

Virtual Studio Visit Reflection: NCECA Emerging Artists

Kelly O'Bryant tends to do things in her studio in multiples or groupings. The concept of family gatherings is something that connects with this. She likes to see the relationships with the object, especially after she gives them away. Her work deals a lot with what goes into the object, such as food, and ways people react to that. In a sense, she believes her work to be a transient still life. She also comments on the precariousness of being human, saying that people are almost afraid to interact in a way that could damage or break ceramics. This is why she creates stacked sculptures that might produce a feeling of anxiety from the audience. I can appreciate her process and ability to work in multiples. It takes a lot of skill and patience. I also like what she said about porcelain — her works carry her process and history.

Joanna Powell's work deals with the definition of beauty. She defines beauty not in terms of aesthetic attraction, but as one's reaction, whether negative or positive, to her work. Her process, according to her, is a series of accidents. A lot of her wonderings go into her works and she deals with a lot of themes related to her own personal history and nostalgia. Her parents seem to be a really important subject that she incorporates into her process. I can relate to her when she talks about the passage of time and her anxiety about forgetting important moments. I like the parts of her works that deal with immediate reactions to them. Instead of focusing on getting every detail perfect, she thinks about what is most eye-catching. This is something I hope to incorporate into my own work.

Kate Roberts is an artist I am familiar with, actually, which is why I have an immediate inclination to respect her work. But besides that, her work is a tedious and meticulous process. She not only thinks of how far she can push the materials to create her works, but of where they will be displayed, and incorporates that into her making. Her dresses, which are made of very very thin delicate materials, are a comment on femininity and how they can push boundaries of expectation. For her BFA work, she displayed in a post office warehouse and took into account how bumped and raised the floor was, working accordingly. I admire how even when something breaks or goes wrong, she doesn't get upset, but rather acknowledges that it is all part of the process.

Roberto Lugo's work is multi-faceted. He is a graffiti painter as well as a sculptor. His culture and experience are intertwined with his art-making. Growing up, he experienced the negative impacts of racial bias. He was told that he wasn't good enough and was constantly judged by the color of his skin. In his work, he tries to address this and hopes that his work can be a spot for conversation between people that may not share the same views. His pots have imagery dealing with racism, poverty, and societal expectation. He even uses his own face in some of his works. I admire that he stood up in the face of adversity and actually used it to his advantage. Something I had not considered in my work is using something negative to turn into a positive. I can use negative experiences and turn them around to create an outlet for what I feel.

In summation, this group of artists as a whole all derived a lot of their work from their own personal journeys and histories. They sought to accurately express and portray feelings, time, space, relationships, reactions, places, and many other themes. Though they might not have much in common on the surface level, they are all greatly affected by their personal experience. They agree that ceramics is an appropriate outlet for their feelings. Some remarked that the inconsistency of clay and other materials is what is so intriguing about it. I find that I agree, and also think that clay is a medium that can closely reflect the human condition — ever-changing, reactive, and expressive.