

# Nature aboard enigmatic vessels

## CRAFT REVIEW

### CURRENTS - CERAMICS BY ULRICA TRULSSON

Beaver Galleries, 81 Denison Street, Deakin.  
Until June 10.

REVIEWED BY Kerry-Anne Cousins

If I ever needed a reminder about the importance of seeing actual works of art rather than two-dimensional images, it was confirmed by visiting Ulrica Trulsson's exhibition.

Scale is of vital importance to the spatial perception of the three-dimensional object. I hadn't noted the dimensions of Trulsson's works in the pre-exhibition publicity images but imagined them to be a lot smaller than what they actually are - the height of the tallest work is 35 centimetres.

This may be because of the sense of intimacy Trulsson creates in her carefully arranged groupings of ceramic vessels.

Ulrica Trulsson is Swedish and left Sweden in her late teens to travel. She arrived in Australia where from 2010 to 2011, she studied ceramics at the Holmesglen Institute of TAFE in Melbourne.

In 2012, she moved to Adelaide to take part in the Associate Training Project at the

*All the works are made from clay stoneware.*

JamFactory, Contemporary Craft and Design. She won the JamFactory's South Australian Emerging Designer Award in 2013 and was a finalist in the Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize, 2014.

Ceramic artists Prue Venables and Kirsten Coelho were early influences. Prue Venables was creative director ceramics when Trulsson was at the JamFactory and Kirsten Coelho was a mentor to her when she was a recipient of the Australia Council ArtStart Award. These two artists have obviously played some part in the development of Trulsson's own ideas about refined forms and their spatial relationships.

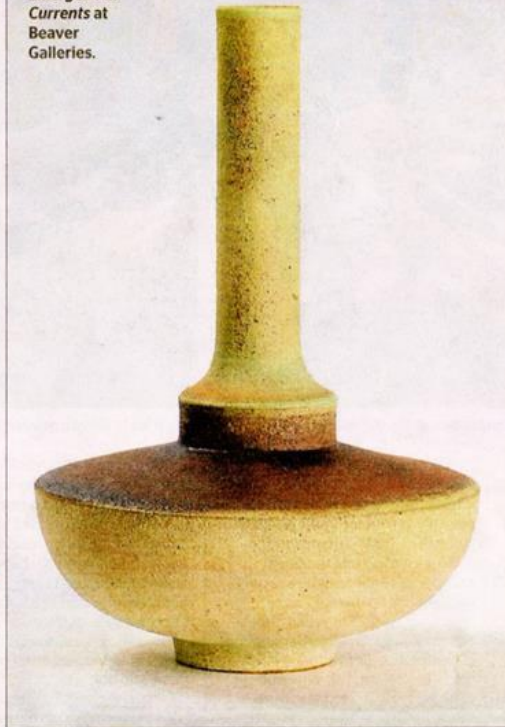
Trulsson's pots are predominantly wheel-thrown but she sometimes builds up parts by hand.

The geometric variations of the pots' cylindrical forms are precisely executed while the vase forms have a more elegant fluid profile.

In her early works the artist used extenuated stylised knobs on her lidded vessels but in this current work the knobs are more successfully deployed as spheres that sit within a concave hollow of the lid.

All the works are made from clay stoneware. The artist uses different clays and glazes from an earth-based tonal range of colours to create subtle textures and

Ulrica Trulsson,  
*Emerge#4* in  
*Currents* at  
Beaver  
Galleries.



Ulrica Trulsson,  
*Collect #2* - set  
of two.



surface colourations. Iron is used for surface speckles and stains. In *Wash#3* these iron speckles on one pot provide a pleasing contrast to the plainer slip-coloured surface of its companion. Intervention during the firing period has also resulted in subtle multi-varied surface effects.

Each vessel, seen from a different viewpoint, reveals subtle surface variations and in the artist's words, enables "(a) changing snapshot, revealing details over time".

A particularly soft mauve-brown that appears in some of the works adds a delicate note.

In *Emerge #2* it is like the softest caress of colour around the long neck of the vessel. This is a delicate, highly refined form that flares out from the foot of its base before tapering into a slender neck, its interior glazed in soft green.

These variations in the colour and textures of the stoneware and the different stains and glazes make pleasing aesthetic connections and contrasts between the forms. Such variations are orchestrated with finesse.

In works such as *Collect#2*, a matt dry

brown glaze envelopes a lidded cylinder that is set against a more squat form where the brown iron stain provides a contrast in colour and texture. In *Collect#3* the added flourish of a green glaze in the concave circle of a lid provides a flash of colour in the predominantly cream-brown palette.

These tall and squat cylindrical forms and long-necked vessels are arranged in groups so that aesthetic and spatial relationships are formed between them.

*Collect #1* is a set of three stoneware vessels - a tall, grey-coloured cylindrical

form and a smaller round vessel with a small neck complemented by an open bowl. Like all the groupings this placement is so exacting that to remove one of the vessels in the arrangement would diminish its companions.

Trulsson cites nature as the important source of her inspiration. One place in particular, Hallett Cove in South Australia, an important geological and archaeological site with its layers of sedimentary rock, windswept cliffs and erratic rocks deposited by the ice age, has been cited by the artist as a particular source of inspiration.

Her arranged groupings of ceramic forms have for me an affinity with Japanese temple gardens such as Ryoan-ji in Kyoto, Japan. In this iconic garden rocks are carefully chosen and placed in relationship to one another within a raked gravel landscape. Both the Japanese rocks and Trulsson's stoneware pots are tangible objects; yet the relationship of these objects to one another and to us goes beyond the objects themselves.

They are much more than their individual parts and as such remain elusive and enigmatic.



Ulrica Trulsson, *Collect #1*, set of three.

