**Gina Westergard - Artist Statement**

I believe that funerary urns are functional objects of great significance. My intention is to make the urn a contemplative object that initiates a celebration of a life. My designs are inspired by the cycles of nature that symbolize the passage of time. Rich surfaces and vibrant colors evoke joy. The minimal, stately exterior of each urn gradually leads to more detailed and recessed interior space. Nestled within the interior of each lid is an element that awaits discovery, representing new growth and renewal. I believe the urn not only holds a life that has passed but also contains an energy that continues.

I live in rural Kansas on 137 acres of farmland and dense woods. I have developed a close connection to this land and its rhythms of inevitable change. While on daily walks through wooded flood plains and across rolling, open fields, I closely observe nature’s details and meditate on the vast horizon with its ever-shifting compositions. These rhythms have created profound changes in my understanding of life and death, and have greatly influenced the development of my work as a metalsmith.