



RICHARD WARD

Off Grid Ceramic Artist | Primitive, Reclaimed, & Earth-Based Practice

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My practice centers on ceramics rooted in primitive processes and deep material understanding, shaped by years of working directly with earth as both building material and artistic medium. My introduction to clay came through natural building and earth-bag construction, where clay, sand, and water determine structure and integrity. That same material logic guides my ceramic work.

Working primarily with stoneware, reclaimed materials, and locally sourced minerals, I create functional vessels and sculptural forms informed by the desert landscape. Materials and process lead each piece; surfaces retain evidence of making. The work invites slower engagement and a grounded relationship to everyday objects, reflecting a belief that meaning emerges through honest contact with material and animistic views of the world.

Juried Exhibitions & Markets

2026

Upcycling Exhibition • Tubac Center for the Arts, Tubac, AZ
Spring Market • Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ
Endeavor Gallery • Benson, AZ (Featured Artist)
Art State Arizona Markets • Tucson, AZ

2025

Voices of Cochise • Henry F. Hauser Museum, Sierra Vista, AZ
5 C's of Arizona • Ventana Gallery, Tucson, AZ
Rotica • Subspace Gallery, Tucson, AZ
Fall Market • Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ
Art State Arizona Markets • Tucson, AZ

2024

Art in the Park • Huachuca Art Association, Sierra Vista, AZ
Art State Arizona Markets • Tucson, AZ
Bisbee Art Market • Bisbee, AZ (Regular Artist)

2023

Pit Fire Festival • Cochise College, Douglas, AZ (Public Art Sculptor)
Central School Remake Show • Bisbee, AZ
Solo Exhibition • Cochise College, Douglas, AZ

Selected Builder Features & Festivals (Earlier Career)

HGTV Tiny House Hunters • Dallas, TX (Featured Builder)
San Francisco Maker Faire • San Jose, CA (Best in Show Builder)
California Tiny House Festival • San Diego, CA (Featured Builder)

Education & Conferences

University of North Texas • Denton, TX (2009-2013)

Bachelor of Fine Art • Major: Communication Design • Minor: Psychology

Cochise College • Sierra Vista, AZ (2022-Present)

Lifelong Learner • Major: Ceramics & Fine Art • Minor: Welding & Trades

Winter Count • Phoenix, AZ (2022-Present)

Annual Primitive Skills Conference • Participant & Educator

South West Primitive Kiln Conference • Safford, AZ (2023-Present)

Annual Primitive Pottery Conference • Participant

Professional Background

Dirt Creature Pottery

Founder & Artist (July 2025 - Present)

Founded Dirt Creature as an independent ceramics practice operating from a fully off-grid studio in Southern Arizona.

Terraform Together

Nonprofit Founder & Lead Instructor (July 2020 - Jan. 2024)

Founded a nonprofit focused on natural building, trades training, and hands-on education. Taught over 400 students through hands-on, community-based education programs. Large-scale clay building work and teaching informs a deep, embodied understanding of material behavior that directly influences my ceramic practice.

Things Align Design

Independent Designer & Creative Director (Feb. 2016 - Present)

Led an independent design studio serving nonprofits and small businesses. This work developed a strong foundation in visual storytelling, conceptual development, and clarity of communication. Combined with hands-on natural building experience, these skills support a cohesive and intentional art practice where material, form, and meaning are clearly articulated.

Various Professional Design Agencies

Graphic Designer & Art Director (Dec. 2007 - Feb. 2016)

Worked in professional agency environments producing design and digital work for Fortune 500 and national clients. This early career established a strong foundation in visual systems, material presentation, and disciplined creative process.

Bisbee Arts Commission

Commissioner / Board Member (Feb. 2024 - April 2025)

Led redevelopment of revenue-generating programs and restructuring of local arts grant funding for my local community.

Artist Timeline

2020: Began natural building and earth-based material study

2023: Began ceramics practice

2025: Founded Dirt Creature Pottery

