

Spring 5-1-2019

Between and Beyond

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Recommended Citation

HEIL, NOAH F., "Between and Beyond" (2019). *Art and Art History Honors Projects*. 9.
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Between and Beyond

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May 1, 2019

“What we need to know is that queerness is not yet here but it approaches like a crashing wave of potentiality. And we must give in to its propulsion, its status as a destination.”

—José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*

Abstract

Between and Beyond is a series of handbuilt and wheel-thrown ceramic objects which explore intimate queer relationships through the human figure. I assemble slabs of clay to create openings and negative spaces within the sculptures, implying the ways in which the human form also acts as a vessel. The sculptures as well as the figures themselves remain open and vulnerable, literally and metaphorically. The body is depicted through fragmented sections, alluding to the ways in which society and culture break up gender and sexuality into limiting binaries. These intimate, private moments are meant to conjure an imagined future free of limiting gender ideologies and polarizing assumptions about sexuality. My intention is to show multiple figures engaged intimately with each other as well as with themselves in order to point out and elaborate the idea that queerness exists as an ideological framework meant to reject polarization and to embrace the fluid.



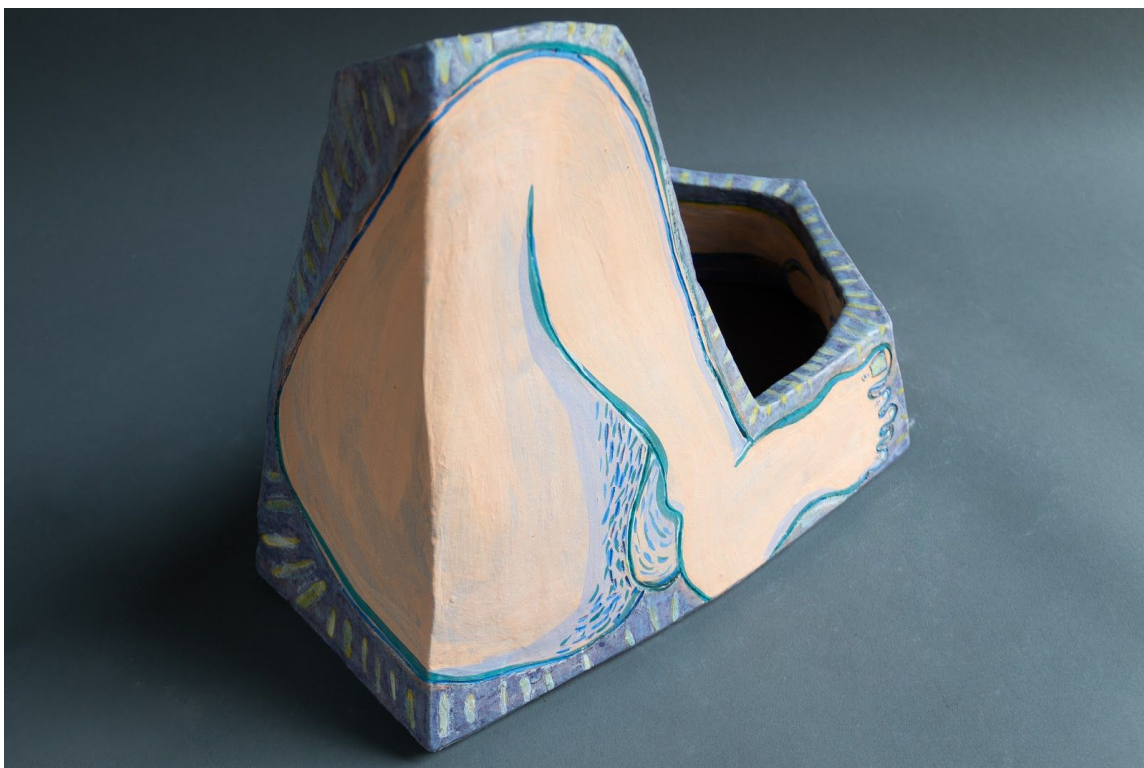
Brace. 2018



Brace. 2018 (side)



Expose. 2018



Expose. 2018 (side)



Expose. 2018 (interior)



The Twins. 2018



The Twins. 2018 (side)



The Twins. 2018 (back/interior)



Untitled Plate. 2018



Untitled Plate. 2018



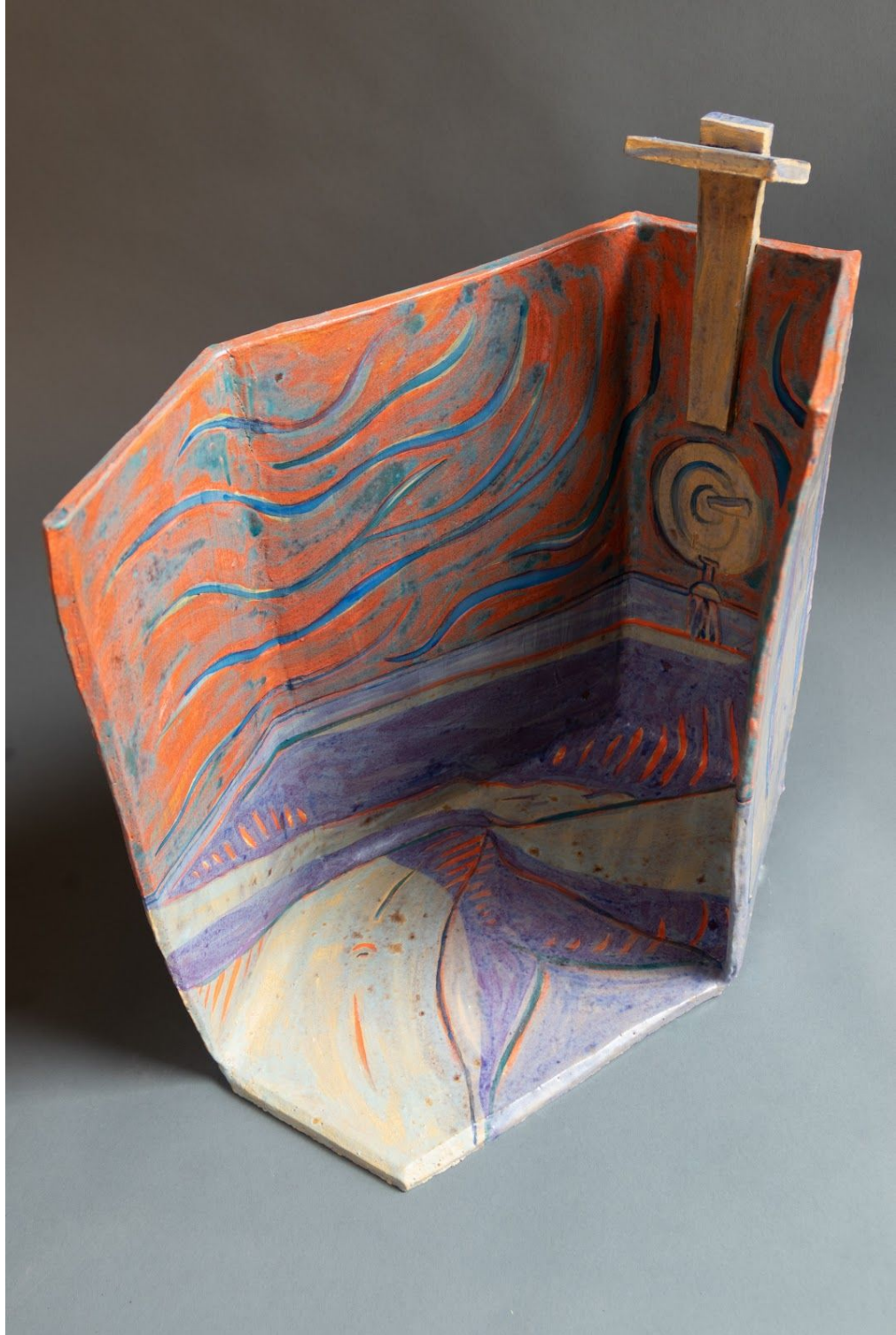
Embrace. 2019



Embrace. 2019 (back)



Public Privacy (Soak). 2019



Public Privacy (Soak). 2019 (interior)



Engage. 2019



Engage. 2019



Engage. 2019



Engage. 2019



Untitled Plate. 2019



Untitled Plate. 2019



Untitled Plate. 2019



Untitled Plate. 2019



Untitled Plate. 2019



Untitled Plate. 2019



Untitled Plate. 2019

Artist Statement

In my work, queerness is presented as an ideology rather than an identity. I feel the need to fill a void in the contemporary setting of art identified as “gay” or “queer” by creating figures who explicitly embrace their own anxieties and panic in order to evolve a productive relationship with themselves as well as with each other. Based on my own experiences, I generate this grouping of ceramic work to capture myriad intimate queer relationships. I challenge the restrictive nature of the typically polarizing associations of internal/external, individual/communal, past/future, figure/ground, masculine/feminine, gay/straight. Rather than prescribing these pieces one or the other I wish to emphasize their fluidity, vitrified within ceramic vessels.

I construct multi-planed, large, angular structures, accompanied by smaller, wheel-thrown “plates” which hang on the wall. Colorful layers of slip and underglaze act as “paint,” which depict specific perspectives on the surfaces of the work; in the sculptures in the round, however, these fixed perspectives are disjointed by multiple vantage points. While painting inserts the viewer into a new space, sculpture confronts the viewer in their own space. I blend the disparate elements of these two media together, by transferring techniques I learned from painting onto the plates and the various planes of these sculptures. The angular clay pieces that I form with my hands become a new “ground” for the painted figures to occupy. In this way, clay acts as a metaphor for an unspecified, utopian setting, one which I believe people have not yet achieved. Neither strictly 2D nor 3D, my work alludes to a space somewhere in between and beyond these distinctive realms. In bridging the two technical processes of ceramics and painting, I test the boundaries between the media in order to highlight the content of my work.

The formal elements grounded in Cubist sculpture, and the ways these elements distort and reframe perceived reality, provide a reference for the style and form of my work. The theorist José Esteban Muñoz’s assertion that queerness is best understood as ideology, not identity, helps direct and articulate my creative process. The sculptures and the figures themselves remain open and vulnerable, literally and metaphorically. The intimate, private moments depicted are meant to conjure an imagined future, free of polarizing and limiting assumptions about gender and sexuality, where confining dualities do not manifest as they do today. My hope is that viewers can both recognize this hope, as well as find solace or affirmation through these sculptures.

References

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York University Press, 2009.