

Fusion

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A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY & GLASS



FUSION MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHT
FEATURED EMERGING ARTIST

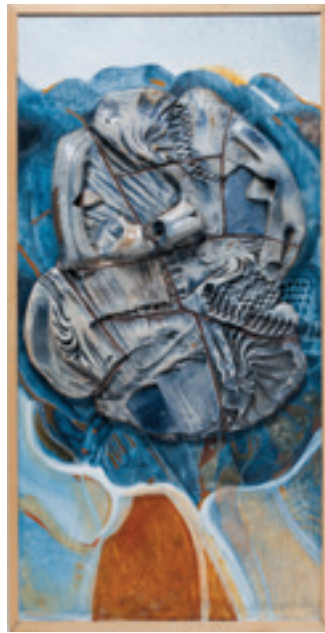
ERRATUM

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Artist Jeannie Pappas
messenger in the woods.



Roger Kerslake *Clay Tile on Board.*



In the last issue of FUSION Magazine Roger Kerslake and Jeannie Pappas were both featured as Emerging Artists in the Featured Artist column. They are both, in fact, Established Artists. The Editor of this magazine regrets the error and offers a sincere apology to both Roger and Jeannie.

FUSION Magazine

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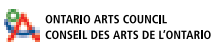
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A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY & GLASS

Volume 40 Number 2 Summer 2016

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article, email the editor,
Helen Rudin at
helenrudin@gmail.com.
The deadline for the next
issue is **Oct. 15, 2016.**

ROBERT ARCHAMBEAU

NEW CERAMICS



*Bottle/Vase
(16/03), wood-
fired stoneware,
14 3/8 X 7 5/8
dia. in.*



*Black Leaf Plate (16/40), wood-fired stoneware,
1 7/8 X 8 5/8 dia. in.*



Black Bowl (16/38), wood-fired stoneware, 4 X 6 dia. in.

David Kaye Gallery, Toronto

Part One: June 2-26, 2016

Part Two: June 30 – August 7, 2016

Review by Diana Reitberger, submitted July 13, 2016

Edwardsville, Illinois, is a 3700 kilometer round trip from Robert Archambeau's home in Bissett, Manitoba. It is home to his friend and colleague Dan Anderson's *anagama* kiln – a Japanese term meaning “cave kiln” - where Archambeau wood fired the ceramics on display at his most recent exhibition at the David Kaye Gallery in Toronto.

I feel that this journey to the kiln must be akin to taking a pilgrimage, where stoneware bottle vases, plates, bowls and double gourd vases were carefully placed by Archambeau in the single chamber kiln, some close to the firebox at the front of the kiln where pieces would receive a heavy coating of ash, while others deeper in the kiln would be softly touched. The full extent of this alchemy and his quiet brilliance in controlling the dance of the fire was on display in this two-part exhibition featuring an impressive display of forms and a masterful variation of surface colour and texture.

Five wonderful bottle vases dominated the gallery space in Part One of the exhibition, which also included tub vases, leaf plates and dome vases. They all showed Archambeau's incredible skill at achieving great depth in surface treatment through the masterly application of thick painterly strokes of slip, with a subtlety of colour ranging from greys to faint hints of pastel shades. One bottle vase in particular had an almost disturbing atmospheric quality about its surface, with rivulets of glaze running down one side - almost like a lava flow - with the faintest hints of turquoise softening the disquiet.

This vigorous brushwork is continued on a series of leaf plates, their matte black backgrounds animated by the strokes of glaze with silhouettes of different leaves resting on the

surface. This created great movement in a very confined space. Archambeau's work is constantly informed by his incredible respect and observance of the natural world and his own collections of found objects which include leaves.

Two bowls were part of this first installation, and they both are incredible studies in surface, volume and touch. While both bowls have a matte black ground, one has a smooth surface wrapped in a single luscious brush stroke, which once fired, is creamy beige with touches of ochre. The unexpected appearance of three small incised stamp marks on the bowl's interior added texture and an element of delight on this surface. The other bowl's surface is deeply incised with flashes of a deep orange further animating the surface.

A shape which I have not seen before is seen in the tub vases, with four represented in Part One. There is an intense physicality to these forms which have been turned on the wheel, and then further manipulated by hand into an almost ovoid shape. In Tub Vase #6, the surface has been literally divided into light and dark. Archambeau is forever exploring, experimenting and expanding his horizons - an incredible gift in a career that has spanned over 50 years. These vessels have a gravitas to them, created by the imposing monolithic shape and the quiet volume they inhabit.

In Part Two – both exhibitions were installed at the front of the gallery where there is abundant natural light – the thoughtful display by David Kaye served to illuminate the work, and focus the viewer on the play of form and colour.

Archambeau has created 19 small bowls that invite quiet contemplation and individual exploration. Each one is unique in shape and surface treatment, with a number displaying the vestiges of the artist's own finger prints, where he has held the bowls to be dipped in slip. The display of these bowls lines one wall of the gallery space, and wraps around another, leading the eye to a plinth with a larger white bowl, with the addition of a traditional Russian folk art paper mache spoon resting inside it. As mentioned, Archambeau is an incredible collector



Tub Vase (16/06), wood-fired stoneware, 6 3/4 X 10 X 7 3/4 in.



Bowl with Spoon (16/49), wood-fired stoneware bowl with found spoon, 4 3/8 X 6 1/4 dia. in.

of objects of all types, and the addition of found objects to his work is something he would like to explore further. It speaks to the integrity of the bowl, and its useful beauty.

Archangeau created five double gourd vases for this exhibition, and each one achieves a perfect harmony between shape and surface treatment, with most deeply incised on the lower half with the upper half left smooth. One piece in this particular series that stands out is matte turquoise (#17), with the incised lines on the lower half sandblasted until only the faintest ridge remains, with an under layer of ochre exposed along the entire body of the piece. This vessel invites to be touching, and it is a wonderful combination of smooth suede with an underlying grit.

Archangeau has said that “wood-firing is difficult, expensive and labour intensive. A more prudent and less compulsive artist might consider it not worth the effort to fire with wood, but the total aesthetic is what I am after and wood-firing is the only way to achieve it”. In total, Archangeau created 67 pieces for this exhibition, and a review of this size can not do justice to the individual work, but can only speak to the totality of the deep impression the work makes on the viewer. He is a living national treasure, forever pushing himself to discover new things about the clay at hand and to imbue it with his personal vision, technical skill and above all, his respect for the integrity of the material. His passion continues to inspire.



Double Gourd Vase (16/53), wood-fired stoneware, 1 3/4 X 8 5/8 dia. in.

BERNARD LEACH'S

Equestrian Roof Tiles and Their Location Within West Country Traditions



FIG 1. *Horse and Rider, 1924/5, Bernard Leach.* Earthenware, L44cm x H36cm x D26cm. Cube Gallery, Image courtesy of the Leach Pottery, Seasalt Cornwall Collection.

By Debra Sloan and Peter Smith

Standing in the Cube Gallery, in the centre of the Leach Pottery, is a very rare mid 1920s earthenware sculpture of a horse and rider by Bernard Leach. The sculpture had been roughly cemented onto a generic earthenware ridge tile (FIG 1), and at some point during the last ninety years, it had been mounted onto a rooftop near St. Ives in Cornwall. This *Horse and Rider* was the focus of my residency in the spring of 2014. Julia Twomlow, Director, the Leach Pottery (March 2008-Oct 2015) requested that I respond to and research this little understood sculpture.

On arrival at the Leach Pottery it seemed important to discover onto which roof the sculpture had been attached. The roof many suggested was Beagle's Cross, one of the buildings that makes up the Leach Pottery complex (i). I contacted former Leach Pottery apprentices, however, none remembered seeing the *Horse and Rider*. I was also informed that there were three other equestrian ridge tiles located on roofs in St. Ives—and all attributed to Leach; I later found that same assumption annotated in the Royal Cornwall Museum (RCM).

In the first days of my residency I walked about St. Ives scanning rooflines for the *Horse and Rider* tiles; and found



FIG 7. *Totnes Ridge tile, Image courtesy of Totnes Museum.*

all three near to the Leach Pottery. Dr. Matt Tyas, Exhibitions Co-ordinator, the Leach Pottery, kindly photographed them, and suggested that potter and scholar, Peter Smith might be able to help further with my inquiry. Smith is an authority on early English pottery and has studied, and subsequently published articles regarding aspects of technologies used in the early years of the Leach Pottery and he has some Cornish ridge tiles in his collection (1).

Smith dated Leach's sculpture to the mid-1920s, pointing out that the sculpture had to have been made well before 1935, when the Leach Pottery changed from earthenware to stoneware, and he recognized the maker's mark on the sculpture as a 1920s mark—reassurance of Leach as its maker. We had questioned its origins, as it was so unlike Leach's body of work – except for one other equestrian sculpture. (FIG 2).

Both of these sculptures, which appear to be a pair, had been in a private collection for many years. The Cube Gallery sculpture spent some years on a roof in Carbis Bay but when the house changed hands, the new owner removed it from the roof and it is on loan to the Leach Pottery. It is a rare and wonderful piece. *Horse and Rider 2* remains in a private collection.



FIG 3. Polperro Equestrian tile, known as 'Devil on Horseback', 17th C. Earthenware, L40cm x H33cm x D26cm. Image, courtesy of the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro.



FIG 4. 18th C. Cornish Equestrian tile, unknown, donated by R.J. Noall (1944). Earthenware, L42cm x H33cm x D 26cm, Ash glaze from moor cut furze. Image courtesy of Royal Cornwall Museum Archive.

In order to understand how and why Leach made these sculptures, we had to research the history of antique equestrian tiles and find the connection to the early days of the Leach Pottery. At the St. Ives Archives, I uncovered some images and references. I then went to the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro, where I explored C19th articles and drawings, and saw photographs of the antique equestrian roof tiles. (FIG 3 and Fig 4)

The articles stated that the innovation of clay ridge tiles played a role in fire prevention. Up until the 16th century most ordinary homes had thatch roofs with central smoke-holes. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, laws were enacted to replace combustible thatch with slate. Large clay ridge tiles were fashioned to cover the defunct smoke-holes, as brick chimneys gradually came into use. More elaborate equestrian tiles were occasionally placed on finer residences. Smith noted in an email; "the Cornish pottery tradition preserved medieval forms long after other areas of Britain." (3)

Regarding the three local equestrian ridge tiles attributed to Leach, still on roofs in St Ives, my first thought was that these tiles bore no resemblance to Leach's sculptures, except they were earthenware and had a similar surface. Smith felt that the clay and glaze looked very similar to the earthenware used at the Leach Pottery. He was fairly certain that these equestrian tiles were facsimiles made

within the last 90 to 100 years, as there was only light erosion and damage—local collectors told us seagulls made off with the clay lances and the figures were sometimes victims of sling shot. Sightings of these specific tiles have not been mentioned in any of the pre-WWI regional journals, supporting the theory of mid-1920s as time of manufacture. (4)

It was apparent that different hands had made the three tiles. Smith noted that the clumsier modeling precluded Leach, and that the figures, though fashioned in the manner of the traditional tiles with their legs rooted in the tile, "did not capture any of the 'folk' qualities of the originals." (5) However, we had come to some conclusions: Leach's sculpture and the three tiles may be of the same clay, made within the same period with a similar glaze treatment, and fired in the same kiln at the Leach Pottery or at the Lakes Pottery in Truro (ii). Questions still remained: what prompted Leach, not known as a sculptor, to attempt his own versions of this tradition? And who made the three other tiles?

Towards the end of my residency the penny dropped; the ownership of the homes with equestrian tiles correlated to members of the Old Cornwall Society, a group dedicated to preserving regional traditions and history. By mid-May 2014, Smith was fairly certain that some of the members had something to do with their manufacture.



FIG 5, Equestrian tile, St. Ives, 1924/5 unknown. Home of R.J. Noall, Earthenware, L40cm x H36cm x D26cm. Photo by Matt Tyas.





FIG 8, 'Hamada Comes to the Leach' 2014, Debra Sloan. Stoneware, L38cm x H40cm x D26cm. Collection of the Leach Pottery Photo by Matt Tyas.



FIG 2. Horse and Rider 2, 1924/5, Bernard Leach. Earthenware, L36cm x H29cm x D20cm. Private Collection, Image courtesy of the St. Ives Archives.

One of the tiles is on the Regency home of R.J.Noall, a knowledgeable collector of traditional slipware. They had been donated to the RCM upon his death in 1944. (FIG 5)

Another tile is on the newer (1922) home of Edgar Skinner, the Leach Pottery accountant and, legend has it, where Japanese potter Shoji Hamada – who set up the Leach Pottery with Leach in 1920 – would bathe. The third tile is on the fine C18th Ayr Manor. (FIG 6) Although the owner remains unknown, we now know that that person also installed an earthenware tile frieze made by Leach. Leach, Noall and Skinner had all been Founding Members of the Old Cornwall Society in 1920.

My theory was that the society members commissioned a local pottery (Lakes Pottery) to make their tiles, to revitalize and support a Cornish tradition. Smith believes that the members made their own equestrian tiles. They would have seen the C19th equestrian tiles in Noall's collection or read an article about a fine Totnes equestrian tile (FIG 7) published in a 1920 journal and they were closely acquainted with the Leach Pottery.

Because of their involvement with the Leach Pottery and love of tradition, the society members would have relished a chance to try their hand. Skinner died in 1926, Smith therefore believes that these equestrian tiles were all made in the mid-1920s, during what he calls Leach's 'best' slipware period. He also noted that making ridge tiles, with

prescribed angles for a roof, was outside of Leach's technical scope and was probably only possible with the arrival of Michael Cardew, or with the assistance of a (tile) Former like Bill Lakes of the Lakes Pottery. The tiles would have likely been fired in the kiln Matsubayashi had rebuilt in 1924, or in the Lakes Pottery kiln. These more technically capable potters could have assisted the society members in making the equestrian tiles in the traditional fashion. (To my eyes the Ayr Manor tile appears modelled after the C18th Cornish Equestrian tile in FIG 4.)

Leach made his versions as freestanding sculptures. In his essay Smith speculates that they may have been models, (7) and he quoted David Tovey:

"Leach also appears to have become friends with Greville Matheson, who was the greatest literary buff in the town, for he designed a roof ridge tile, with a figure on horseback, for the roof of his new library at 'Boskerris Vean'." (8)

We still puzzled over the significance of the horse and rider image on the traditional tiles and why it would attract Leach. Various articles at the RCM speculated that even in the late C19th, there was no living memory of why these tiles were made or whom they represented. Smith notes, "asking the relevant potters was probably not considered". (9) It was considered that a C18th equestrian tile of a Chevalier, seen on a gable, perhaps signalled a post house for sympathizers of Charles II. However, as events around



Work bench in Leach Pottery.

Charles II had little to do with the West Country, Smith felt that this was a ‘fanciful’ idea and that the tiles more likely referenced the decorative tile tradition of the region:

Possibly these images are related to the Saint George and the Dragon relief carvings that were often found over doors in medieval times. They marked a secure and safe place to visit. This sign was also common in Europe. For example, sailors visiting Venice were reassured if they saw Saint George and the Dragon above a doorway. Since the Horse and Riders were concentrated in Devon and Cornwall ports then the ‘safe house’ possibility may apply. (10)

It has been fascinating to see how the equestrian tile has reflected change. Potters depicted the manner and style of leading horsemen of their own eras, reminiscent of how social history is captured in old Staffordshire figurines. At one point, Smith and I both referred to Leach’s sculpture as Don Quixote, jousting the windmills of his early studio days and critics. In the end Saint George was considered a more likely source.

As our discoveries have led us to believe that Leach’s fellow society members made their Horse and Rider tiles at the Leach Pottery, it also follows that Leach would have been moved to make his own versions. Leach did not emulate the traditional equestrian tiles but made sculptures that are steadfastly modernist, unadorned abstract figures reflecting contemporaneous art trends at the time the work

was made.

My first thought was that Leach’s sculptures read as autobiographical, as a hybrid of the Japanese roof guardian, in the role of an (English) pilgrim (Leach himself?); echoing the East/West cultural mix that signals the Leach legacy. Both of Leach’s sculptures are fashioned in a loose and rubbery manner, with vague features and primitive detailing, but they are not without appeal or gravitas. The intention feels genuine and modern, demonstrating an interest in the human condition (his own?) that far exceeds the effort expended on anatomical or sculptural concerns. Leach’s ‘response’ to this tradition was made after the glory of the mounted warrior had been subsumed. Perhaps that is why his sculptures do not radiate the same assurance of the traditional tiles, and have about them a post WWI existential ambivalence.

Smith’s observations refer to Leach’s personal state, noting that though “these pieces could form a visual representation of his (Leach’s) early struggles, at first optimistic followed by the fight to stave off failure in both the pottery and his personal life; particularly critical, between 1926 and 1930. (11)

Throughout this investigation, we wondered why the Horse and Rider sculptures are so unlike rare but more skilled examples of Leach’s modeling. (iii) Perhaps Leach decided that detailed workmanship would have little effect,



as these sculptures would only be seen from a distance, or, as previously mentioned, these pieces were proposals. My impression has been that, although the rendering of the sculptures is unlike other examples of how Leach handled clay, the spirit behind the pieces belongs to someone operating with modernist sensibilities.

Smith discovered literary and visual evidence regarding Leach's 'ceramic horse'. It appears that this image influenced other artists who came to St. Ives during the 1930s. In particular Smith mentions Sven Berlin, author of *The Dark Monarch*, a satire on the post war art scene in St. Ives:

It contains many mystical and classical allusions and in the opening chapter the protagonist travels up the Stennack (iv) by bus when he sees a dark rider (perhaps Demeter?) galloping over the moors. (12)

At the time I was working most of the findings disclosed in this article had not been resolved, so I was only becoming aware of traditions behind Leach's sculpture. I certainly could not replicate the traditional versions, nor embrace Leach's modernist spirit. I decided to respond to where I was, and to acknowledge, in my own fashion, those who had founded and shaped the Leach Pottery – Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada and Janet Leach.

When I began digging about in the St. Ives archives, little interest had been expressed about the St. Ives equestrian tiles, and Leach's own sculptures did not appear to have a context. Smith noted that I am the first sculptor-in-residence at the Leach Pottery since its founding in 1920.

There never had been an indigenous ceramic culture in British Columbia. What we have is an amalgam of influences and knowledge imported by immigration, pre and post the World Wars. Influences from the Arts and Crafts, the Modernist, and Bauhaus movements, and from fine Asian collections. However, for many years, the greatest influence in BC on standards and philosophy came from Bernard Leach's 'The Potters Book', all of which was reiterated when a number of his apprentices returned to BC in the 60s and 70s, encouraged by the 'Back to the Land' movement.

I am among the thousands of ceramicists, worldwide, who can trace their career back to Leach's notion of a committed and independent studio practice. Though my work appears to have no connection, I am deeply indebted to his legacy.

Coming around a corner and spying a dainty Horse and Rider magically inhabiting a roof was an enchanting experience, never to be forgotten; as was living and working at the Leach Pottery.



Photo by author, Bisqued pieces.

References

- (1) Smith, P. 2011. The Log Book, 'The first Leach Climbing Kiln'
- (2) A similar image can be seen in the 1978 publication "The Art of Bernard Leach" edited by Carol Hogben p. 57, pointed out to me by Charmian Johnson, email.
- (3) Email, Peter Smith to Debra Sloan, April 21 2014
- (4) Pevsner, Cornwall, 1951
- (5) Smith Peter, Essay, Equestrian Ridge Tiles, 2015, p. 9
- (6) Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries, VII, 1920-21, P. 264, Peter Smith, p. 9
- (7) Email, Peter Smith to Debra Sloan, May 11 2015
- (8) Tovey, David, 'Sea Change, Fine and decorative art in St. Ives 1914 – 1930' Wilson Books 2010 p. 256 Noted in Peter Smith, Essay - Equestrian Ridge Tiles 2015, p. 10
- (9) Smith Peter, Essay, Equestrian Ridge Tiles, 2015, p. 7
- (10) Smith Peter, Essay, Equestrian Ridge Tiles, p. 11
- (11) Berlin, Sven, 'The Dark Monarch' Finishing Publications, 2009
- (12) Peter Smith, Essay, Equestrian Ridge Tiles, p. 12

End Notes

- i The Beagle Cross Residence was built on the Leach Pottery property, post WWII, by Michael and Bernard

- Leach, housing 4 residents, the new sculpture studio, and library.
- ii Lakes Pottery, was founded 1872 by W.H. Lakes and Son, Truro. Their traditional ware influenced Bernard Leach and his sons.
- iii Image of the lidded jar to be found in the 1978 publication "The Art of Bernard Leach" edited by Carol Hogben p. 18
- iv The (Upper) Stennack is the road that passes between the Leach Pottery and Edgar Skinner's home.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge FUSION: The Ontario Clay and Glass Association for their Scholarship awarded in support of my residency.

Thank you to Julia Twomlow for her imaginative invitation, to Peter Smith for generously sharing the breadth of his research that made this article possible and to Alex Lambly and Dr. Matt Tyas for their help in all ways and to everyone at the Leach Pottery, the St Ives Archives, and Sarah Lloyd Durrant, curator of the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro, and Charmian Johnson for her insights.

More Images of the residency can be found at www.debrasloan.com/journal.

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CHIHULY AT THE ROM



Dale Chihuly, *Persian Trellis*, 2016. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Photo by Chihuly Studio.

By Helen Rudin

On June 25, 2016 CHIHULY opened at the Royal Ontario Museum. The exhibition features eleven installations of the glass art of Dale Chihuly, an American sculptor, who has mastered the alluring, translucent and transparent qualities of ice, water, glass and neon, to create works of art that transform the viewer experience. Seven of the pieces were created specifically for the Royal Ontario Museum.

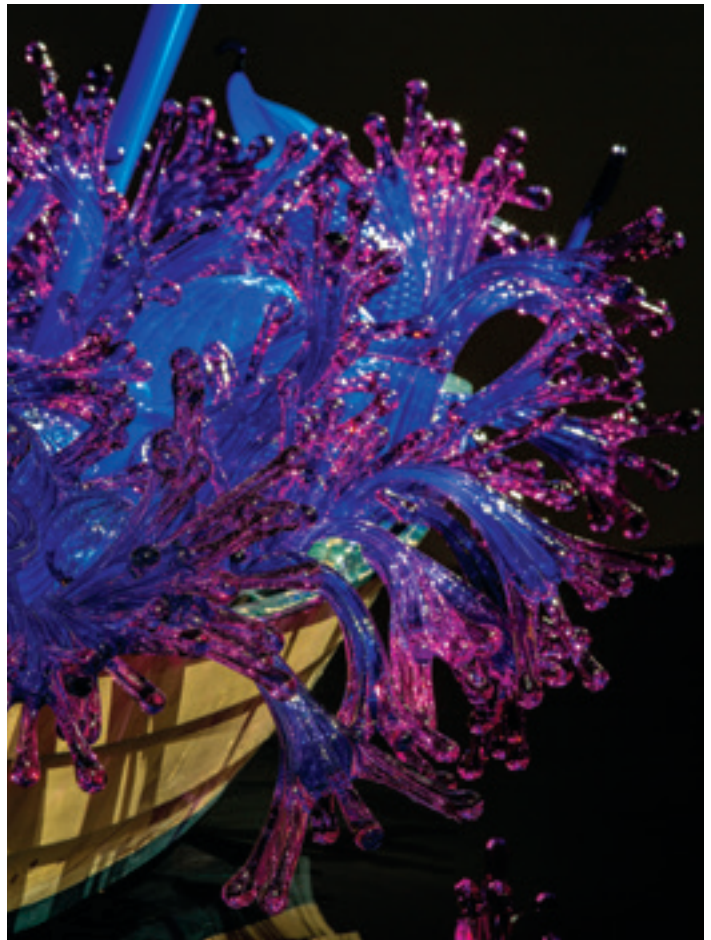
He is renowned for his ambitious architectural installations around the world, in historic cities, museums and gardens. Chihuly's work is included in more than 225 museum

collections worldwide including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Corning Museum of Glass. Major exhibitions include *Chihuly Over Venice* (1995-96), *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem* (1999), *Garden Cycle* (2001–present), de Young Museum in San Francisco (2008), the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2011), Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (2012) and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (2013). *Chihuly Garden and Glass* opened at Seattle Center in 2012.

Dale Chihuly, born in 1941 in Washington State, established the glass program at the Rhode Island School of Design and co-founded Pilchuck Glass School in 1971. He



Dale Chihuly. Fire Orange Baskets, 2016. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Photo by Chihuly Studio.



Dale Chihuly. Blue and Purple Boat (detail), 2006. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, installed 2016. Photo by Chihuly Studio.



Dale Chihuly. Float Boat, 2014. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, installed 2016. Photo by Chihuly Studio.



Dale Chihuly. *Persian Ceiling*, 2012. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, installed 2016. Photo by Chihuly Studio.

has been exploring glass as a medium and has been creating striking installations for fifty years. His monumental works defy the material's fragility. His method of creating his pieces began when he was a young artist in Venice, where he observed the centuries-old team approach to blowing glass. This became fundamental to the way he works today, especially after he suffered permanent injuries first in an automobile accident and then a surfing accident. He transitioned to directing a team of artists in his studio, and has commented, "Once I stepped back, I liked the view."

And we like the view too.

Upon entering the ROM we are confronted by *Lime Crystal Tower*, which stands as the focal point in the



Dale Chihuly. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 2016. Photo by Chihuly Studio.

museum's lobby. Dianne Charbonneau, who guest curated the show, says of the piece, "It's lit up so you can see it at night from outside. It's like a beacon to come inside and see all the pieces".

This exhibition also includes boats, which he first received inspiration for in 1995 in Finland. There, setting up for an exhibition on the banks of a river, Chihuly noticed boys filling their rowboats with glass pieces that he had thrown away into the river. *Ikebana Boat* is one example resulting from this inspiration. Another is *Float Boat*.

Of his work Charbonneau says it "...is about emotion and so he really appeals to the child in us, to our sense of wonder. You're transported into another world. Once you



Dale Chihuly. *Laguna Torcello*, 2012. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, installed 2016. Photo by Chihuly Studio.





Dale Chihuly. *Red Reeds on Logs*, 2016. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Photo by Chihuly Studio.



Dale Chihuly. *Scarlet Icicle Chandelier, Radiant Yellow Icicle Chandelier, Royal Blue Icicle Tower, and Serpentine. Green Icicle Towers*. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, installed 2016. Photo by Chihuly Studio.

enter the first gallery you say ‘Wow’ and then you just want to see more”.

More indeed. Transported to another world; sort of.

Critics have accused Chihuly of creating work that is lacking context and is superficial. His work is technically magnificent and beautiful - raising the age old argument about art versus craft. Rightly or wrongly, Chihuly is credited with revolutionizing the Studio Glass movement and elevating the perception of the glass medium from the realm of craft to fine art.

Without context, however, it is hard to understand meaning. Many of the pieces in this exhibition are attributed to other cultures and to other worldly places, but knowing what Chihuly,

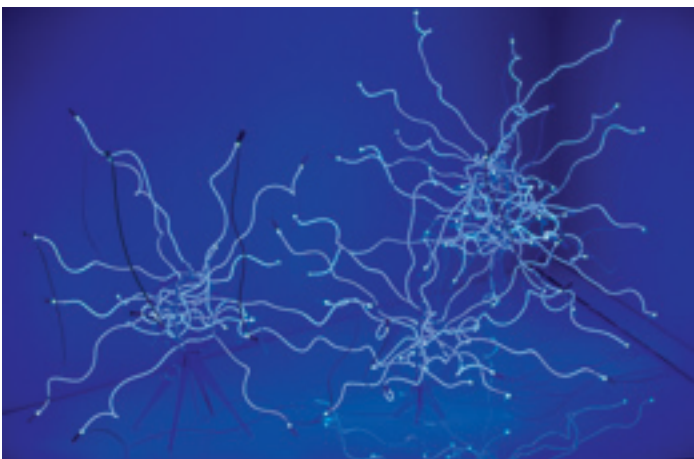
himself, has said about his sources of inspiration might make it hard for some to accept. Of his pieces *Persian Trellis* and *Persian Ceiling* the artist has said he chose the title because “I don’t know, it was an exotic name to me, so I just called them Persians.” To me, the *Persians* are more Chinese. They remind me of a series of ceramic umbrellas created by Ann Mortimer subsequent to her trip to China several years ago. http://annmortimerceramics.com/Ann_Mortimer_Ceramics/Types_of_work/Pages/Umbrellas.html

This exhibition also includes a series of *Fire Orange Baskets* which Chihuly attributes to Native American baskets.

There is no question that the pieces included in this



Dale Chihuly. *Baskets with Northwest Native American baskets.* in Northwest Room, 2016. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto
Photo by Chihuly Studio.



Dale Chihuly. *Sapphire Neon Tumbleweeds,* 2016. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Photo by Chihuly Studio.



Dale Chihuly. *Native American trade blankets* in Northwest Room, 2016. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Photo by Chihuly Studio.

exhibition are beautiful. They are over-the-top explosions of colour, which allow the creative viewer to suppose their own context. *Laguna Torcello* reminded me of the time I was snorkelling in the Cayman Islands. The piece is a cornucopia of shapes and colours that would be encountered in the sea.

In this exhibition, Chihuly has used glass, plexiglass, and polyvitro in his pieces. Polyvitro is the name that Chihuly has coined for a type of polymer he has created. Of the material Chihuly has said, “I’ve done several projects casting resins or polymer for site-specific projects and hope to explore new ways of using it, ways nobody else would think of. The Polyvitro doesn’t replicate what I can do in

glass. It’s a totally different material and it has enabled me to create artwork on a whole new scale and level”. The new polymer material has enabled Chihuly to consider his works in an entirely different way because it is so much lighter than glass.

When the Seattle-based artist was in Toronto, touring the Museum in preparation for the exhibition he said he is “... pleased to be able to bring an exhibition of my work to the ROM. Having been on-site at the museum, I’m really looking forward to presenting my work in this uniquely designed space. I want people to be overwhelmed with light and colour in a way they’ve never experienced before.”

Mission accomplished Mr. Chihuly.

Cavorting Among Creatures of Clay

Mary
Philpott

Murder of Crows at the
Art Gallery of Burlington

Jordan
Maclachlan

Radiance in
Uncontrollable Worlds



By Rebecca Doll

Two crows glare at a lounging Irish Wolfhound.

“Yes, that’s him. That’s the one.”

“Are you sure? He’s not running away or attacking. He’s not even paying attention to us.”

“I’m sure, I’m sure. Let’s get him.”

“I think you must be mistaken. If that was him, he’d be attacking us, or at least on high alert to see us here.”

“If we don’t attack him soon, he’s going to attack us. Come on!”

“He’s very nonchalant. Can that be faked?”

“I’m telling you, it’s a ruse. He’s going to get us.”

“No he’s not, he’s just sitting there.”

When you step into the cultivated courtyard of the Art Gallery of Burlington, you won’t be alone; you’ll find yourself immersed in the world of Mary Philpott’s creatures of clay. Nestled in the shade of a bush or sprawling in the sun, they are life-size and life-like with a touch of whimsy, and will make you feel like you’ve encountered storybook characters of the speaking variety; crows, dogs, and hares with lives of their own. Tucked into nooks in their habitat, they are none





Heart pounding, he presses up against the tree and listens. Curious, she braces against the bark to investigate.

of them posing, but caught in a candid moment, going about their business. For lovers of sculpture, lovers of gardens, and lovers of untold tales and imagined worlds, each form is the launch point of a tale yet to tell in infinite variety.

Mary Philpott has been teaching and exhibiting her work since 1997 and specializes in ceramic tile –

“Not just tile, tiles with tales.”

“And tails. Lots of different kinds of tails.”

Mary captures the essence of the flora and fauna that surrounds her and adds a dash of history, an influence of architecture, a touch of tapestry, transforming them into characters with a time and a space of their own. *A Murder of Crows* –

“I like that, Murder of Crows.”

“It’s nothing new. We’ve always been called that. Take the credit where you can get it, I say. It’s good for our reputations.”

- features sculptures with a red clay base and a variety of finishes that look weather worn

“Did she just call me weatherworn?”

“You are weatherworn.”

“No I’m not, I’m robust. And menacing. I’m robust and menacing.”

“And talkative.”

-and belie the depth of energy and personality emanating from each creature.

“Yeah, personality. I like that.”

In the lexicon of bird gatherings, crows don’t flock, they murder. And so this installation presents a murder of crows and a few of their companions.

“Companions? Does she think that dog is our companion?”

“Yep. And I’d give five to one that rabbit could take you if it didn’t run away.”

In a somewhat different world also based in red clay we find *Radiance in Uncontrollable Worlds*. Housed in the Perry Gallery at the AGB, this multi-media exhibit features sculpture, poetry, and video. Originally intended to be part of a stop-motion video, many of the sculptures are in sets illustrating a continuity of movement. In this case the fantastical creatures are each caught in an orgy of emotion and movement from the languid to the lurid, ascending or plummeting, embracing and devouring. I am at once embarrassed to be a voyeur in among these intense scenes, while at the same time leaning in for a closer look. It is as if I stepped into someone else’s drama, and I have a visceral reaction, that changes as I learn more, and changes again.

Heart pounding,

He presses up against the tree, and listens.

Alarmed

she hears his pulse



They believed in the possibility of everything, even the broken heart of someone else.



They melted together and she wonders why, why can I not recall myself?



Cancerous mounds and pits come forth, she hangs on towards a mass grave.

*throughout
the chambers of her home.
Curious,
curious to know what exists
beyond the love of her nest
she braces against the bark to investigate
she feels the strength,
of her up-bringing.*

After a wander through the russet renderings I read the words up on the wall and search the sculptures again, for a beginning; a middle; an end. I find Him, listening from without, and Her, listening from within, and I realize that in this case, the tale is indeed told.

Once I latch on to this realization that the poetry and the sculpture are linked more directly than I thought, I am compelled to follow the story from start to finish. I wander forth and back, and in and around, following a glorious but tragic tale.

There is a video installation paying homage to the original intention, in still motion rather than stop motion. We get a sense of sweeping in and around the moments, suspended in an otherworldly void.

There is a glimpse, of something sweet through the sunless perhaps.

Jordan MacLachlan's *Radiance in Uncontrollable Worlds* is a story caught in stasis. Were it not, I feel certain it would be lived out over and over, the characters continually making the same choices, compelled by curiosity and desire. Were it set in amongst *Murder of Crows*, I can already hear the play-by-play, perhaps even heckling, as the crows check in now and then to see what they've missed, to see if anything has changed.

*Can we try again tomorrow
wake up in the morning,
start over?*

FUSION MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHT
FEATURED EMERGING ARTIST

Marcelina Salazar

The notion of creating handmade pieces that acquire their full meaning only when used by others is central to my explorations with clay. I truly believe that using handmade objects in our daily lives fills us with a sense of connection and an awareness of beauty. I aim to create objects that slip quietly into the dynamics of home-life.

I make objects with a strong sense of function and simplicity of form. I favour pieces that are glazed simply with minimal decoration. Soda-firing is a great complement to this aesthetic aspiration, with its soft lines and nuanced textures. The outer surface of my work is entirely the result of the firing process. The inside is glazed, but the outside is naked porcelain that becomes 'glazed' by the combined action of the wood-flame and a soda mix added at top temperature. The surfaces are consistently rich and dynamic, yet there is variation from firing to firing, and within each kiln load. I love this relationship between firing and surface results, it feels like I'm painting with fire.



Just wanting to know what it feels like, twisting and turning towards the all night party.

*Are there impatient souls
sprouting shoots just now,
scattered throughout these bodies?
Avenge all by making something
beautiful.
Even just
a wave
breaking over a foot-print.*

Radiance in Uncontrollable Worlds, Jordan MacLachlan, June 11 – September 8, 2016, AGB

A Murder of Crows, Mary Philpott, June 11 – September 25, 2016, AGB

Jordan MacLachlan's work was filmed as a stop motion short, which can be viewed here. <https://youtu.be/R51Ngwg2Rzw>

CARVED IN STONE

For more detailed listings, visit www.clayandglass.on.ca

**To September 4
Outside In**

Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery
25 Caroline Street North, Waterloo, ON

**To September 5
Jordan Maclachlan:
Radiance in Uncontrollable Worlds**

Art Gallery of Burlington
1333 Lakeshore Road, Burlington, ON

**To September 5
Powder and Patches: Porcelain for
the Boudoir in 18th Century Europe**

Gardiner Museum,
111 Queen's Park, Toronto, ON

**To September 5
Gifted: Summer Art and Gift Show**

Blue Mountain Foundation for the Arts
163 Hurontario Street, Collingwood, ON

**To September 10
A Matter of Clay IV**

Jonathon Bancroft-Snell Gallery
258 Dundas Street, London, ON

**To September 10
Women Who Wood**

Jonathon Bancroft Snell Gallery
258 Dundas Street, London, ON

**September 10
Image Transfer on Clay with
Chris Snedden**

Kawartha Potters Guild
kawarthpottersguild.com/workshops/ for
more information

**To September 18
Abandoned Intentions by
Marissa Y. Alexander**

Harbourfront Centre
235 Queens Quay West, Toronto, ON

**September 22
Celia Brandao -
Historical Award Winning Works**

Jonathon Bancroft Snell Gallery
258 Dundas Street, London, ON

**September 24
Collingwood Art Crawl**

go to collingwoodartcrawl.com for more
information

**To January 2
CHIHULY at the
Royal Ontario Museum**

100 Queen's Park, Toronto, ON

**To September 25
Mary Philpott:
Murder of Crows**

Art Gallery of Burlington
1333 Lakeshore Road, Burlington, ON

**September 28
Reinventing Ceramics:
New Paradigms for Clay in
Art with Garth Clark**

Wednesday September 28, 6:30 pm
Gardiner Museum
111 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario

**October 13 to January 8
True Nordic: How Scandinavia
Influenced Design in Canada**

Gardiner Museum
111 Queen's Park, Toronto, ON

**October 14 to November 6
Toronto Potters 19th
Biennial Juried Exhibition**

Gardiner Museum Shop
111 Queen's Park, Toronto, ON

**November 3 to November 12
London Potters Guild
Biennial Exhibition**

664 Dundas Street, London, ON

**November 17 to 20
Pine Tree Potters' Guild
Fall Show and Sale**

Aurora Cultural Centre
22 Church Street, Aurora, ON

**November 18 to 20
Ottawa Guild of Potters Fall Sale**

Landsdowne Park Horticulture Building
450 Queen Elizabeth Driveway, Ottawa, ON

**November 19 to 20
London Potters Guild Fall Sale**

1250 Dundas Street, London, ON

**November 25 to 27
Kawartha Potters Guild 21st
Annual Show and Sale**

Peterborough Lions Community Centre
347 Burnham Street, Peterborough, ON

**Ongoing
Quebec - A Different Drummer**

Art Gallery of Burlington
1333 Lakeshore Road, Burlington, ON



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Helen Rudin at
helenrudin@gmail.com.
The deadline for the next
issue is **Oct. 15, 2016.**

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FUSION CONFERENCE 2016

Best ever, hands down



Mr Jo and his wife at the Gardiner.



Mr Kim's vase at the Gardiner.

By Irene Laurie
Photographs by Judy Dean and Irene Laurie

I'm embarrassed to admit how many times I've watched the video of the Five Korean Master Potters. (You can see it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDmBtNrC5Lc>) Many pottery teachers and friends had told me that FUSION Conferences are terrific, and then I heard that the Fab Five from Korea were the stars this year — I couldn't get my ticket fast enough. As I waited, I wondered if the reality could live up to the beautifully produced video.

At the opening reception in the Gardiner Museum's lovely Terrace Room, we were treated to a demonstration of Mr. Lee's outstanding throwing. Using more than 20 pounds of clay, he quickly and easily threw huge, flawless pots. Although the quickest of the five to laugh or clown, he is able to concentrate like any world class athlete. The room was packed as everyone tried to get a closer look and many of the older people were vying for the few chairs and benches so they wouldn't have to leave.

Saturday morning, imagine our delight as we 270 potters seated ourselves at tables in the conference room and found tool pouches with handmade tools—all made by the five masters. It got better. In a cake box, each of us found four leather hard pieces on which we could try out each of the techniques as it was demonstrated—thank you to all the volunteers who threw, trimmed and slipped all this ware, including Chris Snedden, who also did a terrific job emceeing.

This hands-on approach to the conference was Tony Clennell's idea and here's why it was brilliant. It's educationally sound to have people engage in active learning. Watching a demonstration is good. Now, imagine how many more areas of the brain light up when people are holding a pot and a tool and trying to imitate the demonstrator. Not only do we learn better this way, but we also get a visceral as well as mental appreciation for the work of the masters whom we're watching. Add to that, these demonstrators speak very little English, necessitating translation of



Mr Lee on his rounds.



The reveal.

everything they said. Using our tools on the clay to understand, largely bypassed the need for in-depth verbal explanations.

Our hands-on understanding was enhanced by having the rest of the masters and their wives circulate to provide assistance. I'm sure this was one of the reasons that I heard over and over from attendees that this conference was the best ever. The presenters and their wives were accessible during the entire weekend. This would not have been possible with the usual two presenters. Imagine them even trying! Presenters usually speak English, so they would have been at each table much longer fielding questions never getting around the room. The Koreans' interactions were, of necessity, much shorter with liberal use of pantomime and no digressions from the technique at hand.

The techniques included using the stamps in our toolkits to make impressions which were then painted over with red



One potter's interpretation of the exercises.

slip. As a third generation potter, Mr. Yu, demonstrated on a huge bowl, while we practiced on small plates. The next day—for those who could wait—when the slip was dry, we could use some of the tools to scrape the slip off the flat parts leaving slip in the stamped patterns. It was delightful to wander around the room and see the variety of interpretations that people brought to all the exercises.

Another technique was simplified by Mr. Jo showing us a slide of, line by line, how to draw a stork. On a coaster that had been covered with white slip, we copied Mr. Jo, outlining our drawings then, scraping the slip away from the negative areas leaving our sketches. Using *Punch'ng* (you might know this as *mishima*) he demonstrated inlaying the finer lines in dark slip.

Mr. Choi then demonstrated two of his signature techniques, three-dimensional sculpturing and piercing. As he outlined, then pierced to create the flowers and leaves on



Mr Choi demonstrating 3D sculpture.



Another interpretation.

his pot, he explained the cultural significance of the images he used. Some of us attempted to emulate his complex design, but many of us went our own way. I found that even sketching his complicated floral design was impossible. This gave me a greater appreciation of his depth of understanding of the forms.

Mr. Kim, another third generation potter, demonstrated his five layer slip design. When Mr. Kim spoke it was a very soft, rolling Korean, reminiscent of Alan Rickman's dulcet tones. Meanwhile we took out our small bowls which had multiple layers of slip in four different colours. He showed us how to sketch our images and then, by varying the pressure of our scraping, to reveal multiple colours. As Mr. Lee did a final throwing demonstration, Mr. Kim focussed on finishing the work on his large bowl so that it would be available at the end of the session. Meanwhile, much to our amusement, the three others jumped in to help centre a



Mr. Yu's vase.



Mr. Jo's beautiful work.

huge chunk of clay that Mr. Lee was demonstrating with.

To be a master potter in Korea involves a creative individual spending years to learn the skills, knowledge and history of this art. But beyond that, the person must teach and be an ambassador for ceramics. Like the luster of fine furniture, these five have great depth which shows in their work and in their faces as they are working.

So, how did the reality live up to the video? One appeal of the video is in the faces of the potters. There is a meditative quality to potting—the quiet feeling when a piece becomes centered, or when a master potter is completely focused on creating beauty. This was splendid to watch in real life, with no cuts or edits. Seeing, live, these men of finely honed talent, was unforgettable. Watching the video again, tears sprang up in my eyes from the powerful memories of seeing the five masters in person.