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SOBREMESA: THE TIME SPENT SAVORING FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP

by
Rosa Salas Gonzalez

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
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Reader: Professor Virginia Chavis

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DEDICATION

To my family: my mother, brother, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Thank you for your constant support and for always watching over me. I hold dear to my heart all the memories we have built together over the years and I look forward to the day we are all reunited again.

To all my friends in Mississippi: thank you for being my home away from home and for always including me in your thanksgivings, Christmases, Easters, birthday parties, etc. Thank you for showing me kindness and for always including me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my mother, Guadalupe Gonzalez, for being a constant in my life. Without her support, validation and encouragement I would not be here today. Thank you for teaching me the value of hard work, resilience and trust.

Completing this body of work would have not been possible without the help of my advisor and first ceramics professor Matt Long; whose attention to form, concept and intent have help build the foundations of who I am as an artist today and continues to guide my creative process. To my readers, Dr. Kris Belden-Adams and Virginia Chavis, thank you for allowing me to steal time from your busy schedules to help me find the right words to illustrate this work on paper. Thank you for inspiring me and other young women interested in art and academia.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues and friends from the Meek 127 Ceramics Studio. One of the reasons I chose clay as my medium to focus in was the closeness and familial feeling that comes with being a part of our ceramics community. To McComb, Ashton, and Samara, thank you for checking up on me, helping me move my heavy pieces, giving me feedback, and still being my friends after this busy thesis semester. *Sobremesa* was created behind the Hispanic and Latino tradition of having hour long conversations after sharing a special meal with family and friends. I will always cherish the times we spent doing this while we talked about art and life.

ABSTRACT

Sobremesa is the culmination of five different ceramic sets handcrafted and uniquely made as a way to enhance the experience of eating and sharing food. This work honors the Latino and Hispanic tradition of *Sobremesa*, which is the time we spend sharing special moments with friends and family after eating. I explore the relevance of sharing meals as a member of a Venezuelan family and how these memories of my childhood before moving away to another country relates to the way in which I approach the creation of my functional vessel's aesthetic and conceptual background.

The pieces that make up the sets in *Sobremesa* are all hand-built ceramic functional vessels that are coil and slab built with red clay, and bisque and glaze fired to cone 04. The Sushi Set and Coffee Set can be partially hung, and the Cocoa Set, Sake Set, and Charcuterie Board are free-standing.

Sobremesa expands on the importance of historical ceramics in our world, such as the Teotihuacan, Mayan, and Mimbres pottery, which have influenced the visual elements of my artwork and thoughts on what I want my pottery to express. Contemporary art and cultural references are used to explain the meaning behind color, presentation, and shapes found in *Sobremesa*.

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ARTIST STATEMENT

As a functional-vessel maker, I am interested in the intimate connection between user and maker, and in making works that are genuine to my personal character and history. I envision my work as energetic, spontaneous, and inviting. Using design elements such as line, asymmetrical balance, color, and pattern, my work strives to create dynamic forms.

I am drawn to functional vessels that are accessible, personal, and invite active interaction. Plates, cups and any other functional ware are made with the intention of making the sharing a meal with other people special and engaging. I hope that in my work I can create not only a fun and interesting presentation for food, but also a vehicle for purposeful and valuable times shared with other people.

My sets for shared meals that have eccentric and unconventional form and shapes inspired by abstraction, Cubist shapes, and whimsical line quality. The works' graphic style, pattern, and play of symmetry and asymmetry come from historical ceramics from the native Americas, such as Teotihuacan, Mayan, and Mimbres pottery.

My color palette is derived from children's books, toys, and memories of my youth in Venezuela. It finds inspiration in the polychromatic houses in El Saladillo, the beautiful woven hammocks known as Chinchorros, where I would swing as a kid, or the indigenous Wayuu dresses known as Manta Guajira. These remind me of the Venezuelan and Marabino culture and tradition and they also speak to who I am as a person. A balanced color palette with muted, rich, and vivid colors allows a mature version of myself to celebrate the playfulness of youth and child-like joy.

CHAPTER 1

Serendipia

“Hallazgo valioso que se produce de manera accidental o casual” (Real Academia Española)

“Valuable find that occurs accidentally or casually”

I always have been aware of the importance of these special moments sharing a meal with people we love. These small experiences can be enhanced through beautiful, well crafted, and thoughtful utilitarian objects that we are using every day. They have a beauty of their own that can make these moments feel even more special, as aesthetics and form express the individuality of the artists and the objects. This is the goal of the body of work in *Sobremesa*, which expresses something intrinsic to my core values: the importance of time with family and friends. My work seeks to enhance the experience, and draw attention to its value.

The impetus for this body of work was my own displacement from the culture that taught me these values. I was encouraged by my mother to apply to schools in a different country, and to live a different college experience than anyone in my family ever had. I moved to the United States the fall of 2015 from Maracaibo, Zulia, Venezuela, to pursue a degree in Studio Art at the University of Mississippi.

Moving away from my home and family meant a lot of things to me: independence, freedom, and self-discovery. But what I noticed as time passed was that

the physical distance allowed me to better appreciate the people, feelings, colors, views, buildings, the warm feeling of familiarity, and a shared identity. Being away from home has brought up a lot of memories from my childhood and my times shared with my family back in the “Beloved Land of the Sun.” But that home I remember may not be the same.

Socioeconomic and political crises that gripped my home country over the last nine years, transforming life for all Venezuelans including my family and friends. Recently, many Venezuelans have left their country, and families have been separated. According to the United Nations, “Around 4 million Venezuelans had left their country by mid-2019. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was the largest source country of asylum seeker in 2018 (over 340,000)” (International Organization for Migration). The exodus of Venezuelans meant the displacement of our customs and traditions, in addition to the scattering of family and friends. I am hardly alone in being away from home, and removed from my family.

As I recall, family gatherings were everything. In Maracaibo, we always would find an excuse to have meals together and enjoy each other’s company. Graduations, birthdays, holidays, or just wanting to see your family would be enough reason to have a gathering of about 40 people who all knew and loved each other, and who all were trying to eat in the same room. I would watch my mother wake up bright and early to make the most delicious desserts while her four siblings prepared dishes to bring at their own homes. I have vivid memories of being a kid and watching family and friends start eating lunch at 2:00 p.m., and of not leaving the gathering until after 10:00 p.m. In Latino culture and during my entire childhood, the main purpose of a meal was to spend time

with the people you love by sharing a table and conversations, and nourishing our hearts and bellies.

The work in *Sobremesa* is a presentation of objects we might have used in these social gatherings to help express the celebration of time together through the use of objects that were specially crafted. This is my way of honoring my passion for ceramics, my childhood memories, and the experience of growing up in an environment that values shared meals. My work is about the special memories that these gatherings created, and the celebration of the making of new ones. These pieces deliberately are made in a way that engages the user with its eccentric, colorful, and playful surfaces and forms. For example, In the *Sushi Set*, each individual gets their own saturated color on their sushi plate and bowl. These plates and bowls are all linked to each other through form and color variation; however, each piece has a unique shape and a saturated color per person that brings individuality to pieces that still share a theme. Through pottery I hope to create a vehicle for meaningful times through the individuality and uniqueness of each piece.

CHAPTER 2

Ademán

*“Movimiento o actitud del cuerpo o de alguna parte suya con que se manifiesta
disposicion, intencion o sentimiento”* (Real Academia Española)

“Movement or attitude of the body or of any part of you with which disposition, intention
or feeling is manifested”

As many other artists, my approach to clay goes beyond the desire to create a piece that can function, but to express an idea or emotion while creating an object that holds beauty and visual interest. *Sobremesa* is comprised of sets that are visually connected to one another. This allows them to form a unit that is both harmonious and balanced, while also maintaining their own individuality and uniqueness in form and surface design. In order to accomplish that, I started by selecting a specific meal. I began listing, and sketching all the different pieces that people traditionally include in order to serve a specific sauce, drink, or food. For example, when a big group gathers to have sushi, consumers will use a container for soy sauce, a sushi boat, small platters and bowls for individual serving, etc.

For form and function of all these pots needed for the sharing of food at a gathering are highly considered to enhance their melding into the social setting. These pieces are presented in a sculptural and artistic manner that enhances our visual and dining experiences. I considered how people interacted with these objects, and how formal consistency helped the whole set of individual pots come together. After sketching

and listing the objects needed to complete the composition, I designed a way for them all to unite in a “puzzle-piece” kind of approach. The negative and positive space, the use of color, repetition, and line quality, was also important when I was considering what the surface treatment of the set would look like after all of the firing stages. My ultimate goal while sketching was for the viewer to not only see these as beautiful artistic vessels, but also consider them three-dimensional paintings and drawings.

Both *Sushi Set* and *Coffee Set* can be hung in order for the space to be activated, for the pieces to be stored creatively while they are not being used, and to allow a different interaction with the piece while it hangs on the wall, similar to a painting. Versatility in the way to present the pieces allows for the user to have multiple options for it to be displayed, used, and presented.

On a more technical note, after finalizing sketchbook drawings and written plans, I drew the pots to scale on tar paper. This paper allowed for the drawings to be durable, so they could be used during the multiple stages of building and their shapes remained loyal to the original plans. This allowed me to nestle the pieces together, as puzzle pieces do when they are placed next to each other and fit snugly. This also allowed for line and shape to create an overall composition as a full set, without background distractions. I also could control the spacing between each piece, and the play of negative space.

After creating a tar-paper model of the set, the next step in my process was building each piece. For the free-form standing pieces that sit on a pedestal or a table setting, I included a tray or big platter built with a big slab that was cut using the tar paper as a guide. After the slab was dried enough to be worked on, I coil-build a foot ring with a specific height in mind. I kept building until the entire length of the foot ring was taller

than the desired height of the tray or platter. After this, I utilized a ruler and needle secured with tape, and slowly left a mark to note where I can cut my foot ring so it can be leveled, consistent in height, and therefore, so it would be able to sit flat on a surface.

After everything was cut and smoothed out, I placed a flat wooden board on top of the piece's foot ring, and I made sure that the entire foot ring was touching the board. Making sure that the slab is supported when there is a big surface area without a foot ring and coil structure underneath it is important in order for the slab to remain flat. To avoid an inconsistent flat surface, I created a drawing and design on my foot ring that ensured that there was a supporting structure all over the slab, including the middle.

For pieces with a flat bottom, the process was similar. The piece was built on a slab, and the coils were added. After reaching the desired height, I used a flat wooden board to ensure consistency on the rim. The design of the rim of each pot varied. During the whole process, I made sure to use ribs and sponges to ensure a smooth surface that could be drawn onto when the piece was completely built and hard as leather. Paddles and other kitchen utensils, such as spatulas, became important tools for trying to keep a consistent smooth surface.

In some pieces, I built on top of a leather-hard, coil-built form so the piece could maintain its structure while gaining height. Patience and multitasking became extremely important during this process. Letting the clay stiffen while coil-building was also an important factor taking in consideration while hand-building each piece.

CHAPTER 3

Sempiterno

“*Que durará siempre; que, habiendo tenido principio, no tendrá fin.*” (Real Academia Española)

“That will last forever; that, having had a beginning, will have no end.”

From the beginning of my journey as a BFA student in the Fine Arts, I was encouraged to look at historical and ancient ceramics, not only for its aesthetic value but also for its historical context, cultural meaning, and utility. Identifying myself as a Latina woman and having many friends from different Latin American countries, I wanted to take inspiration from pottery that was familiar, and that had a relationship to my personal history as a woman growing up in a Latino community. Being raised in an environment that encouraged the exchange of different traditions, culture, art, special moments, and differences made me want to also learn from what other Latino ancient civilizations expressed and lived through pottery and clay. The historical ceramics that inspired and influenced this body of work include the Teotihuacan and Mayan Mesoamerican ceramics, the Native American Mimbres bowls, and the Hindu Vesara Style pyramids. In this chapter, I will select specific pieces from these civilizations and explain their influence and significance for *Sobremesa*.

The Teotihuacan tripod vessels can be found in a wide range of size, color, and surface treatments. These vessels can be described as bowls or cylinders that are standing with three feet attached to the bottom of the container (Figure 1). I am interested in the

elevated presentation of Teotihuacan forms, and also, in the incised paintings on their surfaces. The feet frequently were decorated in a way that expanded to the entire structure of the object. Its designs often mimicked lines and shapes found on the drawings of the cylinder. I am interested in the relationship between the form of the ceramic object with its surface treatment and designs.



Figure 1 – *Tripod Vessel*, 300–600 C.E., Mexico. Teotihuacán culture. Earthenware, stucco, and pigment.



Figure 2 - *Tripod Vessel*, 4th-5th centuries. Mexico, Mesoamerica, Teotihuacán. Ceramic and red ochre.

The surface designs of both *Tripod Vessels* (Figures 1-2) repeat unique shapes that, through their reiteration, create a dynamic, compelling composition that wraps around the vessel. The use of line, repetition, and curvilinear, soft edges gives the iconography a boldness that catches the viewer's attention and moves their eyes around the piece. My use of carved lines and designs in the surface decoration of *Sobremesa* was inspired by these vessels. The feet of the tripod vessels also inspired me to find a way to unify the foot with the overall shape, the structure, and the continuous designs of each piece in the different sets.

The ancient Mayan civilization's approach to serving vessels influenced the way I approached the idea of making sets. The Mayas produced specific utilitarian ceramic vessels that honored and commemorated certain foods and beverages. The word "cacao" had its own Mayan glyph that would appear in drinking, serving, and storing vessels (Anderson). The way the Mayas specifically created vessels for a certain type of food,

such as chocolate, inspired me to take the same approach for my sets as a whole and as individual pieces.

The elevated foot of the *Tripod Vessels* and the curvilinear fluid line found in the Mayan glyphs inspired several visual aspects of *Sobremesa*. The elevation of sets through the use of stands, trays, and tripod feet is inspired by the elevated foot of the *Tripod Vessels* and can be seen referenced in *Cocoa Set*. The curvilinear fluid designs found in the Mayan glyphs inspired a similar line quality in the designs and shapes that are drawn onto clay in *Sobremesa*.



Figure 4 - *Lidded Tripod Cylinder Vessel with Head of Cacao Deity*, Guatemala, Petén, Naranjo or vicinity, Maya, Early 5th Century C.E. Ceramic. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

This ceramic vessel was made with the purpose of storing cocoa beans (Figure 4). The knob of the lid is a modeled head of the Mayan cacao deity. The carvings and symbols

in these Mayan vessels have a linear, illustrative quality that is expressive and highly graphic. The drawings give the pot a unique skin that tells its own story. I enjoy how these symbols also allow for different colors to be used in order to separate each symbol from each other. Similar to the Mayan *Cylinder Vessel*, each piece in *Sobremesa* is made with a specific purpose and use. The lines and carvings also serve as illustration that demark color blocking guidelines.



Figure 5 - *Yoke-Form Vessel*. Mid 4th-Mid 5th centuries C.E. Guatemala, Mesoamerica, Maya. Ceramic.

The unique dynamic form of the Mayan vessels motivated me to create pieces that engaged space both horizontally and vertically. The way the *Yoke-Form Vessel* engages the space inspired me to use stands, and to add lift to my pieces with eccentric foot treatments, in order to create similarly interesting forms (Figure 5). The use of

earthenware and red clay in both the Teotihuacan and Mayan cultures also inspired me to use the same material, which ended up being beneficial in my application of bright colored glazes due to its warm tone and background.



Figure 6 – *Bowl Scorpions*. A.D. 950-1150 C.E. Mogollon (Mimbres). New Mexico, United States.

The Mimbres pottery from southern New Mexico is well known for its use of geometric patterns and figures that are both representational and decorative (Figure 6). The attention to detail, use of line, repetition, symmetry, and the variation of geometric shapes create a complex, graphic, and engaging composition that pulls the viewer in to decipher what the drawings are depicting. The designs that the Mimbres used for their surface decorations inspire the forms and cutout shapes of my own vessels.



Figure 7 – *Papanatha Temple*, Pattadakal, Karnataka, India. Hindu. 7th – 8th centuries C.E.

Finally, the Vesara style pyramids and temples inspired the use of platforms and different levels in my work. The *Papanatha Temple* specifically was influential in the creation of pieces that had both horizontal and vertical interest in the composition of the set (Figure 7). I was also interested in the contour line that the shape of these temples created, as I tried to mimic these shapes in the drawings and forms of my vessels. The overall silhouette created by the pieces of the *Cocoa Set* was inspired by the form of the *Papanatha Temple*. I was interested in the horizontal and vertical interest and I wanted to mimic the tower form in a way that it could be used for storage of smaller pieces.

CHAPTER 4

Epifania

“Manifestación, aparición, o revelación” (Real Academia Española)

“Manifestation, appearance, or revelation“

I grew up in a bright tropical place, a culture of vibrant color and laughter. I am from Maracaibo, the warmest city in the country, a forever summer, an oil boomtown, a place where there was always something to do. The Maracucho stereotype is a loud, energetic and carefree person. While I know that the stereotype does not apply to everyone, I have lived and experienced the warm feeling of growing up in such a unique and beautiful place full of lively people. I fondly remember my home and I hold these memories of a colorful city in my heart.

Venezuela is not the same place it was when I used to live there, a lot has changed; however, the resilience of Venezuelans inspires me and fills me with pride. I am proud of the beauty of Maracaibo and I feel this desire to create art that celebrates this part of me. When I think of home, I think of bright colors: I remember our national tree, the Araguaney with its beaming yellow leaves. I see our national flower, the orchid, our “may flower” with its deep-purple petals. The polychromatic streets of El Saladillo, where there is every color of the rainbow painted on the facets of people’s homes (Figure 8).



Figure 8 – *El Saladillo*, Maracaibo, Zulia, Venezuela. Built c. 1774.

In the state Zulia, our crafts also had these lively colors. The beautiful woven hammocks known as Chinchorros, where I would swing as a kid, or the indigenous Wayuu dresses known as Manta Guajira, with beautifully handcrafted designs (Figure 10) (Figure 9). These remind me of the Venezuelan and Marabino culture and tradition, and they speak to who I am as a person. Once I got to University, I became an Art Teacher for 3rd through 6th grade children at the University Museum. The time I spent working with children has made me appreciate the colors of my childhood.

Wanting for my clay work to be honest and feel intimate, I knew that a rich and vivid color palette would allow me to celebrate the playful colors of my youth in Venezuela. I decided to balance the brightness of these colors with neutral tones, finding a balance between my childlike joy and my more mature side. I also believe that the combination of bright colors, and the variation of saturation of color, can create a lively composition that demarks and brings individuality to each different shape and design that is drawn onto the clay.

In *Sake Set*, there are five colors that make up the whole set. Blue and emerald are bright saturated colors that can be found in the crafts and streets of Maracaibo. These saturated colors are balanced with neutral tones such as the cream, grey and pink. Warmer colors can be found in *Sushi Set*, such as yellow, orange, red, teal and light green.



Figure 9 – Manta Guajira.



Figure 10 – Chinchorros.

Knowing I desired a rich and vivid color palette and that I wanted to implement the use of bold shapes in *Sobremesa*, I decided to look deeper into artists who were known for their use of abstracted shapes, line, and color. The following contemporary artists were fundamental sources of inspiration during the sketching portion of my process: Carlos Cruz-Diez, Elizabeth Murray, and Betty Woodman.

But I also looked to the Venezuelan visual culture for inspiration. In the 1940s, Venezuela had several changes in their society that pushed forward art movements such as geometric abstraction and kinetic art. In 1945, a military coup established a new government that found financial welfare, allowing for the modernization of the country.

With modernization came a focus in the fine arts, specially kinetic art and abstraction (Martinez, 322). Artists like Carlos Cruz-Diez were extremely influential in not only the kinetic art movement, but also in the beautification of big Venezuelan cities.

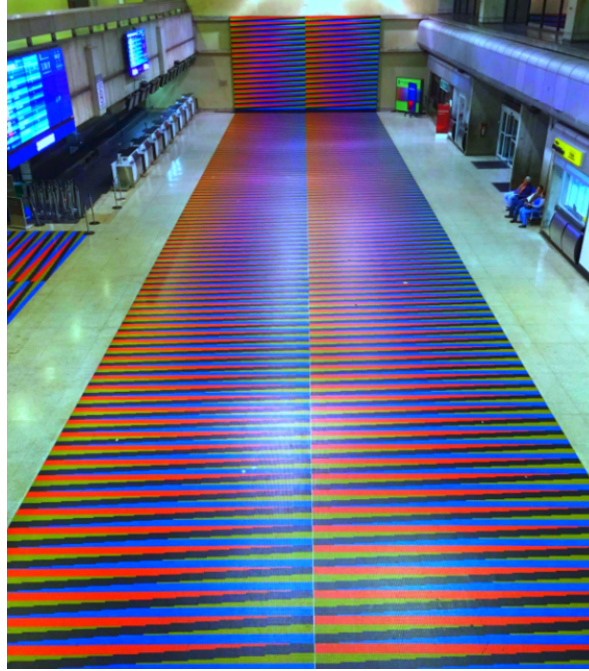


Figure 11 – Carlos Cruz-Diez. *Cromointerferencia de Color Aditivo*. Aeropuerto de Maiquetia. Caracas, Venezuela. Installed in 1978.

The Simon Bolivar International Airport is the place where a lot of Venezuelans will say goodbye to their families as they embark on a journey abroad. The bright colors of this mosaic by Carlos Cruz-Diez are symbolic of the tricolor Venezuelan flag, and it evokes a sense of belonging and nostalgia as people are migrating, not knowing when they might be able to see those beautiful colors again (Figure 11). This reflects on how color is truly a part of the beauty of Venezuela, the appreciation of simple geometric shapes that are exalted with bright vibrant tints and hues is characteristic of our identity. I also find it moving and inspiring that this expression of geometric forms and color is

something that people can interact with directly. All kinds of people, including those who are not actively engaged in the art scene, will get to experience this colorful mosaic as they enter the airport. I find this type of art installation a good outlet to engage everyday people in art. This communal aspect of Diez's work is similar to pottery's way to engage people through utility. I like the idea of art becoming a day-to-day experience for everyone and not just for the elite and formally educated.

Contemporary painter Elizabeth Murray once said "I paint about the things that surround me: things that I pick up and handle every day. That's what art is. Art is an epiphany in a coffee cup." (Murray) I utilize that as finding the beautiful things we see everyday and through our own personal lense we transform them into something beautiful that is expressive, bold, and invasive with cheerfulness. I see all of these things in Murray's work and I have paid close attention to her use of negative space. Moreover, Murray's sculpral approach to a medium that is relatively flat inspired me to use a bolder sculptural approach to pottery. All my objects are built in a non-traditional way, with forms and shapes that are usually not found in platters, coffee pots, etc. The idea of the classical formal presentation of a meal is changed with a composition that tries to create an energetic and unique presentation for food and drinks. Murray's cartoonish drawing style and shapes inspire my own, trying to find my individual language instead of replicating, while making them suitable containers for utility (Figure 12).



Figure 12 - Elizabeth Murray, *Everybody Knows*, 2007, oil on canvas, 87" x 93"
© 2019

I consider Betty Woodman to be the biggest source of inspiration to find a way in which I can translate my thoughts into clay. Betty Woodman's innovative, Cubist, and eclectic approach to ceramics has influenced my abstract sculptural approach to functional objects, the painterly approach to a clay medium, and my way of presenting and installing the work in *Sobremesa*. Woodman's influences range vastly: persian vases, wallpapers, japanese prints, and baroque architecture. Woodman found a balance where the aspects that she loved about pottery could be seen in a sculptural and painterly way. Pottery influenced Woodman's sculpture through the finish of majolica and the forms found in ceramic vessels such as vases, cups, and pitchers. Woodman was moved by the way glazes interacted with the volume of a form and the different types of surface approach.



Figure 13 – Betty Woodman, *House of the South*, 20½ ft. (6.23 m) glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint, 1996. Installation from “The Art of Betty Woodman,” April 25–July 30, 2006, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, California.

Woodman would hang her pieces and play with the negative space they created (Figure 13). This also inspired me to include hanging sets in my show and to use other materials such as wood to allow for the installation to be created. Thanks to Woodman’s innovative mind I was able to come up with the idea of creating a wooden shape inspired by the drawings in *Sobremesa* that could be beautiful on its own but also facilitate the hanging of the pieces. This piece of wood will remain as decorative piece while the pottery is being used. I credit this to Woodman’s flexibility with the way in which she used the material, by being open to the use of other media to best express her ideas of abstraction and patterning.

CHAPTER 5

Desenlace

“*Acción y efecto de desenlazar*” (Real Academia Española)

“Action and effect to end”

My relationship with ceramics is complicated, yet it has expanded my perspective on viewing and interacting with everyday objects and spaces. Through this process of building a consistent body of work during the last two semesters of my undergraduate career, I have stumbled across many different challenges that have allowed me to find better ways for me to engage in mindful introspection and careful planning.

Two semester ago, my entire work from one semester was cracking between firing stages: I was still learning how to successfully hand-build pots that would stand on their own, or that safely could be hung. This technical learning curve is something we all go through, and extensively and arduously working on achieving my goal of making five sets advanced my hand-building skills in ways I never could have imagined.

Historic and contemporary influences that guided the creation of *Sobremesa* have not only inspired visual aspects of my work, but the way I view ceramics, its rich history, and the ways visual culture in these civilizations lived and functioned. Research reinforced my passion and love for pottery and emphasized its relevance in our world, and in art and art history.

As a maker, I have witnessed many artists face situations in which they feel challenged or scared about committing to a body of work or to a specific medium. The

expectation to create a consistent thesis showed me that the fear of an idea “not being good enough” kept me from exploring it.

As a beginner, touching clay was revitalizing and fun. But as the years passed, my relationship with the medium evolved into not only my favorite way of creative expression, but also into a deep curiosity and interest in the conceptual potential of pottery. Utilitarian objects create a two-way experience between maker and user: the user utilizes these pots as vessels to commemorate special moments and nourishment, while the maker hand-crafts these ceramic objects as a way of artistic expression. What we use, what we wear, and what we like are ways we build our own ideas of who we are, who we identify as, and how our personalities could be described. The pots we like are also a part of how we express our tastes and our interests.

The time spent in the studio and doing research for *Sobremesa* has reinforced the desire and pride I have to be a potter. It’s an honor to showcase a body of work that reminds people that in a world so saturated with new information, we can find comfort and beauty in everyday objects. The uniqueness of a utilitarian vessel facilitates a special and comforting way of performing an activity that everyone in this world engages with in order to survive: nourishment.

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PHOTOGRAPHS



Charcuterie Board. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Pitcher. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Bowl. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Coffee Set. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.

x



Coffee Pot and Mugs. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Coffee Pot. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Creamer. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Sugar Jar. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Cocoa Set. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Hot Chocolate Pot. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Small Jar. Red Earthenware, cone 04, wheel thrown and altered.



Small Bowl. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Vase. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Mug. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Mug. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Sushi Set. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



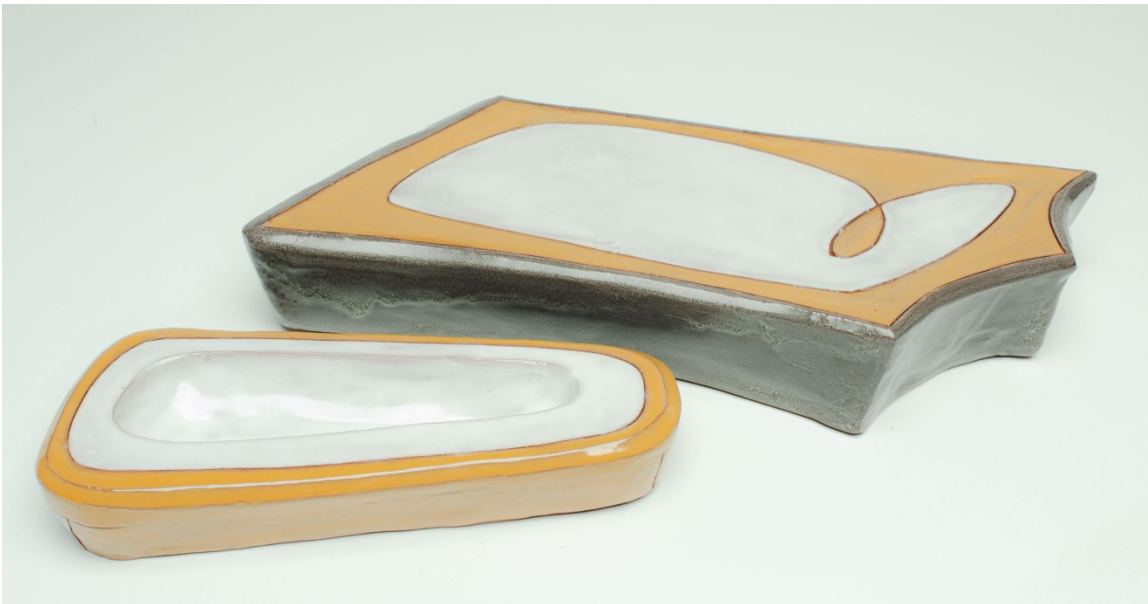
Sauce Dispenser. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



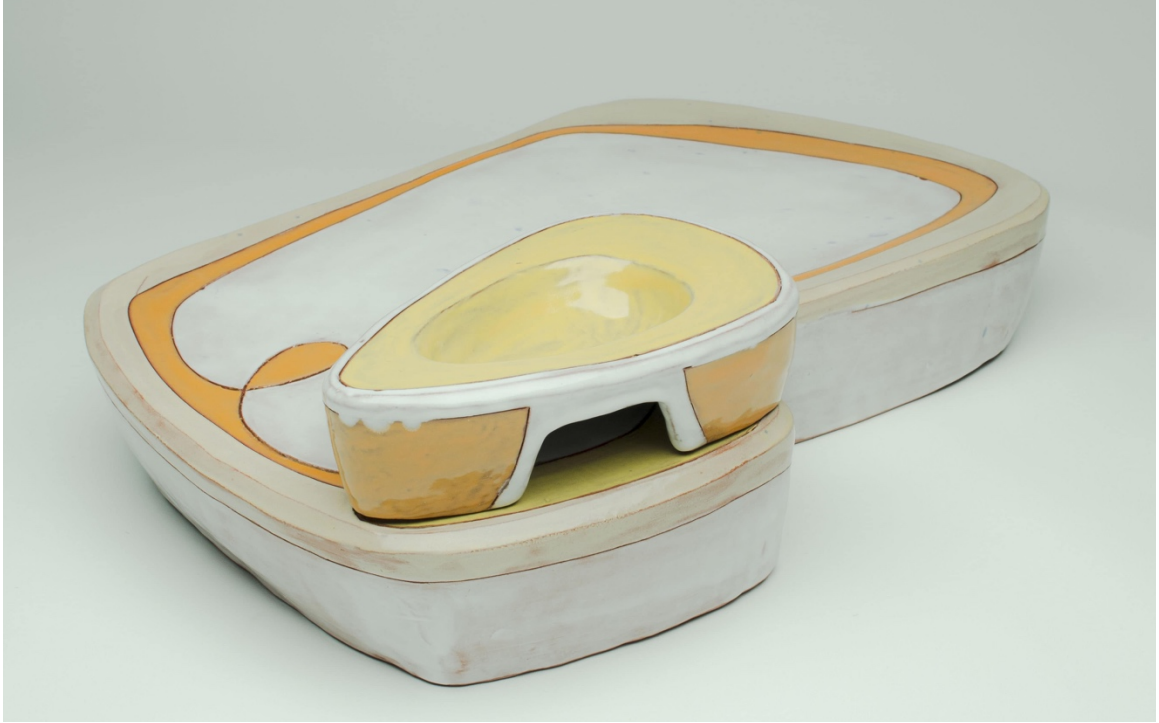
Sushi Plates, Sauce Bowls, and Sauce Dispenser. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



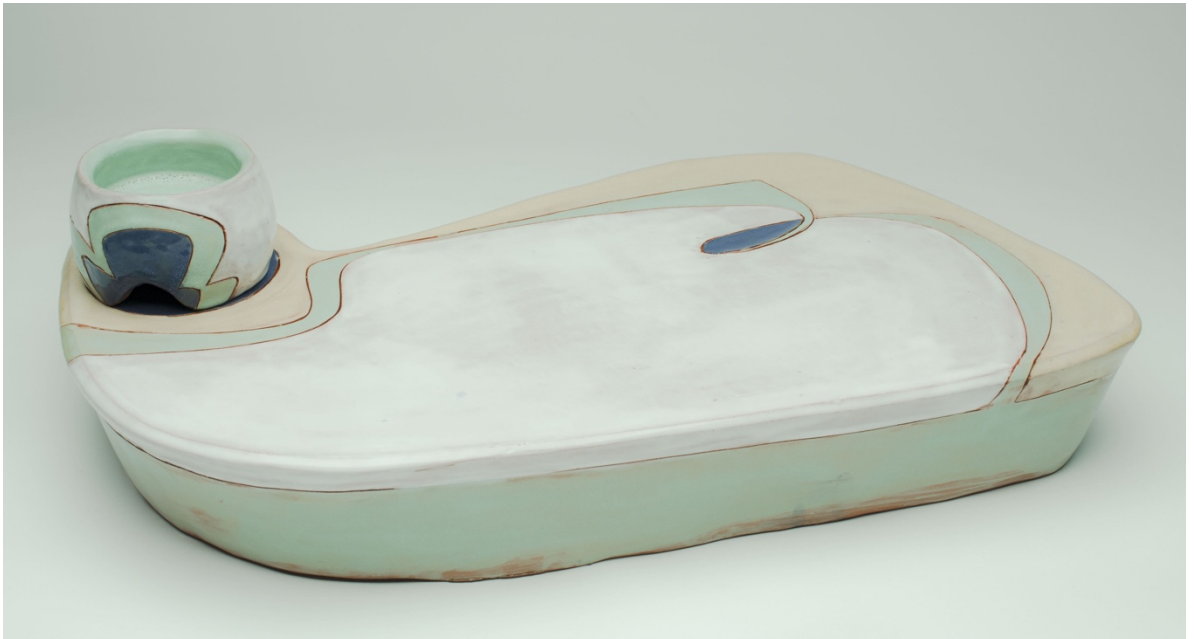
Red Sushi Plate and Sauce Bowl. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Orange Sushi Plate and Sauce Bowl. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Sushi Boat and Small Bowl. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Sushi Boat and Small Bowl. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Sake Set. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Tray. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.



Bottle. Red Earthenware, cone 04, hand-built.

ADDENDUM: Technical Details

The work in *Sobremesa* was glazed with a combination of both commercial glazes and my own formulated cone 04 glaze with variation of colors through the use of oxides. All the work was both bisque and glaze fired to cone 04 in electric kilns with an oxidation atmosphere. The clay utilized for the entirety of the pieces was a cone 04 earthenware recipe from Pete Pinnell.

Glazes and clay recipes are listed below.

Pete Pinnell's Earthenware: Cone 04 oxidation

60 – Red Art

30 – OM4

10 – Wollastonite

2% – Kyanite 100 mesh

2% – Grog 35-48 mesh

List of Commercial Glazes:

- Duncan Envision Glazes: IN 1062 Light Kiwi
- Duncan Envision Glazes: IN 1053 Harvest
- Duncan Envision Glazes: IN 1006 Tearose
- Duncan Envision Glazes: IN 1781 Pumpkin Orange
- Duncan Envision Glazes: IN 1116 Emerald Bay
- Duncan Envision Glazes: IN 1008 Antique Mauve
- Duncan Envision Glazes: IN 1073 Strawberry

Rosa's Glossy Friend Base: Cone 04 oxidation

40% – Gerstley Borate

40% – Frit 3195

20% – Flint

Rosa's Grey and Green

7% – Rutile

3% – Red Iron Oxide

1% – Chrome Oxide

Rosa's Blue

10% – Zircopax

3% – Copper Carbonate

.5% – Cobalt Carbonate

Rosa's Teal

10% – Zircopax

7% – Rutile

.3% – Copper Carbonate

Rosa's Cream

7% – Rutile

Rosa's Buttery White

10% – Zircopax