

# Renewal

## **The long road to completion: 2016-2023**

This project demonstrated that when a community of artists pulls together they are able to adapt to restrictions imposed by pandemics, major changes in timelines, and significant design alterations and to achieve a fabulous outcome.

# In the beginning...

- This is the story of how the art installation “Renewal” was conceived and completed over a 7 year span by the Kingston Potters Guild
- The creation of a mosaic began as part of a “pitch” I made in 2016 to the Kingston Potters’ Guild executive to carry out 3 events to mark the Guild’s 50th anniversary in 2017
- The pitch included:
  - An exhibition of the work of former and current Guild members to highlight the extraordinary range of pottery produced over the first 50 years of the Guild’s existence
  - A “gala” reception to celebrate the Guild’s achievements
  - An art installation to be donated to the City of Kingston to commemorate the Guild’s anniversary



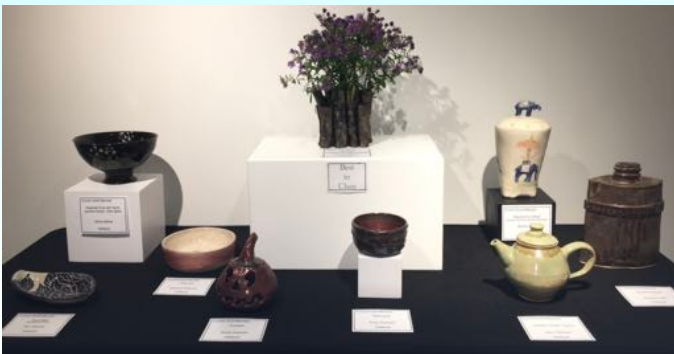
Some of the pottery pieces displayed in the Anniversary exhibition called “Feats of Clay”

Photo credit: N. Martin



# The exhibition...

- The exhibition was held in 2017 and incorporated the works of many former and current Guild members. An opening reception kicked off the exhibition.
- The works of current members were juried by Margaret Hughes (co-founder and co-owner of Cornerstone Fine Crafts from 1981 to 2004, and a founding Guild member), Anne Chambers (former President of The Ottawa Guild of Potters and FUSION: the Ontario Clay and Glass Association), and Alicia Boutilier (former Chief Curator and Curator of Canadian Historical Art at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre)
- “Best of Show” entries were chosen by the jurors



Examples of current members' work displayed at Exhibition. Linda Dougherty received the “Best in Class” designation



Platter by former member Tim De Rose



Pieces made by Founding Guild member William (Bill) Hutchison were on display at the exhibition  
Photo credit: N. Martin

- Meanwhile, development of a design for the art installation and meetings with the City of Kingston to determine a site were slowly happening

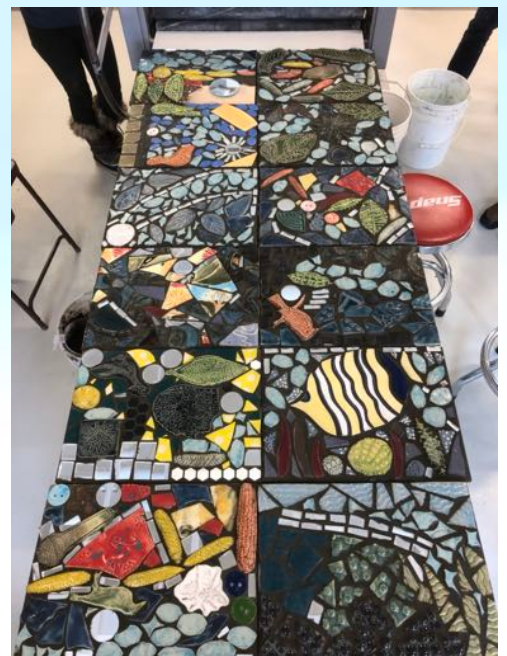
# The art installation...

- Developing a *mosaic* ceramic art installation became the guiding form as things like size, weight, ease of assembly, and flexibility in final size were considered
- A workshop on mosaics, specifically discussing different mortars and grouts for large installations was given at the Guild studio in the spring of 2019 by Susan Day, thereby helping to establish some basic principles

Susan Day demonstrating how to make a quick form for casting multiples of the same shape  
Photo credit: N. Martin



Example of the mosaics made in the workshop



- A proposal for the KPG to create and donate a mosaic to Kingston was made to the Kingston Arts and Cultural Services team for the City of Kingston. The mosaic would be wall-mounted and depict motifs representing Kingston landmarks
- A new recreation centre was being constructed in Kingston and a 1.5 by 1.2 m area in the reception area was selected for the ceramic piece
- A small design team of Guild members worked out a design to fit the designated location
- However, this was soon to change!

# Location, location, location...

- As personnel on the Arts and Cultural Services team changed, so did the location for the Mosaic. Taylor Norris joined the team and brought the idea to the table of installing the mosaic in the Richardson Beach Bathhouse. Renovations were soon to start at the bathhouse. It contained change rooms and restrooms for the public to use when swimming at Richardson Beach on the shore of Lake Ontario. More importantly to the KPG, the bathhouse was the somewhat unusual location of the Guild's first public meetings starting in March of 1967.
- Given the historical significance of the Bathhouse to the Guild, the bathhouse seemed the perfect location for a piece of public art created by Guild members. The beach area was also proposed to undergo a major facelift to enhance safety and accessibility to the water.

PANEL 1



PANEL 2

Sketches by Tania Craan

- The KPG design team worked together to create a new design for the bathhouse. The idea was to install two 3 m sections over the entrances to the building.
- The design played off the idea that the building faced land in one direction and water in the other so the panels were to represent land on one side and water on the other.

# Delays, delays, delays...

- As 2019 turned into 2020 we all know what happened - COVID pandemic!!! Things slowed down, shut down, or were eliminated completely
- Construction at the bathhouse was significantly delayed due to materials supply and budget issues and this pushed the installation date further and further into the future
- The Guild did, however, carry on with mosaic tile making “bees” where many pitched in to help out



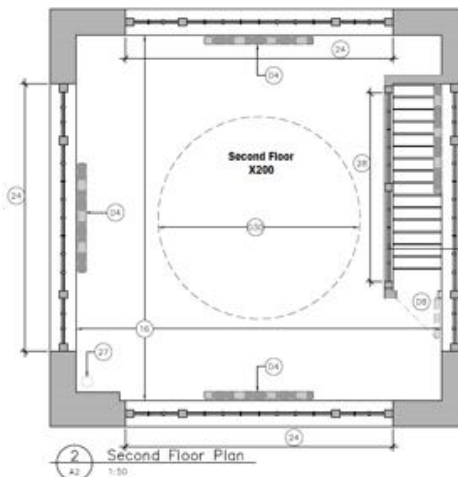
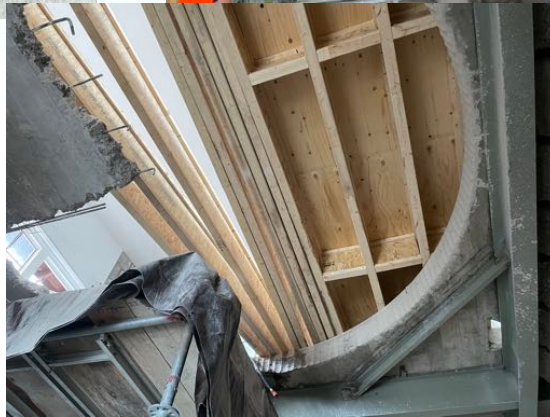
Pre-pandemic water “tile” making session in the Guild studio  
Photo credit: Susanne Gordon

# Design change, again...

- As things slowly moved forward, the location of the mosaic was changed from two 3 m long sections over the entrances of the building to a circular opening that had been cut into the ceiling of the first floor. This created a hole 11 m in circumference with 0.8 m walls that extended up to the second floor. That meant almost twice as many tiles needed to be made compared to our original design estimates!



Linda Fraser, Nancy Martin, Taylor Norris (Arts and Cultural Services Coordinator), and Cam Burns (Project Manager) at bathhouse site visit to view the circular openings in the ceiling for the 1st time  
Photo credit: L. Fraser



New plans for the bathhouse showing opening in the first floor ceiling