

GW
the
wonder
of
fruit



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introduction

Welcome to the Wonder of Fruit!

This is my final degree project and it is all about fruit. It took a while to get there, but it here it is.

The project started with a focus on colour and how to introduce more of it into our lives. I discovered in my dissertation that Britain has inbuilt chromophobia; a fear of colour. To combat this I decided to focus on natural colour, as we are more accepting of colour that occurs naturally. Fruit was the next logical step as a highly accessible source of natural colour, (flowers and birds are

a bit harder to get hold of in the everyday). By showing these mundane, everyday objects in a new light, I hoped to add some new appreciation to the colourful gems.

Along the way, while I was looking into fruit, I decided to add all of the interesting things I was learning about them to the project. As a result each piece now has a small nugget of information to go alongside it.

Ceramics was my medium of choice for this mission. I had worked with clay for most of second year and felt that

there was still so much that I wanted to explore and experiment with in this area. During the year I have been able to reflect on my practice. By nature my work is slow, with some pieces taking months to complete. I enjoy the meditative process of a repetitive action.

So I hope you enjoy reading all about my clay, fruit and colour adventures from the past year.

All photography is my own unless otherwise stated.





joy

I have always been interested in using bright colours in my work and started my research by looking into whether colour can make us happy.

I found a book that seemed to answer all of my questions, Joyful by Ingrid Fetell-Lee. In it she writes that some objects universally bring us joy, things like hula hoops, confetti, blossom, tree houses, googly eyes and fireworks. She studied these objects and found that they all had certain characteristics in common. She goes on to explain why we should try to include as many of these characteristics or aesthetics in our lives as possible.

The reason why bright, vibrant colours bring joy is because it has been hard wired into our brains. 'Over millions of generations of evolution, bright color so reliably predicted nourishment that it became intertwined with joy.'*

Along with birds and flowers, fruit is one of the only places where you can find bright colours in nature. This is one of the reasons I chose to study fruit; it is natural colour. In a world where colour is trying to grab your attention from every high street, I wanted to see what the natural world had to offer.

* Fetell Lee, Ingrid. Joyful: The Surprising Power Of Ordinary Things To Create Extraordinary Happiness. (Rider, 2018) 19

1. Rane, Abhijeet. Beach Findings. 2015, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/abhijeet-rane/17151505624/>. Accessed 27 Apr 2019.

2. Googly Eyes. 2014, retrodoodler.blogspot.com/2014/.

3. Calingasan, Noel Y. "Times Square Confetti for Broadway on Broadway 2009." Flickr, 2009, www.flickr.com/photos/ny-clovesnyc/4085139807.



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2



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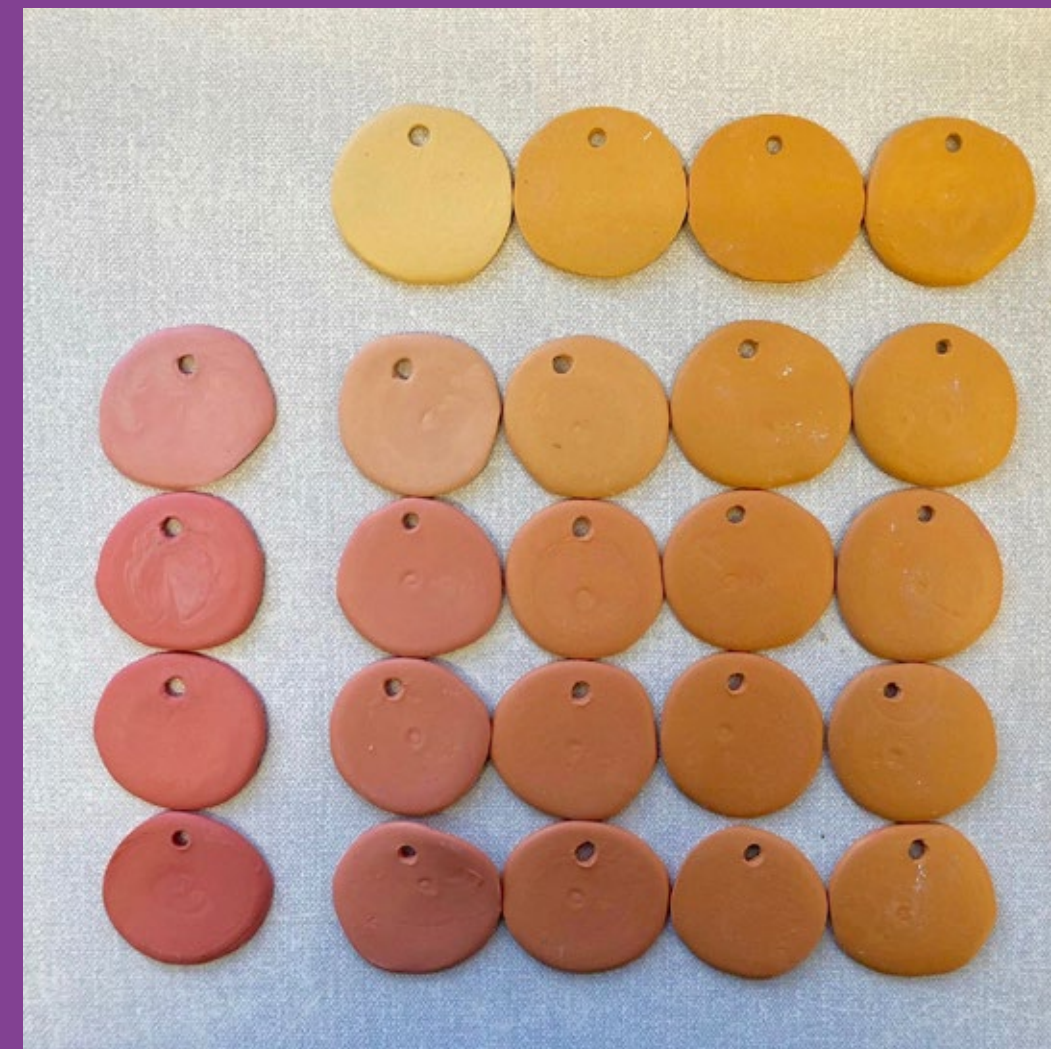


I was interested to see how the characteristics that Fetell-Lee identified could be put into practice so I set about creating the widest range of colours in casting slip as I could.

A rainbow of test tiles was made. Each of the test tiles was made by mixing casting slip with different percentages of body stains and then using a syringe to mix equal amounts of coloured slip together. I then squirted out the mixture onto plaster to dry out the slip, after this, each tile was marked and labelled for future reference. This testing gave me a huge range of subtly different shades of colour. I had made myself my own paintbox.

By arranging the tiles in certain ways, I was able to exhibit several of Fetell-Lee's joyful aesthetics such as the harmony of the ordered sequence of colour and the reassuring shape of a circle. I was hoping that further ideas for using my colours, and forms to use them on, would appear during the making process, however this didn't happen so I looked for fresh inspiration.

1. Bulman, Joseph. *Test Tile Process*. 2018. JPEG File
2. Bulman, Joseph. *Test Tile Process*. 2018. JPEG File





vegetables



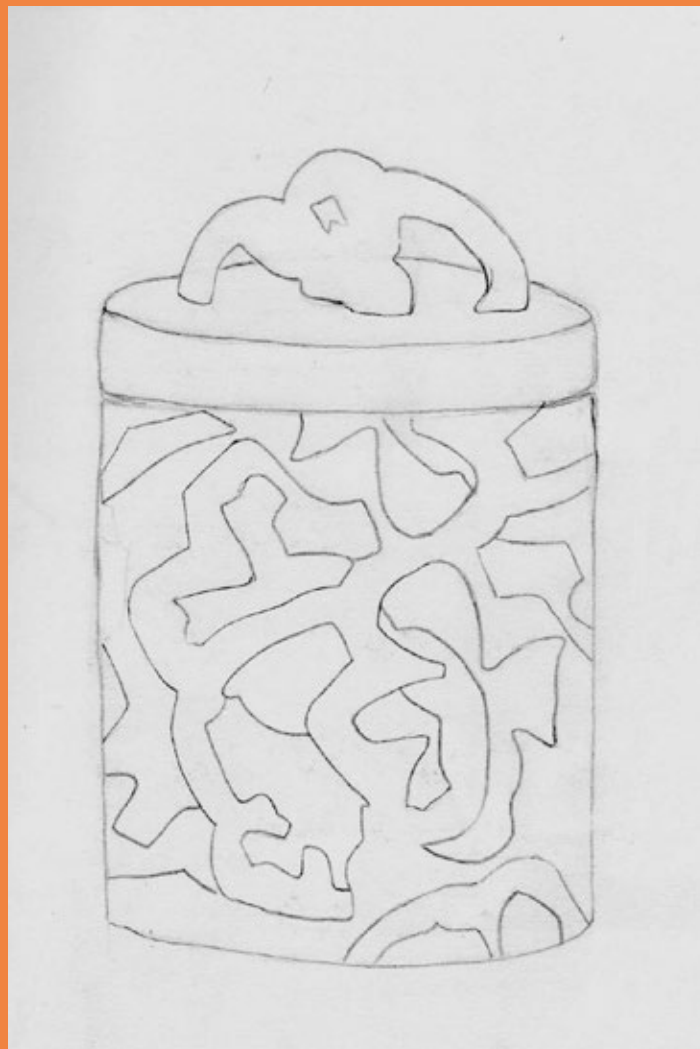
After struggling to find a project or form purely out of just colour, I decided to look closer into a couple of the sources of natural colour. Inspired by the sliced radishes I photographed while working as a chef, I went full on into the world of vegetables trying to find a form I could use my new colours on/with.

I started the experiments by using leftovers and the odd parts of vegetables. From this I found that the end of a courgette produced a very interesting abstract form, which could be used in future patterns.

I also tried using savoy cabbage and cavolo nero leaves to act as moulds for slip. This created thin tripe-like pieces which were interesting textures but a form or use didn't spring to mind. A cast of a shard of cavolo nero was quite intriguing and would have looked really interesting on a larger scale. To try and produce this larger version, I tried using a 3D scanner to make a digital version to enlarge it but it was too detailed to be picked up.

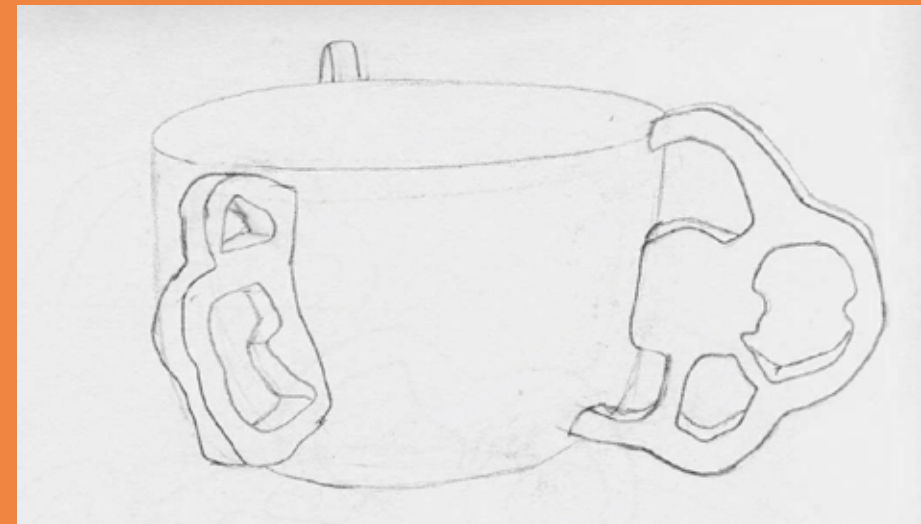
1. Bulman, Joseph. *Cabbage Tests*. 2018. JPEG File





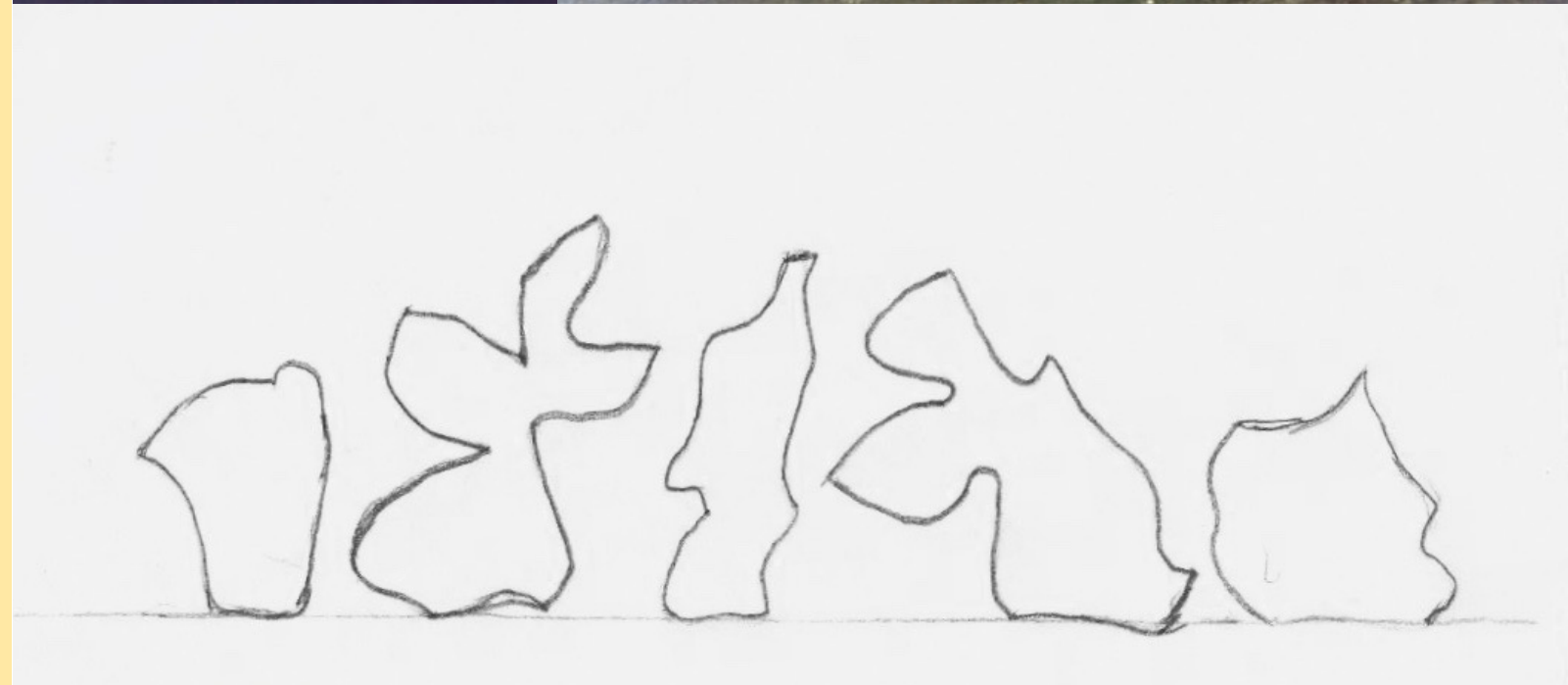
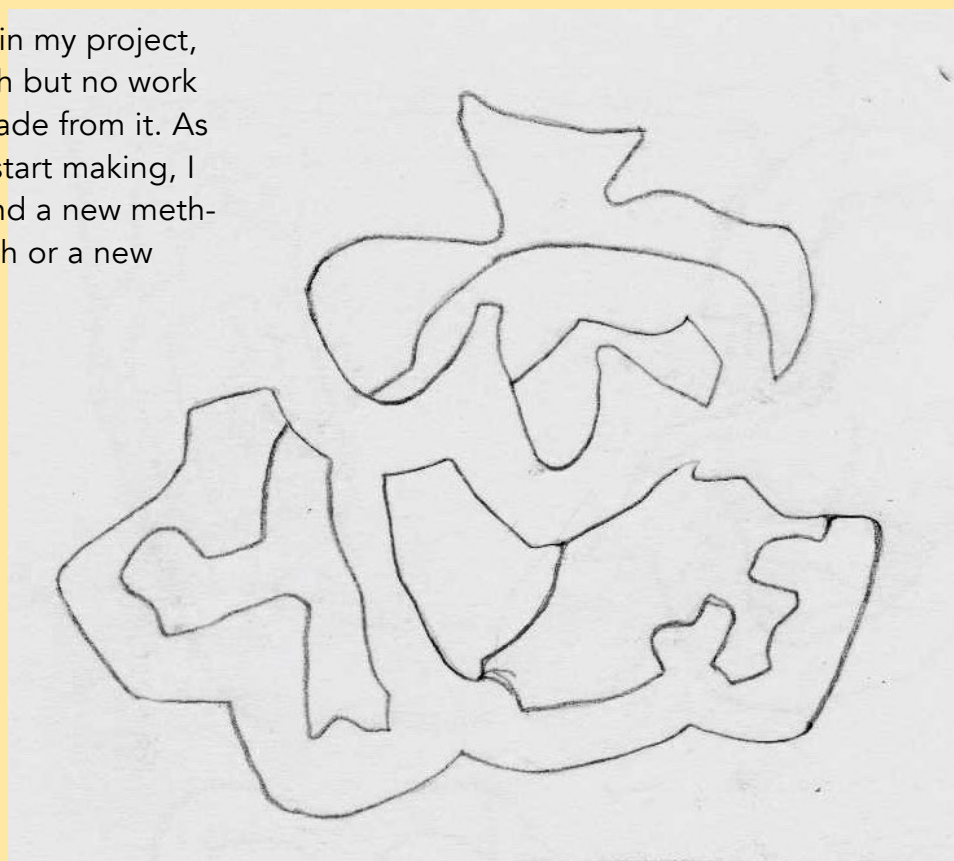
After the cabbages, I chose to look at a pepper, which happens to be both a fruit and a vegetable. I initially researched through photography as I was intrigued to look at the shapes created by cross sections. At this point, still without a form, I tried combining peppers with vessels which created quite an unexciting pot (left) but I liked the abstraction which was created by halving the pepper pieces.

It was also at this point in the project I started looking into information that surrounded the fruit/vegetable. For example, a pepper can be red, orange, yellow, white, dark purple, lilac and brown in colour and contain more vitamin C than oranges. This fact finding would become a key part of my work later on.



By experimenting through drawing I abstracted the pepper cross section, which is so recognisable, into a more ambiguous pattern. The negative spaces in the pattern were quite intriguing and sparked ideas to create vessels from the shapes. However, this idea too failed to pick up steam.

At this point in my project, I had research but no work was being made from it. As I needed to start making, I needed to find a new method of research or a new project.



A high-contrast photograph featuring a large number of bright green lemons. The lemons are packed closely together, filling most of the frame. They have a textured, bumpy skin and a vibrant green color. The background is a solid, dark black, which makes the lemons stand out. In the center of the image, the word "fruit" is written in a large, white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The lighting is bright, creating highlights on the lemons' surfaces and casting some shadows between them.

fruit

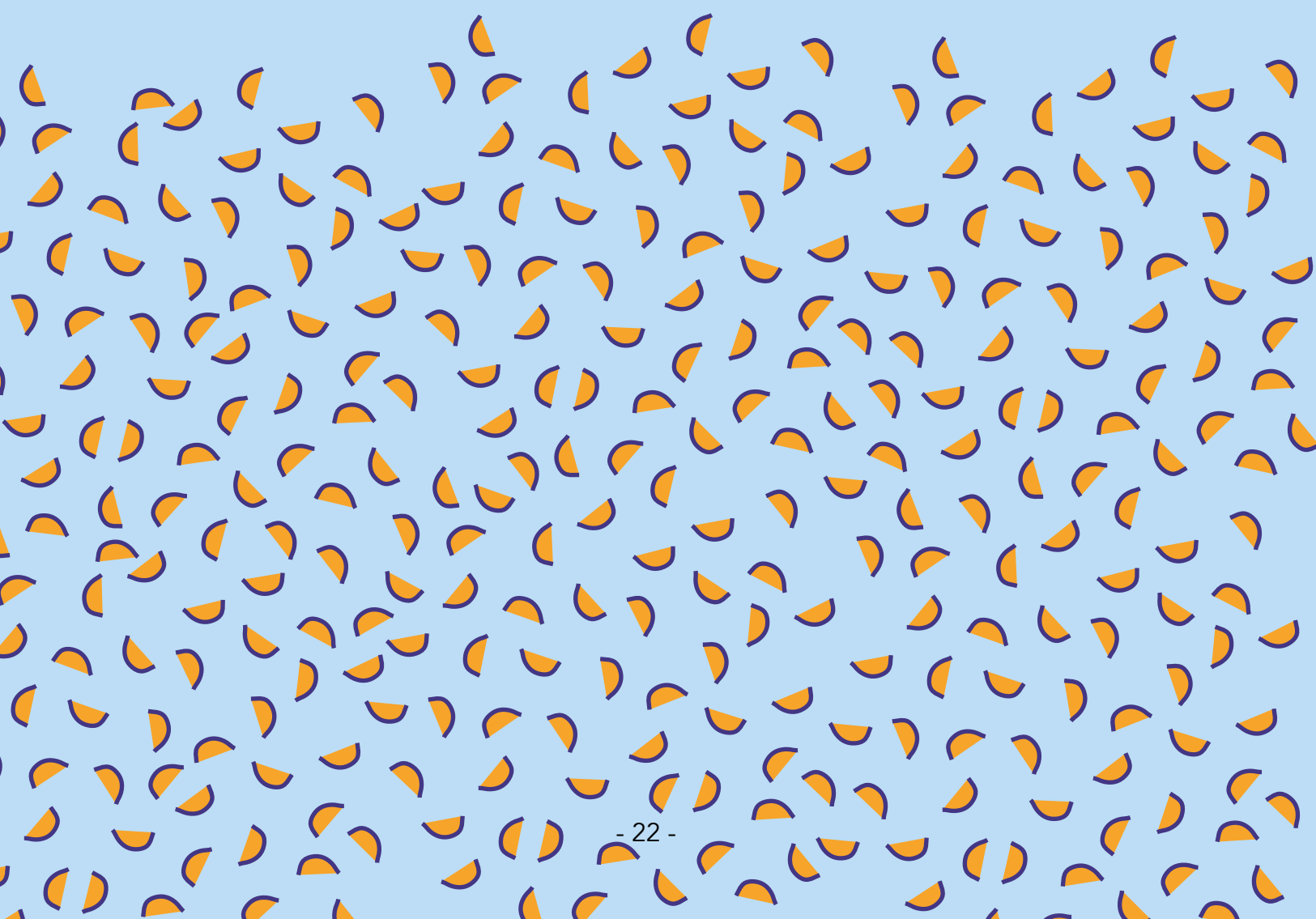
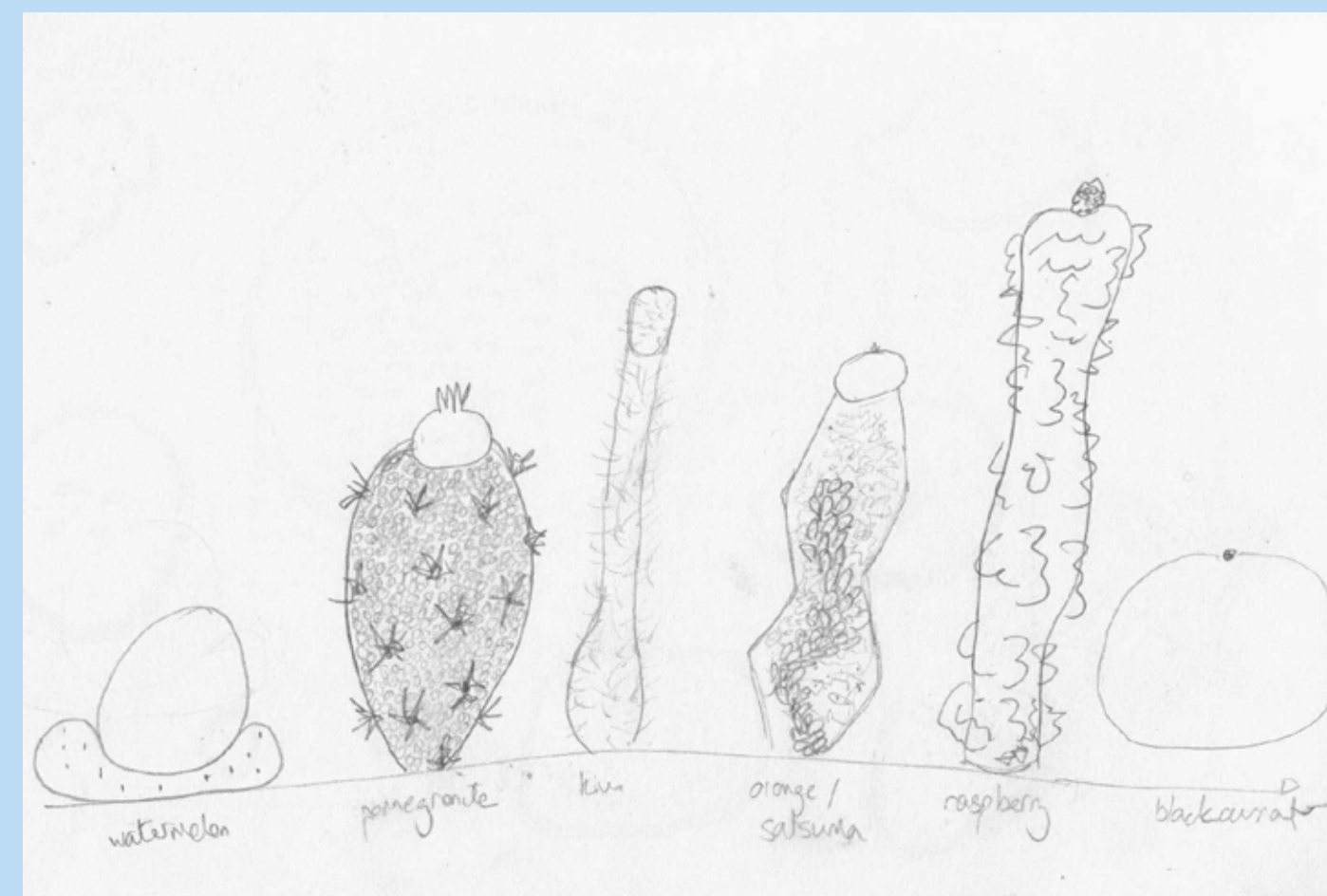
Having a break over the Christmas period allowed me to re-evaluate my project and re-identify my aims. It was clear I still wanted to use bright colours in my work and realised that while I had decided to look at fruit and vegetables to get inspiration, I had focussed solely on vegetables which are not known for their excitement or colour.

Therefore, I refocused my research on fruit and my own experiences, looking closer at the textures and surfaces of it.

I was reminded of eating entirely unknown exotic fruit while travelling in Cambodia and the excitement of not knowing how to even open or eat the fruit. The experience of trying to extract the edible flesh and exploration of different textures and seeds is a very strong memory.

It is very hard to describe that experience or flavours to anybody not there and this is when the idea of creating vessels to display and show off fruit was born.

Unlike a normal fruit bowl, these vessels would have a single example of each fruit on top with the form and textures being inspired by the fruit. These are my initial drawings of the idea.





1

While looking for inspiration for the new idea, I found a couple of artists whose work embodies some of the elements that I wanted to include in my work.

The first is Chiaoza, Adam Frezza & Terri Chiao, who create these bright and fun 'lump nubbins'. Made from plaster, paper and acrylic paint, these whimsical objects embody the fun that I would like my objects to have. The pieces I have made are only partly functional, and therefore I would like to celebrate the oddness of an object that is designed for such a specific purpose. I like the fact that these nubbins don't pretend to be anything other than quirky bright objects. They are playful.

The second artist whose work I admire is Kaori Kurihara, a ceramicist working in France.

I really admire her abstract, fruit inspired, sculptural pieces. Their forms seem to hint at undiscovered fruit and the combination of other textures such as bamboo help this illusion. As well as being individually strong, the work sits very well together, with the range of textures and colours working well. I tried to design my own work to have this same relationship.



4



2

1. Chiaoza. *The Herman Miller Sculptures*. 2016. Acrylic on plaster and paper fiber, painted paper, pigmented concrete. Eternity Stew. <https://www.eternitystew.com/The-Herman-Miller-Sculptures>
2. Chiaoza. *Dancing Man*. 2015. Mixed media paper pulp sculpture on pigmented concrete base. Approx. 3 x 3 x 5" Eternity Stew. <https://www.eternitystew.com/The-Whitney-Lump-Nubbins>
3. Chiaoza. *Gilded Circus Peanut Mound*. 2015. Acrylic on plaster and paper fiber, painted paper, pigmented concrete. Approx. 6 x 6 x 9" Eternity Stew. <https://www.eternitystew.com/Lump-Nubbin-Islands>
4. Kurihara, Kaori. *La fête de la moisson*. 2018. Ceramic. Kaori Kurihara. <http://www.kaorikurihara.com/>
5. Kurihara, Kaori. *La fête de la moisson*. 2018. Ceramic. Kaori Kurihara. <http://www.kaorikurihara.com/>



3



5

new covent garden market

To gain primary research, I decided to go to a market to photograph the fruit. But to make it exciting I went to New Covent Garden Market in Vauxhall, London, at four o'clock in the morning. The largest wholesale fruit and veg market in the UK.

I found rows and rows and crates and crates of fruit, all of it fruity. I had a rough idea of wanting to photograph the different colours and textures of the fruit but once I was there the research changed direction.

Amongst the pristine rows of fruit I started to look for the damaged, imperfect or dropped fruit. Once I started I found discarded, squashed, squished and trampled-on fruit everywhere. Possibly due to having to wake up at half two,

the trip soon turned into a series of investigations into the happenings of squished fruit.

Unfortunately, I am sad to report that there were uncountable crimes being committed in that market. There featured; a massacre of 36 strawberries, a scalping of a pomegranate, and an avocado that had been drawn and quartered and placed back on top of his family. I left with strong concerns for the mental health of the cherry population. As well as several cases of cherry trafficking with one cherry 45 steps away from its home, I counted 2 cherry suicides and found one about to jump.

These investigations really sparked my inspiration again. It was really liberating

to be able to think creatively again after such a long time of indecision and uncertainty in my project work. Ideas formed such as creating memorial pieces to the unloved and overlooked fruit. Although this wasn't where the work ended up going, it was refreshing. It was perhaps the experience of this trip that started me thinking about creating a narrative around my vessels.

Researching narratives that surrounded each fruit which I chose to look at, formed the basis of form, texture and colour for the work so was an important part of my creative process.



Inspired by my Cambodian fruit experience I wanted my pieces to try and change the mundanity of fruit. By elevating its status, I wanted to evoke the wonder that was felt previously in history when a new exotic fruit arrived on British shores. To try and tap into a time when there were still undiscovered parts of the world, the all knowing internet and supermarkets where you can buy any product under the sun didn't exist.

During the eighteenth century when produce from freshly conquered lands were making their way back to Britain, new fruit was incredibly exciting. Discoveries such as a pineapple were soon seen as symbols of huge wealth. These fruits were so amazing and awe inspiring that special stands were made to display them and you could even hire pineapples for an evening. For my work I was interested whether this feeling of wonder could be recreated if the fruit was presented in a different context to normal.

1. Spode Ceramic Works. *Pineapple Stand*. ca. 1820. Bone China. 7.9cm x 25.1cm. V & A Collection <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O333072/pineapple-stand-spode-ceramic-works/>
2. Tweedale, Rosie. *Rambutan*. 2017. JPEG File
3. Tweedale, Rosie. *Fruit*. 2017. JPEG File



1



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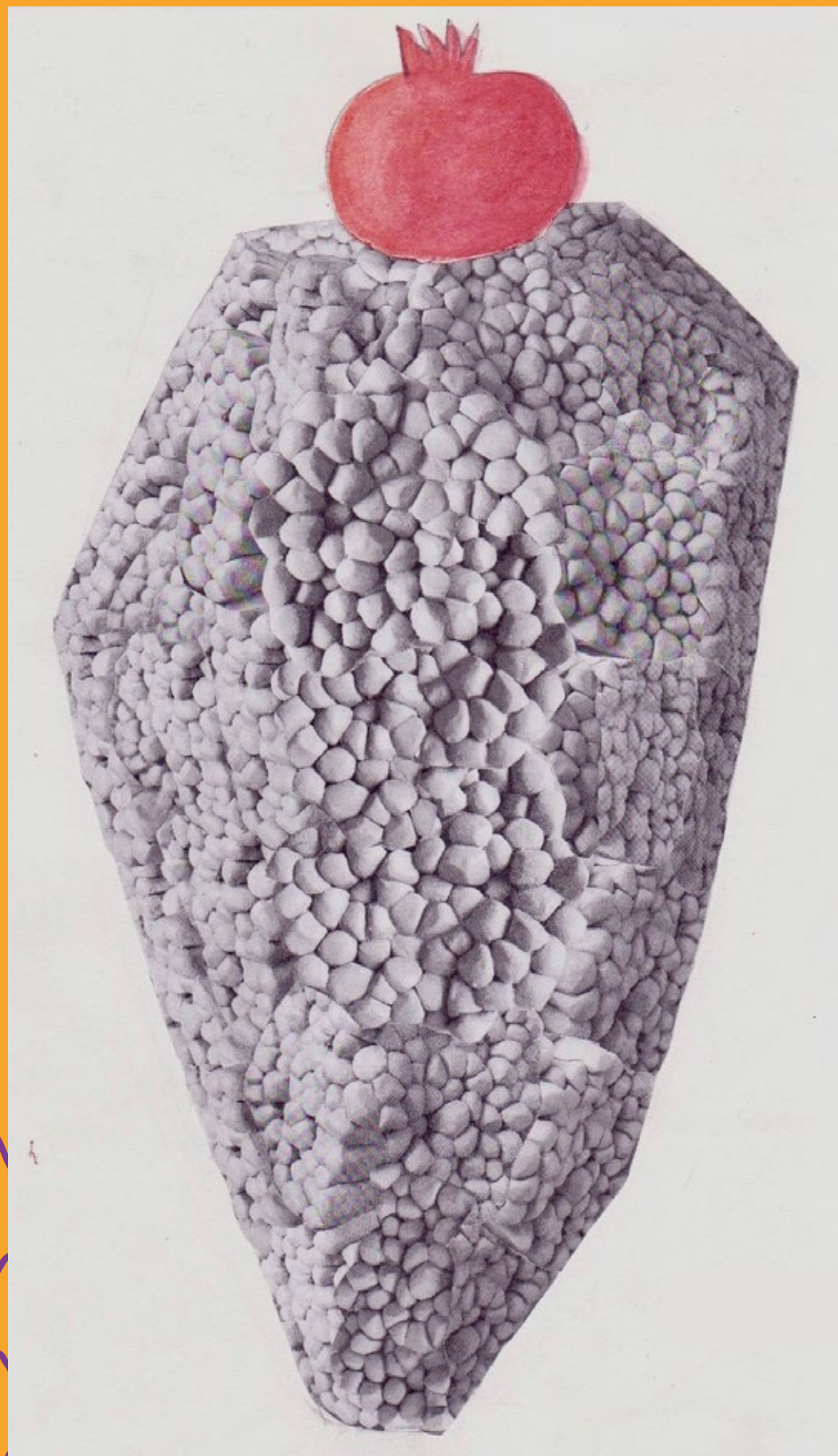


3

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pomegranate



I chose to look at the pomegranate first, not for any particular reason but it was the fruit with the most fully formed idea in the initial sketches.

I started to investigate the fruit by examining it and I was immediately inspired by the surface the seeds created together. I liked the angularity of them compared to the roundness of the outer form. I knew I wanted to recreate this texture to have on the outside of my vessel as it was so tactile.

The form for the vessel came when I removed the flesh from a seed and looked at the smaller hard seed inside. I had to use a microscopic attachment to my phone to get this image because it was so tiny. I was struck again at its angular nature that mirrored the flesh covering it.

So by combining these two elements, I created the first of my fruit stands.





During my preliminary research around the subject of a pomegranate I found the largest pomegranate ever weighed 2.6kg and had a circumference of 59cm.

As I had no sense of what height my vessel should be, I decided that aiming for a finished height the same as the heaviest pomegranate's circumference was a good place to start. However, this meant I had to scale up a seed that was a couple of millimetres to 59cm. To make it easier to see the different facets on the seed, I marked them before photographing them under my microscope attachment.

With these images I made a model by slapping clay with a paddle until it was a similar shape.

Now I had an object that I didn't need a microscope to see, I decided slab building would be the best way to achieve the angular facets of the seed.

I photocopied the shape on all sides and scaled it up (including factoring in shrinkage) to create the templates for the piece. After this I matched each of the enlarged shapes up to create templates that fitted together and would join.



My starting point for creating the texture was to cast groups of seeds and indents left behind by the seeds in the skin. I tried out the resulting moulds and found that the undercuts in the moulds ripped the texture in the clay. Also the seeds would end up tiny in the finished texture due to shrinkage.

Therefore I decided to hand build the texture from individual seeds. At one point I thought I would be able to create this piece entirely in this way but I soon realised how slow this process was and turned to creating a texture but I could press my slabs into.



narrative research

As well as researching through photography I also decided to find out the history and origin of the pomegranate.

I started with the Greek myth of Persephone and Hades. I grew up with the story of how Hades (god of the underworld) wanted a wife and one day came up to the earth and stole Persephone to be his bride. Persephone was the daughter of the goddess of the earth, Demeter. When she discovered her daughter had gone missing, Demeter stopped tending to the earth so all the trees shed their leaves and the crops died.

In the underworld Persephone was miserable, Hades had put on a feast to celebrate her arrival but she couldn't eat anything. Eventually she ate some pomegranate seeds. However, because she had now eaten food from the underworld she belonged to Hades.

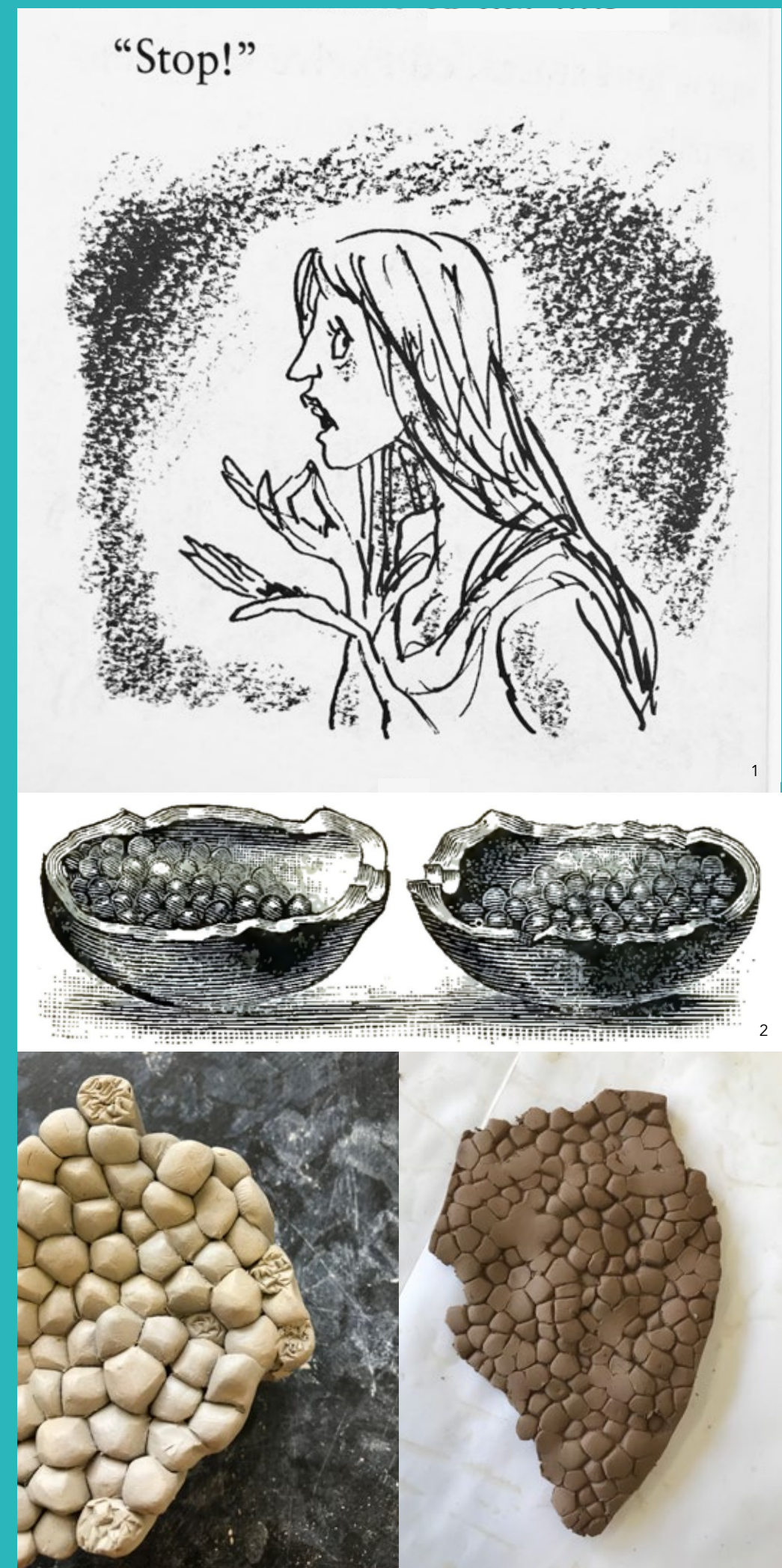
When Zeus heard what had happened he decreed that as Persephone had only eaten half the seeds out of her handful, she would be allowed to live on the earth for half the year. This is why we have seasons. When Persephone is on earth, Demeter is happy and tending the earth, but in the 6 months when Persephone is with Hades, Demeter and the earth mourn her and wait for her return.

As well as supposedly halving the year into the seasons, the pomegranate has a duality elsewhere as well.

In many cultures around the world, the pomegranate was a symbol of fertility. However, it was also partly inspiration for the grenade. As Jes Gearing puts it, 'Shaped like a pomegranate, it's certainly ironic that a weapon used to kill several people at once is named after the ancient fruit of fertility.'*

Due to this narrative research I started to think about how to incorporate this good and bad dynamic into the piece. I tried several ways of deforming the seed texture and finally decided leaving the parts of clay that were left untextured from the mould was the best approach. Or if the piece exploded or cracked in the kiln I would use the Japanese art of kintsugi to repair the piece as this would also show the duality of good and bad.

* Gearing, Jes. "Pomegranates And Hand Grenades - ALTA Language Services". ALTA Language Services, 2009, <https://www.altalang.com/beyond-words/pomegranates-and-hand-grenades/>.
1. Ross, Tony. McCaughrean, Geraldine. 1997. Persephone eats the seeds. Persephone And The Pomegranate Seeds. Orchard Books, 1997, p. 26.
2. Shrapnel Print. <http://dotcw.com/osborn-h-oldroyd-50/>. Accessed 28 Apr 2019.





Before this vessel I had never slab built before and my previous work had been small scaled. To be able to work on such a large scale I made a series of models that would help to work through any issues in construction.

The first was a cardboard model, which told me 59cm was a very big stand. Second came an untextured small scale model from which I found the order of construction mattered as the largest piece collapsed when I put it on due to its weight. For the third model I used the texture bat. I started with the largest piece first and it had a lot more newspaper and clay support and so succeeded.

During the 3 models and final construction I learnt many things about the material limits of the clay. I was working with a grogged clay to offer more support and I'm glad I chose this, as, due to the vessels weight and size, it needed strength.

Also due to the nature of the technique of slab building, I learnt more about what the right consistency of clay is like. It turns out the definition of leather hard clay is a fluid definition, with some leather hard's too inflexible and dry and others still too wet to be able to support themselves. However, leather hard clay was preferable to pressing the clay in the texture bat

when wet as the print double marked as the clay folded over itself when pressing.

Using the models I was able to test finishes as well. For example, I was able to see that for the final piece I should texture the seams of the stand to make seamless transitions. I used one of the small moulds I made at the beginning of the project to stamp the seams and this greatly sped up the process.

I also learnt you should watch where you place your tools, as a rubber kidney found its way pressed into the front of my piece...



For the finish of the pomegranate vessel I wanted to achieve the deep red of the seeds in my glaze. I tried a cold finish first with pomegranate juice. However, as my stands are meant to show off the fruit, it would be distracting if the stand went mouldy or was sticky.

Creating reds in an oxidation kiln is hard but I gave it a go. A combination of chrome and tin oxides is one way to create red and it was a temperamental combination as some of my tests came out grey or green.

I considered using enamels to achieve the colour but these equally didn't work and it would have taken a very long time to apply to each seed.



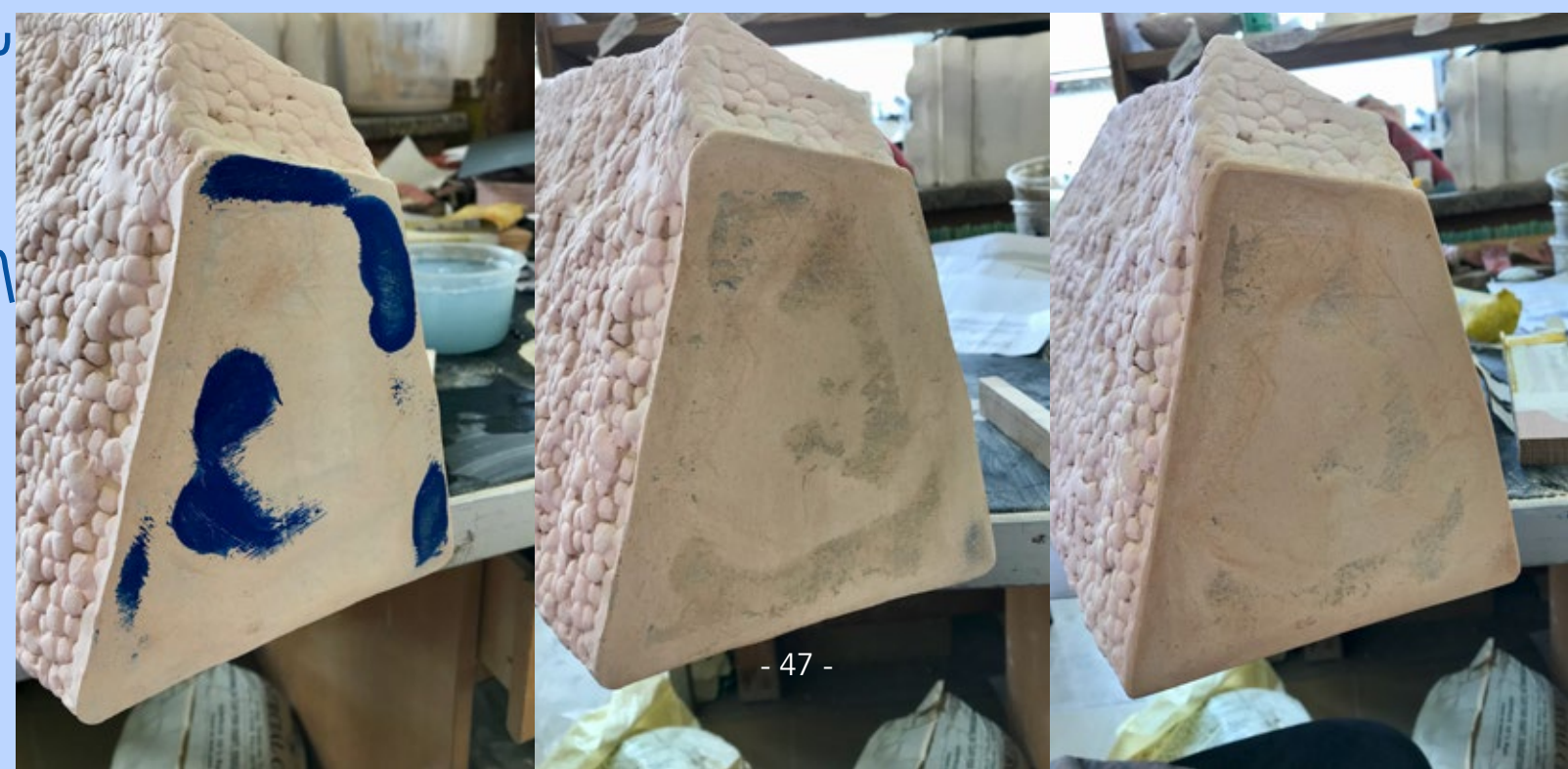


One of the major issues that arose during the making was the instability of the piece.

When it was first stood up-right, it wobbled and wasn't very sure of itself because of its top-heavy nature. To tackle the issue I added extra clay to the bottom and then with the help of a friend, smoothed the bottom down on a fabric covered board. It went into its bisque firing, able to stand but wouldn't survive an earthquake tremor.

Once out of the bisque kiln it was extremely wobbly so I used a combination of sand blasting and sand paper to remove the excess. I covered a chair in blue paint and moved the pomegranate around on it. This allowed me to see which parts of the base where making contact and eventually stability was achieved.

1. Abend, Catarina. *Bottom*. 2019. JPEG File



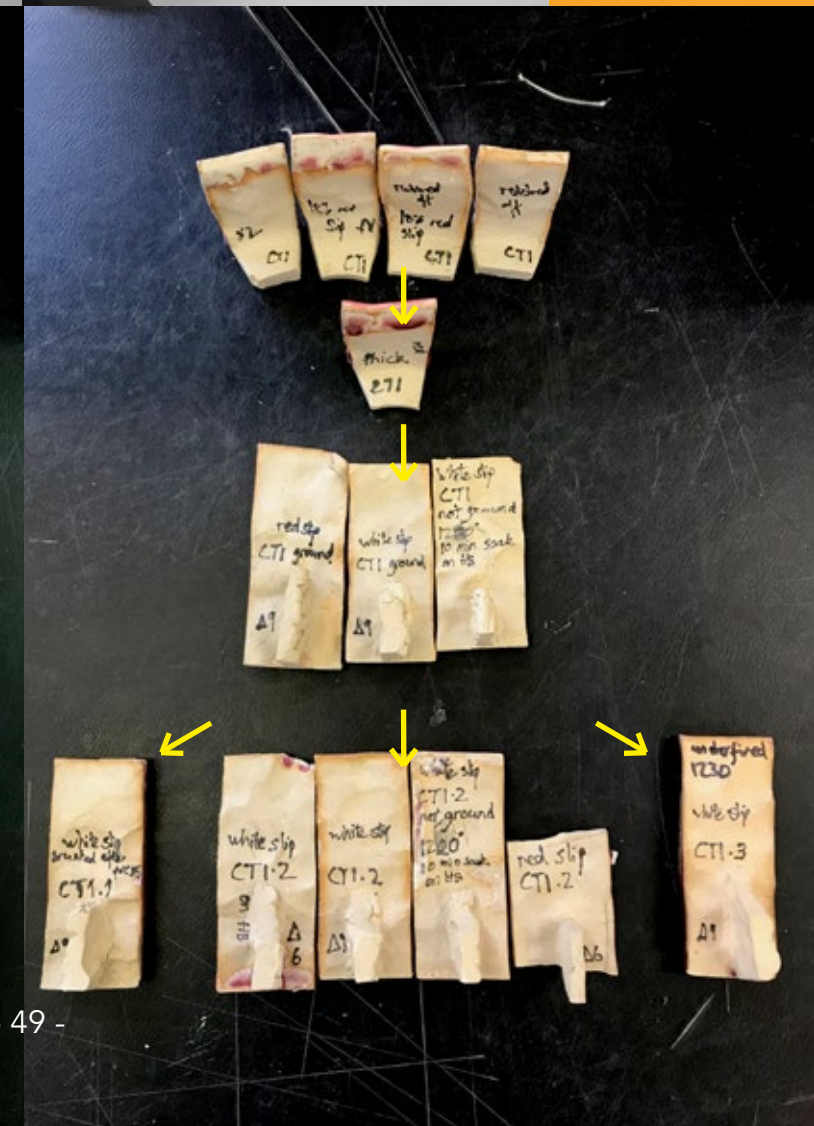
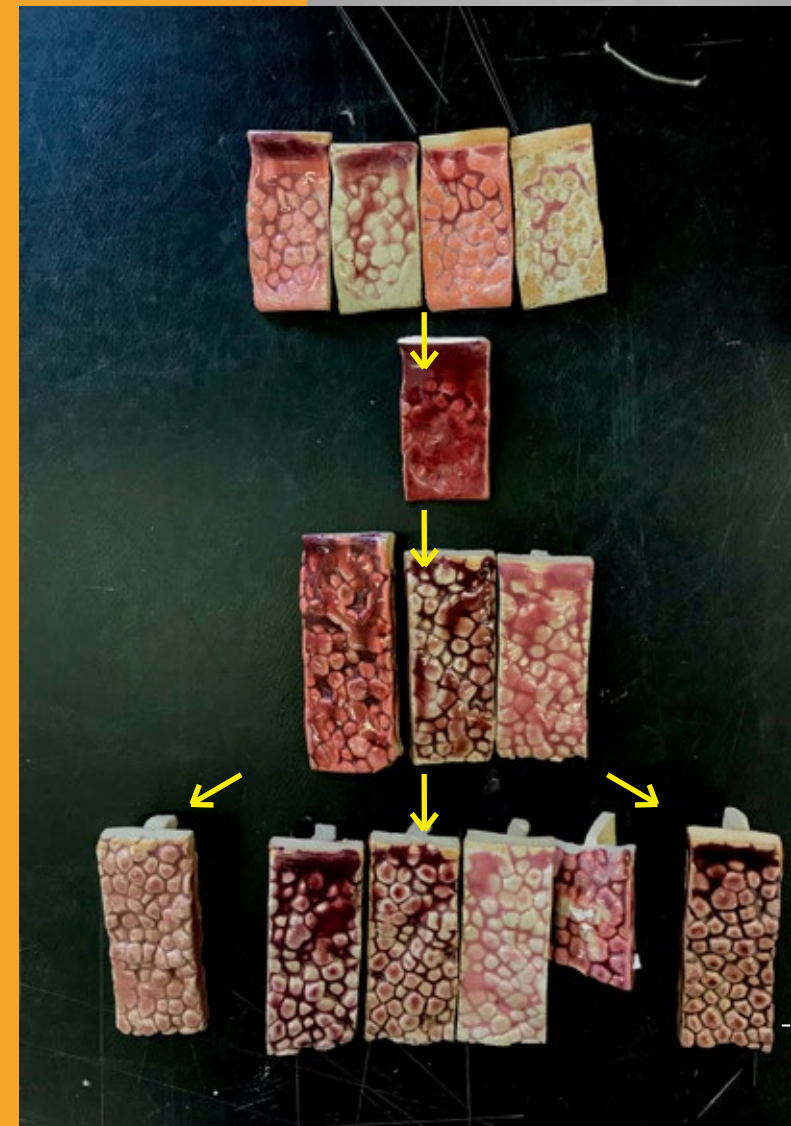


After all the testing I found a glaze that was close to the colour that I wanted. However, it was a runny unpredictable one and therefore CT1 got tested within an inch of its life.

Too thin, no colour; too thick resulted in uneven streaky running. To combat the runny nature of this glaze I tried several different variations of the recipe by altering the amount of flux, as well as firing at different temperatures.

Once I thought I was close, I tried CT1.2 out on the scale model of the piece. It came out looking a bit like blood and I wasn't happy with the uneven streaks. On inspection I think the application was partly to blame as the uneven texture collected the glaze in pockets which then caused streaks.

I also decided adding more colour to the piece using red slip would help add to the overall brightness and zing.



persephone

approx. 570 x 315 x 225

stoneware

After four months of planning and tests, the pomegranate stand now exists.

I couldn't be happier with the glaze and texture of this piece. The finish looks just as I imagined, and as I never achieved this in my tests I was so pleased it happened when it mattered. Glazing the test piece was crucial to getting the glaze application right and for tweaking the final recipe and soak timings for the firing.

The shape is interesting and I'm glad I went through the process of translating a tiny seed into such a large piece.

For the future, in hindsight I think I should have thought more about what qualities each vessel should have that would make the fruit shine, as with the pomegranate and stand being the same colour, the pomegranate looks a bit out of place. For example, would all white or colourless pieces have worked better?

I should also take more care when shaping the top of the vessel and the area which holds the fruit as the roundness of the pomegranate looks off on the odd polygon shaped space.





A close-up photograph of a basket filled with bright yellow lemons. The basket is made of a light-colored, diamond-shaped mesh. Several lemons are visible, some with green leaves still attached. Four of the lemons have black ink faces drawn on them, featuring large, expressive eyes, eyebrows, and smiling mouths. The word "lemon" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image, partially overlapping the lemons and the basket mesh.

lemon

narrative research



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After the pomegranate I decided to look at creating a lemon stand. During the broad fruit research I did, I found an interesting piece of history involving lemons.

In *Swindled*, Bea Wilson describes how in Nazi Germany many fake or replacement foods were being introduced to combat rationing. Among this ersatz (fake) food advice, Germans were encouraged to replace lemons with rhubarb*.

This swap also had the advantage that rhubarb was grown in Germany, whereas lemons were foreign and had to be imported. However, apart from the obvious bitterness, rhubarb and lemons have very different characteristics. This story amused me so I made the form based on the cross section of rhubarb stalk.

I looked to the flavour of a lemon to inspire the texture of the piece. The piece is covered in long spikes due to lemons being sharp.. bad pun I know...

Following on in the same theme as the pomegranate, I found the largest lemon ever was recorded as 35cm tall**. I therefore made the piece with the longest spikes reaching this height.

* Wilson, Bee. *Swindled: From Poison Sweets to Counterfeit Coffee : The Dark History of the Food Cheats*. John Murray, London, 2008.

** "Heaviest Lemon". Guinness World Records, <http://www.guinness-worldrecords.com/world-records/heaviest-lemon>.

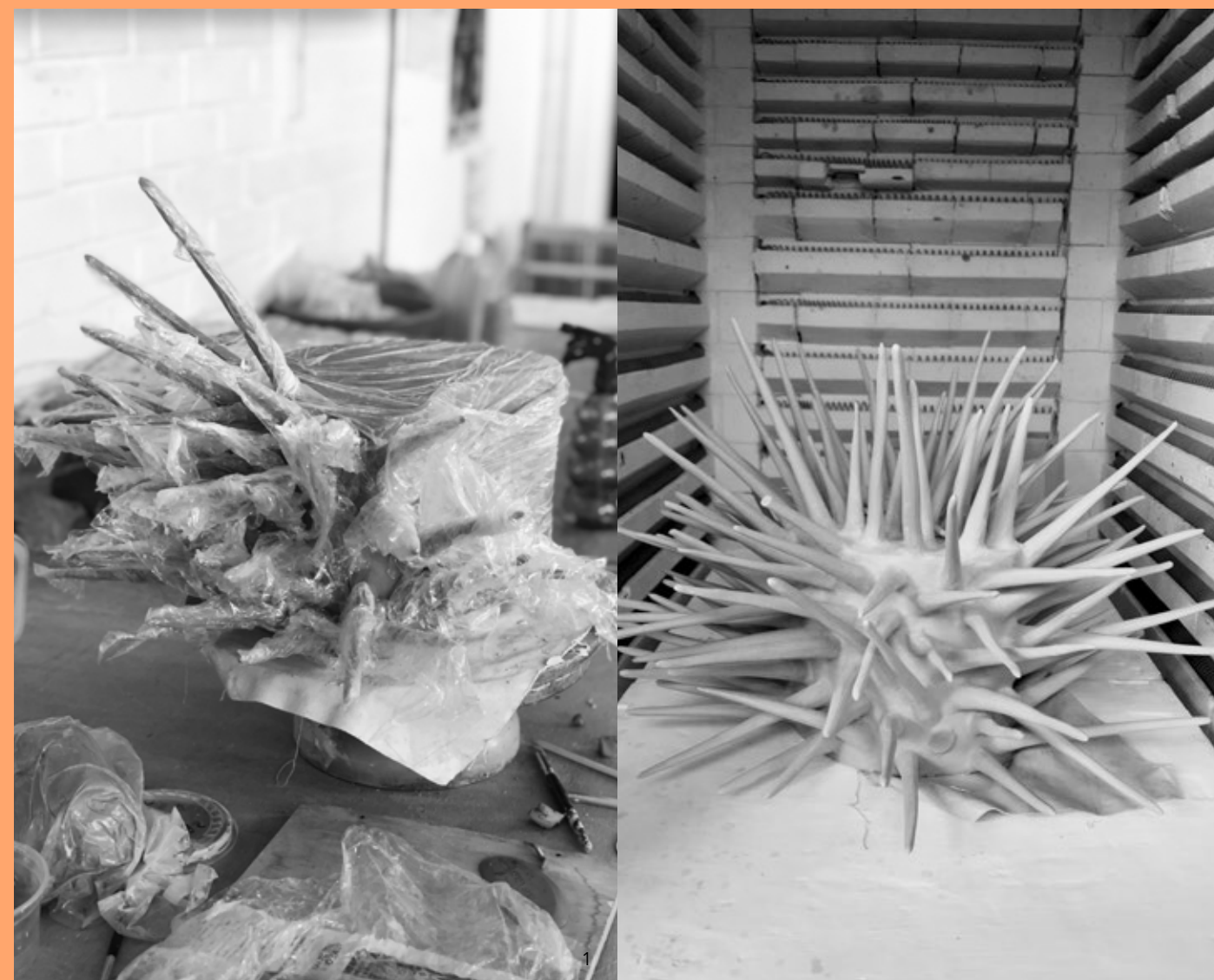


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To construct this piece, it very quickly became clear that it would also be hand-built. So I started by slab building the rhubarb shaped base and started to pull my spikes. Pulling the spikes was a satisfying process and created fairly even and smoother spikes than if I had rolled them.

Once the spikes were leather hard I added them to the structure using slip and small coils. As the spikes were so much thinner than the base I tried to keep everything as wrapped up and wet as possible.

1. Bulman, Joseph. *Lemon*. 2019. JPEG File



Reflecting on the making process, I feel I was too ambitious with the density of spikes I put on the piece. This created most of my problems.

Whilst attaching the spikes, most of the time I wanted the fingers of a small child to be able to fit around the already attached spikes. Also, as it took so long to attach them, when I came to putting the last ones on, the clay was too dry and cracks appeared at the joins. For example, all the pink marks (top right) are spikes which had cracks. Manoeuvrability and fragility were also major issues.

1. Lumby, Annie. *Final Spike*. 2019.
JPEG File



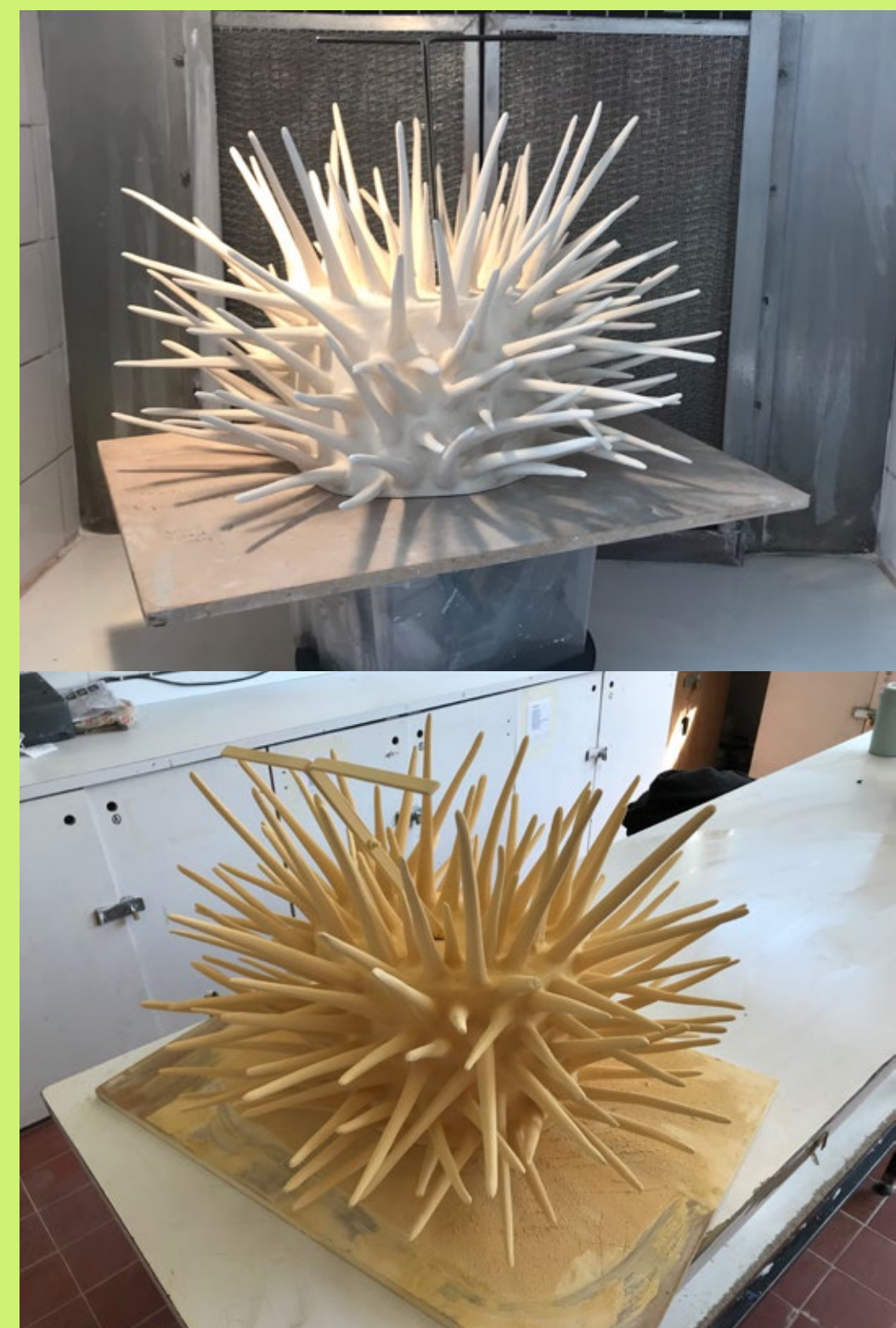


When it came to glazing the lemon piece, I already had a bright yellow glaze developed from last year.

The situation changed a bit when I discovered after the bisque firing, how hard it was to sand the piece. In an attempt to fix the cracks when it was green, I had put gum arabic slip on and had chosen to remove the extra lumps after firing, as the piece was so fragile when green. However, due to the density of the spikes, sanding the lumps was near impossible. I could fill fine cracks with bisque dust but that was it.

So now I retested my glaze to include opacifiers which I hoped would help cover the larger cracks and would give a more uniform surface. I experimented with a range of different opacifiers as I wasn't sure which would give the best result.

In order to transport the piece anywhere it needed some kind of contraption, so I made one. Two pieces of flattened steel bent into U's which then were joined when inside the piece.



german rhubarb

approx. 360 x 540 x 445

earthenware

I have made a yellow spike bomb.

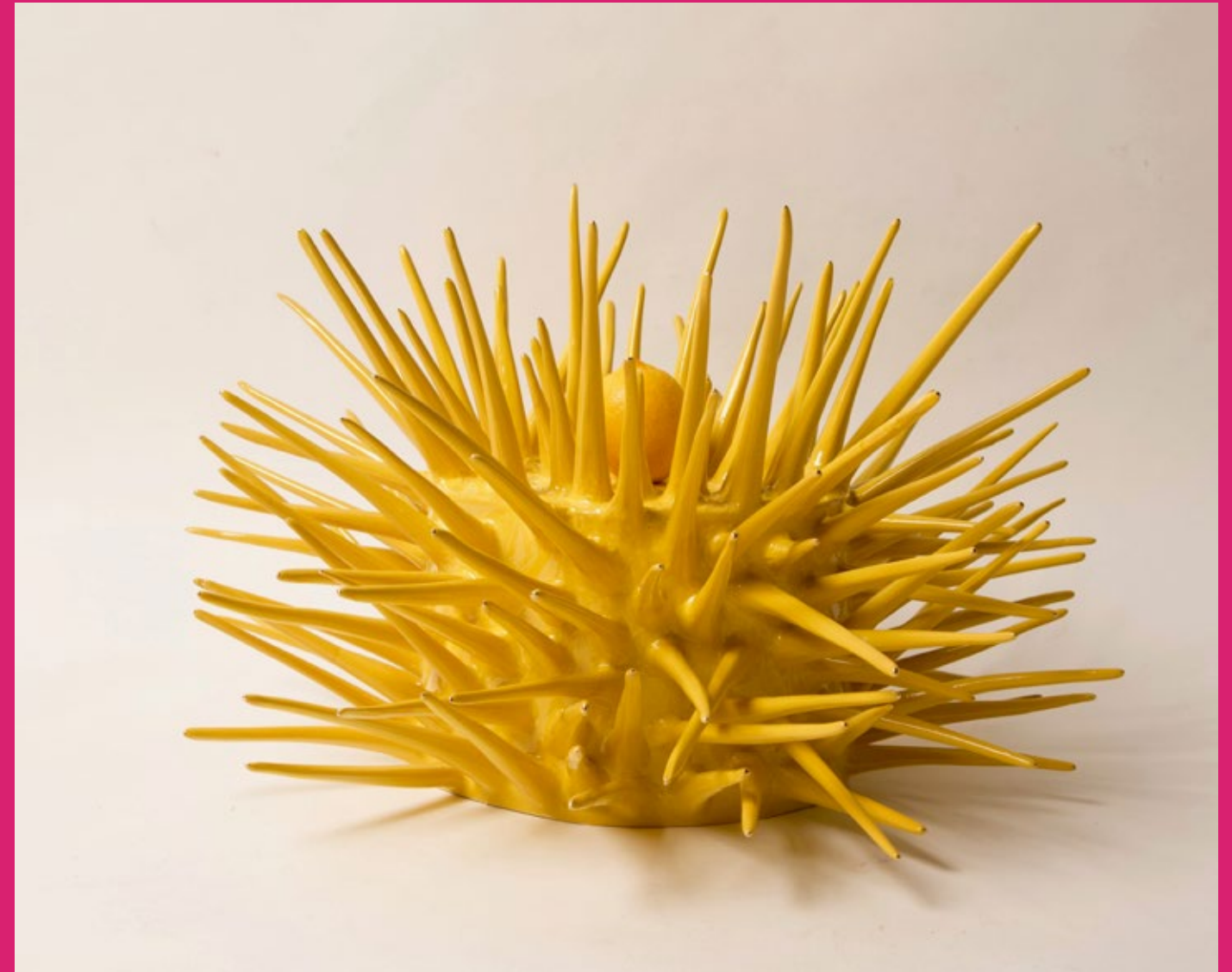
Opening the kiln to see this bizarre yellow explosion of points was an amazing sight. The glaze was the perfect colour and I am very pleased with the final outcome.

To finish the piece off, I filled any cracks that were still visible through the glaze with milliput, used nail varnish to patch up the colour and glued on any broken spikes. Although not perfect, the cracks are now a lot less noticeable. Adding gold tips with liquid gold leaf completed the piece.

This was a challenging piece to make. I experienced many cracks, lots of impatience and have major future transportation issues.

I enjoyed the process of pulling the clay to form the spikes, obviously a bit too much as the density of the spikes was a drawback and I would reconsider if I were to make it again.

Reviewing the piece, although it could be said the crucial lemon gets lost amongst the spikes, I would say the piece definitely gives the lemon more presence which elevates the fruit's standing.







avocado

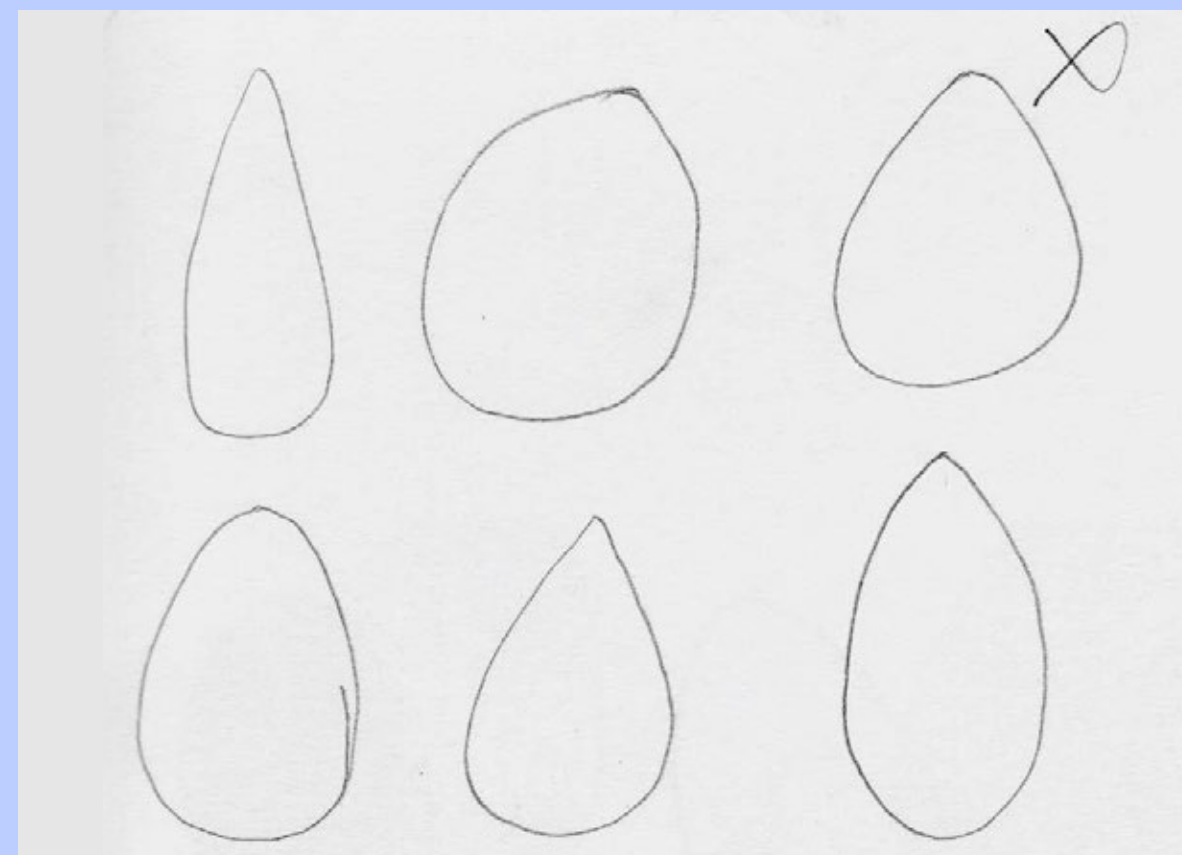
When I started the fruit project, I was keen to use the botanical definition of fruit and also include fruits which are commonly thought of as vegetables.

Whilst at work, we used a lot of avocados for a job and I collected and dried the seeds. I have always found the super smooth, slippery stone, interesting.

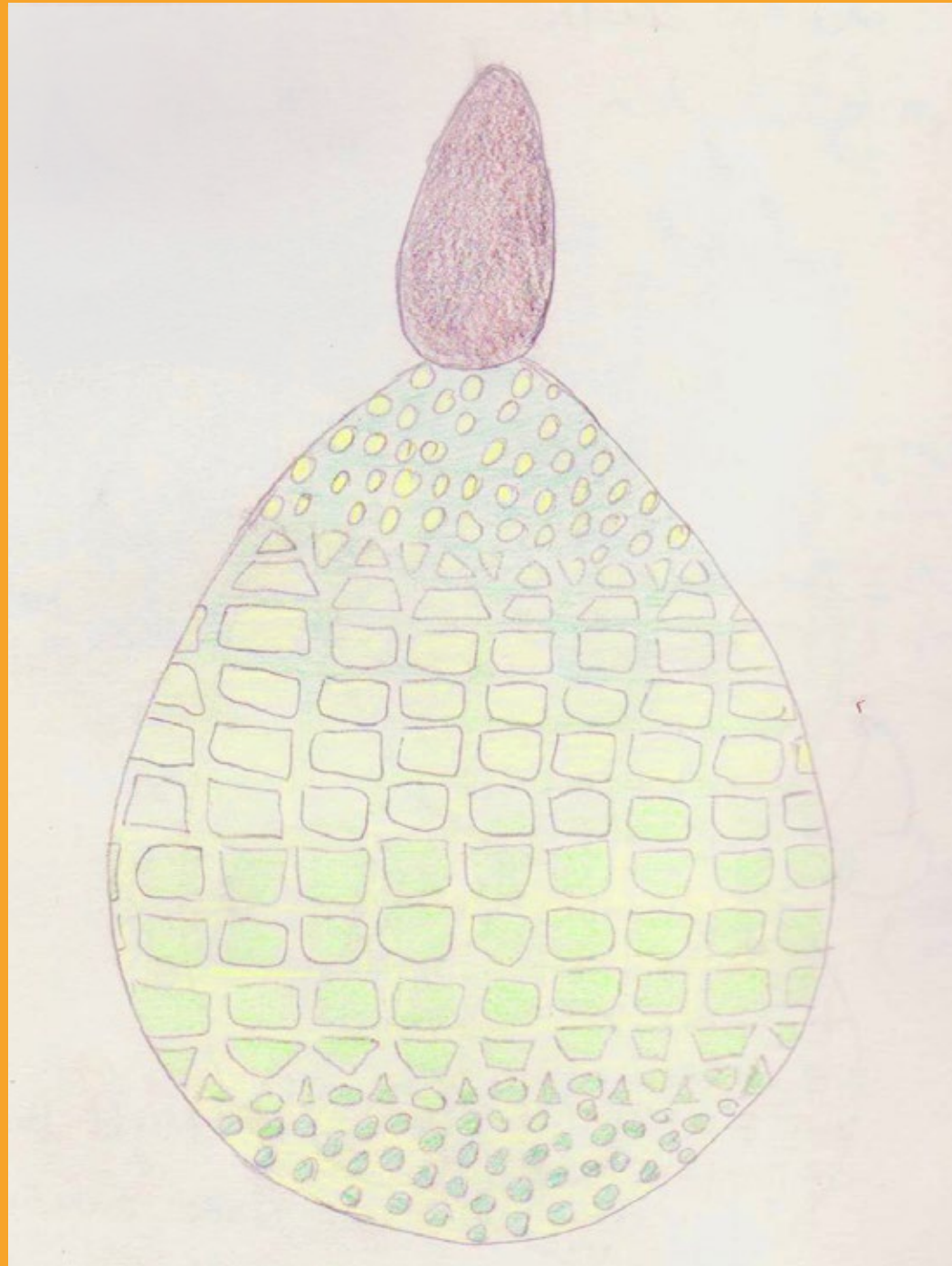
I found some very interesting things in Connie Barlow's book, *The Ghosts of Evolution*. In it she describes how it is a mystery why the avocado is still around, as from an evolutionary point of view it shouldn't be. The large slippery seed was designed to be eaten whole by a very large mammal, the likes of which died out millennia ago*.

To honour the mighty avocado for surviving against the odds, I decided the shape of my avocado vessel should be a seed.

* Barlow, Connie C. *The Ghosts Of Evolution, Nonsensical Fruit, Missing Partners, And Other Ecological Anachronisms*. Basicbooks, 2002.

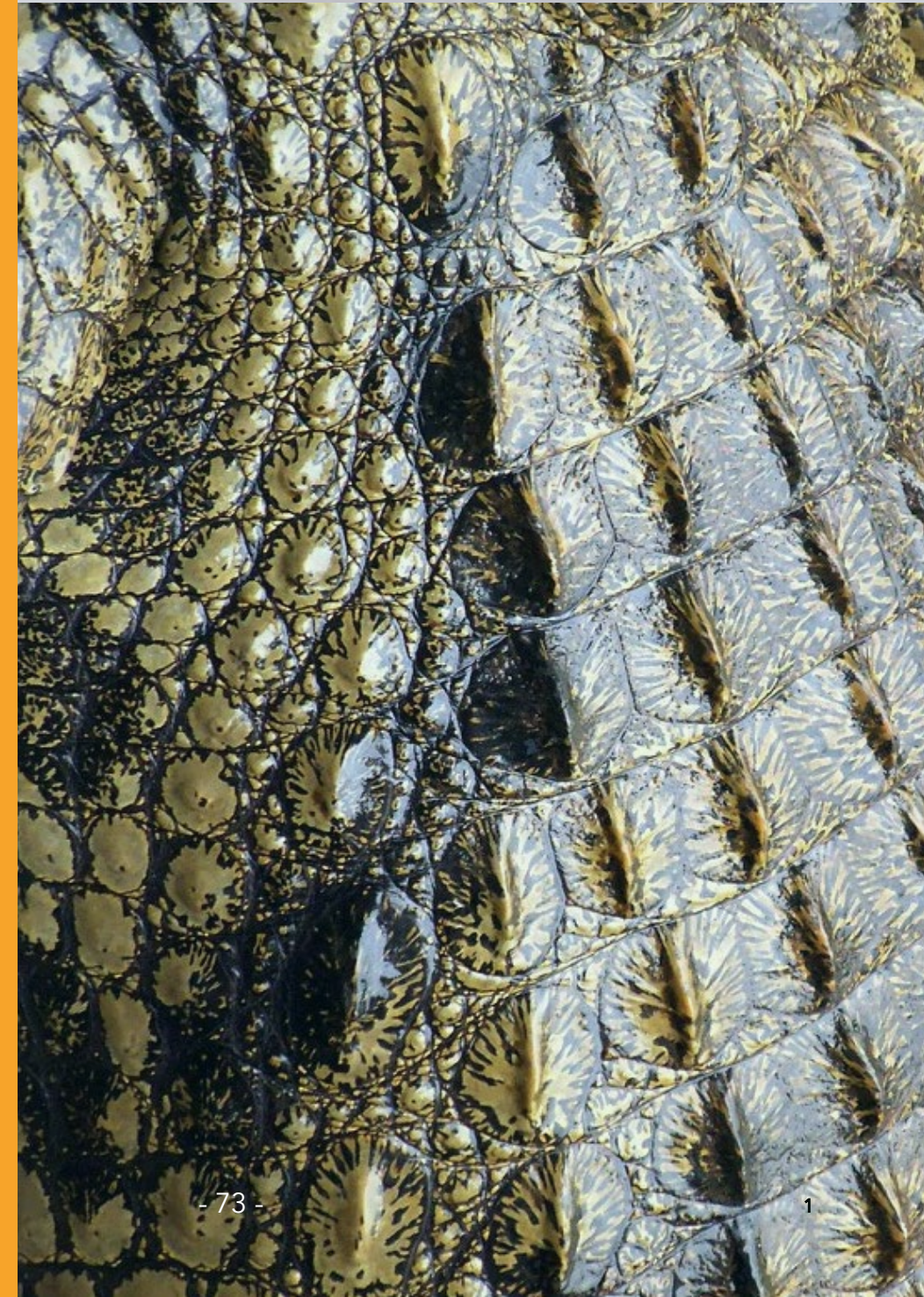


narrative research



As well as the ghosts of evolution research I also found out that avocados can also be called crocodile or alligator pears. This is what I ended up using as inspiration for the decoration of the seed.

As the bright greens of an avocado are only visible once the fruit has been opened, I wanted to show on the stand using that familiar ombre of yellow to dark green. I researched through drawing and photography to determine which way the colours should go and decided the heavy dark green should start at the bottom, otherwise the piece might look top heavy.



To get the colour into the piece I planned to inlay coloured decorating slip in a crocodile print pattern. For this I used my coloured test tiles I made while looking at joy, for inspiration for colours.

The amounts of stain in the test tiles translated into amounts for making the decorating slip.



To construct the avocado seed, I decided to throw it on a potter's wheel in two halves. This required me to throw bigger than I ever had done before but luckily I was having a good throwing day when I decided to try make the avocado.

Controlling the weight of clay was difficult but I found not thinking about what I was doing helped. Using a knuckle to pull up the clay was also more sturdy and supportive than using fingertips as I normally would.

I used a scale drawing to help with sizing and used callipers to get the openings the same size for joining the pieces.

Connecting the two halves was a challenge as somehow in the process something had become off centre so when closing the top, it became difficult to control the clay. As I had left the bases quite heavy, luckily there was enough clay to play with to get the final seed/egg shape.





To make the crocodile print pattern, I drew from photographs and once I was confident that I knew the pattern, I drew it onto my seed. I then proceeded to gouge out the shapes which was very satisfying. After mixing up the different decorating slip colours, I used a syringe to squirt the colours in, again - satisfying. As I was using 6 different shades of yellow to green, I numbered the levels of each colour to get the right gradation.





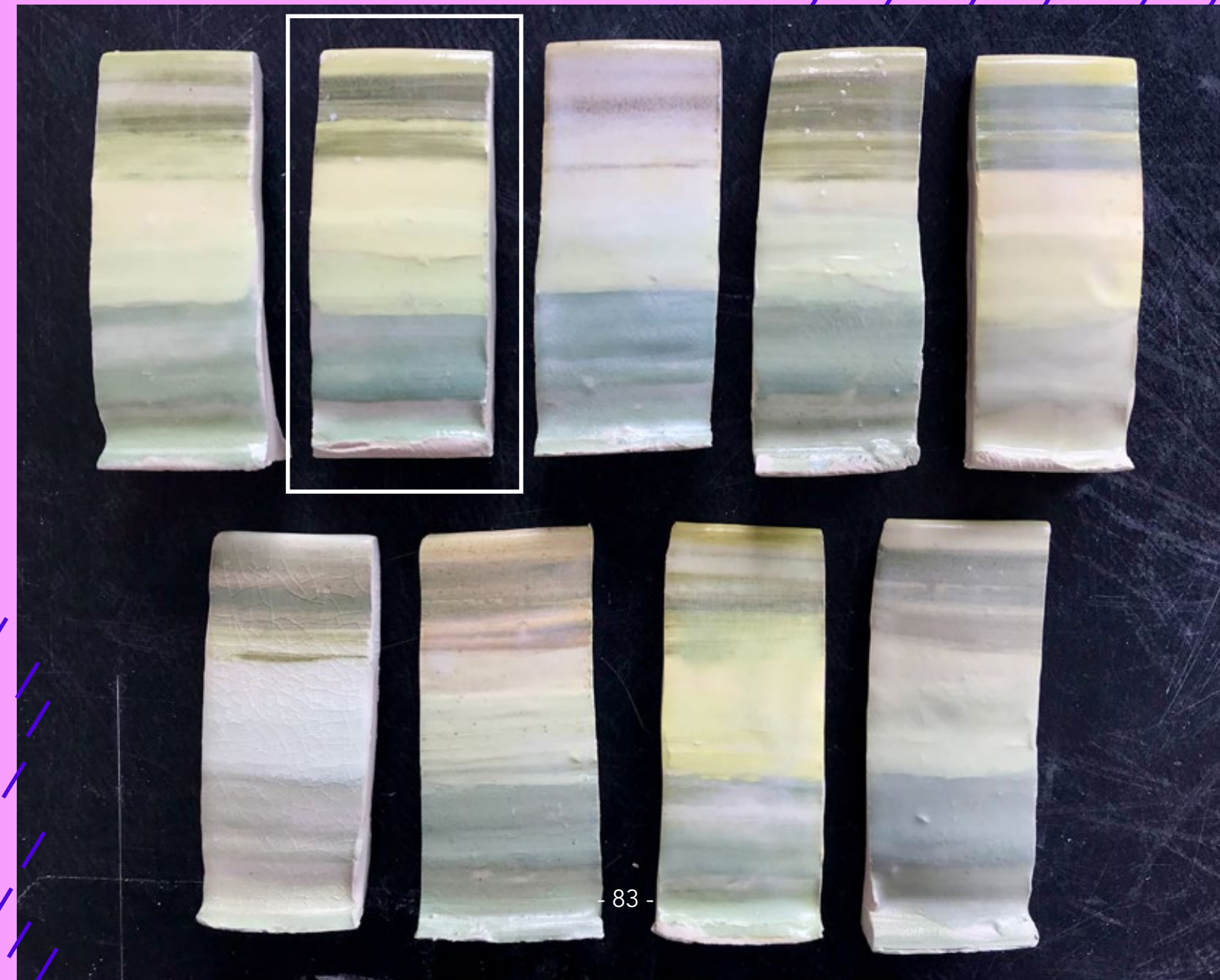
Once all of the inlay was completed, I burnished the seed to get the smoothest surface I could. As much as possible I wanted the seed to replicate the silky smoothness of an avocado seed.

I then decided to paint the grey or off-white clay in-between the coloured crocodile print. This was to get more colour into the piece as colour is one of the important aspects of my project and a piece not entirely covered would be a missed opportunity.

Whilst painting I realised that this completely negated the effect of the inlay as I could just as easily painted this pattern on top of a gradient of yellow - green slip. However I enjoyed the processes involved with the inlay but if I were to make another I would consider throwing with coloured clay to eliminate the need for paint.



To enhance the smoothness of the seed, I tested smooth glazes. I was also interested in a more matt finish as high gloss didn't seem to work with the organic surface. I created a series of tests to find the perfect glaze. None had all the qualities I wanted but I decided to go for a glaze which had some gloss but importantly made the colours of the tile pop.



crocodile pear

approx. 242 x 217 x 217

stoneware

I will definitely be making more egg/seed shaped objects in the future, I loved every process required to create this piece.

Although it isn't yet glazed, I am very happy with the piece. It fits the brief I set myself as the contrasting colours of the brown skinned avocado and the underglaze, set the avocado apart. I am looking forward to seeing the colours of the slip coming through when the piece is glazed.

If I were to redo it, I would think about the possibility of testing a sample of just inlay without the paint as I would be interested to see if the colours would be strong enough on their own. I would also pay more attention to the gradient of yellow to green as there are distinct bands of colour on the piece.

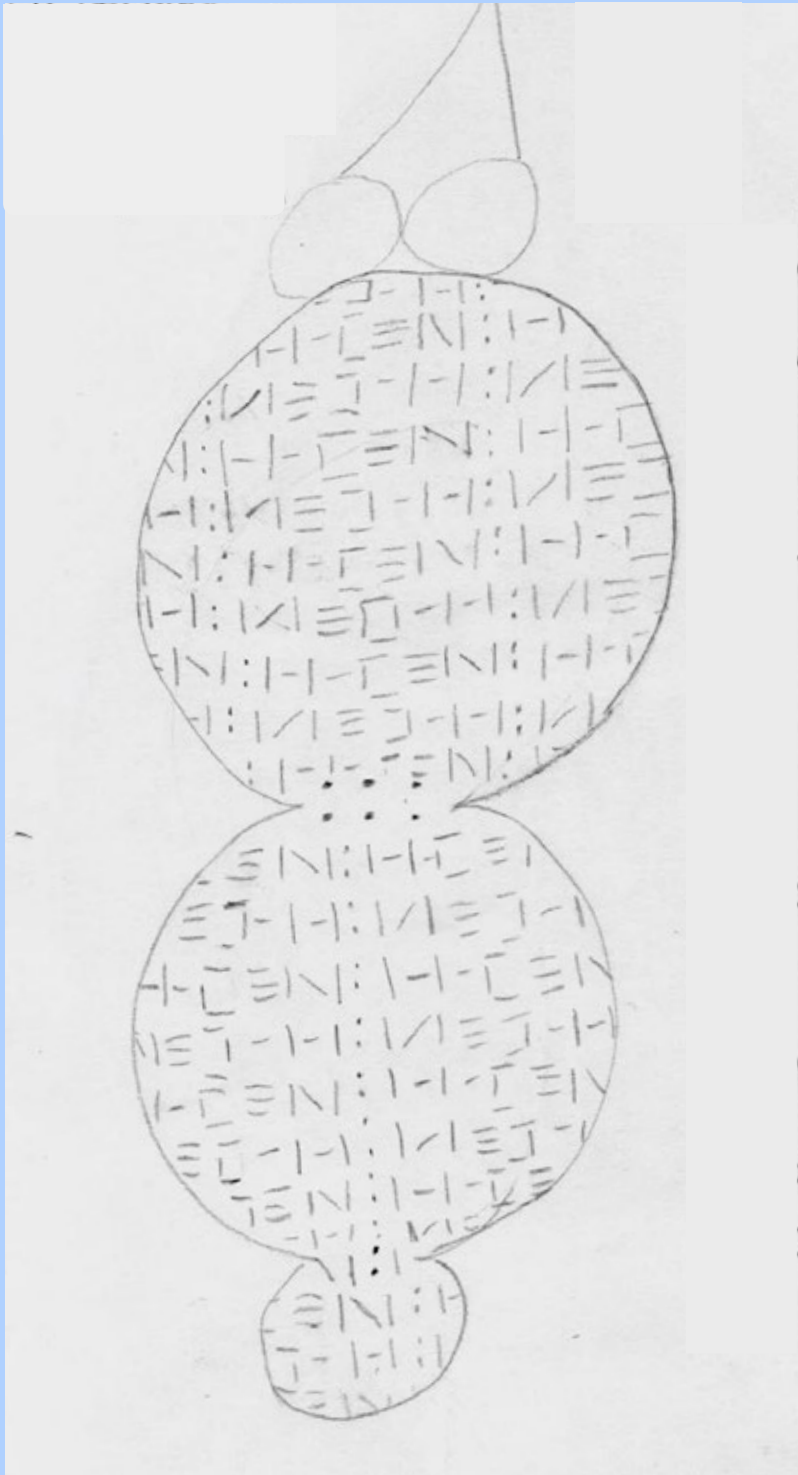




A close-up photograph of numerous pink cherry blossoms in full bloom. The flowers are densely packed, with some in sharp focus in the foreground and others blurred in the background. The petals are a vibrant pink color, and the centers show stamens. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of more blossoms and a hint of blue sky.

cherry

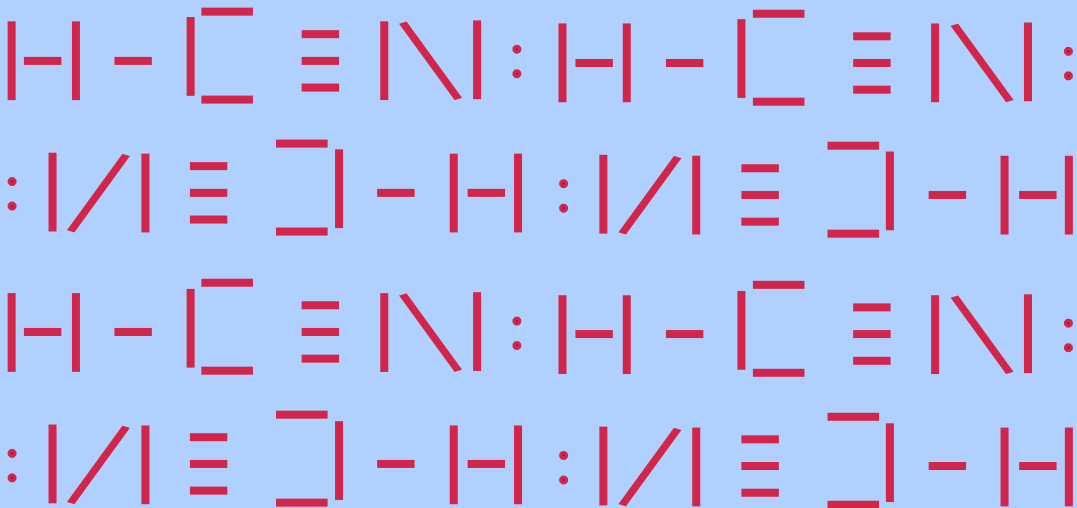
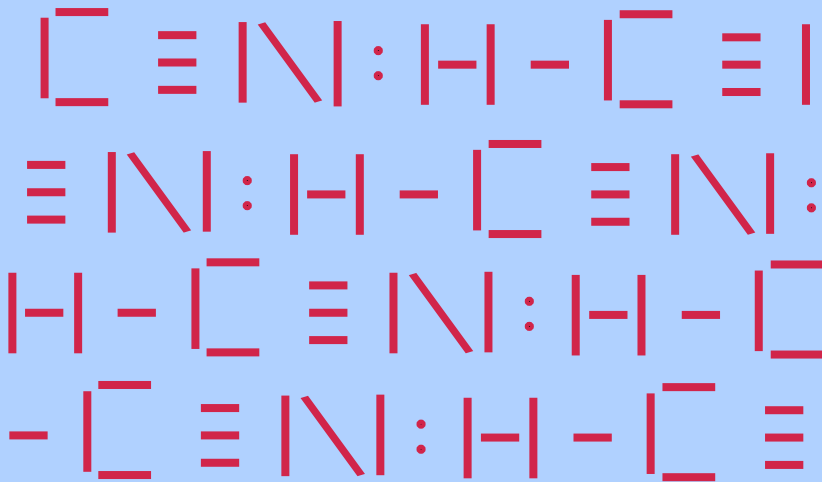
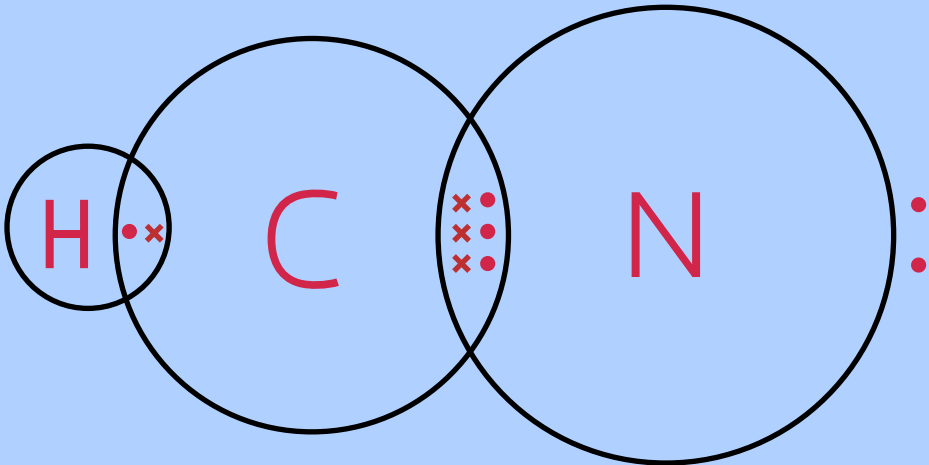
narrative research



The idea for the cherry stand came quite quickly and was fully formed. Through my research I knew cherry seeds contain molecules that when broken down turn into cyanide. It would only take 2 or 3 crushed up stones to kill a person. I read a news article about a man who decided to crunch them for fun and had to be rushed to hospital for the antidote*.

As I have always been interested in science and chemistry, I decided to look at the structure and chemical formula of hydrogen cyanide to inspire the form of my piece. It was perfect, with 2 free electrons which could be the place to stand a pair of cherries. Also by abstracting the formula I could easily create interesting patterns which could decorate the surface.

* "Man Poisoned After Eating Cherry Seeds". BBC News, 2017, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-40738573>.





To create my atomic forms, I chose to coil hemispheres and then later join them all together.

To get an accurate relative size for the different atoms in the piece, I used their atomic numbers. For example, I created circular templates for each sphere with the measurements being; H1 - 1cm radius, C6 - 6cm radius and N7 - 7cm radius.

I then coiled up from there. I was unsure how successful the pieces would be but became more confident when I had smoothed out the lumps and bumps and had beaten the sphere into shape.

Once all the hemispheres had become spheres and those spheres had become connected to one another, I set about making a stamp to create the patterned texture. I found that a flattened length of copper wire worked very well, attached to a thin piece of wood along with a colon stamp from an alphabet set.





I took inspiration from some of my failed pomegranate test tiles as a starting point to create my cherry glaze. I was initially worried that the colours of the pomegranate stand would be too similar to the deep red of the cherry. I looked into yellow/red cherries which are called Rainier cherries but the dappled nature of the colour seemed hard to achieve.

However, by adding more chrome oxide to the pomegranate glaze, I was happy with the richer and deeper red that was produced.



two or three stones

approx. 134 x 250 x 134

stoneware

Although without a pair of cherries or glaze at the time of writing, I am pleased with this stand. The spherical nature of the the atoms is good and the pattern on top almost looks like a different language, which chemistry often looks like.

To have the stand balancing on the small hydrogen atom, as in my original design, would've definitely required an additional stand for a stand. I think it would've looked impressive but cluttered.







watermelon

During the Easter break, I made a fruit salad at work and found the negative form created by a melon-balled melon very interesting. So I decided to cast the halves in plaster and I love the resulting bobbles that came out.

This experiment sparked my interest in creating a melon stand. When I first had the idea of fruit stands I was interested to make some where the proportions of fruit to stand were inverted or not what you'd expect. So I chose to create a tiny stand for a large watermelon.



narrative research

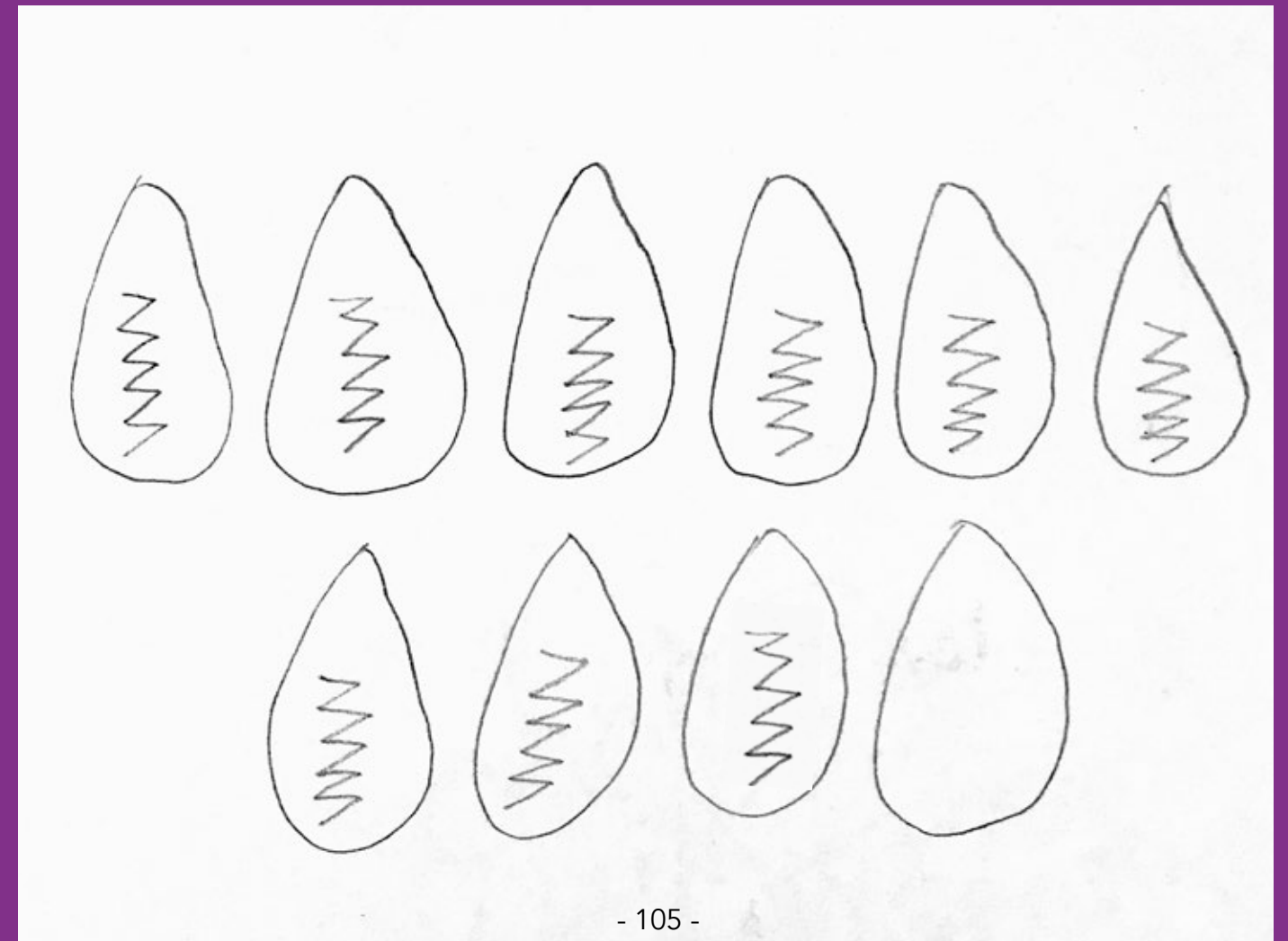
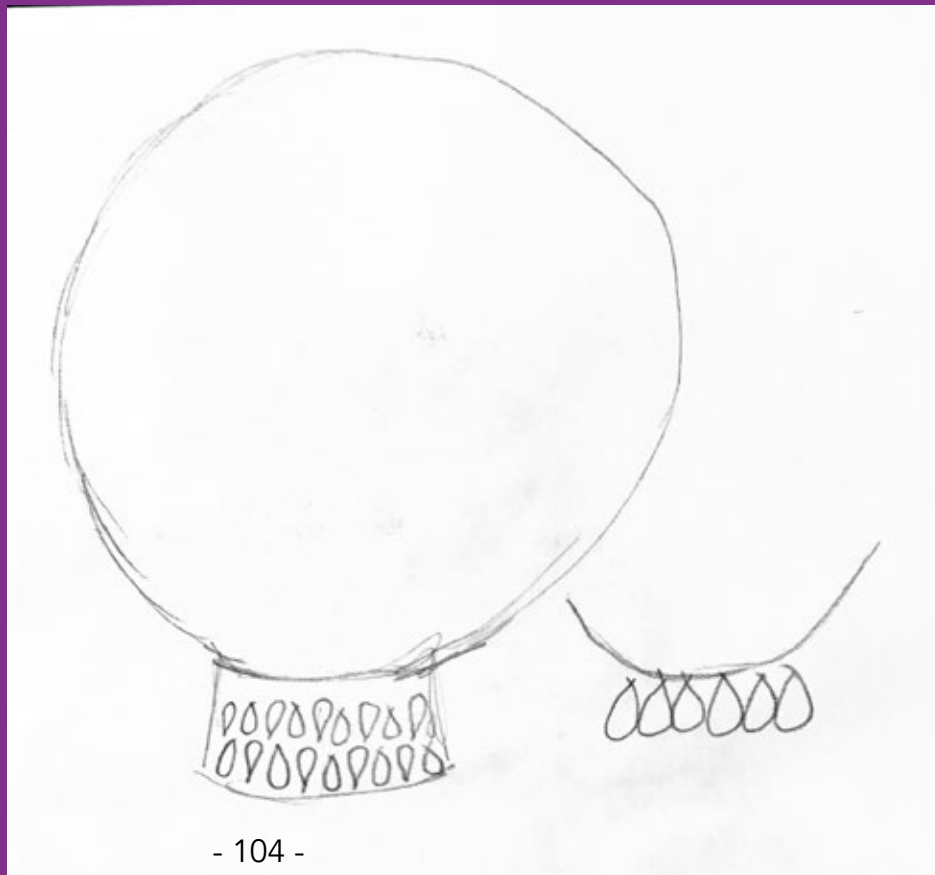
I found that they originated in Africa and before they were cultivated, were a hard and bitter fruit. However, people realised that as they didn't spoil for weeks they were a great source of water. The Egyptians began cultivating them so they were more edible and tasty.

There is evidence of watermelons in Egyptian paintings and also in tombs, including King Tut's. The occupant of the tomb was about to go on a long journey so water would be needed.

For my stand I wanted to show this Egyptian heritage so I decided to create watermelon seeds and engrave them with the hieroglyphic for water.

Another piece of information I found was that watermelons are 92% water and 6% sugar. To honour this fact I made ten seeds with nine having the hieroglyphic on their surface.

The bobble experiments were fun, but to create that shape in ceramic would be very hard due to the undercuts on every bobble. So I conducted further research into watermelons.





I used black clay to make the seeds which I made by mixing copper oxide into a reclaimed batch of clay. After trying out a few different shapes of seed, I divided the clay into ten equal pieces. The seeds remind me of dinosaur teeth and maybe they are too wide but they give the piece the stability to carry a watermelon. The finished seeds were then bur-nished and carved into and arranged.

To attach them I used slip but then also pipetted glaze onto the joins to add extra strength as the contact points were very small.

I found at the higher temperature of stoneware the oxide in the clay released gases and so the surface became pitted and rough. For this reason and also because earthenware gave the darker colour, I chose to fire to earthenware.

92%

approx. 67 x 135 x 135

earthenware

I am looking forward to seeing a watermelon on this stand, I think it could be quite comical due to the size difference. I will also be finishing the piece by adding gold leaf to the hieroglyphics which should elevate the piece. I really like the shapes created by the seeds when in formation.

Interestingly this is the only fruit stand that isn't a vessel and although it still works in the context, it would be good if there was uniformity across the work.







blackcurrant

narrative research

As a project focussed on fruit, it was important to me to use a wide range, including less commonly available fruit such as a blackcurrant.

Blackcurrants are high in vitamin C and during WW2 when oranges were scarce, blackcurrant crops were encouraged. A blackcurrant syrup was free for children under two*, This might be why blackcurrant is a popular flavour for squashes and deserts. However they are rarely found in a supermarket. So I decided to look closer at this small berry.

I found that one of the reasons they are hard to find is because they were banned in the USA. The bushes were thought to carry disease that affected eastern white pine trees which were important for the logging industry**.

For the blackcurrant piece it is based on the white pine tree which I have distorted. I decided to do this because I like the idea of a tall thin stand with a tiny berry on top, completely out of scale.

* "Blackcurrant Facts For Kids". Kids. Kiddle.Co, <https://kids.kiddle.co/Blackcurrant>.
** "Black Currants Are Making A US Comeback With These Remarkable Benefits". Alivebynature - All About NAD+, <https://alivebynature.com/black-currants-are-making-a-us-comeback-with-these-remarkable-benefits/>.
1. National Christmas Tree Association. Eastern White Pine. <http://www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/Education/Tree-Varieties/White-Pine>. Accessed 5 May 2019.





Inspired by the white pine trees, I decided to make the piece in porcelain, I'd never worked with it before so why not try now.

To create the cone shape I was after, I first tried to throw a cone. That didn't go very well as I couldn't get enough height to it as well as keeping the walls thin enough.

Instead I decided to coil build and left the down marks on the outer surface as they reminded me of the texture of pine cones.

1. Bulman, Joseph. *Coiling*. 2019. JPEG File
2. Bulman, Joseph. *Neck*. 2019. JPEG File
3. Bulman, Joseph. *Look How Tall I Am*. 2019. JPEG File

white pine

approx. 670 x 217 x 215

porcelain

This piece reminds me of a mountain of ear wax or a stalagmite.

I think in my excitement to make a tall thin piece the shape of a pine tree got lost. It was made at the end of the project and if I had more time, I would have experimented with finishes and surfaces, as the rough finger marks look unrefined. I like the piece from far away but not up close.

Working with porcelain was interesting and I would do it again when throwing, but I would be tentative to hand build as it was easy for the clay to look overworked when coiling.

However I am excited for a tiny blackcurrant to sit on top. I think at this scale it will look great.

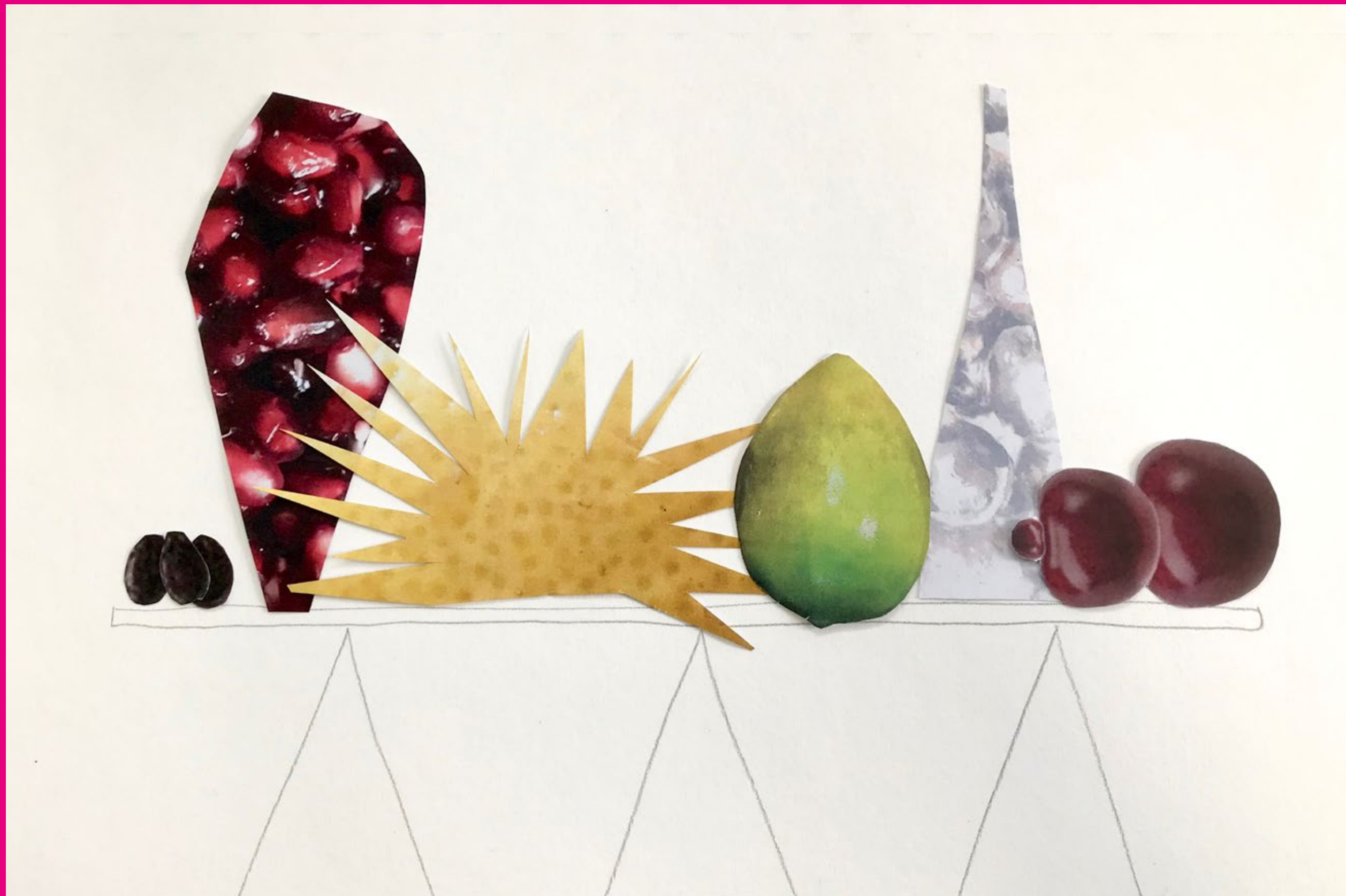




ANY BOWL

£1.00^p

conclusion



Here we are at the end!

I hope you enjoyed this little publication, I definitely enjoyed creating the content for it.

This project has allowed me to create a method of working which I can now use and apply to my future work. I look forward to creating more work with forms inspired by narrative.