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Introduction

The project began with exploring the form and glazes in ceramics, researching deeply in my interests of the geometric forms and modular structure, found in Modernist abstract paintings, architecture and natural mineral and crystal. I was fascinated by the contrast created by natural minerals, especially that of pyrite, gold cubes are grown from sand and rock. Also, this corresponds with the use of industrial and natural materials in art and design, such as concrete and wood in architecture, or vertical lines and organic forms in abstract paintings.

I have wanted to make a functional object which is also aesthetically pleasing to display or use- so I decided to make the modern sake set which both introduces my identity as a Japanese and my artistic thoughts.



Pyrite, Spain
Image source: Gemcoach online.

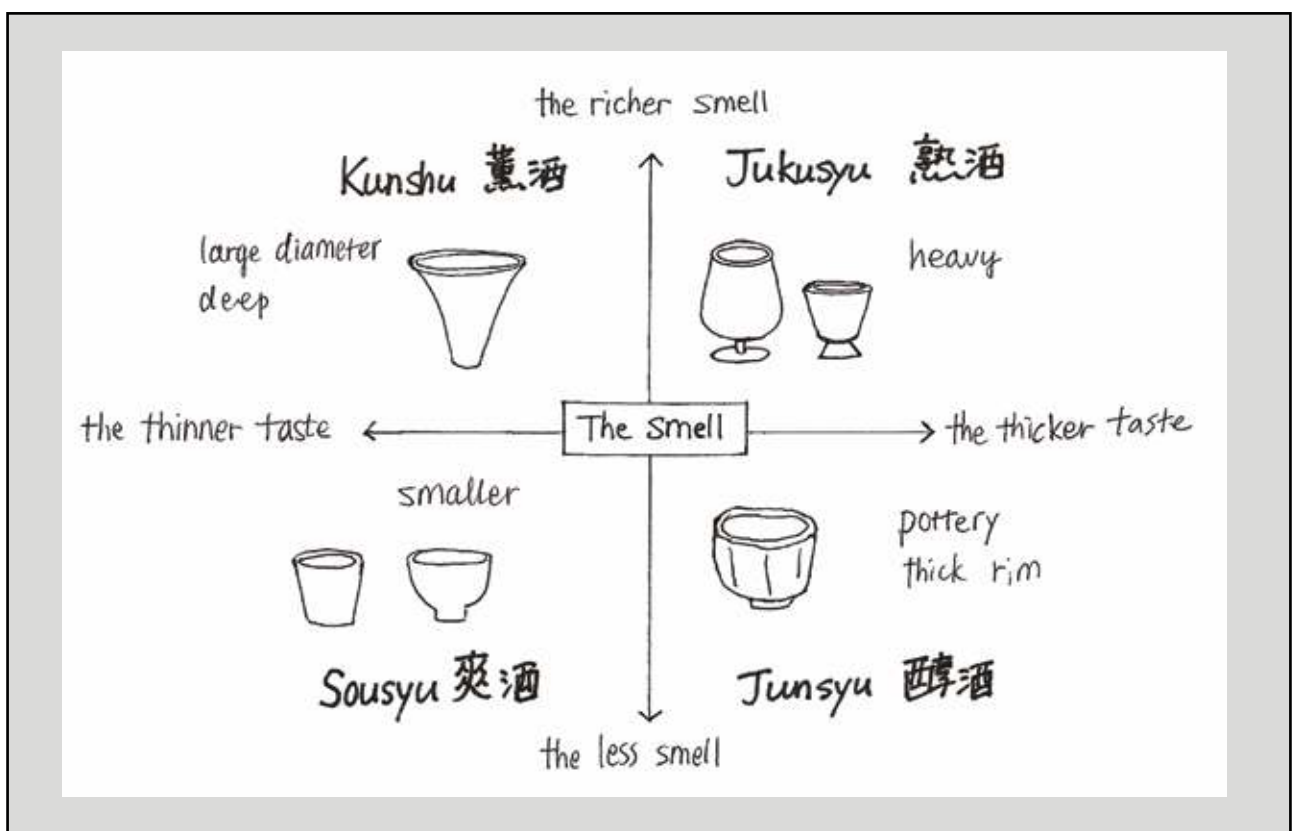
Metaphors of crystal

Crystals are compelling because they are indexical of existential questions, poised at the crossing point of life and death. While their perfect forms appear lifeless, they suggest life because they “grow” and move.

--- Mark A. Cheetham,
The Crystal Interface in Contemporary Art: Metaphors
of the Organic and Inorganic

Traditional sake tableware

Material, form and thickness of a sake cups are chosen for the type of sake which is the best to have with, depend on the flavour and the warmth of it. The traditional Japanese pottery is recognised around the world as its high level of craftsmanship, although it is often considered as “old-fashion” in Japan, and some people tend not to like the traditional pottery because it does not





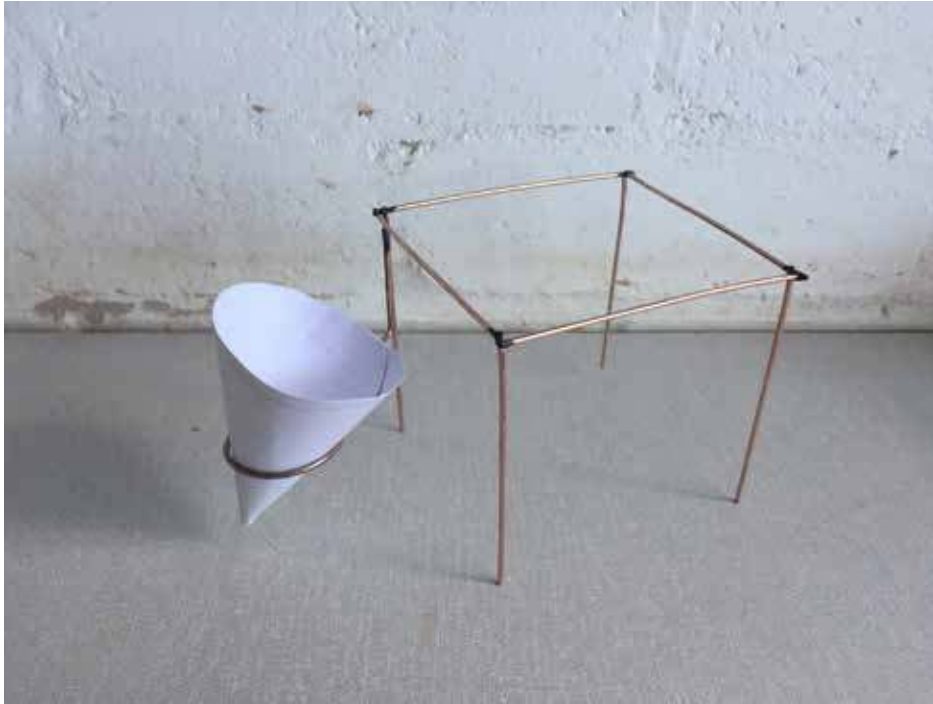
Sake set, Japan traditional craft Aoyama Square
Stoneware, Maker unknown

I decided to design a sake set which almost refuses the traditional form of tableware for sake, in order to make it more casual and accessible for younger Japanese and foreigners. There is an increasing trend of sake exportation from Japan to overseas, as the first sake brewery opened in London in 2017. As well as sake has become more popular among the UK, the sake set design should be more recognised.

The questions I asked my friends from the UK about sake and Japanese culture, some of them answered that they would like to have sake with modern looking tableware if they are at the bar rather than having it with the traditional sake set. At the same time, they also answered that they would like to try sake with traditional style as they want to know more about the history and culture behind sake. Therefore, it is needed to provide the brief history and stories of sake production.

Early Experiments

Study of the forms, which aims to rethink about the form of sake cups.



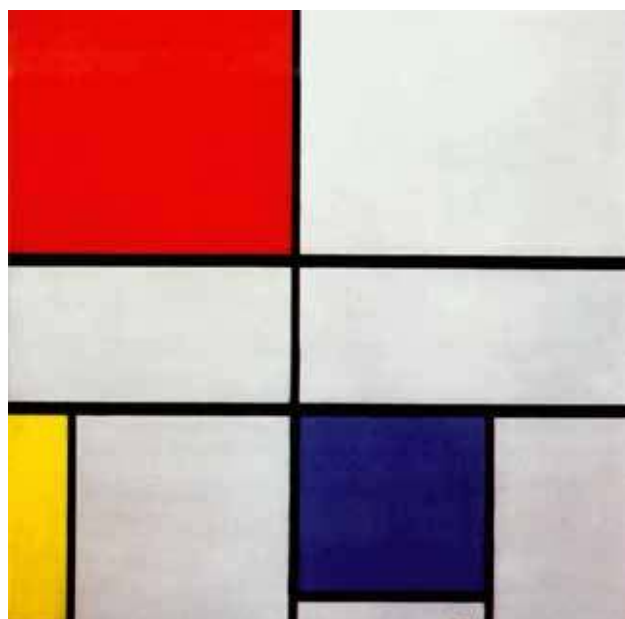


Idea sketches

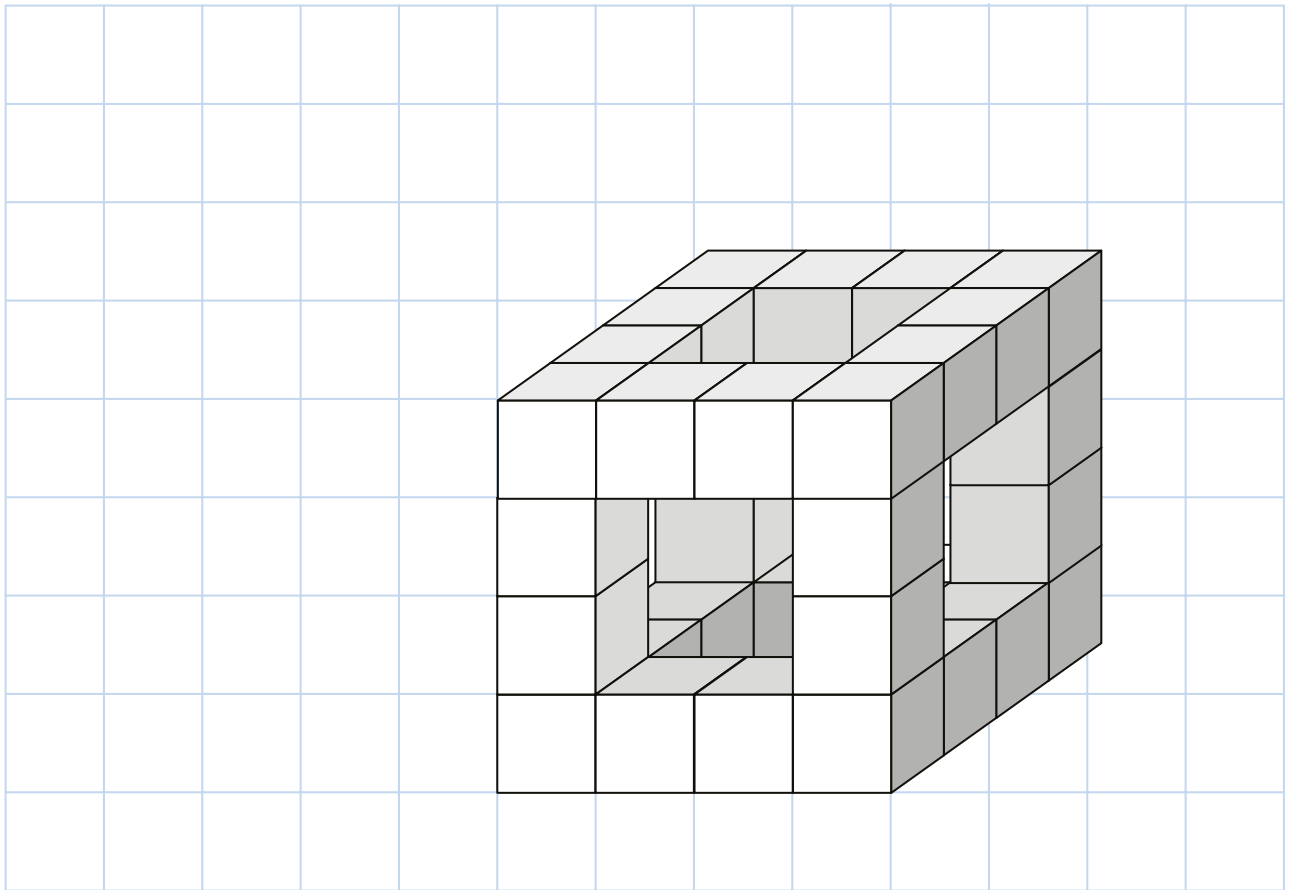
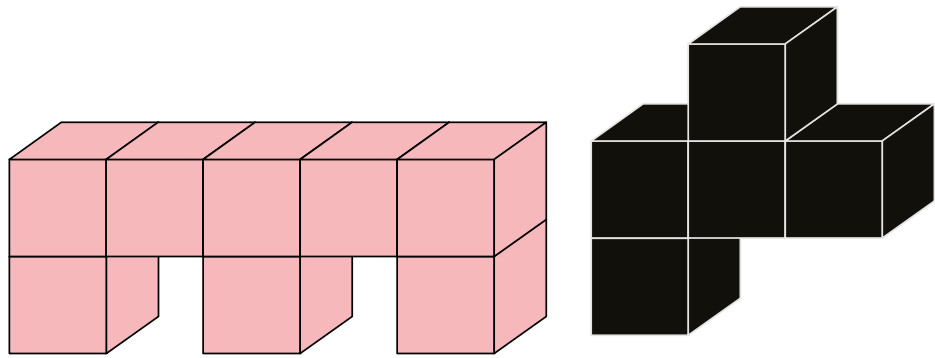
Geometry and modular structure are my main theme, the research into abstract paintings and ceramic works are taken.



Bodil Manz
Porcelain, 2008

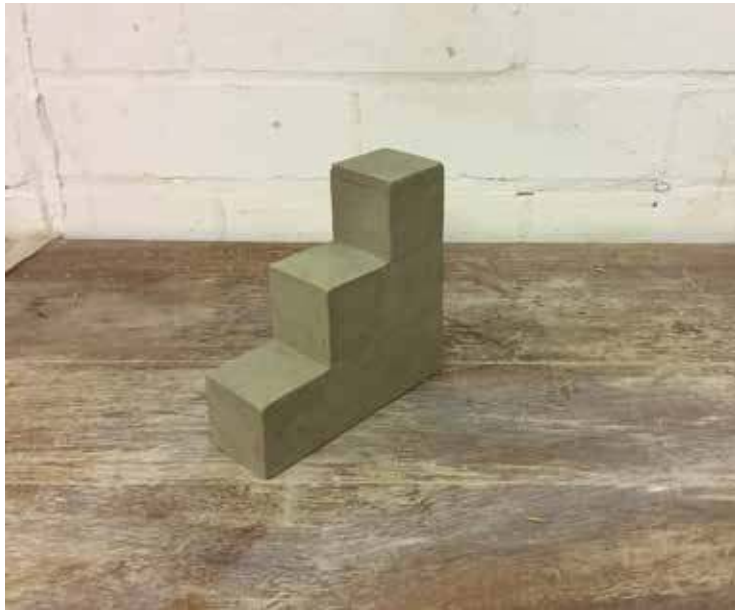


"Composition C", Piet Mondrian
1935

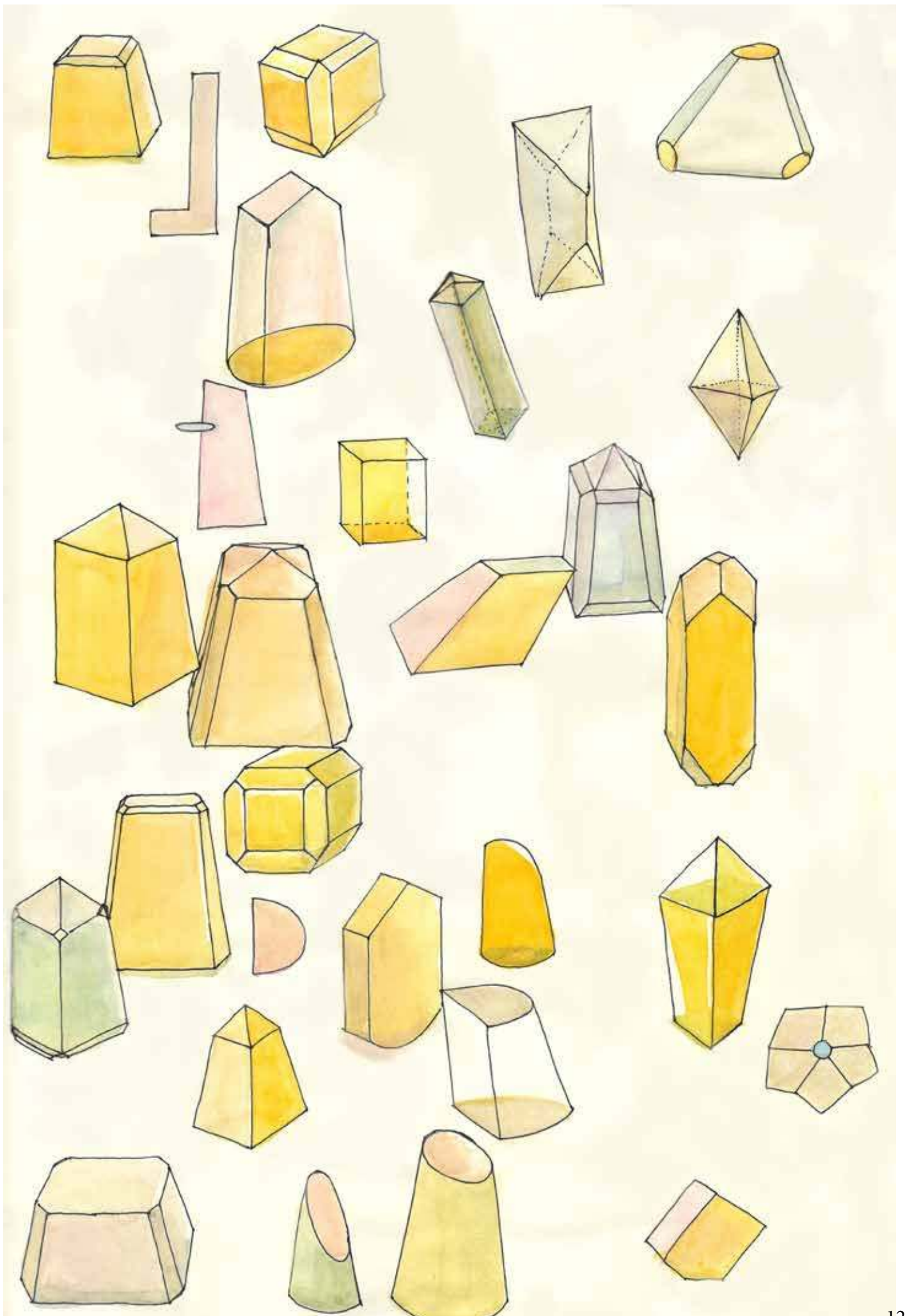


Cube structure

Creating a series of object that each pieces are constructed with cubes.



Model making in clay

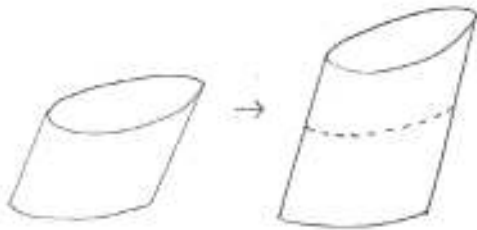


Mould making

Through the project, I have gained the skills and knowledge in ceramics.

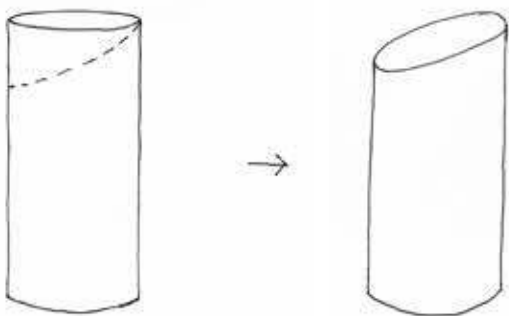
- Slip casting
- Mould making
- Glazes

Form development



Joining

Found the form I want to develop by joining the shape I made for glaze tests.

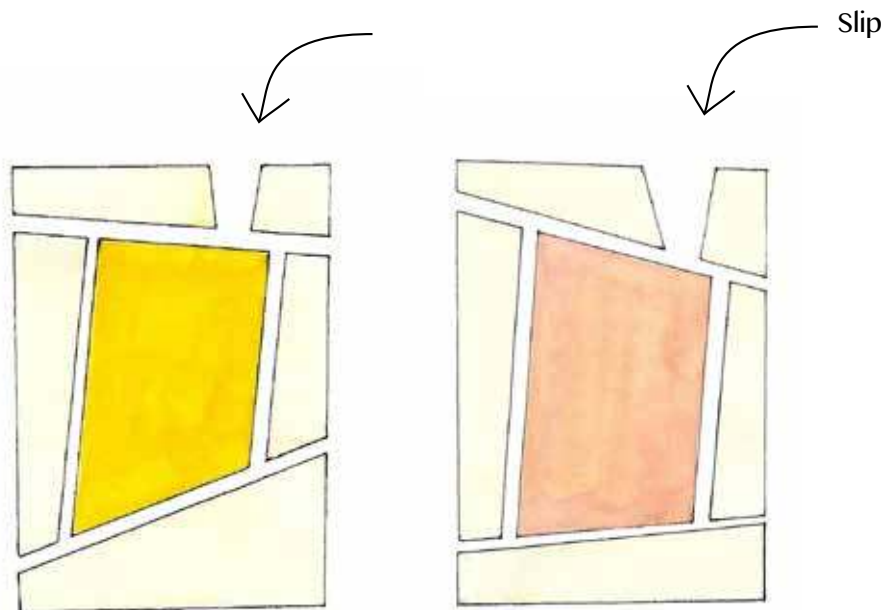


After making a cylinder of plaster by turning a lathe, I used bandsaw to slice off the body.



The cylinder mould

The four-part mould that have two different top parts with pouring holes and the bottom. This enables to cast two shapes from one mould by changing the top and the bottom parts.





Layering coloured slips

In the beginning of the process, a first layer was too thick that lead the cracking when it is fired.

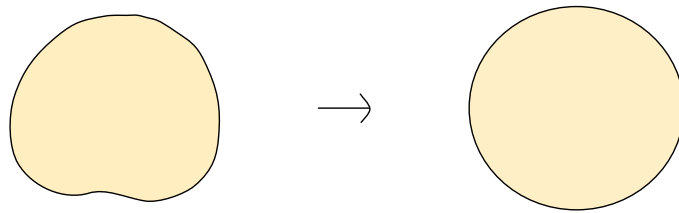
- Applying thinly.
- The high percentage of manganese dioxide has higher shrinkage which made it difficult to finish succeedingly.

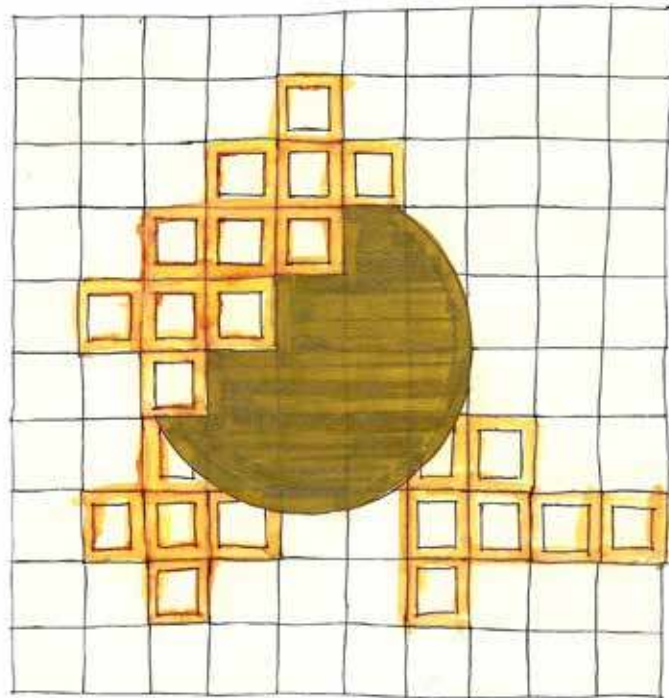
Technical development

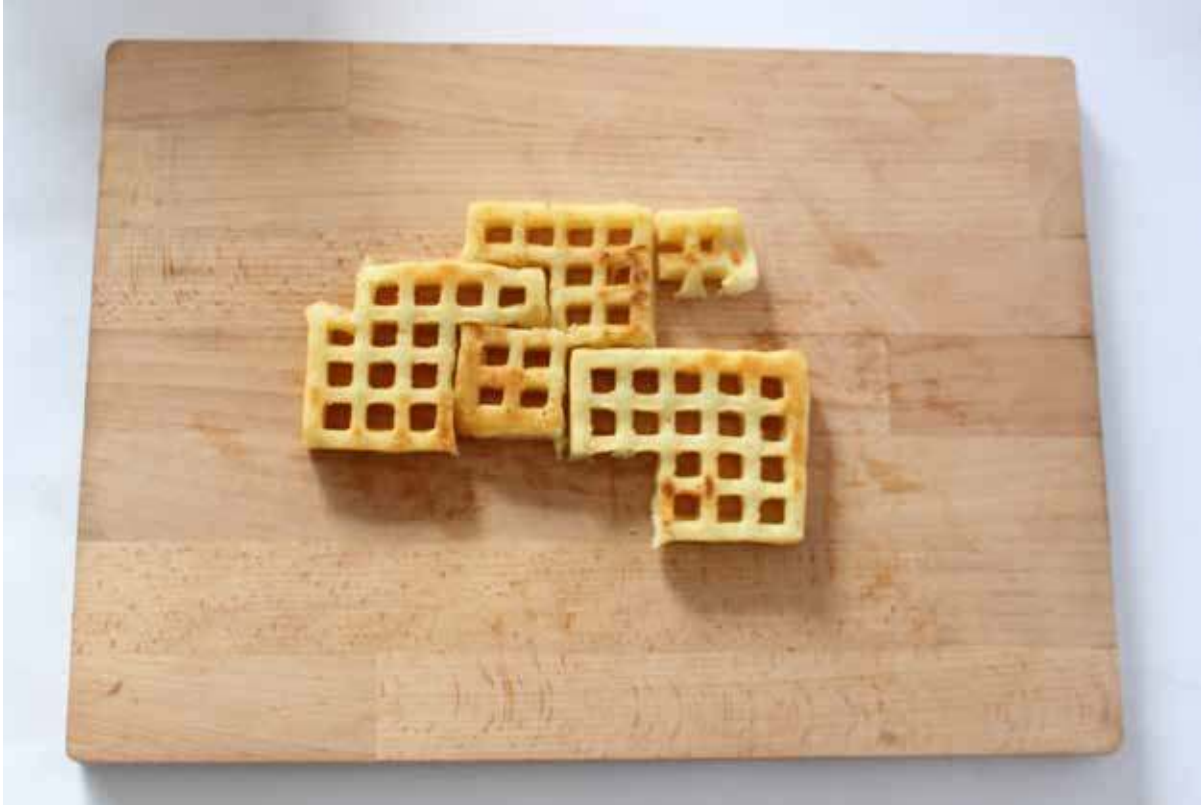
Since the pouring hole is a lot smaller than the size of the body, slip tends to block the hole when it is poured out from the mould. Therefore, the slip requires to pour out slowly and let the mould being placed in angled position to prevent the form collapsed when it is wet.

Making a cetter

To prevent a ceramic piece wobbled when it is fired in a high temperature , a piece should sit on a cetter to maintain the cup round.

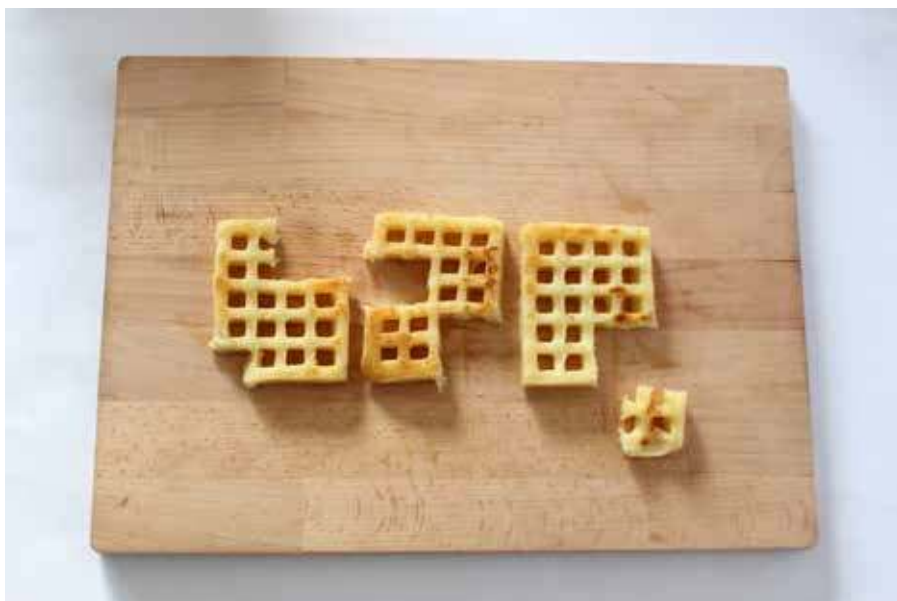
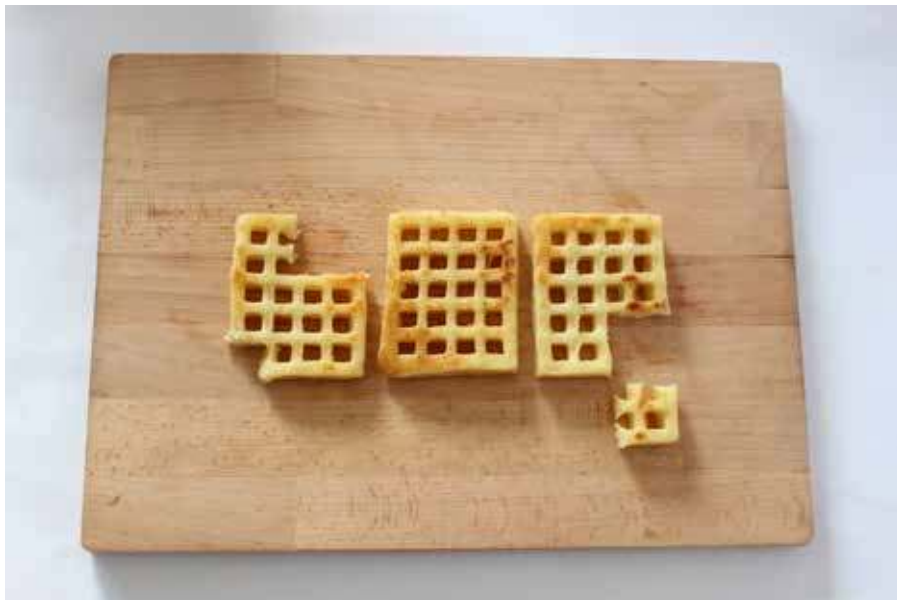
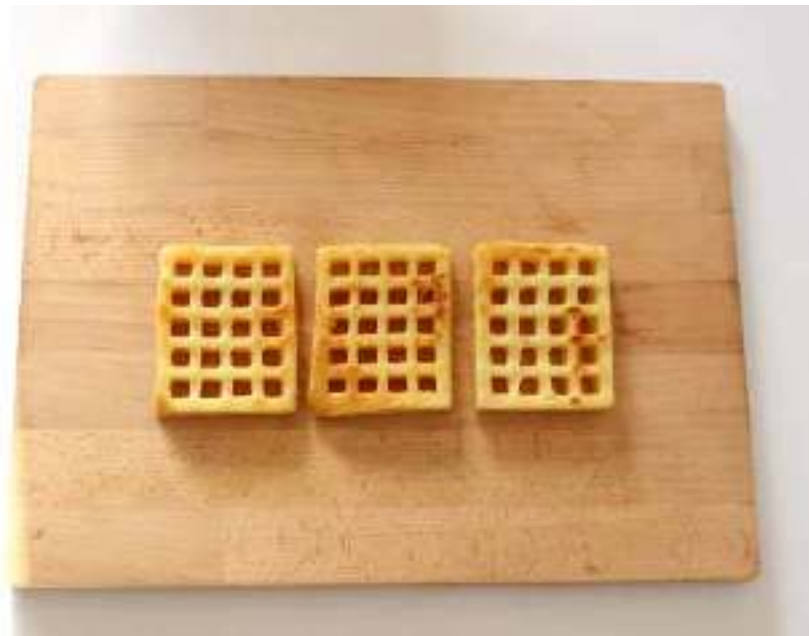


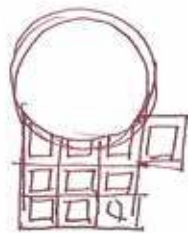
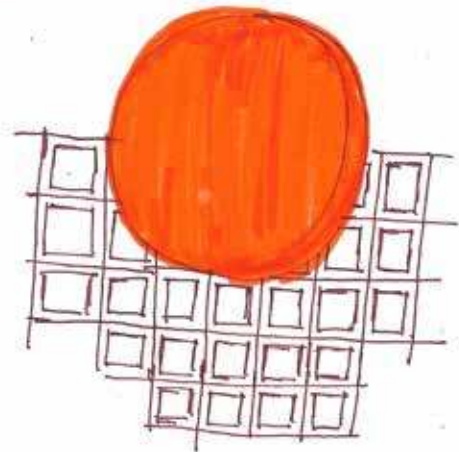
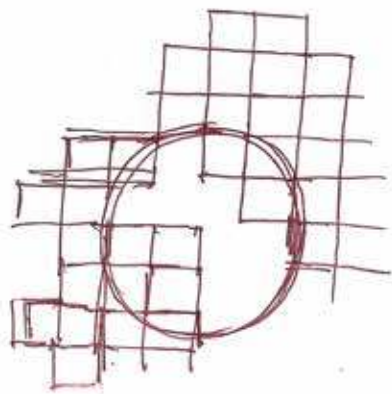




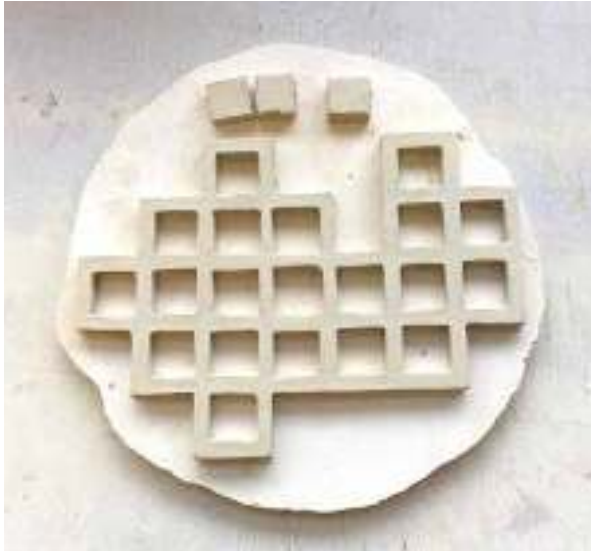
The wall pieces

The initial idea of the wall piece was from when I was having potato waffles. Small squares consist the bigger structure and this architecture-like form can refer to crystal structure and geometric forms I have researched for my project earlier.





Hand building



Colour and texture tests

I experimented with metallic glaze to imitate the quality of pyrite with using high percentage of manganese dioxide, copper oxide and cobalt oxide.

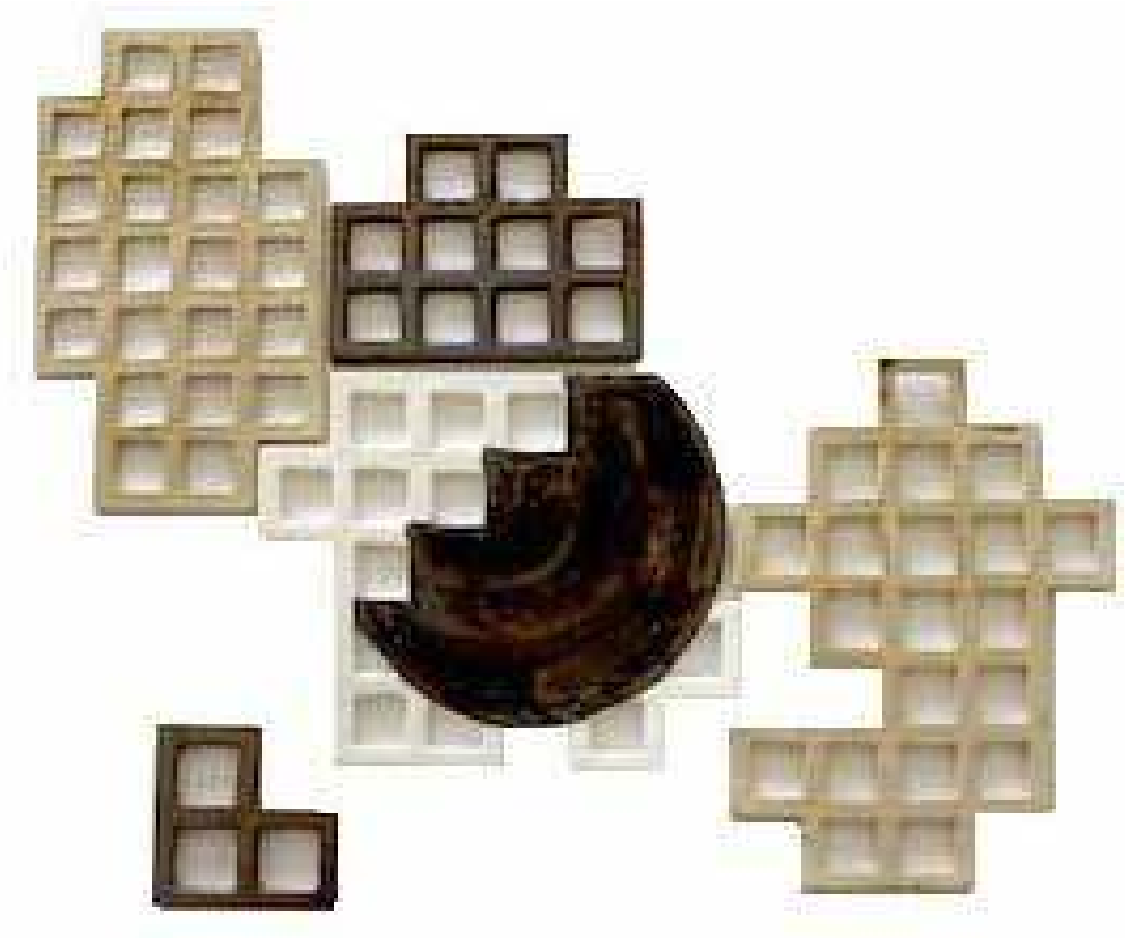




The Final outcome



Cups and a jar, slip-casted semi- porcelain.



Waffles. Porcelain

Packaging and Branding

I want my project to be sold at design store in the UK or Japan to promote Japanese sake and its culture.

- Brand logo
- Packaging
- Photos in context

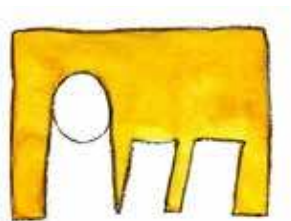
My work with Japanese food with British people.





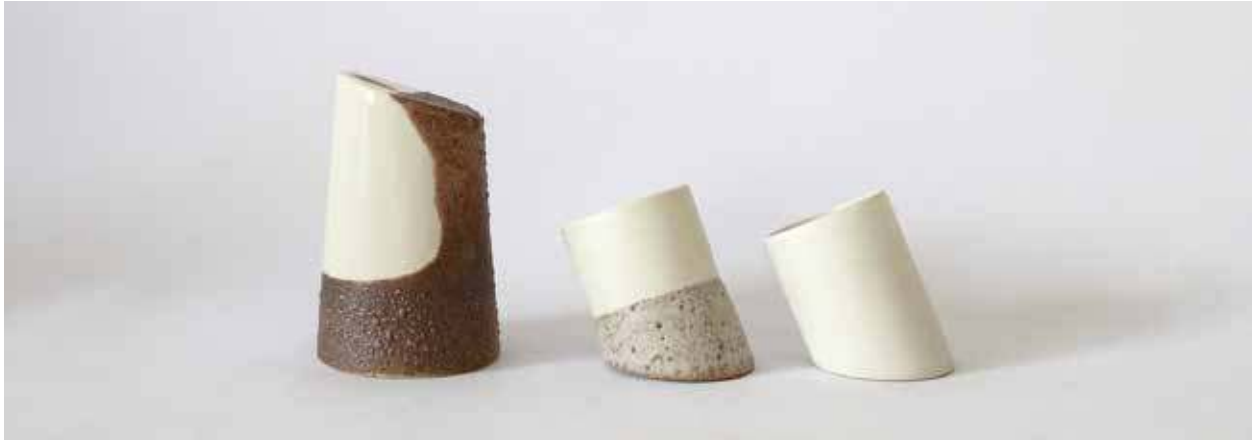
Reference for branding

“Ikkon” Obori Soma yaki in Japan
- Simple and clean



SAKE SET

Sake is a fermented rice wine traditionally brewed in Japan. The simple design of the sake set fits in the modern dining environment and good for those who wish to try sake for the first time.



The sake set, includes a flask and cups, are packed in the wooden box. The interesting contrast between smooth white porcelain and coloured slip which contains high percentage of oxides, suggests the significant quality of mineral and crystal created by the earth.



Conclusion

The project concluded as the presentation of my research and experiments in making geometric forms, modular structure and colour exploration in ceramics. Rethinking about the traditional pottery of Japanese sake led me to think further about the marketing plan to introduce Japanese culture to the other countries. As a designer and maker, balancing the function of an object and a context performed in the project was difficult.

The sake set and wall pieces inform the project as a whole: emphasise the contrast between organic and inorganic found in the quality of minerals.

