

## Vince Pitelka

### Biographical Summary

Vince Pitelka has been professionally involved in ceramics for a half century. After several formative experiences with clay very early in life in Berkeley, California, his real start in the medium came at Humboldt State University in Northern California's Redwood Empire, where he learned clay from Louis Marak and earned his BA in Art in 1971. Fresh out of Humboldt, Vince did a stint working as a journeyman mechanic and welder for the City of Arcata, and then ten years as a full-time studio potter making functional tableware and kitchenware at Railroad Stoneware, his studio in Blue Lake, California. In 1985 Vince and his wife Linda and son Morgan moved to Amherst, MA to attend graduate school at UMass-Amherst, where Vince worked with Frank Ozereko and Nancy LaPointe and completed his MFA in 1988. In graduate school he became fascinated with the long history of elaborate surface pattern in ceramics, and developed techniques for creating highly-detailed pattern and imagery with colored clay marquetry.

Vince has taught at University of Massachusetts, Northeastern University in Boston, North Dakota State University in Fargo, and from 1994 until his retirement in 2018 as Professor of Art and Head of the Clay Program at the Appalachian Center for Craft, a satellite campus of the School of Art, Craft & Design at Tennessee Technological University.

Vince's work for the past decade explores impressed pattern on vessel forms using bisque-stamps of his own design, and often incorporating found or fabricated wood and metal parts installed after glaze-firing. Recent work includes slab- and coil-built vessels reinterpreting traditional utilitarian and industrial storage and pouring vessels. Vince has always been fascinated by the inherent mystery in covered vessels that do not reveal their purpose or contents, and a current series of coil forms responds to vessels semi-permanently or permanently sealed, such as time-capsules, canopic jars, cinerary urns, and ossuaries.

Vince is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and has exhibited work and taught workshops nationally and internationally. Since 1995 he has been an active participant in the *Clayart* Internet discussion forum. His column "Tool Times" appears in *Clay Times* magazine, and the completely revised second edition of his book *Clay: A Studio Handbook* was published in 2016 by the American Ceramic Society.

Vince has been married to Dr. Linda Pitelka since 1970. Dr. Pitelka was Professor of History at Maryville University in St. Louis from 1994 until her retirement in 2018. After retirement, Vince and Linda relocated to Chapel Hill, NC, where their son Dr. Morgan Pitelka is Director of the Carolina Asia Center and Professor of East Asian Studies at University of North Carolina. Morgan is a scholar of Japanese medieval ceramics and tea culture, and his published volumes include *Spectacular Accumulation: Material Culture, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and Samurai Sociability*; *Handmade Culture: Raku Potters, Patrons and Tea Practitioners in Japan*; and *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice*.