

Aaron Tennessee Benton

<http://www.aarontbenson.com/>

CM: What is it about clay, as opposed to some other material, that lends itself to the work you make?

AB: I always start with clay. No matter what other media I add later, clay is always at the forefront, the center, the core. Clay is unique and physical. When constructing with clay, getting it under my fingernails, I really become a part of it. I like the physicality of clay, which requires a tremendous bodily effort on my part to work with it. Unlike other materials, clay comes in its rawest form, unrefined. I am responsible for its refining, and in this process, I come to know and understand the material. All other materials I use come “post manufactured.”

Clay has many unique qualities that make it very appealing and useful for me in my work. It is unlike most other materials because of its ability to be readily shaped and molded. It adapts quickly to additive or subtractive techniques, to model or render, to build, construct, or design. It is the only three-dimensional material that can immediately reflect my desires, thereby giving me immediate feedback without the time consuming process of redevelopment.

I make the clay component first, fire it to cone 04, and then use the other materials to give the piece some security. I still allow for a bit of tension via uncomfortable balance, visually opposing parts, juxtaposition of strong and weak appendages and hardware, or presenting an object outside of its normal context



**A Man-made Sanctuary (Green), 24 in. (61 cm) in height,
porcelain, wood, concrete, and steel, 2010.**

Aaron Benson received his BFA in Ceramics from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and was an intern at Anderson Ranch in Colorado. Benson uses a combination of clay, metal, wood, plastic and Styrofoam to create works that mimic architectural forms. Most recently Benson received the 2010-2011 Bray MJD Fellowship.

"My sculpture talks specifically about the security I place in objects. Using an assortment of different materials such as clay, steel, wood, and plastics, I create assemblages of objects that appear secure and stable, but have tones of uneasiness about them. The tension comes in the forms of uncomfortable balance, and a visual juxtaposition of opposing parts. Each piece establishes an element of visual "trust" with the viewer.

I want people to see how order strengthens and stabilizes our daily life. There is structure everywhere, from the makeup of our bodies, the stoplights that keep traffic flowing in our cities, and our daily routines that keep us scheduled. Where would we be without rules and guidelines? I thrive on organization and precision. I find security within order and structure, in my work and in my life."



Wedge Reliance I, 2010
stoneware, wood, concrete, steel
15.5 " x 13.5" x 6"







Building Parameters XII (Counter Balance),
2010; stoneware, wood, concrete, steel; 22.5 x
20.5 x 5.5 in. Photo: Aaron Benson - See more
at: [http://craftcouncil.org/magazine/article/push-
it#sthash.5nna8Ygp.dpuf](http://craftcouncil.org/magazine/article/push-it#sthash.5nna8Ygp.dpuf)











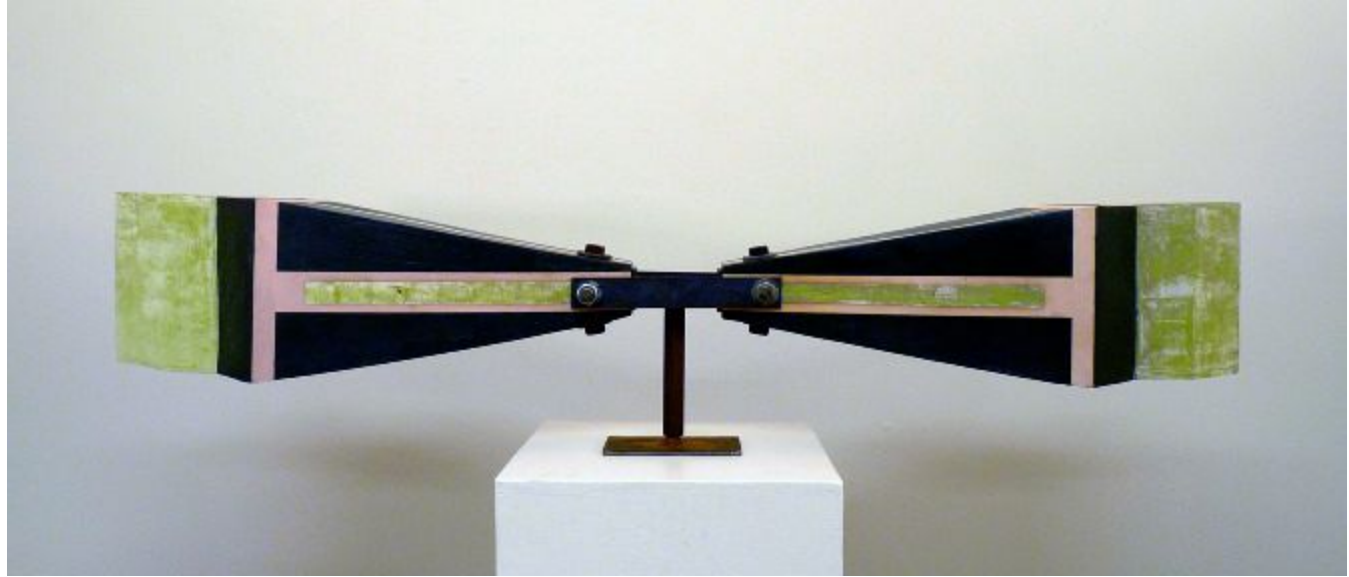


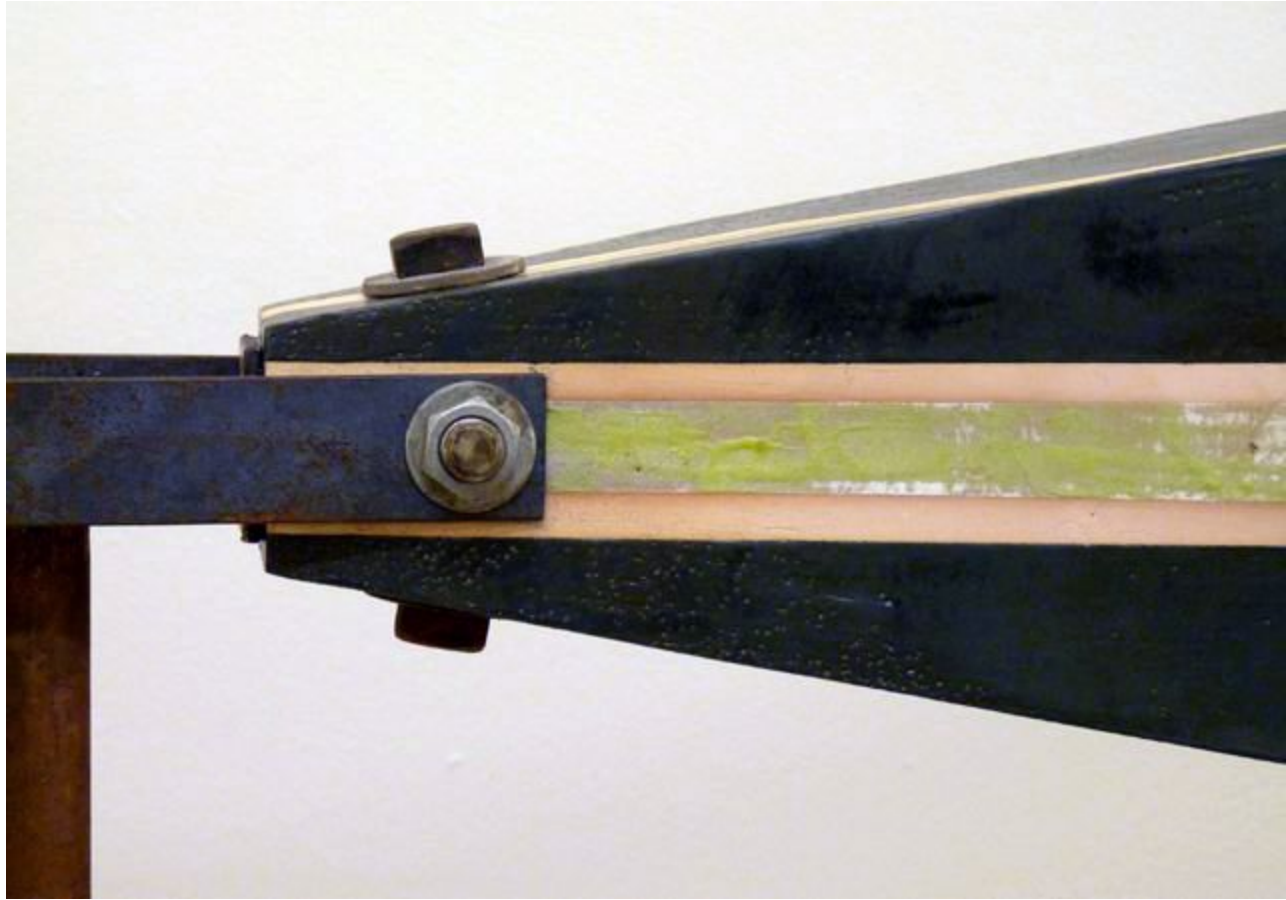


Securing Trust





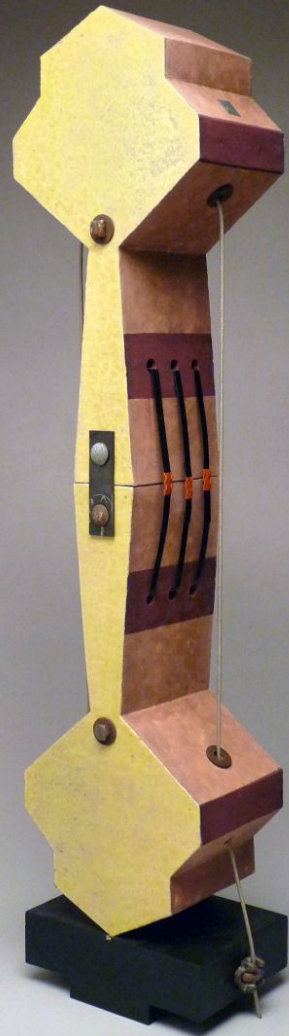






Draw this.







Artist Statement

As a maker, art is the catalyst for me to express my thoughts on both the boundlessness of eternity and the temporal parameters of my present life. I am creating moments, objects, processes, signs and symbols that echo time and its relationship to the sublime. By narrating how I understand and experience time in my work, the infinite becomes somehow more tangible. Time affords me a glimpse of eternity and the ability to comprehend it just enough to hold on to my belief in its existence. Using reductive forms and essential materials, contrasting deep and shallow, vast and narrow, raw and exquisite, my work becomes a moment of intersection that spans the gap between the present and the eternal.

-What motivates this artist?

-List five words you associate with this artist: