

INSIDE: Elaine Bradley, Verney Burness, Richilde Flavell, Isabelle Mackay-Sim, Fran Romano & Lia Tajcnar reviewed **Clay Gulgong** *Ignite* project **website**

Lia Tajcnar, Circumlocution (detail), 2016.

Community Collaboration

Canberra Potters has a long history of collaboration as an artists' run initiative and has contributed to an extrordinary ceramics community.

This year CPS will be expanding its community collaboration through the Ignite project run by Belconnen Arts Centre (BAC) for people with mixed abilities. Other ACT arts organisations involved include Megalo Print, Canberra Writers Centre, PhotoAccess, Warehouse Circus, Glassworks and Rebus Theatre. (See p 7)

The potential for further collaboration in 2016 with CPS is being canvassed by BAC in a program linking fibre makers with ceramicists. (Watch this space!)

It is hoped that if all the ceramic ducks line up then the CPS Open Day will be held hopefully to coincide with Design Canberra. This will be part of a collaboration to celebrate community engagement with the activities of makers and creatives leaving their mark. Participation in collaborative community-based clay events on a regional scale doesn't get better or bigger than Clay Gulgong from the perspective of Ian Hodgson who attended the triennial event, established in 1995. (See p 6)

Closer to home: the winter firings from lan Jones and Moraig McKenna and their collaborative Japanese Anagama kiln firings can be enjoyed, at Old Saint Luke's Studio Pottery, Gundaroo, 28-29 May. Winter School (18-22 July) offers another community feast with well-known wood-fire specialist Steve Williams, following a collaborative soda-firing with Maryke Henderson. (Bookings by 24 June, p 3).

Collaboration in the creative process has delivered a transformative exhibition by Elaine Bradley, Verney Burness, Richilde Flavell, Isabelle Mackay-Sim, Fran Romano and Lia Tajcnar (5 CPS Studio Potters) at Form Studio & Gallery, Queanbeyan. (See Review pp 4-5). What a practice!

AGM Notice Sunday 29 May 10.30am Agenda (revised)

Minutes of the previous AGM Members' Fees Board Reports Receipt of Financial Accounts Appointment of Auditor Honorary Life Members Election of Board Members Board Appointments Appointment of Public Officer

Notes

Board Nomination Forms due 21 May (Nominations to be circulated for vote) Proxy Vote Forms due 28 May, 10 am (You must be a member for AGM vote)

Stop Press

The vote on the proposed Constitution change by Special Resolution is deferred to a Special General Meeting.

CanberraPotters'Society WatsonArtsCentre







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The Canberra Potter May 2016



From the Director

Welcome to the May issue of The Canberra Potter—again somewhat delayed so we could include important member information regarding the AGM (Sunday 29 May). Apologies.

On the 5 May, I was excited to attend the opening of Divergence a joint exhibition including the work of no less than five current CPS studio holders what a delight! I hope you took the opportunity to pop into Form Gallery before it closed on 23 May.

Call out for content! I've mentioned it in the past but the editorial team and I are always on the lookout for contributions from the membership. Tell us about a class or workshop, glaze recipes, tips or a shop bargain. There may even be something from the archive you'd like to revisit—let us know—it's your newsletter!

Part of the requirement to maintain our annual artsACT funding is to report on the past years activities—our annual check-up. It's an opportunity to look back on the past year's highlights. Here's a couple I'd like to share with you: a huge increase in adults and children wanting to do pottery-leading to extra term classes; a year of full studio occupanciesadding to the activity and sense of community at the centre; 13 ceramic arts focussed exhibitions surpassing our goal of 8; gallery visitation increased and we had one of our best Bald Archy shows ever with over 5,500 visitors resulting in over \$11,000 spent in our shop; and we offered 18 days of master classes. Thank you to our members, staff, shop people and volunteers who helped out in what was a busy and successful year for us!

Can you believe we're already in May and so much more still to come! Watch out for information on our Winter School with a difference...

Richard Thomas Director



Board Message

With the Annual General Meeting (AGM) rapidly approaching, it is an opportune time to think about whether you are interested in taking a more active role in how the Watson Arts Centre operates and involve yourself in what we do as the Canberra Potters' Society.

I've been Chair of the Board for the past 3 years and it's been a busy but rewarding role where we saw the Society secure funding and a continuing licence to operate the Watson Arts Centre for another 5 years. We have employed our first ever Director and are now looking to continue to grow both our membership and the range of activities we offer. This is an exciting time to be on the Board as we work towards making the Society even better than it is already.

Part of our commitment for this is to adopt a best practice Constitution that is in line with the ACT Model Rules and the ACT Associations Act 2009. In the last edition we sought feedback on the proposed changes and received 13 submissions. The Board's response to the feedback was distributed to members via email. The final version will be voted on at a Special General Meeting (TBA).

As part of the AGM process, we sought nominations for Board positions, especially people with financial, retail, marketing and arts administration experience as well as general governance skills. This was a formal process with a Board appointed Returning Officer who sent instructions to all members. An announcement on the nominees can be expected shortly.

Brad Thomas Chair

Board & administration

Board

Brad Thomas **Chair** Graham Durant **Treasurer** Cynthia Anderson Jessica Coates Greg Daly Stefanie Pidcock Kathryn Wells **President**

President

(Members' representative) Velda Hunter

Administration

Director Richard Thomas

Workshop Manager Chris Harford

Program Manager Sara Hogwood

Education Program Manager Fran Romano

Education Office Assistant Bhavana Moylan

Editorial note

This edition is published later than usual due to changing AGM requirements.

The Canberra Potter is published monthly February–December.

Contributions are welcome. Please email copy and images with captions to the editor: Kathryn Wells <u>editor@canberrapotters.com.au</u>

Next Newsletter Deadline Tuesday 31 May 2016

Graphic Design: Nina Davis

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From the President

Greetings from the Philippines.

Why do I make pots? Because they can last forever, not a life time, not a few years, forever.

This week I saw one of the most amazing pots. It was The Monunggal burial jar that was found in the Monuggul Cave, Lopuun Point, Palawan Island, Philippines. This magnificent, hand built and low temperature fired artefact is dated 890-710 BC. It sits in a museum looking fresh and bright - like it came out of the kiln yesterday. I wonder what future archaeologists will think of the ceramic artistry of today?

I hope you have all cleared your diaries so that you can come to the AGM (Sunday 29 May), and are ready to vote in a new Board. There are a couple of Boardies who are stepping down, so we will be thanking them for their efforts. There will be the true and trusted, nominating again, asking if you will vote them in. I am sure there will be fresh new faces too; people with excellent professional skills, enthusiasm and commitment seeking election to oversee the Canberra Potters.

I'm looking forward to finding out who steps up to seek election as board members, to support both the Society as a whole and Richard with direction of the operations side, alongside the team of staff members and volunteers that we appreciate so much. Your vote counts, so see you there.

Velda Hunter President velda@tpg.com.au

From Kiln to Table...

Winter School 2016 Steve Williams, FEAST! 18 – 22 July

Join well-known wood-fire specialist Steve Williams as he leads participants in a week-long intensive sharing his vast knowledge of making and design principles. Participants will be led through all stages of the making process from thinking, planning and designing forms to complement the foods on which they are served.

Steve will share tips on his fluid making technique which involves handling the clay as little as possible, lending freshness and a sense of movement to the work he creates. The week will culminate in a soda-firing – a collaboration between Steve and our own Maryke Henderson.

Steve has been teaching ceramics in the NSW TAFE system for many years, teaching many CPS members. A week spent with him will definitely be a rewarding experience.

Steve will be contacting the group prior to the Workshop to begin the process of thinking and researching so that you get the very most out of this opportunity. Ultimately the week will end with the sharing of food! Using some of the forms that have been created, you will be able to assess how successfully you have met the design brief.

Please book by 24 June

\$485 non-member \$440 member www.eventbrite.com.au/o/canberra-

potters-society-9883899351

Fran Romano

Education Program Manager











Divergence, Exhibition

Ceramics by Elaine Bradley, Verney Burness, Richilde Flavell, Isabelle Mackay-Sim, Fran Romano and Lia Tajcnar Form Studio and Gallery, Queanbeyan, until 22 May

Review by Kathryn Wells*

Divergence, is a collaboration between six contemporary ceramic artists. As contemporary art, their works in this exhibition present a fresh approach to the inherent versatility of clay as a medium from the forms they have created, the layering of surfaces and their approach to negative space.

Divergence has inspired different meanings for each of these artists in their creative journeys. It suggests taking a path less travelled, a turn in the road, diverging from what is known, and exploring new ideas. As journey women ceramicists they are building on what went before, taking elements from the past and yet creating something new, encouraging themselves to expand their horizons and investigate new spaces.

In this exhibition we can see six independent artists who have come from divergent places, spaces and processes and yet, they share a common interest in exploring a multiplicity of approaches and outcomes. Burness, Flavell and Mackay-Sim, all EASS Award winners, occupy studios at the CPS along with



Elaine Bradley, Nest with Three Eggs, porcelain, 2016

Tajcnar, who has completed her Master of Philosophy in Ceramics at ANU and Romano, also an ANU ceramics graduate. Bradley is a graduate in ceramics and printmaking from Claremont Tech, WA and also the ANU.

Elaine Bradley normally throws her pieces, two bowls to form a nest, or hollow doughnut, but, for this show she abandoned the wheel process to explore slip casting. This divergent process led to lighter pieces, offering her more opportunities for tinkering with other clay materials.

Verney Burness creates high-fired topographical features or geological objects - that resemble ice crevasses,



Isabelle Mackay-Sim, Studied Flesh, 2016

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and mountainous horsts. These are set on plexiglass, hinting at random order and the explosive forces of creation. However, for this exhibition, Burness has diverged to allow elevation and shadows. This divergent experimentation allows the viewer to engage more with the unseen.

Last year Richilde Flavell, created interactive pieces that focussed on audiences creating miniature people, places, birds, nests, trees, vessels and objects in clay to create a new world as well as another, a topographical view of vast changing landscapes.

Today, Flavell presents us with divergent ideas and a different palette. Flavell has explored slip casting and carving out facetted hollow shells of clay, confronting us about the limits of human energy and creativity in our ever-increasing busy lives.

Isabelle Mackay-Sim's works are informed by biology and flora, resembling fecund biological forms with alchemic possibilities. Yet, Mackay-Sim's new work diverges also. Whilst still referencing botanical forms, with her previous focus on strange fruits and insect-eating plants, her new work offers examples of co-existence, experimenting with new sculptural forms. Mackay-Sim has created pairs of works that sit together, almost embracing each other, glazed with textural contrast in mind.

For this exhibition, Fran Romano has experimented with different clays, surfaces and textures to create different forms in her exploration of ritual and remembrance. Romano has achieved simplicity and, at the same time, created multi-layered complex cultural pieces with iconic meaning.

Lia Tajcnar has kept adding divergent thinking to her creative process in making works for this exhibition. This has pushed not only her understanding of clay but has stimulated her to create unique techniques and ideas for multiple solutions – that are then narrowed, and expanded, over and over again.



Fran Romano, Devotions, 2016

In particular, Tajcnar has taken the relatively simple idea of the Rorschach ink blot test (that reveals mirror and multiple images to examine perception and cognition) and used this to explore softness and subtlety in meaning through the layering of 40 patterned pieces on her ceramic work.

Yet, the journey for each artist is unique, and impossible to replicate.

The journey for Elaine Bradley is about substrate structures, the strength and fragility of home and the connectedness of each piece. For Verney Burness, the journey is about inherent divergences that occur within nature and in creating pieces from ideas.

The journey for Richilde Flavell, with her facetted installation, reflects upon relationships, harmony and tension. In contrast, Isabelle Mackay-Sim's journey



Richilde Flavell, This Time, 2016

is about atypical relationships; she makes the viewer alternate between seeing the work as ceramic and seeing it as an organism.

Fran Romano's journey is about taking elements from the past and then working out how to develop, layer, and interact with those elements to create new universal forms.

Lia Tajcnar's journey is about stretching herself in thinking of immense challenges, and how you have to keep relaxing and letting go in order to making meaning of life's patterns; creating order out of chaos, even as chaos is emerging again, grabbing ideas like a Catherine Wheel.

Yet each step forward in these journeys may be only a shimmy to the left, or right, like a crab on the shifting sands of life.

At the same time, these journeys and the artists' collaboration on divergence have created a dialogue about convergence, by examining the similarities and differences in how the artists explore space.

Their similar, different and juxtaposed use of negative space offers us many possibilities. In Flavell's wall assemblage of small stoneware forms, this takes us beyond the work to the world. With Romano, her exploration of negative space has created new forms, elegant with a universal mesmerisation.

In Bradley's nests, smooth surfaces and hard edges allow us to see smoothness in the shadows and see into those shadows, creating a lyrical space. In the topographical works of Burness, the framing of negative space can be utilised to express movement and transition.

In contrast, the horror of the vacuum by Mackay-Sim and Tajcnar, in attempting to absolve any sense of negative space allows us to explore what can be seen as an additive process to intensify the positive space. Yet, at the same time, peering into the crevices of Mackay-Sims' embracing pieces create a glimpse into chasms that are dark and intriguing. In their works, the layering and intensity of the ceramics helps create a continuation, a surreal space. However, like the exploration of negative space, this continual build-up of positive space, stimulates our knowledge about existence and perception.

This is what makes the sparks in this exhibition so exciting, as they represent new ideas about ceramics and the challenges that unite us.



Lia Tajcnar, Circumlocution (detail), 2016

This is the value of art, and ceramics as contemporary art. This exhibition on divergence demonstrates that in our journeys and our communication about art as a shared experience, we can understand and illuminate our own existence through the act of making.

This exhibition not only provides us with a visual experience but it captures also a critical process about creativity that is worth sharing.

The experiential nature of art, exploring meaning, essence, truth and beauty means that audiences can see things differently than before when they first saw that piece of art. In this case, it is a privilege to be able to share the artists' experimental creativity as it offers the viewer a transformative experience.

* Based on her talk for the exhibition opening and interviews with the artists



Isabelle Mackay-Sim, Studied Flesh IV, 2016

Clay Gulgong: a personal view

Last month I attended my sixth Gulgong clay event. These wonderful festivals of ceramics were started by Janet Mansfield at her property, Morning View, outside Gulgong, NSW. Actually, the very first event was Owen Rye's Gippsland National Woodfire Conference, held in 1986. Janet Mansfield then held Woodfire 1989 at Morning View, and, following Woodfire 1992, organised by Tony Nankervis at Lismore; Janet began the now world-famous series of Gulgong events, beginning with Fire Up Gulgong in 1993. Two years later, in 1995, Janet held Clay Sculpt at Morning View. It was during this that Nina Hole, who died recently, built a beautiful fire sculpture, which still stands as though it was built yesterday, and at which tributes to Nina were laid during Clay Gulgong.

Now held every 3 years since 1995, the event moved into Gulgong town as the number of delegates outgrew Morning View. The main presentations are held in the Prince of Wales Opera House, conveniently next to the Prince of Wales pub. The Opera House was built in 1871 and many famous actors and musicians have performed in it, including Dame Nellie Melba, who sang under her married name of Mrs Armstrong, early in her career.

This year's event, now under the management of Bernadette and Neil Mansfield, following the death of Janet in 2013, included a major logistical improvement. The demonstrations were held in five giant marquees on Red Hill oval, allowing for plenty of seating and unimpeded views of the demonstrating masters. You can see all the masters on Facebook, either my postings on the CPS page or on the Clay Gulgong page or Mansfield Ceramics. They were an amazing group. My favourites were Jack Troy (author of Woodfired Stoneware and Porcelain) and such a kind and gentle man, who writes lovely poetry and was thrilled to be able to sit and make pots for us for 5 days, all the while talking, explaining and telling wonderful anecdotes (if only I could remember them). Next would be Peter Callas, Paul Davis and Akira Satake in a close tie for second, all so exciting, animated and having such fun. And then there was Beth Cavener, giving us an indescribably emotional experience, talking about her life as she sculpted the most amazing hare, a good metre tall.

I enjoyed the great presentations in the Prince of Wales Opera House, and the entertainment such as the hilarious PotWiz, and the fashion show at Morning View. I enjoyed catching up with people I hadn't seen since the last event in 2013, and meeting new friends too. I loved the day at Morning View. It brought back wonderful memories of Janet. I half expected to see her emerge from her studio. It really was an event not to be missed. It was like doing a dozen workshops or masterclasses simultaneously for the price of just one. If you weren't able to make it, then I really do recommend you pencil it in for roughly the same time for 2019 and make sure you are free of other distractions at that time so you can go. You won't regret it. If you think you can't afford it, then start saving now. You should really be thinking, 'Can I afford not to go?' lan Hodgson



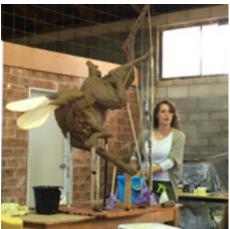
Peter Callas



Nina Hole, Fire Sculpture, 1995



Akira Satake



Beth Cavener and her hare



Jack Troy



Paul Davis working his butt off

CPS Community Project – Ignite

Canberra Potters (CPS) is involved in a collaborative project with Belconnen Arts Centre for people with disabilities this year. The project will link various artsACT and community groups.

IGNITE: Alternative Arts Academy

is a series of programs that encourage participation for people with mixed abilities. The Academy provides opportunities for all levels of experience, from entry level to those wishing to transcend into the mainstream arts sector. It's a program for the hobbyist who likes to participate because it's fun through to the arts professional practitioner.

The Programs are:

Makers: A weekly program for participants seeking to establish an arts practice with workshops at BAC in 2D work in Term 2 has started, with 3D and self-directed work in Terms 3&4.

Connect: In term 4 from 12 October-16 November, participants will visit the CPS at Watson Arts Centre to explore the wonderful medium of clay. They will learn hand building, decorative and finishing techniques and create a wall piece. Other workshops are on offer also through Megalo Print, Canberra Writers Centre, PhotoAccess, Warehouse Circus, Glassworks, and Rebus Theatre.

Social: The focus is on the social/ creative exchange off site. Participants will share in new experiences and understanding of the arts sector through a curated program of supported forums and visits to the suite of National institutions, private gallery exhibitions, live theatre, film and music.

Open Studio: This program is to enable and provide access to studio space for artists to continue working on their projects on Tuesdays 10:00am-3:00pm, during term time.

Exhibition: BAC will curate an annual program with four seasons.

www.belconnenartscentre.com.au/ignite

Fran Romano

Education Program Manager

New CPS website build

The Board has decided upon the successful tenderer for the Canberra Potters website rebuild and finalised approval of expenditure to undertake that work.

Three tenders were received and each underwent a comprehensive and systematic evaluation by the Board Web Advisory Group (WAG) following the WAG input into the specifications for the build. WAG comprised 5 members, a staff member and two Board members of CPS.

The recommendation from the WAG was to appoint Osky Pty Ltd to undertake the work as they fulfilled all selection criteria to the greatest degree. All three tenders were competitive in terms of price however, Osky offered superior delivery and technical features.

This recommendation was accepted and approved by the Board and the Board has approved allocation of monies this financial year (to December 2016) to undertake the rebuild work. The impact of expenditure will be that the CPS will maintain a small operating profit in 2016. This is partly due to CPS member Nina Davies volunteering her skills as a graphic designer. Thank you, Nina.

It is to be a staged development, anticipated as:

- Stage 1 A Design, development, CMS implementation, integration, beta, deployment live – begin May, complete June-July 2016
- Stage 1 B E-commerce, online booking forms,
 - complete July-August 2016
 Stage 2 News and Archive
- Stage 2 News and Archive Module, Events Calendar, Social Sharing module, e newsletter – begin January 2017, complete Feb 2017

Members will be invited to respond to the beta version. CPS WAG-member Susan Hill will co-ordinate the beta testing. Thank you to all WAG members for their collaborative effort

Brad Thomas

Chair

Diary dates

April

Artist Talk 27 May, 6 pm @ Friday Night Supper Club Mahala Hill & Anna Neale Emerging Artists in Residence

Special Short course – Booked Out 22 May – 12 June Use of the Soda Kiln With Maryke Henderson

lan Jones and Moraig McKenna

28-29 May, 10am-5pm Winter Pottery Sale with Mulled Wine and Pizza 1045 Shingle Hill Way Gundaroo NSW

Throwing and Finishing June-July

Course over 4 weeks With Kaye Pemberton

Winter School dates 18 -22 July

FEAST! With Steve Williams Focus on tableware

Artist Talk 22 July, 6pm @ Friday Night Supper Club Steve Williams

Watson Arts Centre is a Key Arts Organisation supported by the ACT government and run by Canberra Potters' Society. We offer:

Classes for children and adults across all levels of ceramic practice. Workshops, Summer Schools and Kids' Holiday classes are available too.

Studios where tenancy applications are always welcome from emerging and established ceramic artists.

Artist-in-Residence program including studio and residence facilities to national and international visiting artists.

Gallery hosting a ceramic focused exhibition program.

Shop with a range of pottery and ceramics to suit all tastes and budgets.

The gallery and shop are open Thursday to Sunday 10am—4pm and most public holidays.

For further information on all programs, events and available facilities please visit

canberrapotters.com.au

Exhibitions

Old Saint Lukes Studio Pottery Studio Exhibition Winter Sale Ian Jones and Moraig McKenna Winter Pottery Sale with Mulled Wine and Pizza 28-29 May, 10am-5pm 1045 Shingle Hill Way Gundaroo NSW (See website for map)



Moraig McKenna's work

AIR Exhibition, CPS Artist-in-**Residence collection** Watson Arts Centre 26 May-19 June An opportunity to purchase selected works with a Cash and Carry Sale



Carla Wolfs, 2015 untitled, Keanes Ironstone clay, glaze, reduction fired

Hsin-Yi Yang, Mix and Match Craft ACT Gallery, Crucible Showcase 27 May-9 July **Opening Thursday 26 May 6pm**

In 2015 the Members' Exhibition was supported by



Caroline Walker-Grime, A Potted History, M16 Artspace 16 June - 3 July Opening Thursday 16 June, 6 pm



Caroline Walker-Grime, *Raft Down the Spey*, 2015, porcelain. Image Ian Marshall

Opportunities



You must be a TACA member to participate.

EOI deadline Wed 1 June www.australianceramics.com

Australia Council **Arts Projects applications**

The Australia council Grant program, Art Projects, for individuals and groups are available from \$10,000-\$50,000. This program funds a range of activities that deliver benefits to the arts sector and wider public, including national and international audiences. Applications Close 7 June 2016.

30th Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award

With one major prize of AUD \$10,000 for an overall winner and up to AUD \$5,000 for acquisitions, all artworks become an important addition to Gold Coast City Gallery's permanent collection. Guest Judge: Glenn Barklev Entries close Thursday 30 June 5pm Exhibition: 27 August-23 October www.gccgartprize.com.au/gcicaa-2016

The 5th Ceramics Exhibition in Changchun City 2016

Please send details of your new ceramic works and resume to the designated mailbox to allow the databases to be established to collect the works, pictures and text information from the world ceramists. Registrations open Contact: HUANG Lu E-mail: cctaoyi@sina.com

Pottery studio space for sale

Jane Crick's pottery, Moonshill, 1 km to the east of Tarago consisting of 50 acres of land, 20 acres of which is remnant forest, and several sheds and a vintage rail Guards Van is for sale. It has magnificent views of the surrounding countryside. The main Colorbond shed, used as a studio, has a concrete base and a veranda. It is divided into two with a workshop area and the other half carpeted and lined. It also has a slow combustion wood heater, LPG stove and fridge. The second large shed was used as a kiln shed and has an enclosed storage area with a concrete base. There is also a smaller shed with a concrete base, which was used as a gallery. The Guards Van has a bedroom, living area, study, toilet, and a large storage area. It requires further work to bring it up to scratch. The asking price is \$285,000. For more details or EOI, please contact lan Crick on 62812594 or by email: crickian@gmail.com



Moonshill, suitable for a pottery studio

eenevs

Clay









australian ceramics

The family of e late Jane Crick