

# TEACHERS' GUIDE

for elementary grades

*The future is already here: Alex McLeod and Brendan Tang*

*Ornamentalism: Clint Neufeld and Dirk Staschke*

*Beyond the Vessel's Edge: Ceramics from the Permanent Collection*



Dirk Staschke, *Still Life #1*, 2009



Brendan Tang, *Manga Ormolu 5.0-c*, 2009



Ian Johnston, *R14 hip - f, ankle - f*, 2005

## DEAR TEACHERS

This guide is a classroom resource, designed to support teachers and students attending the exhibitions: *The future is already here: Alex McLeod and Brendan Tang*; *Ornamentalism: Clint Neufeld and Dirk Staschke*; *Beyond the Vessel's Edge: Ceramics from the Permanent Collection*, on display at the Surrey Art Gallery from January 19 to March 24, 2013. The Teachers' Guide contains exhibit information, as well as activities that will prepare your students for their Gallery visit and engage them in classroom discussion afterwards. These activities reinforce the ideas and processes explored in the exhibition, and provide continuity between the gallery visit and classroom. They are adaptable to different grade levels and require a minimum of materials – these can also be adapted depending on what is readily available at your school. The guide also provides curriculum links, vocabulary, and a resource section.

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## ABOUT THE SURREY ART GALLERY

Surrey Art Gallery is the second largest public art gallery in the Metro Vancouver region. Internationally recognized, the Gallery showcases diverse contemporary art practices including digital and sound art and exhibits renowned local, national, and international artists. The Surrey Art Gallery's mission is to engage the public in an ongoing dialogue about issues and ideas that affect our numerous communities as expressed through contemporary art, and to provide opportunities for the public to interact with artists and the artistic process.

To receive announcements about exhibitions and related events at the Gallery, sign up for our e-bulletins at [www.surrey.ca/arts](http://www.surrey.ca/arts).

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

### *The future is already here: Alex McLeod and Brendan Tang*

#### Introduction

Artists today are continually reinvestigating earlier art forms and traditions in order to reinvigorate their work with new meanings and relevance, freely mashing up high and low art with historical styles and cultural references. They are also at the forefront of experimenting with innovations in technology, combining them with traditional artistic practices to create pioneering artworks that stretch conventional boundaries making them particularly pertinent to today's plugged-in world.

Alex McLeod and Brendan Tang are two such artists. This two-part exhibition includes individual works by each artist as well as the premiere of their first collaborative work, *Lovechild*, in the TechLab. Combining a three-dimensional object created by Tang with a video animation by McLeod, *Lovechild* is an exploration of the narrative possibilities of a real world object enhanced via digital augmentation.



Brendan Tang  
Manga Ormolu 4.1-a, 2009  
Image appears courtesy of the artist

Alex McLeod's computer generated prints and animations are inspired by widely diverse and sometimes unexpected sources, among them science fiction, Romantic landscape paintings, video games, model train sets, and dioramas. His hyper-realistic imaginary landscapes exist in their own indeterminate, artificial, futuristic, and surreal time and space. Brendan Tang's colourful and wildly incongruous *Manga Ormolu* ceramic vessels epitomize hybridity in their fusion of Asian and Western historical decorative styles with pop art forms derived from Japanese Anime and Manga.



Alex McLeod, *By the Sea*, 2010  
Image appears courtesy of the artist

Despite McLeod and Tang's very different choices of medium and technique, and the visual autonomy of their independent work, they have much in common. Their work exhibits a fascination with the latest in technology, a willingness and compulsion to appropriate and reinvent, an embrace of artifice and illusion, the use of the pretty and cute to mask an underlying darkness, and above all a recognition that in today's globalized world the boundaries between high and low culture, distinct artistic styles and media, and ethnic hierarchies and identities will continue to erode. In their use of augmented reality to conflate the real and the virtual, thereby exponentially

expanding our ability to experience cultural objects in novel ways, McLeod and Tang demonstrate that indeed, *The future is already here*.

Rachel Rosenfield Lafo,  
Guest Curator, Surrey Art Gallery

## Ornamentalism: Clint Neufeld and Dirk Staschke

*Each piece [of furniture] seems to be dreaming, as if in a living state of trance, like vegetables and mineral things.*

Charles Baudelaire, *The Twofold Room*, 1862



Clint Neufeld, *Sad Seahorse*, 2011  
Ceramic, wood, cloth  
Image appears courtesy of the artist

Beauty and desire are recurring themes in the work of both Dirk Staschke and Clint Neufeld. Yet, like the ceramic components that dominate the work, beauty and desire are only part of the art. Staschke and Neufeld's ceramics and mixed media sculptures draw from sources as diverse as 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch still life and 19<sup>th</sup> century French Orientalist painting, early 20<sup>th</sup> century home decorating and food display conventions, and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century automobile 'hot rod' culture. These two artists' sumptuous candy-coloured objects present vivid allegories of abundance and temptation that reveal—and *revel* in—a world where the boundary between labour and leisure is increasingly blurred.

Over the past decade, Neufeld has been making objects that combine ceramics, porcelain, and wax sculpture with other found materials. The artist's sculptural assemblages are often inspired by objects of physical labour, including common hand-held construction tools and heavy earth moving machinery. The two ceramic and mixed-media objects presented here are from a series made between 2005 and 2011 that investigate the symbolic power and beauty of mechanical engine parts from cars, trucks, and boats. Neufeld's merging of these loaded symbols of power into glistening pastel-hued objects atop ornate furnishings speak to the changing nature of work, technology, and gender over the past century.

Staschke's artwork often draws inspiration from pre-19<sup>th</sup> century art history and design. One of his previous series of ceramics was strongly influenced by decorative forms from historical architecture, such as embellished arches and pediments and ornate capitals found on classical columns. The symmetry and precision in these early architectural-figurative works is carried forward in the inspired food displays presented in *Ornamentalism*. Here the artist builds intricate stacks of objects: fresh and rotting fruit and vegetables, desserts, dead fowl, and other inanimate beasts meant for feasting. With their rich folds, bulbous forms, and symbolic textures, Staschke's objects are deeply seductive to look at. Yet, the artist's accumulations pile up and teeter under the sheer weight of their abundance and the absurdity of the artist's jarring insertions of imagery.



Dirk Staschke, *Wishing Well, Knowing Otherwise*, 2011  
Ceramic and mixed media  
Image appears courtesy of the artist

A key aspect of both Staschke and Neufeld's recent work is the exploration of the limits between fine

art and decoration. Modern art and architecture often discouraged ornamentation and forms of object making that served decorative purposes. There has been a resurgence of art making over the past half century (sometimes gathered under the banner of “postmodern” art and architecture), that has re-examined the role of ornamental and decorative motifs and forms. As ceramic objects have long played a key role in the intimate spaces of interior and architectural design, artists who use ceramics as the dominant material have developed bodies of work that play off these conventions of display and formats of presentation. Neufeld and Staschke are especially adept at this. At the same time, both artists’ visual extravaganzas borrow extensively from retail and museum display conventions to playfully subvert our ability as viewers to easily decode their meanings. While they flirt with the language of adornment and decor, these are artworks that draw deep from history to take the temperature of our current, often conflicted, longings.

*Jordan Strom, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections, Surrey Art Gallery*

### ***Beyond the Vessel’s Edge: Ceramics from the Permanent Collection***

*Beyond the Vessel’s Edge: Ceramics from the Permanent Collection* brings together a variety of poetic and sculptural clay pieces by seven contemporary artists who are experimenting with the traditional forms, techniques, and histories of pottery to create their innovative artworks.

Artists whose chosen materials are historically tied to functional practice have increasingly moved beyond making household objects, turning instead to fashioning extraordinary metaphorical and conceptual artworks. In the latter part of the twentieth century there was much discussion about the relationship between ceramic practices and the making of art objects. Informed by the ideas of postmodernism—such as the inherent plurality and hybridity of the world—many artists use clay saw their work not exclusively oriented towards the goal of making functional things to be used in daily life, but also contributing to contemporary art and its various responses to urbanization and the human condition.



Tam Irving, *Rocking Bowl*, stoneware, 2007  
Image appears courtesy of the artist

The functional pot became a conceptually interesting aesthetic vessel; and studio pottery embraced the opportunity of fine art ceramics. There was a desire to bring into art theory discussions about the humble brown pot. The change in terminology (vessel vs. pot) suggests that artists were also shifting their interests and ambitions. For example, British artist Alison Britton has written about her own practice; she felt that it no longer sufficed for her to just produce a useful and usable pottery object. She came to understand that the objects she created signified meanings and related to histories that were important. She thought of ceramics having a *double presence*—vessels that are vessels and at the same time are about the ideas of the vessels.

Some of the artists in this exhibition work within the traditional forms of pottery, but their objects defy use as functional bowls or vases. For instance, John Chalke created two small wheel-thrown bowls that are intimate in scale and would be perfect to hold in two hands. Upon closer inspection,

they are unusable: the surfaces have mottled and fractured glazes and are toxic due to the metals used, precluding their use for holding food. With *Canadian Night*, Alwyn O'Brien based her vessel on a traditional urn form, but she has, squeezed and squashed the clay and stressed it through its firing process. It appears precarious on its stand. With its surface decorated with a collage of layered images, including those of urban landscapes, she has created a post-modern version of the decorated amphora. In creating *Rocking Bowl*, Tam Irving built up slabs of clay into a flattened vase form, integrating the coloured forms on the surface with the shapes of the vessel. The dynamic bold design reinforces the impression that the work is ready to move at any moment.



Alwyn O'Brien, *Canadian Night*, hand built porcelain and earthenware with enamel lustre, mishima, gold leaf, computer decals, commercial decals, 2006

Image appears courtesy of the artist

Linda Standbridge's *Ribbon* is a composite work of two thrown pots linked together by the zigzag strip that pierces through the two forms, uniting them as one. Impractical as a vase, the work delights through its bold decorative composition. Tam Irving's *Song for Morandi 3* is a tableau formed of traditional studio pottery arranged onto a stage that recalls the paintings of vessels by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian still-life painter Giorgio Morandi. In this composition, Irving combines the history of still life painting, the tradition forms of the studio potter, and *trompe l'œil* effects of creating optical illusions of representing real objects in three dimensions.

The techniques of the potter—coiling, moulding, and working with sheets of clay—are important components of the construction of a ceramic object. Ian Johnston's work *R14 hip – f, ankle – f* is both a sculptural abstraction of the human body and an unlikely vessel. The small aperture reveals that it is a hollow form, created from sheets of moulded clay. The human form is also seen repeatedly in the work of Sally Michener. Her portrait sculptures were made using coils of clay to raise the moulded faces up to meet our gaze. Totemic in format, and with its unglazed terracotta finish, these portraits of *Diane G.* and *Barb C.* seem timeless. As hollow forms, they echo the vessel of the body that contains the self. The human hand is a reference point for Diana Lynn Thomson's *Lingual*. Each individual stone—half are found rocks that she gathered and half are hand-moulded by the artist—fits in the palm of one's hand. Minimalist in appearance, the work's installation format brings to mind symbolic representations of language and genome coding. Thomson's work also is a conceit, a *trompe l'œil* to fool the eye, provoking us to figure out which stones are real and which were fabricated.

All of these artists have acquired the skills and techniques of the potter, but they have explored the capacity of clay to create sculptural forms in innovative ways. Their works are containers of ideas. In this age of the commercially mass-produced utilitarian plate, cup, and bowl, they have fabricated works in the humble material of clay. But in their hands, this clay has become art that transcends the everyday and the practical.

Brian Foreman, Assistant Curator, Surrey Art Gallery

*The Gallery would like to acknowledge the generosity of the artists and donors who have supported the acquisition of these artworks into its Permanent Collection.*

## VOCABULARY

**3D animation:** Animated films or cartoons in three dimensions, including but not limited to computer animation (3D modeling programs), stop motion animation, and claymation.

**Aesthetic:** relating to, or dealing with, the beautiful; also: what is pleasurable to the senses.

**Anime:** A style of animation originating in Japan. This art form is characterized by colourful graphics depicting vibrant characters often with fantastic or futuristic themes. Anime can be both hand-drawn and/or computer-animated.

**Assemblage:** an artistic composition assembled from a variety of components, often found objects.

**Ceramic Art:** Art created from clay [earthenware, stoneware, or porcelain] typically fired in a kiln at a high temperature.

**Ceramic decal:** A printed design that can be transferred to a ceramic object and can withstand the process of firing and overglazing.

**Coil building:** A method of hand forming pottery by building up rope like coils of clay.

**Collaborative Art:** Art that is created to work jointly with others.

**Digital Art:** Art created with computer technology.

**Glaze:** To furnish or fit with glass; to give a smooth glossy surface to.

**Hand building:** Techniques used by ceramic artists through which a clay form that is created by hand using any number of techniques [such as slab or coil] that do not use the potter's wheel.

**Interactive Art:** Art involving the actions or input of a user/viewer.

**Juxtaposition:** The act or an instance of placing two or more things, or concepts, side by side.

**Manga:** A popular style of Japanese comic book or graphic novel.

**Mould:** A negative form which is used to create three dimensional objects, often in multiples.

**Odalisque:** A female slave, or concubine in a harem



Sally Michener  
Diane C. handbuilt terra cotta ceramic, 1981.  
And Barb G. handbuilt terra cotta ceramic, 1981.  
Image appears courtesy of the artist

**Ornamentation:** The act or process of decorating, adorning, or embellishing. b. The state of being decorated, adorned, or embellished.

**Projection:** The display of motion pictures by projecting an image from them upon a screen.

**Resist:** in casting, a material used to resist adhesion to the surface of mould to facilitate the release of a cast object.

**Slab building:** A clay form that is created by rolling out flat sheets of clay, pieces of which are then cut, folded, and joined to create new forms or shapes.

**Slip:** Liquefied clay used for the casting of clay objects, or the decoration of unfired clay. Slip can be made from different clay bodies and can be coloured.

**Slip casting:** A ceramic arts technique where clay slip is poured into a mould to create a ceramic form.

**Still Life:** A picture, most commonly a painting or drawing, consisting predominantly of inanimate objects.

**Terra Sigillata:** A thin slip made from clay, often applied over a clay body to alter the colour or surface quality.

**Thrown:** To form or shape on a potter's wheel.

**Thrown and altered:** A ceramics technique whereby a form is created on a potter's wheel, then altered by the removal or addition of other clay components, or the manipulation of the form to change the forms shape.

**Vessel:** A container (such as a cask, bottle, kettle, cup, or bowl).



Dirk Staschke, Still Life #1, 2009  
Ceramic and mixed media  
Image appears courtesy of the artist



## SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Collage Vessel

### OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Explore three dimensional artwork
- Experiment with a variety of 2D and 3D art media
- Experiment with art making processes
- Consider the form of a vessel
- Work with the surface of a 3D artwork and consider how this influences the form
- Ponder the connection between object and idea – how does art explore ideas, how do artists communicate with images and objects?

### ACTIVITY

Students explore three dimensional form and its surface by creating their own collage vessel. These are constructed from paper cups which are cut up, folded, crumpled, and reassembled to create a dynamic sculptural form. Once this vessel is constructed, paper, magazine cut-outs, fabric, wire, string and other household objects are adhered to the vessel. Things to consider in the design and construction of these pieces include colour, pattern, narrative, decoration, and texture etc.

### DISCUSSION & INTRODUCTION

While, historically, ceramics has been associated with the craft of creating vessels: cups, teapots, bowls, urns, etc., contemporary ceramic artists work in a wide spectrum of formats, including sculptural work, installation art, performance, and in more conceptual modes. Contemporary ceramic artists are highly aware of the history of the medium and, in some cases, refer to the richly varied cultural history of ceramics around the world. The vessel has been at the centre of many ceramic artists' practices, approaching this subject from many vantage points: formally, aesthetically, functionally, and conceptually the humble "pot" has been examined, deconstructed, re-considered, and celebrated.

Show examples of ceramic vessels and forms, both traditional and contemporary. (See the list of resources in this document.) Discuss how students could consider adopting one of these forms, could derive inspiration from these, or can completely invent their own design. You can discuss basic elements of 3D design: balance - symmetrical and asymmetrical; and form – organic, inorganic, and geometric.

Present images of collage artwork and assemblage sculpture (see list of resources). Discussion could include: What collage materials could students use? How does this change their vessel? Does it add meaning, make it more interesting, express an idea, describe a narrative – a story, convey an emotion?



Alwyn O'Brien, Canadian Night, hand built porcelain and earthenware with enamel lustre, mishiima, gold leaf, computer decals, commercial decals, 2006

## TOOLS

- Scissors
- Wire cutters
- Needle nose pliers

## MATERIALS

- Paper cups
- Comics and magazines
- String, wire, fabric
- Glue sticks
- Masking tape
- Acrylic paint
- Acrylic medium



Hannah Höch, *Cut with the Dada Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany*, Collage, 1919.



Kurt Schwitters, *Das Unbild*, Collage, 1919

## PROCESS

1. Prepare work stations with the tools and materials listed above.
2. Introduce the project, provide examples, discuss the possibilities.
3. Ask students to do a series of five sketches experimenting with several concepts/designs for their project.
4. Students can begin the construction of their form using paper cups, which can be cut up, altered, and reassembled to create their vessel.
5. Young artists can now begin to choose images and materials to work on the surface, interior and exterior, of their vessel. They may also decide to add objects, wires, and/or fabric to their vessel.
6. Acrylic medium, washes of acrylic paint, pencil, etc. can be used to further alter the surface of the work. The acrylic medium can act to seal and protect the surface. Crayons and oil pastels can be used but will not be protected by the acrylic medium (see *resist* on the vocabulary page).

## CONCLUSION

Through the process of constructing and designing the surface of their collage vessel, students will have explored a variety of art media: paper, cardboard, found objects, acrylic paint and pencil. They will have further worked with three dimensional and two dimensional processes of assemblage, construction, and collage.

## OTHER IDEAS FOR FOLLOW UP (FOR BOTH PRE- AND POST-ACTIVITIES):

- Have students write a brief artists' statement about their piece.
- Create your own in-classroom art gallery.
- Host a positive peer critique and discussion with your class. Encourage your students to utilize newly acquired art vocabulary where appropriate.

## SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Fusion Vessel

### OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Work in three dimensions
- Explore the medium of clay
- Learn and practice techniques specific to working in ceramics
  - Hand building
  - Slab building
  - Score and Slip
- Think about:
  - How different cultures and ideas interact, co-exist, and even fuse
  - The origins of a variety of images and forms
  - The connection between object and idea – how does art explore ideas, how do artists communicate with images and objects?

### ACTIVITY

Students will construct a ceramic vessel. This slab built vessel will be visually fused with a contemporary idea, art form, or object (ie: robot, story, fairy tale, Pop Art, space ship, racing car, etc) . All artists will begin with a simple ceramic form, younger students can decorate the surface by carving or drawing into it. Advanced students can construct additional 3D components to add to their vessels.

### DISCUSSION & INTRODUCTION



Clint Neufeld, *Odalisque*, 2010  
Ceramic, wood, vinyl  
Image appears courtesy of the artist

Ceramists have explored the form of the vessel for millennia. Contemporary ceramic artists continue to explore the vessel through a contemporary framework. In Brendan Tang's *Manga Ormalu* series he combines traditional Ming Dynasty ceramic forms with contemporary robotic forms based on Japanese Manga robots. Two cultures, time periods, and their aesthetics are fused together creating new hybrid forms.

Clint Neufeld's work also combines a variety of cultural references. Clint fuses very different aesthetics and cultural references in his work. In his work *Odalisque* he juxtaposes elements of hot rod culture and traditional Chinese ceramics, while referencing the tradition of *Odalisque* paintings as the engine block "reclines" on an ottoman.

Students should consider ideas, themes, or images they may want to incorporate, or fuse, with their vessel.



Brendan Tang  
*Manga Ormalu 3.0-b*, 2007  
Image appears courtesy of the artist

## MATERIALS

- Low fire clay
- Acrylic paint

## TOOLS

- Rolling pins
- Knives
- Forks
- Sponges
- Containers for water
- Ceramics tools (if available)
  - Pin tools
  - Ribbon tools
  - Loop tools
  - Wooden modelling tools

## PROCESS

1. Demonstrate the construction of a simple slab vessel
  - a. Roll out a clay slab using the rolling pin
  - b. Cut out the shapes you will use to construct a simple vessel
  - c. Demonstrate the joining of the slabs and the vessels base – ask the students to closely observe the slipping and scoring
    - i. For older students, Grades 4-7, demonstrate the alteration of this form
      1. Removing a component of the vessel
      2. Re-joining that component elsewhere
      3. Joining an additional component to the vessel
    - ii. For all students
      1. Demonstrate carving techniques to create pattern or drawings on the vessel
        - a. Use your loop, ribbon, and modelling tools if these are available
        - b. Use knives, forks, and pencils alternatively, they also work well – the marks these make will have a different character
        - c. Other objects: bottle caps, figurines, coins, can be pressed into the clay to make an imprint and change the surface as well



Score the edge of your slab



Add a thin layer of slip



Press your slabs together



Reinforce the corner

2. Ask the students to begin work on their projects after preparing a few preliminary sketches to work out some ideas beforehand
3. Assist the students in creating slabs, joining these using the slip and score method, and general trouble shooting as required

4. Once they have completed these objects they should be left to dry thoroughly, until they are bone dry
  - a. How you follow up from here is really dependant on the resources and expertise available to you at your school
    - i. If you have the resources available your green ware can be bisque fired
      1. Your bisque ware can then be glazed, left to dry, and glaze fired
      2. You may elect not to glaze these and rather paint your bisque fired vessel with acrylic paint
    - ii. Alternatively you can simply paint your green ware without firing it using acrylic paint, however the pieces will be somewhat delicate

### **CONCLUSION**

Having created their own slab built vessel in clay, student artists have had an opportunity to gain experience working with clay, have developed a 3D form and worked with that form to create a dynamic artwork.

### **OTHER IDEAS FOR FOLLOW UP:**

- Have students write a concise artists' statement
- Create your own in classroom art gallery
- Host a positive peer critique and discussion with your class. Encourage your students to utilize newly acquired art vocabulary where appropriate

## ARTIST STATEMENTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

### ***The future is already here: Alex McLeod and Brendan Tang***

**Alex McLeod** was born in Scarborough, Ontario (1984), attended George Brown College in Toronto and is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art & Design Painting and Drawing program. After graduation, McLeod began to explore 3D rendering software and now creates C-prints of fantastical and romantic landscapes, both candy-coated and darkly whimsical. He has been exhibiting these virtual installations since the fall of 2008. In 2009 he successfully invaded the blog world and caught the attention of hip-hop artist Kanye West. McLeod has exhibited worldwide at MASS MoCA in North Adams, MA, rojo®artspace in Barcelona, and cities including Toronto, Montreal, Miami, San Jose, and Sao Paulo. He has received awards from the Toronto Art Council and has works in public collections including the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA), Toronto and BMO Financial Group. McLeod is represented by Angell Gallery in Toronto and Gallerie Trois Points in Montreal.

**Brendan Tang** was born in Dublin, Ireland (1975) of Trinidadian parents and is a naturalized citizen of Canada. He earned his formal art education at Malaspina University College in Nanaimo, BC, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, and Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville. Tang has lectured at conferences and academic institutions across the country, and his professional practice has also taken him to India, Trinidad, and Japan. He has been a resident artist at the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts in Helena, MT and participated in an international residency at the European Ceramic Work Centre in 's-Hertogenbosch, NL in 2011. In 2012 Brendan was the winner of the RBC Emerging Artist People's Choice Award. Tang's work has been showcased at museums and galleries including the Seattle Art Museum, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (as a Sobey Finalist 2010), the Mendel Art Gallery, the Kamloops Art Gallery, and Art Labor in Shanghai. Upcoming exhibitions of his work will take place at the Surrey Art Gallery and the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery. Brendan has been profiled by The Knowledge Network, and has been featured in printed publications including: *The National Post*, *Wired* (UK and Italy), *ELLE (Canada)*, and blogs including *Boing Boing*, *NotCot*, and *Design Boom*. Tang is represented by Gallery Jones in Vancouver.

### ***Ornamentalism: Clint Neufeld and Dirk Staschke***

**Clint Neufeld** is a sculptor who works with concepts of masculine identity, currently in the form of ceramic transformations of engines and transmissions. Neufeld was born and raised in small town Saskatchewan. Prior to pursuing a career in art, Neufeld spent three years with the Canadian military, which included a deployment to the former Yugoslavia in 1994. After a failed attempt pursuing a career as a firefighter Neufeld began his BFA at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg and finished at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. In 2006 he completed his MFA at Concordia University. He now lives and works on an acreage near the town of Osler, Saskatchewan.

**Dirk Staschke** has maintained an ongoing studio practice for the past 14 years and has an extensive exhibition record at many prominent galleries. He has been an educator at many universities: Emily Carr University, Alfred University and New York University. His work is featured in notable permanent collections: the Smithsonian, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Icheon Museum in South Korea.

## ***Beyond the Vessel's Edge: Ceramics from the Permanent Collection***

**Ian Johnston** (b. 1961, resides Nelson, BC)

R14 hip - f, ankle – f

From the Tangible Shadows: Intersections Series

stoneware with terra sigillata, 2005

Gift of Stephanie Fischer

Ian Johnston has used the pliable qualities of clay to create this enigmatic figurative sculpture. Each work in the Tangible Shadows Series is hand built using sheets of clay laid over objects including human arms, legs and hips. Familiar forms are abstracted through this process. This muting of the identity of the source forms creates what Johnson refers to as a “tangible shadow of the object”. The resulting work intrigues by the abstracted yet familiar form.

Artist's Statement:

This ceramic object is part of Tangible Shadows: Intersections, a series of sculptural ceramic vessels. The work is both a testament to, and documentation of, a process that was inspired by the idea of Milagros, the votive offerings found in Hispanic folk culture. The medium used in this exploration is drape-moulded ceramic [created by draping forms in fluid clay sheets]. The choice of forms used in Tangible Shadows followed a journey that began with human anatomy and ended with the automobile body. Bicycle seats and motorcycle tanks served as a transition between the two forms.

About the Artist:

Ian Johnston is an architect turned sculptor based in Nelson, BC. Since the mid-nineties he has been pursuing an interest in ceramic and more recently large-scale installations that often include ceramics with recycled materials such as rubber and plastics. Johnston studied architecture at Algonquin College, and Carleton University in Ottawa and with the University of Toronto at Paris, France. Prior to opening his Nelson studio in 1996 he spent five years working at the Bauhaus Academy in Berlin. At the Bauhaus, together with two architects, he developed and facilitated a series of workshops around themes of urban renewal and public intervention in a tumultuous time of cultural transformation.

**Alwyn O'Brien** (b. 1975, born and resides on Saltspring Island)

Canadian Night

hand built porcelain and earthenware with enamel lustre, mishima, gold leaf, computer decals, commercial decals, 2006

Artist's Statement:

I strive to create objects that embody a sense of the richness of life and time, memory, longing and loss

Beyond the immediate subjective, I also draw on 'memory traces' at large in our visual culture (commercial decals, shards of industrial plaster moulds, drawn images) and those of ceramic history (Persian ceramics, Blue and white Chinese export ware, Delft ware, Sevres Porcelain, 19th century Canadian underglazed print ware). The feelings and impressions evoked by the objects we encounter in our lives, and our ever-changing relationships to them, is a central concern in my work. The 'felt'

(tactile/emotional) experience of ceramics is integral to the reading of it; where surface and form combine to become Braille, a bridge between maker and user, a storied surface conveyed between hands. The contemporary ceramic object can be understood as a souvenir – a simultaneous overlay of our histories, our present and our presence.

About the Artist:

Alwyn O'Brien has a BFA from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Vancouver and a MFA from the University of Washington, Seattle. She has exhibited her works across Canada and in the United States. She has received Emerging Artist awards from the City of Vancouver and the Gardiner Museum, Toronto. She resides on Saltspring Island, and teaches at the Emily Carr Institute.

**Sally Michener** (b. 1935, Fergus Falls Minnesota, resides West Vancouver)

Diane C.

handbuilt terra cotta ceramic, 1981 c.

Gift of the Artist

Barb G.

handbuilt terra cotta ceramic, 1981 c.

Gift of the Artist

These two columns were originally created as part of a "forest" of at least forty similar sculptures for an installation first presented on the grassy hill on Granville Island in 1981. The women's faces represented on the columns presented here are impressions of two women who were very involved in the field of ceramics, either as fellow artists or curators. This Hill Installation was the artist's first outdoor project. Michener has continued to use the structure of the columnar format and the human body as her primary subjects.

About the Artist:

Sally Michener is an artist, educator and long-term Board member based in West Vancouver. She holds a MSW from Columbia University in New York City and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. She immigrated to Canada in 1973 and taught at the Vancouver School of Art/Emily Carr University for twenty-five years. Her works, which have been exhibited across Canada as well as abroad in Japan, China, the USA, Mexico and Europe. A generation of Surrey children has become familiar with Michener's work, her studio, and her specialty of working with coils of clay to create art, in the Gallery's popular "Clay Sculpture Kit" designed to be used in school classrooms.

**Diana Lynn Thompson** (b 1958, resides Saltspring Island)

Lingual

stone, clay with glazes, 2008

Artist's Statement (excerpt):

Only half of these stones are real. The other half are handmade. The real ones came from places where I walk. Their elongated shapes caught my attention. I was compelled to hold them. Some are cocoon or capsule-shaped. Many are the size and shape of a thumb or finger, or are flattened and turned like a human tongue. They are like pestles, wedges, tools. Some are reminiscent of the



Lingam stones of India – evoking both an egg and a phallus. But beyond this imagery, every stone remains just as it is...

When I place these stones on the wall, I write in an indecipherable script, one that seems to be part computer code, Braille, musical notes and/or conscious configuration...

Every stone is different. This work isn't about making copies or simulations. It's about thinking as I create every stone – making certain each shape is formed by paying attention, attending to the task. My hands leave their mark but remain invisible, their presence felt but not stated.

This work is not about words, but it is about language.

I've learned the language of stones by making stones.

About the Artist:

Diana Lynn Thompson is an installation artist who works with ephemeral moments, accumulated objects from the environment such as leaves, rocks and wood, collected stories and insertion/intervention strategies, which she documents in video and photographs. She has a BFA from the University of Victoria. Her works have been exhibited, performed and installed nationally and internationally.

**Tam Irving** (b. 1933, Bilbao, Spain, resides West Vancouver)

Rocking Bowl

stoneware, 2007

Tam Irving (b. 1933, Bilbao, Spain, resides West Vancouver)

Song for Morandi 3,

stoneware, wood and stucco, 1994

For Tam Irving's retrospective exhibition in 2006 at the Burnaby Art Gallery, the artist wanted to create something new: "I thought it was time to do something radical. Use some colour!" Rocking Bowl is one of these new works. Previously, Irving's work used earth-tone glazes for his bowls, bottles and vases. Rethinking this practice, the artist noted that "I have the impression that colour is often used in a decorative way on ceramics. Not much consideration seems to be given to the way colours impact on each other and the possibility of creating dynamic tension between colour contrasts." For these new works, Irving says "The shift to stronger colour has presented a new problem where surface tends to dominate. One solution has been to move toward minimal forms where colour can become the essential statement." Rocking Bowl unites dynamic colours shapes onto a bold vessel form that itself always looks like it is about to move. The artist continues to explore bold colour and line design in his recent vases and wall plaques.

Quotes sourced from: Carol E. Mayer, *Transitions of a Still Life: Ceramic Work by Tam Irving*, Vancouver: Anvil Press, 2007

This still life tableau is an homage to the modernist Italian artist Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964) who is noted for his paintings of simple still life compositions that employ subtle tonal ranges. Irving studied the various vessels that Morandi used and recreated some of the bottle shapes for his tableaux. He also references the influence of surrealism on Morandi by including "an egg on a column, and high arched back to the shelf that mimicked the arcade and shadows of surrealist painter Giorgio de Chirico's town squares" The egg and the garlic ("Morandi was Italian") both introduce the idea of potential new life within this tranquil group of inanimate objects.

**Artist's Statement:**

Still lives do not exist: they must be arranged by the artist in actuality, in the mind or through the lens of a camera. Traditionally the Still Life has been considered a reflection of joy and humanism, it celebrates intimately known things. If you look at the history of Still Life painting you find that some of the most popular objects were pots simply because they were ordinary yet beautiful. We make pots so I thought that it would be interesting to turn the real thing into a Still Life, as a way to celebrate our concern for objects.

Quotes sourced from: A Still Life [student project] cited in Carol E Mayer, Transitions of a Still Life: Ceramic Work by Tam Irving, p.91

**About the Artist:**

Tam Irving is an educator and studio potter based in West Vancouver. He initially obtained a degree in Agriculture from the University of Scotland in Edinburgh and then worked as a chemist for Shell Canada, before becoming a production potter. He began to lecture in ceramics at the Vancouver School of Art/Emily Carr University in 1973 and stayed there until he retired in 1996. Since then he has returned to potting full time and has exhibited widely. His work is in the collections of The Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull and the Gardiner Museum, Toronto as well as other public and private collections.

**John Chalke** (b. 1940, Gloucestershire, England, resides Calgary)

Copper Black Matte Bowl  
clay with glazes, 1990  
Gift of Kathleen Laverty

Barium Blue Bowl  
clay with glazes, 1990  
Gift of Kathleen Laverty

**Artist's Statement:**

It's still hard to know how my pre-making mind operates. I know it sometimes calls upon quarries of ideas, which are based on known previous historical and cultural contacts ... early American and English slipware, French wood-fired country pots, Japanese Oribe designs, woodcuts from early children's books. But then there is another pulse which sporadically appears above the thought horizon, like northern lights. It might be the peeling red and blue paint on a barn door ... or a folk art weathervane ... perhaps the word "Clinchfield" on a boxcar across the tracks.... What the objects I make must have to operate successfully is a comfortable relationship with the human scale: for example, an engaging encounter with both hands. But they should maintain a querulous position also, like dug up jewellery or a table top in the rain.

source: <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/prizes> (Accessed January 11, 2013)

**About the Artist:**

John Chalke received an Art Teacher's Certificate in education from the Bath Academy of Art in 1962. Soon after, he was exhibiting at London's Design Centre. He taught at the Farnham and Harrow Schools of Art before immigrating to Canada in 1968. He has taught throughout his career—at the

University of Alberta, the University of Calgary and the Alberta College of Art and Design, but the main focus of his energy has been in the studio. He has participated in over 230 solo and group exhibitions. Chalke is one of four Canadian ceramists to have had work purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum. His work is also found in private and public collections throughout North America, in the U.K., Italy, Japan, France and Australia.

**Linda Stanbridge** (b. 1948, Glasgow, Scotland, resides Victoria)

Ribbon

clay with glazes, 1987

Linda Stanbridge's art practice recurrently investigates the use of geometric design, where she often creates illusionary three-dimensional images on her ceramics. This is seen in the dynamic zigzag that intersects the wheel-thrown forms that comprise the work. A key element in her work is "the cerebral transcendent quality imparted by this use of pure geometric optics". Throughout her career, she has explored the use of raku firing, a process that is of particular interest for the earth tone colours that can be obtained and for its unpredictable effects.

Artist's Statement:

My work deals with gravity, and the universal presence of that phenomenon in culture.

We are born; we rise up; we die. Lucy Lippard suggests, "Artists are the Keepers of human racial memory, natural archeologists." Events both personal and collective of that life experience are visualized in geometric forms that represent the abstract and idealized notions of existence, and the mystery that binds them together.

About the Artist:

Linda Stanbridge's art has grown out of an interest in geometric structures and the dynamics of optics as experienced by the viewer. She has exhibited her work both nationally and internationally and is represented in numerous public and private collections in Canada, the U.S., and Europe.

Commissioned public art projects by Stanbridge are on display in Greater Victoria at the Victoria International Airport's departure lounge, the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, the James Bay Firehall, and the Centre for Innovative Teaching.

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Participating in a guided tour, studio workshop, or self-guided tour in conjunction with the exhibitions supports British Columbia Visual Arts Prescribed Learning Outcomes for elementary grades as outlined below. The exhibition can be used as a touchstone for discussion relating to themes and concepts addressed in a variety of curriculum areas.

### ***VISUAL ARTS PRESCRIBED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

It is expected that students will:

#### **Kindergarten to Grade 1**

- identify a variety of image sources, their own and others
- describe the many forms that images take
- describe various purposes of visual arts
- demonstrate an awareness that images come from a variety of contexts
- demonstrate recognition of the expressive qualities of individual visual elements

#### **Grade 2 to 3**

- suggest purposes for a variety of images
- demonstrate an awareness of a variety of reasons why people make and use art
- identify the expressive qualities of individual visual elements
- demonstrate an awareness that materials, tools, equipment and processes can be used to create particular effects
- identify images from a variety of historical and cultural contexts

#### **Grade 4**

- identify image development and design strategies
- compare images developed for particular purposes
- identify the characteristics of materials, tools, equipment and processes used to create particular effects
- demonstrate an awareness that there are various types of artists in the community
- identify distinctive styles of visual images from various historical, cultural, and social contexts

#### **Grade 5**

- compare the relationship between form and purpose in a variety of images
- identify aspects of selected images that indicate the social, historical, or cultural context in which they were created
- compare a variety of works that emphasize particular elements and principles
- analyse the use of materials, tools, equipment and processes in a variety of artworks
- compare the distinctive styles of artists and images from various cultures and historical periods

**Grade 6**

- demonstrate knowledge of image-development and design strategies used by artists for a variety of purposes
- demonstrate an awareness that images influence and are influenced by their social, historical, and cultural contexts
- identify images that emphasize particular elements (including space) and principles (including rhythm)
- analyse the use of materials, tools, equipment and processes in a variety of artworks
- identify the historical and cultural contexts of a variety of images

**Grade 7**

- analyse image-development and design strategies used by various artists for a variety of purposes
- demonstrate an understanding of the influence of social, historical, and cultural contexts on artists and their images
- analyse how the elements and principles are used to create effects and convey mood and meaning in images
- evaluate the use of materials, tools, equipment and processes in a variety of artworks
- assess the relationship between selected artists and their social, historical, and cultural contexts

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Artists webpages:

[www.artdirk.com](http://www.artdirk.com)

[www.brendantang.com](http://www.brendantang.com)

[www.alxclub.com](http://www.alxclub.com)

[www.clintneufeld.com](http://www.clintneufeld.com)

[www.ianjohnstonstudio.com](http://www.ianjohnstonstudio.com)

[www.dianathompson.net](http://www.dianathompson.net)

Assemblage:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assemblage\\_\(art\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assemblage_(art))

[http://www.moma.org/collection/theme.php?theme\\_id=10057](http://www.moma.org/collection/theme.php?theme_id=10057)

Ceramics:

<http://www.gardinermuseum.on.ca/collection/emuseum>

<http://www.garthclark.com/>

<http://www.criticalceramics.org/>

[Ming Dynasty Ceramics](#)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue\\_and\\_white\\_porcelain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_and_white_porcelain)

Ceramics BC:

[www.bcpotters.com](http://www.bcpotters.com)

[www.galleryofbcceramics.com](http://www.galleryofbcceramics.com)

Collage:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collage>

[http://www.moma.org/collection/theme.php?theme\\_id=10064](http://www.moma.org/collection/theme.php?theme_id=10064)

Manga:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manga>

[InuYasha Trailer](#)

[Spirited Away Trailer](#)

Northern European still life painting:

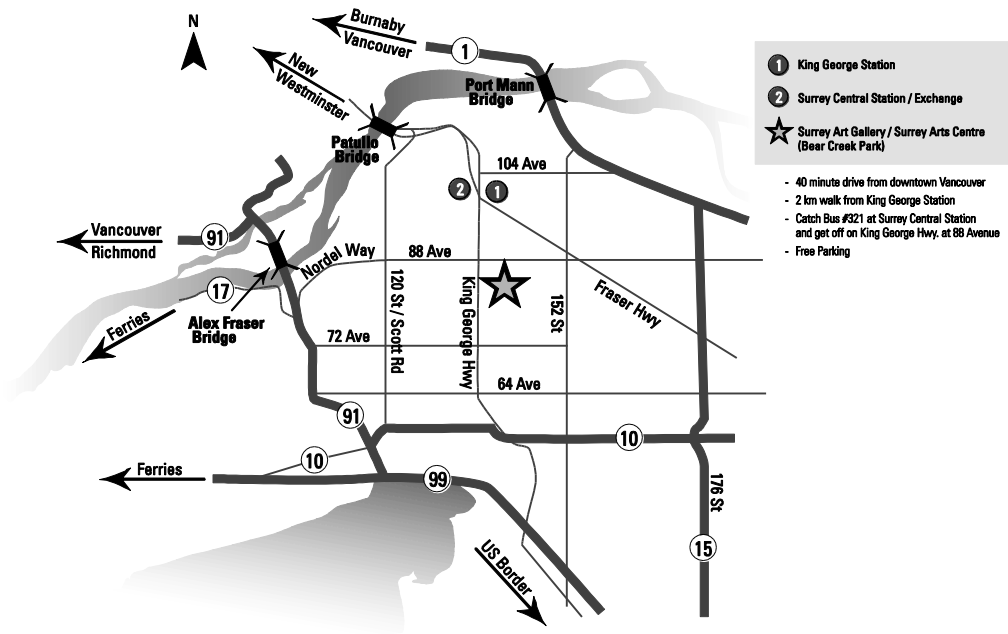
[Northern European still life painting](#)

<http://www.nga.gov/kids/DTP6stillife.pdf>

### TEACHER GUIDE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Teacher Guide prepared by Chris Dawson-Murphy, Volunteer Program Coordinator, with the assistance of Ingrid Kolt, Curator of Education and Public Programs, Surrey Art Gallery. Exhibition descriptions prepared by Jordan Strom, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections and Brian Foreman, Assistant Curator of Exhibitions and Collections, Surrey Art Gallery and Guest Curator, Rachel Rosenfield Lafo.

# SURREY ART GALLERY INFORMATION AND MAP



- 1 King George Station
  - 2 Surrey Central Station / Exchange
  - ★ Surrey Art Gallery / Surrey Arts Centre (Bear Creek Park)
- 40 minute drive from downtown Vancouver
  - 2 km walk from King George Station
  - Catch Bus #321 at Surrey Central Station and get off on King George Hwy. at 88 Avenue
  - Free Parking



**Surrey Art Gallery**  
 13750 – 88th Avenue  
 Surrey, BC V3W 3L1  
 604-501-5566  
[artgallery@surrey.ca](mailto:artgallery@surrey.ca)  
[surrey.ca/arts](http://surrey.ca/arts)

**Gallery Hours**  
 Tues, Wed & Thurs: 9am – 9pm  
 Fri: 9am – 5pm  
 Sat: 10am – 5pm  
 Sun: Noon – 5pm  
 Closed on Mondays & holidays / Admission by donation

Sign up for our e-bulletin at [www.surrey.ca/arts](http://www.surrey.ca/arts) to receive gallery exhibition and program updates.

