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Unit 1

Methods of Cataloguing

Week 1

Harvard Digital Collections

Artemas Ward House and Its Collections

Subcategory

Vessels

Vessels in Context

The Artemas Ward House is located in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts (USA), and dates back to 1727.

It belonged to General Artemas Ward, the first commander-in-chief of the Patriot forces during the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783),

and later generations of his family lived there through the 18th and 19th centuries.

Vessel

the physical act of containment

Literally, it refers to everyday containers such as bowls, cups, jars, and bottles used for holding liquids or food within the Artemas Ward household in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Vessel

the containment of history and memory preservation

Conceptually, the collection itself becomes a vessel.

It holds traces of household history,
preserving moments of daily life that
once took place around these objects.

Extracting

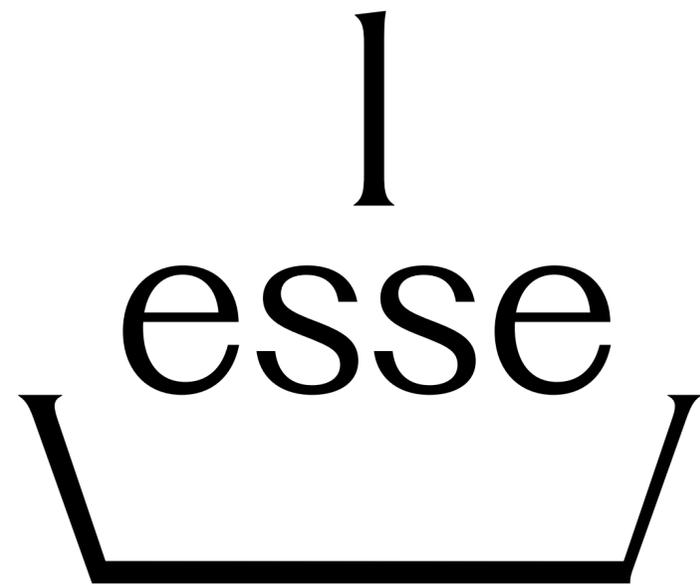
Vessel

V esse l

A vessel's function is to hold and contain. If you look at the word visually, the letters V and L also function as containers. They hold the letters esse between them

l
esse
v

l
esse

A diagram consisting of three elements: a vertical line at the top, the word 'esse' in a serif font in the middle, and a trapezoidal shape at the bottom. The trapezoid has a horizontal top edge, a horizontal bottom edge, and two slanted sides that connect the top and bottom edges.

l
vesse

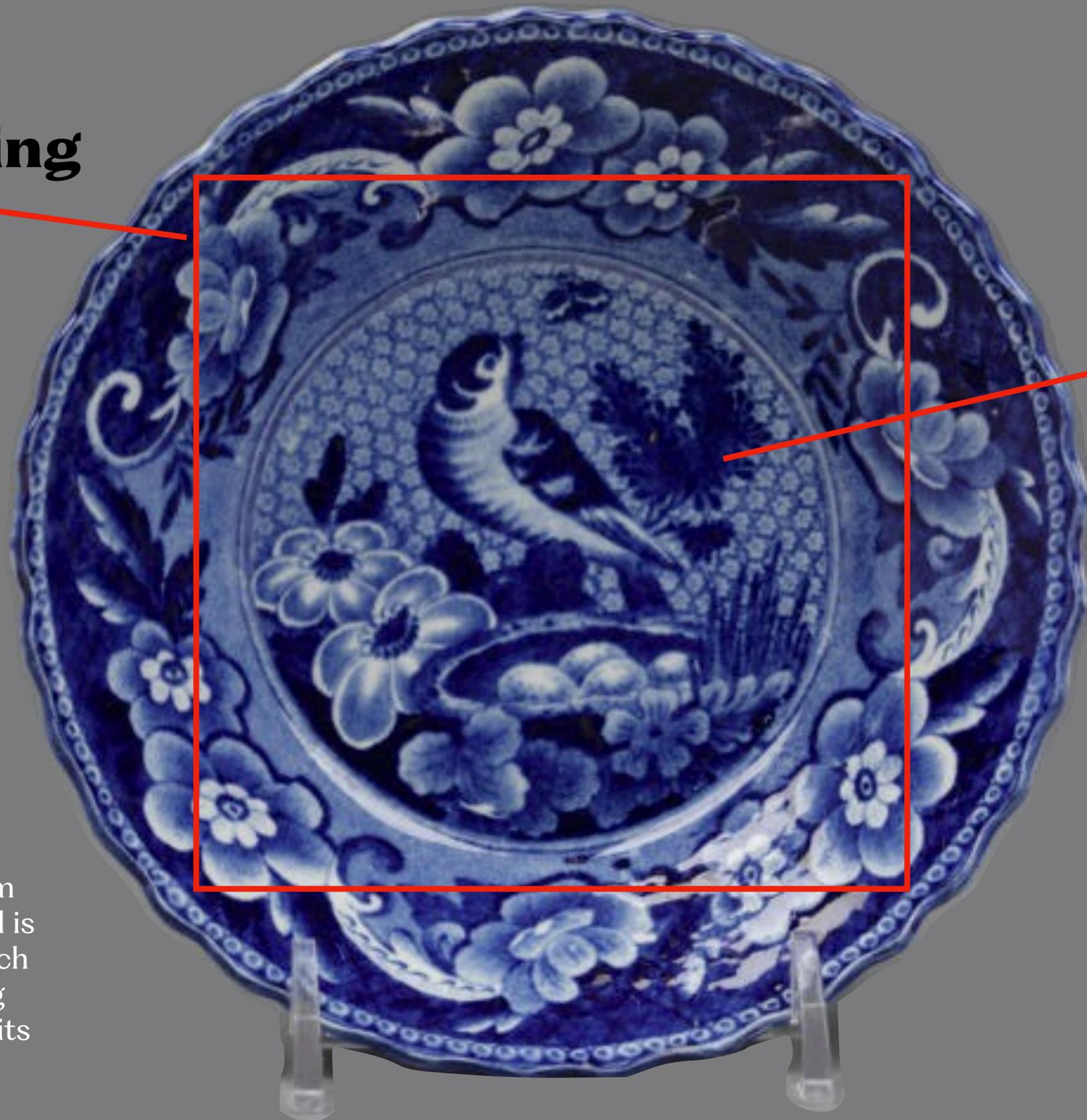
l
esse

/ˈɛsɪ/

(noun) esse is a borrowing from Latin

1. In Latin the phrase, in esse means in **actual existence**
2. **Essence**, Essential nature

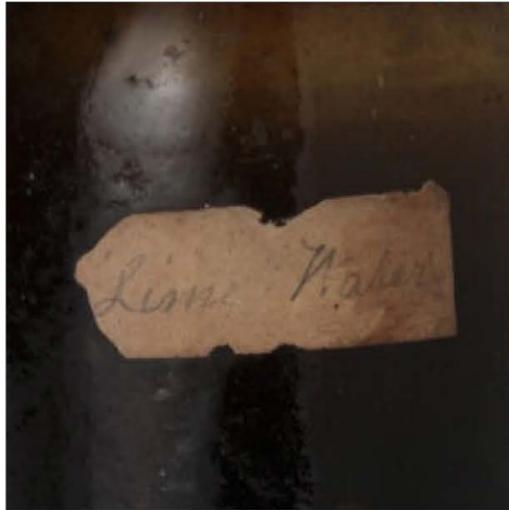
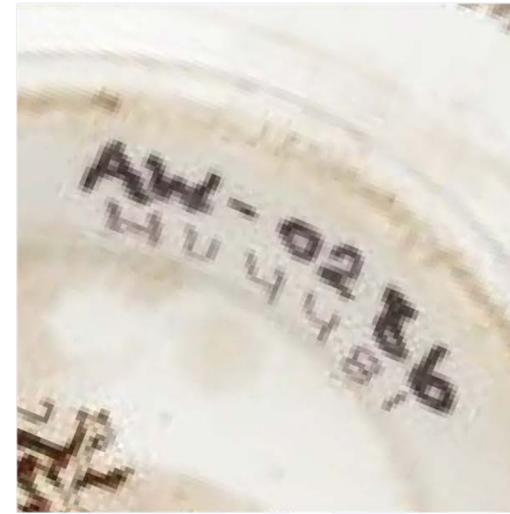
Extracting



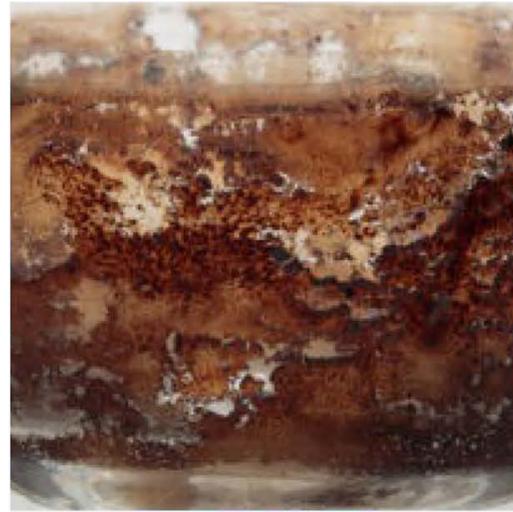
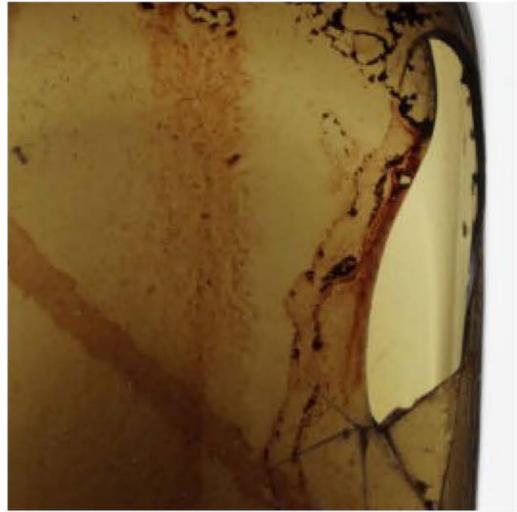
Essence

The vessel itself becomes a form that holds 'Esse' and my method is to extract that essence from each vessel to find what kind of being or existence it still holds within its form, surface, or trace.

Existence of Word



Existence of Mark/Trace



Existence of Life: Plant and Flower



Existence of Life: Animal



Existence of Place



Existence of Vessel as Carrier

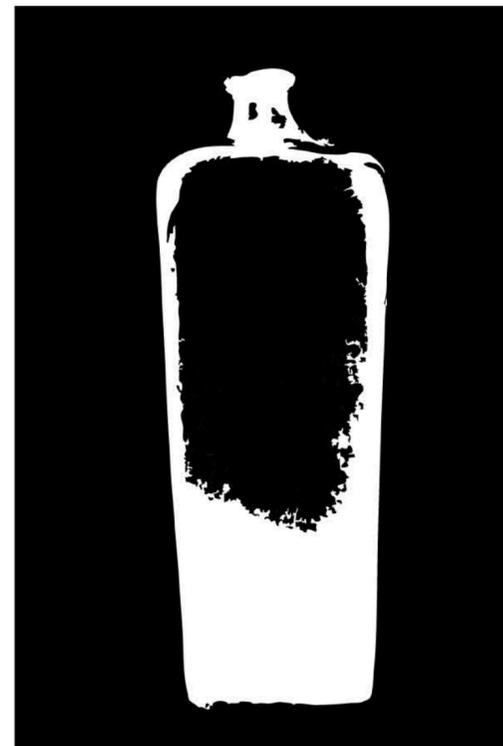
After looking into the place, I discovered there are boats. I extracted the vessel as a carrier, which could be linked to colonial histories. I think it's interesting, but I don't have much knowledge of it, so I have to explore this connection further.



2

Reversing

If Esse is a catalogue of being.
This is its opposite. It is a Catalogue
of Void reverses the act of
collecting, classifying absence as
evidence of time and loss



If objects contain histories, what happens when I place their voids back into this house?
The vessel silhouettes became frames for family portraits. Instead of cataloguing the objects themselves, I used their voids as windows that hold the presence of the people who once lived in these rooms.



3

Reclassifying

English language

handle (noun)

a part of an object designed for holding or carrying the object easily



Thai language

หู หู้ (noun)

ear-like part of anything, such
as bag handle, teapot handle



Thai language

หู หู้ (noun)

ear



Function of vessel and handle

holding
carrying,
containing,
transporting

Function of ear

listening,
hearing,
collecting sound



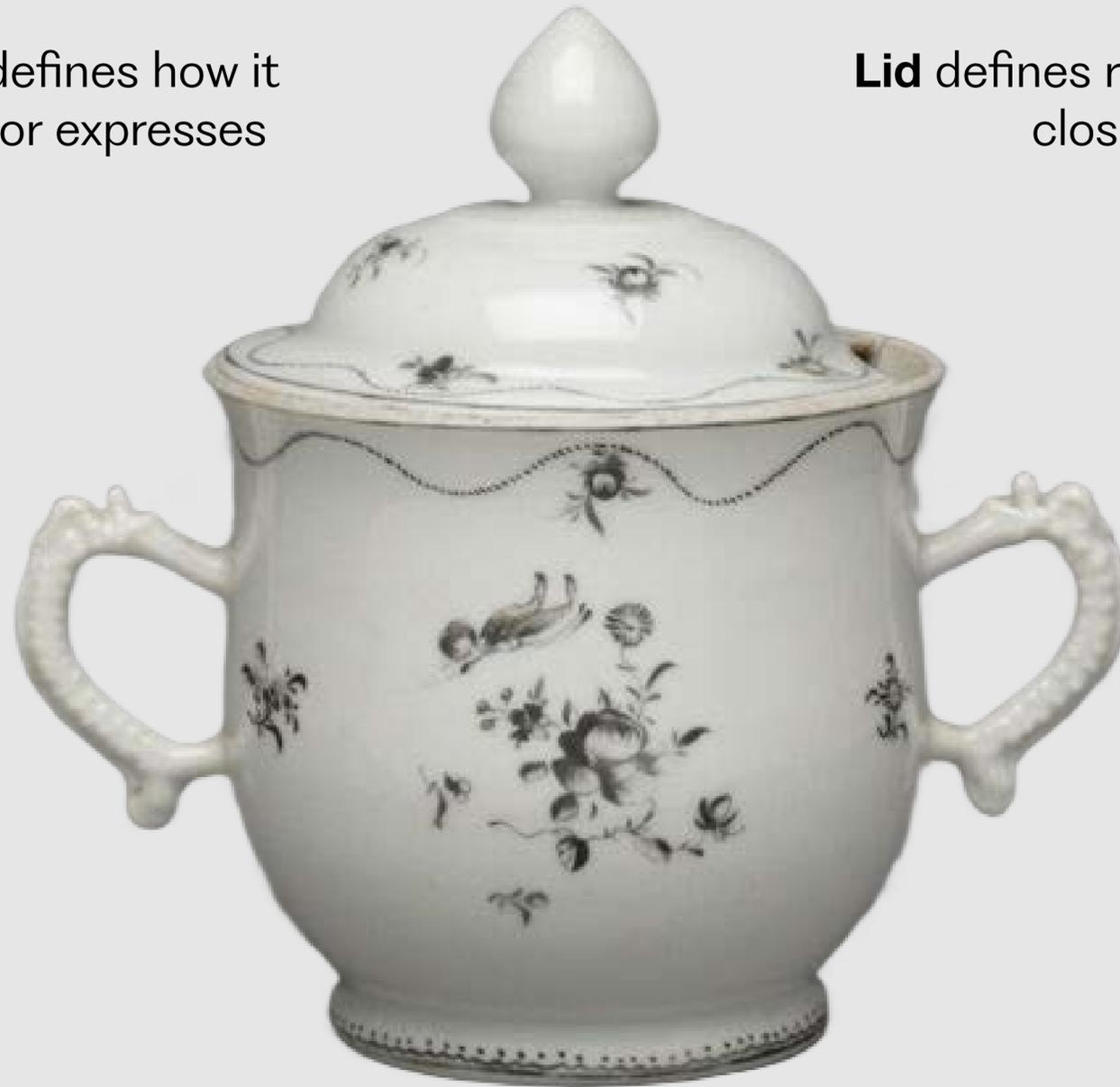
Message

Mouth defines how it speaks or expresses

Lid defines reflection or closure

Ear (handle) defines how a vessel listens or receives

Body becomes a space for containing messages



Six archetypes of communicative vessels

Capacity to listen / Direction and degree of receptivity

no ear

Containment without communication

one ear

Selective communication

two ear

Relational communication

Silent Vessel

Cannot listen or speak
Silence / Absence



Private Vessel

Listens to whispers, keeps what it hears
Confession / Intimacy / Whispered words



Reflective Vessel

Listens deeply, then closes to reflect
Understanding / Thought / Wisdom



Echo Vessel

Cannot listen, but quietly absorbs
traces from surroundings
Trace/After-sound



Empathetic Vessel

Listens and responds softly
Compassion



Conversational Vessel

Listens and speaks in balance
Casual Dialogue / Mutual understanding



close

open

Capacity to speak or share / Degree of openness and expression

wide mouth

open mouth

small mouth

closed mouth

no ear



1 ear



2 ears



