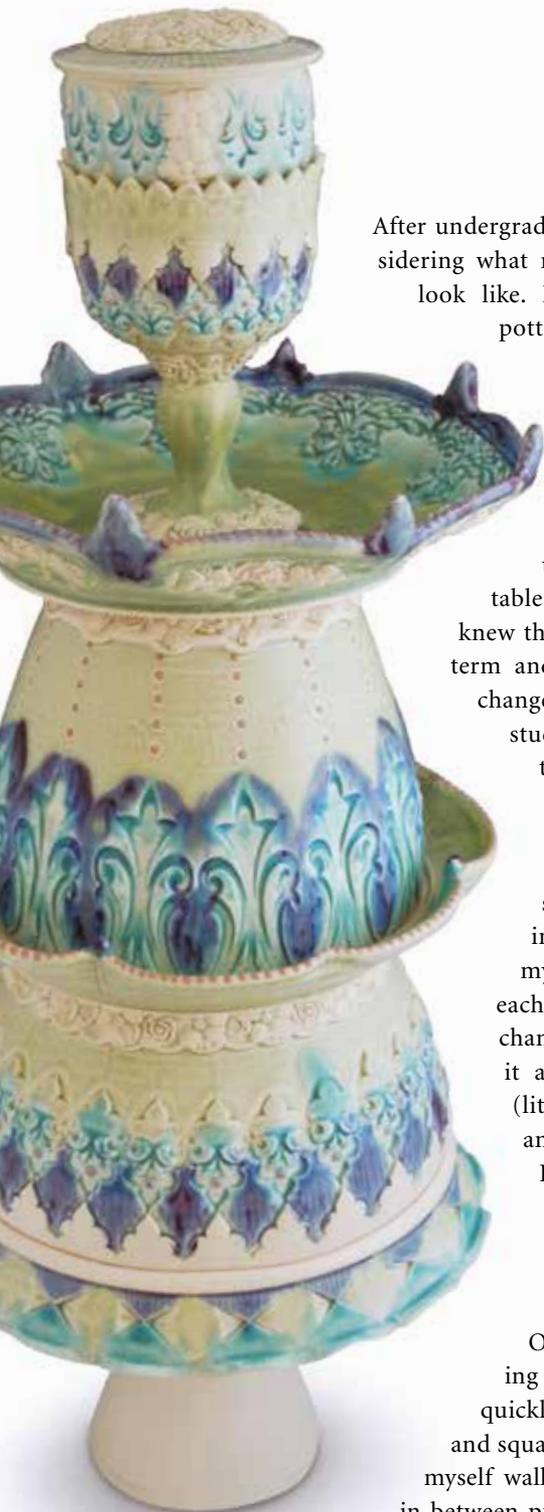


# Finding Perspective

by Lindsay Scypta



After undergraduate school, I began considering what my studio practice could look like. I identified myself as a potter using the wheel as my primary tool, and a decorator using the banding wheel to map out pattern and design. This back and forth from sitting at the wheel to sitting at the table was hard on my body. I knew this wasn't sustainable long term and that it was time for a change. When I set up my next studio, I made the decision to raise my wheel so that I could stand to throw and sit to decorate. This forced me to change positions regularly, elongating my spine and rolling my shoulders back before each task. This small shift changed my perspective, it allowed me to step back (literally and figuratively) and actually see the work. It also allowed me to view my work from many angles not just the foreshortened view I had become accustomed to. Once I got used to throwing standing up, my pots quickly transformed from short and squat, to tall and thin. I found myself walking away from the piece in between pulls just to see its silhouette from afar and to confirm the place-

ment of the belly or shoulder. I experienced a sense of freedom in this transition from my seated wheel position as if the chair and the pedal had chained me. Not to say that I don't experience fatigue from throwing while standing, but this seems more manageable.

I was content with this setup for years until one day, in an effort to beautify my basement studio space, I set a mirror in front of my wheel. Just like the transition I made in throwing, having the opportunity to see the piece from a new perspective again changed the work. Rather



1 Lindsay Scypta starting a pitcher form, using the mirror to check that the base and rim are centered.



2 Scypta looking into the mirror to confirm that the excess clay at the base has been repositioned and included in the first pull.

All process photos: Keith Fisher.



Using the mirror to confirm the placement of a division line in the pitcher form.

than looking downward at the top of my hands, now I could look forward into the mirror where my movements could become more refined. I could watch my hands from my perspective and through the mirror, shifting my view from my interior hand to my exterior hand. The effectiveness of each pull now could be realized before leaving the foundation of the piece (1, 2). There was a new intentionality to my forms and to the division line I place in each piece as a starting point for my decoration. Just like checking your outfit in the mirror one last time before leaving the house, I too use the mirror to confirm, check, and question my throwing decisions (3). I was willing to push the volume of my bowls further, and give an upward inflecting inhale to my pitcher forms, which prior to using the mirror had lost their posture at this point of expansion. I also began to implement mirrors into my wheel-throwing courses, where students are still sitting and throwing. With the mirror in front of them, they're able to sit with better posture, they can self-identify if their clay is centered, and the speed of each movement can be realized. The mirror often allows my students to answer their own questions ("Is this centered? Can I push this belly out further? Does this look ok?"). For beginners, the mirror gives perspective, it opens their eyes to the reality of their movements, and it provides a bit of confidence.

I use the mirror in quick glances, at pivotal points, in stepping back, and when I'm questioning myself. I don't stare into the mirror endlessly, and often I don't even realize I'm using it as the tool that it is. I encourage you to give the mirror a try especially if you're seated at the wheel. Move it around until you find the perfect placement, watch your hands move with the speed of the

wheel, use it to check that your piece is centered, and assess and question the silhouette of each form. Enjoy!

*Lindsay Scypta is a studio potter and adjunct instructor at Lourdes University and Owens Community College in Toledo, Ohio. She teaches community classes locally and workshops nationally. See more at [www.LindsayScypta.com](http://www.LindsayScypta.com), on Instagram @lindsayscypta, and on Facebook at Lindsay Scypta Ceramics.*

## Paragon introduces a new touch screen controller

After subjecting the new Sentinel Smart Touch controller to ruthless testing, we are proud to add this to our family of kilns.

### Easy to install

The Sentinel, made by Bartlett Instruments, is optional on most digital Paragon kilns. The Sentinel uses the same wiring harness as the Sentry 12-key controller and can replace the 12-key in minutes on existing Paragon kilns.

### Continuous voltage and amperage readout

New Paragon kilns equipped with the Sentinel give a continuous amperage and circuit voltage readout during firings. You will know at a glance if the voltage drops and when to replace elements.

### Easy-to-use touch screen

Easy-to-follow screen descriptions simplify programming. Give a title to each custom program. Use up to 32 segments per program. The novice mode is ingeniously simple, with questions that help you program each step.

### WiFi updates

As long as you have WiFi access, you can update the controller when new features are available even from distant lands like Australia.

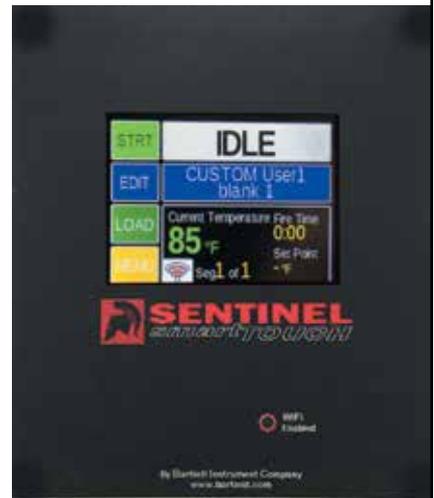
### Graphics display

The Sentinel displays a graph of the program during operation to show you the progress of the firing.

### Editing on the fly

Edit the program during firing with Skip Step, Add Segments, Add Temperature, and Add Time. Program a temperature alarm to remind yourself to check witness cones.

Join the Clayart pottery forum here:  
[lists.clayartworld.com](http://lists.clayartworld.com)



### Control a vent

The Sentinel can turn a kiln vent on or off for each segment of a program. And, of course, the Sentinel can control the cooling rate for special glaze effects.

For more details on the exciting Sentinel Smart Touch, please visit our website or call 800-876-4328. The controller you've dreamed of costs a lot less than you dreamed.



**Constantly finding better ways to make kilns.**

**Paragon Industries, L. P.**

Better Designed Kilns™

2011 South Town East Blvd.  
Mesquite, Texas 75149-1122  
800-876-4328 / 972-288-7557  
[www.paragonweb.com](http://www.paragonweb.com)  
[info@paragonweb.com](mailto:info@paragonweb.com)