

RESEARCH STATEMENT

My ceramic artwork focuses on water usage in the Great Plains area: a regional concern that is related to the phenomenon of global drought. I began my study of water and drought in 2007, when I started utilizing the University of Nebraska at Lincoln websites, faculty, libraries, and collections as resources for my artwork. My research has benefitted from my experiences at UNL's Cedar Point Biological Research Station in Ogallala, NE, Morrill Hall, and from the U.S. Drought Monitor. My ceramic artworks reference the increasing struggles over water rights and are battered reminders of these problems.

I create often overlooked objects that explain levels of water and drought: intake towers, jackstones, water and ethanol molecules, water pumps, faucets, and maps. I use color theory adapted from the U.S. Drought Monitor, surface texture, and monumental scale to aid in the viewer's understanding of the artwork. My work has been exhibited most recently in drought-stricken Texas, at the Ellen Noel and Amarillo Art Museums. In June 2025, my artwork will be exhibited in invited groups shows in The Joslyn and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, NE. I plan to continue to fabricate monumental intake towers during my summer breaks, dry during the academic calendar, and then fire, glaze and stack permanently the following spring/summer.

My imagination was trained in the irrigation ditches on the 100th Meridian, and I aspire to be Nebraska's second most not talked about lesbian, after Willa Cather, of course. The 100th Meridian is the geographical split of our nation's weather and water. Most of our food is produced to the west, with shrinking water resources, but most of our population lives to the east, with abundant water. I'm observing the rise and decline of Lake Mead, in Nevada, Lake McConaughy, in western Nebraska, and the Ogallala Aquifer, below the Great Plains. I continue to produce ceramic maps that compare historical droughts and water levels.

My family has always thought about water. We first settled in southwest Nebraska, then later migrated to the fertile soil and abundant ground and surface water of the Platte River Valley, in central Nebraska. We understand the value of water to our economy and environment. I hope my artwork offers a perspective that all viewers can be inspired to have conversations about Nebraska's most valuable and often overlooked commodity, water.

TEACHING STATEMENT

As my students expand upon their artistic vocabularies, I act as a guide, helping them discover their own imaginations. Throughout undergraduate courses in 3-D foundations and in beginning and intermediate ceramics, students are given a framework of detailed assignments. Advanced students receive more individualized mentoring specific to their areas of inquiry.

Each semester, I conduct several individual critiques. I also conduct group critiques in order to cultivate dialogue. I provide students with a context for their artworks by incorporating power-point presentations, Google searches, group discussions, and you tube videos on issues related to the history and practice of making art. I also instruct students on contemporary issues in the ceramics field by discussing articles from current ceramic magazines.

My approach to teaching is very hands-on: to work side-by-side with my students in the studio. I believe that it is very important to involve students in all aspects of the art making process. I require my beginning ceramic students to mix clay for the Ceramics I class. Intermediate and advanced students are also expected to mix their own clay and can, in addition, choose their clay bodies. Electric kilns are loaded in small groups, and I utilize this time to explain the process of firing a kiln. Advanced students are expected to fire their own artwork and gas kilns are loaded and unloaded by all students. I also require my advanced students to take an active role in kiln firings by signing up for shifts.

Ceramics is a community driven medium. I organize students into work teams so that they get hands-on knowledge of the process while learning to work together. I also introduce my students to their surrounding artistic community. I require their attendance at lectures, both on and off campus. As an assignment, intermediate and advanced students assist a local artist in his or her private studio. Students are also encouraged to host studio throw a thons and pot lucks.