

May 2012
Volume 48 No. 4



BC POTTERS

Newsletter of the Potters Guild of British Columbia

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Manganese Clay, 61.5 x 19.5 x 15 cm.
Porcelain with Glaze, 62 x 15 x 13 cm.
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Gallery of BC Ceramics

www.galleryofbcceramics.com

Representing the best of BC Ceramics

Gallery Manager

Brenda Beaudoin

galleryofbcceramics@bcpotters.com

604.669.3606

Gallery Hours as of May 1:

10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Gallery Assistants

Carito Ho, Gala Vlasic, Sasha

Krieger and Samantha Knopp

staff@bcpotters.com

Exhibition Committee:

Jinny Whitehead, Sheila Morissette,
Maggie Kneer, Celia & Keith Rice-Jones

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

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

■ *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.*

*Artists must apply to be juried;
there are three deadlines annually.*

To download and print a Gallery

Jury Application, [click here](#).

For information on Gallery

Policy, [click here](#).



2012 Gallery Exhibitions

April 7 to 28:

Up the Garden Path

Members of the Potters' Guild of British Columbia. Opening Reception: Saturday, April 7, 1 to 3 p.m.

May 5 to 28:

Boulders, Rocks and Stone

Sandra Dolph. Opening Reception: Saturday, May 5, 1 to 3 p.m.

June 2 to July 2:

Table Salt

Jackie Frioud, Cathi Jefferson, Lari Robson, Gunda Stewart, Vincent Massey, Sandra Ramos. Opening Reception: Saturday, June 2, 1 to 3 p.m.

July 7 to 31:

Harbinger

Laurie Rolland. Opening Reception: Saturday, July 7, 1 to 3 p.m.

September 8 to 24:

Mug Shots

Members of the Potters' Guild of British Columbia. Opening Reception: TBA.

September 29 to October 29:

Collaboration of Vision

Jinny Whitehead, Pia Sillem, Jan Lovewell and Ron Robb. Opening Reception: Saturday, Sept. 29, 1 to 3 p.m.

2012 Featured Artists

The monthly Featured Artist must be an individual PGBC member in good standing and each application must include a signed gallery policy. This is an opportunity for a non-juried PGBC member to be represented in the gallery by displaying a small selection of ceramic work that meets the gallery's quality standards and is suitable for this venue (pricing, size, and non-competing with current gallery artists): Representing the Best of B.C. Ceramics.

February 15 to March 14: **Joan Barnett**

March 15 to April 14: **Ekta Nadeau**

April 15 to May 14: **Kathryn O'Regan**

May 15 to June 14: **Jan Formby**

June 15 to July 14: **Che Gawlicki**

July 15 to August 14: **Gabrielle Burke**

August 15 to Sept 14: **Roxanne Gagnon**

September 15 to October 14: **Laurel Vlieg**

October 15 to November 14: **Jessie Tse**

GALLERY OF BC CERAMICS: DEADLINES

Gallery Retail juries

There are two remaining gallery retail juries for the year 2012: June 4 and Sept. 10.

Exhibition juries

This is a reminder to members that you can now apply for an exhibition at the Gallery of BC Ceramics at any time during the year. We hope this will allow more flexibility and allow you to put together your submissions when inspiration actually hits you, rather than having to wait for a specific date to submit. We also look at scheduling a two-year period to allow more lead time in creating work for exhibitions as well as creating a balanced exhibition program.

For more specific information on either jury, please refer to the gallery website www.galleryofbcceramics.com. Select the menu "Artists" and then "Artist Forms" where you will see "gallery jury applications". Here is the direct link: www.bcpotters.com/forms/2010_Gallery_Jury_Application.pdf

President's Message

Here at the computer, the morning after Oven & Kiln 2012 (the fabulous silent auction, award ceremony, fund raiser for the NWCF), with my second coffee, on a glorious sunny B.C. spring morning (well, in the Lower Mainland anyhow), thinking how fortunate I am to be here as a potter in B.C. Last night's event helped to drive home what a wonderful, varied and deep ceramic community we have here in the province and as a relative newcomer to B.C., a realization that perhaps this ceramic wealth is not as well known outside B.C. as perhaps it should. I also began to wonder if this expanse of ceramic wealth is fully realized within the province itself for its level of skill and variety.

While at NCECA last month in Seattle, I met a great number of B.C. potters, some of whom are or were members of PGBC and many who were not. The number of active potters who are not members were the ones who concerned me the most. What does the PGBC need to do, to be relevant and to encourage more potters and ceramic enthusiasts to want to sign up to as members? As the name implies, PGBC should represent, at the least, a good solid cross section of our constituency from all corners of the province, if not as individual members than at least as representative of the many smaller local groups.

Knowing that the board has been occupied with many issues and projects over the last few years, we are now hoping to refocus energy toward membership development. Starting out on this new mandate, I hope to have members and contacts from all corners of this very large province. I do realize that, sitting here in the Lower Mainland, this may be a pie-in-the sky ideal, but I do quite like a challenge. So, with the throwing down of that gauntlet, one action I will personally take up is, as my husband and I travel through the province exploring our new home, I hope to make contact with as many members of the clay community as possible. Feedback from the present and past membership on how the PGBC could be more relevant to the ceramic community throughout B.C. would also be most welcome. This feedback can come in a number of ways. For instance, in this issue of the newsletter, we have reports written by members reflecting their experiences at NCECA. This participation by members adds to our newsletter and reminds us of our members' strengths and interests.

Looking forward to hearing from you. 🍷

—Denise Jeffrey

Gallery News *By Brenda Beaudoin*

First quarter gallery sales are up by 26% from last year! Great news to be ahead of our sales goals as April sales have been very slow. We're sure however that Sandra Dolph's May exhibition will draw in many of our regular gallery patrons. We're looking forward to getting the first look at Sandra's latest ceramic works and installing her exhibition.

We've been emailing bi-monthly evites to promote new ceramic arrivals and exhibitions. If you have not been receiving your evites please email: staff@bcpotters.com to be added to the gallery's outlook PGBC member list.

Check us out on Facebook too @ Gallery of BC Ceramics. 🍷



Sandra Dolph Exhibition

BOULDERS, ROCK AND STONE

Geological forms, colours and textures were the starting place for exploration in this new body of work. The pottery pieces are made from the very same, finely ground minerals from which rock is composed, and some of the same methods of making—rolling, compressing, abrading, layering, and heating.

And once in a while, while working in the quiet, the deep essence of the stones was revealed. 🍷

Left, Above: new pieces by Sandra Dolph, on display at the Gallery of BC Ceramics this month.

NCECA Overload *By Keith Rice-Jones*

Even before we left there was a sense of being overwhelmed, with a 54-page exhibition guide! It certainly wasn't any better when we got there—there was SO much. This wasn't helped when the convention centre was invaded by fantasy characters, streaming up the escalators for a parallel Comic Convention. It was quite bizarre! However, we had sat down earlier with a coffee and made a plan to focus on what we felt were important things for us, certain of the exhibitions and just not worry about what we didn't see. We had a pretty good time.

Avoiding indigestion seemed to be the name of the game; giving yourself space between exhibitions, meeting old friends—there were so many from B.C.—making new ones, mooching, enjoying getting around on Seattle's excellent transit system, watching and listening to demos and more exhibitions.

We were pretty full by the time we got to the many exhibitions at the Seattle Design Centre on Saturday morning, and perhaps it was this that underlined my overwhelming sense of American bombast in much that we had seen. Sure there was much that was quiet and thoughtful, intriguing, clever and skillful but I tired of the sense of "look at me," a predilection for the grotesque and ugly, trying to be different for the sake of it, and why all the bunnies? I certainly don't think that we have anything to apologize for in B.C. Our work, well illustrated in the two shows at the Fraker-Scott Gallery, *The Edge of Here* and *The Salish Sea* has a quiet competence, is strong and varied. Yeah, Canada!

After the visual indigestion of the Design Centre we had a break and felt we were fortunate to end our experience on such a positive note with the superb show at the Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington, *Around the Bend and Over the Edge: Seattle Ceramics 1964 – 1977*.

It was a bit like going back to source material, like reading Darwin in the original rather a pastiche of accumulated ideas. It was easy to see the roots of so much current "edgy" work but this was so ground breaking at the time with Seattle artists playing such "a vigorous role in a widespread revision of what constituted ceramics and ceramic art" (Martha Kingsbury, Guest Curator). Artists at the forefront of this revolution were Robert Sperry, Patti Warashina, Fred Bauer and Howard Kottler. It was great to not only see work by David Gilhooley, whose zany frog kingdoms were often referenced in my teaching of kids, but also pieces by Pat McCormick, who had been my instructor



Sesame Frog with Pigeons, by David Gilhooley.



Work by Howard Kottler.



Serious Business, 1973, by Patti Warashina. Slip-cast, slab and hand-built earthenware with stains and luster glaze.

at Western Washington University just after the end of the time window covered by the exhibition.

Most of the work was sculptural, a pivotal subversion really of the predominant traditional vessel forms of the time. However, in a sub-part of the exhibition, some of this earlier work was shown alongside influential Japanese work. In particular, Patti Warashina had made a witty version of historical Japanese bottles and it was a double-take before you realized quite what was going on. Also it was a revelatory reminder of roots to see an early traditional large stoneware casserole by Peter Voulkos near one of his iconic loose dented plates.

While one aspect of exploration was food—in a way, a subverted extension of the vessel, using wry cartoonish humour and pushing the accepted limits of using clay—other work was decidedly political, as with Robert Sperry's *Spirit of 76*, a gruesome *Easy Rider* skull head, a commentary on the Vietnam war.

Much of this new work stepped away from the earlier devotion to high-fired stoneware and comfortable forms. It made use of the vivid, even garish colours available with low temperature. At the time, it was shocking and controversial but showed an impeccable craftsmanship.

The show is on at the Henry Art Gallery until May 6. 📍

For more on the Henry Art Gallery, see:

www.henryart.org/exhibitions

Wasn't that a Party!

The joint opening of *BC-in-a-Box 3: The Edge of Here* and *Celebrate the Salish Sea*, work from the Fired Up! Collective, was held at the Fraker/Scott Gallery in Seattle March 29, 5 to 9 p.m. As you can see from the pictures, the event was very lively and well attended as it celebrated the exhibition of B.C. ceramists at NCECA. 🕯

Photos by Keith Rice-Jones.



Left to Right: Nora Vaillant, Jinny Whitehead (PGBC past president), Sheila Morissette and Denise Jeffrey (PGBC current president) at the Fraker/Scott Gallery B.C. show opening.



Above, left and right: The crowds at the Fraker/Scott Gallery B.C. show opening.

Interesting Pots at NCECA

Photos by Gillian McMillan



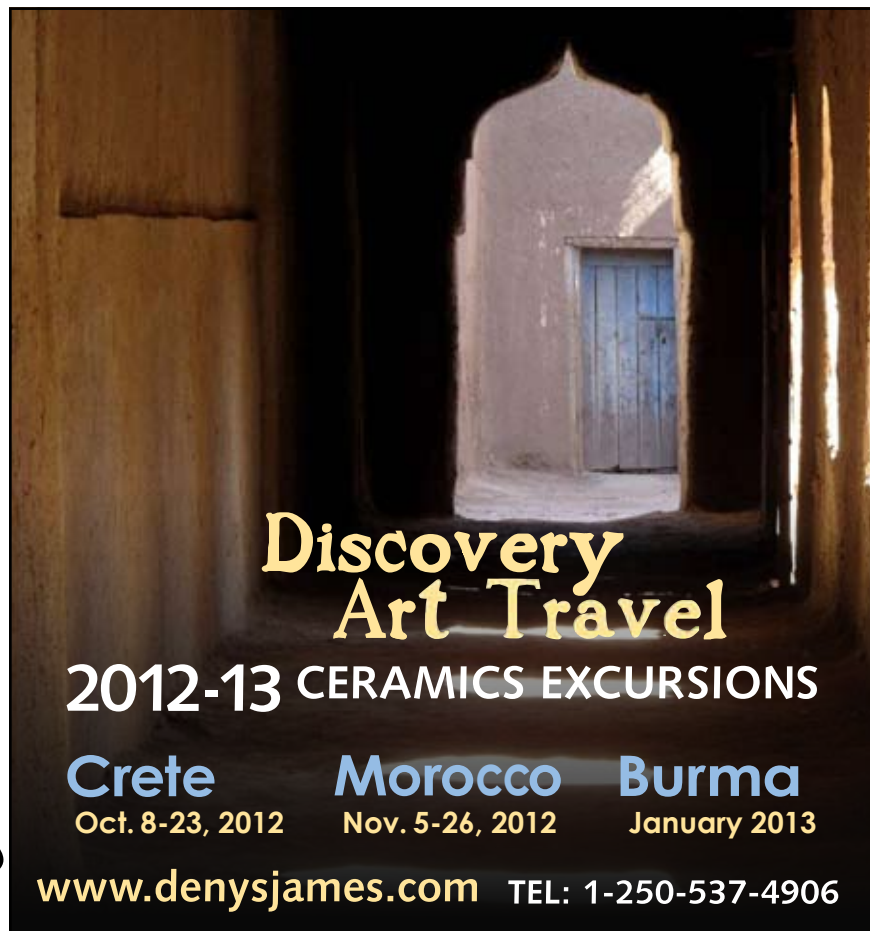
Ah Ha, Nathan Toning Ceramic Book, \$750.



Sculpture by Tip Toland, co-presenter with Walter Keeler (see article, next page).



Praise and Folly, by Mark Messenger, \$13,000.



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Pottery demonstration at NCECA *By Gillian McMillan*



Walter Keeler and Tip Toland work side-by-side on stage, with video of their demonstrations, plus slides of their work and influences in the background..



Walter Keeler attaching a teapot handle.



Teapot handle ready to be attached.



Walter shows off his finished teapot.



We've just returned from four exciting days in Seattle attending NCECA, the biggest ceramics conference on the continent. My Medalta friend Brenda Sullivan flew out from Port Hope, Ont. to drive down with us. We heard that some 400 Canadians joined the roughly 6,000 ceramic artists attending and certainly lots of B.C. and Alberta folks drove or flew down. It was such fun to keep running into TriCity Potters, Potters Guild of B.C. members and the Medalta crew. As usual, there was a vast room set aside for promoting college and university courses, community centres, ceramic suppliers offering glazes, tools, wheels, kilns, and what-have-you, and there were tours to consider and piles of paper: posters, brochures, invitations galore.

In the ballrooms, one could listen to discussions, watch slide shows and watch demonstrators. I found myself unable to move from watching British potter Walter Keeler throwing and assembling his unique teapots and jugs. In 1990, a year before I decided to go to Emily Carr University, I so enjoyed attending a workshop he gave there on a hot August weekend. At that time he was already making his recognizable metal-like jugs and teapots but he also made several of the large oval vessels with outrageous loopy handles. The assembled work dried so quickly!

Later, in 2005, my husband and I arranged for our little tour group of potters to drive up the Wye Valley to his studio. He was so welcoming and talked to us while sitting at his kick wheel as if we were a group of his students. While we admired some of his work and the collection of old pots, cans and found objects that inspire him he was watching his kiln, waiting for the moment to start salting. If only we could have been there three days later to see the results of the firing!

On this week's occasion he shared the stage with marvellous Tip Toland. As I don't do sculpture of figures, I hadn't expected to enjoy her side of the stage, but she entranced us with her petite energy and unfailing confidence in creating an enormous head. Sharing three hours side-by-side gives each presenter time to work while the other person speaks, and the audience can see both types of work inching towards completion, helped by enormous screens behind the two. 📺

Some of Walter's pots, photographed at Pottery Northwest, Seattle.

Alwyn O'Brien receives the 2012 North-West Ceramics Award

By Amy Gogarty

At the very successful and festive fundraising gala, *From Oven and Kiln*, held on April 19, Alwyn O'Brien was presented with NWCF Award of \$5000. In 2009, the prize was awarded jointly to Ian Johnston and Lisa Henriques. The award recognizes a ceramic artist who has resided and worked in B.C. for at least five years, who has exhibited his or her work publicly and who has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the ceramics community. O'Brien was selected by a panel consisting of board member and ceramic artist Sarah Coote, former board member and senior artist Tam Irving, and Burnaby Art Gallery curator/director Darrin Martens. The award is made with no conditions or responsibilities attached in the certain knowledge that the artist knows best how to use it.

Alwyn O'Brien was born on Salt Spring Island to a family of makers and gardeners. She studied at Capilano College in North Vancouver; at Sheridan College, under Bruce Cochrane and Susan Low-Beer; at NSCAD with Julia Galloway, and at Emily Carr University, where she worked with Paul Mathieu. In 2010, she completed her MFA at the University of Washington in Seattle. In 2011, she was one of five artists nominated for the RBC Emerging Artist Award, which involved creating a new work for exhibition at the Gardiner Museum in Toronto. Her work was featured at NCECA in Seattle both at the Convention Center and in a solo exhibition, *Essay in Objects*, at the James Harris Gallery. A



Hold My Hand and We'll Swab the Decks One Last Time, 2012. Porcelain with Glaze.
36.5 x 52 x 36 cm.

piece of her work was recently purchased by the Seattle Art Museum.

Her newest work is characterized by an exuberant proliferation of looping, hand-rolled ceramic coils, which emerge from the surface of the vessel to create elaborate, expressive tangles. As O'Brien describes it, "The surface has become the object rather than the decoration. It has become free of the vessel's three-dimensional form, and is able to claim its own space." These fragile yet agitated excrescences "act like moving tendrils, creating the appearance of motion, destruction, and despair." Speaking about a recent work, *Ridusse A Frittata*, she writes:

Desire is a transformational condition; it is a responsiveness to hunger, a longing to become at once undone and done. Ridusse a Frittata means "to make a mess". The ambiguous object: a passage, a mishap, an effluxion, a treatise of fragments.

Please join us in congratulating Alwyn O'Brien on the Award and on her impressive work to date. We all look forward to even greater things to come. 🍷

For more on the NWCF, please see their website at www.nwcf.ca. For more of Alwyn's work, please see the James Harris Gallery website at <http://jamesharrisgallery.com/2012/03/alwyn-obrien/>



Gallery of BC Ceramics: Featured Artist

PGBC member Jan Formby is the Gallery's featured artist May 15 to June 14. Jan was, born in Vancouver and is a potter, sculptor and oil painter. After graduating from Kootenay School of Art and Design in 1999, Jan opened Red Moon Clay Studio and Gallery in the historic city of Nelson. She is best known for her pottery production line of wildlife and sports mugs. While her clay and sculptural bronze pieces tend to depict nature themes realistically, her oil paintings wander and take landscape into abstract and mysterious realms.

Between the years 1999 and 2011 Formby has exhibited eleven times showing cohesive bodies of oil paintings, pottery, clay and bronze sculptures in popular Nelson venues. Her production line of image mugs are sold from the Coast to the Rockies as an all seasons best seller. Contact: Red Moon Gallery 724 Herridge Lane (Studio+Gallery), Nelson, B.C. red.moon@telus.net 🍷

Sea horse vase, 23cm x 17.5 cm x 12.5cm, porcelain, Cone 9.

Two Inspiring Exhibitions by B.C. Ceramists By Amy Gogarty

Two very interesting exhibitions by BC ceramic artists opened in the Greater Vancouver Region in April, and both will be on view through the middle of May. As the weather improves and spring stirs creative energies, these two exhibitions are not to be missed. On Granville Island at the Craft Council, former PGBC president Jinny Whitehead presents new work that departs considerably from her familiar wood-fired baskets and pots. At the Art Gallery at Evergreen in Coquitlam, Richmond native Eliza Au is featured in a two-person exhibition with a former resident of Vancouver, Ying-Yueh Chuang. While the two exhibitions are quite different, there are themes and approaches that resonate and suggest connections between them.

Jinny Whitehead exhibits with printmaker Celia Pickles in *Traces: Inspirations from the Coastal Shorelines*. The two bodies of work complement each other well, as both incorporate biomorphic forms and spirals reminiscent of the detritus one finds along our extensive coasts. Pickles introduces collage, embroidery and fabric paint into her



***Tidal Drifts 2*, by Jinny Whitehead. Clay and sea kelp.**

monoprints, which are delicately coloured and subtle. Whitehead works with naked raku and smoke firing, two processes she has used in the past but perhaps not with such dramatic or spectacular effect. At one point last year, Whitehead was unable to work with the large format forms for which she is best known. Wanting still to create, she began making smaller, more intimate, non-functional works

based loosely on shells, driftwood, rocks and other sea materials. Her rock forms are burnished and smoke-fired to a rich, dark patina, but the white stoneware shells are patterned with the black lines and crackle of raku. Using smoked clay slabs that resemble driftwood, she creates sensitive tableaux

Continued on Page 9, Tidal Drifts

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Sink Making Workshop

Using moulds, slab roller, and other techniques, you'll create your own drop-in counter bathroom sink from high-fired stoneware.

You can register with a friend, even if they don't have clay experience, as this class is for all skill levels.

June 2, 10:30am–4:30pm &

June 24, 12:30–4:30pm

2 sessions \$110.25 | #4281622

Instructor and full-time potter Murray Sanders has taught at the Surrey Art Gallery for nineteen years, and is also the ceramics studio technician. He holds diplomas in Fine Arts and Adult Education.

Kiln Operations Workshop

Learn all about electric kiln operations from the kiln manager at Surrey Art Gallery. Topics include trigger adjustments, kiln loading, re-wiring, firing schedules, cones, troubleshooting, and safety.

June 17, 12:30–3pm

1 session \$26.50 | #4281507

Ceramics for the Garden

Use the hand-building processes of extruding, coiling, and slab construction to create a planter, fountain, or hanging bird bath out of clay. Learn different techniques for surface decorating through incising, impressing, and adding on.

June 9 and 16, 1:30–4:30pm

2 sessions \$60.25 | #4283361

Instructor Laurel Vlieg is an artist and educator. She studied at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, and has operated her own ceramics studio for more than a decade.



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Tidal Drifts, Cont'd from Page 8

called *Tidal Drifts*, on which she arranges an assortment of rocks, sea kelp and shell-like forms. Reflecting the touch of the artist's hand in their making, the pieces beg to be handled. While not literal or representational, the shell-like components so convincingly conjure the sea one can almost smell and hear it.

At the Art Gallery at Evergreen, Au and Chuang present *Variations on Symmetry*, an impressive and challenging set of works that explore issues of nature, culture, decoration and order. The exhibition covers several years of each artist's work, and given the richness, complexity and multitude of components that make up each work, the time frame is entirely understandable. The installation process itself was extremely labour-intensive, and, by the time this goes to print, the gallery should have uploaded a time-lapse animation documenting it. Both artists work with slip-casting and/or press moulding to produce multiples, yet each further modifies the resulting forms in very personal ways. Eliza Au assembles lobed forms into layers of pattern that simulate rugs or gothic tracery. Each component is glazed in shifting colours that burst into bright accents at tips and nodes. In addition to her ceramic



The Meditation of Order, Center Mandala (detail), 2009, by Eliza Au. Cone 6 slipcast stoneware, metal and paper. 180 cm wide x 150 cm high.

works, she includes a carpet-like piece created from cast glass and two mandala forms that combine ceramic and paper. The artist is interested in exploring the qualities of her different materials, yet she is also driven to

explore connections between pattern, order and spiritual states. Ying-Yueh Chuang, who now lives in Toronto, was born in Taiwan, but she moved to Vancouver to attend Langara and Emily Carr. Her works often incorporate hundreds of individually shaped and brightly glazed components that resemble food, underwater coral or strange hybrid animals. In their presentation on acrylic rods in gridded arrangements, they further suggest weird science or other-worldly environments. Several works created in Jingdezhen, China, incorporate the very difficult-to-use Imperial porcelain, selected for its extreme whiteness and tendency to glow slightly when properly fired. These works combine unglazed stylized flowers with brightly patterned fabric. As the fabric is associated with peasant culture, and the porcelain with aristocracy, Chuang sees the works as commenting on the importance of treating everyone the same regardless of class or origin. Together, these artists explore symmetry and order as found in the natural and human world, and they inspire with their sense of beauty and impressive craftsmanship.

While the two shows are quite different, both demonstrate commitment to the work of the hand and the values of craft, and both respond to the beauty and complexity of nature. On view in Coquitlam until May 19, *Variations on Symmetry* will travel through 2013 to Castlegar, Kingston, Toronto and Halifax. *Traces: Inspirations from the Coastal Shorelines* has been extended at the Craft Council on Granville Island until May 24. 📍

For more information on both shows, please see the gallery websites:

Craft Council of BC:
www.craftcouncilbc.ca

Art Gallery at Evergreen:
www.evergreenculturalcentre.ca



Flower Series #1, 2011 (detail), by Ying-Yueh Chuang. Fabric, Porcelain 302 x 265 x 12 cm.

Greenbarn's catalogue is
now available online.

In an effort to be more environmentally
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are phasing out our printed catalogue,
in favour of a downloadable version
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Jim Robison Workshop at Shadbolt Centre

By Gayle Oyama



Having seen Jim Robison's large outdoor ceramic installations and garden pieces online and in books, I eagerly anticipated his two-day slab building workshop at the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts on March 24 and 25. I had done some slab building in my years of taking pottery classes, but Jim Robison's techniques, the creative use of slabs and the assembly process were the greatest value of the workshop to me and created the desire to get back to the studio and put these methods into practice.

I realized, even with some knowledge of slab building, I was a little out of my comfort zone. I felt more at ease when we started with smaller manageable pieces that were built and stretched by hand. Base and accent slabs were created using slips, impressions, combing and stencils from fabric. The base slabs had strips of the accent slabs applied both top and bottom. With the application of more slip and score lines and the final stretching of the slab the design emerged. Using molds, both decorative and functional pieces were created.

Next we moved to the slab roller. Using the same methods used for the smaller slabs, larger ones were created. This time however Jim scored the slab in a few select places. The slab was put through the roller and dramatic patterns were integrated in the slab and tears appeared where the slab was scored: order and pattern had been created. You could tell we were all impressed as each piece emerged from the slab roller. We now have a hint of how Jim's larger pieces were created.

This was all leading to the large planter. We watched Jim use the clay slabs as a canvas creating the windswept scenery on his planters: stencils to anchor the ground, slip for the scenery, and combing and scoring for depth and movement. Jim was ready to use the large, wooden half barrel like molds: we had all been waiting for this demonstration from the time we first laid our eyes on the molds. Once the "canvas" was sufficiently dry and the slabs were placed in the curved molds and allowed to set up, the sides of the two curved pieces were joined together and the base added with neat precision.

Then we moved onto the rims which Jim created with extrusions. I had been looking forward to seeing the rims applied as I had admired the beautiful curved flowing forms on his work. His development of the rim for "our" large planter did not disappoint. The rim he created had movement as the extrusion curved over the clouds, finally rippled and cascaded down the sides of the planter.

I couldn't wait to use this method on my workshop pieces. At the end of the workshop, my extruded rims are applied and as I stand back, in my mind I hear one of my early instructors: "stop touching the piece". I guess I still haven't learned—there are finger marks everywhere. Where were all of Jim's finger marks? There were none to be found.

At the end of the workshop, I looked at my fellow students' work—amazing. There were works that emphasized colour, others design and yet others pattern. They were all different and, while they had embraced Jim's techniques, they used their own creativity. We had graduated from creating small slabs using Jim's techniques to larger more intricate pieces and, finally, Jim worked on and finished "our" planter. I look forward to seeing all of Jim's workshop pieces displayed at Shadbolt to continue to inspire both myself and all who take courses at and visit the Centre. 🍷

Many thanks to Gayle Oyama for sharing her workshop experience with PGBC members, even though she is not a member herself. Our newsletter welcomes submissions from anyone about anything clay-related.



Jim Robison demonstrating the many stages of a slab built pot.

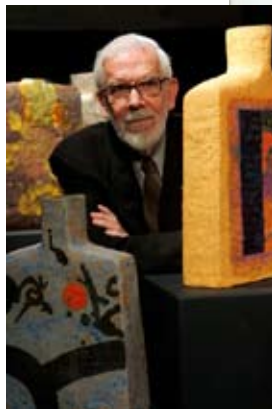
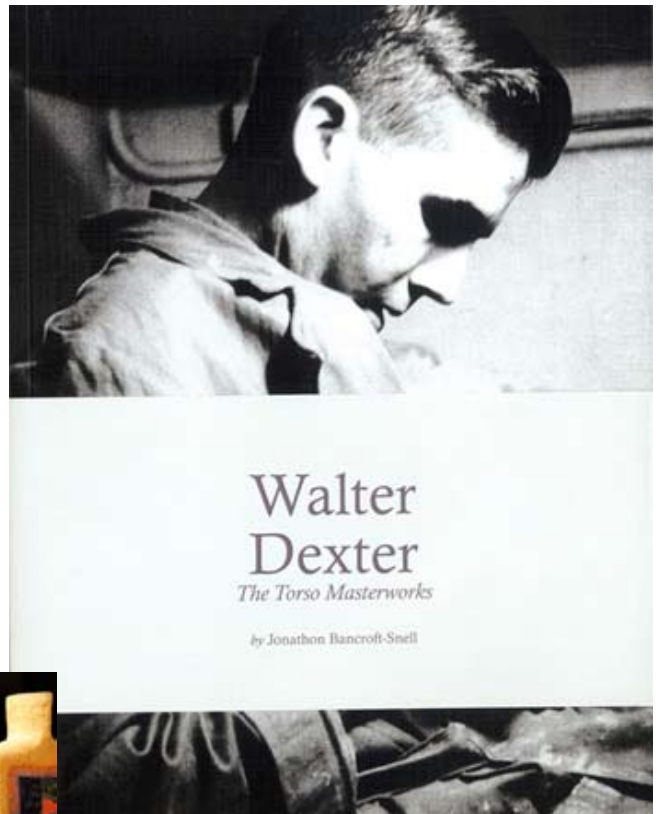
Book Review *By Amy Gogarty*

Walter Dexter: The Torso Masterworks by Jonathon Bancroft-Snell
(Toronto: Ronald P. Frye, 2012)

It is so rare to find a monograph on a living Canadian ceramist that one cannot be blamed for high hopes and great expectations when such a document appears. *Walter Dexter: The Torso Masterworks* is a handsome book with many beautiful photographs of exquisite works, and my anticipation was keenly aroused when I received my review copy in the mail. The *Torso* works are a series of flat-slab-bottle shapes Dexter produced throughout his career, particularly over the last ten to twelve years. They resemble a human torso stripped of head and limbs and are imbued with a liveliness of colour and spirit that makes them especially powerful when exhibited as a group. Most are decorated with brilliant colour, rugged texture and vigorous brushwork, which link them closely to the work of modern artists such as the Regina Five or the Painters Eleven in Ontario. In September 2007, Jonathon Bancroft-Snell, the author of this book, presented a large number of these works in a retrospective titled *Tribute*, and that exhibition became the impetus for this book.

With so many beautiful and inspiring examples from this series photographed so compellingly by Sebastian Frye, it seems churlish to criticize the text, but it must be done. The text is nearly impossible to follow; it is disorganized and virtually incoherent. While claiming to focus on the torso vases (roughly 1996-2011), the author traces the artist's history beginning with his 1931 birth in Alberta at the depth of the Depression, his attendance at the Alberta Institute of Art and Technology (later, ACAD, in Calgary), where he encountered his life-long mentor Luke Lindoe, and his later moves to Kelowna, Vancouver and eventually Victoria. Strangely, his attendance at art school is discussed in Chapter 1, "The Beginning," and again in Chapter 2, "Return to Alberta," yet the name of the school is not given until Chapter 4, "The Vancouver Years," which, confusingly, opens with a discussion of Dexter's teaching in Alberta. The book concludes with a very useful catalogue raisonné of as many torso works as could be located. At the bottom of each page is a diagram indicating the relative size of bottles as small, medium and large. However, the diagrams are in inches while all dimensions for the works are in centimeters.

There seems to be a general confusion about craft, functional pottery and "art." Asserting Dexter had to make functional work to survive despite wishing to make art, he states (107) "Walter is first and foremost a potter and that is how he continues to see himself." That potters engage in creative and artistic work even while making functional pieces does not seem to be appreciated, despite this being widely discussed in critical circles. Some statements challenge credibility, such as when he mentions small file cards Dexter used to market his work, writing: "Given that very few studio potters today use any form of visual marketing aids, that was in itself quite creative and innovative, especially in the sixties" (101). Are not artist websites "visual marketing aids," and do not nearly all professional potters today access some form of website to promote their work?



Walter Dexter then (upper right) and now (above).

The book is rife with these sorts of disconcerting disjunctions and non-sequiturs, which, frankly, make it difficult to review as it is nearly impossible to follow any train of thought. The author is clearly an enthusiastic supporter of contemporary Canadian ceramics and of Dexter, and he is able to supply interesting anecdotes illuminating the personal and economic relationship between artist and dealer, dealer and collector. The book opens with a sublimely beautiful poem about unloading a kiln by Rona Murray, Dexter's late wife, which provides moving insight into these two artists' shared life. However, this is not a sufficient basis for a book. If ceramics is to be

taken seriously as a valid and important form of creative art practice, it must be addressed with the same level of critical attention and serious scholarship given other art forms. That will only come about if we demand it. We have numerous examples of artist-scholars producing serious, critical writing such as Paul Mathieu, Leopold Foulem, Sandra Alfoldy or Brian Grison, whose excellent article on Dexter in *Ceramics Art and Perception* 76 (June, 2009) helped sort out confusions with the book. Dexter surely deserves a serious monograph, one that places his work in a broad aesthetic and critical context with clarity and factual detail. This is a lovely book to look at, but, to understand this artist better, you will need to look elsewhere. 🔥



Jonathon Bancroft-Snell and one of Walter Dexter's torso masterworks.

ClayLines

Celebrating Success in our community

Pottery Sale, Nanaimo

May 11 & 12

The Nanaimo Pottery Co-op's Spring Show and Sale will be held on Friday, May 11 from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday, May 12 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The location is Country Club Centre, 3200 N. Island Hwy, Nanaimo. Free admission to all and no tax on pottery! All purchasers will be entered in a free draw for a pottery item. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

Delta Potters Annual Spring Sale

May 11 & 12

Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

South Delta Recreation Centre
1720 56th St, South Delta

Choose from a huge selection of functional and decorative pieces from our amateur and master potters at budget friendly prices. And no HST.



Denman Island Pottery Tour

May 19 and 20

The 25th Anniversary, free self guided pottery tour: Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Ten studios, Anagama Dragon Kiln site, and retrospective show at Denman Arts Center. Maps at Ferry Booth and on the island. www.denmanpottery2012.blogspot.com

WORKSHOP, Williams Lake

The Cariboo Potters' Guild will be hosting a demonstration workshop, with a slide show put on by Keith and Celia Rice-Jones On Sept. 28 to 30. Visit their website to see their work: www.wildricestudio.com. Registration is on a first-to-pay basis: \$120 for non-CPG members. Cheques can be made out to and mailed to: Cariboo Potters' Guild, Box 4852, Williams Lake, B.C. V2G 2V8

Members of our guild have offered to billet out-of-town participants. Please indicate if you would like billeting when registering. Please email me first of your intention to participate, so I can have an idea when spaces are filled. Christy Richardson, Workshop Coordinator, christyjrich@gmail.com

EXHIBITION, Coquitlam

April 13 to May 19

Exploring the symmetry of landscape, architecture, cycles of life and their relationships to the spiritual and natural worlds, artists Eliza Au and Ying-Yueh Chuang collaborate to alter the Art Gallery at Evergreen with beautifully expressive and mixed media installations.

Art Gallery at Evergreen Cultural Centre
1205 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam

Submissions for the June 2012 PGBC newsletter

Please get your articles and ads in to Melany by May 20 at the latest for the June 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.

EXHIBITION & SALE, Victoria

May 25 to 27

Fired Up! Contemporary Works in Clay presents their 28th Annual exhibition of Ceramics: "Celebrate the Salish Sea" at the Metchosin Community Hall. Show continues Saturday and Sunday May 26, 27, 10 am to 4 pm. 2012 guest artists are Samantha Dickie and Cindy Gibson. Also at the show: book launch of *Walter Dexter: the Torso Masterworks*. Everyone is welcome to attend this FREE, wheelchair friendly event.

4401 William Head Road, Victoria.

Opening Gala: Friday, May 25, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., sales from 6:30

www.firedup.ca 250-592-8257

2012 CONEBOX SHOW

DEADLINE: June 18

To download the 2012 ConeBox Show entry form, go to web page www.coneboxshow.com and click on the entry form link. If you want to send a computer printed sheet with all the entry information on it with your pieces that is fine. Just make sure I know which piece is A and which is B. Printed lines cannot be more than 5 inches wide.

If you live outside of the USA and would like to send a \$35 cash entry fee rather than a check, please contact me so we can discuss it.

The 2010 Show paid \$4,150 in awards. I always look forward to seeing the many new and exciting pieces you send and admire your skill, imagination and techniques.

Don Balch, dgbalch@gmail.com

Unclassifieds

POTTERY APPRENTICE NEEDED: Sandra Dolph on Galiano Island needs a pottery apprentice this summer. Studio space and daily throwing instruction will be provided, with the possibility of a place to stay, in return for gallery and gardening work. Contact Sandra at sldolph@telus.net

FREE: Leon @ Emily Carr University on Granville Island has 200-400 arch bricks #1, 2, 3's for pick up. Bring your truck as there are lots and heavy. You will be on your own for loading them. Incl. some curved fire bricks that would work great for fireplace. Leon, 604.844.3821.

FOR SALE: kiln, Estrin 8 cu. ft, PerfectFire Controller, stainless jacket, much furniture, \$900; Shimo RK2 \$300; Giffin Grip \$50; 2 bags OLD Gerstley; 53 glaze materials; stains and underglazes; bats, boards, more. West Van. Carolyn: 604.926.1003; dipa@telus.net

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.

Advertising Rates*:

All ads are payable upon receipt of invoice

- Full page, \$189+ HST
- 2/3 page, \$129 + HST
- 1/2 page, \$99 + HST
- 1/3 page, \$69 + HST (horizontal, vertical, or column)
- 1/4 page, \$55 + HST
- 1/6 page, \$39 + HST

Please submit ads as PDF, TIF, JPG or EPS files. For ad sizes see: <http://www.bcpotters.com/Guild/newsletter.php>. 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 \$22 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>

PGBC Treasurer Needed

In January, Patrick Geach resigned from the Potters Guild of BC board because the meetings conflicted with other activities. We need someone for the board who can interpret our monthly financial statements and provide sound business advice to the board.

Daily accounting transactions and preparations of monthly financial statements are handled by our bookkeeper. If you feel you can help us, please contact Denise Jeffrey at terranme@telus.net or Jinny Whitehead at vwhitehead@shaw.ca. 📧

Potters Guild of BC Board

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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: www.bcpotters.com/Guild/membership.php

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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