

The Clay Studio
100 Artists
1000 Cups



Julia Galloway

Missoula, Montana

ON MENTORS

When I was a ridiculously overconfident undergraduate student, I told one of my professors that I wanted to "make everyone's favorite mug" – and exactly, how could I do that? He did look a little taken aback by my energetic bombastic request and after a slow smile he said, "Well, Julia, I don't know about a favorite mug, but I do remember at my grandmother's house she had a well in the backyard. There was this small metal cup that hung there, by the well, and each day I would drink from that cup, such cold water, the coldest water, so soothing on a hot day."

Well, that stopped me for a minute. Mulling it over I realized that it's more than the mug, that a favorite mug would have to come from experience and meaning in addition to form and surface. I do not know this tin cup or well where such cool water flows, but I can be there for a minute, and taste that slightly metallic spring water and see this now passed professor as a young man in a back yard in western New York state, pausing for a long slow drink.

ON CUPS

My favorite cup changes all the time, how can someone have one favorite? The reason for a favorite cup is based on context and desire.

I fall in love with cups over and over again. What I do know for certain is that nothing touches my lips as often as a cup. I know that I have a special fondness for cups that have begun to show their age – with a chip on the lip of that dreaded hairline crack that reveals itself down its side.

ON INFLUENCE

Influence, appropriating and downright stealing has been a big issue in the larger field of ceramics. We send a bit of a mixed message to younger potters – we encourage them to develop their own voice, pretty much since day one. But this is just about impossible, when they are just learning how to see and how to touch the clay. We also encourage them to copy the great master potters to learn how to make pots and see form and decoration through copying. What is a young potter to do?

The Silk Route and development of porcelains from China to Europe was crazy influential on historical and contemporary ceramics. The Silk Route was a bit of an appropriation feast! From the desire to copy rose such great innovation and brilliant cultural reflection.

Today? I think it's difficult on young potters, so much pressure to develop their "own work" and also

to post images of their newest creations, while the work is still in the kiln! There are so many and such consistent images online of new and undeveloped work, of pottery buckling under the overabundance of 'cool' images and unrelated content on its surface, with modest understanding of form.

About ten years ago I was speaking with a potter who had many of his "early" pots included in publications and posters. These early pots had a sense of a chameleon, a constantly changing look, work that was heavily influenced by which workshop he had just attended. In reflection he said, "It was a good way to learn, copying other people's pottery to understand surface and form – but looking back now, I just wish I hadn't done it so publicly." I think this is not as true for young artists today. There is constant access online about how artists make everything, clever handles and feet, every color under-glaze at every temperature. I suspect that the pressure for uniqueness is slowly fading – and to be known as "someone who makes work like so-and-so" is not such a stigma anymore, since we just learned how to make anything on YouTube. We will see where this leads.



BIOGRAPHY

Julia Galloway is a utilitarian potter and professor at the School of Art, University of Montana, Missoula. Julia was born and raised in Boston. She did her graduate studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder, her BFA at New York State College of Art & Design at Alfred University and studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design. Julia has served on the board of the

Haystack Mountain School of Crafts and the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts. In addition, she has developed service-based websites: "Montana Clay" and "The Field Guide for Ceramics Artisans."

STATEMENT

I am interested in pottery that is joyous, objects that weave into our daily lives through use. Pottery decorates our living spaces with character and elegance. Teapots celebrate our drinking tea; a pitcher decorates a mantel when not in use; a mug with slight texture inside the handle allows our fingers to discover uniqueness. Pottery is a reflection of us. I am curious about its inherent dialogue and celebratory use.