

# The transformation of a vase from a pound of clay:



# *Artistic Statement*

When my journey as a Catamount fellow began last September, I doubted whether I was the right person to explore such a complex issue. Looking back, I am proud to have experienced this journey.

With that, I draw parallels between my journey as a Catamount fellow and my journey into learning pottery. The art of crafting pottery is unique, as it gives you free will for self-expression by transforming clay into a functional and creative item. However, I learned that pottery is more than that. Pottery offers therapeutic benefits as it requires mindfulness in the present moment; it teaches you to be kind to yourself when your art fails; and, to appreciate the significance that lies not solely in the final product but in the process itself. Crafting flowers as my first attempt at pottery using the hand-building technique did not go as planned. However, I learned that instead of immediately working on the clay, I tried to strategize, considering what tools and techniques I might need to accomplish my goal. On my second try, I was happier and more satisfied with the results. When I tried the wheeling technique, on the other hand, it looked easy and effortless, but without the guidance and collaboration with my instructor, it would have not been a success.

The parallels between my pottery workshop journey and my journey as a Catamount fellow are apparent. In my pottery journey, I was given a pound of clay and the freedom to create an art of my choice. In my Catamount journey, I was assigned a How Might We question, in which I had the free will on how to approach and choose a system mapping tools to comprehensively understand the complex issue. Despite having distinct purposes, both journeys shared a transformative learning experience.