reached a space of uncertainty. The pure white colour of the clay—especially when fired—often stark, cool and uninviting for a form intended to hold warmth.



Figure 21. Joel White, speckle grey clay cups with clear glaze, November 2023.

My most recent cups have focused crafting unique profiles through trimming, as well as perfecting the smoothness of the rim to create a pleasant (or intentionally unpleasant) drinking experience.

Over time—and through exploration and consideration—the cup became my core focus, owing to the dialogue it maintains between hand and lip. The bowl, plate, jewellery dish, butter holder or bud vase are not usually raised to the mouth. The cup rests in your hand and settles into the curvature of your palm. It continually, yet intermittently, caresses the lips, gently pressing onto the mouth. This simple form, which holds liquid that would otherwise spill, extends into a vessel for much more.

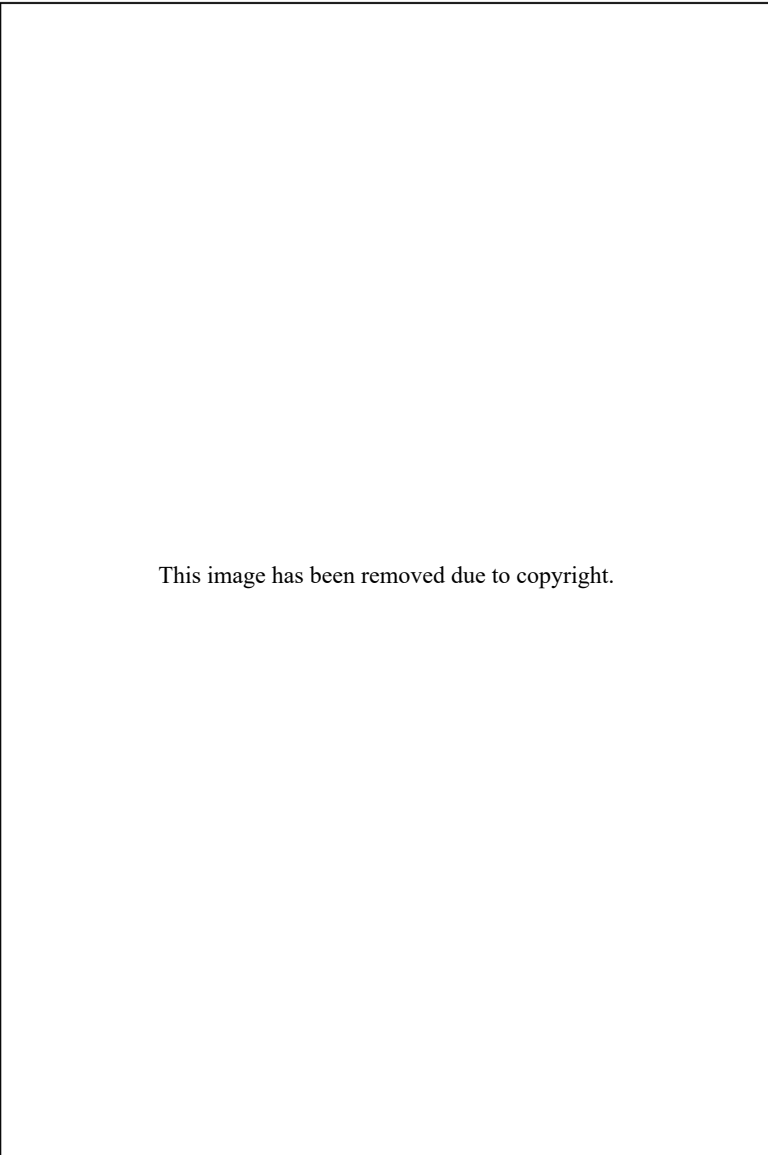


Figure 22. *Tea Cup and Saucer. Soft-paste porcelain painted with enamels and gilded.* Victoria & Albert Museum Ceramics Collection.

A brief history of the cup

Cups act as repositories of information about their makers and the periods in which they were crafted. In her thesis, ‘Cups as a Record of Humans: Material Culture Effects on Social Communications’, ceramist Bethany Lamb writes about how a human-made object can serve as an archive of intention, displaying the linkages between body, mind, and cognition of the crafter. The object—say, a cup—does not serve as a passive entity.⁸

The cup and saucer above were crafted in the mid-18th century at the Sevres porcelain factory in France. Made out of soft-paste porcelain, the design and finishing of this object lead us to understand that this was something expensive and not accessible to the common person. The twisted handle of the teacup is a bespoke element; the coat of arms, the hand-painted vignettes, and the gold lustre applied all speak to technical skill, labour, and the cost of materials.

The cup’s design gives context to its use and period of creation. Lamb describes this as “communicating the limits of its use”, which is determined by the physical attributes and characteristics of the object. The handle keeps the cup functional as it heats from the tea¹⁰; it is thin, light, and delicate, informing one to use it with care, not inattentively. The heat of the tea renders consumption slow, each careful sip involving the teacup lifting from saucer to lip, requiring attention and grace, qualities associated with gentility. These highly designed tea sets were “brought out for guests” in 19th-century Britain, where tea sets also served as a further demarcation of class.

⁸ Bethany Lamb, “*Cups as a Record of Humans: Material Culture Effects on Social Communication*,” Master of Humanities Capstone Projects, July 1, 2022, <https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/humanities/21>

⁹ Lamb.

¹⁰ These cups needed to be “tempered”, as they mimicked porcelain only in appearance, not durability. They could easily crack or shatter from sudden changes in temperature.



Figure 23. Joel White, matching plate and vase in classic white clay with purple haze and new violet underglaze, July 2023.

Records of cognition

Within my practice, clay is positioned as an indexical medium, with the resulting ceramics producing a lasting archive of ephemeral encounters. Through careful treatment of this material via form, surface, scale, and colouration, intimate events are encoded, allowing embodied intimacy to be gently shared. My body has become a site of remembrance, and so have my ceramics. Each houses the marks of my hands, impressions tenderly pressed into them, recording the weight of my touch as the weight of bodies have pressed against mine. My skin touches the clay body as my skin has touched the bodies of others. These objects are transmuted into repositories of people, events, spaces, and emotions. The decisions I make in clay choice, trimming (thickness, thinness, feet), surface, scouring, marking, glazing, and how my hands work the clay results in an index of impressions, a material codifying of memory, desire, intimacy.

Lamb proposes that clay reflects a maker's intent and thought, the material uniquely disposed through its impressionability to act as a record of the emotion and attitude of the potter crafting it. The record extends through the movement of the potter's hands, most noticeable when the clay is in motion on the wheel. This dialogue between material and maker can be seen as a "record of cognition"¹¹. Therefore, each object I create is not simply a passive entity, purely functional. Rather, each object possesses a mark of my emotional state and thoughts: a rippling of my mind into touch and feeling. Each object has the potential to act as a material record of both past and future encounters.

11 Lamb, "Cups as a Record of Humans."



Figure 24. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (Billboard of an Empty Bed)*, photograph, 1991.

Intimacy, reciprocity and gifting

In 1991, Gonzalez-Torres arranged 24 billboards displaying a photograph of an unmade bed throughout Manhattan in remembrance of his lover, Ross Laycock, who had passed away from AIDS that same year.

The lived-in bedroom is a space not often shown or displayed, which establishes the intimate nature of the work. A site used for advertising—the billboard—has been co-opted to present this intimacy on a public scale. Gonzalez-Torres intentionally employs an open-ended, ubiquitous format with his art, allowing the viewer to more readily inhabit or insert themselves into the work and the experience. The monochromatic nature of the photograph removes the personal or autobiographical, and the bed contains no indication as to the gender and nature of the couple who rested there—only the impression of bodies since risen.

This moment—crumpled bedsheets luminous in black and white, giving the impression of a lazy, airy, summer Sunday morning—left an “impression” on me. Through my own work I desire to convey the traces of intimate memories formed in both the public and private domains, like Gonzalez-Torres. Through a medium that invites impressions and traces—clay—the marks that can be made by a body, or on a body, can be subtly referenced. The body can be marked both visibly and invisibly; bites, licks, kisses, and caresses fading out of view except from a lover’s knowledge of their pathways. Likewise, clay retains the trace of a touch: the cavity of a thumb pushed into a surface, the concentric rings as clay is “pulled” upwards while throwing. Clay holds a memory of its past¹².

¹² Clay has a material memory. If you were to throw a piece of clay on the wheel into a cylinder, take it off, crush it, re-knead it and throw it again, the clay would want to return to the cylindrical form it was in.

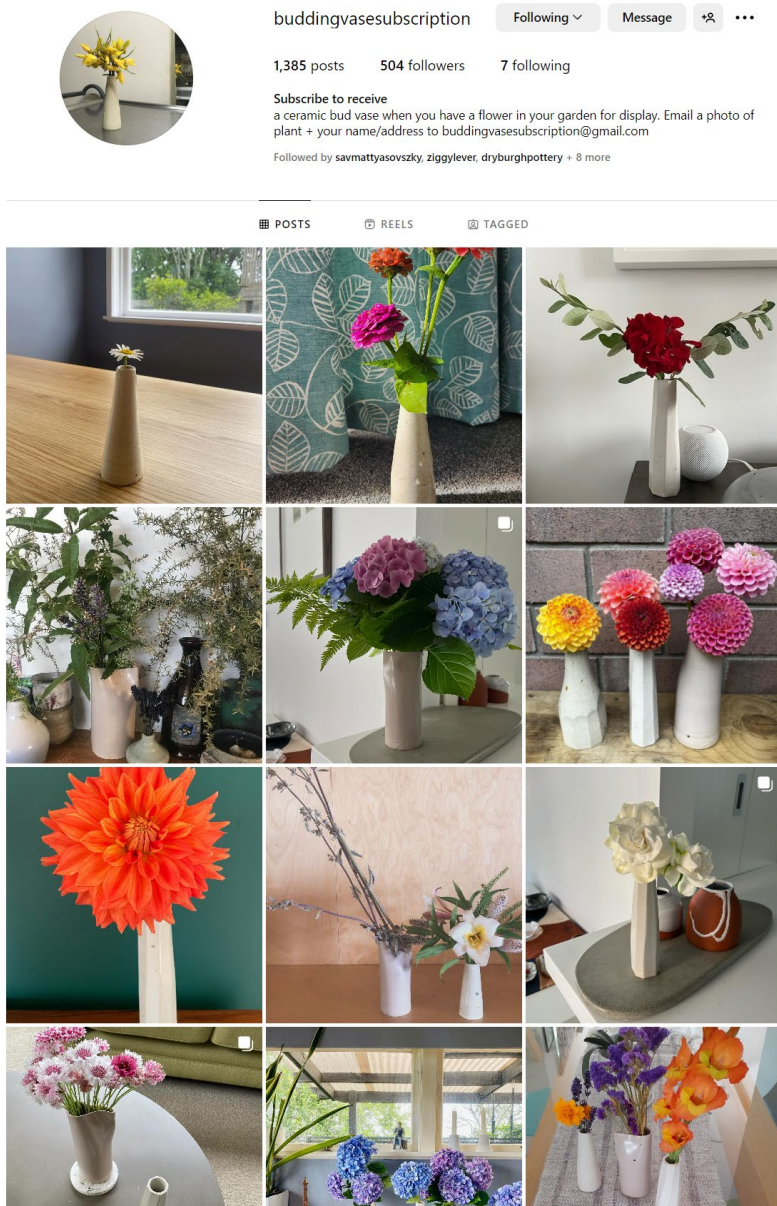


Figure 25. Monique Redmond & Harriet Stockman, *Budding Vase Subscription Archive*, Instagram Page, accessed April 24, 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/buddingvasesubscription/>

Traces of touch are embedded within Tāmaki Makaurau-based visual artists Monique Redmond and Harriet Stockman’s project, *‘Budding Vase Subscription’*. This project invites the public to “subscribe” to receive a bud vase by sending a photograph of a blooming flower within their garden or surrounding vicinity. In exchange, a handmade bud vase is sent to them. Upon receiving the vase, the subscriber is requested to send a second photograph of the bloom resting within the vase. Redmond and Stockman create the bud vases in editions of 100 and have crafted a single edition each year since 2019. They collaborate on the shape, form, and glaze of the vases. Stockman throws the initial profile on a potter’s wheel, and Redmond then fettles, carves, smooths, and cleans each vase before their transformation in the kiln. While the vase changes from edition to edition, the forms within each edition are consistent yet unique.

Multiplicity and personalisation are key facets in Redmond and Stockman’s work and mine. After Redmond and Stockman have crafted the vases, they pair each bloom with the vase they think most appropriate: one that accentuates the characteristics of the flower. The number of objects created—a critical mass—allows this pairing to occur.

While reading Redmond’s writing on the project, a particular phrase captured my attention. She described Budding Vase as “a reciprocal system of exchange”¹³. I consider reciprocity to be embedded within intimacy and began to puzzle that perhaps the site of the cups I was making was the person they referenced rather than a specific type of location (domestic interior, gallery, store). I began to imagine various frameworks through which the cups might be gifted to past lovers¹⁴. As a result of this, I reviewed anthropologist Marcel Mauss’s seminal essay, ‘The Gift’.¹⁵

Mauss reasons that all gifts carry an inherent sense of reciprocity or obligation to reciprocate, regardless of the intention of the gift-giver. He proposes that the act of gift-giving was done with the intention of strengthening community, cementing hierarchies, redistributing wealth, and developing and reinforcing social bonds.

¹³ Monique Redmond, “*The Event within Temporary Practices and the Public Social*” (thesis, Deakin University, 2020), 111.

¹⁴ Placed in the space of a past encounter, delivered from my hand to theirs, posted across distance, told to the lover in passing, written about.

¹⁵ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1990).



Figure 26. Joel White, *'how might our bodies blend?'*, mid-green powder stain kneaded through porcelain clay and thrown, October 2023.

I disagree with Mauss's proposition that all gift-giving carries the expectation of reciprocity, intentional or not. His argument places the gift in the realm of transactionality, eliminating the possibility of altruism and, in my eyes, eroding the possibility of the gift as an act of connection. If the gift carries an inherent sense of reciprocity, is it not simply an exchange?

Anthropologist David Graeber also interrogates the concept of gifting under the concept of "baseline communism"⁶. He points out that in many early human societies and communities, resources were shared according to need without explicit expectations of repayment or reciprocity. While both scholars emphasise the social significance of gift-giving, Graeber posits that many forms of gift-giving are motivated to express solidarity rather than to initiate a cycle of obligation. Graeber points to examples of communal sharing practices and informal economies where gifts are given and received within the context of social relationships and moral economies.

⁶ David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years, 10th anniversary edition* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2021).



Figure 27. Joel White, high-fire porcelain clay cups in clear glaze with compression cracks, December 2023.

Cracking: Tender Spacings

Tender spaces

Within the poem *'The School of Logic'*¹⁷, author Chen Chen writes of his reluctance and embarrassment at holding his partner's hand in a shoe store. The public declaration of their relationship, their queerness, and Chen's worry over the reaction of others overwhelms and prevents him from reciprocating the touch. On reading this poem, a memory of my own surfaced: a man who asked to hold my hand while walking through a park. I couldn't; it was too public, too declarative, too demonstrably queer. Everyone would see and know. Within *'Queer Phenomenology'*¹⁸, Sara Ahmed states the reason for my reaction is due to the fact that heteronormativity, or the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm, shapes the way spaces are organised and inhabited, as well as how bodies are perceived and social interactions within these heteronormative spaces unfold. Queer individuals may alter their behaviour and mannerisms, even unknowingly, to try and fit in, and to avoid discrimination or violence.

My memory of the park led me to briefly consider the park bench as a space of encounter, an opportunity for happenstance and unexpected occurrence. I wondered how the spatial dimensions of the bench might inform or allow for tenderness between individuals, known or unknown to one another? Through some initial explorations of seating and joinery, analysing how the body touches the seat, and how the seat might inform closeness and intimacy between those who settle on its form, however, I determined that I was not interested in negotiating these ideas or materials, and returned to my desire to be with clay.

17 Chen Chen, *Your Emergency Contact Has Experienced an Emergency*, First edition, American Poets Continuum Series, no. 194 (Rochester, NY: BOA Editions, Ltd, 2022).

18 Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).



Figure 28. Joel White, hand lathed 'chair' legs out of kwila, June 2023.



Figure 29. Joel White, hand lathed leg and CNC cut plinth of kwila, June 2023.



Figure 30. Joel White, classic white clay bowl and plate glazed with trail-on blue underglaze and clear glaze, August 2023.

The domestic interior

Throughout my practice, a common thread among the objects I make is that they find a natural home in a domestic interior. I began to ask: How does this offer a space in which these objects can be read and understood? With public space previously investigated and discarded, the private interior remained of interest, as it is also a space in which there is no demand on me, as a queer man, to fit in. It is a space of freedom and intimacy.

Initial explorations of the domestic interior considered various places where ceramic objects in use reside: the nightstand, the drawer or cupboard, the coffee table, the windowsills, the dining table. The dining table was further explored for its existence as a space where intimacies of various scales play out, the relation of the object resting on the surface of a table, the social contexts of dining together, the interaction of the body from the waist up, above the table, to the hidden dialogue and arrangement of limbs below. How might objects, especially cups, participate or initiate events and occurrences at the dining table?

Over this investigation period, however, the concept of the dining table started to develop significant friction for me. I understood *why* the dining table; it served to position the work, forming the third point between my practice (throwing) and the conceptual underpinnings (intimacy, tenderness). Yet the properties that made the site understandable were antagonistic to my intentions. The dining table contained a formality to me, which, even as a concept, was antithetical to my burgeoning reckoning of intimacy. The domestic interior remained appropriate, but the specificity of the dining table was not.



Figure 31. Joel White, *'how might our bodies blend?'*, orange powder stain kneaded through porcelain clay and thrown, October 2023.

When something goes wrong with throwing, there is the option to take a wire and pull it through the form, cutting it in half. Doing so allows you to inspect the interior and uncover mishaps. Destabilisation leads to intense clarity. As the centrifugal force pulls clay into the centre of the wheel, so too does being thrown off-centre allow one to return to the project's core.

Ahmed writes, "Moments of disorientation are vital,"¹⁹ not merely negative or chaotic, but crafting opportunities for resistance and creativity. Through the act of "queering" or the crafting of "queer" objects, convention and "norm" can be disrupted and challenged²⁰. The cups I craft interfere with the expected outcome of a "casual encounter", recollecting spaces, individuals, and events as a durable record formed in clay, rather than letting them fade.

The problem was, if not the dining table, then *where?*

19 Ahmed, 157.

20 Ahmed, 161.

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Figure 32. *Will Martin, "Man Handled"*, Paul Morris Gallery, accessed August 25, 2024.

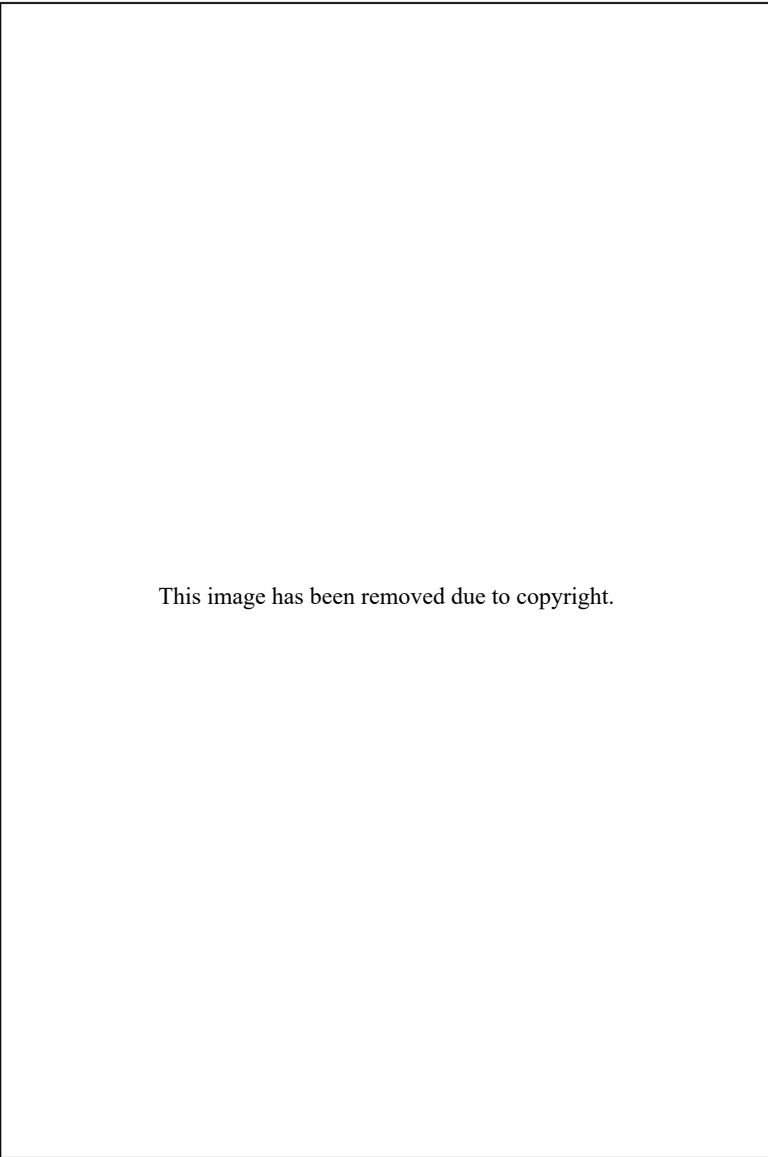
South-African-born UK-based potter Will Martin considers the queering of domestic space through his 2024 exhibition, *Man Handled*²¹. The exhibition consists of a collection of “domestic” objects (objects designed to be used or placed around the home) that serve as artistic and functional pieces. Martin further subverts these objects, encoding them into the queer through the use of explicit and subtle allusion. Jars, cups and plates sport bright, cobalt blue phalluses, slip-cast jockstraps cover vases, and yet others are made from clay extracted near a common cruising ground in Hampstead Heath.²²

Martin challenges how we construct and inhabit domestic space, creating objects and bespoke surfaces informed by queer lived experiences.

I return to the question of where these objects of mine might “belong” or “orientate” themselves within my domestic space. I query whether these cups reside in multiple locations or a singular one, such as the dining table. Yet a cup is not a fixed object; it travels with the individual, carried from room to room, just as experiences are carried with us over the passage of time, travelling with us from home to home or locale to locale. These cups of mine, embedded with queer experiences that have happened in a variety of different domestic interiors, are moveable, shifting objects. From the window sill to the coffee table, to the untreated kwila decking covered in the sun, these cups travel with me, providing a soft queering to my space.

21 “Man Handled, 2024,” Will Martin, accessed August 29, 2024, <https://www.williamjohnmartin.com/exhibitions/manhandled2024>.

22 “Man Handled, 2024.”



This image has been removed due to copyright.

Figure 33. *Edmund De Waal, Signs & Wonder, installation view, Victoria & Albert Museum, accessed April 22, 2024.*

<https://www.edmunddewaal.com/making/2009->

Restraint, clarity and ceramics

Edmund De Waal is a British ceramist, writer and contemporary artist known for his porcelain installations and family memoir *The Hare With The Amber Eyes*. De Waal “sees his objects as attestations of stories”²³, in an essay on his website, he writes: “And I turn and there are my boards of porcelain vessels, still damp. They gleam softly. And then I ask myself, ‘Which story shall I tell? What is tellable and what is untellable?’”²⁴

This mirrors my experience with asking clay what it can show, share, and tell of intimacy, tenderness and desire; some aspects are recountable, and others are not. I have likewise had to employ restraint, discovering the space of too much or too little information when illustrating or detailing these intimate encounters, lest the others involved be identifiable.

Restraint is an essential characteristic of De Waal’s work. Colour is intentionally omitted, his installations delineated by a multiplicity of objects arranged in collections, framed or contained in muted custom-made shelves and boxes, set out of reach from the viewer. This distance between the viewer and objects invites the audience to engage with the work on a conceptual and/or emotional level rather than as physical artifacts or objects for use. The idea of creating ceramic objects that are held out of reach is counter to my practice, in which I intend for my objects to be held, not held apart.

²³ ‘You Take an Object from Your Pocket’, Edmund de Waal, accessed April 24, 2024, <https://www.edmunddewaal.com/essays/you-take-an-object-from-your-pocket>.

²⁴ ‘You Take an Object from Your Pocket’.



Figure 34. Richard Beauchamp, *250ml stacking mugs in colour 'sand'*, photograph © Richard Beauchamp, 2023, accessed April 27, 2024. <https://richardbeauchamp.studio/>

In contrast is Ōtautahi Christchurch-based production potter Richard Beauchamp and his coffee cups, which are explicitly intended to be held. Beauchamp has developed a practical form guided by his work as a barista. In an interview with Thom Morrison, Beauchamp describes his ideal cup as one with “a stable base... comfortable lip and handle”.²⁵

I see Beauchamp’s cups not simply as domestic objects, inviting you to touch them with their smooth finish and subtle hues, but as items designed to interweave, facilitate and become key figures in the observance and ritual of daily life. While the cups I am making will not be embedded into the routine of their recipients or be produced at the same scale as Beauchamp’s work, I also employ the power of the object to create connection, acting as a social conduit which both interrupts and becomes part of the quotidian.

²⁵ “Richard Beauchamp,” Thom Morrison, accessed May 2, 2024, <https://thommorrison.com/blogs/lifestyle/richard-beauchamp>.

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In an adjacent vein, Tāmaki Makaurau-based designer and ceramist Ben Pyne’s work in *Mantle Overturn*’ is focused on the power, or “voice”, of the clay material. Creating structures evocative of kitchen islands or bathroom tiled flooring²⁶, as part of his pursuit towards making a “New Zealand tile”, Pyne works closely with the natural landscape of Tāmaki Makaurau, taking the basalt-rich soil and incorporating it into his clay and glaze work.

Pyne holds a deep respect for the capacity of clay as a material and as an informer/indicator of the surrounding landscape within which we are rooted. His work references the domestic interior, albeit as objects that construct the surface of that space rather than to be utilised within it.

Pyne and I each approach clay from differing avenues but with a joint level of respect. As I see the power of the ceramic object in the form of connection, Pyne hopes through the development of his clay and glazes to lend a greater awareness of the merit of the environment surrounding us.²⁷

This consideration for the power of the clay body to speak through its materiality is executed differently by De Waal, Beauchamp, Pyne, and myself. Pyne’s warm-toned clay answers a problem I had been struggling to solve. I had been working with porcelain for some months, and while a tricky pleasure to throw, the results when glaze-fired had become to me stark, coolly refined, and uninviting. For De Waal, this ethereal purity suits a floating form set within the skylight of a museum. For Beauchamp, Pyne and myself, the connecting warmth of earth-tone speckled browns, muted greys and creamy eggshells rest naturally within the hand, connecting one to the soil surrounding us from whence they came.

Figure 35. Ben Pyne, *Mantle Overturn*, Brick and Basalt, Photograph by Sam Hartnett, 2023.

²⁶ “Mantle Overturn — Objectspace,” accessed May 2, 2024, <https://www.objectspace.org.nz/exhibitions/mantle-overturn/>.

²⁷ “Mantle Overturn: Ben Pyne — Objectspace,” accessed May 2, 2024, <https://www.objectspace.org.nz/journal/mantle-overturn-ben-pyne/>.

Slaking: Tenderness in Waiting



Figure 36. Joel White, Crushed porcelain pieces prior to being slaked with water for reclamation, January 2024.

Slaking—within ceramics—refers to the process of submerging bone-dry pieces of clay into water, where it then breaks down, loses its form and becomes ready for reclamation. It is also a word that is used idiomatically to refer to quenching or satisfying a thirst or a desire. I think this needs to talk about tying it into the above, and earlier stuff, how have desires been met, or not? Quenched or not?

A gift not (yet) given

At this time, I am considering how gifting and reciprocity operate within my work, be it literal or metaphorical. I desire to create something exempt from reciprocity. Mauss would argue that any gift, regardless of the intention of the giver, has reciprocity woven into its fabric; that our social contract and culture have, at this point, imbued a gift with such connotations that to give a gift without expectation of reciprocation is impossible. I cannot entirely disagree with Mauss; so I am left wondering how I might queer the notion of gifting?

I find myself returning to Carson and the wholeness/holiness of eros. Throughout the encounters that gave rise to this work, I have, at some point, lost part of myself. The objects (gifted or not) are not to strengthen a “social bond”, increase “social capital”, or to spark “connection”, as Mauss’s lens on gift-giving suggests. Rather, Carson’s perspective presents the distinct possibility that this work could be an attempt at returning to wholeness, recovering from the “loss” she describes. The paradox of eros: to return to completeness. This return wholeness has at times felt selfish to me. I propose this feeling is tied into Mauss’ notion of the gifting economy. Gifts given to oneself do not strengthen a social bond or hold hierarchical value and therefore do not uphold normative ideas around the gift. Gifting to oneself might then be seen as one example of a queer notion of gift-giving.

While a cup²⁸ is most often designed to be used by a single person, teacups were primarily used and created as part of a set. Reaching a point of rest (this writing) while still in the midst of making work produces a strange oasis. It is a regular occurrence within ceramics, however.

28 I define a “cup” as “a vessel for holding or retaining liquid that does not have a handle”. I intentionally created cups without handles to bring the hand in closer contact with the object rather than separated from the body by an additional form.

Some elements have reached the status of certainty: I am making a multiplicity of cups. The surface treatments of the cup and my recollection of particular moments of intimacy while crafting them inform whom or what event and space the cup is obliquely recording. Once a critical mass of cups has been produced, I will begin a process of pairing them, each pair referencing both myself and a specific ex-lover whose tenderness inspired this work. Memories are used as the “binding agent”, linking a pair of cups through more than their physical similarities.

This brings an implication that these cups might be used to drink with those that inspired their creation, that we could reunite and share a drink, with the cup acting as a social conduit²⁹ for this. I would hasten to specify that seeing or speaking to these individuals is not the goal of this project. However, I wish to acknowledge the *potential* for an object to take an active role in returning tenderness and connection.

At this point, the haze of pleasant uncertainty takes form. I once intended to send one half of each pair to the corresponding ex-lover, but through writing this exegesis I am becoming aware that these objects may better fulfil their role as material records by staying with me. The cups may serve as a memorandum or secret reminder, chanced upon when pulling open a drawer or cupboard, inspiring a little devious quirk of the mouth when rediscovered...I have become the recipient of the gift.

29 Monique Redmond defines the social conduit within her thesis ‘The Event within Temporary Practices and the Public Social’ (thesis, Deakin University, 2020), as “a facilitator of the social exchange. It is responsible for brokering the space between materiality and sociality”.



Figure 37. Joel White, 'memory of A', speckle grey clay cup with Blue Opal glaze, April 2024.

My final desire is that my emerging practice might contribute to and expand the dialogue around queer existence. As I said at the beginning, tenderness is not something I have seen, or often encountered, amongst other queer men, instead observing a community in parts sex-focused, hyper-fixated on body image, and oddly adept at co-opting traditional gender roles. I wish to show that amongst all this noise exists the space for care. In the final chapter of *Queer Phenomenology*, Ahmed refers to hands as “crucial to phenomenology in general”³⁰. She writes: “Hands hold things. They touch things. They let things go.”

The hand is the crucial final element. The dining table, lounge, bedroom, none of them were ‘right’ because there is no single ‘right’ place for the cup. The cup belongs in the home because of the way in which it is intimately linked with the domestic interior, yet it is the hand that brings the cup to the lip, that carries it throughout various spaces in a home, places it down on coffee table, kitchen bench, dining table, windowsill, nightstand or verandah. I have come to consider these cups as queer gifts to myself and I imagine that they will move with me from home to home in years to come, allowing for unexpected recollections when unpacked out of the final moving box. Perhaps I will make more over time, or perhaps I will craft just *one* more for he whom I call “lover”. I hope they stay with me for a lifetime, extensions of intimacy clasped within the palm, each cup a material record that will invite a contraction and expansion of space-time-desire as hand raises cup to lip, and memory flows in.

30 Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 174.



Figure 38. Joel White, glazed cups in the kiln after their final firing, May 2024.

Unpacking the Kiln: reflections on making

A cup a day

Following the submission of this exegesis for review, I returned to throwing with the goal of making as many cups as possible in the following four weeks.

I quickly encountered my first hurdle in making: thinking of the individual and the specifics of that encounter while throwing, and not having technical concerns dominate my inner monologue, e.g. “Is this wall too thin? Could I pull this one more time? How will I get rid of this twist in the top third?”

I solved this with music. Returning to tracks I was listening to when I met the individual I was throwing the cup for, pieces we had shared with one another, or songs I thought were indicative of them. The wet labs where I was working at this time were also a hive of activity and noise, and these sonic landscapes gave me the space to concentrate and zero in.

The second hurdle was around the concept of the pairs of cups I made. Through discussion, the question arose: if I was making, say, seven pairs of cups, did that mean I was making seven different cups that were also representative of myself? While the argument could be made that they were seven different versions of myself with these partners, what felt more elegant, and importantly truthful, was to create a singular cup representative of me that could then be paired with other cups that represented past or current friends, lovers, or happy encounters.

Following that decision, I began to focus less on how the cups paired together, as the cups were not being thrown so much in conjunction or relation to one another, but instead, how I could go about capturing or displaying key attributes or impressions through surface, texture, lips, rims, feet, scale, and glaze. I began to create a series of cups, considering each as a sketch, an attempt to capture or record the person they were made for. Some of these sketches began with a phrase or idea such as “easy to hold” or “larger than life”, to thoughts like, “How do I convey longing in a cup?”, “how do I show distance?” “That something is an impossibility?”



Figure 39. Joel White, “1”, Green Shino on speckled grey clay, May 2024.

I had a breakthrough with trimming during this time. Previously, I had tried to define the shape and character while throwing the form. Having such a wide array of cups to work through, I felt able to experiment, testing the limits of clay and how much I could influence and shift the form with the clay at this more stable point.

I will also note that I swapped clays. Previously, I had been working consistently with high-fire porcelain. After receiving back some test pieces from a glaze firing, the starkness and clinical “whiteness” of the porcelain were unsuitable for crafting cups that were to be symbolic. I switched to a soft grey clay with a slight speckle. The clay was more consistent, less prone to mysterious compression-like cracks, and had, by nature, a character and feel missing from porcelain.

After receiving the cups from the bisque firing, I sorted them into groups and assigned a glaze for each individual. I had slowly been accruing glazes over the year and testing them. Each person was assigned a glaze for a specific reason.

1’s cups were glazed with a light green shino, specifically chosen as being the only non-dinnerware safe glaze. While our connection started tenderly, such feelings dissolved, and the somewhat venomous colouration seemed fitting for them.



Figure 40. Joel White, "2", Celadon on speckled grey clay, May 2024.

2 and 3 were both given celadon glazes, bright and glossy. Both were vibrant and delightful individuals, 2 larger than life and expansive, 3 the type to go to karaoke with or seriously rank seasons of real housewives with over a glass.



Figure 41. Joel White, "4", Light Shino on grey speckled clay with curved based, May 2024.

4 had a light blue shino. They were delightful and animated and unexpectedly caring, yet flighty and ungrounded. A fan of aviation, I aimed to use a colour to capture the sky they seemed to always be chasing, as well as trimming these cups to have a curved foot, leading them to wobble and rock, not quite secure.



Figure 42. Joel White, test assembly of shelves and uprights in workshop, May 2024.

Fabrication

With the cups underway, I questioned how they would be displayed or installed for the exhibition. I wanted to create something that would reference the domestic sphere and be a logical place where ceramics would rest. Shelving acted as a natural fit for both these requirements, being a space ceramics would rest whilst also serving as a display. I created several 3D mock-ups, which I discussed with one of our senior woodworking technicians, Angus Roberts, ultimately settling on a modular system with different-sized shelves, slotting into four stationary “upright” columns.

I was concerned with two things at this time: trying to make sure the shelves didn't feel like the raw wooden shelves you would find in a pottery studio for drying or resting recently made pottery on and that the objects were touchable and not out of reach or seemingly unapproachable to the viewer. I ultimately ended up adding a small “table” so that there would be a plane extending into space instead of being confined to the wall. I added two more uprights to extend the shelving across the space, as it felt constricted and cramped.



Figure 43. Joel White, “*experimentation during installation #1*”, previous work placed underneath and on-top, June 2024.

Installation

Placing the main body of work on the shelves and table was intuitive. Grouping the cups by individual and glaze colour was the natural decision and made the most sense visually and conceptually. I tried a couple of variants involving mixing up glaze groupings on different shelves.

To talk through the decisions I made with the final placement of objects: The central shelf (around my mid-chest height) was where the cups that were most accurate/indicative of their individuals were placed. Space from the central shelves was used intentionally. The cups placed on the higher shelves, out of reach or above, were done so because I was no longer in contact with those persons. Those positioned closer to the central shelf were people I liked, was still in touch with, had fond memories of, or shared things in common with. Pieces positioned on the table were experimental shapes and forms that resulted in not being symbolic of a specific individual.

What caused the most iteration during installation was the inclusion and placement of work that stemmed from before the completion of the exegesis. I wanted to include these pieces to show the breadth of work and experimentation that had occurred leading up to the final installation. Still, it required several experiments with placement.

I ultimately settled on the work leading from the doorway towards the shelving and acting as a pathway as well as being conceptually satisfying by having the past work lead into the present work. If I had a little extra time, creating a low shelf or stool that elevated the past work slightly off the ground would have served to relate it strongly to the primary body of work.



Figure 44. Joel White, “*experimentation during installation #2*”, assorted past work grouped by characteristics/similarities, June 2024.



Figure 45. Joel White, “*experimentation during installation #3*”, past work stretching to the entrance, leading the viewer to the current work, June 2024.



Figure 46. Joel White, “*hand-in-hand*”, final arrangement and display of installation, June 2024.

A drink for one

It is a strange feeling.

I am sitting on a chair, about two metres directly opposite the culmination of a year and a half's worth of work. It is the day after the exhibition's opening night, and there are a few other students milling around, photographing, chatting, and poring over one another's work.

I'm here to see the work from a viewer's perspective rather than as the maker. This is difficult to do, as I already have some perspective on how a viewer perceives the work compared to myself. Without reading the exegesis or having myself as a guide, there is no information that reveals or hints towards the meaning behind the ceramics, their arrangement, grouping and positioning on the shelves and tables. This is both a successful and unsuccessful aspect of the work. On the one hand, it means that as the creator, I get to choose who I wish to bring “into the know” to unfold the particulars that comprise this creation. I see this as analogous to the queer experiences of both “coming out” as well as being selective with your “found family”. “Who would you have at your table?” is an appropriate phrase in this instance. I also think that when I first started the writing and investigation for this master's, there was a plethora of personal information and thoughts which gradually dissolved back into the private or were concealed. This was my choice as the work already felt deeply personal, and keeping information or allusions towards these experiences and people became important to me. I wanted to “keep” some parts of them for myself.

It does, however, mean that if these elements are not uncovered for a viewer, the work does not move beyond a lovely little collection of different and brightly glazed cups arranged according to their glazes. My reticence towards this stems from the feeling that I am gatekeeping information, which does go against my value that information should be accessible, especially in an “academic” situation, though now one of the few ways to view this work still is through this exegesis which explains the intention and execution behind it.

Ultimately, I am proud of the work and writing that has emerged in response to these concepts of intimacy, tenderness, queerness and space. I see a myriad of further fascinating avenues to explore. The interweaving of loneliness, intimacy and desire has been tumbling around in my mind. The emptiness or strange unsettledness which accompanies desire met or a master's completion a fertile ground to look towards next.



Figure 47. Joel White, "hand-in-hand", close up of wall work, June 2024.

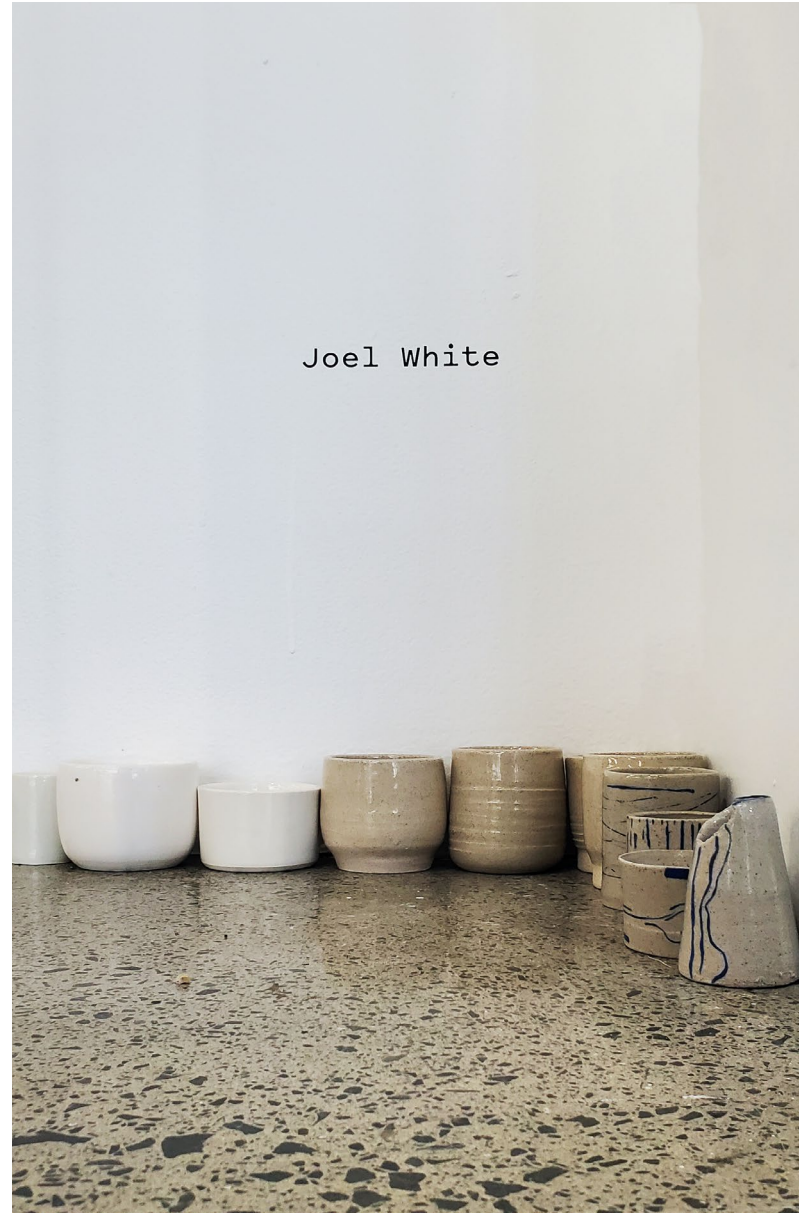


Figure 48. Joel White, "hand-in-hand", close up of wall work, June 2024.



Figure 49. Joel White, “*hand-in-hand: “3”*”, Weeping Plum celadon glaze on speckled grey clay, 2024.



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Figure 28. Joel White, hand lathed 'chair' legs out of kwila, June 2023.

Figure 29. Joel White, hand lathed leg and CNC cut plinth of kwila, June 2023.

Figure 30. Joel White, classic white clay bowl and plate glazed with trail-on blue underglaze and clear glaze, August 2023.

Figure 31. Joel White, *'how might our bodies blend?'*, orange powder stain kneaded through porcelain clay and thrown, October 2023.

Figure 32. Will Martin, *"Man Handled"*, Paul Morris Gallery, accessed August 25, 2024.

Figure 33. Edmund De Waal, *Signs & Wonder, installation view*, Victoria & Albert Museum, accessed April 22, 2024.

Figure 34. Richard Beauchamp, *250ml stacking mugs in colour 'sand'*, photograph © Richard Beauchamp, 2023, accessed April 27, 2024. <https://richardbeauchamp.studio/>

Figure 35. Ben Pyne, *'Mantle Overturn'*, Brick and Basalt, Photograph by Sam Hartnett, 2023.

Figure 36. Joel White, Crushed porcelain pieces prior to being slaked with water for reclamation, January 2024.

Figure 37. Joel White, *'memory of A'*, speckle grey clay cup with Blue Opal glaze, April 2024.

Figure 38. Joel White, glazed cups in the kiln after their final firing, May 2024.

Figure 39. Joel White, *"1"*, Green Shino on speckled grey clay, May 2024.

Figure 40. Joel White, *"2"*, Celadon on speckled grey clay, May 2024.

Figure 41. Joel White, *"4"*, Light Shino on grey speckled clay with curved based, May 2024.

Figure 42. Joel White, test assembly of shelves and uprights in workshop, May 2024.

Figure 43. Joel White, *"experimentation during installation #1"*, previous work placed underneath and on-top, June 2024.

Figure 44. Joel White, *"experimentation during installation #2"*, assorted past work grouped by characteristics/similarities, June 2024.

Figure 45. Joel White, *"experimentation during installation #3"*, past work stretching to the entrance, leading the viewer to the current work, June 2024.

Figure 46. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand"*, final arrangement and display of installation, June 2024.

Figure 47. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand"*, close up of wall work, June 2024.

Figure 48. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand"*, close up of wall work, June 2024.

Figure 49. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand: "3"*, Weeping Plum celadon glaze on speckled grey clay, 2024.

Figure 50. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand: "4"*, Light Shino on speckled grey clay, with June 2024.

Figure 51. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand: joel's cup"*, Sapphire Float on speckled grey clay, June 2024.

Figure 52. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand: "5"*, Eggshell on speckled grey clay, June 2024.

Figure 53. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand"*, June 2024.

Figure 54. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand"*, June 2024.

Figure 55. Joel White, *"hand-in-hand"*, highlighting centre shelf with the nine final cups, each chosen for most accurately representing the individual, June 2024.

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