



Silas Nelson

Fail 2022

Capstone - Pottery

Department of Art and Art History

Artist Statement:

In my body, I shoulder the burden of a heavy record: a record given to me, and the reckoning that has followed. In the clay, I capture the record in an instant moment. The body is the conduit.

Hands, wrists, and the weight of a body wrestle clay into a workable submission. Forearms and fists pound and slam the clay down into immense slabs. The back, legs, and chest strain under the clay, turning it and willing it to become a body of its own. The two bodies then enter a conversation of compromise, each giving and requesting amends to the other.

Each piece finds structure in either a grid or a landscape, seeming opposites that are in reality two sides of the same coin. Both are able to hold space for the same stories. My pieces vibrate between putting on airs and collapsing into the visceral. Plastic, gleaming surfaces and precise lines betray the eye, as scrutiny reveals an inescapable vulnerability in even the most manufactured pieces. Other pieces eviscerate this same vulnerability into something raw, peeling, contorting; naked with nowhere to hide.

Technical Statement

My process is based in hand building and relies heavily on slabs, especially for tiles and the base structure of looped sculptures. Holes are made using a drill, using a custom jig for pieces such as spinning tiles that require long holes and precise placement. Loops are rolled manually, one-by-one, in a highly repetitive process.

For some pieces, the post-firing process includes adhering hardware to pieces using epoxy and fabricating a housing structure using wood and stainless steel rods.

I mix the clay body, using a body with high filler and grog content for stability and to minimize shrinkage. Colors are from commercial Amaco Lead-Free Velvet Underglazes and topped with a cone 6 clear glaze mixed in the studio. On the looped sculptures, Villendorf Red/Green is used.

DAM Clay

OM4 Ball	20
Hawthorne	55
Nepheline Syenite	20
Silica	10
Fine Grog	15
Medium Grog	15
Nylon Fiber	50g
Paper Fiber	75g

Anton Clear

Nepheline Syenite	22.4
Frit 3134	12.1
EPK	15.8
Whiting	15.7
Silica	26.6
Dolomite	7.5

Villendorf Red/Green

EPK	26.10
Lithium Carbonate	22.20
Green Chrome Oxide	2.00

Title**Original Format**

Figure 1: Sweet Nothings

Pottery, 32" x 32"

Figure 2: Sweet Nothings, Detail

Pottery, 32" x 32"

Figure 3: Tiles

Pottery, 48" x 34" x 5"

Figure 4: Tiles, Detail

Pottery, 48" x 34" x 5"

Figure 5: Loop Form 2

Pottery, 24" x 18" x 10"

Figure 6: Loop Form 3-5

Pottery, 72" x 20" x 14"

Figure 7: Loop Form 3-5, Detail

Pottery, 72" x 20" x 14"



Figure 1: Sweet Nothings



Figure 2: Sweet Nothings, Detail



Figure 3: Tiles



Figure 4: Tiles, Detail



Figure 5: Loop Form 2



Figure 6: Loop Form 3-5



Figure 7: Loop Form 3-5, Detail