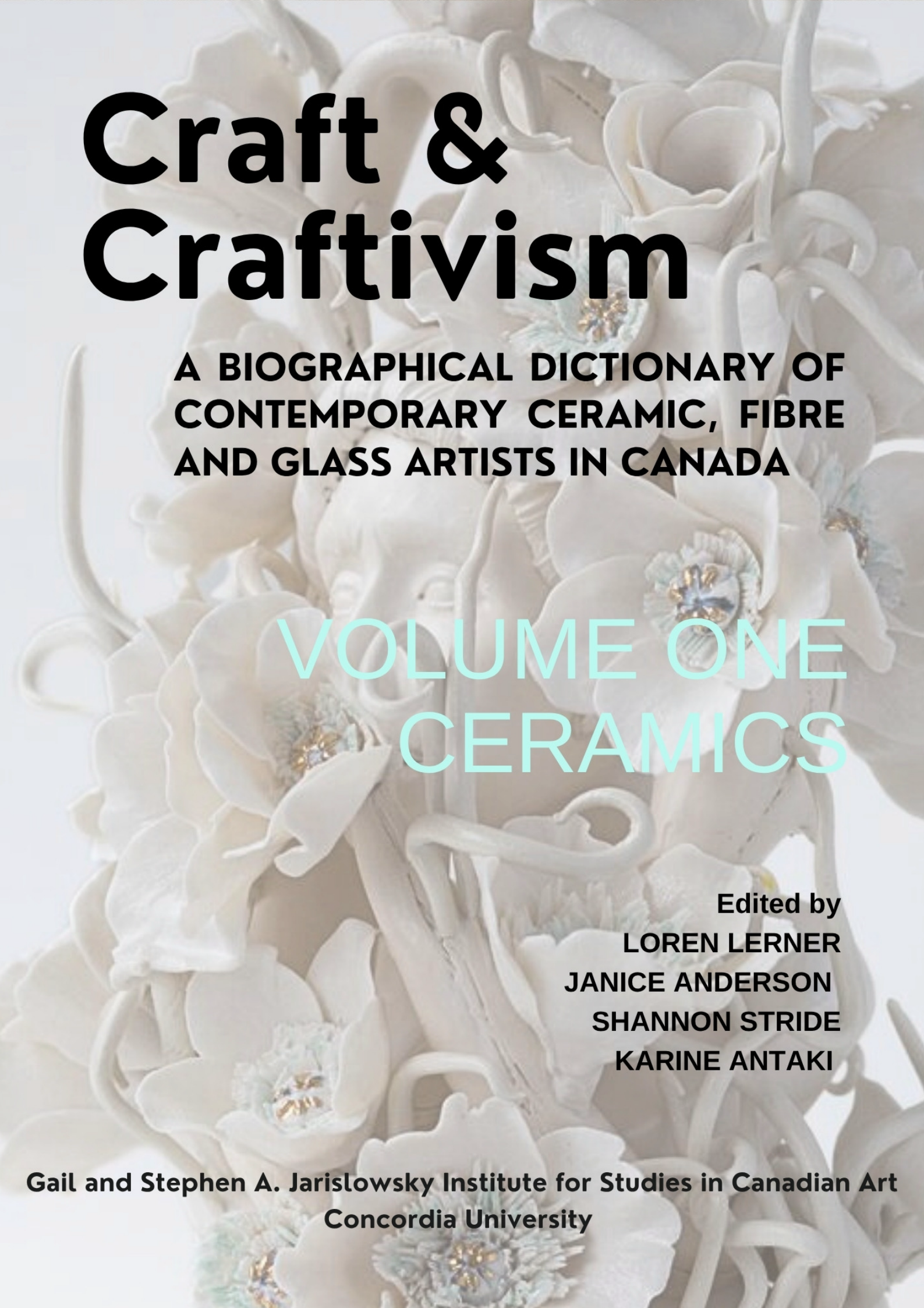


Craft & Craftivism

A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF CONTEMPORARY CERAMIC, FIBRE AND GLASS ARTISTS IN CANADA

VOLUME ONE CERAMICS

Edited by
LOREN LERNER
JANICE ANDERSON
SHANNON STRIDE
KARINE ANTAKI

Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art
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Cover image:
Jess Riva Cooper
Fruiting Bodies and Hellebores (detail), 2023
Porcelain, paper-clay, glaze, gold lustre,
9”x7”x17”

Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art
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Introduction

Contemporary work in ceramics, fibres, and glass is commanding unprecedented attention in the visual arts world. Many Canadian artists have gained recognition for their aesthetic proficiency, conceptual relevance, and skill-based expertise in provincial, national, and international public institutions using these materials. The visual arts community in Canada and elsewhere seeks information concerning the historical importance and significance to contemporary Canadian craft artists of these materials and skills. *Craft and Craftivism: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Ceramic, Fibre and Glass Artists in Canada,* edited by Loren Lerner, Janice Anderson, Shannon Stride, and Karine Antaki, is created as a free e-publication to fill this need. The material is readily available for both pedagogical purposes and the general public's use. It aims to encourage scholarly interest while acknowledging the artists' contributions to Canadian visual arts, a path currently encouraged in many Canadian post-secondary art education institutions. Concordia University, for example, offers a robust studio arts program that encompasses craft and craftivism, particularly within the Department of Fibres and Material Practice.

The biographies emphasise the artists' works in relation to materials, techniques, processes, creative inspiration, and artistic vision. Craft artists create handmade objects or artworks, producing functional or decorative pieces that exhibit remarkable skill and craftsmanship. These works often draw inspiration from natural forms and cultural traditions while preserving established practices and innovating new ones. On the other hand, craftivism is a form of activism, the word being a portmanteau of "craft" and "activism." Typically, a craftivist is an artist who uses craft materials to empower, criticize, or make social or political statements.

Craft and Craftivism was conceived as an introduction to these professional artists. Their profiles encompass three representative works and a biographical entry with details that locate the artist, their training and travel, and other experiences that have served as sources of material knowledge and inspiration. Where possible, these connections are made in the artist's own words or those of curators and reviewers. These sources can be traced through the

artists' websites, online exhibition reviews, curatorial statements, interviews, articles, videos, and so forth.

We recognize that many more artists might have been featured in this biographical dictionary. Artists develop over time, their creative production grows and changes, and new artists emerge. We hope this biographical dictionary, as an online eBook, can be revised, updated, and expanded in future years.

Acknowledgements

A project of challenging dimensions, *Craft and Craftivism* stands as a testament to the dedication and support of many contributors. Their time, effort, and unwavering commitment have been instrumental in bringing this project to its successful completion.

First and foremost, we thank the artists who agreed to participate in the project and inspired our efforts, and the twelve biography writers listed below. The project has been supported by the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art. We are grateful to Research Chair and Director Martha Langford, our fellow members who approved the project, and Institute Administrator Brenda Dionne for their encouragement and oversight. A grant from the Canada Council for the Arts, under the Jean A. Chalmers Fund for the Crafts, provided both funding and encouragement as the project was getting started.

Craft and Craftivism was greatly enriched by the expertise of several professionals who played a pivotal role in suggesting the initial lists of potential artists for inclusion. We extend our sincere thanks to Susan Surette, Denis Longchamps, Elaine Cheasley Paterson, and Julia Skelly for their invaluable contributions. Furthermore, we acknowledge the efforts of Serena Desaulniers, who meticulously organized the names of the artists and pertinent information at the beginning of the project.

We wish to convey our sincere gratitude to Karine Antaki for her design of *Craft and Craftivism*, and to Elliot Mann for helping to integrate the images into the text and for providing links to the online sources.

The biography writers were primarily graduate students and recent graduates in art history from Canadian universities. Their initials appear in brackets after each biographical entry. Of the nearly one hundred applicants, these are the writers we selected:

MEC: Marie-Eve Castonguay
HC: Hailey Chomos
DD: Daisy Duncan
HF: Hannah Ferguson
NJH: Natalie Jane Hume
MI: Mirra Ianeva
EK: Erika Marie Kindsfather
ORO: Owen Roman Ostrowski
SS: Shannon Stride
TS: Tammy Sutherland
HLT: Hans Lujan Torres
SW: Stephanie Weber

The editors of *Craft and Craftivism* are:

Loren Lerner, Professor Emerita of Art History and an Emerita Member and Distinguished Fellow of the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art at Concordia University. Recently, Lerner published two free eBooks: one with Karine Antaki, titled *Creating the Modern: Intersections of Art and Society in the Nineteenth Century* and another with Shannon Stride, titled *Guide to Studying the Visual Arts in Canada*.

Janice Anderson, retired Visual Resources Curator, Affiliate Professor of Art History, Affiliate Member of the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art, and co-founder of the Canadian Women Artists History Initiative (CWAHI), Concordia University. Anderson is co-editor of *Rethinking Professionalism*, co-editor of a special edition of the Journal of Canadian Art History titled "Women and the Artistic Field," and co-organizer of four CWAHI conferences, all with Kristina Huneault.

Shannon Stride, Curator and Collections Manager of the S.A. Jarislowsky Investments Collection, and the Craft Content Developer of the Canadian Craft Federation / Fédération canadienne des métiers d'art. She previously published the

eBook *Guide to Studying the Visual Arts in Canada* with Loren Lerner.

Karine Antaki, Independent Curator and Writer, former Director and Curator of the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery of Concordia University, and Director of Creative Arts at Centennial College. She has published numerous catalogues on contemporary Canadian art and most recently collaborated on *Creating the Modern: Intersections of Art and Society in the Nineteenth Century* with Loren Lerner.

To further pursue the study of the art and artists covered in Craft and Craftivism, we strongly encourage you to consult the *Guide to Studying the Visual Arts in Canada*. Its coverage is comprehensive, with sections on Finding Funding for Your Research; Archives, Libraries, & Special Collections; Art & Art History Associations; Artist Files; Artist-Run Centres; Canadian Art Journals & Magazines; Databases & Indexes; Educational Resources; Encyclopedias & Dictionaries; Exhibition Catalogues; Image & Video Collections; Museums & Galleries; Online Art Writing Platforms; Newsletters & Blogs; Oral History Interviews; Podcasts; Provenance Research & Art Sales; Theses & Dissertations; University and College Faculty & Curators in Canadian Visual Arts; and Examples of University-Level Courses on the Visual Arts in Canada.

KC Adams

For KC Adams (Flying Overhead in Circles Eagle Woman)—an Anishinaabe, Inninew, and British relational maker based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on Treaty 1 territory—Relational Making is the skillful production of objects, new media, or performances by an Indigenous person that infuses Indigenous knowledge systems such as relational, locational, spiritual, communal, or holistic understanding. Through her roles as a relational maker, curator, educator, activist and community member, she explores technology and its relationship to her Indigenous identity. A multidisciplinary maker since the 1990s, Adams is well-known for her pottery, installations, and photography, such as her *Cyborg Hybrids* series, an ongoing portrait series that started in the early 2000s.



Figure 1a. KC Adams, *"INDIAN PRINCESS" Cyborg Hybrid KC (Visual Artist)*, 2005. Digital print. View Source



Figure 1b. KC Adams, *"SAVAGE" Cyborg Hybrid David (Actor)*, 2005. Digital print. View Source

In this series, Adams created portraits of artists of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry positioned in stoic poses against a stark white background with racial slurs beaded onto the chest of their t-shirts, as seen in "*INDIAN PRINCESS" Cyborg Hybrid KC (Visual Artist*) (2005) (fig. 1a) and "*SAVAGE" Cyborg Hybrid David (Actor)* (2005) (fig. 1b). She then photoshopped these posed portraits to appear glossy and perfect, as though they belonged in a magazine, revealing her hand in their making and, by extension, exposing the cultural fabrication of the anti-Indigenous slogans on the models' shirts.

In 2014, Adams began to formally study and experiment with woodland pottery—the ancient ceramic art of woodland peoples like the Inninew and Anishinaabe—through land-based experimentation, engaging with Elders, and archaeology. The artist recalls being drawn to the materiality of clay decades earlier; she states: "The moment I touched clay, my blood memory kicked in,

and I felt like I had come home." This experience was transformative for her; through learning her community's traditional methods of pottery-making, she found her miskenow (Inninew word for life purpose). This practice isn't simply a way of creating; it is a land-based pedagogical for understanding the interconnectedness between all beings, the Land, Water and spirit. Adams handles clay-making with care, humility, and patience, approaching the medium as a teacher. Before beginning her works in clay, Adams begins each practice by smudging and then mixing collected clay with temper from rough sand and crushed granite obtained from ceremonies. She uses only tools that come from the land, hand-built methods, and fires each piece in an out-of-doors pit fire. One example of Adams' reclamation of her Indigenous pottery methods was her contribution to the 2017 group exhibition *Shards: Contemporary Artists in Conversation with the Ceramics of our Forebearers* at Gallery 1C03 in Winnipeg (curated by Jenny Western and Kevin Brownlee in partnership with the Manitoba Craft Council), a show that focused on the connections between female makers of pottery in history and contemporary Indigenous artists.



Figure 2a. KC Adams, installation view of *nipêkoskopanin ê-kîwêyân (i am awakening as i come home)*, 2017. From the series *Shards: Contemporary Artists in Conversation with the Ceramics of our Forebearers*. Mixed media floor installation. 91.4 X 91.4 X 30.5 cm. Gallery 1C03, University of Winnipeg. View Source

At the exhibition's centre was Adams' floor installation, *nipêkoskopanin ê-kîwêyân* (*i am awakening as i come home*) (2017) (fig. 2a), comprised of stones placed around clay pots arranged in a line from smallest to largest. To connect the past with the present, Adams created these pots with clay sourced from Manitoba's Lake Agassiz region (and other areas across the province) and shaped it with traditional Indigenous pottery methods.



Figure 2b. KC Adams, installation view of *nii wawaa ichi gamin (we create a circle)*, 2017. From the series *Shards: Contemporary Artists in Conversation with the Ceramics of Our Forebearers*. Multimedia video installation and clay, dimensions unknown. Gallery 1C03, University of Winnipeg. View Source

To further collapse old and new technologies into one another, Adams nestled a video screen within the installation's centremost vessel showing *nii wawaa ichi gamin* (*we create a circle*), a multimedia piece that included sound recordings of a poem Adams wrote and a video of a community performance orchestrated at a Nibi (water) Gathering near Bannock Point in Whiteshell, Manitoba (fig. 2b). Through making these clay vessels—bulbous forms modelled after a woman's pregnant belly—Adams was not only able to link tradition with contemporaneity through memory but also explored her relationship with the Land and Water and reconciled her personal connections to tradition: "There's a lot of references to water. Women are water carriers, and so those kinds of lessons

helped me understand Indigenous ways of thinking and being on a more holistic point of view."



Figure 3a. KC Adams, *Maada'oonidiwag (Coming together),* 2022. Bronze and limestone, dimensions variable. Donald Forster Sculpture Park, on the grounds of the Art Gallery of Guelph. View Source



Figure 3b. KC Adams, *Maada'oonidiwag (Coming together),* 2022. Bronze and limestone, dimensions variable. Donald Forster Sculpture Park, on the grounds of the Art Gallery of Guelph. View Source

Another example of Adams' mediation on history and identity through memory is *Maada'oonidiwag (Coming together)* (2022), installed in the Donald Forster Sculpture Park on the grounds of the Art Gallery of Guelph (Ontario) (figs. 3a and 3b). Here, in a multi-

media installation comprising a series of five bronze pots shaped after traditional Indigenous ceramic vessels and resting on a limestone base etched with the paths of the Speed and Eramosa rivers—two systems that flow through nearby Wellington County in southwestern Ontario— Adams materialised the past in situ and contemporized it. Adams' full body of work ranges across media to include not only ceramics, photography, and installation, but also adornment, drawing, painting, digital technology and kinetic art, and printmaking—an expansive practice that enables the artist to investigate Indigenous kinship and identity across many contemporary social issues. (NJH)

Thomas Aitken and Kate Hyde

Thomas Aitken and Kate Hyde are studio potters living and working in the village of Warsaw, Ontario. They are partners in both the romantic and professional senses of the term, having met in graduate school in Hyde's native United Kingdom, where they initiated a relationship based on a shared love of art that continues to this day. The couple immigrated to Aitken's home country of Canada, and Aitken began producing one-of-a-kind tableware while Hyde initiated a creative practice that crosses several disciplines, including graphic arts, textiles, and ceramic sculptures. Today, the two maintain solo practices while also collaborating on creative ventures that showcase their individual strengths, uniting Aitken's strong ceramic forms and Hyde's interest in colour and surface embellishment. Their collaborative creations are intended to be used day-to-day and to delight the eye with eclectic imagery that references a variety of sources, including historical theatre, poetry, and textiles.



Figure 1a. Thomas Aitken and Kate Hyde, *Pulcinella Teapot*, 2012. Porcelain, underglaze, glaze, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Thomas Aitken. View Source



Figure 1b. Thomas Aitken and Kate Hyde, *Pulcinella Teapot*, 2012. Porcelain, underglaze, glaze, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Thomas Aitken. View Source

Aitken and Hyde's desire to create beautiful ceramics that can be placed on the wall where they function as art objects, as well as on the table where they can be used to serve food, is apparent in their *Pulcinella Teapot* (2012) (figs. 1a and 1b). This teapot—included in the Art Gallery of Burlington's fortieth-anniversary show, *Suited to a*

Tea: 40 Years – 40 Teapots (curated by Jonathan Smith, Burlington, Ontario, 2018)—features a hand-built Polichinella, a character from Commedia dell'arte, alongside other actors and a musician who plays from a sheet of music that just happens to be the knob of the lid. In an article about the show, art critic Regina Haggo describes this playful piece, writing: "The mood of joyful mayhem is typical of many of Hyde and Aitken's ceramic creations."



Figure 2. Kate Hyde, *The Thread*, 2016. Porcelain, underglaze. 26 x 14 x 11 cm. Photo credit: Thomas Aitken. View Source

In her solo practice, Hyde draws on her training in both ceramics and textiles, often treating her clay as if it were fabric, developing work that reflects the textures, intimacy, and social meanings of cloth and clothing, as seen in the movement of sculpture in the form of a dress (fig. 2).



Figure 3. Thomas Aitken and Kate Hyde, *Mixing Bowls*, 1997 to present. Porcelain, glaze, 13 x 28 x 27 cm. Photo credit: Donna Griffith. View Source

Aitken's practice centres on hand-produced porcelain work that celebrates the functional object, its history and its associations. He has accepted several significant private and public commissions for dinnerware, including designing wine cups commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, Ontario, producing a place setting for the President's Service for the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and making limited edition plates designed by artist Michael Snow in 2007 titled *Condimental Shifts*. (SS)

Marissa Y Alexander

The materials and processes involved in transforming clay into hand-coiled sculptural forms are fundamental to Marissa Y Alexander's artistic practice. Based in Hamilton, Ontario, Alexander creates artworks that engage with space. In 2022/23, she relocated to Nova

Scotia to serve as an assistant professor of ceramics at NSCAD University (Halifax, Nova Scotia).



Figure 1a. Marissa Y Alexander, *Green on Grey*, 2016. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Marissa Y Alexander, *Green on Grey*, 2016 (detail). Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1c. Marissa Y Alexander, *Green on Grey*, 2016. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source

Green on Grey (2016) (figs. 1a, 1b, and 1c) is the three-dimensional translation of one of the artist's linear drawings. By creating the clay form, she was able to explore spatial relationships between the lines, curves, and surface articulations of the vessel, the qualities of its form, and the proximity of its parts to one another.



Figure 2a. Marissa Y Alexander, *Sculptural Form with Raspberry Motif*, 2019. From the installation *Looking in Dimmed Light*. Ceramic, glazes, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2b. Marissa Y Alexander, *Sculptural Form with Raspberry Motif*, 2019 (detail). From the installation *Looking in Dimmed Light*. Ceramic, glazes, dimensions unknown. View Source

Alexander mines her memories for imagery, and she is drawn to what is physically familiar. For example, the design pattern of *Sculptural Form with Raspberry Motif* (2019) (figs. 2a and 2b) recalls a childhood memory of raspberries that her grandmother used to pick that were growing through a fence. It was included in Alexander's MFA exhibition *Looking in Dimmed Light* (2019) (fig. 2c), which was inspired by the concept of the garden as a space where different elements can belong together.



Figure 2c. Marissa Y Alexander, *Sculptural Form with Raspberry Motif*, 2019 (installation view). From the installation *Looking in Dimmed Light*. Ceramic, glazes, dimensions unknown. View Source

In Alexander's work, the installation of individual ceramic pieces, when presented together, democratises the space in which they exist, and the sculptural forms accompany one another in balance, a union of similar but different things.



Figure 3a. Marissa Y Alexander, *I Dreamt I Swam with You*, 2020. From the series *Swim with Me*. Hand-built stoneware and glazes, fired to cone 5, 22.5" x 18" x 13.5". Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery. View Source

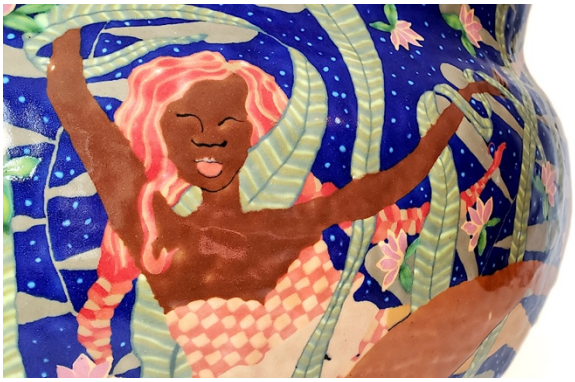


Figure 3b. Marissa Y Alexander, *I Dreamt I Swam with You*, 2020 (detail). View Source

The sense of fluidity in *I Dreamt I Swam with You* (2020) (figs. 3a and 3b), part of the series *Swim with Me*, is enhanced by the surface decoration rich in figures and foliage that spread around the vessel's surface seemingly without beginning or end. Alexander hand-builds all her artworks; she says, "I feel free when using coils to establish forms—there are no restrictions, and the possibility of where the lines lead to is endless. Material and process are central to my ceramics practice, and I aim to make things that engage myself and other people." (NJH)

Morgan Kamocki Allaby

Morgan Kamocki Allaby is a sculptor based in Western Ontario, where he maintains a creative practice that explores queer sexuality and masculine identity through male figurative sculpture. He depicts the male body in the nude, recalling classical sculpture, as seen in the idealised body of *Nerves* (2018) (fig.1).



Figure 1. Morgan Kamocki Allaby, *Nerves*, 2018. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

In *Nerves*, the figure stands alone before the viewer, asking them to question their own assumptions regarding the male body and what constitutes masculinity. Like all of Kamocki Allaby's sculptures, this figure is a hybrid: a human body with an animalistic face. Kamocki Allaby explains this hybridity, writing: "I seek to challenge and engage the viewer with depiction[s] of touch between males, and the use of animal features in these tableaus serves to make this conversation more complex. The hybrid faces I work with do not represent any one animal in particular, but are an amalgam that is capable of a breadth of human expression while being simultaneously removed from humanity." In this way, manipulating the male form to create man-animal amalgams allows the artist to

explore human gestures and relationships without creating a specific likeness, while simultaneously exploring the similarities between human and animal behaviours. In his 2021 solo show, *Marooned*, at the Glass and Clay Gallery (curated by Peter Flannery, Waterloo, Ontario), Kamocki Allaby explored queer masculinity further by representing pairs of white cast porcelain male figures, again with animal faces, in loving embraces and poses of homoerotic domination and submission, bringing queer relationships to the forefront in an affirmation of queer intimacy.



Figure 2. Morgan Kamocki Allaby, *Couple*, 2020. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

In *Couple* (2020) (fig.2), Kamocki Allaby's figures are depicted in a romantic moment, their eyes meeting as their arms wrap around each other.



Figure 3. Morgan Kamocki Allaby, *Grapple*, 2020. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

Grapple (2020) (fig. 3) pushes this exploration of queer intimacy and embrace further, showing a couple in the throes of wrestling, with one figure sitting on a tree stump, wrapping his legs around his partner below him. This scene is clearly playful; no violence or oppression takes place as the pair uses the physical power of their bodies to express affection and eroticism. Peter Flannery describes this series, writing: "In their gazes and in their poses, we see human interaction and affection, despite the hybrid faces that look back at us and at each other…Unsettling, for sure, but warm and engaging at the same time, the figures divulge to us desires, intimacy, and beauty in a quiet, yet powerful statement of queerness and sexuality." (SS)

PJ Anderson

At heart, PJ Anderson is a potter. The simple form of a vessel provides her with an endless source of inspiration. Anderson's journey to connect to her ancestral past is contained within her works, which rely upon techniques indigenous to Africa and North America to create something new that speaks to her identity as a Black-Métis woman born of the Manitoba prairies. After Anderson travelled to South Africa in 2009 to study traditional Zulu ceramics, she began the *Weaponization* series.



Figure 1. PJ Anderson, *Axe Headed Pitcher #2*, 2011. From the *Weaponization* series. Earthenware, terra sigillata, 58 cm. View Source

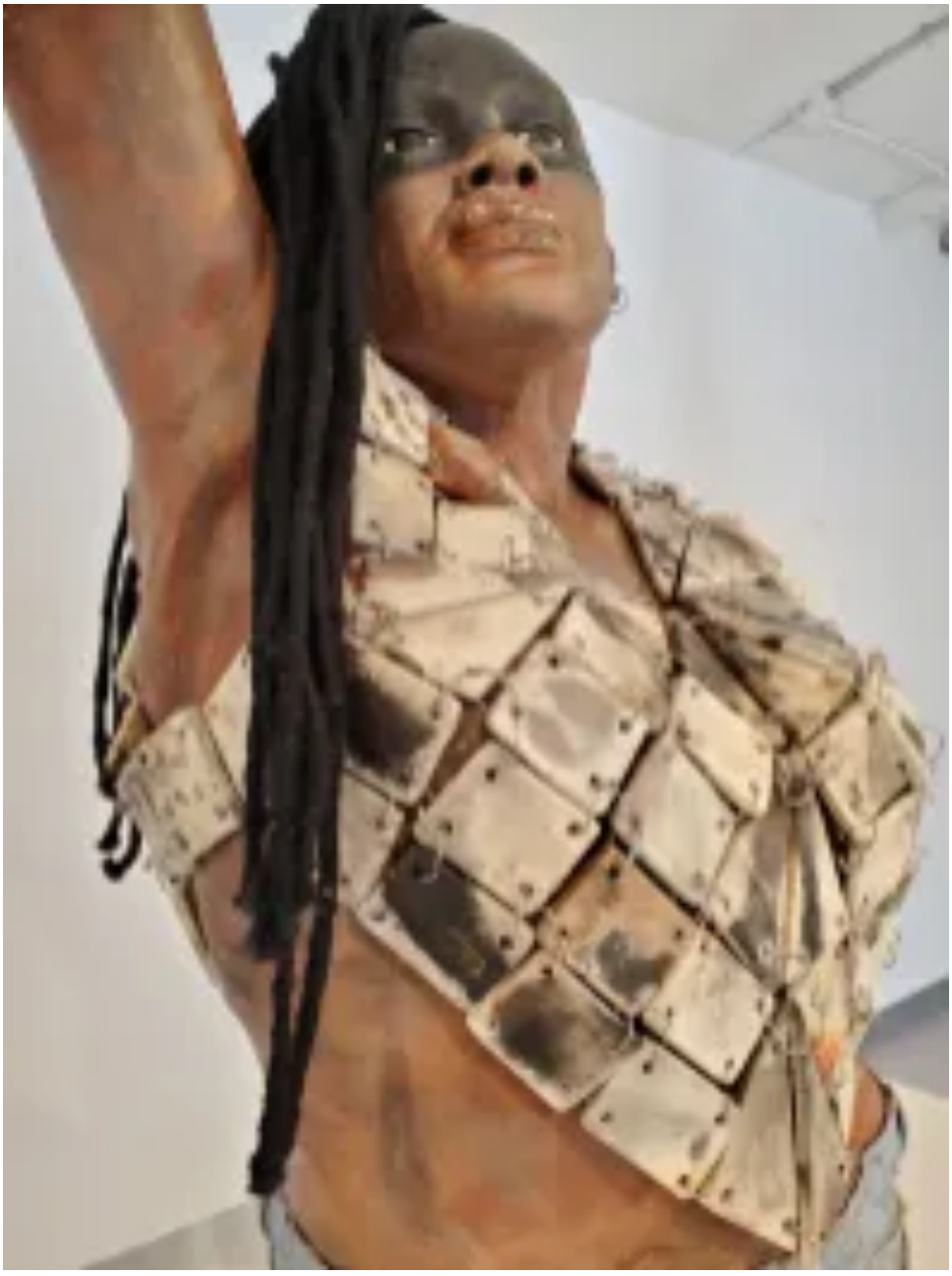
To highlight the lack of safe drinking water in many indigenous communities in Canada, *Axe Headed Pitcher #2* (2011) (fig. 1) takes the familiar form of a water ewer; however, its life-giving contents are made inaccessible by the imposing axe in place of a spout. The disparate availability of knowledge about North American

indigenous ceramics inspired Anderson to incorporate basket weaving into her works.



Figure 2. PJ Anderson, *Glorification 1*, 2018. Saggar-fired earthenware and terracotta, 44 x 35.5 x 35.5 cm. View Source

Anderson combines traditional methods for ceramic production and basket-weaving with images from popular culture in works like *Glorification I* (2018) (fig. 2), which was included in the 2019 exhibition *Contemporary Traditions and Allusions: Anderson, Fowler, and Ten Zulu Potters* (curated by Ken Fowler and Grace Nickel for the University of Manitoba, School of Art Gallery). Although Anderson's work uses traditional techniques from African and North American Indigenous communities, the formal language and symbolism of her work indicate the "points and counterpoints [that] bring us back to the unifying concept in most of my [Anderson's] work… disparate elements woven together, intertwined; like kin, to make something new to be shared."



Figures 3a. PJ Anderson, *Liberté*, 2020. From the *Culture Warriors* series. Smoke-fired earthenware and terra sigillata with paper, stainless steel, wool, and hemp cord, 160 x 63 x 63 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. PJ Anderson, *Liberté*, 2020. From the *Culture Warriors* series. Smoke-fired earthenware and terra sigillata with paper, stainless steel, wool, and hemp cord, 160 x 63 x 63 cm. View Source

In her Winnipeg studio, Anderson explores the narrative potential of ceramic vessels like *Liberté* (2020) (figs. 3a and 3b) in her recent series, *Culture Warriors*, which attempts to connect past techniques with the present of the artist's singular identity to imagine a potential future for the vessel as a container for life itself. (NJH)

Catherine Auriol

Catherine Auriol is attracted to both the utility and tactility of ceramics and to both the efficiency and spirituality of the process involved in turning dirt into dinnerware. When Auriol opened her ceramics studio and storefront, Atelier Gaïa on rue St Laurent in Montreal in 1999, she did so with the conviction that selling and making cannot be separated. She went to France in 1998 to study under ceramicist Pierre Dutertre, an experience that taught her to accept the humanity of ceramics—the uniqueness and imperfection of handcraft. As a production potter, Auriol forms functional ceramic pieces on the wheel or sometimes by hand. The slight variations in shape and finish make her designs a powerful statement for the functionality, efficiency, and spirituality of handmade ceramics in the face of what Auriol refers to as "cheap industrialization."



Figure 1. Catherine Auriol, *Teapot*, 2002. Thrown earthenware, blue Chun glaze, wax resist, 18.5 x 24 x 14.2 cm. Art Gallery of Burlington, 2014.094.0.2. View Source

For works like *Teapot* (2002) (fig.1), Auriol used a screenprint technique to transfer pattern designs to the clay surface. Critic Susan Schwartz writes that Auriol's designs are an "imaginative blend of

rare friezes and other patterns drawn mostly from photographs of old French pieces, with nods to different periods and styles."



Figure 2. Catherine Auriol, *Lidded Vase*, 2002. Thrown and hand-built stoneware, glazes, 47.5 x 13 x 13 cm. Art Gallery of Burlington. View Source



Figure 3. Catherine Auriol, *Plate*, c. 2015. For *Le Mousso Restaurant*. Hand-turned stoneware, dimensions unknown. View Source

Exhibitions such as *La terre et ses maîtres ceramists* (Musée POP, Trois Rivières, Quebec, 2016) showcased Auriol's technical skills, while works like *Lidded Vase* (2007) (fig. 2), with the expressive hand-sculpted head on the lid, result from the artist's tendency toward experimentation. After 2002, Auriol began working with porcelain and briefly explored casting, earning first prize for her work at the SIDIM in 2006. Around 2015, Auriol returned to throwing functional ware, creating exclusive designs for Montreal restaurants; she wanted her ceramics to touch as many people as possible. Collaborations with renowned Montreal restaurants like Le Mousso, as in *Plate* (c.2015) (fig. 3), were particularly inspiring, representing a parallel to the farm-to-table movement. (NJH)

Douglas Bamford

Douglas Bamford is an artist and community organiser who lives and works in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.

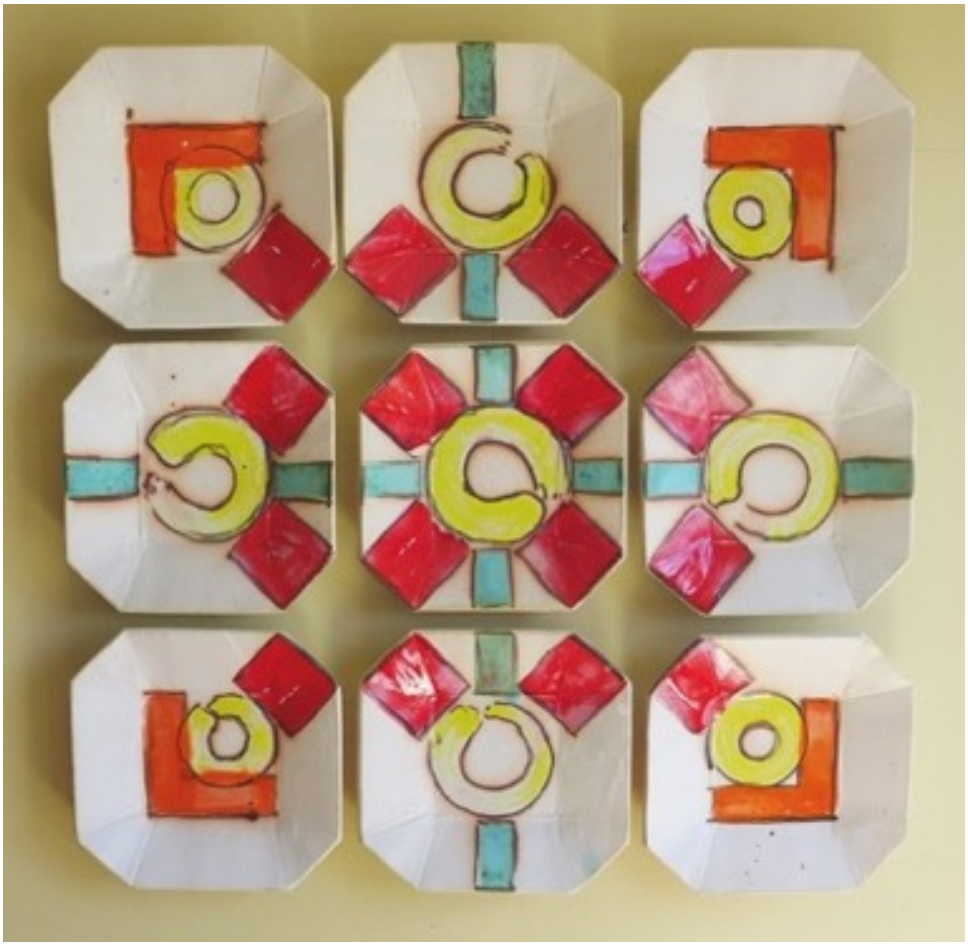


Figure 1. Douglas Bamford, *Nine Plates*, n.d. Clay, prisma colour glaze, dimensions unknown. View Source

Bamford's *Nine Plates* (fig. 1) are reminiscent of a mosaic and are representative of his ceramic studio practice that examines, "the history of ceramic art; investigating the socio, economic and political environments from which iconic styles and works emerged, then trying to make historically informed ceramic objects within a contemporary context." Bamford often collaborates with other artists on public artworks which seek to build and strengthen community ties.



Figure 2a. Douglas Bamford and Fen Martin, *Sydney Steel*, 2012. Ceramic wall mural, 15.24 x 3.05 m. Open Hearth Park, Sydney, New Brunswick. View Source

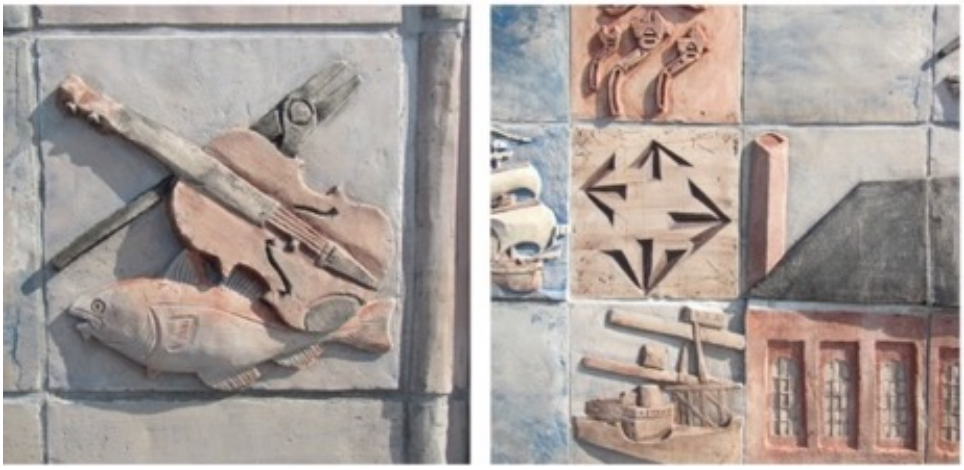


Figure 2b. Douglas Bamford and Fen Martin, *Sydney Steel,* 2012 (detail). Ceramic wall mural, 15.24 x 3.05 m. Open Hearth Park, Sydney, New Brunswick. View Source

The mural *Sydney Steel* (2012) (figs. 2a and 2b), created by Bamford and his collaborator and assistant Fen Martin, is constructed of large ceramic tiles carved and built up in relief to tell the story of one of Canada's largest steel production sites, without shying away from issues around colonization and the environmental impact of heavy industry. In addition to his art practice and Skullduggery Gallery, the studio and gallery space where he displays his work alongside other established and emerging artists, Bamford runs an artist-in-residence program and teaches classes at the Lunenburg School of Arts

(Lunenburg, Nova Scotia) that feature and celebrate the town and surrounding landscape.

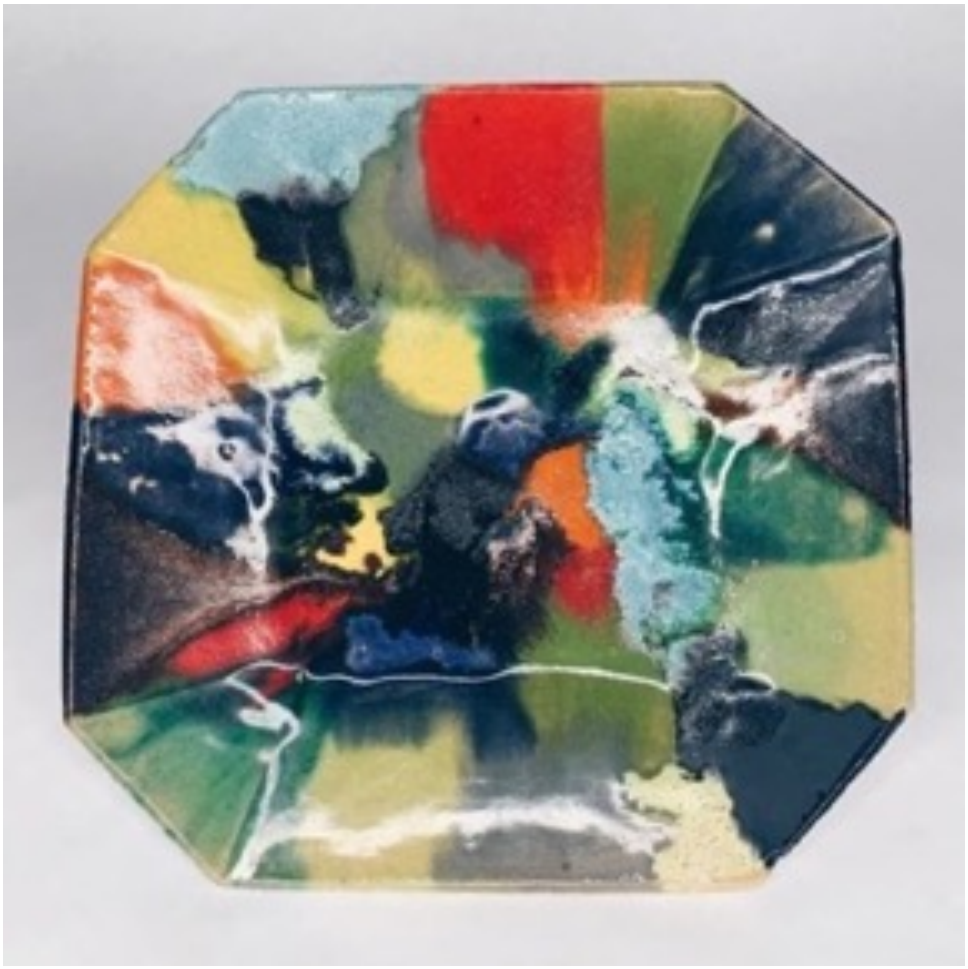


Figure 3. Douglas Bamford, *Plate*, n.d. From the series *36 Views of Lunenburg*. Clay, prisma colour glaze, dimensions unknown. View Source

Bamford's *Plate* (fig. 3) is part of a series entitled *36 Views of Lunenburg* that was displayed as a wall installation in the 2017 exhibition *The WORKS* (Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia), which celebrated the artist's body of work and his retirement from twenty-three years as ceramics technician at NSCAD University (Halifax, Nova Scotia). Bamford continues to expand his artistic practice and find inspiration in the community and landscape of Lunenburg. (NJH)

Ed Bamiling

Ed Bamiling left his hometown of Winnipeg in 1989 to work as a ceramics facilitator in the Visual Arts Department at the Banff Arts Centre, Banff, Alberta. His sculptural works are made with paper clay, a process he learned during his early days at the Banff Arts Centre. This process involves adding a cellulose fibre-like paper to clay, lending strength to the unfired work and allowing the artist to achieve intricate sculptural forms.



Figure 1. Ed Bamiling, *Sahara*, n.d. Wood-fired stoneware, glazed sphere, 35 x 12.5 x 5 cm. View Source

Inspired by the natural world, Bamiling explores both the influence of nature on human culture and the impact of human activity on the

environment in works like *Sahara* (fig. 1), which evokes the ever-shifting sands of the desert.



Figure 2. Ed Bamiling, *Whimsy Cup A*, 2015. Raku-fired paper clay, glaze, 13 cm. View Source

The form of Bamiling's artworks obscures their function. In the 2017 solo exhibition Whimsy Cups (Willock and Sax Gallery, Banff, Alberta), he plays with the traditional cup and saucer form in pieces like Whimsy Cup A (2015) (fig. 2). Bamiling hand-forms the cup, then applies glazes and oxides to maintain a rough, brittle texture which gives his works a sense of being of the earth. Bamiling's artist statement describes how the paper clay medium, "shaped his consideration of ceramic process and aesthetics, which moved him to explore beyond the normal boundaries and incorporate concepts of the found object intermingled with a play with traditional form."



Figure 3. Ed Bamiling, *Tempest*, n.d. Glazed ceramic, 33.7 x 17.8 x 7.6 cm. View Source

The firing process causes paper clay objects to be shattered and ripped apart in the kiln; however, instead of trying to control the process and its outcomes, Bamiling embraces this uncertainty by combining shards and other elements from his previous practice to create evocative new forms which result in dynamic sculptural pieces like *Tempest* (fig. 3). For Bamiling, the aesthetic rewards of the paper clay medium far outweigh its technical challenges. (NJH)

Scott Barnim

Scott Barnim is a ceramicist based in Dundas, Ontario who grew up in a family of rural artists. He specializes in the production of functional ceramics, privileging techniques like stoneware and porcelain that ensure durability. Barnim's early works were made in the tradition of British studio ceramics, especially salt glaze stoneware. He later became interested in surface decoration and colour while studying in Cardiff, Wales. His current work consists of highly decorated stoneware made for domestic use, like table and kitchenware, which are, to cite him, "inspired by the natural beauty of the Dundas Valley."



Figure 1. Scott Barnim, *Large Bowl*, n.d. Paint on stoneware, 11.8 x 5.4 cm. View Source



Figure 2. Scott Barnim, *Dinnerware*, n.d. Paint on stoneware, dimensions variable. View Source

Works such as *Large Bowl* (fig. 1) and the set *Dinnerware* (fig. 2) feature his signature fish and floral motifs executed in a simple brushwork. Barnim also makes lusterware, a form of pottery originating in Iraq and Persia that is rarely practised in North America. Lusterware is achieved by overglazing ceramic pieces with lustre—a pigment containing silver and copper in the salt form and fired at a low temperature in a special kiln that keeps oxygen out.



Figure 3. Scott Barnim, *Persian Jug*, n.d. Red and gold lustre on stoneware, 35 cm in height. View Source

The result is a golden surface brilliance, as seen in the lusterware piece *Persian Jug* (fig. 3), which is adorned with a delicate vine-leaf

design and was fired in a fuel-burning kiln built by Barnim himself. By interweaving the historical, the natural, and the personal in his practice, Barnim redefines what it means to use traditional techniques in a modern context. As the potter and scholar Peter Wilson notes, he belongs to a category of ceramicists who "re-interpret the technique and develop the forms, glazed surfaces and… intuitive effects such that they become their own, rather than attempting to repeat the past." (MMI)

Pam Birdsall and Tim Worthington

Birdsall-Worthington Pottery Ltd. is the ceramics studio in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia where Pam Birdsall and Tim Worthington create their unique pottery, functional earthenware, commemorative plates, and funerary urns. During their school days at NSCAD University (Halifax, Nova Scotia), pottery was just a technical exercise.



Figure 1. Birdsall-Worthington, *Iris Bowl*, 2012. Earthenware, white slip, underglazes, 22.2 cm diameter. View Source

It was not until Birdsall and Worthington established their studio in 1977 and started to live with ceramics and to take time to consider the function and experience of using each piece, that they were able to create works like the glaze-fired *Iris Bowl* (2012) (fig. 1). Using local (Lantz) earthenware clay, each piece is wheel-thrown and covered in white slip before being decorated with coloured clay slips and transparent coloured glazes. Birdsall is responsible for throwing and decorating the birth and wedding plates, using coloured clay slips to create floral bouquet "drawings". Worthington throws and decorates the pottery using a variety of slipware techniques, brushing, sponging, sgraffito combined with coloured transparent glazes.



Figure 2a. Tim Worthington, *Crow Plate*, 2018. Earthenware, white slip and underglazes, 35.25 cm diameter. View Source



Figure 2b. Tim Worthington, *Crow Plates*, 2018. Earthenware, white slip and underglazes, 35.25 cm diameter. View Source

Indicative of Birdsall and Worthington's love of English slipware is the intricately painted *Crow Plate* (2018) (figs. 2a and 2b); the detailed design etched onto each piece's surface makes all the plates in the series unique. Their artworks and contributions to the ceramics community in Nova Scotia were highlighted in the exhibition *Carrying it Forward* (Centre for Craft, Halifax, Nova Scotia, November 8–December 22, 2012), which examined the body of work created by six Nova Scotian potters who have been active since the 1970s. "Being a potter is a practice of mindfulness," says Worthington, "Making pottery is a great metaphor for life; clay only does what you tell it to do."



Figure 3a. Pam Birdsall. *Bouquet Plate*, n.d. Earthenware, feathered clay slips and sponged glazes.



Figure 3b. Tim Worthington, *Bee Jar*, 2019. Earthenware, white slip, glazes, 26.7 cm tall. View Source

Recently, Birdsall and Worthington have continued exploring their interest in traditional Chinese and Japanese ceramics with works like *Bee Jar* (2019) (fig. 3b), modelled after ninth-century Chinese funerary urns. (NJH)

Judy Blake

As the title of her solo exhibition *Painting with Fire: An Approach to Smoke Firing* (Handworks Gallery, Saint John, New Brunswick, 1999) suggests, Blake is a ceramicist who paints with smoke and fire. The opening of her studio in Lincoln, New Brunswick in 1984, and a trip to the Sedona desert in 1998, were decisive for the development of the vessels that define her artistic practice. The studio provided enough space for her to experiment with open-pit and smoke firing techniques without disturbing her neighbours. And, while taking pottery courses in the Sedona desert, Blake encountered the indigenous pottery and ancient smoke-firing techniques that she had previously only read about.



Figure 1. Judy Blake, *Naked Raku Lidded Vessel*, 2005. Wheel-thrown, burnished, naked raku-fired white earthenware, 24 x 25 x 25 cm. View Source

Blake forms the simple lines and sensuous curves of *Naked Raku Lidded Vessel* (2005) (fig. 1) at the potter's wheel to facilitate the movement of the smoke and fire on the clay surface during the firing

process. According to Blake, she stretches some of her vessels "almost to the point of collapse" to achieve a careful balance between form and surface. Creating the beautiful, silky surfaces of her work is a painstaking process that involves repeatedly burnishing the vessel's surface with a river stone and when dry, several layers of clay slip (terra sigillata) are applied and polished after each coat.



Figure 2. Judy Blake, *Saggar-and Saw-dust-Fired Vessel,* 2012. Saggar-fired, wheel-thrown, burnished, white earthenware fired with straw, sawdust, and newspaper, 35 x 24 x 24 cm. View Source

In works like *Saggar-and Saw-Dust-Fired Vessel* (2012) (fig. 2), Blake re-fires her vase forms using different materials until she has satisfactorily captured the spontaneous colours and patterns of smoke and fire on the vessel's surface.



Figure 3. Judy Blake, *Saggar-Fired Lidded Vessel,* 2019. Saggar-fired, wheel-thrown, burnished, white earthenware, 50 cm. x 21 cm. CollectionArtNB. View Source

As one of a small number of artists in Canada using smoke-firing techniques, she captures the movement and colour of smoke and fire on clay in works such as *Saggar-Fired Lidded Vessel* (2019) (fig. 3). (NJH))

Louise Bousquet

Two years after Louise Bousquet completed her studies at the Institut des arts appliqués de Montreal in 1972, she set up her first workshop to produce a collection of vitrious porcelain tableware that achieved a harmony between form and function.



Figure 1. Louise Bousquet, *Petit Veilleuse 'Glycine'*, 2010. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. Photographed by Claude Lafrance. View Source

The intricate cut-out design and mat finish of *Petit Veilleuse 'Glycine'* (2010) (fig. 1) celebrate the porcelain medium. Bousquet's apprenticeship at the Centre de transfert de technologie céramiques de Limoges (Limoges, France) in the early 2000s, an important hub of ceramics production in France, was a formative experience. After she returned to Montreal, she applied her knowledge of the industrial processes and materials involved in making fine porcelain

to her own practice when she opened Porcelaines Bousquet Inc. in Saint-Jean Baptiste, Quebec, near Montreal, in 2002.



Figure 2. Louise Bousquet, *Chocolatière et deux Gobelets*, n.d. Hand-thrown porcelain, dimensions unknown. Photographed by Claude Lafrance. View Source

The sculptural simplicity of pieces like *Chocolatière et deux Gobelets* (fig. 2) was unique amidst the earthenware and stoneware typical of the Montreal ceramics community. She remarked that even in the early '80s the ceramics community joked that, “Bousquet s'est lancée dans les cabinets de toilette." Bousquet was manufacturing and had launched for the first time in Quebec a collection of white tableware objects in hand-thrown vitreous porcelain. To exploit the whiteness and translucency of fine

porcelain to the maximum, the latter can only be manufactured by casting. An exhibition of modern tableware by Eva Zeisel (1906-2011), the Hungarian-American ceramicist and industrial designer, however, helped Bousquet realize that she "had the right to exist in white, and I held my chin a little higher." At her home studio, and with her partner, François Godier, who built a machine to mold functional porcelain tableware after German examples, Bousquet remains one of a small number of artists in Canada creating hand-thrown porcelain tableware.



Figure 3. Louise Bousquet, *Saladier*, n.d. Hand-thrown porcelain, dimensions unknown. Photographed by Claude Lafrance. View Source

The stark whiteness of pieces such as *Saladier* (fig. 3) showcases both a refined functionality and sculptural balance. The technical mastery required to create her functional pieces highlights not only the love and respect Bousquet has for the medium but also her delight in porcelain and all its whiteness. (NJH)

Shary Boyle

Growing up in Scarborough, Ontario, Shary Boyle was drawn to the music, fashion, and ephemera of Toronto's punk-rock scene. Boyle worked as an illustrator to support her early artistic career, and now works across diverse media, including sculpture, drawing, installation, and performance. Boyle's creative approach is at once deeply personal and universal, connecting to themes of death, grief, sexuality, and resilience. The artist started exploring three-dimensionality in the late 1990s when she began modeling small figures with polymer clay. Later in the early 2000s, she began to work with ceramic clay, after joining a basement hobby class of retirees and grandmothers who taught her how to use vintage figurine molds, slip-casting methods, and obsolete decorative and assembly techniques. Boyle thrives on collaboration and mentorship and quickly absorbed these techniques into her sculptural practice.



Figure 1. Shary Boyle, *Untitled,* 2005. Porcelain, china paint, lustre, 18 x 14 x 14 cm. Photo courtesy of Rafael Goldchein. View Source

Boyle was introduced to porcelain as well as lace draping by dollmaker Vivian Hausle, resulting in her uncanny figurine works from this period, including *Untitled* (2005) (fig. 1). Referencing the social history of ceramics, animist mythologies, antiquated technologies and folk art, Boyle is known for a symbolic, politically charged visual language uniquely her own. This unique sensibility was on display at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013, where she represented Canada with a multimedia exhibition titled *Music for Silence*.



Figure 2a. Shary Boyle, *Cracked Wheat,* 2018. Ceramic, steel, fibreglass, bronze, 275 x 122 x 122 cm. Gardiner Museum, Toronto. View Source



Figure 2b. Shary Boyle, *Cracked Wheat*, 2018 (detail). Ceramic, steel, fibreglass, bronze, 275 x 122 x 122 cm. Gardiner Museum, Toronto. View Source

Her voluptuous public sculpture *Cracked Wheat* (2018) (figs. 2a and 2b), commissioned by the Gardiner Museum (Toronto, Ontario), pays homage to the history of ceramics and its role in human culture. Standing on childlike legs of bronze, the sculpture is comprised of 220 porcelain shards and references eighteenth-century European porcelain as well as the Japanese tradition of kintsugi, a technique that uses gold to repair broken shards in a ceramic work, celebrating that object's history. The vase is decorated with a "Canadian Wheat" pattern that was mass-produced during the 1960s on common tableware, which Boyle uses to underscore the global relationship between ceramics and food.



Figure 3a. Shary Boyle, *Outside the Palace of Me,* 2021. Installation view. Aluminum, polystyrene, porcelain, underglaze, synthetic hair, epoxy, textiles, motor, electronics. 244 cm x 152 x 212 cm. Photo courtesy of Toni Hafkensheid/ Gardiner Museum. View Source



Figure 3b. Shary Boyle, *Dressing Room*, 2-way mirror with ceramic busts. Installation view of *Outside the Palace of Me*, Museum of Art and Design, New York. View Source



Figure 3c. Shary Boyle, *Centering,* coin-operated pottery wheel sculpture. Installation view of drawings and *The Procession. Outside the Palace of Me*, Museum of Art and Design, New York. View Source



Figure 3d. Shary Boyle, *Outside the Palace of Me*, entrance onto stage with ceramic sculptures. Gardiner Museum, Toronto. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source

In the multisensory exhibition *Outside the Palace of Me* (curated by Sequoia Miller, the Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Ontario, 2021; travelling) (figs. 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e and 3f), the museum is reimagined as a collective performance space. Boyle moved freely from one medium to another, resulting in a wide body of ceramic sculptures, drawings, life-sized automatons, two-way mirrors, a coin-operated pottery wheel, and an interactive score, representative of Boyle's explorations of identity, society and subjectivity during the pandemic.



Figure 3e. Shary Boyle, *White Elephant*, 2021. Installation view of *Outside the Palace of Me*. Aluminum, polystyrene, porcelain, underglaze, synthetic hair, epoxy, textiles, motor, electronics. 244 cm x 152 x 212 cm. Commissioned by Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area (CAFKA). View Source



Figure 3f. Shary Boyle, *White Elephant*, 2021 Detail of head rotating. Aluminum, polystyrene, porcelain, underglaze, synthetic hair, epoxy, textiles, motor, electronics. 244 cm x 152 x 212 cm. Commissioned by Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area (CAFKA). View Source

At the centre of the carnivalesque exhibition sat a distorted, nine-foot-tall (2.75 metres) figure, *White Elephant* (2021), with a porcelain head that periodically spun 360 degrees in a manner that recalled the 1973 Hollywood horror film *The Exorcist* (fig. 3c). This

work was inspired by Boyle's investigation into an evolving understanding of what it means to be "white" in Canada, and, in the words of the artist, "how whiteness simultaneously goes unnoticed yet takes up so much space, with identity associations both so violent and banal the confusion makes our heads spin." Flanking this "white elephant" in the room hung the paintings *Lone Gunman* (2019) on the left and *Settler* (2019) on the right. "These works were made a response to my own reflections on identity as a white woman, and to encourage other white people to talk about the complicated histories and positions we occupy," Boyle explains. The artist worked with skilled craftspeople—including robotics engineer (Colin Harry), costume artists (Heather Goodchild and Juliann Wilding), amusement park innovator (Anton Gosley), textile artist (Grant Heaps), silicone sculptor (Evan Penny), hairstylist (Dallas Wagner), woodcarver (Yorgo Liapis) and acrylic nail artist (Justin Cappelletti) on the oversized animatronics in the exhibit. Boyle continues to collaborate with, mentor, and learn from other artists from around the world today, resulting in unique, politically charged works addressing themes of feminism, marginalization, and otherness. (NJH)

Joan Bruneau

Joan Bruneau is a studio potter and educator based near Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, where she operated her studio/storefront Nova Terra Cotta Pottery studio from 1995-2022 and was a Regular Part Time Faculty at NSCAD University 1995-2019. She currently operates in a private studio and teaches at the Lunenburg School of the Arts.

Her love of travel and food sparked her desire to become a studio potter, after she discovered the cuisines and pottery traditions of Europe on a trip in the 1980s. Bruneau completed a BFA at NSCAD University in 1988 and MFA at the University of Minnesota 1993. She was Assistant Professor at Emily Carr Institute of Art from 1998-2002. She exhibits and teaches workshops across North America and taught at the Distance Ceramics Diploma Programs at the Australia National University and the Glasgow School of Art. Joan was a Demonstrating Artist at NCECA in Pittsburgh, 2018. Her work is

featured in *Ceramics Monthly* (2014) and Ben Carter's books, *Low-Fire Glazes for Potters and Sculptors* (2024) and *Mastering the Potter's Wheel* (2016).



Figure 1. Joan Bruneau, *Small Flower Brick with Pussy Willow Motif*, 2021. Nova Scotia earthenware, slip and polychrome glazes. 9" x 6" x 9". View Source

Bruneau's pieces such as *Small Flower Brick with Pussy Willow Motif* (2021) are interactive and function as decorative objects activated through use. As she writes, "interaction with the viewer/user completes the aesthetic potential of my pieces as they contain, deliver or present food and flowers." Using Nova Scotia earthenware clay, she produces wheel-thrown and assembled slipware informed by ceramics history, natural phenomena, and ornament. Her surfaces are treated with brushed white slip, sgraffito, underglazes, and

polychrome food-safe glazes. Her sensuous shapes and patterned surfaces invite contemplation and inspire use.



Figure 2. Joan Bruneau, *Charger with Beach Roses,* 2024. Nova Scotia earthenware, slip and polychrome glazes. 2" x 11 x 11". View Source

Throughout her career, Bruneau has been inspired by cultural travel and ceramics history. A residency at La Meridiana in Tuscany, Italy in 2005 marked a pivot in her work toward surface decoration, as in *Charger with Beach Roses* (2024), which continues to evolve. Her work is also inspired by the natural phenomena surrounding her on Nova Scotia's South Shore, and her surface compositions often evoke the province's flora and fauna.



Figure 3a. Joan Bruneau, Installation view of *Full Circle, Fall Colour Flower Brick*, 2012. Nova Scotia Lantz earthenware with slip and polychrome glazes, 22.85 x 33.5 x 38 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Joan Bruneau, Installation view of *Full Circle, Fall Colour Flower Brick*, 2012. Nova Scotia Lantz earthenware with slip and polychrome glazes, 22.85 x 33.5 x 38 cm. View Source

For example, Bruneau created works for display in her 2012 solo show, *Full Circle*, at the Mary E. Black Gallery (Halifax, Nova Scotia) (figs. 3a and 3b) around the theme of the seasons, with glaze

palettes and shapes reflecting the four distinct seasons of the Atlantic coast.



Figure 3c. Joan Bruneau, *Fall Colour Flower Brick*, 2012. Nova Scotia Lantz earthenware with slip and polychrome glazes, 22.85 x 33.5 x 38 cm. View Source

She intended the flower bricks and vessels in *Full Circle* to complement the local foods and flowers available in each season, such as the oranges and reds of autumn in *Fall Colour Flower Brick* (2012) (fig. 3c). (SS)

Keith Campbell

Keith Campbell, a long-time resident of North Bay, understands that his ceramic practice is deeply grounded in Northern Ontario. His work responds to "myths and legends such as Grey Owl and the Voyageurs." Campbell's landscapes are all of northern Ontario, and he uses a "northern Ontario sense of humour" in his comedically inspired sculptural work.



Figure 1. Keith Campbell, *Lollipop Box*, 1976. Porcelain, 23 cm. View Source

Some of his earliest ceramic works are hinged ceramic containers, many of them tiny and expressly made to hold lollipops, such as *Lollipop Box* (1976) (fig. 1). Since the turn of the twentieth-first century, Campbell has directed his irreverent observational style to comment on Canadian politics, both historical and contemporary. His sculptural pieces recontextualize iconic symbols of Canada, from beavers to maple leaves to portraits of politicians (drawn with air-brush techniques onto various vessels), in order to bring attention to resource extraction, the mythologization of assassination, and the efficacy of contemporary political leadership.



Figure 2. Keith Campbell, *Smith & Wesson*, 2013. Porcelain, 20 x 28 cm. View Source

Smith & Wesson (2013) (fig. 2) puts a handgun in place of a cup handle on a mug emblazoned with the face of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a "satirically obscene" gesture where Campbell's commentary is directed "backwards in time." *Journey Through the Past*, an exhibition curated by Dermott Kennedy that travelled to galleries throughout Ontario between September 2011 and September 2013, where it closed at the John Bancroft-Snell Gallery (London, Ontario), included many of these pieces.



Figure 3a. Keith Campbell, *Toast,* 2011. Porcelain and stoneware. View Source



Figure 3b. Keith Campbell, *To Be Toast*, 2011. Porcelain and stoneware, 21 x 25 x 25 cm. View Source

The exhibition consisted of a variety of Campbell's politically charged vessels as well as the installation *Toast* (2011), which included airbrushed images of Canadian political figures on pieces of ceramic toast arranged on a wall (fig. 3a), along with the centrepiece, a toaster titled *To Be Toast* (2011) (fig. 3b). (SW)

Ruth Chambers

Though Ruth Chambers hails from Toronto, where she grew up among generations of gardeners, education brought her to Regina, where she has remained since graduating in 1994. She still maintains her own garden, and her ceramic work engages with the organic

shapes and ephemerality of vegetal petals and bulbs of the sort that might be found in a domestic kitchen. Chambers often presents these compositions in her installations.



Figure 1. Ruth Chambers, *Untitled Arch,* 2007. From *Mobile Structures*. View Source

Untitled Arch (2007) (fig. 1), part of the group exhibition *Mobile Structures* (2007), echoes the classical forms of Doric columns while integrating organic shapes of leaves and pressed plants into the architectural space created by these monumental forms. Working within the tradition of still life, Chambers' smaller-scale hand-modelled porcelain objects are made of commercial clay that is coloured with stains and oxides and fired in small test firings. These

are studies of botanical forms that attentively "re-present" organic matter with "study, care, and duration."



Figure 2. Ruth Chambers*, Sweet Peas, Lemons, Strawberries and Avocados,* 2018, cone 6 hand-modelled stained porcelain with white earthenware base, museum wax, 4 x 7.5 x 13 inches, acquired by SK Arts (the provincial collection for Saskatchewan).

Many such works are recreations of still-life tableaux, as in the intricate bowl bearing fruits and vegetables in the composition *Sweet Peas, Lemons, Strawberries and Avocados* (2018) (fig. 2). These small, sculptural arrangements bring attention to themes of beauty, temporality, and consumption within an expanded context of the traditional still-life motif.



Figure 3a. Ruth Chambers, *Bulb Unfolding: Close Observations on Making and Growing*, 2018-2021 (one of three stands from *Tend,* 2021). Porcelain, oak, plywood, foam core, felt, pins, each stand 65 x 83 x 102 cm. Photo by Don Hall. View Source



Figure 3b. Ruth Chambers, *Bulb Unfolding: Close Observations on Making and Growing*, 2018-2021, porcelain, oak, plywood, foam core, felt and pins (three oak stands supporting arrangements of individual porcelain pieces, approx. 9-12 pieces per arrangement), each stand 26" x 33" x 40". Photo by Don Hall. View Source

The solo exhibition *Tend* (fig. 3a), which ran from February 5 to April 11, 2021 at the Art Gallery of Regina (Regina, Alberta), pinned over sixty individual recreations of leaves, stems and blooms at various stages of life to the gallery walls and upon black felted lecterns, echoing the visual language of taxonomic botanical displays as in *Bulb Unfolding: Close Observations on Making and Growing* (2018-2021) (fig. 3b). Inspiration for these chalky, pastel pieces was drawn from a 2018 residency in Denmark where Chambers witnessed people forcing bulbs "to create an early spring." She found the idea of scientific experimentation in botany to parallel arts practice and intentionally echoed the botanical illustrations of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century female illustrators, as well as those of Mary

Delaney (1700-1788), a bluestocking and needleworker who pioneered a method of paper-cutting botanical illustration. (SW)

Katrina Chaytor

Known for hand-built functional wares constructed with the rigour of an architect and decorated with a painterly eye for ornamentation, Katrina Chaytor was born and raised in Newfoundland and Labrador. She is Professor Emeritus at the Alberta University of the Arts (Calgary, Alberta), where she was a full-time ceramics instructor. Upon retirement, she built her studio in Renews, Newfoundland, on the Avalon Peninsula, where her maternal grandparents and great-grandparents once lived.



Figure 1. Katrina Chaytor. *Fruit Bowl/Tray*, c. 1990. Earthenware, 35.6 x 40.6 x 25.4 cm. View Source

The clean lines and geometrical detail of Chaytor's *Fruit Bowl/Tray* (c.1990) (fig. 1) demonstrate her interest in the industrial arts. She constructs her pieces slab by slab using plaster moulds to imprint

complex patterns onto her surfaces, which she enhances with luminous glazes to achieve a jewel-like effect.



Figure 2. Katrina Chaytor. *Salt and Pepper Set*, n.d. Hand-built earthenware with slip and glazes, oxidation fired. View Source

Chaytor's interest in textiles inspired her use of repeat patterns in works such as *Salt and Pepper Set* (fig. 2). Her decorative surface designs were originally derived from nature, however, she now focuses on patterns and motifs drawn from digital imagery and computer codes. She explains, "Decoration is also integral to my research and pottery practice in its capacity to be both performative—delighting the eye and informative—as a cultural carrier of meaning. I am interested in how decoration has served this dual purpose in cultures and histories. Decoration constitutes complex, diverse and visually rich languages that reveal a society's values, traditions and cultural structures." Chaytor's recent work examines the role of ornament as a mediator between art and life in contemporary culture.



Figure 3. Katrina Chaytor. *Teapot with Cups*, n.d. Stoneware (teapot and cups) and earthenware (tray), glazes, oxidation fired, dimensions unknown. View Source

In *Teapot with Cups* (fig. 3), natural imagery re-emerges enmeshed with digital motifs: keyboard icons, desktop symbols, and circuitry references. Her work encourages viewers to see beauty in the industrial world and to consider the ways that ornament functions in the design and in our experience of our everyday environment. (NJH)

Ying-Yueh Chuang

Ceramic artist Ying-Yueh Chuang came to Canada from Taiwan in the early 1990s. A graduate of the MFA program at NSCAD University (Halifax, Nova Scotia), she finds inspiration for her work in places as simple as the grocery store, where the myriad forms and imperfect symmetries of the fruits and vegetables suggest possibilities to explore.



Figure 1a. Ying-Yueh Chuang, *Plant Creature*, 2001. Ceramic, 34 x 34 x 34 cm. View Source



Figure 1b. Ying-Yueh Chuang, *Plant Creature*, 2001. Ceramic, 34 x 34 x 34 cm. View Source

The hand-built *Plant Creature* (2001) (figs. 1a and 1b) was included in her solo MFA thesis exhibition *Sea Garden* (Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2001), which was filled with fantastical sea-like creations detailed in brilliant colour glazes.

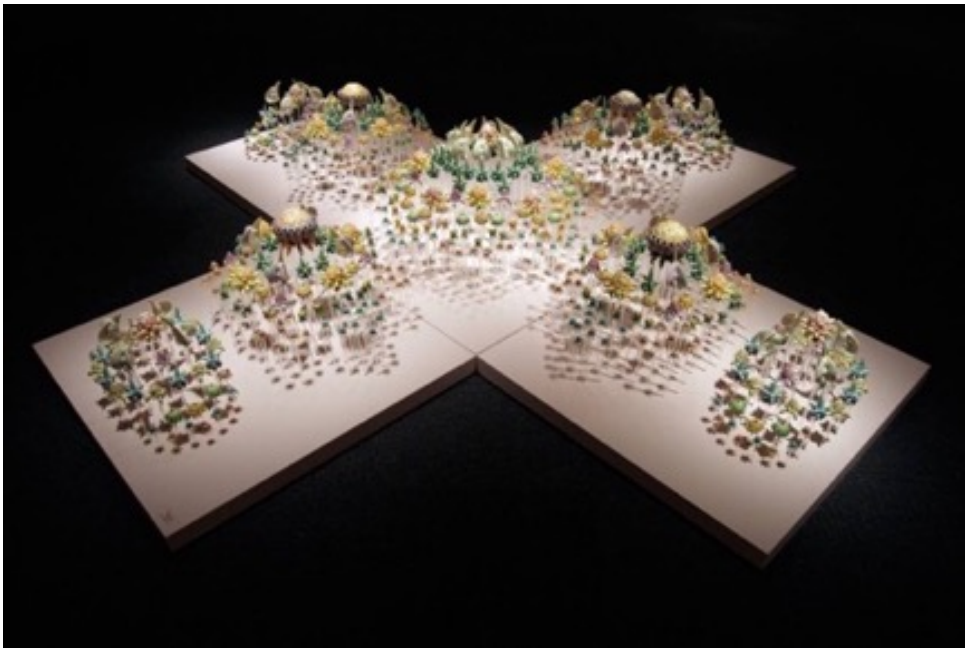


Figure 2a. Ying-Yueh Chuang. *Cross* series *#3,* 2008. Ceramics, wood and plexiglass rods, 365.75 x 365.75 x 61 cm. View Source



Figure 2b. Ying-Yueh Chuang, *Cross* series *#3* (detail), 2008. Ceramics, wood and plexiglass rods, 365.75 x 365.75 x 61 cm. View Source

Chuang's installation work consists of slowly built accretions that reflect her obsession with the interactive potential of objects, as seen in the *Cross* series (2008) (figs. 2a and 2b), where eight hundred brightly glazed ceramic pieces were organised geometrically and assembled in situ.

Of her installations, she says, "I don't want my work to be displayed in the traditional way, which is always sitting on a plinth with a top, bottom, left and right...Any object we have in our life is three-dimensional. A fruit or vegetable, we don't define where the bottom is, where the top is." Underlying the dizzying array of repeating hybridised forms is an examination of order and freedom that reflects Chuang's experiences moving from the fairly homogenous culture of Taiwan to the heterogeneous environment of Canada; the *Cross* installation grew out of Chuang's mediation of the tensions between the two.



Figures 3a. Ying-Yueh Chuang. *Flower Series #1*. 2011 (detail). Porcelain and vintage fabric, 30 2 x 265 x 12.5. cm. View Source



Figure 3c. Ying-Yueh Chuang. *Flower* series *#1* with *Cross* series *#3* in foreground from the exhibition *Playing with Fire* at the Museum of Anthropology. Porcelain and vintage fabric, 302 x 265 x 12.5 cm. View Source

Notions of class and culture also influenced her wall-mounted *Flower* series (2011) (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c), which bridges two major craft mediums, clay and textile. Chuang was inspired by her visits to the fabric shops of Jingdezhen, China, a centuries-old hub for ceramics production, during a four-month artist residency. Chuang replaces the two-dimensional flowers printed on cheap textiles with unglazed ceramic creations. She juxtaposes the materials, inexpensive fabric mass-produced for the working classes, with hand-built porcelain, typically made for the wealthy classes, to bring attention to social issues around inequality. Close observation of nature, in particular the structure and patterns of plant life, provides inspiration for Chuang who sees in nature's forms the building blocks to create exponentially larger patterns. (NJH)

Victor Cicansky

Romanian-Canadian ceramicist Victor Cicansky describes himself as a sculptor rather than a potter. Born and based in Regina,

Saskatchewan, he is best known for his witty narrative pieces exploring ordinary, domestic objects—such as pickle jars, pantries, and shovels. His interest lies in the production of non-functional objects, and many of his works deliberately subvert functionality.



Figure 1. Victor Cicansky, *Kebab*, 2013. Clay and glaze, 41.91 x 30.48 cm. View Source

An example is *Kebab* (2013) (fig. 1), in which various garden vegetables and a saltshaker are glued onto a plate, effectively making it unusable. As Cicansky relates, "I made casseroles, but then I filled them with clay veggies and things, painted them red and yellow, and put on zippered tops to make them non-functional." Cicansky developed his style while studying in California in the late 60s, where he became acquainted with Funk art—a Bay-area art movement that rejected the then-prevailing style of Abstract Expressionism in favour of a playful and irreverent exploration of popular culture and everyday life. He was a key figure of the Regina Clay Movement (1968-1988), which similarly explored, through the

lens of ceramics, concrete realities and personal experiences that were traditionally deemed inappropriate for the medium. Many of his works draw inspiration from the gardens of his community in East Regina, which was commonly known as Garlic Flats, a region known for its abundant vegetable production.



Figure 2. Victor Cicansky, *The First Time*, 1994. Clay and glaze, 19.05 x 30.48 x 19.05 cm. View Source

The First Time (1994) (fig. 2) shows two carrots embracing on a loveseat, exemplifying his penchant for humour, sexually suggestive imagery, and bright colours. Other works address his immigrant background as well as issues of urban ecology.



Figure 3. Victor Cicansky, *Singing the Joys of an Agrarian Society*, 1973. Clay, glaze and plastic flowers, 48.9 x 34.93 x 12.7 cm. View Source

For instance, the piece *Singing the Joys of an Agrarian Society* (1973) (fig. 3), in which a blue-glazed ceramic outhouse is precariously perched atop a mound of rocks and compost remains, was inspired by his experience growing up in a poor immigrant neighbourhood of Regina. The piece reimagines the humble structure of the outhouse as a small temple, celebrating the ingenuity of community-built infrastructure. As Timothy Long and Julia Krueger, the curators of the

2019 retrospective show *Victor Cicansky: The Gardener's Universe* held at the Mackenzie Art Gallery (Regina, Saskatchewan) note, Cicansky's work "speaks to the wider world of the joys and trials of supporting life in an urban prairie space." (MMI)

Naomi Clement

Naomi Clement is a potter and educator from London, Ontario, who lives and works in the nearby town of Stratford. Although she specialises in kitchen and tableware, Clement understands her work first and foremost as a vehicle for connecting past and present. Her pieces explore themes of memory, home, and belonging, informed by her travels across North America and her family history. She is best known for her hand-built stoneware featuring graphic elements from old family correspondence and ephemera, such as recipes and baby book entries. A series of cups, bowls, and plates made in this style, as in *Platter* (2018), was presented in the 2018 solo exhibition *Bound,* held at Gallery 212 in Sonoma, California. Clement's process involves digitally scanning, enlarging, and laser cutting fragments of handwritten text into newsprint, which she stamps onto the stoneware objects before the clay has dried out and then outlines with underglazes.



Figure 1. Naomi Clement. *Platter*, 2018. Hand-built stoneware with underglaze decoration, oxidation fired, dimensions unknown. View Source

Some words—like "hope," "miss," and "if"—often appear on her pieces and are chosen for their content; other graphic elements are selected for their visual appeal, as is the case with the elegant strings of letters written in cursive that appear on many of her white-glazed stoneware platters from 2018 (fig. 1). Laser cutting allows Clement to work with marks that are made by someone else's hand and, in this way, to create objects in which the past endures. As she explains, "Handwriting is such a personal way of connecting, leaving your mark, and telling your story. Through this intimate process, we connect our thoughts to the physical world. Using the labour of my hands, I unite these traces of my past with functional objects." More broadly, Clement's work is characterised by what she calls "points of transition," such as the space where one colour becomes another or where glaze meets bare clay.



Figure 2. Naomi Clement. *Cup*, 2019. Hand-built stoneware with underglaze decoration, oxidation fired, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3. Naomi Clement. *Nested Bowls*, 2019. Hand-built stoneware with underglaze decoration, oxidation fired, dimensions variable. View Source

This feature is visible in her cups (fig. 2) and nesting bowls (fig. 3) from 2019, where the meeting point of the edges of the curved surface is marked by a noticeable protrusion that disrupts the overall symmetry. A visible record of Clement's creative process, such an aesthetic feature is meant to invite notice and pause. (MMI)

Tony Clennell

Tony Clennell is variously described as a "quintessential potter," the "definitive handle-maker," and a "mud and water man." Whatever the moniker, he is drawn to the grit of earthenware clay, to wood-firing methods, to the whole process of making mud into something unique and beautiful. Clennell threw his first pot when he was just six years old, and he used to help wedge clay for his uncle Jimmie, who, with his wife Selma, started Pinecroft Pottery, Alymer, Ontario, one of the oldest family-run ceramics studios in Canada, in 1948.



Figure 1. Tony Clennell. *Basket*, n.d. Wood-fired, reduction-cooled earthenware, 45.72 cm. Collection of Judith Graham. Photo courtesy of Sheila Clennell. View Source

Having trained in ceramics at the Banff Arts Centre (Banff, Alberta), Clennell was inspired by the roughness of earthenware forms, such as *Basket* (fig. 1). The rich surface texture combined with the oozing edges contrast with the linear pattern around the body of the vessel that together achieves a balanced sense of refinement. As a professor of ceramics at Sheridan College and OCAD University (Toronto, Ontario), he approaches teaching as a kind of performance art. Clennell often runs workshops at studios and art galleries across Southern Ontario, such as the class he taught at the local high school outside Wiarton, Ontario, where he met his second wife and collaborative partner, Sheila. In one of the most popular videos posted on Clennell's award-winning blog, he demonstrates how to form the sensuous curves of a vessel handle with knowing ease. There is something comforting and familiar yet curious in Clennell's work. He writes, "I don't make pots for everyone! I make them for those who like the unusual. Those who like the marks of the maker, the fire and those who are not interested in sameness." Clennell started to use an electric kiln after dismantling his wood-fired kiln (nicknamed "the train" because it resembled a locomotive) when he and Sheila moved to Aylmer, Ontario, in 2010.



Figure 2. Tony and Sheila Clennell. *Candy Dish*, 2012. Earthenware, white slip, overglazes, 25 cm. View Source

They have since refined their collaborative process; Sheila glazes the pieces that Clennell forms and then fires, for example, *Candy Dish* (2012) (fig. 2). The artworks featured in the exhibition *High & Low: A Survey of Sheila and Tony Clennell* (Art Gallery of Burlington, Burlington, Ontario, 2012) represented the new directions and new firing methods the artists worked with as they transitioned to rural life. But Clennell keeps coming back to reduction firing in wood-fired kilns because this method, though time-consuming and laborious, lends a certain amount of control over the process.



Figure 3. Tony Clennell. *Teapot*, n.d. Earthenware, dimensions unknown. View Source

He guides the interaction of smoke, ash, and fire within the kiln by building ledges and making small changes to the surface of the works during the firing process to achieve the rich surface colours of works such as *Teapot* (fig. 3). (NJH)

Bruce Cochrane

Following a Brampton, Ontario-based ceramics practice of over forty years, Bruce Cochrane, now retired from teaching at Sheridan College (Oakville, Ontario), works from a rural pottery studio located north of Toronto. His ceramics have incorporated a variety

of materials and techniques, switching between earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain, from low firing to high firing in gas, to wood, and to salt. His work is often functional, beginning with the foundational principle of utility, though he also integrates elements which can be appreciated in both "physical and contemplative" senses. "The way an object carries, lifts, cradles, pours and contains are properties which I strive to make engaging for the user," Cochrane says, "offering more than just convenience."



Figure 1. Bruce Cochrane. *Earthenware Bowl*, 1988. View Source

The elaborately decorative vessels that Cochrane made in the 1980s, such as *Earthenware Bowl* (1988) (fig. 1), were inspired by a trip to Italy, which is reflected in their blend of texture, carvings and added thrown parts that adorn structurally sturdy forms.



Figure 2. Bruce Cochrane. *Teapot*, 2001. Reduction-fired porcelain. View Source

Cochrane also experiments with a variety of firing methods, which have resulted in distinctive, varying surface patterns, as in *Teapot* (2001) (fig. 2). In ostensibly utilitarian pieces like this one, Cochrane plays with functionality in order to "convey the richness" found in the domestic, "making things that present content within a functional object." Many of Cochrane's vessels combine press-molded and thrown techniques to create sculptural, geometric forms inspired by the expressive visual symmetry of fourteenth-century Moorish architecture and the curtain walls and geometric simplicity of twentieth-century modernism



Figure 3. Bruce Cochrane. *Press-molded Accordion Jar*, 2008. Stoneware, 36 cm. View Source

Vessels with corrugated accordion sides from this series, such as *Press-molded Accordion Jar* (2008) (fig. 3), comprise "a kind of architectural systole and diastole." The exhibition *Down to Earth* (Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, April 2-July 3, 2022), curated by Melanie Egan, gathered a collection of these pieces, which display Cochrane's focus on "a more hard edge and geometrical solution," in contrast to the "gesture and plastic qualities" of clay explored in his earlier works. (SW)

Susan Collett

Susan Collett runs her art practice from a studio in downtown Toronto, where she has spent "virtually every day" since 1993. Working in sculpture as well as printmaking, Collett is interested in "the tension of strength against fragility," explored as she continuously pushes her pieces in her sculptural process "towards the edge of physical collapse."



Figure 1. Susan Collett. *Racine,* 2017-2022. From the *Racine* series. View Source

Her hand-built ceramics, such as *Racine* (2017-2022), are accumulated segments of pre-made paper clay, layered one after another over nichrome wire, glazed multiple times and multi-fired, creating a complex surface on structures that seem in danger of collapsing.



Figure 2a. Susan Collett. *Pots*, 2005-2009. From the *Moiré* series. View Source

Her *Moiré* series (2005-2009) (fig. 2a) was inspired by a "layered environment" comprising the "multi-tiered tea farming, layered tile rooftops and willowing bamboo forests" she sketched during a residency in Jingdezhen, China.



Figure 2b. Susan Collett. *Hive,* 2005-2009. From the *Moiré* series, 21 x 24 x 24 in. View Source

Vessels from this series, such as *Hive* (fig. 2b), are subtly glazed with barely perceptible colour, and their walls, though solid, seem to be delicately thin, with parts hollowed out for light to trickle through, illuminating them from within and without.



Figure 3a. Susan Collett. *Mercurial.* From the *Maze* series. 25 x 13 x 8 in. Photo by N. Stirling. View Source



Figure 3b. Susan Collett. *Snare,* 2011. From the *Maze* series. 28 x 12 x 8 in. Photo by N. Stirling. View Source

The large-scale pieces from the *Maze* series (2009-2010) (fig. 3a) are dense stacks of curving, patinaed shapes that resemble coral reef bodies, integrating "shale and ledge formations" built up with the palimpsest of organic growth, as in *Snare* (2011) (fig. 3b).



Figure 3c. Susan Collett. *Lava,* 2010. From the *Labyrinth* series. 43 x 19 x 18 in.
View Source



Figure 3d. Susan Collett. *Lava* and *Print,* 2010. From the *Labyrinth* series. 43 x 19 x 18 in. Photo by V. MacDonald. View Source

At the human scale, towering to five feet six inches when mounted on plinths, Collett's *Labyrinths,* such as *Lava* and *Print* (2010) (fig. 3c), do the same while evoking more direct relationships by matching the size of their viewers (fig. 3d). The solo exhibition *Concurrents* (June 14-July 29, 2017) at Sandra Ainsley Gallery in Toronto, featured works from *Labyrinth*, in addition to print pieces and selections from two other major bodies of clay works, titled, respectively, *Racine* and *Aggregate*. Here, Gotlieb writes, Collett drew out the close links between the mediums, which in her practice "inform each other offering alternative paths to pursue form, line and composition." (SW)

Jess Riva Cooper

While Toronto, Ontario, artist and educator Jess Riva Cooper began her artistic practice as a painter, she soon discovered that she was more interested in exploring the three-dimensional surfaces of ceramic sculpture. Today, as a sculptor working in installation-based ceramics and surrealist busts, Cooper draws imagery from both the natural and artificial worlds and uses colour, drawing, and clay to explore themes of death, regeneration, reclamation, and transformation. Cooper often turns to natural imagery to explore such themes; across her smooth and pristine ceramic surfaces, she adds untamed plant life and fungi, hand-built in clay, depicting the moment when life and death converge. Invasive plants, such as the tangled Kudzu vine, planted generations ago, slowly overtaking and causing abandoned homes across the United States to disappear, and parasitic fungal spores like the cordyceps, that attack and invade (and eventually replace) host tissue, all engulf her works, revealing how the fecund forces of nature can at once take over and destroy, and simultaneously breathe new life.



Figure 1a. Jess Riva Cooper. *Perilin*, 2009. Ceramic, glaze, underglaze, acrylic ink, oil clay, foam, cardboard, 180.5 x 101.5 x 140 cm. View Source



Figure 1b. Jess Riva Cooper, *Perilin* (detail), 2009. Ceramic, glaze, underglaze, acrylic ink, oil clay, foam, cardboard, 180.5 x 101.5 x 140 cm. View Source

In *Perilin* (2009) (figs. 1a and 1b), the empty Night Forest of a parallel world described in Michael Ende's contemporary German fairytale *The Neverending Story*, Cooper laid thick wet clay slabs on top of mattress foam and plastic-wrapped boxes and then pierced the soft clay with hundreds of fired porcelain plant forms and figures to represent the power of imagination to fill a void. Working quickly to complete the large on-site installation in under twenty hours and executed in a "performative" process wherein the artist herself became the idea of nature enacting a "violence" onto the material, Cooper explores the dichotomy between wet, malleable clay and bone-like pieces of porcelain. From another storytelling source, this one steeped in the Yiddish folktales Cooper heard while growing up in a Jewish home, the artist reinterprets the foundation myth of the malevolent dybbuk spirit through a female lens. A dybbuk, in Jewish folklore, is a disembodied human spirit that wanders restlessly until it finds a new home in the body of a living person. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Eastern Europe, dybbukim were often believed to be male spirits possessing the bodies of young people, most often young women, causing erratic, strange, and transgressive behaviour in their victims.



Figure 2a. Jess Riva Cooper, *Viral* series, 2013. Ceramic, glaze, decal, 28 x 21 x 45.7 cm each. View Source



Figures 2b. Jess Riva Cooper, *Viral* series (detail), 2013. Ceramic, glaze, decal, 28 x 21 x 45.7 cm each. View Source

With mouths agape, Cooper's female busts in her *Viral* series (2013) (figs. 2a, 2b and 2c) grow unexpected appendages in the form of ivy, flowers, and insects emerging from their mouths, noses, and ears. These figures escape a silencing patriarchal order by transforming the dybbuk into a vegetative armour that protects them, thus rendering the possessing spirit benevolent: "I see a direct parallel between my interest in insidious plant life and a dybbuk taking over and consuming a human body. In both situations, a loss of control is seemingly suffered as the parasitic entity subsumes the host body," explains Cooper.



Figure 3a. Jess Riva Cooper *Fruiting Bodies and Hellebores*. 2023. Porcelain, paper-clay, glaze, gold lustre, 9”x7”x17”. View Source



Figure 3b. Jess Riva Cooper, *Sporophore,* 2023. From *Fruiting Bodies* series. Porcelain, paper-clay, glaze, gold lustre, varying dimensions. View Source

Most recently, in 2023, *Sporophore*, from the artist's *Fruiting Bodies* series (figs 3a and 3b), was included in the International Ceramic Art Fair at the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, Ontario, again pointing to the artist's interest in nature and parasitism. Cooper teaches at Sheridan College in the Bachelor of Craft and Design Program in Oakville, Ontario. (NH)

Marie-Andrée Côté

Multidisciplinary artist Marie-Andrée Côté lives in Deux-Montagnes, Quebec, where she creates sculptures and installations with ceramics, photography, and enamelled polymer. Drawing inspiration from the life cycles and processes of change found in nature, she often works from close-up photographs of seeds, algae, land formations, and other natural phenomena, rendering their repeating patterns in ceramic sculptures.



Figure 1a. Marie-Andrée Côté, *Ma terre comme un murmure – My land as a whisper*, 2013. Installation view, Maison de la culture Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Montreal. View Source

This process is apparent in the detailed ceramic and multimedia sculptures included in her solo exhibition, *Ma terre comme un murmure – My land as a whisper* (fig. 1a), held at the Maison de la culture Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Montreal, Quebec; travelling) in 2013.



Figure 1b. Marie-Andrée Côté, *L'eau dans tous ses états/En péril*, 2011. Porcelain, wood, stainless steel, 92 x 92 cm. View Source

Often working within a tondo form, Côté's arrangements of unglazed porcelain components in circular frames evoke and highlight the destructive impact of human actions on aquatic ecosystems, as exemplified by *L'eau dans tous ses états/En péril 1* (2011) (fig.1b). "Drawing on the 'rosette' theme," Côté says, "I explored the tondo form to create large circular works with relief, curves and spirals. I am intrigued by nature-inspired shapes and motifs within the confines of a circle."



Figure 2a. Marie-Andrée Côté, *En équilibre entre terre et ciel – In balance between earth and sky,* 2017. Porcelain, plywood, and lead, dimensions unknown. View Source

She is also known for her large-scale hanging sculptural displays and public installations, carefully composed of individual ceramic pieces hanging in irregular, oblong, and organic shapes, such as in *En équilibre entre terre et ciel – In balance between earth and sky* (2017) (displayed at the Canadian Craft Biennial, Burlington, Ontario) (fig. 2a and 2b).



Figure 2b. Marie-Andrée Côté, *En équilibre entre terre et ciel – In balance between earth and* sky, 2017 in front of Louise Lemieux Bérubé, *Les uns les autres*. Installation view, Canadian Craft Biennale. Porcelain, plywood, and lead, dimensions unknown. View Source

With *En équilibre entre terre et ciel - In balance between earth and sky* (2017), Côté suspends a multitude of white porcelain elements in a column that, in her own words, is "a simple, pure and minimal representation of the tree." Curator Amy Gogarty describes the artist's process of creating this work, writing: "Coté models her construction method on that of natural regeneration, connecting piece after piece to create intricate webs. Working with porcelain

clay, a material that originates in the earth, she celebrates the beauty and complexity of the natural world. Combining infinite numbers of tiny parts into larger organisms, she creates poignant statements about the fragility and inter-relatedness of all life." The artist addresses her desire to create work inspired by nature as well, stating, "My motivation is to put the beauty, fragility and vulnerability of the plant world into perspective; to create atmospheres that challenge us to think about the cycle of life and the environmental damage that threatens our planet."



Figure 3a. Marie-Andrée Côté, *La fragilité de l'existence – The Fragility of Existence*, 2020. Aluminum and porcelain, 84 x 84 x 10 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Marie-Andrée Côté, *La fragilité De L'existence – The Fragility of Existence* (detail), 2020. Aluminum and porcelain, 84 x 84 x 10 cm. View Source

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Côté created *La fragilité de l'existence – The Fragility of Existence* (2020) (figs. 3a and 3b), arranging porcelain flowers in a hexagonal, honey-comb pattern, reflecting on how honeybees use distance and retreat to protect themselves from harmful bacteria, thereby sharing responsibility for the overall health of the hive. (EK)

Laurent Craste

Ceramic artist Laurent Craste was born in France and has lived and worked in Montreal for over thirty years. His ceramic vases, though inspired by European decorative porcelain of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, are reinterpreted through processes of alteration or outright destruction, guided by a distinctive sense of humour.

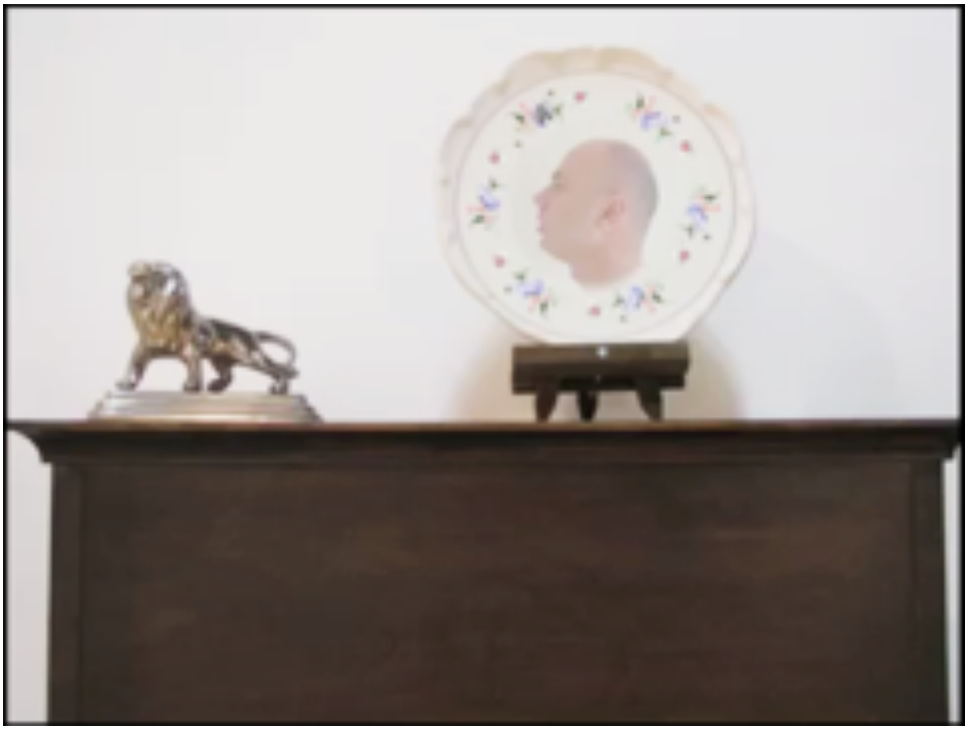


Figure 1. Laurent Craste, *Your Breath That Passes Through* (still), 2009. Porcelain plate and video projection. View Source

Craste's early work interpolated imagery of the human body; pieces from the early 2000s integrated twinned iconography of laboratory equipment with sexual organs, and his *Les Vases Communicants* (2007-2009) paired Sevres vases with projected images of his own face and body, silently acting out tableaux of anger or sadness, as in *Your Breath that Passes Through* (2009) (fig. 1).



Figure 2. Laurent Craste, *Iconocraste au pied de biche*, 2014. Porcelain, glaze, crowbar, 53.5 x 44.6 x 61.5 cm. View Source.

Subsequent work responds directly to the historical contexts from which his visual cues are sourced (the *Ancien régime,* the Napoleonic Empire, the monarchical restorations of the nineteenth century), identifying these as periods during which class revolts came to violent climaxes. Craste's interventions into the luxury porcelain of the elite spotlight the "moral bankruptcy" inherent in class hierarchies, both historical and present-day, playfully invoking a threat of revolutionary insurrection. The irreverent vases of Craste's *Abuse* series appear malleable, collapsing under the blow of a nail or a crowbar like an organic, alive body, bending under pressure as though elastic, and even seeming to ball handles like fists or open their lids like mouths agape, as in *Iconocraste au pied de biche*

(2014) (fig. 2). These pieces begin on the wheel, and Craste staggers drying times with the insertion of other sculptural elements, allowing the clay to naturally "deform under the impact of the tool," which is taken out before firing and reinserted once the piece is removed from the kiln.



Figure 3a. Laurent Craste, *Subversion* series, 2007-2019. Porcelain, glaze, mat burnished gold, marble, dimensions vary. View Source

The works in the series *Subversion* (fig. 3a) (2007-2019) stand upright, giving the impression of traditional forms, but, through a process of "contaminating the object," Craste injects the decorative scenes on their faces with morbid or violent themes that critique the wealth and power at the crux of the iconographic imagery that might traditionally adorn vases of their ilk.



Figure 3b. Laurent Craste, *Vase de l'émeute IV*, 2019. Porcelain, glaze, mat burnished gold, marble, 50 x 18.6 x 18.6 cm. View Source

The burning car on *Vase de l'émeute IV* (2019) (fig. 3b), a visual reference that reappears often in Craste's work, is one example. The car, for him, is poignant because it "projects a status of social ascension and social achievement, which is the mark of the owners and of individualism," and is "the object which has most profoundly upset and contributed to damaging the environment in a short span of time in human history." Pieces from both the *Subversion* and *Abuse* series populated Craste's solo exhibition *La Chute* (February 23-April 29, 2018) at Montreal's La Guilde, where the curators wrote that a cumulatively-presented exhibition of his historically inspired aesthetics reached a commentary on "the universal: the human condition." (SW)

Lisa Creskey

Lisa Creskey, based in Chelsea, Quebec, is interested in visual storytelling through her art. Though she centres the primacy of personal, subjective connections to the subjects at hand, she also seeks to "question and destabilize" notions of "personal and collective identity." Creskey often uses historical documents or artefacts as inciting ideas, from which spring complex clay worlds which investigate interlinkages between nature and time.



Figure 1. Lisa Creskey, *Procession and Cormorant Weather* at *When Horses Walked on Water Exhibition*, 2016. Procession: parade floats, figures, horses, arch-sculpted, underglaze painted, glazed. Electric train components. Cormorant: porcelain. Wings: tree seeds, cattails, epoxy resin. Technique: ceramic work - sculpted, underglaze painted, glazed. Wings - resin epoxy, paint. Dimensions: Procession (fore) 200 x 200 x 30 cm. Cormorant (back) 150 x 150 x 65 cm. Craft Ontario Gallery. View Source



Figure 2. Lisa Creskey, *Lady Franklin's Dream – Sycorax,* 2015. Porcelain, 40 x 60 x 40 cm. View Source

The installation piece *Procession and Cormorant Weather* (2016) (fig. 1), for example, which integrated porcelain sculpture with electric train parts, was spurred by a historical photograph of parade floats in Toronto's 1884 semi-centennial. *Lady Franklin's Dream – Sycorax* (2015) (fig. 2), seemingly a porcelain interpolation of the folk ballad "Lady Franklin's Lament," depicts a ship upon a turbulent sea from a birds-eye perspective, in a style that exemplifies the tendency of Creskey's sculptural worlds to depict extreme detail without veering into the realm of the realistic or hyper-representational. Having grown up on a farm in Ripon, Quebec, animal subjects are also a common theme of her work, and she credits her childhood experiences for her "sense of the humanity of animals." Creskey's solo exhibition *Sunset Cruise* (September 4-24, 2021), at L.A. Pai Gallery in Ottawa, Ontario, was an imaginative exercise in futurity, engaging in particular with the effects of human-caused climate change on the Canadian Arctic.



Figure 3. Lisa Creskey, *Tingmiatornis Arctica – Sunset Cruise*, 2020. Whale sculpture plus single bowl in porcelain, 40x40x50 cm. View Source

Inspired by the hyper-adaptation of Arctic creatures to their environment, and reflecting upon the emotional toll that habitat loss will take on humans and animals alike, Creskey created ceramic creatures such as birds and whales which surround and populate the surreal clay landscapes in which ecosystems of humans and wildlife intermingle, encapsulated in one of the central pieces, *Tingmiatornis Arctica – Sunset Cruise* (2020) (fig. 3). (SW)

Ann Cummings

Ceramicist Ann Cummings creates porcelain sculptures inspired by the rural landscape of Port Perry, Ontario, where she lives. While her surroundings are a major reference point for her sculptures, Cummings incorporates fantastical elements and artificial objects into imaginary landscapes that she calls "accumulations." In 2017, the David Kaye Gallery in Toronto, Ontario, exhibited *Rare Birds and Strange Bedfellows*, a series of dynamic porcelain sculptures that reflect the artist's interest in the paradoxes of nature and the medium

of ceramics. She explains, "I feel there is a strange beauty all around me and yet conversely there is uncertainty and a disarray of the natural landscape with the possibility of its demise. This dichotomy of nature and my surrounding landscape are two opposing sides of beauty and wonder, as well as fear and destruction, that all makes for strange bedfellows."



Figure 1. Ann Cummings, *Around the Bend Over the* Hill, 2018. Porcelain, glazes, dimensions unknown. View Source

The sculpture *Around the Bend Over the Hill* (2018) (fig. 1) included in the exhibition, featured shells, plants, birds, a unicorn, and other creatures stacked and arranged on a surface with two mounds. The

entanglements of artificial and organic elements not only express Cummings's understanding of incongruencies in nature but also reference the materiality and cultural meanings of eighteenth-century Rococo ceramics, a source of inspiration for the artist since she encountered a collection of Derby porcelain at the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, Ontario.



Figure 2. Ann Cummings, *Isolation Blues*, 2020. Porcelain, glazes, dimensions unknown. View Source

Isolation Blues (2020) (fig. 2) echoes the frivolity of Rococo depictions of nature while incorporating synthetic components such as a kewpie doll and drips of slime-like glaze, alluding to decay and destructive human intervention in the environment. Other works by the artist directly communicate the fragility of nature and the threat of ecological damage.



Figure 3. Ann Cummings, *Fallen Trees*, 2020. Black clay, porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

Black clay twigs overlay a backdrop of white porcelain leaves in *Fallen Trees* (2020) (fig. 3), suggesting the occurrence of a destructive event. Cummings establishes a sense of movement in her compositions, challenging the static materiality of ceramic and highlighting states of change in the environment. Suspended between the observed and the imaginary, a sense of flux and rigidity, and representations of life and decay, these complex sculptures intertwine seemingly incompatible elements to illuminate the contradictions that exist in the natural world. (EK)

Karen Dahl

Karen Dahl, who has lived across the Canadian prairies in Winnipeg and Regina, works with ceramics to mimic mundane objects with extreme realism. It is these objects, "both natural and manufactured," she says, that serve as her inspiration, "things [she] grew up with and those that [she has] collected voraciously over the years." Assembled in still life, these technically intricate pieces intermingle with one another in situations that range from unusual to surreal. Dahl often works with ordinary forms such as fruits or vegetables, which are placed alongside unexpected fellows like tools and toys.



Figure 1. Karen Dahl, *Cabbages and Kings,* 1998. Low-fired clay, glazes, lustre and acrylic sealant, 17.2 x 45.7 x 16.9 cm. View Source

Cabbages, a recurring image in these pieces, are painstakingly recreated with glaze, lustre and acrylic, and set alongside

recreations of objects for play, such as playing cards and toy boats, as in *Cabbages and Kings* (1998) (fig. 1).



Figure 2. Karen Dahl, *A Trio of Pears,* 1998-2001. Low-fired clay, glazes, lustre, and acrylic sealant. 14 × 40.6 × 19.1 cm. Gardiner Museum, Toronto. View Source

The assemblage *A Trio of Pears* (1998-2001) (fig. 2) consists of three hyper-realistic ceramic fruits and a half-finished sketch of the pears—itself a ceramic imitation. Her work was included in the survey of Canadian ceramics featured in *Earthworks* (2000) at the Gardiner Museum of Art in Toronto, held in conjunction with Expo 2000 in Hanover, Germany.

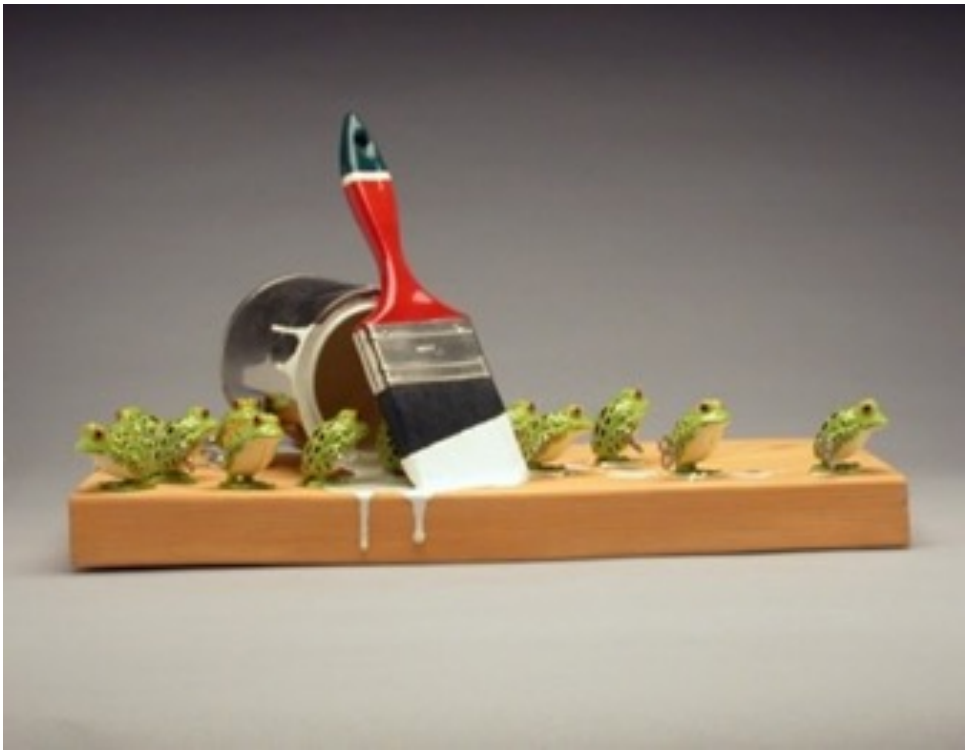


Figure 3. Karen Dahl, *Race*, c.1999. Earthenware, 24 x 41 x 21 cm. Gardiner Museum, Toronto. View Source

Featured in this exhibition was her trompe l'oeil *Race* (c.1999) (fig. 3), a wooden slab providing the surface for a scene consisting of an overturned paint can, a red brush loaded with thick white paint dripping from the can, and a cluster of key-wound mechanical frogs, all handcrafted earthenware, functioning, in her words, as "a metaphor for life's daily struggles." Writer Gary Michael Dault, noting the juxtaposition from which Dahl's pieces often draw their humour and offbeat sensibility, calls *Race* a "ceramic one-liner" with "anticlimax built right into it." (SW)

Carol Demers

Clay comes as second nature for Vancouver-based artist Carol Demers. She explains that "[t]he slow, contemplative process of coil building sustains and calms me. Once the piece is given over to the open flame, I can only wait and allow the crackle of the fire and the uncontrolled inevitability of smoke firing to produce its magic."



Figure 1. Carol Demers, *Vessel (Untitled)*, n.d. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source

Demers carefully burnishes her hand-built organic forms to achieve rich surface effects for pieces such as *Vessel* (*Untitled*) (fig. 1), which is smoke-fired using wood, sawdust, or minerals. While Demers' education in biology and her experience working as a physiotherapist still inform her work, the physical world has been her primary inspiration since she turned to art full-time over fifteen years ago.



Figure 2. Carol Demers, *Once Upon a Grouse*, n.d. Mixed media on wood, 60.96 x 60.96 x 10.16 cm. View Source

She takes a mixed media approach to painting using oils, pigments, plaster, encaustic and found materials to create *Once Upon a Grouse* (fig. 2), which incorporates a three-dimensional bird's nest nestled within a darkened space surrounded by the two-dimensional painted surface the texture of which evokes the forest debris and small branches that the ground-dwelling game bird uses to nest. In the 2019 exhibition *Terra* (Ferry Building Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia), Demers explored the power of nature through paintings and ceramics expressive of her visceral experiences of the backcountry. Recently Demers has been weaving textile practices and materials into in her ceramic work.



Figure 3. Carol Demers, *Bowl (Untitled)*, 2023. Ceramic and mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source

For example, *Bowl (Untitled)* (2023) (fig. 3) is part ceramic vessel, part woven basket. Demers intuits her clay forms allowing them to dictate their own shape(s), and whether or not the piece wants to become more than a bowl. Her daily hikes allow Demers to contemplate the sights, sounds, and smells of the ocean and the coastal forests and the never-ending variations of their rhythms, patterns, and forms observed on the forest floor and rocky beaches; the trees, the lichens, the surf and sky all guide the facture of Demers 'highly tactile artworks. (NJH)

Dawn Detarando and Brian McArthur

A small creek runs through the idyllic wooded landscape surrounding Voyager Art & Tile, the studio created by Dawn Detarando and Brian McArthur outside Red Deer, Alberta. Their versatile studio space accommodates small and large projects,

ranging from decorative tiles with designs inspired by their travels through Canada to large-scale public artworks, which are an increasingly large part of Detarando and McArthur's collaborative artistic practice.



Figure 1a. Dawn Detarando and Brian McArthur, *Immense Mode*, 2009. Hand-carved bricks, glass tile sculpture, 6.1 m. Southgate Mall Transit Centre, Edmonton. View Source



Figure 1b. Dawn Detarando and Brian McArthur, *Immense Mode*, 2009. Installation view. Hand-carved bricks, glass tile sculpture, 6.1 m. Southgate Mall Transit Centre, Edmonton. View Source

The public art installation *Immense Mode* (2009) (figs. 1a and 1b) was created by a months-long process where unfired bricks were sculpted, assembled, and mapped in their raw state before the sculpture was dissembled, fired, and carefully reassembled in situ – an exacting process intended to bring a little joy to a bus route. Their "concentration in public art stems from an inherent interest to inspire and make the lives of those who encounter it more meaningful. To motivate but also allow for visual respite to individuals, giving one a sense of wonder and enlightenment in the imagery, encouraging laughter or a seriousness through these experiences." Both artists maintain a solo artistic practice. Detarando held five solo exhibitions in the 2000s, with her most recent exhibition, *In Adoration of the Precarious Bees* (Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery, Red Deer, Alberta, 2022), showcasing her current work that utilizes visual metaphors and symbolic vocabulary to capture both the plight and poetic narratives of bee life.



Figure 2. Dawn Detarando, *Sacred Bee*, 2020. Hand-built porcelain, underglaze/glaze, cone 6, gold lustre, 20.3 x 22.9 x 7.6 cm. View Source

The narrative elements of hand-built artworks like *Sacred Bee* (2020) (fig. 2) are carved into the surface before the sculpture is finished with underglaze paint and then fired.



Figure 3. Brian McArthur, *Trojan Beaver*, 2007. Low-fired clay, glaze, stain, lustre, 40.64 x 40.64 x 25.4 cm. Photo by 3TEN Photography. View Source

McArthur's artistic practice is inspired by Canada's history and mythology. His irreverent interpretations of Canadian heritage, like the sculpture *Trojan Beaver* (fig. 3), are wry and witty characterisations of Canada's cultural patrimony. (NJH)

Aneela Dias-D'Sousa

Born and raised in Mumbai, India, Aneela Dias-D'Sousa has been creating functional and sculptural artworks since she began to study ceramic art at the University of Mumbai. Her work is inspired by her personal experiences.



Figure 1a. Aneela Dias-D'Sousa, *White Ox 1*, 2005. From the *White Ox* series. Wheel-thrown stoneware, 39 x 34 x 11 cm (approx.). Photo credit: Aneela Dias-D'Sousa. View Source



Figure 1b. Aneela Dias-D'Sousa, *White Ox 1*, 2005. From the *White Ox* series. (detail). Wheel-thrown stoneware, 39x34x11cm (approx). Photo credit: Aneela Dias-D'Sousa. View Source

For example, in early works such as *White Ox I* (2005) (figs. 1a and 1b) Dias-D'Sousa incorporates bovine imagery into the piece because of the sacred cows she witnessed living in Mumbai. The juxtaposition of the cows' passive and indifferent personalities with the chaos of the dense urban setting in which they live was a source of great amusement for the artist. Dias-D'Sousa writes that her works, "describe passing thoughts, transient phases and fleeting emotions in a minimalist style. They are a visual statement about change, growth and a personal story." After she immigrated to Canada in 2007, her work transitioned away from surface decoration, and instead, she explored volume, space, and line through form. Dias-D'Sousa uses a variety of techniques, firing temperatures, and processes to achieve the desired effects. She adapts her methods to each artwork.



Figure 2. Aneela Dias-D'Sousa, *Exuvia*, c. 2011. From the *Exuvia* series. Hand-built stoneware, 28 x 34 x 15 cm. Photo credit: Aneela Dias-D'Sousa. View Source

In the *Exuvia* series (c.2011) she drew inspiration from animal exoskeleton imagery and the process of moulting to create sculptural imagery to explore what she described as, "concepts around migration, transformation and what gets left behind" (fig. 2). From her studio in Pickering, Ontario, Dias-D'Sousa's current body of work involves small-batch functional objects intended to meet subtle purposes in everyday life.



Figure 3a. Aneela Dias-D'Sousa, *Small Cup Set*, 2021. From the *Incubate* series. Cone 6 stoneware (tray), Cone 6 porcelain (cups), 32 x 18 x 32 cm. Photo credit: Aneela Dias-D'Sousa. View Source



Figure 3b. Aneela Dias-D'Sousa, *Small Cup Set*, 2021. From the *Incubate* series (detail). Cone 6 stoneware (tray), Cone 6 porcelain (cups), 32 x 18 x 32 cm. Photo credit: Aneela Dias-D'Sousa. View Source

Small Cup Set (2021) (figs. 3a and 3b) is a composite piece that acts as a sculptural object or a serving tray. The stoneware base is wheel-thrown, altered, and then formed into a nest-like shape within which seven slip-cast porcelain sipping cups are nestled. In this work, from the *Incubate* series, the artist suggests the transient, ephemeral nature of human connections and interactions. (NJH)

Samantha Dickie

From her home studio in Victoria, British Columbia, Samantha Dickie creates conceptual artworks that engage with multiplicity and abstraction to recast perceptions of the ceramics medium. She was drawn to ceramics following her undergraduate degree in Gender Studies and Indigenous Studies. The visceral nature of the medium provided a means for Dickie to question the nature of human existence and the ways humanity contrasts with the natural world.

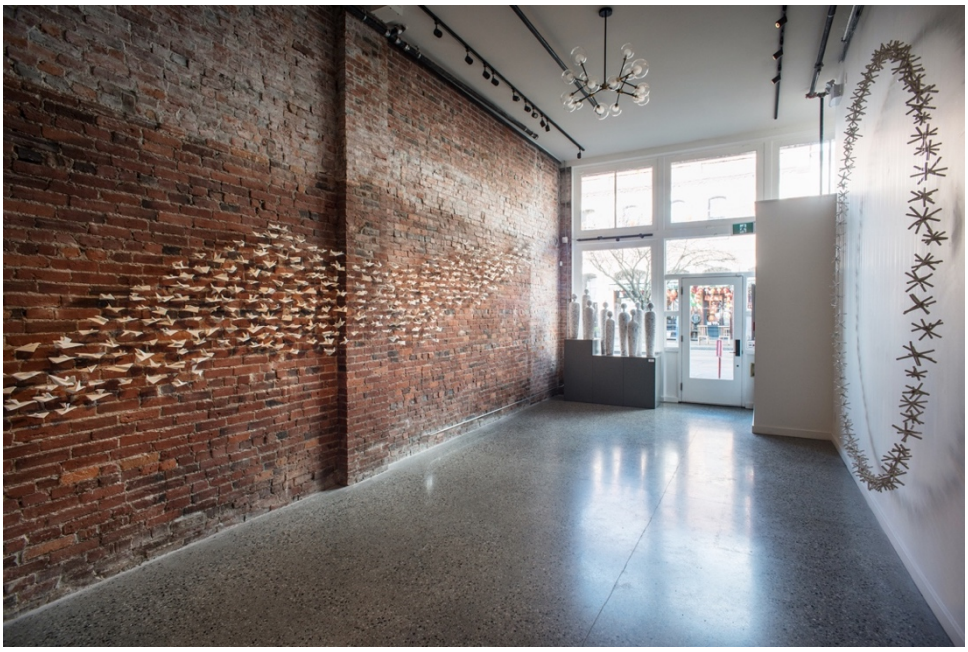


Figure 1a. Samantha Dickie, *The Skin We're In*, 2019. Installation view from *Now*, 2022 at Fortune Gallery, Victoria. Nine ceramic figures, varying dimensions. View Source



Figure 1b. Samantha Dickie, *The Skin We're In*, 2019. Nine ceramic figures, varying dimensions. View Source



Figure 1c. Samantha Dickie, *The Skin We're In*, 2019. Installation view from the exhibition *Now,* 2022, Fortune Gallery, Victoria. Nine ceramic figures, varying dimensions. View Source

In works such as *The Skin We're In* (figs. 1a, 1b, and 1c), the interaction of nine individual forms intimates the visible and invisible forces that interact to dictate social norms around the body and feminine being. The rough texture of the figural sculptures, their imperfections and their flaws, function as a celebration of natural beauty. In her recent

work, Dickie focuses her attention on individual forms and how they interact.



Figure 2a. Samantha Dickie, *All We Can Do Is Keep Breathing*, 2018. 1300 porcelain components. Photo credit: Karl Griffiths-Fulton.

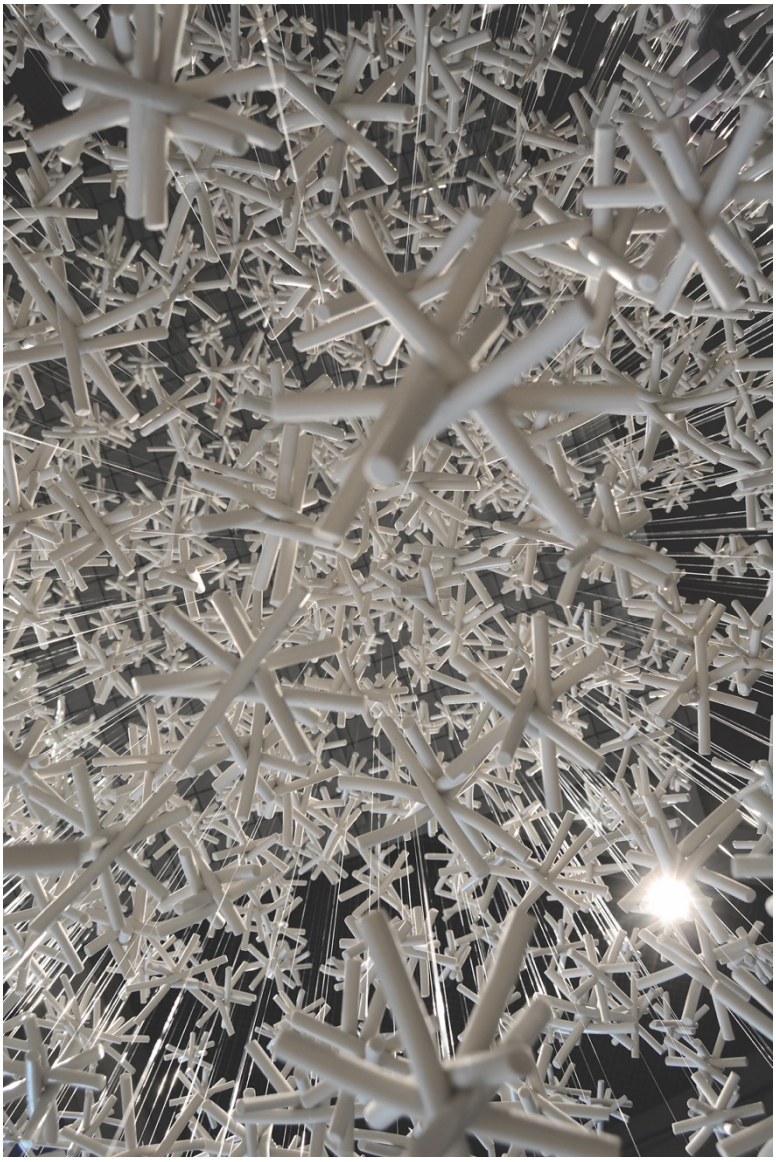


Figure 2b. Samantha Dickie, *All We Can Do Is Keep Breathing*, 2018 (detail). 1300 porcelain components. Photo credit: Karl Griffiths-Fulton.

In 2018, Dickie exhibited *All We Can Do Is Keep Breathing* (fig. 2a, 2b) at the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery in Waterloo, Ontario, as part of the *Then, Now, and Next* exhibition, in conjunction with presenting at the Fusion Conference hosted by the Ontario Clay and Glass Association at Wilfrid Laurier University. As an installation of over 1300 porcelain components suspended from the ceiling, Dickie's intention was to manifest a moment of contemplation which taps into the visceral feeling of connection and presence that envelops us when immersed in nature. Utilizing abstract multiples, she seeks to capture the embodied experience of being immersed in nature, where the relevance and irrelevance of our existence intertwine. The vastness and repetitive forms of the natural world

remind us that we are part of something much larger than ourselves, yet we also retain our individual uniqueness. In reflecting on the simultaneous significance and insignificance of our lives, a sense of wonder and awe permeates this paradox between the infinite and the personal. This philosophical connection, she believes, ties us to one another and possibly fosters a shared sense of humanity.



Figure 3a. Samantha Dickie, *Still Point*, 2019. Installation view from *A Moment in Time,* 2021, at Victoria Arts Council Gallery. Porcelain (1,100 components), dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3b. Samantha Dickie, *Still Point*, 2019. Installation view from *A Moment in Time,* 2021. Porcelain (1,100 components), dimensions unknown. Photo courtesy of Cathie Ferguson. View Source

Still Point (2019) (figs. 3a, and 3b) is one of four ceramic installations included in the exhibition *A Moment in Time* (curated by Kegan McFadden for the Victoria Arts Council Gallery, 2021). It is a hemispheric aerial sculpture composed of hundreds of molded oval or oblong ceramic discs suspended from the ceiling with fishing wire. Roughly the size of a sand dollar, the unglazed ceramic pieces have a dusty, granular texture except for the daub of glaze on the surface, which catches the light to exaggerate the overall sense of movement and spaciousness. (NJH)

Tanya Doody

Tanya Doody is an artist, researcher and educator whose work focuses on expressive and sustainable practices in a range of media. An ongoing dialogue with the ceramic medium forms the basis of her practice which includes performance art, sculpture/object making, and place-based research. Sustainability in art practices is an ongoing concern that has led to practice-based research in early pre-industrial technologies. Hand making dyes and pigments, low-fire clay processes, and a return to traditional knowledges that value

non-commercial processes align with her practice in using clay to reconnect the body to its environment, to itself, and the bodies of others.



Figure 1a. Tanya Doody, *Haptic Objects*, 2020-ongoing. Ceramics, variable dimensions. View Source



Figure 1b. Tanya Doody, *Haptic Objects*, 2020-ongoing. Ceramics, variable dimensions**.** View Source



Figure 1c. Tanya Doody, *Haptic Objects*, 2020-ongoing. Ceramics, variable dimensions**.** View Source

Offering clay and ceramic objects up for interaction in performance art contexts led to the ongoing series of sculptural ceramic works, *Haptic Objects* (figs. 1a, 1b, and 1c), begun in 2020. Through this work and a series of performative workshops, she proposes that engaging with matter calls us into being in familiar but sometimes forgotten ways. This work acknowledges that touch is important, and through sensorial engagement with material *Haptic Objects* centres direct experience. This experience is situated outside of language and the usual ways we analyze and explain our worlds to ourselves, valuing other means of sensory perception beyond vision. *Haptic Objects* seeks to reengage audiences in sensorially abundant ways reflective of the complexities of being.



Figure 2a. Tanya Doody, *ASMR for Empaths*, 2021 (video still). Digital video. View Source



Figure 2b. Tanya Doody, *ASMR for Empaths*, 2021 (video still). Digital video. View Source



Figure 2c. Tanya Doody, *ASMR for Empaths*, 2021 (video still). Digital video. View Source

ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) refers to a subjective experience of tingling or euphoria which Doody hopes to induce using the digital video format to extend the ceramics medium beyond its physical and spatial constraints in *ASMR for Empaths* (2021) (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c). For the exhibition *Objects for Empaths* (Casa, Lethbridge, Alberta, 2021), which featured *ASMR for Empaths* and other artworks created as gestures of care for those who feel

deeply and who are impacted by the emotional states of others, and who accumulate stress as a result, Doody combines gestural performance with handmade ceramic objects as means to foreground touch and sound. From her studio and commercial gallery space, Tanya Doody Ceramics, located in Lethbridge, Alberta, Doody has been creating works for over twenty years, and she currently teaches ceramics in the Department of Art at the University of Lethbridge. Doody loves the tactile nature of ceramics, the way that clay responds to touch, both the immediacy and reciprocity of the medium. She explains, "[i]n my functional ceramics I try to balance the excitement and freshness of current design trends with the longevity and timelessness of well-considered and thoughtful design. Everything in the shop is individual, one-of-a-kind, or made in limited-run small batches." Recently, Doody has been experimenting with two-dimensional as well as performance artworks.



Figure 3a Tanya Doody and Jackson 2bears, *We Invent Neutral Defence*, 2018. Performance documentation. View Source



Figure 3b. Tanya Doody and Jackson 2bears, *We Invent Neutral Defence*, 2018. Performance documentation. View Source

For example, *We Invent Neutral Defence* (2018) (figs. 3a and 3b), made in collaboration with Kanien'kehaka (Mohawk) multimedia artist Jackson 2bears. The performance took place over several hours in a room where audiences were allowed to enter in small groups for a limited amount of time and given obstructed or partial views of a series of changing tableaus that engaged audiences to exchange their testimonies and solicit their memories of the event to gradually and collectively construct meaning. Whatever the materials, the focus of Doody's artwork is the human body which she uses to engage with themes around presence and corporeality in order to activate sensory ways of knowing and to initiate social exchange. (NJH)

Louise Doucet and Satoshi Saito

Harmony is the heart of Louise Doucet's and Satoshi Saito's collaborative practice. Since 1968, they have maintained a studio in

Way's Mills, Quebec, where their work has evolved from functional ceramic pieces to large-scale sculptural works.



Figure 1. Doucet-Saito, *Vase*, 1966. Stoneware, 21 x 26 x 26 cm. Photography by Raymond Martinot. View Source

Early works like *Vase* (1966) (fig. 1) were created while the artists were studying traditional Japanese ceramics in Mashiko—a revelatory experience that inspired their quest for harmony through sculptural form. As Doucet-Saito developed, their work increasingly engaged with abstract sculptural forms and asymmetrical lines to achieve a dynamic balance. In the 1985 exhibition *Doucet-Saito: Concepts in Clay* (Koffler Gallery, Toronto) the artists displayed large-scale ceramic murals and sculptures that included stone and metal elements for the first time. In a catalogue essay for their 1985 exhibition, D.G. Jones describes Doucet-Saito as, "a two-headed, four-handed organism uniting two personalities and two cultures in a way that is difficult for most people to grasp, and that is sometimes a puzzle to themselves."



Figure 2. Doucet-Saito, *Ganyméde*, 2005. Bronze, 14 x 16 x 23 cm. Photography by Antoine Saito, View Source

Doucet-Saito continue to experiment with different mediums and materials, for example, *Ganyméde* (2005) (fig. 2) is bronze, and the first of several sculptures based upon the form of a hand holding a stem.



Figure 3a. Doucet-Saito, *Akatoki (Alba)*, 1997. Granite sculpture, 180 x 200 x160 cm. XVIII Olympic Winter Games Commemorative Sculpture, Nagano, Japan. View Source



Figure 3b. Doucet-Saito, *Akatoki (Alba)*, 1997. Granite sculpture, 180 x 200 x160 cm. XVIII Olympic Winter Games Commemorative Sculpture, Nagano, Japan. View Source



Figure 3c. Doucet-Saito, *Akatoki (Alba)*, 1997. Granite sculpture, 180 x 200 x 160cm. XVIII Olympic Winter Games Commemorative Sculpture, Nagano, Japan. View Source

Akatoki (Alba), (1997) (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c) exemplifies the sense of harmony that Doucet-Saito bring to their work. This large-scale granite sculpture commemorating the XVIII Olympics sits quietly over the city of Nagano, Japan; the upward movement of the piece was intended to reflect the surrounding mountains. (NJH)

José Drouin

For José Drouin, the chance and uncontrollable aspects of her ceramics practice are a source of endless delight. The joy Drouin finds in her craft is suggested by the name given to the Atelier-Boutique she established with her partner, Marie-Ange Samon, in 2005, Ne faites pas l'autruche (Don't Behave Like an Ostrich). Located in Saint-Hilaire, Quebec, it is less a studio space and more an economuseum, a workshop for small-scale production goods that focuses on the preservation and perpetuation of traditional skills and expertise.



Figure 1. José Drouin, *Vase with Dog*, n.d. Raku-fired ceramic, 17 x 17 x 22 cm. View Source

The wheel-thrown *Vase with Dog* (fig. 1), carefully glazed, reduction-fired, and crowned with a lively hand-sculpted dog, showcases Drouin's technical skills that have been honed since she discovered ceramics in her childhood.



Figure 2. José Drouin, *Serving or Wall Platter*, n.d. Gas-fired stoneware with green, yellow, blue, turquoise glazes, 45 x 18 x 5 cm. View Source

Often, Drouin adorns functional ceramics like *Serving or Wall Platter* (fig.2) with human and animal figures that evoke other cultures, which she often turns to for inspiration. She states that "in our highly industrialized society where uniformity reigns supreme, I try to make room for chance and coincidence. I hope that you will recognize in each of my pieces a warm and lasting impression that will touch you."



Figure 3. José Drouin, *White Urn*, n.d. Raku-fired stoneware, 19 x 25 cm. View Source

In addition to reduction-fired artworks, Drouin also experiments with raku firing methods in works like *White Urn* (fig. 3). Reduction and raku firing are Drouin's preferred methods because they are well-suited to small-batch production, which enables Drouin to play with surface effects, colours and patterns, and glazes. (NJH)

Robin DuPont

Robin DuPont, ceramic artist and educator based out of the Slocan Valley, British Columbia, has fostered a deep connection with both community and place in the southern interior of British Columbia, ever since an early educational experience art Kootenay Studio Arts (Nelson, British Columbia) introduced him to the region. DuPont creates both functional and decorative works, both hand-thrown and

coil-built, to create pieces for everyday use. As a kiln builder known for his wood-firing expertise, he fires his kilns to extreme temperatures, which leave his signature earthy, atmospheric mark-making patterns.



Figure 1. Robin DuPont, *Atmospheric Vase*, 2020. Woodfired porcelain, 35.5 x 35.5 cm.

Atmospheric Vase (2020) (fig. 1) illustrates the kind of colour variation that results from the build-up of molten ash that accumulates during the firing process.



Figure 2. Robin DuPont, *Untitled*, n.d. Dimensions unknown. View Source

DuPont also experiments with soda firing, introducing sodium into the kiln to create experimental glaze patterns, affecting the colour and texture of surfaces (fig. 2). DuPont's interest in the materiality of clay verges on the anthropological—he is drawn to the history of clay, affected by the central role the material has played in human history, in "culinary development, plumbing, architecture," and prefers to understand the "relational" aspect of his own utilitarian pieces, including interactive elements in exhibitions and asking his audience to photograph his cups and plates in use. "I make objects that are accessible," comments DuPont, "with the intention for them to go on to have a life of their own."



Figure 3a. Robin DuPont, *Touch I*, 2012. From the *Touch* series. View Source



Figure 3b. Robin DuPont, *Touch II*, 2013. From the *Touch* series. View Source



Figure 3c. Robin DuPont, *Touch III*, 2013. From the *Touch* series. View Source

The *Touch* series (2012-2013) (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c) encapsulates this philosophy. *Touch I* (2012) (fig. 3a), exhibited at the Illingworth Kerr Gallery, AUArts (formerly Alberta College of Art and Design, Calgary, Alberta) in 2012 following DuPont's year as artist in residence at the Alberta College, invited gallery visitors to interact with his wall-mounted pieces directly—by taking down plates from the wall to hold food given out at the exhibition's opening reception. (SW)

Magdolene Dykstra

Magdolene Dykstra is an artist based in the Niagara region of Ontario who works in sculpture, installation, and mark-making. She is interested in questions of the interconnection between people and the Earth in both the micro and macro senses, emphasizing "the power of the small when gathered into intricate ecosystems." Dykstra sees clay as her collaborator, working with unfired and fired states to compose installations that are, crucially, temporary. Whether fired or not, her installations are not meant to remain

constant, instead embracing impermanence as an opportunity for transformation.



Figure 1. Magdolene Dykstra, *34 Faces* (exhibition view), 2013. Stoneware, stains, engobes, and glazes. View Source

In her earlier work, Dykstra interpolated imagery of human figures, sometimes separating body parts from one another or rendering figures without limbs entirely, as in her *34 Faces* from the series *Torsos* (c. 2009-2013) (fig. 1), also often twisting facial features to express pain or sadness. More recent work incorporates unfired clay pressed into shapes that suggest organic growth or cellular material, which accumulate into irregular masses, supported by structures of wood and chicken wire, and appear to seep from gaps between walls and wrap around corners.



Figure 2. Magdolene Dykstra, *Polyanthroponemia*, 2020. Unfired clay and mixed media. View Source

In one of the first works of this kind, *Polyanthroponemia* (2020) (fig. 2), which derives its name from environmentalist James Lovelock's view of the Earth as "a single living thing that behaves a lot like our own bodies," Dykstra intended to visualize the Earth fighting back and invading the gallery space. Dykstra regards the process of creating these installations as "collaborating with the material to respond to the architecture" of a space, using features already present in rooms to determine the placement of the masses.



Figure 3. Magdolene Dykstra, *Exchanging Presence*, 2024. Iron oxides and acrylic medium, terracotta, video. View Source

This consideration continues in Dykstra's mark-making practice, which uses fingerprints as a way of visualizing individuality within a collective (fig. 3). Her mark-making practice utilizes clay, as well as soil and naturally occurring oxides, to record her presence "with a simple, yet persistent gesture." These works are composed by the repeated pressing of her fingerprints against paper or a gallery wall. Dykstra often employs assistants, members of racialized and marginalized communities, to join her in creating site-specific paintings by leaving their marks on the gallery walls. Dykstra *Exchanging Presence* (fig. 3) included an open invitation for guests to contribute their own record of existence by leaving an imprint of themselves on a piece of clay. In exchange for the offering of their fingerprints, participants were invited to take home pre-fired remnants from the installation. (SW)

Marc Egan

Marc Egan has been producing pottery, ceramic sculpture, and tile from his studio in Toronto for over thirty years. He also teaches ceramics at Sheridan College (Toronto, Ontario) as an instructor and workshop facilitator. Often exploring ecological themes, in

particular the relationship between humans and nature, Egan combines technological and naturalistic aesthetics.



Figure 1a. Marc Egan, *Construction No. 1*, n.d. Ceramic. View Source



Figure 1b. Marc Egan, *Constructions 2, 3,* n.d. Ceramic. View Source



Figure 1c. Marc Egan, *Constructions 6, 7, 8, 9,* n.d. Ceramic. View Source

His *Constructions* (n.d.) (fig. 1a), for example, are "miniature environments that blend the natural and synthetic," juxtaposing "modern technological society and nature" in ceramic compositions that integrate rounded surfaces ornamented with images of plant life and organic material with factory chimneys and hard, geometric edges painted in greys and blacks (figs. 1b and 1c). These *Constructions* were gathered in the exhibition *Emotional Geography* (April 5-29, 2007) at David Kaye Gallery (Toronto, Ontario), where his work addressed "a need to see humanity as a part of the natural world and not in opposition to it." Egan's interest in the natural world extends to the diversity of life existing in soil, and work such as his illustrated wall plates takes inspiration from plants, insects, fungi and microorganisms in order to "try to capture the beauty and energy of the cycle of growth, reproduction, decay and regeneration in the garden."



Figure 2a. Marc Egan, *Curious Encounters #16*, 2015. Stoneware and glaze, 20 ½ in. View Source



Figure 2b. Marc Egan, *Curious Encounters* 1-8, 2015. Stoneware and glaze, 9 ¼ - 20 ½ in. View Source

Egan uses the Cuerda Seca technique to create line decoration, in which wax-resist lines are drawn with a brush on a base pencil drawing, segmenting the placement of glaze, which creates glossy, multicoloured images like *Curious Encounters #16* (2015) (fig. 2a) that could be the close-ups of a whimsical microscope (fig. 2b).



Figure 3a. Marc Egan, *Tree of Life,* 2024. From the *Elaborate* exhibition, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto. Stoneware, cuerda seca with polychrome glaze, 22.86 x 30 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Marc Egan, Three tiles from *Sketches in Glaze* series, 2024. Stoneware, cuerda seca with polychrome glaze, each 40.64 x 45.72 cm. View Source

In 2022, Egan began developing large-scale tile panels. Working in the tradition of architectural adornment, the imagery draws on the history of the decorative arts and botanical illustration. Egan applies

the discoveries of his extensive material research in glaze development to these panels. His *Tree of Life* (figs. 3a and 3b), from the exhibition, *Elaborate,* at Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, September 2024, depicts an aged tree with twisted, broken limbs bursting forth with new life in the form of colourful, exuberant flowers. "The sacred tree is an enduring image used throughout history and across cultures to depict the interconnectedness of life." The tile panel "shows the many aspects of a tree's life, celebrating the marvel and resilience of an organism that endures for centuries." (SW)

Bev Ellis

Nature is the preferred muse of sculptor Bev Ellis; she sees beauty in the infinite variations and imperfections of the natural world. Now based in Surrey, British Columbia, the Vancouver-born artist has worked with various mediums, studying everything from jewelry making to metalsmithing, printmaking, drawing, and painting. However, the ceramics medium has offered her the ideal opportunity to blend different aesthetic techniques that both challenge and inspire her to expand her knowledge and skills.



Figure 1a. Bev Ellis. *Storied Oak: Looking Back on Our Roots,* 2019. Ceramic, 8.5 x 8.5 ft. View Source



Figure 1b. Bev Ellis. *Storied Oak: Looking Back on Our Roots*, 2019 (detail). Ceramic, 8.5 x 8.5 ft. View Source

For example, she combines photography, print-making, and sculpture for *Storied Oak: Looking Back on Our Roots* (figs. 1a and 1b), commissioned for the Hastings Vancity Bank Branch (Vancouver, British Columbia) and installed in the front entryway. Ellis utilized photographic images from three separate collections that documented the history of Vancouver, such as the work of renowned street photographer Foncie Pulice, which were printed onto the two hundred hand-formed ceramic pieces that form the arboreous installation. For Ellis, "Trees speak to me about vulnerability, community, beauty, brokenness, nurture, help, and hope. I am an encourager. Flowing from that, as an artist, I have a desire to bring into existence not just things, but the creation of artful objects that bring joy and beauty into our daily lives."



Figure 2a. Bev Ellis. *Where the Foxes Nest*, 2022-23. From the *Adorned* series. Ceramics, gold leaf, 7 x 9 x 3 in. View Source



Figure 2b. Bev Ellis. *Where the Foxes Nest*, 2022-23 (detail). From the *Adorned* series. Ceramics, gold leaf, 7 x 9 x 3 in. View Source

Artworks such as *Where the Foxes Nest* (2022-23) (figs. 2a and 2b) from the *Adorned* series appear representational, but they suggest multi-layered meanings. Ellis uses glazes, underglazes, and oxidation firing to achieve the startling realistic surface effects that are enhanced with twenty-two-carat gold to intimate the complex lives of trees and the sense of wonder and awe they provoke. Ellis likens the experience of this work to a treasure hunt in the woods where the discovery of something beautiful, wonderous, or strange, big or small, can bring boundless joy. In more recent work, *Nature's Palette,* a series of trompe l'oeil ceramics invite the viewer to engage with the world of nature in unexpected ways.



Fig. 3a. Bev Ellis, *The Gathering*, 2024. Handbuilt ceramic sculpture with underglazes and glazes, multi-fired in oxidation, 14 x 14 x 7.5 in. View Source



Fig. 3b. Bev Ellis, *The Gathering*, 2024. Handbuilt ceramic sculpture with underglazes and glazes, multi-fired in oxidation, 14 x 14 x 7.5 in. View Source

One piece from the series, *The Gathering* (2024) (figs. 3a and 3b), Ellis describes as "embod[ying] my quest to translate the ephemeral beauty of nature into a lasting artistic expression. Inspired by serene forest walks, this piece intricately weaves together fragments of memory, transforming clay, an elemental medium, into a tangible reflection of fleeting moments."

Often informed by the cycle of decay and rebirth, Ellis aims to bring the peace and calm of the outdoor world into everyday life, asking how something so lifelike can be rendered in clay. The viewer is reminded to slow down and celebrate the miracles of nature. (NJH)

Darren Emenau

Maritime ceramic artist Darren Emenau, also known by his phonetically-inspired alias MNO, grew up on the Kennebecasis River in New Brunswick and continues to call the province home. Emenau, who maintains "an eye bent to beauty in unexpected places" and a "ruddy reverence for the natural world," takes cues from the natural environment to shape his art, beginning at the level of material. Rather than purchasing clay, he digs his own stoneware and earthenware from rich clay deposits at New Brunswick riverbeds historically known for clay working, and he creates unrefined glazes by sourcing and crushing local granite, slate, calcium, quartz, limestone, potash, salts and wood ash. Emenau also uses his own kiln to fire his works at high temperatures for several hours. He constructed the kiln using soft bricks, a lower-energy alternative to traditional options. Multi-firing and applying successive layers of glaze to his work creates textural finishes reminiscent of "lichen or bark, moss, or the cracking in the mud of a dried riverbank," surfaces both naturalistic and evoking a sense of the past.

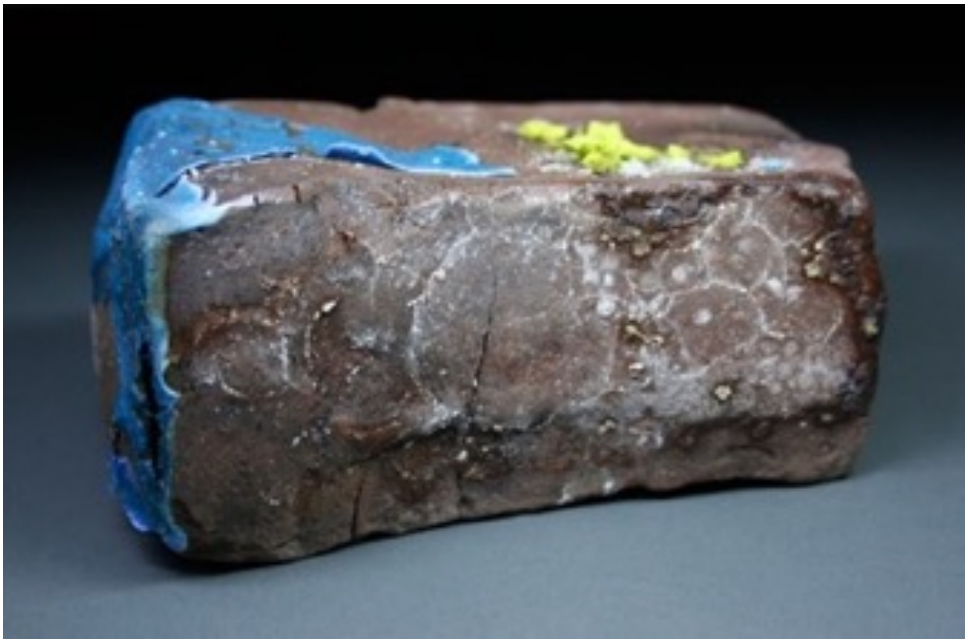


Figure 1. Darren Emenau, *Brick,* c.2012. From *Resurfaced* series. Local earthenware, 2.5 x 4 x 7 in. View Source

The historically-inspired series *Resurfaced* (c.2012) (fig. 1) fired recovered bricks from a historical brickworks along the same riverbank from which he scavenges his own clay. The resulting pieces are glazed and warped during the firing process, thus taking on a new character, putting him in conversation with the shore's industrial past and the region's material history. The pieces in Emenau's series *Olio*, exhibited at a show of the same title in 2018 at the Museum of Art, University of Maine, Orono, are also "all about Saint John," made from local clay dug from around the Saint John River.



Figure 2. Darren Emenau, *Welsford II*, 2018. White earthenware, multi-fired custom glazes. View Source

Welsford II (2018) (fig. 2) is one such piece, a lime green vessel whose saturated, acid-green-coloured surface is "imbued with nature's essence."



Figure 3a. Darren Emenau, *Soother 6 and 33*, n.d. View Source



Figure 3b. Darren Emenau, *Soother No. 31,* 2022. White earthenware, MNO lichen glazed, multi-fired at cone 06, acrylic paint, rayon flocking, non-toxic adhesive, 8 x 8 x 23 in. View Source

A more recent series, *Soother* (fig. 3a), incorporates the vibrant colours of his earlier work with rayon flocking to create bright pieces whose unexpectedly textured surfaces seem to invite tactility, as in the hot pink *Soother No. 31* (2022) (fig. 3b). (SW)

Carole Epp

Carole Epp, who is based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, creates pieces that incorporate childhood imagery for various purposes. A key figure in the Canadian ceramics community, she maintained for more than fifteen years, the blog Musing About Mud, which featured ceramicists working and exhibiting in Canada while also providing resources, including listings of helpful workshops, opportunities, and artist calls. Additionally, she co-founded Make and Do Ceramics, a volunteer organization that promotes Canadian ceramics both nationally and internationally and co-authored *Ceramics: Profiles of Potters and Artisans* (2020).



Figure 1. Carole Epp, *Boy With Skull Side Plate*, 2020. Ceramic. View Source

The "cute" images that adorn her thrown porcelain dishware in coloured glazes, such as in *Boy With Skull Side Plate* (2020) (fig. 1), are inspired by the aesthetics of the storybooks and whimsical drawings she encounters through her two young children. Epp's bright white dishware is made to be functional, so skillfully rendered it almost appears industrially produced. She sees the selection, stacking, and sequencing of this functional work as a kind of ongoing dialogue between maker and owner, where her own intention and value are extended and altered as the objects are passed between hands.



Figure 2. Carole Epp, *Sweet Dreams*, 2011, Cone 6 clay, underglaze, decals, fired in cone 6 electric. View Source

Her line of figurative sculptures, which incorporate darker themes, encompass another, more abstract body of her creative work. At first glance, these pieces seem like the kitsch figurines typically found in gift shops for home decor. However, they subvert the saccharine ideas and storybook allusions often associated with such

items, instead unsettling the viewer with reminders of death and violence, as seen in *Sweet Dreams* (2011) (fig 2). These figurative sculptures are created using Epp's extensive collection of vintage molds, along with her own handmade molds and hand-building techniques. For her, communicating the themes at hand is more integral than the technical side, or what she terms "a purist approach to ceramics," so she will also glue, paint, or integrate found objects or other materials in order to achieve her desired effect.



Figure 3. Carole Epp, *Roe vs Wade*, 2022, Cone 6 porcelain, underglaze, fired in cone 6 electric, graphite, resin fixative. View Source

Epp has also created a series of #potteryispolitical works, including *Roe vs. Wade* (2022) (fig. 3). This work criticizes the devastating decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to abandon its duty to protect fundamental rights by overturning Roe v. Wade and ruling that there is no federal constitutional right to abortion.



Fig. 4. Carole Epp, *Grounding*, 2024. AI digital print.

Epp's most recent research investigates the integration of AI into ceramic design as a tool in the creative process using Midjourney, which generates images from language descriptions called prompts. The artist describes a vision with words, and the AI tool translates them into an artwork. Some of this research has led to works like *Grounding* (fig. 4). Epp explains that these are "images of pottery that don't actually exist in the real world but that I would love to create someday, somehow. For now, they will simply tell their stories as digital images." (SW)

France Fauteux

Quebec artist France Fauteux's inspiration began during her childhood on her artist family's Shawinigan farm, where she developed a passion for animals and "their form, agility and physical beauty." Since opening her studio in Quebec City, Quebec, in 1979, her career has spanned more than forty years.



Figure 1. France Fauteux, *Les Oiselets*, 1988. 7 x 15 x 5 cm. View Source

Her early ceramics used forms that were more realistic than fantastical, such as the three stark white birds of *Les Oiselets* (1988) (fig. 1). Her more recent work, which plays with the application of texture and saturated colour, occupies a more imaginative and surreal realm, though it remains primarily inspired by "the animal kingdom," especially interspecies emotional connections and expressive similarities.



Figure 2. France Fauteux, *Confidence*, 2007. Fine terracotta, vitrified engobe, glaze, 43 x 48 x 41 cm. Photo: Guy Couture. View Source

Fauteux comments that she sees texture as "the sculpture's language," and colour as "its sound and melody," applied with slip coatings of vitrified engobes that "fix the clay" and magnify its matte finish and textures. The whimsical ceramics she makes are "happy" and always seem to be in animated movement. Her series *Les Amourois* was a "complete imaginary universe" in which diminutive

human figures interact with oversized fantastical creatures, climbing on their backs or nestling into their recesses, as in *Confidence* (2007) (fig. 2). To round out the universe in which these creatures exist, Fauteux wrote a "marvellous adventure story," a fairy tale that also acts as an "allegory on happiness," giving imaginative life to the exhibition of these figures at Quebec City, Quebec's Centre MATERIA in 2011. The series *Le Peuple Couleur* (2011-2015) is also accompanied by a publication, "Le prodigieux défi de Maître Thot," which recounts a story of an "Island of a Thousand Colours" populated by creatures who are also colours—each with their own abilities and personalities imbued by the qualities of, and associations with, their inspiration.



Figure 3. France Fauteux, *Vert*, 2012. Fine terracotta, vitrified engobe, glaze, electric wires, epoxy, 52½ x 30 x 30 cm. View Source

Vert (2012) (fig. 3), for example, was intended to be "clear, bright, young and sparkling like spring," inspired by "the inner flesh of the kiwi" and "young freshly unfurled leaves." (SW)

Eddy Firmin

Eddy Firmin, an Afro-Canadian, Montreal-based artist and theorist, originally hails from Guadeloupe. His practice is wide-ranging, integrating such diverse methods as painting, sculpture, video, installation, poetry, and performance, and is guided by research questions centring on how "imaginaries" might be "decolonized," which he terms a "Méthode Bossale." Through all arms of his practice, Firmin is informed by the intertwining of ancestral traditions and modern artistic methods available from his own transcultural position, an identity and self-understanding termed by W.E.B DuBois the "double consciousness" of colonized persons.



Figure 1a. Eddy Firmin, *Terra incognita – Série sciapode*, 2006. Ceramic. View Source



Figure 1b. Eddy Firmin, *Terra incognita – Série sciapode*, 2006. Installation view, Galifa, Barcelona, Spain. Ceramic. View Source

An engagement with the legacies of colonialism is central to Firmin's *Terra Incognita– Série sciapode* (2006) (fig. 1a), a series of ceramic sculptures modelled after the xenophobic, monstrous descriptions of "non-Western otherness" in classical natural histories, which were exhibited alongside narrative films (fig. 1b). Firmin also often utilizes images of himself directly in his art.



Figure 2. Eddy Firmin, *Ego Portrait – [danger]*, 2016. Earthenware, porcelain, gold and steel, 170 x 42 x 55 cm. View Source

The series *Ego Portrait* (2016), for example (which also incorporated a performance component traversing the streets of Montreal, during which Firmin wore a collar fitted with cell phones modelled after those collars used to control enslaved peoples on plantations), contained earthenware and ceramic self-portraits with bodies altered by the addition of animal parts, or stamped, as in *Ego portrait – [danger]* (2016) (fig. 2), with luxury brand logos, playing with the violent legacy of slave "branding."



Figure 3a. Eddy Firmin, *Punching Bags*, 2021. Installation view, Art Mûr, Montreal. View Source

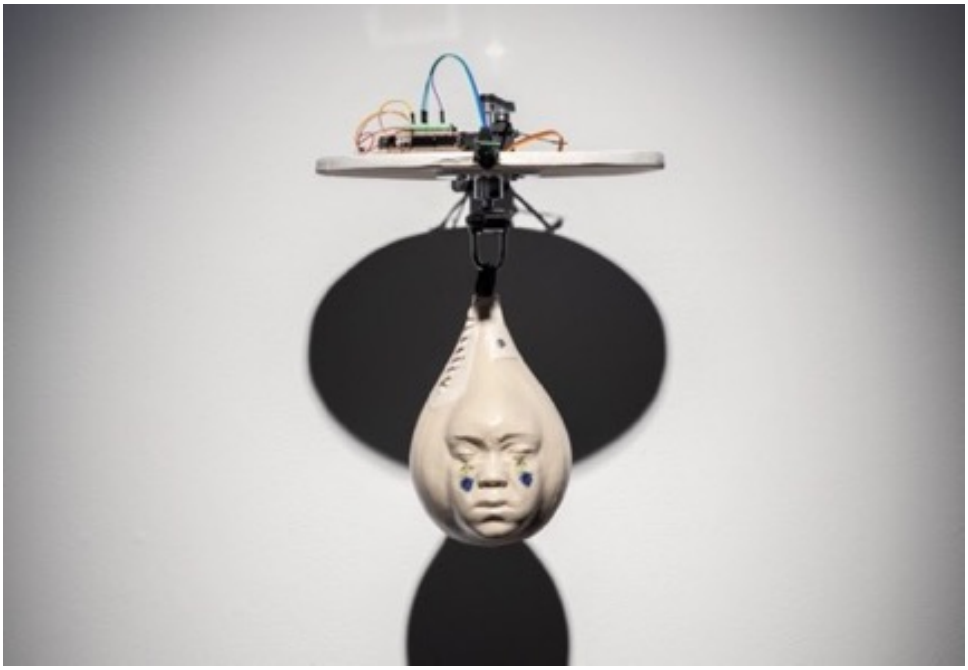


Figure 3b. Eddy Firmin, *Punching Bags* (detail), 2021. Installation view, Art Mûr, Montreal. View Source

Punching Bags (2021) (fig. 3a), exhibited at Firmin's 2022 solo exhibition *Orgueil et préjugés* at Art Mûr (Montreal, Quebec), integrates engagement with both colonial stereotypes and the legacy of racist violence in a monumental "family tree" made up of ceramic punching bags fitted with faces, serene, pained and crying

(fig. 3b). The bags rotate, powered by exposed motors, revealing, alternately, expressive faces and flat sides painted with flowers. The hanging boxing gloves nearby remind the viewers of the ongoing violence and brutality of colonialism, while the always-moving bags suggest the possibility, and attendant power, of turning away. (SW)

Michael Flaherty

Potter, fibre artist, and installation and performance artist Michael Flaherty lives in Newfoundland, the place where he was born and spent a childhood "getting lost in the woods." His studio, Wild Cove Pottery (Port Union, Newfoundland), offers pieces directly inspired by Newfoundland's "culture and environment," with strong material connections to the land forged by using local materials such as beach sand, sea salt and seashells in glaze, and seaweed, wildflowers and berries as decorations.



Figure 1. Michael Flaherty (Wild Cove Pottery), *Stein*, n.d. Thrown cone 10 stoneware, wood fired, rain drizzle fog glaze. View Source

Visual echoes of Newfoundland also appear in the subtle colouration of his pieces, such as the *Rain Drizzle Fog* series (long-term project), as in *Stein* (fig. 1), which are popular with locals for their interpolation of the "moody blues and textures" of the "Newfoundland sea and sky." The *Grey Islands* exhibition, held at the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in 2012, included twenty-one ceramic sculptures from Flaherty's series *Rangifer Sapiens* (2009).



Figure 2. Michael Flaherty, *1807-1884*, 2009. White earthenware with terra sigillata, cobalt sulfate, cobalt underglaze and clear glaze. View Source

Works from this series, such as 1807-1884 (2009) (fig. 2), are recreations of antlers and pottery shards that Flaherty recorded during a remote three-month sojourn in the abandoned Newfoundland region from which the exhibition derives its name—a place now uninhabited by humans due to a government resettlement policy in the 1960s and 1970s aimed at relocating inhabitants of remote communities to central areas where they could access government services. The series constituted both a kind of "archeological documentation" as well as an exploration of "a spatial and temporal engagement with loss—lost time" echoed in the pottery shards and cemeteries Flaherty found, curator Pan Wendt suggests, but also with "lost space, as the artist explored the island wilderness now claimed by caribou and other wildlife." Flaherty's project for the 2017 Bonavista Biennale in Port Union

similarly posited an environmental collaboration, this time with a nod to the aesthetics and idealism of the "Space Age."



Figure 3. Michael Flaherty, *SpaceCraft*, 2017. Parabolic mirror, glaze, gold lustre, firebrick, kiln cement, aluminum foil. View Source

Called *SpaceCraft* (2017) (fig. 3), the project embraced "low-tech, do-it yourself culture" as a proposal for existence and artmaking during a time of overconsumption and global climate catastrophe. The piece consisted of a solar-powered kiln, handmade with conventional materials, which used a system of reflective surfaces to fire tiny sculptures of planets, including, as Flaherty describes, "gas giants, cratered moonlets, water worlds, planets covered in artificial structures, and planets of polar bears and icebergs." (SW)

Neil Forrest

Ceramic artist Neil Forrest is noted for rethinking ornament in post-modern space. His architectonic strategies extended the reach of ceramics as three-dimensional matrixes that could fill built spaces. More recent works and installations pursue specific questions of topical or anthropological concern. More narrative in nature, these often conflate historical archetypes with popular modernist iconography.



Figure 1a. Neil Forrest, *Scaff,* 2004-2005. Porcelain, magnets, acrylic rod, nylon fishing line, 720 x 80 x 320 cm. View Source



Figure 1b. Neil Forrest, *Scaff* (detail), 2004-2005. Porcelain, magnets, acrylic rod, nylon fishing line, 720 x 80 x 320 cm. View Source

Scaff (2005) (fig. 1a), for example, is emblematic of his artistic use of the language and logic of the "rhizome" during a period when many of his sculptures were assemblages built to occupy built space, offering "architectonic strategies of aggregation and connective systems," usually in the form of "long chains or complex matrixes" (fig.1b).



Figure 1c. Neil Forrest, *Scaff,* 2004-2005. Porcelain, magnets, acrylic rod, nylon fishing line, 720 x 80 x 320 cm. View Source

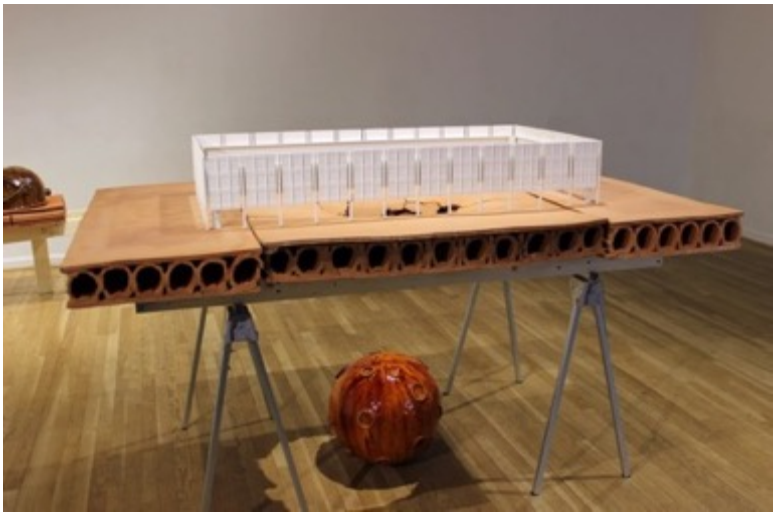
In *Scaff*, this matrix takes the form of a structure of porcelain trusses suspended on fishing wire and fitted together with a system of magnets (fig. 1c).

Forrest's multi-year research project *Pøros* (2015-2017), carried out in conjunction with Oslo National Academy of the Arts, investigated the materiality of clay itself, particularly its porosity.

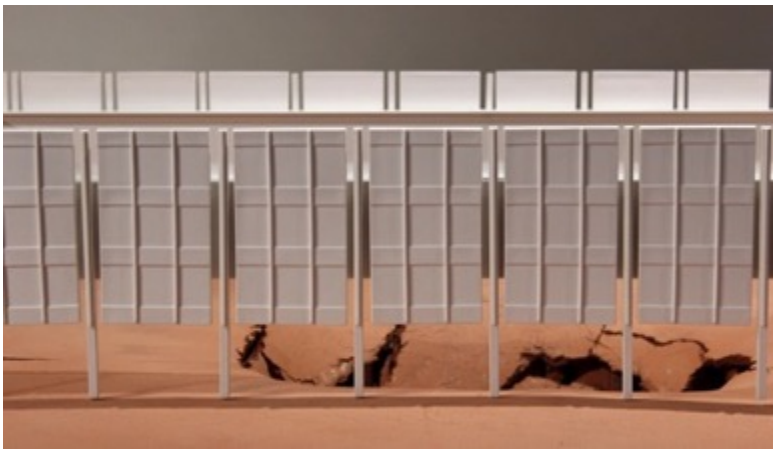


Figure 2. Neil Forrest, *Pøros*, 2015-2017. Stoneware and porcelain ceramics, solubles, wood, water pump, compressor, steel mesh, additional materials, handbuilt and CNC milled ceramics, 14 x 11 x 1.6 m. View Source

As an installation at the Nelson Fine Arts Center, ASU Art Museum, Tempe, Arizona, the piece *Pøros* (2017-2018) (fig. 2) comprised a "grotto" of cisterns and a structure of steel mesh, in and around which mechanical systems of water and soluble chemicals atomized into microclimates and left the traces of chemical processes on ceramic pieces (including models of Norwegian architectural structures that served as historical impetus for Forrest's project), something between a science project and "geophysical landscape." Forrest also maintains a research interest in "place," collaborating with architects to question the relationship between identity, history and architectural space.







Figures 3a. 3b. 3c. Neil Forrest, *The Washingtonian Service*, 2019. CNC milled porcelain, hand-built stoneware, extruded terra cotta, lead glazes, wood, powder-coated metal, video. Installation dimensions 6x5 x2 m; extruded table 6x42x45 feet. Photograph: Neil Forrest. View Source

The Washingtonian Service (2019) includes a small-scale porcelain replica of the skeleton of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library

(designed by architect Mies van der Rohe), "emblematic of a golden age in a salient city," held up by a terra cotta table, through which a "meteor" has crashed, a process documented on film, creating a gaping, cracked crater in the centre of the model (figs. 3a, 3b and 3c).

Working alone or with collaborator John Roloff in San Francisco, Neil Forrest's artistic process has moved towards spacious investigations with multiple threads and stories. Forrest has been commissioned for an installation in 'Overthrown', an exhibition at the Denver Art Museum, and his solo installation 'Porøs' (Porous) was shown at the Nelson Museum of Art in Arizona. His work was featured at the Cheongju Biennale in Korea, and he presented his solo installation *The Washingtonian Service* in Washington D.C. (SW)

Jackie Frioud

Jackie Frioud throws functional pottery on the wheel at her home studio in North Vancouver, bringing pieces by ferry to her salt kiln for firing at the Tidal Arts Centre in Lund, British Columbia several times a year. It is at her kiln site, near her family's remote cabin, that she can be found immersed in "the sublime beauty of nature," helping to inspire the subsequent pots that "complement quiet moments of pleasure and reflection in daily life." Frioud's sturdy and elegant works aspire to "perfect" shapes and proportions, but she leaves room for "the process to show" in the marks her hands leave on the surfaces of her pieces, revealing the "inherent qualities of clay."



Figure 1. Jackie Frioud, *Bowl with Lid*, n.d. Salt-glazed Stoneware. View Source

Her salt-firing process, with which she has been "captivated" since 2000, leaves her pieces with "earthy colours," which show "the evidence of making." In works like *Bowl with Lid* (fig. 1), evidence of "the trail of the flame and the salt vapour" marks the surface, which she has described as "varied, tactile," and "orange peel" in appearance. As she explains, "I think my work has been influenced by Sam Kwan and the Leach/Hamada tradition that Sam's teachers brought to BC in the 60's and 70's. My salt glaze surfaces certainly echo their pots as well as my focus on function and simplicity."



Figure 2a. Jackie Frioud, Ceramic Pottery, 2021, varied dimensions. View Source



Figure 2b. Jackie Frioud, *Tea Pots*, n.d. View Source

Frioud works in a range of muted and warm palettes (fig.2a) with a recent interest in blue and gray colourations, as demonstrated in *Tea Pots* (fig. 2).

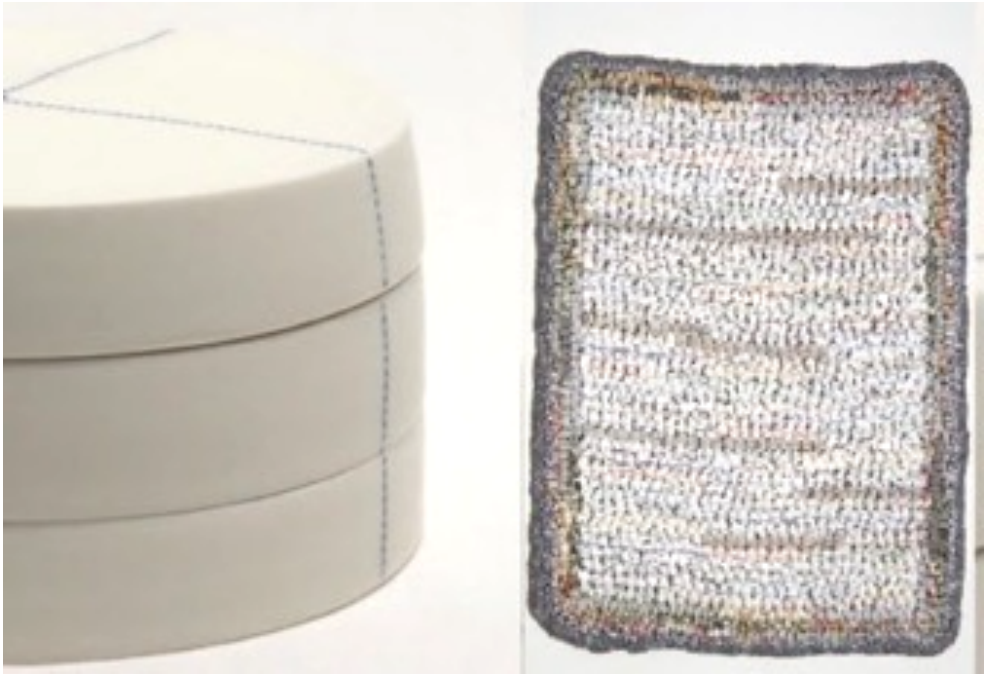


Figure 3. Jackie Frioud, *White Porcelain Ceramics,* 2011 (alongside work by Judy Robertson). Porcelain, cone 6 electric fired. Circle Craft Gallery, Vancouver. View Source

White Porcelain Ceramics (2011) (fig. 3) is a functional, multi-layered box, decorated with a "stitching motif" added in blue slip-coloured clay, which she showed at the 2011 two-artist show *Slipstitch* at Circle Craft Gallery, Vancouver. This piece, inspired by "a minimalist, Japanese aesthetic" and her own background in sewing, played off the muted colours in fellow exhibitor Judy Robertson's hooked rugs. (SW)

Rob Froese

Born in Saskatoon and raised in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Rob Froese works from different studio locations in Saskatchewan and Alberta as well as in Sagara, Shizuoka, Japan. His experiences working and exhibiting in Japan regularly since 1998 have profoundly influenced his approach to clay body choice, surface design and firing techniques. His arts training began early; Froese's father, Gus, is a painter and arts educator, and after the younger Froese completed a BFA in ceramics at the University of Regina, he and his wife moved to Japan, where he quickly became immersed in the local ceramics community.



Figure 1. Rob Froese, *Script Vase*, 2011. From the *Medalta* series. Ceramic, 30 x 8 cm. View Source

The tactility of works such as *Script Vase* (2011) (fig. 1), made during one of many of Froese's artist residencies at Medalta, Medicine Hat, Alberta, reveals a deep concern for the physical qualities of clay. His forms are delicate yet forceful, balanced but asymmetrical; the strong brushwork and vigorous mark-making are all reminiscent of the Japanese cultural and culinary aesthetics that have inspired Froese's work. Music also shapes his artistic practice.



Figure 2a. Rob Froese, *Measured Composition*, 2020. Installation view. Ceramic and mixed media installation. Photo courtesy of Moose Jaw Museum and Art Gallery. View Source



Figure 2b. Rob Froese, *Measured Composition,* 2020. Installation view. Ceramic and mixed media installation. Photo courtesy of Moose Jaw Museum and Art Gallery. View Source

The 2020 exhibition *Measured Composition* (Moose Jaw, Museum and Art Gallery, Saskatchewan, 2020) (figs. 2a and 2b) is

reconfigured for each installation and explores the correspondences between ceramics and music, in particular the improvisational expressiveness of avant-garde composers such as John Cage and Gabriel Orozco.



Figure 3. Rob Froese, *Ocean Moon*, 2016. From the *Flow Forms* series. Ceramic, 30 x 10 cm. View Source

The restrained colour and harmonious pattern of *Ocean Moon* (2016) (fig. 3) result from Froese's process. Amy Gogarty writes that "Froese works quickly, responding to chance marks and textures that evolve through the various processes to which he submits the clay. His work overall has an 'untrammelled' spirit to it. It is beautifully balanced yet not symmetrical; plates and bowls fit comfortably in the hand and feed reward-searching fingers with pleasing textures." (NJH)

Kaashif Ghanie

Ceramic artist Kaashif (Kaas) Ghanie, a second-generation Muslim Guyanese Canadian based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, uses traditional Islamic pottery forms and motifs to consider stereotypes and his own experiences of Islamophobia. Originally from London, Ontario, Ghanie relocated to Nova Scotia to study sculpting but was soon "hooked," he says, on handling clay. Today, the artist maintains the grandeur of sculpture but also pays careful attention to sensorial surface detail for vessels that draw upon his Muslim identity and experience as witness to the acts of objectification and dehumanization that reduce individuals of colour to "the Other."

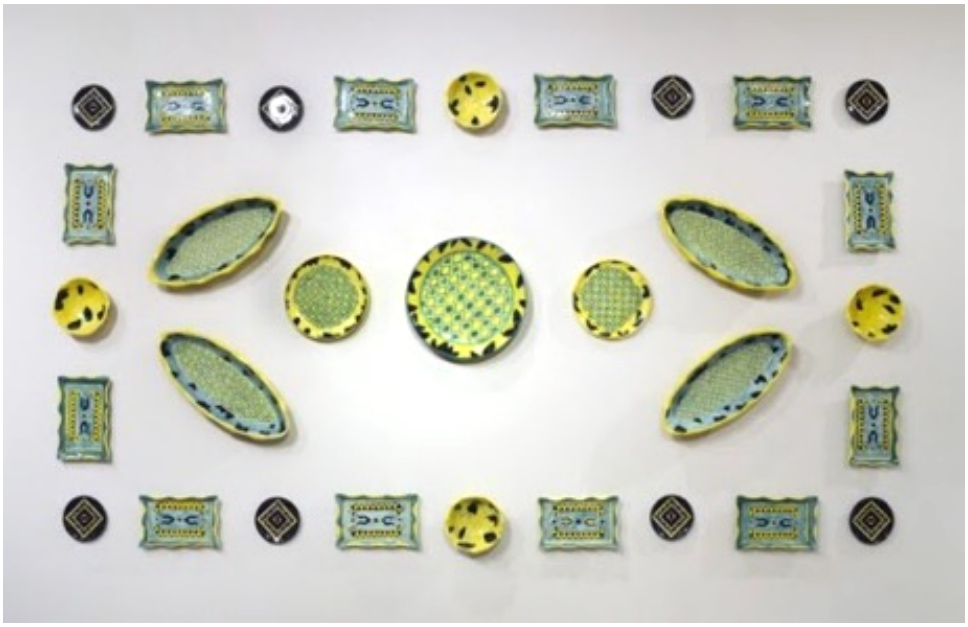


Figure 1. Kaashif Ghanie, *Serving Dinner, Not War*, 2017. Ceramic wall installation, approximate dimensions 122 x 245 cm. View Source

In *Serving Dinner, Not War*, shown at the Mary E. Black Gallery in Halifax, Nova Scotia (2017) (fig. 1), the artist turned to Islamic motifs—patterns from prayer rugs—recontextualizing a family carpet into a ceramic dinnerware set in a vivid Guyanese colour palette to visualize his diverse heritage and to voice feelings he says were previously "bottled up."



Figure 2a. Kaashif Ghanie, *Ointment*, 2018. Glazed stoneware, 73 x 41 cm. View Source



Figure 2b. Kaashif Ghanie, *Ointment* (detail), 2018. Glazed stoneware, 73 x 41 cm. View Source



Figure 2c. Kaashif Ghanie, *Adaptation*, 2018. Installation view, Hermes Gallery, Halifax. View Source

Ointment (figs. 2a and 2b), one of five works completed during the artist's nine-month residency at the Centre for Craft Nova Scotia (Halifax, 2017–2018) and included in his solo exhibition, *Adaptation* (fig. 2c), held at Hermes Gallery in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 2018, also recounts a personal narrative. In both form and surface detail, the vessel is conceptualised as Ghanie's body—its brown colour and ragged texture the artist's skin after suffering a third-degree burn to his leg as a child—but also as a container for the racism he and his mother faced while seeking treatment. In creating this work, Ghanie states, "I hope to make people more aware about Islamophobia and realize that brothers and sisters do get scarred." Many of Ghanie's vessels in *Adaptation* were cracked, broken, or scarred—surfaces adapted to expose and display the physical and psychological effects of systemic discrimination against Muslims in Canada—though they also are substantial in scale, many measuring a metre or more, symbolic of healing and resilience. "I...look at them as figurative in some ways...they represent a human being, and each one has their own form of scarring or mutation to adapt to the climate of what's going on socially, politically with racism," states the artist.



Figure 3. Kaashif Ghanie, *Home/Alhambra*, 2020. Materials and dimensions unknown. View Source

He also found inspiration for the vessels included in *Adaptation* in historic Middle Eastern and Andalusian ceramics, pointing to the long history of pottery in the regions and how human beings, like clay, can survive difficult circumstances. Ghanie continues to make work drawing from Islamic motifs, to affirm the place of Muslims and immigrants in Canadian society, as seen in *Home/Alhambra* (2020) (fig. 3), a vessel combining motifs from familial prayer rugs, Nova Scotian may flowers, and Guyanese floral motifs. The sum of Ghanie's oeuvre—the body as a vessel, linking the cultural past of Islamic form and ornamentation with ongoing violence towards the

Muslim community—is a material reflection on human emotion and survivance that is as political as it is personal. Ghanie is one of two ceramic artists working and operating the ceramic studio in the Wonder'neath Art Society, an artist-led organization located in Kjipuktuk (North End Halifax). There, with studio partner and co-business owner Kate Grey, and inspired by the Mik'ma'ki (Nova Scotian) landscapes, Ghanie co-runs KGCeramics, a commercial functional pottery company. (NH)

Karine Giboulo

Karine Giboulo has been creating art since she was a child growing up in Sainte-Émelie de l'Énergie, Quebec. She taught herself to paint and experimented with collage and sculpture before she turned to miniatures. Her colourful dioramas are intricately sculpted scenes of humanity that use pathos and humour to comment on issues such as globalisation, rampant consumerism, and racial inequity.

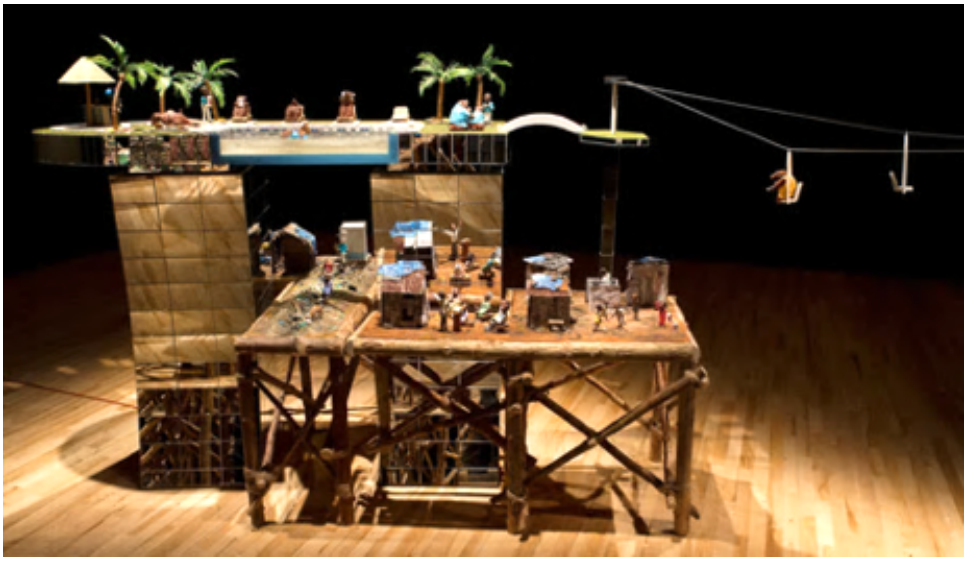


Figure 1a. Karine Giboulo, *Democracy Village,* 2012. Installation view. Polymer clay, acrylic, plexiglass, and mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Karine Giboulo, *Democracy Village,* 2012 (detail). Polymer clay, acrylic, plexiglass, and mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1c. Karine Giboulo, *Democracy Village,* 2012. Installation detail. Polymer clay, acrylic, plexiglass, and mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source

Democracy Village (figs. 1a, 1b, and 1c) is a three-part reconstruction of a Haitian shantytown populated with roughly 200 figures hand-sculpted in coloured polymer clay (Sculpey). The village huts, made using scraps of metal and debris that Giboulo collected when she visited Village Démocratie located on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, are juxtaposed with a high-rise tower made of reflective plexiglass where miniature figures sunbathe and sip cocktails, a

startling contrast intended to bring attention to the negative side of the global economy. Giboulo invites the viewer to consider their part in the creation of the village as they inevitably see themselves reflected in the surface of the luxury tower. Giboulo explains, "I am trying to create a reflection of the world we live in. Sometimes I don't really understand it, so the work is a way to talk about these things, so that an audience can understand, and so that I can understand as well."



Figure 2a. Karine Giboulo, *Broken Circle*, 2015-16. Polymer clay, acrylic, plexiglass, and mixed-media, 244 cm diameter. View Source



Figure 2b. Karine Giboulo, *Broken Circle,* (detail), 2015-16. Polymer clay, acrylic, plexiglass, and mixed-media, 244 cm diameter. View Source



Figure 2c. Karine Giboulo, *Broken Circle*, (detail), 2015-16. Polymer clay, acrylic, plexiglass, and mixed-media, 244 cm diameter. View Source

Giboulo uses colour to great effect in *Broken Circle*, (2015-16) (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c), which explores issues around the cultural genocide enacted on indigenous communities through the residential school system. In *Broken Circle,* Giboulo creates a colourful scene but renders the school building and the figures within it in black, white and grey to show the colour and cultural life being literally and figuratively drained from the community. The empty beds on the upper floor pay homage to the many children who never returned home.



Figure 3a. Karine Giboulo, *Housewarming*, 2022. Installation view. Polymer clay, acrylic, plexiglass, and mixed-media, dimensions unknown. Photo by Toni Hafkensheid. View Source



Figure 3b. Karine Giboulo, *Housewarming*, (detail), 2022. Polymer clay, acrylic, plexiglass, and mixed-media, dimensions unknown. Photo by Toni Hafkensheid. View Source



Figure 3c. Karine Giboulo, *Housewarming*, (detail), 2022. Polymer clay, acrylic, plexiglass, and mixed-media, dimensions unknown. Photo by Toni Hafkensheid. View Source

Giboulo's most personal work to date, *Housewarming* (2022) (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c) was the subject of an exhibition at the Gardiner Museum (Toronto, Ontario) in which she recreated the rooms of her home and populated them with over 500 miniature figures to document individual and collective experiences related to the pandemic, amplified by themes of isolation, aging, food insecurity, and housing instability. Giboulo has created thousands of figures, each of which requires seven to eight hours to make, and she knows them all. Her figures inhabit whole worlds couched in playfulness, but the delight they bring comes with a poignant political message. (NJH)

Pascale Girardin

For almost thirty years Pascale Girardin has pursued her unique vision, creating art objects, tableware, wall hangings, and architectural installations that utilize pure forms to express the relationships connecting humanity to the organic structures of nature. Having studied biology before entering the fine arts, Girardin blends artistic intuition with a deep understanding of the scientific aspects of ceramics, embracing a research-driven yet instinctually creative approach to her craft. Her process is rooted in a keen sensitivity to materiality. Choices related to glazes, colours, and firing temperatures are guided by an ongoing dialogue between artist and medium. Inspired by Buddhist teachings that emphasize abandoning conceptions of what a thing should be to appreciate the thing for what it really is, Girardin allows each work to reveal itself to her, guiding her toward new artistic directions. "Curiosity has always been a driving force in my life as it opens doors to the unexpected," she says. "Biology, art, and design rely on this common principle. I think that experiencing a state of uncertainty and a willingness to explore the unknown shifts your way of seeing and that is very exciting."



Figure 1a. Pascale Girardin, *Figura 07*, 2020. From the *Figura* series. Vitreous slip on stoneware, 155.5 x 42cm. View Source

This philosophy led to the development of the *Figura* series, which includes *Figura 07* (2020) (fig. 1a). In 2020, Girardin began producing large-scale sculptures—some standing as high as 175 cm tall—using pinching and coiling techniques. The scale of these works required physical engagement, as she recalls, "Moving the large sections of the sculptures in the studio required me to carry them in an open-armed embrace, evoking the feeling of hugging a comforting adult figure from my childhood." This physical experience transformed the *Figura* sculptures into metaphors for human attachment and belonging. In 2023, works from her *Figura II* series (fig. 1b) were selected for display at Révélations, la biennale internationale des métiers d'art et création in Paris, France.



Figure 1b. Pascale Girardin, *Figura II* series, 2023. Vitreous slip on stoneware, dimensions variable, between 38 cm and 153 cm in height. View Source

Girardin is the creative force leading the multidisciplinary team at Atelier Pascale Girardin, which is housed in a large, light-filled studio in Montreal, Quebec. The exchanges between herself and her team of collaborators have enriched and evolved Girardin's practice. Her studio specialises in the creation of artworks for high-end hospitality and residential projects, as well as boutiques, restaurants, and commercial spaces.



Figure 2a. Pascale Girardin, *Contemplation*, 2019. Powder-coated aluminium, 24 karat gold, stainless steel, 3150 x 760 x 640 cm. Photos courtesy of Stephany Hildebrand. View Source



Figure 2b. Pascale Girardin, *Contemplation*, (detail), 2019. Powder-coated aluminium, 24 karat gold, stainless steel, 3150 x 760 x 640 cm. Photos courtesy of Stephany Hildebrand. View Source



Figure 2c. Pascale Girardin, *Contemplation*, (detail), 2019. Powder-coated aluminium, 24 karat gold, stainless steel, 3150 x 760 x 640 cm. Photos courtesy of Stephany Hildebrand. View Source

In 2019, Girardin completed *Contemplation* (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c), a monumental hanging ceramic installation commissioned for the Four Seasons Hotel in Montreal. Extending for nine floors, the cascading white flowers accented with gold evoke the cycle of nature. Ceramics requires patience and an appreciation of both art and science, and increasingly for Girardin, who has received numerous commissions for large-scale installations, an awareness of space.



Figure 3a. Pascale Girardin, *Eole*, 2021. Hand-built and glazed stoneware, 22 karat gold lustre, 135 x 300 x 8 cm. Photos courtesy of Stephany Hildebrand. View Source



Figure 3b. Pascale Girardin, *Eole*, 2021. Hand-built and glazed stoneware, 22 karat gold lustre, 135 x 300 x 8 cm. Photos courtesy of Stephany Hildebrand. View Source

Such an understanding of space and the built environment is apparent in *Eole* (2021) (figs. 3a and 3b), for example. Created for a private home in Boisbriand, Quebec, this piece is made of delicate flowers that thoughtfully compliment the clean lines and modern design of the architectural setting to create a moment of contemplation and quiet, a refuge from the chaos of the world outside. (NJH)

Amy Gogarty

Based in Vancouver, British Columbia, writer, art critic, and artist Amy Gogarty is at heart a painter of pots. She was born and raised in Philadelphia, immigrated to Canada in 1973, and became a citizen in 1985. After earning her MFA in Painting from the University of Calgary, she taught visual art history, the history of ceramics, and theory for sixteen years at the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary, Alberta, prior to relocating to Vancouver. She has exhibited across Canada, and she writes and presents frequently on issues relating to visual art and craft.



Figure 1a. Amy Gogarty, *Trout Lake, Spring*, 2017. Cone 6 stoneware, underglaze, glaze, 29 cm x 23 cm dia. Photo courtesy of Amy Gogarty. View Source



Figure 1b. Amy Gogarty, *Trout Lake, Spring*, 2017. Cone 6 stoneware, underglaze, glaze, 29 cm x 23 cm dia. Photo courtesy of Amy Gogarty. View Source

Artworks such as *Trout Lake, Spring* (2017) (figs. 1a and 1b) bring together her passion for ceramics and painting. She frequently paints from her backyard or takes her bicycle to a nearby park, pot safely in tow, to paint urban life and capture the interaction between humans, animals, and nature in situ. In Gogarty's recent work, she explores the effects of consumer capitalism through composite sculptural forms like *Balancing Act* (2020) (fig. 2b). Here, she combines a jumbled array of ceramic forms, tubes of paint, an old doll's head, and bare branch-like sticks crammed with a crumpled soda can into a wheel-thrown cone, all of which are contained in a ship-like vessel that recalls the cargo ships and the environmental devastation that comes in the wake of global commercial trade.



Figure 2a. Amy Gogarty, *All Consuming*, 2022. Installation view from exhibition at the Craft Council of British Columbia Gallery. Photo courtesy of Amy Gogarty. View Source



Figure 2b. Amy Gogarty, *Balancing Act*, 2020. Ceramic, metal hardware, cone 6 electric and cone 10 soda-fired porcelain, glaze, and metal hardware, 45.72 x 17.78 x 33.02 cm. Photo courtesy of Amy Gogarty. View Source



Figure 3a. Amy Gogarty, *Pink Dream*, 2021. Cone 6 stoneware, cone 10 soda-fired porcelain, glaze, and metal hardware, 43 x 21.5 x 23 cm. Photo courtesy of Amy Gogarty. View Source



Figure 3b. Amy Gogarty, *Pink Dream*, 2021. Cone 6 stoneware, cone 10 soda-fired porcelain, glaze, and metal hardware, 43 x 21.5 x 23 cm. Photo courtesy of Amy Gogarty. View Source

In the exhibition *All Consuming* (Craft Council of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2022) (fig. 2a) ceramic plaques reminiscent of ship portholes painted with scenes of industrial shipping activity were displayed around a group of sculptures that included *Balancing Act* (2020) and *Pink Dream* (2021) (figs. 3a and 3b). The vibrant hues mask the evocative and sometimes ominous forms, such as the scythe poking out from a used tube of paint that could be mistaken for a seedling from another angle. As Gogarty explains, "My works are a form of meditation. They are not prescriptive or didactic. I don't know the solution to the many problems we face, but, as an artist, I feel it is important that I explore them in my work." (NJH)

Trudy Golley

Born and raised in Revelstoke, British Columbia, Trudy Golley studied ceramics in Calgary (BFA) and Hobart, Australia (MFA) before beginning her professional career. Having retired from teaching ceramics at Red Deer Polytechnic for twenty-four years, she currently lives and works in Red Deer, Alberta.



Figure 1. Trudy Golley, *Great Wave 2010* (2010), Aurora series, wall piece. Multi-fired ceramic, glaze, 24 karat gold lustre, with parergonal light effects, 36 x 38.5 x 13 cm. Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. Image credit: Paul Leathers. View Source

Golley's artworks explore materiality and vision through ceramic forms that capture, obstruct, reflect, and redirect light. Artworks such as *Great Wave* 2010 (fig. 1) recall Canada's long winter nights and the drama of the Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis.



Figure 2. Trudy Golley, *(a)blaze* (2014), installation. Multi-fired glazed porcelain, titanium PVD, with parergonal light effects, approximately 72 x 640 x 30 cm. Collection of the artist. Image credit: Paul Leathers.

Artist residencies — including at Red Deer College, The Pottery Workshop in Jingdezhen, China, and Medalta (Medicine Hat, Alberta) — were formative experiences that inspired Golley to experiment with innovative techniques. The physical vapour deposition process (PVD), which deposits a thin layer of ionized titanium onto the object's surface to create a lustsous finish, is used on the reflective bases of the installation, *(a)blaze* (2014) (fig. 2).



Figure 3. Trudy Golley, *HST Scotch Cups on Rusty Base*, 2018. Slip-cast glazed porcelain, multi-fired ceramic, rust finish. Each approximately 8 x 7.5 x 7.5 cm; ceramic base, 14.5 x 25.5 x 14 cm. Collection of the artist. Image credit: Paul Leathers.

Golley frequently creates links between traditional materials and techniques and innovative digital technologies. *HST Scotch Cups on Rusty Base* (2018) (fig. 3) embodies this strategy in its combination of traditional forms and emergent technologies. Golley explains that her work deals with strategies of attraction by using light to attract and locate the viewer, to provide an unexpected sense of discovery, and to address notions of conceptual and intellectual illumination. Without depicting a specific event, object or place, she aims to deliver a sense of the sublime in order to capture and hold the viewer's imagination.

Inducted into the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (2002) and the International Academy of Ceramics (2009), Golley is an active advocate for Canadian ceramics. She has exhibited, presented and led workshops internationally and has served the community on numerous Boards of Directors, including Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) and Friends of Medalta Society. (NJH)

Jody Greenman-Barber

Jody Greenman-Barber's ceramic works are the embodiment of dynamic movement. Based in Buena Vista, Saskatchewan, her multidisciplinary practice is a hybrid of ceramic and performance art, combined with elements of dance, improvisation, drawing, film, and photography. Regardless of the medium, Greenman-Barber's primary tool is her body.



Figure 1a. Jody Greenman-Barber, *Sketches of a Pot*, 2005. Stoneware, engobe, cone 10 reduction, various dimensions. View Source



Figure 1b. Jody Greenman-Barber, *Sketches of a Pot*, (detail), 2005. Stoneware, engobe, cone 10 reduction, various dimensions. View Source

In *Sketches of a Pot* (2005) (figs. 1a and 1b), she pushes the conventional boundaries of wheel-thrown ceramics and attempts to break the traditional patterns and rules governing ceramic production. Her work is defined by a process-based experimentation with expressive form derived from the concepts and methodologies of traditional pottery making. In the movement of the potter's wheel, Greenman-Barber sees a parallel to the movement of the human body.



Figure 2a. Jody Greenman-Barber, *Wrapped Form*, 2012. Installation view *In the Presence of Absence* series in the *Mimesis* exhibition at the Moose Jaw Museum and Art Gallery. Ten wrapped forms of soda-fired porcelain, average dimensions 75 x 25 x 25 cm. View Source



Figure 2b. Jody Greenman-Barber, *Wrapped Form*, 2012. Installation view *In the Presence of Absence* series in the Mimesis exhibition at the Moose Jaw Museum and Art Gallery. 75 x 25 x 25 cm. View Source

The *Wrapped Form* (2012) (figs. 2a and 2b) from the *In the Presence of Absence* series is animated with pulsing movement. The bands of porcelain comprising this work twist together and unravel, the result of Greenman-Barber's combination of wheel-throwing and hand-building forms that engage the viewer on both a visceral and cognitive level. She uses the movement of her body to activate the expressive potential of sensations manifest in the ceramic form. When *In the Presence of Absence* was exhibited in Greenman-Barber's solo exhibition *Mimesis* (curated by Heather Smith and Kim Houghtaling for Moose Jaw Museum and Art Gallery, Saskatchewan, 2013) it was installed with stills from a video of her performing the dance movements used to create some of her porcelain sculptures (fig. 2a). "I work intuitively and improvise throughout the construction process with the intention to capture a bodily expression. Improvisation is a methodology that I employ in my ongoing practice; it supports processes that allow me to challenge,

develop and discover innovative methods of working in the field of ceramics technically, conceptually, emotionally as well as physically." She dances around the clay thrown onto the wheel, deconstructing it into long ribbon-like strips.



Figure 3. Jody Greenman-Barber, *Really…I am a Pot,* 2015. Porcelain, glue, 9.5 x 11.5 x 6 inches. View Source

The spontaneous and gestural movements of her body and the rhythmic spinning of the potter's wheel guide the placement and interaction of the coils and flat strips of clay that Greenman-Barber weaves together to form works such as *Really…I am a Pot* (2015)

(fig. 3). Her sculptures are not literal representations of objects or dancing figures. Rather, they are sculptural abstractions that at once capture expressive bodily movement and embodied sensations. (NJH)

Grace Han

From large-scale red clay vessels to delicate palm-sized porcelains, the work of Winnipeg-based Grace Han is guided by the feeling of being in-between. Originally from South Korea where she trained in traditional Korean ceramic techniques at Dankook University (Yongin, South Korea) Han also worked at one of the largest commercial ceramics manufactories in Korea for several years before she immigrated to Canada in 2011 where she pursued an MFA in ceramics at the University of Manitoba (Winnipeg, Manitoba). "My work and area of research is about the exploration of my identity and creation of an honest language with which I can have a direct conversation with others. As a Newcomer to Canada from South Korea, I have been between languages, cultures, expectations, loved ones, aesthetics, and artistic methods."



Figure 1. Grace Han, *Mural: Scholar's Dignity*, 2016. Wheel-thrown and hand-built ceramic, 170 x 112 x 20 cm. View Source

Han explores this aspect of her identity with large-scale sculptural works like, *Mural: Scholar's Dignity* (2016) (fig. 1). Using a variety of ceramics techniques (kick-wheel, mould-making, and slip-casting) and firing methods (wood, salt, oxidization, etc.), *Mural: Scholar's Dignity* emerges from a place between tradition and originality which Han refers to as *betweenness*. In Han's large-scale works, the process of making is a cathartic experience, purging the negative emotions and frustrations that result from her struggles to exist between two cultures and two languages.



Figure 2. Grace Han, *Whimsical*, n.d. From the *Stone* series. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

Conversely, Han creates hundreds of small porcelain works like the *Whimsical* (fig. 2) tea set from the *Stone* series in order to bring some order to her tangled ideas and thoughts. From this combination of diverse practices, Han creates a visual and tactile language with which to communicate her authentic self.



Figure 3a. Grace Han, *Be Free From Myself To Be Myself* (film still), 2018. Recorded performance, mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3b. Grace Han, *Be Free From Myself To Be Myself* (film still), 2018. Recorded performance, mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source

In *Be Free From Myself To Be Myself* (2018) (figs. 3a and 3b) she brings together ceramic and performance art in an interactive exhibition titled, *Touch the Conversation* (Saskatchewan Craft Council Art Gallery, Saskatoon). Han begins the performance

wearing a hanbok (traditional Korean dress), which restricts her physical movement and functions as a metaphor for the expectations and responsibilities that Han carried with her from South Korea. She uses the physically demanding onggi method, a technique that developed over centuries in Korea and which involves throwing large slabs onto a special slow-turning kick wheel and shaping the clay using wooden paddles and an anvil. As the performance progresses, Han slowly sheds layers of her dress in a symbolic gesture that mirrors her own transformation, and discovery of self. Near the end of the performance, Han has created a beautiful and sizable new vessel. She pushes it to the floor, smashing it to pieces: "I can destroy the jar. My main goal was the process. The jar did its job today." (NJH)

Steven Heinemann

Steven Heinemann is a ceramicist who lives and works near Cookstown, Ontario. His work comprises abstract sculptural objects that evoke shared memory, referencing our extensive human history of utilitarian objects created through the ancient technologies we refer to as Craft. His predilection for vessels, bowls, and containers in particular reflects a preoccupation with enclosed inner space, which he considers to be quintessential to ceramics when compared to sculpture. To make his pieces, Heinemann uses a technique called "slip casting" that involves pouring liquid clay into plaster moulds. While slip casting is usually considered to be an industrial process associated with the production of replicas, Heinemann has, since the 1980s, used it to expand the creative possibilities of ceramics.



Figure 1. Steven Heinemann, *Untitled*, 1985. Slip-cast earthenware, 67 x 42 x 16 cm. View Source

An early application was to recuperate the mould itself and turn it into a container, as seen in *Untitled* (1985) (fig. 1), a piece with a geometric cavity and an amorphous exterior that explores the tension between void and mass. Despite being drawn to unusual modes of production—including 3D printing, which he uses to develop prototypes—Heinemann considers himself an old-school ceramicist. His practice is rooted in the principles of the American studio craft movement, which states that material and process drive creative content. To cite him, there are "no ideas but in material." All his pieces are the result of a lengthy process involving extensive study and documentation of the properties of clay, which, as argues Rachel Gotlieb, the curator of the 2017-2018 retrospective *Steven Heinemann: Culture and Nature* held at the Gardiner Museum (Toronto, Ontario), allows him to "push and expand the innateness of the material to discover new aesthetic perceptions."



Figure 2. Steven Heinemann, *Fluoresence*, 2006. Ceramic, 41 x 51 x 33 cm.
View Source

For instance, *Fluorescence* (2006) (fig. 2), a vessel with fissures and a slightly collapsed rim that blurs the line between interior and exterior, was made based on observations of how clay warps and cracks as it dries. Another common thread linking his work is nature, which often guides his experiments with form. For instance, his nesting bowls from the 1990s and early 2000s were inspired by the outer shells of seeds.



Figure 3. Steven Heinemann, *Kudluk*, 2013. Slip-cast earthenware, 39 x 55 x 37 cm. View Source

More recently, Heinemann has made bulkier pieces that foreground volume and mass rather than empty space, like the sealed vessel *Kudluk* (2013) (fig. 3). As the title suggests, the piece references Inuit soapstone oil lamps, which have a similar oblong shape. Instead of letting them warp unpredictably during the drying and firing, Heinemann casts his sealed vessels with an inserted top, which is why they tend to be more geometric in shape. (MMI)

Lisa Henriques

Vancouver, British Columbia-based Lisa Henriques' ceramics are inspired by a wide variety of global traditions. "Hooked" on the art form initially during a cultural exchange in Vume, a Ghanian pottery village, she subsequently travelled extensively to continue to research ceramic traditions in China, India, Mexico, Australia, and Denmark. Throughout these global travels, she says, clay acted as a "common language" between her and her many educators, allowing

gestural communication in each cultural context. Henriques still works with techniques she learned in Vume. Taking thick coils of clay, she pulls, scrapes, paddles, and rubs them, using the movement of her entire body to form the coarse coils into round pots of varying sizes, attaining what she calls the "best feeling ever," a kind of flow state where she feels her body is "moving by itself."



Figure 1. Lisa Henriques, *Burnt Star*, 2000. 15.25 x 14.5 x 4 in. Photo by Ken Mayer. View Source

Many pieces, such as *Burnt Star* (2000) (fig. 1), a scraped and paddled vessel form, bear the clear influence of places where she has studied. Henriques also works in porcelain, which she calls "a completely different animal." She learned from the "impossibly thin" and translucent pieces of her mentor Gwynn Hanssen Pigott in Australia, who taught her "the qualities of form, colour and space." Henriques 'pieces from the 2010s combine techniques inherent to both art forms.



Figure 2. Lisa Henriques, *Untitled 46*, 2013. Translucent porcelain. 17.5 x 18 x 7.5 in. Photo by Ken Mayer.

She integrates the movement and scale she learned in Vume with the "translucency and memory" of porcelain, brought together in sophisticated vessels like *Untitled 46* (2013) (fig. 2).



Figure 3. Lisa Henriques, *In-process*, 2015. 23 x 16.75 x 25 in. View Source

The scale she works in has also steadily increased, as evidenced by the enormous stark white porcelain piece *In-Process* (2015) (fig. 3), which was featured in the exhibition for the 2015 RBC Emerging Artist People's Choice Award at the Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Ontario. (SW)

Jason Holley

Jason Holley first encountered pottery in 2004 in a St. John's, Newfoundland ceramics class. He immediately fell in love with the medium and has been working with clay full-time ever since. Now based in a studio in Twillingate, Newfoundland, Holley produces both sculptural and functional work.



Figure 1a. Jason Holley, *Chainmail*, n.d. Raku-fired clay, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Jason Holley. *Chainmail*, n.d. (detail). Raku-fired clay, dimensions unknown. View Source

His main body of sculptural work is comprised of chain sculptures, painstakingly built by hand with raku-fired clay, as seen in his chainmail series (figs. 1a and 1b), displayed in the group show, *Crafting Paradox* at The Rooms curated by Denis Longchamps, St. John's, Newfoundland, 2011). There is tension at the heart of this work; it looks durable but is incredibly fragile. The artist's website explains that raku firing is unpredictable and notoriously difficult to control, resulting in a finished work that "appears strong, militaristic, permanent, and yet it is not. The illusion is brittle; for Holley these sculptures are about weakness, not strength."



Figure 2. Jason Holley, *Chimney (48 bricks),* n.d. Variable dimensions (6"x6"x12" per brick). Photo: Mark Bennett. From The Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador Annual Member exhibit, July-Sept 2011. View Source

Holley plays with this tension and the assumed strength of chainmail, often partially destroying his sculptures after firing, as seen in his *chainmail* pieces and his large-scale sculpture, *Shelter* (2012) (fig. 2). Holley is constantly experimenting with clay and more recently began combining virtual reality technology with his pottery practice.



Figure 3a. Jason Holley, *Tumblers,* n.d. From *Virtual Refreshment* series. Pink and white marbled tumblers cast in porcelain, 4 x 3 inches each. View Source



Figure 3b. Jason Holley, *Tumblers,* n.d. From *Virtual Refreshment* series. Porcelain, 4 x 3 inches each. View Source

Using a virtual reality headset and the program Google Blocks as creative tools, Holley designs ceramic cups by hand in VR, such as this pink and white marbled tumbler cast in porcelain for his *Virtual Refreshments* series (figs. 3a and 3b). Combining ancient pottery techniques with experimental technology, Holley prints the final designs with a 3D printer, makes plaster molds from those prints, and then casts porcelain cups in those molds. In 2017, Holley began

collaborating with his partner and fellow potter, Maaike Charron, playing off each other's complementary skill sets to establish CUP Studios together (Twillingate, Newfoundland). They produce their own collections of handmade pottery and art while designing and crafting custom pieces for others. (SS)

Harlan House

Based in Lonsdale, Ontario, and educated in Calgary, Alberta, where he began his career, Harlan House makes porcelain "that fits into people's homes." His pieces, which often hold either "food or flowers," draw inspiration from both "very old Chinese traditions" of the eleventh century, and "current events in a world where cell phones and laptops rule." House writes that he intends his pieces to make "people gravitate towards touch, use and pleasure…with both their hands and eyes." Numerous sculptural vases populate his early work, for which he became well-known both before and after his move from Calgary to Lonsdale in the mid-1970s.



Figure 1. Harlan House, *Iris Vase*, c. 1978. Porcelain, slip cast additions, glaze oxide, 44.6 x 17.4 x 9.3 cm. View Source

Iris Vase (1978) (fig. 1), a "beautiful living sculpture, a beautiful, gorgeous, sensuous thing," is among a series of House's more recognizable pieces. It, like his other flower vessels of this era, is a cylindrical form impressed with flower stems that seem to grow into the carved petal elements near its lip. House has worked often with celadon, preferring its light blues to deeper, darker tones.



Figure 2. Harlan House, *Six Pack*, 1999. Tulip wall platter self-portrait with RGM celadon. View Source

Wall plates with celadon glaze, like *Six Pack* (1999) (fig. 2), are humorous takes on decorative pieces, with images of his own face or that of his wife, Maureen (both usually twisted into expressive guises), slightly obscured behind floral reed patterns. House also deploys a signature sense of humour in many functional works, shaping table vases as shoes to counter the maxim of "no shoes on the table," and slipping in corporate and political imagery as decorative aspects of vessels. Such aesthetic touches also comment on concerns like mass consumerism and industrialisation, as in his wall pieces that addressed the building of "freeways in national parks" and "cities that paved their greenery."



Figure 3. Harlan House, *Alberta Place*, 2015. Porcelain, 53 cm. View Source

In this vein, lamps become skyscrapers in his series of *Condo Lamps* (2015), slumping geometric forms that project light through tiny, punctured windows, such as *Alberta Place* (2015) (fig. 3). Works from this series appeared in the 2016 exhibition *Table Talk* at the David Kaye Gallery in Toronto, Ontario, a show with which House intended to ask "about what kind of porcelain people put on their tables, over their tables and on the walls near the table." (SW)

Steve Irvine

Steve Irvine, who hails from Burlington, Ontario, and is now based in southern Ontario, northwest of Toronto, has been making clay pieces for a living throughout his entire career. During his teenage years, Irvine received encouragement to explore clay from various influences, particularly from his mother, who was a potter herself. For more than fifty years, Irvine has consistently crafted tea bowls—small bowls he uses to "warm up" during a cycle of making before his large batches of glazing and firing.



Figure 1. Steve Irvine, *Tea Bowl*, 1969. 7 x 11.3 cm. View Source

These small works, like the *Tea Bowl* pictured (1969) (fig. 1), are examples of "sophisticated simplicity" that inspire "quiet contemplation," allowing him to "become centred again about clay."



Figure 2. Steve Irvine, *Night Energy*, n.d. Cone 6 stoneware, vitreous black slip. View Source

Works like *Night Energy* (n.d.) (fig. 2) demonstrate his versatility in scale, form and style. The pattern on the surface of this vessel is made up of one continuous line, "a bit of math and art." Irvine also maintains other practices, including writing about clay for magazines and dividing his time equally between pottery and photography, his twin passion, having published and won awards in a variety of national magazines.



Figure 3. Steve Irvine, *Camera*, 2013. Stoneware, glaze, aluminum leaf, 24K gold leaf, photo paper negative, 33 cm. View Source

Irvine's untitled functional pinhole cameras, as in *Camera* (2013) (fig. 3), are instances in which these two interests merge. He throws and hand-builds the steampunk and fantasy-inspired stoneware and hand-makes the camera parts, which function without lenses or viewfinders. Irvine's cameras, which he suggests "contrast with our usual notions of cameras being machine-made, high-tech devices," made up part of the 2013 show *Ceramic Cameras and Vessels* at the Carnegie Gallery in Dundas, Ontario. (SW)

Tam Irving

In 1964, Tam Irving arrived in British Columbia from Winnipeg, where he had worked as a chemist for Shell Canada. His experience in the corporate world was unfulfilling, and he never returned to it. Instead, like many other artists and craftspeople who arrived in the province at about the same time, he was introduced to the writings of Bernard Leach, the British potter who created a studio-pottery movement based on social values drawn from Eastern and Western aesthetics and philosophies. In the spirit of this movement, Irving wanted to create an independent lifestyle, where he could make hand-made objects, become part of the maker culture, and distance himself from the corporate world and the strictures of the urban environment. He sought what he called a "felt life," not a "built life." He began work as a studio potter, creating uncomplicated, functional pottery intended for everyday use. He created strong forms with rich glazes, free from decoration, sometimes leaving areas unglazed to reveal the beauty of the body. "I believe that craft should be in the service of ideas," he says, "which go beyond mere dexterity. Ultimately, my goal is to enrich the ordinary rituals of life by giving expressive force to utility." ("Meaning," unpublished paper, 2016)

He could not earn enough from his pottery to continue even his simple lifestyle, and after embarking on a short-lived and unrewarding sojourn as a production potter, he moved to the stability of a full-time position at the Vancouver School of Art, later to become the Emily Carr University of Art and Design. He began a long career teaching students throwing skills while emphasising the importance of expressive content. In 1996, he retired and returned to his own practice.

Toward the end of his teaching career, he gave his students an assignment to celebrate pots through a still-life format. He was intrigued by the possibilities of such an assignment and decided to challenge himself by taking on the same project. He looked to art history and found initial inspiration in the works of two artists, Giorgio Morandi (1890–1964) and Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978).

Morandi's placement of ordinary things in a seemingly endless combination of rows and clusters, which he claimed had no particular message or meaning, appealed to Irving's belief in the power of the ordinary to become extraordinary. He was also intrigued by de Chirico's enigmatic cityscapes, characterised by their depiction of classical facades, long shadows, and odd juxtapositions of unrelated objects that reach beyond the barriers of logic and common sense to enter a dream world. This opened the door to a period of experimentation with relationships between forms and environmental contexts, and the development of a new body of work: his subdued *Still Life* series (1994–2006) (fig. 1).



Figure 1. Tam Irving, *Song for Morandi*, 1994. Ceramic. View Source

In the works he produced during this period, Irving challenged himself to relinquish control, discover, take risks, and seek ways to express ideas and influences that were undeniably unique to him. He

says, "I am aware that derivation risks trivializing the original source of influence, but with persistence one's own voice eventually shines through to add new ideas." ("Meaning," unpublished paper, 2016).

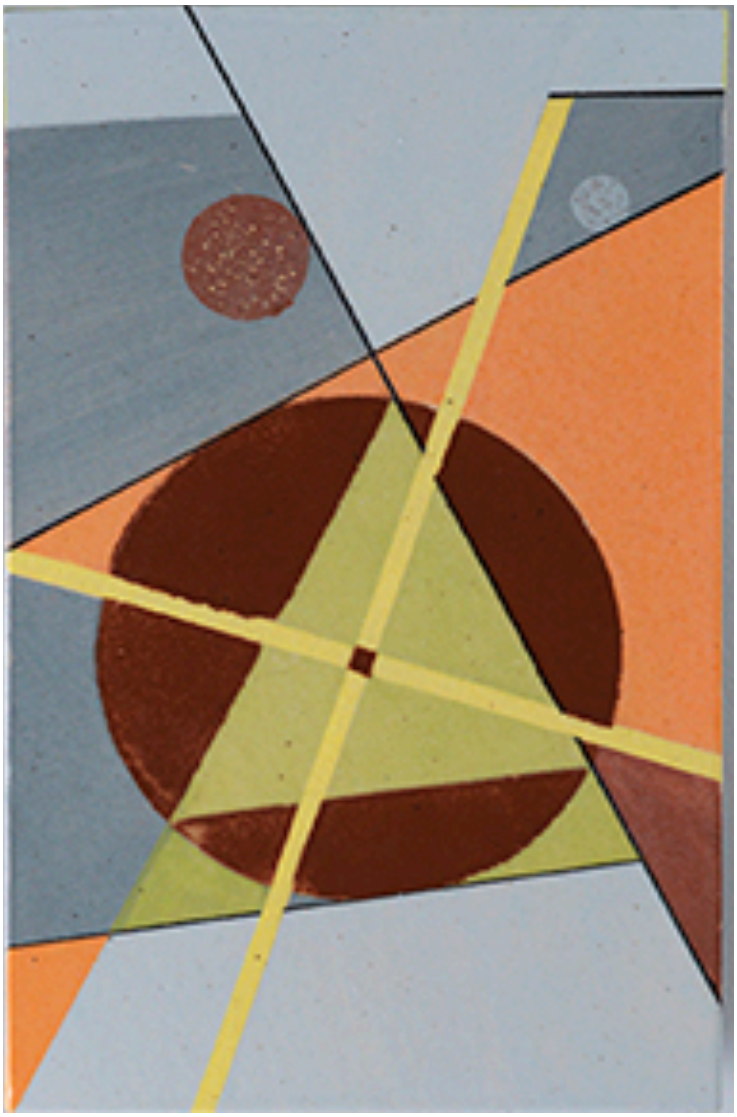


Figure 2. Tam Irving, *Suprematist Inspired 2* (wall vase), 2015. Stoneware, underglaze slips, clear glaze over, 33 x 20.3 x 7.6 cm. View Source

In 2016, Irving began a new direction inspired by the Colour Field painters, particularly Mark Rothko (1903–1970). He created a series of vases, such as *Suprematist Inspired 2* (2015) (fig. 2), that aimed to demonstrate colour field relationships and Suprematist approaches through linear juxtapositions. He altered these vases from free-standing to wall-mounted 'paintings' that also functioned as vessels.



Figure 3a. Tam Irving, *Virtual Bowl,* 2016. Stoneware, underglaze slips, clear glaze over, 33 x 33 x 15 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Tam Irving, *Virtual Bowl* (profile), 2016. Stoneware, underglaze slips, clear glaze over, 33 x 33 x 15 cm. View Source

He subsequently became fascinated by the Russian Suprematists and their emphasis on abstractions comprising circles, squares, lines, and rectangles, as seen in works such as *Virtual Bowl* (2016) (fig. 3a and 3b).

Tam Irving continues his search for ideas today and relishes discoveries that help him glimpse new horizons. "I have realized that I am actually more of a minimalist," he reflects, "and so, given this new insight, future work will be less ebullient and more focused on the old idea that less is more." To share his ideas and discoveries with the public, Irving has participated in over forty exhibitions and

contributed to numerous publications. His works are included in private, Canadian, and international collections. (Carol E. Mayer)

Xanthe Isbister

Xanthe Isbister is an artist, curator and museum professional living in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Born and raised in Winnipeg, she received her BFA from the University of Manitoba and her MFA from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Since 2005, she has created and exhibited ceramic sculptures aesthetically inspired by the natural environment.



Figure 1a. Xanthe Isbister, *Constructing Entropy*, 2008. Installation view. Ceramic, terra sigillata, oil paint, 96" x 180". View Source



Figure 1b. Xanthe Isbister, *Dusk in Kakagi I-XV* (detail), 2004. Ceramic, glaze, cast glass, metal, 360" x 420". View Source

Isbister created her first installation as an undergraduate at the University of Manitoba. Titled *Dusk in Kakagi I-XV* (2004) (fig. 1a) it comprised fourteen large sculptures inspired by her childhood summers spent at Kakagi Lake in Northwestern Ontario. She describes her memories of Kakagi Lake as "positive ones, filled with love." When Isbister started creating pieces inspired by those experiences, she "felt a strong desire to capture something within the work that would describe this place." Rooted in abstract expressionist traditions, Isbister's works are created instinctively and spontaneously; she largely avoids traditional ceramic techniques like slab and coil building—opting instead to manipulate large mounds of solid clay in what she refers to as a "whole-body" physical approach with a focus on symbolic significance rather than literal interpretation and representation.



Figure 2a. Xanthe Isbister, *Biophilia*, 2014. Installation view. Ceramic, Terra Sigilatta, glaze, 240" x 240". View Source



Figure 2b. Xanthe Isbister, *Biophilia II,* 2014. Ceramic, terra sigillata, glaze. 40" x 25" x 18". View Source

Isbister's works are characterised by a visual contrast between smooth and rough surfaces, created through ripping, gouging, cutting, and smoothing clay, as seen in her 2011 installation *Biophilia*

(solo exhibition at Medalta, in the Historic Clay District, Medicine Hat, Alberta) (figs. 2a and 2b).



Figure 3a. Xanthe Isbister, *Land Organ I,* 2014. Low-fire ceramic, multi–glaze fired, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3b. Xanthe Isbister, *Land Organ II,* 2014. Low-fire ceramic, multi–glaze fired, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3c. Xanthe Isbister, *Land Organ III,* 2014. Low-fire ceramic, multi–glaze fired, dimensions unknown. Photo by Koi Neng Liew. View Source

In 2014, Isbister participated in the group exhibition, *True North: Contemporary Canadian Ceramics* (curated by Robert Silberman for the Northern Clay Centre, Minneapolis, Minnesota) contributing *Land Organ I*, *Land Organ II* and *Land Organ III* (2014), (figs. 3a, 3b and 3c) to the show. She created these wall hangings after losing her father and giving birth to her son in quick succession, an emotionally challenging period in her life that profoundly influenced her artistic practice. This experience marked a transition from the sense of monumentality and physical weight found in her earlier freestanding works to smaller-scale sculptures that delve into human psychology and the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth. The exhibition catalogue for *True North: Contemporary Canadian Ceramics* describes Isbister's *Land Organs* works as uncanny, stating that they "do not offer up any easily identifiable subjects, yet

still manage to suggest life forms...Their drama begins with their multiple elements, and the tension established between the contrasting physical elements. That tension is reinforced by the differences in surface and colour: between relatively simple, smooth, closed shapes and more complex folded, torn, fragmented ones, and between shiny white and matte black." (SS)

Ian Johnston

Ian Johnston is an artist living in Nelson, British Columbia, working in mixed media, ceramics, and large-scale installations that aim to appeal to multiple senses of the viewer. An architect by training, Johnston worked in East Germany in the early 1990s, teaching an interdisciplinary program in urban renewal at the Bauhaus Academy before returning to Western Canada in 1995, where he established a design studio and made furniture from reclaimed construction materials as well as functional pottery. He eventually settled in Nelson, where he taught at Kootenay School of the Arts, Nelson, British Columbia, until 2003 and where he increasingly moved away from functional wares and towards exploring themes related to consumer consumption and waste production through sculpture.

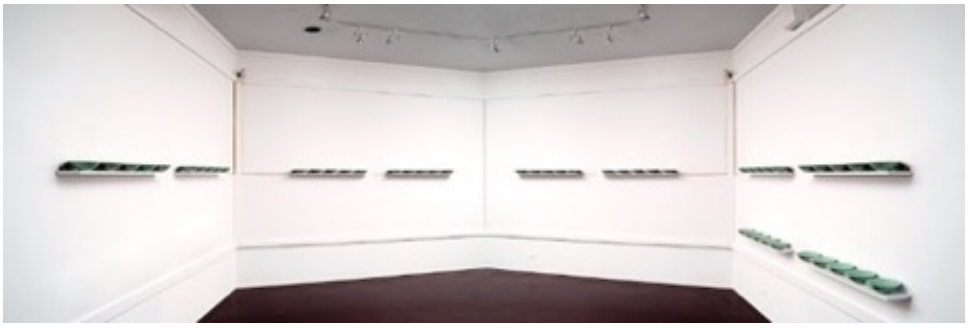


Figure 1a. Ian Johnston, *Refuse Culture: Machine for Singing*, 2009. Installation view. Porcelain, wood, steel, carpet electronic components, dimensions variable. Photo credit: Jeremy Addington. View Source



Figure 1b. Ian Johnston, *Refuse Culture: Machine for Singing* (detail), 2009. Porcelain, wood, steel, carpet electronic components, dimensions variable. Photo credit: Jeremy Addington. View Source



Figure 1c. Ian Johnston, *Refuse Culture: Machine for Singing* (detail), 2009. Porcelain, wood, steel, carpet electronic components, dimensions variable. Photo credit: Jeremy Addington. View Source

His 2009 installation, *Refuse Culture: Machine for Singing* (figs. 1a, 1b and 1c), points to the artist's interest in exploring how the things

we consume populate our daily lives, shape our relationships, and define our social structures. *Refuse Culture: Machine for Singing* is an interactive installation comprising two rooms within hearing distance of each other, one filled with porcelain bowls connected to mechanical devices with the capacity to produce noise, activated by walking on a carpet that covers pressure-sensitive switches in the other room. The artist did not inform his viewers that by walking on the carpet, they would produce a noise in the next room, and thus, he says, "this piece engages the idea of cause and unknown effect, like the relations between consumers and makers of consumed objects."



Figure 2a. Ian Johnston, *Reinventing Consumption: The Inventor's Room*, 2013. Installation view. Materials and dimensions unknown. View Source

Johnston explores themes of consumption and material culture further in his solo exhibition *Reinventing Consumption* (curated by Joanne Marion for Esplanade Art Gallery, Medicine Hat, Alberta, 2013-2015, travelling). The first room of this exhibition, *The Inventor's Room* (fig. 2a), presents artefacts related to Johnston's investigations into vacuum-forming ceramics. Johnston dragged wet clay over objects and used vacuum suction to form reliefs.



Figure 2b. Ian Johnston, *Reinventing Consumption: The Antechamber*, 2013. Installation view. Ceramic, dimensions variable. View Source

The next room, *The Antechamber* (fig. 2b), presents the results of this experimentation: hundreds of vacuum-formed ceramic reliefs of discarded industrial objects printed with contrasting line and colour patterns and installed in claustrophobic grids.



Figure 2c. Ian Johnston, *Reinventing Consumption: The Chamber*, 2013. Installation view. Deflated, 7-minute cycle, rip-stop nylon, salvaged material, electronic components, sound, 38 x 30.5 x 63.5-90 cm. Photo credit: Hide Away Studios. View Source

The Chamber (fig. 2c) fills the final rooms with an inflating and deflating nylon tent which shrouds and reveals an enormous mass of

household items diverted from the waste stream in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Through his overwhelming display of consumer goods, Johnston asks viewers to contemplate the environmental impact of mass production, aiming to, in the words of ceramicist and writer, Kay Whitney, "intervene in the social cycles of desire and consumption that have brought about global, economic, and environmental disruption." In 2019, Johnston displayed his work in *Fine Line*: *Check Check*, a solo exhibition at the Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art (Kelowna, British Columbia), marking a shift in his artistic practice from a focus on consumer culture to an investigation of the role of doubt in mass media.



Figure 3a. Ian Johnston, still of *Howard Hughes' Washing Instructions Interpreted*, 2019. Video. View Source



Figure 3b. Ian Johnston, still of *Howard Hughes' Washing Instructions Interpreted*, 2019. Video. View Source

In *Fine Line: Check Check*, Johnston lined the gallery space with four large projection screens playing a looping series of vignettes, such

as *Howard Hughes' Washing Instructions Interpreted* (2019) (figs. 3a and 3b), which draws connections between our charged relationships to screens and digital devices and compulsive obsessions, as represented by videos of the artist following the famous aviator and entrepreneur Howard Hughes' highly ritualized rules for handwashing. (SS)

Bradley Keys

Bradley Keys creates works of art inspired by the prairies and mountain landscapes surrounding Calgary, Alberta, where he lives and works.



Figure 1. Bradley Keys, *West Wind Elevator Storage Jar*, n.d. Ceramic, 27.94 x 20.32 x 13.97 cm. View Source

He frequently explores the built environments interspersed within the natural world in works such as *West Wind Elevator Storage Jar* (fig. 1) in which the iconic regional symbol of a grain elevator, hand-modelled into a lid handle, towers above a sea of wind-swept prairie grass indicated by the gestural pattern carved around the vessel's

body to suggest the ways that our relationship with nature can affect how we come to know and experience the world. It was after studying biology in university, an experience that still informs his work, that Keys came to ceramics. He was drawn to both the immediacy and functionality of clay pottery and the power it has both to carry meaning and occupy a space in such close proximity to the viewer that the artwork becomes an active part of life through daily use. Keys' experience as the ceramics technician at ACAD (now the Alberta University of the Arts, Calgary, Alberta) informs his constant experimentation with different construction techniques, surface textures, slips and glazes to capture contemplative moments of beauty and stillness felt in nature. Keys' solo exhibition *Mountain Peaks and Glacial Waters* (Willock & Sax Gallery, Banff, Alberta, 2018), included works that speak to both the strength of design and the artist's experience of his surrounding geography.



Figure 2. Bradley Keys, *Rocky River Stone Bowl*, 2018. Glazed stoneware, 14 x 32.4 x 27 cm. Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, 2019.014.002. View Source

For *Rocky River Stone Bowl* (2018) (fig. 2), Keys uses different glazes to vary the work's surface texture. The highly glazed interior of the bowl appears partially filled with glassy stone-like forms that

contrast with the matte finish and golden-brown hues of the outside and edge of the bowl in a manner that recalls a river's edge or the shoreline of a slough. Keys explains that "[i]t is through making pots that I strive to connect myself to this place and time. My pots are a constant exploration of form, surface, and glaze. I try to balance these elements to create something that begins to tell a story; a story that is revealed over time through use and mutable observation."



Figure 3. Bradley Keys, *Platter*, n.d. Stoneware, dimensions unknown. View Source

In *Platter* (fig. 3), Keys seeks in the turbulent prairie skies, wind-blown grasses, and patterns of light across a vast Alberta landscape the perfect views and perfect moments to communicate a sense of awe to the viewer. (NJH)

Joon Hee Kim

Joon Hee Kim is a Korean-Canadian ceramicist who lives and works in Oakville, Ontario. Often rendered in vivid, dripping glazes and

gold accents, her narrative porcelain pieces are centred on the human and explore complex experiences and emotions tied to death, identity, belonging, and memory. Her approach to ceramics can be described as maximalist; it involves adding and pasting clay in phases onto the body of her sculptures, a process that results in highly textured and intricate surfaces. Joon Hee Kim borrows this layering technique from pastry making, which she trained in before turning to ceramics to explore more personal and serious subject matters. Some of her works are meditations on life and death and the continuous burden of preserving relationships.



Figure 1. Joon Hee Kim, *You Must Carry My Bones Up From This Place*, 2016. Glazed porcelain, gold lustre and mother of pearl, 29 x 31 x 51 cm. View Source

An example is *You Must Carry My Bones Up From This Place* (2016) (fig. 1), a house-shaped porcelain reliquary—a container for sacred relics—that is pulled by two horses and decorated with skeletons and skulls.



Figure 2. Joon Hee Kim, *Those Who are Awake*, n.d. Porcelain and glaze, dimensions unknown. View Source

Another example is *Those Who are Awake* (fig. 2), a sculpture in the shape of a trophy that features small human figures in various states of leisure and labour, and celebrates, as the artist explains, "each

and every moment of life rather than the short glory at the end." Other works are expressions of, and attempts at reconciling, the multiple facets of her own identity, including her dual role as artist and mother as well as her ties to two distinct cultures, East Asian and North American. As remarks Denis Longchamps, the curator of her 2017 solo exhibition *The Eye of the Beholder* held at the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo, Ontario, "Joon Hee Kim's work reminds us that while we are all different and react differently to the world we live in… in the end, we all want the same… belonging." This preoccupation with identity and belonging is at the heart of her ongoing series *Build My Life* (2017-), which consists of tall, totemic assemblages from which several heads, hands, and cups sprout like flowers. The heads look in different, sometimes opposite, directions, suggesting a multiplicity of desires and aspirations. Each sculpture in the series features objects and faces encountered by Joon Hee Kim during her travels. As if to preserve a trace of these encounters, she press moulds the objects, which are usually small, like buttons, coins, or seeds, onto patches of clay which she then uses as decorative additions.



Figure 3a. Joon Hee Kim, *Build My Life VII - Ceramic Art London*, 2020. Glazed ceramic and gold lustre, 35 x 65 x 34 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Joon Hee Kim, *Build My Life VII - Ceramic Art London* (detail), 2020. Glazed ceramic and gold lustre, 35 x 65 x 34 cm. View Source



Figure 3c. Joon Hee Kim, *Build My Life VII - Ceramic Art London* (detail), 2020. Glazed ceramic and gold lustre, 35 x 65 x 34 cm. View Source

In *Build My Life VII - Ceramic Art London* (2020) (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c), the eighth sculpture in the series, she also uses collage to adorn some of the faces with strips of blue and red paper. As this work conveys, Kim's practice reflects an understanding of the human body as a container of knowledge, emotions, and memories. To cite her, the body is "a collage of various experiences that keep growing as we move through life." (MMI)

Kathryne Koop

Based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Kathyrne Koop works in wheel-thrown porcelain clay to create functional art objects that are sensuously sculptural in their organic shapes as well as their colours and patterns drawn from the natural world. Growing up in a creative family, Koop has been an artist since childhood and has worked as a full-time potter since 1980 when she completed her studies at the University of Manitoba (Winnipeg) under the late Robert Archambeau. Since that time, Koop has taken the traditional vessel form as her point of departure, creating ceramic objects in the round, while imbuing each of her works with originality and uniqueness, resulting in a body of work in which, as the artist explains, "nothing is just one way." Such exploration—with form, primarily, but also elegance and even eccentricity—embodies Koop's ceramics as she alters, manipulates, carves, and assembles teapots, vases, pitchers, bowls, platters, and mugs, transforming malleable clay into durable and expressive objects. She explains, "The work has a strong organic quality since most of my inspiration derives from various aspects of nature. The shapes, colours, and patterns found in such things as leaves, exotic flowers, or the wings of birds and butterflies, are some of my sources. The energy, sensuality, and innate beauty found in these objects are characteristics I want reflected in my work."



Figure 1a. Kathryne Koop, *Blue Sake Set*, n.d. Thrown, carved glazed porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Kathryne Koop, *Blue Sake Set* (side view), n.d. Thrown, carved glazed porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

In Koop's hands, functional objects such as her *Blue Sake Set* (figs. 1a and 1b) are transformed into art objects, elevating them from the everyday to the extraordinary.



Figure 2. Kathryne Koop, *Sisters*, 2010. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

This process is also evident in her series of vases, *Sisters* (2010) (fig. 2), shown at the 2011 juried exhibition *Prairie Excellence, the Today and Tomorrow of Prairie Fine Craft* presented by the Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta Craft Councils. These tall and slender floral vases billow and bend as if caught in the invisible prairie wind of Koop's home on the pre-Cambrian Shield—a landscape that inspires much of Koop's work and a geography that grounds the artist's professional training and studio and teaching. *Sisters* also reflect Koop's interest in the stylised botanicals of British textile designer William Morris of the Arts and Crafts movement. Koop's works are constructed and initially fired to set the clay, and then layers of glaze are applied for richness and depth before firing to 2400°F in a gas reduction kiln in the artist's home studio. As an early member of the Winnipeg artist-run Stoneware Gallery and Stoneware Studio—a unique venue established in the 1970s by a small circle of potters who both teach and market ceramics—Koop works to connect craft, design, and industry to make visible the relationship between ceramics and fine art.

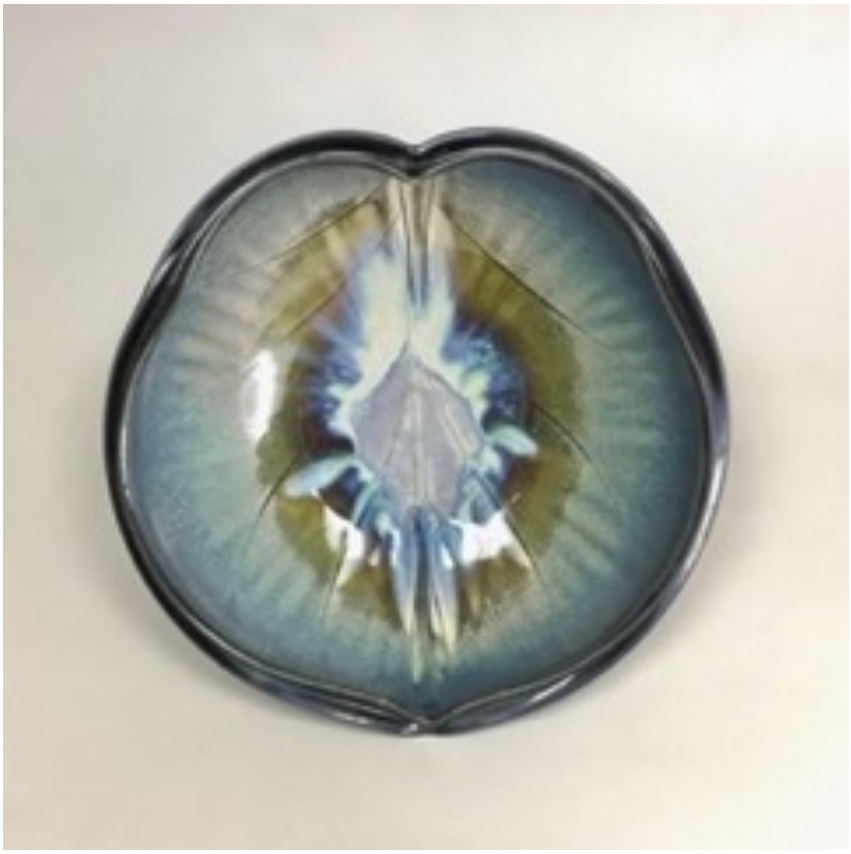


Figure 3a. Kathryne Koop, *Bowl – Turquoise Leaf*, n.d. Porcelain, 26.65 x 7.6 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Kathryne Koop, *Bowl – Turquoise Leaf* (side view), n.d. Porcelain, 26.65 x 7.6 cm. View Source

She continues to throw on the wheel today, creating work that blends functionality and beauty, and that is inspired by the natural beauty around her, as seen in her *Bowl – Turquoise Leaf* (figs. 3a and 3b). (NJH)

Kathy Kranias

Toronto-based ceramicist Kathy Kranias's artistic practice is deeply rooted in the material properties and processes of clay. Kranias's pieces are spontaneous and meditative; she works with the malleability of the medium, allowing forms to emerge naturally as her hands engage with clay to create sculptures that explore movement, the body, myth, and women's experiences. Describing her creative process, she explains, "As a handbuilder, my specific practice results in forms that express the gestures and asymmetry of the human body, and the condition of the human being as she moves

and experiences the world." In her early works of the 1990s, Kranias drew upon her background in dance and incorporated her understanding of human gesture to create expressive sculptures of figures caught mid-movement. As her artistic journey progressed, Kranias embraced a more abstract approach to form, influenced by the organic shapes found in nature as well as the historical significance of vessels in relation to the female body.



Figure 1. Kathy Kranias, *I am a Dancer*, 2008. Hand-pressed moulded paper clay and glazes, 30.5 x 24 x 15.25 cm. View Source

The work *I am a Dancer* (2008) from *The Danaïds* series (fig. 1) exemplifies this creative exploration, which Kranias describes by writing: "I was thinking about the female body and its miraculous function as a vessel. A vessel of contradiction, perhaps: able to contain and carry another being, another body, while containing the woman herself."



Figure 2. Kathy Kranias, *Persephone Emerges,* 2009. Earthenware clay and glazes, 5 x 34 x 35 cm. View Source

Returning to figurative work, Kranias embarked on the *Becoming the Persephone* series, exhibited as a solo exhibition at the Art Gallery of Peterborough, Ontario (curated by Janette Platana, 2009). For this show, she created plates and platters, such as *Persephone Emerges* (2009) (fig. 2), drawing on images inspired by classical Greek mythology. Her work today continues to draw inspiration from Greek mythology, bodies in movement, and narratives centred on female agency.



Figure 3a. Kathy Kranias, *Growing Wings*, 2017. Unglazed porcelaneous stoneware, 46 x 15 x 15cm. Global Affairs Canada Visual Art Collection, Canadian Embassy, Washington D.C. View Source



Figure 3b. Kathy Kranias, *Matrilineal Hauntings*, 2022. Installation view. Unglazed porcelaneous stoneware and photography, various dimensions. View Source

This new work largely consists of white, unglazed clay pieces, including *Growing Wings* (2017) (fig. 3a) displayed in the 2020 exhibition *A New Light: Canadian Women Artists* at the Embassy of Canada Art Gallery (Washington, D.C.) and her series, *Matrilineal Hauntings*, (fig. 3b) exhibited in a 2022 solo show of the same name (curated by Lera Kotsyuba, 43 Queen's Park Crescent East, University of Toronto campus). (SS)

Debra Kuzyk and Ray Mackie

Debra Kuzyk and Ray Mackie are partners and ceramicists from Saskatchewan. They have lived together in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, since 1999, where they maintain individual art practices as well as Lucky Rabbit Pottery, a collaborative ceramics endeavour. Together, they produce functional pottery, exhibition pieces, and tile work for public and private commissions. Mackie forms, glazes, and fires the clay vessels that Kuzyk embellishes with hand-built sculptures of birds and small animals, painted decoration, and carvings, or as they explain, "We collaborate by each doing the parts we love, and leaving the other alone." In a shared artist statement, the pair describe their process, writing: "This type of shared production is never easy, but it has also resulted in pottery magic. There are times when we work as one to produce a single unique object, which transcends what either could achieve independently…The result is the consequence of many hours of shared effort and negotiation." Their creative relationship is intuitive: Mackie is by inclination an abstract artist, deriving satisfaction from creating beautiful forms and making vessels inspired by classical Chinese, Korean, and Turkish pottery with traditional Japanese glazes; Kuzyk is passionate about decorating the surfaces of these vessels with visual elements drawn from the natural environment.



Figure 1. Debra Kuzyk and Ray Mackie, *Flying Red-winged Blackbird Platter*, 2016, Porcelain with underglaze decoration, dimensions unknown. Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Photo credit: Andrew Tolson. View Source

Her affinity for nature-inspired designs is apparent in *Flying Red-winged Blackbird Platter* (fig. 1). In 2016, the pair produced works for *The Scavengers and Outcasts* exhibition (Saskatchewan Craft Council Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan), a homecoming show featuring their sculptural ceramics decorated with themes of Saskatchewan wildlife and Prairie landscapes.



Figure 2a. Debra Kuzyk and Ray Mackie, *Racoon Jar*, 2014. Porcelain with underglaze decoration and clay sculpture, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2b. Debra Kuzyk and Ray Mackie, *Racoon Jar* (detail), 2014. Porcelain with underglaze decoration and clay sculpture, dimensions unknown. View Source

Racoon Jar (figs. 2a and 2b) from this show exemplifies Mackie and Kuzyk's interest in historic ceramics, both in shape and decoration, and their desire to honour all natural creatures by placing sculptures of animals—even those deemed scavengers or vermin—on the tops of their vessels.



Figure 3. Debra Kuzyk and Ray Mackie, *Goldfinch Jars*, 2021. Porcelain with underglaze decoration and clay sculptures, dimensions unknown. View Source

More recently, the couple displayed new collaborative pottery—including the *Goldfinch Jars* (2021) (fig. 3) depicting a male and female goldfinch—in a solo show, *Curved Space: Debra Kuzyk and Ray Mackie* at Studio 21 Fine Art (Halifax, Nova Scotia). (SS)

Alan Lacovetsky

Alan Lacovetsky, a ceramicist residing and practicing in St. Andrews, situated north of Winnipeg, Manitoba, is celebrated for his functional and sculptural wood-fired pottery. With a career spanning four decades, Lacovetsky first discovered his affinity for clay during his time on Texada Island, British Columbia, in the 1970s. His subsequent passion for ceramics led him to study, teach, and exhibit across the country and internationally, and to live in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, the United States, and Australia, where he worked alongside master art-potters John Reeve, Michael Cardew, Gwyn Piggott, and Peter Rushforth. Under Rushforth's mentorship, Lacovetsky developed a deep admiration for wood-fired kilns and a lasting fascination with crafting ceramics through ancient, time-honoured techniques.

Returning to Canada in 1996, he established his current rural Manitoba studio, where he throws functional vessels on his foot-powered potter's wheel with custom clays and glazes that he mixes by hand using local, natural materials.



Figure 1. Alan Lacovetsky, *Round Vase*, 2011-2012. Materials unknown, dimensions unknown. View Source

Many of Lacovetsky's explorations with natural pigments result in an earthy, red, brown, and orange palette, which he accents with blue celadon glazes, as seen in his *Round Vase* (2011-2012) (fig. 1). He primarily fires his work in a Bourry double-chambered, wood-fired kiln, which he built with fellow Manitoba ceramicist, David Krindle. This traditional firing method is labour intensive—requiring the artist to stoke the fire every five to ten minutes throughout the entire forty-hour process—reflecting Lacovetsky's dedication to technique-intensive, s. He describes how his firing process reflects his desire to foster a close relationship with nature, wr, ting: "I prefer to use my own energy to spin the potter's wheel and stoke the wood burning kiln because it allows me to be much more intimate with the process. I want my pots to be powerful statements of beauty but calming and gentle at the same time."



Figure 2. Alan Lacovetsky, *Lidded Jar,* 2015. Shino glaze, coarse stoneware clay, 19.05 x 19.05 x 21.59 cm. Photo credit: Alan Lacovetsky. View Source

The duality of Lacovetsky's work, manifesting in the simultaneous slowness and intensity of his firings, is apparent in the organic, fire-kissed variegated patterns that decorate his pottery, such as *Lidded Jar* (fig. 2).



Figure 3. Alan Lacovetsky, *Bio-Tusks* series, 2007-2009. Ceramic, 104 cm long each. Manitoba Hydro Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Photo credit: Leif Norman. View Source

Although he prefers wheel-throwing, he does produce hand-built works, such as his abstracted tusk-shaped ceramic sculptures commissioned by the Manitoba Hydro Head Office Building in Winnipeg, titled *Bio-Tusk* (2009) (fig. 3). (SS)

Robin Lambert

Robin Lambert is an artist, educator, and curator interested in social practice, sculpture, craft, and relational art. Born on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, his childhood was spent travelling throughout Western Canada before his family eventually settled in Northern Alberta. After years of studying and working away from home, Lambert returned to Alberta, where he now lives and teaches visual arts at Red Deer Polytechnic of Art and Design in Red Deer. Lambert's practice is multidisciplinary with a strong background in ceramics and an overarching interest in exploring the interactions and relationships between people.



Figure 1a. Robin Lambert, *Service: Dinner for Strangers*, 2009. View Source



Figure 1b. Robin Lambert, *Service: Dinner for Strangers*, 2009. View Source

He positions himself as an eccentric researcher who orchestrates moments of human exchange, as seen in his 2009 exhibition *Service: Dinner for Strangers* (figs. 1a and 1b) (Bilton Contemporary Art

Gallery, Red Deer, Alberta; travelling) in which Lambert hosted weekly potluck dinners for seven strangers in the gallery space, asking the guests to bring their "best" dishes, which were served on dinnerware by ceramicists Robin Dupont, Maggie Finlayson, and Candice Ring, specially commissioned for the show. Following each dinner, photographs of the participants, now no longer strangers, were added to the gallery display.

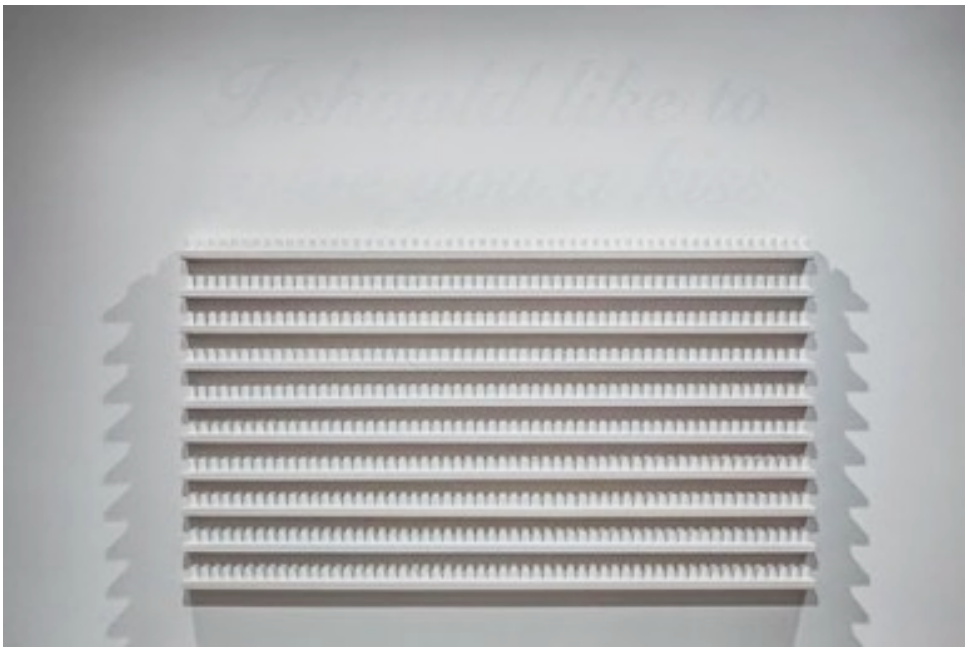


Figure 2a. Robin Lambert, *I Should Like to Give You a Kiss*, 2014. Installation view. Bone China thimbles and wood, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2b. Robin Lambert, *I Should Like to Give You a Kiss* (detail), 2014. Bone China thimbles and wood, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2c. Robin Lambert, *I Should Like to Give You a Kiss* (detail), 2014. Bone China thimbles and wood, dimensions unknown. View Source

In 2014, Lambert displayed *I Should Like to Give You a Kiss* (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c), at the Gardiner Museum's RBC Emerging Artist exhibition (Toronto, Ontario). This work was named for a quotation from J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* wherein Peter tells Wendy that he does not know what a kiss is, and the flustered girl places a thimble in his hand and calls it a kiss; the work is comprised of 3,000 white porcelain thimbles, which visitors were invited to take home with them. More recently, Lambert turned his creative lens on the socio-economic landscape of Alberta in *Because it Never Occurs to Us that We Cannot*, a solo exhibition at the Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery (2018). The title of the show reflects what he calls the "DNA of Alberta," the pioneering spirit of the province that allows residents to live in a part of the world that oscillates between minus-thirty degrees Celsius in the winter and plus thirty degrees Celsius in the summer. This spirit of hard work and progress, in Lambert's eyes, also brings with it a desire to build, to develop, and to consume at an unsustainable speed.



Figure 3. Robin Lambert, *Because it Never Occurs to Us That We Cannot*, 2018. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

The intricate ceramic works in this show, such as the sculpture, *Because it Never Occurs to Us That We Cannot* (2018) (fig. 3), resemble grain elevators or children's forts, leaning precariously while supported by unstable foundations and scaffolding, as if they are about to collapse, suggesting the delicacy of the province's current climate by juxtaposing fragile ceramics with industrial imagery. (SS)

Jean-Pierre Larocque

Born in Montreal, Quebec, Jean-Pierre Larocque is an artist using drawing, painting, rintmaking, and materials such as clay that are usually associated with Craft. From 1990 to 2000, Larocque taught ceramics at institutions across North America (including Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver, British Columbia, the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in Alfred, New York, the University of Athens in Athens, Georgia, the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and California State University, in Long Beach, California), before returning home to Montreal where he was Head of Ceramics at Concordia University until his retirement, and where he continues to live and work today. In his creative practice, Larocque is not interested in making faithful representations of his subject matter; rather, he is an inveterate experimenter, creating forms that reveal themselves by continuously adding and subtracting layers of clay. For most of Larocque's sculptures, he uses watered-down glazes that are more like washes, absorbed by the surface, unlike traditional glazes. The pieces are then fired multiple times. The resulting pieces show the evidence of his hand and tools in the making process and maintain the freshness of clay, giving his sculptures a textured, haptic quality. The inaugural exhibition for the 2006 reopening of the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, Ontario, entitled *Trapping Shadow,* included the artist's large heads, standing figures, and horse sculptures, alongside his works on paper. Larocque has repeatedly depicted horses in his work, initially finding their shapes appearing in his abstracted forms by accident and later, intentionally exploring the figure of this animal so uniquely tied to human history.



Figure 1a. Jean-Pierre Larocque, *Horse with Baggage #1*, 2005-2006. Stoneware with glaze, 101.6 × 81.3 × 55.9 cm. Gardiner Museum**.** View Source



Figure 1b. Jean-Pierre Larocque, *Horse with Baggage #1*, 2005-2006. Stoneware with glaze, 101.6 × 81.3 × 55.9 cm. Gardiner Museum. View Source

One such work included in his Gardiner show, *Horse with Baggage #1* (2005-2006) (figs. 1a and 1b), is typical of the artist's equine sculptures, the horse carrying a heavy load on its back. Larocque's horses, like many of his pieces, appear to be works-in-progress, as

curator Susan Jeffries explains: "Armatures of clay, normally used by ceramic artists as supports during the making process and removed before or after the firing, are left in place. These supports become part of the piece and, along with the detritus from the process (bits of clay shavings left on the base), serve as a further reminder that the work is first about sculpture and only secondly about horses."



Figure 2a. Jean-Pierre Larocque, *Grande tête* (*Large Head* series), 2006 Partially glazed and enamelled ceramic, 108 x 60 x 63.5 cm. Photo credit: Bertrand Carriere. View Source

Larocque's human figures also have an unfinished, painterly quality to them, as seen in *Grande tête* (2014) (figs. 2a and 2b), displayed in *Jean-Pierre Larocque*, a retrospective dedicated to the artist at 1700 La Poste in 2019 (Montreal, Quebec) (fig. 2c).



Figure 2b. Jean-Pierre Larocque. *Studio Installation*, 2006. Atlantic Street Studio. Photo credit: Bertrand Carriere. View Source



Figure 3a. Jean-Pierre Larocque. Installation, 2018. 1700 Galerie La Poste. Photo credit: Guy L'Heureux. View Source



Figure 3b. Jean-Pierre Larocque, *Untitled* (*Sans Fusain* series), 2018. Charcoal on paper, 116 x 200 cm. Photo credit: Guy L'Heureux. View Source

This retrospective also displayed Larocque's drawings, including this untitled charcoal work (2018) (figs. 3a and 3b), from his *Sans Fusain* series, made by applying and then erasing and subtracting the charcoal. (SS)

Enid Legros-Wise

Enid Legros-Wise lives and works in Hope Town in the Gaspé region of Quebec. Since the 1970s, she has worked primarily with fine translucent porcelain, although her work encompasses a spectrum of other media.



Figure 1. Enid Legros-Wise, *Cup of Plenty*, n.d. Porcelain bowl on raku table, 8cm. View Source

When Legros-Wise first opened her own studio, she used a range of techniques, such as coiling, wheel-throwing, plaster molds, and slip-casting, to make small porcelain objects, such as *Cup of Plenty* (fig. 1). However, the scope of Legros-Wise's work developed far beyond the delicate and refined aesthetic of these early forms.



Figure 2a. Enid Legros-Wise, *The Sea*, 1988. Hydrocal® (gypsum-based cement, harder and finer than pottery plaster, but with similar working properties); latex paint; plaster; fibreglass; epoxy resin); metal (iron); plastic; polyurethane foam, 244 cm. View Source



Figure 2b. Enid Legros-Wise, *The Sea*, 1988. Hydrocal® (gypsum-based cement, harder and finer than pottery plaster, but with similar working properties); latex paint; plaster; fibreglass; epoxy resin); metal (iron); plastic; polyurethane foam, 244 cm. View Source

She challenged the limits of the porcelain medium with public artworks such as *The Sea* (1988) (figs. 2a and 2b), installed in the Thérèse-Allard room of the National Historic Site of Paspebiac, Quebec. This work began from a fervent desire to create a spoon, which grew into the *Wave* sculptures (1982) and, after six years of trial and error, expanded further into the large forms of *The Sea*. Legro-Wise credits this commission with opening up a world of aesthetic possibilities from new materials to new areas of interest, such as physics and quantum mechanics.



Figure 3a. Enid Legros-Wise, *Veritas*, 2007. Installation view from Centre d'artistes Vaste et Vague. Porcelain, 10cm each. View Source



Figure 3b. Enid Legros-Wise, *Veritas* (detail), 2007 from the *Veritas* series. Porcelain, 10cm each. View Source

Her interest in shifting perceptions and human truths and her explorations of light and movement converged in the *Veritas* project, exhibited at three venues (Centre d'artistes Vaste et Vague, Carleton, Quebec; the Historic Site of Paspebiac, Quebec; Musée de la Gaspésie, Quebec) (figs. 3a and 3b). With *Veritas*, Legros-Wise collapsed the divide between fine art and craft. She explains, "I used one thousand 'cups' in porcelain as a vehicle to explore a collective search for truth. This work took a simple object of use and placed it in a philosophical and social context, neatly uniting the two poles of fine craft and contemporary art, and at the same time engaging the public in the very process of the creative act." (NJH)

Sarah Link

Sarah Link creates artworks that provoke viewers to question and reconsider their relationship to the world around them.



Figure 1a. Sarah Link, *Peas and Zucchini* (installation view). Ceramic and mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Sarah Link, installation view of *Farm.* Ceramic and mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source

Her installation works are produced with multiple component pieces made of ceramic and mixed media components carefully arranged to create a meditative and evocative effect, for example, *Peas and Zucchini* (fig. 1) conceived of during an artist residency at Art Farm, Aurora, Nebraska, a collaborative program that brought artists from

around the world together to work and collaborate in the studio space located on twenty acres of land dedicated to sculpture and installation artworks. Through the repetition of forms, this work explores themes around industrial farming and genetically modified produce. The smooth, flawless surface of the pea-like forms cradled in the two vessels in the foreground and the white ceramic objects lined on the wall in four columns are suspended and displayed like produce but without any trace of the essential connection these vegetal forms have with the land. Link examined issues around environmental degradation, the impact of technology, and genetically engineered food in the touring exhibition *FARM* (fig. 1b) (Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Ontario).

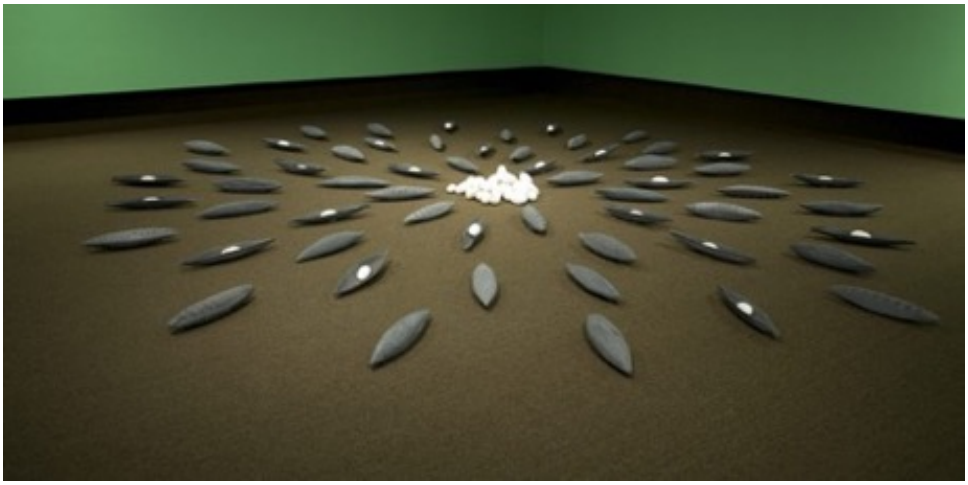


Figure 2. Sarah Link, *Tane*, 2001. Shigaraki clay, 10 x 366 cm. View Source

Also included in the exhibition was the artwork *Tane* (2001) (fig. 2), which means seed, or source. During a three-month artist residency at the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Shiga Prefecture, Japan, Link used black shigaraki clay from Japan to form the more than sixty molded clay pods that were carefully placed in a radiating decorative pattern around a pile of white stone-like forms to bring the viewer's attention to the world underneath their feet. Link moved from Hamilton, Ontario to Thunder Bay, Ontario in 1994, where she taught ceramics at Lakehead University until she retired in 2008. Since relocating, Link has developed her artistic practice through artist residencies (Art Farm, Aurora, Nebraska; Institute of Ceramic Studies at the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Shiga Prefecture, Japan) and collaborations with actors, musicians, and activists, such

as the teacher and healer Pauline Shirt who is an elder of the Cree nation. Her inspiration always comes from the land. She says, "Being in this environment [Thunder Bay] and seeing the history of this area [is] the inspiration for creating."



Figure 3a. Sarah Link, *Windfall*, 2004. Ceramic and mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3b. Sarah Link, *Windfall*, 2004. Ceramic and mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3c. Sarah Link, *Windfall*, 2004. Ceramic and mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source

Link was commissioned to create a large-scale public installation in Sibley Park, part of Sleeping Giant Provincial Park in 2004. *Windfall* (2004) (figs.3a, 3b, and 3c) is about the silver strike at the turn of the century and the miners' struggles during the long, freezing winters. It consists of several large pieces that demonstrate an approach to form rooted in Link's multidisciplinary understanding of art. The individual components are not connected; they seem like pieces of larger objects that have been left behind which reference the events of a strike at the local silver mine. (NJH)

Toni Losey

Toni Losey, born in the Canadian prairies, now lives and works as a ceramic artist in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.



Figure 1a. Toni Losey, *Serving Boat* (2 pieces), n.d. Stoneware, small serving boat: 8.9 x 21. 6 x 12.75 cm, large serving boat: 8.9 x 35.5 x 20.35 cm. View Source



Figure 1b. Toni Losey, *Serving Boat* (2 pieces), n.d. Stoneware, small serving boat: 8.9 x 21. 6 x 12.75 cm, large serving boat: 8.9 x 35.5 x 20.35 cm. View Source

Working as a studio potter for over fifteen years, she produces a line of functional work that grows out of her interest in Art Deco design, as seen in the smoothly curved geometry and the limited palette of natural tones and pastel blue of her two-piece *Serving Boat* (figs. 1a

and 1b). While Losey continues to create this Art Deco-inspired functional ware, the focus of her practice has shifted to developing a new body of sculptural work that plays with organic forms, evolving from the artist's personal interpretation of the natural world.



Figure 2a. Toni Losey, *Sample-NER-00-4-5-1*, 2019. Porcelain and earthenware, 10 x 6.5 x 6.5cm. View Source

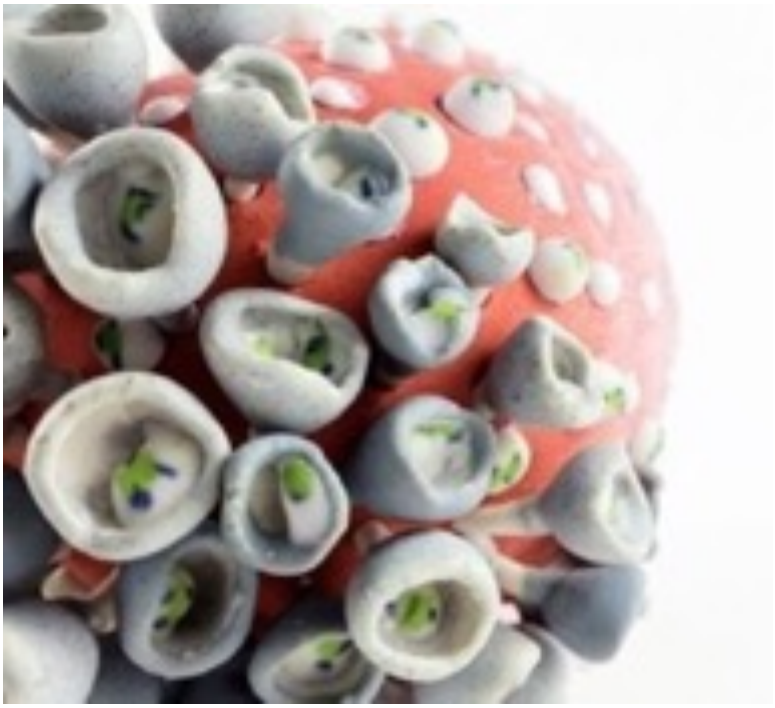


Figure 2b. Toni Losey, *Sample-NER-00-4-5-1* (detail), 2019. Porcelain and earthenware, 10 x6.5 x 6.5cm. View Source



Figure 2c. Toni Losey, *Sample-NER-00-4-5-1*, 2019. Installation view. Porcelain and earthenware, 10 x 6.5 x 6.5cm. View Source

Losey builds sculptures, such as *Sample-NER-00-4-5-1*, part of her 2019 show, *Toni Losey: New Works* (The Craig Gallery, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia) (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c), by hand and on the wheel, adding clay appendages intuitively to the central body of each piece that mirror the patterns of growth found in nature, evoking a proliferation of mushrooms growing along a decaying log or perhaps a viral cell in the process of division. Losey's sculptural works all bear these peculiar appendages, resulting in pieces that seem otherworldly, organic, familiar but slightly sinister. Ray Mackie

describes these works for *Studio Magazine,* writing, "Losey's biological form sculptures are not literal models of biological forms; rather, they are expressive vehicles for the artist's inner journey. What we notice in Losey's new sculptural objects is the intensity and risk-taking that she brings to the journey."



Figure 3a. Toni Losey, *The Outside of Inside*, 2021. Installation view. Multi-fired ceramic, 172.7 x 96.5 x 129.5 cm. View Source

In 2021, Losey presented her work in her first international solo exhibition, *The Outside of Inside*, with Cluster Craft London at the Barge House at Oxo Tower (London, England) (fig. 3a), displaying a number of sculptures ranging from smaller pieces, that require her, in her own words, to "push the details and the glaze further" and larger pieces, up to 1.5 metres in height.



Figure 3b. Toni Losey, *The Outside of Inside*, 2021. Multi-fired ceramic, 172.7 x 96.5 x 129.5 cm. View Source

One such large work, sharing the name of the exhibition, *The Outside of Inside* (2021) (fig. 3b), is composed of two pieces, each decorated with a dozen or more appendages that radiate informally from a central, hollow core, in which another bulbous appendage sits. The faces of these central appendages are decorated with dripping glaze buttons in chromatic silver, leaving the viewer with the impression that this sculpture is somewhat alien and unnatural. Losey continues to teach courses in the ceramics department at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (Halifax, Nova Scotia). (SS)

Yves Louis-Seize

Yves Louis-Seize resides in Ville St-Gabriel, Québec, where he maintains a studio and art gallery, Galerie YL-S. He taught at the Centre de céramique Bonsecours from 1985 to 2005 and was a professor of sculpture and ceramics at the Université du Québec à

Montréal from 1989 to 2017. His sources of inspiration and representational style have varied over his long career, resulting in a diverse oeuvre in metal and clay. His early work was influenced by the emergence of minimalism, characterised by functional ceramics featuring simplified lines, while his later sculptural and site-responsive works present allegorical forms that reflect the artist's preoccupation with temporality, expressed through references to mythic archetypal forms reminiscent of the ruins of historic ceremonial sites and structures. These later works explore strange worlds that are both contemporary and ancient, described by the *Historical Dictionary of Quebec Sculpture in the 20th Century* as "neither abstract nor figurative; these works are instead discreetly symbolic, touching on the fragility and precarious balance of both people and things."



Figure 1a. Yves Louis-Seize, *Absence...après le grand passage à l'Autre rive*, 1991. Materials unknown, 200 x 150 x 110 cm. View Source



Figure 1b. Yves Louis-Seize, *Absence...après le grand passage à l'Autre rive*, 1991. Installation view. Materials unknown, 200 x 150 x 110 cm. View Source

Such symbolism is apparent in Louis-Seize's sculpture *Absence...après le grand passage à l'Autre rive* (1991) (fig. 1a), displayed in the solo exhibition *Présence-Absence, traces et fragments* at Galerie Trois Points in 1991 (Montreal, Quebec) (fig.1b). This cage-like structure depicts a funeral pyre, with a metal panel behind its horizontal bars bearing the remnant reddish stain marks of a departed human presence. Sara Amato describes this work, writing: "The rough surfaces and raw texture of the clay, with its unrefined casting, depicts the process the materials have come through and bears witness to the external process of formation, and erosion." This textural quality makes the artist's process evident to the viewer.



Figure 2a. Yves Louis-Seize, *Le regard absorbé... à Aurélien* (face), 2007. Steel, lightbox, earth, and sound, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2b. Yves Louis-Seize, *Le regard absorbé... à Aurélien* (verso), 2007. Steel, lightbox, earth, and sound, dimensions unknown. View Source

Louis-Seize continued to explore themes relating to the passage of time and mortality in his 2007 sculpture, *Le regard absorbé... à*

Aurélien (figs. 2a and 2b), composed of a life-sized sarcophagus enshrining nude photographs of the artist collaged with images of nature, illuminated by an internal light source. In a brief written statement, the artist explains that this work presents an "introspective reflection on vision," created after the death of his father.



Figure 3a. Yves Louis-Seize, *L'incommunicabilité*, 2017. Steel and ceramic, 126 x 168 x 70 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Yves Louis-Seize, *L'incommunicabilité*, 2017. Steel and ceramic, 126 x 168 x 70 cm. View Source

Louis-Seize often integrates rust painting into his sculptural practice by applying acid and water to sheets of metal, as seen in *L'incommunicabilité* (2017) exhibited at Galerie YL-S. In this work, a pair of hand-built clay birds stand facing each other on a beam held aloft by two acid steel sheets, one with a geometric pattern created with cut-out tessellated shapes and the other with abstract surface decoration created with poured acid (figs. 3a and 3b). (SS)

Susan Low-Beer

Susan Low-Beer is a ceramic artist whose work explores themes related to the human experience, the body's simultaneous power and vulnerability, and psychological archetypes. Low-Beer began her career in the arts as a painter at Mount Allison University (Sackville, New Brunswick). It was at the end of her studies in the late 1970s that Low-Beer began to use fired clay forms as a vehicle for her painting, investigating the sculptural potential of clay, and learning about the medium's association with human history. In 1980, Low-Beer moved to Toronto, Ontario and began to focus on creating large works in clay, returning consistently to the human form to express her thoughts through gesture and movement, while also moving away from traditional glazes and paint to experiment with encaustic, an ancient surface treatment that uses beeswax, powdered pigments, terra sigillata, and coloured slip.



Figure 1a. Susan Low-Beer, *State of Grace*, 2008. Ceramic and steel supports, approx. 120 cm each. View Source

Louis-Seize often integrates rust painting into his sculptural practice by applying acid and water to sheets of metal, as seen in *L'incommunicabilité* (2017), exhibited at Galerie YL-S.



Figure 1b. Susan Low-Beer, *State of Grace* (detail), 2008. Ceramic and steel supports, approx. 120 cm each. View Source

Her body-forms are often life-sized, modelled and then hollowed out for firing and propped into poses on steel structures, as seen in her 2008 installation, *State of Grace* (figs. 1a and 1b), in which fifteen child-like sculptures are on coiling metal supports. These figures appear to hover in a mysterious in-between state, such as before birth or after death, or in the artist's words, "in the dream world of childhood before rationality takes root…jumping up but coming down, spinning outward but meditating inward." In 2012, Low-Beer facilitated therapeutic workshops for women survivors of domestic violence in partnership with the Schlifer Clinic and the Gardiner Museum (Toronto, Ontario).



Figure 2a. Susan Low-Beer, *About Face*, 2012. Installation view. Ceramics, stains, terra sigillata, plaster bases. 17x17x13 cm (head). View Source



Figure 2b. Susan Low-Beer, *About Face* (detail of #20), 2012. Ceramics, stains, terra sigillata, plaster bases. 17x17x13 cm (head). View Source



Figure 2c. Susan Low-Beer, *About Face* (detail of #8), 2012. Ceramics, stains, terra sigillata, plaster bases. 17x17x13 cm (head). View Source

Her subsequent work, *About Face* (2012) (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c), consists of twenty-four ceramic heads mounted on pedestals; she formed these heads with a single mold, resulting in a uniformity of shape and features, and then altered them with hand-building methods and through manipulation of surface texture, creating strikingly differentiated faces.



Figure 3a. Susan Low-Beer, *Specimen,* 2022. Installation view. View Source

A retrospective exhibition, *Embodiment: 30 Years of Sculpture*, which featured works from across Low-Beer's career, finished its tour at the Clay and Glass Gallery in 2018 (curated by Jasmina Jovanovic and Stuart Reid, Waterloo, Ontario; touring). Most recently, she exhibited *Specimen* (fig. 3a), a solo exhibition which references mortality and intimacy by moving away from the figurative to more abstract forms (curated by Sheila McMath for the River Brink Art Museum, Queenston, Ontario, 2022; touring).



Figure 3b. Susan Low-Beer, *Mammilla*, 2022. Materials and dimensions unknown. View Source

Her abstracted "specimens", including *Mammilla* (2018) (fig. 3b), are organic in shape, contain industrial elements, and are displayed on domestic furniture, resulting in absurd and uncanny forms that invite close inspection. Low-Beer has taught ceramics in several institutions, including the Ontario College of Art and Design University (Toronto, Ontario), Sheridan College (Greater Toronto Area, Ontario), and Emily Carr University (Vancouver, British Columbia). (SS)

Hannun Lyn

Hannun Lyn is a ceramicist specializing in high-fired, fine English porcelain and functional pottery. She is a Jamaican-born woman of Chinese descent living in the diverse communities of downtown Toronto, Ontario, where she actively embraces what she calls her "intuitive ethnic history," blending international influences in her work.



Figure 1. Hannun Lyn, *Cherry Blossom Porcelain Cup*, n.d. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

These influences—spanning Sung Dynasty glazes, Japanese tea culture, and mid-century Scandinavian ceramics—are apparent in her *Cherry Blossom Porcelain Cup*, (fig. 1), inspired by the Kyoto cherry blossoms as well as the blooming of cherry trees each year after the long winter in Toronto's High Park. Lyn chooses to work solely in porcelain for its contrasting qualities of fragility, beauty, strength, and translucency. Additionally, as a Zen Buddhist, her choice of material reflects her continual exercise in bringing thoughtfulness, awareness, and presence to her work, or in her own words, "[F]ine porcelain is so delicate that one must be completely present to hold and bring into one's space." In 2020, she established a studio in Toronto's Kensington Market neighbourhood, where she created several sculptural vessels for the Aga Khan Museum (Toronto, Ontario), each bearing a quote from the ancient Persian poet, Rumi.



Figure 2. Hannun Lyn, *Porcelain Vessel*, c. 2020. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

One such *Porcelain Vessel* (c. 2020) (fig. 2) is decorated with the lines of poetry: "Let the beauty we love be what we do. / There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground." The design of these vessels resembles a piece of paper rolled into a cylinder with a protruding corner at the point of overlap.



Figure 3a. Hannun Lyn, *Hand Built Large Oval Dish*, 2023. Cone 6 porcelain, electric-fired with underglazes using brush and Mishima techniques, glazed and later overglazed with bright gold lustre, 30.5 x 19.5 x 5cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Hannun Lyn, *Hand Built Large Oval Dish*, 2023. Cone 6 porcelain, electric-fired with underglazes using brush and Mishima techniques, glazed and later overglazed with bright gold lustre, 30.5 x 19.5 x 5cm. View Source

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Lyn continued making and selling her wares in Kensington Market and established Kensington Clay, creating a series of pottery decorated in cheerful floral designs, such as the *Hand Built Large Oval Dish* (2023) (figs. 3a and 3b). In reflecting on creating this series in the midst of the pandemic, Lyn states, "The world has changed so much and so quickly in the past couple of years it made us all reflect on the real gratitudes and necessities of life. This project is a collection that captures the celebration of life, joy and shared ritual."



Figure 3c. Hannun Lyn, *Dukkha Bowl*, 2024. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3d. Hannun Lyn, *Dukkha Bowl* (detail), 2024. Ceramic, dimensions unknown, 2024. View Source

Post-COVID, Lyn's work has focused on the Buddhist concept of Dukkha, or suffering (figs. 3ca and 3d). She describes clay as malleable, full of potential, and at the same time fragile; once fired, the clay vessel achieves a semblance of permanence but is still susceptible to breaking, mirroring life's fragility. The vessel itself is

empty, but the orange glaze evokes joy and warmth, contrasting with the starkness of the emptiness. Lyn writes that her work has become a meditation on Dukkha, reminding us that even in the depths of suffering, there are moments of light and transformation. Lyn recently opened MUD The Clay Studio in Toronto, Ontario, where pottery classes are offered in a welcoming environment to artists at all levels. She also teaches ceramics at a number of institutions across Toronto, including the Gardiner Museum, Toronto Potters, and schools in the Toronto District School Board. (SS)

Rory MacDonald

Rory MacDonald is a ceramicist living and working in Summerville, Nova Scotia, interested in expanding our understanding of pottery, the built environment, and our place in it. By approaching ceramics as an activity, MacDonald says he strives "to make new associations in the medium and to communicate those through new forms."



Figure 1. Rory MacDonald, *Curb Works*, 2003. Clay, glaze, repaired curb, dimensions unknown. View Source

Many of his works are what he calls "experimental gestures" of site-specific installation and public craft, such as *Curb Works* (2003-on-

going) (fig. 1). He started this project of patching missing or crumbling pieces of urban walls and curbsides with glazed ceramic repairs in Regina, Saskatchewan, while working as a professor in the Ceramics department at the University of Regina. For this project, MacDonald developed methods of site-specific firing, designed a portable kiln, and experimented with techniques for glaze applications to architecture and public space. By repairing the fissures he saw around him with exquisitely decorated ceramic patches, he highlighted the deterioration of Regina's under-served neighbourhoods, while also introducing public art into these streetscapes and creating new audiences for contemporary ceramics. In describing MacDonald's process of ceramic repair, the ceramicist Paul Mathieu writes that the artist "takes the principle of 'site specificity' to its ultimate potential, since the intervention, while often removable if necessary, could not readily be repositioned anywhere else without a complete loss of meaning."



Figure 2. Rory MacDonald, *Vase 4*, 2014. Cone 6 oxidation, white ware, black slip, terra sigillata, and chalk, 23 x 10 x 10 cm. View Source

MacDonald continued creating innovative public craft interventions upon moving to Nova Scotia, including *Vase 4* of his *Chalk Works* series (2008-ongoing) (fig. 2). In this series, displayed at the Mary Black Gallery (Halifax, Nova Scotia) in 2012, the artist evokes some of history's most revered and recognizable ceramic vessels, Chinese celadon and blue and white porcelain, by firing black slip-covered porcelain and then sanding his forms to create a blackboard-like surface that accepts chalk. He then draws iconic Chinese ceramic patterns on these surfaces, at once calling attention to the haptic qualities so valued in ceramics and creating works that cannot be touched.



Figure 3a. Rory MacDonald, *blue lovers,* 2016. Porcelain whiteware, underglaze transfer (blue and red), 1600 x 4000 x 22 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Rory MacDonald, *blue lovers* (detail), 2016. Porcelain whiteware, underglaze transfer (blue and red), 1600 x 4000 x 22 cm. View Source

He continued his engagement with the iconic potential of blue and white patterning in his installation, *blue lovers* (2016) (figs. 3a and 3b), which explores vantage point and composition through elements of the Blue Willow chinoiserie pattern displayed along a forty-metre-long storyboard (curated by Sheila MacMath for the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo, Ontario, 2016). MacDonald has been a professor of Ceramics at NSCAD University (Halifax, Nova Scotia) since 2009. (SS)

Shauna MacLeod

For Shauna MacLeod, the process of making is as important as the finished work of art. She creates functional wares and sculptural ceramics using a variety of traditional techniques, including hand-building, slip casting, and wheel throwing, which is perhaps her favourite method of shaping clay because of the intimacy it fosters through the creative process. In 2020, she left her position as a medical emergency dispatcher to pursue art. She had opened Black Crow Pottery in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, in 2012, the year after graduating from NSCAD University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The "untitled" heart series reflects an early exploration of the trauma experienced by emergency healthcare workers. Her work focuses on healing and fostering connections, which is one reason she

primarily uses Nova Scotia earthenware clay; not only is it strong and beautiful, but it also connects her to her community.



Figure 1. Shauna MacLeod, *Blue and Black Large Vase*, n.d. Ceramic, 22.86 x 14.6 cm. View Source

While creating works for the *Black and Blue* collection, such as *Blue and Black Large Vase* (fig. 1), MacLeod reflects upon her personal history and the history of others. The past traumas and injuries that have been inflicted on her are the marks she has inflicted on her pots, legacies of deep scars but also of healing while blemish-free pieces represent those among us who carry our scars on the inside. MacLeod, a proud member of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, has created a celebratory series of functional artworks that are intended to impart joy, pride, and love.

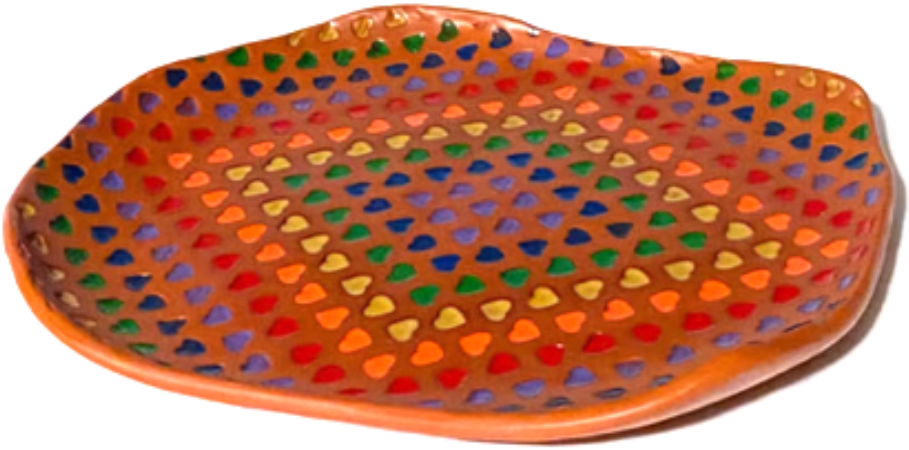


Figure 2a. Shauna MacLeod, *Happy Pride Plate*, n.d. Nova Scotia earthenware, glazes, and underglazes, 21.59 x 18.41 x 1.9cm. View Source

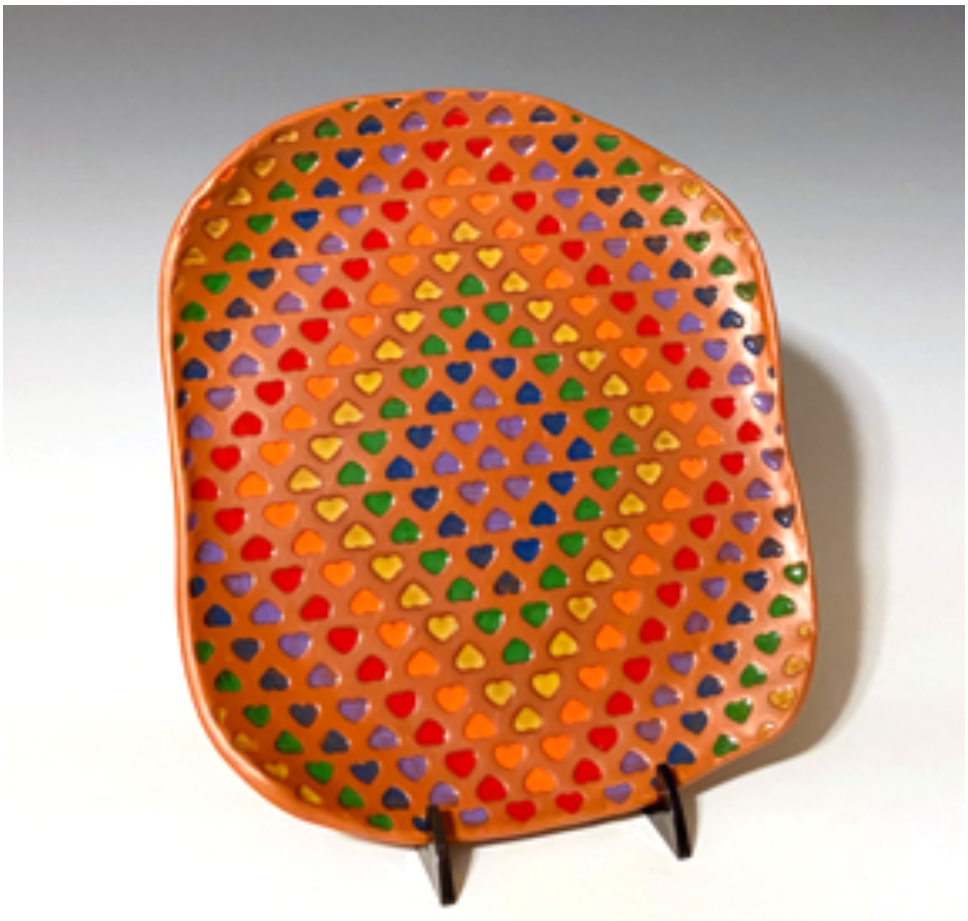


Figure 2b. Shauna MacLeod, *Happy Pride Plate*, n.d. Nova Scotia earthenware, glazes, and underglazes, 21.59 x 18.41 x 1.9 cm. View Source

The small hearts imprinted onto the surface of *Happy Pride Plate* (figs. 2a and 2b) are decorated by hand with the pride colours of

red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet, ensuring that each piece of the series is unique and special, just like the incredibly diverse individuals who comprise the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. When MacLeod first turned to ceramics she worked as a production potter, a ceramicist who strives to make large quantities of consistently formed functional or decorative ceramic wares such as plates, bowls, cups, and saucers either by hand or, typically, by throwing on a wheel. In 2012 MacLeod began to experiment with sculptural forms building upon her experience in making utilitarian pieces as a production potter.



Figure 3. Shauna MacLeod, *Untitled (Three Hearts),* ca. 2017. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source

For example, *Untitled* (*Three Hearts),* (c.2017) (fig. 3), is one of three sculptural forms resembling human hearts each with catastrophic injuries. One is pierced through while the gaping wounds of the other two are stitched up with metal sutures; in this way, MacLeod draws upon personal narratives of trauma and healing to connect with and inspire viewers. Likewise, her 2018 solo exhibition *Homesick* (The Craig Case Gallery, Dartmouth Nova Scotia) explored themes of connectedness and permanence with a series of works finished with MacLeod's homemade glazes made from dirt, soil, and rocks that her family and friends gathered from various destinations. MacLeod explains, "[M]aking work is an opportunity for me to be reflective, it also becomes a record of the events of my life. It's an expression of truth about life, and I aim to connect with others through this vulnerability and truth. Perhaps the viewer can

recognize something of themselves in the work that validates their own experience." (NJH)

Janet Macpherson

Janet Macpherson is a ceramicist and sculptor living and working in Hamilton, Ontario. She began her artistic career with a studio practice focused on sgraffito pottery and functional ceramics before a mould-making class sparked her departure from functional ware. In the fifteen years since, Macpherson has built an extensive catalogue of plaster moulds made from dollar-store animal toys, decoys, Christian statuary, and found refuse, which she uses to slip-cast her characteristic hybrid figures in stark white porcelain.



Figure 1a. Janet Macpherson, *Angelus*, 2012. Slip-cast and assembled porcelain, paper clay, gold lustre, 50 x 60 cm each. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source



Figure 1b. Janet Macpherson, *Angelus* (detail), 2012. Slip-cast and assembled porcelain, paper clay, gold lustre, 50 x 60 cm. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source



Figure 1c. Janet Macpherson, *Angelus* (detail), 2012. Slip-cast and assembled porcelain, paper clay, gold lustre, 50 x 60 cm. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source

She often dissects and reassembles these moulds, as seen in *Angelus* (2012) (figs. 1a, 1b, and 1c), a series of three statues composed of animal heads and saints' bodies, creating fragmented, disquieting figures. Through her use of religious iconography drawn from her

Catholic upbringing, and historic illuminated manuscripts, as well as animal forms, the artist explores ideas of repression, control, and the body. Macpherson wraps many of her hybrid animals in damp porcelain sheets, creating the impression that they are bandaged or bound; she explains this wrapping, writing: "Inspired by visits to the Ohio State Agricultural Fair in Columbus, where farm animals were clothed in protective fabrics, tethered tightly to posts, awaiting exhibition and judging, I have begun assembling my own slip-cast menagerie, in which I play with forms of domestication, sanitation and restraint." In 2016, Macpherson was commissioned by the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, Ontario to create a solo exhibition in response to the 150th anniversary of Confederation.



Figure 2a. Janet Macpherson, *Janet Macpherson: A Canadian Bestiary*, 2017. Installation view. View Source



Figure 2b. Janet Macpherson, *Janet Macpherson: A Canadian Bestiary*, 2017. Installation view. View Source

The project, *Janet Macpherson: A Canadian Bestiary* (curated by Karine Tsoumis, 2017) (figs. 2a and 2b), consisted of four sculptural installations, each examining the complex history of Canada and Canadian identity. It is unclear if the porcelain-bound animals in Macpherson's show—ranging in size from diminutive and toy-sized, to true to life figures—are in the process of healing or are constricted, pointing to the illness at the very heart of our country's origins: colonial violence and the exploitation of the land.



Figure 2c. Janet Macpherson, *Reliquary*, 2017. Slip-cast porcelain, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source



Figure 2d. Janet Macpherson, *Reliquary* (detail), 2017. Slip-cast porcelain, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source

Reliquary (2017) (figs. 2c and 2d), a shrine to St. Jean de Brebeuf, a colonial-era missionary charged with the "salvation" of Indigenous people, exposes this violence, represented by ceramic sacramental hearts, gilded and decorated with odd appendages, including doll arms.



Figure 3a. Janet Macpherson, *Migration Bridge*, 2017. Installation view. Slip-cast porcelain, paper clay, gold lustre, wood, and paint, 90 x 700 x 60 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Janet Macpherson, *Migration Bridge* (detail), 2017. Slip-cast porcelain, paper clay, gold lustre, wood, and paint, 90 x 700 x 60 cm. Photo credit: Toni Hafkensheid. View Source

In 2021, Macpherson displayed her work in a solo exhibition titled *Hybrid Land* at the Mary E. Black Gallery (Halifax, Nova Scotia), centred on a large work titled *Migration Bridge* (2017) (figs. 3a and 3b), made up of almost one hundred of her curious and amorphous miniature hybrid animals in migration. (SS)

Paul Mathieu

Paul Mathieu always knew he wanted to become an artist. He was intuitively drawn to ceramics as a teenager, sensing its potential to impact the daily lives of real people beyond the walls of an art gallery or museum. Mathieu's artistic practice is characterised by his contestation of the traditional conventions defining art, design, craft and media. He challenges artistic hierarchies, confuses visual conventions, and embraces contradictions in his series of stacked dishes.



Figure 1a. Paul Mathieu, *The Arrows of Time*, 1989 (unstacked). Glazed ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Paul Mathieu, *The Arrows of Time*, 1989 (stacked). Glazed ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source

For example, *The Arrows of Time* (1989) (figs. 1a and 1b), which is inspired by physicist Stephen Hawking's book about the origin, structure, and development of the universe *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (1988), is a functional, hand-built dinner service which when placed together forms an intricate sculptural work that mimics a two-dimensional representation.



Figure 2a. Paul Mathieu, *Ian/Edouard,* 2008. From the series *Odalisque Bowls*. Glazed porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2b. Paul Mathieu, *Ian/Edouard,* 2008. From the series *Odalisque Bowls*. Glazed porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2c. Paul Mathieu, *Ian/Edouard,* 2008. From the series *Odalisque Bowls*. Glazed porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

In a similar way, *Ian/Edouard* (2008) (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c), was a hybridized artwork that resisted conventional notions of art and craft, two- and three-dimensional form, as well as the portrayal of gender roles and queer identity. Édouard Manet's eponymous painting of 1863-65, *Olympia,* is reproduced as a photo-portrait with a nude model named Ian lying in place of the female figure. For Mathieu, sexuality is a subject *for* the work of art rather than it being the subject *of* the artwork. He explains, "Homosexuality cannot possibly be taken seriously by contemporary culture…Ceramics suffers the same fate. It is only allowed to be either cheap gifts or very practical things, like bricks and tiles. Despite the significant and seminal contributions both homosexuals and potters have made and continue to make, they are never taken seriously, and they are not allowed to…[t]he result…is to make work that is absolutely dismissible yet impossible to ignore." Although Mathieu has been a teacher at the college and university levels since 1976 in Montreal, Mexico, and Paris, and he has been teaching at Emily Carr University of Art and Design since 1996, he considers himself a life-long student. His first teacher was Léopold L. Foulem and he has held numerous artist residencies, but Mathieu's multiple stays at the San Boa International Ceramics Studio in Jingdezhen, the thousand-year-

old ceramics capital of China, have left an indelible mark on his work. Included in the solo exhibition *The China Syndrome* (curated by Jonathan Smith for the Art Gallery of Burlington, Ontario, 2016), for example, was a series of hand-painted *Odalisque Bowls,* made by unnamed Jingdezhen ceramicists working under Mathieu's direction.



Figure 3a. Paul Mathieu, R.I. Love/ G.I. AIDS, 2013. Porcelain, 24 x 21 cm (each). Gardiner Museum, the Diana Reitberger Collection, G17.11.17.1-2. View Source

The simple form of the functional vases *R.I. Love/ G.I. AIDS*, 2013 (fig. 3a) conflates traditional design with photo-based images from art history and Mathieu's personal life to defy artistic convention to create something beautiful, functional, and deeply subversive.



Figure 3b., Paul Mathieu, *R.I. Love/ G.I. AIDS*, 2013 (detail, maker's mark). Porcelain, 24 x 21 cm (each). Gardiner Museum, the Diana Reitberger Collection, G17.11.17.1. G17.11.17.2. View Source



Figure 3c. Paul Mathieu, *R.I. Love/G.I. AIDS*, 2013 (detail, maker's mark). Porcelain, 24 x 21 cm (each). Gardiner Museum, the Diana Reitberger Collection, G17.11.17.1. G17.11.17.2. View Source

R.I. Love/G.I. AIDS speaks to issues of production, commodification, and sexuality. With imagery taken from well-known works by American Pop Art painter Robert Indiana and Canadian conceptual art collective General Idea, Mathieu destabilizes ideas around originality, authenticity, and individual authorship (figs. 3b and 3c). (NJH)

Alexandra McCurdy

As a child growing up in Wolverhampton, England, Alexandra McCurdy was exposed to textile art at a young age from her mother who was a textile designer and her aunts who were curtain embroiderers. Her incidental introduction to ceramics occurred because the textile course she wanted to take was full, but after studying under the likes of ceramic artists Rosalie Namer, Léopold Foulem, and others, McCurdy based her multi-layered artistic practice in clay.

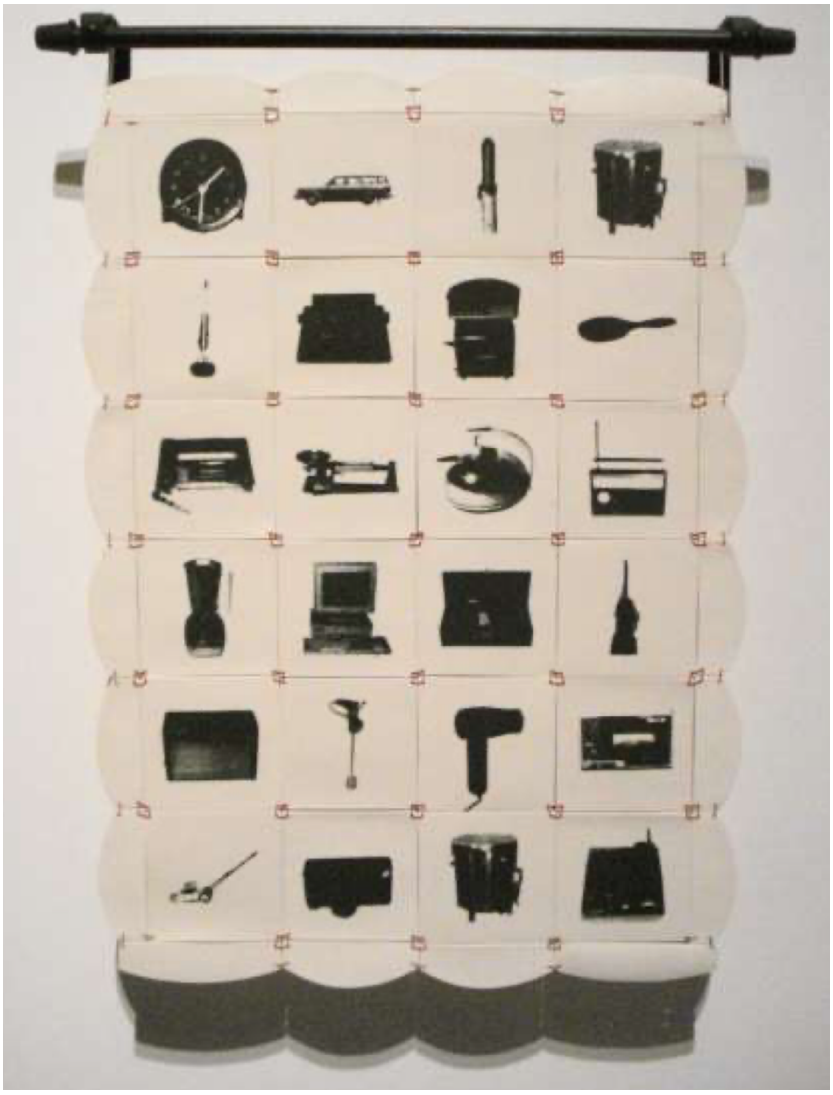


Figure 1a. Alexandra McCurdy, *Security Blanket*, 1997. Porcelain slabs with silk-screened images and embroidery floss, 74 x 54 cm. Collection of the Burlington Art Gallery. Photo by Joe Lewis. View Source

Security Blanket (1997) (fig. 1a) is a ceramic quilt that references two important recurrent themes in McCurdy's work: feminism and conceptual aesthetics.



Figure 1b. Alexandra McCurdy, *Security Blanket*, 1997 (detail).

Each individual porcelain slab features a silk-screen image of a domestic item typically associated with women's work like a sewing machine, wooden spoon, or kettle (fig. 1b) that have been stitched together with embroidery floss to reflect the structural patterning of fibre media but also the structural paradigms that have limited, and often marginalized, women's contributions to society.



Figure 2. Alexandra McCurdy, *Apricot and Taupe Footed Bowl*, n.d. Porcelain, copper wire, dimensions unknown. View Source

McCurdy, however, struggles with making usable artworks because her work incorporates textile and fabric art into ceramic forms, as in, for example, *Apricot and Taupe Footed Bowl* (fig. 2). McCurdy threaded copper wire through small holes made around the edge of the bowl after the work was fired and the linear pattern repeated on the inside and outside surfaces gives the illusion that the bowl's surface has been pierced through with needle and thread, thus creating a hybridized work of art. She explains, "[M]y work has long been inspired by textile patterns and motifs, by my research into Western textile history and the central role played in it by women, and by my mother's personal involvement in the British textile industry." McCurdy is constantly working in new directions and exploring new forms from her studio in Halifax, Nova Scotia, as she moves from plinth sculptures to wall hangings, printmaking, and installations. The exhibition *The Fabric of Clay* (curated by Gloria Hickey, Art Gallery of Burlington, Ontario, 2011) chronicled McCurdy's long career as a ceramicist, printmaker, and curator and highlighted her recent explorations into mixed-media installations by displaying her series of hand-formed porcelain boxes alongside wall-hangings and works on paper that explored themes around containment and enclosure as a metaphor for women in ceramics.



Figure 3. Alexandra McCurdy, *Oh Canada Box*, 2017. Porcelain, slip, glaze, 16 x 16 x 16cm. View Source

Some of McCurdy's boxes have perforated sides that allow the viewer to peer inside, while others, like the *Oh Canada Box* (2017) (fig. 3), remain closed off, its mysterious contents left hidden. Created by laboriously coating cheesecloth on plaster in slip that is carefully dried, pierced with holes for sewing, fired and then layered to achieve a woven surface texture, McCurdy celebrates the history of women's textiles with these deeply personal ceramic forms. (NJH)

Lesley McInally

Lesley McInally completed her Bachelor of Design Honours Degree in Ceramics and Printmaking at Dundee University, Scotland. She worked as a full-time professional ceramic artist, producing both functional and decorative ceramics for galleries throughout the United Kingdom. In 2004, she immigrated to Canada, where she continued her studio practice in Cookstown, Ontario. McInally is widely known for her unique stretched slab forms, paperclay techniques, hand building and surface treatments. Incorporating her

printmaking skills, she has developed a highly tactile surface using coloured slips and underglazes, which create a rich depth of surface texture. She has taught her techniques in many ceramic educational establishments and more recently online to a worldwide audience through the Ceramic School in Austria. She has been the recipient of numerous prestigious awards and grants and continues to exhibit her work nationally and internationally.



Figure 1a. Lesley McInally, *Landscape Vessel*, n.d. From the *Landscape* series. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Lesley McInally, *Landscape Vessel*, date unknown (reverse view). From the *Landscape* series. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

In *Landscape Vessel* (figs. 1a and 1b), she uses coloured porcelain slips and underglazes, combined with the technique of mono-printing, to explore the relationship between the natural landscape and built structures transformed by time and neglect. She scrapes vertical and horizontal striations into the white glazed surface suggestive of fence posts and untended rolling fields.



Figure 1c. Lesley McInally. Thrown vessel with ceramic pigments, 2022. Dimensions unknown.



Figure 1d. Lesley McInally. Thrown and altered vessel with ceramic porcelain and pigments, 2022. Dimensions unknown.

McInally characterises her current landscape series (figs. 1c and 1d) as a way to evoke a profound emotional response to time, erosion, seasons, and prose. She aims to "evoke dramatic seascapes, landscapes and sunsets similar to the Expressionists," an experience akin to "an orchestral concert for the eyes. Each piece tells its own story and often takes the viewer on a nostalgic journey where one's senses and dreams cohere."



Figure 2a. Lesley McInally, *Narrator*, n.d. From the series *Emotional Landscapes*. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2b. Lesley McInally, *Narrator*, date unknown (detail). From the series *Emotional Landscapes*. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source

There is an aspect of historical narrative in works such as *Narrator* (figs. 2a and 2b) in which the multi-layered surface made using paper clay, slip, ceramic pigments, glazes, and porcelain engobes retains a physical record of each mark made upon the surface. In her 2016 solo exhibition *Revitalise* (Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Ontario), McInally showed her preference for hand-built vessels made from slabs and coils of clay; however, she is drawn to the immediacy of wheel-thrown forms because they provide a simple, canvas-like surface upon which to build her layered imagery.



Figure 3a. Lesley McInally, *Abandoned Chamber*, n.d. From the *Orkney* series. Ceramic, 12.7 x 12.7 x 11.43 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Lesley McInally, *Abandoned Chamber*, n.d. From the *Orkney* series. Ceramic, 12.7 x 12.7 x 11.43 cm. View Source

For example, the pattern incised onto the outside of the vessel *Abandoned Chamber* (figs. 3a and 3b) suggests both the wooden ships used to navigate the Scottish Isles but also the archeological

remains of the ancient buildings found on the Orkney Islands. McInally explains that her work examines, "the relationship and interaction of landscape, seascape, weather and archaeological sites of Neolithic chambers, dwellings and monuments found in the Orkney Islands [which] have been the predominant influence in my most recent body of work. What has become increasingly intriguing for me is the historical narrative encapsulated within and on these ancient monuments." (NJH)

Heidi McKenzie

Heidi McKenzie, based in Toronto, Ontario, is a ceramic artist, arts journalist, and curator. In 2009, she left a twenty-year career in arts management and radio to pursue ceramics full-time, apprenticing with Indian studio potter, Mini Singh, in her father's ancestral home at the foothills of the Himalayas.



Figure 1. Heidi McKenzie, *China Bound No, 5*, 2013. Porcelain, 8.9 x 14 x 8.9 cm. View Source

Upon her return to Canada, McKenzie established a studio practice, delving into the creation of both functional-ware and abstract sculptural pieces, seen in works such as *China Bound No, 5* (2013) (fig. 1) which was created in Jingdezhen, China, during an artist residency in the summer of 2013. After 2014, McKenzie began experimenting with transferring photographs into iron oxide decals on clay, using photographic images to engage with themes of the body, memory, family history, migration, and belonging.



Figure 2. Heidi McKenzie, *Moving Forward*, 2016. Porcelain with iron oxide decal, 11 x 11 x 11cm each. View Source

Her interplay of image and ceramics is evident in her piece, *Moving Forward* (2016) (fig. 2), in which she depicts fragmented images of her own body on slip-cast polyhedron blocks, conveying her pain and isolation after a prolonged period of illness by disassembling and dislocating the familiarity of the body. Expanding on this exploration of the body, as well as themes of familial bonds and her mixed-race Indo-Trinidadian/Irish-American heritage, McKenzie unveiled her exhibition *Family Matters* at the Gardiner Museum Shop (Toronto, Ontario) in 2019.



Figure 3. Heidi McKenzie, *House of Cards*, 2019. Porcelain ceramic substrate cards, 11.45 x 15.25 x 0.05 cm, stacked variable as a house of cards. View Source

Among the exhibited works was *House of Cards* (2019) (fig. 3), a piece constructed from thin porcelain cards ceramic substrate with archival photographs of her father's lived experiences symbolising his immigration from Trinidad and the precariousness of building a new life in Canada as an immigrant. McKenzie delved deeper into themes of race, ancestry, and colonisation in her mixed-media ceramic-based exhibition, *Reclaimed: Indo-Caribbean Her Stories* (Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Ontario, 2023). In her artist's statement for the exhibition, McKenzie writes: "Through a feminist lens, the exhibition narrates the little-known histories of Indo-indentureship in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries through to the women of today." (SS)

Valerie Metcalfe

Valerie Metcalfe, based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, is a ceramic artist specialising in wheel-thrown porcelain. She approaches her craft, in her own words, as "a form of alchemy wherein you work with the four elements to transform humble matter into something precious." Describing herself as a "production potter," she produces functional ware in large quantities while also exploring larger works.

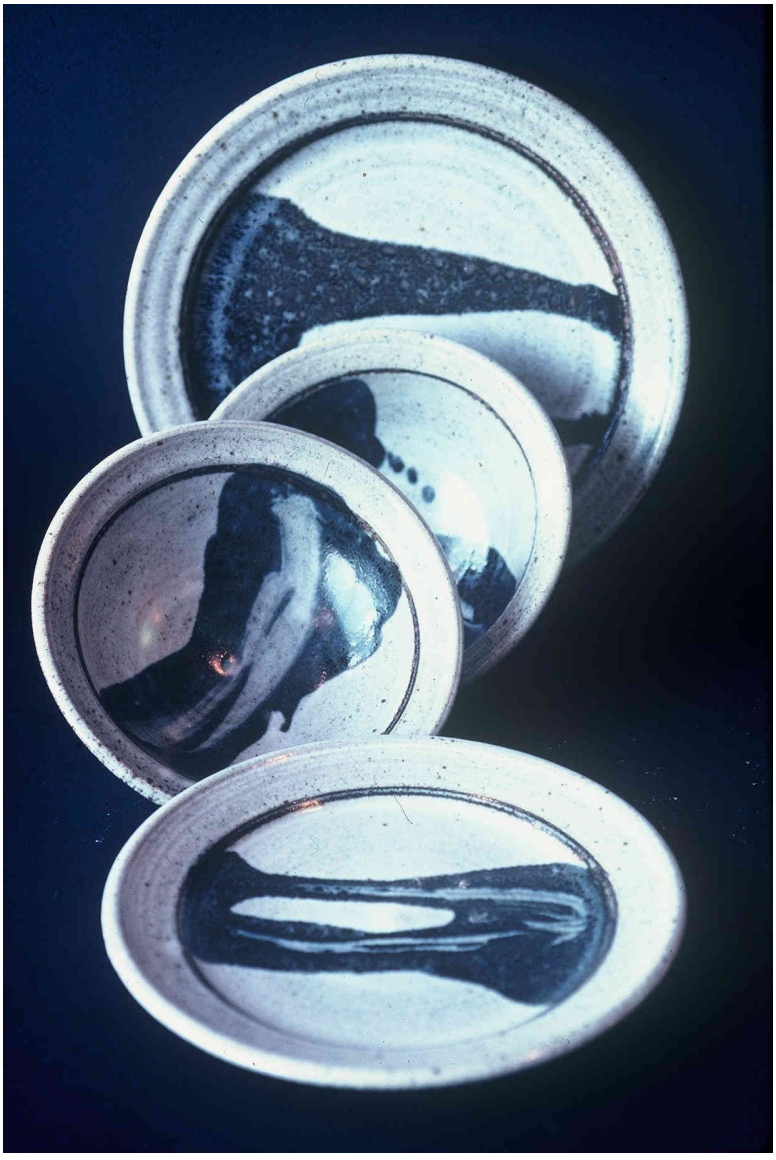


Figure 1. Valerie Metcalfe, *Dinnerware set*, 1978. Ceramic, large plate, 27.9 cm, bowl 20.3 cm, small plate 17.8 cm. View Source

Like many artists of the 1970s, Metcalfe worked primarily in stoneware in the early years of her career, as seen in her 1978 dinnerware set (fig. 1). She gradually moved into porcelain work, attracted by its luminous white colour, which provides a blank canvas for her decorative expression.



Figure 2. Valerie Metcalfe, *Dinnerware set*, 1983. Porcelain dinner plate 30.5 cm, side plate 20.3 cm, bowl 17.8 cm, cup 7.6 x 7.6 cm, saucer 12.7cm. View Source

Her meticulous designs often draw inspiration from nature, evident in her 1983 dinnerware set adorned with delicate blue and green flowers, complemented by vibrant red splashes (fig. 2).



Figure 3. Valerie Metcalfe, *Cathedral Bowl*, 2000. Porcelain, 45.7 x 11.4 cm. View Source

She also employs glazes to create abstracted designs, as seen in *Cathedral Bowl* (2000) (fig. 3). Throughout her career, Metcalfe has remained an enduring presence in Manitoba's arts community. As a founding member of the Stoneware Gallery and Studio (Winnipeg, Manitoba) in 1978, she has played a pivotal role in fostering artistic growth within the local landscape. Over the past four decades, she has nurtured connections with fellow artists and shared her knowledge through teaching, solidifying her position as a cornerstone of the Stoneware cooperative and the wider ceramics community. (SS)

Richard Milette

Montreal artist Richard Milette is known for an intellectual approach to clay that simultaneously references, critiques, and subverts historical ceramic traditions while exploring themes related to gay male experience. Milette's work over four decades draws from a diversity of historical periods and regions, from the Hydria vessels of ancient Greece to eighteenth-century French Sèvres porcelain and Chinese export garniture vases. Elaborately and elegantly crafted, Milette's technical virtuosity is not an end in itself, but rather serves

to underscore the artist's ideas. A broken vessel glued back together, often with pieces missing, is one of Milette's characteristic motifs, undermining both the utility of the form and the sense of preciousness that antique ceramics convey.



Figure 1a. Richard Milette, *Hydrie 13.6996 avec Homo,* 1994. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Richard Milette, *Hydrie 13.6996 avec Homo,* 1994. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source

In *Hydrie 13.6996 avec HOMO* (1994) (figs. 1a and 1b), held in the collection of the Musée des arts décoratifs in Paris, the viewer must reconcile a familiar form, the hydria vase, with an unfamiliar and disconcerting surface, text interspersed with patterning from different historical periods. As suggested by his inclusion in the 2014 exhibition *Camp Fires: The Queer Baroque of Léopold L. Foulem, Paul Mathieu, and Richard Milette,* which premiered at the Gardiner Museum, Milette's work pays homage to camp, described by curator Robin Metcalfe as including "elements of irony, exaggeration, excess, humour, sentimentality, theatricality, artifice, parody and devotion; as a disputed field of appropriation and counter-appropriation and of alternative signifying codes."



Figure 2. Richard Milette, *Guasparre*, 2000. Ceramic, 59.7 × 66 × 26.7 cm. View Source

As one of many pieces featured, *Guasparre* (2000) (fig. 2) showcases the artist's erotic playfulness, use of double entendres, and skilled trompe l'oeil techniques used to create the illusion of materials other than ceramics. Featuring a studded black leather-like handle affixed to a teapot body fashioned to look like male genitalia, the piece suggests sado-masochism, once a popular cliché of homosexuality.



Figure 3. Richard Milette, *Garniture à fond jaune*, 2004. Ceramic, 33.5 x 56 x 17.2 cm. View Source

In *Garniture à fond jaune* (2004) (fig. 3), now in the collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Quebec, Milette references the monochrome enamel vases of eighteenth-century Chinese export porcelain. As with much of his work, the functionality of the pieces has been subverted, the vessel openings sealed, thereby closing the distance between craft and fine art, the disjointed text another example of the artist's exploration of the use, value and significance of narrative in art. (TS)

Lindsay Montgomery

Lindsay Montgomery creates ceramic vessels and sculptures that reimagine medieval and renaissance myths, legends, and cautionary tales through a feminist and activist lens. Inspired by Italian Renaissance maiolica, she refers to her approach as "Neo-Istoriato," a contemporary take on the Istoriato story-telling style popular in Europe in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, in which biblical, historical, and mythological scenes were painted onto ceramics. "I see medieval symbols as powerful images that we can use to talk about environmental activism today, women's rights today, just all

kinds of political ideas about speaking truth to power," Montgomery writes. Her work challenges the notion that the decorative cannot be conceptual or political.



Figure 1a. Lindsay Montgomery, *She-cession (Round Charger),* 2021. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Lindsay Montgomery, *She-cession (Round Charger) (detail),* 2021. Ceramic, dimensions unknown. View Source

In *She-cession (Round Charger)* (2020) (figs. 1a and 1b), a round charger plate created early in the COVID-19 lockdown and shown as part of her exhibition *Year of the Flood* at Galerie 3 in Montreal in 2021, she uses medieval plague imagery to comment on the disproportionately high cost of the pandemic for women juggling work and full-time childcare duties. While honouring women's experiences and calling out misogyny, Montgomery is not afraid to address what she calls "toxic white femininity."



Figure 2a. Lindsay Montgomery, *Karens (Oval Charger),* 2021. Press-molded and coiled earthenware, tin-glazed and painted, 47 x 33 x 5 cm. View Source



Figure 2b. Lindsay Montgomery, *Karens (Oval Charger) (detail),* 2021. Press-moulded and coiled earthenware, tin-glazed and painted, 47 x 33 x 5 cm. View Source

Made at the time of the incident when a white woman called the police about a Black bird-watcher in New York City's Central Park, her 2020 oval charger plate, *Karens (Oval Charger),* (2020) (figs. 2a and 2b), uses imagery inspired by Dante's Inferno to bring awareness to the problem of weaponized racism.



Figure 3a. Lindsay Montgomery, *Crone Jug,* 2021. Coiled and modeled earthenware, tin-glazed and painted, 51 x 34 x 34 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Lindsay Montgomery, *Crone Jug,* (side view), 2021. Coiled and modeled earthenware, tin-glazed and painted, 51 x 34 x 34 cm. View Source

Montgomery's *Crone Jug* (2021) (figs. 3a and 3b) subverts the traditional Toby Jug, exchanging the usually jovial and rotund seated man with a serious, standing woman holding a broom, conveying Montgomery's respect for the matriarch. (TS)

Julie Moon

From her studio in Toronto, Ontario, Julie Moon creates both figurative and abstract sculptures, functional pottery, and ceramic accessories and jewellery. Her artistic practice is motivated by the

process of making and the experience of seeing which allows Moon to connect with objects and ideas manifest in her materials and her subsequent work. She explains, "[p]rior to my artistic career, I spent over a decade working in Toronto's garment industry. Now in the field of ceramics, I continue to be inspired by the language of ornament, tactile media and the human figure. Focused on the body, not necessarily its literal representation, I attempt to animate and anthropomorphize clay, often dressing up bulging, blob-like forms in a pastel palette of fancy frills and floral patterns."



Figure 1. Julie Moon, *Dancing Queen*, 2010. Porcelain, 30 x 26 x 26 cm. View Source

Moon explores the tactile and anthropomorphic qualities of the clay medium with pieces like *Dancing Queen* (2010) (fig. 1). However, these porcelain figurines are not like the delicate, modest objects collected and displayed in a china cabinet. *Dancing Queen* is an awkward and imperfect figure restricted by a cascading fancy dress, the smooth, delicately ornamented surface of which creates a visual

imbalance intended to confront viewers' preconceptions around beauty, femininity, and alterity. The first of Moon's two-part process is surface preparation, which is followed by decoration and ornamentation. She manipulates ceramic materials to subvert traditional conventions of feminine beauty by depicting natural deformities, protuberances, and growths that play with our desire to control nature and physical form. The 2014 exhibition *Chimera* (curated by Morgan Mavis for Craft Ontario Gallery, Toronto) included artworks by Canadian craft artist David R. Harper and the Contemporary Zoological Conservatory and featured pieces by Moon that examined the transition from natural world to specimen to material culture through traditional craft techniques such as ceramics and embroidery which have been historically gendered.



Figure 2. Julie Moon, *Sight Flight,* 2014. Porcelain, glaze, mylar, ink, dimensions unknown. View Source

For example, the highly-glazed porcelain surface of *Sight Flight* (fig. 2) appears fleshy and dimpled. The nose and lips of the face are almost lost among the ocular forms patterning the artwork, all of which contrasts sharply with the organic lines of the leaf-like mylar lashes stretching like butterfly wings from the numerous eyes that cover the piece to intimate the interaction between humanity and the natural environment. In the series *Acid Garden*, Moon uses clay to create a surface for design which she sees as a means to expand

upon and extend the process of making to explore multiple ideas in a single object. For both her sculptural and figurative artworks, Moon carefully forms her pieces by hand sometimes using the coil technique to build up the outer surface of her sculptures painted in precise detail to confuse the boundaries between form and decoration.



Figure 3. Julie Moon, *Camouflage*, 2017. From the *Acid Garden* series. Stoneware and glaze, dimensions unknown. View Source

For example, *Camouflage* (fig. 3) from the *Acid Garden* series demonstrates Moon's love of graphics, pattern, and textile design, all of which continue to inspire her creative endeavours. Moon teaches ceramics at the Toronto School of Art and OCADU (Toronto). (NJH)

Paula Murray

Paula Murray is a ceramic artist based at Meech Lake, Quebec, best known for her thin porcelain sculptures and public works inspired by natural shapes such as shells and coils, as well as scrolls. Murray spent several years living on the water with her young family on long-term sailing trips between Canada and South America, enriching

both her life and work. This ongoing relationship with the sea has intensified her appreciation of nature, influencing her art practice, as she explains: "Much of my imagery is inspired by observing the forces of nature, the complex patterns and relationships in the world around me. I use my relationship with process and material as a metaphor to investigate our perception of the nature of reality."



Figure 1a. Paula Murray, *Nautilus*, 1990. Porcelain, steel, aluminum, lustres, and paint, 106.5 x 396 cm. Ottawa City Hall. View Source



Figure 1b. Paula Murray, *Nautilus*, 1990. Porcelain, steel, aluminum, lustres, and paint, 106.5 x 396 cm. Ottawa City Hall. View Source

The immense beauty of the sea often manifests in the shapes, colours, and figures of her work, as demonstrated in the large-scale installation *Nautilus* (1990) (figs. 1a and 1b). Commissioned by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton for the atrium of what is now Ottawa City Hall, Nautilus draws inspiration from the spiral structure of a nautilus shell. Its thirty-three arcs reflect the confluence of forces that sustain and shape the community. Murray has always had an unconventional approach to ceramic processes, and this commission led to her experimentation with multimedia, specifically in embedding fibreglass surface veil into her wet clay to create patterns and stress lines over several firings. Murray describes her process of combining clay and fibreglass, writing: "I induce movement in my cast porcelain forms through the juxtaposition of clay and surface-veil fibreglass. I am manipulating and responding to the work as the stress twists and cracks my forms as they dry." She connects these cracks and fissures to the fragility and strength of the human spirit, stating: "Woundedness and healing is part of life that everyone can recognize…I see beauty in those cracks, and strength in the will to survive whatever comes."



Figure 2a. Paula Murray, *You Are Me*, 2016. Seven porcelain vessels, aluminum frame wrapped in muslin, in a 101.5 x 28 cm circle. View Source



Figure 2b. Paula Murray, *You Are Me* (detail), 2016. Seven porcelain vessels, aluminum frame wrapped in muslin, in a 101.5 x 28 cm circle. View Source



Figure 2c. Paula Murray, *You Are Me* (detail), 2016. Seven porcelain vessels, aluminum frame wrapped in muslin, in a 101.5 x 28 cm circle. View Source

This interest in vulnerability and strength is apparent in Murray's 2016 exhibition *You Are Me* at the Ottawa Art Gallery (Ottawa, Ontario) (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c). Later invited to the Taiwan Ceramic Biennale in 2018, the exhibition consists of seven unique porcelain bowls floating on gauze in a circular formation. The vessels confront us on a human scale, evoking the idea that we are all connected—part of the circle of life—and that at any moment, we may find ourselves in a state of brokenness or healing.

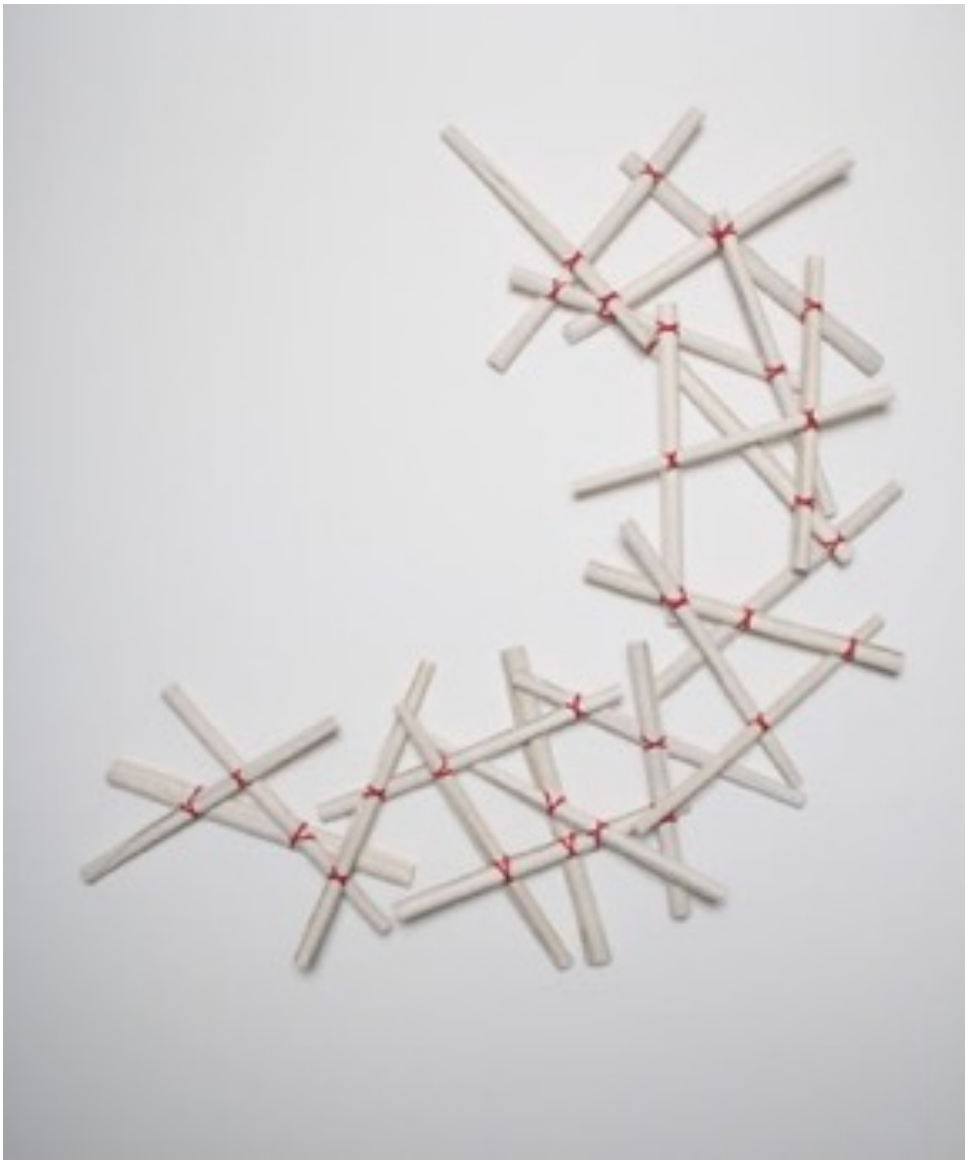


Figure 3. Paula Murray, *Adrift*, 2021. Wall sculpture of bound porcelain scrolls, 122 x 113 x 10 cm. View Source

In 2020, Murray displayed her small and medium works in a solo exhibition, *Call and Response* at the L.A. Pai Gallery (Ottawa, Ontario), including *Adrift* (2021) (fig. 3), a wall sculpture of bound porcelain scrolls, reflecting the artist's interest in studying ancient sources of knowledge. (SS)

Diane Nasr

Diane Nasr, a Quinte West, Ontario-based ceramic artist, was born and raised in Trinidad. Upon immigrating to Canada, she lived in

Kleinberg, Ontario for over forty years, where she maintained a studio practice alongside her husband, fellow ceramicist Kayo O'Young. Nasr is known for her whimsical and intricately crafted porcelain vessel forms—teapots, bowls, baskets—that blur the line between functional ware and sculpture. The Canadian Glass and Clay Gallery describes her process, writing: "Frequently using incredibly thin porcelain hand-built with countless pieces of added decoration, Nasr's technique produces light and airy forms that provide the viewer with a sense of wonder and infinite details to observe."



Figure 1. Diane Nasr, *Dragon Teapot*, 1995. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

Her animated works are not predictable in execution, with layers of added surface texture and fantastical components, as seen in her *Dragon Teapot* (1995) (fig. 1), included in the group exhibition, *Evocative: The Art of Porcelain* (curated by Jonathan Smith for the Canadian Glass and Clay Gallery, Waterloo, Ontario, 2019). Another characteristic of Nasr's pottery is her bold and experimental use of colour; she makes the glazes for both herself and her husband, resulting in vivid and colourful works. She notes, "[M}y father was a pharmacist… I immediately felt a connection to mixing glazes and the chemistry of it. To me it's creating a liquid fabric, a textile."



Figure 2. Diane Nasr, *Basket Sculpture*, 1998. Porcelain, height 26 cm. View Source

Nasr often chooses a palette that evokes the lush flora and fauna of her Trinidadian childhood, as reflected in the blues and greens of her *Basket Sculpture* (1998) (fig. 2). Nasr's work was displayed in a two-person exhibition, *Stories Told* (2014), with jeweller Vivienne Jones, in the gallery-space at Pearson International Airport (Toronto, Ontario).



Figure 3. Diane Nasr, *Tea Cup*, n.d. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Peter Panacci. View Source

The airport described her work in *Stories Told* as "[inhabiting] the realm of fairy tales, presenting us with vessels both humorous and sumptuous," as evident in the delicate, yet bold and highly-decorated teacup included in the show (fig. 3). (SS)

Grace Nickel

Grace Nickel is an artist and educator living in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where she teaches at the University of Manitoba School of Art. Her studio practice focuses on sculptural ceramics made in a variety of media, including paper-clay, porcelain, and glass, which, in her own words, "investigate how material, process, and scale impart meaning to form and how they influence the aesthetic qualities of my studio work through exploring both traditional and new technologies."



Figure 1a. Grace Nickel and Michael Zajac, *Espalier*, 2015. Porcelain tiles, each tile: 49.5 x 72 x 0.7 cm. Photo credit: Karl Griffiths-Fulton. View Source



Figure 1b. Grace Nickel and Michael Zajac, *Espalier*, 2015. Porcelain tiles, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Karl Griffiths-Fulton. View Source

She also works on site-specific commissions, including sculptural lighting for public and private architectural spaces and tile-making and installation, such as her *Espalier* series of porcelain tiles (2015)

(figs. 1a and 1b). To create the surface design of this tile series, Nickel used peripheral photography and laser marking to flatten her three-dimensional sculptural forms into two-dimensional patterns in collaboration with photographer, digital technician, and designer Michael Zajac. The organic lines on these tiles reflect the artist's abiding interest in nature, specifically the form of the tree and its life cycle. Her work often contemplates the resilience of trees in response to natural disasters and climate change, as described by Tammy Sutherland, Director of the Manitoba Craft Council, who writes: "Her work considers how the intimate and individual struggle for survival reflects the broader crises in which we find ourselves today, with climate change and resulting environmental catastrophes [being] top of mind."



Figure 2a. Grace Nickel, *Arbor Vitae*, 2015. Installation view. Porcelain, oxide, glaze, metal armatures, 240 x 360 x 525 cm overall. Photo credit: Michael Zajac. View Source

Constantly experimenting and refining her craft, Nickel undertook two years of intensive study of Jingdezhen porcelain in China as well as a study of fabric formwork in Winnipeg at the University of Manitoba's Centre for Architectural Structures and Technology (CAST), using flexible fabric membranes to create curvatures in clay, resulting in a body of work called *Arbor Vitae* (2015) (fig. 2a)

(curated by Sheila McMath for the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo, Ontario, 2015; touring) that combines the natural beauty of trees, the strength of classical columns, and the fluidity of cloth.



Figure 2b. Grace Nickel, *Host*, 2015. Jingdezhen porcelain, slipcast with handbuilt additions, metal base and armature, 270 x 50 x 50 cm. Photo credit: Michael Zajac. View Source



Figure 2c. Grace Nickel, *Host*, 2015. Jingdezhen porcelain, slipcast with handbuilt additions, metal base, and armature, 270 x 50 x 50 cm. Photo credit: Michael Zajac. View Source

Nickel describes *Arbor Vitae*, writing that the large-scale porcelain sculptures, such as *Host* (2015) (figs. 2b and 2c), reference both natural forms and artificial construction, thereby "[negotiating] the relationship between the natural and the fabricated, the austere and the embellished, growth and decay, loss and recovery." The monumental verticality and stark white palette of *Arbor Vitae* bring to mind images of ancient Greek architecture or, in the words of curator Sheila McMath, of "the structural columns of buildings that remain long after the walls have fallen away," thereby referencing environmental destruction caused by both humans and natural phenomena. In 2022, Nickel expanded on her investigation of trees and their survival in the face of destruction by collecting, studying, and memorializing felled trees and forest fragments in porcelain, resulting in the solo exhibition, *Eruptions,* initially created for a solo exhibition at the Art Gallery of Burlington in Ontario (2019), curated by Suzanne Carte. The exhibition was subsequently shown at Gallery 1C03 at the University of Winnipeg (2022), curated by Jennifer Gibson, and later at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa for the Governor General's Awards in the Visual and Media Arts exhibition (2023/2024).

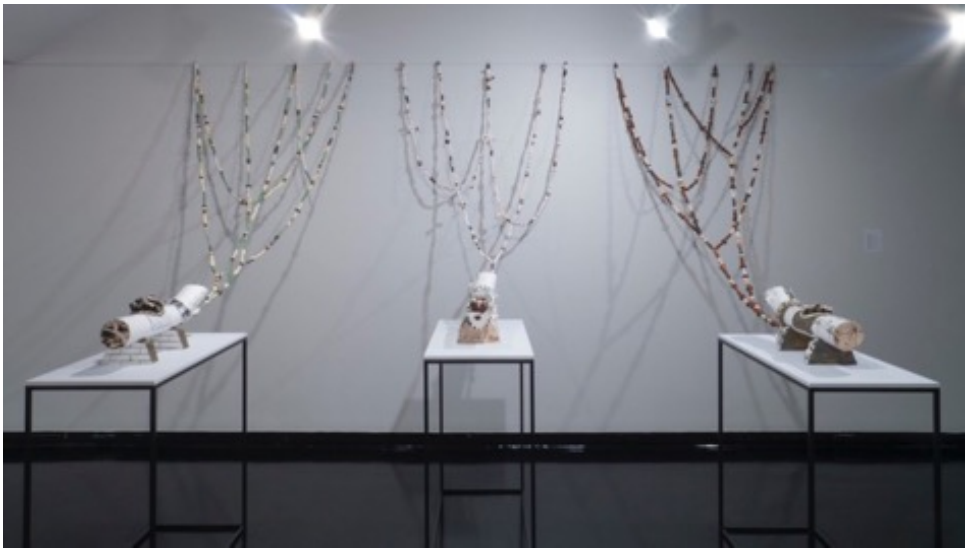


Figure 3a. Grace Nickel, *Pyre*, 2019, (installation view). Porcelain, 27 x 83 x 20 cm. Photo credit: Michael Zajac. View Source



Figure 3b. Grace Nickel, *Pyre with Tumblestack and Lifeline* (detail), 2019. Porcelain, 27 x 83 x 20 cm. Photo credit: Michael Zajac. View Source

At the installation's centre stands her *Pyre* series (2019) (figs. 3a and 3b), comprising porcelain tree fragments connected to the gallery wall with beaded string, branching out to create the spectre of a living tree in shadows. This work refers to funerary rituals and decay, pointing to the direness of ongoing environmental catastrophes while also providing a measure of hope by including new growth emerging from the pyre in the form of ceramic fungi and roots, suggesting networks of support, conduits for nourishment, and the potential for passage to a new life. Nickel was the recipient of the 2023 Governor General's Saidye Bronfman Award, which was celebrated with a solo exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Titled *Inter Arte et Naturam (Between Art and Nature*) 2023, it was curated by Tammy Sutherland and Riva Symko.

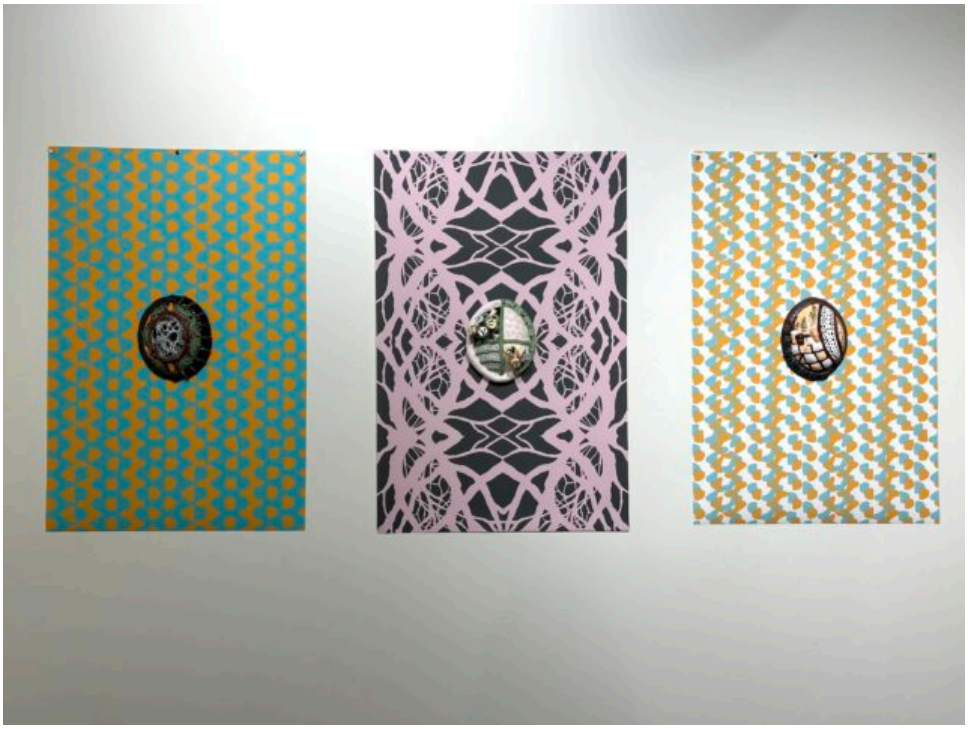


Figure 3c. Grace Nickel, *Commemorative Cameos*, 2023, Axis of Art – Women in Clay, Jonathon Bancroft-Snell Gallery, London, Ontario. View Source

The 2023 exhibition at Jonathon Bancroft-Snell Gallery, London, Ontario, included a series of works collectively named *Commemorative Cameos* (2023) (fig. 3c). Nickel writes: This body of work delves into Anabaptist pottery known as Haban ware, which was produced in northern and central Europe during the Renaissance period. This largely unrecognized but important branch of tin-glazed ceramics connects to my own Anabaptist heritage." (SS)

Kayo O'Young

Kayo O'Young was born in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong in 1950 and immigrated to Canada in 1965 with his parents to escape the political unrest of the era. It is often written that O'Young hails from a long line of potters and threw his first pot at the age of five, which is not true, he says; "I was born on a farm where we grew rice, and there was a lot of clay. When I came to Canada I took a ceramic class and it felt like home." Amongst ceramicists, O'Young is often referred to as a "potter's potter," having maintained a consistent studio practice producing functional

ware since the 1960s, while teaching and mentoring many younger ceramicists. He is known for porcelain vessels thrown on the wheel with handwork additions, surface scratching, scouring, and glazes applied in a painterly and calligraphic fashion.



Figure 1. Kayo O'Young, *Oversized 'Rainforest' Teapot*, 1993. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

O'Young's approach to surface decoration is sometimes dense, as seen in his *Oversized 'Rainforest' Teapot* (1993) (fig. 1), bearing layered gestural brushwork in pink, blue, and green on a black background.



Figure 2a. Kayo O'Young, *Large Turquoise Glazed Vase*, 1993. Porcelain, 33.5 x 35 cm. View Source

Other vessels are strikingly minimalistic, as seen in *Large Turquoise Glazed Vase* (1993) (fig. 2a).



Figure 2b. Kayo O'Young, *Kayo O'Young: After Fifty Years*, 2015. Installation view. View Source

A number of such turquoise pieces were included in the 2015 retrospective of the artist's porcelain works and ink impressions at the Carnegie Gallery (Dundas, Ontario) (fig. 2b), titled *Kayo O'Young: After Fifty Years*, alongside other vases, bottles, bowls, and teapots from across the artist's fifty-year-long career in ceramics, celebrating his contributions to Canadian art. When his wife, fellow ceramicist Diane Nasr, was asked what brings O'Young back to the wheel after five decades, she said, "He's a person of few words…I think in some ways, the making of the pots expresses whatever he's feeling. That's his words, his language…He knows his clay and he's happy there…He never tires of it."



Figure 3. Kayo O'Young, *Bowl - Mustard*, 2022. Porcelain, 7.6 x 33 cm. View Source

O'Young continues to experiment in porcelain today, such as with his *Bowl – Mustard* (2022) (fig. 3), an expressionistic and one-of-a-kind vessel with abstract, textured surface decoration along the centre of the form. O'Young and Nasr recently moved from Kleinberg, Ontario, where they had lived and worked for forty years, to Quinte West, Ontario. (SS)

Maja Padrov

Maja Padrov is a Fredericton, New Brunswick-based ceramicist who immigrated to the Atlantic province from Novi Sad, Serbia, in 1997. After her move, she took a night course in studio pottery and fell in love with clay, as she explains, "I had the time of my life learning something that I never paid attention to before." Padrov has lived and maintained a studio practice in Gagetown, New Brunswick, since 2003, while also working until 2017 as a part-time ceramics instructor at the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design (Fredericton,

New Brunswick). In her studio practice, Padrov explores the sculptural possibilities of functional pottery and everyday objects. Having trained in making functional wares, she uses wheel-throwing and hand-building techniques to make and expand upon the basic structures and components of teapots, covered jars, and vessels, creating intricate pieces that maintain functionality while also playing with positive and negative space, colour, and form in unexpected ways. She explains: "I often change the method of making, proportions and appearance of elements, so the function is not always obvious. I like to arrange elements in a playful, illogical manner; their placement and interplay affect both function and the aesthetic."



Figure 1. Maja Padrov, *Ceramic Medium Green Teapot*, n.d. Ceramic, 38 x 17.75 cm. View Source

Function is sometimes emphasised and sometimes concealed in her work, as evident in her *Ceramic Medium Green Teapot* (fig. 1), which is not instantly recognisable as a teapot. Another important aspect of Padrov's work is her research in glaze chemistry and firing techniques. As she writes, the "transformative power of heat, extensive research in chemistry, belief in potter's alchemy and chance, are my main decorating tools."



Figure 2a. Maja Padrov, *Entanglement*, 2014. Materials and dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2b. Maja Padrov, *Entanglement*, 2014. Materials and dimensions unknown. View Source

In her experimental surface treatments, she often makes references to other materials, such as metal and stone, as seen in the metal-like surface of *Entanglement* (2014) (figs. 2a and 2b), a sculptural piece that was included in the 2016 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale at the Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taipei.



Figure 3a. Maja Padrov, *Articulate 2*, n.d. Ceramic connected covered jars and bowls, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3b. Maja Padrov, *Articulate 2*, n.d. Installation view. Ceramic connected covered jars and bowls, dimensions unknown.

In 2020, Padrov exhibited her work, including the simultaneously functional and sculptural piece *Articulate 2* (figs. 3a and 3b), in a two-person show with textile artist Janice Wright Cheney, titled *Familiar Objects* (Gallery on Queen, Fredericton, New Brunswick). Padrov intends her ceramic works to be handled and felt, displaying a sign in her studio that reads, "Please, do touch." (SS)

Joseph Panacci

Joseph Panacci feels a sense of magic and wonder when throwing on his potter's wheel. The pursuit of a perfect form, the right glaze, and a challenging firing cycle captivate the artist, who sees every step of the ceramics-making process as an opportunity to learn.



Figure 1. Joseph Panacci, *Sanity Mugs*, 2022, Porcelain, oxide decoration with wood ash glaze. Fired in a wood kiln. 12 X 14 X 10cm. View Source

The *Sanity Mugs* (2022) (fig. 1) were inspired by an accidental dent caused by a mistake made while throwing on the wheel. To balance the design, Panacci created three additional dents, resulting in his *Sanity Mugs*, which, in his words, "serve as a reminder not to take things too seriously."

In 2006, when Panacci left Caledon, Ontario, to work at the Sprucedale Youth Centre in Simcoe, Ontario, he discovered his paradise and inspiration for his work in the landscapes, nature, and geography surrounding his studio. Having worked primarily with porcelain and a gas kiln, Panacci began using different clays, such as earthenware, after relocating, and installed a wood-fired kiln in his studio. While Panacci mostly creates finely formed, exquisitely glazed wheel-thrown vessels, the 2022 exhibition *Memory and Rebirth* (curated by Jonathan Smith for Carnegie Gallery, Dundas, Ontario) provided the opportunity for Panacci to work in a sculptural mode.



Figure 2. Joseph Panacci, *Farmer's Fields*, 2022. Wood-fired stoneware, 53 x 72 cm. View Source

Farmer's Fields (2022) (fig. 2) is a wall-mounted stoneware relief sculpture meant to embody the fertility and fecundity of the earth. Each of the two pieces swells and recedes to conjure not only rolling hills but also the female body (earth goddess); embedded stones in one of the pieces suggest the work required to clear the land for use while the vertical ridges and striations incised into the artwork's surface recall the furrows of a tilled field. "Ceramics is an art form that is firmly based in craft, in technique," remarks curator Jonathan Smith. "So much time is spent mastering the material that it is often only as a more seasoned artist that they let themselves explore a more sculptural approach to their work."



Figure 3. Joseph Panacci, *Vase*, 2022. Porcelain, 23 x 23 cm. View Source

Joseph, along with his son Peter, built a wood-burning kiln in 2010. He began experimenting with local materials like clays, sand, wood ash, and local rocks to make the sabulous glaze of *Vase* (2022) (fig. 3); its highly textured surface gives a sense of swirling movement to the vessel's classic form. (NJH)

Greg Payce

At first glance, Greg Payce's ceramic forms, from small ceramics to large-scale, multi-piece installations, appear to be conventional. However, the primary characteristic and strategy behind many of his works lies in their spatial relationship to one another and the negative space formed between them. Payce utilises various Formica templates to create each ceramic piece and attain these wheel-thrown, precise forms. As a five-year-old residing in Edmonton, Alberta, Payce observed an individual throw a pot on television, and from that moment forward, he wanted to become a potter. From his first pottery experiences in high school to his long tenure as a ceramics professor at the Alberta University of the Arts in Calgary, Payce has worked to expand the expressive potential and

conceptual range of ceramics. He sees himself as part of a continuum of ceramists who have pushed and developed the possibilities of the ceramic medium.

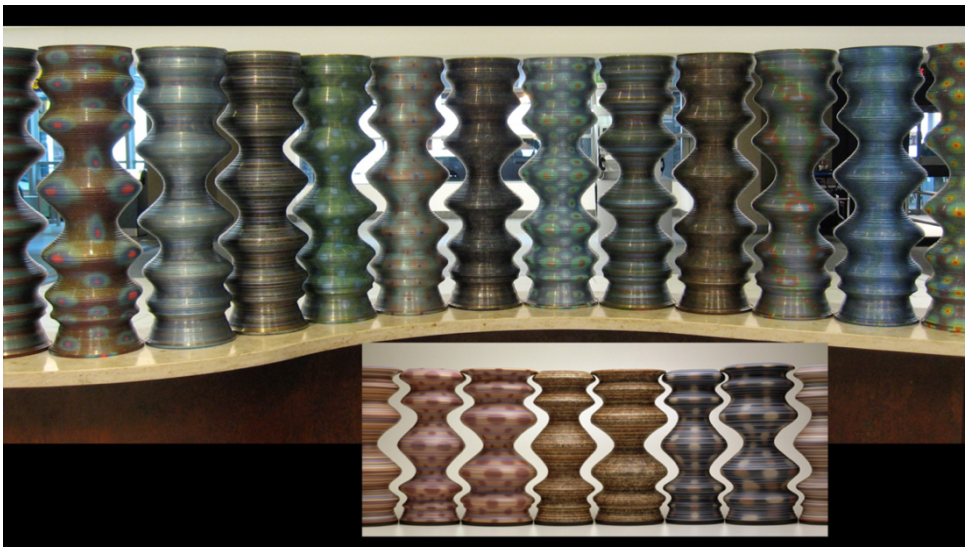


Figure 1. Greg Payce, *SSSSSSSSSSSSSS*, 2003. Turned bronze, paint. 92 x 458 cm. Collection of the Calgary International Airport. View Source

His work belies a fascination with images, decoration, history, and the notion of remediation, as seen in the shifting illusory experience of *SSSSSSSSSSSSSS* (2003) (fig. 1). This large-scale work represents a shift in medium from his previous ceramic piece, SSSSSSS (inset in image). He remediated the work in bronze to enable the concept to function in a public space. This newer piece was crafted in metal because the strength, permanence, and precision of that material were better suited for the site of the Calgary International Airport in Calgary, Alberta, where the piece is installed in a busy baggage claim area, where a ceramic work would not endure. Payce utilized industrial duplicator metal lathe technology to produce the elements in the piece. Each element began as a solid bronze extrusion, which was lathed to form each piece. Instead of ceramic surfaces, automobile paint was used. The onomatopoeic title is especially fitting because, as one's eye shifts from one reptilian-hued column to the next, the snakes formed by the negative space appear to slither, animated by the act of the viewer looking and moving past the elements.



Figure 2a. Greg Payce, *Entre la raison et la passion*, 2008. Porcelain, 100 x 117 cm. View Source

Payce frequently references historical sources for imagery, such as the silhouette of French Enlightenment philosopher François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire (1694-1778), which appears in the aperture between the two precisely formed porcelain vessels of *Entre la raison et la passion* (fig. 2a).

In 2004, Payce began collaborating with software engineers and lenticular fabricators to produce two-dimensional lenticular photographic images. To create these works, he takes high-resolution photographs of his ceramics from 24 incremental angles on a rotating turntable. The software engineers combine the images to produce a printed image that incorporates elements from all 24 photographic images. A specialised transparent, ridged plastic panel is laminated to the surface of this image. The ridges on this panel act as lenses. The viewer activates the image as they move in front of it. This technology enables him to create large-scale two-dimensional works that synthesize a three-dimensional apparition while maintaining their roots in ceramics.



Figure 2b. Greg Payce, *Entre la raison et la passion* (cabinet) with *The Customs and the Spirit of the Nations*: (from left to right) *Candide, Halcyon, Occident, Orient, Vanquish*, 2013 (installation view from *Illusions*, the Gardiner Museum). View Source



Figure 2c. Greg Payce, *The Customs and the Spirit of the Nations: Orient*, 2013 (edition 1 of 3). Lenticular photograph, 99.06 x 116.84 x 0.635 cm. View Source

For instance, Payce utilised the forms from *Entre la raison et la passion* to create a series of lenticular images titled *The Customs and the Spirit of the Nations* (2011-2013) (figs. 2b and 2c), after Voltaire's famous 1756 essay of the same name. Each of these works – *Candide*, *Halcyon, Occident, Orient,* and *Vanquish*–responds to ideas presented in various subthemes of the treatise. For each lenticular image, Payce photographs a tableau in the negative space visible through Voltaire's silhouette. Viewers can animate the different images of *The Customs and the Spirit of the Nations* by moving in front of them. This series was displayed alongside the ceramic work *Entre raison et la passion,* in the exhibition *Illusions* (2012), curated by Amy Gogarty for the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, Ontario. In the exhibition, remediated versions of Payce's ceramics, including lenticular images, turned metal, and video, accompanied his ceramic works, encouraging new experiences and interpretations of his ideas.

"Much of my ceramics grows from considering relationships between pottery form and human form," Payce explains, continuing, "Large scale and lenticular 3D animated images heighten the physical scale. The newer formats allow the ceramics to form interesting new relationships with both the physical and the functional contexts of exhibition spaces."



Figure 3a. Greg Payce, *The Transit of Venus*, 2013. Porcelain, dimensions unknown. View Source

In *The Transit of Venus* (2013) (fig. 3a) the identities of the figures in the shifting negative spaces become blurred. Gender binaries

dissolve, and the human figures undergo transformation. In The Transit of Venus, the line of vases illustrates a series of human figures in a changing depiction of human sexuality. The concept and title of the work merge a historically significant astronomical event (the transit of Venus across the Sun) with a Lou Reed song, " Take a Walk on the Wild Side, " in which a man transitions into a woman. (2013).



Figure 3b. Greg Payce, *Adam and Eve* (edition 1 of 2), 2015. Lenticular photograph, 116.8 x 116.8 cm. The Gardiner Museum, T10.6.311. View Source



Figure 3c. Greg Payce, *Adam and Eve* (edition 1 of 2), 2015. Lenticular photograph, 116.8 x 116.8 cm. The Gardiner Museum, T10.6.310. View Source

Similarly, for the Lenticular series *Adam and Eve* (2015) (figs. 3b and 3c), male and female figures appear in the negative space between the vases that Payce utilised for the work. The masculine blue vessels form the figure of Adam, while the contours of the feminine pink vessels correspond to the figure of Eve. Adam appears through the image of Eve, and Eve appears through the image of Adam. The pair of images is a satirical, contemporary, gender-based take on the many historical paired paintings of Adam and Eve. (NJH)

Mary Philpott

Mary Philpott is a craft artist whose practice encompasses both sculptural ceramics and two-dimensional drawings and paintings on tile.



Figure 1. Mary Philpott, *Feather, Fox & Hare*, n.d. Porcelain tile and glaze, 40.65 x 40.65 cm. View Source

She draws inspiration from an array of sources, including the English Arts and Crafts Movement, Symbolist and Pre-Raphaelite paintings, Medieval tapestries, and, above all, the wonders of the natural world, as seen in her tile *Feather, Fox & Hare* (fig. 1). Philpott makes her porcelain tiles using a traditional tile-making method that encompasses hand drawing, carving, and pressing. Each tile undergoes multiple firings, with layers of glazes meticulously

applied by hand to create a jewel-tone palette inspired by the landscapes of Provence.



Figure 2. Mary Philpott, *Curious Buzzing Thing Crow*, 2014. Sculpture clay, dimensions unknown. View Source

She also creates three-dimensional sculptural works of the animals depicted in her tiles, such as *Curious Buzzing Thing Crow* (2014) (fig. 2). Since moving to the countryside of Uxbridge, Ontario, in 2015, Philpott's practice has become progressively more sculptural. Immersed in the untouched beauty surrounding her, she gained a new vantage point for observing the behaviour of animals in their natural habitat and became increasingly focused on depicting them in sculptural form.



Figure 3. Mary Philpott, *White Crackle Hare* (detail), n.d. Sculpture clay, metallic oxides, and satin glazes, dimensions unknown. View Source

Her 2017 show, *Mary Philpott: Susurration* at the Robert McLaughlin Gallery (Oshawa, Ontario), highlighted these sculptures, such as *White Crackle Hare* (fig. 3). Philpott's evocative, hand-modelled animal figures exude a mythic quality, reflecting the artist's desire to explore not only the land that surrounds her but also the enchanting realms of fairy tales. She invites viewers to embrace the magic that lies within both tangible and intangible landscapes, posing her animals in static positions that recall children's book illustrations and paintings in the medieval *Book of Hours*. (SS)

Kasia Piech

Ceramics are at the core of Kasia Piech's mixed media practice, which explores the complexities of modern life, from plastic pollution to conspicuous consumption to Catholicism and the Seven Deadly Sins, and more recently, to social justice and the fundamental human right to medical care. As she explains, "Artists have the ability to comment on the society in which they live. The intent of my work is to play with certain societal themes such as religion, morals, ideals, humour, beauty, disability, and the grotesque." Piech turned to ceramics after earning a degree in religious studies, a subject that still informs her work. After teaching in a variety of places in Canada and around the world, Kasia Piech is currently a sessional instructor in Ceramics at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, completing an MA in Social Justice and working at Community Living Thunder Bay.



Figure 1. Kasia Piech, *The Seven Deadly Sins Garden Bench*, 2007. Mixed media, dimensions unknown. Art Gallery of Burlington. View Source

After winning the 2008 Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics, Piech took a research trip to Spain, studying Hieronymus Bosch at the Museo del Prado and participating in a residency focused on faith and religion. These experiences were the impetus behind the works

created for the solo exhibition *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (Burlington Art Centre, Burlington, Ontario, 2007), which featured works such as *The Seven Deadly Sins Garden Bench* (2007) (fig. 1). The exhibition title references Bosch's painting of the same name, created c.1450-1510, which is a visual representation of the fears that dominated the Medieval imagination, such as eternal damnation, human weakness, temptations of the flesh, and lustful human folly. Piech's *Garden Bench* is a meditation on good and evil, the grotesque figure turned on its side suggests the world turned upside down, while the little critters with oversized heads crawling over the surface symbolise beings trapped by their own thoughts. Piech made the glaze herself from expired canned food, which made the piece look like it was rotting; a grotesque being whose carnal desires have distorted its body. Piech's figures are often monstrous or mischievous-looking; they have a menacing, abject quality that results from Piech's glazes made using expired foods and other such materials.



Figure 2a. Kasia Piech, *Cardinal Sins*, 2010. Installation view, Thunder Bay Art Gallery. Ceramic, mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2b. Kasia Piech, *Gluttony*, 2010. From the installation *Cardinal Sins*. Ceramic, mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2c. Kasia Piech, *Justice*, 2010. From the installation *Cardinal Sins*. Ceramic, mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source

Piech poses some uneasy questions about human nature and our unhealthy materialist preoccupations with equal measures of whimsy

and gloom in *Cardinal Sins* (2010) (2a), a ceramic-based installation piece comprised of two grotesquely smiling heads and fourteen female figurines representing the seven deadly sins and the seven cardinal virtues, such as *Gluttony* (fig. 2b) and *Justice* (fig. 2c) displayed on individual faux-grass covered plinths. *Cardinal Sins* playfully combines a solemn religiosity with moral ambiguity to question the world around us and the paradoxical structures delimiting our experience; Piech's works remind us that life is complex, always evolving, but through the chaos and ugliness truth is made clear.

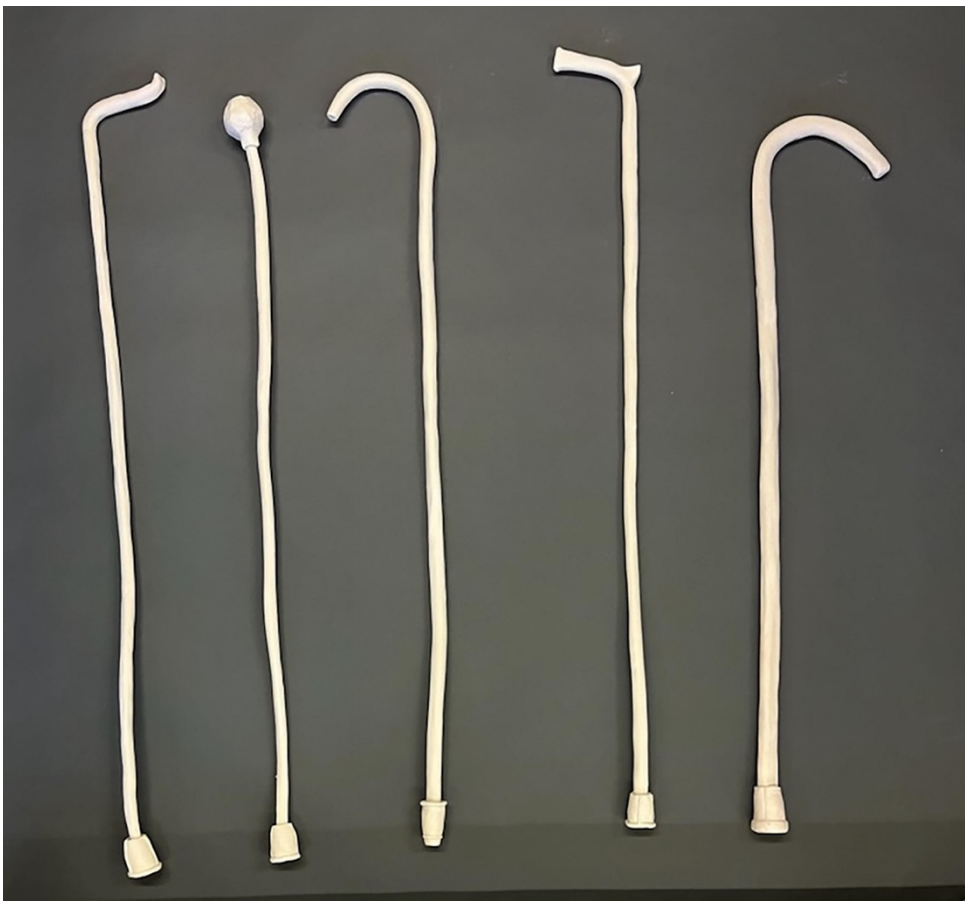


Figure 3a. Kasia Piech, *Cane*, 2020. Ceramic porcelain, 91h cm. CoLab Gallery, Thunder Bay. Photographer: Jorge Cueto. View Source

Informed by her interest in social justice, Piech's recent work explores issues surrounding physical disability and health in northwest Ontario. By creating assistive devices like canes, walkers, and wheelchairs out of porcelain and paper, she aims to start a needed conversation about the fragility of life and the fundamental human right to care in Northwestern Ontario.

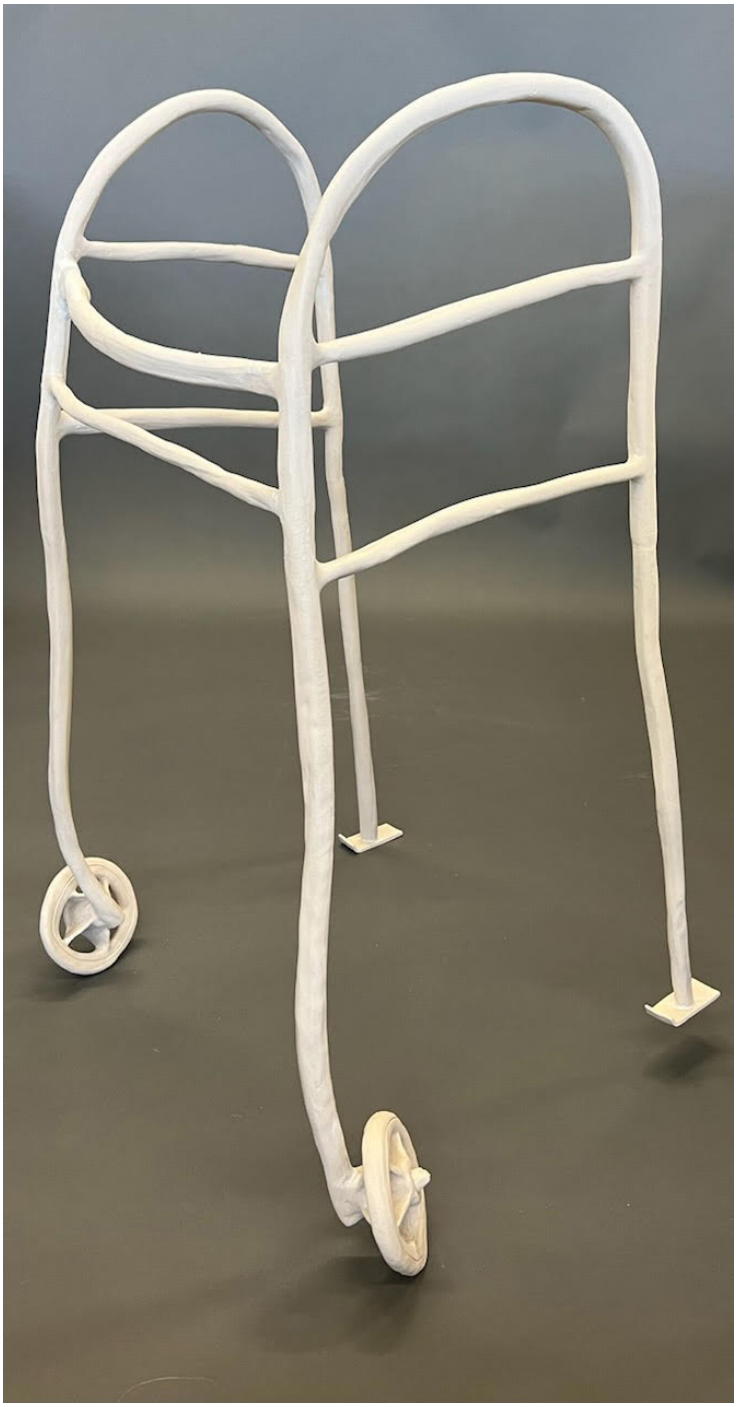


Figure 3b. Kasia Piech, *Walker,* 2020. Ceramic porcelain, 81 x 60 x 43 cm. CoLab Gallery, Thunder Bay. Photographer: Jorge Cueto. View Source



Figure 3c. Kasia Piech, *Wheelchair*, 2020. Ceramic Porcelain, 92 x 175 x 38 cm. CoLab Gallery, Thunder Bay. Photographer: Jorge Cueto. View Source

This new body of work, such as *Cane* (2012) (fig. 3a), Walker (2020) (fig. 3b) and *Wheelchair* (2020) (fig. 3c), incorporates ceramic and paper, conceptually alluding to the fragility of both bodily skin and the human spirit. The unglazed quality of the ceramic gives the porcelain pieces a bone-like surface appearance, reinforcing the reference to the frailty of mortal existence. (NJH)

Gilbert Poissant

From his home studio on the slopes of Mont Saint-Hilaire, Quebec, multidisciplinary artist Gilbert Poissant has worked with a diverse array of materials over the years. He is constantly experimenting and grafting new technical and aesthetic processes onto his own practice. "I draw my sources of creation from the field of design and architecture, exploring the issues raised by the diversity of disciplinary fields," Poissant explains, "I merge the approaches in a protean work that molds to the technical advances of the time while reinventing a very old material, ceramics."

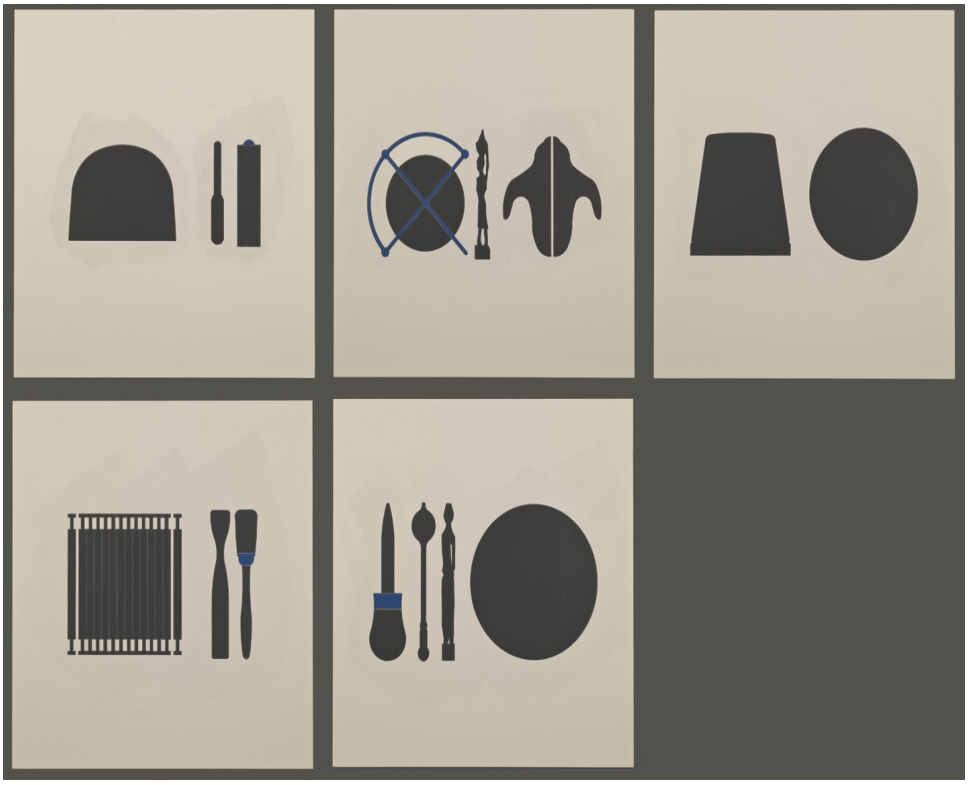


Figure 1. Gilbert Poissant, *Objets spécifiques*, 2009. Porcelain, 59.7 x 59.7 x 2.8 cm. Musée national de beaux-arts du Quebec, 2011.52. View Source

For example, for the pictographic designs of *Objets spécifiques*, (2009) (fig. 1), five porcelain plates were each printed with the blue-black silhouettes of select objects that Poissant "aimlessly" collected over decades to create a pattern that oscillates between representation and abstraction.



Figure 2. Gilbert Poissant, *Traversée*, 2011. Porcelain, stainless steel, 290 x 150 x 8 cm. Parc municipal du Grand Lac Saint-François, Lambton. Photo by Michael Dubreuil. View Source

He uses industrial ceramics as the raw material for some of his large-scale public art commissions, such as the outdoor mural *Traversée* (2011) (fig. 2) located in Parc municipal du Grand Lac Saint-François in Lambton, Quebec. The surface is partially covered by the digitally printed design that resembles rolling waves or soaring undulatus clouds, both of which intimate the passage of time, a subject Poissant frequently evokes in his art.



Figure 3a. Gilbert Poissant, *Le Jeu du collectionneur*, 2016. Installation view. Found objects, wood, plexiglass, dimensions variable. View Source



Figure 3b. Gilbert Poissant, *Le Jeu du collectionneur*, 2016. Installation view (detail). Found objects, wood, plexiglass, dimensions variable. View Source



Figure 3c. Gilbert Poissant, *Le Jeu du collectionneur*, 2016. Found objects, wood, plexiglass, dimensions variable. View Source

Poissant used his collection of found objects for the installation piece and exhibition of the same name, *Le Jeu du collectionneur* (2016) (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c) (curated by Pascale Beaudet for Centre d'exposition Circa, Montreal, Quebec, 2016), which consisted of 600 found objects mostly made of wood. The playful groupings of objects such as dice, hat blocks, and hammers contrasted sharply with the seriousness of the artist's classification of the objects according to size and their meticulous arrangement.

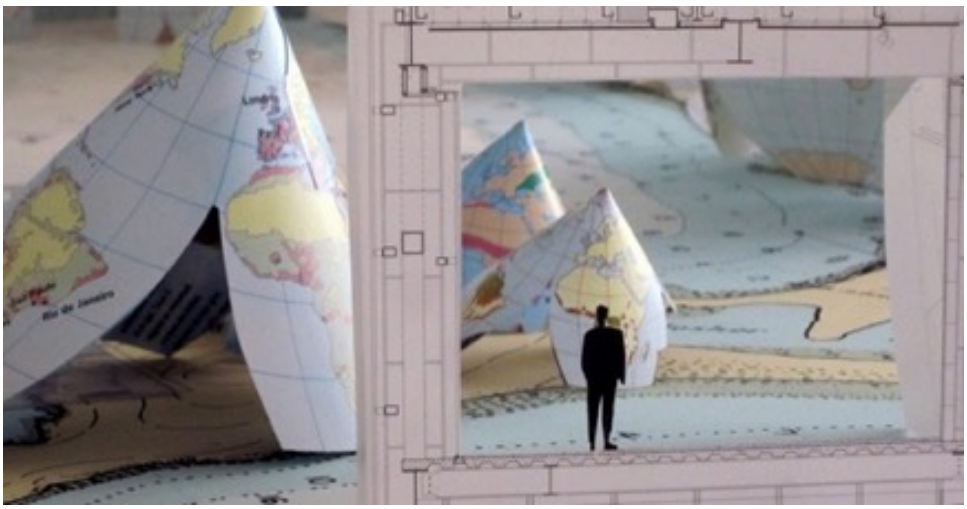


Figure 4a. Gilbert Poissant, *Mon atlas 3D*, 2019-2021. Paper, pins, 110 x 244 x 367 cm. Photo by Gilbert Poissant. View Source

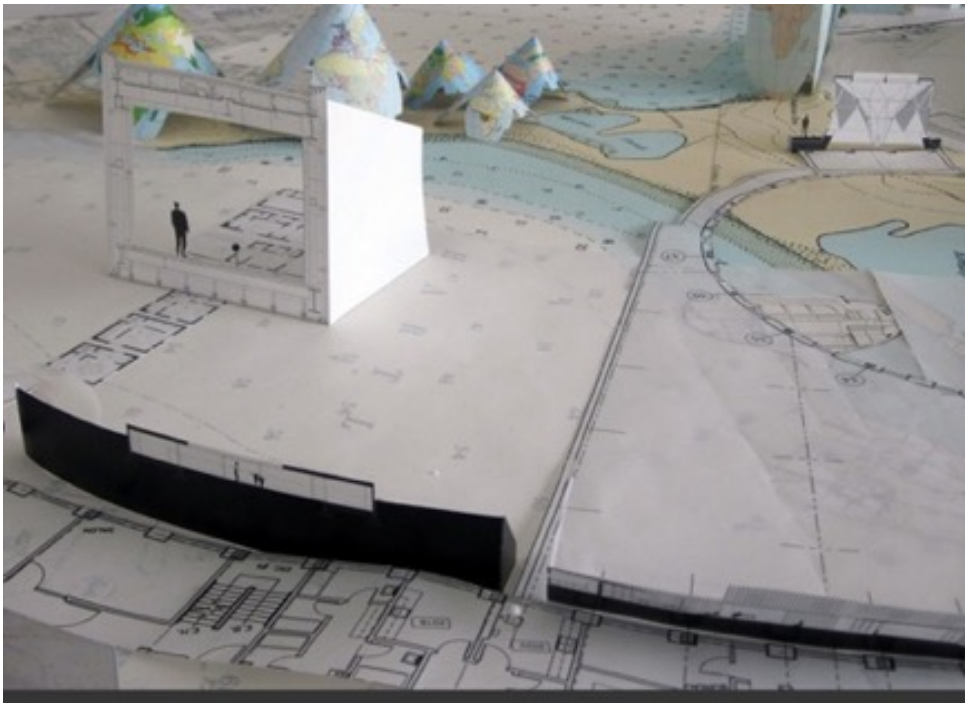


Figure 4b. Gilbert Poissant, *Mon atlas 3D*, 2019-2021. Paper, pins, 110 x 244 x 367 cm. Photo by Gilbert Poissant. View Source



Figure 4c. Gilbert Poissant, *Mon atlas 3D*, 2019-2021. Paper, pins, 110 x 244 x 367 cm. Photo by Gilbert Poissant. View Source

The artwork *Mon Atlas 3D* (2019-2021) (figs. 4a, 4b, and 4c) is a table-top installation that used maps and paper to fuse the artwork with Poissant's passion for architecture and geography in a way that lends material form to his utopian vision for the world he inhabits and

the places he loves: Mont Saint-Hilaire, Quebec and Kingsburg, Upper Nova Scotia. *Mon Atlas 3D* is an exercise in both spatial poetics and self-portraiture, composed of symbols close to the artist's heart. In collaboration with Alain Boisvert (director, editor, animator), Michael Bridge and Ladom Ensemble (music), *Mon Atlas 3D* was made into a documentary video that captured the delight which the artist and the director took in the inter-medial play between video and paper. (NJH)

Peter Powning

Peter Powning, originally from the United States, has lived and worked as a ceramicist and sculptor in southern New Brunswick since 1970. His fascination with clay began over five decades ago, as his wife, author Beth Powning, recounts: "In the summer of 1969, newly married and camping our way through Europe on five dollars a day, my husband Peter and I visited the pottery studio of old family friends in Oberammergau [Germany]....He saw clay transformed into mugs and bowls, watched dusky-blue tableware emerge from kilns." Mesmerised, he threw his first pot, and shortly thereafter, he and his wife immigrated to Canada, where he began creating ceramics inspired by the rhythms of rural life and the natural environment surrounding their new home. Powning's artistic evolution has been fueled by an unwavering desire to experiment with diverse materials, often defying categorisation and resulting in pieces that incorporate raku-fired ceramics, bronze, glass, and steel. His innovative approach has led to exhibitions and public commissions across Canada. His commitment to craftism as a contemporary discipline is evident in his involvement with various arts councils and advisory groups, his leadership in private and cooperative galleries, as well as his position as chair and founding board member of AX (The Arts and Culture Centre of Sussex), a non-profit charitable arts organisation that includes exhibition space and a ceramics centre.



Figure 1. Peter Powning, *Lunarium,* 1996. Thrown and assembled vase with a slumped glass arch and cast bronze rim and parts. 22" in height. View Source

Powning's creations range from small vessels and decorative pieces to large-scale site-specific installations. They are distinguished by their textured surfaces and fluid forms, which evoke the beauty of the natural environment. In his early career, Powning frequently produced smaller-scale, clay-based pieces. *Lunarium* (1996) (fig.1) is one example of the mixed media vases and objects he created using glass, bronze, and clay beginning around 1990.



Figure 2a. Peter Powning, *Shards of Time*, 2013-2014. Pigmented and stained concrete, cast bronze, dimensions unknown. View Source

Powning's projects later extended to the construction of large-scale, site-specific installations. One of his notable installations, *Shards of Time* (2013-2014) (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c), was unveiled in 2014 along the waterfront of Saint John, New Brunswick. This sculptural composition, crafted from pigmented and stained concrete and cast bronze, portrays fragmented shards of a bowl emerging from the ground, reminiscent of an archaeological discovery, pointing to the rich historical heritage of the harbour.



Figure 2b. Peter Powning, *Shards of Time* (detail), 2013-2014. Pigmented and stained concrete, cast bronze, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 2c. Peter Powning, *Shards of Time* (detail), 2013-2014. Pigmented and stained concrete, cast bronze, dimensions unknown. View Source

Shards of Time is decorated with impressions of objects from across history, arranged chronologically to create a timeline bearing witness to the life on the shoreline, ranging from the fossils of pre-human sea life to the impression of a contemporary Tim Horton's coffee cup and many objects from the years in between. These reliefs on the bronze shards were made by creating plaster impressions from objects in museum collections across New Brunswick, as well as from objects that community members brought to collaborative impression-making sessions. Work from across Powning's career was displayed in the major retrospective exhibition, *Peter Powning: Retrospective,* curated by John Leroux for the Beaverbrook Art Gallery (Fredericton, New Brunswick) in 2022-2023.

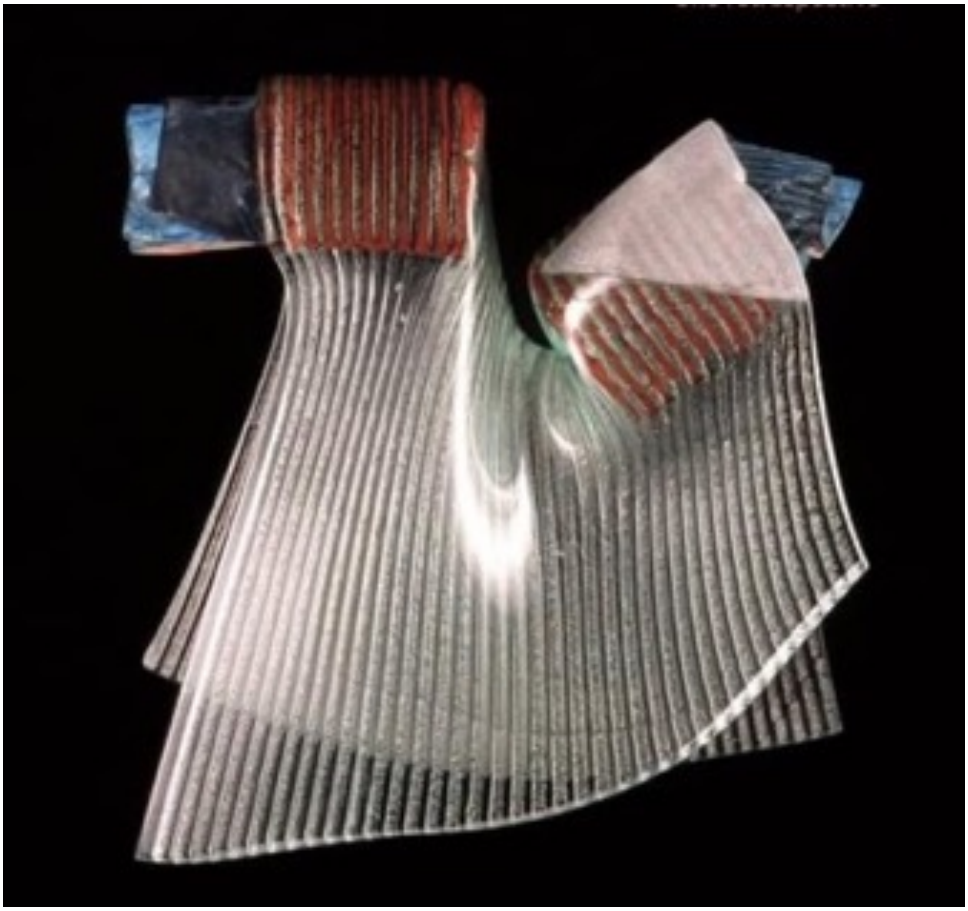


Figure 3. Peter Powning, *Fragmented Self*, n.d. Glass and copper, 33 x 30.5 x 15.25 cm. View Source

A monograph accompanied this exhibition with Powning's wall-mounted sculpture, *Fragmented Self* (fig. 3), on its cover. (SS)

Amélie Proulx

Though Amélie Proulx is captivated by the stability and permanence of porcelain, over the years she has developed various strategies within her multidisciplinary practice to challenge the medium's inherent qualities.



Figure 1a. Amélie Proulx, *Jardinet mécanique I*, 2013. Porcelain, glaze, steel structure, springs, motor, microcontroller, electronic circuit, 81.28 x 152.4 x 45.72 cm. Photo by Frances Juriansz. View Source



Figure 1b. Amélie Proulx, *Jardinet mécanique I*, 2013. Porcelain, glaze, steel structure, springs, motor, microcontroller, electronic circuit, 81.28 x 152.4 x 45.72 cm. Photo by Frances Juriansz. View Source



Figure 1c. Amélie Proulx, *Jardinet mécanique I*, 2013. Porcelain, glaze, steel structure, springs, motor, microcontroller, electronic circuit, 81.28 x 152.4 x 45.72 cm. Photo by Frances Juriansz. View Source

Proulx's innovative methodologies are evident in her early work, such as *Jardinet mécanique I* (2013) (figs. 1a, 1b, and 1c), where she affixed individual gear-shaped porcelain flowers to micro-controlled, spring-mounted stems assembled on a steel table that concealed the motor controls triggering the dreamy blossoms to move and sway at varying intervals, sometimes producing subtle sounds as vibrations from the off-centred shafts caused the flowers to knock into each other. It is a moving garden that simultaneously suggests that all the flower blossoms are interconnected like a machine and challenges the decorative and utilitarian connotations of the porcelain medium and its immutability. Jean-Pierre Labiau,

curator of exhibitions and decorative arts at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (Quebec City, Quebec), writes, "[i]n her work, excess, apparent lack of composition, and elements of surprise are united in harmony. Proulx offers a reflection that is anchored in our contemporary world without, however, neglecting a poetic dimension." Proulx teaches ceramics and visual arts at the Maison des métiers d'art de Québec (Quebec City, Quebec) and at Cégep Sainte-Foy (Quebec City, Quebec), located near Lévis, Quebec, where she lives and works, as well as the Ceramics Department at Concordia University since 2018.



Figure 2. Amélie Proulx, *Dactyles Parus*, 2017. Vitreous china, glaze, 38.1 x 55.88 x 55.88 cm. Photo by Rich Maciejewski, courtesy of Kohler Co. View Source

She has incorporated techniques and processes learned from multiple artist residencies from Denmark to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where Proulx learned the mold-making technique used to create *Dactyles Parus* (2017) (fig. 2). Before being fired the individual seagull legs made of porcelain resembled novelty backscratchers, but through the firing process, they softened and fused to form new shapes and new meanings.



Figure 3a. Amélie Proulx, *Topiaires d'hiver*, 2019. Porcelain, nichrome wire, entomological pins, variable dimensions. Photo by Étienne Dionne. View Source



Figure 3b. Amélie Proulx, *Topiaires d'hiver* (detail), 2019. Porcelain, nichrome wire, entomological pins, variable dimensions. Photo by Étienne Dionne. View Source



Figure 3c. Amélie Proulx, *Topiaires d'hiver* (detail), 2019. Porcelain, nichrome wire, entomological pins, variable dimensions. Photo by Étienne Dionne. View Source

The installation piece *Topiaires d'hiver* (2019) (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c) was included in the exhibition *Paysages-Fragments* curated by Anne-Sophie Blanchet for Maison Tessier-dit-Laplante in 2019. It resembles a *vanitas* painting, the Dutch still-life pictures popular in the seventeenth century that dealt with themes of death, mortality, and the transience of life. Proulx creates a winter garden in porcelain, complete with ivy climbing the walls and vines reaching from their containers, the altered and adorned human skulls evoke death and the cycle of life, but also the potential for eternal regeneration. (NJH)

Nurgül Rodriguez

Nurgül Rodriguez works across a range of disciplines and media, including porcelain, installation, paper-making, print-making, three-dimensional pieces, and, more recently, socially engaged and collaborative projects. Born in Turkey, she and her family spent several years living as quasi-nomads in Turkey, the United States, and Spain before settling in Calgary, Alberta, in 2009. Consequently, her socially minded and politically conscious work betrays the artist's preoccupation with issues around immigration, physical and cultural borders, and diasporic identities.



Figure 1a. Nurgül Rodriguez, *In a New Land...Be Longing*, 2017. Installation view, Remai Modern, Saskatoon. Unglazed porcelain, fired to cone 7, dimensions variable. View Source



Figure 1b. Nurgül Rodriguez, *In a New Land...Be Longing* (detail), 2017. Unglazed porcelain, fired to cone 7, dimensions variable. View Source



Figure 1c. Nurgül Rodriguez, *In a New Land...Be Longing* (detail), 2017. Unglazed porcelain, fired to cone 7, dimensions variable. View Source

For example, *In A New Land...Be Longing* (2017) (figs. 1a, 1b, and 1c) is a porcelain-based installation comprised of a series of headless human busts displayed across from an opposing wall hung with tablets inscribed with words and phrases taken from immigration documents, such as "NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL," "surveillance code," and "sponsor." A path made of broken porcelain shards separates the rows of mounted objects that stretch across the walls like waves of water, or like the curve of a human spine, and uses texts and artefacts to hint at the cold, aestheticized bureaucratic process of becoming a landed immigrant in Canada. Rodriguez explains, "We are living in an era shaped by global refugee crises and immigration issues, and for me making art is an expression of how I understand the experiences of migration in a country that prides itself on its multiculturalism."



Figure 2. Nurgül Rodriguez, *Vociferously Opposed to be Sculptures*, 2019. Porcelain fired to cone 7, dimensions unknown. View Source

Rodriguez is always looking for opportunities to learn and further develop her ceramic practice. For instance, with *Vociferously Opposed to be Sculptures* (2019) (fig. 2), Rodriguez takes a sculptural approach to convey a sense of otherness; the clay and paper forms suggest both the presence and absence of everyday objects like vases, cups, and dictionaries that are often taken for granted and that often get left behind when families move to a new country.



Figure 3. Nurgül Rodriguez, *Out of Place*, 2020. Installation view, Remai Modern, Saskatoon. Glazed porcelain, dimensions variable. Photograph by Blaine Campbell, courtesy of the artist. View Source

The socially engaged project, *Out of Place* (2020) (fig. 3), is inspired by Rodriguez's journey to become a Canadian citizen. The 1095 handmade ceramic cups that comprise the installation each represent a day that the artist was required to be in Canada while waiting to receive landed immigrant status. Featured in the exhibition BorderLINE, (Remai Modern, Saskatoon, 2020), Rodriguez invited visitors to take home one of the cups in exchange for answering a question from the Canadian Citizenship Guide which prompted visitors to consider their knowledge of their own country of origin and to empathise with recent immigrants and new Canadians. (NJH)

Carol Rossman

Carol Rossman is a Dundas, Ontario-based ceramicist who has been potting since 1973 and selling professionally since 1985. Working first in the field of medical research, Rossman was surprised to discover her natural talent for throwing pots in an introductory pottery class. When she later turned her hobby into a career in ceramics, Rossman applied her knowledge of scientific experimentation and documentation to the notoriously unpredictable process of raku.



Figure 1. Carol Rossman, *Antelope Canyon Journey*, 2019. Raku-fired ceramic 20 x 29 x 29 cm. View Source

Rigorous attention to detail and continued experimentation have led Rossman to develop new, precise glazing and firing techniques that allow her to create graphic surface designs in a range of jewel-tone glazes, as seen in *Antelope Canyon Journey* (2019) (fig. 1). Journalist Wendy Schneider describes how Rossman achieves her graphic designs, writing: "She does this by using her pots as a canvass upon which she 'draws' her distinctive designs with thin black masking tape

and meticulously applying her glazes to the uncovered parts. During the firing process, she is constantly covering and uncovering until her glazes take on the colour variations she wants. It's a technique that has taken her years to perfect." Still, the unpredictability of raku firing can result in unexpected, natural effects and thus, Rossman's burnished and glazed work resembles her main source of inspiration: the untamed beauty of the American Southwest. She seeks to capture the ever-changing hues, flowing canyons, complex patterns of the rock formations, and native flora that she encounters on annual trail riding trips through New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah.



Figure 2. Carol Rossman, *Canyon Formation,* 2017, Raku-fired ceramic, 17 x 20 x 20. Photo credit: Michael Dismatsek. View Source

In recent years, Rossman has increasingly explored sculptural representation, creating organic, rock-like forms, as seen in *Canyon Formation 3* (2017) (fig. 2), displayed in *Carol Rossman: Explorations* at David Kaye Gallery (Toronto, Ontario, 2017). Her sculptural works explore contrasts between hardness and softness, rigidity and roundness, and geometric and organic patterns.

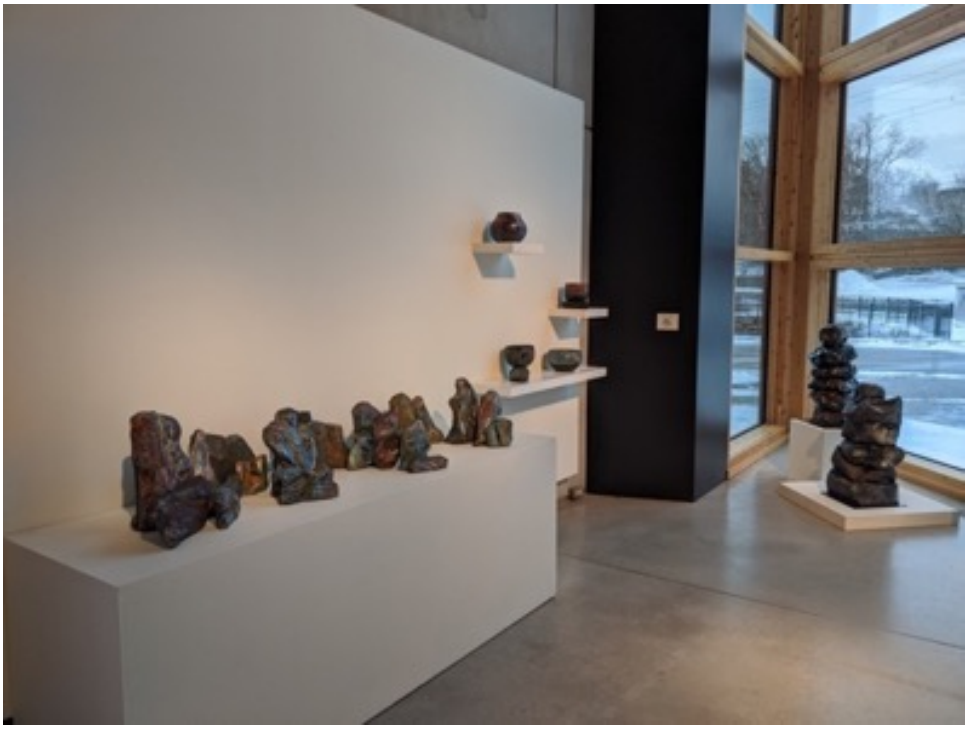


Figure 3a. Carol Rossman, *Rocks in My Head*, 2020. Installation view. View Source

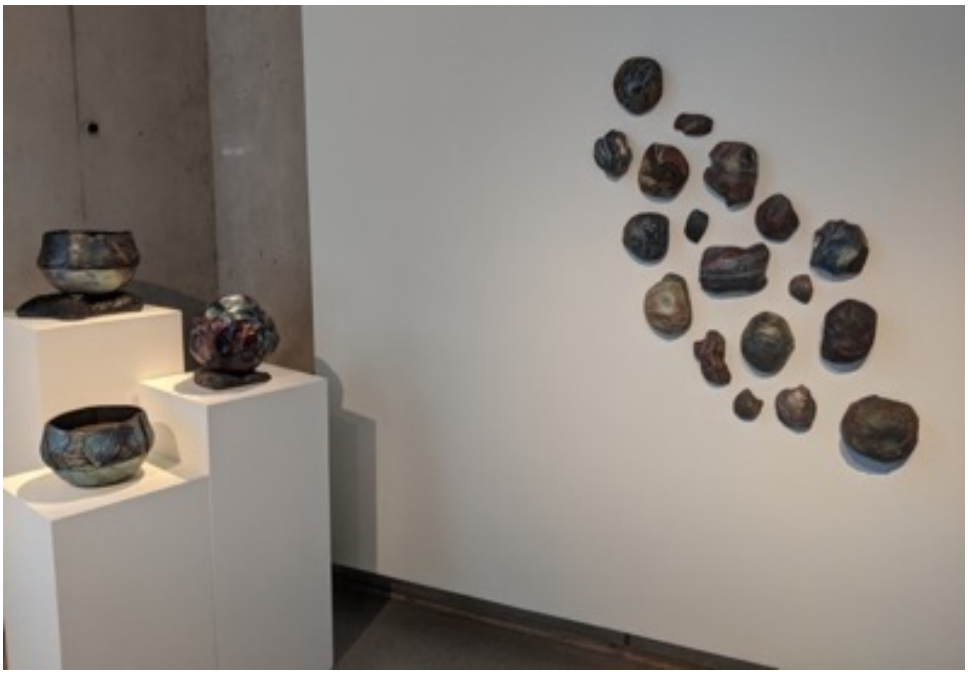


Figure 3b. Carol Rossman, *Rocks in My Head*, 2020. Installation view. View Source

In 2020, Rossman's vessels and sculptures were displayed in a solo exhibition, *Rocks in My Head*, at the Canadian Glass and Clay Gallery (figs. 3a and 3b).



Figure 3c. Carol Rossman, *Rectangular Rock Stack*, 2019. Raku-fired clay, 81 cm h x 39 cm w x 38 cm d. View Source

Works for this installation, including *Rectangular Rock Stack* (2019) (fig. 3c), draw inspiration from the smooth, curving, canyon walls and the deep red and orange tones of Antelope Canyon, Arizona and Rattlesnake Canyon, Utah. (SS)

Arezu Salamzadeh

Arezu Salamzadeh is a Mississauga, Ontario-based queer artist of mixed Cantonese and Iranian descent whose work spans performance, video, bookmaking, painting, sculpture, music, and interactive public installation. Salamzadeh—who uses she/they pronouns—writes that they are interested in "examining diasporic culture and identity through a combination of entertainment, play, nostalgia, and humor."



Figure 1a. Arezu Salamzadeh, *Pink Glazed Ceramic Drumstick Necklace*, 2017. Installation view. Handmade ceramic-casted, glazed chicken drumstick on a 76 cm chain. View Source



Figure 1b. Arezu Salamzadeh, *Pink Glazed Ceramic Drumstick Necklace*, 2017. Handmade ceramic-casted, glazed chicken drumstick on a 76 cm chain. View Source

Her interest in humour is especially apparent in her work, as seen in *Pink Glazed Ceramic Drumstick Necklace* (2017) (fig. 1a and 1b), a

life-sized, bubble-gum-pink chicken drumstick hung on a gold chain, which was nailed to the gallery wall in *Proud Deviants and Queer Multiples*, a group exhibition exploring queer identity (curated by Rebecca Casalino, Hamilton, Ontario, 2021). Salamzadeh often uses levity and camp aesthetics to engage their audience and to pose complex questions about cultural identity and power.



Figure 2a. Arezu Salamzadeh, *Fortune Flavors the Bold*, 2019. Installation view. Photo credit: Polina Teif. View Source



Figure 2b. Arezu Salamzadeh, *Fortune Flavors the Bold*, 2019. Installation view. Photo credit: Polina Teif. View Source



Figure 2c. Arezu Salamzadeh, *Fortune Flavors the Bold*, 2019. Installation view. Photo credit: Polina Teif. View Source



Figure 2d. Arezu Salamzadeh, *Fortune Flavors the Bold*, 2019. Installation view. Photo credit: Polina Teif. View Source

In 2019, she transformed Toronto, Ontario's Xpace Cultural Centre Project Space into a marketplace for her solo exhibition, *Fortune Flavors the Bold* (figs. 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d), with glittering red foam floors, teal walls decorated with Chinese New Year's pouches, red plinths, and shelves. They decorated these shelves with ceramic statues cast from Chinese waving cats and ornate dragons, reimagining these knick-knacks in a red, white, seafoam green, blue, and pink palette, altering the form and surface decoration of each statue to appear intentionally messy in opposition to the uniformity of mass production. In her artist statement, Salamzadeh describes these ceramic sculptures as tokens of good luck, writing: "*Fortune Flavors the Bold* is a shop warded for good luck, inspired by the symbols and spiritual cures of the household in which the artist grew up with her mother, an immigrant from Hong Kong. Like many second-generation children who grew up in the West, she examines what it means to be part of a distant culture, whose language one does not speak."



Figure 3. Lan Yee and Arezu Salamzadeh (Rice Water Collective), *Please Help Yourself*, 2020. Materials and dimensions unknown. View Source

In 2020, Salamzadeh continued their exploration of cultural identity in collaboration with Lan Yee under the name *Rice Water Collective*, creating *Please Help Yourself* (2020) (fig. 3), a series of life-sized clay tangerine peels. Yee and Salamzadeh undertook this project by mailing unformed mounds of clay to close family and friends whom they were separated from during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a step-by-step guide on how to shape the peels and instructions to send them back to be fired in a kiln. Journalist Michael Hague describes this work, writing that the ceramic peels point to the Cantonese tradition of welcoming guests with an offer of sweet citrus and thus, "The sculptures speak to how simple, pleasurable rituals can bring people together—symbolism that works during the best of times, but given how the objects were produced, resonates more deeply during the current global pandemic." Salamzadeh serves as one of two Directors of the Chinatown Biennial (Toronto, Ontario). (SS)

Jai Sallay-Carrington

Jai Sallay-Carrington is a figurative ceramic sculptor currently living in Vancouver, British Columbia. Jai is a queer and transgender artist whose work is heavily influenced by this aspect of their life, creating works about human identities, behaviour and emotions using

anthropomorphic creatures. Reflecting on their queer and transgender identity, Jai creates sculptures which uplift LGBTQIA2S+ communities as well as challenge and analyze the dominant heteronormative and cisgendered society. Their work explores the nuances of gender, sexuality, and identity through the anthropomorphic sculpted figures they affectionately refer to as their "creatures." The sense of otherness they elicit extends beyond the physical and obvious. Instead, the sculptures' zoomorphic qualities reveal human characteristics that are hidden from plain sight, encouraging a deeper understanding of the individual's persona and experiences.



Figure 1. Jai Sallay-Carrington, *Preening*, 2015. Ceramic, 33 x 22.85 x 11.5 cm. View Source

Sallay-Carrington often poses their anthropomorphic sculptural creatures—hand-built hybrid animals with human attributes—erotically, as seen in the lounging bird in *Preening* (2015) (fig 1). Through their menagerie of erotic animals, Sallay-Carrington hopes to, in their own words, "encourage a more sex positive culture," using humour, hybridity, and a frank handling of sexuality to dismantle taboos and stigmas around the diverse expressions of sexuality, while promoting self-confidence and body positivity. The artist also includes zoomorphism in their work as a lens to explore the spectrum of gender identities, as they explain, "...gender doesn't have to be this box that everybody goes into...There isn't just 'men 'and 'women 'and 'male '/ 'female 'things; you can be female with male attributes. There are all sorts of spectrums of trans and non-binary identities, so I'm just trying to push the boundaries of what gender means." As such, Sallay-Carrington's sculptural work includes a range of humanised, animal body shapes, styles of body hair, and queer partnerships. In 2022, Sallay-Carrington was inspired by the adaptations Montrealers were making in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, seeing commonalities between animals living in confinement and human beings quarantining inside.



Figure 2a. Jai Sallay-Carrington, *Calluses*, 2020. Smoke-fired stoneware and wood-fired porcelain, 43.2 x 38 x 68.5 cm. View Source

In response to these resonances, they created a series of animal sculptures titled *Adapting*, which is displayed at Maison de la Culture Côte-des-Neiges (Montreal, Quebec). One of them is the large porcelain sculpture *Calluses* (2020) (fig. 2a).



Figure 3a. Jai Sallay-Carrington, *Reasoning with the Inner Demons*, 2022. Porcelain, gold lustre, salt crystals, wood, metal, 10 x 10 x 40.5 cm, 9 cm off the ground. View Source



Figure 3b. Jai Sallay-Carrington, *Reasoning with the Inner Demons* (detail), 2022. Porcelain, gold lustre, salt crystals, wood, metal, 10 x 10 x 40.5 cm, 9 cm off the ground. View Source



Figure 3c. Jai Sallay-Carrington, *Reasoning with the Inner Demons* (detail), 2022. Porcelain, gold lustre, salt crystals, wood, metal, 10 x 10 x 40.5 cm, 3.5 9 cm off the ground. View Source

Sallay-Carrington continues to create sculptures of animals to explore the complicated aspects of human behaviour and experiences, such as internal torment and psychosocial distress, as illustrated by the suspended wolves in *Reasoning with the Inner Demons* (2022) (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c). (SS)

Anita Singh

Anita Singh is a St John's, Newfoundland-based artist who creates mixed media artwork. Though she has lived and worked in Newfoundland for over two decades, her path to the Atlantic province was winding: she was born in Guyana, raised in Montreal, Quebec and Toronto, Ontario, lived in British Columbia for a decade, and travelled extensively before eventually discovering and falling in love with Newfoundland during a cross-Canada trip in 1999. Her artistic career has been equally varied, starting with throwing pottery in the early 1990s, which she then put aside to focus on her work in other mediums—printmaking, papermaking, bookmaking, painting, and graphic design—before returning to clay once again.



Figure 1. Anita Singh, *Untitled Orange Plate*, n.d. Materials and dimensions unknown. View Source

Since 2012, Singh has primarily worked in ceramics and encaustic, creating three-dimensional works inspired by nature, as seen in her orange plate (fig.1). Singh is fascinated by the elaborate patterns, colours, and textures of flowers, anemones, seedpods, and seaweed. She often plays with layering, repetition, and variation to mimic these organic patterns in her surface decoration, as she explains, "The natural world for me comprises of elements that form distinct and perceptible patterns. Both ordered and chaotic in construction, my work embodies elements of time, space and chance."



Figure 2a. Anita Singh, *Microorganisms*, 2016. Installation view. View Source



Figure 2b. Anita Singh, *Microorganisms 7*, n.d. Hand-sculpted ceramic, 20.3 x 20.3 x 10.2 cm. View Source



Figure 2c. Anita Singh, *Micro C*, n.d. Encaustic on birch panel, 25 x 25 cm. View Source

Her interest in patterns, textures, and shapes drawn from nature is also apparent in her sculptural forms, such as her *Microorganisms* series, which explores the cellular world in clay and encaustic (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c), displayed in the Newfoundland and Labrador Craft Council's Craft Gallery (St John's, Newfoundland) in 2016.



Figure 3a. Anita Singh, *Artist in Residency*, 2023. Installation view. Mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3b. Anita Singh, *Artist in Residency*, 2023. Installation view. Mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 3c. Anita Singh, *Artist in Residency*, 2023. Installation view. Mixed media, dimensions unknown. View Source

Singh's work across media often features vibrant, high-impact colours, as exemplified by her installation *Artist in Residency* (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c) created during her residency at the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2023. This installation comprises a life-sized dining room complete with a table, chairs, side table, and lamp covered in varying tones of orange and green. Using screen printing techniques, Singh created wallpapers, canvas floor mats, a tablecloth, curtains, placemats, napkins, throw pillows, ceramic plates, cups, bowls, planters, and framed printworks for her dining room with bold retro designs featuring imagery drawn from Newfoundland plant and animal-life, including berries, hawkweed, lichen, coral, molluscs, and seaweed. (SS)

Debra Sloan

Vancouver, British Columbia-based ceramicist Debra Sloan creates sculptures of babies, horses, dogs, and other figures to investigate the plurality of human emotions and relationships with the non-human world. Sloan engages in multiple ceramic techniques and often uses her own press moulds, which allow for repeated figures with slight variations. She describes her ceramic practice, "I am drawn to the theatricality of clay that enables emotional interaction alongside being a repository for ideas. I try to use expression in a figurative presence to address human uncertainties and believe that intentional

singular objects are important contemporary witnesses to ideas, individualism and memory."

In 2014, Sloan was invited to research and respond to Bernard Leach's rare 1926 equestrian finials at the Leach Pottery in St. Ives (United Kingdom) (founded in 1926) where she created a series of modelled horses later exhibited in the Leach Pottery Gallery, and several installed on the Pottery's roof. In 2018, she published *Up on the Roof,* around the West Country equestrian finial tradition, which prompted Leach's own versions. Her argument is that finials represent a simple opportunity for embellishment, largely missing from modern North American architecture.

Bernard Leach (1887-1979) was an eminent British potter, born in Hong Kong, known for championing Korean, Japanese, and Chinese pottery in the West, in combination with traditional techniques from England and continental Europe. His 1940 publication, A Potter's Book, was instrumental in encouraging ceramic studio practices worldwide, post-WWII. Sloan continued with the equestrian theme in her exhibition *Horsing Around in the Year of the Horse* at the Gallery of BC Ceramics (Vancouver, British Columbia, 2014).



Figure 1. Debra Sloan, *Traveller to the Coast*, 2014. Clay, glaze, coloured slips, wire hair, dimensions unknown. View Source

Inspired by Leach's equestrian earthenware sculptures and finial roof tiles, Sloan's work, such as *Traveller to the Coast* (2014) (fig. 1), explores the historical, cultural and symbolic meanings of horses. A baby with a halo of straw-like wire hair sits atop a horse with an expressive, open mouth and detailed features, painted in layers of blue and earth tones to create a mountainous landscape across the figures, addressing the shifting status of the horse in the history of travel. Sloan continued to explore the figure of the horse in subsequent residencies at the Leach Studio in 2017 and 2018, and at other residencies; the International Ceramics Studio in Hungary (2020, 2013, 2017), CRETA in Rome (2016)), Museum of Anthropology (MOA), University of British Columbia (Vancouver), (2018/19) and at the Shigaraki Cultural Centre in Japan (2019).



Figure 2. Debra Sloan, *By the Sea, Girl with crow, Finial with Martyr's leaf*, and *The Apple does not fall far from the tree,* 2018. Clay, glaze, coloured slips, wire hair, dimensions varied. View Source

Sloan has other thematic interests, such as the putti motif of European ceramics as seen in the dramatically emotive baby sculpture. During her 2018 residency at the MOA, the artist created a series of press-moulded, ersatz finials of bulbous "proto-human" figures with ambiguous age and gender identity, each painted with unique scenes, symbols and facial features such as *By the Sea, Girl with crow, Finial with Martyr's leaf*, and *The Apple does not fall far from the tree* (2018) (fig. 2). The figures were made in response to the Anabaptist tin-glazed works in the Koerner Collection of European Ceramic*s* at the MOA. These figural sculptures and others were exhibited in the group show of British Columbia-based artists titled *Playing with Fire: Ceramics of the Extraordinary* (curated by Dr. Carol E. Mayer, former Head of the Curatorial Department at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and the 2024 recipient of the Canadian Craft Federation for the Robert Jekyll Award for Leadership in Craft.



Figure 3a. Dancers Heather Dotto and Joey Matt with ceramic creations by Debra E Sloan in *DANCE:CRAFT*, 2022. Photo by Michael Slobodian. View Source



Figure 3b. Dancers Heather Dotto and Joey Matt with ceramic creations by Debra E Sloan in *DANCE:CRAFT*, 2022. Photo by Michael Slobodian. View Source



Figure 3a. Dancers Heather Dotto and Joey Matt with ceramic creations by Debra E Sloan in *DANCE:CRAFT*, 2022. Photo by Michael Slobodian. View Source

In 2022, Sloan collaborated with the Craft Council of British Columbia, Vancouver (CCBC) and the Joe Ink Dance Company on the performance project *DANCE:CRAFT* (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c), contributing several ceramic props and masks, which aimed to explore the animacy of objects through dance. In 2024, her solo exhibition of Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) influenced figures, *Les Grandes Dames*, was held at the Craft Council of BC. In 2025, Sloan's work is included in *Walking Alongside Trauma*, an exhibition held at Douglas College in New Westminster, British Columbia, and at the McGill Faculty Club, Montreal, Quebec, in support of the 2016-25 SHRCC-funded research project at McGill University titled iMPACTS, around dismantling sexual violence in post-secondary environments. Sloan's craftism is around recording the British Columbian history of ceramics and artists, creating a database of over 500 BC ceramic artist profiles and their ceramic marks. The BC Ceramic Mark Registry is found on the Craft Council of the BC website. She has been president of the North-West Ceramics Foundation since 2018. (EK)

Jim Smith

Jim Smith is a ceramic artist based in Chester, Nova Scotia whose work is inspired by the global history of ceramics. His work references historical motifs and forms that are both localized and found cross-culturally. As the artist explains, "Through trade, conflict, and migration, cultures have influenced each other, resulting in new ideas being born, new aesthetic solutions being investigated. I enjoy tracing stylistic developments from one culture to the next and through the centuries."



Figure 1. Jim Smith, *Salt Cellar*, 2019. Nova Scotia earthenware clay, 20.3 x 12.7 x 15.25 cm. View Source

For example, sixteenth-century salt cellars from Urbino, Italy, that Smith encountered at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England while researching Italian majolica, inspired his rendering of the small mineral container *Salt Cellar* (2019) (fig. 1) made of earthenware clay sourced in Nova Scotia. Decorated with floral and lattice patterns that combined Islamic and Italian motifs, Smith highlighted the cross-cultural influences present in the sixteenth-

century vessels as well as the history of salt. "Carefully controlled, distributed, and taxed, wars have been fought over salt, revolutions sparked, and gorgeous salt cellars imagined and created," he explains.



Figure 2. Jim Smith, *Madina Platter*, 2019. Nova Scotia earthenware clay, 48.25 x 40.5 x 7.65 cm. View Source

Following a research trip to Uzbekistan, Smith created *Madina Platter* (2019) (fig. 2), which features a European Baroque shape decorated with Islamic-inspired motifs to indicate the networks of cultural exchange that materialised in the trade activity of the Silk Road. He describes the influence of this trip on his *Madina Platter*, writing: "I had the honour of being hosted for dinner in a private home where Uzbekistan's national dish, a delicately spiced blend of lamb, rice, and vegetables, was served in a great mound and eaten from a generous communal platter. As the meal is shared, layers of nuanced decoration are revealed on the serving platter, just as the flavours of the meal itself are discovered." Smith often considers how the shapes, colours, and decorations he chooses to feature in his work can visually enhance the food that will be served on them and by extension, the joyful experience of sharing food with others. "Once a piece emerges from the kiln, I decide what food would best complement its shape, colour, or decoration. It's a creative process,

imagining the sensual possibilities, much like planning a meal itself, and communicating how I see a piece being used is an integral part of its story," he says.



Figure 3a. Jim Smith, view of *Canadiana Collection*, 2020. Nova Scotia earthenware clay, dimensions variable. View Source



Figure 3b. Jim Smith, *Canadiana Oval Platter*, 2020. Nova Scotia earthenware clay, 3.8 x 22.85 x 3.3 cm. View Source

Smith also explores Canadian identity in his ceramic works and the methods used to create them, using clay that he sources from the Shaw Brick Company in Lantz, Nova Scotia. With a wry sense of humour, he highlights symbols of Canadian culture in his *Canadiana* series (2020) (figs. 3a and 3b), adorning bowls and platters with mosquitoes, canoes, paddles, bonfires and other stereotypical references to nature and outdoor activities. (EK)

Nurielle Stern

Nurielle Stern is a Toronto, Ontario-based artist. She works sculpturally, combining ceramics with video projection and other media to explore the dichotomy between the tamed and the wilderness. In her words, she "navigates the malleability of language and materials, the historic role of maker as storyteller, and the dialectics of inside and outside." Stern often finds inspiration in the world around her, creating fantastical sculptures and immersive installations with forms at once invented and reminiscent of those found in nature.



Figure 1a. Nurielle Stern, *Eyes of Metal and Agate,* 2013. Glazed porcelain, 4.5 m x 33 cm x 70 cm. View Source



Figure 1b. Nurielle Stern, *Eyes of Metal and Agate,* 2013. Installation view. Glazed porcelain, 4.5 m x 33 cm x 70 cm. Gardiner Museum. View Source



Figure 1c. Nurielle Stern, *Eyes of Metal and Agate* (detail), 2013. Glazed porcelain, 4.5 m x 33 cm x 70 cm. View Source

Her installation, *Eyes of Metal and Agate* (Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Ontario, 2013) (figs. 1a, 1b, and 1c) features brightly-glazed, white ceramic animals—realistic in shape, yet uncanny in their

surface texture—alongside shimmering white and pink pieces of fish, and tree branches, creating a bizarre fictional scene of vibrant and textured natural forms.



Figure 2a. Nurielle Stern, *Fable,* 2019. Installation view. Glazed porcelain, stained-glass, steel stands, polymerized gypsum, 20 vitrines total, largest measures 1.4 m wide x 43 cm deep x 90 cm high. Gardiner Museum. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source



Figure 2b. Nurielle Stern, *Fable* (detail, *Tiger*), 2019. Glazed porcelain, stained-glass, steel stands, polymerized gypsum, 124 cm wide x 28 cm deep x 53 cm high. Collection: Gardiner Museum. View Source

In *Fable* (2019) (figs. 2a and 2b), an installation spanning twenty vitrines mounted on the windows on all three levels of the Joan Courtois Gallery in the Gardiner Museum's stairwell, Stern created porcelain, glass and polymerized gypsum sculptures of animals, fragmented caryatids (the figural columns of Classical Greece), and flora. Displayed on metal mounts, the sculptures in *Fable* reference ethnographic museums, where artefacts are, in the words of the artist, "removed from context, somehow pulled out of time." In discussing how the display conditions of the Gardiner influenced this work, Stern states: "The work would be seen in changing light conditions... Each piece was constructed with a lattice-like structure, so that light was able to filter through... The work has a temporal component with both the changing light conditions, and the act of ascending and descending the staircase while viewing the piece." The temporal nature of the piece also points to temporality in narratives including that of fables, reflecting the artist's interest in language. "Language, another medium of transformation, is built on metaphor, and the roots of words are often based on things physical and sensory," Stern explains, "...I'm constantly engaged in finding ways to transform ceramics into something antithetical to itself. My work often incorporates levity (as opposed to gravity), permeability through various hollows, spaces, and lacunae, temporality, reflection, and light."



Figure 3a. Nicholas Crombach and Nurielle Stern, *Whale Fall*, 2019. Installation view. Glazed porcelain, found, altered, and carved furniture, and lights, 6.6m wide x 1.8 m deep x 1.5 m high. Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery. View Source



Figure 3b. Nicholas Crombach and Nurielle Stern, *Whale Fall* (detail), 2019. Glazed porcelain, found, altered, and carved furniture, and lights, 6.6m wide x 1.8 m deep x 1.5 m high. Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery. View Source



Figure 3c. Nicholas Crombach and Nurielle Stern, *When you can see right through me*, 2019. Cyanotype on silk, found x-ray illuminators, drafting table, soft-paste porcelain, found objects, 11m x 91cm x 3.6m. View Source

In *Whale Fall* (2019 (figs. 3a, 3b and 3c), a fully collaborative exhibition with artist Nicholas Crombach titled *When you can see right through me* (Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo, Ontario, 2019, and Union Gallery, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 2021), the artists assembled an otherworldly, large, toppling structure of ceramics and piled furniture stripped of upholstery and carved into skeletal forms, alluding to both the decaying flesh of a whale and the sensual excess of Baroque still-life painting. Surrounding the whale carcass, the artists presented tongue-in-cheek variations of the falsified natural history specimens found in sixteenth-century curios in *When you can see right through me* (2019), comprised of fabric x-rays depicting invented chimaera creatures printed on silk, created from the Royal Ontario Museum and the Toronto Zoo Veterinary x-ray collections. "In essence," writes Carina Magazzeni for Union Gallery, "the gallery space becomes an immersive lab experience, where we are invited to explore the artists 'curiosities, question the sculptural objects' origins and deeply consider our complex human-nature relationships." By establishing malleable narratives and ambiguous meanings in the details of her works, Stern invites viewers to develop their interpretations of the natural and fantastical scenes and figures that she creates. (SS)

Jonah Strub

Jonah Strub is a Toronto, Ontario-based artist who explores his Jewish and queer identities through painting, sculpture, and performance art. Strub describes his artwork as "a visual love letter to the aesthetics of camp, kitsch, musical theatre, Yiddish humour, and drag." He uses his art to depict gender variance, recognising, in his own words, "deviations from gender, celebrating femininity in a male's body, celebrating flamboyancy, and creating visibility." His work is intentionally playful and extravagant, revelling in aspects of gay culture that Strub did not see in the queer art he was exposed to growing up, which was often responding to the AIDs crisis; similarly, he did not see his Jewish identity in the Jewish art of his youth, which primarily consisted of Judaica for ritual use and art commemorating the Holocaust. Strub fills this absence, employing humour, bright colours, and busy compositions with references to gay culture and Jewish tchotchkes (decorative trinkets), creating his own exaggerated and extravagant visual culture that highlights the joys of Jewish-flavoured femininity and queerness in the traditions of pop art and high kitsch, art movements that elevate aesthetics and objects widely considered "banal" and "tacky" to a place of high art.



Figure 1. Jonah Strub, *Hummuspalooza*, 2018. Oil on canvas, 99 x 122 cm. View Source

As an undergraduate student, he primarily worked in oil painting, uplifting his flamboyant, kitschy aesthetic with the traditionally high-brow medium, as seen in *Hummuspalooza* (2018) (fig. 1), for example. Strub completed his degree abroad at the Hochschule für Künste in Bremen, Germany, where he began increasingly to experiment with ceramics. He displayed his hand-built sculptural forms alongside his figurative paintings in his first solo exhibition, *IBS The Musical*, at The Front Room Gallery (Waterloo, Ontario) in 2019.



Figure 2a. Jonah Strub, *The Katz Family*, 2019. Installation view. Porcelain cast, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Rebecca Casalino. View Source



Figure 2b. Jonah Strub, *Campy Katz,* 2019. Porcelain cast, dimensions unknown. View Source

The main gallery space featured a set of shelves where the artist installed five ceramic cats—named *Katz*, a tongue-in-cheek reference to the common Jewish last name—all bearing the artist's face, complete with his distinct nose and trademark moustache, adorned with differing surface decorations, such as a glazed cheetah-print pattern on *Campy Katz* (2019) (figs. 2a and 2b).



Figure 3a. Jonah Strub, *Loxanne Creamcheese: The Eponymous Sculpture*, 2023. Glazed stoneware and false eyelashes, 63.5 x 38 x 43 cm. View Source



Figure 3b. Jonah Strub, *Loxanne Creamcheese: The Eponymous Sculpture*, 2023. Glazed stoneware and false eyelashes, 63.5 x 38 x 43 cm. View Source

Strub's alter ego and drag persona, Loxanne Creamcheese, whom he describes as "the embodiment of my fruitiness, the quintessence of my flamboyance," was featured in paintings and ceramics throughout the exhibition. Loxanne continues to appear in his work today, serving as Strub's muse and the embodiment of his Jewishness, gayness, and theatricality, as seen in his 2023 ceramic sculpture, *Loxanne Creamcheese: The Eponymous Sculpture* (figs. 3a and 3b), in which Loxanne lounges glamorously on top of a bagel, dressed in smoked salmon, cucumber slices, capers, onions, and false eyelashes. Strub's work is united by a playful irreverence, a love of femininity, and a desire to create a campy, gay and Jewish visual culture, as he describes it: "I want to create things for people with experiences like me who are really flamboyant, maybe never felt like they fit in throughout their lives, and for that to be my political statement." (SS)

Linda Swanson

Born in Los Angeles, Linda Swanson has lived and worked in Montreal, Quebec since 2009, where she is a professor of Ceramics and Studio Arts at Concordia University. She commenced her ongoing exploration of clay at the Tekisui Workshop in Ashiya, Japan between 1990-1994 and since that time, has maintained a practice that, in her own words, "engages the enigmatic properties of matter at an elemental level and the capacity of wonder to question how and what we know," seeking to create works that explore the mysteries of nature and the metamorphic properties of ceramic materials and processes. Interested in the transformations of matter, Swanson manipulates clay to capture transitional states between solid and liquid, luminous and dark, wet and dry, mirroring the constant changes of our natural world.



Figure 1a. Linda Swanson, *Quantum Bloom*, 2015. Installation view. Glazed porcelain, salt water, Mylar, wood, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1b. Linda Swanson, *Quantum Bloom* (detail), 2015. Glazed porcelain, salt water, Mylar, wood, dimensions unknown. View Source



Figure 1c. Linda Swanson, *Quantum Bloom* (detail), 2015. Glazed porcelain, salt water, Mylar, wood, dimensions unknown. View Source

She often experiments with raw materials such as crystalline salts, water, metallic compounds, and clay minerals that transform in interaction with each other, as seen, for example in *Quantum Bloom*, an installation at PRACTICE Gallery (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2015) (figs. 1a, 1b, and 1c). In this piece, the artist arranged hundreds of hand-built cockroaches in a pool of salt water which progressively corroded and transformed the ceramic insects over the four-week period of display. Swanson explains that she plays with material processes to question "how experiential encounters with raw and fired ceramic materials can implicate our sense of temporality and corporeality; and how, when situated publicly as events with community participation, they can draw attention to issues of sites and their interpretation."

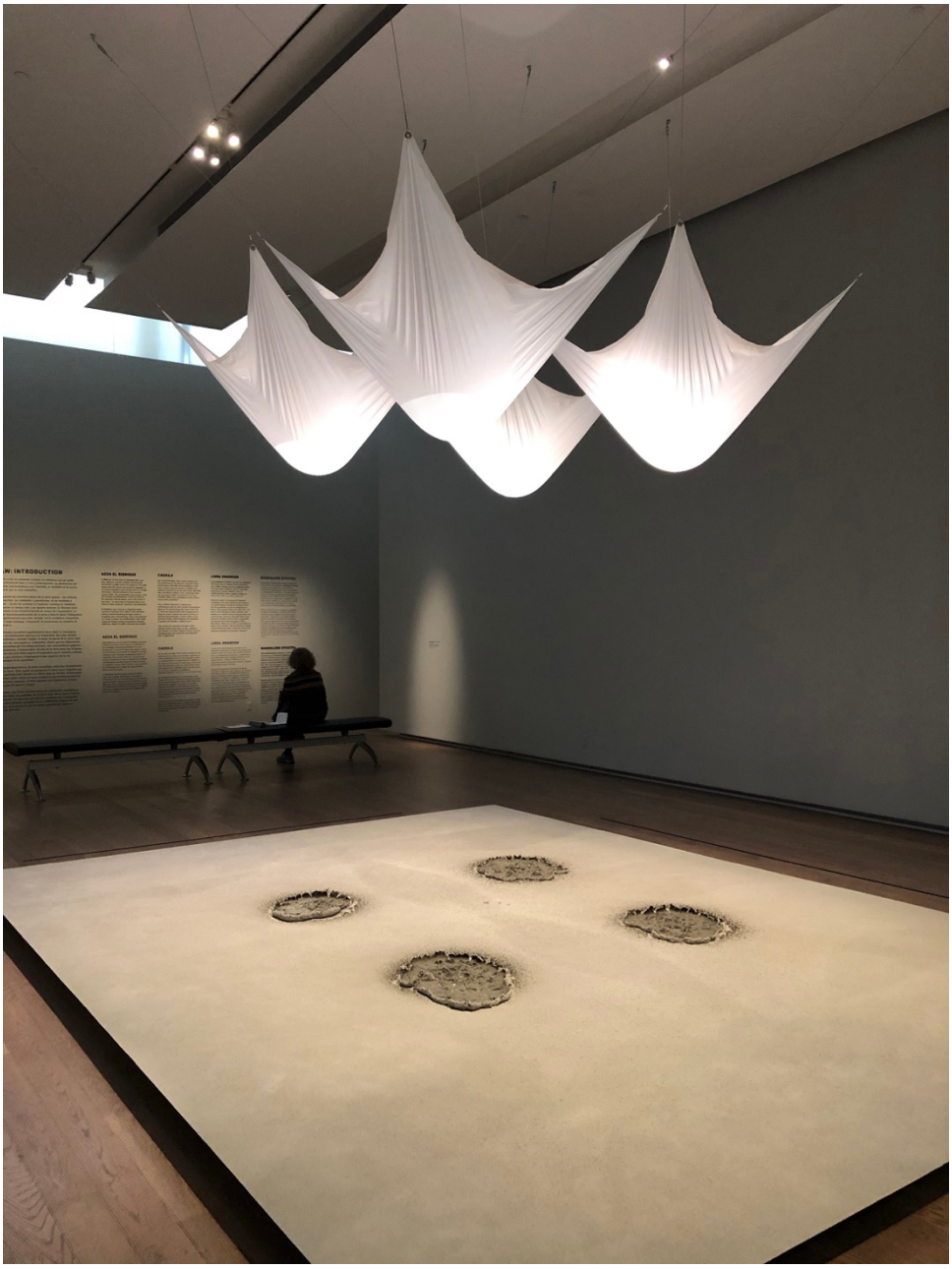


Figure 2a. Linda Swanson, *Templum of a Precious Thing of No Value, A Shapeless Thing of Many Shapes*, 2020. Installation view. Clay, water, metal, wood, and nylon, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source



Figure 2b. Linda Swanson, *Templum of a Precious Thing of No Value, A Shapeless Thing of Many Shapes* (detail), 2020. Clay, water, metal, wood, and nylon, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source

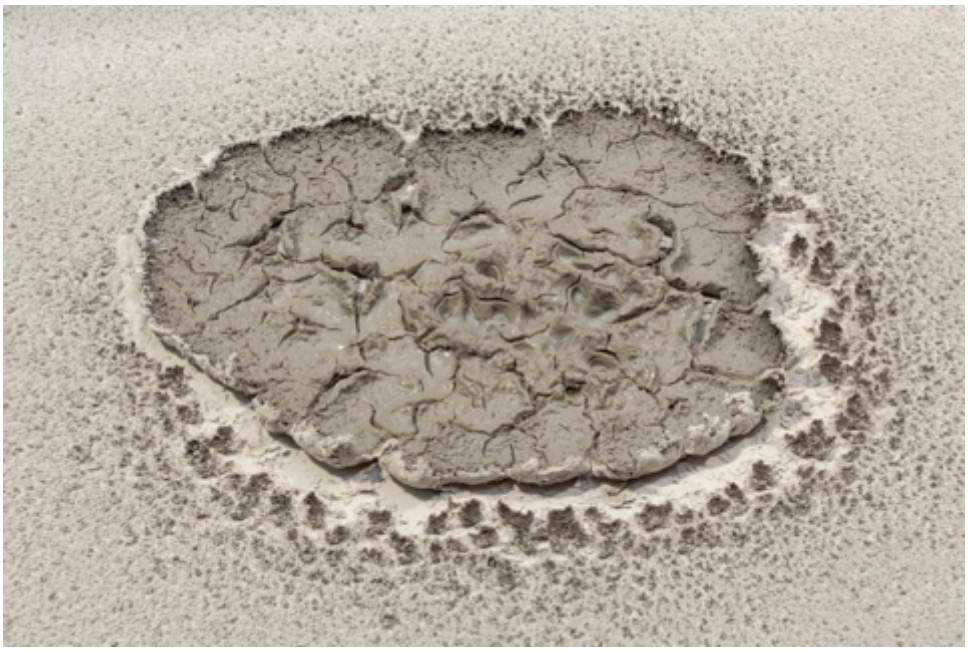


Figure 2c. Linda Swanson, *Templum of a Precious Thing of No Value, A Shapeless Thing of Many Shapes* (detail), 2020. Clay, water, metal, wood, and nylon, dimensions unknown. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. View Source

The artist's exploration of shifting states is further apparent in her large-scale installation, *Templum of a Precious Thing of No Value, A Shapeless Thing of Many Shapes*, installed at the Gardiner Museum in 2020 (Toronto, Ontario) (figs. 2a, 2b, and 2c), as part of the group

exhibition, *RAW*. This piece invokes the Ancient Roman templum, a sacred space set apart where augurs—religious officials—observed natural signs and created drawings in the dirt to interpret omens; for this piece, water drips onto a bentonite floor from water-filled templum-like membranes above, transforming the clay over the course of the exhibition.



Figure 3a. Linda Swanson, *SPECTRE 1111204*, 2020. Porcelain and glaze, dimensions unknown. Photo by Luuk Smits. View Source



Figure 3b. Linda Swanson, *SPECTRE 1111206*, 2020. Porcelain and glaze, dimensions unknown. Photo by Luuk Smits. View Source

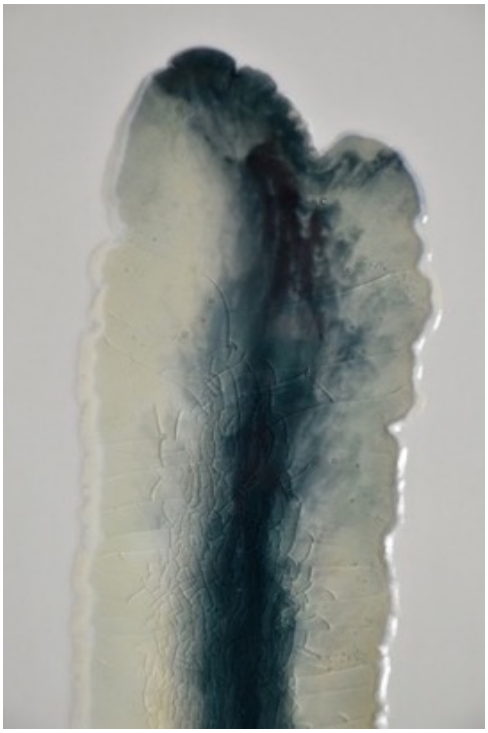


Figure 3c. Linda Swanson, *SPECTRE 1111206* (detail), 2020. Porcelain and glaze, dimensions unknown. Photo by Luuk Smits. View Source

Swanson also captures natural states of flux by playing with the interaction of colourants in the glazing and firing processes, as seen in her series *SPECTRES* (2020) (figs. 3a, 3b, and 3c) exhibited in the group exhibition, *Beautés Equivoques* at Fondation Bernardaud (Limoges, France) in 2021. To create the works in this series, Swanson exposed her flat rectangular pieces of porcelain variously to layers of glazes, chemicals, fire, and water, watching the reactions to create careful, yet experimental artistic gestures resulting in striking variations in colours, bubbles, cracks, dissolutions, and crystallizations. The curator, Stéphanie Le Follic-Hadida, describes this series, writing: "By submitting these physical and chemical reactions to human observation, Linda Swanson aims to raise public consciousness of nature's beauty and incredible creative variety." (SS)

Brendan Lee Satish Tang

Brendan Lee Satish Tang is a Vancouver, British Columbia-based multidisciplinary artist who incorporates a variety of media and cultural influences to create imaginative sculptures and drawings. Born in Dublin, Ireland to Trinidadian parents of mixed-Asian descent and relocating to Canada as a child, Tang has devoted much of his artistic career to the exploration of modern Asian culture as filtered through his hybrid upbringing. He is also influenced by his belonging to what he calls "the remix generation (as evidenced by electronic music and its 'mash-ups')," leading him to borrow and reconfigure ideas from a variety of sources, including art history as well as contemporary influences, such as pop culture, manga, and video games, to create new works in a practice he likens to "channel surfing, where I absorb, interpret and bank a great deal of visual information to inform my personal aesthetic." This penchant for remix is apparent in *Manga Ormolu*, Satish Tang's ceramic series that blends elements of Chinese Ming Dynasty-style vases with anime, robotics, and invented technology.



Figure 1. Brendan Lee Satish Tang and Alex McLeod, *#Lovechild*, 2013. Underglaze and glaze on white earthenware, wood, video, and computer-generated animation, dimensions unknown. View Source

Works from this series, such as *#Lovechild* (2013) (fig. 1), are futuristic re-imaginings of eighteenth-century ormolu, the European gilding technique of applying decorative, invented chinoiserie ornamentation to existing Chinese porcelain objects. Satish Tang states that he was drawn to historic ormolu ceramics for the ideas of hybridisation and cultural appropriation that the art form carries, saying, "I saw a part of myself in the Asian ceramic works, dripping in the rococo ornament of the West." The artist interrupts the expected appearance of ormolu chinoiserie, however, by blending the historic form and decoration with futuristic components, as seen in *#Lovechild*, which is bifurcated and contains robotic elements.



Figure 2. Brendan Lee Satish Tang, process image of *Clay Fighter*, 2018. Digital animation. View Source

A collaboration between Satish Tang and animator, Alex McLeod, *#Lovechild* was exhibited in *The Future is Already Here* (curated by Rachel Rosenfield Lafo for the Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey, British Columbia, 2013) with live video of the vessel containing animated overlays projected on the Gallery wall, melding the real and the virtual. Satish Tang further explored ceramics and video technology in *Clay Fighter* (fig. 2), His 2018 video homage to *Street Fighter*, the classic Japanese video game, in which he depicts the game's character Dhalsim as a ceramic artist, creating a self-portrait in which he fights with, manipulates, and shapes a mound of clay. Satish Tang describes *Street Fighter* as a "childhood favourite," explaining, "One of the reasons that this particular game resonated with me is that it...was the first time I saw a South Asian male portrayed as a person of power in popular culture."



Figure 3a. Brendan Lee Satish Tang, *Rain City Robot*, 2016. Fibreglass, steel, paint, 320 cm tall. View Source



Figure 3b. Brendan Lee Satish Tang, *Rain City Robot*, 2016. Fibreglass, steel, paint, 320 cm tall. View Source

In 2016, Satish Tang expanded his *Manga Ormolu* to create a public installation titled *Rain City Robot* (figs. 3a and 3b), depicting a large fibreglass Chinese vase with cartoon-like clouds emerging from its neck, recalling the four sister smokestacks of the old Mississauga Lakeview generating station, and robotic limbs inspired by barnacles at its base, a nod to Mississauga's high-tech industry and the city's lakeside location. Satish Tang is a professor in the Ceramics department at Emily Carr University (Vancouver, British Columbia). (SS)

Bruce Taylor

Bruce Taylor is an interdisciplinary artist and fine arts professor at the University of Waterloo (Ontario). Taylor works primarily in stoneware, as well as with mediums such as porcelain and drawing.



Figure 1. Bruce Taylor, *Cone and Donut,* 1991. Ceramic and lead, dimensions unknown. View Source

His early work is simple in style and notably heavy, with some works weighing over 1,000 pounds. One such piece, *Cone and Donut* (1991) (fig. 1), takes inspiration from simple mechanical elements. Crafted from ceramic and lead, the sculpture is striking in form, with smooth, fluid edges, and raw organic textures across the surfaces.



Figure 2a. Bruce Taylor, *White Crucible*, 2009. Ceramic and copper leaf, 127 x 76 x 58.5 cm. View Source



Figure 2b. Bruce Taylor, *Stirrup Crucible*, 2009. Ceramic, copper leaf. 106.7 x 111.75 x 71 cm. View Source

A series within Taylor's ceramic oeuvre, which shares similar approaches to texture, are the artist's "heads," large busts depicting cartoon faces, sometimes positioned upon a base with wheels, or sporting a teapot spout as a head adornment. *White Crucible* (2009) (fig. 2a) and *Stirrup Crucible* (2009) (fig. 2b) are two sculptures in this series, crafted from ceramic and copper leaf. The heads figuratively blend the familiar and the strange, while also referencing Victorian-era industrial practices, particularly the vessels that were used for melting down liquid metals, as alluded to in the title, *Stirrup Crucible*.



Figure 3. Bruce Taylor, *If I Were A Bell*, 2019. Ceramic, glaze and stains, 26 x 54 x 74 cm. View Source

The heavier, earlier works by Taylor differ quite significantly from his more recent ceramic pieces, such as *If I Were A Bell* (2019) (fig. 3), which was exhibited at the Korean International Ceramic Biennale (Gyeonggi-do province) in 2019. With clean lines, even surfaces, and hand-painted geometric designs in vivid primary colours delicately detailing the piece, *If I Were A Bell* embodies the stylistic, streamlined, and colourful elements that have defined Taylor's work for the past decade. The artist's more recent work with porcelain and drawing also reflects visuality that is directly inspired by music. As the artist notes, "the ceramic forms rely on minimalism's emphasis on primary structures whereas the mark making is crafted from musical concepts such as rhythm, repetition, and improvisation, which have guided the arrangement of elements on the form's surfaces." (DD)

Barbara Tipton

Barbara Tipton, a ceramic artist and arts writer, living in Saltspring Island, British Columbia, isformerly from Alberta where she taught at the Alberta College of Art and Design, Calgary, and produced functional and fine art ceramics alongside her late husband John Chalke. With an oeuvre that explores aesthetic possibilities, as well

as the functional and technical elements of clay production, her work is varied in presentation, yet consistently starts with a common format: the cup and saucer.



Figure 1. Barbara Tipton, *Bronze Cup with Blue Interior*, 1989. Wheel thrown stoneware, altered, deliberately broken and reassembled, cone 6 firing, 32 cm wide. View Source

In *Bronze Cup with Blue Interior* (1989) (fig. 1), a wheel-thrown stoneware piece, Tipton takes the teacup as her departure point, flattening the cup and saucer so that they become asymmetrical and unbalanced. With a simple bronze exterior and deep indigo interior colouring, the vessel is uncanny and surreal. The artist plays with the traditional cup and saucer's utility, distorting and destabilising the expectations that emerge when one comes across a familiar domestic material object with a known purpose.



Figure 2. Barbara Tipton, *Latte Cups*, 2014. Wheel thrown porcelain, brush decoration with cobalt/manganese stain, green glaze, wood/soda firing, 10 cm in height. View Source

The functionality that goes hand in hand with an object like the cup and saucer appears in other works in Tipton's practice, such as *Latte Cups* (2014) (fig.2). Crafted from wheel-thrown porcelain and detailed with cobalt/manganese stain and green glaze, the cups are simple in their form, painted with organic lines and leaves. Tipton engages with the natural in these cups, but in a more figurative sense, through references to historical drawings, churches, blue-and-white Chinoiserie patterns, and herbal drawings from the sixteenth century that are noted as significant inspirational sources for the artist. The artist explains that her work "originated as wheel-thrown forms, altered and assembled, but this evolved into drawing on the surface of paper clay slabs and forming them intuitively into three-dimensional shapes. Many of the works retain their visual identity as cup and saucer; others retain those origins only marginally as various implied narratives take over." For Tipton, her reason for singling out the cup and saucer as a recurring theme stems from a desire to elevate the motif—and, by extension, the practice of making things from earth—so that ceramics may be recognised as a significant contemporary art form, similar to how it was historically perceived and is currently viewed in countries such as Japan.



Figure 3. Barbara Tipton, *Adrift in Jetsam*, 2017. Multiglazed, multifired, ceramic sculpture, 20 x 19 cm. View Source

Exhibited in the fortieth anniversary Alberta Craft Council exhibition, *Making: A Career in Craft* (2020) in Calgary, *Adrift in Jetsam* (2017) (fig. 3) is a multiglazed, multifired, ceramic sculpture that subtly maintains a resemblance to the cup and saucer format from which it originated. The artwork incorporates an abstracted depiction of a human figure floating amid various debris. *Adrift in Jetsam* was created during a time when masses of people were desperately trying to cross the Mediterranean in search of safety in Europe. The artist was profoundly moved by the accompanying tragedies. The rich textures enveloping the sculpture, which seem almost fluid and organic, create a sensual quality that contrasts sharply with the chaotic theme. The piece's multidimensionality is furthered formally by the layered clay components, the carved grooves, and the raw edges. This stylistic format appears repeatedly in Tipton's work, where commercial and original decals, along with three-dimensional mark-making, are integrated into the surfaces of her cups and saucers. (DD)

Gise Trauttmansdorff

Gise Trauttmansdorff is a ceramic artist living and working in the Hamilton, Ontario area, where she draws inspiration from her surroundings. Born in Graz, Austria, Trauttmansdorff studied Architecture before immigrating to Canada and initiating her career in sculpture. Since 1991, she has worked with clay, initially creating figurative sculptures and portraits before increasingly moving towards abstracted sculptural forms and installations created with raku-fired pieces and often including found objects.

Her creative process is multi-stepped, guided by inspiration and emotion as well as by her education. The clay is hand-formed and thinned out slowly until it becomes nearly weightless, carefully worked into the desired shape and then fired multiple times. Raku firing is usually an exciting and demanding part in this process. It is a quick outdoor firing, it involves removing the piece, red-hot glowing from the kiln, placing it in sawdust and covering it to smoke and reduce. This thermal shock creates colours and random fissures in the surface of the piece. As a result, no two pieces are ever the same. Trauttmansdorff manipulates space and form through composition and explores the relationship between light and shadow as well as inner and outer, positive and negative space, juxtaposing textures and colours, fragility and coarseness, as Carnegie Gallery (Dundas, Ontario) describes.

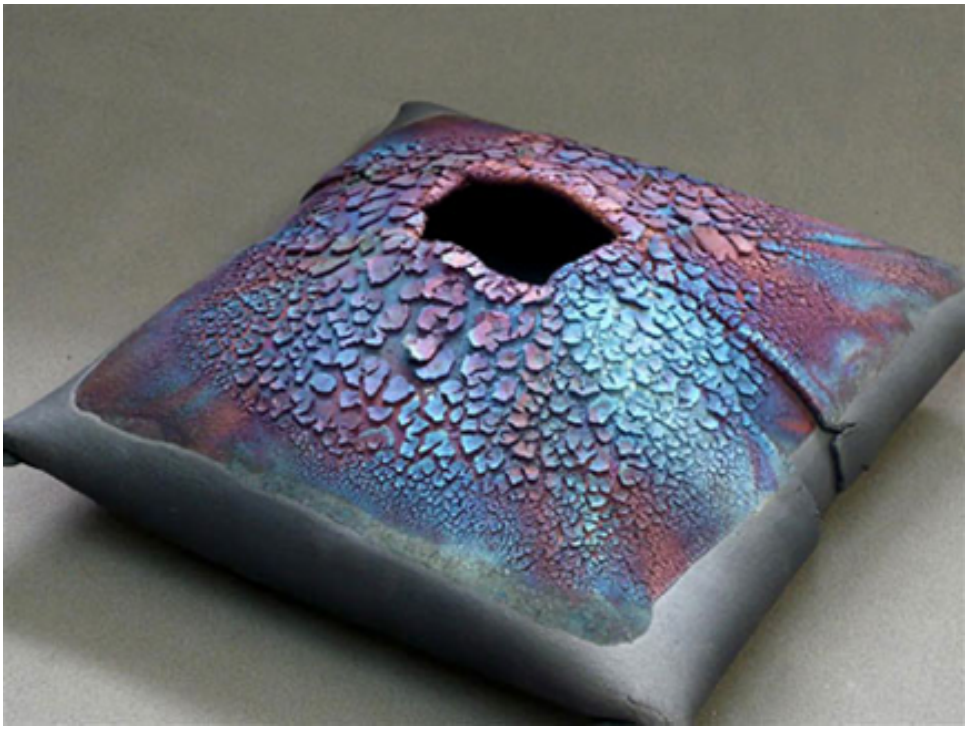


Figure 1. Gise Trauttmansdorff, *Raku Fired Alligator Pillow*, n.d. Raku-fired ceramic, 8" x 8". View Source

These qualities of juxtaposition are apparent in the artist's *Raku Fired Alligator Pillow* (fig. 1), which evokes the comfort of a pillow but also invites exploration of the dark interior that might represent a safe shelter, a dwelling. It bears a textured surface that appears weathered, recalling the high temperatures in which it was forged. Though Trauttmansdorff creates the majority of her work with raku, she also uses other firing techniques, as seen in her two-person show *Bare Bones* at James North Studio Gallery (Hamilton, Ontario) in 2011. Alongside fellow artist Barb Sachs, Trauttmansdorff displayed minimalist sculptures, featuring found objects—such as sticks and fish bones—bisque fired, unglazed to highlight the naked surface of the clay and to create a monochrome palette of white clay forms floating suspended, slowly moving and casting multiple shadows on the gallery wall.

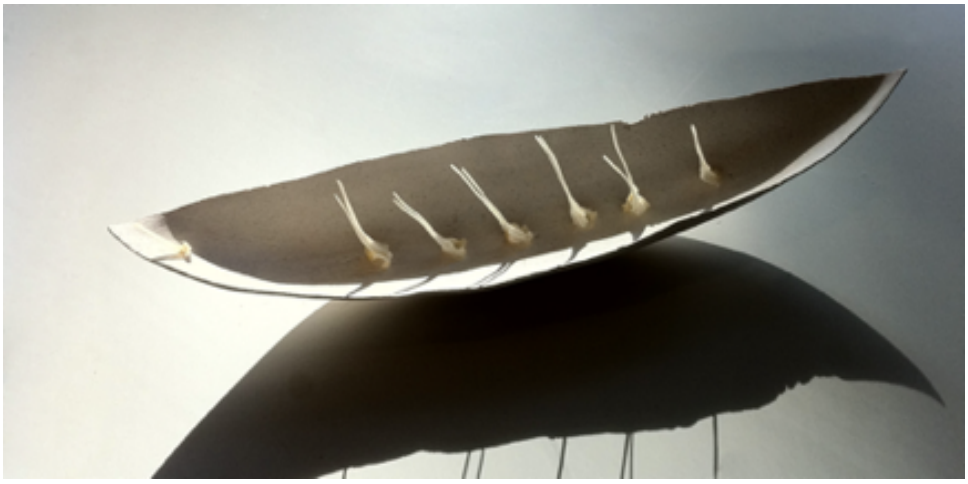


Figure 2. Gise Trauttmansdorff, *Warrior,* n.d. From the *Pod* series. Ceramic and found fish bones, dimensions unknown. View Source

Trauttmansdorff included sculptures from her *Pod* series (fig. 2) in this show, which she describes, writing, "The pod form is a metaphor for the journey of life, whether it's surmounting an obstacle, achieving a goal, a new beginning, or a memory…expressed through the simultaneous fragility and sturdiness of this shape."



Figure 3. Gise Trauttmansdorff, *Red Envelope*, n.d. Raku-fired ceramic, 38 x 30.5 cm. View Source

The artist also creates allegorical sculptures based on the form of the envelope or letter, such as *Red Envelope* (fig. 3), which she created as a reaction to email thinking about, in her own words, of "all the messages that were written, sent and received far and wide through space and time," as well as the letters "that somehow never made it out of thoughts and good intentions, and those long lost in transit." (SS)

Reed Weir

Reed Weir, an interdisciplinary artist originally from Ontario, moved to Newfoundland and Labrador and fell in love with the vibrant history and folk culture of the Atlantic province. Currently based in McKellar, Ontario, Weir maintains a practice focused on the figurative, primarily through sculpture and painting.



Figure 1a. Reed Weir, *Briny Pillar*, 2007. Stoneware, 53 cm high. View Source

Her work grapples with big themes, such as culture, society, and the human experience, particularly considering paradoxical moments in life, such as when action becomes stillness, as seen in her sculpture, *Briny Pillar* (2007) (fig. 1a). Hand built from stoneware, *Briny Pillar* depicts a small girl rising from the flood waters holding a salt shaker in her hand. The work alludes to movement, as though the wind is blowing her hair—an ironic detail when crafted from something as still and solid as clay.



Figure 1b. Reed Weir, *The Flood at Furnace Cove*, 2008. Installation view. The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador. Photo credit: J Haney. View Source

In 2007, this sculpture was exhibited in *The Flood at Furnace Cove* (curated by Gail Tuttle and Charlotte Jones for the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College Art Gallery, Corner Brook, Newfoundland; travelling) (fig. 1b), a two-person exhibition, alongside other works in clay by Weir and encaustic paintings by Angela Antle. This exhibition centred around an imagined story of a flood obliterating a Newfoundland community in the distant past and, more broadly, themes of community and change within rural Newfoundland & Labrador as influenced by environmental pressures. As Weir explains, "One of my main motivations is the desire to understand and document rural society and its position in present-day culture. I draw extensively upon images from my own garden and the rural area in which I live (southwestern Newfoundland). My intention is to create contemporary works of art that speak to our common human experience, but via stories that are informed by a rural perspective."



Figure 2a. Reed Weir, *Mark Makers*, 2011. Stoneware, 34 x 34 x 38cm. View Source

Ceramic works within Weir's oeuvre always exist within a series. *Mark Makers* (2011) (fig. 2a), for example, from a series of the same name, is made from two separate pieces that create one singular work when placed together. The work features both two- and three-dimensional elements, such as a flat base and a dimensional sculptural figure. *Mark Makers* shows two figures, seated facing one another with a wall in between them. Both figures have pencils in their hands, literally making marks on the wall. The work is evocative in showing the relationship between the two figures and the two separate sculptural components.



Figure 2b. Reed Weir, *Green Wall,* 2011. Stoneware, 44 x 43 x 30cm. View Source



Figure 2c. Reed Weir, *Mysterious Reader*, 2010. Stoneware, 37 x 46 x 40cm. View Source

Again, despite the solidity in the clay, the figures are crafted with movement and humanity—this is present in the other works from the

series, such as *Green Wall* (2011) (fig. 2b) similarly depicting two figures drawing on a wall, and *Mystery Reader* (2010) (fig. 2c) showing a figure deep in concentration reading a tiny book.



Figure 3. Reed Weir, *Earth Day Performance,* 2012. Stoneware, cotton twine, 54 x 23 x 22cm. View Source

Earth Day Performance (2012) (fig. 3) is from Weir's *Horizon Watchers* series. A figure stands tall, wearing an extravagant and unusual hood that creates a tunnel around their face. The garment is both performative and political in concept, alluding to the tunnel vision that saturates environmental and climate issues. As craft writer Gloria Hickey writes, in an exhibition essay for Weir's *Horizon*

Watchers exhibition at the Mary E. Black Gallery in Halifax, Nova Scotia (2012), "We are all Horizon Watchers, scanning the horizon line, watching, waiting, and assessing our options... The horizon line is something everyone on planet Earth shares. It is a common denominator like the human condition." (DD)

Nikola Wojewoda

Nikola Wojewoda is a multi-disciplinary artist based in Hamilton, Ontario. Since the 1980s, Wojewoda has worked and exhibited in a variety of media, including filmmaking, drawing, painting, printmaking, installation, and most recently, sculptural work in clay, bronze, stone, plaster, and mixed media, as well as in collage and paper cutting. Wojewoda describes her artistic process as "storytelling," explaining, "I'm drawn to symbols, to the metaphors where layered meaning lies. Through personally constructed archetypes I explore what it is to be human, and what is at stake in these complex times we live in." This creative preoccupation with stories and symbolism began at the beginning of her career when Wojewoda found artistic and personal inspiration in the mythology and archetypes of various global cultures.



Figure 1. Nikola Wojewoda, *Out of the Water to Tango*, 1988. Plaster, 86.35 cm high. View Source

In this period, Wojewoda was particularly affected by contemporary Inuit and First Nations sculpture; her 1988 sculpture, *Out of the Water to Tango* (fig. 1), demonstrates the direct influence of Indigenous art on her work. Her continued interest in symbols is apparent in her 2015 solo exhibition *The Dharma Queens* at the Dundas Valley School of Art (Dundas, Ontario).



Figure 2a. Nikola Wojewoda, *The Somnambulant Queen, 2015.* Paper, 115 x 89 cm. View Source



Figure 2b. Nikola Wojewoda, *The Seer, Ally to the Somnambulant Queen*, 2015. PSH paper clay and slip, crystal ball, 60 x 25 x 30 cm. View Source

This show featured several elaborate, collage figures—constructed out of vintage wallpapers and card stock— that evoke the appearance of royalty and stained-glass windows, including *The Somnambulant Queen* (2015) (fig. 2a). Each collaged-Queen corresponds to a sculptural "spirit jar," a ceramic vessel with human features and a body capable of, in the artist's words, "holding what needs to be protected, or containing that which needs to be subdued." *The Seer* (2015) (fig. 2b), with unblinking eyes, provides the sleeping *Somnambulant Queen*, for example, with sight.



Figure 3a. Nikola Wojewoda, *Garden of the Gods*, 2021. Installation view. View Source



Figure 3b. Nikola Wojewoda, *Convolvulus Tricolor*, 2019. Stoneware and glazes, dimensions unknown. View Source

In her 2019 exhibition, *Garden of the Gods* (fig. 3a) (curated by Denis Longchamps for the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery, Waterloo, Ontario) (fig. 3a), Wojewoda displayed eleven decorative plates depicting hallucinogenic plants, such as *Convolvulus Tricolor* (2019) (fig. 3b), exploring themes related to religion, our complex human nature, and states of altered consciousness. Wojewoda's interest in psychedelics lies in considering how transformative encounters with hallucinogenic plants have shaped religious and philosophical thought over the course of human history. (SS)

Lin Xu

Lin Xu was born in Inner Mongolia but grew up in Beijing after her parents, who were radio/computer scientists, relocated the family in 1983 having been displaced during the Cultural Revolution. Xu left her teaching post at Washington State University (Pullman, Washington) in 2004 to establish the ceramics program at the University of Manitoba located in Brandon, Manitoba where Xu lives and works. In addition to her art practice and teaching, she is also pursuing a degree in Biological Science focusing on microscopy to inform and further develop her artwork.



Figure 1. Lin Xu, *Untitled Vase*, n.d. Ceramic, 30.48 x 17.78 cm. View Source

In addition to sculptural pieces made primarily using soft-slab clay and installation pieces, Xu creates functional ceramic wares such as *Untitled Vessel* (fig. 1) made with glazes, surface treatments, and firing methods similar to those used for the *Gourd* series (2005-ongoing), which is rooted in Xu's fascination with the children's story by Zhang Tianyi, *The Secret of the Magic Gourd* (1958). Xu explores themes around creativity and imagination, memory and dreams, and the subconscious, which she sees as constitutive elements of human knowledge. Her process-based work uses a wide range of clay bodies, surface treatments, and firing methods in what she describes as "an ongoing appreciation and exploration of the material's physical potential. Clay is humble yet stubborn, generous yet challenging material [that] offers endless possibilities...Universal symbols and subjects closely related to the human body interest me the most. Subjects such as shadow, pillow, Chinese symbolism, and the metamorphic qualities of clay have been my continuous focus in the past ten years."



Figure 2. Lin Xu, *Untitled*, 2013-2017. From the *Pillow* series. Porcelain and stoneware, glazes, decals, lustres, and gold pen, dimensions unknown. View Source

Untitled (2013-17) (fig. 2), from the *Pillow* series, uses the form of a common household object to explore the soft and fragile qualities of clay and to suggest the personal memories and emotions that an object so closely related to the human body can evoke.



Figure 3. Lin Xu, *Untitled*, 2015-2018. From the *Oasis* Series. Porcelain and stoneware, glazes, decals, lusters and gold pen, 20.32 x 22.86 x 12.7 cm. View Source

Featured in the solo exhibition of the same name (curated by Natalia Lebedinskaia for the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, Brandon, Manitoba, 2017), the *Oasis* series is an exploration of themes around adaptation and transformation. The objects created combine elements shaped by Xu with studio discards and found materials such as porcelain flowers, dolls 'faces, or the swirl of clay trimmed from the edge of a vessel thrown on the potter's wheel in a process of addition and subtraction that transforms the object into a singular work of art, a "living individual."

For example, *Untitled* (2015-18) (fig. 3) draws parallels between the malleability of the clay medium and the human mind, which are both simultaneously fragile and resilient. Xu seeks to create objects of both beauty and meaning that celebrate the materials, forms, surfaces, and remnants of the past in a unified aesthetic vision. (NJH)

Linda Yates and David Hayashida

Partnership is the core component in Linda Yates and David Hayashida's shared pottery practice. The ceramicists currently live and work in King's Point, Newfoundland. Partners in both life and work, the pair run the Craft & Art Gallery at King's Point Pottery, working as practising potters and sharing their work with visitors and locals alike. Yates, originally from King's Point, uses her history and ties to the land as inspiration for her ceramic work. Hayashida is *Sansei*, a third-generation Japanese-Canadian, originally from the Kitchener-Waterloo region, and also finds inspiration in his rural Newfoundland surroundings. As the two potters explain, "Our pots reflect the passion we share for the environment we have chosen to live in."



Figure 1. Linda Yates and David Hayashida, *Whales,* n.d. Ceramic. View Source

Such inspiration can be seen in *Whales* (fig. 1), a work that encapsulates the potters' signature blue and white functional Whales and Waves designs, which have been a core feature in their collaborative practice since 1992. The whale has been an important presence in the artists' lives, with the Humpback Whale Pavilion neighbouring King's Point Pottery. The Pavilion teaches visitors about the whales' migration and features a humpback skeleton. Hayashida helped the pavilion and community clean and preserve the whale's bones. Yates and Hayashida also produce functional ceramics inspired by the flora and fauna of Newfoundland and intended for the home and table.



Figure 2a. Linda Yates and David Hayashida, *Secret to the Return of the Cod,* n.d. Installation view. Stoneware and glass installation, 365.75 x 244 cm. The Rooms, St John's, 2008. View Source

Secret to the Return of the Cod (fig. 2a) is a work that displays how the artists blend functionality and creativity. Exhibited in 2008 at The Rooms (St John's, Newfoundland) and in Cheongju, South Korea for the *Unity and Diversity* exhibition in 2009, the work is a twelve-foot-high installation piece shaped like a kettle. It is formed by 230 cups stacked upon one another and supported by glass shelves. From a distance, the kettle formation shows a large codfish image on its surface.



Figure 2b. Linda Yates and David Hayashida, *Secret to the Return of the Cod* (detail of one cup), n.d. Stoneware and glass installation, 365.75 x 244 cm. View Source

Once closer to the work, one can identify the smaller capelin (the cod's food source) painted on each cup that work together to form

this larger shape (fig. 2b). The cups are fired with seawater—another notable feature of Yates and Hayashida's work. Since 2003, the artists have used a salt and soda kiln, which creates unique textures, colours, and effects, by incorporating local salt water, and soda ash, into the kiln while firing the pottery. *Secret to the Return of the Cod* is political in concept, referring to how Newfoundlanders have historically depended on cod, even to the point of overfishing, leaving the species on the precarious edge of extinction.



Figure 3a. David Hayashida, *Low Tea in '43 (British Columbia) Still Boils,* 2017. Installation view. Mixed media, dimensions unknown. *Being Japanese Canadian...*, The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 2019. View Source



Figure 3b. David Hayashida, *Low Tea in '43 (British Columbia) Still Boils* (detail), 2017.Mixed media, dimensions unknown. *Being Japanese Canadian...*, The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 2019. View Source

Political messaging is also apparent in Hayashida's individual work, *Low Tea in '43 (British Columbia) Still Boils* (2017) (figs. 3a and 3b). This multimedia work explores Hayashida's family history and addresses the racism that Japanese Canadians have experienced, particularly in and around the Second World War. The ceramic elements, teacups and saucers, and the title allude to the traditional British high tea and the British colonial influence that perpetuated racist behaviours and laws towards Japanese people in Canada. This is underlined by Hayashida's textual elements written in the shadows of the tea cups, which showcase the racist terms and phrases that have been used against Japanese Canadians. The artist explains, "It hurts deeply knowing these words and this imagery were used to describe people in my family... [The] words and images [were] taken from political cartoons in newspapers and magazines, propaganda posters, and historical records of the incarceration of Japanese Canadians... Generations suffered because racism was considered acceptable in the highest levels of our Canadian government." Yates and Hayashida continue to create sculptural and functional ceramics inspired by their heritages and life in Newfoundland, while also championing the province's arts through the Craft & Art Gallery at King's Point Pottery. (DD)

Donn Zver

Donn Zver is a studio potter in Troy, Ontario, where he creates and sells functional stoneware ceramics and runs the Donn Zver School of Pottery. Until 2021, he also operated Cafe Troy, where he served meals on his handmade dinnerware and sold pottery. Zver has practised and taught ceramic arts for over fifty years and has championed the art form, raising the profile of Ontario pottery and working to establish the Ontario Potters Association (now Fusion: The Ontario Clay & Glass Association, Toronto, Ontario). Zver has long been invested in passing on his knowledge to younger generations of potters, and a key feature of his business is supporting apprentices, as he explains, "I am a teacher at heart and want to

ensure I share my expertise." Under his tutelage, Zver's apprentices develop a body of work suitable for sale, assist him in his ceramic production, and learn studio and business management—skills essential for a professional functional potter, although he notes that it is increasingly uncommon for potters to take apprentices. As underlined by his school, commitment to the Ontario Potters Association, and apprenticeship model, developing community, sharing in the joys of wheel throwing with others, and helping potters to make a living through their art is deeply important to Zver. Such desires also inform his business and creative practice, in which he endeavours to create high-quality functional ware that his customers can use and enjoy for years.



Figure 1. Donn Zver, *Covered Casserole #2*, 1985. Thrown stoneware, glaze with stamped iron and rutile oxide decoration, dimensions unknown. Collection of Art Gallery of Burlington. View Source

Covered Casserole #2 (1985) (fig. 1), an early work from Zver, is a practical vessel intended for daily use. It features intricate detailing in natural tones.



Figure 2. Donn Zver, *Vase Form*, 2016. Stoneware, reduction firing with multiglazes, 30.5 x 20.3 cm. View Source

Over the years, Zver has moved away from such patterns, now favouring a focus on form, glazes, and texture in lieu of detailed surface designs, as seen in the fluid form and variegated colours of *Vase Form* (2016) (fig. 2), a vessel with clean lines, sculptural silhouette, and a glossy finish. This vase was reduction fired, which means the incoming air to the kiln was restricted, which in turn alters

the colours and visual effects due to metallic oxides giving up oxygen and converting to their more metallic forms.



Figure 3. Donn Zver, *Open Casserole*, 2019. Stoneware, 7.6 x 35.6 cm. View Source

Open Casserole (2019) (fig. 3), a stoneware dish, glazed in black and white with a transitional band that gently blends the oppositional tones, similarly prioritises simplicity, while underlining the functionality central to his practice. Zver writes, "I see myself as a potter who works in the same tradition as those early craftspeople of the past. When I work with clay, I work knowing that someone will see the merits of the piece and want to use it in their home. From that standpoint I accept the responsibility that the piece must not only be aesthetically pleasing but that it will also fulfill a necessary function." (DD)