

ALANA WILSON

I believe art has a function but not necessarily of utilitarian value. For my own work, form and concept are of greater consideration than function. Utilitarian function implies that an object can be used which in turn highlights the user as the decider of the fate of the vessel, rather than the maker.



Xenophora (or carrier shell)

The idea of the vessel is filled with possibility – to be filled, or to remain empty and carve out only negative space. There is also the possibility to contain, protect, carry, separate, withhold, or hide something from its surrounds – a boat, a bowl, a body, a shell, a womb. The idea that the vessel can exist as a purely utilitarian object and yet also a placeholder for something more symbolic is mystifying. Even more mystifying is the person who is the decider of whether the object in front of them is utilitarian or artistic, is in fact a vessel themselves, filled with organs, cells, knowledge, opinions and emotions. The answer lies in the eye of the beholder.

Art is thinking in visual and material form. Ceramics and sculpture must exist in the real world and obey the physical laws of gravity, space, materiality. Art can only be made by humans, for humans. It is another language in which we can express, read, understand, or question concepts and beliefs. I make the kind of work I make to be able to express, understand, and question the world we live in and the world which may eventuate as a consequence of our collective path. Art can be trivial and serious at the same time, as can life.

The history of ceramics as a medium is profoundly intertwined with daily life, spanning cultures, civilisations, and millennia. Every piece that comes after that is part of this history, allowing an insight into the daily life of the time that it exists in. Ceramics is a medium with innate tacity – soft and malleable for the maker, tough and long-lasting for the user who may end up holding or drinking from a vessel on a daily basis. It can bridge a gap between internal thought and external function, between now and ancient history.

Alana Wilson, *Tea Bowl Stitch*, 2022, photopolymer etching, an exploration of flattening the surface of a tea bowl through photographic and print processes; photos: artist

