



SHANE
NORRIE

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SHANE NORRIE

Woodstock Art Gallery
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SHANE NORRIE





CONTENTS

Message from the Woodstock Art Gallery, Connie Lauder	TEN
Friends of the Woodstock Art Gallery, Margaret Douglas	TEN
Foreword, Patricia Deadman	ELEVEN
Invited Essay, Peter Powning	SIXTEEN
In the Stream of Consciousness: "Not Just a Ceramic Vessel", Patricia Deadman	TWENTY
List Of Works	THIRTY
Artist Acknowledgements	THIRTY-ONE
Biographies	THIRTY-FOUR

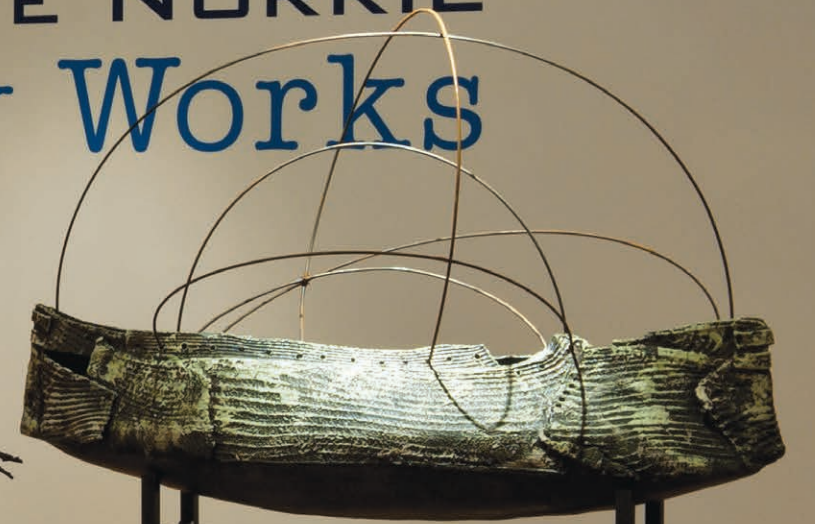


'Untitled' 2012 | Mixed Media | 38" x 13" x 65" | Private Collection

SHANE NORRIE New Works

JULY 21, 2012

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO



M E S S A G E F R O M

WOODSTOCK ART GALLERY ADVISORY COMMITTEE | CONNIE LAUDER, CHAIR

It is with great pleasure that the new Woodstock Art Gallery hosts the solo exhibition Shane Norrie: New Works – his first major public art gallery exhibition.

Shane Norrie’s relationship with the Woodstock Art Gallery and the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre is a long established one. In 1997, Norrie received The Friends of the Woodstock Art Gallery Visual Arts Scholarship. Today, his work is collected internationally in both public and private collections. Norrie’s career continues to evolve with his creativity and range of work, which includes mixed media painting, functional pottery and his latest creations using kiln-manipulated glass.

Congratulations Shane on your continued success, we look forward to working with you in the future.

F R I E N D S O F T H E W O O D S T O C K A R T G A L L E R Y

VISUAL ARTS SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE | MARGARET DOUGLAS, CHAIR

The Friends of the Woodstock Art Gallery fund an annual scholarship for a graduating high school student from Oxford County who has been accepted into an Arts program at a college or university. Shane Norrie received this scholarship in 1997. The Friends of the Woodstock Art Gallery are committed to supporting the education of visual art students in Oxford County.

F O R E W O R D

PATRICIA DEADMAN, CURATOR

The Woodstock Art Gallery (WAG) proudly presents Shane Norrie: New Works. This exhibition represents the first large body of installation work by local artist, Shane Norrie. Known for his ceramic functional pieces and mixed media paintings, Norrie presents ten large mixed media works and eleven smaller sculptural pieces. This body of work follows his recent journey to an Oregon artist residency and Japan visit with mentor Shirley Clifford.

The exhibition and accompanying catalogue was made possible through the generous support of our fellow colleagues, peers and community members. The Woodstock Art Gallery would like to extend our heartfelt thank you to internationally renowned ceramic and glass artist Peter Powning for his insightful words in the catalogue introduction. A senior Canadian artist, curator and writer Peter has been a long-time inspiration for Shane. Thank you to the many admirers and collectors who continue to support Shane’s endeavours.

Also, to the special partnership with the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre, I extend our thank you to Heather MacIntosh (Administrative Assistant), Keri Axon (President), Members and the Potter’s Group.

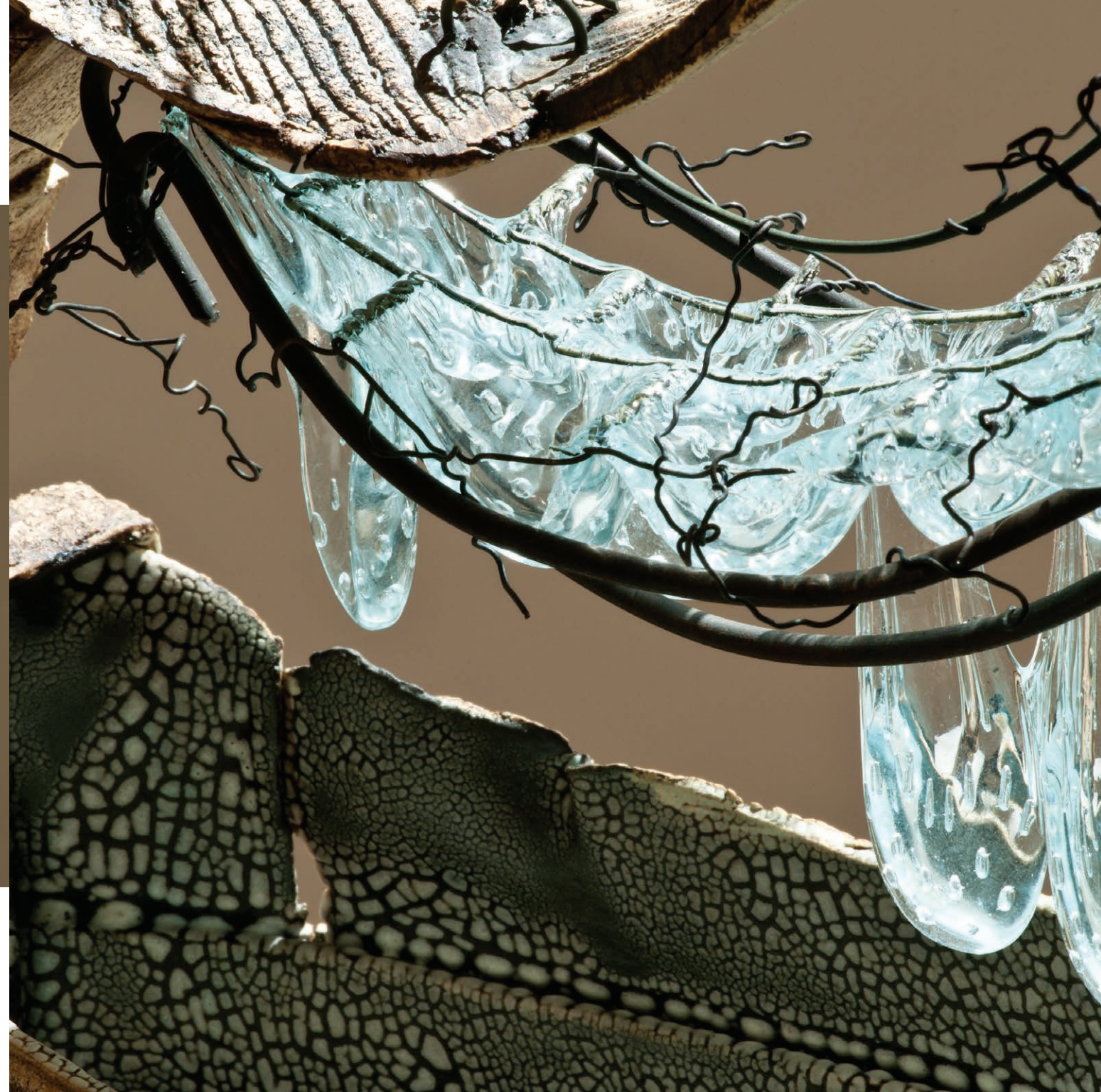
Many thanks are extended to those who volunteered their efforts to assist with the exhibition installation as well as the dedicated contributions of individuals Rita Taylor and Pauline McHenry.

The Woodstock Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the Art Gallery Advisory Committee, the Friends of the Woodstock Art Gallery, and the City of Woodstock.

Special thank you to Shane Norrie for sharing his passion, experience and imagination, we are truly grateful and enriched.



'Untitled' 2012 | Mixed Media | 20" x 5.5" x 14" | Private Collection





INVITED ESSAY

ARTIST, CURATOR, WRITER | PETER POWNING, GUEST WRITER

Before you read this, take a look at this stimulating exhibition. Savour the unmediated experience of seeing and being with the work before reading what anybody else has to say about it. Try to just take it in without labelling or intellectualizing your initial encounter; give it a chance to speak for itself. Soon enough, the rush of associations, categorizations, comparisons and opinions will elbow their way in, influencing your sense of the work – but it's important to allow yourself mental space for your own empirical seeing.

In this show Shane Norrie presents us with a well-defined, focused collection of sculpture rather than giving us the full range of his work – utilitarian ceramics, painting and sculpture. This is a distilled body of work. We're confronted with metaphorical resonances that evoke "vessel" in its many meanings: container, boat and embodiment of cultural meaning (or associations.) Some seem like exotic dwellings; others evoke arks. Some are the familiar sculptural ceramic vessel, that is a vase in form but refers to non-utilitarian aspects of containment, of clothing a volume. These last claim a right to self-sufficiency without the need of serving a utilitarian function. They divulge their content over time.

There is a simplicity of approach in this exhibition that unifies the complexity of texture, line and materials. It is a layered experience. The fleet of vessels as a whole provides a communal context, various groupings revealing more specific connections and then the particular resonances of each piece individually inviting intimate encounters and consideration.

This work summons engagement. It is clearly the result of Shane Norrie's willingness to experiment and take risks, while exercising enough guidance and control to benefit from the process of transforming materials by ordeal of "fire." The blend of glass, metal, clay and other materials works by alternately creating tensions and contrasts while managing a unity of purpose.

There's a precarious, almost dangerous quality to the glass in many pieces that transmutes a comfortable ceramic vessel into something edgier, harder to parse. The contrasts and intricacy of material combinations are rich and allow a breadth expression that is alluring. Each piece sets the stage for an imaginative encounter with ourselves and all that important stuff that we get from non-word engagement with the world.

My test for good work is that it possesses the potential to reward contemplation over time, that it always triggers a reaction, new connections. I see that in this exhibition.



'Untitled' 2012 | Mixed Media | 20" x 6" x 14" | Private Collection



*Ceramics today is more than pots. It can be sculptural or conceptual. It can be tangible or intangible, recognizable or unrecognizable. It can be about living, or about ideas. It is about life.*¹

- Raphael Yu



IN THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

“NOT JUST A CERAMIC VESSEL” | PATRICIA DEADMAN

Since time began, hidden among the tall grasses, alongside glacial rivers clay beds withhold the very foundation of our existence and continue to provide sustenance to humanity. For artist Shane Norrie, inherent qualities, ancestral knowledge and collective memory fused with a healthy dose of inquisitiveness and sense of discovery the landscape becomes a source of interpretation and creative energy to explore notions of self, narrative and recollection. Iconic symbolism ingrained with personal observations of shared time, histories and cultural references inspire his artistic practice,

Several years ago one autumn afternoon a small group of dedicated potters amid the drizzle eagerly waited with anticipation over a smoldering fire pit to unbury the fruits of their labour. Shane Norrie was one of those potters as he worked alongside his mentors at the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre (ICAC). Since that rainy day as a student, Shane has evolved his proficiency in his technique not only as a functional potter and painter but also as a mixed-media ceramicist that elevated his methodology and opens the dialogue between ancient traditions of art and craft and contemporary art.

For centuries, throughout the world ceramics began with humble beginnings. Ceramics remain an integral practice relevant to the intellectual, aesthetic and social lives of the individual and the community. *“Craft, rooted in function and the everyday, bridges the divide between art and life that continually eludes the utopian grasp of art.”*² For Norrie, his holistic approach continues to transform the ceramic discourse



of craft and sculpture to a heightened hybrid sensibility. His early investigation remained rooted in process utilizing tactile surfaces and richly coloured glazes yet served as a stepping-stone to further his vision. His painterly sensibilities transcended into the materiality of the clay medium. His way of seeing and interpreting his rural environment became fodder for his current work. His vessels exemplify not only the historical symbolic relationships to water, earth and fire associated in Western thought but rather allows one to question their own understanding of place and cultural value as well as opportunity to acknowledge place as a reference to the past and offer a connectedness to the

future. Norrie continues to blur technical boundaries between two-dimensional surface and that of the three-dimensional form.

Norrie like many artists deftly cross boundaries between ceramics, fine art ceramics, craft, design, archaeology and architecture. There is a delightful sense of discovery in his work as he challenges and explores elements of art history and culture to create a symbiosis between form and function. The sensuality and physicality of his process confronts contemporary terminology such as beauty and nature. *“Every piece you look at has a place in time and a location in the world; it can be viewed as a measure and metaphor of the maker’s culture; it can touch your soul or leave you cold.”*³

Shane has returned to the notion of the vessel or container as an inherent architectural form. He skillfully and intuitively crafts the object to provide a point of departure that references both place and universality. His investigation of complex relationships between nature and culture, exterior and interior and the objective and the subjective materialize in organic shapes and rhythms that emanate the roughness, fragility and resilience of the landscape and echo the reality of being in the moment. However, as Peter Powning observes, *“The on-going experience of the physical presence of things deepens our awareness of seeing, just seeing, without the filters and intellectual garnish that analysis encumber us with.”*⁴ We are gently reminded of our privilege to absorb the experience.

In Norrie’s exhibition: New Works, appreciation of the moment becomes apparent. It is with a natural curiosity, enjoyment and discovery of transformation that he offers an escape from predictability through tension and

fluidity. Norrie manipulates glazes, firing methods and various types of clay to create unique surface effects and textures. He incorporates found objects from the farmer's field tactile elements such as steel, wire and old rubber tires with slumped glass. He allows the disparate parts to function as one, thus becoming an independent sculpture serving as a mnemonic device to express an idea that articulates containment, abstraction and metaphor. Brief narratives inscribed on the glass are fragmented and remain hidden only to be revealed as obscure markings. It is by the passage of time, perhaps reminiscent of early rock paintings giving evidence of community that multiple meanings invite contemplation to issues of protection, regeneration and residue. What do we choose to recollect?

The challenge to transform an object into an act of curiosity or play is to recognize the necessity of the physical use of an object to the significance of the spiritual realm—an aspect often alienated in today's modern culture. While his emotional response alternates with the rational the notion of play become one in the same for the artist—the vitality of a new experience is paramount to individuality. Norrie's vessels are a multi-dimensional concept beyond mere geography, economic, or social construct they are vessels filled with personal memories, feelings and aspirations allowing the collective consciousness to respond to the universality of human emotion. The vessel becomes an object that is inherently abstract, a repository where dexterity, laborious, theoretical and intangible thoughts and skills are achieved. The materialization of an idea or concept usually is metaphorically a representation or rather an extension of the self.

Global cultures since millennia have incorporated clay objects into daily ritual. Clay can have numerous references to mythology, creation or the mundane to serve many purposes, either cultural, spiritual, functional; from bricks for dwellings to vessels for carrying, containing and cooking, the ordinary becomes transformed to the extraordinary simply by the intrinsic beauty of the object. In every culture there is a cultural canon determined by archetypes, motifs, perhaps a universal symbol that triggers the unconscious beyond rational thought. Norrie leaves space for the imagination to elaborate on the individual pieces. *“Function has become not only a narrative between the maker and the piece, but a narrative that permeates the life and lifestyle of each individual.”*⁵ Function alone is no longer a valid indicator of worth since the aesthetic consideration celebrates what we sometimes take for granted. The specific meaning of the artists work remains within the artist however the viewer brings a set of values with them to determine their own interpretation. After all,

*“containers and objects are also the ultimate form of abstraction, they never “represent” anything (except themselves).”*⁶ What do we choose to value?

Rooted within the landscape, Norrie enlightens his own perspective and knowledge to interpret aspects of history, language, politics and cultural constructs. This seems an onerous and daunting task to associate with his work however, for Shane, fragments of twentieth century art movements such as abstraction and conceptual art reflect intellectual thought within his world view as seen through diverse works in a global culture. Since his recent sojourn in the Oregon glass residency and his trip to Japan alongside his mentor Shirley Clifford he met master Japanese potter; Shihoh Kanzaki, embracing his passion for sculptural form.

There is validity to the inherent nature of clay. The malleable material allows transformation through the firing process that engages the viewer to question the intangible. Norrie fuses both architectural and ceramic elements to negotiate transitions of interior to exterior space. A notion of shelter or protection or rather a mode of how we establish a sense of place and space remain ambiguous. *“Functional ceramics contribute much to the comfort and homeliness of this place; simultaneously, they mediate subjectivity in terms of status, identity, and agency. As contexts or “carriers” for ornament, both architecture and ceramics exhibit versatility, innovation, and symbiosis with the natural world. As creations of the human body and spirit, they materialize their makers’ desire to explore connections between the individual self and the social world.”*⁷ How does one consciously traverse the landscape of domesticity and wilderness?

As Norrie extends the clay's tolerance threshold, cracks, shrinkage and construction contribute to the final complexity of the vessel. Since his work is not considered utilitarian in nature as defined in a traditional sense but rather an interpretation of a rich global history, his work resonates regeneration in a rhythmic and tangible form. Norrie's acute attention to detail and enjoyment of chance results in his ability to accept unfamiliar forms, take advantage of subtleties and take pleasure into the beauty of irregularity. The ill-defined lumps of glass ooze brightly between the wire constructs. The relationship between water and the boat frames the metaphor between life and death, a rite of passage or perhaps a symbolic gesture of decay. His approach encompasses a modernist aesthetic that simply suggests both an inside and outside space bringing together the past and present. The vessels precariously suspended in space atop the minimal, architectural metal stand elevate their

status by alluding to the notion of quality or connoisseurship. The density of the vessel lends both physical and intellectual weight to cultural beliefs that makes the ideology that we surround them with thus no longer a debate between craft or is it art, after all, *“The sheer act of making objects in clay will forever be entwined with our own ideas of creation and identity.”*⁸ Perhaps the work subversively questions our own relationship to not only culture as a commodity but rather with how we perceive our connection to the landscape. The exhibition, *New Works* embarks a new journey for Norrie. His quiet and contemplative nature reflects the artist that he is. The intricacy of his installations begin to extract a premise that remains within all of our lives which make his work accessible to those who choose to recognize those qualities within themselves. This act initiates a synthesis of the collective consciousness and prescribed ancient values. *“Canadian ceramic vessels are a cultural production that both reflects and constructs meanings, fusing the symbolic with the functional without dismissing or negating either attribute.”*⁹ Norrie’s determination transforms an ancient medium to eloquently speak to his vision in a contemporary sculptural form that blurs identities and mirrors the connectedness between the state of being; a residue of self-awareness, community and a sense of belonging.

1 Raphael Yu, accessed www.garninermuseum.on.ca/raphael-yu-centre-of-canadian-ceramics/about July, 2012
 2 Amy Gogarty, *Remediating Craft* in ed. Ruth Chambers, Amy Gogarty and Mireille Perron, *Utopic Impulses, Contemporary Ceramics Practice*, (Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, British Columbia, 2007) pg 109
 3 Carol E. Mayer, *Measure and Metaphor in Vessel Based Sculpture in Hot Clay: Sixteen West Coast Ceramic Artists*, (Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey, British Columbia, 2004) pg 10
 4 Peter Powning, accessed www.powning/peter/books (Transmutations) July, 2012
 5 Naomi Clement, *Function, Form and Process: Walter Ostrom and the Female Potters of NSCAD*, in *Utopic Impulses, Contemporary Ceramics Practice*, Edited by Ruth Chambers, Amy Gogarty & Mireille Perron (Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, Canada, 2007) pg 23
 6 Ibid. pg 121
 7 Amy Gogarty, *A Bell Rings Out; Recollection, Architecture, and Ceramics at the End of Modernity in Mobile Structures: Dialogues Between Ceramics and Architecture in Canadian Art*, (MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan, 2007) pg 39
 8 ed. Ruth Chambers, Amy Gogarty and Mireille Perron, *Utopic Impulses, Contemporary Ceramics Practice*, (Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, British Columbia, 2007) pg 17
 9 Susan Surette, *Landscape as language in Canadian Ceramics: A Reading of a National Collection in CRAFT Perception and Practice Volume II, a Canadian discourse*, edited by Paula Gustafson, (Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, BC, 2005) pg 25



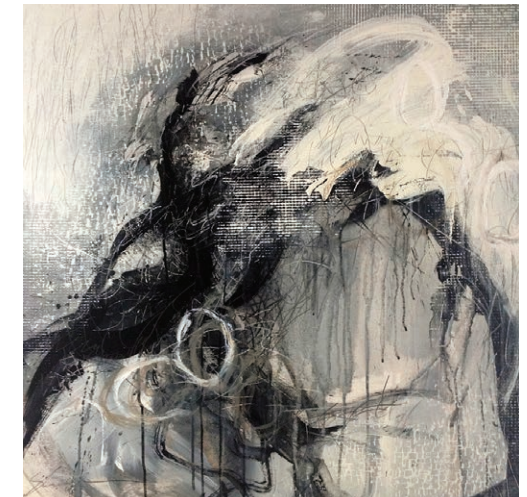
2010 | Mixed Media on Panel | 12" x 12" | Private Collection



2002 | Lidded Shadow Crackle Vessel | 13" high | Private Collection



2009 | Turquoise Landscape Wall Piece | 20" d | Private Collection



2013 | Mixed Media on Panel | 36" x 36" | Private Collection





'Untitled' 2012 | Mixed Media | 39" x 20" x 61" | Private Collection



LIST OF WORKS

SHANE NORRIE | 2012

#1 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 20" x 5.5" x 14" Private Collection	#7 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 17" x 4.5" x 12.5" Private Collection	#12 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 39" x 15" x 58" Private Collection	#17 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 36" x 20" x 65" Private Collection
#2 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 18" x 6" x 12.5" Private Collection	#8 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 17" x 6" x 10.5" Private Collection	#13 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 39" x 20" x 61" Private Collection	#18 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 39" x 21.5" x 65" Private Collection
#3 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 18" x 6" x 15" Private Collection	#9 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 18" x 5.5" x 12" Private Collection	#14 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 39" x 20" x 63" Private Collection	#19 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 37" x 20" x 68" Private Collection
#4 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 18" x 7" x 10" Private Collection	#10 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 52" x 14" x 69" Collection Woodstock Art Gallery. Purchased with funds provided by G.R. Green Chapter of IODE.	#15 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 34" x 17" x 61" Private Collection	
#5 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 18" x 5" x 10" Private Collection	#11 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 36" x 14" x 64" Private Collection	#16 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 38" x 13" x 65" Private Collection	
#6 – 'Untitled' 2012 Mixed Media 20" x 6" x 14" Private Collection			

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SHANE NORRIE | STRATFORD, ONTARIO, CANADA

I remember when I was a teenager, and just discovering the world of clay, I happened upon an exhibition catalogue that spoke to my creative senses. It was a catalogue of a 1996 exhibition at the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery in Waterloo. The artist was Peter Powning of New Brunswick. Peter's work has been and continues to be a strong and constant influence in my work. He is a master of surfaces and skillfully combines different mediums effortlessly and beautifully. I remember flipping through that catalogue when I was a teenager and dreaming about having a catalogue of my own, of an exhibition of my work in a public gallery. Not only has that happened with this publication, but Peter Powning has generously written an essay for the catalogue. This is a highlight of my career, and something that I will always fondly remember.

Many people have helped with this exhibition and publication, and have contributed many hours of work and time to make it happen. To those people, I am very grateful. A special thanks to: Jeffery Robinson, Diane and Jeff Collins, Ashley Beecraft, Rob Norrie, Peter Powning, Sheila Perry, Patricia Deadman, Maria Ricker, Janet McGlynn, Woodstock Art Gallery Staff, Friends of the Woodstock Art Gallery, City of Woodstock, Members of the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre, Ontario Arts Council, and all of those who have been supporters and fans of both me and my work.

Thank you all. This is a group effort, and not a small undertaking. I sincerely appreciate the generous guidance and assistance,

Shane Norrie

Please visit www.shanenorrie.com for more information.

“

I am continually drawn to nature and to surfaces that are worn... that appear to have been formed from exposure to the elements for very long periods of time. My desire is to create work that has both a sense of familiarity and a sense of mystery. This body of work explores my ideas of fragility, vulnerability and protection.

- Shane Norrie

”



BIOGRAPHY

PETER POWNING | GUEST WRITER

Peter Powning is an artist, curator and writer. Since 1970, Peter has lived and worked as an artist in the hills of southern New Brunswick. His life is characterized by intense periods of work preparing for exhibitions and commissions, punctuated by periodic travel. While Powning's award-winning work is shown internationally, it is imbued with qualities distilled from a life lived close to the silence, space and seasonal rhythms of his home, the fields, forests and shorelines of Canada's east coast. Peter is married to author Beth Powning. They have one son, Jake, a swordsmith who shares studio space with Peter and lives nearby with his family.

BIOGRAPHY

PATRICIA DEADMAN | CURATOR

Patricia Deadman is a visual artist, independent curator and writer. She obtained a Fine Arts Diploma, Fanshawe College (London, ON) and BFA Visual Arts from the University of Windsor. Deadman has participated in numerous artist residencies including Banff, Alberta; Paris, France; Merida and Oaxaca, Mexico and Whitehorse, Yukon. Her lens-based work has been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions since the 80's, most recently in the traveling group exhibition Changing Hands: Art Without Reservation 3, Contemporary Native North American Art from the Northeast and Southeast, Museum of Art and Design, New York, New York (2012-2015) and collected in public and private collections throughout Canada, USA, Mexico and UK. Deadman has curated numerous inter/national curatorial projects since the late 90's and is a former Curator of The MacKenzie Art Gallery (Regina, SK); Aboriginal Curator-in-Residence, Museum London (ON) and Curatorial Intern, The Power Plant: Contemporary Art Gallery (Toronto). She represented Canada as a member of the Canada Council, Aboriginal Curators Delegation to the Venice Biennale/Basel Art Fair (2009) and the Sydney Biennale/New Zealand (2010). Patricia currently lives in Woodstock, Ontario.





'Untitled' 2012 | Mixed Media | 52" x 14" x 69" | Collection Woodstock Art Gallery | Purchased with funds provided by G.R. Green Chapter of IODE