



Jenny Andersen: "Animal figures to me represent our connection with nature, our instinctual side. They represent being in tune with the natural world. We commonly assume that humans are a higher form of life than animals; I prefer to represent animals as having a more ancient wisdom. In a way, the figures express transformation from this world into other realms. For me this transformation is more easily expressed by connecting the human and animal forms.

Pilgrim belongs to the part of my work that deals with travel and transformation, similar to my bird-shaped cups; the vessel as a vehicle for traveling to a different state of mind or being. *Pilgrim* was created over a period of time. On a personal level, I began the single figure after I had been diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. The idea of a pilgrimage was in part about the search for better health and a return to my art.

While I was most ill I read a great deal. In one book I saw the work of Mary Frank who created minimal landscapes in clay. I had been yearning to work with the kind of watercolor landscape imagery I had done in art school but hadn't seen how I could do that in clay. The book showed one of Frank's sculptures, a woman confronting a wave on the beach. That inspired me to build the figure of a mountain: the image of a steep climb, a difficult journey, because it's difficult to pull yourself out of illness and up onto a higher plane.

The mountain sort of represented that to me. Creating that image was so liberating! Plus, just the fact I was able to lift the volume of clay required by the piece meant I was beginning to get better. I thought of it as a pilgrimage because when you have health problems you have to delve inside and find out what is strong within yourself. In that way it is a spiritual journey, a pilgrimage."