STATE OF CERAMICS *.edu edition*

Artist as Social Engineer
discussion guide

February 27, 2021

Topic
In a world polarized politically, economically, racially, and sexually we are forced to question our trust. We need one another now more than ever and our trust is the mortar that binds us. But how do we see eye to eye with human groups we don't trust? Enter the artist. If we can subvert the idea art is an object, a noun, then we can reinstate the truth that art is a verb, an action. By developing processes that include society as a medium the act of making, we embed our communities in the outcomes and histories of those processes. People who may not typically engage with one another—whether because of differences or distances—become connected and create work together. In the field of ceramics, with its deep history of collective making, this is a particularly important tradition and contemporary approach for a more inclusive understanding of our past and future.

Reading
Decolonization is Not a Metaphor by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang
(available for download at www.a-bprojects.com)

Questions
How can institutions work to maintain culture as opposed to preserving culture?

What does the maintenance of culture look like? How do we actively involve as many voices as possible in that pursuit, creating participation without possession?

Is the preservation, or sequestering of culture, a violent act?

What is difference (or is there a difference) between collaboration, cooperation, participation, facilitation? Who owns an artwork that is collectively made? Is ownership important?

Ceramics has a long history of collective making. Where is this tradition still visible? How has this tradition changed in the contemporary moment?

Collective making is arguably one of the most important ceramic traditions to maintain. Do you agree? Which other traditions fuel inclusivity? Are there exclusionary traditions being maintained?