

Guild at a Glance

December 2016

www.victoriapotters.ca

Volume 18 Issue 4

December Meeting - Christmas Social

Monday 7:30 PM December 12, 2016

Bring finger food, sweet or savory, to share. And bring along any ceramic creations you might like to talk about, as well as any marks you have made with last month's brushes

November Program in Review:



The November program was a hands on introduction to brush making led by Monika Burrell.

Monika provided the glue, bamboo, string, paper and ink and members brought anything they thought might make a brush, from feathers to squirrel tails to hair from themselves or someone else, fur from an animal or porcupine quills.

Members were also encouraged to bring their own handmade brushes to show others the possibilities and variation in mark making..



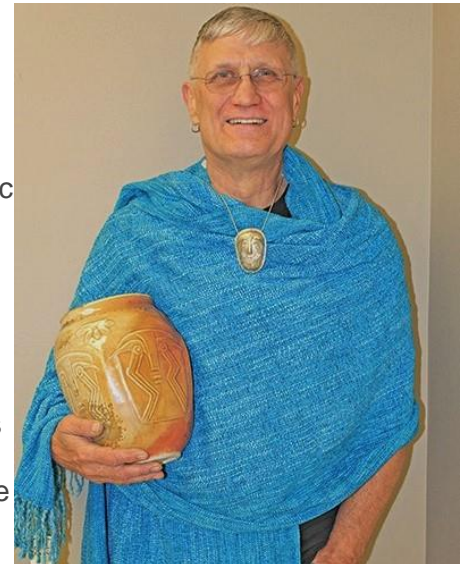
Tobias Tomlinson

Meet Tobias Tomlinson – a professional artist and educator for over 40 years. Tobias started life in the United States, raised in the Quaker faith and was a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War. In 1969, after the internal violence in the US caused the death of two Black Panther members he knew, he decided to relocate to Canada, where some of his mother's family lives. After arriving in Canada, he achieved a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts with emphasis on Print Making and Ceramics (Univ. of Calgary), followed by several years working in a potters' collective and then apprenticing with a master potter. Tobias then received a bachelor's degree in Education (Univ. of Victoria) and began his career as an educator coupled with his career as an artisan.

Tobias' history with clay started when he was just 5 or 6, but his creative focus was not limited to clay alone. When he was seven years old, Tobias sent a drawing off to the Howdy Doody Show, and won \$25 worth of bubble-gum. A real prize, and an amazing way to win friends, upset dentists, and his first real inspiration to develop his art. Another important inspiration was Ms. Ross, the high school art teacher in Urbana, Illinois to both Tobias and Gordon Hutchens. Tobias says "She was an amazing open person encouraging experimentation in ideas and media. She brought her students various competitions or events to enter". In one instance, Tobias won a fibre design competition, which helped pay for part of his scholarship to Illinois State University. Tobias has had many encouraging mentors along the way, and he thanks them all for their assistance.

Tobias continues to work in media other than clay, including textiles and metal with which he weaves and makes jewellery. In this August 2016 picture for the 8th Annual First Nations, Inuit and Metis Art Show, Tobias is pictured with his pieces; a hand dyed woven shawl, a repoussé pendant and a wood fired ceramic vase.

Tobias' role as an educator is also widely varied and includes working with the Sooke School District teaching autistic students through grade 6, as well as librarian and ceramic resource person for 33 years. He was also a pottery instructor for the children's class with the Victoria Art Gallery as well as art sessions at the Victoria Youth Custody Services Centre. His essential centre as an artist was an important element of all of his teaching roles. It interestingly included grade four students making internal organs out of various media for one of their 'stuffies', which they had donated to the cause of learning physical anatomy.



Key features of Tobias' work are the First Nations themes and natural elements that link him to his Chickasaw Cherokee ancestry and his close connection to the natural world. Another strong element is his enjoyment of a working collaboration amongst artists. He is an active member of the Victoria arts community being a founding member of the Island Artisans Association, an early member of the SVIPG, as well as a member of the BC Potters Guild, Community Arts Council of Greater Victoria, the Community Arts Council of Saanich Peninsula and the Tozan Society. As most know, Tobias has been an active supporter of the Guild, participating in the annual sales and running the monthly raffle.

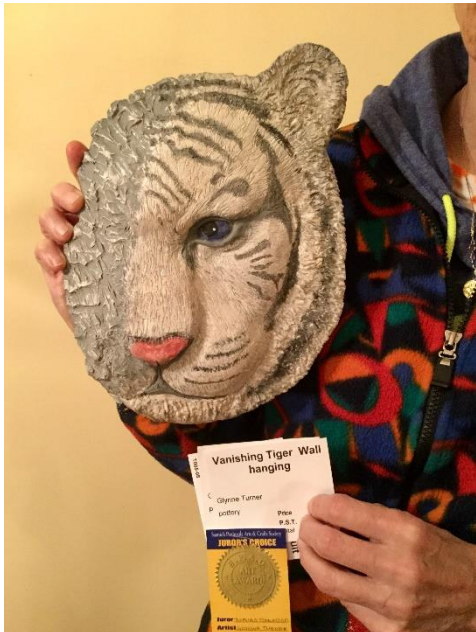
As to how he sees the Guild's future, Tobias described two areas of growth he would hope for – one where the potters of the guild become more connected with other three dimensional artists and another where the skill and knowledge of the limited number of professional potters is used to develop a more structured curriculum for developing potters. This would be similar to an apprenticeship program that encompasses all aspects of the business of being an artist (pricing, marketing strategies etc.).

Glynne Turner

Meet Glynne Turner, one of the newest members of our Guild, joining in September. Glynne came to clay work in an almost serendipitous way. She had some free time, wanted to try something new and Greenglades potters' studio was just down the road from her home. Before her first eight week course five years ago, Glynne had neither potted nor collected clay art.

But once she had sat at the wheel, guided by Barb Hyrano, she was in her words 'smacked upside the head'. She now tries to spend part of each day at the studio, and has bought her own kiln to bisque and sometimes glaze her pieces at home. She is experimenting with commercial glazes or using Greenglades' glazes, as she doesn't see glaze mixing as an option for the near future.

Her main interest is wheel throwing, finding it mesmerizing and loving using the right side of her brain. She enjoys altering the



shape and carving into the

clay to produce a unique handmade piece that does not have to be perfectly round, catering rather to the shape, colour and texture. Glynne understands the advantages of focusing on one shape to explore its elements, but she prefers instead to move from one shape to another. She's noticed that her exposure to well produced pieces has made her more aware of design concepts and well-proportioned pots. Glynne has begun sculpting in paper clay as well. She was pleased to win the Saanich Peninsula Arts and Crafts Juror's Choice award for her Vanishing Tiger Wall Hanging (shown here). The juror's comments included: "Very clever use of clay for mask"; "Love the textured part of the tiger"

Glynne came to the Guild at Monika's suggestion and has appreciated how informative the meetings are, noting in particular the discussion of oxides in October and the brush making in November. As she is a vegetarian, she chose not to make her brushes from fur attached to skins and instead made them from a few snippets of hair and fur from of her dogs Spud and Geordie. The brush marks each makes is different

as each has dog has different hair/fur, and also because Peach the cat got a hold of one and it's a bit thinner than first designed.

One of the topics Glynne would like to see as a Guild topic is the pricing of work, as she is sensitive to hobbyist not devaluing pots as they have less of a business pressure. She also thinks the Guild might explore the topic of the cost of craft sale tables, noting the high cost and the impact on professional potters.

Visiting Clay artist – Sylvia Shaw of Hornby Island, BC

The world of clay is well populated with folks exploring and expanding the use of clay. In this month's newsletter, we are featuring the work of an 'away' clay artist. My friend Sylvia, who lives full time on Hornby Island just down the road from my summer cottage, is our first 'visiting artist'. Sylvia is a natural artist who has been creating with arts and crafts since she was a wee girl. In recent years, her focus has been painting (with water colours, acrylics, oils, pastels etc.), photography (making art cards), cement ware for garden ornaments and fabric arts (making beautiful art quilts and weavings). Much of Sylvia's art has been produced for the



Hornby Summer Farmer's Market. She and her partner Pete, who makes beautiful band saw boxes and wood trays, have two stalls, which they share with me when I'm on the island.

I knew that in Sylvia's distant past she had owned a kiln for glazing green ware, but it was long gone when we met. The summer of 2015 changed that. While we picked through the sale



items of an island potter getting out of clay, we came upon a test kiln – which looked sufficient for experimenting with glass work, an idea for Sylvia's next art adventure. Instead, it became the first step to rediscovering clay. Sylvia is surrounded by artists on Hornby (Deb Taylor for one, who is well known to many Guild members), so with that help she was into hand building with low fire clay and creating fairy houses for the garden. This year's markets



were especially fun, as the fairy houses enthralled every kid who came through. Their most common question was how the fairies got in, as the first prototypes had no functioning lid, doors or windows. That led to experimenting with lids (the flange of which is the trickiest to keep it from falling out when they lift up the house) and some cut out windows, which made glazing interesting, especially when her helper (me) forgot some of the windows were cut out and merrily filled the pots with liner glaze, half of which landed on my shoes. Creating these houses required some experimentation with found objects – many of them sourced at the 'free store'. The wood look texture on the houses is created with a lemon zester and the shape of some of the roofs/lids are helped along with a martini glass. I can't wait for next year's markets. Sylvia has now bought a bigger kiln with an actual cone sitter (instead of just a peep hole) and who knows what will appear next.



The Many Tools of Chattering – By Derek Kaspar

Here are four photos of what I consider to be interesting uses of chattering for decoration. I particularly like to use chattering with transparent mobile glazes that flow off the high points and pool in the recesses to highlight the texture.

Chattering can be loosely described as marks made on a rapidly spinning pot by the edge of a relatively sharp tool held at a steep angle to the pot's surface, somewhere within a few degrees plus or minus of a right angle. This technique is something I have been using for several years now, as a way to introduce texture onto the surface of my pots. I love texture and I love the different patterns that can be produced by chattering. There are two main types of chattering that I do and the tools and types of marks vary considerably.

The first type of chattering is done during the throwing process, mainly using hard rubber ribs or various styles of metal ribs. Although this can work on the outside of a pot I mainly just use this technique on the interiors of bowls or open shapes. The pots must be pretty well centred and the surfaces must have been well compressed and ribbed free of slurry during the shaping process. To chatter properly the pot must be able to go fast on the



wheel without flopping. The final opening of wide rimmed bowls can be done at high speed using the sharp edge of a metal or mud-tools type rib held straight up and down so that it digs in a little and bounces, making a chattering pattern of radial lines. Various spiralling or wavelike marks can be made in the bottom of the pot using a similar technique with metal ribs and plastic platter ribs.

The second variety of chattering I do is during

the trimming stage. A wide variety of marks can be made, from fernlike, to geometrical, to wavelike—from subtle and barely perceptible to coarse and highly textured. Complex patterns can be built up by using different tools over top of already created patterns. Different types of marks result from the shapes and types of the tools used. My favourites include a regular tear drop loop trimming tool, a variety of other types of common loop tools, various cutting shapes of bent knife trimming tools and those made from bent hacksaw blades that have been sharpened. You can find an illustrative video at the following link that shows chattering and trimming techniques. The presenter has many videos about potting that I think are well done.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w7wDEWneH4>

Three factors that are common to all the trimming chattering techniques I use are:



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- The wheel is turning at a high rate of speed, meaning that the piece must be securely held in a foam bat, or a Giffin Grip or using large and **well adhered** lugs of clay.
- The tools must be as sharp as you can make them.
- The tools must be flexible or held loosely in your hand so that they can dig in a little because of the angle, but then bounce, and then dig in, and then bounce, all at high speed as mentioned. This process happens rapidly and the tool must be guided up and down the surface that you want to chatter.

Chattering marks can vary considerably depending on the condition of the clay. You can chatter in clay from quite soft all the way to very hard leather hard. Typically you can get much deeper and more sculptural marks in softer clay and finer and more feathery marks in harder clay. It isn't unusual to have wetter clay near the foot and drier towards the rim, so the pattern can change because of not only the hardness of clay but also the likelihood that in the outside of a bowl the clay is moving much faster near the rim than near the foot. With practice, you can predict and control what the patterns will look like. If the clay becomes too dry to chatter effectively you can mist it and let it soak in a bit and then it will work.

Chattering is fun and relatively easy to learn, and in my mind at least, a useful way to enliven a surface.



An Update on the Well Being of Les Manning

Many potters will know the name Les Manning - a ceramic artist for more than thirty years who received the Order of Canada in 2012 for his impressive body of work advancing the arts in Canada.

A recent update on Facebook explains that Les, who was diagnosed two years ago with early onset Alzheimer's disease, has recently been upgraded to severe. The family is reaching out (through Facebook) to encourage past friends and colleagues to be in touch with Les, but to please organize any planned visits through the family.

For Sale – Shimpo Wheel

For sale: Shimpo Silver which has the moveable foot pedal. It is 20 years old but still seems to be functioning well...at least I'm still making pots on it. The wheel head is 12 inches, the wheel weighs 97lb Price, and has adjustable legs. Price is \$200 and open to reasonable offers. The online manual can be found at <http://www.shimpoceramics.com/pdf/manuals/wheels/rk10goldandsilver2cables.pdf>.

Those interested can contact Maureen at 250 656 5955 or email at swobodapots@gmail.com

What's Up with Programs?

Submitted by Rosemary Neering

December: Gallery and Potluck

Our annual Christmas get-together: bring finger food, sweet or savory, to share. And bring along any ceramic creations you might like to talk about, as well as any marks you have made with last month's brushes.

January: On the Road Again

Ceramics travel guru Denys James talks about his travels, his travel offerings and his own ceramics.

February: Tips and Tools

Know something you wish you had learned earlier in your ceramics practice? Have a special tip that makes life easier for you? Have a favourite tool you use all the time or occasionally to improve your work? A sharing night.

March: Jane Murray Smith comes down from Coombs to talk about her pottery. Check out <http://www.dragonflypottery.ca/> to see her eclectic raku, horsehair & feather, saggar, and stoneware pottery, with a sample of her animal masks, large animal sculptures, animal ornaments, custom pet portraits, large wall pieces, tiles, lamps as well as assorted vases.

April: Marlene Bowman demonstrates her hand-building techniques. See <http://www.stinkingfishstudiotour.com/Marlene-Bowman/> for some examples of her colourful and unusual creations.

May: tentative: Photographing your work and other presentation tips. **June:** spring get-together and gallery.

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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
helen.pedneault@shaw.ca

Guild at a *Glance*

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

It is published monthly, September through June. It's distributed by email to all members and some copies are available at Guild meetings. The newsletter is also posted 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
helen.pedneault@shaw.ca

**SUBMISSIONS REQUESTED BEFORE
THE FIRST OF THE MONTH**

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**Victoria
Clay Art**

654 Burnside Road W.
Victoria BC V8Z 1M8

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 Telescoping 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**

Vancouver Island Pottery Supply

Has Moved

Hello to all our valued customers, This is notice that VIPS has moved.

Our new address is:

515 Stanford Avenue E.
Parksville, BC
V9T 6V6

We have the same phone number and website address. We have a new email address.

Cheers, Donna

Ph: 1-250-248-2314

E-Mail: sales@vipottersupply.com
(new email address!!)

Web: www.vipottersupply.com

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. Roger C. sends us the username and password each month.

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

*... When you shop – please mention
to our advertisers that you learned
about them in the Guild Newsletter.*

DISCOVERY ART TRAVEL



OVERSEAS CERAMIC WORKSHOPS & TOURS WITH DISCOVERY ART TRAVEL DENYS JAMES

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ANDALUCIA, SPAIN, 2018, November. Moorish influence on Ceramics and tile art, Art, Architecture. Seville, Cordoba, Granada, Ronda, Ubeda. Optional add on trips in Spain. www.discoveryarttravel.com

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