

# Biography

## Katherine Glenday 2009

I was born in 1960 in Cape Town, South Africa. Having studied art at university and having almost by accident ended up taking my practical major in ceramics, a path was set for me to work in a medium perennially associated with craft. Having originally had no real interest in working with clay, a second 'accident' provided me with the tuition of the finest porcelain potter in South Africa at the time, Marietjie van der Merwe. She came to lecture in my final year at university and alluded to the horizons which I was yearning for.

Having a compulsion to express myself and to work things out through creativity, I have pursued an unwavering path with this fine translucent clay.

It is an abiding love. There is no other medium in my experience, better able to capture light and movement, water and earth, and sound in form. It calls for technical virtuosity and responds to a free wheeling 'letting go'. My studio is my playground.

Working with clay has led to many blessings, but has also caused some difficulty for me as an artist. In a strange way this dynamic has left me free to make my own way and to find my own idiosyncratic methods of 'putting out' my work. I am ever grateful for the wonderful mentors and friends who have encouraged me and recognized my sometimes faltering voice.

Most of my work is strongly autobiographical, and at the same time devoted to exploring various conceptual preoccupations. It is sometimes functional, and has been decorative in my earlier years but on the whole speaks of an embodied dialogue between myself, my materials and the flora and fauna and people around me.

If I look at my work since the early eighties, I observe parallel developments in the outward forms with my inner orientation around what I have come to call "The Dweller in the Innermost" after a painting which I saw by chance. \*

From about 2001 I began to set out my vessels as installations – making use of their context to amplify the voices that I was trying to make heard.

By about 2004 I was working collaboratively with other artists whose work I recognized as being similarly occupied with meaning.

I have done series of works about gender, about the metaphysics of belonging in a body and belonging on the earth. I have come to work in the landscape more recently, and before that looked at psychological themes, the use of symbols and branding, narcissism, duality, alchemy and the philosopher's stone. The many things we call love and the complexity of our notions about what that might be, also informs much of my work.

I believe that the years of practice, of gaining mastery over materials and techniques and a growing freedom to trust my own methods and intuition - (and the delights of growing older) have delivered me to a fine wondrous world.

I am constantly grateful for the gift of creativity. It keeps me aware of the utter abundance of life (if we but remember that it is there and possible.)

I teach, I collaborate with musicians and other artists, dancers and writers, I make some functional ware and I work towards exhibition installations.

I am constantly redefining what it is that I am doing, and why I find it so necessary to work with clay and with people, rather than with paper or paint or film.

\* this was a painting by George Frederic Watts done in 1885. It is in the Tate collection in London.