Like in many other projects, this one also has also changed into a slightly different direction than what was intended from the beginning. First of all I started making beautiful things, or at least what I myself considered beautiful, instead of exploring the ugly which was my original intention. And I've continued to do so throughout the whole year.

In my Research Lab application I wrote that I wanted to go against a less controlling, automotive working method in order to further develop my Linusian expression. And with this project I've had the time and opportunity to get back into an exploration of the ceramic materials and the clay, a chance to rediscover the possibilities of the material and research how it behaves depending on small variations in how I work. During my education in Konstfack, 1994-1998 this urge to extend the uses of clay in search for new expressions was of high importance in my work. Since then though I have very much abandoned this exploring methods in favor of concepts and pieces that I have consequently reproduced from the origin of a drawing or a sketch. So initially this year I wanted to get rid of concepts and ideas and started with the ancient origin of all ceramics, that is the container - the pot. This worked for me as an excuse to immediately grab the material, produce without thinking, watch closely what happens during the process and also document whenever I saw something interesting happen. I used hand building techniques, tried different methods of applying the coils, smoothed them out, or did not, or smoothed the outside and inside in a different order. Sometimes I stopped in the middle of process; like once when I intended to make a large pot, I found it was so beautiful when I've made the bottom, so I left it being a plate instead.

Another intention with my project was to explore how far I could close up against the "ugly" and my reference point was a sculpture of a boot I've made many years ago which I myself had a hard time coping because I found it ugly and badly made. But I also saw a strong sculptural expression in it which I wanted to understand. So my initial intention why I chose to start with making these pots beautiful was because of two reasons. The first one was that by making a beautiful pot you may come to an understanding of what makes an ugly one. And the second reason was that by making beautiful pots I can show that I have the skill to do it, which may underline the fact that the ugly ones are intended to be ugly and by making these plain, relatively beautiful and skilled pots they can set a reference in relation to the crazier ones that were yet to come.

And they came because the next step was, still with a starting point in the container, spontaneously stretch them, rebuild them, add elements and content in a collage like manor, make holes in them, slaughter them completely and rebuild them again. Still, I found that I continued making them as I subjectively found beautiful and not really closing up against the expression of the boot. For instance, for all the butter in Småland (Swenglish expression) I would not glaze one of these pots with a transparent glaze that would kill the surface and hide the fingerprints on it, like I've done with the boot. After all, it is these marks of the process, these imprints in the clay that represent the findings in this project and I don't want to erase them from the surface.

So maybe, I'm not there yet. Maybe in the end, I might have to build the most beautiful hand built pot and then pour this transparent glaze all over it, just to see what happens and how I and others will react on this action. Or on the other hand, eventually it may not be that interesting to get there, and I will be pleased balancing the thin line between my ideas of ugly and beautiful, skilled and unskilled and that way slowly widen my own perspectives, step by

step until the day I actually find that darn boot beautiful and not ugly anymore. And that is because, as I'm also writing in my project description, it is not really the "ugly" just for the cause of it I'm after. It is rather an expressiveness or a beauty as I see it. For me it cannot be beautiful if there isn't an analog fault, a tension or an imbalance in what I see.

What you think is ugly or beautiful is subjective. Therefore I've in this text been distinct about saying that I've made pots that *I* find beautiful. Some people might still think these pots are crazy, ugly or badly made and part of my mission is still to expand their views of what they think is beautiful and correct. Encourage them to be open minded, reconsider and search a content or a beauty in my works, or for that matter search for beauty in the everyday world we are surrounded by. But to see a beauty in my works, the viewer often has to be told that there is one to see, and this is where the communication comes in.

In a coming exhibition in Liljevalchs Konsthall which I'm part of, I am trying some of the methods of communication of which I set up to try in this project. Just by having the opportunity to show my works in a place like Liljevalchs communicates that I'm a renowned and professional crafts artist. I will also show my plain and relatively beautiful, pots as references beside my more demanding ones. That is the ones that otherwise are at risk of being misinterpreted as being made by a hobby artist. Also by having skilled carpenters make the podiums and light designers setting the lights I will strive for a sharp presentation that can make my works stand out as professional pieces of art.

With the purpose of finding the right words, expressions and which references to refer to, I have also been working on a longer statement about my art. I've been writing in the format of a presentation spanning my whole artistic career from Konstfack until now, pedagogically talking about my motives and putting my reasoning about ugly/beauty in a perspective outside the art world. I'm comparing ugly with fears of what is different in other cultures and in human behavior etc.

The purpose of my statement is also to come to an understanding of a duality that is troubling me and which may be the actual core of my artistic work. That is the contradiction in that on one hand I want to accept and learn to appreciate reality as it is, with all its faults, drawbacks, natural drives etc. Those which might be considered as the *"ugly"* parts of life. But on the other hand I want to encourage escaping reality into idealized fictions as in dreams, movies when you travel as a tourist etc. Issues that often are represented in my work by the motives I've chosen; a beautiful house on the countryside, romantic images of France etc. To be able to fully enjoy, to fall in love with someone/something you have to idealize the object. So, first I say, I want to see and then I say, I want to close my eyes. The hard thing is to know when to look and when to close your eyes.

The thing though, with this long statement is that it will never be ready.
It is ever changeable. I have written an extensive one within this project, which is good and finished in that I'm writing about all the subjects I set up to write about, but when coming to the end I still want to rewrite the beginning. I've also felt that have been kind of forcing the writing into certain directions just to get it into the overall context, to get it to fit into a logical series of events in time. But my artistic work progress, and many others I believe, does not always fit in this logic. I'm an artist, a great observer, I actually believe that is my greatest strength; I see things, problematize, pose questions and depict them without really judging or taking sides. Therefore an artist statement like this one may not necessary be that logical. It can be something else that more resembles the process it sets up to describe.

Because of that, when my tutor encouraged me to find another way of sharing this statement than a lecture, which is linear in time, reaches quite a few people and is mainly a one way communication, it appealed to me. She proposed making a podcast, but I want images so I first thought about a video cast. It has the potential of reaching a much larger audience and could be a real good complement to the Liljevalchs exhibition. But I also wanted the flexibility in adding material and also break up the symmetry into a statement that can go into different directions, depending of the reader's interest. Something I also could use when lecturing, adding the possibility for me to go in different directions depending on the interests of the audience. So I found that this resembles the structure of a webpage, and because I want it to be easily read in a mobile phone, I started build an html app/webpage that contains my statement so far. I'm laying it out with a starting point but after reading an article you will have several choices of what to read next and the reading can end in different ending points. Each time you enter the site can it can offer a different reading and end up in totally different and maybe even totally contradictive locations. Quite much the same way my thinking about my art functions, ever changeable and with no necessary claims of answers. This way the statement becomes an art piece too. Writing in fragments like the artists of the 18th century romanticism. This will become the documentation part of the Research Lab project and I'm publishing it in the web domain map.linusersson.com for everyone to visit. I used the word - map, referring to the mind mapping software I've used so far to writing my statement and documenting my progress. And I like the idea of visualizing the statement as a map with roads going off in different directions.

Another conclusion of this project is that maybe I really should not talk so much about ugly and beautiful, and questioning valuations of aesthetics and skill because these notions are so subjective and huge. There are shiploads of texts written about them and I have only read a few. If I am to talk about them I should probably do it in a questioning format and maybe above all put them within a context, exemplify and explain which aesthetic values I want to question. For instance saying that the aesthetic values I try to expand are the white light, clean and minimalist design values of the late 90s when I was studying in Konstfack.

I am aware though that I in this conclusion have mentioned the words ugly and beautiful numerous times, and that is because this questioning was a main part of my project description for Research lab and I had to relate to them in my conclusion. From now on though you may not hear them from me so much again, or maybe you will. I'm not sure. It's hard to learn an old donkey to sit.

RESULTS AND CONTINUUM

The main result for me of this Research Lab project is the process and the findings I've made within the process. And those findings are what I believe the ones that are most interesting for the craft field to take part of, and that is why I chose to change my examination in the last minute to show my material objects and works in my studio, instead of displaying my statement/webpage even though some of the works were not finished yet. I wanted to show the setting these findings are made in and the photography stage where I put my objects in different points in the progress, lighting them up and photographing them for the documentation. I want the public to take part of my work during the process because so much interesting things happen there and so much happens on the way to finished art piece or exhibition. I often think that when I've just made a clay object that is the point when it's most beautiful and after that it moves, shrinks, changing color it becomes something else and I will

have to reevaluate. And sometimes the other way around, a piece does not become beautiful in my eyes until I suddenly discover it after all the firings are done.

So, to get back in the process of making and make findings in the actual process has been the most important thing for me in this project and this is a method I will continue to develop in my continued work. But since I've also come to understand that I want to show more of the process to the public and maybe even get the public to be a part of the process, this way of thinking about a statement and documentation as an interactive platform on the web is really inspiring and is also something I will continue to work on.

Linus Ersson