

# KILN' TIME



APRIL 2026

THE OFFICIAL CLAY ARTS GUILD NEWSLETTER

## Important Dates

April 24 – 25 – CCAC at Davis

April 29 – Noon  
Online sign-up for summer quarter begins.

May 2 - 3 – Mothers Day Sale: \*no class or open studio

May 25 – Memorial Day: \*no class or open studio

May 30 – Last class of the spring quarter



**THE CLAY ARTS GUILD SPRING SALE IS ON!**



**May 2 & 3, 2026**

10 am to 3 pm

Both Days

Handmade Ceramic Art for Your Home, Patio & Garden  
Wheel and Handbuilding Demos  
Special Under \$15 Section



## Inside This Issue

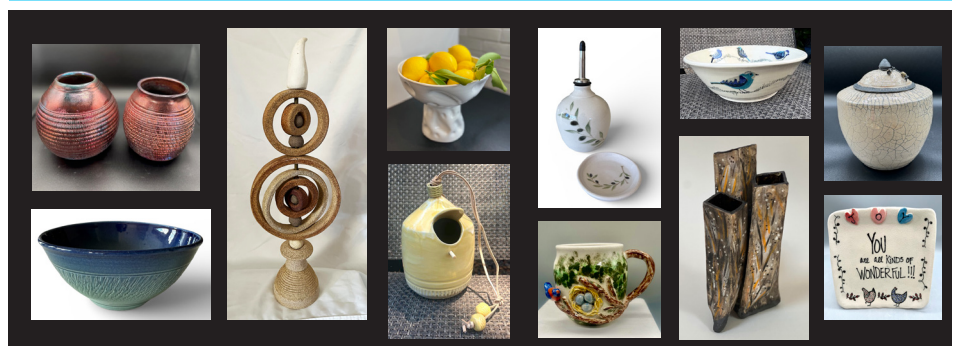
- Page 2 – *Message from our President, Mona Moxley.*
- Page 3 – *Team Work is Dream Work!* Clay Arts collaborates again with preschoolers' imaginations.
- Page 4 – *Get to know Monitor Marina Xavier!*
- Pages 5, 6, 7 & 8 – *Special CAG Evening Workshops, with Katherine Zhao, Ed Blackburn, Gilda Rottman and Mihran Touriguan.*
- Page 9 – *Viola Frey at the Beford Gallery.*
- Page 10 – *Message from Brandon.* Lots of important studio information.



## Clay Arts Guild Spring Pottery Sale!

1365 Civic Drive  
Civic Park, Walnut Creek  
Studio E

<http://www.wcClayArtsGuild.com>



*Individually crafted ceramics by Clay Arts Guild members and CCA instructors.*

*Featuring Art Pottery, Sculpture, Hand-built & Wheel-thrown Pieces, Stoneware, Raku and Soda-fired.*

**Did you know?** Through our sales, the Clay Arts Guild is able to support the studio by contributing towards the purchase and maintenance of equipment. *Clay Arts Guild also provides ceramic scholarships through Community Arts.*

## MEMBERS of the BOARD

**President:** Mona Moxley

**Vice President:**  
Erika Goldstein

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**Monitors:** Erika Goldstein

**Newsletter Coordinator:**  
Marina Xavier

**Newsletter Editor:**  
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**Co-Curators:** Brad Krebs  
and Robin Moore

**Website & Data Base Manager:**  
Kathy Nicholson

**Web Master:** Brad Krebs

**Meals On Wheels:**  
Barbara Moreland

**Why have we removed  
committee members'  
emails?**

Many CAG members  
have received spam  
emails. We believe  
that they were possibly  
culled from this  
newsletter listing as  
well as articles that  
contained an email.

Visit our website:  
[www.wcclayartsguild.com](http://www.wcclayartsguild.com)  
See the latest *Kiln' Times*  
in full color!



## Message from Our Prez ...

**Happy Spring to all.** We have the opportunity to have more informal presentations during the spring session. The Saturday evening time is again available. I received very positive feedback about the events from Winter. Thank you again for the students who presented their work over Winter and for the folks who facilitated the presentations.

Please let me know if you are interested in presenting to your fellow students some technique or process or form or ?? that you have been passionately pursuing.

There has been discussion about having another Contest in the studio. Please let me know if you are interested in volunteering to head up this project [which we need first] and participating.

We've all seen our artists working on the Transportation collaboration project. They are done! There will be a reception April 15 at 4:30 pm at the Shadelands site where all will be displayed along with pictures taken of the creative process.

Mark your calendars for the pre-Mother's Day sale May 2nd and 3rd in the studio. No classes that weekend. Bring your friends who are interested in seeing more of our creations.

*Mona Moxley*

## Important Information from Brandon

**Parking:** I have the new 2026 permits. You can pick the new permit up from your instructor, once you fill out the form online. You are allowed to park for 3 hours in the Civic Park parking lot. If you are registered for an open studio before or after your class that you will be attending, you will need to get a parking sticker. Students that have two consecutive classes or one class after another at the Ceramic Studio can also qualify. This does not include extra loading or unloading time.

**Clay:** Students can purchase clay online, before or during class. Monitors are not allowed to issue clay. Please pick up clay from your instructor. Students are allowed two bags of clay per class. Four bags maximum. No outside clay is allowed in the studio.

**Lockers:** The lockers are located in a new area. They are through the door, to the left of the sinks by the wheels.

**Studio:** All bisque ware and finished work from Winter 26 quarter will be outback by the raku kilns. Last day to pick up this work will be Saturday, April 18th

**Look for more important information on page 10.**

# Teamwork is Dream Work!!!

By Erika Goldstein

We're so proud of this collaboration and grateful to everyone who made it possible:

## Community Arts Team

Bobbie Ireland  
Brandon Lipe  
Karen Fuentes  
Kristin Birdwell  
Maile Ogasawara  
Rosie Lopez

## CAG Creators

Barbara Jerabek  
Bette Sindzinski  
Bill Schaaf  
Dina Hamaoui  
Donna Cowan  
June Bowen  
Kat Knudsen  
Kathy Nicholson  
Kit Knudsen  
Marina Xavier  
Mary Ellen Brownell  
Nicole Collins  
Ruth Mannion  
Susan Heckly

## Oh! The Places We Will Go!



We're thrilled to share that we have once again partnered with our amazing Community Arts Preschool! This year, the creative 4-year-olds in Kristin Birdwell and Bobbie Ireland's class designed imaginative modes of transportation using construction paper and stickers. Their incredible teachers then invited our CAG volunteers to bring each child's vision to life as a one-of-a-kind 3D ceramic sculpture.

Each ceramic artist received a child's artwork along with the story behind it—providing inspiration and insight to guide their process. With just a half bag of soldate clay in hand, they got to work transforming these ideas into their 3-D interpretation! To keep the young artists engaged, our creators shared progress photos along the way. Kristin and Bobbie compiled these into a classroom book so students could follow the journey of their creations from paper to clay. The kids get to keep our creations after the show is over.

The full collection will be on display at Shadelands as part of the Youth Arts Show. There will be a reception on April 15th from 4:30-5:30 pm. After that, the exhibit will move to Walnut Creek City Hall (first floor, corner of Civic & Broadway). There will be a separate reception there as well, date: TBD.

As part of this special collaboration, our CAG artists also wrote reflections about their creative experience. These, along with progress photos, will be displayed on the third floor of City Hall—offering visitors a deeper look into the artistic process and the meaningful connection between the pre-school and our wonderful ceramic studio.



# Meet Your Monitor The Marvelous Marina Xavier!!!

By Erika Goldstein



It was great fun to interview Marina who monitors Sundays from 3:30-6:30pm.

Marina shared that her love for pottery started when she was in third grade when she took a ceramics class and they were assigned to make a house. While her teacher was beyond

rigid and wanted everyone to make the same cookie cutter form, Marina wasn't having that and embellished hers with shingles for the roof and created an open door. She fondly remembers placing her creation on the door mat for her mother to find. She rang the doorbell and hid behind a bush

to watch her mother's expression. Her mom still has this gem to this day! Marina also remembers, and is most fond of, the first bowl that she ever threw! She still has it and it is pictured at left!



In her mid 20's she took classes at Chabot college and befriended Skip Esquierdo who started her love for making big raku platters and she fell in love with Raku!

Marina then put her mud playing on hold to raise three children and when her youngest started to learn how to drive she dove back into her ceramic life.

She joined our fabulous studio in 2019 and took Jim's class, and he re-introduced her to making functional forms. She then moved into Bruno's classes to learn how to make larger, thinner forms.

She is now very excited to be learning from Lynne Mead this quarter.

Marina loves being in the studio as much as she can. She loves carving and altering forms and she wishes they made a machine that would wedge clay (she will take you up on wedging her clay for her if you are bored). She appreciates our community and how people share ideas and techniques and loves the positive energy that the studio encompasses!!! You will often see her in the studio after her day job being a bi-lingual teacher for the Hayward School District, where she has worked for 37 years! She spends her days helping fellow teachers become their best teaching selves, and is passionate that children learn in the best environment possible!

## I asked her to pick between two words and her answer is underlined!

Underglaze or overglaze (but this was a toughie)  
Throwing or hand-building (easy-peasy)  
Death Valley or Rod's Bod  
Oxidation or Reduction  
Beach or Skiing  
Sweet or Savory  
Salt or Sour

Here are two of her latest clay creations! Enjoy them and give her a big hello when you see her around the studio or during a shift she is covering.



# A Lovely Evening with Katherine Zhao ~ Painting on Clay ~

By Nina Stawski



On February 28, I had the pleasure of attending a **Painting on Clay** demonstration by our own CAG member and amazing artist, Katherine Zhao. Kat initially joined our studio in 2018 and she has been a delight to interact with. More than 20 people attended this demonstration, and the

two-hour session was a resounding success.

Kat shared a bit about her background and how she found her way into painting. She was inspired by her grandmother, Li Renqiu, a talented artist whose influence clearly stayed with her. Kat attended an art school as a child, and then rekindled her interest in painting in college. When she took up pottery over the past five years, she was excited to bring those same painting techniques into a new medium.



As a base for her paintings, Kat usually uses stoneware clay with white porcelain slip, which makes the colors pop beautifully. She recommends avoiding painting directly on clays with a lot of grog or high iron content, since the surface will not be as smooth and can interfere with the painting. She also uses porcelains such as Dave's,

550, Babu, Frost (Cone 6), and white stoneware such as Hopkins White, which is a favorite for tiles.

One of the secrets to a good painting, Kat explained, is preparing the surface well. Crisp lines begin with the smoothest surface possible, which is why she often burnishes her vessels before painting on

them. The clay should be just beyond leather hard - too wet, and the underglaze will appear fuzzy. When a slip is needed, she wraps a piece in plastic and lets it sit for a day - and then burnishes to a smooth surface. She paints in underglaze, preferring Amaco for vivid colors, and uses a limited color palette. Her primary colors are black and blue, with other colors used as accents, and she dilutes the underglaze with water to achieve specific shades.

In addition to art brushes, Kat has used makeup applicators and blending sponges for painting on clay and cleaning up underglaze. She also frequently sgraffitos the lines to make them stand out and to separate different parts of a painting. After the vessel is painted and dried, it goes through the bisque firing, and the lines can be touched up before the glaze fire if needed. Kat always sprays her clear glaze application to avoid unwanted brush streaks and to ensure an even coat. Other glazes she uses besides clear include Copper Red in oxidation and Celadon in reduction.

After a short presentation, Kat gave us a live demo and painted an orchid on a leather-hard vase she had made about a month earlier. Watching her work was immensely inspiring, and she encouraged everyone to try painting on clay at least once.

Thank you, Kat, for showing us your techniques and artistry! You are truly one of a kind.



# Ed Blackburn's Presentation on March 7, 2026

By Connie Parham

Ed Blackburn gave a masterful presentation of many ceramic glazes, tools, sculpture and designs. He brought in many pieces of his work and illustrated how he made them. We all learned so many techniques that he has practiced over 50 years including 27 years at our ceramic studio.



Ed also showed us step by step mold designs. He had samples of the four stages of molded bisque pieces with the addition of glaze at each stage until the final piece (See photos below).

For the final demonstration he demonstrated the use of an airbrush and compressor, as well as a central pneumatic gravity sprayer.



Ed then concluded with a slide show of his work. We learned so many techniques that many attendees had not used before. It was a wonderful program.

Ed grew up in Walnut Creek and made his first clay pieces in 4th grade at Muir Elementary School. He started out enjoying wood shop and was influenced

by interest in medieval subjects, reflected in his ceramic sculptures. Ed wood-fired these pieces and brought to our presentation three sculptures in this style, one of which is pictured on the left. He explained that he put them together by connecting at least three larger bowls, then added smaller pieces in his designs.



Ed paints his large platters, which he also brought with him. He made straight lines by using 3M green auto painting tape of various sizes, the thinnest of which are easy to maneuver around a surface to create a design. He then paints between the taped lines with underglazes or engobe slips and recommends pulling off the tape when wet.



# Gilda Rottman and Mihran Touriguian Workshop on March 14, 2026

By Gregory Mayfield



Gilda Rottman has a passion for Neriage technique pottery. For over 15 years, she has been creating digital art. Gilda's current ceramic focus applies her well-developed sense of style and color to her passion for Neriage. Her creations are not only beautiful, but her work is a true labor of love.

**Neriage** is a traditional Japanese pottery technique that involves layering and combining different colored clays together and throwing them on the wheel to develop swirling and spiraling designs. Unlike surface decoration techniques such as glazing that affect the outer layers of the form, the colors of Neriage go through the entire body of the piece because it is a marbled blend of the different colored clay bodies. This technique is also known as **agateware**.



Neriage is different from **Nerikomi**. Although both use stained clay mixed with natural clay, Nerikomi involves creating intricate checkered, striped, and other geometric designs. Typically, it is used in hand-building. Neriage is more organic in the way the different colored clays mix with the natural clay and is thrown on the wheel. During her presentation,

Gilda showed us how she uses pigments, such as Mason stains, to create multiple, often contrasting colors of clay by kneading the pigment into the clay. The colored clay is then stacked in various combinations with the unaltered clay body to form a striped or swirled pattern. The multi-colored clay is thrown on the wheel resulting in a bowl, vase or other form with a marbled effect.

## Here is a little of the history of Neriage.

- **Origins:** The technique originated in Tang Dynasty China (7th–10th century) as **Jiao Tai** and later spread to Korea and Japan.
- **Evolution:** It was perfected in Japan during the Edo period and saw a major resurgence in the late 20th century.
- **Master Artist:** Matsui Kōsei, a renowned Japanese potter and Living National Treasure (1927–2003) is celebrated for elevating Neriage to an intricate art form.

Gilda introduced us to another approach to decorating our ceramic work other than glazing. If you are like me, glazing can be a maddening part of the ceramics process. Check out her pieces. She is always happy to share her insight.

After Gilda, Mihran Touriguian gave us a refreshing in-depth talk on **Mayco glazes** and two studio glazes. Because Mihran is an engineer, he has the scientific understanding of chemistry to really give us an understanding of glazing from a more in-depth approach. Glazing isn't by chance; there is science behind glazing. During his presentation, he talked about his development of a test cylinder for Mayco (commercial glaze) and our studio glazes. He decided to test for cone 10 oxidation examples, experimenting with both Mayco and studio glaze combinations. He even included some of our studio glaze combinations that are currently not represented the test tiles wall.

*Continued on the next page*

## Gilda and Mihran Workshop, continued

The test cylinder has five test examples, with six rows, and nine columns. Columns are enumerated on the top rim of the cylinder and there is a printed chart to find the glazed tile. B-mix (white) clay body was used for the making of the cylinder.

Mihran shared his personal observations using Mayco glazes and fluxes. Flux creates movement in the glaze applied. Mayco has a light and dark version. When firing at cone 10, Mayco glazes with flux tend to run more. Be forewarned: when using more than 3 layers you run the risk of the glazes running onto the kiln shelves. Mayco glazes also change color when applied over studio glazes.

### Key points during Mihran's talk:

- Use a fan brush when applying the Mayco glazes.
- Avoid heavy crystals on the outside bottom fourth of a piece.
- Use a cookie under your piece when firing, especially if you're unsure of the stability of the glaze.
- Creating a test tile for reference is always a good first step.
- Heavy glazing on the inside may cause pooling in the center which in turn increases the chances for glaze bubbling.
- Cone 10 reduction may darken the glaze or result in a completely different color altogether. Check Mayco (<https://www.maycocolors.com/>) website for examples and details.



From his experience, Mihran shared several insights on the issue of bubbling. He noticed that glaze on darker clay bodies tended to bubble more, and he did not experience any bubbling issues when he used B-mix (both with and without grog).

Mihran also talked about using studio glazes. He shared insight on two of his personal favorites: Mendocino Shino and Blue Black. When using Mendocino Shino, he recommends:

- Doing a quick dip
- Using a white clay body
- Spraying lightly
- Layering with other glazes for a dramatic effect
- Using oxides both under and over, blushed or sprayed
- Using overglazes (particularly Rutile colemanite and Troy slip)
- Firing in reduction to get warm reddish colors.

Mihran's second favorite glaze is Blue Black because you can get everything between light green, light blue, dark green, and black. (even purplish tints if you're lucky). He loves it over Rod's Bod clay and likes how it breaks over patterns and carvings on his pieces. His results depend on the application of the glaze. A quick dip produces a green/blue color on a white clay body. Heavier applications produce a very dark, almost black matte color. To prevent a heavier glaze application, he recommends wetting the piece before dipping. Mihran finds that Blue Black in reduction works best for him.

I can only hope that this will be the first of many in the future of real in-depth talks on glazing; we've needed this. Mihran also has taken a sabbatical in the past and taught. If you've had the pleasure of talking with Mihran, you know of his calm detailed approach to all things. I think of him as the studio's Glazing Guru.

# Viola Frye at the Bedford Gallery

By Wendy Schmidt



On March 25, CAG Members had the opportunity to learn about the life and work of Viola Frey through a docent-led private tour at the Bedford Gallery with Sally Van Oosbree. Upon entering the exhibit, I was immediately drawn towards the larger-than-life ceramic statues, one standing nearly 10 feet tall. We learned Viola's process was to start six statues at a time, beginning with the feet - she would build a section of each statue, then move the next statue and continue rotating and building until the statue was complete. Each section was designed to fit into the prior section like pot lid fits into its base. Viola only used commercial glazes allowing her to focus her energy on creating works. In addition to sculpture ceramics, Viola was a painter (see photo at right), could throw on a wheel and dabbled in other mediums including commercial wallpaper.



Born in 1933, Viola was raised on her family's farm in Lodi, attended the California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of the Arts) in Oakland. Her work was influenced by the abandoned objects on her family farm and she frequented the Alameda flea market collecting objects that influenced or were incorporated into her work. Viola truly lived the life of an artist – her Oakland home was her studio. She lived surrounded by her art. She was a founding member of the Artists Legacy Foundation (<https://artistslegacyfoundation.org/>) and became a legacy artist herself upon her death in 2004.



Photos by Wendy and Nicole Collins

# Message from Brandon



**Thank you all for participating in our Spring Session! We are looking forward to a fun quarter of making!**

Here are some reminders. We want your time in the studio to be productive and creative. In order to ensure the studio is in good working condition for all students, please note the following:

**1) Mandatory: Check in** with the Monitor when coming into Open Studio. You'll find the Monitor's name on the stand by the front door and look for the orange flag.

**2) Enter/Leave on Time.** Please wait to come in until open studio begins as it can be disruptive to class and the instructor to enter while class is still in session. Be sure to be cleaned up and ready to leave by the end of open studio. If you are leaving near the end of open studio, please be sure to clean up your areas and also help the Monitors clean up the studio if you see something that you can do. If the open studio is the last thing for the evening, please help Monitors put all of the stools on the tables.

**3) Store your personal belongings** such as purses and lunches on the shelves near the Pottery Shopping Corner.

**4) Please keep tools in your area.** Wheel throwers: please do not store tools or your work in progress on the tables with canvas. If the wooden tabletops are needed for hand builders place your work the storage shelves throughout the studio.

**5) Purchasing clay.** Please remember that you must use clay purchased from the studio. *No outside clay can be used.* Only instructors and the studio manager can sell clay while they're at the studio. Plan accordingly.

**6) 30 Minute Rule:** Wheels and tables cannot be reserved by setting down your tools and working in another area. If you are away for more than 30 minutes and someone else needs your space (usually during busy sessions), the monitors have the right to move your belongings to make room for others. If all wheels are occupied the Monitor will have a waiting list.

**7) Wedging tables:** use only white clay on the table closest to the damp room. Clean wedging tables after each use; do not store bags of clay or wet clay on the tables. If you need to dry clay out use the plaster bats.

**8) Slop barrels:** the smaller buckets on the floor are for dry clay. The large barrels are for wet slop/slip. If you have a lot of water in your throwing bucket, empty most of the water in the sink; the remaining slop should go in the slop barrels.

**9) Pottery wheels and splash pans** should be left cleaned with the stool on top of the wheel, pedal on top of the work pan and power switch turned off.

**10) Be sure to clean up after yourself.** It is your responsibility to insure your work space and any tools and supplies you have used are clean and returned. This includes wheels, tables, glaze room, any bats or boards, sink, wedging tables, etc. Go ahead and clean up around you as well if you see something dirty. No sanding or grinding indoors! This includes greenware, bisqueware and finished ware.

**11) When cleaning in the glaze room** wash out pitchers, cups, syringes, spoons etc. that you use and return them to the appropriate place. Wipe off the glaze tables after you use them. Clean the spray gun as soon as you're done using it. Also, clean off the turntable in the spray booth. Be sure the fan, air, and light are off in the spray booth when finished.

**12) Use the smallest board or bat** to store your work in the damp room and drying room. We often lack space in these rooms.

**13) Slab roller:** it is best to have a cloth under your clay for the big slab roller and you must use the designated cloths for the small slab roller on both the top and bottom of the clay. Flatten your clay to about 1-1 ½" before using the roller.

**14) No plaster hump or drape molds can be used in the "damp" or "dry" room.** Molds need to be accessible for the following class/OS, unless they are your own personal molds – please make sure your name is on the actual mold. Use hair dryers or a heat gun to dry your clay enough to remove from mold and transfer clay to a ware board.

If you have any questions please just check with our Open Studio Monitor or Studio Manager. Our studio is a shared space and is used by many students and we want to ensure that it is clean and functional for all who use it. Your consideration, cooperation and involvement will ensure everyone has a great working environment. **Thank you!**