

with accomplished ceramic artists from across the country.

As soon as confirmations are received from our invited artists, we'll e-mail you more details. In the meantime, keep checking the Medalta website [www.medalta.org](http://www.medalta.org) and follow the links to an exciting adventure.

E-mail queries may be made to the Artistic Director Les Manning at [lmanning@medalta.org](mailto:lmanning@medalta.org) or the Committee Co-Chair Jane MacKay at [jane.mackay@shaw.ca](mailto:jane.mackay@shaw.ca)

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## **Cathi Jefferson Workshop – NSCAD – September 2008**

*“Trying to retain that initial thrown freshness and interacting with the kiln during the firing process has always drawn me to salt and wood-firing, It never ceases to amaze me how each fired piece is directly affected by its location in the kiln, producing unique variations with rich colour tones and textural surfaces.”* - from [www.cathijefferson.com/bio](http://www.cathijefferson.com/bio)

The above quote tells you something of the philosophy, aesthetic and commitment that Cathi Jefferson brings to her pots. However, online words are a pale substitute for the energy and passion she demonstrated while giving those of us fortunate enough to be there a complete overview of her ceramic process: throwing, altering and hand building her forms in the morning,

trimming, assembling and viewing her video on **Salt Glazing** in the afternoon. That evening she gave a well received slide presentation on her work.

Cathi began by throwing a Yunomi, a taller than wide vessel with a trimmed foot, the Japanese equivalent to our coffee mugs, meant to be held by the rim and foot until cool enough to cradle in the hand while throwing some of her functional pottery forms: the Yunomi, mug, latte cup and saucer, pitcher, teapot, and a large bowl Cathi set up a rhythm of conversation discussing every aspect of studio pottery from the artisan, artistic, aesthetic considerations to practical, technical and business considerations.

My notes from memory made the following day, incomplete and taken from the perspective of a student, include these hints and highlights in no particular order:

- Looking for and taking advantage of opportunities to enhance your pots. For example, giving your customers an extra little surprise by cutting holes in various shapes to form patterns instead of using ‘that dreadful hole punch tool’.
- Looking for, using and making your own tools as a way to make your work more individual
- What kind of bats she prefers (plaster) and why (“... plus they don’t catch fire like the wooden ones do.”)
- Ways of throwing the clay that are kinder to your body than the traditional ones.

- The no nonsense use of a pin tool in getting rid of bubbles in the clay.
- Her emphasis on the point that clay is absolutely not stronger because it is thicker.
- The importance of allowing for the weight of the pot when in use.
- Ergonomic tips for making your functional pottery more pleasurable to use.
- Taking full advantage of those versatile tools that you can never misplace, your hands.
- The advantages of longer sides on your lids, little moats to keep glaze off your gallery.
- Her comment 'Wood firing does such a good job on impressed details.'
- The importance of taking the time to play with your clay (that's where the ideas come from).

We were equally fortunate to have the input of NSCAD Instructor Joan Bruneau on various issues of importance to all potters including a discussion on how to sustain a studio practice over the course of decades.

Thanks to Neil Forrest, Joan Bruneau and Doug Bamford of NSCAD, Judy Gordon of NSPG and to Cathi Jefferson who gave so generously of her skills, knowledge, and philosophy for making this event possible. We hope your brief stay on this coast was as enjoyable for you as it was for us. Thank you.

- Sharon Merriam

The slide show took us through Cathi's new studio, her work at the Archie Bray Foundation [huge and fabulous], with

insight into the decoration on her pots...the window in her studio is the frame around the brushwork of leaves on her pots [If you have seen them, you know they are squared], and her time in Japan. The slides showing the forest around her studio on Vancouver Island were breathtaking.

Cathi was kind enough to share with us her sources of inspiration and guidance, both during her demos and at the slide show in the evening. The life of an artist/potter is fraught with pitfalls and she introduced us to her "bible" – a book entitled *Art and Fear* by David Bayles and Ted Orland. I can't recommend it highly enough.

Cathi shared other written sources of inspiration with us: *Beauty* by John O'Donohue, and *Spell of the Sensuous* by David Abram. My favorite quote – and I have no idea who she was quoting – is: "Let nature stir you – and creative energy will flow upon you with no effort on your part." It is obvious that Cathi has been stirred by her majestic surroundings and that they make their way gently into her work. Her generous spirit flows through her teaching and her art.

- Judy Gordon

**Sometimes artist think about ambiguity in their art. To be ambiguous means to give double—or more than one—meaning. It is from the "quality art" that most of us strive for, it's the "quality idea" that engages and bends the mind.**



## Paintings and Pots

A show of work by Potters Guild member Karen Robinson and painter, Grace McKnight took place at Lunenburg's Black Duck Gallery from November 16th to December 25th, 2008. Grace and I have been friends for a long time, and it was a revelation the day she noticed the similarities in our work and suggested doing a joint show. Grace was a professional potter in Ontario for ten years, producing crystalline glazed wares. She now works in paint on paper and canvas.

We transformed the space, and watched our pieces come together to a finished presentation. The pieces did indeed complement each other! Of course, it helped that Grace is a Feng Shui master! It turned out better than we had even hoped, and we hope to do another show together in Halifax with all new work in a year or so.



- Karen Robinson

## Bee-hive Kiln & Wood Firing to Cone 10, at The Pottery, 12 miles from Manhattan, New York City



I Mary Jane Lundy had the experience of finally getting to New York City during Thanksgiving in November 2008. It wasn't just about seeing this amazing city and going to the Cosmopolitan Museum and see a piece by the man who inspires my work

Bernard Palissy large platter,



or walk 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue on a sunny day , and see Time Square at night.....

it was having the opportunity to help fire a Cone 10 wood kiln only 12 miles away from the big apple. The address is 67 A

Ludlow Lane, Palisades, the home of Jane Herold a potter who also lives here in Nova Scotia two months out of the year in Mabou, Cape Breton. She is a member of our potters guild and I connected with her after babysitting her pots from the exhibition

"Atmosphere: The Rising Sun of Eastcoast Woodfired Ceramics", at Mary E. Black Gallery, Halifax, in 2007. When she came to pick up her pots the next summer I invited myself up for her next firing. I was welcomed with open arms from her whole family and her next door neighbor Grace Knowlton. Grace Knowlton is a sculptor and painter who very generously has shared her property and inspiration with Jane (as well as her humor!) since 1980.

The kiln is a 6 foot diameter, round, down-draught bee-hive kiln with four fireboxes with an annular bagwall all around it, and a fairly tall chimney. On the day to begin the firing Jane preheats during the day and start the fires in earnest by 6 PM, finishing the firing the next evening in time for a late supper. Firing takes about 24 hours all told, excluding the preheat. Jane describes her firings "like a long, slow dance, with a few fast numbers thrown in here and there". Three people can do the work. She burns hardwood to preheat and pine for the rest of the firing. The smaller it's split, the easier the firing.

We had a perfect day for the firing. Who'd believe it was the end of November. To view the pots we fired go to -

<http://janeherold.com/gallery/december-2008/>



These are Jane Herolds words about her work:

### **POTS TO MIX IN, SERVE IN, COOK IN AND EAT FROM**

There are people today who want handmade dinnerware, who accept and value the variation that comes with humanity, who want warm, natural, living pots. People who care what they eat from. If you are one of them, it is for you that I work.

I throw my pots on a kick wheel, and single fire them to 1300 degrees Centigrade using only wood as my fuel. I care more about beauty than uniformity, though I fully respect the demands of use; plate should stack neatly, mugs should feel good in your hand, a serving bowl should make the food look wonderful. All of my pots are lead-free, dishwasher, oven and microwave safe. They are meant to be used, not once in a while, but every day.

Although these pots are easy to live with, they are not just for the table, but also for the spirit. My hope is that even washing up will be less of a chore and

more of pleasure because you'll have beautiful things in your hands.

Jane Herold established The Pottery in the fall of 1984 after apprenticing at Wenford Bridge Pottery in Cornwall, England, with the renowned potter Michael Cardew. In his words, "*The beauty of a pot ought to be a natural consequence of its usefulness, just as a man's happiness ought to be a natural consequence of his work.*"

My pots are intended for everyday use, and you do not need to baby it, however you do need to use a little common sense. Please don't take a pot from the fridge and put it in a hot oven. Room temperature pots can go into the oven without any problem, as long as they are fairly full of food. They are not intended to go under the broiler. The guide is to heat pots gradually and evenly, in an oven, not over the flame. With this little bit of care my pots can last forever.

The Pottery is open year round in New York and during July and August in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. You can check me out on my website, to see what I'm up to. The website address [www.janeherold.com](http://www.janeherold.com) or visit her 67A Ludlow Lane, Palisades, New York 10964 845 359-5421 or 13757 Highway 19, Mabou, Cape Breton, N. S. B0E 1X0 – July and August 902-258-3727

Here is an Invitation from Jane:  
If anyone wants to come to CB this summer and give me a hand I am going to cast the arch of the Glenville kiln, and

build the chimney. The rest is all done. It's a different design (of my own) and I call it my "comfort kiln"...loads at ground level, no steps up OR down, and stokes at a comfortable height, with only one, really big firebox. I hope it works! Glenville's in a beautiful spot just outside Mabou, and we've got plenty of room, so if anyone would like to come help they'd be most welcome. Maybe combine some kiln-building with some beach-going or hiking? My goal in CB is to use the local clay as much as possible, and I've had some very nice test pieces with it. I'd like the whole operation to be as local as possible. Tell anyone interested to send me an email at [jane.herold@gmail.com](mailto:jane.herold@gmail.com).

-Mary Jane Lundy

**'the distill cup 2009'**  
**Open to Canadian**  
**artists/craftspeople/**  
**designers**  
**to interpret 'cup' in any**  
**medium.**

Application **due date is**  
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Toronto, Ontario, m5a3c4  
For additional information,  
contact Allison Skinner at  
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**Nova Scotia Potters Guild**

**Committee**

**Co-Presidents –**

**Louise Pentz**

RR#1, Pleasantville, NS

B0R 1G0 902-688-2732

[louise@pentzgallery.ns.ca](mailto:louise@pentzgallery.ns.ca)

**Sharon Fiske**

629 Bedford Highway

Halifax, NS, B3M 2L6

902-445-4453

[sharonfiske@eastlink.ca](mailto:sharonfiske@eastlink.ca)

**Membership-**

**Judy Gordon**

241 Kinsac Rd, Beaver Bank, NS

B4G 2C1 902-864-0024

[turnaroundpotter@accesswave.ca](mailto:turnaroundpotter@accesswave.ca)

**Treasurer –**

**Janet Doble**

24 Ravenerock Lane, Halifax, NS.

B3M 2L6 902-455-6960

[jdoble@eastlink.ca](mailto:jdoble@eastlink.ca)

**Communications Director – Editor-**

**Mary Jane Lundy**

274 East Dover Rd.

East Dover, N.S.

B3Z 3W8

902-852-4467

[nspottersguild@gmail.com](mailto:nspottersguild@gmail.com)

[pinwheeldesign@gmail.com](mailto:pinwheeldesign@gmail.com)

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Graphic Designer, Pinwheel Design

[www.pinwheeldesign.ca](http://www.pinwheeldesign.ca)

[info@pinwheeldesign.ca](mailto:info@pinwheeldesign.ca)

902.893.3786

**HAPPY POTTING!!**

**Your communicator/editor:**

**Mary Jane Lundy**

SEE  
NO  
EVIL

HEAR  
NO  
EVIL

SPEAK  
NO  
EVIL

HEY-  
SHIT  
HAPPENS



DWAYNE TINSLEY