

Marty Fielding

Discussion of Research, Teaching, and Service

Research

My ceramic vessels draw on architecture and color symbolism to convey and evoke emotional responses. I am currently pursuing two related yet distinct lines of research that apply their own specificity to this general description. The **Abstracted Archetypes** series draws on modern and post-modern architecture, abstract painting, and color theory to re-envision conventional pottery forms. **Ritual Objects** examines personal and collective grief through a series of ritual objects that reference reliquaries, urns, and candle votives.

The **Abstracted Archetypes** series is inspired by architecture and abstract painting. I construct sculptural ceramic vessels comprised of intersecting geometric shapes. By exaggerating proportions and visual mass, the forms express a sense of monumentality for objects of modest scale. I layer the surfaces with saturated ceramic pigment leaving the lower layers visible around edges of panels and embracing the texture and movement of brushstrokes. The synthesis of these sources culminates as utilitarian 3-dimensional Color Field paintings. The series build on research into architects like Frank Gehry and Steven Holl who broke from conventional architectural design and showed that buildings could defy preconceived expectations. Similarly, research in color paired with the geometric forms I build led to studying painters like Mark Rothko and Sean Scully for their use of color and form to communicate emotions.

The second line of research, **Ritual Objects**, examines how bereavement can be expressed through the context of a ritual object such as an urn or candle votive. Grieving is a universal experience that involves numerous emotions. Grief can be a collective experience and applied to concepts like the loss of a societal consensus of truth in addition to the personal loss of a loved one. As an example of collective grief, the National Institutes of Health has published a case study on the emergence of ecological grief: the emotional response to losses attributed to climate change.

This research began during an artist residency at CRETA Rome in 2024. During the residency, I studied Etruscan *bucchero* ware in museums and spent time at *Necropolis Banditaccia*. The necropolis is the burial site for the ancient Etruscan city of *Cerveteri*. The tomb architecture provided a point of departure for developing urn and reliquary forms. In juxtaposition to the previous series, the unglazed black surface of this work references to the burnished, carbonized *bucchero* ware and acts as a signifier for mourning. Drawing on tombs, reliquaries, and sarcophagi, these lidded containers are intended to metaphorically hold collective grief and stand as a monument for the ideals and norms that have been lost in the current political climate: the widespread agreement of what is true, the value for equity across ethnic, racial, sexual preference, and gender distinctions, and environmental preservation. They offer a focal point for intentional acts of acknowledging, grieving, and remembering the moral and civic values that are rapidly eroding.

My research combines post-modern architecture, abstract painting, and color theory to abstract conventional vessel forms and convey or evoke emotional responses. I construct sculptural ceramic vessels comprised of intersecting geometric shapes. By exaggerating proportions and visual mass, the forms express a sense of monumentality for objects of modest scale. Informed by painting, I layer the surfaces with saturated ceramic pigment leaving edges of the lower layers visible and embracing the

texture and movement of brushstrokes. The synthesis of these sources culminates as utilitarian 3-dimensional Color Field paintings.

Color has the power to produce a visceral reaction. I am interested in harnessing the potential for color to evoke emotional associations in the viewer. My decisions for color combinations vary depending on the feeling communicated: tranquility, invigoration, exasperation, grief, or repose.

I am drawn to clay for its material characteristics, its vast history, and its ability to produce artwork that carries meaning and purpose. There is a sense of wonder to the material as it starts as a malleable mass that can be manipulated yet retain its shape. Information can be added as the material hardens as it dries and finally it can be transformed by heat into stone with a veneer of glass. Humans have used clay for 30,000 years for function and expression. My work draws on the history while exploring contemporary ideas and technology. Working within the parameters of function allows me to achieve two important goals: offering individuals an interactive experience through use and questioning the aesthetic conventions of the archetypal pot. By reimagining a teapot or liquor service through an architectural lens, I abstract the form to the point where it is simultaneously unfamiliar and recognizable. This can lead to a moment of discovery that entices the viewer to investigate the piece further through sight, touch, and use.

Dissemination of Research

Three solo exhibitions are the most important showings of my work over the last five years. They include 1-person shows at ClayAkar in Iowa City, IA, Schaller Gallery in Baroda, MI, and Plough Gallery in Tifton, GA. Additionally, I have been featured artist at venues like Companion Gallery as well as numerous group exhibitions including the Artstream Nomadic Gallery in conjunction with the NCECA conference in Detroit and the Morean Center for Art in St. Petersburg, FL.

I presented the solo exhibition, *Conveying*, at Schaller Gallery in August of 2025. I have been represented by Schaller since they opened in 2011 and have worked with the owner/gallerist, Anthony Schaller, in his previous position at Red Lodge Clay Center. Schaller Gallery represents prominent nationally and internationally known ceramic artists whom I consider contemporaries as well as several of my mentors: Jane Shellenbarger and Randy Johnston. Despite not being in a large city, the gallery has an established national following for its physical location and online presence.

Intentional Acts, a solo show at Plough Gallery opened in September 2025. Most significantly, the show gave the opportunity to show a grouping of my newest work that is a continuation of research started with FYAP funding in 2024. I presented a gallery talk during the opening reception. The exhibition was covered by the Tifton Gazette <https://tiftongazette.com/2025/09/24/intentional-acts-plough-gallery-exhibit-explores-form-purpose/>. The gallery represents artists of national and regional stature including leaders in the field of ceramic vessels such as Malcolm Mobutu Smith, Kathy King, and Andy Shaw.

ClayAkar Gallery presented *Solo Exhibition: Marty Fielding* in July 2024. Clay AKAR is a prominent ceramic gallery in Iowa City, IA. The gallery developed a strong internet presence in the early 2000's and has remained a prestigious venue with a national scope. Many notable artists have exhibited in the gallery including professors from peer institutions: Brad Schweiger and Ted Saupe. In addition to the solo show, I was the featured artist in at ClayAkar in August 2022 and have shown in several group exhibitions in the gallery.

Harvest of Shadows (Il Raccolto delle ombre) was the exhibition of artwork produced during a 4-week artist residency at CRETA Rome. CRETA Rome is a ceramic residency center that attracts artists from around the world. The show of international scope featured the work of Yana Payusova, Tiia Anttila, and me. The residency was the centerpiece of my research funded by the FYAP. I began working on a new body of work addressing grief through ceramic ritual objects.

I exhibited work in a light-themed group show, *Radiant, Luminous, Illuminated*, that took place in November 2022 at Schaller Gallery in Baroda, MI. One of the candelabras included in this show became the subject of the article *Light, Intention, and Atmosphere* that was published in *Pottery Making Illustrated* in 2023.

I was invited to include 3 pieces in *Contemporary Ceramics*, a ceramics biennial presented by The Dairy Barn Arts Center in Athens, Ohio. The show was curated by artist/professors Brad Schweiger and Tom Bartel from the highly ranked Ohio University Ceramics program. In the invitation letter Brad Schweiger states, "I've considered a wide range of artists that will represent a broad cross section of American Ceramics." The breadth of approaches and content represented in the show can be seen in an article in *Ceramics Now* magazine.

My research in color theory is an ongoing part of my practice and has included interviewing ceramic artists on their use of color. I included data from these interviews in my article *Contextualizing Ceramic Color* that was published in the September 2018 issue of *Ceramics Monthly* magazine. This research has been recognized through invitations to group exhibitions with themes of color use. During this review period, I exhibited in two such shows: *Color Theory* at Companion Gallery in Humboldt TN, and *Color* at the Signature Contemporary Craft Gallery in Atlanta, GA.

For the *Color Theory* exhibition, I explored the concept of optical mixing, embraced by post-impressionists such as Georges Seurat, that proposes when dabs or dots of colors are placed adjacent to each other on the canvas, the colors mix in our perception rather than having been mixed on a palette. To achieve this effect, I screen printed halftone patterns in two colors and transferred them onto a group of ceramic forms. In conjunction with the exhibit at Companion Gallery, I presented a virtual lecture/demonstration where I showed my construction and painting techniques and discussed my analysis of how the artists in the show employed color theory in the work they exhibited.

In addition to exhibiting artwork, publication is a way that I can raise visibility for my work within the field. My article *Light, Intention, and Atmosphere* was published in *Pottery Making Illustrated* magazine in the Nov/Dec 2023 issue. I was invited by the editor, Holly Goring, to write a technical article on the process of making the *Candelabra* that I exhibited in *Radiant, Luminous, Illuminated* at Schaller Gallery in 2022. The procedure for writing the article entailed describing the steps of the construction and illustrating the process with photographs. The article highlights the distinctive design, construction techniques, and methods of surfacing that I have developed in my practice. I discuss the content of the work which connects ritual objects with grief and is an early conception of the research that began under support of the FYAP grant in the summer of 2024.

Teaching

I believe that my job as a teacher is to facilitate in the student's quest to find their voice and effectively communicate their ideas through material. I give students agency in their decision making around the content, forms, and surface treatments that will serve their ideas. Within this freedom, I offer

suggestions on concept, technical approaches, and encouragement to execute their plans. The degree of agency varies depending on the level of the student or course, but even in beginning level projects, I find it essential that students can claim ownership in their work. Each student has their own history and experiences, and I honor this in the classroom. I introduce a wide range of source material with the intent that students will find artwork and ideas that they can relate to and will be inspiring.

An important goal in my teaching is to instill in students an intrinsic motivation for continual development and the analytical capacity to be their own best critic. Artists need to look critically at their previous work and apply what they learn from that analysis in the next piece. This self-assessment leads to an evolution in one's work where the future iteration exceeds the previous one. While in school, students can rely on the faculty and their peers for this critical dialog, but after graduation they must gain independence. I build this self-criticism in students by posing questions that cause them to reflect on the degree of success they see in a work and by adding prompts in class projects that ask them to analyze recent work and set goals towards progressing.

A high standard of craft is important in all media, and skill is gained through diligent practice. I have over twenty years of working in ceramics with specializations in wheel throwing, slab building, gas and electric firing, and numerous surfacing processes. I have substantial experience with approaches such as 3D printing, kiln building, glaze chemistry, mold making and slip casting, printmaking techniques. I regularly teach the Wheel as Tool class. Expanding on this introductory course, I designed an Intermediate Wheel course that I taught in 2023, 2024 and 2026. FSU's Ceramics curriculum has a rotating series of special topics courses: Digital Ceramics Course, Print on Clay, Kiln Building, Mold Making and Slip Casting, and Clay and Glaze Materials. My studio practice and experience overlap with each of these topics, and I have taught the digital, print on clay, and kiln building, and mold making classes in the two most recent rotations. I have taught Advanced Workshops focusing on themes of color and alternative firing processes. In 2023 and 2025, I co-taught Print on Clay with Daniel Luedtke which brought together faculty with unique specializations in printmaking and ceramics and who work across each medium. We each oversaw a course in our respective focus areas comprised of graduate and undergraduate sections. Both classes met at the same time and moved between the Print and Ceramics studios depending on equipment and material needs. Enrollment in the classes included graduate and undergraduate students who produced successful work bridging the mediums.

In addition to teaching Ceramics, I have taught several semesters of 3D Foundations and served as the lead faculty for 3D in the '21/'22 school year. I have taught All-Media Critique courses in the Graduate Program, as well as co-teaching the 3rd Year Exhibition Seminar in 2024 with Meredith Lynn and in 2025 with Jiha Moon. I look forward to continued involvement in the MFA program going forward. My interest in the graduate program ties into the mentoring process that I am involved in with undergraduate students, as well. I find it impactful and gratifying to build rapport with students on a one-on-one basis, learn their artistic interests and motivations, and engage in an ongoing dialog around content and technique to support them in reaching their educational and artistic goals. Formally, I serve on graduate thesis committees, as BFA Major Professor, and have supervised a Student Intern for Faculty Research Support. Informally, I engage with mentoring BA students by developing relationships with them over multiple semesters, offering guidance, and writing recommendation letters as they progress in their education.

Visiting teaching opportunities outside of FSU provide a way to raise visibility for my own research, represent FSU in the broader community, and to recruit prospective students. During this review period I have taught in four settings outside of Tallahassee.

I taught in the University of Georgia Studies Abroad in Cortona Italy program for the third time during the summer of 2023. I taught two stacked sections of Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Ceramics. In addition, I oversaw a Graduate Independent Study. In addition to the coursework, I led several excursions to significant museums, residency programs, and artist studios in Rome, Cortona, Naples, and Venice. International study offers an invaluable experience for students as they can engage in expanding their artistic skills while being immersed in a culture that is different from their own. Having taught in this program multiple times, I have seen the students benefit from being able to see many important works from art history in person while creating their own artwork. In the coming years, I am interested in teaching in the FSU International Programs.

I taught a 2-day workshop and artist talk at Rain City Clay in Seattle, WA. The studio is owned and operated by Deb Schwartzkopf, a contemporary ceramic vessel maker and author of *Creative Pottery: Innovative Techniques and Experimental Designs in Thrown and Handbuilt Ceramics* published in 2020. I am a contributor to the book.

I presented a Visiting Artist lecture/demonstrations at the University of North Florida in October 2023 and at Florida Atlantic University in 2026. These were two -day and one-day visits respectively where I demonstrated my construction and surfacing techniques for students, presented and artist talk, and gave feedback via studio visits.

In June of 2022 I taught a week-long workshop in the HOT Clay program at Idyllwild Arts in Idyllwild, CA. This is a summer clay workshop series that has been operating since 1950. The instructors are nationally known artists, and the courses format is similar to those offered craft schools like Penland and Haystack.

I presented the virtual demonstration *Form and Color Theory* hosted by Companion Gallery in Humboldt, TN in August of 2021. The workshop was offered in conjunction with the Color Theory group exhibition mentioned above. I spoke about my research in color and demonstrated my slab building and painting techniques. I included a lecture using the exhibiting artists work to illustrate concepts in color theory.

Service

I began teaching full time at FSU in the Fall of 2021 under the title of Visiting Specialized Faculty and moved into the rank of Assistant Professor in the Fall of 2023. During this period, I have performed service to the Department of Art and to the profession.

I served administrative roles of Fablab and Equipment Checkout Supervisor and lead faculty for 3D Foundations in '21/'22. This entailed overseeing the Fablab manager, training and scheduling GTAs in Equipment Checkout, and disseminating guidance and information to GTAs teaching 3D Foundations. I am beginning my 4th year of service as Area Head of Ceramics which entails supervising the Lab Manager, mentoring GTAs, advising the Clay Club, coordinating the schedule, and discussing and approving lab fee purchases and equipment requests.

I have served on departmental committees including the Executive Committee, Promotion and Tenure, the Graduate Committee, and the Curriculum Committee. I chaired a successful faculty search committee in '24/'25 in for an Assistant Professor position in Ceramics and served on 2 search committees for positions in Sculpture and Foundations. I have been a faculty lead on annual graduate trips to Atlanta and New Orleans and leading students and recruiting at the National Council for

Education in Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference in 2023. NCECA is the main professional organization for the field of ceramics and holds an annual conference that drew a record 7000 thousand attendees in 2026.

I performed service to the profession in April of 2023 by reviewing applications and being a panelist for the Baltimore Clayworks Resident Artist Jury. Baltimore Clayworks is an organization comprised of a gallery, community education center, and artist residency. The gallery and residency program have a national scope. In 2024, I served on a 3-person jury to choose the winners of the Cups of Merit awards for the Annual Cup Sale at the NCECA Conference.

In the coming years I look forward to continuing to collaborate with colleagues in the department, performing service in the college and university, and working with national organizations such as NCECA.