

# Stanley Street gallery

In his recent solo exhibition *I Guess This is Growing Up*, Hayes contemplates the uncertainty of growing older and how the passing of time encourages inner deliberation as he grapples with his own transition into adulthood.



## Shaun Hayes

*I Guess This is Growing Up*

18 September - 5 October

Preview  
18 - 21 Sept

Official Opening  
Wed 25 Sept 6-8pm

FML, 32x21x15cm, Glazed stoneware, Photo Bryna Bamberry

***“In his ceramics, Hayes grafts onto venerated traditional forms of vessels, drawn from Chinese and Greco-Roman models, slip cast disposable parts taken from plastic toys, drink bottles and toy weapons. It is an aesthetic of laughing through tears, whereas we marvel at the beautifully resolved glazed stoneware, but are aware of the disturbing imagery incorporated behind the shiny surface”.***

***Sasha Grishin - Canberra Times July 2019***

Shaun Hayes is a ceramic artist who investigates the relationship between throwaway objects and their ability to instil a sense of reflection on memory, creating a deeply nostalgic and sometimes humorous representation of time and place. Inspired by the experience of hearing a song on the radio from his childhood, the exhibition *I Guess This Is Growing Up* investigates how the arousal of memory can transport a person back in time. He contemplates the uncertainty of growing older and how the passing of time encourages inner deliberation as he grapples with his own transition into adulthood.

The collection of plastic objects that inform Hayes's sculptures are evocative of certain memories and feelings, capturing these ephemeral moments in time. Hayes contemplates the nature of today's throwaway society and through the use of seemingly unimportant, everyday objects, humorously highlights the importance of being more conscious of the enduring impact waste has on the environment. Drawing on the aesthetics of traditional Chinese ceramics combined with contemporary objects, his adorned vessels echo a blending of past and present, old and new as well as illustrating the material similarities between plastic and ceramics.

Through methods of repetition, rearranging and joining of cast objects paired with a tonal colour palette, Hayes's sculptures are reminiscent of fantastical and comical imagery whilst also highlighting the tensions of growing up in conversation with existing in a wasteful, thoughtless consumerist society.

1/52-54 Stanley Street Darlinghurst NSW 2010

P: 0293681142 [www.stanleystreetgallery.com.au](http://www.stanleystreetgallery.com.au) E: [mail@stanleystreetgallery.com.au](mailto:mail@stanleystreetgallery.com.au)

Hours Wed - Fri 11-6pm Sat 11am-5pm

# Stanley Street gallery



Officeworks (set), 2019, Glazed Stoneware, Dimensions variable, Photo Bryna Bambrery

## *An interview with Alice Cherry*

**Alice:** *The title of the show “I Guess This is Growing Up”, suggests a sense of uncertainty. Was this intentional?*

**Shaun:** The title originally came from a line of a Blink 182 song called “Dammit”. I heard this song play on the radio about a year ago, which immediately took me back to my childhood when the song was first released. It made me contemplate how long ago that was and which was reinforced by the line ***I guess this is growing up***. The idea that a song was able to instantly reawaken this sense of nostalgia resonated with me. What I’m trying to portray in my work is a similar sense of nostalgia using toys or throwaway items people have seen in their lives and try to cement them permanently into an artwork which reawakens a memory of a time or place. The line also reflects my own time in life where I see myself at the tipping point of transitioning into an adult, which previously I had not thought about. The uncertainty is intentional as it’s an unusual thing when you perceive yourself differently and not necessarily something that is set in stone or black and white, rather a gradual understanding and realisation. I thought the line ***I guess this is growing up*** works better to reflect that than say this IS growing up.



Fresh, 2019, Glazed Stoneware, 33x22x22cm, Photo Bryna Bambrery

# Stanley Street gallery



Life of waste, 43x35x35cm, Glazed Stoneware, Lustre,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry



You Are What You Eat, 2019, Glazed Stoneware, 56x37x37cm,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry

**Alice** - *A theme in your practice is humour. Could you discuss the relationship between humour and the objects that you use in your sculptures?*

**Shaun** - I want my art to be meaningful to people and to have a reason to exist in the world, but I also think there are a lot of artists/people who take themselves very seriously. I want my work to make people firstly smile at the combination of toys and plastic junk on pots as they are an unusual amalgamation and generally are enough to get a chuckle. However, beneath the exterior layer of humour there is this sort of darker side to the work which talks about waste; our throwaway society and the commonality/relationship between ceramics and plastics. The misconception that ceramic is a natural material and therefore better for the environment than plastic is also a driving force in my work. Ceramic as a material lasts virtually forever, outlasting plastics and never breaks down or changes shape. The production of ceramics uses a huge amount of resources, energy and produces a huge amount of waste. On the other hand, it is an amazing material as it can last so long and therefore a great medium to permanently capture these fleeting objects which are a direct reflection of everyday disposable society.



Birdman and I, 2019, Glazed Stoneware,  
27x10x10cm, Photo Bryna Bamberry

# Stanley Street gallery

**Alice - Could you explain the relationship between plastic objects and food?**

**Shaun -** A lot of my work is about waste or making waste permanent, and food is a particularly nostalgic object in how it is also heavily consumed and discarded. In this body of work, I have used a lot of plastic moulded fruits and vegetables which I have always thought as a strange object which reflects our idealistic yet long-term unthoughtful society.



Food Waste 1, Glazed stoneware, lustre, 36x18x18cm,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry



Food Waste 2, 2019, Glazed Stoneware, lustre, 36x20x20cm,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry

**Alice - The colour palette you use is quite tonal and limited. I am interested in the choice behind this as if you were to use a range of colours, the works would be read completely differently. Could you discuss the thought process behind this decision and how it relates to the ideas that the sculptures convey?**

**Shaun -** The colour palette I use for a number of reasons, firstly from a technical point of view, my work is fired to higher temperatures, mostly for strengthening the fragile objects with small parts. By doing this a lot of the more bright and vibrant colours burn out and become a lot more subdued. I like glazes that highlight the fine details in some of the objects so glossy glazes that pool into and enhance these details I think work better in my work. In my own personal taste I am drawn to the more old world ceramics mostly traditional Chinese ceramics, which is conveyed in my work and historically the colour palettes on those pieces is more subdued again because it is fired to similar temperatures but also because the invention of more brightly coloured stains and glazes did not happen until the 20th century. I think using more subtle colours draws people into investing the work and the subject matter is not so obvious.

# Stanley Street gallery



I knew Them Well, 2019, Glazed Stoneware, 29x16x16cm,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry



Summer Fun, 2019, Glazed Stoneware, 27x20x20cm,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry,

**Alice** - *There appears to be a theme of darkness that informs your work in conversation with humour, particularly through the use of guns, doll heads and waste. Is this intentional and if so, what are you trying to communicate?*

**Shaun** - Yes, I feel it is important to capture this time in history or at least bring up the fact that we are a very wasteful society. I use objects that are typically once use items or easily disposable and combine them with ceramics. I hope to both convey the importance of these fleeting disposable objects and the relationship between those particular objects and different points in our lives whilst also pointing out the fact that these objects maybe should not be thrown away so quickly and that even the smallest objects are meaningful. The use of guns or disassembled dolls is not meant to be used as a political statement. They are more or less used and rearranged differently to transform relatable disposable items into works of art. Using ceramic as the medium, I hope to convey the fact that not only do these objects play a role in our lives, but they last a very long time in the environment as do ceramics.



When Life Throws you Lemons, 2019,  
Glazed Stoneware, 18x10x6cm,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry



Boys Don't Cry, 2019, Glazed Stoneware,  
30x16x16cm, Photo Bryna Bamberry



Corny, 2019, Glazed Stoneware, 35x20x20cm,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry

1/52-54 Stanley Street Darlinghurst NSW 2010

P: 0293681142 [www.stanleystreetgallery.com.au](http://www.stanleystreetgallery.com.au) E: [mail@stanleystreetgallery.com.au](mailto:mail@stanleystreetgallery.com.au)

Hours Wed - Fri 11-6pm Sat 11am-5pm

# Stanley Street gallery

**Alice** - You mention that the blending of past and present is an important element to your practice. In working through this process of time and reflection, how have you made the distinction between growing up and the transition into adulthood? Have you made any discoveries that have altered how you perceive yourself?

**Shaun** - In some ways by choosing to live my life as an artist I sort of thought I could avoid the idea of growing up. By not necessarily doing the things majority of people do like working 9-5; saving to buy a house or having kids etc. I never really came to terms with my own sense of reality. My art takes priority in my life and my existence has been based around the next show or work needing to be made so I never really stop to think about myself much or the idea of getting older. Working long hours and using a labour intensive and time consuming medium, and having little time to rest between deadlines has meant that I'm very busy which in some ways is good but quite funny as everyone around me is getting married, having a baby or buying a house or all three, doing the 'regular things' while I'm still struggling to pay rent and living off 2 Minute Noodles like I was when I was 18 whilst working 7 days a week and ridiculous hours. I have come to the realisation that whilst not really doing the things that would normally constitute growing up, I'm still getting older which is unavoidable and my career is growing in leaps and in a weird alternative sort of way I am growing/grown up without necessarily being completely aware of it. I am at a point where realising that I am growing up has allowed me to stop and appreciate the little everyday things in life like the disposable junk that surrounds us all. In short, nothing particularly has happened recently to alter how I perceive myself but more a culmination of things that happen to everyone as you get older that make you think, "wow I'm getting old".



Hamburgular, 2019, Glazed Stoneware, 39x39x14cm,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry



Sky High, 2019, Glazed Stoneware, 31x16x16cm,  
Photo Bryna Bamberry

# Stanley Street gallery

**Question - I am interested in the technical processes employed to assemble each sculpture. Could you explain this process further?**

In simple terms I mostly use ceramic forms by either moulding existing objects or using found moulds that have been discarded from old slip cast production factories or other small scale makers no longer wanting their moulds. I then mould the plastic objects that I obtain and create a plaster mould like the ones used for the form using slip which is a liquid clay that you can pour into the plaster mould, it is then poured out to get a hollow cast of the object. If you get the cast out before it becomes completely dry you can model and shape the cast like ordinary clay. I then merge the multiple slipcast objects by cutting, rearranging and joining the casts from these moulds, whilst the clay is still able to be shaped and formed. During the firing process and with the addition of glaze, the objects are fused together creating one work. Sometimes one work can be made of a up to 20 different moulds, or the same mould repeated numerous times.

## About Shaun Hayes

Shaun Hayes is a ceramic artist who investigates the relationship between throwaway objects and their ability to instil a sense of reflection on memory, creating a deeply nostalgic and sometimes humorous representation of time and place.

Hayes received a Bachelor of Arts (Visual), with Honours majoring in Ceramics from the Australian National University School of Art in 2013. He was awarded an artist residency at Strathnairn Arts in July of 2014 and is still currently producing work there. His trips to Jingdezhen China in 2011 and 2013 continues to be an influence.



Shaun is represented by Stanley Street Gallery and was selected to represent them at the Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Carriageworks Sydney in September 2018.