

Eva zeisel and  
beverly mayeri



**ASSIGN  
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Eva Zeisel is known as one of the greatest industrial designers of the twentieth century. She was famous for her unique ceramic tableware designs. She was born on November 13, 1906 in Budapest in a wealthy and well-educated family. Since childhood Eva was interested in art that is why in 1923 she entered the Royal Academy of Fine Arts to study painting. Nevertheless, very soon she decided to get some practical skills and experience in pottery and became an apprentice to Jacob Karapancsik. Having graduated as a journeyman, Eva collaborated with Hungarian ceramic manufacturers and designed tableware for a German ceramic manufacturer, cooperation with whom transformed her from the studio artist into an industrial designer. A visit to the Soviet Union in 1932 became a significant event for Eva Zeisel as it inspired her to create new forms that would be modern and lyrical at the same time. But her work was interrupted in 1935 when she was accused of assassination attempt on the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin and was arrested for 16 months, 12 of which she spent in solitary confinement in the Soviet prison. After release, she got married and moved to the USA via Austria (Hamilton).

In the USA, Eva began teaching at Pratt Institute and developed one of the first industrial ceramics courses in the U. S. The 1950s became a very productive period for Eva. At that time she produced a famous Town and Country ceramics line, which became an effective combination of organic shapes and muted colours, and Tomorrow's Classic, designed in solid white along with fabulous floral patterns (Labaco). Her salt and pepper shakers with their anthropomorphic bodies that are curving toward each other became iconic. It is believed that Eva created such forms under the

influence of her motherhood. In the next 20 years she turned less and less frequently to the commercial design. However, she designed collections of ceramics, glass and metal, and collaborated with young Brooklyn ceramists on the vase collection. Eva Zeisel died in 2011 aged 105 .

According to Eva Zeisel, she designed about 100, 000 items of tableware in such styles as Russian Art Nouveau, Bauhaus, and her most famous style organic modern. When in 1925 she visited Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris, which introduced her to modern art movements, she claimed modernist art to be “ too cold”. In her work Eva Zeisel always tried to combine simplicity of the contemporary design with the sensuality of classic shapes. She created items in such a way that shapes complemented each other rather than repeated. Eva Zeisel once said that women should design things they use, as men do not have any idea how items for home should be (Luther). That is why pieces created by Eva Zeisel are beautiful and useful at the same time. She was the one who brought the casual and clean shapes of modern design into the postwar houses of Americans.

Eva Zeisel’s contributions to the design were acknowledged by the Royal College of Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the American Society of Industrial Designers, and the Hungarian government. She also wrote a book “ Eva Zeisel on Design” that was published in 2004.

Beverly Mayeri is a well-known modernist American ceramic sculptor. She was born in 1940 in the U. S. Beverly Mayeri received her BA from the University of California and MA in sculpture from San Francisco State

University. She has been sculpting for about 30 years, but besides her main work as a studio artist, Beverly has also lectured and taught sculpting workshops in different states across the U. S. Her works are presented in numerous museums and galleries, and are included in many public and private collections.

Beverly Mayeri is known for the meticulously patterned details that evoke human presence in her works. Sculptures made by the artist are endowed with life and personality, which is not common for the contemporary art (Johnson). In general, most of her works have the same style. Mayeri crafts faces, busts and full-length sculptures. The heads and torsos are made of clay coils that are gradually transformed into the bodies and heads. She uses soft colors to tender moods and gestures of each figure. Pale blue, green, pink and gray washes of acrylic paint are used to amplify the contours and lines of the bodies, as well as face and hair of the sculptures. Drawings, relief work and patterning on the surface of the clay are also used to give her works some emotions and thoughts. Some of Mayeri's sculptures look uncertain and expectant while others look immersed in thoughts.

Interestingly, there is a slim-figured girl with an unusually long neck and moon-shaped face which often appears in Mayeri's work. This girl is believed to represent the artist or her alter ego (Cassidy). Beverly Mayeri said that many of her pieces are psychological portraits that should be felt rather than seen.

Her works may provoke some critical reviews as one of her most distinctive ways of patterning the sculptures, especially faces, is deconstruction of the original human form. While some viewers may be attracted to her style of

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realism and symbolism, others may dislike the disproportion and imperfections that her works may contain. The concept of her work may be seen as quite different from the traditional decorative art concept. In addition sometimes her pieces are enormous, outsize and unsettling, which makes them unpractical.

Beverly Mayeri has had 20 solo shows in such galleries as Perimeter Gallery in Chicago, Franklin Parrasch Gallery in New York, Dorothy Weiss Gallery in San Francisco, and others. She also participated in numerous group exhibitions where her ceramic wall and pedestal sculptures were presented along with other famous modern ceramic artists. Beverly Mayeri has been twice a recipient of the Individual Fellowship of the National Endowment for the Arts Visual Artist grants in 1982 and in 1988 and also got grants from Virginia Groot Foundation and Marin Arts Council.