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The narrative and the commemorative in the ceramic vessels of Hylton Nel, Wonderboy Nxumalo, Grayson Perry

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Abstract

This study explores the narrative and the commemorative aspect of the contemporary ceramic vessel. It examines the context of the narrative and the commemorative and how it manifests in the works of Grayson Perry, Wonderboy Nxumalo and Hylton Nel.

I have tended to take an approach that is Post Modernist and deconstructive which attempts to be inclusive. The narrative and the commemorative are explored and defined within the discourse of literary theory. Hence the concept of memory, history, time, narrative structure and semiotics are evident within these definitions. The relationship between the image and text is also explored and how the artist exploits this narrative device.

The contemporary vessel is used within the narrative in the appropriation of ceramic tradition and is explored in the works of these artists. Futhermore these traditions are subverted and manipulated in order to convey the narrative, whose content is both private and collective and extends and transgresses the confines of societal boundaries. It will be demonstrated how each of the artists convey their own dialogue that is driven by their own personal histories.

The chapters therefore explore thematically, many aspects of the narratives, all of which are relevant to the artists:

- The Concept of the Child
- The Didactic Nature of the Narrative.
- Narrative, Genre and sign.
- Sexuality, Transgression and Queer Politics.
- Recalling the Past; History and Nostalgia.

In the final chapter I explore my own work from the required exhibition. *Object /Vessel: Narratives of Containment*. The subject of the narrative is explored within the context of the ceramic vessel and the mixed media drawing. Many of the aspects of the narrative explored in this study have influenced my own work, in particular the concept of memory, nostalgia and the past.