

## Features

### 14 Novel Designs

Every pitcher tells a story in the hands of sculptor/author Bette Golden Lamb.

By Stephanie Finnegan

### 20 Functional and Fun

These artisans serve up surprises with their uniquely useful creations.

By Stephanie Finnegan

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It's time to say bye-bye to the hang-ups that hold you back.

By Leanne Regalla



**On the Cover:** In 2013, American Craft Week challenged individuals to create pieces that featured the number 5. Called "Give Me 5," the contest asked artisans to use the medium of their choice to whip up a piece that would emerge as ACW's 5th Anniversary logo. Additionally, the winner would receive a cash prize. Charlotte Behrens of Charlotte Arvelle Glass created the selected glass piece, featured here. Go to Page 8 for more information.



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The mission of *THE CRAFTS REPORT* is to inform, instruct, and inspire both the beginning and the established professional craftsperson and crafts retailer by providing them with: ■ how-to articles on all facets of crafts business management and related topics ■ relevant industry news, as well as information on current issues and trends ■ a forum for exchanging ideas and concerns ■ encouragement and recognition.



**Above:** Collaged Home mugs are a popular theme for Nicole Aquillano. ([www.nicoleaquillano.com](http://www.nicoleaquillano.com), [www.nicole-aquillano-ceramics.com](http://www.nicole-aquillano-ceramics.com))

**Below:** The Pittsburgh Skyline bowl is from Nicole Aquillano Ceramics. ([www.nicoleaquillano.com](http://www.nicoleaquillano.com), [www.nicole-aquillano-ceramics.com](http://www.nicole-aquillano-ceramics.com))



The artist admits that she has a penchant for the sweet side of her designs: “I like to concentrate on the tea/chocolate service. I am drawn to teapots and accompanying pots, because of each piece’s complexity. I enjoy the challenge they pose to the ceramic artist. From spouts to handles, to bellies that hold hot tea or chocolate, cream or sugar, sweet treats or spoons, service sets are the most satisfying creations.”

### Shattering the Myths About Mugs

“I make functional work because of the intimate relationship it establishes between the maker and the user,” Patty Bilbro shares. “A mug is held for comfort and warmth, placed on the lips, and caressed with thumbs and fingers. Plates and bowls play an integral role in the most basic human needs and rituals. My hope is that through the use of functional forms, my work creates moments of quiet presence and intention within the daily lives of others.”

To that end, the Baltimore, Maryland, artist festoons her pitchers, platters, and cups with an array of quirky, comical characters. Many of them—especially her facially expressive robots and her sloe-eyed, serene young girls—pop up on many of her vessels. They are a revolving cast of characters that tell a deep story, without ever saying a word.

“I intentionally use nonverbal narratives to encourage people’s participation in the story,” Bilbro explains. “My work deals with themes of connection and isolation, love of nature, environmental concerns, and collective/personal symbolism. Humor imbues my work.”

These are a talented group of men and women who are proud to be ceramicists and sculptors, blending their extraordinary visions with ordinary uses. It's a fantastic hybrid of imagining and engineering!



**Above:** Patty Bilbro created this stoneware jar. Its robot is a familiar face for her collectors. ([www.pattybilbrofoxfirepottery.com](http://www.pattybilbrofoxfirepottery.com))

**Left:** A stoneware plate set from Patty Bilbro, featuring her choir of young girls, who appear on many pieces. ([www.pattybilbrofoxfirepottery.com](http://www.pattybilbrofoxfirepottery.com))

### Drawing with a Purpose

"I think a common misconception is that functional ceramics cannot be something that is both used and displayed. I like to think of my work as a functional drawing or painting—as something that can be both used and displayed—maybe even collected. Especially since one of the main reasons people collect is to remind them of the past," observes Nicole Aquillano, a Boston, Massachusetts, ceramicist. "I create a story you can hold in your hand forever."

One of her most pervasive themes is that of nostalgia, and her childhood dwelling in particular: "The images I use on my work reference places to which I have strong connections. I love drawing these images since the act of drawing the tiniest details has a way of bringing back specific memories from my past. My most frequently drawn image is my childhood home, which I never thought I would continually draw, but