

Harlan House RCA

STUDIO POTTER



photo credit Ned Pratt

Prologue

I am a potter. This book is for potters. The difference between being a studio potter and a studio teacher is night and day. Potters get to work all day, and into the night. Teachers don't. I tried both and chose the night life. So why write?

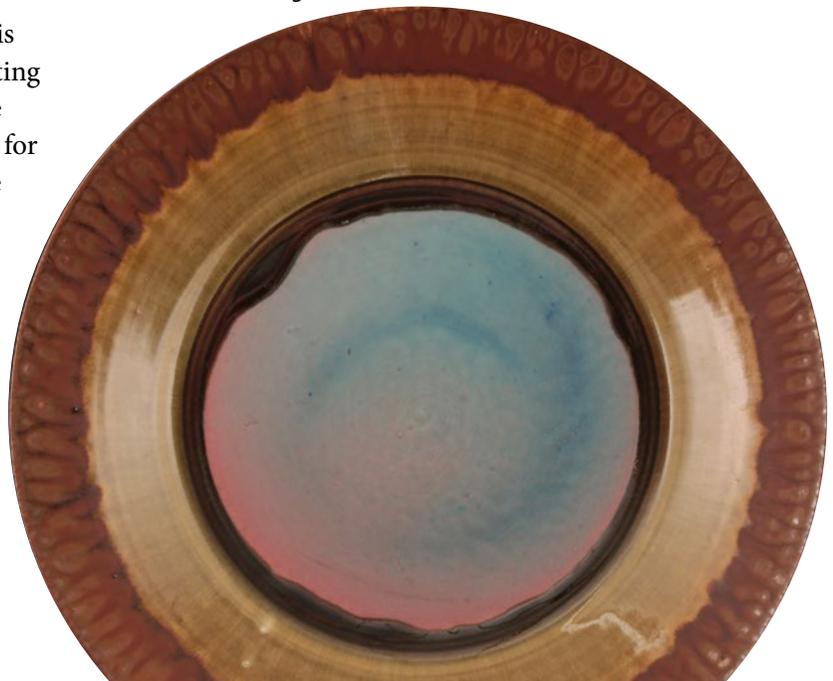
I had a plan. Pick some of my favorite pieces and run a slideshow. I asked our son Abraham if there was room on the website. He said "yes", and asked "why?" *My work, my way, covering fifty years in the studio.* "Fine but it is just a picture show," he said. Abraham suggested that I write about the pieces explaining why works were chosen and in some cases how they were made. Improvement. More work. Maybe, like a good teacher, I can be of some use to aspiring potters. Let's find out...

This is *my work, my way*, but my hope is that this is less about me, and more about how and why creating is so important. As robots and Artificial Intelligence replace human occupation, there is even more need for us to make relevant art. Making clay objects that are alive with expression is essential because they are *made by a human and made for a human*. Even though you are reading this on a very modern platform, we, as humans have not changed very much in thousands of years. We still need, and should touch, whether it is with our hands or our eyes or both. Enjoy.



Meet Your Maker recumbent Mei Ping 2006

I was given some Chinese porcelain. I used it in this shadow, as a way of saying 'thank you' to generations of old Chinese potters who did such fine work. The Mei Ping is glazed in Imperial Snapdragon Yellow, and the shadow self-portrait is RGM celadon. 6.5 inches or 16.5 cm high, and 15 in. or 38 cm long.



 Wall plate Lithium blue flashed ash glaze rim

An introduction



▲ Samsung Galaxy cell phones

Morgan and temmoku 2017

When cell phones started to ignite themselves I reacted. These do not cost anything monthly, and will never bother you. And you still have a phone.

There has always been a reason for making an object aside from the enjoyment of just being a maker. I go to work but I play.

If I needed dinner plates for our family, I made them. If I needed lamps for our house, I made them. If I needed a vase for tulips, I made tulip vases. If I was curious or cynical or amused about anything, I made something in response to those feelings. In short, I did pretty much what I was taught to do in art school. See, respond, think, and then make fine Art.

I have also been very fortunate to have had good friends who asked me to make things for them. It has been a pleasure to stretch out and solve problems that I didn't even know existed.

I love accidents. Every good change or variation in my work has started with an accident. It was even a secretary's accident that got me into art school. Mrs. Stevenson mistakenly sent me an acceptance letter instead of a rejection. Sweet!

The thing I like most about accidents is not so much making them, but looking at them. Is it good, is it bad? Is it something I can do again? Can I keep the flavour? Is it adding to the statement? Is it worth remembering?

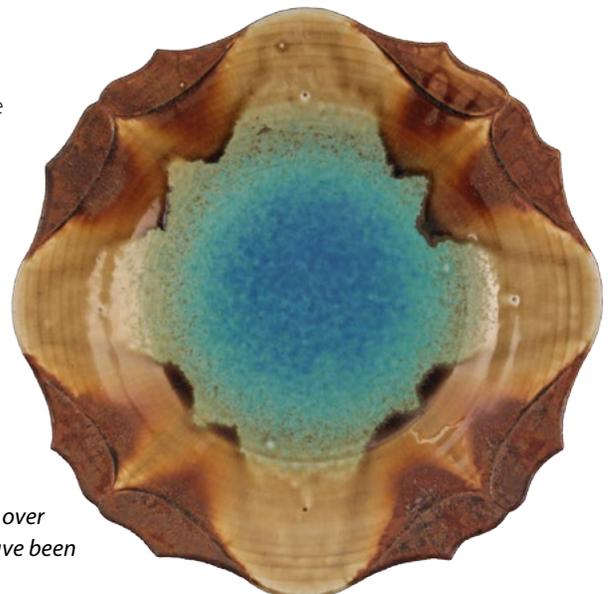
This project is a record of some of my accidents. It might be about some of my best work, but it really is about what makes an accident turn into better work, and a more satisfying life.

It has been a life of phases for me. Whatever technique I picked up in art school was never enough to do the whole job. For me life has been about having ideas, and then finding the tools/skills to do the work on the idea. Always catch-up. I think potters are a lot like good cooks in that respect. In order to learn how to poach an egg, a cook will waste a hundred eggs, and then get the hang of it while working on the next hundred. I did exactly that with each form, and with each glaze and each function and each foot and each lip and each shoulder. The gathering of tools and the refinement of ideas is a long drawn-out process for all of us who make ceramics our living.



▲ Maureen's Christmas dinner ware plate 1982

The rippling rim on Maureen's Christmas plate was a complete accident that led to all kinds of things.



▶ The Butterfly wall plate

Lithium blue and ash glazes

The butterfly piece is a result of adding iron oxide slip to the rim, over an ash only glaze. It shouldn't have been a surprise, but it was.

Lithium Blue Glaze formula

[makes 25 pounds] from my teacher Bert Borch

Nepheline Syenite 11.4

Barium Carb 8.4

Lithium Carb 0.28

Ball clay 1.8

Silica 2

Bentonite 0.5

Copper Carb 0.75



▲ Large branch vase with ash glaze cobalt and iron oxide wash 46 cm high



▲ Mei Ping celadon and peach black 1978



▲ (t) Thomas scalloped wall plate 1976 33 cm across
(b) Wall iris plate in flashed Thomas



▲ Garlic head flower vase 1981

My studio creativity image looks like a bicycle wheel. I am the hub. I go out on a spoke and push an idea as far as I can. I retreat to the hub, and go out on another spoke with a different idea and push that idea as far as I can. Rest, think, retreat. Repeat. In time, I re-enter a spoke that I created and push the idea a little further out. Re-visit and re-work and re-think and then retreat once again to the hub. It can always be better, and it only gets that way if the work gets done.



◀ (l) The largest Iris vase I made Thomas glaze flashed 59 cm or 23.25 in. high; (r) detail of very large iris vase



I have had a creative life with many spokes and many interests. Not a wheel for comfort and smooth riding, but a wheel that is rough, unfinished and always changing; it's not a boring ride. And no marks earned for finding an idea or form and riding it into fame.

The sections of this book are organized like the bicycle wheel I mentioned. I will start in Calgary, and then explore the spokes of the wheel. The photographs are not in chronological order. In my life, time does not matter.

Thomas Glaze formula

Thomas glaze starts out as TOM or *touch of the moon*. Just add 10 pounds of 400m or 40 micron silica to the below TOM formula, and use Grolleg kaolin instead of EPK.

It is a matt, dry whitish glaze that I used on many of the iris vases. They were sprayed with TOM in the green state, and once fired. An over glaze brush full of wet chrome oxide gave me green leaves. You can scratch through the chrome...have fun. Cobalt water color over glaze gives a good light blue, and wet cobalt slip yields a deep blue. Add Manganese and you may get into the blue-purple range.

A whiter, dryer version of TOM and a little less crackle when it is thick. These two glazes were always applied quite thin.

TOM formula

Nepheline Syenite 50
Whiting 30
EPK kaolin 20
Bentonite 4

[see appendix for complete formula]

▼ (l) Thrown faceted bud vase in Lithium blue flashed
(r) Thrown vase with Iris added in flashed Thomas glaze 1978



Getting Started...

Art school and bas relief all in good time

I have often mentioned how wonderful it would have been to be in Paris when the impressionists were all hanging out together, or to be in Florence when Lorenzo was taking on students like Michelangelo for his in-house art lessons. Rubbing shoulders with Leonardo and Picasso and soaking up the air of art in the making would be so fascinating. As it happens, pretty much the same thing happened to me, and it's only obvious to me now that I was living out the dream. I walked into a good old fashioned 'real' art school.



◀ Ceramic sculpture 1965

This was made in the sculpture studio before I went into the ceramics program under the watchful eye of my Swedish teacher Olle Holmsten. He along with George Angliss, was instrumental in teaching me how to see. George Angliss coached me on drawing a perfect 'O' in Caslon italics. It took me about a week to get it right, and then I had to do the rest of my name. A well spent month!

There I found a home with lots of very good, interesting people who actually cared about making art more than anything else in life. Not bad! Lucky boy.

I had the privilege of meeting so many other artists in all disciplines all over the country. For many years, I did a few workshops every year, and met virtually all the teachers in all the schools, as well as many professionals along the way. While it was not Paris or Florence, it was pretty much the kind of life artists had long ago...faster pace, but the same life.

I also had the advantage of starting very young. I was in Junior High School when I was introduced to good craftsmanship. My parents both approved of drawing, painting and making. It makes a difference.

A neighbour in Lethbridge, John Slykus, introduced me to *bas relief* leather work when I was about thirteen. In no time, I set up a little shop in our basement and worked away. My dad lent me the money to buy tools and leather, and I was in business. I was able to pay back the loan, and pretty soon I was able to earn enough to buy more leather. I did this all the way through high school, and into the first year of art school. It meant that I was able to pay my own way, and do exactly what I wanted to do without any outside influences.

▼ Maureen's carved leather wallet from 1962



While my parents did approve of my going to art school, neither of them thought it was anything that would or could lead to a 'real' job. My dad advised me to take up a 'real' trade just in case. Years later he thought that being a good artist was just fine as long as you did not mind always having a used car.

Illingsworth Kerr was the head of the Alberta College of Art. On the first day of school he told us that if we were there to become rich or famous, it would be a good idea to leave. I stayed.

Kerr also said, "Artists tend to look too hard for subject matter. There is usually something right under their nose". He was right.



▲ The workshop wall platter carved sandblasted 2000

I did this after being away for a workshop. Potters go to workshops to learn. They ask questions, and the answers lead the workshop in many ways. Whatever was planned is tossed, and the moment rules. It makes for some tough moments, and some interesting reactions on both sides of the coin. Communication as it turns out, is an important part of making.

Calgary...mid 1960s...

I went to art school in 1964 to become a painter, and I did that for three years. I am still a painter.

I also did a serious minor in sculpture. When I came to ceramics, I was well along the road to learning how to see. Bob Bozak, a ceramics student at the time, and now a very fine Canadian potter, let me sit at his wheel in our shared house. It was a thrill I never forgot. I instantly knew that ceramics was exciting. It still is. So is painting. Both are also very difficult. I work on that.



◀ **Chinatown** #2 acrylic on canvas 1966
We lived not far from 'Chinatown' in Calgary and we loved every aspect of the village. It was my introduction to all things Asian. And it happened before I knew about the ceramics department.



▲ **Honeysuckle study** 2013 oil on canvas



▲ **Spindle berry** painting oil on canvas
2017 3 x 4 ft. 91 x 122 cm



▲ Handbuilt jar 1967

I switched to ceramics and did two years in that department. My first instructor was Walter Drohan. He was a very talented man, and a good teacher. He tried to cover just about every aspect of ceramics as we knew it then. When you are just starting your career, this is critically important. Walter knew that his students would want choices for direction, and he provided that information openly. He also offered this little tidbit: "It is a good idea to know what went on in historical times, and it is a bad idea to copy it." Important stuff. Basic stuff.

He went to Germany on a grant, and Bert Borch replaced him for my last year in school. Bert was a most thoughtful man; he was quiet and peaceful and loaded with knowledge about ceramics. He had been working in the USA and was very familiar with what was happening there. We were not, but we got caught up, thanks to Bert.

At that time in both the teaching and student world, formulae were something that you kept in a bank vault. Bert changed that. He gave me one of his recipes for something...glaze, clay body, I forget. My jaw must have dropped when he gave it to me.

He said, "It is just a formula Harlan. It is what you do with it that will be important." How marvellous! Bert could see the good in almost anything we did as students, and was most encouraging; he was a good teacher!



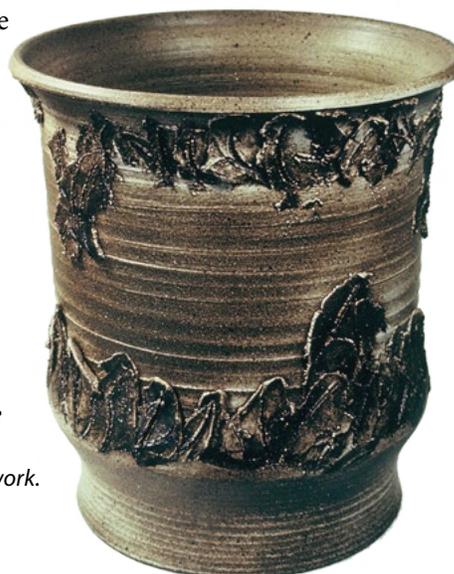
▲ (tl) Art school stoneware bowl 1967; (bl) Small bowl by Bert Borch February 1976; 2 stem goblet 1967; Art school stoneware vase 1967; My first piece of porcelain about 1968 in art school

I left art school in 1969. Together with my peer in art school, Ted Diakow, and my first teacher, Walter Drohan, we set up a small studio in down town Calgary. We spent the summer finding what we needed to make the place work. We built work tables, potter's wheels and a kiln. We all pitched in and had it working in the fall. It took a while to catch on to how the kiln liked to be treated, but after a few dull firings we were off to being real potters.

Ted had worked for Ed Drahanuck so he had some inkling about what we had to do to make a living. Ed was a very successful studio potter, and also the brother of our partner Walter. Walt was also Ed's teacher. Small Calgary world. Walt changed his name to avoid problems.

I took on a night job teaching night classes at the college of art, and thankfully Maureen, who is a Registered Nurse, was working, so we covered our expenses that way. My total lack of experience showed in spades. I had to learn how to make a decent stoneware cup/mug, as well as many other useful ceramic items. It did not come easily nor very quickly, but finally I started to make good work. It was even selling. We had several outlets across the Western section of Canada and they kept us busy making mostly functional stoneware that would fit into any kitchen or office.

▶ Large planter in fireclay CNE exhibition 1972
This puppy was big in a couple ways. It was huge, over two feet high and 18 inches wide, made two sections. The lower impasto decoration covers the join. I was also the first piece I ever sent out of Alberta, and I won some kind of small purchase award. It was really encouraging to know that someone liked the work.



▲ Large bowl with drawing of Boo 1968

I learned something from Verlyn 'Boo' Achen. She was a small woman, and could make large ceramics. I couldn't. What was she doing that I should be? She seemed to put her whole body into the work, but she thought about what she was doing first. And she was gentle. Brute force does not work. Important. Thanks Boo!



▲ Ed Drahanuck tea bowl about 1970



▲ Walter Drohan P1 test cup about 1968



▲ My coffee cup from 1973



▲ **Downtown Calgary Rose**
mixed media 1971

Downtown rose was inspired by Calgary's first high rise. It was called Elveden Centre. I did not like anything about it.

▶ No on U.S. flag vase; Calgary stoneware fireclay vase sculpture 1973; Stoneware hand built vase; Thrown stoneware vase with altered rim



▲ (t) test bells
(b) test egg Calgary 1972



▲ Porcelain on the fence 1972



▲ Thrown porcelain with iron oxide brush work 1971

The Quest chain of retail outlets became the first craft shop to offer me one man shows. Ted and Joan Bartlett encouraged me to reach out and experiment, and they were happy to exhibit pieces that were out of the functional norm. I had several solo exhibitions at all three locations, Banff, Vancouver and Victoria.

I also had the good fortune to meet, work with and become friends with David and Pamela Haight. They, along with Witold Twardowski started a craft gallery called The Barbary shop in East end Calgary. That turned into the Rubaiyat Gallery. I had many solo shows at the Rubaiyat over a span of almost 50 years. Thank you!



After I left the ceramics program in art school a big problem arrived on my doorstep. How could I do research into new glazes at my own expense? In the school, kilns were fired each week, and I could always count on a little shelf space for some tests; all were free and regular. Now, on my own that was impossible. This was why I started to make porcelain eggs, and later on, bells.

They are small, fairly easy to make, and affordable. They are also perfect carriers of glaze in that they have vertical and flattish aspects as well as interior surfaces. I could get a lot of them into wasted spaces in the kiln. I could really test glazes for many aspects without ruining works that had many hours of work in them. I lost a lot of bells, and gained a lot of knowledge that I could use on future thrown pots. The ones that survived sold well, and helped pay for the research. Win win.

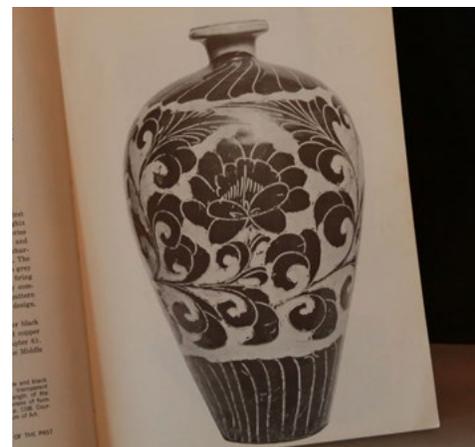
The Cizhow influence

When I switched from a painting major to a ceramics major there was just one text book. *Ceramics*, 2nd edition, by Glen C. Nelson. That was it; period. I still have mine. Page 20 is where you will find a Chinese vase with the cizhow [Tz'u-chow] Northern Chinese Song Dynasty floral decoration on it. That piece influenced me for years. I have no idea how I solved the problem of layering oxides for these pieces. I never tried simply doing what they did. It seemed wrong to copy, so this was my answer. I found a light stoneware body and used the following technique for a while. Eventually I used it on porcelain as well.

A form is completely glazed thickly by dipping [spraying does not work] in crackle white. Then the gray slip is brushed over that, using a banding wheel. The slip is forgiving so it can be thick or thin depending on how dark you want the outcome to be. Play.

Once the slip is on the piece, you can draw whatever you want on it with a pencil.

You then simply scratch and scrape through the black slip *to the white glaze* and not any further. Black and white. Easily said, but not so easily done.



◀ Cizhow Song vase from Glen Nelson book page 20



◀ (l) Flower mei ping Cizhow style from Calgary 1971
(r) March crackle mei ping with peony brush drawing 1980s

Slow, and time consuming, and very old fashioned work. All good if you like that sort of thing. I used a flattened, bent bicycle spoke as a linear scraper for years, and I found a #11 scalpel a very handy tool for larger areas of slip removal. You can sharpen it when it gets dull. If I had it to do again, I would wear a dust mask. [See Appendix for formulae.]



◀ 1941 Chev truck turning into a highway 1970; Shiny truck vase 1970; Calgary stoneware vase with 1941 Chev quarter ton

Harlan's Gray Black Slip formula

1 cup of Cobalt slip
[see appendix for formula]

1 cup of Lithium Blue glaze
[see appendix for formula]

¼ teaspoon of Manganese Dioxide

This slip is brushed on top of the white crackle glaze that follows.

White Crackle Glaze formula. Cone 9 to 11

Nepheline Syenite 33

Whiting 2

EPK Kaolin 7

Dolomite 1.5

Silica 9

Bentonite 3

I would be lying to you if I said I never cut through the slip and glaze to the clay, and yes, you can just add glaze with a brush to correct the error.

Trucks, cars and highways

▶ I have always disliked large cars and trucks. I found an old 1941 quarter ton truck in Calgary. It was beautiful, and I used it over and over again. The grill reminded me of huge smile. Happy truck. I traded that one for a 1946 Chev that I still have.



▲ The 1941 Chev quarter ton truck in 1970



▲ Smiling 1946 Chev wall bowl 1972



▲ (t) Mud car ACA exhibition 1970
(b) ACA exhibition of cars and highways 1970

Growing up in Alberta was actually pretty wonderful. The landscape, whether it be prairie, or foothills, or mountains, is truly awesome, except for the roads and the little square mile blocks they make. In my downtown Calgary Studio I started to make fun of the silliness of the roads and the big American cars that everyone loved so much. I was earning a living as a potter, making a lot of planters, lamp bases and some functional kitchen and table ware. All of it had to be trimmed, so I had mounds of scrap clay laying around. I started to pick these scraps up, and make them into funny shaped cars and trucks.

This steered into making wall pieces that made comments on the Alberta landscape, and my worry about what roads and people had done to that landscape. This sideline in my production was noticed by some curious fans, and lead to a couple of interesting exhibitions. The first was called the *Hairy Hill* Exhibition put on by the National Art Gallery. The Glenbow Museum and curator Bruce Ferguson also took interest and they put a show called *A Prairie Sweet* together. My part of the three person show was all wall landscapes with a theme of highways.



▶ (l) **The mountains jump right out at you** *Prairie Sweet* 1973;
(r) **Re u turn** wall piece stone-ware from Calgary 1973

That show travelled all over Canada for a few years, and got my name in print as an artist. Only one piece sold, to the Confederation Gallery in PEI. That told me all I needed to know about making works of so called *high art*. I was either going to continue to do that and get a teaching job, or devote myself to being a good potter. I chose the latter. I did not forget the former.

I was asked by the University of Calgary to teach a three month session. I said yes. I did the job well. I was only working at the University a few hours a week over two days. The pay was ridiculous compared to what the studio was generating. But...what I was working on in the studio suffered. Decision time.

I hated meetings. I didn't like the office. I didn't read my memos. I did not like marking. I finished my job by allowing the students to give themselves a mark that they thought they deserved. Interesting day.

Murals

My interest in the landscape was used in all of the murals that I did while in Calgary and Lonsdale. The Hoffman mural was the influence of being on the Bow River in a canoe.

▶ Hoffman and Associates mural
Edmonton 1971



The Edmonton Alberta Government Telephone mural was about how communications work or don't, and how if we don't protect the environment from our own development, in the end, we will not have anything to protect. The inclusion of the stainless steel in the prairie landscape should tell all.



▶ Alberta Government Telephones mural
Edmonton 1971



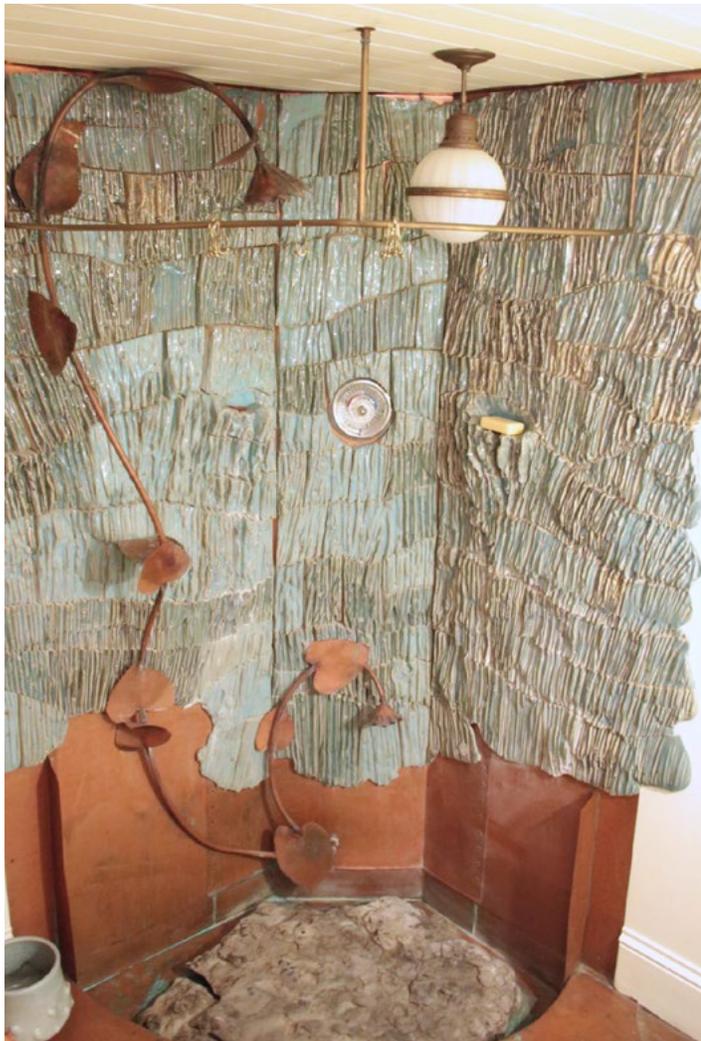
▶ Highway landscape with safety pins
Calgary 1973; Rollin' out the highways
A prairie Sweet 1972; Prairie landscape
with highway 1972
Collection of Confederation Art Gallery, PEI.

The Calgary AGT mural is also about re-thinking the way that land is used, and hopefully the U-Turn will lead to more respect and less damage to a very beautiful landscape.

▶ Alberta Government Telephones mural Calgary 1974



My little shower mural is something that I have always wanted to do. Rain, just rain. I can still see a big wall of it in a downtown office. Call me.



◀ Lonsdale raining shower mural 2003

Eventually Walter left the partnership as his teaching load overwhelmed his time. Ted too wanted to work on his own and in his own home studio so he and I parted on very good terms. I worked in the studio for a good year or so, and then decided to move on to Ontario. My friend and art school room-mate, Jack McMaster, was living in Toronto. He had friends living in Eastern Ontario, and he kept sending me photos of what he was seeing. It looked good.

I made a trip to Toronto to join Jack, and we headed out to where we now live. What I saw was wonderful; old places with lots of history attached. I was leaving Calgary and the fantasy of progress behind.

We put an offer on an old 1840's hotel and got it. 45 years later and with a lot of fixing, it still is exactly where we want to be.

Why make mortar and pestle dishes...

I think every potter should make one of these early in their career. We use ours for all kinds of things, from grinding salt and pepper to making pesto. The reason you should make one early in your career, is so you can eat better for longer.



▲ Stoneware Mortar and pestle Calgary 1972



▲ Raw porcelain mortar and pestle 1993



▲ Myare mortar and pestle 1999

Why porcelain?

My first ceramics teacher, Walter Drohan, had a very curious nature. He knew about porcelain; he knew it existed in China and Europe. There was very little information in the text book at the time. He played with formulations and got some very interesting results. His take on porcelain did not look anything like traditional Asian porcelain; it was more like Scandinavian works of the time. Walt was influenced by Kyllikki Salemharra who was a studio artist at Arabia in Finland, so that influence made sense. For us students it was foreign and difficult. We were still stoneware babies.

Then Bert Borch came on board. He was fresh out of the USA and had all kinds of new information and the recipes too. He shared! He encouraged us all to try it. I did, and still have the first piece I ever made. It's not too impressive.

Porcelain had been skipped in the Leach/Hamada years [1950-60's] when they introduced Asian ceramics to England and North America. They naturally focused on Japanese folk wares, with some mention of Korean ceramics.

They pretty much forgot Chinese ceramics. Period. An odd revision of ceramic history because everything started in China. I was interested from the beginning in Chinese-anything. Don't know why... I was drawn to early Chinese porcelain because of its quiet beauty and simple forms. Later Chinese not so much.



▲ Carved wild rose on celadon Mei Ping 1980s

Quarter Body Formula

Kaolin 25
Ball clay 25
Silica 25
Potash Feldspar 25

Cone 10 Clay Body Formula

In 1967 Bert Borch gave me his formula for porcelain clay. It was a starting point for me, and an important one.

Potash spar 20
Nepheline Syenite 5
Kaolin 37
Ball clay 10
Silica 25
Bentonite 3

[see appendix for more clay making instructions or technical blog on clay making]

I did look at my family roots for inspiration, and passed. My German ancestry on my Father's side and my Swedish ancestry on my Mother's side gave me some choices, but the mysterious Orient won out. As I wrote earlier, we lived on the edge of 'China-town' in Calgary. We ate there. We shopped there. We had friends there. We loved our Chinese neighbours. We were fans!

My interest was helped along by the simple fact that it was such a challenge. In an era where you could still dig your own clay body, making a porcelain clay body from scratch out of glaze materials was a huge test. The only clay body we had vague knowledge of was the old English quarter body.



▲ Hand built electrical porcelain
Calgary 1970



▲ Hand build vases in Lithium blue on Luke's
electrical porcelain 1972

When we set up the co-op studio we pretty much were forced into making either stoneware or fireclay objects. There was absolutely no market for anything in porcelain. I literally tried to give it away. No takers. Nevertheless, every now and again we would clean the place, and have a few days of porcelain in our hands. We used a formula that Bert Borch gave us, and it worked very well. I also got some electrical porcelain from Luke Lindoe. He got it by sweeping scraps up from an electrical insulator factory in Medicine Hat. Needless to say I did not get much, and what I got I used exclusively to hand build-small vases. Thanks Luke!

Against all advice I tried my hand at slip casting porcelain. Those were the heady days of not tolerating anything that was approaching industrial. Potters only do things with their hands. Period.

I met Neils Graveson and went to his workshops. These were sessions about mold making and slip casting. He was an amazing craftsman, and I learned a lot.

The very first work I did with thrown porcelain in the Calgary studios was decorated in **bas relief**.

The first glaze that we [as students] knew was celadon. Walter had two or three versions of it in the buckets that the students used, along with a few other standard glazes of the times. It was very limited. This lack of choice had the effect of making us focus and learn just what each glaze could do. Good practical training. [See harlanhouse.com **technical blog glazes for formula**]

On a visit to Vancouver to see Maureen's Mom and Dad, we were snooping in antique shops at things we couldn't afford. Ring any bells?

I saw a 16th or 17th century Chinese celadon platter with carved floral designs. I knew immediately how it was done. As I mentioned earlier, I was taught bas relief leather carving in my early teens, and had made a small business out of bas relief carved leather purses, wallets and belts. I just transferred that craft/know-how to porcelain. 60 years later, I am still working the bugs out. I still like what the early Chinese potters did for ceramic traditions.

The problem was there was no market for porcelain, no matter how it was made.



▶ My first carved celadon wall plate Calgary 1972



▲ **Hospital memories** mixed media 1970
Maureen was in the hospital. Seeing her there inspired this piece of electrical porcelain and mixed media. It was called "If the truth were ever known". Don't ask...



◀ (l) Sunflower basin 1973; (r) Detail of sunflower drain in Calgary basin 1973
I knew we were moving to Lonsdale and would need a bathroom basin, so I made this one. I carved a sunflower for the over flow drain. The glaze must have had some coarse bits of limestone-something in it, as spit-out has occurred over the years, and there must have been some coarse iron oxide in it too. Spots...lots of spots. Early times for porcelain.

Move to Ontario

That market, or lack of it, got solved more or less by accident. Somehow Virginia Watt found out about our work. She was the manager of the Canadian Guild of Crafts in Montreal. She came to the Calgary studio to see Ted's and my work too. I had made an effort to have lots for her to see, as did Ted. For some reason, she was totally disinterested in my stoneware. She liked Ted's. Instead, Virginia's curious eyes found my stash of porcelain in a storage area of the studio. I was totally surprised, and thrilled that someone actually liked my porcelain. She bought it all. Not long after that, she called and asked for more. This happened quite a few times, and each time it got me more motivated.



▲ Large celadon **Green Apple** mei ping 2003 ▲ Large car on USA flag stoneware Calgary

There was one hiccup. In 1972 I sent a big shipment to Montreal. It was some of the work you saw in the truck and highway section, plus a few more that had both political and environmental stories to tell. I got paid, but heard nothing for a long time. Then we moved to Ontario in 1973 and continued to work. Even though I was now much closer to my best porcelain market, I still heard nothing. So I called Virginia. In no uncertain words, she said "As long as I wanted to raise hell with American cars and flags and whatever else that bothered me, she was having none of it." She informed me that Americans were my biggest collectors, and her best customers. Biting the hand that feeds is not the way to go. I listened. I drove. I packed. I drove home. I packed. I drove. I took new work to replace the old work. She loved it. I drove home with my tail tucked very much between my potter's legs. I had been shown the way.

Virginia Watt became my mentor, and she and her partner Dorothy Stillwell were dear friends to both Maureen and me. Their support and enthusiasm made it possible for me to do what I wanted to do at a time when almost no one

in Canada was making porcelain objects. At that time, the only studio ceramic artists using porcelain were Enid Legro and me. Robin Hopper was using a white stoneware for functional pieces, many made by his wife Sue. Ruth McKinley was also using a white stoneware/porcelain body for some of her wood fired pieces.

It was the early days of making porcelain. Marketing this new art form was difficult. We knew that Craft Shops and Art Galleries were good at what they did. Sometimes, but not all the time. If your only income source is your studio, putting all your eggs in one basket is not always the smartest thing. We decided that we could rent the local Women's Institute space and have our own 'Gallery' exhibitions. The Lonsdale Womens Institute Hall is an old limestone school house, so everything was a fit. We used their tables, and mounted exhibitions. Sometimes my art school friends, Al Wilson, and Jack McMaster would join me with their drawings and paintings.

I realized that most, if not all, of the people we were inviting to those shows knew absolutely nothing about making porcelain. It was new, and needed to be explained. Jack McMaster took photographs of me, Maureen, and the kids working in the studio. We mounted them on board, and added them to the exhibitions. They, like pictures do, answered a million questions. I also did studio throwing demonstrations. I especially wanted children to see that there was another way to make a living...

Taken altogether the education plan worked. It was a bit disjointed, but we learned to deal with that. I did the demonstration. Maureen took over the running of the exhibitions and our business, and the kids kicked in as runners and packers. Yes, we sold things at the exhibitions. We always put only one price on a piece, so it was nice to retail a few pieces once a year.

I added space to the studio in 1975. Part of that expansion is a small art gallery which we have used for years. The combination of Lonsdale Studio Exhibitions and Gallery shows in major cities across Canada and the USA worked for us. The balance made it possible to occasionally pay income tax, something I had always looked forward to.



◀ The mushroom bowl 1970's



◀ Mounted photos by Jack McMaster 1980s

▶ Photos by
Jack McMaster of
making porcelain



Marnie also, at this young age, helped me make some of the glasses. She poured the slip, and watched for exactly the right time to empty the mold. I taught her how to fettle them, and get them ready for the first bisque firing. It was fun, and good work was done. Thanks Marnie!



▲ Slip cast iris wine glass from
about 1975



▲ Abraham helping me load
the kiln



▲ Marnie helping me unload glasses from the kiln
about 1975

I had been selling these wine glasses and glasses without the stem in Toronto at the Ontario Potters Shop. It was going well. The manager in Toronto asked me how the glasses were made, and I explained that they were slip cast by Maureen, or Marnie, assembled by me, fired and then re-fired with enamels. Sometimes there were as many as five firings all for ten dollars retail: six dollars to me. She informed me that there would be no more sold. They did not sell slip cast items. End of chat. That left a taste in my mouth, but I was hardly in charge. I brought them back to Lonsdale, and sold all of them for full retail in my own gallery. Taste almost gone.

When I started to make the iris vases, great interest was shown by the same shop. I told them that they were slip cast, and none would be coming their way. Their choice. I felt better about who was in charge!



(l) Very early iris vase from first mold
(r) Detail of 8th iris vase in light celadon and dark



The Gardiner Museum asked me to speak at one of its events. Maureen and I went, and I spoke about the importance of museums to artists. I used the lunch to reference how artists go to museums and feast visually. I thanked the people who routinely go to museums and volunteer their time. It went well. At the end Maureen and I were standing about, and a woman complimented me on my talk. She then asked Maureen “Do you do anything?” I was tempted to kill. Maureen calmly said “No” and we walked away. Maureen does do a lot, including running our business, working in the studio on various tasks, and maintains an acre of gardens. She does a lot.

▼ **The Glass wall** platter
Maureen in bas relief 1985
This piece is my “kill” piece. It is Maureen pressing against the glass ceiling of doing “anything”.

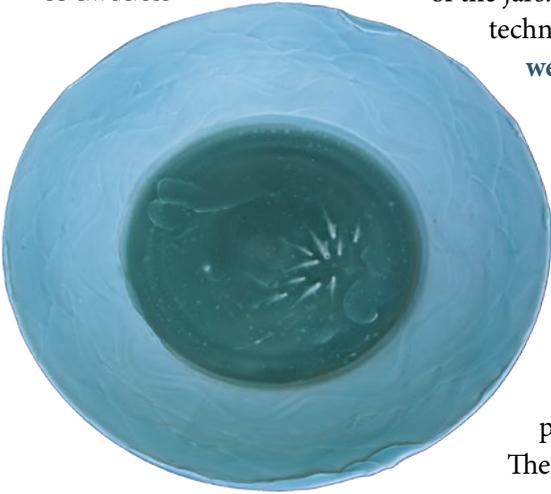
▼ **Last Call** RGM celadon Maureen rising to the surface 1999



Sprigging...

A sprig is a piece of molded clay decoration that is added to an existing form. It is called a sprig because Thomas Whieldon, an important English potter in the early 1750s, called it that. He, along with his more famous partner of 1754, Josiah Wedgwood, looked at small Chinese tea jars, and copied the Yixing Chinese decorations. They were little branch and leaf twig decorations on the sides or lids of the jars. Sprigs. It was Thomas that taught Josiah. The Chinese invented the technique thousands of years ago. Josiah that got all the credit. [See the website for how to sprig.]

Very large pond platter 1991
53 cm across



The duck, fish and frogs and more.

While trying to make flower beds for Maureen and tree holes for me, I managed to end up with a pond. A guy was in our village making holes for hydro poles, so I asked him to do a little work for me. He was able to pound out a hole in solid limestone that was shallow enough for kids to wade in and be safe; it was more like a big bathtub than anything else. I patched the holes, and had a garden pond. We got some goldfish and a few plants and the kids had a ball. Then the frogs moved in...many many frogs. Lovely!



Pond guard



Kid's pond with guards and dragon fountain in fall



Our backyard duck models

our ducks would fly from wherever they were in the yard, and land at our feet. Not a cheap thrill. If we were weeding, they were there too. We had to lift them out of the way. Lovely!

While looking for places to plant more trees, I found an old hole in the rock. This time it was about waist deep and bigger than the frog pond. I patched the holes, and then I had a good duck pond. I got some English call ducks from a local farm, and of course they had ducklings. If you have never held a duckling you are missing one of life's big thrills. We could go out to their little pond and feed them out of our hands. A thrill everyone should try on.



Lilly's baby dish 2006

So now I had ducks, frogs, and fish to use in my work. I admired the fish in their pond and wanted to use them in the bottoms of thrown platters bowls and plates; sort of a pond surrounded by a shoreline. I wanted to do the fish, and frogs in raised bas relief, so I turned to the sprig. I also wanted to have very small images of fish and frogs, but had no idea how to accomplish this.

I spent a lot of time working on the fish and frog sprig. For a very long time, it went nowhere because the sprig was just too big. What I really wanted was the small, very real and very difficult sprig work that Josiah Wedgwood did on his English work. I dislike what he did with his technique, but the technique is beautiful. My problem was how to get the very tiny delicate bit of clay out of a very small delicate sprig mold in workable condition; that is, in one piece. Nothing I did worked, so I needed help.

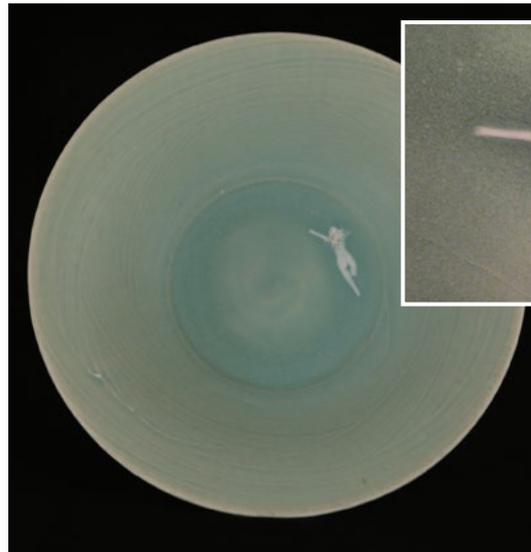
I got an Ontario Arts Council grant to travel to England to research. The British Council kicked in some help too with hotel rooms and escorted tours of British artworks. They were very lovely. Of course, learning about sprigging in the early times meant trying to learn more about all English wares of that period, and the social history that went along with the times. It was interesting work.



▲ **Wall of Fifty** HH celadons on large wall platter

▶ Swimmer platter RGM celadon and floating sprig 1985

When I was in London researching the sprig, I went to the Percival David Foundation Gallery. I was introduced to the curator, Rosemary Scott. She opened the doors of display cases so a potter could touch and really see all aspects of ancient treasures. She was truly wonderful! I noticed a large platter in a deep green celadon that had unglazed sprigs of dragons floating in the glaze. Spectacular. Simple. Common sense. This is my take on their invention.



▲ Detail of swimmer in wall platter
[See appendix to find out more about Sprig Making]

RGM 1999

Grolleg kaolin 30
G200 feldspar 20
400m or 40 micron silica 28
Whiting 20
Iron Oxide 0.5

[see appendix for more variations and history of the RGM glaze]

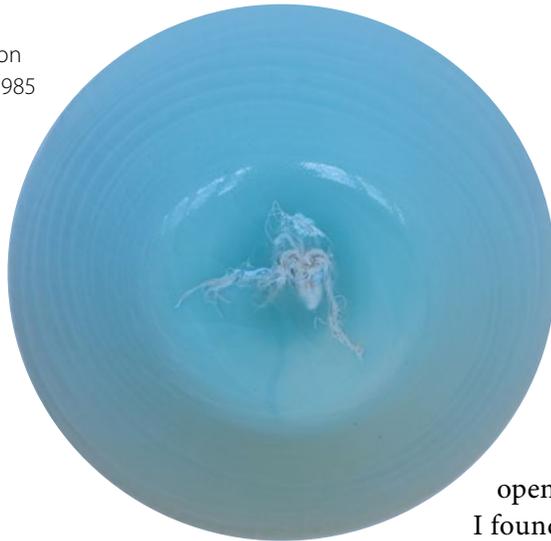
Of course, I ended up at the Wedgwood Museum at Barlaston, Stoke on Trent. I was to have a tour with the curator. She was ill the day of the meeting, so I roamed through the place on my own. There were technical demonstrations on sprigging by women who knew the job perfectly. The women worked in the



▶ (l) Horace working on a Portland vase 1987
(r) A woman demonstrating how sprigs are made at Wedgwood
I also got to talk with one of Wedgwood's demonstrators. He was adding sprigs to a Portland Vase.

▶ Celadon bowl with person arriving from the deep 1985

Like the swimmer, the face is a spig, and the hair is made with a fine screen held over a small hand held extruder. The raw unglazed porcelain is floating in the glaze.



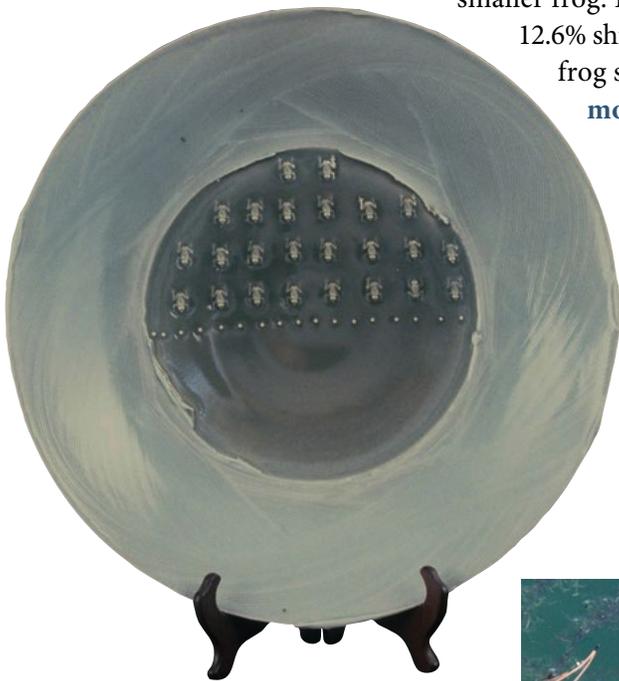
▶ An early sprig and its mold in a British museum

open, so I could even ask questions. They told all. I found out all I needed to know in about ten minutes of observing. There was not a chance in the world that I could have done it on my own. It was just that simple!

When I got back from that trip to England, my head was swimming with ideas for the sprigging technique. Flowers, people, faces, animals and insects: all things we have in abundance.

First was a frog. Since we had lots of frogs, I had the kids bring me frog models in jars. They loved catching them and never hurt one.

I made little frog sculptures. When the model seemed uneasy, I let it go free in the pond. The kids would bring another. They started out at life size but I fired the little sculpture and got 12.6 % shrinkage. I then made a mold of the smaller frog. I pressed clay into it, then fired it, and got a second round of 12.6% shrinkage. After a few more rounds I had a believable and very small frog sprig. This took about a year to complete. **[See appendix for more details on how to make a sprig mold.]**



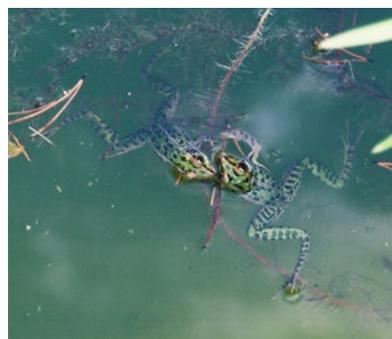
▶ **There is always one** Celadon frog wall platter 1990's



▶ Frog on pond guard



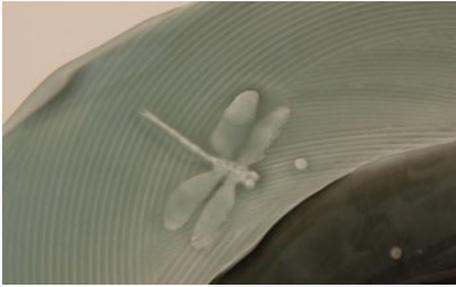
▶ Frogs on face in kid's pond



▶ Frogs whispering in pond



▶ Big frogs and little frogs in kid's pond



▲ Dragon fly sprig



▲ Swimmer and fish sprigs



▲ Heron flashed celadon bowl

I thought the frogs would work well with the fish in the pond pieces. They did, just as in real life. Of course, I got around to the ducks, and a whole lot of other creatures that live in our gardens too. OK, the heron is in the river near our house, but I would love it if it wants to move into our pond.

The duck was an easy choice. They are so beautiful, and adding them to the pond pieces was just natural. Making duck handles was also natural for me. I never picked up a duck by the neck, but did hold them in my hands many times. Not a cheap thrill. In the end, I just used what was at hand, what I saw and enjoyed.



▲ Duck bowl detail



▲ Heron bowl looking inside at fish and heron 1993



▲ (l) Large duck wall platter 45 cm across 1995; (r) Details of duck sprigs in wall platter

Each piece of porcelain made with this technique told a story about our gardens, and the life and times in the pond. To my way of thinking, this gives the work a kind of life of its own that keeps on giving.



◀ Peony bowl sprigged and carved in HH celadon 1987

▶ (l) Swallow sprig on swallow vase 1987
(r) Cup mouth flower vase with a swallow 1987
If I could fly, I would want to be a swallow...





▲ Frog sprig in coffee cup



▲ Tree frog sunning in my cup 2013
A real tree frog in one of my cups sunning itself. It doesn't get much better than this, when you have my history.

The real kicker was putting a frog sprig inside a coffee cup. I did it as a joke, and sent it to my dealer in Toronto. I thought she would just laugh, and she did while selling it. She ordered more, and more and more and soon I was known as the 'guy who makes cups with frogs inside'. The reality is that the cup did not matter. There are people who collect, and frogs are collectable. Who knew?



▲ Frog cups and saucers HH clear celadon 1997



▲ Frogs on Toaster vase 2017

The problem for this potter was that the cup *did* matter. I worked on that. My goal was to get the cups to be the star. Frogs, not so much. Work.

Because of the frog addition I started selling things that otherwise would have sat for decades on a shelf. I have had the experience in our own gallery. I forgot to add the frogs to a set of cups and saucers, and after a few years took them home for our own use. The frog cups are long gone. I stopped using the frog sprig in cups a few years ago, but still get requests. I finally got the cups without frogs, where they should be, into an art gallery!

Years later, after I had stopped putting frog sprigs in cups, a *real tree frog* moved into the gallery for the winter. I have some jardinière's that get moved out for the summer, and in for the winter...so I imagine the frog hitchhiked inside in one of those. I heard it several times, but could not find it for months. One sunny day, I took another look, and found it. Of all places, it was in one of my cups getting warm in the sun.

One of the off-shoots of having ponds and the wildlife in them, was making fountains for the ponds. Mostly because I could, but also to aerate the water for the fish. The very admirable architect Raymond Moriyama, and his son dropped



▲ Raymond Moriyama office dragon fountain 2000

in for a peek in the gallery. They noticed the pond guards that were working in our pond. Raymond had just moved his office into what was an old garage. It still had the pit that mechanics used to work in, under the cars. He filled it with water for an office pond, and asked me to make a pond guard for him. I did. Years later, he called and was in distress. Someone in the cleaning department had cleaned the guards water stained teeth back to shiny white! What to do?

Lighting...

One of the definitions of porcelain is *white, hard and translucent*. Some even added *thin* to this definition. Wrong. This is more of a European definition than the Chinese, which is *hard and white*. I was educated with the European demands, so the translucency element was something to play with.



▲ Lampshade self-portrait in clear HH celadon
I made a pair of these for my very fine friend Paddy Mann. She said she needed lights by her bed, so I made these. It is me sticking my tongue out at her when she gets up in the morning. We really are good friends!



▲ Celadon cup and saucer wall sconce with patinated brass fittings and shadow



▲ Copper stand for stars and moons shade 2014

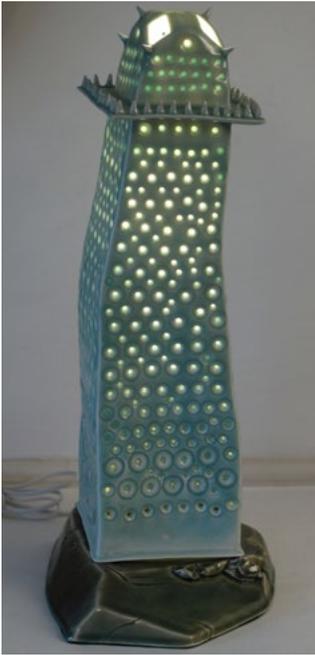


◀ (l) **Bucket** chandelier detail;
(r) **Bucket** chandelier

This lamp sits over our summer table where we cook, and eat for most of the summer. It seemed like a good thing to do. I couldn't help myself when adding the tank-top shirt to the chicken. Got to love the Colonel for all he has done.



◀ Nancy and Bill Gray kitchen boat lamp 2014
Nancy and Bill have been great supporters of the arts for years. They live in Art. It is people like them that keep us creating. When you can't separate Life from Art you are probably on track.



▲ **Alberta Place** Condo
2012
If this looks like an oil derrick, I have done my job.



▲ **Richard Arms**
I did the condo lamps because I got lost in Toronto. I was in the Lakeshore district, which is wall to wall condo territory. I looked for the lake to see what direction I was going to go. Nope. Just condos. I managed to exit, but it took a little time. Time to think.



▲ (l) **Costa Concordia 3** tourist boat; (r) Beaver crew on **Costa Concordia 3**
I did this series when the Concordia ship ran aground in Italy, and when Concordia students went on strike in Montreal. Opportunity knocks.



One of the first things I made in porcelain was a hanging lampshade. The clay body at that time had ball clay in it, so it was only marginally translucent, but still it made for interesting work. Once I arrived at a really good translucent clay body with zero ball clay, the lamps took on a whole new direction. I could now play with light and use bas relief to do that. It was time consuming demanding work, but the results were gratifying.



◀ (l) Hanging peony lamp 2015;
(r) Detail of peony carving on lamp 2015
[There is a video of me carving these on the website.]

The lamps would out-sell vase forms about two to one, so there was incentive. I became aware of the antique hardware for glass lamps and shades, and was able to modify my work to accommodate that kind of available hardware. I developed a series of slip cast shade shapes that could be used for either hanging or standing lamps, and I found ways to throw lamp bases to support the standing lamps. I also used a lot of copper and brass that was forged and welded into lamp stands.



◀ (l) 1978 carved begonia bedside lamp; (r) Begonia carving detail in bedside lamp 1978

I had a begonia in the studio of years. I used it constantly for bas relief carving. When digital cameras came along, I could use all sorts of garden flowers as source material, and I did not have to cut the flowers. Lovely to have them in the gardens, and in the studio at the same time. Bonus.



◀ **In Awe** Iris sculpture-lamp Wood fired iris shades 1992

'In Awe' took some planning. I fired the figure in the propane kiln, and wood fired the shades. Planning paid off when it came to wiring. I eventually built a bird's eye maple plinth for the piece. It resides in Toronto...



◀ **Recumbent** Iris Lamp 1992

The fireplace...

This is my winter work station. I built the Rumford fire place to cook in. It works. The stoneware mural on the floor is there to look at and walk on, and for fire reasons. The highway is there for the cats to use on their way to the cat box. The tree theme is there since we use only firewood to cook on, so when I made the screen, it became a tree, and the Morgan glazed tiles became a tree top. The rock boat shape opening is totally an accident, but I like it. The Morgan glazed lamps were the last thing to be added. It is always a good thing to be able to see what you are cooking.



▲ Fireplace lights on

Functional work

Why so much attention to dinner wares?

Maureen and I both like to cook. We each do different things, but we both share the basic love of good dishes. We also share the idea that first you see the food, then smell it, and finally get to eat it.

Seeing a dish of food is actually a very important concept that all good cooks know well. We are not the dot and squeeze and tong /tweezer types, but still how food looks is important for us. We do this for one another, and not just for guests. It has become a way of life.



(l) Flashed temmoku tulip lunch plate 2006; (r) Detail of tulip sprig on lunch plate

(l) Birthday dinnerware bowl impressed 17 cm across 1982; (r) Inside of impressed birthday bowl 1982

This raised bump in the bottom of the bowl started as an accident. I was throwing off the hump, and while taking a bowl off that hump, slipped and dented it. I looked, and dented the other side, and liked what I saw. After the bowl was trimmed, all the 'dent' finger marks on the outside are trimmed away...magic.



Good dishes are hard to make

Until 1980, I had only made dishes for our close friends and family. No reason. Well, actually there is a reason.

I have never known or understood why some things are so undervalued, and others overvalued. In the good old days, I could throw a tall narrow necked vase and sell it for \$30. Or I could put a hole in the side of it, and cut out the bottom and sell it as a lamp base for \$130. Easy choice. I could not make enough of them.

Same thing for dishes. If I made a plate and added two little holes in the back for a hanger the piece became wall Art, and had value. If I made a dinner plate that was exactly the same it had almost no value. *Just* a dish.

Peach Black temmoku

G200 feldspar 40
Whiting 12
Grolleg Kaolin 12
400m or 40 micron silica 24
Zinc oxide 2
Iron oxide 7
Bentonite 3

This glaze was given to me by Bonnie McCombe in art school. Neither of us knows why it is called Peach Black, but that has not held us back. Thin it is a good caramel brown, and thick it is black with a chocolate pull on the rims and edges. Thanks Bonnie!



Thrown fireclay lamp base early 1980's

I was taught that *handmade* ceramics was an Art form. Now some ceramics are, and some not so much.



◀ Duck handled bowl
I made these dishes after seeing our pet ducks in a snowstorm. They were standing out in the yard, taking on a load of snow, and loving it. If these were filled with fresh, sweet smelling steamed rice, you would have the picture...



▲ Rice grained bowl RGM glaze 2000

To call the modern University system inbred is an understatement. The oldest university in North America started in 1636, and first PhD was handed out in 1861. In all the ensuing years, they pretty much just hire their own graduates as professors. Every six or seven or so years, a new crop of inexperienced ‘masters’ enter the profession to teach what they know. A hundred and fifty years of this takes its toll.

When I started to study and make ceramics, the common belief was that in Japan, the apprenticeship period to become a Master was between 24 and 28 years. Now it is down to as few as two years to be a Master if you have a BA in anything.



◀ Rice grained tea bowl in clear HH celadon 2000
People have asked many times, “do you put rice grains into the bowl?” Nope. Each shape is drilled, then cut to an elliptical rice grain shape with a very fine scalpel. Time. The glaze runs into the holes and creates a clear rice grain. Be ready for some disappointments.

Universities, and more importantly, educated parents, have been telling young people that if they get a degree of some kind, they will avoid being *just* a laborer. They have collectively managed to create an *us* and *them* class society.

The effects are striking. Many university graduates look down on anyone who is in the business of using their hands in labour. Repetitive work is a no no. No rice-graining. A potter uses/needs common sense. Practical intelligence. Universities tend to downplay practical.



◀ Len's Espresso cups and saucers 2013

One of the places where class division exists in the visual Arts. There is Art. Painting and Sculpture. And there are the Crafts. *Sort of Art.* Within that Craft sector, there is hierarchy. In ceramics, the so called production [producing] potter has been relegated to the labor department. The sculptor using clay has been elevated to the Art department. Function is seen by some art professors as putting a limitation on the artist. We can't have that.

Function is also defined by many professors as accessible. It is a bowl. Worse yet, it is *just* a bowl. In the world of abstract inaccessibility the more accessible your work is, the less it is valued as art. Elite ceramics professors around the world, live in what we street potters call a *greenhouse*. They are well paid, work 15 hours a week for 6 months, get a year off every 6 years and live the good life. They meet at large college events and impress one another with anything but a bowl.



▲ Large Marine Wudi bowl with moons

Marine Wudi Glaze/Sinter...

EPK kaolin 50
Barium Carbonate 50
Whiting 15
Copper Carbonate 2.5
Iron Oxide 1.5
Marine Wudi does all of this in one firing

[see appendix for more details and history of the Marine Wudi glaze/sinter]



▲ Scalloped thrown celadon bowl



▲ Jun crackle jar with wrought copper lid 1992



▲ Plum lidded jar clear celadon Nov 1974



▲ Slab oval salad or veg bowl 2017

Crushed Strawberry Copper Red Glaze

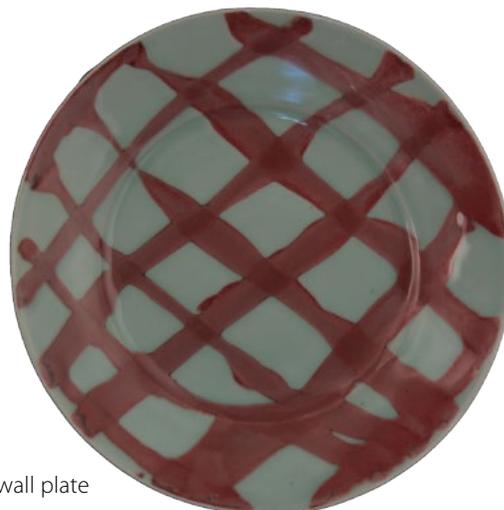
Soda feldspar 52.63 pounds
400m or 40 micron silica 26.3 pounds
Whiting 10.5 pounds
Dolomite 5.3 pounds
Zinc oxide 3.2 pounds
Tin oxide 1.3 pounds
Bentonite 0.8 pounds
Iron oxide 0.5 pounds

Copper carbonate 150 grams
This glaze is best thickly applied...really thick. This means that if it is too hot, it will run, so put a silica dusted cookie under your pot. The iron in the glaze gives it better color, but also if any atmospheric oxygen is in the kiln, the red will turn into a good crackle celadon. Sometimes you get both on the same piece. Bonus.

[see appendix for more details and history of the Crushed Strawberry Copper Red Glaze]

One of the consequences in the ceramics world, is that most professors have taken the attitude that educating potters is not their job. Creating artists is. The line of separation is made pretty clear in most institutions. A potter's functional work is not taught, and sculpture is. In many universities, potters wheels have been eliminated. Us and them...

I remember a friend telling me that when he first went to Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, one of the first things he did was throw some functional work. He had been a good potter for a long time and had a successful studio. He was at NSCAD for a degree, and some long term security; something studio potters do not have. When his teacher saw what was happening, he took him



▶ Studio red and green wall plate



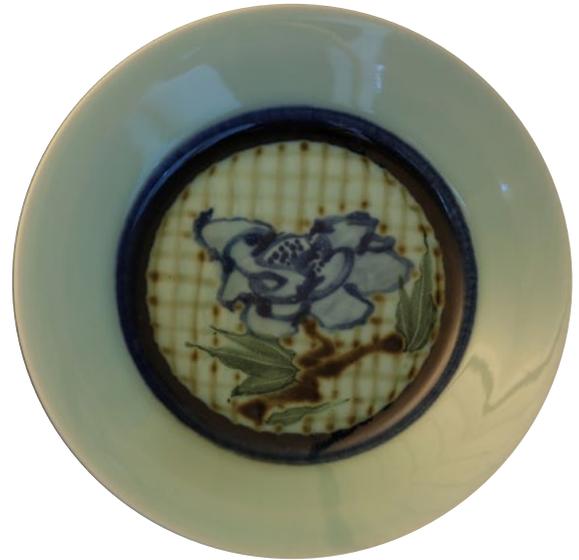
▲ Jun potters tear tea bowl 1981 [see harlanhouse.com technical glazes for Jun formula]

aside, and said in no uncertain terms, “We don’t do functional ‘production’ pottery here.” Period. Pots for flowers yes. Pots to look at yes. Pots that are Art, yes.

One of the first objects this professor likes to show guest potters is his Song dynasty temmoku bowls. Old is OK. New, not as much.



▲ (l) Landscape bowl celadons and temmoku 1980s; (r) detail interior of Landscape bowl 1980s



▲ Wall platter HH celadon with peony drawing in cobalt and iron oxide and chrome oxide 1985



▲ (t) Slab dinner ware set April 2014
(b) Slab bowl for many table uses 2017

In my last exhibition at David Kaye Gallery I featured a lot of slab dinner ware that I had been working on for three years. Two professors from two different colleges were in to see the show. Neither of them approved. Too accessible.

Professors can only teach what they know. There is a huge difference between teaching a person *how to make art*, and teaching a person *about art*. Historically, most of what we study is functional work. Erasing the Potter from that ceramic history is impossible. Dismissing the Potter’s work today is also wrong. We are part of the Ceramic art world. Nothing more nothing less.

Interesting fact. A few years ago, the NSCAD University ceramics department limited the firing temperature to below cone 5 to save money. This means that about half of what constitutes ceramics study simply can’t be done. The future teachers of ceramics come from places like NSCAD. Think about that.

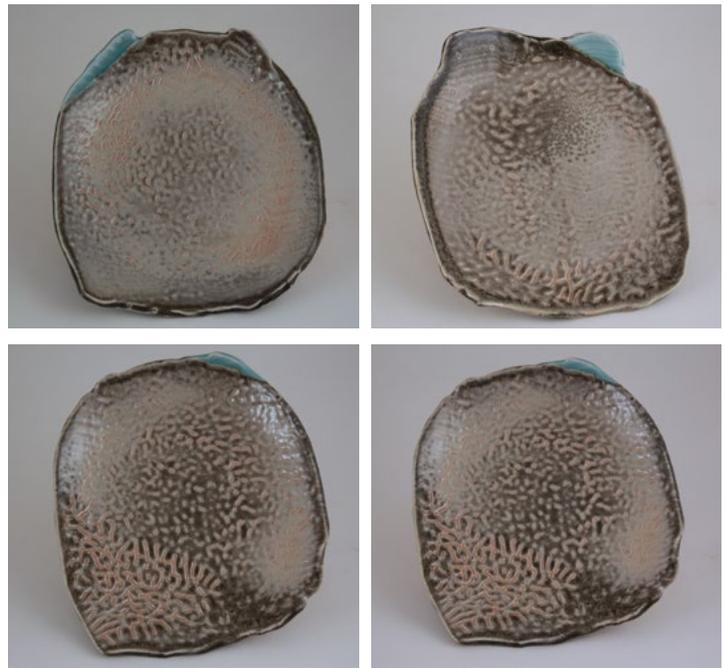
▶ Bisque candle holder 2009; Large scalloped celadon bowl 40 cm across; Carved peony cell phone holder 2015; April 2015 Kimchi jar; Swiss chard dinner plate and squash soup bowl and two frog visitors



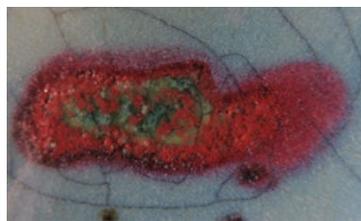
Dishes lots of dishes...

So, generally speaking making dishes is just not worth the bother. There are some exceptions other than making dishes for friends and for Maureen. Canada's Governor General decided to have a dinner set made for the residence, and had a competition to get Canadian potters interested. [GG Ed Schreyer 1979 to 1984] I tried but did not get the nod. It was enough of a party though to warrant a very serious effort, and I learned a lot.

A lot of friends got dinner ware that year as presents, and they seemed pretty happy about that. My skills got better too. My good friend Joan Chalmers and her good friend Barbra Amesbury asked me to make them a set for their new house. They took me aside one evening, and Barbra said to me, "Harlan, think big!" They wanted a five piece setting for 24 people. Talk about big! I worked for over a year on the project, and in the end got it right. It is still in use.



▲ Yves and Steve's shino dinner set 2017



◀ (l) Jun side plate with copper inclusions 1980; (r) Detail of copper inclusion on Jun side plate 1980

This was an extra side plate from Joan and Barbra's dinner ware. I had seen a lot of celadon, so this little diversion was playtime. I think the little bit of copper is delicious.

Harlan's Carbon Trap Shino Glaze (HH Shino glaze)

Nepheline Syenite 8

EPK Kaolin 5

Spodumene 4

Silica 4

Soda ash 2

Albany Slip 0.6

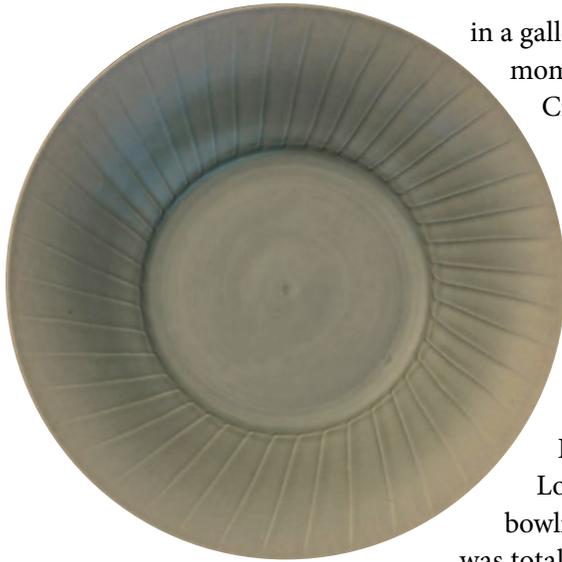
Application can be thick or thin or both for lots of variations. It is a good idea to glaze the inside of your ware and let that dry at least for an overnight. Then do the outside.

I have made several sets for us, using things like birthdays, anniversaries or Tuesdays as the reason. It is still not a profitable thing to do, but I am still doing it. Now and again, there is a light in someone's eyes, and they get it. Those people are rare. Oh, and some time ago I decided that the price on the wall and the price on the table should be more or less the same. Let's just call it Art.

There have been some galleries along the way that saw Art the way I do. There is room for all ceramics



▲ Tulip dinner set



▲ Large scalped platter RGM glaze
1983

in a gallery. Prime Gallery in Toronto was that way, and they did not for a moment try to elevate one area over another. AKAR Gallery in Iowa City, USA was one of the first to run an art gallery on line. They encourage people like me to do exactly what I do well. AKAR along with a precious few other galleries continue to support and encourage potters to do what they do...make Art. Prime is gone. But David Kaye Gallery and AKAR Gallery exist. Check them out: www.clayakar.com and www.davidkayegallery.com

Why bother making cups and saucers...

I saw an old cup and saucer in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London that really caught me. It was a deep saucer that was almost bowlish, and it literally held the cup. It made me think of my father. He was totally uncomfortable with a cup that he had to pinch, and the thought of a saucer would send him into retreat. It wasn't that he was a *mug* man, he just did not like a *tea like* ceremony when he was drinking coffee. If his pinkie finger went up, he was in trouble. Time to leave the room. Tea cups will do that.

I designed my cups and saucers thinking of him. The cup fits the hand very well. If you have to be walking around with a cup of coffee [he wouldn't] at least the saucer [he did not like them] makes it safe and possible. For those of us who like saucers, these are comfortable, and bowlish enough to fit in the hand. The cup's handle is big enough that you can get your index finger through the negative space, and it is wide enough to get a good grasp. The pinky thing will not happen. There are also dots of texture on the handle where the thumb can explore. Just something to do if you like rubbing your thumb on little dots of which there are five. Not all the same size.

I still make cups and saucers, and have for a very long time charged \$100 for each one. I make about 20 cups and saucers a year. I put a lot of effort into each one, making the saucers absolutely unique from one another, even if they are slip cast! It is my belief that decent coffee needs a decent cup.

The best example of how this works happened in our dining room. A friend, Shelagh was here for lunch, followed by a coffee. I watched as she moved the coffee cup and saucer close, turned it around several times feeling the edges and bumps on the saucer and moving it into a comfortable place. She picked up her cup with both hands. Her right hand index finger moved into the negative handle space, her thumb moved over the five little bumps on the top of the handle. Her left hand moved over the cups rim, star belly and eventually to the bottom, where she felt the underside of the foot. With both hands on the cup, she took it to her lips, closed her eyes and gave a sigh. I was expecting her to ask for a cigarette.



One of my big thrills was when Victoria Page set up an exhibition of my work in her Page and Strange art gallery in Halifax. She displayed a cup and saucer all alone on a single plinth in an art gallery! First time in 50 years, and it was wonderful!

◀ Star temmoku cup and saucer 2017

I went to China for a month in 1997

I went to China with a small group of professional clay artists. The trip was organized by Douglas Bamford of NSCAD and by Jiangsheng Li [Jackson Lee]. I had seen Walter Ostrom's slides of China, and talked with Walter. He said, "You have to go...just go."

Jiangsheng Li was a teacher in the Ceramics Institute in Jingdezhen and is the son of a merchant family.

Chinese merchants have been successful for centuries because they do not like rules or rulers. If a ruler makes a rule, they will work around that rule. They are clever.

The craftsmen that invented porcelain over 1000 years ago thought the same way as the merchants do. If something did not work, they just worked around the problem until it either went away, or got solved. Nothing was impossible, and some things took time. I was, and still am an admirer of that Chinese way of thinking. And the tenacity!

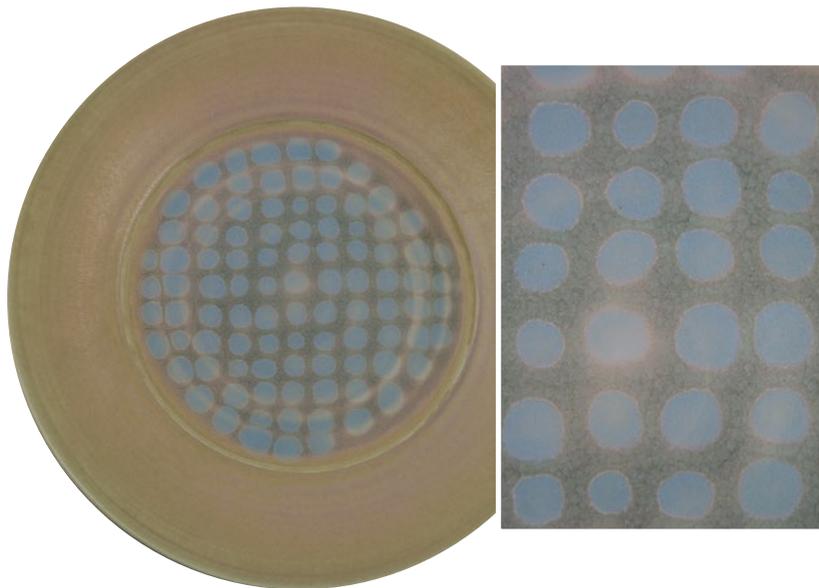
Being in China for a mid-career potter was the equivalent of a seriously religious person being in a majestic cathedral.

I had read everything I could get my hands on about Chinese ceramics for many years. Early on there wasn't much. I love what the early Chinese craftsmen did whether it was in wood, clay, silk or stone. They have a good sense of proportion and a fine tradition of good craftsmanship. And they can cook...

If you are in the porcelain business, it is a good idea to know your history, and who your competition is. Put another way, beware of the 'original' claim. Every time I did something that I thought might be original, I looked again at Asian history, and there it was. *Almost* everything has been done, so there is some *hope*. Keep trying...



▲ Detail of flashed copper red wall bowl Feb 1977



▲ (l) Big wall platter with Imperial Snapdragon Yellow and Jun celadon lights;
(r) Detail of Jun celadon lights on large ISY platter

These lights are the result of an accident. A drip of Jun got on an ISY piece. Bingo! The ISY glaze is applied and then a dot of Jun is added. I use an ear syringe or an eye dropper depending on the amount needed. After that luck kicks in. The reason I call them lights is that the idea came to me while arriving in Toronto. I flew in at night, and noticed all the street lights as we flew over. Magic...

Imperial Snapdragon Yellow Glaze fall of 1999

G200 feldspar 47
Dolomite 9
Whiting 14.5
Grolleg Kaolin 21.5
400m or 40 micron Silica 8
Iron oxide 1.2
Bentonite 1

I liked the yellows I was getting with wood ash, but I wanted something less fluid, and softer in tone. It took just a little over 12 years to get it right. ISY is a glaze that is open to kiln fuming, so if any copper reds, or other volatile glazes are in the area near ISY, it will affect the yellow. This can be wonderful, and of course it can go south in a heartbeat. I used Jun blue and peach black temmoku in combination with this glaze a lot, especially on wall platters. It is a soft glaze and therefore an open glaze so food will stain it...eye candy only.

This is interesting, and restorative if you are a potter. In pre-Islamic Persia, rich people ate out of a shallow metal bowl that had a flattened rim on it. They were made of either gold or silver. The bowls had various kinds of bas relief decorations hammered into the rim or bowl or both. After Islam became the ruling force, eating out of metal was barred. No problem. The potters of the day simply copied the metal bowl shape, and made luster glazes that looked like metal bowls...job done. The Tang Chinese came to Samarra to sell their wares around 850 AD, and liked what the Persians were making.

They took the bowl idea home, and started to make them their way. Over the next few hundred years or so, they found and imported Persian cobalt. This worked very well for the copied ornamentation on the inside of the copied bowl. That cobalt blue and white porcelain was known as 'Mohammedan Blue'. The Yuan returned to Persia, and sold the rulers of Persia their own designs, now coming out of China. The Ming would do the same, but with Persian decoration and Persian script added.

My teacher, Walter Drohan made some of these shapes, decorated them with gold luster and taught me how to do it too. I call them old fashioned or traditional bowls, and they are. Copies of copies of copies of copies, and not one is the same.

▶ (l) Old fashioned bowl by Walter Drohan 1970; (r) Detail of Walter Drohan old fashioned bowl

Walt had the nerve to do his calligraphy with a copper solution over top of a celadon glaze. When that was fired, he went to work with low fire gold china paint. All very traditional, and not.



▶ Small wall bowl cobalt, gold and celadon 1973



▶ Scalloped old fashioned bowl ash and temmoku 1990



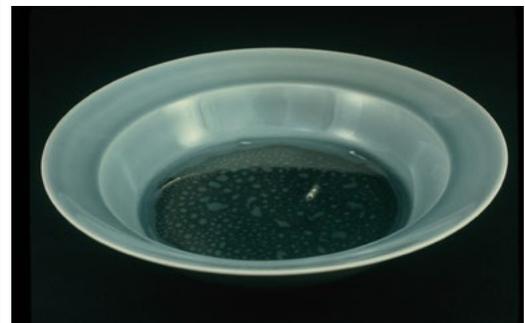
▶ Flashed copper red old fashioned scalloped bowl



▶ Wall bowl out of first Lonsdale firing 1973 Lithium blue



▶ The Gardiner Museum's old fashioned bowl 2001



▶ Old fashioned bowl with fish eating 1989

Knowing that most things have already been done makes it a lot easier to just go ahead and be a maker. So what if your Mei Ping looks like one of theirs is some small way. It is not theirs. Who cares? The important thing is that influence is always around, but out and out copying is just silly. You can't and you shouldn't. Copies are never as good as the original!

Influences. Appropriation. What to do. If you want to be a potter in North America, and are looking for your roots, you have a big problem. There are none. Indigenous yes; anybody else no. Outside of our Indigenous friends, we are all guests in North America. Some of us are not very well behaved either.

My answer to influence is to look at history, take the bits you like, and play. I looked at the techniques used by the old Chinese potters, and used them to make new works. Another way of looking at this: technique is a ceramic language. As a writer, I am not inventing a new language, but I might use one to communicate in a new way. Of course a technique influences, but so did my Mother. Where to stop...

Rules are made to be broken in North America. We are free.

Remember to play

Remember to look—really look at history. All of it. If you want to be part of history you might want to use history.

When I was in China, I was part of a show organized by the Gardiner Museum of ceramic Arts. It was a show called White on White. We went to the opening in Shanghai, and it was quite wonderful. Many of the people that I travelled with had works in the show, so it was old home week in China. This big branch vase was one of my entries. [51 cm or 20 inches high] March crackle was applied to the shoulder of the vase. The tulip shapes were carved out of the crackle glaze. Then wax resist was added over the remaining crackle glaze. Xue Bai chicken skin glaze was then dipped over the shoulder and into the tulips giving me white on white...sort of.



▲ Toaster flower holder with spindle berries 2016

March Crackle Glaze

Nepheline Syenite 56.9

Whiting 3.44

Grolleg Kaolin 17.24

Dolomite 2.58

Silica 15.51

Bentonite 3.44

Iron oxide 0.86

[see appendix for more details and history of glaze]



▲ Garlic head flower vase 1981

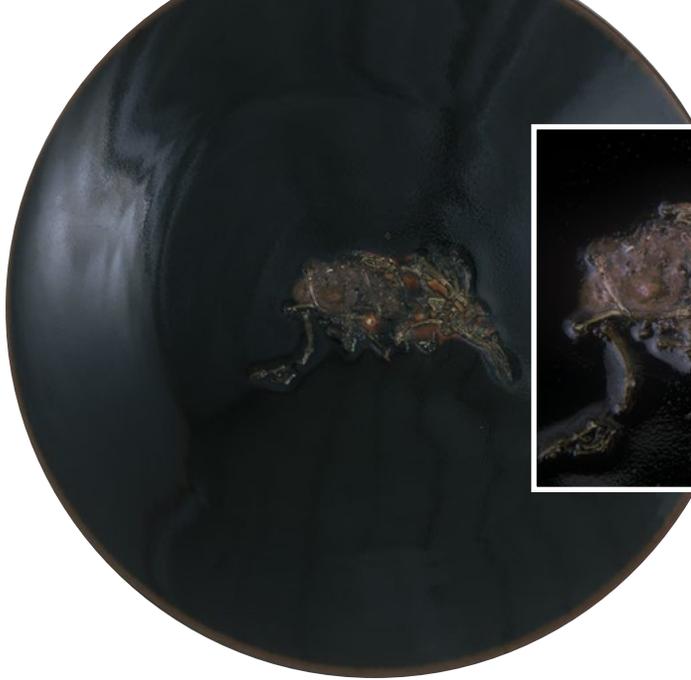


▲ Small thrown flower vase with apple blossom decoration



▲ **White on White** march crackle tulip vase 1995

This statement is attributed to Paul Gauguin. "Art is either plagiarism or revolution".



◀ (l) Thrown temmoku bowl with grackle fired into glaze; (r) detail of grackle bowl

A grackle got into the studio somehow. I did not notice it, and it died. I found out by accident. I saved the poor thing in the freezer, and fired it into this bowl. I had no expectations, and what I got was pretty wonderful. No waste.

Myare Celadon

Grolleg Kaolin 5
G200 feldspar 7.5
400m and 40 micron silica 9
Whiting 2.5
Dolomite 2.5
Iron oxide $\frac{3}{4}$
Bentonite $\frac{1}{4}$

This glaze is named after our daughter Marnie. When she started to talk, we would ask her if her name was Marnie, and she would say "Yes my are". So Myare stuck as her nick-name. This makes just a little over 25 pounds of dry mix.

▶ Function made to not function in a tear flashed Myare mortar 1999

The tear would break off in a heartbeat if this were ever really used. Part of me was sad, and part happy. I do love potter's tears when they present themselves.



The other reason I wanted to see China was personal. China was just emerging as a country with Western influences. I wanted to see what the 'old' China was like, and 1997 seemed like a good time. It was.

The streets were still filled with bicycles and hand carts, and new roads were still being built the old way with shovels and baskets and gazillions of hard working people. There were a few cars in use when we were there, and of course there were trucks and buses. There were still steam engine trains. Roads were there but they were not over-crowded yet.

The new Shanghai museum had just opened, and the Opera house was starting. The only lights on at night were at the airport, and over the outdoor pool tables. The new parts of the cities were gobbling up the old parts, but it was just



▶ Main street by art school with a pig
And yes that is a small pig helping to clean up the street that was below our art school residence. I love pigs.



▶ China Jingdezhen 1997

starting. We were interested in what the new China would look like in contrast to the old China. We were accompanied at all times by young men with Chairman Mao's Red Book in hand. We were referred to as the "Foreign Devils". I only found out about that 20 years later from Paul Mathieu who still goes back for many reasons.

The food. Oh my, food! Jackson Lee is a good cook, and he made requests all over China for good food for his troupe. I can't imagine a China without the world's best cuisine hand in hand. Lovely!

And, to no-one's surprise, we saw a lot of potters in their studios and in their kilns and in their galleries. We saw a lot. Most of it was really interesting, and some of it was just plain wonderful. I can still close my eyes and see a kiln building made out of trees that were chosen so the branches would make the braces for the roof. Wonderful, brilliant carpentry and a truly astonishing building. The kiln was not bad either.

I also got to know some of Canada's professional ceramic artists. Some I already knew, but some I only knew of. It was lovely to get to know them better.

In the end, one other thing about China comes to mind. Nothing I saw was wasted. Virtually everything was recycled. That was over 20 years ago, and before their move into manufacturing. There are new recycle problems in New China but they try. Nobody is perfect.

That Old China still lives well in my memory. The New China not so much.



◀ Ming kiln building with angled chimney showing



◀ Kiln vase CBNL glaze with scraffiti 2007 35 cm high

I made these flower vases thinking of that old Chinese kiln, and its angled chimney. It was angled because of prevailing wind conditions. Common sense. Love it.

▼ Detail of drawing of kiln door in CBNL glaze



◀ Reused ceramics to walk on
▼ Retaining wall of pots



CBNL Glaze (Christopher Broadhurst Night Landscape glaze)

Our friend Chris is a painter, and for a time did some night landscapes that were very interesting. When this glaze/sinter came out of the kiln, it reminded me of his night landscapes, so I named it after him.

CBNL Glaze

Grolleg Kaolin 50
Barium Carbonate 50
Iron Chromate 2
211 Blue Oxide 1

[211 Blue is a product from The Shepherd Color Company, from Cincinnati, Ohio and is a drum dry mortar color. I have no idea what is in it...]

[see appendix for more details and variations of glaze]

The butter dish...

Like so many things that I have made, the butter dish was a request. Jack McMaster was an art school friend who ended up living in Lonsdale for almost twenty years. He excelled in graphic design and calligraphy. Every time I needed an invitation I went to Jack. When I tried to pay him, he would say “Catch you later.” Later for me would start with a phone call. “Jack, I am in the studio. Can I make you anything?” On one of those occasions, Jack said that they could use a butter dish. I had never made a butter dish, but said “Yes”. This is my ‘invitation’ butter dish. Jack was happy.



▲ (l) Butter dish 2012; (r) Butter dish detail 2012



▲ Starry McDee for Tea

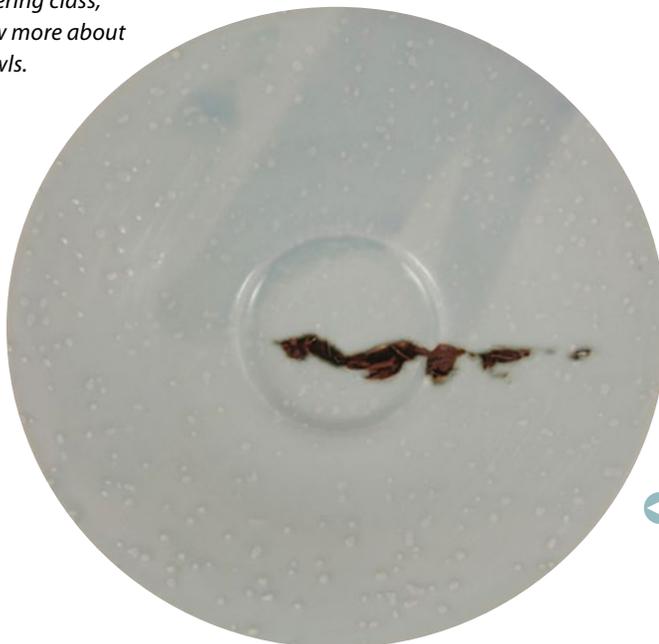


▲ A jewel of a tulip bowl 2008
Think about drawing, just drawing—no tools—that Caslon “O” in lettering class, and you will know more about making good bowls.

Bowls as stories...

I love making bowls. They can be easily made, and usually when they are easy, they are awful. I like to work towards the more challenging, simple and elegant answer. Knowing how to see helps. You have to work on this. The form of a good bowl is subtle, and in a way, very mysterious. *Seeing the forces that space occupies is critical.*

When they hold something, they function quite well. But when empty, that is when they shine. I think the open space that bowls offer is the inspiration for any kind of story you want to tell.



▲ Large tulip bowl 2007 34 cm across and 20 cm high

◀ Snow scape wall bowl
When a bowl goes to the wall, it becomes a round wall painting.

Whether it is prairie winter storm or a pond scape inside the bowl, it begs and calls for someone to look in and get involved. It gives the bowl a job to do when not holding a salad or some mandarins. I think that is honorable work.



◀ Shelagh's birthday bowls drawing



▲ Harlan throwing off the hump in Lonsdale 1975

◀ Poured temmoku and celadon bowl 1979
This started as an accident, but once I saw what these two glazes did to bowls, it was so interesting. This bowl was round when I glazed it, and this is what happens when two glazes "work" the shape in the kiln. Porcelain is pyroplastic totally explained in one bowl...



▲ Duck bowl detail



▶ Cobalt soup brush drawing on a soup bowl 2000
Drawing a bowl on a bowl has been so much fun. This is cobalt underglaze decoration. It is a lot like working on a watercolor painting. Which is to say, you only get one chance. Screw it up, and you are toast. Play...



Cobalt Slip Formula from Alberta College of Art 1960's

Albany Clay 15
 Cobalt Oxide 2
 Ocherous clay 5

Teapots and more teapots...

I make art. It is always a good idea to know exactly what that means. The Oxford dictionary is a fine place to start.

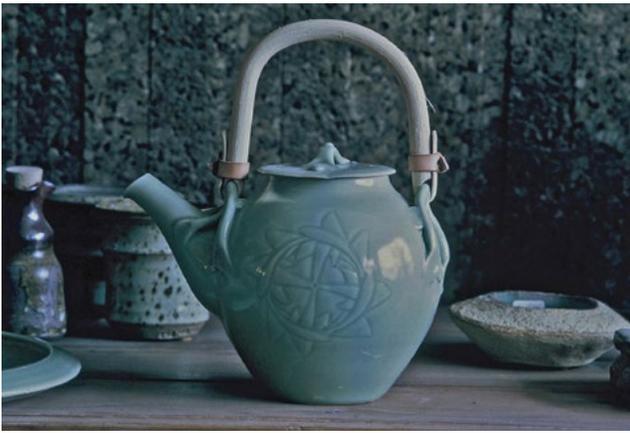
Art *Put together, Join, fit. Skill as a result of knowledge and practice. Human skill as opposed to nature.*

The principle is that *art does not just happen, it is made to fit by humans.*

Make has two old roots. One word is Praktis and the other is the old word Poiesis. Praktis means to work habitually, consistently, constantly...



▲ Marine Wudi McTea pot



▲ First porcelain tea pot 1972 Calgary



▲ The plum tea pot in clear HH celadon



▲ HH Celadon tea pot with thrown handle 2005



▲ Prime tea pot 2003



▶ Oxidized rose tea pot 2003
I really felt awful when I unloaded this piece. I had high hopes, but since it was yellow instead of green, it was a failure. Still, I liked it, so brought it home to use. Over the years, I have grown to think it is one of the best accidents I ever had.

and has turned into our word **practice**. Think of doing scales at the piano. Poiesis is an old word that means thoughtful creative work, and it has turned into the modern word **poetry**. The combination of Praktis and Poiesis: making art is a thoughtful practiced act. In the end, one has to practice the skill set while thinking about what an object conveys.

Thoughtful art. Made to fit. This has teapot written all over it!

One of the things we absolutely had to make in art school was a teapot. I now know the reason after many years of wondering. Almost all the skills a potter needs to know about are covered in the making of a teapot. Made to fit really covers it. My first attempts were pretty awful, which is why you must make more, and better. Along the way, I found that things got a lot better but never easier. That tells you that there is always more to learn, and the teapot invites you to do just that.

I wish every professor would read the following:

Claudia's body language changes when she talks about fabrication, about making and making and making. "This is a creative field, but that doesn't mean that you get to create all the time. You have to do the rote thing, you've got to practice your scales, you have to know all your positions. I like to tell kids there's so much opportunity in repetition-it means you can do it better this time than you did last time. You can always do it better. And until you've done it a thousand times, you haven't done it. Until you can fix it, you haven't done it at all. You get to make it the best and then make it better. You get to understand it inside and out, you learn it well enough that you can teach other people."

—These are the words of Claudia Fleming, a very fine American baker. As written by Peter Meehan in the Lucky Peach.

Let me be clear. Creativity is important, very important. The gathering of skills to put that into reality is also important. It is important for all aspects of art, to do the job well. Think back to the bicycle spoke and hub. Create. Work. Re-think. Retreat. Repeat.

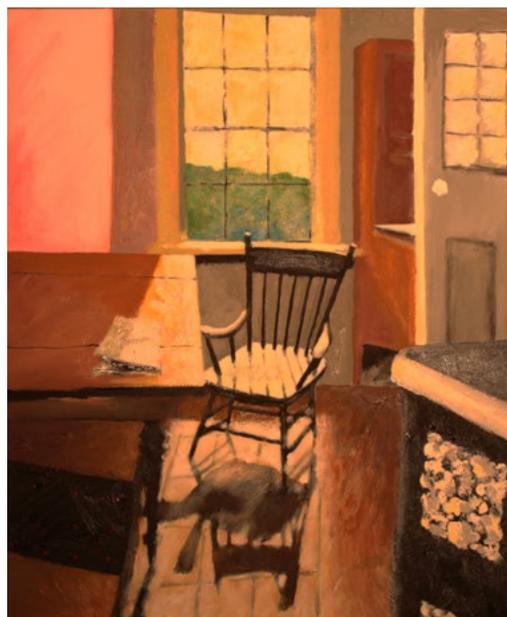
When I decided to make only porcelain objects, teapot making became a challenge. One thing at a time had to be adjusted. Since I was doing some slip casting, it made sense to cast lids and spouts. This made the whole process go a lot more smoothly for me, especially the spout. Thrown or hand-built porcelain has a serious memory. This means a thrown spout distorts at high temperatures, and the cast one does not. I managed to throw spouts and compensate for the unwinding distortion, but the slip cast spouts just made making more fun and a lot more predictable. Same thing with the lid. Once I decided on a shape and type of lid, the only restriction was making the size of the lid opening. Not a big deal in the large picture.

This is why identical [almost] formulae for the slip and throwing body makes sense; parts are interchangeable. I also used large cast slabs to make the shadows for many of the later tea pots for the same reason. A rolled, or thrown slab will distort every time, while the cast slab remains stable every time. Good to know if you are making something that has to fit exactly.

I always tried to make tea pots that actually worked. They had to pour well, and not drip. Water, or tea in this case, does not run up hill. Plumbing 101. I applied that to the making of spouts, and the concept worked. Most tea pots do not get a lot of use, so sitting around is what they do. If you are just going to sit and be looked at, it might be a good idea to look good. Fine, strong forms are not easy with tea pots, but that is what I tried to accomplish.

Why do some of the pieces have shadows?

My first years in art school were mostly spent on paintings. One of my painting instructors, Illingworth Kerr, made it painfully aware to all of us that shadows were very important things. They tell where the light is coming from, and they can't be separated from what made them.



◀ **Kitchen still life** oil on canvas 2017
3 x 4 ft 91 x 76 cm

I walked into this still life, and then ran out the door to the studio. I had a canvas prepared, so grabbed it and a piece of carbon and ran back home. Draw draw draw. Back to the studio to paint. Timing sometimes is everything.



▲ Tea pot in celadon with carved design 2007



▲ Temmoku tea pot 2017



▲ Reeded tea pot with emerging shadow in Marine wudi

Oh, and they are not, repeat not, grey. Never grey. OK maybe a little grey but never just grey. And, he said, "They have form". Look for the form. And, he added, there are things going on inside the shadows; important things that tell and inform about what is making the shadow. Buck, as he was known, loved shadows. Me too.

So we were made aware that shadows were important and intrinsic to what a painting could be. Pay attention and make Art!

When it comes to making Art and making a teapot there is a challenge; a misunderstanding. For many in the art world, the words 'Art' and 'Teapot' cannot be in the same sentence. Even university art teachers who teach ceramics would agree, or they seem to by example. Students across North America mostly do not make functional teapots in university ceramics classes. This is because their teachers couldn't make one if they had to, but mostly because teachers think of tea pots as craft and not art. They are wrong.



▲ Rose tea pot with Marine Wudi shadow with drawing 2003



▲ Rose celadon tea pot and its CBNL shadow trivet



▲ Reeded tea pot in celadon with Dynasty shadow carved



▲ Reeded celadon tea pot with Marine Wudi shadow 2003



▲ Carved rose tea pot with Myare shadow



▲ CBNL tea pot with scraffiti and Dynasty shadow

My answer to this problem, is to add a shadow to a teapot. It changes the rules and re-enforces them as a works of Art. More than that, adding a shadow to a teapot gives the teapot a home. You cannot separate the shadow from the thing that made it. Teapots are usually kept in a cupboard or on a shelf in wait. Now that the shadow comes with a teapot, the whole object has to be kept in a more open, important place. *A place where a work of Art might like to live.*

The shadows are always the real shadows of the teapot. I just shine a light on the piece, and draw the shadow as it appears. Some of the shadows seem to have a life of their own. Some are growing new versions of their teapots. Emerging spouts and lids rise out of the dark. Some have accepted the drawings that used to be on their teapot. Mysterious devils...

Some of the shadows also have little feet at one end, so the shadow gives birth to a new, little shadow. Who knew shadows could be parents? Art works.

Why would a prairie dog be making boats?

My good friend Paddy Mann asked me to make her an olive boat for her dinner table. I said yes. I had no idea what an olive boat was.

I made her a boat that held olives. It was not what you might think. She liked it, and I was on to boats.

The boats that failed came home. Maureen always helps me unload the kiln, and when she saw the failed vessels, she asked for one of them. OK, two or three of them.



▲ Take home olive boat with no lid 2001

Maureen filled olive boats with water, floated candles and flowers in them, and added the whole thing to our dinner table. What more could you ask for if you are a potter? I know a good idea when I see one, and Maureen has good ideas. I loved that the water was on the inside of the boat, the light was coming from below and the flower could be anywhere. All wrong, and all right. Accident. Thanks Maureen.



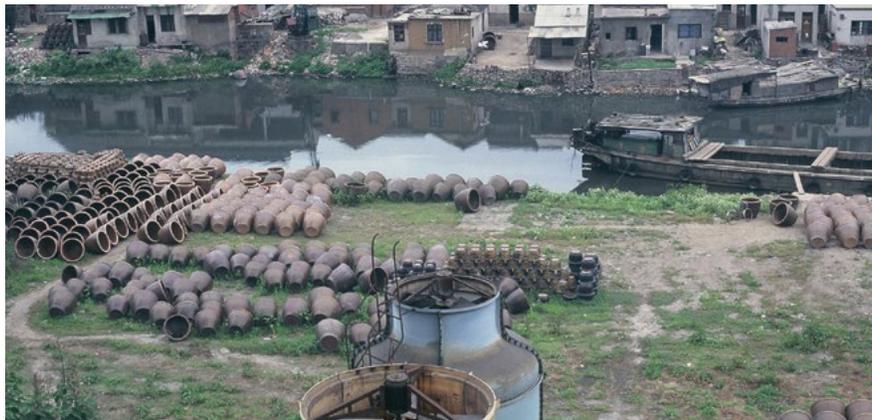
◀ **Maiden Holy Chow** 2008

This was made in response to finding out that McDonalds was opening in Beijing. I imagined that a lot of Chinese might like to send them back.

I also managed to hit a raw nerve in this accident. I used to love canoeing in Waterton Lakes. Camp Inuspi had old canvas covered Peterborough canoes that were beautiful and completely functional. As teenagers, we would head out and explore the lakes like we were the first people ever to have been there. It was truly beautiful, and still is in my memory. When I look at boats, I see beauty in the lines. After that, almost anything is possible.

When I was in Yixing, China I saw boats like I had never seen before. I was supposed to be looking at tea pots and stacks of other pots, and I was. I also saw boats that reeked with stories. They were small river boats that made thousands of trips while filled to the gunnels with water jars. They were family run and family owned business adventures with the whole family aboard, and they were a happy crew. The boats told me about where they had been: dirty rotten stinky waters, but the kids that were on the boat were clean, happy and energetic, as were their parents.

I went to work making the boats into flower holders, and candle holders. I had a fine time doing it. They morphed into all kinds of vessels along the way, and became an important part of my work.



▲ Boats with water pots in Yixing 1997



▲ Flower boat with candles 2002



▲ **G W Bush aircraft carrier** single flower boat with one dim candle aboard
This was done in response to the announcement that President Geo. W. Bush made aboard an aircraft carrier. Just barely into the war he declared on Iraq, he announced that it was over, and they had won. Years later...



▲ Rose boat with Alex in mind 2007



▲ A Rose boat 2007



▲ Yixing Marine Wudi single flower-candle holder 2000



▲ Single flower boat Marine Wudi glaze 2002; A Yixing single rose boat 2007; A single flower and candle Yixing boat 2007; **Definitely a house boat** flower holder 2007

Narcissus bowls...



▲ Myare glazed bulb forcing bowl

We both like spring flowers a lot. When we were younger, we could not wait for spring. We bought bulbs and forced them in the window wells of our house. Of course, we needed special bowls so I made narcissus bowls. The shape has to echo and cradle the bulbs. When they are watered, they expand into the shape, and become tight. When they flower, they don't fall over as a result of the tight fit. As it turns out, they make great bowls for reaching into with your bare hand to gather a handful of Maureen's hot salted almonds. Popcorn. Humus. Salad. Floating flowers.



▲ Harlan at 60 throwing off the hump

It is a shape that, when made smaller, really works for soups on the table; it is a good closed shape that keeps things hot or cold. They also work well for anything that is passed around the table with a spoon—condiments dry or wet for whatever you are going to eat. Oh, and they're a lot of fun to make. I throw them off the hump.



▲ Narcissus bowl in celadon with a scalped wall 1982

▼ March crackle bulb bowl 2004



▲ Narcissus bowl in March crackle with a flash



salt boxes...

Our friends Darla Rhyne and Alex Kisin have been supporters for our whole lives. Alex asked me to make a salt box for one of his dear Italian friends who collects salt boxes. I said yes. I had no idea what a salt box was.

Alex was the first person to buy a wood fired vase in an exhibition. It was a shape inspired by nuclear reactor chimneys. Alex was working with a group called Energy Probe. He gave the piece to them. Alex is a star!



◀ salt cellar tulip sprigs celadon and lacewood 2015

Why the mallet vase...

A gift of some *two metre high delphinium flowers* lead to mallet vases. Chris Broadhurst likes all things big. He brought us the delphiniums as a present. For a potter to receive such a gift, and have nothing to put them in, was not only an embarrassment, it was just silly. Of course we would have a metre high delphinium pot. Everyone does!

This became an accident looking for a place to happen. For a few years I spent time making pots that would hold a delphinium, some small and some very large. Unintentionally they morphed into a variation of the Song Dynasty Mallet vase. It was really a lot of fun to play with the idea of a mallet and at the same time be ready if anyone ever gave us delphiniums again. They did. It is really sweet to watch flowers fall off the branches to the floor, creating a carpet of delphinium flowers that dry in place. Lovely!



▲ Mallet vases in March and Jasper crackle 1993



▲ **Recumbent plum vase** ready for work 2001

This is a variation of the mallet vase. It is a single flower vase using the mallet form. It lays down on three little plum shapes, and has plums carved into the body. The opening between plums and leaves is for the flower. You knew that...

▶ **Recumbent plum vase**
standing up for a change
53.5 cm high

◀ Mallet iris scraffiti vase and admiring self- portrait shadow; (inset) Detail of mallet vase admiring shadow



Single flower holders...

In my early years of making, I read just about anything I could get my hands on about Asian Art. China was a closeted place. Exotic. I knew I was deeply moved by much of it, and knew I was being influenced by it. I wanted to know why. The more I read, the more insight I got. Asia is all about common sense! Everything makes sense. I love that.

One of the things I got my hands on was a book on Japanese flower arranging. I came across a Japanese man who did a most remarkable thing. When he was finished with his Ikebana arrangement, he took his flowers out to a special mound, and laid them down with both hands palm up.



▲ Single flower vase with iris vase 1998; (inset) detail of cobalt iris decoration on vase in single flower vase



◀ Chalmers Award single flower bowl; (inset) detail of Chalmers Award vase in single flower vase

I threw this piece, and altered the bowl shape. It warped in the kiln, to this shape. I love it when you are not in charge, and things go well. This piece got me the Chalmers award...

He gave them a final show of respect by placing them carefully and gently on the mound. A *thank you* reliquary moment.

This gave me pause for thought. Could I make a vase that was symbolic of his mound? Could I *lay a flower down in water*, in small vase, keep it alive, and emphasize my respect for it? The reliquary single flower vase was born.

These shapes are hard to make. I throw the flat bowl, leaving a thick bottom. When I have finished throwing the bowl, I reach into the thick bottom and pull a little cylinder. I close that cylinder to form a void. After the piece is trimmed, I cut into that void and leave the image of a vase in the negative. Not easy.

I made a lot of variations using this concept, and I still like making vases that hold only one flower. A bouquet is decoration: a single flower is a study.

I had a well-known Canadian Ceramics teacher guy and his wife here for dinner with Maureen and me. All he did all night was talk ceramics shop talk. His wife was also a good potter, and she knew better. He did not. Boring. Long night. The food was good. Table talk vase for a wild daylily was the result.

I wanted to take the single flower idea to the wall.



▲ **Table talk** wild day lily single flower vase 1999 40 cm high; (inset) detail of **Table talk** wild day lily vase 1999

The flower goes into the talking vase on the side of the vase. You knew that...

▶ (l) Slip cast wall vase with vase of sweet peas 1997
I fired a piece of ni-chrome kiln wire into the vase to hold the flowers.

(r) Slip cast single flower holder with carved flower vase



Maureen and I both find that having a low, flattish vase on the dinner table with one flower in it is a good thing. The small low flat arrangement means that you can see your friends while eating dinner, make eye contact, and pay attention to all things. Hotel flower arrangements are annoying in the extreme at a dinner table. Bigger is not better.

If you do have an off-table need for a single flower vase, I made these.



▼ (l) ISY single flower vase with celadon insert; (r) detail of crackle celadon insert in single flower vase



◀ (l) Single daylily flower vase on an ISY flower vase; (r) detail of single flower vase on daylily vase

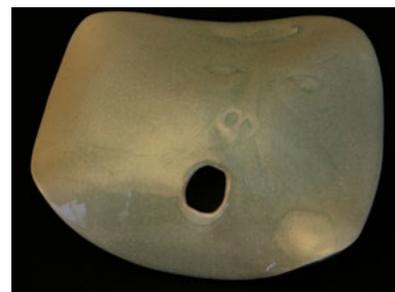


▲ **Paddy Pan** squash single flower vase 2017



▲ **Paddy Pan** ISY single flower vase 2008

I named these after my friend Paddy Mann RCA. She designs and makes beautiful clothes. She makes very good clothes—very fine Art.



▲ detail of **Love that Garlic** pillow 1999

I made the pillow shape so we could have a pillow on the dining room table. It is a self-portrait, and is funny with a flower, or an asparagus cutting in it. Life's short...



▲ Myare and celadon arranger roses and daffs

Why tulips...

Maureen and I both love tulips, and always have. We try to plant a few each year so we have a lot of them. Spring flowers are about the only flowers that we cut and bring in the house.

I have always loved the way cut tulips adjust to the room, and especially how they move and dance as they get older in the vases that I have made for them. We also like the leaves and what they do for color and movement. I like them at all stages, closed, or wide open and almost finished. Always interesting and evocative.



◀ Zack's chewing pot ISY reeded 1998

I have this piece because it has a bit of the kiln fused to its shoulder. When our grandchild Zack was really little, our daughter got photographer Bob House [no relation] to take a picture of him. She borrowed this vase, and you will see in the appendix what they did. Lovely...



▲ Tulip vase in Xue Bai glaze 1995



▲ Tulip flower holder Myare glaze 2000



▲ Core sample vase
Marine Wudi 2002

*I came across this Japanese definition of a perfect vase. **A rock with a hole in it.** That's it. This core sample is my take on that definition.*

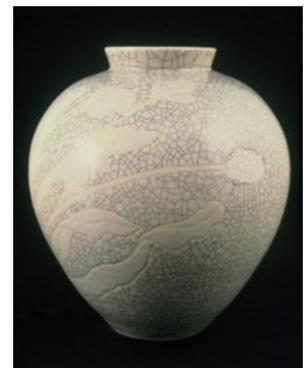
▲ Tulip guard vase 40 cm high 2000

Like most people who garden, we have squirrels. They like tulips. Breakfast, lunch and whenever. The only good thing is that they rarely get all of them. This is me guarding some recently planted tulips. It did not work. Squirrels 6 Harlan 0. I have done this on platters too. That has not worked either, but I like doing it. We will plant more next year.



▲ Threat of winter tulips self portrait in oil on canvas 2007
91 x 122 cm

I swore that I would never buy tulips out of season. I did. More than once. This painting is a result of my bad judgement.



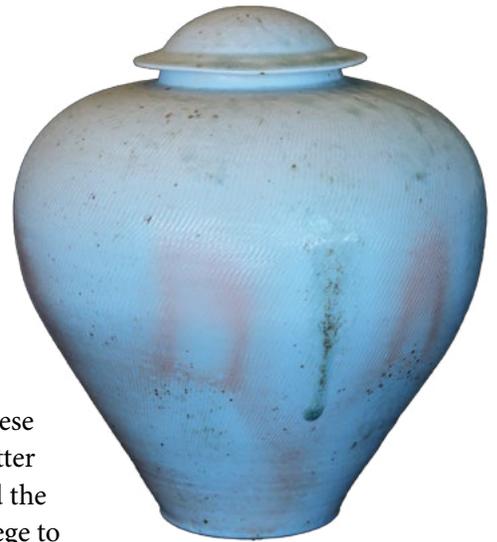
▲ March crackle and Xue Bai tulip vase

Lonsdale Tobi Ganna... a variation on Tobikanna

Tobikanna means jumping or chattering tool, and that is exactly what happens with this technique. The reason it is named Lonsdale Tobi Ganna is interesting.

I had tried the traditional method of the jumping tool on platter bottoms, and it worked but only in a limited way because it really was just a weak copy of what the old Japanese craftsmen did.

I wanted more. So I made a tool out of a hacksaw blade that looks like a trimming tool but much larger and much sharper. It works perfectly as a jumping tool. Right weight and right curve. I could not find anything in Japanese history that looked like what I was doing. When Japanese Mingei master potter Tatsuzo Shimaoka was doing a workshop in Toronto I took a few pieces, and the tool, to show him. Tatsuzo was a Japanese living treasure, and it was a privilege to meet him. I asked if he knew of any Japanese precedents, and he did not. That is when he told me that I should call this technique *Lonsdale Tobi Ganna*.



▲ Maureen's wood fired Lonsdale Tobi Ganna lidded jar 1980s



▲ (l) Wood fired Lonsdale Tobi Ganna flower vase 1980s; (tr) Wood fired tobi ganna and peach black vase; (br) Wood fired small Lonsdale tobi ganna vase

You need to pay very close attention to the condition of the vase when using this technique. Too wet and you will be trimming, and too dry and you will get dust and not much for markings. Practice...

▶ (r) Wood fired Lonsdale tobi ganna vase 1983; (l) Detail of Lonsdale Tobi Ganna wood fired 1983

The speed of the wheel will vary with each piece, and ultimately that will be yours to control, along with the positions of your hand and the tool. Different angles will give you different marks all on the same piece. Simple!



Weeping willow...

How is it that you always want what you can't have?

I love weeping willow trees for any number of reasons. The color of leaves, shape of leaves, position of leaves, and color of bark; harbinger of spring.

We have very shallow dry soil on a bed of limestone. Naturally, I planted a young marsh loving weeping willow in the backyard. It seemed happy. Along comes another potter, Robin Hopper. He said that if I wanted to keep using our water well, I would have to get rid of the willow, and told me exactly why. Willow out, and replanted down by the Salmon River. Harlan and Willow not happy. So I use the shape and color of the willow in brush decoration, always thinking of that tree and what could have been.



▲ Flattened weeping willow flower vase 2000



▲ Weeping willow crackle vase 1985



▲ Weeping willow bowl 1985



◀ (l) 1977 Iris vase; (r) detail of 1977 celadon iris vase

The iris...

When we moved to Lonsdale in March of 1973 there was nothing but winter grass showing. One of the first things that we saw that spring was a group of wild iris growing in a rock crevasse. We both loved them. We had almost no experience being gardeners, and since we were under 30 with two small children gardening took low priority, very low. Nevertheless, we loved those little blue iris.

Maureen's mother Helen was a fine gardener, and my family always had a vegetable garden. We knew what gardening was but did not have the time.



◀ Celadon and watercolor blue iris vase 1977; (inset) detail of Iris vase showing cobalt watercolor technique



◀ **Crown Sterling** watercolor 1980; (inset) detail of iris watercolor and picket fence



▲ Iris and Picket fence vase 1980

That changed. Like my father, I love trees, and Maureen, like her mom, loves flowers. It pretty much unfolded that way. I would look for interesting trees to bring home, and Maureen would want something that blooms to go alongside. Fair and equal was always our way. I took great pleasure in making rock beds for anything that we could grow. Since we are on shallow dry soil on a bed of limestone, rocks and raised beds were natural and necessary. It turns out that those little irises that we inherited were important for other reasons. They could be used as a decorative element in my porcelain. Happy accident.

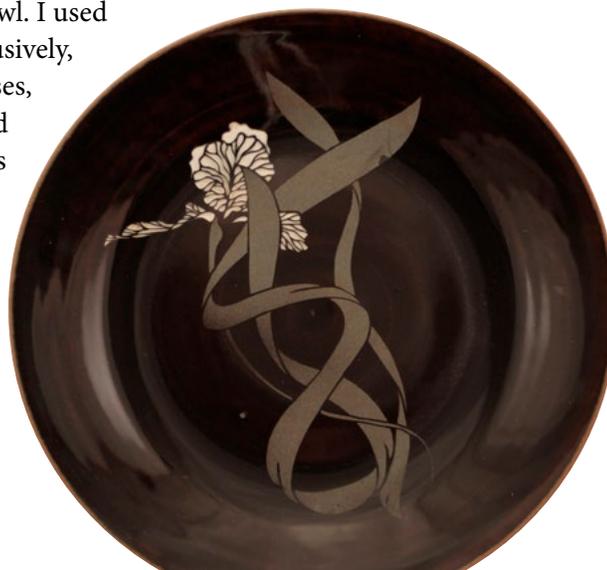
I started out on the iris highway with brush in hand, and cobalt slip in a bowl. I used Asian calligraphy brushes exclusively, because they work. In some cases, I also used chrome oxide to add green leaves. Eventually, the iris and the leaves were used in bas relief carved decorations. The better I got at that, the livelier the iris image became.



◀ Branch vase with cobalt blue Iris drawing 1994

The cobalt brush drawing is done over the applied glaze. It is then worked on with fine scratching tools. The technique is similar to the Cizhou work mentioned earlier crossed with watercolor techniques. Keeping the energy is what you want. It is easy to fall into the detail death trap.

▶ **White Night** Sandblasted Iris temmoku wall plate



▲ Iris flower vase 1985 cobalt and chrome brush drawing

Finally, it occurred to me that bas relief was not enough, and full three dimensional iris flowers were the answer.



(l) **Me and my Iris** wall bowl;
(r) detail of me inside an iris wall bowl
In the early stages of making three dimensional iris flowers, I took iris flowers apart to see how they were formed. This helped me find out what I was actually dealing with. I inserted my face as a sprig, so they would know that I was there watching...

It took forty years of practice to fully develop the technique needed to build a convincing, intriguing iris.

I had noticed in our flower beds that many times after a good rain and wind, the iris was blown over but still looked radiant. Trying hard to look beautiful and vitally attractive. How brave and stubborn all at the same time. Something to admire. So, I introduced wind to my iris sculptures. Now they had a story to tell. Beautiful yes, but also a story.



(l) Iris platter

(l) **The Last Hahrah Dearie** Iris vase 1982
48 cm high; (r) **Lucky ol 7** iris vase dragon
series 1988



As successful as the iris vases were in terms of sales, I had to stop making them. I had stopped learning, and was in the grip of the market: not a good feeling. It is hard at times to keep your integrity, and keep your studio heat on. In the long term, integrity is the important choice. Get a sweater.

I left the flower and went on to other things. Wood fired porcelain was about as contrary as it could get. That is what I did. The market did not like it. More later...



(l) **Southerly Breezes** Iris sculpture Bronze 1994

Why iris chandeliers?

When I stopped making iris vases, I really thought I was done with the iris flower. Nope.

We keep a canoe on the banks of the Salmon River just below our house. From time to time Maureen and I will take a trip up the millpond. It is really lovely, because after the first little turn in the millpond, you really feel like you are the first person to have ever seen the landscape. The silence is wonderful. There is lots of wildlife in, on, and around the pond. That is where I had the idea for an iris chandelier. I wondered what it was like to be a fish seeing this vessel passing overhead.

Maureen was away visiting her mother on the west coast when I told her that I had added a chandelier to our back room. She asked me what it looked like, and I said, "It was sort of a canoe with a load of irises and you get to be a fish when you sit at the table".

There was a silence on the other end of the line. It worked out. Trust is such a good thing.

As it turns out, other people liked it too, and I made some serious variations on the idea.



(t) North room iris vessel copper and brass 1986; (b) North room iris chandelier all lights on 1986



(l) Iris mirror lamp; **Still in the Salmon River** Gray's Iris lamp 2002; detail of Gray's Iris lamp

I also did some chandeliers based on Maureen bringing a round flat basket of cut flowers for the table. We don't do that very often, as we both like the flowers as they are in the beds. More or less wild and more importantly living.



(l) Iris chandelier in forged copper and brass 2005; (r) **The Field iris lamp** 2013

In the end, I used the wind in the iris chandelier pieces too. The body of the lamp was made of wrought copper and brass with iris shades. Finding all the hardware was a nightmare, but suppliers of old fashioned lighting saved the day.



(l) Black Iris wall lamp and mirror; detail of black iris on wall mirror

Why wood fired porcelain?

▶ My wood fired coffee cup 1980s



Using fire and potter in the same sentence is just the right thing to do.

I knew Ruth McKinley when she and Don McKinley were at Sheridan School of Crafts in Mississauga. I liked what Ruth accomplished in her little wood kiln, and I got the virus. I watched Ruth fire a couple of times, so got a lot of information, including her use of stacked fireboxes. I incorporated that into my kiln, and it worked like a charm.



▲ Wood fired cup mouth meiping with combed slip 1989



▲ Wood fired bowls fired up-side down 1989

▶ Wood fired branch vase with finger pull 1987



▲ Maureen and our dog on a break from stoking the kiln 1982

Ruth liked the mark of fire on her work, and so did I. For the most part, I used unglazed surfaces in the kiln, and I had hope. One of the most important lessons in wood firing is to find out how flames move inside a box, and how to load that box. Fire management. Luck is overrated. The flames move like water in a stream, so the more rocks that get in the way, the more exciting the end becomes. Wood firing is a fine, good, and essential experience for any potter if you can manage it.

It is a young potter's game. Maureen and our kids all pitched in to make it happen. The firings were long, hot and a ton of work. Maureen had a touch in the firing rhythm that I could only mimic. She taught me how to say cone 13 and wood-fired in the same sentence. When the kids came home from school, they would come over to the kiln and help chop wood. We burned up a cord or more in less than 20 hours! Thank you!



▶ I agree there is no waste Blue Ruth reliquary 7 cm 1982

My friend Ruth McKinley died before she could see my wood-fired work. Don McKinley sent me some of her ashes, and I made this little vase for her. I fired her ashes in it, and fused the lid closed. The glaze is called Blue Ruth, and has inscribed on it I agree, there is no waste. Ruth and I had talked about that.

I introduced my wood-fired porcelain to my collectors by *inviting myself* to my own Studio exhibition in Lonsdale. I invited guest potter *Nalrah Esuoh* to share the exhibition space with *Harlan House*. It was an eye opener! I had a serious collector from Toronto who writes coffee table books on important artists say that I need not worry. The new-comer Nalrah was just not up to snuff. I had people ask me why I invited him. He makes such rough and unfinished work. Porcelain maybe, but it is not right. Needless to say, Nalrah did not sell one piece. Harlan did, so in the end it was OK. Long weekend.



▲ Vase fired next to bag wall in wood fired kiln 1989

This is one of the most spectacular pieces to endure the wood fire. It has my name on it, and I love the form but in the end the kiln did all the work.



▲ Wood fired salt glazed stoneware cup mouth branch vase 1992



▲ Salt glazed wood fired stoneware branch vase 1992



▲ Wood fired branch vase with feldspar inclusions 1980s



▲ Wood fired bag wall Lithium glazed mei ping 1985

I also sent my most precious pots to two galleries in Alberta. They had asked for my very best and latest works, so I packed up some wood-fired vases and waited. One gallery in Edmonton called and asked if I had substituted work done in art school for the 'real' stuff of the day. It all came back. The other gallery did the same. Not a real fine reaction for sure, but sometimes total rejection can re-enforce the heartbeat. If galleries dislike it, you might be onto something!

I persevered. I had a show in Toronto, and sold one piece. Thanks Alex! Encouraging but not exactly what we had in mind. Sales got a bit better, and the work got a whole lot better too. I learned a lot. Fire and Potter is a natural mix.

Kintsugi

Essentially kintsugi comes down to showing respect for an object by repairing without hiding what was done. I have encouraged many of my collectors to have their restorations done this way, and not one of them has regretted it. The old people used lacquer mixed with gold, silver or platinum to do the restorations. I have used modern epoxy and gold or silver leaf, or silver amalgam, in my work, thanks to Douglas Meredith. Doug is our friend and dentist; he took me under his wing and showed me how to use amalgam.



▲ Detail of Kintsugi on wood fired mei ping 1985

Kintsugi in Japanese means golden repair. I have used this many times, and I completely agree with the philosophy that goes along with the technique.



▲ **Cherries in lime Jell-O** 1985 oil on canvas



▲ **McRose holder and Fries-Coke** side



▲ **McRose holder and Fries** Ronny side



▲ **Message for Harland**

Did I mention that I am not a fan of fast food? Crimes against humanity!

Why junk food?

As I mentioned, I went to Art School to become an artist, and more exactly to become a painter. A lovely screw up at the end of my third year sent me into the ceramics rooms. I still kept painting. When Walt and Ted and I set up the studio in downtown Calgary there was no time left over for anything but ceramics. Then our kids came along and the move to Ontario in 1973.

It was in the mid-1980s that painting came back into focus. We offered our kids the option of making any dessert they wanted, and because we had been pretty good about eating healthy foods, we expected them to follow. Marnie and Abraham asked to make *Lime Jell-O with canned red cherries!*

A promise made is one kept. We went to the store, and bought the promise. We looked over our shoulders to make sure there were no witnesses.

It could have been worse. Neither of us could believe our eyes, or our failure. So I went out to the studio and recorded the event with a painting of that dessert. The beginning of painting junk food. 1985. I made up the squares, but have seen many similar ones at neighbourhood potlucks. Another accident.

I have seen the work of corporate marketing in grocery stores for over 50 years, and if I had the power to get rid of an entire profession, it would be them. For me it is these people who have taken the goodness out of food, and turned the business into the worst example of what capitalism represents. Sell them more, and give them less. Greed at its finest.

Sugar is now added to over two-thirds of our food, and wouldn't you know it, people are getting sick. I have seen our beef turn into cardboard. Most bread is white. Chickens are only allowed to live for about 30 days. Pigs never become adults. Process everything. Sugar, salt, and some kind of oil are all you need.

The CEO of Kraft Foods was asked if he would feed Kraft food to his own children and he said he would not. He added. "We don't force people to buy what we make." Nice.



▲ **Harland's on my side**

▶ Ham and Cheese with Oreos



What to do? Paint what I see is what I do. I can draw. I have given myself a few weeks almost every year to work on paintings and drawings. I have found the change of discipline is a healthy thing on all levels. My drawing skills come in handy when I am working in porcelain, and my sense of color is maintained. I also get reminded that even though they are different disciplines, they are both art forms in the highest meaning. Different work, same respect.

▶ Ham sandwich with olives



▶ Dinner in Napanee

This triptyc is about ten feet long and about five feet high. I was told that it had little likelihood of selling. I am guilty of never thinking about sales while I am working. Never!



▶ (l) **Wings** single flower boat 2007

(r) **Princess Celon** single flower vessel

I have a hunch Coors Light and tea are about the same. And yes, corporations do spell anything the way they want to...cheez whiz comes to mind.



▼ **M X CES** left side

I made M X CES when KFC brought in the Double Downer sandwich. It was two pieces of fried chicken with bacon, cheese and who knows what else added. 610 calories, and 1880 mg of salt with 37 grams of fat. You can get worse junk food than this, but this is up there. Good for you KFC! You get the M X CES as a prize.



▲ Ice cream cone flower holder 2005
I did the ice cream cone holders to go with a show of junk food paintings and dinner-ware at Prime Gallery in Toronto. It was fun.



▲ **Fresh-faves** 2005

I ventured out of junk food to paint other things. Cynicism and loathing are good motivators to make art. So is good food. So is natural beauty.



▲ **KFT pot with side of fries** 2010



▲ **Etna at Ardo** oil on canvas 2018, 67 in or 170 mm long and 26 in or 66 mm wide
Roberto and his team at Ardo make truly good food.



▲ **McT**



▲ **Winter Stars** oil on canvas 2018, 51.5 in or 130.5 mm at base by 23 in or 58 mm high
I love good peasant food, because I am one of them.

Why the pool room?

I love my pool table. It needed a collection of condos over the top, so that people in them could look down and see us trying to play the game. They would agree that it is a very good, interesting, challenging, and civilized activity. Really though, we needed lights. Good lights, and lots of practice. Playing pool is just as hard as making good dishes. I am better at dishes. Work in progress.



▲ Pool room with condo lighting overhead 2015

Mei Ping...a lot of Mei Ping

I fell in love with the Mei Ping form very early in my ceramic career. I also like Northern Chinese Song Cizhou wares of all kinds. The Japanese master Ninsei caught my attention with his strong jar forms and his decorated surfaces. I didn't have a clue how hard it was to make these types of forms, or how long it would take to get them *right*. A lifetime is about right.

The challenge of the Mei Ping form is in the shoulder. Keeping that shoulder high, and full of energy is really difficult. Add to that the challenge of shaping the closed neck and rim on top of the shoulder. It is difficult because by the time you are throwing the neck and rim, the clay is wet and only the most careful gentle touch will do. Luck helps. Practice is needed for this puppy.

One of the least spectacular acts in making porcelain is trimming it. We don't even talk about it, but it has to happen. Getting good at it is just as important as how well you form a piece. If you throw porcelain on a wheel, you will almost always have to trim it. Nowhere is this truer than in making Mei Ping.

I have enjoyed making these forms over and over again, because I could always go a bit further. It could get better. Simple is not easy.



▶ Anniversary Mei Ping 2003;

(insert) Detail of narcissis on Anniversary Mei Ping

I was doing a Sheridan summer workshop in Toronto, and I missed our wedding anniversary, and Maureen's birthday, so I made this vase in Toronto and gave it to Maureen. It has our tulips on it.



▲ Imperial Snapdragon Yellow carved Mei Ping 2003 31 cm high



▲ Crushed strawberry Mei Ping Oct 1977



▲ Jasper crackle Mei Ping 1998



▲ Mei Ping with thick and thin Marine Wudi and celadon moons 2001



▲ Naples-March twice fired Mei Ping four seasons vase 2007

This is one of five Naples pieces. Naples is March crackle glaze that was fired a third time. The third is another bisque firing. More than that, it was just one little spot in the third kiln that worked. The March crackle had been rubbed with India ink to achieve the crackle effect. In the past, when something went wrong with the crackle effect, I could just re-fire it and the ink would burn off and I could re-apply the ink.

In this case, something magic happened. I called the ink makers to find out what was in the ink; not much of anything that would change the color of a glaze, but it did. It is still a mystery, and I love it. The four moons on this piece represent the four seasons, and they are moons because the glaze is thinner and goes a bit yellow when thin. Management as a result of an accident.



▲ Drawing of a **Mei Ping accident**



▲ RGM crackle Mei Ping 1998



▲ Wood fired cup mouth Mei Ping with combed slip 1989

There is an interesting history of the Mei Ping. The early shapes were used for making wine. Probably fermented table vinegars or sauces. Small, tasty additions. Not Pinot.

The must was in the bottom and the bigger top allowed for the gases to expand. Some of the early Mei Ping have three lugs on the shoulder, and a small straight sided bowl shape that when inverted, covers the lip and neck. The lugs were used to tie string to, so the cup was tethered into place. This kept the fruit flies out, let the gas out, and protected the wine from contamination. Common sense.

Later on, the shape became a vase for the holding of plum blossoms. I love that this beautiful form has very traditional useful beginnings.

I added shadows to the Mei Ping for the same reasons as I did for the tea pots. They exist.

▶ (l) Jun crackle Mei Ping with Dynasty shadow 2006; (r) ISY Mei Ping with Dynasty Banker pin stripe shadow 2006



In this case, I made the vase, shone a light on it to get its shadow, and then laid it down on that shadow. The pieces were separate until the final firing when they were fused together by the celadon glazes. Recumbent stories.



▲ Recumbent Mei Ping with tulip sprigs and carving 2005



▲ **K466 Romance** recumbent Mei Ping 2005



▲ **Look Out for Me** Mei Ping with four guards and swimmer shadow 2006

Barrel vases...

The barrel form is, to me, a good *branch* vase. I love the idea of pruning an apple branch and actually using it in the studio or house. I have to prune the trees anyway, so instead of composting the bits, I just use them. I prefer one branch, but there are no rules. The form is simple, strong, and open to many variations. I also think that the form works very well as a sculpture, so whether it is holding something or not does not matter.



▲ (l) Morgan barrel branch vase 2014; (r) Morgan barrel branch vase 2014 other side;



▶ Morgan glaze on branch vase detail April 2014



▲ Tulip branch vase in flashed Marine Wudi 2007 33 cm high

Morgan Glaze/Sinter...

All this can happen with Morgan in one firing

EPK Kaolin 50

Barium Carbonate 50

Whiting 10

Copper carbonate 10

This glaze is named after a wonderful black cat that we had for many years. He could keep the squirrels from digging up our tulips. Beautiful! This is a variation on Marine Wudi. Applied thick it will be black and thin it is blue or even white. Again, very unpredictable.

▶ 2006 branch vase Marine Wudi
This vase is about as good as it gets for me. It was in a hot cone 14 spot near the bag wall in a very long, slow firing. This is a shining example of a glaze that begs to be touched, and when you do, it feels like all is well. I love the colors, the shape and the warmth of this piece. What really kills me is that, in the end, I really did not do very much...fire, time and luck kicked in, and somehow my name is scratched into it.



▶ Marine Wudi branch vase David Kaye show



▶ Flower vase Bess glaze with dip of raw wood ash 1990
Bess was an attempt at a hares fur glaze. It worked occasionally that way, but more often it looked like these. The addition of a splash of raw wood ash really make Bess sing...

Bess hairs fur/tea dust Glaze

Kaolin 31.03
 G200 feldspar 24.13
 Silica 20.68
 Whiting 24.13
 Iron Oxide 6.45
 Manganese Dioxide 1.0
 Copper Carbonate 1.0

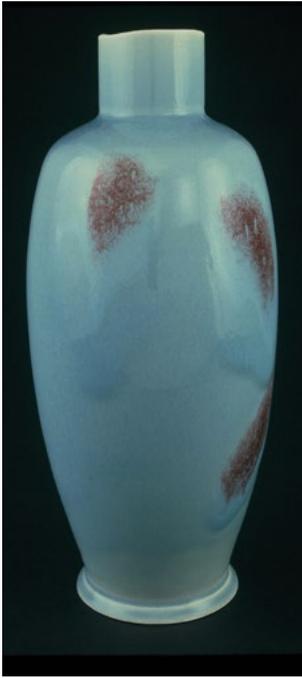
Flowers or not...

I made a lot of vase forms that could hold flowers. In some cases I tried to make vases interesting enough that you would *not* put flowers in them. In other words, I thought of them as sculpture.



▶ **Lady** 3of3 August 1976 Thomas glaze flashed with copper and iron oxide

▶ 46 Chev and Formal dinner vases 1980s



◀ CBNL glazed flower vase reeded and carved 2002
This form has CBNL variation glaze on them. It was sprayed, thick and thin. A fair amount of luck kicks in...

▲ Flower vase in crackle celadon and Tien splash 1992
◀ Jun vase with copper red splashes 1989



▲ Drawing of a broken trumpet mouth vase



◀ ISY trumpet mouth vase 2000
This piece is quite tall, about 18-20 inches, and was thrown in one piece. The curved carving on the base was done with a round cheese cut file, and a curved scraper. Time...



◀ ART flower vase in TOM with ash and oxides 1979
I was at a craft show in Ottawa in the early 1970's. A man told me that my work should be on pedestals, like the Chinese do. Only then would it be considered 'real' art. I tried it, and in the end just disagreed with him. But I did try.



▶ Swimmer vase with shadow

▶ Wave Branch Vase 55 cm high
This was one of the largest thrown pieces I ever did. The combed slip and ISY glaze seemed pretty happy. Me to...





◀ March crackle branch vase with scraffiti tulips 1995
I discovered by accident that March Crackle went to an ochre color when thin. In this piece, I did my drawing by scratching through the glaze to the vase, then lightly sprayed a thin coat of March over that scraffiti, making it yellowish. The top of the vase has Xue Bai chicken skin on it.



◀ March crackle flower vase with big craze 1992
This piece had ink rubbed into the craze while it was still warm from the glaze firing.

These were made to hold flowers. It was not their only job, but they fall into the category of *bring it out when you need it*. This is a very old Japanese approach to living. You do not need to show all of your *stuff* all of the time. In fact, it is a very good idea to only show it rarely. I try to do this, but my discipline is weak.



▲ temmoku vase celadon leaves 1990
The floral lip on this vase was made by throwing a large flat lip. That lip was then cut into, to make the enclosing leaves. Mason jars make great flower vases. This is my attempt at competing.



▲ Flattened march crackle flower vase 1990



▲ March crackle flower vase 1991



▲ Jun flower vase large crackle 1991



▲ Carbon trap Jun flower vase 1989
This is a thick and thin application of Jun. The carbon band of gray is the only time it ever happened...



▲ Jun flower vase copper splash 34 cm 1980



▲ Jun flower vase with lava foot 1988
The Jun glaze literally flowed onto the kiln shelf, but somehow did not stick...

I also made my share of jardinières and flower arrangers. I have always had great respect for anyone who can arrange flowers in a natural way. They are rare. Management seems to get in the way.



▲ Foliated jardiniere in Myare glaze
24 cm 1988



▲ Celadon flower arranger
2013



▲ Morgan flower arrangement vases



▲ Shino glazed jardiniere 2013



▲ Toaster flower holder with spindle
berries 2016



▲ **Florentine Express** for 12 flowers 2007

I found an old model of a Mediterranean ship in an Italian museum. The attendant was asleep, so I photographed it. I loved the shape. When 12 rose oars are added, it all makes sense. Rose, rose, rose your boat, gently down the stream...

Why urinal pucks 1999

Mike Harris and his pals formed a neo-conservative government in Ontario for far too many years. One of the things they did to save money was to cut the art programs out of all of the grade schools. Their attitude was that if kids needed art lessons, their parents should pay for them. So the rich kids got lessons, and the rest did not. Art is such an easy target for politicians. In a not so funny way, politicians and short sighted go hand in hand.

I asked my friend Jack McMaster to do a drawing of Mike Harris for me to use as a rubber stamp, and this is what he came up with. I used the stamp with some cobalt stain, and put the image on the puck. I dropped the pucks in every urinal that I could get to in our area, and made a trip along the 401 to Toronto and did the same there. This was in advance of Mike's second run at being the Premier of our province. There is not much a rural studio potter can do in the political arena, but this I could do. I have no idea what happened to the pucks. It was worth it.



◀ Mike Harris urinal puck

On technique. Or not...

I went to a *real* art school in 1964. At the Alberta College of Art, there were only 80 first year students, so it was a small intense place to study art. It was basically a place where you were expected to become an artist. Nothing else would do.

The first year was a basic introduction to all of the disciplines, and in the second year you made a choice to go with either fine art or advertising art. In the third year, the fine art people could choose between painting, printmaking, sculpture or crafts. Drawing, still life or figure, was a must in all of the programs. So was history of art.

The interesting thing was that if you could really draw well, in the Leonardo, Michelangelo or Durer way, you were really encouraged to go into the Commercial arts programs. Very few who could draw really well resisted and stayed in the so called 'fine art' areas. In the fine art Painting department, the word 'draw' mutated into 'mark making'. At that time Claes Oldenburg said that the definition of Art was "Anything you could get away with".

So even then, most of the painters who were my instructors looked at any form of drawing that was heavy on technique as a form of illustration. Most of them had, one way or another, consumed the waters of Emma Lake. The word illustration was always used in the pejorative. Anything that looked or approached *reality* was dismissed as illustration. Skill without imagination is illustration. Skill with imagination leads us to Picasso, Salvador Dali, Henri Matisse, Georgia O'Keefe, Whistler, Apple computers, and good dishes. Telling stories well is a good skill to have. Have a look at Japanese watercolor wood cut prints. Monet did.

I have wondered about this for years. Why is it that musicians and actors admire, and use technique in the most wonderful ways, and the cousin visual artist remains apprehensive? Listening to good opera, a fine piano performance or good jazz has mastery embedded. Creativity is not held hostage by technique for a minute.

The technique conundrum has arrived in modern ceramics classes. Don't worry about learning good technique. Just make Art. Create. Innovate. Need technical help, call the Technician. If that does not work, ship the idea off to China, and have the work done there.

▼ **Six Pack** wall platter self-portrait RGM celadon 1999; (insert) Detail of bas relief drawing in **Six Pack** RGM celadon



The Art teachers who avoid, or are suspicious of good technique are the ones who expect their favorite pizza to be the same as it was last week. They go ballistic when their computer goes on holidays. They expect their flight to be on time. They do not want the young medical intern to do their heart surgery. Only the star Doctor will do. And don't change the cappuccino. Don't do that. Ever. They are suspicious of skill in visual Art, but crave technique everywhere else.

Walt Drohan and Bert Borch admired, and had, good technique. They also had good imaginations. However, in the ensuing 50 years, in the same institution, almost anything that is very well done technically or functionally is dismissed as accessible and therefore not *Real Fine Art*. The Alberta College of Art actually hired a man who would not even talk to a student who was making functional ceramic works. He, like the new head of the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design ceramics department, wanted nothing to do with anything functional in their ceramics department. Good traditional skills are not valued, but somehow good art is. I was taught that they can go hand in hand. Leonardo might agree...

One of the important concepts that *high art* brings to the table is the importance placed on the *new* and the *original* over everything else. I worked in Korea with a US professor, Dick Haye, who warned his students' with one sentence when they were presenting their final work. "*If the work is not original, you will not graduate*". This kind of thinking is prevalent in most universities and with many museum and art gallery curators. Perceived originality is always a big part of juried competitions. How far a medium is pushed is value added.

This narrow view in the Western art world has denigrated many disciplines and devastated the traditional work of the potter. I was told by my mentor, Virginia Watt, that while she was jurying the Craft Exhibition for the Olympics in Calgary, one of her co-jurors said of my entry, "A vase is a vase is a vase". Of course that vase was not in the exhibition. What did get into the exhibition was pretty iffy ceramic sculpture.

Leopold Foulem, a class-mate of mine at ACA, said in a radio interview regarding his Bronfman Award, that "Functional work in ceramics is *just* craft". He sat at a potter's wheel in the ceramics studio with all of us.

Leopold was in my first class of ceramics at ACA in 1967. He made this lidded jar in class, and it was fired in our back yard in Calgary. I knew nothing about Raku. Still don't. My job, when this little piece was being fired, was to feed and water the group. Cold beer. Bob Bozak was one of our roommates, was senior to me in ceramics, and was the organizer. I can't remember how many potters were there for the firing, but there were a few. I think Leopold left this behind as a thank you for the party and the firing. Not dated. Not signed. But I was there, and Leopold, if you would like it back for your collection, call me. This little work of Art is yours.

Leopold's friend and fellow professor Paul Mathieu has written a pretty good history of ceramics for his students. Like me, then he also has a Bronfman Award. *The Art of the Future* is worth a read. Last time I read it, I was not mentioned nor were any other studio potters. No room. Elite Professors only. [\[Find the Art of the Future by Paul Mathieu.\]](#)



▲ Leopold Foulem Raku lidded jar
1967or8

Going to Paris for an education...



▲ M Extreme Happiness

Our Friends Alex and Darla took us to Venice. Lovely. We were having lunch at St. Marks when a tour ship the size of Venice crept in. American tourists in ball hats oozed out to see Venice in three hours. They were coming back aboard by the time we finished lunch. This was my response.



▲ Ee-i-ee-i-O left side; (insert) detail of cobalt drawing of Superman logo on Ee-i-ee-i-O boat

I was awarded a Canada Council grant to go to museums and art galleries in Paris. I got to see—*really see*—many of the most important works of art that exist in this world. I had seen many in books, but never in real life. That trip changed my life. ***I learned and saw how every single facet of life can be Art.***

Much later, I was able to do this a second time, on another Canada Council grant that supported me and my studio for two consecutive years. There has never been a time in our lives that we were not looking over our shoulders for the next rent payment, so two years was breathing space that meant all my energy went into making new Art. I did that. It was wonderful.

I never worked so hard and I had fun doing every bit of it. In Paris, I had the help of many people and they got me into the inner bowels of the Sevres Manufactory. I was able to see how the old craftsmen did their work at every step along the way. I saw how all the elements came together then, and now.

I was specifically interested in how Sevres made their really large porcelain forms, and how they moved them in the studios. I found the original sling that allowed men to lift and place two metre high vases without touching them. A good thing to have seen. I wanted to make large boat forms, and needed to know how to handle them. It was just going to be Maureen and me doing the lifting, so we needed the help.

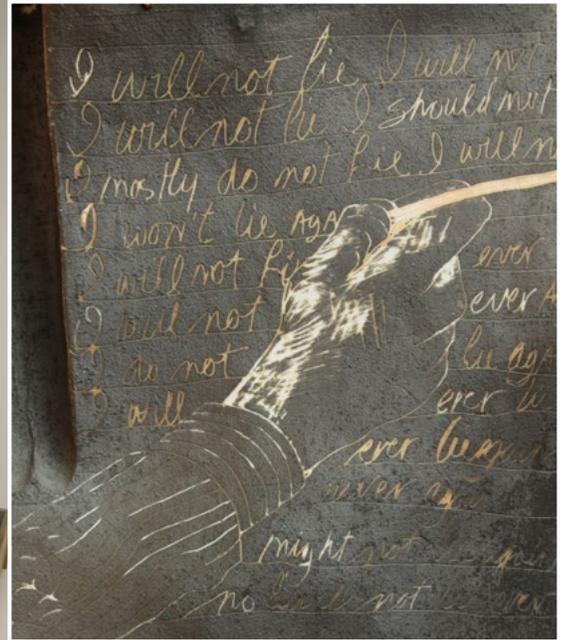
I also found the old molds and learned a lot from seeing how they were made. It gave me a lot of information that I could not get any other place in the world...OK Meissen in Germany would have been nice, but they refused to allow me in to their studios. Yeah Sevres!

This was the only time I can recall, where I had to plan an exhibition. When you apply for the grant, you have to tell them what you will do. Makes sense. All of the other exhibitions I mounted were collections of what I was currently working on or just a mix of my favourite pieces on hand. Or both. This one was about food...mostly.

I made Ee-i-ee-i-o in response to being in China. Near the end of our journey there were a few in the group that complained about missing their coffee. I went to McDonalds in Beijing. I had to. I found it to be so fundamentally wrong that going was a must. I bought coffee for the complainers.

McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken and others have discovered that it is young Chinese that flock to their outlets. This is because they do not have to be accompanied by a parent if they are just going for a Coke. Nice. I imagined a Chinese parent expressing him/her self on the side of the boat.

I was buying Loblaws President's Choice Organic peanut butter for a while. I noticed that the jar had 'product of Canada' on it. Since we do not grow peanuts routinely, I was curious how this came about. I spent some serious time on the phone with Loblaws, and finally got to speak to a person. I asked where the peanuts came from, and the lady said that they were Chinese. I asked why the package was marked Product of Canada. She said that the processing costs were high enough that it entitled them to call it a 'Product of Canada'. I asked her how they knew it was Organic. She told me that a third party told them the peanuts were organic. Not good enough for this potter, so I made PCX as a tribute to corporate truth.



◀ **PCX** left; **PCX** self-portrait side of ship 110 cm high; (inset) Detail of **PCX** I will not lie 2009

I thought that since it was me moving through the waters of corporate truth, one side could be a self-portrait. Sort of.

Apparently I was on to something. In 2017 Loblaw's admitted to the price fixing of bread. They had been doing it for 14 years. The owners are also being questioned by the tax people about off shore accounts that have hundreds of millions in them. Nice!

More of the final exhibition of the two years' work, "Thanks Canada Council", is in the junk food section of this book.

Rose Houses...

Sevres was a huge source of information. I also saw a lot of ceramics collections in many other Paris museums. Where I *did not* expect to find information was on Paris streets. Another accident.

I walked back to the apartment each day, and passed by several florists. One Florist sold nothing but roses. One of the ways they displayed them was fascinating. They cut the rose stem off at a hands with, and inserted it into wet foam cheek by jowl. Just a mess of crowded roses. A blanket. Beautiful!

Well, the flowers were beautiful. The idea was beautiful. The containers were awful. Ugly glass, concrete, tin cans, and plastic trays. Miserable. It made me think for a long time about what the container should look like. I played. Then I found my answer in the Rose House.

It is a nice pun on row house, and I can stretch the meaning into my own name too. The Rose House really works. They are cut down to almost no stem, so they last for a lot longer than other arrangements. You can buy fewer of them each time. Less is almost always better. And no annoying foam to buy; just plain water will do.



▲ Flower-play-box of roses

This was an improvement on the Paris containers...



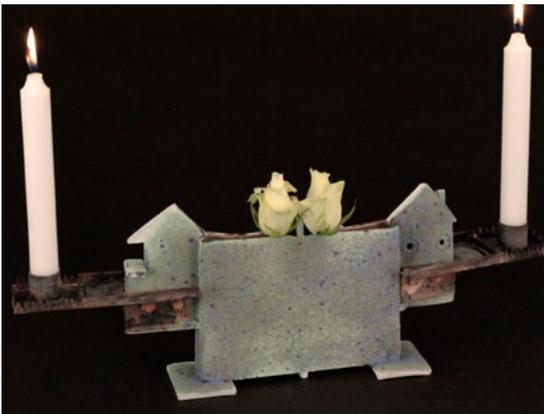
▲ Marine Wudi yellow rose flower home 2013



▲ Marine Wudi flower home 2013



▲ Iris toaster vase Morgan glaze 2017



▲ Rose house with decks and outdoor lighting

▼ **We have everything**
 rose house; Detail of every-
 thing deck on rose house
*I had so much fun doing
 this. The lap top, the dish,
 the hot tub pool, giant
 flat screen... everything!
 No books.*



▼ Rose house for six
 roses—Morgan Glaze
 thick and thin with
 copper decks and a
 glass pool; Deck detail
 of six roses rose house



▲ Rose houses with an on-looker 2017— Morgan glaze sprayed thick and thin

Why the shoe...

When I was a small boy, my mother would constantly tell me that “Shoes go on the floor, and not on the furniture”. Definitely not on the furniture. She was also the kind of mom that would say “Don’t shuffle” and “Pick ‘em up”. We all learned exactly what to do and when. This shoe is my little bit of rebellion, since it definitely goes on the furniture. Definitely.

It started out with me spending a lot of time going to used clothing places to find an old pair of brogues. I have some old ones that Maureen gave me, and they are beautiful. I could not bring myself to ruin my own shoes, so went the used route. When I found a pair of Florshiems, it was music to my ears. One of the first shoes I ever bought with my own money was a pair of Florshiems.

I wanted to have a shoe on the table that held a single flower. The interesting aspect in this shoe project came by accident. The sock part of the shoe sculpture is there for the overflow of casting slip. My original intention was to just have a shoe, so the sock part would be cut away as necessary waste. When I saw the sock as an element with possibilities it opened up a lot of new territory.

I altered the original mold and added a whole new section which became knee socks. I don’t know if you have ever seen some of the people that go to exclusive golf courses, but if you haven’t it is *almost* worth a look. They wear golf attire that is hilarious. The mediocrity of the situation would be funny if they were not the nation’s most wealthy, influential old politicians.

So I added some attention getting flowers to these old golfers’ attire. Ironically more is better.

And they definitely go on the table. White linen is approved ironed or not.



▲ **Mc Brogue** with pink roses 2016



▲ **Temmoku brogue** single flower holder



▲ **Fancy Pants** 2017 35 cm high



▲ **Asian wings** celadon with iris toe cap 2017



▲ **Match** celadon over peony sprigs 2017; Detail of **Match** Boot 2017

Leave the studio...please



▲ Vase lantern with rock wall



▲ One of my better rock walls



▲ **Angus** oil on board 1990



▲ **Old guy with heavy load** in garden wall

I worked seven days a week in my studio from sometime in September right through to May or June. That is enough. Leaving the studio is a very good idea. After a long stint I get a bit comfortable, a bit lazy and, not to put too fine a point on it, *dull*.

Even day to day things get crazy in the studio. I just leave. On one occasion I went for a breath of fresh, and heard the most amazing, screaming engine sound. And smoke...blue smoke. It was our neighbor Angus on a small motor cycle. Angus weighed in at over 200 kilo [450 pounds], so he was a big boy. And the bike was really small. 100cc. The smile on Angus's face was enough to clear this potter's head of anything. Seeing a big boy on a small bike having some fun was treasure found. So I did this painting. My friend Isabel Huggan has it. I am glad. It wouldn't have happened if I hadn't left the studio.

If you value your career, and your dignity, leave. Just walk out and smell the flowers. I join Maureen in the flowerbeds and vegetable garden for the whole summer. If I am not in the garden, I am on the end of a hammer fixing or changing and improving the house or the studio. Building stone walls is a wonderful way to contemplate.

Time away from the studio is *compost* time, so when you get back in you have a place to start, and a thought-out direction to move in. Nothing is wasted.

After fifty years of exhibition deadlines, I have stopped having exhibitions. I had a few. Check my shine sheet at the end of this if you want to count them. It is a good way to get rid of deadlines. It feels good.

I hope this will be of some use to aspiring potters. My history of making porcelain in Canada parallels Walter Ostrom's devotion to the earthenware world. The big difference is that Walter actually was a good teacher to many. I was a studio potter who never attended a class. Maybe this will make up for that.

I might do more work in porcelain. I am painting. I am drawing. I think I am finished writing.

OK, some thank you letters...

Along the way, Maureen and I have met some very special people. You know who you are! The many years of Lonsdale Studio Exhibitions have turned into a gather of friends. That it will not be happening is sad, but getting there was wonderful. I suspect that we will be seeing one another for all the right reasons. That is what friends do. Thank you!

Thank you Maureen for almost everything. OK everything! Maureen read every word of this several times. I heard the line, "you are ranting again," more than once. I didn't...OK I did. I hit delete. Felt good.

I met Maureen at a get-acquainted dance in her first week of high school. It was 1961. She was 16 and I was 17. We had a couple of dances. I went home with someone else.

Later that week, she flashed a smile at me in the hallway at Lindsay Thurber High School. I fell in love at that moment. You just know when someone is on your side! 57 years later I am still in love with Miss McBride. I am looking forward to the next 57 years. We get along, except in the nightly card game where anything goes. My line is, "I promise never to do that again". I say it almost every night.



▲ Maureen McBride taken by George McBride 2017



▲ **Party** June 09 as seen in David Kaye Gallery during the exhibition

Thank you Abraham for all kinds of help along the way, including dragging me by the heels into this century of computers and web-sites. I still do not have a cell phone that I didn't make, and I do not wear a watch. There is some hope. More work for Abraham...

Thank you Marnie for smiling and letting Zack chew on a tulip vase.

Thank you Miriam Brant at Miriad Design and Production. Magic is Miriam's middle name. She took me by the hand, and showed me what my computer could do. I learned. Thank you! The first purpose of this book—a slide show—is what Miriam made happen. The beautiful part for me, is that she did it beautifully, thoughtfully, and independently. Her work—my work—her way. Thank you Miriam!



▲ Abraham at one (photo credit to Jack McMaster)



▲ Marnie at five (photo credit to Jack McMaster)

▲ Zack eating a tulip vase (photo credit to Bob House)

Thank you Lorie Wright for looking thoughtfully at what I wrote. You make me look a lot better than I am. I will be forever grateful for your kind advice along the way. Less is more!

I have wanted to paint Lorie for years, and finally did. She was in the studio gallery, and I managed to get an image to work from. She has character. She has a great laugh. She cares about art and artists. She has wonderful hair. You know that. And she is a great friend. Thank you Lorie!



 **Lorie** parallelogram oil painting 2018 52 in or 132 mm by 35.5 or 90

Thank you David and Gloria Allan, Scott and Pat at Allan Graphics. For many many years, they have made the best invitations to/for my exhibitions. People collect them: they are that good. Thank you!

Lorie

Appendix

My glaze firings were all in reduction. The temperature range was from cone 10 to cone 13. Glazes were put on ware that had been bisque fired to a warm cone 09. The wood fired kiln was also fired to cone 11 to 13.

It should also be noted; the kilns were always allowed to cool to hand touch temperatures while being completely closed tight. Days were spent waiting, and both kilns showed their respect by never showing any distress. The ware inside also did the same.

The pool table gets a lot of use while waiting for things to cool down. No point in wasting time.

I started making glazes and clay bodies when Canada was in the pound and ounce system. I did not rush out and buy new anything when our system converted, so my scales are all in pounds and ounces. If you are in the more sensible metric system you should be able to figure it out. Some are even in pounds, ounces and grams! Some of the formulae are my batch amounts, so don't add up to 100%. But they work.

Most of the glazes I worked on were based on a simple concept. Some feldspar, some clay, maybe silica and washed wood ash. In some cases I used ash, and in some cases substituted whiting, talc, or dolomite for ash content. Some of the glazes were given to me by my teachers, so I just tweaked them to suit the kiln and clay body. I tried to keep it simple and basic. I never fired a kiln without a glaze test inside. Never.

One of the reasons we bought Patty Doyle's Hotel was that it had two buildings on the property. The hotel, is an 1840s home with 5 very tiny bedrooms. One was made into a bathroom, and one a clothes closet. That is how big they are...

The other building was a large old carriage shed. The horses pulled the carriages through one side of the building, where they were unhooked and stored. The horses left through a door on the opposite side. By the time I came along, those doors were shuttered, and the place was used for storage. By happy accident, I am blessed with lots of studio space. Rural bliss.

The studio is organized by what happens to clay. As you enter the building, the raw materials needed are stored in an unheated porch. Inside the studio, the first room is where clay and glazes are made. That room is also used for slip casting because that is where the blunger is. Common sense. Messy.

The next room is where the plastic clay is used. I have one potter's wheel for throwing, and one for trimming. In early times just one wheel for everything. Inside that room, there is another room. It is a little drying room, where there are no draughts, and the humidity can be controlled. The ideal conditions for drying porcelain is 90% humidity and 30 degrees C. Hot and humid. It is easily the most important room because everything good or bad happens in it. If I make ten pieces, I want to fire ten pieces. The drying room makes that possible. Clay babysitting.

I have a cistern for rain water. A hand pump and a bucket is all the hardware I need and use. Simple. My total landfill waste including broken pots is about 3 wheelbarrows a year.

The next room is a place for dry ware and glazing. It is also where the kiln is. I built it in 1973. It is a downdraft propane fired kiln used for everything. I can safely store enough work to fill a bisque in this room. After the bisque firing, the room serves as a storage place for glazed wares. After the glaze firing, the finished pieces go upstairs to the gallery area. And the whole process starts over.



▲ Swimmer 3-4-5 sprig making

Check out the web site for more information.

There are also videos of various studio activities that may be useful. Sprigging and bas relief carving on a lampshade are there if you have the time. [Visit my website for more www.harlanhouse.com.]

Sprig Making

As you can see in the photo, you will have to not only cast the sprig, but the flat working surface as well. To start with, make your sprig in clay on a sheet of plate glass. The swimmer in this case, started out about 8 inches long. In the photograph, you are seeing the 3rd, 4th and 5th reduction. I used a wooden barrier, and poured US # 1 pottery plaster over the clay sprig. Use a bit of mold soap on the glass and wood for mold separation. Two thin coats are better than one thick

coat, with drying time between coats.

I use 15 of plaster to 10 of water for this purpose—pounds/kilo ounces/grams—your choice. Always add fresh plaster gently to room temperature water, and let it slake for about five minutes before stirring.

When that pour of plaster is firm, you can remove the barrier, and move the plaster off of the glass. You can now remove the clay sprig form, and clean the plaster with water and a sponge.

Dry that mold for a few days. Once that plaster mold has dried, press clay over the whole surface, capturing the sprig and the flat surface. Press a board against the outside surface, to make a level model. That clay will come away from the plaster as it dries out.

Fire the piece you have taken from the first impression. When that is fired to glaze temperatures, and reduced in size by about 12%, coat it with a couple of coats of mold soap with some drying time in between coats. Create a barrier around that piece, and pour plaster over it. Assuming there are no under cuts, it should release. Now, with that new and smaller mold, repeat the process as many times as you want. My 8 inch swimmer ended up being just over 2 inches long after five repetitions. It took me a year to complete. Just remember to always cast the sprig and the flat scraping surface as one. When you have made the final reduction, cast the final mold in dental plaster, because it lasts longer due to the scraping action when making the actual sprig. [See the making of a sprig at the website] If you cannot get dental plaster, use the US#1, knowing that if you make a lot of sprigs, you will have to re-make the mold a few times as it wears out. The advantage is that you will always have the master to go back to.

The only time you just get the sprig, is at the end when you press clay into the final reduction mold, and pull it out.

Why use Specific Gravity measures?

To any potter who invests time in making his or her own glazes or clays, the use of specific gravity is a cheap, reliable tool that saves not only time, but a lot of money too. When we get a good glaze or a clay body, we want to be able to depend on it all of the time. All of the time. Ruining your work with glazes that are not properly hydrated is common and need not happen.

So, what is it and how does it work.

You will need a 100 cc graduate cylinder, and a gram scale. Weigh the dry graduate cylinder and write it down. To arrive at a specific gravity of 1.00, you must fill the cylinder with 100 cc of water, and it will weigh 100 grams, plus the weight of the cylinder. Subtract the weight of the cylinder, and you should get a S.G. of 1.00. An easier way is to adjust the counter weight on your gram scale with the empty cylinder on it, then simply read the final result on the scale when it has the 100 cc of liquid in it.

If you weigh a glaze that is working for you now, put exactly 100 cc of it in your cylinder. You might get a weight of about 140grams, giving you the SG of 1.40. Now each time you re-make that glaze and are wondering if it is too thick or too thin, all you have to do is re-measure and you will have your answer in no uncertain terms. Some glazes want to be thicker, and some thinner for many reasons, and this is a way of getting the same reliable mix each time. If a glaze is too thick, it is easy to add some water, and if it is too thin, wait a couple of days for the solids to settle, and take some of the water off by siphon or sponge. How much to add or take off is told by the use of Specific Gravity testing. The same applies to slip casting bodies where it is even more critical to measure each batch and make scientific adjustments rather than a guess. Easy, cheap and accurate.

Clay Making: Cone 14 Clay Body

[See website technical for more...]

In 1967 Bert Borch gave me his cone 10 formula for porcelain clay. It was a starting point for me, and an important one.

Potash spar 20
Nepheline Syenite 5
Kaolin 37
Ball clay 10
Silica 25
Bentonite 3

HH cone 14 porcelain clay body for throwing and hand building.

I have been asked many times why it is important for me to make my own porcelain. It is, after all easier to buy a box of clay and be done with it. No mess, no fuss. The answer I always give is simple.

I care about the quality of my work in all aspects. I also fire in reduction to cone 13 flat, or a soft 14 on the bag wall. Most of the kiln is cone 12 or better, so I need good clay.

I have specific demands. My porcelain must be hard, white and translucent. So it makes sense to me to start by designing a good personal clay body. If I make the clay carefully, age it well, and look after the drying of it, I end up with a very fine clay body that will perform well in every aspect of making. If your definitions of porcelain are different than mine, feel free to substitute different materials to satisfy that need. This only makes sense as we all make personal choices. This method is very adaptable, I made stoneware this way 45 years ago, so it works with any clay body.

I also know that it costs about a third less than the prepared clays, and performs better. I feel quite smug, knowing that I am not paying for rainwater,

which is about a third of the mix. I also know from experience that I can make enough clay [1000 dry pounds] to last me for a year, in a day, with less mess than you might think.

Many times, potters have mentioned to me, that my ways are more laborious. I have to wedge the clay by hand, and adjust the density for various needs. All true. I am in my mid seventies, and can still do all that needs to be done. The sheer exercise of all of it is a good thing for any human being. I am glad that I do not have any machines to clean, or fix or listen to. Preparing clay for work, clears the cobwebs of doubt, and allows for clear, creative thinking.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of making your own glazes and clay bodies is that the complaint buck stops right on your own doorstep. You cannot blame the clay if you made it.

The formula for my cone 14 HH porcelain throwing clay-body is as follows in pounds, grams or kilograms; whatever you are working with as long as it is consistent. Note, I have a supply of old pre 2009 G200 feldspar. Table 1 uses this material. If you do not have this, you will have to use a combination of F4 soda spar and G200 pot spar in Table 2. You will also require about 25 L or 6.5 US gal of water for every 100 lbs or 45.35 kg of material used.

Table 1. Cone 14 Clay Body using G200 purchased after 2009		
Clay Body Component	lbs	Note
Grolleg Kaolin	53	–
G200 Potash Feldspar	16.1	*Used only if G200 was purchased AFTER 2009
F4 Soda Feldspar	6.9	Used only if G200 was purchased AFTER 2009
40um Silica	24	–
Volclay Bentonite	3	–

Table 2. Cone 14 Clay Body – Modern G200 purchased before 2009		
Clay Body Component	lbs	Note
Grolleg Kaolin	53	–
G200 Potash Feldspar	23	*Using G200 purchased before 2009
40um Silica	24	–
Volclay Bentonite	3	–

The easiest way to mix these materials is to either make a plywood box, or find some kind of hard plastic kids swimming pool, or if you are lucky, find a masons tub. It looks like a very low bathtub made of heavy plastic. I have an old throw-out farmers stainless Steel bulk milk tank that I use to make and store slip in. Depending on the size of your tub, and the size of your mix, put the materials together and thoroughly mix them. Wear a dust mask at all times when using dry materials. Use a mason's hoe, or a good clean garden rake. Mix really well.

You are now ready to fill your storage container. Big plastic 45 gallon drums with their tops cut off are wonderful. Remember to have them very clean. Plastic garbage cans are good too, and come with lids. If you have to move them around, now is a good time to make a dolly so you can move them easily. Whatever your container is, fill it with about one third of rain water, and then add your mixed dry materials to that. My last batch of clay was 500 dry pounds, and with the water it will almost fill two 45-gallon barrels. About 15 gallons of water was added to each barrel. The water is a bit of guessing game, but in this case more is just fine, as it

makes it easier to mix by hand. In the end, the solids will settle, and you can decant the water making the slip a bit thicker. Cover and you are done for a while.

In a few days, mix the slip well with a paddle, or a blunger of some kind. You may need to add water at this time if the mix is too thick. Masons, and drywall mixers on the end of a drill work wonders. Keep them clean, and rust free.

Now wait for as long as you can, as the aging process starts. After a month or two, blunge again. At this stage, you can transfer the slip to another container, and in the process screen it for any lumps or foreign objects...things happen...bottle caps, stones, etc. Aluminum window screen stretched and stapled over a 1×2 wooden frame works nicely. At this stage, it should be somewhat deflocculated, and will pour easily, making screening very easy. The Specific Gravity should be 1.40 or close.

After it is screened, add at least four litres or one gallon of vinegar to each 250 pounds of dry material. You will notice the immediate thickening of the mix. The acid is now making the clay flocculate making it workable. I prefer cider vinegar because there is always a little residual organic matter from the apples in it, and this speeds up the ageing/rotting process. If you cannot get cider vinegar, use what you can find, as it is the acid that you are looking for to promote flocculation

If you can wait another month or two [I age mine for at least six months and usually for a year or more] the clay will improve, but if not it should be OK to work with, albeit a bit short. It does improve with age. As it ages, water will rise to the top of the container. Siphon or sponge this off, as it will eventually quicken the drying time in the bats.

The reason for using rainwater over chlorinated tap water is that the chlorine impedes the ageing process. If you only have chlorinated water available to you, fill buckets with the water and leave them open in the sunshine for a few days; most of the chlorine will evaporate.

If you can keep your trimmings, and you should, dry them out completely and only then add them to water, making a slip. This slip can be added to your new clay slip. It can also be dried by itself, and wedged into the new body. It will give it improved 'age' qualities and will cut your overhead and time by at least 1/3. You may need to add a litre of vinegar with your trimming slip to increase the acid in the mix. It is also a good idea to screen it before drying it, or adding to your new slip. We tend to forget or loose things, and it always seems to end up in the trimmings!

A word about how to dry your slip might be helpful. I have made plaster tubs that hold about 20 pounds of slip. It takes a few days to dry, but is easy to do. The sharp edges dry first, and come away from the plaster. These edges need to be softened or rounded by hand, so that there are no really hard bits in your throwing body. Do not be tempted to use a fan; it will create more problems than it solves. If the clay coming out of the tub dryer is too soft, and it probably will be, stack plaster throwing bats with a few pounds of clay between each to finish. This gives you great flexibility when it comes to working with the clay body; stiff clay for larger pieces or softer if you prefer that. I take these cookies of clay, and cut and slam wedge them into a perfect throwing body.

Other ways to dry slip if you do not use plaster.

I used to put porous building bricks on a table, line it with canvas and pour slip on to it. It worked very well. I also have filled cloth flower sacks with slip and hung them in the studio to dry. The legs of blue jeans work very well if you have a spare set. Just tie a rope around the bottom, and fill up the leg, then using the same piece of rope tie off the top. Now you have a handle to hang it by. Drying varies in the different months, and in different places, but you will find out what works best by trying it out.



▲ Clay drying vats and bats in plaster

HH cone 14 porcelain casting slip.

Table 3 provides a list of ingredients I use for making a batch of Harlan House cone 14 porcelain casting slip using my old G200. Table 4 provides a modified list for modern G200. These formula are compatible with the throwing body, as they have almost the same formula minus the Bentonite.

Table 3. Cone 14 Porcelain Casting Slip – G200 purchased before 2009		
Porcelain Slip Component	lbs	Note
Water	40	–
Darvan #7	0.385 (or 6.172 oz)	–
Grolleg Kaolin	55	–
G200 Potash Feldspar	25	*Used only if G200 was purchased Before 2009
40um Silica	25	–

Table 4. Cone 14 Porcelain Casting Slip – Modern G200 purchased after 2009		
Porcelain Slip Component	lbs	Note
Water	40	–
Darvan #7	0.385 (or 6.172 oz)	–
Grolleg Kaolin	55	–
G200 Potash Feldspar	17.5	*Used only if G200 was purchased AFTER 2009
F4 Soda Feldspar	7.5	Used only if G200 was purchased AFTER 2009
40um Silica	25	–

Start by adding 40 lbs of room temperature water. Add the Darvan # 7. Blunge this mixture for a few moments. Add the Grolleg Kaolin to the water with the blunger on, and blunge until it is in slurry, and then add the G200 feldspar (and soda feldspar if required), followed by the 40micron silica.

After blunging for a half of an hour, allow the slip to sit for two days in a warm place. Blunge it again and take out 100 cc of the slip. Weigh this slip. It should weigh 180 grams, but anything above 170 will probably work so there is flexibility in this system. If the weight is OK but the slip is too fat, either increase the temperature of the slip by putting it near a heat source overnight, or add very small amounts of Darvan # 7 in a little water until it is usable. If the slip weighs over 180 add water in small amounts until you get to 1.80 specific gravity. This slip will definitely improve with age, and should be left for at least two weeks to a month before using.

I cannot put too much emphasis on keeping your slip warm, and keeping your molds warm too. Think summertime room temperature for the slip and the molds being used, and you will be in the right range.

Casting slip also likes to be blunged before each pour of slip no matter how many days or even hours between pours. It is also a good idea to screen the slip as it comes from the molds back into the slip tank. A small amount of plaster chipped off a mold will alter the slip and make it impossible to use.

Glazes and Formulas

Cizhow information [Tz'u Chow]

Harlan's Gray Black Slip formula

Get ready for high science kids...

1 cup of Cobalt slip

1 cup of Lithium Blue glaze

¼ teaspoon of Manganese Dioxide

This slip is brushed on top of the white crackle glaze that follows.

White Crackle Glaze formula

Cone 9 to 11

Nepheline Syenite 33

Whiting 2

EPK Kaolin 7

Dolomite 1.5

Silica 9

Bentonite 3

I would be lying to you if I said I never cut through the slip and glaze to the clay, and yes, you can just add glaze with a brush to correct the error.

You will also need these to make the brush-on slip.



Cobalt Slip formula from Alberta College of Art 1960's

Albany Clay 15

Cobalt Oxide 2

Ocherous clay 5

Lithium Blue Glaze formula

[makes 25 pounds] from my teacher
Bert Borch

Nepheline Syenite 11.4
Barium Carb 8.4
Lithium Carb 0.28
Ball clay 1.8
Silica 2
Bentonite 0.5
Copper Carb 0.75



Thomas Glaze

Thomas glaze starts out as **TOM** or *touch of the moon*.

Nepheline Syenite 50
Whiting 30
EPK kaolin 20
Bentonite 4

It is a matt, dry whitish glaze that I used on many of the iris vases. They were sprayed with TOM in the green state, and once fired. An over glaze brush full of wet chrome oxide gave me green leaves. You can scratch through the chrome to make all sorts of linear marks...have fun. Cobalt water color over glaze gives a good light blue, and wet cobalt slip yields a deep blue. Add Manganese and you may get into the blue-purple range.

To make **Thomas**, just add 10 pounds of 400m or 40 micron silica to the above formula, and use Grolleg kaolin instead of EPK.

Thomas is a whiter, dryer version of **TOM** and a little less crackle when it is thick. These two glazes were always applied quite thin.

1999 Jasper Glaze

Jasper Glaze is named after Chris' cat, who I liked a lot.

A grey-blue fine crackle glaze. I like this glaze best when it is thick and hot.

G200 feldspar 28.22
Silica 43.00
Whiting 21.50
Grolleg Kaolin 2.68
Dolomite 2.68
Bone ash .44
Iron oxide 1.00
Bentonite .44



Peach Black Temmoku

This glaze was given to me by Bonnie McCombe in art school. Neither of us knows why it is called Peach Black, but that has not held us back. Thin it is a good caramel brown, and thick it is black with a chocolate pull on the rims and edges. Thanks Bonnie!

G200 feldspar 40
Whiting 12
Grolleg Kaolin 12
400m or 40 micron silica 24
Zinc oxide 2
Iron oxide 7
Bentonite 3



Myare Celadon

This glaze is named after our daughter Marnie. When she started to talk, we would ask her if her name was Marnie, and she would say “Yes my are”. So Myare stuck as her nick-name. This makes just a little over 25 pounds of dry mix.

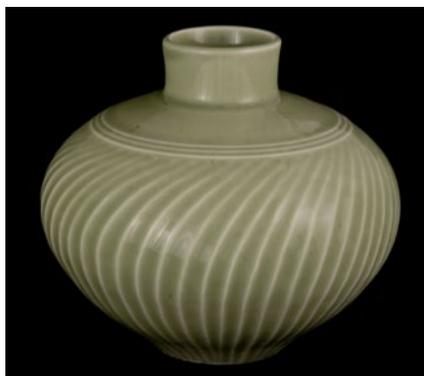
Grolleg Kaolin 5
G200 feldspar 7.5
400m or 40 micron silica 9
Whiting 2.5
Dolomite 2.5
Iron oxide $\frac{3}{4}$
Bentonite $\frac{1}{4}$



Our Abe Glaze

Named after our son Abraham. Marnie got a glaze named after her, and fair is just fair. This is a lovely deep green glaze that when hot will craze/crackle.

G200 feldspar 45
Red art clay 25
Whiting 10
400m or 40 micron silica 23 [original was 20 but now 23 to make bigger craze pattern—play]



This glaze needs a blunger to make it. The first thing to do is mix water and red art and blunge for a while. Run this mix through a fine screen to get the lumps out, and when that is all done, add the rest of the materials and blunge again.

CBNL Glaze (Christopher Broadhurst Night Landscape glaze)

Our friend Chris is a painter, and for a time did night landscapes that are very interesting. His use of color and light was and is admirable. When this glaze/sinter came out of the kiln, it reminded me of his night landscapes, so I named it after him.

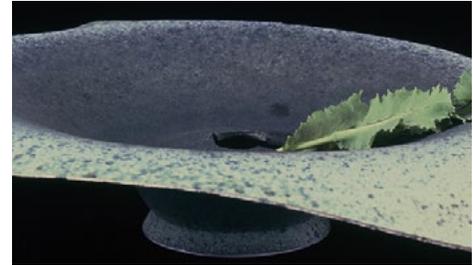
Grolleg Kaolin 50
Barium Carbonate 50
Iron Chromate 2
211 Blue Oxide 1

[211 Blue is a product from The Shepherd Color Company, from Cincinnati, Ohio and is a drum dry mortar color. I have no idea what is in it...]

A variation on CBNL Glaze is:

Grolleg 50
Barium Carb 50
Copper Carb 5

A very dry sinter. Whites [thin] to green-blue [thick] with a very open-pore surface.



Marine Wudi Glaze/Sinter

Named after my wife Maureen. I changed the spelling to a more watery name, like the glaze feels. Also it is named after Wu Zetian [Wu -tse-tien] called Wudi. She was a Zhou Dynasty leader in China, and a woman. Very difficult but possible. Two important women, so they deserve a glaze.

If I had discovered this early in my career, I would have thrown it out because it really is not a glaze. It is a sinter. It is almost a glaze. It is also totally unpredictable. Sometimes if applied thick, it just falls off the pot to the shelf when it is cooling. What is left on the pot, however can be wonderful.

EPK kaolin 50
Barium Carbonate 50
Whiting 15
Copper Carbonate 2.5
Iron Oxide 1.5

This sinter likes it hot, so if you can push it all the way to cone 13 or 14 it will be wonderful.

Morgan Glaze/Sinter

This glaze is named after a wonderful black cat that we had for many years. He could keep the squirrels from digging up our tulips. Beautiful! This is a variation on Marine Wudi. Applied thick it will be black and thin it is blue or even white. Again, very unpredictable.

EPK Kaolin 50
Barium Carbonate 50
Whiting 10
Copper carbonate 10



March Crackle Glaze

Named because of its color, a warm grey that mimics what happens to our landscape in March. This is another accident. I mixed two glazes up, and loved what happened. Trouble is, I only knew what one of them was. I spent a huge amount of time trying combinations and finally hit gold. It turns out to be about half white crackle, and half RGM, which both look the same in the wet state...

I use good India ink to emphasise the crazing. The surface must be dry, so wear rubber gloves as even your sweaty hand will keep the ink from entering the craze. Use a small sponge, and cover the glaze with ink. As it starts to dry, use a larger damp sponge to get most of the ink off the surface. Finally, use a clean sponge to get the last smear of ink off the glaze. Let that dry for a day or so, and sponge it again. You will find out that it is not a good idea to get the ink on the exposed clay body. You will, and you will curse. You will likely re-fire, which is how I found Naples Yellow.

This is a messy job, so wear things you don't want to wear again...and gloves, rubber gloves.

Nepheline Syenite 56.9
Whiting 3.44
Grolleg Kaolin 17.24
Dolomite 2.58
Silica 15.51
Bentonite 3.44
Iron oxide 0.86

Timing...

If you want very large crackle patterns ink should be applied very soon after the piece is out of the kiln. If you want smaller cracked ice type of pattern, wait for a month and ink then. Of course, you can do both. You can also use good artist's drawing inks, and they come in good colors. Play. Black first early, and red or blue later is a nice combination.



RGM 98 Celadon

Ruth Gowdy McKinley was a good friend. I noted in my glaze records—fired kiln Saturday night over Sunday March 29th 1981. My Friend Ruth died.

I was testing a glaze in that kiln called Proto Porcelain Glaze. I wrote that the proto glaze was fantastic and will be named for my friend who died while the glaze was being born. RGM—sad accident. Lovely glaze.



▲ **Taiwan Bowl 1992** Tien glaze on rim, and RGM on the inside and foot

The thinking behind the glaze went like this. *What if I took my porcelain minus some of the kaolin and silica and melted it with something, and added a little iron oxide?*

In other words what did the old people in Southern China do to get such wonderful unctuous celadons? Remember, this is the late 70's and early 80's, and we had no clues as to how the Chinese did anything. It was still a closed room. I imagined that they likely took their clay body, more or less; added ash to it, played around for a few decades and ended up with Longquan celadons. Beautiful. Exquisite, simple and difficult.

I tried adding washed wood ash to my porcelain body minus most of the kaolin. It works. It was even interesting, but not something I could reproduce because I did not have enough, or even the same ash all the time. If that appeals to you, play and enjoy. I did.

In the end, I thought that whiting would be more dependable, so went that route as well. I kept all the buckets, and used the glazes as the pieces spoke out loud for them. It was worthwhile. I like the two worlds together on the Taiwan bowl.

Tien Crackle [on the way to RGM]

G200 spar 21
400m or 40 micron silica 30
Whiting 16
Grolleg 2
Dolomite 2
Bone ash .33
Iron oxide .75
Bentonite .33



I had some help. When I was in the early stages of making this happen, I went to the Royal Ontario Museum with a sample. I wanted to see how mine looked against the other guys. I was not trying to copy their glaze, but I did want to confirm the thinking behind the glaze—melt the clay body and make it beautiful.

I met a fine and very knowledgeable woman in the Far Eastern Department. Patty Proctor. She saw my glaze, and liked it. She took me by the hand, and showed me drawers of sherds from the Chinese Song period, since my glaze reminded her of that era. Good thing, since I was after that too. We got along very well. I learned a lot. One of the important things that I learned was that not all of their glazes were alike. There was no one way; there were many. It confirmed that they too did not have consistent ash, or maybe even clay bodies to make glazes with. Yahoo! I love it that there was room for all then, just as there is now.

Patty also took me deep into the museum, and I got to feel, to handle wonderful treasures. It turned out that I could give Patty some information about how and why things were done the way they were, from a potter's technical point of view. Camels stand on a slab of clay so that their feet shrink proportionally. If there was no slab, they would splay and look very odd. We felt the inside of pots and found the finger marks. Then she filled me in on the history of the piece. We went on to do a workshop together for The Society of Decorative Arts. Our collaboration was well received. It was a privilege to know Patty.

I worked on this glaze for 18 years...tweaking this and that. It still crackles a bit, and now and again if applied to thick will run. It is a good one to play with.

Here is the starting point...

Harlan's Porcelain Clay Body

[See website technical for more...]

Grolleg kaolin 53
G200 feldspar 23
400mesh silica 24
Ferro Bentonite 3

The thinking in RGM was to move some of the kaolin out, and replace it with whiting.

RGM 1999

Grolleg kaolin 30
G200 feldspar 20
400m or 40 micron silica 28
Whiting 20
Iron Oxide 0.5



Blue Ruth Glaze

Add a tube or two of cobalt blue water color to the batch above. Leave out the iron oxide—I didn't have to tell you that. You knew, but just in case...

To mix the watercolor with the glaze, take about a cup of glaze, and add the water color to that. Mix like crazy with a kitchen wire whisk. Think making egg whites into merengue. Run that through a fine screen into another cup to make sure the paint lumps are out of it. You may have to do that a few times, and then add that mix to the large batch. It is a sweet blue celadon.



Imperial Snapdragon Yellow Glaze

Fall of 1999



I liked the yellows I was getting with wood ash, but I wanted something less fluid, and softer in tone. It took just a little over 12 years to get it right. ISY is a glaze that is open to kiln fuming, so if any copper reds, or other volatile glazes are in the area near ISY, it will affect the yellow. This can be wonderful, and of course it can go south in a heartbeat. I used Jun blue and peach black temmoku in combination with this glaze a lot, especially on wall platters. It is a soft glaze and therefore an open glaze so food will stain it...eye candy only.

G200 feldspar 47
Dolomite 9
Whiting 14.5
Grolleg Kaolin 21.5
400m or 40 micron Silica 8
Iron oxide 1.2
Bentonite 1

Xue Bai Chicken Skin Glaze

[xue bai means snow white]



Nepheline Syenite 35
Bell dark ball clay 15
Whiting 10
Magnesium Carbonate 50

Bess Hairs Fur/Tea Dust Glaze

Kaolin 31.03
G200 feldspar 24.13
Silica 20.68
Whiting 24.13
Iron Oxide 6.45
Manganese Dioxide 1.0
Copper Carbonate 1.0



Crushed Strawberry Copper Red Glaze

For far too many years, getting a good copper red glaze was a must. It took decades of trying tests in each kiln load, but finally I got something that worked. I did not want anything liver-like; this has what I wanted. These glazes are not easy, and vary from load to load. Even different locations in a kiln affect them. Keep trying...

And yes, you will be wondering. Why is the batch in pounds, and the copper in grams? It turns out that my old scales are good at larger loads, but not at small ones. The amount of copper is so small, that I had to use my gram scales for the batch. So there.

Soda feldspar 52.63 pounds
400m or 40 micron silica 26.3 pounds
Whiting 10.5 pounds
Dolomite 5.3 pounds
Zinc oxide 3.2 pounds
Tin oxide 1.3 pounds
Bentonite 0.8 pounds
Iron oxide 0.5 pounds
Copper carbonate 150 grams

This glaze is best thickly applied...really thick. This means that if it is too hot, it will run, so put a silica dusted cookie under your pot. The iron in the glaze gives it better color, but also if any atmospheric oxygen is in the kiln, the red will turn into a good crackle celadon. Sometimes you get both on the same piece. Bonus.



Harlan's Carbon Trap Shino Glaze

Nepheline Syenite 8
EPK Kaolin 5
Spodumene 4
Silica 4
Soda ash 2
Albany Slip 0.6

Application can be thick or thin or both for lots of variations. It is a good idea to glaze the inside of your ware and let that dry at least for an overnight. Then do the outside.





HH Celadon Glaze

[See website technical for more...]

Potash feldspar 25
Whiting 18
Kaolin 20
Silica 37
Iron Oxide 1

Feldspar is G200

Whiting is Snow White

Flint is 400m or 40 micron but 63 micron or 230 mesh is OK too

Kaolin is:

For light blue-green—Grolleg Kaolin

For Yellow Green—Edgar Plastic Kaolin

For Koryo Green—use Bell Dark Ball Clay

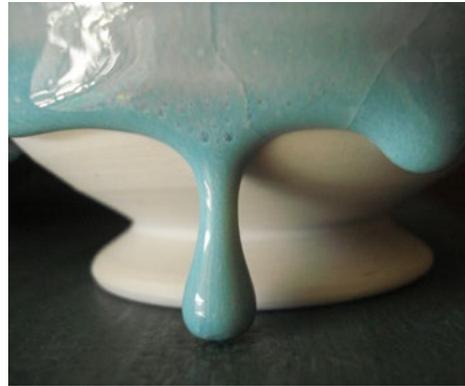
For Qing Bai or Ying Qing—use Grolleg Kaolin and leave out the iron oxide

Iron Oxide is Spanish Red Iron Oxide, and nothing else works...nothing else.

Jun Glaze

[See website technical for more...]

Potash feldspar 40.09
Silica 34
Whiting 15.32
Bone ash 0.63
Iron oxide 1.67
Grolleg kaolin 3.83
Dolomite 3.83
Bentonite 0.63



Be careful to grind the bone ash and screen it, as it tends to lump in storage. Even ball milling it is a good idea if you have one.

Shine Sheet

PROFESSIONAL EXHIBITIONS AND AWARDS:

- 2012 Yunomi Invitational Exhibition AKAR Gallery, Iowa City, USA
- 2010 "Northerners" Group show of five Canadian Ceramic Artists. AKAR Gallery, Iowa City, USA
- 2010 Yunomi Invitational Exhibition AKAR Gallery, Iowa City, USA
- 2009 Unity and Diversity International Craft Biennial, Cheongju, Korea
- 2009 Yunomi Invitational Exhibition AKAR Gallery, Iowa City, Iowa, USA
- 2008 Canada Council long term visual arts grant to research slip casting technology and produce large vessel sculptures for two exhibitions in Halifax and Toronto
- 2008 Yunomi Invitational Exhibition AKAR Gallery, Iowa City, Iowa, USA
- 2007 Forms and Shapes: Architecture Exhibition. AKAR Gallery, Iowa City, Iowa, USA
- 2007 Yunomi Invitational Exhibition AKAR Gallery, Iowa City, Iowa, USA
- 2006 A K Collings Art Gallery group show titled "Craft Dinner" Fast food Oil paintings and porcelain
- 2006 Forms and Shapes: The Useful Tea Pot, a juried exhibition AKAR Gallery Iowa City Iowa USA
- 2006 Unique! 30 years of outstanding crafts Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec. Curator: Alan Elder
- 2006 David Kaye Gallery group exhibition of Saidye Bronfman Award recipients
- 2005 Opening Exhibition of Gallery artists Gallery Page and Strange Halifax Nova Scotia
- 2004– Quietly Convincing Burlington Cultural Centre Exhibition curator Tony Clennell
- 2003–2004 Canada council "A" grant. A one year Creation/research project into porcelain in Germany and France
- 2003 Ceramic Modernism, George R. Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Canada
- 2002 Alberta College of Art and Design 75th Anniversary Exhibition Calgary, Alberta
- 2001 Canadian Pavilion at EXPO 2000, Hanover, Germany
- 2000 Canada Clay Today, The Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. Toronto, Canada; Amsterdam, Holland; Faenza, Italy; Chicago USA.
- 2000 Expressions 2000, Quinte Arts Council, Belleville. Drawings and Porcelain
- 1999 Toronto Collects. Gardiner Museum
- 1998 Poetry of the Vessel. Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
Fire and Earth Itabashi Art Museum, Japan.
Organised by Burlington Cultural Centre
- 1997 Jean. A. Chalmers National Crafts Award.
Fire and Earth Exhibition. Burlington Cultural Centre, Burlington Ontario
- 1996 Transformation'—Prix Saidye Bronfman Award, 1977-1996. Canadian Museum of Civilisation.
- 1996 White on White' —Travelling Exhibition. Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo, Ontario. Gallery of the Canadian Embassy, Tokyo, Japan; Shanghai, China.
- 1995 Elected to Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.
- 1995 Royal Ontario Museum. Toronto, Ontario. 'Reshaping Tradition: Contemporary Canadian Ceramics in Asian Modes.' —Exhibition.
MuJu International Exhibition. Seoul Korea
- 1993 Taipei International Exhibition of Traditional Arts and Crafts. Taipei Fine Arts Museum.

- 1992 The 1992 International Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary Ceramic Art. National Museum of History. Republic of China.
- 1990 20/20 Hindsight. Koffler Art Gallery. Toronto, Ontario. A twenty year retrospective exhibition. Publication written by Gloria Hickey.
- 1989 Saidye Bronfman Award for Excellence in the Crafts.
- 1988,87 Canada Council Arts Grant "A".
- 1987 Ontario Craft—John Mather Award.
- 1987 Victor Martyn Lynch Staunton Award.
- 1986 Joan Chalmers Award for Excellence.
Homer Watson Gallery. Kitchener, Ontario.
Bronfman Award Nominee, Ceramists Canada, Ontario Crafts Council, Canadian Guild of Crafts.
- 1985 London Art Gallery
Ontario Crafts '85, MacDonald Art Gallery.
Alberta College of Art.
Fireworks Travelling Exhibition.
Durham Art Gallery, Ontario.
Belleville Art Gallery, Ontario.
MacDonald Art Gallery, Toronto. Wood fired Exhibition.
- 1985/84 Kornbluth Art Gallery, New Jersey, U.S.A.
Rails End Gallery, Staff Exhibition.
- 1984 Harbourfront Gallery, Toronto. Best Ceramics Award.
- 1984-83 Ontario Arts Council Research Grant.
- 1984,82,80 Ontario Potters Association, Ottawa.
- 1982 Canada Council Grant, Wood Fire Research.
- 1980-79 Metiers D'art III, Travelling European Exhibition
Ontario Potters Association, Purchase Award.
Special Pots, Special People. London, Ontario.
- 1977 National Ceramics Show, Glenbow Art Gallery, Calgary.
- 1976 Agnes Etherington Art Gallery, Kingston, Ontario, "Contemporary Ontario Crafts."
Ontario Art Gallery, "Down to Earth", (Travelling Show)
Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival, Florida, U.S.A.
Super Mud Conference, Niagara Falls, U.S.A.
Carborundum Museum Show, Niagara Falls, U.S.A.
Calgary Visual Art Exhibition.
- 1970 Osaka Worlds Fair.
National Art Gallery, "Hairy Hill Exhibition", (Travelling Show).
Glenbow Art Gallery, A Prairie Sweet", a three man show organised by Bruce Ferguson.
National Arts Centre, Ottawa, "Vessel Show."
Canada Council Grant.
Canadian Biennial Travelling Show.
All Alberta Show". Montreal.
- 1970-69 Environment Canada.
Canadian National Exhibition Prize for Excellence.

ONE-MAN SHOWS:

- 2017 Gallery Page and Strange Halifax, Nova Scotia
- 2016 "Table Talk" an exhibition of functional table porcelain and domestic paintings... David Kaye Gallery, Toronto
- 2012 "Current Events" Exhibition Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal, Quebec
- 2011 "China, Made in Canada" an exhibition of porcelain ceramics and oil paintings at David Kaye Gallery Toronto, Ontario, Canada. [Thank you Canada Council]
- 2008 Angelines, Bloomfield, Ontario. 25 year Retrospective of Paintings and Drawings
- 2007 David Kaye Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- 2007 AKAR Gallery, Iowa City, Iowa, USA
- 2006 Gardiner Museum, Toronto Ontario
- 2006 Harbinger Gallery, Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario
[porcelain and drawings]
- 2006 Page and Strange Art Gallery, Halifax, N.S. "Porcelain that works"
- 2004 Prime Art Gallery, Toronto, Ontario 'Dinner on the table-Lunch on the wall' oil paintings and porcelain
- 2003 Prime Art Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- 2001 Prime Art Gallery, Toronto Ontario
- 2001 Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal Quebec
- 2001 Thirty-Year Retrospective Exhibition. "Then and Now" Burlington Cultural Centre, Burlington Ontario. Curator; Jonathan Smith
- 2000 Prime Art Gallery. One Man Exhibition, Drawings and Porcelain
- 1999 Studio 21 Halifax
- 1998 Prime Art Gallery, Toronto
- 1998,96,94 Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal, Quebec.
- 1995,93,92 The Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario.
- 1993 Gallery One, Toronto, Ontario.
- 1992-90,88 Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal, Quebec.
- 1992,90-89 Ufundi Art Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario.
- 1992-91,88 Quest Gallery, Victoria British Columbia.
- 1991,82 Ontario Crafts Council, Toronto, Ontario.
- 1990 Belleville Public Art Gallery, Belleville Ontario.
- 1988,85-82 Hiberna Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario
- 1987-86 Ufundi Art Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario.
- 1987,85-74 Rubaiyat Gallery. Calgary, Alberta.
- 1986,84,82 Quest Gallery, Victoria British Columbia.
- 1986 Alexandra Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- 1985 Guild Shop, Toronto, Ontario, "New Porcelain, Old Ways."
- 1985 Agnes Etherington Art Gallery, Kingston, Ontario, "Ten Year Retrospective."
Ontario Potters Association, Toronto, Ontario.
- 1987,85,82 Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- 1985,76 Alice Peck Gallery, Burlington, Ontario.
- 1980-79 Quest Gallery, Victoria British Columbia.
- 1982 "Form and Function". Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.
- 1981 Red Deer Museum and Archives, Alberta, "A Measure of Success," Retrospective.
- 1980 Hiberna Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario
- 1980,78 Kornbluth Gallery, New Jersey, U.S.A.

1979-76,74 Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
1978,74 Canadian Guild of Potters.
1977,75,74 Kingston Gallery of Fine Canadian Crafts, Ontario.
1977,75 Canadian Guild of Crafts. Toronto.
1972 Downstairs Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta.
1969 Alberta College of Art Gallery.
1968 Claybin, Vancouver, British Columbia

TWO-MAN SHOWS:

1970 Banff Centre for the Arts, Alberta.
1969 Red Deer, Alberta.

LECTURES, WORKSHOPS AND TEACHING APPOINTMENTS:

Holland College, Prince Edward Island.
Alberta Potters Association.
British Columbia Potters Association.
Ontario Crafts Council (Quinte).
London and Regional Potters Association, London, Ontario.
Red Deer Junior College.
Advisor to the Ontario Board of Education, Art and Craft Survey.
St. Lawrence College Board of Advisors, Brockville.
Ontario Association of College Instructors, Mississauga, Ontario.
Lester B. Pearson College, Vancouver Island, Victoria.
Canadore College, North Bay, Ontario.
Museum and Archives, Sudbury, Ontario.
Alberta Potters Association, Lethbridge, Calgary, and Edmonton.
Ontario Clay and Glass, "Fusion".
Gardiner Museum, Toronto.
MuJu International Environmental Clay Arts Symposium. Korea, 1995
Mohawk College, Hamilton, Ontario.
Ontario Potters Association, Hamilton, Kitchener, Waterloo, Ottawa, Toronto.
School of Visual Arts, Montreal, Quebec.
Ceramics Seminar, Department of Education, Calgary.
Nova Scotia School of Art and Design, Halifax.
New Brunswick School of Art, Fredericton.
Nova Scotia Designer Craftsmen Association, Halifax.
Sheridan School of Design, Toronto, Ontario.
University of Alberta, Edmonton.
Potters Guild, Edmonton and Kingston.
University of Calgary.
Alberta College of Art, Calgary.
Canadian/Chinese Ceramics Conference 1997.

COMMISSIONS, WORKS OF ART IN COLLECTIONS:

Glenbow Art Gallery.
University of Calgary.

Government of Alberta.
Alberta Art Foundation.
Confederation Art Gallery, Prince Edward Island.
National Canadian Craft Council Collection.
Montreal Museum of fine Art.
Indusmin Collection, Toronto, Ontario.
Canadian Guild of Crafts Collection, Toronto, Ontario.
Massey Collection, Toronto.
Royal Scottish Museum, Britain.
Royal Ontario Museum.
Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art
Winnipeg Art Gallery.
Canadian Museum of civilization, Hull, Quebec.
The Claridge Collection, Montreal, Quebec.
Burlington Cultural Centre, Burlington, Ontario.
Canadian Craft Museum, Vancouver, British Columbia.
Commission for Joan Chalmers. The #1 Chestnut Dinner Service... a Commission of Pleasures.
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.
Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute - Jiangxi, China.
Numerous personal private collections.

COMMISSIONS, MURALS

(Ceramics/ Stoneware/ Porcelain):

Hoffman and Chinery Designers, Edmonton, Alberta.
Alberta Government Telephone Buildings, Calgary, Alberta.
Highfield Development Corporation, Victoria Place and Highland Place, Edmonton.
Nu West Land Development Corporation, Edmonton, Alberta.
Burnett Duckworth and Company, Calgary, Alberta.
Built in Art. Ontario Crafts Council, Toronto, Ontario.
Built in Art, Canadian Craft Museum. Vancouver, British Columbia.

PUBLICATIONS:

The Masters: Porcelain. Lark Publications [Spring release 2008]
World Famous Ceramic Artists' Studios. Bai Ming Hebei Fine Publishing House
Studio Ceramics in Canada Gail Crawford
Contemporary Studio Porcelain Peter Lane A & C Black London
21st Century Ceramics. Bill Hunt American Ceramics Society
September 2004 Ceramics Monthly, written by Diane Creber
Clay Today. The Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art in Toronto
Ceramics Art and Perception #36 Single Flower Vases 1999
Fire and Earth Itabashi Art Museum, Itabashi, Japan
Copper Red Glazes. Robert Tichane.
Rotunda—The Magazine of the Royal Ontario Museum. 'Canadian Ceramics in Asian Traditions',
Raphael Yu. Summer, 1996.
Canadian Collector, January/February 1987, Pages 38, 39, 40, and 41.
Ceramics Monthly, Wood firing, pages 23, 24, 25, February 1984.
Works of Craft, The Massey Foundation, pages 114, 158, 164, 165, 191; 1984.

Ceramics, A Potters Handbook, Glenn C. Nelson, page 178; 1984.
Ceramics of the World, Gottfried Borrmann.
The Perfect Setting, Office of the Governor General of Canada, 1983.
Studio Ceramics, Peter Lane, pages 50, 51, 73, 75, 169; 1983.
Ceramics Monthly, Portfolio, pages 47 to 54, December 1981.
The Craftsman's Way, Flanders and Massey, Page 50; 1981.
Porcelain, Jane Axel and Karen McCready, 1981.
Contemporary International Ceramics, Hildegard Storr-Britz, 1980.
The Art of the Earth, Rona Murray and Walter Dexter, Pages 38, 39; 1979.
Arts Canada. Pages 64, 65, May 1973.



▲ July 1st 2018

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