

PENLAND GALLERY

JEN ALLEN

Morgantown, WV

CLAY | Functional ceramics

Artist Information | Studio artist; education: MFA Indiana University, Bloomington (IN), BFA University of Alaska, Anchorage (AK); teaching: West Virginia University (WV), Bowling Green State University (OH), Carroll College (MT), Indiana University, Bloomington (IN); residencies: Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts (ME), Fallingwater (PA), Archie Bray Foundation (MT), Red Lodge Clay Center (MT), West Virginia University (WV), MacNamara Foundation (ME), Rochester Institute of Technology (NY); exhibitions: Red Lodge Clay Center (MT), Society for Contemporary Craft (PA), Schaller Gallery (MI), Companion Gallery (TN), Saratoga Clay Arts Center (NY), Emory and Henry College (VA), Lillstreet Art Center (IL), Plinth Gallery (CO), Gandee Gallery (NY), Zen Clay (WV), The Clay Studio (PA), International Gallery of Contemporary Art (AK)

Artist Bio | Jen Allen received a BFA from the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and a MFA from Indiana University, Bloomington. From 1998-2002, she worked as a production assistant to Kris Bliss at Bliss Pottery in Anchorage, AK. In March 2008, the National Council for the Education of Ceramic Arts (NCECA) recognized Jennifer as an “Emerging Artist”. Among other awards, she was the recipient of the 2006-2007 Taunt Fellowship at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, MT. In addition to keeping a home studio, Jennifer currently teaches ceramic classes at West Virginia University.

Artist Statement | *Whether forming a vase that decorates a room or producing dinnerware that celebrates a meal, my work is made to honor and enhance the rhythms of home life. Driven to create for special occasions, I visualize the holiday table brimming with friends, food, flowers, and candlelight. While I enjoy the vibrant energy encircling a festive gathering, I find the contemplative moments sipping a morning cup of coffee equally as invigorating. My work is intended to live in these instances of physical and psychological nourishment.*

As a lover of textiles and sewing, I use two dimensional templates to build three dimensional forms out of slabs. I utilize details such as folds, seams, darts, pleats, tufts and ruffles to relate to the craft of a seamstress. It is important that these methods of construction are evident in each finished piece as a nod to process and the pots “life” with the maker.

Decorative imagery is gathered from specific textile sources created during times of optimism and progress: post WWII textiles, Arts and Crafts Era designs and Edo period kimono fabrics. This imagery is then transferred to my forms by way of handmade stamps and/or carved imagery. Repetition of stamped textures is a way for me to refer back to my love of sewing and to communicate a sense of wonder and merriment. The texture in my work is also a means to offer a tactile experience for the user. You cannot just see the decoration, you can FEEL it!

Penland School of Craft | Penland Gallery & Visitors Center
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