

Ceramics From an International Palette

Description

The path to designs in ceramics has been a circuitous one for painter and printmaker Justyn Livingston.

She started in the mid-'80s designing bedding for ESPRIT, the youth-oriented lifestyle brand, then freelanced designs for carpet and dinnerware for Pottery Barn. Later she worked with the U.S. Agency for International Development and its Aid to Artisans to help struggling entrepreneurs around the world find paths to market for hand-made goods.

Her art has been informed by the designs she found in places like Romania, Oaxaca and Tonga.

"The inspiration for my designs comes from all the international travels," she said. "But I draw from kimono textile fabrics too – from [tsugigahana](#), the flower of Japanese textile arts."

She is particularly influenced by the universal motifs she found on embroidery in Romania. That nation, with its design pedigrees reaching back to Turkey, Greece, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, hugely impacts her work in tile today.

Her palette is earthy, with a tendency toward blues, greens and golds mingled together in a language all her own. "I have no formula," she said. "It's more an intuitive thing – it's the way I see it. I like to balance it."

Creativity, she believes, requires the artist to let go of certainties. "The creative dynamic either allows the artist or artisan to flourish and blossom, or can put out the fire if there's too much restriction or micromanagement," she said. "I never know where I'm lingering to go, or where I'm going to start."

For more on Justyn Livingston's work, go to <http://www.metoliusridgetile.com/about>

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Author

mike