

PENLAND GALLERY

GERTRUDE GRAHAM SMITH

Bakersville, NC

CLAY | Functional pottery

Penland Affiliation | Penland Resident Artist 1987, Penland Instructor 2007, 2014, 2016, former Penland Board of Trustees

Artist Information | Studio artist; education: University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (MA), University of Oregon (OR); residencies: Penland School of Craft (NC), Archie Bray Foundation (MT); teaching: Haystack Mountain School of Crafts (ME), Penland School of Craft (NC), Harvard Ceramics Studio (MA), Findhorn Foundation (Scotland).

Artist Statement | *My pottery is made of porcelain clay formed and altered on the potter's wheel, glazed when leather-hard, and fired to cone 10 in a soda kiln. I seek for fire and kiln atmosphere to decorate my pots by creating responsive surfaces and forms. I am interested in the tactile quality of clay, and my pieces appeal to the sense of touch and the scale of the human hand. The pots look alive, and a bit whimsical, and I intend that they will bring life, beauty, and years of enjoyment into the lives of those who use them. These days, I contemplate living as a practicing artist on a planet facing extraordinary shifts. I imagine what the work of my hands and heart might contribute.*

Perhaps, this work develops qualities that may be of benefit: caring attention, commitment, honesty, courage, passion, hard work, love of beauty, and a willingness to get one's hands dirty. Simple pottery, like cups, can be made consciously to hold and serve nourishment. Objects are designed to bring pleasure and joy with use and touch. The continuing, primordial, mysterious act of creation links us with that process, and with the essential raw materials of which we and the pots are made: earth, water, fire, and air.

Do consciously made pots carry some ineffable ability to transform and heal? What lies embedded in the stone of fired clay by the creative alchemical bond between material, process, and person? What may be conveyed through use or enjoyment? A hand grasps a handle; compassion arises in the heart. This is what I intend.

Technical Information | Soda-fired porcelain

Penland School of Craft | Penland Gallery & Visitors Center
3135 Conley Ridge Road, Bakersville, NC 28705
gallery@penland.org | 828 765 6211
penland.org/gallery