

Emergence 2024

The Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery is delighted to present *Emergence*, our annual exhibition celebrating the winners and finalists of our awards in ceramics and glass. Since 2001, the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery has presented with Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics, providing emerging ceramic artists with critical support to develop their careers through international residencies, independent study, and other educational programs.

This year's winner of the Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics is Lael Chmelyk of Calgary, AB. This prestigious \$10,000 national award will allow Lael to undertake a period of independent research, mentorship, and development of a soda kiln to further her practice. This year's runner up is Benjamin Oswald, who will receive a \$5,000 prize. Four finalists were also selected – Nichol Marsch, Alejandra Vera, Sami Tsang, and Tomo Ingalls – each receiving a \$1,000 award.

Winifred Shantz believed strongly in supporting young talent to ensure the continuation and development of Canada's ceramics art scene, a sentiment that we share at the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery. Amidst challenging economic times and expensive materials and studio space, programs like the Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics are critical in ensuring that emerging artists receive the assistance they need to grow. In functional soda-fired ceramics, new approaches to sculpture and form, and exciting narratives, the artists represented in this year's exhibition show us the incredible future of this medium in Canada.

This year's selection was made by a jury comprised of artists and leaders in the North American ceramics community: Marissa Y Alexander, Carole Epp, and Judith Schwartz. We thank them for their time and commitment to the jurying process.

The late Winifred Shantz was a driving force for the arts in Waterloo Region for more than 40 years. A successful ceramist, entrepreneur, and visionary philanthropist, she was committed to finding ways to enable artists to reach their full potential. A successful ceramist, entrepreneur, and ardent supporter of the arts, Winifred, along with her husband Keith Shantz, were integral in the founding of the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery and have enabled the Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics to continue in perpetuity. The Keith and Winifred Shantz Fund for the Arts is held at Waterloo Region Community Foundation.

A big congratulations to the winner and finalists!

Denis Longchamps, PhD
Executive Director & Chief Curator



Lael Chmelyk, *Nature Over Nurture; Watering Can III, 2023*. Soda fired porcelain, flashing slip, underglaze, cobalt inlay, leather, brass hardware. Collection of the artist. Photo by Matthew Huitema.

Lael Chmelyk (Calgary, AB) Grand Prize Winner

Lael Chmelyk is a ceramic and fiber artist living in Calgary, Alberta. Raised in Dawson Creek, Lael began making from an early age, joining a long line of obsessive craftsmen. Starting ceramic classes at the age of fourteen, she went on to graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics with Distinction from The Alberta University of Arts in 2020. In 2021 she received a project grant from Canada Council for the Arts to develop a range of soda fired work to lower the environmental impact of the work. Her work focuses on themes surrounding identity, agency over our bodies, chronic illness and the legacies we leave behind. In the last year, her solo exhibition "Haptic Rituals" explored living with endometriosis and the choice to remain childfree through ceramic vessels and quilts.



Benjamin Oswald, *Cut and Illuminated, 2023*, Stoneware, glaze, terra sigillata. Blaine Campbell, courtesy of the Mitchell Art Gallery.

Benjamin Oswald (Edmonton, AB) Runner Up

Benjamin Oswald received his MFA at Emily Carr University of Art and Design and was a recipient of the Robert Weghsteen Memorial Award in ceramics. His practice involves the creation of vessels and sculpture and is an examination of their spaces and interactions. Oswald has won awards both provincially and internationally for his work and recently completed a residency at the International Ceramic Research Centre in Skælskør, Denmark. He currently works as a professional artist and arts educator in Treaty 6 Territory - Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.



Tomo Ingalls, *Tea Party, 2024*. Clay, terra sigillata. 15 x 20 x 13cm. Collection of the artist. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Tomo Ingalls (Surrey, BC) Finalist

Tomo Ingalls is a woman, immigrant, mother, daughter, and artist currently residing in British Columbia. She grew up in Japan and immigrated to Canada in 2001. Her study began in 2014 at Gloucester Potter School in Ottawa. And she received traditional training at New Brunswick College of Craft and Design. Tomo has successfully sold her works through galleries in the maritime provinces. Her curiosity led her to Calgary, where she pursued contemporary craft and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Craft Media from Alberta University of the Arts. Her works are inspired by existentialist questions, exploring what it means to exist and the fundamental essence that predates existence. For Tomo, art practice is a necessary mean to express her intangible emotions through clay. She connects her daily activities with her body and art form, extending her use of her body to include performance art with clay.



Nichol Marsch, *Fibroids, from Barrens, 2023*. Collection of the artist. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Nichol Marsch (Stonewall, MB) Finalist

Nichol Marsch (she/they) is a Metis artist from rural Manitoba (Treaty 1). Working primarily in multimedia sculptural installation, her practice is self-reflective and explores concepts of social constructs, determinants of identity, place and invariability. Through abstraction and a focus on process and materials, her work represents lived experiences and observations of the realities of living within social structures and dealing with superfluous habitual/mundane acts.

After obtaining a Bachelor of Fine Arts Honors from the University of Manitoba, Marsch completed a year-long Practicum at the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity, MAWA's Foundation Mentorship Program (2019-2020), and the Creative Manitoba Youth Mentorship (2020-2021). With support from Canada Council for the Arts, Marsch completed a large-scale installation featured at Centre[3] for Artistic+ Social Practice in Hamilton Ontario (2023), a large-scale installation Self Portrait... to be featured at the Mary E. Black Gallery (2024) in Halifax Nova Scotia. Marsch is a founding member of the Winnipeg Pantsuits Collective (2020-).

About the Jurors:

Marissa Y Alexander is a ceramic artist living and working in Hamilton, Ontario. She builds with clay to make both functional and sculptural ceramic objects. Marissa is interested in the process of inventing form through coil building and establishing alluring surfaces that create patterns and narratives to visually describe her reflections on everyday life and envision the ideal amid contemporary reality. She received her MFA in Ceramic Art from Alfred University and was previously a full-time Artist-In-Resident at Harbourfront Centre. Alexander has garnered recognition for her ceramics, earning various awards while exhibiting both nationally and internationally.

Carole Epp has maintained a full-time studio practice since graduating from the Australian National University in 2005 with a master's degree in ceramics. Currently working in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Epp is a fierce advocate for the ceramics community, acting as a co-founder for the Make and Do Ceramics collective of Canada and Editor of *Musing About Mud*. With both sculptural and functional objects in her repertoire, her work has been exhibited throughout Canada, Australia, Scotland, and the United States.

Judith S. Schwartz is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Art and Art Professions at New York University. She directed the Sculpture in Craft Media area (Clay, Metal, and Glass) and taught studio-based courses in ceramic sculpture from 1970 through 2017. Dr. Schwartz lectures and consults extensively, continues to publish numerous journal articles, artist's reviews and catalogs for both national and international journals, chairs national conferences, juries and curates ceramic competitions and exhibitions worldwide, and serves as board or honorary member on many notable not-for-profit organizations. She is President of the Museum of Ceramic Art and is a trustee of the Howard Kottler estate, facilitating the publication of two books about him and several national exhibitions of his work.

Cover: Lael Chmelyk, *Soft Bulk*, 2023. Soda fired stoneware, slip transfers, underglaze, cobalt inlay. 25 x 25 x 11cm each. Collection of the artist. Photo by Matthew Huitema.

Exhibition on View:

June 1 to September 8, 2024

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CANADIAN
THE CLAY & GLASS
GALLERY

The Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of:



On selecting this year's winner and finalists, the jurors state:

The jurors commented about the overall quality of applications and how they are an indicator of the breadth of highly skilled talent in the Canadian Clay Community. They wish to congratulate all the winners and finalists for their thoughtful and considered applications. Unanimously they highlighted the winner, Lael Chmelyk for her clear and confident understanding of her career direction, her pursuit in developing new competencies, and her commitment to the growth of her local community. Runner-up, Benjamin Oswald, was selected for his sensitive and poetic explorations of the vessel with a fresh approach. The jurors wish all of the finalist artists success in their careers going forward. There is much talent in our community and this award is a testament to that.

About the Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics

The Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics is presented annually by the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery and is supported by The Keith and Winifred Shantz Fund for the Arts, held at Waterloo Region Community Foundation. This prestigious \$10,000 award allows practising early-career ceramic artists to undertake a period of independent research or other activities that advance their artistic and professional practice. One runner-up will receive a prize of \$5,000. Up to 3 finalists will also be selected who will each receive a prize of \$1,000. Each summer, the winners and finalists of the Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics and RBC Award for Glass will have their work presented in an awards exhibition held at the Gallery.

About Winifred Shantz

The late Winifred Shantz was a driving force for the arts in Waterloo Region for more than 40 years. A successful ceramist, entrepreneur and visionary philanthropist, she was committed to finding ways to enable artists to reach their full potential.

About Waterloo Region Community Foundation:

Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) collaborates with partners to create sustainable, equitable and thriving communities. We connect regionally and locally, working with three cities and four townships – to include the people and places across our region. Together, we develop forward-thinking innovative solutions and seize opportunities to meet current and future needs of our community. We make philanthropy easy for individuals and companies to support organizations and issues they care about. WRCF is focused on Granting, Impact Investing and Convening to make measurable and sustainable impacts. Gifts are directed to WRCF's endowed funds that drive positive change through grants with the income generated being distributed in partnership with Fundholders to support a wide range of charitable causes within our community. A portion of the endowed funds are also used for impact investments that deliver both financial returns as well as positive social or environmental outcomes. As a leading community-building organization we also work to amplify voices and issues of importance by convening conversations and sharing information, while approaching our work with an equity mindset.



Sami Tsang, *Staying Put is Moving Forward*, 2022. Stoneware, engobe, glaze. 91 x 66 x 43cm. Collection of the artist. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Sami Tsang (Toronto, ON) Finalist

Sami Tsang is a Toronto-based ceramic artist whose work explores domestic encounters and private narratives borne out of the flux amidst two cultures – Chinese and Western. Sami studied traditional Chinese painting for 7 years in Hong Kong, which profoundly affected her pursuit of an art career. Sami earned her BA in Craft & Design from Sheridan College (2019) and her MFA in Ceramics from Alfred University, NY (2021). Sami has presented solo, and group exhibitions and art fairs in the United States and Canada, including Sculpture Space, NYC, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, the Gardiner Museum, Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto, ON, Toronto Art Fair and NADA Miami. Tsang's work is included in private collections, Collection Majudia, and Gardiner Museum. Sami is an Artist-in-Residence (Ceramics) at Harbourfront Centre (Toronto, Canada).



Alejandra Vera, *Recollection*, 2023. Porcelain, two-channel video. Dimensions variable. Collection of the artist. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Alejandra Vera (Markham, ON) Finalist

Alejandra Vera is an interdisciplinary artist interested in art, craft, and design. She has a BFA from NSCAD University in Fine Arts, an MFA from the University of Barcelona, and a diploma in ceramics from Escola d'Art La Industrial in Spain. She is originally from Quito, Ecuador, and is currently based in Toronto. After training in painting and sculpture, she discovered ceramics later in her career, a medium that dramatically changed her artistic practice. Her current interest is to explore ceramic processes and techniques in a way that speaks to a broader interdisciplinary practice. In addition, she runs the ceramic design studio 'cuir ceramics' since 2019. Her work has been shown in various galleries in Canada and abroad.



Emergence 2024 Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics

Winner: **Lael Chmelyk**
Runner-up: **Benjamin Oswald**,
Finalists: **Tomo Ingalls**,
Nichol Marsch, **Sami Tsang**,
Alejandra Vera

