



June 24 – September 25, 2016  
Opening reception: June 23, 6PM

*Paula Murray: You Are Me*

Since the origins of the studio pottery movement in the early twentieth-century, the bowl has fascinated material based artists who choose to perfect or disrupt its surface and shape. It is a universal form easily identified as a container of liquids and solids and often understood as a metaphorical symbol of life.

For Paula Murray the clay vessel is a canvas to explore the tensions of life's many paradoxes: culture and nature, deliberation and chance, fragility and strength and, most importantly, the individual and the collective. Murray lives and works in a cottage by the lake in Gatineau Park. Here she witnesses the volatility of nature, which informs her work instilling a distinctly organic aquatic sensibility. She and her family sailed the world for five years. She has spent as much time in a vessel as she has thinking about and making them.

“Raw” and “fragmented,” these are the words that Murray uses to describe her upbringing and they fittingly apply to the vessels themselves. After years of trial and error, Murray has refined an original process of casting liquid porcelain with fiberglass, a blend that causes stress in the hybrid clay body, which Murray further exploits by prematurely releasing the work from the mould and gently manipulating its shape as it dries to warp and furl.

Each bowl begins with a pure and unblemished skin but over multiple kiln firings, Murray employs a variety of techniques of infilling, knitting, sandblasting and burnishing to either enhance or diminish the ruptures. The patina that Murray creates in these open, closed, vertical and horizontal receptacles convey a uniqueness seemingly attained over a passage of time. Look inside and outside each vessel: the smooth and rough textures, the fractures, the ripples, and the wrinkles connote pulsating veins, muscles, flaws, and defects. The bowls nestle in a ring on a wrapped tubular metal armature. Together as a group they form a wondrous and harmonious collection while maintaining their individuality to reveal both strength and tranquillity. The message is at once ambiguous and clear: we are all the same yet different, you are me, and I am you.

Rachel Gotlieb  
Guest Curator