The Theatre of Repetition
Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, MA
(January 21 – March 31, 2012)
curated by Fabio Fernandez

My work reflects on relationships between ceramics and architecture, both the large scale of building cladding and architectural facades, and the more intimate scale of ceramic objects (pots) within architectural (domestic) spaces. This piece is a case of the latter.

Conceived for this exhibition specifically “Natura Morta (Lady Templeton)” was inspired by Mr. Fernandez’s title: “A Theatre of Repetition”, which recalls a quote by the painter Wayne Thiebaud describing the “Natura Morta” (or “Still Life”) paintings of Giorgio Morandi.

In developing the composition, I was conscious first of the feeling of the space in Morandi’s “Natura Morta” – specifically those produced from the mid-1950’s 1960’s. A reductive space with a sense of austere intimacy rendered with a hand that is both persistent and spare/restrained.

The bowl form was drawn directly from Morandi – an object present in several “Natura Morta” – in particular a personal favorite painting from 1952 which is housed in the Museo Morandi in Bologna. The materials/colors of the objects refer to the clays developed in the factories of Josiah Wedgwood – an early industrialist and contributor to the invention of the “slip casting” technique. The palette of Wedgwood’s “Jasperware” have a simpatico with Morandi’s paintings.

The second form in the composition is both more and less specific. It is first a form with a particular Mathematical provenance – from the study of Topology (Knot Theory) it is the 107th knot (of 165 total) with 10 crossings.

Within the context of this piece it may refer to an amorphous shape present in the same Morandi painting from 1952 – a crumpled cloth or piece of paper. The knot also recalls the studies of Paolo Uccello – a 15th century pioneer of renaissance perspective who held a persistent influence on Morandi’s work. In “Perspective Study of Mazzoccio” (1456) Uccello has rendered a piece of wicker head-ware worn by men of renaissance Italy in a manner that resembles a computer “wire-frame” model. The Mazzocchio’s doughnut shape is also the simplest knot – identical in topological terms to a coffee cup, or any other volume with one perforation.

Here/today Uccello’s “knot” has accumulated complexity:
“A Theatre of Repetition” also, serendipitously, quotes the philosopher Gilles Deleuze.
“The Theatre of Repetition is opposed to the theatre of representation, just as movement is opposed to the concept and to representation which refers it back to the concept. In the theatre of repetition, we experience pure forces, dynamic lines in space . . .” (Difference and Repetition 1968)
Or perhaps (again from Deleuze):
“. . .a topological knot, where everything is connected without confusion, where everything flows together . . .” (Anti-Oedipus 1972)