

american
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**THE
CRAFT
OF
DESIGN**

25 ARTISTS
MAKE AUTHENTICITY WORK

Ochre Monoprint Vessel, 2012, stoneware, slip, glaze, 10 x 12 x 13 in.



Striped Bucket Vessel, 2012, stoneware, slip, glaze, 10 x 14 x 12 in.



“My work has really separated out, between more sculptural vessels, works on paper, and then the functional work I do that’s designed for industry,” says Erteman. She enjoys having a product out there that’s accessible to just about anybody. “I don’t believe in the \$75 mug. I believe in affordable good design,” she says. “It’s like the Eames slogan – which is exactly how I feel as well: ‘The best for the most for the least.’” She’s especially proud of how food looks on her plates. “I really consider that. Most ceramic artists love cooking and entertaining, and I’m no exception. So my designs are often driven by ‘What do I need to cook what I’m interested in right now? What would present the food well?’”

Her advice to young makers considering industrial design? “I would encourage ceramic artists who are interested in pursuing design to form alliances and get a conversation going,” she says. “You know, photographers have a very strong lobby [with regard to] pricing and terms of use that they’ve developed over the years, and [they have] agents, just to make sure they get paid for something that’s so easy to reproduce.” Also, she says, understand that design for industry is a true

Kathy Erteman

IF YOU’VE SHOPPED AT CRATE & Barrel lately, you may have seen the 18th Street Collection, a set of sophisticated, rustic-refined dinnerware in a muted palette of black and cream, the newest line by Kathy Erteman.

A critically acclaimed ceramist whose sculptural work is shown in museums and galleries, Erteman has been collaborating with industry, designing and making molds and prototypes for manufacture, since the early 1990s – a time when some in the craft world dismissed that direction.

“‘Oh, Kathy Erteman. I like her work, but, you know – she does design.’ I heard that third-hand,” says the New York-based artist, adding that times – and attitudes – have definitely changed. “All of a sudden, design is good.”

Erteman never set out to be any sort of groundbreaker; she just always envisioned a dual way of working. She grew up in Los Angeles, the daughter of parents from the Netherlands and Austria. On trips to Europe, she saw that combining one-of-a-kind work with design for industry was a common

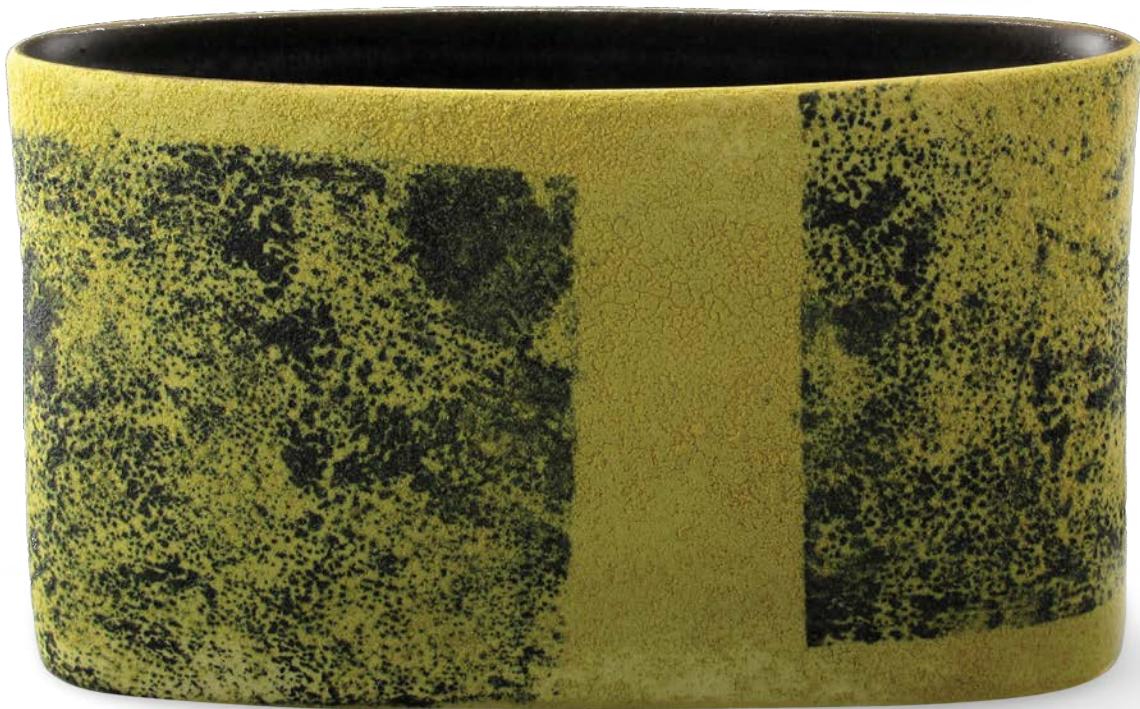
model for ceramists. She went to California State University at Long Beach (mainly because it offered training in plaster moldmaking, a technique she would use for years), and later studied with the celebrated ceramist Adrian Saxe at UCLA. As she established her career during the ’80s and ’90s, she simultaneously pursued her individual studio work while cultivating tableware-industry connections (“making it up as I went along”) that led to projects for clients such as Dansk and Tiffany.



Veil, 2009,
porcelain, slip,
glaze, 18 x 16 in.



Small Vessel 3B, 2012,
stoneware, slip, glaze,
6 x 6 in. dia.



Small Vessel 4, 2012,
stoneware, slip, glaze,
5 x 8 x 1 in.

collaboration; it's not about an artist's ego and expectations.

"Working with industry, it's more, 'What can you do for us? Can you do something extraordinary that also fits in?'"

In today's market especially, artists need to be open and adaptable. Different artists have told her over the years that "basically the code or formula in the art world is, you develop a concept in graduate school and then you spend the rest of your career on that one concept, developing and promoting it," she

says. But "that's the success of the past," Erteman says.

"I realize that clarity in what you do is important, but I don't know how that's going to play out in years to come."

Erteman has found that having a variety of avenues for her creativity has been a fulfilling model. "Some of my students have said, 'You've picked one thing and done it your whole life.' And I say, 'Yes, but within the one thing, I've done many things!'"

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kathyerteman.com

Erteman's 18th Street dinnerware, designed for Crate & Barrel

