



# BRANCHING OUT

INFORMED BY DECADES OF TRAVEL AND THE BEAUTY OF NATURE, PORCELAIN ARTIST LUCRECIA WAGGONER'S ORGANIC INSTALLATIONS ELEVATE TRADITIONAL CERAMICS TO NEW HEIGHTS.

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Lucrecia Waggoner of Lucrecia Waggoner Porcelain in Dallas (pictured right with an installation from her *Constellation* series) recently began tinting with oil paint for a touch of color (previous pages, right). Waggoner throws each vessel on a wheel before manually creating its wavy appearance. Still in process, the pieces shown opposite are glazed but not yet fired.



A sign in Dallas-based porcelain artist Lucrecia Waggoner's backyard studio states, "Nothing is easy." This treasured keepsake from her aunt Lucia, a well-known jewelry designer and an inspiration for Waggoner, provides daily motivation. "Working with ceramics is a slow process, and many elements, from weather to timing, can affect the finished piece," says the artist. "Seeing those words inspires me when an installation gets tough, and every day that I'm working, it pushes me to create new ideas of expression."

Although Waggoner's process is anything but easy—a single installation requires four to six weeks of throwing, glazing and gilding hundreds of vessels, while preparing an entire show can take six months—it's difficult to tell by looking at the final product. With delicate shapes and undulating patterns, the organic arrangements evoke a sense of tranquility, movement and ease, appearing to float effortlessly across the

wall. Waggoner often compares her installations to elements in nature, including butterflies, constellations and flowers, which she creates using porcelain, wood, oil paint, acrylic and gold leaf. "I enjoy incorporating multiple mediums in my work," she says.

The road to her signature style, sought by many prominent Dallas collectors, took Waggoner around the globe. Growing up in Mexico City, she caught the arts-and-crafts bug early at a children's workshop in the Museo Nacional de Antropología. Then in junior high, a friend invited her to a local community center's ceramics class, where, "I just fell in love with the touch of the clay," she says. The artist continued honing her skills after school—she has a fashion marketing degree from the Parsons School of Design—by enrolling in ceramics-related workshops everywhere from France to Hong Kong.

Waggoner eventually settled in her husband's home state of Texas, spending two years at Southern Methodist University under artist Peter

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Waggoner uses the very finest porcelain and gilds with top-quality precious metals including gold, platinum and bronze. To create an Asia-influenced wall installation (opposite, bottom right), the porcelain artist cut, debarked, sanded and polished a branch before embellishing it with her 22-karat-gold-leaf creations. She affixed several to the wall for a sense of movement.



Beasecker, focusing on ceramics before opening up her studio. She began as a traditional potter creating utilitarian items like sake cups and dinner plates, but dreamed of showing in galleries and museums. "I want people to look at my art because they relate to it or it transports them somewhere else, or simply because it's beautiful," the artist says. The turning point to achieve this came on a trip to Santa Fe in 2004, when she began studying with artist Heidi Loewen, Waggoner's mentor and friend who helped her make the leap to throwing large-scale pieces. Soon thereafter, Waggoner got her platters into a small gallery, and one show led to another.

This past May, Waggoner once again evolved her work for her latest exhibition at Laura Rathe Fine Art in Dallas. "This was the first time I presented an actual sculpture," she explains. "Normally, my installations are on the wall, but this time it's a freestanding, 9-foot-tall tree on a granite pedestal." Attached to the tree, more than 150 vessels create the illusion of cherry blossoms, reminiscent of her time in Asia.

From large sculptures to tiny teacups, Waggoner continues to challenge herself—keeping in mind that while nothing is easy, the hard work is always worth it. Now focused on having her work known internationally, Waggoner says, "I have realized my dream to be recognized as a serious artist." ■

