Interviewee: Rick Hintze (RH)
Interviewer: Meredith McGriff (MM)
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MM 0:00
I will get us started. Today is January sixth, for the record, 2019. I'm Meredith McGriff behind the camera. And if you could introduce yourself and maybe just say a couple words about where we are right now.

RH 0:15
I'm Rick Hintze, I'm a partner in Johnson Creek, Wisconsin. And we're in my studio.

MM 0:24
So I always like to start out with just having people talk a little bit about how they first got interested in clay.

RH 0:34
I'm old enough that when I was in school, in like in my college years, they wasn't, I was an art major, but there was no ceramics program until my senior year. And I didn't even know that this existed as something that somebody could do until this program was started. And I took, I took a sculpture class from the guy, Dennis Parks, who was teaching the ceramics class, he started the ceramics program. And he told me at one point, I mean, this pottery wheel was pretty fascinating. I was very interested in he said, "Well, I'll give you credit. If you want to work on that, you know, you can use that time, get the credit for this sculpture class." So I kind of got into it in the, you know, the kind of fundamentals were, you know, they were okay, I, I didn't have trouble learning how to center and all of that. But I obviously didn't get very far. But the other thing is he did build a salt fired kiln. And it, he, he built it with two layers of hard brick on fresh concrete, because this was a new building, and it, the floor buckled the very first firing. So we had to rebuild the kiln. So I got to help him rebuild the kiln. And, just got really interested in it. So that was my senior year. And then I worked for a couple of years. And then I went to graduate school in art history at the University of Iowa. I was advised to do that instead of studio just because of the job market. So went to the University of Iowa, and got a degree in art history and then a teaching job in art history. I was very interested in the ceramics program when I was there, spent you know, time... had a couple of friends who were studying ceramics. And then at my first teaching job, it was in a very small college in western North Dakota. And there was a, the guy who was teaching printmaking taught ceramics. And he really didn't want to teach ceramics. He said, ?Why don't you teach ceramics?" and he was, he was the head of the program. So I got to teach the ceramics class without much of a background, but of course, I was totally immersed in it and learned a lot.

RH 3:08
And then, my, so I worked for two years in the admissions office of my undergraduate school after graduated, then I went to study art history. And I got this job in North Dakota and college enrollments were dropping, the demographics was... so they got rid of everyone they'd hired in the last two years. So I went back to my job in admissions at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. And they had a new potter there named Henry Joe who I became really good friends with and he was kind of a mentor for me. And so, think I took a class with him and I just spent all my extra money and time on equipment and trying to learn how to make pots. And eventually built a kiln my house, in my garage, and oil burning kiln. And anyway, had this relationship with Henry. Well, the local

community college, let's see. So I went back to work there in '73. And worked for four years, in admissions, and then the local community college was starting a ceramics program. And Henry recommended me to be the person to order all the stuff for the studio, build a kiln, all that, and teach classes. So I quit my job, I just got a promotion and it was a full time job. But I quit and went to take this job, which it was, it was full time for a semester because of setting everything up. And it was part time after that. So I made pots at home, in the basement, fired in my kiln in the garage. I could also use the kiln I built at the community college. And then at some point, Monmouth College, which was a liberal arts college not too far away, needed someone to teach ceramics because their person was leaving. And so I went there and I taught ceramics and art history, on a kind of a half time basis, and could get health insurance because of halftime situation. And then. So I made, I was making pots, I was making pots there. And if the other school and at home, and there were three different kilns, I was sort of, I was hauling pots, I had a Volkswagon bus. And I'll never forget, I would, I would put all my pots glazed, on ware boards in the bottom of the Volkswagen bus and just drive very carefully from one place to another. And I rarely had any, very rarely lost any pots.

MM 6:04
Those must have been smooth roads, or you were just very careful...

RH 6:06
I drove slowly. You know, the bottom of the van was much more stable than if they'd been up higher. And then my wife, who was a printmaker, and she got interested in pottery, my wife at that time. And she had some connections with people in Bishop Hill, Illinois, which was a 19th century Swedish commune. And there were a lot of really neat old buildings there that were starting to fall down, and a local association and the state of Illinois, two kind of separate institutions started saving those buildings. And so it's kind of a tourist place, they opened a museum, and there were just these neat old buildings to go through. And there were a few restaurants and some antique stores. And in the old carriage shop, they had craftspeople, and there was a potter there, I can't remember the name right now. But they were there for a while. And after several years, they got tired of it or whatever. They backed out and they needed someone else. So through my wife's connection, the two of us took that over. So we built the kiln there and had a shop and a studio. That's around 1981. Around 1986, we got a divorce and I went to graduate school at the University of Notre Dame to get an MFA in ceramics. So I left, but Gail kept, she continued to sell my pots. So periodically I would bring her a batch of new pots... Do you want me to continue with this particular? I mean, you said, "How did you get started here?" Here I am way into it at this point.

MM 8:06
No, that's great, though. Well, that might be a good point to, to pause. And, because I'm curious about what style of pots you were making, what kinds of pots, who were your influences in those earlier years?

RH 8:23
Well, Dennis Parks, who was the pottery teacher, the first, you know I took the sculpture from him, he was a student of Paul Soldner and even had Paul Soldner come out and do a, a artists visit, studio visit at the college, and he was great. He was very kind of open in terms of what, you know, I mean, very, he was very experimental himself. And so it was very kind of freewheeling. You know, do whatever you want kind of thing. I mean, he would offer criticism and that sort of thing, but it was very inspiring. When I went back to take the job in admissions and made a friend with, of Henry Joe, he was a much more disciplined potter. He studied under Warren MacKenzie, he got his bachelor's degree under Warren MacKenzie and he went to Montana, and got an MFA with Rudy Autio. So he had kind of a functional pottery background from MacKenzie. And then he had this his degree was, his MFA was in sculpture. But he was really a Warren MacKenzie fan. And I was, at the time, I was about 30 years old when I met him. And I was just kind of ripe for all of this. And he really introduced me to MacKenzie and then Leach of course, and then the whole Hamada, Yanagi thing. And I just, I just couldn't get enough of it... just seemed like I knew most of those books by heart at one time. And, you know, that led to Michael Cardew, so I was really making functional pots, not signing them, you know, that kind of thing. And that's, that's how it kind of started. And that, so that led to trying to look up Leach apprentices who were in the

United States. So, made several visits to MacKenzie's, made friends with Shirley Johnson who was working with him at that time, and went up to the Minnesota crafts festival, sold pots. Looked up Clary Illian, in Iowa, made a couple of trips out to see her. And then when I was in Minnesota, met Jeff Oestreich and you know, some of those people up there in that circle. So that's kind of the, you know, that was the type of pottery I was influenced by and was trying to make. As I, still learning how to do it.

MM 11:30
Sure. Sounds like you're very rooted in the Midwest and sort of the upper Midwest. And did you grow up in this region too?

RH 11:41
Pretty much. I was born in Peoria, Illinois, and my dad worked for Caterpillar and he was, he was in marketing and he was transferred. And when I was about eight years old we moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, lived there for three years. And then we moved from there to Moscow, Idaho, lived there for a year and then came back to the Peoria area and was, you know, there for the rest, for the duration.

MM 12:14
Okay. So you were starting to talk about doing grad school at Notre Dame. Was that with, who's there now...

RH 12:26
Bill Kramer?

MM 12:27
Bill Kramer, cuz he started that program, right?

RH 12:29
Yes.

MM 12:29
Okay.

RH 12:30
Yes.

MM 12:30
So that was with Bill, then.

RH 12:31
Yes.

MM 12:31
Okay.

RH 12:33
Do you know him?

MM 12:33
I do.

RH 12:34
Okay.

MM 12:35
I've been, I've been working pretty closely with the Michiana area, pottery tour.

RH 12:42
Oh, right. Okay.

MM 12:43
Six years or so. So he's been a little bit involved. I've gotten to know him a little bit.

RH 12:47
Yeah.

MM 12:49
So what took you to Notre Dame? What was that decision?

RH 12:53
Well, I was looking for graduate schools, you know that, at that time, it seemed like pottery, there were a lot of graduate schools that weren't interested in pottery anymore. And ceramics programs that were getting rid of their potter's wheels and things like that. And there were only a couple places I knew of one was Iowa, Bunny McBride, and gosh, what is... Chuck Hindes were there. And I did, I went to talk to them about going to school there, and they seemed interested in my work, but they were facing really economic crunch in Iowa. And they were, they didn't have enough money to fix some of their kilns, they were losing some of their assistantships, and it just seemed not real good. So a friend of mine, who was teaching at Augustana College, Megan Quinn said, "You should go talk to Bill Kramer, Notre Dame, he's a potter, great potter, likes pots." So I did. And I went out there for a summer workshop for a couple of weeks. And, you know, we kind of hit it off, and so I applied and got in for the next year. So, so, so part of it was I mean, I don't know, I guess I didn't look very far afield. But it seemed like, at least in... what I did know about, that the opportunities for grad school making pots were kind of limited. So. And Notre Dame you know, I got an assistantship to teach a class. And I had a 20 by 20 foot studio all to myself, the kilns were right outside the door of the studio. I mean, they, they have a lot of resources. So it's great.

MM 14:47
That's wonderful. What year did you start grad school?

RH 14:49
Eighty six. And I was, I was able to get some credit from my art history degree toward the three year MFA program there. And I could have finished in two years. But, I went, in fact, I was looking for jobs. And there was a job opening at Berea College. And I went down there to talk to them. And, you know, it looked interesting, but the amount of money they would, that was part of the salary was about what I was making as a teaching assistant. And you know, I don't know, it just, it didn't look as attractive as I thought it was. So I just stayed at Notre Dame for another year. And I had been making pots for the first couple of years and doing some sort of sculptural things. And then that third year, I just, I made a lot of sculpture, and so my MFA show was kind of a sculpture oriented thing. So that piece over there's kind of a descendant of the kinds of things I was making there.

MM 16:04
Okay. So what, what started the interest in trying sculpture?

RH 16:13
I'm not sure. I think I've always, I was always kind of interested in and of course, in grad school, they're sort of pushing you to do new things, I don't think. And Bill, Bill was not only making pots, but he was making these

large kind of press molded sculptures that are this kind of scale. And you know, I'm not sure why. But, I've always liked coiling. In fact, one of the very first, so, way back in undergraduate school, when I was taking sculpture, it was mainly working with clay. And I just remember making some heads and torsos and, you know, made a kind of life size torso, all with coils. And I have always liked that process. And so I started working with coils, and I just kind of wanted to make something that wasn't just round, it was actually sort of flat. So that piece over there is built with coils. One thing sort of led to another.

MM 17:25
Sure, yeah.

RH 17:29
I mean, what I, whatever I was making, it seemed like people were interested in it. And I was inspired by it. And I just kind of kept going with that. So.

MM 17:40
It's a great opportunity to do that while you're in school.

RH 17:43
Yes. Yeah, no, it really is. It's a unique time when, I mean that's your main responsibility is to make this work. You know, everything else kind of takes a second place. So.

MM 18:02
Yeah. So were most of your, were most of your functional pieces thrown on the wheel or were you coiling any of that work?

RH 18:13
They were, they were thrown.

MM 18:15
Okay. Were you selling your work while you were in school?

RH 18:19
Yes. Well, you know, we had made this attempt earlier, to... let's see... in '77, when I started, I set up that clay program and made pots, you know, I went to some art shows, went to the Minnesota crafts fair, festival, a couple of others that I can't remember now and some local things, and then we had a Christmas sale in our house. So I was selling work then. And then of course, when I got the, when we set up this pottery in Bishop Hill, I mean, we had a shop and they were, you know, visitors coming in every day. So we made sales that way. And... I was trying to think of... that was it. So when I left and went to grad school, I continued to bring parts to Bishop Hill. And, you know, Gail sold quite a few of them for me. And then we had a Christmas sale and a spring sale at Notre Dame, which was really a good sale. So that with my assistantship, you know, kept me going.

MM 19:37
Sure, that's good to have. Do you feel like your, your interactions with customers while you were selling, did that influence directions in your work? Or did you get a lot of feedback from people?

RH 19:55
I don't think it, I don't think it made a difference, except in the sense that you know, if we'd make. I mean, I, you know, it was a sort of standard pot, pots, plates, tea pots, casseroles, bowls, mugs, and they're all things I like to make. And I think that I just sort of felt the showroom had to have a nice selection of, of those things. And when the supply was low, I would think, "Oh, I should make more of those." So I mean, we, you know, we made enough sales to get by. But I don't I don't think I was I don't think it was influenced by what the customers wanted

so much. In I mean, I guess if, if the inventory is low, yeah, there's, there's something about that, that says, "Well, I'll make more of those, those sold." But I wasn't getting like feedback from people saying, "Well, why don't you do this, or that?"

RH 21:07
And I think I was still, you know, I mean, I'm still in the learning stage. I mean, right now. But, so I'm always sort of attracted by, you know, what I can do next. And I think that that's kind of the driving force behind whatever direction I was taking.

MM 21:31
So what did you end up doing after you graduated?

RH 21:35
Well, I was applying for jobs the whole time. And I, gosh, I think at one time, there were only 30 jobs in the whole United States, that were advertised. Anyway. So I knew that it was risky to do this. And you know, I got, I didn't get a job. But I had a friend who and this was another piece of this. Before I went to graduate school, I had a friend who had started a commercial production pottery, in Wisconsin, in Cambridge. So Rowe Pottery is there. So, this is, Pete Jackson was a student at Knox College when I was there working in admissions, and he was a student of Henry Joe's. And I got to know Pete, then, in fact, we even invited him over to sell pots during our Christmas sale. And, at one point, Henry had a heart attack, actually. And he had he asked if I could teach a class. So I taught his classes for one semester. And Pete was one of those students. And so I had this connection with him. So Pete worked for Rowe Pottery, and at some point, split off and started his own business doing similar work at the other end of town in Cambridge. And, so before I went to graduate school, I came up here and for about a week hung around, and, you know, made some pots, and just to kind of see what that was like. So when I got out of graduate school, with no teaching job, Pete gave me a job making pots. So for two years, I was a production potter at Rockdale Union Stoneware. And that, that was as much of a learning experience, you know, as all the rest... very valuable.

MM 23:41
So you were making, I assume, production line, their style, their work.

RH 23:46
Yeah, it was all kind of, you know, early 19th century, gray, salt glazed stoneware. Crocs, jugs, bowls, mugs, teapots, all of that, pitchers. And, you know, they always tell you in beginning ceramics that you're, you know, repetition is the, is really key, you do this over and over and over again. So, that's what this was to very tight, you know, so we would have to make pots like this, or up to about this high with an eighth of an inch tolerance in the width and the height, and the base, or if it was curved, there was also a girth dimension. And then the larger you got, you know, you could have a little bit more leeway, but it was pretty strict. And they had to fit that, all kind of tighten dimensions. And it, it was just really good, because everything we made, I mean, one of the pots we made was very simple, it was just a 2 quart crock, was four and a quarter pounds, was eight inches tall, six inches wide, and straight-sided with a bead kind of on the top ri,. And it was a really popular thing. So I must have made 100 of those every Monday morning. And so I'd come in and wedge up the clay and throw 100 pots by noon, usually. And then. So we would work making, you know, mugs, it was like 38 mugs at a time, and you'd usually make two groups of them. So 76 mugs. So, just that, that process of making this exact same shape, over and over and over again, and then putting handles on them, I mean to do 76 handles in a row, they're all the same. I mean, you really learned how to kind of eliminate wasteful movements when you're, you know, became much more efficient, because we were also paid by the piece. So the faster you work, the more money you made.

RH 23:56
But it just was really a skill, it was a great skill builder, and confidence builder. And the other thing that that job, that kind of learned from that job was that... there were eight potters, that there were 27 other people working

there to do everything else. So all we did is the clay work. So no, no decorating, no clay mixing, the clay just came in a cart. You had we, have gang cutters that cut it into, you know, it came in logs, and you could just cut it and you'd have all these pieces all the same weight. So it was just strictly throwing and finishing the clay work. And I think that, and I was probably just an average potter there but I probably made 14,000 pots in one year. And I think that, that the wholesale value of their prices of 14,000 pots was like $240,000.

RH 27:21
So it kind of you know, it told me that if I ever wanted to do this myself and make a living at it, I could produce, I could produce enough stuff, you know, actually selling it and getting rid of it was another aspect of it. But it just gave me confidence that if I decided to have a line of work, that I could kind of repeat and become efficient at that I could make enough of them. So I mean that, that was a real, real eye opener into that process. You know, Michael Cardew said if a potter does everything themselves, everything--like I'm doing here, I'm, I'm it--you'd only spend about 20% maybe 25% of your time doing clay work. And it's true. I mean I, in a month, I'm not as productive as I used to be, but in when I was more productive, in a month, probably I would fire once a month. And it would probably take a week's time to make those pots, you know, spread over maybe two or three weeks and then there'd be at least a week of glazing. So. Kind of works out that way.

MM 28:42
Yeah, absolutely. Let me just check my camera.

Video File #2 (afc2018030_05163_mv02.mp4)

MM 0:02
So, well. That sounds like it was really helpful experience.

RH 0:05
Yeah. Also then, I was applying for jobs the whole time. And I ended up getting a job at a community college in Cedar Rapids, Kirkwood Community College and I got the job, moved there, and taught there for 10 years.

MM 0:22
Ceramics?

RH 0:23
Yes.

MM 0:24
Just ceramics?

RH 0:24
And art history.

MM 0:25
Okay.

RH 0:26
Art appreciation, ceramics and sculpture. Yeah.

MM 0:33
That's great. So that was Community College... variety of work. We still producing your own work at all at that time?

RH 0:42
Yes. Well, I had plans to build a studio of my own at my house. And I eventually did that. In 19... I got the job in '91. 1993, bought a house and built a studio, a kiln. All of that. Made pots there and of course, made some at school. I was still taking pots to Bishop Hill, and we would have a Christmas sale and a spring sale. But I didn't really try to sell them in any other way at that point. And then. Yes, so anyway, I taught there for 10 years, and then to move here. The two years that I spent working at Rockdale Union Stoneware, of course, I was living in this area. And I met my wife-to-be while I was there, just before I got the job and moved to Iowa. So we had this long distance relationship for probably eight years or so. And eventually I said "Your job's better than mine, I will move in your direction if we can find a place for me to do this." So, some looking around locally and then on the internet, found this, a picture of this building, thought wow, we've gotta check that out. So here we are. So in 1999, we bought this building. So I have the first floor, and a kiln shed over there, and then we own that warehouse, and that's, I store dry materials in there. And then bricks, a lot of bricks. I moved here with nine pallets of bricks.

MM 0:48
Wow.

RH 0:48
Big semi. Yeah, so the bricks, well that's an interesting story. When I was at Rockwell Union stoneware, I think it was the first, yeah, was the first year I worked there, was it, was kind of great. I was doing okay, I was making some money putting some money in the bank, I was trying to pay off student loans. But I rented a studio space in Lake Mills, and I had plans to build a kiln there. And then in December, we got laid off. So all of a sudden, no income. Since I had been a student, I didn't qualify for unemployment. So I had no money coming in. So there was this really low period for at least a month or so. But during that time, I got a letter from the National Endowment for the Arts that said, I won a fellowship, visual artist's fellowship. So at that time, they don't have this anymore. And they had two levels, they had one level it was like $20,000, and another was five. So I got one of the small awards. But it was just a real pick me up at that point. Because it was, I had to give up my studio because I couldn't afford to pay for it, so that kind of went down the drain, and I was having, you know I was using up my savings. And to get that was really helpful. So I bought bricks with it and Rockdale Union was, they were so successful they were building a new building in Edgerton, and they were, they were buying bricks from A. P. Green and so I was able to get in on their brick order and so I got a decent price. But I got all these bricks that I had no place to put. So I put them in a temporary storage unit in Cambridge, and then got the job in Iowa, moved them to Iowa, put them on my front porch. I was renting with an option to buy, this place, I started fixing it up and the owner decided he wanted to move back in after two years. So fortunately hadn't started anything with the bricks. But I moved all the bricks to the other place that I bought, and built a kiln and a studio and then when I was there, the original community college where I set up the program was deciding to get rid of the kiln that I built there, so they auctioned everything off so I went over there and bought that kiln. So I hauled all those bricks there, because I was going to build this, I was going to build, I had a big reduction kiln and I was going to build a salt kiln. Excuse me. So never built the salt kiln, but anyway moved here, so I moved all those bricks here.

MM 5:33
Well travelled bricks.

RH 5:36
It's just potters, when I had my very first kiln that I had built way back when, when we moved, and when I was younger and stronger. I said I am never going to do this again. It's just too much work.

MM 5:54
And so now you have... a lot of bricks.

RH 5:57
Yeah, well I've got a nice big kiln... enough to build another one. I haven't built that other kiln yet.

MM 6:04
Okay. Plans for it?

RH 6:07
I'm not sure I was, you know, I would like to, I have a lot of hard brick and I'd like to build a salt kiln but I don't, that might be problematic in the village here. So my plan, I thought I, I'll build a small... I built my kiln big enough that I could fire these sculptures. And I really haven't made a lot of big work at all. And so it's a little bit, it's a little bit of a big kiln to experiment with because I've got so much work in there. So I've thought I'll build a smaller kiln that doesn't hold quite as much work, that I can kind of fool around with. But, I haven't done it.

MM 6:50
Are these all gas kilns, then?

RH 6:52
Yep.

MM 6:53
Do you use electric at all?

RH 6:55
I have an electric kiln in this room back here where I bisque fire. Although at one point I was doing some of, these pieces up here are terracotta with terra sigillata. And when I was teaching in Iowa there was, I don't know, about a four or five year period where I was working with that cone 04 in an electric kiln.

MM 7:21
So how long did it take you to get this building set up? And what did that involve?

RH 7:27
We bought it. So, so my wife's studio is upstairs.

MM 7:32
What does she do?

RH 7:32
She teaches, she makes, she draws... charcoal drawings, large charcoal drawings, and does pinhole photography. With some drawing on the... and she also makes hand-made books. She teaches at the University of Wisconsin in Whitewater. Teaches art, teaches drawing and bookmaking. So we bought the building in '99 in the fall. And then the following academic year, I took a leave of absence, and came up here and spent a year working on the building. I worked part time at Rowe Pottery for one semester. And then the art historian, one of the art historians at the, at the university, I don't know that she quit suddenly or something, but anyway they needed someone to teach art history. So I taught art history for the second semester. But meantime, was working on this and we had some people, you know, doing various things. And then the job in Iowa, it's just a, so complicated, the job in Iowa, they gave me credit for that year toward an early retirement. So if you got in 10 years, and you were 55, you could retire early. And they were, they were trying to get people to leave. So they, they had a very nice sort of package. I was able to put some of that money into this building. So we did quite a bit of remodeling. Those doors and the bathroom, it's all new. And there were, there was a wall there separating this space from that space. The stairway had to be changed. So it was quite a bit of work there. So I was not able to open... and I built a kiln shed. So I opened for business in October in 2002.

MM 9:50
Did you do a lot of the work yourself here? Or did you have other folks working on it?

RH 9:55
Did some of it. I replaced this wall, there was a garage door there. This space was open, that wall back there I built, but the, this heavy duty stuff over here with all the steel, we had someone that knew what they were doing.

MM 10:13
Sure, it's complicated.

RH 10:14
And to hang those three doors, had them do that also. And it wasn't until, it was about five or six years later that we finished the upstairs. And we had someone do that.

MM 10:30
What was the building before that?

RH 10:33
This was part of a cream and, or an egg and butter business. I think this building was for horses and carts. And there was a room upstairs in that corner that was completely, excuse me, lined with metal.

MM 10:51
Oh, my.

RH 10:52
It was for grain storage for the horses, probably. And keep the rodents out. And when the wind blows really hard from the right direction, we'll still find oats on the floor over there, underneath that space.

MM 11:07
Oh my gosh.

RH 11:09
Yeah. Crazy. Who knows how, I don't know when they stopped having oats up there, or horses.

MM 11:18
Must be ingrained in the walls. Oh, my goodness.

RH 11:23
So.

MM 11:25
That's interesting. So you're involved in the community here, the clay community here, it seems like pretty heavily. Tell me about how that got started. I mean, I would assume some of that had to grow out of your work with the potteries previously, but...

RH 11:41
Yeah. Yeah. Well, Mark, he probably has a similar story. I mean, in terms of the tour, but the... When I did open for business, I opened for business in October for the artists tour.

MM 12:01

Okay.

RH 12:02
So it's not just, that's not just a pottery tour, but it... There was a woodworker named Bill Bailey, who was, he and Mark [Skudlarek] I think really arranged the first... I think when I started, they had already done it two years. But there were about 20 artists all together. So painters, a woman that has their own sheep and make felted wool objects, and some printmakers, furniture, pottery. Yeah, woodworking. So that group, you know, I was part of that group from then on every year, and we, our pottery tour has been and going for about, this will be the eighth year. And I think it'll be the 20th year next year for the artists' tour. So, about 12 years into that, we were all, we were kind of at a gathering. And we had just had the pottery, the artists tour in fall. And Mark was there, and Rick Lamore, a couple of other people, said we should have a, we should do this in the spring and just do pottery. I think at that point, we'd heard about pottery tours in other places. And so we, that was in January, and we worked on it and had it that May. And it was just eight of us. So there were eight, there were eight potters that were part of the artists' tour in the fall. And so it was that group that started the pottery tour. And it's, it's still just the eight of us. We have, invite guests. But it worked. And I, maybe the second year, we invited other people, but every year kind of invited a few more. And I think, so we have eight potters and seven locations. And I think last year we had 25 or 26 potters altogether.

MM 14:15
It's a big group.

RH 14:16
Yeah, no, it's a lot of, a lot of variety, really nice variety of work, big selection of different kinds of things.

MM 14:28
How do you, how do you divide up the work of planning the tours?

RH 14:32
Well, people kind of volunteered at the beginning, I... volunteered to kind of be the coordinator. And so, and no one has, I've asked if someone wanted to take over this job several times, can't get anyone to do that. So basically, I have to organize to have meeting, have some kind of agenda, of the things we need to talk about. And, you know, there are lots of different things to do. So, you know, people just kind of volunteer, so Mark kind of took over handling the photos on the website, and updating them. We got some, some tech help from outside to set the website up. And then the other main thing was our brochure, I mean, that's the sort of most important item that we have to make sure it gets done and mailed and all that. So you know, one person takes care of the mailing list. Mark had a connection with a designer. So through him, we get everything to the designer, to design the brochure deal with the printer. It wasn't kind of that way, at the very beginning. At the beginning, I put a website together, designed some kind of brochure that we had. But now it's, we sort of farm some of those things out. And it's, unless we want to change something drastically, it's kind of routine at this point, it's kind of set in place. And then the only other thing that we've been trying to do is advertise. And it's just, it's just very expensive, you know, so we charge a fee to participate in the tour. And that has provided, so far, enough money to pay for the brochure, the designer, the IT guy, and the mailing, with a little bit left over, which was last year spent on advertising. And I think we broke our budget a little bit, we all had to contribute a little bit more.

MM 17:07
Well, advertising's tough. How do you... What's your sense of the clientele at the artists' tour versus the pottery tour? Do you get a lot of the same people? Or is it a different crowd?

RH 17:20
We get a lot of the same people. I think the artists tour, there's a little bit of an advantage there--one's been going much longer. So there are more people that come through. And I think because it's diverse in terms of the

medium, the media that people have, that they're offering that it may be, we may get some new people, you know, someone who wanted to see a painter over there something, "Oh, I'll go see this guy and see what the pots are like," you know, whereas the pottery tour is really focused. But I think one of the advantages we had in setting up a tour is we already had a mailing list of people, you know, because of the artists' tour. And I think that really helped get the pottery tour off the ground.

MM 18:19
Yeah, that's great. As far as other sales, do you have a lot of people stop by the shop, do you do art fairs, galleries?

RH 18:30
It's, my sales are kind of random in the shop. Other than the artists' tour and the pottery tour. When I started here, I thought this is really cool building, you know, I can get people to come to me, because that was the advantage in Bishop Hill is that, plus it was a state historic site it was sort of built in kind of tourist traffic. And we were right in probably the prime location for traffic. Well, this, this building is a little hard to find. It's not that visible, you're limited in the kind of signage you can have. And since I don't have frontage on the road, I have to put a sign on my neighbor's property. And I didn't want it to be jarring, you know, in a residential neighborhood. So it's kind of a quiet... design. I mean, people say, "You don't have a sign, I didn't see any sign." So yes, there's a sign Well, you can't put it, it has, can't be in the terrace. You know, it has to be like 8 or 10 feet back. So it's, it's, you know, it's not out, right out, where it grabs attention. And so, when I first started, I got my signs, and I advertised in the local paper and a couple of other places and had hours. And it worked a little bit, but not that much. And then after, I don't know I'm very impatient, so after not too long, I thought well, maybe I need to start doing some, you know, take the work out to art fairs. So I started doing some art shows. And I never did very many, probably seven was the most that ever did. All in the you know, late spring and summer and into the fall. And so I bought a van, you know, built the display all of that stuff. And at that time there was a local fair in Cambridge, it was called the Cambridge pottery festival. And it was just pots. And I can't remember the number of potters over there but it was, you know, a lot of potters. It was just pots. And it lasted for 20 years. I mean, at some point had quite a reputation, and people came there to see pots.

RH 21:09
You know, so I did that. And then started applying to shows. And I probably started all that around maybe 2003, 2004. And did some local shows. So I've done shows in, the St. Louis art show, the Uptown show in Minneapolis, the Plaza show in Kansas City. I did the Philadelphia Museum of Art craft show, and the Smithsonian craft show. There was another show in Washington DC that I did once. Oh and the ACE show the American Craft Exposition in Evanston, it used to be in Evanston, Illinois. And they've moved it since then. But my progression was, I thought I needed to get into better and better shows, and did that up until maybe three or four years ago. And at that point, I just added up what it cost me to do those shows and what I made, and I thought, this isn't worth it. It was not, I mean the, especially the time that it takes. So right now I'm only doing one show in the summer, which is connected to the Cambridge community because they've started, the pottery fest died. And they started a new thing called the Midwest Fire Fest. And so the the Clay Collective potters are all kind of supporting that. So we take part in the little art fair that they have. And we make beer steins for the art council that isn't charged, to sell. And the other thing I did in 2004 or five, I tried wholesale. So, and I, you know Bruce Johnson over here in Lake Mills, was doing the Rosen show in Philadelphia. And can't remember what it was called now. But anyway, I did that. Actually went out the year before to just talk to them and find out what it was all about. The next year, I did it. And so, do you know about that show at all?

MM 23:29
A little bit, I haven't actually...

RH 23:33
It's probably like the ACC shows, the American Craft Council shows, has retail and wholesale shows together. But, so it's a place where you can go with your work and take orders. And people from all over the country show

up there, from California, and Maine, and Florida. So the first year I did pretty well, according to my friends, said oh, and they all said this will just get better, because the longer you're here, you know, the buyers will realize you're credible and you can be depended on and you should get more orders. Well, every year, there were less buyers there, it just, it kind of tapered off. I did that for about three years. And it, I think it was just a, it was not a good time. I mean, at one point, there were I think it was a glass blower that I talked to who would go to that show and get enough orders for six months worth of work. He just, it wasn't that way anymore. So. So I gave that up. But there were two or three galleries that continued to buy for me. And what was great about that, it was, they would, they would call me up and say, "Do you have any work? or we'd like to..." and I said well, I'll show you what I've got. And they would buy from pots I'd already made and so I pack those up and ship them instead of taking an order and then making it and hoping everything comes out okay. And that was great, and that, you know, that lasted for 3 or 4 years, kind of petered out.

MM 25:20
Okay.

RH 25:21
So I've given up, so now it's just the artist tour, the pottery tour, random sales, online sales, which is very minimal but I do have a online shop, but I don't, I don't make any effort to advertise it so that would probably help.

MM 25:43
Oh, well, you never know...

RH 25:44
The other thing is that we live half an hour away and, because we live in Whitewater so it's really convenient for Sue to teach, but if she ever retires we may move closer or, you know, transform one of these buildings into living space. And if I lived here I would have regular hours and advertise and hopefully I would make more sales, you know, right here.

MM 26:15
Yeah. About how often do you work? What's a weekly schedule like for you?

RH 26:23
Well, I'm usually, I'm almost here every day. Sue keeps saying you gotta take a day off. And I don't, you know I'm not working that hard. I used to fire about once a month, probably 11 to 12 firings, and now I'm doing maybe four. So, but I usually get up here around 11 o'clock and stay till 6 or 7 sometimes. You know sometimes on weekends, I'll be here maybe just three or four hours, but usually come up to, I mean, if you've got wet clay things going you have to kind of keep track of them.

MM 27:02
Yeah, absolutely. The clay kind of drives the schedule a little bit.

RH 27:05
Yeah, yeah.

MM 27:07
I'm gonna change out my battery real quick if you'll excuse me.

Video File #3 (afc2018030_05163_mv03.mp4)

MM 0:04

So, thinking about the clay needing attention, be a good point to just, if you would just talk through your process a little bit. I mean, I'm familiar, but for people who've not heard about this kind of work, what does your process look like?

RH 0:20
Yeah. Well, I've always been, you know, I have liked the idea of production, functional pots, and makes sense to make them in a kind of a production mode, so I sort of make small series of things. So if I'm making mugs, you know, maybe make 16, it was always like 8 or 16, you know, multiples. I have a pug mill and I get a log of clay and I have some gang cutters, and I can cut that. But with a smaller object, I usually just, I'll wedge 8 pounds or 16 pounds, and then just make it into as a symmetrical a ball as I can and cut it in half by eyeball. And that always ends up in four, you know, 8, 16, whatever.

MM 1:20
Okay.

RH 1:21
So I'm usually making things in those... so maybe eight jars, these jars that are over here. The other day, I think I made, made eight of them, and I made a few more, but I'll make eight jars, and I'll make the eight lids, put them away, and I'll move on to something else, make some mugs or plates, but it's always kind of in those small numbers. So it's not like back in the production pottery, we're making 100 of this. And I like making small tea bowls. And those are. Well, let me back up just a little bit. So the, some pots I'll make in a series and they are identical, or you know, very close, and I'm sort of trying to make them identical. If it's jars with lids, I'm sort of measuring that lid. So that when I'm done, if I have eight jars and eight lids, you know how hard it is to get them all to fit, well I can, I can move those lids around, find the best fitting place for them. So I might also just want to experiment. I might make eight jars, all with similar shape and lid, but not exactly the same. But all the lids fit the same way. So I have that advantage that I can, you know, move the lids around 'til like, they fit best or look best. So, you know, sometimes it's very disciplined. Or if I have, I mean sometimes so people will order and I don't normally take orders, but sometimes I do if it's something I'm making anyway. And those I'm making pretty strictly, you know to exactly the same size. But also, I'm old enough at this point that I really just want to make what I want to make. And so, I still have this, you know, I want to try new things. And so I don't have standard ware anymore. When I was doing the wholesaling I had a line of jars of different sizes with different glazes that I put on them, and I had bowls, I can't remember all of the different things and jars. But those were, you know, I would make them kind of in the same way that I work in the production pottery.

MM 3:57
Okay.

RH 3:58
And they would be exactly the same. I knew what the glazes were going to be and everything. And now you know, unless I've got an order, I'm not doing that, and so it's a much freer kind of thing. And, so I'll make some things that are pretty exact, others I'm experimenting more. As you know, your knowledge of glazes and all of that and how, that... you sort of end up, it's all of a piece. And so the, when you're making something, you're very much aware of what the glaze might be that you're going to put on it. And so you're, you're shaping it with that in mind, where the surface details and so... I guess what, I guess what I'm saying here is that sometimes I know exactly what I'm going to do with it, in terms of the glazing process. And other times I'm not quite sure and I, I probably have too much of an experimental portion of my work going on. I mean, I sometimes at least a half or a third of what I'm doing is something I don't know how it's going to come out, whether it's going to succeed or not. But it's kind of what keeps me going so... So the other end of that is then, when the pots are made, I'll usually make enough pots for a kiln load, and I can put maybe 200 normal size spots in my kiln, but I have been making some larger things so, but anyway I'll get enough, or, excess of what will fit in the kiln so I can fit it in there efficiently. And then I'll start to glazing process and that'll take, well first of all I bisque fire everything in the

electric kiln and then start glazing and that usually takes about a week for me to to glaze everything. And haul it out to the kiln out there and fire it. I have some of these pieces, like these jars with this ochre color on them, those are sprayed glazes and I don't have a spray booth. So I have to kind of wait for decent weather. So not in the winter at all. But I take all that stuff outside and spray the glaze on.

MM 6:32
You talked earlier about the fact that only a certain portion of your time gets to be clay work. So what is, what is

RH 6:39
The rest?

MM 6:39
your other work that takes up your time with a business like this?

RH 6:45
Well mixing clay. So I mix all my own clay. So I have to go somewhere and get the dry materials, bring them back. Mix them, I mix my clay and then I run it through a pug mill, so there's with the clay, procuring the clay, preparing it, getting it ready. There's that. Arranging pots in the shop. And of course when I was doing art shows there's just a lot involved getting ready to go somewhere, getting all this stuff together. And then when you bring it back, you know if you're not doing another fair soon, to put everything back in place, and all of that. Pedestals need repainting. You know, so,, when I was doing the shows, there was a lot of time involved in preparing to go to a show, when you come back taking care of everything. And then I have work in three different places now outside of here. So a gallery up in Door County, and one in, south of Madison, then I recently have started this curated ceramics, which is an online store. I mean, I didn't start it, I'm part of it now. So taking work to those places is part of it. Paperwork, just keeping track of all the expenses, and, you know, whatever sales there are. I think, probably, so, the other thing that's efficient about the wholesaling, when you have an order for somebody who you know exactly what you're going to do, and you can just go to it. I think I spend more time thinking about what I'm going to do.

RH 8:46
You know, maybe too much, but it's, I don't know. And then I you know, do some reading and looking at work online and some videos of other potters and things and. I get a lot of inspiration just from driving around the countryside. And, you know, so all, there's all of that stuff that kind of feeds into what comes out, eventually. I don't know if other... Yeah, I'm really working at a very relaxed pace, you know, for the last, maybe the last year or two.

MM 9:32
That's nice. Are you still doing any sculptural work?

RH 9:37
Yes. Kind of not the large scale thing. But you see those house shapes that up on top? And then these four objects are kind of architectural-related. Coil built, and stoneware. And then I've been coil, I've been making some large coil pots. There was a show... do you want background on that?

MM 10:11
Sure.

RH 10:12
When I was in Iowa, as a, probably more so when I was teaching in Cedar Rapids, the art museum, at the University of Iowa, in Iowa City, frequently had a show of African pots. And there was a professor there a printmaker named Keith Achepohl, who was, he went to my undergraduate school. And my painting teacher, who

was a printmaker and painter, Keith Achepohl was one of his favorite students. So he'd always talked about him. And Keith Achepohl went to Iowa for graduate school. But he ended up coming back there and teaching, and he collected African pottery. So the museum would frequently have shows of his collection. And I was always moved by that work, and spent a lot of time looking at it. And then in 2009, or 10, the Art Institute, I think he gave a lot of his collection to the Art Institute. And they put on this big show of his work, or his collection. And I was just blown away by that. I had been, I had started a couple of these sculptures, because I still had that ambition. And something went wrong with, I think one warped or something when it dried. And I thought, I'm just going to make some round coil pots, kind of inspired by these, these pots that I saw. And, so I've made quite a few of those since 2010. And I'm kind of going in a different direction here, these two pieces are kind of straight cylinders, instead of round pots, but they're round but they're not round this way.

MM 11:59
Okay.

RH 11:59
They're all coiled. And there's something that I really like about that process in that... Mark makes pots bigger than the ones I'm making, you can make some on the wheel, but the wheel is, I don't know, I've just never been that interested in making big pots on the wheel, just the effort that goes into centering that much clay. But coiling, it's just kind of a meditative process. And it's very slow. And I'll start I mean, normally I'll work on. I mean, since I made these kind of architectural things, I've got those going. But normally I'll have maybe five or six coil pots going. And you know, you put one or two coils on and then you move on to the next one. And then they're all sort of drying, and you look at them, and I'm sitting here eating lunch, and you know I can see like, you know, sort of get, oh, maybe I could take that shape this way. Or have an idea for a whole new shape. But you know, just get to watch them grow, and there's something really pleasurable about and then the way, what, what I was inspired by with these African plots, which are hand made, not on a wheel, is that they just have a feeling that I don't think you get with a wheel thrown pot. Are you familiar with Philip Rawson?

MM 13:29
I don't think so.

RH 13:30
He's the author of this book, Ceramics, if I can... and several other books. But

MM 13:40
Oh, I've seen that book, I just didn't recognize the name.

RH 13:41
Yeah, oh it's great. It's really great. He has a great book on drawing, also. But he has a, there's a quote in here from him that just describes hand built pots. In his mind, he's sort of saying it takes much more skill to make, but in my, my take on it is, it's not about skill so much as, because I'm not trying to make them perfect. It, the way he describes it is that when you're making a pot, there's a center, and every, the wall is related to that center. And you're, you know, you're shaping the clay, always in relation to that. And it's kind of a geometrical certainty almost, that you're sort of extruding the wall of clay through your hands at this distance from that axis. But when you're, when you're hand building something, and I mean you obviously could do slabs, and that would be a whole different thing, but if you're just coiling like these African pots, you are, you are pushing the clay, making the clay go to a certain spot, I mean, every inch of it, you are deciding where it goes. So you don't have a, there's not a tool that is helping you make that symmetrical in relation to this thing. Now, I make them on a banding wheel. So there, in some sense, I've got a little bit of a crutch. And the African parts were made, at least the ones, the films I've seen is of people walking around them. So there, but it's an ordered kind of thing. So there's something really intriguing about that. And so you get something that's sort of symmetrical, but it's not perfect. And there's a feeling to that, that is not, a wheel thrown pot does not have that. And I'm not saying one's better

than the other, it's just that that's what I really appreciate about the handbuilt pots, they kind of have a sort of a life to them that, that a wheel thrown pot does not have.

MM 16:03
It seems like that that time span of creation really is, is really different. With a wheel thrown pot they come out so much faster.

RH 16:11
Yeah, yeah.

MM 16:11
Interesting.

RH 16:12
And there are people that make coiled parts pretty quickly, with a torch, you know, they're drying it out so they can keep going. And I've just never, I mean, I've used a heat gun and that does not very, it's not very efficient. But I haven't been in a hurry, you know, so I may take two or three weeks to make, make the piece, just kind of watch it grow. I mean, I kind of enjoy that aspect of it. That I'm not in a hurry to get it done. I mean I've done a couple of workshops that, you know where I've got to get this thing made in a certain, limited amount of time. It's not the same.

MM 16:56
Well yeah, absolutely. Taking this in a little bit of a different direction, I meant to ask earlier. You mix your own clay, I'm assuming you mix your own glazes as well. Are those recipes you've developed yourself?

RH 17:13
Some of them. I'm not, personality wise not, not made to keep careful track of like, do experimenting, and all of that. I have friends who are really into it. So I, I am doing glaze experiments almost every kiln load. You know some of those I'll... but they're very simple. I have a glaze that's just wood ash and feldspar. And then some variations on that with some clay in it and that sort of thing. And other glazes that, I think there's one glaze I use, I use a tenmoku on the insides of some pots. Sometimes on the outside that I, was the recipe, you know, it's a class recipe when I first started.

MM 18:10
Well, if it works, you may as well keep using it.

RH 18:12
Yes, yeah. And then you know, a few other... There's a celadon glaze I'm using on porcelain and a clear glaze that are kind of standard glazes out there.

MM 18:26
Do you have anyone that helps you around the shop? Or is this something you take on yourself?

RH 18:33
I have had a, I had a kid help me out. It's rare, and it's usually when I'm in a bind, and need to get some things done. And there's a guy named Andrew, that I've had worked for me, Bruce, and I sort of knew of him through Bruce Johnson in Lake Mills, because he worked for him. He was a, he was a high school student over there when he worked for Bruce, but he went on to get an MFA. He's in Milwaukee, but had him come out for a couple of days to help me do some things. Otherwise, it's just me.

MM 19:19

Okay. Do you have any plans to take on apprentices or anything like that, or is that not...?

RH 19:27
I don't have any plans. I probably never will. But I have thought, partly because of the, the not being able to have hours here, I've thought I should have, get someone else who could work in here in exchange for just keeping the place open, you know. But, I haven't done it. I've thought about, people ask, do you teach classes? And I kind of miss teaching, but I've just never thought, I mean, this, you're coming at a time when I have not been very productive. Coming over the holiday and everything, I just relax. But, you know, I cleaned this whole place up for the artists tour. So these display things are not here on this side at all. Soon, they'll all be gone. I'll move all that stuff out there. And then I just kind of fill this area up, and need it. So to imagine someone else in here just doesn't... Maybe, it is weird to work alone every day. Every week, whatever. But, I don't think I would mind having someone here, just as a, as another person to bounce ideas off or just have in the space, but the amount of space, you know, we need a separate room. If I get someone else.

MM 20:53
Do you, do you have that sort of idea-bouncing with other potters in the area? Do you all visit one another frequently or not?

RH 21:04
We used to, there used to be a, I think it was just called the Cambridge Clay Guild. And it was made up of people that not only were, you know, making pots themselves and trying to sell them, but people that worked at the production pottery. And they would meet, I don't know a few times a year, it was pretty informal. But it was sometimes they, we would all shell in, out some money to get someone to come down and do workshop for a day or two. And, it was great. And then we would have a couple of sort of "pot on the spot" sessions, you know, where everyone would bring pots and just kind of talk about it. But that kind of pooped out. Since we started the Clay Collective, we really haven't done that kind of thing. And the only time we get together as at these, when we have a meeting and we you know, maybe meet three, three times a year. And then it's just to discuss, you know how to get the job done for the tour. And of course, there's other conversation, but, that's about it. Now, several of the people are, have friendships. And you know, I mean, there are people I see and do things with now and then but not as a whole group.

MM 22:33
Sure, yeah. It's, I'm really interested in areas that have so many potters because there, some people choose to work very solitary. Some people choose to be completely alone. Other people are drawn to areas with, with more potters. So.

RH 22:49
I mean, it's really nice to, that there are that many of us in the area. I mean, just for other, I mean, sometimes someone will call me up and say, do you have any of this kind of material? Oh, yeah, you know, so. Or, sometimes if you're going somewhere to get something at a clay supply place, you know, you can pick up something for somebody else. Yeah. And then it's just nice that you don't feel like you're alone!

MM 23:22
Sure.

RH 23:22
Hey they're other people that are trying to do, other crazy people trying to do this.

MM 23:27
Yeah, absolutely. The one of the last questions I like to try to ask is, if you have advice for someone who's thinking of becoming a professional potter and doing this kind of a career, what kind of advice would you give?

RH 23:45
That's a tough, tough one. I mean, it... I think these days, you know, the, it seems like the character of work that I see at shows are, you know, the kinds of pots that I see are not quite the sorts of pots that I was making or wanting to make when I started, I mean, there's a lot of pots out here that have really kind of intricate surfaces. And people must spend an awful lot of time on the surface. So you know, the amount of work, you can make seems to be different anyway. So I was thinking that, well, obviously a production pottery job for a couple of years would be great in terms of learning how to, learning the skills, and also that kind of confidence level that I was talking about. But there seems, there, that just throwing pots. There seems to be you know, there are people who slip casting, extruding. And then and then with these kind of elaborate surfaces, I'm not sure what kind of prep you need. I mean, obviously, I guess to get good at anything, you have to make a lot of it. And go through the steps over and over and over. I mean, no matter what it is. And you know, there's kind of a difference, I think between apprenticeships and school. And various people think one is better than the other, and I think it might be helpful to have both. And I think that depends on the kind of apprenticeship that you have. I mean, you could have an apprenticeship where you're mainly learning how to make whatever is being made, and it's kind of narrow. And that's great if you, that's where you want to go. I mean, if someone's already got everything worked out, you know how, what to make, how to fire it, how to market it, seems like all of those things are, you got to have those. And you can learn that through an apprenticeship.

RH 26:14
On the other hand, I mean, it's college and grad school. If you are, I mean, it seems like the good programs, I mean, not only are you going to learn technique, and technical aspects of clay and glazes, and processes, but you constantly are being critiqued. And so if you are, you know, meeting a few times a semester with your peers and instructors, and people saying oh, why are you doing that, or, you know, constantly questioning what you're doing. Makes you... I mean, that's that, and think of that all through undergraduate school and then graduate school. I mean, it really gives you a chance to, you know, develop kind of a critical faculty in terms of assessing your own work. And in developing things, and, you know, probably one of the... So, I've been on a few, just, haven't done a lot of this, but the juried craft show thing being a juror, and, or just witnessed a lot of work out there. And one of the things that is pretty, it seems like there's a lot of work that is not developed, you know, someone's got a great idea and they kind of make it and they don't stretch it very far. It's like, so in teaching, in teaching clay, one of the things that I was all amazed by is sometimes my students couldn't recognize their own pots.

MM 28:04
Oh my.

RH 28:06
So you know, you have the same assignment. So everyone's got to make mugs. So there's mugs, you know, around the room. And sometimes they couldn't, they couldn't find it, or they wouldn't know whose was whose, and I could tell, you know, from across the room. And I think it's just... the harder you look, the harder you're asked to look, the more you hear what other people are seeing. You develop your, just capacity to see what is there. And it's like the rooms where you can't see what you don't, what you don't see, you know. And so, I think that's, that's just experience and continual questioning. And I think that you know, good, a good college program or grad school program, kind of fosters that sort of thing. Whereas an apprenticeship, it all depends on the person you're apprenticing with.

MM 29:17
Yeah, absolutely.

RH 29:19

And if you're, you know, you're, it depends on your goal, too. And if your goal is just to make to make functional parts that are nice pots, and that's it, maybe that's all you need, you know, but if you're kind of striving for something else, then I don't know, I think maybe the academic program is the way to go. It depends, I mean if you really have, it's, I could see an apprenticeship with a particular kind of person might work out great.

MM 29:51
Yeah, well, it's, it's interesting to think about how those different things work out.

RH 29:54
Yeah.

MM 29:58
Thank you.