

## FIGURE AND GROUND

CURATED BY MELISSA LOUGHNAN AND JANE O'NEILL

MARCO CHIANDETTI  
SARAH CROWEST  
REBECCA DELGANGE  
MISHA HOLLENBACH  
CLAIRE LAMBE  
ROB MCLEISH  
SANNÉ MESTROM  
STEPHEN RALPH

OPENING THURSDAY 8 MARCH 6 – 8PM  
EXHIBITION FRI 9 MARCH UNTIL SAT 31 MARCH 2012

AT UTOPIAN SLUMPS  
GROUND FLOOR, 33 GUILDFORD LANE MELBOURNE  
WWW.UTOPIANSLUMPS.COM  
HOURS: WED – SAT 12 – 6PM  
OTHER TIMES BY APPOINTMENT: +61 3 9077 9918

**Utopian Slumps** is pleased to announce the opening of *Figure and Ground* curated by Melissa Loughnan and Jane O'Neill on Thursday 8 March 2012. The exhibition will feature work from eight local and international artists: Marco Chiandetti (UK), Sarah Crowest, Rebecca Delange, Misha Hollenbach, Claire Lambe, Rob McLeish, Sanné Mestrom and Stephen Ralph.

*Figure and Ground* will investigate the use of earthware in contemporary art practices, particularly concerning intersections between ceramics and collage, the human figure and abstraction.

The exhibition presents a curatorial interpretation of an archaeological dig by juxtaposing mounds of earth, lumps of clay and fossilised artefacts. The result will be the culmination of a diverse range of processes relating to the texture of clay and ceramic objects that at times allude to the figure, and at others reference kitsch ornamentation, utilitarian objects or pure sculptural abstraction.

Marco Chiandetti's work explores performative processes and interaction with the body. Bronze casts, first made in clay, are formed to sit within a nook of the human leg or gripped by two hands. Sarah Crowest's current PhD inquiry, *An Unaccountable Mass: bothersome matter and the humorous life of forms*, is concerned with materials, excess, not-knowing and the absurd. A central point of departure for Rebecca Delange's sculptural and installation work is its being in a constant state of flux. That is to say, there is no definitive final point. New materials join the debris of previous works in their creation and recreation. Misha Hollenbach's recent ceramic works explore a fascination with both epic and humble architectural monuments, on and in the ground. Claire Lambe's sculptural practice combines reverence, violence, pleasure and curiosity with a fascination for traditional modes of museum display, where Rob McLeish's work explores notions of excess, banality and desecration. For Sanné Mestrom, it is the intervention of the viewer that is the key to resolving odd juxtapositions of form and their components. And Stephen Ralph's sculptures hone a keen sense of spatial awareness and precision of gesture.

This predominantly floor-based, intimately-scaled exhibition will offer the viewer the opportunity to explore the textural and thematic intersections between these artists' practices in a celebration of handmade processes that gravitate towards and around contemporary ceramics.

**Figure and Ground** will take place at Utopian Slumps, Ground Floor, 33 Guildford Lane Melbourne from 9 to 31 March 2012. For further information, images or to arrange an interview please contact Melissa Loughnan on +61 3 9077 9918 or [melissa@utopianslumps.com](mailto:melissa@utopianslumps.com).