

# Man or myth? | Your online newspaper for Waterloo, Ontario

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## Submitted Photo

Clint Neufeld's Sad Seahorse on display at The Clay and Glass Gallery's exhibit called Man or Myth: Explorations on Masculinity until June 30.

## Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery explores notions of masculinity in new exhibit

By Bob Vrbanac, Chronicle Staff

The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery's latest exhibit Man or Myth: Explorations of Masculinity challenges the perception of men as stoic and separate.

"Most North American men still measure their sense of their own masculinity against an outdated 1950s construct — one that is practically unreachable and holds little relationship to what is actually going on inside," said Christian Bernard Singer, curator of the Clay and Glass.

In fact modern culture is still fascinated by the time period, with popular culture exploring the same themes in TV shows like Mad Men.

Exploring the inner workings of men are three artists who each bring something different to the conversation.

Quebec sculptor Leopold L. Foulem's latest work challenges traditional notions of sexual politics by turning a figurine into an object of subversion.

Srdjan Segan's massive clay sculpture lets people get up close and intimate with a 32-foot-long clay man. All the bumps and rough spots give texture and life to an otherwise inanimate object.

"I used to study medicine and lots of my influence comes from that point," said Segan, who is based out of Toronto.

"I'm trying in all of these pieces to create some kind of species from a natural history museum where there is certain drama happening.

"The piece itself is a stage and the animal and human forms inside are kind of actors."

Then there's the work of Clint Neufeld, a Saskatchewan-based artist, who takes traditional items associated with men like engines and car parts and makes them out of ceramic.

"I then decorate them to reference fine china or something," said Neufeld. "And most of the things I work with end up on some kind of furniture like a settee or a chaise lounge or end table.

"When I started to build these things I wasn't exactly sure what to do with them, I've never really been partial to the white pedestal."

Even during the creative process when he was taking these symbols of masculinity he was thinking about his own grandmother's china set and the fragility of that as opposed to the utilitarian nature of the original objects.

"I was thinking of her china settings and her china cabinets," said Neufeld. "It seemed like a natural sort of place to put these objects on this decorative furniture."



Masculinity is more fluid, flexible, shifting and has an emotional life often left unexplored in art," he said.

"One of the things that happens when you take these objects, whether they are hot-rod engines or a boat motor, and make them into ceramic and make them into china you kind of shift people's perceptions of what they're looking at and what they stand for," Neufeld said.

"When people spend a little time with them they see they're not just a metal object painted, they are something completely different."

The exhibition continues until June 30.