

Ceramics

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carved by them from plaster. They use this master to create the molds that they use to produce the final product. In this studio, the use of molds has a place other than to speed production. "As our aesthetic developed, molds and plaster simply became the best way to make the thing we were picturing in our heads . . . sometimes challenging ourselves to make the use of molds vital to the pieces we were making." In 1999, Klein and Reid began a collaboration with Eva Zeisel that resulted in a porcelain line that could only have been made using the industrial processes they have mastered. They sum up their process saying, "We want to be the invisible hand that created the thing and, to this end, molds are useful partners."

Jonathan Adler (www.jonathanadler.com) began working with clay in high school; his resume says, "Spends entire adolescence in basement of parent's modern house throwing pots." He then went to Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, to study art history, but spent most of his time at the Rhode Island School of Design making pots. In 1993, he showed a group of pots at Barney's where they were a huge success, which led to more and more orders. Adler soon realized he wasn't cut out to make the same pots all day. His solution to his production problems was to seek help from Aid To Artisans (www.aidtoartisans.org), which is a nonprofit organization that connects artists in the US to artisans in developing countries. In this instance, Adler was connected to a small clay studio in Peru. Again from his resume: "1997, flies to Peru and discovers paradise—a beautiful workshop by the sea with parrots and gardens and incred-

ible artisans, creative explosion ensues." Currently, the prototypes for each piece are developed at the New York studio and then shipped to Peru. The Peruvian artisans create molds and the line is cast and finished. Today, Adler is a designer working in numerous mediums, much like Russell Wright did in the last century.

Going forward the clay worker, whatever they call themselves, will be confronted with the realities of what might be called the new normal. The totally-made-by-hand object has become, by nature of its cost, a luxury product only available to more affluent consumers. It is certainly important that this facet of our field continue. It is, after all, how skills are passed on. However, the traditional collector group that has fueled the demand for studio pots is aging and fading from the scene. This, coupled with rapidly changing levels of appreciation for handmade ceramics (the mark of the hand is no longer the selling point), presents today's clay worker with a marketplace that little resembles that of the last generation. These indicators, along with well-designed industrial tools and an ample number of studio models, suggest the studio potter can, with thoughtful care, embrace a broader approach to how their work is produced, and can continue to honor their materials.

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Vice Canisters, to 8¾ in. (22 cm) in height, high-fired stoneware, by Jonathan Adler, New York, New York.

