

It is safe to say that throughout the latter half of the Twentieth Century, the majority of strictly functional potters looked to the East for inspiration and influence, either via the Hamada-Leach philosophy, or more directly by way of the historical works produced at various Japanese, Chinese and Korean kilns. Those few potters who did look to the modernist movement of Scandinavia and Northern Europe typically expressed their aesthetic sensibilities within the bounds of chunky stonewares, or other high-fire technologies. More recently, a handful of potters have aligned themselves directly within the traditions of European earthenware pottery; both that produced by village potters for a local clientele, and that designed and engineered at the great manufactories and destined to grace the tables and sideboards of individuals flung far and wide around the world.

Kari Radasch (RAY-dash) is an exciting young artist who is borrowing from both of these European traditions. Her vibrant dishes, candelabra and serving pieces contain references to both the elaborate forms and over-the-top concepts of the kind of work coming out of Stoke-On-Trent in the 19th century, combined with the not-quite random and casual glazing found on many French peasant pieces.

Using plaster molds taken from original or found models, Kari constructs her pieces from red clay and covers it with white slip. Generous forms, such as large platters, are subdivided by patches of contrasting flowing glazes that converge and pool in low areas and around details. Those details, upon examination, are revealed as delicate linear slipwork and scrafitto, outlining edges; decorations suggesting blossoms, leaves, arabesques, along with sprigged 'buttons'. These drawn and applied details often become apparent only upon close examination of the object. Working in an atypical way with both transparent and opaque layers of glaze one upon another, Kari achieves a surface that is mesmerizing to those uninterested in quiet restraint.

Kari represents a group of talented young artists choosing the studio over the academy. These are individuals full of energy for the hard work involved in succeeding in a marginalized art form. As one of Kari Radasch's teachers during her graduate program I can't help but applaud her accomplishments to date, and await with anticipation the contributions she will make to our field in the future. Kari and her peers represent the Next Wave in the American Pottery Movement.

Gail Kendall
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