Andy Chew
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Professional Practices Portfolio
Prof. Nick Gaffney

Artist Statement

My work represents my spirit as an artist. From an early age I felt connections to nature, ancient cultures and spiritualities that had appreciation for the beauty in nature. I was convinced as a child that I had been born in the wrong time period and remember telling my mother frequently how instead of school I wanted to explore the world. I still want to be an explorer in many ways, but more so not feel the need as an artist to follow the conventional ways in the world. I find myself through letting go of expectations when producing my work due to the destructive processes I use. To lose myself in my ceramic explorations and in that finding the beauty in a successfully finished piece defines my heart as an artist.

Most of my pieces take inspiration from ancient Japanese vessels while keeping a focus on the environment and different natural colors. I am fascinated by the deep browns contrasted by vibrant greens achieved in the salt firing process. The emotion I put in to my work in terms of glaze techniques is meant to draw a sense of the natural world. I have always been drawn to artist who’s work looks more at home placed in nature than a gallery. I love having my work be so closely tied to the firing process.

When making my work my process begins with choosing the texture of the clay. Finer clays produce a clean surface. I work with both fine and rough clay bodies
which I mix myself. The rough clay bodies I have used in the past include pieces of different minerals I've dug up in local quarries and forest. The fine clay I've used to produce vessels that are usually dedicated to functionality. The rougher clay I use to pay homage to ancient potter's who mixed rough stone in their clay without the ability of a machine to crush the stones for them. Some pieces literally seem like they could be found growing out of the earth and mud. I have made my work in two different styles. One is what the Japanese would refer to as “wabi-sabi” referring to the beauty in natural art. The other style dedicated to functional vessels. I have connected these two different styles through surface designs and color, taking inspiration from both east and west to create something my own. I often love to incorporate my drawings from sketchbooks onto the pieces to make images that fit to the specific vessel.