

Victoria Crowell, the potter

Victoria Crowell is a porcelain artist. In 1975, she received her BFA from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. Her work is collected from upstate New York to Australia, throughout Europe and the Far East. Galleries, museums, and private collections house more than a quarter century of her art. Victoria is having the time of her life designing and creating with clay.

In 1977, Victoria established a solo design studio on the side of Bald Mountain, Center Brunswick, New York. Her studio and gallery are surrounded by gardens that have been planted over the past 30 years. The garden and the pottery have been evolving together to create an oasis of color, textures and patterns. Whether you are viewing vessels in the gallery or strolling along a garden path, you will find yourself enmeshed with all these elements.

Victoria Crowell, the work

Like paper of the finest quality, porcelain clay provides a soft texture, whiteness, and permanence that I find so irresistible. I have always been bound up in the making of traditional forms, which are captured from thousands of years of changing cultures.

Using porcelain clay, the forms are either hand-thrown on a potter's wheel or hand-built from a rolled slab. Colored clay slips become my paints. Line is created by brush or by cutting away, using the sgraffito technique. The designs have been continually changing through the years, yet the themes of people, animals, plants, color, black and white and geometrics have always been with me. One or many of these themes can appear on an individual vessel.

Geometric black and white designs have grown from the study of Japanese textile patterns, the woodcuts of Frans Masereel, and the traditional Shino and Oribe ware of Japan. Also, the influence of the Fauve Landscape painters captured the high-keyed colors and simplified forms I love to paint using the color slips.

Two firings are done. The first, an 1800°F bisque firing, after which a glaze may be applied. The second high-temperature firing, at 2400°F, fully matures the porcelain, slips, and glazes to their permanent state. Results can never be exactly repeated. With the introduction of heat from the kiln firing, and the changing of raw materials that are mined from the earth, there is always variation. These pots are traditional in form and function. Only the unglazed surfaces should not be used with food.

From soft clay, fire, and my hands, these pots are created to enrich our lives daily.