

Finding the Authentic Self



Ehren Tool
California, USA

“I just make cups” is the only statement I am comfortable making about my work. The gap between what I thought I was doing and what I did was vast and painful, in the Marine Corps. I joined with a desire to serve and I still have that desire. I don’t think anything I do will change the world, and nothing in the world releases me from my obligation to try. Making cups feels like a pretty impotent gesture, in the face of all of the horrors surrounding us. Peace is the only adequate war memorial. Any other “memorial” is at best a failure and usually a lie, promoting war as a good and noble thing. War is not a good thing. I still love the Marine Corps and Marines, which makes it harder to watch young Marines kill and die. Wars never end—they ripple and echo forever.

After serving in the “’91 Gulf War” I have lost my ability to point fingers. The line between good and evil is a line in every human heart. We choose everyday. We live with the consequences, even when we are ignorant of how our actions affect others. I believe there is some kind of judgment or karma, although it is not the satisfying cinematic ending. Judgment is not mine. My opinions about my work and what I do feel is unimportant. I just make cups, If they are ever anything else it is because of the generosity of people who take the time to look at the cups. The cups are only something more if something resonates with the viewer, or better yet the user of the cup.

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I am very grateful to people who see something in the cups. The price and value of a cup is not the same thing. That the cups are meaningful to some people means much to me. I'd rather have my cups in their hands than their money in my pocket. I hope the cups can be touchstones to start conversations about unspeakable things. My father and grandfather never talked about their wars until I came back from mine. I didn't understand why they didn't talk until my son asked, "how come you were bad and now you're good?... you were a soldier, right?" I didn't say anything, I changed the subject and held back tears. To be demonized or idolized for something you did or didn't do in a context you can never explain, by someone you love, is too much. It seems easier to just not talk, "suck it up" and "move on."

I went to art school, but I ended up making cups. My Marine friends think I'm a hippie. My hippie friends think I'm a fascist. My artist friends think I'm a potter. My potter friends think I'm a shitty potter. I just make cups. Making ceramics means I have five hundred thousand to one million years to find a receptive audience for my work. I hope a few of my cups will make it through these times full of horror. Through the cups, I hope to shake hands someone whose great-great-grandfather has not been born yet. From my hand to your hand to some point hundreds of thousands of years in the future. Cheers!!! I hope you always have enough to eat and drink... I love you.

Strength to love, + E

Curated #	Artist and title	Price
ET01 - ET36	Ehren Tool cup	\$ 65 each

Note from Curated Ceramics:

Ehren Tool is a most inspired and inspiring individual. After serving in the first Iraq War, he returned home and became a committed anti-war activist.

He has made more than 21,000 cups to date and has given nearly each one of them to fellow veterans.

This exhibition is only the third time he's offered cups for sale to collectors and only on condition that his artist proceeds be donated to military veterans organizations.

For every cup purchased, \$35 in proceeds will be a tax deductible donation *from you!*