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FARM by Sarah Link

April 20 to August 31, 2002

Sarah Link moved to Thunder Bay in 1994 when she became an instructor of ceramics at Lakehead University. She has immersed herself in that community, teaching, joining the Thunder Bay Potter's Guild, and the December Gallery, and continuing to exhibit her work.

In 1998, Link was selected to participate as one of sixty Canadian ceramists in Fire + Earth, a two-year travelling exhibition organized by the Itabashi Art Museum, Japan and the Burlington Art Centre in Canada. Also in 1998, Link joined forty-five international artists to celebrate the work of the famous German installation innovator in the exhibition Joseph Beuys Was Here, at SAW Gallery in Ottawa. Link's work was included in a number of other exhibitions during this time including Legacy at Hamilton Artists Inc.

With the Thunder Bay Art Gallery we present this exhibition of Link's recent work in order to introduce Canadian viewers to the depth and range of her achievement.

This exhibition is the culmination of work that commenced when Link was granted a residency at Art Farm in Aurora, Nebraska. Art Farm was started in the 1990's to allow artists from around the world to interact with each other, and has twenty acres of space for outdoor sculpture and installations, as well as a number of studios. During her two-month residency, Link created installations based on the issue of "genetically modified produce" - a theme that was further supported by the setting of Art Farm.

Returning to Thunder Bay following her residency, Link continued to produce work for this exhibition until she received word that she had been chosen for another prestigious residency at the Institute of Ceramic Studies at the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Shiga Prefecture, Japan from June through August 2001. Given that artists from all over the world applied for this residency, this was another important honour for Link.



Shigaraki has been famous for the production of



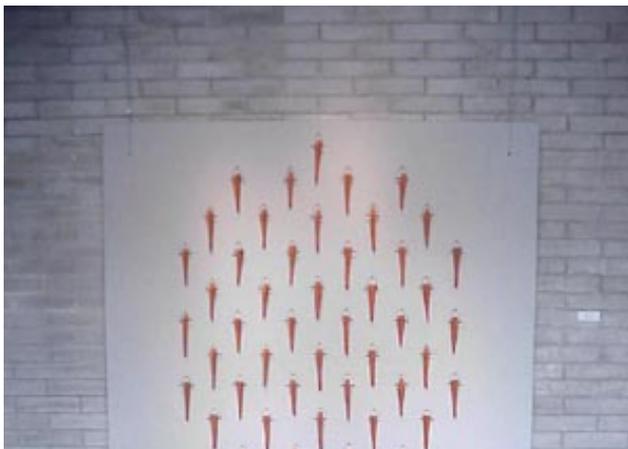
functional pottery for at least 800 years. It is celebrated as one of Japan's Six Ancient Kiln sites. The clays at Shigaraki are technically lower in fire resistance, traditionally considered some of the most rugged in character, heavy with sand and gravel impurities that lend character to the vessels wrought there. Shigaraki wares are recognized for their approachability. They hold a strong kinship with ordinary humanity - unpretentious, with raw energy. Sarah Link has added those qualities to her own work.

During her time here, Link produced Tane (seed/source), an installation continuing the theme of genetic modification begun the previous summer, and an integral and culminating part of this exhibition. Link's work was selected to remain in Japan as part of the permanent international collection of the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park.

Throughout her career, Sarah Link has elected to work in different places and within different cultures. She strives to place herself in a variety of settings so that she can come to her work with fresh perspectives. In FARM, the influence of the places she has worked is evident in the bright orange hue of the clay dug from under the farmhouse at Art Farm in Nebraska, and in the black clay of Shigaraki from which Link has formed the exquisite and powerful pod-like forms. Each venue in which she works informs her work in inimitable ways, but the problem of foreign residencies is that Canadian coverage is limited. Through this project, we bring some of Link's recent production together and present this very intriguing ensemble that is sober, austere and thoughtful.

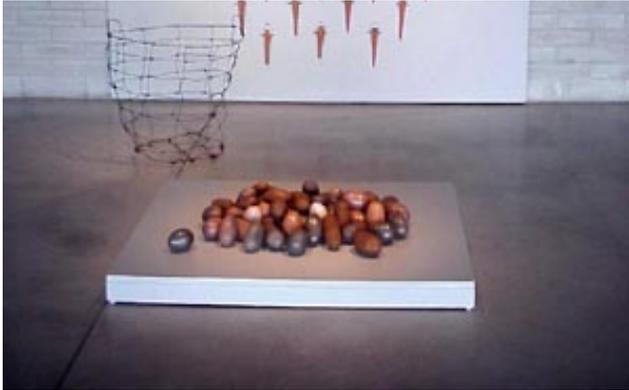


As with many of Link's past projects, she has collaborated with another artist. Sarah Link approached John Fell, a Thunder Bay poet, and asked him to respond to her work through his medium - words. So successful was this effort that the resulting poem entitled Genetically Modified has been incorporated into the exhibition and provides the viewer further access to Link's work.



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Les Manning, Vice President of the International Academy of Ceramics, has contributed an essay on the artist in which he captures the focused energy that Sarah Link brings to her work. His description of the numerous



projects that Link has so successfully undertaken fosters to our understanding of the importance of her work in the context of international ceramic art. The catalogue is available in the Gift Shop.

Funding from the Senator Norman M. Paterson Foundation has supported the initial organization of this exhibition. As has been the case throughout the years, the involvement of The Paterson Foundation has made it possible for the Thunder Bay Art Gallery to support and exhibit some of the fine art being produced in the Thunder Bay region.

Finally, we extend thanks and congratulations to Sarah Link. She has been involved in all facets of this project. Her assistance at all levels has been most appreciated.

The Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the City of Waterloo, and the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation.

Glenn Allison, Director, Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery

Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery
25 Caroline St. N., Waterloo, ON N2L 2Y5 ☎ Phone: (519) 746-1882 ☎ Fax: (519) 746-6396
E-mail the Gallery ☎ Site map