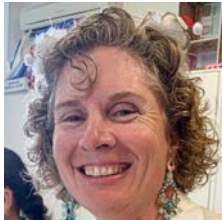


PREZ TIDINGS



Welcome to the first WSC Newsletter 2022! I'm very grateful that our former chief and Newsletter Editor David is still keen to have the production of our monthly Newsletter

added to his duties as Secretary. Thank you, David! (And Val)

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to kick start our year as planned but hopefully you have been able to use that time to do some planning for your exhibition work. I know I need a good 6 months to pull something grand out of the fire! We have fired up the kilns in January for a bisque, midfire and earthenware with some great success and the new layout of the studio really flows.

I've purchased an LED light which is installed in the old fumehood over a workbench, it has 3 colour settings (warm, bright, daylight) which are changed by pressing a little button on the end of the light bar near the power inlet. Great for fine detailed work - you'll have to fight (rock, paper, scissors)

Rachael for the pew!

Also purchased is a new drill for mixing slip etc and a mop bucket, stored under the sink. Please use this to clean up any

spills, clay dust etc. The kiln room looked heaps better after one going over! This will help reduce the dangerous silica dust levels in the workspace. I empty the bucket water in the gardenbed.

Thank you to those who responded to my survey in January. You would have noticed I'm doing all my correspondence via my personal email petelvalepottery@gmail.com. This saves me time and frustrations with already managing my work and personal email accounts. David as secretary is still managing the wsclayworkers@hotmail.com account and forwards all correspondence to me. Thanks for your patience while we transition into our new roles. I hope you all appreciate the text message Broadcasts regarding studio openings and kiln firings. You can opt-out by replying to me at anytime and if you have accidentally been left out, please also let me know.

You need to be a member to attend the studio, **your Membership fee of \$32 is now overdue**. You can direct deposit or pay in person cash at the studio (correct cash preferred). Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre reopens and studio hours are back to normal Monday 7 February 2022.

NEXT MEETING: Wed 2 March 2022
10am at the SNC Studio

MONTHLY MUSING:

“Just remember you're unique, just like everyone else”

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Done anything interesting artistically lately? Let us know with a few words and photos

Daphne Morgan – Member Extraordinaire

“My interest is in handbuilding, particularly figurative sculpture as I have always been fascinated by the human form.”...

Daphne Morgan is a founding member and long-standing much loved past treasurer of the Western Suburbs Clayworkers.

She is a Brisbane based artist whose focus switched from painting to clay sculpture. Her current practice conveys encounters and relationships between the ordinary, common man and woman. These subjects are portrayed in situations, captured in that frozen moment of time to depict a three-dimensional everyday experience. The figures could be placed in local environments demonstrating social activities familiar to most.

Predominantly self-taught, Daphne has attended many clay workshops and has certificates from Southbank Institute of TAFE, Ceramics Department. Before Covid she attended weekly sculpture classes held by Midge Johansen from the Sculptors' Society Gold Coast Inc. and after a couple of years' absence is now happy to be back in their studio once again. She was recently awarded the major First Prize in the Society's Annual Exhibition and has amazed fellow members with her ability to drive from Brisbane every week to create her sculptures with quiet and confident diligence. Daphne is over 80 years young!

In earlier days Daphne displayed her work in the Sculptors Queensland exhibitions and was awarded second prize for her piece 'Gossip' in the 2012 RNA Show's, 'Representational Sculpture' category. She has also exhibited in 'Just Nudes' at the Old Courthouse Gallery, Ipswich.

Every year she joins Western Suburbs Clayworkers Members Exhibition to exhibit and sell recent works at the Richard Randall Gallery, Mt Coot-tha.

She fires to stoneware, and raku, which imparts a warm character in the clay and with the addition of glazes and underglazes her pieces convey a natural appeal to the viewer's eye.

If we could bestow a title to Daphne it would be Western Suburbs Clayworkers, 'Living Human Treasure'.



Extracts from Opening speech

WSC, Richard Randall Studio, Mt Coot-tha 18/12/2021

As you would be aware the popularity of handmade pottery and ceramics has exploded everywhere on the planet ... and I believe it was triggered by just one thing, “the Great British Throwdown”. I’m yet to actually watch an episode but I’ve heard a lot about it, and even met Keith Brimmer-Jones whilst at Gulgong.

This explosion was fuelled by Covid lockdowns, when so many beginners bought clay and tools, wheels and kilns, and started exploring this awesome material in the comfort of their homes, with the great internet as their tutor.

I fear the consequences of this approach will be a real challenge to the industry as time goes on; however it might also reveal some exciting innovations brought to light by novel and unfettered thinking - I look forward to seeing if this happens.

Meanwhile I am concerned about the terminology and the perceptions surrounding current practice, and the enthusiasm in which some new work is credited with being 'cutting edge', as if it has never been seen or done before!

Being a student of the 60s and 70s I've seen and done an awful lot of weird things with clay and firing, with 'awful' usually being the most appropriate description! It's possible that all these things have

been made before, but never thought worthy of displaying on a plinth.

My disappointment with current commentary is that it seems to be applauding the “handmade-ness” of an object over its visual appeal or design integrity, and any flaws or ‘wonkiness’ are given high praise, as if these detractions are necessary proof of it being hand-made.

This is perhaps a reaction to the decades of slick factory-made ware that we have become accustomed to in the slump years of studio production, but we need to be careful not to fall into a trap of making to satisfy this re-active market rather than making to please ourselves and our innate creativity and artistic moral values.

It is up to groups such as yours, Western Suburbs Clayworkers, and mine, Ceramic Arts Queensland, to ensure that the public gets to see the genuine articles, made with the right intentions, with as much ingenuity and innovation as we can muster, so that the amazing character of this material is exposed in all its possibilities and guises, with the knowledge that everything we fire has the potential to last forever.

Dianne Peach

Grass Roots Pottery

When I became a secondary school art teacher in 1970, many schools did not have an art room for their art classes. My first art room was a storeroom with a blackboard that was overcrowded with five students and me. The blackboard was so high up on the wall that I set up two chairs - one on either side of the blackboard - and moved from one to the other to write on the board. The only windows were clerestory louvres - one set connected the storeroom to the ladies' staff toilet windows. Occasional tinkling sounds did nothing to improve the setting!

A new purpose-built Art Room became available for my second year and for the first time I could explore some new and exciting experiences with the students - screen printing, batik painting, copper enamelling and pottery.

Pottery at a country school was, on the whole, not much different to what we had experienced at Teachers' College in Brisbane. No permanent kilns were available to fire our work at college but thankfully, the legendary Kevin Grealy had previously been a lecturer there, and his design for a simple down draft kiln made from about 150 house bricks served us well. Kevin had moved on by 1968 and

pottery was the domain of Jeff Shaw, who later helped to set up Barambah Pottery at Cherbourg.

To fire our work, we needed first to build our kiln. Once built and loaded, we started the fire using offcuts of wood from a wood pile that covered a nearby slope. Firing would take all day and we used the colour of the fire in the firing chamber as our temperature guide. We had one clear earthenware glaze recipe available, and we experimented with oxides to get different colours.

This is the knowledge that I took to my first school. Aware of the fun that this grass roots firing experience brings, I was keen to develop the full pottery experience for the kids. These Year 9 students were justifiably proud of the kiln they had built and fired. It wasn't until 1976, when I was teaching in Melbourne, that I encountered my first "real" kiln - a monster mains gas kiln with four burners.

Judy Hamilton

PS Kevin Grealy replied to my post saying that he had fired one of those kilns to STONEWARE in 4 hours using palm fronds as fuel.



Year 9 students at Pittsworth State High School in 1971 with their kiln after a gloss firing.



Judy Hamilton: *Hippo* (1969). White earthenware clay with clear glaze with tin oxide, copper carbonate and ferric oxide.

Our 2021 exhibition



Our spacious new studio after the cleanup and rearrangement in January



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