

Process as Vacuum

by

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“The Body has to adjust to the environment, to the challenges in the environment. The Body isn’t wrong, isn’t ‘disabled’. The environment itself-gravity, air, solidity, or the lack of it, et cetera-is what is somehow wrong; ill-matched to the body’s abilities, inimical to its verticality, stability, or mobility...” (Cole, 256).

Thesis Abstract

Can one tool the mind by tapping into the creative psyche through conscious recognition to harvest an idea? This thesis considers surface, colour, form and subsequent internal and external volumes to examine peripheral considerations to form as a proponent of evaluative visual discourse. I argue the bowl epitomizes vulnerability as conceptual architecture—symbolic to an open hands/open mind pedagogy that will resolve in a final grasp of the seemingly unobtainable.

This paper considers multiple iterations oscillating conscious to subconscious toolsets in an attempt to evaluate then reify iteration through a process as vacuum—a limitless creative outcome probability to a final exhibition. As form is [in(form)(ed)] it instills formation of a determined resolution one may or may not be forecast from the start. The malleability of clay has set the stage for my personal growth through acceptance of the new and thus perpetuates a greater chance of malleable conscious decision making.

Surface treatment of a form through numerous disciplines will dictate the overall appearance and thus visual delivery of form/formless as content. Yet, the value of form is understood through observation. So, we must evaluate the internal and external properties of volume. This research is a conservative effort to maximize the creative potential of the marked participant, myself and a committee of three unrelated individuals to chime in added amplification to colour, light, sound, and form as said content.

Acknowledgements

Throughout the past two years the compression of time and space has challenged my perception of my surroundings and eventual unpacking of what I perceived as truths. I could not have managed through this journey without the support of individuals of which some I can afford to name. To my committee members: Dr. Oliver Botar, Dr. Shepherd Steiner, Grace Nickel, external committee member Sin-ying Ho, and to my advisor Mark Neufeld. Thank you to each of you for your support, your pushes, your extraordinary energies in believing in my processes. Further, Mark, your consistency as a mentor and peer has equated to a brother-like experience of which I am grateful. Thank you for the countless walks and impromptu conversations.

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To my friends and family, you know who you are—I am indebted to your support and love.

Natasja... Thank you for your patience, your understanding, and seemingly inexhaustible enthusiasm. I love you.

To my son Keaton. May you continue to seek knowledge and forever hold that hunger for learning. I celebrate you with thanks for taking part in so many ways while I have ventured through my studies. I love you.

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Introduction

At the earliest stage, a potter learns how to make a bowl. Either by pinch pot or coil, through to wheel thrown, and slip cast, our field is diving further into technical developments in computational rapid prototyping to 3D printing. These various toolsets physically perform a standardized method of production. Where does the tooling of the mind exist beyond direct instruction through patient repetition in relation to the greater creative practice? Gilles Deleuze discusses the role of creativity with independent disciplines while through their unique formulaic acts, they communicate what we should believe. Much like storytelling, it is this neuropath, that aids the confidence of roll-playing as a creative discipline. This event is extremely important for the grand idea as Deleuze proposed that creativity is in fact grand, if not magical. Will the performative action of such retooling preclude a successful progression? Researcher Nicolas Claidière points to social norms that lean toward conformity with people who aim to be efficacious in their actions and as such feel they reflect a positive evaluation of the self. This eventuality perpetuates a loss of nonlinear creative development, as there is a greater chance that an individual would fall victim to their inhibitions while losing gumption to perform in nonlinear thinking.

I have researched eight iterations that engage the subconscious through the act of creating form, as bowl through a series of performative queries: 1) reinterpretation of the journey of clay to a bowl form; 2) ceramic form through to photograph; 3) form through computer algorithms; 4) building 3D form from algorithmic images; 5) lamination of process through plinth, photographs, and paper as 3D object; 6) form as (laminated between institution; plinth, image, and physical form) vacuum; 7) emergence of form within vacuum of digital file manipulation to 3D print extrusion. It is from this point where I will discuss the greater protection of creative junctures with an amalgamation of analogue/digital/phenomenological tool considerations upon which deceleration of creative momentum reaches a pinnacle transgressive moment of reflection that I interpret as synonymous with a potter's studio and the collective failure of individual pieces of broken clay. I attribute this idea to one of two things depending on a maker: 1) complete failure or 2) opportunity. An opportunity to observe the internal structure of broken pieces that tell a

story of process. It is the latter with which I will reveal a greater parallel through staged elements under the filtration of a maker related to clay process: myself.

This research has broadened my understanding of clay and approach to creative decisions. Starting with the aluminium head of the potter's wheel, and the black box place of observation in the camera, I have opened myself to modes of sketching through lens and algorithmic computations. I examine the possibilities of engaging the subconscious by using peripheral tools to guide my creative path. The outcome is a potential link to more open-minded process evaluation with the goal of building a jazz-like musicality to my compositions. I question what might be the greater cerebral processes at play, how one might break free of a systemic framework that binds us to decisions. BadBadNotGood, a quartet of renaissance Jazz performers with Rap and Hip-Hop interplays, stirred the historical placement of Jazz in the early 2000s by ferociously tossing away the notion, ironically, that Jazz needed to remain structured and unchanged (Neil). Clay too has a structure of process integrity, paralleling the early challenges BadBadNotGood had in their early musical inter-explorations.

Creative clay practices have a history of puritanical structure which nearly forbids alternative materials for simply not relating to clay. Beyond the rarified nature of collections including Adrian Saxe's miniature toy ornamentations on ceramic forms or Brendan Tang's Manga Ormolu with polymer cabling and connections to further his technology-driven themes, non-clay disciplines are simply, not clay.

But I would argue, as a clayographer, potter, ceramist, burnt dirt manipulator, that the very inclusion of many disciplines in the clay process is relevant and widely used—specifically during the developmental stages of concept design. From Robert Archambeau's and Kayo O'Young's charcoal sketches of pots through to Greg Payce's video installations of kinetic surface treatments as vase form considerations, we can see the processing of clay entities as complete works in and of themselves. Consider Picasso's long exposure photographic light drawings. He is still a painter.

I recognize my artistic practice as a peregrination of sorts; it became apparent when I lived in Japan. Into the culture, I steeped myself like a leaf in hot water, which led to a period of

transition. My mind dilated with cultural warmth and separated from an individualistic mindset to embrace the collectivist. When I first thought of exposing my individual thoughts and behaviours to the greater collective, I felt vulnerable. But I learned this is a good thing! Only such vulnerability can release “innovation, creativity, and change” (Brown). This event led to an examination of my creative process as it changed my sense of self and opened the stage for a greater reflection on my creative choices. In particular, I reflected on the photographic process of documenting form that has an unknown function. I experienced space and time through an entirely different algorithmic lens.

If I consider the physical paired with conscious thought and negative space paired with the unconscious and challenge the idea of positive form in physicality, by nature, is a visual trigger to acknowledge form. To reach the subconscious from subconscious creative energy, one must consciously acknowledge unconscious thought, which is as challenging as making oneself aware of an overlooked wall smudge or room furnishing. The object is of no immediately apparent consequence to one's direct path (Deleuze, et al. 317).

And with my unpacking of the bowl form to expose the processes, which are simultaneously of the past and future, I question, will processes implode to become nothing at all? Will they succeed in one chaotic rupture of release? “A masterpiece...of creative practice in relation to other forms of academic research” (Lowry, 43) is just that, a masterpiece of process. Miscalculations have become a greater part of art practices, and for that matter in the sciences as well. The true masterpiece is in the creative process in and of itself.

I believe that negative space, or dark matter, is linked to the subconscious and thus begin with negative space as open to properties inclusive of, though not solely defined by, supporting physicality. I argue that negative space simultaneously reflects back to the conceptual stage, and this can be seen in clay. When we look at a clay object, we perceive it to fill a space or void. But the greater question is how I determine the nature of filling by either adding or subtracting.



Figure. 1. Christopher Reid Flock, *First Term Critique*, 2020, University of Manitoba.



Figure. 2. Christopher Reid Flock. "Red Bowl," cone 04 fired and glazed clay, 2020.

My journey as a maker and of concept developer can be compartmentalized into three paths of concern: 1) The Big Rip; 2) Constant Dark Energy; 3) The Big Crunch. Each path allots one particular outcome. This Thesis will conclude with a Big Crunch. AKA shitting out a diamond. Said diamond will be exhibited after a thorough examination and will pull from the processes explained theretofore.

Colour

Is the colour red incidental in nature and then in my work? In blood there is iron, which on contact with a light source registers as a red. With clay or glazed objects there is iron in various forms. Aside from an indirect nod to clay and glaze formulation, the colour red promotes excitement, a heightened involvement both engaging the observer and the object.

However, do other colours not exhibit the same energy? What of the space in which all form suspends? Will I conclude the pragmatics of clay studio action reaction by knowledge and research concretization as a singular entity resolved in clay? The creative processes in which I have over two decades of study are, what I like to refer to as clay performances. As I presently examine my physical and mental toolkits, the answer has become clearer through a multitude of disciplines, materials, and sensory evaluation steeped in the passion of red.

Reinterpretation of the Journey of a Bowl Form

Vulnerable at the malleable stage by the scrupulous nature of a maker, through the journey of drying and firing to vitrification (Hamer and Hamer, 324, 378), the path ahead is as arduous as any sea turtle making its way to adulthood. The bowl is a mere note amongst the ocean of possibilities that the musical score dictates, but the bowl remains as a function of utilitarianism, and its primal function is to survive. What does that path look like? How, as simple a form as the bowl is, can it hold such weight as the iconic marker of consumption? Here we are, under the protective garb of the walls of education where dreams come true. No drive-by-shooting-styled critiques but good natured hazing. Life's a beach.

On the first iteration, I completed a sequence of still life, staged in the life of a bowl as shown in Figure. 1, where I focused on the impending sequence of events in relation to the existence of a bowl. Pushed, pulled, and compressed, the malleable became stoic, fossilized, showing its wear as ware, illustrated in Figure. 2. Clay, by nature, allows “forming and retention of form” (61), and is thus of events past, present, and (in the blind spot) the future.

Through all the pushes, pulls, slaps, and tugs remarkably does the clay then sit and listen, intently. These actions become sacred to the making of the object, so much so, it will sit for an apparent eternity, waiting for the peripheral actions of the moment to reflect on the bowl's purpose (Krahl).



Figure. 3. Photo of Small Red Bowl #1

Ceramic Form Through a Photograph

The early stage of my growing dialogue with clay I spent with photography as a source of documenting process and form. I aimed for both form and content as subject.

I realized later that I projected what I thought was the intention of a piece, to photograph the bowl as a bowl. In fact, I was not photographing the bowl at all but taking a snapshot of myself. It was at this point that I changed my stance with the camera— my position in relation to the bowl. The slightest incremental change within the camera's functionality changed the image of the form dramatically.

This entry into greater dialogue with clay and my periphery led me to look to the photograph to capture the bowl (in this case) as a crusty, forgotten, yet structurally veracious caricature resembling a bowl, as shown in Figure. 3. This is an entry point in presenting process as potter, and one must heed the technical prowess required to make the object and also raise questions as to why and to what purpose(s). Wolfgang Tillmans' flip approach to process, I find inspiring. Particularly with his Freischwimmer series where he acts on the darkroom process in the moment. Further, he steeped himself in becoming the camera where his very physical mechanism becomes the aperture, the shutter, and the click of a button. He had consumed the idea of darkroom practice and induced an interplay of brush manipulation with light, chemistry, and aperture to conceive the new. A simple swipe of a brush while exposing light to photo paper as image production.

With this toolset freedom in mind, I have thus photographed the bowl and from varying angles challenged my default perspective to see the form as something other than what I perhaps had intended. This event is crucial as I now look at how processed, through a secondary category of tooling (photography), can influence or alter an initial intended path. This led to change. A change, which I can now address as tapping into decision making led by the subconscious. But in relation to Roland Barthes' discussion of inauthenticity in the photographed portrait and how it folds within a process of becoming a physical entity, is there a greater question of material fraudulence (Barthes)?

Form Through Computer Algorithms

From these photo documented images, I found myself similarly in a darkroom to expound on the physical and chemical processes of developing an image, as the photographer Wolfgang Tillmans illustrates in his darkroom processes. Through the algorithmic processes on a computer, I took to post-processing as one associates with the darkroom, not to diminish the potential play that happens in darkrooms but to further expound on play within intentionally unintentional

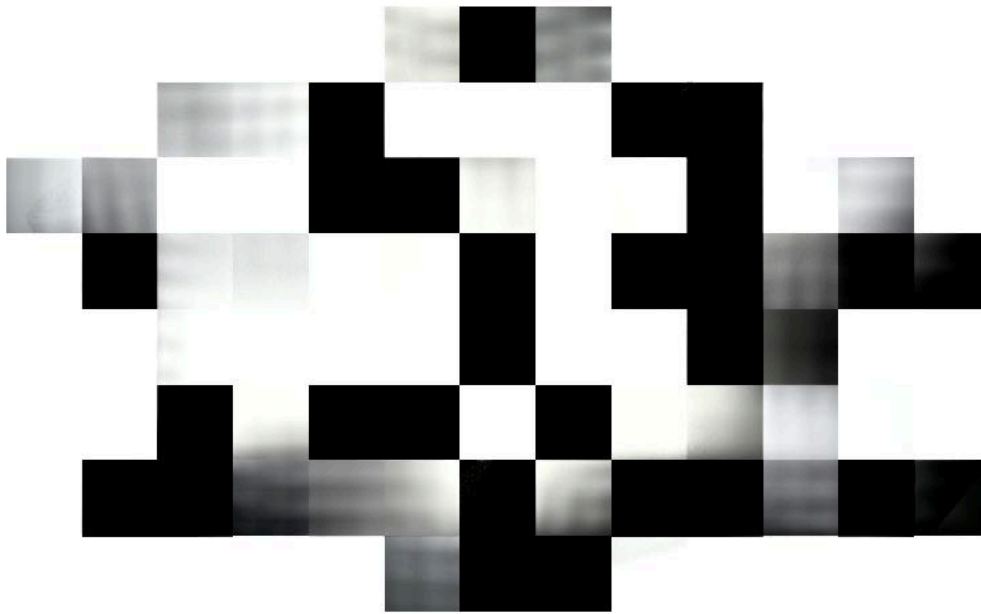


Figure. 4. Algorithmic image of Red Bowl #2

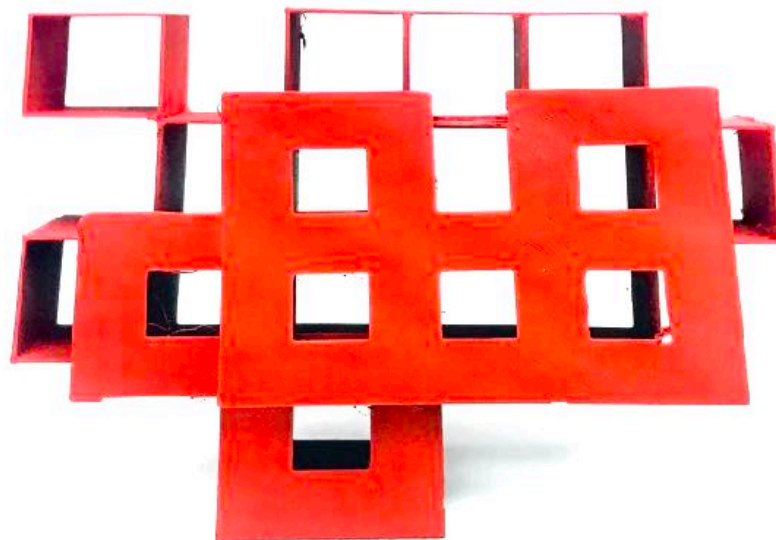


Figure. 5. Small Red Bowl as 3D print

outcomes. Computer systems are just as engaging and enticing (Phillips) as text messaging and information exchange. They have reoriented our understanding of the present and accountability as streams of consciousness. The digital darkroom is near to Mr. Dressup's Tickle Trunk (Mullen) of possibilities. Once the software is open, anything/any thing is possible—only your imagination can hold you back.

Through playful exercises, I developed an appreciation to break down the process of creating by examining the immediate tool-sets. The computer can be broken down to binary systems and grid architectural systems that zip about laying form and function in one slick environment. No mess. I let the computer become messy. I ignored my initial consideration to digitally clean the images to give control to the sophisticated software structures. In the opposite direction, the images fragmented to base structures as nothing more than a grid representation of the initial physical object photographed.

Further to this, the algorithmic computations reinterpreted contours in the physical ceramic bowl forms through interlacing shades of grey through to black. A near mimicry of a camera's aperture settings (Figure. 4).

Building 3D Form From Algorithmic Images

I coloured the 3D prints, in turn, to match my first ceramic vessel (my thrown bowl) and staged on white-on-white plinths against a white backdrop. As photographs, there was a wholly new appeal to the objects and far from the first representation of a physical, three-dimensional object, let alone a ceramic bowl. As a potter, I make three-dimensional forms. My approach involved thinking of the digitized rendition of the bowl in photographic form as a physical representation of the ethereal or subconscious considerations to fruition. With this reinterpretation of the initial bowl, I developed the photograph as a three-dimensional form in FUSION 360. Fully realized in digital, I then 3D printed this as an actual physical representation of the photograph as digitized bowl, shown in Figure. 5.

Lamination of Process Through Plinth, Photographs, and Paper as 3D Object



Figure. 6. 3D Print of photo of Small Red Bowl #1 as 3D form on paper
installation mid-term critique, 2021, University of Manitoba

I then photographed the 3D-printed forms and printed on a large format, matte, white photo paper with the original photographed ceramic form printed on the reverse side. I accomplished two things here: 1) the plinth, as a component of the initial staging, included as a part of the end result; and 2) the processes, the forms themselves, and the direction of physical to binary to physical entity laminated as one object. These process developments become a fresh interpretation of not only the photograph as a physical entity, but that of the processes as physical form. The final stage was a crumpling of the large photographs wherein they were no longer flattened images, but three-dimensional objects that supported the idea of image and process becoming a physical vessel comparable to the initial clay form presented in Figure. 6.

Laminated Between Institution, Plinth, Image, and Physical Form; Form as Vacuum.

The mass of information from the multiple reiterations has become imperative to my direction so far as the creative process alone has offered new perspectives simultaneously offering a continuum of exponential creative growth. Much as with the Tickle Trunk, a sense of discovery lends to a positivity that builds upon change in a progressive, creative development. This sixth iteration depicts a process of form becoming formless to becoming form within a form left as a greater void mirroring the initial reiteration of the physical clay object as a pixelated entity (Figure. 7). The original two iterations further break down the object and process to colour and stage (Figure. 8). As a final twist, the remaining components of the sixth iteration and all semblance of the previous processes disappear within moments of the reveal. This happening arrives by a hired performer to adequately execute with direct efficiency the deliberate notion of form erased or becoming integrated. The identity of this performer is left to the audience to deduce. The anonymity through an unmarked, white coveralled figure is not lost in ambiguity as their identity lies within the process of their action, not who they are (Figure 9). Further

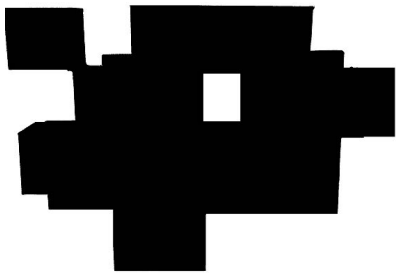


Figure. 7 Algorithmic vacuum of Small Red Bowl #1 as vinyl positive of positive as negative

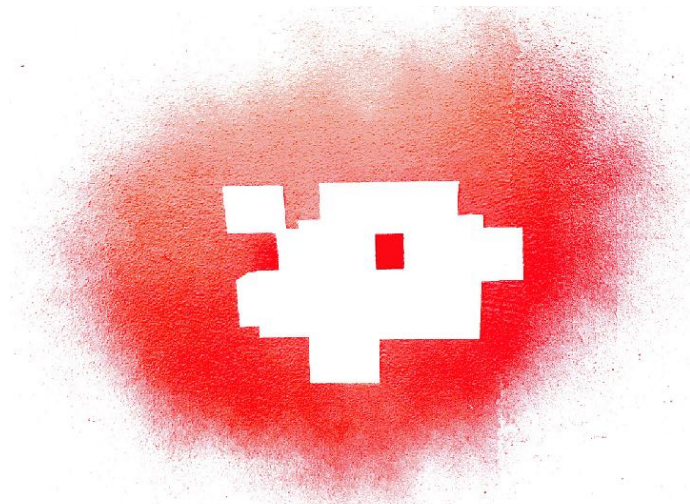


Figure. 8 Algorithmic vacuum of Small Red Bowl #1 as pigment surface as positive contrast to negative value of previous positive algorithmic bowl form

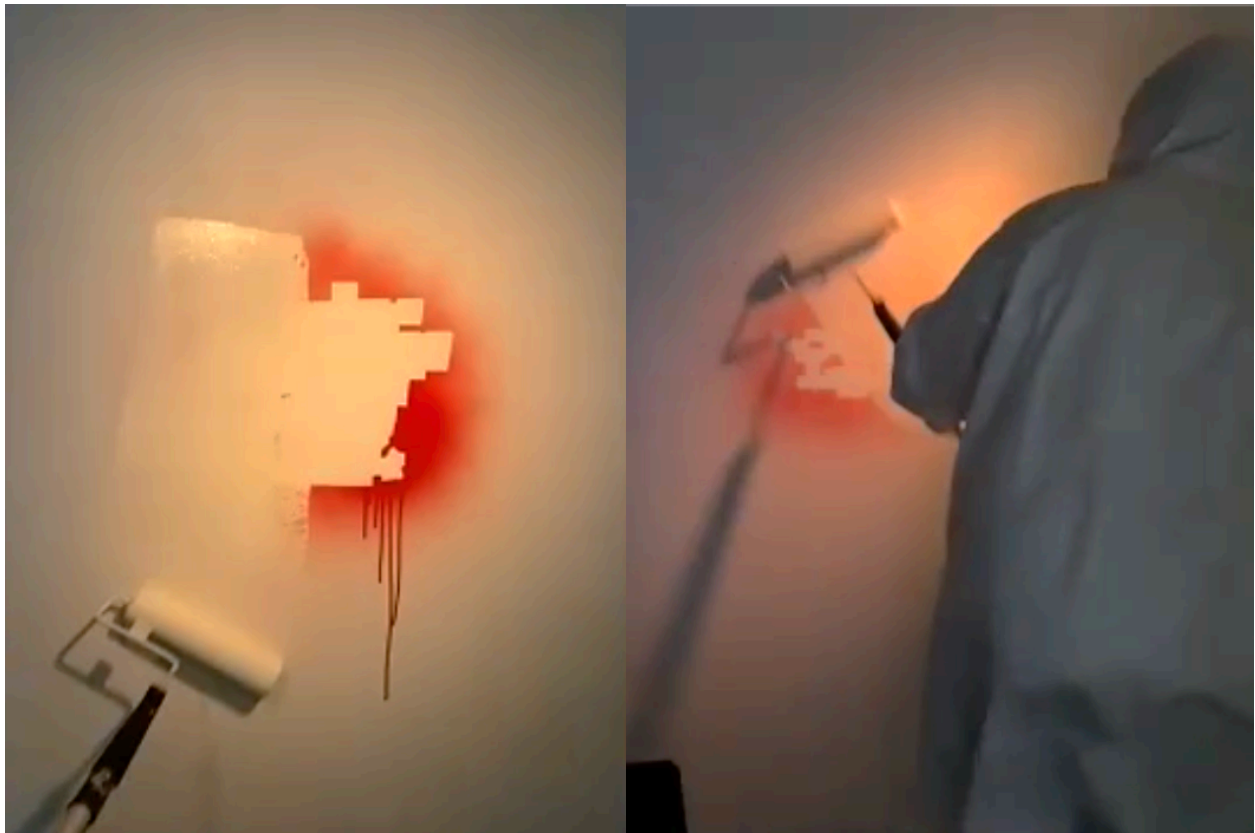


Figure. 9 Term critique, Zoom, University of Manitoba, 2021

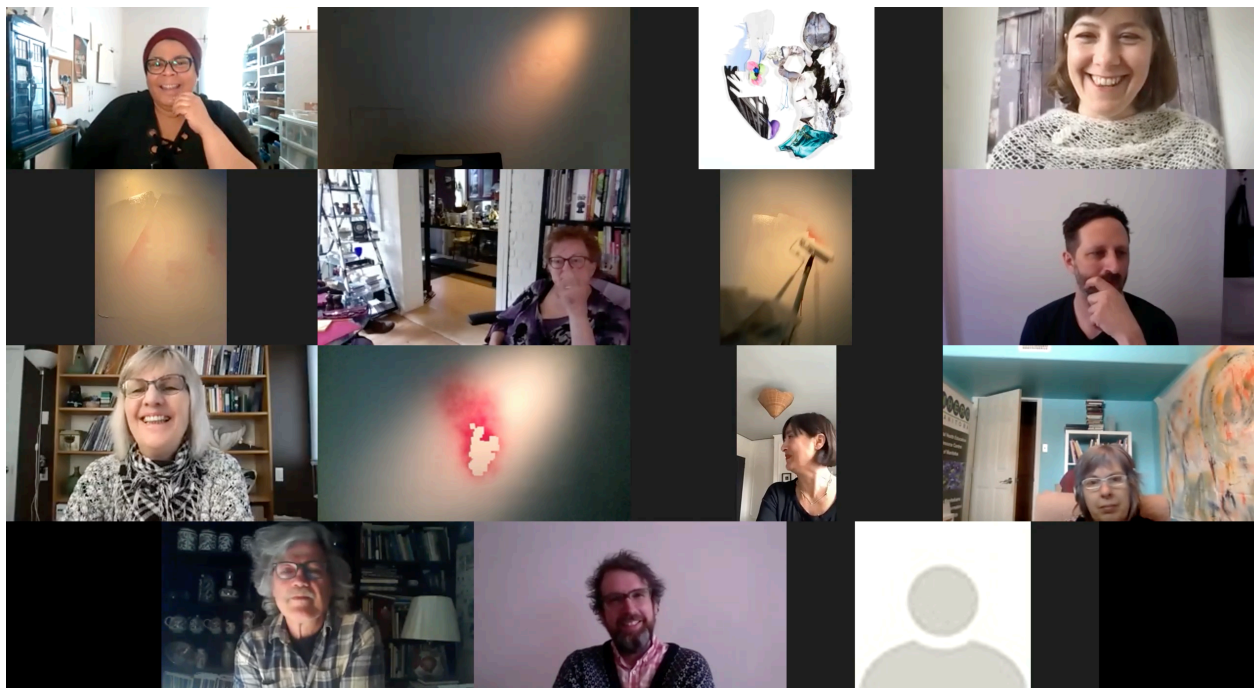


Figure. 10 Term critique, Zoom, University of Manitoba, 2021

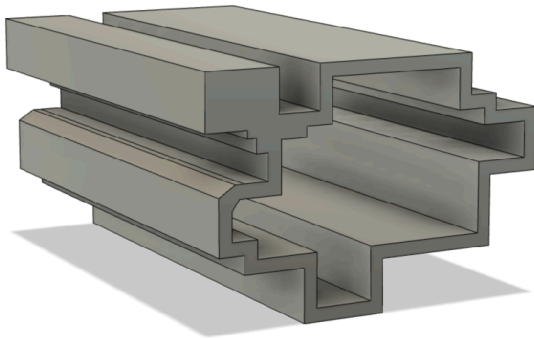


Figure. 11. Emergence of form within vacuum of digital file manipulation. Rhino 7

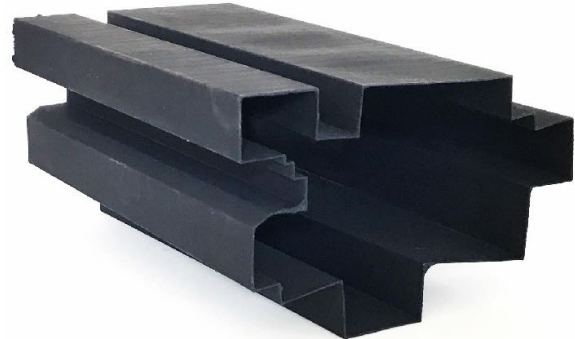


Figure. 12. Emergence of virtual form as 3D print.

clarification comes to light with a literal painting over of the final stage of the bowl's pigment alone absorbed and laminated within the institution instilling the importance of action. Audience members perhaps can sense a number of feelings during this stage. Perhaps, the cathartic sense of form release, disbelief, confusion, or simply of awe as the timing between speaker (myself) and the action of changing into coveralls and preparing the paint is nearly immediate (Figure 10). There is a sense of the phenomenal at this stage.

Emergence of Form Within Vacuum of Digital File Manipulation To 3D Print Extrusion

And voila! We have the moment wherein the semblance of great form as function to fiction presents itself as an extrusion from the depths of pragmatic discourse in a single discharge of euphoric phenomena (Figure. 11). Great wings spread as the seemingly impossible settles through a scope of proposed postulating particulate concluded presently as form take flight (within the algorithmic structures and computational phenomena of 3D software programs Rhino and Cura - Figure. 12)!

Each performs a succinct function of concept development through to reification of the object. The initial algorithmic form of the photographed bowl became the template to re-enter physical space. Once realized virtually in Rhino, the digital entity as extrusion came to fruition as a 3D-printed extrusion presented in Figure. 12 as a Vanta black shadow of its previous self. Black is representative of the beginning to a formative staging of what and where something is in

fact extruded or presented. I have treated this as nearing a final appeal to my development over this research term as a vacuum of process.

Shards

If I look back at this odd range of individual iterations, I find myself among vast piles of post process pertaining to previously postulated potters' puzzles— the shard pile. Although seemingly removed from the creative process, shard piles become candidates for future



Figure. 13. Process shard piles

consideration and are an awakening of sorts (Figure. 13). And what of this waking? The question of the importance of one's sleeping is historically questionable. Idol hands entice devil's work. Surely, as we awaken from the entrenched slumber of our recent isolation, our greatest crime might be finding connection. As the violin player in Joseph-Marie Vien's *Ermite Endormi* portrayed as the sleeping hermit, could ceramic shards not have similar potentiality even though they sleep? Ceramic shards lay in wait to weather the seasons, hibernating behind potters' kilns for weeds to grow amongst and archeologists to pine over. What I have found in my self-absorbed theatricality of framing the making, the placing, and the staging of all the things is a period of compressed contemplation. What I am proposing is a continuation of pressure upon the medium of clay to a point where it requires a moment to release itself.

Perhaps unclear to this process at the moment, the eight iterations (as shard piles) do become integral proponents to not only future ideas but to a literal cross examination. Traditionally, each shard offers a cross section of glaze, clay, and other considerations, which make up the body of each shard. We are now at a moment, within this research journey, at a turning point of great consideration.

The Creative Path through Institutional Development and the Final Crunch

This journey can be compartmentalized into three paths of concern (Figure.14). 1) The Big Rip not to diminish the importance of Disconzi's Big Rip theory where the universe is hypothesized to rip apart in 22 billion years (Devlin) but of consideration to my own universe, if I may, and its hopeful direction within the known viscosity of *my* universe. Furthermore, with greater appreciation of stability, in reference to state of mind, I consciously choose and greatly appreciate the latter. 2) Constant Dark Energy, where Einstein discusses dark matter and the theorem of constant energy in space over time, is relative to and respectful of, each person's perspective and not of an absolute (Seigel). As discussed by Seigel, "the key advance that Einstein made was that instead of masses pulling on each other, gravity worked by both matter and energy curving the fabric of spacetime"(Seigel). 3) Big Crunch. Each non-synchronous path maintains exclusivity to its outcome.

This research will conclude similar to the Big Crunch, in theory (Shwartz) where my present universe will cease to expand to then reverse and recollapse wherein a progressive expansion, paralleling Einstein's Big Bang Theory, evolves (Devlin).

The gravitational pull I have engaged with I equate to forces of process within my own space-time continuum in consideration to the viscosity of time and space allotted as it became a malleable condition of my own conscious/subconscious equilibrium.

The bowl had become a reflection of moment-to-moment unpacking of clay processes and of the self: myself. This lends into the theory that my big crunch is in fact not only feasible but necessary. Post studies, I consider an alternate reality perhaps outside the doors of the institution—a path of creative development.

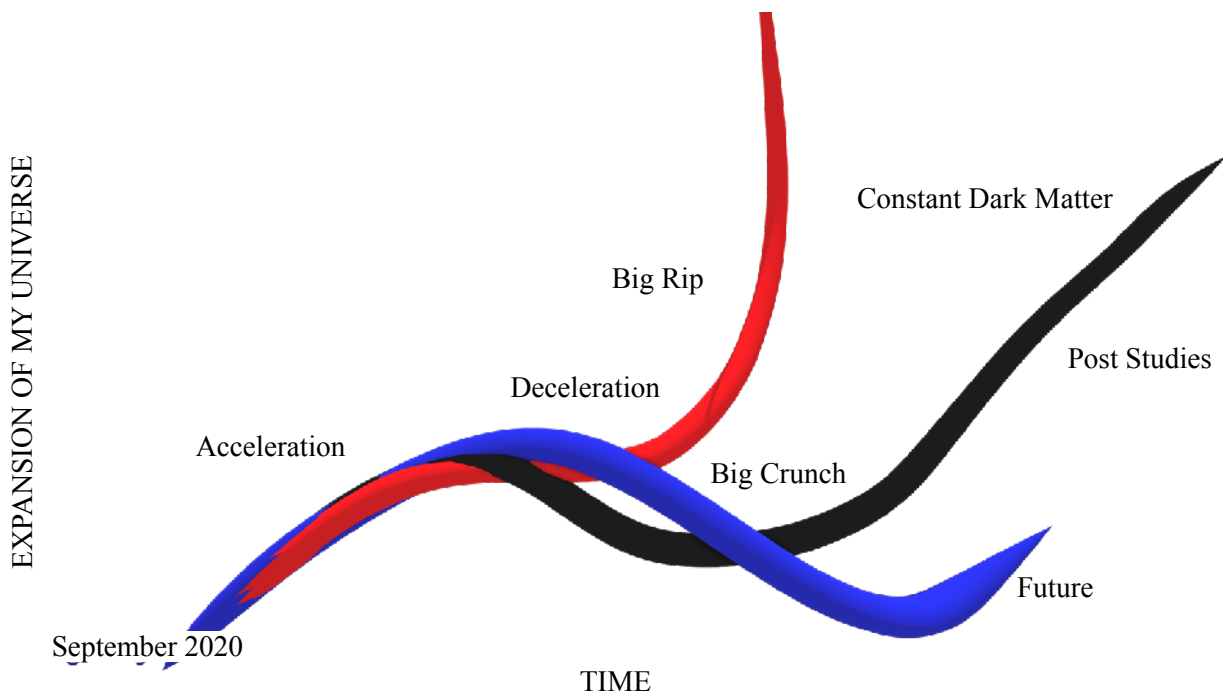


Figure. 14. Creative development paths in consideration to the expansion of my universe, adapted from: Ethan Siegel, *Accelerating expansion of the universe*, by NASA/ GSFC, 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/startswithabang/2020/12/25/ask-ethan-is-einsteins-cosmological-constant-the-same-as-dark-energy/?sh=564902384636>

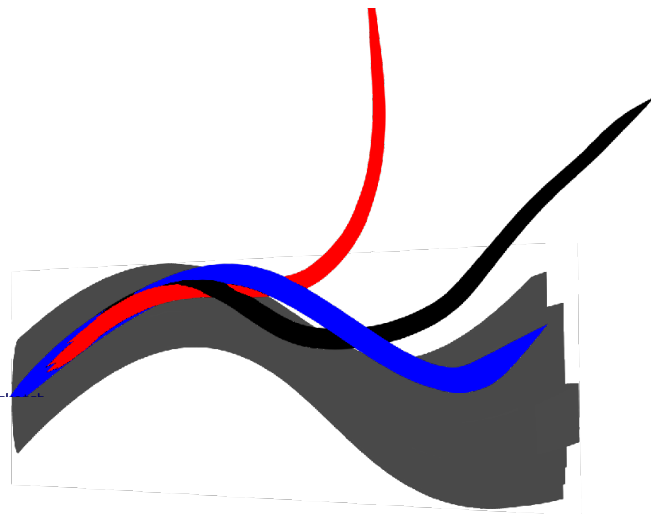


Figure. 15. Creative development paths in consideration to the expansion of my universe as positive extrusion potential

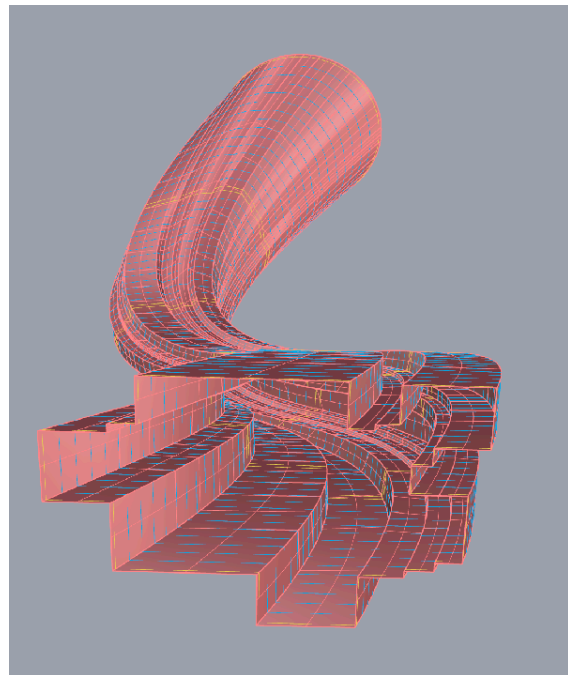


Figure. 16. Creative development path as consideration to the expansion of my universe as positive extrusion potential- detail, Rhino 7

Figure. 15 illustrates the potential path of creativity as form, which by choice follows the path of the Big Crunch. A snapshot, if you will, of process, processing, and progression still-life. Its very form carries insight into this journey. One cannot see from end to end unless one enters the extruded moment of reflection (Figure. 16). And even with this, one must travel wholly through the experiment in order to see around the next corner. From the start, as with a potter's wheel, there is a circle— like the bottom of a thrown form (Figure. 17). At the end, or top, it transforms — like the rim of a bowl, or the raw edge of an uncut first extrusion (Figure. 18). Undulating, greater than its base. It has propelled immeasurably yet distinctly in one direction.

Clayography and Shards of Process

Prior to this clay form coming to fruition, further discourse must take place. As this paper hinted earlier, the terms and conditions one must prod to realize such form, in form, my dialogue with process should suggest an unexpected iteration. I wish to open towards past and present dialogue in the presence of the shards' (Figure. 17 and Figure. 18) potentiality. A call to code of academia as previously referred to as good-natured hazing. And perhaps in this realization through perforative moments of reflection do I find myself, alive and aware. Staged, in nearing its final sequence, discourse through call and response, and the shards of present moment, flash

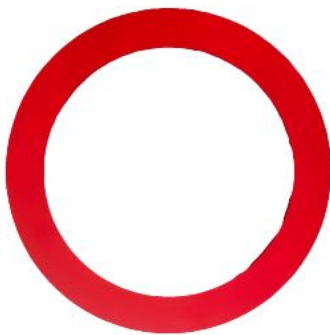


Figure. 17 Creative development path as consideration to the expansion of my universe as positive extrusion start as plywood shard

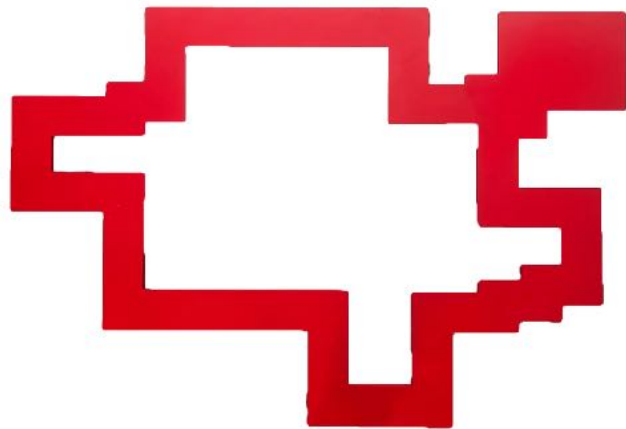


Figure. 18 Creative development path as consideration to the expansion of my universe as positive extrusion end as plywood shard

the code for help; for alertness; for reason. This chiming in, in Morse code, had become the unexpected iteration through my course of research. The committee voices and voiced reason through concern and interest are colourfully [in(form)(ed)] throughout the duration of this progressive juncture.

Not out of chance but succinct and careful consideration to the chiming, the variances in material handling and scrutinizing, I find myself looking into dark matter. Chaotic, free, and



Figure. 19. Paper process shard pile sketch

removed or edited from immediate evaluative process, I have reached into the proverbial and at this point literal blue bin of creative child play, closed my hand around off-cuts and off-shapes and echoes of similar wooden bat forms cut from 4x8 foot sheets of plywood for throwing forms on the potter's wheel I find myself (Figure. 19). I insist on the creative approach to process through clay as that is at the fulcrum. Open consideration to contents of a singular vessel invites a profound query into content-rich sustenance from the very process of the vessel becoming.

This fistful of colourful, chorally sharp shards, in a modicum of precariousness, isolated, is momentarily caught between a literal sense of materiality (Figure. 20). However, does colour really exist? Is it not merely a sensation? Within this research, I have learned that colour extends beyond the object and is often within the sensations experienced within discourse, through making and the peripheral sounds, smells, and flavours—an abundance I perceive as colour. The paper cut-outs for themselves are part of that creative vacuum.



Figure. 20. Paper process shard pile sketch #2 grasp



Figure. 21. Paper process shard pile sketch #3 staging, Mid-term critique, Winter 2022, University of Manitoba.



Figure. 22 Thesis exhibition installation, *Shards*, Sound Stage, University of Manitoba, 2022

I have reached into “potentiality” and trusted my grip. What I pull from that reach is an inverted snapshot of holding chaotic dark matter as form through the many iterations conducted through this journey to which I refer as multi-cerebral hypnopompic states. Anish Kapoor distinguishes the phenomenal existence of objects through his *Svayambhu* series wherein a self-manifested entity questions the very appearance of the object as well as the importance therein. This performative action retools preclusion to successful progression of creative thinking as dark matter to reflect on concept development. This process as vacuum, this figurative gesture, leans into discomfort and vulnerability (Figure 21). From that reach reifies an inverted snapshot of holding the chaotic as form. Here, I emulate creative play and the agency of possibility.

People who work with clay are expected to do so, to solidify their argument seemingly to set reason into why that particular medium was chosen. Like the form itself, the medium, the “known” process, is “meant” to be sterile, to remain staged, unfree, vitrified, and stoic. This is the problem we face as a society. The very systemic issue at hand, which is to not be malleable. To not reflect adequately upon our surroundings and our past.

Conscious Materiality

If I did not place my past into the equation, then I would be lying. The research would be a falsity. But the truth is, I am a potter. I have worked with clay for over 20 years which, by path of learning, has definitively, become me.

If I choose a score of music to play, and I am a classically trained musician, do I only stay within that genre? Is this change not permitted?

The scale at which I wish to embellish my understanding of myself and my approach to material and the immaterial (shown here as processing process) can be realized in clay. For that matter, in any material.

I chose aluminium based upon my ability to remain malleable to my surroundings. There are simply no immediate facilities to allow this to happen in clay at this place. To carve out my thoughts, to reify my choice in process to processing, I got a grip of my toolsets. Beyond this, clay and aluminium do in fact have similar properties. They are both malleable, are compressed; specifically in this moment of creative considerations, had been flattened much in the same way one would flatten clay to make slabs.

Further, the first contact within the potters tool kit is an aluminium wheel head from which I form clay objects. I don't expect nor wish for every observer of this conceptual artifice, this shard pile to see nor adhere to my montage of creative practice. For it is my interpretation. As this is staged, this final experience through the materiality, the colour, the paper/metal simulacra, the chiming audio of call and answer, the drama, the staging, the multi-sensory experience as a final performance is simply not just that.

Delegated Performance

As with all staged performances, there is an audience with which each visit a new experience unfolds. This unspoken, hidden in-the-blind spot, performance is acted out by the identities which carry their own interpretive performance. A delegated performance within which each participant collaborates in isolation. From the orderly, single-file nature of outlined pathways, the participant files in to contemplate an initial bunker isolating the viewed from the

viewer. This initial denial of an immediate affirmation of authenticity in experience and performance causes alarm and disorientation. Who is the viewed? What are the stipulations to proceed? Can one? Is this not the path one encounters in the new? With learning? This delegation of roles pushes and pulls the viewer to renegotiate their role (Bishop 110). Is it they who are creating the narrative? I would argue yes. It is this very weave of inter-collective insinuations through personal assumption that one arrives at a conclusion. The hope is to force the subconscious forward like texting.

Staged

And in place too is the question of what one is observing. The “Control Room,” aptly titled, suggests a 2D representation of the work. In bunker style, the Sound Stage proper appears to be in the line of fire, vulnerable, alert, anxious. Linked to the early stages of the bowl photographed, we now stand within the earlier framework of the camera itself, woken to our processes as camera. When one closes the shutter by walking to the next room is of the audience’s choice—passive audience delegation.

And my committee, through the various conversations, walks, emails, texts, Zoom calls, have become part of this retooling. Each assembly of personalities, tones of voice have added a harmony while simultaneously inducing chaos to disrupt and recalibrate from being rigid. Their voices, their words ring in my mind repeatedly. Not tormenting but of a nudging like that smudge we passed pages ago on the walls of this paper. Did you notice? These frequencies of vocal tone are here, in the same space, woven with the subconscious experience. Chaotically joined as slices of material coexisting in the immediacy of conscious recognition. The audience is now privy to this information as they walk into the Sound Stage. Into the photo as three-dimensional object. Remember the crumpled photo as the lamination of bowl, photo, plinth, paper as 3D object?

The audience, now fully within my still life performative subconscious, is now open to the Process as Vacuum. Each holds their own interpretation of the experience.

However, with no intention of disavowing another's perspective, I purport this collection of oversized discarded artifacts from a children's art class blue bin carries far more than the work insinuated by the quick scissor cuts and immediate extrapolation of positively necessary shapes and patterns of a child's necessity. It is this to which I see the potential of what has been taken and what is left and to where one could be open to change.

Conclusion

From the beginning of this research, I have delved into the allegorical. This is a pursuit of understanding of place as a creative. A desire to orient/reorient while assimilating a guided pedagogy steeping in anti-appropriation of the self as tourist. How does one maintain an anti-appropriation of the self while pulling from one's conscious decision making? We have witnessed through the iterations of this research, commencing with the bowl form, this very act.

The retooling, if you recall, is of the greatest importance. The physical and cerebral toolsets all converge into a paradigm consistent with a potter's ability to remain malleable. Malleable with decision making in direct relation to problem solving.

My challenge was to look beyond a methodology considering physical tools such as the potter's wheel. How the wheel came to be—nearly 17,000 years ago in Mesopotamia. Makers at the time looked onto the engineering feats of the wheel as a progressive development necessary to advance from pinch pot or coil building in the production of a form. History repeats itself as we are witnessing the progression towards 3D printing, laser printing, and concept development within A.I. and virtual/augmented realities.

We are no strangers to this self-guided pedagogy that perpetually reinvents. At the stem of this is how one, as a potter, clayographer, burnt dirt manipulator can stay as malleable as the very material they work, struggle, torment, wrestle, and converse with. There are fewer disciplines that simultaneously use physics, chemistry, geology, physiology, psychology, and sociology, to convey an intent simultaneously. Likely, as there is still so much to learn I have left much out.

Through each of my iterations I have left the assumption that I am simply unsatisfied. That I am perhaps masochistic with egregious tendencies. And I agree, this archaic form of understanding might be interpreted as simply not being able to sit still. That my thinking is not linear nor non linear. It's all over the place. Perhaps that is the point.

As a young school child, I often sat on the back porch, alone, dividing layers of plywood. Each layer would hold a new energy. Whether the glue stuck so well as to splinter causing other layers to splinter, causing the undulating wood grains and their fascinating pattern development, it all became a learning experience leaning into potentiality. In school, I loved to play with small cubed coloured blocks. I would love to mix the larger blonde wooden "building" blocks with the coloured ones and develop from my own tickle trunk of possibility. This was simply not allowed. I look now, as an adult, at the various iterations of my creative path through to this particular research with an appeal to my understanding of place and time.

These pieces, this shard pile (to me) is a lean into a progressive contemplation of materiality in place. This [in[(form)]ation] provides a visual and auditory context into how and where I am at present. This reorientation of the self-conscious is steeped in an appeal to the phenomenal. Because it is phenomenal that I now stand here, in this place, with the rendition of leftover children's cut-off pieces as the next generation of what, where, and why we progress with(in).

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