

# KILN' TIME



SEPTEMBER 2023

THE OFFICIAL CLAY ARTS GUILD NEWSLETTER

## Important dates

- Fall session starts on Sunday, Sept 10th
  - CAG board meeting Wednesday, Sept 20th 10am
  - Last day to pick up summer pottery is Oct 7th
  - Chili Cook-Off November 4th
- Asking all students to make a few bowls to donate.*



## HOLIDAY SALE 2023

Get ahead on your holiday shopping! The Holiday Sale at Shadelands is happening December 9 and 10. Please help promote it since 25% of all sales from CAG vendors goes to CAG!  
*Spread the word!*

## Message from Our Prez ...



### Events

- **Chili Cook-Off November 4th.** We are hosting a Chili-cook off fundraiser in the studio. All proceeds will go toward Clay Arts Scholarships. Everyone is being asked to make a few bowls to donate to the event. Brandon has set up some wonderful demo/bowl making sessions and will have more as the event gets closer. Everyone is encouraged to participate and if you have a favorite chili recipe you can join the contest as well! Should be a fun, family event for all!
- **Bedford Gallery is hosting a California Potters exhibit January-March of 2024.** CAG will loan a few of the pieces from our collection that were made by California potters to add to the show. The Grand Opening will be January 13 and CAG will hold a small popup sale in the lobby during the Grand Opening event. We will also have a visiting artist of one of the featured artists during the exhibit. In addition, Brandon will be setting up 2-3 Hands-on workshops in the studio for the community.

### Studio Equipment

- **Our new Raku kiln** has been ordered. It will be hard-plumbed with natural gas, so no more hauling bottles!
- **Our new Blaau kiln** is on the boat on its way here! Brandon is working hard to make sure the removal of the old kilns and the installation of the new one goes off without a hitch. We are expecting installation to start in October.

### Pottery Sales

- **We just wrapped up another successful pottery sale in the studio on Aug 26th-27th.** I was excited to welcome some new artists to the sale. Kevin Erwin, Sarah Pipkin, Janice Holve and

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See the latest *Kiln' Times*  
in full color!

Mary Tichenor joined us for this end of summer event in the studio. We increased our sales by 15% from last year and the weather was much more cooperative this year! Page 8 shows an overview of the data from the past few years, just in case you are interested in the trending numbers of past sales, plus some photos.

- **We will hold the next Pottery sale in the studio on the weekend before Mother's Day (May 4-5, 2024).** It is our most successful sale of the year, so if you have not tried it out, I encourage you to join us!

**Classes start September 10th! See you all in the Fall!**

pat Alger

## EMPTY BOWL PROJECT by Mona Moxley

Each year the Community Arts potters make bowls and donate to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. Bowls are for their Empty Bowls event which is a major fund-raiser for them, held each fall.

Folks in the studio have been busy all year making and glazing bowls for this project. On Saturday, August 19th, we completed the final stage of this year's project – sanding bottoms and packing for pick-up by the Food Bank.



Our donation this year was 204 bowls. I particularly want to thank Erika Goldstein for her contribution of items for the auction, and Bette Sindzinski for her tireless search for glazers for the bowls.

Thank you to all members of the community who participated in this project! 🖐️



Mona (on left) with Kevin Erwin, Bette Sindzinski and Mary Tichenor.



## ~ HISTORY CORNER ~

# CATHARINE HIRSOUX

by Ann Kalinowski



Some of you might be wondering who Catharine Hirsoux is, whose photo giving a CAG workshop is above the sink in the hand building area, and why she would have been invited here. I was Catharine's Saturday helper in her gallery on the Kensington/Berkeley border for nearly 20 years, and I have been asked to share my knowledge of her and her work for the CAG newsletter.

Catharine has a very impressive resume: pieces in the Smithsonian, the Renwick Gallery (D.C.), the American Craft Museum (NYC), and in major collections in Osaka, Hong Kong and Singapore. She has taught or given workshops at SUNY, UCSC, SF State and at the ceramics meccas of Penland and Haystack. She was commissioned to make twelve place settings for the Senate Ladies' Lunch sponsored by the Carter White House. She had a month to do it – and didn't know who had commis-



sioned it until she was told where to ship it. She had been actively exhibiting and selling her work nationwide, but this honor shot her career into the stratosphere. Her specialty was porcelain, decorated in an abstract expressionist manner (her husband was an abstract expressionist painter), with consistent use of copper reds. (See photo.) Her finely honed skills and precise throwing with porcelains contrasted with the much darker and rougher stoneware pieces Voulkos inspired at that time (Catharine had audited some of Voulkos's classes at Cal.)

One of the ways that I find Catharine to be a great artist, and not just a good one, is the fact that she is forever exploring and developing her work. Her husband died in his mid-40s of brain cancer, leaving Catharine with 2 children to support. The tension of this time showed up in her work: she was making beautiful bottles with voluptuous sides and very narrow necks. She went to take a nice red one out of her kiln- and found when she grabbed it, the pot had split in half at its widest part. However, she looked at the bottom 'bowl' with its jagged rim, and that led her to a completely new body of work. Instead of the tight precision she sought after previously, her work became more organic and symbolic. This work led her to wood firing in anagama kilns, since her former cone 10 glazes weren't compatible with the feeling she wanted from her new work. Even a few years ago, when I first started playing with textures on my bowls, Catharine borrowed a few of my rollers for the bottom of one of her large porcelain plates. Unfortunately, the plate cracked while she was trimming it. She asked me, when I came

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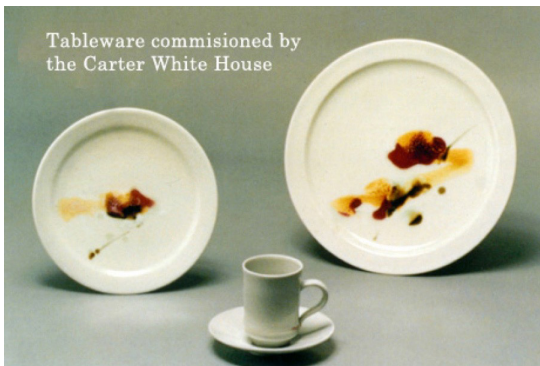
## CLASS SPOTLIGHT:

# BACKYARD SUMMER PICNIC with ANN HENDERSON

This summer session Ann Henderson taught the Backyard Summer Picnic class. The syllabus included all things for a backyard picnic. From plates and pitchers, to closed-form birdhouses, bird feeders, baskets and planters, the students in this class were challenged to create a new piece each week. Ann brought in examples, provided website links and resources, as well as demonstrated the throwing techniques of the various forms. Here are some of the creative and unique finished products. 🙌



in that Saturday, if I thought she could mend it. I told her, "Catharine, you know you can't. It will likely crack again, and any mend will show up in the texture." So she poked the crack and made a hole. That hole fascinated her, so she made it bigger. The end of the story there is that she started yet another body of work where she put holes in plates, often with textures around them, then attached shallow bowls underneath. These made perfect vessels to put a frog for ikebana, or just to fill with water to float some gardenias. So to me, what made Catharine Hiersoux a great artist, was her ability to take those disappointments that most of us would have thrown away, and use them to inspire her to go off on yet another different path.



Sadly, Catharine was diagnosed with Parkinson's several years ago. While she was able to throw, and split wood, and help stoke anagama firings for several years, she no longer can. She tried to throw, and to fire in her kiln at her studio as long as she could, but unfortunately

her last firing was almost exactly a year ago. Also unfortunately, the person who fired that last kiln for her was stressed in running between his own classes, and inadvertently left the gas nozzles fully open at the start of the firing. The upshot was that the kiln grossly overfired: all the cones were down (through 12), the shelves collapsed, pieces were fused to each other and to the kiln walls, the kiln door cracked. I felt terrible about it, and so did the person who did that firing. Catharine's reaction: "I went out with a bang, didn't I!"



For more pictures and information please visit her website:  
[hiersoux.com](http://hiersoux.com)

## NEW in the STUDIO

**Calling all glazers! Need inspiration? If you haven't already seen this, there's a new chart showing the various oxides we have in the studio and how they react with our clear glaze and glossy white glaze.**

**It's an amazing and informative resource. Check this out!**



## END of SESSION CLEAN UP

**Thank you to all who came to the studio clean up on August 20.**

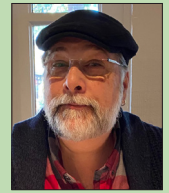
**Our studio is now sparkling clean just in time for the CAG Summer Sale.**





# WORKSHOP SPOTLIGHT: GLAZING TECHNIQUES with BRANDON

by Gregory Mayfield



In Brandon Lipe's class on glazing August 28th, we were treated with a large array of information on glazing. He showed us his breadth of knowledge of the application of glazing. He went over basics of glazing, waxing and much more. How to use the

sprayer when glazing and get a different type of effect with our glazes. That was a big help to me since I hadn't sprayed my projects yet, but now I know how. Brandon is very warm and easy to talk with, which is a great asset as the Studio Manager and teacher.

Brandon created a few new mugs, bowls and jars, showing different ways to use glazes on them. I learned a lot about waxing which I didn't know before. The glazes he used were Millring Red with Gray Bird fired in reduction. Also created a triple dipper glazing bowl using Millring Red, Termoku and Oribe for amazing expression of colors. Along with using yellow bird with blue black over and dipped. Brandon said that these items that he glazed for our class will be available for everyone to look at when we all return from class break.

He enjoys making jars a few times a year, and talked about the balance of each element. Brandon mentioned the need to put wadding in the opening of the jar and lid, along with glueing the wadding on both sides so it stays in place during firing. Not doing this simple thing could cause your lid to glue itself to the side of the jar. This was another area that I wasn't aware of before the class. He reminded us

to remember to stir the glazes before using them. The glazes are stirred each morning before we come to the studio but they still need that extra stir. Brandon spoke of being very open to anyone who has questions; he wants each of us to have a good experience working with our clay projects.

The class exceeded my expectations, both about glazing and about him. *Thank you Brandon!*



Many of the bowls Brandon used for glaze demos, such as the ones pictured above, have now been fired and have full written glazing description written inside each one.

# A lovely afternoon with Ken Becker!!!

By Erika Goldstein



Another lovely thing of Covid waning is that the studio got to bring back the ever-popular CAG sponsored teaching artist demo!!! This is a lovely way that we get to see and experience different teaching artists from the studio who we may not have contact with.

Ken started the afternoon talking about how he really appreciates the space at Community Arts because it's non-competitive, that everyone shares information, and it feels warm and welcoming. That it is great to see people put in time towards a common goal and that after a time you do get better and better. He talked about how you really need to be nice to yourself and that you can only be where you're at in the process and thinking negative thoughts doesn't make you throw any better. That working with clay you can learn forever!

For his demos, he started off showing how he throws a cylinder and how he views it as a two-part process: he pulls the walls and then shapes the vessel. He then showed a two-part bottle where he throws the bottom and top separately and then attaches them together with scoring (that you wiggle the two pieces, and it will lock up together!). He then ended the day with showing how he attaches handles to his mugs (he makes his handles all different shapes and sizes as he doesn't like to make the same thing over and over!) Throughout his different demonstrations he talked about how you can look at the lines on the outside of your piece to see where you sped up and where you slowed down and how to smooth things over to get the lines out. He also talked about how most people speed up or slow down at a specific spot and the clay then can become too thin, and we need to be aware of that. He showed the different tools he likes to use to attach things together, to smooth things out and to shape his pieces. My personal

favorite was the prison shank tool. He likes to keep most things on the bat when he is attaching and shaping so that he can manipulate it without moving the piece itself (less chance of it being shaped in a less desirable way.)

He gave a lovely slide show of his life and education, and it was fun to see his progression through the arts. He was very inspired by all his art teachers from high school on up who all seemed to take him under their wings. Given his open, kind nature, I can only imagine he would be easy for a teacher to love. He showed us his different art from over the years from painting his bosses in underwear (it's a good story and fun to look at), to making quilts during the pandemic (his mother is a seamstress). He told us that when he worked in museums at the age of 17, he learned how to fill up different spaces for art. He talked about his beginnings in art school and how he stumbled upon the clay studio and how it smelled really good, and then he was hooked.

We were also treated to some of his most fabulous creations to admire and buy! So a fun day indeed.

Thank you, Ken, for sharing your craft with all who were able to come to support this fun event, and to CAG who provided tasty lunch treats for us to nibble on!



**This demo by Ken Becker took place on Sunday, March 19, 2023. We apologize for not including Erica's article in an earlier Kiln Times issue.**



# PALO ALTO CLAY & GLASS FESTIVAL

by Jackie Gerry

The Palo Alto Clay & Glass Festival never disappoints!! It was on July 15 & 16th. The weather was a bit on the warm side, but there were enough trees to get some shade, as well as food and ice cream trucks to cool off with!

This time we were smart in doing the valet parking so we didn't have to waste time in looking around for parking. I think it was only \$12 – so well worth it!

The booths were all fabulous! It's also especially nice that two of our own teachers (Bruno Kark and Ellen Sachtshale) have booths exhibiting their beautiful pottery. There were thrown pieces as well as hand built. Also there were beautiful glass pieces! There is so much variety; each booth is a delight to look at! I try and make this sale every year as I always get great ideas and really enjoy seeing the amazing talent of the exhibitors! It is also so nice that these artists do not mind at all explaining how they get their fantastic results.

I truly look forward every year to this event!! 🙌



The photo above is actually of clay not glass!



## Line up of Fall Classes & Open Studio Times

Fall 23	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8:30 AM	Open Studio 8:30-11:30	HB 1 8:30 - 11:30 L Jensen	Open Studio 8:30-11:30	Open Studio 8:30 - 11:30	Glaze Mixing 8:30-11:30 Brad / Karen	Wheel 2 8:30 - 11:30 J.Newton <small>*No class 10/27&amp;11/10</small>	Raku 8:30 - 11:30 J.Newton
12:00 PM	HB 2 12:00 - 3:00 E. Blackburn	Alternative firing 12:00 - 3:00 L.Jensen	Sculpture 1 12:00 - 3:00 C.Fortin <small>*No class 10/3</small>	Wheel 1 12:00 - 3:00 C.Fortin <small>*No clas 10/4</small>	HB 2 12:00 - 3:00 E. Sachtshale	Clay Misfits 12:00-3:00 A. Henderson <small>*No class 10/27&amp;11/10</small>	Open Studio 12:00-3:00
3:30 PM	Open Studio 3:30-6:30	HB 1 3:30 - 6:30 E. Blackburn	Open Studio 3:30-6:30	Wheel 1 3:30 - 6:30 C.Fortin <small>*No class 10/4</small>	HB 2 3:30 - 6:30 E. Sachtshale	Open Studio 3:30 - 6:30 <small>*No O.S 10/27&amp;11/10</small>	Open Studio 3:30 - 6:30
7:00 PM		Wheel 1 7:00 - 10:00 V. DiTullio	Wheel 2 7:00 - 10:00 B. Kark	HB 1 7:00 - 10:00 pm E. Sachtshale	Soda 7:00 - 10:00 D. Cockrell	Wheel 2 7-10pm K. Becker <small>*No class 10/27&amp;11/10</small>	

# AUGUST SALE WRAP-UP

by Pat Alger



## Summary of CAG Sales

Year	Date	# Potters	Days	Items	Total	Avg/Potter	Avg/Item	Avg/day	CAG Total
2017	May 5-7	33	2.5	244	\$5,695	\$173	\$23	\$2,278	\$1,424
2018	May 4-6	32	2.5	547	\$10,129	\$317	\$19	\$4,052	\$2,859
2019	May 3-5	38	2.5	575	\$9,330	\$246	\$16	\$3,732	\$3,231
2021	May	18	1	355	\$7,140	\$397	\$20	\$7,140	\$2,000
2022	May	19	2	531	\$12,025	\$633	\$23	\$6,013	\$3,360
2023	May 6-7	23	2	435	\$10,051	\$437	\$23	\$5,026	\$2,504
2016	Labor Day	30	2.5	218	\$4,775	\$159	\$22	\$1,910	\$1,194
2017	Aug 25-27	24	2.5	419	\$6,393	\$266	\$15	\$2,557	\$1,816
2019	Aug 17-18	16	2	249	\$3,798	\$237	\$15	\$1,899	\$1,284
2021	Aug 7-popup	8	0.5	88	\$1,935	\$242	\$22	\$3,870	\$607
2022	Labor Day	19	2	236	\$5,164	\$272	\$22	\$2,582	\$1,539
2023	Aug 26-27	21	2	271	\$5,303	\$253	\$20	\$2,652	
2018	Holiday-Shadelands	21	2.5		\$14,104	\$672		\$5,642	\$3,526
2019	Holiday-Shadelands	17	2.5		\$8,756	\$515		\$3,502	\$2,189
2021	Holiday-Shadelands	17	2	507	\$11,991	\$705	\$24	\$5,996	\$2,998
2022	Holiday-Shadelands	20	2	490	\$15,512	\$776	\$32	\$7,756	\$3,878
2022	Dec 11 Studio	22	1	311	\$5,012	\$210	\$18	\$5,012	\$1,419

2016	Yearly Total	30	3	218	\$4,775	\$159	\$22	\$1,910	\$1,194
2017	Yearly Total	57	5	663	\$12,088	\$212	\$18	\$2,418	\$3,240
2018	Yearly Total	53	5	547	\$24,233	\$457	\$44	\$4,847	\$6,385
2019	Yearly Total	71	7	824	\$21,884	\$308	\$27	\$3,126	\$6,704
2020	Yearly Total	-	-	-	\$0				
2021	Yearly Total	43	4	950	\$21,066	\$490	\$22	\$6,019	\$4,998
2022	Yearly Total	80	7	1568	\$37,713	\$471	\$24	\$5,388	\$10,196
2023	Yearly Total	44	4	706	\$15,354	\$690	\$22	\$3,839	\$2,504