

Guild at a Glance

October 2017

www.victoriapotters.ca

Volume 19 Issue 2

October Meeting

Thanksgiving Monday 7:30 PM October 9, 2017 -

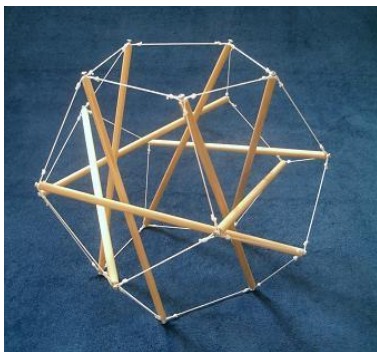
Submissions for Calendar and November Newsletter to helen.pedneault@shaw.ca by October 30, 2017

Heads Up November Meeting is November 6, 2017

Program: Coming on October 9: Commissioned Work: the great, the good, and the ugly. Laurie Hashizume and Eric Roberts lead off the discussion with a description of their experiences working on commissioned pieces. Bring your own experiences and thoughts on how making commissioned ceramics has worked, or not worked, for you, and your suggestions for others, including such things as contracts, pricing and timing. Monday, October 9, 7.30 p.m.

Portrait of Nature's Dynamic Tension – By Derek Kasper

The sculpture of 10 dynamic swirling fish, finally titled “Portrait of Nature’s Dynamic Tension” was a project that took several months from conception to finish. It was a creative outgrowth from a series of folded slab platonic solids



sculptures that I did in 2015/16. While looking into the various types of geometric structures I came across this photo of the 10-strut dodecahedron which was called a tensegrity because none of the struts actually touched each other, the whole thing is stable but entirely held together by the tension on the 30 cables. This led to one of those Eureka! moments for me—it was just such a perfect metaphor for the natural world where everything appears to be unrelated but is actually irrevocably linked to everything else, somewhat obliquely at times.

When links are broken or connections lost the whole thing can lose its integrity. The inter-linked and multi-directional swirling nature of the struts were like a school of fish in my imagination.

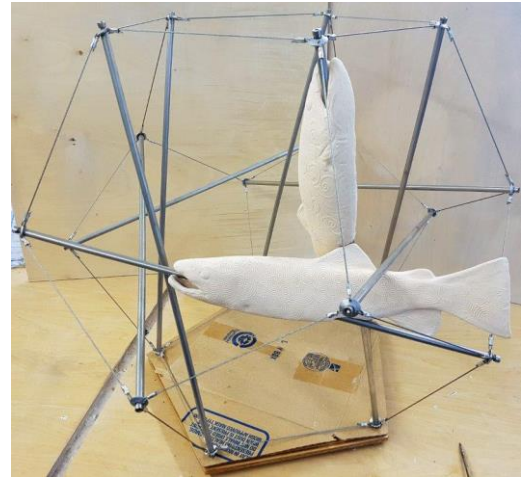
My first conception of this was to just make 10 elongated fish and use them for the struts but it seemed likely to me that they would run into each other and it wouldn’t be possible to assemble. This led to the idea of the rods to extend the size of the structure and create some space in it by using curved smaller fish so that their position could be manipulated in space by rotating and also by the placement along the length of the rods.

Once the planning got to this stage I started in with the design and creation of the two-part plaster press mould. The fish had to be curved in order to have life and realism. Creating a careful parting line on the original fish while making the mold so that the fish would come out of the mold was quite a challenge. I also had to cut a straight and precise channel through the fish in



such a way that the fish could be glued to the struts during the final assembly. Once the clay was formed and in the mould, I then used the long drill in the photo to cut the channel into the assembled fish. Making the channel through the mould for the drill was an entertaining task. It needed to be slightly over-sized to take into account the clay shrinkage!

Each fish was made using individually textured body slabs and separate fin slabs. The textured slabs had to be carefully managed so that they were soft enough to form into the mould and join well but still maintain their texture. For the most part I used ¼" slabs with thin sheets of plastic adhered to them so that I could handle and manipulate them without deforming too much. Then it was like the magician pulling the tablecloth out from under all the dishes--- tadaa! Each half was well scored and slipped and then the two halves were clamped together well and the fish was left to set up for a while before removing and finishing all the details while the clay was still malleable. Before removing each fish from the mould the drill was carefully run all the way through the mouth and out the bottom.



After the bisque firing the fish needed to be glazed! The interior of the mouth was brushed with glaze, very tediously I might add. They were then hung on a carefully profiled piece of coat hanger in my spray booth and spray glazed in two colours of transparent glaze to highlight the textures. The fish were glaze fired on their sides using multi-pin stilts. The little rough volcanoes in the glazed surface caused by the pins were very carefully ground with diamond buffing wheels and the scratches polished out. Any small remaining pits were filled with a black lacquer pen.

Creating 20 domed aluminum washers with 4 precise holes in each one was a whole other challenge! The structure was meant to be assembled using fishing line carefully tied to fish hooks to go through the holes. A frame using pipe clamps and masking tape was used to hold the whole thing vaguely in shape while I connected up the fish lines and hooks. This process might have made for some amusing video. It quickly became apparent that this not nearly strong enough because with the slight stretch in the hooks and the nylon line the structure wouldn't hold its shape properly. This was quite a low point, when I wasn't certain that I was going to be able to finish this project.

I just happened to have a little bit of cable in my shop and finally hit upon the idea of using fine stainless cable. The precision needed to get these cables all exactly the same length and connected to the washers with crimp connectors took a little concentration. In the final version, I made the entire net of connected washers and cables by itself and then connected up the rods one by one with bolts through the washers into the ends of the tubes. This time it was strong enough to be stable, and so it was time to do a test fit with the bisque fish. They wove together very well, as conceived. This was a very big relief. There were quite a few places in the project where I realized that I might not actually be able to complete it, but I was driven to keep on until the end.



Initially I created a wooden base and photographed the sculpture on it to get under the deadline for entries to the Sooke Fine Arts Show and the Salt Spring National Arts Prize, but I wasn't entirely happy with the look of it. A comment by one of the "Gallarinas" at the Avenue Gallery led me to search out a piece of natural stone. With help from Matrix Marble I came across a beautiful piece of Guatemalan marble which was cut and drilled in order to work as the base for the sculpture. Unfortunately I didn't receive it until two days before delivery to Sooke and I had to drill holes and then remake the fastening system to hold the structure onto the base.

On the morning of the day that it was to be delivered, while wrenching it off the wooden base, one of the cable connectors separated and the whole thing crashed down, breaking the jaw on one fish and leading me to the realization that I was done! I couldn't connect the wire back together under tension. OK, what if I use a bandage to pull the thing back together, using duct tape, and replace the whole wire? Did I say I made 10 fish? Well actually I made 11 fish. It did go back together. It did get mounted to the base. It got to Sooke with an hour to spare.

Derek Kasper



Belle Leon – Long Time Guild Member

Meet Belle Leon – a long standing member of the guild who I recently asked to interview for the newsletter. Belle graciously agreed and offered to share an article written about her a few years ago for the Gorge Tillicum Community Association Newsletter. I enjoyed reading the article and suggested that rather than crib from it, I would reprint the article in its entirety, with the kind permission of author Chris Bullock. I've also included at the end of the article a few more recent notes about Belle's journey as a potter. [Newsletter Editor]

Belle Leon, Ceramic Artist - Spring 2013 – By Chris Bullock



It seems a long journey from being a lecturer in zoology and medical physiology at the University of Cape Town in South Africa to being a ceramic artist in Victoria with a studio close to Esquimalt Lagoon and a house in Gorge Tillicum.

This, in any case, is Belle Leon's journey, and it's a journey with some very interesting stops on the way. Belle was born in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Early in life she developed a love for expeditions into the bush, and it was this love that led her to South Africa to earn a PhD in zoology and a degree in medical physiology and then to a career as a lecturer and scientific researcher. A different impulse—an impulse for social justice during the era of apartheid—led her also to work in an academic support program for black students in UCT's Medical School.



When she married Gabe Epstein, and moved to Toronto, it was her work in this program that led her to work at the University of Toronto in the Transitional Year Program, an access program for marginalized students who had left high school without university qualifications. While she was working in this program, she was also working with ceramics in a cooperative pottery studio. Her love for clay and artistic creativity prompted her to shift careers into becoming a full-time potter. Inspired by an intensive ceramics course at the Haliburton School of the Arts, she did make the

shift, and when she and Gabe arrived in Victoria four or so years ago, she immediately sought a space where she could set up a ceramics studio. This she found at the Coast Collective Gallery in Colwood.

I was curious about the seeming distance between lecturer in zoology and full-time potter, but the more I talked to Belle about her work, the less this distance seemed to be. For, it was being in nature that originally drew Belle to zoology, and her pots are full of references to nature, to the animal and plant kingdoms. These references sometimes appear as abstract designs such as seascapes, a tree or mountain design on a set of dinner plates, or they might appear as representations of animals directly painted on a bowl, a sculptural piece with free standing elephant and hippo, or versions of seed pods.

I'm about to ask my usual local artist question about the significance of Gorge Tillicum for her, when seeing a set of bowls with painted seals and waves, and a jug with a blue-green marine pattern starts to answer the question. Belle says she's always inspired by nature, and it's the Gorge that has provided the inspiration for a number of her pots.

I ask a question about how one of these marine painting effects was achieved, and am immediately deluged with references to under glazing, multiple glazings, low firings, naked raku and the like. Belle takes the technical component of pottery extremely seriously. A large part of her work is functional pottery—bowls, cups, plates and the like—but she plays with how such forms can be decorated in exploratory ways. So she describes herself as a ceramic artist with a decorative focus. But I see another way of describing her, because I suddenly see that the scientist she was earlier in life hasn't disappeared at all, but has become transmuted into a researcher into the use of glaze chemicals to achieve varied surface effects.

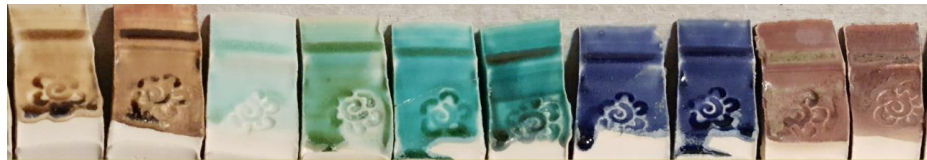
And so, if the scientist hasn't disappeared, I wonder, as my final question, whether the big city dweller in her is still there, and if so, how that part finds living in the distinctly small city atmosphere of Gorge Tillicum and Victoria. And what about the part of her that was so interested in equality in a multi-ethnic society? Her answer is a mixed one. She does miss the multi-ethnic diversity of a city like Toronto. So, one of her strong wishes for this area is that the various ethnicities here have more of an overt presence. But, on the other hand, the close presence of nature in Gorge Tillicum and Victoria in general is an important advantage of this part of the world, in her view. And so the animals, terrestrial and marine, and trees and bushes will continue to flourish on her pots, to the pleasure of people like myself (who have several of them) and many others.

From the Newsletter Editor:

In my chat with Belle about her life as a ceramic artist, she told me she still loves going into the studio, loves being a potter and most importantly for her, loves being a part of her many communities of potters and artists. We also roamed over and around the topic of inspiration and creativity and the challenge of developing as an artist amidst the crunch of show deadlines and life's events.

Belle's creative space has and is undergoing significant change, including the possibility of her needing to either set up her own studio or join another. The Esquimalt Lagoon location of her current studio (Havenwood, which was also the location of the Coast Collective Art Centre before it moved to Colwood) is being developed for condos. How much longer the five potters working at Havenwood can carry on is uncertain, probably another year or so. With these changes, Belle is noticing that she is missing the more dynamic and supportive environment that existed when the Coast Collective was in the same building and is noticing that the uncertainty of the future studio has her thinking about her future direction. This coupled with the process of producing work for 3 or 4 shows a year as well as the Coast Collective Gift Shop is pushing her to develop a more creative focus rather than producing repetitive work to sell. In pursuit of this sense that she needs to explore her creative side more, and because it offers an enjoyable opportunity to work with others, Belle has recently delved more into the joys of raku. This spring she was part of a well-received clay-focused show at the Coast Collective Art Centre and at the beginning of November will be part of another show at the Coast Collective Gallery – Havenwood 5. This show will showcase the work of the five studio artists still remaining at Havenwood. She also continues to introduce new forms in her work, yet is still seeking that magical spot where the muse is feeling well fed. This topic of creativity and finding new avenues in our work no doubt resonates with many of you.





Understanding Glazes

Workshop #1 - How Glazes Work

We explore:

- Glass formers, fluxes & stiffeners - how they function and which materials fall into each category
- A basic intro to glaze chemistry
- Why colourants react differently in different glazes
- How to determine if a recipe is suitable for functional ware
- Best studio practices for consistent glaze results
- Visual examples to illustrate all concepts
- Resources for recipes, material information and further learning

Date: Saturday Oct 21, 2017
Time: 1 - 4pm
Location: North Saanich, Victoria, BC
Price: \$50
Contact: info@suemcleodceramics.com

More Workshops
to Follow

www.SueMcLeodCeramics.com



PACIFIC RIM POTTERS

24th Annual Fall Show and Sale

Saturday, November 4, 10am-4pm

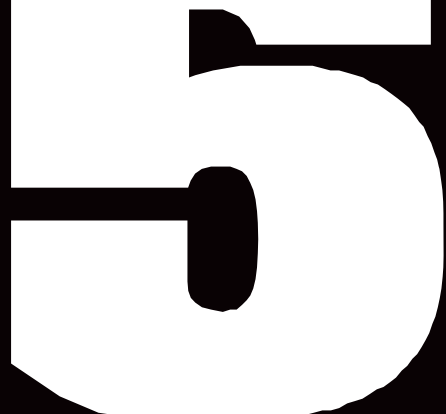
Knox Presbyterian Church Hall

2964 Richmond Rd.

Local ceramic artists in this popular, long established show will exhibit a wide variety of handcrafted, artful, functional and sculptural clay creations for home and garden. Free admission, door prizes, refreshments. For more info: 250-658-4523



HAVENWOOD



Len **Collin**

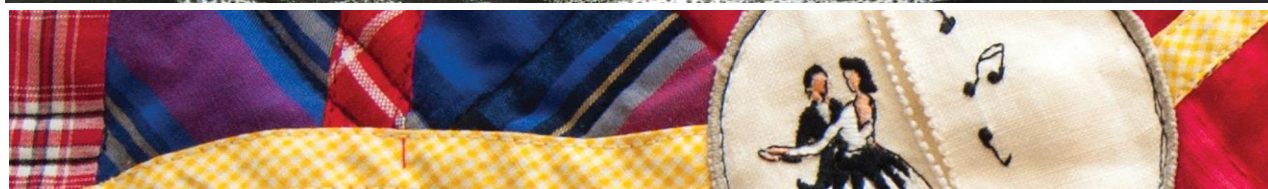
Ken **Faulks**

Belle **Leon**

Sheila **Lintaman**

Sheryl **Parsons**

**Encaustic
Paint
Ceramic
Fibre
Paint**



Exhibition: November 1-12, 2017

Reception: Friday November 3, from 6 - 9:30pm



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Gaming Commission



October 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 21st annual Gabriola Studio Tour
8 21st annual Gabriola Studio Tour	9 Thanksgiving Guild Meeting	10	11	12	13	14
	21st annual Gabriola Studio Tour					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
November 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	2 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	3 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	4 Pacific Rim Potters 10:00am Knox Church Hall, 2964 Richmond St.
5 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	6 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	7 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	8 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	9 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	10 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	11 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre
	Guild Meeting Note Special Day					
12 Havenwood 5 Show @ Coast Collective Art Centre	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

ADVERTISING RATES

Business card size (2" x 3 1/2"):
\$10 per issue
or
\$75 for 10 issues

Quarter page ad (3 1/2" x 4 3/4")
\$20 per issue
or
\$150 for 10 issues

Sales announcements, events, classified ads:

FREE

Contact the *At a Glance* editor
helen.pedneault@shaw.ca

Guild at a *Glance*

... is the newsletter for the South Vancouver Island Potters Guild.

It is published monthly, September through June. It's distributed by email to all members and some copies are available at Guild meetings. The newsletter is also posted online at www.victoriapotters.ca

Articles and items of interest to members are welcome and will be included as space permits. Items for inclusion are best emailed to the editor
helen.pedneault@shaw.ca

**SUBMISSIONS REQUESTED BEFORE
THE FIRST OF THE MONTH**

The Executive

President:	Muriel S.	250.652.5434
Vice-Pres:	Pam T-W	250.474.5434
Secretary:	Derek K.	250.995.2905
Treasurer:	Linda V.	250.479.5966
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Coffee:		
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Directors:		
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	Kris J.	250.384.5344
	Belle L.	250.382.1326
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Newsletter	Helen Pedneault	250 383 5808
Program Coordinator:		
	Rosemary Neering	250.477.7032
Raffle:		
	Ester G.	250.658.4523
	Tobias T.	250.383.3893
Webmaster:	Nancy Fraser	250 508-2053



**Victoria
Clay Art**

654 Burnside Road W.
Victoria BC V8Z 1M8

Here is a list of my favorite pottery tools, glazes and things. Dan

All available at Victoria Clay Art

Mud Tool Ribs
Amaco PC-20 Blue Rutile [cone 6]
Alphabet Stamp Set
2" Goat Hair Fan Brush
Magic Water
Stroke & Coat SC-74 Hot Tomale [cone 08-10]
MKM Finger Rollers
Xiem Telescoping Sponge on a Stick
Mud Tool Blue Sponge
Amaco Velvet Underglaze V-361 Jet Black
Aardvark Cone 5 BEE-Mix
Mud Tool Clay Cutting Wire [green handle]
MKM Wood Stamps
Paper Clay cone 06, 6, or 10

**Come in and look around, we're open
10:00am to 5:00pm Mon-Sat**

Vancouver Island Pottery Supply

Has Moved

Hello to all our valued customers, This is notice that VIPS has moved.

Our new address is:

515 Stanford Avenue E.
Parksville, BC
V9T 6V6

We have the same phone number and website address. We have a new email address.

Cheers, Donna

Ph: 1-250-248-2314

E-Mail: sales@vipottersupply.com
(new email address!!)

Web: www.vipottersupply.com

REMEMBER – among others, 2 great benefits to being in the South Vancouver Island Potters Guild are:

- 1) the library
- 2) access to the BC Potter's Guild newsletter online. Roger C. sends us the username and password each month.

So ... check them out! They're worth using!

*... When you shop – please mention
to our advertisers that you learned
about them in the Guild Newsletter.*

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