

## Intimate arrangements create a serene vision

### REVIEW

Kerry-Anne Cousins

**Ulrica Trulsson: Close to earth - ceramics.** Beaver Galleries. Extended to Sept 19 and online at [beavergalleries.com.au](http://beavergalleries.com.au).

Billy's Beach near Mystery Bay on the South Coast is a special place. I was reminded of it when I saw Ulrica Trulsson's exhibition of ceramics called *Close to earth* or alternatively *jordnra* in Swedish, the artist's first language.

The cliffs that protect the beach have small horizontal fissures in the rock face caused by some great geological upheaval in the past. Unknown hands have filled these fissures with lines of white pebbles chosen from the beach.

Sometimes there are many pebbles along the rock fissures - other times there are fewer as I think

they are washed away by the big incoming tides. The unknown arrangers of the pebbles would have spent time looking for suitable specimens as the pebbles need to fit exactly.

Ulrica Trulsson notices such things - the smooth coolness of pebbles and the grainy feel of rocks, the traces of the tide left on sand, the soft greenness of leaves and moss on pathways.

These observations are played out in the small intimate groupings of her ceramics where she carefully orchestrates the interaction of their form, colour and texture.

In 2012, after obtaining a diploma in ceramics at Holmesglen in Melbourne, the artist embarked on a JamFactory Associate Training Program in Adelaide where she also studied with Prue Venables and Kirsten Coelho. Both these ceramic

artists are well known for grouping their works in intimate arrangements to investigate spatial relationships through form, colour and light.

Trulsson was obviously attracted to this way of considering ceramics and, as this exhibition so ably demonstrates, has developed her own individual style and art practice.

Since then the artist has achieved a quiet confidence in her work that lets the pots speak for themselves.

She works within a small range of wheel thrown forms - lidded canisters that are simplified cylinders or more complex geometric shapes, tall cylindrical vessels and bottles with narrow necks.

A small bud vase (*Green Offering III*) makes a sole appearance. All are under 25 centimetres tall. Some of the works stand alone as in the brown speckled stoneware



Ulrica Trulsson, On My Path IV.

bottle in *Close to earth II* and the beautiful serene bulbous porcelain lidded canister *Green Offering IV*.

They serve as a contemplative "pause" between the other groups of pots while contributing to an overall sense of serenity and harmony.

The glazes, oxides and slips used by Trulsson and handled with skill are the

key to the relationships between the groups of works. The colours are taken from the natural world - smooth soft white glazes for the lidded porcelain canisters, delicate celadon-style leaf green on other geometric forms and the warm ochres and brown glazes on stoneware bottles.

Trulsson uses slips on her hard clay bodies before

reglazing. It is obvious she enjoys the properties of clay and the slip allows her to sometimes use her fingers to leave subtle traces on the surface of pots.

The small brown lidded canister in the group *On my path III* has these marks like the movement of the sand caused by the departing tide.

In other pots oxides provide textual patterns. In *On my path IV* the oxides provide a tracery of markings like moss on the cylindrical vessel. In the pieces titled *Close to earth IV* and *On my path II*, the dark brown "glaze on glaze" leaves its mark on the foot and rim of vessels, emphasising subtle focus points and textures.

The serenity of Ulrica Trulsson's creative vision reminds us that in troubled times there are joys to be found in the natural world and that engagement with nature can bring solace.