

thesis

This body of work will use functional ceramics and the act of sharing a meal to create an environment of empathy and conversation among viewers.

project proposal

I want to fight against the blind hate surrounding the cultural and societal divides in our country. My goal is to create an environment of conversation, a setting that brings people together in dialogue. Sharing a meal is an intimate act; it is a sign of trust, invitation, and empathy, and I want to provide a place where people feel safe exchanging ideas. My work will consist of a set of 20-30 dishes to be used at my show reception, along with other ceramic vessels that will be displayed in the gallery. These may at times subvert the conventional aesthetic and purpose of the vessel to represent issues we encounter in conversation and ways we can better connect with each other. I want my viewers to tangibly connect their own bodies to the work through their use as dishes, but to also connect with each other over my work. In this way, my dinnerware is a vessel for not only physical, but also metaphysical, sustenance.

artist statement

Amalia Wills is a multimedia artist residing in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee. She will be finishing her BFA in studio art and minor in creative writing in December 2020, and a BA in art education in 2022. Though her work spans many mediums, she focuses mainly on ceramics and drawing as ways of connecting both with herself and the natural world around her. She has a love of texture, light and shadow, and dynamism and energy, as well as functionality and utility. Her work often poses difficult or deep questions and leaves viewers contemplating the answer and its impact on the world. Her senior show, bodies, features both functional and decorative ceramics as a vehicle for social equality and community.

show statement

"Words had to change their ordinary meaning and to take that which was now given them. Reckless audacity came to be considered the courage of a loyal ally; prudent hesitation, specious cowardice; moderation was held to be a cloak for unmanliness; ability to see all sides of a question, inaptness to act on any. ... The advocate of extreme measures was always trustworthy; his opponent a man to be suspected....To forestall an intending criminal, or to suggest the idea of a crime where it was wanting, was equally commended until even blood became a weaker tie than party, from the superior readiness of those united by the latter to dare everything without reserve. ... Meanwhile the moderate part of the citizens perished between the two, either for not joining in the quarrel, or because envy would not suffer them to escape."

-Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War Book III, 43 I BC

show statement, cont.

Born pre-Covid and pre-election season, bodies has a special significance in its timing. It is a show about connection and disconnection, humanity and inhumanity, and the tendency of people, especially online, to polarize around issues and forget the middle ground. There is a loss of empathy, a loss of compassion that occurs when we place ourselves behind a screen. When someone is just a pea-sized picture and an opinion, it's easy to reduce that person to a flat manifestation of their beliefs, one-sided, black and white. Simple.

But it's never that simple.

We're tired of being preached to. I know that. But the truth is that it is up to us to change things. To stop assuming. To stop the anger, the hatred, the blind rage that so readily finds a voice and an audience online. It's up to us to start looking closer, to look inward, to reprogram ourselves back to before we forgot what we would and wouldn't say to someone's face. To rediscover our humanity, our form, our likeness to each other, our shared bodies.

Amalia Wills Studio Artist

PERSONAL PROFILE

I am a studio art/art education major at Austin Peay State University. My work is focused in ceramics, but spans many mediums, both 3D and 2D. I am a strong communicator and listener, and enjoy learning new skills.

CONTACT

Phone: 615-335-4157 Email: a.necap@tds.net Instagram: @casthegreater

EDUCATION

BFA (pending) in Studio Art BA (pending) in Art Education Minor in Creative Writing Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN. Expected graduation: December 2022.

SKILLS

- Ceramics (wheel throwing)
- Drawing (traditional and digital)
- Sculpture
- Printmaking (relief and screenprinting)
- Painting
- · Creative Writing
- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Premiere

EXHIBITIONS

• 2020	Solo Exhibition: bodies, The Beach Gallery, Clarksville, TN
• 2020	Group Exhibition: 52 Annual Juried Student Exhibition,
	The New Gallery, Clarksville, TN
• 2019-20	Group Exhibition: Cummins Station, Nashville, TN
• 2019	Group Exhibition: The Beach Gallery, Clarksville, TN
• 2018-19	Group Exhibition: Cummins Station, Nashville, TN
• 2018	Group Exhibition: Measuring Histories, The New Gallery,
	Clarksville, TN, curated by Sonya Clark
• 2018	Group Exhibition: Different Strokes, Grey Zone Gallery,
	Clarksville, TN
• 2016	Group Exhibition: The Frist, Nashville, TN

EXPERIENCE

Austin Peay State University

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•	2019	Graphic Designer: Designed pamphlets and brochures for		
		the Languages and Literature Department		
•	2018	Southern Festival of Books: Worked at the Zone 3 Press		
		booth selling literary journals and books		
•	2017-18	Studio Monitor: Monitored and cleaned the sculpture and		
		ceramics studios		
•	2016-17	CECA Illustrations: Created three illustrations to accompany		
		poems on posters for the Center of Excellence for the		
		Creative Arts at Austin Peay SU		

Freelance Artist

•	2012 -	Deliver art of varying mediums to clients based on
	present	specifications

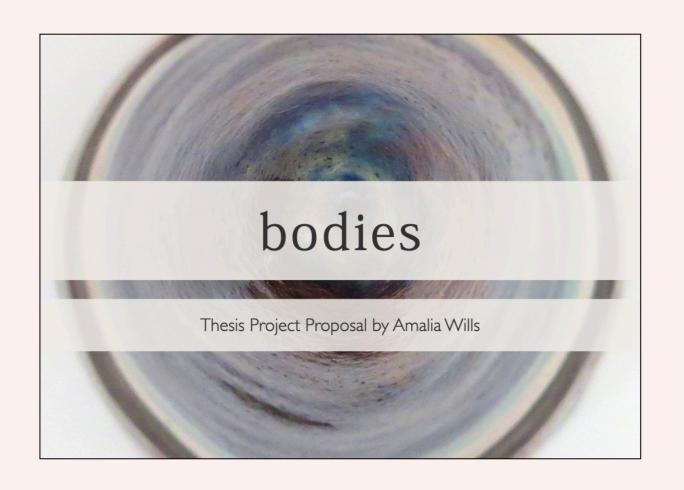
Photographer

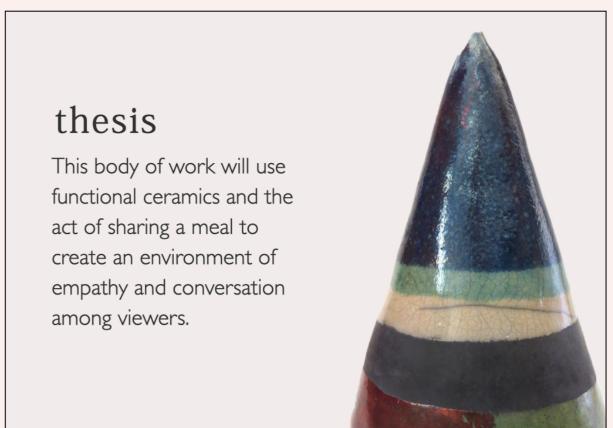
2012-13 Documented Grace UMC's annual Vacation Bible School program

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

• 2016-20	Dean's List
• 2016-19	CECA Creative Writing Scholarship
• 2019	AWP Conference Attendee
• 2019	Art in Rome Study Abroad Program
• 2016-18	CECA Art Scholarship
• 2017-18	US Bank Art Scholarship
• 2018	Reader at Bread and Words

proposal presentation





project proposal

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research



Amalia Wills Window, 2019 Marker on glass



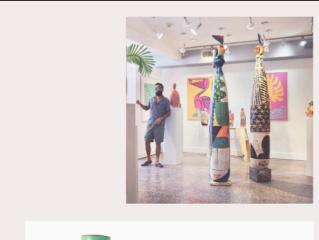
sociopolitical research

- https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/we-were-madefor-civil-war/
- https://www.ketchum.com/there-is-a-creative-echo-chamber-nowwhat-are-going-to-do-about-it/
- https://www.kqed.org/news/11703717/how-social-media-echochambers-drown-out-the-voices-in-the-middle
- https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/ fiorina_finalfile_0.pdf
- https://www.people-press.org/2019/12/17/in-a-politically-polarized-era-sharp-divides-in-both-partisan-coalitions/

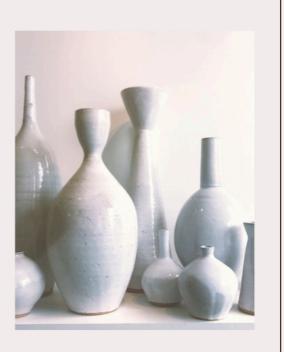
visual inspiration/ research



Adam Russel of Key West Pottery









Ceramic vessels by Huskmilk Pottery



Ceramic vessel by Huskmilk Pottery

conceptual inspiration/research

body as a vessel

- The Body as a Vessel: https://www.youtube.com/watch? v=sMQhANUUB8o&feature=youtu.be
- Julian Stair's exhibition: https://www.youtube.com/watch? v=pdGCft1Rfcw
- $\bullet \quad \text{``Being'': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ykoif_J0_ME}$

anechoic and reverberation chambers



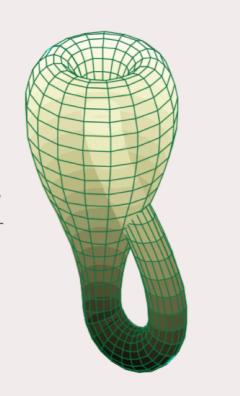
Anechoic Chamber



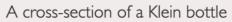
Reverberation Chamber

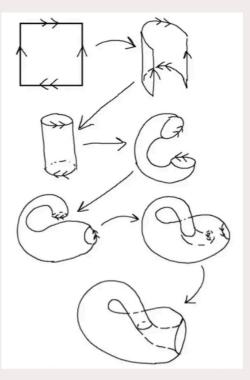
klein bottles

- https://www.youtube.com/watch? v=AAsICMPwGPY
- http://mightoughtashould.blogspot.com/ 2010/02/how-to-make-klein-bottle-in-neasy.html

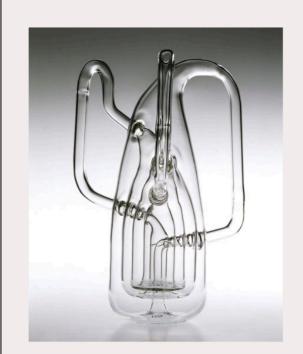








How to create a Klein bottle





Glass Klein bottles by Alan Bennet



"It's not functional, but I'm following the functional form."

Jiha Moon LOL, 2015 Earthenware, underglaze, glaze







Inverse Place Settings, 2010

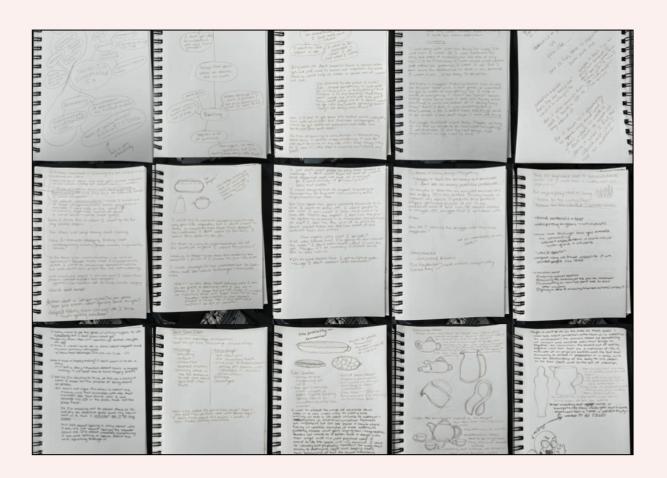


Barbara Kruger Left: We Have Received Orders Not To Move, 1982

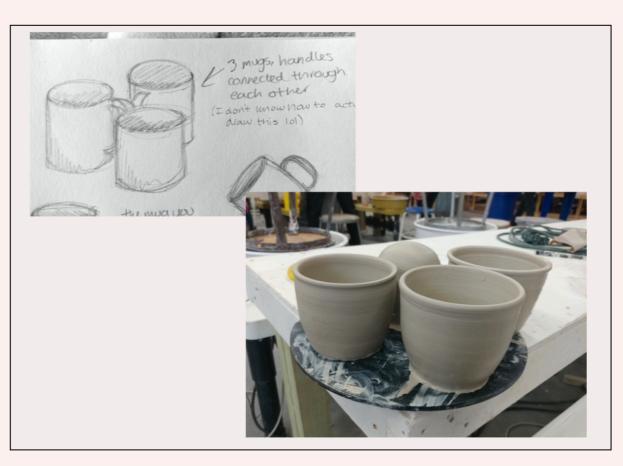
Above: Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground), 1989







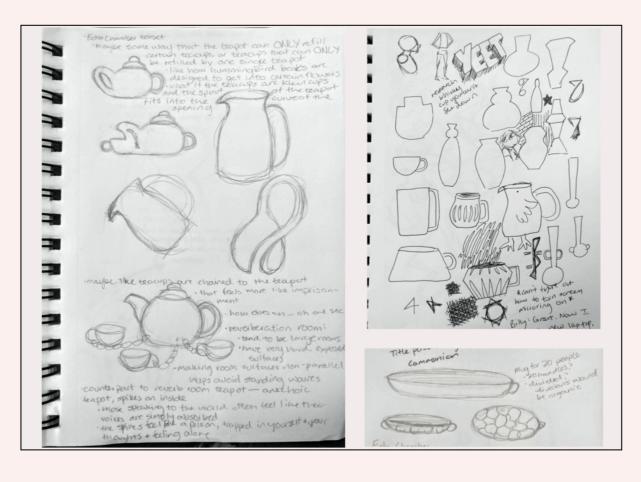












timeline

- Week 3 (Feb 2-8)
 - · Continue research into contemporary and historical functional ceramic artists
 - Historical significance of functional ceramics, especially in bringing people together/uniting people
 - · Check out all the links Virginia sent me
 - · Research glazes and surface treatments
 - Work to develop throwing skills
 - · Make proposal powerpoint
- Week 4 (Feb 9-15)
 - Meet with Billy (Official Mentor Meeting 1)
 - Continue research
 - Continue studio practice (document progress)
 - · Clarify scope of project
 - Practice proposal powerpoint
 - · Present proposal to faculty (Feb. 14)

- Week 5 (Feb 16-22)
 - Continue research
 - · Order Val Cushing's book on glazes
 - Buy supplies for studio
 - · Meet with Wansoo (either this week or next)
 - Talk about historical significance of ceramics and his personal use of internal decoration on his work
 - Continue making work (document progress)
- Week 6 (Feb 23-29)
 - Continue research
 - Continue making work (document progress)
 - · Focus on making sets of dishes
 - · Evaluate conceptual development of project to this point
- Week 7 (Mar I-7)
 - · Continue research
 - Continue making work (document progress)
 - · Continue thinking conceptually; put thought into setting and surroundings
 - · Make plenty of sketches as ideas come

- Week 8 (Mar 8-14)
 - Continue making work (document progress)
 - · Continue thinking conceptually; put thought into setting and surroundings
- Weeks 9-11 (Mar 15-April 4)
 - Begin preparing for progress reviews
 - Continue making work (document progress)
 - · Continue thinking conceptually; put thought into setting and surroundings
- Week 12 (April 5-11)
 - · Prepare for progress reviews
 - Continue making work (document progress)
 - · Get a concrete idea of setting and surroundings; do the design work
 - · Explore options for studio access in summer

- Week 13 (April 12-18)
 - Put finishing touches on progress review work
 - · Continue making work (document progress)
 - Meet with Tobias about building "set pieces" for show; see if that's something to
 do next semester (probably, and probably a good idea to wait in case my ideas
 develop more or go a different direction)
 - Progress Review (April 17)
- Week 14 (April 19-25)
 - Continue making work (document progress)
- Week 15 (April 26-May 2)
 - · Glaze and fire
- Week 16 (May 3-7)
 - Finals
- Summer
 - · Continue to work in the studio, or find somewhere else I can practice
 - · Refine conceptual side of project
 - · Specific research into glazing, surface treatment, and firing technique

task list

- · Continue research
 - · Watch videos on how potters practice consistent sizing
 - · Learn how to make plates
- Meet with Wansoo
 - Talk about historical significance of ceramics and his personal use of internal decoration on his work
- Continue making work (document progress)
- Visit local ceramics master to discuss ideas and glaze recipes (February 22)

special concerns

- Having studio access in the summer, especially living an hour and fifteen minutes away
- · Learning how to use the kilns and mix glazes



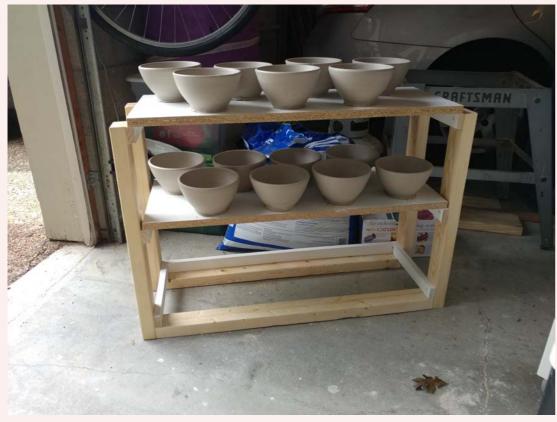
progress

spring/summer studio



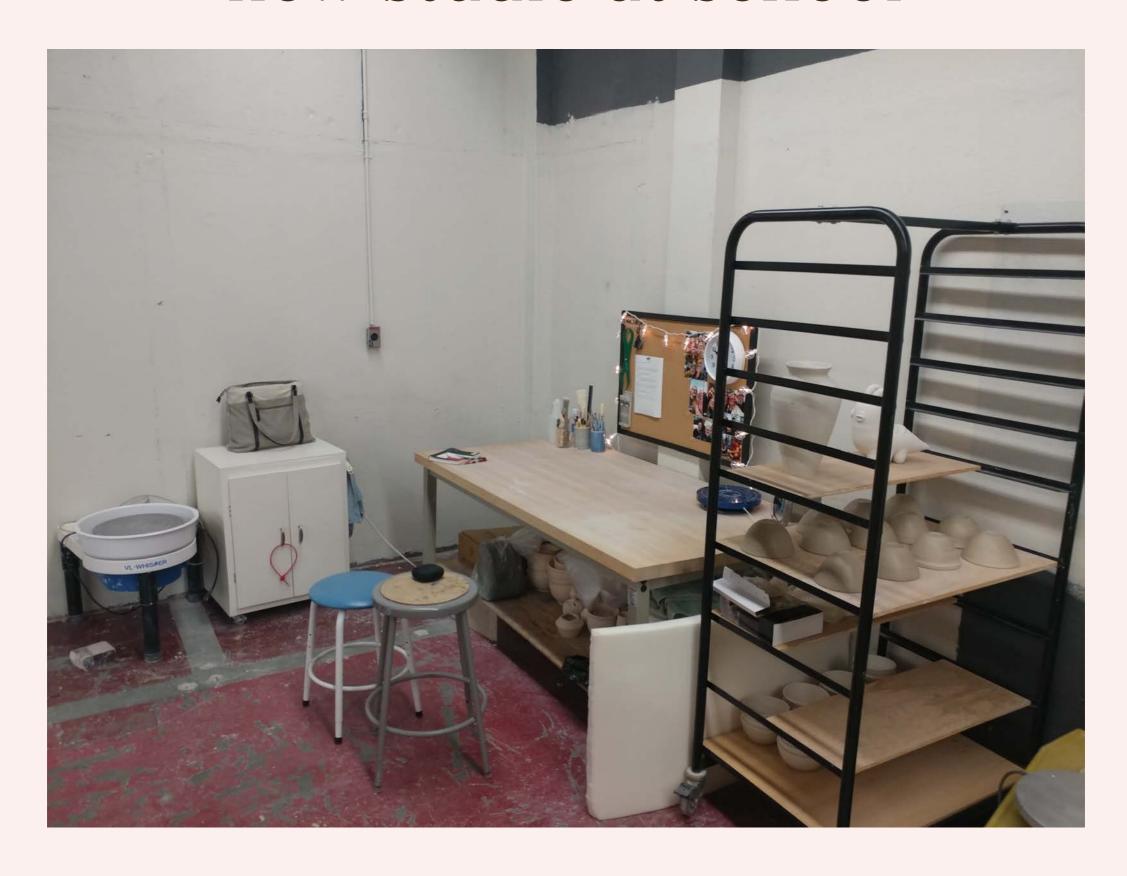
When covid hit, moving from the studio at school back home was hard. Without the help of my parents, I never could have finished my show on time. I got my own pottery wheel, we converted the guest room into a studio, and my dad helped me build shelves, a wedging table, and a cabinet for my supplies.







new studio at school



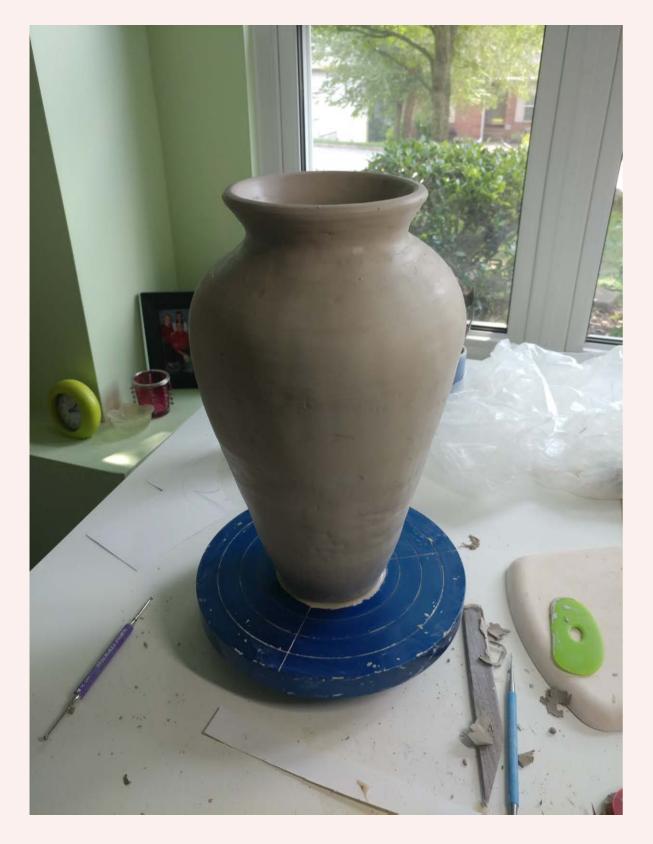
anechoic vessel

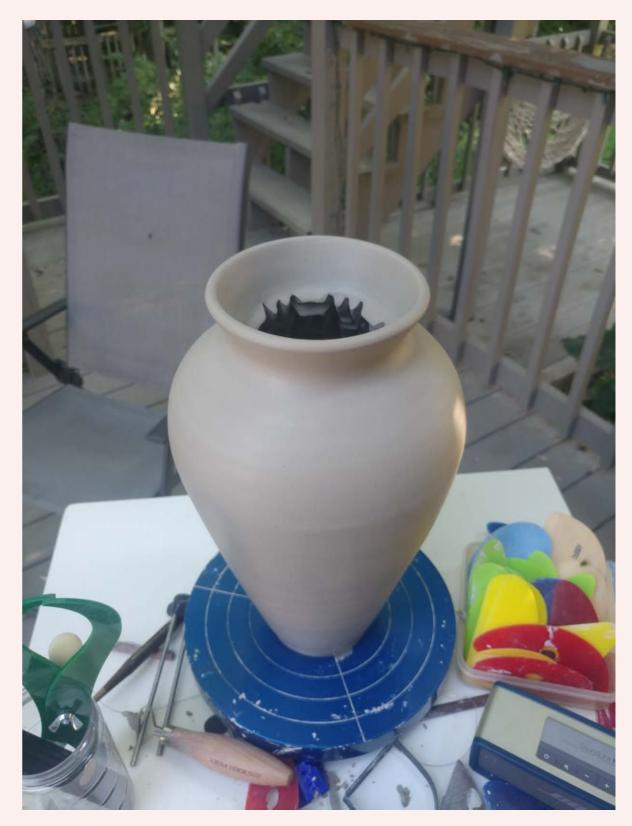






This was my first large-scale coil-built vase. I used the coil method so that as I built up the vase walls, I could also build up the interior decoration.





Finally finishing the building and trimming the uneven outer walls was so satisfying. This is before and after trimming.

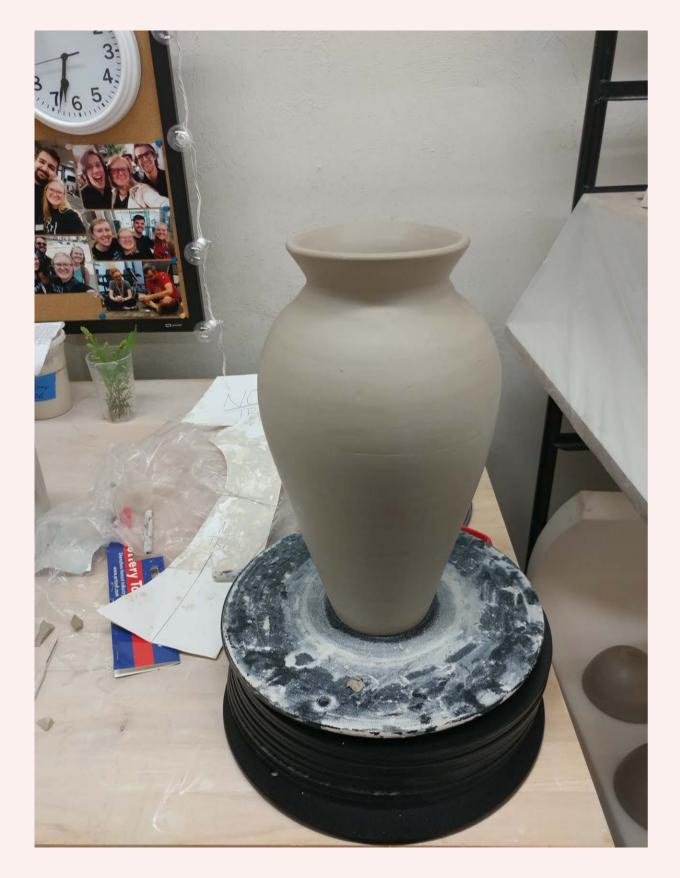
echo vessel



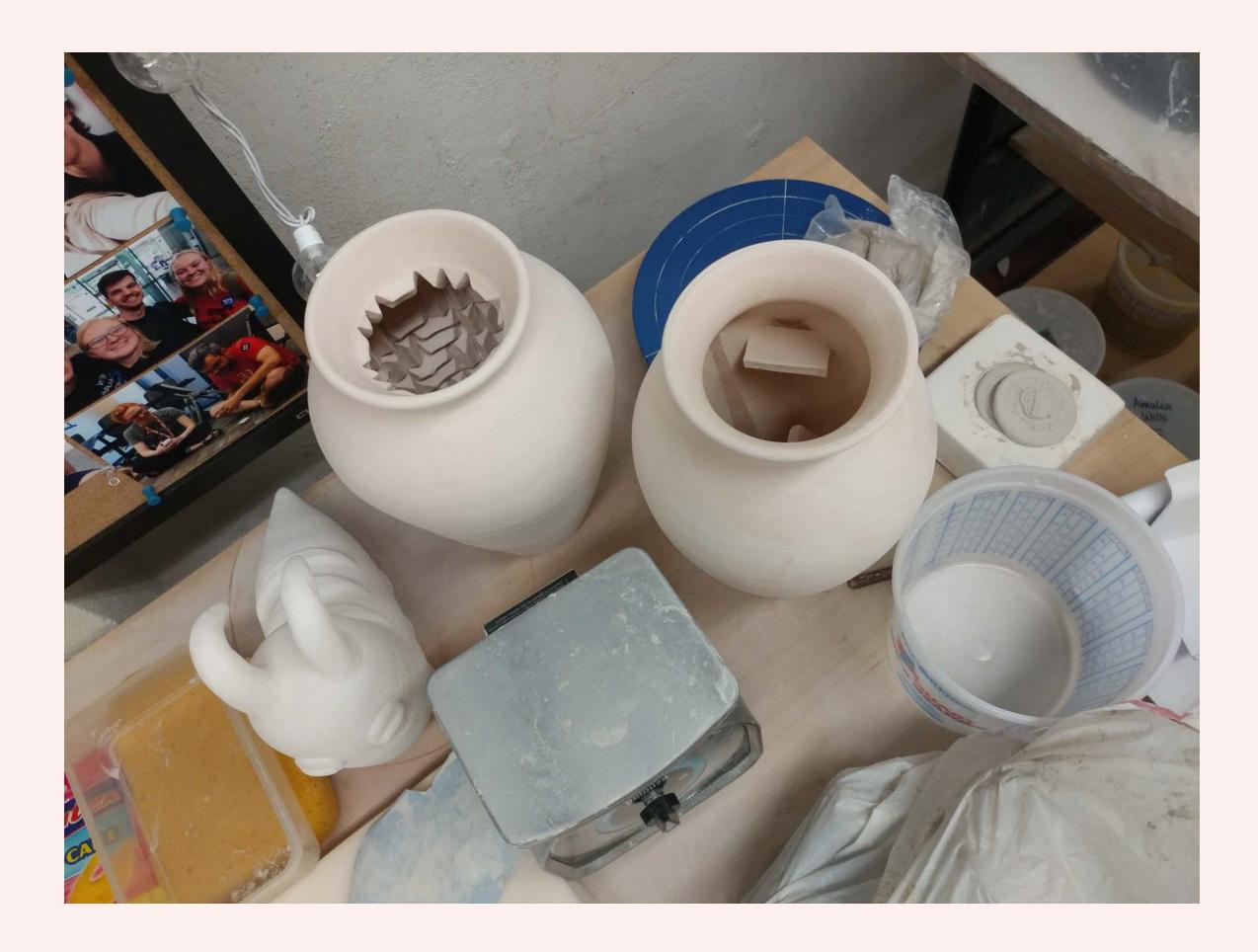




The echo and anechoic vessels are twins, but instead of coiling this one, I threw it in three parts using a silhouette cutout I made from the first vessel. Though this one has a simpler design, it was harder to create. I had to make sure not only that each of the inner walls fit the angle of the vase vertically, but that the angle of the edges of the walls fit against the curve of the vase.







a game of telephone





if you've seen one (you've seen them all)

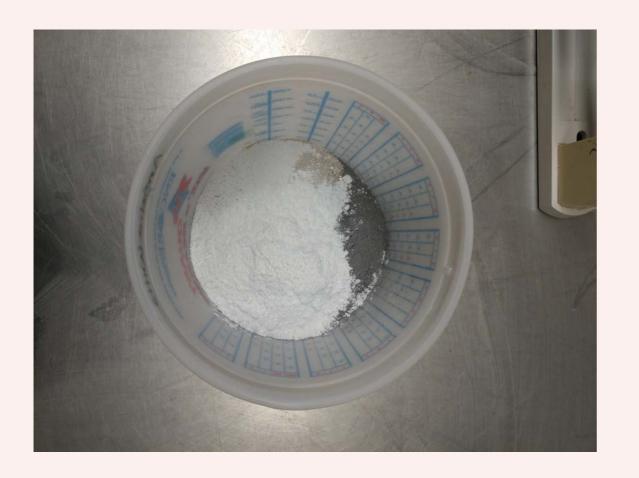






black and white

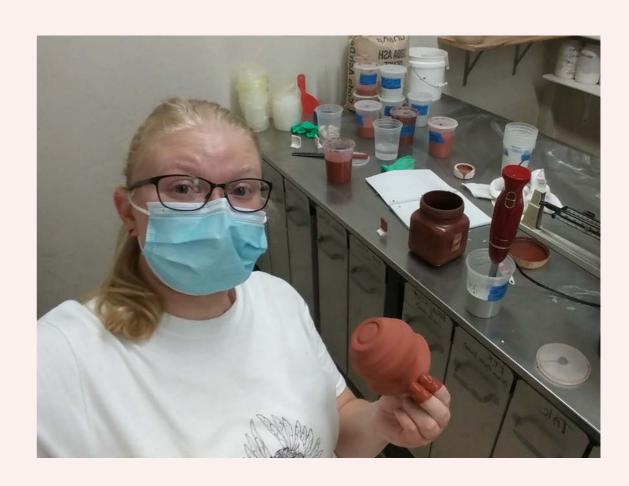
One of the potters I am inspired by often throws large vases in more than one part, combining them on the wheel. I used this method to create this piece. This was my second attempt; the first's walls were very uneven around the join. This one also has flaws, but it was a huge improvement from the first. I intend to continue practicing this method, as I would love to throw larger pieces.



glazing









dishes





















final show documentation



If You've Seen One (You've Seen Them All)

Stoneware jars, white glaze









Anechoic/Echo

Stoneware vessels, thrown and hand-built



Anechoic, detail



Anechoic, detail



Echo, detail

Pure Vessel

[Vessel type], [clay body], [glaze]







Censored Series



Censored (This One Was Too Personal)

White cloth, [redacted]



Censored (This One Was Too Religious)

White cloth, [redacted]



Censored (This One Was Too Political)

White cloth, [redacted]



It's That Simple (It's Never That Simple)

Stoneware vessel, test tiles



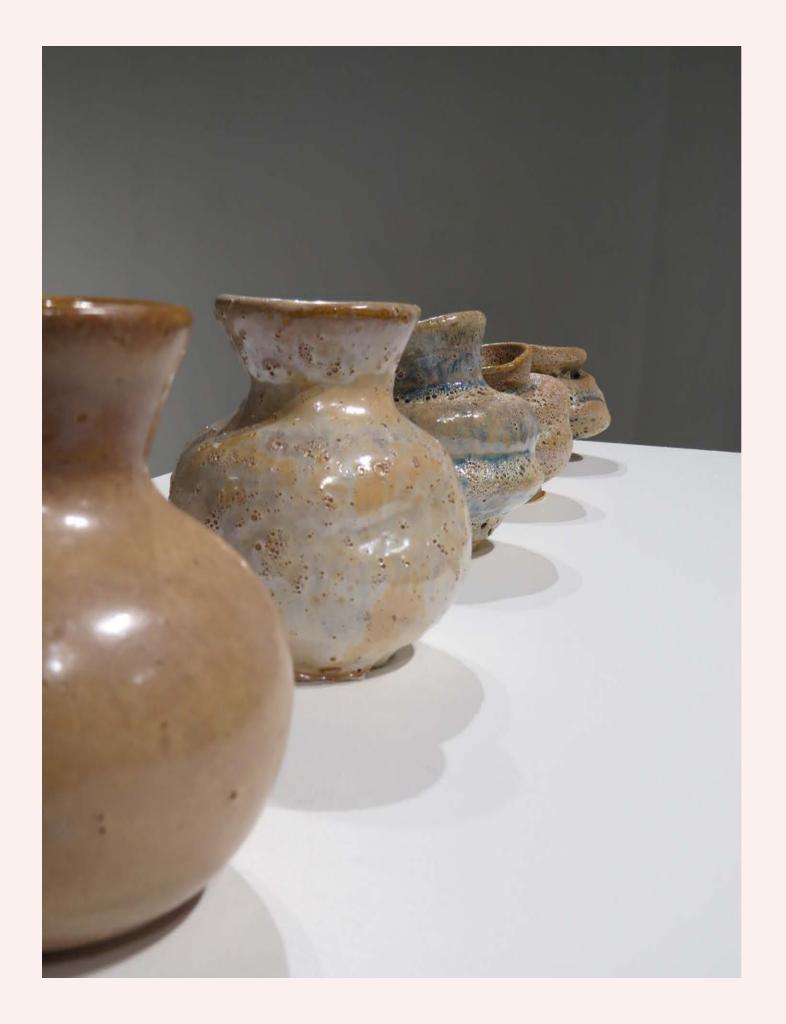
You Dig Them Up

Failed vessels by the artist, miscellaneous objects









A Game of Telephone

Stoneware vessel, five versions







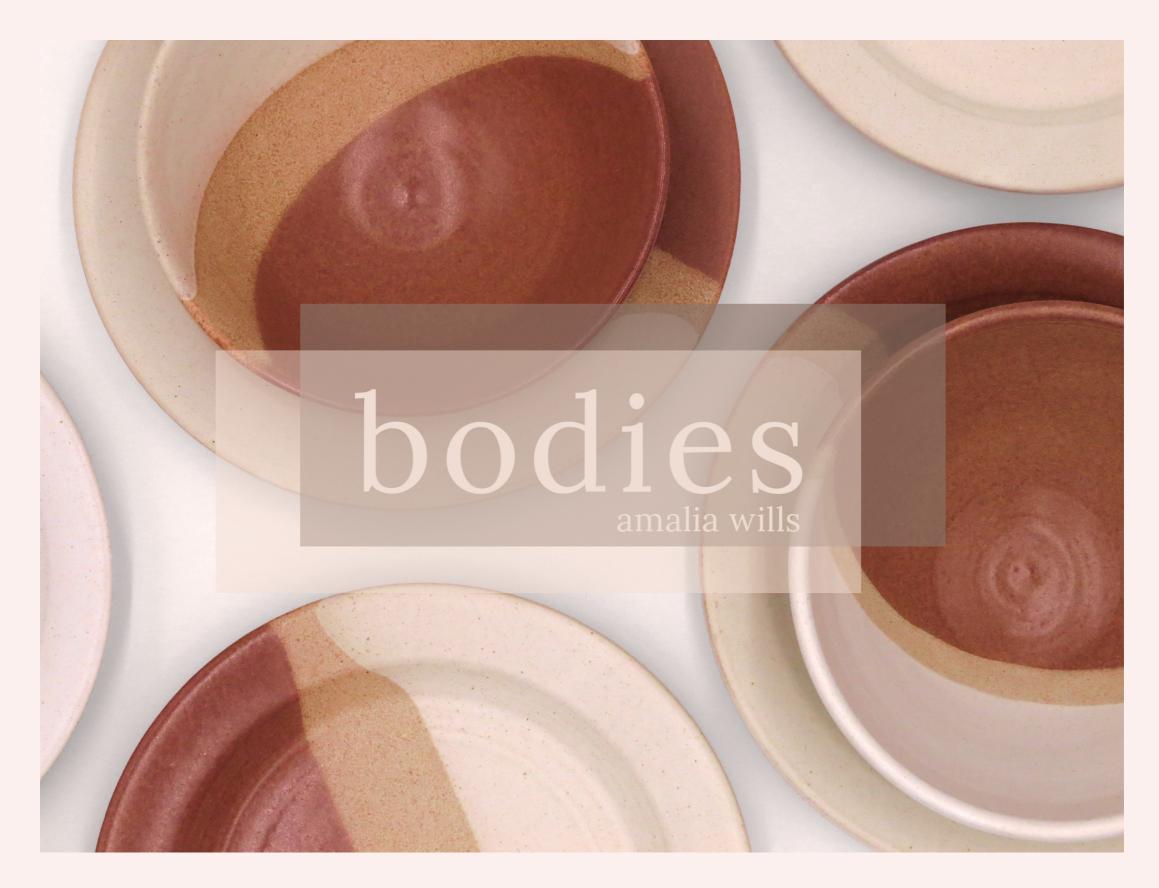
dinner



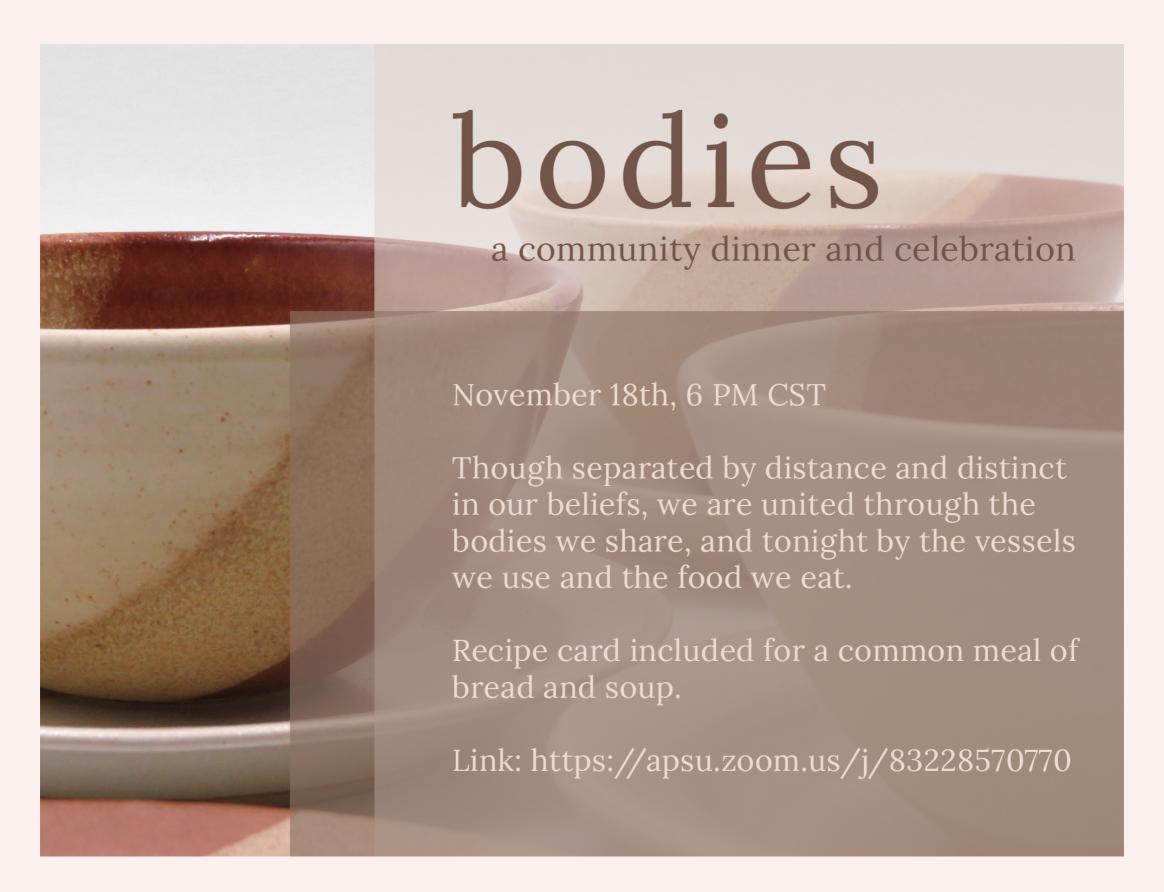


covid changes

Because of Covid, my original idea to have a meal inside the gallery at my reception did not work out. I instead gave people sets of dishes and sent them recipe cards for the foods I would have served in person, and moved the dinner online. The purpose of the dinner also changed slightly. Initially, it was going to be about connecting the people attending my show despite their differences. It did still serve that purpose; however, because it moved online, attendance became by invitation, and so the participants were slightly more curated than they would have been at the reception. This turned the dinner into part performance art, part celebration of my show and graduation. Though different from how I imagined it a year ago, I enjoyed it immensely. A huge benefit of the move online was that friends and family from all over the country were able to join.



Dinner invitation, front



Dinner invitation, back

kindergarten bread

Yield: 2 loaves

Ingredients

2 tbsp yeast

1/2 cup warm water

2 1/2 cups hot water

1/2 cup brown sugar or honey

3 tsp salt

1/4 cup oil

3 cups stirred mixture of 1 cup rye flour and 2 cups whole wheat flour

4-5 cups all purpose or bread flour

- 1. Soften yeast in 1/2 cup lukewarm water.
- 2. Stir salt, honey or brown sugar, and oil into 2 1/2 cups hot water. Let cool to lukewarm. Add to yeast mixture in large bowl.
- 3. Stir in wheat/rye flour mixture and 1 cup of the all purpose or bread flour. Continue adding all purpose/bread flour until the dough is kneadable. Knead until satiny and firm, about ten minutes.
- 4. Gently pat the kneaded dough. Place in greased bowl, and turn over to grease top of dough. Cover and let rise for 1 1/2 hours.
- 5. Punch down the dough and divide it in half. Let it rest for ten minutes.
- 6. Roll each half flat and then roll into loaves, tucking edges under in the pan. Let rise in pans for 1 1/4 hours.
- 7. Bake at 350 for 35 minutes.

Serve warm with butter.

Ingredients

1 yellow onion
2 cloves garlic
2 Tbsp olive oil
1/2 lb. carrots (about 4)
1 28oz. can diced tomatoes
1 cup pearled barley
1/2 tsp dried basil
1/2 tsp dried oregano
freshly cracked black pepper
6 cups vegetable broth

1 russet potato (about 3/4 lb.) 1 cup frozen green beans

1/2 cup frozen corn 1/2 cup frozen peas

1 Tbsp lemon juice

1 handful fresh parsley (optional garnish)

Instructions

1. Dice the onion and mince the garlic. Add the onion, garlic, and olive oil to a large soup pot and sauté over medium heat for about 5 minutes, or until the onion is soft and translucent.

vegetable barley

- 2. Meanwhile, peel and dice the carrots. Once the onions are soft, add the carrots to the soup pot, along with the canned diced tomatoes (with juices), barley, basil, oregano, some freshly cracked pepper, and vegetable broth.
- 3. Stir the contents of the pot to combine, place a lid on top, turn the heat up to medium-high, and bring the broth up to a boil. Once boiling, turn the heat down to medium-low, and let the soup simmer, with the lid in place, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes.
- 4. While the soup simmers, peel and dice the potato into 1/2-inch cubes. After the soup has simmered and the barley is mostly tender, add the diced potatoes and continue to simmer for 10 minutes more, or just until the potatoes are tender.
- 5. Once the potatoes are tender, add the frozen green beans, corn, and peas. Stir to combine, and heat through (about 5 minutes in the simmering soup).
- 6. Finally, add the lemon juice to the soup and stir to combine. Taste the soup and adjust the salt or pepper to your liking. Serve hot, with fresh chopped parsley on top as a garnish, if desired.

Recipe cards

At the dinner, I gave a short opening address, and then gave a virtual tour of the gallery, as many of the people there had not been able to attend the reception or see the show in person. Unlike the reception, I took time to individually explain each piece in depth. I then opened the dinner up to questions and comments. I also shared some of my original sketches and ideas and compared them to the finished products.

opening words

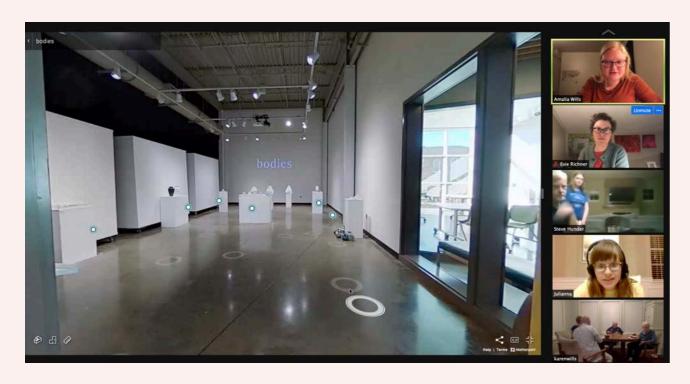
Friends, family, neighbors, teachers, and mentors; people I've known my whole life and those I've just met; people from in state and out of the country: thank you for coming tonight. This evening is the culmination of months and months of hard work, stress, confusion, and grit, and I'm honored that you would share it with me. Without your support this would not have been possible. As much as this night is about me, it's about all of you as well. Thank you so much.

This past year has not been an easy one for any of us. It seems like the problems and obstacles never end. From the pandemic and isolation and fear to civil unrest and the election season, the chaos hasn't seemed to stop. With every new problem come new ways we divide ourselves, new categories we create to hold our ideas, new walls we build delineating new groups, new rights and wrongs. Issues that should be simple become complex, politicized, until morality is seen as a quality of one side or the other, and not both.

opening words, cont.

It's so easy to get lost in these ideas to the point where retaliation, blunt assertion, or aggression against those we disagree with are parts of our behavior we no longer recognize as such. We say things we don't think about, reply in words we don't consider, voice our opinions without regard for who might be listening. We are hurt by others and don't address it, change our minds and don't want to admit it, love each other and are too afraid to say it. Communication is breaking down into short bursts of passion with no foundation and no empathy, but it's so normalized that we often don't see how damaging it truly is.

These are the issues I wanted to address in my show, the little things that become big things, the ways we disconnect from each other and forget how to treat each other as human beings. Each of the pieces in my show represent a different problem in communication, using the metaphor of the human body as a vessel to relate ourselves to the vessels I have made out of clay.

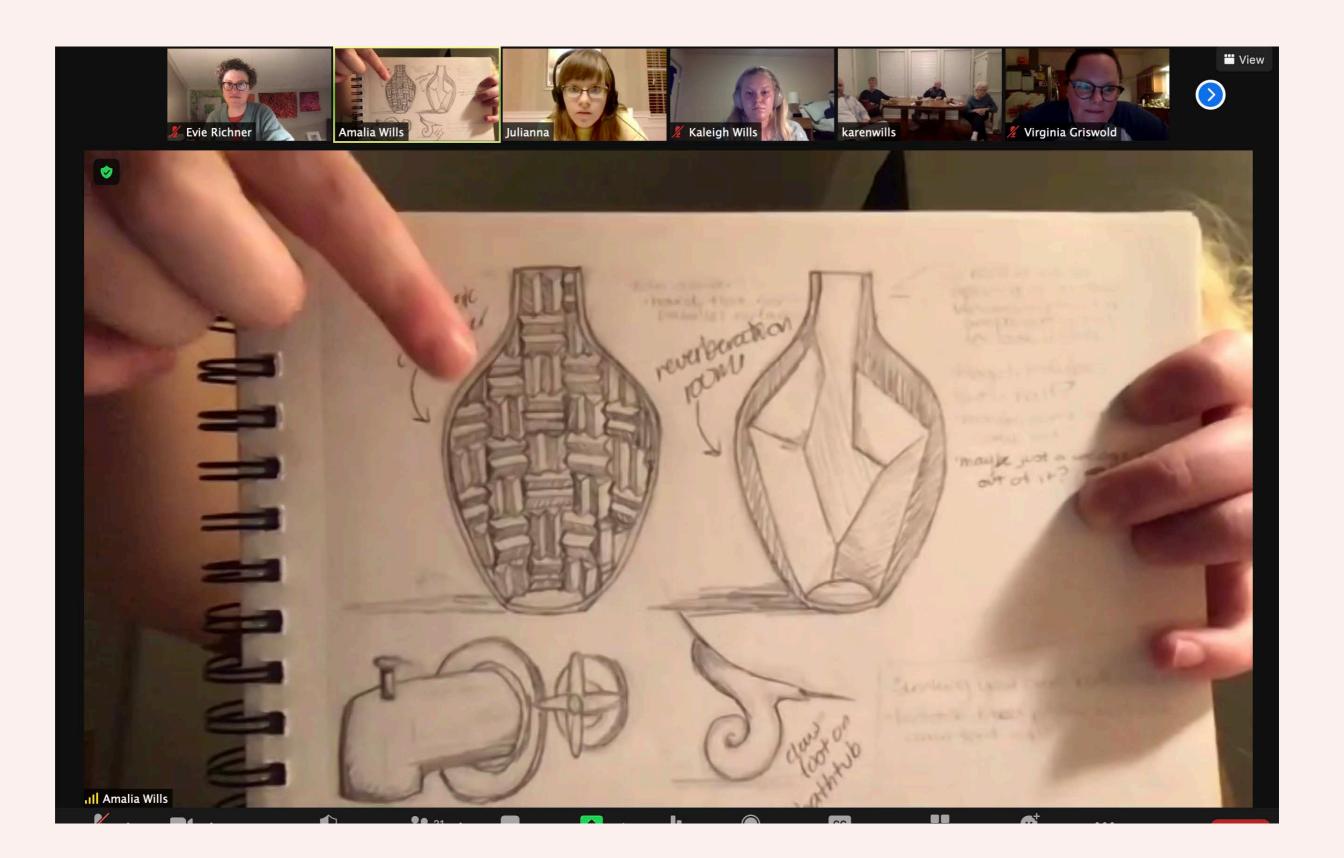


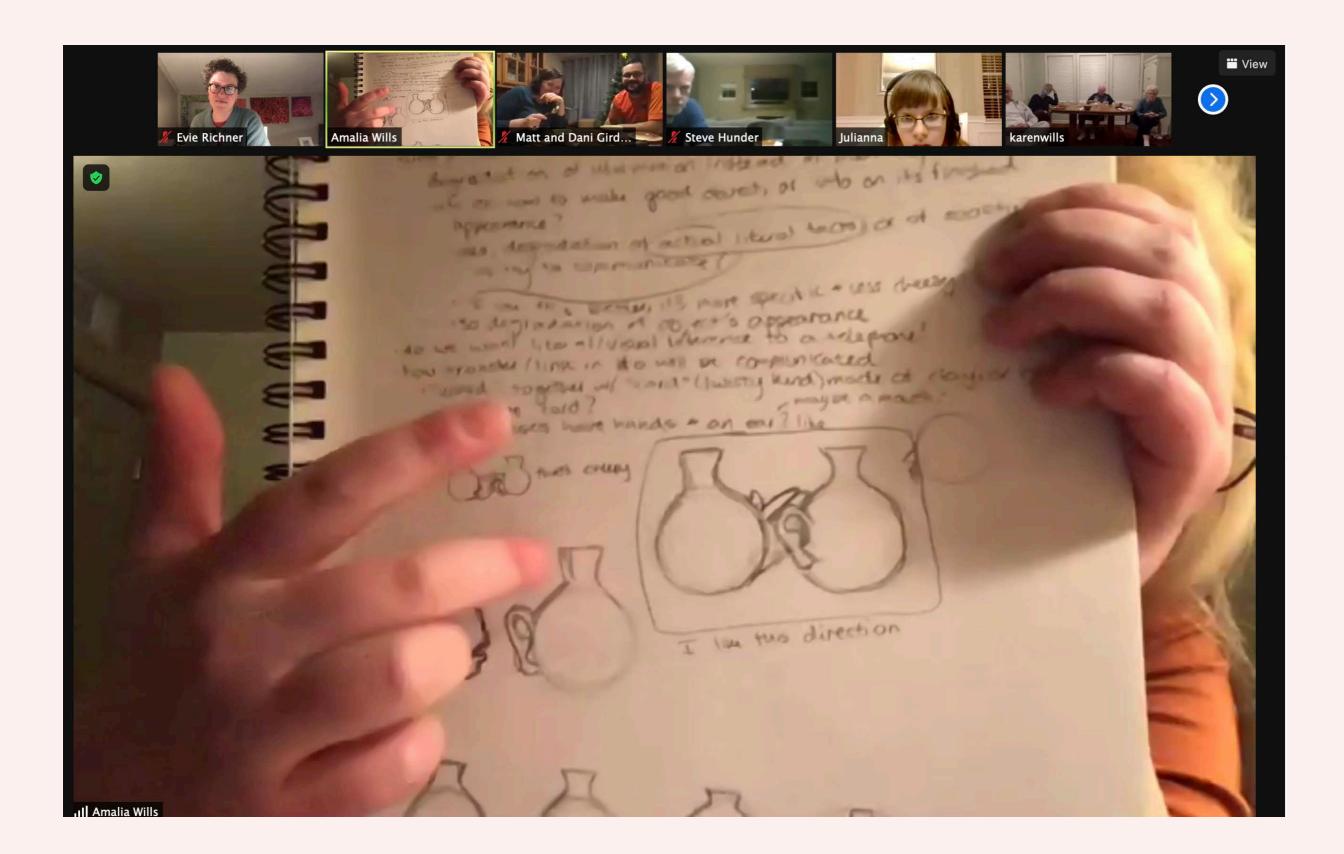






Virtual gallery tour

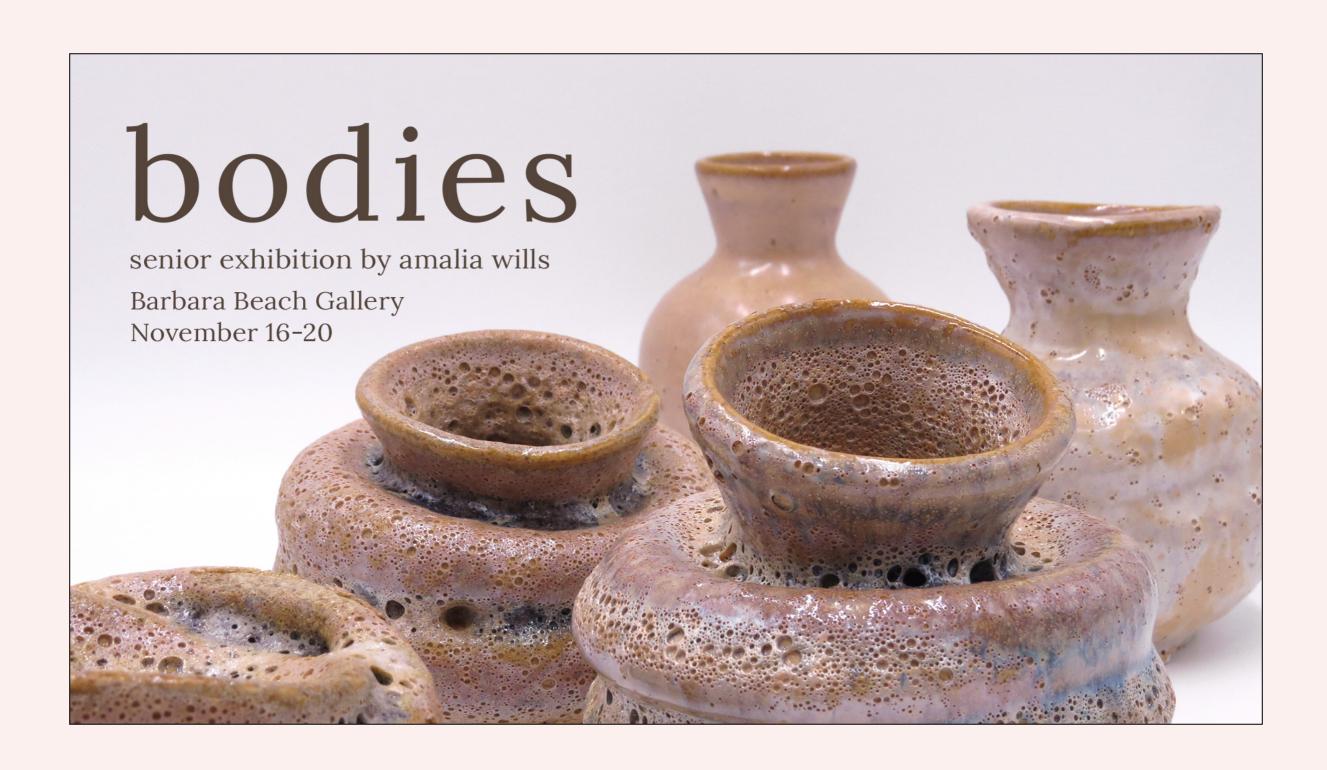


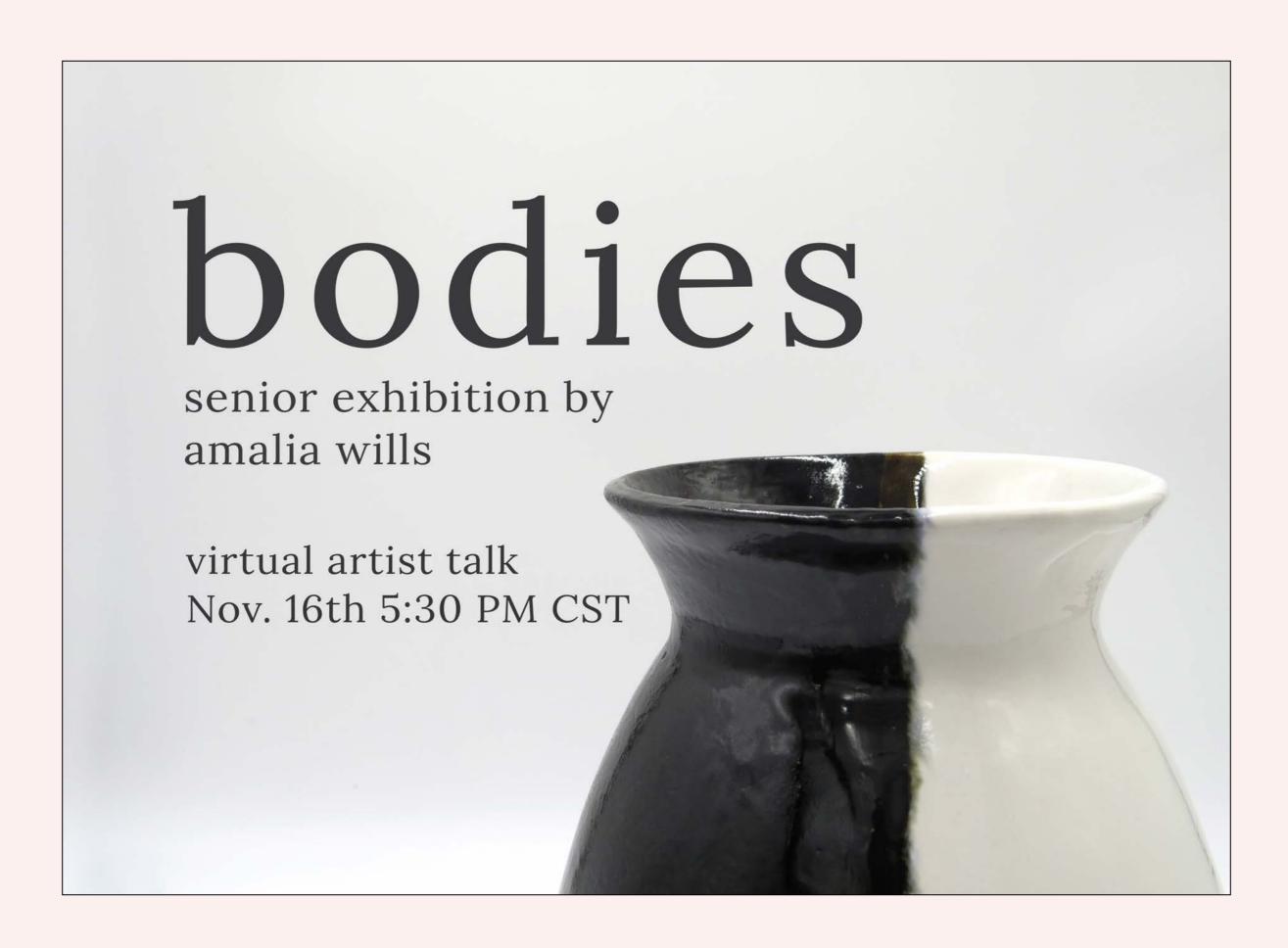


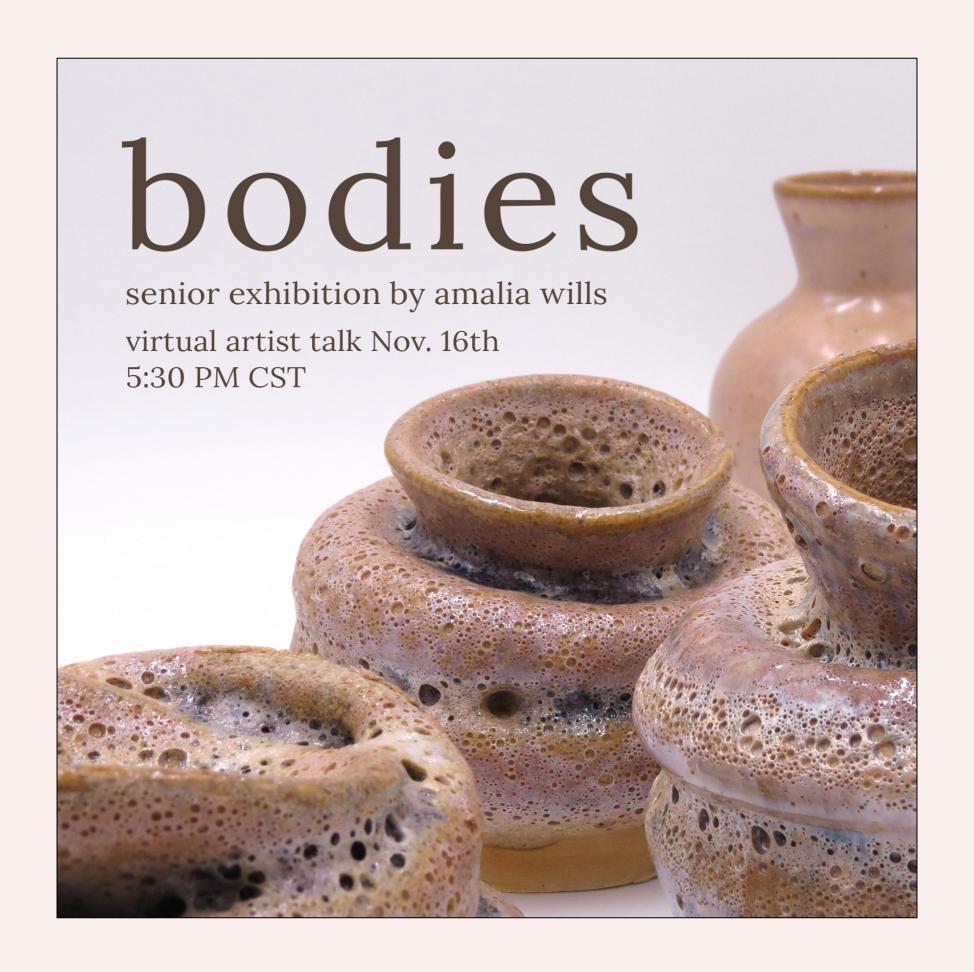




professional materials







self reflection

First, the things I did right.

With the help of my parents, I set up a home pottery studio when classes moved online. I got my own pottery wheel and made all of the bowls and a portion of the plates I needed for the second half of my show. I finished my first sculptural piece, Anechoic, and came up with a working list of ideas for the rest of the sculptural pieces. I bought new supplies. I got a small head start on learning about glazes. I can say with complete certainty that if I had not been able to work over the summer, I would not have finished my show on time.

Which leads me to the things I could have done better.

It took a long time to get in the swing of things after classes moved online. I put a lot of work off because with all the time at home, it felt like I had forever to get things done. Even when the fall semester started and I was back on campus, I took my time. Not only did my show seem far away, but with reduced class size and student population on campus, working alone in the studio meant being alone in the studio. I could go for hours and see no more than one person, and it took a serious toll on my mental health, so I avoided the studio. I didn't realize just how far behind I was until I started testing glazes.

self reflection, cont.

Glazes were so much more variable than I ever imagined. Before, I simply used the studio glazes and they generally turned out well. Now, though, I was testing recipes I had found myself, and many of them did not turn out the way I wanted them to—most importantly, the glaze I had found for the fifty bowls and plates for my dinner. On top of that, I realized how far behind I was on my sculptural pieces, and that I didn't have glazes picked out for them, either.

Thus began two of the hardest months of my entire life.

I was often in the studio late into the night. I sacrificed all of my other classes and responsibilities, put free time on the shelf, and stopped going home on the weekends. My mantra became "It's not about what you want, but what you need," and I repeated that to myself every single day. I was constantly on the edge of a breakdown, I missed home, I missed my family and my friends, my cats, and taking time for myself.

I'll spoil the ending: things worked out. I was incredibly blessed with an unexpected extra week of work time, and my parents came up to keep me company in the studio multiple times. Everything was finished before my show. Not everything went the way I wanted it to; there were a few problems with my dishes and sculptural works, unexpected results, ideas that didn't reach full development. Overall, though, I was very, very happy with the results.

self reflection, cont.

I learned several big lessons from all of this. First, I learned what procrastination can do when it gets out of hand, and I'm hoping to never let that happen again. I learned just how time-intensive ceramics is, and the kind of dedication it takes to be successful at it. I learned a lot about myself as well, and how important being around people is to me (this was a surprise, as I recharge when I'm alone). In a more concrete sense, I learned lots about glazing and throwing. I've gotten better at making larger pieces and throwing consistently. I fired the kilns for the first time by myself and learned about firing cycles and how to—and how not to—achieve the effects I was looking for. One of the most exciting things was that I could see my own style developing, something I hadn't noticed in my brief time with ceramics earlier in my college career.

I'm extremely grateful for the people who have supported me these past months. Without them and their prayers, I wouldn't have made it through. I have gained so much experience and knowledge that I will use for the rest of my life. As I move forward into my art education degree, I hope both use this experience in my new studies and later impart it to my own students.

links

- Virtual Gallery: https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=aisqZEgINxI
- Redbubble: https://www.redbubble.com/people/Casting-Shadows/shop?asc=u
- Instagram, Twitter: @casthegreater

