

FIRED

UP



My studio is in the Ohauti hills just outside Tauranga, in a shed on my parents' land, a 20-minute drive from where I live in Mount Maunganui.

They built the shed from recycled materials when they bought the land – and they built a house from recycled materials and stored all the wood in the shed. When we were kids, we used to come and stay here. It's on the edge of a valley and we'd go and hang out by the stream.

It was a hillside paddock back then. We've planted a lot of native trees and a fruit orchard, which is now quite established. We're going to plant the whole valley out in native bush this year, to protect the stream and land.

Gerard Dombroski builds a kiln shed from found materials for artist Jaime Jenkins.

I started working up here about six or seven years ago. Before that I was sharing Laurie Steer's studio at the Mount. Since I've been up here I've lined it and insulated it (it's a bit of a work in progress) because it would get really hot in summer and cold in winter. There's a little mezzanine upstairs which I have set up as a library for my pottery books and a bedroom – I stay over sometimes when I'm working lots.

For the first couple of years I had my gas-fired kiln inside the studio, which was a bit tricky. I'd have to go outside because it produces toxic fumes when firing to high temperatures. And it would also get quite hot as I fire my pieces to 1300°C.

The kiln shed was designed and built by my architect friend Gerard Dombroski. One summer he was visiting his mum, who lives down the road, and he asked if he could help with anything as he loves a project. Over a coffee, I said I needed a kiln shed. Two hours later we were driving around gathering materials. Everything was free except for the nails.

He drew a design and I was like, "Sure!" We de-nailed the timber, built the frames on the ground and attached the corrugate. I didn't really realise the scale of it until we stood the walls up – it's taller than the studio.

It works like a giant chimney, with a hole at the top – all the heat goes up and out. It has a counter-weighted



Left: A ladder leads to the mezzanine library and bedroom. Below: The artist is inspired by her surroundings. Bottom: Ceramics in the studio kitchen.

Jaime Jenkins
Jhana Millers Gallery
jhanamillers.com

door at the front which lifts right up and doubles as rain protection. It's really good.

_____The biggest effect of moving into my own studio is the amount of space I now have, and being able to upscale. I make a lot of slab work, and you need a lot of room to roll the pieces out and let them dry out at the same time before you put them together. My studio upscaled and my work did as well.

_____I'm currently working on some large slab-built stools and plinths which are part of a wider body of work, including wall hangings, that were to be shown with Jhana Millers Gallery at the Aotearoa Art Fair.

_____I'm massively influenced by my surroundings. Here, I'm looking out at green everywhere, and my glazes are similar. I use a lot of greens and blues. I'd like to move to a city at some point to see what would happen – the setting influences my work a lot.

_____It's also so peaceful here. I do listen to music and podcasts but often I just want to listen to the cicadas and the birds, and if you're here at night you can hear the ruru calling. It's really beautiful up here – the sunsets are incredible and that all influences my colour choices too.

_____I also find being out of town is great for my focus – it's a decent drive up here so I don't come and go. Once I'm here, I'm here for the day.



_____I have a little vege garden – I've got heaps of tomatoes at the moment. I always cook lunch – and dinner if I'm here that late. It's nice to take pauses from work and eat outside, and I think that's become part of my practice.

_____I lived here for a summer three or four years ago, but I drove back to the Mount beach every day to swim – I swim most days, sometimes twice a day – so it was a bit pointless really. And I think living and working in the same building is quite intense – it's nice to take breaks away from my work. I feel very lucky to be able to live by the beach and wash off the clay at the end of my day with a swim.

The Aotearoa Art Fair was cancelled as this magazine went to press. Find Jenkins' work at Jhana Millers Gallery.

CITTÀ



The Arc Bed, designed in New Zealand

cittadesign.com • @citta