

Crafting collective futurity

What kind of world do we want to imagine into being together? How might a creative methodology with clay cultivate the solidarity needed to craft a future across difference? Porcelain – a white ceramic material historically and symbolically laden, in the West, with preciousness, power and prestige – offers an apt medium through which to collectively challenge ideological whiteness.

This presentation explores how the political legacy of porcelain can be reworked through participatory workshops to envision 'the marvelous' (Miller, 2016) – a socially just future free from the workings of whiteness, as a praxis of anti-racism. Drawing on notions of conviviality (Gilroy, 2004; Valluvan, 2016), these collective making sessions foster plural perspectives, inspired by the concept of living in a condition of 'difference without separability' (Moten, 2014; Ferreira da Silva, 2016).

The work discussed examines how making together with porcelain can engender entangled empathy (Moten, 2014; Gruen, 2021). I argue that, when infused with care and relationality, these creative spaces can enable participants to begin to digest the unpalatable realities of oppressive whiteness and, in doing so, to imagine the material and structural transformations that living with difference requires. This practice centres communion and futurity; craft and clay in pursuit of social justice.

Keywords: anti-racist praxis, communion, conviviality, porcelain

Disciplinary field: Ceramics (within Arts/Social Sciences)

Format: Presentation and/or workshop

Name: Victoria Burgher

Affiliation: University of Westminster, London, UK

Contact: v.burgher2@westminster.ac.uk

Bio: Victoria Burgher is an artist whose practice-based, AHRC-funded interdisciplinary PhD research at the University of Westminster, London, UK was entitled "Crafting counter-hegemony: using porcelain to interrogate ideological whiteness as anti-racist praxis". Her postdoctoral research focuses on the potential of clay as a material tool in conflict resolution. Her sculptural work using colonial commodities to expose and contest ongoing coloniality is exhibited nationally and internationally.