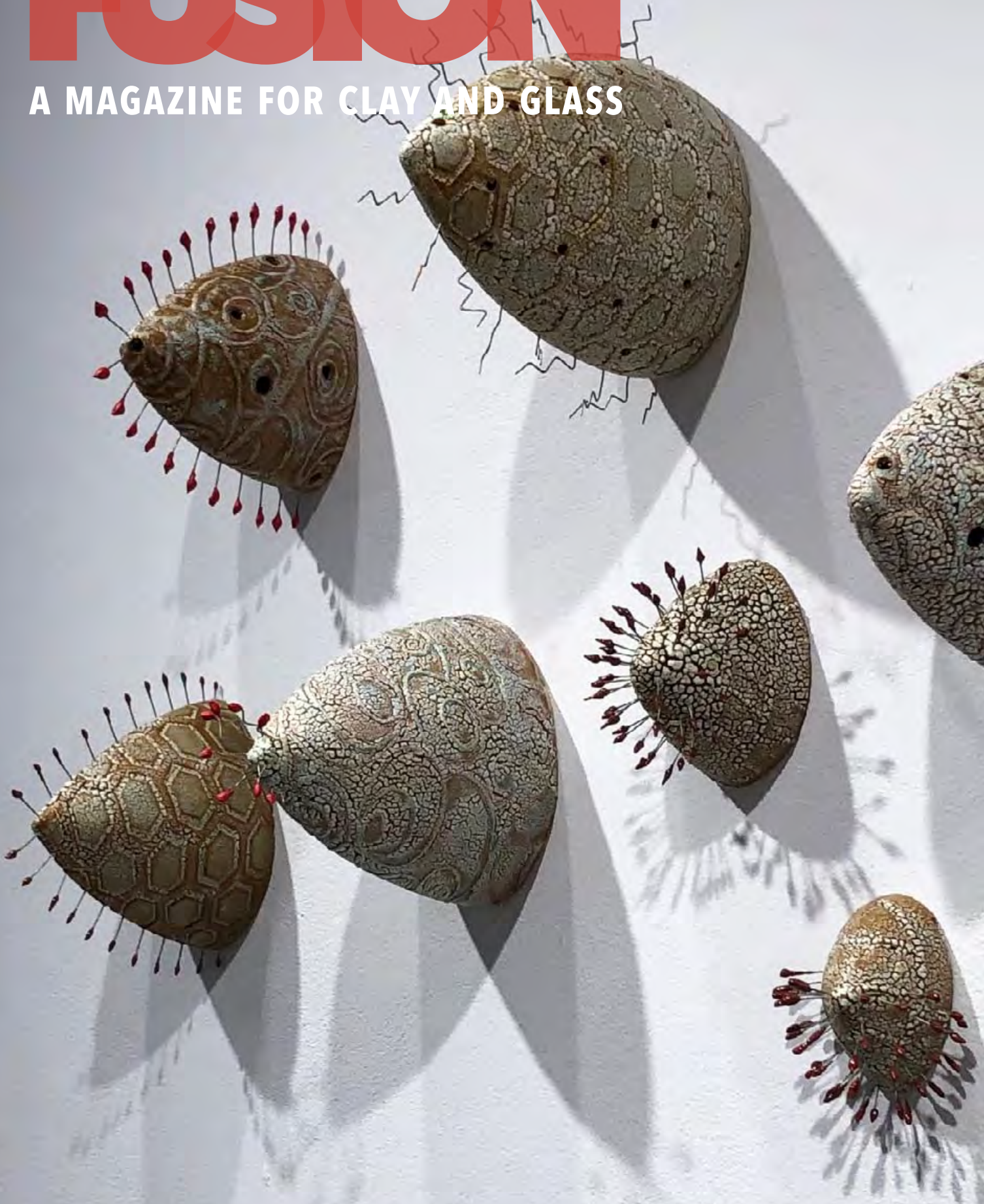


Volume 46 Number 1 | Summer 2022

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A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS



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FUSION

A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS

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ON THE COVER

The cover image is work by Darlene Pratt who participated in the most recent Creative Directions program led by Lesley McInally.

Darlene Pratt, *Ova Papilio*, various sizes ranging from H: 22 cm X W: 20 cm to H: 8 cm X W: 9 cm. Cone 6 Dark Mid-Cal stoneware, double-walled slump mold construction, textured and overlaid with coloured slips and underglazes, nichrome wire inserts dipped in clay, Snowflake overglaze. Image by Lesley McInally.



Message from FUSION's President

Dear FUSION Members,

We did it! It was a busy few months! Together we launched the conference as well as a beautiful Breakthrough PLUS exhibition with ceramic and glass artists from all levels. There were amazing entries and the work is stellar: well done!

A big shout out for John Gagné, our juror, conference speaker and gallerist this year: he has helped us out so much and was always most cheerful and positive. Thank you to all the volunteers working at the conference including Ann Allen, Paul Stewart, Dana Dallal, Annie McDonald, Joy Eliuk, Maggie Hesketh and Salina Szcetman. Thank you to Gay Longo for providing delicious food that lasted us throughout the three days, to Mayco and Spectrum for donating gift bags and underglaze prizes, to our conference sponsor Jenny Rushforth from Desjardins Insurance (your goody bags were such a nice touch and your generosity made it possible for us to have a first ever sponsored student rate) and, of course a huge thank you to PSH and Tucker's Pottery Supply for participating as vendors and supporting the conference generously with gift bags, gift certificates and many door prizes that were raffled off throughout the day.

Congratulations also to the Breakthrough PLUS and FUSION Award winners that were announced at the conference. Read more about them in this issue of the magazine.

The culminating exhibition of the Creative Directions program "Gaining Ground", led by Lesley McInally, was exhibited at the SATELLiTE Project Space in London, Ontario this past May. While I was a participant in the program, I was amazed by the diversity of the work that was produced after we all shared in the same workshops. Keep your ears tuned for the next Creative Directions program with John Britt - it's in the works for October! A huge thank you to Silvana Michetti and Barb Banfield who led this program through the pandemic, and, of course, thank you to Lesley McInally for her leadership.

A big thank you to Dana Dallal who took on the Grad Newsletter with incredible energy. Dana is a Sheridan ceramic student who will be joining the

FUSION board in September. [The Grad Newsletter](#) features Ontario's Clay and Glass Graduates and is linked in this issue.

Our annual AGM will be held by Zoom on September 21, 2022. Please save the date and participate. We are also starting to plan The Clay and Glass Show - and a party the weekend of November 18-20, 2022. It will be held at Artscape Wychwood Barns.

A new law for Canadian not-for-profit charities (ONCA) was released and FUSION will be changing several by-laws to ensure compliance. We will also do our best to help translate these legal changes to our member guilds in a Zoom meeting later this year and assist with advice. If your guild is not a member, please sign up for FUSION Membership to take advantage of this offer. We currently have 12 member-guilds across Ontario.

The FUSION membership cycle is being transitioned to a common April 1 start date for simplified fiscal accounting and budget reasons. Please bear with us as this transition may have some hiccups along the way but will benefit the organization in the long run.

A FUSION program makeover is also in the wings - we are looking at refreshing some programs and starting new ones. We are always open to ideas on how we can better meet the needs of FUSION members so please share your thoughts with us. Please also watch your inbox for a postable FUSION Member sticker that you can add to your website and/or social media. FUSION bumper stickers will also be available for purchase as are FUSION T-Shirts.

If you have a special skill or would just like to help out, we are looking for people to help with website maintenance, advertising, graphic design, fundraising, membership, outreach and organizing events. From personal experience, I can tell you that it is incredibly fulfilling to work with such an inspired group of people on the project called FUSION.

As always, we welcome your input and suggestions, please drop us a note! Tag [#fusionclayglass](#) on social media and remember that we re-post messages and announcements from members if you ask us.

Thank you to the FUSION Board Members who work so hard behind the scenes.

Enjoy reading!
Catharina Goldnau

Conference 2022

Cross-Cultural Reflections with Julie Moon and Joon Hee Kim



FUSION's Annual Conference was back this year and the feedback was simply wonderful. Thank you to everyone who attended from guilds, schools and studios from across Ontario - and as far away as British Columbia. Located in Toronto's Todmorden Mills, an historic site located a stone's throw from the popular Brickworks, the setting could not have been more ideal to talk about clay.

Included in the weekend was a kick-off party on Friday night followed by two days of presentations and demonstrations by Julie Moon and Joon Hee Kim. The Raffle and Mug Sale raised over \$1500 and we are grateful for those who donated their time and work. FUSION Conferences are run by volunteers and we could not have done it without all of you - thank you!

The *Breakthrough PLUS* Gallery Hop on Saturday night allowed conference delegates to take in the work of the artists exhibiting their work at Gagné Contemporary and Leslie Grove Gallery. Juried by John Gagné, the work represented an amazing cross-section of clay and glass featuring work from FUSION members from across Ontario and Canada. You can read more about the exhibition in the magazine.

Thank you to Jenny Rushforth, Desjardins Insurance Agent for her sponsorship of the conference and subsidizing the student rate to help support new makers.

Longo's donated food for the opening night kick-off party and we all enjoyed treats throughout the weekend.

Tucker's and PSH are always so amazingly supportive and we all are very appreciative of

Thank you to the artists for donating work to the Raffle	Angelo Di Petta	Leta Cormier	Lesley Mcinally
Barbara Banfield	Minna Koistinen	Karen Franzen	Danielle Skentzos
Scott Barnim	Alison Brannen	Tony Clennell	Paulus Tjiang
	Keith Campbell	Mary Joubin	Catherine Thomas
	Bruce Cochrane	Catharina Goldnau	Donn Zver



your outreach to the ceramic community.

Thank you to a new sponsor to FUSION, **Fundview**, for your generous support.

Plans are already in the works for future events and how we can all come together and build connections.

Enjoy photos from this past conference [here](#)





Breakthrough PLUS

May 19 – June 5, 2022

Featuring work of FUSION members at all career stages, there were a record number of submissions for this year's juried exhibition. Displayed at two locations: Gagné Contemporary and Leslie Grove Gallery in Toronto's east end, the show represents the amazing diversity of clay and glass artists.

Tour the exhibition with Barb Lewis at Leslie Grove Gallery on FUSION's *FACES of FUSION* [here](#)

BREAKTHROUGH
CLAY AND GLASS **PLUS**

Congratulations to the Breakthrough PLUS Award winners

Tucker's Pottery Supply Best in Clay: \$500 Gift Certificate - **Alana Marcoccia**

Pottery Supply House Best in Glass: \$500 Gift Certificate - **Francis Muscat**

Best in Show for Emerging Artists: \$250 - **Taeyouk Yeo**

Best in Show for Established Artists: \$500 - **Lesley Mcinally**

Craft Ontario Affiliate Award: 1 year Craft Ontario Professional Membership - **Carol Grant**

FUSION Membership: 1 year Individual Membership - **Silvia Tagusagawa**



Alana Marcoccia



Francis Muscat



Lesley Mcinally



Silvia Tagusagawa



Taeyouk Yeo



Carol Grant



Informational text on the wall, partially obscured.

Mark Campbell
Mark is a graduate of Trent University School of Design and has applied his skills in glass and ceramics. Mark has worked at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and the University of Waterloo. He is currently a graduate student at the University of Waterloo.



ARTISTS

Alana Marcoccia
Alison Brannen
Alyson Chasse
Arlene Kushnir
Carol Grant
Catharina Goldnau
Dana Dallal
Danielle Skentzos
Debra Sloan
Francis Muscat
Gabriela Wilson
Jacquie Blondin
Jason Schiedel
Jocelyn Jenkins
Joon Hee Kim
Karen Franzen
Kathy Kranias
Keith Campbell
Lesley McInally
Lisa Gwen Robbins
Lynn Glover
Marlene Kawalez
Michael James Polubiec
Monica Rosenthal
Nurielle Stern
Salina Szechtman
Sami Tsang
Silvia Tagusagawa
Stephen Hawes
Taeyouk Yeo
Victoria Guy
Zara Gardner

John Gagné / Juror's Statement

It's an honor to have been asked to jury the show this year. I found looking at the entries for the first time VERY exciting - the impressions and vitality and surprises are fresh! Particularly this year, after so many of us have been under wraps for too long, the exuberance and material force of many of the pieces are so gratifying. As are the quieter, gentler works. There's a notion that society gets the art it deserves. I believe that's true here in the best sense. The work in *Breakthrough PLUS 2022* feels necessary.

I would like to extend my thanks to the participating artists, and acknowledge the courage, expertise, and spirited emotions that lead anyone to make work (not easy) and submit that work for peer review (definitely not easy). I have the utmost respect for artists, staring down oblivion, staring down a thousand decisions and frankly walking a tightrope most people aren't aware of. There are rules for any practice, and of course there are no rules. How does an artist find their way?

I can tell you that as an art dealer I respond first and foremost to conviction - the palpable sense that the artist believes in their work and makes decisions that may seem courageous or silly or mysterious to us, but are clearly vital to the artist's project. That gets my attention. Technical skill also gets my attention - which doesn't mean finesse necessarily. I look for a calibration of intent, ability, execution and finish. Finally there's an element of "yes" that I'm attuned to, whatever the piece, whatever the practice. Difficult to explain but really the first impression that arrives - call it harmony, integrity, the sense that it's a surprise and it's familiar all at once.

Thank you to the artists. And thank you to the intrepid organizers of FUSION's *Breakthrough PLUS 2022*.



John Gagné, Juror

Gagné Contemporary works with artists across Toronto, Canada and New York City, USA. Part of an art advisory that includes gallery shows, studio visits, artist representation and a curatorial practice.

What began in NYC as a side hustle - leading art walks through Lower East Side and Chelsea galleries, volunteering with Brooklyn arts organizations, conducting studio visits with artists and collectors - soon became THE hustle and a fully viable business. Warmly embraced by the arts community, I began curating exhibitions in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

Returning to Toronto in 2020, I established Gagné Contemporary in a former stable in the Leslieville neighbourhood where I've been presenting solo and group shows. I also manage two websites that allow me to sell and ship artwork internationally, as well as support the gallery shows.

AWARDS and SCHOLARSHIPS 2022

This past spring, FUSION launched an Awards Program with over \$8000 available to clay and glass artists at all career stages. FUSION also gave awards to Sheridan's graduating class for their accomplishments. While the awards program is a benefit of FUSION membership, the scholarships that FUSION funds are open to all clay and glass artists.

Thank you to the commitment of the Awards Jury for their selections: Brenda Nieves, Donn Zver, Bruce Cochrane, Judy Donaldson and Siobhan Lynch.

Awards Jury Statement

FUSION has generously developed a new vision for their awards and scholarship program. The criteria for these awards and scholarships were designed with a broad brush so that everyone has opportunities and can contribute and challenge themselves with the new work they present.

Our 5 committee members from varied backgrounds, perspectives, skills and styles were excited to participate in this adjudication. We reviewed all the submissions independently and applied a common evaluation to each, then participated in a virtual meeting. We are pleased to advise that our decision represents a consensus of all committee members.

We congratulate all the potters and glass artists for the effort and passion evident in the work they submitted, and to acknowledge the excellence in presentation, execution and artistic expression. We are optimistic that, going forward, this awards and scholarship program will continue to create opportunities, develop skills and challenge artists to new goals.



The Mary Lou Gilchrist Award for Clay and Glass Artists: \$2000 to JANE GARCIA

My work has typically been described as precise. However, in 2019 I underwent eye surgery, which left me with greatly reduced vision. For months I couldn't see well enough to produce the careful details I had become good at, and I had to find a new way to work.

The idea for a series of archangels fallen to earth, experiencing various reactions of shock, grief, pain and failure, had been nagging at me since the death of my youngest son in 2009. I had resisted immersing myself in this difficult subject for the weeks it would take to complete a single piece, but, with my mallet and miserable attitude, I pushed that clay around for hours, thinking about my son - his last minutes, what he must have gone through, what he felt, what he thought, what he is thinking now.

I almost absent-mindedly produced the

hulk of what would be my first Fallen Angel, and once I had it, I stopped and left it in its crude and unfinished form. Then I added heavily textured wonderful wings for contrast. I really loved that first sculpture, and feedback for it was good. I remember the exact second I engaged with the work and the energy it gave me. I believe the reduction in my vision provided me with a physical challenge that balanced the emotional challenge which I was unable to work through before.

Everybody says that clay is therapeutic, so I needn't say it again. This series is my tribute to love. With each new piece, I still feel the difficulty of the subject, but I embrace the process, the peace it brings and the individuality of each character.

**FUSION Award for Clay or Glass New Generation Artists:
\$500 to SAMI TSANG**

Growing up as the youngest child of a conservative Hong Kong family, my voice was not welcomed. The ability to speak faded away. Age 12, I moved back to Canada, where a series of traumatic events came about due to the constant flux amidst two cultures - Chinese and Western.

At 20, I began to resist my traditional role. Every day, I process my progress. I gather stories of domestic encounters and private narratives. Simultaneously, I find relationships between these stories and the materials I use in my practice, such as resin, rice paper and ballpoint pen. I ask, "Is clay actually the old grump? Does making humorous sculptures help me strip down guilt? Can using a ballpoint pen bring back innocence?" In Chinese culture, it is forbidden to speak of family shame. My ultimate goal is to face this heavy-hearted matter head-on. When my heart allows, I convert these stories using cartoonish-like gestures and straightforward imagery to help make the memories bearable and reveal the raw emotional experiences we



all share. Over time, I hope the sweet anticipation for mooncake parties will become fruitful.

\$500 to ZIHAO XIONG

My works focused on the research of materials and identity. I found the past might limit us, as we often define our identity with limited experience and knowledge from the past. Same as how we learn. When we try to interpret new things and concepts, we describe them in terms of what is known. Creating a connection to the past is the way we learn. We build a boundary while we define things. We confine ourselves to past experiences while defining what is new.



**FUSION Award for Clay or Glass Artists:
\$1000 to HEIDI MCKENZIE**

My studio practice engages issues of identity and belonging and is informed by my IndoTrinidadian/Irish-American hybrid identity. Through abstract portraiture, I capture self, an individual, or a culture. I began incorporating photographic imagery on clay in 2014 to viscerally depict the fragmentation of the body, and have moved on to explore image as archive.

Recent work speaks to my personal histories through archival imagery coupled with abstract representation.



FUSION Award for Arts Educators and Administrators: \$500 to PAUL STEWART

In my role as a teacher/arts educator I have introduced clay to thousands of people. As an administrator I have helped introduce the joy of working with clay to many thousands more. I derive a great deal of satisfaction knowing that so many have been introduced to clay.

**FUSION Volunteer of the Year Award:
BARBARA BANFIELD**

Barb Banfield is the creator of the Creative Directions and Mentorship program at FUSION and served for many years as a FUSION board member. Her dedication to the ceramics community has been significant and we have much to thank her for.



FUSION Scholarships for Continuing Education: 2 scholarships at \$500 each

AMY BELL

I have been accepted to participate in “Deep Dish Ceramics” with Walter Ostrom, CM, and Mat Karas at the Lunenburg School for the Arts (LSA) in July 2022. It is a two week, intensive workshop that will focus on art, design, science and technology and will allow me to explore glaze surface techniques including incorporating digital technologies. It is a particularly special and rewarding learning opportunity to be in a small class setting for two weeks, with lectures, hands-on work and critiques. As a ceramic artist without a Fine Arts degree, it is rare to be able to get expert critique of my work.



STEFANIE SMITH



I am seeking support to return for my final semester in the Masters in Ceramics & Maker, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff Wales UK program. This program is a 3 semester post graduate degree which I have chosen to undertake as a means of refocusing my practice from functional production work to conceptually driven sculpture.

Having ten years experience as a full time production potter, I now feel as though I want to push my skills further, and also feel as though I now have the confidence to express more complex ideas than previously felt possible. The support of the program's advisory team, dialogues with my fellow students, and the institution's facilities and technical staff will provide me with the tools I need to begin this new journey.

FUSION's Award recipients at Sheridan's Craft and Design program:

GLASS

FUSION Technical Achievement Award:
Sydni Weatherson

FUSION Community Involvement Award:
Heather Phillips

FUSION Award of Merit:
Zeer Liu

To see their work, click [here](#)

CERAMICS

FUSION Technical Achievement:
Emma Kip
[@kip_ceramics](#)
Click [here](#) to view Emma's work.

FUSION Community Involvement:
Mads Christianson-Walker
[@mudandcolour](#)
Click [here](#) to view Mad's work.

FUSION Award of Merit:
Yue Brook Xing
[@xingyuebrook](#)
Click [here](#) to view Yue's work.



"I plan to return to my home town and start a small studio in the countryside. Textured, rough masks will still be my working theme. I decided to fill the wall of my studio with those masks to create a personal meditation space."

- Yue Brook Xing

How are FUSION's Awards and Scholarships funded?

- Ontario Arts Endowment Fund
- Henry Goodman Awards Fund
- Scarborough Pottery Guild Fund
- Private and corporate donations
 - Personal donations through FUSION's Annual Giving campaign
- Proceeds from the Mug Sale and Raffle at FUSION's Annual Conference

If you would like to create an award or contribute to an award in 2023, please reach out at fusion@clayandglass.on.ca. Donations can also be directed online through www.clayandglass.on.ca

FUSION

A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS

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If you would like to write for FUSION, have an idea for an article, or have a comment, please contact Lucie Grys, Editor, at fusion.editor@clayandglass.on.ca

FUSION'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ZOOM

Wednesday, September 21, 2022
7 - 8 pm

More details will be sent to members.

All members in good standing are invited and eligible to vote.

SAVE THE DATE!

Clay and Glass Show,
Sale - and Party!

Artscape, Wychwood Barns
November 18-20, 2022

ESTABLISHED ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

CALL FOR ENTRY

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE
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FALL / WINTER 2022 MAGAZINE?

Deadline August 15, 2022, 5 pm.
Apply [here](#)

Emerging, 10x14x8, Glass and copper, 2020. Image: Jasmin Mori



Jennifer Kelly

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, Jennifer Kelly is an established glass artist. She creates work in her private studio, at Loretta Studios and Gallery and is a guest instructor in Canada and Europe.

How did you discover glass?

My fascination with glass dates to childhood when I admired my grandmother's collection of antique and cranberry glass. Later, in my last year of university, I took a stained glass course. That was it; I was hooked.

Where did you receive your training?

At first, I took several courses at a local Ottawa stained glass shop. That evolved into traveling to schools in the US to take courses in specialized techniques to further my interest in specific outcomes in glass. Some of the schools were Corning Studio in Corning, NY, Urban Glass in Brooklyn, NY, and Pittsburgh Glass Center, in Pittsburg.

Tell us about your recent exhibitions, shows, awards and accomplishments.

My journey has been

twisty and always interesting! I went from hobby to full time in 2013 when Cirque du Soleil commissioned me to create twelve different glass products for their boutiques internationally. This led me to a clear understanding of what I enjoy and it is not wholesale production work. I now do as much community outreach as I can often with an Ottawa mentorship program or with public art opportunities. In 2019, I was asked to teach my techniques for creating glass feathers in Bristol, UK. It was such a wonderful experience. I loved traveling to teach and hope to get back to doing that again. In 2020, I was involved with two public art installations: one at the Ottawa

Centretown Community Health Center and the other at the Ottawa General Hospital. Last summer was my first time exhibiting with the Toronto Outdoor Art Fair and showed a collection of my glass sculptures depicting dioramas of macro forest scenes. I was awarded Best in 3D at the Toronto Outdoor Art Fair for this series.

What are your inspirations as an artist?

I am inspired by sites that move my soul in some way. I love intricate details and also serene and



Image: Goodyear



Dancing for a Moment, 12x6x8, Glass, copper, 2020. Image: Jasmin Mori

peaceful forms. I may read a line from a poem or hear a lyric and it will inspire me to create a visual. With each new idea for a sculpture comes the challenge of how to create what I haven't seen before in glass. The scientific and aesthetic challenge involved with creation also inspires me.

Tell us about your process.

I would like to say that I start out with a sketch but often that doesn't happen unless I am documenting an idea for down the road. I generally dive right into step one of creating the glass form. This involves either cutting sheet glass or sifting glass powder onto a kiln shelf. Most of my sculptures go in and out of the kiln many times. This repetition is for texture, colour and to use heat and time to shape the glass or to bond it to other three dimensional glass elements. My finished piece

is often different from my initial plan as I change my mind on the aesthetic composition as I go through the journey of creating. With each step I ask myself if the sculpture is visually joyful and does it bring a sense of peace to my mood. If I am standing alone in my studio smiling while looking at the sculpture, then I know it is ready.

Describe your studio - what is your work flow like?

I moved house and studio from a rural riverfront setting into Ottawa in 2021. I am currently in an industrial building in Ottawa that is filled with clay and glass artists. My studio is surrounded by the clay studio. I have always been inspired by ceramic sculpture, so it is fun to see what the artists are up to every day. Once inside my studio, there is an explosion of stuff. Lots and lots of bits of glass



Go For It, 11x6x7, Glass and copper, 2022. Image: Jasmin Mori

set aside for future sculptures, lots of small tools (many dentistry tools!) that I use for my powder techniques, and different sizes of sheet glass. I have attempted to streamline my supplies, but there are still quite a lot of bins of materials I might need for the next project. I have taught classes in several different techniques and I run a take home glass kit business, so I have lots of supplies for students. I have downsized to three worktables, one big kiln, and three small kilns. I would love to work in an empty room but I settle for clearing off one white table when I start a project.

What are you working towards now?

This spring a large glass and steel flock of birds installation will be unveiled inside a bell tower in downtown Ottawa. Later this summer I am unveiling a miniature art gallery in collaboration with Ottawa Public Art that will



Image: Jasmin Mori

pop up in various locations in Ottawa. My love of fantastical reality continues with work on glass sculptures depicting dioramas of macro forest scenes. This summer I will be exhibiting a new collection of forest boxes at the 61st Toronto Outdoor Art Fair. In August, I have a solo exhibit at Shenkman Centre in Ottawa. The exhibit is titled "Handwritten" and is an all glass collection nostalgic for artifacts we commonly used to write on by hand.

Where do you show and sell your work?

I have gone through some changes over the last few years so have streamlined the locations that carry my work. Available pieces can be found on my website, at Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, and at the Toronto Outdoor Art Fair this summer.



Love Notes, 7x10, Glass and graphite, 2019. Image: Jasmin Mori



Handwritten, 14x12, Glass, 2019. Image: Jasmin Mori



Aspire Wings, 60x30, Glass, 2018. Image: Sarah Evans

What advice would you give an emerging artist?

That is a tough one as everyone starts out in a different place. I will approach this question from the perspective of what I wish I knew when I took the jump to professional artist: Have patience; set goals and climb the ladder, don't try to skip too many rungs on the way up. Join arts organizations; there is so much to learn from other people in the industry and you have a lot to offer. Consider having multiple revenue streams; this will ensure money will continue to trickle in from somewhere if a show gets cancelled or a pandemic wipes out your teaching business. When creating your art, make the best art you can. Raise your own bar for what you are willing to show the world and don't settle.

I have found my standards have changed dramatically since I started. I create with a museum quality standard. This ensures that the sculpture is something I can send out into the world with confidence. And finally, rejoice in your good fortune to be a creator.

[@jenniferakelly](#)



Pine Tree Potters

Pine Tree Potters' Guild (PTP) was founded in 1979 by a group of young potters who were living in northern York County (now York Region). The original members had been part of York Potters' Guild which started in 1973 and developed out of the Seneca College Ceramics program. By 1979, York Potters had grown to 55 members and with only one kiln and two wheels, it was decided that to better meet the needs of the growing membership, York Potters would split into two separate guilds. PTP remained in Aurora, and Hill Potters settled in Richmond Hill. PTP's first studio was in a derelict jailhouse on Yonge St and there was a pine tree on the property. From these humble beginnings the new guild was established.

In 2003, with help from an Ontario Trillium Grant and support from the Town of Aurora,

PTP moved to its current studio in the basement of the Aurora Public Library. Today, PTP's membership is a diverse group of individuals living and working in York Region. Some are hobby potters and others draw their livelihood from their ceramic practice. At the core of PTP is a strong commitment to education and community involvement.

PTP is a teaching guild. Its mission is to promote the ceramic arts both to its membership and to the larger community. Well established in the community for 43 years, the guild has a waiting list of people eager to join. To fulfil its mandate, the guild offers classes and workshops at the beginner, intermediate and advanced level to its membership and the public.

The guild also holds 2 annual sales which, while providing revenue to the participants,



are also vehicles for celebrating ceramics and for advancing awareness in the community of this wonderful medium. In addition to these sales, the guild has always sought opportunities to exhibit the best work of its membership. *View From the Pines*, held in 2019 at the Aurora Cultural Centre, was the most recent juried exhibition, as well as a celebration of the guild's 40th anniversary.

Pine Tree Potters is heavily involved in the community and has an extensive outreach program and has facilitated programs for Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, hosts children's clay camps each summer and offered workshops to the Able Network for adults with special needs. The guild has also supported the Queens' York Rangers, a local army reserve unit, by making donor plaques for their fundraising wall and a clay plaque of the unit's logo displayed prominently in their reception area. Another popular fundraiser inspired by

Donn Zver has been making Remembrance Day poppies as a fundraiser for the local Legion.

PTP also annually participates in Culture Days. In 2021, we held a Raku Day in Aurora Town Park where our members made over 200 bisque pieces of pottery for the public to glaze. Participants observed as the pieces were fired by members and once cooled, each person enthusiastically took a piece home.

Since 2010, the most important initiative has been the Annual Empty Bowls event. Each year, members make 500 bowls and local restaurants provide delicious soups and bread. Wine is served and guests enjoy a meal while listening to live music provided by local musicians. This is a sold-out event every year. Working with local culinary establishments and supported by other local businesses, Pine Tree Potters has raised over



\$210,000 to support marginalized communities in York Region. We are very proud of the fact that every dollar raised is given directly to the charities that we support. All expenses are covered through the support of our sponsors and our membership.

Now that we are learning to live with COVID, the guild has some exciting plans for the near future. Inspired by FUSION, Hamilton and Mississauga Guilds, PTP is hoping to develop a mentorship program. We are also looking forward to taking pottery on the road again this year for Culture Days. There are whispers of a "Great Aurora Pottery Throw Down" for our members. And of course, we look forward to hosting our Annual Empty Bowls event this November. Tickets will be available after Labour Day.

[@pinetreepottersguild](https://www.instagram.com/pinetreepottersguild)
www.pinetreepotters.ca

"Pine Tree Potters Guild is an awesome place to be! We work together, share ideas and workload. Jobs are undertaken with well-organized shift schedules. We have all the space and supplies needed and best of all, the companionship of other potters." - Jillian Lemmond

"Making pottery is my passion. Pine Tree Potters' Guild has been my home away from home for over 30 years and I have made many friends along the way. Belonging to the Guild is a joyous and continuous learning experience. I look forward to many more years of participation at Pine Tree." - Cathy Harris

"In 2017, I took my first ever pottery class at PTPG. The spark was lit, and I've been happily playing in clay ever since. The spirit of community that is fostered is both energizing and humbling. Pine Tree prioritizes community involvement by organizing charity events, and other interactions that support the people of Aurora and Newmarket in York Region." - Lisa Oliphant

"As a studio member, I enjoy the fully equipped studio with access to a wide range of equipment and materials. I've made many friendships, shared ideas, and knowledge. PTP offers excellent throwing and decorating classes with experienced and creative instructors. I have enjoyed being on the Executive for 9 years. I value that Pine Tree Potters' is exceptionally community minded. It's great to be involved with such a progressive and professional organization!" - Dave Schembri

"Pine Tree is more than just a physical space or group with a common interest; it is a collective of like-minded creatives coming together to learn, encourage, mentor, discuss and share. Even with the adversities we have faced recently, I feel like we managed to keep the connection going in the best possible way through the leadership and support of each other and for that I am extremely thankful!" - Christina Kerr

Image credits: Don McCahill, Lisa Oliphant and Dave Schembri

The article was compiled and edited by Teresa Dunlop with the help of Cathy Harris and a number of other members.





Chasing Flames

I live in Leslieville in the heart of downtown Toronto with streetcars running up and down Queen Street and hip small businesses packed together in a very urban environment. I also spend a good part of my life in the mountains of the Hudson Valley or on the edge of the Catskills, on the outskirts of forests and conservation areas. Surrounded by wilderness and coyotes, I throw wood into a kiln for up to ten hour shifts to produce my ceramic art.

Wood firing is a process I fell in love with the first time I saw those rolling, white, hot flames snaking through a pile of bricks built into a kiln. Wood firing is a force of nature and a process full of mystery and challenges, a science that I have been fascinated by since I helped build my first wood kiln in 2013.

I think of myself as the itinerant potter living out of a small, red sports bag and sleeping wherever I am lucky enough to find myself: New York, North Carolina, Connecticut, Ontario or where I find a kiln that will give the surfaces I am searching for.

Complex, rugged – anything but plain brown, with shell marks and glazes running down the surfaces mixed with ash from the burning wood.

The process uses cords and cords of wood stoked over many days of hard physical work. A firing can last up to ten days – or longer depending on the type of kiln, the number of chambers and the desired outcomes of the kiln owners. The longer the firing, the more ash is deposited on the surface of the pots as the wood is burned, a material that melts at higher temperatures to give a natural ash glaze. The temperature range in a wood kiln can reach 1260 degrees Celsius or 2300 degrees Fahrenheit, a temperature that takes a large hot coal bed and careful stoking of the kiln to reach. Many kilns are held at certain temperatures for long periods of time, referred to as a soak, to allow the ash and glazes to melt and mature. The work, often bisque fired to between cone 012 to 04, is loaded or stacked on silicon carbon shelves by height or size and each shelf is stacked on



bricks up to the height of the top of the kiln arch. Once the kiln is loaded, the door is bricked up and the kiln is sealed to keep heat in and oxygen out for a good reduction firing.

The kiln temperature is steadily increased by 50 to 100 degrees an hour by stoking wood every few minutes. The flame and uncombusted gasses travel through the kiln and heat the kiln, the kiln furniture, pots and the bricks throughout the firing. As the wood is stoked, there is a natural cycle of reduction and oxidation which creates the colours achieved in the clay bodies and glazes. Reduction is important to give the rich reduction colours of a fuel firing process. Reduction occurs when there is an oxygen

deprived environment - the opposite of an electric firing. Wood kilns are fired to anywhere from cone 9 to cone 12/13 depending what kind of results the artist is looking for. A lower cone firing can give richer clay colours but some glazes need a higher cone to mature.

The best way to learn about wood firing is to find a kiln to join. In the first couple of years, I traveled to any kiln I could find to learn about the wood firing process. I experienced both large kilns where over 800 pots were loaded and the firing went on for days with a huge flame snaking through the kiln and smaller kilns where only a few people fired. Eventually, I found my place and





the kilns that gave me the results I am drawn to. In time, you get to be part of a community and you can't wait until the next firing. I am so grateful to all the people and artists I have met along the way. I love the community. As ceramic artists, we all spend many hours alone making our work so firing in a community is a very special part of the making process.

It is always a challenge with a good amount of surprise. A wood kiln cannot be entirely controlled, with unpredictable outcomes as it is a very complex, sensitive process that can change due to fuel sources, weather conditions, stacking of the work in the kiln, types of clay bodies and glaze chemistry (sitting next to one another). As the artist you have an intention and you use your knowledge and firing skills but one firing is never the same as another and there are always challenges to solve.

This is what drives many wood fire artists. This is the work and we all love the fire.

Catherine Thomas is self-taught, an engineer by training, and has studied at many workshops and kiln firings with numerous international wood fire artists. She is always learning and challenging herself to grow, to develop as an artist and as a crew member in these fire communities. She has a studio in her house where she builds and prepares her art for the wood kilns. She then loads her work into the back of her car and sets off for a 10 hour drive to the kiln, crossing into the Hudson Valley to help Tony Moore fire his two chamber anagama/noborigama kiln recently expanded in Cold Spring New York or driving out to Valens Conservation area to fire with Emma Smith of ESCeramics in a reduction cooled firing bringing out the rich dark iron bearing clay colours. Catherine's work is available at her own shows in Leslieville, at the Gardiner Museum and at shows around Ontario. Follow her travels and see the results of the crews' efforts [@catherine.thomas28](https://twitter.com/catherine.thomas28).

To learn more about Catherine, watch her FACES of FUSION [here](#)

Creative Directions 2020-2022

New Pathways with Lesley McNally

Andrea DeKay • Andrea Vuletin • Ann Randeraad
Catharina Goldnau • Catherine Thomas • Chris Snedden
D'Andrea Bowie • Darlene Pratt • Jane Paterak • Judy Morris
Kathleen Verbeek • Naila Rahim • Scott Barnim



New Pathways was the most recent Creative Directions mentorship program led by Lesely McInally. The program culminated in a final exhibition called *Gaining Ground*, held in London, Ontario at Satellite Project Space from May 4 -14, 2022. To view the exhibition catalogue, please click [here](#).

The participating artists in Creative Directions:

Andrea DeKay	Andrea Vuletin
Ann Randeraad	Catharina Goldnau
Catherine Thomas	Chris Snedden
D'Andrea Bowie	Darlene Pratt
Jane Paterak	Judy Morris
Kathleen Verbeek	Naila Rahim
Scott Barnim	

The Mentor's Perspective

Lesley McInally

The Creative Directions program is a wonderful opportunity for clay and glass artists to embark on a personal growth journey with the support and guidance of a mentor. Titled *New Pathways*, the program introduced me to a wonderful group of thirteen students searching for a new direction.

The selected clay artists varied quite dramatically from early to mid and late career. Each participant had their own personal project, requirements and personal goals. Some of the students were searching for new techniques, others sought inspiration to create a new body of work and fresh possibilities. Some simply needed to build on their self-confidence as a clay artist whilst gaining valuable experience in critical discourse within a group environment.

As the mentor, I facilitated the course which consisted of eight meetings covering a ten month timeline to guide the group. Four sessions were hands-on where I shared my own skill sets and I demonstrated various hand-building techniques. I also introduced many ways to achieve surface effects and decoration. The remaining four sessions were focused on critiques, goal setting and finding your voice within the medium. All of these sessions took place in the inspiring



environment of The London Clay Art Centre in London, Ontario.

What better way to begin the journey and discover 'new pathways' than to go back to the basics; to let go and simply play and explore without worrying about the outcome. After all, this journey was about nurturing the beginning of new ideas, not focusing on an end result. I challenged the participants to let go of their inhibitions and relearn how to simply play with materials, colours, surfaces and form. My intention was to show the

students how to let go of their fears and step out of their comfort zones. I encouraged them to allow all preconceived end goals to dissipate and begin again with fresh eyes. Children grow and flourish through play in order to harness ideas, learn new skills and explore techniques. As adults, we forget this. It becomes a real challenge to rethink the basics from a fresh and fearless perspective while ignoring the pressures of external influences and opinions.

In the beginning, I took a risk and introduced the book *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron. I invited the group to work their way through a 12-week program which involved journaling, examining specific topics and tapping into a weekly structured creative thought process. I had hoped this experience would allow each participant to take on the insights that spoke directly to them, awaken their senses and follow their own individual journey during lockdown. It allowed the group some guided focus during an incredibly isolating time whilst opening up the possibility of delving deeper into their practice and questioning their own perspective.

It is extremely valuable to gather as a group, bond and have the opportunity to discuss ideas and view demonstrations up close. However, the ability to have in-person sessions were often disrupted by lockdowns during COVID. As a mentor, it was important for me to keep the momentum and to find a way forward. This led to regular online meetings, demonstrations and one-on-one sessions via the Internet. We often communicated and shared information and student progress through our own personal Facebook group which helped everyone to keep a sense of connection. We were able to discuss the impact of *The Artist's Way* over the course of the program and we continued to communicate this way until in person sessions were able to resume at the London Clay Art Centre.

Due to restrictions and lockdowns, our timeline altered and the program was extended by a further year in order to properly facilitate the course goals. Although there were moments of frustration with this, I believe the students benefited significantly from gaining a longer timeline during such difficult circumstances. Over a period of 20 months, it was incredible to experience each student's journey and artistic growth. With each meeting, they were able to expand and develop their ideas and skill sets. As a teacher, it was particularly rewarding to observe a light bulb moment within a student. Discussions around the endless possibilities of that new idea helped nurture further growth.

Our group gatherings often stimulated wonderful conversations, new perspectives and positive constructive critical support which energized all who attended our meetings. It was wonderful to see strengths emerge and confidence flourish within the group.

The final exhibition, *Gaining Ground*, at the Satellite Project Space Gallery in London, is an extremely important milestone for the group and a stepping stone to further their practice and careers in clay. It is an excellent way for the artists to experience completion of their time with Creative Directions. I am so proud of each and every one of them.

Thank you to FUSION for inviting me to share my skills with such a wonderful group of people. Thank you to The London Clay Art Centre for providing us with a wonderful space and thank you to all the students who persisted through what has been a very challenging two years of our lives.

You have all bloomed.
Lesley McNally

Judy Morris



Wow - what a journey this has been. The original sixteen-month commitment to Creative Directions experienced many unforeseen obstacles due to COVID. I applied to the program so I could connect with other potters and clarify my vision for moving forward. The group was able to physically meet six times with the rest of the meetings online with Zoom. I know for myself that part of the journey was getting more comfortable engaging with technology.

I started with a personal inventory and goal setting with the suggested reading of *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron.

Drop molds, stretched slabs, coiling, slab vessels, extruded forms and sculpture - I did it all. I experimented with surface marks and brushes, plus five different clay bodies. Next came layers upon layers of slip and underglazes a process that I had not used before. Staining and sanding multiple firings, Lesley laid the table and I dove in.

Going forward I have a clearer vision of

where I would like to go. The bottle forms I have been working on have been a journey in the process, exposing the vulnerability, texture, and strength of the clay. It appears to me that the bottles still are in the developmental stage hence the grouping *Standing in the Shadows*. I am now ready to step out of the shadows.

Thank you to the group for support and Lesley for always being there.

Kathleen Verbeek

This program and our instructor has had a profound impact on me. I have learned so much from exploring my feelings and what I have to say to being able to produce work that reflects those feelings. This has not always been the case where my work reflects who I am at the time I produce it. I feel this work represents who I am at this present time. It reflects the trails and journey that led me to this moment. COVID was very difficult for all of us in many ways and FUSION's Creative Directions and our instructor was able to navigate us through. I feel the biggest change in me, and my work is the fearlessness I now have as an artist. I am confident in my building, my mark making and exploration of



surface decorations. My creative work clearly reflects my newfound confidence as an artist and as an individual.

Naila Rahim



Going into Creative Directions I did not have extensive experience with pottery as I had only been practicing for a few years. I was fairly happy with my skill set and the results I was getting with my work but I understood that there were definitely areas where I would benefit from some mentorship. Aside from the occasional workshop or class, I was working in a mainly self-directed environment. I tended to stay within my comfort zone. Creative Directions forced me to learn, grow and apply new skills. It was helpful having another set of eyes looking at how I work and my results as it helped me identify areas where I could grow and improve. Creative Directions was tough at first as it was rigorous and I was looking at my work more critically than I ever had, but in the end it helped me grow as an artist and solidified my skills/styles.

Jane Paterak



This has been an incredible journey for me. In the last two years, as we navigated through the pandemic, I had time to pause and reflect on my work. At the beginning of the program, Lesley encouraged us to begin the creative process by exploring and approaching our work with a sense of play rather than focusing on the end result. She helped me to step out of my comfort zone, moving away from my functional work to explore sculptural forms. Working through the exercises in the book, *The Artist's Way*, was instrumental in awakening my senses and awareness of nature and my surroundings. Lesley inspired

us to go back to some of the basics in working with clay, coiling, hand building, working with slab, slump molds, sometimes breaking the rules and always pushing the clay to see what was possible. I had many failures along the way. With every crack and failed project, I learned something followed by many new possibilities to explore. To quote Leonard Cohen, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

The creative process does not end here. It has just begun. Thank you to Lesley and the group for their insights and encouragement. I have learned so much and am excited to continue in this journey.

Darlene Pratt



Lesley McNally is the reason I decided to apply to FUSION's Creative Directions program. I own one of her pieces and was intrigued to learn the process behind her work. I knew she was the mentor who could wake me from my 15-year creative slumber. I had previously created my own hump molds out of wood and foam board insulation but the slump mold and coloured slip mono-printing techniques we learned blew the creative door wide open for me. Each insight Lesley provided filled me with enthusiasm and an avalanche of ideas that will take me a lifetime to explore.

We were discouraged from thinking

immediately about function. The task was to explore materials and processes through playfulness and letting go. The combination of Lesley's fluid approach and my penchant to control the materials aligned well to inform the work I created during Creative Directions. Early on, we were assigned the task of creating a vision board. Using images and words, we documented our muse which acted as a guide for creative exploration over the following months.

For almost two years we moved together through this mentorship. With the protracted timeline, I was able to focus and develop my body of work through many iterations of the same basic forms, working from pure experimentation to something more focused, refined, and thematically cohesive.

With constant lockdowns and other restrictions related to the pandemic, the Creative Directions program could have fallen apart. It was our good fortune that Lesley and the volunteer team from FUSION pushed hard to keep the program moving forward. We met online to discuss our progress and watch demonstrations from Lesley. We shared our inspirations and challenges and learned from one another month by month. Gentle and enthusiastic suggestions from Lesley and other participants pushed me to think more deeply about how I could harness the materials and new techniques to embody the concepts I was wrestling to express.

Before submitting my application for Creative Directions, I truly doubted my artistic ability and had sometimes lamented not having pursued my vision of becoming an accomplished artist. There was a lingering sense of regret but a simultaneous curiosity about how my work could develop if I applied myself to it. I am very proud of the work I produced through the mentorship and feel it represents the tip of the iceberg of what I will create over the rest of my life.

In the shorter-term, I intend to extend the body of work I created and pursue further

opportunities to exhibit my work. Longer term, I am working toward fulfilling my dream of being an accomplished artist, but it will have to wait until I'm no longer consumed by the demands of my job leading operations at London Clay Art Centre.

D'Andrea Bowie

Sheltering in place, adjusting to a global crisis, my studio work throughout the pandemic focused on the technical aspects of glaze making. Creative Directions provided a community during uncertain times; an opportunity to troubleshoot practical aspects, learn new techniques from Lesley McNally and most importantly, encouragement during isolation. Science and chemistry allowed me to focus on process during a time when it was difficult to access a creative mindset. As restrictions begin to loosen, I bring new skills into my artistic practice, strengthening my ability to create a strong visual language. My current work is a continuation of investigating ways to work with the body and clay. Fragmented pieces coalesce, shaping new promise and meaning.

Chris Snedden

I can only express gratitude to FUSION and to Lesley for this opportunity. It came along for me just at the right time in my career, and



other than the contemplation I have talked about in my Artist Statement, I have taken the necessary time to explore other surface decoration techniques and use them to greater effect in my work. I feel as if my work is now invested with a greater sense of confidence and I am looking forward to exploring themes of life's landscape in the future. I can now bring a vigorous creative expression to my work that I only caught glimpses of before. A way of working that takes greater advantage of not only imagery, but also the properties of the material. This is a very exciting beginning!

Catherine Thomas

Creative Directions and Lesley McNally brought my artwork back to life. I am very grateful for both the mentorship program and for Lesley's strength and endurance during this very difficult time. In 2020, I was not able to wood fire or cross the border into the USA where I assisted with a large wood fire kiln. I had stopped producing work and stopped learning and firing with the wood fire communities as most kilns were shut down.

Lesley supported all of us to continue to work and to get back into our studios and on track to produce work again. She very generously and openly shared her incredible skill in building and decorating work. Now I am thrilled with this new direction, with the explorations of both materials and firing techniques and the skills I have acquired



which will enable me to work on a much larger scale through coiling and coil and slab building. I would like to thank Lesley McNally, FUSION and the London Clay Art Centre for their persistence, encouragement and support in this very difficult time.

Catharina Goldnau

I applied to the Creative Directions course because I heard amazing testimonials from other artists who had gone through the program before. Having been out of school for three years, I was looking for more formal direction and feedback. I am also a great fan of Lesley's work and was curious to find out more about surface techniques that I could incorporate into my own practice. We started the course with some hands-on workshops where Lesley was demonstrating various techniques, resulting in "homework" to make test tiles. It was fascinating to see how every one of the participants used the same information and did completely different things with it. When I presented the first piece I built, *Ode to Peace*, I was very inspired by the group's feedback. Someone suggested making a sister piece, *War*, and my idea started to take on shape.

I asked myself questions about the significance of war and peace, and quickly thought of other concepts that were



prominent in our value system, the pillars our Western zeitgeist was resting on. We had just overcome the era of Trump and during his time in office the idea of news and information seemed to have taken on another meaning and shifted significantly. In the era of smartphones and AI, technology was a fourth concept to pay tribute to. The last phenomenon was the realm of Myth, the non-physical belief systems guiding people's value systems, ranging from religion to political theories.

While my work here is more conceptual and differs from my usual practice, I enjoyed the process of thinking about contemporary issues, using a variety of materials and techniques.

Ann Randeraad

With heartfelt gratitude, I would like to thank FUSION's Creative Directions: *New Pathways* mentorship program and Lesley McNally for this incredible opportunity. Through Lesley's extended guidance and FUSION's support, my approach to creating with clay has literally taken on new directions. With generous mentor demonstrations, remarkable



leadership, thoughtful group discussions and peer prompts, this program has greatly broadened my approach to clay. With much appreciation and renewed energies, I am very excited about where these new skills will lead me.

Andrea Vuletin

The Creative Directions program with Lesley McNally came at the right time for me. I had already been itching for a new direction creatively and then came COVID and the subsequent shut downs and social distancing. 2020 brought a forced break in all of our lives. At first, I welcomed the pause in activity, especially because spring was on the horizon. Once it was clear the break was going to go on for some time, business was not as usual,



worry and isolation began to sneak in. Pivots were made and thankfully programs were put in place to help small businesses out. The isolation was ongoing and coupled with an erratic schedule. What I had was time to fill and an anxious mind. I could continue making work in preparation for the eventual reopening, which I did - but found I was working at a glacial pace and felt nervous and distracted. I wanted to express my feelings in my work but my usual cheerful nostalgic work was not appropriate. Along came the Creative Directions program headed by Lesley. Perfect! This was an opportunity to stretch creatively, to develop new expressive ways of working, a new visual language and to work with like-minded people.

We began with daily journaling which helped to clarify and narrow down ideas. I followed this up with a visual journal as well, sketching symbols and forms that had the potential to embody my ideas. To begin I made vessels but decided that function had little bearing and could be limited to symbolic application if at all. Form, weight, stillness and surface could represent state of mind. Lesley's demonstrations of construction and surface treatment opened new avenues of exploration. My only parameter in the beginning was not to use any of my usual techniques as tempting as it was to want to include some signature mark. The biggest challenge would be to begin with lots of experiments and then to narrow the options searching for the most effective way to express my ideas. I'm still working through that. My focus now is to examine and edit. I have difficulty keeping it simple. I will continue to refine and push and enjoy the freedom of a new direction.

The forced break was a blessing in some ways. I knew it was true but I haven't always allowed myself time to explore.

Give yourself time. The hamster wheel doesn't stop unless you do.

Scott Barnim

It has been a great opportunity to get to work with a mentor like Lesley McNally during the Creative Directions mentorship. I could not have chosen to work with someone who brought to the table such a different approach than my own.

I chose to dive into the ceramic history of the 1950's in Britain with the work of one of my idols: the British potter Lucie Rie. It was the crater glaze surfaces of the era that I wished to incorporate with Lesley's process of layering and mono-printing ceramic pigments; building surfaces of my own with colour exposed beneath the rough glaze surface. I also made a point of using my electric kiln and a mid-range temperature of cone 6. All my research these days is moving in that direction, I expect I may be of that last generation of potters to use a kiln fired with fossil fuel.

As it often goes with research, I did not arrive at the destination that I had anticipated. Research in itself is a journey into something perceived, not precise. In many ways I think that the point I arrived at was unresolved. Research can fail, it often does, however I have a new test series in mind and the work will continue.

My thanks to Lesley and FUSION for this opportunity.



Andrea DeKay

I sought to gain focus and intent in my work through the Creative Directions program. Under the mentorship of Lesley McNally, Creative Directions has afforded the opportunity to explore surface decoration in the naked raku process and to develop a body of work that is unique. I am grateful for the opportunity and plan to further develop this body of work in the future.



All images by Gene Timpany with the exception of those identified.

Darlene Pratt's work photographed by the artist.

Catharina Goldnau's work photographed by the artist.

FUSION is currently developing Creative Directions programs for 2022/2023. If you have any suggestions for work you want to explore and artists with whom you would like to learn from, please connect at fusion@clayandglass.on.ca



Image: Hannah Johnson

STUDENT MAKER

MEL WRIGHT

I am a Toronto-based artist working with clay, and a recent graduate of the Sheridan College Craft & Design program, specializing in Ceramics. My attraction to clay began when I was in the Furniture Design program at Sheridan and I took a ceramics class as an elective. During the elective, the force of human hands on clay really moved me. I made the change into the ceramics studio immediately to start working with an exciting material that I had little familiarity with.

The desire to make things with clay lives on strongly due to its malleability and its warm welcome to spontaneity. I construct and compose clay pieces that highlight contrast, arrangement, and play. Using form, scale, colour, and post-construction alterations, my work acknowledges abrupt changes in life, and how unexpected events can permanently alter people in

profound ways. I am drawn to the understanding and discovery that comes from making clay forms through a lighthearted and introspective process. Using a combination of hand-building methods, I connect directly with the clay while I am making. My hands are the gateway to following my creative impulses, which guide me in my studio practice.

My desire to focus on perception-altering events in life came from reflecting on the current state of the world around me. It became clear to me that everybody is deserving of compassion as we navigate life. Some of us have experienced things that have changed our lives completely. Many of us have lost friends, family members, or partners, in shocking and unexpected ways. These losses do not leave a physical mark on our lives that people can see or understand. They are events on an invisible timeline. To be able to make clay forms and then give the form the opportunity to show without words that it has been through something transformational is very powerful and where I find working with clay to be most expressive.

I was trained in ceramics at Sheridan College by insightful and experienced professors. Their guidance helped me find my way in the last 4 years. The faculty encouraged me to explore my ideas fully without limits. It all led to the Graduate Show at the Gardiner Museum in April 2022 where I was extremely fortunate to receive the Gardiner Museum award. The award gives me the opportunity to present new work in April 2023 with a solo

show in the Gardiner Museum lobby case. I will be approaching the work by focusing not only on the objects, but on the process that leads me to the objects. This is the way I have been approaching the clay material in the past years. This way, the objects are almost a by-product of my process. I have found this way of working to be most successful in terms of creating work that resonates with what I am trying to say. It forces me to create in a way that is aligned with my thoughts about each object.

My next chapter will include making new work for my solo show at the Gardiner Museum in April 2023. I am also very lucky to say that I have been accepted into the Harbourfront Centre as an artist-in-residence starting this summer. It is truly the perfect place for me to begin my post-graduation studio work. Going forward, I'll be focusing on scale, discovering new surfaces and new forms as I go into the next year of exploration. I am really looking forward to seeing what the year brings and I am very grateful for the opportunity to keep making things at this stage of my life.

[@_melwright_](#)

All ceramic work images by the artist



LA MERIDIANA

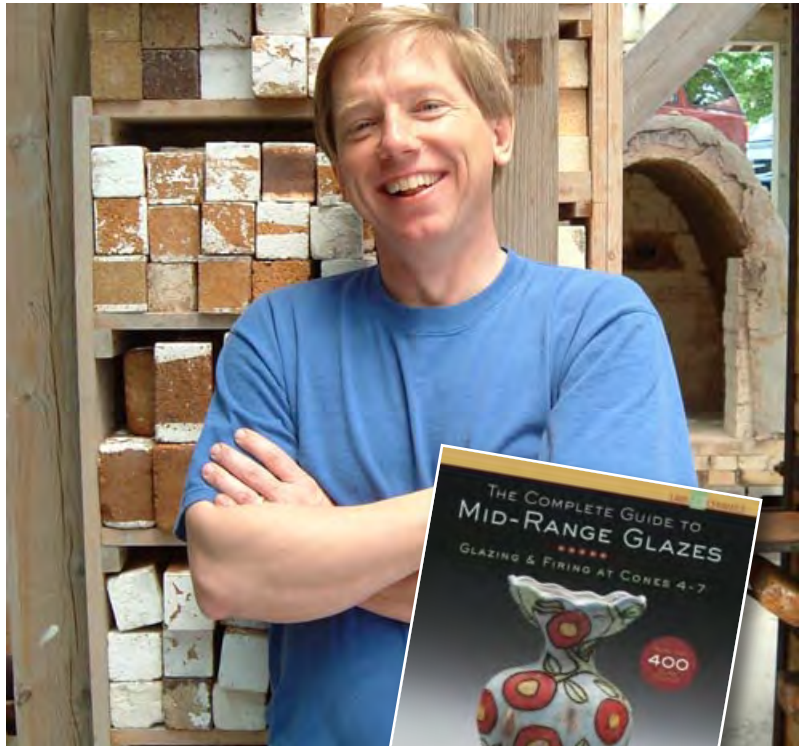
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FACES of FUSION Connect with your community!

FUSION's Catharina Goldnau connects with members every Wednesday at noon as they share their work, studio space and businesses. Come join us and see what others are creating. Can't log on at noon? The FACES of FUSION interviews are stored online and can be watched when you have some downtime. Learn more [here](#)

The most recent artists who have shared their thoughts, studios and practice include:

Minna Koistenen @minna.koistenen.90

Monica Schafer @monikapotteryfibre

Karl Burnett @thepotterygardenvi

Dawn Middleton at Tony Clennell's workshop in Portugal at The Clay Kitchen @fusionclayglass

Carole Epp @musingaboutmud

Donn Zver @donnzver

The Clay and Glass Gallery Confined exhibition tour with curator, Peter Flannery @cdnclayandglass

Heidi McKenzie @heidi_art

Amy Bell @shorebird_pottery

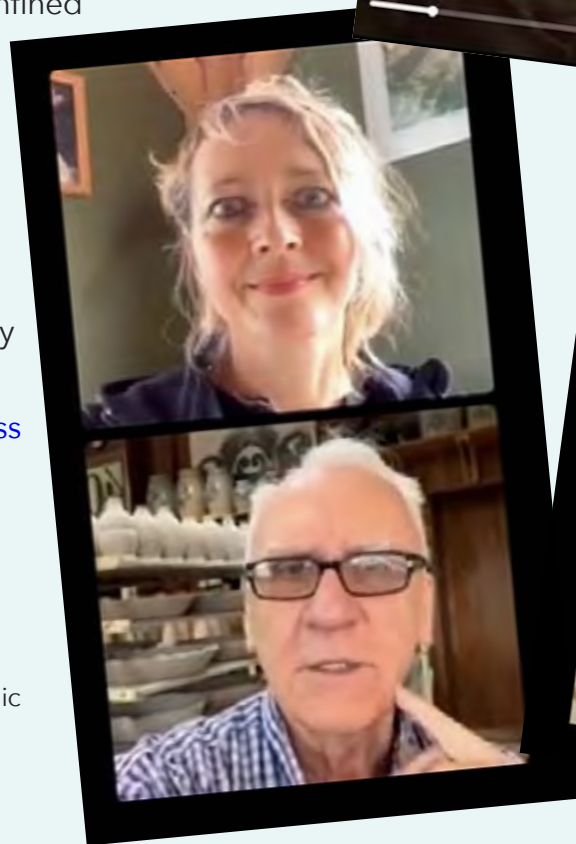
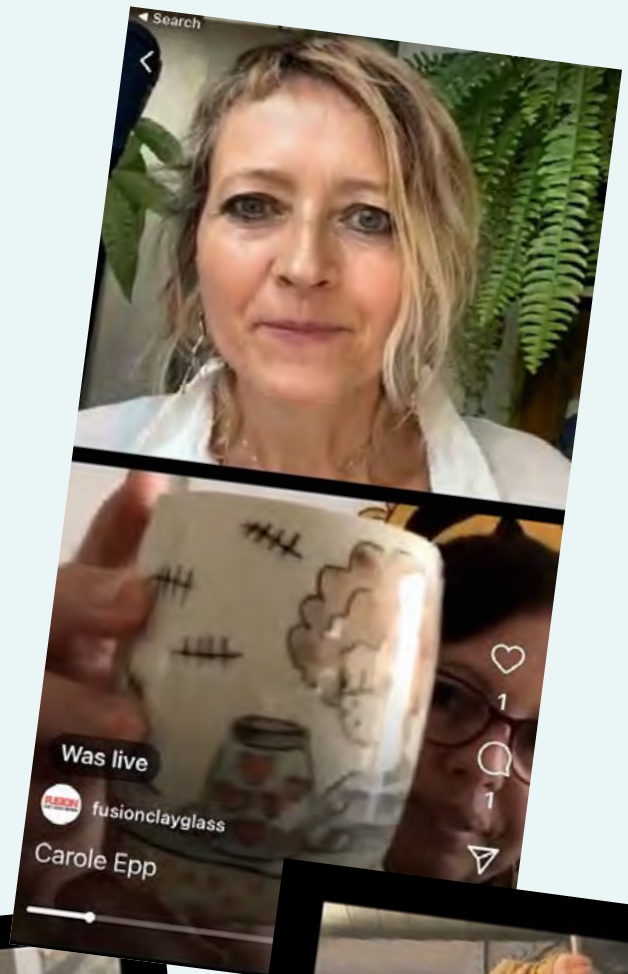
Michael Leonard at Tucker's Pottery Supply @tuckers.pottery

To see all of these fabulous interviews, visit [@fusionclayglass](#)

Carole Epp shares her work with Catharina during her interview

Donn Zver talks about his new ceramic school in Troy, Ontario.

Minna Koistenen does a live demo in her glass studio at Wychwood Barns.

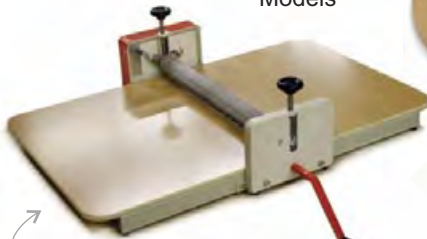




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Tips, Tricks and Hacks

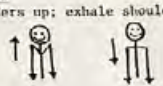
YOGA PRACTISE FOR POTTERS

#s 1 through 8 can be done sitting or standing. Standing is preferred because it allows the lower body to straighten out and there is more freedom to move.

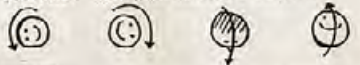
- SHAKING OUT**
Gently shake our hands; then include your forearms and finally both entire arms. Do the same with each leg-- foot first, then the whole leg; gently to begin and then more actively.
- SHOULDER ROLLS**
Slow shoulder rolls forwards and then backwards. One shoulder at a time or both together. Do 5 or more in each direction.




- SHOULDER DROPS**
Inhale shoulders up; exhale shoulders drop.




- NECK RELEASE**
Keeping your face forwards tip your head to each side, forwards and a small rip backwards. Allow your neck muscles to release, 5 seconds or longer in each position. Keep your shoulders dropped.




- ARM STRETCH**
Interlace your fingers and stretch your palms up to the ceiling, shoulders dropped. Repeat with fingers interlaced the opposite way.




- Repeat 1, 2 and 3.
- ONE ARM UP ONE ARM DOWN**
Do both sides.




- ARM WRAP**
Do both sides.



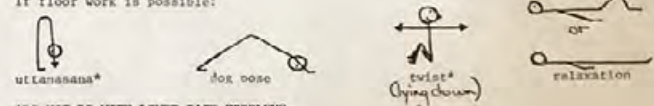
- ARMS UP THE BACK**
If possible have your hands in prayer position up your back. If that is too extreme then hold your elbows or anywhere along your forearm. Shoulders dropped.



- SEATED BACK STRETCH**
Sitting on a chair with a back first hook one arm and then the other over the chair back. Let your head float upright and keep your legs straight ahead.



If floor work is possible:



*DO NOT DO WITH LOWER BACK PROBLEMS.

FUSION Board Member, Karen Franzen, shared her warm-up exercises that have been posted on her studio fridge for many years. "It is good to do before hopping on the potter's wheel. They were created for me many years ago when I did yoga classes with Elisa Gallendar who is now retired. She apologized for her stick figures but I luv 'em!"



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MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

FUSION is moving to a one-year automatically renewing membership platform with an April 1 start date. Current renewals are prorated and we invite everyone to renew together on April 1, 2023.

Thank you for your patience during the process.
If you have any questions, please connect at fusion@clayandglass.on.ca

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PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS

EL-123 Patina and SW-165 Lavender Mist over
SW-187 Himalayan Salt fired to Cone 6 (1222°C)



MaycoColors.com

