

## Degustation bowls 2006

**Creator/Contributor:**

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Smart works: design and the handmade

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# Jacqueline Clayton and Paul Davis

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Jacqueline Clayton and Paul Davis both have strong careers in ceramics, and while their personal work is quite different, they share a common experience in Japanese ceramics and culture and an interest in designing ceramics for production. Two years ago, they unexpectedly had the opportunity to acquire some state-of-the-art production equipment and, working around their other commitments, are developing a range of ceramic tableware for restaurants, through their company, Press to Play.

From 2001, following 25 years of teaching ceramics in Melbourne, Paul Davis has been head of Sturt Pottery, at Mittagong, NSW. Davis's personal work is recognisable as large, rugged, boldly formed and decorated plates, woodfired with the characteristic glaze of Japanese Hagi ware. However, he is also skilled as a production potter and in 2002 introduced the Sturt Range of plates, beakers, teapots, jugs and bowls. Jacqueline Clayton is currently senior lecturer and head, School of Design, at the University of New South Wales's College of Fine Arts (COFA). Through installations of repeated objects, her artwork investigates systems of classification and the relationship of history to memory and to the present. In displays as diverse as 120 pincushions with 85 000 pins in decorative motifs, to masses of flowers carved from face-powder 'clay', she examines the role of objects in defining place and the self.

In 2002 Davis and Clayton heard about a well-equipped workshop that had been set up in Sydney by a Korean entrepreneur who had hoped to make production ceramics in Australia and was unable to continue.

We realised that this facility could offer a long-term option for us, where we could continue with personal work but also bring our shared interest in production wares and repeated forms to a different marketplace.

Apart from clay-processing machines and trolley kilns, the equipment included a pressure casting plant and a computer-programmed electric kiln, as well as tonnes of Korean porcelain. Now installed in premises in Mittagong, they have since added a hydraulic press that expands the range of production options and provides them with greater control and flexibility in working on small runs.

Master chef, Peter Gilmore, from Sydney's Quay Restaurant, was looking for a designer for tableware in 2006 and approached Clayton for ideas. Davis and Clayton agreed to work with him to develop prototypes for a white porcelain bowl and from their different perspectives agreed on the final form. Gilmore and Clayton discussed the brief:

Peter brought his experience of the functions he needed the bowl to perform; I translated these to a measured design and Paul then hand-threw the prototype contributing adjustments through his intuitive throwing process to the final form.

Following this collaboration, they have developed two more bowls and a plate designed by Clayton for the restaurant. She explains:

The Korean porcelain is beautiful; it is hard and tough and dense, so there isn't a replacement market — instead we have an arrangement where we will market the forms more widely.

However, with a philosophy that includes an ideal of working locally, and a concern for the sustainability of resources, Davis and Clayton are now researching the development of a porcelain clay body that will use local materials instead of importing and freighting from elsewhere.

For the future, Jacqueline Clayton and Paul Davis are looking long term to a time when they will be able to combine all their interests. They have acquired a building in Newcastle which will eventually allow for personal studios, the production facility, a showroom and a teaching area.

GRACE COCHRANE

## NOTES

All quotes from correspondence and interviews between Jacqueline Clayton and the author in 2006.





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**1. Plate 2006**  
hand-built by Paul Davis, Sturt Pottery,  
Mittagong, NSW  
woodfired stoneware (Paul Davis clay  
body), Hagi (rice ash) glaze  
40 x 310 (diam) mm

PHOTO: MICHAEL BROUET

**2. *Fuyu no yuki* (winter snow) plate**  
2006  
handbuilt by Paul Davis, Sturt Pottery,  
Mittagong, NSW  
woodfired stoneware (Paul Davis clay  
body), Hagi (rice ash) glaze  
150 x 610 x 610 mm

PHOTO: MICHAEL BROUET

**3. Degustation bowls 2006**  
designed by Jacqueline Clayton and  
Paul Davis for Peter Gilmore, Quay  
Restaurant, Sydney; made at Press to  
Play studio, Mittagong, NSW  
ram-pressed high-fired porcelain  
two sizes: 53 x 265 (diam) mm and  
42 x 260 (diam) mm

PHOTO: HAMILTON CHURTON