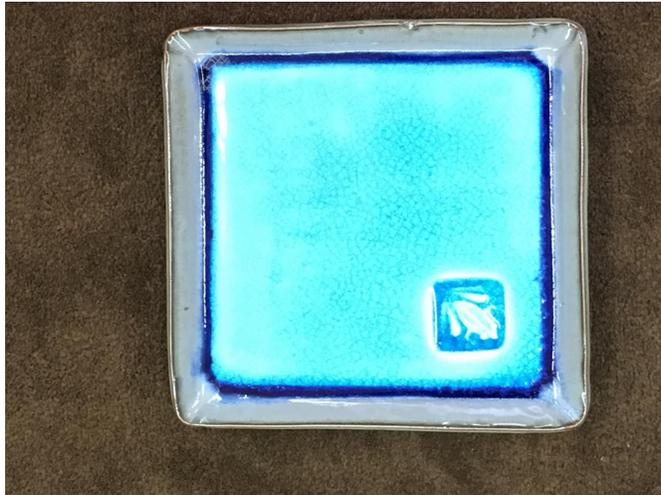


Kim Erslev



Kim Erslev is a very busy woman! After several several attempts to connect before the holidays, we were able to meet in late December. Kim had been busy with her teaching position at the Conway School of Landscape Design, a graduate program for sustainable landscape design, planning and management. “I teach design site engineering and graphics, and work with other people doing instruction in ecology,” explained Kim, who has taught at the Conway School since 2006. With the semester behind her, Kim took the opportunity to get her hands dirty in Molly Cantor’s clay studio two doors down from the Arts Coop, where she trades studio time in return for minding the attached retail store for Molly. Kim has been doing clay since high school, off and on when she has the time. “Whenever I do it,” says Kim, “I do it very seriously, but it’s challenging to make a living

doing it and I usually do it when I have a little extra time from work. I never tried to do it full time,



unfortunately.”

As you might have guessed, Kim is also an architect with her own practice. “I mostly do passive solar houses, low energy houses, and landscapes that have ecological production or are thought of as ecologically inspired landscapes,” said Kim. “I love homes and landscapes that have a seamless connection between indoors and outdoors, which is very nice when you can do it, and have indoor-outdoor experiences be seamless.” Her projects are mostly local, but she has also worked with several design firms on projects including: the design of the Micmac Heritage Center in Northern Canada, the Jerusalem Science Museum, the Eric Carle Museum, and the design of a new town destroyed by a volcanic mudslide in Colombia.

While we chatted in the clay studio, Kim was trimming and glazing some of her hanukkah menorahs, a design she considers “really old—I took a break from them for a couple of years,” she said. The menorah are landscape themed, and indeed they look like an undulating garden wall topped with eight little squares that are candle holders. At the highest end of the wall, which gently slopes downward as it curves around, is the ninth holder for the shamash candle, a candle used to light all the others and/or to be used as an extra light. Suiting Kim’s focus on bringing inside and outside, the

glaze creates a vista of gentle mountains on this miniature landscape feature.



“I love the mystery of glazing,” she said, dipping the edge of a menorah in a tub of liquid, “but you can really go so wrong with it, and have something that you like one day, and then can’t use the other. I’ve done a lot of these, similar to this one here, but not overlaid these two glazes before... so I love that it is a surprise for everybody including me!”

Kim has a masters in architecture and landscape architecture and reports that she loves her field. “I’m comfortable artistically and I love math. I enjoy interacting with people, which you do a lot of with architecture, but there is a quiet place I get to when I do ceramics that I can’t get to when I do architecture or landscape architecture. There’s a more of a quiet freedom that I feel, because architecture is different than this very internal, meditative space.”

Kim does other hand built, stamped work. “I make stamps,” she explained, “and so I have a fern stamp, stamps of plants, lots of different ones. Lizards. I have been doing a whole wetland theme, thinking about mud and clay, and healthy wetlands and animals that live in wet, slimy, cool clay and soil. I also have Hebrew stamps.” Her wheel-thrown mugs and bowls are stamped, and lately she has created a stock of salamander themed tableware. She likes to think that people will feel joy when dining and drinking from her dinnerware.

Kim is very enthusiastic about the coop model, and lives in Buckland co-housing she designed and built with several other families. This is where she and her husband David, a story teller and Jewish educator, have raised two sons over the last 20 years or so.



She is one of the most recent members to join the coop and one of the most enthusiastic. Said Kim, "It's really wonderful; I love this. I wish I had the time or I would most like to be a working member. But my business is pretty busy and I teach so I can't." She doesn't mind the fifty-fifty split, saying "I always want to support coops, I think it's a great thing."

Kim joined as soon as she felt she had enough inventory to sell. She started working at the Cantor studio about two years ago, and slowly accumulated the necessary items to jury in to the coop. She didn't know what to expect when she entered the marketplace, but she has been surprised and happy with her sales so far.