

Joseph Sand
Artist Statement

My ceramic work is created in the heart of North Carolina: Randolph County. In 2010, I built, brick by North Carolina brick, a 40-foot-long, 8-foot-wide kiln on my property outside of Randleman. This unique kiln not only allows me to wood-fire a large body of work, but to infuse my pottery quite literally with the spirit of the Piedmont Triad.

If you look closely at my work, you will see the red North Carolina clay I use to shape everything from coffee cups to large sculptural outdoor planters. I fire the kiln with pine slab offcuts from a local sawmill. Three times a year, I invite the community to kiln openings so they can see my work, talk with me, meet my wife Amanda and our two young sons, and take home a piece of authentic North Carolina pottery. The best part of my potter's life is meeting my customers face to face and witnessing their excitement and pleasure in viewing, holding and owning—or giving as gifts—my work.

I'm grateful to Pittsboro potter, Mark Hewitt, for allowing me to apprentice with him for three and a half years. Because of my training with Mark, who is originally from England, I learned how to create functional pottery in the English tradition, including incorporating the fluid, slip-trailed lines and rounded form I admire. My work has also been influenced through my exploration of the South's historic alkaline and salt-glazed pottery as well as colorful glazes. My glaze experimentation relates directly to my love of nature, reminding me of the diverse properties of the elements.

Having worked primarily on the wheel, I have recently expanded my work to include large hand-built sculptures—some as high as five feet tall. Just as I do with all of my ceramic work, I use locally dug clay bodies and select local clays for glazes that I know will react well in my kiln. The challenges and rewards of working with this off-the-wheel technique adds to my love of my work as a ceramic artist and helps me connect even more to this place I call home: the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina.