

Abstract

Doctoral thesis "Material identity of ceramics. Research on the physical nature and cultural contexts of ash glazes" is a description of a project combining artistic activities with experiments on unconventional sources of raw materials for ash glazes. In the thesis, I outlined the context of my research, both in cultural and as well technological aspects.

The starting point for justifying the choice of topic, is to present the issues, related with unclear position of ceramic art, as a field suspended between art and design. I am trying to find out whether and under what conditions ceramics is possible as an equal art discipline. I hypothesize, that this opportunity is provided by the unique technology area of ceramic material, such as ash glazes, which, by abstracting the raw material from its presenting form, allows us to draw attention to the meaning it carries through chemical composition.

Selection of organic remains, both of plant and animal origin, entails many logistical, ethical and legal problems. I describe contexts and the nature of the "ontological transformation" of the remains of organisms as a consequence of their death and subsequent processes and with the transformation of their identity, opening the field for research through artistic lense.

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In the following chapters I describe the glazing experiments carried out on raw materials obtained from fungi, lichens, and then animal remains - insects, especially bees and small vertebrates. In a separate chapter, feeling part of the world I explored, I put myself in the center of the exploration and present the results of experiments on materials related to me symbolically and emotionally, such as company documents and tax declarations, medicines and my own body tissues.

In the summary, I also mention the items and resources that I decided not to join in the experiments and process it into glaze for reasons economic, symbolic and under the influence of my own emotions and beliefs, as well as I present conclusions and reflections after the completed project, showing the diversity and uniqueness of results.

In the last chapter, I present six projects that address the above-mentioned issues being a material response to the hypotheses, prepared using experimental glazes and the artistic program combining these artworks, which assumes voluntary resignation from conscious aesthetic choices by importing ceramic objects to individual content carriers, encoded in the glaze component. With the works in the material, I conclude that it meets the assumptions regarding the questions asked about limits of ceramic material, due to its organic sources of raw materials and also with the incredible potential for creating glazes contained in those unusual ingredients, which may be insects and animal remains.

