

David Carlsson "En vackrare sanning (A more beautiful truth) 2017

Project Reflection

Themes related to true or false - being and wanting to be, to look like and to fake, who one wants to be and who one really is – have been constant explorations in my artistic practice. With these themes as background I have explored how ceramics can imitate other materials and how other materials can look like ceramics. My media has often been tiles, both self-made, bought and found.

In spring of 2016 I presented works in a solo show at Sintra Gallery, Göteborg <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/51415> . Most of the works were composed using readymade tiles. The exhibition concept was a departure from my comfortable way of working: Conceptual and clear ideas were requirements I placed on myself in early work. But more recently the concepts described above lingered as less important priorities, allowing me to focus more on composition and visual expression.

My recent range of works brings clay back into the conversation again. And by that I mean wet clay, handled by me. Combining tiles with clay allows me to draw on illustrative associations as well as abstract parts. I agree with those who relate work in clay to drawing: I use mostly natural clay color making the material nothing more than itself. At the same time clay is everything I shape with it, much like the line of a pencil. Handmade parts and industrial tiles are basically the same material, but I want visual qualities to come before the material meaning even if it feels useful to have an underlying story for an enthusiastic ceramic art audience. In the last five years I've mostly worked with wall pieces, but for this project I also made freestanding sculptures in fired clay and with tiles as single material.

My works could be said to refer to everyday life or modern interior design trends since this is the area where the tiles I use belong. Associations with domestic and everyday matters are a crafts cliché which I think could be useful to continue to acknowledge alongside the theme of true and false. Titles for my works are often borrowed from music or literature as a way of opening up the story, enlarge it and, perhaps blur it a bit, and at the same time pointing out a direction.

Blurriness and my attempt to open up multi-layered readings are inspired by conversations with colleagues and students that good art may have to include strange and unpredictable parts. What I finally presented in the show is more sprawling, but not more unfocused than before. I found that everything does not have to relate to each other in every way. Many tales can be told within one story.