

SHARING EXPERIENCES: THRESHOLDS HOMES & SUPPORTS



In February 2020 we launched a new outreach program to connect with our communities. On invitation, various groups come to the gallery and communicate a lived experience through a free workshop in clay. The lived experience is based on themes discussed with the leaders and the participants of each community group. The work created is then presented to the community at large with an exhibition and a publication. The second community group we invited was Thresholds Homes and Supports. We thank John and Rebecca Short for their support of this program. We do hope that this program will not only allow us to strengthen the existing bonds between our gallery and community partners we already have, but also new ones and allow for new friendships to be forged between the participants.

DENIS LONGCHAMPS, PHD

*Executive Director and Chief Curator,
The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery*

Thresholds Homes and Supports has had a very positive community partnership with Elsa and the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery. Our consumers have benefited from numerous programs through the Gallery in the past. Being invited to participate in the Sharing Experiences program brought great joy to our consumers, as COVID-19 has kept them from gathering and meeting up with peers to do hobbies, physical exercise and other activities. The Sharing Experiences program allowed our consumers to participate in an activity in a different way but still feel connected to one another, Thresholds and their community. This very generous opportunity provided them a meaningful purpose and a way to get through the tiring days of staying at home. We look forward to returning to the Gallery when it is safe again to participate in the beautiful space.

CARA GILFILLAN

*Recreation Therapist – ACTT,
Thresholds Homes and Supports*



Sometimes I am two people.
Outwardly smiling, pretending
to be confident and happy.
While inside, I am being torn
apart by depression and pain.
I keep working.
I keep trying.
I keep hoping.
One day the two will become
a whole.

This piece is made to inspire,
heal, and comfort.
You may decide it's meaning.

During the COVID-19
pandemic it is important to
ground ourselves.
Through nature we can find
strength and use that
strength in these uncertain
times.





We can see the sun. Sol and the Earth and the moon, but why not the light as it moves from the sun to them?

Dark Light.

Flowers represent
blooming and growth
to me.

I am trying to bloom
and grow where I
am.





If this project were to tell a story it would be of how a person can be made of complex parts, like coils and circles. One can become whole through that complexity and then as a result of that same process, fall apart, but then only come back to triumph over the cracks in ones foundation.

This project not only tells my story, but also reminds me that it's okay to be weak and it's okay to fall apart but I must keep all of my pieces together so that I can put them back where they belong. The purpose of this project is to communicate through clay and I feel as though I have achieved that goal. Even if my project fell apart and I may not know how to put it back together, it will be a reminder that sometimes life doesn't go as planned.

Here you go. Every time I read this it brings tears to my eyes. If anyone were to ask what it is like to live with a severe mental illness, let this be the answer. We never know what's waiting around the corner, happiness or sadness, love or loss, anger or appreciation. So many of us have stared death in the face and came back from the ledge. Words could never adequately describe what it's like, but actions can.

I can't wait to get back to this project. Thank you, Cara, for giving me another chance to communicate through clay. Maybe as I build the next project I will be able to write another sentence or two.



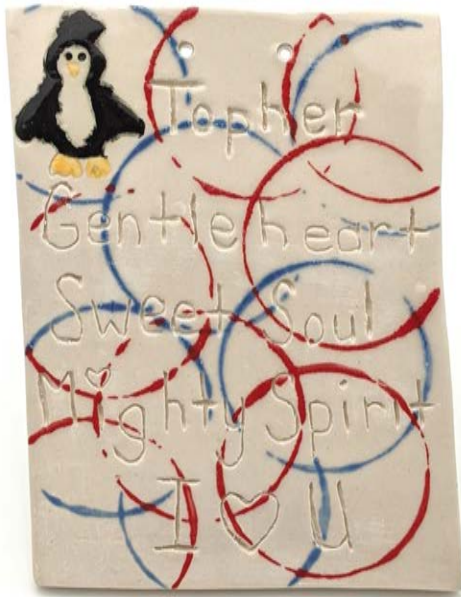
If you were to ask me yesterday about my experience with clay I would have chosen words like "negative" or "heartbreaking" or even just "bad". Today, after giving some more thought I would describe it a bit differently.

Clay needs clay.

In order to be strong, clay needs clay. In order to have a solid foundation, clay needs clay. For strong attachments, clay needs clay. For all of the bonding, joining, building, and strengthening, clay needs clay. If you were to ask what that means to me, today, after I cried about my broken bowl, I would say something similar. People need people. In order to be strong, people need people. In order to have a solid foundation, people need people. For strong attachments, people need people. For bonding, joining, building and strengthening, people need people. Clay has taught me that I am not a solo artist, I am supported by a strong group of people who are my family and my friends. My family is my vessel, my family keeps me whole, and my family is my foundation.

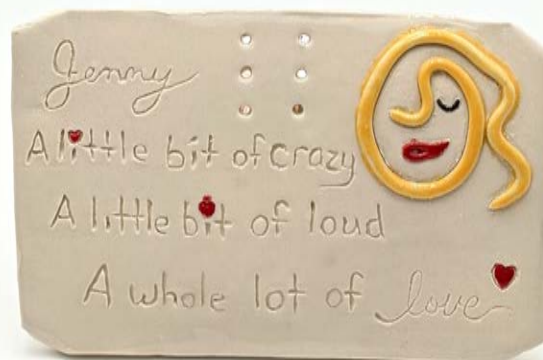
When my bowl broke into a thousand pieces I thought it was over, but I had some lingering feelings, and that is what I learned from clay. My clay bowl was the vessel that carried the message to me that I am not alone, and that I have strong foundations. Just like clay needs clay to be strong, my final thought is that people need people to be strong. That is what I learned from clay.





At one of my stays in respite, I noticed an inspirational quote that was written on the whiteboard. I asked who wrote it there and it was a staff member. While I was talking with her about it she mentioned that you can keep a journal of them (the ones you like) and she gave me a pad of paper to keep them in.

That was 8 years ago, now I put together my own. This art come from that idea.



I created an
Easter basket
and a wiener
dog.
I enjoyed myself
very much.



The pieces make
me happy.



Life Experience: My Mental Health

Mental wellbeing is a
slippery slope for me.
At the top I like to
believe that I'm
completely rational.

Additional
Works











**SPONSORED
BY:**

**John and
Rebecca Short**

The Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery is a long-standing site of excellence and a destination for contemporary art for international tourists and regional citizens. We are Canada's only gallery dedicated to contemporary Canadian works in ceramics, glass, and copper enameling. We host critically-acclaimed exhibitions that challenge ideas and perceptions of the definitions of art, craft and design today. With an emphasis on Canadian artists, our exhibitions also support international and regional artists.

A relevant and dynamic cultural organization, the Gallery provides supportive education programs to people from across the Region. Using exhibitions as a starting point, individuals develop arts vocabulary, arts appreciation and cultivate confidence in their interpretation of contemporary artworks.