



BrushStroke Series
 "Mantis"
 Dan Saultman 2020

Some months ago I felt that I needed to break out of my “design box” mentality. I created a series of calligraphy strokes that I felt might reflect an Asian freeness and free me from my western design homage. I broke out my Asian bamboo brushes that I had collected, and began to slash at page after page to capture some kind of fervent strokes that were free, yet graphically viable. I ultimately wanted



to apply them to ceramic product. I then set about designing a square, tapered lidded jar to apply my graphic brush stroke experiments to as a decal fired-on. I selected 6 brush strokes from hundreds I had done.

I built a silkscreen printing set-up with an exposure lighting system and coated my own screens to create printed decals that would be applied to white and colored mugs and the new rectangular boxes I had developed. After making the necessary molds for these new boxes, I began produc-

tion of these porcelain boxes (let’s call them “Canisters”). I made ten of them. 7 of them made it through the firing (a little heartbreak there after so much labor). 6 of them made it through the final decal firing process. And so in summary, I had made graphic brush strokes, created systems to make decals as well as casting molds for porcelain boxes. Of course then you have to bisque fire them, wax the parts that touch, glaze them and fire them in a kiln for 12 hours.

Thinking back - I was quite mad. This project had taken months to accomplish and there had been failures of every kind along the way. Pieces broke, printed pieces were flawed. The screen printing process took me days to pin down.

When the dust settled on this expansive project, I realized that I needed metal bands to finish the look. I went into the metal shop and welded, assembled and polished stainless steel banding to all of the square box lids.

I has been quite a journey. (Sigh). And, this is the first series. Lids don’t fit properly and the next new graphics are in the offing. I am making new molds that will accommodate refinements that will keep the boxes from distorting and warping - a major challenge.



In my “Perfect World” someone would whisk away my pieces; do wonderful photography and write all of the sales-speak. Then upload them on ETSY, Facebook, Pinterest, and Instagram. Naw, not so - grasshopper. I must do it all. Shall I mention that my clay-work studio is gathering dust. Some people are waiting for things to be made. Argh!

I’ll sign-off and wish you well. Dan