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The Alberta Potters' Association

Twenty/Twenty

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

CATALOGUE

**Ruberto Ostberg Gallery
Calgary, Alberta**

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to stimulate our members through informative workshops, lectures, exhibition opportunities and community building, while helping to connect our members to the larger arts community through events and our affiliate art organizations.

Please visit our website:

www.albertapottersassociation.org

Twenty/Twenty “Celebrating 50 Years”

Committee Chair **Connie Cooper**

With this Show, we celebrate the Alberta Potters’ Association (APA) and mark its 50-year history. The organization played a significant part, particularly in the first twenty-five years in its contribution to the development of ‘Studio’ ceramics in Alberta. Presently, the APA focus is on community, connecting the many and varied artists whose medium is clay as well as providing show, sale and educational opportunities for members.

This 50-year anniversary has given the current APA Board the impetus to consolidate and retain information that is presently scattered and would otherwise be lost. As we began to compile old show catalogues, *Contact* magazines and past meeting minutes, we realized that although we would present a timeline highlighting events over the years as originally intended for the show, the scope was much broader and is a project that will continue into the future.

We are proud to exhibit technically and creatively high quality work from contemporary Alberta Artists. Thank-you to all who entered.

I would also like to thank the juror, Jim Etzkorn for your careful consideration, in what is never an easy job, of the works submitted.

Thank-you to the committee, especially to Louise Cormier, for all of your work on the historic timeline and to Monika Smith for the great job on the catalogue. Thanks also to Gillian Mitchell, Darlene Swan, Genevieve Goodhart, Louise Brud and Connie Pike for your support and continued effort!

Thank-you Anna Ostberg and your team at the Ruberto Ostberg Gallery in Calgary for presenting the work in your excellent space.

Juror
Jim Etzkorn

It is an honor to be invited by the Alberta Potters' Association to jury the Alberta Potters' Association 50th anniversary show.

I want to mention the Alberta Potters' Association was an integral part of my ceramic career. It constantly offered workshops, conferences, juried shows and informative articles from *Contact* magazine.

In viewing the applications I was delighted by the quality and diversity of the art work.

Each piece was viewed many times to give it a thorough assessment. My considerations in judging the work were the concept, execution of the piece, how it worked formally, material expression and visually how the art work would collectively fit together as a show. The work of Louise Cormier and David Barnes were the outstanding pieces from the selections made. Louise's entry was a clear, concise and sensual symbol of her connection "to the planet through memory

and the senses." David's focus utilizes archetypal form to transform a chaotic surface into a classical statement.

Other notable choices were the jars of Andrew Tarrant, Prairie Mosaic by Juliana Rempel and the narratives of Mathew O'Reilly. The rest of the choices reflected some of the considered elements but lacked the overall clarity of the first two.

I feel the ceramic objects selected will present a diverse, colorful, whimsical but unified exhibit.

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David Barnes

Okotoks

Whether I am labeled a potter, sculptor or artist it is irrelevant to the work that I create. Over the past years I have been and still am all these things. Ceramics for me has always been about the whole process, from concept and design to production, this is what defines the craftsman.



Strata Vessel

2020

Cone 6 Mixed Clay, Stains and Oxides; 13" x 5"



Strata Vessel

2020

Cone 6 mixed clay, stains and oxides; 6.5" x 4.5"

2

I have never been one to feel tied to limited designs or one process, for me it is a life of constant exploration and the development of new ideas, pushing the material and my abilities to their limits in the pursuit of the new and unexplored. The ultimate consideration being the aesthetic and statement made by the end result.

My work has always ranged and fluctuated from utilitarian ware to sculptural forms, each piece has always been

given the same consideration. I feel that my work should show the essence of the materials and the processes involved. For me there should always be an element of natural occurrence, something I have only a limited amount of control over, elements that are a result of the glaze combination, the mix of the clay or the result of the firing process. Sometimes the result is disappointing and sometimes exceptional, sometimes functional, while others are sculptural.



Strata Vessel

2019

Cone 6 mixed clay, stains and oxides; 18" x 12"



Hard Hail North of Medicine Hat

2018

Stoneware clay, oxides, stains, glazes; cone 10 reduction,
1.5" x 17"



Writing On Stone Series

2018

Stoneware clay, oxides, stains, glazes; 20" x 7"

Richard Bates

Lethbridge

These works are greatly inspired by the landscape,
geography and unique qualities of light in
southern Alberta.

Louise Brud

Calgary

Having always been inspired by the properties and patterns of nature, the 'spiral' has held the greatest appeal to me. Scaling from the tiny to the cosmic, logarithmic spirals have a special property, in which their shape remains the same no matter what. This example of self-similar pattern has invoked the concept of repetition, expanding symmetry and recursion to the forefront of my work. Unaware I began exploring this idea with a set I created in my ceramics studies. With the responds of mentors, to the notion of a nesting set, and the encouragement from fellow ceramic peers to make more, over time I decided to explore and develop a series of work based on the concept of recursion. Cascading on the idea of 'expanding symmetry' one can say that past encouragements always come forth repeatedly in our work and life's and can be a constant influence.



Green Square Nesting Bowls
2020

Stoneware clay and slip; 4" x 8.5", 3" x 6", 1" x 2.5"

Dismay

2020

Porcelain and porcelain paperclay, masonite and paint;
15.5" x 13.5"



Connie Cooper

Calgary

Having lived in Alberta for most of my life, the geography and climate here are intrinsic to me and subsequently to my work. This and current climate issues inform my sculptural work; they are metaphors for themes of transition, transience, fragility and sustainability. A 1974 graduate of what was then the Alberta College of Art in Calgary, my medium has been primarily clay for almost five decades. In those early days, high fire pottery informed by the Chinese and Japanese pottery tradition via Bernard Leach was current. I was personally also inspired and influenced at the time by other European artists such as Lucie Rie and Hans Coper. At ACA, I was also influenced by my instructors Bert Borch and Walter Drohan and by the artists Harlan House and John Chalke. There has been such a broadening of scope in the ceramic arts over the decades that I have been privileged to see. We now have so much access to so much information and the opportunity to travel. The fluidity and scope of the medium itself keeps it interesting.



Shelter

2020

Porcelain and porcelain paperclay, masonite and paint;
21.5" x 11"

Louise Cormier

Lethbridge

I have been formally educated in art and art history permitting me the opportunities to teach, organize exhibitions and write a bit around Canada. As a maker in Alberta, I like to combine my love of painting, print making and photography into my clay work by reconfiguring it into 3D forms focused on colour, textures and imagery/content. Clay is my ideal medium because it is so malleable, allowing me to work out my thoughts/perceptions using many aspects of current and traditional visual language with the goal of a commentary on the world around me.

I have been working with the subject of seed pods for about a year or so. In this time of ecological fragility, the seed pods represent for me not only the concept 'life cycle' but the beauty and purposefulness of each individual item found in nature. Through science, we have come to see the infinite complexity of each item at a micro and macro level, and hopefully sense the threading that weaves through all living matter. My aim is not to mimic nature but to make objects that touch our memories, our senses and our deeper psychological connections to the planet.



In and Around Us
2020

Mix of clays with multiple firings; 14" x 14"

Elaine Harrison

Lethbridge

I was first captivated by the infinite possibilities of clay in the 1960's and 70's when I helped form our local guild in Lethbridge and contributed to the APA—remaining a member to this day 50 some years ago. Local and provincial clay organizations have been instrumental in my development. What these provided was a knowledge of the craft and its continuous reinvention. What I learned, I was able to turn around as teacher/mentor to many in the decades following. My work, entitled *Memory of a Ritual*, is a raku-fired piece. It may seem like a teapot but cannot function as such—raku is more about the expressive form and surface than functionality, more a sculpture and an object of contemplation. This vessel in part, alludes to the old Japanese tradition of raku more perhaps more importantly, to gatherings in our own lives and their importance for our social well being.



Memory of a Ritual
2019

Mid-high fire clay, raku glazes; 15" x 7"



Barbara Howe

Calgary

I have been pursuing pottery since 1983. This became a full-time passion in 1994. I am primarily self taught. I was fortunate to be able attend workshops from Tom Coleman, Les Manning, Bernard Leach and Robin Hopper and came away with valuable learning from each of them. I am primarily a functional ceramic artist and have learned much from ceramic publications and videos and as such those have been my main mentors. I was also blessed to be a member of a very well-equipped guild. We honed our skills together. I love bright colours and attempt whenever possible to include them in my work. Since moving from Fort McMurray I have been enamoured with the southern Alberta landscape and have been slowly working on incorporating it into my work.

Neighborhood Tea
2020

Mid-range porcelain, glazes and underglazes; 7" x 6.5",
4" x 3.75", 4" x 3.75"



Heather MacDonald-SoroChan

Coalhurst

I have been a member of the Oldman River Potters Guild in Lethbridge for sixteen years, and have been taught by many knowledgeable and passionate ceramic artists, both in-house and as guests to our guild. Most recently, I have been exploring mold-making and slipcasting by one of our members, Louise Cormier, with some of the techniques evidenced in my submissions to this show. Most of my work focuses on contemporary issues surrounding the environment and our interactions and interventions, both positive and negative, with the environment.

Promise Stoneware clay, glazes, stains; 21" x 7.5"
2019



Gillian Mitchell

Calgary

Gillian attended Alberta College of Art + Design where she graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in ceramics with distinction. She received a Bachelor of Education in 2014 from the University of Calgary. Currently living in Calgary, she works for The City of Calgary at Wildflower Arts Center as the ceramics technician. Living in Alberta has Gillian longing for the sea, thus inspiring her ceramic work. Finding inspiration from coral reefs and tide pools she brings it all together with colour pulled straight from Grassi Lakes in Canmore, Alberta.

Teapot
2019

M370 stoneware clay; 6" x 10"



Death of the Last White Savior

2019

H550, underglaze, stain, washes, decals, MDF, flocking, acrylic paint, and clay; 15" x 19.5" x 14"



Grating Nostalgia

2019

Mid-fire soda, underglaze, kiln atmosphere, and clay; 24" x 20" x 11"

Matthew O'Reilly

Calgary

Working between ceramics and sculpture, Matthew's studio practice uses the sculpted figure as a launching pad for conversation about social issues. Matthew is particularly concerned with subverting sculptural embodiments of masculinity, whiteness, and power structures. Through employing a critical framework, reflexivity, and the armoury of satire, Matthew aims to make reflexive work that pushes and pulls our perceptions of modern day society, and the roles we play in it. Matthew complicates and contributes to the dialogues around identity. With a tactful, thoughtful, and humorous approach to material and subject matter, Matthew examines social issues through a frame of plurality.

Matthew brings a sense of urgency to his practice. He builds hollow bodies, one large slab at a time. After a large plains of clay are established, he will begin to articulate various features, giving matter form. Matthew's ultimate goal is to make bodies that exude a primal viscosity; bodies that capture the essence of our particular moment in time.

As an Alberta artist, we would also like you to think about and to describe how you have been influenced and inspired in terms of mentors, educators, history and other influences such as landscape and geography in a short statement.

My mentors, my history, and my geography shape my identity and therein my artwork.



Woodfired Carved Pitcher

2019

H550 stoneware, slip; 10" x 4.75"

Tammy Parks-Legge

Parkland County

My clay career has been profoundly influenced by several clay mentors and associations, including Steven Hill and the APA. My mentors have taught me how to create from the heart, be learning, experimenting and questioning continuously and building on that daily.

The APA facilitated my path to woodfiring both when I attended an APA woodfire workshop and then received priceless woodfiring advice from John Chalke at an APA sponsored exhibition. I am continuously inspired by the world around me, the joy of a sunrise, the happiness in a sunflower adorned with bees or the beautiful lines in the architecture of a building. I am also motivated to continuously improve my work by the patrons who use and appreciate my pieces. Their comments are invaluable as they push me to strive for better pieces every day!



Woodfired Feldspar Pitcher

2019

Bmix stoneware, feldspar crystals, slip; 8.75" x 6.5"

Sail Boat 1

2020

Stoneware, wood stain, resin, lacquer; 4" x 10"



Gordon Pengilly

Calgary

Rodin observed that the interplay between subject and material in sculpture necessarily invokes sensuality. As I work with clay the veracity of that remark has never been so personal or intense. I have been sculpting in one medium or another since I was a farmboy whittling with a pocket knife or molding with plasticine and my earliest work portrayed animals of the prairie. Though I have sought the advise from many other sculptors and curators I'm entirely self-taught. Through sculpting I challenge myself to create beauty from the deepest part of me where the lovely language of space and form resides.

Connie Pike

High River

My clay journey started in 1971, in Peace River. Pierre Guy with Alberta Culture came and taught a workshop. Since 1978, I've been making my living as a ceramic artist. My approach to working with clay evolves as I investigate a balance between function and aesthetic. Shapes and designs build upon themselves and new versions of form and decoration filter through the body of work and refresh the process. It is my desire to create forms with rich surfaces with texture and glazes. I am interested in how my work can be used everyday to bring art into our lives. I try to make pottery that is successful in several ways: comfortable to use, enjoyable to look at, and interesting to think about.

I spent two summers at the Banff School of Fine Art studying under Carlton Ball, Les Manning and Liz Mould...I've attended many Red Deer Series courses, received a diploma from the Australian National University Long Distance Program and have taught many pottery workshops around the province.

I studied design under Stan Perrott who believed in my work and gave me confidence. I am partnered with Bob Pike, who is my greatest mentor.



Three Vases A B C
2020

H570; 11" x 5"



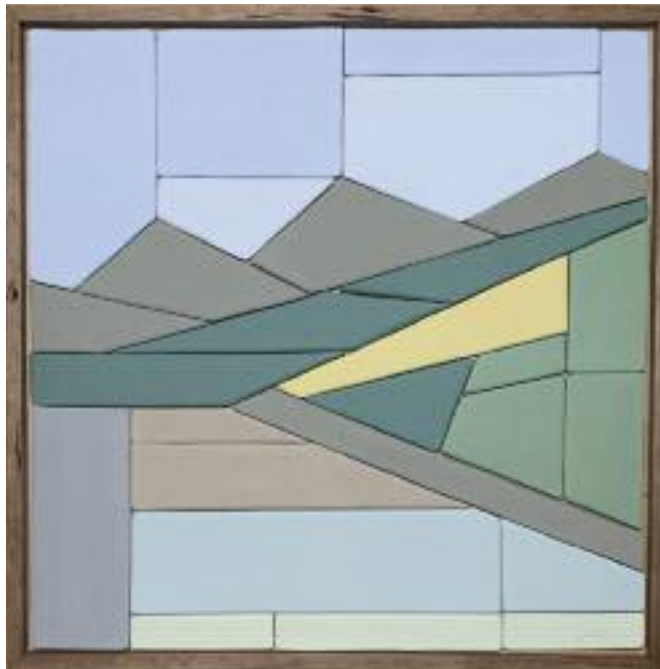
Aura Along the Plain

2019
M340 clay, slip and underglaze; 13" x 52"



Horizon

2019
Plainsman coffee clay, slip, oxide, underglaze;
12" x 6", 4" x 2.5"



Juliana Rempel

Bragg Creek

Through installations, groupings and individual pieces Juliana Rempel's work focuses on the study of process and progression, exposing the accumulation of form and surface over time. Her work is greatly influenced by the process of making within the discipline of ceramics.

Exploring the relationship between action and growth, these silent processes look to find a voice within their frame. Each line, cut, colour, mark, gesture, stroke, pinch, pull, leads to the next; each decision makes progress. Within the pieces shown there is a story that is told, each action is evident and important, honoured and displayed. The first allows for the second and so on until the last piece is made. The intriguing part about exposing the process in this way is that the last piece is not necessarily the final or finished piece, instead it is merely the last piece shown within this evolution.

Growing up in southern Alberta the influence of the prairie landscape is strong within Juliana's work. The bold lines and colors of the prairies compositions allow objects to emerge from the shadows, posed and poised. There is a beauty found in the shapes and colors that compose the settings of our day. Within the soft and muted colours of the mundane, there is a silence. Through the silence, vivid colours and shapes emerge and a story unfolds.

The rise of the land falls against the sky 2019

M340 clay, slip and underglaze; 23" x 23"

Aspen Grove

2019

Terracotta, terra sigillata, glaze, stains; 12" x 11.5" x 5.5"



Monika Smith

Calgary

My inspiration is the landscape of the Eastern Slopes of the Rockies. This is such a unique and fragile environment. The early history of Alberta used horses for work, which ultimately changed the land. It is now known that horses are New World animals reintroduced to North America by the Conquistadors after a very long absence—around 13,000 years. Their bones and remains have been found in the Yukon because of the Klondike gold rush and more recently in Alberta.

Aspens are marvelous trees: fire resistant, can harvest light in winter; and they easily form huge colonies that can be millenia old. Our grasslands are huge and supported a great biodiversity before colonization and cultivation.

Our modern story overwrites what was there; and we've lost appreciation for the native animals, birds, trees, grasses and insects. Only those that have managed to tolerate us and can live with us in our highly changed and urbanized landscape. We often walk by some of the most beautiful native flowers, but are diverted by the beauty of huge, colorful hybrids and annuals from other lands.



Dancing Horses

2019

Terracotta, glaze, stains; 0.25" x 16.75"

Mr. McGregor's Rabbits

2020

Plainsman M Sculpt clay, oxides, underglazes, glaze, enamel on pearls; 14.5" x 20"



Laurie-Dan Steinbach

Vulcan

Laurie Steinbach began her journey with clay 11 years ago at the Moose Jaw Pottery Club. After taking a couple of wheel and handbuilding courses each, Laurie began to practice at home on the weekends. Her teachers and mentors there were Wendy Parsons and Zach Dietrich from the wonderful Dietrich Studio in Moose Jaw. While working full time as a teacher, raising kids, and helping on the Saskatchewan ranch Laurie fit clay in where she could. Three years ago Laurie and her husband relocated to an acreage East of Vulcan where she now has her own studio in their shoe. When not working as a teacher, she handbuilds tiles and created botanical lamps, plates, and wall art. She sculpts 3D critters, people and flowers. All of the inspiration from her work comes from the plants and animals of the prairies and from her garden. She uses a variety of clays along with a variety of colourants, from mid-fire glazes and underglaze to low-fire glaze, to oxides. She also sometimes uses acrylics and even watercolour. Her husband frames her work.



Crocus Post

2020

P300, underglaze; 6.5" x 6.5"



Darlene Swan

Calgary

I love colour, pattern, texture and whimsy. I do like combining geometric patterning with organic forms and I LOVE the Polka Dot. I am inspired by activities that I enjoy, as well as activities of friends and family. I want my pottery to be used as well as being enjoyed.

Rose Garden
2019

Earthenware, majolica, overglazes; 2.75" x 12.75"



Et Finis Omnium—End Of All Things

2015

Low-fire clay, sprigged; 16" x 9"

Andrew Tarrant

Calgary

I was one of Walt Drohan's last students at ACA, what he, Sally Barbier, Bert Borch and Greg Payce taught me has remained constant in my studio practice, and I teach the same to my apprentices and students.



Patterns In The Chaos

2017

Midfire-clay, sprigged; 4" x 15"

A BRIEF HISTORY OF APA

Connie Cooper

Louise Cormier

In the very early days after WW2, ceramic art, as distinct from manufactured ceramic ware, had begun to creatively flourish particularly in the UK and USA but also in Canada. In this nascent period in Alberta, there was little information or access to materials. As the impetus for development increased, a group of artists and educators agreed to form the Alberta Potters' Association (APA) in 1970 in order to access information and extend interactions with other potters both nationally and internationally.

By 1973, this young association had established *Contact* magazine. Canadian in scope, it focused on introducing clay artists

of all levels to wider ranges of current experience, concepts and techniques. Through the APA and *Contact* magazine, Alberta potters now had access to symposia, shows and visits by International artists. For example, the APA organized Ceramics International, held in Calgary in 1973, in cooperation with The International Academy of Ceramics (Switzerland).

This time period saw a surge in the development of ceramic departments in post-secondary institutions such as the (then) Alberta College of Art, the universities and the Banff Centre as well as the establishment of province-wide pottery guilds. The Alberta



Judith Lamb, Rita MacKinnon, Don Wells,
Lorain Oberg, Rob Hill, Les Manning,
Conce Weirich, Marshall Shyne,
Diane Morrison,
Marilyn Gault, Wainwright, George Gault
1980 - BY A.P.A. EXECUTIVE



2006 AGM at Red Deer College and Cone Box show

(2012 – present). The host regions organized some phenomenal AGMs, workshops and presentations by numerous artists and most importantly, it offered an opportunity for members to meet.

However, the APA has always been a volunteer organization and with continually changing boards, the overall continuity has suffered. So, it was decided that the board remain in Calgary. A comprehensive survey was conducted to identify how the organization could best serve the members with subsequent development of a reorganizational plan as reflected in the mission statement. Provincially, the Off-Centre Show (Webster’s Gallery) and Symposium held at (the then Alberta College of Art + Design) was held in

Calgary in 2013. Projects include website development, a greater social media presence, workshops, retreats, AGM events, a historical documentation project and this show, 2020, a Celebration of 50 Years. As well, local to the Calgary area are the Millarville Market, a Christmas Sale and Coffee & Ceramics events.

We remain a vibrant group who are dedicated to serving the ceramic arts! At no other time has ceramics (nationally and internationally) enjoyed such wide cultural popularity through museum/gallery exhibitions, the Handmade Movement and community programs. The APA is clearly an invaluable facilitator for arts within communities.

Arts Foundation (1972) was formed by the government for the purpose of collecting and exhibiting works. Alberta Culture Visual Arts supported the APA and its endeavors with grants. Many of APA's members contributed significantly to contemporary activities in the province.

By the late 90's however, government funding and venues became less secure and the APA's role became less clear. The Internet, easy access to travel, workshop availability, the development of residencies, flux spaces and community-based studios all contributed to the difficulties in maintaining a province-wide organization. The APA was struggling to stay afloat. *Contact* magazine came to its end in 1999. These difficult years

culminated with the proposal to disband the APA in the winter of 2006.

But the APA would not pass quietly. By March, Jim Marshall, a founding member, started to rally the troops. A newly formed committee from Medicine Hat made a bid to keep the APA alive. Jim Marshall, Les Manning and Sharon Altonen were voted in as the new executive with a new vision for the restructuring. This included regional rotations of executives and AGM duties (every two years), greater use of digital technologies for web pages, portfolios, a re-focus on the grassroots layers and on community development. Following this plan, the APA was housed in Medicine Hat (2006 - 2007), Red Deer (2008 - 2009), Lethbridge (2010 - 2011) and Calgary



2007 AB/BC Show held at Medalta, Comox and Vancouver



Elaine Harrison, Aleithia Ward and Verna Allison at AGM, Red Deer College, 2009

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