

Cincinnati Menorah

Produced by Rookwood Pottery

Presented by *ish* and The Jewish Cincinnati Bicentennial

Designed by Maxwell Holden

Modeled by Jen Watson

Two Part Porcelaneous Menorah

2023

Artist Statement: Recently, I have been thinking about time and our experience of it relative to the steady ticking of the clock. It lasts forever in line at Kroger with screaming children and people confused by the shelf checkout robots demanding items to be bagged that already have been bagged. Then it passes instantly on a weekend with friends and family.

The menorah measures time in moments. It does not tick or count the minutes in the evening as the candles burn. The menorah marks our experience of time in a very precise way: one complete moment each evening together. Children are thrilled by potential gifts waiting at the end of the prayer and adults are refreshed by a gathering in a context outside of the grind of daily chore and routine. The menorah is more than a moment keeper. Ritual is a reminder to us to be aware and pay attention to the broader context we live in. We forget that Kroger is as sacred as anywhere else, a broken self-checkout is a chance to help and have a human connection.

The Cincinnati Menorah reaches back into the deco art period, while maintaining a simple flowing design. The inflated, generous clay form offers a fun oscillating wave through two unusual separated components. Not only is the pair different in form but each side is different from the next, encouraging play and arrangement options. I define play as giving one's attention entirely into objects, people, or ceremony. It makes the profane sacred and brings sacred objects and mindsets deeper into the routine of our lives.

Finally, this menorah is special in that it can accommodate both standard Hanukkah candles as well as typical dining candles. We don't need to wait for the holidays to enjoy our communities or give meaningful attention. Rookwood is pleased to release the Cincinnati Menorah for the 2023 NCECA conference and looks forward to watching pieces flow through the current of time, ritual, and generations, accumulating the moments and memories of the households in and beyond Cincinnati.