

Biography

Merrie Wright received a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute, and an MFA from Louisiana State University. She currently lives in East Texas and is Professor and Chair of the Department of Art & Art History at the University of Texas at Tyler.

Wright exhibits her work nationally, has received numerous exhibition awards her work, and has been cited in several publications, including *Ceramics Monthly*. She served as one of the 2013 Conference Liaisons for the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Art and served as an NCECA board member from 2012-2013. She is currently serving as the NCECA Board Steward (2020-2022). Conference presentations include, '*Clouds: Capturing Ephemeral Imagery in Enduring Materials*,' which was presented at the 2014 National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts conference. Select exhibitions include: *Broken and Whole* at the Museum of Biblical Art in Dallas, TX; *2021 Irene Rosenzweig Juried Biennial Exhibition* at the Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas in Pine Bluff, AR; *City Sine Cera* at the Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis, MN; *Beyond the Brickyard, 10th Annual Juried Exhibition* at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, MT; *31st annual Materials: Hard + Soft National Contemporary Craft Competition and Exhibition* at the Greater Denton Arts Council, Patterson-Appleton Arts Center in Denton, TX; *Tiny Mountains, Cliffs, and Switchbacks: Small Sculpture by Merrie Wright* at the Tyler Museum of Art in Tyler, TX; *Craft Texas 2016* at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft in Houston, TX; and *Mesmerize* at the Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Art in Houston, TX.

Studio art residencies have become a central part of Wright's studio practice. She was awarded a six week International Residency through a partnership with NCECA and The Banff Centre in 2014, a short-term residency at Red Lodge Clay Center during the winter of 2016-2017, and she was the host artist for a Artist-Invites-Artists group residency at the Red Lodge Clay Center in May 2019. She returned to the Banff Centre, as a Banff Artist in Residence, for the 2020 Winter Residency program.

Artist Statement

The landscape is a repository, containing my experiences and memories, beliefs and observations. It holds these two realities, the tangible and the ephemeral, simultaneously. These abstract sculptures, which reference natural and constructed landscapes, explore universal and personal relationships to place through formal explorations. Elements within the work conjure the physicality of place, as well and the psychological power of the landscape.

Just as the landscape itself is not static, our relationship to place is always in flux. There is an aesthetic balance of deliberate and spontaneous elements within the work, meant to evoke our shifting connections to the land. The landscape becomes a reflection of the sequence and rhythm of life- encompassing the vastness of geologic time, as well as the immediacy of a particular moment.

Time is of equal significance. The work begins before entering the studio or touching material, with a thoughtful investigation of my surroundings. It may take years before observations and responses to a place translate into form. The process of creating the work is equally time-intensive and meticulous. Each sculptural form is created and glaze painted by hand, with each layer of the process slowly building upon, and responding to, the one before it. Collectively, the works represent a myriad of places, and span an arc of time, representing the past, present, and future.

Like strata, these physical and conceptual layers fuse, and the work becomes a record of what the landscape, and all of the complexities that my relationship to it, holds.