

ARTIFACT OF RECLAMATION

Jess Perlitz

...if every rebellion begins with the idea
that conquerors on horseback are not many-legged gods, that they too drown
if plunged in the river,
then this is the year.
So may every humiliated mouth,
teeth like desecrated headstones,
fill with the angels of bread.

—

Excerpt from *Imagine the Angels of Bread* by Martín Espada

When a shaft of light spills into the room through a gap in the blinds, dust can be seen dancing slowly in the air. It is a simple moment that is familiar and ever beautiful. Suspended and swirling about, it's hard to not wonder at the specks suddenly made visible. Are we always breathing that dust? The dust is mostly made up of things from outside, which even includes space dust, but it is also made up of our bodies. In our homes it settles on our surfaces. It is the material of both our crumbling and our making.

Nichola Kinch's *Reclaim* is born of a grappling with our crumbling and making. Not dust but rather clay, a meticulous 1" scale reproduction of the White House made out of porcelain is submerged in a tub of water, left to stand until it can't anymore, dissolving and collapsing into the water that has subsumed it. The finished piece is made by then releasing that water, leaving the clay to dry once more. The evaporation forms a landscape that is then kiln fired and spread out on the floor before us, fractured remains, rubble and cracked desert topography.

With ceramics, the process of reclaiming clay is one where old clay or undesired forms are put into a bucket of water and slaked. It is a way of reconstituting the clay so it can then be useful again. With *Reclaim*, Kinch's carefully constructed porcelain White House is reclaimed through this basic reworking method. It is then ossified in that moment where we contemplate what else can be made of it.

Kinch's work regularly engages metaphor as a material, embracing a question that exists in sculpture about the difference between a prop and an artifact. She embraces the question without doubting sculpture's authenticity and instead uses the question as a mechanism in the making. Artifice, an inventive device to gain an end, is consistently integral to the meaning making of her work. Honoring a deep lineage of craft in which material, technique and skill are held paramount, Kinch uses it in *Reclaim* to present us with a haunting.

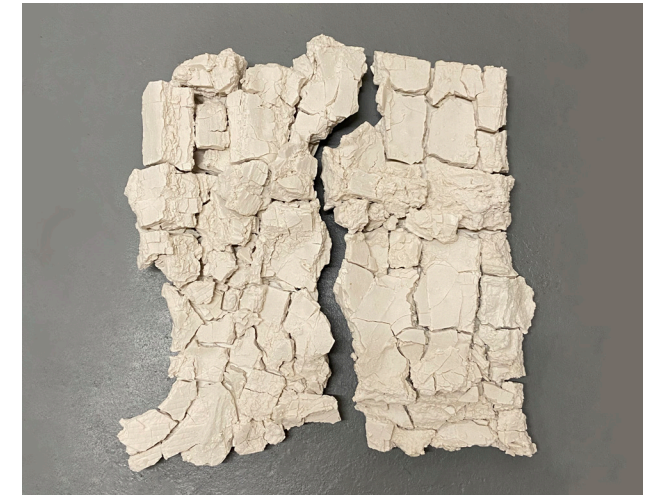
The artifacts of reclamation that Kinch presents us with sit uneasy, as they should. *Reclaim* is a proposal to consider the possibilities, but it is also the residue. And the residue looks a lot like a post-apocalyptic landscape – the terrain of our greatest environmental fears, the fantasy of a fallen empire, the rubble of what once was, the unnerving question of one's complicity in it all. What will ultimately be the forces that dismantle all this? What else will be built in place of these crumbling structures? Who is free to imagine what might come next? Ashes to ashes and dust to dust, may we build something new, formed out of clay, breathing life into its nostrils, each of us grappling with the making.

Tiger Strikes Asteroid is proud to present
Reclaim, a solo exhibition by member Nichola Kinch.



When a ceramicist makes a mistake, they put the undesired forms of raw clay into a bucket of water and slake them down. Once the form has dissolved that clay can be reconstituted and used again to create new forms. This process is called reclaiming.

From May to November 2019, Nichola Kinch built a scale model of the White House out of unfired porcelain. This model, roughly 5'X7'X3', sat in a base that was filled with water causing the base to flood and the model to collapse. After the fall, the clay soaked up the water and largely reclaimed its unformed and plastic state, to create a new topographical landscape embedded with vestiges of the original model. This topography was then dried, segmented and fired, resulting in a new landscape reminiscent of a desert - parched and cracked - with trace evidence of it's previous architectural life. In *Reclaim*, Kinch will exhibit images, videos, and the porcelain topography in its totality, reassembled as modular units intended for redistribution. Visitors to the gallery will have the opportunity to select a segment and pay what they wish to one of a selection of grassroots organizations centered on empowering citizens through the reallocation of resources.



RECLAIM

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Tiger Strikes Asteroid is a 501c3 non-profit network of independently operated,
artist-run exhibition spaces with locations in
Philadelphia, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Greenville, SC.



