Form and Surface Narrative

Porcelain and politics in the twenty-first century

A project submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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February 2016

Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the dissertation/project is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics, procedures, and guidelines have been followed.

Marianne Huhn

27th February 2016

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Abstract

This practice-led research project explores the relationship between porcelain and politics. It does this by examining selected historical and contemporary pots that convey a political message and the visual language of surface decoration. The outcome of the research is an exhibition of porcelain forms with surface narratives exploring Australian politics during the research period: 2012 to 2016.

Decorative functional ceramics may not be immediately associated with the creation and legitimisation of a culture and its political position. It may also seem fanciful to use three-dimensional forms to directly manipulate and promote a leader or redefine a nation. Borrowing historical decorative patterns to comment on contemporary political decisions may appear unusual. However, with this research, I investigate selected political ceramics from the beginning of the twentieth century and contemporary ceramics and focus on how surface imagery is used as an instrument of political promotion and personal commentary.

Stories that unfold around the surfaces of three-dimensional forms occupy a genre that is now commonly referred to as 'narrative ceramics': pots that tell a story. Mark-making is one of the unique ways people have shaped and sought to understand their world. Paintings and stories on ancient ceramics have revealed much of our knowledge of the past and the cultures that created them. For example, the black and red figure painted vases of Classical Greece (Ostermann 2006, 13)[1].

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[1] The Greek painted pottery produced from 700 BC-300 BC were characterised by black figuration on a red ground. 'Battles, races and processions were favourite subjects. To these, as competency increased, were added more particular incidents from mythology, drunken revels, and quieter scenes from domestic life' (Cook 1972, 277).

My relationship with political porcelain objects was formed as an undergraduate art student in the 1980s. I was curious how Russian revolutionary pots made during the early twentieth century incorporated modern designs and political energy with traditional decorations on their surfaces. As such, I became interested in the contrast between what past cultures had integrated onto ceramic forms and the surface narratives of functional ceramics in the twenty-first century.

In Russia, from 1917, the Bolshevik Party utilised porcelain forms from the Imperial Porcelain Factory in St Petersburg to promote their new regime. My interest lies in how artists were enlisted to create messages of propaganda, by adopting traditional symbols and patterns with phrases and images of the modern environment.

In twenty-first century Western democracies ceramic artists, such as Stephen Dixon, Stephen Bowers and Gerry Wedd, articulate personal and political narratives. Using functional and non-functional forms contemporary ceramic artists decorate surfaces with historic symbols and visual metaphors to observe and comment on twenty-first century political decisions and concerns.

The primary focus of this research project was to respond to the political machinations of Australian politics as observed during the period of the research candidacy, by creating functional porcelain objects that utilised images and text on the surfaces. As a consequence, works developed for this project use text from contemporary phrases of the Australian Trade Union movement, and sound bites taken from the slogans and speeches of Australian politicians. Informed by the research, I adopted a range of images that included farm and mining machinery, industrial buildings and barbed wire to replace traditional decorative patterns.

A number of political issues are prominent in this project. Amongst them were: communication and the National Broadband Network, refugees arriving by boat to Australia, and the broader issue of Australian governance.

By using functional forms to carry visual images of the Australian political landscape, the project aimed to advance the link between Australian politics and functional porcelain, establishing a space for our personal lives to engage with the politics that surround us.

Introduction

The creation and legitimisation of a culture and its political position is not immediately associated with decorative functional ceramics. It may seem fanciful to use three-dimensional forms to directly manipulate people's views and promote a leader or redefine a nation. However, throughout history, the surfaces of a variety of decorative objects have carried visual narratives to promote power and political positions. Understanding how this has been achieved frames this dissertation.

Three questions propelled my research project:

How can an investigation of selected historical narrative ceramics inform the development of a new body of ceramics that reflect aspects of twenty-first century Australian politics?

In what way can drawn images on the surface of three-dimensional ceramic forms convey political ideas?

In what way can form and surface imagery be combined in the construction of a political narrative?

Functional narrative ceramics, a genus of craft, formed the basis and starting point for my artwork and research. Bowls, cups, jugs, teapots, and plates are forms with an intended domestic use. Narrative is defined by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* as 'a tale or story' (Sykes 1985, 673). An account of events or experiences, whether true or fictitious can therefore be represented through both language and images. For the purposes of this research I confined my discussion to the role visual, pictorial narratives might play on the surfaces of objects. As author James Fentress notes, a story can be 'a natural container for memory...a way of sequencing a set of images...a way of ordering our

knowledge' (Fentress and Whickham, 1992, p. 50). On the other hand, a narrative can bring together disparate elements and be open to interpretation. Ceramic forms that use visual narratives extend their functional role as vessels and tell us about the world we live in.

Political conditions can determine the role that ceramics play within society. For instance, when the exercise of control over a nation or society is paramount (such as autocratic rule), the surface decoration on ceramics is utilised by rulers and dictators for propaganda purposes or aimed at promoting supremacy (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 14). Surface narratives can also carry a royal family or government's status or seal, confirming authority and political position. For example, the Commemorative ware of the British Royal families have existed since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603), memorialising births, weddings, anniversaries, coronations, jubilees, deaths and visits. These ceramic forms skilfully utilised the functional requirements of consumption, while promoting and highlighting the reign and supremacy of royalty through the decorations on the surfaces. These types of forms continue to be marketed as diplomatic currency and as demonstrations of wealth and achievements both to the populace and abroad. The surfaces of these forms 'are intended to reflect a sense of dignity and reverence' (Clark, 1990, p. 66), parading portraits and silhouettes, busts of the king or queen, royal coats of arms, dragons, national flowers, armour, and decorative initials.

As an example, objects also served a purpose for Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) following the French Revolution (1789–1799) when France shifted from feudal reign to civil rights. When Bonaparte came to power in 1799 he 'fostered relationships with leading intellectuals and artists in order to promote his reputation and popularize his image' (Hanley, 2005), and used the deployment of the smallest coins to grand ceramic sets to promote his representation of history. By manipulating the surface decoration of familiar forms, such as

coinage and ceramics within French society, Napoleon formulated his story of victory and triumph. Presentation vases (designed to be overwhelming and impressive by their size) narrated stories commemorating military victories. Cameo portraits of Napoleon and his marshals adorned tableware that was produced for the palaces and homes of French aristocrats (Coutts, 2001).

However, in a democratic environment, personal expression and engagement with authority has greater freedom. Individual artists are able to communicate private concerns without fear of retribution. Ceramic forms and their surface narratives are less controlled by governments, mirroring the society and its regard for choice and freedom of expression. Thus, contemporary ceramic artists are able to discuss and comment on political situations of the twenty-first century through their artworks, without fear of government interference.

My relationship with political porcelain objects was formed as an undergraduate art student in the 1980s. I was curious how Russian revolutionary pots made during the early twentieth century incorporated modern designs and political energy with traditional decorations on their surfaces. As such, I became interested in the contrast between what past cultures had integrated onto ceramic forms and the surface narratives of functional ceramics in the twenty-first century.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters and explores how selected ceramics, through their durableness of form and surface imagery, record and comment on political histories.

The first chapter of the dissertation examines the surface decorations of porcelain produced at the State Porcelain Factory in St Petersburg as Russia changed from feudal reign to communism. Following the Russian revolution of 1917, the Bolshevik Party utilised ceramics as part of their propaganda campaign. Surface narratives on traditional porcelain forms became promotional

tools in the dissemination of communist ideals to the Russian nation and the world. Surface imagery was appropriated from a familiar language of folk and religious images and decorations in the construction of a political narrative. The work of three artists are discussed within this context. Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya, Sergei Chekhonin, and Mikhail Adamovich cleverly combined traditional graphic symbols and styles that were familiar to the Russian community with controlled images and dictatorial political messages. The State Porcelain Factory included artists who worked with the modern art movements of the time, such as the geometric abstraction of Suprematism and Constructivism. However, my dissertation will be confined to the artists which adopted traditional Russian motifs and styles to create propaganda.

The second chapter of the dissertation explores how two contemporary Australian ceramic artists, Gerry Wedd and Stephen Bowers, respond and borrow familiar decorative patterns and motifs, and how British artist Stephen Dixon, comments on the political and cultural concerns of the twenty-first century. In the work of these artists, an attempt is made to create order out of chaos as the lived experience of unfolding political events is articulated using symbols to tell stories. The visual representation of political ideas and thoughts is achieved by artists Gerry Wedd and Stephen Bowers through their adoption of familiar patterns, such as the willow pattern, to create irony within political narratives. Stephen Dixon references images, such as an historical image of a Roman soldier, to comment metaphorically on political decisions in the twenty-first century.

Following this, I discuss the ceramic works created during this research project, communicating political narratives that reflect personal ideas concerning Australian politics, which occurred during 2012 and 2016, the duration of this PhD. My investigation of the surface decoration of Russian revolutionary ceramics and selected contemporary ceramic artists informed my creative

research. The primary aim of the research project was to create a new series of functional ceramics that express a personal view of selected Australian political events, giving permanency to the issues that impact our lives. My political convictions informed the text and surface imagery which developed on the surfaces. Words and phrases used by the Australian Trade Union movement and sound bites taken from the slogans and speeches of Australian politicians became prominent in my decision to portray a personal viewpoint. A further aim of the project was to develop a visual language that referenced Australian culture and politics.

The porcelain works produced as a result of this investigation continue the role of ceramics in documenting, recording, and interpreting political history. These works explore how text, visual narratives, and ceramic objects can be combined to provide commentary and discourse about contemporary Australian politics.

Chapter One: Historical context/political power

Historical background

Narrative ceramics have been produced throughout history in a number of cultures. However, I chose to focus my own investigation on Russian revolutionary porcelain created between 1917 and 1927 at the Imperial Porcelain Factory in St Petersburg. Historically, ceramics produced at the factory had a physical function to contain and a symbolic function, through its surface imagery, to carry praise and status of the Imperial hierarchy.

Following the Russian revolutions, the symbolic function of ceramics became focused on the people and Communism. The Imperial Porcelain Factory was renamed The State Porcelain Factory and images on the surfaces of functional ceramics heralded ideas of equality and socialism. My interest lies in the political situation and how ceramic functional forms, reflected through surface imagery, the changes in society.

The Imperial Porcelain Factory was founded in 1744 under the order of Empress Elizabeth (1709–1762) daughter of Peter the Great (1672–1725). The factory existed and produced ceramics for the imperial family in Petrograd (St Petersburg), the house of Romanov and the Russian Imperial Court (Agarkova and Petrova, 1994, p. 8). Throughout its history the factory produced ware to be used in the homes of wealthy lords, nobles, and tsars with replacement pieces for existing services; and vases and figurines, which were often used as gifts to visitors and members of the imperial court. Russian visual and material culture were used as vehicles for promoting, authenticating and celebrating the Romanov's identity.

The Romanov Imperial Dynasty reigned over Russia from 1613 until 1917. Exploitation of the common people and social inequality was deemed necessary to retain the tsars' authority. Serfdom and autocratic rule flourished during the Romanov's reign. Theodore Weeks, Professor of History at Southern Illinios

University, defines serfdom as 'a form of free labour where peasants are not free to move and must give up a significant part of their labour and/or produce to the landowner' (Weeks, 2011, p. 19). The change in Russian leadership, from monocratic rule to communism began with growing opposition to Tsar Nicholas II (1868–1918), the last of the Russian tsars.

During the mid-nineteenth century, thinkers, such as Henri de Saint Simone (1760–1825) and Karl Marx (1818–1883) developed the concept of socialism where the people or citizens, rather than aristocrats or religious authorities, would regulate wealth and property (Mesch, 2013). In 1861, Nicholas II abolished serfdom in Russia, resulting in a mass exodus of workers to the cities. This created both a profusion and exploitation of labour in the factories and workplaces; thus, poverty ensued and political and social unrest resulted in strikes and demonstrations that eventuated with the revolution of 1905. Following the second Russian revolution in February 1917, Tsar Nicholas II abdicated his throne. The October Revolution of 1917 resulted in Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), with Leon Trotsky (1879–1940) of the Bolshevik Party, forming the new government of Russia. This new governance eventually became Russian communism and was based on Marxist theory of a classless society and equal distribution of wealth and land. The Russian communists believed in the right of the working class to create rules and for these decisions to affect economic change.

Vladimir Lenin announced the nationalisation of Russia's factories in 1918 and a 'peoples' system of administration was established. Toleration of experimentation in the arts existed amongst the Bolshevik Party, primarily through the influence of Anatoly Lunacharsky (1875–1933). Lenin appointed Lunacharsky head of the Peoples Commissariat for Enlightenment (Narkompros), which governed education, theatres and the arts. He was 'a long time party

member recognized for his cultural enthusiasms and already well connected to Russian literary circles'(Wardropper et al.1992, 11).

The Imperial Porcelain Factory was witness to the resulting upheavals and chaos that resulted in the cities and towns following the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. Not immune to the changes that surrounded the imperial family and its demise, it became obvious that production was no longer required for the imperial court. However, workers at the factory continued to work as a collective and the Imperial Porcelain Factory was renamed the State Porcelain Factory in 1917.[2]

The storerooms of the Imperial Porcelain Factory contained an astounding resource for the Bolshevik leaders. During the imperial reign over the factory, blanks of porcelain had been made and stored due to:

> ...the practice of producing a certain number of articles in advance; dinner services, platters, plates, jugs, teapots, cups and saucers, up to the 'biscuit', or unglazed stage. These were stamped with the monogram of the reigning Czar and the current year, then stored away until an order came through from the imperial household for a service or gifts for distinguished visitors. The required items would then be painted, glazed and fired (Lobanov-Rostovsky 1990, 17).

The stored ceramic forms of the once Imperial Porcelain Factory became documents of the Bolshevik revolution through the artists that were appointed to produce agitational propaganda on the ware. Propaganda attempts to convince people for a particular purpose. In the most neutral sense, propaganda means to disseminate or promote particular ideas (Welch 2012, 2). Historian and author, Robert Williams in *Artists in Revolution* (1997) writes, 'agitation meant that art should

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[2] The factory was renamed the Lomonosov Porcelain Factory in 1925 on the 200th anniversary of the Russian Academy of Science, of which Mikhail Lomonosov was the first member (Agarkova & Petrova 1994, 114).

call forth action on the part of the viewer or listener; the viewers response was an essential part of the work. In the context of the early Soviet period, agitation was the means by which art ceased to serve the bourgeois market and began to serve the masses' (Williams 1977, 15). The first assignment of the factory was to support a campaign for literacy. Narkompros was tasked to eradicate illiteracy amongst the vast population of Russia. Porcelain plates were 'probably distributed and displayed like propaganda posters' (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 12). Next, the political authority of the Bolsheviks was established to assert its power and gain control of the entire country.

Artists who were familiar with designing and working with ceramics were appointed leading roles in the newly formed institutions, such as Sergei Chekhonin (1878–1936) who became 'head of the Artistic Section of the State Porcelain factory in 1917' (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 34). This enabled him to invite artists with 'graphic finesse, decorative sensibility and illustrative function' (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 40), many of whom were working outside the field of ceramics. The remarkable and inventive revolutionary porcelain was mainly designed by artists who worked as graphic designers, painters, stage and set designers, and book illustrators.

However, due to limited production, the ceramics were never sold or used by the public. They were displayed in shop windows to promote the new government, and as the porcelain artist Elena Danko (1898–1942) describes:

> Anyone who remembers the Petrograd of those years — the jagged wilderness of its highways and its deserted houses plunged into darkness and cold, their windows spikily starred with the traces of recent bullets — will remember too, the window display of china on 25th Oktober Prospekt. There on dazzling white plates, red stars glittered, the hammer and sickle shone with the dull gleam of golden porcelain, and fabulous flowers were

plaited into the monograms of the RSFSR...this china was a message from a beautiful future (Shinn 1992, 11).

These porcelain plates were never used in the homes of the Russian proletariats. The majority of the propaganda ceramics produced for the Bolshevik Party were instead sold for 'revenue producing export' (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 24).

Lenin's Plan of Monumental Propaganda in 1918 attempted to politicise all art forms in order to destroy the presence of the former tsars in the domestic and urban environment. During 1918, 66 monuments were erected in the promotion of communism. They were constructed '...of plywood and plaster of Paris, as the old granite and bronze monuments were being torn down' (Bodsky 1987, 77). A material legacy of Bolshevik ideology was constructed through festival decorations for cities; streets were re-named, while trains and boats were decorated with agitational propaganda. Theatre productions, posters and films also promoted the new regime. Common images and symbols of the old regime, such as the Romanov's Coat of Arms, were replaced with images of:

> ...the (usually rising) sun; the globe; the banner; the hammer and sickle; the five pointed star; the conflagration of world revolution; ... the red knight... Lenin's light bulb-representing electrification; the human hand in various gestures: pointing, summoning, clenched and giving; marching; smoking chimneys; the steam locomotive – symbols of urbanization, industrialization and progression (Taylor 2004, 83).

The images and compositional designs urgently heralded the Bolshevik's political ideals. However, the propaganda porcelain produced between 1919 and 1923 adapted some of Russia's traditional styles of decoration such as folk and religious imagery to create an emotive connection between the past and the present. The ornate borders and central motifs of imperial porcelain were incorporated into new designs proclaiming political messages. Perspectives from

differing angles and scattered text, both components of religious iconography,[3] and the popular Lubok[4] were two more of the visual devices referenced in the designs of propaganda porcelain. The nostalgic use of such traditional visual devices could be seen as 'reassuring the viewer that such traditional patterns of life would continue under the new regime'(Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 59). This will be covered in the following chapters which discuss the work of Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya, Sergei Chekhonin, and Mikhail Adamovich, and images used to promote Bolshevik ideology.

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[3] The traditional religious icon was painted on a flat wooden panel, layered with stretched linen and held together with Gesso which is a mixture of white paint with a form of glue or plaster. The painted images were of religious, sacred persons, buildings of worship, events, and festivals from the Bible. Bold flat colours were utilised and the usual appearance of a person or saint was less important than its spiritual essence (Alaniz, 2010, pp. 11–15).

[4] The Lubok was traditionally a graphic print of a popular scene or narrative from a religious tale, event, festival or peasant song. From the eighteenth century engravers and printers executed the prints and they were distributed throughout the community similar to comics (Alaniz, 2010, pp. 18–22).

Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya

Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya (1892–1967) worked as an artist at the State Porcelain Factory between 1918 and 1923. Previously, between 1908 and 1915, she had studied 'with Nikolai Roerich and Ivan Bilibin[5] at the School of the Society for Encouragement of the Arts in St Petersburg'(Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 60).

Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's designs for surface decorations highlighted her fascination with Russia's past, adding to the connection between the old and the new. However, her fluidity of line work and compositional styles stem from her background in costume and theatre where she created set designs for many Russian operas.

Paintings and surface designs created by Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya were distinctive and characterised by her impartiality to any guidelines or rules of porcelain surface decoration. The porcelain plates and services planned by Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya are original in their use of space and colour, and distinctive through her fluid use of line. Brush strokes that are unmistakably bold and use of a vibrant colour palette adds to the palpable energy and movement on the imagery on her plates. Images stretch beyond the rims of cups and saucers and across the width of plates. Cups and saucers were often decorated as a united form with each rim or shape's edge melding into the other.

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[5] Both artists were involved with Sergei Diaghilev and his productions of the Ballet Russes (Bowlt, 1987, 28–45).

Figure 1
Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya (1892–1967)
Russia's grief
1921
State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, Russia
Porcelain, clear glaze, on glaze enamels
Approx. 25 cm diameter

Author Tamara Kudryavtseva (2004, 18) describes the technique of Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya:

> She fearlessly distorted and broke up perspective…crossing the boundaries of form. Amplified lubok figures are combined with elegantly drawn details. Her commissars, sailors, young ladies and peasant girls, captured in rapid brushstrokes, walk and dance, exchange caresses and hurry off who knows where, unconcerned by the limitations of the objects form.

Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's connection to the past is evident in a little known plate titled *Russia's grief* (1921) (Figure 1 [p 15]). The rim of which is decorated with painterly brown lines resembling a crown of thorns. At the centre of the plate, similar to the placement of a figure in an icon, is the large frowning face of a distressed woman. As Russian icons were seen to many believers as 'manifestations of the divine' (Alaniz, 2010, p. 13), this is an interesting composition. In the cusp of her hand, painted below her face is a collection of small people. To the left of the plate's rim is the woman's other hand, in its grip are sheaths of wheat. One side of the plate is decorated in green and an almost growing garden of flowers and leaves, while to the left of the woman's head is a small yellow vista 'conveying a feeling of protectiveness' (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 60). The yellow buildings and church towers appear glowing under a radiant, warm sunlight, while a light blue river runs through the middle of the scene. The theme of the plate is complicated and indirect. Does *Russia's grief*, by representing a woman's face surrounded by a crown of thorns, refer to Jesus as he carried the cross while wearing a crown of thorns? Does this symbol represent a Russia which mourns the passing and persecution of its religion? The presence of the church towers could express a concern of Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's. Communist leaders were not sympathetic to Christianity and ridiculed the church, deeming it spiritually suppressing and promoting subservience to the people. The dynamic nature of religious belief was adapted by the Communist Party to support its own causes (Tumarkin, 1981). For instance, the religious ritual of celebrating Saints and Holy Days was replaced with ceremonies and festivals that celebrated Communist Party leaders and the dates of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. Did Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya perceive the changes to Russian religious rituals and beliefs as national mutiny? Galina Agarkova, Russian author, and in 2003 artist at the State Porcelain Factory, observes (Petrova, 2003) that Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's strong

family ties with traditional Orthodox religion impacted her designs and hints to the conflict inherent in her working for the Bolsheviks:

> Brought up in a patriarchal orthodox family, she, in fact, gave a special place in her work to the deeply tragic picture of a past Russia, rigid in its silent expectation (Agarkova and Petrova, 1994, p. 112).

As Agarkova noted, Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's spontaneous compositions hint at an uncomfortable relationship with the outcomes of revolution. This corresponds to her infrequent adaption of new compositional techniques and her continuation of traditional Russian styles of representation and depictions of Russia of the past. The Russian Revolution resulted in systemic change and the concerns of those changes were made visible in Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's paintings on porcelain. Did Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya purposefully ignore the boundaries of form and create compositions that ran over the objects edge as a type of rebellion? It is this uncertainty, the inherent tension between the compositions and the objects that give Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's work its vibrancy.

Figure 2
Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya (1897–1967)
Bell ringer
1920

State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, Russia
Porcelain, clear glaze, on glaze enamels
Approx. 25 cm diameter

Another work designed by Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya is a plate titled *Bell ringer* (1920) (Figure 2 [p 18]), which heralds the celebratory words 'Long live the eight congress of the Soviets' (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 1990, p. 62). This plate depicts a woman in the centre, arms crossed in front of her, while her hands pull the strings attached to two large bells on either side of her figure. Images of foliage decorate the plate and two large wooden doors with complex patterning sit on each side of the plate. The contrast created between intricate patterning and broad-brush strokes was a component of her individual style. Bright colour dominates the surface, as the woman is dressed in yellow, the bells are black and the patterns surrounding her are green, gold and orange. The inclusion of

figures into the foreground of the work is in contrast to the traditional painting scenes on porcelain where figures are placed within a central frame of the shape. Her use of text, which translates as 'Long live the eighth congress of the Soviets', attempts to sit beside and around the chaotic composition. In formal decorative ware text was placed in an ordered and subdued fashion, following the plates circumference.

Figure 3
Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya (1892–1967)
History of the revolution 1917
1921
State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, Russia
Porcelain, clear glaze, on glaze enamels
Approx. 25 cm diameter

On a plate by Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya, titled *History of the revolution 1917* (1921) (Figure 3 [p 19]), the entire white surface is jumbled with dancing letters

of various sizes and colours, to spell the Russian words 'To all who are brave and young at heart (put) into their hands a Book, a Sickle and a Hammer (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 1990, p. 69). Author and collector Nina Lobanov-Rostovsky describes the origin of this phrase:

> The slogan comes from an old Russian saying which people used to utter when in the presence of a clever child, 'into his hands a book' (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 1990, p. 68).

Compared to previous works designed by Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya, this plate appears light and playful. The composition and placement of letters resemble a random pattern rather than words, in a style similar to a popular Lubok, where text was added to the narrative as a decorative device. The images in the centre of the plate are of four books painted yellow, red and blue, while the large hammer lays or floats behind in red and grey. The sickle, almost carelessly painted, runs around the inner rim of the plate, in gold and green.

Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's informal use of space and composition frames her approach. Russian revolutionary propaganda designs, which are controlled and graphic in style, can often appear rigid and structured. However, there is a playfulness offered to the ceramic form with Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's work due to her illustrative style and adaption of traditional compositions. Is it because of Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's lack of training in ceramics that her images run off the sides of forms and appear half seen? Or is it that Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's designs portrayed misgivings to the new communist regime, which she expressed through her flamboyant disregard for conventional porcelain decoration? The tension between her love of old Russia and her animosity of the Bolshevik Party can be seen in the face of the *Bell ringer* (Figure 2 [p 18]), who looks straight ahead, sturdy and defiant in her position within the composition. Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's designs of flora and fauna creeping into the compositions from the edges of the plate

History of the revolution 1917 (1921) (Figure 3 [p 19]) connote associations to traditional folk art. Rather than solely use new symbols of the Bolshevik revolution, such as the red star, Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's designs for the State Porcelain Factory also serve as reminders of Russia's past. As a consequence of these reminders, the tension in Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's designs are raw. That this work, revealing animosity, existed and survived within the context of Bolshevik propaganda campaigns could reflect the Factories earnestness to produce or the understanding that a broader group of Russians also harboured apprehensions.

In contrast, the next artist to be discussed supplied the State Porcelain Factory with designs which almost dutifully replicate the former Factories decorative porcelains.

Sergei Chekhonin

Sergei Chekhonin (1878–1936) 'began to work with porcelain from 1913' (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 34). His knowledge of the medium and its graphic decorative techniques supported the process of refashioning past styles into the creation of a new Soviet identity.

From 1902 he collaborated in the designs of the façade and the interior of the Hotel Metropole in Moscow and designed majolica panels for numerous buildings in Moscow (Leek, 2012, p. 266). He combined the skills of design with a mastery of materials, and established himself as an artist dedicated to the promotion of arts and crafts. In 1905, at the age of 37, Sergei Chekhonin participated in the workshops patronized by Princess Maria Tenisheva and held on her estate (Talashkino),[6] which operated from 1900 to 1905 to create large ceramic wall plaques (Salmond, 1997, p. 11). Heading furniture, embroidery and stitching workshops, eventually established Sergei Chekhonin as an advisor to Anatoly Lunacharsky (the first head of the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment) and chief artist at the State Porcelain Factory in 1918 (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 1990, p. 14). From 1918 a separate painting department was opened connecting the designers and some twenty-five artists to the factory

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[6] The traditions and institutions of traditional Russian crafts were in danger of disappearing as industrialisation in Russia took hold in the nineteenth century. Rural workers migrated to the cities, abandoning the environment where during the winter months traditional crafts were produced. At the same time as wealthy manufacturers and industrialists—the merchant millionaires—were observing the decline of traditional arts and crafts some were aiming to restore the situation, such as Princess Maria Tenisheva and Savva Mamontov (1841–1918), railway entrepreneur, industrialist and patron of the arts who established the Abramtsevo colony, to continue the traditions of rural art or peasant craft to 'seek their way back to a more authentic, subjective experience of Russian history, landscape and culture' (Salmond, 1997, 8).

(Kudryavtseva, 2004). Here, Chekhonin 'taught other painters how to apply an image using a continual brushstroke that followed the form of the object, and how to paint directly onto the surface' (Kudryavtseva, 2004, p. 18). Sergei Chekhonin was a remarkable draftsman, who before this appointment had often worked sporadically for political journals and book manufacturers, producing several children's books where he created his own font (Leek 2012, 266). Sergei Chekhonin gained 'the central position in the history of Soviet ceramics' (Elliot, 1986) by successfully combining identifiable Russian designs from traditional porcelain with his skill and stylistic line work as a draftsman/graphic designer.

Figure 4
Sergei Chekhonin (1878–1936)
Cubist design with hammer and sickle
1919
State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, Russia
Porcelain, clear glaze, on glaze enamels
Approx. 25 cm diameter

Sergei Chekhonin's distinctive graphic style at its best is evident in the plate titled *Cubist design with hammer and sickle* (1919) (Figure 4 [p 24]), which has been frequently replicated by painters at the factory since its creation. Sharp edged, geometric shapes decorate the border's edge, ranging in colour from red, black and yellow to light shades of blue. The white surface of the porcelain plate plays an active role in the plates composition. In the centre of the clear white space is an image of the hammer and sickle, in fine gold painted lines, which follows the contours of the plate. While in the space left above the sharp tip of the sickle lays a section of a cogwheel, depicted in a dark blue. This is in contrast to the flowing lines of the sickle, which break the composition creating a magnet for the eye and highlighting an imaginary union between modern

abstraction and the ideologies of communism. The addition of modernist designs around the rim of the plate resembles the geometry present in styles representative of the avant garde artists[7] of the day. Thus, associating the 'revolutionary character of the government with a revolutionary style in art…both disrupted and rejected classical pictorial and representational systems' (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 70). This particular plate offers an insight into why Chekhonin was so successful within the State Porcelain Factory. The composition remains disciplined, and although the work heavily relies on formal decorative techniques (such as how space within a shape is divided) Chekhonin's graphic ability was also rich in definition and detail of line. The section of a cog wheel is simplified and distinctive, while the angles and colours express a fluidity. Red and orange are positioned on the plate in a triangular formation, allowing the eye to encompass the plates circumference. Chekhonin had a calligraphic understanding that resulted in the surfaces of porcelain celebrating its decorative style with letters and shapes.

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[7] The Russian avant garde encompassed architecture, painters and costume designers, who worked across futurism, suprematism and constructivism, with artists such as Kazimir Malevich (1878–1935) and Vladimir Tatlin (1885–1953).

Figure 5
Sergei Chekhonin (1878–-1936)
From the heights of science it is easier to see the dawn of the new day than from below amidst the mist of everyday life
1921
State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, Russia
Porcelain, clear glaze, on glaze enamels
Approx. 24 cm diameter

In 1918, Lunacharsky assigned artists to collect statements, sayings and aphorisms to support art work produced in the cities and towns of Russia (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 38). This task was to connect with Lenin's Plan of Monumental Propaganda. Many of the original sources of these sayings have since been forgotten; however, artists at the State Porcelain Factory incorporated many of the aphorisms that were collected by artists and Lunacharsky into their designs. As a former book illustrator, Chekhonin often combined text with political messages into his designs for the State Porcelain

Factory. For instance, a plate designed by Sergei Chekhonin is encircled with the lettering *From the heights of science it is easier to see the dawn of the new day than from below amidst the mists of everyday life* (1921) (Figure 5 [p 26]) (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 1990, p. 42). At the centre of the plate is a small gold hammer and sickle, depicted with a few firm but steady brushstrokes. The rim, painted in cobalt blue has gold lettering dancing over its surface. Scattered through the floating and sizably different letters are representations of leaves. Chekhonin decorated the propaganda porcelain with graphic line work as ornate and detailed as the formal decorative ware produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory. In this plate, Chekhonin's work gains expression due to the intensity of the contrasting colours used for the letters, such as bold black and red on the surface of a stark white ground. This defined, bold line work appears assertive and portrays a confident placement of the narrative, linking the decoration to the form. Chekhonin's political narratives and play with text sit as secondary to the movement and colour on the surface of each form decorated.
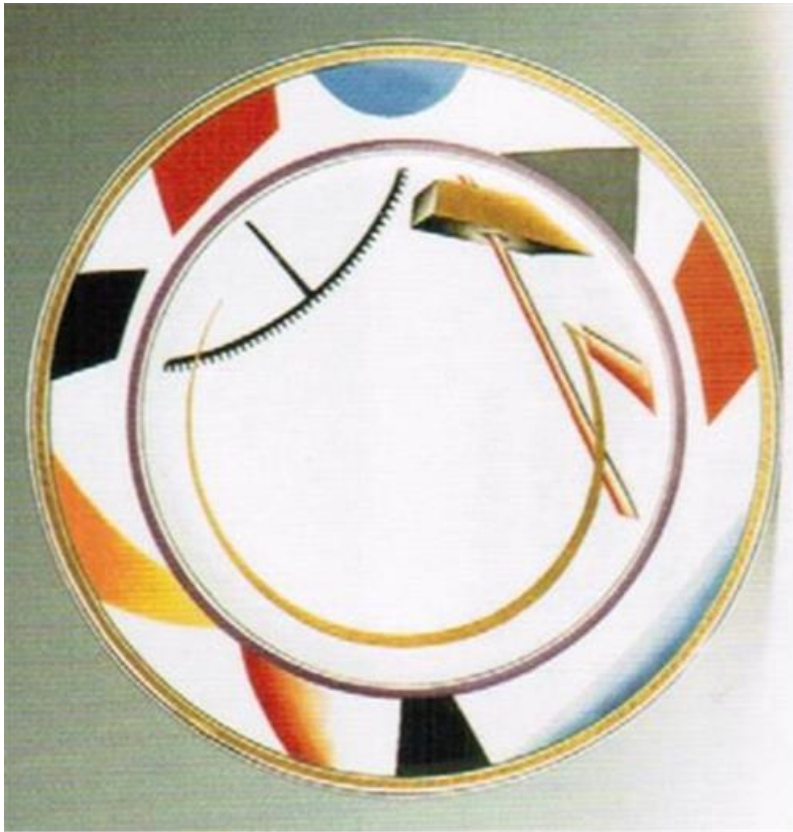
Figure 6
Sergei Chekhonin (1878–1936)
RSFSR
1921
State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, Russia
Porcelain, clear glaze, on glaze enamels
Approx. 26.6 cm diameter

During the eighteenth century, porcelain produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory were adorned with monograms formed by ropes of flowers. Less striking in revolutionary zeal is a plate titled *RSFSR* (Figure 6 [p 28])*,* which was designed by Chekhonin as a prototype in 1919. Chekhonin clearly utilised the imperial style of interlacing ropes of flowers with and into letters. However, he replaced the tsars monogram with the initials of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic and the large letter of S (C), in red, have handles added, turning them into sickles. This plate clearly links the past decorations to the future of the new state by utilising designs that were recognisable to the Russian public. Therefore, the new images which represented the Socialist regime was

introduced to the Russian public through familiarity, representing them as unthreatening. The designed impact of the work produced at the porcelain factory was to promote, rather than intimidate both the people of Russia and the broader Western world.

In contrast, Mikhail Adamovich, the following artist to be discussed, created surface narratives that mirrored the new environment of communism through colour and movement in his compositions. However, they also replicated the frenetic environment that Russia was experiencing.

Mikhail Adamovich

Figure 7
Mikhail Adamovich (1884–1947)
He Who Does Not Work Does Not Eat
1923
State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, Russia
Porcelain, clear glaze, on glaze enamels
Approx. 25 cm diameter

Mikhail Adamovich's (1884–1947) works produced at the State Porcelain Factory

are covered with the bright colours and expressive designs of soldiers, stars, and

symbols reminiscent of the agitational trains and boats.[8] Objects from the urban

environment, such as industrial buildings, are also depicted on sets of cups and

plates. Incorporating industrial images such as chimney stacks aimed to proclaim

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[8] Political slogans, pamphlets to agitate and exploit the grievances of the masses were aimed at gaining the publics support. Trains and river steam ships were fitted with agit-prop decorations such as red stars, frescoes with Lenin's profile, and traversed throughout Russia's vast countryside. 'The agit-trains…had facilities for distributing literature, showing movies, reproducing Lenin's speeches on gramophone…' (Williams, 1997, p. 76).

the new Soviet reign as progressive. Mikhail Adamovich's work is as skilled as Sergei Chekhonin's and as fluid as Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's. However, a unique sense of celebration is contained within his compositions. Each plate, jug or set of cups/saucers has layers of text and images that formed a complete decorative surface. Encountering the work requires a close reading, as each line or group of images are dispersed around the entire form. An example of this is Mikhail Adamovich's plate titled *He who does not work does not eat* (1921) (Figure 7 [p 30]), replicating the fondness for proverbs on porcelain (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 21) such as Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's plate with the Russian slogan 'into his hands a book…' on the *History of the revolution 1917* (1921) (Figure 3 [p 19]) plate previously mentioned. Surrounding the edges of Adamovich's plate is a range of colourfully assorted letters of different sizes that spell out the title. A portrait of Vladimir Lenin's face is prominent on the right hand side of the plate, as are yellow and green food ration cards positioned beneath the portrait. The visual depiction of Lenin's face in black and grey tones alludes to his personal power[9] and adds authority to the composition and phrase on the plate. The large black letters with red decorative patterns depict the text used in the plate: the monogram RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic). Using such disparate images, as coloured dancing letters and black and white tones portraying the stern face of Lenin, create a narrative that mirrors the frenetic environment of change and chaos initiated by the Bolsheviks. The composition follows the circumference of the plate but retains the feeling of celebration and joy as the groups of letters or images appear to bounce freely within the object. The presence of threat is tangible although the colours are bright, and the composition playful. The words clearly state that food

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[9] Interestingly, this is still utilised as a twenty-first century advertising marketing ploy— images of celebrities are used to endorse products, such as celebrity chefs and product placement within the abundance of cooking television shows.

coupons depend on your ability to work and co-operate within the new rules of Bolshevik governance. The profile of Lenin situated beside the coupons completes an imaginary inner circle to the plates decoration, replicating the dramatic changes the Bolsheviks dictated to Russian civilians.

Figure 8
Mikhail Adamovich (1884–1947)
Lenin with red star
1922
State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, Russia
Porcelain, clear glaze, on glaze enamels

Ceramics collector and author Nina Lobanov-Rostovsky has noted that Mikhail Adamovich frequently used 'a five pointed red star containing a hand plough and a hammer…It is the symbol of the worker-peasant Red Army in which Adamovich served' (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 1990, p. 36). Four coffee cups with matching saucers titled *Lenin with red star* (1922) (Figure 8 [p 32]) is an example.

This set renders a festive impression, with its repeated use of red and scattered colours of black and yellow surrounding each form. Written in black letters on each piece is the date of the second Russian revolution, 25 October 1917. Commemoration anniversaries, historical events, feast days, and patron saints were traditionally supported by sets produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory during the reign of the tsars. However, with the Bolshevik Party and a new Soviet society these were replaced by celebrating events and dates of revolutions. Mikhail Adamovich's red star is prominent in the plates and cups, while the portrait of Vladimir Lenin (almost identical to the previous plate mentioned) sits within an oval as a distinguished portrait reminiscent of the tsar. A world globe is illustrated, spinning on its axis while a smoking chimney, attached to a large factory, stands beside a row of marching red soldiers. The sickle, painted in yellow, is represented similar to a sheath of wheat; this adorns each composition, possibly indicating the bountiful crops promised by the new Soviet government. The inclusion of such images highlights Adamovich's skill in contributing scenes from the environment and surrounds into his compositions. The overall impression of the set is of gaiety and activity through the textured lines of red over all the work and the union of different images that surround each piece. Mikhail Adamovich created work that is detailed and considered yet dense in its imagery. In a similar style, Serge Chekhonin and Mikhail Adamovich utilised the traditional skills of decoration, which followed the contours of the form decorated on, and division of space.

The propaganda work produced at the State Porcelain Factory from 1917 to 1927 reveals how the incorporation of familiar images, patterns, and compositions can enhance new designs that carry political messages. All three of the artists discussed above combined political slogans and phrases of the time within their decoration on porcelain to render enduring political narratives of the new Socialist society.

For instance, Alexandra Shchekotikhina-Pototskaya's work extols the natural environment and the organic material of life. Flowers, fauna, representation of faces, figures, and sections of faces express a personal perspective and affiliation in her porcelain work. These wares combine Russia's cultural heritage, with texts that resemble popular Luboks with new political phrases.

Sergei Chekhonin's work also successfully combines text and images by utilising the structure of formal surface patterns familiar to traditional porcelain decoration of the Imperial Porcelain Factory. Chekhonin facilitated the surfaces of ceramic forms to incorporate a new language by employing established ornamental elements, such as borders, medallions, and friezes, and replacing them with political images and text.

Thirdly, the work of Mikhail Adamovich illustrate how the use of images, symbols, dates, and phrases from the immediate environment positions ceramic works within a particular context. Adamovich uses easily recognizable images, such as industrial buildings, newspapers and food coupons, farming tools, along with the turning of political phrases of propaganda into compositions on his porcelain objects to create familiarity and cohesion.

In the following chapter, I will discuss the work of three contemporary artists to investigate how the referencing of historical patterns gives context to surface narratives that comment on (rather than promote) contemporary political issues and concerns.

Chapter Two: Contemporary context/political observations

Introduction: Contemporary context

Gallery owner and author Garth Clark's, *The potter's art* (1995), explores the history of British ceramics from the Neolithic peasant potter of the fifth century to the studio potter of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As Clark's book attests, ceramic's role in daily life has a long and extensive history. Observing this history, Clark positions contemporary ceramics with the understanding that no object is made in an isolated environment. Behind each new creation lies a rich history of previous vessel making.

Clark describes contemporary ceramic work as freely incorporating 'pattern and decoration…figurative imagery, humour and the appropriation of styles…from pottery's past' (Clark, 1995, p. 193). Clark confirms ceramic's role in acknowledging the past in surface narratives when engaging in a dialogue concerning the current day. For instance, Australian artists Gerry Wedd (b.1957) and Stephen Bowers (b.1952) employ sections of the willow pattern as a device to situate their narratives around migration and colonial intervention. They both use the willow pattern to give context to their observations about how cultures impact and influence one another.

The willow pattern was a tableware design that emerged as a transfer print in England. The Spode Porcelain Factory at Stoke-on-Trent, England, produced the design created by the English potter Thomas Minton (1765–1836) during the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century. It was 'appropriated from the chinoiserie patterns common on Chinese export ware' (Walton, 2015). As a result of trade and travel between England and China a collection of cultures influenced each other and 'cross-breeding' (Wedd, 2005, p. 40) of decorative styles and patterns occurred. The willow pattern is a mythological Chinese landscape and was depicted on mass produced bowls, cups, and plates and is still produced today. The design is decorated in cobalt blue atop a white clay

body. The willow tree holds the central position in the landscape while three figures cross a bridge near the base of the composition. An ornate fence zigzags along the bottom right hand side of the decoration, while a boat and two hovering birds occupy the top half of the circular pattern. The border of the design can best be described as a mixture of copied Chinese designs and eighteenth century decorative flourishes.

The Jam Factory, in Adelaide, South Australia, (now known a JamFactory Craft and Design) features in the biographies of each artist to be discussed, as it acted 'as an interface between the training that young crafts people received in art schools and the challenges of a career as independent makers' (Moon and Neylon, 2013, p. 12). The organisation began in 1973 with craft training workshops and artists' studios of glass, ceramics, leather textiles, and jewellery. Stephen Bowers was head of the Ceramics studios between 1991-1999. His appointment at The Jam Factory was a 'great advantage for the organization, as well as for the trainees and artists who passed through its doors, ultimately benefitting the Australian ceramics community as a whole'(Moon and Neylon, 2013, p. 12). In 1991, The Jam Factory's funding (from the South Australian Government) was less than half of its operational costs. As a consequence, production ware supplemented the income. Bowers' approach was to engage experienced potters to work with the trainees, resulting in a higher standard of product. As well, lower fired clay was introduced to the production ware, resulting in an increase of designs sold to the public. In 1990–1991, Gerry Wedd 'had a studio space in the training workshop' (Thomson, 2008, p. 38) where the mix of disciplines and artists helped establish his oeuvre. British artist, Stephen Dixon (b. 1925) was also involved in The Jam Factory with a research residency in 2006 where he explored a wider range of materials and processes. Dixon's work developed a new element of 'embodied narrative' (Dixon, 2012) by incorporating calcined kangaroo bones into the clay body. Rather than decorating surface

narratives with images that comment on colonial settlers in Australia and the damaging history to the Aboriginal identity, Dixon began to rethink his conceptual approach to the material of clay by incorporating elements that embedded the narrative within the clay body.

Dixon's earlier ceramics work explored the war on Iraq in 2003, and involved the creation of layers in formulating his visual imagery. The Government of Iraq, which Saddam Hussein led at the time, was toppled by an invasion of the United States, the United Kingdom, and several coalition allies. For the work titled Babylon (2003), Dixon employed an image of a Roman warrior on the surface of a slab built form to highlight the parallel between historical periods of conflict and the notion of superiority that one culture holds over another, in this case Western countries over the Middle East.

The following chapter will provide an in depth study of each of the above mentioned artists and explore how surface imagery can construct a political narrative and how the adoption of historical patterns can contribute to visual language.

Stephen Bowers

Stephen Bowers (b.1952), a contemporary Australian ceramic artist who uses traditional ceramic forms and decoration to create an imaginary landscape that explores Australian politics and identity. Bowers, in his 'historical Chinoiserie' (Moon and Neylon, 2013, p. 28), utilises the surfaces of his forms to carry images, such as clichéd images of Australiana culture, designs from European and British ceramic factories, comics, and illustrations from early Victorian engravings. The employment of traditional forms, such as vases and plates with detailed and elaborate narrative surfaces, has offered the followers of Bowers' work an opportunity to appreciate a connection between ceramic, politics and cultural history.

Stephen Bowers' ceramics are recognisable by his skilful illustrations. From the onset of Bowers' career, a collaborative mode of working informed his practice. Bowers both designs and decorates ceramic objects, while the production of large forms are often carried out by others. Experienced throwers produce large-scale forms while Bowers decorates their surface,

> 'Bowers often works collaboratively, most notably with potter Mark Heidenreich whose background in production-throwing, and mastery of technique with large and difficult forms, accords with Bowers' ambition to work on more challenging 'blanks' which provide a bigger 'canvas' for his ideas' (Walton, 2015, p. 5).

It was in this environment that Stephen Bowers established his ceramic career and began to build his visual compositions and motifs. His opulent decoration and patterning is sourced from a variety of formats, from comic books to early English copper plate book illustrations. European ceramic factories also inspire Bowers designs with their opulent patterning and colour. Bowers constructs a

visual narrative combining Australian landscape painting, clichéd images of Australian souvenirs, and the British willow pattern.

In the early 1980s, Bowers made traditional forms such as mugs, bowls, and teapots. However, by the late 1980s he had started to work on large vases and platter forms. A more layered approach to decoration emerged through this process while form remained as a grounded body that referenced classical and oriental forms. The 'Palace ware' vases (produced in the mid-1980s) directly referenced the practice of elaborate and often large-scale Chinese and European vases which were used to decorate the palaces and grand villas of European royal families, similar to the Romanov dynasty in Russia during the 16th Century. Mark Heidenreich produced the large wheel thrown forms standing 3.4 metres tall and 1.5 metres in diameter. The architectural presence of such classical forms is a strategic ploy to entice the viewers' attention to surprise while also associating the grandeur of historical objects which informs this work, with the beauty of Australian flora decorated on the surface.

Figure 9
Stephen Bowers (b. 1952)
Stubbs meets Spode
2011
South Australia, Australia
Earthenware, underglaze colour, clear glaze
63 cm x 6 cm
Photo: Grant Hancock

Whilst using traditional forms of plates, the surface decoration of Bowers' work references Australian history, politics and identity, rather than the ornate and opulent patterning usually associated with porcelain designs. It is in this subversion of surface design that Bowers excels. Bowers adapts the patterning of the popular willow pattern, skilfully utilising its decorative grammar to add to his narratives and create another layer of meaning. The decorative arts tradition is reconstructed by Bowers to create a 'home grown' Australian language of iconography. In 2011 Bowers produced a number of works commenting on

Australian identity. *Stubbs meets Spode* (2011) (Figure 9 [p 41]) is a plate 63 cm in diameter with a detailed image of the top half of a kangaroo. George Stubbs, an English animal painter, first drew the image of a kangaroo in 1773. Stubbs was commissioned to engrave an image of the kangaroo that was to be presented in the official account of Captain Cook's journey from 1768–1771, in which they sailed from England, across the Pacific Ocean to map the southeast coast line of Australia. Stubbs illustration was a speculative rendition of what a kangaroo's form might look like as only the skin was returned to England, along with plant and animal specimens from 'New Holland' (Moon & Neylon 2013, 22). Bowers' rendition of the kangaroo was created by detailed cross-hatching and sits in the centre of the circular plate. In the hazy background of the plate, in which the willow pattern appears, Bowers adopts the pattern referring to the historical connection of England and its colonial influence on Australian culture.

Figure 10
Stephen Bowers (b. 1952)
Fracture
2011
South Australia, Australia
Earthenware, underglaze colour, clear glaze
63 cm x 6 cm
Photo: Grant Hancock

The second plate in this series, titled *Fracture* (2012) (Figure 10 [p 43]) questions what the initial encounters between the cultures of indigenous Australia and the British would have been like. Superimposed over a faded and magnified section of a blue and white willow pattern is 'a detail of a 1784 engraving by T. Chambers after Sydney Parkinson' (Moon & Neylon 2013, 23), which was first drawn by Parkinson, an illustrator, during his travels with Joseph Banks on James Cook's voyages. The sections of the engraving on Bowers plate overlay the torsos of two Aboriginal men. Both men hold arms aloft with weapons: a spear and shield. The exploration and illustrations of early colonial artists have added to Bowers' own landscape of visual imagery to explore the tale of the British

discovery and exploration of the indigenous peoples who populated Australia. These two plates manipulate images and overlapping of styles that result in suggestion and possibility. The juxtaposition of different visual languages and histories, such as the willow pattern, and colonial illustrations, form an unlikely composition on the plate's surface.

Bowers' work also has the ability, through its use of forms and adaptions of historical decoration, to reflect on and examine the achievements and legacies of ceramic tradition. Re-contextualising narratives that explore Australia's diverse history is communicated through Bowers' surface decoration, skill and techniques. The striking images have been portrayed by Bowers on forms, such as large plates (some 63 cm in diameter), rendering the multilayered images as detailed and confident. Through this, Bowers' work reflects on Australian history and identity and 'how we come to terms with heritage, continuity and tradition at a time of increasing dislocation, change and disruption' (Walton, 2015, p. 5). Bowers has cleverly combined images of early illustrations of the British colonial images of indigenous Australian people and animals. His pursuit in questioning the radical changes bought to Aboriginal life through the colonisation of the land is in my view commendable. A particular strength of Bowers' oeuvre is his draftsmanship. The use of hand drawn line work, as opposed to the addition of an image made through a printing process, renders the work individual as it exposes his unique skill. Bowers' work reflects my own interest in juxtaposing pictorial elements to create a new visual language or narrative. Like Bowers, I combine elements that are not commonly seen together to create a new or imagined tale. When the work is open to suggestion, by combining disparate pictorial elements (such as sections of images and illustrations or patterns) the work is subtle and suggestive and leaves space for reflection. Whilst Bowers' work includes references to European forms and British patterns, the

combination of objects and images construct a distinctly Australian narrative discussing identity.

Similarly, Australian artist Gerry Wedd combines segments of the willow pattern to enhance his visual narratives and allude to cultural identity and differences.

Gerry Wedd

Gerry Wedd (b.1957) is a South Australian artist, conversant in working with a range of materials. In the mid-1980s, following his successful study in jewellery and design for the Australian clothing brand Mambo, Wedd commenced his training in ceramics at the South Australian School of Art, although already familiar with the medium. Between 2005 and 2007 Wedd completed a Masters of Visual Arts at the South Australian School of Art titled *Pot Culture: Domestic ceramics as subversive texts* (Wedd, 2005).

Wedd works with expectations of the familiar by borrowing the blue and white colours of the willow decorative pattern. However, differences appear in the detail of Wedd's painted narratives. For instance, social commentary is important to Wedd as a contemporary Australian artist. He translates his views and opinions onto ceramics by hand building functional forms and decorating them with a 'refreshingly cartoonish quality' (Thomson, 2008, p. 124). Like Bowers, Wedd creates quirky ceramics reminiscent in form and surface decoration of the mass produced British willow ware. The British decorative wares are common additions to many homes in Australia, hence their familiarity and reuse in both Bowers' and Wedd's construction of political narratives. However, Wedd disrupts the traditional idyllic landscape of the willow pattern by introducing new images. One example is a casserole dish, *Oz and Chinese Food* (2003), that depicts a character from Australian politics during the mid-1990s. Pauline Hanson was an Australian Member of Parliament from 1996 to 1998, who also owned a fish and chip shop in Queensland. As an Independent member representing a Brisbane seat, and leader of the One Nation Party, Hanson was outspoken in her xenophobic concerns. In Wedd's version of the willow pattern, the fish and chip shop replaces the building in the pattern and sells both Australian and Asian food.   In her 1996 maiden speech to parliament, Pauline Hanson stated that

Australia was in danger of being swamped by Asians.[10] Wedd, ironically, highlights the multiculturalism of Australia, which contributes to its continuing development, population and culture. Positing a fish and chip shop into the Chinoiserie style of decorative pattern is an affront to Hanson's beliefs, serving to ridicule her xenophobia.

Figure 11
Gerry Wedd (b. 1957)
The willow teapot
2004
South Australia, Australia
Ceramic with cobalt painted underglaze
175 mm high
Photo: Michal Kluvanek

The willow teapot (2004) (Figure 11 [p 47]) at first glance appears to be a traditional shape. It carries a hand painted rendition of the willow pattern, which 'has become the basis for a fertile re-interpretation of mythical cultural

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[10] 'In 1995 there were 866,000 Asian born Australians. They accounted for 21% of the overseas born population, and 5% of the total population' (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996).

landscapes and Gerry Wedd has been among the foremost of those interpreters' (Thomson, 2008, p. 72). On close inspection, however, differences appear. The boat within the pattern is now overcrowded with people. The image represents what is now the common plight of refugee who flee to Australia by boat from countries such as Indonesia, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. A zigzag fence at the base of the pattern is illustrated in the lower half of the decoration supporting razor wire. This references the detention centres used by Australian governments to house refugees.[11]

However, Wedd's subversion of historical decoration is not the only appeal of these works, he also recognises the capacity for functional objects to carry and create meaning in our lives. Webb emphasises the uniqueness of the handmade object by retaining some mark or evidence of the hand on the forms created. Creating narratives on work that is clearly handmade is an important consideration of Wedd's as he values the object's relationship to the hand. Our response to objects, first by the eye, then the hand and often the mouth is an experience of 'upcloseness' (Wedd, 2005, p. 21).

Wedd's recognition and affirmation of the personal is revealed through his drawing skills. Sometimes Wedd's images have a cartoon like quality or appear clumsy. However, it is a light touch that causes variations in the depth of colour, or wash in a line, which retains an openness and personal connection with the objects he draws on.

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[11] Australia's detention of refugees will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Figure 12
Gerry Wedd (b. 1957)
Willow land
2005–2008
South Australia, Australia
Cobalt decorated ceramic
Dimensions various: tallest 400 mm high
Photo: Grant Hancock

During Wedd's MA research (2005–2007), he created maquettes of separate character pieces (Figure 12 [p 49]) taken from the willow pattern narrative: the willow tree, bridge, boatman, doves, and apple tree (Wedd, 2005, p. 56). Adapting the images into familiar and 'invisible' (Wedd, 2005, p. 57) figurines, such as those that adorn domestic interiors, rendered them as innocuous as the willow pattern. Here, Wedd excelled in creating new narratives about migration by using figurine formations as a vehicle to discuss contemporary society. The

willow pattern and the individual figures developed within Wedd's oeuvre to include more political issues.

Figure 13
Gerry Wedd (b. 1957)
Abu Ghraib figures
2005
South Australia, Australia
Cobalt underglaze painting on hand built ceramic
170 mm high
Photo: Grant Hancock

In 2005 Wedd remodelled the figurines created from the willow pattern changing them into a tableau of figures based on photographs taken of abuse in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. During the 2003 war on Iraq, members of the US Army and the CIA committed violations of human rights against their Iraqi held prisoners. Amnesty International reported the abuse of the detainees and Associated Press released photos that depicted physical and mental torture and

abuse (Hersh 2004, 38). Wedd's work, titled *The Abu Ghraib figures* (2005) (Figure 13 [p 50]) consists of ten individual figures that can stand alone or form a composition with separate three-dimensional elements of the pattern, such as an isolated tree. This referenced the Biblical use of the willow tree as a symbol depicting mourning (Wedd, 2005, p. 57). The folds and shadows of the figures are decorated with light cross-hatching of blue and white brushstrokes. Wedd produced a scene that expressed the atrocities and degradation of war. The maltreatment and brutal torture of the Iraqi prisoners by the US Army received widespread disapproval and Wedd queried the media's ability to retain a memory of these events as another news story or disaster would take its place the next day. Wedd writes of the work: 'The rendering of these scenes as ceramic tableaux was intended to act as a memorial to the crimes' (Wedd, 2005, p. 58).

> The benign tableaux conventionally associated with porcelain figures (and further reinforced by a willow pattern gentility) are suddenly turned on their head with the recognition of the iconic photographic images (Thomson, 2008, p. 141).

Wedd's figurines stand out as monuments to the memory of this time in political history and hold an engagement with the horror of war. In some respects, a functional form with a narrative that refers to the violence of torture and abuse would rarely be used as dinner ware. The figurines Wedd has created are to be seen and not touched, to be viewed from a distance.

Wedd has continued to interpret the pattern in sculptural forms rather than painted narratives, commenting on Australian stories and 'how people and cultures relate to one another' (Jones, 2009, p. 38). The ability to borrow a visual language of form and decoration from other cultures to convey new narratives is a strength of Wedd's oeuvre. The conversation Wedd creates between 'comfort and discomfort' (Jones, 2009, p. 39) reflects the familiar relationship we have

with form and the uneasy connection we have to difficult political situations, such as migration and war.

I turn now to Stephen Dixon who, like Wedd, uses the three-dimensional ceramic form in the development and creation of a contemporary political narrative.

Stephen Dixon (UK)

The British artist Stephen Dixon (b.1957) also constructs ceramic work whose expressive characteristics stem from his interest in world politics and discussions on war, 'issues that confront us all' (Mitchell et al. 2005, 8). From his first adoption of the medium, following a Fine Art (sculpture) degree at Newcastle-upon-Tyne University from 1976 to 1980, and his study at Royal College of Art in the mid-1980s, Dixon has created work that embraces political observations of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Early works by Dixon were 'inspired by Etruscan cosmetic boxes and majolica ink stands' (Clark, 1995, p. 206). Dixon uses figurines inspired by Renaissance figures or angels to adorn the lids of his forms, introducing play and satire into the interpretations of these lidded boxes. However, the figurines, loosely created, appear more as a street scene comprised of contemporary figures in various stances and attitudes, such as postulating muscle men and animated riders straddling camels or elephants. They undermine the ceremonial nature of the ceramic objects and become agents for ideas about contemporary society.

The sculptor, collagist and writer Eduardo Paolozzi (1924–2005) influenced Dixon during his years at the Royal College of Art in London, where he was 'trained to focus obsessions into a language of visual references, to develop a personal iconography or alphabet of resonate and relevant images' (Dixon, 2005, p. 72). Since then Dixon has developed graphic narratives of images and found text on the surfaces of his vessels, creating what Dixon calls his 'alpha-bet' (Dixon, 2005, p. 72). Forming part of this are common phrases used in the reporting of political situations. Dixon has also incorporated images of celebrities into historical caricatures in his work. Themes from classical and biblical imagery are juxtaposed alongside depictions of myths, which form part of Dixon's explorative alphabet.

Dixon's inspiration for a series of work *The sleep of reason* (2005) is derived from the work of Spanish artist Francisco Goya (1746–1828). Goya's set of etchings, from *Los caprichos* (1798) 'nightmarishly reflected upon the post-revolutionary political situation in Spain' (Dixon 2005, 72). Utilising his political alphabet and combining images and form into constructed vessels, Dixon reflected the political unrest of his own time. Some of the forms were based on the shape of an oil can, metaphorically 'suggesting the stranglehold of the oil industry on the policies of western governments' (Mitchell et al. 2005, 37). Surface decoration on forms evoke, rather than explicitly state, ideas of good versus evil, conflict (of governments and nations), fear and war by using 'symbols and motifs gathered from heterogeneous sources – famous Old Masters, popular icons of film industry, documentary photographs...' (Mitchell et al. 2005, 39) (Figure 14 &15 [p 56]). Dixon also uses text from the media and places them on his pots. He includes familiar phrases such as 'no war' (Dixon, 2005, p. 72) from sections of text taken from anti-war protest banners and keywords and numbers from news headlines, often with text imprinted on ribbons of a clay slab and placed around the forms. These situate a work in a particular time allowing its subject matter to be freely interpreted. Small figurines in different postures decorate the lids of Dixon's vessels, such as a poodle dog, which references former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in his 'syncopating relationship with the US' (Dixon 2005, 73). Through loosely assembling slabs into hand built vessels based on a shape reminiscent of metal oil or petrol cans, Dixon cleverly correlates form and surface to assist his narrative on the 2003 Iraq war. The loose play that exists between the different textures, lines and tones of the images as they swim around the form reveals layers of suggested ideas that are mirrored by the layering of slabs. Dixon's ceramics comment on the militaristic machinations of western society through symbols and motifs which carry familiar connotations to a 21st century audience.

However, neither the metaphors nor the objects themselves are made explicit and it is within this subtle manoeuvring that Dixon invites a conversation between an object and narrative. As Dixon has written in his article *'The Sleep of Reason'*,

> I think it was Kafka who said you should leave your writing with a hole in it, to allow space for meaning (Dixon, 2005, p. 73) .

Figure 14
Stephen Dixon (b. 1957)
Babylon
2003
London, England
Slab built and modelled Earthenware, inglaze and onglaze transfer printed decoration
61 cm height
Photo: Joel Fildes

Figure 15
Stephen Dixon (b. 1957)
Babylon
2003
London, England
Slab built and modelled Earthenware, inglaze and onglaze transfer printed decoration
61 cm height
Photo: Joel Fildes

Following this work two dimensional images—such as Frankenstein and Aphrodite—that Dixon had formally rendered on the surfaces of forms

developed into three dimensional objects. Dixon explored ceramic objects that no longer resembled the vessel but instead, represented sculptural monuments.

In 2009, Dixon was the first artist invited to commence the research residencies at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The studio is encased in glass allowing visitors to the museum to witness the working processes of an artist. During the residency Dixon learnt of the Victoria and Albert Museum's sculpture department. His engagement with the public and the drawers of ceramic shards and the card indexes used to document each piece in the museum (Dixon, 2014) also informed his creative work. Throughout his research, Dixon discovered that the Victoria and Albert Museum holds several busts replicating political leaders. Based on public monuments and usually replicated in unglazed porcelain, Dixon discovered several busts of Chairman Mao (China), Ho Chin Minh (Vietnam), and Ayatollah Khomeini (Iran). Each one represented a direct portrait of the leader's head and chest. Reaching 30 cm in height the faces of each possess a demure and slightly eerie smile. Dixon was also inspired by:

> ...two or three Indian heads in the ceramic collection and the Janus head in Poussin's picture, Dance to the Music of Time. I felt that the Janus head was a great metaphor for the way the Museum looks back to its historical collections and forward into the future...while the Indian heads underline its important multi-cultural element (Woolf, 2013, p. 2).

The small-scale and almost domestic reproduction of the busts piqued Dixon's political interest and he proceeded to produce his own heroic figures. This work is reminiscent of Paolozzi's pop art bronzes[12] and was 'made by creating several

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[12] 'Some of his best known sculptures today include The Statue of Newton (after William Blake), 1995, in the piazza of the new British Library, the mosaic patterned walls of Tottenham Court Road tube station and the Piscator sculpture outside London's

plaster heads, carving them into sections, and then creating one composite from the different originals' (Lloyd-Jones, 2013, p. 121). Dixon created three large heads, titled *Restoration* (Figure 16-18 [p 58]) of three Nobel Peace Prize winners, all of whom were incarcerated or on home arrest at the time they were given their awards: Liu Xiaobo (China),[13] Aung San Suu Kyi (Burma),[14] and Carl von Ossietzky (German).[15] In a process similar to Paolozzi's, Dixon constructed a ceramic bust which he then took plaster moulds of in sections and reverted these moulded parts into clay and placed them together with glue, forming a whole. References to the culture of each of the Nobel Prize winners; 'the traditional Burmese terracotta for Suu Kyi, celadon glaze for Xiaobo and the clinical white of phrenology heads for Ossietzky' (Lloyd-Jones, 2013, p. 45) gave context to the materials traditionally used in each person's historical environment. *Restoration* refers in an aesthetic sense to the three-dimensional collage processes that Dixon uses in constructing the heads. In a political sense *Restoration* highlights each of the three activists Dixon chose, through the recognition of their achievement of winning of the Nobel Peace Prize, despite

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Euston station...some of his many public commissions can be seen inside the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre, in the courtyard of the Royal Academy, outside the British museum and the Science museum. He created the cast-aluminium doors at Glasgow's Hunterian gallery' (Tilden, 2005). Paolozzi was interested in constructing sculptures similar in style to collages mainly around themes of man and machine. Clearly, the act of construction and an engagement with the public is of interest to both Dixon and Paolozzi.

[13] Liu Xiaobo is a Chinese writer and human rights activist. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 during his forth prison term (*Liu Xiaobo-Facts*, http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2010/xiaobo-facts-html).

[14] Aung San Suu Kyi is a Burmese politician and leader of the National League for Democracy. She received her Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights (*The Nobel Peace Prize 1991*, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1991/).

[15] Carl Von Ossietzky was a German pacifist and received his Nobel Peace Prize in 1935 for his work in exposing the German rearmament *(The Nobel Peace Prize 1935*, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1935).

the fact that all three were unable to collect their prize due to imprisonment for their beliefs.

Figure 16
Stephen Dixon (b. 1957)
Restoration
Carl von Ossietzky
2013
London, England
Press moulded
Earthenware, in-glaze and
on-glaze transfers
65 x 47 cm
Photo: Tony Richards

Figure 17
Stephen Dixon (b. 1957)
Restoration
Liu Xiaobo
2012
London, England
Press moulded
Earthenware, in-glaze and
on-glaze transfers
65 x 47 cm
Photo: Tony Richards

Figure 18
Stephen Dixon (b. 1957)
Restoration
Aung San Suu Kyi
2012
London, England
Press moulded
Earthenware, in-glaze and
on-glaze transfers
59 x 41 cm
Photo: Tony Richards

The three contemporary ceramic artists discussed all recognize that no object or surface is without a history. Rather than using ceramic forms with images and text as propaganda, ceramics produced in contemporary Western democracies, such as England and Australia, comment and offer opinions about politics and cultural identity.

In the following chapter I discuss the work I produced during this research project that linked diverse elements from postage stamps and wire fencing to formal decorative patterning as a means of creating a personal political narrative. My aim was to reveal and suggest political concerns and issues

through surface imagery on my porcelain forms and to investigate the Australian political environment during my research period of 2012 to 2016.

Chapter Three: Australian context/political conversations

Introduction: Australian context

This chapter explores the creative research I undertook in my studio and reveals how a variety of political issues developed into visual surface narratives and ceramic forms. My research into politics and porcelain influenced and informed an understanding of how ceramics can function as more than a vessel and can carry, through its surface narrative and form, political content. For instance, the Russian revolutionary ceramics were objects with a purpose. The plates, cups and jugs fulfilled the role of propaganda and promotion of the Bolshevik Party. In the twenty-first century political ceramics by artists such as Stephen Dixon, Gerry Wedd, and Stephen Bowers were created to comment and communicate ideas and opinions about war, refugees and political decisions.

My purpose in creating functional ceramic forms with political narratives is to re-establish the important role ceramics play in creating a connection between the personal and the political. Political issues, decisions and debate are conducted daily and recorded, discussed and announced via old and new media in the twenty-first century. We listen and watch the machinations of our political systems through our televisions, radios, computers, and electronic devices, such as iPads and smartphones.

However, the physical orientation of a functional form encourages direct contact between objects and people. We touch with our fingers, we probe with our lips, and we cup with our hands. Through the haptic experience, objects we use every day can help create and formulate a personal and political perspective. Interaction and reflection can occur with the images and text on the surface. Thus, a purposeful dialogue between ceramics, the user and political issues can evolve.

Following my investigations into historical and contemporary ceramics with political surface narratives, I considered my medium of choice, Limoges

porcelain. Limoges is usually used in European porcelain factories, such as the Lomonosov Porcelain Factory (St Petersburg), to produce delicate functional forms. The manufacturing of forms with Limoges porcelain is traditionally moulded into shapes from slip, liquid clay. However, I utilise the clay body and throw forms on the wheel.

My hand has the learned ability to judge thickness of walls when throwing and depth of line when etching into the surface. Leaving a throwing line or a mark that establishes my touch is important in the creation of porcelain forms that often appear smooth. Time and practice has revealed that throwing confidently and direct in intention is imperative to success with this particular medium. A form created on the wheel is still fluid, and adjustment or changes are common. However, at high temperatures inside the kiln, the porcelain shape retains the memory of its making and may shift slightly, altering its contours.

My personal choice of using porcelain is varied. The walls of the high-fired body appear vitrified and solid. However, when light hits the side of a cup, the body appears translucent, fleetingly thin and fragile. The medium can carry connotations of preciousness and delicacy but remain durable and resilient. Traditional manufactured porcelain sets can bear on its surface beautiful and detailed patterning. However, surface decoration on porcelain shapes can also carry visual images of political propaganda heralding militaristic victory, as I have discussed earlier. A further benefit of using porcelain is its smooth surface that I require for my drawings, which are etched into the surface of the work. This is similar to the etched zinc plate process in printmaking. Drawing scratched lines into the exterior body of a form requires a hardy and receptive material.

Narratives covered in the work produced during the project covered a variety of subjects: the Australia's National Broadband Network (NBN) and the changes to communication, refugees arriving to Australia by boat, and the broader

governance and issues within the Australian political landscape, during 2012-2016.

My investigation of the subject of communication and its changing possibilities for society led to my questioning how the rollout of the NBN in Australia could divide or connect people. The NBN is an Australian Labor Party initiative (2010) that was designed by the Rudd Federal Government to build, upgrade, and operate an Internet network structure to ensure all Australians have access to fast and affordable broadband. With my partner involved in the IT industry, interest developed around who and how we communicate with one another and the opportunities this affords. I began to develop a narrative that consisted of representations of cables with images of maps and land that depicted the NBN rollout and aimed to highlight the proposed changes to the municipalities, country, and remote areas of Australia.

I also felt inspired to construct narratives about the plight of refugees coming to Australia, which began by comparing ceramic vessels to boats. Both vessels and boats have the ability to contain and carry. During the duration of my PhD research (2012–2016), the arrival of refugees by boat to Australia became a contentious political issue. Political debate across the Australian federal parliament tried to address a solution. In an attempt to discourage refugees, off-shore detention centres were introduced, and as a consequence no boat carrying refugees was allowed to legally land on Australian shores. This was endorsed by both the Labor and Liberal federal parties.

This carries personal relevance as my father, in the late 1950s, migrated from Germany to Australia at the age of 17 by boat, although it was under different political circumstances. Growing up in Australia with a father from a foreign land highlighted for me how different cultures can be accepted and how division is expressed.

My surface narratives of refugees arriving by boat from 2012-2016, utilised graphic images of rugged cliffs, land, and small boats on the horizon. Images of running figures, houses, and barbed wire referenced possible situations before refugees arrived to Australia and the detention centres encountered in the attempt to land on Australian shores. Work developed in the studio aimed to comment on the political situation surrounding acceptance and integration of refugees into Australia.

My depiction of the Australian political landscape includes a variety of works developed through my research. Surface narratives on my ceramic forms (which are visually explored through images and text) include climate change, federal budget proposals, mining within Australia, and the machinations of politics. Because of my political leanings, the disputation within the Australian Labor Party during 2014 between Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd became an interesting situation that lent itself well to the image of cogs and wheels. An engagement with text, ironically commenting on the disunity present within the Australian Labor Party, evolved. I also created narratives referencing images and words spoken by politicians from the Australian Federal Parliament. Images on the surfaces of forms depicted how decisions, in parliament or otherwise, are linked, as are cogs in a wheel. As a wheel engages in motion, each cog is affected, emphasising the impact of political decisions on society.

In 2010, disputation within the Australian Labor Party resulted in a leadership challenge mounted against the Australian (Labor) Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. His Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard was successful in her challenge to Rudd's leadership. Later that day Julia Gillard was sworn in as Australia's first female Prime Minister. She remained leader of the Australian Labor Party for three years and three days. A variety of reforms and issues were introduced through the Gillard Government. The Clean Energy Bill aimed to establish a price on carbon, while the National Disability Insurance Scheme was established to reform

disability care around the country. The rollout of the NBN continued throughout Australia during Gillard's leadership. In February 2012, Kevin Rudd announced his challenge for the leadership of the Labor Party, and after an internal ballot he resolutely lost and Julia Gillard was re-elected leader. Julia Gillard described this as a 'cocktail of internal destabilization, a minority government and a harshness in the public critique...that swelled together to make it very hard political yards' (Channel Nine, TV, 2014). With a federal election planned for September 2013, Kevin Rudd again announced his opposition to the Gillard leadership and was successful in defeating Julia Gillard as leader of the Australian Labor Party. The federal election was held resulting in the victory of the Liberal Party, with the leader, Tony Abbott, elected as Australia's Prime Minister in late 2013. This situation highlighted how differences are resolved in political parties, and the interesting dilemmas of their group dynamics. It also directed me towards the notion of difference and how division is created in our societies. These ideas correlate with functional objects, which too, separate and divide.

Divisions created within society, usually due to financial restraints, have become evident on a personal level through my mother's involvement and work with the society of St Vincent De Paul.[16] My awareness of social justice issues and the difficulties encountered by the poor and disadvantaged within Australian communities has highlighted the distinction between the have and the have nots and the consequences within Australian society. A narrative developed from this addresses the 2014 Liberal Federal Budget and its proposed changes to the unemployment benefits.

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[16] St Vincent De Paul is an international Catholic lay organisation whose mission is centred on helping those in need and living in poverty, 'the key areas of effort lie in Vinnies' ability to give a hand-up to people who are disadvantaged either by upbringing or lifestyle' (Doherty, 2004, pp. 32–33).

As my research into political issues progressed, the role that a ceramic form plays in the construction of a narrative developed. I produced groups of objects, such as bowls, plates, and cups, which depicted large words of values or beliefs on their surface, which became actors in a play designed for an imaginary election. Each form had text and was created to display on a table setting, to be chosen, organised or elected, therefore reflecting the democratic process.

Communication: National Broadband Network

In 2010 the Australian Federal Government began the rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN) throughout Australia, beginning in Tasmania. I combined the ideas of communication between people and the rollout of the NBN in developing a narrative on the surface of a series of lidded vessels, bowls, and plates. In a ceramic piece titled *Lines are drawn* (2013) (Figure 19-22 [p 67 & 68]) the surface narrative depicts the lines and borders that surround, divide or connect us, with map lines, fences, cables, buildings, and maps drawn into the lidded vessels.

Drawing map lines around the walls of pots was a strategy used to encourage participation. Interaction from a person is required for the pot to be physically moved or for the viewer or user to move their fingers around the form, completing the visual image. When the object is of an intimate size to hold, the activity of viewing the narrative in full is achieved through touch. The drawn lines are etched into the surface of the work and are revealed through one's fingertips.

Figure 19
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Lines are drawn
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges Porcelain –
thrown form
Approx. 20 cm high
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 20
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Lines are drawn
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges Porcelain and
brown oxide – before Bisque
Approx. 20 cm high
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 21
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Lines are drawn
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges Porcelain and
brown oxide– before Bisque
Approx. 20 cm high
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 22
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Lines are drawn
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges Porcelain and brown oxide
Approx.18 cm high
Photo: Jeremy Dillon

Lines are drawn consists of four lidded vessels that explore a narrative about communication and the political debates concerning the NBN. For this piece I investigated whether the way we interact due to faster and increased broadband would change and how these questions could be reflected in form? I queried whether I could I create new possibilities to how a narrative is read by drawing on different surface areas of the form. I responded to these questions by painting the words 'lines are drawn' on the inside walls of the lids. Therefore, text was painted on the forms in a way that was unusual for my practice and

unexpected for regular shapes. The title of the work is only revealed as you lift the lid through the touching and handling of the work. The words 'lines are drawn' refer to the distinctions and differences created between areas of Australia that received the NBN and those that did not. The surface of each pot portrayed a slightly different narrative: from closed city environments of factories and buildings to open landscapes depicting rural environments. Twisted and contorted cables alluded to the tubing unravelled in media images released of the NBN. Industrial machinery, such as cogs and wheels, were included to act as metaphors for the machinations of governments. In 2013, after the Liberal Party wa elected as the Federal Government of Australia, the NBN's policies were changed and some funding was cut. This downgraded the rollout and the implementation of how the network was to reach homes and this also altered the speed of the broadband.

Figure 23
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Connect
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges Porcelain with black stain and coloured underglazes
9 cm width x 3 cm height
Photo: Jeremy Dillon

I developed further narratives on the subject of communication on the surfaces, around communication with a row of seven straight-sided saucers (Figure 23 [p 69]). The saucer forms were thrown with straight sides in order for the narrative about connection and the NBN to dominate. A flat surface was created purely for the image to be read with ease and the lack of any foot assisted in maintaining a plain and simple form.

Approaching politics as a game of strategy and chance led me to adopting the game of Scrabble, as part of the surface design, and later as stand-alone objects. The placement of letters, spelling out the word 'connect', was scratched into the interior surface of each saucer. Images of cables were loosely painted on the base of the saucers and were only visible by turning the pots upside down. The

exterior of the saucer walls depicted a landscape that progressed from city buildings and rooftops to open country, crudely illustrating the discrepancy of access to the NBN rollout. A concern amongst politicians was that the rollout of the NBN would only commence where existing fibre was established and therefore regional or poorer areas within cities would be slow or expensive in achieving any Internet access (Sharwood, May 15, 5).

Figure 24
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Climate
Scrabble pieces
2015
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black stain
Each Scrabble tile 2.5 cm x 2.5 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Scrabble is a board game. Small tiles of individual letters, each with a numeric value, are used to create a word. Strategically placing words on the board, to double or triple one's score can accrue points to win the game. This presented me with a humorous reflection on politics and the manoeuvrings of politicians. Seen as a game of strategy, Scrabble has similarities to a politician presenting a policy to the public. Each media interview or sound bite helps to mould a 'picture' of a proposed policy until its impact on the community is revealed, imitating a Scrabble word and its placement on the board. For my project, the game of Scrabble and strategy and the accumulation of points resembled the plotting of politicians. Using the game of Scrabble also refers to how politicians, in deciding policies within the governance of Australia, influence and impact people and communities. Although an economic strategy, game theory 'provides general mathematical techniques for analysing situations in which two or more individuals make decisions that will influence one another's welfare' (Myerson1991, 2). Tenuously linking these ideas with Scrabble and Australian politics I created porcelain Scrabble tiles into words, such as *Climate* (2015) (Figure 24 [p 71]) and *Immigration* (2015). *Hide and seek* (2014) (Figure 25 [p 72]) Scrabble pieces were created to suggest inconsistencies, in particular to the NBN. In 2013, as the Federal Liberal Party was elected to govern Australia, changes to the rollout of the NBN occurred. If you close your eyes and count to ten discovering where the NBN is could become a game of chance.

Figure 25
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Hide and seek
Scrabble pieces
2014
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain and black stain
2.5 cm x 2.5 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Following this I created three straight-sided nesting plates titled *Communication* (2013) (Figure 26 & 27 [p 73 & 74]). The narrative for this piece imagined how the NBN could be brought to people living in both remote and highly populated areas. Each plate displayed a different chapter to the narrative as the images were separated into three parts. The base of the set depicts buildings of an industrial city and rooftops, symbolising a suburban environment. In the centre are drawn lines, similar to a web of cables or a map that connects (or not quite connects) towards each building and rooftop.

Figure 26
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Communication
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black stain incised and coloured underglaze
Large plate: 21 cm x 4 cm
Middle plate: 14 cm x 4.2 cm
Small saucer: 9 cm x 4.5 cm
Photo: Jeremy Dillon

The second plate's exterior is encircled by the word 'communication' while the image in the interior is of a person standing under a tree with head down, texting on a mobile. He is isolated, engulfed by space and the plate's empty surface that surrounds him. The smallest plate has partial images of a 'how to vote' card within its interior, referencing elections and how the results of such events affect how we live in a society. The political parties we elect affect our present and future lives due in part to the policies that are legislated and passed in parliament during their time in government.

Figure 27
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Communication
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black stain incised and coloured underglaze
Large plate: 21 cm x 4 cm
Middle plate: 14 cm x 4.2 cm
Small saucer: 9 cm x 4.5 cm
Photo: Jeremy Dillon

In the 2015 Alumni Speakers series of lectures[17], David Marr (b.1947) Australian social and political commentator, journalist and author, discussed his impatience with Australian's political passivity. Inquiring into how policies are passed and democratic society is governed led me to question this 'strange trust in power' (Zsivanovits 2015) we give to our politicians. According to Marr, political issues

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[17] The Alumni Lecture Series are held at the Cranlana Programme, Toorak, Victoria. The speeches are recorded and broadcast on the ABC Radio National Big Ideas programme.

that reflect our national spirit, our sense of selves, such as becoming a republic or forming a Bill of Rights, are not fought for or demanded by voters. I argue that the political and public debate surrounding refugees arriving to Australia by boat became a fraught issue,[18] potentially compelling politicians to change regulations and laws that govern the situation of refugees and detention centres. However, as the project progressed the situation remained static,[19] and, according to Marr (Zsivanovits 2015), will only produce change when we refuse to cede politicians their power.

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[18] Amnesty International, The Refugee Council of Australia, the Australian Greens. The Edmund Rice Centre, and prominent human rights lawyers, such as David Manne, have all appealed to Liberal and Labor federal parties to stop suspending asylum seeker claims and put a halt to offshore processing, arguing that political self-interest had been more important than human rights.

[19] In 2013 the Federal Liberal Party took direct action to stop the boats, which included increasing the Australian Border protection fleet and turning boats back when possible (Reilly, 2013).

Refugees

In 1958, my father arrived in Australia from Hamburg, Germany. After previously contacting the Australian Embassy in Hamburg, he and a friend paid ten British pounds each for a one-way ticket to Australia, with the agreement of staying in the country for a minimum of two years. They sailed on an Italian liner for one month with families and single men and women. Once the ship arrived at Station Pier in Melbourne a train transferred the migrants to Bonegilla, near Albury in NSW. My father's story of migration is markedly different from the refugees that have arrived (often by crowded and unsafe fishing boats) in Australia in the last decade. However, leaving your home country, with a piece of paper, a signed agreement, to start your new life requires bravery. Who you are and where you are from are unknown to the people in the country you arrive in. Although the advertisements for migration to Australia encouraged workers with skills to migrate, my father's qualifications in the building trade were not recognised by Australian authorities and it took him at least five years of study and work for him to have his credentials recognised. I chose to comment on the political debate surrounding boat refugees with this in mind. The political rhetoric surrounding refugees has focused on the people who instigate the passages between countries. Politicians now use the term boat smugglers. This change in focus, away from the people who were desperate to leave their country and who required help, to the people who gain from refugees by taking their money and sailing dangerously unsafe boats was a political decision to help justify Australian political arrangements of off-shore detention centres. Both Labor and Liberal federal parties assured the public they were taking decisive action to prevent hazardous situations and death at sea by creating a disincentive to travel or seek asylum in Australia. As a consequence of this, the idea was that people smugglers would find individuals seeking transport to Australia dramatically reduced.

Utilising language on my work was inspired by referencing metaphors and idioms. Investigating elements that make up the form revealed an idiom: 'Keeping a lid on things'. The idiom refers to controlling or containing a subject. The form too remains closed as the lid conceals the contents of the vessel, mirroring the text. This phrase seemed relevant to my narration of the arrival of refugees by boat to Australia. The issue, though debated, has created a party line of practised phrases, by both sides of Australian politicians, therefore, how it is discussed in the media is practiced and measured. Keeping a lid on things closes down any open dialogue.

In 2010, I developed a series of lidded vessels, a narrative depicting a boat disaster that occurred on the coast of Christmas Island in 2010. The island is a territory of Australia, situated in the Indian Ocean. A boat, full of refugees, sank before reaching its cliffs. This resulted in the destruction of the vessel and death of forty eight people aboard (Carlyon, 2010). In 2012, the topic of refugees remained a political issue that Australian politicians attempted to resolve or ignore.

Figure 28
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Vulnerable vessels
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain, black stain
with blue, green and ochre
underglaze colours
Approx. 16 cm high
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 29
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Vulnerable vessels
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain, black stain
with blue, green and ochre
underglaze colours
Approx. 16 cm high
Photo: Marianne Huhn

During the 1990s, the Labor Federal Government under Prime Minister Paul
Keating introduced mandatory detention for unauthorised boat arrivals.
Following this, in 1996 the Liberal Party, under Prime Minister John Howard,
introduced off shore processing arrangements for illegal boat arrivals.[20]
Retaining a familiarity with the political narrative of refugees within Australia

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[20] Mandatory detention has been a policy of both Labor and Liberal Governments
within Australia since 1992. Manus Island in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Island
nation of Nauru became off shore detention centres in 2001 under Liberal Prime
Minister John Howard's 'Pacific Island Solution'. In 2008, Labor Prime Minister, Kevin
Rudd, and in 2012, Labor Prime Minister Julia Gillard adjusted Australia's systems of
mandatory detention with the aim, however unsuccessful, in creating a more humane
system. The Federal Liberal Party, in 2014, began the policy: 'Sovereign Borders',
operated by the Australian Defence Force. The current Federal Liberal Government
holds zero tolerance to any illegal boat arrivals and information to the public is
restricted, resulting in news black outs (Phillips, 2011, p. 2).

rendered the form I created in response to the issues in a similar fashion. Three vessels stand beside each other, varying in height with flat, wide bases (Figure 28-30 [p 78 & 79]). The contours of the walls narrow as they reach the lid, which sits atop the rim of the form. The lid repeats the shape, narrowing its ascent to the tip where it opens slightly to a miniature concave. Creating lidded vessels that can contain liquid corresponds to the images that surround the shape. Water, imagined on the inside, is drawn on the exterior, depicting the swells of the ocean. The shape of a small boat rocks in the currents. At the narrow angle of the form, as the neck closes in to hold the lid, land is illustrated, mirroring the reality of Australia's controlled intake of refugees.

Figure 30
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Vulnerable vessels
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain and coloured underglazes
14 cm to 16 cm
Photo: Jeremy Dillon

Figure 31
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Journey by sea
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black stain
Approx. 22 cm d
Photo: Jeremy Dillon

As an experiment I threw a set of large, flat-based plates and decorated them with distinctly different graphic imagery, as chapters in a book are separate from each other but remain part of a whole. The results of the experiment are two plates (Figure 31 [p 80]). The first depicts figures running over a line drawing of a house. The small dark figures are inspired by a photograph of St Petersburg on the 3 July 1917 (Salisbury, 1978, p. 131) when rioting broke out in Nevsky Prospekt, the main city street. Soldiers turned against industrial workers who were demonstrating against the Russian Provisional Government. The photograph represents the fear and violence that was the beginning of change

within the political environment of Russia. However, the fleeing figures offer no indication to their original source. Their interpretation is open, unknown, and in an uncomfortable way can mirror the plight of the figures' actions, for they are running to somewhere but who knows where? The second plate holds a sharp and jagged image of a coiled barbed wire in a twisted awry fashion. Sitting above a fence (reminiscent of a farm fence) is a barricade or fence of an offshore detention centre. A contrasting thin black line works on the first plate with the rough edges of the barbed wire on the second plate adding to the drama of the narrative.

The introduction and experimentation with new forms, such as plates, afforded a fresh examination at my compositions and how images could be read. Previously, entire surfaces of forms had been surrounded by lines, images, text, and occasionally colour. However, with the flat surface of a plate, a central image could create an immediate visual impact. Utilising the shape of the two plates afforded the opportunity to discover that revealing more of the clay body within a composition creates a starker, more dramatic narrative.

When the forms were dry to the touch, their surfaces were scoured with a Scotch Brite product producing a textured background. Next, using a 2B pencil, images and text were sketched and arranged on the surface of the pot. The drawn lines were then etched into the clay with a sharp pin like tool. Following the completion of the two plates I began to vary the strength and depth of the etched lines. When black or brown oxides were added to the lines, their edges became softer and began to blend into the scratches of the textured background. Therefore, the graphic drawings became integrated with the body of the form rather than placed on its surface. Representing political issues and text on the porcelain shapes with black oxides and stark contrast to infer a definitive position on the chosen subjects. Consequently, rendering the lines, images and text with tentative lines, fluctuation in depth of colour, and more

visibility of the textured background offered more movement within the compositions. Through the addition of tones and shades it was possible to infer a less decisive political stance of the narration, which accorded with my hesitation in being too didactic. However, with the following set of work, the narrative, combining form and surface, became the primary focus.

Functional objects are instruments of purpose in that they separate, order and often contain different elements of liquid and solids. The function reflected in each shape and its ability to contain remains unchanged unless a situation occurs where the content of the vessel spills over and the rim of a pot is unable to hold it. In this scenario, the word displacement comes to mind and it is with this word that combining form and narrative occurred. Stories, like forms, contain a range of fragments from our memory, identity, imagination, and interaction. As Bruce Jackson, Professor of American Culture at University of Buffalo, filmmaker and author, notes in *The story is true* 'Stories are forms into which scattered or new pieces of information are poured so they can make sense' (Jackson, 2007, p. 112). However, what if stories or forms could not contain all the information? What would happen if forms and narratives were filled to the brim and overflowed, spilling their contents? Relating these thoughts to the subject of refugees arriving in Australia I made a series of teacups that sat uncomfortably inside one another (Figure 32 & 33 [p 82]). On first recognition of these forms, the handle is appealing and the rim refined. They appear delicate to the touch. On the surface of each cup, a story of migration is told through reference to postage stamps. Each postage stamp depicts a different sea vessel. Postage stamps are evidence of payment usually placed on an envelope or parcel, to carry an item from one destination to another. The postage stamp depicting ships was used to reference this exchange. Historically, postage stamps have carried visual information that commemorate and promote governments and royal families (Reid 1984, 224);

similar to porcelain forms, which have been used to carry images of promotion and propaganda.

Figure 32
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Displacement
2015
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black stain and coloured underglaze
6 cm x 6.5 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 33
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Displacement
2015
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black stain and coloured underglaze
6 cm x 6.5 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

The stamp on the first cup has a rendition of an historical maritime sailing ship, referencing the arrival of British settlers and the establishment of colonies in Australia. The paired cup, which stacks or sits above, depicts a village of huts. While on the base, convict wrist chains reference the convicts who were brought to Australia in 1788 by the British upon their conquest of the land they called Terra Nullius, which subsequently became known as Australia in the mid-1800s. The second pair of cups alludes to migration to Australia following the Second

World War. The stamp with a freight ship sits below a cup with the line drawing of a house and small dark figures (fleeing from where and who is unclear). The third pair carries the cup of a mother and her children running from an army figure, depicting the situation or origin preceding migration. The base cup holds a stamp depicting an Indonesian fishing ship referencing the frequent images of refugee boats that sail perilously from Indonesia to Australia, carrying refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (Bachelard, 2014). Therefore, the displacement of imaginary contents and people involved occurs when one cup is piled upon the other.

The form became an important component in the narrative of displacement. Besides carrying the surface decoration, the form itself played a role within the narrative. Though these pieces are small in size and number, they act as a catalyst to a growing understanding of how form can play an important role in the telling of a political tale. The familiarity of a cup can be used to tell a story, offering a different perspective of its function.
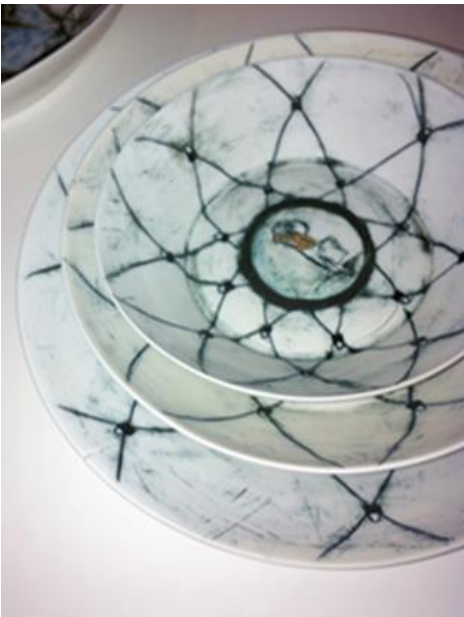
Figure 34
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Border protection
2014
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black oxides
and coloured underglaze
14 cm to 22 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 35
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Border protection
2014
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black oxides and coloured underglaze
14 cm to 22 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

The visual devices employed by Russian artists at the Imperial Porcelain Factory prompted me to consider a decorative pattern titled 'Cobalt net' (Figure 34 & 35 [p 85]). The pattern was produced at the factory before the revolution of 1917 and continues today. Lines of a net are painted over each form within the set, comprising teacups, saucers, and milk jug. As the lines of the net cross one another there is a touch of gold. In place of this, I drew a small black lock, which is a graphic rendition of a symbol from the screen of an iPhone. Both net and lock metaphorically reference the Australian Government's policies concerning border protection. The Liberal Party's immigration policy 'Border protection', passed in 2015, aims to deal with refugees that attempt to arrive to Australian

shores by boat. The policy led to the establishment of the Australian Border Force to 'deliver effective border control over who and what has the right to enter or exit, and under what conditions' (Australian Customs and Border Protection Services, 2015). The image of a lock refers to refugees who are intercepted by the border protection department, and either turned away or taken to off-shore detention centres. Inside the centre of each plate, within a small circle, three imaginary scenarios are drawn: a refugee is represented carrying luggage ready for departure, a boat on its journey, and barbed wire fencing referencing detention centres. These plates were an experiment in appropriating an established pattern to integrate new images and symbols. Drawing from the skilled line work and patterns of the traditional porcelain led me to question my approach to the drawn line. Uniform brush strokes or mathematically calculated spacing is not a personal strong point, however my contemporary rendition of the cobalt pattern offered possibilities. Further development questioned whether to rigidly correspond to formal patterning or to create an open, individual style. On considering line work, exploring a freer, looser approach appealed as the narrative would only be revealed through close inspection. Interpreting the language of design from a formal pattern and rendering the lines and images slightly askew or uneven created a familiar but surprising relationship between the form and the surface. Porcelain factories, throughout their history, have practiced the decoration of formal designs onto ceramic forms. Following decorative techniques of line and pattern to form on work created during the research was a recognition of formal decoration ware. My research continued to adapt patterns and designs from traditional porcelain while refering to the Australian Federal Governments current Border Protection policy.

Figure 36
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Peace is all around me
2015
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black stain and coloured underglaze
14 cm x 14 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

The song *No trouble on the mountain* (1974) sung by American soul musician Richard 'Groove' Holmes, inspired a visual narrative with text to comment on the asylum seeker arrivals (Figure 36 [p 87]). The lyrics describe how being on the top of a mountain would avoid the 'trouble down here below', alluding to a turbulent relationship. Imagining the desperation and hope of refugees (travelling by boat) as the sight of land approaches, encouraged the deployment of these words into a new narrative. Work developed to include layers of colour, in contrast to the plates, and required many firings to achieve depth. The choice of form (decorative rather than functional) echoes the surface narrative, as both retain a distance from physical involvement. The image of boat, land, and sea

are portrayed from the outside, seen from afar. The form, closed and straight-walled suggest it is to be displayed rather than used. However, the rendition of the text and the words in particular are undeveloped. The text is not incorporated into the visual images, often sitting on top of the landscape. As the form is turned, a circular frame holds the image of a small fishing boat in a large expanse of sea. Surrounding the circular motif, a loose ribbon is drawn with another phrase from the song: *peace is all around me*. My aim with this work was to recreate the uncertainty and disillusionment felt by refugees as they leave their homeland. The work produced a discomforting scenario, where juxtapositions between text, proclaiming peace and imagery and a jagged cliff face created an incongruity.

The political landscape

During the research period, from 2012 to 2016, there was commentary by political journalists—such as Michelle Grattan, the political editor of *The Age* newspaper and Chris Ulhmann, ABC journalist for radio, television and print media—on the disputation within the Labor Party. This inspired me to develop two lidded vessels in 2013 to tangibly contain the disunity present within the Australian Labor Party and hide the conflict. The tall-lidded vessel begins with a wide flat base and lifts to form a round bottle like body, approximately 13 cm in height. A lid completes the contour of the shape. Observing and highlighting political situations through the use of metaphorical images in the surface imagery mirrored Stephen Dixon's approach where ideas are suggested rather than proclaimed as statements (Figure 37-40 [p 90 & 91]).

Choosing to comment on the demise of Julia Gillard was however personal. I celebrated the election of Australia's first female Prime Minister. Women are underrepresented in Australia's Parliament and in 2014 only 29% of all Australian parliamentarians were female. The 2011 census noted that the population of females in the country were 50.2% (Mc Cann and Wilson, 2014). However, the discrepancy of gender representation in government and parliament is marked. Consequently, it was difficult to refrain from personally influencing the narrative, beginning with scorn for the masculine role, in this case Kevin Rudd, in deposing Julia Gillard as Prime Minister.

By producing a lidded vessel, I played with the idea of a genie in a bottle. However, the narrative on the surface offered no illusions to magic as the mechanical gears and levers reveal the machinations of a political system. Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd's faces are clearly depicted within mirrored frames, as cogs and wheels rotate around them, shifting the small figures running below them. Painted inside the walls of the vessel's lid is the word 'duplicity', which *The*

Concise Oxford Dictionary (Sykes, 1985, p. 299) defines as double or two-fold. This refers to Kevin Rudd when he publicly declared in 2013 that he would not dispute the leadership of Julia Gillard, which he later did. The eyes, patterned around the work, represent the eyes of the watching public as the Labor Party spill unfolded in the Australian media.

Figure 37
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Duplicity
2014
Melbourne, Australia
Work in progress
Limoges porcelain
2B lead pencil
Approx. 18 cm high
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 38
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Duplicity
2014
Melbourne, Australia
Work in progress
Limoges porcelain
2B lead pencil
Approx. 18 cm high
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 39
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Duplicity
2014
Melbourne, Australia
Work in progress
Limoges porcelain
black stain
Approx. 18 cm high
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 40
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Duplicity
2014
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain and black stain
Approx. 17 cm high
Photo: Andrew Noble

For the two forms titled *Duplicity* (2014), the top of the lid became an open indent, similar to a miniature bowl, resulting in easier movement as one's fingers hold and lift the lid to reveal the hidden text surrounding the interior walls of the lids. The forms and surface imagery of the pieces are successful in a number of ways. Primarily, they require interaction with the form as the lid discloses the title through lifting, and therefore the drawings of eyes and politician's profiles besides cogs and wheels is understood, through walking around or turning the work in your hands. As your eye runs around the form, the small figures on the base link the movement of the cogs and wheels, which appear to grind away. The profile images of Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd mark the work as a record of

political history, thus the personal feelings of the maker play a small role in the narrative. The Russian artist, Mikhail Adamovich, when working as a designer of Russian propaganda porcelain in the State Porcelain Factory from 1917, revealed, through his designs, that space left within a narrative allows room for exchange between images. With this in mind, space was left between the images in the composition to imagine the actual motion and rotation of the cogs.

Figure 41
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
The political landscape – first 3 beakers
2013
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain and black stain
Approx. 17 cm high
Photo: Andrew Noble

The following work, *The political landscape* series began with the idea of capturing the changing issues of Australian politics throughout my research on a group of pots that, when joined together, retold the story of the time (Figure 41 [p 92]). As the Australian federal government changed from Labor to Liberal, in September 2013, issues around detention centres, unemployment, health care,

education and government funded schemes, union involvement, and industrial growth were raised by political journalists. For this body of work three pots began as small beakers and resulted in a collection with straight-sided saucers. One depicts a soft line drawing of a barbed wire fence, referencing Australia's immigration policies and offshore detention centres. The taller beaker has the remnants of voting cards, the House of Representatives and the Senate only slightly visible. This refers to how a political party is elected into the Australian Parliament. The third beaker has a large flag flying over the buildings of a city; reminiscent of flags carried in union rallies which represent each division of the Australian Union Movement. Arbitrary and suggestive though all three appear, they were the beginning of a narrative that evolved over time. Forms chosen for this series were small in scale and ambiguous in function. Beakers and straight-sided saucers sit in rows or stack atop one another in an arrangement resembling a still life. Finishing the work unglazed renders the work a sculptural piece rather than a functional set, as the message on the surface of the beakers or interiors of saucer shapes dominated the interaction with the forms.

For this work I researched the Australian Union movement and the historical banners used at Union marches and demonstrations. For instance, the phrase 'Unity is Strength' is common to t-shirts, flags and banners of the Australian Union movement.[21] Adopting this slogan highlights the situation of disunity within the Australian Labor Party. Inspired by a revolutionary plate designed by Russian artist V. Timorev in 1920 (Figure 42 [p 94]), I borrowed the image of a ribbon to carry the union's slogan. The visual design of a ribbon was traditionally used on porcelain services produced for the Russian Imperial family, to celebrate

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[21] The Australian Labor Party, which began as a worker's party, and the Trade Union movement are historically intertwined with the history of the Australian labour movement. Workers' rights and compensation, pay, and working conditions are championed by both (Cameron 1993, 121).

and honour heroes (Wardropper et al., 1992, p. 21). The red or orange ribbon bordering the Russian revolutionary plate assumes this past implication and utilises its presence to instead favour the Bolshevik state. I replaced the text with 'Unity is Strength', beginning a new decorative device for my work.

Figure 42
V. Timorev (1870–1942)
1921
State Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, Russia
Porcelain, clear glaze, onglaze enamel
Approx. 25 cm

Figure 43
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Unity is strength – part 1
2015
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black stain and
coloured underglaze
Approx. 21 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 44
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Unity is strength – part 2
2014
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with black stain and coloured
underglaze
Approx. 21 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

The surface narrative on the plate titled *Unity is strength* (Figure 43 & 44 [p 95])
is a collection of images that developed over time and with several firings. An
outline of Julia Gillard's face sits beside large numbers, which were the result of
the final internal ballot held between Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd in 2013. A
note stating 'three years and three days', represents the period of Julia Gillard's
leadership. The 'how to vote' card alludes to the federal election in 2013, which
eventuated a change of government from Labor to Liberal. Two small figures in
the bottom left of the composition suggest the internal Labor Party members
during the dispute within the factions of the Labor Party. The profile of Julia
Gillard created an interesting dilemma, as drawing her was a challenge.

Questioning whether to caricature her features or stay true to her image by literally tracing a photo resulted in a decision to produce a clear and simple line drawing. The numbers however are large, thick and distracting. A blue underglaze was painted on the ribbon, and through various firings I attempted to add movement to the ribbon on the edge of the plate. Because the composition was developed over time, the overall movement around the form is rigid and flat.

Figure 45
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Earn or learn
2014
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges Porcelain and coloured underglaze
Approx. 22 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Another plate that uses the ribbon with a short statement or phrase, similar to the Russian propaganda porcelain produced at the State Porcelain Factory is my *Earn or learn* plate (Figure 45 [p 96]). As a result of Lenin's Plan of Monumental

Propaganda in 1918, several artists[22] collected and edited sayings, appeals and phrases 'attributed to... Confucius, Georges Danton, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Marx, St Thomas More...John Ruskin, Leo Tolstoy and the Bible' (Wardropper et al. 1992, 38), which designers incorporated into their designs. In 2014, the Australian Liberal Government released their first federal budget, which contained proposed changes to unemployment benefits. Often repeated in the media during this time was the Federal Treasurer, Joe Hockey's statement 'earn or learn' (Kenny 2014). The Liberal Party proposed that unemployed people less than 30 years old should wait for six months before accessing any benefits. Currently working with the St Vincent De Paul Society in the welfare sector of regional Victoria, my mother explained how challenging this would be for the people she seeks to help and their families. Social welfare is problematic as assumptions and judgements of class and lifestyles can be made that are often ignorant of the full situation. In 2014 The Victorian Council of Social Services media release revealed more than 'one million Victorians are living near or below the poverty line' (Victorian Council of Social Services, 2014). Each ceramic shape produced as a result of the research has the potential to divide audiences, depending on their political viewpoint or opinions. Therefore, I questioned whether to present a political view or to comment on Joe Hockey's statement.

The figure in the centre of the plate originates from a drawing. Walking through the streets, moving from one place to another, a homeless man was pushing his possessions in a shopping trolley. The words of Joe Hockey's proposed budget changes, juxtaposed with this image resulted in a visually stark composition, reminiscent of the Adamovich plate *He who does not work does not eat* (1923)

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[22] Valerii Briusov, Vladimir Friche and Mikhail Pokrovskii with Anatoly Lunacharsky (Wardropper et al. 1992, 38).

(Figure 7 [p 30]). The drawing is rendered in deep blacks with minimal tonal range. The contrast between line work and empty space produces a dramatic effect. Using blue and varying its depth with the movement of the flag attempts to soften the composition. The form of the plate, however, is awkward and dry to the touch. There is no smooth and shiny surface on the exterior to contrast with the interior, which renders the plate unfinished.

Figure 46
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Democracy
2015
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain
Bowls in the making
Approx. 7 cm x 10 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Figure 47
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Democracy
2015
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with blue underglaze
Approx. 7 cm x 10 cm
Photo: Marianne Huhn

Stories have a function similar to three-dimensional objects, in that they both have the ability to contain or hold. Functional objects can literally contain substances, and metaphorically contain ideas, as do stories.

In September 2013, as the Australian federal election was held, a reflection on what voters looked and listened for in a political leader ensued. What democracy is is a complex subject and cannot be defined in an absolute or simple statement. On the website of The Museum of Australian Democracy, democracy is introduced as 'a political system where eligible people vote for candidates to carry out the business of governing on their behalf' (Museum of Australian Democracy 2015). This called into question the possibility of ceramic forms being elected or chosen to represent or mirror ideas of a democratic environment. Deciding to give permanence to words that described values and thoughts, I painted hope, justice, equality, courage, certainty, justice, reason, and vision onto the surfaces of functional bowls. The bowls were conducive to being held, as the walls were round and the form light. Painted in a light blue colour, each word described a value, resolve or wish. During the election campaign I noticed emotive media releases and promotion for Australian political parties was employed to persuade and convince voters.

Each form presented a choice, mirroring a democratic election, this bowl or that bowl, this party or that party. To hold, invest, single out an idea, core belief, or bowl, is similar to how we choose or give preference to one political party over another. It was my aim for the form to reflect parliamentary democracy. The resulting set of bowls titled *Election day* (2015) (Figure 46 & 47 [p 98]) were exhibited in a group show at Beaver Galleries in Canberra 2015.

Following the exhibition, further ideas developed to include different forms in the narrative, such as a plate and cup. Each shape would continue to carry a word around its exterior walls, a significant value or important belief. Therefore, a set or collection of forms would be created through interaction and movement. People could select and combine shapes and words to form their ideal 'party'. Consequently, through the combination of form and surface imagery, a political narrative, which reflected democracy, had evolved.

Figure 48
Marianne Huhn (b. 1969)
Policy: climate change
2015
Melbourne, Australia
Limoges porcelain with brown oxide
Approx. 15 cm h
Photo: Terence Bogue

In 2015, a series of larger tall bowls were created to address policies put forward by the Liberal Party. Using wire fencing as a decorative device, the surface was divided into a diamond like patterning. The wire fence was deliberately drawn with scratches left visible from beneath the surface of the clay, thus interfering with the wires of the drawn fence lines. Applying brown oxide into the line work created a rusty and weathered appearance, uninviting to the touch. By

correlating the function of the form, of separating space, with the surface images of fences that divide and separate, the narrative titled *Policy* (Figure 47 [p 100]) evolved.

Climate change is a major political issue in contemporary Australia. In 2014, the Australian Liberal Party's policy on climate change was against a tax on carbon. Carbon is one of the major emissions released into the atmosphere due to a product's (such as coal power stations) manufacturing process. A carbon tax would increase the cost of a product, usually to the manufacturer, depending on a product's emission of pollution into the environment. Therefore, a carbon tax would aim to encourage cleaner manufacturing processes and thus a reduction in dirty emissions. However, in 2014, the Liberal Government passed legislation to repeal the Labor Party's carbon tax policy, resulting in scrapping the price on carbon.

Mining entrepreneurs, such as Ian Plimer, and scientists, such as Tim Flannery have debated issues of climate change and the policies and actions that surround and address it.[23] Ian Plimer dismissed climate change and its effects on the earth in his controversial yet popular book, *Heaven and Earth* (2009). However, Tim Flannery, in an essay titled*, Now or never: A sustainable future for Australia* (2008) writes of his concern for the Earth and the role we as humans play in its continuum. Flannery poses a challenge, discussing how the 'life-support systems' (Flannery 2008, 130) of Earth are threatened and how we can only avoid becoming destroyers of our own civilisation by understanding how the world works. Implicit in the article is Flannery's opinion that will and leadership are instrumental tools in generating new technologies and solutions

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[23] Tim Flannery is a scientist and environmentalist who was the chief commissioner of the Australian Climate Commission, a body that provided information on climate change to the public, before it was disbanded by the Liberal Government (Australian Broadcast Corporation, *Lateline* TV, 2014).

in the reduction of coal emissions and therefore its impact on global warming and climate change. Strong political declarations from the Australian National Party leader Warren Truss have also been aired through the media as Tony Abbott, possibly influenced by Plimer's views, stated, while attending a Liberal Party dinner in 2009, that the 'science of human-caused climate change was "crap"' (Readfearn, 2015). In 2011, the Gillard Government established the Climate Commission, which Tim Flannery became the chief commissioner of. It provided information away from political debate on the effects and solutions of climate change. In 2013, the Climate Commission was abolished by the incoming Abbott Liberal Government (Arup 2013). Political debate within this area of Australian society affected me personally when visiting Morwell, a town in the La Trobe valley of Victoria in 2015. Possibly, because of personal history[24] the effects and close proximity of the power stations in the town revealed a complex situation following the fire at Hazelwood's giant open cut mine. Toxic black smoke engulfed the town of Morwell for more than four weeks in 2014. The companies running the power station contribute to the town's economy. However, workers and the town's population are affected by the close proximity of the towers. The debate around climate change is a complicated one, involving many different factors: economic, environmental, and scientific. Debate within the Australian parliament, especially from the Liberal Party, has resulted in a closing down of any resolutions or purposeful solutions for communities.

With the political context in mind, I began by re contextualising an image from a Russian propaganda plate designed by Natan Altman in 1919 titled *The land is for the workers* (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 1990, p. 41). The image depicts an

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[24] Although not parallel in any way, I was reminded of 1986 when I was living in Germany and the Russian nuclear accident in the Russian town of Chernobyl occurred. The safety and health consequences were dire and due to the fluctuating weather impacted the population of plants, animals and humans beyond the boundaries of Russia.

industrial scene of angled buildings and towers with a green background. Manipulating the image and adapting it to the twenty-first century's manufacturing processes highlighted the carbon emissions present in the environment. The birds, flying away from the monocle, reference what environmentalists and scientists fear, that because of predicted climate changes to the earth, bird populations are at high risk (Wormworth and Mallon, 2006, p. 3).

Conclusion

In the twenty-first century, the tangible nature of functional ceramic objects stands in contradiction to the ephemeral, fluctuating environment of throwaway objects and quickly changing technologies. Materials can be disposable and forms are made for manufacturing ease. Symbols, signs, slogans, messages, and proclamations surround us and contribute to a chaotic landscape of celebrity endorsements, social media and three-second political media sound bites. We experience digital images, posters, advertisements, political broadcasts of news, and political debates that are disseminated quickly, transitory, and usually incomplete. What we take in and accumulate or recognise is disorganised.

Objects made with the durable material of porcelain hold permanence. I intentionally make objects by hand to promote the importance of touch and a personal dialogue with objects. I use porcelain because it is a malleable medium that can form individual pieces, but also because it has solidity. Functional porcelain shapes are delicate, light and translucent. However, they are also structured, stable, and dependable.

Ceramic forms, either functional or non-functional, have the capacity to be more than vessels. With the addition of surface imagery, the functional object can contribute to our identity because it holds more than physical substances, such as solids and liquids. It can be invested with a meaning beyond its ability to simply function. We look, hold, eat, think, and talk. Through our interaction with functional vessels a personal dialogue can be created. When surface narratives on ceramic vessels carry stories that reflect our lives and our histories they inform our hands, eyes and lips, as well as our beliefs, ideas, and recollections.

Researching ceramic surface narratives created in political environments of both early twentieth century Soviet Union and contemporary democracies has highlighted two common themes: 1) both periods utilise a combination of

historical patterns and familiar motifs and visual elements of the contemporary political environment (whether it be metaphorically, literally or ironically) to create political messages; and 2) words, text and phrases can be utilised in surface narratives to suggest an ideology or play with our perceptions or expectations.

Surface imagery that utilise recognisable designs and patterns of past cultures give context to an established visual identity. Linking Russia's past with its future ensured that the propaganda ware produced at the State Porcelain Factory from 1917 to 1925 borrowed compositions and motifs from traditional decorative porcelain. This served to demonstrate solidity and continuity to the Russian community. By combining decorative techniques from the popular *lubki* and religious icons with contemporary language and signs, such as the hammer and sickle, the new political environment of Soviet communism was realised on surfaces of the Russian propaganda porcelain. Adapting the visual language of previous styles continues a conversation between ceramic form and surface imagery. Therefore, contentious, new or inquiring ideas can be supported. Contemporary ceramic artists, such as Stephen Bowers, Gerry Wedd, and Stephen Dixon whose work engages with political messages give context to the present through the juxtaposition of historical patterns with contemporary images or historical illustrations.

British artist Stephen Dixon reflects the political machinations of contemporary politics by utilising designs and forms of past cultures. During propaganda campaigns, such as those that promoted communist regimes, busts had been utilised to promote leaders and dictators. However, Dixon instead uses the form to champion human rights activists, such as Carl Von Ossietzky, Liu Xiaobo, and Aung San Suu Kyi. The surface decorations of Dixon's *Restoration* (2012) (Figure 16-18 [p 58]) works are a series of three large busts combining different clay, glaze and patterns to refer to each Nobel Prize winner's cultural heritage:

German, Chinese, and Burmese. Political circumstances change, however Dixon's *Restoration* series of busts stand steadfast, and through their material, permanent reminders of each prize winner's determination and political conviction.

Australian ceramic artist Stephen Bowers has chosen to draw references of early colonial illustrations on the surfaces of ceramic forms to give evidence of Australia's past. By combining historical patterns, such as the British willow pattern with illustrations from the history of colonisation, Bowers ruminates on the situation of Indigenous Australians.

Similarly, Australian ceramic artist Gerry Wedd situates his commentary and engagement with contemporary politics by utilising an historical decorative pattern. In Wedd's Abu Ghraib figurative work (Figure 13 [p 50]) the decorative surface of the willow pattern is loosely painted on to the figures. Thus suggesting the objects as ornaments of the 21st century, familiar and forgettable, despite the horrific reality.

Referencing elements of nature and drawing common objects, such as flags or fences, from the environment can suggest a narrative as contemporary. For instance, food coupons were depicted on Russian propaganda ware, which became common in Soviet Russia and symbolised the changes that occurred in Russian society following the 1917 revolution when the Bolsheviks formed the new government. Similarly, the image of wire fencing commonly seen in the Australian farming landscape was included in my ceramic works referencing the fences of refugee detention centres.

A drawn portrait of Vladimir Lenin was included in surface narratives of several Russian propaganda wares to endorse his authority, such as Mikhail Adamovich's cup and saucer set, *Lenin with red star* (1922) (Figure 8 [p 32]). A plate designed during my PhD research, *Unity is strength* (2014) (Figure 43 [p 95]), places a

depiction of Julia Gillard's profile beside numbers that correspond to her political period in government. Collectively, the plates act as witness to each leader's time in power. Conveying political ideas through portraits were also utilised beside sections of mechanical levers, such as cogs and wheels in *Duplicity* (2014) (Figure 40 [p 91]). The images suggested the manoeuvrings and machinations within the federal Labor Party at the time. During the research period both Australian Liberal and Labor federal parties deposed their elected leaders. Kevin Rudd, of the federal Labor Party, deposed Julia Gillard in 2013. In 2015, the federal Liberal Party deputy leader, Malcolm Turnbull deposed the elected Liberal leader Tony Abbott.

Combining words or phrases from the environment or culture onto the surfaces of forms can position elements of the narrative into an existing and current time frame. The Russian propaganda plate designed by Mikhail Adamovich in 1921, *He who does not work does not eat* (1923) (Figure 7 [p 32]) reflects the ideology of the Bolsheviks. While the *Earn or learn* (2014) plate (Figure 45 [p 96]), records, in my view, the incongruous political ideas of the Liberal Party in 2014. Both plates use language to reference beliefs and thoughts that existed during their making.

This project investigated how historical and contemporary ceramics can, through surface images and form, convey political ideas. Engaging with life and using functional porcelain forms with political surface imagery connects the personal and the political. Ceramic forms are essential objects in our lives; we drink and eat from them every day. Holding, touching, and using functional forms which carry political surface narratives can encourage reflection and conversation with our thoughts and peers to emerge.

My research into Russian revolutionary propaganda and selected contemporary ceramic artists expanded my artistic practice and assisted in the development of new visual narratives. Ceramic forms with political surface narratives can act as

tangible documents, and record events; however, I chose to develop images and text that carried my personal perspective and ideas of twenty-first century Australian politics. During the project images that constructed a political narrative developed around disputation and dissonance present in political issues and machinations of Australian governance.

As the making of my functional objects improved, with thinner rims, smoother contours and turned feet, a contrast between the surface images and the form was noticeable. The images and text I drew on the surfaces of the functional forms represented dysfunctional political issues, such as refugees arriving in Australia by boat and the off-shore detention centres, disputations within government parties, and contested political policies, such as climate change.

Producing familiar forms during the research project, such as the cup, plate, and bowl, with new surface imagery depicting conflict created discord. This led me to question what will happen when the forms are picked up, held and touched. Will the contrast between the personal, tactile experience of porcelain form and the dissonance on the surface narrative be obstructive? Or is the tension an inherent one and only through the handling and use of the form might the personal and political be connected?

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Appendix

Copyright letter – Nina Lobanov-Rostovsky

Dear Marianne Huhn: As I've already written you, I have no problem with your including images from my book on Russian Revolutionary porcelain, and you have my permission to do so. However, owner and copyright laws keep changing in the art world and I have no idea who owns the plates now. At the time I wrote my book over twenty years ago, most of the plates belonged to Nicholas Lynn and I had his permission to illustrate them. He died shortly after the book came out.

I prefer not to sign any formal letter as one never knows what that will lead to. At present I have sufficient problems as I'm in the midst of a course of chemotherapy to try and vanquish Mantle Cell Lymphoma, a generalized cancer of the blood. Good luck with your dissertaion.

With best wishes,

Nina Lobanov-Rostovsky

From: Marianne Huhn
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2015 3:02 AM
To: ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇
Subject: PhD - Marianne Huhn

Dear Mrs Lobanov-Rostovsky,
I am writing to you for some help.
I am currently undertaking my PhD in Melbourne, Australia and my subject of research is the Russian Revolutionary porcelain produced during 1917-1927.
I would like to include some images in the dissertation however I am unsure what to do in regards to copyright. I will send you a formal letter for you to sign in regards to the photos produced in your book. I hope that you will be happy to do this as I think it is my only option.
Kind regards,
Marianne Huhn

4/12/14

Marianne Huhn
PhD Candidate, School of Art
RMIT University
Melbourne Australia

Dear Stephen Bowers,

I am completing a PhD thesis at RMIT University in the field of ceramics.

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agree to grant a non-exclusive licence for an indefinite period to include the above materials for which I am the copyright owner, into the electronic thesis for inclusion in the RMIT University research repository.

Regards,

Marianne Huhn

4/12/14

Marianne Huhn
PhD Candidate, School of Art
RMIT University
Melbourne Australia

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t a non-exclusive licence for an indefinite period to include the above materials for which I am the copyright owner, into the electronic thesis for inclusion in the RMIT University research repository.

Regards,

Marianne Huhn

4/12/14

Marianne Huhn
PhD Candidate, School of Art
RMIT University
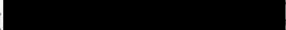Melbourne Australia

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Regards,

Marianne Huhn