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2016

## House of God: MA Thesis

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House of God: MA Thesis

By

Michael Cimino

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In

Studio Fine Art

Ceramics

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

May 2016

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Master of Arts Thesis Exhibition: Michael Cimino

House of God

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following thesis committee:

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Chair of Committee, Mika Laidlaw

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Committee Member, Amy Toscani

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Committee Member, Brandon Cook

Master of Arts Capstone

Thesis.

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Figures of Christian dogma, and Midwestern Iconography have become the focus of my artistic practice. Growing up in a Roman Catholic household in Southern Minnesota, the transfiguration of common objects to symbols of sacred value became a daily occurrence. Key roles in the transfiguration of these articles were the rituals performed in their reverence, the ornament adorning the surrounding space, and the iconography situated around them. These concepts, rituals, and patterns of adornment and iconography appear in my work as objective investigations of divine value. I work to place the visual rhetoric of adornment as one focal point of the work, granting the opportunity for the viewer to realize the equitable beauty of the ornament, rather than praise the object placed upon, or inside it. In taking these objects intended to venerate and removing their function of insisting value, I reopen the definition of their purpose, and allow the viewer to consider whether the ornament and iconography of any institution should be but a red carpet for other objects and theologies to stand upon.

Through molding found objects in plaster, and pressing or pouring clay into the negative cavity, I can create a reproduction of the original, while retaining the malleability and free-formation that lends itself to the ceramic process. It is in this manipulation where I embrace reactionary methods in my process. Each new ceramic cast of the original allows for another opportunity to poke and prod at the physical limits of the form and material. Casted ceramics, along with elements of hand built ceramic, found object, and mixed media, come together as an accumulation of parts. Once acquired, the individual parts are assembled and arranged into a series of works. These final works reflect my aim of conceptual execution along with a ceaseless drive to experiment in the possibility of material, form, and idea.