

Pottery show 'fires up' campus

Michael Kimberling

The Clackamas Print

As part of the National Council for Education of the Ceramic Arts annual conference, Clackamas' Pauling Center provided the venue for the Canadian group Fired Up, March 8 through 11.

"It's an exchange of ideas," said Canadian ceramic artist Meg Burgess, "and the variety

of type of work, some just glazes, creativity ideas that we want to share with other people who are interested in clay."

According to Pat Webber, a member of the Canadian ceramic movement, a point to be made about the 18 artists that make up Fired Up is that they have been showing art together for 22 years.

"This is an ongoing relationship that we have with one another," said Webber. "We have shows around Canada, different provinces ... invitational shows and an annual show in Victoria."

Webber went on to say that most of the students from Clackamas that went through the student's eyes.

"Some of this work is sculptural, thrilling, funny, some of it is more basic for use in your homes," said Webber.

According to Burgess, the show was exciting for Fired Up to see their own work through the student's eyes.

"It has been that interaction," Burgess said.

Among the other artists there

were Gary Merkel and Gordon Hutchens.

Hutchens has been producing works of art and functional pottery for over 35 years with over 25 one-man shows, and over 85 group exhibitions across Canada, the US, Japan and Korea.

Hutchens went on to explain how the medium of ceramics as an art form lends itself to a more technical universe to explore, and how a few of his pieces capture the color patterns of a seashell as it grows.

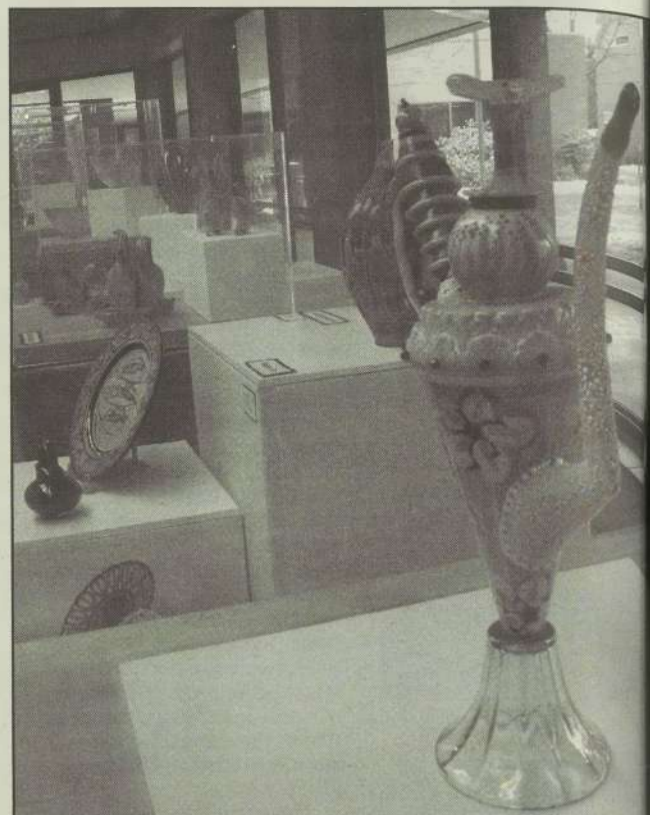
"I spray in a mixture of different metallic salts which then vaporize, and those metallic vapors caress the surface and create those iridescent colors, illustrious colors; interference colors technically," said Hutchens.

"They're literally bouncing light waves back to your eye in slightly conflicting wave patterns, and that creates that illusion of iridescence. At this angle it looks purple, at this angle it looks turquoise. It's a physics experiment in the surface of glaze."

According to Merkel, he treats the porcelain teapots he creates as sculptural collages.

"I like to think of them as conversation piece," said Merkel. "As you would take the time to go out for a cup of coffee, you would take the time to sit back look at the art work and lose yourself in its frivolity."

Merkel also states that he works spontaneously to con-



tribute to the freshness and liveliness of the architectural pieces.

"I want the work to stand on its own," said Merkel, "I want people to be intrigued with the work for more than a fleeting moment, but to really look at it, feel it, touch it, experience it on all levels,

which I think is what sculpture is really about."

On the day before the show, Fired Up students expressed gratitude to the students and campus of Clackamas.

"Thank you for hosting us," said Webber, "it's been a pleasure to be here on this beautiful campus."



All photos by Michael Kimberling Clackamas Print

Gordon Hutchens (Above Left), who focuses in stoneware, crystalline porcelain and lustreware, displays two of his creations. He uses metallic salts to create iridescent surfaces akin to the seashells of marine animals. (Above Right) Vases and Pottery by the group Fired Up adorned the Pauling Center March 8-11. (Right) Gary Merkel and one of his porcelain teapots. Merkel said he treats each teapot as a sculptural collage.



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