



BC POTTERS

Newsletter of the Potters Guild of British Columbia

INSIDE:

Size Matters **5**

8 *NWCF Speaker Series: Julie York*

Tam Irving: Sense of Form **6**

9 *Membership Renewal Time!*

Coloured Clay Workshop with Vince Pitelka **7**

10 *Return to the Muses of Greece*



*Two Vases,
by Gillian McMillan.
See Sewer Pipes, Page 4.*



Gallery of BC Ceramics

www.galleryofbcceramics.com

Sharon Cohen,
Gallery Manager

galleryofbcceramics@bcpotters.com
604.669.3606



Hours

10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Gallery Assistants

Carita Ho, Roxanne
Gagnon, Sarah Cannon,
Nadiya Chettiar, Kate Metten
staff@bcpotters.com



Gallery Volunteers

Maggi Kneer
Sheila Morissette
Elizabeth Claridge
Jinny Whitehead
Celia Rice-Jones



*The Gallery of BC Ceramics is a
gallery by potters for potters.*

- **The Gallery coordinates and curates
several exhibitions a year.**

*Artists must apply to be juried; the
deadline is September each year.
To download and print a Gallery
Jury Application, [click here](#).*

- **Every month we showcase an artist,
usually someone just starting
his or her career.**

- **We also sell the work of more
than 100 artists in the retail shop.**

*For information on Gallery
Policy, [click here](#).*



2010 Featured Artists

The Featured Artist slot affords a non-juried artist the opportunity to sell work in the gallery for a month-long period. All Potters' Guild members are eligible to apply, and may show work other than the mugs and tiles to which non-juried potters are usually restricted. Please apply (include images of your work) directly to the gallery manager at galleryofbcceramics@bcpotters.com

- **February:** Carole Henshall
- **March:** Unassigned
- **April:** Richard Tanaka
- **May:** Ekta Nadeau
- **June:** Sarah Cannon
- **July:** Kwai-Sang Wong
- **August:** Katie Janyk
- **September:** Linda Lewis
- **October:** Mike Allegretti
- **November:** Elaine Futterman

2010 Gallery Exhibitions

March

Vancouver Collects
Doris Shadbolt Collection
March 6 to 31

July

Laura van der Linde
Three
July 3 to 31

September

Keith Rice-Jones
September 4 to 30

October

Amy Chang
Imperfection
October 2 to 30

November

Student Show:
West Point Grey Academy
November 6 to 26

CALL FOR ENTRY

GALLERY OF BC CERAMICS ANNUAL EXHIBITION JURY

The annual exhibition jury will be held in October 2010. Application details appear on www.bcpotters.com/Gallery/forms/2010_Gallery_Jury_Application.pdf.

Please note that, for the first time, we'll be programming two years of exhibitions. Applications received now will be scheduled for exhibition dates in 2011 and 2012, with the artist to specify preferences. This enables you to plan ahead and allow yourself enough time to produce work of the highest possible calibre.

As always, the emphasis will be on technical competence and originality of concept. We're looking for innovation and strong exhibition themes that convey a powerful statement. Please ensure that submission guidelines are closely followed.

We look forward to receiving your proposals.

Sharon Cohen
Gallery manager
galleryofbcceramics@bcpotters.com

President's Message

Please join me in welcoming new board members Amy Gogarty, independent researcher, educator, artist and writer; Carole Henshall, interior designer, ceramic artist, teacher and studio technician; Judy Osburn, business owner, manager, and ceramic artist; and Patrick Geach, investment executive, portfolio manager, and supporter of the arts. They each bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and enthusiasm that will help us move forward.

At this year's AGM we discussed a resolution that would, in special circumstances, allow the board to exempt a director from having to be a member of the guild. The resolution was proposed in order to facilitate the board's efforts to recruit directors with expertise in

areas other than ceramics. This is an issue that has surfaced several times in the past. During the AGM discussion of the proposal it was decided to look at alternative ways of addressing this question.

If you would like to read the 2009 Annual Report, you can find it on our website in the Members Only section ([click here to sign in](#)). 📄

—Jinny Whitehead

Gallery News *By Sharon Cohen*

What would happen if the Mad Hatter's Tea Party took place in Africa? Vibrant whimsy is the short answer, and the long answer can only be fully appreciated by checking out Laura Vanderlinde's exhibition *Three*. Bold, confident use of colour has always characterised Laura's work but, despite the fact that the colour is such an essential component of her creative vision (and genius,) it's only part of the story. Her use of three-dimensional embellishments contributes as much to the overall aesthetic as the wild colour does. There are leaf indentations, there are postage stamp protrusions, there are spiked edges, there are curlicues, there are lugs and nubs and braids and peep holes and three dimensional pin dots. And the patterns! Each grouping of her pieces has its own distinctive patterning, and each has a name. Laura named *Confetti*, Dan named *Dimples*, Nadiya named *Pillow Fight* and I named *Flashdance*. All of the pieces in all of the groupings are functional, some more practical, some more whimsical, like the tea-light lanterns, the spike-collared mirrors and the triangular cake plates. The most WOW-inducing pieces are the ceramic urban trees, which stop passers-by in their tracks and make them gape and then smile and then go exploring through the rest of the exhibition in a state of joy and wonder. I myself have been in a perpetual state of joy and wonder, and am just loving having this truly spectacular work in the gallery. Yay, Laura!

The lovely hot, sunny weather is the perfect backdrop for Laura's Africa inspired work, and it also means the gallery is packed with tourists, some of whom will be taking Laura's pieces to distant shores. So yes, it's busy here, and that's great! Just the way we like it!

Summer is wonderful but, before we know it, fall will be upon us, and that means that the annual exhibition jury is imminent. Please consider applying, details can be found on our website at www.bcpotters.com/Gallery/forms/2010_Gallery_Jury_Application.pdf 📄



Confetti Teapot, by Laura Vanderlinde.



Urban Tree, by Laura Vanderlinde.



Confetti, Dimples and Clowning Around, a Laura Vanderlinde trilogy!

Salt-glazed Sewer Pipes

My inspiration at Medalta *By Gillian McMillan*

Next to Plainsman Clay's office and the vast piles of clay in Medicine Hat, Alta., there is a very large domed kiln. Creeping into the dark interior you find that the walls are completely glazed. Nearby is a block-long pile of shards. Imperfect salt-glazed sewer pipes were broken up and just left there.

Down the road is Medalta National Historic Site, where, until a few years ago, they manufactured the crocks for prairie pickles, crockery for Canadian households and for the dining cars on the trains. There are still several of the round kilns and a wonderful museum showing all aspects of the making of these familiar, but lumpy, stoneware pots.

Thanks to the inspiration and determination of Les Manning, former ceramics director at Banff School of the Arts, there is now also the Shaw International Artists-in-Residence Program, housed in a completely reconditioned brick building on the Historic Site.

Having thought about the luxury of an artist residency as a chance to devote a serious length of time to doing nothing except making pots, and on hearing news of the splendid studio facilities in Medicine Hat, I decided to apply to go this June. I was one of 13 artists invited to share the studios, with Nelson's Robin Dupont as an atmospheric firing mentor. Also working in studios in the building are Les Manning, Artistic Director Aaron Nelson, studio tech Jenn Demke-Lange and year-long Resident Jim Etzkorn.

We were welcomed so warmly by the Friends of Medalta and the Medicine Hat Potters Club that we felt like celebrities. But soon it became clear that we all were really determined to make the most of the valuable time in this facility, with its glaze room, several electric kilns and the large gas kiln, the gas-fired soda and salt kilns and a wood kiln. Some artists did, in fact, work all night but certainly we were there long hours. Our accommodation was in two- or four-person flats at Medicine Hat College, where we each had our own room and shared excellent kitchen, washer and dryer, freezer, TV and bathrooms, and we had access to a nearby community room for students where we had Internet access.

Before leaving, I spoke to last year's residents Amy Gogarty and Gail Carney about it all, especially transportation. I fell exactly in between their advice "Oh it's an easy bike-ride" and "You definitely need an air-conditioned car to get back and forth between the flats and the Shaw Centre!" Both are true. In the end, I walked very occasionally as it took a full hour along Seven Persons Creek, or was given a ride by artists who had their cars with them or shared a taxi. For the final week or so, I rented a car.

Back to those sewer pipes. I have occasionally had the chance to take workshops with salt-firing potters: years ago in England with Douglas Phillips in Somerset, with Walter Keeler at ECU and with Jane Hamlyn at the Shadbolt Centre. I keep being drawn back to the luscious orange-peel surface. Recently Vincent Massey gladdened my heart by including some of my work in his Whistler salt kiln. So, when Aaron assured me that the salt kiln at Medalta is indeed brand new and available, that was the deciding factor in my plan for June. Finding beautiful examples of various sizes and colours of salt glaze on shards in that pile just kept me excited.

I found that loading and firing the salt kiln, even though it is fired with the ever-present gas of this region, not wood, was work for several people. My fellow residents were keen to help roll salt burritos in



Very excited—Gillian inspecting a load of her "salty pots".

newspaper and formed a team when it was time to poke the dampened burritos into the 'peeps.' I could not have managed without the enthusiastic help of Saskatchewan potter Claude Morin who, luckily for me, had also decided to make good use of the salt kiln. It was so exciting!

Now that it's over I shall be hoping that I will have the chance to make more salty pots. I wish I could build a salt kiln in my Port Moody garden! There are many more ideas in my notebook.

I heartily recommend the residency experience, especially if you have a clear idea of work you want to pursue. The time and space are uninterrupted. Sometimes there's total satisfied silence in the studio. But it isn't a workshop: nobody teaches you and nobody comments on your work unless asked. Jenn will answer questions about the glazes there, Aaron advises on firing the kilns but otherwise you need to be confident about your own direction. We were all on different paths, in a companionable way.

Circle Craft Co-operative provided a scholarship to attend this valuable residency, for which I am very grateful. The Circle Craft Gallery on Granville Island will be displaying some of my pieces, as well as those of fellow guild member Debra Sloan for the next few weeks.

To read my blog of this busy month and to see many more photos go to www.gillianmcmillan.com and click on 'blog'. 📷

Size Matters *By Keith Rice-Jones*

Size Matters – New Sculpture by Keith Rice-Jones is at the Gallery of BC Ceramics September 4 to 30.

I still have my first big pot. It's a sweet little thing, coiled from scrap clay. I brought it all the way back from England in 1976. I had been there on a course and had been stimulated by large Nigerian coiled pots.

Drawing influences from a variety of different cultures has been a strong aspect of much of my work and I continue to explore aspects of this craft approach. However, my current sculptural work has its roots in the huge influence of Modernism on my original schooling in the 1950s and 60s.

My first shift into a completely abstract use of pyramidal elements that I had been using for architectural and ritual-inspired vessels, came in 2001 when I was working in Japan. The first piece referenced the shapes in two of Magritte's paintings. This began a series, exploring the possibilities of forms incorporating the two pyramids. With the addition of circles spheres and rectangles, a play began with the forms and the negative spaces between, culminating in *Primary Energy* at the Gallery of BC Ceramics in 2003.

For some time I had been wanting to explore more flowing forms that would be scaled up versions of carvings, and had had several maquettes in soft firebrick sitting on a shelf in the studio for some years. In 2006, I had a three-month residency at Sturt Contemporary Craft Centre in Australia and used this opportunity to break into a new way of working. Initially, moving from what I knew, I translated the forms into curved planes, which I firmed up in slings, and worked



Totem, by Keith Rice-Jones.

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with the the geometric forms in a much softer state than I was used to. Since these initial pieces, I have developed a method of pinching together small accretions like a mud wasp and the process is much more contemplative and akin to the act of carving.

With both the geometric and carved pieces, I am limited by the size of the kiln. Initially, being able to lift it was another rule. Now I add bases and get help when I need to move pieces!


The other direction I am pursuing is to assemble individual forms after firing. This allows me to transcend the height limitations of the kiln. Interestingly, these forms incorporate ideas and processes from both my approach with the geometric and the carved work. Some of the individual elements of the assembled forms are from moulds taken from initially carved Styrofoam. The internal supporting parts are very much constructed and the individual bases are essentially slab built.

These are large pieces and, though transforming an interior space, naturally find their place in outdoor settings for most people. Supplementing the large assembled pieces is a series of smaller versions inspired by some of the originals and fired in one piece. If I draw the analogy of paintings and prints, these are numbered limited edition forms from a mould and, like prints, are relatively cheaper originals. In fact, many bronze sculptures are often made in small editions; it is nice to go and visit Henry Moore's *Knife's Edge* on the London Embankment in London as well as the one in Queen Elizabeth Park here at home. Because these smaller forms use a common base, include the pod form and are press-moulded, which is like casting, I have called the series Podcasts! 🗿

Tam Irving: Sense of Form

By Angela Cachay Dwyer,
Surrey Art Gallery

Tam Irving (b. 1933), one of Canada's most respected ceramic artists, has practiced in British Columbia for over 40 years. Throughout his career he has explored the technical possibilities of clay and glazes, and experimented with the formal and aesthetic properties of ceramic artworks. Irving is noted for his interest in sourcing and processing raw materials from this region for use in his work. As both a maker and teacher, Irving encourages the careful observation of form. For Irving, whether you are the maker or the viewer, you should take time to look for the subtle nuances that each work has through the history of its making.

The works in this display were generously donated from a private collection in the spring of 2009. This exhibit continues into December. 



Asymmetrical Vase, by Tam Irving, 1983.
Stoneware: clay, rhyolite tenmoku with poured silt glaze.

LADYSMITH, B.C.

Potters Discussion Group

Hello fellow potters:

The next Discussion Group meeting will be on Sunday August the 8th from 1 pm onward at my pottery in Ladysmith on Vancouver Island. Everyone is welcome, beginners to professionals, and there is no charge. The idea is for a free flow of discussion covering whatever areas people may be having problems with. I personally like to help with problems around finding your style and the creative process but am happy to help in other areas too if I can. Mary Fox Pottery is located at 321 Third Ave. Ladysmith 250- 245- 3778, maryfox@shaw.ca

An email or phone call to let me know you are planning on attending is welcome but not a requirement. Looking forward,

—Mary Fox

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COLOURED CLAY: Form and Surface Workshop

By Mike McElgunn

Vince Pitelka, professor of Ceramics at the Appalachian Center for Craft in Tennessee, is a consummate workshop presenter. Ten clay artists were recently able to benefit from his skills at a five-day workshop at the Shadbolt Centre focusing on the creative incorporation of coloured clay patterns onto ceramic works. We appreciated the depth of knowledge and the organization Vince brings to his teaching, as well as his generosity in sharing his skills and expertise so freely with the group.

The workshop began with a morning of preparation, wedging stains into our clay bodies to create the palette we would later work from. Incorporating technical information where needed, and slide shows to give both a historical and contemporary context for the use of coloured clay, Vince demonstrated and explained the processes to create 12 different patterned loaves of coloured clay. Students had time each day to build the loaves to try out and then take home for future use. Vince also demonstrated the cutting and lamination of extremely thin slices of the loaf onto both slabs and 3-D objects.

In a public evening slide show on Friday, Vince shared with the group his personal journey with clay. The visuals showed his early works and highlighted his inspirations and the progression and development of his work over his thirty-five-year career.

Special thanks for a successful workshop also go to Sharon Reay, Linda Doherty and Jay MacLennan at the Shadbolt Centre, who have once again contributed to ensuring a positive workshop experience through their advance preparation as well as their organizational and technical skills. Thanks also to Gillian McMillan for hosting Vince in her home.

If you would like to have the opportunity to learn from Vince in the future you may want to consider these two nearby opportunities in 2011:


- July 11-15, 2011 - Handbuilding: Tricks of the Trade - Metchosin International Summer School of the Arts (MISSA), Victoria, B.C.
- July 18-22, 2011 - Ancient Clay - McDowell Pottery and Farm, Ferndale, WA.



A palette of coloured clay.



Vince shows off a slice of a coloured clay "loaf".

For information about these workshops, as well as workshop handouts, photos of Vince's work and clay related articles, visit Vince's website <http://iweb.tntech.edu/wpitelka/> 

Mike McElgunn is a guild member and is the head of the art department at Gleneagle Secondary School in Coquitlam.

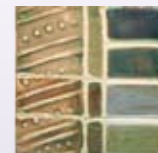
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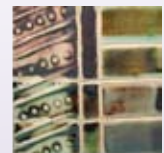
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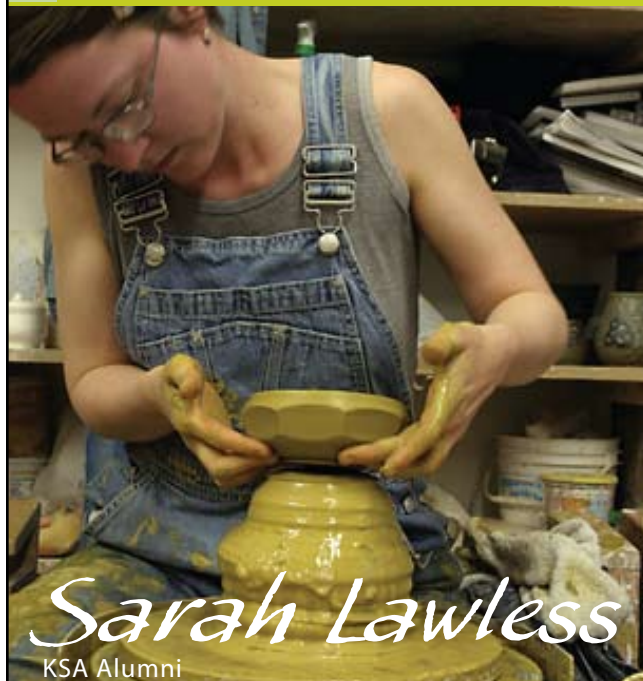
Saturday
9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Drop by and check us out:

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Surrey, B.C.

Or give us a call at:

604.574.0454



Sarah Lawless

KSA Alumni

Sarah graduated from Kootenay School of the Arts (KSA) in 2006 and is a 2008 BC Creative Achievement Award winner. She has her own studio practice and is presently selling her work from her home gallery in Kaslo, B.C.

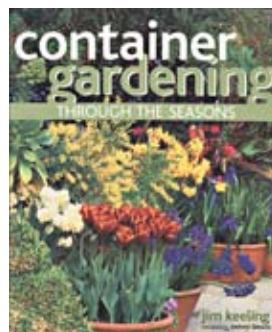
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Selkirk College

Book Review *By Patty Osborne*



Container Gardening Through the Seasons

By Jim Keeling

Published by Kylie Cathie Limited

(www.klyecathie.com)

ISBN 978-1-85626-711-3

176 pages / \$29.99

The title *Container Gardening Through the Seasons* might lead the casual observer to think that this is a gardening book, but the variety

of big, small, funky, traditional, modern, glazed and unglazed pots inside (along with descriptions of how they are made) is what will make a potter's heart beat faster. Jim Keeling, co-owner, with his wife Dominique, of Whichford Pottery (www.whichfordpottery.com) in Warwickshire, England has written a book that describes both the plants that grow in their extensive garden and greenhouse and the pots (all made on the premises) in which they are planted. Amid photos and descriptions of *asplenium scolopendrium* and *hedera helix* are sections on digging and preparing clay, decorating pots, the evolution of the potters wheel, decorating with slip and scraffito, throwing large pots in sections and throwing huge pots using a team of two people, facing each other across the revolving wheelhead. The book is filled with colour photos of the Whichford Pottery gardens throughout the seasons and of pots both in progress and in the garden (where they are filled with luscious plantings.) My one complaint is that the plants described in the text do not always correspond to the plants in the adjacent photos, which makes it difficult for a rookie gardener like me to visualize what the writer is describing, but I had no difficulty understanding the descriptions of pot-making, even when not every step was photographed. Not only is this an inspiring book but it would be a rich resource for students who can ignore the pretty flowers and just look at the myriad of pots for ideas about shape, surface texture and decoration. Now I don't know what to do first: stock up on plants at the garden shop or push aside my boxes of porcelain to make room for some low-fire clay and start making flowerpots. 🌱



NWCF Speakers Series

Mark your calendars for October 20, for the next NWCF Speakers Series lecture by Julie York. She is an Assistant Professor of Visual Arts and Material Practice at Emily Carr University, where she teaches in the

ceramics department. She began her studies with David Lloyd at Kwantlen College and graduated from Emily Carr. She received her master's degree from New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred and subsequently held fellowships and residencies at the Clay Studio in Philadelphia and at the International Ceramic Research Centre, Guldagergaard, in Skaelskor, Denmark. In 2007, she was awarded the prestigious Pew Fellowship. York works with slip-cast porcelain, submerging the forms in baths of mineral oil or encasing them in boxes reminiscent of commercial display. She will discuss the trajectory of her career and her work combining clay with fabrication and industrial materials. Her talk will be held on Wed., Oct. 20, at



View, 2006, porcelain, glass, plastic, H13cm x W28cm x D10cm. Cast found objects abstracted through the manipulation of the form and also through the glass lens. As the viewer moves so does the image of the object, causing one to see in another way.

7 p.m., at Emily Carr University, 1399 Johnson Street, Granville Island, in room 245 in the North Building. The lecture is free and open to all. We look forward to seeing you there! 🌱

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

DON'T MISS THE DATE! September is membership renewal month for everyone in the Potters Guild of BC. The fixed renewal date was a change that we instituted in order to facilitate our financial planning. That, coupled with the installation of the membership database, has been a success, resulting in easy access to accurate data.

There is always some discussion about the benefits of membership. A notable benefit that quickly comes to my mind is the information flow. Our website, ebroadcasts and newsletter link us together by creating lines of communication to and from all parts of the province. Many of our members work alone, often living far from potter-colleagues. Through these lines we can learn about opportunities, events, presentations, techniques, workshops, and publications. We can learn about other artists, their work and what inspires them; and we can promote our own work and events such as sales and exhibitions. It is this sharing of information that encourages artistic growth and inspires us to venture out of our comfort zone.

Of course, there are lots more benefits, not the least of which is being part of this large community of supportive artists. You can do your part to support your community: renew your membership and encourage your friends to do so too.

The Benefits of Guild Membership

Membership is a valuable means of establishing and maintaining a bond with the people who are making ceramics thrive in B.C. It will also allow you to keep up-to-date with events and opportunities that are available to local clay artisans.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

- Access to the membership directory in the Members Only section.

- Notices about social events such as gallery openings.
- Opportunities to become active and work with other potters to build the guild and/or help organize guild events.
- A link to your website on the PGBC website Links page.

MARKETING AND SALES OPPORTUNITIES

- Submit your work to be juried as a regular presenter in the Gallery of BC Ceramics.
- Participate in open and juried members' exhibitions and shows both in the Gallery of BC Ceramics and other public venues.
- Sell mugs on the mug wall in the Gallery of BC Ceramics
- Present your work as an Emerging Artist in the Gallery of BC Ceramics (non-juried, for a duration of one month)
- Create your own webpage on the PGBC website
- Link your website to the PGBC website
- Post classified ads free of charge in the PGBC newsletter
- Have your chop or signature catalogued for identification. [Click here to submit your chop.](#)

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- A newsletter published 10 times annually, filled with informative articles and listings of opportunities, exhibitions and studio sales.
- Information about workshops, classes and events held around B.C.
- Access to the PGBC reference library (located at the Gallery), which contains an abundance of books and periodicals.

ADDITIONAL MEMBER BENEFITS

- Discounts, advance notice, and registration for local and international workshops with ceramic artists.
- 10% off purchases made at the Gallery of BC Ceramics.

Annual membership is from September and is prorated monthly for those joining later. [Click here](#) to renew your Membership online.

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A Return to the Muses of Greece

By Suzanne Fournier

The following article is a shortened version of a much longer piece which appeared recently in Ceramics: Art and Perception No. 80 and is reprinted in its current form with permission of the author.

The English poet and literary critic Matthew Arnold observed a century ago that virtually all of the major cornerstones of our culture, from law to medicine, science and religion, to the arts and architecture, derived ultimately from the ancient Greeks. For Suzy Birstein, a Vancouver-based ceramic artist, a return to

Greece in her recent work as both a creator and facilitator of art, represents a full-circle return to the spiritual inspiration for her chosen calling as an artist.

It was in Greece as a 20-year-old student that Birstein's artistic muses first tapped her on the shoulder. Luxuriating in the magnificent Greek islands of Corfu and Crete, absorbed in the ancient art and architecture on offer, Birstein felt in touch with freedom, creativity and passion for new experience (see PGBC Newsletter, April 2009: www.bcpotters.com/newsletters/200904PGBCNewsletter.pdf). Since her graduation in 1980 from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design with an Honours diploma in ceramics, Birstein has gone on to create a wide and diverse body of handbuilt pottery, ranging from functional tableware to a series called Portrait Masks and large double-sided Duet busts replete with multicultural motifs. She embraces such diverse influences as Picasso, Modigliani, Frida Kahlo and Beatrice Wood to Busby Berkeley and Carmen Miranda. The cultural icons that recur in her sculpture include the busy many-handed Indian gods, Venetian-style masks and now, the 'classic' Greek-influenced Birstein columns and busts, all created to the ever-present outpouring of music ranging from tango, opera, blues and jazz, from Frank Sinatra and Cole Porter to Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen.

Birstein communicates through the faces and figures that dominate her art, driven by a stream-of-consciousness drawing and painting technique that draws on widely-disparate cultural themes.

"Within a single statue, there can be a Chinese warrior, an Egyptian god and a cancan dancer," notes Birstein. When she says, "I long to merge the power of Nefertiti with the spirit of Carmen Miranda" Birstein is speaking literally and descriptively. Her ceramic sculptures blend "archetypal icons that embrace the power of ancient and contemporary world cultures" with the

popular culture of music, film and dance that she has embraced since childhood. In her work, all of those influences and themes somehow combine harmoniously, brought together by the brilliance and subtlety of the way she wields colour on earthenware slabs and coils with fired and cold surfaces, combining multiple glazes, underglazes, pencils, black line, lustres, acrylics and patinas on bisqued surfaces and the rich textures she achieves with stamped, figured and embossed wet surfaces. To Birstein, who invariably wears a brightly jewelled bindi on her forehead in the midst of her cascading, multicoloured Greco/African style braids, all of the artistic reflections of her life are about honouring the diverse fabric and social harmony in the Canadian culture in which she lives and works.

It is in her latest body of work that virtually all of Birstein's artistic influences and inspirations came together. In a typical synchronicity, she was on her way to a tap dance class when she saw Greek columns in a shop window and instantly saw how they could be combined with her own sculpture to form life-size figures. "A voice inside cried, 'Columns. Nine Greek columns for the nine Greek muses,'" says Birstein. The series had actually already begun with a muse that called on the personas of King Tut and Ganesha, the first in a new direction Birstein had begun toward large clay sculptures, which barely fit inside her home-studio kiln. The torso and head of the Ganesha figure survived but the base, upon loading, broke into thousands of pieces. Spotting an elephant column that day in the shop window, Birstein could visualize her Ganesha perched atop it. She envisioned eight more sculptures that would incorporate Greek columns as foundations. "Each ceramic character would be inspired by its found column," Birstein decided, "and I would glaze, paint, patina the ceramic and



Moon lights up the night..., by Suzy Birstein.

*Continued on Page 11,
Melding cultures*



CERAMICS WORKSHOP

with **SUZY BIRSTEIN**

on **Greek island paradise Skopelos**,
where *Mama Mia* was filmed!

Sept. 10 - 25, 2010 - Skopelos Foundation for the Arts
Info & registration: 604.737.2636, www.suzybirstein.com



Melding Cultures, Continued from Page 10

surface the column so the figure read as one.” As for the melding of cultures in her ‘muse’ creations, Birstein saw the muses as “open-handed, ready to receive and offer, to come alive and be impassioned in the most positive sense”. She notes: “This would be my dream for our world.”

The individual works in the column-based series integrate into a harmonious whole, yet each is laden with layers of intricate details and imagery. Handbuilt with slabs of clay, the sculptures glow with Birstein’s melting-pot of brilliant colours and metallic tones. The clay is disguised under richly-coloured glazes, underglazes, gold and mother of pearl lustres, rust and turquoise/aged copper patinas, while the ‘Greek’ columns, painted in complementary and contrasting hues, have become African drums, vessels or ‘legs’. Motifs from the nine columns, whether roses, classical Greek women draped in togas, African drums or crouching elephants, are echoed in the colours and themes of the ceramic sculpture above.

To examine some of the nine sculptures in detail: *African Queen*, perched atop a painted column with two turquoise crinolines that seem to put the figure in whirling motion, reveals on both sides a mask-style face crowned with bronzed horns evocative of the chiwara or African antelope. On one side, the dominant face is a primitive African-style mask, with rich scarlet lips, blue cheeks and a purple headdress on either side of the horns. The torso below that imposing head is bedecked with a dramatic feminine face, evocative perhaps of a Frida Kahlo image but more deliberately intended to refer to the



African Queen, from *Dance of the crinolin'd Muses*, by Suzy Birstein.

masks worn in the traditional African Gelede masquerade performance of the Yoruba, which pays tribute to the power of women as mothers, elders and ancestors.

The first of Birstein’s sculptures in the Muse series is titled *Who are you really and what were you before?* a quote from the film *Casablanca*. Fittingly, this sculpture is based on Ganesha, the Indian elephant-shaped god who confers good luck on new ventures and can be the remover of all obstacles. Birstein’s tall ceramic Ganesha is a noble figure, carefully posed on his column with quizzical downcast eyes and a lustrous white trunk.

Perhaps the most “classically” Greek of the Muse series is *Moon lights up the night...* a sculpture built atop, and inspired by, the four women in the Minoan Crete style that form the column base, dressed in classical

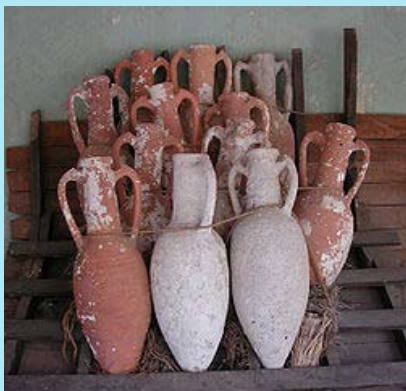
draped togas, bedecked by roses that evoke the lushness of the Mediterranean. Again, the hues of the column carry through to the sculpture atop, which has not only front-and-back images but also a startling gold African Cote d’Ivoire style Goro mask on the shoulder of a white-faced Caryatid-style figure. She has glamorous Cleopatra-style eyes painted over the white-glazed clay face, with ruby lips and rosy-purple cheeks. White columns on her torso, just below her gleaming gold breasts, reference the Parthenon and on her head is a purple vessel.

This dizzying synthesis of eras, cultures and mythologies is all entirely intended and indeed, celebrated by Birstein. Her visual eye finds echoing references in images from all eras and all cultures. She works with the metaphors that have moved artists for centuries, researching their meanings deeply but also instinctively embracing the figure, the colour, the line and the presentation of its surface image that attracts her eye and makes her yearn to recreate the juxtaposed icons and images from a host of cultures and eras.

Birstein intends her ceramic sculpture to combine disparate influences in a harmonious way, and firmly believes the world would be a better place if we all admired and wanted to experience other cultures. Her drive is to create startlingly beautiful sculpture, with all the mythological and iconic influences that she has gleaned in her own experience and from her ongoing passionate self-directed study of world art history. Yet the process of creation for her is not one with a predetermined goal. “I don’t start out thinking what to create; as I work I’m constantly discovering what is coming out of the clay, with my hands, it’s like being in an altered state,” notes Birstein. “I feel a strong connection through the creative process to the art of other times and places; I feel connected to all those other artists from times past.” For Suzy Birstein, the return to her spiritual origins as an artist in the idyllic Greek islands will continue to inspire new work while allowing her to share the gift of complex and varied techniques with other artists, in the land that likely first gave birth to the sculptural arts. 📍

Suzanne Fournier is a Vancouver-based journalist and author who is also a student of ceramics. Suzy Birstein’s work is represented by Jonathon Bancroft-Snell Gallery in London, ON. Suzy is again offering a **two-week workshop on the Greek island of Skopelos Sept. 10-25**. For details see: www.suzybirstein.com

Photos of sculpture by Kenji Ngai.



The above photo shows the design. These items are typically about 18 inches tall and hold one cubic foot (26 litres) of wine.

WANTED! Amphoras

The Surrey Museum is producing an exhibit about B.C. Wineries. For the historical portion of the exhibit we would like a replica of an ancient amphora. We cannot afford an actual artefact but would commission one. Unfortunately we can only afford about \$200.

The exhibit opens Labour Day weekend. If you can help with this request, please contact:

Greg Yellenik, Exhibit Preparator
Surrey Museum 604-592-6959
17710 56A Ave
Surrey, BC V3S 5H8

ClayLines

Celebrating Success in our community

Molla Vancouver

We recently received an inquiry regarding a small figurine of a mouse signed "Molla Vancouver". If you have any contact information or know anything about the artist, please respond to Laura at: lalliinbc@aol.com

PGBC Day Trip to the CLAY THROWDOWN

Bellevue Arts Museum
October 1, 2010

The Potters Guild of BC is arranging a day-long bus tour to visit the *Clay Throwdown* at the Bellevue Arts Museum Friday, October 1.

The cost is \$60 for members and \$68 for non-members and includes the bus trip and the entrance fee. Lunch will not be provided, but the museum is close to a number of good restaurants.

The curator, Stefano, will give us a tour of the exhibit and there will be free time to socialize, shop, eat and visit the gallery. The bus will depart Granville Island at 8 a.m. and return at approximately 7 p.m.

Don't forget your passports!

Seats are limited so book early, but by September 15 at the latest.

Please contact Sharon at the Gallery of BC Ceramics to book your seat: 604.669.3606.

Any questions, please contact Jackie Frioud at jfrioud@shaw.ca or phone 604.921.6417.

Menorah Chanukah Competition

Deadline: Oct. 25

This competition and exhibit is open to artists to celebrate winter light. Artists from all communities are welcome to submit artwork that interprets the meaning of Chanukah and the menorah design. For more information about the menorah design and the observation of Chanukah, please visit www.burquest.org. You do not have to be Jewish to participate. There is a **\$1,000 cash award** to the winning artist of the Judges vote, and a \$100 cash award will be awarded to the winning artist of the public vote. Details of the call are available for download here at: http://www.portcoquitlam.ca/_shared/assets/Menorah_Chanukah_Competition_Call2010_final8437.pdf

Cheers,

Yvonne Chui, Arts & Culture Coordinator

City of Port Coquitlam Leigh Square Community Arts Village

1100 - 2253 Leigh Square

Port Coquitlam, B.C. V3C 3B8,

T: 604.927.8440 F: 604.927.8444

www.portcoquitlam.ca/arts

Submissions for the September 2010 newsletter

Please get your articles and ads in to Melany by August 20 at the latest for the September 1 newsletter. If you submit your material after that date, it may have to wait till next month's newsletter. Submissions can be sent to editor@bcpotters.com.



INTEGRATION

Sandra Carr, Joe Gelinas
& Cathi Jefferson

Circle Craft Co-Op Gallery, in
the Net Loft at Granville Island

Opening: Aug. 5; 6 to 8 p.m.

Show Dates: Aug. 6 to 31; 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Also, "Salt Pots, from concept to completion" a hands-on workshop with show participant (and PGBC member) Cathi Jefferson is offered at Medalta (Alberta) August 6 to 16. For more information, contact miair@medalta.org.

EXHIBITION, Washington State

LONG BEACH PENINSULA CLAY ARTISTS are having a show, demonstrations and sale at Artisan in Ilwaco, WA (on the Long Beach Peninsula) Aug. 12 to 14. Questions? Contact Jan Richardson, 360.665.2603.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Deadline: August 30

NCECA 2011 Biennial, at the Tampa Museum of Art, show January to April 2011. Entry fee \$20/ NCECA members, \$40/ non members. \$7000 in awards. Jurors Glen R. Brown, Julia Galloway & Arthur Gonzalez. www.nceca.net. 1.866.266.2322.

Employment Opportunity

Deadline: ASAP!

The Chilliwack Arts Council is currently working on the start up of a series of pottery programs in our all new Arts & Cultural Centre, scheduled to open this September. The new Ceramics lab will be very well equipped with 10 wheels, and hand-building equipment. It has a terrific classroom space, with a separate drying room and kiln/glaze room, and all new equipment. If any experienced potters, with some teaching experience, at either youth, teen or adult level are interested in delivering evening or daytime programs in this brand new facility, please forward an email with your resume and preferred program area to Holly McKeen at mckeenfarm@shaw.ca, or give Holly a call at 604.823.6430 ASAP for more information.

ClayLines

Celebrating Success in our community

Call for Artists

PLACE DES ARTS CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE

Deadline for registration is Sunday, Oct. 17

Are you an artist or artisan looking for a place to display and sell your work at Christmas? Now is the time to start working on your wares! Place des Arts, a multi-disciplinary arts centre in Maillardville Coquitlam, is seeking new artists for its Christmas Boutique, 2010. This annual event has been very successful in the past, and each year, more and more customers are choosing to forego the shopping malls and buy locally crafted artwork from Place des Arts.

For the 2010 Christmas Boutique, open from Nov. 12 to Dec. 17, Place des Arts is seeking artisans who create fine-art quality felted items (i.e., tea cozies), wooden boxes, glass ornaments, silver work, unique pottery, leather products, hand-made soap and other quality handcrafted items—no hand-made cards, photos, prints or assembled (as in beaded) jewelry please. Keep in mind that these items do not necessarily need to be Christmas-themed, but can be gifts that hold year-round appeal for the recipient.

All works are for sale. Artists set prices for their works, and Place des Arts will retain 30% of the retail price. To be considered for the Christmas Boutique, artists must submit 5 work samples to be juried. A \$5 jury fee applies. The deadline for registration is Sunday, Oct. 17, 2010. The drop off dates for jurying of new artist works are Saturday, October 23 and Sunday, Oct. 24. Artists will be notified of entry status by Friday, October 29.

For registration forms and artists identification cards, interested artists may visit www.placedesarts.ca and follow the "Our Programs" dropdown menu to "Christmas Boutique." For more information, contact gift shop coordinator, Lidia Kosznik, at 604.664.1636 or email her at lkosznik@placedesarts.ca

COASTAL JOURNEYS Opening Celebration

CEDAR GROVE GALLERY, Galiano Island - July 31; 5 to 8 p.m.

Our annual show is on from Fri., July 30 to Mon., August 2; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hope to see you here!

Annette Shaw, Lea Mabblerley and

Sandra Dolph (PGBC member, www.sandradolph.com)

Unclassifieds

FOR SALE: 6 Eclipse gas burners TR-10 140,000 BTU. \$100 each contact Keith at 604-215-7766 or victorbumble@hotmail.com



FREE POTTER'S WHEEL: I have an old unassembled Estrin wheel. All parts are there, with the exception of a few pins. I would like to give it to anyone who will take it away. Contact Rona at 604.224.6550, Vancouver.

2011 NICHE Awards

DEADLINES: Professional division, Aug. 31, 2010;

Student entries, Sept. 30, 2010

The NICHE Awards annually celebrate excellence and innovation in American and Canadian craft. Categories include ceramics, fibre, glass, metal, wood, jewelry and more. Judging of entries is based on three main criteria:

- technical excellence, both in surface design and form
- a distinct quality of unique, original and creative thought
- market viability (professional entries only)

Finalists are invited to display their work in the NICHE Awards exhibit at the Winter Buyers Market of American Craft in Philadelphia, Feb. 18-21, 2011. Winners will be announced at a special ceremony during the Buyers Market and featured in the Spring 2011 issue of NICHE magazine.

B.C. ceramic artists for the 2010 competition included Lilach Lotan's winning submission for lighting: *Lotus*. B.C. finalists in the professional ceramics category were: Heather Dahl for *3 Poppy Oval Bottle Vase*; Rachelle Chinnery for *Bottle and Cups*; Lilach Lotan for *Metamorphosis*.

Apply at www.NICHEAwards.com by the dates indicated above. Mail payment and application materials by the deadline:

NICHE Awards, 3000 Chestnut Avenue, Suite 300
Baltimore, MD 21211, USA

Call for proposals

Deadline: Aug. 31


The Sunshine Coast Arts Council & Arts Centre invites artists to submit exhibition proposals for the Doris Crowston Gallery for the exhibition year February 2011 to February 2012, in any visual art medium, of work that has not been exhibited on the Coast in the last six months. Contact: Sunshine Coast Arts Council + Arts Centre, P.O. Box 1565, Sechelt, B.C., V0N 3A0, 604.885.5412, Fax: 604.885.6192, sc_artsCouncil@dccnet.com, www.scartsCouncil.com.

Call for Entries

Deadline: Sept. 13

The Calgary Clay Arts Association is calling for entries for its show "On the Table". The primary theme is tableware place settings, but includes decorative elements such as small vases, or condiment dishes. Contact: Connie Cooper, 1112 - 9th St. SE, Calgary, AB, T2G 3B4, 403-265-5352, connie.cooper@shaw.ca.

PGBC MEMBERSHIP FEES

This is to advise you that as of July 1 the new 12% HST will be applied to the advertised membership fees, which previously included GST. The guild website has been updated to reflect the new prices. 

Submissions & Advertising

Published 10 times yearly, the PGBC Newsletter is an information link for members.

Submissions:

Send articles, reviews, images, member news, letters and information to: editor@bcpotters.com **by the 20th of each month** for publication the following month. Submissions may be edited for space.

2010 Advertising Rates * :

All ads are payable upon receipt of invoice

- Full page, \$185+ HST
- 2/3 page, \$125 + HST
- 1/2 page, \$95 + HST
- 1/3 page, \$65 + HST (horizontal, vertical, or column)
- 1/4 page, \$49 + HST
- 1/6 page, \$35 + HST

Please submit ads as PDF, TIF, JPG or EPS files. For ad sizes see: <http://www.bcpotters.com/Guild/newsletter.html>. Ad rates are for files requiring no further work by our staff. Ads that are not the correct size, or that need formatting or basic design work will cost \$20 extra.

Unclassified Rates:

Members FREE! Non-members: \$22 + HST

**Advertising rates subject to change*

Potters Guild of British Columbia

1359 Cartwright St · Granville Island

Vancouver, BC · V6H 3R7

tel:604.669.3606 · fax: 604.669.5627

<http://www.bcpotters.com/Guild>

Chop Marks & Signatures

Send in your chops and have them available through the guild. For the form, click on the link here: www.bcpotters.com/Guild/chops.html

You can email it back to Debra Sloan at sloanyip@shaw.ca as an attachment. Or print and mail your sheet[s] to Potters Guild of BC, 1359 Cartwright Street, Granville Island, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3R7 attention: chops. 🖨️

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Jackie Frioud, Secretary

604.921.6417 · jfrioud@shaw.ca

Membership

Membership Fees

For 12 months, **not including HST**: Individual, \$55;
Full-time Student, \$35; Senior (over 65), \$35; Institution/Group/
Corporation, \$200.

Annual membership is from September. New members joining at other times of the year pay a pro-rated fee the first year. If you are rejoining after a break, please use the new membership pro-rated link. All subsequent renewals will take place in September, regardless of your initial joining date. For detailed information see:

<http://www.bcpotters.com/Guild/membership.html>

Membership Renewals & New Memberships

- In person: pay by Visa, cheque or cash at the Gallery of BC Ceramics OR
- By mail: pay by Visa or cheque and mail to the Guild; mark the envelope and cheque with either 'Membership Renewal' or 'New Membership'
- Online at our secure site with a credit card by [clicking here](#).

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