

## Career Profile

### P. J. Anderson



P. J. Anderson is a Canadian clay artist whose sculptural forms are based on her research into traditional West African and South African crafts. A recent graduate of the University of Manitoba, Anderson is drawn to the relationship between the ceramic and metal works of these long-established traditions.

#### **How did you get interested in ceramics?**

**P.J.** When I was young I used to play with clay. Later, as a student at the University of Manitoba, I was convinced that I was a painter. But I needed a 3-D course so I took ceramics. It was instantaneous—like I had just found a home—and I thought *this is what I'm supposed to be doing!* I immediately signed up for all the ceramics classes I could take.

#### **Who are your favorite artists?**

**P.J.** Magdalene Odundo is my hero. I also like Gabrielle Koch who is a German artist living in Great Britain, and Clive Sithole who is a very well-known South African artist.

#### **How do you show and sell your work?**

**P.J.** I spend a lot of time looking and applying for art shows. I have a studio in my house and people will stop by to see things, or buy, or order things.

#### **What do you feel most passionate about?**

**P.J.** My first passion is African ceramics and I was happy to be out in the field with indigenous potters in South Africa. The

women doing this are not young women. Some are seventy years old. They chip the clay, fill the bags, load it on their heads, and carry it as far as fifteen miles (which I recommend everyone try at least once) and then grind it. I'm so lucky I can buy the clay and just make my work.

We actually have sites all over Manitoba where ancient pottery traditions once existed. An idea that I have been rolling around in my head is to reintroduce those indigenous ceramic traditions here in Manitoba and I'm looking for ways to get funding for it.

#### **What advice do you have for aspiring young artists?**

**P.J.** Block out everything you can and just sit down and make things. Everything else—money, business, your life, all of that stuff—really has nothing to do with making something. It is hard to stay focused because there is always so much going on but at the end of the day all it is—is about you making stuff. You need to focus on that.

**Fig. 1-29.** P.J. Anderson, *Two Vases*, 2007. Coiled earthenware, barrel-fired, 10" x 4" x 4" (25 x 10 x 10 cm) and 6" x 4" x 4" (15 x 10 x 10 cm). Photo: Stephen Grimmer. Courtesy of the artist.



#### Web Links

The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts offers a wealth of information for teachers, studio artists, and other professional clay artists. Check out the juried online exhibitions, including student work.

[www.nceca.net](http://www.nceca.net)

Learn more about P.J. Anderson's ceramic work at her website:

[pjceramics.webs.com](http://pjceramics.webs.com)