

Shana Salaff

• Artist Statement

I make useful ceramic vessels that are designed for aesthetic pleasure as well as utility. I am attempting, via my work, to enter into the very personal space of the viewer/user's home, thus participating in the intimate (and very necessary) rituals of another's daily life. From the consumption of food to the decoration of the home, function and aesthetics can co-exist in all aspects of life.

Each piece is part of a conscious process of experimentation and elimination. Most groups of work begin with my sitting down at the potter's wheel for a few days and throwing a number of different parts. I then spend the next month or so cutting, attaching, and adding hand-built components to these parts. Although each grouping begins with the vague idea of a finished product, many changes occur along the way. Each piece asserts its own individual needs or predilections. The particular shape, relative softness or surface quality of the wet clay sections that I am working with continually demand a response and tend to derail any too-specific planning.

My work runs the gamut between traditional or historically significant forms and inspirations and a more postmodern pastiche of style, colors, and decorative patterns. I see the items that I make as being useful "jewels" - shiny, small in stature, and made with as much care as possible. I love beauty and elegance as much as quirkiness and playfulness, and my vessels seek to allow the user to share my passions. Decoration versus content, beauty versus pragmatism; these are the dialectics that inform my work. My own struggles to carve out a personal identity as an artist are mirrored in the individual creative struggle encountered while producing each piece.