



Focus:
Collaboration

Being Consumed

By Adele Sliuzas

“Earlier this year I was invited by then emerging curator Adele Sliuzas to be part of a collaborations project incorporating craftspeople and food and wine producers of the Barossa Valley in South Australia. The makers were given the choice of partner from a list of producers. Being a long-time coffee addict I chose the Barossa Coffee Roasters, a small family business based around small batches of single source coffee beans and a sustainable ethos. It was an interesting and slightly taxing project. It was hard to pinpoint what ‘collaboration’ meant and to reconcile perceived notions of what each partner was bringing to the project. In the end the work produced came out of a collaboration of ideas, philosophies and methodologies. The finished works are the ideas made concrete and are still really in the development stage.” Gerry Wedd

Be Consumed: Creative Collaborations from the Barossa is a project centred on collaborations between craftspeople, artists, designers and producers based in the Barossa Region. The history of the region joins its vitality of production, and narratives and traditions meet to form its distinct sense of place. Focusing on the strong ties between food, wine, art and design, this project is an exploration of Barossa culture.

The relationship between food, wine, craft and design is thousands of years old. It is an intimate connection that relates to tradition and the act of bringing people together. Within this exhibition, craft, design, and visual arts-based practices have been employed to investigate their relationship to produce. Food, wine and the experience of appreciating them have been explored in a way that considers the whole picture. With functional as well as poetic and conceptual outcomes, celebrating the produce is at the heart of each collaboration.

Susan Frost, *Pièce Montée*, 2014, installation detail, wheelthrown porcelain, various dimensions; photo: Brad Bonar



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Right: Victoria McClurg and Honor Freeman
Photo: Brad Bonar

Below: **Honor Freeman**,
Fromage Homage I, 2014
slipcast, handbuilt porcelain
h.15cm, w.52cm, d.30cm
Photo: Grant Hancock



The collaborative project has allowed each of the six ceramic artists to spend time with the producers and get to the core of what they do. The producers have welcomed each artist into their workspace to give a sense of what it is they do, and also why they do it. Sharing ideas over a cup of freshly made coffee or a meal, the relationships developed through mutual generosity. The artists have responded to the processes, traditions, stories and philosophies which play a role in their producer's business.

Focusing on the textures and processes of cheese making, ceramicist Honor Freeman worked with Victoria McClurg of the Barossa Valley Cheese Company. The collaboration explores some of the interesting similarities between cheese making and ceramics, through a poetic tableau.

Freeman's slipcast and handbuilt porcelain forms mimic the fresh, soft cheeses produced by McClurg, down to the last oozing detail. Soft matte glazes replicate white mould, while silky, glossy, glazes reference the movement and ooze of rich, ripe cheese. The tableau is luxurious and indulgent, and speaks about McClurg's passion for her product.





Susan Frost and Claire Wood
Photo: Brad Bonar



Susan Frost, *Pièce montée*, 2014, wheelthrown porcelain, various dimensions; photo: Grant Hancock

Ceramicist Susan Frost immediately connected with Carême for the pastel colours used on their art deco-styled packaging. Similar to the range of hues that she uses in her own work, the sweet pastel colours linked the collaborators. Frost responded to Claire and William Wood's business through exploring the making processes, and the layer upon layer of rich butter used within the pastry.

Taking inspiration from a book about Carême's namesake, master chef and pâtissier Antonin Carême, Frost's work references the decadence of post-revolutionary France and the birth of the modern pâtissier. Arrangements of ceramic pieces within the work highlight the relationship and the subtle differences between each piece. The collaboration has allowed a level of reflection, both on the processes and practices at Carême and on Frost's practice as a ceramicist.

It is the repurposing and reusing ethos of Jan Angas's business at Hutton Vale Farm that attracted Stephanie James-Manttán. Working in ceramics as well as resin, James-Manttán began developing the work by casting a number of Jan Angas's treasured items. Designing a tableau containing both functional and sculptural objects, James-Manttán sought to explore the relationship between form and function within objects that are given second, or even third lives. Here, electrical insulators are repurposed as vessels, and twisted and rusted wire become spoon handles.

Stephanie James Manttán, *A Glut of Insulator Cups*, 2014, porcelain and resin, various dimensions; photo: Grant Hancock

Stephanie James Manttán and Jan Angas; photo: Brad Bonar





Wayne Mcara, *Porcelain Triptych, Fennel*, 2014, underglaze colour and embroidery thread on porcelain tile each tile, h.25.5cm, w.18.5cm, d.0.4cm
Photo: Grant Hancock

Right: Ryan Edwards and Wayne Mcara
Photo: Brad Bonar



Masterful use of materials is at the heart of the collaboration between Barossa restaurant Appellation at the Louise, and ceramicist Wayne Mcara. Appellation's executive chef Ryan Edwards shared his knowledge and skills with Mcara, speaking about the relationships he has developed with local farmers and the ethos behind the experiences they create in the restaurant.

Mcara is a trained chef, so the collaboration with Edwards was a perfect fit. Working with porcelain, he has been inspired by the rhythm of the seasons and a sense of connection between the landscape and the food and wine served in the restaurant. In Mcara's distinct style, the works are refined and considered, mirroring Edward's skills as a chef.

Drawing on the history of the Seppeltsfield estate, ceramic artist Prue Venables created a series of functional pots that represent the daily activities of the time. The Seppelts family, as well as many of their workers, fled religious persecution in Silesia (a region of Central Europe now located mostly in Poland) in the mid-19th century, coming to the Barossa to start a new life. Venables uses the motif of



Prue Venables, *Avenue of Hopes and Dreams, Jugs 1 & 2*, 2014, Bennetts terracotta, white slip and tin glaze, thrown and altered, modelled handles various dimensions
Photo: Grant Hancock

Below: Prue Venables with Nicole Hodgson, Tourism and Events Manager at Seppeltsfield Wines
Photo: Brad Bonar



the palm tree to make reference to the Avenue of Hopes and Dreams, an iconic section of Seppeltsfield Road lined with date palms. Working a decorative palm frond design into the handles of the dishes and jugs, Venables seeks to celebrate the story of how the palms were planted, a story of people coming together through adversity.

Paul and Janelle Amos, who are Barossa Coffee Roasters, have been working with ceramicist Gerry Wedd to produce a line of earthenware coffee cups. Interested in the ceremony of drinking coffee, Wedd created a coffee set that allows the drinker to slow down and appreciate the product. Taking influence from Indian chai vendors, who serve chai in a throwaway clay cup, Wedd produced a coffee cup with a low-fired clay body from Bennett's terracotta, a clay body sourced from the region.

When you've finished drinking your coffee, the cup is essentially 'disposable' and can be smashed on the ground, breaking into small pieces and eventually returning to the earth. This process fits perfectly with Janelle and Paul's ethos of 'people and planet friendly' and small batch production.



Gerry Wedd (right) with Paul and Janelle Amos at Barossa Coffee Roasters
Photo: Brad Bonar

Below: **Gerry Wedd, *Blend (100 cups)***, 2014, terracotta various dimensions
Photo: Grant Hancock

Extending beyond their normal areas of research, influence and inspiration, the collaborative process allowed the artists to examine the point at which their practice can intersect with something different. In working with these differences, they were made aware of the strong parallels with the processes of production and also within the inherent creativity and complexity of running a business.

The objects and ideas that have formed out of the project connect to the collaborative relationships and the ethos behind the producers businesses. The works in the exhibition respond to histories, stories and characters that are unique to the region and welcome creative investigation.

Be Consumed: Creative Collaborations from the Barossa

19 July – 17 September 2014 at JamFactory Seppeltsfield; 26 September – 29 November 2014 at JamFactory, Adelaide

To watch the series of six short videos in which the collaborators discuss the project, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/user/JamFactoryAU/videos>

