

A Shape of Infinity

A Collaborative Exhibition of Poetry, Painting, and Sculpture

Original Work: Exhibition (Creative Writing & Visual Arts)

Kate Cantrell (UniSQ) & Peter Osborn (UniSQ)

[Original Work Submission Year: 2019]



University of
Southern
Queensland

A Shape of Infinity

This collaborative exhibition by poet (Kate Cantrell) and artist (Peter Osborn) is a visual and poetic response to Elizabeth Kübler-Ross's *Five Stages of Grief* (1969), a popular grief adjustment model that describes the emotional transition experienced by those who are grieving, dying, or terminally ill: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. As the nexus between shape and story is one of the natural symmetries between poetry and art, the exhibition draws on the structural paradox of the lemniscate to capture and communicate the nonlinear experience of grief. The work includes 5 x free verse poems (printed as A2 vinyl posters); 6 x small ceramic sculptures (60cm x 25cm, 25cm x 35cm, 30cm x 30cm, 30cm x 30cm, 30cm x 30cm, 30cm x 30cm); 2 x paintings on linen (300cm x 75cm & 100cm x 75cm); and 1 relief ceramic (mounted on ply, 50cm x 40cm), all of which give visual and poetic representation to the five stages of grief theorised by Kübler-Ross.

Artists: Kate Cantrell (UniSQ) and Peter Osborn (UniSQ)

Venue: Red Door Gallery, Toowoomba (16–24 May, 2019)
Frank Moral Gallery, Brisbane (2023)

RESEARCH STATEMENT – A Shape of Infinity [Original Creative Work]

Research Background

The nexus between shape and story is one of the natural symmetries between poetry and art (Leavy 2019); however, the relationship between these mediums has not been widely explored from a structuralist point of view. As a result, there is little research into the methodological dilemmas that poets share with visual artists when confronted with the challenge of how to represent nonlinear experience. This crisis in representation is exacerbated by the pre-theoretical assumption that time is linear (Lidstone 2007; Keen 2003) and governed by the laws of causality and chronology (Alber 2012).

Research Contribution

The collaborative exhibition, *A Shape of Infinity* (2019), by Kate Cantrell and Peter Osborn, employs poetry, painting, and sculpture to establish the lemniscate (∞) as a nonlinear structure that can be used by poets and artists alike to capture the nonlinear experience of grief. In doing so, the work generates new interdisciplinary knowledge by providing a nonlinear form of representation that can help creative practitioners better understand structural and thematic overlaps in multi-modal work that is marked by simultaneity, counterpoint, and reversal.

Research Significance

This research is significant because it offers artists new possibilities for capturing and communicating the lived experience of grief. The value of this work is attested to by the fact that in 2019, the exhibition was externally funded through a Queensland University of Technology Creative Industries Curatorial Grant (\$2000) for a second exhibition at the Frank Moran Gallery in Brisbane. In 2020, the work was also selected for inclusion in the 'Meander' exhibition at the Warwick Art Gallery, with both artists invited to speak on an industry panel at the exhibition's official opening.



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Peter Osborn

The Lemniscate

2019

Raku stoneware (red, brown, white)

60cm x 25cm each

Peter Osborn

Renewal

2019

Red raku midfired ceramic

25cm x 35cm each





Small informational label with illegible text.

Peter Osborn

The 5 Stages of Grief

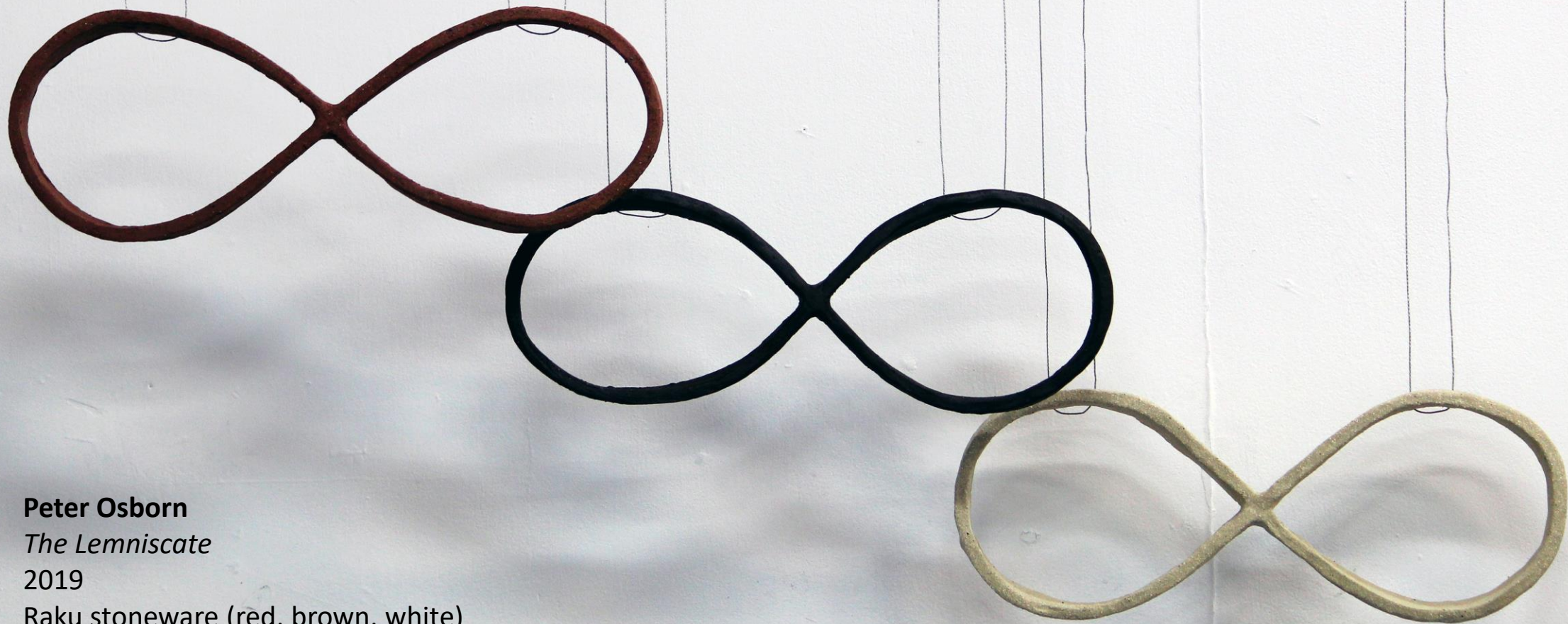
2019

Denial. Anger. Bargaining. Depression. Acceptance.

Clay slip, red earth, ash, pastel on stretched linen

300cm x 75cm





Peter Osborn

The Lemniscate

2019

Raku stoneware (red, brown, white)

60cm x 25cm each



Peter Osborn

The Monarchs

2019

Tinted clay slip

Pastel on stretched linen

100cm x 75cm

Peter Osborn
The Monarchs
2019
Tinted Clay Slip, Pastel on Stretched Linen



August 7
peak-hour traffic
you appeared in the visible world
followed by the bloody armour that kept you
safe and whole

mini knuckles
hair so black it was blue
ironic since it was the end of winter
and you were the size of a pine nut
when we realised you were there

trembling he cut you loose
until you groped and latched
onto my sister's breast
and pressed your fingers into her flesh
as if to check she was there

Kate Cantrell
First Night
2019
Free verse poem