COLORUM
- A CERAMIC INVESTIGATION OF FORM, IN RELATION TO BALANCE AND SPATIALITY

ÅSA JOHANSSON
KONSTFACK
CRAFT! CERAMIC & GLASS
MASTER 2
SPRING 2021
WORD COUNT: 6142
ABSTRACT

I call my project COLORUM - A ceramic investigation of form in relation to balance and spatiality. Colorum means colors in Latin. Dividing the word, color from English, and rum is space in Swedish.

I have investigated the ceramic process through basic geometric shapes. Trying to understand, learn, feel and master the material. Work with and against it, control, and let go of control.

I have been working with casting techniques and exploring the primary forms, challenging the material, pushing the clay norms to their edge. By relating to geometry, I defy myself to create these precise forms in ceramics. I combine soft, colorful glazes on the surface with a strict body that creates a juxtaposition that opposes each other. The journey continued by challenging the precise forms through gravity movement creating imploding bodies. I'm curious about the dialogue and the meeting between different expressions in shapes, material, and volumes.

KEYWORDS
Ceramics - Basic geometric shapes - Process - Construction - Spatiality - Glazes - Curiosity - Playful - Balance - Embody
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am pleased and grateful for the CRAFT! education. My master class for support, happiness, and sharing of knowledge.
An extra thanks to my professors and teachers, Matt Smith, Anders Ljungberg, Andrea Peach, Birgitta Burling, and Bella Rune, for all tutoring, support, good advice, and sharing your broad knowledge.

And a special thanks to the technicians at the ceramic department, Ann-Britt Haglund and Simon Whitfield, for always helping and supporting me. Without you, this work wouldn't be possible.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT 2
KEYWORDS 2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 3

INTRODUCTION 5
-KEY QUESTION / WORKING QUESTION 5
-OVERVIEW OF THE PAPER 6

BACKGROUND 6
-WHY CLAY 6
-EVOLUTION OF FORM 6

PREVIOUS WORKS 8
-SKÖNTGRÖNT- Hydroponic plant cultivation in a public environment. 8
-THREE MOLDS 9

RESEARCH 10
-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ABOUT BASIC GEOMETRIC FORMS 10
-MODERNISM 11
-BAUHAUS SCHOOL 12
-JOHANNES ITTEN AT BAUHAUS 13
-POSTMODERNISM 14
-MEMPHIS 14
-ETTORE SOTTSASS 15
-LUBNA CHOWDHARY 16

METHODS AND PROCESS 17
-PLASTER AND SLIP CASTING 17
-GLAZES 18
-INVESTIGATIONS 20
-SCALE 21
-EMBODY 21

EXHIBITION AND IMAGINARY SPACE 22
CONCLUSION 23
REFERENCE 25
APPENDIX 29
INTRODUCTION

I am attracted to work that centers on the three basic geometrical shapes, the circle, the square, and the triangle. It is exciting to dig deeper and understand how and why it was made. How can you improve it? How do several shapes work together? Is there a dialogue between them? Do they interact with the environment? Is it adapted to the human being or for the space where it is placed? How do the negative spaces look? Are they exciting or not? For me, the negative spaces are a part of the creation and expression.

The themes in my practice have turned into a ceramic investigation of basic geometric shapes. In my work, I want to investigate these shapes further and use them to create a balance between the simplest and clearest elements of design. To make my work embody the clean simplicity of modernity.

In my Bachelor’s thesis in Industrial Design at Konstfack, we had a user-focused perspective on all our projects and did many prototypes to find user-friendly solutions with clear functions. Now I’m studying for a Master of Craft in Ceramics to have the opportunity to immerse myself in different shapes and learn as much as possible about the ceramic materials, the process, and its techniques. I want to understand the process, develop as a designer and artist in the field of ceramics. What will happen when I put the object in focus and not the user?

As a person, I like to see how people interact with different objects. It keeps capturing my interest and curiosity. In everyday life, it's interesting to see how a cup or a vessel is being used or in public spaces where you can see how people move around and relate to sculptures. Objects do not necessarily have to have a purpose, but they can create an exciting attraction. Why do certain forms have an appeal? Is it a feeling, a texture, is it inviting, repulsive, or is it just inspired by curiosity?

KEY QUESTION / WORKING QUESTION

-In what ways can a ceramic process, based on basic geometrical shapes, be developed and investigated?
- What expressions will appear when the user is not in focus? Not asking what the user wants, but asking what the objects turn out to be?
OVERVIEW OF THE PAPER
I will begin this investigation by providing background to my project, my research, and my ceramic practice. Why do I want to learn the characteristics of clay and why do I work with primary geometrical forms? Are simplicity and perfection the key?

BACKGROUND

WHY CLAY
When building prototypes at Industrial Design, we often worked with the industrial clay / tecClay. It's not a natural clay, and you can warm it up and reuse it repeatedly. Even though this clay gets stuck on your hands, and it's pretty hard to clean off, I realized how much I loved to work with my hands and create in the clay room.
I developed a genuine desire to learn the ceramic process, master all its steps, techniques, material, glazes, and difficulties. To find my own ceramic expressions by working with my mind, hands, and body.

While completing an exchange semester at Emily Carr University in Vancouver during my Bachelor's, I had the opportunity to do an introductory course in ceramics, which was one big reason to go there. At the time, we learned how to cast in clay and make molds in plaster - a new technique for me.
Here I discovered how to create by casting in simple molds. In the beginning, it was hard to understand the process since you have to think the other way around when making molds. After a while, I understood more about the process and realized how fun it was. I played around and explored the casting technique. It was like discovering a new world. I learned how to use molds in different ways and build new shapes by joining them together.

So what can I do with this knowledge? In my master thesis, I use the casting technique by exploring the primary forms, challenging the material, pushing the clay norms to their edge. By relating it to geometry, I will challenge myself to create these precise forms in ceramics.

EVOLUTION OF FORM
During my bachelor's in Industrial Design, one of my teachers was Cheryl Akner-Koler, who taught us about the Evolution of Form.
Starting with geometric shapes, each stage in the form's evolution progressed from a base to higher visual complexity. Going through the different stages, Join, Divide, Adapt, Merge, Distort and Organic, where the initial geometrical structure is
transformed to new abstract forms and objects. We worked with the element and their properties in our classes, made clay bodies, experiments with spatiality, movements, axial directions, forces, and curves. Rowena Reed Kostellow was a teacher to Akner-Koler in the 1970s at Pratt Institute, New York City, USA. Reed Kostellow justified the focus on asymmetry in her teaching as a pedagogical strategy. “Symmetry can be beautiful, but symmetry is easy. Any dancer can stand straight on two feet. It’s assuming a dynamic posture with one leg in the air that’s difficult. We demand the dynamic axis because most people can’t handle it. You strengthen your design muscles by becoming disciplined, by learning to do the most difficult things. That will allow you to express yourself more clearly and strongly because you will be able to control exactly what you want to say.”

Cheryl opened my eyes to be critical to forms and learned about relationships that dominate a creative process. This was an important starting point for me. In my work, I am very precise and want to have control throughout the process to get the exact expression I want to achieve. I believe that if I can control the primary forms, I will strengthen my design and art muscles.

Image 1. Evolution of form, Cheryl Akner-Koler.

For my Bachelor’s thesis, I wanted to work with plants and forms that created spatiality.
I made a vertical farming solution for public indoor spaces where you could farm vegetables, salad, and herbs. For my pots, I used the octahedron body. In one pot, two plants were growing opposite to each other. The pots were hanging in a geometric pattern, which created new patterns by looking from different angles. The sharp edges of the pot’s body and the organic plants made an exciting and beautiful contrast. All this created a nice harmonical impression. The stand for the vertical farm was asymmetric, and this made the viewer curious. By walking around it, you could feel the spatiality and see the balance the installation created.
In this project, I used the slip casting knowledge I learned in Vancouver. I also understood that it was possible to make precise forms with sharp edges in high fired-clay. I understood how necessary the craft knowledge was and conceivable to combine Industrial Design with Craft. A combination I like being in between, and I appreciate the complexities in each area.

THREE MOLDS

Image 7. Åsa Johansson, Three Molds.

In the first semester of the master’s, I started with one of the basic geometric shapes, the circle/sphere. I made three half-sphere molds in different sizes. By casting and building some of them together, I started to play around with the forms. To create various looks and patterns, I added color to some of the spheres. We had an exhibition where you could move around the pieces to create different expressions, shadows, and spatiality. For me, the design should look exciting and three-dimensional from every position. It should achieve unity in which every part relates to every other part, and every design relationship contributes to the whole.

At this time, I didn't know anything about glazes, and all my glaze tests failed. I did many tryouts, but every time I opened the kiln, it was a big disappointment. Instead, I chose to spray-paint my spheres with acrylic paint. My ambition to learn the ceramic process felt very far away.
RESEARCH
To understand my interest in geometric forms and put it into a context, I will now explain and go through my research and some epochs in history that are important for me and my work.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ABOUT BASIC GEOMETRIC FORMS
From the 6th century BC. and forwards, geometry started to become a systematic science in ancient Greece. “Eventually it was realized that geometry need not be limited to the study of flat surfaces (plane geometry) and rigid three-dimensional objects (solid geometry) but that even the most abstract thoughts and images might be represented and developed in geometric terms.”

One of the big thinkers was Plato (born 428 BC). His thoughts and ideas have laid the foundation for parts of our conception of the world. He has influenced many thinkers, scientists, philosophers, and artists for millennials after his death. One of his students was Euklides (born 325 BC), who proved the five Platonic solids, convex three-dimensional geometric solids/bodies. In every corner, an equal number of sides meet. I have always been fascinated by platonic solids. When I did my pre-art studies, I worked with “Origami”, the Japanese paper art. It was awe-inspiring to see how the shape came together when you folded the paper. Everything turned out so exact and perfect, and the form was complete. In my Bachelor’s thesis, I used the octahedron body for my pots. The attribute of the shape fit my design and worked very well in my hydroponics system.

Geometry is the field of mathematics where figures’ properties are studied in a room by starting from a set of basic geometric objects, axioms, and definitions. Understanding the visual principle of geometric composition makes you realize that almost everything around us is based on geometry. Kimberly Elam writes about the classic proportioning systems such as the golden section, root rectangle, interrelationships of form, and regulating lines in her book Geometry of Design. All of this, you will find in nature, patterns, architecture, and design. The awareness can give insight into the design and art process and provide visual coherence to my work. Understanding geometry and how the shapes are defined makes it easier to develop as an artist and designer. This got amplified in the Modernist era, where the artists and designers used the primary forms as universal forms.

---

3 Britannica Academic
https://academic-eb-com.ez-proxy.konstfack.se/levels/collegiate/article/geometry/126112
MODERNISM

Modernism was a utopian and very idealistic historical period. It was a revolt against old ideas of art, music, and literature in earlier eras. The modernists wanted to brush the dust off and create something entirely new. In the late 1800s, people began to liberate themselves from authorities and strong religious beliefs that had ruled society before. People were questioning the existing norms in society. They began to think more about rationality and relied increasingly on scientific discoveries. This also came with the belief that man could control and influence his environment.

Against the backdrop of the historical changes at the time, with industrialization and technological breakthroughs like electricity, trains, telegraphy, and radio, it is not hard to see how this came about. With these significant changes, people began to consume things in new ways, they set new standards, and a consumer society started to grow. Alongside these changes, new areas would develop: socially, economically, politically, and also aesthetically, where requirements for a design that had not existed before came through. There was a great need to make cheaper, functional products and build housing for a larger population. Through industrialization, this was possible.

The Bauhaus school’s later years are an example where functionalism and simplicity were customized to the industry. The desire to make standardization of products to a bigger population was made by the thoughts, one shape fits all. This by using the basic geometrical shapes as universal forms. With simple, clean forms, it was easier to mass-produce.

When you think about modernism, the design is abstract with simple geometric shapes and no decorations and frivolities. Designers wanted to show how the product was made by not hiding the construction with other materials. An example of this was Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer’s design of their steel chairs and glass tables.

---

Mass production and technology were glorified, and there was little space for handmade crafts. The organic nature of ceramics was not well suited to modernist principles, and it was no longer welcome alongside modernistic steel and glass furniture. Ceramics was considered deriving from a lower art rather than high art. If a piece of ceramic art should be presented at The Museum Of Modern Art in New York, it should be machine-made and not handmade. It was too complex, domestic, and had too much history and tradition involved within it. “It was simply too messy for modernism to deal with as an artform.” This is why there were less hand-built studio ceramics produced at this time.

BAUHAUS SCHOOL

Despite the fact that the school only existed for 14 years, it had an impressive impact on the design, architecture, and craft history. It started after the first World War in 1919. One of the prominent visionaries was the young architect Walter Gropius who became the principal. A focus on crafts characterized the early years of the schools. All the students had to pass the basic course to learn elementary design as a basis for their future careers in arts. This period was called the romantic years of Bauhaus.

After a few years, this changed, and the craft-oriented school with a lot of space for personal expression was transformed into a strict school of functionalism, modern technology, and industrial production. This connected with the school moving to Dessau in 1925 when the modernistic, utopian period started to have a more significant impact.

“Modern man, who no longer dresses in historical garments but wears modern clothes, also needs a modern home appropriate to him and his time, equipped with all the modern devices of daily use.”

1926 Walter Gropius made some principal statements for the school to develop prototypes for mass production. The form giver (designer) should avoid romantic gloss and wasteful frivolity, limit yourself to simple geometrical shapes and primary colors which are accessible to everyone. They tried to find a design idiom that could fit all, a universal form. The common denominator was reduced to geometrical shapes. One form fits all. By doing this, they thought that there were no cultural, religious, political, and social differences in

---

the design.\footnote{Kristoffersson, S. (2003) Memphis och den italienska antidesignrörelsen. Göteborg, Intellecta Docusys, page 43.} The products' function was necessary, but making them clean and simple doesn't mean they became more functional. During the 1930th, the power of National Socialists grew in the country. They thought Bauhaus school was too provocative, and the school had to close in 1933. Many of the Bauhaus founders emigrated to the UK and USA. The European avant-garde with the strict design language made a considerable impression and praised the Bauhaus style ideal. Students and former teachers continued to work with design and architecture and left marks in both the cityscape and furniture history worldwide. Bauhaus's values have been praised and criticized over the years, and today, 102 years later, the spirit of the Bauhaus continues to be an influence, pretty good for a school that only existed for 14 years.

**JOHANNES ITTEN AT BAUHAUS**

Johannes Itten was a former teacher at the Bauhaus school during 1919 - 1923. He taught his students about the three primary forms, the square, the triangle, and the circle in his famous Basic Course. Itten was inspired by Eastern philosophy, and often, he started his classes with exercises in breathing and relaxing to get the body in harmony and the creativity going. The classes were very dynamic, and often he let his students embody the geometrical shapes by concentrating and doing different kinds of movements. In this way, he made them feel and experience forms to work with and through the shape. For him, it was essential to teach the students to understand and feel the basics. Then it was possible to create almost anything. He explains how the primary forms are "typified by the four different directions in space. The character of the square is horizontal and vertical, that of the triangle diagonal, and that of the circle circular."\footnote{Itten, J. (1975) Design and form : The basic course at the Bauhaus [translated by Fred Bradley], London, Thames and Hudson.}

Students at the Bauhaus learned about the contrast in proportions, perceptions, and positive and negative shapes. How to guide the viewer's eye into a composition. Itten's color studies and key texts are still in print today and are used to inform the foundation studies at many art and architecture schools worldwide. In my pre-studies before Konstfack, I learned how to sketch the basic geometrical forms, shadows, contrasts, perspective and color theories. This historical context has helped me to understand my fascination with geometrical shapes.
POSTMODERNISM

One intention of modernism was to reach out to the broad masses with good functional products and clean, simple design. It was a socialist movement, but the working class rejected the style. The products and the types of furniture ended up in the possession of the higher classes, who are still the ones buying this furniture today.

As a reaction to the strict modernist era, a new movement was developed during the mid-to-late 20th century called postmodernism. It is the name for the series of social and cultural tendencies that worked hard to deconstruct, challenge, and provoke the definition of modernism.\(^\text{13}\) There are no uniform postmodernist looks, styles from different eras are mixed, and old styles are used in new ways. It can be colorful, geometric, playful, pop, friendly to a pattern, and overtly stylish. Something that played a significant role in the emergence of postmodernism was anti-design movements and anti-design groups that popped up in different countries around the world. With a distinctly critical approach towards the existing design and architecture. They were reacting to the political situation in the society, unemployment, the established taste, and the expression “good design,” which the industry used as a marketing tool.\(^\text{14}\) One major anti-design group that has been inspiring to me is the Italian Memphis.

MEMPHIS

The sixty-year-old architect Ettore Sottsass started the group Memphis 1980 together with young designers and architects from all over the world, mainly from Italy. All of them had an urgent need to find a new way to reinvent an approach to design, to make new environments, and to question the agreed formats.\(^\text{15}\) Their first exhibition, “Memphis, the new international-style” 1981, became a scandal and a success overnight. Between the years 1981-1988, they created over 300 objects in ceramics, glass, furniture, textiles, and luminaries. It was collaborations by designers with a different cultural backgrounds who worked by themself or together.\(^\text{16}\) The purpose of their artifacts was to communicate and make expressions, not to be usable.

I think it's engaging with Memphis and their eclectic style, pioneers questioning the existing norms. The way they elaborate with geometry, colors, shapes, combining patterns, and material. A chair doesn’t have to have four legs to stand up. A sphere or a cube can replace a leg. Their work is fun and playful makes me curious and inspires me to dare find new expressions in my work. To find a balance between fun and boring, interesting or unexciting, simple and difficult.

ETTORE SOTTASS
Looking at Ettore Sottsass’s (1917-2007) work gives me the courage to keep developing and exploring as an artist. For me, he is a genius. I am very attracted to the way he works with shapes, colors, patterns, and glaze. He makes compositions by putting forms on top of each other, making pillars, and functional / non-functional sculptures. He creates an environment with his shapes that have a relationship between equilibrium and spatiality, making a creative, fun, and exciting atmosphere. He challenges the ceramic expression in the way he works with precision and volume. I like how he interprets objects and turns them into something playful or non-functional. In my work, I would like the audience to get curious over my pieces, catch their attention, and make them go around my work, feeling it with their mind and body. I want them to be joyful, feel happy, but also precarious over the constructed work. How are they balancing? I hope to create playfulness and a sense of fun in my work.
LUBNA CHOWDHARY
Lubna Chowdhary has a visual language that is outside most contemporary ceramics at the moment. She was born in Tanzania and has a master’s degree in ceramics from the Royal College of Art, London. A lot of her practice has been installations in public buildings. She works primarily with intense colors in tiles format, making patterns with geometrical shapes. Her geometry somehow speaks of modernism and postmodernism. She says “there is a formality to the geometry and the position of the grid which together with the handworked quality of the surface creates a really interesting and dynamic relationship.”

I’m attracted to her work and how she is working in public spaces, creating environments with colors and geometry. I intend to work with public commissions, creating playful and beautiful public spaces where people can walk around, touch, rest, and reflect. I can also see my work in galleries, museums, showrooms, and people's homes, where my pieces can create small installations.

With a background in Industrial Design, coming into the world of Craft, I like to challenge the norm by making objects without user-friendly solutions. To learn to embody the geometrical shapes. To create sculptural sharp forms in clay, which is a material hard to control during the whole process. It does not necessarily lend itself to geometry, so I will try to impose a structure and order to it. To combine soft colorful glazes on the surface with a strict body creates a juxtaposition that makes an opposition to each other. I’m curious about the dialogue and the meeting between different expressions in shapes, material, and volumes.

17 http://lubnachowdhary.co.uk/about/ web page of Lubna Chowdhary, video, time: 05.20.
I have borrowed from both the modernist and postmodernist movements in terms of my theoretical framework, using my industrial design background to push the dialogue further. It has been interesting and provoking to read about these historical movements that continue to inspire and challenge designers like myself.

METHODS AND PROCESS

My practice and my craft are material-based. Hands-on, in the workshop, is where I thrive best, my happy place. For me, the challenge is to understand and master the properties of the material throughout the whole process. The more I learn about the characteristics of the material, the more opportunities I see.

I work with the casting technique, and I am fascinated by the result you can get. I love all the steps it takes to make the final form, from sketches to the glazed final object.

PLASTER AND SLIP CASTING

I started out making plaster molds out of a cube, a rectangular prism, a cylinder, a sphere, and two cones, with different circumferences. I made the cone and cylinder originals in plaster on the lathe and the cube and rectangle as a plaster block. Shellacking them, so they become strong and durable. After that, I started the plaster mold process. It is many steps. You have to think the other way around, be one step ahead. Otherwise, the original quickly gets stuck to the plaster. The more accurate and precise you are, the easier it will be further down the road. You are so close to a plaster disaster all the time, it’s easy to get a leakage, and you have to start all over again. I guess that is what I really like, being so present and organized, one step ahead, and never forgetting the grease, so the molds don’t get stuck in each other.
It is challenging. The bigger shapes you make, the heavier it gets. There is a high pressure of the plaster in the molds, a wrong step, and plaster everywhere. There is happiness and exhaustion of having completed a mold successfully and then tension waiting for the mold to dry in the drying room. After some days, all the water from the plaster has disappeared, and it's ready to be slip cast.

My favorite part is slipcasting. Especially the first time trying the mold, is it going to work or not? In the beginning, I had some troubles with the cube and the rectangular prism, and I poured the clay out way too fast, so there was a back suction, and the clay did not stay along the plaster walls when I opened the mold. After a few days and as many attempts later, I learned that I have to pour the clay out super slow, and it worked.

Clay is difficult material. It is hard to control during the whole process. In some parts, you are helpless, and some factors you can handle. It lives its own life, having molecules remembering every step the hand has made. Pouring liquid clay into a plaster mold and then opening it a few hours later and it has been imaged precisely as the inside of the mold looks like is so incredible. It is now all the work in the plaster room pays off.

Now I began my experimenting part, joining some forms together while the clay still was wet. To find the character, proportions, and balance in the forms, trying to create harmonic objects.

Image 17, 18, 19. Åsa Johansson, Casting process.

GLAZES
Starting this ceramic journey some years ago, I didn't know how to make my own glazes. I failed the whole last year when trying. But I know it would be an essential part of my work, something necessary to learn and manage in my ceramic process. Glazes can add different life to the objects, depending on the surface and colors.
Through the glaze, the objects get various statements and evoke emotions. The visual perception depends on lights, depth in the hues, structures, and the object's attraction.

To elaborate my knowledge, I went to a glaze course at Capellagården, Öland, Sweden, last summer, where I had the Swedish glaze expert Anders Fredholm as a teacher. It was a theoretical course where I learned how different natural materials behave, work, and react. Alone and together with others.

It was a game-changer for me, I learned so much, and now I have a better understanding of controlling and making the colors, surface, and shades I want. This takes a lot of time, and I have done endless experiments. It's not until some days later you can see the final results when the samples have been high fired in the kiln.

My work is rigorous and precise, but I can't control what happens in the glaze kiln, where the object gets permission to its own look. This adds depth and expression to work. This is something I use and appreciate. I am very inspired by colors and different color combinations. How complementary colors work very well together, like yellow and purple, green and orange. Purple and turquoise make a fun and crazy mismatch, and I love how color combinations turn me on and make me happy.

Pink, orange, and purple are favorites and have always been. Yellow, as the sun, my parent's kitchen, butter, flowers, summer, lemons, and happiness. That is why I am experimenting a lot with yellow glazes. Using yellow stains and finding beautiful yellow gradations without stains by using natural materials, like red iron oxides, nickel, and titan.

In the modernist era, they worked with the primary colors, red, blue, and yellow. Not a combination that I like. The postmodernist reacted to this and worked a lot with pink, which was not seen as a beautiful color at that time. My work will be very colorful, and I look forward to exhibiting it to see people's reactions.
INVESTIGATIONS

I have been casting many geometrical forms to get up in volume to create a form library, and I have been experimenting with glazes on my work to see how the glaze behaves. I am working with color combinations, complementary colors, the color tone in tone, contrasts of the surface, different shades, and the deepness in some of the glazes. Through my form library, I can create various installations and work with spatiality and balance to find the character, proportions, and objects related to each other with multiple colors and sizes.

I am reflecting and asking myself. Is there a dialogue between the forms? Do they interact with the environment? Who is the observer? How are human bodies moving in relation to the object and space? Are they including or not?

I want to create curiosity and playfulness with my forms. To evoke people’s minds, make them interested, and get their attention through the colors and the simplicity. The forms should look exciting and three-dimensional from every position. I want to find the balance in the object and in the environment where it is placed. For me, the negative spaces, the light, and the shadows are part of the creation and expression. To be aware of the existing volume of air around my objects and activate the negative spaces around and between my forms. I am using space as a tool.

Image 22. Åsa Johansson, Creating spatiality with ceramic forms.
SCALE
I want to cast more significant objects, go up in scale. Create larger volumes to make spatiality for the human body. Again challenge the clay to see if it's possible to cast massive objects in plaster molds. This is heavy, and therefore, I am researching and trying to develop a sustainable, ergonomic way to cast big forms with less clay. I have not yet succeeded, but I am working on it. It takes a lot of time, effort, and knowledge.

EMBODY
Now I know how to impose a structure and order to the clay, control it, make sharp edges and get the exact form that I challenge for. This has been a difficult task since clay is an organic material. At this moment, there are similarities to modernism in the outcome of my objects. My next step has been to work with gravity, movement, and forces by dropping the clay bodies into a hard surface. To work against the geometrical structure. Defying myself, not working with perfection, has given me new results. Through distortion, my forms get empathy and a new life. The objects are imploding by themselves. The forms are still alive but frozen in a movement. Is this what the objects want to be? A new curiosity takes form and is questioning the agreed formats. Is this the object's reaction to the strict geometrical shapes? Is the perception about the primary forms through the body's distinction changing? By moving to the next step, I challenge modernism in my work and remove the original sharp and straight lines to create something different in a new shape - a reaction like postmodernism.

EXHIBITION AND IMAGINARY SPACE
COLORUM - A ceramic investigation of form in relation to balance and spatiality.
My goal is to exhibit a spatial, balanced, and playful installation that relates to basic geometrical forms. I am planning to have three-five pieces. One is with yellow cubes on the wall. Around 15 cubes in different shades and structures of yellow, from soft to dusty. The colors work by themselves in a strict form.

Image 25. Åsa Johansson, Sketches.

The other pieces will be ceramic pillars with geometrical forms piled on each other. In different heights, creating a dynamic tension and relation between them. The bottom part of the pillar will be embodied forms, showing the gravity and some hierarchy. They will be in colors, of course, but I haven't decided exactly yet. Combining soft, colorful glazes with different textures on a surface with a rigid body makes opposition to each other. Each person has their own color palette. This will be mine.

CONCLUSION

"Why basic geometrical forms?" is the question I have received in every feedback session and tutorial. Maybe I haven't been distinct enough, or perhaps it's hard to understand that a student wants to work with these simple forms. But that has been my way into the craft and ceramic world. Never underestimate the difficulties in simplicity.

Key questions:
- In what ways can a ceramic process, based on basic geometrical shapes, be developed and investigated?
- What expressions will appear when the user is not in focus? Not asking what the user wants, but asking what the objects turn out to be?

Working with my key questions during these two years has helped me work freely and without boundaries. It has also helped me to learn and master the material and techniques. My questions are great. I can work with them forever. It doesn't have an end. But now, I have to reflect, analyze and make a conclusion. I have understood that I need control during each step. In my work, I am very precise and want to have control throughout the process to get the exact expression I want to achieve. If I can verify the primary forms, I will strengthen my design and art muscles. But I have also let go of control. To work against the geometrical structure. Defying myself, not working with perfection, has given me new results. Through distortion, my form has got empathy and a new life. Some of the objects are imploding by themselves. Is this the object's reaction to the strict geometrical shapes? Yes, the forms present themself in their own unique way.

My happy place has been in the workshop. It is where I thrive, hands-on, with the material and all the techniques. I have been working with the casting technique and exploring the primary forms, challenging the material, pushing the clay norms to their edge. By relating it to geometry, I have defied myself to create these precise forms in ceramics. It is a fantastic feeling to open the plaster molds and see how the clay has imaged precisely of the mold, and even more adrenaline and excitement to open the glaze kiln and see if you succeeded or not. I challenge the clay, but the clay and the process have also challenged me. Many times. It takes a long time to learn. I guess you will never learn 100 %. By becoming one with the material, you take small steps forward in the development curve.

One important key in the development has been to master the glaze from zero to hero. Learning and understanding how different natural materials behave, work, and react alone and together helped me in my work incredibly much. Now I have a better
understanding of controlling and making the colors, surface, and shades I desire. My work is rigorous and precise, but I can't control what happens in the glaze kiln, where the object gets permission to its own look. This adds depth and expression to work. This is something I use and appreciate.

I am proud of myself. I believe and know that I have put all my time and energy into this project. My ceramic field knowledge has expanded, and I have learned so much about the ceramic process, which was one of my main goals with this work.

Image 27. Åsa Johansson, My final masterwork exhibited in the Spring Exhibition at Konstfack, May 2021.
IMAGE REFERENCE
Image 1. Evolution of from, Cheryl Akner-Koler.
Image 2. Åsa Johansson, SköntGrönt.
Image 3. Åsa Johansson, SköntGrönt.
Image 4. Åsa Johansson, SköntGrönt.
Image 5. Åsa Johansson, A room in a room.
Image 6. Åsa Johansson, A room in a room.
Image 7. Åsa Johansson, Three Moulds.
Image 8. Marcel Breuer, Wassily Chair.
https://www.steeldomus.com/se/coffee_table_mies_van_der_rohe.htm
https://www.artsy.net/artwork/ettore-sottsass-tahiti-table-lamp-italy
Image 11. Peter Shire, Memphis Group, Bel Air Chair.
http://petershirestudio.com/memphis/
https://www.yatzer.com/agenda/events/celebrating-ceramics-100-jaar-ettore-sottsass
http://lubnachowdhary.co.uk/projects/standard-hotel-standard-hotel-london/
Image 14, 15, 16. Åsa Johansson, Plaster and casting process.
Image 17, 18, 19. Åsa Johansson, Casting process.
Image 20, 21. Åsa Johansson, Glaze tests.
Image 22. Åsa Johansson, Creating spatiality with ceramic forms.
Image 25. Åsa Johansson, Sketches.
Image 27. Åsa Johansson, My final masterwork exhibited in the Spring Exhibition at Konstfack, May 2021.
Image 28, 29. Åsa Johansson, Ceramic pillars creating spatiality together with the cubes attached to the wall. The height of the pillars is between 180 cm to 240 cm and each cube is approximately 16 x 16 x 16 cm.

Image 30. Amanda Nordqvist, Photo from the examination surrounded by my work together with my examinator Anton Alvarez and classmate Sofia Bhalner.

Image 31, 32. Fredrik Agustsson, Plaza Kvinna, nr Beauty 2021, page 73, 87. The model is showing clothes while interacting with my ceramic sculptures.

Image 33, 34. Fredrik Agustsson, Plaza Kvinna, nr Beauty 2021, page 75, 88. The model is showing clothes and shoes while interacting with my ceramic sculptures.

Image 35, 36, 37. Åsa Johansson, The two final sculptures. The distorted forms meet nicely and very well together, and the glazes have a depth and gloss that catches to the viewers.

Image 38, 39. Åsa Johansson, This pillar is called DISCO DONNA.

Image 40. Åsa Johansson, Photos from the Spring Exhibition at Konstfack, May 2021.

Image 40. Åsa Johansson, Photos from the Spring Exhibition at Konstfack, May 2021.

Image 41, 42. Åsa Johansson, Photos from the Spring exhibition at Konstfack, May 2021.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Britannica Academic
https://academic-eb-com.ez-proxy.konstfack.se/levels/collegiate/article/geometry/126
Web page of Lubna Chowdhary, http://lubnachowdhary.co.uk/about/

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akner-Koler, C. (2007) Form & Formlessness, Questioning aesthetic through art projects, cross disciplinary studies and product design education. Chalmers Tekniska Högskola


Fredholm, A. (2019) Glasyr


APPENDIX

REFLECTION
It was a nice and great feeling to sit surrounded by my sculptures during the examination of my master's work, COLORUM - A ceramic investigation of form, in relation to balance and spatiality. The exam exhibition was in the exhibition area of the White Sea at Konstfack. Finally, everything was in place and installed just as I wanted it to be.

Image 28, 29. Åsa Johansson, Ceramic pillars creating spatiality together with the cubes attached to the wall. The height of the pillars is between 180 cm to 240 cm and each cube is approximately 16 x 16 x 16 cm.

The examination was fun, interesting, and instructive. Anton Alvarez, who was my examiner, did a great job. When I researched him, I saw that we have a lot more in common than I first thought. None of us come from the typical craft background. Instead, we are interested in clay as a material and how you can work with it through different engineering techniques. We are very meticulous, precise and have done a lot of preparation before the sculpturing occurs. Anton presses clay through his extruder, which makes distorted sculptures, and my technique is to cast in plaster molds, throwing my geometrical forms on the table or on each other, by using gravity.
Which also creates distorted sculptures. He also likes strong colors, and he plays with color combinations, just as I like to do.

I enjoyed my examination very much, I felt proud, and I could answer all the questions in a good way with confidence. Furthermore, to have the examination together with Sofia Bhalner, my classmate in CRAFT! who comes from the textile department was very nice and a good match. Like me, she works with spatiality, colors, structures and wants to make the audience curious. Sofia and I have, during these two years, explored our different materials in many ways, done millions of tryouts, and have spent all our hours in school. Therefore, I think both of us were well prepared, and together with Anton, we all had a good and rewarding discussion.

The wall labels next to my work were not ready in time, typical for me! So that is a thing that I must improve. How? I don't know. I don't love to write, and it takes a lot of effort, but it is necessary to learn to handle this.

A good lesson to learn is to have extra ceramic pieces if it is possible. Ceramics are fragile and can easily break if you are not cautious enough. For example, when I was building one of my pillars, a big and important piece broke. Luckily, I had an extra one that worked out.
After the examinations, we had five weeks until the big Spring Exhibition. I felt that I had to do two more ceramic pillars. One lower, which was not so tall, so you could look on top of it and relate to it with your human body. And another one, to make an uneven number of ceramic pillars to create the spatiality I wanted to achieve. I also realized that I wanted to make the pillars more color-matched, the tone in tone. To get more harmony and a peaceful feeling. During the final tutorial with Birgitta Burling, one of our professors, we discussed glazes and colors, and she encouraged me to stick to my ideas, work with strong colors and keep it clean. This made me decide to make a blue-purple and a pink-red pillar. Another thing was to work with the forms meetings in the sculptures to make them fit even better together, new challenges to handle. I know that my spot for the Spring Exhibition was in the White Sea, and I wanted my work to take place, so I decided to make more yellow cubes to put on the wall. A lot of work in the workshop again, days and nights.

At the same time, I uploaded my work on Instagram and immediately got questions if they were for sale, how much they cost and if it was possible to borrow them for showrooms and photoshoots for magazines. What a great, fantastic response and feeling. Super fun, and I am so happy that my work is appreciated.
A day in May, one of my best days, was when Plaza Women Magazine asked if they could borrow my ceramics for a big high fashion photoshoot. I was there the whole day installing my work and helping out with the set design in place. Two models were interacting with my sculptures modeling clothes and jewelry. To see the human bodies interact, play, and act with the ceramics was so much fun, a great feeling. There was an including dialogue between the human body and the forms. As I have written earlier in this paper, my goal has been to evoke people's minds, make them interested, and get their attention through the colors and the simplicity of the forms. Suddenly this just happened! Wow, very cool and fun.

Image 33, 34. Fredrik Agustsson, Plaza Kvinna, nr Beauty 2021, page 75, 88. The model is showing clothes and shoes while interacting with my ceramic sculptures.
Åsa Johansson, The two final sculptures. The distorted forms meet nicely and very well together, and the glazes have a depth and gloss that catchers to the viewers.

I don’t understand that I actually made two more pillars due to this hectic time period, but I did, and I am thrilled about that. It felt like they worked very well together and took the space nicely. I placed all my five ceramic pillars with both symmetry and asymmetry, so one stopped the natural way of walking, another one close to the yellow cubes, two shorter ones next to each other, and the tallest one out in the ocean close to Josefin Gäferts woven textiles, where the match each other very well. The 24 yellow cubes were placed on the wall, four in a row horizontally and six in a row vertically.

Åsa Johansson, This pillar is called DISCO DONNA.
Image 40. Åsa Johansson, Photos from the Spring Exhibition at Konstfack, May 2021.

Image 41, 42. Åsa Johansson, Photos from the Spring exhibition at Konstfack, May 2021.
It was interesting to watch people coming into the exhibition, looking at my ceramic pillars, walking around them, taking photos, studying the glazes, and then continuing to all the other exhibitors. Seeing that many people came back, to look even more at my work and study them deeply was very fun. They were also curious about the constructions, like how the cubes were attached to the wall or how the pillars could stand up securely without falling. How the cubes were made, which materials, and how I worked with distortion and glazes. For me, it was intriguing to see the interaction between human bodies and my ceramic work. The spatiality they created and how my sculptures got the space they needed by seeing people, young and old, walking around them.

Another reflection was that my pillars and cubes spoke their own language, standing there by themselves. When I exhibited Industrial Design, I had to stand there all day explaining my work, my thoughts, background, and how the construction worked and could be used. Now due to Covid-19, we were not allowed to be there all the time. But it was not necessary to explain everything since they are pieces of art.

My work takes and needs its space, it is also very fragile, but it’s mountable and quite easy to unpack and transport. That makes me independent and strong, which feels nice for future exhibitions and adventures.