

Student name: Talia Joy Mullane

P Number:2501159

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This show focuses on the line separating 'fine art' and 'craft', looking into how traditional utensils can be transformed, using their functional characteristics in an alternative way for aesthetic purposes. The show will dive deeper into the idea of 'form vs function' and 'transformation', taking a form you know and transforming it into something new, questioning how this affects its function, meaning and how it is viewed. The exhibition will focus on collections from two contemporary artists alongside a historic artefact. This aims to inspire the viewer to look at objects they use and see every day in a different light, hopefully leading to further exploration into how they themselves could transform these objects into new work. The show will take place in the Mission Gallery located in Swansea Marina, which is a former church transformed into a gallery space with one main gallery room featuring high ceilings, bright white walls, and great natural light.

A key feature of this show is a willow-pattern tea set, featuring a teapot, tea cups, saucers, a jug and a lidded jar. The willow pattern is believed to have been created by Thomas Mitton in Delft, Netherlands, but was later mass-produced in Liverpool, England, in 1756, where it became a common household dinnerware set, remaining popular through the 1900s (Draper, 2021). The pattern is in the style of original blue and white Chinese illustrations, with the scenes containing buildings, birds, bridges, trees and floral details. The pattern portrays a story inspired by a Chinese fairytale called the green willow. The tale portrays a wealthy mandarin's daughter and his assistant who fall in love. Their love is forbidden, so they escape to a far island. This angers the mandarin, who sends his men to kill the lovers. Seeing this, the gods immortalise the lovers into two doves. Aspects from the tales that are present in the pattern include the duke arriving on the boat, 3 men chasing over the bridge, the two doves and the far island (all details of the story). The set displayed in this show is a common household dinnerware set portraying a classic functional pottery set where each component is used for its original intended purpose. Although the set is functional, the willow pattern adds pattern and story to the set.



Fig 1 -Vintage blue willow children's tea set, 1930s

Ceramic sculpture and installation artist Ronit Barange creates figurative tea sets which question the border between living and still life. Baranga has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Literature from the University of Haifa in Israel, and was awarded the Israeli Ministry of Culture Award in 2016 (Beinart Gallery, 2026). Her work portrays humanistic qualities, including tongues which extend out of the pots and fingers which encapsulate movement. Barange's work explores the line between 'art' and 'craft', taking everyday objects, including tea pots and teacups and rendering them unfit for their original purpose. Included in the show will be a collection called 'not your normal tea set' which displays a mixture of stacked tea cups, saucers and confectionery, all with additional fingers and mouths. The positions and body parts chosen suggest a sexual scene, as all the mouths are shown to be open with tongues protruding out, and the fingers often gripping the mouths. Ronit Barange states that the mouths and fingers are chosen for their sensual properties as they allow them to be "very powerful as separated items"(Zuras, 2015). Barange states that she takes "objects designated for specific purposes, such as plates, cups and milk jugs, all designed for liquids and transforms them into active agents with choice over their own identity. Thus 'craft' became 'art'."

Barange's work, though still having all the features of the functional utensils, is unable to be used as a tea set but is just a work to be viewed, showcasing the theme of 'arts vs craft'. Baranga's work conveys a lot of movement through the 'scampering fingers', showing where 'still became alive'(Beinart Gallery, 2026).



Fig 2- Not your normal tea set, Ronit Barange 2021

(fig 3) Li Xiaofeng studied to be a muralist at Huanggang College before switching to sculpture (Solo Contemporary, 2020). Li Xiaofeng is drawn to porcelain, which leads to his collection of garments made up of sections of pottery, primarily blue and white china, that are stitched together and meticulously arranged to form the garments. Xiaofeng uses ancient pottery, some dating back to the Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties (Stewart, 2018). He researches and collects the porcelain he uses, allowing each new garment to tell a story that 'stitches together centuries of history'. Xiaofeng gives the ancient porcelain 'new life, not as relics of the past but as intricate garments'(Hube magazine, 2025). In the show will be Li Xiaofeng's piece 'Qing period shards', a wearable garment constructed of broken shards of porcelain which have been polished, shaped and arranged to form a dress. Li Xiaofeng uses the original structure of the porcelain to his advantage to create the structure of the garments. Alongside porcelain dresses, Xiaofeng has also created wearable suit jackets and shirt combinations in the same style.

A key theory that has been prominent in this show is the Bauhaus philosophy. Bauhaus was arguably the single most influential modernist art school of the 20th century. The school took inspiration from movements such as the 'arts and crafts movement' and 'art nouveau'(The Art Story, 2010). The section of their manifesto which is key for this show is 'No border between artist and craftsman'(Art, 2019). The Bauhaus theory highlights the idea that we should all 'turn to crafts'(Art, 2019) rather than suggesting a distinct divide between fine art and craft.



Fig 3 - *'Beijing Memory No. 5,' 2009, Qing period shards*

When showing the willow pattern tea set, Ronit Baranges collection and Li Xiaofeng's porcelain dress alongside each other, it challenges the traditional divide between 'fine art' and 'craft'. Bringing the pieces together as a show aims to make the viewer question form and function through taking a form you know and transforming it into something new. How does this affect how you view it? When you look at the willow pattern tea set, you see a functional set; this will obstruct how you view the piece as you are viewing it with the point of view of using it in a functional sense. This view takes away from the artwork and story behind the set. A viewer is less likely to look deep into the art and design of a functional set as opposed to a collection like Ronit Baranges, which draws in the viewer as it takes something ordinary and changes it, adding new features and is clearly not fit for function.

Li Xiaofeng uses ceramics similar to the willow pattern pieces in his work. The willow pattern is of direct inspiration from traditional Chinese imagery, which is what Xiaofeng uses to tell stories within his garments. Putting the collection together as a whole shows the audience that you can take items connected by their form or purpose, but each can tell its own story, depending on how you manipulate the form.

Running alongside the show will be a community workshop. Free with 20 spaces open to the public before the show, taking unused or broken ceramics, gathered from local charity shops and creating A5 mosaics from the broken shards. This will be fixed with grout and displayed on the wall alongside the main show. After the exhibition is finished, the participants will be allowed to retrieve their mosaic to keep, serving as a reminder of the show. This community workshop will add to the show as it will involve the community gaining insight into the show, but will also convey that it's not only professionals who can re-invent and design, but everyone can explore how they could repurpose objects into something special.

When I visited the mission gallery in Swansea, I was first drawn to the natural light and high ceilings of the gallery space. The mission gallery is not only fit for the show in the space itself, but also connects well with the theme of the show. Outwardly, it appears to be a church, but has been transformed into a gallery space, so its form no longer fulfils its original function as a church. Within the gallery space, there are two sections in one room with a square room connected to a round space through an archway. This round space will be used to display the porcelain dress as it draws

light on the piece, making it a focal point, and making sure the dress is viewed just as much as the other work.

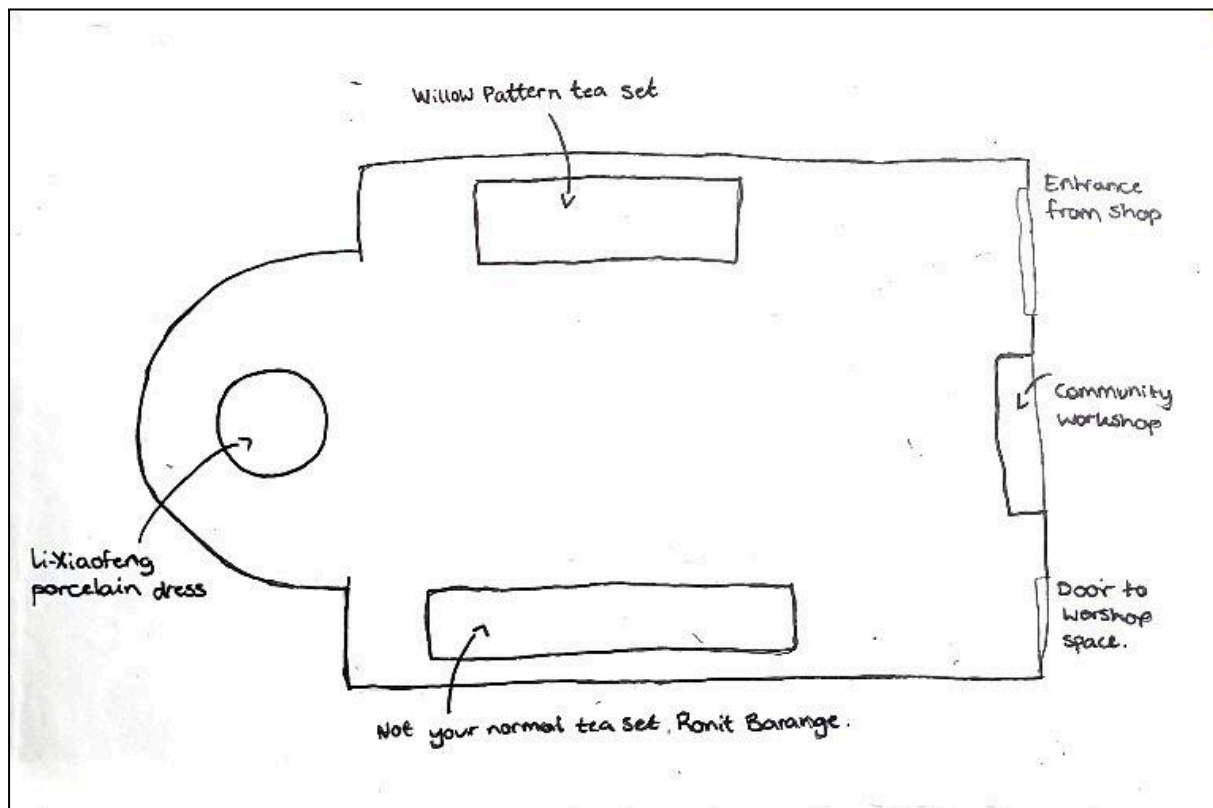


Fig 4. - Mullane, T. Map of exhibition, 2026.

Through my research into curation, I have learned a lot about the importance of the order of work and how I display collections. In the mission gallery, you only have one room, so all items will be visible from the moment you step into the space, which is important to the show as it highlights all the work as equal, rather than implying a hierarchy.

I want my audience to leave the exhibition with more curiosity about objects' intended function and how form affects how we view things. I want to inspire people to repurpose items into new work and motivate them to add more decoration and pattern to the everyday items they surround themselves with. This show aims to get people to look closer at normal items, appreciate design and the thought behind common objects.

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Figure list

Fig 1 -Vintage blue willow child's tea set 1930s

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Fig 3 - '*Beijing Memory No. 5*, ' 2009, *Qing period shards*

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