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6 Black Ceramicists to Support Right Now

by Clark Tate | Feb 5, 2021

Editor's note: Join us in our mission to support diversity, equity, and inclusion by honoring crafters of color during Black History Month. We celebrate our talented black creators by using our platform to elevate their works and amplify their voices in our industry today, and every day.

If you've considered digging deep to chase a dream, take note of these inspiring Black ceramicists. All six of them have day jobs. All six chose to create anyway, following remarkably similar journeys to claim their time and make their art.

Save



Camille Beckles of Camille at the Wheel likes to make things that are useful and beautiful, with neutral, mild colors that let the form speak for itself.

Camille at the Wheel

New York City

“First and foremost I like for things to feel good when they’re being used,” says Camille Beckles of Camille at the Wheel. “I try to make things that are useful and beautiful, with neutral, mild colors that let the form speak for itself.” Gazing at the image above, we’d say she succeeds.

Five years ago, Beckles pushed past procrastination to find an opening in a local pottery class. She loved how grounded she felt with her hands in the mud and appreciated the physical and tactile work. “Once I started, I couldn’t stop,” she says. “I never get bored.”

For Beckles, ceramics is a doorway to inspiration and a flow state. “It’s also one of the only times, for me, where I lose complete track of time,” she says. “That sense of complete absorption and that sense of calm and peace.”

Beckles is coming off an intense production period and is excited to slow down and experiment again. She prefers producing small, regular batches but moved to a made-to-order model during the pandemic. You can find Beckles’ work in a “[small but mighty collection](#)” on West Elm. Her larger, more complicated pieces are available via her website.

Website – www.camilleatthewheel.com

Instagram – [@camilleatthewheel](#)

Beckles recommends – [@sample.haus](#), [@sphouseproductions](#), [@deepblack.design](#)





Kyle Scott Lee of Ceramic Meltdown uses bright, primary color palettes, controlled lines and patterns mixed with irreverent strokes in his work.

Ceramic Meltdown

Brooklyn, New York City

Kyle Scott Lee's ceramic work is inspired by renowned painter and graffiti artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, who died a young man in 1988. Conjure a digital gallery of Basquiat's work, and you'll quickly see its echoes in Lee's hand painted ceramics. Bright, primary palettes, structural black lines, and controlled patterns mix with irreverent strokes.

Lee pursued ceramic art in 2003 to escape the stress of his Wall Street IT job. That led to a third job teaching pottery at the Educational Alliance Art School in Manhattan. "I love teaching," Lee says. "It's rewarding for both them and myself, you know? Because you're contributing to their growth" Still, juggling three commitments takes dedication. "I love to create," says Lee. "I love the process. That's what's kept me going."

It's going well. As we spoke, Lee was preparing to sign the lease on a new studio. He partially credits the pandemic. "Since everyone is at home and wants to elevate their home to some degree, my business is really taking off," says Lee. "Ceramics at home have been important for me too," he continues. "I've been creating all through the quarantine."

Lee sells most of his pottery, which is still completely handmade, through his website. He also [partners with West Elm](#) and has work in the new Paul Smith store in SoHo. He's moving into wholesale and has prototyped several pieces for production work.

Website – www.ceramicmeltdown.com

Instagram – [@ceramicmeltdown](#)

Lee recommends – [@sample.haus](#), [@dantekhayes](#), [@potterybyosa](#), [@pot_la](#)





Sherród Faulks of DEEP BLACK gravitates toward simple and clean forms and colors in his ceramic work.

DEEP BLACK

Portsmouth, Virginia

“I like simple. I like clean,” Sherród Faulks says of his work. “I don’t do a lot of layering. I like seeing the form and the glaze working together.” Faulks was interested in ceramics for years before he made time for it. Touching the clay felt natural. “I really loved seeing this lump of clay turn into something beautiful,” he says. “It’s like a communion with the universe. That connection from brain to hand is amplified.”

He launched DEEP BLACK amidst the chaos of the pandemic despite having a full-time job as a software designer. “I love seeing my things in people’s homes,” Faulks says. “That really drives me. Plus, I have to say, I am a sucker for beauty. I am always chasing the next most beautiful thing I can make.”

The difference between working in software design and in ceramics is stark. “I’ve had to open up and loosen up and get used to failure,” he says. “It disabuses you of your ego immediately.” Faulks has a large new collection debuting in March and a little something special coming out in February. “You, know, keep your eyes peeled on the Instagram,” he says.

Website – www.deepblack.design

Instagram – [@deepblack.design](https://www.instagram.com/deepblack.design)

Faulks recommends – [@sphouseproductions](https://www.instagram.com/sphouseproductions), [@michelleetrick](https://www.instagram.com/michelleetrick), [@camilleatthewheel](https://www.instagram.com/camilleatthewheel), [@tashathrowsraw](https://www.instagram.com/tashathrowsraw)





Makeda Smith of Sio Ceramics intertwines intriguing shapes and surprising details into her work.

Sio Ceramics

Brookland Art Walk, Washington DC

Makeda Smith's ceramics feature irresistible palates, intriguing shapes and surprising details. She first took a ceramics class in college and fell in love. After teaching for years and earning a Master's in education, she missed her spark. She took another class, then an artist residency, and launched Sio Ceramics last year.

It's hard starting a second career, but the process keeps Smith motivated. "The work is really meditative," Smith says, and then she gets to share it. "That people share stories about finding joy out of something I create is really, really satisfying," she says.

Smith just picked up the keys to her first retail and studio space. While she's moving in, sales will still run through her retail partners (like [Salt and Sundry](#) and [Shopmade in DC](#)), and her self-made website. The pandemic served as a catalyst, helping her pull it all together, but she's not hustling. She's savoring the process. "If it's not sparking joy like Marie Kondo," she says, "it's gotta go."

Website – www.sioceramics.com

Instagram – [@sioceramics](#)

Smith recommends – [@khaoscreates](#)





Kristina Batiste of Juniper Clay strives for functional, minimal pots.

Juniper Clay

Tacoma, Washington

Kristina Batiste strives for functional, minimal pots. “Take stuff away until you have only what’s essential,” she says. “That’s the type of pottery I like to make.” Batiste took her first pottery class five years ago. Hooked, she bought a wheel.

Batiste works from home as a librarian, granting her flexibility. “Everything we do is just very labor intensive,” she says of ceramicists. “The most important thing is to carve out that time for yourself.” She doesn’t find it challenging to maintain motivation. “There is very little I’d rather be doing than being in my studio and making pots,” she says.

Currently, Batiste sells her pottery [through Salt Stone Ceramics](#), though she is between production cycles at the moment. “If I want to have an online store and an online presence, that’s just me. It’s daunting.” Batiste doesn’t enjoy administrating. She likes making. “The hard part is not being able to execute your vision,” she says. “The fun part is that you can try again.”

Website – www.juniper-clay.com

Instagram – [@juniperclay](#)

Batiste recommends – [@carlyanne.ceramics](#), [@nakedclayceramics](#), [@sparkleandsoul](#)





Tasha Renee of Tasha Throws Raw likes to have fun and get weird with her designs.

Tasha Throws Raw

Sacramento, California

“I’m continuously discovering new things that kinda bring a smile to my face when it comes to ceramics,” says Tasha Renee. Their Instagram page, @tashathrowsraw, is proof that the results make others smile too.

Renee works in administration and took a night class in pottery when she felt something was missing. It took three classes and an exceptional teacher for pottery to click. Then she got a wheel. Now, when Renee sees something inspiring, she can’t sleep.

“I’ll ruminare, ruminare, ruminare and, eventually, I will go into the studio and make the form, and then apply whatever [decorations] I was ruminating on,” she explains. “Aesthetically I like looking at pieces that are a little odd and a bit more contemporary.” But Renee often finds it challenging to push past the boundaries of the forms she was taught.

She started selling pottery accidentally, by sharing planters on Instagram. Requests started trickling in, making Renee nervous. She finds it hard to throw more than 25 pounds of clay in a day. While certain ceramics will sell really well, she wants time to have fun and get weird.

Then there’s Instagram itself, where gratification tempts us to chase compliments and stay safe. “It’s interesting, figuring out the balance of that external feedback and also the internal creativity,” she says. “Because social media is an integral part of having a small business these days.”

Website – Coming Soon – tashathrowsraw.com

Instagram – [@tashathrowsraw](https://www.instagram.com/tashathrowsraw)

Renee recommends – [@sphouseproductions](https://www.instagram.com/sphouseproductions), [@pottery32](https://www.instagram.com/pottery32)



Clark Tate

contribution

Clark Tate is a freelance writer and lifelong knitter. After graduating from never-ending scarves to more complex projects, Clark also graduated with a Master's in Environmental Science. She then worked as a restoration ecologist for six years, before moving on to an obsession with braided hats and writing articles about people and the environments they live in. She's written for Hakai Magazine, Summit Daily News, Salt Lake City Weekly, and [GearLab.com](https://www.gearlab.com). You can find further examples of her work at lclarktate.com.

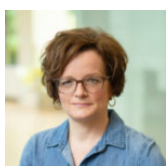
36 Comments



Liz LaRue on February 8, 2021 at 11:25 am

Craft Industry Alliance and Clark Tate: There are other Black ceramic artists you have missed: Carren Clark, Woodrow Nash, Malika Jackson, Roberto Lugo, Harold Miller, Donna Shannon Adams, Sebron Grant, Dayton Grant, and myself, Liz LaRue. Do your research well and present a fuller picture.

Reply



Abby Glassenberg on February 8, 2021 at 2:28 pm

Thanks Liz for adding additional artists for us to celebrate during this time. We highlighted these six in this particular piece but welcome your feedback and additional highlights. We recognize and are proud to celebrate all Black creatives

during this time and will continue to look for opportunities to feature their work in the months and years to come.

Reply



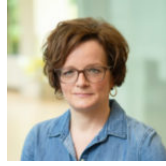
Andrea D on February 10, 2021 at 7:52 pm

Abby, what is this “this time” you refer to? If by “this time” you mean every artist, creative and small business owner, who are men, women, black, white, orange, brown and a hundred other colors are suffering during this pandemic, then why point out only black artists? Sounds to me like you are more concerned with your public profile that you are in supporting all creatives, all artists, men, women and all colors.

I’m not opposed to featuring these artists, their work is beautiful and we all need all the exposure we can get; but the average buyer is going to buy what they like regardless of the what color the artist is.

I’m not sure why I am commenting because I’ve commented on similar articles before and was not given the courtesy of a reply so I don’t expect one now. But I will tell you that this is the number one reason I have not joined your community as a paying member – poorly executed article ideas, lack of variety, and poor customer service in terms of no response to questions or comments. And because I believe that creative businesses are not the proper venue to express and impress upon others the owner’s/manager’s political biases, yet that is all I see in your featured articles for the last year.

You have a great idea with CIA, but it is being executed with only a few in mind. Sad. Unfortunate.

[Reply](#)

Abby Glassenberg on February 11, 2021 at 11:23 am

Hi Andrea! By this time we mean Black History Month, a nationally recognized celebration as part of our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. If you'd like to discuss your membership experience please contact me directly. We value member feedback



Beth on February 13, 2021 at 2:00 pm

Point taken! It's Black History Month! Relax!



Tim see on February 13, 2021 at 10:25 pm

I'm no expert, far from it I suppose. As a white male that doesn't have a whole lot of struggle my comment should be taken with a few grains of salt.

I learned a lot this year Andrea about what it means to be white. What racism is and how I will always benefit from it. I can't change who I am, but I can change how I behave. The idea that if we can't reach out and help everyone at one time we should help no one? No, no I don't think that's the way we have to help. We do it where we can when we can and we do it for them. Do you not want to see more people of color in our field? Is it that you want that opportunity to be showcased.

I am not sure I know what the average buyer wants anymore. This year though I made sure I bought from people that were not like me. The color, their gender, their sexuality mattered to me. We can't ignore something like color and expect the issues to go away This isn't easy, understanding that it takes action some times simple ones to go another step further, is better than nothing.

No organization is going to make everyone happy right now. People like me, white people have all the articles and books and shows and opportunities for far too long.

I took a deep breath in June, I listened and I see us all struggle on how we are get through this.



Thomas Montague on February 14, 2021 at 10:59 am

The Black community is disproportionately negatively affected by this pandemic. Your post stinks of old racist mantras.



Lolitos on February 14, 2021 at 11:26 am

This is such a sad, disillusioned response Andrea, perhaps you could try to appreciate others who receive an opportunity to have a moment of sunshine instead of casting your shadow of negativity.



Keda on February 15, 2021 at 10:41 am

Girl you are mad that Black artists are being highlighted during black history month? Take your outrage somewhere else this is not the time

or place for it. Your comment reeks with racism, you should get to the heart of your racist thoughts and change them.



John Doe on February 15, 2021 at 10:44 am

Stop crying about it if you don't like the organization leave!!!! Find other sources . God forbid the person who runs this organization wants to highlight black artists during black history month. Are you going to cry when they highlight female artists during women's history month?



Angela on February 15, 2021 at 11:21 am

Ugh... so tired of white folks who remain willfully unengaged and unaffected by the discourse on racism and privilege that has been going on for at least a century and a half. Pause, breathe, read, reflect. This is like a whiny complaint charged with racism basically to ask why your work isn't being showcased. There are both reparative reasons and celebratory reasons to sharing and uplifting the work of Black and brown artists.

White people — we have so so so much work to do as is illuminated in this unnecessary comment.

This is my first time on this account as I have been looking for ceramic works by Black artists so that I may buy and support some brilliant work. Thank you for highlighting some here.



Nicole S. on February 15, 2021 at 3:12 pm

So sorry that your racism keeps you blind and ignorant, Andrea. Your final, trumpian linguistic turn “Sad. Unfortunate.” feels, in this moment, for me, a projection of your own state. Accept your racism and address it. Additionally, stop wasting everyone’s time with addressing your tired, rehearsed, antiquated, and narrow viewpoints. You have an opportunity to expand, here. Here is my hope for you that you do. We will continue to grow and evolve, with our without you. It’s pretty nice over here, though... in the racism & hater-free-zone. You might want to give it a try.



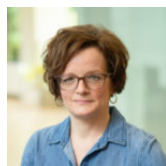
Nicole S. on February 15, 2021 at 3:13 pm

And sorry for all the typos!



Rose M Cannon on February 17, 2021 at 12:16 am

Abby Glassenberg we appreciate your kindness, and, yes, there are likely hundreds more Black ceramicists that go unnoticed. We appreciate your concession to Black History Month, however, we are now determined to celebrate ourselves 24/7/365. How many BIPOC sit on your board in decision-making positions?



Abby Glassenberg on February 17, 2021 at 11:42 am

Thank you for your comment. Our current board is 20% Black, 40% Asian, and 40% White. You

can learn more here:

<https://craftindustryalliance.org/board-of-advisors/> We invite you to become a member of Craft Industry Alliance and join our community.



Rosemary on February 18, 2021 at 2:54 pm

It's called black history month. It exists for a reason. As a Canadian, white woman I am fundamentally aware of the considerable privilege I enjoy. I have watched with utter sorrow as black Americans are held accountable for all the injustices they have suffered. One black man was derided for taking a knee. Another black man was killed whilst being arrested. Still another black woman was shot whilst asleep. Those are the stories we know about. I have seen Caucasian Americans howl with protest over the thought of having confederate statues removed. Ironically, one of the main reasons America became an economic powerhouse was entirely due to slavery and its cruel practices. Black Americans suffer educationally (their schools are poorly funded) they have lower quality health care, their children have higher infant mortality rates and during the past election the sitting president tried actively to make it harder for them to vote. So yes please shine a spotlight on black artists of all kinds. Hold their work and talent up too the light. Celebrate their creativity louder and more enthusiastically. All the feels.

Marie on February 22, 2021 at 1:54 pm



Dear Andrea, I'm sure you are used to being celebrated and being the center of your own world, but maybe if you feel "left out" by the celebration of the following black artists, you may have to consider looking inwards and reflecting on why that is the case, and what that says about you. Why would you direct your anger at Abby, making a post about celebrating these specific artists, when you could rather just make your own post, website or community? You should feel free to celebrate yourself, and others like you on your own terms, but your comment is quite inappropriate, considering it is black history month after all (hence the highlighting of these specific artists). It is extremely RARE to see such posts in my perspective, this is the first I've ever seen that highlights black ceramic artists specifically. You're the sad, and unfortunate one to have missed such a point.



Zee Osui on February 25, 2021 at 10:21 pm

@ Andrea D You just had to find something in Abby's response to filter out your hate. Really ? Using "this time"? You are so ridiculous! "This time" doesn't have a damn thing to do with that article of hate you wrote behind those two words. She did not mean any of that BS you wrote, but thanks for letting the world know that you are a clueless racist. CLUELESS -because apparently you don't know that the shortest month on the calendar is Black History month to tell the truth about history that excluded Black people who built this county among other

things. And RACIST – because every racist starts out with this “we are the world ” crap about “ALL people” this and that! And don’t tell that lie, You are OPPOSED to these beautiful black talented artists being featured or you wouldn’t have wrote that shameful crap. You just want attention! Only thing that’s sad and unfortunate on this page is YOU! So go crawl back under the rock you came from while the rest rest of the world continue to move towards equality.



Elaine M. on August 18, 2021 at 1:51 pm

Andrea,

Black artistry is barely recognized and most of us are never even exposed to art in our lives. Highlighting these artist give us representation in an industry closed off to us. Showing these artist does not diminish anyone else. Open your heart and mind and educate yourself before making such blatant heartless remarks. You can easily go online and see so many faces that look like yours in every genre of Art. Your children can see themselves represented in all facets and movements and our faces our barely seen. We do not need your opinion or permission to occupy these spaces, yet whenever we are highlighted someone like yourself feels the need to complain. This article is in direct line with supporting all creatives. Your comments are idiotic and show the true nature of where your intentions are and what you feel deep down inside. I promise you no one is hurt by you not joining this community as a paid member. Not

one tear will be shed. Take some advice from Tim.



Makenlee on January 10, 2022 at 12:27 pm

I swear black people can never just shine for one minute. Your white privilege couldn't just sit down for one damn minute. White people have always had their times to shine. They've always had a voice and we all had to listen. It's time that black people get to shine through and through. Sit down and shut up white lady because we all know you like to steal from us.



Tammy B on June 22, 2022 at 10:35 pm

Just to point out: i came across this article because i was specifically searching for Black Ceramicists. Representation matters because I (and others) want my art to be made by MY (our) people, not just anyone.



Sharon Mann on February 14, 2021 at 1:16 am

@MANNHandmade.

Reply



Sharif Bey on February 14, 2021 at 12:13 am

I don't think the intention here is to create a comprehensive list. Sounds like they want to bring recognition to a few passionate black folk who have day job but are making headway in ceramics. Your list is a good one but a few folks on there have earned international fame and fortune. I think we need more platforms the boast those who are still grinding.

Reply



Zee Osui on February 25, 2021 at 9:47 pm

Wow! Liz LaRue, The way you present yourself is everything! It seems as though you have an issue about not being recognized first. Really? You should be trying to uplift the featured artist instead of throwing stank to the writers. Why did you list all of those other artist first and yourself last? As if there is a mob of angry black artist wining about not being in a damn article? I believe its just “You” with that crab in the barrel mentality. What you should have done is “gracefully” congratulated the featured artist and informed the writes of other artist for them to consider featuring in future articles. They don’t owe you squat! Hell they probably don’t even know you which is a good thing because you have a nasty attitude. Apparently you didn’t listen when someone told you “if you can’t say anything nice, don’t say nothing at all! Apparently they did research well because the featured beautiful Black artists who are creative, positive, and have good attitudes unlike you!

Reply



Pamela on May 2, 2021 at 4:00 am

Hello, This is a courtesy email to let you, as well as others interested in Historical African American Pottery know, that a Highly Desirable Tuskegee Institute Pottery Vase has just been listed for sale on ebay.

It is PAST TIME to elevate African American Institute / College / University Pottery to its rightful place. ***NOT Alternative as I am sure you all agree!

Thank You, ~pamela

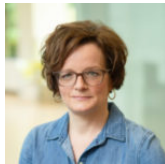
Reply



Amy on February 11, 2021 at 8:03 am

Thank you for highlighting these artists. I would not have known about them otherwise. I really enjoy the content you provide and thank you for supporting those of us in the craft industry who work hard and try to stay positive. Keep up the good work

Reply



Abby Glassenberg on February 11, 2021 at 11:49 am

Thank you, Amy.

Reply




Beth on February 13, 2021 at 2:01 pm

Loved the article and being introduced to the work of these talented artists!

Reply



John Bauer on February 13, 2021 at 2:54 pm

I like pottery, I like potters more than their pots, art has helped me become exposed to diverse people ideas and experiences. I thank you and art for making the circle  bigger each day

Reply



Susan Scheib on February 13, 2021 at 3:29 pm

Larry Allen in Atlanta is amazing and well known as is Tina Curry from Knoxville TN, whom I believe, has a piece in the Smithsonian. Its not too late to highlight more artists!

[Reply](#)

Jeanne Robinson on February 13, 2021 at 6:16 pm

Thank you for highlighting these talented artists!

Ashlyn Pope is another excellent Black ceramic artist.
website-

<https://ashlynpope.com/home.html>

IG-

https://www.instagram.com/ashlynpope_art/

[Reply](#)

Marie on February 22, 2021 at 1:49 pm

Great job Abby! Thanks for trying to create an appreciation post for black ceramic artists. I myself, am an aspiring one, and therefore seeing representations like this does inspire me a lot. Sure, there are A LOT of other black artists you may have missed but this is just a starting point. Pay negative comments no mind.

[Reply](#)

Lea on February 8, 2022 at 8:24 pm

Thank You for highlighting beautiful Pottery and the Artist's creating these works of ART! As a high school pottery teacher I'm working on sharing artists from many different cultures. (culture= color, gender, sexuality) I know I'm not doing this perfectly, but I am trying by doing the best I can and I will continue to grow in my own learning. Living in Minnesota has opened my eyes to the privilege I have in the United States. I will stand up and speak up in 2022. (I appreciate the sharing of the other artists mentioned in the comments) Happy to participate in Black History Month! Thanks

Reply



Christine Liz LaRue on February 9, 2022 at 12:12 pm

Here are some other fantastic African American and Puerto Rican ceramic artists to add to your list.

Charles Smith <http://www.instagram.com/smithpots>

Malika Jackson <http://www.instagram.com/malikame2>

Woodrow Nash <http://www.instagram.com/woodrownash>

Carren Clarke <http://www.instagram.com/carrenclarke>

Roberto Lugo

<http://www.instagram.com/robertolugowithoutwax>

Liz LaRue <http://www.instagram.com/liz.larue.7>

Reply



dawn on February 16, 2022 at 3:17 pm

thanks for the list. I love seeing people who look like me, being featured...

Reply



ASHANTI on October 30, 2022 at 12:08 am

She tried it.

Reply

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