

BY HARLAN HOUSE R.C.A.

Some time has passed since you heard from me, and there are many reasons. The big one we all know about. Lockdown in Lonsdale is normal life for Maureen and me. Time to put oil paint on canvas. I did that.

Connect the Dots - 2021, Oil paint on Canvas, 108cm x 80cm.

Time to fix an old blacksmith shop. Working on that. Time to discover Art that you put away. Did that. Time spent with my girlfriend. Perfect!

Morning Art - 2021, Oil paint on canvas 80cm x 108cm.

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Close - 2021, Oil Paint on Canvas - 92cm x 77cm.



As you know, I stopped making porcelain a couple of years ago, and had our last Lonsdale Studio Exhibition in 2017. I thought I was done. Last summer we found a treasure trove of my work in an old storage shed. We found examples of the first 16 years of porcelain made and exhibited in Canada. My earliest stoneware going back to the Calgary art school and studios was also found. What to do? Photograph the find, document, ponder, and then change our minds.

Result. "*The Find*". We will be showing these treasures from 1967 thru 1988. They will be in Lonsdale, in the studio galleries and at the blacksmith shop. As things settle and we all feel safe again, call and visit us. It will be wonderful to see you again. For now, feast your eyes on my exhibition - The find.



A Little Introduction

Here are some of the first pieces that I made in art school. We had these in kitchens and used them daily. As new work evolved, the old went into storage.

Too good to throw away.











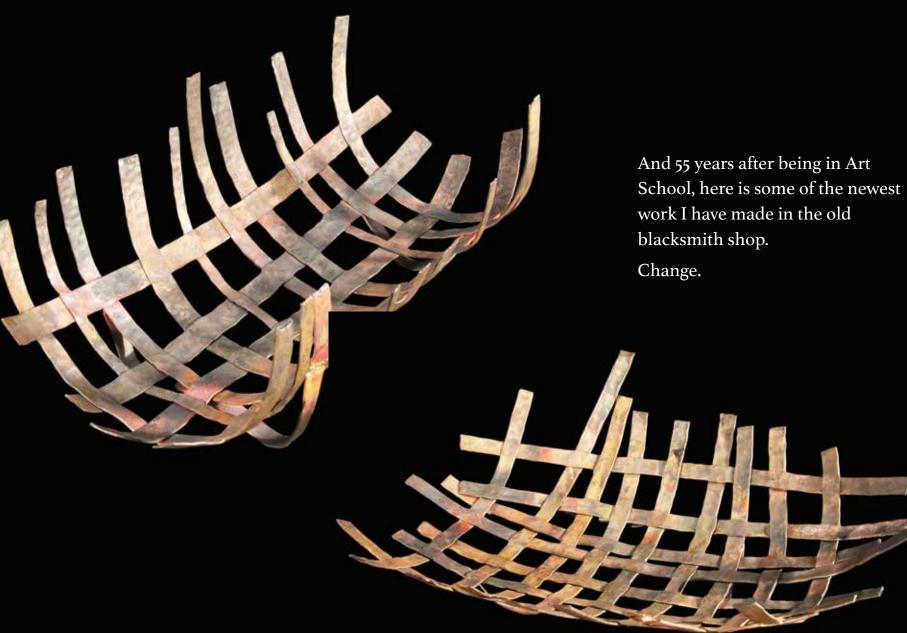
1967

Top right: Celadon tea cups cobalt brush work 8cm high, 1967 - **Bottom Left**: Tea cup stoneware with celadon and mustard glaze 8cm high, 1967. **Bottom Middle**: Stoneware bowl NDW glaze 12cm wide, 1967. **Bottom right**: Tiny 3mm stoneware bowl with BA glaze, 1967.



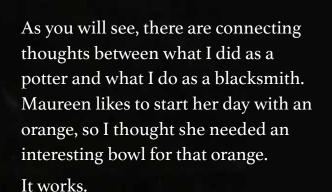
-1970

Top left: Fireclay platter, peach black temmoku, 40cm, 1969 - Top right: Thrown fireclay coffee cups NDW glaze 85mm, 1970. Bottom right: Thrown in two pieces water glasses wax resist on fireclay hustad glaze 115mm, 1970. Bottom left: Stoneware bowl in NDW glaze 14cm.





Top: Forged copper basket sculpture - 44cm x 21cm x 18cm high, 2022 - **Bottom**: Forged copper fruit dish - 41cm x 30cm x 14cm high, 2022.





The Long Read

I have spent the warm months over the past six years restoring an old blacksmith shop. See blog. <u>www.</u> <u>harlanhouse.com</u> It will never be finished, but it is coming along nicely. The room where the wood fired kiln was, has turned into a very handsome show room - called the kiln room. I will use it to show my old and new work. Some of you will remember being in this old building when we were firing the wood kiln during one of our Lonsdale exhibitions.





Part of the building attached to the kiln room is a storage shed. Last summer, I decided to see what was in it. Over the 40-year life of the shed, things were put away. Storage happens if you have space. My memory of what gets stored goes on delete as soon as the object is out of sight. Maureen and I know why many pieces were put away, but some were mysteriously stored. I documented the new-found treasures. For those of you who came to our exhibitions in Lonsdale, this will be a poke in the old



memory bank. Most of this collection has only been seen by 10 or 15 people - way back when. This is the first time for many of you, so I hope you enjoy seeing them as much as we have.



THE TECHNICAL SIDE of most things you will be reading about here is in my book - free - at: <u>www.harlanhouse.com</u> and go to book.

Reasons why my Art went into storage:

- Personal ceramics and paintings
- Duplicates and/or over stocked
- Exhibition returns
- Wood fired works
- Moving between traditions into new
- Imperfect but beautiful
- Gallery returns





Personal ceramics & paintings

When Maureen and I bought Pat Doyle's Hotel in 1972, we knew we were in for change. Our little house at 701 2nd Avenue S.W. in downtown Calgary was tiny and filled with ceramics and paintings from art school plus new work from our Calgary studio.

We packed all that up, and in the spring of 1973 moved to the Eastern Ontario village of Lonsdale and into Pat Doyle's Hotel. We went from two small main floor bedrooms to seven second floor even smaller rooms, and from one main floor room to four. It was a small country hotel, but for us it was huge.

> When we unpacked our Calgary boxes, it looked thin.

Big change.

In Calgary not only did we work with fireclay and stoneware clay, but we also learned how to find clay. My partner in the studio, teacher and friend, Walter Drohan and I would go on little drives around Calgary in the summer. Walter taught me how to find clay outcrops in the ditches along the roadside. Easy if you know what to look for. We dug samples and kept track of mileage from the studio to make sure we could get back to the same dig. It worked. We dug samples, fired them to glaze temperatures and if we got something we liked, went back for a bigger sample. Ditch 23 was a keeper.





1970

Left: Our first dinner ware set - stoneware with ditch glaze and iron oxide brushwork. 265 mm across, 1970. Top right: Stoneware high bowl – thin Hustad and temmoku with iron brushwork. 9cm high, 1970. Bottom right: Stoneware pitcher in ditch glaze and peach black. 10cm across, 1970.



1972

Left to right: Hand built electrical porcelain ball vase Lithium blue glaze and gold. 31cm, 1972. Handbuilt electrical porcelain Lithium blue and 22c gold. 29cm high, 1972. Hand built electrical porcelain vase lithium blue and iron oxide glazes. 34 cm, 1972. Stoneware sculpture 53cm x 10cm , 1972.



-1972

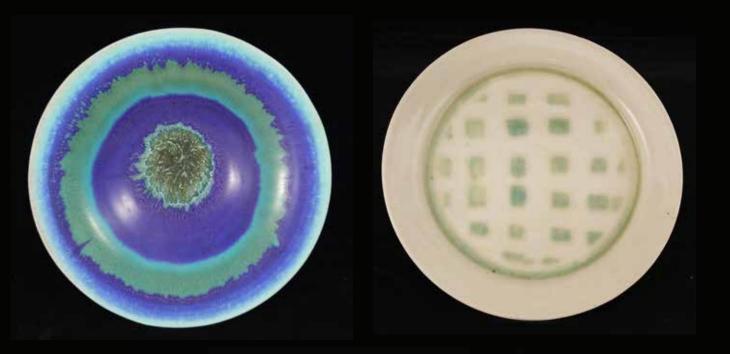
Left: Family Tea Pot stoneware mustard and Hustad glaze. 35cm high, 1973. **Centre**: Studio coffee cup Hustad glaze. 115mm high, 1972. **Right**: Stoneware cup wax resist in scrap glaze, 1971. **Top**: Altered bowl form celadon glaze. 193mm x 65mm, 1972.



Left: Dinner set for six - goblet 126mm high bowl 180mm side plate, 185mm dinner plate 270mm, 1972. Top Right: Large cast egg in celadon with wax resist oxidized copper red over glaze 95mm, 1972. Bottom right: Set of cast eggs celadon over bas relief carving. 1972. Making innovative pieces in my Lonsdale studio allowed Art to move home. I needed to live with the new works to make sure they had content, and the possibility of a long life. As a maker of permanent objects, I need to know that the work commands interest long after the first introduction. I still get messages saying that so and so bought the piece 30 years ago, and it is still relevant and delivering pleasure. Job done.

Maureen always helped me unload the kiln, and often would say "I like this one." That one would almost always come home.

The rooms filled up.









-1973

Left: Scalloped celadon bud vase iron brush decoration 13cm high, 1973. Centre: Wall platter out of first Lonsdale kiln celadon with iron slip brush decoration 22cm, 1973. Right: Celadon altered bowl with iron oxide brush work - on bottom written - this one was a treat - 38cm, 1973.





Left: Fred's field flower vase celadon and temmoku with cobalt wash and chrome pencil drawing over iron brushwork 32cm, 1973. Right: Wall landscape bowl celadon cobalt and iron oxide decoration. 189mm x 45mm high, 1973.

Then reality sets in. The rooms needed work. In our case, we wanted to restore the building to what it was in 1841 when it was a working hotel. We compromised and added hydro and running water, heat, and bathrooms. Hate compromise. Love hot water.







Left: Wall bowl celadon and cobalt brush drawing 23cm, 1973. Right: Plate celadon with copper red wax resist decoration 28cm, 1973.





When we made up our minds about what we wanted to do, the rooms had to be stripped of everything - ceramics, paintings and even some furniture.

We packed up all our Art and took it to the storage shed that was attached to the blacksmith shop. We also promised never to bring so much home again; live a more sparse and simpler life. The furniture came back. Read - so Art could visit. These paintings went into storage and 42 years later they are <u>back</u>.





One of my painting instructors in Art school - George Angliss asked me to work for him. He had just moved into a new house and needed help of all kinds. I knew nothing but was eager to learn, and George was a good teacher. One of the things we did was rent a flatbed truck with a gin pole and a driver. We went to a huge hillside just west of Calgary, and found big, impressive rocks. We loaded them on to the truck and went back to George and Kaye's back garden. I dug huge holes, and we planted rocks the size of a small car into them. It was my introduction to Asian gardens. Beautiful. I have loved rocks ever since. This painting is how I felt about rocks way back in 1967.





The skeletal paintings are a result of having an exceptionally good man teach us about the human and its movements. Ron Spickett knew exactly how our bodies worked and had a skeleton of an older woman in front of us to show why and how it all hung together. It is always amazing for me to see the why in how we move. Magic.





Acrylic on canvas. Untitled. 72cm x 56cm, 1968.











1974

Left: Small celadon vase with cobalt and iron oxide onglaze brushwork. 107mm x 118mm, 1974. Centre: Apple Blossom Vase scalloped with chrome ox-iron ox- copper carb brush drawing. 30cm, 1974. Right: scalloped crackle glazed flower vase. 32cm, 1974.





Left: Scalloped dish oxidized copper red matt glaze. 31cm, 1974. Top right: Thrown ash tray with Bristol crystalline glaze 178mm. 1974. Bottom right: Thrown fluted bowl in clear celadon. 145 mm x 58mm, 1974.

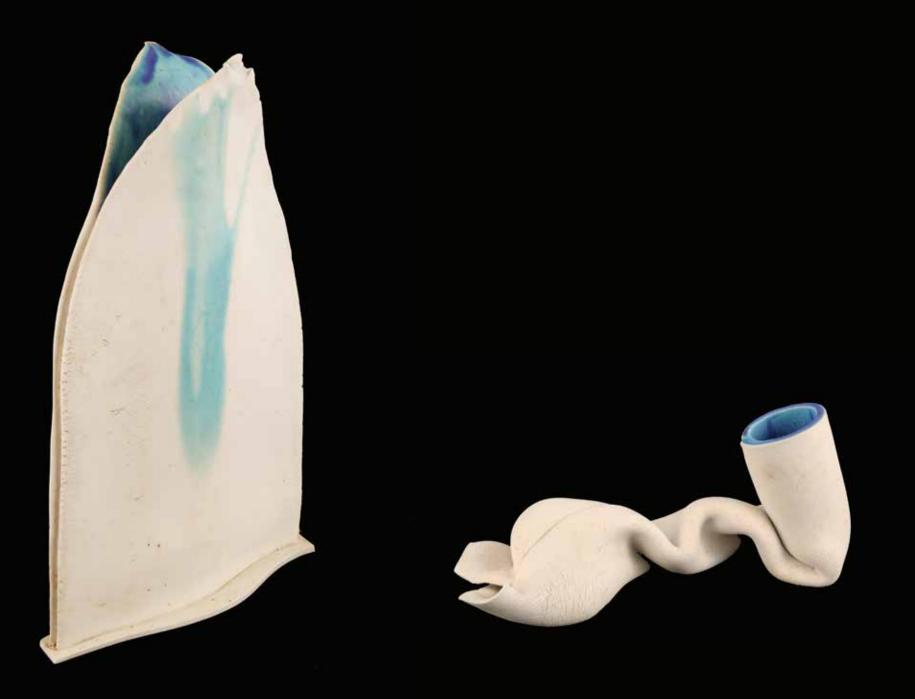




Left: Warped rocking bowl with an oxidised copper glaze- rainy is written on bottom. 23cm, 1974. Right: Pasta vase with lid fired on-useless- celadon with chrome drawing and copper floral inlay. 355mm, 1974.







1974

Left: Hand built slab vase, Lithium blue glaze 34cm, 1974. Right: Handbuilt lay down vase, Lithium blue glaze 30cm x 13cm, 1974.



Left: Celadon vase with cobalt and iron oxide applied on glaze, 16cm, 1974. Right: Celadon with chrome ox drawing and copper red infill written on back--a nice day-almost have my kiln load for this month. 303mm, 1974.

Duplicates and for over stocked

When I went to the studio there were almost no plans made for the day. I worked but it never felt like work - more like play. If an idea needed working out, I did that. Sometimes in spades. I enjoy working on a series, whether it is a sequence of canvases - 37 years painting/drawing junk food - or a shape or a flower. I made more than one iris vase.







Left: Grassy celadon bud bowl 165mm, 1975. Right: Blue on blue flower vase - cobalt on celadon glaze 147mm, 1975.



1975

Left: Single flower vase with lithium blue glaze and wood ash glaze - celadon inside 26cm high, 1975. Right: Wall plate graffiti under temmoku and lithium blue over spray. 29cm, 1975.









Marketing was a skill that I never admired; however, I did learn a few lessons along the way. I remember working in 1977 on a new shape that was a cast bottle form. It had so much going for itself in so many ways, so I just kept making them. Different glazes, decorations, and variations. I remember putting them into one of our exhibitions and realizing that "there are too many". All good, but too many. I put some into storage, and here they are again 40 years later.





1977







1977

Left: No-18 new cast form with hand built iris thomas glaze with lithium blue over spray. 425mm high, 1977. Centre: Thomas glaze with lithium blue over spray. 315mm high, 1977. Right: No-1 Rose Vase celadon with on-glaze chrome oxide wash and copper fume on rose 43cm high, 1977.



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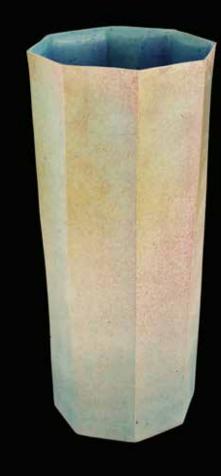
Exhibitions: thoughts about, and return of works

I did at least two one-man exhibitions a year for many years. Busy. I chose the work for each exhibition. There was never a theme or focus - other than good artistry and excellent craftsmanship. I took care of the miserable work with a hammer, and the rest went out to the public to enjoy. Each exhibition was a mix of what I had in the studio on any one day. I did eventually do some exhibitions that featured my junk food paintings and so I made some food related pieces in porcelain. Fun was had, good Art was made and unfortunately, I did not get sued by the likes of McDonalds or Wendy's. Might have been helpful.











1976

Left: Cast octagonal vase course combing with lithium blue glaze. 335mm high, 1976. Centre: Cast octagonal vase temmoku and celadon glazes. 30cm high, 1976. Right: Octagonal cast vase - no.11- fine combing with lithium blue glaze. 348mm high, 1976.







1976



1976

Top: Thrown bowl in lithium blue inside and peach black temmoku outside. 24cm across, 1976. Left: Small Bowl in lithium blue glaze. 556mm x 360mm high, 1976. Right: Thomas glazed open bowl with ash flow brushwork. 30cm, 1976.



1976







1976

Left: Old cast form with hand built Day lily glazed in TOM with temmoku over spray. 42cm high, 1976. Centre: Thomas glaze with lithium blue over spray. 34cm high, 1976. Right: Old iris form with hand built iris TOM glaze with over spray of lithium blue. 415mm high, 1976.



1976

Top: Small cast leaf bowl in clear celadon. 95mm x 66mm high, 1976. **Left**: Slip cast and altered nut bowls Thomas glaze with temmoku and lithium blue over sprays. 16 cm corner to corner 5cm high, 1976. **Right**: Altered octagonal vase form TOM glaze over sprayed with Lithium blue. 35cm high, 1976.



There has also always been keen interest in the *latest* work. It is a concept I have never understood, but I was always aware of its presence. I have always admired some of the old Asian masters. They did not sign their work, nor did they date it. It was *always new!* Some of the work in this storage find was put there because it was no longer new. It had been seen. I needed the space for the *latest* work. Now it is new again!









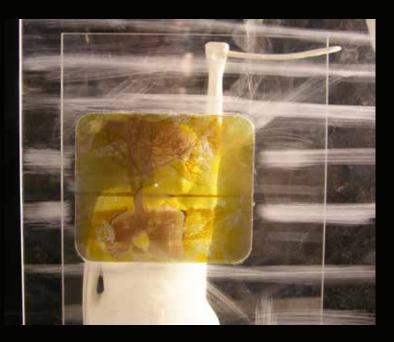
1978

Left: Crushed Strawberry Red Vase Kintsugi. 20cm high x 17cm, 1978. Right: No-0052 Iris vase temmoku-celadon-thomas with copper fume. 435mm high, 1978.



I was in Ottawa delivering an exhibition and stuck in traffic -really stuck. Beside me was a bus full of people headed home and they were stuck but standing too. We were all a sorry bunch. I pondered what they might be thinking as we waited. What were they going home to and where was home? The film negative that is attached to the Perspex resin is a window of rural quietude that is waiting for both of us. Daydreaming in Ottawa traffic.

I have also noticed along the way, that sometimes I totally forget. Forget the function. Forget business. Forget reality. Forget. In grade school, I was called a day dreamer. I was. Still am. I always made things that interested me and challenged my abilities, so sometimes the work is made in another world where I was on that day. Connection to this life maybe, and maybe not. Some of this work fits into the category of day dreamer. I love it, but no one else did. Storage.







In our first year in Lonsdale, we had to put in proper plumbing. We found a local man who did that. Ivan Jackson. He was a dairy farmer who worked on and off the farm. One day we were seeing him at his farm, and to our surprise there was a hay wagon loaded high with bales and a herd of goats on the top. All of us were amazed to see this, and none of us knew how they got there, including Ivan. He asked us if we wanted any goats. Someone paid him in goats. He preferred cash. We wanted to say yes, but on a second look decided that they were not for us. We were city kids newly planted in rural Ontario, and a herd of goats was too much. Our kids would have been in heaven. I liked them too and would probably say yes now. I still see the goats on top of the wagon, and it still makes me smile.

Some things just stick.





Remember the hay wagon. How did they get there, and what happens now? Art creation has an amazing path from beginning to end. Next time you pay your plumber in goats, check over your shoulder for wandering artists. They might be looking for ideas.

With that in the background, Maureen and I were in a local restaurant and the server came to our table greeting us with "how are yous today?" I could not believe my ears, so rushed back to the studio and spent a lot of time making a very small sheep. I made a mold of it and used the ewes in all kinds of ways. There were herds of ewes on the lids of jars, tea pots and on rock cut-offs from one of our local cemetery marble city operations.

I remember one called "Ewes want pie?"









Left: Landscape Vase Coburn blue celadon and Peach Black Temmoku. 27cm high 16 cm, 1979. Centre: Cast vase Tims yellow with TOM overspray. 34cm high, 1979. Right: Landscape vase mother of pearl china paint over coburn blue celadon and poured temmoku. 26cm high, 1979.





Left: Landscape vase mother of pearl china paint over coburn blue celadon and poured temmoku. 26cm high, 1979. Right: Scalloped wall platter TOM glaze thick and thin. 385mm across, 1979.



Looking back and looking once again at this work has been very interesting. As I introduced wheel thrown studio porcelain to Canada, I was also introducing studio porcelain to Harlan. I made it my job to read everything I could find about the white hard stuff. There were a few books about Chinese, Japanese and Korean works, but many more about European examples. Germany, France, and England were all well represented. Looking at these old finds, I can see how these studies formed and informed. There was a school that defined porcelain as hard, white, and thin. There were schools of hard, white, and translucent and/or thin. Hard paste, soft paste and then bone paste. Later as China opened up, there was their definition of simply hard and white. As my clay bodies changed, my ability to move into any of the schools became possible. While using my first clay body that Bert Borch gave us in art school, I was able to play with hard and sort of white. When I changed that clay body to one without nepheline syenite I could make things bigger and still be in the hard and whitish and thin school.

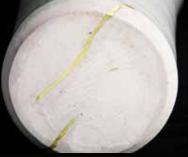






This series of thrown vases are the biggest I ever made in one piece. The Iris vase would have been just over 2 feet tall in the green stage about 60cm. The use of American or English ball clay in the porcelain body made a lot of difference, but there was a sacrifice on the white side. The body was a bit greyish but held up well under a celadon glaze. A Canadian ceramic supply company took on the formula and sold the body as HH porcelain. An American one did it too but used a different name.









When I stopped using ball clay and switched to English Kaolin I fell into the school of hard white and translucent. With translucence came the chance of body melt, and here is a good example. The vase would have been on the hot side of the kiln and is leaning into the fire. Again, not perfect but perfect if you know the story.

As I go through these works, I can remember the thrill of changing the formula and then seeing what could be created with the new body. That kind of research was wonderful because it was slow growth at its best. Imagine the speed: 4 changes to a clay body in 16 years. Makes your head spin.



Left to right: Celadon vase bas relief roses. 44cm x 15cm, 1981. Detail of rose vase bas relief. Ragged edged cup and saucer, 145mm x 9mm high, 1981. Small carved scalloped cup. 76mm x 65mm high, 1982 (or 81).

The Governor General's Dinner Set

In 1984 I was encouraged to add my work into a juried competition to make dinner wares for our Governor General. It was open to all, and there was an exhibition of all the work in Ottawa. It was fun to be there and see what had been done. My work was not chosen, but I learned a lot from the whole event. The one stipulation was the set had to have a cream soup bowl in the lot. Mine did, but it has gone missing, and I hope it is in action somewhere out there in the soup world.









Wood Fired Porcelain





In 1980 I built a wood fired kiln and a building to protect it. It is attached to an 1860s blacksmith and carpenter's shop that sits at the west end of our garden. Part of that build was storage sheds. I used them and the carpenter's shop to store raw materials needed to make my porcelain. Later, space was made to store work from our house and studio.

The find.



My first exhibition in Toronto of wood fired porcelain should have told me how it was going to go. Sold one small piece. The other 40 came home to the studio gallery. I paid no attention to my rejection notice and continued firing with wood. I learned a great deal about managing fire in a small, contained space. Fire moves thru pots like water does in a stream. Manage that.











1982

Left: Small oxidized celadon wall bowl marked W1-first wood firing, Throwing Tobi Ganna marks under glaze. 195mm, 1982. Top: Lonsdale Tobi Ganna wood fired vase. 21cm high, 1980s. Right: Other side of Lonsdale Tobi Ganna vase.







After a couple of years of rare sales, we had to face reality. We were not selling enough to pay the rent, so had to make some adjustments. Sometimes Artists are too far ahead of their audience, or we just find ourselves in a whole other world. I was in both camps. The forms were loose and wonderful to make, and the fire marking was over the moon wonderful and good - but it is porcelain and is supposed to be - well you know - perfect. It was but it wasn't. Break the rules and you pay.

I made kites for our children. Marnie and Abraham. We took them to a lovely field just upriver from our home and had a blast flying them in some serious winds. I refer to those lovely moments in a person's life on some of these vases.













A lot of the space in our gallery was taken up with wood fired work. We boxed it up and sent it into storage. 42 years later, it is being shown again. I never give up.





Left: Wood fired bag wall branch vase. 295mm high, 1980s. Right: Stoneware single flower vase out of last wood firing with salt glaze -fired on its side. 33cm high, 1995.

Moving between traditions into new

By now, you will have noticed Asian flavours in some of my work. As I mentioned, the first books I admired were Asian, so the influences stuck. Asian history is extremely complicated, awfully long and very different from country to country. My first introduction to porcelain was Chinese. Perfection. It made sense to start with the original. As I researched Chinese Art, I became aware of Japanese Art. Perfection and Natural. As I researched Japanese forms, I became aware of Korean Art, and eventually Vietnamese and on and on. No two alike, and yet similar. I liked all of it.





Almost there vase in blue celadon - carved and excised with Kintsugi. 277mm high, 1980.



The most important lesson for me, was that Asian cultures do not separate the importance of one art form over the other. A painter makes Art. A blacksmith makes Art. A sculptor makes Art. A potter makes Art. A weaver makes Art. Embroidery is an Art form. Gardening is an Art form. Music. All making that has us live better are art forms. Very advanced cultures. And, and this is a big and, all the arts are valued equally. Fair.

Not anything like Europe and now North America. We have staggered podiums. Asians have a flat floor where everyone who contributes to the culture stands as a proud artist. Inside the media there are also no podiums. A traditional maker is as honourable as a leading-edge maker. All contribute and all care. Respect.





1980

Left: Thomas glazed vase with cobalt and iron oxide and chrome oxide brush drawing. 235mm high, 1980. Top Right: Tea cups in celadon with iron- cobalt and chrome brushwork. 6cm high, 1980. Bottom Right: Very subtle brushed slip wall bowl in cool celadon. 30cm across, 1980.







1980s

Left: Single flower vase celadon with iron-chrome and iron oxides over glaze. 335mm, 1988. Top right: Small saucer bud vase clear celadon. 15cm x 12 cm high, 1980. Bottom right: Blue crackle bowl. 272mm across, 1980.



Some of this work also is part of my interest in the concept of less is more. I have never liked "hotel" arrangements of flowers. Funeral arrangements same thing. Little restaurant arrangements of mostly ditto flowers in a row. Table boutonnieres.

For me, looking at flowers started with bringing in weeds and seeing how beautiful they can be. One weed at a time. A single weed needs a home. I did that. The funeral decorators did not see my side of the story. I ended up with a lot of weed pots. That concept morphed into making vases for single flowers. I still love to look at a single flower on our dining room table. Less is more. Grace, elegance, and a study. You can ask for more and you can do more. But doing that, you end up losing some of each element. The Study turns into decoration. Loss of content.





1970s



It also helps to have a girlfriend that adores flowers. Maureen will pick a very select bloom or two and bring them in to the table. We both prefer that our flowers are alive and outside. When she did bring flowers in, my job was to make sure she had something beautiful to put them in. Many times, we would work together in the gallery to find just the right vase for her choice of flower. Advice from people who care is always worth listening to.





Imperfect but beautiful

I have never knowingly sold a second in my lifetime. I had excellent teachers who instilled in me the principles of good Art and a good conscience. If you know it is bad, do not sell it. It will come back to bite. Again, I was following Chinese traditions that lean towards perfection, but at the same time looking seriously at Japanese traditions that love perfectly natural. In nature, there will be rough edges and the odd crack. Lovely.



The Japanese had not won me over completely, so selling cracked pots was not on. There is however always something to be learned from even the worst mistakes, especially if you are the potter who made the mistake. So, I kept a lot of seconds. Beautiful and interesting but flawed. Not perfect but also perfect. Compost.



Top: Stoneware vase in NDW. 17cm x 16 wide, 1968. Bottom: Kintsugi 22c gold on early Calgary stoneware vase.



Much later in life I learned about the Japanese Art of Kintsugi. It means joining with gold, or golden repair. The philosophy behind it lives inside the honesty of embracing history and the beauty of flaws. It shows reverence for the object, and for the repair. Honest. Honourable. Old object, new life. No waste. Ceramic poetry. A variation, Kintsukuroi means *made beautiful for having been broken*.







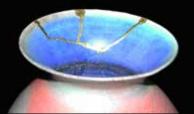
Left: No-86 sandblasted iris vase temmoku glaze with kintsugi. 43cm high, 1977. **Top right**: No-86 kintsugi 22c gold. Bottom right: Weeping willow thrown bowl with kintsugi. 23cm x 8cm high, 1977.



I did Kintsugi for myself over 40 years but did not sell any that I made. Our kitchen has stacks of my Kintsugi dinner ware that we use and love. It takes days to do a simple repair, and I did not know if or how my audience would react. Now, I know that kintsugi is not only honourable and valuable, but also exactly what a valued piece of damaged art should have on offer. Love and respect. The Japanese won.

Now I can offer perfectly beautiful and flawed examples of my Art.









Left: First iris vase form TOM glaze thick and thin with copper wash on iris no-12. 415mm high. Detail of kintsugi 22c gold on iris vase. 1976. Right: Vase with lithium blue glaze pored and sprayed reduced and oxidized. 33cm high. Detail kintsugi 22c gold on lithium flashed vase. 1976.

Gallery returns

My one and only job was being a studio potter. I almost single handedly introduced studio porcelain to Canadian audiences. To do that we had nine Canadian galleries from coast to coast and two in the USA. We shipped new works to most of them every year. We never knew what would sell, or what would be returned. If a piece appeared in an exhibition in Montreal and did not sell, it could go to Calgary and perhaps it would sell there. If that same piece came back from Calgary, it could go to Toronto. Often, when these returns happened, we were in the middle of doing something that could not be interrupted - like another one-man exhibition - so the returned gallery work was just pushed off to the side - or put into storage, which was handy at the time.







No-47 Lady Blue Iris vase TOM glaze cobalt wash with scraffiti. 47cm high, 1980. Backside-really-of Lady Blue Iris vase marked 747.







1970s

Left: No-54 1946 Chev truck in the mountains. Thomas glaze with lithium blue wash celadon mountains. 41cm high. April truck vase highway to mountains backside, 1977. Right: No-53 Ice Cream Landscape celadon glaze with cobalt-chrome and iron washes and wax resist raw porcelain, 42cm high. Detail of Ice Cream Landscape left side, 1977. There was an era when gallery openings were parties. People showed up in hoards, and while they came to see the works of Art, they also came for the fun of it. Booze of all kinds was handed out to whoever wanted it, and as the night wore on it usually ended up with a lot of friends catching up and a lot of embellished stories. Fun. Knowing this, I made a wine cooler for an exhibition in Montreal that could hold enough to last the night. It worked. At the end of its job, it went into storage. Now it is out, and ready if you are.

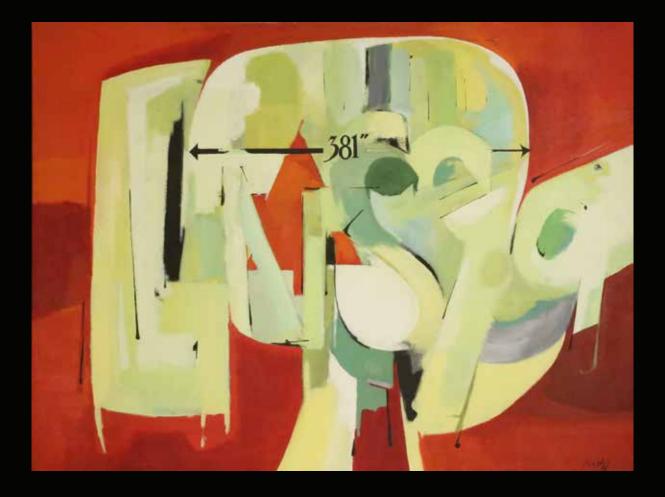
On the bottom of the support is written; For Virginia - July 26, 1976, and for the 1976 Montreal show at C.G. of C. Peel St.

I remember that time spent in the studio. I was able to work on it non-stop for whole days, because in July in Lonsdale we get some very warm and very humid days. I was able to add the irises to the piece without fear of drying, so had time and fewer worries. It took about three weeks to dry hard and did not see the kiln for at least a month for more slow drying. One of the very few advantages of high heat and high humidity is quality drying for delicate porcelain clay bodies. Good timing or good luck. Take both.





I walked both sides of Art Street for my whole life. Mostly as a potter I was in the Decorative Arts. Domestic Art Gallery. Clay can also be an immensely powerful medium in the Fine Arts, and I lived there too. Public Art Gallery. The significant difference other than respect, is money. It is in theory possible to make a living in the public gallery domain, but a very few manage to exist without a teaching job in a university art department. I got offers. I took some, but in the end, I did not teach. I chose to live mostly on the decorative art side of Art Street. When I did play on the other side of the street, most of that work came back to stay with Maureen and me in Lonsdale. I have paintings and sculptures that go from 1967 thru to 2022 because their subject matter is public art gallery content. My choice. Would not have it any other way. Storage.



The painting Out of #19 no2 is my reaction to big screen TV. My thoughts then were bigger is not better because there is little to no content to start with. The old phrase 'boob tube' covers the situation nicely. I still think the same way.



In that shed, I found most of an entire travelling exhibition of sculpture. The Glenbow Museum in Calgary and our National Art Gallery of Canada in Ottawa toured sculpture exhibitions in the 1970s and when a tour was over, the work was sent to Lonsdale. Almost 45 years later, I opened the crates for the first time.

As a little kid growing up in Alberta, I hated going on Sunday drives. A lot of the prairie roads are nothing more then straight lines leading to a correction, and then more straight lines. Until you get to a lake, or the foothills, straight is what you get. Engineers sense of humor.

My dad, made a good part of his living in the oil business, cutting 'line' through the foothills. Again, straight lines going up and over anything. The oil business, and the highway business have no respect for landscape. They don't care about anything but straight. I did these murals with that feeling in the background. A beautiful part of the world dominated by line. I have always loved the way the First Nations managed all things, and I wish they had been asked how to do the job. Since that did not happen, I filled in.



They hang in the kiln room. Why 45 years? Don't know. But now we see them again. Time flies...









Left: New Alberta Coat of Arms 63cm high 51cm wide, 1973. Right: The three sisters, mixed media. 163cm x 231cm high, 1973.







You are seeing my first 21 years in the studio. Paintings, ceramics, and sculpture from 1967 thru to 1988. Maybe you have seen it before, and maybe not.

> You might have noticed that I have had a long life in the arts. I very much admire a Japanese concept and have tried to follow it. The Japanese word is Ikigai. It means reason for being - to give your life worth, meaning or purpose. The secret to a long life. It is the confluence of - do what you love, do what the world needs, do what can support you financially and do what you are good at.

> > *It continues to be quite a ride.*



Handbuilt fireclay Holiday Coupe blue glaze with mother of pearl and gold and platinum. 42cm x 17 high, 1970.

Comments or Questions go to: hh@harlanhouse.com All photographs are taken by Harlan House, R.C.A. Art and design credits to Scott Nelson. 12 / 2022.