



# Jerry L. Bennett

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## Ceramic Botanica

A ceramic exhibition of natural elements and forms expressed with line, texture, and color in fine porcelain.

## Artist Statement

When I was in preschool and elementary school, my favorite time of day was when I was allowed to make art; to draw and paint. To this day, I remember making paper mache animals in grade school and painting them with tempera paint. It was quite a problem for my teachers since it was all I wanted to do at school. However, as I got older, this love of art never faded. My parents were quite confused about my interest in art but allowed me to go to the Springfield Missouri Art Museum almost every day to look at art and visit the library at the museum. In addition, I took ceramic classes on weekends and was there nearly every day. Eventually, I went to college to study pottery. First, I went to Southwest Missouri State University, where I earned a Bachelor of Fine Art, and then to Indiana University, where I earned a Master of Fine Art in Studio Ceramics. For the past fifty-plus years, I have made pottery daily.

As an artist, the technique or medium I use is called paper clay, where I add organic, recycled paper fibers to the wet porcelain. This technique for pottery is about 20+ years old, and I am one of the first to incorporate the method into my work.

Exploring form, texture, and light as it applies to translucent forms is the current direction of my work. I am working with porcelain; the best I can make using fine European porcelain as my inspiration. First, I form each piece by folding or darting the form to get the shape I want. I then allow the form to dry, wash it with water to smooth the surface, and then draw on the surface with a pencil to plan the decoration. Most of the decoration on my pottery is done with underglazes or colored clays. These are painted onto the surface, and it usually takes three coats to get a complete covering. No mechanical or photo process is used. I strive to find movement and especially "attitude" in my work. Although there are traditional aspects of my work.

After the first Kiln firing or bisque firing, the pottery is glazed with colored glazes on the inside and transparent glazes outside over the underglazes. No attempt is made to make the floral pattern look realistic or life-like. Instead, the pattern, color, and line are the decoration's critical parts. I produce functional pottery; the actual intent is to create fun, relaxed, and contemporary ceramics. I create all of the work in my studio without apprentices or employees. I hope you enjoy and love the pottery.