



# IN TERRA SPECTIVE

clay vessels by terrice bassler

MARCH  
8-14  
2024

ARTSEA GALLERY  
IN TULISTA PARK  
9565 FIFTH ST  
SIDNEY, BC



March 8-14, 2024  
10-4 daily

@terricebassler

@potterywithpurpose

[www.artsea.ca](http://www.artsea.ca)

[www.terricebassler.ca](http://www.terricebassler.ca)

[www.potterywithpurpose.com](http://www.potterywithpurpose.com)




# I N T E R R A S P E C T I V E

invites you on a woman's life journey through clay. This solo exhibition celebrates International Women's Day and features individual and clustered ceramic vessels by Cordova Bay artist Terrice Bassler.

The collection honours women who have helped shape the artist's world view and life path. "I learned early from ancestral heirlooms that a single bowl can embody a story," says Terrice. Interwoven with a global career in humanitarian activism, she is now a creator of clay forms with positive spirit and the power to generate connection, belonging, and community action.

Terrice Bassler completed ceramics residencies in Barcelona at El Torn (2011-12), Santa Fe, New Mexico (2016) and NIROX Arts in the Cradle of Humankind, South Africa (2023). She founded and led Pottery with Purpose in Newfoundland (2012-2019).



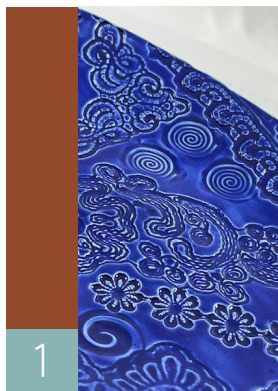


**I have learned to value the  
inner space of a vessel, as  
well as its outer form,  
function, personality and  
beauty. It's about seeing  
and holding life's inherent  
completeness.**

Welcome to the journey.  
Welcome inside.

-terrice

# T H E V E S S E L S



## KATIE

Grandma Weidman (Katie Kniskern)

1878-1967

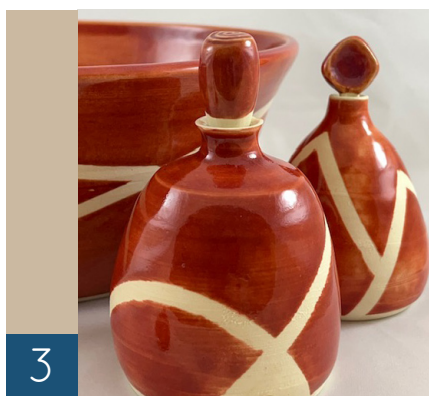
My paternal great grandmother cooked on a wood stove that smelled of comfort. She was keeper of treasured family quilts, and tended much loved, multi-coloured gladiolus blooms (taller than me) that bordered the long, clickety walkway to her kitchen door. Grandma Weidman hosted holiday feasts on the fancy white and cobalt blue china set she'd been gifted by city folks from New York. It was the willoware plates' decoration of a landscape and 3 men crossing a bridge that first showed me the magic of story on ceramic wares.

## FLORENCE

Mrs. Zimmer (Florence Hotaling)

1893-1975

As a little girl, I'd wander over to our next-door neighbour's farmhouse, where Mrs. Zimmer let me trail along as she tended her summer-blooming garden beds. I learned to put names with each variety of flower. She taught me to be still when bees buzzed nearby or landed on us. "They aren't here as an enemy to sting us," she would explain. "If we are gentle and mean no harm, the bees have no reason to hurt us." Mrs. Zimmer gave me an early and lasting lesson in non-violence, calm and courage.



## SARAH

Mimi Bassler (Sarah Weidman)

1910-2001

My paternal grandmother Mimi was a shy homebody soul of infinite caring, with a green thumb, a never-empty cookie jar, and a stitcher's nimble fingers. Mom told me I was the apple of her eye. She instilled in me the love of a worthy project well-planned and "persnickety" on the details through to completion. She favoured shades of pink way more than I do.



# NETTIE

Nana Filkins (Nettie Skinner)

1894–1989

Nana, my maternal great grandmother, was a courageous, self-contained tower of family, her church congregation and community service. Widowed young, Nana taught school to support her family. She kept a tidy house and meticulous diary, dutifully noting the days that her son, my Uncle Clyde, was held as a POW by the German army in WWII. She had a sense about the wider world. Nana lived in a tree-shaded brown and yellow Craftsman bungalow overlooking a creek and roaring waterfall.



4



5

# JANICE

Janice Irene LeBuis Bassler

1936–2008

For reasons still a mystery, my mother had me collect “dolls from foreign lands” on a long shelf in my girlhood bedroom. Each doll was dressed in the ethnic costume of the culture she represented. Grandmothers, aunts and Mom would gift new dolls on birthdays and Christmas, so that the colour-full collection—and my imagination—grew into a symbolic world of places and peoples that I dreamed of knowing for real. In hindsight, I see the dolls as reflecting Mom’s own deep yearning to explore the world beyond a rural hometown.

# THE MRS.

My School Teachers

Who isn’t formed by what their early classroom teachers pour into brains and behaviours? I was blessed to experience K–12 in a rural hilltown school. There was Mrs. Risley’s cheerful kindergarten, Mrs. Shultes’ show & tell, Mrs. Lounsbury’s spelling contests and write-to-your-favourite-author project, Mrs. Richardson’s motivating art class, and Mrs. Hayden, the imaginative English teacher who assigned us to write obituaries for ourselves as teenagers!



6

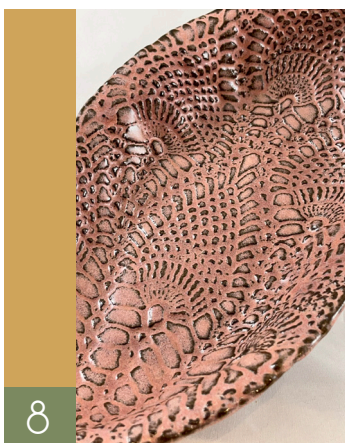
# JONI

Joni Mitchell

Joni is a monumental permission-giver and inspiring influence. She sings bold personal revelations while holding secrets within. Like me, she has lived the spell of lovers, borne heartache and savoured the sanctuary and freedom of navigating solo. She is familiar as a North American transplant with roots in both Canada and the States. Joni's creativity extends well beyond the folk music-box of her youth into jazz, symphony and visual art. The vessel vignette bows to her albums *Blue*, *Hejira* and the song lyric "I am a lonely painter."



7



8

# JUDY

Judy Chicago

"The Dinner Party" was art that raised feminist consciousness in the mid-1970s and blew my young woman's mind. Judy shocked the world with her iconic table of place settings (featuring controversial ceramic 'vagina plates') that spotlighted remarkable, overlooked women throughout history. The intricately stitched fabric table runners throughout her installation showed me that the old-fashioned embroidery I had learned from grandmothers could also be a medium for modern messaging. In October last year, I re-visited the permanent home of "The Dinner Party" at the Brooklyn Museum in NY City.

# ISAK

Isak Dinesen -- a.k.a. Karen, Tania Blixen

1885-1962

Reading Dinesen's "Out of Africa" was a passport when I didn't have one. Her vivid love story with Kenya and sepia photos propelled me to find a way to work and live in Africa. It took years to happen and only a minute to say 'yes' to a 1996 work assignment in post-apartheid South Africa that has been life-altering. In unexpected ways, Africa has become my soul's home address. Isak's struggle to live in right relation with African land, indigenous peoples, culture and wildlife was echoed in my personal journey of being at home in Cape Town.



9



## GEORGIA

Georgia O'Keeffe

1887–1986

I got up close to O'Keeffe's paintings on weekend wanders in American galleries and museums, while living in Washington, DC throughout my 20s. Georgia's work impressed me as grounded in a deep sense of the destinations to which she was drawn--the urban canyon-scapes of Manhattan, the Hawaiian islands' floral kaleidoscope, and her beloved high desert of the American southwest. O'Keeffe was an intrepid traveller to faraway places that called her back, which made sense to me. A dream-come-true with my 2016 ceramics residency in Santa Fe, a visit to Georgia's home in Abiquiu, New Mexico and the opportunity to walk about Ghost Ranch to the rocky sites where she mounted her easel and painted the world as she saw it.

10



## MARTY

Martha Alter Chen

Marty hosted the 1985 Oxfam women's study tour to India which I joined as a keen, curious grad student of international development. She knew South Asia well, having grown up in India as the child of American missionaries. By this time, Marty was raising her own family in Delhi and engaged in a career supporting women's economic enterprise. She showed us high-energy, community-based projects. We met determined women leaders who Marty respected as colleagues--and vice versa. Absorbing the paradox of India's poverty and cultural richness was both formative and humbling. Albeit in a brief few weeks' time, Marty helped me reckon the values necessary for integrity in humanitarian work.



11

## LISA

Elisabeth "Lisa" Croll (Spracket)

1944–2007

A colleague, mentor and confidante, Lisa was New Zealand born and a renowned anthropologist with SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, UK. Fluent in Mandarin, she gained rare access as a Western academic to villages in China during the 1970s and published books with insight and foresight about the country's social evolution, especially of women's lives. We met over dinner dates on stopovers, where she named hard truths about leadership that guided my way. We shared a passion for basic black outfits with distinctive shawls, the rustic stoneware clay yogurt jars one could find in rural China, and men who are able to love, value and partner with strong-willed women.

12





13

## BARBARA S.

Barbara Wolff Searle

A seasoned education specialist and programs leader at The World Bank, Barbara took me under her wing and fledged me into large-scale project management. We were colleagues in a newly formed China Department during the 1980s. She taught me to budget in multi-million dollars, organize travelling teams, and present big ideas. As the Bankwide Ombudswoman, Barbara was a trustworthy, practical resource when I encountered #metoo behaviour. Now 93 years young, Barbara and I spoke recently about our vivid memory of sharing a taxi ride across Beijing--in high tension--on June 4, 1989, the morning of the Tiananmen Square Massacre. What I saw and felt that day set me on a path of lifelong learning about my own and others' trauma healing.

## MABEL

Mabel van Oranje (Wisse-Smit)

I first joined forces with Mabel in 1996, as we were both engaged by the Open Society Foundation to support the Bosnian residents of Sarajevo, while the city was under siege. Our collaboration over decades since has instilled for me what goes into ambitious, values-driven collegial work and co-creation. As friends, we've shared life's ups and downs, celebrating accomplishment over champagne and shining light for one another through setbacks, tragedy and loss. The orange vessel winks at Mabel's Dutch heritage and her dynamism in spiralling up the global movement to end child marriage.



14



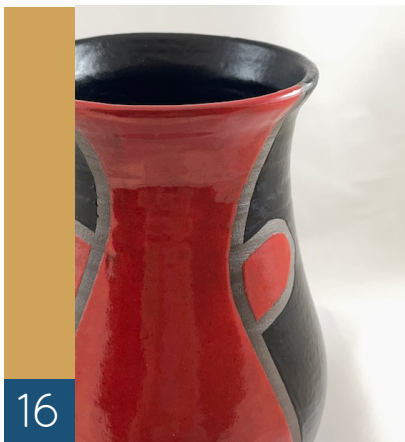
15

## NAFIJE

Nafije Zherka

1926-2018

I was welcomed into Nafije's Sarajevo home for a traditional meal during the war in former Yugoslavia. She shared so much more than savoury Bosnian pita (filled pastry pies) in our yearslong connection. I marvelled at Nafije's depth of affection, her survival skills, and a quirky sense of humour that was laced with dignity and pride. When Nafije comes to mind, I am nostalgic and grateful for all the hospitality I received while living in the Balkans. The vessels incorporate texture with a crocheted doily that Nafije made and gifted me before she died.



16

## TEUTA

Gruaja Shqiptare - Women of Albania

I am fascinated by the proud ancestral history of women in Albania and Kosovo, where I held several leadership posts. There was Queen Teuta of ancient times, the women partisans of WWII, and other noteworthy women of boldness, resistance and song. This brave, dynamic spirit shows itself across generations—and perhaps in singer Dua Lipa today? Worklife in Albanian cultural contexts moved me to lead with strength and self-confidence, balanced with healthy 360 degree awareness and curiosity.

## MHIMHI & CLEA

Mhimhi (Cecilia) Xayiya &  
Clea Justine Bassler

2000-2001

Mhimhi is the South African Xhosa sisi (sister), who helped care for Clea, my daughter who was born in Cape Town with an old-soul presence and a genetic condition called Cornelia de Lange syndrome. As a young woman, Mhimhi exuded love and remarkable instinct for Clea's special needs, with a calm, soft-smiling manner that steadied our stressed household. Clea died before her first birthday. Mhimhi went on to qualify in professional child care and support other families. She has admirably adopted and raised a vivacious daughter from her extended family who was orphaned by AIDS.



17



18

## CLARE

Clare "Old Lady" Fenton

d.2020

Overwhelming life crisis led me into the Cape Town home of Clare, who became a beloved wise mentor and Zen Buddhist teacher. A committed yogi and 'breather,' she probed the deep places and helped bring spiritual order to my lifeways. Clare nearly always welcomed me at her door wearing no-nonsense white trousers with a fresh blue 'n white striped blouse.



## BARBARA L.

Dr. Barbara L. Lewis

A highly regarded homeopath in Cape Town, Barbara opened my body-mind to alternative healing. She concocted remedies that strengthened my daughter Clea's weak immune system sufficiently for her to receive vaccines against infectious disease. An intuitive listener who also read me well, Barbara identified the source of chronic pain I experienced in the years after Clea's death. These breakthroughs gave me profound new perspective on dis-ease and well-being.

## NEWFOUNDLANDIA

Ode to Newfoundland  
Knitters & Hearts

I owe much to many sturdy-souled, warm-hearted and resource-full women of Newfoundland, where I lived in a jellybean row house in St. John's for 12 years and made my first clay pots. Founding and growing the Pottery with Purpose studio on The Rock gave me a sense of belonging, connection and fulfilling impact. I crafted many a yarn bowl and buttons for the island's mighty knitters, and I cherish joyful clay collaboration for good cause with the Islaview Foundation in Deer Lake.



## MARCELLA

Marcella Echevarria

Serendipitous introduction led to meeting Marcella, a versatile "design archaeologist" and connoisseur from Columbia who is nowadays as much at home sourcing yak wool in the Tibetan plateau as she is in the world's cosmopolitan centres. In my first years as an aspiring professional clay artisan, she crystallized what is meant by branding. To Marcella, it's all about creating, making and offering goods with authenticity from every molecule of one's DNA. This cluster of vessels honours Marcella's love of patterned textiles and her keen aesthetic sense for the soul, grace and traces of handwork in quality craft.

# MARION

Marion Ellis

I was directed to Marion's doorstep with a hunch about creating a group ceramics learning journey to Cape Town, showcasing the city's designation as World Design Capital in 2014. Marion and Cape Insights, her boutique travel company, gave life and itinerary to the idea, and so commenced our cooperation, friendship and travels as sister explorers. Vessels for holding food and flora bow to Marion's uncanny ability to suss out Africa's natural and crafted beauty, always ensuring that conviviality and sustenance is never too far down the road.



22

# MARGARET

Margaret Filkins

My maternal great aunt was the generous matriarch of vast extended family, without ever bearing children of her own. The door to Aunt Margaret's humble house on the hill was typically left unlocked as a perpetual welcome to the next drop-by visitor. Folks could rely on Peg's blue-sky demeanour, spunk and listening ear. Her home-baked cream pies were sublime. An astute, wise elder into her mid-90s, Aunt Margaret dared to name without blame the trauma and unhealed wounds of our large, close-knit clan. She inspires me to persevere, be open and extend the honesty, compassion and kindness she demonstrated throughout her long life.



23



# T I M E L I N E

- 1958 – 1975 Born, raised and schooled in Berne, a hamlet in the Helderberg Hilltowns of upstate New York where Bassler ancestors had settled as farmers in the late 1700s.
- 1975 – 1979 Opening to the world with higher education in Albany, NY and further study, urban culture and social life at McGill University in Montreal
- 1979 – 1994 Life and career-building from a Washington, DC home base, with regular work travel to China, Eastern and Western Europe. Outdoor adventuring in Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand. Women's study tour to India.
- 1994 – 2005 Itinerant period of home-with-work living in Budapest, Cape Town, Tirana, Skopje, Prishtina, Ljubljana and Sacramento. A globe-trotting life chapter of growing up as a leader, lover, mother, writer, and explorer of inner life, personal trauma and transformation.
- 2006 – 2018 Re-grounding in North America, shuttling between homes and family in Newfoundland and upstate New York. Began making with clay in 2008. Ceramics residencies in Barcelona (2011–12) and Santa Fe (2016). Founded Pottery with Purpose and mounted solo exhibitions "Smoke & Sparkle" (2016) and "The Vessel Homecoming" (2018).
- 2019 – present Relocation to Cordova Bay on Vancouver Island. Living a life of purpose, curiosity, and well-being as a mentor – mover – maker. Became a grandmother in 2021. Extensive 2023 post-Covid travel to reconnect with the wider world, including residency at NIROX Arts in the Cradle of Humankind, outside Johannesburg, South Africa.



**I recognize with respect and gratitude that I live, work and create on the traditional and ancestral territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lək̓ʷəŋən (Lekwungen) Peoples of the Coast Salish Nation in present day Saanich, British Columbia.**



ArtSea Community Arts is a charitable organization that works to ignite interest and appreciation for all forms of the arts and cultural activities on the Saanich Peninsula.



## IN TERRA SPECTIVE

Solo exhibitions are possible only with generous support, collaboration and encouragement of partners. The artist wishes to thank:

- The Artsea Gallery Team
- Faithwood Farm
- West Wind Hardwood  
--in loving memory of Shelley Nielsen
- Kelly S. Curtis Digital Services
- Amanda Hancocks@Etsy
- Brown's the Florist Sidney
- Noir Mudsilk
- Volunteer Docents--Gayle Graham,  
Joy Long & Rosemary Knechtel
- Sharon Johnson
- Brad de Young, for 24/7 presence,  
daily encouragement & all things practical