

the areas that will be worked, while making sure the remaining areas are well covered with thin plastic to avoid quick drying. In my experience, respecting and understanding the different drying stages of clay and working with it as opposed to rushing it was a big learning that took time.

Technically, gravity is also always a challenge. I want my pieces to show a natural curve but these need to be supported while drying – I use foam in different thicknesses - or they will collapse. I do support my pieces during firing as they would otherwise collapse.

How do you minimise the loss rate with porcelain in the making, firing and decoration stages of the creation process?

Making This is an interesting topic as it is still a challenge for me. In the making, I am starting to evaluate going back to working with thicker slabs that might better withstand the stretching when the clay is being twisted and worked. There is a balance as to how thick I should go without losing its visual lightness. Also, to minimize the loss rate, I am working on the form and trying to obtain the same final effect without as many twists and turns.

Firing I bisque my pieces so that I can sand them before taking them to top temperature. Sanding a bisque piece smoothes surface imperfections with a smaller risk of cracking. I only fire my work in an electric kiln as I don't have access to a gas kiln. But limiting certain alternatives at this point is actually good, as the amount of options to test can be very overwhelming. I do not glaze my work yet as this would add another dimension to it that will require a lot of time to develop. But it is something I am constantly considering. I bisque fire, sand, and then I fire to 1260°C.

Decoration In this initial phase, I have chosen to decorate some of my pieces by adding a delicate texture that does not distract from the form. I am still evaluating introducing colour (other than black), in which case I might choose to mix stains in the clay as opposed to using glazes as these might result in cracks due to the thin porcelain walls.

What influences, if any, does the use of porcelain have on your direction of work? What inspiration, if any, for your work have you drawn from the porcelain itself?

Porcelain has inspired me to show its pure form, colour and texture. Using porcelain reinforced my focus on form and my interest in pursuing a minimalist aesthetic, versus a distraction with colour and glazing. The inspiration behind

my work draws upon the conflict between confinement and liberation by stretching the geometric limitations of the square. Through the intimate physicality of the making, I distort, bend and twist the walls to create fluid, open-form abstract sculptures that evoke a balance between control and freedom.



What are you creating with porcelain at present?

I am still working with my series 'Squares', created for my graduation show this past July as I feel it is an interesting concept that can be further developed. Currently, I am testing a variety of stains in different percentages mixed in the porcelain and learning how to get a uniform colour throughout the clay. I am also increasing scale, which is a challenge, but I have recently made a larger piece which I am pleased with. I want to continue developing different forms, which takes time.

Is there any advice or tip(s) about the use of porcelain you would like to share with our readers?

Although porcelain is always porcelain, there are many variations offered by the different suppliers and each have different qualities, even within paper clay. You will only truly understand their capabilities and limitations and value their qualities once you have tried working with the different samples.

Is there anything that you would like to add?

When working with clay, it is important to find the right clay for what you want to do. If you choose to work with porcelain, it is important to practise so that you can learn how to handle its limitations. Lastly, I reinforce that it is key to learn to work with the different drying stages of the clay and to keep it at the right stage for what you want to do at that time.

Photo. courtesy: Sylvain Deleu