

ARTSY SHARK

Featured Artist Nancy Salamon

4 COMMENTS

Whimsical and inspired by nature, the ceramic and textile designs of artist Nancy Salamon are colorful, painterly and functional. Visit her [website](#) to see more of her work.



Large Oval Serving Bowl—Crab Pattern, Ceramic, 4.5" x 11.25" x 2.75"

I have always been driven to make things, but I never imagined a career in art. A chance encounter in the college pottery studio changed my life. I was kidnapped by clay. I became an art major with all the naiveté and confidence of a clueless nineteen year-old. Flash forward ten years—marriage, kids and divorce.



Artist Nancy Salamon painting in the studio

I set up my studio, Clay Born Pottery, while I raised two sons. I did craft fairs and joined guilds. In 1993 I made the best business decision of my career and switched to wholesale. Exhibiting at the Buyers Market of American Crafts was a game changer. Many of those customers are accounts I still have today.



Square Stackable Plates, Ceramic, 10" x 10," 8" x 8," and 6" x 6"

It was a challenge (code for "OMG what have I undertaken?") to run a production studio. My work features handpainted underglaze designs and it was apparent from day one that I could not make *and* paint everything *and* fill orders on time. I hired an assistant so I could focus on painting. She was, and still is, instrumental in making the business work. I use white stoneware fired to 2232°. My designs are drawn from nature—fish, herons, dragonflies, calla lilies, crabs, hummingbirds. My new (improved) husband sails on the Chesapeake Bay, and the beauty of the shoreline and sea life provide the inspiration for much of my work.



Tall and Short Thin Vases, Ceramic, Various
Sizes

Wholesaling forced me to be more disciplined. I confess that in college we sneered at production potters. How boring it must be to do the same thing over and over. Let me disabuse you of that notion. It takes stamina and focus to keep the work fresh and add new shapes and patterns to keep clients engaged. Clay is unpredictable but clients expect orders shipped on time. Don't feel inspired? Too bad. Put on an audiobook and get to work.



Large Round Hanging Platter—Heron Pattern, Ceramic, 16" x 2"

I also do custom orders—wedding platters, baby dishes, and cremation urns. It's an honor to make something for these landmark occasions. I make decorative wall pieces too, but my heart belongs to functional work—things people can use in their everyday lives. The daily rituals of life (morning coffee!!!) are enhanced when we reach for a favorite mug.



Tea Towels, Cotton/Poly, 17" x 30"

I hear from people, years after a purchase, telling me how much they still love a particular piece. Annually I get a frantic call from a man desperate to replace something he broke before his wife finds out. A lawyer told me a client had added a codicil to her will outlining precisely who got her collection of my work.



Aprons—White or
Black, Cotton/Poly,
One Size

Kitchen and dining textiles that featured my imagery was a natural addition to my ceramics: Clay Born Textiles was launched. The term *launch* sounds effortless, like a cartoon rocket. Trial and error finally led me to the right products and a wonderful Direct to Garment (DTG) textile printer in Philadelphia. DTG has size limitations, so a North Carolina company prints larger fabric bolts for the bigger items. The images still retain the crisp, painterly quality of my designs and allow everything to be made in the USA.



Napkins, Cotton/Poly, 20" x 20"

A local seamstress friend cuts and sews these pieces. I've exhibited twice at the NYNow trade show, and I am going to AmericasMart in Atlanta mid-January. Many of my pottery accounts also carry the textiles, but my goal is to reach a much wider audience and perhaps even venture into licensing. I'm still committed to handmade work with no plans to retire.



Pillows, Cotton Twill, 14" x 14" and 18" x 18"

The principal that guides me comes from William Morris, the English textile designer and founder of the Arts and Crafts movement. "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or to be beautiful."

Artist Nancy Salamon invites you to follow her on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).