

Norah Ruth Amstutz

My work honors the inherent value and dignity of the feminine, seeing it as a vital pathway to more sustainable living. The feminine tendency to nurture and cultivate is an antidote to the aggressive and ravenous forms of power that order contemporary human hierarchies.

I combine feminine inspired silhouettes with baluster forms to create a vessel that is both stately and sinuous. Nourishment and cultivation have come to be known as feminine traits, and feminine traits have been labeled as weaknesses. In order to emphasize the importance of feminine energy, I create a form with waist and hips following the guidelines of a baluster, visual language that is associated with architecture of power and status. The baluster is named for the Latin word *balaustra*, for pomegranate, earned by its portrayal of a blossoming pomegranate flower bud, with its bulbous base and steadily opening neck and mouth. This sign of luscious abundance entered architecture during the Renaissance and has appeared in countless structures of consequence since then. My surface designs add exuberance and movement to the forms. I prefer improvising abundant botanical patterns in high fire atmospheres to infuse my feminine vessels with a buoyant girlish spirit. I have grown up in the Michiana potter's community of northern Indiana and southern Michigan, specifically in Goshen, IN. There I have been fortunate to practice wood, soda, salt and gas firing and these methods help me continue exploring the possibilities of glaze and clay. I am currently working towards my MFA in ceramics at Notre Dame.