



# The Kiln Post



## Happy Spring!

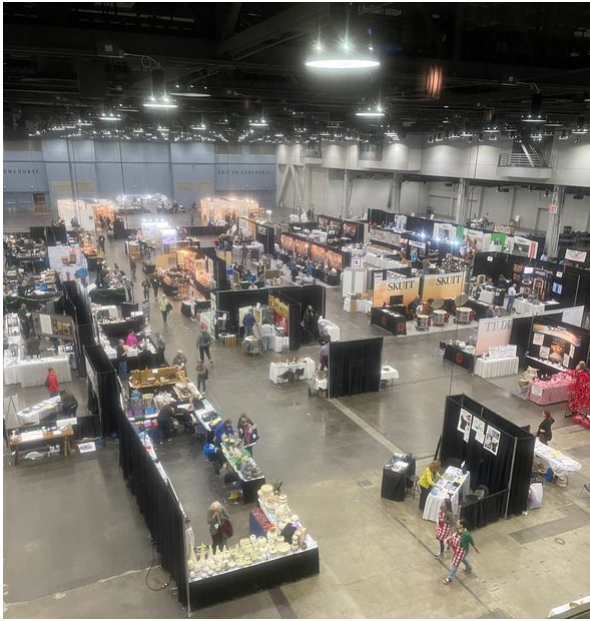
As we talked about last month, March was full of activities and fun for SACA. From the Geronimo Plaza Show and Sale to the Salt Fire Workshop with Joni Pevarnick and also NCECA, there was a lot happening! Read on below for more details about all those events.

Have you checked out the brand-new SACA Member Gallery on our website yet? Visit [Member Gallery](#) to see the amazing work created by our fellow artists, and while you're there, submit a photo or two of your own work. We're so excited about the new member feature and thankful to our Board members Dawn and Joanne for getting it started!

Finally, SACA needs your help! Our Board met recently to establish goals and focus areas for the coming year and one of those goals is to bring back our member activities. We are still looking for someone to fill the Member Programs position and to help us plan those events throughout the year. If you're excited about SACA and want to help build community among our members, please reach out!

Hope you have the chance to get outside and enjoy the warming weather. This is such a lovely time to be in Southern Arizona and see the desert come back to life and all the wildflowers in bloom!

~melissa



# Presenting at NCECA

Virginia Thompson  
V

This year

This year's 2023 conference in Cincinnati was my second time giving a presentation and my first time in-person. I had been scheduled to present in 2020, but the conference got cancelled due to Covid and I ended up doing a canned presentation followed by a live Q&A in the 2021 virtual conference titled "The Great Silk Road Project: Integrating Technology and Globalization Into Community College Ceramics Research & Learning".

Presenting "Get a Grip! Handle Your Pots Better" this year live in a conference room was such a different experience! The room was packed and the energy and enthusiasm for my material was palpable. The audience particularly loved the slides containing photos where my Cochise College students modeled as the different ways people hold cups with handles. This slide show originally came to be as part of a workshop I presented last Spring for SACA at Tucson Clay Art Center. I have taught at Cochise College for 10 years now, and each semester in my level 2 wheel and handbuilding course I have a "handles day". I ask students to each bring in vessels with handles (I bring in a lot as well) and we investigate and explore what we like and don't like, and how handles work. When SACA invited me to give a workshop, I wanted to do something fundamental that would be broadly useful to potters of all experience levels and styles of making. Preparing for that workshop led me to compile my thoughts on basic handle and hand geometry and physics, and create a slideshow for the participants before our work session. The participants were such a delight, and seemed to really appreciate the slideshow, so when it came time to apply to present at NCECA, I decided to modify it somewhat and apply for a "short form presentation".

Short form for NCECA means a stack of 10 min assorted presentations in a 1-hr room block. I shared my slot with three other presenters from around the world. It was a pretty eclectic lineup, but a great way to give an audience a variety of ideas in a short amount of time. Because my presentation was short and I had packed in loads of "nuggets": important concepts and advice I wanted to share with the NCECA world, I rehearsed my slideshow over and over in the weeks leading up to the event. I wanted to present without reading off my notes, but to be sure not to miss anything! I also wanted to be sure to stay within my allotted time and not steal anyone else's time. I believe in teaching through humor, since that creates strong memories, and my presentation had a lot of amusing ideas and names I had made up for good handles, bad handles, and the 5 types of ways I have observed humans using them. Many people came up to me in the days following and said how much they enjoyed and

appreciated it. As a teacher, I want to get at the underlying, simple truths about clay and forms that are often so hard to express and understand. I want to give students the tools to make their own unique best solutions to the problems clay, sculpture and pottery present.

If you want to present at NCECA, here is my advice:

- 1) Follow the schedule- they give a call for proposals months before the conference, and there are strict deadlines and guidelines. I would recommend that you have all your materials almost fully prepared before you even propose a talk.
- 2) Give it a shot! I am 2 for 2 getting accepted for my presentations, but I didn't expect that. I just sent in my best effort and was thrilled to be accepted. Presenting or volunteering at NCECA gives you an extra-special purpose at the conference. It also opens you up to meeting and talking with wonderful fellow ceramists from around the world and making new connections. In addition, if you are accepted as a presenter, your conference fee and annual membership are waived, and you receive a stipend for your work.
- 3) Talk about what you really know and love! Don't just make up a theme. Present about what you are the most passionate and "super-nerdy" about. My students like to tease me about my extreme feelings for handles, but that is why it was a good choice for my presentation.
- 4) Practice practice practice! This is the big-time Ceramics stage. I am comfortable in front of my usual 18-student classes. This was a room of over 150 people. And of course my slide show didn't load correctly at first even though we had tested it the day before in the speaker prep room. You can never be over-prepared, and you never know how you will feel in front of so many people. You need to be so comfortable with your material that nothing will shake your delivery. I had rehearsed so many times that I had actually gotten a little bored of my own presentation, but when my "lumberjack" slide loaded up and the whole room giggled, I remembered that it was actually really an entertaining presentation, and we all had a great time teaching and learning.

\*Check out my instagram @stumpcanyonstudio, and feel free to reach out to me at [thompsonv@cochise.edu](mailto:thompsonv@cochise.edu) with any questions or for more advice.

-Virginia Thompson

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## Salt Fire Workshop

by Samirah Steinmeyer

Joni Pevarnik shared her studio and kiln with a group of potters last month for a salt firing workshop. Joni has been holding salt firing workshops since 1998, when ceramic artist and educator Don Bendel came down from Flagstaff to help build her kiln. Joni said that they built the kiln, made pots, and fired it the same day!

For this latest workshop, the pace was slower than the first. The first day, participants made pots on the wheel or hand built pieces, applied slips and/or glazes, and then loaded them into the kiln to dry. The second day of the workshop was actually a potluck held two weeks later. The gathering began around sunset and once the kiln reached maturity, participants took turns adding salt to the fire.

The kiln was unloaded on March 28th and everyone stopped by to pick up their work and to admire the work of others.

I asked Joni what part of the salt firing process was her favorite and she said it was watching the fumes creating glaze on the pots. As for me, I enjoyed the sight and sound of the roaring kiln and the excitement of not knowing exactly how the salt firing would transform my pots. Meeting local potters was also a highlight.

Many thanks to Joni for a wonderful workshop!

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### Upcoming Jury Session

If you are not already a juried SACA member, consider applying for our spring jury session. Juried members are eligible to participate in our SACA shows and sales.

Jury Session Date: Sunday, April 30, 2023

Registration Closes: Friday, April 28, 2023

Location: The Romero House Pottery at TMA, 102 W Washington Street

For more details or to register, follow this link. [Jury Session Registration](#)



### Member Programs Chair needed!

After the past few years of low-key activities, we are ready to watch SACA grow in 2023 and need your help! If you are excited about creating events and activities throughout the year to strengthen our clay community and bring our members together in a casual and fun setting, then the Member Programs chair role is for you. If you have any questions or would like more details, [email Melissa](#).

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## Pottery Tips & Tricks



Cheap circle cutter. Thrift shops sell random pan covers for pennies. I bought several different sizes, and they come in handy whenever I want to cut a perfect circle out of clay.

Have a great tip or trick that helps you in your clay work? Let us know! Submit your tip or trick to our [Newsletter Publisher](#).



## SACA Members Attend NCECA 2023

*From Left to Right*  
Melissa Henshaw, Mary Swallow,  
Esteban Apodaca, Aurore Chabot

## NCECA 2023 CURRENT, Cincinnati, Ohio

by Melissa Henshaw

The annual National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference was held March 14-18 in Cincinnati, Ohio. The unique thing about NCECA is how it brings together people from all areas of the ceramics community - from the college student and the hobby potter, to professional artists, community studio teachers and university departments chairs - there is truly something for everyone at the conference. I was fortunate to travel to NCECA for the second time with my "Kiln Engineer" (aka my husband), and we had a blast!

I learned so much watching presentations on topics like new techniques for fluting clay, using carved plaster molds for hand building cups, or creating dinnerware for restaurant use (not something I am ready to tackle anytime soon!), while my husband attended the in-depth sessions on glaze chemistry, using technology like 3D printing in the studio and even listened to a live recording of the podcast, "For Flux Sake." We spent hours meandering through the Resource Hall visiting with all the vendors, seeing demos from artists we know from Instagram, buying new tools, and even chatting with manufacturers about upcoming kiln maintenance. My Kiln Engineer even won a carving tool in the DiamondCore Tools raffle!

There is so much happening at NCECA that it is impossible to see it all in such a short time. During our quick four days in Cincinnati, we also visited the Cincinnati Museum of

Art and the new Roberto Lugo exhibit, viewed amazing ceramic work at other nearby shows, finally met friends we know on-line, in-person, and even got together for a quick morning chat with some of our fellow SACA members. It was truly an inspiring experience, and I can't wait for next year's conference in Richmond, Virginia!

Learn more about [NCECA](#). And you can watch some of the presentations from the conference and the keynote speakers from the opening and closing ceremonies online. Just search NCECA 2023 or @WatchNCECA on YouTube.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Have a new piece of work you want to show off? Or trying out a fun technique new to you? SACA would love to share your work on our Instagram and Facebook Stories. Be sure to tag us @SouthernArizonaClayArtists and use the hashtags #SouthernArizonaClayArtists and #SACATucson the next time you post!



## Geronimo Plaza

by Elaine Walsh

Great weather and a beautiful location in the shady, fountain courtyard of Geronimo Plaza provided the setting for a new spring SACA show, March 4-5, hosted by the Marshall Foundation and Main Gate Square. The Marshall Foundation and Main Gate Square provided and set up tents, tables and chairs for all the participants, as well as sidewalk signage and on-line promotion.

Thirteen clay artists participated, showing both functional pieces and sculptural works. Linda Baker did clay throwing demonstrations on the wheel during the event.

The Tucson Museum of Art Show, Empty Bowls and the Tucson Festival of Books were all held the same weekend and impacted attendance. Plus, this was a first-time-ever event. Show Chair Suzanne Poirier is soliciting feedback from participants and the SACA board will work with the Marshall Foundation on a possible future event, especially because a no-commission event is an attractive option. Selecting a date with fewer competing events and making other changes can lead to a more successful future event in Geronimo Plaza in the future.

## Of Interest to Our Readers

Submit items of interest to our [Newsletter Publisher](#).

*Shows, Studio Tours, Art Fairs, Classes, Workshops, Gallery Openings, Exhibitions, Job Openings, Equipment For Sale*

**For Sale**  
Olympic Electric Kiln  
Model S18HT

**APRIL 15 & 16, 2023**  
**SATURDAY 10AM-5PM**  
**SUNDAY 11AM-4PM**



From metalwork to locally-designed fashion, the open-air La Encantada Fine Art Festival is an opportunity to support local artisans and fine art crafters while strolling the lush and ever-blooming garden walkways of the outdoor La Encantada Shopping Center.

Live art demonstrations and music will be presented in the Southern Arizona Artists Guild (SAAG) Gallery throughout the weekend.

### Current Show

**Desert Expressions**  
**Thru May 6, 2023**

**Gallery Hours**  
**Tues - Saturday**  
**10 am - 4 pm**



*Together Forever*  
Geri Bringman

For more information  
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