

Advanced Material Investigation Through Sculpture

Grady Aldrich, Class of 2018

Thanks to the Grua O'Connell Research award I received I was able have an enriching experience over the course of my independent study and I was able to experiment with many new materials that would have been otherwise inaccessible to me. The grant primarily covered the cost of art making materials, especially larger quantities of rubber for mold making and other materials for experimentation and casting. I explored different techniques as related to mold making and casting, and I continued to push my ideas throughout the project to create numerous works that sought to consider ideas related to gender, sexuality, and identity.

In the beginning of my project, I focused most of my time on making molds and exploring my ideas through mass-production. As my interests continued to shift, so did my use of materials, moving from this more systematic approach to one that was centered in hand building with clay. Although the central themes I was examining remained constant throughout the semester, with each subsequent work the forms and pieces I made morphed, with the resulting work consisting of three ceramic objects as part of a *Decorative Object Series*. These objects, informed by previous works that I had developed over the semester, were not only emblematic of my ideas as they continued to mature, but also my larger concern with the relationship between art objects, decoration, and the perceived "beauty" of the works.

I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity as it allowed me to further explore my artistic ideas with materials that I would not normally utilize. Through this experience I was able to consider themes that had consistently shown up in my work but required the depth and time that an independent study provided to fully come to fruition and be realized within a complete art piece. After gaining such insight in terms of my own creative process, I am excited to continue forward with the material knowledge and conceptual background that I gained from this experience.



Holy Trinity,
Ceramic heads, 2017



Deformity,
Ceramic objects, 2017



Decorative Object Series,
Ceramic objects and
sand, 2017

Faculty Mentor: Jackie Brown

Funded by the Grua/O'Connell Research Award