

# A GAME OF JUG

Conor Wilson

Conor Wilson recently completed a PhD research project (*Writing\_Making: Object as body, language and material*, RCA, 2016) in which, influenced by Object Oriented Ontology, he explored craft making as an intimate engagement with, or a form of contact with, another object. Working methods were developed that exploit the potential of making as a means of generating writing and the potential of writing to generate, or to contaminate, making; methods designed to bring writing closer to making, driven by (and resulting in) questions such as:

Can making function as a model, or a spur, for settling deeper into inter-object relations? What voices might emerge from such relations and how might the various objects [maker, material, image, language] that cohere around the activity of making be presented? How might maker, and audience, become an object among objects and access the subjectivity of the material / artwork?

Wilson has since developed a practice-research process that incorporates making, drawing, documenting, writing and existing objects – the latter often included through ‘guided chance’. The exhibited images are by-products of an ongoing ‘game of Jug’, instigated by Martin Heidegger’s essay, ‘The Thing’, and the subsequent purchase of a jug made at Prinknash Abbey, home and workplace of concrete poet, Dom Sylvester Houédard. Working out the limits of the game is a form of speculation on the reality of a jug. The playground is constructed from:

## Materials

Three texts: ‘The Thing’ [Martin Heidegger] / ‘The Handle’ [Georg Simmel] / ‘me as poet rather than critic’ [Dom Sylvester Houédard]

Two books of images (with captions): *Sculpture Grecque* [Jean Charbonneaux] / *The Louvre: Sculpture, Ceramics, Objets D’Art* [Maximilien Gauthier]

Prinknash Abbey jug (1 litre) / water / measuring jug / jug pourer [human] / A4 copy paper / cartridge paper / brown cardboard / digital photographs / silicone / plaster / clay / perspex measuring box (1000 ml)

## Tools

pencil / rule / scalpels / scanner / computer / camera / loop tools / modelling tools / kiln / laser machine / printer

## Methods

reading / collage / CAD [Adobe Photoshop / Illustrator / InDesign] / writing / typing / retyping / copying / mould-making / press-moulding / hollowing [gouging] / modelling / laser etching

But if the holding is done by the jug's void, then the potter who forms sides and bottom on his wheel does not, strictly speaking, make the jug. He only shapes the clay. No — he shapes the void... From start to finish the potter takes hold of the impalpable void and brings it forth as the container in the shape of a containing vessel. The jug's void determines all the handling in the process of making the vessel. The vessel's thingness does not lie at all in the material of which it consists, but in the void that holds.

And yet, is the jug really empty?

Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing' in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) (first delivered as a lecture, 'Das Ding', in 1950).

**When, in the appearance of the handle, one of its two functions is completely neglected in favour of the other, the impression made strikes a discordant note. This often occurs, for example, when the handles form merely a kind of relief ornament, being fully attached to the body of the vase, leaving no space between vase and handle. Here, the form rules out the purpose of the handle (that with it the vase may be grasped and handled), evoking a painful feeling of ineptness and confinement, similar to that produced by a man who has his arms bound to his body.**

Georg Simmel, 'The Handle' in *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918: A Collection of Essays*, ed. by Kurt H. Wolff (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1959) (first published in 1911 as 'Der Henkel').

-my poetry examines interplay of god and non-god-image-of-god -  
concept as image (nadanada & netineti): cosmos as image: micro &  
macro cosmos as image

entry into image can be vision of the meta-image

image hides and shews at same time - mysterium: sacramental nature  
of art

Dom Sylvester Houédard, 'me as poet rather than critic : written for may 1964 ica bulletin but not included' in *ceolfrith 15: dom sylvester houédard*, ed. by Charles Verey (Sunderland: Ceolfrith Arts Centre, 1972), p. 50.