

**Vince Pitelka**  
**Artist's Statement**

I make pots that address the visual and narrative power of pattern and the dialogue between surface, form, and containment. I am interested in the way pattern and surface detail influence our perceptions of exterior form, interior space, and implied function. Every container represents an aesthetic and utilitarian statement defining a relationship between exterior appearance and contained space. I like the association with figurative concepts of body and soul or exposure and concealment. The exterior skin or surface rarely indicates the soul or intent – the interior nature or contents, creating an inherent mystery as to specific purpose of containment. The forms are at once celebratory, ritualistic, and utilitarian.

I explore a range of vessel forms, drawing influence from architecture, industry, and utilitarian vessel traditions. Of particular interest are common vessels in clay, tin, and copper made before and during the Industrial Revolution, where simple expectations of utility steered vessel design and aesthetics. I have a particular interest in covered vessels and forms that pour, such as pitchers, teapots, ewers, and cruets. A parallel direction is inspired by specialized vessels semi-permanently sealed, such as time-capsules, cinerary urns, canopic jars, and ossuaries.

My work is slab- or coil-built with white or brown stoneware claybodies containing fine grog. I impress pattern and texture into the damp clay surface with bisque-fired clay stamps and rollers that I design and carve by hand. I apply a variety of slips, engobes, oxide patinas and glazes, and soda-fire my work to cone-6 (2220° Fahrenheit) or cone-10 (2340° Fahrenheit) in a 30 cubic-foot cross-draft propane-fired kiln. After the glaze firing, I often add found or formed metal or wood parts and other mixed-media components.