

BECOMING

Pressure. Emergence. Release

An exhibition about how people change



Becoming is what happens when something breaks, something forms inside the break, and something opens after the forming. It is not a straight line. It is not a single shape. It is a life unfolding in its own time.

Olivier Schulte Fishedick (OBBE) —

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Section 1

Curatorial essay

*"Some forms rise only
when they stop trying"*

Curatorial essay

Pressure. Emergence. Release

A life does not change all at once. Even when the turning point feels sharp, even when the ground seems to split in a single moment, the deeper work unfolds slowly. The materials of that life begin to shift long before the person can articulate it. Clay begins to crack. Habits begin to loosen. A body begins to remember what it once knew and what it still needs to learn.

This exhibition, titled *Becoming*, presents the work made by the artist Obbe during a period in which every foundation in his life was being rearranged. The pieces shown here were not created as a planned series. They were created as a trace of the inward changes that were already taking place.

Between 2023 and 2025, Obbe moved through rupture, recovery, deepening friendship, new physical awareness, and the slow exit from an identity that no longer fit. A divorce marked the beginning of this shift, but what followed was not a collapse. It was the slow building of a different way of being. As he let go of the structures that once held him, he returned to clay with the urgency of someone who needed to work with his hands in order to sense what he felt.



What emerged was a body of work that reveals what happens when control loosens and when the material itself becomes a collaborator in the artist's own transformation.

The clay behaved in unusual ways during this time. It slumped under its own weight. It rose unexpectedly. It cracked. It refused to hold shapes and then created new ones. These moments of unpredictability were not corrected. They were accepted and preserved. The artist allowed these gestures to exist as they were. This decision is central to the exhibition. Becoming is not imposed as a concept. It is observed in the material. It is found in the way each piece arrived in the studio without asking permission from the artist's plans.

To make the journey visible, the exhibition is arranged into three acts. These acts are not linear stages but recurring states that mirror the emotional and material rhythm of the works. Pressure. Emergence. Release. Together they form an arc that feels both personal and universal, specific to the artist yet recognisable to anyone who has lived through periods of profound change.

Pressure begins with the works that hold the weight of rupture. Clay collapses. Surfaces strain. A meteorite-like form cracks open in the kiln. Thin strings of clay knot into overwhelming masses. These pieces reflect the instability of the period, not through symbolism but through material fact. They show what clay does when its internal tension is greater than the structure that holds it.

They show what life feels like when the inner world no longer aligns with the outer one.

Emergence gathers the works that appear to be forming themselves. Tentacle-like shapes stretch outward. Disc sculptures invite viewers to build and rebuild. Nudibranch-inspired figures twist their bodies into strange, bright gestures. The mood changes here. There is more curiosity and more space. Things begin to move. These works sit between definition and possibility, reflecting the period when the artist himself said he felt he was becoming a new version of himself, though he did not yet know its name. They reflect the moment when play returns as a necessary part of living.

Release is the final and quietest act. Here the works are fragile and open. Thin porcelain sheets hang by threads, making a soft sound when visitors walk through them. A tactile ball invites people to close their eyes and return to their senses. Moss grows over a figure reaching into a hollow golden form. These pieces embody vulnerability without fragility. They show the moment when the artist's emotional armor, shaped by years of tension, loosened enough to let presence return.

This arc from Pressure to Emergence to Release is not a narrative imposed on the work. It is something the work itself revealed. Walking through the exhibition, visitors are invited to move at their own pace, to sense what each piece evokes, and to notice how the forms speak to one another.



Becoming is not a heroic story of transformation. It is a simple fact of living. Things break. Something grows in the break. Energy returns. And if allowed, openness follows.

What Obbe offers in this exhibition is not a series of statements. It is a set of conditions. Clay that collapses. Clay that forms itself. Clay that accepts light. Through these conditions, the visitor is reminded that becoming is not about achieving a final identity. It is about allowing oneself to be in motion and to recognise the beauty of that motion. The exhibition becomes a map of transformation, not through metaphor but through material truth. It is a reminder that change is rarely clean, rarely linear, and rarely under full control. Something in us shifts before we can explain why. These works show what that shifting looks like in clay.

For Amsterdam, this exhibition introduces an artist who does not pretend to have arrived at a final style. Instead, it presents someone who knows where he stands and is unafraid to show the uncertainty that shaped him. That honesty is rare and powerful. It positions Obbe not as a newcomer trying many things, but as a sculptor whose practice is grounded in emotional truth, material intelligence, and a clear sense of direction. Becoming is the end of a beginning, and the beginning of a practice that will continue to evolve with the same openness that shaped these works.

Varun Khanna —



Section 2

Concept

*"Becoming is the slow
work of noticing"*

Concept

Pressure. Emergence. Release

The sculptures in this exhibition come from one sustained period of making during which the artist's life was reshaping itself. The works behave in three distinct tonalities. These tonalities are not linear phases or thematic clusters. They are recurring states visible in the material, in the forms, and in the emotional atmosphere of the works.

Pressure gathers the pieces created during moments of rupture, instability, or emotional overload. The forms slump, crack, rise without permission, or knot themselves together. They carry weight and tension, and they hold the honesty of what it feels like when structures give way. These works do not dramatise collapse. They show how collapse actually behaves.

Emergence brings together works that behave like early organisms, creatures in first formation, or moods taking shape before they find their names. Here the tone is exploratory. Surfaces are playful. Forms stretch outward and twist themselves into curiosity. These works reflect the return of intuitive making. They show the moment when the artist began to discover what freedom feels like again.



Release presents the most open and vulnerable works in the exhibition. These pieces slow the visitor down. They invite touch, pause, or quiet proximity. Surfaces become thinner. Moss begins to grow. Porcelain catches air. The works in Release reveal the moment when the artist's emotional armor loosened and a new clarity began to emerge.

Pressure. Emergence. Release.

Together they create a rhythm that mirrors the lived reality of becoming.



Section 3

Acts

*"Becoming is a slow
form of noticing"*



Acts

Three material states of transformation

Pressure

These works arise from collapse, instability, and honest rupture. Clay slumps under its own mass. Surfaces strain. Forms break open in the kiln. These sculptures carry the gravity of a life shifting beneath its own weight. They show what remains when control slips and material truth takes over.

Emergence

These works behave like early bodies or in-between states. They stretch outward. They balance on unfamiliar limbs. They twist into playful shapes. They invite visitors to build, play, and experiment. Emergence reflects the moment when curiosity returns and new forms begin to take shape even before they understand themselves.

Release

Here the works are open, vulnerable, and quiet. Thin porcelain sheets sway with air. A tactile sphere invites touch. Moss grows on a figure reaching into a golden shell. Release is not resolution. It is a moment of allowing. A moment when the artist's emotional armor loosened enough to let presence return.



Act I

PRESSURE

Works shaped by collapse, instability,
and honest rupture.

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Rising Figures I-IV



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Cradle of Broken Mass

Threads of the Overwhelmed Mind

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Rising Figures I-IV

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Rising Figures I–IV

What forms rise when you allow them to move

Four soft figures rise and slump at the same time, their bodies caught between holding themselves up and letting themselves melt. Their postures feel tentative. Their presence feels honest. These works mark the moment when the artist no longer hid collapse but observed how forms behave when they move on their own.

Created while recycling clay. The clay was saturated with water and resisted shaping. Stacked by hand on plaster, the mass continued to shift for nearly one hour. The forms reminded the artist of Muk from childhood memories and of his own resolve to stop letting life slide by. Nothing was corrected. The figures became themselves.

Cradle of Broken Mass

When rupture becomes the real form

A cratered mass sits on the ground like a fragment from another world. The break is not a flaw. It is the revelation. This piece holds the strength of something that could not withstand its own internal pressure but refused to disappear.

Originally an attempt at a large inverted bowl, the clay was too thick. The outer walls heated faster than the core in the kiln and split open. The interior exposed a rugged landscape more compelling than the intended shape. The artist kept it as a record of limits tested and truth revealed.

Threads of the Overwhelmed Mind

The shape of too many feelings

A dense mass of red and blue clay strings twists into a form without beginning or end. Viewers sense overwhelm immediately. This is the physical form of a day when everything felt urgent and nothing could be sorted.

Formed after a day of emotional overload. Thin coils were layered without intention and allowed to tangle naturally. The contrast of glazes heightens tension. The work overwhelms the eye to mirror the artist's state: tangled, blocked, and still moving.

Soft Signal Variations

Beauty that arrived by accident

Sixteen small jellyfish pulse softly across the wall. Their translucent bodies capture a moment of suspended motion. They feel delicate but alive. Visitors often sense unexpected tenderness in them.

These began as a failed experiment. A translucent craquelure glaze, layered over color, created a soft, squishy surface reminiscent of living tissue. The artist first attempted a large form but discovered the movement expressed better through many small ones. The work marks the moment he stopped chasing perfection and leaned into intuition.

Study of Aftermath

A moment before words

A dark, dripping painting records emotional residue rather than narrative. It was made in a period marked by crying, anger, and catharsis, before those states could be articulated. It belongs to the moment after rupture but before clarity. The work seems too personal to part with. It exists as truth, not product. Made shortly after the artist's divorce. Paint was allowed to fall and pool without correction.

Layers of repeated immersion in rain, and subsequent evaporation created depth. Though pared back in palette, the work grounds the exhibition in emotional reality.

Nudibranch Kin

Beauty found in the freedom to be strange

Bright and spiky, these small sculptures evoke nudibranchs, sea slugs known for their improbable beauty. They feel like organisms that thrive outside conventional categories. Their joyful strangeness invites viewers to smile, lean in, and remember that the unfamiliar can be delightful.

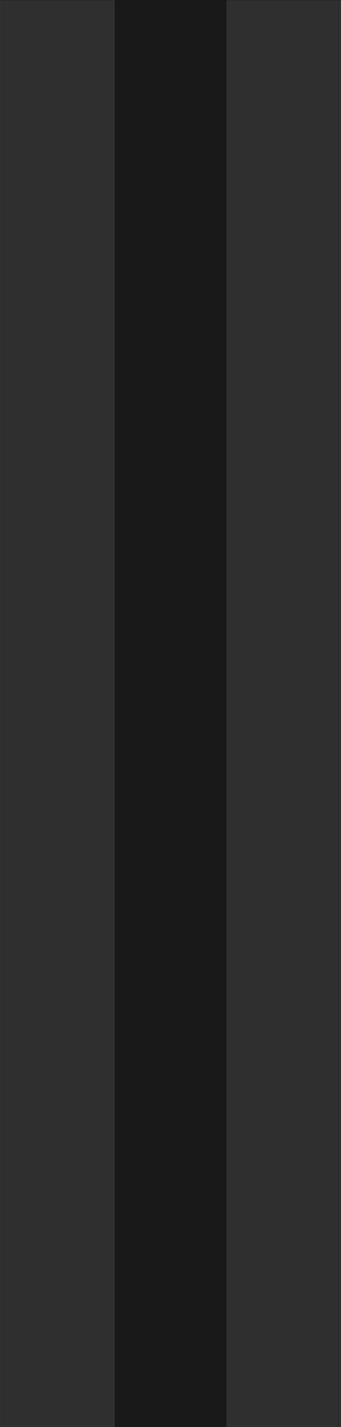
Inspired by nudibranchs and early explorations in texture. The artist made these when experimenting with spikes and playful anatomy. He says he does not know what “family” means here. The refusal to force meaning is the meaning.

Shards of Other Worlds

Fragments from an unfinished universe

Three cracked ceramic discs hang like portals or celestial fragments. They feel incomplete because they are. Their vulnerability lies in their half-formed ambition.

Early experiments with transparent crackle glazes. Originally part of a larger vision of multiple planets. The artist stopped at three and kept them despite feeling they were “mid early work” and imperfect. They honor the fact that becoming includes incomplete attempts.



Act II

EMERGENCE

Forms in early stages of becoming.
Play, curiosity, and movement return.

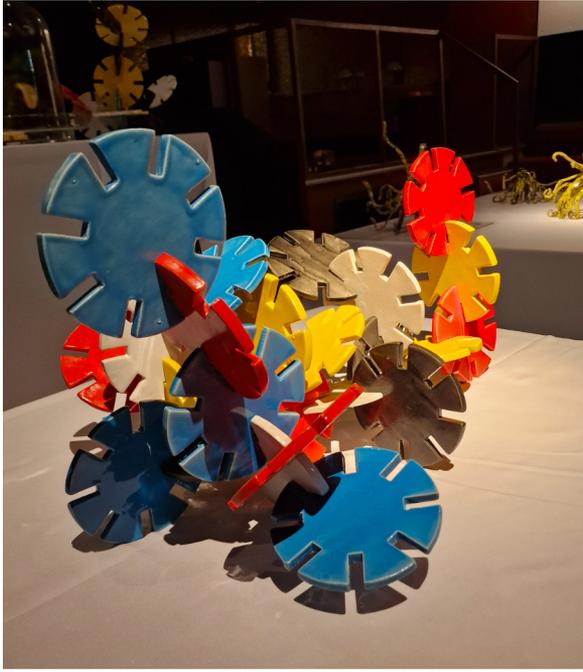
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Goblin Studies: Full Circle 53

Studies in Surface Memory I-III

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Assemble and Disperse

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Minor Fault

Holding the awkward without apology

A rounded form with skin-like puckers sits quietly. It is both humorous and unsettling. Fault under restraint. The work invites viewers to face what feels uncomfortable and to see presence in imperfection.

A glaze pooling accident caused surface tension and distortion. The artist kept the work because of its honesty. It stands as a reminder that awkwardness is not failure. It is part of becoming.

Balancing Forms (Studies in Motion)

Learning to stand again

These twisting bodies rise from the floor as if testing their ability to exist. Their limbs curl outward in gestures that feel both cautious and curious. Each form resembles a creature learning its own balance, sensing the room softly. The work embodies the emotional moment when the artist stepped out of rigidity and began allowing himself to move again.

Created through repeated extrusions using a clay press. No final image was planned. The artist stopped only when the forms felt alive. The tension in the limbs reflects the shift from controlled adulthood into exploratory making. The slight playfulness at the tips reveals the return of joy that had been dormant.

Assemble and Disperse

What if sculpture could be rearranged by anyone

A table holds dozens of ceramic discs in different shapes and colors. Visitors are invited to assemble sculptures, photograph them, then take them apart so someone else can begin again. This work opens a quiet freedom in the space. It returns play to the viewer, reminding them that becoming is never fixed.

Each disc is shaped and glazed individually. The work began when the artist realised that adulthood had drained the playfulness he once felt. He created a work that lets others rediscover joy and agency. The sculpture is different every day of the exhibition.

Goblin Studies: Full Circle

A return to the child who sculpted without doubt

Humorous small creatures, some with gold accents and others with living moss, stand in a loose family. Their expressions feel mischievous and tender. They reconnect the artist with his twelve-year-old self, who once made a goblin sculpture that two gallerists praised. Seeing these in a debut exhibition closes a twenty year loop he did not know was still open.

These figures are the artist's test subjects. He experiments on them with new textures, glazes, and materials that include 24 karat gold and various mosses. They are the meeting point between childhood confidence and adult craft investigation.

Studies in Surface Memory I-III

Records of moments that cannot be recreated

Three flat works hang like pages torn from a private notebook. The surfaces shimmer with glazes that catch the light differently from every angle. They hold the memory of attempts rather than the completion of ideas. Their honesty lies in their incompleteness. The palette is limited to bronze, copper, and brass tones. Their reflective qualities shift with light and distance.

Each sheet records an attempt that cannot be recreated. Surfaces reveal differences in thickness, timing, and application. What matters is not resolution, but attention. These works mark a moment where making continues through looking, noticing, and adjusting.

Study I — Floating clay strands settle unevenly across the surface, appearing to resist gravity. Glaze follows the movement of the material without correction.

Study II — The artist's first experiment with paper porcelain. Three glazes were layered in sequence. The exact combination was not documented, making the surface irreproducible.

Study III — Two glaze types were combined over earthenware to create subtle depth and variation. These sheets embody the essence of emergence: trying, forgetting, noticing, continuing.



Act III

RELEASE

Quiet works of vulnerability,
sensation and openness.

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Two Figures in Uneven Care



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Crawling Shields



Tender Resonance

Feel first, understand later

A reflective sphere rests gently on a cushion, inviting the visitor to lift it, close their eyes, and explore its textured surface. Holding it becomes a small ritual. The sculpture speaks in the language of sensation rather than ideas. It reconnects the viewer with the body at a time when emotional openness can feel fragile.

The sphere is earthenware covered with a metallic glaze chosen for its contradiction: visually cool, physically warm in the hand. The three textures were designed to create different sensations when explored with closed eyes. The work originated from the artist's desire to make an object solely for pleasure and calm, not for interpretation. It belongs in Release because it restores intimacy to the senses.

Crawling Shields

Protection can exist without aggression

A constellation of metallic shapes crawls across the wall. Their spikes appear defensive, yet their slow, orderly movement feels peaceful. The forms resemble protective creatures searching for their place rather than objects prepared to attack. They evoke the question of how self-protection can soften without disappearing.

Created through repetition of a single form, adjusted in orientation and curve to create a sense of movement. Glazed in a glossy metallic surface to contradict their sharp anatomy. The artist describes them as a blend of serenity and rebellion, inspired loosely by thorny devils and natural armor. They embody the calm confidence that emerged after the artist's emotionally turbulent period.

Two Figures in Uneven Care

Nature reaches into what we built

A moss-covered figure extends its arm into a hollow golden form. The gesture feels tender and uneasy at the same time. The moss figure appears alive and grounded, while the golden body feels empty and waiting. Many viewers see this as a scene about care, imbalance, or maturity. The work allows these interpretations without demanding them.

This sculpture was born during the COVID period when the artist and a friend were building terrariums. This led to an interest in living moss as a sculptural material and the discovery of *Vesicularia montagnei* as a species that attaches well to ceramics. The moss must be misted weekly to stay alive. The gold figure stands for human systems that have grown hollow. The moss figure stands for the natural world reaching back. The work is quietly humorous and deeply sincere. It marks the artist's growing confidence to experiment with living materials.

Becoming

Chorus of porcelain

Thin sheets of porcelain hang by threads in a suspended field. As visitors move through the installation, a soft, intermittent sound emerges as porcelain meets porcelain. The space is quiet but charged. Movement demands attentiveness. Presence becomes felt.

The work is composed of unglazed paper porcelain sheets, each approximately four millimeters thick. Edges remain rough and unresolved. Suspended lightly, the sheets respond to the slightest shift in air, proximity, or gesture. Nothing is reinforced. Nothing is fixed beyond what is necessary.

Placed in the final act of the exhibition, this work holds a state of release. Not as collapse, and not as resolution, but as openness without armor. After pressure and emergence, the material no longer strains or searches.

It accepts light, air, and contact. Becoming here is not a destination, but a condition sustained through attention.

Section 4

Artist's statement

*"Fragility is not a weakness.
It is clarity under light"*



Artist's statement

OBBE's voice

I have always been drawn to shapes that feel alive. Sometimes they look like creatures, sometimes like emotions, sometimes like something that grew on its own. Working with clay is a way of understanding myself. I do not begin with fixed ideas. I begin with a feeling in the body, or with a material behaving in a surprising way. Much of my work starts in accident or curiosity. When the clay collapses or forms itself or pulls away from what I intend, I pay attention. It often knows something before I do.

I came back to clay during a period when everything in my life was in motion. I did not always feel stable inside myself. The work I made during that time shows that instability, but it also shows the moments when things began to grow again. Some pieces feel heavy. Some feel playful. Some are fragile and open. They belong to the same process.

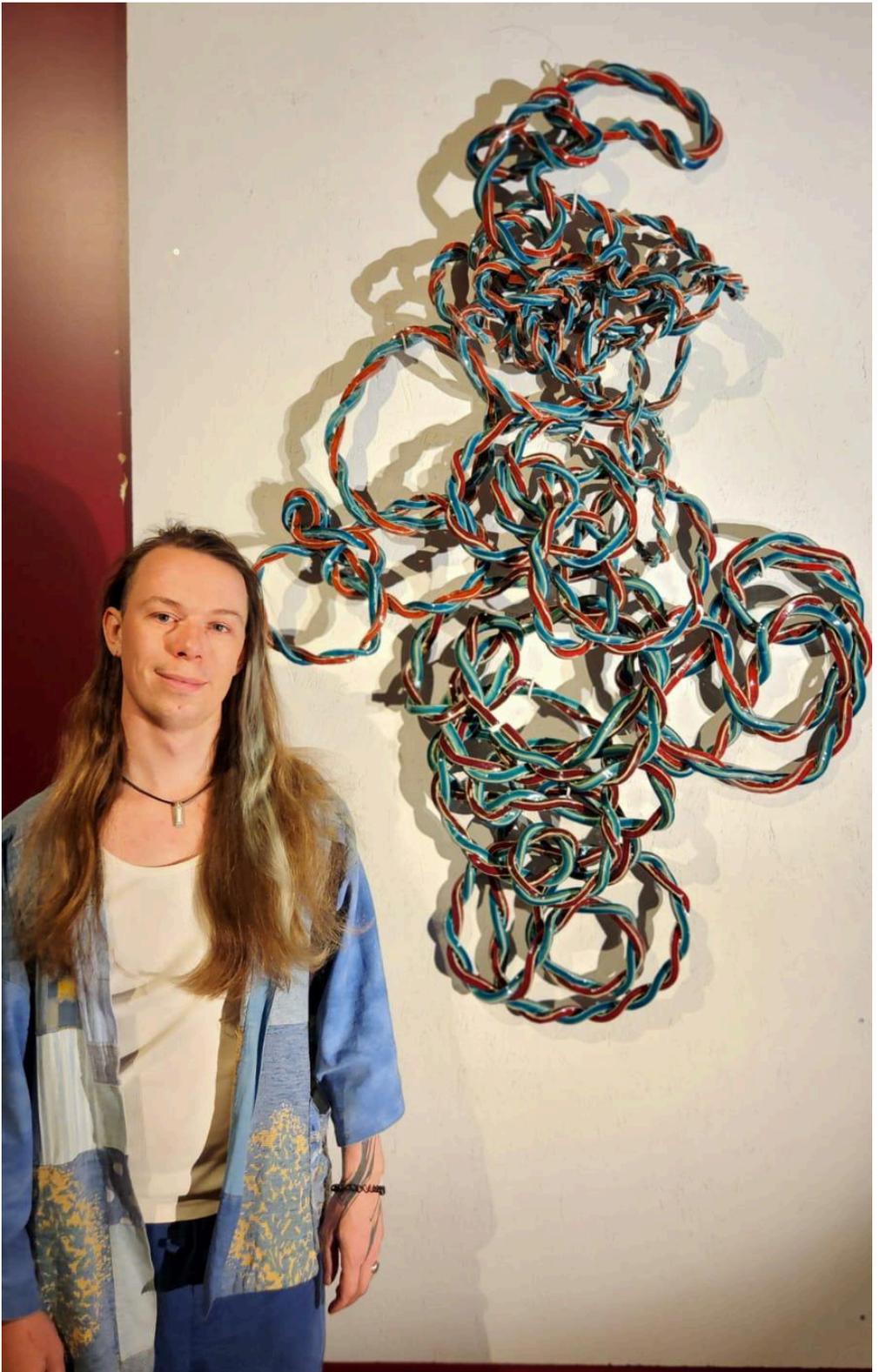
I hope that people who see this exhibition feel invited to notice something in themselves. Not through explanation, but through presence. Becoming is not a straight line. It is something that moves with you. Clay has taught me that.

Section 4

Artist's biography

"Nothing becomes itself all at once"





Artist's biography

Journey of becoming

Obbe is an Amsterdam based artist who works with clay, porcelain, found objects, and living materials. His artist name is an acronym for Olly Bound By Earth, a reminder that his life is inseparable from the world around him, from the natural materials he works with, and from the people who have shaped him.

He grew up in a home surrounded by paintings, sculptures, and creative work. As a child he spent summers in the south of France, where he and his father made pottery together. These early experiences formed a deep connection to clay as both a material and a way of thinking. At twelve he sculpted a goblin figure that visiting gallerists praised. That memory resurfaced later in life when he returned to the form as part of his artistic development.

Before becoming an artist, he studied psychology and worked for several years in human resources. Although the work was stable, it left him increasingly disconnected from himself. In 2022 he left the corporate world and took an orientation course at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie. This confirmed what he already sensed. Clay was not a hobby. It was a necessary part of his life.



He founded OBBE Studio soon after and began producing work that blended emotional honesty with material experimentation. Sustainability is central to his practice. He recycles clay, works with local and European materials, uses renewable electricity, and is a member of One Percent for the Planet. His sculptures incorporate moss and other organic elements, reflecting his belief that art can participate in ecological care.

Becoming is his debut exhibition. It introduces an artist whose work does not hide instability or uncertainty, but who uses them as sources of openness, curiosity, and presence.

Sustainability note

The artist works with sustainability as a quiet discipline rather than a slogan. Clay and porcelain scraps are recycled until fired. Electricity in the studio comes from renewable sources. The studio furniture is made from reclaimed materials. The artist bicycles to work and to deliveries whenever possible. Moss used in the sculptures is grown in controlled conditions and misted regularly. The artist is a member of One Percent for the Planet and donates a portion of studio revenue to environmental causes.

Sustainability is present in the work through material honesty, reuse, and a belief that beauty can emerge from restraint and care.

*Thank you for joining me in
the journey of **Becoming**.*

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