

PERSONAL/PERVERTED

By

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VITA

Kiran Sattar was born January 28, 1992, in Newport, Wales, in the United Kingdom. In 1993, along with her sister Leyya Sattar, and mother, Naheed Khalid, Sattar moved to Manchester, England. Sattar graduated with her Bachelors of Art in Sculpture from the Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK, in 2015.

In August 2015, Sattar left her small world and moved across the Atlantic Ocean to study her Master of Fine Arts at the Texas Christian University, specializing in Sculpture. She held a TCU Graduate Assistantship for the TCU Art Galleries (2015 - 16). Sattar found a love for art education whilst working as a teaching assistant (2016 - 2017). She lived out her dream and passion for teaching as a graduate instructor for Beginning Ceramics for Undergraduates (2017 - 2018).

ABSTRACT

PERSONAL/PERVERTED explores my attraction to the human body and my fascination with its grotesque features and functions that are masked to others. I look to the body, to the skin and to the body's inside and outside. I explore notions of the uncomfortable and the unsettling to create repulsive yet seductive imagery. I use heavily process-based actions to become lost in repetition and the consumption of time. When making my work, the process is entirely self-indulgent – a release of my own personal and perverted reality.

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Figure 1 Gallery show card, *PERSONAL/PERVERTED* 2018

PERSONAL/PERVERTED

I was exposed to death and bodies from a young age. At funerals, I saw the expressionless faces of elders, shrivelled and wrapped in cotton inside their wooden caskets.

I saw death creep in front of my eyes as it latched to a loved one. As he deteriorated, his bowels burst and his skin broke, his hair fell and his eyes were piercing blue and pained. We saw him as he saw himself, deconstructing and breaking, being destroyed from the inside out.

I am influenced by routine and the normal everyday experiences of human life that we deem inappropriate to ourselves and in our society.

Pulling the knotted, soggy and clumped hair out of your shower drain.

Pulling the hair that fell from your head out of your crack after a shower.

Threading, tweezing, shaving and waxing the unwanted hair that just can't take the hint.

Caressing the stiff, thick hair on your chin that seemed to pop up overnight and playing with it before plucking it.

Noticing that one long weird nipple hair that seems so bizarre to have grown so long and unnoticed.

Popping that spot and watching the pus clump out in a ball, seeing the wound seep blood and weep clear.

Peeling the scabs and dead skin from the living skin.

Entering or releasing a hole from an obstruction in your body; a splinter, ear wax, snot.

Pissing and shitting.

I have always found the human body interesting: the way in which it changes, the hair that it grows, and the body's superficial facade. I approach its surface, the way it sags and its power to change, the use of gravity, and the way it expands and shrinks. I expose the areas we find uncomfortable. I find therapy in time consumption and repetitious acts that make me feel like I am in control. I tweeze and tweeze my eyebrows yet the spider leg brow hairs seem thicker and darker after each time. My frustrations come from my own body's deceptions. I feel defeated.

Throughout my art process I have control, and see irony and humour in the making process. I can become lost in my actions and by the end, I feel a sense of accomplishment. My practice explores the body and the personal, whilst my process engages with therapeutic and repetitious acts. I see making as an action of nurture and

care, which is why I must hand build every piece. When using my own hands, my body and my work form a relationship. I enjoy the fast-paced construction with the slow and tedious motions in every part of the making process. I retain and capture the moments I find in process and examine the understanding of what I expect in myself, of precision, execution and craftsmanship. It is important in my practice to understand my own attractions to details and subtle visual references, the tactile and textural compositions of the things that I personally find of interest.

Finding the best representation in a material is extremely important. I seek out the optimal native in colours, surfaces and textures from any chosen material. When the chosen materials start to take form, I naturally begin to personify them, this connection comes from having an attraction to a material and using my own body to work and build with it.

When seeking a material for a specific purpose, I rely on my gut instincts and a feeling of bodily excitement. I examine for texture, colour, pattern, and the imperfections and impurities. I scour and search the piles of wood until I find what I am looking for and when I see it, I know it.



Figure 2 *They Call me Yellow Mellow*, installation photo 2018

The framed photographs from the series *Improper Bodies 1* are an extension of my photographs. I specifically chose poplar for the framing, as it has a naturally yellow complexion that relates to bodily colours.

The shades and shadows in these photographs defy scale, causing a distortion and becoming more sculptural. I used a darker shaded poplar to resemble a bruised-looking skin complexion. The photograph's imagery appeared to be squeezed inside the rectangular wood, filling the back of the frame and pushing out towards the glass, making both photograph and frame exist as an object.



Figure 4 *Inside the Inside*, installation photo 2018

Improper Bodies 2 is a further exploration of textures and patterns on different surfaces. Aromatic cedar became an obsession for me because of its colour and smell. Her raw and perfect imperfections screamed at me to use her.

The feminine pink and creamy flesh-like tones and natural knots played with my imagination as I saw its potential

and resemblance to the female body. I see the wood as a representation of a naked woman; its dimensions and slab-like structure reflect a female torso. The two

smaller square pieces attached to the surface of each cedar box are overhanging bulges.



Figure 3 *Fluffy Muff*, installation photo 2018

For western culture, they convey the parts of the body easily hidden with clothes. What would normally be hidden away is now confronting the viewer and protruding outwards. I lay her out bare, exposing the things we hide underneath our clothing.

The use of slip as the core substance for the majority of my objects in the exhibition is a metaphor for the human body. It evokes notions of fragility and reinforces the idea of the body: its exterior, its interior, deterioration and other experiences of the human condition. I see a relationship and connection between humans and clay as it is formed from mud and is a mixture of natural elements. We are both coming from the Earth and being taken back to these raw materials in death. I interpret the deconstruction and betrayal of our bodies with slip and its fragile nature. This interpretation promotes ideas of the unknown but also the possibilities and what we experience with our own bodies, often the things we deny about ourselves.

From these liquid and unmalleable substances, a three-dimensional object is brought to life through nurture, care and routine. They are nurtured into being through an act of growth and development. During this time in my process, a special bond is born between me and the object being made.

Using the interior to reveal the exterior:

Interior, exterior, interexterior, exterinterior.

Understanding the materials of plaster, which is a powder mixed with water that hardens, and slip, which is clay suspended in water, and their partnership in pottery production helps to push its mimicking qualities further. By using casting techniques, I

am able to make successful slush moulds of plaster and slip casts. The impression made by casting slip into a plaster mould is as important as creating the plaster's exterior and ultimately unique interior shapes. The plaster creates curves and folds of detail for the slip to emulate. The transformation creates a distinctly unique form that questions the nature and history of the material as well as examining the materiality of the object's ambiguous and organic presence.



Figure 5 *Three Foursaken with Peephole* in background, installation photo 2018

Once bisque-fired, slip is beautifully clean, and bone white in colour; it is ready to be pushed further with mutation and colour. The ceramic skin acts as a canvas for my imagination. Its fragility ensures an exercise of problem solving and unique response to each individually cast piece.

Some ceramic pieces go through a raku firing, the sawdust from the construction of the platforms they sit on is collected and used in these firings. I try to not waste any material, as I enjoy the connotation of salvaging as much as I can from every piece. The raku firing adds more definition and colour. Other ceramic surfaces are already strong and intricate and stay bone white and bare. To heighten a ceramic piece's definition, I sometimes rub charcoal onto the ceramic surface,



Figure 6 Image of *Varicose* from the exhibition *PERSONAL/PERVERTED* 2018

resulting in an accentuation that amplifies wrinkles and textured depths. The colour palettes of the objects appear soft or cold, while others seem aggressive or calm. Raku firing can create cracks from heat shock but I see them as a positive. These indiscretions give intention for added materials to expel out of the forms, helping to bring the objects closer to the human experience, the representation of the degradation of the body and notions of the grotesque.



Figure 7 Image of *Bruised Juice* from the exhibition *PERSONAL/PERVERTED 2018*

These ceramic forms are enhanced with materials, such as hair or latex that resembles the body's interior colours, skin and disease. These forms then extenuate

grotesque notions of the body. Depending on the ceramic's need to reflect a certain emotion, its corresponding platform is painted to reinforce this emotional human quality.

The hollowness of the ceramics explores aspects of the body and its orifices. One is enticed to engage in an intimate observation as they come closer, dawdling around the object, peering inside and studying the outside.



Figure 8 Installation photo of *Gob* in foreground from the exhibition *PERSONAL/PERVERTED* 2018

To stand tall and strong, each ceramic piece has its own platform. Each platform is meticulously thought out in scale and size so that the work cannot exist without it. Depending on the ceramic's appearance and its personality, the colours of the platform are chosen as a way to stress its characteristics by complementing the colours, tones and details of each unique piece.

The platform's colour reflects our own bodily traumas, the colours of bruised skin, warm grey and yellow, and our internal colours, white and puce¹. By using these specific colours, I amplify the object's individuality. The relationship and placement of ceramic pieces within the space gives each piece the attention it deserves by delivering soft visual



Figure 9 Photo from the exhibition *PERSONAL/PERVERTED* 2018

gaps and intimate areas of contemplation. The viewer can walk around the individual pieces and observe every angle, getting up close and personal. Yet the viewer can remain engaged with the whole installation because other members of the ceramic family are present in the viewer's peripheral vision.

From the very start, everything I create goes through a developmental process until the final outcome is complete.

The plaster cast is made,

¹ The colour puce is of a dull pink-brown or purple-brown. It resembles the colour of human intestines.

the slip is poured,

the second cast is made,

the plaster is broken,

the interior becomes the exterior;

the slip is fired,

the piece is developed further with additional firings and/or other materials.

The platform is thoughtfully and painstakingly decided,

the compliment of platform colour is chosen,

and the piece is finished.

Repeat and end.

My work does not contain realistic references of the body, yet the audience cannot deny that they see bodily implications in the works tactile qualities. The textural and visceral imperfections are demanding of our bodily sensations: to feel, to touch, to smell and to look closer. My work is quietly submissive but demands the viewer's attention. My work is uncharacteristic and unsettling, yet familiar at once.