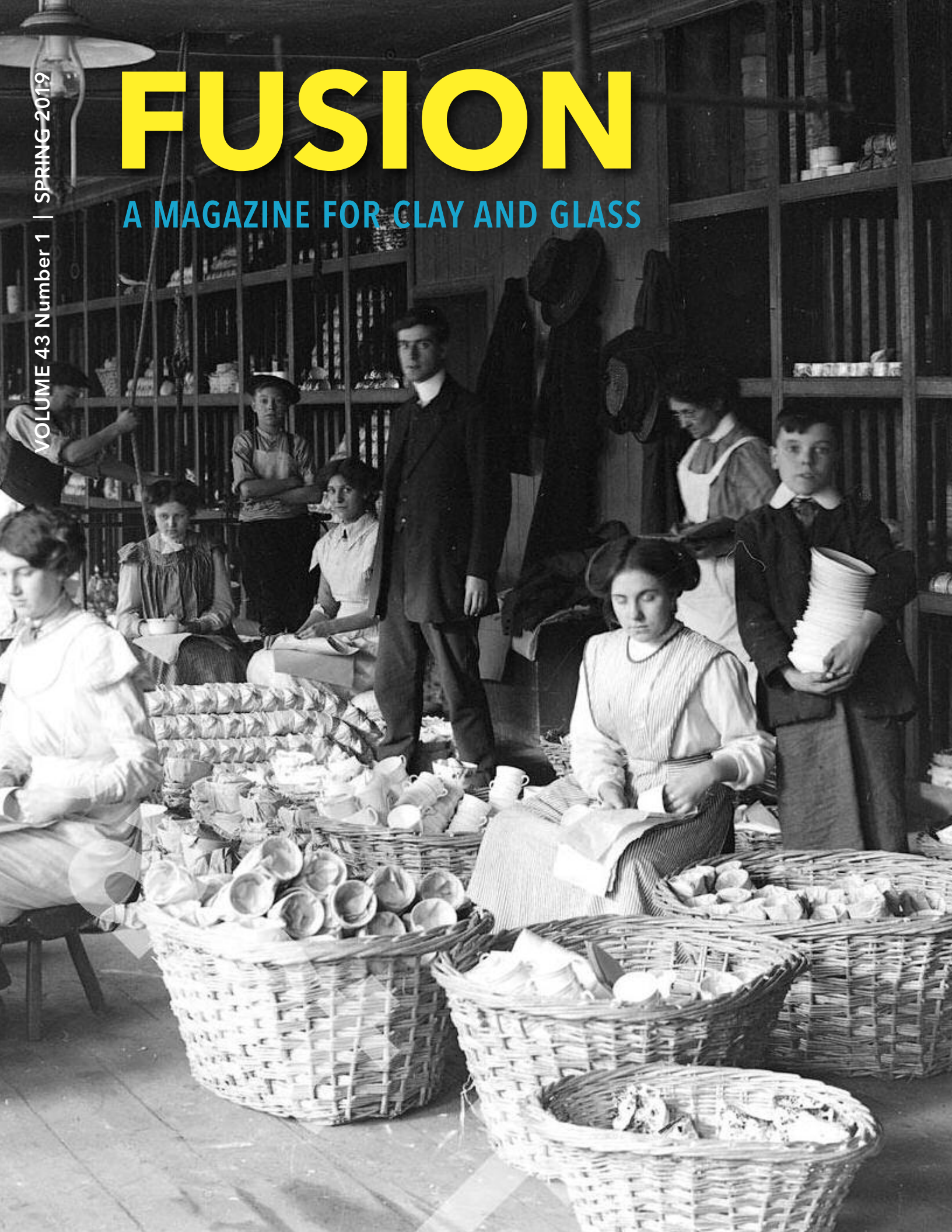


VOLUME 43 Number 1 | SPRING 2019

# FUSION

A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS



Thalamuseum, 2016, Peter Tittenberger.



## En Route:

Sculptural Ceramics and Glass  
Emerging from Manitoba

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- Gayle Buzzi
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- Terry Hildebrand
- Monica Mercedes Martinez
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*En Route* is an exhibition in partnership  
with the School of Art, University of  
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Marg, 2017, Mary Stankevicius. Photo: Nolan Drew

# FUSION

A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS

Editor: Margot Lettner      Advertising: FUSION  
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## IN THIS ISSUE

<b>Editor's Note</b>	
Margot Lettner .....	5
<b>Top of the pots: the smashing rise of ceramics</b>	
Amy Fleming / The Guardian <a href="http://www.theguardian.com">www.theguardian.com</a> .....	6
<b>Things of Beauty Growing: A Short History of British Studio Pottery</b>	
Rachel Gotlieb .....	10
<b>Gallery: The Potteries of Stoke</b>	
FUSION .....	14
<b>Making Marks: Lisa Hammond in Conversation</b>	
Leslie Menagh with Lisa Hammond .....	18
<b>British Ceramics: The Collections</b>	
FUSION .....	20
<b>2019 Member Survey: Highlights and Next Steps</b>	
Salina Szechtman & Sasha Bateman .....	26
<b>FUSION Magazine Spotlight, Featured Established Artist - Glass</b>	
Tali Grinshpan .....	27
<b>FUSION Magazine Spotlight, Featured Established Artist - Ceramics</b>	
Diane Black .....	28



### ON THE COVER

China Warehouse by William Blake. Courtesy of The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, see *Gallery: The Potteries of Stoke*, page 14. Used with permission. Image may not be used or stored in any form without consent of the copyright holders.

### Reprints


Two revisions to FUSION's Winter 2019 issue. Ceramicist M. Bernadette Pratt made the work, attributed to Marie-Pierre Drolet, on page 19. Photographer Peter Shepherd's website is [watershed96@me.com](mailto:watershed96@me.com)

# UPCOMING FUSION EVENTS

## FUSION Annual Conference

### "British Potters Potting"

May 31 - June 2, 2019 McMaster University, Hamilton, ON  
For registration and information visit [www.clayandglass.on.ca](http://www.clayandglass.on.ca)




**Friday, May 31**  
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**Saturday, June 1 - Sunday, June 2**  
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## FIREWORKS 2019

Exhibition  
May 24 - June 6, 2019

Reception and Awards Ceremony  
Friday, May 31, 2019  
7:30 - 9:00 pm

Earls Court Gallery  
215 Ottawa Street North  
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Mary Louise White  
Lucille McCann

### Creative Directions: Dynamic Design with Angelo di Petta

#### Call for Application

FUSION: The Ontario Clay and Glass Association is excited to announce the launch of Creative Directions: Dynamic Design with Angelo di Petta. Dynamic Design is intended for ceramic artists who have had several years of clay experience and achieved a reasonable level of competency in ceramics. Each participant will be encouraged to critically examine their own work and embark on an individual project that will generate either a new body of work and/or resolve current issues in their own work.

**This Creative Directions program will:**

- have a distinct focus on design - investigating the relationship between function and form;
- help to clarify your understanding of the elements and principals of design, expand your technical skills and develop critical thinking; and
- support you in developing a body of work for a final group exhibition at the Gardiner Museum in the fall of 2020.

Running from September 2019 to June 2020, this year long program, with 8 sessions, will include:

- 4 full-day workshop sessions consisting of:
  - model-making;
  - mold making;
  - slip casting;
  - press-moulding;
  - surface design techniques;
  - imagery, transfers, and silk screening.
- 4 additional full-day sessions consisting of:
  - critique and discussion devoted to supporting the participants as they refine their skills and pursue the development of new ideas.
- Power Point lectures covering: surface and image; curvilinear form; positive/negative space; the repeating image; modular form; form & meaning; form & function; architectural ceramics and lighting; and
- a final group exhibition at the Gardiner Museum.

Angelo di Petta studied at OCAD University and upon his graduation was awarded three scholarships to study industrial ceramics in Italy. He returned to OCAD and began his teaching career, which spanned 37 years. He taught courses in mouldmaking, domestic ceramics, ceramic materials, 3D design, imagery/ surface and rendering drawing. Angelo is an outstanding and generous teacher and an internationally acclaimed artist.

Applications are due June 7, 2019.

In collaboration with FUSION, Angelo di Petta will choose a maximum of 10 participants for the group. Participants will be notified of decisions via email by June 28, 2019.

The workshop fee for the 8 full-day sessions and final exhibition is \$950 (+ HST); due by August 2, 2019.

The workshop will take place at Angelo's studio in Millbrook, Ontario.

**Suitable candidates should:**

- have had some instruction and an intermediate level of competency working with clay;
- have access to a studio space and a kiln to finish their work;
- be willing to learn new skills and techniques, and to apply this knowledge to the development of their work;
- be prepared to engage in conversation about their work, be open to ideas, set goals and begin the process of researching and writing about their work; and
- be a member of FUSION to apply and maintain their membership throughout the duration of the program.

This process is intended to take place with support and guidance. Developing new ideas and a body of work is an exciting learning process.

**To apply, please submit:**

1. A letter of intent briefly outlining (max. 500 words):
  - your experience with clay; and
  - your specific interest in the program.
2. 10 jpeg images 300 dpi images; and
3. An image list starting: i) title; ii) medium; iii) size; and iv) date of the 10 images you are submitting.

Submit your letter, 10 images and image list via <https://form.jotform.com/90445163290252>

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## FUSION Glass & Pottery Lottery

### FUSION's Glass & Pottery Lottery is back!

It's being held on  
Sunday June 23rd, 2019 from 1-5  
at Cafe Troy, home of Donn Zver Pottery  
2290 Hwy 5 W, Troy, ON L0R 2B0

This fundraising event will be a great gathering of clay and glass artists, and collectors!

Your \$100 ticket admits you and 1 guest to the event and you are GUARANTEED to go home with a piece that is worth \$100 or more!

Canada's top clay and glass artists have generously donated their best work to support FUSION.

There will be food, live music, and a cash bar. This will be a fun way to support Canada's only organization devoted exclusively to clay and glass artists.

Click the link below to buy a ticket!

Proceeds of the event go to support FUSION activities.

FUSION gratefully acknowledges the support of:



For more event information visit:  
[www.clayandglass.on.ca](http://www.clayandglass.on.ca)

Some years ago, my friend Mary, on one of her adventures to London, brought me a small pale grey jug with cream dots. It was made by a ceramic artist from the Eel Pie Island Artists, up the River Thames at Twickenham, whose card I kept for years and now cannot find. In its early days with me, it poured things. Then it settled in with some dried hydrangea blooms and has sat, Graceful Ewer, on my desk ever since.

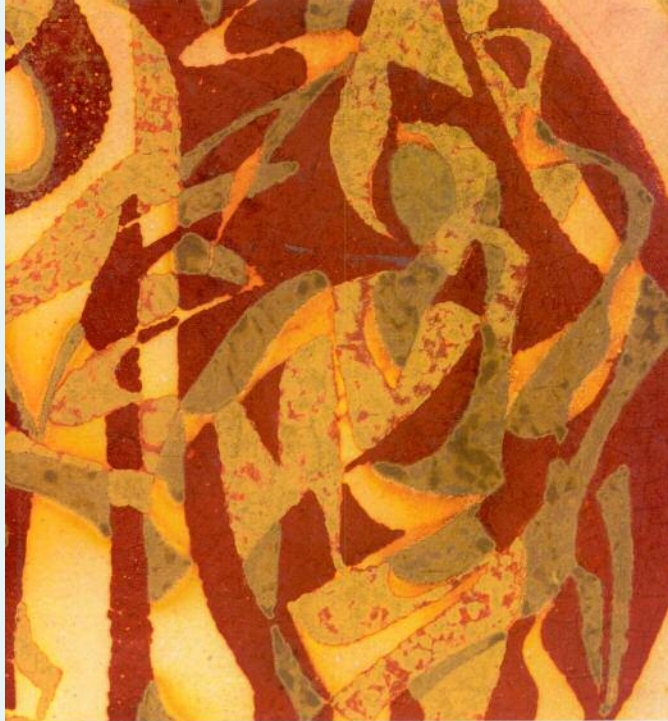
Last June, while in London myself, I visited gardens in the South, among them Christopher Lloyd's Great Dixter in Northiam, East Sussex. Lloyd loved the ceramic work of Alan Caiger-Smith of The Aldermaston Pottery, pieces of which are still placed about the public rooms of the house. In 2015, Caiger-Smith donated over 300 pieces to Great Dixter through the Arts Council Cultural Gifts Scheme, work dating from the 1960s to the closure of his studio in 2006. As Fiona MacLeod reported the gift, "The pottery collection radiates originality and some unusual glazes: reds, pinks and oranges rather like Christo's hot garden of dahlias, cannas, gingers and other brightly coloured, tender specimens planted in 1993 to replace the old rose garden."<sup>1</sup>

No muted earths and minimalist painted design in the-then fashion of British Studio Ceramics. Caiger-Smith made tin-glazed earthenware in off-white interrupted by bold swoops of colour. He also made lusterware in vivid metallics. And, he maintained a working production studio that employed about 80 people during its lifetime, 36 of whom eventually set up pottery studios of their own.<sup>2</sup>

Complementing FUSION's 2019 Annual Conference British Potters Potting, May 31-June 2, featuring Guest Artists John Colbeck, Lisa Hammond and Kitty Shepherd, this issue of FUSION Magazine gives British Ceramics and ceramic artists the kind of mauve, red, and orange treatment that Lloyd so lavished on his gardens.

With kind permission of The Guardian [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), we reprint Amy Fleming's article "Top of the pots: the smashing rise of ceramics," first published in The Guardian, April 18, 2018, a smashing introduction to the art, artists, gallerists and shows behind "the boom in all things clay." You'll find Lisa Hammond MBE and British ceramic artist emerita, in conversation with Leslie Menagh, an independent curator and frequent contributor to FUSION. I'm particularly grateful to Lisa for giving FUSION this "extra" on top of her preparation for the Annual Conference.

A partnership of The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, and the Yale Centre for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut, the exhibition Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery stopped in both



## POTTERY, PEOPLE AND TIME

Alan Caiger-Smith

the UK, March-June 2018, and the US, September-December 2017. Rachel Gotlieb, Assistant Curator, The Gardiner Museum, Toronto ON brings a curator's perspective to this story of studio pottery in Britain as told through the evolution of the vessel form: vase, bowl, charger, set.

A special feature this issue: with grateful acknowledgments to archives staff of The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and The Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, the workers and crafters of "The Gallery" remind us of the remarkable history of The Potteries of Staffordshire. Archival research gives us the means to move both back and forwards in time, the chance for the woman at the pot house door to look out again; it was deeply affecting to do the image research for this article.

From the FUSION Board: Directors Salina Szechtman and Sasha Bateman highlight results from the January 2019 Member Survey.

And from a stellar group of applicants, Spotlight's focus on Emerging Artists gives us winners Diane Black, Clay, and Tali Grinshpan, Glass, fresh work for the spring season that takes its place among the traditions of the past.

Margot Lettner, Editor

<sup>1</sup> Fiona MacLeod, "UK's Great Dixter house chosen for Aldermaston Pottery bequest," The Financial Times, February 20, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> MacLeod, *ibid.*

# Top of the pots: the smashing rise of ceramics

Record auction prices, pottery classes bursting at the seams, Instagram superstars and innovative young artists ... what's behind the boom in all things clay?



Work from Ceramic Art London 2018 ... clockwise from top left, Emily Stubbs, Hans Coper, Alison Britton, Jessica Thorn, Lucie Rie and Peter Beard. Composite: Ceramic Art London 2018/ The Fitzwilliam Museum

Its elegant shape was inspired by ancient Aegean figures and its pleasingly mottled surface made it feel like it had just been dug up from the ground. Yet when it was first sold in the 1970s, this understated vase by the late British potter Hans Coper changed hands for just £250. An unloved present, the creation was then kept in an old shoebox by its recipient, who finally decided to offload it last month – and was stunned to see its price soar to £381,000 at auction, a figure you might expect for certain Ming dynasty or Picasso vessels.

The world of ceramics was stunned too, but not as much as it might once have been. While it's true that Coper is a key figure in British studio pottery, with works in London's V&A and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, what this whopping sum – more than double the previous record for a Coper – really reflects is the fact that ceramic art is currently experiencing something of a boom.

Last month's Ceramic Art London was oversubscribed like never before, with a queue of pottery nuts snaking around Central St Martins College, impatient to bag top contemporary pieces while they could still afford them (prices ranged from £30 to £10,000). The previous weekend, the Barbican's conservatory was transformed into another ceramics fair, this time showcasing 60 artists from the Turning Earth collective's two London studios. Many of these makers got their starts through taking classes there, while similar urban ceramic-making communities that pool resources and share kilns are flourishing across the country, including Glasgow Ceramics Studio and Clay Studio Manchester.

In Cambridge, meanwhile, the Fitzwilliam Museum is celebrating a "spring of ceramics" with two simultaneous shows. The larger one, called Things of Beauty Growing, is a major survey of British studio pottery – a first for the museum, which is responding to what co-curator Helen Ritchie refers to as "a steady rise of interest" in the

museum's 20th and 21st-century ceramics stash. The show combines influential antiques from



Influence ... Asymmetrical Reduced Black Piece, by Magdalene Odundo, incoming chancellor of the University for the Creative Arts. Composite: Crafts Council Collection/Ben Boswell

China, Korea and Japan with the work of 20th and 21st-century potters. These range from Bernard Leach (whose famous pottery lives on in St Ives), Coper and his teacher Lucie Rie (who both settled in Britain after fleeing the Nazis), through to Kenyan-born Magdalene Odundo (incoming chancellor of the University for the Creative Arts) and Edmund de Waal, best known for his installations of shelves of pale and delicate porcelain vessels, sometimes huddled in conspiratorial groups.

"There's been a lot of chat," says Ritchie of the strapline for the show: "British Studio Pottery. Where does it begin and when does it become art?" Some of the makers, she says, like to be known as potters while others prefer the term ceramic artist.

"It's partly a generational thing," she says, mentioning Grayson Perry, who also has a vase in the show and who came up through art school rather than a pottery studio. "More people now just prefer to be called an artist – and clay is their chosen medium. Whereas Bernard Leach, often known as the father of British studio pottery, is

It's so rudely analogue ... an antidote to the analytical, screen-based way most of us spend our lives

very much in the potter camp."

Halima Cassell, who was born in Pakistan in 1975 and grew up in Manchester, is among the younger artists in the show. Her installation *Virtues of Unity* comprises a row of exquisitely carved (as opposed to thrown) bowls, each made with clay from a different place, lined up in order of colour like a tea-strength chart, from the palest cream to the darkest brown. The ongoing project, she says, "is to do with my own identity, growing up in Manchester and the various comments you get, like 'foreigner'."



Many shades ... Halima Cassell, and her carved installation *Virtues of Unity*.  
Composite: Ben Boswell/Jon Stokes

In 2009 she returned to her "own country" for university residencies in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad. "I expected to be treated like a homecomer, but I was always introduced by the university staff as 'a foreigner from England'. It got me thinking about where we belong. You think about the migration of people over thousands of years, and really we're all the same. We're made from the same material, we're from the earth and we go back to back the earth."

Recent exciting ceramics acquisitions for the museum, says Ritchie, include work from Alison Britton, famous for her colourful interpretations of traditional pottery vessels, and "a very hot artist" called Jesse Wine, who is based in New York but was born in Chester. "He makes this fabulous sculptural work," says Ritchie, which ranges from vast organic earthy abstracts to glossily glazed renditions of his bowl of pasta, Sports Direct mugs with a snail idling between them and the Adidas sliders he wears to potter about in the studio.



Well, there's no accounting for taste is there, 2017 - a sculptural work by hot ceramic artist Jesse Wine. Photograph: Courtesy the artist and Mary Mary, Glasgow

One reason why ceramics feels quite "buzzy at the moment", she says, "is that we are seeing younger collectors. That idea of spending more on something and buying less is spreading. You do see people spending on something handmade that they really love rather than buying something mass-produced or disposable."

And there's a simple human joy in feeling a connection to the maker through a tactile 3D object. "When it's made with the hands, you can hold it or imagine holding it, or use it, and your hands are where their hands were. People really love that directness. And they love knowing how things are made - we get asked that all the time. People are interested in technique, materials and process."

In fact, more people are getting involved in making themselves, says Toby Brundin, director of Ceramic Art London. The urge to take up pottery, he says, goes hand in hand with the recent boom in knitting, sourdough bread-baking and craft beer brewing. "It's all connected. If you pick up a pot - which is shorthand for any ceramic object - a lot of it's about texture and there's no way to digitise it. There are no shortcuts in the making. If you lose concentration, you're screwed. It's so rudely analogue that it's an antidote to the analytical, screen-based way that most of us spend our working, and a big chunk of our non-working, lives. People are craving physical experience."

There was also the BBC2 game show, *The Great Pottery Throw Down*, which ran between 2015 and 2017. Filmed at Middleport Pottery in Stoke-on-Trent, it saw members of the public



Adam Buick only makes moon jars. He lives on the coast, surfs every morning and digs his own clay out of the earth

compete to make the best pots, in the mould of The Great British Bake Off. "I think Throw Down definitely drew attention but I also suspect the programme was commissioned in response to the rising popularity of ceramics," Brundin says. "So while it definitely helped the growth of the craft, it was also a response to it

rather than the cause of it."

Some ceramic artists have become role models for an alternative way of life, such as Adam Buick, who has a few pieces in the Fitzwilliam show. "He makes only moon jars," says Brundin, referring to traditional spherical vessels. "He lives on the Pembrokeshire coast, surfs every morning at six, digs his own clay out of the earth." Sometimes he leaves a pleasing bowl impression in the ground, as is documented on his Instagram feed.

"Instagram is a key driver for the younger generation of makers," says Brundin. "It's changing the way they sell." The American potter Eric Landon, of Tortus studio in Copenhagen, is as close to a rock star as a potter could get, touring the world and posting to his 786,000 Instagram followers videos of himself with tanned, muscly arms effortlessly manipulating wobbly wet clay, or a selfie with Susan Sarandon at one of his workshops.

Fashion and textiles illustrator-turned-potter John Booth says he gets a kick out of selling

directly through Instagram rather than through galleries. New to the medium, he started an evening class at Turning Earth in 2015 and his first edition of 50 painted plates

Photograph: Eric Landon/@tortus/instagram

sold out in two days. Previously best known for designing prints for fashion house Fendi, he now funds his studio with his bright, crude vases. "It's

such a simple process and there's a roughness to them - they're for using," he says of the works, built from slabs of clay, with faces painted on.

Booth is currently co-designing "a ceramic side table that you can put your ceramic pot on", along with bed linen and soft furnishings. "It takes me away from that uncomfortable feeling that art should be elitist, or conceptual. People aren't scared of my work. It's a fun decorative or functional object."

Not surprisingly, such fashion figures as Simone Rocha and Silvia Fendi are fans of Booth's pots. And, with ceramics' roots in craft, they're not the only designers who are ambassadors for the medium. Jonathan Anderson, the Irish creative director of Spanish luxury house Loewe, has admitted to making personal budget cuts to facilitate his Bernard Leach pottery collection, and this May will see the third instalment of his Loewe craft prize, which showcases ceramic artists among other makers. Meanwhile Raf Simons, the Belgian designer who is currently chief creative officer at Calvin Klein, has long been addicted to buying and selling ceramics and unflinchingly displays breakable Picasso pots in his living room.

At Ceramic Art London, a representative from Bonhams approached exhibitor Nichola Theakston, who makes deeply empathetic sculptures of animals, to commission her to make fresh work for the auction house to sell. "The auction world follows trends and finds underexploited areas," says Brundin. "Ceramics has historically been undervalued because of its connection with craft so they can see room to move upwards."

But generally, he says, "we're still in the realm where people are buying for themselves rather than for an investment. In any case, that's how you should do investments: buy things that give you pleasure."

FUSION Magazine and FUSION: The Ontario Clay and Glass Association are grateful to The Guardian [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com) for permission to reprint this article by Amy Fleming, originally published in The Guardian, April 18, 2018.

Amy Fleming is a freelance writer and former Guardian staff journalist.





Fig. 3 Clare Twomey, *Made in China*, 2010, Entrance Court, Yale Center for British Art, photograph by Richard Caspole

# "Things of Beauty Growing": A Short History of British Studio Pottery

Between the 1950s and 1970s many Canadian potters travelled across the pond to apprentice with Bernard Leach and Michael Cardew, most notably John Reeve, Kent Bensen and Sam Uhlick. What's more, Canada enjoyed a British "clay invasion" with studio potters Robin Hopper, John Chalk and Roger Kerslake immigrating here in the late 1960s and 1970s, settling in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, respectively, to both teach and make functional and artistic ceramics. In turn, ceramists like Alexandra McCurdy, Scott Barnim, and Juliana Rempel honed their ceramic skills at Cardiff School of Art and Design in Wales. All this to say that British studio pottery had a profound effect on Canadian ceramists in the last century, an influence that continues to this day.

If art prices are a measure of success, then British studio pottery is enjoying a strong revival. Last year a Hans Coper pot from his Cycladic series broke all records for contemporary studio pottery, fetching £381,000 at auction (about \$661,000).

*Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery*, co-curated by Marina Droth, Glenn Adamson and Simon Olding for the Yale Center for British Art (YCBA) in New Haven, Connecticut, and The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England, fall 2017 – spring 2018, adds remarkable proof to this renewed interest.

I was fortunate to see the show at YCBA with a group of young Alfred University art students who were gobsmacked to see the precisely made, hand-coiled vessels of Jennifer Lee and Magadalene Odundo, then

meet the artists in person at the show opening. Viewing was a particular pleasure since most of the work was displayed without Plexiglas barriers. The gallery's rough poured-concrete walls, with the natural light and open space that Louis Kahn brought to his 1950s architectural masterpiece, complemented and enhanced the rugged-hewn textures of the pottery (Fig.1).

A survey exhibition, the show followed a relaxed chronology moving from the late nineteenth century to the present, grouping functional and art pots into categories of form and function: thus the sections "Moon Jar"; "Vase"; "Bowl"; "Charger"; "Set"; "Vessel"; "Pot" and "Monument." The curatorial didactics explained the influences of English country pottery, Chinese Song Dynasty, and the Japanese Mingei Movement to underscore that many ceramists followed one or all of these traditions in pursuit of beauty and, moreover, focused on vessel type rather than figurative work. That the white porcelain Moon jar, an archetypal form of South Korean Choson ceramics, was selected as a category unto itself makes this point particularly clear. As well, the exhibition title, *Things of Beauty Growing*, while a touch old-fashioned, is a direct quote from Cardew and reflects the value he placed on the organic and vital qualities of clay, especially when wheel-thrown, a value that many makers still hold today.

The masters are all here. Bernard Leach: his extraordinary and large *Tree of Life* charger of 1923 (Fig.2), a gem from the New York private collector John Driscoll, a treat to

see in a public venue. William Staite Murray, Michael Cardew, Lucie Rie, Hans Coper, Alan Caiger-Smith are included and so, too, the important players from the latter half of the twentieth century: Alison Britton, Elizabeth Fritsch, and Carol McNicholl, as well as the contemporaries Grayson Perry, Edmund de Waal, Julian Stair, Felicity Aylieff, Akiko Hirai, and Halima Kassell. Importantly, the exhibition also features the work of non-Brits such as Japanese Mingei potter Shoshi Hamada and Nigerian Ladi Kwali to demonstrate how cross-cultural British studio pottery is; its tap roots, to reference Leach here, run both wide and deep.

The show begins in the nineteenth century with Christopher Dresser's work for Ault and Linthorpe Pottery, an interesting choice since he is considered the father of industrial design, not studio pottery. William De Morgan, who collaborated with William Morris, is rightly present. While the focus is on "studio" ceramics (fine art and production), the exhibition also reveals the cross-pollination among art, craft and industry, such as the Omega Workshops and Roger Fry's famously wobbly tableware. Keith Murray's designs for Wedgwood and Susie Cooper's for A.E. Gray are on display, as is Lucie Rie's failed collaboration with Wedgwood; sadly, her prototypes never went into production. Admittedly, it is impossible to include everyone in a survey, which may explain the absence of notable makers such as Colin Pearson and Michael Casson.

The first and last work that visitors encounter is Clare Twomey's installation *Made in China* (Fig.3), which, at first, seems out of place for an exhibition on British ceramics. Located in the lobby of YCBA, it highlights the differences between ceramics made in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, and in Jingdezhen (JDZ): the former, the fading lady; the latter, the acknowledged heartland of the global ceramics industry. Eighty soldier vases were on view, all made in JDZ except for one executed by Royal Crown Derby.

The challenge was to find this singular British pot: hand-painted with 18-carat gold



Fig. 2 Bernard Leach, Charger, Tree of Life, 1923-25, earthenware, brown slip, and a galena glaze, The John Driscoll Collection, New York, photograph by Joshua Nefsky

rather than factory-ware decals, it took much longer to make (and cost more) than the entire Chinese collection. No easy task for the non-expert because, at first glance, all the vases look alike: same height and form at 1.5 m tall, red ground with identical floral and gilt pattern. Twomey's project, which she completed for the West Norway Museum of Decorative Art, Bergen, in 2010, continues to provoke debate about skill, value, originality, and the lack thereof in the global world of ceramic making: be it industrial, which still requires considerable hand-labour, or bespoke and handmade - important context for what it means to make pottery today in the UK or, for that matter, around the world.

For those of you who were unable to attend the exhibition, there is a tome of a catalogue with insightful essays by Glenn Adamson, Tanya Harrod, Sequoia Miller and others, co-published by the YCBA and The Fitzwilliam Museum in association with Yale University Press.

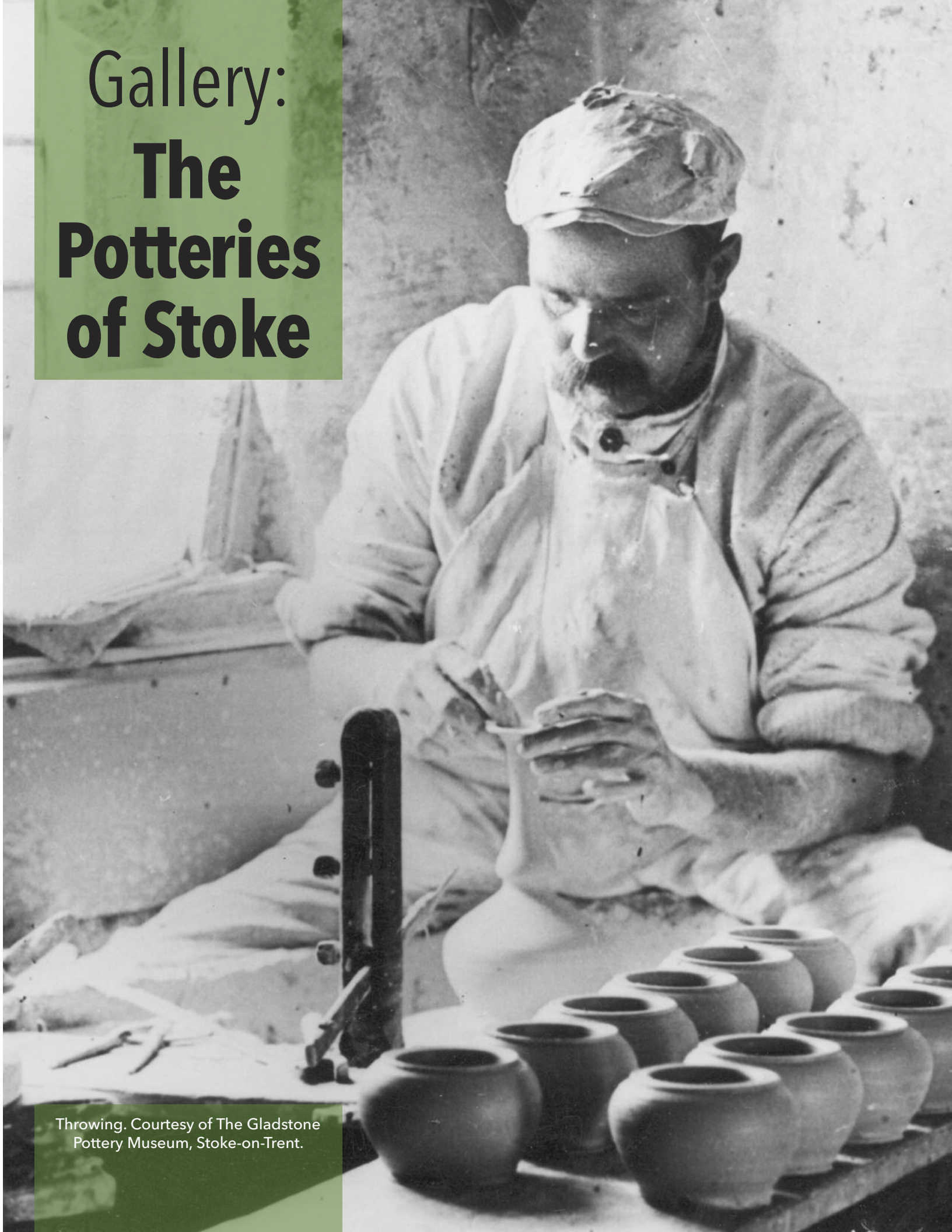
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Dr. Rachel Gotlieb is Adjunct Curator at the Gardiner Museum, Toronto.



Fig. 1 "Things of Beauty Growing": British Studio Pottery, installation view, second-floor galleries, Yale Center for British Art, photograph by Richard Caspole

# Gallery: **The Potteries of Stoke**



Throwing. Courtesy of The Gladstone  
Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent.

The history of British ceramics can't be written without mention of Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, in North West England, known simply as "Stoke": six towns and their surrounding villages – Hanley, Burslem, Fenton, Longton, Stoke-upon-Trent, and Tunstall. The Potteries, as they came to be known, were players in the Industrial Revolution that reshaped the British landscape while redesigning British society. By the 1980s, many of these industries and their communities had fallen into a decline as precipitous as their rise.

Stoke had coal for fuel; and ivory clay and red or blue firing Etruria marl for pottery production. Burslem potters made butter pots for the local Midland market from the late medieval period and, by the early 1700s, Burslem had become the major pottery centre in Great Britain. But the real story of The Potteries is one of their people:

"Here a skilled and industrious workforce, located in an isolated rural backwater and often in wretched conditions working with the simplest of tools and raw materials, made objects of great beauty and worth and won a worldwide reputation for themselves and their native area which still continues today.



Glost Workers. Courtesy of The Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent



Daisy Bank Marl Hole, Longton, by William Blake. Courtesy of The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

The many unpleasant facts of life in [t]he Potteries, which were common even in recent memory, have been obscured by the scores of books on the wares produced, but the character of [t]he Potteries was formed by the potbanks and the working life and people they enclosed. The early country potters, throughout Britain, worked on a small scale, often supplying only local markets near the sites where they found their clay. They faced competition first from the metropolitan centres, such as London, Bristol or Norwich, where from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries British and foreign craftsmen captured important high quality markets and then from a rural, isolated and otherwise undistinguished area of England, North Staffordshire".<sup>1</sup>

Here is a look at that place and time and the people who lived and worked there, c.1900-1940, through photographs from the collection held at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and The Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, [www.stoke.org](http://www.stoke.org) and [www.thepotteries.org](http://www.thepotteries.org). Stoke Museums also holds the most extensive collection of Staffordshire pottery in the world.

<sup>1</sup> The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, [http://www.thepotteries.org/six\\_towns/index.htm](http://www.thepotteries.org/six_towns/index.htm), retrieved March 18, 2019.



Burnishing Ware, Minton's Ltd. Courtesy of The Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent.

Many of these photos were taken by William Blake (1874-1957) and form the William Blake Collection at Stoke Museums, which contains about 1,500 images taken throughout The Potteries and Staffordshire. William John Bailey Blake was born in the US but emigrated to England with his sister and widowed mother, settling in Longton, where his mother had family, by the early 1900s. He opened a stationer's shop, selling his own work as postcards. A keen local historian and naturalist, he was also a member of the North Staffordshire Field Club and custodian of its photograph collection. Blake's passion as a naturalist also caught his eye behind the camera lens: one of his images of a skyline of smoke-belching pottery stacks at Longton carries the caption, "A Bit Thick for Father Christmas In The Potteries."

On his death, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery acquired his collection: a unique record of working life and social conditions, as well as the natural and built environments,

in and around The Potteries during the first half of the 20th century.

A note about the images. Some of Blake's photos were lantern slides; these show a black-border surround. Lantern slides are images painted, printed, or produced photographically on transparent plates, usually glass, then projected by a light source called a magic lantern. Part of the 17th century fascination with optics, and long before PowerPoint or even 35 mm Kodak slides, lantern slides were used into the mid-20th century until superseded by the slide projector.

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FUSION is especially grateful to the archives staff of The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and The Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, for their time and expertise in granting permission to use these images. <http://www.stokemuseums.org.uk>





Clockwise from upper left: Inside an Enamel Kiln, Aerographing China, Potbank Workers, Enamelling, and Clay Wedging. All courtesy of The Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, except for Aerographing China, by William Blake, courtesy of The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent. All images, pages 14-17 inclusive, used with permission. Images may not be used or stored in any form without consent of the copyright holders.

## Making Marks: Lisa Hammond in Conversation

A devoted potter since her early twenties, Lisa Hammond's contribution to her craft is considerable, to say the least. Forty years of running a private studio and building a teaching career have shaped her into a remarkable leader and community builder. Indeed, she recently spearheaded a new school of ceramics called Clay College in Stoke-on-Trent, England, which is seeing its first cohort of students graduate this July.

Earlier this spring, Lisa and I chatted via WhatsApp about the college's creation and her journey in getting there.

"I realized quite a while ago that education for ceramics was severely marginalized. [College graduates] were coming out with very few skills. They had the theory of it, and they were taught the creative practice, but actually weren't taught many skills."

Formerly a teacher at Goldsmith's College, Lisa had become a front-line witness to the dismantling of ceramics programs at colleges across the UK. Goldsmith's was one of the first colleges to see its ceramics department disappear, in 1994. The impetus? A shifting of priorities at art schools away from technical skill-building and studio practices, and towards contemporary art-making popularized by the BritArt movement. "We spent a lot of time fighting for the cause. It was a really difficult time for everybody."

So when she set up her current studio 20 years ago, Lisa shaped it with teaching in mind. At Maze Hill in London, while maintaining her own practice, she ran evening classes for people both local and from afar, then began taking on apprentices. By 2009, with just five or six "pure ceramics" programs remaining throughout the UK, and therefore an unmet need for young potters seeking mentorship, Lisa began receiving emails in overwhelming numbers from

apprenticeship hopefuls. As a result, she founded a much broader reaching endeavour that funds and oversees apprenticeship with professional potters throughout the country.

With the support of a group of expert trustees, an accountant, a lawyer, a fellow ceramicist and dedicated Studio Director Kevin Millward and his very small team, Lisa was able to establish Adopt a Potter as a charitable trust. Funded almost entirely by donations; the auctioning and raffling of other potters' donated works; the sale of apprentices' work; and any proceeds generated from the sale of totes, t-shirts and aprons, Adopt a Potter has been an immeasurable success. "Sometimes we've placed as many as four in one year. It just depends what the money is that we get in. We've had some fantastic donations from some collectors, and potters have continually donated pots."

Similarly, the professional potters in the program have been "incredibly generous with their time to help train these people. And we give the money not to the potter. We give it to the student. So they come with 5,000 pounds to help with their time there. And then we ask the master potter to provide time and equipment for them, and clay and materials to make their own work. Plus, we would ask them if they have accommodation to help out with that. We basically say, 'What can you offer? We're going to give you someone who can help you in your day-to-day tasks. What can you give back?'"

In the course of re-igniting a community of working intergenerational potters, and recognizing a void in the availability of training opportunities for fledgling potters, the need for a school became increasingly apparent. "If you're going to take someone on for a year as an apprentice, they actually already need to be quite skilled. They need some knowledge. If they've done a degree, they've got a visual awareness, they've worked with clay, and they may have fired. They'll have a bit of experience.

**"We did the work ourselves, and I think that's what makes the difference"**

So that's where we came to the idea of actually training people, and setting up a college.

It's a bit of a crazy thought really, massively difficult, I found out. So, we actually spoke to quite a few people. We put a survey out there, and within a week we had nearly a thousand responses. And one of the questions we asked was 'Where do you think this centre should be?' and it was pretty well overwhelmingly Stoke, because it's right, dead, middle of the country. Very accessible. It's also incredibly cheap to live, to rent, to everything. But also the infrastructure for suppliers is still there (as it was an historically, but now largely neglected, ceramics production centre for the country). So it seemed like a good place. So we found out what we'd need to raise, and reckoned we'd need just over 200,000 to set it up."

Two years ago Lisa and her colleagues took the leap. In the span of a few months, having raised 75% of their targeted amount, they advertised the opening of the school; took applications; and began swift set-up in time to start their first semester in September. Lisa's own business savvy, along with the support of a group of trustees, devised an intensive two-year program with comparable tuition to that of other colleges.

Like Adopt a Potter, the school is designed to fund itself. Lisa remarks that "Clay College had the ambition, after the initial fundraising for the set-up, to run as a business and pay for itself; the only fundraising is for bursaries. So far that has worked: when we have a Master potter teach, we usually run a public masterclass to follow on and those profits pay for our full-time students to have fantastic regular guests teachers."

Students have learned to build kilns by contributing kilns to the school itself. Guest instructors who are ceramics experts of various kinds, in addition to teaching Clay College students, offer evening workshops and master classes to the greater public to help generate interest and income. Lisa adds: "We also run a gallery on-site showing work of Master potters, themed to coincide with the student projects, which also helps run the college as well as gives our students income and weekend work. A standard Clay College range produced one day a week by the students is also sold in the gallery,

50% of sales goes towards funding student trips – last year we took all the students to Japan."

Additional fundraising continues, reaching an international scale; and profits secure bursaries for students. And so far, the creation of Clay College has come in under budget.

When asked how she views her role in the ceramics community, and echoing the question she herself poses to her contemporaries, "What do you offer?" Lisa replies:

"My time. When I set up the college, I gave up half a year. And people have asked me, 'Why are you doing this? Why don't you just set up a school for yourself and make the money?' But I don't think money's been my particular driver, really. I think I've always had a bit of an altruistic streak, and it has just infuriated me that these colleges were shutting down and students weren't getting what I was lucky enough to have."

At mid-career, Lisa's legacy is already deep and evident. She has indelibly carved her path as a fierce community builder and visionary, supported by a vast network of equally skilled and generous fellow potters, business people, collectors and appreciators, family, friends, students, plus a constant stream of apprentices. Her own creative practice is equally indelible; in her words, "more of a mark-maker than a decorator...strong, fluid and unfussy."

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Leslie Menagh lives in Peterborough, ON where she teaches and creates at Madderhouse Textile Studios [madderhouse.com](http://madderhouse.com) [lesliemenagh.com](http://lesliemenagh.com) She is a frequent contributor to FUSION Magazine.

Lisa Hammond MBE is a soda-firing potter who works at Maze Hill Pottery, Greenwich, London. She is a Guest Artist at FUSION's 2019 Annual Conference, *British Potters Potting*, May 31-June 2, 2019, McMaster University, Hamilton ON (conference details at FUSION). To see more of Lisa's work and story, including her film profile, *A Sense of Adventure*, go to <https://www.lisahammond-pottery.co.uk>.

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FUSION is especially grateful to Lisa for the gift of her generous time and reflection for this interview; and to Leslie for working "across the pond" to create this unique correspondence.



Dish, style of Bernard Palissy, earthenware, c.1850, France, The Bowes Museum, Accession Number: X.3876

# British Ceramics: The Collections



Loretta Braganza, Twelve Apostles, 2010, Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA)



Gallery view, The Anthony Shaw Space, Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA)

Sir Herbert Read once said, “Pottery is at once the simplest and most difficult of all arts.”<sup>1</sup>

As part of FUSION’s look at British Ceramics, both in this Spring 2019 issue of FUSION Magazine and at FUSION’s 2019 Annual Conference being held May 31-June 2 at McMaster University, Hamilton ON, here is a guide to (arguably) the most (significant) collections. “Arguably” because there are many other collections of ceramics and celebrations of makers across the UK and elsewhere; and “significant” because, as a descriptor, it means different things to different people. Here is a tasting menu.

Two notes about where to go, what you might see. Some collections, such as that of the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), have a broad thus diverse collection base, holding work by European, Asian, and African artists, as well as historical and contemporary ceramics by British artists. Also, as well as the four collections and venues highlighted here, see also the related article in this issue, “The Gallery,” which introduces the special collections of pottery, as well as archival images of the people who made it, housed at the Stoke-on-Trent Museums, Staffordshire.

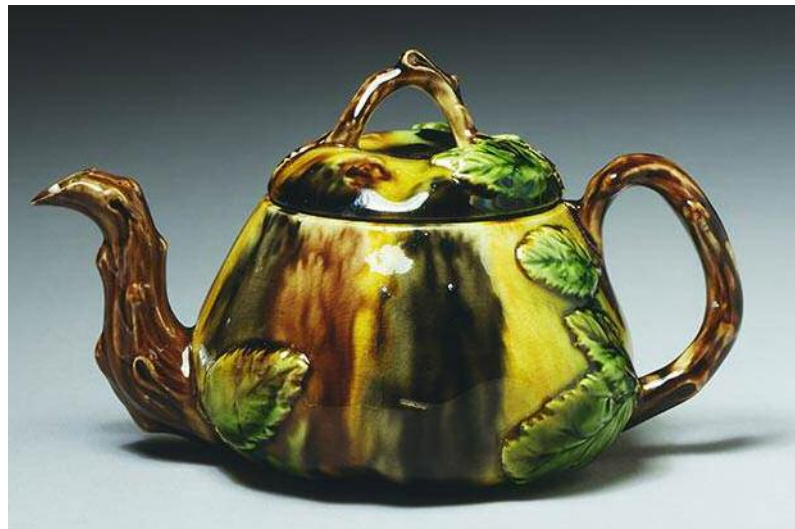
And a note about where FUSION couldn't travel this time: ceramics from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland will feature later.

### The Bowes Museum

Barnard Castle, Co Durham near Penrith  
[The Bowes Museum](#), [The Collections](#)  
[The Bowes Museum](#), [Top 20 Ceramics](#)

The Bowes, the North’s Museum of Art, Fashion and Design, in the heart of the Pennines in North East England, is home to one of the UK’s pre-eminent ceramic and

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Read, 1931, quoted at [Read](#), retrieved March 18, 2019.



Teapot, Thomas Whieldon, about 1760, Staffordshire, England. Museum no. C.47-1938. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

glass collections. Gathered by collectors and principal benefactors John and Joséphine Bowes, as well as works acquired from John Bowes’s cousin Susan Davidson, The Enid Goldblatt Collection, and pieces collected by Lady Ludlow, the museum represents work from many European countries from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. While mostly domestic pieces, the 5,000-piece collection offers a comprehensive representation of European ceramics – including tin-glazed earthenware and what is called faïence in France, Delftware in Holland, and maiolica in Italy – with pieces from almost every known factory. John and Joséphine Bowes were adventurous collectors of both fine and decorative art and furnishings, with a large collection of Spanish painters including work by El Greco and Goya.

The largest part of the museum’s collection is of French porcelain and faïence: porcelain from the royal factory of Sèvres as well as from Chantilly, Saint Cloud, Vincennes, and Mennecy; and faïence from Nevers, Rouen, and several centres in southern and

eastern France. Of special interest: a group of faïence patriotique, pottery celebrating political events, made during the French Revolution.

Most of the German porcelain factories are represented, including Meissen, Frankenthal, Ludwigsburg and Nymphenburg. The Bowes added to their continental across the whole of

and silver fish, the Silver Swan has enchanted many, including Mark Twain, since its creation in 1773. The Swan fishes to music, all made possible by over 2,000 moving parts and an internal mechanism made by John Joseph Merlin. A recently-restored star at the 2017 Robots exhibition at London’s Science Museum: see [The Silver Swan](#)



Vase, Josiah Wedgwood's factory, about 1765, England. Museum no. 3119-1853. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Mr Nobody' (figure), unknown, late 17th century, China. Museum no. C.7-1951. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Waster of 34 dishes fused together, about 1640-60, Delft, Netherlands. Museum no. C.10-2005. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Europe by buying modern pieces from the International Exhibitions in Paris in 1867 and London in 1871.

For glass lovers, The Bowes also has much to offer. Amber glass was an early interest of the Bowes: when Joséphine Bowes met Emile Gallé, a young china and glass dealer, she commissioned an engraved glass cabaret set from him. Gallé became the leading maker of Art Nouveau glass twenty years later; this was one of his first known commissions. His letters survive in the museum archive and contain some of his earliest known thoughts on the relationship between art and botany.

For lovers of the eclectic yet exquisitely beautiful, The Bowes offers the Silver Swan musical automaton, which plays daily at 2 p.m. Life-size, resting on a stream of twisted glass

## Buckinghamshire (Bucks) County Museum Aylesbury

### [The Bucks Museum, The Collections](#)

With over 340 pieces, the “Bucks” County Museum holds one of the most important collections of modern British Studio Ceramics in the UK, representing many of the major potters working in Britain in the 20th century. Bucks pays special attention to the intimacy and multi-skilled discipline of studio work:

Central to the idea of studio ceramics is the relationship between the potter and their work. Unlike the segmented production of ceramics made in a factory, studio potters are involved in every stage of making a pot, from design to production. As the term studio ceramics suggests, the scale of production is small and intimate, each piece is a unique

work of art crafted from clay.<sup>2</sup>

From the delicate pinched porcelain forms of Mary Rogers to the angular slab-built pots of Ian Auld, the collection highlights and celebrates the diversity of this rich tradition. The Bucks' collection was started in the 1960s by then Curator Christopher Gowing. As the UK was at the

the spectrum of the Studio movement and situating it within British Modernism. Created mainly from gifts from four major private collectors, it is home to permanent and changing collections (including pre-historical ceramics), commissions, extensive archives and research support, and a dedicated Subject Specialist Network. In CoCA's words,



Sugar box, Chelsea porcelain factory, about 1752-55, England. Museum no. C.3&A-1966. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Plate, Maestro Jacopo, Italy, 1510. Museum no. 1717-1855. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Bottle, James Walford, 1996, England. Museum no. C.119-1996. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

centre of studio ceramics, with many of the best-known potters such as Hans Coper, Lucie Rie, and Bernard Leach living and working in England, Gowing purchased pieces directly from artists and from well-known dealers and craft galleries.

### Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA)

York Art Gallery  
Exhibition Square, York  
[Centre of Ceramic Art](#)  
[York Art Gallery](#)

The Centre of Ceramic Art at York (CoCA) opened in 2015 as part of the renovation and reopening of York Art Gallery. With over 5,500 pieces, the centre holds the largest and among the most important collection of British Studio Ceramics in the UK, covering

“it retains the unique personality, passions and obsessions of its creators, providing an insight into the socio-economic development of the British studio ceramics movement.”<sup>3</sup>

The foundation collection began in the 1950s, when the Very Reverend Eric Milner-White, Dean of York, left his collection of studio pottery to York Art Gallery. Milner-White began collecting in 1925: few collectors were interested in modern pottery, and so he focused on stoneware as the “aristocrat” of clays and bought early work by William Staite Murray, Shoji Hamada, and Bernard Leach.

<sup>2</sup> Buckinghamshire (Bucks) County Museum, [The Bucks Museum](#), retrieved March 15, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA), [Centre of Ceramic Art](#), retrieved March 15, 2019.

W.A. Ismay, a librarian who built a collection of over 3,500 pots beginning in 1955 – and lived mostly surrounded by them – left his estate to the Yorkshire Museum. He had a fondness for pots he could use in his daily life, but also collected more sculptural works. Michael Cardew, Hans Coper, Lucie Rie, and Bernard Leach are represented in his bequest.

In 2009, Henry Rothschild gave York Art Gallery a group of ceramics from his personal collection, which included work by Lucie Rie, Ian Godfrey, and Beate Kuhn. Rothschild founded the Primavera gallery in London at the end of World War 2, becoming a leading retailer of craft and design during the post war period.

Anthony Shaw's early purchases often reminded him of things seen in international museums on his travels with his parents as a child. He began collecting in the 1970s and, after meeting artists Gordon Baldwin and Ewen Henderson, developed an interest in sculptural ceramics. His gift to CoCA features work by Baldwin and Henderson, as well as other artists including Gillian Lowndes, Sara Radstone, Ian Godfrey, Bryan Illsley; and a collection of more than 550 buttons by Lucie Rie on long-term loan to York Museums Trust.

An aesthetic favourite as well as historical marker, CoCA's 17-metre long Wall of Pots presents over 1,000 ceramics from the centre's archaeology to social history collections, dating from the Roman period to the present day. The first display in this enormous case is a celebration of colour: a rainbow of pots, making visual the long-abiding interest ceramists have in finding colour and texture in materials and technique.

CoCA also hosts a link to the online magazine *Emerging Potters* for new makers as part of *Rethink Ceramics*, a campaign launched by CoCA to celebrate the variety and diversity in the world of ceramics, from exhibition reviews, to glazing recipes and techniques, and testimonials. [Rethink Ceramics](#)

## Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) London

[VAM](#)

[VAM History of the Collections](#)

[VAM, Articles About Ceramics](#)

[VAM, The Collections](#)

Opening the splendid video *Spotlight on V&A Ceramics Collections*, Kate Malone, maker of Snow Lady Gourd at the museum, turns over a bowl (1944) and vase (1957) made by Danish ceramicist Axel Salto and says, "The extraordinary thing about ceramics is that it was maker's hands and fingers."

Neil Brownsword, recalling his childhood growing up in Stoke-on-Trent, adds: "I grew up on this seam of red clay and to handle some of these things is a joy, really."<sup>4</sup>

In Rooms 136-146, the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) houses the most comprehensive collection of ceramics in the world: from the everyday kitchen-cup-and-saucer to the elegance of Wedgwood and Jacopo; from a corner of Lucie Rie's studio to the miniature Mr. Nobody, an encyclopaedic journey in form and function, in language and culture. Ceramics, whether fine or decorative, become a pathway to understanding where and how people lived, traded, traveled, and created their private and public worlds.

What is now the diverse V&A ceramics collections started as the one founding collection of Henry Cole's Museum of Ornamental Manufactures, which opened at Marlborough House in 1852. Under Cole and first Curator, John Charles Robinson, early acquisitions included then-contemporary Minton bone china, as well as historic English pottery from the former collection of the Staffordshire potter, Enoch Wood. The museum was renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899.

From so-called "ship-wrecked ceramics" culled from international and inter-Asian trade; to the first "white gold" European porcelain made by alchemist J.F. Böttger in

<sup>4</sup> Kate Malone and Neil Brownsword, respectively, [Spotlight on V&A Ceramics Collections](#), retrieved March 15, 2019.



the court of Augustus the Strong; to unglazed, earthenware, dimpled ceramic Bucaro vases from 17th century Mexico: the V & A has it all. Dating from about 2500 BC to present day, it strives to show world ceramics, whether post-Medieval European, Middle Eastern, East Asian, or North African: most notably, tin-glazed English earthenware and Italian maiolica; French and Spanish ceramics; English art pottery and exhibition pieces; Chinese, Japanese and Korean ceramics; and international 20th century and contemporary work including studio pottery.

Bernard Leach's apparently favourite cut-sided stoneware bowl is here. Made around 1925 with an accidental saltglaze on top of the intended stoneware glaze, Leach tells its creation story:

"I was helped by the kiln: we were using some railway sleeper wood as fuel, not

knowing that it contained salt-peter for preservation, and although many pots were thereby ruined, a few, including this one glazed with celadon, came out with a matted surface and pleasant, warm discoloration."<sup>5</sup>

V&A has a Ceramics Resident Program that draws a diverse group of artists; most recently, Clare Twomey, Edmund de Waal, Phoebe Cummings, Keiko Masumoto, and Phil Eglin, among others.

For a particular treat watch the video mentioned above: renowned ceramicist Kate Malone (from BBC2's *The Great Pottery Throw Down*), ceramic artist Neil Brownsword, and V&A curators Reino Liefkes and Alun Graves on tour through a treasure trove.

[Spotlight on V&A Ceramic Collections](#)

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Leach, Victoria and Albert Museum [Leach, Accidental Masterpiece](#), retrieved March 15, 2019.

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## 2019 Member Survey: Highlights and Next Steps

In January, we sent you a survey about your membership in FUSION. Thank you for responding – and 35% of you did, a great response rate in the arts and artists industry – so we’re confident that the results fairly represent the views and ideas of FUSION’s membership.

Here are some highlights about what we learned about you, our members, and what you would like us to do.

### What we learned about you

- almost a third of FUSION clay and just under half of glass artists have been practicing for less than 10 years
- about half of our members are full-time professional artists; about one in five members is an educator who mostly teaches classes or workshops at guilds or studios
- most members produce functional work; of those who make sculptural work, over half are over 55 years old. Almost half of FUSION’s glass artists do kiln casting; the next most common technique is layered glass work
- the most popular FUSION products, programs or activities that members participate in are, in order of frequency: FUSION Magazine, the Annual Conference, Fireworks Exhibition, and the Clay & Glass Show
- over a third of members are interested in networking events for new artists; almost three-quarters want to collaborate more with guilds for shows and networking
- most members are interested in viewing regular, half-day, workshop demonstrations live and online
- almost half of members have applied for grants; one-third of these are willing to

share their grant-writing skills and knowledge with other artists and/or FUSION, or mentor an emerging (within five years of education or exhibiting) or newcomer artist (new, within five years, to Canada)

What is FUSION planning to do based on what you told us?

- the Board will connect with guilds to develop opportunities for networking and collaborating for shows and exhibitions
- the Board is planning to launch a half-day educational workshop, webcast live from featured artists’ studios. Stay tuned for details.

Members also made many other thoughtful and helpful comments and suggestions, which the Board will continue to review for future actions. On behalf of the FUSION Board, thank you again for taking the time to let us know your thoughts. Together, we make FUSION stronger and more relevant to your creative practice.

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Salina Szechtman is Director, Magazine, and Sasha Bateman is Director, Membership, of FUSION: The Ontario Clay and Glass Association. Salina can be reached at [Salina Szechtman](#) and Sasha at [Sasha Bateman](#)





## FUSION MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHT FEATURED ESTABLISHED ARTIST, GLASS

Tali Grinshpan

[EMAIL](#)

[WEBSITE](#)

Coming from a background in psychology, I am interested in the human condition. My work tends to be autobiographical in nature; and explores my own life experiences as strongly influenced by nature and the landscape that surrounds me.

I am deeply inspired by the ever-changing life of the land. Particularly the landscape of my homeland, Israel, and of my present home in Northern California. Being an immigrant, I search for connection through the land: exploring my internal memories and my external surroundings, and weaving the two into my work.

Themes such as hope, loss, memory, and the fleetingness of time recur in my work. I strive to create intimate spaces where the viewer can reflect on our emotional existence and the journey we go through in life.





**FUSION MAGAZINE  
SPOTLIGHT  
FEATURED ESTABLISHED  
ARTIST, CERAMICS**

**Diane Black**

[EMAIL](#)

[WEBSITE](#)

In essence, my work is about story telling: stories taken from my own experience, and those the viewer conjures in response to the work. I often use humour to break down barriers, or as a portal through which I invite deeper meanings and connections to surface. Likewise, animals often appear in my sculptures to represent an aspect of humanity in a symbolic way.

My process of sculpting in clay is not carefully planned, leaving me free to respond to whims or changes in direction that more authentically reflect the message I am trying to convey, or the story I am telling. Spontaneity allows me to work quickly in the initial stages, giving the pieces a feeling of immediacy and intimacy. That being said, I can often spend a disproportionate amount of time working on an expression or subtle gesture.

Being able to form a lump of clay into a figure that conveys emotion is endlessly appealing to me. I believe it speaks to how much of our experience is shared, how powerful our expression of non-verbal communication.



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