

Ceramic Art Creation with Emotion

The concept of my project is to use ceramic materials to tell a story. Although ceramics are often made into small crafts, they possess an often overlooked inherent strength. My goal is to magnify this strength, amplifying the impact of ceramics as a material, to bring a visceral experience to every viewer.

In this article, my aim is to narrate the discoveries and reflections I have made during my studies in Swansea, along with my creative process. Ultimately, I attempt to answer the question, "How can public ceramic art installations evoke empathy?"

In Course 7016, I have detailed my psychological experience in Clyne Garden using the method of autoethnography, carefully analyzing each corner filled with emotional significance. Through comparative analysis of Gormley's mental landscapes and McEwan's profound reflections on the real world, I have been able to more accurately describe the psychological experiences of Clyne Garden. Tim Ingold's anthropological perspective also provided me a new way to consider the relationship between people and their environment, especially attitudes toward materials and the process of making.

The description of Clyne Garden reveals that this natural setting is not just a place but a symbolically rich space, where every corner reflects deep emotional and psychological experiences. The acts of observing and describing not only help us understand ourselves more deeply but also let us feel a close connection with nature and others. As a venue for emotional and psychological exploration, Clyne Garden offers a unique perspective to experience Heidegger's "Dasein," the state of being actively and interactively present in the world. This philosophical reflection helps us better understand our position and role in the world and shape our understanding and feelings about existence through daily activities and experiences. Overall, Clyne Garden not only offers a closeness to natural beauty but also provides an opportunity for a profound inner journey and self-discovery.

The relationship between space and memory is particularly pronounced in parks. Each visit can trigger different emotions and memories than the last because each experience is unique, and the changes in time and nature mean that the same space presents differently at different times. This dynamic change makes Clyne Garden a living space, a place filled with personal history and emotional projections.

Tim Ingold's anthropological perspective (2013) offers a new way to consider the relationship between people and their environment, especially in terms of attitudes toward materials and the making process. Ingold posits that making is not just about creating form but is a process of interaction between people and the world. This view has prompted me to rethink how I establish connections with the surrounding environment through art and how the materials themselves can participate in the creative dialogue. In my artistic practice, this means not only respecting the inherent properties of each material but also exploring and expressing these characteristics through the process of handcrafting, thus allowing the artwork to more authentically reflect the power and beauty of the natural world.

The relationship between Antony Gormley's sculptural works and his meditation practice offers a unique perspective on his artistic creation (Gormley, 2009). He enters a deep state of self-perception through meditation, which is not only a physical sensation but also an exploration of the mind. This process from meditation to creation provides him with new methods to capture and express the state of human existence.

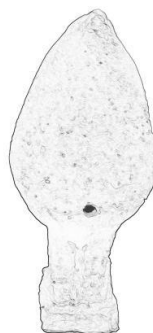
In Gormley's creative process(Gormley, 2009), the indexical nature of his sculptures makes them more than mere representations of artistic objects; they become entities that have direct connections with the real world. Through this approach, his works transcend traditional aesthetics and forms of artistic expression, becoming mediums through which to experience and feel human existence. This practice emphasizes the relationship between the body and space, as well as the physical and psychological dimensions of individual existence.

This method of viewing sculpture as an index allows viewers not only to see the existence of the sculptures as objects but also to feel the direct connections between the sculptures, the creator, the audience, and even the environment. Such artworks can stimulate the emotions and thoughts of viewers, prompting them to reflect more deeply on their relationships with the surrounding world. Thus, Gormley's works are not only visual delights but also experiences that touch upon the essence of human existence. Through this direct physical expression, his sculptures facilitate a more fundamental exploration and understanding of the human self and state of being, beyond mere representation.

These three pieces are inspiration exercises I conducted before embarking on formal works, showcasing my attempts to explore different tendencies in artistic creation. Through the three stages presented in Figure 1—clay draft, processed image, and AI-generated image—I was able to observe the entire evolution process of each piece from concept to completion. The first part of the work (Figure 2) employs a constructivist expression, where the use of geometric forms and textures not only emphasizes visual impact but also adds a sense of spatial depth to the artwork. The second part (Figure 3) expresses a primitive and intuitive art style by emphasizing the volume and intentionality of the work, giving it a more vivid expressiveness. The third part (Figure 4) uses delicate lines and an upward trending motion to display a vibrant visual flow, symbolizing vitality.



Especially in the first part of the work (Figure 2), I utilized a typical constructivist style, highlighting structured geometric forms, particularly triangles, which visually provide stability and a sense of balance. These geometric shapes not only symbolize the durability and timelessness of modernist architecture but also reflect humanity's pursuit of rationality and order. The composition of the entire piece, resembling a person with arms spread wide and kneeling in prayer, expresses a search for higher power or deeper spiritual values through a high degree of abstraction. This combination of posture and form not only creates a strong dynamic sensation visually but also emotionally triggers the viewer's deep contemplation about existence, spiritual pursuit, and the human condition.



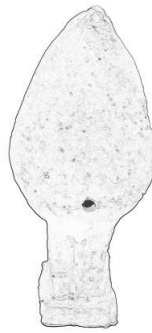
This artistic practice that crosses the boundaries of traditional and modern reflects my efforts to explore and express the multidimensionality of human experience. Each work is not just a display of physical form but also an experiment in my life experiences, philosophical reflections, and methods of artistic expression. Through these works, I hope to inspire viewers to reflect, explore their own feelings, and understand the world they inhabit. The diversity of these works and their gradual evolution during the creative process are a testament to the infinite possibilities of artistic creation.

During the process of using Stable Diffusion technology, I obtained a line drawing, then pre-processed the artwork, finally achieving the effect seen in Figure 2. Although Stable Diffusion is highly efficient in generating images, it also presents some challenges, especially in terms of image controllability. This technology makes it nearly impossible to precisely adjust certain details in the creation process, resulting in parts of the work that may not fully align with my original intentions. This lack of control is a significant drawback of current AI image generation technologies, limiting the artist's precise control over the details of the work.

Despite these limitations, AI technology as a creative auxiliary tool still shows its unique value. It allows me to quickly generate multiple versions of artwork, from which I can choose the one that best matches my artistic vision. For example, the image I selected is closer to the artistic effect I wanted to express in terms of texture and tone. I specifically chose a grayscale tone, which not only gives the work a more sober temperament but also resonates with my theme of exploring the integration of nature and form. This choice of tone reflects my meticulous consideration of the work's emotional expression and visual impact, emphasizing its depth and complexity.

Furthermore, this method allows me to experiment and realize my artistic concepts within a digital creation environment, while also exploring how technology influences traditional methods and outcomes in art creation. Although the involvement of AI introduces some unpredictability, it also opens up new possibilities, enabling me to explore novel expressions distinctly different from traditional handcrafted art.

This artwork (Figure 3) combines abstract human forms with geometric shapes to convey a strong artistic expression. The use of a rough artistic technique enhances the work's primitive feel and visual impact. The upper part's water droplet imagery symbolizes flow and change, while the highly abstracted human leg contours in the lower part provide a sense of stability and support. This contrast not only generates tension in form but also provokes deep reflection in meaning. The rough texture on the surface of the work adds visual depth, making the overall piece more vivid and expressive.

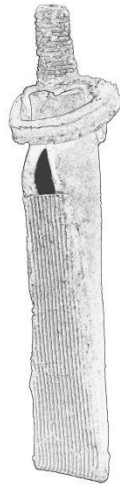


The design of a cave in the middle is particularly striking; it is not just a structural element but also symbolizes the deep connection between humans and nature. This design suggests an inward to outward flow of emotions and spirit, representing the ongoing interaction and communication between the human inner world and the external natural world. Additionally, the imagery of the cave connects to symbols of mysticism, sparking associations with the unknown and supernatural phenomena. This symbolic use imbues the work with multiple layers of interpretation.

The choice of color—pale earth tones—further enhances the work's natural feel and rustic texture, making it resemble an unearthed artifact or a relic of an ancient civilization. This use of color not only harmonizes the work visually but also evokes a nostalgic feeling of times past. This color strategy echoes ancient sculptures like the Venus of Willendorf, which convey symbolic meanings through exaggerated fertility imagery, whereas my work explores abstract expressions of human existence through simplified shapes and pure geometric forms.

The connection between them lies not only in their simplicity and abstraction but also in their deep symbolic exploration. By removing facial features, these works forgo depicting specific individual traits, instead emphasizing more universal, non-personalized concepts. This mode of expression challenges the traditional category of portrait sculpture, leading viewers into a broader space of contemplation—exploring the meaning of human existence as a whole and its profound connection with the natural world. In this way, my work is not just about shaping physical forms; it is a profound reflection and exploration of the human inner spiritual world.

This sculpture (Figure 4) through its columnar form and unique upper structure, successfully displays the perfect integration of geometric aesthetics and craftsmanship. Its vertical extension not only reminds one of traditional monuments or landmarks but also the circular structure at the top provides the necessary visual balance for this vertical stretch. This design powerfully guides viewers' gazes upward, emphasizing an extension towards the sky, symbolizing the pursuit of heights or ideals.



The clearly defined and expressive lines on the sculpture's surface, intentionally left during the creation process, display the material's layers and cumulative effects. This artistic technique not only highlights the work's handcrafted characteristics but also adds a unique texture and rhythm to the overall design, giving the piece deeper visual and tactile appeal. Furthermore, the choice of material and surface treatment evokes primitive craft techniques, like pottery making or clay sculpting, which emphasize direct and natural interaction with materials.

In his book *The Making*, Ingold(2013) explores the characteristics of craftsmanship, revealing not only the skills and details involved in artisanal production but also highlighting the profound cultural and philosophical significance of such activities. Through manual labor, such as rope making, we can experience the texture of materials and appreciate the close interaction between hand movements and the materials. This interaction allows the maker to infuse strength and energy directly into the material through their gestures, a process that is both physical and emotional.

The deliberate traces left in interaction with materials are not merely technical manipulations but also part of the artistic creation process. Each action can subtly affect the material. Over time, these traces accumulate within the object, becoming a visible record of history. Thus, handcrafted items are not merely physical objects but also containers carrying the emotions and memories of their creator.

Simultaneously, the overall neutral color tones of the artwork (as shown in Figure 4) further enhance its form and texture visually. These simple tones not only elevate the work's abstract nature but also emphasize its temporal and geological aspects, suggesting a respect for ancient crafting techniques and a preference for raw materials. This form may subtly reference the columnar structures used in ancient civilizations for commemoration or rituals, which often hold symbolic significance within their cultural contexts, closely associated with religious ceremonies, mythologies, or social hierarchies.

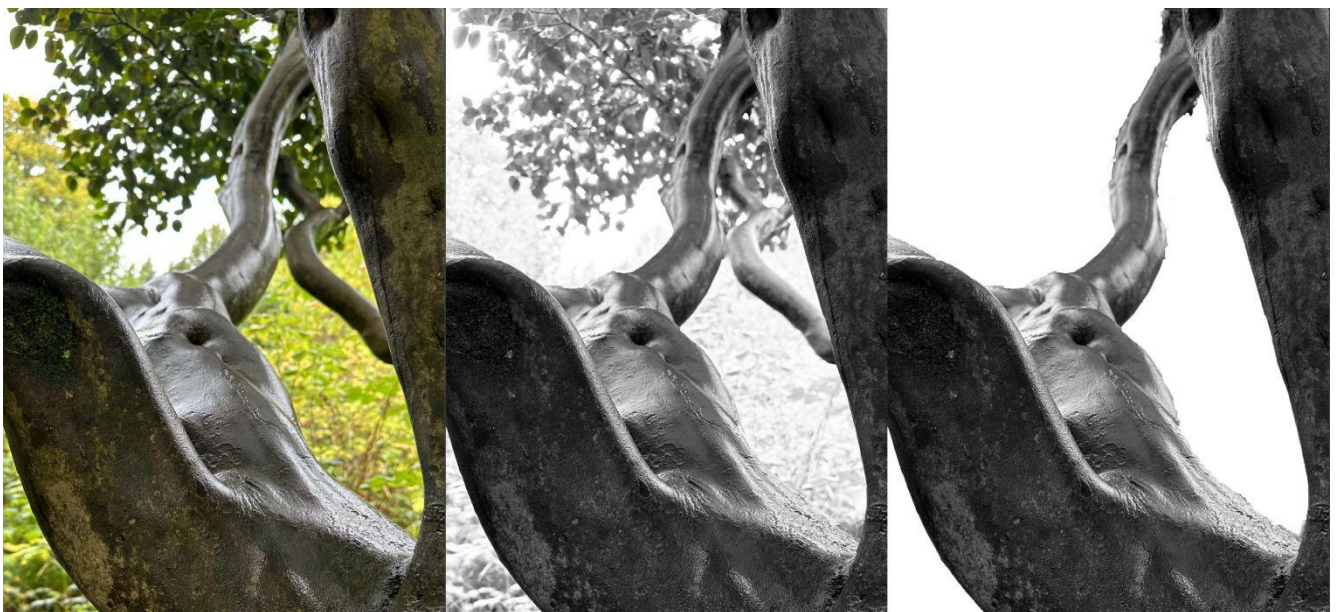
When designing large sculptures, I usually begin with small models or sketches, where the choice of form, color, and texture is crucial. These preliminary explorations directly impact the final work's visual and emotional expression, as shown in Figure 1. The transition from small drafts to large works involves a deep understanding of formal aesthetics and the meticulous application of technique, ensuring that the artistic vision in the drafts is

appropriately reflected on a larger scale.

The sculpture design shown in Figure 5 embodies a profound understanding and abstract expression of dynamic human forms. Its upward extension not only visually guides the viewer's gaze upwards but also symbolizes the pursuit of strength and freedom. This design integrates elements from Figures 3 and 4, where the dynamic features of the human body and abstract geometric forms work together, creating a potent and delicate visual and emotional experience. This combination is typically used in visual arts to enhance the expressive power of the work, making it not just a physical entity but a medium that can evoke emotions and thoughts in viewers.



The elongated and twisted forms of the sculpture echo elements from nature, such as flowing rivers and naturally growing plants, symbols of natural power and beauty. By employing minimalistic and fluid lines, the sculpture avoids overt figurative depiction, focusing instead on the relationship between form and space. This abstract expression allows the work to present a constantly changing beauty from different viewing angles, thereby enhancing the sculpture's dynamic presence and visual impact.

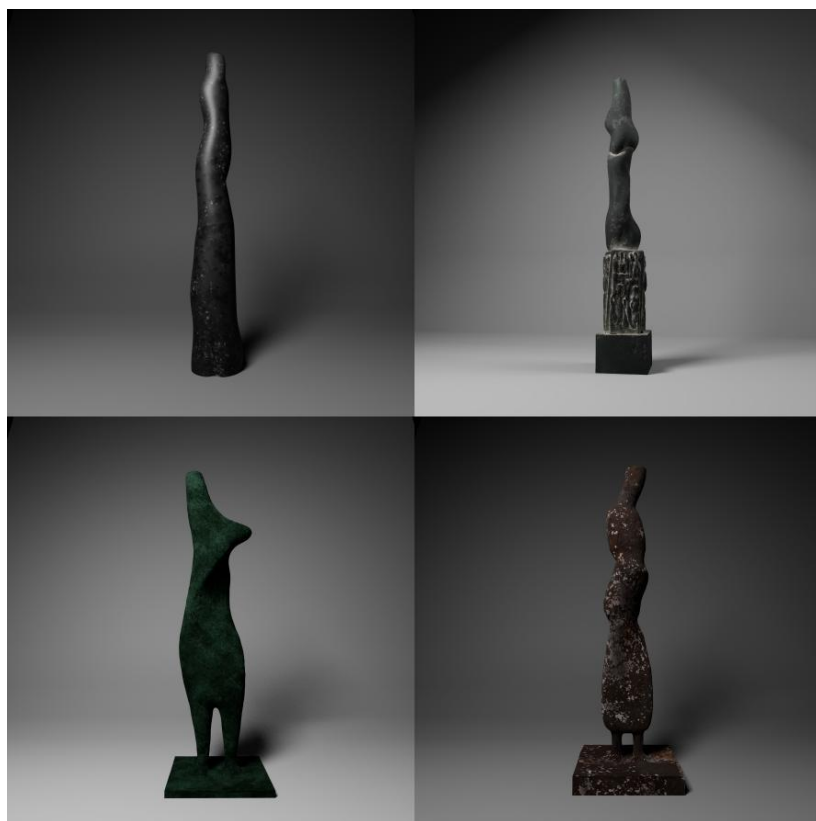


In terms of surface treatment and color choice, this piece deliberately uses restrained black, white, and gray tones.

These colors not only better represent the sculpture's form and texture but also convey the work's spiritual depth and philosophical dimensions more profoundly. The simplicity and intensity of black, white, and gray effectively focus the viewer's attention on the work's form and structure rather than the colors themselves. Moreover, this color choice also resonates with the existential themes the work seeks to express, exploring the essence of life and human existence through simplified forms.

Overall, this sculpture, with its unique forms, textures, and color choices, not only provides viewers with a novel artistic experience visually but also inspires deep reflection on human existence and the forces of nature on an emotional and philosophical level. Such artworks, through a high integration of form and content, successfully elevate viewers from their everyday visual experiences to contemplation of broader and deeper issues.

Indeed, eliciting empathy requires a deep exploration and a return to the essence of nature to find that commonality. As I experienced in Clyne Gardens in Swansea, accidental phenomena in nature, such as the light reflecting off a moist tree trunk after rain, can evoke a strong resonance within us. This experience transcends simple visual appreciation, touching deeper emotions and memories, as discussed by Heidegger in terms of "being-there," where every seemingly ordinary natural element can reveal its unique meaning and existence at a specific moment.



In the example of the tree trunk, the post-rain natural scene is not just a visual beauty but an experience of emotion and existence. This abstract representation of nature combined with the human body is a blend of nature's unconscious creation and human conscious perception. This tree trunk transforms from an ordinary natural object into a meaningful artistic symbol through human observation and inner feelings.

Fluidity and continuity are among the most prominent features of these sculptures. Their shapes are smooth, without obvious breaks or sharp angles, allowing viewers' eyes to naturally glide along the contours of the sculpture, thereby feeling its overall fluidity. This fluidity is not only physical but also visual, guiding the viewer's gaze to wander through the work, thus enhancing the interaction between the viewer and the sculpture, making it a dynamic visual experience.

Simplified forms are a common technique in abstract art. These sculptures emphasize shapes and outlines by omitting details, enhancing the overall unity and sense of form. This simplification not only makes the work visually clearer and more focused but also helps to highlight its intrinsic meaning and emotional expression, allowing viewers to more fully engage with the artistic concepts the artist intends to convey.

The organic textures give a sense of naturally formed aesthetics, as if affected by weathering, erosion, or natural growth. These textures are usually achieved through carving, polishing, or other forms of physical manipulation, making the sculpture not just a product of visual art but also a result of time and the forces of nature. This natural yet processed texture adds to the tactile and visual complexity of the sculpture, making it more captivating.

Moreover, although these works are very abstract, some sculptures still feature recognizable human-like forms, such as prominent curves and body postures. This abstract human suggestion makes the connection between the sculpture and the viewer more direct and profound, allowing viewers to see their reflections or feel shared human emotions and experiences in these curves and forms.

Balanced stability and dynamic integration is also an important aspect of these sculptures. Despite their varied forms, each piece is supported by a solid plinth that ensures the stability of the sculpture. In turn, a sense of dynamism is embedded in their gestures or shapes, making these static sculptures appear as if they are moving, thus providing the viewer with a richer visual and contemplative space. The text-like symbols or patterns contained in the base of the work add to the mystery and symbolism of the work. The texture and symbols of this text suggest abstract human cultural systems, adding more layers of interpretation to the work and allowing the viewer to appreciate the beauty of the sculpture while at the same time thinking about and exploring the possible cultural and historical meanings behind it. This design not only enriches the work, but also makes it a bridge across cultures and time, connecting different viewers and diverse interpretations.

Public ceramic art installations have the power to touch people's empathy through their unique aesthetics, forms and materials. Firstly, these art installations are usually located in public spaces and naturally become part of people's daily lives, and their accessibility and visual impact give everyone who passes by the opportunity to interact with them and feel their artistic expression. Secondly, ceramics, as an ancient material, carries a sense of time and cultural heritage, which in itself inspires people to resonate with history and tradition. Through the combination of modern design language and traditional materials, public ceramic art not only shows visual beauty, but also touches the audience's perception of roots and belonging. In addition, public ceramic art installations often use their forms and textures to mimic elements of nature, such as flowing water, rocks or biomorphic forms. This simulation and abstraction of nature allows people to unconsciously feel connected to nature, triggering an inner resonance. Through this form, a non-verbal dialogue is established between the artwork and the viewer, touching people's emotions and memories and stimulating empathy.

The balance of stability and dynamic motion is also a crucial aspect of these sculptures. Despite their varied forms,

each piece has a solid base that ensures the sculpture's stability. However, their postures or designs imbue them with a sense of motion, making these static sculptures appear as if they are moving, thereby providing the audience with a richer visual and cognitive space. The base of the work often contains symbols or patterns resembling text, adding a layer of mystery and symbolic meaning to the sculpture. These textual textures and symbols suggest an abstract human cultural system, adding multiple layers of interpretation to the work and encouraging viewers to think about and explore the potential cultural and historical implications behind the beauty of the sculpture. This design not only enriches the content of the work but also makes it a bridge across cultures and times, connecting different viewers and diverse interpretations.

Public ceramic art installations, through their unique aesthetics, forms, and materials, have a powerful capacity to evoke empathy. First, these art installations are typically located in public spaces, naturally becoming a part of people's everyday lives. Their accessibility and visual impact allow every passerby an opportunity to interact with them and experience their artistic expression. Secondly, ceramics, as an ancient material, carry a sense of temporal depth and cultural heritage, which inherently resonates with people's reflections on history and tradition. Public ceramic art, through the combination of modern design language and traditional materials, not only displays visual beauty but also touches viewers' perceptions of roots and belonging. Furthermore, public ceramic art installations often use their forms and textures to mimic elements of the natural world, such as flowing water, rocks, or biological forms. This natural mimicry and abstraction unconsciously connect people with nature, triggering inner resonances. Through this form, the art pieces establish a non-verbal dialogue with viewers, touching their emotions and memories, and inspiring empathy.

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