

BITING THROUGH

When we announced the theme for this issue a year ago, it seemed as though, what with a presidential election coming up, our public landscape was about to shift, and we were interested in how that might play out in the studio. Historic as it was, the election turned out to be only one of a cascade of events and trends that have made “change” something of a cliché. From the economy’s tumble to technology’s accelerating pace, it has become impossible to ignore.

You would think that change would be the default setting for ceramic artists. Clay – perhaps the ultimate medium of transformation – structures both the reality of our studio practice and the metaphors that inhabit our minds. Yet the rhythms of studio life can also work in the opposite direction. Surviving as a working potter requires discipline and focus: work habits and the steady accretion of experience observed and applied. It takes time and commitment to master the particular clays, forms, glazes, and firing schedules that serve our ideas, and too much change can keep us perpetual journeymen. Yet these same habits can be a liability when individual or general circumstances upend our lives. The forms that once compelled suddenly turn stale and formulaic. Marketing strategies worked out during an earlier time no longer seem to apply. The body, our primary tool and ally, betrays us. Is the news good or bad? Do we have a choice?

We are at one of those moments when the arc of our individual lives intersects with a larger pattern of events, institutions, and assumptions in flux. Young makers, coming into their own mastery and fluent in the ideas and technologies that formed them, welcome the ascendancy of new ideas and leaders. Those who took up a life in clay during an earlier moment of social and political upheaval note ruefully that they are not as light on their feet – either literally or metaphorically – as they used to be. External circumstances may move at one speed and their effect upon our lives at another. In its many guises – from natural transition to upheaval and revolution – change surrounds us. What we make of it remains deeply individual and endlessly compelling.

– MB

UPCOMING ISSUES:

Money Issue- Winter 2009-10

Boundaries/Digital Worlds - Summer 2010

STUDIO POTTER is a non-profit organization which publishes journals, produces educational programs, and provides services to the international community of ceramic artists and craftspeople.

A professional journal, THE STUDIO POTTER is published twice a year and focuses on critical issues of aesthetics, technology, history and personal development. It is aimed at a discerning readership of ceramists, educators, and others committed to supporting work and dialogue. By fostering innovation and creativity as well as respect for tradition, the organization endeavors to improve the quality of life and work for studio potters.

STUDIO POTTER welcomes hearing from potters, artists, scholars and educators with special interests in writing and reporting on topics and events in ceramics.

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