

Statement for Jenni Brant

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I believe that the experience of beauty is important for its ability to inspire reflective contemplation. Beautiful things have the power to arrest our attention, to take over our consciousness and move us to new places in unexpected ways. Beauty has the power to make us more aware of the present moment and more aware of those we are sharing it with. The experience of beautiful objects is an enriching and necessary facet of human existence. My work is life affirming and reminds us to celebrate the ordinary as well as the extraordinary: the trivial, the tragic and the triumphant.

I bring beauty into existence by creating functional ceramic objects. Pots are of an intimate scale and are utilitarian in nature; they come into direct contact with our bodies and our senses, and occupy our domestic spaces. The forms, surfaces, colors and craftsmanship in my work all serve to illustrate and communicate beauty as I define it. My understanding of beauty is rooted in my rural mid-western upbringing, in its emphasis on family bonds, respect and hard work. My aesthetic awareness was shaped in the idyllic environment fostered by my parents, which provided our family with a beautiful and serene space in which to grow.

Ideally, my pots serve as focal points in family celebrations and gatherings. Vessels with specific utilitarian functions ritualize the significance of extended family get-togethers and traditions. For most of the year, the pieces are beautiful objects that serve as symbols of important events to come and reminders of times spent with loved ones in the past. The work is admired and appreciated while on display in the china hutch; anxiously waiting to be handled, continuously reminding us of special times.

The beauty of my work should leave you breathless. Eyes trace voluptuous curves and sensual crevices that long to be embraced by our hands and caressed by our fingers. Small feet, exaggerated handles, and thinly refined edges seem precarious and fragile, warning us to handle everything with care. Symmetrical forms calm our fears, grounding us in balance and repetition. Ornamented with pearls and lace, the work is formal while also suggestive; scantily dressed in smooth, luscious, and transparent surfaces. Colors remind us of flesh and of candy; things that are sweet, good, and that stir desire. While fresh and contemporary, they are comfortable in their reference to pots of ancient Persia and Sung dynasty China. Although the obsessive hand of the maker is not overtly apparent in the forms I create, the eye and spirit is, bringing to life and presenting to the world all that I deem beautiful.

-Jenni Brant