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FUSION

A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS



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FUSION

A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS

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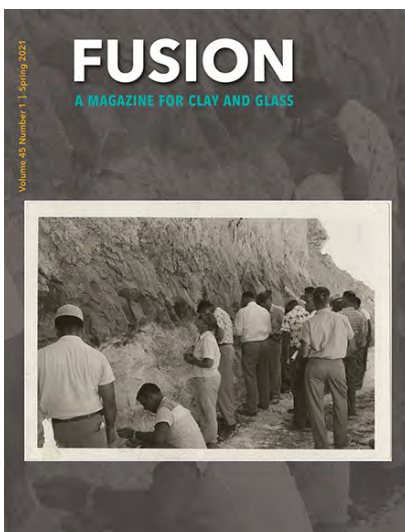
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ON THE COVER

Edith Heath examining a clay-rich wall of earth with her ceramics class from the California College of Arts and Crafts, ca.1955-1957. Heath Collection, EDA, UCB. See "Edith Heath: The Making of a Committed Life" at p.6.

Rewrites

In "Remembering Ed Roman," Winter 2021 issue, the photos of Ed frameworking on the cover, of Ed and Tanya Lyons on page 10, and of Ed with work in hand on page 11, should have been attributed to Gal Capone Photography, 2017, Wilno ON
galcaponephotography@outlook.com www.galcaponephotography.com

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This Spring 2021 issue of FUSION Magazine began with an idea of writing about public art. As the issue evolved, though, the idea became less about a sense of public "ownership" of art; and more about art in relation to the commons, or what I might call "art in public," a sense of art being "out there" as a way to draw us "in here" to conversation.

In her field guide *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*, Jenny Odell raises consciousness about how we spend down the precious resource of our attention, moving from individual to collective refusal to engage with distraction, to hold open and restore what she calls "the grounds for thought."

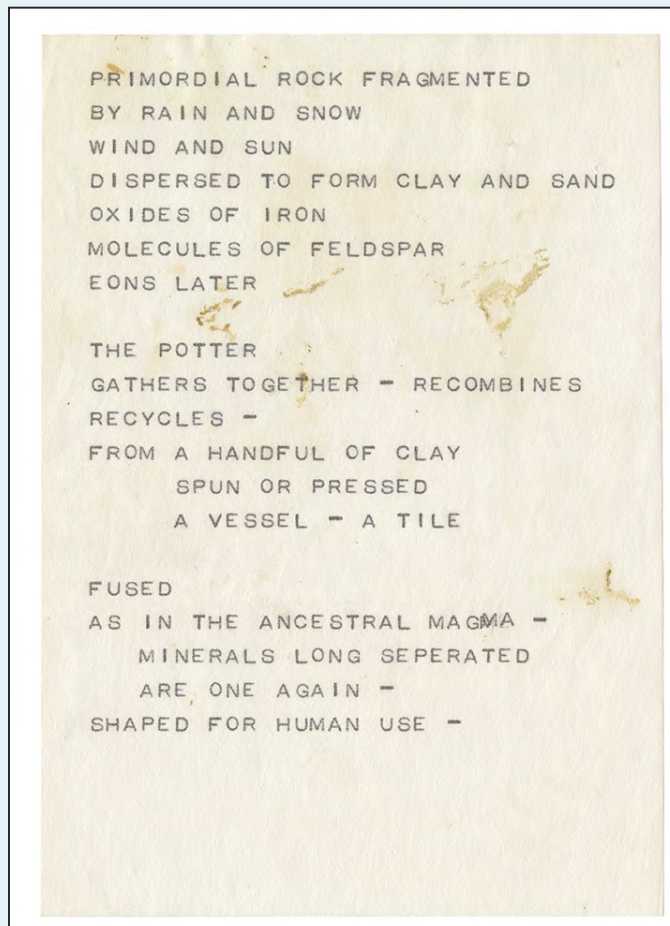
The issue begins with a review of a new and marvellous book, *Edith Heath: Philosophies*. While Edith Heath may not be well-known to some of you, she stands as a driving force of aesthetic, production, and innovation in 20th century North American ceramic art and design. Edith paid attention: she saw farther than the immediacies of craft or business to the confluences of societal structures; she saw the necessity, the ethical imperative, of making art for a public, in public; she grounded her work, literally, in landscape and materials she learned about and loved.

My deep thanks to Emma Walter, Information Office, Vancouver BC for coordinating contacts and permissions with co-publisher Berkeley Design Books and project partners UCLA-Berkeley (UCB), The Environmental Design Archives (EDA), and The Brian and Edith Heath Foundation; and to Jennifer M. Volland, Guest Curator, and Bruce Grenville, Senior Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery BC for their interest and support.

A Pacific Coast note: this summer, *Edith Heath and Emily Carr: From the Earth* opens July 10, 2021 at the Vancouver Art Gallery, bringing together two Modernist women artists.

FUSION welcomes new contributor, ceramic artist and PhD candidate Aitak Sorahitalab, in conversation with ceramic artists Andrea Poorter and Genevieve Patchell about their experience creating their installation *Paired Samaras*, chosen as part of the 2018 Elora Sculpture Project exhibition sponsored by the Village of Elora ON. Beginning life as a maquette, growing up in a barn, emerging into the street life of a village – *Paired Samaras* carries multiple histories of language, culture, kinship, materiality.

Potter and Guild Exhibitions Committee Chair, Elizabeth Davies, who last wrote about local ceramic happenings in Fall 2019 as part of FUSION's *Raconter*



Edith Heath, "Primordial rock fragmented," 1971. Heath Collection, EDA, UCB.

series, returns with an account of the 2020 Ottawa Guild of Potters Virtual Annual Exhibition, capturing both the imagination and logistics behind transforming a traditionally in-person show, first into a safe physical space for installation and judging; then, into an online showcase for community celebration during a pandemic. We've embedded a link to the online OGP Exhibition Catalogue and other galleries from the show: it's a gorgeous tribute to the importance of remaining in life.

Finally, the quarterly FUSION feature, *Spotlight*, highlights the work of two Emerging Artists and this issue's winners: Zoe Gardner, Clay; and Lauri Maitland, Glass. Beautiful work – underpinned by profound engagements with philosophies about and commitments to materials; ecosystems; and bonding among human and more-than-human species, their landscapes, and lives.

As we begin to turn outwards again, I hope these reflections on the importance of art being – and remaining – in public offer hope and inspiration for life in the commons ahead.

Margot Lettner
Editor

A photograph of Edith Heath in a pottery studio. She is wearing glasses, a necklace, and a bracelet, and is looking thoughtfully at a pottery wheel. The studio is filled with various pottery-related items, including a large piece of pottery on the wheel and a wooden structure in the foreground.

Edith Heath: The Making of a Committed Life

Edith Heath oversees production while wearing her Margaret De Patta wedding ring, ca. 1955. Heath Collection, EDA, UCB. All images this article: Information Office and Berkeley Design Books, used with permission.

As I opened the package and saw the book cover, a photo of a woman washed in a shade of blue-green, I remembered a door. My childhood home was crafted from 1950s California Modernism: a small bungalow, its window walls, central hearth and carport a promise that California Living could somehow thrive in modest, temperate, Ontario. Our front door was always painted that blue-green: a colour evocative of a time and place that I now might call, "Heath Turquoise."

Edith Heath: Philosophies, a co-publication of Berkeley Design Books and Information Office, with the assistance of the Brian and Edith Heath Foundation and a Berkeley Crowdfunding campaign, and edited by

Jennifer M. Volland and Chris Marino, is a remarkable book about a remarkable woman who lived fully as an artisan, production engineer, entrepreneur, and poet, at a distinct moment in American design history that still speaks to our own time.

Beautifully designed, with a generous array of images from the Environmental Design Archives (EDA) at UCLA-Berkeley (UCB), which houses the Heath Archives, *Philosophies* is a collection of essays by 15 curators, archival consultants, and art and design historians, some of whom knew the Heaths. The breadth of scholarship, reflection and comment is deep and diverse; and wonderfully readable. A sample: an evolutionary look at Heath ashtrays and mugs;



Edith Heath on-site at the Pasadena Art Museum observing the installation of her tile, 1969.
Heath Collection, EDA, UCB.

the influence of technical and ideological ideas of European émigré ceramic chemists; resonances with women of the Land Art movement; the origin story of Heath architectural tiles. Its title houses its project: *Philosophies* is most “about” a creative practice in clay that pace-set design and technique in syncopation with profound contexts and shifts in the class, consumer, and culture landscapes of post-war America.

While *Philosophies* speaks to an American time and place, it has a North American reach. That Vancouver-based Information Office is a co-publisher speaks to this reach; it also reflects a shared aesthetic and practice between Edith Heath and ceramic artists along the Pacific coast from Tiburon CA to Tofino BC. The farther reach is to mid-century modern European design, making *Philosophies* a living archival text. If you have an IKEA plate or a Denby rimmed bowl in your cupboard, you hold a metaphor for *Philosophies* in your hand.

Writing about a book inevitably becomes an intimate conversation about what to talk about, which necessarily becomes a sorting of what to leave out. With the 110th celebration of Edith’s birthday on May 25th of this year, making her, perhaps, a more distant presence for contemporary ceramic artists, I’ve looked closest at her philosophies that may hold most vital learnings for our time. Other fascinators, such as her collaborations with landscape architect Robert Royston; her prolific writings and later-life reflections about herself; or the eclectic transformation of the barge *Dorothea* into her home, I leave for you.

Edith Kiertzner was born on a farm in Ida Grove, Iowa, in 1911 to a settler family from Denmark. A promising student, her father bought her a horse and shay so she could ride to high school. Moving to Chicago in 1931 to train as a teacher, she fell in love with

art and arts education. Over the next ten years, she majored in art history, design, and painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; taught at the Howell Neighbourhood House for immigrant settlement; and worked in arts and crafts recreation and leaders’ training for the Illinois Works Progress Administration (WPA) under the New Deal.

While at the WPA she met and married Brian Heath, a social worker and, in 1942, the Heaths moved to California. Weekdays, Brian worked for the American Red Cross while Edith took further studies in ceramic chemistry, including at the California School of Fine Arts, and taught art at the progressive Presidio Hill School for children and the Marxist California Labor School. Weekends, the Heaths took to the road looking for

sources of local clays. In 1945, the Heaths established Heath Ceramics, Inc., to make and market Edith’s hand-thrown dinnerware services.

I mention these biographical details, abridged from essays by Rosa Novak, Jennifer M. Volland, and Brian Trimble, because they’re signifiers: root influences that Edith brought to her ideas and practices, both in design and business. To American designer Charles Eames, the post-war design brief was to create “the best for the most for the least.” There was a shared sense that products should embody how Americans saw themselves – solid, functional, hardworking – and be affordable: what became

known as “good design for everyone.”

Edith Heath, however, was greater than the sum of a good designer. She believed in what Jennifer M. Volland references in “The World is Written in Clay,” citing Jane Bennett, as the “political ecology of things”: local sourcing, materials recycling, practices fundamentally adverse to the throw-away culture. This activism guided her praxis in business,

**“I wanted to make something that was for the American way of life, ... for Sunday best as well as for everyday use ... something that was more egalitarian rather than aristocratic.”
Edith Heath¹**



CUTTING "MASTER"
BLOCK FROM
WHEEL MOLD'S
WILL BE MADE



FROM A HAND-
ROLL OF CLAY -
A VESSEL
EMERGES -
A SKETCH OF
AN IDEA FOR
PRODUCTION -
MADE ON POTTERS'
WHEEL



"JIGGERING"
MOLDS USED IN
PRODUCTION

"A Day in the Life of Edith Heath," booklet created ca.1985 using photographs taken by Elizabeth (Lisa) Stephens in the 1970's. Heath Collection, EDA, UCB.



A PROBLEM WITH A GLAZE -
OR CHECKING SPECIFIC GRAVITY
AND VISCOSITY -

GROUTING A
TILE PANEL
MADE FOR FUN

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF Edith Heath

THE HAND IS THE EXTENSION OF MIND
A TOOL IS AN EXTENSION OF BOTH

3

research, and teaching. Here *Philosophies* is certainly great reading for ceramic historians: it's also a vital reminder of how fresh, how contemporary, Edith's commitment to art and making within a grounded ethical framework is to our own time of disruption and transition.

Her workshops were built on the imperative to "know your clay" and ceramic chemistry. When awareness grew of the environmental consequences of industrial discharge, she made new glazes from production waste. She figured out how to lower firing temperatures to conserve energy. She made extruded clay brick prototypes for affordable housing. Her commitment to social justice evolved not only from her orientation to equity issues during the Great Depression, but also from mentoring relationships with ceramic engineer Willi M. Cohn and design-educator László Moholy-Nagy, both established practitioners in Weimar Germany who had experienced, first-hand, invention necessitated by disruption.

Heath Ceramics then found itself in an historical moment. As Julie M. Muñiz surveys in "Pacesetters, Place Settings, and Designing for the Homes of Today," America after the war embraced individuality and informality. "Tastemakers" curated an ideal of "gracious living" for the new peace and prosperity, an ideal realized through education, housing, and consuming by an ascendant (primarily white) middle class. Dining *al fresco*. Buffet service. Entertaining at home. A new architecture, made collaborative through public initiatives such as John Entenza's Case Study House Program; Edgar J. Kaufmann Jr.'s Good Design Program; and Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's kitchen designs modeling factory efficiencies like the work triangle and standard counter heights. Formica. Melamine. Tupperware.

Heath Buffet Service, 1955. Heath Collection, EDA, UCB.

**"With the new architecture, what were the objects – the products that would fit into this new design, this new house, this new building?"
Edith Heath²**

Ruth Schwartz Cowan has called this lifestyle "Two Washes in the Morning and a Bridge Party at Night."³ And, particularly fortuitous for Edith, California became home for this ideal. (Perspective has suggested more nuanced views: Joan Didion, in her essay collection, *Where I Was From*, counterpoints this golden history – myth by fact – exploring its fragile underpinning as she recalls her own California childhood.)

What became known as California Modernism meant, in Edith's hands, earthiness, warmth, and colour. Her first dinnerware service, Coupe, was "a family of simple forms"⁴: first a simple triad of plates, bowls and cups; then, adding teapots and serving dishes, a collection of useful things for the home. Glazed stoneware in her original Heath colours of Sand, Shining Sand, Sage and Blue – both texture and colour alive to the *terroir*





Heathware, ca.1960. Heath Collection, EDA, UCB.

of the California landscape – Coupe cut with European formalism. Organic in shape, with thumb rests and subtle necks; speckled with the materiality of its local, coarser California clay, it introduced another first for Edith: the “dropped bowl” mark, her brand pressed into the bottom of each piece.

By 1947 Edith had left the studio for industrial production. But while noting that “[i]n designing for mass production, the personal quality of spontaneity is sacrificed,”⁵ she looked for ways to keep just that: jiggering to keep the randomness of hand-throwing; slip casting to be most like organic shapes, the horizontal ridges on a 1947 creamer crafted to look like throwlines. Now a collection of 30 pieces in eight colours, including brighter “party colours” like Currie, Rock Red, and Verde with reflective glazes, the renamed Heath California Dinnerware was “for homes of today with all the charm of the handmade.”⁶

Coupe initiated a production transition,

giving Edith economies of scale that allowed her to build a robust infrastructure for innovation. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Heath Ceramics added 2-tone patterns from the same glaze, such as the lush Gold/Apricot; exposed clay edges; and triad patterns of three colour fields. Here *Philosophies* offers a colourist’s feast with its selected Heath product and dinnerware glaze history.

Gourmet, Edith’s new oven-to-table line with stylish rimmed pieces, plates that inverted to lids on baking dishes sized to fit between oven racks, launched in 1961 as Julia Child brought the how-to of French cuisine to North American housewives in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. It was a perfect fit. And not the last time that Edith would see opportunity emerging in a shift in consumer living: in 1993, she collaborated with chef Alice Waters of Chez Panisse on a new line of restaurant ware in clearer white glaze with saturated colours like Raspberry

and French blue to showcase regional California cooking.

Restaurant ware, however, wasn't Edith's first move outside the family home. She once said, "If I hadn't been a potter, I'm sure I would have been an architect."⁷ Emily Vigor, in "From Surface to Structure: The Evolution of Edith Heath's Architectural Tile," and Rosa Novak, in "Crosscurrents in Clay: Edith Heath and Leon Galleto's Architectural Tile," trace the unique partnership between Edith and Leon Galleto that brought the concept of "total design" to Heath Ceramics.

Four basic shapes; set gridded, staggered, alternated or tessellated; making three-dimensional patterned, textural walls. Planter boxes and patio screens; shopping mall and museum exteriors; and, fantastically, Edith's murals such as that for the 1964 Occidental Center, Los Angeles. Her attention to the bespoke remains even here: unique Heath products such as ribbon-rolled, with its warp, or blistered tile; density inspired by patterns in Persian rugs. Experimentation was a constant, and Vigor and Novak are meticulous in capturing the evolving process.

Edith had some misses: Heath Basics, her 3-piece line so backpackers could eat well on the trail, failed to connect with 1960s youth. For those of us of the Billy bookcase generation, the entrance of global design houses such as IKEA in the 1980s gutted profile, revenues, and distribution for local makers. And despite her progressive views, she was sometimes challenged to put them into practice with her own employees. But what Edith did have was drive: from a poem, "I know only that I must go here./I must try that./I dream such beautiful dreams...."⁸

That North American reach of *Philosophies* touches Canada's Pacific Northwest as a little-studied collaboration that Allan Collier recalls in "Edith Heath's Vancouver Workshops." In 1951-52, she taught ceramics at UBC at the invitation of ceramic artist Mollie Carter, who had studied with her in California. Students brought in local clays from their homes on Salt Spring Island, Powell River, Vancouver Island, a *terroir* trove that the BC Potters Guild

published as the *Report on BC Clays* in 1958. Olea Davis, Hilda Ross, Thomas Kakinuma, Sasha Makovkin – BC potters who trained at UBC's Extension Department that Edith helped plan, or later worked at the Arcadia Ceramic Workshop.

That history foregrounds the upcoming exhibition *Edith Heath and Emily Carr: From the Earth*, opening at the Vancouver Art Gallery on July 10, 2021. Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Guest Curators Jennifer M. Volland and Jay Stewart, and Bruce Grenville, Senior Curator (VAG), *From the Earth* "brings together the work of two artists whose art was profoundly influenced by the land and landscape – its colours, light and materials"⁹; two women who never met but, as "modernist women living on the West Coast, built careers in the creative arts that spoke to their time and place."¹⁰

Perhaps the best epilogue to *Philosophies* is that *Heath Ceramics* still exists. You can still order Coupe. In "Epilogue: Unearthing the Heaths' Legacy," Catherine Bailey and Robin Petravic talk about their own "joyful path of discovery" after purchasing the company in 2003 – or, how one day they "came home with a coffee table with unusual legs,"¹¹ as they describe their discovery of a dusty 1959 factory in Sausalito – and thus began their own *Philosophies*.

¹ Edith Heath, in Mara Holt Skov, "Good Design for Everyone," in *Philosophies*, eds. Jennifer M. Volland and Chris Marino (Berkeley Design Books and Information Office, 2020), page 86. Reprinted with permission from Edith Heath, *Tableware and Tile for the World: Heath Ceramics, 1944-1994*, transcript of oral history interviews conducted by Rosalie Ross, 1990-1992, 1994, California Craft Artists Oral History Series, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1995, pages 138-139.

² Edith Heath, in Skov, *Philosophies*, 89. Reprinted with permission from Edith Heath, *Tableware and Tile for the World*, 235.

³ Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "Two Washes in the Morning and a Bridge Party at Night: The American Housewife Between the Wars," *Women's Studies* 3, no. 2 (1976), 154-156.

Edith and Brian Heath on their deck, 1957.
Heath Collection, EDA, UCB.



⁴ Skov, *Philosophies*, 87.

⁵ Edith Heath, in Julie M. Muñiz, "Pacesetters, Place Settings, and Designing for the Homes of Today," in *Philosophies*, 74. Reprinted with permission from Edith Heath, "Some Thoughts About Ceramic Production," The Brian and Edith Heath/Heath Ceramics Collection, EDA, UCB.

⁶ "For Homes of Today," brochure, The Brian and Edith Heath/Heath Ceramics Collection, EDA, UCB.

⁷ Emily Vigor, "From Surface to Structure: The Evolution of Edith Heath's Architectural Tile," in *Philosophies*, 196. Reprinted with permission from Edith Heath, *Tableware and Tile for the World*, 203.

⁸ Edith Heath, "Why Question what Is after Visit to Advance Factory," 1969, The Brian and Edith Heath/Heath Ceramics Collection, EDA, UCB.

⁹ *Edith Heath and Emily Carr: From the Earth*, Vancouver Art Gallery, <https://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/exhibitions/edith-heath-and-emily-carr-from-the-earth>, accessed April 28, 2021.

¹⁰ *Edith Heath and Emily Carr*.

¹¹ Catherine Bailey and Robin Petravac, "Epilogue: Unearthing the Heaths' Legacy," in *Philosophies*, 277.

Margot Lettner is Editor of *FUSION: A Magazine for Clay and Glass*. Her poetry/image book, *anglepoise*, was published by [Daed'u Books](#) in 2021.

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See also [Edith Heath: A Life in Clay](#) at the Oakland Museum of California, opening date to be confirmed.

For more about *Edith Heath: Philosophies*, visit Information Office <https://i-o.cc/books/edith-heath> or Berkeley Design Books <https://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/news/heathbook>





Edith Heath throwing a bowl on the potter's wheel, ca.1955. Heath Collection, EDA, UCB.



Paired Samaras:
A Conversation with
Andrea Poorter and
Genevieve Patchell

Maquette for Paired Samaras.
Image: Genevieve Patchell, 2018

I met Andrea Poorter and Genevieve Patchell at the Mississauga Potters' Guild, where we share workspace, stories, and knowledge about our practice, society, and art. Coming from different cultural and historical backgrounds, our work varies yet connects through the medium of clay and technique, as well as through philosophies.

One story Andrea and Gen shared with me was *Paired Samaras*, their collaborative public art creation that the Town of Elora selected for its 2018 Elora Sculpture Project exhibition. This 2.4 m (eight-foot) statue is built of Winterstone – an entirely different material from clay that needs a pre-constructed armature, among other specifications; which, in turn, means a willingness to experiment and persevere as well as an array of special skills, all of which Andrea and Gen developed and brought to the project. The work was not meant to be site-specific; its location at one main intersection in the village was based on logistics determined by project staff.

Paired Samaras is visually fabricated as two abstract figures that share one base. How they are positioned, as well as the distance between them, suggest duality in dialogue, similarity yet individuality – without negating either or both. In both colour and form the sculpture wears its title: coloured in earth-tones of ochre and khaki; shaped as maple keys, the Latin word “samara” meaning “a winged nut or achene containing one seed, as in ash and maple.”¹

For me, “samara” has added richness through other associations and perceptions. In my language, Persian, the word means “result” and “fruit of something.” The word is rooted in Arabic and Hebrew; it is also a girl’s name.

Everyone comes to art with their own background or knowledge: my own visual understanding of *Paired Samaras* is affected by these particular cultural references, which are given greater liberty, more open play, by the sculpture’s abstracted forms. Which is to say that while *Paired Samaras* follows the concept of art for *art’s sake*², and while it tells a story of the “two,” it can be interpreted in many ways by viewers.

In this interview with Andrea and Genevieve, I try to delve into *Paired Samaras* to surface the concerns, approaches, and points of view they hold as artists. What follows are my questions and their responses, in their own words, along with photos taken of *Paired Samaras* during its making, installation, and exhibition. Any edits for reading clarity appear in square brackets. My deepest thanks to Andrea and Gen for the generous gift of their time and thoughts.

So, why ‘Paired Samaras’?

Andrea: As our Artists’ Statement reveals, this sculpture refers to us as makers, as people who have similar interests, aesthetics, and work ethics in common; but are also individuals who approach those ideas from



Andrea Poorter (L) and Dorothy Collin (R) in Dorothy's barn during construction. Image: Genevieve Patchell, 2018



Sculpting the armature. Image: Genevieve Patchell, 2018

different angles, based on previous experiences and histories. The goal was to collaborate on this project: compromising and adjusting where necessary, learning, problem-solving, and challenging ourselves to achieve something that we could both be proud of and enjoy. We wanted to work together as two artists, which the samara shape illustrates naturally and beautifully.

How was the experience of showcasing your work/artistic expression in public within a new sphere and new community?

Gen: We've both shown in galleries before, but we were drawn to this new experience: our first outdoor project. Our main challenge was the scale and fabrication. Having never made anything this large before, we were more concerned about the engineering of the piece and how we would get it done on time.

We made a small maquette [to start] and submitted it to the Elora Sculpture Project. We wanted to ensure that the piece would remain standing throughout the exhibition without falling on anyone!

Andrea: We were excited to learn that the building at the corner where our sculpture was [sited] is in front of an art studio for kids. They were very excited to have such a large piece outside their studio. We met the director who was so enthusiastic, so that was fun for us.

What do you think of the functions of public artwork in general?

Gen: To me, good public art brings a moment of joy or wonder to the viewer; or provokes thought. It can also simply be a point of visual interest in the landscape.



Genevieve Patchell during installation.
Image: Andrea Poorter, 2018



Gen (L) and Andrea (R) on site.
Image: Sonya Poorter, 2018

Andrea: It depends on the piece. If the work draws me to it or is visually interesting, either I'm intrigued by it; or I might go closer to look or maybe touch it!

There is always an argument that public art can change the landscape or people's expectations positively or negatively. How was your experience in Elora's project?

Andrea: The Elora Sculpture Project is championing and showcasing artists. They create space every spring for sculptures that are removed in the fall, making every year a temporary experience. Visitors can look forward to new art which they may find appealing, or appalling. There were different installation sites – by the river, along well-traveled roads, in parks – and each one probably got different kinds of traffic, viewing, and experiencing depending on whether

someone was strolling, or driving by, or sitting. When all the pieces were installed and we went to the opening, we realized that this was a new dimension for us, as artists, to understand that is particular to outdoor public art.

In terms of the temporality or permanence aspect of these types of programs, do you find them helpful for the artists to get more opportunities and recognition?

Gen: No one approached us to purchase our work or for commissions. Having no previous outdoor exhibition experience to compare it to, we're not sure if there's an advantage to temporary vs permanent installations. We did have the biggest sculpture there, which could be more difficult to sell. While the whole process was stressful it was also fun, and I'm considering applying for a similar show now.



Paired Samaras, 2018 Elora Sculpture Project, Village of Elora ON. Image: Genevieve Patchell, 2018.

A chance to exhibit a work somewhere where a lot of people might see it is appealing to me.

Andrea: The Elora Sculpture Project wants different artworks every year. It is a tourist attraction and people who know about it are excited to see what the sculptures will be.

Is there anything you want to share about your artistic process, psychologically or physically?

Gen: [Making *Paired Samaras*] we had a three-inch maquette that we scaled up from, creating an eight-foot sculpture. We had to figure out what materials were needed to engineer this in a safe, successful, and aesthetically pleasing way, which was super challenging! Working against a tight deadline and in extreme weather, the building process was physically demanding, mixing hundreds of pounds of concrete and Winterstone by hand; and climbing up and down ladders to apply it to the armature over the course of a few weeks.

Andrea: We would like to give a shout-out to Dorothy Collin, a founding member of the Mississauga Potters' Guild, who graciously allowed us to work at her barn, where we were sheltered from the wind. Dorothy would check in on us and take pictures. She is a force who has supported us throughout the process. Thank you, Dorothy!

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Andrea Poorter graduated from Sheridan College Ceramics in 2013 and continues to learn about and experiment with clay
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Genevieve Patchell is currently renovating an abandoned building into a dream studio where she'll be able to continue working and experimenting with all sorts of mediums
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The Elora Sculpture Project is an outdoor exhibition that runs from May through October each year. The sculptures are installed at sites throughout the downtown core of the Village of Elora and the Town of Fergus ON. For an image gallery from the 2018 exhibition, as well as images from other years and a project history, go to www.elorasculpture.ca

FUSION is grateful to Andrea Poorter and Genevieve Patchell for their participation in this conversation and for permission to quote their words here; to Genevieve Patchell and Sonya Poorter for permission to reproduce their images of *Paired Samaras*; and to Dorothy Collin for permission to show her (and her barn).

¹ Oxford Dictionary, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/samara>, accessed April 26, 2021.

² "Art for art's sake means for its adepts the pursuit of pure beauty – without any other preoccupation." Théophile Gautier, cited in "Art for Art's Sake: Its Fallacy and Viciousness" in *The Art World*, 2(2), (May 1917) 98-102 https://archive.org/stream/jstor-25587887/25587887_djvu.txt, accessed April 26, 2021.

Hands-on Jurying:

Holding a Virtual Ceramics Exhibition in a Pandemic



Joanna Richardson, Salt and Sugar Speckled Jar, Juror's Choice Award, sponsor: Tucker's Pottery Supplies, 2020 Ottawa Guild of Potters Virtual Annual Exhibition. Image: Rajeev Nath, 2020

Ceramics are judged largely on how they appear to the eye of the beholder. But to properly assess quality, a person needs to hold and handle a piece and assess its weight, balance, and proportion.

Virtual ceramics exhibitions – the only kind of exhibition possible during a pandemic – present organisers with a choice: they can opt for “jurying from digital,” where the juror selects pieces by relying solely on photographs; or they can plan for “in-person jurying” where the juror selects from among the physical pieces themselves. During the 2020 COVID 19 pandemic, in planning their first virtual annual exhibition, the Ottawa Guild of Potters (OGP) chose to go for a hands-on approach.

The Exhibitions Committee – Isobel Salole, Carol Lim, and myself – began event planning. First, Huntington Properties offered the Guild vacant office space in Ottawa ON for the judging and photographic sessions. The Guild then opted for professional photography. Photographer Rajeev Nath is a local: he would be able to take photos under all circumstances except a complete lockdown. Juror and well-known potter Marney McDiarmid agreed to make the 200 km drive to Ottawa from her home in Kingston to evaluate the submitted pieces in person. Everyone knew full well that, with rising and falling levels of infection in Ontario and rapidly changing requirements for social distancing, restricted movement, and self-isolation, plans might need to change.

While hoping for the best, the committee was pragmatic and planned for the worst,



Cover, Ottawa Guild of Potters 2020 Virtual Exhibition Catalogue, showing Maria Moldovan, "Departure," Best in Show, sponsor: Pottery Supply House. Image: Rajeev Nath, 2020

working up three different exhibition scenarios that all complied with public health directives. In Plan A, members would deliver their submissions to the temporary office space where jurying and photo sessions would take place. Plan B would cover the situation where Marney couldn't travel to Ottawa due to public health directives: the photo session would still go ahead; and she would judge using Rajeev's photos.

The committee would move to Plan C if Ontario found itself in complete lockdown, in which case Marney would make her selections on the basis of photographs submitted by the potters, which would also be used for the exhibition itself. By November 2020, as the jurying session approached but further public health directives were possible for hard-hit communities, Committee members became increasingly worried. Fortunately, Ottawa remained in the less restrictive category: in-person jurying could go ahead.

On jurying day, the committee used Plan A to organize logistics and keep people safe. Potters dropped off their pieces according to the staggered schedule that had been decided in advance; sanitized their hands upon entry; remained masked; and kept a careful distance apart. Marney worked alone, even managing to complete the jurying and

return home to Kingston the same day (and before the first storm of winter). The following day, the photo shoot for the Exhibition Catalogue went off without a hitch.

However, not even a virtual exhibition is complete without an opening ceremony! The OGP Virtual Annual Exhibition was scheduled to open with a ZOOM Awards Ceremony on December 5th, at three o'clock. Committee members sat in front of their computer screens, wondering whether the virtual ceremony would come off. A practice rehearsal ironed out some issues, but uncertainties lingered. What if the screen froze? Or the sound failed? How many people would attend? To everyone's great relief, a full 100 attendees logged on and everything ran smoothly. And, thanks to careful preparation by the Guild's tireless volunteer webmaster, Dave Drapeau, the virtual 2020 Exhibition itself went live as soon as the ceremony closed.

In her closing notes to the Exhibition Catalogue, Marney speaks to a special element of her work:

In the middle of COVID-19's second wave I was given a gift – the opportunity to spend many hours surrounded by wonderful pots. I was able to pick up the pieces and experience how they felt to the touch. I tested out lids and looked at the pots from all angles. With so much of our lives now taking place online, it was a joy to be able to fully connect to the work that was submitted to the show, and I'm thankful to the organizers for finding a safe way to make this possible.

Marney echoed that sentiment in her comments on her Juror's Choice Award sponsored by [Tucker's Pottery Supplies](#) granted to Guild member Joanna Richardson, again validating the choice of in-person jurying:

"Smooth to the touch, light yet solid to hold, the piece captivates the hand as much as the eye. The smoky interior is a comfort. This exquisitely rendered pot feels like it is of the earth."

We hope the OGP's next Annual Exhibition will take place with the pandemic well behind us. If not, the Exhibitions Committee plans to repeat what they did in 2020. The presence and enthusiasm of a 100-strong community of attendees at the Virtual Awards Ceremony; the Juror's speech and comments on the entries and award winners, and on the significance of touch and heft, of physicality, in ceramic art; and the words of thanks from the award winners themselves – all confirmed that staying "hands-on" was not only well worth the effort of careful and informed planning, it affirmed the essence of making and experiencing art in clay.

The OGP 2020 Exhibition Catalogue was presented as a flipbook, a digital publication that resembles a real magazine, complete with visual page-flipping and sound. To see how it works, as well as view the other online features the OGP used in its virtual presentation of the show, go to <https://www.ottawaguildofpotters.ca/annual-juried-exhibition/> Online polling software was also used to create a web-based "People's Choice" award.

FUSION thanks OGP President Amy Bell for her support of this article. For permission to quote from their remarks and/or reproduce images of their work, FUSION is grateful to:

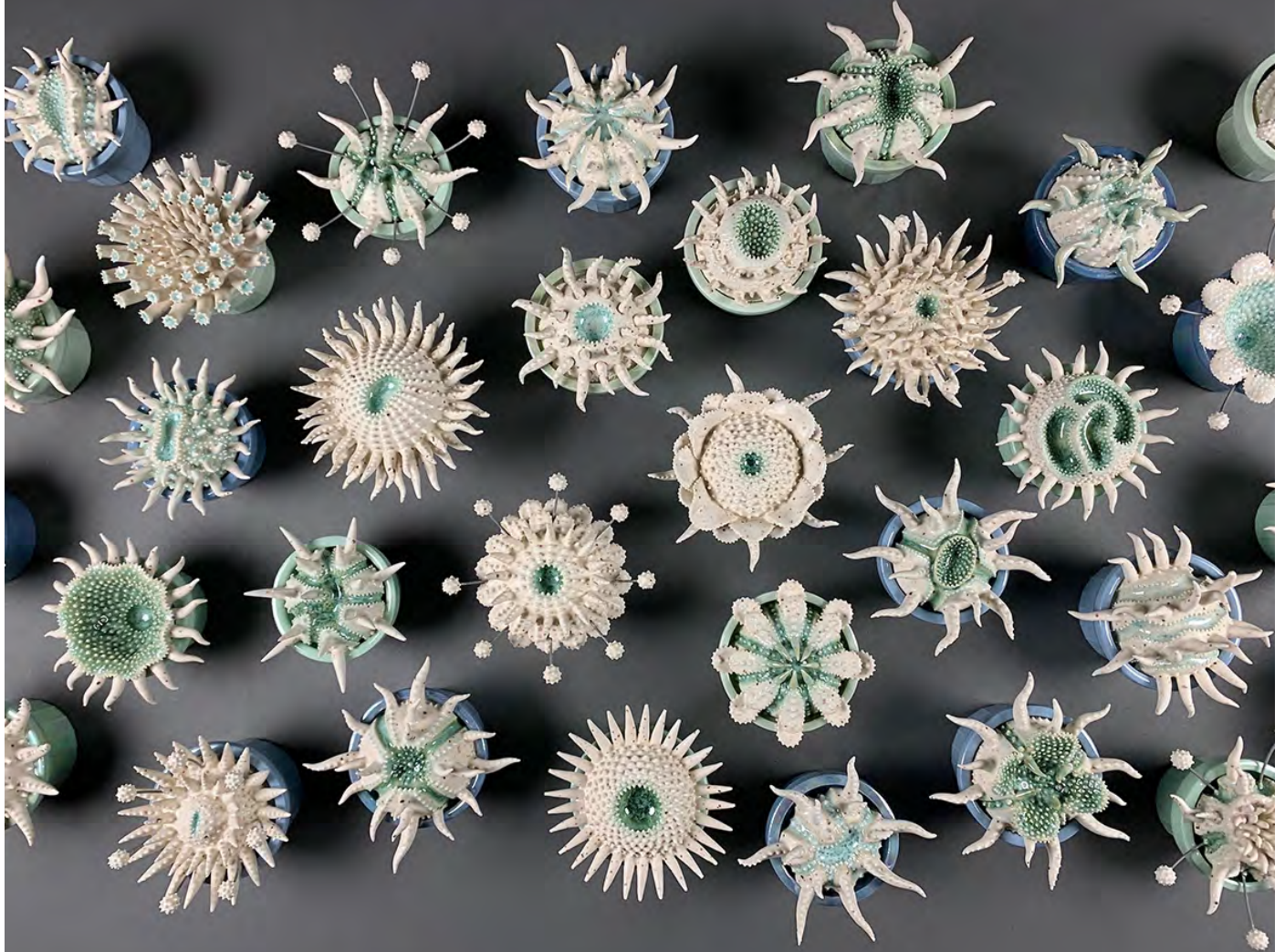
Marney McDiarmid
<https://www.marneymcdiarmid.com>
Instagram @marneymcdiarmid

Maria Moldovan
<https://www.moldovanmaria.com/>

Rajeev Nath <http://rajnphotos.com/>

Joanna Richardson
<https://www.amblyandpottery.com/>

Elizabeth Davies is a potter at Gladstone Clayworks. She is currently Chair of the Exhibitions Committee, at the Ottawa Guild of Potters
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FUSION MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHT **FEATURED EMERGING ARTIST, CLAY**

Zara Gardner

I am a Barbados-born ceramic artist currently living and working in Toronto, Ontario. I received my BA (Honours) in Fine Art from the University of Guelph in 2010; and a Certificate in Ceramics from the Haliburton School of Art and Design, Fleming College, where I also received the 2017 Ceramics Certificate Award.

I create objects in clay ranging from functional to sculptural that spark concern, curiosity, and appreciation of our natural world and the hardships facing it. Exploring the intricate and fragile beauty of coral reef ecosystems and their inhabitants, my work addresses the influences and impacts of humankind on our marine environments, with a specific focus on the critical issues of plastic pollution and coral bleaching.

My process involves collecting found plastic objects, which I then use as moulds for hand building and slip casting. In my sculptural work, intricate hand-built coral structures and/or organisms appear to grow on and live in these plastic objects, prompting the viewer to contemplate how the natural world is adapting in its attempt to reclaim, repurpose, rebuild, and reproduce in the face of the destruction.

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FUSION MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHT FEATURED EMERGING ARTIST, GLASS

Lauri Maitland

I am a fused glass artist, originating in Toronto and now residing in Eastern Ontario. Starting out in the media of charcoal and pastel, I apply that same attention to detail to my glass work. Focusing on multi-panel, hand-painted, enamel and glass pieces, I achieve a sense of depth and dimension that draws the viewer into the work itself.

The process involving painting, kiln fire, and cold working takes place at my studio just outside Merrickville ON. Each work of art consists of anywhere from 4-20 layers of individually painted panels that are stacked together and fused in a kiln to form a solid block of glass. The mixed medium of glass and enamel maximizes the light and depth that are inherent in the glass.

My work evokes emotion using familiar subjects that examine the bond between people and their surroundings – using the natural attributes of the glass to enhance and elevate it. I have exhibited exclusively in Ontario, and many of my pieces are now in private collections across the province. I am a member of galleries in the Toronto and Ottawa area and regularly participate in juried competitions, with annual solo exhibitions.

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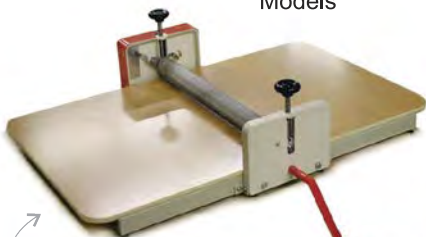




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