



## Living Artfully

Deborah Mills Thackrey's former professional experiences prepped her well for her current calling as a creator of functional art. Previously a resident of California, Mills Thackrey is a former San Francisco gallery owner and a longtime photographer and freelance graphic designer whose past clients include Apple. Since moving to Kingston in 2012, she's been focusing mostly on her fine art photography (with seven solo shows, a museum fellowship, and 85 group shows on her resume). Having grown up "staring at patterns," as the granddaughter of a Pennsylvania Dutch quiltmaker in the Texas Panhandle, near Route 66 and its vintage American signage, she feels that it's no surprise that curation, graphic design, and imagery come naturally to her.

All of Mills Thackrey's skills and interests came together when a collector asked to keep the print of one of her photos for a week "to see how it felt in her home," she recalls. "She decided not to buy it because she said in order to hang it in her living room, she'd have to recover her couch." It was an a-ha! moment: "People shop for art to fit their furniture," she says. Her business, Art for Living, grew from there.

Mills Thackrey offers hand-sewn pillows, along with tote bags, reupholstered chairs, made with fabrics digitally imprinted with her original, abstract photos. The textural styles of the images on her pillows vary widely: natural (including stones and water), urban warm (graffiti, cracked concrete), artistic (fresh or peeling paint), urban nocturnal (lights, architecture), urban cool (metal and rust), reflections (water, glass), and bright accents (distressed walls, paint-dripped floors). Whether she's at home or traveling, Mills Thackrey is always shooting. For the 2019 Kingston Design Showhouse, she created meditation cushions using images of soft watercolors.

+ [ART-FOR-LIVING.COM](http://ART-FOR-LIVING.COM)

Photo: Deborah DeGraffenreid



## Fired Up

For Elise Killer-Migliore, making ceramics is as much about pragmatism as it is about "creating something beautiful and useful from the earth." Working out of Kingston Ceramics Studio, Killer-Migliore has created Sour Baby Ceramics, a line of small-scale stoneware products, both thrown and hand-built, that explore spherical and circular shapes along with earthy colors, often applied in stripes or using crackled or speckled glazes. There are whimsical round-bowled ceramic spoons with hand-rolled, looped handles; half-circle and partitioned-circle plates; donut-shaped single-stem vases; as well as incense burners, ring holders, cups and mugs, finger bowls, bread plates, soap holders, and planters.

"I make almost exclusively practical pieces. I think this comes from having to move around a lot in the past few years and not wanting to have to deal with moving or with [having] a lot of stuff," says Killer-Migliore, who moved to Ulster County from New York City. "My inspiration comes from all over—other makers, hikes, things that I find myself wishing I had in my own home."

Trained as a painter, Killer-Migliore began studying and focusing on ceramics two years ago as a way of overcoming a creative block, and hasn't looked back since. Next on the agenda? To create a line of large-scale home goods.

+ [INSTAGRAM.COM/SOUR.BABY.CERAMICS](http://INSTAGRAM.COM/SOUR.BABY.CERAMICS)

Photo: Elise Killer-Migliore