

NECESSARY IMBALANCE:
CERAMIC SCULPTURE AS HUMAN SOCIAL ANALOGUE

Domonique Venzant

Bede Clarke, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The focus of this visual investigation is the relationship between the individual and the larger group. I often struggle to understand myself, my curiosities and motivations and how they relate to the greater society. I am a multicultural-multiethnic man, living within the greater context of American society. Being a visually distinct member of the American social landscape is infused with difficulties regarding race, bias, and negativity that are often based on perceived differences. My struggle to understand my relationship to the larger community has resulted in an attempt to depict the core of inter-human relationships by using ceramic sculpture as form of analogue for these social relationships. Creating objects from clay, wood, and steel has provided a sense of security that helps me recognize my concerns regarding difference by crystallizing them in the physical realness of objects which provides a distinct perspective that engages social bias.

Identity, whether it is personal, social, or cultural is constructed from a *mélange* of fragments that edifies the value of accumulated experience. The work produced in response to this understanding is accretive and amalgam. More often than not these visual experiments in self understanding are executed in clay. Repeated ceramic forms provide analogues for human individuals or groups. The visual undercurrent of this work is borrowed from minimalist portraiture, still life representation, as well as fragments of experience and memory.