caawa
Ceramics Arts Association of Western Australia

PYRE
June 2022

OUR VISION

To make Western Australia a vibrant global centre for the ceramic arts.

OUR MISSION

To develop a community that nurtures understanding, practice and passion for the ceramic arts.

PRESIDENT' REPORT

Bernard Kerr, President

Hello everyone!

As we head towards the winter solstice this month, clay is taking longer to dry and many of us are working towards producing work for exhibitions, markets and open studios that will occur in Spring or the Noongar season of Kambarang.

You will have noticed that the CAAWA annual members' selective exhibition will be held at Gallery Central in Northbridge and run from September 19th to October 15th. The entry form is on the CAAWA website and entries are due by Monday 15th August. This is a great opportunity to exhibit your work and cerebrate the appreciation and practice of ceramics in WA.

Perhaps you might consider the current time of year to be a time for experimentation, exploration and reflection about one's direction as a potter or ceramic artist. The Noongar people called it the Fertility season or Makuru. It may be worth considering it as a time of developing new ideas and planning new directions. One of the added benefits of working with clay at this time of the year of course is that often the studio space is warm when we are firing!

The month of May has been interesting connecting with matters related to ceramics. Firstly was a meeting with staff at Boola Bardip, the Museum of Western Australia to discuss the ceramic performance by the Singapore artist Jason Lim. Jason was meant to come to WA and conduct his installation at Fremantle Arts Centre last year in October as part of the Indian Ocean Craft Triennale (IOTA) but was foiled by Covid. He now will be conducting his ceramic performance at Boola Bardip in late October. CAAWA plans to conduct clay activities in the space that Jason is working in but we will need volunteers. If you can help out during the day between the 22nd and 26th October to help children and their parents and, indeed, the general public become acquainted with the joys of working with clay, please contact Felicity Bodycoat, CAAWA secretary at secretary@ceramicartswa.asn.au.

Secondly, and most excitedly, I have been involved in the formation of a network of regional representatives from all over our great State of Western Australia. We now have a group of ceramists from the major centres in WA that aims to foster a network of ceramic artists across the State and have people in regional centres act as conduits for information and knowledge related to ceramic activities and help us provide access and information relating to our 'MUD" sessions (Make, Understand, Demonstrate) as well as link the appreciation and practice of ceramics in WA in a general sense. Representatives will join Zoom meeting with other regional representatives regularly and share what is happening in terms of ceramics in regional WA with each other and then disseminating information to their local contacts, write brief reports about regional activities for 'PYRE" when appropriate and be part of the planning for the 2025 Triennale. We have representatives for Esperance, Albany, Busselton/Margaret River, Bunbury, Geraldton, Port Hedland and Broome/Kununurra. We are still looking for someone from the Goldfields so, if you know of someone suitable, please email their details to our secretary (email above). Hopefully this will connect clay people across the State and, as we plan to stream events in the future it may mean that ceramic artists in WA may participate in what we offer in Perth as well as the possibility of CAAWA developing workshops that may tour the State.

Thank you to those regional representatives who have already sent in information and reports for inclusion in PYRE!

CAAWA's next MUD session will be held at the State Library of WA on Sunday and will concern how to effectively write about and best photograph your work. Hopefully this will assist in your application to exhibit in the annual show. More details will be emailed to you directly and be posted on the website.

Also, don't forget to send in images of you cups or mugs so that you may have the possibility of being included on our inaugural 'Mug Shots' poster. Details are on the website.

Happy potting and sculpting,

Warm regards,
Bernard

REGIONAL REPORTS

THE SOUTH WEST – "The Green Blade Rises"

Alison Brown is an influential master potter who has been producing high quality ceramics for over fifty years. She initially had a studio in the Perth Hills but moved to the South West a number of years ago. She reflects on on the state of ceramics in her new home.

The winter rains have arrived in the Southwest, and the shoots of winter grass are emerging, turning the landscape green. Renewed energy and activity after a busy summer of tourists, has given Potters time to build up stock and prepare for the Margaret River Region Open Studios event in September.

After 50 years working as a potter, my studio work this year was put on hold while I recovered mobility following thumb surgery. The 3-4 months of rehabilitation has now passed, and I am about to begin again.

In the meantime, the studio has not laid idle as my Granddaughter, Ella Stubbs, has recently moved to the region to take up work as an Occupational Therapist in Margaret River. In 2020 COVID saw the closure of many workplaces, enabling her the chance to spend time in my studio where she quickly learned the basic principles of clay making. Also packing and firing a kiln, hand building techniques, centring clay and throwing. After returning to Perth, a return visit to my studio produced 100 pots to fire-that is passion!

Fast forward two years, has seen skills honed and developed into a distinctive style and technique, and a career path in ceramics well established. The region welcomes a newly emerging potter ready to use her skills to run hand building workshops, as well as continuing in her primary field of training. Money from the sale of work at the Summer X Salt markets Perth, and online sales has seen her set up her own studio with a kiln, wheel and all the equipment needed to function independently in Margaret River.

There is another outstanding example of a potting dynasty in Dunsborough dating back to 1969. Earl Happ began a parallel career as a production thrower and founded Happs Pottery in 1977 with the whole family involved. It was growing up in this environment that Myles Happ learned his skills, and has moved on with his own career to establish Happs Pottery at Marybrook.

His work volume has expanded to the point where high output has demanded semi industrial equipment and a number of employees. Now a third Generation of the family, Finn Happ, has emerged as a fine young potter working in the Marybrook pottery studio.

The original Happs Pottery was lying as a sleeping giant for some years until a few years ago when a potting duo, Gary Hambleton and Japneet Keith came along. A climate of energy and commitment saw it's re-emergence and growth. Under the management and art ceramicist Japneet Keith, and superb skills of a production thrower and artist Gary, the business has continued to thrive and develop.

The pottery studio was renamed Commonage Pottery in 2020.

A teaching school has been formed there, where students are being trained in all areas of clay making and throwing, glazing and firing techniques. Some great work, high skill and creativity is coming out of the now thriving pottery workshop.

Ceramics is alive and well here in the Southwest. With a parallel between skills transferred through generations, and well-established studios such as Willyabrup Dreaming Pottery- Bill Micklejohn, Hoffman-Dilkes Pottery, Sensei Pottery- Ian Benniston, Bussleton Pottery Club, the Courthouse Gallery, and many other smaller studios.

Alison Brown

INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN BAXTER, EMERGING POTTER:
CONDUCTED BY JAPNEET KEITH

Martin Baxter is a young potter and works from his home studio in Busselton. He has been firing at Ian Dowling's studio in Margaret River. He recently completed a wood salt firing.

Martin likes to explore texture and pattern in his work, and has been working on establishing a range of glazes as he likes to suit the form as well.

Currently he is enjoying making bigger bottles. He will be doing a few ash glaze tests and is looking for a nice and stable ox blood glaze. It's a never-ending journey:)

His work has recently been added to the collection of pottery at Commonage Pottery.

Instagram: @mwbaxter

An interaction with Martin Baxter.

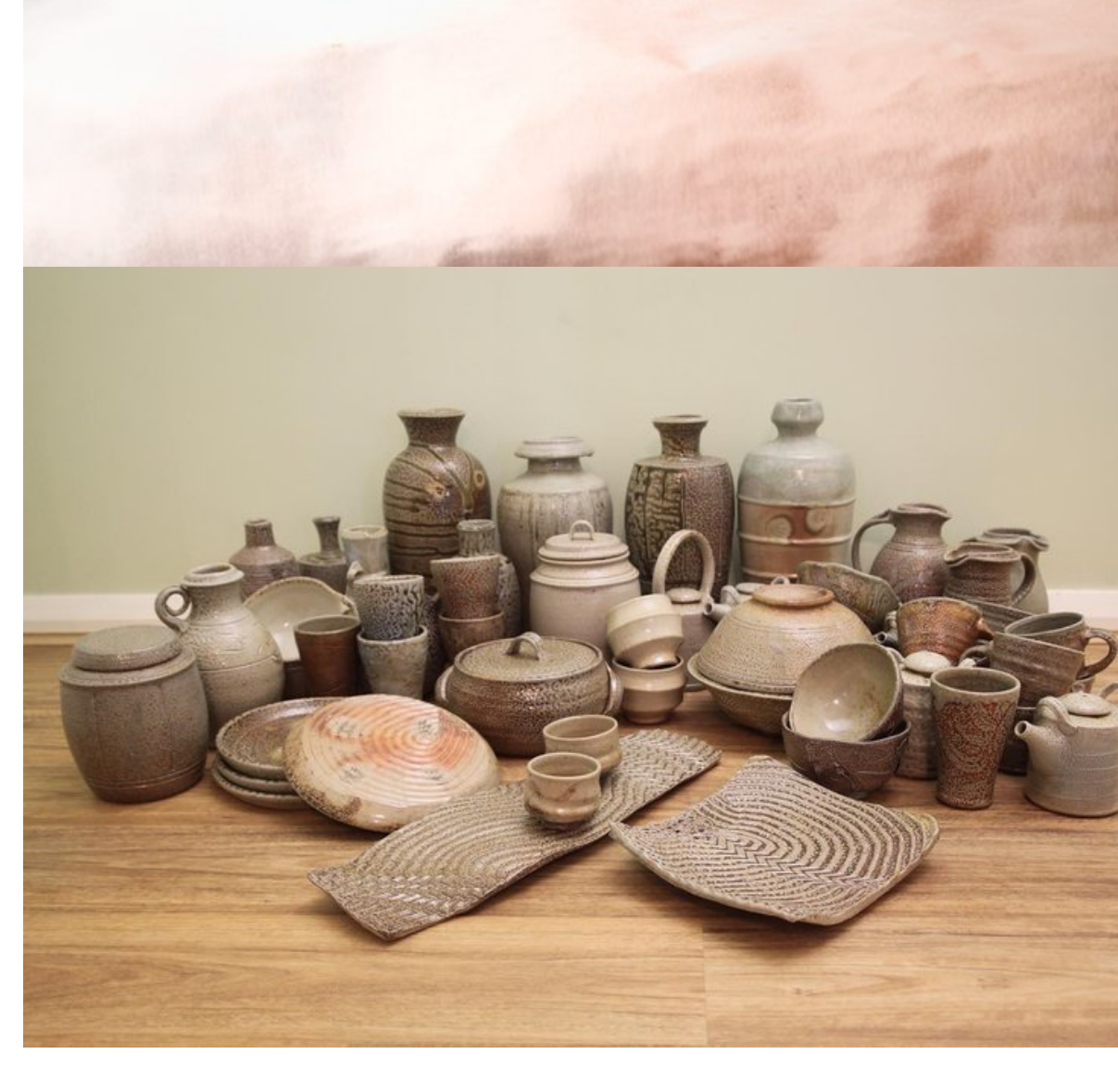
What inspired you to pottery?
There are many contributing factors over my life course that may have led me to pottery, most direct being that my partner Emily also makes pots and was my introduction to the craft. A few things kind of happened at once for me to start my own journey into pot making. One being that Em got tired of me asking her to make things. Her response had become "why don't you make it?!". The second thing being that Cher Shackelton announced that she was putting on a woodfiring workshop. We joined up and I thought, well, I better learn to make a good pot by then! A week or so later we went on a trip to Denmark and came across some pots by Ian McRae;one being a short coffee cup. This pot holds all the characteristics of what I believe to be a fine pot. We also met Mary Wallace in Denmark who told me how to pull a handle. When we got back from that trip I sat down and tried to recreate my version of Ian's cup. Of course as any beginning potter does, I shared my 'best' pots with the family. This included Em's father Gerry. Gerry being a former production potter at Cowaramup pottery was true to form and said "great, now make 100 more the same". From there, I was off and the inspiration continues.

Through your clay journey and learning is there a particular potter or style of pottery that has influenced you immensely?
I feel like I am just beginning my clay journey! My education started by looking locally. Greg Crowe, Cher Shackleton and Ian Dowling have all been generous teachers and are potters I admire. I then explored further, leading me to Leach and Hamada and the long line of potters in England and America (in particular Minnesota potters) they have influenced. My current favourites are Richard Batterham and Mike Dodd. You may see the influence in my work of these potters. I still have a lot more exploring and learning to do.

What has been your biggest joy as being a ceramic artist?
I don't think I will ever not love opening a kiln and seeing how it all worked out (or didn't). I also enjoy taking note of any progress being made in a shape or form and how it has evolved over time. Adding the little tweaks in the next making cycle. Reflecting on the progress made is a simple joy. Then if someone else likes it too, even better. I also love the woodfiring process, being present with the kiln, listening out for the changes and smelling the different timbers. I also have found a lot of joy in the community around pottery and the enormous generosity of knowledge from others.

What challenges do you face as a potter/ Ceramic artists**?**
For me, the biggest challenge is finding the time to make and space to do so in in order to continue to grow in my skills. Like many artists, I gain income from multiple types of work so it is a consistent juggle. I would love to formalise my learning through study or an apprenticeship but these are in short supply!

Your work is a strong reflection of love for ash & wood fired pottery. How would you best describe your experience of firing with wood?
I still have a lot to learn about wood firing. Like all things with ceramics, wood firing seems to be process driven and a continuous learning cycle! I have found I need to work *with* the kiln and the wood to reach and sustain temperature. Each kiln and type of timber interact differently so, for a beginning potter or new kiln, this needs to be figured out along the way. Add in the fact that wood firing can also be long and labour intensive. It can be quite the emotional journey at times.



BUNBURY
Bunbury Ceramics Report

Linda Guinness is our new CAAWA Regional Representative for the Bunbury region. She is a secondary school teacher with a love of the arts, particularly ceramics and sculpture. This is her description of the ceramics scene in Bunbury

In 2021 I had long service and I spent a lot of time with the Bunbury pottery group. Two wonderful people who work there are Davida Palmer and Jan James, I greatly admire and often seek out their advice. I felt honoured to have such awesome mentors around me. Being away from the school environment gave me a chance to explore some of my own ideas. It was a wonderful opportunity to develop my hand-skills and learn a little more about sculptural techniques. With their encouragement I even exhibited and sold a few pieces! OMG!!

One thing I have noticed in the studio is that most people gravitate to the wheel. There are ongoing basic workshops in hand-building but that is all. Jan became inspired over our time together in exploring hand-building skills and now is working more in this area.

I think that the Bunbury pottery group is keen to see some further development in hand-building and sculptural techniques together with further knowledge about glazing and ceramic decoration techniques.

In our group there are a few people that teach basic wheel skills, but there is always a place for challenges. Our members are enthused about the idea of attempting larger scale vessels with the choice of developing skills in using slab or coil hand-building or working on the wheel with coil and throw. Such a workshop or series of workshops such as this would be received well. At the end of the day, our members love any new ideas.

There have been recent positive changes to our pottery studio and new approaches to the way the studio is run. After a big clean up, the work area is now suitable for a number of students to participate in workshops and group activities. Inviting artists from around the State to work in the studio may really boost the interest in the area of ceramics and give members the opportunity to work with recognised ceramicists in their field. The Art Centre has regularly invited ceramic artists to teach in the studio in the past and there is still plenty of evidence on the shelves in the studio.

The Stirling Street Art Centre where Bunbury Potters are situated is very supportive of workshop opportunities and would also happily promote any workshops run there. A large number of people visit the centre, including students, families and retirees looking for opportunities that set new challenges and offer new perspectives on approaches to their art making. This would be a good place to consider if CAAWA considers offering some workshops as part of their MUD programme in Bunbury.

An alternative venue would be the Art room at Dalyellup College for weekend workshops.This would also encourage some of the students to join in learning new skills, along with professional development for Visual Art teachers in the district.

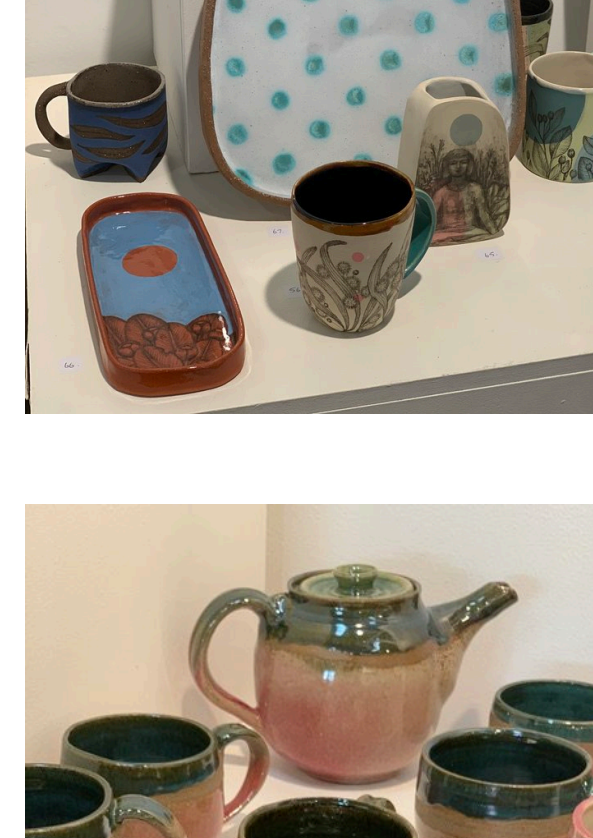
Potters and ceramic artists in Bunbury eagerly look forward to hearing from CAAWA and seeing what we can do together collectively to promote our love of ceramics.

Personally, I am looking forward to our first Regional Representative online get together and chat and seeing what other parts of the State are doing and sharing in their ceramic communities.

Warm regards,
Linda Guinness

ESPERANCE
The Esperance Pottery Club was established in 1978 and has been operating from the pottery room at the Cannery Arts Centre since 1986. The pottery room is a well-equipped work space for individual artists and community groups to use with two kilns, and recent funding to purchase a third kiln, six electric pottery wheels and two large benches with capacity for 20 people. The Cannery Arts Centre organises courses and workshops; a six week hand building course on Sunday afternoons, a six week wheel course on Wednesday evenings and a variety of children workshops run by master potter Krystal Obschonka. The club itself is designed for self-guided pottery creation. Currently, there are over 50 members with most aged 30-50 years old. The members have been busy preparing for their very popular annual exhibition that opened recently in the main gallery at the Cannery.

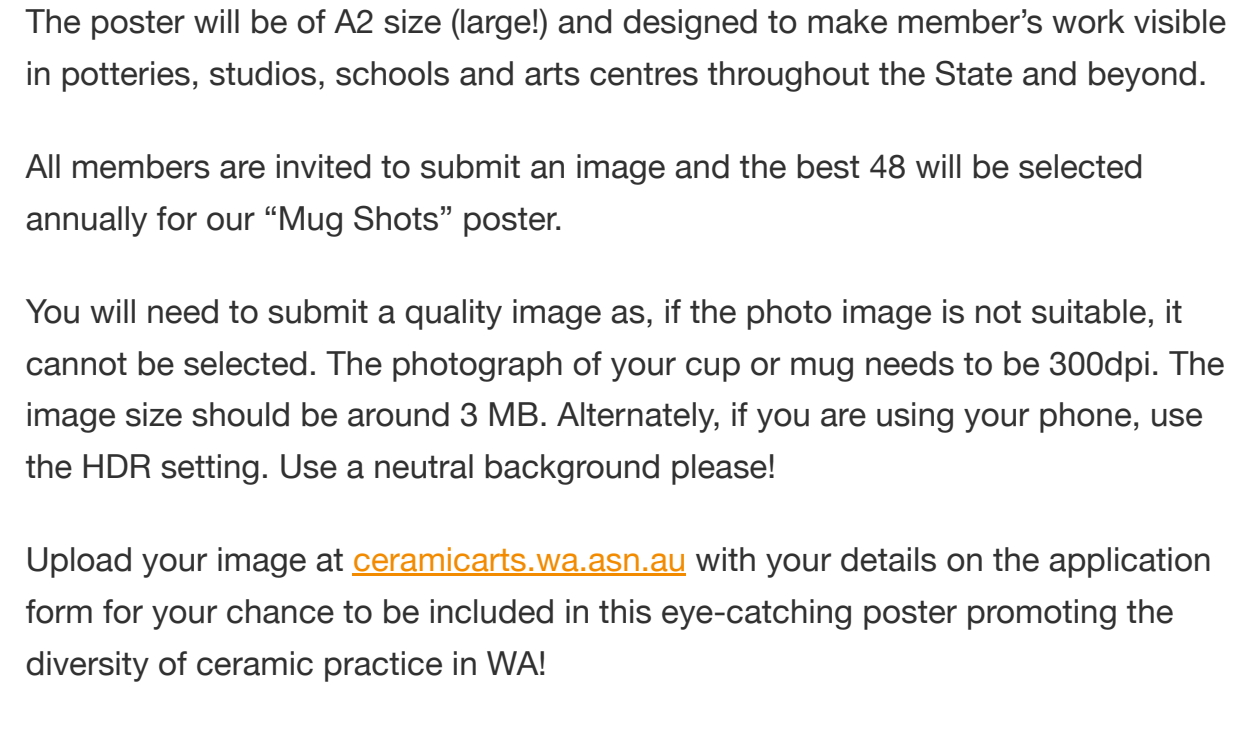
All photos by Katie Witt



New potter Lynda Horn and her rustic handbuilt platters with ocean colours.

Intricate drawings of nature on exquisite clay pieces by artist Naomi Stanitzki
instagram.com/artbynomes/ facebook.com/artbynomes

Master potter Krystal Obschonka with glazes inspired by the Esperance environment from our pink lakes to white sands and green vegetation.
facebook.com/krystal.obschonka
instagram.com/krystalobschonkaartist/


OPPORTUNITY!
SUBMIT A PHOTO OF YOUR HANDMADE MUG OR CUP
to feature on the next CAAWA A2 poster
Entries close 30 June 2022. Apply online at www.ceramicartswa.asn.au
Exclusive! Members only

The CAAWA committee has commenced an initiative to make visible some of the great work done by our members by producing an annual 'Mug Shots' Poster.

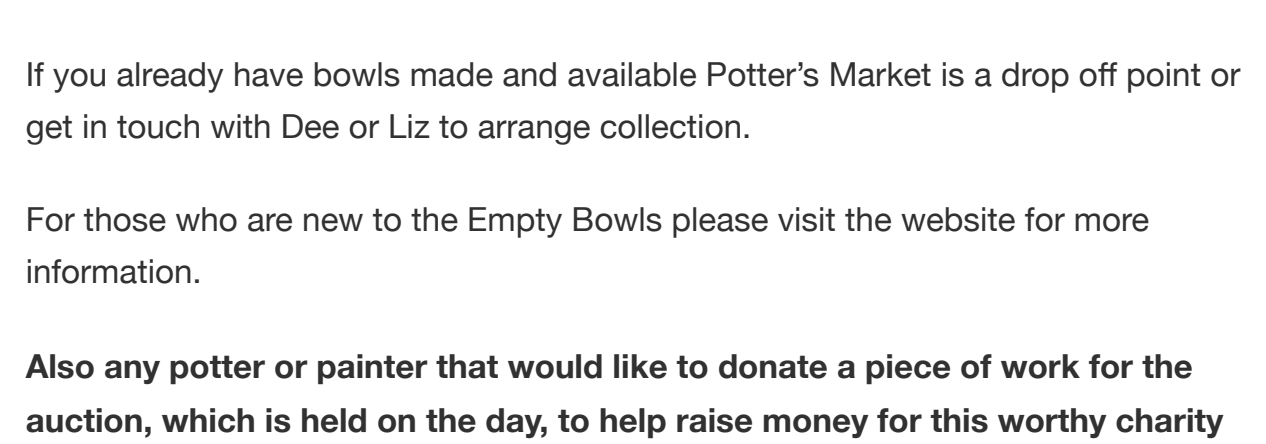
The poster will be of A2 size (large!) and designed to make member's work visible in potteries, studios, schools and arts centres throughout the State and beyond.

All members are invited to submit an image and the best 48 will be selected annually for our "Mug Shots" poster.

You will need to submit a quality image as, if the photo image is not suitable, it cannot be selected. The photograph of your cup or mug needs to be 300dpi. The image size should be around 3 MB. Alternately, if you are using your phone, use the HDR setting. Use a neutral background please!

Upload your image at ceramicarts.wa.asn.au with your details on the application form for your chance to be included in this eye-catching poster promoting the diversity of ceramic practice in WA!

"Mug Shots" Application Form



EMPTY BOWLS FOODBANK WA EVENT 2022

Calling to all the potters out there. We are starting to receive bowls for the Empty Bowls Perth Foodbank WA event but are in need of plenty more so your donations would be much appreciated. If you want to let us know how many you are able to pledge before August 21 would be a great help.

If you already have bowls made and available Potter's Market is a drop off point or get in touch with Dee or Liz to arrange collection.

For those who are new to the Empty Bowls please visit the website for more information.

Also any potter or painter that would like to donate a piece of work for the auction, which is held on the day, to help raise money for this worthy charity please contact Dee on 0418 942 406 or Liz Berry on 0419 987 762.

Thank you for your support

For more information visit www.emptybowlsperth.com

BOOK HERE

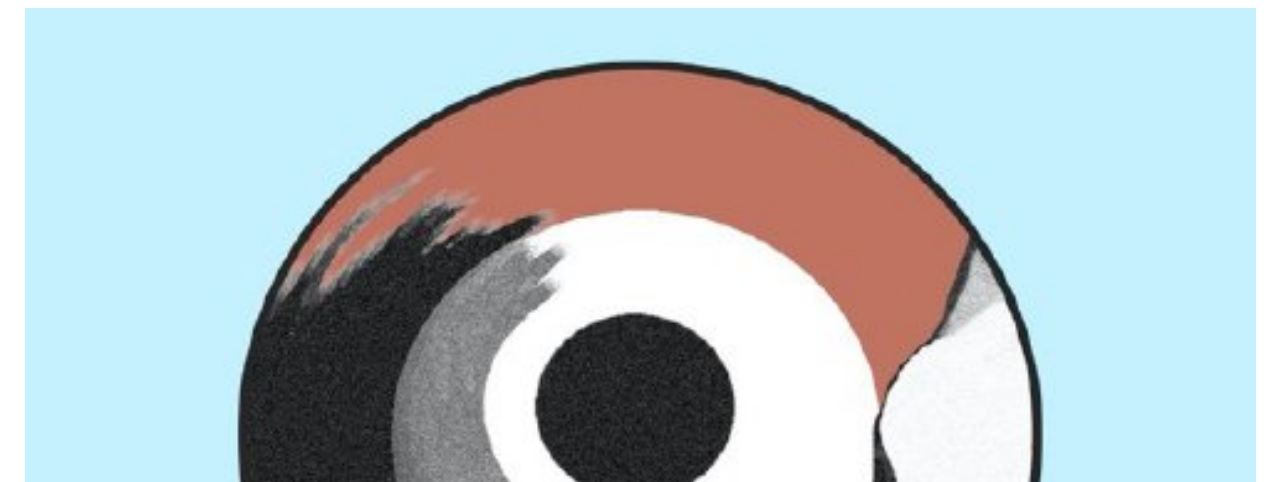
CAAWA MEMBERS' SELECTIVE EXHIBITION

YOUR CHANCE TO EXHIBIT IN A TOP GALLERY IN A GREAT CENTRAL LOCATION WITH YOUR FELLOW MEMBERS

Click here to apply

caawa
MEMBERS' SELECTIVE 2022
EXHIBITION

AUSTRALIAN CERAMICS OPEN STUDIOS



AUSTRALIAN CERAMICS
OPEN STUDIOS
12 & 13 NOVEMBER 2022

Australian Ceramics Open Studios (ACOS) is an annual, nationwide, weekend event that celebrates clay, community and creativity. Hosted by The Australian Ceramics Association, ceramics studios around Australia open their doors to offer a peek into their making, practical demonstrations and the chance to take home a handmade piece.
Whether you have a newly established or well-known studio, are an inner-city group, a regional potter or in the suburbs ... everyone is welcome to apply.
This will be TACA's 10th national open studio event. In 2021, 180 studios opened their doors around the country – mostly individual potters in their studios, but also lots of groups and potters sharing studios with other potters.
HERE'S HOW ACOS WORKS ...
You participate by:

- Opening your studio doors and invite your community in for a sneak peek (this is the minimum requirement to be involved)
- Giving a demo or offer hands-on experience for visitors (visitors just love this!)
  Selling a pot or three (or loads more!)
- Sharing a cuppa in the garden (a lovely way to enjoy the day with visitors)
- Gathering together some local potters and share a space (and the excitement) ... one clever option
- Connecting a group of studios by creating a studio trail ... another option which works well for everyone!

TACA will support you by:

- Providing a logo which will be available for registered participants to use for publicity.
- Organising national and state promotion of the event.
- Sending you lots of great advice for local promotion and studio preparation as the event draws closer.
- Posting each participant a stack of ACOS 2022 regional maps for local distribution and some TACA postcards.
- Making available downloadable maps, posters etc.
- Listing every participating artist or group on australianceramicscommunity.com.

DEADLINES & IMPORTANT STUFF!
EARLY BIRD DEADLINE: FRIDAY 31 JULY 2022
EARLY BIRD PARTICIPATION FEES

- Single TACA member in their own studio: $40
- Several TACA members in one studio: $40 per TACA member ie. per person
- Incorporated Group Studio* with 10 and under people participating: $100
- Incorporated Group Studio* with 11 and over people participating: $150

*Incorporated Group Studio (ie. your incorporated group is a TACA member)
PARTICIPATION FEES (1 August – 2 September)

- Single TACA member in their own studio: $50
- Several TACA members in one studio: $50 per TACA member ie. per person
- Group Studio* with 10 and under people participating: $110
- Group Studio* with 11 and over people participating: $160

* Incorporated Group Studio (ie. your incorporated group is a TACA member)

ABSOLUTE DEADLINE TO BE ON A MAP: FRIDAY 2 SEPTEMBER
NOTE: If you miss this deadline, your studio will NOT be included on your regional map.
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST REQUIREMENTS

- Completed EOI forms are due by Friday 31 July (early bird) or Friday 2 September (final deadline).
- You (and your group participants) must comply to the Conditions of Entry (below) prior to creating an ACOS Listing.

ACOS CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- Be available for the Australian Ceramics Open Studios (ACOS) event dates in the given year.
- Must hold current membership/s of The Australian Ceramics Association (TACA) at the time of the event. Find out more HERE if you are not a TACA member.
- All participating artists (or incorporated groups) must have liability insurance with a valid Certificate of Currency, detailing cover for the dates of the ACOS event.
- The Certificate of Currency must note the TACA member's name (single person or incorporated group) and must be supplied to TACA at least one month before the event.
- Note: those who have TACA Group Liability Insurance are covered for this event.
- Pay an applicable Participation Fee on (or just after) submission of an EOI form.

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT YOUR ACOS EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI), YOU WILL NEED:

- to be a **current member of The Australian Ceramics Association** (TACA)
- a recent **photo of you in your studio** – square to landscape is best with your head not too close to the top of the image.
  to **have text prepared** about what visitors to your studio can expect when they visit you – type of work, demonstrations, cup of tea etc
- to **be ready to pay** the ACOS Participation Fee on submission of your EOI form.

Vicki Grima
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