

Richard Rowland opens ceramics exhibit

See 'Honoring the Life of Earthen Materials' in Cannon Beach

CANNON BEACH — Cannon Beach Gallery's October exhibition, "Honoring the Life of Earthen Materials," showcases the ceramics of Astoria teacher and artist Richard Rowland. The show opens Friday, Oct. 2, and there will be an artist reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 3. The show will continue through Nov. 1.

Every material Rowland selects has its own character that creates an ecological and emotional perspective on the finished ceramic pieces. In the holistic process of finding, collecting, mixing and firing these raw materials, he watches their evolution into abstracted new forms.

Visual art gives artist another language to express their sense of the world. While this is true of Rowland's ceramics, it is not the whole truth. His work is more about the integration of art with the natural world. Balance is key in Rowland's work: in his

thrown and cast forms; between the controlled and accidental elements. Even his home and studio, set in woodland just outside Astoria, is a careful balance between the requirements of safe and comfortable living and work accommodation and the outside world.

"Interacting directly with raw, unrefined earthen materials with all one's senses is a primary experience, eliciting a sense of transcendence that makes one feel truly alive," he says. "When you physically touch a material for even a moment, you begin to understand its character."

Rowland is of Hawaiian heritage and feels a connection with indigenous peoples and their sense of place. He has collaborated in and initiated projects with artists from the Aboriginal, Maori and Hawaiian communities. He understands the respect given by these visiting artists for the local native Chinook peoples and facilitated

their meeting. These rich cultural exchanges feed into Rowland's work.

Rowland fires most of his work in his anagama (large wood-fired hillside kiln). He is currently building a new kiln and explained that the angle of the kiln must shadow the incline of the earth — for function and poetic concept; the ritual can not be separated from the making. The five- to seven-day firings of this large, whale-shaped kiln is indeed a ceremonial act of creation. The volcanic heat, flying ash and fire craft marks on the surface of the clay, which he describes as, "bringing to life an unpredictable, emotional quality and natural spirit to the work. The community (including the wind and the rain) firing the kiln brings a collective energy and multi-layered perspective that adds to the intensity of the experience."

Every ceramic shares its story about the firing process. Like



Submitted photo

A ceramic vessel by Richard Rowland, fired in his Astoria anagama kiln and part of his new exhibition at Cannon Beach Gallery.

an artifact, each piece holds traces of a longer geological history, connecting to bigger mysteries. In the anagama kiln, the fire

creates the spirit of the work, integrating materials in a natural way. There is no certainty in how a piece will turn out. "The

whole process is labor intensive, challenging and extremely humbling," Rowland says.

In "Honoring the Life of Earthen Materials," Rowland hopes each piece can evoke a genuine, intimate response. He also hopes that the depth of that experience and the work's connection to the natural world can conjure a sense of immensity.

In addition to Rowland's fine art pieces, the exhibition will also include functional ware. The holding of a cup or bowl made by an artist from materials drawn from the earth is an interaction with art at its simplest level.

Rowland is an art instructor and Gallery Exhibition Coordinator at Clatsop Community College in Astoria. He holds a Bachelor of Art from Pacific University and a Master of Fine Art from the University of Tasmania in Australia. He has studied kiln design and ceramics in Australia and Japan.

This exhibition was made possible with funding from the James F. & Marion L. Miller Foundation and exhibit sponsor, Lum's Auto Center.

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CCC Art Center Gallery opens 'Investigations' Artist David Allison to teach figure drawing workshop Oct. 9

ASTORIA — The Clatsop Community College Art Center Gallery will open its 2015-16 exhibition season with the show "Investigations, a Retrospective Exhibition by Seattle artist David Allison" featuring artwork created by the artist over a span of 40 years from 1975 through the current year.

There will be a reception at 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 8. The reception and exhibit are free and open to the public, located at 1799 Lexington Ave. The gallery is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday, weekends and holidays by appointment. The show will run from Sept. 28 through Nov. 5.

In conjunction with his exhibit, Allison will conduct the workshop "The Figure: Thoughts on Seeing" from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Fri-

day, Oct. 9 with a one-hour lunch break. During this workshop, which includes two hours of practice with a live model, participants will gain greater insight into the artist's process and explore his approach in a productive, hands-on session.

The workshop will be held in the Drawing/Painting Studio of the CCC Art Center and is free to CCC students enrolled in fall term art classes and open to the public for a \$20 fee. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. For a materials list and to register, contact Kristin Shauck at 503-338-2472 or email kshauck@clatsopcc.edu

Selected to exhibit in the 2015 "Au Naturel" competition by Seattle curator and art consultant Barbara Shaiman, Allison was also chosen by CCC art department faculty to

receive the coveted prize of a solo exhibition at the gallery.

Allison, who describes himself as a painter and draughtsman, grew up in and around Chicago and as an adult lived and worked in the city until 1969. Although he attended the University of Illinois for two years followed by a brief stint at the Art Institute in Chicago, he considers himself a self-taught artist. Allison worked at the Museum of Science and Industry for seven years where he had a painting studio, and his work was shown in galleries in Chicago.

In 1969, he moved to Seattle where he has balanced art making with art care for the last 45 years. He has shown successfully in local galleries while managing a fine art services business. In recent years art making has come resound-



Submitted photo

"St. Severin, Self" (2015), mixed-media on paper by David Allison.

ingly to the foreground.

"I've been working from the nude for a long while, perhaps 50 years," Allison recounts. His early work in the 1970s was formalist, focusing on what he calls "re-contextualizing the figure in space," using a copyist's grid to define the surface and a linear approach. He explains that his figures "exist in a push-pull sort of space, moving between surface and form."

He intends for his retrospective exhibit to illuminate

the ways he has dealt with context, which has shifted from a formalist approach to one that is "emotional and personal. He is currently more interested in expressing deeper issues of mortality, religion and sexuality. "I'd like this show to illuminate my winding path from earlier to present work."

Allison explains that his creative process begins with an image he finds compelling. "It could be a face, body, building; in life or existing only in a photograph." While his starting point begins with observation, throughout the development of the work it progresses through what he calls "stages of creation and destruction" until he arrives at an image "not highly finished" but that "feels complete." He never tries to visualize the final image beforehand. "I need to surprise myself," he explains. "I don't think I could keep working on a piece if I knew the end result."