

SASKATOON POTTERS GUILD SPRING 2013 NEWSLETTER

From the Editor:

The members of the Saskatoon Potters Guild have been busy this winter making things with clay.

It has been a long cold winter in Saskatchewan, and now, spring is upon us. For many, this is a time for new beginnings in our work, looking back over what we've accomplished over the past 8 months or so, and spreading our wings a bit in the warmth of the sunshine to come.

This newsletter has a few things in store for you; a taste of something different from a land far away, where the sun always shines, a friendly reminder from the Saskatoon Potters Guild Archives committee, and some firing opportunities and ceramic services from Ceram Canada. Thank-you to the contributors.

HECHO EN MEXICO - submitted by Bonnie Gilmour

La Manzanilla, Jalisco, Mexico, is the home of "The Gallery of the Peoples". It is the home of some of the best retail Mexican and Central American folk art ceramics I have seen under one roof. Sculptures, and various items of utility, from all over Mexico, but primarily from two important art centres, the diverse Mexican states of Oaxaca, Michoacán...and some pieces from as far away as Peru. The works are whimsical, and unique to the story of the maker.

The gallery is owned and operated by Bruce Colasurdo of Washington, USA. Bruce spends his summers travelling to many small Mexican towns, getting to know the people and purchasing artworks for his gallery. Through his studies in anthropology at the University of the Americas in Puebla, Mexico, he discovered ceramics. He is a ceramic artist specializing in pre-Colombian replicas.

I had wandered into the gallery one day and found a gorgeous but diminutive Peruvian sculpture I thought I might want to purchase. I went home to get my pesos, and when I returned, found that it had just been sold! So every day since, I would go to the gallery to see if there was something similar that would strike me the way that Peruvian sculpture did. Needless to say, there was only one, never to be another like it I am sure... but I discovered many more wondrous objects!

Dona Rosa's black pottery from San Bartolo Coyotopec, Oaxaca. This is a state in which the indigenous groups and many of their pre-hispanic and colonial traditions persist. There is an abundance of production of ceramics in its communities.

Dona Rosa Real de Nieto stood out as a personality in Coyotopec for many years, is well recognised and her works are highly collected around the world. She gave black pottery a shine when she accidentally discovered that it can be polished, and this is where today what we call black pottery came from. She died in 1980; her son and grandchildren carry on the family tradition with master abilities.

The potters of Coyotopec continue to use their traditional method of turning pots without a wheel. The "wheel" consists of 2 concave plates, on upside down supporting the other. This is a pre-Hispanic method, and the pieces are fashioned on this device. The process takes 20 to 30 days of molding, decorating and slow drying in closed rooms, polishing with a smooth stone, and then finally firing the works. The pieces acquire their blackness depending on the firing time.



Black pottery of Oaxaca

La Catrina is one of the Mexican popular phrases for death. Lady Death is often depicted in Victorian dress. She is celebrated throughout Mexico in the form of masks, figurines, altars and shrines, clothing, statues and even souvenirs for tourists.

Halloween falls on October 31st. Mexico's Day of the Dead is celebrated on November 1st, and ends on November 2nd. The two holidays are often confused with each other, and even celebrated jointly. Halloween is based on a European concept of death, and is populated by negative images of terror. The Day of The Dead is far different. It is a unique Indo-Hispanic custom demonstrating love and respect for one's ancestors, the continuance of life, and even finds humor in death -- all positive concepts.

Juan Torres from the town of Capula, Michoacan makes La Catrina his way. After a few years of making the gorgeous sculptures, and doing quite well selling them into the Mexican gallery markets, the small town of potters quickly emulated his work, so now there are over one hundred townspeople making these wonderful "La Catrina" ceramic dolls.





Here are some more examples of the ceramic folk art. Look closely at the detail... especially at the fireball. The women are in their underwear rolling around in a ball of fire. At the bellows are the devils. When the artist was asked why the women are in the fire... he said they are "loose" women. They drink.



Please note that the artists of the folk art pieces are unknown to me.

The Gallery of the Peoples is closed for the summer 2013 season, and will open again November 2013.

Should you be interested in purchasing any of the above works, Bruce Colasurdo can be reached at brucecolasurdo@hotmail.com

ARCHIVES INFORMATION- submitted by Lorraine Sutter of the Archives committee

All materials archived are filed in order of date noted on the document, if there is no date we estimate when it was likely to have been produced.

Archives material- content and location

- a. Content: Binders labeled "Minutes,Reports,Correspondence" - in 3 banker boxes (dated 1962 to present time) These binders also contain committee developed material with the exception of material specific to workshop committee, sales committee, newsletter, and treasurer records
Workshop Binders- 1971 to present

Sales Binders – 1194 to present

Newsletters- 1976 to present

Treasurer – 1979 to present

A binder containing the following lists has also been developed: presidents,list of Tweddell Award winners, workshops held and membership lists (small white binder)

All of the above are in banker boxes in the Storeroom ,with listing of binders on outside of banker box

NOTE: There may be duplication e.g. some documents from the specific committee materials may also be filed in the "Minutes,etc." binders; there are also gaps in documentation, this occurred when the archives did not receive documents from the various committees. If you discover that documents missing from your committee records and you have them on hand please contact the archives committee.

- b. Photo Albums – in banker boxes in the Library
Workshops- 1965 to present (also contain handouts from workshops that used them)

Sales - 1970 to present

Special Firings(e.g. Primitive,Wood,Salt,Raku,Paper Kiln) – 1983 to present

General Activities- 1995 to present (includes executive , moving, meetings, celebrations

Exhibitions – 19--- to present (NOTE: AS OF Feb.2013 exhibitions binders are with Lorraine,they will be put in the Library ASAP)

c. Workshop Handouts- all workshop handouts have been put in a binder in the Library. We ask that members use these copies to make copies for themselves, rather than take the copy filed in the photo albums. Check out the contents in these handouts-they contain hints from the artists, glaze recipes, mold making info, plaster methods,etc. lot of useful information!

If binders are not in the boxes,they are being used by committee members to update or check them. Members are asked not to remove binders or albums from the Guild (we do put albums on display at workshops).

PHOTOGRAPHING EVENTS:

The Archives Committee has been given the responsibility of arranging for the photographic records of the Guild. We ask that committees holding events(i.e. special firings,socials,workshops,sales etc.) contact an Archive committee member well in advance of the event to ensure arrangements to have a photographer designated.



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Offers

Custom kiln firings, custom glaze making, workshops,
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The summer and fall 2013 firing schedule is online
A few spots left!

Contact: Bonnie Gilmour or Charley Farrero at info@ceramcanada.ca