

Tara McGinn (they/them)

During Tara's time at Can Serrat they worked on a couple of different projects, developed their collaborative skills with other artists, and attempted to learn some Spanish through the poetry of Alejandra Pzarnik.



Initially they had applied to be part of Creacion Collectiva with the intention of spending time in Catalonia and developing some creative writing with other peers on the residency.

They arrived with new ideas in mind; exploring representations of the body, it's forms and language, especially how this translates through memory and stories.

During the racons they learned of the other artists' and writers' practices, and a sub-group formed who were interested in making natural biomaterials as well as creating ceramics and salvaged objects. On learning of the local fabrica (brick makers), together with other artists of the group they agreed on finding clay in the mountains surrounding Can Serrat. Tara had done a clay salvaging workshop the year before and was excited to find raw clay and to process it again.

Collectively they found different clays in different places; terracotta in the mountains near the fabrica, yellowish red clay along the trail between Canserrat and the Fabrica, and a darker brown clay that was sitting on top of the grass in the garden of Canserrat they nicknamed "catpiss clay". The group processed the different clays together, making different batches and different blends, developing a process of sifting, pouring, and draining the clay, and letting it dry on plaster bats they found in the bodega.



The director of the local fabrica gave the group a tour of the factory where the bricks used to be produced and offered them to take a bucket of the leftover clay supply he had.



They decided to make a body but with individual parts, without discussing who is making what parts, with the intention of bringing the different parts to gether in different arrangements, creating a fluid body of ceramic. Towards the end of the residency the group decided to have a clay firing ceremony by building a big fire in a pit in the garden of Canserrat, and to celebrate the end of the residency. They wrapped the pieces in tin foil and collected firewood together. They drank, partied, chanted and sang songs around the fire with everyone at Canserrat until the fire burned down to ashes the next day.



From the ashes (and with hangovers) the group found their body parts had been turned to ceramic overnight; made permanent and scorched by the fire. They arranged a presentation in a local bookshop with the help of the residency coordinators and shared writing, thoughts, and other artworks together.



"Cuerpo de arcilla"

Aside from the clay project, Tara also took part in a biomaterial making workshop led by another artist on the residency. Tara's interest in biomaterials stems from creating sculpture with more commonly accessible materials for cast making which are carcinogenic for the environment. Biomaterials offer an alternative to create mock plastics and other forms that will not damage the local ecology or cause physical harm to the maker. This is a research process they are continuing to develop after their time at Canserrat. They also made a series of Cyanotypes for fun with other artists whom purchased the chemicals and experimented with collecting shadows of objects and body parts through this new learned process.



From materials they brought from Ireland, they made a sculptural garment using traditional and experimental embroidery patterns with thread they purchased in Barcelona. This work developed from ideas around bodily autonomy, domestic living, gender and labour that has been at the centre of Tara's creative practice for a number of years. The garment was cut to make shapes that "house" the body and the embroidery was used to draw attention to parts of the body that are normally withheld or concealed with clothing.



Tara went on to wear the garment at the opening of a group exhibition in London, and later wore it during a performance that marked the closing of another group exhibition in Belfast where they currently live. This work symbolises a transformative

year for the artist through coming out as their non-binary gender identity through their work and experiences with the support of found family and new friends.



Tara McGinn (they/them) is an interdisciplinary artist based between Belfast, NI and Enniscorthy, ROI. Selected exhibitions include *An Intimate Public*; solo exhibition at PS2 project space Belfast in June 2023 curated by Cecelia Graham and Grace Jackson, *Betwixt - Held* group showcase at Mimosa House Gallery London February 2024, *Mother Tongue* group exhibition at the MAC Belfast May - July 2024, and *Out of Context*; a series of new off-site performances as part of the FIX Performance Art Biennial in November 2023. They are a recipient of funding support from the Arts Council of Ireland since 2021 and received the SIAP Award from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in 2022. Recent residencies include *Creacion Collectiva* residency at Can Serrat Spain 2024, and was artist in residence at the CCI in Paris 2024 supported by the Wexford County Council. . Her critical writing has been published in *Bloomers Magazine*, *Visual Artists Ireland Newsletter*, *CIRCA*, *Northern Irish Arts Network*, and they are the 2024 inaugural writer in residence with *Mirror Lamp Press* and the *Complex* in Dublin. They are a studio member of *Flax Art Studios* in Belfast since 2021 and a former *Catalyst Arts* co-director. They hold an MFA in Fine Art Practice with distinction from the University of Ulster and completed their BA Honours in Art at the South Eastern Technological University Wexford School of Art (formerly Carlow I.T Wexford Campus School of Art).