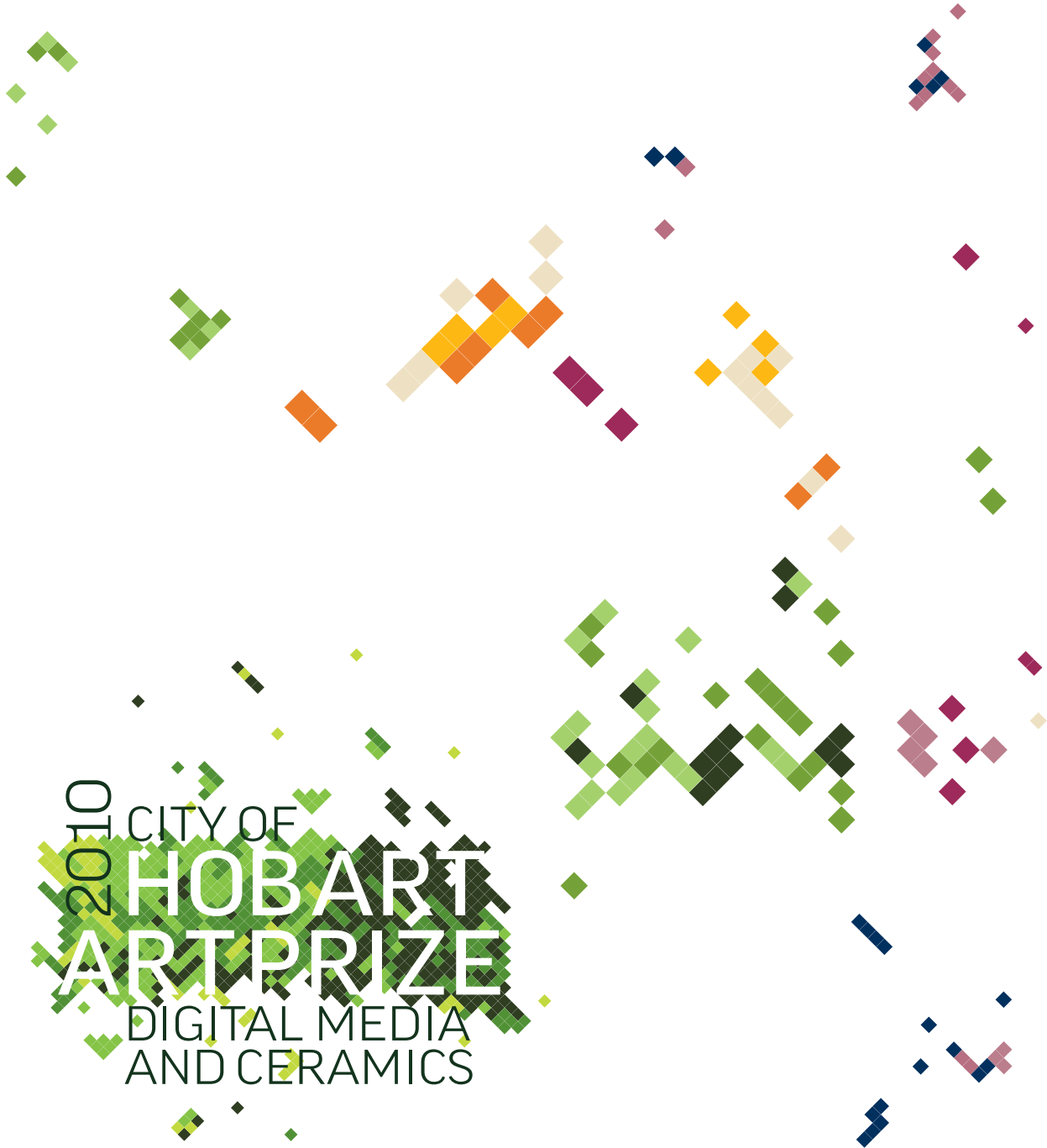


2010

CITY OF

HOBART
ARTPRIZE

DIGITAL MEDIA
AND CERAMICS



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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE LORD MAYOR OF HOBART
ALDERMAN ROB VALENTINE

Welcome to the 2010 City of Hobart Art Prize exhibition – an event that Hobart City Council is very proud to present.

The works created by the 22 artists practicing within the fields of digital media and ceramics demonstrate the high calibre of contemporary art work being produced both here in Tasmania and across the nation. I extend my congratulations to all the participating artists for their individual contributions to this nationally significant art prize.

My thanks go to the staff of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery for their expertise and professional assistance and to our valuable sponsors for their support of the exhibition. Hobart City Council would also like to acknowledge the ongoing commitment of its Visual Arts Sub-Committee.

My thanks also to this year's judges - Jose Da Silva, Curator (Film, Video and New Media) Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane and Brian Parkes, Managing Director, Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Design, Adelaide who have travelled to Tasmania and committed themselves with enthusiasm and great professionalism to what is an always difficult task. In addition I would particularly like to acknowledge (our third judge), Jane Stewart, Principal Curator of Art, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery who has generously given her time, advice and energy in working with Council staff to make the City of Hobart Art Prize a truly professional event.

Selected from the exhibition, the works of the two winners in each category are acquired for the City of Hobart Art Prize Collection.

My congratulations to the winning artists whose work stands out in what is an exceptionally strong field of contemporary Australian art practice.

The Council is very proud of its role in initiating and continuing to present this important national art prize. We believe it reflects our City's cultural identity as a place where contemporary visual arts, craft and design are nurtured and celebrated.

Please enjoy the exhibition!

ALDERMAN DR PETER SEXTON
CHAIRMAN
VISUAL ART SUB-COMMITTEE

The City of Hobart Art Prize, now in its 22nd year, is somewhat unique in the Australian context in bringing together contemporary visual arts, craft and design practice in a single exhibition. This year, these two complimentary yet contrasting disciplines are digital media and ceramics.

Through this, Hobart City Council seeks to encourage experimentation within and across art, craft and design forms, to present an exciting exhibition that offers a 'snap shot' of contemporary practice, and to provide the City of Hobart with a collection of significant works over time.

This year, eight of the 22 finalists short-listed from 173 national and local applicants are in the digital media category, with a further 14 finalists in the ceramics category. This has resulted in an exhibition which presents an exciting and diverse mix of works, produced by both established and emerging practitioners.

The City of Hobart Art Prize has always sought to be as encompassing as possible when defining what particular practice can be included within a given medium for the purpose of the competition. In line with this, the exhibition this year showcases digital media works which include projection software generated and screen based art works. The ceramics category is also highly diverse, featuring functional and non-functional works, including sculptural, wheel thrown, slip cast and hand built methods.

I trust that you enjoy the resulting wonderfully expansive and stimulating exhibition, complimented by a deft, witty and engaging essay by Dr Edward Colless, Head of Critical and Theoretical Studies at the School of Art, Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of my fellow Aldermen in the development and continuing success of this important cultural initiative. In particular, I would like to thank the members of the hard working Visual Art Sub-Committee: Lord Mayor, Alderman Rob Valentine; Deputy Lord Mayor, Alderman Helen Burnet; Alderman Philip Cocker; Alderman Bill Harvey; Dick Bett; Michael Edwards; Anne MacDonald; Rosemary Miller and Jane Stewart.



DIGITAL MEDIA PRIZE

JAMES NEWITT

Dreams 2009

8:10 min

2 channel 16:9 HDV, stereo sound

ARTIST STATEMENT Through my work I explore forms of social encounter: people are observed, questioned or directed to perform. Both actual and fictional narratives emerge out of these encounters but fiction and reality are not presented as binary concepts, rather they co-exist and intertwine. In *Dreams*, four street performers are connected through a series of beautifully tragic performances. Futility and failure seem ever-present during these isolated and introverted performances, which are enacted in public spaces in the evening. The performers seem to be responding to their immediate environment, marking their presence in the city. *Dreams* was filmed in Los Angeles in 2008.



CERAMICS PRIZE

GERRY WEDD

Silent Spring 2010

Dimensions variable

Porcelain paperclay, cool ice, slips

ARTIST STATEMENT I walk a lot, well that is if hitchhiking to and from the surf without any success constitutes serious walking. As I walk and the world slows down, I notice a lot more than I would from the passenger seat of the car; useful pieces of rope, various discarded bits of clothing and footwear (thongs are prominent) and of course rubbish. Lately I have noticed the alarming and portentous amount of small dead birds: canaries- in- the -coalmine perhaps? Have they flown into reflective windscreens? It's hard to say as the bodies show little evidence of trauma.



THE MONA PRIZE

BELINDA WINKLER

Composition of Curves (20) 2010

Dimensions variable
Porcelain

ARTIST STATEMENT My ceramic work explores sensual bodily form and tension in curve. These forms connect to the body in both an aesthetic and making sense. Both the process and the purpose are linked – for me making is a sensual experience. My approach to slip casting is to push the original plaster forms into, over or between parts of my body. The slip cast forms that result from this process retell the memory of my body and are imbued with the tension and pressure of their creation. Positioned closely, where curve almost meets curve, space is compressed and the tension between forms is heightened.

JUDGES' STATEMENT JANE STEWART

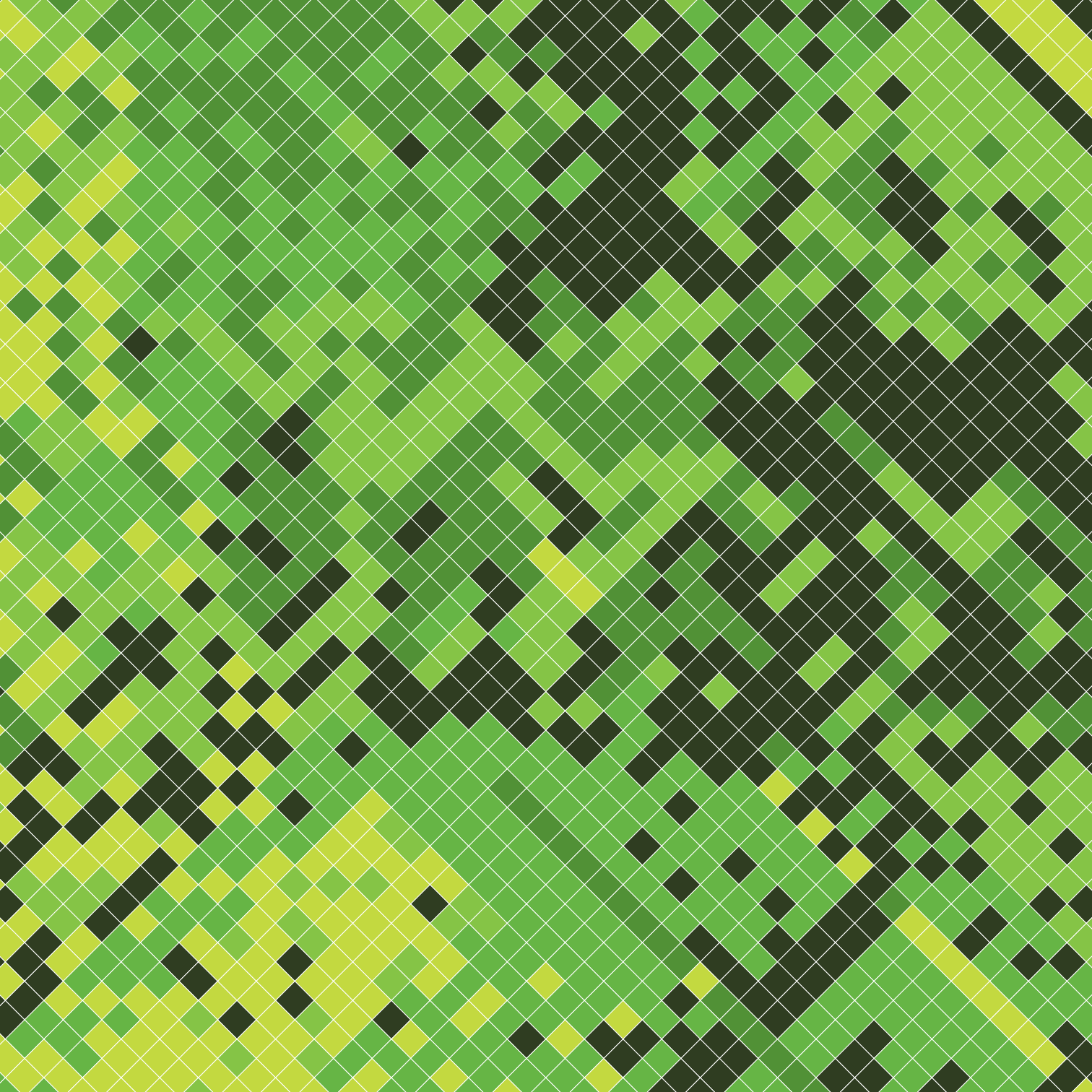
This year, the three judges took the liberated curatorial line, paring back the number of finalists in comparison with past City of Hobart Art Prizes (CHAP). This was uncharted terrain in the history of the Prize and we approached the selection of finalists with a studious degree of care and consideration.

There is rarely an exhibition that brings the moving image and ceramics together in isolation, so rather than separate the two disciplines; we chose to explore the conceptual and aesthetic connections between all works. CHAP 2010 may be a little quirky owing to the seemingly disparate disciplines, but it is also an arresting survey which spans emerging to senior practice across the nation. It represents diverse approaches to each art form: from slip cast, wheel thrown and hand built ceramic vessels and sculptures, to projected and screen based images which adopt documentary, animation, interactive, and appropriative techniques.

The interplay between traditional and contemporary materials and approaches establishes a platform where common perceptions of each discipline might be challenged. Ceramics is viewed in the slippery, intangible, and motion-charged world of screen based media, which is enhanced by the materiality of crafted objects. For art forms which are founded on opposites (light/substance, motion/stasis, 'new' media /traditional) there are universal similarities in the artists' interests, with works from each discipline exploring landscape, popular culture, identity, relationships, and loss, with a mixture of sobriety through to irreverence.

Hobart City Council is commended for embracing digital media in this acquisitive award. It has demonstrated a willingness to roll with the times at a period when art prizes nationally are under scrutiny. Such responsiveness is made possible by the unique flexibility of this prize, ensuring CHAP's continuation as a vibrant contemporary exhibition of thought and practice nationally.

Jane Stewart, Principal Curator of Art
Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery



JUDGES' COMMENDATION DIGITAL MEDIA

MERILYN FAIRSKYE

Fieldwork I I (Chernobyl) 2009

100 min

Single channel video projection

ARTIST STATEMENT In February 2009 I travelled to Chernobyl, Ukraine to shoot footage of reactor #4. Driving into Chernobyl, a long row of abandoned houses stood on snow-covered ground still contaminated by radiation. Further along the road more toxic houses were shrouded in a thick layer of clay intended to contain the spread of contamination and prevent seepage into the earth. Despite the lasting contamination of the area, there has been a dramatic revival of its wildlife. Wild horse, boar and wolf populations are thriving, lynx have returned and barn swallows nest in the reactor building.



CHRIS BENNIE
A Wee Sunset 2009
1:35 min loop
High definition Quick Time



DAMIANO BERTOLI
Continuous Moment: Bad Infinity 2009
5:37 min
Digital video, audio



CHRIS HOWLETT

Michael Jackson 4 Ways: Part I-IV 2010

30 min

HDTV, PAL, Stereo 16:9

14/15



ELVIS RICHARDSON

Televisuals 2008

6:15 min

DVD



GRANT STEVENS
If Things Were Different 2009
18:17 min
Digital video



MATT WARREN
Project Blue Book 2010
10 min
Digital video, LCD screen, display plinth, DVD player

2010 CITY OF HOBART ART PRIZE DR EDWARD COLLESS

Writing a catalogue essay for an art prize as generous and long standing and as exciting as the City of Hobart's is like being an MC at a wedding. It's a self-effacing privilege. You speak to but also on behalf of everyone who comes to the party. And there are rhetorical obligations that this diverting eloquence ought to honour: acknowledging the parents who provide and pay for the ceremony, there is the beauty of the bride, the debonair and dash of the groom, the special opportunity of the event which allows you to say a few words of congratulation.... And, you need to fuel these compliments with a good story, preferably a kind of parable that everyone can enjoy rather than your own idiosyncratic judgement about the match.

It takes a sleight of hand to do this well, a trick of the eye and a kind of magic act, since as MC you hold centre stage but only for a moment and then by a fluke of circumstance, by the sense of occasion, and most importantly only to divert attention from oneself to the happy couple on exhibit at the high table. It's this bridal troupe – even though they remain silently in attendance – which is the very focus of the ritual. There is a delicate contradiction here, a necessary mannerism; and it's expressed in the flamboyant tact required of a catalogue essay. You should be unpretentious but can't afford to be inconspicuous; you want to be courteous but inevitably become gregarious; you ought to be munificent but also want some of the applause.

In a way, the exemplar for the ambition of this sort of catalogue essay is the story of “the marriage at Cana”. This is where a wedding guest steals the scene by honouring the bride and groom with an impossible gift, upstaging the feast with a figurative rabbit-out-of-the-hat by miraculously turning water into wine. And not only chipping in to help the host when the booze runs out, but also providing the very best wine served all day. Whoever the luckless wedding singer may have been at Cana, their position has been usurped forever by the saviour of the day, Jesus. And who actually remembers the bridal couple? Instead, the event becomes a prophetic preview of Jesus's own destiny (his “last supper”). It's all about him, him, him. For all his temperamental modesty, Jesus would have had enough sly vanity – and villainy – to write a decent catalogue essay.

Well, that's not quite the story I was looking for. But the wedding analogy is insistent. Like the MC, the essay has to speak to the couple; but what do ceramics and digital art have in common that makes them happily wedded here today? It's not just a marriage of convenience, since there's little convenient about the conjoining of these two media that seem, in the scope rather than scale of artistic methods, to be polar opposites.

Ceramics has a pedigree that is literally as old as the earth. It's not just made from the stuff of the earth – although that gives the medium an impressive patina. Other than chipped or rudely carved stone weapons, it's the type of artefact most commonly dug up at deeply ancient sites and that records both the habits of daily life and the narrative arcs of broader cultural change. Ceramic ware is the archaic but enduring evidence for the civilizing process: for eating off, drinking from, transporting and storing perishables, for entombing or displaying ritual symbolic things (objects such as flowers, or even blood and body parts but also imagery). Oddly enough, one could also say that next to earth, the next elemental, material thing to ceramic ware by affinity and in substance is actually food. For example, just prior to the European discovery of porcelain in the 18th Century (largely by court alchemists harassed by their regal patrons' envy of the secrets of Chinese porcelain production), the sort of elaborate sumptuous table decorations we now associate with, say, the Meissen factory, were made from marzipan. A century and a half after the discovery of porcelain, ornate Baroque table decor became food again in the astonishing dinner tableaux of the Belle Époque chef Georges-August Escoffier. The decorative equation of food with ceramics is a tradition that survives in the ceramic-like lustre and the miniature architectural folly of the tiered wedding cake.

We seem to approach and appreciate ceramics – and we will do this with each artist in this show – as both an archaeological index and as a confection. The former gives the ceramic medium *gravitas*, earth-bound bearing and substantiality...inevitably associated with the grave. Its craquelure, grain, crystals and globules, its coruscations, folds, scoring: these earnest, adamant qualities are

finessed in the scorching dehydration and chemical fusions that happen in the kiln. They convey a moral as well as physical reflection on death and transfiguration, on skeletal bone and mortal clay. The confectionary aspect on the other hand gives the medium its voluptuous elegance as well as poignant delicacy and wit, but most of all that odd quality of brittleness (even in the most robust volumes and forms) that makes ceramic ware hard by being inflexible, fragile and that, under the right force, can crack like the shell or sugar crust on a *crème brûlée* or crumble like biscuit or pastry.

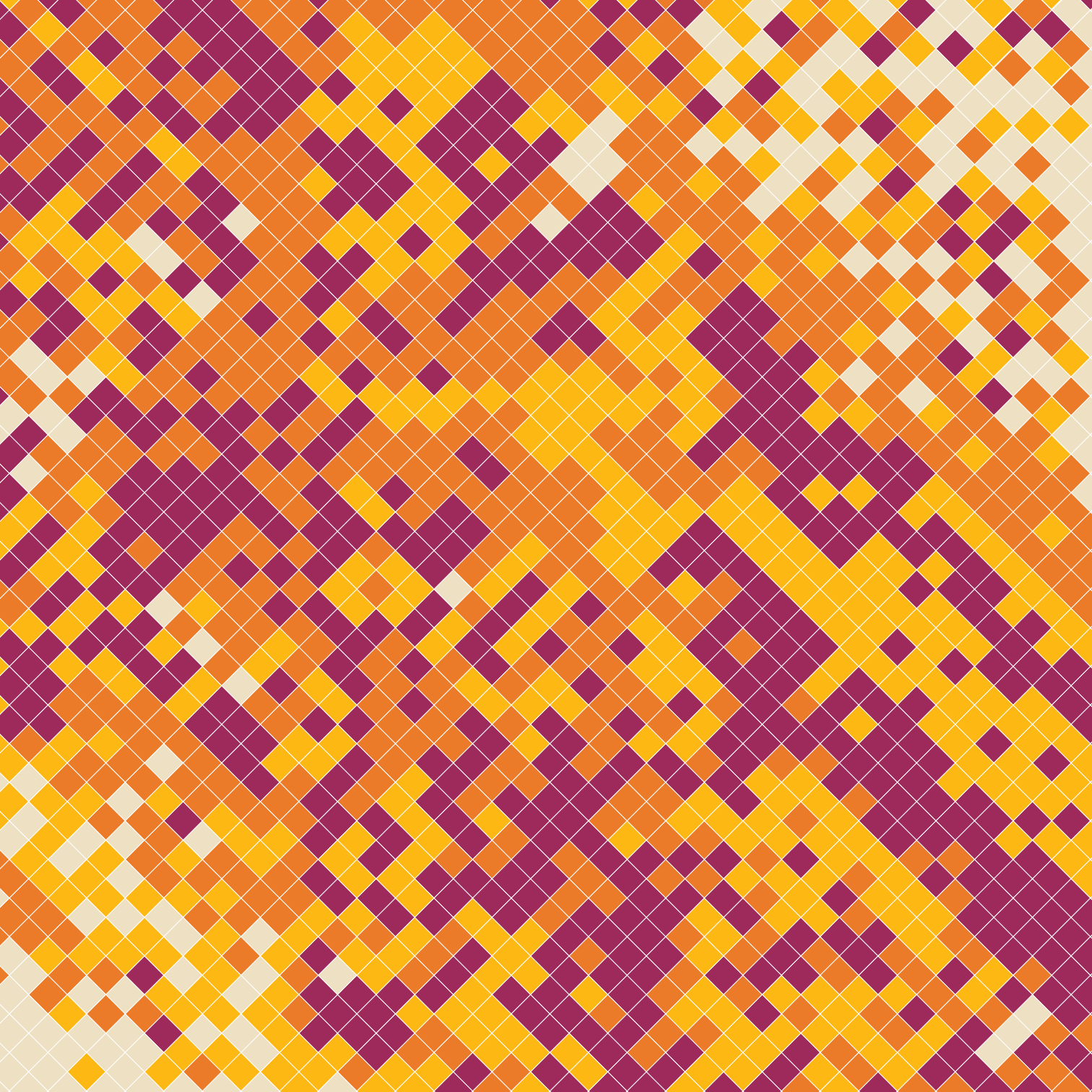
If the medium of ceramics has this genealogy and disposition from the grave to table, digital art is in comparison essentially a non-material medium suggestive – within a mythological idiom surprisingly as archaic as ceramics – of life beyond the grave. Mediumistic is probably a better word for digital art, since it has no matter of its own but channels energy into material sites that convert digital signals into analogue behaviour: light and noise that we can see and hear the way a spiritualist medium manifests messages from “the beyond” often in cryptic utterances or gestures. The artefacts of digital art, its images and sounds, are the equivalent of a spiritualist’s body-trembling or levitation or issuing of ectoplasm – that indefinable but effusive spiritual substance that pours or is ejaculated from the mouth and ears (and other orifices!) of a medium in climactic moments of their trance. In the great wave of spiritualist, séance photography from the 1890s to the 1940s, ectoplasm is, of course, a charming hoax. But if we appreciate it as an artefact of the séance, as an aesthetic phenomenon, then we see a correlation with the digital artefact: it is the charm rather than the duplicity that is affective.

What the table is to ceramics, table-rapping is to digital art. Even the most identifiable, mundane image from the analogue world – a landscape, a nude, a flower – when digitalised evaporates into particulates as mathematically abstract and sparse as an atomic array, volatilised like a body in *Star Trek’s* transporter. What looks like an old-fashioned movie, a rapid illusory sequence of still photographic images (of actual, indexical traces of light), is instead a lightless vector induced by a profoundly arcane mathematical operation of binary pulses. But are these digital operations a conversion of analogue matter into code or the elucidation of its immaterial essence as code? A paranoid luddite movie such as *The Matrix* insists (more vividly than the pious and idiotic *Avatar*) that material

bodies – paralysed, etiolated, excremental – lurk behind the fantastic dimensions of cyberspace in the way a pasty, obese net geek sits entranced and addicted before the computer screen, surrounded by empty pizza boxes and Coke bottles. The rage against the machine in *The Matrix* is a plea for the human body to get physical and to do some exercise. “Life. Be in it” could have been that movie’s slogan. But this actually identifies the enigmatic charm of digital art: that it aspires to a condition beyond life. A type of ethereal but irreligious world, a “second life”, beyond corporeality. The carnal body becomes a “long tail” of diminishing turbulence behind the gesture of the digit, the finger on the touch screen. This is the digit that raps its binary message to the beyond.

Should we, in the exhibition scenario, demurely partition these strange bedfellows of digital art and ceramics, in the way the sheet chastely hangs between the unmarried characters played by Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable, comically forced to share a room and bed in *It Happened One Night*? When, in a lecture a few years ago in Melbourne, the philosopher and art historian James Elkins gave an example of the most sensuous experience offered by art he spoke about holding a precious vase in his hands. One could almost say that in his experience ceramics provided the “philosopher’s stone”, an ultimate nugget of the transformative value of the sensuous. Digital art, we could say in contrast, would offer the “charmed particle”: an untouchable evanescence made with the minute arc of an electro-galvanic discharge off the fingertip rather than the embrace of the hand. I like to think of what happens when these differences interact, when aesthetic experiences so diverse nakedly confront each other: “as beautiful as the intersection of a sewing machine and umbrella on an operating table”. Lautréamont’s celebrated and startling formula for beauty was deftly erotic. If we eroticise the encounter of the digital and manual – of fingertip and hand – it should be celebrated as a dexterous, alchemical wedding.

Dr Edward Colless, Head of Critical and Theoretical Studies
School of Art, Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts
University of Melbourne.



JUDGES' COMMENDATION CERAMICS

STEPHEN BENWELL

Collection (1) Collection (2) 2009

24.5 H x 50 W x 50 D cm
Earthenware, found objects

ARTIST STATEMENT This work came to mind after a trip to Greece. Each collection is a small installation that combines the influence of both museum displays and archaeological sites. The components look like classical antiquities – statuettes, busts, urns and trophies. Details are added by a scattering of modelled stones, rubble and shards. The collections could be from a just-opened tomb in which the contents, tumbled together, have the sense of being left behind only recently. Or they could be sites of ancient ruins where masonry and statues have fallen to the ground and settled in interesting, albeit awkward ways.



LES BLAKEBROUGH

Open Wounds Series No 5 2009

13 H x 17.5 W x 11.5 D cm

Porcelain



STEPHEN BOWERS

Caucus Race Cup and Saucer 2009

(cup) 18 H x 21 D (saucer) 5 H x 39 D cm

White earthenware, cobalt blue underglaze, clear glaze



PENNY BYRNE

Gitmo Bay Souvenirs. Closing Down Sale, All Stock Must Go! 2010

34 H x 15 W x 65 D cm

Vintage porcelain figurines, metal chains, epoxy resin, re-touching medium, powder pigments



ALAN CONSTABLE

Not titled (AK SLR) 2008

20 H x 28 W x 17.5 D cm

Ceramic



MICHAEL DOOLAN

Monuments of Times Past - (Red) (Purple) 2010

Red - 40.5 H x 25 W x 25 D Purple - 45 H x 25 W x 25 D cm
Earthenware, automotive nylon



NEVILLE FRENCH

Mungo Light 1 (2 pieces) 2010

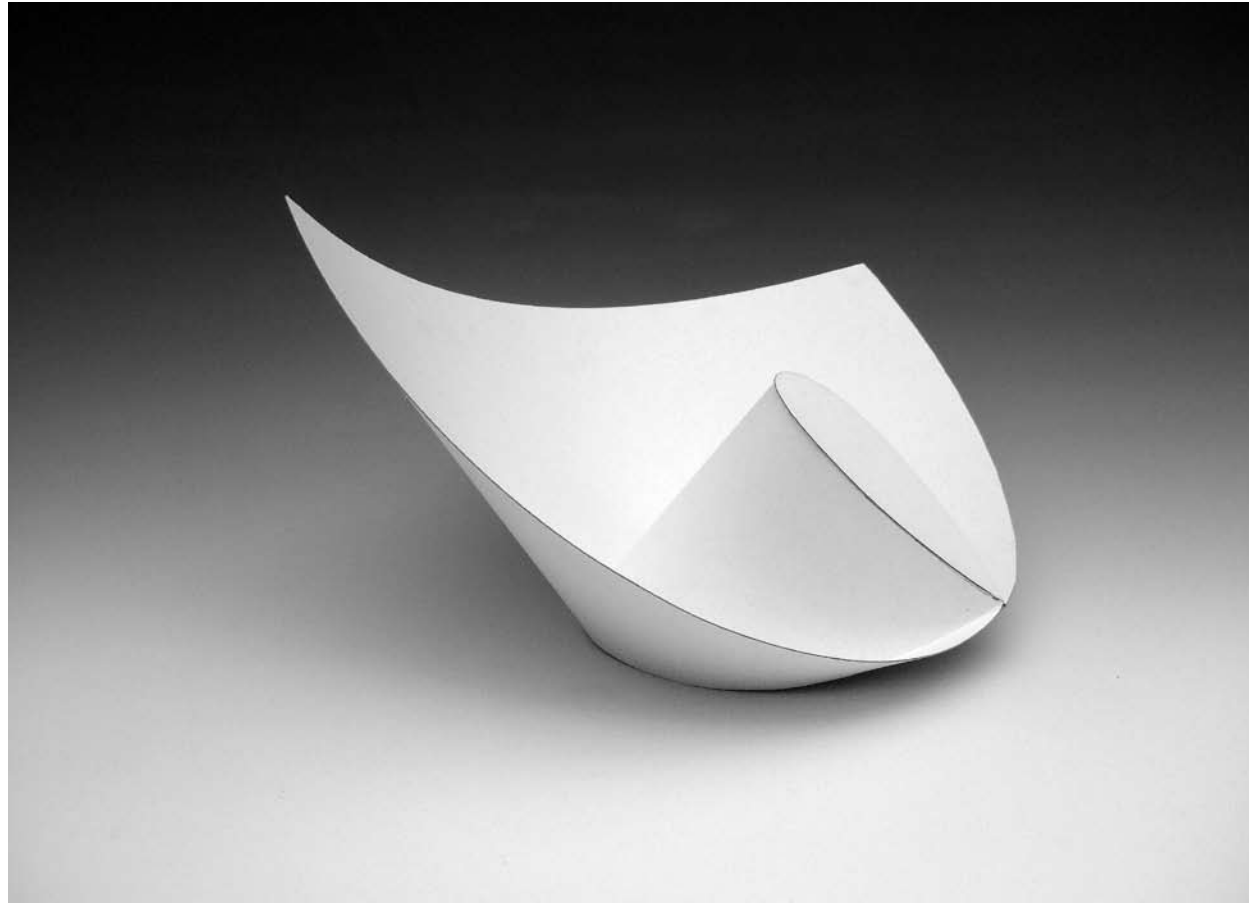
1 - 21 H x 41 W x 34 D 2 - 22 H x 30 W x 24 D cm
Porcelain



JEFF MINCHAM
Winter 2010
45 H x 63 W x 17 D cm
Ceramic, multiple glaze



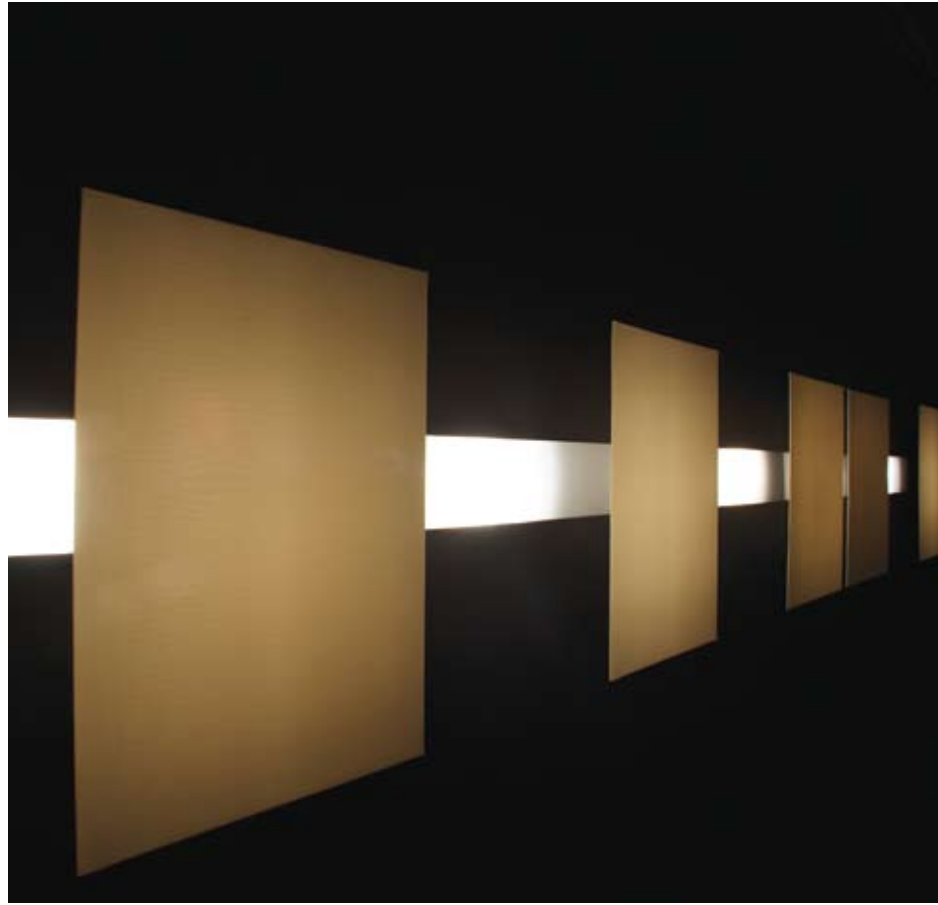
DAVID POTTINGER
Cross Currents 2009
16.5 H x 12.5 W x 16 D cm
Nerikomi porcelain



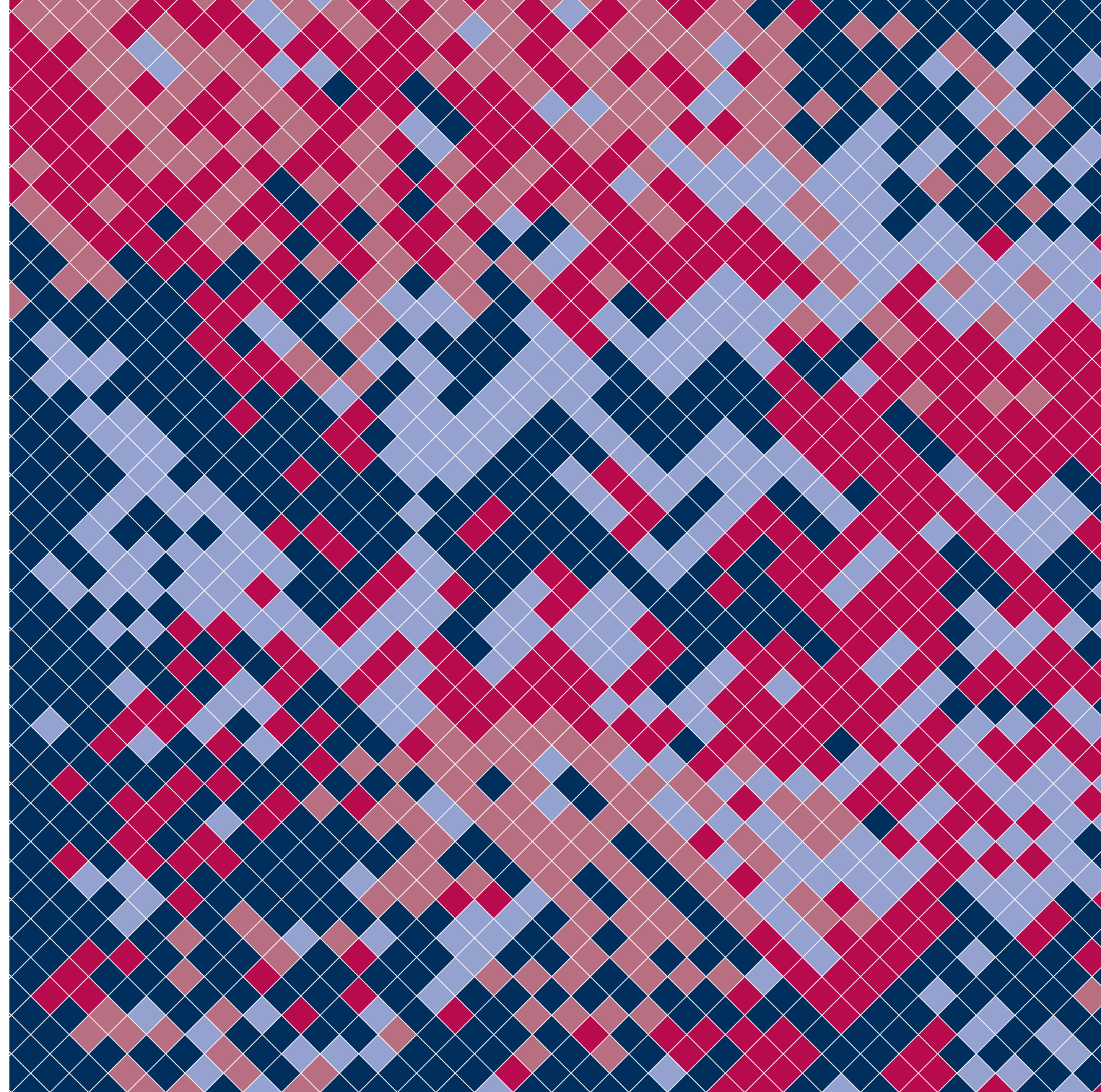
PENNY SMITH
Petalody Suite 2010
25 H x 30 W x 25 D cm
Porcelain



VIPOO SRIVILASA
Fortune Teller (plastic bag) 2008 (detail)
19 H x 18 W x 17 D cm
Porcelain, cobalt pigment and ceramic colour



SARA WRIGHT
Involuntary Series (6) 2010
25 H x 250 W cm
Keraflex porcelain paper



THANK YOU

SPONSORS

Hobart City Council wishes to thank the sponsors of the 2010 City of Hobart Art Prize for their generous contribution to the exhibition.

MONA, the principal sponsor, generously provides the MONA Prize as well as the superb wine and canapés for the opening event. The judges and winning artists stay in the luxurious chalets located on the Moorilla estate. Moorilla provides lunch for two at the Source Restaurant as part of the Myer People's Choice Award. For more information on MONA visit mona.net.au

Advertising is provided by the Mercury newspaper and WIN Television.

Australian air Express is the official carrier of the exhibition artworks. Printing of the invitations and exhibition catalogue is undertaken by Monotone Art Printers. Audio equipment provided by Bose and professionally installed by Quantum.

PRIZES

The 2010 City of Hobart Art Prize offers two acquisitive prizes of \$15,000 in each category. MONA generously provides the \$7,500 non-acquisitive MONA Prize and the \$1,000 People's Choice Award is provided by Myer.

2010 CITY OF HOBART ART PRIZE JUDGES

Jose Da Silva, Curator (Film, Video and New Media)
Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

Brian Parkes, Managing Director,
Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Design, Adelaide

Jane Stewart, Principal Curator of Art,
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart

2010 MONA PRIZE JUDGES

Lindy Lou Bateman
Leigh Carmichael

HOBART CITY COUNCIL

Project management: Ben Booth

Exhibition installation and curation: Anthony Johnson and Scot Cotterell

Administrative support: Kaye Harrison and Jodie Stapleton

TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

Exhibition installation and curation: Jane Stewart, Peter Hughes and Brian Martin

Project management: Trudy Woodcock-Outram

Exhibition support: Jo Eberhard, Mark Colegrave and Paul Colegrave

Conservation: Nikki King-Smith

Promotion and signage: Hannah Gamble, Jess Atkinson and Garrett Donnelly

Catalogue Essay: Dr Edward Colless

Graphic Design: Tracey Allen

Photography: All images supplied by the artists
except Sara Wright and Belinda Winkler images by Peter Whyte

For further information on the City of Hobart Art Prize and the Carnegie Gallery exhibition program, and other Hobart City Council cultural initiatives, contact Hobart City Council's Cultural Development Coordinator.

Telephone 03 6238 2778

Fax 03 6238 2124

GPO Box 503 Hobart 7001

boothb@hobartcity.com.au

hobartcity.com.au

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