

# A Journey of Craft, Creativity, and Growth



Nestled in the heart of Port Carbon, Pennsylvania, Stephanie Premich, founder of Mud & Maker, has been creating functional, beautiful pottery that speaks to both art lovers and everyday users alike. Her story is one of dedication to craft, sustainable practices, and growth. We had the pleasure of speaking with Stephanie about her journey into pottery, her creative process, and what's next for the Mud & Maker brand.

**Q: Can you tell us about your journey into pottery? What inspired you to become a potter?**

**Stephanie:** I started doing pottery in high school while attending Blue Mountain, with Billy Whalen as my teacher. I even attended Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia during the summer between junior and senior year of high school, where I took college classes. After graduating, I went to Arcadia University in Glenside, PA, where I double-majored in Interior Architecture and Ceramics, with a minor in Business. I officially opened my first studio in downtown Pottsville after graduating in 2011, and we've grown from there. We now ship to over 500 gift shops, galleries, and stores across the US, Canada, and Europe, with some of our biggest partners being L.L.Bean in Maine and Joshua Tree National Park in California.

**Q: What types of clay and glazes do you prefer to work with, and why?**

**Stephanie:** Our clay is sourced right here in PA, keeping our carbon foot-



Above: Packages outside the original location wait for pick up. Above: Original vases, unique finishes, inspired by everyday life.

print small. All our glazes are made in-house with a custom recipe we developed for the unique style of our work. Every piece of dinnerware is food, microwave, and dishwasher safe.

**Q: How do you approach the design process for a new piece?**

**Stephanie:** A lot of my design inspiration comes from everyday life and experiences. I prefer functional wares over decorative ones. Many of the image transfers we use are inspired by places I've traveled to and people I've met.

**Q: What role does functionality play in your pottery? Do you prefer creating functional items, artistic pieces, or a mix of both?**

**Stephanie:** I definitely lean towards creating functional wares. There's something satisfying about knowing people are using the pieces we make every day.

**Q: Where do you find inspiration for your designs and motifs?**

**Stephanie:** I believe each piece of pottery is unique, just like every person you meet or every day you experience. My image transfers are often inspired by the aesthetics of places I've traveled to. As for our "Text-Tiles" (hanging ceramic tiles with sayings), many of the sayings are drawn from personal experiences, each with its own backstory.

**Q: How does your environment influence your work, whether in terms of aesthetics or themes?**

**Stephanie:** My environment plays a huge role in my work. I love to keep a lighthearted, witty, and playful nature in many of my designs. I believe pottery should bring joy.

**Q: How do you maintain creativity when facing potter's block or burnout?**

**Stephanie:** Just do it. Get in the studio

and start with the mundane tasks like wedging clay, making glaze, or rolling slabs. These little actions often lead me to a creative flow.

**Q: How important is sustainability in your practice, in terms of materials and processes?**

**Stephanie:** Sustainability is central to what we do. We use recyclable and compostable packing materials for all our shipments. Plus, all of our clay and glaze, as long as they haven't been fired, are fully recyclable in-house.

**Q: How has your pottery style evolved over the years?**

**Stephanie:** Like anything, you get better with time. I can see how much I've grown as both a person and an artist over the last 13 years of doing pottery professionally.

**Q: What advice would you give to someone who wants to start learning pottery?**

**Stephanie:** Practice, practice, practice. Don't be afraid to take risks and make mistakes; that's where you'll learn your best lessons.

**Q: Where do you see your pottery practice going in the next few years? Any big goals or projects?**

**Stephanie:** We recently expanded to a new 10,000 square foot warehouse, which we're excited about. We're now able to offer classes and workshops again. We've got a full workshop schedule for the fall, and we're looking forward to sharing our space with more people!

Stephanie's journey from her high school art room to running a thriving pottery studio is nothing short of inspiring. Her commitment to her craft, sustainability, and connection with her customers continues to fuel Mud & Maker's success, and the future looks bright with exciting new workshops and projects on the horizon.

For more information about upcoming workshops or to purchase visit [www.MudAndMaker.com](http://www.MudAndMaker.com) or follow Stephanie on Instagram at @MudandMaker

**\*Read the full interview on our website!**



The best way to explore all the works created by Mud & Maker is to visit them at a local vendor show. Upcoming events listed at right.

**Sign up for events being held at Mud & Maker**  
311 Washington St. Port Carbon

Saturday, October 25 @ 6:30 pm  
Wheel & Wine

Friday, Nov. 22 @ 6:30 pm  
Wheel & Wine

Saturday, Nov. 23 @ 10 am  
Glaze Your Own Ornaments

Sunday, Nov. 24 @ 1 pm  
Gingerbread Houses

Wednesday, Dec. 18 @ 6 pm -  
Snowman Workshop

Thursday, Dec. 19 @ 6:30 pm  
Wheel & Wine

Friday, January 17 @ 6:30 pm  
Wheel & Wine