Multiplicity: More than the Sum of the Parts explores and celebrates the power of multiples. This exhibition highlights artists whose work is composed of separate elements repeated to create the whole. Some artists slip-cast objects which are then combined into large scale sculptures or wall works. Others throw or hand-build functional wares that come together as sets or installations.

The visual variety overlaps or echoes one another: sinewy lines, paper-thin porcelain, imbedded colors, industrial or architectural references, configurations inspired by crystalline growth, and clay symbiotically joined with other materials. Their craftsmanship and virtuosity showcase the vibrancy of contemporary ceramic art.

BIANKA GROVES’ delicate forms finish with a small foot and give an allusion of floating or hovering. Before firing, she traces thin, wandering lines through a layer of wax, and paints underglaze over her drawings, the black soaks into the bare clay line, and gives the feeling of an etching or black thread wrapping the forms.

BRYAN HOPKINS throws porcelain to translucent thinness then cuts and includes textural elements of an industrial nature to contrast its fragility. He utilizes dark, gritty cement bases to create an intriguing dichotomy.

MARY KAY BOTKINS works porcelain into impossibly thin walls, folded with gentle precision like ceramic origami. Porcelain is not known for its willingness to comply with such gymnastics, her ability to coax the clay into her vision is as astounding as it is beautiful.

KYLE BAUER creates molds from found objects and combines those components into his mixed-media large-scale sculptures. His playful use of materials and colors create works that reference strange toys or bizarre machines from another realm.

FRANK SALIANI colors his porcelain slip before casting, the cool colors are infused throughout resulting in a deep hue that differs from what a glaze might supply. He creates various crystalline components so they can be combined and altered into a many possible radial or group configurations.

BRETT FREUND’s work is also is influenced by crystals, using them visually and literally. He casts and assembles his angular constructions, carves lines and imbeds underglaze colors, it is as if the surface is tattooed. After the glaze firing, they are soaked in a solution of borax yielding actual crystal growth, echoing the form. These artists’ use of repetition is not redundancy, it does not dilute, but enhances the impact. The individual objects coalesce into a unified statement. There is strength in these numbers.

Mary Cloonan, Exhibition Director at Baltimore Clayworks, Baltimore, MD

Multiplicity More than the Sum of the Parts
January 18 – February 17, 2013

Kyle Bauer, Mary Kay Botkins, Brett Freund, Bianka Groves, Bryan Hopkins, Frank Saliani

Mary Cloonan, exhibition director at Baltimore Clayworks, Baltimore, MD
Kyle Bauer (Baltimore, MD)
Tension | Control
2011
mixed media, porcelain, wood, metal, rubber, paint
36 × 24 × 24 inches

Brett Freund (Baltimore, MD)
Crystal Study
2012
porcelain, underglaze, glaze, borax crystals
5.5 × 7 × 4 inches

Bryan Hopkins (Buffalo, New York)
Apertif Set
2012
porcelain, stained cast mortar, platinum luster
7 × 7 × 5 inches

Mary Kay Botkins (East Dundee, IL)
Envelopes
2011
porcelain
8 × 5 × 4.5 inches

Blanka Groves (Baltimore, MD)
Line Cups
2012
wheel-thrown porcelain
4 × 3 × 4 inches

Frank Saliani (Brooklyn, New York)
Radial
2010
colored, cast, assembled porcelain, and polyester
29 inch diameter