



Madeleine Child, "Cheezels" from *Pop-pop*, 2006, ceramic clay and glaze, each approx. 20 cm in diameter.

Madeleine Child, "Popcorn" from *Pop-pop*, 2006, ceramic clay and glaze, each approx. 20 cm in diameter.



*Pop-pop*

My new ceramic work is brightly-coloured and festive. That is, until one looks closer. A heap of 'cheezels' spills onto a table; and multi-coloured popcorn in pink lavender, chrome yellow, rose madder and a lysergic green makes one feel sick. Looking at these massed objects one can smell the cheezels and the popcorn – as if one has just stepped into the foyer of a movie house. The work is evocative of smell and of taste through the ways in which the texture of the clay and the glaze have been combined. We are transported to another place and this place is a nostalgic one as we remember a childhood in which cheezels and popcorn were always partly allowed and partly disallowed. My project is called *Pop-pop* and is prompted by my sons' desire for junk food and the constant battle over food and preservatives alongside a loss of innocence in the face of food additives and genetically engineered crops. At the same time, however, the pieces are also a spontaneous response to the shape and tactility of cheezels and popcorn as comfort food. I blow them up to large size, each about twenty centimetres in diameter. The works are fun and playful and these characteristics are poignantly at odds with the serious issues at stake. The pieces also play with the tension between attraction and repulsion; between desire and guilt; and between bodily needs and informed opinion – and they do so on a material level. We see the opposites playing out in front of our eyes through the contrasts between the lumpiness of the clay and the seductive qualities of the coloured and glazed surfaces.

**Madeleine Child** is a lecturer in ceramics at the Otago Polytechnic School of Art and completed her master's degree at the Royal College of Art in London. She exhibits regularly and is currently the recipient of an Otago Polytechnic research grant to explore the material possibilities of clay and glaze.