

# ARTIST CASE STUDY

## JULIE BARTHOLOMEW



Julie Bartholomew  
*ZARA Koppori* 2018  
porcelain

*"Investigating the relationship between bodies and an increasingly commodified global culture ... the co-existence of traditional and contemporary forms ... offers new possibilities for embodiment and the positive value of difference."*

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## THE ARTIST

Julie Bartholomew is an artist and educator in ceramics, currently Head, Ceramics Workshop at the School of Art and Design, ANU. Her practice explores contemporary issues including consumer culture, examining the relationship between female identity and global branding within the context of western and eastern cultures.

*"The relationship between bodies and an increasingly commodified global culture is central to my ceramics practice. An engagement with material processes and object making reflects on transnational forces of consumerism and searches for subversive synergies as indicators of distinct expressions of cultural difference.*

*This approach questions the consumption of global consumerism as simply an imposition of one force upon the other. The co-existence of traditional and contemporary forms of female body presentation offers new possibilities for embodiment and the positive value of difference."*



## ARTIST Q&A

**What advice would you give to a person who is passionate about their art making practice but doesn't know where to start?**

Understanding that everyone is creative and has the potential to become an artist. Being inquisitive and asking questions is the beginning of learning about materials, processes and ideas, the essence of art making.

**What do you want your work to do? Are you looking for a particular reaction from audiences?**

My work adopts seductive glazes and intriguing surface imagery. This is a device designed to evoke the aesthetics of beauty in my work as a manoeuvre to engage the viewer in critical discourse. In this instance, the narrative is about the co-existence of traditional and contemporary forms of female body presentation.

**Has your style of work undergone a particular development or transformation?**

Yes, my most recent work addresses a different topic, it is about climate change and its impact on the Antarctic.

**Do you plan with a specific exhibition in mind or do you constantly produce works and then piece them together?**

Yes, a solo show at Sabbia Gallery, Paddington called 'Anthropogenic Scrolls: transparency and disclosure' is a response to climate change and its impact on the Antarctic. A new series of ceramic and glass objects depict ice cores embedded with information akin to ancient scrolls. The horizontal striations, created by layers of snowfall, provide an understanding of anthropogenic changes to the earth over thousands of years. Coloured glaze markings describe scientific data collected from actual ice cores extracted from glaciers in the Australian Antarctic Territories. The range of colours capture the hues, tones and shades of glaciers, ice beds and atmospheric

effects of the Antarctica. The translucent, material qualities of glass and ceramics make visible evidence of climate change hidden within the glaciers and ice beds of Antarctica.



## MATERIALS & PRACTICE – ARTIST Q&A

**Can you explain your technique and how you manipulate the clay?**

My main technique of construction is casting and moulding. This means making plaster moulds from found objects, or hand formed prototypes, and casting with liquid clay. My surface imagery is produced with photographic ceramic decals.

**Can you give us an insight into your artistic process?**

I both pre-plan work and become inspired during the making. It is very individual and depends on the intended outcome. Some works are complex requiring weeks and sometimes months.

**Do you keep a process diary or a collection of images or photographs for inspiration?**

I keep a collection of images for inspiration and photographs that I shoot during my travels and overseas art residencies.

**Who are your favourite artists? Who do you draw inspiration from?**

Phoebe Cummings, Fiona Hall, Joan Ross, Ai Wei Wei. Artists who engage with social, cultural and environmental concerns and want to impact change.

## FRAMES

**Structural:** Relationships between visual symbols and text process and materials.

**Cultural:** Constructs of femininity, identity, social class, merging of traditional and modern experience.

**Postmodern:** Crossing the barriers between art and popular culture, branding, mass media and consumerist culture.

## KEY WORDS

**Consumerism:** Preoccupation with the acquisition of consumer goods.

**Commodification:** The action or process of treating a person or thing as property which can be traded or whose value is purely monetary; the treatment of a person or thing as a commodity; commercialization.

**Embodiment:** To give a concrete form to (what is abstract or ideal); to express (principles, thoughts, intentions) *in* an institution, work of art, action, definite form of words, etc.

**Transnational:** Extending or having interests extending beyond national bounds or frontiers; multinational.

**Subversive:** That tends or is intended to subvert a system, institution, or person; that seeks subversion; (now *esp.*) that seeks to destabilize or overthrow a political regime, *esp.* by covert means.

## DISCUSSION

Explore the branding of women in Western and Eastern cultures. What is the definition of beauty in each culture? List some examples. Is this definition of beauty the same or different?



## QUESTIONS

### STAGE 4

- Can you recognise and name any of the icons, symbols or logos in these artworks?
- What symbols of traditional Japanese culture can you see in these artworks?

### STAGE 5

- Does adding commercial logos to traditional shoes change the way the audience thinks about the shoes?
- How does Julie Bartholomew explore the tension between traditional culture and modern consumer culture in her work?

### STAGE 6

- Explain how Julie Bartholomew re-contextualises objects (changes how and where they are normally seen) to give them new meaning?
- How does the choice of materials relate to the meaning communicated through the artwork?

## PAST HSC QUESTIONS:

Investigate the ways in which artists develop connections between art and society in their practice. In your answer, refer to specific artists and artwork.

Contemporary art can provide a valuable yet unsettling critique of society. Discuss this statement, referring to specific artists and artworks in your answer.

Examine how artists have used artworks to challenge social and political views in innovative ways. In your answer, refer to specific artists and artworks.

An artist's practice is still shaped by their gender. Discuss this statement, referring to specific artists and artworks in your answer.

## FURTHER READING

### JULIE BARTHOLOMEW

- Julie Bartholomew – website [https://www.juliebartholomew.com.au/exhibitions/transitional\\_bodies/index.html](https://www.juliebartholomew.com.au/exhibitions/transitional_bodies/index.html)
- Sabbia Gallery - *Julie Bartholomew* <http://sabiagallery.com/artists/julie-bartholomew/>
- Video (11.59) *Ceramics and Activism* <https://youtu.be/djRvBdKTSoE>

### PLASTER MOLDING

- Video (8.08min) *How to make a plaster mold* <https://vimeo.com/251936300>
- Video (7.16min) *Making a plaster mold* <https://youtu.be/KQAOLeOwg-k>

### CERAMIC DECALS

- Video (1.17) *Sunbao underglaze Decal Tutorial* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quV7R6eWxzE>

Images courtesy of Julie Bartholomew, 2018.

## BEYOND THE BOWL

2 February – 18 April 2019

Hurstville Museum & Gallery

*Beyond the bowl* explores and celebrates the diversity and aesthetics of contemporary ceramics and glass, showcasing the works of Julie Bartholomew, Alexandra Chambers, Cobi Cockburn, Matthew Curtis, Merran Esson, Honor Freeman, Anita Larkin, Eloise Rankine, Kirstie Rea and Emma Varga. These artists push the boundaries as to what can be achieved when working with glass or clay.

This educational resource was created for *Beyond the Bowl*, exhibited at Hurstville Museum & Gallery. It is designed to assist Visual Art and Visual Design teachers and students from years 7 – 12. The images and suggested activities are to be used together with relevant syllabus documents and teaching resources, and should be used as a guide for teachers, adjusting activities to suit the needs of their students.

The efficacy of this resource can be extended by visiting the exhibition with students between 2 February – 18 April 2019. A hard copy of the exhibition catalogue is also available for purchase and is a valuable tool that can be used alongside this resource.

Hurstville Museum & Gallery, 14 MacMahon Street, Hurstville.

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