

NORTHERN LIGHTS GALLERY KESWICK

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Clare Humphry is a BA (Hons) Contemporary Applied Arts graduate.



Clare works from her studio which is based in the Lake District in Cumbria.

My smoke fired bowls are cast from white stoneware slip, lightly burnished on the outside, then bisque fired to a low temperature.

After this I decorate using resist techniques, and rapidly fire them in a small bonfire made from locally gathered materials such as dried bracken, fallen twigs, nutshells, or fir-cones. Here, a reduction firing takes place as the flames rob oxygen from the surface of the bowl and replace it with carbon adding the subtle brown, grey and black tones to the design.

Each bowl is completely individual, not only because each one is hand decorated by myself with unique sketches drawn from the landscape and wildlife of my local Cumbria, but also because I cannot control what happens in the fire. The final result has a pleasing Chinese water-colour style fluidity that would be hard to achieve through planned design.

Due to only receiving one low temperature kiln firing, the bowls are less robust than high fired ones would be. Although the surfaces are sealed with beeswax, the bowls remain porous and are therefore unsuitable for the containment of liquid, so should not be used as vases or plant pots. They can be safely rinsed clean with water but avoid the use of abrasive materials. If desired, the bowl can be buffed up with a touch of beeswax polish on a soft cloth.