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### **between. beneath. beyond... A Visual Drama in Five Acts**

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**between. beneath. beyond...**  
**A Visual Drama in Five Acts**

By

**Deborah Burk**

B.F.A., Governors State University, 2018

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art,  
With a concentration in Ceramics

Governors State University  
University Park, IL 60484

2021

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wanted to take a moment to express my thanks to all those who were a part of this journey. I know, saying this, that I will probably forget, in this time and place, to mention someone special. I hope those who walked alongside me, whether mentioned here or not, know that I am grateful for the role they played in helping me get here today. That said, let me try.

I first want to thank my ceramics mentor and M.F.A. Thesis Committee Chair, Leanne Cambric for teaching me all things ceramics, allowing me to work alongside her in the studio and reminding me to breathe. I would also like to acknowledge and thank my M.F.A. Thesis Committee members, Gretchen Jankowski, Rebecca Siefert and Jeff Stevenson, who along with Leanne, spent the past year guiding, mentoring, critiquing, pushing and supporting me through the thesis process. This would not be a thing without you all and I'm grateful beyond mere words.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (continued)**

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And finally, thanks to my husband, Jim, who has supported me in every way possible, through what we thought would be a two-year trek that became a six-year marathon. Thanks for your love, support, extra work and grace to let other things slide while I was focused on the end goal – here it is. Now I can help clean the garage.

Oh, yes. And one last thing: Thanks to Javier Chavira, for showing me that you can be good at posting your art and inspirations on social media, even without a smart phone.

I'd better get at that – the clock is (always) ticking!

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## ARTIST STATEMENT

The physical body, the clay, and the kiln are protagonists and antagonists in the drama that is my process of making. I am compelled to create visual work that is deeply theatrical; work that is significant enough in size and volume to dominate a gallery space or that is filled with such detail as to draw one in closer. Some of my current body of work explores an inner narrative, the echo of the life of the artist that is reflected in each piece, creating a sense of inquiry into the story behind the work.

The art I make is designed to push boundaries or to defy gravity, testing what the limits will bear: a small, delicate foot supporting an unexpectedly large form, or a sculptural twist that creates a tension of balance. In the same way that one will strive to win a verbal debate, I wrestle with the concept of not dominating the clay, but winning it over to my side in this conflict.

As in a stage production, my forms become critical components in this visual drama. They may take on the role of prop, stage set, actor or observer, as they exist to create a cohesive narrative. Like a theatrical production, I want the work that I create to evoke an emotional response – joy, wonder, surprise, curiosity, tension. Boredom is not an option.

My current body of work has been birthed out of a lifetime of experience. The joy and the struggle in the making is my homage to the celebration of life and shared experiences. It reflects places of remembrance, experiences, and relational dialog. The transient nature of time, life, and those fleeting moments that make up a shared journey is a compelling force in the making of art that will live beyond me. The clock is ticking!



## ABSTRACT

The concept that I explore in my thesis is the idea of marking moments in time by mental “snapshots” of events that are indelibly ingrained on the mind and can be theatrically portrayed through ceramics. That these moments birth opportunities to create a narrative between the artist and material, the art and the viewer, and between the works of art themselves was the impetus for the work, while also exploring what lies beneath the making and what might live beyond the exhibition. COVID-19 created, by necessity, a “slowing down” of time – and magnification of moments that one might otherwise speed through and thus go unnoticed because of the pace of contemporary life. This event gave room for breath that would otherwise not have been allowed. Part of the motivation for looking at this direction for a body of work was the concept that a personal journey and the rhythms of life include moments that are sometimes sacred – and that the lines are blurred between the sacred and the secular – and are often marked by celebration or ceremony. Glaze chemistry research was also a critical part of this thesis, with the development of new glazes being pivotal to the process of creating work for this exhibition.

Keywords: Memory, legacy, narrative, drama, theatricality, relationship, time, celebration, ceremony, pace, breath, discovery, performance, glaze, chemistry, journey

**PROLOGUE:** An abbreviated historical context for this work

I was seventeen when I started college. I went back five times over the course of my life. Fast-forward fifty years: I'm on the cusp of completing a degree I never imagined I'd have the opportunity to pursue. I'm extremely grateful for and humbled by this experience.

**ACT ONE:** Backstory – The Exposition

In every good production, a little exposition is necessary to set the scene and introduce the main players involved in the story. The concept of this body of work is to explore what is between, beneath and beyond relationships and boundaries of a single lifetime and the way those explorations play out through art as a visual drama. As in a well-written narrative, the sense of exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, and resolution in my art work together to ensure that boredom is not an option. My objective is to create a sense of inquiry, evoking a desire to be drawn in to make discoveries in each piece and the story that they collectively tell. Ultimately, my hope is that viewers will be able to “read” that narrative or envision my art objects performing in their own narrative.

The physical body, the clay, and the kiln are protagonists and antagonists in the drama that is my process of making. I am compelled to create visual work that is dramatic, work that is significant enough in size and volume to dominate a gallery space or that is filled with such detail as to draw one in closer. Although I rarely perform on stage, my art is deeply theatrical, and I often see my objects as a series of theatrical components. “I Love To Be Beside Your Side Beside...” (Figure 1), for example, an installation in the exhibition comprised of thirteen individual works, creates that sense of drama, commanding a place, center-stage in the gallery,

with the “ensemble” surrounding and supporting the “main character.” It becomes both a stage filled with “players” and a sort of other-worldly environment that communicates with “Beyond the Reef” (Figure 2), which is intentionally placed outside the window, beyond the gallery walls.

I am enamored with the creation of vessels that move beyond the realm of mere function and become art. The vessels I build embrace both the sculptural side of ceramics as well as the functional, leaning into the histories of both. Hand-building work is not only where I feel most comfortable and at home in the studio, but also where I find my greatest ability to produce what I see in my head and on paper. It is reminiscent of participating in a debate team: in the same way that one will strive to win a verbal debate, I wrestle with the concept of not dominating the clay, but winning it over to my side in this conflict.

**ACT TWO:** The Concept – between. beneath. beyond.

The concept for my thesis exhibition is fueled by my love for theatricality and spectacle. The work has developed out of living a significant portion of my life in advance of my return to an academic and art-making focus, and my art has been influenced by the processes of a creative life that included writing, theatre and visual art. My years of working in non-arts related fields has also given me the rich variety of experiences over decades of time that have played into the development of this concept and gave me a unique perspective that would not have been available for me to access at younger age. I wanted the execution of the body of work to communicate an inner narrative and reflect those life experiences.

I see each of the individual works falling into one or more narrative and/or theatrical categories: Setting and stage design, props and endowed objects, actors or characters, and observers or audience. The past year of navigating this process during a pandemic influenced my decision to include a representative of the audience in this exhibition, standing in as one that bears witness to an event. With that idea guiding this current body of work, I was set on that theatrical trajectory from concept to completion. One of the tools used in this process was an outline of the Five Elements of Fiction: Plot, Setting, Character, Point of View, and Theme, as well as a Plot Structure Diagram (see Appendix). This was invaluable in structuring my thought process, narrative, and final curation of the work.

The work I create is, foremost, about the vessel – it is about the body, containment and scale. While I am not generally concerned with utility, as form often dominates the conversation over function, I seek to bridge the functional and sculptural by giving a nod to the history of decorative arts in functional pottery. The work is intentionally designed to push boundaries in some way: an attempt to defy gravity, for example, as an unexpectedly large form expands vertically, testing the limits of what the small, delicate foot can bear, as is seen in “Suspended in Time” (Figure 3) or a sculptural twist that creates a tension of balance, such as “On Shaky Ground” (Figure 4). “The Dance” (Figure 5), by way of organic abstraction, visually undulates and dances, creating an other-worldly setting for the drama, as though seen through moving water. “In Defense of The Window to The Soul” (Figure 6) is reminiscent of costume, the breast-plate area an empty, vulnerable space surrounded by an armor-like structure, protected by a spiked crown. “Taking Your Spine Out” (Figure 7) alludes to the figure, with growing, shoulder-like towers connected by an open, twisted central spine – compelling both

vigor and vulnerability. These figure-inspired works provide the players - the cast - for this production. "The New Stallion – A Thinly-Veiled Allegory" (Figure 8) gives a dramatic nod to historical and functional work, reminiscent of Chinese Neolithic Yangshao pottery, but in such a way that allows it to become an object endowed with special significance, the etched narrative on the surface weaving it into an archetypal storyline as a supporting character. The viewer is also represented in the work. "Bearing Witness" (Figure 9) was built to stand in for the viewer, so that this body of work would have "someone" to attest to its existence, in spite of a pandemic. The intentionality in naming the components that represent those found in a theatrical production was to further build into the work a sense of dramatic spectacle, narrated with mark-making, set in a created world complete with props, acted out by figure-inspired objects and ultimately, observed by its own witnesses.

Each piece was built with the intention of creating interactions between characters and objects, other characters, the setting they lived in, and the observers. I chose artistic and curatorial devices to help facilitate this concept, using form, line, color, and specific placement in the gallery space to direct the narrative and the eye of the viewer. Those choices serve to create as plot devices as well, running as an undercurrent beneath the observable physical characteristics of the forms, creating a subtext in this visual theatre. This idea pushes the boundaries beyond those narratives, creating, in full circle, a place for dialogue between the work and the viewer, as they consider those theatrical and artistic devices on multiple levels.

Whether they represent actor, prop, setting or audience, the forms are imbued with life and movement, and they also vary in character; they are sometimes austere, sometimes surreal, almost fairy-tale-esque, with an Alice-In-Wonderland feel that makes the viewer want

to tumble down the rabbit-hole and explore it more deeply. Like a theatrical production, I want my work to create a world to lose oneself in, and to evoke an emotional response – joy, wonder, anxiety, surprise, melancholy, curiosity, tension.

**ACT THREE: The Creative Process: Just a Few Not-Too-Technical Details of Making and Design**

In the past, surface treatment was the most difficult part of the process for me in the making. Building forms came naturally and I tended to work with a bit of intuitive adjustment, even when the forms followed a sketch or a maquette. But once the form was built and had been bisque fired, it became, to me, a completely new work. It was like painting on an unconventionally-shaped canvas, with a whole new set of design problems to solve, creating primarily a two-dimensional design on a three-dimensional object. The size of the vessels I was building made this an especially daunting task.

Several of my mentors suggested possible design solutions, such as adding graphic elements to the surface or using slips and underglazes as surface treatments prior to the bisque fire. Another suggestion was to do blind contour drawings of the vessel and use the resulting line work to create a design in the mishima (carving) technique, then inlaying color to the line, or use a colored slip (thinned clay) to first treat the surface and then use a sgraffito (or scratching) technique to etch the surface. I chose to employ several of these techniques, and by doing so, began to intentionally include those elements at the beginning of the process.

The move toward including line work as a part of the surface treatment at the design stage led to the concept of using those lines to create a narrative, especially in the figural-type pieces. In each of those works, the line was created not from blind contour drawings of the

vessel itself, but blind contour drawings of portraits, maps, endowed objects and emotional reactions related to the story that each piece told. They became the characters or players in the visual drama and contained the inner narrative, memory, or moment in time that the piece represented, driving the concept of the entire body of work.

#### **ACT FOUR:** The Work – Reflection and Response

As I reflect on the process, the concept, and the experience of making this body of work, I have made some general observations: The work, for me, has always been about the vessel and how the body relates to it. I was introduced to the work of contemporary ceramicist Chris Gustin, and was inspired by the scale and forms that define his work. I strive to build work that is sometimes big enough for me to crawl into, often large enough to have to stand on a stool or a ladder to build. My work has, at times, been compared to Georgia O’Keeffe’s abstract floral works, because of the sense of organic abstraction and references to the body in many of the larger forms. I mainly use form, rather than color, to create a dramatic impact, usually choosing more muted palettes reminiscent of those used by O’Keeffe in works such as “Abstraction White Rose, 1927”, which is painted in a variety of white and cream tones along with pastel shades of greys and blues, and “Nature Forms, Gaspé, 1932” which is primarily rendered in the colors of the beach – turquoises, creams and tans. I create gravity-defying work that suspends the clay horizontally against its material inclinations, and include unexpected twists that force a new perspective, or a precariousness of balance that induces a theatrical, sitting-on-the-edge-of-your seat sense of anxious anticipation. Georges Méliès, pioneer of early cinema, was noted for his theatricality, his narrative, and his creation of spectacle. His approach to film-making

was heavily influenced by visual art, and the study of the way his cinematic productions were designed and staged was influential to the concept and making of this body of work.

I have also realized that much of the reason for my making is legacy. My past experiences influence my work - disappointments, regrets, and failures are accessible as artistic inspiration and tend to captivate me as much as the joys, achievements, and successes do. In this body of work, I have chosen to use not only scale but also line and color to create that visual narrative that speaks to my life experiences, both negative and positive.

The curatorial decisions made in this exhibition were meant to invite the audience into these narratives by intentionally placing the viewer, props, and endowed objects among the players in the visual drama. The players in the drama draw the viewers through the work, encouraging them to interact with the objects and setting, and thus, become participants in this visual production.

As you enter the gallery, “Bearing Witness” and “Focus!” are the first two works that are seen (Figure 10). “Bearing Witness” is composed of a pair of column-like forms and are the silent observers of this event, of this moment in time, of those who share in this exhibition. They do not comment, they simply stand as a testament to this event. The two pieces face forward and back, one standing on tip-toe – one solidly installed in place, both with a sense of writhing movement, looking to the future and the past, while firmly planted in the present. They are somber in color without being depressing, with a rich copper red metallic finish at the top that allows for a bit of understated celebration. Between “Bearing Witness” is “Focus!” (Figure 11) – in shades of bright pink – a not-so-subtle reminder that we need to direct our attention. Most of us have been convinced that multi-tasking happens, and yet, we all realize



that it is mostly illusion. We have to choose where to look. The act of focusing allows us to define what is important in the moment.

From the entrance to the gallery, “Focus” is placed to be in dialogue with two other wall sculptures (Figure 12), in a triangular configuration with “Eye Spy With My Little Eye” (Figure 13) seen to the left and “It Seems Like Years Since It’s Been Here” (Figure 14) seen near the back of the gallery. With rich organic shapes and strong energy, these pieces are reminiscent of the wall-mounted work of sculptor Lee Bontecou. While Bontecou’s sculptural work is darker in palette, and has a sense of raw immediacy that is not a part of my aesthetic, there are references in both bodies of wall-mounted work to organic abstraction and a gravity-defying tension of the sculptural weight being suspended rather than supported.

The allusions to functional pottery reference the enduring nature of ceramic art, cementing the concept of “legacy” firmly in the work – work that lives beyond the life of the maker. The figurative works in the space live and interact with those objects. Some are endowed objects, with special significance. “How To Set A Proper Table” (Figure 15) was inspired by my 4-year-old granddaughter’s reaction to, and comment about, putting flowers in a vase on her kitchen table. Some, like “Offering” (Figure 16) and “Abundance” (Figure 17), remind us that we should live a life of gratitude, and while at times we have much, we must also be willing, for the sake of the good of humanity, to sacrifice some of what we have to help others.

Much of the work that has a figural quality or reference to the body has line work that makes visual reference to a person, relationship, or memory of an event that was, in some way, frozen in time for me. “Spring Break” (Figure 18) and “I Met You Once” (Figure 19) are tributes

to, and inspired by, particular people. They speak of legacy; the influence of that person as they simply existed in the world. Some others were inspired by dialogue between the artist and children.

Many of the figural pieces have openings through which other work can be seen, with the curatorial intention of viewing between and beyond the work itself. Through the center of “In Defense of The Window to The Soul,” (Figure 20) one can see beyond it the dark narrative of “Hope in The Face of Treachery” (Figure 21) and “The New Stallion – A Thinly Veiled Allegory.” From the other direction, you can see framed between the space of this figuratively-inspired piece the more hopeful narrative (Figure 22) revealed in “Kodachrome” (Figure 23), “High Tide, Low Places” (Figure 24), “Night Sky” (Figure 25), and “It Seems Like Years Since It’s Been Here.”

“Little Apple Girl” (Figure 26) and “Move It, Chubs!” (Figure 27) are self-portraits based on childhood memories. “Made New” (Figure 28) speaks to transformational experiences in life, “Why Are We in Kansas City Anyway?” (Figure 29) is commemorative of an event and those who were there, and “Game Face” (Figure 30) is a character study about the “trying on” of “faces” that adolescents experience, and which one to “wear” at a given time. “Who’s Watching The Baby?” (Figure 31) represents the “wild child” and the parent who thinks (hopes) that they can catch a break from their over-active toddler when others are around to “share the care” – but forgets to ask. All are intended to create a sense of dialogue with each other and with the setting and objects around them.

The exhibition culminates with “Free” (Figure 32) and “A Moment Etched in Time” (Figure 33). These works commemorate exactly that: a moment in time, child-like joy, a

carousel on a pier over the ocean, and the sense of free abandon indelibly etched into the memory of that experience (Figure 34).

#### **ACT FIVE:** The Dénouement

I have said that my prior body of work is not art that is tangible, but is living and organic. It is seen in the lives of my children and family, and in the works they create. This experience has allowed me the privilege of creating a legacy of art that commemorates, celebrates, and makes tangible some of those intangibles. My favorite work in the exhibition might be “I Spy With My Little Eye” because it is representative of the intangible – of something that is unknown. And of course, it is a game we play with children. This piece is a reminder that not only is there still fun to be had in the world, but if we just look closely enough, we might see something really special.

My current body of work has been birthed out of a lifetime of experience, and the joy and the struggle in the making is my homage to the celebration of life and shared experiences. It makes connections between the material and the artist, between the artist and the long history of art, between the individual works themselves, and between the art and the viewer. It reflects places of remembrance, experiences, and relational dialogue. It explores the deep places beneath – relationally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It looks beyond the present to both times past, with the historical significance of ceramic art, its forms and function, and to the future, embracing and celebrating the resilient nature of the art form. It compels the viewer to confront both the transient nature of time, life, and those fleeting moments that make up shared experience that are reflected in the narrative components of the

work, as well as the ancient, enduring nature that is inherent in ceramic art. And it is a compelling force for the artist to make art that is designed to live beyond us: such is the stuff of legacy. Whether we choose to look between, beneath or beyond, we are all constrained or compelled by one driving factor: The clock is ticking!

#### **EPILOGUE:** A Technical Statement – Ceramic Processes, Research and Results

Ceramic art is like a drama in and of itself, and there are so many chances for stories of success, but also failure in those processes: during the building, the alteration, the drying, the greenware state, the kiln firing, and the glazing. There are many points at which work can crack, break, bubble, explode, or in some other way, fail. I often describe the processes as a struggle, and in many ways, it is. At its most basic level, it is a sometimes harmonious, sometimes contentious, relationship between the artist and the materials.

Hand-building ceramics can involve a number of different methods of building and for this body of work, I employed several different techniques. In terms of design, I worked with sketches, maquettes and intuitive building, in order to ensure that I was staying to scale during the building process, but also allowing for moments of freedom while creating.

Because I often choose to build larger vessels, I work with earthenware for its strength in the building process and its potential for a successful outcome. I prefer to work with a talc body clay, white or buff earthenware, that has no grog or sand. Although I prefer the smooth texture of talc body clays for building, I am intentional about not making the work smooth. My fingerprints create texture, so that the marks bear the presence of the artist's hand throughout the work.

Most of these pieces began by rolling out a slab of earthenware clay, and using bisque or plaster molds that I created to guide the shape of the base. Most of the work that has a figurative influence began with an elongated oval base. This shape simulated the basic anatomical profile of a human body. A number of the pieces, particularly the geometric wall pieces, were created using the slab process over a hump mold or slump mold to begin the work. From this beginning, the forms were built using a pinch coil method, attaching rolled coils of clay, layer by layer, to build the form.

Working with talc body clays can also create challenges in the glaze fire, as they are known to have glaze fit issues. Glazes that work well with red earthenware can unexpectedly bubble or shiver off of vessels built with talc body clays, creating an additional challenge to overcome. Shivering is a glaze defect that results in the glaze flaking away from the work after the glaze fire. Last summer, as part of my glaze research during my internship with artist Nancy Gardner, I focused on low-fire, earthenware glazes, slips and terra sigillata recipes. During the course of study, I confirmed what I had already noted to be true from prior experience with glazes applied to talc body work: glazes that contained tin oxides predictably caused shivering when applied to bisque ware built from talc body clays. Other specialty glazes had less predictable results in testing, but provided enough data that resulted in the cautious use of a number of normally desirable glaze effects.

To compensate for some limitations in glaze choices, I developed a number of slip options to help add depth and glaze fit modifications to the clay bodies in the green and bisque stages of construction. These also provided a richer color palette with more options to create depth in the surface treatment of the work prior to and during the glaze process. During my

research, I discovered a great resource, the Georgia Regents University Glaze List, available through Pricilla Hollingsworth's website. Using a "Super Slip" recipe found there, which was developed to be used on either greenware or bisque ware, I modified that recipe to create colored slip options that I would use at times in the green state, at other times after the bisque fired, depending on the desired result.

By layering numerous slips, glazes, and underglazes in multiple firings, I was working to achieve more variety in surface treatment options and a more refined, curated finish. This was especially important on the white clay body, which in itself did not provide any of those desirable characteristics, since white earthenware lacks the luminosity of finer clay bodies, such as porcelain. Using the same process of research and testing, I developed a number of glazes that worked well alone and with those slips and terra sigillatas, to help create the desired results. I developed several original low-fire glaze recipes that were used on multiple pieces in this body of work. The glaze recipes are as follows:

DB SEMI-OPAQUE LOW-FIRE SHINO                      Cone 06-04  
30 Lithium carbonate  
70 Nepheline syenite  
100

For DB NIGHT SKY, add +.54% copper carbonate and + 2.38% Mason Stain #6500 (Sage).

DEB'S TEXTURED CRYSTAL                              Cone 05-04  
50 Magnesium carbonate  
36 Lithium carbonate  
14 Borax  
100

For color variations, add +6-18% Mason Stains in various combinations.

DB GLOSSY    Cone 06  
85 Frit 3134  
15 China Clay  
100

For color variations, add +6-18% Mason Stains in various combinations.

During my research and testing I also developed nine mid-range glazes, to be used on future work built using mid-range clay bodies, and to create a range of finish options, from glossy transparent to matte opaque, specifically developed to work well with color options in the yellow to red color spectrum. Three of those recipes are listed below:

DEB'S GLOSSY 1

Cone 5-6

40 Nepheline syenite  
5 EPK  
15 Gerstley Borate  
18 Silica  
10 Wollastonite  
12 Zinc Oxide  
100

For color variations, add +6-10% Mason Stains in various combinations.

Notes: Very glossy transparent glaze that becomes semi-transparent with higher percentages of colorant. Brushes, dips and pours well.

DEB'S SATIN 1

Cone 5-6

35 Custer Feldspar  
15 Whiting  
9 Frit 3124  
15 Silica  
10 EPK  
10 Dolomite  
6 Gerstley Borate  
100

For color variations, add +6-10% Mason Stains in various combinations.

Notes: Smooth satin, with a glossy sheen that has slight variations with some colorants, where it becomes semi-opaque. Brushes, dips and pours well.

DEB'S MATTE 1

Cone 5-6

25 F-4 Feldspar  
15 Whiting  
20 EPK  
20 Dolomite  
15 Silica  
5 Gerstley Borate  
100

For color variations, add +6-10% Mason Stains in various combinations.

Notes: Nice, flat, smooth semi-opaque matte. Brushes, dips and pours well.

Another important consideration in the making of this thesis work was scale. I have, for the past few years, built large-scale work – as large as is possible in the kilns available. This resulted in work that was often as long as 40 inches, as wide as 30 inches and somewhere in the range of 2 to 4 feet high. Just prior to the beginning of my thesis, I had the opportunity to see my work in a gallery setting and realized that the lack of variation in scale became a bit boring. I therefore determined early on in this process that I would vary the scale of the work as it seemed appropriate for each piece. My intention was to adjust scale so that the forms were still impactful regardless of size, using line and color to create that same visual impact across scale variations.

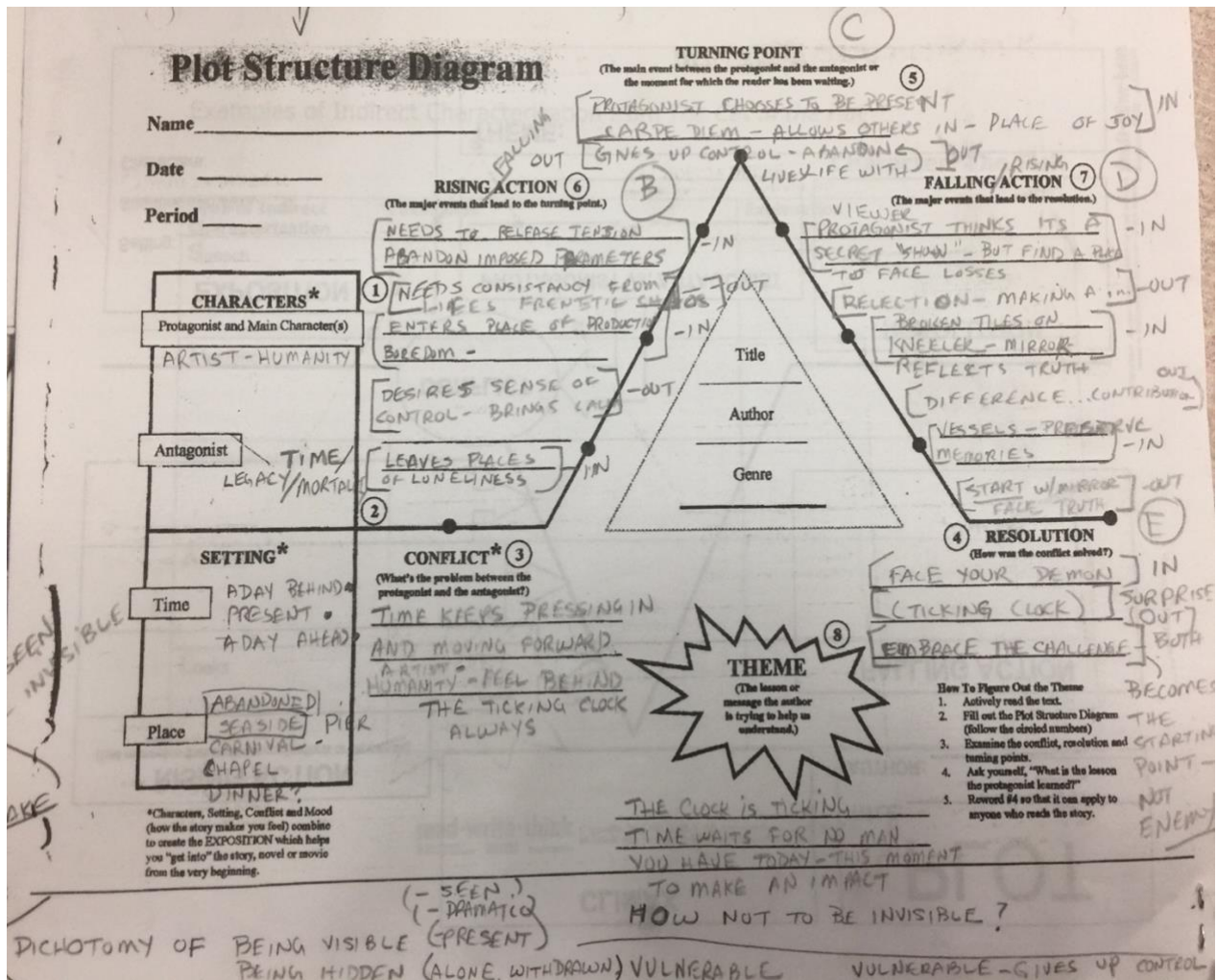
Another process I employed in the work was building modularly. I explored this in a two-piece work, with the intention of building multiple segments that could help the pieces exceed the size constraints of the kilns. The concept was successful in theory and in execution, but in the case of the finished work, the work itself seemed complete even before I took it to “new heights.” Although the finished piece didn’t attain the height dimensions that I had originally envisioned, the modular pieces worked well and I was satisfied with the results. As I continue to make art in the future, this is a method I will continue to explore.

A final note regarding building: One great result of rolling slabs and cutting ovoid shapes from them, as stated above in the section regarding the building process, is that there is always excess clay rolled, and the excess is often oddly-shaped pieces left over from the cutting of the geometric shapes. The resulting shapes are asymmetrical, often with rounded sides and pointed edges. I am always excited to use those shapes as bases to build from, taking an organic approach to building these pieces and allowing for the clay and the base shape to guide



the final form. The works created from this process were largely in the vein of organic abstraction, many resembling aquatic life. As I am both enamored and energized by the ocean, this process allowed me to envision the ocean's wild, untamed and uncontrollable force as I was building, feeling in my hands how water might affect these forms, giving them that sense of movement, and reflecting the power and vastness of the soul and the ocean that is reflected through the large scale of my work.

APPENDIX



This Plot Structure Diagram was used to create a written storyboard, defining plot devices, motivations, narrative, and thematic content. Tools such as this are used in creative writing, fiction, short story, and scriptwriting. The use of this and other creative writing tools helped to identify and refine the concept of using ceramic work to convey the idea of a visual drama.

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IMAGES



Figure 1. "I Love To Be Beside Your Side Beside..."



Figure 2. "Beyond The Reef" (Outside the gallery window)

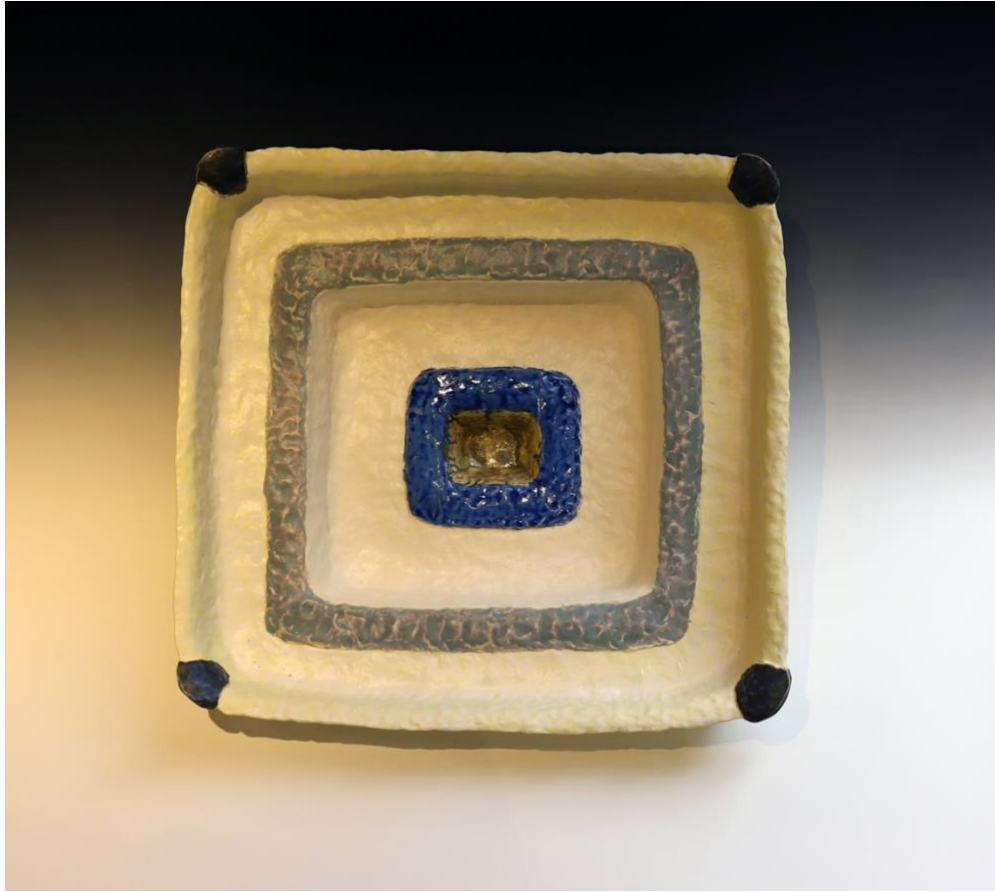


Figure 3. "Suspended in Time"

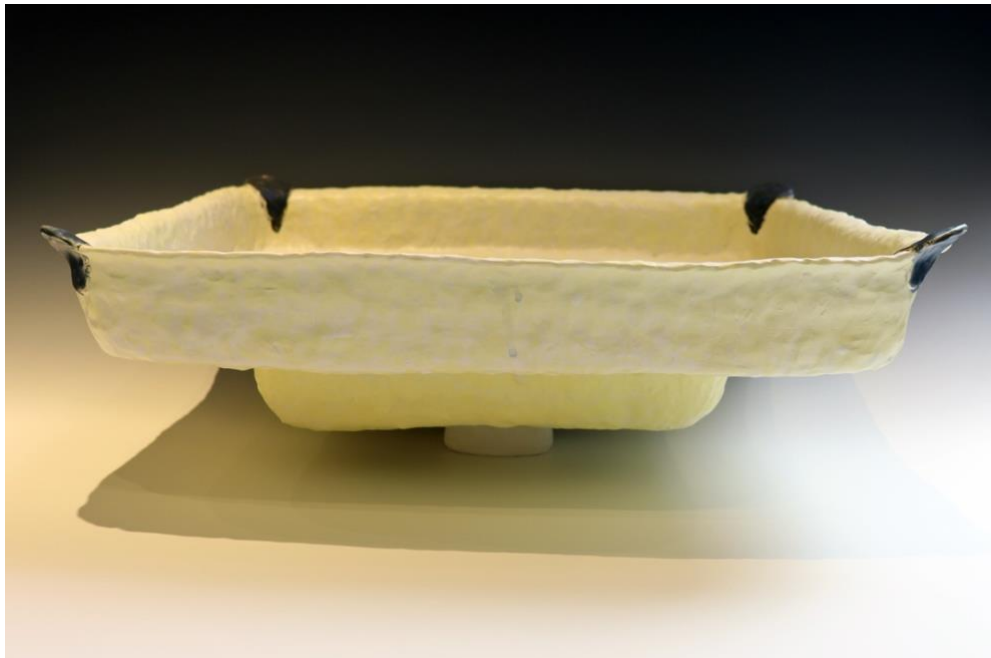


Figure 3. "Suspended in Time" (profile)



Figure 4. "On Shaky Ground"



Figure 5. "The Dance"



Figure 6. "In Defense of The Window to The Soul"





Figure 7. "Taking Your Spine Out"



Figure 8. "The New Stallion – A Thinly-Veiled Allegory"



Figure 10. Gallery Image of Exhibition Entrance (“Bearing Witness” and “Focus!”)



Figure 11. "Focus!"



Figure 12. Gallery View of wall sculptures visible from entrance



Figure 12. Gallery View of wall sculptures visible from entrance



Figure 13. "Eye Spy With My Little Eye"

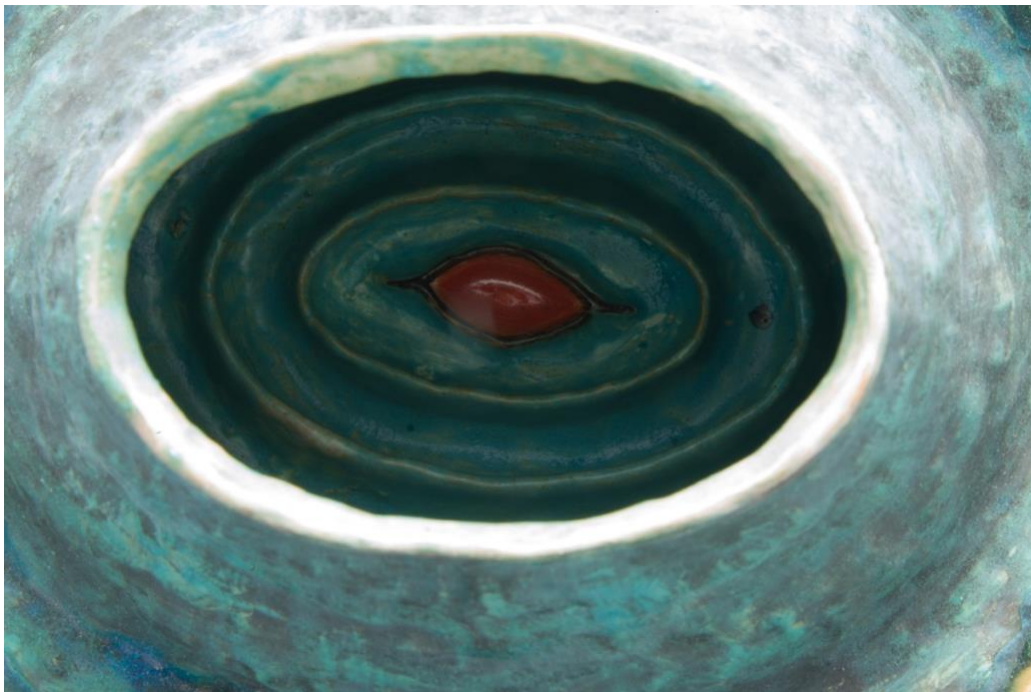


Figure 13. "Eye Spy With My Little Eye" (detail)



Figure 14. "It Seems Like Years Since It's Been Here"



Figure 15. How To Set A Proper Table





Figure 16. "Offering"



Figure 17. "Abundance"

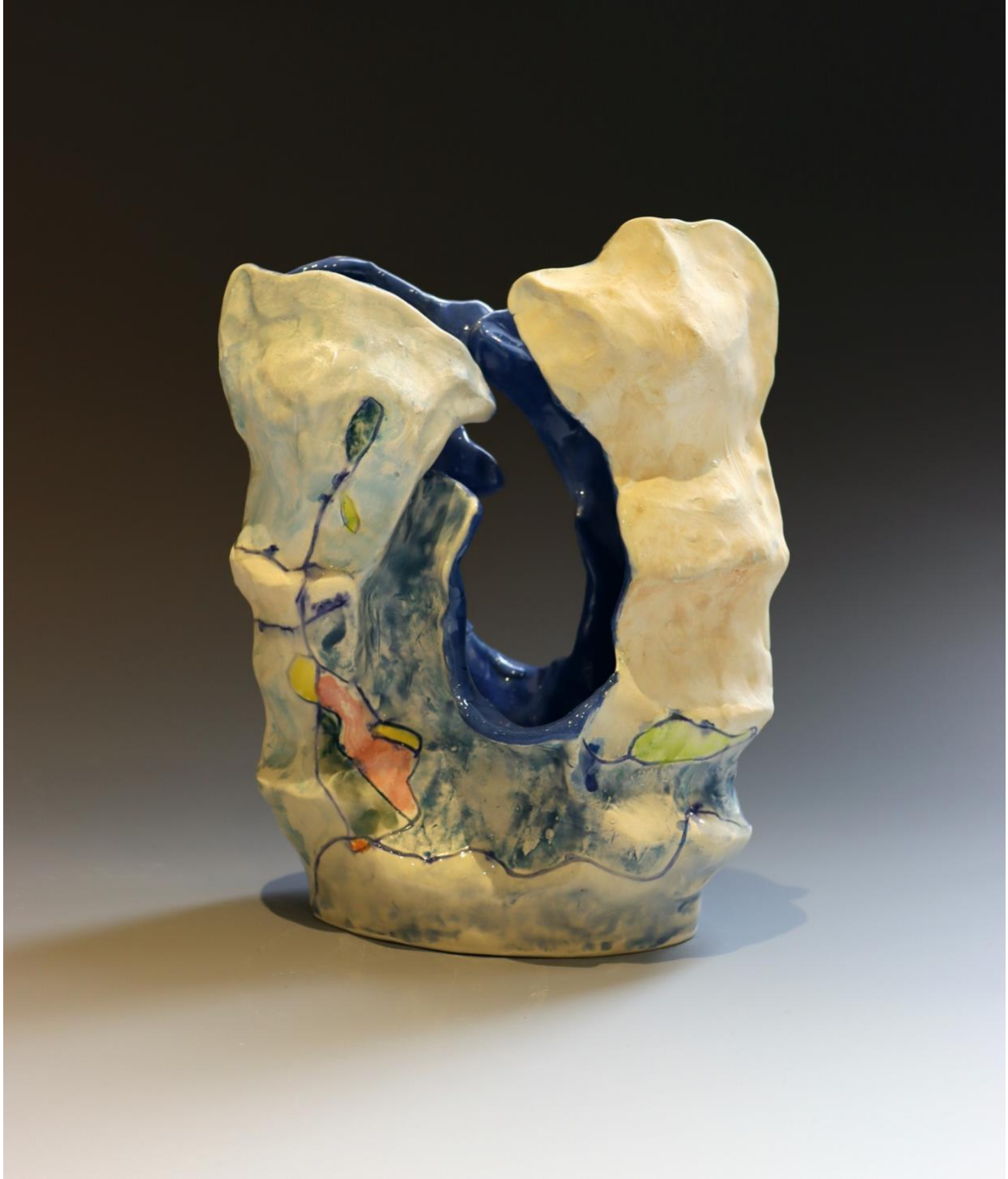


Figure 18. "Spring Break"



Figure 19. "I Met You Once"



Figure 20. Gallery View through “In Defense of The Window to The Soul”.



Figure 21. “Hope in The Face of Treachery”



Figure 22. Gallery View through “In Defense of The Window to The Soul” (alternate direction)

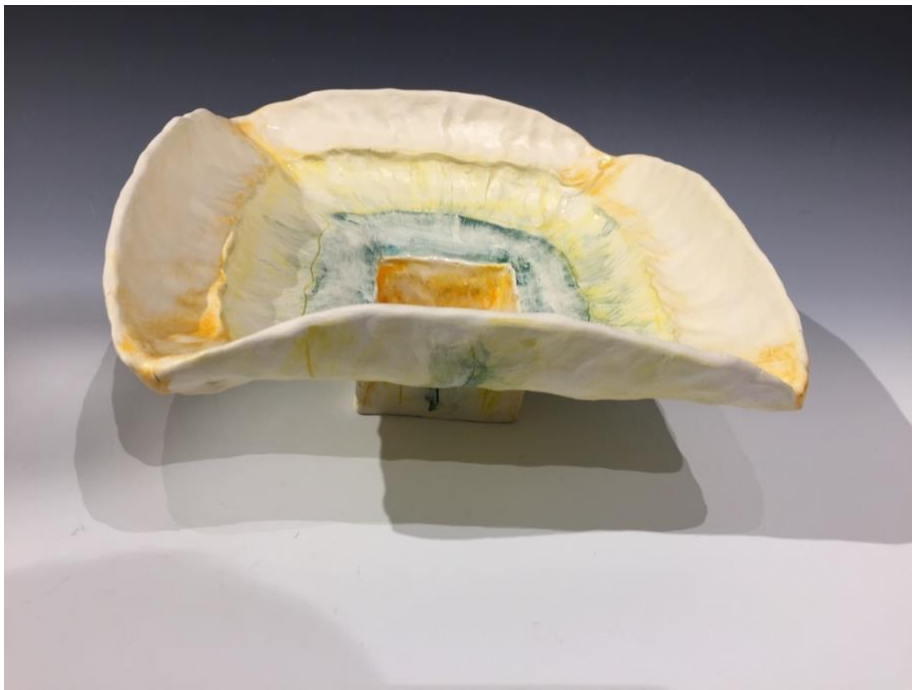


Figure 23. “Kodachrome”

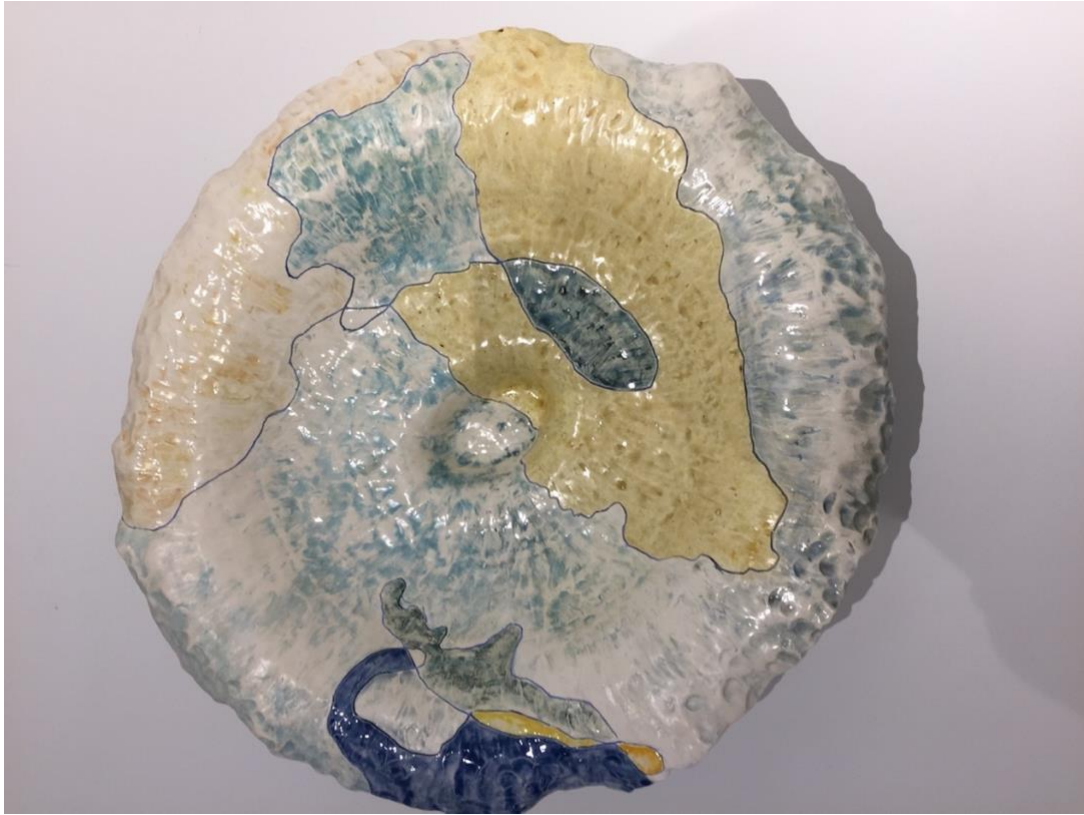


Figure 24. "High Tide, Low Places"



Figure 25. "Night Sky"



Figure 26. "Little Apple Girl"



Figure 27. "Move It, Chubs!"



Figure 28. "Made New"





Figure 29. "Why Are We in Kansas City, Anyway?"



Figure 30. "Game Face"



Figure 31. "Who's Watching The Baby?"



Figure 32. "Free"



Figure 33. "A Moment Etched in Time"



Figure 34. Gallery Image of Installation – “Free” and “A Moment Etched in Time”