

The Past and the Present: Reflections of Everyday Life in English Ceramic Figurines

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ABSTRACT

The practice-led research in this thesis investigates narratives of everyday life captured through ceramic figurines. This is informed by the history of the English ceramic figurine, which pertains to a long tradition of reflecting scenes of everyday life and social concerns particular to the time of their production. The aim of this thesis is firstly to examine the ways in which English ceramic figurines captured images of everyday life throughout history, and secondly to explore how contemporary everyday life can be interpreted visually through ceramics. This thesis addresses the relationship between the research carried out by historians and the work of practitioners on figurines. Moreover, the thesis considers the history of figurine production and its impact on contemporary practice. My research methodology relies on original archival materials and museum collections, which enables me to frame my practice within the literature on the subject of figurines. Many aspects of these remain overlooked in existing scholarship.

The thesis is divided into two chapters. Chapter 1 comprises three case studies, which examine the socio-historical significance of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English figurines. My investigation includes materials, makers, sources of inspiration, conditions of production, the cultural background and the ceramics market. Case Study 1 examines the culture of pastimes and the theatre in eighteenth-century England by focusing on one particular piece, *The Music Lesson* (1765). The *Tee-total* and *Ale Bench* figurine group (1835) in Case Study 2 is an example through which the relationship between drinking culture and ceramics in early nineteenth-century England is investigated. Case Study 3 examines Victorian china fairings and their manufacture in Germany through the example of *Before Marriage* and *After Marriage* (c.1860). All the case studies have been conducted to support the view that English ceramic figurines were cultural products of their time, integrated into everyday life – that of both the upper and working classes – and thus provide unique insight into the social and cultural issues that concerned English society. Many of the examples considered in these three case

studies stem from my research trips in the UK and elsewhere, including the Harris Museum in Preston, and in Germany the Meissen Factory and Museum in Dresden and the Nymphenburg Palace and Porcelain Manufactory in Munich. These case studies were crucial in informing new approaches to my practice, and are important in understanding its development.

Chapter 2 focuses on my studio practice. This consists of wall-based and freestanding figurines based on my own observations of British culture, collected during my time living in the UK as an 'outsider'. I highlight four key issues from the case studies examined in Chapter 1 that have influenced my own practice. These include an English perspective; encounters and exchanges; multiples; the relationship between drawing, and the figurine. My subjective observations and understanding of the historical framework surrounding the field of figurine making have thus informed this series in a new body of work.

It is a poignant time to examine this fast-disappearing aspect of visual culture which used to be so vital in British economy and society, as the demand for, and production of, figurines is decreasing. This thesis hopes to revive an appreciation of the ceramics with which we are so familiar in terms of practical use. By documenting everyday life through a material which quietly surrounds us every day, for instance in the kitchen, dining room, bathroom, and human-inhabited space generally, I hope to challenge the viewer to respond to this material in a new way.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification.

The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

Signature: Sun Ae Kim

Date: April 2014

INTRODUCTION

1. CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

I was introduced to a new world of ceramics when I first visited the Ceramics galleries in the V&A in 2009. I was overwhelmed by the vast number of collections on display, which filled the ceiling-high glass cabinets, from top to bottom. While observing these collections, I was able to imagine the frenzy surrounding this European porcelain ware and the figurines when they were popular in the past. Moreover, I was intrigued by some of the scenes captured in the figurines. Before then, my understanding of figurines was purely as decorative pieces for the house, and therefore drinking, fighting, scenes of crime and love affairs seemed inappropriate for display. In my first encounters with European figurines, I experienced a cultural disconnect and surprise, as the notion of 'figurines' does not exist in Korean history, and comparable ceramic figures differed tremendously from their European counterparts. It must have been a great surprise to

Europeans when they first encountered the beauty of porcelain from Asia in early as the thirteenth century. In Korea, ceramic figures were mostly made for ceremonial purposes or for burials, and were also limited to water droppers or incense burners for daily use, and held purely decorative value for scholars. Even in Asia, the philosophy of ceramics in art was developed distinctively in each national culture; unlike in Japan and China, whose ceramics were first introduced to Europeans, the art form was developed differently, with less emphasis on colour.¹ Initially, this prompted my research into European figurines. My earlier works, *A Marriage Lesson* (2009)(Fig.1) and *Since Eve ate Apples, Much Depends on Dinner* (2010)(Fig.2) were a result of this interest during my MA. Taking European porcelain figurines of the eighteenth century, and their socio-political significance and artistic form, as a point of

¹ Colour (*chaesek*) was not seen as a significant characteristic of in Korean ceramics.

Korean ceramics are characterized by clarity of forms, simple in colour, understated decorations (mostly white and black) and subtle yet luminous colour glazes.

departure, I created ceramic works that explore issues in contemporary marriage.



Fig.1, *A Marriage Lesson*



Fig. 2, *Since Eve Ate Apples, Much Depends On Dinner*

My general interest in European ceramics was developed more specifically during my experience of working at the design studios of the Wedgwood, Royal Doulton, Royal Albert and Minton, and at the Wedgwood factory in Stoke-on-Trent in 2010. For the production of *Since Eve ate Apples, Much Depends on Dinner* (Fig.2), which was a theatrical dinner setting piece, I had the opportunity to make the centrepieces of this collection at the Wedgwood factory. Prior to the factory experience in March 2010, I was

situated in the design studio of Wedgwood, Royal Doulton, Royal Albert and Minton for my work placement. This was just a few months after Waterford Wedgwood Royal Doulton company (WWRD Holdings Ltd.) had fallen into administration in early 2009. During my stay, I was able to learn about the changes that had taken place since the takeover of the factory and design department by an American company, KPS Capital. As a long-term visitor (I was resident for over a month), I sensed depression and anxiety at the major redundancies and uncertainties of the future. In the factory, most of the lines had already relocated to China and Indonesia; only the prestige lines and some of Jasper Conran range were still manufactured at the English site. However, some enamel-painted figurines and commissioned pieces were still being produced. Two plate liners who have worked for the company for around forty years, shared their photographic catalogue of what they had previously produced for private collectors. Unfortunately, I was unable to meet any figurine-makers. Interestingly, I was told that designers in the UK sometimes preferred figurines made in Indonesia since they were of better quality, and ceramics are now

being manufactured outside the UK.² This move can be connected with the history of Victorian china fairings, which were manufactured by Conta and Boehme in Germany in the late nineteenth century for the British market.

In collectable figurines today we see a continuance of the subject matters and styles of the past. For example, in the current Royal Doulton *Pretty Ladies* series (Fig.3), it is evident that the subject matter of the figurines has not changed dramatically since Royal Doulton was highly popular in the late nineteenth century. Even though the female figurine wears a modern-style evening dress, it

² Despite all the effort to keep the production within the UK, the major factories in Stoke-on-Trent shifted much of their production to the Far East. The main production of Royal Doulton brand from WWRD has now relocated to Indonesia, while the Design Studio remains in Stoke-on-Trent. The Royal Doulton brand continues producing collectable figurines. Carroll, M., Cooke, F.L., Hassard, J., & Marchington, M. *The Strategic Management of Outsourcing in the UK Ceramic Industry*, Working Paper No. 17, Manchester School of Management, Manchester, 2011.

See also: Keena, C. *How Increased Global Trade Transformed Indonesia*, Irish Times, 2013, viewed 20 July 2013 < <http://www.irishtimes.com/how-increased-global-trade-has-transformed-indonesia-1.1334372>>

bears a strong resemblance in terms of composition and treatment of the costume to historical figurines of female figures. (Fig.4)



Fig.3, *Pretty Ladies Collection*



Fig.4, *Pretty Lady Figures From the HN And M Series*

This continuity is also manifest in the ways in which contemporary ceramic figurines also reflect the social and economic trends of the times. For instance, nowadays most ceramic figurines manufactured in large European ceramic firms such as Lladró take as subject matter not only memorable moments in life, but also new Oriental traditions, with its iconography of wealth, reflecting

the emerging market for figurines in the Middle East and Asia.³ Often these are idealised portrayals of beauty and an idyllic lifestyle, and are removed from everyday reality. Considering that figurines have functioned as one of the ways in which people's lives were documented, the tendency to idealise became an issue I wanted to address in my work.



Fig. 5, *Look at Mommy*



Fig. 6, *Sunset At The Pier*

My experience with the traditional European ceramic figurine art form and observations of changes taking place in the contemporary ceramic industry informs my research for this MPhil research thesis.

2. OVERVIEW OF CERAMIC FIGURINES

(1) A DEFINITION OF THE CERAMIC FIGURINE

'Ceramic figurines' in this thesis indicate small, moulded statuettes of human beings, deities and animals made of clay. Although it is unknown when the term first appeared, the term 'figurine'

³ Lladró is a Spanish ceramic manufacturer that has specialized in high-quality porcelain figurines in Spain since 1953. The firm was influenced by existing porcelain companies such as Meissen, Sèvres and Capodimonte. As the production lines grew, Lladró expanded their porcelain products to home décor, including lighting, mirrors, and centrepieces, along with large figure groups of diverse cultural characters. More details are: *History 2014*, lladro, viewed 20 July 2013, <<http://www.lladro.com/porcelana/history>>

emerged in the mid-nineteenth century to refer to small porcelain statuettes that were first made in the eighteenth century in Europe. In England, the production of porcelain figurines emerged from a commercial agenda, to be sold as highly fashionable items for high-profile patrons. These were normally expensive, limited in number, and exclusive to certain markets. For example, Josiah Wedgwood actively targeted potential customers for his ceramics. He encouraged wealthy women to visit his shop by invitation only, or to come during their season in town to meet with friends, in the hope and expectation that they would tell their husbands. Wedgwood sometimes tailored his work to specific markets, including individual commissions; for the armorial trade, for example, he would print or paint the patron's coat of arms.⁴

⁴ Wedgwood Museum, *Marketing and Commercialisation*, Wedgwood Museum, 2014, viewed 28 July 2013, <<http://www.wedgwoodmuseum.org.uk/learning/discovery-packs/pack/lives-of-the-wedgwoods/chapter/marketing-and-commercialisation> >

However, these quickly became popular among the working class as more affordable figurines appeared on the market. By the end of the nineteenth century, small porcelain figures, 'Victorian china fairings', were readily available to the public, as they were sometimes given away as souvenirs in fairs, hence the term 'fairings'.⁵ In my thesis, the term 'ceramic figurines' include these china fairings as well as more expensive lines, as they followed a similar procedure in terms of production.

(2) DEFINITION OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CERAMIC FIGURES AND FIGURES IN CONTEXT

The majority of books and articles refer to ceramic figurines as 'figurines' or 'figures'. The origin of the word 'figurine' comes from the French and Italian words *figurine* and *figurina* as a diminutive form of the Latin *figura*.⁶ It is unknown when ceramic statuettes

⁵ Victorian china fairings are small porcelain china ornaments, usually captioned, making a humorous, social comment on British life. They are called 'fairings' as they were usually sold in fairs in the UK.

⁶ *Figure* 2013, Oxford Online Dictionary, viewed 13 July 2013 <<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/figurine?q=figurine>>

began to be called 'figurines'. 'Figurine' seems to have been more prevalent verbally, while 'figure' seems to be preferred in written text. The '-ine' from 'figurine' might suggest that they are smaller versions of 'figures'.

In the wider context my artworks could be seen to fall into the wider category of 'figurative ceramics'. However, my intention for this practice-led thesis was to place my works in the field of contemporary 'figurines', which in my view has a direct engagement with English historical figurines.

(3) THE SUBJECT MATTER OF CERAMIC FIGURINES: OVERVIEW OF EVERYDAY LIFE SCENES IN CERAMICS

In the eighteenth century, the subject matter of figurines varied widely, from popular theatrical scenes, actors, actresses, Greek myths, Chinoiserie, Turks and sportsmen to pastoral subjects, family, courtship, children, animals and the seasons. On the other hand, the majority of nineteenth-century Staffordshire figurines originated from the copying of the porcelain figurines that were available on the market: marked, however, by much more diverse

interpretation by the makers. The themes also differed, focusing predominantly on portraits, social issues, pastimes and pastoral subjects. Ceramic figurines captured and reflected people's social habits and issues. Unlike Wedgwood figurines, which dealt with classical subject matter from the Greek and Roman periods, scenes from everyday life in England were the predominant theme in Staffordshire figurines. While Wedgwood products were produced for a minority of wealthy consumers, figurines became more widely available for purchase by a broader range of customers in the nineteenth century: importantly, earthenware figurines became accessible to the working class. Ceramics was highly popular at that time, like social media today in the way the work functioned as a channel or tool for observation and commentary on contemporary society.⁷

⁷ Social media such as Facebook provides an easily accessible medium through which one's personal life can be introduced to and shared with the wider public. But transient online communication tends to be ephemeral, despite its accessibility. Mobile devices, Internet platforms and smartphone applications are rapidly changing, while enduring materials like ceramics, however, remain: they will thus still have a role to play in offering permanent documentation of

(4) RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY

The issues and experiences explored above motivate my current research and research question:

‘In what ways do English ceramic figurines reflect images of everyday life in post-eighteenth century England, and how can contemporary everyday life be interpreted visually through ceramics?’

My practice-led research employs an interwoven method of theoretical investigation and visual practice in the studio: historical methods include archival and museum collection research, a literature review, interviews and case studies of figurines. My studio practice methods, through case studies, incorporate drawings, tests, storytelling and ceramic making.

people's lives, rather than the fleeting reflection of everyday life provided by social media.

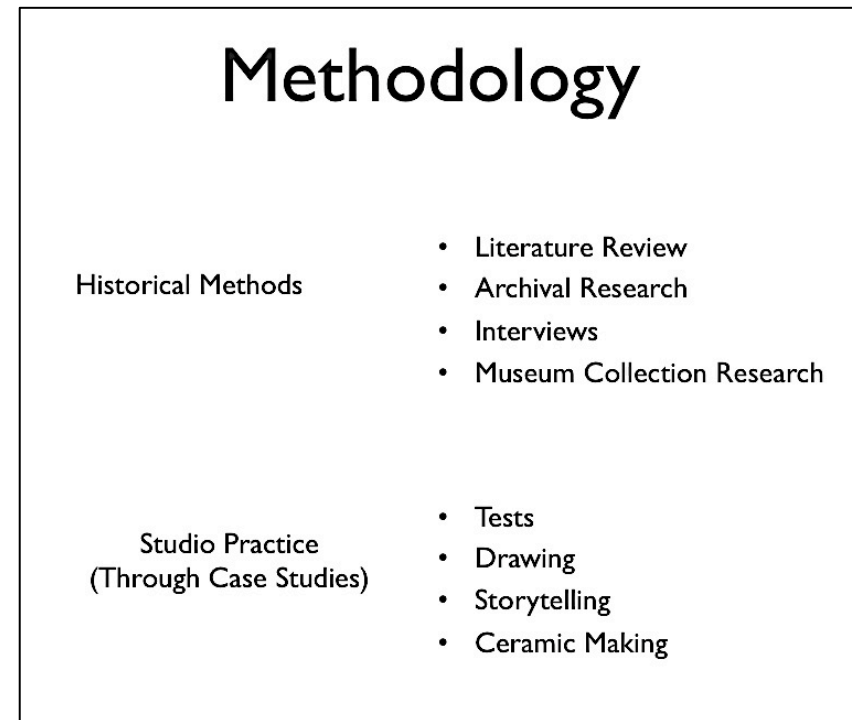


Fig. 7, *Methodology*, Graphic Image

Case studies informed the experimental studio works. The making process in the studio led my understanding of contemporary figurines, and responded to the past by extracting new knowledge through the heuristic process of making.

The case studies selected provide an understanding of how the historically specific factors relating to ceramic figurine production in England can be interpreted in a contemporary context. To begin with, I have chosen three different historical ceramic figurines produced for the English market at different historical periods. Factors such as production processes, subject matter, conditions of production, the market, manufacturers and cultural influences are examined, as these ceramic materials are treated as visual reflections and recordings of everyday life. It is intriguing to observe how the ways in which the documentation of everyday life scenes in ceramics changed during the three periods examined in this thesis: the eighteenth century, the early nineteenth century, and the late nineteenth century.

The table (Fig.8) offers an outline of the three case studies examined in this thesis. I have selected three figurine groups, each with different subject matter using different clays: both these factors impacted on the market for which they were made. The

first is *The Music Lesson*, 1765, by the Chelsea Porcelain Factory, made in porcelain for the upper class. *Tee-total* and *Ale Bench*, both 1835, constitute the second case study. These were produced by an unknown Staffordshire earthenware figurine workshop in the style of the well-known modeller Obadiah Sherratt.⁸ These earthenware group were for the working classes, depicting social issues of the day. The last case study is *Before Marriage* and *After Marriage*, a Victorian china fairing manufactured by Conta and Boehme in Germany in the late nineteenth century. They were made using German porcelain and manufactured at a price affordable to the general public. The hierarchy of material, linked to the aspirations of this market for porcelain figurines and the subject matter, had a strong relationship to ordinary people's life at that time. These three case studies have been chosen for their historical importance, as they function as demonstrations of shifts in the English market's taste for ceramic figurines. English porcelain

⁸The manufacturer is unknown, as there is no factory stamp. However, this follows the 'Obadiah Sherratt' (c.1775 – 1846) style. This information is sourced from Rebecca Wallis, curator at the V&A Museum, and Oliver, Anthony, *The Victorian Staffordshire Figure*. London, Heinemann, 1971

figurines were made in imitation of delicate German porcelain figurines that were originally used to accompany dessert courses at eighteenth-century court dinner tables. (Fig.9)

Case Studies



The Music Lesson, 1765



Tee-total & Ale Bench, 1835



Before Marriage
& After Marriage, 1860

	Case Study 1	Case Study 2	Case Study 3
Clay	Porcelain	Earthenware	German Porcelain
Market	Upper Class	Working Class	Affordable / For the English Market
Theme	Pastime and Theatre	The Relationship between Drinking Culture and Ceramics in early 19 th Century	Everyday Life through Victoria China Fairings

Fig. 8, Case Studies

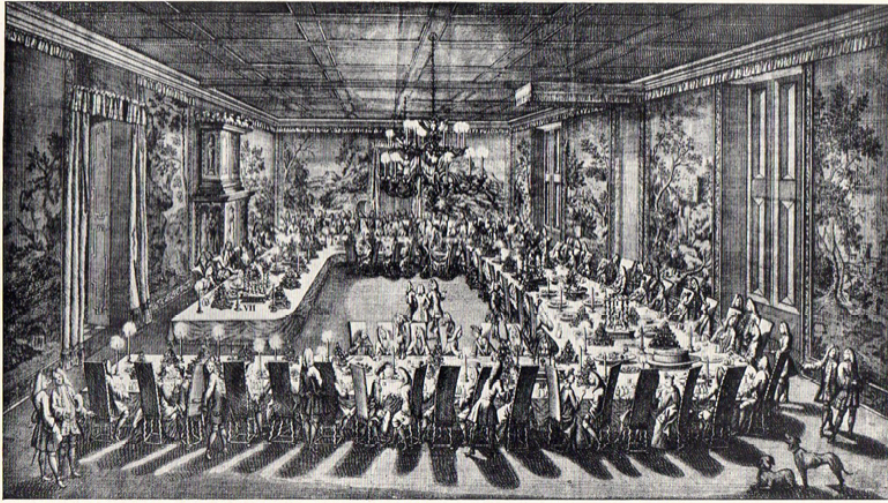


Fig. 9, *Banquet-Table at Ratisbon*

However, from the late eighteenth century onwards, less delicate and detail-focused Staffordshire earthenware figurines became popular, although their makers were often left unidentified. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the china fairings were easily available to the general public and were sold at fairs all over England.

Throughout this thesis, the term ‘ceramic figurines’ will also include Victorian china fairings, as these ceramic figures were similarly sculpted and cast specifically for the English market. It is ironic that while the English pottery industry copied and referenced the shape and subject matter of porcelain figurines from eighteenth-century Dresden manufacturers, it was in Germany that the Victorian china fairings would be made a century later.

My thesis aims to augment a practitioner’s point of view by creating a new body of work. I would like to bridge the knowledge of the historical context of figurine production and the way in which this is adopted for contemporary practice. I believe that my perspective on the subject matter, which focuses on everyday life in English culture, differs from that of other British ceramic artists. My observations, which draw upon various aspects of my identity, such as being a foreigner in England, will contribute a different contemporary translation, while, however, not limiting it.

CHAPTER ONE

1. CASE STUDY I: PASTIMES AND THEATRE

(1) *THE MUSIC LESSON*

The aim of the first case study is to investigate how people's life in the eighteenth century was captured and visualized in porcelain figurines. In particular, this has been investigated through the figurine group *The Music Lesson* (1765, Fig.10) by Joseph Willems, produced in the Chelsea Porcelain Factory.⁹ I have researched the pastoral scenes and themes which were popular and prevalent in European theatrical productions. These originated particularly in the court of the French king Louis XIV (1638-1715), which was cited visually and incorporated into ceramic figurines.¹⁰ Furthermore, I

⁹ Joseph Willems (1715-1766) was a Flemish figurine modeller for the Chelsea Porcelain Factory.

¹⁰ French theatre had a significant impact on drama in the world: theatre in the Court of Louis XIV (1638-1715) nourished by the French dramatist Thomas Corneille (1625–1709) and Molière (pseudonym of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin) (1622–1673) actively used theatrical performance for political purposes.

argue that these figurines were not isolated incidents, and that such themes were widely adopted in other visual arts, mainly painting. Why were these specifically recognisable scenes from French theatre translated into a ceramic figurine form displayed in the interior of a home? What did this theme signify for the audience and the ceramic collector in the eighteenth century? What cross-cultural connections were being made, and what nuances were lost when these scenes were produced by English makers, for an English audience?



Fig. 10, *The Music Lesson*

The subject matter of *The Music Lesson* was first seen in the oil painting known as *Les Flûteurs* (*The Flute Lesson*, 1757-1766) (Fig.10) by the celebrated French Rococo and French court painter François Boucher (1703-1770).¹¹ This was a familiar scene from the comic operetta repertoire, and specifically a ballet-pantomime, *La Vallée de Montmorency* (*The Valley of Montmorency*, 1752), which was adopted from Charles-Simon Favart's 1745 pantomime *Les Vendanges de Tempé* (*The Harvest in the Vale of Tempé*).¹² Boucher was a friend of Favart, and designed the stage set and costumes for the operetta. The success of the operetta had a significant impact on the decorative arts throughout Europe, especially that of Sèvres

¹¹ François Boucher (1703-1770) was a French painter who led the Rococo style in eighteenth-century Europe. He was well known for pastoral scenes in an idyllic style and worked as a stage and costume designer for the theatre.

¹² *Les Vendanges de Tempé* has no dialogue but consisted instead of a series of scenes set to popular songs or *vaudevilles*, whose lyrics, recognised by everyone, spoke for the characters- at the time, the official theatres held exclusive right to the use of the spoken word.

Hyde, Melissa, *Making Up the Rococo: François Boucher and His Critics*, Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006, p.161

The J. Paul Getty Museum 2013, *Pair of Figure Group: The Flute Lesson and The Grape Eaters*, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Viewed 18 February 2013, <<http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?handle=other&artobj=6120&artview=55415>>

porcelain, where his designs were modelled in porcelain. For example, *L'Agréable Leçon* (The Enjoyable Lesson, 1748) (Fig.11) and *Pensent-ils au raisin?* (Are They Thinking about the Grape?, 1747) (Fig.14) were created as a pair at Sèvres.¹³ The fact that these scenes from Boucher's paintings were performed in the theatre without dialogue must have heightened its sensuality. The idealised and idyllic scenes of love and courtship as portrayed in *The Music Lesson* can also be compared with pairings made with other sensual acts of exchange between the male and female figures produced at Sèvres.

These pastoral scenes always presented the two figures in isolation, far removed from reality of everyday life, in an eternal setting of lush, abundant nature, signifying fertility and sensual delight. Fruit and flowers worked to symbolise the couple's love, and the wilderness, as opposed to tamed nature, was used to emphasise the desire to visually express notions of reproduction and uncontrollable love. The lack of dialogue required the

deliberate creation of scenes and costumes that expressed these sensibilities in order to maximize the understanding of the scene.



Fig. 11, *L'Agréable Leçon*

¹³ Figure 12 offers a similar composition to the porcelain work in Figure 14.



Fig.12, *'Pensent-Ils Au Raisin?'*



Fig. 13, *The Flute Lesson*



Fig. 14, *The Grape Eaters*

In the case of *The Music Lesson*, which was produced for an English audience, 'bocage' performed this particular function, and was used as background. Bocage was a prominent feature in English ceramic figurines, and refers to a profusion of hand-modelled and

applied flowers and vegetation, creating a unique centerpiece. Bocage was developed from the use of a modelled tree-trunk used in European figurines to support the work and prevent it deforming during the firing. Joseph Willems, however, was not satisfied with this device of what appears to be a dead tree stump in his figurines; he added decorative imagery of trees, leaves and flowers, possibly encouraged by the popularity of pastoral scenes in England. This is particularly interesting, as the French figurines of same subject matter, did not include such abundant scenes of nature or flowers. This was a distinctly English trait.¹⁴ These pieces were not produced for the court, however, but purchased by the upper class of the day. In addition, music played a very particular role in the portrayal of love in Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This figurine group of shepherd and shepherdess in *The Music Lesson* immediately conjures up a convincing image of courtship.¹⁵ The

¹⁴ Savage, George, 1964, *Eighteenth-century English Porcelain*, London: Spring Books, 1964, p.31

shepherd is flirtatiously teaching the shepherdess how to play the flute, with his arms around her. As the recent exhibition *Vermeer and Music: The Art of Love and Leisure* (2013), at the National Gallery in London, showed, music provided 'a rare chance for men and women to get together without a chaperone'.¹⁶ In painting, it can be translated as a metaphor for harmony between a man and a woman.¹⁷

(2) TRANSLATIONS/INTERPRETATIONS ACROSS THE CONTINENT

Figurines made in eighteenth-century England were very different from those of continental Europe. Firstly, most of the clay material used for the English figurines was soft-paste porcelain rather than hard-paste porcelain. English manufacturers like Chelsea, Bow, and

¹⁶ In a recent exhibition, *Vermeer and Music: Theatre of Love & Leisure* (2013) in the National Gallery London, the curator of the show, Betsy Wieseeman elaborated on the relationship between the couple in the painting. *Exhibition Insight: Music and Painting in the Dutch Golden Age*, National Gallery, London. Viewed 8 September 2013, < <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/rich-media/video/featured/music-and-painting-in-the-dutch-golden-age-film>>

¹⁷ *Exhibition Insight: Music and Painting in the Dutch Golden Age*, National Gallery, London. Viewed 8 September 2013, <<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/rich-media/video/featured/music-and-painting-in-the-dutch-golden-age-film>>

Derby used the soft-paste porcelain extensively because the recipe for the hard-paste porcelain was kept secret.¹⁸ After Meissen's success with hard-paste porcelain in 1708, no Englishman could discover the two essential ingredients of hard-paste porcelain, *kaolin* (china clay) and *petuntse* (china stone).¹⁹ Those two enabled the hard-paste porcelain to be fired at higher temperatures, from 1200°C to 1450°C, whilst soft-paste porcelain can only be fired at the lower temperature of 1100 °C. Because of the formula and high firing temperature, hard-paste porcelain provides more whiteness, brightness and a degree of plasticity to the body.²⁰ However, the soft-paste allowed English figurines to maintain the special

¹⁸ The discovery of hard-paste porcelain in Europe was credited to Johann Friedrich Böttger, of the Meissen factory in Germany in 1708. In 1719, Samuel Stölzel, the arcanist at Meissen, escaped to the Royal Vienna Factory in the imperial city of Vienna with his secret knowledge.

Dennis, J.M, 'J.G. Herold and Company: The Art of Meissen Chinoiserie', The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Viewed 2 April 2014, < www.metmuseum.org/pubs/bulletins/1/pdf/3258207.pdf.bannered.pdf>

¹⁹ Lane. Arthur, 1961, *English Porcelain Figures of the Eighteenth Century*, London: Faber and Faber, p.11.

²⁰ 'H is for Hard-paste', *A to Z Ceramics*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Viewed 1 April 2014, < <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/a-to-z-of-ceramics/#H>>

characteristics of the glassy material, which had a sensuous charm, a smooth richness and was different in character from the German porcelain.²¹

Secondly, in terms of the market for figurines, unlike many continental factories the Chelsea porcelain factory was not supported by aristocratic patronage, but was much more commercially driven.²² In England, such porcelain figures might have been displayed on domestic furniture, while in Germany they were shown on a dining table during the dessert course of a grand meal. (Fig.15) Meissen was the first factory to make porcelain figures for this particular purpose, replacing sugar paste and wax figures.²³ The figurines were originally intended as expressions of dynastic power and as a celebration of political allegiances. It was only in the eighteenth century that they became purely decorative:

²¹ Lane, p.7.

²² Figure, Joseph Willems, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Viewed 30 May 2013, <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O71000/figure-willems-joseph/>>

²³ Victoria and Albert Museum 2013, *Figure*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Viewed 18 May 2013, <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O77856/figure-kandler-johann-joachim/>> Honey, W.B. 1954, *Dresden China: An Introduction to the Study of Meissen Porcelain*, Faber and Faber, London, p.19.

this is evident from the back of the figurine, which is flat, and decreases significantly in quality because it was also intended to be displayed on a mantelpiece.²⁴ (Fig.16)



Fig.15, *the Swan Service (Schwanenservice)*

²⁴ Through my research trip to Meissen factory and museum in August 2013, I was able to see the reproduction version of *the Swan Service (Schwanenservice)*, first made in 1737-43, now on display in the museum. The service is a luxurious whole with tableware, centrepieces and figurines.



Fig.16, *The Music Lesson* (Back View)

The translation from Boucher's painting of the theme to the ceramic figurines produced in Sèvres is worth noting. The Sèvres *Les Flûteurs* (Fig. 13) is completely white, featuring a material that was known as 'white gold'.²⁵ On the other hand, in the case of enamel-decorated figurines, such as *The Music Lesson* (Fig.10) by the Chelsea Porcelain Factory, patterns and colours were added to the clothes to make them more visually alluring. In the hands of the potters, the shepherd and shepherdess suddenly became glamorous and fashionable works of art. This transformation can be attributed to the patrons of such figurines, the upper class and the royal court, reflecting their habits and taste. For example, the manufacturing company at Nymphenburg Palace in Munich was created specifically for the royal court and thus located inside the

²⁵ Porcelain was frequently called 'white gold', because the market value of Chinese ceramics was equal to gold before the discovery of how to make porcelain in the eighteenth century in Europe. Johann F. Böttger (1682-1719), alchemist at the court of King August the Strong in Germany, originally investigated a way to make gold in order to help improve the court's finances. However, instead he discovered the secret of porcelain, 'white gold'. Kaiser Porzellan 2014, *The White Gold*, Viewed 1 April 2014 <<http://www.kaiser-porzellan.de/en/left/willkommen-1>>

palace.²⁶ Recognisable because they quoted visually and directly from theatrical productions produced for, and viewed by, the royal court, these porcelain figurines were superior decorative pieces that were affordable only for the wealthy. Their connotations and significance were internalized: only those who were in the royal circle would truly understand the meaning of figurines. In this sense, *The Music Lesson* could be seen as a memento or miniature theatre in one's household.

French writer Denis Diderot criticized Boucher for having little reference to reality in his paintings.²⁷ He reviewed Boucher's paintings in 1761 Salon thus: 'Cet homme a tout – excepté la vérité'

²⁶ The manufacture of Nymphenburg ceramics is still established in the Nymphenburg Palace for the court since its creation in 1747 by the Elector Maximilian III Joseph. From my research trip to the Nymphenburg Palace on 13. August 2013, the factory was still situated there, inside the palace. The manufacture was moved to the royal Bavarian Wittelsbach family's summerhouse in 1747 by Elector Max III Joseph. For more information see: Doppellbauer, Elke. (ed.) *Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg*, Snoek, Germany, 2012.

²⁷ Denis Diderot (1713-1784) was a French writer, critic and philosopher. His opinion on Boucher's paintings was notably mixed.

(That man is capable of everything – except the truth).²⁸ The figures and settings in Boucher's paintings are not based on real-life models, and provided highly idealised images of rural life. However, these particular paintings were the height of fashion and were informed by the Rococo style, which to some extent influenced the figurines. The Opéra-Comique began as entertainment for ordinary people in France in the eighteenth century, and was not aimed at the aristocratic patrons in the prestigious grand opera houses, instead originating in the annual fairs in Paris.²⁹ Like the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte*, which had one foot in the palace and the

²⁸ Perrin Stein, 'François Boucher (1703-1770)', *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Viewed 20 October 2013, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bouc/hd_bouc.htm>

²⁹ In Boucher's lifetime, one of the major developments in French theatre was the 'resurrection of the Comédie-Italienne; the triumph vaudeville parody; the explosion of private théâtres de société; the beginnings and development of opéra-comique; the vogue for exotic and "Orientalizing" stage productions'. Hyde, Melissa. (ed.) *Rethinking Boucher*, Vol. 15 of Issues & Debates, Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006, p.135.

other in the streets, the characters represented every level and character in contemporary society.³⁰

The Music Lesson, similarly, contained elements that, at their simplest level, were recognisable to ordinary people – rural life and love – and on another level reflected the taste of the royal court and theatre. These levels of understandings may not have been instantly recognised by the English audience, as these scenes of pastoral life were not as prevalent in English theatre in the eighteenth century. Although French theatrical taste strongly influenced European theatre in the eighteenth century, theatre in England was successful on its own terms in relation to its English character. For example, John Gay’s humorous ballad-opera *The*

³⁰ *A Brief History of Commedia*, video recording, Commediaworks, London, (National Theatre)
Viewed 19 February 2013, < <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/video/a-brief-history-of-commedia> >
At the time, only the official theatres held the exclusive right to use the spoken word. *Les Vendanges de Tempé* has no dialogue.
Melissa Hyde (ed.) *Rethinking Boucher*, Vol. 15 of Issues & Debates, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2006, p.161.

Beggar’s Opera (1729) and Shakespeare plays became increasingly popular, with a slight change of taste according to the date.³¹

(3) SUMMARY

In summary, *The Music Lesson* provides an insight into the rich and luxurious habits and culture of the wealthy classes, both in England and throughout Europe, through ceramics. This case study also provides an understanding of how the theatre functioned as an important nucleus of court life in eighteenth-century Europe. Within the courts and the homes of the upper classes, the multiple layers of cultural references in the figurines could be instantly recognized, while outside of this context they became purely decorative objects. The work’s lineage, which can be traced back to the theatres of the contemporary French royal court, is particularly illuminating as it shows how these figurines were translated and interpreted as they were adopted in a new social and cultural context, and presented accordingly. This is different from the

³¹ *Eighteenth Century-Theatre*, Victoria and Albert Museum, Viewed 20. October 2013 <<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/0-9/18th-century-theatre>>

following case study, as in the early nineteenth century the figurines began to be dispersed widely across all levels of society and came to function as documents and objects of social activism, reflecting the pressing social issues and concerns of the time.

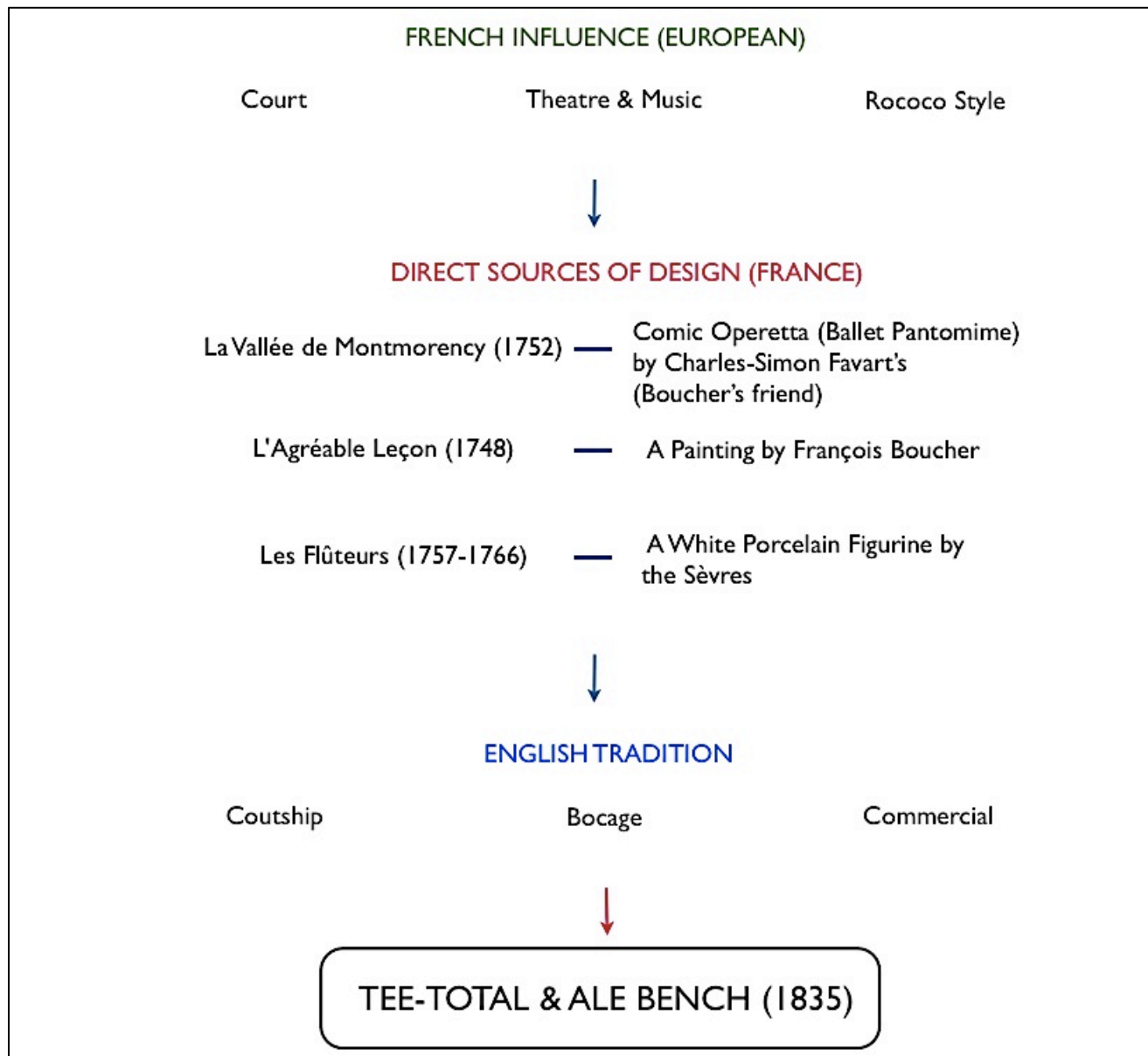


Fig. 17, Case Study 1, Graphic Image

2. CASE STUDY II: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRINKING CULTURE AND CERAMICS IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

(1) *TEE- TOTAL AND ALE BENCH*

The aim in this second case study is to understand the discrepancy in the subject matter of ceramic earthenware figurines collected by the working class, along with an investigation into the production, socio-political circumstances, inspiration and the state of the market in early nineteenth-century England. The resulting findings of this case study have been applied to my own work. It has also contributed to the final body of work, which has been motivated by research into how contemporary social issues have been captured through ceramic figurines and the way that relevant narratives were employed as subject matter. The two ceramic figurine groups that form the departure point for this case study are *Tee-total*

(Fig.18) and *Ale Bench* (Fig.19)(c.1835), currently housed in the Ceramics gallery of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.³²

³² Similar variations of the same subject matter are displayed in The Potteries Museum in Stoke-on-Trent and The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. However, *Ale Bench* (c. 1820) in the Fitzwilliam Museum is different in form. The husband and wife are sitting together and drinking ale, putting the cup to each other's mouth in front of a tree.



Fig.18, *Tee-total*



Fig. 19, *Ale Bench*

Both present one female and one male character on a raised stage; the two figurine groups follow the same compositional format, with a decorated base which bears the title of the group; a castle and the bocage form the backdrop to the two figures. The similarity in composition welcomes comparison between the two and further emphasises one's relation to the other. The scene presented in the *Ale Bench* figurine group is quite dramatic: a man is quarrelling with

a woman (possibly drunk), after presumably having consumed large amounts of alcohol. On the other hand, in the *Tee-total* group, the husband and wife are at the breakfast table with a cup of tea. The husband has his hand on his forehead, as though he has a headache.³³

These figurines were produced in earthenware clay. The earthenware clay in Staffordshire was, in fact, imported from Southern England and East Anglia via the canal.³⁴ The darker local clay in Staffordshire could not mimic the white clay body. Earthenware was more creamy and whiter than local red clay and met the demand of those who desired the white of porcelain, but could not afford the price. Therefore, figurines that were made in earthenware were affordable to the working class. Even today, the price of earthenware clay and the production costs are cheaper than those of porcelain. Earthenware was widely available, and its

³³ From a conversation with curator Rebecca Wallis in the V&A, she told me that the male figurine might have a headache because he had not drunk the night before. This can be conjectured from 'Tee-total' caption in the figurine.

³⁴ 'To Make a Teacup', *The Past at Work*, video recording (edited), BBC (broadcast 1980), viewed 1 April 2014 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIWneSiWCLM>>

use made the figurines cheaper and more accessible for the working class to collect. Some of the Staffordshire earthenware figurines were crude in their aesthetic and varied in their treatment, being produced in an assembly line moving from potter to painter. Interestingly, slightly different versions of these two figurines can be found, and modern collectors see the various degrees of finesse as an important factor in appreciating their aesthetic beauty. The antique dealer and collector Anthony Oliver describes the importance of such variations in aesthetic. In *The Victorian Staffordshire Figure: a Guide for Collectors* (1971), he states that 'there is no other way to judge Victorian Staffordshire figures, for there is a great variation in quality'.³⁵ However, despite the varying degrees of finesse, there is no evidence to show that they were produced by different potters working for the same

³⁵ Anthony Oliver (1922-1995) was a leading author on the Victorian Staffordshire figures and owned a shop in Kensington Church Street in London. He was also a well-known stage-actor, performing regularly in London and New York. His research into Victorian melodrama contributed to the knowledge and identification of many un-named figures in Staffordshire figures, documented in his book *The Victorian Staffordshire Figure; A Guide for Collectors*. Anthony Oliver, *The Victorian Staffordshire Figure; A Guide for Collectors*, (London: Heinemann, 1971), p.41.

manufacturer, by followers or by competitors. The existence of a wide variety of earthenware figurines treating the same subject matter and dating from very similar periods aroused my curiosity about the maker, collector or commissioner of these figurines. Furthermore, this led me to examine the social and cultural circumstances of the period that may have led to the significant production of these figurines.

(2) DIRECT SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

The unusual subject captured in these ceramics prompted my research. Prints were in fact one source of inspiration for potters in pot-banks, which means that it is sometimes possible to identify the imagery or subject matter presented in ceramics from an existing print.³⁶

³⁶ Pot-banks is a colloquial name of the pottery factories in Stoke-on-Trent.

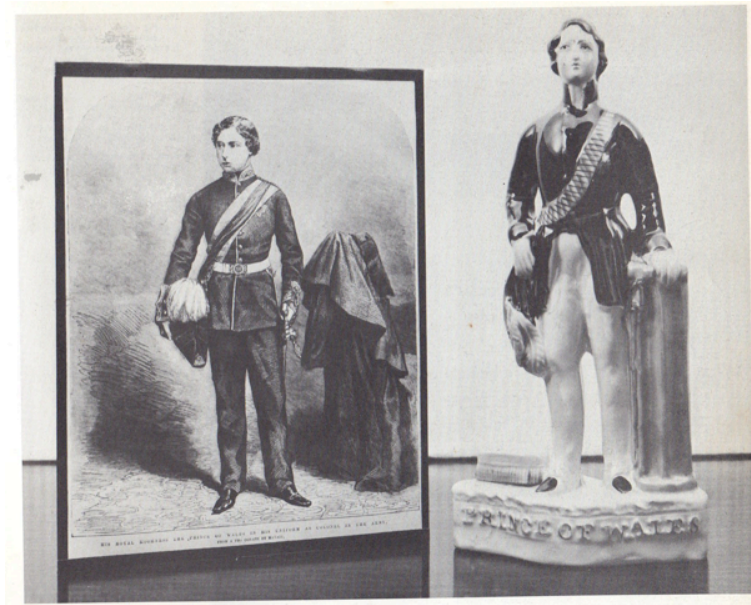


Fig. 20, *Prince of Wales* (Right), *Prince of Wales* (Left)

For example, the image below demonstrates how inspiration for Staffordshire figurines originated from prints (Fig.20).³⁷ In the case of this case study, *Tee-total* and *Ale Bench* can be linked to several

³⁷ The original source of design for potters was commonly from popular prints or paintings of the time since the eighteenth century. Case study 1 also provided the example of an oil painting by Boucher that inspired potters in England. Potters in the nineteenth century in Staffordshire further referenced prints.

prints relating to the Temperance Movement in the Wellcome Collection in London: *The Contrast, No.1 Temperance* (Fig.21) and *Temperance* (Fig.22) and *Intemperance* (Fig.23).³⁸

³⁸ I have researched the existence of prints that would have been a direct source for the design of *Tee-total* and *Ale Bench* but was unsuccessful. Whilst the prints from the Wellcome Collection are later in date than the figurine group, I have selected them as examples, surmising that the actual prints used as a design source for the figurines may have been similar.



Fig. 21, *The Contrast, No.1 Temperance*



Fig. 22, *Temperance*



Fig. 23, *Intemperance*

Of particular importance is the proximity in date between the figurines and the prints. Dated c.1840, the prints were produced within five years of the two figurine groups in this case study – c.1835. The prints came later than figurines, based on the approximate dates; however, from this it can be deduced that not only were the prints a source of inspiration for the figurine designers and makers, they also functioned correlatively/correspondingly as cultural manifestations of the Temperance Movement in the nineteenth century.³⁹ The Temperance Movement was a widespread social movement that encouraged people to reduce their intake of alcohol, triggered by the fact that the poor quality of water had led people to heavier consumption of alcohol in nineteenth-century England.⁴⁰ In London,

³⁹ While the prints in this example and the figurines under investigation do not correspond to each other exactly in visual terms, further investigation into printed materials of the period might lead to images that relate more closely to the figurines.

⁴⁰ The Temperance Movement was founded by Joseph Livesey in March 1832 in Preston, when he signed a pledge with seven followers. He opened the Temperance Hotel in the next year and founded the magazine called *Preston Temperance Advocate* (1834-37). Several long-running journals were published in England, including the *British Temperance Advocate*, *The Alliance Newsland*, and

for instance, the River Thames was the only source of water available, not only for drinking but also for sewage and waste. This often led to death from cholera, further encouraged by underdeveloped hygiene facilities and lack of awareness of health issues at the time:⁴¹

‘Out of the 12,800 deaths which, within the last three months, have arisen from cholera, 6,500 have occurred on the southern shores of the Thames; and to this awful number no localities have contributed so largely as Lambeth, Southwark and Bermondsey, each, at the height of the disease, adding its hundred victims a week to the

The Temperance Record. In 1847, a gathering called the Band of Hope was founded in Leeds, aiming at saving working-class children from drinking.

⁴¹ Henry Mayhew (1812- 1887), who was a social researcher and a journalist for the *Morning Chronicle*, a co-founder of ‘*Punch* magazine (1841)’ and an author of ‘*London Labour and the London Poor* (1849), investigated the way in which the poor of London lived and worked for a series of articles for the *Morning Chronicle*. In one of his articles in 1849, entitled *London Labour and the London Poor*, he described a visit to the cholera districts of Bermondsey, the death toll and filthy water conditions he witnessed.

A series of articles by Mayhew was later compiled into a book: Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor: Volume I*, London: Dover Publications, 1851.

fearful catalogue of mortality. [...] The water is covered with a scum almost like a cobweb, and prismatic with grease.⁴²

To overcome this crisis in hygiene, drinking water was replaced with alcohol in the form of ale, beer and gin. As consumption of beer proliferated throughout the nineteenth century, overconsumption of alcohol soon became a grave issue.⁴³

The *Tee-total* figurine group is almost certainly associated with the Temperance Movement because of the caption on the base, stating 'Tee-Total'. Here, the husband is having a cup of tea with what appears to be oatcakes, a customary breakfast staple in Staffordshire and Northern England. It has been conjectured that he has his hand on his forehead because he has been 'tee-total', a

⁴² Henry Mayhew, 'A Visit to the Cholera Districts of Bermondsey', *The Morning Chronicle*, Monday, 24 September 1849.

⁴³ The famous prints of *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane*, 1751, by William Hogarth, provides a glimpse into the drinking culture of the time, and how the taxes on beer and gin affected people's lives and the daily quantity of drinks consumed.

term denoting a person or practice of complete abstinence from alcohol.⁴⁴

This corresponds to William Hogarth's two well-known prints, *Beer Street and Gin Lane*, of 1751. (Fig.24) By associating the name of an alcoholic beverage directly with the setting of the scene, *Ale Bench* acts as a satire and a humorous warning, by portraying the consequences of the overconsumption of alcohol resulting in the wife, who would traditionally have less power and be submissive to the husband, now beating him. It is a warning of the immoral and disorderly cultural side-effects of alcoholic consumption.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The Oxford Dictionary definition of *Tee-total* (or *Teetotal*) is 'choosing or characterized by abstinence from alcohol.' The origin of the term is unclear although there are several interesting theories. One of them is possibly derived from a speech by Richard (Dickie) Turner, formed from *total* with a reduplication of the initial *T*- for emphasis (*T-totally* 'totally', though not in an abstinence sense, is recorded in Kentucky dialect from 1832 and is possibly older in Irish-English).

⁴⁵ Although, the two prints by William Hogarth relate more specifically to the Gin Act 1736, which criticised the resulting production of fake and unlicensed gin, *Gin Lane* explains how alcohol consumption could lead to poverty, madness, infanticide, starvation and death.

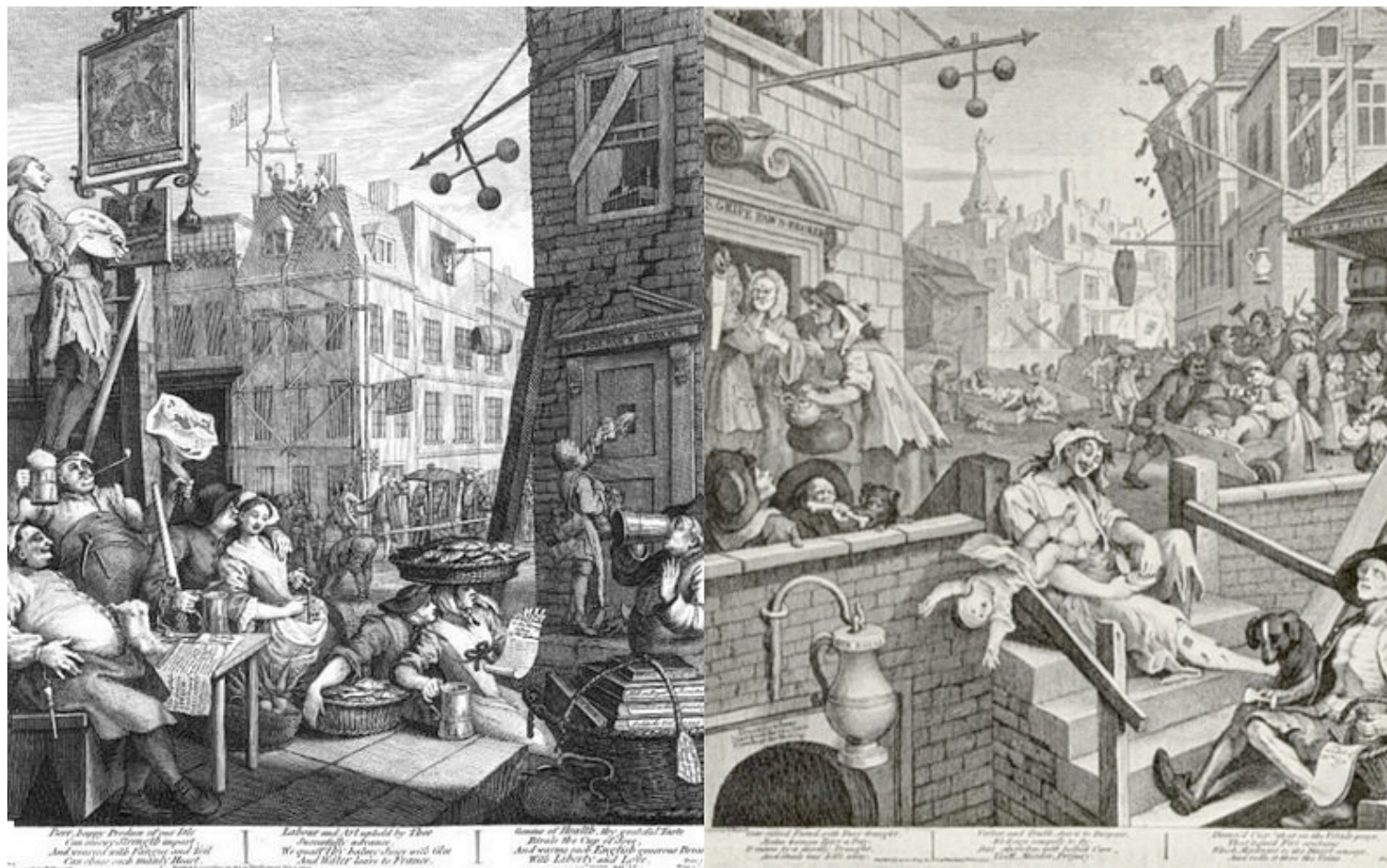


Fig.24, Beer Street And Gin Lane

As can be conjectured from the two figurine groups, in the nineteenth century the Temperance Movement had a huge impact on the English working class and the movement was even exported to other countries.⁴⁶ In this sense, the two figurine groups must be considered in relation to one another. They share a similarity of composition, and could be considered as a pair of or as part of a series which may have served as a medium for moral and educational purposes. The Temperance Movement formed and maintained a strong relationship with the Christian community, using the power of religion to steer people away from drinking.⁴⁷ For example, The Band of Hope, an organisation for working-class children, was created by Christians and Temperance societies to seek a way of providing an opportunity to guard children's health against the ill effects of alcohol consumption in the nineteenth century. The organisation encouraged them to avoid alcohol

⁴⁶ The Temperance Movement made its success to countries over the world such as Canada, Norway, Poland, New Zealand and the United States.

⁴⁷ Throughout this thesis, as a matter of consistency and specificity, 'Christians' refers to Christians in the Anglican Church and the Methodists outside the Catholic Church.

problems through lectures and songs. Furthermore, biblical texts were adopted directly to promote the cause. For instance, in the Livesey Collection at Lancashire Central University there are dessert plates inscribed with 'We will drink no wine' (Jeremiah 35 v 6) with the symbol of the Independent Order of Rechabites, which were produced by Prinknash Abbey Pottery in Gloucestershire, England, in the twentieth century.⁴⁸ (Fig.25)



Fig. 25, A Plate of The Independent Order of Rechabites

⁴⁸ The Prinknash Pottery was founded in 1942 by Benedictine monks in Gloucestershire and sold to the Welsh Porcelain Co. in 1997.

The simultaneous proliferation of prints and pottery reflecting the spreading power of the Temperance Movement demonstrates how the potters were eager to reflect directly the most pressing social concerns of the times.

(3) THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH TEA DRINKING

Interestingly, the culture of tea drinking relates strongly to the Temperance Movement. Tea drinking was passed on to working-class culture from the exotic and fashionable upper-class social circles in the later eighteenth century.⁴⁹ This happened after the government reduced the heavy taxation on tea from the Far East, and it was estimated that there was more tea smuggled than legally imported. This is illustrated in the several sets of Temperance teaware held at the Harris Museum and Art Gallery in Preston,

⁴⁹ 2013, *Tea For the Masses and the Smuggling*, 'United Kingdom Tea Council', viewed. 17. Nov. 2013, <<http://www.tea.co.uk/a-social-history>>

discovered during a research trip in 2011.⁵⁰ *The Tee-total Teapot* (Fig. 26) and *Temperance Society teaware* (Fig.27) in the museum are decorated with the inscriptions 'Tee Total' and 'Put No Rum In Me', accentuating the movement's connection to tea drinking.⁵¹

⁵⁰ In addition to such wares, the Livesey Collection in the Lancashire Central University library holds numerous collections, including books, hymns, newspapers, educational illustrations, badges, temperance certificates, tickets, advertisements, badges, medals, ceramics (tea wares) and other ephemera, often in the temperance colours of blue and white. These collections were examined during my research trip to Preston in December 2011. For more, see: Aidan Turner-Bishop, 'Archives, Livesey Collection, University of Central Lancashire, Preston', *Manchester Region History Review* (Vol.17, Number 2, 2006), p.100.

⁵¹ Written information is from Caroline Alexander, the curator in the Harris Museum. Also, in the novel *Mary Barton* by Elizabeth Gaskell (1848), a scene describes a Manchester tea party in the early nineteenth century in the house of John Barton, a workingman. In the fiction, Mary's mother asks Mary to buy a penny worth of milk and a loaf of bread, and her father says, "No, it's not all," said her husband. "Thou must get six penny worth of rum, to warm the tea; thou'll get it at the 'Grapes.'" This quote led me to some questions about the cultural and historical background of tea drinking in England. Pouring milk into a cup of tea was a surprising experience to me at first. Tea with alcohol is an unusual mix for those who are not familiar with traditional English or contemporary drinks. The tea wares in the Livesey Collection were made specially for the regional Temperance Societies and photographs of annual gatherings with similar tea ware are still in existence



Fig. 26, Tee-Total Teapot



Fig. 27, Temperance Society Tea Wares

Tea seems to have been considered as an alternative to alcohol, and it is said that tea was served during the gatherings held by the Temperance Societies. It is highly possible that these figurines were thus created for the tee-totallers to actually use or to collect, as part of the nationwide Temperance campaign. The teaware can be considered akin to other promotional goods and mediums used by the Temperance Movement organizers, which varied hugely from three-dimensional pledge cards to ceramics, books, hymns, badges, temperance certificates, tickets, and other ephemera, often in the temperance colours of blue and white.⁵² The movement also owned hotels and organized talks that encouraged people to turn away from alcohol and its immoral effects. In 1864, the Salvation Army was founded and both worked for abstinence and ministered to the working class.

⁵² Based on the Bible, verse Numbers 15:37-38. 'The Lord said to Moses, Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel.' (New International Version)
Aidan Turner-Bishop, 'Livesey Collection, University of Central Lancashire, Preston', *Manchester Region History Review*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2006, p.100.

(4) SUMMARY

As this chapter has illustrated, the two figurines *Tee-total* and *Ale Bench* were made in the highly fashionable medium of social and cultural storytelling at the time. More importantly, they act as pivotal documentation, as reflections of a particular social and historical phenomenon in British history. While today social movements and cultural messages are dispersed through multimedia platforms, in the nineteenth century figurines, as well as other mediums such as prints, played a key role. Clay was cheap, and figurines were very collectable; they were easy to purchase, as they were often sold on the streets or in front of theatres, which meant that they could be collected and displayed quite easily in the home. More importantly, using visual messages as their main form of communication did not depend on the literacy of its buyers or collectors, and offered the ideal medium for social movements and campaigns.

3. CASE STUDY III: ENGLISH EVERYDAY LIFE

This final case study, *Before Marriage* (Fig.28) and *After Marriage* (Fig.28) (c.1860) examines the reflection of everyday life and culture in Victorian England in ceramics through the use of humour and satire. I see this as a distinct characteristic of the figurines produced in Europe for the English market.⁵³ This pair provides an occasion to examine the phenomenon of Victorian china fairings that became widely popular from late-nineteenth century England to the early twentieth century, and how porcelain was manufactured for a broader market in England.⁵⁴ The cheaper price and expansion of collectability meant that porcelain items were not

exclusive to the upper class, being accessible to the working-class family in markets and fairs. This possibly influenced the subject matter – scenes from everyday life such courtship, marriage, children, animals, pets, cycling, tea parties. The subject matter suggests different lifestyles within the British class system, family and domestic problems such as marital infidelity, falling in love with servants, and so on. The tradition of porcelain figurines and the act of collecting was originally imported from Germany in the eighteenth century.

⁵³ The exact dates of these two pieces are unknown, as no number was recorded on the base of the objects. However, there is a reference for a date in *Victorian China Fairings*, by W.S. Brestowe. The author states that these two figurines were manufactured around 1860. With regard to the figures' dress, he says that '...the man's clothes, the women's hairstyle and tunic sleeves coming below the elbow. This fashion ruled shortly before 1860'. W.S. Brestowe, (1964), *Victorian China Fairings*, London: Adam & Charles Black, London, 1971, p.50.

⁵⁴ Conta and Boehme of Pössneck was a German porcelain factory that produced porcelain ornaments including matchboxes, tobacco boxes and candelabras between 1850-1890.



Fig. 28, *Before Marriage*



Fig. 29, *After Marriage*

(1) VICTORIAN CHINA FAIRINGS

Victorian china fairings are small porcelain ornaments, varying in size from three to five inches in height in general, that were highly popular as collectables in the Victorian era (1837-1901). These

groups are often described by antique dealers as 'bed pieces', 'cottage mantelshelf china', 'valentines' (in Lancashire) as well as 'fairings'.⁵⁵ The term 'bed pieces' appeared as beds feature heavily in domestic scenes depicted in the fairing groups. I refer to the group as 'fairings', as this is the most common term used by art dealers and scholars today. The term 'fairings' derived from the fairgrounds or fairs where they were most often sold.⁵⁶ At the height of their popularity, in the second half of the nineteenth century, some were even 'giveaway' items in the English fairs: they were cheap but collectable items accessible to everyone. While these groups of porcelain pieces are referred to as fairings, I see them as part of wider family of figurines and as such defined in the introduction to this thesis.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Brestowe, p.11.

⁵⁶ Fairings were certainly not only made for fairgrounds in England. After the main fairing period, 1860-90, fairings were also sold in town shops, but without inscriptions.

⁵⁷ In terms of the fairings I refer to in this thesis, some of these were partly made in Germany by Contac and Boehme of Pössneck, and some by unknown factories in Germany with a similar style.

Fairs in England have a long tradition, being recorded as far back as the Anglo-Saxon period in the early fifth century.⁵⁸ Fairs became an important part of entertainment and amusement in English life. At these fairs, where fairings were sold, there were stalls and booths to sell inexpensive goods, items and food. The earliest fairs were in the market-place, and many have traditionally retained the same site. For example, Figure 30 shows a fair at South Shields in 1899, and suggests where the fairings might have been sold.⁵⁹ Another example is the Great Fair of 1910 in Hull: by this time there were over 200 stalls in the fairground, in addition to 1,000 ft of bazaar stalls.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ 'Historic Fairs', 2007, *National Fairground Archive*, viewed 20 October 2013 <<http://www.nfa.dept.shef.ac.uk/history/charter/index.html>>

⁵⁹ The earliest fairs were held in market places, usually only for a day. South Shields fair in 1899 came to the market place and regular businesses carried on their trade around the fringes.

⁶⁰ Hull Fair is one of the oldest fairs in England, it was granted permission to be a Chartered Fair in 1278 and still keeps this tradition today. *World's Fair* newspaper has served as a channel of communication between showmen, market traders and the funfair industry in the United Kingdom since 1904.



Fig.30, *South Shields Market Place*

The fairings came to play the role of memorabilia, a small memento of the fair that fair visitors would purchase. The collectability of the fairings was enough to attract visitors, as they were often made in pairs or produced in a narrative sequence. For instance, other subject matter, such as dancing scenes (*Cancon*, Fig.31) and women on bicycles (*Dangerous Encounters*, Fig.32) were also sequence-

' Extracts from *World's Fair, 1901-1910: 'Hull's Great Fair'*, National Fairground Archive 2007, viewed 19 October 2013, <http://www.nfa.dept.shef.ac.uk/history/worlds_fair/extracts/1900-1910.html >

based, encouraging the collectors to anticipate new pieces in the series.



Fig. 31, *Cancon*



Fig. 32, *Dangerous Encounters*

(2) *BEFORE MARRIAGE AND AFTER MARRIAGE*

The porcelain group that I have chosen strikes an interesting narrative in the context of other fairings that were available in this period. The group *Before Marriage* and *After Marriage* create a

progressively linear narrative, like other popular fairings of the time that captured scenes from married life through time.⁶¹ The themes were elaborated in scenes depicted extensively in numerous humorous sequences, showing, for instance, in between, before and after marriages, the bearing of children, sleepless nights and cheating on partners.

In *Before Marriage*, the bride is sitting on a chair while the groom-to-be sits next to her on the floor. The groom is holding his hand with the bride's hand, as an expression of love and devotion. However, in *After Marriage*, the husband and wife are sitting on the sofa, looking in opposite directions, as though after an argument.

Such fairings were very much products of their time and culture, capturing the English social climate of the time. First of all, the

⁶¹ W.S. Brestowe explained the themes of Victorian China Fairings as if he reconstruct the lives of Sarah Jones and her husband, Joseph to provide some pictures of the hype of humour enjoyed in his book, *Victorian China Fairings*, 1971(1964), Adam & Charles Black, London

narrative of the fairings reflected the 'British' sense of humour about ordinary life. Their affordability and subject matter made them attractive purchases for the working classes. It is worth noting here that fairings were produced in porcelain, which was considered as 'white gold' in the previous century. The fairings were a similar price to the cartoon magazines and satirical prints popular at the time. For example, *Punch* magazine (1841-2002), a journal that covered national and international affairs, art, fashion and society in cartoon form, was sold at a price of 3d and remained the same price for 76 years, despite inflation.⁶² Although the price of prints depended on their size and the various degrees of quality of finish, the majority of satirical prints from the nineteenth century were sold at the price of 'a penny or two'. The phrase 'Penny Plain or Twopence Coloured' was made popular by the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson in 1884 with his obsession for collecting miniature theatre sheets of characters and scenery, which cost a penny for a plain one and twopence for one that was

⁶² 'An Introduction: How A Sketchy Idea Of Humour Took Off', *Punch Magazine Cartoon Archive*, viewed 26 October 2013, <<http://www.punch.co.uk>>

hand-coloured.⁶³ A carpenter's daily wage was approximately 5 shillings in 1860. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, a working family needed an income of at least 18 shillings to 21 shillings a week to get by.⁶⁴ Considering that one shilling was equivalent to 12 pence, the price of satirical prints, *Punch* magazine and fairings were affordable items in the nineteenth century for the working classes. The desire to possess them may have even been greater since the porcelain fairings aroused a purchasing frenzy for porcelain, as well as just the pleasure of collecting.⁶⁵

The subject of marriage occurs frequently in illustrated satirical prints of the time. Describing marriage and domestic problems had been a popular pursuit in satirical prints since the eighteenth

⁶³ 'A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured', *The World Through Wooden Eyes*, viewed 1 November 2013,

<http://www.theworldthroughwoodeneyes.co.uk/toy_theatre.html>

⁶⁴ 'Currency, Coinage and the Cost of Living', *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913*, viewed 1 November 2013,

<<http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Coinage.jsp>>

⁶⁵ 'White gold' was the term for porcelain in the eighteenth century, as the market value of ceramics was equal to gold. For more details, please see Case Study 1.

century in England. William Hogarth's celebrated *Marriage à la Mode* (1745, Fig.33) and James Gillray's *The Morning after Marriage – or – A Scene on the Continent* (1788, Fig. 34) are examples of this. The topic was prevalent, as a satirical print *Before Marriage! After Marriage!!* (c. 1825, Fig. 35) demonstrates.⁶⁶ There are even examples of handkerchiefs printed with humorous scenes from married life, with captions illustrating the extent to which the theme of marriage and its humorous depiction was popular. (Fig.36)



Fig.33, *Marriage a la Mode*

⁶⁶ Although the scenes in the *Before Marriage! After Marriage!!* potentially expressed before and after marriage scenes in a middle-class setting, with regard to the couple's clothing, however, this print has a resemblance to the fairing group I have chosen.



Fig.34, *The Morning after Marriage – or– A Scene on the Continent*



Fig.35, *Before Marriage! After Marriage!!*



Fig.36, Handkerchief

The porcelain pieces produced for the English market are much more obvious in terms of their humour. Objects produced by Conta and Boehme for the German market are far less humorous and less

political than those they produced for the English market. Examples are the tobacco boxes by Conta and Boehme from 1880 (held in the V&A Museum), and the serious, individual figurines sold to the German audience. They are much less narrative-based and the majority of the pieces had no captions. Furthermore, the subject matter, composition, and quality of modelling differ widely. The tobacco boxes in Figure 37, *William I Of Germany* (c. 1880), and Figure 38 are decorative and of high quality, depicting royalty and high culture.

Although technically the fairings were known to be manufactured by Conta and Boehme, many were produced by unknown factories in Germany. Design sources for the fairings for the English markets were the popular prints or music covers found in the English markets. Tongue-in-cheek jokes, images of children playing and saucy subjects only further support the idea that these fairings were decidedly for an English market and different from other objects produced by the same manufacturer.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ While the majority of the captions on the fairings is in English, a few can be found in German and French. This supports the argument that these fairings



Fig. 37, *William I Of Germany*

were produced with the English market in mind, which was perhaps more receptive to the products.



Fig.38, *Tabacco Box*

Fundamentally, as fairs created a romantic fantasy world, expressing a desire to imitate, falsify, construct and distort for the public's pleasure, they were also permanently transient,

disappearing as quickly as they arrived.⁶⁸ Fairings reflected the nature of the fairground in England. From their emergence in the second half of the nineteenth century, they only survived until the beginning of the First World War in 1914.

(3) FOR THE ENGLISH MARKET

The interesting point about this is that the fairings were made in Germany and sold in England. These had captions in English and the figures were dressed in British fashion, suggesting that an English instructor or designer of the time guided the manufacturer. As the author of *Victorian China Fairings: The Collectors' Guide*, Derek H. Jordan, states in his book,

' The original ideas and designs must have come from England; it would seem that no foreigner could know us so well. However some of the clothes depicted on Fairings are of German origin and some captions just miss the mark of their intended meanings, for example, Shall We sleep first

⁶⁸ Ian Starsmore, *English Fairs*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1975, p.11.

or how? "what" would have been more colloquially used in the place of "how".⁶⁹

It can be conjectured that the reason why the figurines were made in Germany was that the factories in England were not be able to meet the cost of production for the fairings.⁷⁰ The production of fairings was quite complex: several moulds were needed, and had to be joined together by repairs, and materials, including white porcelain paste, was presumably more expensive in England. Interestingly, despite the elaborate production process – modelling, casting, firing, glazing, enamel decoration and gilding – these fairings produced in Germany cost no more than a penny or two in the 1860s. It is believed that Conta & Boehme discovered an inexpensive and easier way to paint and gild.⁷¹

⁶⁹ D. Jordan, *Victorian China Fairings: The Collectors' Guide*, Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2003, p.11.

⁷⁰ *ibid.* p 11.

⁷¹ *ibid.* p 11.

Although there were no stamps for the first fairings, which were made in the 1850s, by 1860 manufacturers were marking serial numbers onto the base, along with their trademark. Fairings were known to be produced by other unknown German factories as well as in Japan and Austria (the Royal Vienna Factory).⁷² However, the largest manufacturer of the fairings was Conta and Boehme, right up to 1931.⁷³

Back in the eighteenth century, when porcelain figurines had become popular in the work of the Meissen porcelain factory, the Chelsea Porcelain Factory in England had copied German porcelain figurines. During the nineteenth century figurine-making in England was at its peak, with massive growth in the pottery industry in Staffordshire. For example, in 1751 Sir Everard Fawkener, a sponsor of Chelsea director Nicholas Sprimont, wrote to the British Envoy at the Dresden court particularly requesting items of Meissen

⁷² In Derek J. Jordan's book *Victorian China Fairings* it is suggested that 'the best Fairings were made in Germany by Conta and Boehme between 1850 and 1890. After this date, other unknown German factories and one in Japan' *ibid.*, p.3.

⁷³ Brestowe, p.13.

porcelain for the Chelsea factory to copy, and for information on the prices charged for Meissen ware.⁷⁴ By the nineteenth century, however, English factories found themselves in a different situation. It has been suggested that alongside the popularity of the fairings, there was a considerable demand for finer porcelain figurines made in England.⁷⁵ For instance, during this period, Royal Doulton's figurines were featured in both national and international exhibitions, such as the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876, and the Chicago Exhibition in 1893.⁷⁶ The rise of the great international exhibitions that followed the industrial revolution meant that not only was the domestic market able to easily access these special products, they were also

⁷⁴ W.B. Honey, *Dresden China: An Introduction to the Study of Meissen Porcelain*, London: Faber and Faber, 1954, p.78.

⁷⁵ For example, Royal Doulton Figures gained their reputation throughout the nineteenth century and by the early twentieth century the company had reached a renaissance of figure-making. For more details see: Desmond Eyles, *Royal Doulton figures Produced at Burslem c1890-1978*, Stoke on Trent: Royal Doulton Tableware Ltd., 1978.

⁷⁶ Eyles, p.19.

Nearly 1500 Royal Doulton wares, along with figurines, were displayed for the American market in 1876 at the Philadelphia Exhibition, while in 1871 some 70 were shown in London for the domestic market.

able to reach out to a greater international audience to showcase British culture. Ceramics from Staffordshire became highly popular in America and this led to the production of more goods for the international market.⁷⁷ It is important to note that these exhibitions of the industrial revolution, that aimed to show new products and wonders from different nations, in which high-quality porcelain featured heavily, as a distinctly British product of the industrial age, exposed it to an international market. With this exponential growth in the market, the renaissance of Staffordshire figurine-making began in the early twentieth century in England. Considering this, it is particularly interesting that these fairings were made in Germany during this period, when figurine-making thrived in England.

⁷⁷ The American market was complex and distant, and in terms of design reflected the different taste of Americans. Although the style and taste in America was different, ranging from white wares to expensive Parian goods, American importers often came to Stoke to visit factories to order products during the last half of nineteenth century.

Keith Mcleod (ed.) 'A Picture of Midwest American Ceramic "Taste": Staffordshire Ceramics for the St. Louis Market', in *Wedgwood: Production For Elegance, Fashion and Taste*, Wedgwood International Seminar, USA, 1978

(4) SUMMARY

In the late nineteenth century, fairings were produced in Germany for the English market, which created an exchange of manufacturing knowledge and economic trade between the two countries. The popularity of fairings developed from a desire by ordinary people to possess the porcelain figurines which had previously been the preserve of the collections of the wealthy. These present images of familiar everyday scenes that the buyer would find amusing and recognisable. Representing British satirical humour in both captions and subject matter, the Victorian china fairings provide an interesting case of the continuous flow of exchange of skills, markets, and trade in Europe.

CHAPTER TWO

1. CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

The three historical case studies in the previous chapter directly inform and are interconnected with my figurine making in the studio. The first case study investigated the impact of European theatrical culture on English porcelain figurines in the eighteenth century. The second case study researched in depth how earthenware figurines represented social issues of the nineteenth century and were used for social campaigns: in particular, issues related to alcohol consumption. In the final case study, I examined the figurines' employment of British humour and satire through the construction of narratives. Here, the inter-European exchange of manufacturing and the expansion of the market through outsourcing were investigated. I developed my ideas through a series of tests and experiments in order to underpin the historical references in the three case studies. While they were not all

successful, they were pivotal stages that led me to the final stage of practice for this MPhil.

2. MY INTERPRETATION THROUGH CERAMIC FIGURINES

A. AIM

The aim of my studio practice is to document contemporary English cultural and social behaviour as manifested and embodied in people's daily activities. These are observed through my own eyes as a Korean living in London. The stories I have collected through my observations provide the themes for my figurines, and they include English drinking culture, football, loneliness, social attitudes to homosexuality, laws and regulations, and the British preoccupation with the weather.

B. PROCESS OVERVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

My process of figurine making for this project is straightforward. I write a short story that comments on the theme and then produce a figurine as an illustration. It might record an experience, an action or a reaction.

I started the practice-led research by trying a new style of drawing that was new to me in 2011. Then my project was developed in an investigation with drawings onto functional ceramics. Figurine making came later, during the MPhil. For just over a year and a half, I was trying to find a way to approach the figurines and the case studies. For the final figurine making, there have been three stages in my approach and experiments. First, I made figurines that were roughly modelled and hand-painted with enamels, which related closely to my previous work (Fig. 40); second, I created figurines that were partly modelled and partly left blank, where the left side was decorated with an enamel painting (Fig.41); and finally I created figurines that were fully modelled and partly decorated with an enamel painting. (Fig. 42) Then I added an MDF panel with my drawings on to some of the wall figurines. Figures 40 and 41 are a part of Figure 63, which is the final image of the work. More details are also indicated in the Tests. (Appendix 1)

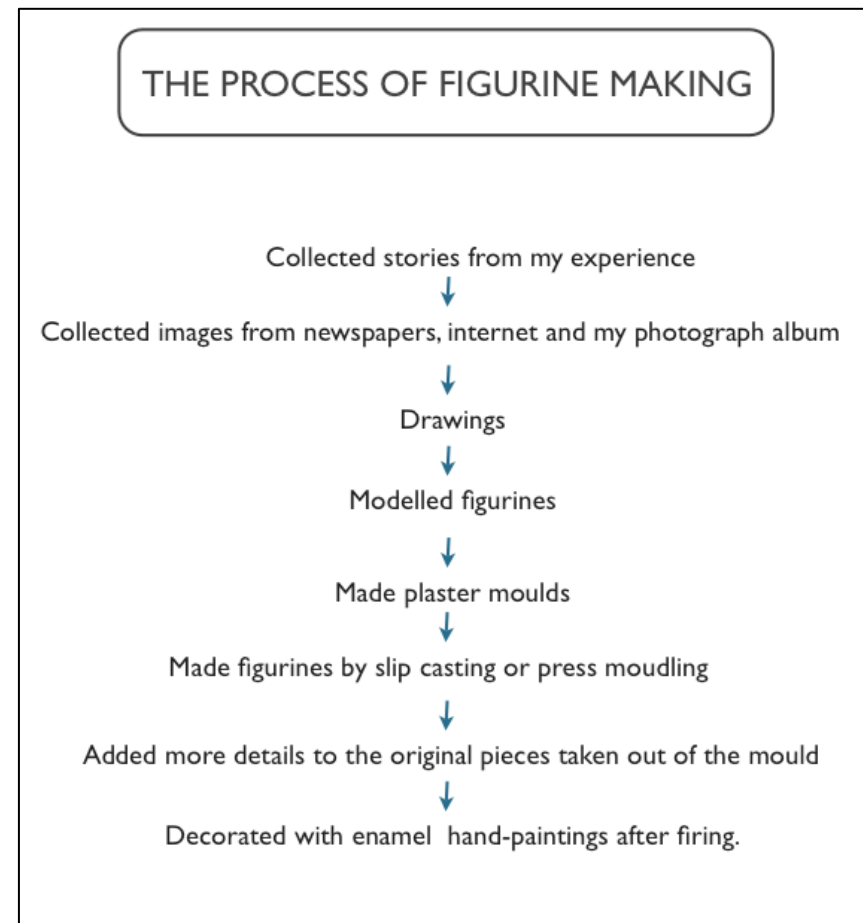


Fig.39, *The Process of Figurine-Making*



Fig.40, A Man, from *Red Knickers*



Fig.41, A Figure from *Top-Geared*



Fig.42, A Figure from *Top-Geared*

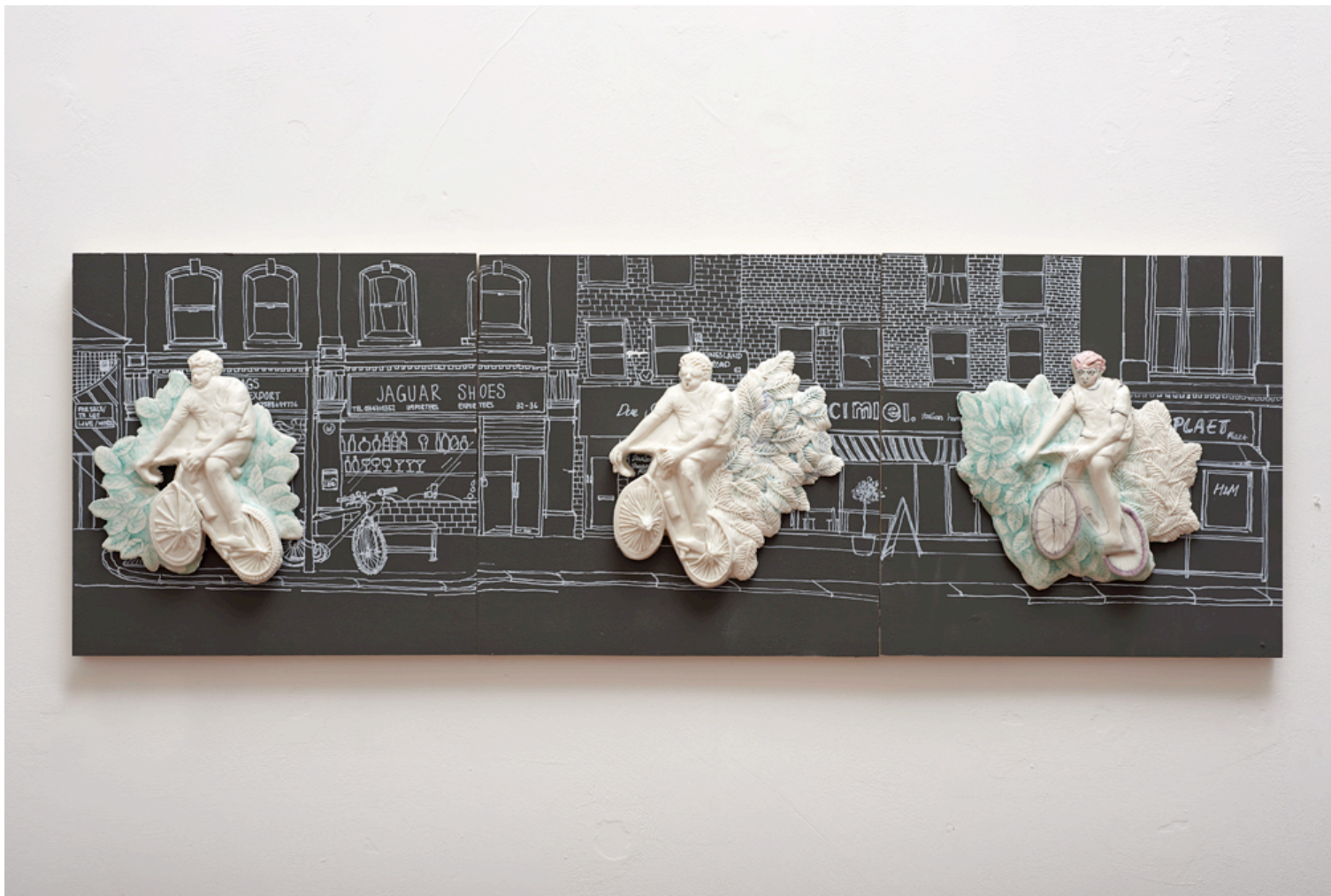


Fig.64, *Top-Geared*

C. THROUGH CASE STUDIES

As I carried out the research for the three case studies, four key elements arose and came to direct my contemporary practice:

The figurines as a vehicle for documenting people who live in England from an English perspective, their manners and behaviour in everyday life.

The notion of encounters and exchanges in relation to my identity as a ceramic artist originally from South Korea.

The relationship between drawing directly from scenes of everyday life and producing figurines.

Two-dimensional images as a template for three-dimensional figurines.

Storytelling emerged from my drawing practice as an observational tool.

(a) FIGURINES AS A DOCUMENTATION OF THE ENGLISH IN EVERYDAY LIFE FROM AN ENGLISH PERSPECTIVE

My own cultural background, and experiences in the UK which were coloured by this factor, drove my interest in English culture

during my stay in the UK. I wanted to express these through the medium of ceramics, and thus my figurines contain narrative, humour and satire taken directly from my own observations while living in London. In a sense, my observational stories are more a result of the various cultural shocks that I experienced on a daily basis.

There are diverse ways in which the English represent everyday life in England. Common themes include depicting poverty and political issues, while the traditional expression is through humour and satire. Journalists, writers, artists and satirists have contributed to the recording and documenting of the lives of the people, and are a rich source of information throughout history up to the present day. For instance, Henry Mayhew, in his 1851 work *London Labour and the London Poor* provides lively descriptions of various characters from the working class in the streets of London through which the readers are able to picture life in nineteenth-century England.⁷⁸ The characters include a beggar, a street stationer, a street author, and

⁷⁸ Peter Quennell (ed.) *Mayhew's Characters: Selected from London Labour and the London Poor*, by Henry Mayhew. London: William Kimber, 1951, p.1

a flower girl. While these figures would have demanded no particular attention, since they were 'ordinary', Mayhew documented his observations of the working class from the perspective of a middle-class author. Peter Quennell states in the introduction to this collection of Mayhew's texts that 'The English character is like the English landscape - a pattern of incongruities, a tissue of contrasts, composed in different moods, full of fragmentary survivals and odd anachronisms'.⁷⁹ The observation is as much an insight into Mayhew's stories as it is into the subjects of observation. More obvious examples could include the books of Charles Dickens, Jane Austen and Elizabeth Gaskell. Documentation has not only existed in the written form, however, but also in visual representation. For example, visual representation has left us with important archive of documentation from newspapers and magazines that give us a glimpse into the lives and concerns of those living at the time.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ibid. p.1.

⁸⁰ Ronald Weber, *The Reporter As Artist: Readings on the New Journalism Controversy*, London: Hastings House, 1974, p.10.

In today's digital age, we are overwhelmed with images and documents of everyday life: these include individual blogging, photography, social networks, etc. Ceramics play a significant role in representing everyday life in Britain. British contemporary ceramic artists have developed new ways of producing work for this purpose, such as using ready-made ceramics (sometimes called upcycling).⁸¹ I began researching contemporary British ceramic artists who mainly reference the figurine tradition before my studio practice was set up. Researching the approaches of established artists who use the figurine as a reference has helped my own practice, in particular Tony Hayward, Stephen Bird, Neil Brownsword, Barnaby Barford and Carole Windham. From the range of artists I encountered during my course of study, I decided to look more closely at the work of Barford and Windham. I found their work the most interesting as their recent and historical references to figurines are relevant to both historical investigation

⁸¹ Upcycling uses the ready-made, vintage and found ceramics, to transform them. *Upcycle*, The Oxford Dictionaries, 2014, *exotic*, Oxford University Press, UK, viewed 7 February 2014, <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/upcycle?q=upcycle>>

into figurines and my contemporary artworks. In the context of my research these two have been a central inspiration for my studio practice. I was fascinated to see how British life was seen through the eyes of a British artist.

In both artists' work you can see a similarity in approach to aspects of traditional figure making which they have utilized in their contemporary translations. These bear a relationship to my case studies. Barford uses a 'romanticised' ready-made approach from which he constructs theatrical scenarios, an artistic strategy with which he makes a visual comment on contemporary culture and society. Carole Windham's focus is on the 'naïve' expression of the Staffordshire figurines of the nineteenth century, a ploy she uses to explore the social and cultural issues of today. She mainly uses the hand-building process, often in large and sculptural format.

For example, *Dearly Beloved* (2013) (Fig.43), by Carole Windham, is an example of how a British cultural background is incorporated into the traditional ceramic figurine in order to address a

contemporary social issue.⁸² She uses the skilful 'naïve' expression often associated with the Staffordshire figurines of the nineteenth century. Her work makes reference to the modelling style of the nineteenth-century Staffordshire modeller Obadiah Sherratt, transforming work into a large scale. There is a cross-reference to both Pop art and Staffordshire flat-backs, a deliberate interconnection that alludes to their similarities in terms of production, reception, and subject matter.⁸³ In her recent interview for the *Subversive Design* exhibition at the Brighton Museum & Art Gallery in 2013, she emphasized that 'the original flat-backs have an innocent charm that is impossible to reproduce; however the unique quality of "Englishness" that they possess can be achieved in the sense that I am an English artist working in

⁸² This sculpture depicts the British Prime Minister David Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg as Queen and Consort in commemoration of their policies on gay marriage. In the work they are married in the Rose Garden. This piece featured in the exhibition *Victoriana: The Art of Revival* at the Guildhall Art Gallery, London, 2013.

⁸³ Pop art in ceramics was a new trend in the 1960s in American ceramic art. Artists included Robert Carston Arneson (1930-1992) whose work was the essence of 'Funk Ceramics' in which an irreverent and sarcastic approach to subjects could be seen.

England.’⁸⁴ Not only does she employ an ‘Englishness’ in her work with a root in Staffordshire pottery, she also uses the qualities she recognizes as quintessentially ‘English’ – something that cannot be measured or grasped as a tangible quality.

Barnaby Barford examines the human condition through his figurative porcelain and presents the contemporary world with a sense of humour. He works primarily with found figurines to create unique narratives drawn from his observations of British society. In 2013, the Virginia Museum of Art described his work as follows: ‘Through humor the sculpture takes the viewer off guard, evokes relevant problems and concerns of our times, and allows the messages to permeate. By fusing reality with recognizable elements

from fairy tales and fantasy, Barford invites the viewer into an unusual and yet not completely foreign world.’⁸⁵

In his series of works *The Battle of Trafalgar* (2010), his particularly British perspective on this tourist landmark is captured excellently. (Fig.44, 45) In the exhibition text by Ken Harmon (2010): ‘Trafalgar Square is located in the very heart of London, and has for almost two hundred years been a destination and attraction for Londoners and tourists alike. Since the Battle of Trafalgar, in the Napoleonic Wars, the square has provided continually evolving documentation of the history of the UK, with its statues and plinths, and as a meeting point for celebration and revolution. It has been described as the blank slate upon which Britain has inscribed its modern history. Drink, Violence, Consumerism, Junk food, Protest and Terrorism all inhabit this world’.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Carole Windham, Artist Page, International Ceramics Festival, UK, 2013, viewed 20 Jan 2014
<http://www.internationalceramicsfestival.org/speakers/carole_windham/>
Flat-backs are named for a group of Staffordshire earthenware figurines which backsides were left blank. They were often placed on fireplaces as decoration therefore the back was intentionally left undecorated.

⁸⁵ Virginia MOCA 2014, *Barnaby Barford*, Exhibition Text, Viewed 19 January 2014
<<http://www.virginiamoca.org/barnaby-barford-0>>
⁸⁶ K. Harmon, K. , *The Battle of Trafalgar Square*, 2010, Barnaby Barford website, viewed 20 January 2014, <
http://www.barnabybarford.co.uk/image_gallery/node/106>



Fig.43 Dearly Beloved



Fig.44, Shit! Mummy's Gonna Kill Me (The Battle Of Trafalgar)



Fig. 45, BOGOF At The Supermarket (The Battle Of Trafalgar)

In one of Barford's installations, a girl is trying to get away from a flock of pigeons; she is holding a KFC family bucket. Another girl is holding a rubbish collection of cans littered in the square. In another, a group of children are seen holding placards: in a humorous way, he uses recognizable contemporary images: however, the actual figurines look like they are from fairy tales. In a recent interview Barford said, "Our emotions and our characteristics have not changed, it makes us a human. A way of British perspective, the way of looking at this satirical way to be able to make a fun of it and also be deadly serious about it."⁸⁷ I found that Barnaby Barford's approach to themes selected from British everyday culture is unique and different from Korean satirical culture. British satire, has more freedom of context and political focus on direct expression and social issues than Korean satire. This can be located in the use of satire or humour as a form

⁸⁷ *Porcelain Artist Barnaby Barford*, Video, Euromaxx, 2013, viewed 20 January 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=3oLok41Baul#t=5s>

of storytelling in the lineage of British satirists going back to the eighteenth-century artist James Gillray.

Whilst I recognize that both the work of Barford, Windham and other contemporary figurative artists working in ceramics has some similarities to my practice it is generally more satirical and political in its intention. I see my work as being more specifically in the area of 'storytelling' through figurine making. As I stated in the introduction there is a difference between figurine and figure. My work is influenced not only by the figurative form, it is also an interpretation that draws from the tradition, making processes and language of figurine making in the UK. My contribution to the ceramic figurine is to augment the practitioner's view of the historical figurine (through my research) and through my practice to create collectible one-off contemporary figurines.

(b) ENCOUNTERS AND EXCHANGES

My studio practice is a visual documentation of the English today, seen through my own eyes as a foreigner. The stories are based solely on my own experiences, thoughts and scenes observed

during my life in London, and they can be considered as the product of my encounter with English culture in the twenty-first century.

Some of the observations maybe appear to be very ordinary, not worth noting for an English person. In this sense, the observer's subjectivity is key. After six years of living in and being educated in London, London has become my second home. I might be seen as 'Korean' to my English contemporaries, yet I may differ from the Koreans with whom I interact. Living in London for six years may not be enough to fully understand British culture, and my British friends even tell me that a London experience is different from a truly British experience. Nonetheless, my studio practice is largely based on what I have seen, heard, and experienced, living in London as a foreigner. Experiences that may appear uninteresting or normal to my friends can seem abnormal and shocking to me. In this sense, 'Misreadings, mediations, denials, and imaginary projections emerge as important iterations of this creative

process'.⁸⁸ I am not alone in this process, as I often see other young Korean contemporary artists based in the UK individually and collectively grapple with such positions.⁸⁹ It is these exchanges that take place within myself that also inform my ceramic figurines. There are cases of observation that take place from an outsider's viewpoint.

History shows us that cultural exchanges or encounters are never neutral. One densely documented encounter is that of East and West, notably that of European countries with Japan and China.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ A. Monroe, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989*, 2009, viewed 1 February 2014,

<<http://web.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/thirdmind/index.html>>

⁸⁹ The 4482 (Sasapari) is contemporary group of artists who are originally from Korea now based in the UK. The number 44 and 82 stand for the international dial code for the UK and Korea. Since 2007 the group has focused on a cross-cultural dialogue calling for artists to participate in a group show each year.

⁹⁰ The Japanese and the Dutch established diplomatic relations in the sixteenth century, and in 1650, the Dutch East India Company began their trade in porcelain with Japan, amongst other precious goods such as copper and silver. The Dutch East India Company was established in 1602: until 1792 the company sent around a million Europeans to work in Asia in the trading of ships and Asian goods. A fascination with each other's culture soon became manifest. For instance, Morishima Chūryō's '*Kōmō Zatsuwa* (The Red-Haired Miscellany)' (1787) contained an extensive description of the daily life of Dutch residents in the

For instance, in *Figure of a Dutch Woman* (Fig.46) produced in Jingdezhen, China, around 1735-45, a lack of knowledge is evident in the reliance on amalgamating fashion references from disparate cultures and time periods. It is highly likely that a commissioned porcelain-maker in this rural city would have never seen an actual European before. According to the V&A description of the figurine, the figure's dress corresponds to a late seventeenth-century engraving of a peasant from Swabia (a region in southern Germany). The style of the ruff collar had already been out of fashion in contemporary Netherlands for almost a century.

Furthermore, the face of the Dutch woman is actually closer in resemblance to figurines of Chinese figures produced at the time such as *Guanyin* (The goodness of mercy, 1630-1700) (Fig.47)⁹¹ In fact, according to a curator's comment in the British Museum's description (Harrison-Hall and Krahl 1994), *Figure of a Dutch*

confinements of the artificial Island Deshima, and included detailed renderings of the Dutch fashions.

⁹¹ According to the V&A description, by the late 17th century porcelain made in Dehua in Fujian Province, China, was also exported to Europe: Dehua was the second biggest city in this export trade. The body and colour of the Dehua ware was also known as 'Blanc de Chine'.

Woman was modelled from a print of German-Jewish figures by the Dutch artist Casper Luyken (1672-1708, Fig. 48). Not only are the faces of the figures completely different, these figures are in fact not based on the Dutch.⁹² The projection of an Orientalised face reminded me of the times I was told that the people in my drawings or figurines look Asian. (Fig. 49) It is a testament to the way in which Chinese makers hybridised what they heard and saw, collected over a period of time to create what they thought was a Dutch woman of the eighteenth century.⁹³ Such misrepresentations

⁹² According to the description of the image in the exhibition *Culture and Costume: Depictions of Jewish Dress Across Five Centuries* (December 25 2002-31 March 2003), the print was created by the Dutch artist Caspar Luyken (1672-1708). Luyken travelled to Nuremberg, Germany, in 1699; he collaborated with the noted German print publisher and art dealer Christoph Weigel on the production of numerous illustrated books. This volume of prints features magnificent portraits of European nobility as well as images of people from a variety of nations. 'Culture and Costume: Depictions of Jewish Dress Across Five Centuries', 2003, *The Jewish Theological Seminary*, viewed 10 February 2014, <<http://www.jtsa.edu/prebuilt/exhib/costume/index.html>> *Figure*, British Museum Collection, The British Museum, viewed 10 February 2014, <http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?assetId=473578&objectId=253655&partId=1>

⁹³ Victoria and Albert Museum 2013, *Figure*, viewed 2 February, 2014, <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O127937/figure-unknown>>

were common. For example, in *Kai Tsū shō Kō* (On Commercial Relations with China and Barbarians), first published in 1695 by Nishikawa Joken (1648-1724), the Dutch were described as having ‘no heels and eyes like animals to lift one leg to urinate like a dog’.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ T. Ryōan, *Wakan Sansai Zue* (Japanese Chinese Illustrated Assembly by the Universe), first published 1712, trans. and adapted by Shimada Isao and others in *Tōyō Bunko* 456(1986), p. 402-3.
Anna Jackson, (ed.) 2004, *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800*, London: Victoria and Albert Publishing, 2004, p.215.



Fig.46, *Figure of a Dutch Woman* (Left)

Fig.48, *Franckfurter Jud Und Jüdin* (Right)



Fig. 47 Figure of Guanyin

Fig.46, Figure of a Dutch Woman



Fig. 49 Details from my work, *A Londoner's Progress, the Teatotalism*

This misrepresentation and mistranslation was not simply one-sided. During my research trip to Dresden, some of the Meissen figurines that I saw depicted idyllic scenes of everyday life in Asia. Rather than intended as realistic portraits, they reflected the

mélange of fantasy of a faraway place encountered through stories and depictions. 'Chinoiserie' decoration, a term used to refer to Asian inspiration in art and design, especially from China and Japan, became extremely popular at Meissen, as it was initially produced to imitate the hugely popular Chinese porcelain being imported at the time.⁹⁵ Augustus II the Strong (1694- 1733), who financially supported the founding of the Meissen porcelain factory, amassed a substantial collection of Japanese-style enamelled wares produced in Meissen for his 'Japanese Palace'.⁹⁶ In *Asian Family* (designed c.1740, Fig.50), a father and mother with two children are shown in a playful composition set in a garden. The costumes are reminiscent of stereotypical representations of Asian silk prints and conical hats, as is the inclusion of a monkey, which is found frequently in other porcelain figurines, since having monkeys as

⁹⁵ Hugo Morely-Fletcher, *Meissen Porcelain in Colour*, London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1971, p.37.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p.42

Augustus II the Strong's Japanese Palace became one of the most famous buildings in the Old Saxon State and he collected more than 20,000 Chinese and Japanese porcelain works for its decoration.

pets was considered an exotic cultural practice at the time.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the two children are strangely European in representation and composition. They are uncannily similar in attire (semi-nude) and pose like the baby cupids that feature heavily in the Rococo period. (Fig. 50,51,52)

Another contemporary ceramic artist Japanese-born Hitomi Hosono, uses a technique that was initially inspired by English ceramic heritage. Her inspiration is originally from Wedgwood's Jasperware, where thin ceramic 'sprigs' are applied to the body of the pot as surface 'relief'. (Fig. 53) Her interest in leaves and flowers translates as a modern version of bocage, although she does not use the term itself. Her research using the archives and libraries of botanical institutions including the Royal Botanic

Gardens, Kew, contributes to the rich translation of traditional techniques in British ceramics.⁹⁸



Fig. 53, *Soyo Kaze Tower*

⁹⁷ The monkeys as pets were an exotic cultural trend in the court of Germany for a long time. When I visited Munich in 2013, the guide explained that having exotic pets, including monkeys, was highly fashionable in the German court. Monkey Tower (*Alter Hof, built in 1253-1255*), in the Wittelsbach residence, was named after a legendary tale; a baby (Ludwig IV of Bavaria) was carried off by a monkey that belonged to the court.

⁹⁸ 2013, London Art Blog, Interview with Perrier-Jouet Prize Winner Hitomi Hosono, *London Art*, Viewed 11 June 2014, <http://london-art.net/interview-with-perrier-jouet-prize-winner-hitomi-hosono>



Fig.50, *Asian Family* (Left)

Fig.51, *Cupid Figure* (Right)



Fig.52, *Conspiration De Putti* (Cupids In Conspiracy)

My work can be seen to exist within this historical framework. In particular, my practice deals with the themes of encounter and exchange by adopting the English tradition of humour and satire to depict events that drew my attention. Since 2008, I have been interested in satire as an approach to addressing social issues around me. Satirical prints and satirical ceramics was my main theme for my MA graduation dissertation and this MPhil study was originally prompted by looking at satirical ceramics of the eighteenth century. My current practice adopted and developed

the interrogation of English figurines that explored everyday life, including social issues, then transformed them with sharp humour and visual comment to glamorize the decoration. However, my studio practice neither dealt with paradise nor depicted idyllic scenes: my intention was to inject humour as an ironic gesture born out of my foreigner's viewpoint and in part in emulation of British humour. In order to have this in my work, I worked with enamel decoration on the figurines. For example, Figure 64, entitled *Top Geared*, below, delivers the message of my interesting view of cyclists in the park in the UK, with their perfectly prepared clothes and accessories. The piece shows on the one hand a happy moment of cycling in the park, expressed with decorative bocage; on the other hand there is an emphasis on the clear-glazed part with no decoration that actually has the main point that I want to address through my work. I intended to use enamel decoration sparingly so that it has a contrast and emphasis of meaning.

(c) THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DRAWINGS AND THE FIGURINES

Drawing has been central to my practice for the last six years. Since my MA course at the Royal College of Art, I have been referencing the special relationship between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century figurines and the original sources for their designs. Over the past two years (Appendix 1, The Test), I experimented with different types of figurines in various ways. My main research enquiry sought to question and draw attention to the relationship between two-dimensional and three-dimensional works. I intended to bring my figurines to life three-dimensionally, originally based on my drawings, yet I intended to retain a sense of flattened modeling. This is the case for both works which are created to be hung on the wall as well as those that are more conventionally displayed as freestanding. In fact, many of the figurines for this thesis are created with decorative elements painted on the back, hidden from view. My interest in the 'hidden' side in ceramics first began when I saw a European-commissioned double-sided saucer manufactured in China in 1750 (Fig. 54)⁹⁹ The underside of the saucer showed a

⁹⁹ According to the V&A description, this style of commission informed some of the earlier modern Chinese depictions of foreigners. The representation is

cheeky bare backside of a female figure depicted on the 'front' side. This would have passed unnoticed unless the saucer was physically turned over. Similarly, in my own work, the sprig-decorated or hand-painted backside is deliberately hidden from the visitors when hung on the wall. For wall-based works, only the collectors or those who actually handle the works can discover them, a surprise element that is not intended to be exposed easily, nor to everyone. Some of my standing figurines also incorporate hidden elements, mostly on the back. These 'surprise' elements are inspired by the flat-back compositions hugely popular in nineteenth-century Staffordshire work. The flat-backs, which were left purposely undecorated, were intended to reduce the cost of production, since it would be placed against a wall and therefore left out of

usually not a caricature, as the craftsmen's main concern was to reproduce the design they had been given as accurately as they could. However, there is a slightly different sense of translation involved. The bawdy decoration on this double-sided dish is based on the European print *Perrette et le pot au lait*.

Saucer, V&A 2014, Viewed 10 January 2014.
<<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O77042/saucer-unknown>>

sight. (Fig. 55) Specifically, the development of flat-back figurines in my work referenced two particular models for figurines, *Wine Jug of half figures depicting Herculaneum dancers* (c. 1769) (Fig.56) Although the two terracotta figurine models now housed in the Wedgwood Museum were never produced, they reveal the intentions of the producers for display should they have been completed.¹⁰⁰ While both dancers appear three-dimensional from the front, when seen in profile, it is evident that the backside is left flat so that they can be exhibited against a wall.



Fig. 54, Saucer with *Dairymaid and Milk Pail*



Fig. 55, *Figure Group*

¹⁰⁰ According to the Wedgwood Museum description during my visit in 2010, 'pair of half figures depicting Herculaneum dancers, probably trials. White terracotta stoneware. Possibly modelled by Ralph Boot c.1769 No terracotta figures have been identified; the idea seems to have been abandoned'



Fig. 56, *Wine Jug of Half Figures depicting Herculaneum Dancers*

This also alludes to the decline of ceramic figurine collecting by the public and the emergence of painting as the preferred form of home decoration.¹⁰¹ The wall-figurines in my practice pertain more to my own interpretations of these traditional figurines. By merging the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional, drawing and sculpture, they act as three-dimensional drawings. This method can be compared to the ceramic artist Katharine Morling's work.

Morling states that

'Each piece, on the surface, has been given layers of emotion and embedded with stories, which are open for interpretation in the viewer's mind. When put together, the pieces combine to make a tableau staging the still lives of everyday objects.'

¹⁰¹ Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2010, *Consuming Craft: The Contemporary Craft market in a changing economy*, Crafts Council, viewed. 2. Jan. 2014, <<http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/professional-development/research-and-information/research-reports>>

In *Time* (2013) (Fig.57), for instance, she uses black lines around the contours of the camera shapes to create the illusion of a two-dimensional drawing. During my conversation with the artist in 2009, she explained that her intention was for her drawings to come to life in three-dimensional works. However, while my work shares an emphasis on drawing, my practice is more directed at the historical usage of the drawings as a source for design, and how this was subsequently developed into final products.¹⁰²



Fig. 57, *Time*

(d) MULTIPLES

Considering the importance of Staffordshire figurines as a point of inspiration for my practice, the notion of ‘multiples’ takes on a particular significance. During my research into Staffordshire

¹⁰² Conversation with artist at the RCA, 2009. I sat opposite Katherine Morling during my first year of the MA.

figurines, I found it particularly interesting that there were often particular images or models were reused and repeated in various figurines, crossing over from one potter or workshop to another.¹⁰³ Figurine production of limited editions pertained mainly to two methods: slip-casting and press-moulding. High-end manufacturers such as Wedgwood and Nymphenburg ensured that each piece of their limited edition ceramic figurines was quality-controlled by using slip-casting rather than press-moulding.¹⁰⁴ This meant that each edition was an exact duplicate of the others.¹⁰⁵ However, in the smaller workshops in Staffordshire, figurines were less than perfectly copied. During my investigation into the figurine group

¹⁰⁴ Nymphenburg figurines are made by slip-casting; the factory is closed to the visitors, but the process can be found online. The V&A also has an example of the process of Nymphenburg figurines in its 'Making Ceramics' section. Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg 2014, *Moulding Shop*, Viewed 21 February 2014, <<http://www.nymphenburg.com/en/manufacture/processes/moulding-shop>>

¹⁰⁵ By an exact duplicate, I mean that the quality of the product was controlled by the workshop. For example, when I worked for the Wedgwood design studio in 2009 as a part of a work placement, I looked at one of their limited edition figurines and a proved model for copying. Also when exploring the closed Spode Factory in 2011, as a part of my residency in BCB, I found numbers of plates that were quality controlled.

Tee-total, as described in Chapter 1, I found different variations in work in various museums: The Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Fig.14), the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, (Fig.58), and the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (Fig.59), in addition to private collections made possible through auctions. While some are outstanding in quality, others are mediocre and some even poor. To clarify, by quality I mean various degrees of finish.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ More details are in the case study 2 in the Chapter 1.



Fig. 58, *Tee Total*



Fig.59, Chimney ornament: *Tee Total*

There is no evidence that these were created by different potters working for the same manufacturer, by followers, or copied by competitors. This is because their manufacturing provenance is commonly unknown, and no factory marks can be located, while

many of the small pot-banks did not keep details of makers or processes of transaction. What intrigued me the most was the fact that even though these were 'duplicates' or 'multiples' of the same image or model, each possessed a quality that differentiated it from the others and it therefore appeared as a unique piece.¹⁰⁷ (Fig.60)



Fig.60, *Family Group*

¹⁰⁷ This is an example of when the same mould was used for different contexts of figurines. A woman with a baby from *Tee-total* (Fig. 14) can be found in the *Family Group* figurine (Fig.57) from the Fitzwilliam Museum collection.

Initially, I was curious as to what led to the production of these multiples that varied so widely in terms of quality. While copyright issues may have prevented such a facile transfer of images or models without obtaining legal permissions, it is difficult to discern

whether these varying multiples were the product of one pot-bank, or if they were products of various pot-banks which copied designs from one another.¹⁰⁸

The varying quality could be attributed to the working conditions and the discrepancy in skill between workers, as well as the speed with which each model was re-cast. Anthony Oliver explains that potters worked long hours, and often children were employed as assistants to the unknown potters. He refers to the Report of the Royal Commission on Children's Employment in Industry in 1843 that explained the strenuous working conditions of the pottery factories,

'No machinery could make the figures. The modellers were the unknown artists; the children were often the machinery.

Robert Moreton, aged nine, was a figure maker for his

¹⁰⁸ Although the Copyright law was introduced in England in 1710 for the first time, plagiarism was common in European figurines from the eighteenth century. See: Julia Poole, *Plagiarism Personified?: European Pottery and Porcelain Figures*, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 1986.

father, William Moreton. "I work by the piece and can make forty dozen small figures a day. I get a penny for ten dozen, that is about two shillings a week. I work from seven to seven sometimes eight or nine."¹⁰⁹

I found it both interesting and ironic that while moulds were originally produced in order to ensure exact duplication, in the case of Staffordshire figurines, while the same mould was used, it ended up producing variations for reasons outlined above, thus resulting in unique pieces for the contemporary eye.

Consequently, some of my final works are slip-cast while others use the process of press-moulding.¹¹⁰ Of the figurines noted in Chapter

¹⁰⁹ Following Lord Ashley, the factory reformer and philanthropist's campaigns around children's working hours and conditions, Parliament set up a Royal Commission on Children's Employment in Industry. It consisted of two parts. This included working conditions in factories in the first half of the nineteenth century in the UK. In 1840, hours of work, meals, holiday allowances and accidents wages paid were also included in the commission report.

Origins 2014, *Childrens' Employment Commission*, Viewed 24 May 2013, <<http://www.origins.net/help/ChildrensEmploymentCommission.aspx>>

¹¹⁰ Slip-casting is a process aimed to duplicate models by pouring clay slip inside of the plaster mould. Press-moulding is a technique in which clay is pressed

1, *The Music Lesson* was made by both slip-casting and press-moulding, while *Tee-total* and *Ale Bench* in Case Study 2 was processed by the press-moulding technique. In slip-casting, I used the same plaster mould to make several copies of the basic form of the figurine and then added various elements after casting. For example, the seven variations in Figure 61 were created from one mould of a drinking male figure. To show the passing of time, I added different details on each of the seven pieces, with the intention of showing the figure getting older, piece by piece. However, in these series of works created using press-moulding, I used the same mould to create work which dealt with different subject matter. For instance, the basic figure from *Divided Nation* (Fig.70), *Let's Have A Cuppa Tea With Miss Wonderland* (Fig.73) and *Finally, Sun came out!* (Fig.69) were all originally created from the same mould; however, additional elements were added to make

down to the mould by hand in order to take the impression. In general, high-end factories including the Chelsea Porcelain Factory generally used the slip-casting process for figurine making. This process is more suitable for delicate and complicated models. Press-moulding was popular in the smaller Staffordshire factories for earthenware figurine making in the nineteenth century.

each one unique. This meant that whichever method was used, the final work produced became a unique piece of work, rather an edition.



Fig.6-, *Finally, Sun came out!*



Fig.70, *Divided Nation*



Fig.73, *Let's Have A Cuppa Tea With Miss Wonderland*

(e) STORIES

Drawing and printmaking have been central to my practice.

Another way of recording my interest towards the subject matter was making notes alongside my drawing. This turned into my making short stories illustrated by my drawings. These stories were finally translated into clay figurines. The stories below are a few of my observational, storytelling about my life in London.

1> Pardon Me? There Is A Football Match Tonight?

In 2010 I experienced working in Wembley Stadium for a couple of days. I had no idea which teams were playing, but nonetheless I served bottles of beer to those who came to see the matches. Some of the customers were shouting at me for no reason. His team must be losing, I assumed. After work, I was squashed among the drunk football fans, singing loudly on the tube on their way home. I remember them looking extremely happy. The nation of gentlemen is also a nation of football-lovers.

2> *Red Knickers*

It was the first hot summer in over two years in 2013, with temperatures reaching up to 31 degrees celsius. I was sitting outside the Westfield shopping centre in White City. An old couple were sitting across from me on a bench. The old lady suddenly took out a pair of very sexy dark red knickers from one of the shopping bags and showed it to the old man next to her. They appeared to chat about the knickers for about 5 minutes. Were they husband and wife?

3> *Cycling Accidents*

In July 2013, the press reported the death of a 20-year-old woman hit by a lorry as the first victim of the 'Boris Bikes'. When I graduated from my MA degree, I decided to cycle to my studio to save the monthly tube fare, and wanted to become healthy by cycling. I was really afraid of the roads (I still am), so I took the canal path, which was longer, about an hour and a half's journey to my studio in Shoreditch. After a month, my folding bike was stolen. I could not believe this, it happened within a blink of an eye. Since the theft, I travel by Underground and it often takes just as long as

when I was riding my bike. Delays and signal failures are a regular occurrence. I have no regrets, however. I have even come to think that it was almost a blessing to get my bike stolen when so often I read tragic stories about cyclists getting hit by lorries and buses. Today, I am safe inside the unreliable London Underground.

4> Health and Safety

I often see ladies with two children riding on a single bicycle in London. One is seated in front of her and the other baby is behind her. When I first saw this, I was shocked and thought that she must be really confident with her cycling abilities. I thought the UK was the Kingdom of Health and Safety. In the summer of 2013, I saw a lot of mothers riding bicycles in Copenhagen, with a much safer-looking carriage attached for their children to ride in. The carriages have enough room for more than two children. My fellow artists and I agreed that they were better. However, is it safer?

5> Top-Geared

London is one of the leading cities for fashion. Or is this the case for just one week of the year, during the London Fashion Week? When it comes to fashion in Korea, people are sensitive to what others think. I have lived in London for six years and nobody has ever commented about the casual clothes I always wear. In Korea, an ordinary college girl would wear high-heels, and full make-up every day. A lot of my female Korean friends would not even go to the supermarket without make-up on. I now live in a city where no one judges me if I wear gym trousers and no make-up. In London, however, I have noticed that if you are in training or if you cycle, the Brits really gear up. I often see cyclists wear waterproof trousers, custom-specific tops, high knee socks, accessorised with sports water bottle, headgear and a backpack on rainy days. I get curious about the kind of things they carry in the bag. In Korea, people wear ragged sweatshirts to exercise or to cycle and do not tend to spend money on purchasing expensive sports gear. In the UK, people wear different clothes to cycle to work, then take a shower and get changed when they arrive. This really surprised me. Not a single company has a shower in the office in Korea.

6> Baby Boom Boom Shake Shake

Soon after I graduated from my MA, some of my friends started having children. Some of them moved in together and many eventually married. To me this was shocking, because in Korea it is usually the other way around, at least in my family that is the rule. I see a lot of people around me having babies. In London, I see a lot of mothers with buggies. According to the news last year, the UK has experienced a huge population growth and the birth-rate has risen immensely. It has been the biggest baby boom in forty years. Living in the UK for six years now, I feel that time flies by as I see my friends' children grow.

7> *From the Cradle to the Grave*

The British culture of drinking was the first thing I noticed which differed from the environment in which I grew up. There was even a bar inside the college and there were three pubs within five minutes distance from my flat. I was really surprised when I saw people drinking beer during the day while enjoying a meal in the

pub. Having investigated the history of British drinking culture from my case studies, I understand the culture more. However, I still don't like the smell of beer and hate drunk people saying 'arigato' or 'nihao' to me.

8> *Three Sisters*

One day, I saw three drunk girls hanging out together in Oxford Street. It was on a Friday night and there were a lot of people partying. I could hear people raising their voices in the tube and singing together in the streets. Friday nights are usually the time for house parties and birthday parties. The idea of Friday night excites me too. However, in reality I am always working over the weekend.

9> *Rainy Shelter*

I saw a homeless man near the Palace Gate bus stop in Kensington. He was there day and night. That spot was his home. I passed by him every day and I saw him sleeping and eating on the street. I do not fully understand the government policy; however, I heard that the government supports the homeless in various ways in the UK.

In July 2009, I watched the documentary Famous, Rich and Homeless on BBC Three. It was a TV programme broadcast shortly after the recession in 2008, when homelessness was a frightening possibility for almost everyone. In the programme, five celebrities volunteered to be homeless for a week and struggled to cope in the harsh environment. At the time, the Korean currency was skyrocketing against the pound and I was afraid of the global economic meltdown. I participated in trying to help those affected by donating sleeping bags collected by my church to give to the homeless. Sometimes I still see the homeless man selling the Big Issue in front of the Notting Hill Tesco. I would like to see him overcome his situation.

10> *Finally, The Sun Came Out!*

The summer in 2013 was recorded as the hottest and sunniest summer since 2006 in the UK. Although I have lived in the UK for six years, I have not yet managed to get used to the weather. I long for hot weather and I feel like my body temperature is dropping quickly when it is raining. I really miss the hot sunny Korean

summers. I want to have another summer that is really hot and sunny in 2014 so I can try outdoor swimming on Hampstead Heath.

11> *Divided Nation*

Britain suffers from a high level of obesity. According to the NHS, there has been a marked increase in obesity rates over the past eight years – in 1993 13% of men and 16% of women were obese – in 2011 this rose to 24% for men and 26% for women. In my daily life, I see a lot of people jogging in the park while others I see enjoying fish and chips in the middle of the night. I feel that the UK is a divided nation when it comes to health and nutrition. Some people are addicted to working out and spend hours in the gym while others do not. This is a sensitive issue, as this may be connected to poverty and income. However, in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea where my college and home are, I often see posh ladies jog around Holland Park. I don't belong with those ladies. I am a poor college student who is lucky to have a rented flat in Notting Hill – well, I think I am on both sides.

12> *Keep Calm and Carry On Jogging*

My desk in the Royal College of Art has a big window. Through this window, I can see a part of Hyde Park where I can see runners every twenty seconds. It does not matter if it is raining or snowing, early in the morning or late at night. I was amazed. Sometimes I see a man running with a baby in a pram or a couple running with their dogs. I became curious about the jogging culture and when the British started jogging outside in the park or in the streets. This is really rare in Korea, as jogging is not very popular nor is there a lot of places to run outside. Koreans are keener fast-walkers rather joggers. By the way, I don't believe walking is not exercising. It is daily human activity.

13> *Daddy's Little Helper*

'Dad needs something today to calm him down.
And though he's not really ill, there's a little yellow pill.
He goes running for the shelter of a dad's little helper.
And it helps him on his way, gets him through his busy day.'
Lyrics from the Rolling Stones' *Mother's Little Helper*.

Daddy's little helper is a pill for depression.

15> *Dancing Queen*

'You are the Dancing Queen, young and sweet, only seventeen
Dancing Queen, feel the beat from the tambourine
You can dance, you can jive, having the time of your life
See that girl, watch that scene, diggin' the Dancing Queen'
Dancing Queen by ABBA.

My current gym is located in Vauxhall. At weekends, when I go early in the morning, I can see a lot of people who are returning home from their night out. The gym is next to a club. There are a lot of clubs around my university in Korea and I remember that when I left the studio late at night, clubbers also would flood the entire area with their fancy outfits. Being surrounded by clubbers in the UK was not such a strange thing for me, as it reminded me of my time in Korea.

16> *Let's Have A Cuppa Tea With Miss Wonderland*

The English tea culture is unique and I have come to value it highly while living in the UK. It is a quintessential British experience, as the British always take out time to relax with a cup of tea. Drinking tea with milk was such a weird thing to experience first time; however, I soon became an avid tea and coffee drinker. I only drank herbal tea in Korea.

17> *Eve Smith & Eve Jones*

I used to joke that that I was unable to find a boyfriend because all the good men in the UK were gay. Korea is a conservative country where homosexuality is still a taboo. When I saw two women kissing each other in front of me in the streets in Cambridge in December 2010, I was shocked.

18> *Four Weddings and a Funeral*

My favourite radio station is BBC London. When I first listened to it in 2008, a radio presenter was taking calls from people who were divorced. A lot of people all over London phoned to speak about their lives. Divorce is still not socially acceptable in Korea. It was

amazing to see how people to talk openly about their divorce and subsequent marriage.

CONCLUSION

This investigation is primarily concerned with examining how English culture is reflected in what is now a much less significant form of visual culture, the ceramic figurine. In turn, it aims to show how this knowledge has informed my own practice, which presents my own subjective interpretation of the life in Britain today.

Assuming the role of a visual storyteller, my thesis was to document the observations on the British culture that I collected during my stay from 2008 to 2014 in the medium of ceramics. These works were directly influenced by my research into English ceramic figurines of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, where I learned about technical methods and processes hitherto unknown to me.

The series of final works produced for this two-year MPhil are the direct outcome of my practice-based research conducted through the investigation of three case studies in Chapter 1. Case study 1, 'Pastime and Theatre' examined the pastime and theatrical culture of eighteenth-century England reflected in ceramic figurines, while

Case study 2, 'A Relationship between Drinking Culture and Ceramics in Early Nineteenth-century England', looked into the relationship between the drinking culture of early nineteenth-century England and contemporary ceramics. Case study 3, 'English Everyday Life' examined Victorian china fairings and ceramic figurines. All the case studies were conducted with the understanding that English ceramic figurines were cultural products of their time, integrated into everyday life – that of both the upper and working classes – and thus provide unique insight into the social or cultural issues that concerned English society. These case studies constituted important frames of reference for my final work. The research process and findings not only informed the direction of my research question and methodology; it also challenged my studio practice to create figurines in ways that were new to me. This was especially true of the various tests conducted. The tests were crucial in guiding my style. Of the 55 tests in total, Tests 34 to 37 exhibit a dramatic change in terms of style from my earliest tests, as they are the first ones to use moulds and begin to engage

with what it means to produce multiples. I began to experiment with flat-backs and 'wall' figurines from Test 39 while Tests 41,42 and 43 played an important role in incorporating drawings into the porcelain figurines.

While the stories selected for the content of my final work are directly from my own observations and visual record of living in London, some relate to the themes examined in the case studies of Chapter 1 in this thesis. For example, *From the Cradle to the Grave*, *Three Sisters*, and *Let's Have a Cuppa Tea with Miss Wonderland* can be related to the social context of drinking and tea culture explored in Case Study 2. The passion for dance in *Dancing Queen* can also be connected to Case Study 1.

The most significant discovery made during the course of the research was the close relationship between drawing and the figurine and its application to my work. The flat-back figurines were inspirational, and the production of wall figurines was a first for me.

The thesis has also challenged me to think differently about display. The opportunity to show my in-progress works at Hockney Gallery at the RCA in January 2014 challenged me to think about the different ways the wall-based figurine could be displayed on the walls. My solo exhibition at Mokspace gallery in London in March 2014 enabled me to further this challenge by creating a backdrop for the figurines with drawings which were made directly onto the walls. In the future, I hope to lay more emphasis on the content and subject matter of these background drawings, which help to create an interesting scenography for the ceramic works. This will go hand in hand with technical challenges, such as improving my sculpture skills, figurine mould-making and enamel painting. When I return to Korea I will continue to research into the history of figurines and beyond, and endeavour to highlight the importance and relevance of this history to contemporary practices. I would like to explore the reverse culture shocks that I expect to experience in Korea in the medium of ceramics.

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APPENDIX 1 –The Tests

TEST 01

Date 13. Jan.2012

Aim

To capture scenes of contemporary drinking culture in my drawings.



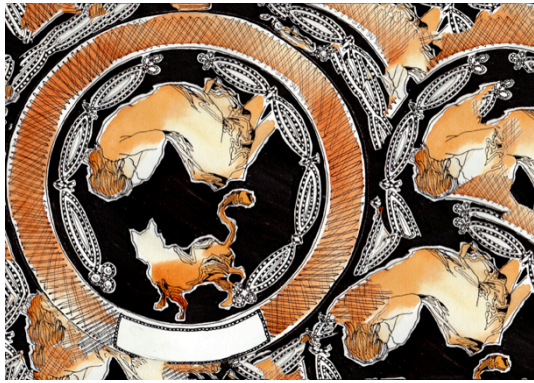
Process

A new approach to drawing was undertaken using a pen and watercolour. These drawings were explored using the forms of traditional English drinking vessels as subject matter.

Result

The subject of drinking culture was explored using a different style of drawing that had not been part of a previous drawing practice. The combination of watercolour and pen drawing felt very expressive and fresh in approach. (The subject of the drinking girls became *Three Sisters* in the final project)





Watercolour and pen drawing onto drawing paper

TEST 02

Date 27. Jan. 2012

Aim

To design and make an appropriate ceramic vessel, suitable for carrying images and mark-making .To respond to the research question, 'How will the function increase the potency of delivering messages?'

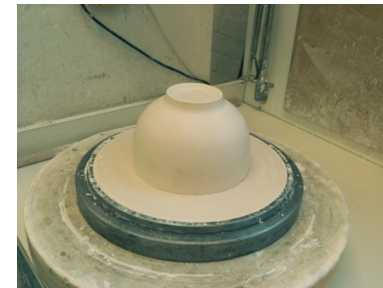
Process

A small individual punch-bowl was designed and created by using the Jigger and Jolley process in order to make some test samples as illustrated

Result

Learning the jigger and jolley process enabled the easy replication of the punch-bowl form. It provided a large surface area for testing a range of decorative treatments translated from experimental

drawings. The use of the punch-bowl as the ceramic form provided context to the drawing. The resulting punch-bowl models and moulds were successful in terms of their ease of production.



Jolley process

TEST 03

Date 30. Jan. 2012

Aim

To design and make a plate form as a vehicle for the translation of exploratory drawings into ceramic media. To respond to the research question, 'How will the function increase the potency of delivering messages?'

Process

A further exploration of the jigger and jolley process to create a plate form, enabling ease of replication in reasonable quantity.

Result

Learning and understanding about the jigger and jolley process took two weeks. The total process, including the making of moulds,

was a new learning experience. Plates were made by testing out different clay bodies to facilitate testing at the decoration stage.



Jigger process

TEST 04

Date 05. Feb. 2012

Aim

To seek a new process for the transfer of experimental drawings directly on to the plate and punch-bowl forms.

Process

Quantities of small porcelain tiles were made in order to test slip-trailing and marbling processes for potential decoration.

Result

Where the translation of imagery required a direct drawing response using a ceramic process, it was hard to maintain the finer details of the drawing. However, the result in an unfired state had a unique identity resulting from the techniques used.



Test tiles: coloured slip (flanders blue, black)

TEST 05

Date 16. Feb. 2012

Aim

To apply experimental drawings onto the plates that were made using the jolley machine.

Process

A drawing of a posset pot was painted, using blue stain, directly onto the plaster jolley mould. The drawing is based on Test 01. The surface was made damp just before jolleying the plates using prepared slabs.

Result

I expected the drawing to be picked up nicely; however, this did not happen because the stain was stuck onto the plaster mould. This was probably because the surface with the pigment was too dry. Next, water was sprayed on top of the mould before placing

porcelain slabs on top. Some of the pigments were picked up, but not enough to be able to recognise my drawing.

The idea of using drinking vessels to tell the stories of contemporary drinking culture in England was developed further. Therefore the use of plates became no longer essential for the tests.



Jigger plaster mould with Flanders blue stain colour.

TEST 06

Date 20. Feb. 12

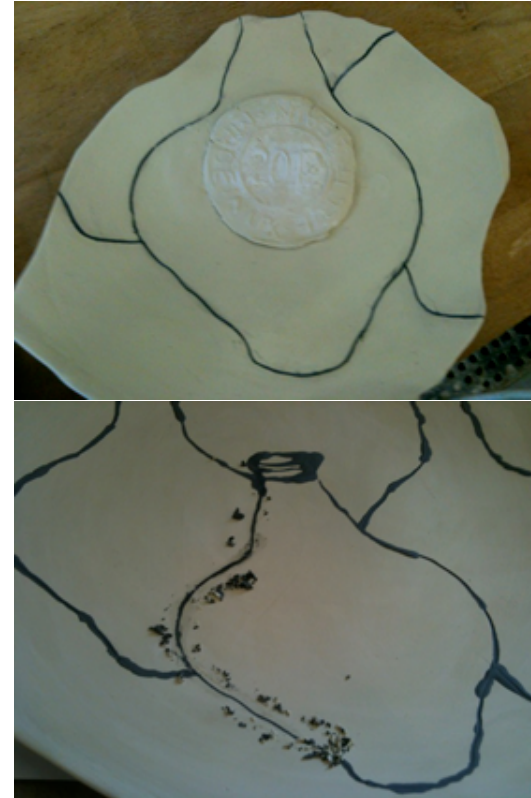
Aim: To try drawing directly onto to the jiggered plates.

Process

As part of testing the best way to apply my drawings onto ceramics, I tried the inlay process. I carved lines (the bottle shape on the right), put black-coloured slip inside and then scratched the image.

Result

The result of inlaying worked well for some of the lines; however, there was a limitation on drawing freely. This led to the conclusion that this process of drawing onto plates was not right for my work in this context.



Porcelain jiggered plate with inlay process

TEST 07

Date 27. Feb. 12

Aim

To seek a new process in order to transfer some of my drawings directly. This is the fired result after Test 04.

Process

After slip-trailing, I fired the tiles at 1000°C, then painted the inside of the raised drawings (slip trailed lines).

Result

The result was successful, although there was a limitation on applying finer drawing. The process of slip trailing and colouring inside the trails worked well, but I decided not to take it further. I left this for a future trial.



Fired tiles

TEST 08

Date 27. Feb.2012

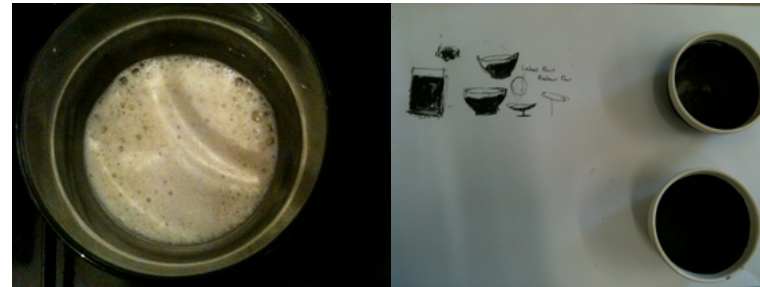
Aim: To try a new way of expressing drinking culture in drawing.

Process

I used a pint glass to create impressions of drinking culture, imagining that many glasses come and go, leaving marks on a table in pubs. I was thinking about the surface relationship between vessels and drinks. Mock-ups were made with inks and bisque fired, fully fired small, thrown bowls with paper cuts.

Result

This was a mock-up version of the next step with a successful result. After a lot of sketches and mock-ups, I decided to apply this test onto punch-bowls in the next stage.



Mock-ups with a sketched idea

TEST 09

Date 03. Mar. 2012

Aim

To seek a new process of expressing drinking culture in ceramics.

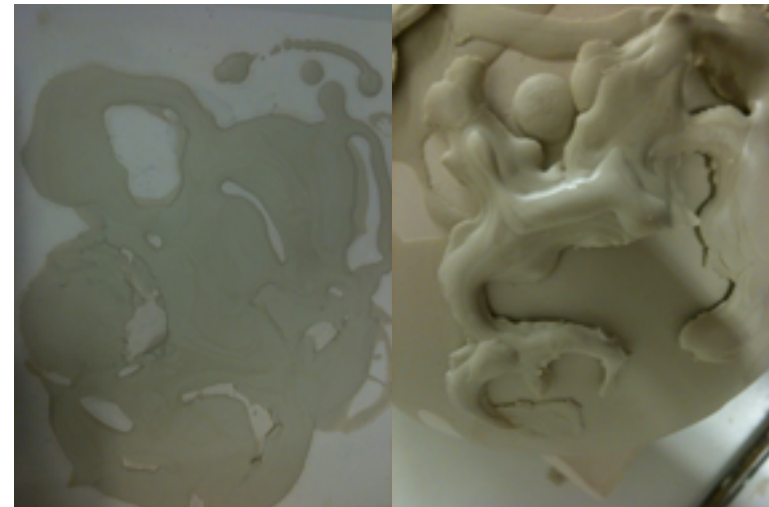
Process

Porcelain slip marking tests were carried out to create drinking vessel marks on to the punch-bowls. Porcelain slips were used for drawing freely onto the plaster bed, applied onto leather-hard clay then stuck onto the punch-bowls.

Result

The result to put porcelain marks onto the punch-bowl was successful. The marks were placed on the inside and outside together and in this way worked well. Although there was a

concern that the form would change during firing, I decided to proceed with making a series of bowls.



Porcelain, small punch-bowls made by the jolley machine

TEST 10

Date 08. Mar. 2012

Aim

To test sandblasting in the bisque ware of punch-bowls, to make it aesthetically more related to the 'drinking marks' from Test 09.

Process

The rough-grinding sandblasting machine was used for making some holes in the grey area (picture on the right).

Result

The successful result of sandblasting initiated further work on several vessels. Bisque-fired punch bowls did not slump; however, there was still the possibility that the bowls might warp during the second firing.



Sandblasted punch bowls after bisque firing

TEST 11

Date 09. Mar. 2012

Aim

To seek the right vessel for my drawing, after making punch-bowls and plates with the jigger and jolly machine,

Process

Coiling posset pots using buff and black clay.

Result

Two posset pots were produced in two different types of clay, However, during the process of drawing onto the clay it became apparent that they were not the right clays to use a direct drawing approach on. The pigment of the black smooth clay was not smooth enough for my drawings, while the porcelain slip on top of the buff was not clear enough.



Posset pots- black smooth clay, buff clay/ porcelain slip

TEST 12

Date 10. Mar. 2012

Aim

To seek the right vessel for my drawing. I decided to make a Parian clay posset pot.

Process

Coiled posset pots using Parian clay.

Result

It was the first time I had coiled with Parian clay. Parian was smooth enough to draw on to the pot surface directly; however, it was hard to use for coiling, not appropriate for this technique.



Parian clay, bisque fired at 1000°C

TEST 13

Date 15. Mar. 2012

Aim

To apply background colours to the small punch-bowls before drawing.

Process

After using the sandblasting machine to make the holes in the wares, yellow and purple irons were applied inside the bowls. Irons were diluted with water and poured into the each bowl.

Result

The quality of bisque-fired porcelain and colours at this stage was interesting. Iron paintings inside the vessels were selected to form the background colours for my drawing at the next stage.



Sandblasting- smooth finish (silica-carbide 220)

Parian clay, bisque fired at 1000°C

Sandblasting- smooth finish (silica carbide 120)



Parian, slip decoration (drink marks), bisque firing, sandblasting (holes, depths)

/rutile – inside

/yellow iron oxide-inside

TEST 14

Date 26. Mar. 2012

Aim

To develop a drawing style in various non-ceramic materials such as colour, pencil, watercolour, conté crayon and pastel to find a suitable quality for translation into ceramic media.

Process

Different drawing styles were the focus of this test. My previous drawing had much finer lines, made with a black ink pen. For this test, photos were taken from different drinking scenes around London. Then the selected scenes were drawn in graphite pencil.

Result

The result of drawing and graphite pencil allowed me to draw more freely. Applying the drawings directly to ceramics would be the next step.



A photo taken in the Clerkenwell Rd market/ my drawing

TEST 15

Date 28. Mar. 2012

Aim

To practise drawings of contemporary drinking culture.

Process

Drinking scenes were captured around London and selected images were drawn in pencil, then these were applied to ceramics.

Result

This test was to look for various possibilities to apply my drawings onto the surface. I left the vessel unfired after my trial, as the outcome of drawing in pencil onto the wares was captured in a similar way to my pencil drawing onto the paper.



Near Oxford Circus – Market Place Pub



Drawing on the papers



Drawing practice onto the bowl

TEST 16

Date 03. Apr.2012

Aim

To try drawing drinking and party scenes directly onto the bisque-fired Parian punch-bowl.

Process

An image from my friend's Facebook page was collected in order to draw directly onto the surface of bowl. A fine brush was used for the test, after a quick sketch with pencil.

Result

The result of direct drawing was successful, although it was a challenge to draw with a fine brush and not smudge the image. I decided to try drawing inside the vessel for the next test.



Parian clay, bisque-fired, black stain

TEST 17

Date 05 Apr. 2012

Aim

To try drawing the drinking and party scenes directly into the bisque-fired Parian punch-bowl.

Process

Following the previous test, drawing was carried out inside the punch-bowl. The original image was captured from television and a fine brush and sponge were used together. At that time, my approach to collecting images was mostly by taking photographs of people around me, and images that I saw in the media, via social networking and television.

Result

The second test, drawing directly onto the wares, was successful and the result after the firings allowed me to proceed to the next step.



Parian clay, bisque-fired, black stain

TEST 18

Date 27. Apr. 2012

Aim

To develop my drawing skill on paper as a potential technique for a background image for ceramic objects.

Process

Drawing of Tavistock Road in Notting Hill onto paper. This is the street in London where I have been living for six years.

Result

I was uncertain whether to use this particular style of drawing in ceramics for the next stage. When I tested this drawing style, it was more focused on developing my drawing skill. The depiction of my street provided an opportunity to apply the backdrop drawing for my final pieces (Appendix 1- The Final Images)



Drawing, Tavistock Rd, London

TEST 19

Date 06. May. 2012

Aim

To evaluate the use of small punch-bowls.

Process

Most of the bowls were made in Parian clay, so there was no glazing needed, however I applied a transparent glaze inside some of the bowls.

Result

These photos were the final images after the second firing. The result of drawing onto Parian wares was highly successful: the surface of the clay body allowed me draw freely and the translucency of the Parian clay worked well with my drawing. However at the final stage, the decision was that punch-bowls were still too small to apply my drawings.



Fired punch bowls

TEST 20

Date 06.Oct. 2012

Aim

To explore a different quality of drawing by timing the drawing on paper.

Process

Drawings with the same image at six different speeds were undertaken. The original image was *A Monster Soup Commonly Called Thames Water* from the Wellcome Collection. While drawing, there was no time limit: however, they took 04:35, 10:06, 12:23, 15:07, 45:07 (mins: secs)

Result

The first drawing (The middle image on the top) that I made was still lacking in confidence. This is because it was the first time that I drew without a pencil sketch beforehand. I used to sketch with

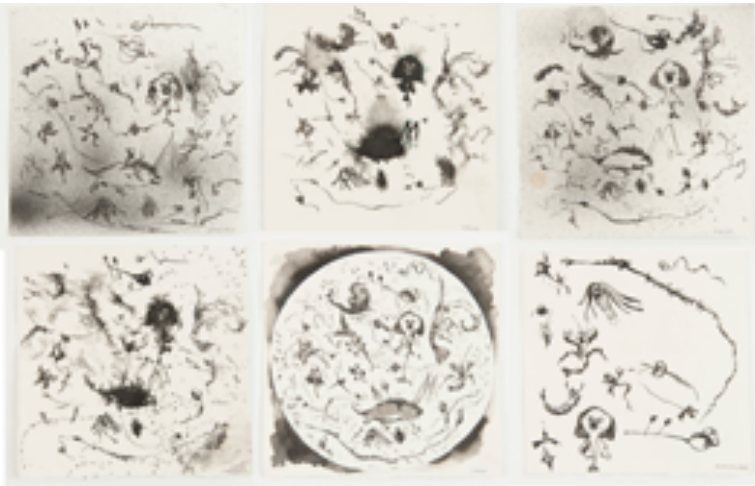
pencil then use an ink pen when drawing. However, from the second trial I had more confidence in using the brush only. I could see that there was more freedom in my final drawings (Middle image, bottom line).



A Monster Soup Commonly Called Thames Water, Coloured etching by William Heath, London, 1828



Details of the Timed Drawings



Timed Drawings (6 drawings)



Details of the Timed Drawings

TEST 21

Date 22. Oct. 2012

Aim

To explore a quality of drawing in the style developed from the previous test. In order to practise more free-style drawing, the test was timed when drawing onto ephemeral materials (napkins).

Process

At this time, I was interested in ephemeral materials such as napkins and different quality papers for my drawing. Using everyday materials I drew drinking scenes of ordinary people around me and timed each one.

Result

The process of quick drawings resulted in the production of a number of drawings. While carrying out this test, it certainly changed my drawing style and gave me more freedom in drawing.

At this point it became a matter of transferring the process into clay.



Drawings on napkins

TEST 22

Date 23. Oct. 2012

Aim

To investigate how to try to use the rear, hidden side of the figurative work, inspired by Andrea della Robbia's *Lamentation Over the Dead Christ* in the V&A Museum, I made the three men.

Process

A terracotta figure was roughly made and hollowed out. Creating three-dimensional drawings in clay at high speed was my goal during the process. After bisque firing, a drawing was tested out inside the object with red iron oxide. Then a clear glaze was applied.

Result

The result was not aesthetically successful, as it did not totally convey the meaning of my drawing. However, a decision was made to exploit the 'hidden/surprise' element and to decorate the

reverse side of the object. The drawing inside was not well resolved and it was not very visible because of the clay that I had used. I was aware that in della Robbia's work, the back was left unfinished on purpose, because it would have never been shown to the public.



Fired work (inside)

The Lamentation Over the Dead Christ (c.1510-15)
Workshop of Andrea della Robbia (1435-1525), Florence.
Glazed and painted terracotta, V&A collection

TEST 23

Date 10. Nov. 2012

Aim

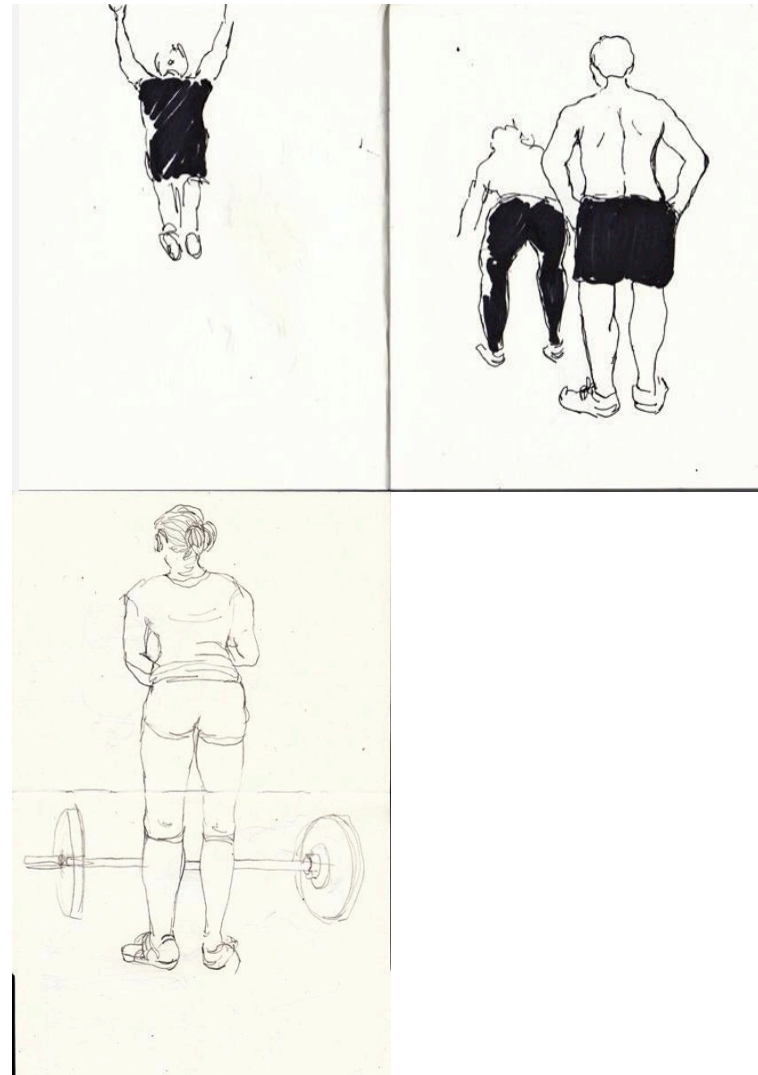
To practise life-drawing skills in order to improve my skill, as well as seeking a new approach to drawing.

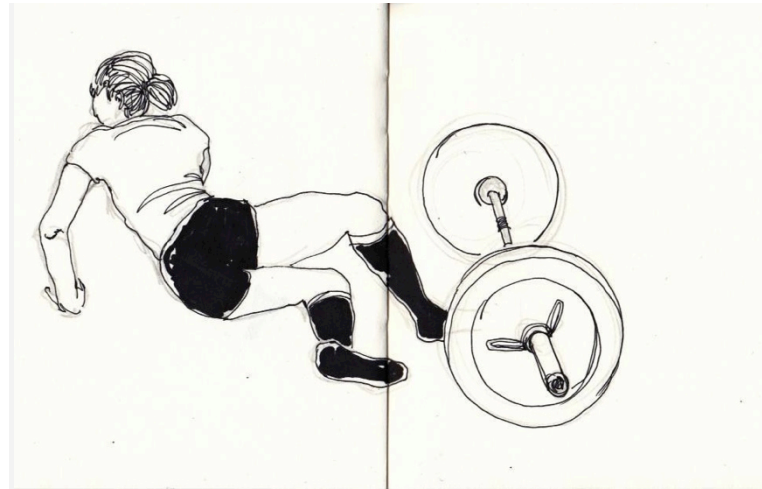
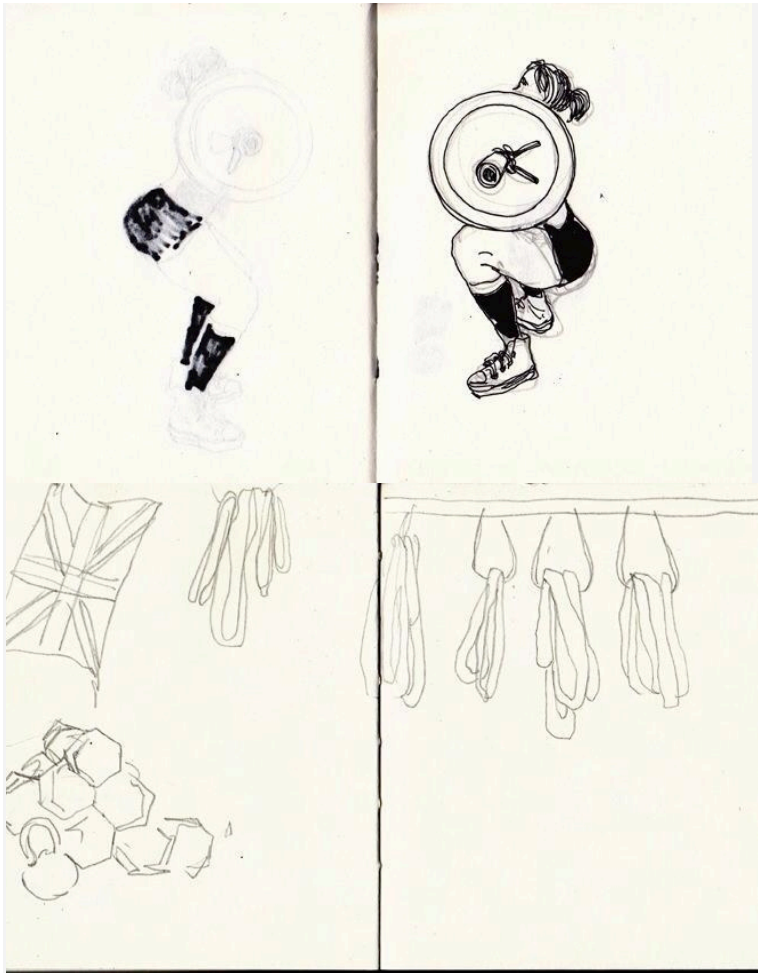
Process

To practise life drawing, in which I do not have much experience, I spent an hour drawing athletes working out in the gym.

Result

Drawing people in constant movement was a challenge. It was a very useful exercise, as I learnt more about life drawing. There was still a slight timidity towards capturing life-drawing images, but after this test I gained more confidence to continue to work from life when the opportunity arises.





Drawing on paper

TEST 24

Date 14. Nov. 2012

Aim

Inspired by Test 22, which questioned the relationship between the back and front of the figure, I wanted to create a figurine from my drawings.

Process

Three Sisters, from the previous drawing, was visualised as a figurative form in terracotta clay. It was made by the use of coiling and hand-building. The figure was then fired at 1000°C, and 1250°C, with glaze on the front of the piece.

Result

Three Sisters, from my drawing, was made into a three-dimensional form. The work itself was well resolved, but there was

still something that I was dissatisfied with. However, looking back at this test now, this signalled the start of my figurine-making for the final work.



Three Sisters

TEST 25

Date 15. Nov. 2012

Aim

To make contemporary figurines inspired by my drawing.

Process

A small figurine was created which depicted a drinking scene outside a pub. It followed on from the drawing carried out in Test 14. The hand-building process in black clay was completed, and then colour was applied onto part of the surface.

Result

The result of this test led to decisions about the size of the final work and the choice of clay for it. After this trial, I decided that I would follow this format. However, my ambition to use different clay was not totally resolved. The smooth black clay was too rough

to work in some of the details, and in the end I decided that porcelain might be more suitable in the end.



Three Gentlemen, drawing and figurine form

TEST 26

Date 18. Nov. 2012

Aim

To an exercise to draw more quickly and to practise life drawing in order to make contemporary figurines inspired by flat-back figurines of Staffordshire.

Process

Some life drawings were undertaken while I was on the Number 55 bus from Liverpool Street to Oxford Circus.

Result

This time the drawings provided me with a different perspective, with useful information for translating into ceramic figurines.



Drawing on paper in a bus

TEST 27

Date 19. Nov. 2012

Aim

To make contemporary figurines inspired by the previous test involving life drawing undertaken on a bus.

Process

Test 26 was visualised in both figurines and drawing form onto a ceramic tile. The ceramic figurines were small in size and hand-built with speed. The ceramic tiles were made in stoneware clay and ceramic coloured pencil was used to draw onto the surface.

Result

This was a quick test, carried out in order to apply my previous drawings onto clay. This test created a narrative scene and allowed me to consider making figurines as a way of storytelling for the final

project. The scale was too small, and I considered using flat-backs in the next stage.



Applying my drawings to ceramics

TEST 28

Date 21.Nov. 2012

Aim

To make contemporary figurines inspired by flat-back figurines of Staffordshire and put them together for the Work-in-Progress show at the RCA.

Process

I created several figurines of people I saw in the street: a pregnant lady with a bottle of beer, a homeless man who was looking for food in the bin and a man leaning on a tree. They were made in stoneware (Superwhite) clay and partly decorated with ceramic crayons.

Result

Among the collection that I made, the one featuring the homeless man in particular had an interesting quality of the glaze. The backs were left undecorated, retained an interesting quality where my making had left a textural effect.



Front view /top view of figurine group

TEST 29

Date 23. Nov. 2012

Aim

To develop my drawings on a large scale and try a different style to investigate its potential use.

Process

My new drawing process in the Drawing Studio was filmed for 45 minutes. I placed 91 A4 papers around the room, and drew with black inks and charcoal while thinking about three words: Drinking, Crazy and Anger.

Result

It was a different style, and an opportunity to try my drawing on a larger scale for the first time. However, it was clear to me that this drawing style might not be suitable for my contemporary

interpretation. It was interesting as a drawing and expanded my mark-making.



Ink on paper in the drawing studio

TEST 30

Date 29. Nov. 2012

Aim

To make ceramic wares in order to prepare for the 2013 RCA Biennial Research Exhibition: 'Disruption'

Process

Small vessels were created, whose purpose was to be disruptive if people attempted to consume drinks from them. The forms included a small short glass and a wine glass, made in ceramic.

Result

The result of the cup-making was successful, and at this point I decided to evaluate it when I had an event, 'Ale Bench', at the RCA Biennial Research Exhibition.



Drinking Vessels

TEST 31

Date 22. Jan. 2013

Aim

To evaluate the potential of the small punch-bowls in a performative context and gauge the response from viewers. The test was to explore the possibility of using the 'Disruptive Drinking Vessels'. This event was scheduled as part of 2013 RCA Biennial Research Exhibition.

Process

For the research RCA Biennial exhibition 2013, entitled 'Disruption', I proposed to use my punch-bowls in conjunction with an event. The 2013 exhibition was curated around the theme of Disruption, and I was asked to directly respond to this concept. I participated by imaginatively connecting my research to the biennale's subject. (<http://disruption.rca.ac.uk/>)

I invited people to get involved. Participants were asked to choose the vessel. Then I served drinks, including tea, rum, punch, etc.

Result

This was a performance-based, experimental event. Many participants came along and left a message, which I photographed and documented with video clips. This event opened up an exciting prospect. However, I decided I did not want to take it further for my research, because I intended to focus on more figurine-making at this point.



Ale Bench event poster for the research exhibition



Ale Bench participants at the event at the Research Exhibition

TEST 32

Date 02. Mar. 2013

Aim

To test variations of drawing and figurines according to different set times. This was the first test of these sets in which the etching printing technique was learnt in order to create variations.

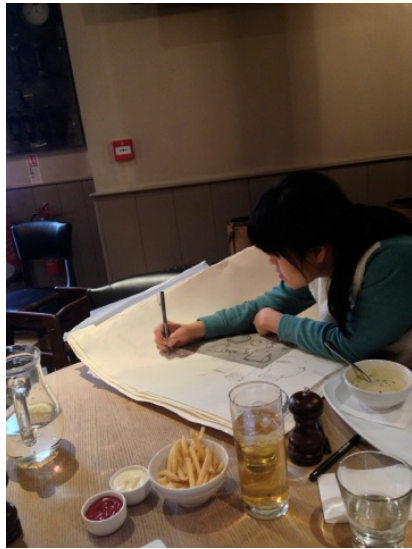
Process:

Etchings with various finished qualities. An etched image was taken from ceramics in my cupboard, and then timed drawings in the local pub for 5/7/8/10/12/15/18/20/25 minutes.

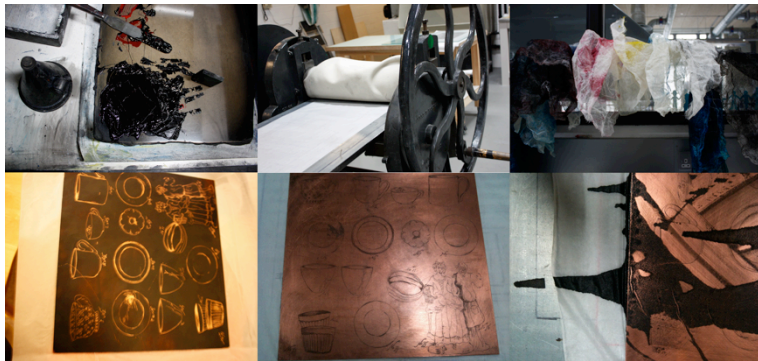
Result

Etching was used to duplicate a number of the same images. During the process, however, finishing with a different quality was more interesting. In particular, when rubbing the copper plate, in order to get rid of the rest of the ink and let it absorb into the lines, I

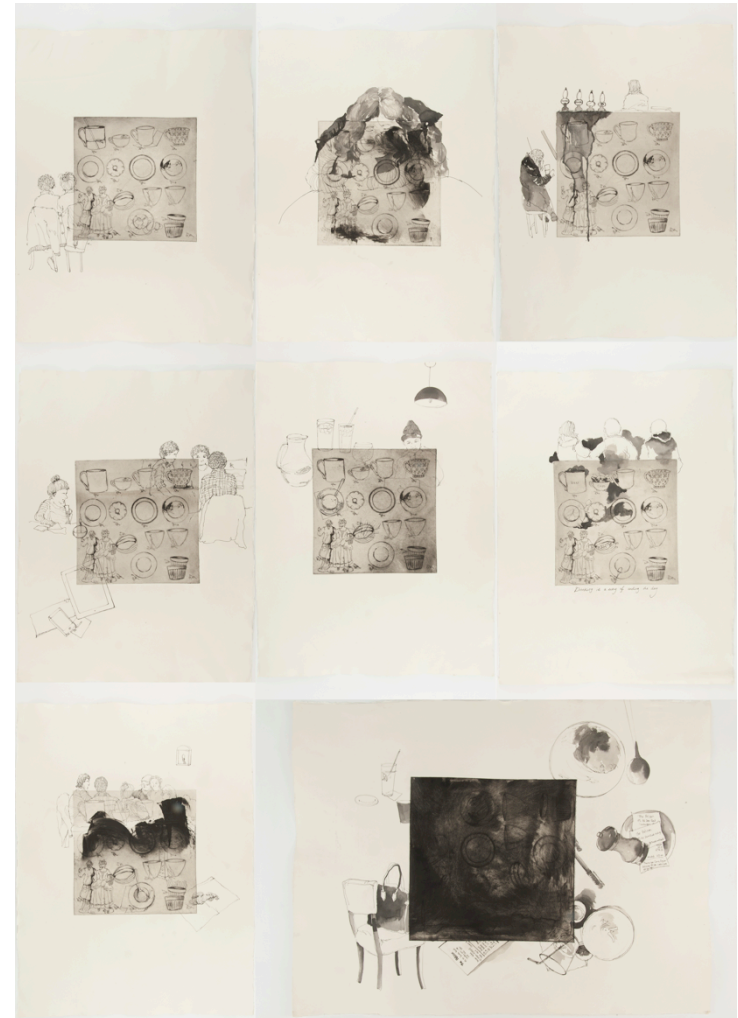
could make each plate different by partly rubbing them. I found that bridging the relationship between everyday ceramics and capturing everyday scenes needed further development.



Drawing in the Pelican Pub. 02.March.2013



Etching process



Drawings with etching

TEST 33

Date 18. Apr. 2013

Aim

To try the timed drawing process through direct response (life drawing) onto ceramic plates.

Process

Jiggered sets of terracotta plates. Drawing when timed in the Pub: 5 to 25 minutes. Then they were fired at 900°C, glazed and fired at 1220°C.

Result

The original plan was to draw for a longer time during the process; however, it was not easy to carry out this in the dark bar. The quality of drawing was successful; however, after firing the images were unexpectedly blurred. Also, the plan was to use earthenware clay for jiggering. However, the jiggering process did not work well

with this test. (This was probably because the white earthenware clay was not appropriate for this process.)



Life-Drawing plates

TEST 34

Date 28. Apr. 2013

Aim

To carry out a timed making process using a press-mould technique, and to examine how this affects the finishing quality.

Process

An image taken from Test 32 and modelled in Plasticine.

A press mould was made from an original model. Press-moulded when timed: 30/60/90/120/150 minutes.

Result

This was glazed in black (only the hair) and the front part of the woman for the first model (brushed). The quality of brushing created an interesting result. The transparent glazing was thick and

lost some detail. The more time that was spent, the more detail is shown in models. The original model had too much information when modelled in Plasticine. I observed that the length of time spent does not necessarily make for better works. The first model, with rough finishing, worked well overall.



Image taken from my drawing



Modelling



Press-moulding and painting

TEST 35

Date 07. May. 2013

Aim

To carry out the timed making process using the press-moulding technique and examine how a timed making process would affect the finished quality.

Process

An image taken from Test 33 and modelled in Plasticine.

Then press mould was made and then processed at different speeds. (30/60/90/120/150 minutes) Then I painted three models with underglaze colour onto the glazed unfired body.

Result

Painting: the result of paint on top of unfired glaze was not successful; the density of painting came out too dark. Every stage of timed making was an interesting process in variations. A range

of aesthetic diversity was found in the result. This test led to the potential possibility of variations as a set. Painting onto the glaze before firing needed to be developed and investigated further.



Press-moulding



Painting (underglaze oxide over the glaze before firing)

TEST 36

Date 10. May. 2013

Aim

To enhance the quality after Test 33.

Process

Timed painting onto the glazed (unfired) plates. I was situated in the bar again and undertook the drawing for 3/5/7/10 minutes in the bar. Then they were fired at 1200°C.

Result

Some parts of my drawings were partly smudged and blurred by the thick glaze.



Life-drawing Plates

TEST 37

Date 13. May. 2013

Aim

To time when painting to see how the quality changes. To paint over the glaze (before firing), the aim being similar to the previous experimental work.

Process

Models 002 were slip-cast then bisque fired at 1160° C. They were painted with underglaze colour at 1080° C. Finally enamel colours were painted on in 5/10/15/20 minutes and fired at 780 °C.

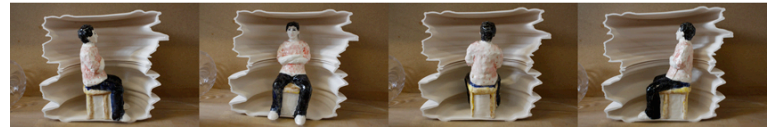
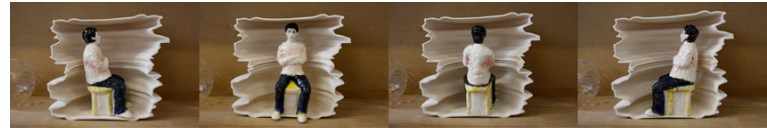
Result

Painting the same object in different styles was a successful process.

During this process, I felt as if I was one of the unknown painters/potters in the small workshops of the past. I decided to continue looking at diverse quality in painting and making.



Figurines



Figurines, four different views

TEST 38

Date 16. May. 2013

Aim

To make stacks of plates, looking at the possibility of combining these with figurine works.

Process

Around this time, my research developed my idea of integrating everyday ceramics. With this idea in my mind, several stacked plates were used to make a mould. My first trial did not work well in terms of the quality of work. As more sharp edges for my original model were recommended, I made a second stack in order to improve the quality.

Result

The second trial for moulding and casting was successful and produced several objects.



Process



Bisque-fired objects

TEST 39

Date 07. Aug. 2013

Aim

To see explore the possibilities of applying figurines against a wall and on top of a plinth offering an opportunity to develop this idea in response to an exhibition proposal.

Process

Several figurines were created in response to the Siobhan Dance Studio residency during the summer. In particular, I wanted to use this opportunity to test out the format of figurines that I am going to make for the final project. (See press release, below)

<The Choreography in Everyday Life>

The Choreography in Everyday Life is an on-going project that documents everyday life and movement through ceramic figurines.

I began this project by taking Contemporary Dance classes at Siobhan Davies Studios, with the hope of experiencing dancing movement in her daily life. As porcelain figurines captured dancing movement and theatre scenes in the eighteenth century, I intended to re-configure everyday life in England through figurines. For the *Unfold* exhibition, I was much inspired by the film, *All This Can Happen* by Siobhan Davies and David Hinton. The film was made entirely out of archive footage and images from a number of different archives across the world. From this, I have explored narrative rhythms of everyday life. Dancing movement became everyday movement during the residency at Siobhan Davies Studios.

Result

The figurines that I made for hanging on the wall worked differently from those made for conventional plinths. Small hooks were glued after firing to the most of the figurines to hang on the walls. However it did not work well, because the hooks were visible. I still needed to work on the details of display for hanging.



Display view at the Siobhan Davies Dance Studio

TEST 40

Date 04.Sep. 2013 – 30.Sep.2013

Aim

To study porcelain painting, looking at the possibility of applying the technique to my practice.

Process

I took a four-week beginners' class on porcelain painting when I was in Korea during the summer. I learnt the basic skills and the traditional way of decorating European porcelain. Indigo enamel colour was applied to two square plates and painted three times.

Result

It was a great opportunity to learn traditional enamel painting, and the first result was successful. I would like to apply this porcelain painting process to my studio practice for my figurines.



Porcelain painting in progress

TEST 41

Date 05.Oct. 2013

Aim

To test out enamel line drawings in order to look at the possibility of decorating the surface of the figurines.

Process

The form was initially developed from my MA work. Roughly modelled figurines were created, glazed and fired at 1250°C.

Result

I was not sure how this form of figurine would be effective for my final pieces at that time. The result of the test figurines themselves worked well.



Figurine in progress, after the second firing

TEST 42

Date 06.Oct. 2013

Aim

To try enamel line drawing onto the surface of figurines (Test 41)

Process

Using a porcelain-painting pen, simple line drawings were applied onto the surface of figurines.

Result

Although it was not easy using to the porcelain-painting pen, I successfully drew a man and a woman from my story 'Red Knickers'.

I needed more practice using an enamel pen for drawing.



After enamel painting

TEST 43

Date 8.Oct.2013

Aim

To paint with grey/ black enamel colours to make it more decorative. The black enamel colour was used intentionally, followed on from my previous practice, which mostly focused on black-and-white drawing.

Process

After decorating with enamel lines, shades of colour were added onto the surface lightly.

Result

This sample was from the previous Test 42. On repeating this, repainting the figurine made the saturation darker.



After enamel painting

TEST 44

Date 10.Oct.2013

Aim

To model figurines for the final project.

Process

Plasticine was used for modelling figurines. Some of models were made by the slip-casting and press-moulding processes.

Result

It was the first time I had used Plasticine to model figurines, and there were benefits and disadvantages in the use of this material. It was better to use clay for the details but Plasticine enabled a longer working period, because it did not dry out.



Model-making process

TEST 45

Date 11.Oct.2013

Aim

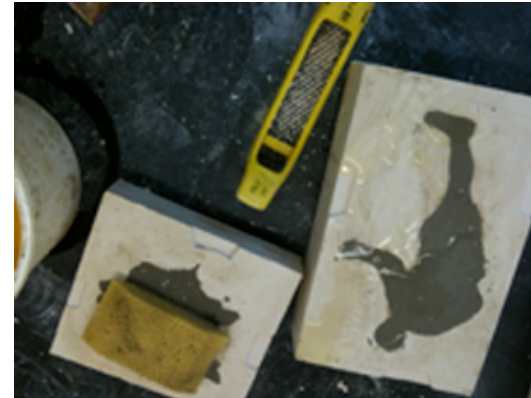
To make press-moulds and casting moulds from Plasticine figurines.

Process

I made plaster moulds with models. Some of them were for casting while others were for press-moulding. I intentionally increased the depth of the figurines by adding some clay underneath the figurines.

Result

When I made the moulds, some of them were too flat; therefore, I raised them up with a slab of clay on the bottom of the figurines. They were ready for slip- casting and press-moulding.



Mould-making process

TEST 46

Date 22.Oct. 2013

Aim

To make the first press-moulding figurine.

Process

From the press-moulded original casting, I added some extra elements to the figurine to make a one-off piece.

Result

The result of adding extra decoration after taking the figurine off the mould was positive. At the time, I was not sure I wanted to make figurines for hanging on the walls. From this first trial, I decided to go ahead with making figurines against walls.



Press-moulded and added details

TEST 47

Date 29.Oct.2013

Aim

To make the first slip-cast figurines

Process

I made figurines by using the slip-casting process, then added modelled elements to the figurines.

Result

Both press-moulding and slip-casting worked well for the projects. For the details of the figurines, slip-casting is better; however, the press-moulded figurines were easier to add some additional details to. I wanted to continue this approach for my final work.



Slip-cast figurines



Slip-cast and added details

TEST 48

Date 12.Nov.2013

Aim

To see the result of firing figurines with transparent glaze.

Process

All the figurines were fired at 1000°C and glazed with transparent colour.

Result

The firing and glazing results were very successful overall. The glaze was well applied and the details of the figurines remained. Small sections of the figurines were decorated using on-glaze enamel, but they mostly remained white.



Fired figurines



Test 49

Date 17.Nov.2013

Aim

To try the decoration of the *Three Sisters* figurines.

Process

Enamel painting and gold lustre line were undertaken for the second figurines (on the right of the bottom photo).

Result

Using the gold line was not successful; it almost washed away the details on the figurines. I decided to only use gold lustre on small parts of the figurines.



Three Sisters in Progress

TEST 50

Date 18.Nov.2013

Aim

To try a third version of *Three Sisters*

Process

The press-moulding process was used, and additional flowers were added as bocage to this figurine. The previous two versions of this work were used to make a series.

Result

This version worked well and I did not decorate with any enamel colour because the flowers were made in pink-coloured clay.



Three Sisters in Progress

TEST 51

Date 22. Nov.2013

Aim

To explore the relationship between 2D and 3D figurine-making.

Process

Some of the details were intentionally left out of the original drawing. After firing at 1250°C in the kiln, enamel colours were applied for four times. Each time the figurine was fired at 800°C.

Result

Lining the face of the figurine with black enamel colour seemed not to work for this figurine. I decided to leave out the face and body next time and decorate the bocage only.



Top-Geared in Progress

TEST 52

Date 25. Nov.2013

Aim

To explore the relationship between 2D and 3D in figurine making.

Process

Pen drawing with enamel was undertaken and then painted over, along with the lines, four times. Each time, it was fired at 800°C.

Result

Painting enamels over four times was resulted in an increase in the depth in shading.



Top-Geared In Progress

TEST 53

Date 02. Dec. 2013

Aim

To paint part of the figurines in a way which shows an ironic aspect of everyday life.

Process

Rough sleeper figurines in *Rainy Shelter* were created and slightly altered. The figurines were painted with enamel colours two to three times and fired, each time at 800°C.

Result

A pale colour was applied to this figurine, and this determined the colour decisions for most of the figurines. Parian clay was used for a glossy effect for the second figurine (Bottom photo). This test confirmed the process of enamelling for me, and also the use of some coloured clays for my final figurines.



Rainy Shelter in Progress

TEST 54

Date 05. Dec. 2013

Aim

To apply some enamel colours and ready-made transfers.

Process

The figurine was hand-painted three times with enamels and some commercial transfers were applied to decorate.

Result

The bicycle wheel on the figurine was painted with enamels several times and fired each time. The result of the wheel painting did not fulfil my expectations, so I decided to decorate the wheel simply with a strong colour impact next time. The use of a ready-made decal for adding a bit of decoration came out positively.



Health and Safety in Progress

TEST 55

Date 14.Jan.2014

Aim

To experiment with background wall drawing in an exhibition display. This was displayed in the Work-in-Progress show at the RCA.

Process

Background painting was applied directly on the wall to match with the figurines.

Result

The black line drawing was too dark for the figurines in the end. The next time, I opted to do fine line drawing and considered different options for presenting my figurines.



From Cradle to Grave, Work-in-Progress Show at the RCA

APPENDIX 2 –The Final Images



Fig. 61, *Pardon Me? There Is A Football Match Tonight?* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)



Fig. 62, *Red Knickers* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)



Fig. 63, *Health And Safety* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)

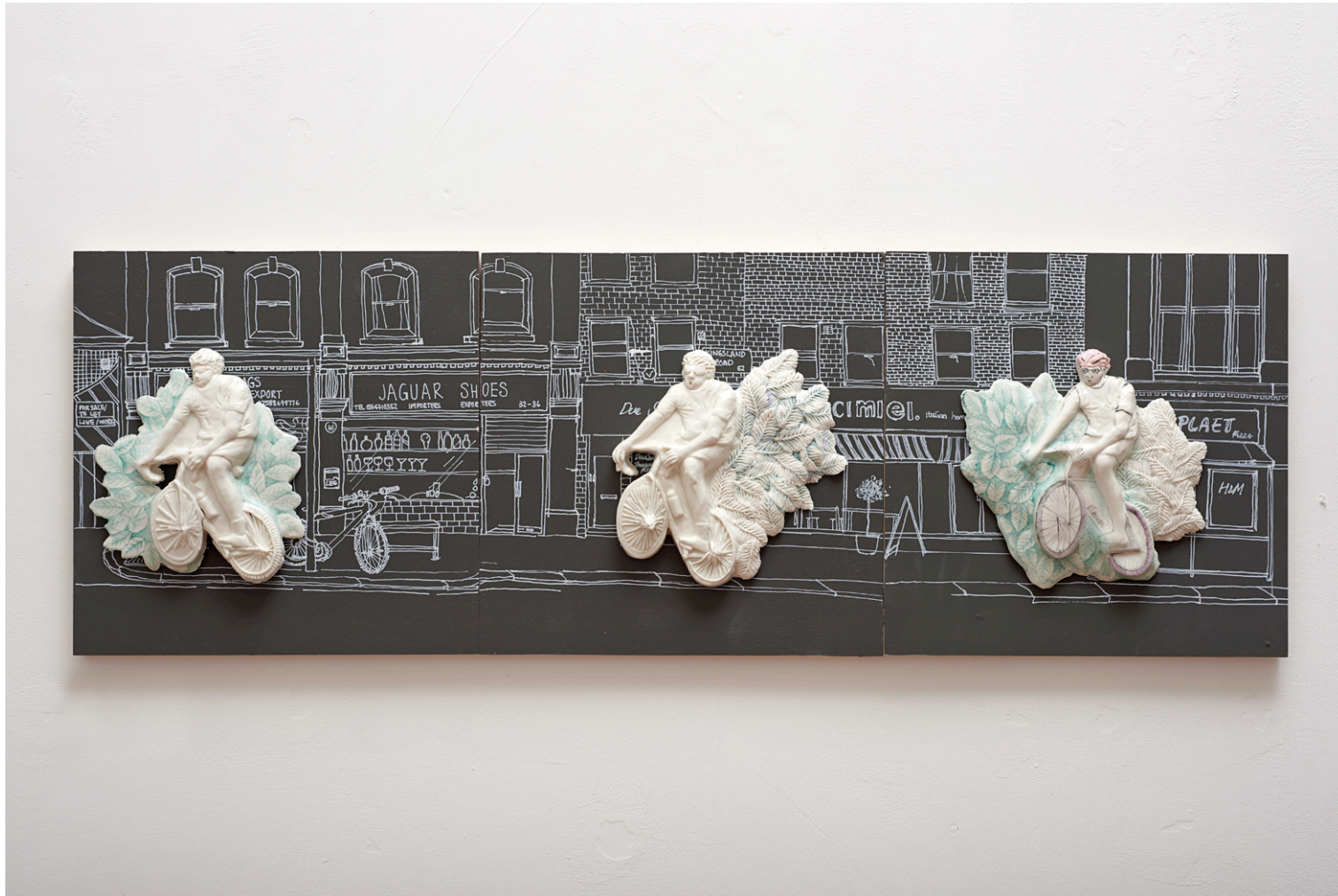


Fig. 64, *Top-Geared* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)

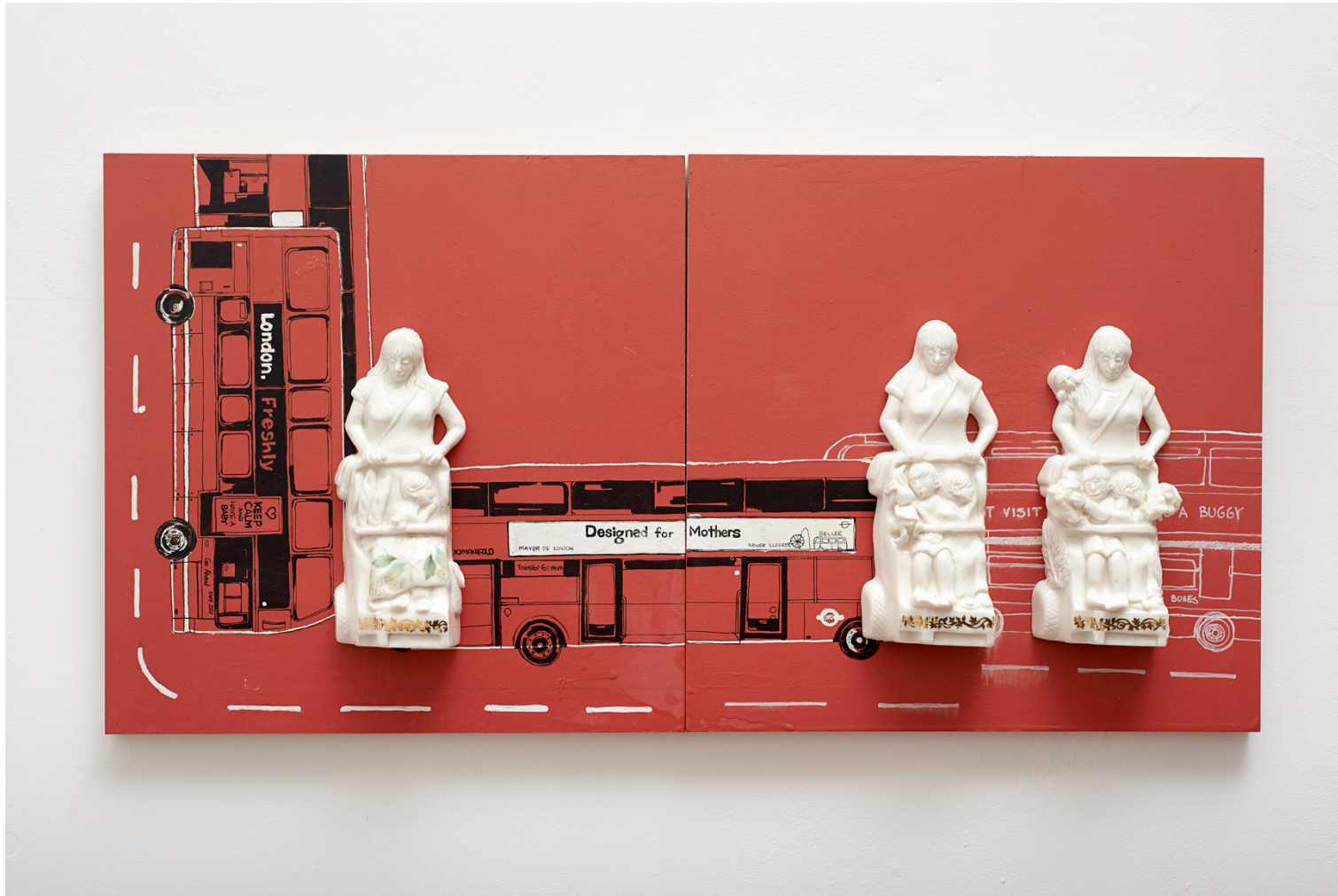


Fig. 65, *Baby Boom Boom Shake* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)



Fig. 66, *From the Cradle To Grave* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)



Fig. 67, *Three Sisters* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)



Fig. 68, *Rainy Shelter* (Photo: Sun Ae Kim)



Fig. 69, *Finally, Sun Came Out!* (Photo: Sun Ae Kim)



Fig.70, *Divided Nation* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)

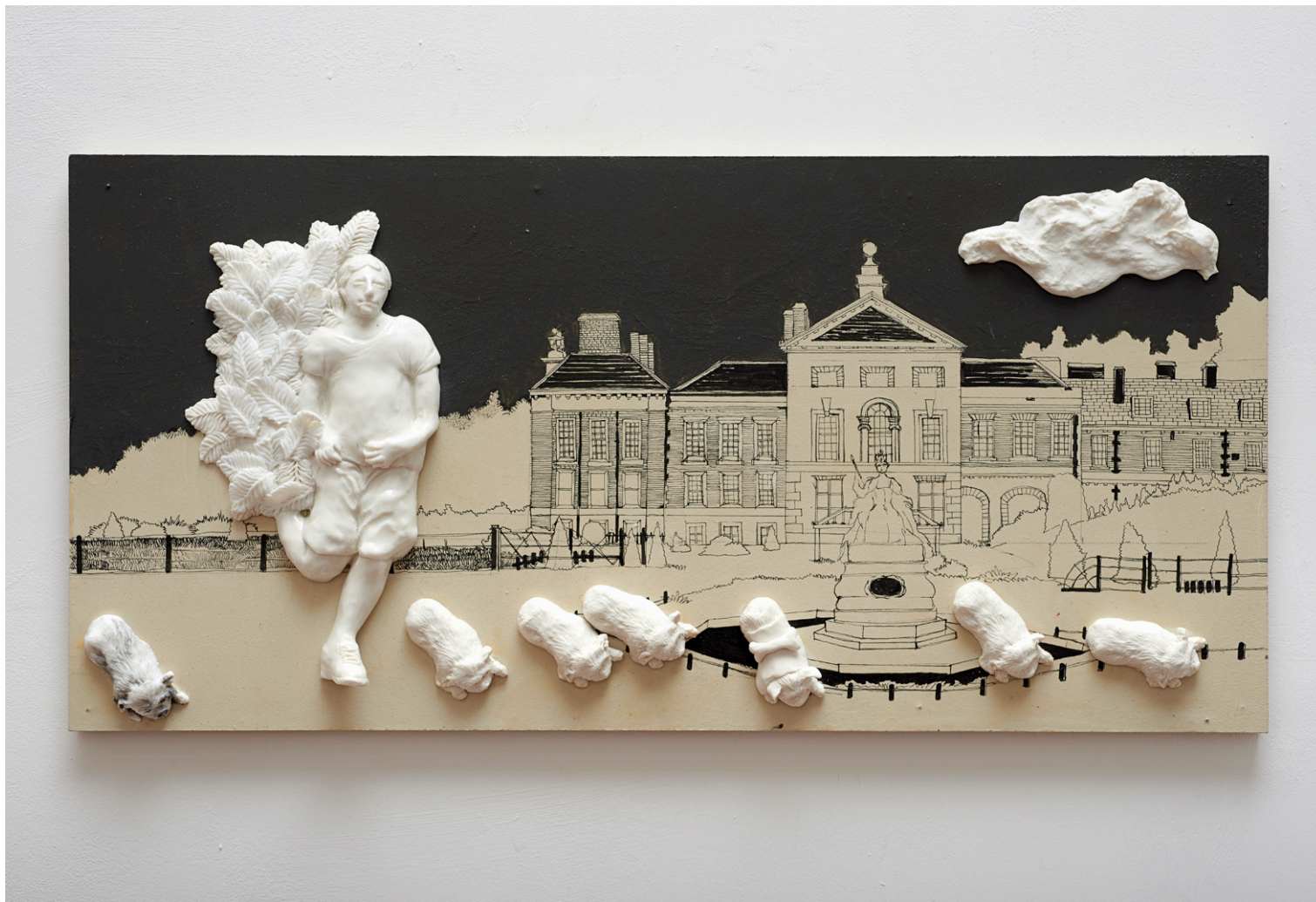


Fig. 71, *Keep Calm And Carry On Jogging* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)



Fig. 72, *Daddy's Little Helper* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)



Fig. 73, *Dancing Queen* (Photo: Sun Ae Kim)



Fig. 74, *Let's Have a Cuppa Tea with Miss Wonderland* (Photo: Dominic Tschudin)



Fig. 75, *Eve Smith & Eve Jones* (Photo: Soon Hak Kwon)



Fig. 76, *Four Weddings And A Funeral* (Photo: Sun Ae Kim)

