

JOANNE JAFFE
Artist's Statement and Bio

Moving to Los Angeles from New York in the late '60s, I received an MA in English at UCLA and began a career as an editor, working on art- and design-related publications—among them at the Los Angeles County Art Museum, for *Architectural Digest* magazine, and as the founding editor of *Angeles* magazine. Simultaneously, in my free time, I explored a variety of art forms: drawing and making soft sculptures, wearable art, fetish objects, and jewelry. In the late '70s and early '80s I exhibited fantasy costumes at the Arco Center for Visual Art, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Oakland Museum, created feathered costumes for “Raiders of the Lost Ark” and had a boutique line of wearable-art garments.

The passion for ceramics overtook me in the mid-90s, supplanting all other art forms. I was quickly seduced by the sensuality of clay, the mystery and complexity of glazing, the merging of art and craft, hand and head. I fell in love with ceramics' endless possibilities and that it could readily incorporate drawing, painting, and sculpture. In an attempt to absorb as much and as quickly as I could, I studied with several Los Angeles ceramists and was exposed to a wide variety of styles and techniques. I found myself drawn both to functional work, often wheel-thrown, and to more sculptural forms.

As I progressed, I began working in series, and increasingly gave expression to my love of drawing by emphasizing surface decoration and utilizing sgraffito, mishima, slips and colored stains, and, most recently, underglazes. My imagery has ranged from the geometric to the figurative, floral, and calligraphic, and has frequently alluded to the ceramic traditions of other cultures (ancient Greek, Pre-Columbian, African, Asian, etc.) What interests me abidingly are the juxtapositions of differently patterned areas. I never draw first. The decoration is always an attempt to marry drawing and carving to form.