

Visit Oconee

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From attorney to artist: Local man's journey to Perspectives, Georgia's premier pottery event

WATKINSVILLE, GA— Watkinsville resident Matt Powelson began his career as an attorney practicing trademark and copyright law in California 17 years ago. Just two weeks after moving to Watkinsville in 2013, Powelson found inspiration to extend his talents from courtrooms to art studios after visiting the studios of local artists and attending pottery classes in his new home known as the *Artland of Georgia*.

"Not long after moving to Watkinsville I was able to understand how deep the artistic legacy is in the area. It's incredible and rich," Matt explained. "I saw ads for studio tours and my daughter and I became interested in taking pottery classes, and it all started from there."

Four years later, after studying under Jerry and Kathy Chappelle – owners of Watkinsville's Chappelle Gallery and Happy Valley Pottery – Powelson's work is now set to be featured in Georgia's largest pottery show – Perspectives: A Georgia Pottery Invitational. The 20-day event is hosted by the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation (OCAF) in Watkinsville, and showcases more than 7,000 handmade, functional pottery pieces by Georgia potters. The juried exhibit allows potters from across the state to submit an application and photos of their work to be judged for approval to be displayed in the show.

"To have my work featured in Perspectives is a nice validation of my pottery career to date. Some of these artists, like Jerry and Kathy Chappelle, have been doing this for 50 years. To be in a show with that caliber of individuals is a real honor," expressed Powelson.

In addition to the galleries exhibiting the art work of Powelson and other featured potters, Perspectives also includes a pottery sale, gallery talks by artist Michael Pitts, pottery

demonstrations by participating potters, and a workshop on Echizen – one of the Six Ancient Kilns of Japan— led by potter Naoki Izumi.

“Perspectives has become one of the foremost events of its kind in our region. Historically more than 6,000 visitors from all over the country attend the sale over nearly three weeks,” explained Cindy Farley, Director of the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation. “Now in its 15th year, Perspectives features the work of some of the most talented artisans producing ceramic works within our state. The forms, textures and glazed surfaces achieved by these potters are truly remarkable,” she continued.

A Southeast Tourism Society Top 20 Event, Perspectives will open Friday, August 25 with its Opening Gala Reception & Preview Sale from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. The reception will include live music, refreshments, and an opportunity to meet participating potters.

See the distinguished artwork of Matt and other Georgia artists at Perspectives from August 25 to September 13 at the OCAF Center located in Downtown Watkinsville. You can also watch art demonstrations by Matt Powelson, tour his studio, and view and purchase his pieces at 321 Pottery, also located in Watkinsville.

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About Matt Powelson

Matt Powelson is a local Watkinsville artist and the owner of 321 Pottery. His approach to pottery is inspired by his experiences as a lawyer and overlander. Powelson is involved in all processes of the pottery-making process, mixing his own clay and glazes from scratch. His work includes functional, production pottery inspired by a mix of western landscapes, nature, modern architecture, and industrial design, which are revealed in the style, shape, surface decoration, and color of his work. Website: www.321-pottery.com

About Perspectives: Georgia Pottery Invitational

Perspectives is a pottery show showcasing more than 7,000 handmade pottery pieces from Georgia potters. The 20-day event is the largest pottery show in the state of Georgia and arguably the Southeast. Celebrating its 15th year, the event is set to feature three exhibits, a sale, gallery talks, pottery demonstrations, and a workshop on Echizen – one of the Six Ancient Kilns of Japan— led by Naoki Izumi. Perspectives has been included in the Southeast Tourism Society’s Top 20 events for the past two years. Website: www.ocaf.com

About Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation

The Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation is a non-profit organization in Watkinsville, Georgia that works to promote and encourage art education in the community. Founded in 1994, the arts center hosts several art exhibits, courses, and events like the largest pottery show in the Southeast – Perspectives: Georgia Pottery Invitational. Website: www.ocaf.com

About Oconee County Tourism Department

The Oconee County Tourism Department acts as a professional destination marketing organization committed to promoting the area's facilities, attractions and events as a destination for visitors year-round, resulting in overnight stays, an increase in business activity, and the improved quality of life for Oconee County. Website: www.visitoconee.com