

Guild at a Glance

January 2017

www.victoriapotters.ca

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January Meeting

Monday 7:30 PM January 9, 2017

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

December Program in Review:

As is tradition, the December Guild meeting was devoted to a short business meeting, followed by a sumptuous finger food feast and 'show and tell' of several members' pots.

A sampling of the feast:



Below, Derek Kasper showing an impressive example of one of his large thrown bowls decorated with a chattering pattern combined with two sprayed glazes, which collectively gave the appearance of beaten bronze.



Below is Sydnie Johnson, who explained the source of her inspiration for surface treatment was often her background in biology.



She explains: *Detail intrigues me, from the geological processes that form and deposit clay to the structure of plant species. I am interested in unraveling the layers of beauty in the surrounding world from the visible textures and colours of a plant to the cellular structures revealed through a microscope.*



This process is evident in bowls as I carve wild roses onto the outer walls while sgraffito reveals the microscopy of a rose pedicel within. Continuing to bridge science into art, 3D representations of cellular cross sections emerge as hand built vases. Shared along with the rose bowl at the December meeting was a vase carved with the cross section of a cedar stem under compound microscope at 10X magnification. This vase, with a rim following the design of the outer edges of a section, was glazed and fired at Cathi Jefferson's Salt/Soda Firing workshop with Chris Weaver in August 2016. The reduction environment of swirling gas and soda gave a dynamic detail to the vase that reflects the liveliness of a cedar within the wilderness.

Experimenting with learning new firing techniques has captured my interest as much as details within the natural environment have. At the early stages of a ceramic journey, I look forward to what will continue to be revealed within the clay.

Making a Big Planter – By Roger Champagne

The following are general directions for making a large planter:

Building:

- Establish the profile, and basic dimensions on paper.... to have a road map.
- The base is a round disc with a decent thickness to it, say 3/8 ". Place it on a bat and try to centre it.
- Roll out a number of coils...I like them about 1.5" thick, leaving a bit of edge for the foot. Their length depends on the circumference of the neck...I like the coils to make one round, then overlap the ends and cut the ends to form a bevel...for a stronger joint.

- Depending on the firmness of the clay I will score and brush on slip between each coil. I use a paddle to tap the coils together...gently. On the outside and the inside smush the top coil over the joint in an angular motion. Repeat the in the opposite direction...this ensures a solid and uniform wall.
- After about 3 or 4 coils, place the bat on the wheel and, depending on the softness once again, smooth the wall with your fingers or ribs as the wheel slowly turns, and this brings it all to centre, more or less.
- As wall strength allows, add coils and repeat steps, creating the desired profile by drawing the coils outward as the wall rises. Be careful not to cantilever too quickly with soft clay, as it will sag out of shape. Be patient, spray often and wrap with plastic to maintain even plasticity.
- When desired height and profile is achieved, allow to stiffen, then scrape and smooth inside and outside with toothed and smooth ribs.

Altering and Decorating:

I like to carve the walls of the planter with tulips and leaves top to bottom.

- First I sketch onto the walls with a pencil, gouging the surface.
- Along the top edge I carve tulip heads out, keeping them joined till I'm nearly done so they don't break off so easily.
- I carve the leaves in relief, and also create piercings around the pot...not too low down though.
- Texture and detail is personal
- Work slowly and carefully, spraying and covering every day.
- Sponge entire surface smooth and finish foot with desired profile; pierce a drain hole
- Dry slowly.

Variations:

Different profiles can be created using templates held against the wall as a guide
If the base is a different shape then the pot will follow it.

Happy potting.



A Cautionary Tale – Why Kilns Should Always be Monitored When Firing

This is a tale about why kilns should be carefully monitored even if you think you have all the failsafe safety mechanisms in place. My kiln is rated for 48 amps and requires a 60 amp circuit. My kiln was installed by a certified electrician. The outlet for the kiln was specially installed for the purpose and wired to a 60 amp circuit in our new electric panel. However, unbeknownst to me, the electrician installed a 50 amp wall receptacle, likely to save me money and because they were more easily available than a 60 amp wall receptacle. He obviously thought that the 2 amp difference (48 for kiln, 50 for receptacle) was sufficient. It wasn't and it almost burnt down my house. A few days before Christmas, I was firing a 22 hour glaze firing, including a hold for several hours to ensure the glazes were well dried, the glaze firing and cooling ramps. I started the firing in the late afternoon so that it would fire through the candling phase during the night and I would be awake to monitor it through the crucial high end of the firing phase and the cooling ramps during the day. The kiln safety backups I have in place include a timer, a cone sitter, a computer program with the established ramps and the circuit breaker at the electric panel. When my husband and I woke that morning, we both noticed and started to search for the source of an electrical burning smell. We discovered that smoke was pouring from the electrical receptacle for the kiln plug. Despite this almost catastrophic breakdown of the receptacle and plug connection, the computer program running the kiln was merrily displaying the temperature and running the elements to continue the prescribed ramp. I immediately aborted the firing on the computer and my husband flipped the circuit breaker at the electrical panel for certainty. We learned that outlet receptacles or plugs and circuits should have a 20% higher rating than the appliance's requirement. That means an electrical appliance requiring 48 amps of power needs a 60 amp circuit and a receptacle and plug rated for 60 amps. The electrician who did the trouble shooting confirmed with the wholesaler that the outlet receptacle installed for my kiln was underpowered and was likely running 'hot' for some time, probably from the start. We likely caught the problem in the nick of time and just before actual flames erupted in the receptacle. Although difficult to see the details in the pictures, one of the three female ends of the receptacle was completely burnt out with the other two mostly destroyed. My electrician tells me that I can always check my kiln plug to ensure it is operating correctly by simply putting my hand on the outside insulated portion of the plug while the kiln is operating to ensure there is no heat buildup in the plug. An underpowered receptacle is only one of the reasons a plug may run hot and eventually cause a fire. Other reasons include vibrations or water corrosion which loosens the connection which will cause the heat to build up. None of these failures will cause the electrical circuit to break before a fire erupts. In short – find out all you can about how electricity works and monitor your kilns when they are firing



Plug Showing Heat Damage to Prongs

Back of 50 amp Electric Receptacle Showing Extreme Heat Damage due to Underpower for Kiln rated for 48 amp Service



What's Up with Programs?

Submitted by Rosemary Neering

January: On the Road Again

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

February: Chinese Tea Ceremony

A change in program. Special guest Yujia Xu introduces us to the Chinese tea ceremony and the uses of special ceramic ware for its various aspects and traditions.

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.

Library Additions

New Resources purchased: DVD - "**Layers of Color**" with Andrew Gilliatt (expected to arrive late January)
<http://ceramicartsdaily.org/bookstore/layers-of-color/>

ADVERTISING RATES

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or
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Quarter page ad (3 1/2" x 4 3/4")
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Contact the *At a Glance* editor
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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



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MOROCCO 2018, April 9 - 30. The Full Circle - Fez, Chefchaouen, Essaouira, Volubilis, Marrakech, Zagora, Meknes, Rabat, Casablanca. Studio visits, adobe architecture, tile art, Roman mosaics, traditional and contemporary ceramics, fabrics, a camel ride in the desert, and much more. www.discoveryarttravel.com

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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