

Ceramics on the Edge 2



Sunshine Coast Arts Centre
Doris Crowston Gallery
June 30–July 25, 2010

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This is the second annual Ceramics on the Edge show. The intent of this juried exhibition is to present the best innovative new work created by ceramic artists resident on the Sunshine Coast. Two categories—established artists and emerging artists—were judged separately, with the best of each category selected for inclusion in the show.

Each artist is represented by a set of objects that can be displayed within a 30-inch by 30-inch by 40-inch (h) space. As well as objects that can be placed on plinths, artists were encouraged to submit work such as masks, tiles and plaques that could be wall-hung.

The juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2* was Whistler, BC, ceramic artist Vincent Massey who chose eleven entries for the show. “I am amazed at the diversity of work I am seeing produced on the Sunshine Coast,” he said. Vincent Massey is a frequent instructor at the Metchosin International Summer School of the Arts (MISSA). His work was featured at the BC Gallery of Ceramic Arts on Granville Island in May 2010 and may be seen year-round at the Vincent Massey Pottery at the foot of Rainbow Mountain in Whistler.

Vincent Massey

Biography

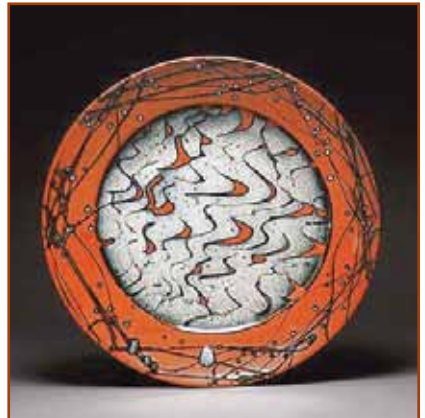


A fourth generation artist, Vincent Massey discovered, at the early age of 15, his passion and flare for pottery. His father, a respected architect, and his mother, an established painter, fostered a creative home where he was introduced to artistry as a part of everyday living. His family's approach to life has translated to his pots, which combine exhibition with functionality.

Vincent Massey studied at the renowned West Surrey College of Art and Design in Farnham, England, where he specialized in traditional English and Japanese methods of stoneware, including wood, salt and raku firing techniques. Further apprenticeships with exceptional English and Canadian potters established him as a professional artist.

He continues to develop the art of pottery through the adaptation of traditional methods and glazes. He mixes and ages his own clay and experiments with his own personal glaze recipes to achieve his one-of-a-kind, spontaneous pots. His work is shipped worldwide and eagerly sought by art collectors, hotels and those wishing to enhance their cuisine or dining room with unique, yet practical pottery pieces.

For 20 years, he has supported his family as an artist. In the first stages of his career, he supplemented his income with carpentry, and the skills he developed helped him to build his own house, studio, gallery and kilns. Now, as well as contributing to the art of ceramics by teaching workshops and master classes throughout BC, he encourages young, aspiring apprentices.



Susanne Biden

Established Ceramic Artist



Clay is the medium of choice whereby I try to express and communicate my thoughts and feelings, and ever since I first discovered clay sculpture, I've explored its various possibilities.

I'm not sure I've ever had a "standard output." In the early days I did wheel work and experimented with glaze recipes. Later, I opted for handbuilding and staining with gouache. I've experimented with clay and mixed media and created some large scale pieces. However, most of my work is just slightly larger than hand-held size. I have worked with moulds and casting and just recently have worked/played with PMC (Precious Metal Clay)—which is pure silver when fired.

Any innovation I have been able to make has been subtle. I believe there has been more of a natural progression in altering/developing forms, textures and colouration in my work. I am still responding to what I see and experience in daily life and my travels.

These pieces lead my eye to search for their deeper meaning and to look inside them in an attempt to find what is going on within the form. I find them both technically sure and visually intriguing."

—Vincent Massey, Juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2*



Liz de Beer

Established Ceramic Artist



I am now a West Coaster in body and soul and have found peace on our beautiful Sunshine Coast. The move from Africa to the west coast expanded my artistic vocabulary and now enables me to express myself with greater ease. However, I do not shy away from my African heritage and my work will always reflect elements from that continent. The fusion of those ideas with those of my new identity is a slow process and I believe the change and development can be tracked through the work that I produce.

In the past year my focus has been on surface decoration through carving. I also introduced glazes to some of the surfaces. I developed a variety of different techniques to achieve the results that I want and sometimes use natural materials to complete the piece.

The mass production of functional items does not interest me and I see myself as a clay artist rather than a production potter. I believe my passion for the medium and my love for the process is evident in the work that I produce. Opening up the kiln door to discover the magic that took place through firing remains one of the most rewarding experiences anyone can have.

This artist has combined African influences with great form and great glazes. Her statuesque pieces are a perfect contrast to her functional work because they are filled with attitude.

—Vincent Massey,
Juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2*



Timothy Niebergall & Carlie Sanford

Established Ceramic Artists



Over the past five years Timothy Niebergall and Carlie Sanford have created and displayed both sculptural and functional pottery. Our work is always in transition, always dynamic and fluid as is the process of working with clay. In the past, our functional works have consisted of mugs, bowls, teapots, and similar objects, while our sculptural works consisted of everything from fanciful teapots to large carved bowls and from cauldrons to vases.

Most of our sculptures have in some way reflected the functional works that we were trained to make at the Kootenay School of Arts.

In last year's *Ceramics on the Edge* we displayed separate works. Carlie featured coil-covered teapots and vases, a combination of function and highly textural surface decoration. Tim showed a large sculptural bowl and two sculptural vases, all covered in geometric patterns of intricate detail.

The new work on which we have collaborated for *Ceramics on the Edge 2* is a water-feature sculpture. The addition of fluid water allows a new aspect to be drawn into the creative realms of our clay work.

Drawing from the inspiration of sacred geometry (pattern in nature), water and architectural ceramics, this piece is a natural progression for us. By adding this meditative function, both visual and auditory as the water moves through the clay, our work continues to evolve.

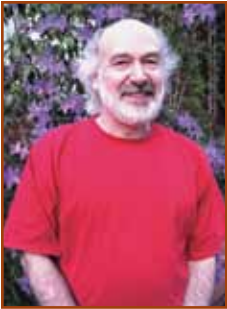
It is always refreshing to see a potter's work that involves another dimension—in this case, water. This work has left me feeling tranquil.

—Vincent Massey,
Juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2*



Jack Ploesser

Established Ceramic Artist



My path is beginning to diverge. For a long time I have been altering shapes that I made on the wheel, but now I am intentionally *designing* that process rather than discovering the result. Last year's *Ceramics on the Edge* juror left one significant message with me: to take it a step further, nothing halfway. Abstraction will always be there to a lesser or greater extent, but balance and proportion are important as well as consistency.

Whether or not it sounds corny, in some pieces I am trying to find inspiration from inside because I believe that change comes from within—perhaps it is always there, and you just have to find it, but when you do, it opens the flood gates. There is a framework but these more abstract pieces have to evolve based on previous work. In this case, drawing becomes inherently more important as the work itself is becoming more complex. I am also now trying to incorporate simpler but more effective surface design.

Sometimes change is knowing what to leave behind, and what to keep and really being able to see every detail objectively. Then you can move ahead.

The two leaning pitchers in this collection are a favorite with their generous rims, spouts with purpose, and handles that look ergonomic.

—Vincent Massey, Juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2*



Sandra Ramos

Established Ceramic Artist



My primary interest is in creating functional work. I throw and alter the shapes of my creations, working with the richness of textures and the movement of each of them. I like my pots to have simplicity of form and sculptural presence.

I use high-fire clay bodies then apply a variety of slips or glazes to the exteriors and glaze the interiors. The pieces are then fired to 1305°C/2381°F for 18–25 hours.

The kiln is fueled by wood and the salt is introduced into the kiln when it reaches 1305°C/2381°F. The salt reacts with the silica and alumina in the clay to form a glaze and an orange-peel effect. I prefer salt/wood firing because of the challenge it presents and the element of surprise it creates. My finished functional works are lead-free, food-safe, dishwasher and microwave safe. My sculptural pieces are safe outdoors year-round.

Clay brings my body and mind together. It allows me to express my feelings and thoughts freely. There is a great satisfaction in working with all the elements—earth, metal, water, wood and fire—and bringing them together into my own creations. I love the creative process of taking a lump of clay and turning an idea into reality. I fill each piece with my thoughts and feelings of the moment. I am drawn to every aspect of creating a pot from start to finish.

This artist's work has an organic look but is architectural at the same time.

—Vincent Massey, Juror for
Ceramics on the Edge 2



Pia Sillem

Established Ceramic Artist



My fascination with clay started when I was a child growing up in the Netherlands where clay is not only regarded as an important component of infrastructure but is also held in high aesthetic regard. I arrived in Vancouver as a young adult and since then have traveled the world extensively. My fascination with the various uses of clay, particularly vessels used for storing, was increasingly fuelled by contact with other cultures. As a result, most of my pots are containers with lids and have even been used as funerary urns.

However, lately I have been fascinated by a different type of container—the seed pod—and my innovative new work reflects my study of different seed pods mixed with a little fantasy.

My work is wood-fired. My first experience with this process was in the early nineties with the Tozan kiln in Nanaimo, a multi-chambered climbing kiln, that we fired for five days. Even though it was hard work, I loved the camaraderie and the team work. During the following years I fired an anagama (one chamber) style kiln in Seabeck, Washington, and attended several international wood fire conferences. I then learned to fire a train kiln, which can be fired by just four people.

When we moved to the Sunshine Coast in 2007, we built our own kiln, which we fire for fifty-five hours. This stretch of time allows the involvement needed to shepherd each piece from manipulated raw clay to finished product. The wood ash, which fuses with the clay surface during the intense heat of firing, gives the texture and color I seek to complement my forms.

The wood fire is a very organic method that lends itself particularly well to these forms. However, not many potters are focused on both form and firing, so this is a treat for me to see them come together so well.

—Vincent Massey,
Juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2*



Shey Smith & Diane Amaral Fisher

Established Ceramic Artists



We wanted more to happen with the look and the feel of our vases, large bowls and trays. Just feeling the smooth but nubby surface of shino-glazed pieces is out of the ordinary as the soda in shino gives the “alligator” characteristic and crystal crackles when the glaze is applied thickly.

Shino reacts to the lack of oxygen in the firing of a reduction kiln, giving gold, orange and metallic tones. These colors are enhanced on the pots on which we have painted wax designs on top of the glaze. We also use these wax lines with other glazes, such as copper red. In the series presented in this show the lines are denser and interact more like foliage, though always within a border or frame. Elaborate abstractions of foliage, fern fronds and leaf veins compliment the edges and contained areas. These motifs are also rolled onto feet.

Our inspirations continue to be the natural world of this coast, and the ancient glazes and traditions. Shino originated in 16th-century Japan and copper red is from the Ming dynasty in China. We are ever grateful for the rich history of ceramics.

Personally I know how technically hard it is to fire good reds—and/or shinos, for that matter. These pieces will definitely enhance the show.

—Vincent Massey, Juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2*



Marilyn Butt

Emerging Ceramic Artist



At the last Ceramics on the Edge show my vases had evolved into expressive variations of trees as I saw them on the Coast. Then during a course in aesthetics with Les Manning at the Mechosin International Summer School for the Arts, I chose one vase shape from those trees and produced many copies with variations in size. It was a very satisfying adventure to explore that one shape and expand it into a series.

At a follow-up group residency at Medalta in Medicine Hat, I was encouraged to explore that shape further and began to experiment by making a variety of alterations on the basic form. Some were flattened from the side, some had vertical lines, and some had single or parallel rings at a variety of levels. It was this last variation that gave me the most satisfaction, as I began to see those rings as the challenges that life throws at us at different stages, that is, when life throws us curves. It is the pieces from that series that I have chosen to exhibit in Ceramics on the Edge 2. Incorporating these curves into my functional pieces to see if they could become a style will be another avenue to explore.

At Medalta our group had access to salt- and soda-firing kilns, which opened a new area to me. I also loved the simple look the sprayed-on glazes that we used there gave to my vases. While I do not have a salt- or soda-fire kiln available to me here (I fire at cone 6 in an electric kiln), I have begun to spray my glazes on and I like the soft shading that it brings to my work.

These vases have reminded me of some of the work I was producing in art school, but throwing rings into a form is sometimes dangerous as taking them too far can spell doom

—Vincent Massey,
Juror for Ceramics on the Edge 2



Joanne Scanlan

Emerging Ceramic Artist



I began learning ceramic techniques in October 2008, but my interest in ceramics goes back to my high school days when I first saw some of the ancient Chinese, Egyptian, Mediterranean and pre-Columbian statues and pottery containers displayed in San Francisco and Los Angeles museums and galleries. I was fascinated with the quality of the works shown and also with the deep religious significance of so many of these artifacts. My own inspiration is the tradition of ceramics as an expression of belief in the supernatural: using the most common of materials—earth—to convey ideas and images of gods and their powers.

My ultimate goal is to create larger scale sculpture, but at the present I am working on figurines and small ornamental pieces. Last year I worked on wall-mounted plaques and small boxes. This year I have tried more freely formed vases, bowls and three-dimensional figurines in order to improve my technique and explore more styles.

My submissions for the 2010 show are three-dimensional and two-dimensional figurines and ornamental pieces with a feline motif.

Wow! Only two years with your hands in clay—well done! I also was smitten with clay in high school and have never let that early inspiration expire.

—Vincent Massey,
Juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2*



Heather Waddell

Emerging Ceramic Artist



I am still investigating the theme of how women are viewed and of how they view themselves. It is said that women of my age are nearly invisible to the younger generation, and thus wearing a burka would only help to conceal the wear and tear and the sags and droops that in our society make a woman unseemly and unseen. On the other hand, to be forced into wearing a full veiled disguise would be devastating to this old warhorse. And for me, watching a young intelligent woman in Canada wearing veils and long coats and other coverings hatches the suspicion that she is aching to be different from other western women. She is indulging in a kind of counter rebellion.

Coverings, clothing unmake the woman?

I also cannot get altars out of my mind. Altars piled on altars in a totemish pile of platforms that culminate in a throne-like furnishing that is always vacant. They reflect the reality that, if our elites and rulers are found to be devoid of leadership capabilities, then of course their thinking and their symbols are also meaningless.

The pillow-like tower I have included in this collection is sheer fun—a fat dancing horse on top of the black pile.

Heather's statement is appropriate given that the woman with the veil has at least one eye peering out, giving some intimation of hope.

—Vincent Massey,
Juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2*



Betty Keller

Emerging Ceramic Artist



Although I began my ceramics experience with wheel-work classes in 2001, the majority of my work now is handbuilding, partly because the time to do it can be fitted more easily into my writing and editing career. Handbuilding has also allowed me to build bigger and more complicated objects for garden and home than I am capable of building on the wheel.

Light sources (candle holders, lanterns, lamps, torches) have always intrigued me, and for the 2009 Ceramics on the Edge show I submitted garden lanterns in the Japanese *yukimi-gata* or snow-viewing style, using carved and pierced paper clay. Since then I have used the same clay and the same techniques plus appliquéing and sprigging to build indoor lamps. As with those intended for outdoors, the motifs in the decoration are all inspired by plants and animals—especially sea animals. The two lamp bases submitted for this show are 13 inches (33 cm.) high. The finish is a thin coat of matte glaze, poured to develop wave-like patterns reminiscent of patterns in nature.

I am also experimenting with building large boxes and urns, using paper clay and the same techniques of piercing, carving, appliquéing and sprigging. All my work is fired to cone 9 in an electric kiln.

My eye at first glance goes to the overall form then to the fact that the lamp bases appear not to be made of tiles but almost separate cube forms that unify to become one functional piece.

—Vincent Massey,
Juror for *Ceramics on the Edge 2*

