ARTIST IN THE SPOTLIGHT



SAM SMITH

When and why did you join HAGAS?

I remember becoming a member of the club back in the early 1990s, when I was a student studying Ceramic and Glass Design at Uni SA's Underdale Campus. Then, when our little family came along in the early 2000s, life became all about mortgages, nappies, sport and playgrounds—so my art had to take a back seat. It wasn't until 2017, when space and time suddenly became my own again, that I decided to pick up the tools and joined Ting's class on a Monday night. I am just so thankful to my husband for storing my kiln, wheel and equipment for all that time. He was always so encouraging of my art and said I'd get back into it again one day. He was right!

What's your medium and why do you do what you do?



As a teenager, I loved drawing in pencil, pen and charcoal. I always wanted to study graphic design and illustration, but after doing a one-year art course at TAFE straight out of school, I met a wonderful ceramics teacher by the name of Helen Doubell. She introduced me to wheel throwing and slip casting, which I picked up quite quickly. I loved the precision and accuracy of the skills involved, and I could utilize my steady hand to illustrate my designs right onto the clay surface. I found it an exciting medium to work with, offering endless possibilities. The fact that it is so labour-intensive has somehow soothed my soul. It has taught me so much about being patient, slowing down, taking a breath and being present in the moment. Who would have ever thought back then, as a 19-year-old, how important clay and this practice would become as part of my day-to-day life? I am forever grateful. 😊

What's your strongest memory of your childhood?

I fondly remember taking long road trips around Australia with my parents and my sister, packed into the back seat of our EH Holden towing a caravan. We would spend hours playing games, listening to '80s music, and reading *Archie* and *Heckle and Jeckle* comics. Drawing took up a fair part of this road trip time, as I would constantly create my own comic strips while on vacation. Looking back, I think this is exactly what started me on my art path.

What is your dream project?

I absolutely adored working with other artists in both ceramics and painting here at HAGAS to produce some of the best art I have seen at our gallery for our *60th Anniversary for SALA* this year. Projects like this are incredibly inspirational, and I am so proud to be a part of this very special place and its wonderful people. Looking ahead, I would love to delve into more garden sculpture projects. Back at university, I made terracotta birdbaths utilizing both wheel-throwing and hand-building techniques, and I found it incredibly fulfilling to work in that way. It would be wonderful to explore that medium and process all over again.





Favourite or most inspirational place?

Any and every opportunity I get, I love going to galleries and markets whenever I visit a new city or country. My poor dear husband and kids are so patient with me. Luckily my eldest son is a gaming artist and enjoys being in the creative spaces with me, while my youngest son and husband find the nearest café to drink espressos and patiently wait for us. The garden, hiking and being in the great outdoors are also a great inspiration to my art and the forms they have taken over time.

Artistically, what's your goal?

My goal moving forward is to continue improving my teaching skills, while also making time for myself to experiment more. I want to embrace the challenge of mastering advanced ceramic techniques, like glaze technologies and different clay craftsmanship. I have felt so privileged to have the opportunity to teach wonderful students here at HAGAS for the last six years. Surprisingly, this experience has given me so much artistic growth—the kind of growth I didn't even realize I needed until now.