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(In)significant Objects

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(In)significant Objects

Kurt A. Teeter

Thesis submitted to the
College of Creative Arts
at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
Emphasis in Ceramics

Committee Members
Chair: Kristina Olson
Dylan Collins
Shoji Satake
Robert “Boomer” Moore
Jennifer Allen

Key Words: Ceramics, Pottery, Wood Fired, Significant Objects, Motifs.

Division of Art and Design

Morgantown, West Virginia
2011

ABSTRACT

(In)Significant Objects

Kurt Teeter

This thesis describes my MFA Thesis Exhibition: *(In)Significant Objects*, which was on display at the Paul Mesaros Gallery at the West Virginia University Creative Arts Center from November 29 to December 11, 2010. The exhibition included twenty-one large-scale ceramic storage jars and this written thesis explains why I, as an artist/craftsman, still find significance in these objects. By basing my vessels on ancient Greek amphoras, I am indicating that these forms, though heavy and obsolete by contemporary American standards, still have a role as decorative objects expressing vitality, idealism, and active discovery.

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Introduction

Objects made in a certain time reflect the society at the time of making and [these objects] are incredibly resistant to time.

Paul Mathieu, “How to Write Critically About Ceramics?”

My Masters of Fine Art thesis work consists of large ceramic storage vessels. Historically, large storage jars had significant impact on the evolution of human societies by allowing civilizations to stockpile consumables such as grains, kim chi, maize, oil, water, wines and various other goods. Storage of these necessities in vessels such as Pithoi jars (**Figure 1**) allowed civilizations like the Minoans (3000 B.C.E. – 1500 B.C.E.) to flourish and grow.

The tradition of making ceramic vessels spans centuries and their significance in past cultures as functional art in daily life is evident. Today, however, these large storage jars are insignificant in American culture. We have no need for storing food or spirits (fermented beverages) in large ceramics jars. We, as a progressive consumer society, have replaced the necessity of these handcrafted vessels with machine-made plastic, glass, and metal containers. While the machine is “the greatest dilemma faced by modern artisan-craftsman,”¹ machine-made wares lack the heart, experiences and vitality associated with the handcrafts. This transition from hand-made wares to manufactured wares is not without consequence because, as an artist craftsman, I find value in the experience handcrafted objects offer.

As an artist craftsman, I make decorative vessels that enhance the household environment by reflecting the vitality of life found in the bustle of a home. I was raised

¹ Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 81.

in a ten-person household in an eighteen-hundred-square-foot home. There was always something going on; an intense game of Pitch or Cribbage, agitated siblings chasing each other around the house, or even the obstacle of having family dinners with ten people trying to fill in around a large table. These are but a few of the experiences associated with vitality and energy depicted in my work. Motifs (symbolizing vitality), a toned-down color palette, and use of the wood-kiln are, in essence, a way of expressing this energy found in the home. Because of this vitality (associated with the motifs) and historical value (as seen with the Minoans) I see these large decorative storage jars as significant objects.

Vessel Form

My vessel forms share commonalities with Greek amphora (**Figure 2**) (700 B.C.E to 500 B.C.E.) and Yayoi vessels (**Figure 3**) (300 B.C.E – 300 C.E.). Contemporary artists whose work shares these similar influences are Mark Hewitt (**Figure 4**) (English, b. 1955) and Paul Chaleff (American, b. 1947) (**Figure 5**). I find beauty in the forms of these historical and contemporary vessels. This beauty in Hewitt's and Chaleff's work is shared in my forms through soft curves and small feet. This soft curve in the belly elevated above a small foot gives the appearance of a jar burdened or filled with excess goods and it signifies abundance.

My vessels explore the proportions of the amphora shape. Variation in height, width, location of belly, size of foot, width of jar opening, and size on knobs are the main proportional considerations. Through this formal investigation and the number of storage

jars made, these vessels became anthropomorphic and appear as multiple figure types; short and squat, tall and thin, larger than life, and average.

This exploration in proportions was meant to expose the importance of perspective. These large storage jars cannot be handled like a mug or bowl due to their sheer mass; neither are they to be viewed at eye level like a painting. These vessels are likely placed on the floor and seen from the top at a downward angle in a household setting. When looked upon from this perspective the vessel becomes foreshortened. Foreshortening makes these vessels more elegant as the foot appears visually smaller, and causes the belly of these vessels to appear elevated and deceptively lighter.

This alteration to form by perspective is found in Michelangelo's sculpture of *David* (1501-1504, **Figure 6**). The significant difference between my large storage jars and Michelangelo's *David*, is that these jars are meant to be seen from the top in the personal setting of a home, whereas *David* was intended to be placed in a niche high on the side of the Duomo in Florence, Italy. It also explains the bizarre proportions (seen in the hands and enlarged head) found in the features of *David*. The change seen in the exterior of my jars is less dramatic. However, my jars appear very different in their form based on the level from which they are viewed.

Due to the size of these vessels, making these objects required multiple phases to achieve the height and girth of my desired forms. Essentially there are two ways of achieving these large forms; adding more clay via clay coils or adding thrown rings upon an existing vessel base. This second method, known as sectional throwing, is the procedure I prefer because sectional rings of clay are more symmetrical and easier to control on the potter's wheel. The one drawback from this method is numerous wheels

are required; one wheel to hold the base of the vessel and another wheel to throw the section that will be added.

Sectional throwing requires strong technical skill, good timing, and a bit of physical strength. Each section requires between fifteen and twenty pounds of clay and is thrown to roughly ½” thick. When adding this amount of clay to a vessel, especially a vessel with a small foot, timing is critical. If the initial section is too wet when adding another, the vessel will collapse from the additional weight. Whereas if the initial section is too dry before the next is added, then the vessel will crack at the joining seam. The role of timing in construction of large vessels is critical and these two examples show the consequences of poor timing.

Technical skill also plays a significant role in the construction of these objects. This is seen in “idiot bumps.” These bumps are caused by inconsistencies in the thickness of the walls of the vessel and are particularly troubling at the connecting seams. As each new section is added and manipulated, the clay tends to settle and thicken at the joint. If these thickened areas are not evened out, a bump in the final form will show and detract from the flawless, amphora-like forms I desire.

Since each section requires fifteen to twenty pounds of clay, a good deal of physical strength is needed to manipulate the clay. By working with a softer clay body I was able to alleviate the strain on my fingers, wrists and elbows. However, when reducing the strain on my joints, I increased the level of technical difficulty as the clay became increasingly difficult to throw thinner or taller. This continual compromise between softness of material and my own physical strength required me to plan ahead and mix my clay body accordingly.

Decoration

In her essay *Ceramics and Art Criticism*, Janet Koplos explains that ceramic artists are “rarely concerned with innovating new forms.”² This is due in part to forms already being idealized over the centuries of making vessels that serve specific purposes in both ritual and domestic use. As an artist craftsman, I fall into Koplos’ description of ceramic artists because I am in constant search of new surfaces. These large vessels are ideal for this exploration of surface. A vast surface framed by the foot and the rim allows for investigation of glazes, patterns, and shapes.

The surfaces are created by layering slips over handmade cut-outs (**Figure 7**) to form motifs. Motifs are constructed of shapes in a phenomenal structure. Through the repetition of similar interlocking shapes, the motif emerges and “presents itself to the senses...or imagination.”³ These multiple layers of slip, combined with areas of glaze inlay, act as a catalyst for impulses of active discovery. Active discovery is the ability to look deeper into the surface and shape of an object, thereby allowing the vessel to reveal itself over time.

The peony motifs are a direct result of my experiences in China. In 2008, I spent a semester studying ceramics at the WVU-JCI International Ceramic Studio in Jingdezhen, China. These motifs began by abstracting a single leaf found in traditional Chinese Peonies used in Qing Hua decoration from the Yuan (1279-1368), Ming (1368-1644), and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties (**Figure 8**). In Chinese Qing Hua, peonies, melons, cranes, and many other icons (characterized as allegories and symbols) are

² Garth Clark, *Ceramic Millenium* (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design, 2006), 279.

³ Paul Crowther, *Art and Embodiment: From Aesthetic to Self-Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 18.

masterfully painted on porcelain with a cobalt underglaze. During my time in Jingdezhen, China, I was exposed to this porcelain tradition. My work pays homage to this tradition by appropriating a portion of the traditional peony design and translating it into my own.

The depth achieved by layering motifs is similar to drawing. In drawing, a three-dimensional illusion starts to emerge from the page as the artist builds upon existing layers of graphite, charcoal, conté, etc. While my surfaces do not reflect the subtleties found in a drawing on paper, my use of interlocking and overlapping shapes, slips, and glazes create an illusion of depth as layers are built one upon another. These layers of textures, colors, and shapes are my way of rendering the surface of a vessel.

The curvilinear shape of the peony leaf indicates a sense of motion while the composition of these shapes suggests the energy conveyed in these large jars. The qualities of curvilinear line, creating a sense of motion, are also found in Alphonse Mucha's (Moravian, 1860-1939) (**Figure 9**) Sarah Barnhardt posters. Mucha's use of pristine flowing lines enhances the form of the figure, flora, and framing elements while, my use of a repeated peony motif mimics the energy found in Mucha's illustrations.

Firing in the wood kiln enhances these motifs by supplying another layer to the surface. The firing is also closely tied to the vitality associated with motifs. Just as in my home, there is always something happening during a wood firing; people stop by, stories being told, and meals being eaten.

Glazes are formed from the wood ash floating through the kiln. This ash lands and melts on the vessels during peak firing temperature and adds fluidity to the surface. Ash and use of glazes with the firing process transforms the surface of these large jars. The combinations of these elements enhance some areas of my decoration with the wood

kiln's effects, while obscuring other areas with ash glaze. Halos are characteristics caused by glazes that bleed into the slight ridges left by the paper cutouts. These variations in surface are not accidents. There are certain places in this down draft kiln, designed by Brian VanNostrand, where specific results are produced. For example, the Shaner Oribe glaze is the most temperamental to firing process and kiln location. A jar with this glaze placed in the middle of the kiln turns red. But, if the jar is placed next to the door, the glaze turns green. This is due to the amount of oxygen introduced by the opening and closing of the wood kiln's stoking door.

MFA Thesis Work

The work I selected (twenty-one vessels out of thirty-six total jars made) for *(In)Significant Objects* is categorized by the glazes and techniques I used. The five types of work presented in this exhibition were Inlay, Oribe, Silhouette, Celadon, and Raw Storage jars. I incorporated similar techniques in the decoration of all of these jars through slips, yet they are all very different in the final product. Through different glazes, color combinations, and the manipulation of a wood kiln, I created depth on a two-dimensional surface and challenged common perceptions of the eye by overlapping layers of flat shapes.

In the inlay storage jars (**Figure 10**), I used Pastel Green and Yao Ware Celadon glazes⁴ to accent the motifs. Soft green celadon circles of varying sizes are overlapped by peony motifs, freckles of fly ash, and runny natural ash glazes implying illusions of depth and space on a flat surface. Circles of blue slip react with the green celadon to accent the

⁴ See appendix for recipes, page 27.

edges of this glaze with a darkened blue hue. This layered quality is similar to that observed in nature as one sees trees overlapping one another. In this case, each subsequent layer becomes more and more obscured and harder to define.

Celadon (**Figure 18**) is a type of a glaze in Oriental traditions of clay. The original celadon glaze is thought to originate in the Zhejiang province of China during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 to 220 A.D.).⁵ Celadon glazes are typically transparent with hues of blue or green. Celadon glazes accent every detail under the surface similar to the experience of looking through crystal clear water. This is seen in my use of slip as the recesses caused by paper resist are slightly enhanced by the pooling of glaze that happens along those edges. Tones of grey and slightly darker variations of green are caused by the use of an iron-saturated stoneware. Like painted glazes of color on a dark canvas, the dark color of my clay body interacts with the translucent glazes, subtly changing their hue. Drips of green indicate locations of melted ash and trap the history of the ash melting on the surface. This celadon surface is not about accentuating the motif (as inlay or silhouette jars), but rather, discovering the surface through a transparent glaze.

I see connections to the optical illusions of space between my inlay storage ware and the works of Wayne Higby (American, b. 1943) (**Figure 11**). Higby creates vessels by taking a three-dimensional object, such as a bowl, and visually flattening it through surface embellishment. The continuation of imagery that starts on the front side of a bowl and correlates with the imagery on the inside of a bowl creates an illusion of flattened space. While Higby's vessels only have one point of perspective to see the illusion, my storage jars provide a three-dimensional illusion of space through

⁵ William Watson, *Art of Dynastic China* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 1979), 333.

overlapping flat shapes. It is a constant push and pull between illusions of recession and projection produced by layers of shapes and numerous glazes.

My silhouette storage jars (**Figure 12**) utilize a Matte Black glaze and explore the tradition of silhouettes. Kara Walker (American, b. 1969) is a well-known contemporary artist working with the silhouette (**Figure 13**). While her work addresses social issues such as race and gender, my silhouette storage ware reduces the floral motif to its most basic shape, thereby exaggerating the beauty and depth of the background. This is seen with warm colors such as reds, oranges, and yellows that attract the focus of the eye. A matte black glaze melts and drips over these warm colors found in the background and maintain a sense of motion and energy.

Perhaps the most complex vessels in *(In)Significant Objects* are my Oribe storage jars (**Figure 14**). These containers are loosely based on Japanese Oribe Ware; a type of work established in the early 17th century of Mino, Japan.⁶ One particular piece of Japanese Oribe Ware, the *Handled Dish* (**Figure 15**), employs a green glaze on opposite sides of a vessel creating a wide stripe of white down the center. The stripe is decorated with the textile patterns of the region using black designs under a white glaze. The sectioned quality of glaze application from this historical ware is characteristic of my work. Through a wax resist technique, I mimic this sectioned quality while substituting peony motifs (symbolizing vitality and life) for the textile qualities found in the Japanese version.

My hope is that these Oribe storage jars (as well as all of the other types of jars) induce active discovery or the ability of a vessel to reveal itself over time. This active

⁶ Ryoichi Fujioka, *Shino and Oribe Ceramic* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc. 1980), 88.

discovery is the characteristic I find particularly interesting in Chris Gustin's (American, b. 1952) (**Figure 16**) work. The surfaces he achieves in his anagama wood kiln on his figurative vessels require the viewer to look deeper into the running of glazes and the subtle softness of his forms.

My Oribe storage jars incorporate the use of cutouts, sprigs,⁷ and effects of the wood kiln to accentuate the embellishment on the surface. Oribe glaze interacts with my red clay body to cause a slight red variation in color, while accumulation of wood ash and soaking⁸ the kiln makes the glaze run through and over the designs causing the images to become more obscured and harder to decipher. Variations from matte golden yellows to metallic blacks bleed into intense greens from one side of the vessel to the other. I hope this interesting variation provokes a desire to walk around the whole vessel to fully experience the complexities and interaction of color, motif, and form. Upon closer examination the slightest changes in those colors reveal another layer of motifs prompting that need for continuous inspection of these vessels (**Figure 17**).

Only slip is used to create the surface decoration in the Raw storage jars (**Figure 19**), as this work is not glazed. My primary interest in the rendering of these vessels is the values of brown my clay body receives from the firing process. The quality of this color is meant to inspire a sense of comfort, thought, and as Peter Dormer writes, "Hues of brown tend to be honest, wholesome, and have more integrity. Browns also have that feel of good, old-fashioned values."⁹ My experiences in China revitalized my interest in

⁷ See appendix.

⁸ "Soaking" is the action of holding the kiln at a certain temperature for an extended period of time.

⁹ Peter Dormer, *The New Ceramics: Trends + Traditions* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 123.

red stoneware. Contemporary Chinese ceramic artist, Master Jin, visited the WVU-JCI International Studio with clay from Tian Bao and used it to make large traditional jars out of clay coils. When his work was fired the water jars were a beautiful reddish-brown. His work exemplifies Dormer's comments about the qualities of brown and convinced me to reinvestigate red stoneware.

Conclusion

Through formal investigation of amphora-type vessels, my forms began to share anthropomorphic characteristics depicting various body types: short and squat, tall and thin, larger than life, and average. These connections to various types of figures have individual characteristics similar to those found in human beings. Just as each human body is individual, so is each of these vessels. Small feet help promote an elegance found from perspective as these feet visually lift the jar and make it appear lighter. The bulging proportions found in the belly of these vessels also imply a vessel burdened with excess goods.

With the five types of work shown in *(In)Significant Objects* (Inlay, Sihlouette, Oribe, Raw, and Celadon) execution of overlapping shapes, selective glazing techniques, and use of a wood kiln produce qualities of space and depth. This push and pull of spatial play allows for formal exploration and active discovery (the ability of a vessel to reveal itself over time) by encouraging the desire to investigate these vessels more closely. Active discovery is very important to my work because it allows the viewer to find the fluidity and motion I convey with abstracted peonies and various other shapes. This decorative motif was prompted by my travels to Jingdezhen, China and has a strong

resonance with the vitality I convey in the surface of these storage jars. The wood kiln increases this sense of active discovery as natural wood ash melts into a glaze and obscures the motifs on the surface of these vessels.

Through the placement of paper cutouts and my use of glazing techniques, the vessels in *(In) Significant Objects* successfully conveyed my interpretation of vitality and energy associated in the bustle of a home. I also feel that these jars, though insignificant in our modern culture, are significant in their ties to history and the depiction of vitality that I have been fortunate to experience. I am an artist craftsman because I see significance in the portrayal of vitality and its role in my life.

Illustrations

Figure 1

Four-handled pithos, Early Minoan II (ca. 1500 BC). Greece, Found in Knossos, Crete, Louvre Museum, Dept. of Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Antiquities.

Figure 2

Greek Amphora, Black Figure Ware, 570 B.C.E., Greece, Terra Cotta, National Archeology Museum of Athens.

Figure 3

Storage Jar, Yayoi Period (300 B.C.E. – 300 C.E.), Japan, Earthenware, H. 10", The Harry G. C. Packard Collection of Asian Art, Gift of Harry G. C. Packard, and Purchase, Fletcher, Rogers, Harris Brisbane Dick and Louis V. Bell Funds, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, and The Annenberg Fund Inc. Gift, 1975 (1975.268.378).

Figure 4

Mark Hewitt, *Yellow Dog*, 44" x 24" x 24", 2001, Collection of Cameron Art Museum.

Figure 5

Paul Chief, *Large Vessel*, 70" x 40" x 40", 2005.

Figure 6

Michelangelo, *David*, 1504, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy

Figure 7

Kurt Teeter, *Paper Cutouts 'Sketch'* 11" x 6", 2010.

Figure 8

Hui-bing Li, “Figure 291: peony decoration of Yuan dynasty” *Appraisement Foundations of Chinese Porcelain*, Beijing: Forbidden City, 2001, 202.

Figure 9

Alphonse Mucha, *Bieres de la Meuse*, 1898, Color lithograph.

Figure 10

Kurt Teeter, *Inlay Storage Ware*, 36 1/2 " H x 19" W x 19" D, Wood Fired, Stoneware, Cone 12, 2010

Figure 11

Wayne Higby, *Landscape Bowl*, 11 x 20 1/2 x 16 5/8", 1980, Arizona State University Art Museum

Figure 12

Kurt Teeter, *Silhouette Ware*, 36 ½" x 18" x 18", Wood Fired, Stoneware, Cone 12, 2010.

Figure 13

Kara Walker, *Cut*, 1988, Cut paper and adhesive on wall, Brent Sikkema NYC.

Figure 14

Kurt Teeter, *Oribe Storage Ware*, 32" x 14" x 14", Wood fired, Stoneware, Cone 12, 2010.

Figure 15

(Orube ware) *Handled Dish*, c. 1650, Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 4-7/8 x 8 x 7-13/16 in. Kimball Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, **AG 1983.02**, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Randolph B. Caldwell, Dallas

Figure 16

Chris Gustin, *Vessel with Dimple #0901*, 33" x 19" x 18", Anagama Wood Fired, Stoneware, 2009

Figure 17

Kurt Teeter, *Oribe Storage Ware (Detail)*, 32" x 14" x 14", Wood fired, Stoneware, Cone 12, 2010.

Figure 18

Kurt Teeter, *Celedon Storage Ware*, 2010, 30" x 16" x 16", Wood Fired, Stoneware, Cone 12, 2010.

Figure 19

Kurt Teeter, *Raw Storage Ware*, 36" x 19" x 19", Wood Fired, Stoneware, Cone 12, 2010

Appendix 1

Techniques and Process and Technical Information

I employ many techniques in the making and decorating of large-scale storage jars. This appendix describes my techniques and process in order to achieve depth in surfaces and active discovery when in use.

Paper Cutouts – The vessels in *(in)Significant Objects* utilize four different paper shapes to achieve my decoration. The peonies from Chinese Qing Hua (blue and white) porcelain, a teardrop shape, a cross between a teardrop and peony shape, and the shape of a circle.

- Step 1 - Draw desired shape on a sheet of paper and cut out until I have roughly 50 similar shapes
- Step 2 - Dip in water and apply to leather hard surface of the vessel making sure all bubbles under the paper are pushed down as this can cause slip to leak under the shape and cause a break in the cleanliness of shape and line.
- Step 3 - Apply a layer of slip until desired area is covered. I repeat this process until I have the number of layers I want.
- Step 4 - Once the slip has dried a little, I use a needle tool to pick the shapes away, leaving the desired mural behind.

Sprigging – defined as the process of adding clay to the main vessel form.¹⁰

Sprigging in my work offers another layer of depth and is the last step during the workable state of clay. After the slip layers are applied to the vessels and just short of leather hard, I roll coils, dots, and cones out of my clay body, spray the surface and attach the sprigs without scoring the surface.

Wax-Resisting – used as a glazing technique with my oribe glaze and peonies design. After the vessel has been bisque fired, I draw a line following the outline of the

¹⁰ Frank and Janet Hamer, *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 348.

peonies to three quarters of an inch or so, wax over the peonies area to drawn line, let dry, then apply the Oribe glaze via spray gun.

Glaze In-lay – A method of glazing where glaze is applied to the areas of paper cutouts. The layers of slip leave a raised surface roughly a thirty-second to a sixteenth of an inch for glaze to applied via nasal bulb, commonly used to pull mucas from a baby’s nasal passage.

Recipes & Technical Information

Teeter Red Clay Body (Cone 10)

Hawthorn Fire Clay.....33
Gold Art.....30
Nepheline Syenite.....20
Red Art.....10
EPK.....10
Silica.....8

Martin Tagseth Flashing Slip (Cone 10+)

Tile 6.....35
OM-4.....20
Nepheline Syenite.....30
Spodumene.....15

Shaner's Oribe (Cone 10)

Potash.....	30.9
Silica.....	25.3
Whiting.....	22.4
Talc.....	7.8
EPK.....	12.6
Bone Ash.....	1.10
Bentonite.....	1.10
Copper Carbonate.....	5.50

Yellow Salt (Cone 10)

Nepheline Syenite.....	60.46
Dolomite.....	20.15
OM-4.....	4.11
Red Iron Oxide.....	0.96
Bentonite.....	3.82
Epsom Salt.....	0.15

Matte Black (Cone 10)

Cornwall Stone.....	42
Dolomite.....	15
Whiting.....	10
EPK.....	23
Silica.....	10
Ochre.....	6
Cobalt Carbonate.....	2
Chrome.....	1

Yao Ware Celadon (Cone 10)

Potash.....	27.21
Whiting.....	19.58
EPK.....	19.92
Silica.....	33.28
Yellow Iron Oxide.....	1.5
Chrome Oxide.....	0.1

Hennesey Celadon (Cone 10)

Custer.....	44
Wollastonite.....	20
Dolomite.....	4
Grolleg.....	12
Silica.....	20
Spanish Red Iron.....	0.5

Lee Celadon (Cone 10)

Dolomite.....	2.60
Whiting.....	17.22
Zinc Oxide.....	1.10
Potash.....	50.45
EPK.....	3.70
Silica.....	24.93

Pastel Green (Cone 10)

Potash.....50
Silica.....25
Whiting.....8
Barium Carbonate.....5
Dolomite.....5
Chrome.....0.5
Tin.....1

Wood Kiln firing schedule

I fired the 150 cubic-foot wood kiln designed by Brian VanNostrand and built by a small group of students, including myself, at West Virginia University in the spring of 2008. It is designed to be a quick fire kiln, meaning it can reach peak temperature in as little as 10-12 hours on a just over a cord of wood.¹¹ I fire it for roughly 32-36 hours on three cords of wood to achieve more wood ash on the vessels and an even dispersement of heat throughout the kiln. I fire with a pyrometer because I know this kiln can fire very quickly. The pyrometer helps me attain consistent results and maintain a schedule for those helping with the firing. Below is a schedule of the kiln and differing ways of firing it.

	<u>Time Slot</u>	<u>Target temperature at end of Shift</u>
Shift 1	8:00 – 12:00.....	below 200 degrees.
Shift 2	12:00 – 4:00.....	600 F
Shift 3	4:00 – 10:00.....	1200 F
Shift 4	10:00 – 4:00.....	1800 F
Shift 5	4:00 – 8:00.....	2350 F

¹¹ A cord of wood is roughly 4' x 4' x 8' stacked.

Shift 6 *	8:00 – 12:00.....	2250 F
Shift 7 *	12:00 – 4:00.....	2250 F
Shift 8 *	4:00 – finish.....	2375+ F

*Shift 6,7, & 8 are the shifts that I have done alterations in the kiln firing.

Notes:

- I start body reduction when Cone 08 is moving in the kiln. I base this off the cone packs in the kiln, not the pyrometer.
- After I reach 2350 for the first time I fire the kiln down to 2250 and hold this temperature for eight to ten hours.
- At the end of the firing I like to get cone 12 soft and hold it at that temperature for an hour to help excess ash to melt on the vessels.

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2010 **Masters of Fine Art**, West Virginia University, Morgantown,
WV, Expected Graduation: December 2010
2007 **Bachelors of Fine Art**, Utah Valley University, Orem, UT

Field Related Skills: **Mentoring**, Studio **Construction**, Concrete, Drywall, Framing,
Welding, Kiln building, Kiln firing (wood, salt, soda,
reduction), Glaze Calculation, Kiln Repair, Wheel Repair, Clay
Mixing, Event **Organizer**, **Grant** Writing,

Professional Experience:

2010-2009 **Graduate Assistant**, Office of International Programs, Morgantown, WV
2010 **International Forum**, Coordinator, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
Dialogue on Africa, Coordinator, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
2009 **Dialogue on China**, Coordinator, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
2009-2007 **Studio Assistant**, Lab Tech, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
2008 **Production Studio Assistant**, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
2005-2007 **Ceramic Lab Technician**, Utah Valley University, Orem, UT

Awards:

2010 **Global Education Opportunities (GEO) Grant**, West Virginia
University
2010-2009 **Luce Foundation China Fellowship**, West Virginia University,
Office of International Programs
2009-2007 **Tuition Waiver**, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
2008 **Travel Grant**, Henry Luce Foundation
Travel Grant, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
Travel Grant, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
2007 **Outstanding Academic Achievement Award**, Utah Valley
University, Orem, UT
Award of Excellence, Utah Valley University student Exhibition,
Ceramics
2006 **Award of Merit**, Utah Valley University Student Exhibition,
Watercolor
3rd place, "Who am I?", Utah Valley University, Orem, UT

Solo & Dual Artist Exhibitions

2011 **Zen Clay**, Morgantown, WV, *Polar Opposites* (Upcoming, March)
2010 **Mesaros Gallery**, Morgantown, WVU, *(In)Significant Objects*

Group Exhibitions:

2010 **The Clay Studio of Missoula**, Missoula, MT, *Soda Salt National
Fast Forward Gallery*, Pittsburgh, PA, *You're a Cheese Sandwich
Glasses Gallery*, Baton Rouge, LA, *8 fluid ounces*
2009 **Zen Clay**, Morgantown, WV, WVU ceramics Dept.

Group Exhibitions (Cont.)

2009	Randolph Arts Guild , Asheboro, NC, <i>Symposium Show</i>
2008	Robert P. Anderson Gallery , Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, China, <i>NCECA Student Show: Shared Journeys</i>
	Zen Clay , Morgantown, WV, <i>WVU students X 6</i>
	Zen Clay , Morgantown, WV, <i>WVU Alumni Exhibition</i>
2007	Woodbury Gallery , Orem, UT, <i>BFA Exhibition</i>
	Woodbury Gallery , Orem, UT, <i>Student Exhibition</i>
2006	UVSC Library , Orem UT, <i>Who am I</i>
	Woodbury Gallery , Orem, UT, <i>Student Exhibition</i>

Conferences Attended

2010	NCECA: Independence , Philadelphia, PA
	NCECA Pre-Conference , West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
2009	NCECA: Ceramic Interface: From Dawn to Digital , Phoenix, AZ
	22nd Annual North Carolina Pottery Conference , Ashboro, NC
2008	NCECA: Confluence , Pittsburgh, PA
	NCECA Pre-Conference : West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
2007	NCECA: Old Currents/New Blends , Louisville, KY

Travel Experience

2008	Ceramics In China : Fall semester travel abroad in Jingdezhen
2007	Study Abroad Art History : Italy. France, Netherlands, Czech Republic
2006	Utah Valley University: Art and Visual Communications in NYC
2000	Work and Cultural Experience , Gotemba, Japan

Clubs & Associations

Current-2006	NCECA Member
2010- 2009	West Virginia University Ceramics Guild
2010- 2009	Golden Key Nation Honor Society, West Virginia University

Volunteer Work

2010	Empty Bowls Monongalia , Morgantown, WV
	NCECA Pre-Conference : Assistant to Sarah Jaeger, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
2009	Empty Bowls Monongalia , Morgantown, WV
2008	NCECA: Shared Journeys Symposium Volunteer , Jingdezhen, China
	NCECA Volunteer , Surveys, Pittsburgh, PA
	NCECA Pre-Conference : Assistant to Tara Wilson, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
	Empty Bowls Monongalia , Morgantown, WV

Collections

2008	Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute , permanent collection, Jingdezhen, China
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