

Clay is a challenging, resilient and lively medium. It responds to the touch in an immediate and spontaneous way that appeals to my senses. Each form changes and fluxes in appearance from the time it exists as a sketch to its last firing. The challenge is allowing for the accidents. Every fracture, crack and mark activate the surface. It is the written dialogue between the medium and myself.

Much of my work examines the innate beauty of nature versus the cosmetic intervention of people. My cultural sense of belonging is grounded in that every object has a meaningfulness or spirit. Every rock, every tree, every element contributes to our connection to this world and keep us rooted to an ancestral past. With the small figures, I am interested in their talismanic aspect and iconic relationship with the world at large. They can symbolize the preciousness, wonder or intimacy that is set aside and lost from our everyday adult life. The portrait busts are inclined to a broader narrative and symbolic interpretation. The meaning of faith, belief, fortune, chance and life's ironies weave in and out. This adds a sense of mystery and innate connection to the multicultural landscape of the human figure.

I enjoy the process of rolling out coils of clay. All my work begins with this meditative ritual. I begin from the bottom up, row by row, shaping as I go. I will leave areas that strongly identify the form to its media. Other areas are smoothed for an application of terra sigillata along with layers of colored slips and oxide stains. Focusing on the textual qualities of clay, slips, and glazes allows the surface treatment to inform the work, adding its own dialect. This process of firing and adding color continues until the piece feels complete and can speak for itself.

Born in the middle of the United States, I am half Japanese and half Cajun French. My mother was half a continent and an ocean away from her rising sun. My father was in the army and stationed everywhere except his home state of Louisiana. My influences come from this mixture of East meets West. Shinto and Roman Catholic. Japanese spirits and bayou ghosts. Teacups and chalices. Tied together with joyous humor and quiet rituals.

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— Charlene Doiron Reinhart