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I came to the ITE residency not knowing much about the lathe, but I was confident enough in my other strengths as an artist that I knew I could be productive and play for a few months. The statement for the installation I created for the lightwell in the Wood Turning Center explains a lot of my experience of being here, but there are other areas of note that I'd like to discuss in this artist's statement.

I came with a few ideas that I'd had in my head for the past few years that I thought the lathe would be perfect for. I didn't do a single one of them. Instead, I let myself react to my surroundings. Seeing all of the work in the collectors' homes gave me an overview of the field that led to an inquiry into the vessel form. What makes something a vessel? Is it merely any mass with a hole in it? What boils it down to its most essential elements?

This inquiry took two forms in my artwork - one was the series of "Sandpaper Vessels" where I used sanding discs as the top of the "vessel" and the holes were dictated by that found object. This brought up more questions for me: Does a vessel need to imply function? Does the orifice need to imply function? Can a vessel have more than one (nonfunctional) orifice?

The other project that was important to me was my "Self Releasing Mold." I took a block of wet holly and turned out the exterior silhouette of a bowl shape into it. Then I cast a positive form into that space with Plastidip, the rubbery paint I usually use to coat my sculptures. The wood has been cracking apart as it dries, naturally releasing and revealing the positive form I created within. A tension was created between the sticky positive and the wet negative interior, and it has been interesting to watch it open as it cracks and shifts. It's the battle of Man vs. Nature and at the time of this writing, I'm still not sure who will win.

I was also intrigued with what I saw when I had just poured the mold material into the cavity. It completely obscured the shape within, but I knew it was there. What would it mean to someone who had not seen that form? Would they believe it really existed?

What if I just hollowed out a tiny round indent and told someone there was a bowl form inside? If the mold never cracked to reveal, one would just have to trust that I was telling the truth. This idea has much potential for me. Other questions in my mind now are about how other mold making materials would react under the same conditions and what metaphors they might bring to develop this idea into a full body of work.

Another significant part of this residency was the experience of collaborating with Liam Flynn. Early on, we noticed that we were interested in the same artists and forms when we were at the collectors' homes, particularly those of Maria van Kesteren. In these early days of the residency, we walked to the hardware store together. I wanted to look for some alternate material to laminate and turn, inspired by the plywood forms of Richard Hooper, another turner whose work Liam admired. I chose a piece of pegboard and Liam immediately understood my desire to make a piece with lots of holes running all the way through, so we decided to collaborate. We completed that piece, and it led to two more, each evolving from the one prior. In the past, my collaborative experience has always been a version of "I'll start it and you finish it," or vice versa. This time, we worked together tightly every step of the way, and the end result was unlike any of my work, or any of Liam's work-- it became a new voice begat from our mutual love of design and form. This was thrilling and I hope it leads to more collaborations in the future.

The last big thing for me about this residency was writing. I got the harebrained notion to keep a blog while I was here in Philadelphia, and it ended up becoming a focal point of my residency. I have always loved to write, but it has been mostly private (journals and letters) besides the expected professional writing in my field for things like grants and artist's statements and bios. Writing for a public audience allowed me to reach a new level of interaction with others. I found a different kind of creative voice, and I'd like to see where that takes me down the road.