

Molly Hatch – Interviewed on October 27, 2013  
Transcript  
H. Wang

KF: I first interviewed Molly Hatch on October 27, 2013. I met Molly when she came to Anderson Ranch Art Center as a workshop scholarship recipient. During that two-week workshop, I remember being moved and intrigued by her ability to draw on the clay surface. I have enjoyed watching where Molly's career has gone. I take pleasure in knowing the woman behind the objects I see in the Twin Cities Anthropologie store. In my opinion, she is one of the most diversely creative women in both the contemporary ceramics and design fields. Her clay has never prevented her from moving into other areas of design. And likewise, those areas do not prevent her from being in ceramics.

The daughter of a painter and an organic dairy farmer, her childhood was divided between physical labor, clay, and creating art. Molly received her BFA at the Museum School in Boston and her MFA at the University of Colorado in Boulder. In 2009, she was awarded the prestigious Arts Industry Residency in the pottery at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Her works have been widely collected, commissioned, and exhibited, both nationally and internationally. Her largest work to date is on permanent view at the Hyde Museum of Art in Atlanta.

Molly lives with her family in Northampton, Massachusetts, and is represented by Todd Merrill Studio Contemporary in NYC.

I hope you enjoy our conversation.

In reading the bio on your web page, you talk about the experience you had at the John Michael Kohler Art Center as an artist in residence and that laying the foundation for your career as an artist-designer. Could you talk a little bit about what you worked on in the time that you were there and that experience in general and perhaps touch on what parts of that experience really helped influence you?

MH: It's interesting, because I was pregnant during that time, during the time that I was there. And I had graduated from graduate school with my masters in 2008, so I applied, as I was finishing up my masters degree, for the artist-in-residence there in the pottery. I did it based on the recommendation from Beth Littman, who is a glass artist who was running the program at the time. And she came as a visiting artist while I was still in graduate school and was like, "Oh, my god, you have to apply. This is—you're such a good fit for this residency."

And I think what was so effective for me was that I was able to spend time working with my artwork in a new way, with new materials, new process, and actually had someone paying for my time to do it. And being exposed to the way industry worked there was the most influential for me, I think, understanding that

the laborers on the floor hand-finish everything. And it was sort of like, wow, okay. So the Mr. Rogers understanding of what factory-made things are isn't exactly—you know, it's not all machine-finished. It's not all machine-crafted. There is a person behind every object.

And I think that that's shaped a lot of my willingness to work with industry in licensing and design since then, understanding the craft of the factory, kind of. And some people would disagree with me, but I definitely feel like they took so much pride in what they did, and it was really obvious to me that those were crafted objects in the same way that someone would use—Nick Bivins would use a mold in his studio, these guys were using molds but on a larger scale. And they were so interested in making everything work really well. And they were constantly reworking a mold to make it work better. I mean, it was just sort of amazing, it was like the same process that we would use, just on a factory scale of production.

So I think that when I talk about it influencing my career, that's what I mean. Like it's sort of like—it just completely opened my eyes to the possibility of what an artist could do with industry.

KF: I know in 2010 you were hired to create an exclusive line of pottery for Anthropologie. Could you talk a bit about this endeavor and how did it come about, and what were some of the challenges you faced as a creator for that company?

MH: It came about because one of their executives, a woman who runs their special projects, named Patty Isen, was in New York. And she saw my work in what was the former little shop at the Greenwich House Pottery on Jones Street. They used to have pots in the window, and their gallery is now on that first floor. And she saw the work and thought, "Oh," you know, "I need to get one of my tabletop buyers to see what she's doing and see if she'd be interested in collaborating."

So they emailed me and essentially were interested at first in having me wholesale them some of my original work. And wholesale, for me, at that time I was really starting to realize that my process was really involved. The work that I was making was far more time-consuming than what people were willing to pay for it. It was already leading to a—I mean, I was making money on my work, which was really great. But making money meant paying taxes on \$1,000 a year. [laughs] It wasn't a living yet. And that was a problem.

And I had a family at that point. My daughter was—when they first contacted me in 2010, my daughter was 10 months old. And it's a really different set of motivations for making a living when you have a kid in the picture. You're willing to set aside some things that you maybe wouldn't have been willing to consider setting aside in the past. And I don't feel that I did that in the end. At the time, it

felt like a big, big decision. But I approached them to let me design some stuff, because I felt like, I'm not making money at this. I want to try seeing what happens with the work when it translates into a factory-made object.

And they came back with inlaid pots and pieces that were made the same way that I would make them. They were hand-painted, and they were a fraction of the cost of what it costs me to make them because they were making them on such a large scale, and they were making them in a factory. So you know, I went for it. And that led to—I've now been working with them for almost four years. And I've made over 250 objects with them, and they've supported my art career as well. But really, the major effect that that had was, a large amount of money came in. All of a sudden, I was actually really making a living off of my pots. My pots were still my pots. My process didn't change, and I was handing them prototypes and making pots but just coming up with new ideas all the time. Which is sort of like everyone's dream, right? At least from my perspective. I feel like I spent a lot of time in my studio repeating the same designs because that's what people wanted, and I was so ready to develop new ideas, and I felt like I couldn't afford to take the time to do that. And I feel like I've talked to a lot of other people who have the same—that's the same conundrum.

To be paid properly for one design, to come up with a bunch of other designs, it's like, whoo, this is so cool. And then to be able to dream up what you would do with wallpaper and tabletop, other things, it was sort of like my mind just went there. I'm a pattern and surface person, so I think that that's why it worked for me. It's not for everybody. But that extra cash and that extra influx...

I was working with Leslie Ferrin at the same time. She had—her gallery was doing pretty well. She was looking for new artists, and she happened to be 20 minutes away from me here. She saw the work that I had done. The first time I hung out with Anthropologie and they looked at my work in person was during a solo show I had at The Clay Studio in Philadelphia in the spring of 2010. It was June of 2010, and Leslie saw that work happening in my studio. So they both picked me at kind of the same time. And so all of a sudden, I had, because I was getting paid well for the work that I was doing with Anthropologie, I all of a sudden had money to invest in making more conceptual or installation-type artwork for Leslie. And it was so exciting, because I wouldn't have had the time and energy to do that—maybe once a year. But then all of a sudden, I had the money and the time. I could buy the time to do that.

And so pretty much hand-in-hand, the relationship with Leslie grew, and she started taking me to art fairs, and she was selling work. She and I have since split and gone our separate ways, and I have a different gallery that I'm working with. But I really don't think that I would have been able to pay attention to that part of my career the way I wanted to and needed to without having that support, financially.

I think the reason I got into pottery in the first place was because it's something that people can understand and approach. And I love the idea of drawings on pots, like pots as a way to sort of democratize drawing, for lack of a better description. So by pulling it out of a frame and off the wall and putting it on something that you're intimate or you already understand—like, I understand a cup. Everyone understands a cup. So even if Joe Schmo doesn't understand why there's the drawing on the cup, he can still appreciate the value of its use, its function. But when you're making \$90 or \$120 cups, that kind of falls to the wayside. [laughs]

And so I felt like the integrity of what I was doing was still there, the drawing, the concept, the idea, just being executed by somebody else. And there this sort of weird dissociative thing that happens when you're looking at cups that you feel are yours, but you didn't make them. There's a detachment that's bizarre. It's very strange. You get used to it really fast. [laughs] I didn't have to make those hundreds of thousands. But it was a good idea. And so I just could never have fulfilled that many orders on my own without never wanting to make another mug again.

KF: Without a team of people doing parts of your process for you, even if it's loading a kiln.

MH: Yeah. So I think there was a lot of value in it for me, for my ideas and the kind of work that I'm making. And like I said, not everyone's work would translate that way. And I felt like, if the factory could do this, then what else can I do with that, or can I start focusing on making pots that I wouldn't be able to afford to take the time to make? So I designed things like crazy cake stands that I never would have taken the time to do as a studio potter, because who's gonna pay \$2,000 for a cake stand? No one is going to do that. But you can afford to do that when industry is willing to pay you a licensing fee or a design fee that is the equivalent of that. You can afford to take your time, make it really well.

KF: You mentioned the importance to you of life beyond the studio, which I think is a good thing for all of us to think about. How do you balance work life and family life, and what do you choose to do to recharge and live outside of that creative outbuilding you have?'

MH: Yeah, I love my garage, where I am right now. I think having my daughter, there was a real motivation to ground myself in the importance of the rest of the world, like beyond making work. Like I think I would be a total shut-in if I didn't have to go get my kid at the daycare, have play dates with her friends. And I remember being very conscious of that at the time, like my husband and I needed to have her. Like it was an important balancing step on our part.

And it forced me to sort of reconcile—it constantly forces me to have to put things down at 5:00, make dinner, take a run, go to the playground, do the things that I

want to do. And it is also hard to explain to people who have 9:00 to 5:00 jobs that what I like to do with a glass of wine at the end of the day is the same thing that I do all day. [laughter]

They're like, "You go back to work after your kid goes to bed? What is your problem? You work on the weekends?" And it's like, it's work but it's not work. And I kind of arrange it so that things I get to do in the evening, I can watch some TV while I'm doing it, or—it's a funny thing. It's hard to explain, because I think on some level it's workaholism. But on another level it's just a deep, deep passion for the things that I'm doing.

So I run, and my husband and I bike, and we like to ski, and we have things that we do. And cooking, and we have a garden and a dog and our daughter. Just getting through the day-to-day of maintaining our house and painting the walls and doing the domestic things is the balance for me. Although I would love to see a little more time dedicated to that, that kind of ebbs and flows. It depends on the season, time of year, what's going on.

But having daycare full-time, five days a week, from 8:30 in the morning to 4:30 or 5:00 in the afternoon is my—that's how I have a career. Without that and having a studio out back with a monitor and her being able to go to bed at 8:00 or 8:30 and then me coming back out again for a few hours, without those two things combined, I just wouldn't be getting anything done.

KF: That's my next question. I know your studio is an outbuilding at your house. What's the advantage and/or disadvantage of having that arrangement?

MH: I don't feel like there's any disadvantage for me in how I operate at this point. And that's because I have a kid. I think if I didn't have a kid, then I think having a separate space might be healthier, to force me to come home for certain things at certain times. But I have my dog at work with me. I have ultimate control over the space. We bought this house with this space in mind in particular, and now I own it. Like, I can fuck up my career, and I still have a studio [laughs].

I can take more risks, because I will still have a studio at the end of the day. If ultimately the plan is to make work for the rest of my life, then whether I make money from it or not—ultimately, of course, that would be amazing. But if I end up deciding to—or the world stops liking my pots or something, I can still make my work. I have this place to do that. And I remember realizing that and being like, oh, my god! That's amazing. It's all paid for. I have a slab roller, and I have the kilns, and I have everything I need. And unless we can't pay our mortgage, no one's gonna ever be able to take that away.

Having it out back means that I have to walk a few steps out of the house to go, and so there is this—forever, it's been in the basement of my house or is the basement of some other building—the basement. For some reason, potters'

studios are in the basement. And in our previous rental it was in the basement, and it flooded every day. But just—I could hear my husband and my daughter upstairs walking around, and it made me feel guilty for being in the studio. Just having the building be a separate building—it's a one-car garage that we finished off. It's like 350 square feet. It's nothing huge, but it's separate. And it means that when I have a studio assistant—I have a woman who comes and works with me two days a week. And it's a separate building. And she uses our bathroom and everything, but it feels like, that's work, and this is home. But I get to look out my window at the garden, and my daughter comes home from school every day, knocks on the door, and says, "Mama, it's time to stop working."

And I can have the monitor on while she's napping or while she's sleeping or—and I kind of love—I have sort of a romantic notion of her being slightly more independent as a 7, 10, 14-year-old, and me being this fixture in the studio. I'm always home. I am always here. I will be here when she gets off the bus. I will be here when she—and there's this sort of lovely idea that I don't have to detach myself from that to participate in her life, and she can kind of have her life around it and see how hard I work and participate.

I grew up on a farm in Vermont, and I think I had sort of a similar experience. My parents were around. But they were working their asses off. And I was around, and I was quite independent, but I could see how dedicated they were to what they were doing. And I got to participate too. She has a little desk that she can work at in my studio, and I definitely include her in that space too. So there's a major advantage.

I suppose the disadvantage is that I get interrupted sometimes because I'm right here. So my husband might come out and be like, "What are you cooking for dinner?" [laughter] I'm like, "Go play. I'm working. I know it doesn't look like it, but I'm working." I can get interrupted a lot more that way. But I can also run in and throw laundry in at lunch. [laughs]

KF: I want to go back in time to those first days, weeks, and months after the birth of your daughter. Can you talk a bit about how much time you took away from the studio at that point in time and your feeling about that separation from the studio, or maybe you didn't have that at all, and when did you dive back into your studio practice?

MH: So I had my daughter a little early. I ended up having preeclampsia, which was sort of presenting itself oddly. So I ended up being quite sick. The recovery from preeclampsia can be really rough. And for me it wasn't too bad, but I was just really exhausted. I was really, really tired going into it. I mean, I know a lot of parents since who thought—that first month after having a baby, they're like, "Oh, this is fine! I can handle this!" And you're like, uh-huh, wait for it...[laughter]

I was like that from day one. I just was so exhausted. We were in an interesting situation. I graduated in 2008 with the crash of the economy, and I was working towards—I had a rental studio for a little bit when we first moved. We first moved to Northampton area, where we live now, when I was still pregnant with my daughter, around six months pregnant. And we got an apartment, and that had a studio in it. So we had to move into the studio. So I set it up sort of intentionally, knowing I was gonna need to be working from home 'cause I had a kid. But we were living off of my husband's income as a builder, which was maybe \$35 or \$40,000 a year. So we were on welfare.

We had WIC. We didn't qualify for food stamps by, like, 300 bucks a month or something. It was painful. We were so close. It was almost worth Oliver taking a pay cut just to be eligible for it. So I got really creative. The way I earned money was doing childcare, staying home, making food, preserving food. My parents have an amazing garden, and so we would go and pick vegetables and put them away in our freezer. And we used WIC to—we eked that out. And we were really living on a shoestring completely. We owned our vehicles outright. They were old, but we kind of—it was really kind of nuts. The difference between our lifestyle now and five years ago is really crazy.

That first couple months—I had my studio, but it wasn't very well put together. It was sort of set up in the basement of this rental property that we had, and I had one of my kilns there and everything. But it was close, and it was home, so I could kind of dabble down there. But I didn't really get down there until my daughter was about two months old. I started working again because I had to. I had a show—I had sort of stupidly set up a show for myself at the Bennington Art Museum in Bennington, Vermont. I had a solo there, and I was gonna make all new work for it. And I had to start in on it when she was two months old to get it done before three or four months later.

My mom—having my mom nearby was really helpful. My mother-in-law lives 15 minutes away, but she just wasn't capable of—she just couldn't quite be part of it. My mom was, in addition to being a farmer, was a painter. So she knew what it was gonna take for me. She felt like if I took too long of a break from the studio, that I was going to not—that it would be tempting not to go back to it or to prioritize other things. And she really wanted me to be able to continue the studio practice.

And I was one of those moms—I had a really hard time—I would admire these friends of mine were like, "I left my baby with my friend for two hours, and I went out shopping." And I was just horrified. I couldn't have done that. I was so attached to her, and I was so worried about her. My anxiety levels were through the roof. But I felt comfortable leaving her with my mom. And at that time, having my studio in the house felt really good because I could hear when she was crying a certain way, or I could hear where my mom was or what was going on, and I'd run up and sort of try to breastfeed her in the middle of trying to make—it was

nuts. It was totally crazy. But that show kind of came off. I managed to make the show happen. But it was definitely a little nuts. I was pushing the envelope, I think. But I owe it all to my mom, 'cause I didn't have childcare. I couldn't afford it. And she came down once a week. And so I would go into the studio one day a week, and I'd be working on this work.

I finally started to feel, after my mom coming down once a week and helping me with laundry and helping me with Camilla, my daughter, I finally felt around six months that it was time to have someone else come in a few days a week and help me out. So I hired a local grad student to come two or three days a week for three or four hours in the morning, and would go down to the studio for like half a day. And I paid her some exorbitant amount of money. She totally hosed me. It was [indistinct] an hour for her to watch my daughter for three hours at a time. And my daughter started taking formula from her too, which was really helpful, 'cause I wouldn't have to interrupt what I was doing. And she would just sit there and play with her and kind of hang out. And it was really great. She was an awesome person. I met her through Care.com, which was really helpful.

That quickly grew into I'd ask her for a little more time, and then I had my mom coming one day a week. So I quickly started to amp up what I was doing in the studio. And then around that same time, around six months, I visited Kari Radasch and Ian Anderson. And they had Ruby, their oldest daughter, around the same time, a few months before I had Camilla. I remember very distinctly because they invited me to come lecture at MECA, the Maine College of Art. I remember standing with them, and we were sort of reuniting, and it was cute, and the babies. And then the babies went to bed, and then Kari was like, "All right, I'm going in the studio." And I was like, it's 9:00. Aren't you exhausted? Don't you want to go to bed? And she's like, "I'm going to the studio." She grabbed a beer, went to the studio, and started working. And I was like, holy shit. I was like, if I'm gonna make this work, I've got to take advantage of every single minute I can and push myself to get—even though I'm super-exhausted, I have to use that time. And nap during the day when I don't have childcare, or whatever. Just figure it out.

And so as soon as I got home, I started doing the same thing. And it was like, opened up this whole evening time. I was not used to working at night. I was a daytime person.

KF: And did you find that once you had your daughter and you were back in the studio, and maybe you only had an hour and half of time, that you were more effective with that hour and a half than you were prior to her birth, or didn't it change for you?

MH: I might have been more effective, but I think what I just got good at was putting shit down. I got really good at interrupting my ideas and my thought process. And I really think it has completely changed my entire process to where

something was maybe perhaps a slightly more intuitive process earlier, I could take the time to sit and develop a whole idea on the wheel and sort of make a new pot form just by playing around, I had to sit down and do the research beforehand. And then execute it. Because I didn't have time to fuck around. I had to just make it, make it happen and move through it and move on to the next thing, because there was no time to guess or to not be decisive about it. So that I could come back after putting it down for an hour and pick up where I left off and have a plan. 'Cause sometimes the surfaces of what I'm doing, you have to know where you left off. You can't leave off for—and I remember times distinctly hearing Camilla crying and being like, I just have to draw this one last line. If I don't, it's not gonna...Wiping pots furiously late at night...

Often the thing that would stop my evening sessions would be her waking up for a feeding at 10:00 or 10:30, and then I was like, all right, I'm done. I have to go to bed. But that slowly went away. She didn't start sleeping through the night properly until a year ago, at like, 3. It was horrible.

But the real significant studio shift for me—I was making it into the studio, and I was getting time. I was probably getting in the equivalent of three days a week, three full days a week of work. But I got offered a teaching job at the local community college, at Holyoke Community College, teaching one class a semester, which quickly turned into two or three classes a semester. And it was like \$7,500 for the semester. It was really good pay for adjunct. It's not good pay, but it's good pay for adjunct work. All of a sudden, I was like, wait, I have to have childcare. She was a year old, and I was gonna have to hand her off to someone, and I had to figure it out.

But what I quickly realized was, two full days of teaching at HCC meant that I had to meet the three-day minimum at a daycare. That meant that I was paying for three full days of—and it would more than pay for the daycare, so I was coming out on top, and I could afford daycare all of a sudden. And that three days a week quickly turned into four, which really quickly turned into five. By the time she was 5, she was full-time, five days a week, 8:30 to 4:30, at a small private preschool here. And it was amazing.

And learning to just drop her off in the morning. And I would run her there in the morning. It was close, so I got my exercise in. And then I would run there to get her in the afternoon. It was great. I was in good shape, I was probably in better shape than I am now, and I had time in the studio. And it was like, that just blew things open. And at that point I was already working for Anthropologie. And so there was need and demand for more. I was pretty apprehensive about daycare at first, but man, thank god for that teaching job when she was a year old.

KF: You answered my next question, which was to talk a little bit about that cost-benefit analysis of paying for childcare so that you can have the time—it's both financial pay, and then I think sometimes there's guilt too.

MH: Absolutely.

KF: Like, I'm taking my kid, and somebody else is gonna take care of her so that I can go to my studio, essentially, which is the work we need to do for ourselves and for our career. But there is this kind of guilt feeling, and I don't know why it's any different than if I went to a business.

MH: Right. Well, don't you think that the difference is that it's not a money-making venture ultimately? That was the thing for me. It was like, this isn't paying the bills. I'm paying taxes on a \$1,000 worth of income, at the end of the day. But what it did do was, if I hadn't been doing that, and there had been a two-year or a three-year gap in my career, I'd be starting all over again. And I could see that I couldn't afford to do that. Leslie wasn't gonna wait for me, and neither was Anthropologie. It was too valuable of a thing to put down. So even though—yeah, it was definitely—we were on welfare. It was sort of like this bizarre thing of having to figure out, is this a long-term investment, basically. I could've been teaching. And I could still be teaching. I would be teaching there, if I'd stayed on the way that position happened to evolve, I would be teaching three classes a semester, and I'd be making probably \$30,000 a year teaching.

And that's okay, but thank god I didn't, 'cause now it's like, I'm making more than double that just doing what I'm doing, with the way things have progressed. So I cannot wait for the \$1,200 a month back, which is more than our mortgage, next year when she goes to kindergarten. Because I feel like we're gonna actually be able to start putting money into retirement. What?? Who does that? But I think in the beginning there was definitely this guilty feeling, especially because my mom was of the generation—I feel like their whole generation was very anti-daycare. And she was like, "What? You're gonna let someone else raise your kid?" And I was like, yeah, I am, actually, because I can't afford not to.

I think I would've felt far more justified if I was pulling in enough money to pay for that and then bring home money to add to our daily income. And I had to start to break down the cost-effectiveness of doing it in a slightly stranger way. So because my studio was in the house where we were living, I paid for a significant portion of our rent out of my studio budget. I paid for an enormous amount of our utilities, because the studio ate up electric like crazy because of the kilns. Phone costs, a lot of the travel costs, because every time I'd go pick up my daughter, I'd be shipping a box, so part of the car cost—you know, it's sort of like if you started adding all of that up, I was heavily subsidizing our income. But it was all tax-deductible. And then I was paying for childcare on top of that. So at the end of the day, if you started to take all that away and I was just staying home, working at being the mom and doing laundry and making our lives more—here I am, being interrupted. Hi. I'm on a Skype call.

Husband: Okay. I'm gonna go out.

MH: Okay.

[laughter]

There you go. There it is. Hi. Hi, Bean.

Camilla: Bye!

MH: Bye! Figuring that out made me realize, okay, there is more to it than just this sort of cash in, cash out. So maybe I wasn't paying our rent, but I was still contributing enough that it was like, if I wasn't working, it would've made a pretty significant difference in our day-to-day lives. And also then there's that mental sanity part. How do you value that, I don't know, but I needed to have something else other than my daughter. I expected myself to be this mother that was like, "I love babies, I'm gonna have a million of them!" I was really ready to be that mom, and I totally wasn't. I was like, oh, my god, I need a break. I resented her sometimes. I wanted more time than I was getting. And getting through that first couple of years and getting her into a place—I mean she loved the daycare she was at too. Sort of ironic, but she would be like, "Bye..."

KF: Yeah, we had the same experience. Our daughter went running in and just didn't look back. Or we've gone to pick her up before and she was in the middle of playing. And she'll come over and hand you a toy and then go back and keep playing. So it's always kind of—in some ways it feels good, because I think it takes away some of that guilt of feeling like you've left her someplace. And actually they do enjoy it.

MH: Yeah. And I think they need it, the social thing. It takes a long time to get over that. I feel like I should be this parent who wants to stay home with my kids and—but I've also watched friends of mine who have done that, and I feel like they're lost, like they don't really know who they are aside from being a parent. And I think it's really valuable for kids to see that you have other things going on.

I was really driven to get back into the studio, and if I hadn't been, I wouldn't be here. And it was really important to me to make sure my other work happened. And I think I can see pretty easily how, if you weren't that committed to what you were doing, it'd be pretty quick to fall to the wayside, lose yourself in parenting or another job to support yourself or...

I'm very lucky that I had a husband who was okay with that. It takes a particular person to support, to that degree, the willingness to live—if I had been making as much money as he was, we would've been living just fine for a long time. And I really wasn't making that money. I was not making much at all. But he saw the long-term benefit of it, potentially. But it's all the more reason to make—

So that was the other thing. It's like, if I'm gonna pay for my daughter to go to daycare five days a week or even three days a week, I'm gonna make the best—make the most out of what I'm doing in that time. I would feel guilty, earlier on—I don't anymore. But earlier on, I would feel guilty when I'd drop her off at daycare and run an errand because I felt like it would just be easier to do it without her. Whereas—or I would actually do something just for me, occasionally. I would use that time to go to do something just for me, or go get my nails done, or something, whatever. I don't even know what I would do those times, go shopping at the bookstore, I don't even know what I was doing a couple times. But I remember feeling horrified, and in the end I think you need just as much of a balance—time for yourself for whatever reason, whatever it is you want to do, work time in the studio too.

The guilt thing, I don't know where it comes from, whether it's society or some other—the other moms who are staying home, who feel like you should be too, or—I have no idea. But I definitely felt the same thing.

KF: What advice do you have for women in the ceramics field as they begin to think about—or not, because I think some people don't think about it at all—their futures as mothers and makers?

MH: I think anyone who's interested in having children should just go for it, and you'll figure out how to make it. I watched Kari Radasch, who was far more established in her career than I was when I first—we were pregnant at the same time—have to relearn how to have her studio practice happen. She did a really good job with it. But I felt like in my own studio practice, the timing was—right after graduate school. And my career has grown with my daughter at the same time. And so I've had to figure it out with her there the whole time, pretty much. Not to say that I didn't have a career before graduate school or during graduate school, but really the career with the focus that I've had on it now has been there with a kid alongside that. And I think it would've been really challenging for me to try to figure that out if I had a kid right now.

Without having a kid I would be so much more entrenched in what I was used to doing and the money I was used to having or not. I just didn't haven't any money and I didn't have any—you know, having a kid at that point was a really good move on our part, though I'm not sure I could have predicted when that would've been good. It's just like there's no good time or bad—maybe there are bad times. But it's been really valuable for me to have her, but I'm not having any more, either. I feel like my career is another child. It demands as much time, or more, as her and her needs. It's slightly different obviously, but it definitely feels like having another kid, I'm just not sure where there would be room for all that to happen for a while, and I'm not really willing to make that concession.

I do think, too, recognizing—having the studio at home, if you can, and being able to divide your time between what you're doing and your kid and having the

easy access to coming and going has been really helpful for me, or being able to bring some of it home with you.

KF: Are there other women who are working in clay that are also mothers who you feel are role models? And what have you gained from these ladies?

MH: Kim Dickey, who was one of my graduate thesis faculty at CU had young children when I was there. And she definitely sort of set an example or set the bar high for managing your career with kids, and an artistic career with kids, and a job teaching. I couldn't believe what she was able to accomplish. And again, I think I saw the support in her husband. That was really huge. That was a huge part of how she was able to do it. So I think Kim is someone I've looked at, and Kari. There are other folks, but those two, I would say, are the two that I have looked to the most, who have made decisions or set patterns in their own studio practice or lives that I was kind of like, okay, I can do this, or this is possible.

And then my own mom, she's had a studio practice her whole life—maybe not a showing career in the traditional sense. The fact that she has continued to make work for her whole life, she's managed to find time. And I think that consistency and willingness to devote yourself to it, I think that's an incredible example.

KF: I hope you enjoyed this conversation. For more information or to listen to additional interviews like the one you just heard, please visit [www.bothartistandmother.com](http://www.bothartistandmother.com). Funding for this project was made possible by St Olaf College's Academic Innovation Fund. Special thanks to Caleb Genheimer for his audio editing, the Eriksons for their music, Heather Wang for her transcription skills, Rachel Elizabeth Murphy for her web expertise, and to all of the artist mothers, thank you.