



MIRKA DRAPANIOTOU

PORTFOLIO | ARCHAIC TALES



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ABOUT

Mirka Drapaniotou (Greece, 1971) is a versatile ceramicist who bridges the rich heritage of Greek ceramic traditions with innovative, conceptual explorations of clay. Born in Athens, Greece, she began her creative journey studying fashion and costume design, working in the fashion industry from 1992 to 2000. Her transition into the visual arts led her to discover a passion for ceramics, where she developed her skills under the guidance of respected teachers like Marilena Michopoulou and Menandros Papadopoulos between 2013 and 2017.

Her artistic education also includes extensive training in free-hand drawing and chromatics with Irene Koutridou and Stavros Bonatsos from 2012 to 2019. Mirka expanded her expertise by studying classic sculptural techniques with Altin Patselis from 2014 to 2016 and exploring form design with visual artist and ceramist Nikos Sklavenitis between 2015 and 2017.

Currently, Mirka teaches at the Clay Form Sculpture School ‘Keramikes Morfes’, where she inspires new artists while also maintaining her own studio practice. Since 2020, she has collaborated as an exclusive partner with the renowned Greek fashion brand Zeus & Dione, designing unique utilitarian household items that seamlessly blend traditional craftsmanship with contemporary aesthetics.

Mirka is a founding member of the art collective TERRACTIVA, through which she actively contributes to the artistic community. Her work has been exhibited in several group shows, including Clay Stories I and II at MELANITRHOS Gallery, the Metamorphosis exhibition at Eleni Marneri Gallery in 2019, and most notably, the inaugural Biennale of Contemporary Ceramics in Santorini in 2024. She also regularly participates in seminars and symposia, continually deepening her understanding of ceramics and expanding her creative practice.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Mirka Drapaniotou's ceramics inhabit the space between dualities, where fragility merges with strength and the echoes of tradition blend seamlessly with contemporary expression. Her practice is a deep engagement with the vulnerabilities of clay, a material that she coaxes into revealing its hidden beauty in both the precision of its shaping and the eloquent embrace of imperfection.

Drapaniotou often begins her creative journey by crafting flawless forms, only to reshape and reassemble them into intricate, symbiotic structures before firing. This transformation speaks to the delicate balance between control and surrender, as the forms evolve beyond their origins, embracing the fluidity of change. Drapaniotou's signature technique—piercing the clay with needle-like precision—becomes a meditative act, a way of testing the material's limits while turning it into a translucent veil that blurs the line between the tangible and the ethereal. Her creations frequently take the shape of modular compositions, where individual elements nestle and interact with each other in a state of dynamic balance. These structures invite endless possibilities for arrangement, embodying a spirit of connection and interdependence, with each piece finding its role within a larger whole. Echoing the principles of Constructivism, Drapaniotou's work treats these forms as articulated structures that function together, constantly shifting in dialogue, where each component contributes to the overall unity.

Drapaniotou's embrace of imperfections infuses her work with a deeply human resonance. By deliberately introducing flaws into her pieces, she brings a sense of vulnerability and authenticity to her ceramics, drawing viewers closer through their shared experience of imperfection. This approach breaks down the barriers often associated with flawless creation, replacing them with a touch of warmth that speaks to the honesty of the artist's hand.

A thread of ritual runs through Drapaniotou's work, connecting her pieces to the long-standing traditions of Greek craftsmanship. Her ceramics serve as vessels of memory, echoing the ancient customs where everyday objects played a central role in communal and spiritual gatherings. Candelabras designed to hold beeswax candles, or vessel forms that invite the act of offering, transform these pieces into contemporary icons of ceremony, honoring the timeless rituals of connection and giving.

Influenced by the rich landscape of Greek culture, Drapaniotou draws inspiration from both nature and architectural forms, weaving these elements into her work. Her pieces reflect the stability of ancient structures while embracing the movement of natural patterns. With a palette of earthy tones and textures that evoke the warmth of the Mediterranean, she creates ceramics that resonate with a sense of place and identity, inviting touch and contemplation.

In her artistic journey, Drapaniotou skillfully combines her techniques and inspirations to create ceramics that tell a story of becoming. Each piece stands as a testament to the enduring qualities of craft and human experience, bridging the past with the present. Through her work, she invites us to find beauty not just in the finished object, but in the act of transformation itself, celebrating the richness of impermanence and the layers of cultural memory.

ARCHAIC TALES

Mirka Drapaniotou's *Archaic Tales* distills the essence of Greek culture into ceramics, reinterpreting the timeless qualities of ancient art. This body of work draws inspiration from the strength and resilience of Greek architecture and pottery, bridging past traditions with modern sensibilities.

Her pieces reveal a dual nature, embodying both solidity and fluidity—evoking the stability of ancient structures and the movement of natural elements. Drapaniotou's use of textures is deliberate and evocative, capturing the grainy touch of sand, the ruggedness of rocks, and the earthy essence of the Greek landscape. This tactile approach grounds her work in the landscape that has shaped generations.

Patterns are integral to this series, echoing the designs that adorned classical Greek ceramics. Drapaniotou intricately weaves these motifs into her pieces, celebrating the craft and cultural memory they represent. The repetition of patterns creates a thread that links the ancient world to the present, while subtle imperfections emphasize the artist's hand in each creation, making the work feel both historic and personal.

Drapaniotou's earthy hues and warm tones mirror the sunlit landscapes of Greece, infusing her ceramics with a natural glow reminiscent of sunbaked stones and weathered cliffs. This choice of palette not only enhances the tactile qualities of her pieces but also draws viewers into a sensory experience that feels grounded in the Mediterranean.

A hallmark of Drapaniotou's technique is her manipulation of clay to resemble other materials, blurring the line between the familiar and the unexpected. The play between fragility and durability is further enhanced through her oxides and terra manipulation techniques, which transform the clay's surface into something that mimics the texture of fabrics, sand or the sheen of metal.

In *Archaic Tales*, Drapaniotou captures the essence of Greek art not only through visual symbolism but also through an experiential connection to form, texture, and meaning. Her focus on archetypal patterns and motifs transforms each piece into a vessel of cultural memory, blending the ancient with the contemporary. This collection stands as a tribute to Greece's legacy, where the motifs of the past find a fresh, resonant voice in today's creative landscape.





Mirka Drapaniotou, *Archaic Tales*, 2023
handbuilt stoneware clay decorated with slip













CV

Education

- Form Design with Nikos Sklavenitis (2015 - 2017)
- Free-Hand Drawing and Chromatics with Irene Koutridou (2012 - 2017)
- Ceramics with Marilena Michopoulou and Menandros Papadopoulos (2013 - 2017)
- Classic Sculpture with Altin Patselis (2014 - 2016)
- Fashion and Costume Design, Athens, Greece (1992 - 2000)

Teaching Experience

- Instructor, Clay Form Sculpture ‘Keramikes Morfes’ (Present)

Seminars & Symposia

- 1st Symposium of Ceramics, Archaeological Museum of Syros, Syros, 2023
- 5-Month Seminar on "High Temperature Glazes" with ceramist George Vavatsis, Athens, 2022
- International Ceramics Symposium, "Approaching Low Temperature", Aegina, 2021
- Alternative Baking Methods (Raku) with Thodoris Galigalidis, Athens, 2018
- Symposium with Ceramist Group Kerameon Ichni, Kalamata, 2018
- Form Development with Rafa Perez, Athens, 2018
- Alternative Baking Methods (Raku) with Theodora Chorafa, Aegina, 2017
- Form Development with Velimir Vukicevic, Patras, 2017
- "Ceramic Decoration - History of Ceramics" by Lia Papailia, at Keramikes Morfes, Athens, 2017

Affiliations

- Founding Member, Art Group TERRACTIVA

Exhibitions

- Biennale of Contemporary Keramics (BCK), Santorini (2024)
- Chimera Culture, "Anama", Syros, 2023
- Archaeological Museum of Syros, "4500 Years Later", Syros, 2023
- Gallery 6 Exi, "Kanata Neru", Thessaloniki, 2022
- Benaki Museum Shop, "Project Mirror", Athens, 2022
- Ceramics Exhibition, "East Meets West (Greek & Catalan Ceramic Art in Paxos)", Paxos, 2022
- Larnaca Biennale, "Limitless Limits", Larnaca, Cyprus, 2021
- Mon Coin Studio, "Aegean", Monastiraki, Athens, 2021
- 6th Ceramics Exhibition, with the Ceramist Group Kerameon Ichni, Archaeological Museum of Olympia, 2021
- Hellenic American Union Gallery, "Melana", Athens, 2021
- 5th Ceramics Exhibition, with Ceramist Group Kerameon Ichni, Agora Argiri, Patras, 2019
- Eleni Marneri Gallery, "Metamorphosis", Athens, 2019
- Ceramics - Sculpture Exhibition, "Equality of Two Genders" with the Ceramist Group Kerameon Ichni, Kalamata, 2018
- MELANITRHOS Gallery, "Clay Stories II - Containing Content", Athens, 2018
- 54th Panhellenic Ceramics Exhibition, Marousi, Athens, 2016
- MELANITRHOS Gallery, "Clay Stories I", Athens, 2016

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