

Shawn O'Connor

Artist Statement

A home cooked meal is still the essence of good, nourishing food for the body and soul. Society as a whole has forgotten that handmade pots can offer the same thing. The benefit of using handmade pots is that they contain the idea of human endeavor. For embedded within the handmade pot that we use every day resides the memory of our human evolution, an idea that transcends ethnic and racial, economic and class, cultural and national boundaries. The biggest success of hand made pots, unlike other art forms is that it is approachable and accessible. It is an art form that represents conversation between maker and user, and enters the home with the ability to affect and interact with the inhabitants on a daily basis.

My focus on utilitarian objects fills a desire to create useful objects for service in the home. My home growing up was strongly focused around the family. Family dinners were important and rarely missed growing up. My extended family gathered quite often for social events such as birthdays and holidays that always revolved around food. I would like to extend this sense of comfort and warmth through my work to others who use it.

The work I make is tailored for the process of wood firing. During the making, I leave the surfaces of the work quiet and relatively unmarked to allow the flame to create the modulated surface that I desire. The pieces are marked by the flame, colored by the kiln atmosphere, christened by ash deposits, and freckled by erupting impurities. I am fascinated with the rich surface left by this process. No two pieces are exactly the same as the flames path records distinct marks on each piece. The wood fired surface is much like the way wind and water erode rock and earth. The flame moves through the kiln wrapping in and around the work, leaving a mark dependant on what is next to, touching, or above that particular piece. The path of the flame can be controlled when stacking the kiln. Great time and care is spent on each piece as it is loaded, as this will dictate the way the flame moves over and marks the surface of this piece.