

Fremantle

Pottery three ways
Jacob Ogden Smith
Fremantle Arts Centre
Until 21 July

Opening hours:
Daily 10am–5pm

Chances are, any discussion of pottery in popular culture will lead to that erotically charged scene between Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore in the film *Ghost*. Jacob Ogden Smith is cool with that. In fact it's one of several cinematic and televisual depictions of pottery he's collected and interpreted in his work. His points of reference range from the aforementioned supernatural romance to Japanese cinema and the sitcom *Community*. The images “depict popularised examples of pottery and pottery practice and serve as proof of pottery's inclusion in contemporary culture, just as pottery was once proof of culture,” Smith says.

Smith is a conceptual ceramicist: he not only makes functional hand-built and wheel-thrown vessels but also uses iPad apps, 3D modelling and 3D printing to explore pottery's post-traditional possibilities. His new exhibition, *Pottery three ways*, extends on his “pottery stills” with three processes. Firstly, these media images are reinterpreted as actual hand-coiled objects. Secondly, stills are rendered using 3D software and printed



Jacob Ogden Smith, *Sims 2: FreeTime*, 2013, digital video.

on aluminium and put through a sheet-metal roller. “They curve to become a semicircle; they become more like the original object,” Smith says. Finally, Smith outputs computer renderings to a plastic polymer-based 3D printer. “It prints in the same techniques as coiling... The process of that reflects the hand-built ceramics,” he says.

As Andrew Nicholls has written, “Smith is concerned with the art object and how it sits in a historical context.” Pottery has moved from being a (hand-crafted) basic necessity or, alternatively, marker of wealth (Smith is interested in pottery's hierarchies such as porcelain versus stoneware) through to mass production and beyond. Becoming for many people a hobby, leisure activity or pastime, the shift is from object to performative action. Fittingly *Pottery three ways* will also include videos based on a wheel-throwing potter-avatar Smith has created in the FreeTime expansion pack designed for the Sims 2 “life simulation” computer game. An ancient practice still embedded in our increasingly digital world. **DR**

Sydney

String theory: focus on contemporary Australian art
Museum of Contemporary Art Australia
16 August to 27 October

Opening hours: Mon to Wed and
Sat to Sun 10am–5pm, Thur 10am–9pm

String theory is an exhibition of works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists inspired by textile traditions and techniques. Textiles is not the first thing that comes to mind when we think about art, let alone contemporary art. Textiles conjures images of calm women patiently stitching, weaving or knitting over a nice cuppa: more sedate than seditious. But not according to *String theory* curator Glenn Barkley.