



The Textile Ceramic: Elisabeth Kley at VOLTA NY

By Elisabeth Kley

I sometimes use decorative faces on bottles because I like it when things look at you, as if they are ready to come alive and change – like a drag performer putting on makeup. More recently, I've become even fonder of large, aggressive flowers. Many of my visual references, garish Russian textiles, Renaissance and Baroque grotesque ornamentation, and Islamic art, come second and third generation as found in paintings and set designs by artists including Matisse, van Dongen, Dufy and Natalia Goncharova.



Elisabeth Kley, Large Round Gold & Red Bottle with Trident Leaves, glazed earthenware, 21" tall, 2013 © SEASON

Although I am making ceramic bottles, I do not consider them crafts, rather, they are hybrids of paintings and sculptures. Each bottle is unique and I do numerous drawings and watercolors before I decide on its decoration. In fact, a kind of triple masquerade takes place. Decorative elements move from the images that inspire them into my works on paper and then migrate back onto my emphatically useless earthenware vessels, I don't even glaze the insides.

Elisabeth Kley, Large Round Turquoise & Yellow Bottle, glazed earthenware, 21" tall, 2013 © SEASON

The ceramics are hand-built from coils scraped smooth, low-fired with wax resist and sgraffito decoration using homemade underglazes, and then re-fired with homemade glazes. The dripping reaction of certain oxides with glazes, including a turquoise made from copper carbonate and a blue from cobalt, corresponds to the interpenetration of watercolors touching each other when wet. What occurs instantly on paintings takes hours on ceramics, but moments of transformation are frozen in both.

Elisabeth Kley, Large Round Yellow, Red & Lime Bottle, glazed earthenware, 21" tall, 2013 © SEASON

[Elisabeth Kley](#)'s works were presented at Volta NY by Seattle based [SEASON](#) was formed out of a dual need to have a space dedicated to under-recognized local artists and to bringing shows of national and international artists to a Northwest audience.

Elisabeth Kley, Large Green and Gold Round Lotus Bottle, glazed earthenware, 21" high, 2012 © SEASON

Featured image: Elisabeth Kley, *Large Round Turquoise & Yellow Bottle*, glazed earthenware, 21" tall, 2013 © SEASON

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Technological Parameters: Adam Mysock at VOLTA NY

By Adam Mysock