



Coffee and espresso cups in blue tones, making you think of the sky and the sea.

## Lena Pedersen Ceramics & Design: Authentic Nordic craftsmanship like no other

**In a world rife with mass production, it is refreshing to find a genuine craftswoman who makes every piece with equal parts care and attention, creating striking yet functional products that keep customers coming back for more.**

By Trine Jensen-Martin | Photos: Tia Borgsmidt

Since leaving the Royal Danish Academy in 2003, Lena Pedersen has worked as an independent glassblower, a ceramicist and a designer. She opened her studio and boutique in Copenhagen in 2013, building a hugely successful business. Her unique, beautiful pieces are created using time-honoured methods, and starting out with her now-iconic round vase, she is known for her distinctive coffee cups and elegant bowls and plates.

### A Nordic expression

"Some find inspiration in nature, but I find it in the vibrant urban environment

around me," Pedersen says. "And when my hands are in the glaze or I am working a piece of clay, I feel truly inspired."

Pedersen often comes up with new ideas or designs during the process of creation, allowing the materials to develop and speak for themselves. Her sense of Scandinavia is evident. "When I talk about a Nordic expression, I mean that my colours are soft and understated, and the shapes of my products are clean and sharp," she explains.

She works with porcelain clay, which is completely white and the perfect back-

drop for the subtle and hushed colours often found in Nordic nature. The all-over effect of letting the colours, shapes and materials work together is light, crisp and delicate. But make no mistake – Pedersen's items are not meant merely for the display cabinet. "I want my customers to enjoy their coffee in my beautiful cups; I am a craftswoman, not an artist, and I make things to be used," she says passionately.



Casting of large, round porcelain vase. Photo: Hanne Fuglbjerg

Pedersen has many regular customers and collaborates with select hotels and restaurants, as well as making pieces for TV and film productions. Her pieces are also available to buy at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. It is easy to see why she is in high demand: her products are exquisitely made, capturing a spirit and an essence of Denmark, of Scandinavia. You can sense the seas, the fjords, the open expanse of sky, the mountains, the soil and the fields in the colours she creates. Her glazes are clean and muted, yet full of colour and interplay between light and shade. The shapes she creates are simple, elegant and timeless, allowing her to focus on new colours and glazes.

### Time is not of the essence

"The biggest challenge for me is time, as I create every piece by hand myself, from idea to finished product," Pedersen explains. "Things take time, and you can't rush the process, otherwise it won't be perfect."

Even with bigger orders, Pedersen never compromises on the quality of her work, nor her dedication. Simply put, the time it takes to make 100 perfect cups is the time it takes. Her work is highly sought after, yet she continues to create every single piece herself, and her love for and appreciation of the materials she works with shines through. "I am proud of being

a highly skilled and experienced crafts-woman, and my craft is very important to me. I use traditional techniques and methods, making each piece unique," she says. This is the antithesis of mass production, and truly artisan.

### Mistake made perfect

As with anything handmade, Pedersen's products are distinctive; no two cups or bowls are the same, and every piece has been through her hands several times. "The possibilities are endless, and I love the process of mixing and creating new glazes. While I strive for perfection, I will always embrace the imperfect," she says.

One particular glaze came to life this way: "I was mixing a certain shade of pink, called Rosa, and added a pigment to give it a specific colour. But as can happen in nature and in chemistry, the glaze turned out completely different and, instead of pink, I had golden crystals on my vase when it came out of the oven!" she muses. This finish has since become a best-seller and is a wonderful example of letting the glaze take on a life of its own.

### An authentic working experience

Pedersen's boutique is in her studio, so when visiting Ahlefeldtsgade 22, you get to experience a real ceramicist at work, feel the warmth from the furnace

and smell the burning clay in the air. It doesn't get much more real than that. This is a lot like Lena herself: a genuine and passionate craftswoman who believes in her work and takes her time with every item she creates, the end-result being that it feels as if there is a little part of her in every single piece so lovingly and expertly crafted.



Vases in black porcelain with pink, blue and brown glazes.

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Serving dishes in three different sizes.



Coffee and espresso cups in rose, ochre and pink nuances, reminiscent of a sweetshop.