

First, I would like to say that I am grateful and extremely honored to be asked to curate a show for the Greenhill Center for North Carolina Art. "By Example" is such a dream show for me, getting together 20 of what I and many others consider North Carolina's best potters and ceramic artists, who in turn invite 20 "mentors", is a daunting task, but also a chance to showcase North Carolina's vibrant ceramics scene.

North Carolina has such a long and rich history in ceramics, with longstanding communities of ceramic artists such as Penland and Seagrove, producing both everyday utilitarian wares and aesthetic wonders, I feel honored and humbled to curate such a show. With such a rich history and active ceramics scene, how to narrow it down to 20 artists? When thinking about who to invite to this show, I held the following criteria in mind: the invited artists are in their 40's and younger, from North Carolina, active and known on a local, national and international scale, and produce ceramic vessels known for good craftsmanship, functionality, and teeming with color, texture and imagery. Narrowing it down using these standards, I am very excited with the group of artists that have come together to make "By Example" possible.

Each of the invited artists were asked to invite a "mentor", or someone they feel has had a huge impact on them and their careers as ceramic artists. Interestingly enough, most of the invited mentors happen to also live and work in North Carolina, which again notes the rich and vibrant ceramics scene in the Tarheel State. The title "By Example" notes the relationship between an artist and their mentor(s) and how the teaching and learning of a mentorship comes through watching and listening. This benevolent "Do as I Say, and Do as I Do" system includes how to conduct business, as well as how to approach solutions to aesthetic issues. The invited artists of "By Example" are also being watched and learned from, because they are defining functional ceramics and ceramic expression for students, customers, and collectors within North Carolina's borders and beyond.

Despite the fact that nearly all the invited artists chose to invite mentors that are ceramic artists, particularly vessel makers, all of the artists' work is informed and developed by drawing from many different sources. From contemporary painting to folk traditions in woodworking and textiles and family histories, to carnival rides and comic books, each artists sources for inspiration are as unique as the work they produce. Techniques and processes are also a myriad approach, from traditional brushwork and slipping and glazing applications to screenprinting, image transfers and inclusion of different media, these artists look outside their clay studio to give substance to their ideas. These artists are not simply making pots as they have seen others make pots, they are pushing the boundaries of ceramic expression, defining clear and important voices as ceramic artists and vessel makers, and pushing forward North Carolina's legacy of outstanding ceramic expression.