

Guild ^{at a} Glance

South Vancouver Island Potters' Guild meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 4733 West Saanich Road, Victoria

April 13, 2015

www.victoriapotters.ca

Volume 16 Issue 8

March's Meeting – Armchair Travels

Knossos Palace is the legendary site where Theseus fought the Minotaur, Ariadne saved Theseus with her ball of string, and Daedulus, creator of the Labyrinth, built doomed Icarus's wax wings. At March's Guild meeting, Brendan Burke, associate professor and chair of Greek and Roman Studies, connected these legends with the ceramic work of Crete and Greece during the Bronze Age (3000-1100BC).

Brendon explained that what we know as the labyrinth may well have been the palace at Knossos, a massive structure with a maze of interconnecting rooms.

Another source of Bronze age pottery is the Franchthi Caves in Southern Greece.

Overlooking the Aegean, it has provided archaeologists a wealth of information. There are many reasons why Franchthi Cave is an important site; three of them are the length and period of occupation, the quality of preservation of the seed and bone artifacts, and the fact that it was excavated in modern times. It has been occupied continuously for 17 000 years and thus gives us an unparalleled view of the development of agriculture. Knowledge about the use of the olive, grapes, sheep and goats also connects to the development and use of ceramics. Many of the ceramic artifacts were used to handle agricultural products.

Evidence of the earliest work is sparse as perhaps only 10 pieces were made per year (see photo below). They were typically found in burial sites, indicating the importance of the pieces.



A child's burial might include a small marble dish and clay pot. Another site included a Neolithic tool kit for pottery work and a finely repaired bowl of lovely proportions. That it was included in a woman's grave seems to point to the social significance of the pottery.

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**Our next meeting will be
MAY 11TH 2015**

**We meet at 7:30 pm at St.
Michael's
Anglican Church
4733 West Saanich Road**

**Don't forget
the Raffle !**

Interesting work included ritual object such as male and female fertility effigies, roof tiles, ostraka, and loom weights. Brendan filled out the description with anecdotes that were informative and often humorous. The ostraka were pot sherds being repurposed as voting tablets during an ostracism...which might result in exile for 10 years! On Crete, at Knossos, the "labyrinth" of Minotaur legend actually means "the place of the double ax". In the Mycenaean language *labrys* is the word for "double axe," a sacred Minoan symbol that appears frequently in the Knossos palace. Labyrinth, then, may have originally been a name for the palace meaning "House of the Double Axe."



The final series from the historical period of 600 to 400 BC were the black and red figures on large vessels. Much of what we understand of how these pieces were developed and the different styles (hands) came to us from the work of Dr John Beazley. He specialized in [Greek decorated pottery](#) (particularly [black-figure](#) and [red-figure](#)), and became a world authority on the subject. These are particularly beautiful.

A pottery trip to Crete and Greece seemed like a wonderful idea! Brendan invited us to his "dig" in Eastern Boeotia and assured us that we would be warmly welcomed, when and if we ever make that trip.

For further information, contact Dr.Burke at:

bburke@uvic.ca

Text: Roger C. Photos: Nancy W.

Coming in May - Sales: the Public Part of Pottery

A panel of Guild members talks about display, publicity, pricing, and all those aspects of selling that bedevil us—just in time to prepare for the Guild's own annual sale in June.

Submitted by Rosemary N.

Brendan Tang Workshop – Manga Ormolu

On February 14/15 Brendan Tang gave a workshop at ArtSpring on Saltspring Island. It was put on by the Saltspring Potters Guild.

Brendan spent the weekend showing how he makes pieces from his "Manga Ormolu" series. Manga Ormolu are sculptures made of thrown and altered parts.

They look like traditional blue and white Chinese pots with robotic parts interacting with them in various ways.

While the pieces are made to look like porcelain, Brendan actually uses a low fire white (LF06 by Plainsman) and uses commercial glazes by Duncan (as well as spray paint and other mediums in the finished state).

He has done extensive research on Chinese blue and white pottery and received a Canada Council grant to travel to Japan to research robots!



MANGA ORMOLU VER. 5.0-K (2011) H 18.5" (47CM)

Sold, Rodman Hall Collection

Photo source: <http://www.brendantang.com>

He works from sketches, which he does to scale and uses directly while sculpting his forms. The photos show chronologically assembling a form - from throwing to piecing together, stretching the clay from the inside to look like folds of skin, adding clay, and then final smoothing. Serrated ribs are his favourite tools!



Text & workshop photos: Farro S.

DIG THIS: Exploring BC Clay

On Saturday, March 21 four exceptional ceramic artists from BC met at the Shadbolt Centre in Burnaby to work and create together.

An audience of about 80 was privileged to listen in to conversations between the artists, glean insights into their thought process as well as practical considerations.

Each artist demonstrated a variety of techniques, altered and combined forms in novel ways.

Two rooms were set up with two artists –one whose work is more sculptural and one whose work is more functional.

The audience was invited to move freely between rooms to watch the artists make their pieces – the natural progression of creating a piece from beginning to ready to fire.

The artists were generous answering questions and sharing tips.

And to make it even more exceptional Bob Kingsmill told the story of Axel Ebring, a pioneer potter from Vernon; (go to <http://studioceramicscanada.com/axel-ebring/> for more information).

As many of you already know, Bob is an amazing storyteller! Bob shared his collection of Axel's work.

A wonderful day, inspiring and informative!

Continued on page 4



Brendan Tang contemplating his next addition



Sarah Lawless demonstrating an unique way to make a bowl



Robin Dupont combining two large bowl forms to make one vessel



Kathleen Raven forming the head of human for one of her whimsical sculptures

Text & workshop photos: Nancy A.

MAKING TIP: Canvas 'Bats'

Cutting plates off a bat or the wheel can be quite difficult, especially large ones – any attempt to move the piece usually leads to it bending or breaking a cutting wire or cutting the bottom out of the plate. The net effect is lost money, lost time, lost something ... (we all know that experience). Joy F. found the following suggestion in Jan/Feb 2015 Pottery Making Illustrated. I think you might find it useful too:

"A piece of canvas cut to a circumference roughly that of your bat or smaller is attached to the bat using a small amount of well-mixed slip. The plate is then thrown on the canvas. When the plate is finished, I cut between the canvas and the bat. There is less tension as you cut through and as soon of the plate is firm enough, I flip it over and remove the canvas."

BONUS – as Joy suggests, its easier to store a bundle of canvas than a supply of bulky plaster bats.

*Original Source: Jan/Feb 2015 Pottery Making Illustrated
Quoted text by Kyla Toomey*

From the LIBRARY:

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This month, four new items were purchased for our library – a DVD and 3 books.

- **Darted & Decorated: Techniques for Enhancing Form & Surface**, by Jennifer Allen
- **Contemporary Tableware**, Linda by Linda Bloomfield
- **Cone 5-6 Glazes: Materials & Recipes**, from Ceramics Arts Daily
- **The Pot Book**, by Edmund de Waal

The titles above are hyper-linked to provide more details. Once the newsletter is uploaded to our guild website, you should be able to click on the links



These additions, along with some books donated by Irene Baker in March, are ready for signing out on a **'first-come first-served'** basis.

Note that there is no longer a 'wait-list' option to borrow library items.

With these additions, we have spent the \$250 budgeted through to June 2015.

Library Committee,
Nancy Wall, Belle Leon, Kris Jeffrey

Getting the MOST Out of Your Workshop

Before you go to a workshop, write down what you think you want to learn to improve your work.

Cut out 50 photos of things (nature, food, machines, fabric design, iPhone photos etc.) you like – they can be from a magazine, from the Internet – just find 50. Now pare it down to ten items.

Being open to what the workshop leader is excited about helps because that might be a whole new area that will be of new interest to me.

Don't pay overmuch attention to the workshop leader. These leaders are facilitators paid by you, so drink in what is useful.

When watching and listening to a workshop leader, keep in mind what you love about clay.

If you are curious about the workshop leader's background or development of techniques or ideas, be ready to ask questions.

If taking a hands-on workshop, decide if you want to make small maquettes of everything the workshop leader demonstrates, or if you prefer to concentrate on only the forms or techniques that interest you.

It can be helpful to think of what you love in clay and how someone else's techniques would give you more variety in those aspects of your work.

Take pictures or draw – otherwise you are likely to forget.

If the teacher makes something you don't like or show images of some work you think is uniquely unsuccessful, specifically figure out what you think is weak.

Practice critiquing ceramic pieces featured in books and magazine, then take the next step to think of three ways you would improve the work.

Try just playing with what you have learned, and don't worry about making finished work.

Excerpt from publication *Clay Times* by Lana Wilson edited by Meira M.

Upcoming Events :



Spring Pottery SALE

South Delta Rec Centre
1720 56th Street, Tsawwassen
May 8th 10 - 8 pm
May 9th 10 - 5 pm

www.deltapottery.com

Delta Potters Association



Bill Reddick • Brendan Tang • Cathi Jefferson • Carole Epp



Join Us

August 7 - 9, 2015 • Prince George, BC

Two Day Workshops • Demonstrations • Slideshows
Silent Auction • Clayfest Showcase • Appie Reception
Clayfest Marketplace • Hosted Dinner at Twisted Cork

Network with fellow artists and meet exciting workshop presenters at our fourth Northern BC Clayfest!

100th Prince George Pottery Guild

For more information or to register:
www.pgpottery.ca

Explore the arts on the inspiring campus of Pearson College in Metrosin.



METCHOSIN INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

**Alternative Firing Techniques:
Chasing the Elusive Flame**
Instructor: Don Ellis
Monday to Friday, June 29 to July 3

Don Ellis will lead five intensive days of alternative firing sessions where participants learn to take their pots to the next level. Over 34 years of firing experience have enabled Don to achieve a magic touch with raku that is beyond the ordinary. Don will demonstrate a variety of surface decorations and will share firing and post-firing techniques for getting spectacular results. Students will enjoy a fiery week of demonstrations, glazing, and of course ... firing! The focus of the sessions will be on copper mats, post-firing fuming and more.

Workshop Fee: \$639.55; Limited space available
Tuition: \$570 + Supplies: \$65 + PST: \$4.55
Register online at www.missa.ca

DON ELLIS is an Associate Professor of Ceramics at San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico. He and his wife owned and operated Cloudcroft Pottery for 20 years in Cloudcroft, NM. Don is also well known for presenting workshops with Randy Brodnax for more than 20 years in the USA and Canada. He has been featured in the book Alternative Kilns and Firing Techniques and featured with Randy in Potree: Not Your Typical Tight Ass DVD.

intensive hands-on studio workshops
small class sizes
lunch and two daily snacks included

f www.missa.ca

Do you have a show / sale coming up?

We include notices of upcoming activity of potential interest to our membership – free of charge.

Send pdf of poster or email information to Louise (eartharts@shaw.ca) by noon on the first Monday of the month for inclusion.

May deadline is noon May 4th

Guild at a Glance

... is the newsletter for the South Vancouver Island Potters Guild.

It is published monthly, September through June, and is available at meetings and online at www.victoriapotters.ca

Articles and items of interest to members are welcome and will be included as space permits.

Items for inclusion are best emailed to the editor, Louise, at eartharts@shaw.ca

SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS NOON THE FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH

The earlier submissions are received, the more likely there will be room to include them. Be kind to the editor, please send items for inclusion *before* the deadline.

ADVERTIZING RATES

Business card size (2" x 3 1/2"):
\$10 per issue
or
\$75 for 10 issues

Quarter page ad (3 1/2" x 4 3/4")
\$20 per issue
or
\$150 for 10 issues

Sales announcements, events, classified ads:

FREE

contact the *At a Glance* editor at:
eartharts@shaw.ca



Victoria Clay Art

654 Burnside Road W.
Victoria BC V8Z 1M8
250 384-3831
vcart@shaw.ca

Here is a list of my favorite pottery tools, glazes and things. Dan

All available at Victoria Clay Art

Mud Tool Ribs
Amaco PC-20 Blue Rutile [cone 6]
Alphabet Stamp Set
2" Goat Hair Fan Brush
Magic Water
Stroke & Coat SC-74 Hot Tomale [cone 08-10]
MKM Finger Rollers
Xiem Teliscoping Sponge on a Stick
Mud Tool Blue Sponge
Amaco Velvet Underglaze V-361 Jet Black
Aardvark Cone 5 BEE-Mix
Mud Tool Clay Cutting Wire [green handle]
MKM Wood Stamps
Paper Clay cone 06, 6, or 10

**Come in and look around, we're open
10:00am to 5:00pm Mon-Sat**

Your 2014-2015 Executive

President:	Muriel S.	250.652.5434
Vice-Pres:	Pam T-W	1.250.474.5434
Secretary:	Derek K.	250.995.2905
Treasurer:	Linda V.	250.479.5966
Archivist:	Dawn K.	250.896.4373

Coffee:

Monika B.	778.351.3988
Katia C.	250.472.8225
Hillary G.	778.425.4228

Library:

Nancy W.	250.479.3524
Kris J.	250.384.5344
Belle Leon	250.382.1326

Membership:	Betty B.	250.382.0974
Newsletter	Louise P.	250.655.3811

Program Coordinators:

Rosemary N.	250.477.7032
Muriel S.	250.652.5434

Raffle:

Ester G.	250.658.4523
Tobias T.	250.383.3893

Webmaster:	Deb.C	250.664.6805
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9 am – 4 pm**

REMEMBER – among others, 2 great benefits to being in the South Vancouver Island Potters Guild are:

- 1) the library
- 2) access to the BC Potter's Guild newsletter online. Betty B. sends us the username and password each month.

So ... check them out! They're worth using!

Pottery @ Greenglade Community Centre



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www.panoramarecreation.ca

Discovery Art Travel

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(Burma)

Sicily

Morocco

www.denysjames.com

TEL: 1-250-537-4906

Burma, January 26 – February 13
Sicily, September 26 – October 14
Morocco, October 26 – November 16

Our Library welcomes your
suggestions –
Contact Nancy W.
nwall2009@gmail.com

...and something to **THINK ABOUT**

Here is a lesson for all of you that take Ceramics Monthly.
Open this month's magazine and turn the pages rather quickly.
See what you see. Don't read anything..turn the pages.

Page after page of images of glaze samples, pots with commercial glazes and more glazes for sale. Color charts like a paint store.
Pretty colors..lots of pretty colors.

Then ask your local supplier of ceramics...`What sells?`
Then look at the shelves of commercial glazes, see the price tags.
In some cases, a room of shelves with commercial glazes...pretty glazes.
You can even get Tom Coleman's shino...in a jar.

Then ask.
How many lbs. of feldspar have you sold this month?
You would be startled. `We don't sell very much glaze materials any longer...people like it ready made.`

What used to be a train car of materials, is now a half pallet.
If you don't believe me, ask and educate yourself. In fact, ask at NCECA...{the vendors} are all there.
I won't bother, I already have. And, I don't blame the vendor, they sell what sells..I sure would.

Ready made de/aired clay.
Ready made perfect glaze.
Ready made tools that make decoration.
Ready made kiln that will turn itself on and off. You can even check the kiln at your movie house or bar from your iphone.
As I ask `What does one bring to the party?`

I am working on a new `mother in law blue` ...it sells like crazy.
And, I mean it.
Mel, the blue huckster.
A metaphoric joke...I can make a 25 gallon tub of glaze for about 30 bucks. 25 gallons of ready made glaze would cost \$2,841.52.
HEY, I'M JUST SAY'N.
from: minnetonka, mn
website:<http://www.melpots.com>
new book: <http://www.21stcenturykilns.com>
<http://www.melpots.com/clayart.html>

Submitted by Betty B. Originally from ClayArt's moderator, Mel Jacobson

Was Dylan correct?

Is it true that:

“ The times they are a changing” ?

If so, is change a good thing?

Write me with your response

eartharts@shaw.ca

Editor

Are we loosing skills?

or

Are we changing skillsets ?

Write me with your response

eartharts@shaw.ca

Editor

“ Recently, I've been thinking about the basic skills that are handed down from generation to generation and I wonder if our domestic skills are getting lost as we become a more consumer-based and service-oriented culture. It also wasn't that long ago that most people had the skills to tackle any project that they want to do, whether it was simple sewing repairs, ironing, canning, or fixing leaky pipes – truth be told, I've never really learned to iron or make jam. It used to be that if you had a project you didn't know how to do, there was almost certainly someone that was either family or a friend who you could turn to to learn the skills you needed. Back then, collective wisdom counted for a lot.

Continued on page 10

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I have always felt potters and crafts people alike are more than just consumers, we are also producers of both objects and meaning. Our act of making requires a set of skills strung together to produce meaningful objects.

....

While I may not have a well-pressed shirt or any delicious preserves from this year's harvest, I now know how to use a canvas bat and make my own Japanese cut off tool. Potters do have their priorities after all."

Submitted by Joy F. Originally from Holly Goring, Editor of
Pottery Making Illustrated Volume 18 Number1

This could have been more stuff sent
in by you - but - I had nothing more
so repeated an Upcoming Event.
Editor - (who is too cheap to give you
a mostly blank page)

METCHOSIN INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL OF THE ARTS MISSA 2015 Update

ALTERNATIVE FIRING TECHNIQUES: Chasing the Elusive Flame with Don Ellis



DATES: Monday to Friday, June 29 to July 3

Don Ellis will lead five intensive days of alternative firing sessions where participants learn to take their pots to the next level. Over 34 years of firing experience have enabled Don to achieve a magic touch with raku that is beyond the ordinary. Don will demonstrate a variety of surface decorations and will share firing and post-firing techniques for getting spectacular results. Students will enjoy a fiery week of demonstrations, glazing, and of course ... firing! The focus of the sessions will be on copper mats, post-firing fuming and more.

Workshop Code: 36-DE-CLA
Workshop Fee: \$639.55

[Visit missa.ca](http://missa.ca) and register for this workshop online.