

Captured on Film

Area artists showcase their creativity on HGTV.

by Carla Jean Whitley

when Southside artist Amy Lucas McClure begins work on a piece of pottery, it usually takes five days to transform a lump of clay into a bowl or pitcher. But in December, McClure demonstrated the entire process for a film crew in an eight-hour day.

It's an experience several area artists can now understand. McClure was one of 17 local artists filmed in December for HGTV's "That's Clever!" Episodes featuring Alabama artists are expected to air in late 2007.

In each shot, McClure explained her steps to the camera. Every moment and syllable was analyzed. She couldn't say "you" do something; instead, she elaborated on why she was doing it. A slight hesitation in a sentence was cause for a retake. Some fun shots, such as one that required her to peer through a tiny circular fondant cutter, required several takes in order to achieve proper timing and framing.

McClure demonstrated for the camera how to make a ceramic chopstick bowl and a blue textured hoop necklace. Although she's owned her personal kiln for only a year, McClure's interest in art dates back to her childhood.

"I had this little tablet piece of paper that I painted on it, 'When I grow up I want to be an artist so I can paint people's pictures,'" she remembers. As she continued to study art in high school and as an art student at the University of Montevallo, McClure's focus changed from portraits to ceramics.

"I just like the ability to create functional things that are pretty," she says. "There are so many things that are made just for function. There's no style to it."

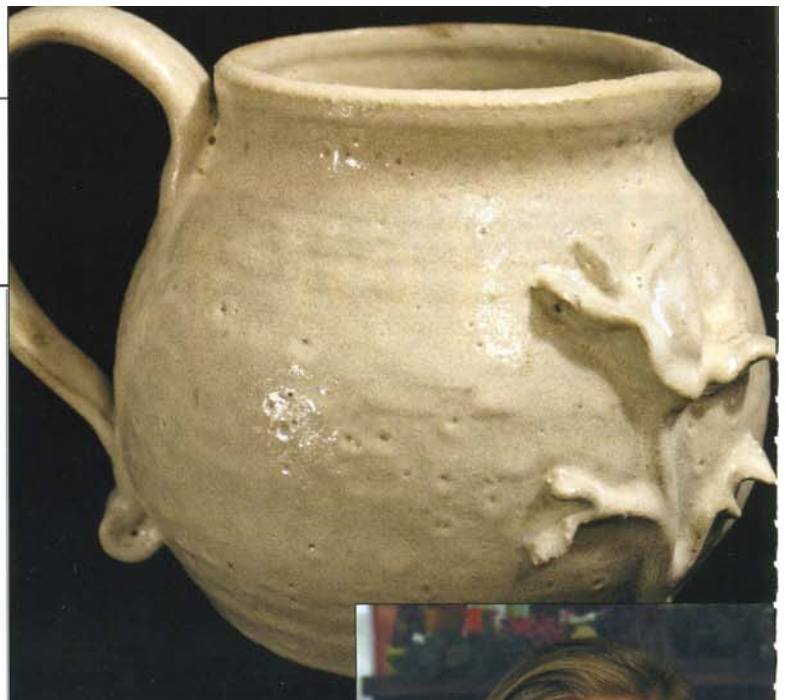
Several items, including the chopstick bowl featured on "That's Clever!" and most of her jewelry, incorporate lace into the design. McClure uses lace as a stamp on the side of bowls and presses it into the wet clay to give her jewelry texture. "It's very feminine without being over the top," she explains.

Those creations contribute to McClure's personal style. She often sells her jewelry right off of her own neck. But you can buy her works locally at ShoeFly or Mia Moda. To contact McClure directly, visit olariastudio.com.

After submitting several items to the "That's Clever!" team, Hoover artist Michael Hawkins was exhausted. Still in need of the piece that would get him on the show, Hawkins' eyes fell on a three-dimensional ceramic game, based on Chutes & Ladders, which he created in 2001 for his children.

He was in.

Hawkins also demonstrated how to create a glass geode paperweight. The rock-like creation is the result of firing hobby glass in his kiln. Hawkins is prone to experiment with a variety of glass when he's firing another pro-



ject because his kiln is large.

Professionally, Hawkins' efforts are concentrated largely on graphic design and photography for corporate clients. "It's functional artwork," he says. But he's able to blur the lines between function and fine art, creating distinctive pieces for those



Amy Lucas McClure

