

# ARTIST STATEMENT

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The overarching theme dealt with in my work relates to the Space Age - specifically the predictive futuristic approach to product design and the pop culture that came out of the movement. By refurbishing the camp sci-fi aesthetic of the Space Age to fit the new era of human space flight, my work becomes a playful commentary on the commodification of the future and the resurgence of space exploration in contemporary pop culture. Within this commentary, I take an autobiographical approach to investigating the role of objects in the communication of identity. Further influence derived from Mid-Century Modern residential architecture, highlights an interest in aspirational living. In examining the branding of such aspirational living, I explore my own relationship to domestic life. The trajectory of my current body of work moves from defining the Neo-Space Age object, to using said objects in a mock lifestyle brand. This lifestyle brand produces reactions to heteronormative representations of domestic bliss, which leads to markers of reclamation.

Experiences and afflictions often shared within the queer community such as, isolation, internalized shame, addiction and feelings of unworthiness are much of what I attempt to reclaim in my work. By calling upon the feelings and memories surrounding past experiences, I reshape them through a new typology of form. Old memories merge with trajectories of optimism to become markers of reclamation. Values of manual labor impressed upon me by my father are transferred to my studio practice, but on terms that are self-designated. I now use these inescapable values to speculate my own future. In a body of work that has become increasingly autobiographical, my associations with domestic life, relationships, and my psyche surrounding such subjects align to establish a queer space in hetero-dominated territory.

Markers of reclamation materialize as sculptural objects that mimic domestic objects in form, scale, material, fabrication and display. My inclination toward the ceramic medium itself, lies in its relationship to domestic life. The material is an expert at navigating domestic space; it is present throughout the home. It occupies space in the kitchen in the form of dinnerware, a backsplash or the tile on the floor, in the living room it morphs into a vase or a dish on the coffee table, a lamp on a bedside table, and a bathroom could not function without its presence. In stripping the ceramic objects of their functionality and placing them within the context of a lifestyle brand, they disrupt norms associated with the medium. They reference functional ceramic work, but reject traditional presentation. Positioning the viewer in a space between the known and unknown, they transcend time and space, not existing in reality but acknowledging it. It is in this in-between space, that I communicate my reality as it relates to domesticity.

With the introduction of wood and concrete, I cite the material exploration and aesthetic of residential Mid-Century Modern architecture. Practicing an internal 1950s housewife drag of sorts, I am Mrs. Modern. I carefully orchestrate the relationship between the ceramic objects and their structures, so that they may fit perfectly into my fictionalized domestic space. In this space there is order, yet nothing is practical. The objects are optimistic in their coloration, yet they are cryptic. At times the closed forms become confrontational, yet their scale makes them approachable. The oak structures exhibit warmth in their materiality, yet their precarious placement can be unsettling. The implementation of balance, intentionality, and the notion of accessibility are all present, but the site of this lifestyle brand is not one of harmonious domestic bliss. Unable to conform to heteronormative representations of domesticity, the objects are remixed, DIY fragmentations of aspirational living, on an unyielding mission to locate a blueprint for their site. This mission shapes them into devices of queer futuring which, in addition to speculating contemporary aeronautical innovation's impact on the design trends of a futurist consumer culture, probe for signs of habitability.

I use stereotypically masculine labor practices to create objects that assert my identity as a queer man. Building structures from industrial materials that are easily acquired at a hardware store, the skills I employ in making the structures are the very skills that were taught to me by

my father. Raised on a farm, as the only son, I was often tasked with projects such as - building fences, building hay wagons, bailing hay, and chopping wood. The DIY culture surrounding farm life frequently presented me with challenges to my masculinity and, although I rarely enjoyed the work, I became proficient and confident in my abilities. The same emphasis on the value of manual labor that once challenged me to subscribe to stereotypical ideals, now grants me the agency to craft my own future. No longer props in scenes that take up space in my conscious, the devices of queer futuring that I create now hold their own creative agency. Abstracted representations of obsessive thought frozen in sequence, they form a sense of community in their presentation. Unapologetic in their presence, they operate as extensions of self, communicating the identity of the maker through their objecthood. And thus, through the intuitive labor of reclamation, they reveal the maker to himself.

Currently in production, my forthcoming body of work once again positions queer objecthood and queer futuring at the forefront. I plan to further investigate and theorize about such topics by examining queer craftspersonship as it relates to digital craftspersonship within the field contemporary ceramics. By using experimental film, graphics interchange formatting (GIFs), and digital collage, in combination with site specific ceramic instillation and performance, the objective is to take the sub-genre of digital ceramics beyond the confines of production methodologies into the realm of emerging modalities of presentation. Online exhibition spaces and the rapidly growing non-fungible token (NFT) market have the potential to offer viewers new ways to experience digital ceramics. The act of engaging with emerging modes of digital presentation not only indicates a push for innovation within the field of ceramics, but affords an opportunity to make prominent the non-traditional predisposition of my studio practice and provides a proper alternative space for speculating queer subject matter.

