

# The Canberra Potter

The newsletter of Canberra Potters' Society Inc.

February 2015

## Awaken your inner dragon and fire up!

**Surrounds Triennale exhibition expressions-of-interest due 2 March**

This is a great opportunity to have your work viewed by artists from all states of Australia and from overseas.

### New and ancient ceramic practice

A reflection on new and ancient practice is presented to inspire you to enter pieces in the CPS sponsored *Surrounds* exhibition for the Australian Ceramics Triennale in July. We offer inspiration from firing in traditional Chinese dragon kilns through functional ware from Colombo fired in open wood ovens, to post-modern Japanese vessels. We reference practice in creating medieval cookware and ancient Roman terra sigillata glaze from Australia's red dirt country, to finding inspiration from local bush birds who make ceramic nests fired by the sun and snow drifting through gum trees in our Alps.



Hidemi Tokutake, untitled, 2013

See <http://www.hidemitokutake.com/>

## Artist-in-residence: Hidemi Tokutake

Ceramic sculpture artist Demi is in Studio 3. She studied modern ceramics under Syo Katou and Reikichi Katou, before completing her Masters of Ceramics at the National Art School. The fragility and strength of Australian landscapes inspire her vessel making. Please visit. **Free Artist talk, Friday 20 February, 6pm**

## Claybodies on show

- explore *Delineations* at FORM
- discover *Mudlarks* at Strathnairn

An exciting and dynamic exhibition, *Delineations* showcases: Sue Hewat, Velda Hunter, Jacqueline Lallemand, David Leake, Suzanne Oakman, Zoe Slee and Tania Tuominen.

**Opening, FORM Gallery, Thursday 12 February, 6 pm**

*Mudlarks* draws together: Stephanie Hunt with abstractive design, Ingrid Adler's landscape textures and glazes on vessels, Gwenna Green's hand built pots with brush stroke glazes, and Jacqueline Lewis's vessels, each with strength and movement.

**Opening, Strathnairn, Saturday 21 February, 4pm**

## Michelle Lim –

Firing Singapore's dragon kilns

Read about 3000 people participating in a workshop making works for firing in traditional dragon kilns, p 4

## Summer review

Hear about the creations that came out of the kilns in five week and five day intensive workshops, p. 6:

**Janet DeBoos – Glazes**

**Walter Auer – Terra sigillata**

**Alex de Voss – Medieval pots**

## Suzanne Oakman

See Potters Place Profile of Suzanne Oakman revealing her inspiration for form and materials, p 6

## Kelaniya cups – Colombo to O'Connor

See story of Ranga and Sumitra's cups, p 3  
Exhibition at The Front Gallery and Cafe, O'Connor  
**From Friday 6 February**

Supported by



[www.canberrapotters.com.au](http://www.canberrapotters.com.au)

## From the Director

### STOP PRESS: Funding approved

Our Chair Brad Thomas and I met with artsACT late Friday afternoon and I'm pleased to announce that our funding for the next four years has been approved! The Board and I are looking forward to doing good things in the future at WAC-CPS.

### Changes to newsletter distribution and website

Our newsletter continues to undergo its transformation and will soon be an online service. This will allow us to connect with our growing audience of members, stakeholders, artists and community groups. Importantly, it will be a significant cost saving for our organisation on printing, postage and volunteer time. In addition our members can expect regular email updates on member specific issues. For those members without online access; a limited number of issues will be available as hardcopies upon request.

Richard Thomas

## From the President

Happy New Year to you all. What a great start we had to the new year with the running of both Summer School workshops. There was such energy around the premises as the tutors and participants threw themselves into their projects. I do hope that you have had a relaxing break and are now bursting with creativity and energy, ready to produce your best work yet.

### Soda kiln commission underway

The commission of the soda kiln is progressing and we are hoping for the first Soda Firing class will be happening in term 2.

### New artist-in-resident: Hidemi Tokutake

Please make yourself known to our new visiting artist, Hidemi Tokutake (Demi, as she likes to be called) and visit her in studio 3. Demi is working on some very interesting and innovative work that would be of interest for hand builders.

I hope everyone has a very productive year working with clay.

Maryke Henderson



Maryke looking through her Forest Memories, Tamworth Regional Gallery.

## Kelaniya cups – Colombo to O'Connor

O'Connor Community Trade Project at The Front Gallery and Cafe, O'Connor  
From Friday, 6 February at 5:15pm



Ranga potting in Colombo, Sri Lanka



Ranga's cups

A little ways outside Colombo is one of Sri Lanka's most sacred temples, *Kalaniya Maha Vihara*. Pilgrims to the temple make all kinds of offerings, they burn incents, offer garlands of flowers and smash burning coconuts on the ground. They also offer small lamps comprising a clay cup, cotton wick and oil.

Functional hand-made clay pottery (as opposed to artisan pottery) is a dying art... it is also one of the world's most ancient stretching back 20,000 years. Two potters, Ranga and Sumitra make their cups much the same way as those ancient peoples did. They mix the clay by hand, throw it on hand spun wheels and fire the cups in an open wooden oven, keeping an even heat by eye. They are unglazed and porous which means that you should keep your cup for yourself if you reuse them.

Those cups sell for around 30c in our money. This is remarkable because a family of potters had to find the clay, throw it and fire the cup... all for a net profit of about 15c. Who could possibly throw enough pots to make a living on those numbers? The Front Gallery, O'Connor has agreed to display them for no charge. Every cent (excluding the cost of shipping) will go back to the family.

See: <http://www.rangascups.com/>

See: Craft Revival, Sri Lanka, [Earthenware](#)



## Michelle Lim — Firing up the last two of Singapore's dragon kilns

*Awaken the Dragon Festival, community art project, Singapore, November 2013, 2014 and 2016*

Michelle Lim was interviewed by Kathryn Wells

A CPS member, Michelle Lim completed a major in ceramics as part of her Bachelor of Design Arts at the Australian National University in 2010. On returning to Singapore, Lim discovered that one of the last remaining dragon kilns had been demolished – leaving only two remaining: Guan Huat and Thow Kwang, both located off Jalan Bahar in Singapore's West. *Awaken the Dragon Festival* was developed by Lim and Post-Museum (a Singapore Art-collective) as a community art project in 2013 and 2014 to promote the dragon kilns' existence and encourage people to use them.

### How did you encourage 3000 members of the public to participate in a collective sculpture made from clay?

We felt that the only way to keep the dragon kilns' history alive was to get as many people as possible to learn about its existence as well as its significance. Since the kiln could only be properly fired up with enough works, it was only natural to have as many people come together to make works to fill the kiln. To do this, we had to change the narrative of the dragons by transforming it from a has-been industrial space to a communal space. It was this little seed we planted in the participants, by explaining to them that without our efforts as a community, the dragon literally would not wake from its slumber. This encouraged everyone to spread the word. Before we knew it, the project had a momentum of its own.



Michelle Lim and Australian ceramicist Ian Jones at the Guan Huat dragon kiln, photo by Daydream Studios

**The dragon kiln originated in China more than 2000 years ago, and in the early 1900s was brought to Singapore as a way to fire high volumes of ceramics. In the 1930s, over 20 dragon kilns were operating, each measuring over 30 metres long. How did the project's master artists manage the 72-hour firing process?**

It turns out that the dragon kilns designed for production in Singapore did not require the full 72-hour firings but, we decided to keep the kiln fired for the full 3-day festival to have the experience of a real dragon kiln firing. We asked Ian Jones to lead the firing since none of us in Singapore knew how to fire the abandoned kiln. During the firings, the master artists would come in on shifts and other shifts were aided by local artists who had previous experience in firing wood kilns. On every shift, we had at least 2 to 3 volunteers from the public that would accompany the master artists.

### Did the project, with the exhibition and workshops, effect and encourage people to embrace ceramics in a different way?

The public response was overwhelmingly positive. After EVERY workshop, participants would ask where they could continue this craft or go to get raw materials. As we used large amounts of local clay, it got people very interested about the land and how accessible this craft is to us. A lot of us have been searching, always, for something beyond the commercial, something genuinely local. People learnt about the importance and heritage of ceramics in Singapore. Thankfully we managed to successfully preserve the kilns after the festival's efforts. The dragon kiln is a reminder to people about their land and its people, past and present. Also, it provides possibilities for the future now that we all know a little bit more about our past.



The long 'body' of the Guan Huat dragon kiln, photo by Daydream Studios, courtesy Awaken the Dragon festival

### How has this influenced the establishment of Mud Rock ceramics with Ng Seok Har, and consequent work?

Mud Rock was set-up after the first festival in 2013, as it was then that I met Ng Seok Har who was one of the many volunteers. We immediately bonded because of our love for making domestic ware. We will never forget the beauty that happened when different communities inter-mingled. So in Mud Rock, on top of production making, we try to open our space and skills to various communities. So far we have held pottery workshops in contrasting and different places such as the Sikh Temple, as well as a beauty department store. This allows us to get mud everywhere, and we like that.

See <https://awakenthedragonkiln.wordpress.com/> and <http://www.mudrockceramics.com/>



Commissioned traditional tea set



Crab on large serving bowl



Slip painted tea set



Restaurant lamp shades

## Janet DeBoos & Walter Auer

### Two five-day intensive Master Classes: glazes and Terra Sigillata

Summer workshops at CPS are a kind of essential luxury for many potters: you give up a week of work to devote some intense time to the practice of your craft, under the tutelage of visiting artists from whom you may only have this one opportunity to learn.

This year it was a chance to learn from wizard glazer Janet DeBoos and Terra Sigillata wizard Walter Auer. What a bonus, then, to benefit from the insights of not one but two teachers!

Glaze Making with Janet and Terra Sigillata with Walter opened with a joint presentation: each teacher described their artistic practice to the combined groups.

This set the tone for the week, for while the groups then separated to their classes across the CPS courtyard, we regularly dropped in to see each other at work.

Chemistry is the basis of all pottery, integral to understanding glaze, and Janet knows her stuff. Packing Janet's essential basics into a mere week was a challenge, and daily we fought our enemy the clock to learn the curriculum and also sate our curiosity.

While we Glazers grappled with a series of *science theory/prac tests/reading results/repeat* over the week, we could hear the Terrasigers pounding their raw materials into dust over long hours.

We weighed spoonfuls of dust and slaked it into jars and cups, and mixed like mad. We blended and dipped and wiped. We inspected our test rings, discussed 'what if...?', learned chemical formulae to better describe what happened in firing, and wrote down recipe bases.

At lunch we looked at the dry firing results of Walter's class, touching the glossy surfaces (can potters ever refrain from touching??) and appreciating the range of terra sigillata colours from the whole new perspective given through learning about glaze materials and their behaviours.

Look at that red, so much iron. Oh the black, what a lot of carbon.

By Friday we came away not with a list of tidy glaze recipes, but with the door opened to a messy, exciting world of possible glazes, full of possibilities and the mantra, "suck it and see". There's a lot more chemistry ahead in our potting futures.

Andrea Ho



Janet DeBoos, wizard of glaze



Andrea Ho and Brad Thomas in Janet's glaze class



Walter Auer, wizard of terra sigillata



Finished products from Walter and Janet's workshops

## Alex de Voss — Medieval cookware workshop



Image: Suzanne Fox



Image: Suzanne Fox

In late November and early December, Alex de Voss' taught a five-week Medieval cookware and cooking workshop. We made the pots and prepared authentic medieval recipes. The ginger and saffron mushrooms were a big hit as well as the lamb skewers with fruit sauce. Yum Yum.... Thanks to Alex and Rhonda for their hard work.

Suzanne Fox



## Potters Place Profile – Suzanne Oakman



A pottery opportunity

Open Thursdays to Sundays, 10 am – 4 pm

As a child I had wonderful times with clay dug up in the gully across the road; grinding down coloured stones and mixing with water from the puddles, then painting the surface of the pies that were half baked by the sun. Today I am developing my art practice that focus people's awareness on our fragile natural environment and precious life forms.

I am interested in exploring nature such as snow and ice from a bird's eye view of landscapes that appear to be frozen puddles and valleys. These become platters and vessels with the idea of viewing fine snow drifting through the gum trees. Also I am inspired by marine life, and create surreal sculptures such as Dancing Coral and Sea Pods.

As I progress in this area, each theme I work with determines the many possibilities to explore and develop alternative techniques in the making of an art piece. I like the way light affects the colours and textures on the surface of a piece. I enjoy breaking rules exploring domestic and crawl glazes to develop a tactile surface – to encourage the viewer to engage and touch each artwork.

Suzanne Oakman



Suzanne Oakman, Snow storm, hand carved, surface treatment: designer white under glaze, white and crawl glaze, 2013, photo Ian Hodgson

## Stepping Up Australian Ceramics Triennale 2015 Canberra, Associated Program commences 6 July Conference 9–11 July, 2015

Stepping Up is Australia's premier ceramics event which brings our community together. Held in Canberra, the program will be designed to showcase ceramics by presenting important discourses and helping to expand skills and ideas. The three days of conference presentations will include – keynote talks, panel discussions, artist's presentations; pre-conference master classes, exhibitions, a trade fair, a potters' market and, of course, a wealth of social events.

**Program now available online**

### Early bird registration now open

The Stepping Up committee is delighted to present the 14th Australian Ceramics Triennale program. The conference program consists of themed days beginning each day with a keynote address followed by speaker presentations. Early bird registration is limited so book now.

### Masterclass registration now open

Stepping Up is proud to offer three masterclasses for a range of levels, techniques and content led by world-renowned ceramists Fred Olsen, Janet DeBoos and Juz Kitson. There is only a limited number of tickets available so register now.

### Call for Stall Holders: Market Place

We are calling for expressions of Interest for Stall Holders as part of *Stepping Up*,

### Managing Organisation

Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre  
Mel George, Project Manager  
[project@craftact.org.au](mailto:project@craftact.org.au)  
Phone 02 6262 9333  
[www.australianceramicstriennale.com](http://www.australianceramicstriennale.com)

### Partners

- Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre
- Australian National University
- Strathnairn Arts
- Canberra Potters' Society
- The Australian Ceramics Association



## Exhibitions and opportunities



27 February – 1 March,  
2015

**Craft Expo  
Entries invited  
Pottery Section**

**Deliver works to  
showgrounds by  
20 February 2015**

Entry Forms for Craft Expo at  
[http://canberrashow.org.au/competitors\\_craft.html](http://canberrashow.org.au/competitors_craft.html)

The theme for the 2015 show is **RAINBOWS**

### CPS Volunteers needed to:

- demonstrate hand building or wheel throwing
- set up before and after the Show.
- help on the stall.
- sell their work at the Show.

**Steward Forms to be in by end of October.**

Space is limited so get your name down asap.

Please call me with any questions.

Judy McDonald 0414 342 916



Canberra Potters' Society 2015 Ceramics Triennale Exhibition

CPS is seeking expressions of interest for an exhibition of  
ceramics from the ACT and surrounding region.

**Deadline extended to Monday 2 March**

Please contact [admin@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:admin@canberrapotters.com.au)

## Diary Dates 2015

1st Sunday of each month – Workshop Orientations\*

### February

**20 Feb** – Artist-in-Residence Talk: Hidemi Tokutake

### March

**2 Mar** – Deadline for EOI for Surrounds Triennale Exhibition

**10 Mar** – Bending the Rules, with Maryke Henderson,  
altering thrown forms (intermediate to advanced skills),  
7 – 9 pm for three weeks, \$115

**8 and 15 Mar** – Master Class with Hidemi Tokutake, large  
forms, \$285 Members \$310 Non-Members

\* Book workshops by phoning (02) 6241 7800

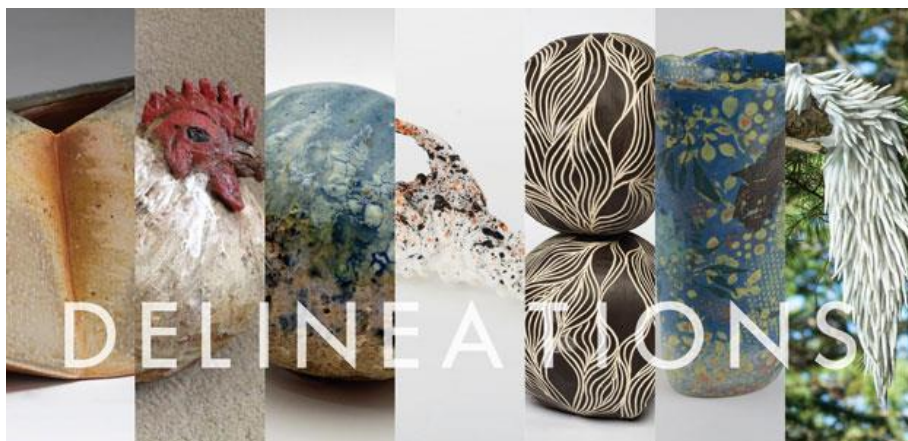


Ingrid Adler, Gwenna Green,  
Stephanie Hunt  
and Jacqueline Lewis

## MUDLARKS: AN INTIMATE EXHIBITION BY MEMBERS FROM CLAYBODIES

**Official opening Saturday 21 February 4pm**  
Richard Thomas, Director, CPS

The term 'mudlark' is popular in ceramic and pottery circles from the naming of an  
exhibition to the naming of a studio and essentially derives from playing in the mud  
as well as the Mudlark birds that build their bowl shaped nests of mud! This  
exhibition explores the role of play in the creative act of making ceramic artworks.



FORM Studio and Gallery, 1/30 Aurora Avenue, Queanbeyan  
open: weekdays 9.30 - 2.30pm weekends 10.00 - 4.00pm



### DELINEATIONS

an exciting and dynamic group  
exhibition from CLAYBODIES

showcasing:

Sue Hewat, Velda Hunter, Zoe Slee,  
Jacqueline Lallemand, David Leake,  
Suzanne Oakman, Tania Tuominen

Opening 12 February 6 pm  
by Ian Jones



## Watson Arts Centre Gallery exhibition

### Bald Archy Prize 2015



6 February – 9 March

Open daily 10am-4pm

Admission \$5 or \$4 concession

That eccentric icon of the Australian art calendar, the Bald Archy Prize, returns to Watson Arts Centre in 2015 so pop it in your diary now. Created in 1994 as a spoof of a more serious competition (the Archibald Prize for Portraiture), the Bald Archy Prize provides artists of all styles and standards with a genuine opportunity to create portrait paintings of humour, dark satire, light comedy or caricature. Known internationally as the only art competition in the world to be judged by a Sulphur-crested cockatoo named Maude, the satirical side of this event has its basis in the irreverent, larrikin Australian comic comment with great appeal to people of all ages and from all walks of life.

Celebrating its 22nd year in 2015, the exhibition will be previewing in Canberra before going on tour to various venues in eastern Australia.

Sara Hogwood

## Sturt Gallery, Ceramics then and now

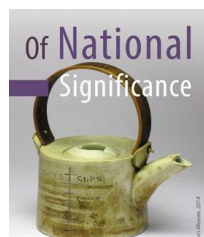
### Of National Significance

22 February to 12 April 2015

Exhibition opening – 11am Sunday 22 February

Opening Special guest: Greg Daly, Head of Ceramic Workshop, ANU

This exhibition will feature new work by a selection of prominent Australian and international artists alongside the historic work in the Sturt collection:



Chris Weaver, 2014



Kevin White, 2000 and 2014



Kevin White, 2014



Les Blakebrough, 2014

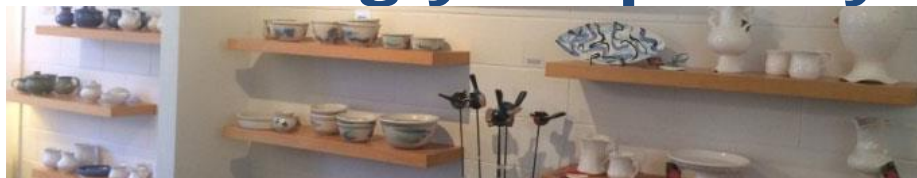
Artists:  
Les Blakebrough,  
Patty Wouters,  
Campbell Hegan,  
Yasuo Terada,  
Yasuhisa  
Kohyama,  
Svend Bayer,  
Chris Weaver,  
Kevin White,

Paul Davis,  
Prue Venables,  
Liz Charles,  
Martin Halstead,  
Ian Jones,  
Sandy Lockwood  
and  
Victor  
Greenaway.

## Opportunities for selling your pottery



**POTTERS PLACE**  
CREATIONS IN CLAY



**Potters Place is open Thursdays to Sundays, 10 am – 4 pm, and most public holidays**

Our members are made up of potters, ceramic artists and sculptors who make a range of works from tableware including dinner and tea sets to conceptual art works. We have professionals and hobbyists, graduates of ceramic arts and experienced tutors in our midst. We are brought together by the love to work creatively with clay.

**Potters Place Shop is one of the few singular ceramics arts retailers in Australia that promotes the work of potters and ceramic artists. This is part of the Canberra Potters' Society commitment to generating income for its members and other exhibiting artists.**

We offer members and exhibiting artists the opportunity to sell their works on a commission basis in the shop.

As well, we will be developing an online presence to promote artists and their work.

If you are interested in selling your work then please contact <[admin@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:admin@canberrapotters.com.au)> or (02) 6241 1670.

## Canberra Potters' Society programs

### Workshop

#### WORKSHOP MANAGERS

Available Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 9:30am–12:30pm

At other times please leave a message on the answering machine.

Members are reminded that the Workshop Managers are not obliged to attend members if they 'drop-in' outside of these hours.

#### MAIN WORKSHOP DROP-IN SESSIONS

Thursdays (term time)  
9:30–12:30pm

Sundays 1–4pm  
(except Christmas/New Year period as notified in the newsletter)

Please refer to the Workshop Handbook for full details of drop-in times & exceptions

Cost: \$5 per 3-hour session

#### MEMBERS' WORKSHOP

Members may use this workshop during class, administration and drop-in times.

For unlimited access you must be a CPS member for six months before you can apply for a workshop key. Contact the Workshop Managers for details.  
Cost: \$5 per 3-hour session

Use of all workshop facilities is subject to successful completion of a workshop orientation session or refresher.

#### FIRING

(10% discount for members)  
\$5.85/kg (bisque & glaze)  
\$4.00/kg (bisque or glaze)  
Items decorated transfers:  
\$6.95/kg (bisque & glaze)  
\$5.10/kg (bisque only)

#### KILN HIRE

Electric: \$10–\$30 depending on kiln hired plus electricity  
Gas: \$5–\$15 depending on kiln hired plus gas used  
Raku: \$5 plus gas use  
To hire a kiln you must have a CPS kiln licence or pay for loading.

The Canberra Potters' Society has operated for over 25 years. The Society supports:

- Education – Adult and Children's pottery classes and workshops are key aspects
- Potters Place – which promotes the work of potters and ceramic artists; generating income for members and exhibiting artists, and selling supplies
- Residencies – potters live on site with a dedicated studio demonstrating their skills
- Watson Arts Centre Gallery – a wonderful opportunity to excite people about ceramics and other crafts and design disciplines, with chances for forums
- Workshop facilities – available to members and enrolled students (see this page)

#### Board Members

Brad Thomas, Chair  
[bradthomas74@gmail.com](mailto:bradthomas74@gmail.com)  
0433010415  
Roger Ellyard, Treasurer  
[vanell@grapevine.com.au](mailto:vanell@grapevine.com.au)  
(02) 6247 9131  
Cynthia Anderson  
Robyn Booth  
Greg Daly  
Andrea Ho  
Catherine Reid  
Stefanie Pidcock  
Jessica Coates

#### President

Maryke Henderson  
[marykehenderson@bigpond.com](mailto:marykehenderson@bigpond.com)  
(02) 6258 0987

#### Director

Richard Thomas

#### Managers

Chris Harford, Workshop  
Sara Hogwood, Program  
Fran Romano, Education Program

#### Teachers

Chris Harford, Alex de Voss,  
Cathy Franzi, Maryke Henderson,  
Garry Palecek, Verney Burness,  
Rick Beviss, Velda Hunter

#### General Staff

Bhavana Moylan (Office Assistant)  
Rick Beviss, Paul Dumetz (Kiln Loaders)  
Paul Dumetz (Workshop Assistant)  
Alex de Vos, Sarah Guiver (cleaners)

#### Volunteer Coordinators

Rick Beviss, Members' Event Co-ordinator;  
Suzanne Fox, Librarian

#### Contact details

Workshop (02) 6241 7800 (after hours) (02) 6241 7732  
Office (02) 6241 1670 (after hours) 0414 526168

Enrolments: [classes@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:classes@canberrapotters.com.au)

Director: [director@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:director@canberrapotters.com.au)

General enquiries: [admin@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:admin@canberrapotters.com.au)

Workshop Manager: [technical@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:technical@canberrapotters.com.au)

Education Program: [education@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:education@canberrapotters.com.au)

Library: [library@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:library@canberrapotters.com.au)

Workplace Health & Safety: [safetyissues@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:safetyissues@canberrapotters.com.au)

Watson Arts Centre: [wcac@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:wcac@canberrapotters.com.au)

Editor: [editor@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:editor@canberrapotters.com.au)

Canberra Potters' Society Inc  
Watson Arts Centre  
Aspinall St, Watson ACT  
PO Box 7021,  
Watson ACT 2602

Gallery Hours  
Thursday to Sunday  
10 to 4 pm

ABN 65 491 135 689

The Canberra Potter Newsletter is published monthly  
February - December.

Please let us know of any exhibitions, or give us a report on a workshop. Please email copy and jpg images to the editor  
Kathryn Wells  
[editor@canberrapotters.com.au](mailto:editor@canberrapotters.com.au)

Next Newsletter Deadline  
22 February 2015

In 2014 and 2015, the Members' Exhibition is supported by::

Feeneys Clay WALKER Ceramics CESCO Glazes & Colours

ActewAGL for you

keane CERAMICS  
australian ceramics  
The Australian Ceramics Association

CLAYWORKS  
The family of the late Jane Crick  
craft & design centre