FAITH IN PROCESS
A CREATIVE PROJECT
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MASTER OF ARTS
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Chapter 1

Statement of the Problem

How can utilitarian ceramic form express ideas of spirituality while remaining mysterious and thought provoking? This study, where spiritual content is merged with formal and utilitarian concerns, has been a journey of self-exploration through the creative process. This synthesis began with the realization of the many Christian metaphors embedded in the ceramic vessel and process. Research in early Christian, as well as Modernist art, has unveiled the value of symbolism as a means to bring deeper spiritual content into utilitarian form, while expounding upon the inherent spiritual aspects of working with clay. Symbols are used as surface decoration on cups and jars. This serves two purposes: to accentuate the form with decorative motifs, as well as bringing deeper meaning to the ceramic object.

The merging of utilitarian form with symbolic imagery becomes a way of fostering spiritual thought in daily rituals. A meaningful symbol on a favorite coffee cup can serve as a departure point for meditative thought on spiritual matters. Jars are symbolic of the body as a vessel that contains a soul. Cups are symbolic of the atoning death of Jesus Christ. The cup and the jar are two forms that have symbolic significance in the Christian faith. Form and surface are intertwined conceptually when symbolism is
present in each. In this way, spiritual ideas can be expressed to anyone who might use these forms in their daily lives. These objects can serve as reminders of a spiritual idea, though they are left subjective in order to allow for the viewer's own spiritual, philosophical, or emotional interpretation.

The use of ancient religious symbolism as surface decoration on a contemporary ceramic vessel begins a conversation with the viewer about the old and new, the passage of time, and the many generations of humanity. These elements combined have been the driving force behind this creative study in ceramics.
Chapter 2

Review of Influences and Literature

Ceramicists, as well as painters, from the Modernist period have had a profound effect on my work stylistically and formally. Maija Grotell, Jacques Blin have deeply influenced the way I look at ceramic form and surface. Paul Klee, Joan Miró, and Ben Shahn continue to inspire an imaginative use of surface decoration. The convergence of these influences, combined with Early Christian symbolism, is where I have begun to find my voice in ceramics. The conceptual component of my work is largely influenced by the Early Christian period of art history. I am interested in the way these ancient artists and craftsmen used simple signs and symbols to embed meaning in a work of art. My work employs symbols which were also used by Early Christian artisans to convey religious messages to viewers more than two thousand years ago.

Modernist Painters

Having started my artistic journey as a painter, my early influences were also painters. My first major influence was Paul Klee, a painter from Bern, Switzerland. His playful, yet mysterious imagery, struck a chord with me that continues to reverberate. Paul Klee was actually associated with the Bauhaus Period which proceeded, and served as a springboard, for the Modernist Period. Klee lived from 1879 to 1940. He began his
career as a draftsman and was also a skilled violinist, teacher, and lover of all kinds of performing arts, especially the circus. These interests are evident in many of his paintings. His drawing style is linear, which can be attributed to his training as a draftsman. The lines in his work often denote naturalistic and geometric shapes and objects. He was inspired by children’s art, which can be seen in the simplified forms and playful scenes often rendered in his paintings.

What I am most interested in with Klee’s work is his ability to create abstract spaces that have both depth and light, while using a minimal amount of visual information to render a recognizable object or scene. He often worked in watercolors, using light washes for a background, transferring simple, drawn imagery using a technique called ‘monotype’. This technique is a very direct form of printing which involves a transfer to paper of an image painted on glass. Smudge marks from the glass panel are sometimes printed along with the image. Klee often utilized these smudge marks to “disturb” the structure and “defile” the light, as in his painting, Lion’s Attention Please!

Paul Klee
Lions Attention Please!
1923

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Joan Miró is another Modernist painter whose style has influenced the way I approach surface design. He created abstract drawings and paintings using line in an organic, minimalistic way. Like Klee, he would provide just enough information to suggest a form or object, drawing in a very playful and simplified manner. The representations in his work seem to be inspired by children’s art but convey a high level of sophistication and artistic sensitivity. Miró’s style denies the viewer of much depth or spatial representation. As in *Catalan Landscape*, color fields are often void of any blending from dark to light\(^2\). There are occasional areas of blending and modeling, although these are as minimal as his line drawings.

![Joan Miró: Catalan Landscape (1923-24)'](image)

Joan Miró’s work spans for decades and encompasses a wide variety of periods and shifts in style. My favorite period of his career is represented by a series of lithographs from 1939 called, *The Barcelona Series*. These beautiful lithographs are

printed with black ink on white paper. They are filled with simple, geometric and naturalistic shapes and lines. Smaller shapes are usually enveloping a larger one which serves as a focal point. These main areas of interest are abstract, monster-like representations of war, and civil unrest. The “stellar symbols”\(^3\) that surround these dark forms bring them into a new dimension that speaks of the terrors of war.

![Image of Joan Miró's artwork](image.jpg)

Joan Miró, from the *Barcelona Series*, 1944.

I am interested in these prints because of the way abstract forms and simplified symbols are used to convey a very meaningful, personal message from the artist. Miro’s homeland, Spain, was in a Civil War in the 1930’s. This same war inspired other artists like Pablo Picasso to create works which spoke out against war. In my own work, I also speak of warfare. The wheel and arrow pattern speaks of the war between good and evil.

An American painter from the Modernist period, also listed among my influences, is Ben Shahn. He lived from 1898-1969 and created work during the height of the Modernist period⁴. I was originally exposed to his work when I read his book, *Form and Content*. I again took notice of his work on the covers of several books of poetry and agrarian essays by writer, Wendell Berry. His painting, *Beatitude*, was one of these book cover paintings. I was instantly drawn to its narrative quality. The style is definitive of the Modernist movement, with muted color fields falling behind rigidly drawn lines. The figure of the farmer is highly stylized. It is evident that Shahn is not interested in recreating reality, merely suggesting it in his own way. The foreground of wheat is simplified, yet the lines contain within them the very essence of wheat. The gesture of the hands and the face of the farmer convey the virtues of patience and gentleness. A story of agrarian wisdom is told in this narrative painting.

As I went on to research more of Ben Shahn’s works, I found inspiration again and again. As Klee’s drawings and paintings spoke of music and satire, Miró’s lithographs of war, Shahn’s work contains allegory that often references societal issues and the human experience. What I am most drawn to about Shahn’s style is the way he utilizes line. The figures are often rendered in lines that seem like incisions in the paper or canvas. They are scratched onto the surface in a confident, deliberate manner. His representations are usually recognizable, yet boarder on abstraction. Shahn’s drawing style, like many Modernists, is highly stylized, playful, yet confident and thought provoking. His drawings and paintings, no matter how simplified, resonate with symbolic and allegorical meaning. The combination of these qualities in Ben Shahn’s work is what I am inspired by, and try to evoke in my own.

**Modernist Ceramicists**

My transition from painting to ceramics led me to realize that Modernist ceramicists were also among those who would influence my ceramic work. The same qualities that captured my attention, such as line, shape, and style, were also present in the ceramic works of the same period. As Karen McCready explains, “Modernist ceramics, whether handcrafted or factory made, utilitarian or ornamental, present a
glorious microcosm of stylistic currents… sharing many common traits.”⁵ These qualities were especially evident on the surface of the works. The forms comprised in this body of work are intended to speak of volume, stability, and posture. My interest in these formal qualities was initiated by Finish ceramicist Maija Grotell. I found in her work a genuineness that was lacking in my early ceramic forms. As Jeff Schlangler states, “Maija Grotell’s works have great posture. They stand with glory and without arrogance. They are powerful, secure and stable, yet they stand softly.”⁶

Her works are mostly wheel thrown, spherical forms with approachable, and engaging surfaces. In a natural way, they speak of the relationship between surface and form with patterns of colorful designs. Similar to the paintings of the Modernist artists previously mentioned, Grotell’s works possess the beauty of simplicity that comes from striking truthfulness and purity of form. Ever since I discovered her work, Maija Grotell has had a strong influence in the way I think about form and surface.

The French ceramicist, Jacques Blin, is also among the Modernist ceramicists who have influenced my work. In this case, I have been more influenced by Blin’s approach to surface rather than form. His style is highly recognizable, in that most of his pots are white with black inlay. His drawing style is linear and primitive, not unlike the Modernist painters. “Birds, primitive animals, and scenes from daily life are among his preferred themes.” Although there is little in common among content, it is notable that many of the Christian symbols I employ are also references to the natural world and daily life.

Jacques Blin
Vase
1950’s

The inlay is usually accompanied by areas of dark colored slip which was intentionally left during the inlay process. This brings to mind Paul Klee’s paintings in which he used the monotype printing technique on a washed ground. What I find so appealing about this aesthetic is that it creates a unique, mysterious atmosphere for the drawn imagery. In some areas of the surface, the lines can be seen with great clarity, while in other areas the lines are obscured. This quality of line and distortion reminds me of cave paintings, where the image has been lost over time, or the color of the rock darkens causing a line to fade from view. I have achieved similar results, in my own work, though atmospheric firing.

**Early Christian Art and the Use of Symbols**

Early Christian art has had a considerable influence on the way I approach the conceptual component of my work. I am interested in the way these ancient artists and craftsmen used symbols to convey, and disguise, religious messages in their work. Symbols were often used as a way to communicate religious messages with other Christians while avoiding persecution from non-Christians. While fear of such persecution is not an issue in today’s society, there are still valid reasons for this less direct form of visual communication. I try to retain a sense of mystery in my work, leaving the door open to various levels of interpretation. I invite the viewer to think and feel what they will, while giving subtle clues of my own conceptual intentions. I have
found that all too often in contemporary religious art, interest from the viewer is lost through overwhelming candor. The mystery of symbolism is fitting for my purpose.

These symbols, which were intended to disguise meaning, eventually became common knowledge. As Jennifer Speake states, “The ancient international language of Christian symbolism was for many centuries common currency all over Europe.”8 Today, these symbols and their meaning have been lost to the vast majority of people. I enjoy bringing them back to life in my own work, to be interpreted on a variety of levels. As Trent C. Butler states, “Symbols, whether objects, gestures, or rituals, convey meaning to the rational, emotional, and intuitive dimensions of human beings.”9

Christian symbols range from animals, plants, and natural elements, to letters, colors, and numbers. The surface decoration on my jars and cups shows a selected few of these symbols that I have adopted and stylized. Pattern, as it did in Early Christian art, takes on a significant role in working with these symbolic images in a way that is not only narrative but complimentary to three-dimensional form.

A wide variety of influences, spanning from Early Christian art to the Modernist period, is culminated in this body of ceramic forms. The painting and drawing styles of Klee, Miró, and Shahn are all influential to the way symbolic imagery is rendered on the


surfaces of the objects. Volume, posture, and stability are formal qualities evident in this work inspired by Modernist ceramicists, while the symbolic nature of the imagery stems from Early Christian art.
Chapter 3

Description of the Artworks

Physical Processes

My work is made on a potter’s wheel using a stoneware clay body that is fired to 2300 F. I use stoneware clay because of its durability and for the surface effects of high temperature atmospheric firing. I have found that there is a connection made between the process of working with clay and conceptual aspects of my work. The ceramic process, as well as the ceramic vessel, is an allegory found recurrently throughout the Bible. One example from Isaiah 64:8 says, “Yet, O Lord, you are our Father, We are the clay, you are the potter; we are the work of your hand.”

This connection between process and content makes the creative process more meaningful and fulfilling to me as an artist. It could also serve, if the viewer makes this association, as an indication to the spiritual significance of the surface designs.

Surface Treatment

I use three different techniques to make surface designs on my pots. They are sgraffito, mishima, and slip trailing. Sgraffito is a technique that has been used throughout the world with earliest records dating from 13th century Germany. The word *sgraffito* means “scratched” in Italian, and refers to scratching, or carving, through layers of colored clay slip to expose the underlying clay. The technique has also been used in painting and in architectural wall decoration.

Mishima, or inlay, was a technique invented by Korean potters, although the date that inlay was initially used is unknown. As Robert P. Griffing explains, “Excavations have shown that inlay had reached an advanced stage of evolution by 1159, the date of a tomb in which an accomplished specimen had been found. Yet it is difficult- even impossible to say when this technique first came into being.” An incised design is filled with moist clay or slip, followed by scraping to remove any excess slip from the design. This leaves a clean line that usually contrasts the color of the background. I first took an interest in this technique when I attended workshops given by ceramicists Lorna Meaden and Julia Galloway. I quickly adapted this technique and it has become my primary surface design technique.

Recently I have been using a technique called slip trailing to create surface designs on my work. This technique involves running a trail of slip along the surface of the clay to create a raised line. The slip trail is applied using a small plastic bottle with a

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pointed tip, much like using a bottle of glue. The technique of slip trailing has been used by English folk potters since before the Renaissance.\textsuperscript{12}

Once the surface has been decorated they are fired in an electric kiln to draw out any remaining moisture from the clay. The interior and exterior of the pots are then glazed using a variety of celadons, flashing slips, shinos, and other glazes. The interior of the pots are lined with glazes that seal the surface, making it usable for food and beverage. Any glaze can be used for a liner glaze as long as it seals the surface. I often use dark, iron rich glazes like tenmoku, or Ohata red for a liner glaze due to their neutrality. The exterior of the pots are glazed with translucent glazes like celadons, which allow the surface design to show through after firing. In many cases, especially when pots are to be wood fired, I use flashing slips which react to the volatile fluxes in the kilns atmosphere. This creates transitions in color from one side of the pot to the other, according to the directional flow of fluxes moving through the kiln.

These fluxes, especially in the salt and soda kilns, will react with the clay body creating a glazed surface. In each kiln, these effects are different and they also react to glaze and slips that have been applied to the pots. I prefer to fire my pots in an atmospheric kiln such as a wood, salt, or soda kiln. I find that the extreme surfaces work to create an ethereal environment for the pictorial motifs. Although there is always a level of erasure that occurs, I find that this adds to the visual interest of the surface and harkens

to the mystery of symbolism. I feel it also speaks of the disappearance of such symbols, and the knowledge of them among the majority of contemporary society. The level of erasure that occurs is much higher in wood firings than in the salt or soda kilns. I welcome this diversity in the surfaces of my pots, which allows for the symbolic imagery to be read through a variety of ways.

Atmospheric Firing

Wood firing is a process that I have come to know and love during the course of this creative project. The historical aspect, as well as the labor involved, makes each wood fired piece unique among pots fired in more contemporary ways. Basically, glazed or unglazed pots are loaded into the kiln, the door is bricked up, and a small fire is stared in the firebox. The temperature rises about 100°F per hour as wood is steadily added. When the pots are red hot, volatile fluxes in the form of wood ash, react with the clay, creating a glaze on the surface of the pots. The flow of ash though the kiln will cause the pots to have transitional surfaces, from one side to the other.

Salt and soda firing procedures I use are similar in that they are fired in gas-fueled kilns. The materials that create volatile flux, which creates glazed surfaces by reacting to the clay, are introduced into the kiln near the end of the firing process. Salt is poured, in a succession of stages, into the kiln through ports. It instantly vaporizes, reacts with the clay, and slowly billows out the chimney. In soda firing, soda ash is mixed with water and sprayed into the kiln through ports, also in stages, using a garden sprayer. The soda
creates surfaces that are directional, as in the wood kiln. Salt creates a surface that is more uniform.

**Description of Form**

When I work with form, I look at the correlations between the different parts of the whole, such as the foot and the lip. I create design cohesion through repetition of formal elements. I am also looking at the flow and transitions in contour lines created by the surface of the form. The lines of my forms flow in slow curves, while transitions are subtle and usually occur at the foot and lip. My forms speak of volume through these curving lines, and often have spherical internal volumes. Endings, such as the lip of a cup, are smooth, rounded, and void of angular edges. My goal is for the combination of these formal elements to suggest a sense of calm, balance, and style, while being pleasant to touch and use.

**Cups**

My cups are usually made without handles, inviting the hands to experience the form. The base is wide and the lower portion narrows inward. The form widens as it curves upward to the lip. The curve fits naturally into the hand, so it’s easy and comfortable to use.
This cup form also speaks of volume and the way liquid leaves the form. The wide upper portion is open, welcoming use. The lip is a very important part of a cup, since it’s the part that comes into contact with the mouth. It comes to a dull point with a slight bulge just below the lip. These subtle details in form can drastically enhance the utilitarian experience. I want these cups to be enjoyable and interesting to use, bringing art into daily life. This aspect of clay is what initially drew me away from the easel and to the potter’s wheel. The interaction that takes place with utilitarian ceramics goes beyond sight, into the tactile, and the most intimate of moments. The designs I draw on the cups are obscure, mysterious, and interesting to look at and ponder. A slip trailing technique is frequently used on these cups due to the pleasant tactile quality of the raised line.

Wood-fired cups with slip trailing

Wood-fired jars with inlay

**Jars**

The jars I create are rounded and symmetrical. The lids are all inset, meaning they rest on a lid seat inside the opening of the jar. They rise slightly, cresting in the center.
The knobs mimic the rounded form of the jar. Some knobs are rounded on the top, while others come to a dull point. The knobs follow the same principle of the cups. I want them to be a tactile experience. They should be comfortable to use while being cohesive to the design of the jar. The lid seat is deep, providing a secure resting place for the lid. This also emphasizes unity between the jar and the lid.

Surface and Symbols

The soda-fired jar shown above has a surface that is indicative of my stylistic and symbolic approach to surface treatment. The technique used to create the dove pattern is called *sgraffito*. Black slip, or liquid clay, was brushed onto the entire surface of the jar. The dove designs were drawn on using a sharp wooded drawing tool. Lastly, the black slip was scraped away from within the dove shapes exposing the clay underneath. A flashing slip was sprayed on after the jar had been bisque fired. The effects of the soda
firing can be seen on the dove forms but not on the black areas. The inside of the jar is lined with a dark, iron rich glaze called tenmoku.

While researching Christian symbols, I discovered one that consisted of seven doves in a circular pattern with the heads facing inside. This symbol is referred to as the *Spiritu Sancti* in Latin, meaning Holy Spirit. The Latin word *Cadus* means *jar*¹³, and I use it in the title for this piece. This jar refers to this *Spiritu Sancti* symbol, as it has seven doves in a circular pattern with the heads facing the base of the jar.

I have employed the dove symbol ever since I began using symbolic imagery. Some pots have only one or two doves; others are completely covered with doves. In most cases, it is simply a reference to the Holy Spirit. A dove symbol shown flying over water is a reference to the dove sent out by Noah to find dry land, as in Genesis 8:8-12. A dove facing downward above water is a reference to the baptism of Jesus, as in John 1:32. As with most of my symbols, the dove is a part of the natural world, or *the creation*. This thematic harmony among symbols is intended to extend unity throughout my work. The wheel and the arrow symbols are exceptions, although they are both tools from primitive man and work well among the other symbols. I am conscious of the design qualities of these images as well as their meanings.

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The deer is an image that I have worked with since I began using Christian symbols in my work. I use the deer on both jars and cups, and it is usually combined with the water symbol. This is a reference to Psalm 42, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.”14 The deer and water motif, referencing this verse, is common among Early Christian art. “…examples occur in the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna (5th century) and St. John Lateran, Rome (13th century).”15

A pattern of symbols that references the teachings of Jesus, from Matthew 13: 24-29, is the wheat and the tare pattern. This pattern is also employed as an allegory which speaks of God’s judgment and his care. Psalm 81: 16 says, “But you would be fed with the finest of wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”16 The use of pattern is an important reference to the way, from fear of persecution; symbols were commonly used to conceal religious meaning in Early Christian art.

A combination of symbols often used on my cups is the fire and cloud symbols. Together they reference the presence of God, as it was in Exodus 13:21-22. “By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or by night. Neither the pillar of cloud nor the pillar of fire left its place in front of the people.”

![Cup with inlay fire symbol.](image1)

![Cup with sgraffito water symbol.](image2)

The wheel and the arrow are symbols that also appear in patterns. The wheel is a Christian symbol that symbolizes God’s presence as it appeared in Ezekiel’s vision. The arrow is a metaphor for evil forces, as in Ephesians 6:16. I use these two symbols together to reference spiritual warfare.

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The tree symbol in Christian art can reference the tree of life, planted by God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9), and is also equated to the cross of Christ. The tree symbol in my work is used in groups of three, and symbolized the crucifixion. A singular tree symbol in conjunction with the water symbol is a reference to Psalm 1, “and he will be like a tree planted by streams of water”. The star is a common Christian symbol and references the birth of Christ. It is used metaphorically in Philippians 2:15, “so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe”. The “bright Morning Star” is used as a metaphor for Christ in the last chapter of the book of Revelations.

![Soda-fired jar with water, trees, and star symbols.](image)

**Reasons Why**

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My forms, combined with symbolic content, are essentially a reflection of who I am both as an artist and a human being. As an artist, I chose clay as a medium for expression because of the close connection that is made between art and life. Its capacity to enter into moments of peace and contemplation and the directness of the process can be therapeutic to the soul. Unlike many works of art, these can enter the most personal and mundane of life’s moments. They are made through the contact of bare hands, water, and fire. I find that the healing and spiritual elements of the ceramic process are what sustain my creative interest with clay.

As a human, on a journey through life, I chose to embed my work with religious symbolism as a means of personal contemplation and expression. A series of life changing events has led me to focus my interest on spiritual matters in my work. I aspire to make work that is meaningful to me on a personal level, as well as a collectively human level. I focus on the spiritual and utilitarian aspects clay, combined with symbolism as a point of departure.
Chapter 4

Conclusion and Exhibition Statement

The past year and a half has been a time for personal growth in craftsmanship, artistic expression, technical knowledge, and spirituality. I have learned a great deal about working with clay, glazes. The surface-form relationship and I have also expanded my understanding of the creative process. When I began working on this project, my knowledge and experience of ceramics was somewhat limited, even so, I understood that this ancient, versatile medium had the capacity to enter the closeness of daily experience and serve as a mode for profound conceptual expression.

Awareness of Ceramic Materials and Processes

During the course of my project, I have learned about the chemical composition of clay and glazes. The task of mixing these materials from a recipe has become an integral component of my creative process. The knowledge I have gained of ceramic materials has enabled me to create unique clay bodies in order to enhance the desirable surface effects of salt and wood firing.

In addition to clay body development, research in glaze chemistry and application has proved to be a valuable skill. Test tiles frequently reveal new possibilities while my
understanding of clay and glazes continues to grow. I have created glaze recipes according to a predetermined set of qualities, such as color, texture, transparency and stability.

My throwing skills have developed considerably through the course of this project due to the amount and variety of forms I have been able to produce. My handling of the clay in various stages of dryness and my awareness of moisture content and drying rates has also greatly improved. These skills have led to a higher success rate in my overall production of ceramic work.

**Surface and Form**

My use of symbolism in design has taught me a great deal about the relationship between surface and form. I try to envision, while looking a form, what elements could be accentuated, or enhanced, through surface treatment. Rather than simply drawing on a pot for the sake of filling empty space, my goal is to create harmony between surface and form. I do this though the use of pattern and the directional flow of imagery.
I fire my pots in atmospheric kilns because of the flashing effects and how they provide interesting environments for imagery. These effects are also a way of creating a natural harmony between surface and form. The directional flow of ash, salt, or soda, creates variation in texture and hue from one side of the pot to the other. I have found that the areas of transition between these two sides are the most interesting and I enjoy seeing how drawn imagery appears in those transitions. It is reminiscent of the work of Klee, Miró, as well as prehistoric cave painting.

The Creative Process

The importance of working in a series has become apparent as I have worked through the creative process. I have learned to see form, proportion, and the surface-form relationship by means of repetition of basic forms. In limiting myself I simplify the process and focus on these elements. Concerns shift from decisions about the type of object, to form, surface, and utility.

Before I started this series of work, I moved through ideas finding only my lack of ability to see the subtleties of form. I had to go through that process to come to the conclusion that I needed to simplify and focus on fundamentals like volume and posture. Working through this series of jars and cups, I have seen significant increase technical skills, as well as an increased awareness of shape and proportion.

Working in this way allows for a natural progression through ideas, which come through the process of making rather than through a concerted effort. The result is a body
of work that is focused on a unified theme, while displaying a variety that comes through a progression of realizations.

So when does my creative process end? Is it over when the pots are lifted gently from the kiln? Is it complete when a jar is filled with sugar or grain, or a cup is filled with tea on a cold afternoon? Is it finished when someone enjoys holding a cup while pondering the significance of the marks on the surface? Perhaps it ends beneath the roots of an old oak tree, or under stones along a riverbed when my hands and pots both return to dust.

**Exhibition Statement**

I am interested in how ceramic vessels can be used on a daily basis to bring art into our lives. They can serve a functional, decorative, even a spiritual purpose, nourishing not only the body but also the soul. I am drawn to the mystical surfaces created by wood, salt, and soda firing. I feel that they create an ethereal environment for the drawn elements of my work.

I try to find meaning in everything from material, form, process, and function. The connections I have made among these aspects of process are rooted in Christianity. The images and patterns I use are due to a longing to meditate upon certain spiritual concepts which, in my life experience, have proven to be spiritual truths. They are allegories for concepts found in scripture and early Christian art. Symbols like the deer,
tree, dove, and water, have religious meanings which tie directly into my own life, and the human condition.
Bibliography


