

AMY SANDERS DE MELO

Artist Statement

As a Colombian-American ceramic artist and educator with vision and hearing loss, I strive to create work that speaks to the resiliency of the human spirit. I utilize Braille as a way of telling stories, encouraging meditation, and creating space for grieving and healing. My wheel-thrown work from my *Invisible Words* series features handwritten Braille messages that encourage reflecting on one's own humanity and the necessity of empathy and empowerment for all individuals.

Pieces from the *Invisible Words* series create moments of connection through recognizable forms and their function, while in other instances, they create disconnect as the Braille is unreadable by most viewers. This back and forth feeling mimics the way I often feel-- somewhere between disabled and able-bodied, non-functional and functional. We all experience loss, grief, and healing in different ways throughout our lives. Using Braille on ceramics started as a way of coping with my vision loss, but it has evolved into a storytelling method intended to be felt and used by anyone, blind or not. Braille is a tactile way of placing emotions, convictions, and intentions directly on my work, and these tactile wares aim to create a home for all of us-- a place where everyone can experience acceptance, dignity, and healing.