

MADE IN THE USA

VIT Ceramics

Handmade, modern and organic, this vase collection is designed to flatter flowers.

Kristin Nelson is a Seattle-based ceramic artist whose pin-stripe-adorned vases resonate with florists and collectors who appreciate the uncommon in an otherwise mass-produced world of home décor.

She is the owner of **Kri Kri Studio**, and her **VIT** collection is a favorite among florists and gallery owners. Kristin has studied in Sweden and speaks Swedish, so the name “VIT” (pronounced veet), which is Swedish for white, seemed natural for her range of vessels and lamps detailed with thin, raised white lines.

The distinct shapes of the VIT collection are very much influenced by midcentury modern art and architecture. The rainbow of glazes – including black and white – evoke a fresh Scandinavian sensibility. The palette is seasonally inspired, often changing, thanks to Kristin’s small-batch production.

“A distinguishing characteristic is that my products are not just made in the USA, they’re *handmade* in the USA,” the artist says. “Each piece is perfectly imperfect, and I love the *wabi-sabi* aesthetic created by the hand-painted lines.”

Kristin studied fine art and ceramic sculpture at the University of Washington, and she has been working in clay ever since. Early in her career, Barney’s New York and Barney’s Japan selected her Kri Kri line of ceramic dishes and serving pieces. “Being discovered by Barney’s moved me more into products,” she explains. After the 2008 recession, she expanded into single items, more accessible than entire dinnerware sets. That’s when the VIT collection took off. “Vases were a perfect medium for me – especially bud vases – because people could have an affordable gift that is actually handmade.”

Kristin’s process involves the low-tech “coil and pinch” clay technique. Because each style is made by hand rather than thrown on a pottery wheel, a distinctive surface texture emerges, including ripples where her fingers have pressed into the clay. Once she fires the original piece, Kristin makes a plaster mold of it, which allows her to produce multiples of the same design. The

method is called “slip casting,” referring to liquid clay, the consistency of pancake batter, which is poured into the molds. “The plaster absorbs moisture and creates a skin,” Kristin explains. “When it’s thick enough to form the vessel, I tip over the mold and empty out the excess slip.”

Trimming and glazing are followed by the pinstriped accents, then two firings in a 2,000-degree-plus kiln. Surface details, combined with impressions in the clay made by the artists’ fingertips, lend an organic quality to VIT vases. “There’s something really nice about handmade items,” Kristin says. “They bring me back down to earth, and they celebrate humanity. Flowers and plants do that, too, adding a certain amount of calm and simplicity that we need today.”

For a florist like **Melissa Feveyear**, owner of **Terra Bella Flowers**, which has two locations in Seattle, including at the flagship Nordstrom, carrying a line of locally made artisan vases complements her floral sourcing practices. Melissa calls Kristin an “uber local” artist, and she offers “designer’s choice” arrangements paired with a variety of VIT vases to online and in-person customers.

“Kristen’s work has an element that’s so personal and unique, from the indents made by her fingertips to the slightly imperfect lines that you can tell were applied by hand. There’s something so satisfying when you hold one of her vases in your hands, and to design a floral in one is beyond inspiring as a designer.” ■

DETAILS

Kri Kri Studio

Contact: vitceramics.com, @krikristudio

Wholesale: Kristin Nelson offers wholesale pricing for orders beginning at \$175.

