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Metaphoric Vessels
by Preston Saunders

In the last few years, I have noticed more and more our society turning away from nature to rely on computers and technology. Living in the fast lane, we may take for granted where we are and what we are doing. We have begun to lose respect for nature and the precious moments it can give us. My work stems from these observations…
The intention of this body of work is to construct metaphoric vessels that are concerned with ceremonial presentations and that are referential to nature and our busy society. By using the form of a teapot combined with influences from Chinese Scholar Rocks and the Japanese Tea Ceremony, I am making visual and historical connections to the Japanese Tea Ceremony and the philosophies associated with Scholar Rocks. The Japanese Tea Ceremony is not only a time of reflection and contemplation but it is a time of social interaction among family, friends or even colleagues. It is often viewed as “one moment in time never to be repeated.” Scholar Rocks have been collected and valued...
as representations of nature for thousands of years. By combining these traditions, ideas and forms I am illustrating the idea of slowing down not only to appreciate nature, family and friends, but also to become more aware of the simple pleasures of life and realize that they may never be repeated.

As I continue to work in clay I am reminded even more of why I was first attracted to it: it was the ability to produce objects which inherently were meant to be used; the idea of sharing a moment with something that is hand made. I enjoy learning from our history and integrating it with thoughts of the future. The forms I make suggest a mystic presence found in the past but produced in the present.

—Preston Saunders, Assistant Professor of Art