

# Ceramics on the Edge



A juried show of innovative ceramics by Sunshine Coast artists

June 29 – July 31, 2011 | Doris Crowston Gallery | Sunshine Coast Arts Centre

# *Ceramics on the Edge 3*

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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.

One important change has taken place since *Ceramics on the Edge 2*. Although the rules for entry are the same and the same group of ceramic art enthusiasts has organized the show, it is now sponsored by the Sunshine Coast Arts Council, and the organizers are very grateful for their support.

## *Introducing Keith and Celia Rice-Jones, Jurors for Ceramics on the Edge 3*



Our jurors for *Ceramics on the Edge 3* were Keith and Celia Rice-Jones of Wildrice Studio in Burnaby, BC. They were both trained in England and pursued teaching careers and independent paths with clay before coming together to share Wildrice Studio where they work with stoneware and porcelain clays fired in a gas kiln. While the backbone of their studio production is a range of domestic pottery, they pursue individual sculptural directions, though increasingly they work on collaborative pieces.

Their work references many cultures and often hints at ritual ideas. The same sculptural considerations go into every piece, lifting even the humble bowl into the celebratory.

Celia tends to work with the clay in the soft plastic state, pushing, pulling and teasing, while Keith's approach is more architectural, using stiffer slabs of clay. But whether the work is a monumental garden sculpture or a functional mug, the language is the same.

Keith and Celia exhibit both locally and internationally. You can see more of their work at [wildricestudio.com](http://wildricestudio.com).

## *A Message from the Jurors*

*It was an interesting and surprisingly difficult task to view and comment on such a wide range of work. We have submitted work this way ourselves so to be on the other end was very interesting, too. What is always ideal is to have the pieces and the artists in front of us, and we will be happy to talk more about the pieces when we are over for the show. So much about pots is tactile and we look forward to handling the pieces to add that dimension.*

*Our process was to view the pieces together and make our own comments independently before sharing them. There was a remarkable correlation of our perceptions and comments. In one case we wrote identical sentences! In a few instances some comments were added after discussion of the works.*

*Our choices of the pieces selected for the catalogue sometimes varied from the choice of the artist.*

—Keith and Celia Rice-Jones



"Totemtoo" by Keith Rice-Jones



Oval handled bowl with ash glaze by Celia Rice-Jones

*Susanne Biden* Established Ceramic Artist



In the summer of 2010 I paddled the Powell River canoe route, and even though the abundance of stumps within the lakes make for a graveyard feel, there is a real presence about them. They have strength, their roots reach and grope, and weathering has stripped away their outer skins to expose what they are really made of. They are what is left after the growing/living process is finished, and their silence made think of them as witnesses and wonder what secrets they guarded.

I had just gone through a year and a half dry spell in my studio, feeling as if I'd never create anything of worth again. When one is creatively dead, it feels like a permanent state and not part of the cycle, but somehow those stumps broke the spell. It didn't matter that I didn't understand why they had so much power over me. What did matter was the joy I felt to wake up morning after morning eager to get back into the studio.

And so these guardians mark the gateway of my own artistic rebirth as well.

There is still a lot I don't understand or can't articulate about these pieces. They have a mysterious draw, evoking an ever-present longing to tell my stories and be witnessed, and to bear witness to the lives of others. These big trees with their connected roots are an intrinsic part of this BC coastal landscape, which is where I, too, am deeply rooted.

*"There is a monumental feel to these pieces that belies their actual size. The scale and changing density work, and the texture shifts increase the abstraction. They are like some ancient crab-like creatures walking out of history."*

—Celia and Keith Rice-Jones, Jurors for *Ceramics on the Edge 3*



*Liz de Beer* Established Ceramic Artist



My preference is for earthenware vessels and in the work submitted for *Ceramics on the Edge 3* I have used a combination of oxides to produce surface coloration on the raw clay surface. I have also introduced slabs, which present me with a wonderful canvas for applying texture and earthy colours, as well as decorative and very colourful elements in a series of cylindrical sculptures with "flower heads." The contrast in these pieces works on the visual level not only because of the difference in colour but also because of the almost primitive feel of the cylinders in contrast to the controlled decorative elements inside the flower heads.

The mass production of functional items does not interest me and I see myself as a clay artist rather than a production potter. As a result, 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.

*"Particularly like the less straight group of manganese glazed cylinders, as the larger necks and sloping shoulders are relaxed and elegant. The flowerheads above the narrow necks give the impression of a conversation."*

—Keith and Celia Rice-Jones, Jurors for *Ceramics on the Edge 3*



*Pia Sillem*      *Established Ceramic Artist*



Nature's endless inspiration in forms and textures continue to fascinate me. I take home old dried-up seed pods, fallen leaves, and papilionaceous flowers and study their forms until I feel ready to make my own sculptures. After a friend gave me a dried pitcher plant pod, I looked at it for years before I finally made my first version of it just last summer. Eventually the form of that pitcher plant morphed into a belly-type shape, representing comfort, safety and femininity for me. In making the papilionaceous flower I have used the same coiling and pinching techniques that I've used in making my large seed pod forms. I have also collected many dried leaves, and every one of them is unique and with its own character. The meditative process of studying these tiny forms and translating them into larger clay sculptures not only keeps me focussed but soothes my being.

As I work on each of my pieces, which are made from high fire clay, I consider its form and placement in the kiln so that it will get the most benefit from the effects of the wood fire process. For this reason, I put my leaf forms in the bottom where they will get the right temperature and plenty of ash deposit. With a crew of four clay artists it takes a day to load the wood kiln, and we then take turns stoking it. We fire for 55 hours, and the kiln reaches up to 1300 degrees Celsius.

The metal stands that accommodate my sculptures are the result of a collaboration with metal artist Dennis Jensen.

*"This pitcher plant is a complex connection of shapes with all the completeness and inevitability of nature. The wood firing process is so complimentary to this group of forms, and while they have a literal connection, they achieve an abstraction that is all about the sculptural quality of the originals."*

—Celia and Keith Rice-Jones, Jurors for *Ceramics on the Edge 3*



*Shey Smith and Diane Fisher Amaral*

*Established Ceramic Artists*



We have been partners in clay for seventeen years, but more than forty years ago, we each studied ceramics separately—Shey at Sheridan College under Angela Fina, Diane at Douglass College of Rutgers University under Hui Quong—and we both developed an admiration for the reds of the Ming dynasty and shino from 16<sup>th</sup> century Japan, both reduction firing glazes.

Altering clay round forms has a long ceramic tradition, and this year we are again enjoying experimenting with ovals and stressed rims, using our high-fire white clay body.

We are also simplifying our glaze colours to go with the new forms. For *Ceramics on the Edge 3*, we have used no decoration on our pieces in order to accentuate form, but as in previous years we are double glaze dipping and overlapping to intensify the glaze colours and highlight areas.

We have pushed our round vessels to the limit to create a more voluminous shape. A rolled and pulled-off-centre lip on the bowl makes the roundness go off the edge, and where our shino glaze is thick, it has resulted in a bubble-bursting effect. Here we are looking for strong statements and some fun, too . . . without going too far.

*"This piece shows a superb balance of form with its hint of throwing rings in the top section and subtle final flair of the rim. These potters have spectacular control of their copper red glaze and the form is enhanced by the darker/bluer colour accents on the rim and shading on the body."*

—Celia and Keith Rice-Jones, Jurors for *Ceramics on the Edge 3*



## Maggie Citrin *Established Ceramic Artist*



My ceramic work over the past thirty-five years has evolved and changed as my life choices, personal decisions and the directions in which I am moving have changed. As my life has changed, so have the themes and ideas reflected in my work as well as the processes of working. However, painting and clay sculpture are the two areas in which I have always worked simultaneously; they inform each other and create a balance and definition in the projects on which I am working.

I have no formulae or set practices in the process of building with clay. The nature of each piece is dictated by the theme or idea I am attempting to express. The same is true in terms of finishing my sculptures; I choose glazing or painting according to what the piece needs to communicate my thoughts, and I low-fire or high-fire or pit-fire depending on what the individual piece needs. For example, “Waterfall, 20” is stoneware that was glazed then fired many times, both at low and high temperatures, while “Painted Wave” is stoneware that was low-fired and painted with acrylics.

*“Really like the elemental simplicity of “Three Rocks.” Pit-firing is the perfect treatment for these three related pieces. They invite handling: you want to pick them up, move and rearrange and enjoy them. “Boat” reminds one of archaeological digs and the surprise of watching something primitive brought to historical and curious attention. It looks almost grown.”*

—Keith and Celia Rice-Jones, Jurors for *Ceramics on the Edge 3*



## Kez Sherwood *Emerging Ceramic Artist*



My intrigue with clay started in alternative high school where my saintly (patient) art teacher, Wolf, would often say, “That may not work out.” He was (mostly) right. When I would stubbornly forge ahead, failed attempt or not, it was always a move forward in the process. Years later I started creating with ceramic tiles, screen printing, slip casting, hand building and multi-media surface decorating. Mainly self-taught, I have learned from experimentation, research in books, periodicals, videos, the internet, generous artists, persistence and, of course, trial and error.

After the birth of my son in 1998 I took a long break, but since 2010 I have been resurfacing, ecstatic to be back. My current work incorporates porcelain, grogged clay, natural elements/textures, slip casting, paper clay and decals. I’m enthralled by illumination, especially in natural settings. To emulate this effect and achieve transparency, I have begun creating hanging pendants with porcelain and textures. With the help of friends and my kayak, I cast some clay walls on Thormanby Island with plaster and have been using these impressions in some of my work. I am just starting to discover paper clay, which allows me to recycle clay scraps and attempt to create larger sculptural pieces. Working with decals and multiple techniques satiates my love of graphics. I dream of ceramic lighting, tile and architectural installations as well as public commissions involving the community.

*“There is a clear connection between this artist’s explorative processes and the work she has submitted. “Blossoms in Flight” is a sort of aerial abacus, a clever way of dealing with the idea of weightlessness with clay; the different and thinly pinched shapes give an overall sense of movement.”*

—Celia and Keith Rice-Jones, Jurors for *Ceramics on the Edge 3*



*Marilyn Butt*     *Emerging Ceramic Artist*



A number of years ago I attended a demonstration workshop given by Vincent Massey in Vancouver. His slab rolled trays, trims, handles and foam molds were all quite fascinating to me, and I attempted my own versions of serving platters and plates but without the convenience of either a slab roller or an extruder. However, at the time I was intent on improving my throwing skills and devoted more time to the wheel, although I continued to make a few trays as well.

Then last summer I acquired both a slab roller and an extruder at the same time that I acquired a shoulder injury that limited the amount of clay I could centre. So I went back to slab work and the adventure of trying various extruded patterns and their application. The pieces that make up this entry are the results. This past year I have also been applying my glazes with a sprayer, and I am pleased with the results—more subtlety, better blends and more work produced. I make my own glazes and fire my electric kiln to cone 6. Making pots is an endlessly exciting experience.

*“There is a certain comfortable functionality and charm about these pieces. Good to see this artist experimenting with impressed surfaces, which pick up the glazes well, and a variety of handle solutions.”*

*—Celia and Keith Rice-Jones,  
Jurors for Ceramics on the Edge3*



*Joanne Scanlan*     *Emerging Ceramic Artist*



I took my first ceramics course in October 2008, and since then have been learning techniques from colleagues as I try to create objects that have presence and spirit. I have been selected for both the 2009 and 2010 Ceramics on the Edge exhibitions. For the first year’s show I displayed bas relief plaques and sarcophagi boxes based on Etruscan funeral designs. The second year I submitted work based on Egyptian and Chinese religious art. For 2011 I have moved toward an East Indian theme and have submitted a plaque that combines a classical lotus motif and an Indian temple singer.

Since last summer I have learned more about using slip for texture and in construction, as demonstrated in the small open box called “Walled Garden.”

And I’ve also attempted to develop smoother lines and animation in small three-dimensional pieces, such as in “Fat Cat.” My next venture is the construction of wrapped slab vessels. All of my present work is constructed out of paper clay and fired in an electric kiln.

*Ceramics on the Edge* has become a way for me to gain feedback and advice from more experienced ceramics artists.

*“The swirling patterns of the plaque resonate with the complexity of Hindu myths. The chimney pot is an interesting parallel with the lush naturalism of Hinduism; there is a good blend of naturalism and abstraction in the modeling.”*

*—Keith and Celia Rice-Jones, Jurors for Ceramics on the Edge 3*



## Heather Waddell *Emerging Ceramic Artist*



Normally when I go to the studio to work on my clay pieces, I have a good idea of what I am going to produce. And this time I set out to work on a series of small human figures.

However, perhaps influenced by the views of the inlet from my windows or the documentary about the world oceans I had seen the night before, I could almost smell the brine as I rolled out the clay. Immediately images of sea cucumbers and starfish, clams and other fantasy shellfish flooded into my imagination. First, I textured and built a sea-lily. Next, two finned creatures surfaced from the primeval ooze to haul out on the rocks. I then pinched and prodded until a round little clam appeared. I set it aside while I teased out another sea flower. What next? I thought. I found charcoal and a

sketch pad and drew a little sea horse resting on his tail. He developed into a multi-finned creature who was finally finished when I added a pouch and eggs.

Like many other artists I continue to dredge the sea for inspiration.

*“Fascinating sea life. The tall sealily with its loose, direct use of wrapped slabs, has lots of three-dimensional interest. There are rich possibilities for further play with the surface that could increase the abstraction of the piece while still retaining the original references.*

—Keith and Celia Rice-Jones, Jurors for *Ceramics on the Edge 3*



## Betty Keller *Emerging Ceramic Artist*



My submission this year is part of my continuing exploration of light sources. I have moved from candleholders to Japanese-style garden lanterns to box-shaped indoor lamps with ocean themes to my present interest in exploring cylindrical shapes for indoor table lamps. I find that forms of this kind, which must be both thoroughly functional and artistically successful, are challenging both in the design phase and the actual construction. The present works make extensive use of both coloured clay appliqués and slips.

My other interest is stylized animal forms. I have moved from exploring marine forms (fish, crabs, octopi) back to birds, particularly domesticated fowl. My birds have been primitive and passive in the past, but my new figures have more aggressive expressions and postures, although stylistically they remain over-simplified and/or exaggerated in form. For my present “bird works” I have used a warm cream-coloured matte glaze (Cone 9 oxidation), adding detail with enamels after firing.

*“Since these chickens are already stylized, this artist could go ‘over the top’ on surface decoration. They offer such possibilities for play with texture. The lamp bases have formal character to them—very well-behaved pieces—but you can’t go wrong with basic geometry and these lamps are perfectly balanced with the size of shade.*

—Keith and Celia Rice-Jones, Jurors for *Ceramics on the Edge 3*



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