

James Aarons

Ceramic Artist

I began working with clay in 1974, when, as a teenager, I dedicated myself to the task of capturing a sense of form and balance in traditional ceramics. My work has since evolved from wheel thrown vessels and pots to contemporary tableware and art pieces that I create in my private studio, Natoma Ceramic Design.

My artistic career began as a dancer. I earned a B.F.A. from North Carolina School for the Arts in 1984. That same year I embarked on a 15 year professional performing career that has included dancing and choreographing original works, while simultaneously developing my craft as a ceramic artist. Among the more notable companies with whom I have performed are Nikolais Dance Theatre, Erick Hawkins Dance Company, and Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. This dual artistic career has inspired me to create ceramics with a sense of movement and dynamism.

I have always found dancing and the making of pottery to be kindred-spirited art forms. Each has been a very physical experience for me and one has fed the other. In my years as a dancer I discovered the value that abstract gesture and form holds for me and I try to represent that value in my ceramic pieces. The results are wall pieces with brightly glazed patterns that seem to cause the eye to move through pathways across their surfaces, ceramic drawings that quietly vibrate with internal energy, and a collection of tabletop accessories that rock and tilt suggesting motion. My work is a balance of energy and visual design, a melding of movement and imagery.

My work is available at select galleries across the country, including Idyllwild Gallery in Idyllwild, CA; Morgan Library and Museum, New York, NY, Gingrass Gallery in Milwaukee, WI and Left Bank Gallery in Wellfleet, MA. I have exhibited nationally and have created commissions including a tableware design for San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Museum Store.