

Precedent and Inspiration

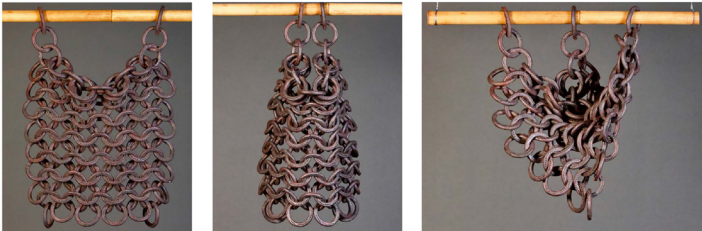
As a team, we were drawn to and inspired by the simplistic and elegant nature of Cecil Kemperink's ceramic linking sculptures right out of the gate. Much of our inspiration came from the complexity of her art work created by the single, simplistic chain link component.

We decided to focus our project on one simplistic unit, the chain link, building to create something more complex. We drew much of our initial inspiration for exploration of the materials from Cecil's many intricate linking patterns.

Cecil also tends to experiment with link shape and size, varying in diameter and thickness within the same link. This was carried through to our project in the initial stages as we explored extrusion sizes, link sizes, link shapes, and linkage patterns.

We also drew inspiration from Tony Furtado in his work on 'Ceramic Chain Mail.' This unique piece is a ceramic sculpture that resembles metal so successfully. This mid-fired stoneware is finished with an oxide wash that achieves its metallic look.

This piece is what inspired the incorporation of metal into this ceramic project. This ultimately let to the integration of welding to create the frame for our chain-link chair.



Tony Furtado
2023
Ceramic Chain Mail

Cecil Kemperink
2019
Big Wave



Clay and Color Exploration

Decisions on clay needed to be made based on color, look, and feel. Additionally, glaze colors were painted and fired to test outcome tones. Ultimately, porcelain and ice blue were decided upon. Porcelain is strong, less difficult to work with, and light in color to control glaze outcomes more accurately.



Size, Shape, and Connection exploration

Initial testing was done to determine which shapes and sizes would work best for successfully linking a large number of chains. This test led us to two circular chain link unit components, one large and one small, extruded from a 5/8" plate. We also explored different methods and patterns of linking the chains, landing on a 1-2-1 large to small linking pattern, with a large joint.



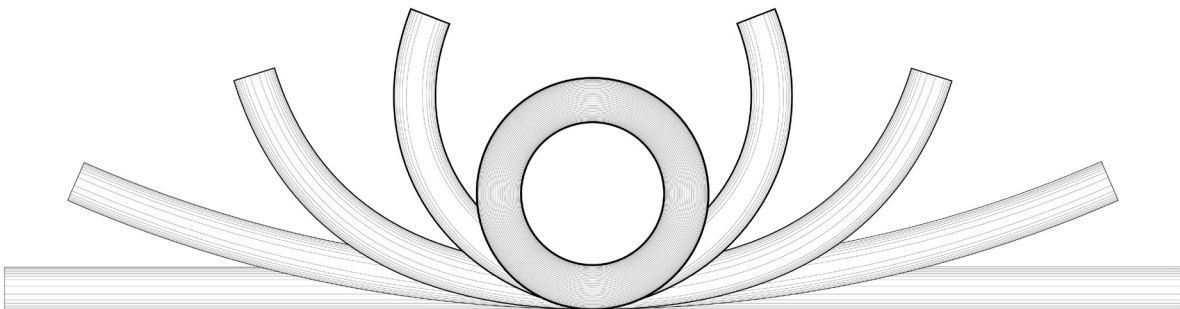
Fabrication Process

Extrusion was the initial method of fabrication in this process. From there, the clay rods were then shaped by their designated PVC pipe, smoothed, then joined using the score and slip method. Each individual chain was extruded, shaped, smoothed, and joined by hand. All initial units were joined and fired. After all units were produced, each chain was assembled using a large chain joint. The chains were then fired, glazed, and re-fired to finalize.



Primitive to Component

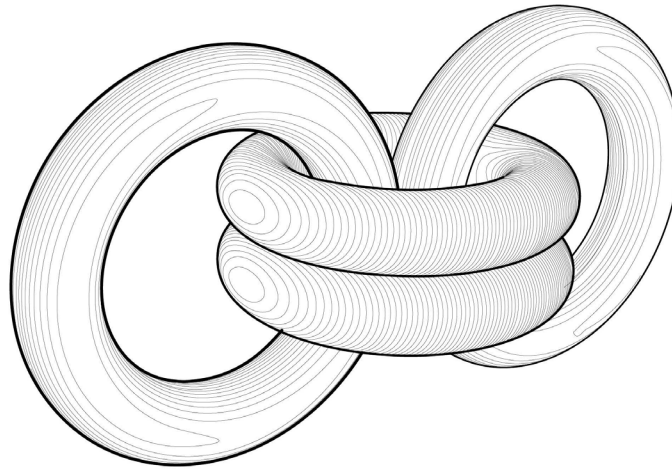
The primitive of this project was a clay rod derived from extrusion by a 5/8" plate. The extruded rod was then converted into clay links by bending and shaping around PVC pipes of differing sizes. The bent, circular rods were then scored, slipped, and bonded to themselves to create individual components. Our component catalog consists of one large and one small link.



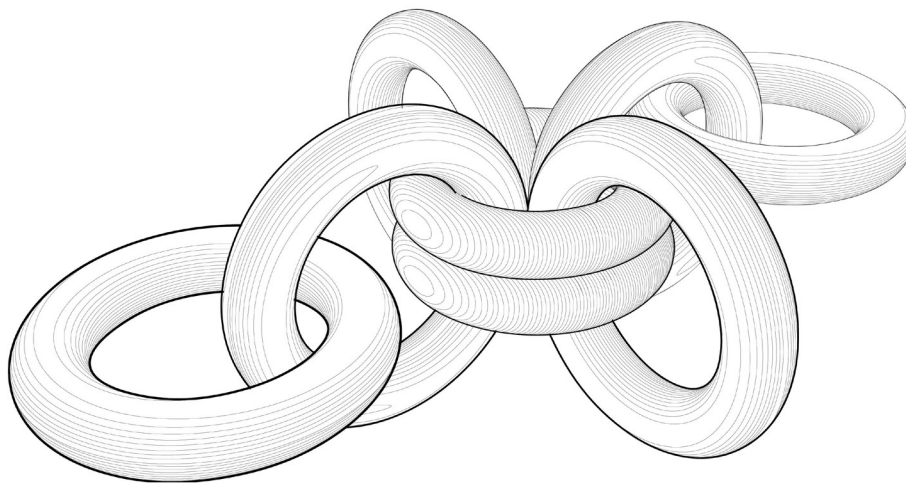
Component 1

Unit

Once our component catalog of different single components was established, the methods of linking components was next explored. The strategy of interlocking that we landed on consisted of: developing individual components, firing individual components, weaving the rod through a fired link, then closing the unfired rod to form a new link. With this, interlocked connections began to form. The units developed from this method included two large components link by two small components.

**Unit Family Combination**

After developing the unit prototype of two large links interlocked with two small links, we needed to find a way to combine individual units to create unit families. The combination method here mimics the combination methods for the units, where the linking component is one large link acting as a unit 'joint.'



Type 1

Chair

The chair - a synthesis of components + structure. Inspired by the traditional leather lounger, we wanted to integrate the free form nature of the chain links with the stark rigidity of the metal framing to create a natural yet industrial piece of furniture. Here, the ceramic units come together, with some help from gravity, to create simple, elegant, and functional art. Complete living room set to come.

