

**Life's Cycles**

**By Annaliesa Connor-Meissner**

**A thesis submitted to the faculty  
of Adams State University in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
In the Art Department**

**Alamosa, Colorado**

**November, 2014**

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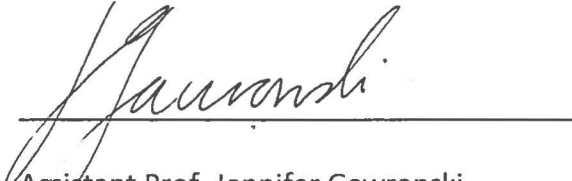
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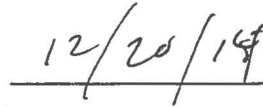
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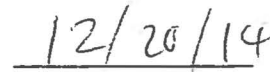
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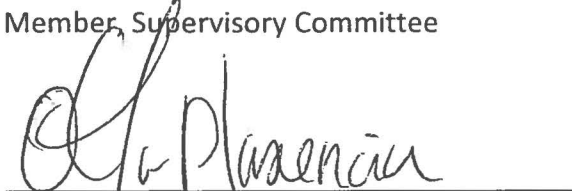
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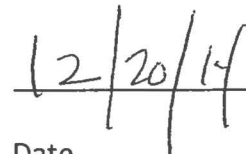
Assistant Prof. Claire van der Plas  
Member, Supervisory Committee



Date



Assistant Prof. O. Gustavo Plascencia  
Member, Supervisory Committee



Date



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## Life's Cycles

### Introduction

This thesis body of work entitled, *Life's Cycles*, is an installation that explores the concept of movement with the passage of time. Ideas of time, cycles, legacy and memory are encapsulated in the work. The work investigates the intersecting layers that occur among these concepts: how time affects cycles, how the legacy of an individual evolves over time, and how memory relates to legacy as a record of an individual's past existence. In this thesis work, time is conveyed as spherical not linear revolving in a multiplicity of cycles. The past, the present and the future are presented as existing together simultaneously. For example, the present is the future of the past. In this thesis exhibition clay is the medium of choice because of its pliable nature and ability to be transformed into any form imaginable. Clay, the substance that the earth is made of, is suitable to represent this body of work that was conceptualized from nature. The flight patterns of butterflies initiated the concept of movement. Their gordy colors inspired the selection of hues used in the work. Seasonal cycles particularly the freezing and thawing of water in rivers from summer to winter promoted the idea of freezing a moment of time.

For the purpose of this thesis, legacy is seen as a continuous cycle that spirals. Each generation creates a legacy and in doing so adds to the legacy that existed previously, creating a collective spiral of memory and legacy. The legacies of a few well known individuals will be discussed in light of their influences on their families, respective nations and even the global community. Family legacies will be examined to discover any similarities or overlapping areas in family members that may have been passed on. The work of Carl Jung will be used as a tool in

discovering some of the layering among the concepts being explored. The artist behind the work is interested in the interplay that is possible as these concepts overlap and become entwined.

The thesis installation *Life's Cycles* incorporates art historical influences from Origami, Art Nouveau, Cubism, Minimalism and Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival. The works of past artists such as Helen Frankenthaler and Victor Horta were also influential in the creation of the work. The past experiences of the artist who created the installation and observations from nature itself are also components behind this work.

The artistic exploits of contemporary artists such as Ann Van Hoey, Janine Antoni, Jennifer Holt, Ken Eastman and Merete Rasmussen were examined in the development of the installation. Those artists influenced explorations into manipulating clay slabs. They inspired the inclusion of non-traditional techniques and materials in the body of work. The ephemeral nature of the installation was also influenced by some of those artists.

### **Historical Background**

All of the natural world and humanity exists within the confines of time. It holds all of history, as we know it, permits our existence in the present and conceals the future. These intricacies of time motivated the investigation of legacies and the relationship that they bear with time. The relationship between time and legacy sparked ideas on the origin of legacy, its evolution and its influence on the future.

One historical art form that inspired the work was Origami, the ancient Japanese art of paper folding. The art form had its early beginnings in Japan during the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1603-1868 paper folding became regarded as a new form of art in Japan (pbs.org website). As

time went on traditional origami patterns were passed down orally or anonymously from generation to generation, much like the transition of legacy. This transmission of Origami to that generation and to future generations marked the beginning of a legacy in the new art form. By the 1950's Origami (figure 1) was globally recognized and a legacy was established (pbs.org website).

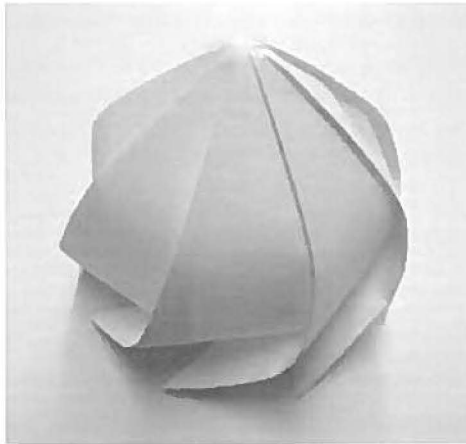


Figure 1. Origami Form. Web. 10/14/2014.

Many of the forms created in this body of work reflect the paper like folds of the Origami style. Creating forms that appear to be paper-thin was essential to the overall concept of movement. The paper-like forms project the perception of lightness that accommodates their flow, fluidity and vitality. The illusion of movement was also dramatized in the form of the ribbon like pieces.

Another historical influence was the Art Nouveau style. The signature characteristic of the Art Nouveau style was sinuous lines and dramatic curves that evolved from botanical studies and deep-sea organisms. The approach of using curves and lines that were derived from observation and studies of natural elements in the Art Nouveau style aligns to the approach taken for the development of the pieces in the thesis body of work. The work of Victor Horta was particularly influential. Horta practiced the style in his architectural designs. Art Nouveau

influenced art, architecture, graphic work and illustration. Designers attempted to integrate art and craft in an effort to produce the “total work of art” (Heilbrunn website). Figure 2 shows the sinuous curves of the style in the metal work, the pillars and the surface treatment of the floors and walls. The pieces in the work *Life’s Cycles* bears similar curves in the forms and the embossed surface treatment on those forms. Those abstract forms were derived from observations of natural elements just as the designs in the Art Nouveau style came from studies in nature.

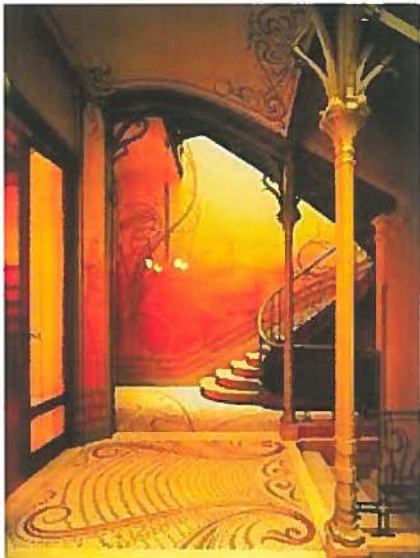


Figure 2. Victor Horta. *Hotel Tassel*, 1893-94. Web. 09/13/2014.

Cubism was realized as an art form at the turn of the 20th century. Aspects of this style have been another influence to *Life’s Cycle*. The emergence of the new art form came with a painting by Pablo Picasso entitled “Gertrude Stein”. In that work new spatial and planar shifts occurred (Adams 835-6). Cubism foregoes the single viewpoint and presents multiple vantage points on the same plane creating fascinating visual effects. The art form is characteristic of possessing multiple lines, planes and geometric shapes as seen in figure 3 (Adams 837-8).



Figure 3. George Braque, 1910, *Violin and Candlestick*, oil on canvas, 60.96cmx 50.17cm. Web. 09/30/2014.

The principle behind Cubism is the aspect of the art form that has been adapted to the thesis work. Although the installation does not resemble Cubism, the idea of segmenting and rearranging space or an object to create a new visual has been integrated into the installation. The simultaneous presentation of multiple views from Cubism has been translated into the simultaneous presentation of multiple aspects of the same concept. Each aspect of time, legacy and memory has been exhibited with the use multiple motifs of varied sizes on numerous planes. The arrangement of pieces manipulates the space that the work occupies. The segments are not juxtaposed in sequential order providing that sense of parts that have been re-arranged.

Minimalism, another inspiration came into being in the 1960's with the realization of "objectless" sculptures. They were described as "minimal" or "primary" structures. They were comprised of solid geometric forms as seen in figure 4 (Adams 908-9).

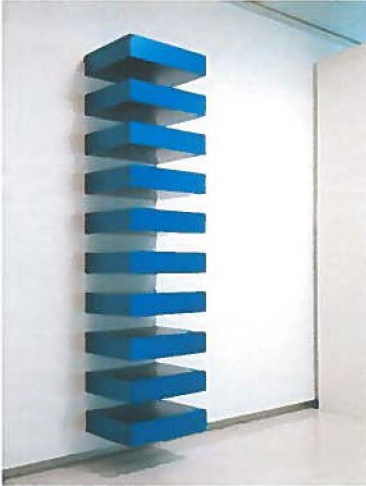


Figure 4. Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1969, 10 boxes 6x 27x 24 inches. Web. 09/30/2014.

The signature of minimalism became the viewer's contemplation of the forms or the medium used. The thesis work has borrowed from minimalism the use of some geometric forms. The work includes cones and semi-hemispheres. In addition, the work was also restricted to mainly one medium (clay). So, in the tradition of the minimalist movement the viewer is left to contemplate the minimal structures created.

The Carnival celebrations of Trinidad and Tobago are another historical inspiration to the work *Life's Cycles*. These celebrations existed before Emancipation in 1838 and still persist to present. The masked balls hosted by the French gentry in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to Carnival. (Trinidad and Tobago 64-67).

Large masquerade bands are one of the major elements of Trinidad and Tobago's annual Carnival festival. A masquerade band is sub-divided into sections. Each section of a band could have up to five hundred masqueraders. The sections all portray a variant of the main concept of the band. Sections are distinguishable by the color combinations of the costumes in the respective sections as seen in figure 5.

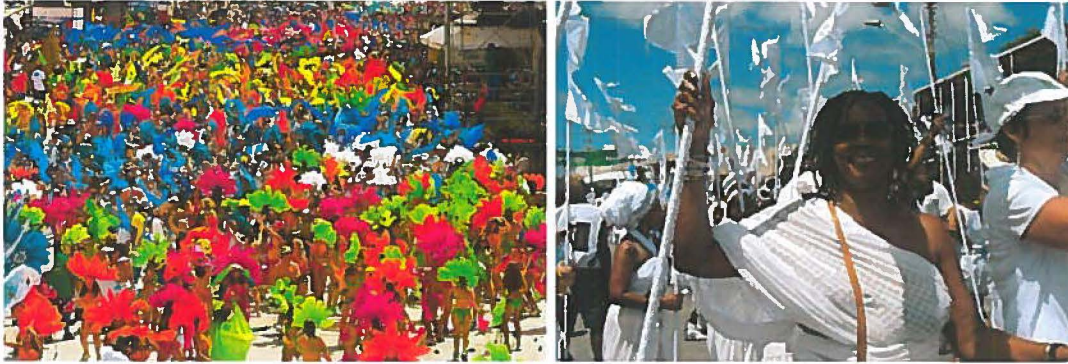


Figure 5. Trinidad and Tobago, Carnival bands. Web. 09/30/2014.

The thesis installation has also been presented as sections that culminate to support one unifying concept. The sections of the installation are distinguishable by spatial arrangement, illustrious multiple motif forms, sound and the application of color. The motif pieces are comparable to the multiplicity of persons in a carnival band. The thesis exhibits unifying design elements in each section of the installation which unite it wholistically as in the design framework of a band.

The colorful abstract butterflies seen in the work of Helen Frankenthaler (figure 6) also provided motivation for the body of work. Her Color Field Painting technique inspired how color was used in the thesis work (Loos 85). She was a painter and print-maker who created many abstract paintings and prints that possessed a sense of calm and lightness (Adams 890). Those qualities are similar to those experienced when observing butterflies, one of the original subjects for the thesis work. Her technique which entailed pouring pure pigment unto canvas to create colorful works that gave the impression of lightness and free movement is impressive to the artist of this exhibition. Frankenthaler was able to achieve layers of color through that technique which inspired the method of application of color in *Life's Cycles*.



Figure 6. Helen Frankenthaler, 2000. Dimensions not stated. Web. 09/13/2014.

Her technique helped to generate ideas of how color could be infused into the thesis work in non-traditional ways.

An account of the background training in technical and engineering drawing of the artists in high school will give insight into the development of the work. During those experiences line was introduced as a language that had to be interpreted by persons in associated fields. Guidelines, construction lines, hidden lines, bold lines, curves and affiliated elements were drawn in combination as language to transmit a message and convey meaning. The knowledge gained through those exercises has assisted the artist in transmitting the visual message. They have contributed to creating the desired mood in the thesis work. The work incorporates line in numerous ways to translate symbolic meaning. Movement in the ebb and flow of life, human responses to those situations and the impressions that are made in the minds of individuals are all expressed through the use of line.

The motif pieces in the thesis work are abstracted representations of lines, patterns and forms found in natural elements. Drawings for the pieces ranged from butterflies, water in motion and frozen bubbles. Some of the sketches were drawn over a decade. They were the launching point of the project. The sketches were recorded from numerous vantage points as in Cubism, overlaid on each other using transparent paper and further abstracted by extracting



segments with a viewfinder as seen in figure 7 below. The layering in the production process permeated the formulation of the concept. Those abstracted compositions bearing strong line, curve and patterns were then transformed into the motifs.

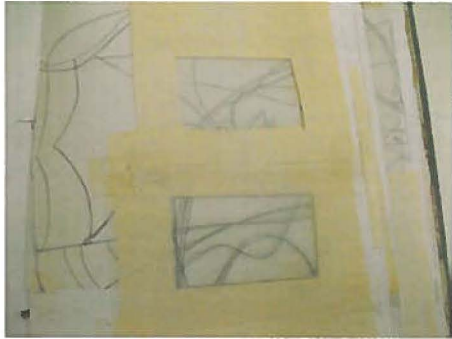


Figure 7. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner, layered sketches with viewfinder.

### Artistic Influences

The first contemporary motivator, Ann Van Hoey, is an artist whose work is based in the practice of origami.



Figure 8. Ann Van Hoey, *Etiré*. Dimensions not stated. Web. 9/13/2014.

Her works seen in figure 8 reflect Van Hoey's signature style adapted from origami. She makes cuts in the form to recompose the form. These cuts dictate the outline of the final form. The technique used gives the pieces the appearance of Japanese paper folded origami. The thinnest of the clay slab lends to the feel of folded paper. Van Hoey's work celebrates purity with its fluid minimalist design. The refined edge is important to the final imagery of her pieces (Art Aurea website).

Line, a refined edge and the minimalist approach in the production of Van Hoey's work has inspired the nature of the installation created. The installation possesses elements of a minimalist approach. The greatest inspiration coming out of Van Hoey's work, however, was her use of the thin clay slab to capture a sense of lightness, line, detail to edges and origami-like folds. The geometric forms in her work were also influential to the body of work made. Those elements were reflected in the conical vessels which hang from the ceiling.

Janine Antoni is an artist who works mainly in the three-dimensional arena. Her work incorporates mainly performance art, sculpture and installation. Those aspects of her work have inspired the creation of *Life's Cycles*. She also believes that beauty could be expressed in non-traditional ways (Antoni and Dreishpoon 123). That thought was borrowed and incorporated in the production of this thesis work.

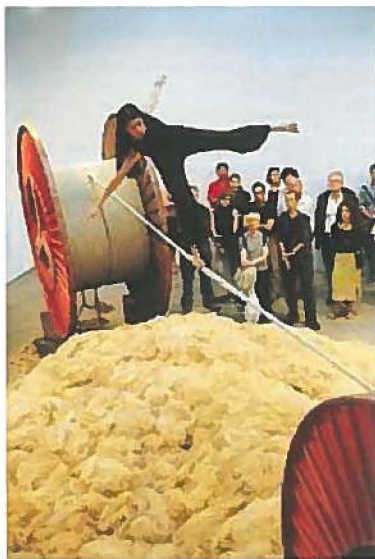


Figure 9. Janine Antoni, *To Draw a Line*, 2003, hemp fiber, 100 feet of hemp rope, two steel reels. Web. 09/13/2014.

In her installation/ performance piece, *To Draw a Line* as shown in figure 9 Janine created an imprint of her body in a mound of hemp that was placed below the hemp rope she wove. The artist tightrope-walked across the hand-made rope and enacted a fall as part of the performance, symbolic of the changes in life that are uncontrollable (Antoni and Dreishpoon 123). Her concept there is similar to that aspect of the thesis that addresses the choice and actions that individuals take when uncontrollable situations arise in life. It is for that conceptual link this work of hers was analyzed.

Although the thesis work does not bear any similarity in appearance to Antoni's work, her desire for process, the ephemeral, and her incorporation of symbolic references has inspired this thesis work. As in *To Draw a Line*, the work references uncontrollable circumstances and the perpetual changes of life. Strong emphasis was placed on the organic sculptural motifs that were created in *Life's Cycle* and their symbolic links to humanity. Non-traditional ceramic colorants were applied as surface treatment to the pieces in reference to the human condition and as an alternative expression of beauty.

The installation was designed with movement at the core of the concept. There is the element of continued movement throughout the presentation of the installation. The work addresses movement in terms of life's continuous changes, time's passage, and the perpetual process of making choices, our continuous interaction with each other, the formation of legacy and the infusion of memory/reflection. The work explores those issues as layered, spiraling and connected in the continuous loop of time. The challenges of representing those considerations were influenced by Antoni's approach to process and the ephemeral.

Jennifer Holt has been another contemporary influence behind the thesis work. Jennifer Holt creates work from porcelain clay. Her works are mixed media, sculpture and installation. Holt's work usually addresses ideas of time, place and memory. Her work is minimalist in appearance but it is saturated with content and pays critical attention to the material.



Figure 10. Jennifer Holt, *Metaphor for a Memory*, funnels: to approximately 5" in height, slip-cast porcelain, thread, ice, sound, 2005. Web. 09/13/2014.

*Metaphor for a Memory* shown above in figure 10 is made from slip-cast porcelain. The entire installation is the natural white color of the porcelain. The absence of color encourages the viewer to really look at the work and make sense of it. Holt states in a *Ceramics Monthly* article, "Clay has the ability to contain... memory, creating a ghostlike membrane that divides presence from absence. It is this fine line between reality and memory that my work explores (Holt 42)." She also sees herself as a mediator between the site and the object, the object and the viewer, the past and the present. In this work *Metaphor for a Memory* ice melts and drips into the containers below creating sound. Holt views the addition of sound and melting ice as providing another layer of experience to the viewer (Holt 42).

Her work has influenced, *Life's cycles*, in light of its minimalist appearance and employment of the natural white color of the clay. Her mixed media piece *Metaphor for a Memory* particularly influenced the shape of the vessels that would be suspended and the dripping of colored fluid. Holt's handling of concepts of time provided other perspectives on the subject and possibilities for its representation in the work. Her reference to memory as being captured in the clay and possessing metaphorical implications are similar to the legacy that is addressed in the thesis installation. The rendered embossing and natural imprints are reflective of capturing the essence of a lifetime in the clay. It metaphorically represents permanently freezing moments in time.

Ken Eastman has been influential as an artist who never makes functional work in clay. His subject matter is the vessel. His objects are abstract expressions of vessels. He pays particular attention to form and surface treatment as seen in *Late Morning* (figure 11) below.



Figure 11. Ken Eastman, *Late Morning*, 2009, height 48cm. Web. 09/13/2014.

The texture on *Late Morning* gives the work an extremely sturdy appearance. He assimilates the color and texture with the clay (Christian 36). Eastman's skill in integrating the elements of

his pieces (texture, color and form) is priceless in the final outcome of the works. The lack of color coaxes the viewer to focus on the details of the form. Color is prohibited from detracting the viewer's attention from the majesty of the form. The artist demonstrates a command of getting the viewer to gaze on what he would have them observe in the work.

Observing the work of Ken Eastman has enlightened the artist as to the possibilities of slab-built work. His work is encouraging in the exploration of the possibilities of the clay slab, in the production of abstract works. The technique of transferring natural textured surfaces (rock) to the clay aids the exploration of permanently freezing abstract imagery. That aspect of his practice was translated into the thesis work. In addition, the strategy of directing the viewer's attention via the lack of color was incorporated for some sections of the thesis presentation.

Merete Rasmussen is an artist whose work is about exploring form and the idea of a continuous surface. Rasmussen makes her objects using the coil method. Her pieces are hand built stoneware. Her work was inspiring because of the appearance of the final form. The piece "Twisted Red Loop" seen below in figure 12, presents as a ribbon-like structure where the form utilizes both positive and negative space with its open design.

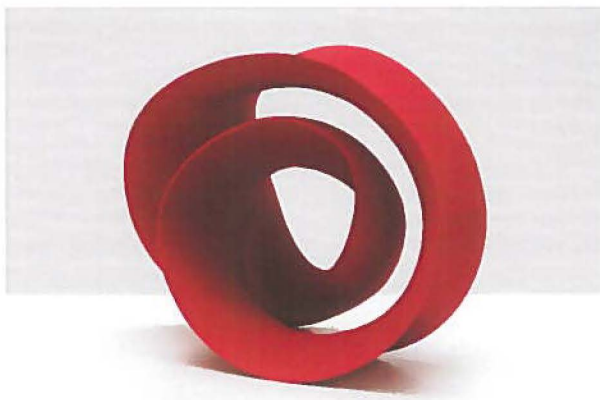


Figure 12. Merete Rasmussen, *Twisted Red Loop*, dimensions not stated. Web. 09/17/2014.

The form divides the negative space inside of itself in an interesting way. It appears to be a continuous concave strip of clay. In a statement about her work the artist says, "I am interested in the idea of one continuous surface, with one connected edge or line running through the whole form (Rasmussen 110)." The artist accomplishes her stated goal and in the process produces a form that is crisp with clean edges. The object allows the viewer's eye to move around the entire form with a smooth flow.

This quality in the piece inherently facilitates the concept of movement in the work, which is one of the main concepts being explored in the thesis work *Life's Cycles*. Although Rasmussen applies the coiling technique to produce her work as opposed to slab building as used for the ribbon-like forms in the thesis installation, her final outcome embodies movement in the form of a thin, crisp, delicate strip. Her attention to edges that compliments strong line was adapted into the thesis work. The ribbon form itself influenced the development of the large ribbon-like sculptures in the thesis work. The manipulation of space through the negative spaces created from the juxtaposition of the loose forms in the thesis work along with the implied movement of the pieces created by their undulating thin forms were inspired by the work of Merete Rasmussen.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

A probe into the definitions of the main ideas considered in this thesis body of work will aid in discovering some of the overlapping layers that are portrayed in the work. Firstly, movement infers a change in position or to live and be active. Next, a legacy is something handed down (orally or otherwise) by a predecessor that could be tangible or intangible - memories, our recollections, remembrances and the reputation of a deceased person. Finally,

time, the common link that embodies all of these concepts is an unlimited proliferation of existence that affects all of humanity. Wholistically time incorporates the past, the present and the future (Oxford 341,373, 391,626). Based on the above statements on the main concepts, layers of interaction among them begin to emerge.

Combined those definitions can be interpreted in the following way. As time progresses the cycle of life persists. Our predecessors in the past taught and passed on their experiences and knowledge to the present generation/(s). What we have learned or benefited from them are the legacies they have left. For example, as the poet Maya Angelou has penned in her poem *Still I Rise*, "Leaving behind nights of terror and fear, I rise, Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear, I rise, Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and hope of the slave... (Angelou 9)." Here the author of the poem speaks of optimism for a better future, arising out of the sacrifices made by those who went on before her, to attain freedom and opportunities that they did not have. In similar fashion the advances of the present time are being transmitted to the generations that are the future adults and the cycle will perpetuate into the future. As generations pass there is the recollection or memory of something significant about that time, for instance, the music, the fashion or perhaps the social climate. Not only can these ideas apply to humanity as a whole but they can also be applied to families and individuals, the core of humanity. The incessant growth of legacies creates a spiral effect where more knowledge, ideas, traits, schools of thought and beliefs are added to previous information which drives how individuals process and respond to life's situations.

This spiral effect has been linked to the symbolism of the spiral itself. Its numerous symbolic meanings have existed since Paleolithic times. Universally it has been used to



represent such concepts as the movement of waters, growth and expansion, birth and death, continuity, the cyclic seasons, a manifestation of energy in nature, the weaving of the web of life and the continuity between cycles (Cooper 156). Hence the spiral has been used to connect the concepts being explored in this thesis body of work. The core of the work investigates universal concepts that are common to humanity. Concepts of life and death, the confinement to time and areas that connect and overlap the human experience of life are examined.

The thesis installation is comprised of abstracted forms made from clay. It is a metaphor for the impressions that we make by our actions in the evolution of our legacy. It symbolically represents the effect of time on the intersecting layers of actions, memory, legacy and the continuous spiral that occurs among these concepts. The large curled pieces seen in figure 13 are reflective of the twists and turns, ups and downs that transpire throughout the human experience. They represent the unexpected situations and changes that are encountered over a lifetime. The variation in lengths creates diversity in the sizes of the motifs reflective of the diversity in the challenges that are encountered in life. The markings on the pieces are symbolic of the legacy that individuals in the past left behind. They are records of the actions they took in the face of changing circumstances.

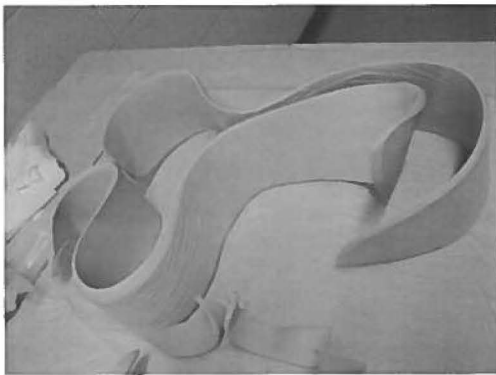


Figure 13. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Large clay ribbon-like forms.

The conical vessels containing colored fluid represent our physical bodies. They are made in a range of sizes that reflect the range of persons who live and pass on. For example, seniors, young adults, teenagers, children and babies all simultaneously exist and die within the same constraints of time. The colored fluid is reflective of our choices and actions. The colored drips that fall unto the pieces below align with the actions that are taken in light of situations that occur. The marks that are made on the pieces translate as the legacy that is left by our actions. Over time the conical vessels will appear to deteriorate (see figure 14 below) in correlation to the deterioration of the physical body as we age. Eventually all of the fluid in the vessels will be expended symbolic of the end of a life.



Figure 14. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Conical vessels.



Deterioration

What remains at that point as seen in figure 16 below are colored pieces, which represents the legacy of the individual. The color is layered over the embossing that covers the pieces. The embossing being legacies that were left by individuals in the past and the newly applied color the most recent legacy added. The color that is absorbed by the base containing the pieces is the memory of the individual's actions. The stark white color of the pieces at the

beginning of the installation seen in figure 15 will be transformed into an explosion of vibrant color over time.



Figure 15. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Pieces before dripping occurs.



Figure 16. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Pieces after being colored.

The explosion of color is also reminiscent of the artist's culture. At Carnival time the nation of Trinidad and Tobago is transformed into a brilliant kaleidoscope of colored costumes in a celebration of life. Since the installation includes multiple vessels each conveying the life of a different individual it reflects a sampling of the diversity and multiplicity of lives that form an

expansive network of influences, experiences, actions, relationships, memories, and legacies, which grow and expand as time cycles on. What develops is a collage of collective entwined layers capsule in time.

The small hanging opened-ring motifs (see figure 17 below) emphasize the slowing down of time. They present a closer inspection of individual actions as they occur in a moment of time. The small suspended domes (globs) are depictions of compounded actions inspired by the beading of water as it streams down a vertical surface (leaf, window pane).

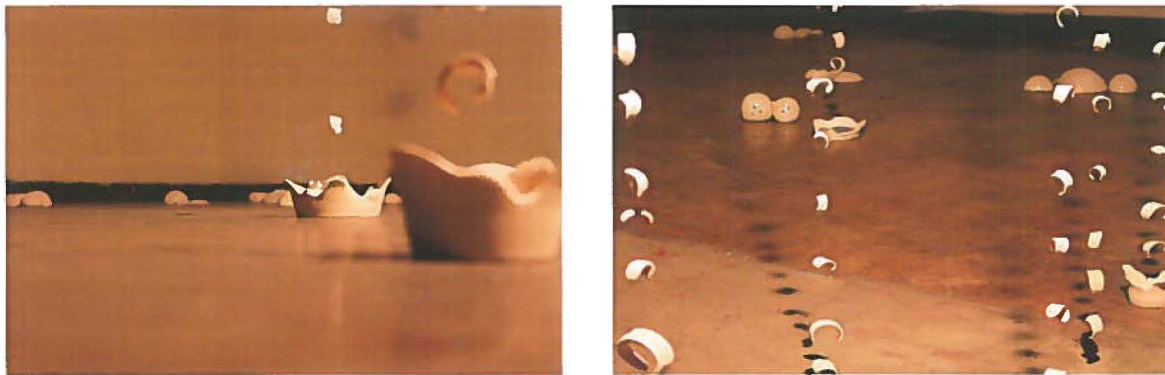


Figure 17. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Small opened ring motifs, splashes and bubbles.

As decisions are made and lived out they ultimately alter or completely change outcomes in the present and the future. The splash vessels below the string of motifs reflect the impact of a person's actions on those individuals within their sphere of influence and beyond. They demonstrate the impact of the course of action taken in response to circumstances that arise. The perforated domes (bubbles) are reminiscent of persons who are in an individual's sphere of influence. The spread of the domes reflect the far-reaching extent of those influences. They mark the beginning of memory and legacy.

## Legacies

Over the course of time, which elapsed during the creation of Life's Cycle, the legacy and memory of certain well-known individuals were realized. In reference to the concept of this thesis the legacy, memory and times of Nelson Mandela, Maya Angelou and Robin Williams are briefly discussed. These discussions seek to explore the impact of the legacies of those persons on individuals in their sphere of influence (close or far reaching) after they have passed on. They are also real life examples of the concepts being investigated in the thesis work. Each of the mentioned individuals represented a different station in life and in all cases left an indelible mark on their families, friends, nations and even the world. They have become beacons of positivity and have made marks that infuse the present generation/(s) with brilliant color.

Nelson Mandela imprisoned for twenty-seven years on Robben Island because of his conviction and fight for peace and equality of the races in South Africa (McDougall 2). Upon his death in December of 2013 he left a legacy of freeing his nation of the horrendous system of Apartheid. He also left a legacy where the black masses of South Africa are able to vote freely in political general elections.

One author, in his article entitled, "Honoring Nelson Mandela" highlights legacies that Mandela left to his family, the South African nation and the world. He left legacies of personal courage, integrity, humility, the power of collective action, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Maya Angelou American poet is noteworthy for the legacies she has imprinted in the Performing Arts and Literature. Angelou is quoted as having said, "I'd like to be thought of as

someone who tried to be a blessing rather than a curse on the human race (Gillespie 98).” She has also said, “The honorary duty of a human being is to love (Maya Angelou 10).” Angelou who was best known for her literary accomplishments and has left a legacy of being a wordsmith. Over the decades she contributed to the performing arts through writing screenplays and making appearances on television and in movies. Angelou also wrote volumes of poetry and other autobiographical works (Angelou 10).

Angelou has received over four dozen honorary degrees, several literary awards, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011 just to name a few of her tangible legacies (Haynes 70). Her life resonates one that was committed to love, equality and the triumph of the human spirit over adversity (Haynes 71).

“What I would really like said about me is that I dared to love...By love I mean that condition in the human spirit so profound, it encourages us to develop courage and build bridges, and then to trust those bridges and cross the bridges in attempts to reach other human beings (Maya Angelou 11).”

Robin Williams American Comedian exploded into fame with the show *Mork and Mindy*. Bill Maher a fellow comedian said of him, “He was fast and furious, and I think there’s something else that’s behind there that you can’t really quantify or define. You could just tell there was a humanity in Robin Williams (Corliss 44).” That quality emanated from him and became part of the non-tangible legacy that he left. President Barack Obama in a statement that he issued said, “Robin Williams was an airman, doctor, a genie, a nanny, a president, a professor, a bangarang Peter Pan and everything in-between, but he was one of a kind. He

arrived in our lives as an alien but he ended up touching every element of the human spirit (Dennis 65).”

In terms of tangible accomplishments Williams left marks in history with his performances in *Mork and Mindy*, *Dead Poets Society*, *Hamlet*, *Patch Adams* and *Mrs. Doubtfire* to list a few. He has earned an Oscar Award for Supporting Actor along with three Best Actor nominations (Corliss 44-49). Most of his films like his true character tended to reassure and touch the heart.

Nelson Mandela, Maya Angelou and Robin Williams were three different individuals from diverse arenas in life. However, they were able to influence those who knew them and a much farther reaching circle of individuals (nationally and internationally) over the expanse of decades. Their backgrounds in politics, literature and comedy did not mask their commonalities in personality of possessing convictions that were greater than themselves, a love of the human spirit and passion for the happiness of humanity. These are the qualities that resonate with the artist who created *Life's Cycles*.

### **Family Legacies**

Family legacies are probably the most influential in an individual's life. One family member in the life of the installation artist who has left artistic endeavors as legacy is Edric Connor. He was born in 1913 in Trinidad and Tobago and was a known cultural activist in the 1940's. Connor migrated to Great Britain in 1944 and launched his international career on the BBC in that year. He went on to become a recognized singer and film and stage actor. Musically

he pioneered the Trinidad All Steel (steelpan) Percussion Orchestra to the Festival of Britain and produced an album of folk music entitled *Songs from Jamaica*. On that album he wrote and performed the song *Day Dah Light* which was subsequently rewritten in 1955 and became known as *Day O* or *The Banana Boat Song*.

Edric Connor's acting made him the first black actor to perform for the Royal Shakespeare Company in Britain. He was the character Gower in *Pericles*. He acted in eighteen films in which he was John Kumalo in *Cry, The Beloved Country*, Daggoo in *Moby Dick*, Waitari in *The Roots of Heaven*, Jimmy Jean in *Fire Down Below* and Balthazar in *King of Kings*. In 1956 he and his wife founded the Edric Connor Agency to promote actors, dancers, writers and musicians (mainlib.uwi.tt website). He dedicated his career to the promotion of art and culture and assisting other artists in their pursuits.

Geraldine Connor singer and ethnomusicologist and daughter of Edric Connor have preserved her father's legacy. She published his autobiography and donated it to the Alma Jordon Library at the University of the West Indies, ST. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago. Geraldine Connor's own artistic pursuits are extensions of her father's legacy. She considered herself a creator of theatre. Her most famous work *Carnival Messiah* (figure 18), which she wrote, composed for and directed was an integration of the European classical oratorio and Trinbago masquerade.





Figure 18. Geraldine Connor, *Carnival Messiah*. 1999. Web. 09/30/2014.

The show was first staged in 1999 at West Yorkshire Playhouse, then in Trinidad and Tobago and on the grounds of Harewood House in partnership with the Eight Earl of Harewood in Britain. Musically, she has been a backup singer for Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff and Tom Jones. Connor has played for the Invaders steel band and arranged music for the Panorama steel band competition (highest ranking steel band competition in Trinidad and Tobago).

In 2009 she received the Chaconia medal (gold) the second highest national honor in Trinidad and Tobago. Geraldine Connor accepted an award on behalf of the Connor family from the British Association of Steel bands for the family's contribution to the promotion of the steel pan, Caribbean Art, Culture and Heritage in the United Kingdom (Busby). Hers was a life committed to promoting, sharing and combining cultures through artistic exploits. The similarities in life pursuits between Edric and Geraldine Connor are just one aspect in the transmission and perpetuation of legacy exploited in this thesis. Carl Jung includes the idea of legacy through heredity in his discussions that follow. His discourse supports the idea that

legacy is universal because it is common to all individuals. The concept in the thesis work aligns to the projection that legacy is common to all persons.

### **Jungian Theory and Legacy**

Dr. Carl Jung presents a theory of universals called archetypes in the book 'Man and His Symbols' which lends to the concept of a collective spiral of legacy. He explains his archetypes as inherent attributes that present themselves through dreams. Dreams can also be viewed as memories or reflections and these are common to all individuals. The origin of his archetypes is unknown but they are believed to replicate themselves in any part of the world (Jung 58). They are embodied in myths, religions and art. Jung has also discovered that the mythology and folklore of numerous peoples are very similar. Folklore, according to the Oxford Essential Dictionary is the traditional beliefs and stories of people (Oxford 224). The stories of people are their legacies. They are cordially the memories that are shared by the wider community about an individual. This supports the idea that the folklore and mythology of societies in different regions of the world are similar, since the human spirit and nature are similar universally. As Maya Angelou says in her poem 'Human Family', "We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike (Mark 5)."

Jung projects that archetypes are patterns in the human mind that are generated by tradition, migration and heredity. The argument for heredity is evidenced in the scenario of Edric and Geraldine Connor, father and daughter. In that case Geraldine Connor exhibited traits/talents that were characteristic in her father. Since traditions are taught social norms, they constitute as legacy which are also lessons that are passed down through teachings. The

layering of legacy and memories through the above mentioned vehicles are plausible since an individual responds to life's situations based on inherited traits, taught traits and those acquired by their environment (migratory surroundings). Jung's theory states that archetypes are present in every individual thus making them universal. They are viewed as a collective unconsciousness (Jung 38). His theory behind archetypes suggests not only that they are universal but also that they are always present (Trilling 56-7).

As stated earlier the concept of legacy in this thesis work is seen as a collective spiral of memory. They are represented in the installation as embossed patterns and colored fluid. The liquid falls in layers over the embossing representing that compiled layering of legacy. The past, present and future are presented as existing at the same time. The past informs the actions of the present and those actions create the new legacy of the future.

### **Technical Process**

Clay was chosen to create this body of work because of its responsiveness and ability to mimic natural phenomenon and to retain imprinted marks. The medium is also intriguing because its versatility presents unlimited scope for abstract organic sculptural forms that are represented in the work.

A range of clay bodies was incorporated to facilitate the varied aspects of the work. Cone 04 low fire white clay that appears gray in its leather hard state and white after the bisque firing was used to create smaller pieces that did not require a stronger clay body to hold their form. Mid-range Cone 6 Whitestone clay with grog was used for larger pieces that required a

sturdier clay body. Two porcelains cones 9 to 10 were used for very small pieces to lend subtle light accents after the glaze firing to sections of the work through their translucent qualities. These porcelains were extremely smooth because they contained no grog whatsoever. All of the clay bodies used were commercially produced.

The pieces created for the work were constructed using a variety of techniques. The hand building methods of pinching and slab-building along with throwing on the potter's wheel were incorporated. Coils were used to reinforce the structural fiber of some of the forms made. Wheel thrown forms varied in height and width. The final form of many of the thrown elements was a result of alterations made during the leather hard state of the clay after the throwing process. Geometrical forms (domes/bowls and cylinders) were thrown on the potter's wheel before alterations were made to achieve the final forms. The thrown pieces (figure 19) were left on the bat until the clay was leather hard for them to be trimmed. Once trimmed and removed from the bat the pieces were cut into, perforated and carved. Parts of the structures were manipulated via pushing, bending and twisting the leather hard clay. In that state the clay is pliable to transformations.



Figure 19. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Piece on bat along with trimmed and perforated pieces.

The slabs for the slab built forms were first kneaded on the wedging table. That process assisted with the removal of air pockets and achieving consistency within the clay body. It also helped to soften the clay before rolling it out. Different thicknesses of slabs were rolled out to facilitate the needs of the forms that were to be constructed from them. Manually rolled slabs were rolled between two pieces of wood that were the required thickness of the slab intended.

Slabs were rolled on smooth fabric to reduce the occurrence of imprints from the working surface. A rubber rib (kidney) was used to remove any unwanted impressions at that stage. The slabs were cut to the desired lengths, widths and shapes for the planned forms. In some instances paper patterns were used as tools for obtaining required shapes for the construction of the pieces. Texturing was implemented through embossing before changing the form of the strips. Plastic was laid over the leather hard strips of slab before maneuvering them to eliminate cracking and lend more control to the bending and twisting process.

Strips of slab ranged from 4 inches x 4 feet to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch x 2 inches and variations in-between. Some strips as seen below were joined to attain the desired length. They were joined by cutting the ends of selected strips at a forty-five degree angle, scoring those edges, applying slip and then joining the two edges to lengthen the strip. The large domes are 18 inches in diameter and 12 inches high. The abstract face forms made on the convex molds are 5 inches at the widest point and 8 inches in length. Molds were used (figure 20) for some of the pieces because of the extensive quantity that had to be produced and the sizes of the pieces that were required for the installation. The time frame in which the work had to be completed also

informed the use of molds. Two hundred and twenty faces and thirty large domes were molded.

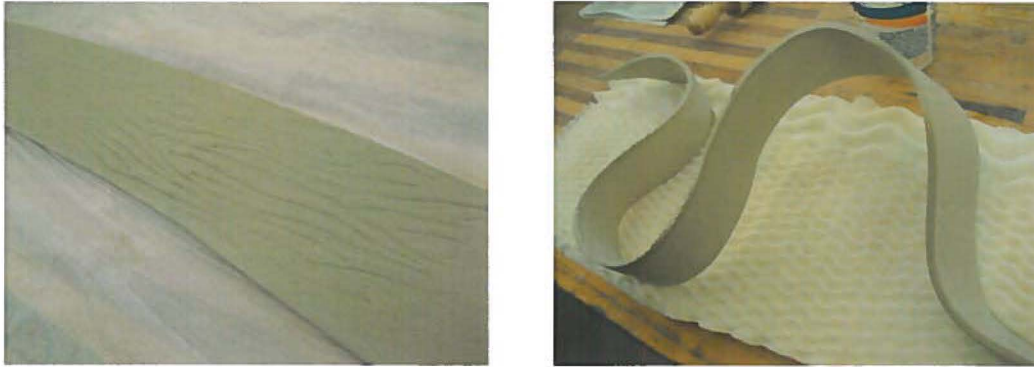


Figure 20. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Long strip that was joined then manipulated.

Concave and convex pressed molds made by the artist from plaster were employed in producing some of the forms. They were pressed and stroked with a damp sponge to adopt the form of the molds. Texture was added to the pieces on the convex molds (figure 21) while they were still on the molds. They were sponged and textured through the processes of embossing and impressing finger marks into the clay. Once the pieces were removed they were trimmed further. Attention was paid to giving the pieces thin clean edges.



Figure 21. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Convex mold with abstract face laid over mold.

The large domes (figure 22) were formed from slabs that were cut from four segmented paper patterns and were connected inside the mold. They weighed approximately thirteen pounds each. They were joined on the inside of the mold through scoring and the application of slip. The seams were smoothed over with a rubber rib. A reinforcement coil was attached to the interior rim of the clay form to assist in retaining the shape during the glaze firing. The pieces coming out of the concave molds were perforated by a combination of cutting into them and using a metal boring tool. They were then sponged to soften the sharp edges gained from perforating the surface and to refine the appearance of the dome.



Figure 22. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Large concave mold with form pressed into mold.

The small pinched dome forms (figure 23) were constructed out of porcelain. They are small but of various sizes ranging from 1 inch to 2 inches in diameter and a  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch in height. The artist made a small ball of clay then indented the middle with the thumb and worked around the indent with the thumb and fingers until a small dome of desired thickness and size was achieved. The edges were cut evenly with a pair of scissors. At the leather hard stage they

were sponged for refining the edges. Holes were bored at the pinnacle of the forms to allow them the ability to be dangled.

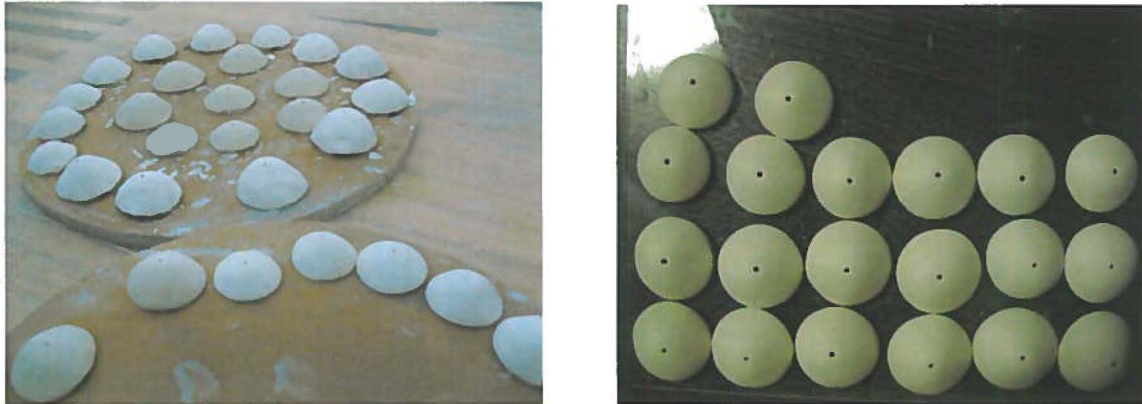


Figure 23. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Pinched porcelain domes.

The conical forms seen earlier were also developed from slabs of clay. Paper patterns were laid over rolled slabs and cut out of clay. Once again various pattern sizes were incorporated ranging from 2 inches in diameter by 5 inches long to 6 inches in diameter by 14 inches long and numerous sizes in-between. After the flat shapes were cut out the clay was allowed to become leather hard before it was embossed. Plastic was then laid over the shapes to assist in controlling the folding process. Curved folds overlapped exposing one edge at the meeting point to imitate folds used in origami. The overlapped areas were fastened and sealed using scoring and slip (scratch and attach method). Some of the fingertip indentations were left on the forms to infuse an organic aura into the forms. Holes were bored around the form near the rim to enable the motifs to be suspended from above.



All of the forms were created from basic geometric forms (cones, half hemispheres, cylinders, ovals) in keeping with one aspect of minimalism. However, some organic elements have been introduced in alignment with ideas from Art Nouveau (Curves, ribbon like forms).

The surface treatment of the motifs comprised of a combination of embossing, carving, perforating, and imprinting natural elements (finger impressions) into the clay. In all instances after the texture was added to the leather hard clay the pieces were brought to the bone dry state slowly. This was accomplished by lightly covering the motifs with thin plastic. When the pieces appeared dry (seen by a change of color in the clay) the plastic was removed and the pieces left in the open air for approximately two more days. They were concluded to be bone dry when they were no longer cold to the touch. Slow drying the motifs lessened the chances of them developing cracks. This process reduced the hazard of the pieces exploding in the kiln because of moisture expanding in the clay. The bone dry work was bisque fired at cone 08 in an electric kiln.

The ribbon-like forms were arranged in an interlocking fashion in the firing chamber. The tiny domes and curls were fitted in the spaces that were created between the interlocking forms for efficient use of the kiln. The abstract faces and conical vessels were nested one inside the other, in similar fashion (figure 24) for the same reason. Without glaze the pieces can touch without the occurrence of them sticking together through the bisque firing process. The sizes of the capacity of the kilns dictated the sizes of the pieces built. After the bisque firing the pieces became more stable and porous enough to receive selected colorants (glaze, fabric dye).



Figure 24. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Manner in which faces were arranged in kiln for bisque firing.

The mature bisque pieces were washed to remove any fine loose particles (dust like) from their surface. Post washing, the work was left to dry for approximately twenty-four hours before applying glaze. The artist mixed all the glazes no commercial glazes were used. They were applied in two ways. Glaze was applied to small pieces by the dipping method, which is complete submersion in a bath of glaze. The medium sized to large pieces were treated with glaze (figure 25) via spraying with a compressed-air spraying machine in a spray booth.



Figure 25. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Application of glaze in the spray booth.

The tiny pieces were finger-sanded to smooth out the area where they were held for submersion. The edges of the small curls, the large ribbon-like forms, the rims of the domes and the footrings on the splash forms were all dryfooted (glaze was removed from the part of the vessel that would touch the kiln shelf) before placing them in the firing chamber. This was done to ensure that they would not stick to the kiln shelf. The kiln shelves were all treated with kiln wash as a measure to also prevent sticking. The glazes used were a selection of cone 6 oxidation matte, semi-glossy and transparent glazes. The high fired porcelain clay was dipped with a variation of cone 9-10 oxidation transparent glossy glazes. Oxidation glazes were selected because of the availability of electric kilns. Stains for the addition of color were not applied to the glazes intentionally because of the conceptual impact the work was designed to unfold. Some of the pieces were not glazed for more efficient absorption of the colorants (fabric dye) used.

Color was applied to the work in a non-traditional fashion in keeping with the ephemeral nature of the installation. Non-traditional colorants (fabric dyes) were included in the exhibition of the installation. Several of the conical vessels were designed to have brightly colored fabric dye (all mixed by the artist) drip from suspended conical vessels unto ribbon-like pieces below them. Some of the conical forms along with some of the ribbon-like forms are not treated with glaze to permit the permeation of the fabric dye through the porous quality of the bisque pieces. That process will allow those pieces to be colored by the fabric dye. In keeping with the cyclic nature of the concept behind the work at the end of the presentation the dyed pieces will be able to be re-fired (re-cycled) to their original white state for future showings.

## Description and Analysis of Creative Work

This body of work probes the idea of movement with the passage of time. It launches the concept in a three-fold presentation. Each section presents a different aspect of the main concept. The artist is interested in the layering of cycles, legacy and memory as time moves on. The sections of the installation are not in any chronological order. Since for the purpose of this thesis, time is not linear but cyclic and layered, the juxtaposition of the sections is arbitrary. The first section of the installation represents life as it happens in real time. The next section depicts the slowing down of time and an individual's awareness of being present in the moment. The final section reveals the perception of generations of legacy.

The installation itself is designed to change over time reflective of the changes that occur over the course of a lifespan. The entire work is initially presented in white directing the viewer's gaze to the forms without the distraction of color. An observation of the subtle differences of each piece is a reminder of our differences. The unifying characteristics that transcended each section of the presentation are reminders that we are more alike than different as mentioned in the words of poet Maya Angelou. The combination of all the sections to embody the whole speaks to the universal nature of our existence and those common experiences (interacting with others, influencing them, aging with time, passing on) bind us together. It is hoped that each viewer connects to some aspect of the work and is able to reflect on and contemplate that one element as it relates to their existence.

## **Real Time Section**



Figure 26. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Real time section.

## **Ribbon-like Forms**

This section of the work portrays life as it expires in real time. All of the motif pieces in this section are initially white. The large ribbon-like forms were inspired from the flight patterns of butterflies. They are reminiscent of movement reflecting the challenges and accomplishments we encounter in life. Those forms bear on them embossed marks, symbolic of the impressions that are left from actions taken, by individuals in responding to the ebbs and flow of life.

The forms are active because life is not stagnant; it is always moving and changing. Combined the forms create visual interest with their inter-weaving of positive and negative spaces. Elegant strong line is evidenced in the curls, twists, treatment of the edges and from the

thinness of the ceramic strips. The thin quality of the forms gives lightness, fluidity and a sense of fragility to the work.

### **Conical Vessels**

The conical vessels are also made from thin clay slabs. Both the inner and outer rim of the vessel is embossed in the same manner as the large ribbon-like forms. The vessels take the likeness of paper folded forms in the art of origami. They are aligned to the physical body of an individual. The body then becomes a vessel that is full of life, since the vessels will be filled with colored fluid symbolic of a person's essence (actions, decisions). Those vessels were originally inspired by the form of a butterfly's body. The artist retained an organic sensibility to the conical forms by leaving finger indentures that were made during the handbuilding process. They resonate the truth that human bodies are not perfect and over time the life contained in our physical structure will end and the body will deteriorate. Some of the vessels containing fluid are not glazed. This is for the expressed purpose of allowing the colored fluid on the inside of the vessel to permeate the porous walls and transpire its color to the outer walls.

In combination the conical vessels will be suspended over the ribbon-like forms. They will be eventually filled with colored fluid which will drip in real time unto the ribbon-like forms below. With the flow of fluid like the hour glass time elapses until all of the fluid is spent. That instant in time symbolizes a life that was lived and has expired over time. The initially white pieces are transformed into a burst of brilliant color. The pieces below emphasize how that individual colored the world by the decisions that they made and the actions that they took. The thesis postulates that the decisions and actions of an individual are informed by the

legacies that were passed on to them by heredity, by taught lessons or by reason of their social environs. All individuals leave a legacy (consciously or not) which becomes a new layer of memory and legacy for the still existing generation (the present) and those to come (the future) within the confines of time.

### Slowed/ Frozen Moment Section

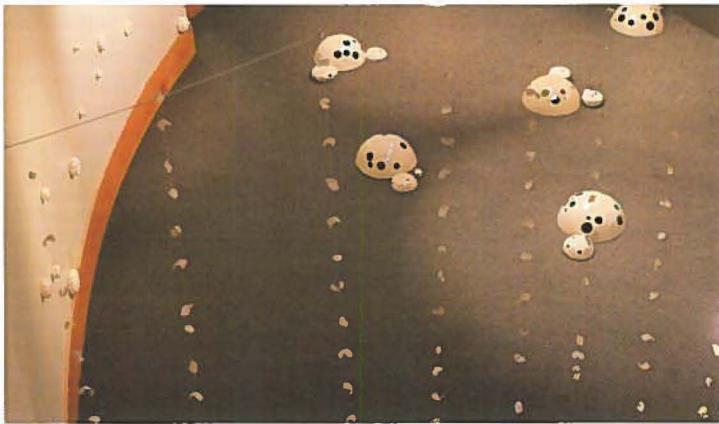


Figure 27. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Frozen moment section.

### **Drips and Globbs**

In this section of the installation the aspect of time is portrayed in one single moment. It is slowed to a point where it appears frozen. In contrast to the section on real time the drops of fluid are frozen as represented by the very small open-ring curls inspired by rainfall. The minute open-ring motifs are derived from thin slabs of clay. Thin strips were individually twisted by hand into the open-rings. The very small domes reflecting beads of water have been individually created using the pinch pot technique. The pieces are strung on fish line and suspended vertically to convey an atmosphere of dripping fluid. The conical vessels are pulled

into this section bringing their symbolism with them. Many of the frozen droplets emerge from the bottom of conical vessels in keeping with the concept of an individual's life source that is depleting with time. In this instance the viewer can trace the path of the drop and not lose it because the moment is frozen. Many of the droplets and globs are glazed with high glossy white or transparent glaze to capture the glimmer in water. They are also moveable. The viewer will be able to slide the droplets and globs in a vertical direction along the fish line. In so doing the installation changes and is transported into the realm of being ephemeral.

### **Bubbles and Splashes**

The droplets fall into forms that are depicting splashes. The action of the drop creating a splash symbolizes the impact of a person's actions on those in their sphere of influence. The splashes vary in sizes because an influence can be significant or quite minimal. The perforated domes are bubbles. The bubbles and splash vessels are thrown elements that have been altered. From the artist's observations bubbles are generally generated with splashes of water. In this arena they reflect the effects of our decisions and actions on other individuals. At times the impact may affect very few persons and at other times the effect can be far reaching to individuals we may never meet. The legacies of the well-known individuals mentioned in this paper are examples of lives that have influenced closely related persons and the masses.



### Generations of Legacy Section



Figure 28. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Generations of legacy.

### **Faces**

This section exhibits an arrangement of abstract faces. It is the only section of the installation that alludes to humanity visually. The accompanying sections are tied to the human condition visually through the faces. The embossing and finger indentations on the faces in turn tie them to the two abstract segments. The marks retain their symbolism of legacy. On the faces they are interpreted by the artist as anonymous legacies. That means that every person whether well-known or not meets legacies that are left by past individuals and by virtue of having existed they leave a legacy after they die. The faces are arranged in a spiral of circles that is incomplete because time is perceived as infinite. As long as time continues in its cycle and humanity persists legacy will continue to build, spiral and layer itself on generation upon generation. Memories of legacies will also persist at least for some time.

## Take Away Mementos



Figure 29. Annaliesa Connor-Meissner. Take away mementos.

Mementos of the installation are entwined in the presentation in keeping with the ephemeral nature of the work. Viewers are allowed to take away a small ceramic disc with a written word on it which expresses a quality that the viewer can attempt to achieve in his/her lifetime. The memento serves as an extension of the exhibition that the viewer takes as part of the legacy that is possible to achieve. Over the course of time of the exhibition the stock of mementos should decrease, in turn, changing the installation.

The installation also directs the viewer in another way, to look in both an above and downward direction. In the mundane routines of life an individual's gaze is so often kept straight ahead filtering out what is above or below. The traditional orientation of the gallery attests to that forward gaze. Works in the traditional setting of the gallery are hung at eye level in that familiar zone where minimal thought is given to the act of viewing. "Life's Cycles" engages the observer by directing the individual's line of vision. It offers a transition from the

norm into a heightened awareness of coherent multiple planes and layers on which the work exists. The tradition of the horizontal eye level view morphs into layers that stimulate viewing interest. The viewer becomes a participant through the activity of interacting with the work. The interaction comes through the intentional placement of pieces in such a way that the viewer must navigate himself or herself through the work to view the entire installation and in the process move the pieces and create sound. In so doing the viewer-participant introduces an element of performance to the work. The other segments of the installation focus on viewer involvement that fosters an awareness of being present in a moment and awareness of human activity in the altering of the present while affecting the legacy of the future simultaneously. The viewer becomes a participant by engaging with the work through touch and passage through the pieces of the installation. This aspect of the installation integrates a performance element into the work.

## **Conclusion**

*Life's Cycles* is an installation developed in the medium of clay, which explores the concept of movement with the passage of time. These ideas and concepts are depicted in clay, because of the material's versatility, responsiveness and almost life-like nature. As the substance of what the Earth is made of and everything contained on it, clay seemed most suited for this installation. Clay naturally embodies the foundation elements that formulate the concept.

Movement in the work refers to both the literal phenomenon and a metaphor for life's journey over the course of time. *Life's Cycle* examines the interconnections among ideas of

legacy and memory as time cycles on. The possibility of compounding layers of both with the passing of generations of individuals is considered. The tracing of individual traits that may have been passed on by heredity or taught endeavors whether consciously or not are explored. The idea that memories and legacies build in a spiral as each generation adds to what was before them and leaves additions for the next generation to build on is probed. The realization that legacy, memories, the bond of time, human interaction, reaction and connection are universal phenomenon in the lives of all persons is taken into account.

Those explorations are accomplished by taking a minimalist approach. The vehicles of previous knowledge and experiences, reflections on the work of past and contemporary artists whose work bear similar approaches or concepts are utilized. Examining Jungian theory and considering the lives of individuals with impressionable legacies was channeled in probing the concepts.

Careful consideration to the selection of materials, techniques, aesthetics and presentation strategies were all combined to produce the work. Organic and ephemeral qualities were infused into *Life's Cycles* to emphasize the concepts and enrich the experience for the viewer. The employment of movement and sound that is produced from interaction with the piece, lends additional layers of interest to the work. This prompts the viewer to question and to think about the installation. The viewer is also encouraged to think about how individual choices and actions shape the legacy that they leave behind. They are challenged to make connections to their role in the cycle of time. Ultimately the viewer's own experiences will enlighten and guide his/her interpretation of the work.

## Appendix

### Glossary of Terms

**Bat:** A plaster or wooden disc for throwing pots on the potter's wheel, for moving pots without handling, or for drying clay.

**Bisque:** Clay ware after the first firing, usually around 1830°F (1000°C).

**Bisque firing:** The first firing of bone dry unglazed clay. In this firing the pieces may be stacked or touching because there is no glaze to stick them together.

**Body:** A specific mixture of clay, such as stoneware body or porcelain body.

**Bone dry:** Clay that is ready for firing. All the moisture is gone from the clay and it is very fragile at this stage.

**Centering:** The act of aligning the clay in the center of the potter's wheel in order to proceed with forming and shaping.

**Ceramic:** Any clay form that is fired in a kiln.

**Clay:** A decomposed granite-type rock that contains fine particles which make it plastic.

**Coils:** Hand rolled cord like pieces of clay.

**Crazing:** The development of fine cracks in the glaze.

**Dipping:** Applying a glaze by immersion.

**Dryfoot:** To clean the bottom of a glazed piece before firing.

**Finger-sand:** The smoothing of a glazed surface by gently rubbing the glaze with fingers.

**Firing:** The process by which ceramic ware is heated in a kiln to bring glaze or clay to maturity.

**Firing chamber:** The interior of the kiln in which the bone dry clay is fired.

**Firing cycle:** The gradual increase of the kiln temperature during firing.

**Foot:** The base of a piece of pottery.

**Glaze:** A thin glossy layer on the surface of the bisque clay. It is used to decorate the piece and seal the clay surfaces.

**Glaze firing:** The firing of a piece of pottery, which has been covered with glass forming materials.

**Greenware:** Unfired clay ware.

**Grog:** A ceramic material, usually clay that has been heated to a high temperature before use. Usually added to clay to lessen warping and increase its resistance to thermal shock.

**Handbuilding:** Techniques of constructing objects by hand.

**Kiln:** The apparatus in which pottery is fired. Kilns can be fueled with wood, oil, gas, or electric.

**Kiln furniture:** Refractory pieces used to separate and support the kiln shelves and pottery during firing.

**Kiln setting:** The arrangement of pieces in a kiln.

**Kiln wash:** A coating of refractory material applied to kiln furniture to prevent it from sticking during firing.

**Kneading:** A method of de-airing and dispersing moisture uniformly through a piece of clay to prepare it for use. Sometimes referred to as wedging.

**Leather-hard:** Stiff but still damp clay hard enough to be handled without distorting but can still be joined.

**Matte:** A soft finish with little or no shine.

**Mold:** A forming device made of plaster for creating clay forms either by pressing or slip casting. Molds can be made of only one section or multiple pieces.

**Nesting:** Stacking pottery one inside the other in a kiln for bisque firing.

**Pinch pots:** Using a ball of clay and opening a hole in the ball to form a bowl shape through a combination of stroking and pinching the clay.

**Reduction:** Deficiency of free oxygen in the kiln atmosphere that causes the reduction of compounds rich in oxygen, which affects the glaze and clay color.

**Ribs:** Wooden or plastic tools used to lift the walls of thrown pots; rubber ribs are used to compact and smooth clay surfaces.

**Scoring:** Scratching the surface of clay for joining, used together with slip.

**Slab:** A flat piece of clay made through rolling.

**Slab building:** Making pottery from slabs of clay.

**Slip:** Clay in a liquid state.

**Soak:** Keeping a predetermined temperature at the end of the firing cycle to maintain the level of heat in the kiln to enhance many glaze finishes.

**Sponging:** Cleaning the surface of pottery before firing or a decorative method of applying slip or glaze.

**Spray booth:** A boxlike booth with a ventilating fan to remove harmful spray dust.

**Spraying:** Applying glazes with a compressed-air spray machine.

**Stilts:** Small shapes of bisque clay, sometimes with metal or wire spurs, used for supporting glazed pottery during firing.

**Throwing:** Forming clay on a potter's wheel.

**Trimming (turning):** Shaving leather-hard thrown vessels on the potter's wheel to refine their shape and, to create footings.

**Vitrify:** A glassy, non-porous state caused by heat or fusion.

**Water smoking:** The initial stage of the firing cycle where the heat rise must be gradual to allow atmospheric and chemical water to escape.



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