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Arts & Entertainment

POTTERY

Ceramics show innovative, professional

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Pottery is an art as old as history, yet potters are always striving to create something new.

Ceramics on the Edge, the inaugural juried show of innovative ceramics by Sunshine Coast artists on display at the Doris Crowston Gallery at the Sunshine Coast Arts Centre in Sechelt, is both contemporary and professional in every way.

The standard of work is high, with each piece having been scrutinized by Saltspring Island juror Judy Weeden. The presentation is good — each potter of the 11 established and eight emerging artists has been given his or her own complex of plinths. (So many display plinths were required that some had to be borrowed from the Gibsons Public Art Gallery.) A much appreciated colour catalogue is offered for \$2 and it includes an unpretentious bio of each artist with photos of the works.

For this show, most of the potters have moved away from the commercial colours such as lasagne dish blue or coffee mug brown. Clay artist Pam Horner glazed her hand-built butter dish with a delicate creamy colour that matched her tableware. The saturated colour in the work of Roberts Creek potter Jack Ploesser is achieved by layering glazes. Also striking is the rich maroon on the vases, oversize fruit dishes and rice bowls of Shey Smith and Diane Amaral Fisher. They are the only artists who work together and also are exhibiting together.

Each other artist has his or her own exhibit: for example, in the work of the Niebergall potting family, Bev and Ray Niebergall, son Tim and partner Carlie Sanford. This has the effect of making each artist stand out, allowing the viewer to understand their distinctive signatures. While there are points of comparison — they've obviously learned from each other — each artist is unique. Bev uses a subtle shade of green in her twig-handled baskets. Ray's *Tree of Life* makes a strong



JAN DEGRASS PHOTO

Planes I and *Planes II* from Gibsons potter Pat Forst are abstract and striking.

spiritual statement. Tim's highly innovative work is inspired by sacred geometry and his *Transformation Loop* with its pendulum is a focal point in the show. Carlie's *Forest Teapots* are woven in clay coils and resemble wood or basketry.

Mike Allegretti and Elaine Futterman of Creek Clayworks have also split up for the purposes of the show. Futterman, known for her functional pottery, is moving into undulating wave cuts on her bowls. Allegretti employs sculptural techniques in dark colours for a Zen-like effect in vases.

Two stunning collections of work in the exhibit are those of artist Liz de Beer and pottery teacher Pat Forst. De Beer's earthenware colours are tropical, reflecting her South African background. Her oversize teapot, a lively wall hanging and decorative bowls are exotic and eye-catching.

Forst, who has taught many of the Coast's

potters from her Gibsons studio, has taken the biggest step out of her comfort zone. *Planes I* and *Planes II* are abstract, grey and striking. Forst's students include the show co-organizers, Betty Keller and Heath Waddell, listed as emerging artists. In fact, both are writers turned potters. Waddell, who also paints, is showing her imaginative figures, extraordinary faces peering from clay. Keller is showing her large, ceramic garden lanterns embellished with lizards and other creatures. They were helped in mounting the show by Joanne Scanlan, whose wall plaques of Greek and Roman gods and goddesses remind the viewer of touring a centuries-old church.

Also on display is the work of established artists Morgan Campbell and Beth Feldman and emerging artists Michaela Cochran and Marilyn Butt.

The exhibition runs until July 29.