



Newsletter of the

# Tasmanian Ceramics Association

Southern Branch

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## Lasting Impression

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*Editor's note.* I'm sorry to have taken so long to get out what is effectively the first newsletter of the year! I'll try to do better in the second half of the year but if anyone would like to relieve me of the editorial responsibility I'd be pleased to hear from her or him.

The great bulk of our membership (48 full members) now receives this letter by email, as do most of the dozen or so associated groups, sponsors, etc with whom we communicate. So I've decided to drop the two-column layout to make it more readable on-screen. I'm not sure about the chosen fonts so let me hear your preferences

The time is fast approaching for our annual exhibition and the theme is to be "Lasting impression". The exhibition will be at the Rosny Schoolhouse Gallery, once more, and is scheduled to take place from 28<sup>th</sup> October to 9<sup>th</sup> November. Responding to a theme is always something of a challenge but it does give an overall coherence to a group exhibition - even though some entries may touch on it only obliquely. This year's theme gives plenty of scope, whether you seize on the opportunity for incised and impressed surfaces or whether you respond in a more literary or narrative way.

I'm still scratching my head about what I'm going to make and I imagine there are a lot of others doing the same. However, time is marching on and sooner or later we've got to get cracking (unfortunate word) on the next masterpiece. Good luck to one and all!

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## Woodfire Tas 2011

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### *A report from Jude Maisch*

What a wonderful event! I have never before witnessed my old home town of Deloraine in such an amazing light. The town was abuzz with claymakers. Exhibitions throughout the town of work by both Australian and overseas woodfirers were inspirational, and many of our members came home with some very special art works to add to their collections.

It began with registration and many attendees placing work to be sold on paper covered trestles. Before long many pots had text a circle surrounds with the buyers name beneath.

Each day was a mixture of talks, demonstrations and gallery openings. There were many exhibitions including International woodfired Tableware, Indian anagama, young USA woodfirers (Josh Copus and Eric Knoche amongst them). The Inside Woodfire- Fifty Australian Stories" was one of the most amazing exhibitions I have ever seen. Curated by Ben Richardson, it included work by Chester Nealie (my favourite pot!), Gwyn Hansen-Piggot, Janet Mansfield, Owen Rye, Peter Pilven, Graeme Wilkie (2 very tall vessels ), Neil Hoffman and 43 others.



Liz Roberts, Gail Nichols and Sara Wright at one of the exhibitions in Deloraine

One of the first talks was given by American Jack Troy, who spoke of what inspires us –did we have handmade pots in our homes and what were our first aesthetic experiences? I enjoyed listening to him recite some of his own poetry and talk of canoeing as much as his talk of his woodfiring. When opening the Tableware exhibition he spoke of tableware as “just pots waiting for a table”, pots not quite complete until they have a home. I loved that! Later during the conference he had an “armchair conversation” with Owen Rye, where they exchanged thoughts and feelings about working with wood from their email correspondence. “Baptism by woodfiring seems to be a sign of permanent commitment” said Jack.

Other talks and demos I enjoyed:

Malina Monks sang old Scottish songs from the weavers and spoke of her work inspired by her heritage, a piece of which was in the Fifty Australian Stories Exhibition.

Graeme Wilkie’s talk was full of things on which to contemplate deeply – he spoke of the need to develop intuition and to be still. “What informs my work is emptiness” he said.

Shiro Otani, of Shigaraki, Japan gave a very informative presentation of the history of Japanese ceramics. His own work is of the red clay of Shigaraki, and he is well known in Japan for his beautiful glazes. ( Shiro at the end of the Conference presented our Ceramics Association with a beautiful sake jug to auction to raise money for our Association. Trisha Dean has offered to do that for us through the Journal’s facebook.)

Torbjorn Kvasbo, from Norway, demonstrated and showed images of some amazing work. Much is formed from accumulated extruded sections. Much of his work is enormous and very dynamic, often built and glazed directly on the kiln shelves. “The stronger the frustration the closer you are to a breakthrough” he said.

Hilary Kane from the Gaya Art Centre in Bali, Steve Williams with his large soft slabs from a thrown cylinder draped over a stacking of sticks, Chester Nealie demonstrating “bundle stacking” (he recommends the Auckland Studio Potters “Playing with Fire” book), and Gail Nichols talking of her chance discovery when teaching herself soda firing were amongst other Woodfire Tas moments.

The last day saw four groups prepare clay, make pots, build and fire a kiln and cook and present food to three judges. Ruby in her sari (alias Rob Baron) was a wonderful waitress, and the hilarity of the finale topped of a fabulous long weekend.

One of the best things I am sure for all of us was meeting so many other potters, and my thanks go to Neil Hoffman for giving us the opportunity through his amazing organization of Woodfire Tasmania.

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## Ceramics Library

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Because of *Offcentre*'s recent change of premises, the Association's library of ceramic books and magazines has returned to the studio at Cosgrove H.S.

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## Polytechnic Ceramics has moved!

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From the beginning of the academic year, the ceramics and woodwork components of the Polytechnic's Creative Arts program has been co-located with the University Art School in Hunter Street. While there have been many teething problems, the new space offers better facilities and more scope for students than was available at the Clarence campus of the Polytechnic.

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## *Offcentre* has moved

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*Offcentre* is now the only retail outlet focused on ceramics in Southern Tasmania. It comprises of nine makers, seven of whom are ceramicists. For eleven years the co-operative has been situated in an out-of-the-way location up the stairs and opposite the Long Gallery in Salamanca Arts Centre. Now at last we have been able to lease premises on the ground floor, in the mall opposite Rebecca Roth's shop. While sales are always pretty dull at this time of the year we are hoping for a more prosperous summer season than before, now that we are much more visible, in easy reach of strolling visitors.

As part of our business we are offering one of our window spaces as a micro-gallery which can be hired by other artists. First cab off the rank was Danika Redstone who presented some lovely figurines and cacti pots and made several sales.

(John Watson)

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## Adult Education is to move!

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For more than ten years ceramics classes run by Adult Education have been conducted at the Clarence Campus of the Polytechnic. Since it's ceramics program has been relocated the Polytechnic has decided to decommission the studio at the end of the Winter AE term. Adult Education will be seeking a new home for its ceramics program...possibly at the Mt Nelson studio of the Hobart College.

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## Sticky-beak Tour

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On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April a group of keen potters converged on the bush at Mount Nelson to have a 'stickybeak' at Penny and John Smith's amazing dome house and studio, and find out about Penny's work. The dome house was built by Penny and John more than 30 years ago, but still looks innovative and exciting in its stunning bush setting.

We were welcomed with afternoon tea served in a beautiful Alice in Wonderland tea set, used in an exhibition at the State Library several years ago. The slip-cast cups, saucers and teapot were decorated with decals of Lindsay Broughton's drawings of the mad hatter's tea party.

Penny talked about her approach to her work, seeing herself as a designer rather than simply a ceramicist. This has freed Penny to use a range of materials appropriate to design challenges rather than being limited to ceramic materials.

Penny's workshop is compact and well-organised. She works mainly in slip-casting, and talked about what slip she uses and how it is prepared. She also showed us the range of

moulds for both her 'bread and butter' production lines and her more experimental contemporary work.

The stickybeak tour finished with a power point presentation showing Penny's work. As well as seeing how her work has changed and developed over the years, Penny stressed the importance of effective design in packaging and marketing. Thanks to Penny for her generosity in opening her home and studio and sharing thoughts and insights from her remarkable career!

A smaller group continued on for a delicious evening meal at Written on Tea in Sandy Bay, with congenial conversation and a chance to talk further about ceramics. Stickybeak tours are always inspiring - don't miss them!

Janine Davison

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## Ben Richardson scoops the prize in "Vitrify"

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"Vitrify" is a new annual ceramics competition sponsored by the Alcorso Foundation which invites applicants nation-wide. From the range of entries, four people are selected to present an exhibition which in this inaugural year was held at the Colville Gallery in Salamanca Place. The four selected were Kim-AhnNguyen, Prue Venables, Ben Richardson and Belinda Marquis. The exhibition was judged by Les Blakeborough, Noel Frankham and Tesuya Wakuda. Ben Richardson was selected for the major non-acquisitive award of \$10,000. Runner-up was Belinda Marquis....wonderful to see local makers in the major league!



Ben Richardson



Belinda Marquis

### Whose ceramics do you most admire?

Send us an image of a ceramic piece you admire and a short paragraph about it, the maker and what you like about it. We'd love to include it in our next newsletter.

Contact me by email,  
[john@dmink.net](mailto:john@dmink.net)

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## Two for Tea

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Last April we held an exhibition called "Two For Tea" at the Moonah Art Centre. This is the second exhibition we have based on this theme, which was a celebration of the equipment and rituals relating to drinking tea. The opening was attended by many artists, family and friends and opened by the Mayor of Glenorchy, Adriana Taylor.

There was an interesting array of different approaches, ranging from Sally Warner's traditional tea bowls to more sculptural work such as Henrietta Norris's "Green Tea" which was a boat with a figure sitting in the middle with a tiny tea pot on his head glazed in a dry green glaze; and Tom Harley's giant earthenware "T".

The exhibition ran for two weeks and during that time a good proportion of the work was sold.

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## The Empty Bowl Project

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*A special invitation to potters from Jude Maisch.*

*While surfing the net she discovered that...*

"Empty Bowls is an international grassroots effort to fight hunger and was created by The Imagine Render Group. The basic premise is simple: potters, other craftspeople, educators and others work with the community to create hand-crafted bowls. Guests are invited to a simple meal of soup and bread. In exchange for a cash donation, guests are asked to keep a bowl as a reminder of all the empty bowls in the world. The money raised is donated to an organization working to end hunger and food insecurity." (from [www.emptybowl.net](http://www.emptybowl.net))

It is hoped that enough members of The Ceramics Association are interested in participating in an Empty Bowl project in our area. The idea was mentioned to me by Desiree Fitzgibbon, who is a friend of Paulus Berensohn. Paulus ("Finding one's way with Clay") has been involved in such projects and has written of and presented talks about them. Along with Desiree and friends, and various others from the community who will assist, I envisage an event held later in the year, probably November, to raise money for a local charity which helps provide meals for the homeless. (e.g. Louie's Van or the City Mission). Have a look at some of the You Tube clips on the Empty Bowl Project, in particular from the Abilene area in USA.

I would like to hear from any potters who would like to make a bowl, or several bowls, to donate to this event. *Any other ideas?*

*Let's make this happen!*

Please email me ([jude@terrafiesta.com.au](mailto:jude@terrafiesta.com.au)) to register your interest.

More information will be forthcoming in the next newsletter.

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## Two exciting workshops in the offing!

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See the flyer for **Michael Stephan's** upcoming workshop by opening the second attachment to your email. (I couldn't figure out how to paste it into this document) It's definitely not to be missed so get in early to avoid disappointment!

Also in the offing (probably in September) is a workshop with **Simone Fraser**. Originally from Hobart but now practising in Sydney, Simone has several successful exhibitions and awards to her credit. To see examples of her work look up her website... [www.simonefraser.com.au](http://www.simonefraser.com.au)

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## Kiln for sale

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