

RACHEL GRENON
SAMANTHA DICKIE
ALAN BURGESS
GORDON HUTCHENS
JEFF BRETT
BOBBI DENTON
D GILLIAN TURNER

hold being held

hold. earth, water, air, fire. alchemy. being held.

hold being held is a convergent program that includes a group exhibition of clay objects, installation + time-based works, community make art projects, project room studio, and a creative residency. The exhibition presents traditional, experimental, and conceptual clay-based installations of seven contemporary artists.



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hold being held began as two pathways of inquiry; an exploration of the concept of container/contained and a curiosity around contemporary ritual vessels. The form of the convergent program began to reveal itself as a gesture – the practice of holding and being held. Specific focus evolved through interactions and conversations with seven contemporary artists working traditionally and experimentally across disciplines: Rachel Grenon / Samantha Dickie / Alan Burgess / Gordon Hutchens / Jeff Brett / Bobbi Denton / D Gillian Turner. We observed resonances in their work; each have a committed studio practice, sharing in a common experience of materiality – that of working with clay.

“No matter what reasons an individual embraces clay, a universal experience binds all practitioners: the reality that they have no control over the final outcome. While the potter may visualize a particular piece or design, the tacit understanding exists that a fundamental tenet of clay is its unplanned, unexpected character, a fact that leads.” [1]

This unknowingness was at the centre, as we collaborated with the artists in the development of their projects and choreographed the relationships and pathways between their work to create the exhibition presented. Knowing and unknowing the tangible ideas that inform their creative practices, we continued to dialogue on site at the gallery, imagining and responding to the possibilities for the final installations.. “...the real is coherent and probable because it is real, not real because it is coherent...” [2]

Each artist made new components and/or entirely new bodies of work for this exhibition. The relationships between objects, time-based elements and participatory hands-on experiential practice holds the work open to expanded ways of knowing ourselves, decentering the emphasis on form and function.

The gallery spaces become the holding container. First glimpses of the installations can be seen from outside, through the street level windows 24 hours a day. Sound and video enfold the viewer as they cross the threshold of the gallery architecture to encounter the exhibition that occupies the building – lobby, community gallery, the hub and reception, GATHER:PLACE, South Gallery, Window Gallery and the George Sawchuk Gallery.

Concurrent programs expanded the thematic foundation of the exhibition. Individual and community making have been held within CVAG’s lower level – as a Project Room Studio for the development of new work by Gillian Turner; and for the Community Make Art collaborations *The Water Effect Project* (Rachel Grenon) and *Tiny Homes* (Gillian Turner).

Water Effect mama et bota – the work of Rachel Grenon – reflects the artist’s annual traverses of the land, from Quebec to the water’s edge on Vancouver Island. The artist’s perceptions of the here and now, her experiences of family ties, the sea and mountains, and the season’s light, are made visible through the processes of making permanent forms and marks. Beginning in May of this year, Grenon conducted site specific research as part of CVAG’s Creative Residency 2019. She made work that responds to her lived experience of this place; the ebb and flow of tides, the curve of rocky shore lines, the light sliding through tall trees and mountain peaks, sky and water refracting and reflecting the seasons.

hold being held is a thematic program that converges in the presentation of manipulated forms, glazes, surfaces, textures, and time-based work in video and sound. Knowledge and processes have been fused. Gesture and material have become form. Ideas have been given agency. Dialogues are held in the multiples, repetitions and spaces: positive – negative, past – present – future, the remembered – the forgotten, the lost – the found, places known – places longed for, utopias and dystopias. The work extends an invitation to pause, to enter into an idea, a memory, a story, a moment of stillness. The work is perceived with the sensing body and this experience influences understanding. [3]

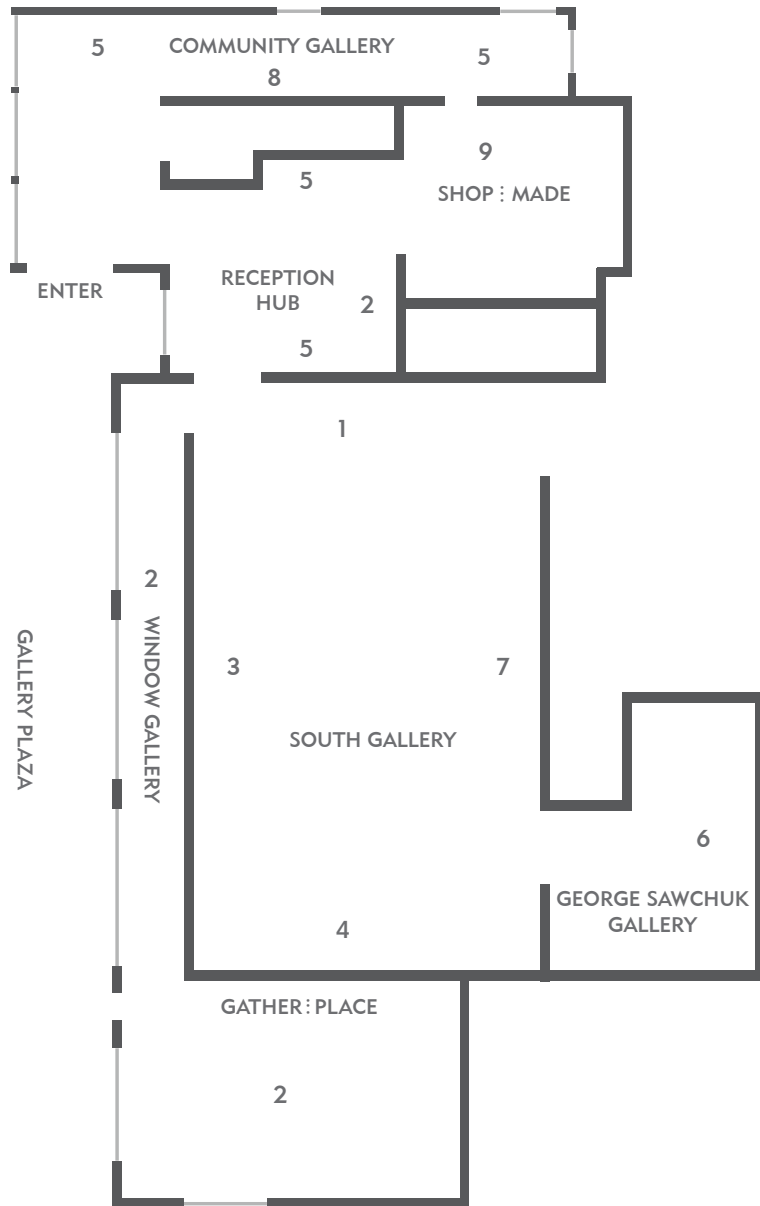
“To understand is to experience harmony between what we aim at and what is given, between the intention and the performance - and the body is our anchorage in the world.” [4]

Ceramics is an ancient process; work of the senses and the body – hands gathering, pinching, coiling, molding and shaping clay forms imbued with the creative expression of the maker – pots to hold water, seeds, food; vessels for ceremony and ritual; clay bodies to hold dreams, memories, stories, the dead.

fire. water. wind. ash.

– Denise Lawson, collaborative curator

[1] Hennig, L. (2001 December). A sticky sense of possibilities, *Ceramics Monthly*, 49(10), 48.
[2] Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (1968) *The Visible and The Invisible*, Northwestern University Press Evanston Illinois, print.
[3] Helmer, Astrid. (2007) *Experience / Materiality / Articulation*. *Studies in Material Thinking*, Vol 14. Auckland, New Zealand, print.
[4] Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (1968) *The Visible and The Invisible*, Northwestern University Press Evanston Illinois, print.



EXHIBITION KEY

- 1 Rachel Grenon
The Water Effect Project
Water Effect 1 Mama
Water Effect 2 Bota /
Where We Go
- 2 Samantha Dickie
Viveka:
The Radiance of Discernment
- 3 Alan Burgess
Pots I've Held Onto
- 4 Gordon Hutchens
Trio of Triptychs
- 5 Jeff Brett
Anagama Artifact 1a
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anagama stoke fire
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anagama stoke at stack
- 6 Bobbi Denton
Holding Breath – Finding Roots
- 7 D Gillian Turner
Water + Shelter
- 8 Community Make Art Projects
The Water Effect Project
facilitated by Rachel Grenon
Tiny Homes
facilitated by D Gillian Turner
- 9 SHOP:MADE
featuring a selection of work by
exhibiting artists

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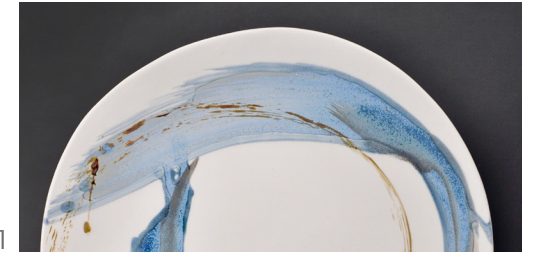
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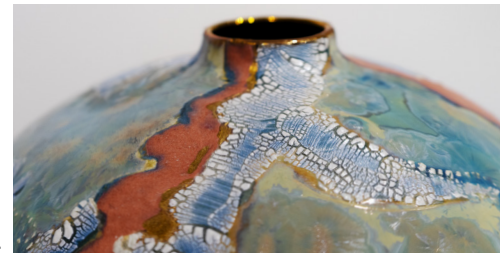
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1



4



3



7



6



8



8



LIST OF WORKS

27 JUNE – 7 SEPTEMBER

RACHEL GRENON
SAMANTHA DICKIE
ALAN BURGESS
GORDON HUTCHENS
JEFF BRETT
BOBBI DENTON
D GILLIAN TURNER

hold being held

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1. Rachel Grenon / *The Water Effect Project*, 2019

installation / dimensions: variable / south gallery

Water Effect 1 Mama

23 porcelain forms, glazes / dimensions: variable

Water Effect 2 Bota / Where We Go (portals), triptych / dimensions: 20" D x 3"

3 components / steel, wood, porcelain forms, glazes

2. Samantha Dickie / *Viveka: The Radiance of Discernment*, 2017– 2019

installation / 550+ components / dimensions: variable / window gallery, CVAG hub, gather place gallery

3. Alan Burgess / *Pots I've Held Onto*, 1964– 2019

Installation: 40 clay forms, 6 lacquered wall hung MDF plinths / dimensions: variable / south gallery

4. Gordon Hutchens / *Trio of Triptychs*, 2019 / south gallery

Seascape/Hokusai Series:

Seascape 1 / dimensions: 14" x 14" x 13"

Seascape 2 / dimensions: 13" x 13" x 17"

Seascape 3 / dimensions: 14" x 14" x 13"

stoneware forms (anagama wood fired with natural fly ash glaze over coloured slips, porcelain slip with Texada Island limestone)

Reimagined Moons of Jupiter Series:

Io / dimensions: 15" x 15" x 14"

Callisto / dimensions: 16" x 16" x 18"

Europa / dimensions: 16" x 16" x 14"

Other worlds Series:

Phoebe (an irregular, curvaceous moon) / dimensions: 18"D x 3"

Mimas (the death star moon) / dimensions: 21.5"D x 3"

Enceladus (an icy moon) / dimensions: 18"D x 2"

porcelain forms (multiple firings, white crystalline glaze with turquoise crystal swirls, Denman lustre, crawling glazes, turquoise crystalline)

5. Jeff Brett / *Carbon Twinkling*, 2015

HD digital video / duration: 2:23 loop / community gallery

anagama stoke at stack, 2019

audio soundscape / duration: 3:16 loop / community gallery

anagama stoke fire, 2019

HD digital video / duration: 5:31 loop / CVAG hub

Anagama Artifact 1a, Anagama Artifact 1b, 2019

colour digital print on paper / 109cm x 71cm each / CVAG hub

6. Bobbi Denton / *Holding Breath – Finding Roots*, 2019

Installation (multiples) / dimensions: variable / Porcelain Gestures / Sculptural Forms (black stoneware clay body) / Sculptural Forms (Helmer clay body, Light colored clay bodies), Scelfs of memory and history (varied light colored clay bodies) / George Sawchuk Gallery

7. D Gillian Turner / *Water + Shelter*, 2019

Installation / dimensions: variable / 180 tiny houses, 39 cisterns (extruded and hand built porcelain and stoneware, atmospheric firing - wood and soda) / 2 ceramic floats (press molded and hand built stoneware, wood-fired, 14' nylon kumihimo hand braided rope) / found objects (8 bottles and printed research materials) / HD digital video, 2:00 loop

8. COMMUNITY MAKE ART PROJECTS

interactive installation / community gallery, plaza

Water Effect Project, 2019 / facilitated by Rachel Grenon

multiples: 100+ / porcelain boats, glaze

Tiny Homes, 2019 / facilitated by Gillian Turner

multiples: 50+ / paper clay forms, bisque fired



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SAMANTHA DICKIE

Viveka / Drawing on research from current neuroscience, psychology and ancient philosophy, *Viveka* uses abstract expressionism and sculptural installation to explore the benefits of stillness and observation. The result is an installation designed as a response to the collective and palpable yearning within us to find a small reprieve from the tyranny of time.

Stillness is not just about quiet, but also about the pause, about the space between sounds and thoughts. “Hear the presence,” as Sound Ecologist Gordon Hempton writes. This concept is central to the work; silence and stillness are highlighted as essential counterpoints to our modern-day rush of endless stimulus, distraction and constant motion.

Viveka invites the viewer to slow down and engage with its components in an immersive environment and to play with the lived experience of presence and pause. The specific variations of the forms themselves, in surface and texture, and the ways in which they are arranged in installations, simultaneously highlight the subtle, microscopic level of observation and the larger, macroscopic experience of stepping into the exhibit as a whole.

This immersive quality of the work is essential. My intention is to bring space and silence into the foreground through calling attention to the dynamic interplay of positive/negative spaces inside, between and surrounding the installed forms. I aim to create a space of contemplation where silence and presence can become an embodied object of observation within the visual narrative. I am curious as to whether this brief pause, the experience of the oppositional nature of subject/object becomes blurred, just for a moment.

SAMANTHA DICKIE / I am a Victoria-based contemporary ceramic artist, focused on abstract expressionism and minimalist sculpture within an installation practice. Following a Bachelor of Arts degree from Trent University, I completed a Diploma in Ceramics from the Kootenay School of the Arts. Over the past 15 years, my practice has included attending various residencies in Canada and abroad; receiving national and provincial grants to create large scale projects for exhibition in public galleries across Canada, as well as teaching workshops and presenting at provincial conferences such as the Canadian Clay Symposium in B.C. and the *Fusion* Ceramics Conference in Ontario. Recent and upcoming public exhibitions include the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery and the Art Gallery of Burlington, in Ontario; as well as commercial commissions for Louis Vuitton. I am currently represented by Madrona Gallery in Victoria, B.C., and Jonathon Bancroft-Snell Gallery in London, Ontario.



RACHEL GRENON

Water Effect (L’effet de l’eau) / I work with clay, a medium I chose because it gives me lots of possibilities. My forms are simple and organic, no frame or sophisticate edges. I make bowls, big and small, to explore the round shapes. The glazes are my colours; the expression itself. I use many different glazes and test the results in combination or on top of each other. And I observe what happens after firing.

The Water Effect Project / In this project I make bowls and boats using the techniques that I know. My bowls and boats are meant to explore the theme of movement, the changing light of the ocean at different times of day, month and through the year. *Water Effect* is also about the calming effect of swimming in cold water at different times of the year. The effect on the human body and the mind. Vancouver Island always attracted me; I suppose it’s there to calm the fire soul of the artist I am. My *Water Effect* project is site-specific: it uses not only images of water but also large rocks. It is an artist residency by creating new ceramic pieces and also has a very important component of partnership with local organizations and involvement of local community.

Water Effect 1 / Mama / The oval round shape evokes the plenty, the mother belly and arms, protection, calm. The glazes are applied in a generous movement and in different thicknesses. The shape itself is my trademark: a big bowl as a recipient of the emotion; or the motion talking. My goal is to give one big brush stroke that looks natural and suits the shape.

Water Effect 2 / Bota/ Where We Go / It’s a question I ask myself a lot when watching people walking: where are they all going; the boats are representing the crowd, the people, but especially the individual in that crowd. I make each boat with a unique pattern referring to the difference between all of us that makes us special. The boat also evokes the project of going somewhere, it points in a direction for us to move and keep moving. I will use the colour to connect the boats; the brush strokes will hit them all, using large movements to spread the glazes on all of these at once. The result will attach these in a fluid motion. The boats will be presented in the same order they have been glazed.

RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL COMMUNITY / *The Bota/Where We Go* involves participation of the public. BOTA/ WHERE WE GO is talking about differences. I like to think of the immigration without any statement just the way the world is driving us to adapt our values and gets us to think as a group instead of individually.

RACHEL GRENON / I am from Saguenay and have studied in western Canada with famous potters from British Columbia and at Emily Carr College of Art and Design in Vancouver and Université Bishop’s in Sherbrooke, Quebec. In March 2004, I set up my studio in Bromont in the Eastern Townships, where mountains and valleys juxtapose, feeding my inspiration to create using open and generous forms. I have exhibited in Canada and internationally. I was the 2009 Canadian Selection – Biennale Internationale of CHEONGJU, South Korea.

ALAN BURGESS

For thousands of years, pots have contributed in a huge way to our knowledge of past civilizations, their social structure and cultures. Clay vessels have informed us of the everyday way of life of people. Pots have served these cultures in many ways, functionally by carrying water or storing food, and spiritually for use in ceremonial practise. Fine porcelain pots were regarded as a highly valued commodity, and at times used as currency.

My love for clay started 60 years ago when I held the first pot I had made, still warm from the kiln. I have made many pots since, each with its own story. I like to begin by working on an idea, letting it evolve into a series, each series finding its own possible solutions. My journey continues, always looking to both historical achievements and contemporary explorations. Forever the student, my pots often tell stories. They have a voice of their own, at times forthright and clear, sometimes quiet and reflective.

My contribution to the exhibition at the Comox Valley Art Gallery titled *hold being held*, is a series of pots and constructions made over the past 50 or so years. They reflect some of the themes I have explored during that time, but not all, there are some I did not keep mainly because I ran out of storage space.

Changes have come about through study, observation and reflection and a great love for this most expressive and challenging material, clay. By exploring different firing techniques such as Raku, Soda-firing or Wood-firing, atmospheric firings of all kinds to achieve colours and textures unique to each individual pot and give the firing process a voice in the outcome. Every piece of work is an individual creation, each having a myriad of thoughtful considerations in the process. And then the time comes to open the kiln.

PLINTH #1 / This is the beginning, the first pot I kept, the small white porcelain bottle I made in 1964 it was my first porcelain pot fired in a gas kiln. Next are a series of small stem pots inspired by Greek pots, thrown very thin, exploring form and testing the clay. The next four pots on the shelf are hand-built or thrown, the tree form is one of a series, I grew up in a large industrial city, the park and it's trees were my refuge. The inspiration for the next two forms with figures came from my drawing studies at the Hornimans Museum in South London. The last pot on the shelf is one exploring natural form, this one is based on studies of Poppy seed heads.

PLINTH #2 / All these pots were fired in an oil burning kiln at my studio in North Wales, they were fired to 1300 Celsius in a reduction atmosphere. The glazes are rich Temmoku iron glazes with some combinations of ochre and wood ash glazes. This was a time of making functional work, pots to hold things, pots that became part of peoples lives.

PLINTH #3 / All these pots are wood-fired porcelain pieces. The glaze greatly influenced by the fly ash hitting the surface, the carbon trapping

atmosphere combining to produce amazingglazed surfaces. The fly ash also reacts with the colouring materials used for the brushwork. I loved the vitality and fluidity of each brush stroke, the marks made by Polar Bear hair, Arctic Fox, Elk or Deer hair in my handmade brushes.

PLINTH #4 / Explorations in language and stories, told through ancient symbols and patterns. Earthy colours are used, reminiscent of pots from earlier civilizations found in archaeologic excavations. The forms are containers, shapes that hold and that like to be held. Some have edges that are uncomfortable, broken and jagged and yet there is still the invitation to embrace the form. The drawing is sgraffito through an iron bearing slip and an ochre wood-ash glaze applied over top, when the glaze application is bone dry it is carefully rubbed removing some of the glaze allowing the iron to burn through in the firing.

PLINTH #5 / The tall lidded jar and the blue vase are Soda-fired. They are from a series of pots that revisits a theme from twenty five years earlier, exploring language, symbols and storytelling. The changes in glazing and firing technique produced work of a completely different character, much colder colours but wonderful textural qualities, brighter surfaces. Soda-firing is a technique derived from Salt-firing. The pots have coloured slips applied to the outside surface and are glazed only on the inside. The pots are placed in the kiln and fired, when the temperature in the kiln is close to it's maturing temperature soda is introduced into the kiln. Soda can be in the form of a solution that is sprayed into the kiln or as dry material that is placed in the kiln through a salting port. The result is the soda becomes a gas, an unstable form looking for other elements too combine with, it finds them in the silica of the clay and slips and forms a sodium silicate glaze. The small round pebble forms are also soda-fired. The round pot with the gold rim is fired in a gas kiln to Cone 10, (1310 Celsius) it has a Shino glaze with wax resist brush marks, in the firing thew shine glaze has trapped lots of carbon but not where the wax brush marks were made. The gold is a gold luster and applied in a later firing at a lower temperature.

PLINTH #6 / These pots have no drawings, they are explorations of form. The tall pot is constructed of several thrown elements, the surface finished and slips applied before sodafired. The tall lidded jar is also devoid of drawings, it is reliant on the colour and texture of the sodafiring. The last pot is matt black a contrast to the white porcelain pot I started with from 1964. The black pot is about form, the inside and outside, the thin clay wall defines that space and the space surrounding it. The matt black glaze has only four materials, mainly metals, the recipe given to me a long time ago by Lucie Rie.

ALAN BURGESS / My pots have always been about form and surface enrichment. Always striving for the right shape, the balance between the form I wanted, and the challenge of making it happen. Then choosing the right slips, textures, glazes or drawings to enrich the surface or tell a story. I like to work in series, learning from each pot, each leading to the development of the concept. I enjoy the process of throwing pots, there is still a magic in how a piece of inert clay can be spun on a wheel to enclose space in a myriad of shapes and forms. The challenge for me is creating a dialogue with the clay that allows me to tease it into the form I have in my imagination. Some surfaces get covered with drawings telling stories using ancient symbols, researched from many sources and cultures, as far back as 6000 BC.

60 years ago, at the age of 13, I made my first pots while studying at Manchester High School of Art. I later attended Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in London, in their Multi-media 3D Design Degree Program where I majored in Ceramics. My teaching career began before coming to Canada. In 1973, I was the Head of the department of Ceramics at Bolton College of Art in England. My teaching career continued as instructor in ceramics, drawing and sculpture, and as chair of the Fine Arts department, during my 30 years at North Island College in Courtenay BC. I continue to make work in my Buckley Bay studio, and my pots may be seen in many public and private collections.



GORDON HUTCHENS

I'm attracted to variable glazes where subtle differences in the action of the flame can make a dramatic difference in the character of the glaze – where fire tells a story. I get excited by the power of heat, the way fire brings about the transformation, the metamorphosis of elements I've combined into something new. For me the most important thing is finding balance, not just physical balance, but the balance between control and spontaneity, traditional and contemporary, technique and inspiration.

I produce a variety of work from sculptured to functional, and utilize an extremely broad range of techniques. I formulate and blend all my own clay bodies using many different clays from across North America, and base my porcelain body on a high quality kaolin from England. Local materials are also utilized.

Seascape/Hokusai series was inspired by the famous wood block print *The Wave* by the 18th/19th century Japanese artist, Hokusai. The painting on these forms is done with layered slips, a clay mixture diluted to a thick paint consistency and coloured with metallic oxides. While the wheel thrown form is still moist, a thin layer of slip intensely coloured with cobalt is brushed over the piece, then over that I paint vigorous swooping brush strokes of a very thick porcelain slip with a coarse, natural bristle brush that I make especially for this purpose. To this porcelain slip I add powdered lime stone from Texada Island to give it a more satin surface. These pieces are then fired in my Tozan style anagama, heated completely with wood, reaching up to 1340 C or 2420 F. The ash from the burning wood flows through the kiln, caressing each piece and melting with the extreme heat, creating a natural glaze on each form.

My most recent work *Reimagined Moons of Jupiter* series (vessels) are titled Io, Europa, and Callisto. They are all white stoneware pieces made using multiple firings, with combinations of crystalline, Denman Lustre, crawling glazes, lava flow of gold and platinum lustre. *Other Worlds* series (wall pieces), were inspired by the moons of Saturn: Enceladus, (an icy moon), Phoebe, (an irregular, curvaceous moon) and Mimas, (the Death star moon). This new work is made using multiple firings and the finishes consist of combinations of Turquoise crystalline, Denman lustre, crawling glazes, white crystalline glaze, glazes.

GORDON HUTCHENS / I first became intrigued with pottery at the age of 14 during a visit to Japan, watching potters at work and seeing the revered position of pottery in a culture as a truly a noble profession. I received an honours degree in Fine Arts from the University of Illinois majoring in Ceramics (Clay and Glass Blowing). Three semesters of glaze & clay chemistry combined with working through school as the ceramics laboratory assistant gives him an unusually strong technical background. My studio is nestled in 19 wooded acres on Denman Island, BC., where I have operated my studio for 30 years. I have exhibited across Canada and the US and have had three major shows in Japan. My work is in many private collections including the Bronfman Family's "Claridge Collection" and in the Canadian Museum of Civilization permanent collection. I teach at North Island College, BC and am the author/host of 4 videos: Beginning Raku, Variations on Raku and two videos on Salt and Soda Firing.



JEFF BRETT

I am drawn to fire, held captive by the heat, light and colour. I think I always have so it seems natural that I have worked with clay and fired kilns for more than thirty years. I primarily use fuel based kilns. I watch and listen, to learn and understand what a kiln needs me to do so that I successfully fire my work.

There is another aspect of firing kilns that keeps inspiring me. The mesmerizing dance of flames and the sounds emanating from kilns and their environment has me searching. Still and moving images and sounds are what I am collecting. Each time the kiln is stoked with wood it responds by creating a chaotic maelstrom of colours and shapes. Sometimes the kiln builds on its exterior a matt of carbon particles that ignites. The embers softly pulse and gently lifting off into the air. Then there is that moment when stoking the kiln creates a dramatic roar that gradually subsides to reveal an underlying background of croaking frogs and distant barking sea lions. It is a creative and endlessly captivating process.

In addition to recording video and audio, I have recently begun to collect and photograph worn and battered artifacts from kilns. Time and extreme temperatures dramatically change the bricks and steel. Eventually parts fail and require replacement. What is normally discarded as waste or is recycled, I have come to realize are a series of extraordinary objects, a record of the history of firings, containing a beautiful and complex imagery.

Carbon Twinkling and *anagama stoke fire* are high definition videos recorded during firings of the anagama kiln at Gordon Hutchen's studio on Denman Island. anagama stoke at stack is a stereo audio recording of the sounds created by the anagama kiln and its forested surroundings.

Anagama Artifact 1a and *1b* are digital still images that portray both sides of what remains of a steel damper previously used in the Hutchens anagama. This object, which is used to control the flow of heat and gases exiting the kiln, was subjected to six firings before being replaced.

JEFF BRETT / I am a husband, father of two adult sons, grandfather, a studio technician, educator, and a multi-disciplinary visual artist. I have lived and worked in the Comox Valley since 1992. I began my art education at Camosun College in 1983 and completed my bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from Emily Carr University in 2008. I have worked full-time as a studio technician in the Visual Arts beginning in 1988 at Camosun College, and since 1992 at North Island College in Courtenay, BC. I have maintained a part-time art practice for over 30 years that spans a variety of disciplines including ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, painting, photography and video. I make pots with family and friends in mind, thinking of when we are together, pots that we enjoy holding, sharing food and drink. My video and audio works and photographs are an ongoing exploration of the ceramic processes I do, including the making of work and firing of kilns.



BOBBI DENTON

Recently I have found personal satisfaction, when working from my most honest emotive landscape. I mine my own emotional reactions to any given situation. I am drawn in by a sense of the vulnerable, the fragile, and that sense of barely being.

This work is part of a series, which I have called “Holding Breath – Finding Roots”, evoking that moment when you fear to draw breath, as if your very breathing can somehow alter or disturb the balance. There is a space there, where there is no breath only possibilities, and the intuitive self takes over.

Recent conflicts, violence, and climatic changes have resulted in worldwide human displacement and societal rupturing. Over 68 million people have been forced to up-root. I feel the need to process and bear witness.

The poet Paul Celan wrote:

*Deep
in Time’s crevasse
by the
alveolate ice
waits, a crystal of breath
your irreversible witness*

This uneasiness translated through heart and hand into gestures in clay. The work began with one small porcelain volume in space, a tiny misshapen vessel with a thin porous membrane, blurring the internal and the external. Barely there, this tiny object held breath and memory, a conversation was born.

I made an other, a different other, with a new breath, an other language and as they sit together, spaces are defined. In space and time, each an individual wrapped and vulnerable in their own story. I find stillness in the making, a being in the moment Time passes and I make many. As the work unfolds other forms evolve.

For the small gestures I used porcelain, know as the ‘white gold’. For centuries, emperors, alchemists and philosophers obsessed over the translucent and luminous qualities of porcelain. Wars have been fought and lives lost in the pursuit of this delicate and resilient material.

The raw clay forms are wrapped in organic matter and using a fairly primitive firing process they are fanned by flame, slipping back and forth through shrouds of smoke, emerging shocked and bruised, barely surviving.



Chance and lack of control through the total firing is an integral part in my process, keeping the work exciting and helping me avoid known destinations.

I see art as a fluid process, continually unfolding and open- ended.

BOBBI DENTON / Growing up on a farm in N. Ireland, I acquired a love for, and a great connection to the land and all sentient beings.

I was the child who carried the ladybug back to her home. Now living in the beautiful Comox Valley I still carry that sense of wonder and respect for the ancient wisdoms in our lands and all living forms. I am drawn into the mystery, bearing witness and sharing through my art process.

I work in multiple mediums, photography, paint, ceramics, video and sound, choosing to work with those that best convey the concept, and open a conversation. I work from a place of “feeling into”. Most of my work starts in the pit of my stomach, respecting that intuitive sense, that there is something that feels uncomfortable. Giving chance and the lack of control the upper hand, my objective is always to be surprised and arrive at a place I did not know.



D GILLIAN TURNER



Water and Shelter / Water that is safe to drink. Water to bathe in without risk of infection. Shelter providing protection and warmth. For much of my life, I have been fortunate to have had easy access to all of these. For many, these necessities are unaffordable luxuries.

In February 2019, the CBC televised a short documentary on the peoples of Garden Hill, Manitoba, drawing attention to the 180 families residing there without potable water or electricity. My own community of Fanny Bay, Vancouver Island, has been on a boil water advisory since last December. With consideration of increased awareness towards the effects of climate change, population growth, and future worldwide potable water shortages, I am making small scale ceramic water cisterns and houses.

It was my goal to build 180 of each, for the installation as part of *Hold Being Held*. It is my wish that eventually all Canadian peoples, and all fellow earth dwellers, will have clean, safe water sources and humane safe shelter within which to live. By creating these objects, the intentions and hopes from within my heart and mind materialize and have presence within the tangible realm. Potential for good within myself connects to the potential and abilities of the materials, encouraging internal reflection and potential dialogue for an observer. My small ceramic forms are made of clay and are fired using atmospheric firing methods, with the intention that the naturally occurring decoration will provide a strong connection of the man-made vessels to the natural world. I am grateful.

D GILLIAN TURNER / In an often tumultuous world, the medium of clay is my constant. In a banal world, it is fresh, responsive and exciting. I was first introduced to ceramics in the winter of 2009, through a weekly ceramics class at North Island College, Courtenay BC. Making pots for the last decade has taught me as much about myself as the material. For those of us fortunate enough to be in the loop, this is what clay does. Immediacy and responsiveness, much like human relationships, only this partner never gives up. It waits for you, until you're ready, ready to do amazing things together. I'm still not ready, but after several workshops at Metchosin Summer School for the Arts, the Archie Bray Clay Centre in Montana, combined with the patience and wisdom of the ceramics instructors at NIC, I am learning. I have been mentored by some authentic and highly gifted people. Thank you Alan, Gordon, Angela. *Hold Being Held* is my first group exhibition, and I am grateful for the residency opportunity and the inexhaustible support of the staff at the Comox Valley Art Gallery. Thank you for being here and supporting the arts community.



COMMUNITY MAKE ART PROJECT *Tiny Homes* / facilitated by D Gillian Turner

HOLD BEING HELD

a convergent program that includes a group exhibition of clay objects, installation + time-based works, community make art projects, project room studio, and a creative residency.

EXHIBITION / JUNE 27 – SEPTEMBER 7 2019

RACHEL GRENON, SAMANTHA DICKIE, ALAN BURGESS, GORDON HUTCHENS, JEFF BRETT,
BOBBI DENTON, D GILLIAN TURNER

CONVERGENT EVENTS

ART OPENING / COMMUNITY MAKE ART PROJECT / ARTIST TALKS / THURSDAY JUNE 27

public reception with the artists in attendance from 5–9pm with artist talks at 7pm

community make art projects 5–7pm, facilitated by Rachel Grenon (*The Water Effect Project*)

+ D Gillian Turner (*Tiny Homes*)

COMMUNITY MAKE ART PROJECT *Tiny Homes* / facilitated by D Gillian Turner

MAY 17 / 31 + WEDNESDAY JULY 10 / 3–7pm / concurrent with Courtenay Summer Street Market

PROJECT ROOM STUDIO / March 18 – July 13 2019 with D Gillian Turner, *Water and Shelter*

CREATIVE RESIDENCY 2019 / May 14 – July 5 2019 with Rachel Grenon, *Water Effect 2019*

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOR SUPPORTING THE CREATIVE
RESIDENCY 2019 PROGRAM / Department of Fine Arts + Design North Island College and
McLoughlin Gardens Society

(cover image)

Rachel Grenon, *The Water Effect Project* (in situation), 2019

CVAG creative residency, 2019

Photo: Spencer Sheehan-Kalina



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HOURS TUESDAY TO SATURDAY 10-5
ADMISSION: DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

The Comox Valley Art Gallery would like to acknowledge that we are located upon the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. CVAG recognizes the enduring presence of First Nations people on this land.

CVAG gratefully acknowledges the support of Canada Council for the Arts, BC Arts Council, Government of Canada, Province of BC, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Comox Valley Regional District, BC Gaming, McLoughlin Gardens Society, Department of Fine Arts + Design North Island College, Sherwin-Williams Paint Store + Staff, SD71 Print Shop, ABC Printing and Signs, and Hitec Screen Printing. We especially thank our volunteers, donors + members.



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