

## **Rebecca Arthur**

While pursuing an art degree in interior design with a concentration in history of furniture at San Jose State University, I had the opportunity to explore many media: wood furniture making, ceramics, textiles, painting, sculpture, printmaking and photography. I realized there were too many ideas to explore in one lifetime. Also, I became fascinated by the work of Georgia O’Keeffe and the concept of abstract realism.

After earning my degree and working in architecture, I became a furniture maker. I incorporated O’Keeffe’s motto "Simplify, Eliminate, Emphasize" as the theme in my work, creating bold, minimalistic forms. Then I discovered clay. The clay vessels became my three-dimensional canvasses – abstract, sensuous and tactile.

My work is hand built, wheel thrown or a combination of both. I concentrate on low-fire techniques such as Raku and pit firing. Raku firing is done quickly, reaching the desired temperature in under an hour. The white-hot pieces are then pulled from the kiln and rapidly cooled in open air, submerged in water, or smoked in combustible material. Pit firing is a wood fired technique where I am able to “paint” the pieces with fire and smoke. In both methods, the results vary widely. I delight in the random, ethereal, almost surreal results. Zao Wou-ki, the Chinese/French abstract painter, captured this feeling when he spoke of how to represent the wind, how to paint emptiness or the silence of space.

Recently, the swirling images of cosmic play as seen in optical space telescope photos have fascinated me. I am exploring this cosmic play to create abstract, boldly textured vessels that accentuate the movement of light reflecting from the textured edges and give a feeling of the colors, swirling patterns and depth of the universe.

I live in Corvallis, Oregon, nestled against the Coast Range Mountains in the beautiful Willamette Valley. My abstract exploration includes three dimensionally working with clay and two dimensionally painting with watercolor.