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Cover: Nathan Murray
Spotlight: Wesley Harvey
Tech: Opacity: Color and Cost

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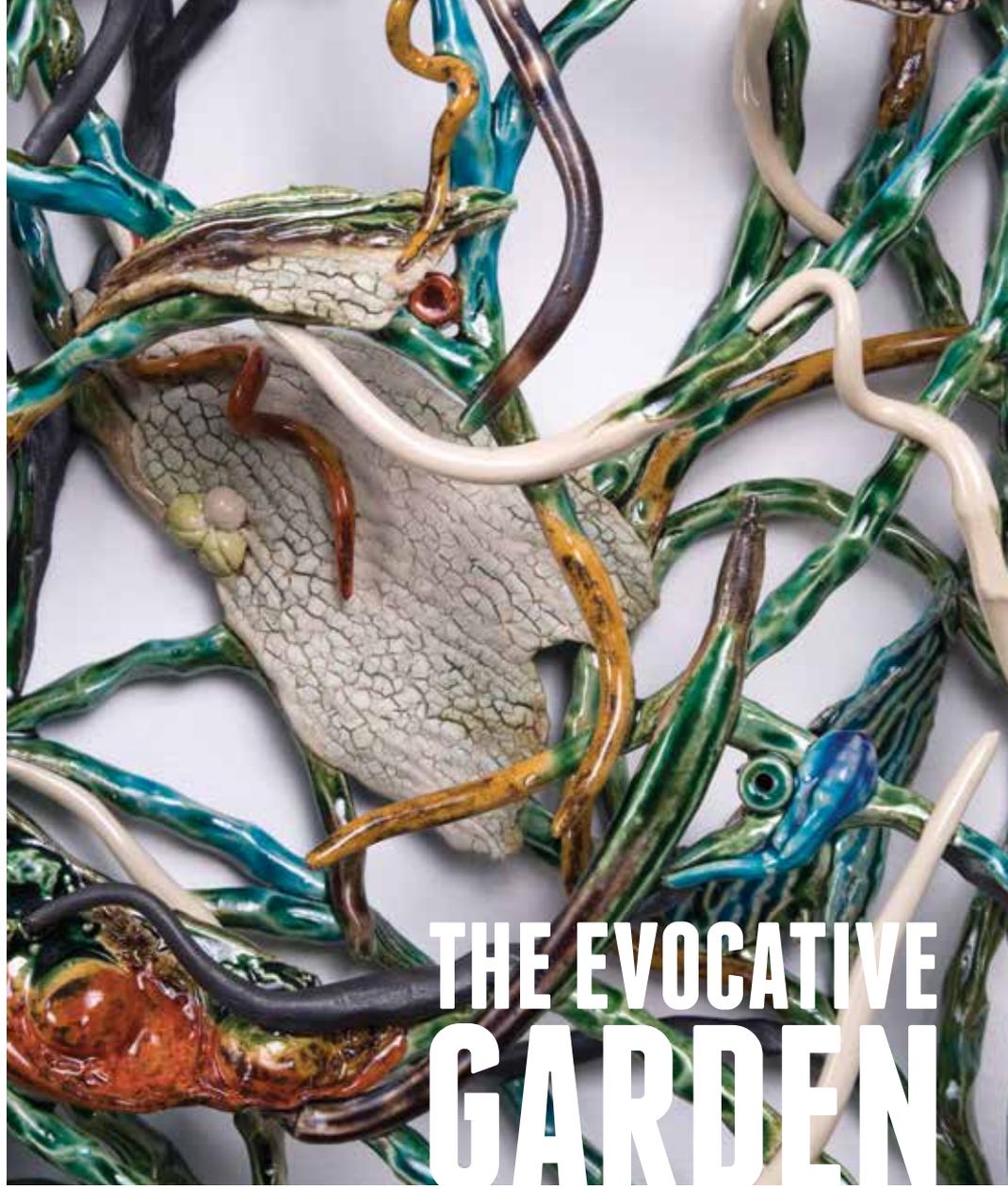
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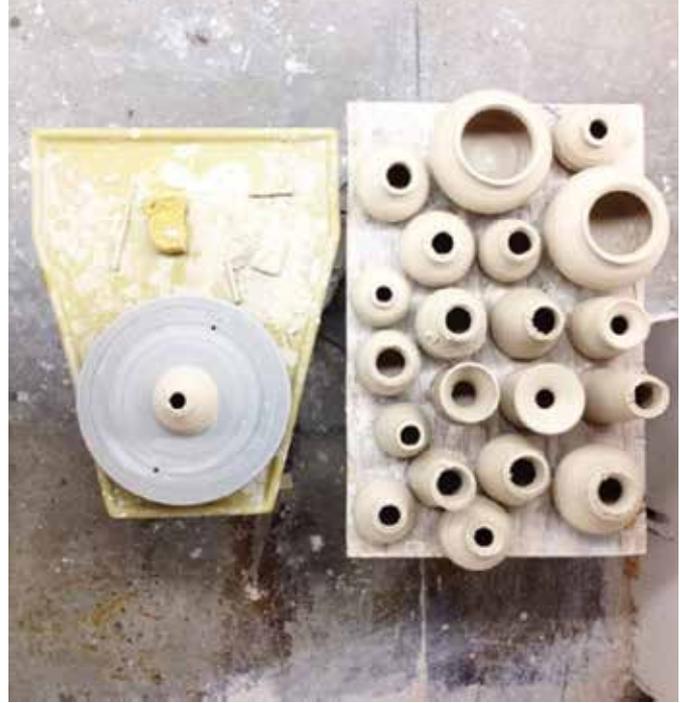
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cover: Nathan Murray's *The Threat*, 15 in. (38 cm) in height, earthenware, underglaze, acrylic wash, 2016.

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A professor's focus on giving and sharing extended to the wood kiln he built. It's large enough that he can't fire it alone, and it can be converted into a 22-seat sauna.

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Janet Hero Dodge and Julie Dickinson are the two women behind Pioneer Pottery. They've been producing functional work in a studio that was once a horse stable in rural Montana for over 40 years.

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Dylan Beck merges the use of technological tools and concepts with traditional ceramics processes to express ideas about our culture and the everyday built landscape.

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50 Mahima Singh: Adventure, Innovation, and Adaptation

by Sarah Kaye

An artist who developed her love for clay while living in Seattle, Washington, shares her experience setting up a studio and building a career as a potter in Bangalore, India.

53 Narrowing the Variables, Expanding the Parameters *by Ben Krupka*

How do we know when to allow ourselves more flexibility to change a body of work? How much do peer feedback, gallery representation, and sales impede on our creative growth? Ben Krupka addresses these questions and then asks Meredith Brickell, Tyler Lotz, and Chris Staley to do the same.

57 Earthenware with Intricate Surface Patterning *by Kaname Takada*

Double-walled earthenware bowls are the perfect form for Kaname Takada to unite his intricate surface patterns with three-dimensional form.

62 Smooth and Exacting Surface Decoration

by Sumiko Takada with Kaname Takada

Sumiko Takada's slip-inlay work, influenced by traditional Japanese geometric and floral motifs, developed out of a desire for a crisp-lined pattern that is flush with the surface of her wheel-thrown pots.



from the editor

respond to jknapp@ceramics.org

In the current climate, inclusivity and working to break down or remove obstacles to participation, expression, and open dialog are more important than ever. Art helps people slow down, feel and express emotions, and connect with one another. That goes for the makers as much as the viewers.

Ceramic artists are known for being generous and welcoming. It's time we put that generosity and encouragement into overdrive. With the divisiveness we're experiencing, people need art in their lives as a way to help them understand one another, empathize, acknowledge differences, and find commonalities and mutual respect. I truly believe that as artists, what we do is fundamentally important to society. We speak our truths, share what we value, invite others to share in the experience with us, and add their own perspective. Art is empowering.

This welcoming has to be proactive, and extended both to groups that have not traditionally had the chance to work with clay and to individuals who are artists already, but feel isolated because they don't yet see

people in the field with whom they identify. Expanded diversity feeds creativity, advances independent and collective work, and is one of the keys to the sustained creative health and vitality of our field.

When the editorial staff discussed what our role could be in expanding inclusivity, in terms of who we cover in the magazine, we felt that it was important to keep the following in mind: gender identity, sexual orientation, differences in mental and physical abilities, age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status/background, and cultural and professional background. Keeping a broad range of experiences and individuals in mind foregrounds the fact that our personal lenses can blind us to unintentional exclusion and to under representation if we are not diligent.

In this issue, we present a wide range of perspectives that we hope will introduce you to new work, while also creating dialog in the field. How do our personal experiences influence what we make and what we draw on for inspiration? How do our specific life circumstances affect how and when we make

work? What are the challenges to building a life that includes being an artist? How do we overcome these challenges, and would those solutions work for others?

I encourage you to get in touch with any of the editors if you come across stories that will help to maintain inclusive coverage of the field in future issues of the magazine. We strongly believe that input from many points of view is invaluable. Share your thoughts with us via social media or email.

If you're attending the NCECA conference in Portland, Oregon, please stop by the booth to share ideas for stories we could cover that promote an increased diversity in the field, your responses to the articles included in this issue, and about your own individual experiences.



Jessica Knapp, Editor



1



2

1 Wheel-thrown stoneware plate with inlay by Sumiko Takada. 2 Masu-Series Cube by Kaname Takada. I had the opportunity to meet the Takadas recently at the Columbus College of Art and Design's winter art fair. I had seen their work earlier, and had ask them to write for us, and in the process, realized we lived in the same city. I don't often get to meet face to face with the artists we feature in the magazine. It was a great opportunity to see their work first hand, watch customers engage with them and their work, talk shop, and learn a little more about them as individuals. Learn more about their work on pages 57 and 62.

It's NCECA Time in Portland!

Bailey will have all sorts of demonstrations, including Cory Brown throwing his incredible colored clay forms on the Bailey Wheel.



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Expanded Content

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Extra images: Exposure exhibitions, sculpture by Dylan Beck and Nathan Murray, and functional work by Sumiko Takada.

Related video: "Saccadic Domestic Conglomerations," which shows the digital pattern overlaid onto Dylan Beck's wall sculpture.

Archive articles: "Pioneer Pottery" from the June/July/August 1998 issue, looks at the work of Janet Hero Dodge and Julie Dickinson. "Press Molded Sculpture" from the February 1988 issue shows Bill Kremer's process for building large-scale, slab-built sculpture.

Social Inspiration



Share stories about the unsung heroes who have made a positive impact on your life as a ceramic artist using the hashtags #powerofferring and #studiohero on Facebook and Instagram.



Know of any artists, studios, or organizations that are working on encouraging artists from diverse backgrounds to work with clay? Share their stories using the hashtag #diversityinclay.

Keep up with what we're seeing at the NCECA conference in Portland, Oregon on our Facebook and Instagram feeds.



On Pinterest, you'll find additional work by artists featured in this issue. CM staff members have added a few of their favorite books to the "Books Worth Reading" board, so you can see what we're reading these days.

Corrections

For clarification, in the February issue's "NCECA Emerging Artist Exhibition" review, Tom Jaszczak's work is described as being soda-fired earthenware and also having the neutral hues of wood-fired ceramics. While it visually relates to wood firing, it is indeed soda-fired earthenware.

In that same issue, we inadvertently misspelled Lacoste Gallery's name on the table of contents page. Our apologies for the error!



Tom Jaszczak's red earthenware casserole, soda-fired to cone 3.



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SW-155 Winterwood

SW-162 Pink Matte

SW-156 Galaxy

SW-004 Zinc Free Clear



exposure

for complete calendar listings
see www.ceramicsmonthly.org



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4

1 Georgina Warne's *Hares on the Mountains*, 22 in. (56 cm) in length, stoneware. "Georgina Warne: Spring," at BADA 2017 (www.jonathancooper.co.uk) in London, England, March 15–21. 2 Phil Rogers' bottle, 13 in. (33 cm) in height, Hakeme, iron pigment, fired in reduction to cone 8. 3 Phil Rogers' plate, 11 in. (28 cm) in diameter, stoneware, nuka glaze, 2014. "Phil Rogers Ceramics," at Goldmark Gallery (www.goldmarkart.com) in Uppingham, Rutland, United Kingdom, March 25–April 23. 4 Annabeth Rosen's *Boogaloo*, 14 in. (36 cm) in width, ceramics, 2015. "Annabeth Rosen," at P-P-O-W Gallery (www.ppowgallery.com) in New York, New York, through March 25.



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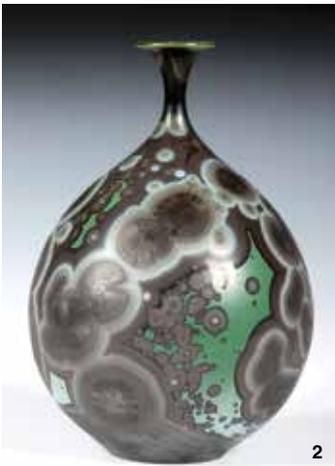
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5 Joe Davis' teapot, 10 in. (25 cm) in height, porcelain, fired to cone 10, flocking, found object, 2016. 6 Matt Long's coffee mug, 5 in. (13 cm) in height, porcelain, soda fired to cone 11, 2016. Photo: Andrew McIntyre. 7 Jeff Brown's oval vase, 12 in. (30 cm) in height, stoneware, shino, glaze, wood fired to cone 10, 2016. 8 Lorna Meaden's growler, 10 in. (25 cm) in height, porcelain soda fired to cone 10, 2016. "Progression: 25 Years of Functional Form," at Butters Gallery (www.buttersgallery.com) in Portland, Oregon, March 2–25. 9 Yukiya Izumita's *Sekisoh* teabowl, 4¾ in. (12 cm) in diameter, ceramic, 2016. "Surface Folds: Yukiya Izumita Clay Wares," at Ippodo New York (www.ippodogallery.com) in New York, New York, March 9–April 7.

exposure



1 Jongjin Park's *Artistic Stratum_G4/1*, 7 in. (18 cm) in length, porcelain, cobalt, 700 sheets of tissue paper, 2015. 2 Matthew Horne's vase, 8 in. (20 cm) in height, acid-etched crystalline glaze. 3 James Oughtibridge's sculpture, slab-constructed ivory stoneware. 4 Charlotte Mary Pack's *Indian Pangolin*, slip-cast, stained porcelain. "Ceramic Art London 2017," at Central Saint Martins (www.ceramicartlondon.com) in London, England, March 31–April 2. 5 Ogata Kamio's *Abyss*, marbled stoneware, 2014. 6 Tokuda Yasokichi IV's jar, porcelain, saiyu glaze, 2012. "Into the Fold: Contemporary Japanese Ceramics from the Horvitz Collection," at Crocker Art Museum (www.crockerartmuseum.org) in Sacramento, California, through May 7.



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exposure



1 Rick Epstein's *A Walk in the Woods*, 4 ft. (1.2 m) in length, six hand-sculpted tiles, ceramic, slip, fired to cone 06, acrylic, 2015. Photo: John Polak. 2 Tim Scull's *Blossom Blitz*, 4 ft. (1.2 m) in height, wheel-thrown white stoneware, overlaid copper wire, copper mesh, rock salt, bisque fired to cone 012, saggar fired to cone 08, 2013. Photo: Hunter Neal. "Paradise City Arts Festival," at Royal Plaza Trade Center (www.paradisecityarts.com) in Marlborough, Massachusetts, March 24–26. 3 Rudolf Christ's *Spirit Bottle*, earthenware, ca.1829. 4 Alexander Matisse's *Large Urchin*, stoneware, 2014. Collection of The Mint Museum. "David Stuempfle Selects: North Carolina Pottery in a Global Context," at Mint Museum (www.mintmuseum.org) in Charlotte, North Carolina, ongoing. 5 Amy Simons' *Traverse*, 18 in. (46 cm) in height, manganese clay, porcelain, glaze, gold luster, 2016. Photo: Brendan Smith. "This is Not My Beautiful Home," at Pottery Northwest (<http://potterynorthwest.org>) in Seattle, Washington, March 3–31.



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1 Justin Rothshank's *Swamp Plate*, 10½ in. (27 cm) in diameter, wood-fired stoneware, decals, 2016. "Surface Stories," at TRAX Gallery (<https://traxgallery.com>) in Berkeley, California, March 16–April 16.

2 Monika Debus' untitled, 8½ in. (22 cm) in height, handbuilt stoneware, porcelain slips, low-fired in a salt kiln to 2084°F (1140°C), 2016.

3 Martin Goerg's untitled, 13 in. (34 cm) in height. 4 Andreas Hinder's *Squirrels*, to 16½ in. (42 cm) in height, 2016. Photo: Articus. "6 Potters from Höhr-Grenzhausen," at Loes & Reinier International Ceramics (www.loes-reinier.com) in Deventer, the Netherlands, through April 2.

5 Austin Riddle's bowls, to 6 in. (15 cm) in diameter, wheel-thrown porcelain, soda fired to cone 11, 2016.

6 Richard W. James' *We Three Kings*, 26 in. (66 cm) in length, handbuilt earthenware, underglaze, fired to cone 04 multiple times, wood, 2016. 5, 6 Photos: Robert Bates. "Artist in Residence Exhibition," at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts (www.arrowmont.org) in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, March 11–May 6.



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**CERAMIC
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How will our responses to the opportunities and challenges of today influence the direction of the field? This question will be explored through programming for NCECA's 51st annual conference, "Future Flux."

The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference will be held at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon, March 22–25. The overarching theme that connects presenters, other programming, and NCECA-organized exhibitions is "Future Flux."

The programming examines where our field is going. There's continued interest in multimedia work, combining digital and analog techniques, expanding the diversity of the field, social engagement, improving the sustainability of artists' practices (and the conference itself), as well as how we respond to and initiate change.

Along with Steve Hilton and Brett Binford, the Portland conference on-site liaisons include Dylan Beck (see page 42).

Programming

This year's keynote, "Where are we now? How did we get here? Where are we going? And where does clay fit in?" will be given by Jerry Saltz. The closing lecture will be given by Jim Melchert.

The four demonstrating artists are: Kim Dickey, who will handbuild sculptural forms; Malcolm Mobutu Smith, who will use wheel-throwing and handbuilding techniques to create abstracted vessel forms with surfaces referencing graffiti; Brendan Tang, who will share a variety of processes used in his *Manga Ormolu* series (see page 38); and Shoko Teruyama, who will combine handbuilding with sgraffito techniques to create utilitarian pots with narrative and intricate patterned surfaces.

Galleries that will have work for sale in the Gallery Expo area in the convention center include 18 Hands Gallery, Baltimore Clayworks, Eutectic Gallery, Gandee Gallery, Lillstreet Art Center, Northern Clay Center, Objective Clay, Red Lodge Clay Center, and the Artstream Nomadic gallery.

Exhibitions

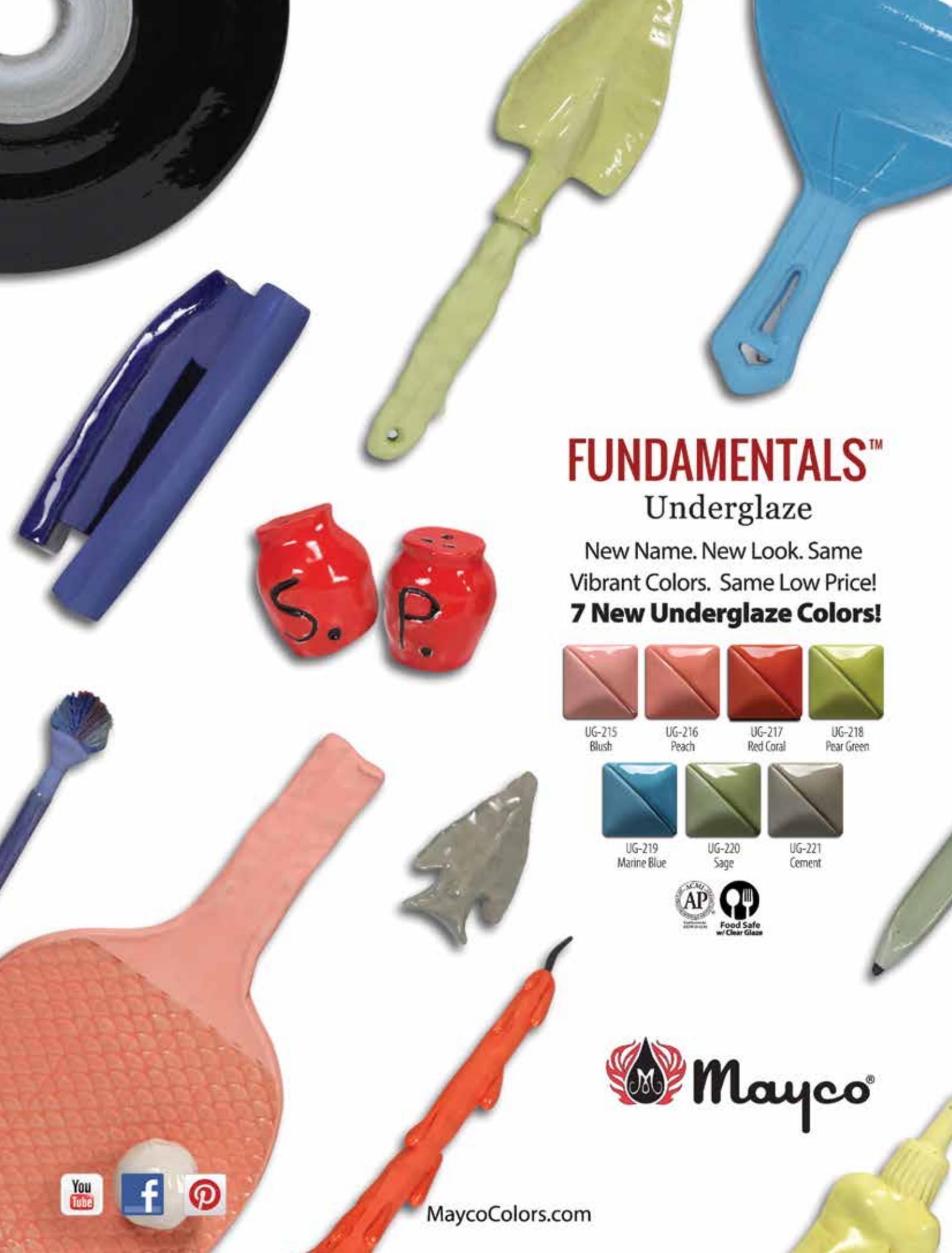
NCECA organized exhibitions include "The Evocative Garden" at Disjecta Contemporary Art Center (www.disjecta.org) and the "National Student Juried Exhibition" (NSJE) at Oregon College of Art and Craft (www.ocac.edu).

There are over 60 concurrent exhibitions organized in conjunction with the conference at venues around the Portland, Oregon area featuring work by hundreds of artists. Exhibitions of note are at venues including Adams and Ollman, Ash Street Project, Butters Gallery, C3 Initiative, Eutectic Gallery, Exchange Ballroom, Gallery 114, Lane Community College, Lewis and Clark College, MFA Applied Craft and Design, Pacific Northwest College of Art, and Skutt Ceramics.

Attending the conference? Please visit us at booth 700, share your thoughts on the magazine, pick up your free CM poster, a copy of the Conference Companion (also free online), and check out the Potters Council exhibition.



1 Stuart Gair. 2 Elliott Kayser. 3 Sarah Heitmeyer. 4 Amy LeFever. 5 Caelin McDaniel. 6 Tiffany Tang. 7 Kelsey Duncan. 8 Ashley Bevington. 9 Christina Erives. 10 Brooks Oliver. 11 Judd Schiffman. 12 Kate Roberts. 13 Jessica Brandl. 14 Rachel Eng. 1–8 Work from the NCECA NSJE at Oregon College of Art and Craft. 9–14 NCECA's Emerging Artists, who will give presentations on Saturday, March 25.



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power of offering

by Dick Lehman

A professor reflects on the overwhelming importance of focusing on both what one can give and the honor of humility.



1 Bill Kremer outside the front of the anagama in Cassopolis, Michigan.

In a small midwestern town there's a university. It's located somewhere within a roughly-300-mile radius of Chicago. Back in 1997, this university decided to support the idea of its then long-time clay professor to build a large anagama. When completed it was, if not the largest wood-fired kiln in America, then certainly one of the largest. And while you've almost certainly heard of the university, it's likely that you've never heard about this kiln.

Just how large is this kiln? "Well, when we get the baffle walls built, and all the benches in place and the kiln full of people, it doubles as a sauna . . . a 22-seater," says the professor, someone whose name you likely won't recognize.

The size of the kiln was critical from the very start of the planning: "I needed something large enough to be able to handle my large sculptures and large pots," the professor muses. "I wanted it to be large enough that I'd never, ever be tempted to try to fire it by myself. I wanted it to be substantial enough that I could attract enough other clay artists to help me fire it for the 100+ hours that it takes to finish the firing. And if I had help from others, the kiln needed to be big enough that they, also, would be able to get lots of their works in the firing: it had to be large enough for them as well. It's size would require a community of people."

This professor's work is truly monumental, and constructed in a manner that would make him a candidate for national and international teaching workshops. But no. And you've likely not

seen his work anywhere in the wide array of international ceramics publications, not, that is, unless you were paying really close attention over the last 30 years.

This kiln was built, wisely, off-campus. It requires an enormous amount of fuel for each firing, and a huge amount of messy space for wood-processing. The fuel appears, almost magically (delivered by the university's maintenance staff), at the kiln site every year, and it is always just enough for the once-yearly firing: trees that have died, have needed to be trimmed, or have been removed altogether for a university building project. Fuel that grew on those relatively few university acres over the last century or more; trees that absorbed the soluble salts and minerals from this very specific tract of land; land that was formed and re-formed by repeated glacial incursions and retreats; glaciation that produced soil with salts and minerals that each tree, according to its specific biological requirements, held and shielded in its bark and cambium layers; salts and minerals that will eventually go flying through this large anagama in order to land on molten-hot pots and stir up a little chemistry experiment; the peculiar mixture of sodium, potassium, and calcium from the cambium layers of the tree, combining with the silica in the clay to produce sodium/potassium/calcium-silicate glass: natural-ash glazing, as indigenous as it can get.

Each year this seemingly random assortment of wood (this year we had some lovely black walnut mixed in with the other mostly-hardwoods) creates a peculiar aesthetic, one that, remarkably, is repeatable, and recognizable, albeit still random. Each firing corroborates the improbability: there is a recognizable aesthetic coming from this kiln; one that is tied to land, trees, climate, weather, rain, and to the hands of those who ultimately process, stoke, and fire it. Those who know of this place can recognize this look, this aesthetic.

If the fuel creates a random yet repeatable aesthetic, perhaps it is an appropriate metaphor for those who staff the kiln. Most of the firing-participants come from a tight geographical area. These participants (undergraduates, graduates, research assistants, local professionals, local teachers and their students, neighbors, and friends), however randomly assembled, seem to learn almost every year how to fire the kiln, and to bring out the refined and particular aesthetic of which the kiln is capable. And there is almost always exactly the right amount of work to fill the kiln: rarely too much, never too little.

On any given day in the US you can peruse social media and see photos of quite a number of wood kilns being built and fired. Likely you can list a few, if you think about it for a moment. But even though this kiln has fired works from some of the greats (Voulkos' stacks, platters, and teabowls; Reitz' monumental thrown sculptures; Soldner's bowls and sculptures), this kiln likely won't have been on your list.

One might think, that with the kinds of connections necessary to fire for/with the greats that the person who conducts this orchestra-

(continued on page 26)

Earline Green's clay spirit quilts on display in the Dunbar Lancaster-Kiest Branch Library in Dallas, Texas.



A Texas potter makes 1,300 pound quilts with her Paragon Dragon

As a child, Earline Green made hand-stitched quilts with her grandmother Mama Freddie. Earline spent more time quilting with the older ladies than she did playing with children her own age. Her early experiences with the lively quilters taught her a life-long love of artwork.

Earline's other grandmother, Mama Ginger, taught her advanced quilting patterns. Later this influenced the design of Earline's stoneware quilt tile mosaics displayed in the entrance of the Paul Laurence Dunbar Lancaster-Kiest Library in Dallas, Texas. For that project, Earline fired 284 white stoneware tiles—all in her faithful Paragon Dragon.

"The Dragon's design and controls are perfect for firing large flat pieces," said Earline. "The digital programming controls provide a consistent firing environment that eliminated cracks and warpage in this project.

"During tile production, I fired my Dragon two or three times a week for four to six weeks at a time. I expected and received excellent results with each firing."

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Earline Green with her Paragon Dragon front-loading kiln. This kiln is becoming a favorite with potters. It is easy to load, heavily insulated, and designed to reach cone 10 with power to spare.



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CLAY CULTURE



2

of-fire might be well-known. That he would have ridden his hot little pony to the top of the wood-fired hill and joined the rest of the wood-fired “cream-of-the-crust-a-nista.”

Not so much. I recently asked him how it is, or why it is, that he did not give more energy to promoting himself and his work, over the years. He answered by referencing a Towns Van Zandt album from 1985, using phrases like “illusive anonymity,” “live and obscure,” and the “honor of humility.” “I’m the invisible wood firer. I’ve been busy pursuing that illusive anonymity,” the professor said.

Then: “Well, you know, don’t you, that the most important thing is the power of the offering. That’s what this is about! The power of the offering. It’s not so much about the works, themselves. It’s about what happens here when what I’m offering gets received.

“I keep thinking that if I offer the kiln, if I give it up, that finally we will, sometime, break through the membrane to something greater, something bigger, something more important. A pause: “And really, I guess, that is what we have already done, just look around at this group of people working on this firing.”

The look in his eyes when he said “break through the membrane;” the far-away look; the tone of his voice; the cock of his head—all of this could be understood as referring to something deeply mystical. But I think that it is less mystical, and more deeply personal.

And while I’m not sure that I can represent completely what it means to him when he says it, I think that “breaking through the membrane” refers to inclusion through empowering, embodying, and enabling. These are the things to which he wants to break through. These are the most important things. More important, even, than self-promotion and international recognition. The power of persistent offering is akin to the power of living a tithed life—consistently offering a portion to others.

He is turning 70 on his next birthday. We all wonder, privately, what will happen to this kiln, to these important things as he ages. As if to answer the unasked, he sang a little made-up song as he worked



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2 A panoramic view of the anagama kiln.
1, 2 Photos: Dick Lehman. 3 Bill Kremer’s wood-fired sculpture, 5 ft. (1.5 m) in height, stoneware clay, wood and salt fired to cone 11, 2014. 5 Bill Kremer’s wood-fired sculpture, 4 ft. (1 m) in height, stoneware clay, wood and salt fired to cone 11, 2015.

his shifts on the last firing. The lyrics: “You’re not needed now.” As I listened, I wondered to whom it was that he was singing those lyrics.

Bill Kremer has taught ceramics at the University of Notre Dame since August of 1973; more than 42 years: a life’s work.

the author Dick Lehman, a participant in numerous firings of the Notre Dame anagama, lives and works in Goshen, Indiana, and is a regular contributor to *Ceramics Monthly* magazine.

Subscribers can view an article from the February 1988 issue on Bill Kremer’s work at ceramicartsdaily.org/ceramics-monthly/subscriber-extras.



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STUDIO VISIT

Pioneer Pottery

Janet Hero Dodge and Julie Dickinson, Roscoe, Montana



Just the Facts

Clay

our own mix of stoneware using Cedar Heights Redart, ball clay, fine grog, and fire clays

Primary forming method

wheel throwing and some handbuilding

Primary firing temperature

cone 9 electric

Favorite surface treatment

carving textures and patterns enhanced by oxide stains under matte glazes, some figurative decorations with terra sigillata and oxides

Favorite tools

ribs for shaping, paring knife or X-Acto knife for lines or cutouts, wire loop tools

Wishlist

a set up for photographing work

Studio

Pioneer Pottery is situated on the banks of the East Rosebud River in the foothills of the majestic Beartooth mountains, near the tiny community of Roscoe in south central Montana. Our 15×25-foot workshop area was a horse stable with attached buggy garage for a ranch homestead in this valley. We remodeled and insulated the stable area for a work space. The buggy garage on the south end was restructured as a gallery space. A 10×18-foot kiln room addition was built onto the north end.

The main work space is quite small for two people but is efficiently laid out. On the south end are two kick wheels that are modified designs from those at Marguerite Wildenhain's Pond Farm Pottery in California. They are sit-down wheels with a central fly wheel with foot rests on either side. Our modifications include key-locks for wooden bats. Small pots are simply cut from the wheel head and placed on the two planks sitting in front of the wheel. Wide pots are left on the bats and also moved to the planks. When the two planks are filled with pots, they are carried across the room to racks. We have found that carrying ware on four-foot planks is the most efficient way to move our pots through all stages of the work flow. Key-locked bats of two different heights can be used for decorating. We also have one electric wheel for throwing the largest pieces. A door between the racks and wheels leads to the gallery.



The north half of the room is lined with large plastic buckets of our main glazes that are stored on benches along the east wall. Lesser used accent glazes are stored on shelves beneath. We set the planks of bisque-fired pots on a large table in the middle of the room, within easy reach of the glazes. The table doubles as a packing area with bags, paper, and other materials stored underneath. At the end of the table is a narrow cabinet with drawers containing shipping labels, tape, and other smaller supplies for packing. The cabinet top holds our sales-record book, calculator, pens, and extra brochures to be included with each purchase.

A huge antique Hobart dough mixer is used to wet-mix our clay body. Mixed clay is bagged and stored next to the mixer along the west wall. Also on that wall is a drawing table with a light box and more storage underneath.

On the north end of the room, a stairway leads to the hay loft area where glazes are dry mixed. The space under the stairs is utilized for storage of small items and includes an old rocking chair and a small library of reference books and magazines. The door to the kiln

room is at the foot of the stairs. Additional space in the adjoining barn is used for dry mixing clay and storage. We draw our water from the river and heat only the main workspace to conserve energy.

Our shop is open to the public May 1 through November 30, Wednesday through Saturday from 10–5. Our winter hours are flexible, with public access by appointment. Winter months are when we work on personal projects, special orders, and build up inventory for the gallery.

Paying Dues (and Bills)

Janet: I have a BA degree from Carleton College (Northfield, Minnesota) in Art History with a studio art minor, and a MA degree from Minnesota State University, Mankato in studio art/ceramics. I spent one summer working on tea ceremony vessels in Kyoto, Japan, while writing a paper on Japanese aesthetics for Carleton. I spent five summers at Marguerite Wildenhain's Pond Farm Pottery in California. Her wheel-throwing techniques became the foundation of my craft. In addition, I attended various workshops run by



Rudy Autio, Julia Galloway, Warren MacKenzie, Peter Voulkos, and others. While I think it is helpful to see how other people work, there is no substitute for the discipline of work itself.

Julie: I have a BA from Carleton College in Studio Art, and an MAT in art education from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. I studied for four summers at Pond Farm Pottery: three summers wheel throwing and one handbuilding. Wildenhain, a student of the German Bauhaus, taught in the rigorous apprenticeship tradition she experienced there. I taught art for a total of eight years at the elementary, junior/senior high school, and college levels.

Inspiration and Getting Recharged

Janet: We live and work in the right place for me. The natural world inspires me, especially plants, animals, and the forms of the landscape. I like to do nature photography. It sharpens my ability to see shapes, patterns, textures, and the relationship between positive and negative spaces. These become the basis of my decorating. My glazes are influenced by the subtlety of Japanese aesthetics while my forms are more influenced by Greek and Minoan pottery and by Wildenhain's work.

Julie: I am fascinated by patterns I observe in the natural environment: linear, geometric, tonal, and textural. Seed pods, grasses, feathers, flowing water, trees, and leaves all inspire me. I feel a resonance with Celtic interwoven linear images and the abstracted yet characteristic images and designs in Native American art. I get invigorated by doing physical work (weed control!) on the grassland acres. Gathering and cutting the wood I use to heat my home is meditative for me. I love the solitude and quiet here and I have the best neighbors: plants, birds, and animals.

Marketing

Marketing was definitely tough in the beginning. Our rural location (we're 15 miles from the nearest small town) was a challenge to overcome. We began by wholesaling around the state to stores and galleries. We gradually built a retail business while compiling a mailing list. Every August we had an indoor/outdoor open house and attendance grew annually. We increased visibility through art auctions, craft fairs, state fairs, and shows: invitational, juried, and individual. A picture of Julie's hands throwing a pot was used on the cover of a children's book, *Spin*. We welcomed people writing articles about us in local,



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1, 4 Julie Dickinson. 2, 3, 5 Janet Hero Dodge.

state, and national publications, including an ad for Paragon kilns. These provided the best advertising possible and were free!

Our first years in this isolated location made financial survival difficult. However, this setting is now a major advantage. People love to come here for the beauty of our area. Red Lodge (20 miles away) is a tourist town. In the summer it is the gateway to the Beartooth highway, which is highly praised as the most beautiful highway in the nation. The highway leads over the top of the Beartooth Mountains into Wyoming to the northeast entrance of Yellowstone National Park. The lovely drive along the base of the mountains from Red Lodge to Roscoe draws visitors, both international and from throughout the US. We have been in this location for 44 years and plan to continue for many more.

www.visitmontana.com/Roscoe; yelp.com/Roscoe/Montana;
<https://app.mt./madeinmontana/Business/Details/8302>;
www.redlodgeclaycenter.com/artists

Subscribers can read Lynn Kidder's article about Pioneer Pottery from the June/July/August 1998 issue of *Ceramics Monthly* at <http://ceramicartsdaily.org/ceramics-monthly/subscriber-extras>.



5

WHERE *UNDERSTANDING* BEGINS

by Lauren Karle

I began the interview for this article with an apology to Nathan Murray, a man of mixed race, for any racial ignorance on my part. As a white woman, I felt both inadequate and self-conscious about trying to represent him and his work through my lens. By the end of our conversation, however, he had made me feel that I too had valuable insight. He observed that, “It would be challenging for me to speak from a white woman’s perspective. We all need to acknowledge our unique perspectives and strive for a desire for

understanding.” This attitude of inclusiveness accounts for Murray’s ability to make work that confronts social issues in a healthy and productive way.

Murray’s most recent show, “Color Theory,” explored different perspectives of racism and challenged the stereotype of what it means to be black. Drawing on conversations with friends and acquaintances, he portrayed individuals’ reactions to current social movements such as Black Lives Matter. Using clothing, he chal-



lenged viewers to think about their own reactions. For example, *The Threat* was set up at the entrance of the gallery so that the audience could see only the back of the hoodie upon entering. Walking around the sculpture, one discovered the unexpected face of an innocent girl with downcast eyes. Across the room, however, the gaze of a police officer in *The Blue Wall* was fixed with suspicion on the hoodie.

I can't let you in the club with that hat bro, which uses clothing to the opposite effect, was inspired by an experience Murray had with a black friend who idealized what it meant to be a white American. He presented his patriotism and desire to belong through his choice of shirts and the non-threatening fedora hat that he wore. Nevertheless, he was turned away at the door of a club. The idea of clothing as costume is completed in *About the best we can do for ya* in which a teenager wears an elf hat in an attempt to embody something he's not.

As human beings we naturally categorize our world to make sense of it, yet every person is so complex that he or she could define a unique category. Like Murray himself, born to a white mother and a Jamaican father, the woman in *The Crossroads* appears to be questioning where she fits as someone of mixed race. Murray explains that society will never identify him as white, though he is just as much white Nebraskan as black Jamaican. To ignore that would be denying half of his ancestry. The woman in the sculpture has painted her face black, as if to say, "If I'm going to be black I have to look black."

Murray's most recent work acknowledges all the facets that create a person's identity. He is interested in differences—all differences. "White people have unique histories too," he states. "To categorize people as white, black, or Hispanic is putting them in a box and not getting the full picture." In order to venture beyond skin color, Murray has begun to depict specific people, though he views the sculptures as an entry point to conversation rather than portraits. He does not claim to accurately represent the individuals, because they are filtered through him—his artistic voice represents his perceptions and interactions with people. Ultimately he looks at the works as collaborations and hopes that they present ideas in a personal way.

For the past seven years, Murray has worked at Region V Services, a Nebraska organization that provides support to individuals with developmental disabilities. During this time, he has mentored a man (in the interest of privacy I will call him Scott) who speaks in metaphors and does not censor his thoughts, as many would do in order to be socially correct. With these filters removed, he has taught Murray about how complex, flawed, and beautiful each of us are. Ethnically, he identifies himself as "one-fourth Native American, part Rocky Balboa (Italian), part Hitler's daughter (German), and part *Polack* (derogatory for Polish)." Scott's native background largely overshadows other aspects of his identity even though he acknowledges them. The dominant native imagery in his ceremonial headdress, along with his more modern attire, are used to make people question their preconceived ideas about what it is to be a Native American in contemporary society. Murray



1 Nathan Murray in his studio surrounded by his work. 2 Murray working in his studio. 3 *Brown and Black*, 38 in. (97 cm) in height, earthenware, underglaze, acrylic wash, 2016.

represents Scott's epileptic seizures with a gold luster lightning bolt that extends up through the tips of the feathers in the headdress. In the sculpture, he wears a shirt that says *Rocky* and his face has an expression of deep concentration and inner strength and peace. Murray wants to celebrate Scott in a way that invites people to try to appreciate his unique perspective.

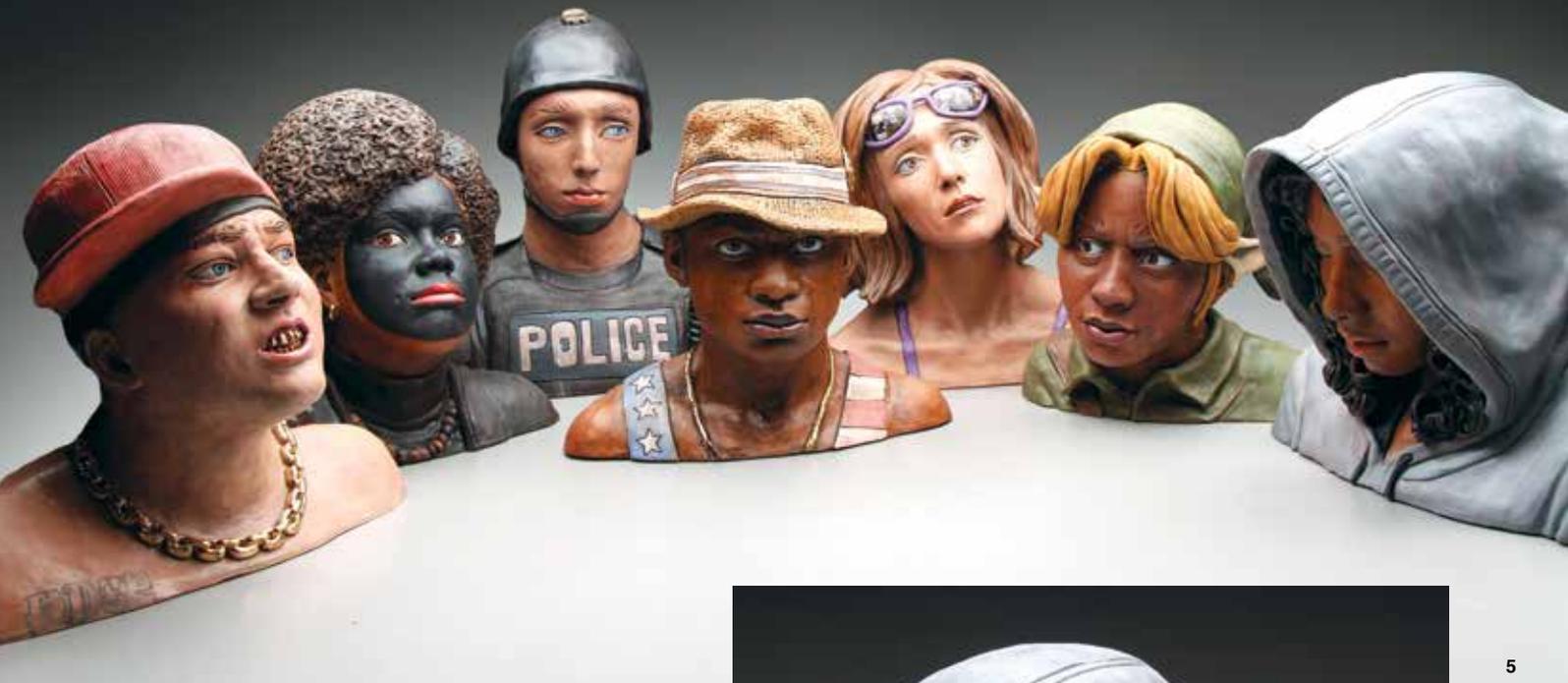
In *Black and Brown* Murray also represents the many facets of the identity of an individual. He uses an individual's likeness in facial structure and body type, layering the inner details of who she is over the exterior form. Her face is painted with classic *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) imagery and her corset is adorned with traditional colorful Mexican floral designs. Oaxaca, Mexico, her birthplace, celebrates the many indigenous cultures that live in the Oaxaca valley. Although I have attended the Guelaguetza, an annual indigenous festival centered on traditional dancing in pre-Hispanic-style costume, I have never seen, nor does the Mexican government recognize, the Black-Mexican minority. This suppressed part of his subject's identity is referenced by Murray through the black and brown African Adinkra symbols that are only visible upon close inspection. The symbols on her sides above the standing relief figures represent harmony, and the symbol on her lower stomach represents freedom and emancipation. The symbol on her forehead represents strength, depicting her personality. Her pose and expression convey a strong sense of pride in her culture

and confidence in her identity while speaking to the struggles of a Black-Mexican woman in Mexico.

Murray uses the human figure to evoke reactions and engage people in a non-confrontational way. Labeling his sculpture as racial or as black art would be to engage in exactly the kind of categorizing that he is working against. Through his work, he asks people to deconstruct categories in order to see things from other perspectives. His work celebrates the positive things that each culture contributes to our world and encourages people to listen, learn, and appreciate rather than employ stereotypes and raise boundaries. Murray's approach to counteracting racism involves engagement and empathy. While he knows that no one is right or wrong, he finds the best place to start is through acknowledging differences. He welcomes questions and conversations, affirming that, "disagreement is ok. If you offend me, I'll tell you, but open dialog is critical. Ultimately we are all family in this together."

One reason stereotypes are so dangerous is that they create expectations. Murray describes how early-childhood experiences affected him. As a second grader, he was blamed for something that he did not do. As the only black student in the classroom he was assumed to be guilty. He was never expected to go to college, let alone earn a graduate degree. Society at large, some of his teachers, and occasionally even family members had low expectations. Part of him turned off in response, and little experiences grew exponen-





4 *Pride*, 24 in. (61 cm) in height, earthenware, underglaze, gold luster, acrylic wash, 2016. 5 Figures/busts from the “Color Theory” exhibition. From left to right: *He’s cool but he doesn’t really act black*; *The Crossroads*; *The Blue Wall*; *I can’t let you in the club with that hat bro*; *How do I fit into this?*; *About the best we can do for ya*; *The Threat*. All pieces: various dimensions, earthenware, underglaze, gold luster, acrylic wash, oils, 2016. 6 *The Threat*, 15 in. (38 cm) in height, earthenware, underglaze, acrylic wash, 2016.



tially to the point where he could easily have been one of the people who fell through the cracks. Murray describes how seeking understanding is better than imposing beliefs or setting expectations based on stereotypes.

Equally dangerous is living with color blindness—failing to recognize the implications of racial appearance. Murray explains that his mother’s color blindness impacted him as a child. He knew that he looked different, but he didn’t understand how deeply that would affect his life. He didn’t care how society saw him, but with time he learned that society would treat him in certain ways nonetheless. Color blindness is great, but it’s not reality. White privilege allows some people to be color blind—we can be blissfully ignorant because race doesn’t have to mean anything in our lives. To counteract that ignorance, it is important not to approach all people as if they were the same, but rather to treat them as individuals with whom we can seek understanding.

While Murray uses his work as a vehicle for conversation and social commentary, he also lives his mission through teaching. He is currently an instructor at the LUX Center for the Arts in Lincoln, Nebraska. While people take his classes to learn ceramics, he also views his work with them as an opportunity for open dialog. Through everyday interactions as well—at the grocery store or gas station, or with colleagues—Murray tries to live with an open heart. He seeks understanding and treats others with the compassion with which he wants to be treated.

In Murray’s MFA thesis is a quote from American social critic Cornell West that embodies key aspects of Murray’s own thoughts:

“We’ve forgotten that a rich life consists fundamentally of serving others, trying to leave the world a little better than you found it. We need the courage to question the powers that be, the courage to be impatient with evil and patient with people, the courage to fight for social justice. In many instances we will be stepping out on nothing, and just hoping to land on something. But that’s the struggle. To live is to wrestle with despair, yet never allow despair to have the last word.”

Ultimately, it will take all of us fighting the same fight from different angles if we are to maneuver the world toward the equality, appreciation, and understanding that Murray envisions.

the author *Lauren Karle is a studio potter, socially engaged artist, and teacher living in rural New Mexico. To see more, visit www.laurenkarle.com.*

PARADOX

Identity and Belonging

by Heidi McKenzie



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I was in the room when Chicago-based artist Theaster Gates delivered his keynote speech at the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 2014. Among many things, he spoke about his sense of isolation working as a black artist in an otherwise white-dominated creative milieu. He asked people in the audience who self-identified as African American to stand up. When fewer than 40 people in a room of 4000-plus stood up, I was shaken. I recognized that this was a physical expression of a deeply rooted sense of disenfranchisement, on both collective and personal levels. Gates put the discomfort of race on the table. It was a call to action.

I organized a panel of mixed-race ceramic sculpture artists whose work speaks to issues of race and identity titled “Paradox: Identity & Belonging” for NCECA’s 50th anniversary conference in Kansas City, Missouri, last spring. Fellow Canadian, Brendan Tang, as well as Americans Jennifer Datchuk and Nathan Murray joined me on stage. Their words cut deeply into the personal journeys of many in the audience who stayed and shared with us for over an hour after the panel discussion, a conversation that moved onto a gathering of more than 20 at a local eatery. The synergies, revelations, and resonances were powerful, walls came tumbling down, and for a moment in time there was a collective sense of empowerment, a feeling that we’re all in this together, sifting through the paradox of mixed race.

An In Between Space

My father was of South Asian descent and grew up in Trinidad. He came to Canada in 1954 at the age of 24 and met my mother whose family is of Irish/Scottish heritage. I grew up in a small town in the Maritimes in the 1970s and 1980s where almost everyone else, including my mother, was white. My father checked his cultural baggage at the border, and I grew up BRASP (Brown Anglo Saxon Protestant). For decades I have been living and breathing as an artist and cultural consumer in the predominantly Eurocentric circles in which I was raised. I define myself as a Canadian artist of mixed Indo-Trinidadian and Irish-American heritage. Much of my work is abstract self-



1 Brendan L.S. Tang’s *Manga Ormolu ver. 4.0-n*, 24½ in. (62 cm) in height, 2012. 2 Brendan L.S. Tang’s *Manga Ormolu 4.0-p*, 27 in. (69 cm) in height, 2013. 1, 2 Ceramics, mixed media. 3 Jennifer Datchuk’s *Sampler of an American Born Chinese*, 3 ft. 4 in. (1 m) in height, slip-cast Laguna cone 5–6 porcelain shower drains, oxidation fired, collected hair, 2014. 4 Jennifer Datchuk’s *Half*, 10 in. (25 cm) in height, Jingdezhen cone 10 porcelain, blue/white pattern transfer, reduction fired, human hair, 2012. 3, 4 Photos: Mark Menjivar.

portraiture, and employs agateware as symbolic of both racial and cultural diversity. I am developing a functional line of marbled colored porcelains that echo a celebration of pluralism. I strive to challenge viewers to reconsider the intersubjectivity of mixed-race

identity's ambiguity, and to set aside the obvious assumptions of visual identity that is merely skin deep.

Within the context of the panel, the paradox refers to the "in-between" space in which mixed-race people find themselves, neither here nor there. Our faces occupy visual markers in society. On-lookers file faces into categories in unconscious, routine assessment. In that instant they assign identities to people that can usher in a whole set of assumptions. Yet the way someone looks—at face value—isn't necessarily who they may be. "Paradoxical space" was first coined by feminist geologist Gillian Rose nearly a quarter of a century ago. Today, in both Canada and the US, the first wave of self-identified mixed-race adults has come of age and with it, artists seeking to find a foothold. The hope for tomorrow is that this generation's children will navigate ethnically mixed milieus effortlessly, and migrate the discourse to new horizons.

I first stumbled upon Jennifer Datchuk's work at NCECA in Providence, Rhode Island. Her conceptual work centered around her mixed Russian-American/Irish-American, Chinese-American heritage. Her imagery screamed paradox, and as we worked together to prepare for the panel, I began to glimpse how her complicated familial relationships continue to be a perpetual source of inspiration.

Datchuk has always been aware of being the "other." Admittedly, she learned to live with the constant question of, "What are you?" In her words, "It's a question that I love to hate and hate to love . . . how I determine to answer this question depends on my hair, make up, clothes, what I am doing, where I am at or what I am eating. What I do know is that people are rarely satisfied with my answer." Datchuk understands the potential pitfalls of face value: "It's only natural to want to fit into a box. We have been putting

people into their respective boxes for years. It's also very American to be ethnically and culturally fragmented, which makes this decision difficult when you want to be both honest and accurate as to what box you put yourself in." Datchuk embraces the angst she feels around her sense of self as "imposter"—neither fully Chinese nor white—through the medium of porcelain. Porcelain aptly nods to her Chinese heritage, while at the same time underlines the purity of white—a quality she finds herself seeking in both cultures. The duality of porcelain captures both fragility and resilience. She often incorporates human hair, her own coarse, straight hair—that can be dyed, curled, and manipulated into a multiplicity of camouflage.

Nathan Murray identifies as black and white. He sees art as "an act of self-exploration" fashioning life-size and heroic, larger than life-size busts as well as half-scale full figures of individuals whose symbolism reach allegorical proportion. Murray's father is Jamaican and he was raised by his mother who grew up in a farming community near Oakland, Nebraska. Murray tackles a range of issues: from passing—where being as pale as possible was desirable for social status, to what he terms "the post-racial world"—where the impetus is for mixed African-Americans to appear as dark as possible to avoid not being "black enough." As a corollary, the concept of being "color blind" is a recurring theme in Murray's work. By positioning his subjects from varying points of view, he asks his audience to consider issues of systemic racism, perceived moral superiority, white supremacy, and racial stereotyping. His personal experiences invariably inform the points of view he chooses to forefront. As a black man, at face value, Murray stands over six feet. He can't count the number of times he's been asked if he can rap or play pro sports, reinforcing the deeply ingrained notion that black men exist

5 Nathan Murray's *Where do I fit into this?* 20 in. (51 cm) in height, earthenware, underglaze, acrylic wash, 2016. 6 Nathan Murray's *The Crossroads*, earthenware, underglaze, gold luster, acrylic wash, oils, 2016.



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7 Heidi McKenzie's *self reflection*, 3 ft. 6 in. (1 m) in length, thrown and altered black-and-white stoneware, 2012. 8 Heidi McKenzie's three pint glasses, 6½ in. (17 cm) in height (each), slip-cast marbled porcelain, 2016.

to embody some form of entertainment. He's quick to point out that he's never been asked if he can sculpt. Murray rails against Western society's propensity to commodify blackness. He points to history to find his way forward, "The legacy of slavery, Jim Crow Laws, and segregation are a negative part of history in the US that continue to have lingering ramifications today. The realities of racial stratification have provided the impetus for working toward social justice in my art practice . . ." Through clay, Murray is literally carving out his role in facilitating progressive discourse with respect to race and racism.

Brendan Lee Satish Tang was born in Dublin, Ireland to Trinidadian parents of Chinese and Indian descent. His family moved to Burlington, Ontario when he was five. Like me, Tang grew up one of a handful of "others" in a sea of white faces. Also like me, his parents hail from a diaspora several generations removed from the homelands. As an ethnically-mixed Asian Canadian, Tang is intrigued by cultural appropriation and hybridity. His artistic practice embodies the influences, tensions, and contradictions that define the postmodern world and boldly embrace the paradoxical tendencies to be irreverent, frivolous, even playful, yet at the same time critically engaged. His signature works, the *Manga Ormulu* series, pair Chinese Ming dynasty vessels with 18th-century French Rococo, Japanese comic-book characters, and/or contemporary toys. He explains, "It is perhaps due to my sense of belonging in the remix generation that I tend to borrow and reconfigure ideas and influences to create works that I find both visually and intellectually compelling. I liken aspects of my artistic practice to channel surfing, where I absorb, interpret,



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and bank a great deal of visual information to inform my personal aesthetic." Tang's practice is diverse and prolific. He's branching out, collaborating, working with 3D-printed culturally specific tiles that can be tattooed onto the human body—leaving transient impressions that reveal or reflect histories of migration. Tang sums up his vision, "Integrating and sometimes literally mashing together differing cultural traditions and visual signifiers allows me to continue to be a part of the ongoing conversation about what makes us who we are in this global community."

Learn more about the artists: Jennifer Datchuk maintains a ceramic practice and teaches in San Antonio, Texas (jenniferlingdatchuk.com); Nathan Murray sculpts clay and minds at the Lux Centre for the Arts in Lincoln, Nebraska (www.nathanamurray.com); Brendan Tang lives and works in Vancouver, British Columbia, where he continues to explore the interface between culture and material (www.brendantang.com).

Note: All the quotes by the artists are from the *NCECA Journal*/Volume 37, NCECA Kansas City Makers Mentors & Milestones 50th Annual Conference, "Panel: Paradox: Identity and Belonging."

the author Heidi McKenzie is an artist, journalist, and curator living in Toronto, Canada. Learn more at <http://heidimckenzie.ca>.

DYLAN BECK

CHRONICLING

THE ROAD TO NOWHERE BY LIZ HOWE

I see the shapes, / I remember from maps / I see the shoreline / I see the whitecaps / A baseball diamond, nice weather down there / I see the school and the houses where the kids are / Places to park by the factories and buildings / Restaurants and bars for later in the evening / Then we come to the farmlands, and the undeveloped areas / And I have learned how these things work together / I see the parkway that passes through them all / And I have learned how to look at these things / I wouldn't live there if you paid me / I couldn't live like that, no siree! / I couldn't do the things the way those people do / I couldn't live there if you paid me to . . .
—Talking Heads

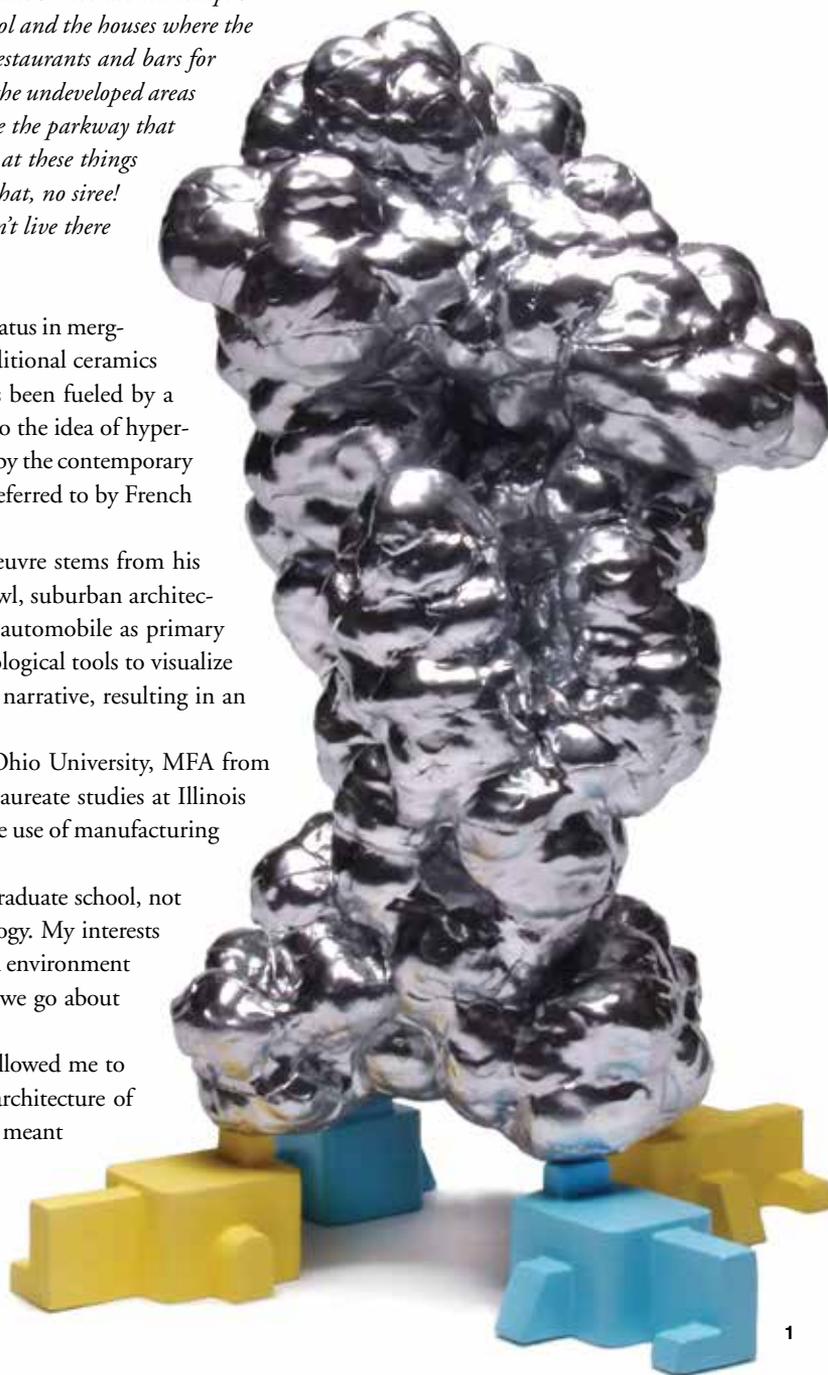
Dylan Beck has ascended this past decade to pace-setter status in merging the use of technological tools and concepts with traditional ceramics processes. His steady rise to recognition in the field has been fueled by a concentrated, culturally relevant focus on issues related to the idea of hyper-modernity. Hyper- or super-modernity is often illustrated by the contemporary building construction trend toward big-box structures, referred to by French anthropologist Marc Augé as examples of non-spaces.

The success and development of Beck's sculptural oeuvre stems from his informed understanding of current trends in urban sprawl, suburban architectural design and the post World War II reliance on the automobile as primary means of transport. A fascination with and use of technological tools to visualize and manufacture his work advances and informs Beck's narrative, resulting in an engaging, evolving series of sculpture and drawing.

Beck has a solid education in ceramics (BFA from Ohio University, MFA from Tyler School of Art, Temple University, and post-baccalaureate studies at Illinois State University) and early on sought inspiration from the use of manufacturing technology. Beck states:

"I started to use technology in my work in undergraduate school, not just tech tools but also the visual language of technology. My interests lie in our attempts to modify the natural landscape and environment to suit our needs. Technology is a major part of how we go about doing that.

The use of technology in my studio practice has allowed me to integrate the aforementioned ideas directly into the architecture of the work. By using technology to create work that is meant to be an interpretation of built spaces or manipulated landscapes and stimulate critical discussion about issues surrounding our current land and resource use, I am using the very same language that is used in the actual built landscape. My practice is a hypermodern way of interpreting the hypermodern landscape."



Talking Heads (1975–1991) lead lyricist David Byrne—a creative lodestar for Beck—is perhaps one of the first contemporary satirists to tackle issues of hypermodernity. Throughout their career the band’s tongue-in-cheek characterizations touched on modern life and anxieties. Talking Heads influenced an entire generation musically, culturally, and philosophically and served as the conceptual sound track for Beck’s creative evolution. Ideologically aligned with the work of this seminal 1980s band, Beck embraced ideas of banal technical progress, glutinous consumer consumption, unsightly urban sprawl and birth of the mobile lifestyle. The pulsating punch of Talking Heads’ staccato dance hooks translate into thrusts of color and biting satire in his work.

Bands like Talking Heads and a propensity for probing cultural phenomena continue to inform Beck’s work and thinking. Acting as detached commentator on the world we inhabit, Beck examines, critiques and draws humor from absurdities and banalities inherent in the current cultural landscape. The artist states:

“My interest in the Talking Heads is nicely illustrated in David Byrne’s movie *True Stories*. It has a quirky irreverence and is subtly insightful, pointing to many of the issues that I am concerned with—poor land use, nondescript and purely functional architecture, and how this type of manipulated landscape affects a culture’s psyche. There is a scene in *True Stories* where David Byrne is standing in the expansive lawn of a corporate research and microprocessor manufacturing facility. Byrne, wearing a cowboy hat says, completely straight faced, “This is the VeriCorp building just outside of Virgil [TX], ...it’s cool, ...it’s a multipurpose shape, ...a box.” I hope that my work embodies the various moments of seriousness, silliness, celebration, and the contemplative monologue and dialog seen in *True Stories*.”

Beck’s early work focused largely on mass construction of the suburban structures (or boxes) within which we live and the resultant destruction of our natural resources. His investigation has been realized in multiple materials and approaches while maintaining a consistently strong conceptual foundation.

Early performance pieces such as *Boomburb* (2005) and *Emulous Blight* (2006) consist of the artist unpacking and placing ceramic modules in a tight, quickly expanding configuration reminiscent of suburban building developments. These performances lasted approximately 30 minutes and entirely filled the gallery space. Cramming every bit of floor space, the artist and attendees were forced up against the walls and ultimately out the gallery doors. Skillful observation and wry humor are evidenced by Beck’s clever titles that creatively circle back to the underlying solemnity of his subject. In *Boomburb* and *Emulous Blight* he strengthens and conceptually situates the work by citing suburban building booms and a competitive desire to destroy.

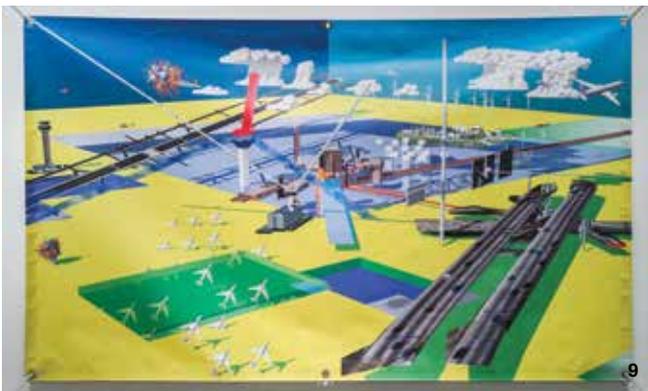
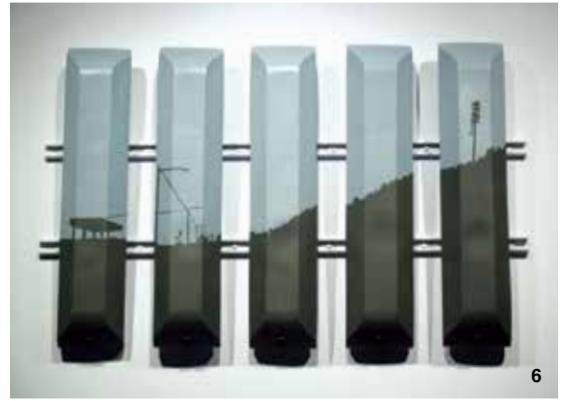
*WAL*ART* (2007), another early piece in Beck’s satirical oeuvre, is a series of slip-cast colored porcelain cogs of muted blue, taupe, green, and mustard arranged in simple, symmetrical, geometric patterns. Derived from casting the negative spaces in Styrofoam packaging and referencing innocuous hotel lobby ‘wall art,’ these neutral cogs are adhered to plywood panels for display on the wall. Beck treats them impersonally and without expressive

gesture, maintaining physical distance from the impressionable materiality of clay, the slip-casting process itself referencing mass-production. The text and subtext refer to the role of WAL*MART in promoting inexpensive, impersonal objects manufactured for mass-consumption.

Wall sculptures *Can You Hear Me Now?* (2008) and *How Many Bars Do You Have?* (2009) expanded Beck’s investigations to include



1 *Concerning the Production of Clouds*, 20 in. (51 cm) in height, ceramic, paint, 2015. **2** *Boomburb*, variable dimensions, colored porcelain, wood, stretch wrap, 2005. **3** *Flyover Country*, installation view, variable dimensions, mixed media, 2013. **4** *Normal Field Instability*, 24 in. (61 cm) in width, porcelain, underglaze, resin, 2011.



5 *Overburden*, 4 1/8 ft. (1.3 m) in width, ceramic, digital print on vinyl, 2015. **6** *How Many Bars Do You Have?*, 5 ft. (1.5 m) in length, porcelain, steel, rubber, paint, 2009. **7** *Accumulation*, 10 ft. (3 m) in width, bisque-fired porcelain, 2013. **8** *Laminate Filigree*, 15 in. (38 cm) in diameter, porcelain, carpet padding, plywood, 2010. **9** *Supermodern Landscape No. 01*, 5 ft. (1.5 m) in width, vinyl, nylon rope, 2013. **10** *Borrow Pit*, 18 in. (46 cm) in width, ceramic, hydrocal, wood, foil tape, paint, graphite, 2015. **11** *Dylan Beck's Oil Still*, 6 ft. (1.8 m) in height, ceramic, unfired glaze, various petroleum products, 2014. *Photos: Mario Gallucci.*

the effects of a growing mobile communications industry upon the natural and built environments. In direct reference to the increasing phenomenon of cell-phone transmission, these works for the wall offer a dynamic overlapping of imagery. Subdued colored, slip-cast porcelain cell-tower antennae decorated with romantic silhouette-style landscapes of street lights, banal architectural structures, electrical wires, and ubiquitous grassy knolls make visible the artist's focus on the physical impact of technological advancements. Beck states:

"I am particularly interested in the historical hierarchies of architecture and how these hierarchies can change depending

upon the needs and desires of a culture. In the past few years, cell-phone signal repeaters have become ubiquitous in the urban landscape, often competing with traditional architectural elements. We benefit from an uninterrupted cell-phone signal and the owner of the structures where the repeaters are perched is compensated monetarily by the cell phone company. What is the intrinsic cost of this practice?"

In recent years Beck's aesthetic investigation has focused largely on our use and extraction of natural resources and the resultant effects of global warming. This conceptual shift is evidenced through expansion of the artist's visual vocabulary. His current

lexicon includes handbuilt cumulonimbus (storm) clouds, multiple small slip-cast jet planes, and dull airport landscapes. Intense, acerbic color saturation infuses this work with visual thrust while Beck continues layering and juxtaposing two- and three-dimensional work.

Supermodern Landscape No. 01 and *Supermodern Landscape No. 02*, which consist of 36×60-inch vinyl wall panels with SketchUp-generated drawings, are pivotal and defining pieces. Each drawing maps out futuristic aerial-perspective airport plans while vigorously employing Beck's piquant palette. The artist cuts, copies, and pastes layers of windmills, planes, landing control towers, and three-lane highways that begin and end nowhere into a landscape of chartreuse green, acid yellow, and cyan. These brightly colored expanses lack any evidence of human touch. The computer-drawing process flattens and simplifies visual space, reducing design to a system of symbolic, color-coded planes and angles. Beck preserves the dominant signature of his software, perfectly distilling his apprehension toward employing computerized manufacture in the design of physical, natural spaces.

The artist's simultaneous fascination and repulsion with these tools and the resulting aesthetic spark a dynamic conversation, one that has masterfully broadened since Beck began more boldly juxtaposing three-dimensional handbuilt and cast forms with two-dimensional computer-generated drawings.

Oil Still (2014) combines handbuilt ceramic forms with vinyl-printed imagery and petroleum products to comment on the still prevalent use of oil in all aspects of contemporary life. The monumental handbuilt ceramic cumulous cloud atop two tall black pillars of thick oily petroleum sits upon and in front of a large vinyl computer-generated landscape background. Beck's simplified two-dimensional skyscape and flattened green landscape animates the conceptual weight and visual drama of the black-and-white sculpture. Impressive verticality and energetic handling of the massive cloud serves to complement Beck's proven technical adroitness at slip casting. The direct handling of clay impressively widens his oeuvre by adding layers of human interaction and touch to a catalog largely built upon mechanical representations.

Beck's landscapes continue to provocatively map the ways in which we, as a culture, determine the use and manipulation of the spaces we inhabit. The strength of his work rests on a continued ability to narrate serious environmental incongruities while remaining the playful provocateur. His sardonic view stems from the critical concerns of blindly and collectively placing our trust in technology to secure our species' future. This subject is void of inherent humor, yet through his masterful amalgamation of words, forms, and images, Beck deftly employs parody and sincerity to navigate the *Road to Nowhere*.

*Well we know where we're goin' / But we don't know where
we've been / And we know what we knowin' / But
we can't say what we've seen / And we're not little
children / And we know what we want / And the
future is certain / Give us time to work it out /
We're on a road to nowhere / Come on inside /
Takin' that ride to nowhere / We'll take that
ride... / We're on a road to nowhere / We're
on a road to nowhere / We're on a road
to nowhere . . .*

—Talking Heads

the author Liz Howe is an artist and instructor living in Bennington, Vermont. To learn more, visit <http://lizhowe.com>.

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Dylan J. Beck

career snapshot

2004 Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, summer staff, Newcastle, ME

2004–05 Studio Assistant to Brad Schwieger, Ohio University Professor of Ceramics, Area Chair

2008–13 Ceramics Area Chair, Assistant Professor of Art, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS

2013–present Department Head of Ceramics, Associate Professor, Oregon College of Art and Craft

Residencies

2007, 2011, 2014 Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, Newcastle, ME

2009 SIGGRAPH conference for computer graphics and technology, Residency and Lecture, New Orleans, LA

2014 Ceramic Surface Symposium, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Gatlinburg, TN

2015 Ash Street Studios, Portland, OR
Caldera, Sisters, OR

Education

2005 BFA, Cum Laude, Ohio University, Athens, OH; 2006 Post Baccalaureate Fellowship, Illinois State University, Normal, IL; 2008 MFA, Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

Service

2015–present National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) 2017 Portland Onsite Liaison, NCECA Board member; 2014–Present ArtAxis Organization Inc, Board President 2014–16; 2012–Present Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts 'Young Advisors' Board of Trustees; 2009–10 Kansas Artisans and Craftsmen Association, 2010 Conference Site Chair and Treasurer

Influential travel

2016 Iceland; 2012 Barcelona, Spain; Hong Kong and Guangzhou, China; 2011 Hawaii; 2010 Western US Road Trip to 8 National Parks

Exhibitions and Publications

12 solo and 80 juried and invitational exhibitions

6 published writings: Ceramic Art and Perception, CFile, NCECA Journal, and Lark Books

2013 lecture, represented NCECA at College Art Association (CAA) conference

2012 Emerging Artist Lecture; 2011 Lecture, "Supermodernity, Emergence, and the Built Environment" NCECA conferences

2010 Kansas Art Education Association conference panel, "Integrating Criticism into All Levels of Art Education"

learn more

www.dylanjbeck.com

www.facebook.com/dylan.wiehebeck

Instagram: @dylanjbeck

Marek Cecula

GLOBAL CLAY PROPHECT

BY MATTHEW KANGAS





Marek Cecula, long a mainstay of the contemporary New York City ceramics scene when he was head of ceramics at Parsons School of Design for 21 years, left New York in 2004 and now lives in his native Kielce, Poland, where he grew up with his family. His Modus Design Studio is in the same building where he lived with his family until 1960 and where his father had an auto-parts store. Cecula took time from his busy schedule as head designer for the legendary heritage porcelain factory, Cmielów (which recently celebrated its 225th anniversary with an exhibition at the National Museum in Kielce) to look back at his career as a teacher, an artist, a curator, a designer, a writer, and a sought-after international ceramics competition juror.

In 1960, fifteen years after World War II, Cecula's father died prematurely after having survived the Holocaust and narrowly avoiding the July 4, 1946 pogrom in Kielce that killed 42 Jewish residents. After his father's death, Cecula lived on a kibbutz in Israel for 12 years. While there, he studied ceramics. Next, he moved to Brazil and, later, to New York City. While in South America, he created *Earthwork Art Project 79* (1979). He removed an enormous geometric chunk of earth from a clay quarry in Curitiba, fashioned it into hundreds of fired bricks, and reset them into the gash in the hillside.

This was later documented by Museum of Arts and Design curator Ursula Ilse-Neumann in a Katonah Museum of Art catalog along with an installation shown there, *Klepisko* (2008), which is a Polish word for the primitive



1 *Ergo* interlocking coffee server and cups, to 9 in. (23 cm) in height, porcelain, clear glaze, ceramic decals, designed by Marek Cecula, produced by Cmielów Design Studio, 2013. **2** *New Atelier*, variable dimensions, porcelain, ceramic decals, produced by Marek Cecula/Modus Design, 2013. **1, 2** Photos: Sebastian Zimmer.



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earthen floor in peasant dwellings. Nineteen tons of clay were poured into large Styrofoam molds (with the help of students at the State University of New York–New Paltz) directly into the museum galleries. The molds were later removed and the cracks were filled with clay facsimiles of Classical architectural details for visitors to walk over.

Easily shifting back and forth between factory and home studios, outdoor site, and indoor museum or design office, Cecula uses the look of industrial porcelain forms—cruets, urinals, sauce boats, and creamers—to create unique or editioned sculptures such as his *Tree Set* (2009, with Edyta Cieloch), which transferred birch-bark reliefs to the exteriors of porcelain vessels.

While in the US, Cecula had several shows at Garth Clark Gallery in New York, New York, starting in 1993 (the gallery has since closed) and was also given solo shows in Germany, Israel, and Norway. His work was shown at other US galleries as well, in Kansas City, Missouri; San Francisco, California; Ferndale, Michigan; and Racine, Wisconsin. Numerous art museums in Europe and the US own his ceramic sculptures.

Two projects in particular blend his life experiences as a child with an enthusiasm for working with young people. *Kielce Chronicle* (2011) used hundreds of porcelain shards with photo decals of the artist's family



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3 *Tree Set*, 8 in. (20 cm) in length, porcelain, glazed interiors, wooden tray, designed by Marek Cecula with Edyta Cieloch, produced by Cmielów Design Studio, 2009. **4** Salt and pepper shakers, 5 in. (13 cm) in height, porcelain, clear glaze, ceramic decals and silicon cork, designed by Marek Cecula with Dagmara Rogers, produced by Cmielów Design Studio, 1998. **5** Balsamic vinegar and oil cruets, 3½ in. (9 cm) in height, porcelain, clear glaze, ceramic decals, silicon cork, designed by Marek Cecula with Dagmara Rogers, produced by Cmielów Design Studio, 1998. **6** *Troika*, 10 in. (25 cm) in height, unglazed porcelain, silicone O-rings, designed by Marek Cecula for Sebastian Zimmer, produced by Cmielów Design Studio, 2014. **3–6** Photos: Sebastian Zimmer. **7** *Klepisko*, 19 tons of unfired clay installed at Katonah Museum of Art, New York, 2008. Photo: Margaret Fox. **8** *Earthwork Art Project 79*, natural organic Brazilian clay, dimensions variable; fired bricks re-installed in the space formerly occupied by the raw clay, 1979. Photo: Edyta Cieloch.



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members affixed to the surface. During an interactive installation at the Center for Contemporary Sculpture in Oronsko, Poland, visitors took out, examined, and then replaced the photo-covered shards, creating what Cecula called “encrypted archaeology.”

Children of Kielce Remember (2009–present) is an ongoing, annual outdoor installation at Pakosz Jewish Cemetery, where Cecula earlier created the 2010 monument of flat, black granite in memory of the July 4, 1946 pogrom. During the May 1943 liquidation of the Jewish ghetto in Kielce, Nazi officials decided to kill 40 children rather than send them to an orphanage after the deportation of their parents. Each year, Cecula told me, “I work with a small group of young kids in my ceramic studio. . . After a discussion, the children make small clay figurines and toys, which they paint with colored glazes and fire. We go to the cemetery with the kids and permanently glue the works to the granite grave slab.” Anticipating today’s community-based art projects loaded with social and historical significance, Marek Cecula blended his own childhood experiences with crucial events of the past that must not be forgotten.

the author *Matthew Kangas is an independent art critic living in Seattle, Washington. His latest book is Paul Havas (University of Washington Press, 2017).*

Mahima Singh

ADVENTURE, INNOVATION, AND ADAPTATION

BY SARAH KAYE

I first noticed Mahima Singh's work on the Pottery Northwest (PNW) kiln-room shelves. I was halfway through my residency there, and unloading a kiln one morning to make room for my firing later that day. Class bisque work always looks much of a muchness to me—rose-colored clay, and a 30-person class worth of similar bowl or cup shapes. Singh's cups stood out because she'd done intricate sgraffito work on them when no one else had—a combination of fastidiously rendered text spelling "pizza" and "ice cream," and with something in a carefully executed foreign script. The precision, care, and the very illustrative nature of her other work stood out to me.

I found out Singh was in the work-study program at PNW in Seattle, Washington, where a commitment of a few hours of time every week is exchanged for a free class for the semester for those in the program. This allows PNW to offer an avenue beyond casual classes, and helps people learn more about clay before considering making the commitment to the residency program. As Singh put it, "that was when I realized that maintaining a studio is delicious, rewarding, physical work. I enjoyed scooping pasty slurry from the

depths of the giant slip buckets (despite the odors) and recycling the clay, had fun mixing glaze because I got to wear a cool mask (a fellow student remarked that I looked like a mad scientist over a simmering cauldron). I did the work study alongside my full-time job. I loved the work-study program. As an outsider who had never studied ceramics, it made me understand the making process and studio cycle a little better, which gave me confidence. I appreciate the staff at PNW who have always said that they support people getting into ceramics irrespective of whether they have a formal background in it."

Singh's day job was as a fundraising coordinator for a national non-governmental organization (NGO) that builds public parks. "I love Seattle for its parks and open spaces. Seattleites are proud of their city's emerald-ness, and that's a big contributor to Seattle's outdoorsy vibe. I wish we had an NGO like that in India, where everything is overcrowded and a city takes more pride in its malls than public services. These feelings bleed into the motifs I make on my pottery's surfaces. I want to make work that people con-



nect with in a very uncomplicated way. And I try to do that with my surface treatment. There is so much kitchenware an urban householder can choose from in the market. So in my pots I want people to have their taste, choices, and life context reflected clearly when I scribe, ‘Coffee Loving Cyclist’ or ‘Happiest Among Trees.’ I want the user to think ‘this cup is made (literally made by hand) for me!’ When I say choices, I don’t mean defining choices in a manner of sweepingly defining identities, but rather that small choices make up our identity bit by bit. Plus, a little whimsy brings innocence and silliness to life. My pots are not serious. They’re not precious.”

Research and Relocation

After five years in Seattle, Singh and her husband moved home to India. A published academic, Singh did not undertake this decision lightly—and a lot of work and research went into choosing which city they would move to. India is roughly 1/3 the size of the US, so relocation closer to family didn’t have to mean the same city as their parents. Taking into consideration lifestyle, professions, and clay, they decided on Bangalore. This had a lot to do with Singh discovering Clay Station (www.claystation.in), a community studio, learning center, and the only importer of Skutt kilns and Shimpo wheels in India. Clay Station was set up by Ganesan Manickavasagam (he goes by Ganesh) who left a thriving information technology career because he wanted to do something meaningful and help people feel connected with a tactile experience.

Now in Bangalore (often dubbed India’s Silicon Valley), Singh has had six months of finding her feet. “Bangalore used to be a sleepy, quiet city with yummy weather (it’s a perfect 70–75°F most of the year) ideal for retired people, and now it’s having to deal with terrific volumes of people, cars, and cows alike.”

The rapid growth in the last 15 years, and poor city planning makes traffic insane and housing overcrowded. Bicycling in the street is not a safe option, driving is a survival sport, and a walk outside leaves a reminder in your lungs like its time to change your studio air filters. On the flip side, there is want for nothing, the local amazon.com equivalent, Flipkart, delivers everything to your door. When you do venture to the grocery store, the produce, like in Europe, is non GMO and the quality and flavor is outstanding.

Singh described Clay Station as feeling like you are working on “someone’s private terrace in a quiet neighborhood. It has thatched roofing, brick walls, and lush, monsoon-drenched trees hanging over the uncovered areas. There’s also a studio dog named Sammy who I carry biscuits for every week. Their revenue comes from not



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1 Striped cups and mugs, 4 in. (9 cm) in height, Grolleg porcelain, 2016. 2 Jigsaw bowls, 6 in. (15 cm) in diameter, Grolleg porcelain, 2016. 3 Mahima Singh with her work in Bangalore, India. All photos: Manu Mahajanp.

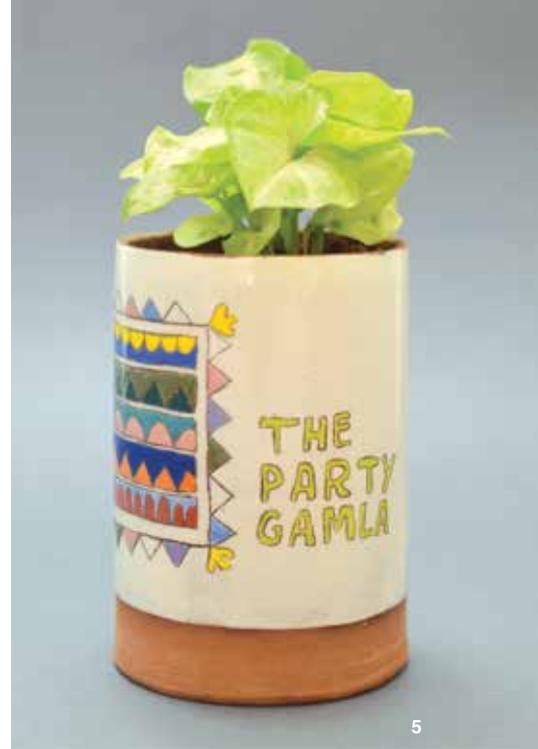
only selling their clay to ceramic artists around the country, but also offering small group classes to beginners, and making customized tableware for a few hip bars and cafés around town. Now they’re branching out into setting up studios at schools and colleges so that ‘a potter comes out of every classroom.’ It’s quite lovely.”

In talking about her adjustment to India, Singh laughed, “we have no timeline in India.” Her clay career started more slowly than she was expecting, but within six months of being there, she’s given demos in schools, has taught group classes at an architectural college, and has taken on a private student. Starting this year, she’ll also have a design-school intern working with her.

Singh speaks with such self-awareness of living with her feet in two cultures. She feels a responsibility to her students, and those around her to share what she learned while living in Seattle, “you don’t know the possibilities, until you know the possibilities.” She



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4 Landscape bowl, 6 in. (15 cm) in diameter, Grolleg porcelain, 2016. 5 *The Party Gamla*, 5½ in. (14 cm) in height, terra cotta, slip, clear glaze, 2016.

begins her sessions by sharing ceramics she bought or was gifted in the US and South America—sharing the work of people who’ve made a career of clay. She loves seeing the light bulbs go off for her students. As they take in the details, she asks students to consider what makes a foot, lip, or handle work. Sharing in that joy, I know many of you can understand—seeing students work transition from casual makers to diligent practitioners.

Two Threads

Within her own work, there are two threads she’s working with—material and context. The material is locally sourced. Unlike here in the US where you find a clay body you like and commit to it, and are able to predict its behavior over and over, in Bangalore the clay is locally mined, and one batch isn’t always consistent with the next one, and testing starts all over again. Singh spends a lot of her time developing glazes and slips that will fit the current batch of clay and then she moves on to making the work.

We’ve talked a lot about the context of her work—as it is a complex issue. “I don’t know what Indian ceramics is yet,” she says. “There is the traditional work—the Indian subcontinent has a very rich history of working with clay, and there are hundreds of regional styles of making. I guess most can be called studio potteries because they’re run by families who have been in the business for generations, often because their caste is ‘expected to be’ potters. But a lot of traditional work is stagnant, catering not only to the local communities but also to a Western audience that has predetermined notions of what Indian pottery should be. There’s pride in the tradition, which is mostly beautiful and commendable, but with that pride also comes the stifling of adventure, innovation, and adaptation.”

“I think a few things are impacting people’s tastes in urban India:
1 Concerns regarding health safety when it comes to traditional ware (will the glaze be leaded? Is it safe to cook in earthenware?)

2 An affluent urban middle class that can afford to care about buying more ornate things for their homes

3 A palette influenced by global trends, and customer tastes or demands for something contemporary and fresh.”

The Start of a New Field

“I was asked by someone here if I want to be an ‘Indian potter,’ or worse ‘make contemporary pottery with an Indian twist,’ whatever that means! Such questions also reflect that there’s a void in the conversation on contemporary ceramics in India. I don’t want to be an ‘Indian potter,’ I just want to be a potter who makes things she likes, and I happen to make them in India. I don’t want to be a poster girl for, ‘this is what Indian ceramics is about these days.’ I inhabit one of multiple Indias, and I want my work to loosely echo my reality as a city person with city tastes, to put it bluntly. Because I’ve been a student of history, I want my work to be true to my present (in terms of materials, tools, equipment, and motifs) without worrying whether I’m reflecting a wider culture of some sort.”

“Finally, I’ve realized that because I lack any formal training in clay, I mostly feel liberated (occasionally I wish I knew more about glaze theory). I can take it anywhere I want because I don’t feel constrained by its traditional scholarship or historical debates (for example: craft versus art). And because urban studio pottery is new to India, I feel that all of us here are contributing to the start of a new field. It’s an exciting time.”

To add my final thought to Singh’s, isn’t it a joy to see the world through someone else’s eyes?!

See more of Singh’s work on Instagram @clayisokay.

the author Sarah Kaye is an artist and designer living in Seattle, Washington. To learn more visit www.skayeceramics.com.

Narrowing the Variables

EXPANDING THE PARAMETERS

by Ben Krupka

How often are artists mindful of the parameters with which they're working? Many are not conscious choices and are purely based on habitual motions or subconscious aesthetic ideals that the artists possess. Some are simply based on what is available in different studio settings. I find these parameters fascinating because they are equally positive and negative: positive, in that they inform and provoke the refinement of one's body of work; and negative, as they can eventually become a roadblock hindering creativity and future growth.

Often, when people are first introduced to clay, they're instantly captivated. Some for the challenge of grasping competency with the material, some for the adaptable, fluid nature of the medium, some for the pursuit of artistic expression, and some for the pure love of the process. Driven by personal fascination and curiosity, the maker begins to shape his or her aesthetic and conceptual ideals based on experience and exposure; in time, cultivating a technical, visual, and conceptual vocabulary derived directly from that experience and exposure.

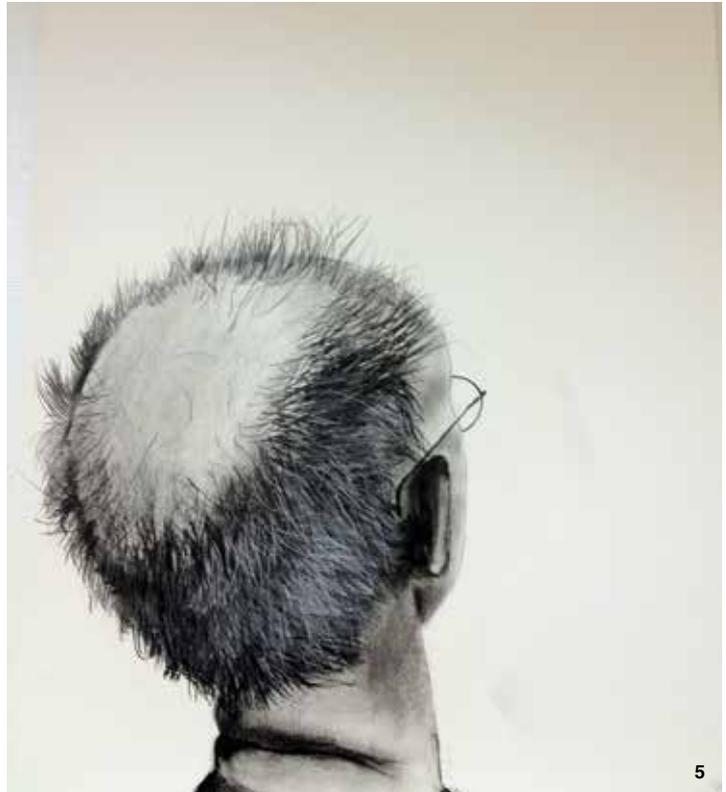
As this vocabulary broadens, the artist consciously determines what to pursue. Decisions must be made: What type of clay will be used? Will the clay be wheel thrown, handbuilt, or slip cast? Will the work have a smooth or rough surface? What tools will be utilized to create that surface? In what temperature and atmosphere will the work be fired? As each question is answered, a myriad of options and investigations are left behind. These decisions are part of a narrowing of variables, a funneling of ideas, until what remains is a tight set of self-devised parameters. These parameters become the language used for creative expression and communication with the world at large.

Posing Questions

I would like to pose some questions that not only I, but others may struggle with: How do we know when to loosen our parameters and allow ourselves more flexibility? How much deviation can exist before we begin to lose continuity within a body of work, or from an external perspective, our brand as an artist? How much do external

1 Ben Krupka's bowl, 7 in. (18 cm) in diameter, dark stoneware, slip, glaze, 2017. 2, 3 Ben Krupka's *Collaboration*, process of an ongoing project documenting weathering on ceramic wall pieces, 2016–17.





4 Chris Staley's *Entropy*, 38 in. (96 cm) in height, black stoneware clay, 2015. 5 Chris Staley's *Vulnerability*, 36 in. (91 cm), graphite, 2015.

Exhilarating Reciprocity *by Chris Staley*

I feel incredibly alive when making something new for the first time. For me the creative process can be exhilarating because of its reciprocity. When artists create something for the first time they have an opportunity to learn something about themselves. This desire to better understand the world around me is often what draws me into the studio. Questions can be grappled within the studio. Yet, I often just let my hands make while the questions hover in the background.

I value art's potential to make me a better person. Creating art provides an opportunity to reflect on the world around me and then turn inward. It's like reading a book a second time years later; the book is the same but we are no longer the same person when we read the book a second time. If the passage of time changes who I am, it makes sense that the passage of time would change what I make as well.

I try to notice what I notice. This could be anything from a Sung Dynasty cup to the entropy that comes with aging. With the unpredictability of daily life I never know what may inspire me.

I believe in the Butterfly Theory, that everything in life is interconnected, and by extension, everything in art and life too.

Once, during the end of the year studio cleanup at school a huge chunk of reclaimed clay fell out of a large trashcan. The clay mass was beautiful in its visceral rawness. This experience inspired me to make the piece called *Entropy*. For me, the round sphere at the top represents wholeness juxtaposed with the decay that comes with aging.

forces, in the form of peer feedback, gallery representation, sales, and followers and friends acquired via social-media platforms impede our growth? Is there a point of diminishing returns to a body of work? Is there a point at which we exhaust the ability for artistic expression within our self-devised set of rules simply by becoming mechanized through repetition? If we find ourselves in a rut, why do we continue in the same direction if we, and by extension, our work are no longer growing? I've wondered if this phenomenon occurs simply because we are encouraged (by professors, mentors, and gallerists) to work in a series, reproducing similar objects tied to the same theme repetitively.

If we consider iconic painters such as Monet, we instantly associate his name with his French Impressionist style. Picasso, however, an artist who constantly reinvented himself, might conjure different images for different people. I might instantly envision his blue period while others imagine Cubism. The parameters defining Monet's work seem instantly clear to us while those of Picasso are more fluid and evolving. In search of multiple perspectives on these questions, I reached out to three artists—Chris Staley, Meredith Brickell, and Tyler Lotz—whose changing parameters are evident in the work they produce. I asked them to comment on their approaches.

Analyzing Parameters

Initially, I was drawn to the challenges that wheel-thrown, wood-fired ceramics presented. This combination of interests was the beginning of a body of work that I produced for about 15 years. Through the process of narrowing the variables and refining the relationship between my skills and theme, I was able to focus intently and creatively. This degree of concentration granted me a secure understanding of the language I had developed to make an effective body of work. I was able to work through a variety of forms, clays, and technical challenges, all the while using my own visual language.

Eventually, I began to feel uninspired by the restrictive framework I had created. The process became tedious and I felt a sense of stultification and stagnation. Though I had lost my initial enthusiasm, I maintained this body of work for a few more years due to fear of failure at new pursuits, fear of losing the external traction

the work had gained, and fear of changing my identity as a wood-fire potter. My internal struggle eventually tipped the scale when I realized how much my identity was limited by this one body of work. A body of work is a snapshot in time, but identity is an ever-evolving, multifaceted experience. Sitting in my studio, I felt like a fraud, as my mind was elsewhere while I made the same work. The earlier process of narrowing the variables allowed that body of work to reach its peak. However, there was no longer room for growth as I felt I had exhausted every possible variation on my theme.

Taking the Leap

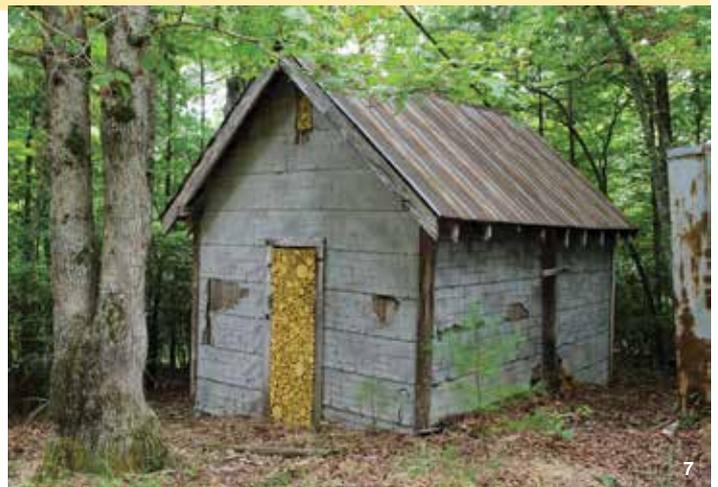
My only option was to leap outside my parameters, holding onto only the clay. I gave up my habitual forms, marks, and decisions cold turkey. This gave me a new sense of freedom and I began to explore ideas and processes I had never considered prior to my narrow investigation. I let go of the familiarity and comfort I had

Jumping In *by Meredith Brickell*

Change stresses me out, so it would make a lot of sense for me to be more consistent in my creative practice. But I get restless once I run through the questions that inspired a body of work. So, a few times over the last couple of decades, I have chosen to follow new directions, even when that meant walking away from stable jobs, dedicated colleagues, and supportive galleries and collectors. I am not someone who is naturally good at a lot of different things, so when I am pursuing new work, I give myself permission to be a beginner—curious, naive, and unskilled. I set aside my admiration for expertise and make room for mediocrity as I delve into unfamiliar ideas, materials, and processes. After doing this a number of times, I understand that I won't be good at anything right away but I trust that I have enough experience to get started or that I can find someone to help. So I jump in.

Despite my expectations and best efforts, some ideas just don't go very far. A series might get off to a good start, but I count on new insights emerging during the process to help sustain momentum. If that doesn't happen, I set it aside with the possibility of returning to it later. Most of my ideas emerge from some kind of personal interest or experience. Those that keep my interest for sustained periods usually last because they intersect with and raise questions about related issues and disciplines. For example, what started out as an exploration of the history of my family's farm has led to *The House Life Project* in Indianapolis. When working collaboratively on initiatives like the HLP, my creative partners bring different perspectives and expertise, which allows greater complexity and longevity. Trained as a potter, I used to think in six-week cycles of making, glazing, and firing. Now I am more likely to approach a project in terms of months or years. This longer cycle is freeing in that I don't have to get it all done at once, but also a bit unnerving in that there is no guarantee that this greater time investment will yield satisfying results.

6 Meredith Brickell's *HLP Cup Factory*, *The House Life Project*, community-glazed porcelain, 2015. 7 Meredith Brickell's *Shed*, Penland School of Crafts, cut saplings, milk paint, shed, 2014.





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8 Tyler Lotz' *Ute Park*, 14 in. (36 cm) in height, ceramic, 2017. 9 Tyler Lotz' *Tenet* bowls, variable dimensions, red stoneware, 2014.

Remaining Open to Discovery *by Tyler Lotz*

Parameters are a necessary component of any making strategy and knowing when to loosen them is a question of motivation. Whether it's a body of sculpture or tableware, I don't often let the parameters become too limiting and I always remain open to discovery that wasn't part of the original plan. I think that we are only limited by what we are interested in. Letting something out into the wild that may not be fully formed or connected with your identity depends on whether you have the will or guts to do so. What motivates me is less fear of stagnation and public expectation and more of a nagging excitement to figure out some new problems in the work. I think there is a perception that my studio practice is filled with more radical shifts than are actually present. Information that I gather from making a line of tableware or a new vase feeds back into the sculpture. Then a discovery in those new sculptures entices me to try something with the tableware that I didn't consider before. I don't feel like I find myself in a rut too often. The typical thing impeding my progress is finding the time between teaching full time, family life, living in a 1920's house, and taking some time for self-improvement (soccer, fishing). When I get to the studio it's not a matter of what can I try, it's whether I have the time to try it and get good results before the deadline. My motivations to get back in the studio are driven by a need to answer some new questions, not to produce more of the same.

found in the vessel and explored how ideas could manifest without any of my usual guidelines. In fact, I attempted to identify as many of my conscious and unconscious parameters as possible with the new goal of attempting not to follow any of them. I also remained mindful of the natural temptation to fall prey to a new set of parameters prematurely. This exercise led to a body of sculptural work lasting only a few years that failed to hold my interest or gain the external traction of my previous work. However, it fulfilled my desire to feel unshackled. What I gained from this experience was an expansion of my visual vocabulary and renewed self-confidence as a maker.

I recognize that as an artist with a full-time teaching appointment and the sabbaticals that affords me, the exercise of investigating these questions might be easier for me to pursue than a full-time studio artist. If you are a full-time studio artist and sharing any of the feelings I mention, how can you leverage yourself to allow for a sabbatical from your work? Can you build a stock of work, save money, or apply for grants to support a short-term residency?

How can we as makers and supporters of the ceramic community collectively foster exploration and growth? Can residencies do a better job of allotting more spaces and funding for artists to pursue new paths? Can we help our friends and peers recognize their parameters and delicately encourage them to take leaps if we sense they are struggling?

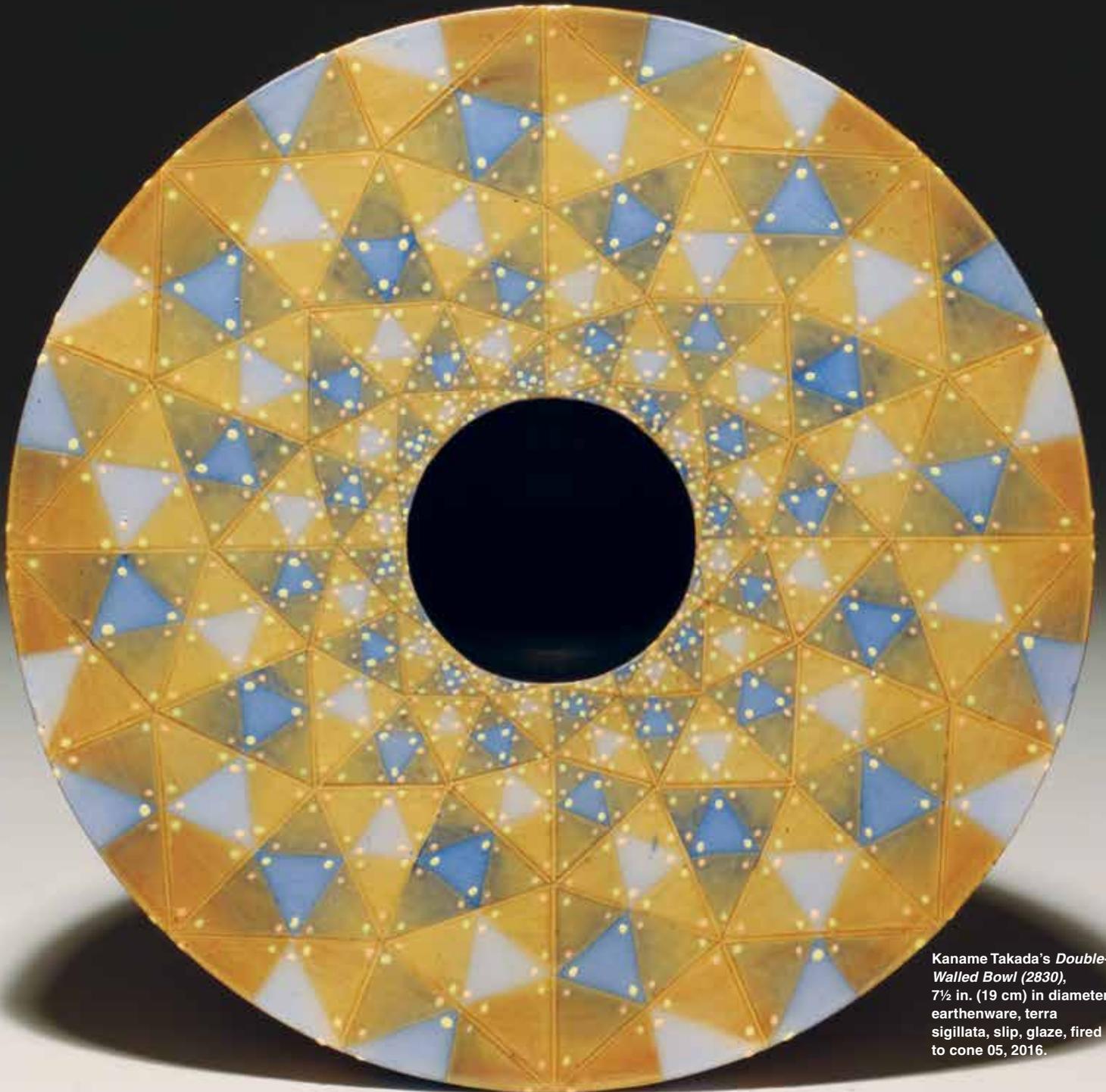
Many of the questions I present in this article are as personal as is the pursuit of happiness. What I would like to leave you with is a challenge to think about what it means to accomplish all that we can within a single body of work. Once we do, where do we go from there? When is it time to be honest about the inertia we may be feeling while we walk in and out of our studio? When do we need to build parameters, expand them, and perhaps let them go altogether and begin again?

the author *Ben Krupka is a studio artist and Associate Professor of Ceramics at Bard College at Simon's Rock in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. To learn more, check out www.benkrupka.com.*

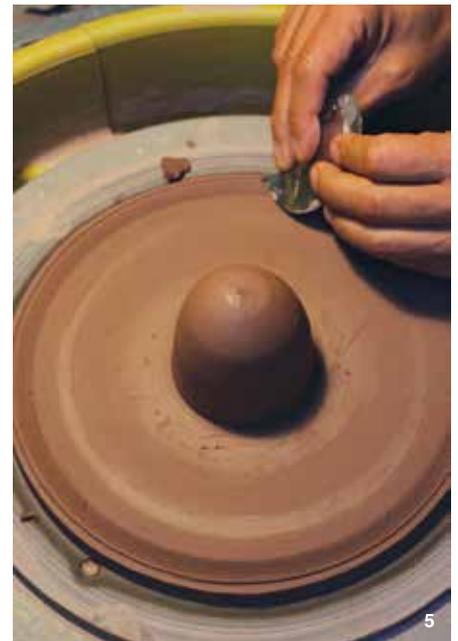
EARTHENWARE

with Intricate Surface Patterning

by Kaname Takada



Kaname Takada's *Double-Walled Bowl (2830)*, 7½ in. (19 cm) in diameter, earthenware, terra sigillata, slip, glaze, fired to cone 05, 2016.



1 Each double-walled bowl consists of three parts: an outer bowl or shell, a top plate, and a small inner bowl. 2 Measure the diameter of the inner bowl using calipers. 3 Cut a hole slightly smaller than this measurement into the center of the plate. 4 Score, slip, and attach the smaller bowl to the plate, then measure the outside diameter of the larger bowl using calipers, and transfer this measurement to the plate. 5 Score, then add slip to the plate edge where it will come in contact with the outer bowl or shell.

My work starts with patterns made with slips and glazes. The shape, scale, colors, and textures of my pieces are chosen to complement and enhance the patterns. Double-walled bowls are one of my favorite forms to work with.

Wheel-thrown earthenware platters with slip decoration make up the main body of my work. About 10 years ago, I was ready to try working with a form that was more three dimensional and had more vertical surfaces. I made various forms without changing the clay body or decorating techniques I was using, with mixed results. The bowl was especially difficult to adapt to the decorating techniques I use. I struggled with visually unifying the interior and exterior surfaces. I use

my platter rims as borders to frame patterns, but the same solution did not work well with the bowls, because the rims visually divided the interior and exterior surfaces. I also felt that I was making another plate, with slip decorations on the front and back, without taking advantage of the form. Working on the concave interior surface was also difficult and so, on some of them, I used a liner glaze on the interior surfaces.

Around the same time, I was invited to participate in an exhibition at the Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum in Coshocton, Ohio, for which all invited artists were to create work in response to an artifact or a group of artifacts from the museum's collections. I made a slab-box piece based on the woven pattern of a Native American basket.

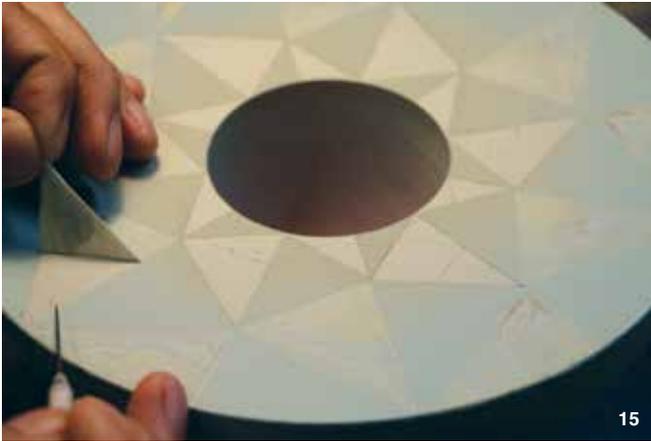


6 Attach the outer shell to the flat plate, then trim it to the desired contour. 7 Run a wire tool under the finished form to release it from the bat, then let it sit on the bat to reach leather hard. 8 When trapped air makes the form puff out a bit and makes the edge of the flat plate start to lift up, remove the piece from the bat. 9 Use an X-Acto knife to release and remove the center disc of clay covering the inner bowl. 10 Use trimming tools to remove excess clay from the transition between the bowl and the edge of the top plate. 11 Spray or brush on terra sigillata to start creating the surface layers. 12 Draw lines on the surface of the bowl to divide it into segments. 13 Create geometric patterns between the vertical lines, decreasing the size of the shape as the diameter of the form decreases. 14 Use liquid latex to mask off areas of the pattern before applying more layers of terra sigillata.

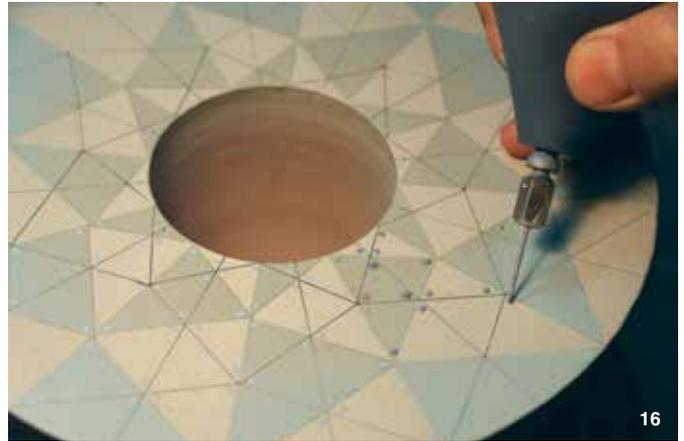
The box later evolved into my *Masu* series of cubes that are based on traditional Japanese wooden measuring cups. I was really pleased with the results. It took me a while, but eventually I realized that they were also cube-shaped, double-walled bowls. This realization gave me a solution to the design problem I was having—integrating pattern on

the different surfaces of bowls—and led me to making double-walled bowls on the wheel.

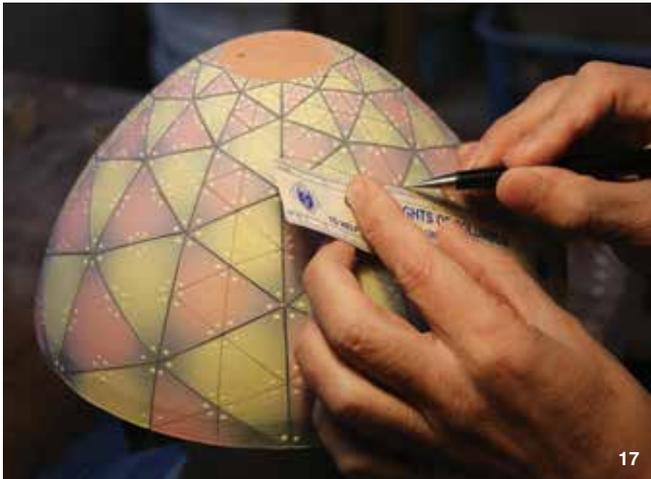
Making double-walled pieces was not new to me. As a college professor teaching ceramics, I have taught my students how to make double-walled pieces in the past. However, we focused more on explor-



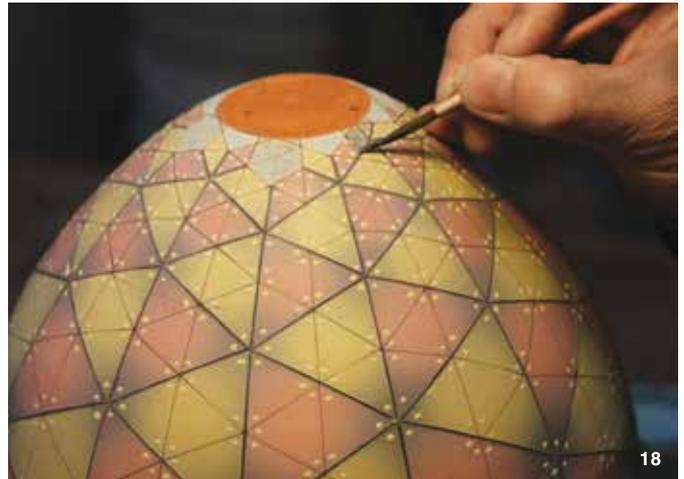
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15 Peel off the liquid latex after applying the last layer of terra sigillata. 16 Add slip-trailed dots to the surface to add a tactile quality. 17 After bisque firing to cone 08, add more lines to the surface to help define the pattern for applying a clear glaze. 18 Apply the clear glaze in an overlapping manner on the terra sigillata patterns. 19 *Double-Walled Bowl (2834)*, 7½ in. (19 cm) in diameter, fired to cone 05. 20 *Masu-Series Cube (2459)*, 10 in. (25 cm) in length, earthenware, terra sigillata, slip, glaze, fired to cone 05, 2012.



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ing how to engage the negative space between the inner and outer walls by cutting shapes out of one or both walls. In contrast, I have come to the double-walled slab-built cubes and wheel-thrown bowls as the way to maximize the exterior surface area for slip and glaze decorations and create flatter surfaces that can be decorated more easily. The size of the inner bowl has become smaller over the years. The flat plane connecting the inner and outer bowls eliminated the issue of rims becoming a border, as pattern could easily continue over this surface.

The sizes of the double-walled bowls are relatively small. They are small and light enough to be held easily by anyone. I make them by assembling the bowls from three parts: a top plate, an inner bowl, and an outer shell (1). I had experimented throwing all of them together as one piece as well as throwing the inner bowl and top plate together and attaching them to the outer shell but I have come to the conclusion that I have better control shaping the parts if they are thrown individually.

I throw the outer shell first, then the inner bowl, and then the top plate. The top plate is usually thrown

a few inches wider than the outer shell. I throw the parts off the hump on Masonite, plastic, or plaster bats depending on the size and shape and how quick I want them to dry.

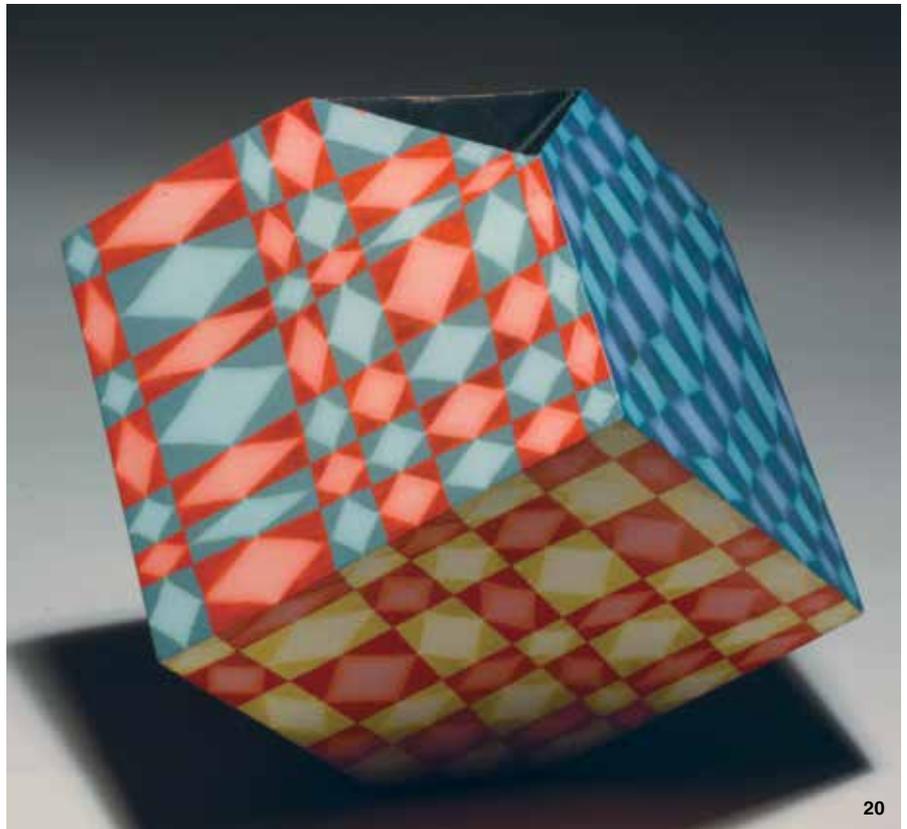
The double-walled bowls are assembled upside down when the parts reach the leather-hard stage. The center opening is cut into the top plate first and the inner bowl is attached to it and then trimmed (2, 3). I have not had any issues with cracking in the seam between the inner bowl and the top plate. Next, the outer shell is attached and trimmed (4–7). This attachment to the top plate needs to be thoroughly secure as pressure from trapped air stresses the joint.

As it dries and contracts in size, the trapped air inside makes the shape puffy and raises the edge of the bowl for easy release from the bat (8). After being removed from the bat, the assembled bowl is further trimmed and cleaned right side up, including removing the center disc of clay covering the small bowl (9, 10). I prefer a slightly convex top plane to a flat one, and achieve it by letting the still-trapped air in the drying bowl to push the top up. A small hole is made to release the air once I am satisfied with the curve of the top. The timing of releasing air is critical. If I wait too long, too much air pressure may cause the joint between outer shell and top plate to break. If I let the air out too soon, sometimes this causes the top to sag.

On some of the pieces the patterns are drawn with a needle tool when they are leather hard, but most of the surface decoration happens when the pieces are bone dry. Once the bowl becomes bone dry, terra sigillata is applied with an air brush and/or with hake brushes (11). I wait for each layer of terra sigillata to dry and then use a mechanical pencil and rulers to draw patterns directly on the surface (12, 13). Liquid latex is painted on to mask off areas before subsequent layers of terra sigillata are applied (14).

When the application of terra sigillata is done, the latex is removed (15), more lines are penciled in, and dots of colored slips are applied with a slip trailer to add more tactile quality to the surface (16). Though I currently use triangle-based patterns extensively, I have tried a variety of patterns before. The pattern inspiration came from various sources, but I have been influenced by traditional and contemporary American quilts and traditional Japanese patterns the most.

On some pieces, I build up layers of dry-brushed slips of different fusibility using various kind of tools and brushes.



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This creates more textured and tactile surfaces on the otherwise flat and smooth pieces.

After bisque firing to cone 08, more lines are penciled in (17) and clear glaze is applied, first in an overlapping manner on the terra sigillata patterns. Over the years I have experimented with different clear glazes and ways to apply them. I have now settled on painting a commercial clear glaze on the surface using fine brushes without masking (18). Though I used to use liquid latex for glazing as well, I found that painting glazes with brushes doesn't take much more time than masking areas with liquid latex to create patterns and the results were just fine. Other glazes are applied after the clear glaze. Sometimes I

apply wax tinted with food dye to protect a glazed area from being contaminated by other glazes as I work. Pieces are then fired in an electric kiln to cone 05.

My immediate reaction to a beautiful piece is to touch and pick it up. It is an emotional reaction rather than analytical observation. I am happy if any of my pieces, including the double-walled bowls, can evoke the same kind of reaction in the viewer.

the author *Kaname Takada is a professor in the divisions of Contemporary Crafts and Fine Arts at the Columbus College of Art and Design. Check out his work at www.studiotakada.com.*

TERRA SIGILLATA
Cone 05 Oxidation

OM 4 Ball Clay	3000 g
Water	7000 g
Total	10000 g
Add: Darvan #7	50 ml

Mix the ingredients thoroughly and sieve with a 200-mesh screen.

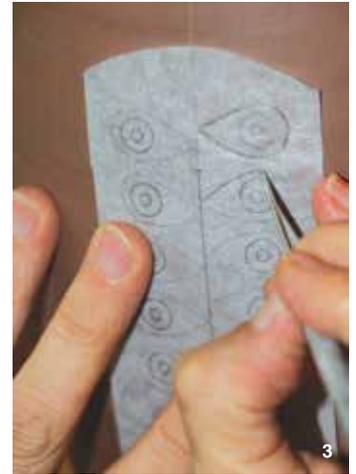
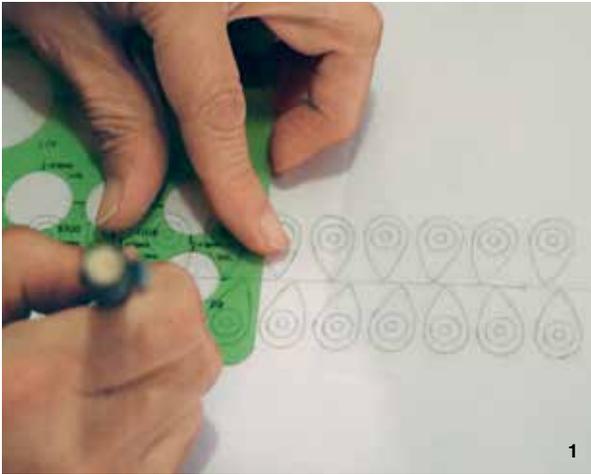
Let it settle for 3 days and siphon the middle layer out to use as terra sigillata.

I add Mason stains for color, about 5–10 grams per 100 ml of terra sigillata. A small amount of Darvan #7 is also added for better deflocculation and suspension of fine particles.

Smooth and Exacting
**SURFACE
DECORATION**

by Sumiko Takada with Kaname Takada





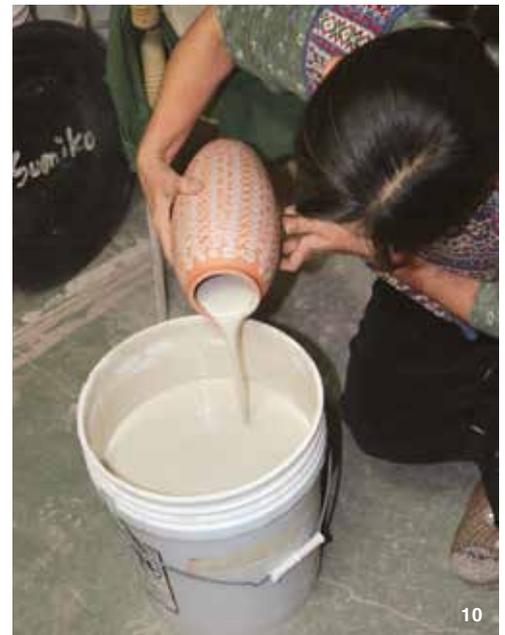
Opposite: Vase, 12 in. (30 cm) in height, brown stoneware, glaze. **1** Prepare stencils of pattern designs on tracing paper using pencil. **2** Draw grid lines as a guide onto trimmed, leather-hard pots. **3** Transfer patterns onto the piece using a needle tool with a rounded tip. **4, 5** Trace over the transferred lines with a needle tool to make them deeper, then use a double-ended ball stylus and small wire loop tool to make the pattern wider and deeper.

I was born and raised in Nagoya, located in a region rich in the ceramics culture and tradition of Japan. Seto, arguably the most famous town for ceramics in Japan, is a mere 30-minute train ride from my house and other towns like Tokoname, Tajimi, and Iga are all nearby. In this environment, my interest in ceramics began at an early age but it took me years to get my hands in clay seriously. When my son started attending a nursery school, I started taking classes offered at the studio of a local ceramic artist, Mr. Yasunori Nishio. I was 30-years-old and wanted to make pots I could use in my house. Nishio was also the one who introduced me to inlaying, but at the time it was one of the many techniques and processes he taught me that I didn't expect would later become an important part of my creative life.

My approach to working with inlay techniques was somewhat roundabout. About 15 years ago, I was working on cobalt decorations on a white clay body, making pieces like Sometsuke ware in a continuing education class at a local college but I was not happy with the result I was getting. Around the same time, a friend let me use her slip trailer to create designs with blue slips on green-

ware instead of cobalt washes on bisque ware. The slip trailer was easier for me to use than brushes and I made several pieces with slip-trailed designs on a white background under a clear glaze. Though I liked the process of slip trailing, I didn't like the raised designs. I wanted the surface of my pieces to be flat and smooth. That's when I remember the inlay technique I was introduced to at Nishio's studio. I tried it and I was really pleased with the result. I also found that the process of inlaying is much more satisfying for me. It took more time than brush work to complete, but it seemed to fit my personality as a potter better.

The reasons for switching from a white clay body to a dark clay body were both practical and aesthetic. While working with the pieces, I found that it was hard to remove all of the excess cobalt slips on the white body. Speckles of blue seemed to be always present on my pieces no matter how hard and carefully I cleaned. So, I tried inlaying on a darker clay body and found that the blue speckles were not so visible. Also, the unglazed surface of the darker clay body was more visually appealing to me. Though there were changes of firing temperature and atmosphere from cone 10 reduc-



6 Apply engobes with a fine-tipped slip trailer. **7** Do an initial cleanup of excess engobes with a metal rib when they have started to dry but are still softer than the clay beneath. **8** When the engobes dry to the same stage as the clay, do a final cleaning without disturbing the surface. **9** Between bisque and glaze firings, smooth the surface with 320-grit sandpaper. **10** Apply a white liner glaze to the interior, then fire the piece again.

tion to cone 5 oxidation, creating unglazed, inlaid designs on a darker clay body has been my body of work for the past 15 years.

My primary method of forming is wheel throwing. I make pieces for inlaying a bit thicker than other types of work as I feel safer and more comfortable working on them as greenware. My current clay body has a fairly large percentage of Cedar Heights Redart clay for the color. I have tried other bodies, but so far it fulfills my needs best with its color as well as its texture, which is fine enough not to cause scratch marks on the surface as I remove excess engobes with a metal rib. I use Columbus Clay Engobe from

our local supplier, adding oxides and stain colors. As the exteriors of my pieces stay unglazed, the only glaze I use is a white liner glaze.

Motifs for my inlaid designs come from various sources but are influenced most by traditional Japanese geometric and floral patterns found in many common objects people use in their daily lives.

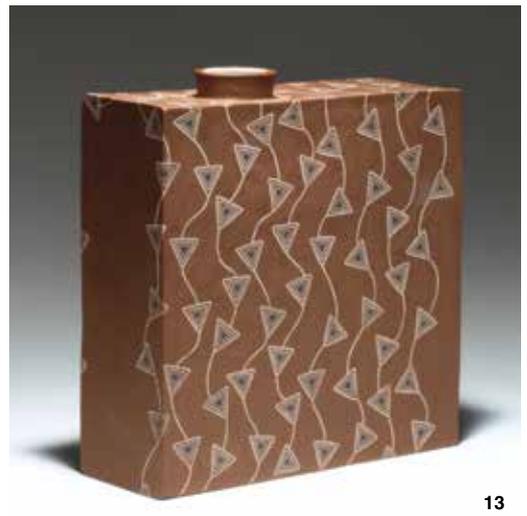
I prepare stencils of pattern designs on tracing paper using pencil (1). The sizes and proportions of the patterns are adjusted depending on the shape and scale of the pieces. Though I have favorite pattern designs, I am always looking for new ones and regularly add two or three new patterns to my repertory.



11



12



13

11 *Vase-06315*, 9 in. (23 cm) in height, brown stoneware, glaze, fired to cone 5, 2016. 12 *Vase-003016*, 8 in. (20 cm), brown stoneware, glaze, fired to cone 5, 2016. 13 *Flower Vase*, 9½ in. (24 cm) in length, brown stoneware, glaze, fired to cone 5, 2016.

Grid lines are drawn as the reference on trimmed, leather-hard pots (2) and then patterns are transferred on the piece using a needle tool with a rounded tip (3). I apply just enough pressure to draw lines on the paper without tearing it. I can usually use a paper stencil over 20 times.

Carving starts with tracing transferred lines with a needle tool to make them deeper. Then a double-ended ball stylus and small wire loop tool are used to make the pattern wider and deeper as the leather-hard ware dries (4, 5). Generally speaking, the carvings are linear and their depth is no more than 1/16 of an

inch. Wider and deeper carvings may result in cracks between the body and engobe. I pay close attention when drying my work and with the timing of carving as it is hard to make clean lines with an even depth and width on the surface if it is too soft or too dry. Depending on the sizes of pieces and the complexity of patterns, it takes a few hours to a few days to complete the carving.

After the carving is completed, engobes are applied with a fine-tipped slip trailer (6). Over the years I have tried different types of trailers but the inexpensive plastic trailer seems to work best



14 *Plate-00713*, 10½ in. (27 cm) in diameter, brown stoneware, glaze, fired to cone 5, 2013.

for me. With metal ribs, I do an initial cleanup of excess engobes when they are drying but still softer than the clay underneath, which makes the engobe easier to remove (7). When the engobes dry to the same stage as the clay, the final cleaning is done carefully without disturbing the surface (8).

Between bisque and glaze firings I clean up the surface once more with 320-grit sandpaper (9). Final sanding will ensure the smooth and clean surface of the fired pieces.

After sanding, a white liner glaze is applied to the interior (10) and the piece is fired to cone 5. My firing is simple, I use the cone fire mode on our Skutt kiln, choose medium for the firing speed, and add a hold of 15 minutes to the end of the firing.

Other than a brief introduction at Nishio's studio and technical help from my husband, Kaname, with clay and glaze formulation, much of what I practice with the inlaid work has been self taught. Though it was frustrating at times, it has been an enjoyable and rewarding experience. There will be always something new I want to try on my pieces and I can't wait to make the next one.

the author *Sumiko Takada has been working in clay for over 15 years. She has studied in Japan with Yasunori Nishio and Jun Terada, both in Komaki, Aichi, and in the US at the Worthington Community Center and at Columbus College of Art and Design. See more of her work at www.studiotakada.com.*

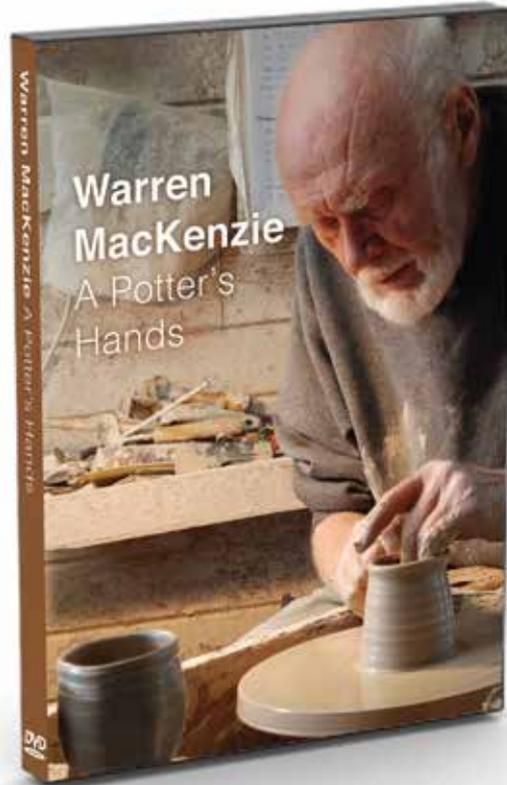


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opacity: color and cost

by Ryan Coppage, PhD

There are two main opacifiers (one inexpensive, the other costly) commonly used in ceramic glazes. Aside from general opacity, their properties are not commonly known. While they are sometimes used as replacements for one another, there are situations when one or the other is more suitable.

Defining the Terms

Crystal Field: A theoretical model that describes the splitting of d-orbitals that is caused by anion neighbors in a coordination environment around a transition metal, causing color or change in color.

Ligand: A molecule bound to a transition metal in coordination complexes, often with octahedral and tetrahedral symmetries in (but not exclusive to) crystal-field theory.

Opacifier: A material added to a system to make it opaque through various mechanisms, most often by forming small crystallites in a substance.

Opacity: Lacking translucency in nature—the inability for light to pass through a material.

Opacity in Glazes

When used as opacifiers, tin oxide and Zircopax (zirconium silicate) are somewhat similar. Aside from these two, titanium dioxide and calcium phosphate (bone ash) are also used to opacify glazes, but both also promote visible crystal formations (microcrystalline surface matte glazes and crystallized iron tomato reds, respectively) and bring far more to the table than just opacity. Focusing on tin oxide and Zircopax for now, each creates small crystallites in a glaze that prevent light from passing through—making it opaque and milky. This characteristic means that you can use tin-oxide or Zircopax opacified glazes on almost any clay body and they will mostly look the same. Translucent glazes specifically need to be used on white clay bodies for the full color effect. Light travels through the thickness of the glaze, strikes a white clay body, minimal light is absorbed, and it is then reflected back out, going through the glaze again and to the eye, colored by various metals suspended in the translucent glaze. Colored clay absorbs more of the light, leaving less to reflect back to the eye.

By adding opacifiers, we limit the length of the light's path to penetrating just barely into the surface of a glaze; it never reaches the clay and is almost immediately reflected back out, going through significantly less material. This shorter path length means that an opaque glaze needs roughly 5–10 times more metallic oxide colorant than that of a translucent glaze to achieve the same color intensity. For example, a jewel-toned teal celadon uses only 0.5% copper carbonate (CuCO_3) while an opaque pastel green would call for 4% CuCO_3 —eight times the metal content for similar, if not slightly less, color intensity.

Comparatively, zirconium silicate is somewhat cream-yellow in color as an opacifier while tin oxide is more starkly white, with somewhat greater opacifying power at equivalent amounts. Most highly opaque glazes often call for 15% Zircopax and those that call for tin oxide (as a whitener and opacifier, but not as a color modifier) reach only 12–13%. In figure 1, similarities and differences

are shown on Brooklyn red tiles to demonstrate opacity, ranging from 2–8% opacifier of each. It is barely noticeable that the zirconium-opacified tiles (1b) are slightly cream colored compared to that of the tin oxide (1a), but the two are similar. The difference here exists as slight color differences for the snobby (like me) and price differences for the parsimonious (me, again!) with tin oxide hitting roughly \$30/pound and Zircopax at \$5/pound. With all of this outlined, unless you are concerned about the slightly yellow nature of zirconium silicates, tin oxide can be replaced with a cheaper opacifier for creamy white opaque glazes.

MILKY CLEAR 20'S BASE	
Cone 6 Oxidation	
Wollastonite	15 %
Talc	6
Ferro Frit 3134	20
G-200 Feldspar	20
EPK Kaolin	20
Silica	19
	<hr/> 100 %
Add: Tin Oxide	2–8%
Zircopax	2–8%

As opacifier content is increased, the glaze becomes first milky and then totally opaque and bright/white. To this end, glazes can be adjusted to control the exact amount of light allowed through a surface.

2% 4% 6% 8% 1a

2% 4% 6% 8% 1b

1a Tin Oxide in Milk Clear 20's Base.
1b Zircopax in Milk Clear 20's Base.

(continued on page 70)

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Color Effects

Aside from opacifying power, tin oxide has a massive and mostly unsung role that is largely not discussed or commonly known to the ceramic world. Without the presence of tin oxide, chromium is a stark emerald green in a glaze, which is actually responsible for the color of emeralds in beryllium aluminum silicate (beryl). In emeralds, the chromium exists in trace quantities, just like chromium in most raspberry reds, at 0.15%. The difference between emeralds and rubies is actually very, very slight. The placement and coordination environment around the chromium actually dictate whether beryl will be green, as in an emerald, or red, as in a ruby, though the two are nearly identical. Similarly for glazes, a base glaze with somewhat high borate (flux, easy glaze melt, fluidity) content and 0.15% chromium oxide comes out a soft emerald green. As tin oxide is added (up to 6% content), the crystal-field nature of the glaze is changed. The coordination around the chromium shifts slightly and red is transmitted versus the blue-green of chromium without tin oxide. In figure 2a, a raspberry red glaze is prepared without tin oxide (the crystal or ligand-field modifier). As it is reintroduced to the glaze in 2% increments, the crystal-field nature of the glaze is changed, which can contribute to a shift in absorption bands and the change in color that we know as raspberry red. Occasionally, tin oxide is perceived as just an opacifier for these glazes. Upon being replaced with Zircopax to reduce costs, you no longer have red, but a mildly opaque pastel green in figure 2b, followed by confusion and tears.

Similarly, tin oxide (often around 4%) plays an important role in all standard copper-red recipes. Without tin oxide, a copper red can still be formed in a gas kiln fired in reduction, but the copper red color is somewhat dull and undesirable in character. It is often mottled with green, as seen in figure 3a or 3b. As tin oxide is introduced to the glaze, up to 6%, the crystal field of the glaze changes, which results in a much more vibrant and desirable red. This may be taking place due to multiple effects, including crystal field effects and orbital splitting in copper, thus shifting the absorption band of the copper to transmit incredibly more vibrant red than that of copper without tin oxide. Again since tin oxide is an expensive ingredient, substituting Zircopax may be tempting; however, it will lead to loss of these vibrant colors and actually prevent a copper red from reducing, in which it stays somewhat green, as in 3b.

RASPBERRY RED BASE

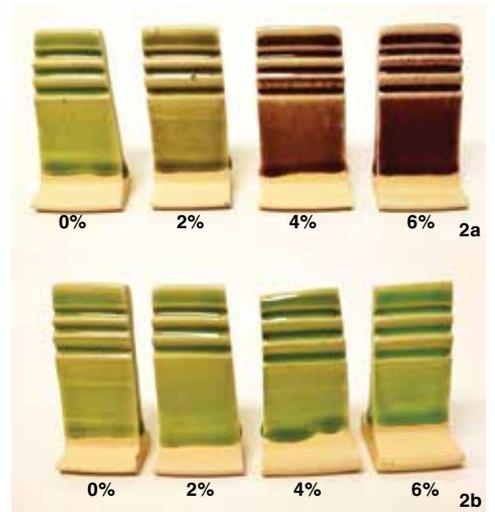
Cone 6 Oxidation

Gerstley Borate	21 %
Whiting	20
Nepheline Syenite	16
EPK Kaolin	11
Silica	32
	<u>100 %</u>

Add: Chrome Oxide	0.15 %
Tin Oxide	2–6%
Zircopax	2–6%

As opacifier content is increased, you see either a shift in color to raspberry red with an increase in opacity or the retention of green color with an increase in opacity, dependent solely on the use of tin or Zircopax.

2a Tin Oxide in Raspberry Red Base.
2b Zircopax in Raspberry Red Base.



COPPER RED 20'S BASE

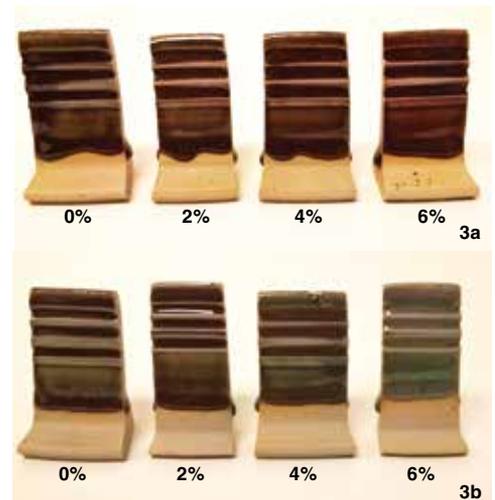
Cone 10 Reduction

Wollastonite	15 %
Talc	6
Ferro Frit 3134	20
G-200 Feldspar	20
EPK Kaolin	20
Silica	19
	<u>100 %</u>

Add: Copper	3 %
Tin Oxide	2–6%
Zircopax	2–6%

As tin oxide is added to 3a, a brighter copper red is observed, but Zircopax (3b) results in the loss of red character in the glaze.

3a Tin Oxide in Copper Red 20's Base.
3b Zircopax in Copper Red 20's Base.



Comparing Cost and Effectiveness

Ultimately, not all opacifiers are created equal in opacifying power and especially not in cost. Tin oxide has been traditionally used as an opacifier, but it holds so much value as a color modifier through crystal-field changes that it also exists in its own category as a colorant additive. At \$30/pound for tin oxide and \$5/pound for zirconium silicate, one could be tempted to substitute out all tin oxide for zirconium silicate, but doing so in chromium and copper glazes is disastrous.

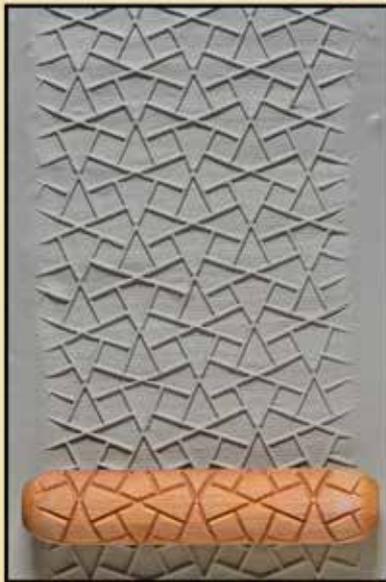
When looking to replace ingredients in glazes, Zircopax is an acceptable replacement for tin oxide only for opacity. With that said, the substitution of tin oxide with Zircopax in effectively any red glaze is a recipe for disaster, disappointment, wasted buckets of glazes, and copious profanity.

the author Ryan Coppage is currently chemistry faculty at the University of Richmond. He teaches a Japanese Ceramics and Glaze Design class at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond and still makes far too many pots. To learn more, check out www.ryancoppage.com.

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surform tips

by Cathi Jefferson

A Surform, a tool originally designed for woodworkers, is so efficient at removing clay that it is not only found at the hardware store but also at most clay supply stores.

It's been so long it's hard to remember not using a Surform in the process of completing handbuilt and wheel-thrown pieces. First, I used a Surform that was long and straight. I would break it in half so it was shorter than the smaller curved Surform that I use almost exclusively now.

When clay is leather hard, planing the surface with a Surform removes the bumps and flattens the surfaces while also creating an interesting texture. You can leave the texture or smooth it away easily with a metal rib. The Surform also enables you to alter forms in endless ways, creating new lines and curves, removing more or less clay where you want it to achieve the lines of the form you desire.

A Surform is a great tool to level rims as well. If you've experienced trying to do this with a knife, you will have discovered that it can be tricky. With the Surform, you have much better control over the lines you are making. A lot of my thrown forms are squared during throwing so trimming off excess clay and making the lines of the form flow are easily and quickly achieved with this tool. I like this way of working and also like the feel of the end result so much that

I often hand trim round pieces with a Surform and metal rib. I feel the entire form becomes more relaxed, and all of the parts relate to each other visually.

When you use a Surform blade on its own, it's not that comfortable to hold and use for any period of time. That's how I came to putting the small curved file in an old credit card so it's super easy to hold and use. The replacement blades are easy to find in the hardware store, your local clay supplier, or online. If the credit card doesn't work for you, there are also comfortable, commercially made handles available at most clay suppliers.

the author *Cathi Jefferson is a potter and instructor living near Duncan on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. See more of her work at www.cathijefferson.com.*

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1, 2 Using a Surform to remove excess clay from a squared, wheel-thrown form. 3 Hand trimming a vessel with a Surform. 4 Removing the tool marks from the Surform with a metal rib.

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studio takada

by Kaname and Sumiko Takada

Sumiko and Kaname Takada share the clays, slips, and glazes they use on their earthenware and stoneware bodies of work.

ARTICLE 57

ARTICLE 62



Kaname

679 WHITE

Cone 05 Oxidation

Ferro Frit 3124	80 %
Nepheline Syenite	10
OM 4 Ball Clay	10
	<hr/> 100 %

Add: Zircopax	10 %
Bentonite	2 %

I use this glaze as a liner. It is a very stable glaze that doesn't shift or move at cone 05.

MATTE BLACK (1)

Cone 05 Oxidation

Gerstley Borate	42.31 %
Whiting	23.08
EPK Kaolin	23.07
Silica	11.54
	<hr/> 100.00 %

Add: Mason Stain Black #6600	10.00 %
Zircopax	3.85 %

A liner glaze that doesn't shift or move at cone 05. It works well for dipping, pouring, and brushing.

METALLIC PLATINUM (2)

Cone 05 Oxidation

Gerstley Borate	77.8 %
Lithium Carbonate	22.2
	<hr/> 100.0 %

Add: Chrome Oxide	0.3 %
Manganese Dioxide	44.4 %
Copper Carbonate	6.7 %

This glaze shifts slightly at cone 05. I add 1.5% CMC gum for brushing application.

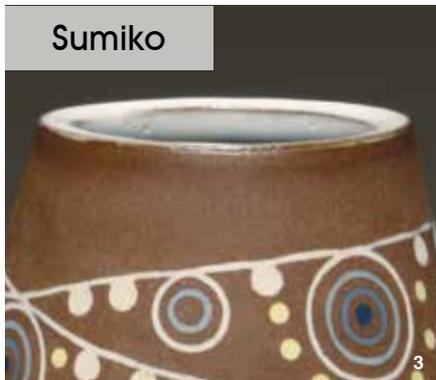
WORTHINGTON'S CLEAR

Cone 05 Oxidation

Gerstley Borate	55 %
EPK Kaolin	30
Silica	15
	<hr/> 100 %

A common low-fire clear glaze that I have been using for almost 30 years. Currently I use this glaze only over liquid latex masking. It works well for dipping, pouring, and brushing.

Sumiko



BROWN STONWARE (3, 4)

Cone 5 Oxidation

Custer Feldspar	2.56 %
Cedar Heights Redart	44.10
Cedar Heights Goldart	41.03
OM 4 Ball Clay	7.18
Silica	5.13
	<hr/> 100.00 %

This clay body works well for throwing and handbuilding small- to medium-sized pieces. If inlaying is not involved, grog can be added to create larger pieces.

COLORED SLIPS (3, 4)

Cone 5 Oxidation

Any White Slip Base	100.0 %
	<hr/> 100.0 %

For Blue:	
Add: Cobalt Carbonate	0.5–3.0%
For Yellow:	
Add: Mason Stain #6483	10.0 %
For Pink:	
Add: Mason Stain #6020	15.0 %

I use Columbus Clay Engobe as my white base slip.

WHITE LINER GLAZE (3)

Cone 5 Oxidation

Dolomite	5.85 %
Gerstley Borate	13.37
Whiting	8.10
Zinc Oxide	3.90
Custer Feldspar	44.39
EPK Kaolin	4.88
Silica	19.51
	<hr/> 100.00 %

Add: Zircopax	10.00 %
-------------------------	---------

Nice stable glaze that doesn't shift or run at cone 5.

1 Detail of Kaname Takada's double-walled bowl with Matte Black glaze, fired to cone 05. **2** Detail of Kaname Takada's double-walled bowl with Metallic Platinum glaze on the raised bumps, fired to cone 05. **3** Sumiko Takada's vase made with Brown Stoneware, White Liner Glaze (interior), inlaid Colored Slips (exterior designs), fired to cone 5. **4** Detail of Sumiko Takada's surface made with Brown Stoneware, White Liner Glaze (interior), inlaid Colored Slips (exterior designs), fired to cone 5.

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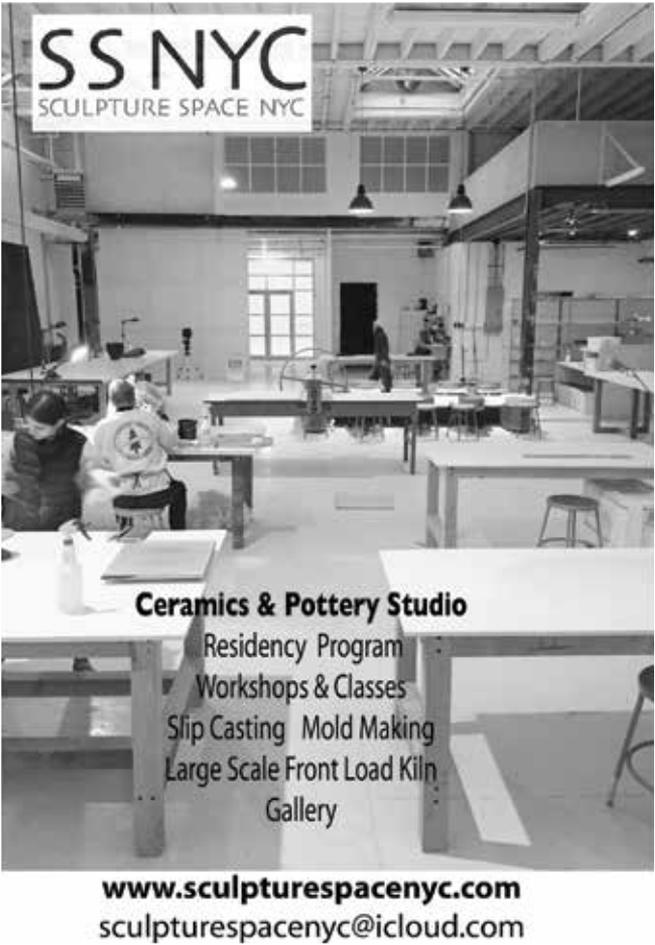


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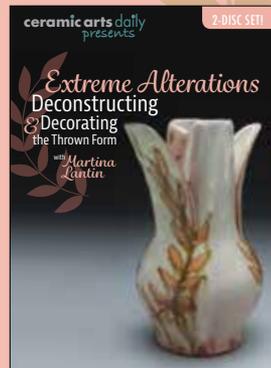
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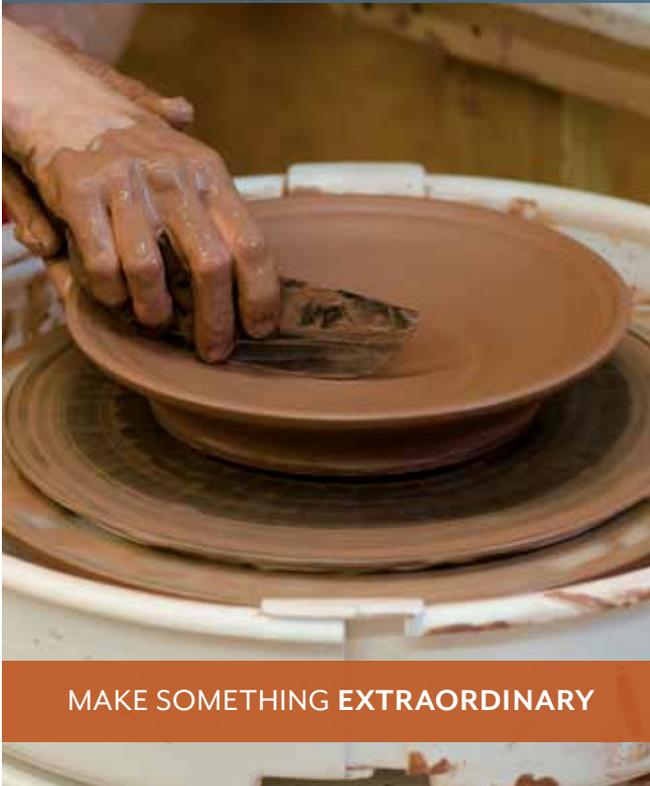


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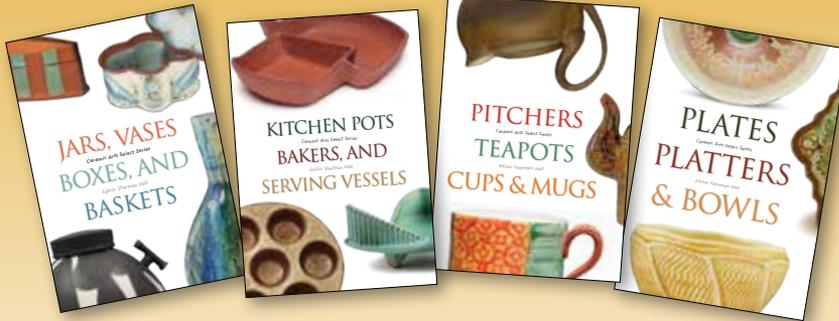


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call for entries

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international exhibitions

March 24, 2017 entry deadline

Nevada, Las Vegas "Naked and Refined" (May 4–28) from traditional firing techniques to innovative uses of oxides, underglazes and stains, we let the natural clay speak. All work must be 60% or more unglazed. Best of show cash award \$200. Fee: \$35 for up to 2 entries \$10 additional entries. Juror: Clayton Keyes with CAV's Peter Jakobowski. Contact Thomas Bumblauskas, Clay Arts Vegas, 1511 S. Main St., Las Vegas, NV 89104; 4information@clayartsvegas.com; 702-375-4147; <http://clayartsvegas.com>.

May 10, 2017 entry deadline

Virginia, Lorton "7th Annual Workhouse Clay International 2017" (August 12–October 8) open to all ceramic artists 18 years and older. All works must be primarily ceramics. Mixed media will be accepted only if ceramic materials are the primary media. Size is limited to artwork that fits through a standard door. Work must have been produced within the last 3 years. Juried from digital. Fee: \$30. Juror: Chris Gustin. Contact Dale Marhanka, Workhouse Arts Center—Ceramics Program, 9504 Workhouse Way Bldg. 8, Lorton, VA 22079; dalemarhanka@workhousearts.org; 703-584-2982; www.workhousearts.org.

May 10, 2017 entry deadline

Illinois, Chicago "The 2017 American Craft Exposition" (September 15–17) all media. Size is limited to artwork that fits through a standard door, 140 craft artists. Juried from digital. Fee: \$50. Applicants must submit their information and five (5) digital images. Contact info@jurying.net; 224-364-7270; americancraftexpo.org.

May 26, 2017 entry deadline

Nevada, Las Vegas "Serve It Up 2017" (July 6–August 27) Serve it up fills the gallery with functional work that answers the question, pottery is with no doubt art. From tumblers to bowls to serving vessels, if it belongs on the dinner table it belongs at Clay Arts Vegas. Fee: \$35 for up to 3 entries. Juror: Lauren Smith with CAV's Peter Jakobowski. Contact Thomas Bumblauskas, Clay Arts Vegas, 1511 S. Main St., Las Vegas, NV 89104; 4information@clayartsvegas.com; 702-375-4147; <http://clayartsvegas.com>.

July 14, 2017 entry deadline

Tennessee, Humboldt "Conductivity: The Many Faces of Copper in Ceramics" (September 1–30) sculptural and functional cups and mugs with copper used in the clay, glaze, or surface decoration. Open to US and Canadian residents 21 and up. Juried from digital. Fee: \$30 for 3 entries. Juror: Dick Lehman. Contact Eric Botbyl, Companion Gallery, 157 Three Way Ln., Humboldt, TN 38343; botbylpottery@gmail.com; 731-267-7784; www.companiongallery.com.

August 25, 2017 entry deadline

Nevada, Las Vegas "What Goes Bump In the Night 2017" (October 5–November 12) This annual show explores a darker side of ceramic art and rings in Halloween in Las Vegas. From night-mares to the darkness that might live in the soul, there are things that remind us of when we were children scared in the dark by things that go bump in the night. All work must be less than 100 pounds and fit through a standard door. Fee: \$35 for up to 2 entries. Juror: Magda Gluszek with CAV's Peter Jakobowski. Contact Thomas Bumblauskas, Clay Arts Vegas, 1511 S. Main St., Las Vegas, NV 89104; 4information@clayartsvegas.com; 702-375-4147; <http://clayartsvegas.com>.

united states exhibitions

March 7, 2017 entry deadline

California, Roseville "Purposeful Pottery" (April 14–May 27) open to artists 18 years or older. Work must not exceed 12 inches in any direction. Juried from digital. Fee: \$35 for non-members, members free. Juror: Katie Curler. Contact Katie Curler, Blue Line Arts, 405 Vernon St. #100, Roseville, CA 95678; info@bluelinearts.org; www.bluelinearts.org; 916-783-4117.

March 12, 2017 entry deadline

Pennsylvania, Sewickely "Thrown & Altered" (April 21–May 27) open to all thrown and altered ceramics, functional or non-functional. Must be more than 50% clay. Juried from digital. Fee: \$25 for 3 entries. Juror: Shoji Satake. Contact Alexandra Watrous, Sweetwater Center for the Arts, 200 Broad St., Sewickely, PA 15143; awatrous@sweetwaterartcenter.org; www.sweetwaterartcenter.org/call-for-artists; 412-741-4405.

April 4, 2017 entry deadline

Georgia, Duluth "The Hudgens 2nd National Juried & Invitational Cup Exhibition" (May 16–July 29) open to artists 18 years or older and living in US. Submit original clay cups made in past 2 years, must be available for sale; Hudgens gets 30% commission. Juried from digital. Fee: \$20 for up to 5 entries. Juror: Garth Johnson. Contact Angela Nichols, Hudgens Center for the Arts, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy., Bldg. 300, Duluth, GA 30097; anichols@thehudgens.org; www.thehudgens.org; 770-623-6002.

April 9, 2017 entry deadline

California, Brea "4th Clay & Glass Biennial: Juried and Invitational Exhibition" (July 22–September 15) artists residing in the US, 18 years or older. Artwork is to be composed of at least 75% clay, glass, or a combination of the two, and may be functional, sculptural, or installation. All entries must be original and executed by the artist within the past two years. Wall-mounted work must be ready for

hanging. Artwork may not exceed 100 pounds nor measure more than 96 inches in any direction. Juried from digital. Fee: \$30 for 3 entries. Juror: Suzanne Isken. Contact Beverly Crist, Association of Clay & Glass Artists of California (ACGA), 1 Civic Center Circle, Brea, CA 92821; acganational@gmail.com; www.acga.net; 714-990-7730.

April 21, 2017 entry deadline

Connecticut, Guilford "Front of the House: Dining Together in Objects and Images" (June 16–July 23) all media: this exhibition presents artisan serving ware, or art that represents gathering for a meal. Juried from digital. Fee: \$25 for up to 3 entries. Juror: Amy Kurtz Lansing. Contact Maureen Belden, Guilford Art Center, PO Box 589, Guilford, CT 06437; info@guilfordartcenter.org; 203-453-5947; www.guilfordartcenter.org.

May 1, 2017 entry deadline

New Jersey, Loveladies "Plates, Platters and Nothing Else Matters" (June 27–July 17) all work must be ready to hang on wall, no pedestals. Video will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Work must be for sale and primarily ceramic. Weight limit 25 pounds. Juried from digital. Fee: \$35 for up to 3 entries. Juror: Garth Johnson. Contact Jeff Ruemeli, Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts & Science, 120 Long Beach Blvd., Loveladies, NJ 08008; gallery@lbifoundation.org; www.lbifoundation.org; 609-494-1241.

June 1, 2017 entry deadline

New York, New York "Teapot" (September 15–October 6) Teapot submissions open to artists 18 years or older. Ceramics must be the primary medium. Cannot exceed 18 inches in any dimension. Completed in 2016/2017. Juried from digital. Fee: \$35 for 3 entries. Juror: John Neely. Contact Aimee Odum, Jane Hartsock Gallery, Greenwich House Pottery, 16 Jones St., New York, NY 10014; aodum@greenwichhouse.org; www.greenwichhouse.org/gh_pottery/jane-hartsock-gallery; 212-242-4106.

August 1, 2017 entry deadline

Virginia, Lynchburg "The Battle of the Bowls" (October 6–31) bowls of all design and intent. Juried from digital. Fee: \$30. Juror: David Crane. Contact David Emmert, Amherst County High School, 139 Lancer Lane, Amherst, VA 24521; thebattleofthebowls@gmail.com; 434-946-2898; www.thebattleofthebowls.com.

regional exhibitions

May 31, 2017 entry deadline

British Columbia, Salt Spring Island "The Salt Spring National Art Prize Call for Canadian Artist Submissions" (September 22–October 23) Canadian citizens and permanent residents who are 18 years and older (as of 01/01/16) 2D & 3D Visual Art. Juried from digital. Fee: \$25 per entry—3 eligible. Juror: Denis Longchamps, Naomi Potter, David Gameau. Contact Patti Bauer,

The Salt Spring National Art Prize, 114 Rainbow Rd., Salt Spring Island, BC, Canada; communications@saltspringartprize.ca; www.saltspringartprize.ca.

fairs and festivals

March 1, 2017 entry deadline

Maryland, Gaithersburg "Sugarloaf Crafts Festival in Gaithersburg" (April 21–23) open to functional and sculptural work. Work must be original design, artist must be present all three days at show to sell their work in person. Juried from digital. Fee: \$20/season. Contact Lorrie Staley, Sugarloaf Mountain Works, 19807 Executive Park Cir., Germantown, MD 20874; apply@sugarloaffest.com; www.sugarloaforcrafts.com/becomeex.html; 800-210-9900.

March 1, 2017 entry deadline

New Jersey, Somerset "Sugarloaf Crafts Festival in Somerset" (March 24–26) open to functional and sculptural work. Work must be original design, artist must be present all three days at show to sell their work in person. Juried from digital. Fee: \$20/season. Contact Lorrie Staley, Sugarloaf Mountain Works, 19807 Executive Park Cir., Germantown, MD 20874; apply@sugarloaffest.com; www.sugarloaforcrafts.com/becomeex.html; 800-210-9900.

March 1, 2017 entry deadline

Pennsylvania, Oaks "Sugarloaf Crafts Festival in Oaks" (March 17–19) Functional and sculptural work. Work must be original design, artist must be present all three days at show to sell their work in person. Juried from digital. Fee: \$20/season. Contact Lorrie Staley, Sugarloaf Mountain Works, 19807 Executive Park Cir., Germantown, MD 20874; apply@sugarloaffest.com; www.sugarloaforcrafts.com/becomeex.html; 800-210-9900.

April 1, 2017 entry deadline

New Jersey, Augusta "47th Annual Peters Valley Craft Fair" (September 23–24) 150 artists. Juried. Indoor booths. New: Reduced emerging artist fees/Wholesale options/Limited outdoor booths. Juried from digital. Fee: \$40. Juror: Marlene True, Keun Ho Peter Park. Contact Lindsay Ketterer Gates, Peters Valley Craft Center, 19 Kuhn Rd., Layton, NJ 07851; craftfair@petersvalley.org; www.petersvalley.org/html/Craft_Fair_Exhibitors.cfm; 973-948-5200.

May 1, 2017 entry deadline

New Jersey, Verona "Fine Art and Crafts at Verona Park" (May 20–21) all media. Canopy and professional display required. Juried from digital. Fee: \$405 for 10x12 space. Juror: Janet Rose, Howard Rose. Contact Howard and Janet Rose, Rose Squared Productions, Inc., 12 Galaxy Ct., Hillsborough, NJ 08844; howard@rosesquared.com; www.rosesquared.com; 908-874-5247.

classified advertising

Ceramics Monthly welcomes classifieds in the following categories: Buy/Sell, Employment, Events, Opportunities, Personals, Products, Publications/Videos, Real Estate, Rentals, Services, Travel. Accepted advertisements will be inserted into the first available print issue, and posted on our website for 30 days at no additional charge! See www.ceramicsmonthly.org for details.

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events

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"Porcelain: Color and Light" with Curtis Benzle. La Meridiana, Tuscany, Italy. September 10–16, 2017. Colored porcelain, translucency, and kintsugi. Lighting, sculpture, jewelry, and more. Fun, food, and fascination. Benzleporcelain.com. Class Information: info@lameridiana.fi.it. Questions: curtisbenzle@gmail.com.

Robbie Lobell Working with Flameware. April 29–May 1. Steven Hill's Journey Workshop, May 21–27 (1st of 3 sessions). www.alisonpalmerstudio.com. The Alison Palmer Studio, South Kent, CT 06785.

Take a workshop at gorgeous SNC TAHOE this summer! Matt Katz, Martha Grover, Andy Ruble, Randy Brodnax and Don Ellis, Kevin Snipes, Eric Sterns, and Michael Lucero. www.sierranevada.edu/workshkops; 775-881-7588.

Workshops at the enchanted Ghost Ranch, New Mexico: August 21–26, 2017: Jerry Bennett, Handbuilding with Paperclay. September 9–10, 2017: Lauren Karle, Sewing Clay. Sponsored by New Mexico Potters and Clay Artists (NMPCA). More Information and register: www.nmpca.com. 505-466-3070.

opportunities

1 year Post-Bac Student opportunity at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, AZ. Studio space, materials, and use of all kilns provided in exchange for taking 1 undergraduate college credit. Deadline May 1st, 2017. For

more information, contact Jason Hess at Jason.Hess@nau.edu.

4th Clay & Glass Biennial Exhibition: Brea, CA, July 22–Sept. 15, 2017. Artist call for handcrafted clay and glass. Juror: Suzanne Isken, Exec. Dir. Craft and Folk Art Museum, L.A. \$30 for 3 entries; info and entry at www.acga.net; deadline: April 9, 2017. Questions: acganational@gmail.com.

Craftsman House Gallery, Café & Studio, St. Petersburg, Florida is seeking artist-in-residence. Benefits include 24-hour studio space, use of electric and gas kilns, studio equipment, and gallery representation in a vibrant arts community. Responsibilities include working in the gallery, studio and café. Opportunity for paid employment for hours exceeding trade agreement. For information contact Jeff at 727-323-2787 or craftsmanhouse@gmail.com.

Create Pottery in Key West! Turn Key Studio & Gallery for sale. \$39,000 for all equipment, business name, and lease at great location. Call 305-923-6199 for more details.

Resident Opportunity: three-month summer program starts June 1 and ends in August with a noborigama firing. Nine-month to one-year program starts September 1. For additional information, jessiman@cubcreek.org, NCECA T47, or 434-248-5074.

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MOROCCO 2018, April 9–30. Meander through the Medinas of Fez and Marrakech soaking up medieval markets with their fabrics and crafts. Enjoy a camel ride into the desert. Be captivated by adobe castles, tile art, and Roman mosaics. Stay in Moroccan Riads and visit traditional potters. Denys James.

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SPOTLIGHT

queer theory in clay

Ceramics Monthly: You create two bodies of work—one sculpture-based the other commercial ware with homoerotic decals. Is one more important than the other?

Wesley Harvey: For me, both bodies of artwork are equally satisfying because they feed off of and inform each other. They both offer me what I need in my studio practice in regards to research and inspiration. The functional ware allows me to work in collage, which is one of my favorite mediums to play around with different ideas referencing my studies involved with Queer Theory. The sculpture-based body satisfies my need to work with the material of ceramics and still use my research in a three-dimensional format. At times, the collage imagery on my functional work can and will become a sculptural piece at a later date. Depending on deadlines/exhibitions, that is usually when one body of work will eclipse the other. Right now, I have two concurrent deadlines coming up: a solo exhibition of sculpture-based artwork and a group show of functional pieces. This scenario is actually my favorite, where I get to work on both bodies simultaneously, because they really do speak to one another in the studio during the making process.

CM: Who do you want these two bodies of work to speak to? The ceramics community, the LGBTQ community, both, or only you?

WH: I want both bodies of my artwork to speak to everyone. For the ceramics community, there is the connection of the material, whether or not someone enjoys or understands the imagery. For the LGBTQ community, the imagery/collage stands out above the material of clay. They are looking at the imagery first, because that is what is important, rather than the fact that it is a cup, plate, or sculpture. I think that, given our current social and political climate, this artwork, not only mine but also the work of other artists who deal with this subject matter, is more important than ever. As artists, we must express our views and

individuality and we must do it now! In the words of the Queen of Pop, Madonna, "Express yourself so you can respect yourself."

CM: Is there a time in the history of ceramics that you feel your work fits into or builds upon?

WH: I remember the exact moment when I was having a conversation with Malcolm Mobutu Smith as an undergraduate student at Indiana University. I was having a hard time figuring out what my artwork was about. He looked at me and said, "your work is about sex, so stop neglecting it and push it!" After that moment in the conversation, I knew what I had to do. I needed to use my voice as a positive force in the discussion of sexuality in ceramics and art. Sexuality in the history of ceramics is not new. I love to look at the forms from the Moche culture and the surface drawings from ancient Greece. Both cultures were dealing with deviant sexual acts in their imagery and started the discussion of Queer Theory without even knowing it!

My studio practice would not be where it is today without two very important ceramic artists who have had major influences in my artwork: Howard Kottler and Mark Burns. I love and respect both men as individuals and artists when it comes to sexuality in contemporary ceramics. I cannot thank both of them enough for the path they started and that I am allowed to continue on.

Photo: Judith Baumann.



Thank you to all the potters who applied to the SHIMPO Juried Teabowl Show!



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