

A San Francisco Ceramicist And Restaurant Team Up To Make Magic With Bespoke Tableware

Kristen Philipkoski Contributor

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Erin Hupp created this plate specifically for Hilda and Jesse's delectable stack of blueberry ... [+] ADAHLIA COLE

When you go to a restaurant, maybe you don't think about the plates. Maybe the tableware seems inconsequential, at least compared to the food. And many chefs prefer their food to be served on a blank canvas of white, sometimes black or gray.

But San Francisco restaurant owners Chef Kristina Liedags Compton and Rachel Sillcocks are different. Rather than taking away from the experience of the food, they believe colorful dishes add an element of delight to a meal.



Kristina Liedags Compton (left) and Rachel Sillcocks (right) sit at booth seats at their San ... [+] ADAHLIA COLE

Take one look at their brunch-all-day restaurant [Hilda and Jesse](#), and it's immediately clear that your experience will be about more than the delicious and creative food. There is so much to look at: bright orange and yellow booth seating, red diner-style chairs, turquoise-striped walls, and incredible murals in the entryway and bathroom.

"It's a lot more fun to plate on colorful pieces! White, neutral and black have traditionally been what chefs like to use, same with interior design of a restaurant," Compton said. "We went 110% on color. We wanted the space and everything in it to be fresh, lively and unique."



Erin Hupp created pink, red, black and white mugs for brunch restaurant Hilda & Jesse. ADAHLIA COLE

So when they were looking for a new cereal bowl in which to serve their [Nettle Soft Scramble](#), they reached out to ceramicist [Erin Hupp](#) for pieces that could hold their own amidst Hilda and Jesse's profusion of color.

Hupp works exclusively with restaurants to come up with designs that compliment the food but don't disappear beneath it. The Hilda and Jesse collaboration is her boldest yet.



Erin Hupp's create ceramic vases for San Francisco brunch restaurant Hilda and Jesse. ADAHLIA COLE

"Before Hilda and Jesse, I had focused mostly on white and black plateware, which helps provide the canvas for a chef's colorful food to pop," Hupp said. "But Chef Kristina's brief was different. She asked me to use bright, glossy color—to be loud and bold."

Hupp brainstormed with Hilda and Jesse's interior designer [Noz Nozawa](#), who helped her choose colors that would work well with her design. They settled on reds and pinks for the bowl, and the same colors wound up on mugs, plates and other pieces.



Erin Hupp designed and created bespoke tableware for San Francisco brunch restaurant Hilda and ... [+] ADAHLIA COLE

But when it came to the pancakes, she needed to change it up.

"Initially, I was going to go bold and colorful. However, it just didn't feel right. So I came in to dine at the restaurant—one of the best parts of my job. As the pancakes arrived at my table, it was clear that Chef Kristina's smoky pancake stack deserved a more muted canvas for the rich blueberry syrup to pop. If I went bold and colorful with the plate it may drown out the beauty of the pancakes. So I prototyped white plates that feature muted, offset pink swirls. The end result was my alabaster and lilac swirl plate now at Hilda and Jesse."



Erin Hupp collaborated with Hilda and Jesse restaurant owners to create table ware and vases ... [+] ADAHLIA COLE

Compton and Sillcocks have a long history with the SF Bay Area's renowned restaurant world, having worked at top restaurants including Range, Nopa, Cyrus, and Atelier Crenn and more. And over the years they have established a collection of vintage, thrift, and off-the-shelf plates, bowls, and glassware.

"It's a lot more fun to plate on beautiful plates! The Hilda and Jesse plate selection is quite vast and will continue to grow," Compton said. "Erin's ceramics are a great addition. It was such a special experience working with her to create plateware specifically meant to complement the food."

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Kristen Philipkoski

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