

Kimberlee Joy Roth

Artist Statement / Artistic Goals

Throughout history, rhythmic arrangements of ornamental embellishments have enriched the surfaces of architecture, furniture and clothing, as well as metal, glass and ceramic fine art objects. The Art Nouveau period's use of strong curvilinear and varied thickness of line created complex and sophisticated designs that appeared deceptively simple. This aesthetic along with the spirals, ogival arches and trefoils of Islamic and Moorish architecture and the lotus petals, clouds and waves of Korean and Chinese ceramics are the primary influence of my work.

The secondary influence on my work is the fact that the embellishments on these fine art objects were meant solely as decoration of a purely utilitarian object. This marriage of embellishment and utilitarian object is the basic idea and inspiration behind my oeuvre: that is to create utilitarian nontraditionally shaped ceramic serving platters that maintain a curvilinear edge throughout the form and which reference historical decorative motifs.

Contours I associate with femininity, softness and sexuality create the core imagery and overall form of my pieces. I strive to create individual ceramic forms that communicate an underlying sexual connotation and overall compositions with provocative movement and striking color relationships. I then arrange these forms into symmetrical repetitively patterned compositions that subtly allude to Islamic tiled façades. The negative spaces in-between the plate arrangements inform the development of the overall background design. These formal relationships between the objects and background create a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing composition.

Today's contemporary ceramics include figurative forms and abstract sculpture, utilitarian ware and architectural and decorative tile. My work is wall sculpture that is still functional; it can be used to also contain and serve food. I see it as a bridge between decorative tile and utilitarian ware and as a vehicle for beginning a communication between these two disparate uses of the same material.

Working Process

Due to my mathematical background, it is mentally and artistically stimulating for me to abstract floral forms toward a geometric symmetry. The technical steps to developing a form start with studying an object such as a flower and creating from its contours a first-draft outline for the outer edge of a bowl or plate. The refined outline becomes the footprint of a piece. This footprint, transferred onto a two inch high piece of Styrofoam, is cut out and becomes the positive form from which a master slip cast mold is created. The piece's rim, inside containment areas, sides and foot are hand carved. I take into account the limitations of my slip body while carving, considerations for slumping, size limitations for height to length ratios and other structural necessities inform the finished sculptural shape. I formulate all of my glazes to create a color palette of satin matte and shiny glazes that feel and look sensual.