

Gina Westergard - Artist Statement

This body of work is comprised of funerary urns, reliquaries and memorials. These objects have great significance to me. Death, which concludes all life, is a complex, often difficult subject to address. Its poignancy and mystery touch us all. I strive to make contemplative vessels that are markers, which celebrate a life that has passed and evoke memories that remain.

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 piece gradually leads to more detailed and recessed interior space. Nestled within the interior of each object is an element that awaits discovery, representing new growth, renewal and an energy that continues.

I live in rural Kansas on farmland and near 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.