



# The Fixed & The Mutable

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This project is about beauty, perfection and perfectionism



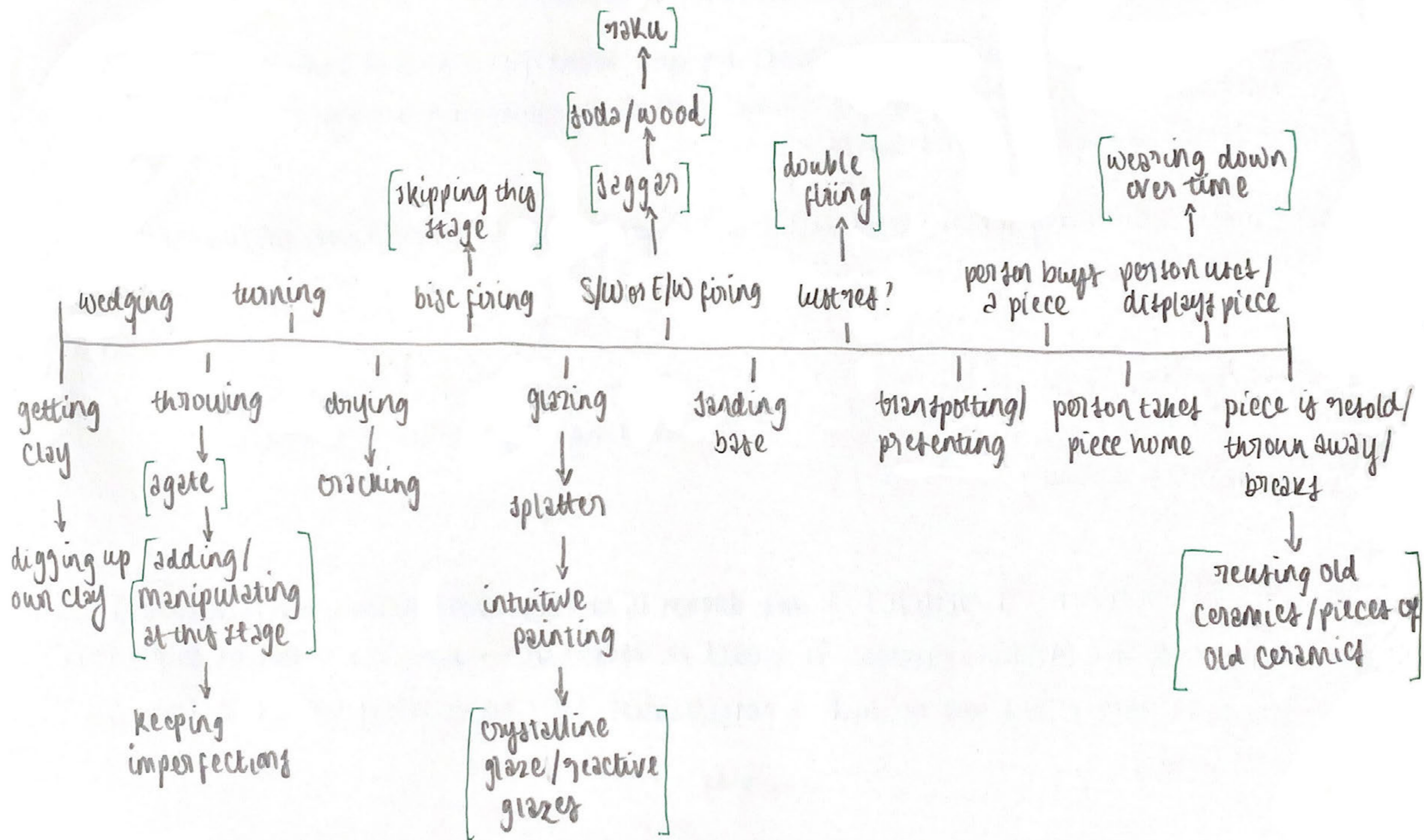


The inspiration for this project came from the modernist “SESC Pompeia” building by Lina Bo Bardi (pictured left). The shapes of the windows (I had heard) were made by taking a sledgehammer to the concrete and forming random shapes.

This approach fascinated me as somebody who had always aspired to create “perfect” things that were smooth, symmetrical and had clean lines. Bo Bardi had stepped away from perfection and predictability to create something unique.

This philosophy of using controlled chaos and unpredictability to create something has been my driving force throughout this project which, as well as resulting in some of my most adventurous work, has resulted in the process being self-healing; I’ve avoided falling into the vicious cycle of seeking perfection - something unattainable - and relaxed into working more intuitively.













These tests were made by colliding 2 bodies of freshly thrown clay. The clay at this stage is very flexible and fragile.

I was initially fixated with the way the 2 bodies seemed to communicate my desire to be perfect coexisting simultaneously with my desire to move away from that mindset and allow myself to be imperfect.





After lots of testing with colliding pairs, including colliding different shapes, colliding from different angles, and having another person colliding the pieces with me, the outcomes started to become predictable. Considering unpredictability was an important part of the process, just using pairs started to feel limiting and I concluded that I needed to work with more than just 2 forms.

I realised I had become fixated with the meaning other people had attached to my work when the initial fun of these collisions was the unpredictability and that I didn't overthink everything while making them.





Moving on from pairs, I started colliding more pieces together but remained unsatisfied with the outcome. These pieces still felt predictable; I wanted more collapsing and deforming from the impact.







Initially by looking into abstract expressionist movement, I became inspired by ceramicists that worked freely, intuitively and did not fear colour.











Before moving away from lateral collisions, I wanted to try a version with more colour variation. This was created by mixing different quantities of modelling clay and terracota.



Moving on from the predictability of lateral collisions, I began to stack various shapes vertically.

Here, I tried to restick parts of the original pile that had separated during bisc firing using glaze, hoping they would fuse during glaze firing but it did not work. I also began introducing colour into my work because I like colour and it could be introduced as another chaotic variable.



I decided I did not like how multiple different shapes looked stacked together so went back to working with just my original round shape. I also liked working with an open shape that showed how the pieces deformed on the inside and outside. Colour was added to this piece to create some chaos and variety by staining the clay body.



Fired to 1080°C, unglazed  
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Outcomes



I stuck with colour as a variable but with this pile did this only by mixing modelling clay and terracota in different quantities.

I also reintroduced the idea of having somebody else help build the pile to have even less control over the final structure.

Fired to 1200°C, unglazed

Testing





Working intuitively, I poured and splattered underglaze onto this pile to create a colourful finish that was just as unpredictable as the structure had been to create.



I, again, attempted to restick a piece that had come loose during bisc firing (and ensured all the pieces stayed together during glaze firing) but this time by pouring colourful glaze between the cracks of the individual pots. Resticking the loose still piece did not work.







I stepped away from the round shape I had been using as it had started to feel repetitive.

Here, I liked the slight chaos in the vibrant range of colours when paired with the structure.







I wanted to introduce special effects glazes as a way to have less control and more chaos in my work. Alongside a colourful base, it would create lots of variation, chaos and unpredictability.

Left: stained modelling clay and porcelain test tiles, firings ranging from 1080°C to 1260°C  
 Right: special effects glaze test tiles fired to 1260°C



I revisited piling 3 different shapes together to create variety but did not like how messy it looked (pictured left).

I then threw my original round shape in different sizes which created enough variety to stop my pieces looking and feeling repetitive (pictured above).

Fired to 1260°C, part glazed





Porcelain for a brighter, less predictable finish with coloured gloopy glaze and lustres applied randomly over the top.

Fired to 1240°C, glazed



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