

ceramics

M O N T H L Y



Cover: Nolan Baumgartner

Spotlight: Ayumi Horie

Clay Culture: Mashiko Renewal

Glazes: Cone 6 Oxidation and Cone 10 Soda

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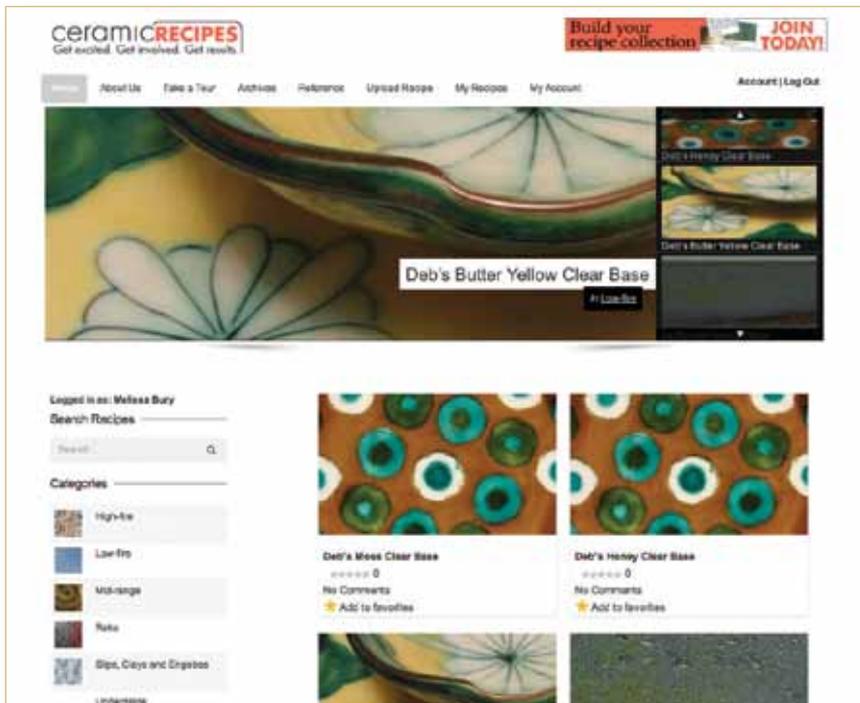
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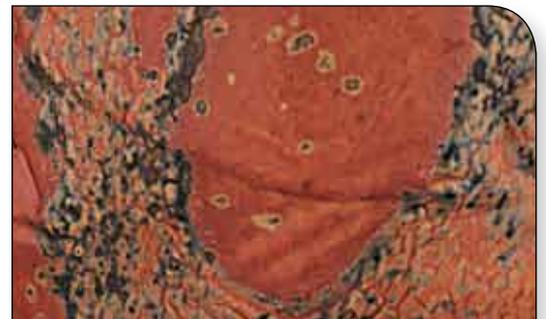
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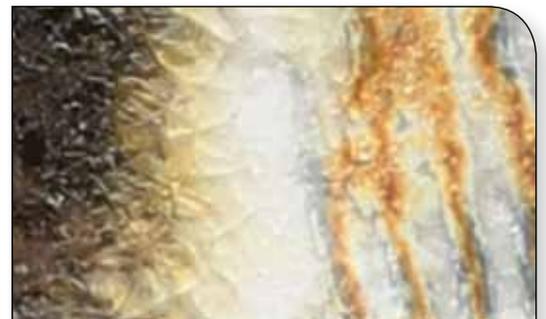
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Editorial

editorial@ceramicsmonthly.org
telephone: (614) 794-5869
fax: (614) 891-8960
editor Jessica Knapp
associate editor Holly Goring
assistant editor Forrest Sincoff Gard
editorial support Jan Moloney
editorial support Linda Stover
technical editor Dave Finkelburg

Advertising/Classifieds

advertising@ceramicsmonthly.org
telephone: (614) 794-5834
fax: (614) 891-8960
classifieds@ceramicsmonthly.org
telephone: (614) 794-5826
national sales director Mona Thiel
advertising services Marianna Bracht

Marketing

telephone: (614) 794-5809
marketing manager Steve Hecker
audience development manager Sandy Moening

Subscriptions/Circulation

customer service: (800) 342-3594
ceramicsmonthly@pubservice.com

Design/Production

production associate Erin Pfeifer
design Boismier John Design
digital design specialist Melissa Bury

Editorial and advertising offices

600 Cleveland Ave., Suite 210
Westerville, Ohio 43082

Publisher Charles Spahr

Managing Director Sherman Hall

Editorial Advisory Board

Linda Arbuckle; Professor, Ceramics, Univ. of Florida
Scott Bennett; Sculptor, Birmingham, Alabama
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contents

december 2014 volume 62, number 10



editorial

12 From the Editor *Jessica Knapp*

14 CM Interactive

exposure

16 Images from Current and Upcoming Exhibitions

reviews

58 Jack Sures: Ceramic Encounters

A recent solo exhibition of large and small-scale works by Jack Sures was on view at the Confederation Centre Art Gallery, in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada. *Reviewed by Matthew Kangas*

techno file

64 Blistering *by Dave Finkelburg*

This common glaze fault is more complex to solve than other related glaze flaws. Let's explore the causes to troubleshoot the problem.

tips and tools

66 Kiln Shelf Storage *by Nick and Miri Hardy*

We've all seen it, kiln shelves precariously stacked against a wall or even the kiln itself, just waiting to be tipped and broken. Try to end this nightmare with this inexpensive, DIY storage rack.

resources

77 Call for Entries

Information on submitting work for exhibitions, fairs, and festivals.

78 Classifieds

Looking to buy? Looking to sell? Look no further.

79 Index to Advertisers

spotlight

80 Here Until Not

Ayumi Horie discusses value, preciousness, and how she determines the pricing on her work.

17

cover: Nolan Baumgartner's dinner set, dimensions variable, wheel-thrown porcelain, slip, glaze, soda-fired, 2013.

clay culture

22 Mashiko Renewal *by Minori Thorpe with Ashley R. Barber*

The potters of Mashiko, Japan, have rebuilt studios, kilns, and museums, and also opened a new residency center. The first guest artist reunited the Leach and Hamada families in this storied pottery town.

26 Digin' Pots *by Steph Guinan*

Pairing up with a community garden to host a pottery sale, fundraiser, and garden tour all at the same time helped three artists to introduce their work to a wider audience, and give back to their community, too.

studio visit

30 Francisca Aldea Dávila, Santiago, Chile

Working in a small backyard studio can have some drawbacks, but the opportunity has allowed one artist in Santiago to start up a business and employ other artists in turn.

features

34 Building Conversations *by Nolan Baumgartner*

Dinnerware contributes to conversations around a meal; Nolan Baumgartner uses this same idea when creating sets, by building conversations between pieces.

38 Creating Traditions *by Lindsay Scypta*

Memories of childhood holidays (along with memories of the overworked host who never sat down) have led Lindsay Scypta to design her own sets for more contemporary traditions.

monthly method Finishing Details

42 Balance and Versatility *by Brenda Lichman*

Creating pieces that have strong relationships to each other and also function well involves consideration of size, scale, color, and how it all comes together on the table.

monthly method Slipped, Altered, and Soda Fired

47 Serving Up Functional Conversations *by Sarah German*

Making altered, wheel-thrown forms that fit together on trays or in caddies can be a challenge. The secret? Drawings, prototypes, templates, and unifying glazes and surface patterns.

50 Designing for Durability and Use *by Andy Shaw*

Shaw excels at making understated dinnerware with a sense of character and engaging surfaces that leave room for the food to be the focal point.

54 Verging on Collapse: Linda Sormin's Installations

by Kathleen Whitney

Linda Sormin's training as a potter is evident in the attention to detail and love of process and handwork in her sprawling installations.

glazes

41 Cone 6 Turquoise Gloss *by Lindsay Scypta*

49 St. Johns Black, Cone 6–10 *by Sarah German*

68 Slip and Liner Glazes for Cone 10 Soda Firing *by Brenda Lichman*

70 Flashing Slips and Bright Cone 10 Glazes for Soda Firing

by Nolan Baumgartner



38

from the editor

respond to jknapp@ceramics.org

I had the opportunity to see some of Andy Shaw's pieces when I was visiting family last week in Philadelphia. They were in an exhibition titled "Pottery by Design" at The Clay Studio that focused on utilitarian objects and featured videos of the artists talking about the ways they consider functionality and design as they work, and how they arrived at the decisions they made in the pieces in the show.

Shaw's tableware is part of our focus in this month's issue (p. 50), along with pieces by Nolan Baumgartner (p. 34), Lindsay Scypta (p. 38), Brenda Lichman (p. 42), and Sarah German (p. 47). The editorial staff asked these five artists a series of questions that covered both the practicalities of designing and making sets meant for use, and the ideas that drive each artist to create these kinds of pieces. The artists also share details about their studio process along with slip and glaze recipes.

Seeing Shaw's vase and cups in an exhibition at the same time that we were putting the finishing touches on this issue added to the experience. After reading and editing his article, selecting

images, working with our designer on the layout, talking with Shaw via email, then reading the final article the day before I left for my visit, looking at the actual work felt very special.

I find that this often happens to me: I've just read about an artist's work, then by some chance, have the opportunity to see it in person. It used to happen when I was studying art history in college and then visited a museum and, by coincidence, one of the pieces I had read about was in its collection. Now it happens after I've read an article or book, or while researching in preparation for a new article in an upcoming issue of CM, then go to a museum or gallery. There is the thrill of recognition, and the eagerness to get closer and learn more. I investigate more closely to answer questions or to find nuances not discernible in the images.

Since no one else was in The Clay Studio's gallery at that moment, I had the chance to get up close to Shaw's pieces to investigate the patterning below the glaze surface, and even surreptitiously touch the rims to see how truly generous but functional they were. I only wish that I had that same opportunity with the pieces made by each of the artists in this issue.

Although I have not had the opportunity to walk around one of Linda Sormin's installations, Kathleen Whitney's article on her work (p. 54) helped me to think about the physical interactions with the pieces and the observations and connections that come from the experience of being in a full-room installation. Watching Sormin's video about the process of assembling and interacting with her installations also provides greater insight, and we've included this in the digital edition so you can check it out, too.

In addition to other practical, how-to information in this issue, there are two articles that will help solve some common concerns. Techno File (p. 64) focuses on the causes and remedies for blistering in glazes, a problem that has plagued many of us. Have kiln shelves leaning against the wall or against your kiln? The Tips and Tools article (p. 66) offers a great DIY solution to get those shelves up off the floor to safety.



I snapped these pictures of Andy Shaw's vase and tumblers while visiting the exhibition "Pottery By Design" through November 30 at The Clay Studio in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Since we were working on this issue when I saw the show, I sent the pictures back to the rest of the editorial staff to enjoy. We have Shaw's video from the exhibition in the digital version of this issue, which you can access using your subscriber number (printed on your mailing label) on our website (www.ceramicsmonthly.org).

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Call for Entries

If you've been pursuing a career in ceramics for less than 10 years, consider submitting work to our Emerging Artist contest! The deadline is February 17, 2015. For more information, check out page 76.

For the September 2015 issue, we are asking readers to contribute images for a new contest with the theme "From Idea to Finished Form." We're interested to see how experimental play in the studio can lead to a finished piece. Entries must include two images, one of a piece that has potential, and the second showing a finished piece that resolves the ideas originating from the first one. We'll publish both images from the selected artists. The deadline is June 30, 2015. For more information check out the contest link in the right-hand sidebar on www.ceramicsmonthly.org.

Expanded Content

Subscribers can check out the digital PDF version of this issue online at www.ceramicsmonthly.org to see more work by featured artists Nolan Baumgartner, Lindsay Scypta, Brenda Lichman, and Sarah German.

There's also a video of Andy Shaw explaining the ideas behind his work for the exhibition, "Pottery By Design" at The Clay Studio in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In other bonus videos, Linda Sormin talks about the process and concepts in her installations, and filmmaker Yuki Kokubo visits her parents who are potters in Kasama, Japan, near Mashiko.

We also have an archive article by Leigh Taylor Mickelson on Andy Shaw's work from the October 2005 issue of CM, and two archive Clay Culture articles on the rebuilding progress in Mashiko, Japan, from 2011 and 2012.

Making Sets?



In this issue, we've asked several artists who create sets of functional work to talk about how they approach the process. If you create sets in your own work, share your own design steps on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram using the hashtag #FunctionalDiscussionsSets.

Research and Explore



For this issue, we've added Pinterest boards on soda-fired kiln designs, soda-firing techniques, alternative pottery sales ideas, stackable dinnerware, and the rebuilding of Mashiko, Japan.

Corrections

Frank Lloyd Gallery's web address was written incorrectly in the Exposure section of the November 2014 issue. The correct link is www.franklloyd.com.



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Alfred University chooses Bailey Wheels



At the 2014 NCECA conference, a team from the Division of Ceramic Art at Alfred University were on a mission to determine which brand of wheel they would select to outfit the university. They were looking at all aspects of power, construction, durability, ease of service, value, and ergonomic design.

They already had individual histories from owning the major brands of wheels, including Bailey. After their evaluation, they chose Bailey Wheels. Alfred now has 75 Bailey ST-XL wheels in their department.



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Bailey has upgraded the drive system to deliver more power to the wheel head. With the STXL wheel running at a slow speed of 60 rpms, we asked the Alfred team to try and stop the wheel head (while wearing gloves) by applying resistance inwardly on the circumference of the wheel head. They couldn't stop the wheel from spinning. The XL has very impressive power!



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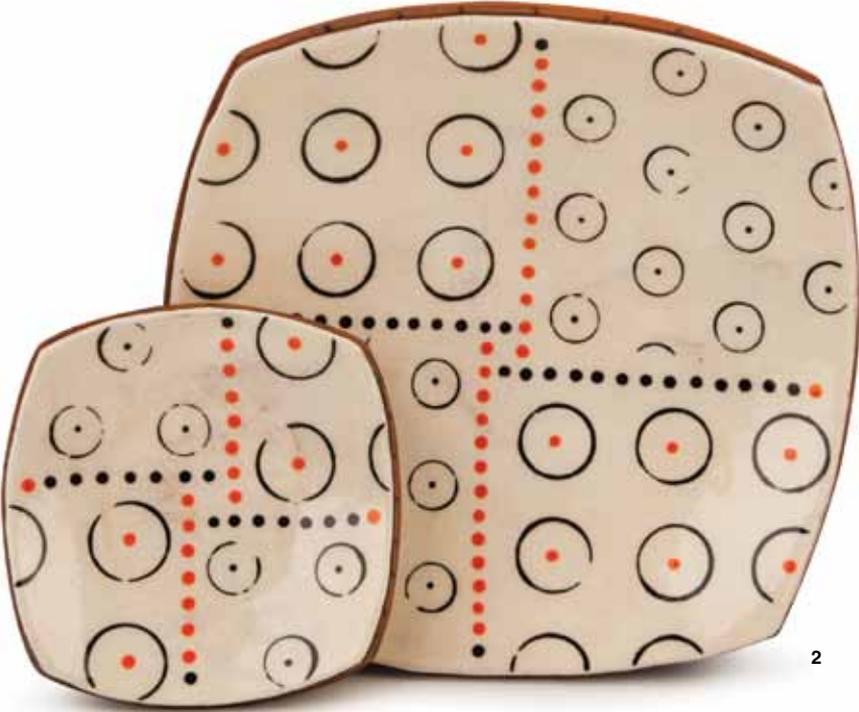


exposure

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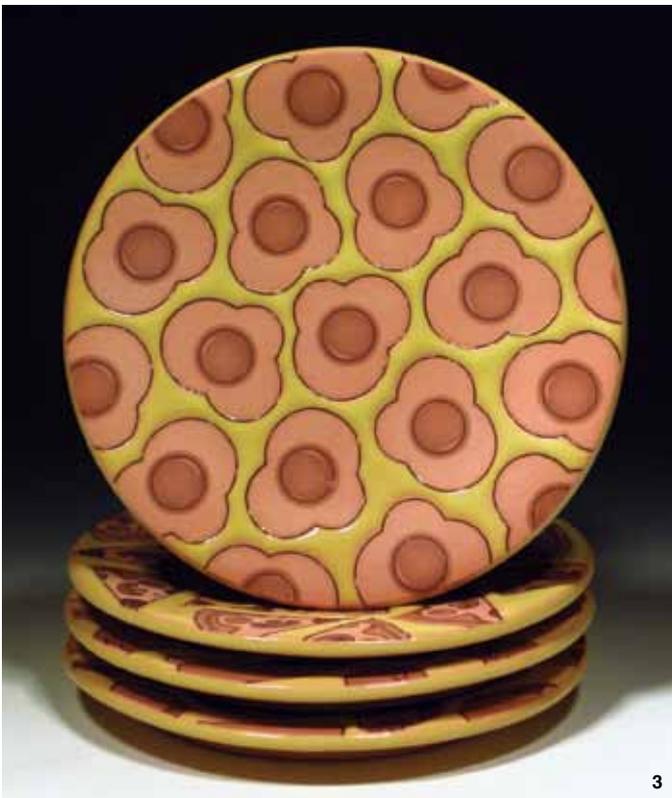
5



6

1 Billy Cho's sushi set, to 8¾ in. (22 cm) in diameter, wheel-thrown and altered white stoneware, sprayed multiple glazes, fired to cone 10 in reduction. 2 Lisa Pedolsky's sushi set, to 8 in. (20 cm) in diameter, slab-built terra cotta, multiple glazes, electric fired to cone 03. 3 David Crane's sushi set, to 7¾ in. (20 cm) in diameter, slab-built stoneware, salt fired. "30x5: The Sushi Service" at AKAR Gallery (www.akardesign.com) in Iowa City, Iowa, through December 12. 1–3: Courtesy of AKAR Gallery. 4 Matt Ziemke's vessel, 15 in. (38 cm) in length, earthenware, 2014. 5 Linda Lopez's untitled, 15 in. (38 cm) in length, ceramic, 2014. 6 Brooks Oliver's *Domino Vase*, 21 in. (53 cm) in length, ceramic, 2014. "Six Under Thirty-Six," at Santa Fe Clay (www.santafeclay.com) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 9–February 21, 2015.

exposure



1 Mike Helke's group of plates, earthenware, 2014. *Photo: Peter Lee.*
2 Clay Leonard's *Gesture Cup Pair*, 6 in. (15 cm) in height, slip-cast porcelain, fired to cone 6, gold luster, 2014. 3 Andrew Gilliatt's *Egg Plate Set*, 9 in. (23 cm) in diameter, colored porcelain, 2013. 4 Megan Mitchell's cups, 4 in. (10 cm) in height, porcelain, silkscreen transfer, slip inlay, fired to cone 10 in reduction, 2014. *Photo: Mark Anthony.*
5 Stuart Gair's pitcher set, 13 in. (33 cm) in height, stoneware, 2014. "Let There Be Light: Lillstreet's 39th Annual Holiday Show and Sale," at Lillstreet Gallery (www.lillstreetgallery.com) in Chicago, Illinois, November 21—December 31.





6 Jennifer Hansen Gard's *Portrait of Woman with Her Plate*, Project NOLA: Under the Bridge series, 2014. 7 Jennifer Hansen Gard's plate, Project NOLA: Under the Bridge series, 8 in. (20 cm) in diameter, wheel-thrown porcelain, multiple slips and glazes, 2014. 6-7 Photos: Forrest Sincoff Gard. 8-9 Steven Young Lee's *Red, Blue, and White*, detail and installation view, each unit 4 ft. 2 in. (1.3 m) in height, porcelain, cobalt inlay, copper inlay, white slip, aluminum, glass, 2013. Courtesy of Ferrin Contemporary. "Conscious Clay," at Grafly Gallery, Ulrich Museum of Art (www.ulrich.wichita.edu) in Wichita, Kansas, through December 14.

exposure

1 Jan Kollwitz's *Mizusashi* (water container), 8¼ in. (21 cm) in height, stoneware, 2014. *Photo: John Davenport.* "Unwavering Pursuit: The Ceramic Art of Jan Kollwitz," at Pucker Gallery (www.puckergallery.com) in Boston, Massachusetts, through January 4, 2015. 2 Mike Weber's teabowl, 5¼ in. (13 cm) in diameter, Shino, natural forming ash glaze, wood fired, 2014. "Mike Weber" at Sara Japanese Pottery (www.saranyc.com) in New York, New York, December 4–6. 3 Mary Cuzick's carved bowl, slip, wax design, 10 in. (25 cm) in diameter, porcelain, 2014. 4 Allen Reed's *Dragonfly*, 17 in. (43 cm) in height, porcelain, 2014. 5 Dot Kimura's *Sabi #7*, 16 in. (41 cm) in height, paperclay, wire, 2014. "Clay/Form/Surface," at San Diego Potters' Guild (www.sandiegopottersguild.org) in San Diego, California, through January 5, 2015.





6 Linda Cordell's *Jolie-Laide Masquerade*, 20 in. (51 cm) in height, porcelain, resin, foam, bronze, 2012. "A Clay Bestiary," at Hunterdon Art Museum (www.hunterdonartmuseum.org) in Clinton, New Jersey, through January 4, 2015. 7 Jo Taylor's *Ensemble ii*, 13¾ in. (35 cm) in height, porcelain, 2014. Photo: John Taylor. "Jo Taylor Ceramics: Debut American Show," at Alchemy 9.2.5 (www.alchemy925.com) in Belmont, Massachusetts, through December 12. 8 Justin Gerace's serving platter. "Wesleyan Potters 59th Annual Exhibit and Sale," at Wesleyan Potters (www.wesleyanpotters.com) in Middletown, Connecticut, through December 14. 9 Thaddeus Erdahl's *OP 1*, 41 in. (1 m) in height, clay, slip, underglaze, glaze, engobe, encaustic, wax, 2014. "Yes Sir No Sir This Way That," at Jane Hartsook Gallery, Greenwich House Pottery (www.greenwichhouse.org) in New York, New York, December 5–January 2, 2015.



mashiko renewal

by Minori Thorpe
with Ashley R. Barber

Over the last three years, Mashiko, Japan, has undergone an impressive reconstruction process as the potters and residents continue the recovery after the Tohoku earthquake and nuclear disaster in 2011.

Mashiko is a legendary town where East met West and a glorious and influential partnership transformed the art of ceramics. Shoji Hamada returned to Mashiko, Japan, after collaborating with Bernard Leach and founding Leach Pottery in England. Hamada made Mashiko not only his home, but also made it his studio by building a noborigama kiln and only using local pottery materials. His philosophy and influence revolutionized ceramics and established Mashiko as a world-renowned pottery center. Mashiko has intrigued me because of its rich ceramic history. I was devastated when I heard that the 2011 Tohoku earthquake had affected the town. In 2012, I visited Mashiko and witnessed the disastrous effects of the earthquake. In my recent visit in May of 2014, I got to see the rise and new beginnings that are going to help Mashiko flourish in the future.

My Introduction to Mashiko

In the fall of 2012, I planned a trip to Japan to visit my family and to visit a town that I hear about so often, Mashiko. Since my retire-

ment I have been working with ceramics. I have often heard many American ceramic artists mention Shoji Hamada and Bernard Leach as prominent leaders in Modern ceramics, and of their connection to Mashiko. Growing up in Japan I was unaware of the ceramic history of this town. I was naive about many Japanese cities and towns with their unique ceramic styles and characteristics.

Another reason for my visit to Mashiko was to see the effects of the earthquake and radiation exposure from the Fukushima nuclear disaster. I remember reading an article by John Baymore in the *2012 Ceramic Arts Yearbook* (pp. 40–42) about the significant destruction and contamination that had occurred. According to the article the majority of the anagama and noborigama were damaged. After the earthquake about 95% of the noborigama kilns were damaged. The degree of damage to these 35–37 kilns ranged in severity. About 80% were repaired, and a little less than 20% of the damaged ones were unable to be repaired because of funding limitations and the limitations on available fuel sources, (non-contaminated wood).



About 30% of the repaired kilns are not being used because of the high cost for the wood to be shipped into Mashiko. The \$10,000 in funding they received to help rebuild the kilns ran out in 2013. As a result of these factors, many of the younger artists are turning to electric and gas firing kilns as an alternative for wood firing.

The wood piles that were used to fuel the kilns were contaminated by radiation and cannot be used for up to 50 years. The potters are shipping in wood from other places in Japan and some are even getting crate and pallet wood imported from America. If wood is being used from near Mashiko, the ashes must be tested for levels of radioactive cesium. As of now there are no tests being done on the clay or glaze, just the wood ash.

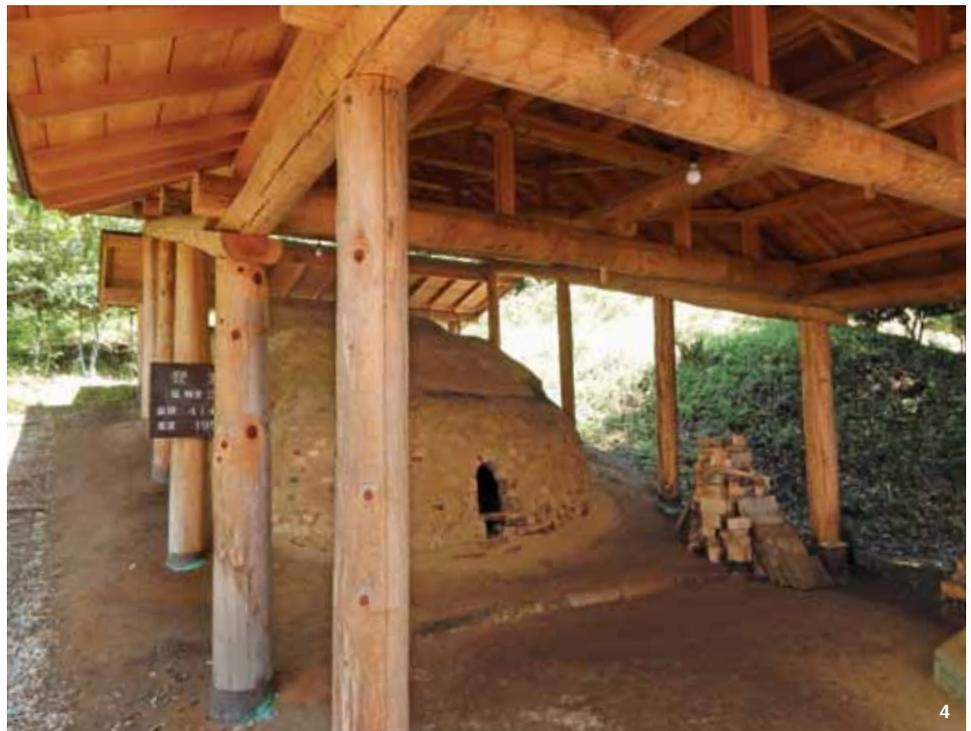
The Potters of Mashiko

Many foreign ceramic artists were forced to move out of the Mashiko area. According to my friend Ryoi-chi Furuki, who owns the Mashiko Ceramic Art Club (an inn and bed and breakfast) where I stayed in 2012, five or six potters from foreign countries left Mashiko because they were strongly advised to do so by their embassy. Three or four of these potters went back to their home country and the remainder relocated to other parts of Japan. One year after the earthquake one foreign potter returned to Mashiko. In contrast, most of the local potters stayed.

Some artists had planned to start a cultural exchange program where they would visit another county, but this was cancelled due to the earthquake. During my visit in 2012, when I talked Furuki, he mentioned that 2011 was the most difficult and depressing year for everyone in Mashiko.

Building on Mashiko's Heritage

While I was in Mashiko during the Hijisai Festival (Earth Art Festival), I observed small crowds of customers. I visited Shoji Hamada's Sankokan, which included Hamada's ceramic works, his noborigama, and his house. Nine buildings were damaged to varying degrees, but they were all repaired by the time I visited. In Shoji Hamada's collection, some



1 Noborigama kiln at the residency site that is presently used, May 2014. 2 Artist residency housing equipped with two apartments and a conference room, May 2014. 3 Shoji Hamada's studio with kick wheels, May 2014. 4 Shoji Hamada's noborigama that was repaired after the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, May 2014.

of the damaged pieces were able to be repaired and displayed, some pieces were beyond repair and will be kept in storage, and some are still being repaired today. The stone building, which displayed his works, had extensive cracks in the walls. His old noborigama was fragmented and in the midst of being repaired during my visit. I felt saddened and powerless seeing the town like this. After my trip, I thought about what I could do to help this town recover more quickly and bring it back to the level where it was before the disaster.

Mashiko is a town whose pottery heritage grew out of knowledge, philosophy, and influence of Shoji Hamada and Bernard Leach and other subsequent leaders in the field. I thought about the effect these



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5 Philip Leach demonstrating on the Leach treadle potter's wheel during his residency in Mashiko, May 2014. 6 Minoru Thorpe with Tomoo Hamada, the grandson of Shoji Hamada, at his home and studio, May 2014.

two names in ceramics today and if there was a way those two names could reunite in Mashiko to encourage people to return. I talked to my friend Ryoichi Furuki in Mashiko about my idea to reunite the Hamada and Leach legacies. During our conversation, I learned that Mashiko was building an artist guesthouse and trying to start a residency program. I decided to write to the Mashiko Tourism Bureau, City Council, and Tomoo Hamada to initiate the invitation to a Leach descendant as the first artist in the residency program. After a few months wait, I received a letter from Hamada. In addition to continuing work as a potter, he is also the vice chairman of the orga-

nization launching the Mashiko Museum Residency Program. Hamada informed me that Philip Leach was to be the first visiting artist, and his residency was scheduled for the spring of 2014. When I heard that they chose Philip Leach as the first artist invited to this program I was very pleased and excited. I booked my flight to visit during Leach's residency four days later.

Hamada also explained that a successful businessman, Minoru Ootuka, a Mashiko native, donated a large sum of money to the people of Mashiko after he learned that a sizable donation from all over the world was being used to help rebuild kilns and studios. He was very moved and impressed by this and decided to make a generous donation himself. Half of his donation was used to build the Mashiko Arts and Crafts Residence, which consists of two rooms for visiting artists and kitchen and dining areas

and a large conference area. The other half of Ootuka's donation went toward program operations and funding for the artists. The residence building is located next to the Mashiko Art Museum and also adjacent to an existing spacious studio with two large kilns. Opposite from the studio there is one of Shoji Hamada's large noborigama kilns. This noborigama is fired once a year and is open to the public.

The First Residency

When I arrived, Philip Leach was already there to start his two-week residency. There was one lecture and two workshops scheduled during his stay. I was able to attend the second open studio workshop where Leach demonstrated using the Leach treadle potter's wheel and slip trail glazing for his works. Leach commented after the workshop that "My talk about my home and how I work was well attended. The open studio days without an official interpreter were very good—about 15–20 people came, mostly young potters. During the afternoon with an interpreter, about 100 came."

He made 45 pots while in Mashiko, and took one home. The museum is holding on to the remainder for a possible exhibition and sale.

Having both a Leach and Hamada descendent in Mashiko at the same time really felt like a new beginning for the program and the town. Witnessing this event along with the progress in rebuilding, and knowing that additional residencies are planned has been a truly inspiring experience. I am glad I could see Mashiko rise above all its struggles and to continue improving.

Read two additional archived clay culture articles on Mashiko's rebuilding process in the digital PDF edition of this issue available at www.ceramicsmonthly.org.





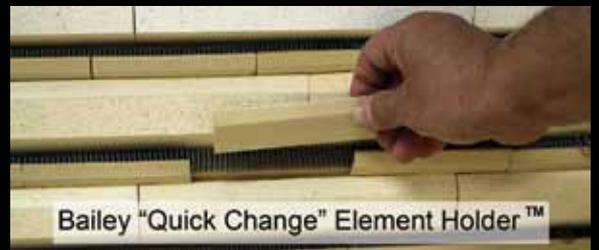
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CLAY CULTURE

digin' pots

by Steph Guinan

Potters know how to bring food to their pots, but recently three North Carolina artists got creative and brought their pots to the food, introducing their work to a wider audience and helping their community, too.

It was on a misty morning in the mountains of North Carolina that a trio of potters (Linda McFarling, Shane Mickey, and Liz Zlot Summerfield) kicked off a weekend event called Digin' Pots, which was held at the Dig In Yancey Community Garden.

The combination of pottery and landscape is not foreign to those in this region, but this particular location reinforced the notion that the event was about community. Speaking of choosing the site for the sale, Summerfield said, "So much about a home studio sale is trying to bring your community in." She continued, "It just kind of fit." The three potters came together around this event to share their work and bring visitors to the garden. Their event planning efforts were

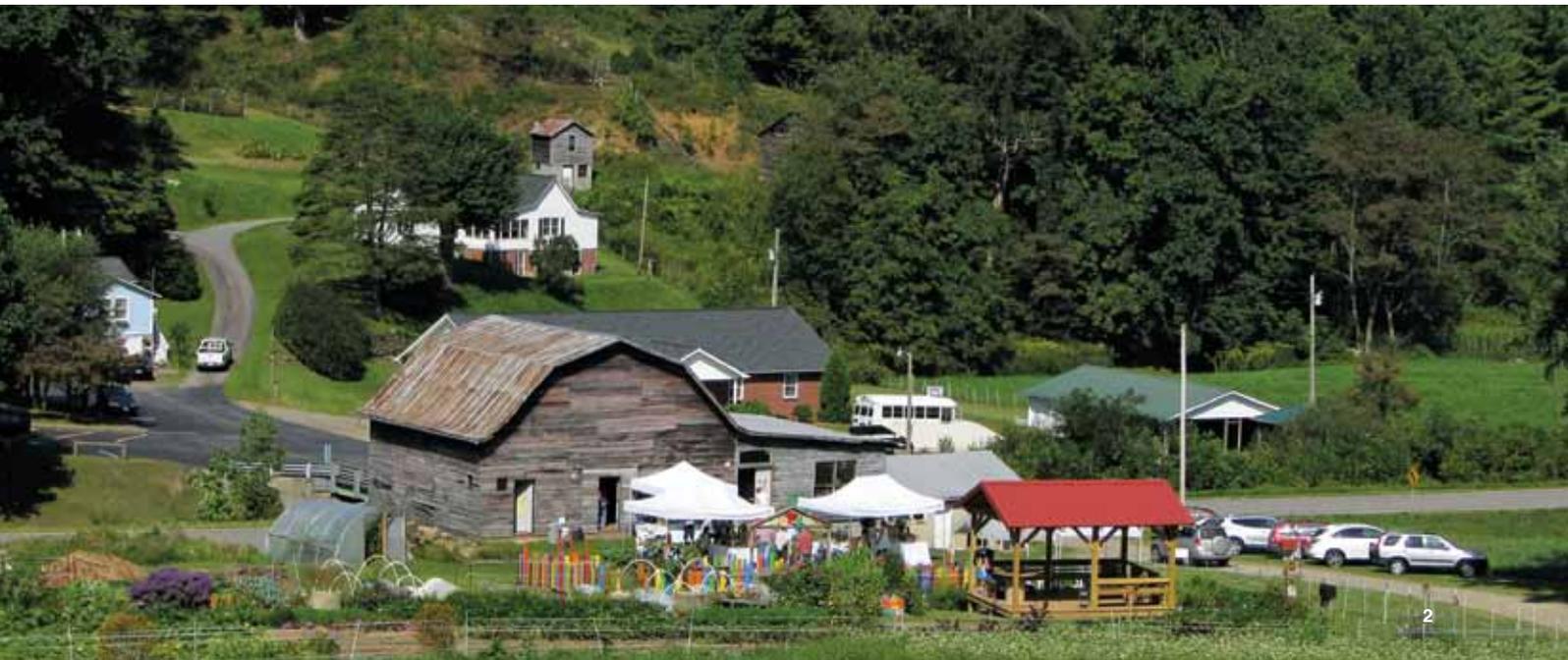
rewarded. The displays of pottery adjacent to the lush end-of-summer gardens had a simple elegance and the hominess of a cool pitcher of iced tea. The more than a few hundred visitors who came to the two-day event were so eager about the pottery that vases of garden-cut flowers were being pulled from the display and sold to customers.

Mickey remembered being struck by what a perfect venue it would be for a sale. "It was just beautiful." He explained, "The garden's here and the barn is here, and there's this big flat area." With room for outdoor tents and room for parking, the location even had the benefit of being close to the main roads, making it easy for visitors to navigate. Hosting the event at the garden also allowed for the added draw of having garden tours, and if the weather should turn, the sale could be moved inside the barn.

McFarling donated a piece of her land to the organization that runs the garden, and her studio is adjacent to it. The site overflows with vibrancy and the goodwill generated by the endeavor of growing food solely to feed hungry community members.

McFarling explained that the garden has been in operation for five years, and now two of the three acres are being cultivated. The effort is producing about 6000 pounds of produce which is dispersed to hunger relief agencies, soup kitchens, and senior centers. "And we're also having people stop by and saying: I'm hungry," said McFarling, and so they're given a box of fresh produce.

There are advantages to hosting your own event with a community partner and small group of artists. Addressing the slower pace of a sale such as this, McFarling said that it tends to be "much more social." In turn, Mickey noted that it's a captive audience. "I think it's a chance to





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1 Visitors to the Digin' Pots event browsing the artists' work with the community garden in the background. 2 An overview of the community garden site and the tent set up for the pottery sale. 3 Linda McFarling's ewer, porcelain, glaze, soda-fired, 2014. 4 Shane Mickey's vase, porcelain, slip, glaze, wood/salt-fired, 2014. 5 Liz Zlot Summerfield's spice set, earthenware, slips, underglaze, glaze, steel caddy, 2014.

be more intimate with customers. They're not distracted by 30 other vendors or other artists. I like the idea of that."

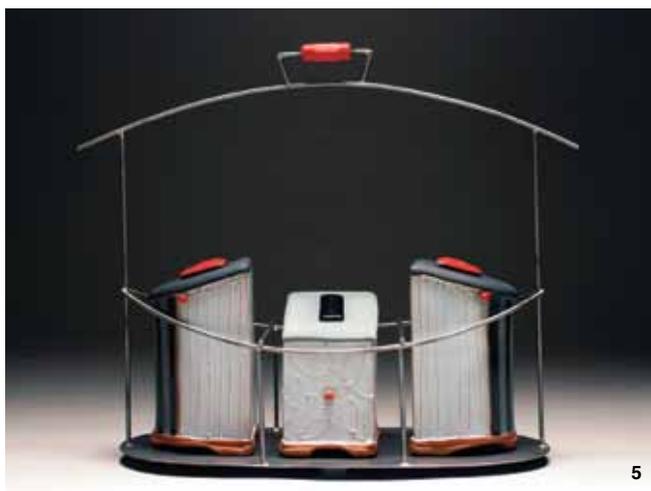
In comparison to other sales, all three artists were pleasantly surprised at the attendance. Summerfield explains "More people attended and bought than we expected for a first year sale. Sales were over 100% of what each of us had expected . . . People came specifically for our work and to support us." She cited the garden, the weather, the supportive community, and the proximity to town as influencing factors to the high attendance and sales.

However, the logistics of such an endeavor are not to be discounted. The trio had to unite around a vision and work collaboratively towards their shared goal. When dividing the tasks, each person could play to their strengths with someone taking on scheduling, someone being the marketer, and so on. Agreeing that the group's dynamic was important for the success of the event, they knew that their camaraderie and complementary skills would help them meet the challenges.

"When you are in a show that is put on by someone else, they are in charge of the advertising," said Summerfield. Speaking to the increased responsibility of hosting a DIY event, she continued, "I think we all have a lot of knowledge around that, but we've really had to pace ourselves. That's been a big learning curve, and I think it will get easier each year." In particular, the focused efforts of marketing and advertising are crucial, because hosting a great event would be pointless if no one knew that it was happening.

A total of 600 postcards were mailed to the trio's combined contacts, and an additional 2000 distributed within a 1½ hour radius. Two email messages were sent to a combined list of 1000 contacts. Facebook was used to promote the event and post images of work in progress. Posters were hung in the two county area, and the group posted in the events category on regional and national online venues.

The logistical minutiae even extended to the morning of the event when McFarling realized an overlooked detail that they would



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of course need trash cans, and so she ran up to her studio to grab the necessary supplies.

Mickey said, "There are a lot of home studio sales and a lot of things to go to see pottery- and art-wise. This is just a little different. And we hope to make it more so in the future—including bringing in more kids activities." With each artist having a connection to children or grandchildren, it seems a natural evolution that a community event would seek to increase its friendliness towards families. And the Children's Garden directly next to the sale's site provides an excellent venue for learning disguised as fun. Rather than children being a hindrance for families to attend, McFarling joked that they hoped they could get the kids to dig up some potatoes while the adults were shopping.

the author *Steph Guinan is a freelance arts writer and owner of Flapjack Media. She lives in Penland, North Carolina. For more information, visit www.FlapjackMedia.com.*



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"This piece is from my series, *Dreamers*, in which I use animal imagery to satirize human behavior. I use

Velvets *at Cone 5*

for their *vivid hues, versatility,* and *dependability* at mid-range."

-Andrew Perry Davis



Watch Andrew's process at velvets.info

Francisca Aldea Dávila

Santiago, Chile



Just the Facts

Clay
stoneware

Primary forming method
throwing

Primary firing temperature
bisque 1940° F, gold luster
1436° F, in an electric kiln

Favorite surface treatment
white glazed surface

Favorite tools
sandpaper and my handmade
tools and knives for polishing

Studio

My studio is located in Santiago, Chile, in a small building constructed behind my mother-in-law Mónica's house. She owns the studio, but she is currently focused on teaching ceramic painting techniques on bisqueware to other women, so she doesn't use it very much.

I share the studio space with a fellow ceramic artist named Valentín. We divide tasks. Valentín is in charge of developing the slip-casting molds, preparing and mixing the clay, and throwing. I clean up thrown pieces, slip cast work, and clean, carve, polish, glaze, and load the kilns. When I am working on small orders, I do all the steps by myself.

We usually divide the work by days. One day, if the temperature is too hot, the morning is used to throw or to cast molds, in the evening the pieces are removed from the molds and left out to air dry until the next day. The following day is for sanding and polishing the greenware, and loading the kiln for a bisque firing. This is followed by a day of glazing and in the evening the pieces are loaded into the kiln for the glaze firing. I unload them the next morning once the kiln has cooled.

My favorite aspect to the studio is that there is silence when I need it. I normally come up with my best ideas when I'm by myself with no noise around me. I really appreciate silence and now that I think about it, I think it helps my creativity.

My least favorite aspects are that we have a lot of molds, but we still don't have an organized system for them, and the only plan to their storage is that the heavier ones are kept on the floor. In addition, some of the molds are so heavy we just store them in the studio even after they are no



longer being used rather than discard them. The dust that results from sanding and polishing is also difficult to deal with. Although I wear a mask, sometimes the dust gives me a headache, and it also severely dries out my hands.

Santiago is a great location in terms of inspiration. It is surrounded by mountains, and in an hour you can either be hiking and skiing, or you could be at the beach. In the winter, we can even see the snow-capped peaks of Cordillera de Los Andes mountain range. The down side of this great location is that the city is getting more and more crowded as people discover it. Due to the heavy car traffic and traffic jams, many of us use bicycles and the metro to get around town rather than drive, which can make transporting work difficult.

There is also a high level of contrast in the city in terms of quality of life. There are splendid buildings built at the beginning of the 20th century, and a block away from these, there is not-so-pretty, poor quality, mass-produced construction. You can find nice neighborhoods with interesting approaches and attitudes toward design, food, and art, and only a few kilometers away, this changes

drastically, and the people living there must cope with very sad and poor living conditions. We have a high level of inequality in this country and a high proportion of people living in poverty, but despite this, we believe and act as if we are on the threshold of truly modern development.

I think Santiago is becoming a creative city but we need to promote it locally and internationally, fix the issues surrounding inequality, and make it possible for artists to continue to afford to live and work here. People who work locally and support local businesses are currently finding that it is getting harder to find good raw materials and workers, due to the rising cost of space in commercial areas that's pushing material suppliers, craftspeople, and skilled laborers out of the city.

Paying Dues (and Bills)

I have learned everything about ceramics from my co-worker Valentín, who has worked in ceramics for many years, and from my mother-in-law, Mónica. Valentín has perfected his techniques and



understanding of the material, and is the ceramic expert in the studio. There is another workshop where we work with wool and develop blankets. There I work with Pedro, Hilda, Doris, and Bernarda who have also taught me a great deal. All together, we form Minka Inhouse. *Minka* is a native word used to describe a collective work with a social purpose and benefit for the community.

After studying design, I worked for three years at different retail stores, in their home-decor departments. I worked as a visual merchandiser, creating set designs. I was involved in textile production and ceramics but had no idea of how things were made. I used to create illustrations, send them via email to China and receive ceramic plates with the illustrations silkscreened and painted on them. After three years of doing this, I realized that it was too boring and that I wasn't learning anything.

While still working as a visual merchandiser, I had the chance to attend a few industry events in Europe and China. After one of those trips, I realized that many of the products I had seen could be manufactured here in Santiago, so I decided to learn how to do it. I started searching for talented, local craftsmen who could teach me how to work in my two favorite materials; ceramic and wool.

While looking for and then working with these craftspeople, it didn't take me long to realize that retail companies have destroyed almost all of our domestic manufacturing. Today just about everything we consume in Chile is mass-produced overseas.

After a long search, I met amazing people that were still in love with their work no matter the adversity. This is how I came up with

Minka Inhouse. I spend around 45 hours per week in the studio, and this is my full-time job. I am fully committed to my career and Minka Inhouse.

Body & Mind

To address the physical wear and tear from my studio work, I practice Bikram yoga at least four times a week. This helps me stretch my body and release some physical tensions, especially in my hands.

I am currently reading a book by Richard Sennett called *The Craftsman*. It is very inspirational and encouraging. He makes some amazing reflections about the handmade/artisan movement along with history and describes the value of the unique and personal objects our hands are able to create. I think one of my favorite parts of the book is when he talks about the magic involved. The primary state of plastic clay is incredible, as it goes from an unformed lump into a cup or vase. I am constantly surprised by this material, and this gives a whole new meaning to my job.

To relax, I treat myself to some nachos or tacos with a *michelada* (beer with lemon and salt) and just enjoy the moment. Sometimes I also listen to music. Last month, listening to Jay Z helped a lot to recharge my creativity.

Marketing

I've been primarily selling online, through our website and Etsy to my local costumers. This year, I started a campaign on Kickstarter to get help from supporters, so we can make Minka Inhouse sus-



tainable over time. The successful campaign (it was fully funded by supporters in July) means that we can buy more raw materials and pay fair wages to the craftspeople who work with us. I haven't sold wholesale ceramic pieces. I think wholesale only works out for mass-produced items coming from China. I am positive that the prices of our products must be fair, in terms of both the final consumer and the craftspeople. I don't feel comfortable increasing my prices just to fit in the wholesale system.

For me, the presentation of the ceramic products is really important, and an aspect where I can have a big impact on the way they are interpreted by potential customers. Because of this I always ask photographers to take pictures that include both the product and a bit of the setting or environment behind it.

My main marketing strategy is always being up to date on internet research. I am constantly searching for new blogs and communities related to ceramic, wool, and especially to home issues. I also search for international fairs regarding home decor, for example Maison&Objet, Ambiente, and Tendence. I also attended Tokyo Designers Week in October.

Here in Santiago we have also started a new and interesting crafts movement. Together with a group of friends, each of them specialized in a specific craft (shoes, bags, clothes), we have an organized event called Mercado Local, where we invite our costumers to join us once every three months and we share our new developments with them. Usually we have some wine, food, and music. It is fun, informative, and helps us to build a community.

My biggest disadvantage in marketing and selling work is that I am really far from many countries in the world. Shipping costs are insanely expensive. But I am thinking of new solutions to this problem. I have the support of the government and we are trying to negotiate best prices with the most reliable couriers. So far, I have found that if you don't want to pay too much you have to keep your products below 2 pounds (1 kg). Shipping below this weight is more affordable and the client isn't overwhelmed with the price. So I think that in the future I just have to work directly with the client and not with distributors.

I am trying to grow our market with our Kickstarter campaign. The only way to achieve true sustainability for Minka Inhouse is by being known outside of Chile, because we have a smaller market for handmade goods here.

The funding of the Kickstarter campaign has been my most important online success so far. I hope it becomes an example for other small businesses and entrepreneurs here and in other countries.

Most Important Lesson

Be patient, and calm. I am still learning to put this lesson into practice!

www.minka-inhouse.com

www.kickstarter.com/projects/775389328/minka-inhouse

www.facebook.com/MinkaInhouse

www.etsy.com/ch-en/shop/MinkaInhouse

*Nolan
Baumgartner* **BUILDING
CONVERSATIONS**



1 Two cups, to 6½ in. (17 cm) in height, wheel-thrown porcelain, soda-fired, 2013.
2 Liqueur set, to 14¼ in. (36 cm) in height, wheel-thrown, porcelain, soda-fired,
2014. 3 Whiskey set, to 14 in. (36 cm) in height, wheel-thrown porcelain, soda-
fired, 2011.

Ceramics Monthly: What is your main concern when making sets?

Nolan Baumgartner: When I am making a set, I think about how the pieces have a conversation with each other. I want them to be beautiful and functional, and I want them to have at least one or two common stylistic threads or motifs. They can—along with the food, the drink, the company, the music, etc.—be a part of the conversation, but also, even as inanimate objects, they can enter the conversation at the dinner table with their own input.

CM: When planning your sets, do you consider sizes of pieces, number of pieces, and what will be served on your dinnerware?

NB: I definitely consider size when making pieces. I try to keep my functional pieces on a sane scale—I definitely don't subscribe to the bigger-is-better ethos. I have seen too many hand-made dinner plates that look like each plate could serve a family of four (or more!).

I have been thinking a lot more lately about what sorts of food or drink might be served with or on my pieces. I think these factors determine what kinds of forms and how many I might be making. I personally really enjoy comfort foods. So, I have integrated gravy boats, butter dishes, and soup tureens into my formal vocabulary. I don't think it is really my place, though, to necessarily determine what might be served on my work. Unless the form has a very specific use (i.e. gravy boat or butter dish), I like the idea that it can be used almost universally.

CM: Your soda-fired sets include pieces with a sense of variety within parameters in terms of form and coloration. When creating a set, how and when do you determine these parameters?

NB: Basically, I start with very simple parameters. I do research to come up with the basic shape of one element of the set. For the liqueur sets, I researched historical sets to come up with the basic bottle form, as well as the number and general size of the small cups to include. I also wanted to have a tray or caddy for them (the tray ended up being the biggest challenge of the whole process, but that is a story for another day). I then decide



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4 Gravy boat and ladle, to 8 in. (20 cm) in length, wheel-thrown porcelain, soda-fired, 2013. 5 Three jars, to 12 in. (30 cm) in height, wheel-thrown porcelain, soda-fired, 2014. 6 Dinner set, dimensions variable, wheel-thrown porcelain, soda-fired, 2013.

which elements or basic shapes need to be transmitted throughout the forms—maybe it is a strong line or a simple curve. I don't want all of the forms to have all of the same lines or all look the same—this is where the variety comes from. I think I spend more energy trying to figure out how different forms can exist as a set than the other way around.

Regarding the surface treatments, again, I start out with simple parameters. When my more recent, bolder treatments began, I had the ellipses, and that was pretty much it. I realized pretty quickly that if everything was colored in bold ellipses (especially because the colors are quite often complimentary colors), it was really hard on the eyes and brain. I found that having a few pieces glazed with the same colors but lacking the pattern not only eased eyestrain, it made the set more cohesive—not unlike the proverbial rug tying the room together. My motifs have evolved a lot (away from strictly ellipses), even in the last six months, but the basic idea is the same.

The simple answer is that I start out with one form and one basic motif, and every other form is derived from that. Having everything fit together well and functioning as it should is the ideal.

CM: What techniques, both in terms of making and decorating, do you use, and how do these play into the sense of a unified set of varied pieces?
 NB: My work is, for the most part, thrown and altered porcelain, and I soda fire to cone 10 (ish...sometimes higher). I use two porcelains—one for tall forms and one for wide forms. I think the most unifying element is probably the surface treatment. I use a very small number of both flashing slips and glazes, most of which, admittedly, have been collected from either studio glazes or from various artists' palettes. Narrowing my scope of colors (at least temporarily), and keeping a small motif vocabulary (at least through each series) has helped me maintain cohesion through my forms. Overall, I think simple repetition (throwing forms over and over) gives my forms a similar feel and size. It really doesn't hurt to have 30 or 40 things to choose from if you need to make a six-piece set.

the author Nolan Baumgartner teaches at the University of Utah, in Salt Lake City, Utah. To see more of his work, visit <http://nolanbaumgartner.com/home.html>.

70
RECIPES

Lindsay Scepta
CREATING TRADITIONS



Ceramics Monthly: Serving sets are inherently made to serve a group of people and to gather people around food and conversation. Is this something that you consider when making sets? Do you consider sizes of pieces, number of pieces, and what will be served?

Lindsay Scypta: It is! I begin a body of work by planning a party, the number of guests, the type of occasion, the food and the table. Making these decisions first helps to define the objects as food-specific serving ware for a particular number of guests. Much of my studio research pivots around the table, from historical formal dinners where footmen wove in and around guests, to the modern meal where the frantic hosts miraculously prepares and serves the meal. I've been investigating the practicality of vertical stacking and how these sculptural vessels have the potential to define the movements and rhythm of the meal. When guests arrive at the party, the meal is contained within the central vessels, the tableware is stacked, and containers for the accoutrements become the architectural finial. I imagine my vertical towers as a starting point for conversation, where the tower is unstacked carefully and food served socially. For me, the importance of the table is indisputable, therefore, I am looking to bring people back to the table through my vessels where the necessity of participation encourages engaged social interaction and intimacy.

CM: What additional elements add to this overall idea of function?

LS: Recently I've been considering what it means to make new traditions. I've been exploring what ideal holidays, birthdays, and celebratory meals might be and how they could be plated and served. My childhood was filled with traditions and ritual-based serving ware (Christmas dishes, a birthday breakfast-in-bed tray, an heirloom cake stand for celebrations) and I feel deeply compelled to create dishes that could help users to create their own traditions.

CM: You are interested in varied resources from Victorian etiquette and the stone tracery patterns in Gothic stained glass windows to the history of table settings/tableware/table service, and presumably the socially codified eating habits related to the history of the table. How are the stacking sets that you create designed to be used?

LS: This whole process of making sets began with a vivid memory of my mother, the ever-inspiring hostess, pouring her energy into an incredible five-course dinner party. Witnessing this clear reality that a multiple-course meal (post historical footmen) demands plating and prep as the party continues on without the host, saddened me in a way that inspired this alternative. I designed these towers around what may be wishful ideas of a social interaction centered around food where everyone at the table has the opportunity to participate. In some ways, these towers could serve as fabulous social experiments, however for me it is my deepest desire for them to be used one way or another and then return to their upright position to serve as a sculptural vessel of visual pleasure.

CM: When designing stacking sets, how do you begin to configure the stack, which pieces do you design first, and why?

LS: I begin with the base, which needs to be sturdy but also ornamented in a way that helps to direct the eye up to the top of the tower. After spending time in New York City, I realized that the bases of skyscrapers caught my



1 Tea Service, 12½ in. (32 cm) in height, wheel-thrown, slip-trailed, stamped, incised, and sprigged decoration, fired to cone 6, 2014. 2 Lindsay Scypta working in the studio. 3 White Afternoon Tea, 20 in. (51 cm) in height, wheel-thrown, slip-trailed, stamped, incised, and sprigged decoration, fired to cone 6, 2014. 1–3 Photos: Loren Maron.

attention but the abundance of ornamentation at the tops kept me lingering. I try to work this way with my own towers, where I'm conscious of the form at the base and aware of the need for ornament at the finial. Once the base is thrown, I carefully document the measurements in my sketchbook and begin to build up the tower piece by piece. After a day of drying, I return to the base to begin trimming, again working up the tower to the top piece and carefully documenting and reviewing measurements. When it's time to decorate, I begin with the top accoutrement and work my way down, cascading sprig appliques and stamped designs throughout.

CM: For individual dinnerware sets, how do you choose the surface embellishments?

LS: I pull my visual research together to create a palette of tools, stencils, stamps, and sprigs inspired by the negative and positive space of Victorian fretwork, the depth of stone tracery in Gothic cathedrals, and the construction lines and layering of fabric in high-fashion gowns. I apply this palette of textures to the forms I make based on my historical research, often inspired by the books I am reading and recent museum visits. Last winter, I read a slew of books that covered subjects such as deconstructing intimate space, the history of common ingredients used in our daily meals, and the histories of forgotten advancements of the modern table. This inspired me to create elevated vessels to honor foods like ice cream, tea, and salt where the historical research informed my decorative choices.

the author *Lindsay Scypta is a studio potter and adjunct professor at Owens Community College in Toledo, Ohio. She received her BFA in Ceramics from Alfred University in 2008 and her MFA from The Ohio State University in 2013. Last year, Scypta was an artist in residence at the Clay Art Center in Port Chester, New York. To see more of her work, visit www.lindsayscypta.com. Follow Scypta on Facebook (facebook.com/LindsayScyptaCeramics) and Instagram (@lindsayscypta).*



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4 *Soup for Two*, 17 in. (43 cm) in height, wheel-thrown, slip-trailed, stamped, incised, and sprigged decoration, fired to cone 6, 2013. *Photo: Brittney Troesch.* **5** *Breakfast Celebration*, wheel-thrown, slip-trailed, stamped, incised, and sprigged decoration, fired to cone 6, 2014. *Photo: Jessica Ozment.*

FINISHING DETAILS by Lindsay Scypta

Glazing begins when the pots are still on the wheel. I throw with my glazes in mind, leaving room to trim a generous foot skirt, which will catch my runny glaze. Once bisque fired, I go over the foot skirt, rims, and handles with a 3M fine-grit sanding sponge (1). I am careful to feel for any sharp edges around the body of the piece as my stamping process can create small burrs. After a quick damp-sponge wipe down to remove the dust, I'm ready to get glazing!

To keep my brain from exploding, I have limited my glaze choices to green matte, white matte, and brown matte glazes, along with one clear liner glaze. I have smaller containers of accent glazes. If time allows, I line all the pots' interiors the night before with a clear glaze to allow appropriate time for drying. This is when I write my decision about color in pencil on the pot. Once the pieces are dry, I come back with a squeeze bottle and trail a thick, shiny, purple glaze in the desired areas (2) followed by a green shiny glaze, which I usually brush on (3). Lastly, I dip the entire exterior of the piece in a matte glaze. I've discovered that the combination of a dry matte glaze and a shiny glaze creates movement—but be careful, I've had many pots stick to shelves in the process of developing this glaze combination.



G184 TURQUOISE GLOSS

Cone 6 Oxidation

Dolomite	6.7 %
Gerstley Borate	14.0
Whiting	8.6
Kona F-4 Feldspar (sub Minspar 200)	47.2
EPK Kaolin	2.6
Silica	20.9
	<hr/> 100.0 %
Add: Zinc Oxide	6.7 %
Mason Stain 6315	6.3 %
Copper Carbonate	2.0 %

Ice Cream Bowls, 7 in. (18 cm) in height, wheel-thrown porcelain, slip-trailed, stamped, incised, and sprigged decoration, fired to cone 6, 2014.



Brenda Lichman

BALANCE AND VERSATILITY



1

Ceramics Monthly: What are some of the considerations that come into play for you when making sets? Do you consider sizes of pieces, number of pieces, and what will be served on your dinnerware?

Brenda Lichman: Pottery can be central to a lively dinner conversation and it can strengthen awareness of our relationships with family and friends. The best part of each day for me is when we pause as a family, sit down at the dinner table, and talk about our day—both the best parts and the frustrating

parts. I strive to make work that adds to these kinds of conversations through richness, tactility, and warmth as a reminder of health and home.

Cooking and nutrition are really important to me, and so is the joy of eating! Some of my work is made with specific foods in mind. For instance, the oval dish that I use for guacamole considers both the serving size of the recipe and the scooping action across the form with a tortilla chip. These things are important to the

68
RECIPES

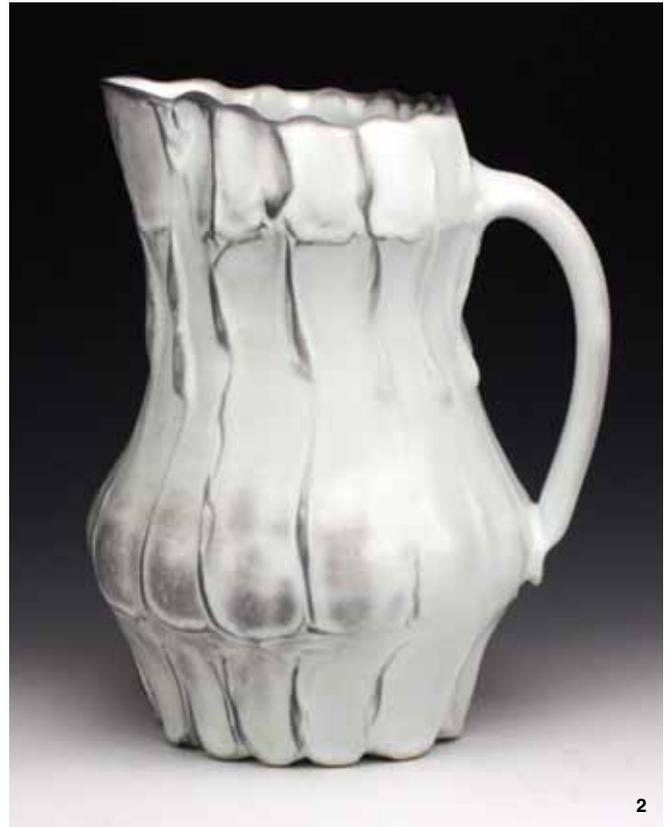
46
PROCESS

success of the work. I do think about the other foods that might accompany that, but many of my forms are also versatile so that different matches can be made. What's important to me is that the pots not lose their relationship to each other, even when they have a strong relationship to their function. I give a lot of thought to sizes and numbers of pieces so that the composition of the place setting and the table has a good balance of textures, forms, and soda surface/color. For example, the scale and height relationship between a bowl and a tumbler, or the diameters of a stack of larger and smaller plates need to balance each other without being too much the same.

CM: What additional elements are central to your sets?

BL: My interest is mainly in relationships between individual pieces and smaller groupings of pots. When making, I'm very conscious of how a whole table might come together, but I think it's important for the user to make some of those decisions. I think of the table as a dance floor where dancers can pair off or form groups, depending on what's right for the music that's playing at that time.

CM: When creating a soda-fired set, the atmosphere of the kiln can change the surface of each piece dramatically, depending on placement. What kind of planning is involved for you when loading a kiln that includes a tea set, or a set of tumblers and a pitcher that are meant to work together?

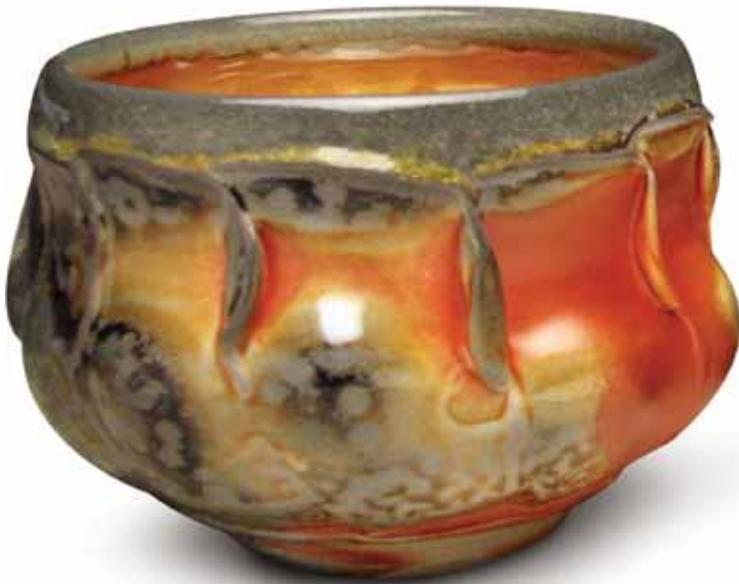


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1 Bowl, 4 in. (10 cm) in height, porcelain, Brenda's Titanium Butter glaze, soda fired, 2012. 2 Pitcher, 9 in. (23 cm) in height, porcelain, Phil's 103 White glaze, soda fired, 2014. Courtesy of Red Lodge Clay Center. 3 Set of mugs, 4 in. (10 cm) in height, B-Mix, Ted's New Orange Slip, soda fired, 2008.



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BL: When loading my work into the soda kiln, I already have an idea of the load before I even start. I make forms that work well in certain areas of the kiln and there are specific areas in the kiln that some glazes and flashing slips work better in than in others. I basically use four different types of glazing for one load, with the intention that they will all relate through color and soda surface.

The white glaze that I use, Phil's 103, is a popular glaze for atmospheric firings. This is the only glaze that works well applied using the dipping process. I glaze one third of the pots for the kiln load with it. It is a perfect glaze as a soft white base for my sets and it presents the color and texture of the food really well.

When loading a pitcher or teapot with matching cups, I will place the pouring vessel with at least four cups around it. This helps to ensure that I will get at least two cups that I feel will work well with that pitcher form. Teapot sets are similar except that I put two cups near the handle, which faces the firebox, and two cups near the spout.

CM: How do you determine the proportional sizes of the thick slip lines and facets on pieces in a set?

BL: The thick slip is added to the piece mainly for formal reasons. Scale is important when considering the slip decoration. A smaller



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4 Set of bowls, 3½ in. (9 cm) in height, B-Mix, Ted's New Orange Slip, soda fired, 2008.
5 Cream and sugar set, 4½ in. (11 cm) in height, porcelain, Brenda's Titanium Butter glaze, soda fired, 2012. 6 Teapot, 5 in. (13 cm) in height, porcelain, Ted's New Orange Slip, soda fired, 2014. *Courtesy of Red Lodge Clay Center.* 7 Dinner place setting, 8 in. (20 cm) in height, porcelain, Phil's 103 White glaze, soda fired, 2014.



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form like a tumbler needs to have the lines closer together. The slip lines fit the form more tightly and close together, highlighting the verticality of the form. The slip also acts as a tactile element and creates areas for fingers to interact with it while in use. With larger pieces such as a large serving bowl or a pitcher, I have a little more freedom with the slip. There is still a certain proportion of lines in relation to the scale of the piece, but the lines will be wider and slip can be thicker since the piece will not be used in as intimate a way as a cup.

the author Brenda Lichman is an artist and educator living in Wichita, Kansas. For more information and to see more of her work, visit www.brendalichman.com.



SLIPPED, ALTERED, AND SODA FIRED by *Brenda Lichman*

The pots begin on the wheel. Simple forms are thrown with a soft, feminine profile focusing on accentuating the belly or the hip of the pot. This is where I want to create the most sense of volume and strength in the form.

I accent the form with a thickly applied porcelain slip. The slip is a porcelain clay body that is watered down to a thick, yogurt-like consistency, then passed through a 60-mesh screen to improve the texture and flow.

The slip is applied to the form using a Mudtools rib (specifically the red Shape 4, polymer rib, which has the corner point and creates a crisp line under the thick line of slip). I apply the slip with a quick, confident gesture as I move the rib up the form, in a similar way to some slip trailing techniques, but with a rib (1). There is a slight pause when I lift the rib to create a thick luscious drip in the middle of the line, encouraging fluid contours along the pot.

I work on a banding wheel, which helps me to move around the form with a direct and intentional speed in my gesture (2). After the slip is applied, I use the lines as a type of grid or base for my altering. I first alter the belly by pushing out the form with my finger between each slip line (3). I am looking for a constant interaction between form and surface by pushing the form out through the surface lines. This process creates a sense of volume that celebrates generosity and strength. I then alter the lip of the form by pinching, pulling, and stretching the clay in an upward motion between the slip lines (4). This creates an undulating lip that accentuates the areas of the volume that were previously pushed outward (5).

When glazing for the soda kiln, I feel my forms are best enhanced with sprayed flashing slips. The spraying gives me a chance to accent the pushed out areas of the form by layering the flashing slips in a circular motion. The push outs are highlighted slightly through this process and then are enhanced in the soda firing as well (6). I do not leave it up to the soda kiln to do the magic; I set the work up for as much success as possible.

In addition to glazing entire pieces with Phil's 103 White glaze, I also use it as the white liner glaze for my other pieces, so there is a nice consistency and balance of all the forms on the table. The pieces glazed entirely with Phil's 103 White glaze are loaded mainly on the bottom shelves of the kiln, in the back, (or sometimes on the middle) of the shelf. I enjoy the soft flux of soda on these pieces, leaving visual room for the food and complimenting the other pots on the table.

Forms, such as my oval bowls, teapots, and pitchers have more of a directional aspect and are placed close to the firebox and on the top shelves. I take special care to orient the pot to the firebox so that the path of the flame and soda emphasize the details of a handle, belly, or spout. The design of the kiln, a cross draft, is taken into account and these forms are glazed in a couple of different flashing slips that aid in recording the pattern of the flame and soda coming across the kiln.

The atmosphere in the soda firing—with its lighter and heavier deposits of fluxing soda, carbon, and flashing—intensifies and enhances the volume of the forms. It also brings out the butteriness of the glazes and activates the vibrant color of my flashing slips.

Sarah German

Serving Up Functional Conversations



Ceramics Monthly: Serving sets are made to gather people around food and conversation. Is this something that you consider when making sets?

Sarah German: The best gatherings consist of good friends, good food, and good conversations. If we're lucky, they also include great functional pottery to serve with and to talk about. It is this thought that inspires me to create my functional serving sets; the possibility that something I created might be a part of an incredibly memorable moment for someone.

CM: Do you consider the sizes of pieces, the number of pieces, and what they will be used to serve? What additional elements are central to your sets that add to this overall idea of function?

SG: When developing plans for a serving set, I consider the occasion and how many people might be using it. Will it be used at a large party or a smaller, more intimate event? Will it be a sit-down dinner or a casual evening of drinks?

I also believe that a beloved serving set can often influence the type of gathering being held. For example, a drinking set designed for two to four people, allows for a relaxed and small social gathering. The pieces chosen are determined by what is being served. Generally, my tumblers hold 12–20 ounces, allowing for water, tea, beer, or a mixed drink. A hard liquor or whiskey set might hold 7–8 ounces per cup to allow for mixing and the bottle holds enough for four people to drink all night long. A flask is made with one shot glass to make it an individual experience.

Something that is set out on a dining table will contain more pieces, generally six to eight, for a larger social event. These could include dinner sets (dinner plates, salad plates, bowls, and cups), a condiment set with handmade spoons, or something like my cob knob set (handles for serving corn on the cob).

Other sets can be found on the table on a daily basis: a sugar and creamer set in a tray that sits next to the coffee pot, and salt and pepper shakers—either paired with oil and vinegar ewers, or a centerpiece vase.

Most of my sets are for eight people or less, possibly because my own gatherings are small. I feel that you can't really have quality time with family or friends if there are too many people to divide your attention.

CM: When creating a stackable set, how do you design the pieces so that they work well together? For your stacking bowls or cups with



2

1 Cups and caddy, 8 in. (20 cm) height, wheel-thrown and altered Laguna B-Mix, Continental Clay's Mid-fire Graphite Black glaze, fired to cone 6 in an electric kiln, 2013. 2 Whiskey set, 14 in. (36 cm) in diameter, wheel-thrown and altered Laguna B-Mix, St. John's Black glaze, fired to cone 6 in an electric kiln, 2012.

caddy, what is your decision making process when dividing the surface between a solid color and patterned sections?

SG: The functionality of my pieces is very important to me. Surfaces must be smooth and nice to touch with both the hands and lips and be pleasant to use with other non-ceramic utensils. If the pieces or containers have handles, those handles must be comfortable to grip, whether it is with a small or large hand. If a set has a central container or caddy, the pieces must fit easily and the caddy must be safely transported with the pieces inside. Additionally, pieces need to be able to be stacked and stored securely. There is nothing worse than hearing clinking pottery from the cupboard or china hutch when you walk across the room.

When creating a set, I begin by working compositionally in a sketchbook. I consider what the piece will be serving, as well as how many people it will serve, and whether it needs a tray or caddy or any other additional pieces. Most of my pieces begin as a blank cylinder thrown on the wheel. The cylinder is then highly altered through ovaling, darting, removing sections, and building with slabs. This can make fitting sets together difficult, which is why the original sketching and



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3 Condiment tray, 18 in. (46 cm) in length, wheel-thrown and altered Laguna B-Mix, Continental Clay's Mid-fire Graphite Black glaze, fired to cone 6 in an electric kiln, 2013. 4 Flask and shot glass set, to 4½ in height, wheel-thrown and altered Laguna B-Mix, St. John's Black glaze, fired to cone 6 in an electric kiln, 2012.

planning phase is so important. When making a set for the first time, many mistakes can be made with the altering. Once I find a form or specific cut that is successful, I make a paper template to use the next time I construct the set.

The surface of my work is generally decorated with an indirect screen-printed pattern and bright translucent glazes combined with areas of deep opaque glazes. The decorating and glazing process is definitely something I take into account during the initial design

ST. JOHN'S BLACK

Cone 6–10 Reduction/Oxidation

Nepheline Syenite	25 %
Albany/Alberta Slip.	75
	100 %

Add: Cobalt Carbonate 5 %

The St. John's Black glaze is intended for cone 9–10 reduction, although I have used it in various atmospheres and temperatures. At cone 10 reduction it has an opaque, almost metallic, semi-gloss quality. Fired in an electric kiln to cone 10, the glaze has a very high gloss, but shows variations in thickness. I currently fire it at cone 6 in an electric kiln and it is a nice opaque satin glaze.

and sketching phase. I find a balance of pattern and solid color through compositional consideration of the entire set. A solid black tray might be balanced out by a black printed pattern and the black interiors of the accompanying pieces, while the main bodies of the pieces have a brighter glaze. It is very important that the set looks good compositionally when all together as well as that the individual pieces be able to stand successfully on their own. This means that the individual pieces have both patterned sections and solid-color surfaces. The areas of solid color are most often found on the tray or caddy, as the liner, on the lid and/or foot of a piece, and on attachments such as handles or knobs. The main bodies of the pieces are almost always patterned.

the author Sarah German earned an Art: Studio degree from the University of Northern Iowa in 2006 with emphases in ceramics, sculpture, and printmaking. She is a part-time studio potter, producing work for galleries, art festivals, and exhibitions from her home studio in Austin, Texas. See more of her work at www.sarahgermanceramics.com.

Andy Shaw

DESIGNING FOR DURABILITY AND USE



Ceramics Monthly: What elements are central to your sets that add to their function?

Andy Shaw: Function has always been the foundation of my work. The transfer of my time and efforts into a physical object that I can share with others and that they can fit into their lives brings me great satisfaction. The *Tableware* series addresses utility within the parameters of functional dishes, components of which include the round and multiples. As a potter, I have loved using the circle as a starting place to develop other shapes but I found that those shapes confused many people about function. Since most of the dishes in my growing-up years were round, I started to think that a round bowl implied soup, cereal, or ice cream before asserting itself as an object. I liked this thinking and adopted the round form to communicate use. At the same time, I began to see the limits on the presentation of single handmade dishes and how they can sometimes suggest gift, one-of-a-kind, or something that would run interference on utility. So I started to exhibit plates and bowls stacked and cups grouped in fours as if ready for a friend to pour a round. To me, multiple dishes suggested a serving portion rather than non-use. Clients can use or not use the tableware to their liking. In making these design decisions for myself, I was simply trying through form to communicate my objectives effectively.



1 Dinner plate, 10 in. (25 cm) in diameter, wheel-thrown porcelain, water-etched pattern, celadon glaze, fired to cone 10 in reduction, 2014.
2 Tumbler, 4¼ in. (11 cm) in height, wheel-thrown porcelain, water-etched pattern, celadon glaze, fired to cone 10 in reduction, 2014.
3 Stack of dinner plates, 10 in. (25 cm) in diameter, wheel-thrown porcelain, water-etched pattern, celadon glaze, fired to cone 10 in reduction, 2014. 1–3: Courtesy of Schaller Gallery.



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CM: How have the patterns on your work evolved over time?

AS: The patterns started out as a way to fill the surface. Drawing does not come naturally to me, so I started working with lines and grids. Pretty simple. Inevitably that became dull and I needed to figure out something else, so I made slight changes to one grid square, repeated that in every square and voila, a pattern emerged. I've painted well over 100 patterns and the work has since evolved to be a study of these slight changes and the resulting patterns. Most recently, the grid as a physical part of the waxed and water-etched relief pattern has dropped away. It is now the underlying structure rather than part of the finished pattern—less obvious, but still essential.

CM: What functional considerations do you find most important to keep in mind as you create work?

AS: Design decisions often mean that to have one objective, another must be relinquished. At best, I'd like my work to be used regularly. Formally, a crisp rim would



5



4 Vases, 17 in. (43 cm) in height, 2013. Photo: Kevin Duffy. 5 Espresso mug, 3 in. (8 cm) in height, 2013. 6 Dinner plate, 10 in. (25 cm) in diameter, 2014. 5–6: Courtesy of Schaller Gallery. 7 Dinner plate with shrimp, 10 in. (25 cm) in diameter, 2012. 8 Serving bowl, 4½ in. (11 cm) in diameter, 2013. Photo: Kevin Duffy. 4–8: Wheel-thrown porcelain, water-etched pattern, celadon glaze, fired to cone 10 in reduction.

define all of my pots so much better than the fatter, rounded one that I use. In the rim, I have chosen durability as a priority. Dishes can take a good clanking when used and I want my pots to be able to withstand a hearty dinner prep and cleanup. A gallery owner once called me to say that a table of my pots had been knocked over in the showroom and that my pots all bounced. They were fine. I love the thought of bouncing porcelain—not the traditional delicate application of porcelain, but I like the way it works.

CM: How do you balance the need for an interesting pattern with the desire to maintain a functional eating surface?

AS: I keep the pattern depth very light so that the glaze can fill in and level the surface. Friends shared a photo of their dinner with shrimp arranged very much in scale and regularity with my surface grid pattern. That was a tremendous surprise!

CM: What are your reasons for working in a pale celadon glaze palette for your dinnerware?

AS: As an artist, I want to make work that satisfies my creative interests, but I like to remember that with functional objects, the

client will take the pots home and incorporate them into their lives in ways I won't ever know. I think of the neutral glaze as providing a place of vacancy, an intentionally designed withholding that promotes the cook to bring completion to the work. I use vacancy as a means to communicate the activity of function. Cooks then have options every night to create color combinations and texture arrangements in their meals with the neutral background of the *Tableware*.

the author Andy Shaw is an associate professor at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Visit shawtableware.com, to see more of his work.

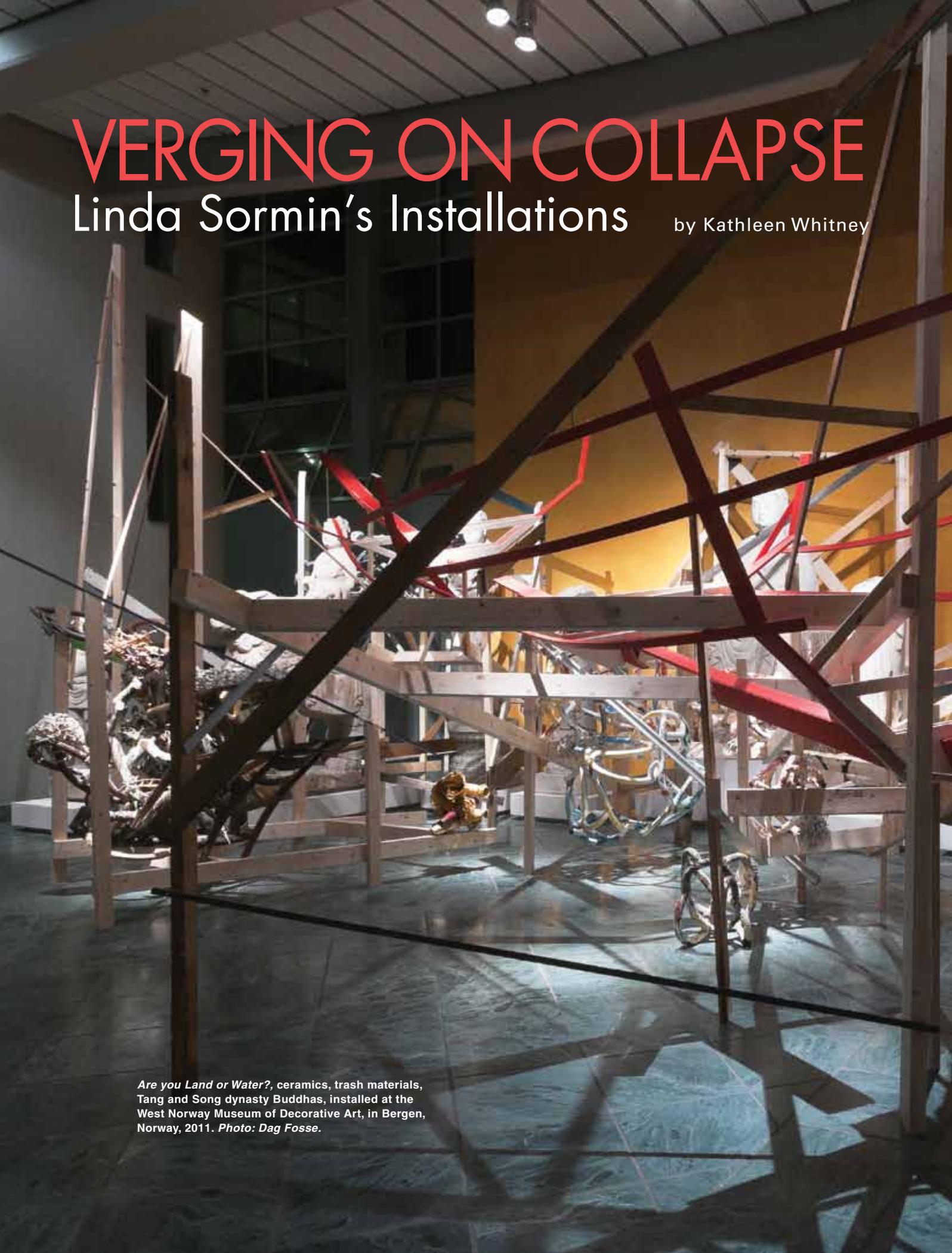
Check out a video of Andy Shaw discussing the ideas central to his *Tableware* series and an archival article on his work from the October 2005 issue in the digital PDF edition available at www.ceramicsmonthly.org.



VERGING ON COLLAPSE

Linda Sormin's Installations

by Kathleen Whitney



Are you Land or Water?, ceramics, trash materials, Tang and Song dynasty Buddhas, installed at the West Norway Museum of Decorative Art, in Bergen, Norway, 2011. Photo: Dag Fosse.



Linda Sormin's work is agile and gymnastic; it vaults from floor to ceiling grasping space and defying gravity. The quantity of parts and pieces is overwhelming, there's enough detail to produce information overload. Heraclitus said "you can't wade in the same river twice;" in Sormin's installations everything changes with every shift in viewpoint, you never see the same thing twice. The work is a myriad of streams rather than a single current; it's borderless and incorporates many sources. The work is complex and layered, messy and contradictory, embracing the grotesque and incongruous. Although Sormin's materials represent an inventory of the cast-off, useless, unwanted, and unstable, she fuses these disparate elements into entities that are coherent and beautiful. Her installations are architectural interventions made up of multi-layered intertwined objects; the deluge of fragments surround islands of specificity. Despite the fact that everything seems generated from a centrifugally spinning center, the core of her visual irrationality is structured by a logic that binds the bit-torrent together. Every element evokes different responses and remembered experiences; the sculptures are a repository of histories and associations. The installations masquerade as abstractions but are fully engaged with social functions and concerns, particularly in the way they address consumer culture.

Sormin does little advance planning; she says her research "includes scavenging, collecting, disassembling, and rebuilding fragments." Her work is performative, situational, and intuitive, created on-site using an extensive assortment of ceramic elements and found objects. The aggregation of materials creates a chute of pieces that resemble the spiraling action of clouds. She pushes the weight-bearing capability of ceramics to their edge, reaching for the instant just before the next addition destroys what's been assembled. If any section breaks, she proceeds with the new situation. Her installations structure the viewer's attention; you have to walk around to see all sides and tread carefully as the work often pools onto the floor. The circuitous viewing produces an intense involvement with parts as well as wholes, the elements conceal as well as reveal.

Sormin's preoccupation with found materials reflects her interest in the concepts



of migration and identity. Her engagement with ideas regarding migration originates in her experience as a young immigrant relocating with her family from Bangkok to Canada. She has a migratory lifestyle and is frequently involved in international projects. After teaching for five years at the Rhode Island School of Design, she returned to Canada and is currently based in Toronto. Her work translates and reconfigures ideas, materials, and objects as they move through space, time, and culture. The issue of identity has to do with fluidity and transformation; the appearance of her work with its multiplicity of viewpoints resembles an identity-in-progress, an illustration of continuous change.

Although Sormin's installations undermine the architecture of their environment, they also provide context and meaning, determining her visual strategies. In 2011, the West Norway Museum of Decorative Art in Bergen, Norway commissioned her to create an installation in a space housing part of the Chinese Collection. This exhibition, "Are you land or water?" incorporated Song and Tang Dynasty Buddhas and various objects she found in the area including construction scrap and ceramic collectibles. As one looked through the porous, reef-like structures of her work, the ancient Chinese artifacts seemed to flicker, vanish, and reappear.

Sormin uses a range of objects and techniques including fired and unfired clay combined with shards, test tiles, and found ceramic objects. The fired work is handbuilt from porcelain, stoneware, and earthenware, and resembles honeycombed grids. Ceramic elements are combined with pipe, plywood, old floorboards, wiring and cloth, plastic items, and scavenged finds from dumpsters, often partly hidden but recognizable. The work is assembled on and around non-ceramic supports and put together so it's both below and above eye-level, creating an over-scale presence. It's the little pieces of content, broken bits of pottery, chairs, and wood structures, that keep her work from falling into abstraction or mere collage.

"Neverhole," at the Gardiner Museum (www.gardinermuseum.on.ca) in Toronto (Sept.–Oct. 2013), is one of Sormin's recent works. Sormin describes it as "part 'Neverland' (as in *Peter Pan*) where you don't have to be a grown-up and part 'rabbit hole' (as in *Alice In Wonderland*) where adventures can happen."

The title is also a pun: never whole. The installation was inspired by Sormin's conversations with the philosopher Dr. Keota Fields regarding



1 *mine (i hear him unclip me)* (detail), ceramics, trash materials, miner's hard hat, installed at the Denver Art Museum, in Denver, Colorado, 2011. 2 *mine (i hear him unclip me)*, ceramics, mixed media, installed at the Denver Art Museum, in Denver, Colorado, 2011. 1–2 Photos: Jeff Wells. 3 *My voice changes when I speak your language*, ceramics, trash materials, installed at the Jane Hartsook Gallery, in New York, New York, 2012. Photo: Clarence Sormin. 4 *Neverhole*, ceramics, trash materials, installed at the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, Canada, 2013. 5 *Neverhole* (detail), porcelain-skinned piece cracked open by the artist's mother, trash materials from Leslie Spit, installed at the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, Canada, 2013. 4–5 Photos: Frances Juriansz. *The Neverhole* exhibition was created with support from Sheridan College.

Mereological Nihilism. As Sormin defines it in her video of “Neverhole” (www.lindasormin.com/news), Mereology proposes that “there is no existence of objects with proper parts. Instead of parts there are simples—things that can never be whole.”

The punning title is also a description of what happens during the show. Twice a week, one visitor to the exhibition was selected to break open one of twelve porcelain-skinned pieces in the space. This person was given a hammer and chisel that was carried by the artist to and from the museum in a red, patent-leather hatbox. Sormin wasn't so much interested in the action of smashing as in the idea of opening up or excavating. This engagement invites the public to play with the ritual of openings in museums and galleries. What's central to the work's meaning is that the action of cracking open examines the way this work conceals and discloses meaning and process. Broken pieces were left on the floor creating new permutations, exposing the once hidden interior and contents of the work. The piece carries within itself 30 or so objects, including kitschy ceramics, porcelain teacups, little plastic birds, and a blue willow plate. The assembly is extremely colorful; many of the ceramic pieces are glazed with multi-colored stripes and polka dots.

Neverhole consists of a waterfall of parts skewered and supported by a long vertical tension pole that reaches from floor and ceiling. Circular sections of plywood twirl around the cascade of objects; every angle is subsumed in twist and skew. All materials that comprise Neverhole function as supports as well as elements of the geography and architecture of the unit. Each grouping is held together by root-like adhesions of pinched-out, unfired clay used like putty or glue; the spaces between the elements are as important as the components.

Sormin focuses on issues of belief or disbelief and the maintenance or alteration of traditions; her work combines destruction with construction. Her incorporation of altered ceramic kitsch, recognizable fragments and familiar objects is a critique of consumer culture and the way it configures reality and personal relationships. Sormin collects the detritus of culture and changes their meaning as she pieces together new aggregations. The power of her work is based on its interaction and collaboration with the viewer who finds, identifies and reacts to the objects within their chaotic environment. Sormin's accumulations point to their key proposal: the world is not minimal and reality is in flux. Her work deals in dichotomies and ambiguities, permanence versus impermanence, observer versus participant—it repurposes the nature of art and social arrangements and pushes the use of clay to its furthest possible edge. The reality of Sormin's work lies in its uncertainty; you discover that you prefer her modified view of reality, where, like Alice in Wonderland, you encounter something fantastical, not quite knowing what it is.

Linda Sormin is a professor at Sheridan College in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. To see more of her work, visit www.lindasormin.com.

the author *Kathleen Whitney, frequent contributor to Ceramics Monthly, is an artist and writer living in Los Angeles, California. To see her work visit kathleenwhitney.com.*

Linda Sormin shares her process and ideas for her installations, including *Neverhole*, in a video included in this issue's digital edition at www.ceramicsmonthly.org



JACK SURES

CERAMIC ENCOUNTERS

by Matthew Kangas



1

One of Canada's greatest ceramic artists, Jack Sures, now 79, is virtually unknown in the US. Subject of a recent touring exhibition co-curated by Virginia Eichhorn and Timothy Long, "The Work of Jack Sures: Tactile Desires," (at the Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada), the Regina, Saskatchewan resident and University of Regina profes-

sor emeritus continues to work vigorously in his studio and participated actively in a symposium dedicated to his art and teaching at MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina in 2011.

Sures is worth knowing more about because he is a sensational clay artist who touched upon and mastered numerous aspects of ceramics, but also because he taught student Marilyn Levine how to use fiberglass in her hyper-realistic ceramic sculptures and antedated by several years the use of sinister animals by another colleague, David Gilhooly, whom he hired at the University of Regina in 1969. This reciprocal influence is one example of the length, breadth, and depth of all Sures' ceramic encounters.

No wonder the Japanese gave Jack Sures the Mino Grand Prize for Design (3,000,000 ¥, roughly \$30,000) in 1989 for his mural *Fire Light*. He had already traveled to Japan in 1966 (when he met master potters Hamada, Kawai, Shimaoka, and Fujiwara). His stoneware jars of the late 1960s (Untitled, c. 1969) demonstrate complete assumption of Japanese-style drip glazing and firing.

Before that, he had already cemented an international reputation at conferences and workshops thanks to his easy, ingratiating manner and sincere interest in other cultures and artists. At the height of the Cold War, for example, when US artists were prohibited from visits to Eastern Europe, as a Canadian, Sures traveled to Hungary meeting artists and forming lifelong friendships. Elsewhere, he spent a year on behalf of the United Nations building a kiln and basically inventing and improving a handmade ceramics industry in Grenada that continues today. For these diplomatic and cultural tasks as well as his growing international reputation as an artist, he was awarded the prestigious Order of Canada Badge in 1991 and the Saskatchewan Order of Merit in 2003.



1 *Garden of Delight*, 35 in. (90 cm) in diameter, earthenware, spray enamel, circa 2001. Collection of the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery. Photo: Don Hall. Courtesy of the MacKenzie Art Gallery. 2–3 Mural commission for the Sturdy-Stone Centre, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1979. Collection of the Government of Saskatchewan. Photo copyright: Linda Corbett. 4–5 *Coffee Table*, 33 in. (83 cm) in diameter, earthenware, spray enamel, 2010. Collection of Bill and Gaye Taylor. Photo: Don Hall. Courtesy of the MacKenzie Art Gallery.



Somehow, with full-time teaching loads, regular sabbaticals, and a succession of government travel grants, Sures managed to become extraordinarily prolific, a fact reflected in the imagery of his carved tiles and thrown pot surface decoration: teeming humanity.

The fecundity of the world is a metaphor for the infinite creativity of the artist. Taking on all of humanity as a subject led to numerous works with humans crawling all over one another in erotic frenzies and, later, with imaginary rodent-like creatures supplanting humans. All along, they colonize and inhabit a series of vases, bottles, platters, plates, murals, bowls, and even macramé planters with intense, meticulously drawn activity. As Sures put it, “Surface decoration [on ceramics] is like making an engraving.”

In *Near Al’s Place* (1975), domestic livestock common to Saskatchewan gambol beneath pink clouds and tall, dark-blue towers of potash mines, a key Canadian natural resource export. Overpopulation or, as it was once called, world population control, is another subject, but with more humor than ecological warning. With its spray-painted, automotive-enamel copper covering, *Garden of Delight* (c. 2001) is another swarm inside an inscribed circle. With dozens of half-emerging male and female figures, it is eerie and chilling.

In addition to attending graduate school at Michigan State University (where he met fellow classmate and clay sculptor Jim

Leedy), Sures has other ties to the US although his work is not in a single US museum collection. (He is generously represented in museums in Canada, Japan, Australia, and Hungary, however.)

At the celebrated Emma Lake Artist’s Workshops north of Regina in 1965, Sures met the foremost American art critic of the era, Clement Greenberg, and the radical avant-garde composer John Cage, both of whom later influenced him in different ways. With Greenberg, Sures had animated conversations that led indirectly to the continuously covered and dynamic, center-less compositions of both his figurative and non-figurative works, along the lines of Greenberg’s theories explaining Jackson Pollock.

In the case of Cage, the two shared an interest in the hidden creative strategies of the *I-Ching* or *Chinese Book of Changes*. The positioning of Sures’ interlocking stoneware tiles in his murals was determined according to chance procedures of the *I-Ching* that Cage used to choose pitch, volume, tone, and other sounds for his music. Sures’ *1-2-3-4-5* (1984), *Untitled* (1985) (not shown), and the massive *Sturdy Stone Centre Mural* (1979) in Saskatoon all followed Cage’s example.

What with the ties to Levine and Gilhooly, Greenberg and Cage, not to mention Leedy and Voukos (whom Sures met in the late 1980s), there really should be more interest in Sures in the US. Like Robert Sperry (remarkably, also from Regina but



6



7



8



9

6 *Fire Light*, Mino relief mural, 1989. Photo: Museum of Modern Ceramic Art, Gifu, Japan. 7 *Untitled*, 14 in. (36 cm) in height, stoneware, glaze, oxide, circa 1969. Collection of Mel Bolen and Karen Holden. 8 *1-2-3-4-5*, 3 ft. 7 in. (1.1 m) in height, porcelain tile, oxide, 1984. City of Regina Civic Art Collection. 9 *Near Al's Place*, 20 in. (52 cm) in height, earthenware, oil and acrylic paint, 1975. 7–9 Photos: Don Hall. Courtesy of the MacKenzie Art Gallery.

a US citizen), Sures successfully straddled studio-size work and large-scale public art commissions. Sures' other murals, including those at the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan and at the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa also continued to employ chance methods. As with Sperry, many of Sures' murals are still in maquette form awaiting full-scale construction. His stamp on the Canadian public environment is already substantial.

Or Sures could go the opposite direction away from public sites toward domestic and residential objects. *Coffee Table* (2010) suggests one possibility. Why not expand the notion of support for the pot or table sculpture to the table itself? Echoing *Garden of Delight*, a pantheon of goddesses arises from the radiating, darkly colored tabletop disk. Sures is making a table but, as usual, uses ceramics to convey his twin artistic visions of fertility and creativity, always in motion, like the potter's wheel, never at rest.

the author *Matthew Kangas is a frequent contributor to Ceramics Monthly, has also written about Canadian artists Robin Hopper, Léopold L. Foulem, Jerry Petbick, and Brian Gladwell. His latest book is Creating the New Northwest: Selections from the Herb and Lucy Pruzan Collection (Tacoma Art Museum, 2013).*

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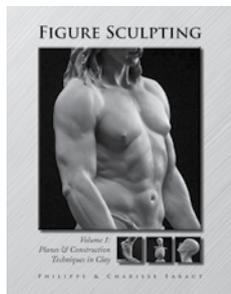
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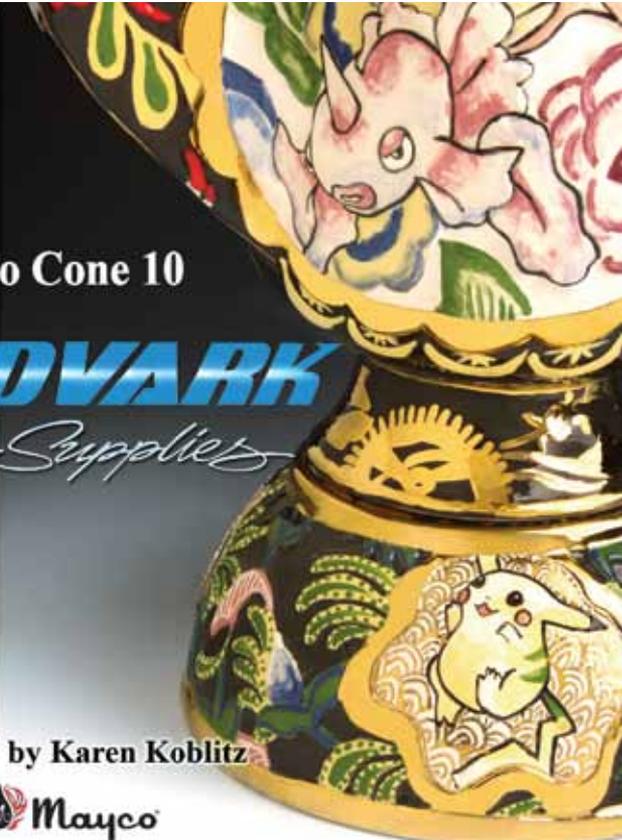
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blistering

by Dave Finkelburg

Glaze blisters are a common but complex glaze fault for which no single, simple remedy exists. The key to curing glaze blistering is to recognize its causes.

It's All About the Gas

Blistering is a glaze problem that occurs when a low-viscosity glaze traps a gas within it. Glaze blisters always have these two components. First, some sort of gas is trapped within the melted glaze. Second, the glaze is "thin," meaning it's been heated to the point that its consistency is watery rather than viscous.

Obviously a glass, which is a liquid, must first form. Then gases trapped within that glass expand due to the rising temperature in the kiln.

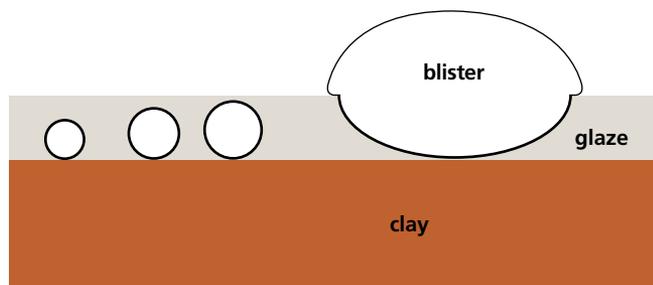
A very thick, viscous glaze may contain many bubbles of gas, but the viscosity of the glaze—its resistance to flow—will limit the expansion of the gas bubble. However, if the glaze is thin and watery, the bubble can expand greatly, in the process thinning the glass covering it.

Glaze chemistry is a factor in blister formation because glaze chemistry controls glaze melting point as well as glaze viscosity. Obviously, the timing of melting matters. Low melting point glazes in mid- to high-fire applications are most likely to blister. That's because the later in the firing a glaze melts, the greater the odds are that problematic gases will have escaped being trapped in the glaze.

Before considering the glaze, it's critical to understand what is meant by gas. To begin with, the term gas is general rather than specific.

The gas trapped by a melting glaze may be any form of vapor:

- It can be air that was caught against the clay body as the glaze was applied over it.
- It can be oxygen given off by thermal decomposition of a glaze ingredient such as iron oxide.



At the glaze-body interface, a bubble has formed and swollen well above the glaze surface. Note that the surface of the bubble is very thin and delicate. Within a glass (below the surface of the glaze), the bubble would be perfectly round, restrained by the glaze equally in all directions from the center of the bubble. However, in a blister the bubble is restrained by the glaze up to where the bubble swells above the glaze surface, but then the bubble tends to stretch and thin.

Defining the Terms

Glaze Blister: A bubble trapped within a glaze such that the glaze coating over the bubble is thin and fragile. The blister itself is unsightly. When it breaks during normal handling of the work the result is even less attractive!

LOI or Loss on Ignition: The amount of weight a material loses when it is fired. The loss is either free or chemically bound elements released as vapor by heating in the kiln or solids that react with oxygen in the kiln and burn away.

Surfactant: A chemical that reduces the surface tension of a liquid to which it is added. Also known as a wetting agent.

Viscous: Of a fluid, resistant to flow or deformation, even though liquid. A fluid which is thick, syrupy.

Viscosity: The quantity of internal resistance of a fluid that will keep the fluid from flowing.

- It can be a molecule of carbon dioxide given off, also by thermal decomposition, of a carbonate such as whiting.
- In the case of extremely low-melting-point glazes, it can even be water vapor given up by decomposition of clay body or glaze ingredients.

Short of firing in full vacuum with ingredients that do not off-gas upon heating, it is impossible to totally prevent gases from being trapped within a glaze. In that case, what's to be done? Ultimately, the answer is to change the glaze so it remains viscous enough that it does not blister, even though many gas bubbles may be trapped within it. Naturally it's also advisable to attempt to reduce the amount of gases trapped in the glaze.

The first step in modifying glaze viscosity usually involves the addition of kaolin or ball clay to the glaze recipe. Both are mainly kaolinite, a mineral made of equal parts of alumina and silica. Since most glaze recipes have between 3 to 15 or more times as much silica as alumina, adding clay quickly raises the proportion of alumina in the glaze.

This is important because alumina will make a glaze viscous. However, adding too much clay, (hence too much alumina), can produce a glaze which is refractory; in other words, one that will not melt. Reasonably viscous glossy glazes typically have between 5 to 15 times as many moles of silica as alumina.

An alternative is to reduce the quantity of glass formers and fluxes in a glaze recipe while leaving the alumina the same. Recall that boron is a glass former, as is silica, but boron melts at a lower temperature. If blistering is a glaze problem, boron should be used sparingly at higher glaze firing temperatures.

Choosing the Right Materials

It should go without saying that the traditional methods of minimizing bubble formation in glazes may be helpful to minimize glaze blisters. In particular, wetting the surface of work to be glazed prior to application of water-based glazes will help reduce air trapped between glaze and body. Likewise, use of a surfactant or wetting agent such as soap in the glaze slurry helps reduce air bubbles trapped under the applied glaze.

Use of frits as the source of glaze fluxes may help to prevent blistering of glazes that melt at low temperatures. This is because frits contain no carbonates that can decompose upon heating to release carbon dioxide gas. Obviously this gas can become trapped within a glaze if the melting temperature of the glaze is lower than the decomposition temperature of the carbonate present.

However, frits can still trap gases from other sources. Use of frits in a glaze recipe is no guarantee of blister-free firings. Testing is still necessary to determine whether frits reduce or eliminate glaze blisters from a given recipe.

Some argument is made that overfiring is the cause of blistering. Certainly, blisters would not appear if the ware had been fired to a peak temperature low enough that the glaze would have remained

viscous. However, firing temperature alone is not the root cause of blistering. A high firing temperature simply reveals the glaze's susceptibility to this fault.

A truly overfired glaze, if from a well-formulated recipe, will flow uniformly—even flow off the pot—but without blistering. Blisters reveal a glaze that is not viscous enough at peak firing temperature.

Soaking the kiln at peak temperature for 15 minutes or more may reduce glaze blisters by providing time for the largest of them to burst and for glaze to subsequently flow into the crater left behind. Please do not ask how I know this is not a perfect cure for the problem.

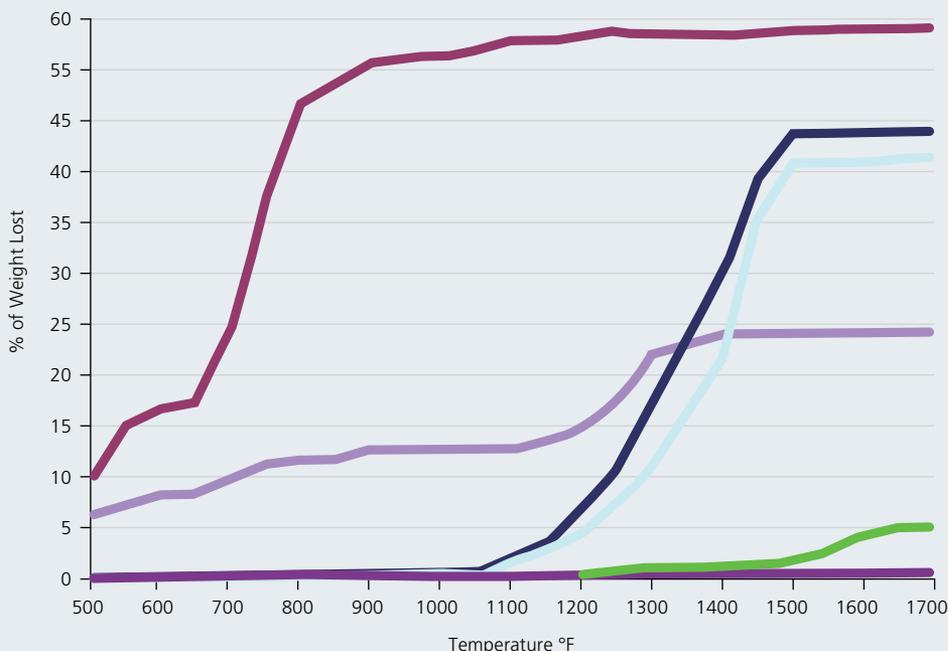
If there is one piece of information that should be available with every glaze recipe, that would be the temperature at which the glaze melts. Draw trials—that, with care, can be safely removed from a fuel-fired kiln—will provide such information.

Draw trials, however, cannot be taken safely from electric kilns, so a small electric test kiln is the best alternative. Shutting the test kiln off at different temperatures to remove and examine glaze tiles will permit determining the melting temperature of a glaze.

Armed with that information, it is possible to consider which glaze ingredients may contribute to blister formation.

LOI Isn't Important? Think Again!

The LOI (loss on ignition) of many common studio materials can affect your glazes, possibly even causing blisters. When choosing materials for your glazes, it's helpful to know when they are gassing and when they are melting in order to prevent or correct blistering. Note that some late gassers overlap early melters.



What's happening in the kiln:

1400°F: Frit begins melting. This happens well before calcium carbonate and dolomite finish gassing and before talc starts to gas. Gerstley borate stops gassing.

1500°F: The calcium carbonate and talc have stopped gassing before the Gerstley borate melts.

1550°F: Gerstley borate suddenly starts to shrink.

1600°F: Gerstley borate is bonded to the ceramic.

1600–1650°F: The talc is going through the final stages of gassing as Gerstley borate is suddenly melting.

1650°F: Gerstley borate bubbles a lot then totally melts.

1700°F: Gerstley borate is a transparent glass. Frit still slowly softening but still not bonding to the tile. (Ferro Frit 3110, 3195, and 3134 all melt sooner than this 3124.)

Data courtesy of www.digitalfire.com.

kiln shelf storage

by Nick and Miri Hardy

We've all seen it in community studios, kiln shelves carelessly set aside and forgotten only to later be found in pieces. Here's a great solution to an age-old kiln-room problem.

Problem

When I first set up my studio a few years back, figuring out a storage solution for my kiln-shelves quickly became a priority. Precariously leaning the shelves against the wall (1) was not a viable long-term solution. As I wanted to have easy access to each shelf, I was looking for a solution that would allow me to store the shelves vertically, rather than stacked. To that end, my husband Nick, who is a firm believer that there are few design problems that cannot be solved with PVC pipe, came up with this simple shelf storage rack (2–3). Everything needed to build this rack can be found at your local home-improvement store—mostly in the plumbing aisle.

Solution

Half of the fun of building with PVC (also known as Legos for adults), is customizing your construction to your exact needs. This is easily accomplished by using different types of connectors and different pipe lengths. For our rack design, in addition to multiple lengths of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch PVC pipe used for the uprights and horizontal support pieces, we used a variety of connector pieces (crosses, T pieces, 90° elbow pieces and end caps). Though not integral to the rack design, we had some spare casters so decided to add them to the rack to increase its mobility. Once you've figured out your design (Nick has been known to 'mock up' PVC constructions while in the hardware store!), a bit of PVC cement is advised in the joints to keep everything in its place. Including your kiln shelves!

Note: Our design was highly influenced by materials we had available. You might find alternate pieces to streamline your design.

Materials

- 2 10-foot, $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch diameter PVC pipes
- 10 end caps
- 12 T-pieces (8 for uprights, 4 for casters)
- 6 × 90° elbow pieces
(4 for corners, 2 for central cross-brace)
- 2 cross pieces (for central cross-brace)
- 4 casters
- PVC Cement

Total material cost: approximately \$25

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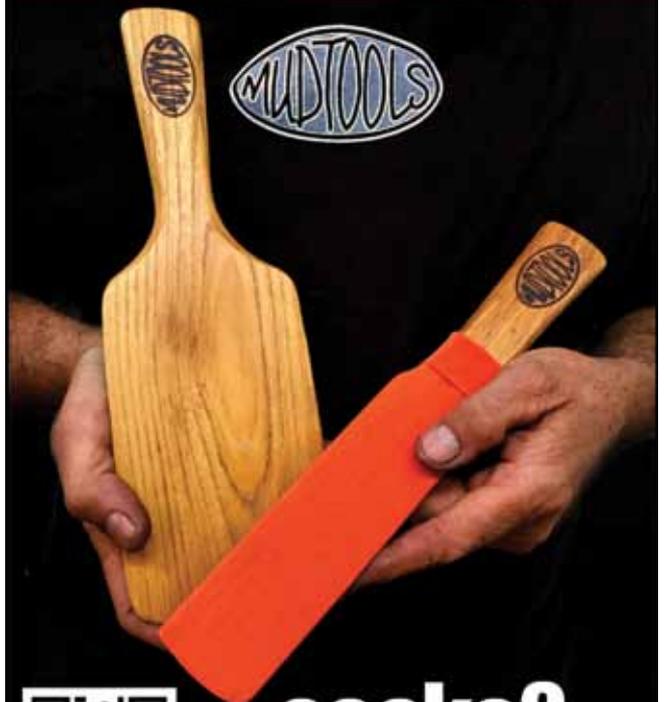
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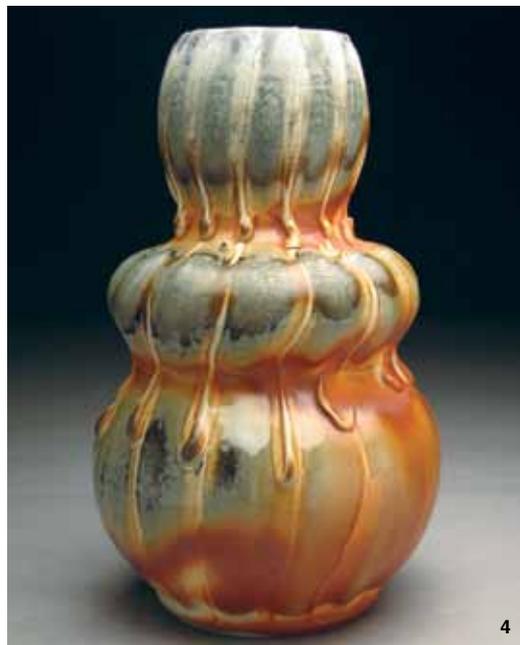
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Cone 10

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Add: Zircopax 1.0 %

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Cone 10

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Nepheline Syenite	24.07
EPK Kaolin	15.74
OM4 Ball Clay	23.15
Silica	23.15
	100.00 %

Add: Titanium Dioxide 9.26 %
Bentonite 1.85 %

Best when sprayed thinly across the surface of bisque-fired work.

SAM'S CELADON (3)

Cone 10

Strontium Carbonate	7.77 %
Wollastonite	17.48
Custer Feldspar	27.18
Blackbird Clay	2.91
Grolleg Kaolin	19.42
Silica	25.24
	100.00 %

Add: Tin Oxide 1.94 %
Bentonite 1.94 %

TED'S NEW ORANGE SLIP (4)

Cone 10

Spodumene	11.11 %
Grolleg Kaolin	44.44
New Foundry Hill Crème	44.45
	100.00 %

Add: Zircopax 11.11 %

Best when sprayed thinly across the surface of bisque-fired work.

1 Tumbler, wheel-thrown porcelain, slip, Phil's 103 White, soda fired to cone 10, 2014. 2 Cup, wheel-thrown porcelain, slip, Brenda's Titanium Butter, soda fired to cone 10, 2013. Photo: Charlie Cummings. 3 Mug, porcelain, slip, Sam's Celadon, soda fired to cone 10, 2014. 4 Vase, wheel-thrown porcelain, slip, Ted's New Orange Slip, soda fired to cone 10, 2014.

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Using a mix of glazes along with commercial and home-made underglazes, Baumgartner sometimes breaks the rules on how hot to fire certain products, which can lead to great discoveries.

34
ARTICLE

Materials

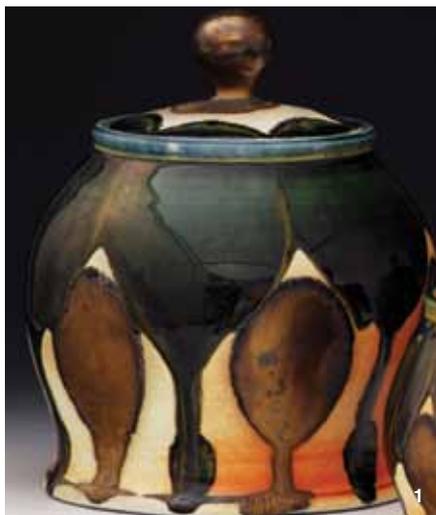
I use two different commercial porcelains, depending on my needs. One throws really well and is stable for tall forms, but it moves if you fire it too hot. The other doesn't throw that well, but it is really stable and forgiving for wider forms and altering.

I use a fine-tipped slip trailer and low-fire majolica-type underglazes for the black lines. So far, I have tried Duncan Concepts and Mayco Stroke And Coat. I really like how the low-fire underglazes react with the high-fire glazes and how they keep their intense black color, but I have found that in my specific situation, they tend to be unstable and blister when fired to cone 10 in a soda kiln. So, I am currently testing other brands, as well as formulating my own.

These low-fire underglazes are applied to greenware underneath the flashing slips. I have found that they like to shiver if they are bisque-fired on over the slips. When applying a design, I map everything out with a ruler and Crayola magic markers. After bisque-firing, I use a water-based wax that is dyed with food coloring to help me to relate the pre- and post-firing colors.

Firing

I fire to cone 10–11 in our 26-foot soda kiln. I reduce pretty heavily at cone 010, taper it off a little, and adjust the atmosphere occasionally to keep the atmosphere slightly reducing and the cones even. When cone 9 is down, I close the damper, open the passive, and spray in the soda. I am in a heavy, smelly reduction during soda spraying. My solution is 3 pounds washing soda (sodium carbonate) and 1 pound of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) added to 3 gallons of water. I spray this in three series, between each series, I open the damper up (neutral/oxidation) to get back to temperature, then returning to the smelly reduction for the spray. I always use draw rings, and I don't always use all of the solution. I open the damper up at the end to clear the glazes up for about 20 to 30 minutes. When I'm at a solid cone 10–11, I turn the kiln off and do a 10-minute crash-cool by opening the ports to set the glazes and keep them glassy (I discovered this at the Clay Studio of Missoula).



1 Jars, porcelain, Bisque Flash Slip, commercial underglaze, Forest Green Celadon, Shaner Clear Liner Glaze, soda fired to cone 10–11. 2 Two bottles, porcelain, Bauer Flashing Slip, commercial underglaze, Oribe Green, soda fired to cone 10–11. 3 Tureen and ladle, porcelain, Bauer Flashing Slip, commercial underglaze, Shaner Clear Liner Glaze, Oribe Green, soda fired to cone 10–11.



SHANER CLEAR LINER GLAZE

Cone 10 Reduction

Dolomite	5 %
Whiting	16
Zinc Oxide	5
Kona F4 Feldspar*	30
EPK Kaolin	14
Silica	<u>30</u>
	100 %

FOREST GREEN CELADON* (1)

Cone 10 Reduction

Gerstley Borate	7 %
Strontium Carbonate	8
Talc	3
Zinc Oxide	1
Whiting	12
EPK Kaolin	4
Kona F-4 Feldspar*	39
Silica	<u>26</u>
	100 %

Add: Red Iron Oxide	6 %
Cobalt Carbonate	1 %
Bentonite	2 %

ORIBE GREEN (2)

Cone 10 Reduction

Bone Ash	1.05 %
Talc	7.81
Whiting	22.36
Custer Feldspar	30.91
EPK Kaolin	12.55
Silica	<u>25.32</u>
	100.00 %

Add: Bentonite	2.50 %
Copper Carbonate	5.50 %

BISQUE FLASH SLIP (1-3)

Cone 10

EPK Kaolin	10 %
Grolleg Kaolin	50
Newman Red Clay	10
Nepheline Syenite	<u>30</u>
	100 %

BAUER ORANGE FLASHING SLIP

Cone 10

Borax	6.36 %
EPK Kaolin	46.82 %
OM4 Ball Clay	<u>46.82</u> %
	100.00 %

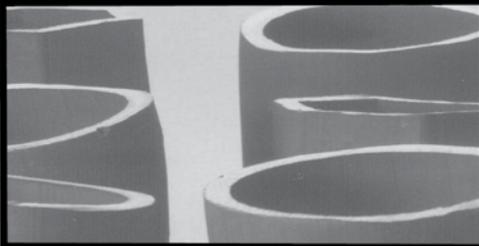
Add: Zircopax 11.73 %

My washes and flashing slips are mixed very, very thin (think skim milk), which measures between 1.1 and 1.2 on my DIY hydrometer (available on ceramicartsdaily.org). I apply them to bone-dry greenware then bisque fire them.

*Substitute Minspar 200 Feldspar.

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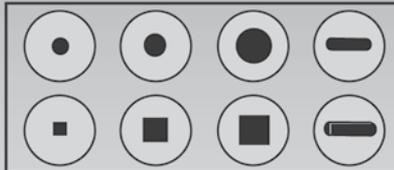
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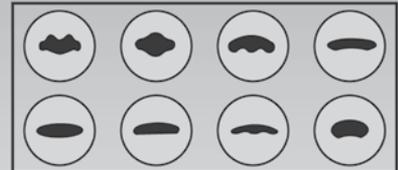
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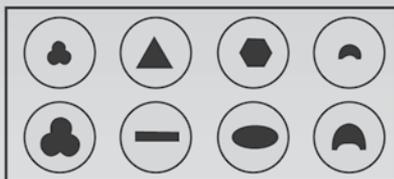
SC001 Clay Gun



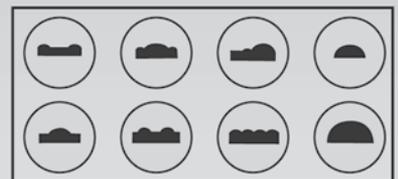
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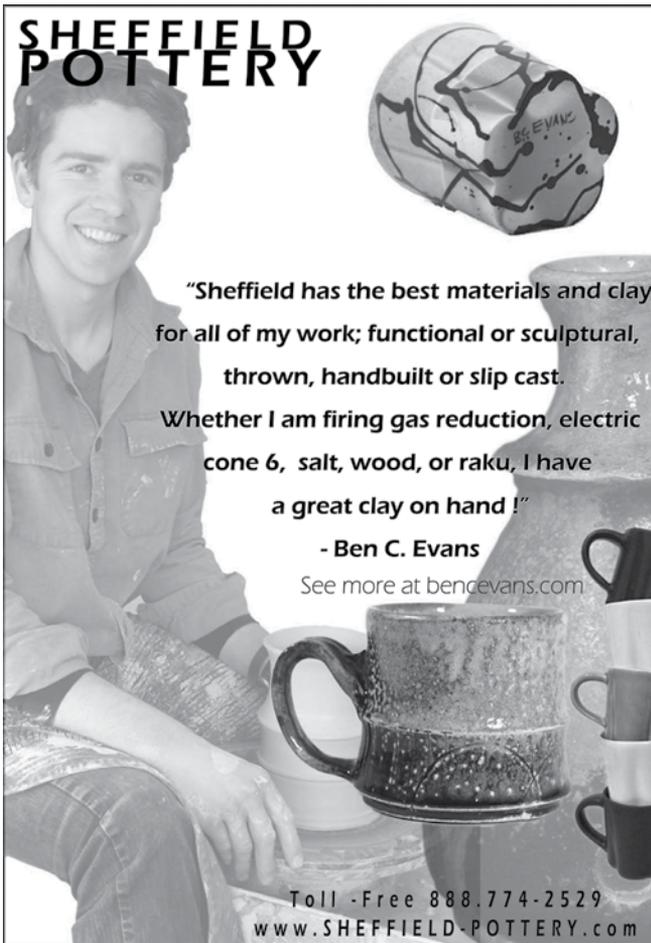


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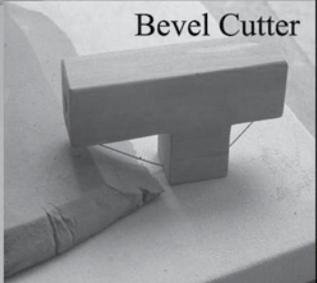
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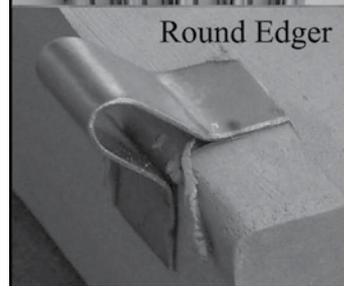
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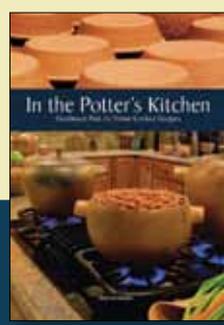
Lucy Fagella's citrus juicer.

AND the kitchen!

It's pretty unusual to have dinner at a potter's house and leave hungry. Cooking and making pottery go hand in hand, and Sumi von Dassow's new book *In the Potter's Kitchen* merges these complementary passions!



Marcia Paul's stoneware baking dish.
Photo: Robert Paul.



Discussions on design, projects for making ceramic cookware, as well as recipes to cook in the cookware, make this book a truly one-of-a-kind experience.

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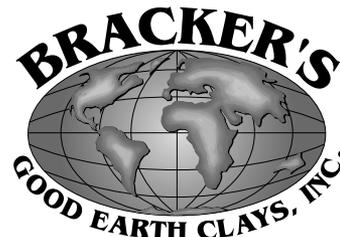
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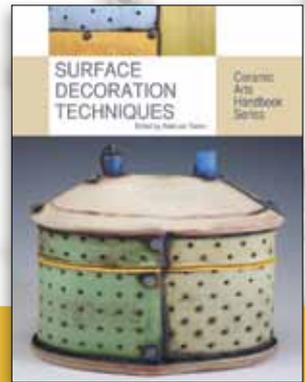
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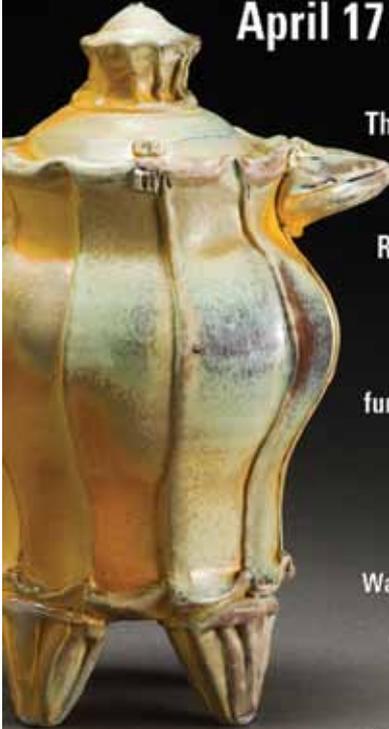
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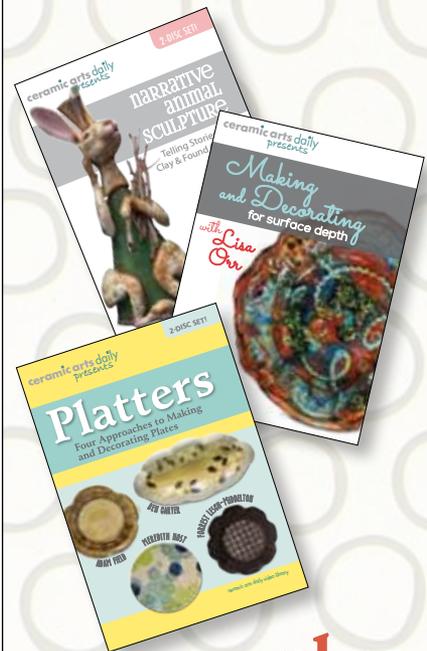
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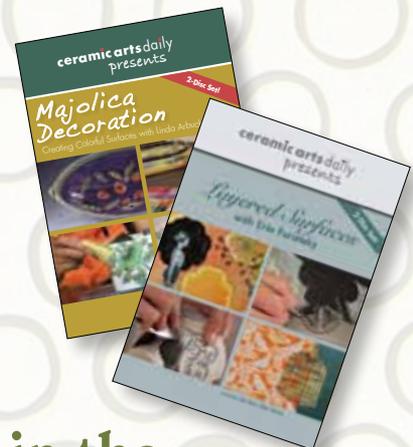
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call for entries

deadlines for exhibitions, fairs, and festivals

international exhibitions

December 6, 2014 entry deadline

Texas, Houston "Texas Teapot Tournament" (January 3–January 28, 2015) original clay work representing teapots, either functional or sculptural, and completed within the last two years. Each piece must be at least 60 percent fired clay, weigh no more than 20 lbs. and be no larger than 24 inches in any direction. Juried from actual work. Fee: \$45. Juror: Jennifer Herzberg. Contact Janis Ross, CAMEO at 18 Hands Gallery, 249 19th St., Houston, TX 77008; info@18handsgallery.com; www.CAMEOHouston.org; 713-869-3099.

January 15, 2015 entry deadline

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia "Small Favors" (April 3–April 26, 2015) Works no larger than 3.75 inches in any direction. Juried from digital. Fee: \$25 for up to 3 entries. Contact The Clay Studio; 139 N 2nd St., Philadelphia, PA 19106; info@theclaystudio.org; 215-925-3453; http://theclaystudio.org/apply/sf.php.

February 13, 2015 entry deadline

Maryland, Baltimore "Putting the Pieces Together: An Exhibition to Address What is Broken" (May 16–July 4, 2015) open to all artists, work completed in the last two years, mosaic works. Juried from digital. Fee: \$25 for up to 3 entries. Juror: Sarah McCann. Contact Baltimore Clayworks; 5707 Smith Ave., Baltimore, MD 21209; info@baltimoreclayworks.org; baltimoreclayworks.org; 410-578-1919.

February 27, 2015 entry deadline

California, Lincoln "America's Clay-Fest III Student Show" (April 17–May 30, 2015) all student artists in the US and around the World working with clay, from the high school level to the college/university level. Juried from digital. Fee: \$25 for up to 3 entries. Juror: Casey O'Connor. Contact Mike Daley, Art League of Lincoln and Blue Line Arts, 580 6th St., Lincoln, CA 95648; 916-209-3499; mdaley@americasclayfest.org; www.americasclayfest.org.

February 27, 2015 entry deadline

California, Lincoln "America's Clay-Fest III" (April 17–May 30, 2015) all clay artists in the US and around the world are encouraged to submit entries for the \$3000+ in prizes and awards. Juried from digital. Fee: \$40 for up to 3 entries. Jurors: Tip Toland and Peter Held. Contact Mike Daley, Art League of Lincoln and Blue Line Arts, 580 6th St., Lincoln, CA 95648; 916-209-3499; mdaley@americasclayfest.org; www.americasclayfest.org.

April 15, 2015 entry deadline

Taiwan, New Taipei City "2016 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale" (July 1–November 30, 2015) works that are primarily ceramic, no larger than 60 inches in any dimension, made within the last three years. Juried from digital. No entry fee.

Contact Ms. Chiang, 200 Wenhua Rd., Yingge Dist., New Taipei City 23942, Taiwan (ROC); ntpc60502@ntpc.gov.tw; http://public.ceramics.ntpc.gov.tw/biennale; 886-2-8677-2727x502.

September 15, 2015 entry deadline

Florida, St. Petersburg "Biennial Cup Show" (October 1–October 31, 2015) cups, mugs, tumblers, yunomis, tea cups, steins, teabowls. Juried from digital. Fee: \$30/3 entries. Juror: Matt Schiemann. Contact Matt Schiemann, Morean Arts Center, 420 22nd St. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33712; 419-606-2475; stpetecelay@gmail.com; www.moreanartscenter.org.

united states exhibitions

December 5, 2014 entry deadline

New Hampshire, Manchester "All Things Tea" (January 22–March 6, 2015) functional and sculptural items that are made to complement the enjoyment of this classic beverage: infusers, teapots, cups, and sets made of ceramic, metal, wood. Juried from digital. Fee: \$25 for 3 entries. Contact Monica Leap, Studio 550 Community Art Center, 550 Elm St., Manchester, NH 03101; 603-232-5597; info@550arts.com; www.550arts.com.

December 17, 2014 entry deadline

Louisiana, Alexandria "Dirty South Mug Competition" (April 7–May 23) all artist working in clay residing in the US. Work no larger than 10 inches in any direction. Juried from digital. Fee: \$25 for 3 entries. Juror: Tom Coleman. Contact James Bolen, River Oaks Square Arts Center, 1330 Second St., Alexandria, LA 71301; ab@riveroaksartscenter.com; www.riveroaksartscenter.com; 318-473-2670.

January 16, 2015 entry deadline

Maryland, Baltimore "Graphic Clay: A survey of Illustrated, Printed and Innovative Surfaces" (March 14–May 9, 2015) Open to all artists who reside in the US, work completed in the past two years, clay as primary material, all works must be for sale. Juried from digital. Fee: \$30. Juror: Jason Bige Burnett. Contact Baltimore Clayworks; 5707 Smith Ave., Baltimore, MD 21209; info@baltimoreclayworks.org; baltimoreclayworks.org; 410-578-1919.

January 20, 2015 entry deadline

Nevada, Las Vegas "Fabulous Figures" (March 1–March 31) artists from North America whose work explores the figure as an expressive form. Figure does not need to be human. Work must be at least 75% ceramic, be display ready, and not to exceed 125 pounds. Juried from digital. Fee: \$35 per figure, up to 2 images per piece. Jurors: Mark Burns, Peter Jakubowski. Contact Peter Jakubowski, Clay Arts Vegas, 1511 S. Main St., Las Vegas, NV 89104; 4information@clayartsvegas.com; http://clayartsvegas.com; 702-375-4147.

January 26, 2015 entry deadline

New Hampshire, Manchester "Sweet Tooth: Celebrating the Best Part of Any Meal" (March 9–April 17) functional ceramic pieces made for dessert: plates, dishes, ice cream bowls, pie plates, cake stands as well as narrative and creatively representational sculpture and 2-D design are all welcome. Juried from digital. Fee: \$25 for 3 entries; \$10 for each additional entry. Contact Monica Leap, Studio 550 Community Art Center, 550 Elm St., Manchester, NH 03101; info@550arts.com; www.550arts.com; 603-232-5597.

February 17, 2015 entry deadline

Nebraska, Lincoln "MUG Shots VII: National Juried Cup Exhibition 2015" (April 3–May 30) all artists working in the medium of clay residing in the US. Work must be original functional and non-functional interpretations of the cup completed in the last two years and available for purchase. Juried from digital. Fee: \$30 for first application, \$5 for each additional (3 max). Juror: Brian Harper. Contact Susan Stark-Johnson, LUX Center for the Arts, 2601 N. 48th St., Lincoln, NE 68504; susan@luxcenter.org; www.luxcenter.org; 402-466-8692.

March 21, 2015 entry deadline

Washington DC "The 3rd National Juried Bonsai Pot Exhibition" (June 22–August 2) American made bonsai containers. Containers may be traditional or an individual approach to the art form of bonsai. Juried from digital. Fee: \$35 for up to 10 entries. Jurors: Deborah Bedwell, Michael Hegedorn, Sara Rayner. Contact Ron Lagd, National Bonsai Foundation, at The US National Arboretum, The National Bonsai and Penjing Museum, 3501 New York Ave., Washington DC, 20002-1958; AskRon@comcast.net; www.bonsai-nbf.org; 717-513-8883.

regional

December 30, 2014 entry deadline

Florida, Orlando "Orlando Museum of Art Florida Prize in Contemporary Art" (June 13–September, 2015) Open to Florida residents working in any medium. Contact 2416 North Mills Ave, Orlando, Florida; omaflprize2015@gmail.com; www.omaart.org; 407-896-4231.

fairs and festivals

January 1, 2015 entry deadline

Connecticut, Guilford "Guilford Art Center's Craft Expo 2015" (July 17–July 19, 2015) Open to fine contemporary crafts made in the US or Canada by hand or with the use of appropriate tools, by an individual and/or with help from a limited number of assistants/apprentices. Juried from digital. Fee: \$40. Jurors: Kathleen Brown, Kate Lydon, Trudi Van Dyke. Contact Allison Maltese, Guilford Art Center, PO Box 589, Guilford, CT 06437; 203-453-5947; amaltese@guilfordartcenter.org; www.guilfordartcenter.org.

January 1, 2015 entry deadline

Maryland, Gaithersburg "Sugarloaf Crafts Festival in Gaithersburg" (April 17–April 19) all mediums. Juried from digital. Fee: \$20. Contact Sugarloaf Craft Festivals, Sugarloaf Mountain Works Inc., 19807 Executive Park Circle, Germantown, MD 20874; 301-990-1400; apply@sugarloaffest.com; www.sugarloafcrafts.com.

January 1, 2015 entry deadline

Maryland, Timonium "Sugarloaf Crafts Festival in Timonium" (April 25–April 26) all mediums. Juried from digital. Fee: \$20. Contact Sugarloaf Craft Festivals, Sugarloaf Mountain Works Inc., 19807 Executive Park Circle, Germantown, MD 20874; 301-990-1400; apply@sugarloaffest.com; www.sugarloafcrafts.com.

January 1, 2015 entry deadline

New Jersey, Somerset "Sugarloaf Crafts Festival in Somerset" (March 13–March 15) all mediums. Juried from digital. Fee: \$20. Contact Sugarloaf Craft Festivals, Sugarloaf Mountain Works Inc., 19807 Executive Park Circle, Germantown, MD 20874; 301-990-1400; apply@sugarloaffest.com; www.sugarloafcrafts.com.

January 1, 2015 entry deadline

Pennsylvania, Oaks "Sugarloaf Crafts Festival in Oaks" (March 20–March 22) all mediums. Juried from digital. Fee: \$20. Contact Sugarloaf Craft Festivals, Sugarloaf Mountain Works Inc., 19807 Executive Park Circle, Germantown, MD 20874; 301-990-1400; apply@sugarloaffest.com; www.sugarloafcrafts.com.

January 1, 2015 entry deadline

Virginia, Chantilly "Sugarloaf Crafts Festival in Chantilly" (January 30–February 1) all mediums. Juried from digital. Fee: \$20. Contact Sugarloaf Craft Festivals, Sugarloaf Mountain Works Inc., 19807 Executive Park Circle, Germantown, MD 20874; 301-990-1400; apply@sugarloaffest.com; www.sugarloafcrafts.com.

January 13, 2015 entry deadline

Washington, DC "American Made Show" (January 16–January 19) handmade items made in the US or Canada. Juried from digital. Contact Mary Strope, American Made Show, 3000 Chestnut Ave., Ste. 300, Baltimore, MD 21211; 800-432-7238 x299; sales@rosengrp.com; www.budurl.com/u49m.

February 1, 2015 entry deadline

Wisconsin, Cambridge "Cambridge Pottery Festival & US Pottery Games" (June 13–June 14, 2015) professional potters, representing all pottery mediums, from functional to sculptural. Juried from slide or digital. Fee: \$25. Contact Wendy Brabender, Cambridge Pottery Festival & US Pottery Games, 1688 Hammen Dr., Cambridge, WI 53523; frogpond@bminet.com; www.cambridgepotteryfestival.org; 608-423-4515.

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.

buy/sell

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employment

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events

2015 California Clay Competition. May 1–29, 2015. Due: Feb. 14, 2015. Juror: Jean Van Keuren. CA Residents only. Clay—Functional and Sculptural. Fee: \$15 per entry. Enter online at <http://theartery.net/cc.html>.

Workshops at Funke Fired Arts, Cincinnati, OH. Jeff Oestreich, Sat–Sun, February 21–22, 2015. Linda Christianson, Sat–Sun, October 17–18, 2015. Bundle discount, student pricing available. Call (513) 871-2529. www.funkefiredarts.com.

opportunities

Craftsman House Gallery, Café and 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.

products

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travel

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MYANMAR (BURMA) 2015 Ceramics Excursion, January 29–February 13 Mandalay, Bagan, Inle Lake, Yangon. Go back in time...experience ancient pottery making and firing in traditional villages; Golden Shwedagon temple in Yangon; optional beach holiday. Denys James, Discovery Art Travel; www.denysjames.com; (250) 537-4906.

SICILY, ITALY, 2015. September 26–October 14—Majolica, Mosaics and Architectural Masterpieces. Explore this diverse Italian island, rich in its ceramics, architecture, history, beauty, cuisine and wine. denys@denysjames.com.

MOROCCO 2015 Ceramics Excursion, October 26–November 16, The Full Circle, including Fez, Chefchaouen, Essaouira, Volubilis, Marrakech, Zagora, Meknes, Rabat, Casablanca. Studio visits, adobe architecture, tile art, Roman mosaics, traditional and contemporary ceramics, fabrics, a camel ride in the desert, and much more. Denys James, www.discoveryarttravel.com.

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index to advertisers

Aardvark.....62	Continental Clay.....62	Herring Designs/SlabMat.....76	Olympic Kilns.....67
ACerS Books.....72, 74,76	Cornell.....76	Highwater Clays.....71	PCF Studios.....61
Alabama Clay Conference.....75	Coyote Clay.....61	K-12 Natl Ceramic Fdn.....75	Peter Puggler Mfg.....4
Alligator Clay.....63	Cress Mfg.....14	Kiln Doctor.....76	Potters Council.....74
Amaco and Brent.....5, 13, 28, 29	Dolan Tools.....76	L & L Kiln Mfg.....79	Sheffield Pottery.....72
Anderson Ranch.....73	Euclid's/PSH.....61	La Meridiana.....62	Shimpo.....Cover 3, 63
Archie Bray.....73	Functional Ceramics Wkshp.....75	Larkin.....73	Skutt.....Cover 4
Arrowmont School.....63	Geil Kilns.....3	Master Kiln Builders.....76	Smith-Sharpe.....69
Bailey Pottery.....1,7,15,25	Georgies.....69	Mayco.....Cover 2	Socwell.....76
Bracker's.....73	Giffin Tec.....71	MKM.....67	Spectrum.....9
Carolina Clay.....76	Great Lakes Clay.....63	Mudtools.....67	Tucker's Pottery.....8
CeramicReceipes.org.....6	Greenwich House.....2	N.C. Potter's Conference.....75	Ward Burner.....61
Chinese Clay Art.....72		North Star.....69	Xiem Tools USA.....63
Clay Art Center.....62			
Clay Art Center/Scott Creek.....71			

SPOTLIGHT

here until not



Ceramics Monthly: How do you think people's experience of something perceived as precious changes their awareness around use? How does that affect their expectations of cost and value? How has this changed your sales over the course of your career?

Ayumi Horie: The word precious gives me the shivers. When applied to objects, it brings to mind either the obsession of Gollum or the prissy untouchability of a china cabinet, neither of which I want my work associated with. Yet, I welcome the notion of a precious memory of an object; it is the *experience* of an object that is precious, rather than the

thing itself. How we value objects not only has to do with cost, but also the circumstance of its acquisition, its history in our lives, and the way it's served us. Despite the anxiety of losing something treasured, the pleasure in the experience of using it may be heightened because we are cognizant of the liminal space it occupies between the every day and the locked away. We excuse its brittle lightness or its leaden bottom, and its sharp edge may instead become endearing, rather than annoying. We may even create occasions to celebrate expressly so that we use the pots we love (think little girls with tea parties).

The function of pots is generally binary; they're either working or not working. I love that their demise is often so dramatic. An audible crack, rather than a tepid wearing out over time like an old sweater with holey elbows. This experience of sudden and permanent* loss reinforces the metaphorical nature of ceramics. Just like everything in life, we ought to enjoy the moment, because they're here until they're not.

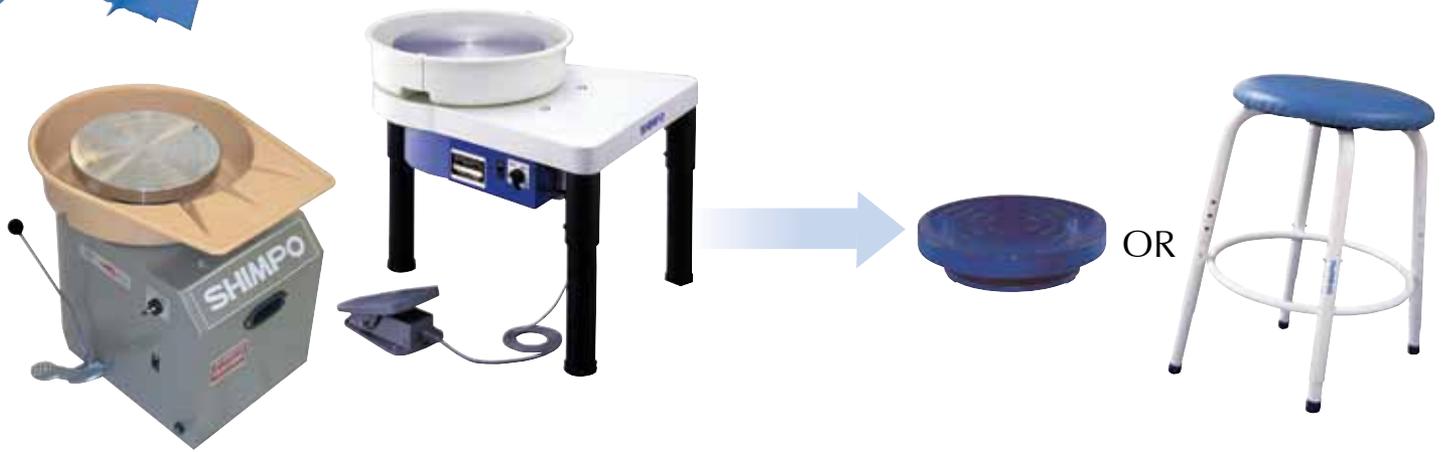
My imperative is not so much to make something cheap, but to make something cheap enough and more than good. More than that, if I'm charging more for an object, it better be good and unique in the way handmade things are. I will let the factories do the work of making affordable work, because I want to make something really beautiful even if it means me putting more time and effort into it. There's a place for all price ranges and my responsibility is to be efficient in the studio and to make quality work. Over the years, my customers have stuck by me, because they appreciate this fact about me. I want to make a living wage and use what I pay my carpenter for his craftsmanship as my benchmark. Luckily, as my prices have increased, so have sales. I spend an enormous amount of time on social media sharing my life as a maker and a Mainer. With every pot comes a little bit of my story and I hope that the animals I draw can nurture a little precious memory for someone.

*Exception: Check out historical examples of repaired pots on Andrew Baseman's blog, [Past Imperfect](#).

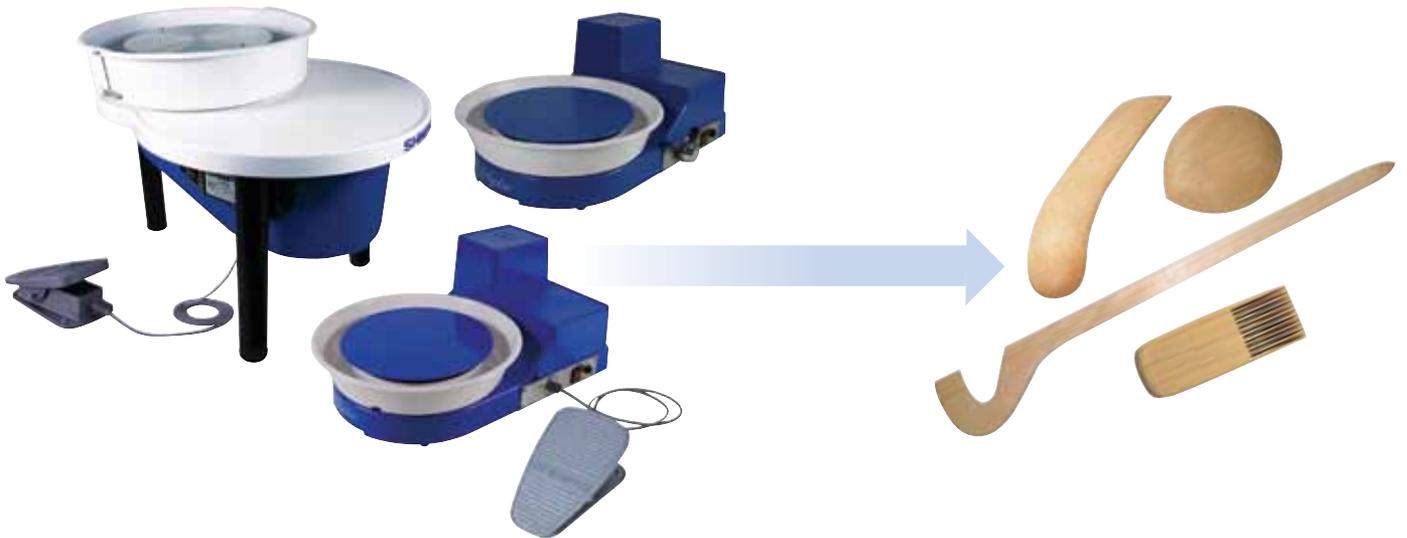
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