

KILN' TIME



MAY 2017

THE OFFICIAL CLAY ARTS GUILD NEWSLETTER

NICK
JOERLING
Workshop
Thrown and
Altered Pottery
May 20th

If you haven't signed up for this workshop, contact the Community Arts office



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Read an interview of
**BETTE
SINDZINSKI**
CAG's new Vice President
on page 3

CAG Volunteers at Parkmead Elementary School

By Bette Sindzinski

The CAG was invited to join the Parkmead Elementary School in Walnut Creek again for their "Panther event." Panther Camp provides exciting educational activities for students as an enriching experience. The kids were so happy with our participation in the STEAM* event in January that they wanted "the clay people" back!



We held two sessions – 45 minutes each – to work with the kids. Thanks to **Forrest Lowe, Clare Macy John Gingrich and Laurie Rittenour**, (pictured above from left to right), we were able to provide them with lots of individual attention.

At each table, one of our CAG members helped 3-4 children construct various creations. They made pinch pots, creatures, space ships, star war bases, cats, snakes, etc. There is no limit to the imagination

shown when you give kids the opportunity to create whatever they want. The children took their creations and an actual ceramic piece (small pinch pots selected from the CAG donation shelves) home with them. There were lots of smiles all around. Please let **Bette Sindzinski** know if you would like to join our "team" that joins in community events. 🖐️



*STEAM: An acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math"

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Please submit all articles to Kate
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in full color!

Message from the CAG Prez...



Dear Members,

I use this newsletter column to keep the membership informed about CAG efforts and areas of focus. As president I've been struck by the different perspectives the members have on the purpose of CAG. I thought I'd use this column to talk about CAG's purpose and share some examples of the investments your membership dollars are making.

Our two primary sources of revenue are membership dues and hosting two ceramics studio sales. The entire membership fee of \$80 per year and 25% of artist sales are invested in the studio, often in partnership with Center for Community Arts.

In the period of July 1, 2008 to through April 20, 2017, CAG provided funding for the following:

- ½ the cost of the Salt Kiln – the city paid ½
- ½ the cost of the new bisque kiln – the city paid ½ and 100% of the cost for ducting
- 1 electric kiln with the city paying for the electrical work needed to install
- 1 Shimpo wheel and 1 Shimpo banding wheel.

On an ongoing basis, CAG provides the following:

- CAG provides the manpower for Open Studio Class so that Center for Community ARTS does not need to hire additional staff for that class.
- CAG co-sponsors three Master Potter Workshops each year. We have had many top artists at our studio: Chris Gustin, Sunshine Cobb and Sergei Isupov are the most recent examples.
- CAG manages an outstanding collection of work from the Master Potters who give workshops at the studio. Recently we did a retrofit of the display cases to protect the work. The city paid for ½ the cost to retrofit the display cases which are CAG property.
- CAG provides funding for financial aid to students who need it.

For your membership you get many perks:

- Sale participation without an extra table fee
- Artists get to keep 75% of the profits from sales.
- Discount on Open Studio class fee
- Discount on Master Potter Workshop fee
- Quarterly educational/social events
- Access to ceramics related books, periodicals and video
- The pleasure of giving back to the community

CAG and Center for Community Arts have had a long and productive relationship. Recently the CAG Board Officers participated in a joint planning session with Center for Community Arts. We will share the plan as it evolves. As always, thank you to everyone at the studio for making it such a great place to make art!!

Beryl

CAG Profile – Bette Sindzinski

VP, Clay Arts Guild Board of Directors

By Kit Niemeyer



“To me, our mission in the studio is to create a community where people can relax and enjoy the social support and camaraderie.”

Bette Sindzinski grew up in Illinois, and has lived in Iowa City, Boston, and Seattle. She currently lives in Concord with

her husband, Sid, a retired transportation executive. Between them, they have five adult children.

A Registered Nurse Practitioner and nationally certified substance abuse counselor, Bette is also nationally certified in adolescent and child psychiatry and served six years as the manager of John Muir Behavioral Health Child and Adolescent unit before retiring in 2011. She is currently taking classes toward a functional medicine nurse practitioner license, a role that focuses on treatment through healthy lifestyle changes instead of automatic medication prescribing.

This quarter, Bette is enrolled in three classes – sculpture (Chris), throwing (Jim), and hand-building (Ed). She is a positive presence around the studio, always available with helpful tips for others, be it about ceramics or life.

I caught up with Bette at the studio in April and asked her to fill in a few blanks about herself...

I started doing ceramics when ... *I wandered into a sale here eight years ago. I've always loved gardening. Soil and clay are part of the same thing, part of the earth – you're just doing different things with it. I think of clay as compacted soil with the organic material removed. They both represent the essence of life to me.*

What I like most about ceramics is ... *the variety. I can hand-build, throw on the wheel, make regular shapes; accidents with clay become something else entirely. I can make animals, creative planters. I use pit-fire, raku, saager, and salt. Then, there are all the glazes to choose from. The possibilities are infinite.*

Recently, I've been making ... *a full-size wolf puppy. This is the second one I've made. A friend, whose 8-year-old saw the one I'd given my granddaughter, told me how much his son loved wolves. I decided to make his son a wolf puppy also. My granddaughter thinks of Wolf Puppy #2 as her wolf puppy's brother.*

When I'm not doing ceramics, I'm ... *in the garden. I love getting dirty. In one handful of soil, there are more microorganisms than all the people on the face of the earth. It's great for the immune system! Today, I spent all morning pulling invasive peppermint vines out of the garden; I find it meditative. About a year ago, I became a Contra Costa Master Gardener through their certification program. I now spend three hours a week working at the Master Gardeners' demonstration garden in Shadelands. The garden donates over 10,000 pounds of food a year to the Monument Food Bank.*

As a child, I ... *was the invisible middle child.*

In high school, I ... *was the star fullback of our women's field hockey team.*

My favorite guilty pleasure is ... *chocolate and watching Family Feud.*

My favorite place to visit is ... *too many. I love to travel. But I also love visiting my adult children around the US.*

My favorite sport or exercise is ... *gardening.*

Continued on page 4

BETTE, continued from page 3

My favorite mode of transportation is ... teleporting.

The sound I love most is ... giggling children.

Currently, I'm reading / watching ... "A Place to Call Home," an Australian series about a nurse who survives the unspeakable in Nazi Germany and comes back to Australia to rebuild her life.

If I could live at any time in history, it would be ... now.

If I could have dinner with five people (past or present), they would be ... my kids.

Something I've always wished I could do again is ... I like new things. I enjoy what I did when I did it and prefer to focus on the new.

The chore I most despise is ... housework.

If I could be any animal in the world, I would be ... Myself. I can't imagine any other life.

Any pets? A white English Golden Retriever and a rescue Australian Shepherd, whom we've lovingly rehabilitated due to previous abuse. He has come a long way.

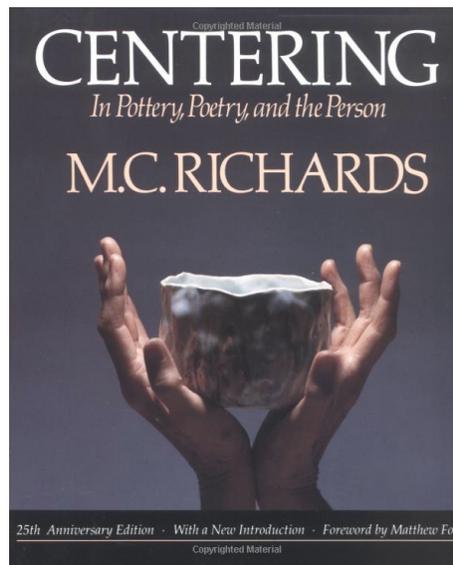
Something others might be surprised to know about me is ... I grew up very shy and introverted.

If I were to brag about anything, it would be ... what wonderful people our five kids have become.



Library Notes

By Librarian, Aletha Wiens



"Craftsmen live with a special immediacy in the double realms of these concerns: the questions of technique and the questions of meaning. Where shall I attach the handle to this pitcher? Shall I decorate this surface or let the clay stand clean? How thin? How thick? As well as What is a potter? What is the relation of pottery to poetry? What is the meaning of impermanence? When is a pot not a pot? What is freedom? What is originality? Are there rules?"

'...Where should I attach the handle to this pitcher? The question here lies in the "should." What does it mean, "should"? What kind of handle do I want? I don't know. What does it mean, "I don't know"? It means that there are many different kinds of considerations, and I don't know how to satisfy them all. I want the handle to be strong enough to support the weight of the pitcher when it is filled. I want to be able to get my hand through it. I want it to be placed so that it does not weaken the wall and crack the pot, and so that the balance of the pitcher is good in pouring. I want it to make a beautiful total shape. I want it to be my handle at the same time that I want to please my customer, my friends, my critics, whomever. And in another impulse I don't care about any of these things: I want it to be a complete surprise. Poetry often enters through the window of irrelevance. So if the handle does not satisfy any of the above requirements, the pot may have a certain marvelous charm, an original image; a cracked pitcher that carries in it the magic of the self-forgetful impulse which in a rage of joy and irreverence stuck the handle on in something of the spirit in which we pin the tail on the donkey blindfolded. A glee, an energy, that escapes from all those questions-and-answers, thumbs its nose, stands on the ridgepole, and crows like a cock for its own dawning."



Turn to page 8 to read a review of Steven Branfman's book on Raku by Ann Kalinowski.

NCECA ~ MARCH 22-25, 2017

PORTLAND, OREGON

By Chip and Connie Parham

The conference, held by the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA), is a wonderful experience for potters. Sometimes it feels as close to letting 6,000 children loose in a candy store! This well-organized event was so diverse and extensive that it did not feel like over 6,000 attendees were present. The choice of activities ranged from demonstrations, lectures, exhibitors, gallery shows, bus tours to galleries and ceramic schools. The times for events overlapped, so we had to select carefully.

In the middle of the Resource Hall were over 100 resource tables staffed by many colleges and universities specializing in art instruction, and 72 commercial booths selling all varieties of tools, wooden molds, decals, brushes, kilns and glazes. One of the tools new to us is the carving and sgraffito tool by Diamond Tools. It has very sharp points and nice curves for carving leatherhard clay. Diamond Tools also has pads for hand grinding and cleaning up the glaze on the bottom of pots. Sanbao Studio (www.chinaclayart.com) of Jingdezhen, China, hand-makes brushes for ceramic glazes, oxides and slips.



In the hall, ceramic artists gave gallery talks about their process. Artstream Noma-dic Gallery parked an airstream trailer with pots for display and sale with artists giving short talks about their work from the steps. Adam Field, Julia Galloway and Sunshine Cobb who have held workshops at CAG exhibited and gave talks.

The commercial booths, such as Skutt, LL Kilns and others, sponsored throwing demonstrations

by well-known as well as up-and-coming artists. Of course, watching Stephen Hill (*at right*) throw was a treat. He has changed from throwing his cups to throwing larger steins and continues his trademark of spraying multiple glaze colors.



The lectures and demonstrations we chose included

Rimas Visgirda who is a master of lusters. He explained the three classifications of luster: transmutation, reduction, and resin. He emphasized that lusters are ideal for coloring ceramics but take a long learning curve to get the underlying clay to show through. He uses lusters from Hanovia and Standard Ceramic supply.

We enjoyed the tips from Dennis Meiners on hand-made roller stamps, sprigs and tools. He illustrated making visual stories on clay. Another lecture was “cardboard” replication by Tom Kowalczyk. He recreates cardboard through press and slabs. After pressing on a mold made from cardboard on to plaster, he layered smooth slab, then “cardboard” impression and then smooth slab followed by peeling back the smooth layer to reveal the clay “cardboard” impression (*result pictured at right*). He only peeled back one side of the smooth layer to reveal the cardboard on the cup. His technique was most unusual and definitely creative. Another

lecture was on a little known but influential potter named John Reeve (1929-2013). Known as the “ultimate gypsy potter”, Warren Mackenzie described Reeve as “my best double.” He worked in porcelain, stoneware and earthenware, and was an inspiration to potters in the US, Canada



continued on next page

and England. Nora Vaillant was so intrigued by finding clues about him at different potteries that she pursued trying to find out all about him and then wrote a book about him.

As you can tell, there is so much more to share about NCECA, we only touched the surface! Another



choice we made was to take a bus tour one evening to receptions at galleries and art colleges. First stop was the Pacific Northwest College of Art which showcased contemporary ceramics. Six galleries were on the tour including our favorite, Annie Meyer Gallery. Tip Toland was present to discuss her pieces. She is known for her extremely large heads.

Also, work by Frank Boyden (see photo above) was displayed. He wood-fires porcelain in fanciful designs of fish, owls, spiders, skulls and skeletons.

We had a wonderful experience and highly recommend NCECA. After all, where else could you choose from over 150 lectures and demonstrations, exhibits, galleries, commercial ceramic companies all in one place. Next year the conference is in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



KATE CHENOK NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Kate Chenok, who has been a CAG member since 2005, is stepping up to edit the newsletter. Kate has been playing with clay since the mid 1980's, when she first

took a class in DC. She loves to work on the wheel and is currently stretching her brain by taking Kathleen's handbuilding class. We encourage you to contact her if you're interested in writing for the newsletter, or have ideas for topics you'd like to see here in the future.

Share Your Glazing

by Kate Chenok

I recently learned from an experience using Blue- Black glaze that Gregory encouraged me to share. After making test tiles of Blue-Black with a mist of Emily's Purple, I fired the tiles in the reduction firing. They came out



Before ...

a beautiful deep turquoise color with black accents. I was so pleased that I glazed 4 textured mugs in the same combination. To my horror, they came out a deep mauve color, with accents of copper red! In consultation with Gregory, I learned that, when fired in reduction, Blue-Black reduces to reddish, mauvish tones. Because my test tile was small, it ended up in an area of the reduction kiln that didn't reduce heavily, so didn't end up with the mauve tones. However, my larger mugs



After ...

did end up in the reduction area. Lesson learned: if you want blue/turquoise/black, fire the Blue-Black in light reduction! Happy ending: we re-fired the mugs in the light reduction, and they came out beautifully blue.



If you've had a glaze result that you'd like to share, please email a photo of it along with what glaze(s) you used and how it was fired to Kate Chenok at keconline@gmail.com for possible inclusion in a future issue of the newsletter.

A New Squeeze: Old Glue Bottles Make Great Clay Studio Tools



With a little squeeze, a re-purposed glue bottle automatically supplies water to the clay you are scoring to make

attachments. To make it, take an empty glue bottle and a piece of coat hanger or heavy wire 1" longer than the height of the bottle and slightly larger in diameter than the hole in the cap.

Sharpen one end with a file or grinder and insert through the hole in the cap. (Cut off the stopper inside the cap first.) Bend the blunt end of the wire at a 90° angle to rest against the bottom of the bottle (this will provide stability when scoring). Fill the bottle with water and squeeze. Drops of water will run down to the tip of the wire wetting the clay that you are scoring.

Ceramic Arts Daily, April 18, 2017



Submit a Hot Tip for the newsletter and earn a free bag of clay. Send your tip to Ann Henderson at annadele@comcast.net. If you received the tip from something you read or another person, it is nice to give credit for the source.

HOT TIP!

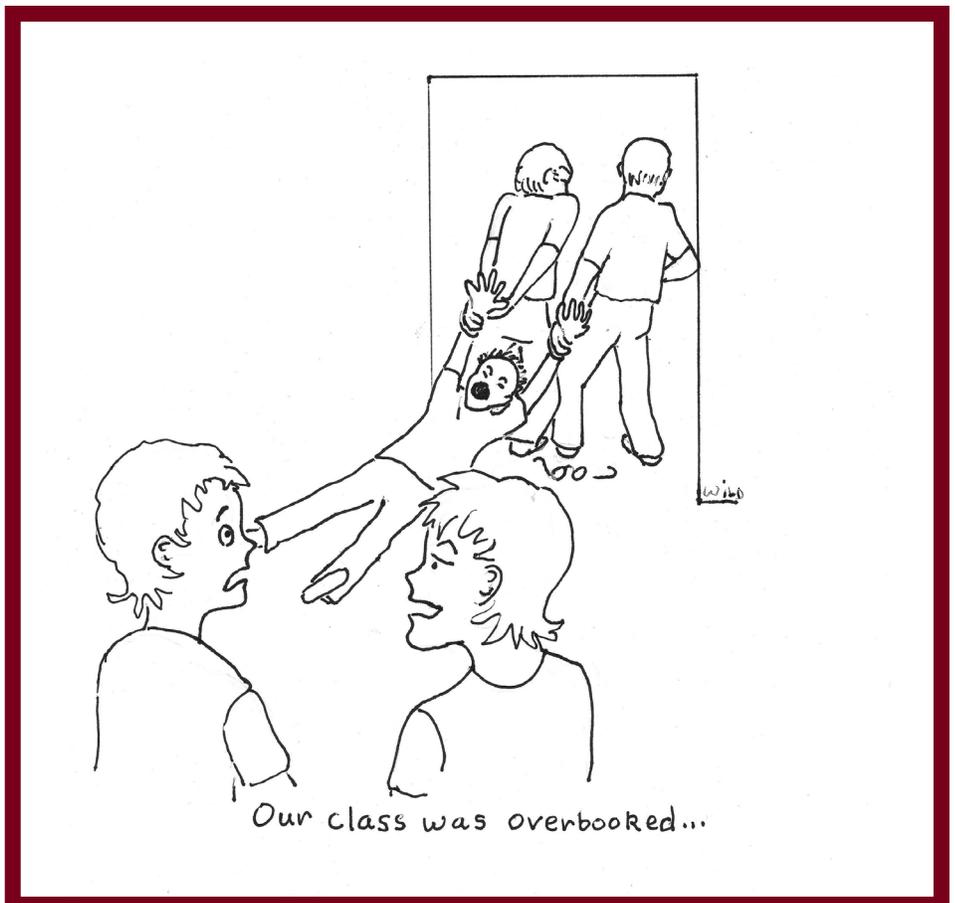
from
KATHLEEN JENSEN

Best Bargain Oxide Pencil

Tired of spending \$15 for an oxide pencil to label your test tiles or sign your work? Try the "Wet and Wild" eyeliner pencil from Target (and probably other stores) for 99¢ ... yes, with tax, just over a dollar!!!

I tested several pencils and this one was the best at Cone 10 (see photo of test tile below). The pencil can be sharpened like a regular pencil and has a little wax in it so you can also draw as a resist technique. Got this idea from a 1995 Ceramics Monthly issue that I was reading for the last time before recycling.

Love a bargain!



Donate to the Empty Bowl Project!

By Bette Sindzinski

As you may remember, the Contra Costa Food Bank has a fund raiser in October called “Empty Bowls”. For a \$20 ticket, they provide a meal like one would get in a soup kitchen, soup and bread. The studio has, for the past several years, provided the bowls for this event. This helps the Contra Costa Food Bank to defray costs. The CAG typically provides about 200 ceramic soup size bowls for the event. At the Empty Bowls event, people who have purchased tickets come in, choose a bowl, are given a bowl of soup, and get to take the bowl home as a reminder of the needy people who rely on the generosity of the food bank.

CAG would like to support this event again this year, and encourage all of you to make and donate your bowls. They should be all about soup size. When glazed and finished (meaning sanded and smooth on the bottoms), please leave them on the cart by the spray booth with my name and EMPTY BOWL PROJECT on a note inside the bowls. I will start collecting as soon as they are donated and will keep people informed as to where we are on our goal of 200.

If you have any questions, please ask me at the studio, or email me at: bettesindzinski@hotmail.com

Thank you!



BOOK REVIEW

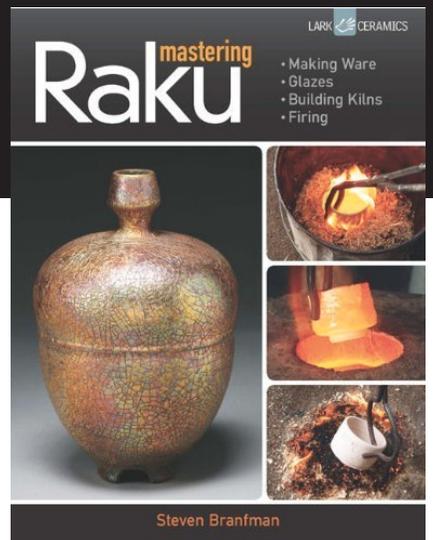
By Ann Kalinowski

Steven Branfman is a Boston area ceramist who has worked as a studio potter for over 40 years. His specialty for most of that time has been raku. I remember his as one of the first ever CAG workshops I attended nearly 20 years ago. I recall being intrigued with his raku bottle forms, his texturing of the body, and his use of high fire glazes in raku.

Mastering Raku is an encyclopedic exposition of every aspect of raku. Branfman starts with, of course, the Japanese tea ceremony, acknowledging that our contemporary raku has little in common with the traditional red and black raku teabowls of the tea ceremony. However, he suggests that rather than abandoning the name ‘raku,’ we try to connect with and embrace its beginnings as a rule-breaking technique: bisqued, glazed ware fired quickly to low temperatures, and then quickly cooled. Post-firing reduction is a modern, American addition to the process.

The text gives advice for everyone interested in raku, from the novice in clay to the advanced ceramist. Branfman talks about setting up a clay studio and even safety measures for the studio such as kiln placement. He goes on to different types of clay for raku, forming methods and aesthetics. Different types of glazes and slips have a chapter devoted to them, including the use of high-fire and low-fire glazes in addition to the usual “raku glazes”. For those lucky enough to have the space in which to build their own raku kiln and neighbors far enough away not to mind the smoke, Branfman goes through various types and fuels used to fire them. There is a lengthy explanation of building the kiln foundation, top or side loading kilns, and the types of burners to use.

The last relevant chapter is about cleaning, repairing and enhancing the pieces. Color fading (and trying to avoid it) and attempts to waterproof ware are discussed. An appendix with some recipes and suggestions for commercial clay is also included. The book has many illustrations of both kiln building and advanced glazing techniques. Several raku pieces by 50 different artists are included. My only gripe there is that Branfman has showcased his pieces (15 of the illustrations are of his work), whereas the other artists have mostly one or two pieces illustrated.



Important Dates

Nick Joerling Workshop
5/20/2017

Spring classes start: 3/26/16

Spring quarter ends
06/10/17

Summer registration begins
05/15/17

Summer classes begin 6/18

No classes/open studio:
5/1-5/7 (CAG sale prep)

No class/ open studio: 5/20
(Nick Joerling workshop)

No class/open studio: 5/29

Regular Summer classes
end 8/12

Summer Intensives 8/14-8/23

Summer Studio Clean-up
8/13 10am-noon

Message from the Yard



Nick Joerling: The workshop will be May 20, 2017. It is only \$43 for CAG members. Check out this video for a little preview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B091bScILHw>

Civic Park Lighting Project: This project was meant to commence in March, but it is delayed to start late May (for now).

Suggestions Box:

1. Visiting Artists: I am always taking suggestions on Master Potters; I keep an ongoing list and balance it with the potters/sculptors I meet at NCECA every year.
2. Porcelain Wedging Table: this table should only be used for 6-Tile and Babu clays (as noted; unless we bring in another experimental porcelain).
3. Visitors: Visitors in class and/or Open Studio cannot remain the full duration of class; they can visit for 10-15 minutes.
4. Clay: We will consider bringing in other experimental Cone 10 clays in the near future.
5. Slab Roller: We will continue to address the note that is written information on the slab roller; even if moisture builds under the canvas top. We need to follow these two points or the machinery will be compromised.

Friendly Reminder: Always keep the studio cleaner than you found it, PLEASE no outside studio projects (work must be made in the studio), you must be enrolled in the present quarter to have work fired, no outside clay, and keep making beautiful work!

Follow me on Facebook: *Greg Byard*

Gregory

CCAC 2017 • April 28-30

CCACA 2017 brings the ultimate ceramic sculpture event to Davis, CA. In an intimate setting, you can interact with top artists in a way not possible at other venues. UC Davis, home to the late sculptor Robert Arneson, was instrumental in defining a new direction for ceramic art. Enjoy delightful downtown Davis and be inspired by nationally recognized ceramic art talents. Demonstrations, lectures, shows—no other event delivers more inspired knowledge of ceramic sculpture for a better price. Meet face-to-face with distinguished ceramic sculptors you might only have read about; see and hear from the artists what makes them top in their field. Local gallery exhibitions and over 30 college/Art Center shows bring the best work of the year within easy reach: John Natsoulas Gallery's annual 30 Ceramic Sculptors; The Artery's California Clay Competition; The Davis Arts Center; The Pence Gallery, *and more!*

These shows run concurrent with CCACA 2017. See all this and over 30+ amazing student shows within a short walk. This is a chance to surround yourself with the top ceramic art of today and the ideas of the artists of tomorrow.

What's Happening in the Clay World

Galleries

TRAX Ceramics Gallery, 1812 5th St., Berkeley, CA **Wood Fired**. May 18-June 10th 2017. Reception May 20th, Bede Clarke, Nick Schwartz, John Dix. May 20-21 2017: Bede Clarke will give a workshop at the Berkeley Potter's Studio. Contact kmkey@sonic.net for more information

The Orchard Valley **Clay Carnival**, Palo Alto Art Center, Sunday May 7, 2017, 9.30-4pm. General fee \$60. Register online at www.OVCAG.org. Registration includes morning refreshments and light snacks. Please bring a sack lunch for the special lunch demonstrations. Demonstrating

artists include Julia Field, Fred Yokel, Lynn Wood, Hsin-Chuen Lin, Irene Jenkins and Sharron Krawetz, Ben Carter, Scott Jennings, and Anthony Rollins among others.

Conferences

CCACA 2017: 28th Annual California Conference for the Advancement of Ceramic Art, April 28- May 30 2017. John Natsoulas Center For the Arts, 521 1st St., Davis, CA 95616. CAG will have representatives in attendance.

Call-for-Entry

Blue Line Arts, It Figures. Entry deadline, May 9th, 2017. Anything figurative will be considered, 2D or 3D. Deadline to enter online submission only, May 9th, 2017. Notification May 12, 2017. Further information at www.bluelinearts.org



CLAYARTSGUILD
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111 N. Wiget Lane
Walnut Creek, CA 94598



To view the CAG Newsletter in full color, go to: www.clayartsguild.com