

## **Artist Statement**

I have been obsessed with clay for over thirty years. For much of my career, the work has focused primarily on the use of the potter's wheel in creating vessels for utilitarian and decorative purposes. Although this has been the mainstay of my studio practice, investigations over the past twenty-plus years have also drawn me away from the strict symmetry inherent to wheel-thrown vessels and reliance on traditional high-fired glaze surfaces.

My studio work now runs the gamut from both subtle to whimsical interpretations of vessel forms, to large and small-scaled sculptural forms employing a wide range of forming and surface techniques. I attribute this joy of experimentation to the fact that I teach in a relatively small academic art program. As the sole full-time Ceramics professor, I regularly teach all levels of students and try to provide solid instruction in the broad range of materials, processes and contexts that clay affords. As I attempt to address the diverse needs and interests of my students, I find myself asking new and varied questions of my own studio work.

The piece selected for inclusion in this competition, "*Peach Pit Vessel*" demonstrates a fairly recent avenue of formal investigation I have described as "excessive sprigging". This decorative process is a combination of employing a decorative technique introduced to my students brought to a bit of an extreme during the initial monotonous months of the pandemic lockdown as it includes literally hundreds of separately press molded and applied elements. The result is an interesting visual texture supplied after enjoying some delicious peaches grown here in Chilton County Alabama.

Many thanks to the folks at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts and juror, James Watkins for this opportunity to have my recent artistic efforts included in what I trust will be an intriguing survey of current clay art.

**Tony Wright**  
**Mobile, AL**  
**2022**

## **Bio**

Tony Wright is a native of Joliet, Illinois. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Minnesota State University at Moorhead and his Masters of Fine Arts degree from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. He has been a resident of Mobile Alabama since the fall of 2000, where he has been in charge of the Ceramics program at the University of South Alabama.