

POTTERS PAGES

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Announcing the 2014 Juried Show

TRANSCENDING MATERIAL

We are pleased to announce the call for entries for our fifth annual members' juried competition. The name of the show is "Transcending Material", and we invite you, our members, to go with your own interpretation.

Our material world is filled with texture and tactile experiences. As artists, we are often drawn to an object because of our desire to experience the way the surface feels—Oil paint on canvas, lace on a coffee table, heavily draped upholstery, honeycomb, sunflowers. How can clay allow for this same sensory experience? Call upon old, new, and innovative ways to manipulate clay in our ever-changing world.

The exhibition will be concurrently shown during National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference in Milwaukee, March 2014, and will showcase the quality work made by the members of the Potters Council—an international organization with members all over the world.

For more information, visit:

<http://ceramicartsdaily.org/potters-council/2014-potters-council-juried-show>

DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2013



Presenter: Courtney Murphy
Potters Council Conference: Alternative
Approach to Clay, September 13–15,
Nashville, TN

letter from the chair:

STEVEN BRANFMAN, Potters Council Board Chair



As I write this I'm on my way home from 12 days in China. I had intended to write this column during my trip but frankly I had no time. Virtually every minute was occupied by taking in the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures of a place

so different from my own that it will take me weeks and months to decompress and appreciate it all. Because my work is so strongly tied to Eastern culture and aesthetics you may be surprised to learn that this was my first trip to Asia. I've wanted to visit the East for many years, perhaps as many years as I've been making pots. In fact, I've had several opportunities, but for one reason or another life conspired against me. And if you had told me that my first trip would be to China, I would have bet against it, Japan being a much more likely destination. But I digress...

Beijing; Tiananmen Square, the Great Wall, The Forbidden City, Olympic Stadium, Summer Palace, Temple of Heaven. Xi'an; The City Wall, Terra Cotta Warriors, Big Wild Goose Pagoda. Shanghai; Shanghai Museum, Jewish Refugee Memorial, Bund, Antiques Market. Nanjing; Sun Yat Sen Mausoleum, Emperors Garden. Yixing; pottery, pottery, pottery, and more pottery.

As a potter you would think that Yixing would be the highlight of the trip. Well you wouldn't be wrong. But lest you think that it was the only place that I saw clay, pottery is everywhere in China. It is part and parcel of the culture. In the Shanghai Museum I saw pots that I had never seen before,

not in domestic or European museums and not in pictures. In the antique markets I saw more "authentic" prehistoric pots than I ever imagined. And Yixing? John Baymore had just returned from Yixing a week before I was leaving. He did his best to prepare me and given John's extensive travel in the East there was no one better to try. John, you might as well have said, "Steve, there's a lot of pottery to see. Have fun." Imagine a city of 1.2 million people where virtually everyone is involved in ceramics. The bombardment of pots is overwhelming. Nothing could prepare you for what you'll see there. Yixing Ceramics Museum, Qian-Shu Dragon Kiln, shop after shop, after shop of pottery. It's like standing at the beach and looking out to sea. All you see is water. At the base of the Dragon Kiln site there are several potters workshops. As we walked by I could hear the unmistakable "slap, slap, slap" of a potter's hand on the clay. We stood by the door only to be invited in. Watching this potter work and exchanging conversation in the form of hand signs straight from the potters dictionary was my Yixing highlight. Clay is a universal language.

Before I left, I was talking to a friend who was clearly excited about all the pottery I was going to see. She asked me if I thought that my trip and being exposed to so much pottery would change my work in any way. I was confident when I said, "I'm really looking forward to seeing all the work but I've been a potter for so long that, no, I don't see it changing my work." Well, after 40 years of clay, I continue to amaze myself. I've got 10 more hours in the air and other than being back home with Ellen, I can't wait to get into the studio. Will my work change? Of course it will. How can it



Dragon kiln



Terra Cotta Warriors

not? Our work, whether it is pots, sculpture, or other objects is an expression of our experiences. My mentor in art school was a robust and larger-than-life Italian who apprenticed in Italy with a famous marble sculptor. One day when I was questioning the value of some academic courses I was taking, he put his hand on my shoulder and said, "There is no such thing as a good stupid artist." Gerry had a knack for getting to the point. It was a moment of realization for me. Read, observe, question, learn, experience, broaden your horizons. It is all ammunition, fuel, ingredients, components, parts, and elements that we churn, mix, combine, and spit out in the form of the things that we make. The more we experience, the more we take in, the more we absorb, the smarter we become.

Will my trip to China change my work? Oh boy, will it ever.

in the studio

Sumi Von Dassow, Potters Council Member

This is an excerpt from Sumi's book *Low Firing and Burnishing*, and she explains the basics of burnishing pottery, from the tools to use, to a couple of basic techniques. Sumi is a presenter at the October Potters Council conference, *Alternative Firing Surfaces* in Minneapolis, MN. A hands-on pit firing will be demonstrated along with discussion and demonstration of the burnishing processes.

To learn more about the Alternative Firing Surfaces Conference, visit: <http://ceramicartsdaily.org/potters-council/alternative-firing-surfaces/>

To learn more about Sumi von Dassow and her ceramic work, visit <http://www.herwheel.com/>.



Pit-fired Torso by Sumi von Dassow

process

BASICS OF BURNISHING POTTERY

Potters who burnish are often asked, "What glaze is that?" by curious admirers of their work. Non-potters naturally assume that all pottery is glazed, and the glossy surface of a burnished pot seems like a different and intriguing sort of glaze. Though glazed pottery can be brighter and more colorful, a burnished pot has a glow from within and a warmth that glazed pottery doesn't possess. The difference which non-potters sense without knowing it—and which fascinates potters—is that the surface of a burnished pot doesn't wear a coat hiding the clay itself from view. Glaze is glossy and reflective, but the reflecting surface consists of a millimeter or so of glass covering the clay. Underneath this layer of glaze the rough stony clay is always perceptible, even if not always visible. A burnished pot can have a surface just as glossy and reflective as any glaze, but behind this glorious surface there is no hidden roughness. Even the feel of a burnished pot is seductive: while a glazed pot feels hard and cold, a burnished pot seems warm and almost soft to touch.

There are two methods of burnishing a pot: rubbing the clay with a polished stone or other smooth object, and coating the pot with terra sigillata and rubbing it with a soft material such as a chamois leather. We'll discuss the former today.

Using a stone is more time consuming and takes a lot of practice, but can produce a higher degree of sheen. You also don't have to worry about the surface chipping or flaking off, and you can get a perfectly smooth surface with no brush-strokes or drip marks.

BURNISHING TOOLS

Any very smooth object can potentially be used as a burnishing stone. Many potters use rubber or plastic ribs for burnishing, particularly on leather-hard pots. The back of a spoon is a popular tool, though it may leave grayish marks on the clay. One of the more unusual burnishing tools I've heard of is used by Wally Asselberghs: he uses burnt-out lightbulbs of various sizes on leather-hard clay, because they are easier to grip. He does switch to a stone to finish the job once the pots are almost dry.

To purchase Sumi's book, *Barrel, Pit, and Saggar Firing*, visit: <http://ceramicartsdaily.org/bookstore/barrel-pit-and-saggar-firing/>

To purchase Sumi's book and DVD, *Low-firing and Burnishing*, visit: <http://ceramicartsdaily.org/bookstore/sumi-von-dassow-collection/>

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in the studio



Bowl, by Ashraf Hanna

BURNISHING LEATHER-HARD OR BLACK-HARD CLAY

Some potters find it easier to burnish a pot before it has dried completely. Timing can be tricky—you want the pot at the verge of dry, but with just enough moisture in the clay to allow your stone to glide across the clay without scratching it. Traditional leather-hard clay, the stage when a wheel-thrown pot can be easily trimmed, is a little too early. A leather-hard pot will show the marks of your burnishing tool as distinct little ridges, and in drying the rest of the way it will lose most of the shine you give it. Ideally, you want to catch the clay at the black-hard—when it is almost dry but has not yet changed color. If you burnish at this point, then cover the pot to slowly dry the rest of the way, perhaps even going over it once or twice more with the stone before it dries completely, you can achieve a good polish. One drawback to burnishing this way is that you won't be able to sand the pot before burnishing, so this technique works better with a wheel-thrown pot that can be smoothed with a rib when wet, or after trimming. If you want to burnish this way, you have to pay close attention to the pot as it dries, checking and rechecking it, and burnishing and re-burnishing it until it is too dry to burnish without scratching. In order to achieve the maximum level of burnish, Carol Molly Prier burnishes her pots four times, starting by first burnishing at leather-hard,



Latticed Globe Form, by David Greenbaum

immediately after trimming. If it is a handbuilt pot she scrapes it smooth at the leather-hard stage before burnishing. At this leather-hard stage she sometimes uses a flexible metal rib to burnish, instead of her stone. She burnishes twice more as the pot continues drying, before it becomes bone dry. Once the pot is bone dry she uses a soft facial tissue to apply a thin coat of salad oil over the entire surface of the pot. She lets it dry completely and then goes over the pot one last time with her stone.

BURNISHING ON THE WHEEL

If you are burnishing a wheel-thrown pot, you may want to use the wheel to make the burnishing process easier. David Greenbaum burnishes wheel-thrown white earthenware pots on the wheel in a two-step process. The first burnish is when the pot is leather-hard, using a Teflon plastic rib. When the pot is bone dry he rubs it all over with olive oil and allows it to soak into the clay. He then uses polished stones to burnish the pot again on the rotating wheel. Usually he makes three passes to eliminate any ridges the stone might have left the first and second time around. With the pot still on the wheel he goes over the surface one last time with the Teflon rib to bring the surface to a glass-like gloss. He uses a Giffin Grip to hold the pot on the wheel for burnishing—the small rubber grips that hold the pot don't mar the surface as wads of clay might.



welcome new potters council members

FOR MAY AND JUNE 2013

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KIM NIELSEN

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AR
CONSTANCE GRIFFITHS
KAREN DEBAUN

AZ
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Come visit the studio
470 Sky Valley Road, Salt Spring Islands,
British Columbia, Canada also showing at:
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Lan's Hands Pottery
by LeeAnn Norgard



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ITALY CERAMICS IN TUSCANY III

2013 events/exhibitions

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, JULY 3-27

“Deep into the Shed/A Studio Sojourn,” at SMAart Gallery & Studio, 1045 Sutter St. This exhibition explores the artist’s journey of undergoing challenges in the studio over a period of time and condition. Visit www.smaartgallery.com or contact Steven Allen at steve@smaartgallery.com for more information.

PEZINOK, SLOVAKIA, JULY 7-SEPTEMBER 6

“Ceramic Markets (Keramicke Trhy),” at Pezinok, Radnicne Square. Marks the 10th anniversary of traditional ceramic markets and festivals. Contact Andrej Frič at andrej_fric@yahoo.com or visit www.pezinok.sk/index.php?yggid=383 for more information.

DAVENPORT, CA, JULY 5-8

“Soup to Nuts: Turning the Corner from Hobbyist to Professional,” at Mendocino Art Center, 45200 Little Lake St. Workshop will focus on individual instruction, with an emphasis on creating a body of sellable work, discussions about studio design, time management, problem solving, and the how to of running a productive pottery business. Visit mendocinoartcenter.org for more information.

FAIRHOPE, AL, AUGUST 1

“The Demitasse, a Cup and Saucer,” call for entries at 60 North Section St. All submitted work must be original, made within the last 2 years and represent a demitasse cup and saucer. The exhibit is open to all artists who work in clay. Each piece should hold approximately 4 oz. of fluid and be made of a minimum of 70% clay, and not exceed 6”h x 6”w x 6”d. Go to www.thekilnstudio.com for more information and the submission form.

DAVENPORT, CA, AUGUST 3-4

“9th Annual Mid Summers Eve Pottery Sale,” at Darkhorse Pottery, 1 Third Ave. Sale starts from 2pm—8pm, featuring a combination of wood and gas fired pottery. Visit darkhorsepottery.com for more information.

FAIRHOPE, AL, AUGUST 3-4, 10

“Taking the Mystery Out of Glaze Mixing,” at 60 North Section St. For 24 years, John Reznar has been making pottery based around the idea of self sufficiency. Building his kilns, digging his clay, and mixing his own glazes has been central to this approach. During this workshop, he will introduce you to the basic materials and processes normally used in preparing and applying your own glazes. The goal of the course is to liberate you from the confusing technical barriers and provide you with the confidence to mix, apply, and fire cone 6 glazes on your own. Cost \$175 plus \$10 material fee. Go to www.thekilnstudio.com for more information.

MENDOCINO, CA, AUGUST 26-30

“Glaze Basics: Developing Color & Surface,” at Mendocino Art Center, 45200 Little Lake St. Learn about each glaze ingredient and its function in a glaze by mixing and firing simple line blends to create glossy, matte and textured surfaces in a variety of colors. Discover what makes stable glazes as well as how to adjust for glaze fit and firing temperature. Contact Chic Lotz at Chic@PotteryPoet.com or visit MendocinoArtCenter.org for more information.

FORT WORTH, TX, SEPTEMBER 6-28

“Best of Texas Clay,” at Fort Worth Community Art Center. \$1500 in awards; submit through website. Deadline to register is June 28. Contact Roy Odom at info@tpsg.biz or visit www.tpsg.biz for more information.

FAIRHOPE, AL, SEPTEMBER 7-8

“A Study of Atmospheric Firing,” at Camp Beckwith, 10400 Beckwith Lane. This is an overnight workshop learning raku and barrel firing techniques. Participants are asked to bring 10-12 bisque fired pieces. Work for barrel firing should be burnished in leather-hard stage before being bisque fired. Raku glazes will be provided on site. The workshop will begin by having participants make burnished whistles to be fired at a later date. After lunch, pieces for the raku firing will be glazed, burnished work loaded into the barrel and then the raku firings will begin. We will fire into Saturday night, unload Sunday, clean, and finish work. Feel free to explore the serene beauty of Camp Beckwith with a walk or canoe ride. All is included in the price and available for us to enjoy. \$250 for double occupancy (all meals included) \$275 for single (all meals included). Visit www.thekilnstudio.com or email thekilnstudio@yahoo.com for more information.

LA CRUCES, NM, SEPTEMBER 6-NOVEMBER 9

“From the Ground Up XXVI,” at the Las Cruces Museum of Art, Main St. Juried Exhibition, for information on applications contact Joy Miller at jmiller@las-cruces.org or 575-541-221. Submission deadline: postmarked no later than Friday, May 17, 2013. Visit www.las-cruces.org for more information.

SKOPELOS, SKOPELOS ISLAND, SEPTEMBER 7-21

“Mia Muse,” at the Skopelos Foundation of the Arts, Greece, welcomes all levels of students. Suzy Birstein is returning to Skopelos for the third time presenting her 2-week, hands-on transformational, figurative ceramics program. Enhanced by the ambiance of the Skopelos sun, experience local music, food, artists, museums, architecture, and beaches. Our vision will grow as we make visible the synthesis of clay, color, concept, and culture. Contact Suzy at suzy@suzybirstein.com or visit www.suzybirstein.com for more information.

NASHVILLE, TN, SEPTEMBER 13-15

“Altered Approach to Clay,” at The Clay Lady’s Studio, 1416 Lebanon Pike. This conference features presenters Susan Filley, Suze Lindsay, Jennifer McCurdy, and Courtney Murphy showing different ways to manipulate clay. Deadline to save \$50 is August 4 2013. Email lstoover@ceramics.org for more information or visit <http://ceramicartsdaily.org/potters-council/alterd-approach-to-clay/#scheduleofevents>.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, SEPTEMBER 20-22

“Handbuilt for CERF+,” at Montgomery County Community College. Featuring artists Lana Wilson, Vince Pitelka, Chandra DeBuse, Mitch Lyons, and Sandi Pierantozzi. Includes demonstrations, inspiration, and conversation to benefit the Craft Emergency Relief Fund. Event is concurrent with the “Philadelphia Clay” exhibition. Visit www.sanduandneil.com for more information.

LANCASTER, PA, SEPTEMBER 28

“Altering Ceramic Forms,” at Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen, 335 North Queen St. Jake Johnson will give a demonstration-based workshop focusing on wheel-thrown forms, 10am—5pm. \$67 for members, \$75 for non-members. To register or for more information, visit www.pacrafts.org/workshops or call 717-431-8706.

2013 events/exhibitions

NELSON COUNTY, VA, OCTOBER 3-9

“Workshop with Nan Rothwell and Kevin Crowe,” at Nan Rothwell Pottery and Tye River Pottery. Hands-on intensive throwing workshop. First 3 days spent in Crowe’s studio, the rest in Rothwell’s studio. Contact Nan Rothwell at info@nanrothwellpottery.com or visit www.nanrothwellpottery.com for more information.

FAIRHOPE, AL, OCTOBER 4-29

“The Demitasse, a Cup and Saucer,” at 60 North Section St. Exhibit of demi-tasse cups and saucers. Juried by Sebastian Moh. Go to www.thekilnstudio.com for more information.

FAIRHOPE, AL, OCTOBER 26-27

“Stretching Your Techniques,” at 60 North Section St. Artists Steve Loucks and Lynnette Hesser will demonstrate their techniques of throwing horizontally vertically forms. Their demonstrations will also show how to include sprigs, carving geometric designs, and organic forms. Loucks will also speak on glazes and glaze theory, firing to cone 6, oxidation firing, reduction firing, and multiple glazes and spraying. \$160 per person. Go to www.thekilnstudio.com for more information.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, OCTOBER 11-13

“Alternative Firing Surfaces,” at Edina Art Center, 4701 W. 64th St. This conference features presenters Billy Ray Mangham, Marcia Selsor, David Sturm, Ken Turner, and Sumi Von Dassow, showing different ways to fire clay. Attendees of conference will be able to participate in firing demonstrations. Email lstoover@ceramics.org for more information or visit <http://ceramicartsdaily.org/potters-council/alternative-firing-surfaces/>.

LORDS VALLEY, PA, OCTOBER 11-13

“Colored Clay Revolution Workshop,” at Hemlock Farms Community Association, 1007 Hemlock Farms. Workshop teaches coloring clay, creating secondary colors, fading colors, the Skinner Method of blending colors, creating canes and patterns, and using these patterns in work. Suitable for all levels of artists. Contact Amy Strapec via phone at 570-775-4200/ext. 118 or 570-236-9393, via email at amy.strapec@hfca.com for more information.

FAIRHOPE, AL, NOVEMBER 1-30

“Two Separate Styles, One Couple” at 60 North Section St. Artists Steve Loucks and Lynnette Hesser will demonstrate their different techniques. Go to www.thekilnstudio.com for more information.

CERTALDO, ITALY, SEPTEMBER 16-27, 2014

“Fun in the Italian Mud,” at the La Meridiana International School of Ceramic Art in Tuscany. The Italian pottery tour itinerary provides time for workshop activities as well as sightseeing and enjoying the beautiful Tuscan countryside. Our Pottery workshop will cover throwing on the wheel, creating sculpture, portraiture, understanding glazing and firing, and ends with our own exhibition. Contact Cathy Lawley at cathy@friedmudd.com or visit www.friedmudd.com for more information.



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Ceramics in Bali

AUGUST 4-17, 2013
INDONESIA

Altered Approach to Clay

SEPTEMBER 13-15, 2013
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Alternative Firing Surfaces

OCTOBER 11-13, 2013
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



600 N. CLEVELAND AVENUE, SUITE 210, WESTERVILLE, OH 43082
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Deadline for the next Potters' Pages is July, 31, 2013.

with 3100 members.

Announce a workshop or exhibition, share ideas, suggestions or comments. Get involved and submit your information today! Member participation is key to the success of *Potters' Pages*. Please send information to lstover@ceramics.org and share your news

contribute

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POTTERS PAGES

