

With both fear and intrepid enthusiasm

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Ann Roberts, a slight, tentative woman, addressed numerous fans at the Knox Presbyterian Church on Sunday afternoon, to launch the show *Ann Roberts.... With both fear and intrepid enthusiasm* at the Waterloo Clay and Glass gallery.

Roberts is an accomplished ceramics artist, who has twice been nominated for the Governor General's award.

Robert's work has been featured in numerous books and journal articles and in over 150 exhibitions.

The *Ann Roberts.... With both fear and intrepid enthusiasm* exhibit features pieces spanning Roberts' entire 50-year career, and shows how her work has progressed from the functional pieces typical of the 1960s, into the theoretically and artistically complex sculptures that she produces today.

Roberts told the crowd on Sunday that while she began her career by throwing forms on a wheel and creating teapots and other functional objects that were typical of ceramics at the time, she soon discovered that she preferred "one of a kind items."

It was after this point that Roberts began to experiment with various forms, glazes and myths in her work.

Roberts discussed one piece, in particular, that was considered "not saleable" at the time she created it.

The tall, mug-like figure had uneven, textured glaze with chips in the bottom. There are also small holes near the top, where Roberts poked her fingers through the clay.

This piece showcases Roberts' transition into the less functional, less polished pieces for which she eventually became known.

The piece represents to Roberts how ceramic art has progressed, what was once considered "unsaleable" is now considered interesting.

Roberts' later work includes various themes; however much of her work focuses around the female form, fish and dogs. She plays with classical myths in her work, reforming them into narratives that challenge the original themes and caricatures.

She has also visited China many times, and some of her pieces both evoke and defy traditional Chinese sculpture. One Roberts' later pieces is a thoughtful and humorous appropriation of Manet's Olympia.

Roberts formed the female figure lying on the bed into a dog, however, the dog is staring the viewer straight in the eye which, as Roberts explained, is impolite in dog language.

This piece exemplifies how Roberts' style evolved from traditional to confrontational.

The works in the exhibit showcase the stages in Roberts' career; how her interests varied over the years, but also the way in which her work was continuous and steady.

Roberts was born in South Africa, and moved to Canada in 1960. She began working at the University of Waterloo in 1977 and has been an active member of the Waterloo Region art scene ever since.

Ann Roberts...With both fear and intrepid enthusiasm runs until Apr. 8, 2012.

- See more at: <http://www.thecord.ca/with-both-fear-and-intrepid-enthusiasm/#sthash.7T8scMOj.dpuf>