

Nicholas Bernard Artist's Statement

I have traveled extensively in Asia Minor (particularly in Turkey and Greece) doing independent research into contemporary and classical ceramic art.



This recent body of work is an exploration of classical forms and their manipulation. Each piece leads to the next. The fired pieces ask to be made again with alterations and subtle changes in form, color and decoration. Some pieces are fired four or more times; reworking pieces through several firings creates depth of color and surface texture.

The subtle changes in color and texture create rich, painterly surfaces that are neither contrived nor expected.

The forms created by ancient, anonymous artisans/artists, with their lack of pretense, incredible craftsmanship and technical virtuosity have been the standard for thousands of years. As a contemporary ceramic artist I am pushing the boundaries of the past, the past of which I am humbled and enthralled.

Technical Description

These pieces are thrown with a heavily grogged white earthenware clay. The pieces are sometimes stretched, cut, reassembled and altered further while wet. Handles and additions are added after trimming if any. Most pieces require a drying time between one and two weeks as the handles will crack if dried too quickly.

Decoration sometimes begins in the leather-hard state, with the application of slips using ceramic stains or oxides as colorants. Other pieces are bisque fired and then decorated. Layers of colored slips are added and manipulated through several firings to achieve color and texture. All pieces are fired in a gas kiln in oxidation to Cone 03 or 2000 degrees F.