

THE POWER OF OBJECTS

Voices of
Contemporary Craft

CURATED BY
BRUNO VINHAS



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Craft Alliance Atlantic

Craft Alliance is a Canadian based non-profit organization, incorporated as a society in 2009. Our mandate is to provide marketing opportunities and to encourage export of Canadian craft. The key objective is to enhance the professionalism, education and advancement of fine craft in Canada and abroad.

Craft Alliance is an organization comprised of regionally based craft organizations consisting of the provincial craft councils and guilds, craft media organizations and other craft related industry, educational or government organizations, interested in supporting the further development of craft.

Craft Alliance leads the industry by working to develop national and regionally based projects to assist in furthering the goals of the partner organizations. The Alliance has four main priority program areas within its mandate. Those priorities include: Education, Market Development, Business Development, and Export.

The Alliance is an industry partner in Canada with the Canadian Craft Federation (CCF). Craft Alliance has represented Canadian contemporary craft at SOFA Chicago through both educational missions and exhibition presentations from 2016–2018 and Collect Art Fair 2024 and 2025. ■

Equity Statement

Craft Alliance acknowledges the diverse communities in our region that make up our population, including Indigenous Peoples, the many descendants of African Nova Scotians, the Black Loyalists and other racialized individuals including immigrants and refugees; individuals from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community; and physically and intellectually disabled

makers and artists. We recognize that the lived experiences of these groups can often vary dramatically, and that considering the intersectionality of those lived experiences is also an essential factor when discussing issues pertaining to them. ■

Team



BERNARD BURTON (HE/HIM)
Executive Director, Craft Alliance Atlantic

Bernard is the founding Executive Director of Craft Alliance Atlantic Association. He was instrumental in forming the organization in 2009, after two years of research and development. Bernard has over 37 years of experience in the Canadian craft community, as a maker, gallerist, administrator and volunteer. In his capacity with Craft Alliance he has participated and coordinated export, trade & market intelligence missions for the craft sector to Japan, China, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, United Kingdom and the United States. He has coordinated contemporary craft exhibitions and presentations at *Collect* 2024, 2025 and SOFA Chicago and was involved with that event for over ten years.

Bernard was recently named an *Honourary Fellow* of the New Brunswick College of Craft & Design. He is also Vice President of the Canadian Crafts Federation. He is also Past-President of World Craft Council – North America and Craft Nova Scotia. He has served on several many industry Boards, including; the Cultural Human Resources Council, the International ECONOMUSEE Network and the National Steering Committee for International Trade Training. Bernard is based in Kijipuktuk (Halifax), Nova Scotia, Canada. ■



PHOTO: NICOLE BOUDREAU

CHRISTINA FOSTER (SHE/HER)
President, Craft Alliance Atlantic
Executive Director, The Crafts Council of New Brunswick

Christina Foster is a dedicated leader in the New Brunswick arts and culture sector, currently serving as the Executive Director of Craft NB (The Crafts Council of New Brunswick). Based in Fredericton, she is an advocate for contemporary craft, overseeing major organizational initiatives, managing significant grants & projects, and building strategic partnerships to support the province's handmade economy.

A strategic thinker and community builder, Christina is a storyteller at heart and strives to further the arts industry by championing the people making the work. She currently serves as a key advisor on several boards, including Craft Alliance Atlantic. ■



Team



BRUNO VINHAS (HE/THEY)

**Curator, *The Power of Objects: Voices of Contemporary Craft*
Manager Export Program, Craft Alliance Atlantic**

Bruno Vinhas is a curator, arts administrator, and cultural connector whose practice is shaped by curiosity, collaboration, and care. With a background in Cultural Tourism and Economy and Textile Craft & Apparel Design, his work bridges communities, sparks dialogue and expands access to cultural spaces. His approach is informed by lived experience as a queer, Latin immigrant living and working in Atlantic Canada, where he has learned to transform difference into strength and advocacy.

Bruno began his career in theatre and dance in Brazil, directing and designing sets, costumes, and lighting for over 30 productions. After living in Ireland and New Zealand, he settled in Canada in 2015. From 2017 to 2024, he held the Gallery Director/ Curator and later Director of Events and Outreach roles at the Craft Council of NL. During this time, he curated and installed over 110 exhibitions across institutions such as The Rooms, Eastern Edge Gallery, and the Shaw Centre.

His work emphasizes mentorship, accessibility, and sector development. Notable initiatives include partnerships with the College of the North Atlantic Textiles Program, the *Craft Conversation* series, and accessibility-focused programs such as the Whisper Program, sensory-aware gallery hours, and *SENSORIUS—Where the Skin Meets the Eye*. Internationally, his curatorial practice expanded through *Collect Art Fair* at Somerset House, London (2024–2025).

In 2024, Bruno was appointed Manager of the Export Program at Craft Alliance Atlantic, supporting craft artists in international markets. His contributions have been recognized with the 2023 Mary MacDonald Award (VANL/CARFAC), affirming his commitment to cultural equity, collaboration, and community-led craft practice. ■

Director's Message

Craft Alliance is proud to share a milestone moment for our organization and for contemporary craft from Canada's Atlantic region. Rooted in collaboration, excellence, and advocacy, Craft Alliance Atlantic champions the work of skilled makers whose practices reflect both deep tradition and bold innovation. Our mission is to elevate craft as a vital cultural and economic force, fostering meaningful connections between artists, communities, and international audiences.

This marks our third exhibition at *Collect*, having exhibited in 2024 and 2025, a process which started in 2018, when we hosted a Canadian delegation to attend *Collect* for the first time. It was that meeting with Isobel Dennis and Rosy Greenlees that inspired our desires to show contemporary work from Canada to the UK gallery audiences.

In 2026, we are honoured to participate in the prestigious *Collect Art Fair* in London, UK—one of the world's leading platforms for exceptional contemporary craft and design. This invitation marks an important recognition of the quality, diversity, and relevance of Atlantic Canadian craft on a global stage. We are excited to present the voices and visions of our makers to an international audience, strengthening cultural exchange and reaffirming Canada's place within the global craft community. ■

- Bernard Burton

Collect Art Fair is the leading international art fair dedicated to contemporary craft and design. It has been at the forefront of the contemporary craft movement since its establishment in 2004 by Crafts Council. *Collect* provides a global marketplace for museum curators, interior designers and collectors to source the finest contemporary craft and design.

A wide range of disciplines and materials are represented at *Collect*: ceramics, furniture, glass, jewellery, wearable art, metalwork, non-traditional materials, precious metalwork, sculpture, textiles, woodwork and more.

***Presented by Craft Alliance Atlantic Association
Curated by Bruno Vinhas***

Past Collect Exhibitions I



THE POWER OF OBJECTS

Voices of Atlantic Canadian Craft Artists

Craft has always been rooted in the intimate relationship between the maker, the material, and the community. From utilitarian vessels to decorative cloth and ritual adornments, craft objects have long served the needs of society - not only in function but in meaning. Craft has lent itself to all arts disciplines and empowered them to tell a story, and thus craft artists have been for centuries making a mark that cannot be erased. Across cultures and generations, they have quietly held space for memory, identity, and resistance in their creations.

The power of craft objects exists in the duality of their nature: they are at once universal and deeply personal, capable of crossing borders while remaining anchored in the specificity of culture, place, and time. These handmade pieces become material witnesses of space in time, embodying traditions, participating in local customs, and telling stories. In their fibers and clay, we find the impressions of one's inherited knowledge; in their

patterns and textures, the echoes of the community where it was made; and in their forms, the resilience of creativity and the expression of the inner world of its maker.

Craft objects carry in them more than pure aesthetic or functionality, contemporary makers use their materials and forms as political statements, as instruments of social change, as tools of transformation and manifestation of hopes for a better future.



CURATORIAL STATEMENT

→ History has shown us the power of craft objects, the Chilean Arpilleras, the AIDS Memorial Quilts, “whether it’s the suffragettes using sashes and banners to march for women’s rights, the abolitionists using quilts to guide enslaved people to freedom, or modern-day craftivists knitting for peace, crafting has served as a vehicle for both protest and survival. These examples underscore the versatility of craft as a method of resistance—blending creativity with defiance, art with activism, and tradition with innovation.”¹

In Atlantic Canada, craft artists are redefining what it means to create with intention. Their work draws from a rich spectrum of lived experiences: from traditional Indigenous knowledge systems and rural worldviews to queer narratives and diasporic connections to ancestral homelands. These artists weave personal and collective histories into their objects, offering insight into cultural identities, critiques of dominant narratives, and reflections on belonging. Whether confronting colonial legacies,

celebrating underrepresented voices, or envisioning alternative futures, their practices illuminate the powerful role of craft in shaping a more inclusive and reflective society.

Through their hands, these artists are reinventing their craft through the demarginalization of “craft” as a lesser art, entrusting their mediums and forms with the highest skill and thoughts, and maintaining a rich sense of history and community through tradition and innovation in their pieces. “Hands are involved in the modes of knowing [...] they possess their own knowledge and skill”². The making of craft objects, for Atlantic Canadian artists, is ritualistic and embedded with the region’s history, stories and landscape; the objects created share the voice of their makers and their communities, presenting and amplifying the rich cultural background of the region to a world stage.

The craft objects created by these makers carry within them more than aesthetic intention or functional purpose, they are overflowed with meaning,

The power of craft objects exists in the duality of their nature: they are at once universal and deeply personal, capable of crossing borders while remaining anchored in the specificity of culture, place, and time.

Through clay, fiber, metal, wood, glass and several other mediums, craft artists engage with urgent political and social themes, transforming traditional practices into acts of resistance, reclamation, and hope.

agency, and vision. These contemporary artists are harnessing the material language of craft not only to reflect their world but to challenge and reshape it. Through clay, fiber, metal, wood, glass and several other mediums, craft artists engage with urgent political and social themes, transforming traditional practices into acts of resistance, reclamation, and hope. These works are not just beautiful or useful; they are bold declarations, statements of identity, resilience, and a deep longing for a more just and compassionate future.

Curating in the context of Craft is unique, beautiful and challenging. It is intrinsically tactile and community and narrative-oriented, rooted in materials, mediums, process and place. It involves careful considerations and aims to amplify voices that have historically been underrepresented in mainstream art spaces narratives and finding meaning in materials, stories, cultures and skills that might otherwise go unnoticed.

This exhibition aims to do that. It embraces craft as a vital language that communicates beyond words. It is a way of holding space for others. It

is a means of connecting makers, audiences, and communities from both sides of the Atlantic through shared values and collective inquiry. It asks viewers to consider how objects shape our understanding of history and how, in the hands of contemporary makers, they continue to challenge, affirm, and transform the present.

The artists represented here are not merely preserving practices, they are expanding them, reinterpreting materials and methods to reflect the complexities of today's world. In doing so, they remind us that craft is not static. It is a living and breathing language, powerfully responsive; an enduring force in shaping who we are, how we connect, and how we imagine what comes next. ■

- Bruno Vinhas

- 1 *Crafting Resistance: How Handmade Art and Objects Have Shaped Movements*. Albion Gould, 2025
- 2 "The Making of Many Hands: Artisanal Production and Neighborhood Redevelopment in Contemporary Socially Engaged Art." Brynjolfsson, Noni. in *The New Politics of the Handmade*, Black I Burisch. 2021

Yalda Bozorg

Yalda Bozorg is an Iranian-Canadian ceramic artist and practice-led researcher whose work examines the relationships between memory, material, and the subtle emotional experiences that resist easy articulation. Beginning her work with clay in 2007, she later moved to Canada, where she studied at the University of New Brunswick and the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design. She went on to complete an MA in Ceramics and a PhD at Cardiff Metropolitan University, focusing on how material processes shape thought and how the ecology of the studio (tools, gestures, atmosphere, and time) influences the emerging object.

Bozorg's research is grounded in the belief that making is a form of knowing. Her studio practice engages clay, porcelain, copper, electroforming, and 3D printing as interconnected material languages. She observes how pressure, movement, and duration leave traces within objects, guiding the next stage of making. These material responses become metaphors for memory, trauma, fear, or slow change; experiences that imprint themselves on the body and return over time.

Her work draws from close listening and lived experience. Through interviews and conversations, Bozorg gathers personal narratives about emotional thresholds and transformative moments. She then turns to material form to hold these stories without reducing or oversimplifying them. Porcelain, with its tendency to return to earlier movements during firing, becomes an ideal medium for exploring memory's persistence. When transitions occur too slowly for clay alone, she incorporates copper, electroformed elements, or digitally generated structures to extend her vocabulary.

Bozorg's objects often appear calm at first glance, yet they contain subtle tensions; fine ruptures, delicate distortions, or impressions that suggest ongoing internal processes.

Her approach is intuitive but deeply research-driven, engaging material as both collaborator and witness. She embraces unpredictability, allowing the material to reveal motions and stories that cannot be directed or controlled entirely.

In recent years, Bozorg has created exhibitions that invite viewers to hold or handle the work, constructing intimate encounters where object and viewers gently alter one another. These tactile exchanges reveal the fragility and resilience contained within each form, emphasizing the embodied nature of perception and emotional experience. Her work continues to evolve through an ongoing exploration of the relationship between making, memory, and the quiet intelligence of material.

Bozorg's contributions to contemporary ceramics extend beyond her studio practice. She has presented her research internationally, collaborated with other artists and researchers, and contributed to ongoing conversations about materiality, making, and embodied knowledge.



Her work reflects a rare sensitivity to both concept and craft, bridging academic inquiry and deeply personal artistic expression.

Within *The Power of Objects*, Bozorg's work embodies the exhibition's exploration of objects as carriers of

emotional and psychological resonance. Her porcelain and mixed-material forms reveal how crafted objects can hold traces of lived experience, echoes of fear, change, and resilience. Through her material attentiveness and research-driven approach, Bozorg highlights the profound and impactful agency of objects as carriers of memory, connection, and transformation. ■





Darrell DesRoches

Darrell DesRoches is a Prince Edward Island-based woodturner whose work emerges from a lifelong relationship with land, community, and the quiet wisdom of natural materials. Before dedicating himself fully to his studio practice, DesRoches spent 30 years working in the public school system as a senior high and intermediate educator, and later as the Indigenous Education Specialist for the PEI Department of Education and Early Learning. His contributions to Indigenous language and cultural revitalization, including the development of a Mi'kmaw language curriculum for grades 7–8, were recognized through the honour of receiving an eagle feather from Senator Chief Brian Francis. This gesture reflects the depth of trust and respect he has built within his community and the care with which he approaches all aspects of his work.

DesRoches holds an Honours Degree in Philosophy from St. Francis Xavier University, a Master of Education specializing in environmental education from the University of Prince Edward Island, grounding his practice in reflective inquiry and ecological awareness. Now retired from formal education, he spends most of his time in his studio on the south shore of PEI, accompanied by his beagle, Lady, where he continues to push the expressive potential of woodturning.

Entirely self-taught in woodturning, DesRoches is widely recognized for his technical fluidity, refined craftsmanship, and thoughtful engagement with the material. His work is rooted in a commitment to sustainability and in deep respect for the forests, shorelines, and ecosystems that shape life on the island. He forages and selects wood with intentionality, allowing the inherent grain, imperfections, and histories embedded in each piece to guide the final form. His practice is influenced by con-

temporary wood artists such as Pascal Oudet, Christoph Finkel, and Christian Burchard, whose boundary-pushing approaches mirror his own dedication to innovation within the craft.

Over the years, DesRoches has become an important figure within the PEI craft sector. He is a charter member of the PEI Woodturners' Guild and a juried member of both the PEI Crafts Council and Craft Alliance Atlantic. He is recognized for his generosity in sharing knowledge, his commitment to mentorship, and his belief that craftsmanship is not simply a skill but a way of being; one grounded in respect, mindfulness, and a deep sense of place. His work balances simplicity and emotional resonance, allowing the material to speak while offering viewers a contemplative encounter with the natural world.

DesRoches's wood-turned forms often serve as meditation on time, fragility, and resilience. He approaches wood as both collaborator and storyteller, revealing what he describes as the "essence" held within each piece. His practice continues to evolve through experimentation, curiosity, and an openness to the lessons the material provides.

Within *The Power of Objects*, DesRoches's works highlight how natural materials can act as repositories of ecological memory, cultural connection, and emotional presence. His work embodies the exhibition's exploration of craft as a language of care; revealing the quiet agency of objects shaped through respect for the beauty on the imperfections, attentiveness, sustainability, and a deep reverence for the land. Through his thoughtful engagement with wood, DesRoches demonstrates how crafted forms can hold space for reflection, grounding viewers in relationships that extend far beyond the object itself. ■

Kristi Farrier

Kristi Farrier is a paper and textile artist based on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, whose practice is rooted in environmental stewardship, plant-based knowledge, and a deep engagement with seasonal rhythms. Working at the intersection of handmade paper, contemporary textiles, and sustainable craft traditions, Farrier cultivates many of the materials she uses, participating in a full cycle of growth, harvest, processing, and making. Her work emphasizes a material ethic grounded in care, responsibility, and connection to place.

Farrier grows and processes flax for her papermaking, collaborating with soil, weather, and the slow transformations embedded in plant fibres. This intimate relationship with raw material shapes her artworks, which often carry the subtle marks of their origin: traces of stalk, root, fibre, and field. She repurposes domestic and agricultural textiles, weaving personal and cultural histories into her pieces while challenging patterns of waste, overconsumption, and environmental disregard. Her handmade paper works often emerge

from long periods of observation and experimentation, inviting viewers to consider the narratives embedded in the material itself.

Alongside papermaking, Farrier creates contemporary textile artworks that combine fabric, thread, paint, and dye to form vivid abstractions. These works explore movement, colour, and the intuitive pathways of hand-stitching. Whether with paper or textiles, her practice centres the tactile and the handmade, celebrating the sensory and contemplative dimensions of slow craft. Through sustained engagement with material, Farrier cultivates not only flax but a deep sensitivity to her surroundings. This ongoing dialogue between hand, material, and place supports both artistic growth and a heightened awareness of environmental and social interdependence.

Before transitioning to full-time artistic work, Farrier earned a BA in Urban and Regional Studies and a Master of Public Administration. She later held leadership and program delivery roles at local and national levels within non-profit and government sectors. This background

informs her ongoing dedication to community engagement, knowledge sharing, and the creation of collaborative spaces for artistic growth. She regularly offers workshops, mentorship, and public programming, fostering creative communities across Atlantic Canada.

Farrier is a juried member of the Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design in both handmade paper and textiles. Her work has been exhibited regionally and nationally and is held in private collections throughout North America. She is the recipient of Arts Nova Scotia grants supporting the development and dissemination of her practice. In her creative space, Flying Finch Studio, Farrier maintains a vibrant creative environment dedicated to sustainable, place-based craft.

Her artworks, whether translucent sheets of flax paper or dynamic stitched compositions, embody the transformative potential of fibre. They honour the quiet intervals of making: soaking, retting, beating, drying, and the dialogue between material and maker. Each piece reflects her commitment to using craft as a



method of attention, presence, and ecological reciprocity.

Within *The Power of Objects*, Farrier's work demonstrates how crafted forms can hold ecological memory and relational knowledge. Her plant-based papers and textiles vessels and sculptures reveal the intimate processes of growth and transformation that shape her materials, illustrating how objects become carriers of place, season, and environmental care. Through her practice, Farrier embodies the assertion that objects hold communal power and are active participants: agents that connect us to land, memory, history, and a broader meaning of community. ■



Neil Forrest

Neil Forrest is an internationally recognized ceramic artist whose multidisciplinary practice spans sculpture, installation, architecture, design collaboration, and academic research. Over a career of several decades, he has presented more than fourteen solo exhibitions and participated in over eighty group exhibitions around the world. Forrest's work is known for its conceptual rigor, inventive materiality, and exploration of how ceramic forms operate as narrative, spatial, and cultural agents.

Forrest trained at Cranbrook Academy of Art and Alfred University and later built an influential academic career as Professor at NSCAD University and the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, and now Professor Emeritus. In his teaching practice, he shaped new generations of artists working at the intersections of craft, material inquiry, and spatial thinking. His teaching, symposium contributions, and cross-disciplinary research have significantly impacted the field, advancing ceramics as a medium capable of engaging with architecture, ecology, and contemporary political questions.

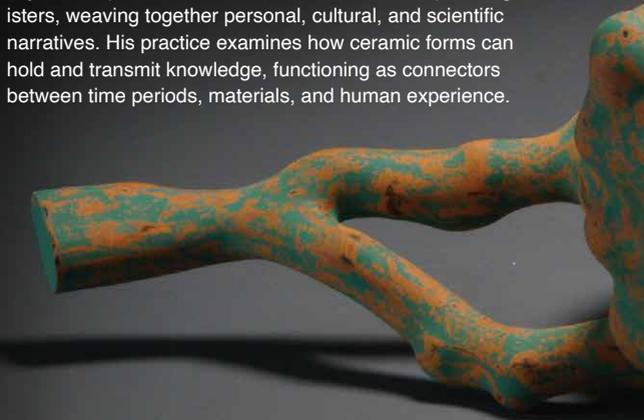
His early work was rooted in ornament and architectonic ceramic systems; large-scale assemblages and micro-structures that challenged traditional boundaries of function, form, and spatial occupation. These pieces explored biological morphologies, invented landscapes, and interconnected ceramic networks. Over time, his practice expanded toward installations that respond to specific historical, environmental, or anthropological contexts, often integrating narrative and conceptual threads.

Forrest frequently collaborates with other artists, architects, and scientists. Notably, as part of OortCloudX (a collaborative duo with artist John Roloff), he develops installations that examine origin stories, pop culture clashes, geological problematics, and material processes. Their recent exhibition, *A Roadmap to Stardust*, held at

the San Francisco Museum of Craft & Design in 2025, exemplifies an interdisciplinary exploration of matter, systems, and narrative. Forrest's international profile includes participation in the *Cheongju Biennale* in Korea, a major commission for *Overthrown* at the Denver Art Museum, and solo exhibitions such as *The Washingtonian Service* (Washington, D.C.) and *Hard Transits* (RAM Galleri, Oslo).

He has received multiple Canada Council grants (including two Established Artist Grants) as well as support from Arts Nova Scotia and other agencies. His research project PORØS (Porous), funded by the Norwegian Artistic Research Council, engineered a narrative of chemical processes, evaporation, and crystalline growth within a suite of ceramic objects. Exhibited at the Nelson Museum of Art in Arizona, the project affirmed Forrest's reputation as an artist who expands ceramics into the realms of scientific phenomena and environmental inquiry.

Forrest's work operates across scales, from intimate objects to spatial installations, and across conceptual registers, weaving together personal, cultural, and scientific narratives. His practice examines how ceramic forms can hold and transmit knowledge, functioning as connectors between time periods, materials, and human experience.



Each project reveals a deep engagement with both the physical properties of clay and the conceptual implications of material transformation.

Within *The Power of Objects*, Forrest's work exemplifies how crafted forms can serve as systems of meaning and political discourse; objects that locate narrative within material, history, and spatial relations. His work underscores the exhibition's vision that objects are active forces capable of shaping our understanding of identity, and collective memory. Through his expansive approach to ceramics, Forrest demonstrates how objects can offer new pathways for thinking, connecting, and imagining our place within larger cultural and geographical systems. ■



Wendy Johnston

Wendy Johnston is a New Brunswick ceramic artist whose practice spans nearly three decades and reflects an unwavering dedication to exploring the expressive potential of clay. With eight years of post-secondary study in fine arts, ceramics, and education, Johnston developed a foundation that merges technical skill with conceptual curiosity. After five years of teaching, she established her studio in Hopewell Cape, where she continues to refine a body of work that moves fluidly between functional objects and sculptural forms.

Johnston began her career rooted in functional pottery, creating tableware that emphasized usability and clarity of form. However, she soon found herself drawn to experimentation, cutting, layering, altering forms, and incorporating transfers to push clay beyond traditional functional boundaries. These early explorations marked the beginning of her interest in how ceramics can inhabit a space between utility and sculpture, inviting

viewers to reconsider the relationship between object, purpose, and aesthetic expression.

Her travels throughout Europe significantly influenced her artistic development. Encounters with Italian majolica, Baroque ornament, Gothic and Renaissance architecture, and the organic curves of Art Nouveau helped shape her interest in elaborate surface treatments and lush decorative elements. This led to a series of highly embellished works that incorporated sculpted flowers, clay straps, and intricate motifs. Her solo exhibition *Scavenging for Beauty* marked a major turning point, showcasing a body of work that integrated unconventional materials (scrap metal, copper, silk, plastic, and found objects) into ceramic forms. Through this mixture of materials, Johnston examined themes of beauty and the contrast of abundant historical decoration to a modern world where the value of ornamentation is lost to utility and efficiency in design.

In recent years, Johnston has shifted her focus to a new narrative: the relationship between humans and wildlife amid climate change, deforestation, and urban expansion. Imagining a world where animals adapt by using human-made tools, her new vessels present scenes in which wildlife reclaims agency in disrupted environments. The work is both a critique of ecological degradation yet is a playful gesture toward reciprocity and coexistence..

Johnston participated in a three-month residency in Jingdezhen, China, an international centre for porcelain production during the last months of 2025. There, she explored large, translucent sculptural flowers that reflect on aging as a process of transformation rather than decline. These works examined fragility, impermanence, and the shifting forms of beauty that emerge over time.



Her practice remains deeply informed by curiosity, experimentation, and a desire to use clay as both metaphor and material. Whether through functional pieces or elaborate sculptural assemblages, Johnston's work captures a sense of movement, narrative, and emotional depth.

Within *The Power of Objects*, Johnston's pieces illuminate how crafted forms can hold speculative and ecological storytelling. Her work acts as imaginative propositions; objects that consider the agency of animals, the consequences of human impact, and the layered beauty found in both decay and regeneration. Through her innovative approach to form and material, Johnston embodies the idea that objects can challenge, provoke, and reimagine the worlds we inhabit. ■



Urve Manuel

Urve Manuel is a Newfoundland and Labrador-based glass artist whose practice is deeply rooted in the landscape, wilderness, and sensory experiences of the province she calls home. Raised in a family that valued outdoor exploration, Manuel spent her formative years hiking the “Rockies”, paddling remote waterways, camping in deep woods, and learning to identify wildflowers, wildlife, and geological formations. These early encounters with vast, ancient ecosystems instilled in her a profound respect for nature and a lifelong fascination with its rhythms, fragility, and strength. Today, living in a remote area near Gros Morne National Park, she continues to cultivate a daily relationship with land and weather, drawing inspiration from mountains, ocean expanses, shifting seasons, and chance encounters with wildlife.

Glass became Manuel's primary medium for translating these experiences into tangible form. She describes the work as both meditative and demanding: a process that mirrors the slow beauty of the landscapes around her. Her feathers, landscapes, and sculptural works capture fleeting impressions of place: the arc of a fox's movement across snow, the sudden appearance of ptarmigan on a ridge, or the delicate unfolding of alpine flora. Each piece distills the sense of awe and intimate observation that characterizes her life outdoors.

Her Estonian heritage also informs her aesthetic decisions, infusing her work with an Her life experience in the Newfoundland's wilderness and her ancestral cultural traditions, create a layered visual language that grounds her work in both personal lineage and geographic specificity.

Manuel approaches glass with an understanding of its dual nature: its seeming fragility and its remarkable strength. She embraces the slow, deliberate pace required

by kiln-formed glass, where each stage of cutting, placing, fusing, shaping, demands patience and presence. The medium's responsiveness to light, heat, and time allows her to explore themes of impermanence, resilience, and the complex interdependence of ecosystems. The translucency and luminosity of glass also echo the atmospheric qualities of the environments that inspire her, capturing mist, ice, and shifting light in subtle visual gestures.

Her practice continues to evolve as she expands her technical repertoire and refines her ability to evoke emotion through colour and form. Whether producing intricate feathers or expansive landscape panels, and life size installations, Manuel remains committed to honouring the natural world through work that invites viewers into a contemplative encounter with place.

Manuel's pieces have become widely recognized within Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond, resonating with collectors who are drawn to the clarity of her vision and her ability to translate wilderness experiences into compelling visual narratives. Her work is celebrated for its sensitivity, craftsmanship, and the reverence it shows for the ecosystems she inhabits.

Within *The Power of Objects*, Manuel's glass works exemplify how crafted objects can hold sensory memory and emotional truth. Her forms mirror the slow beauty of Gros Morne's ancient landscapes, demonstrating how glass can capture the essence of light, movement, and lived experience. Through her attentive engagement with nature and material, Manuel reveals the capacity of craft objects to bear witness to landscapes, to moments, and to the quiet resilience that defines both the natural world and the human spirit. ■

Alexandra McCurdy, RCA, IAC

Alexandra McCurdy, RCA, IAC, is one of Atlantic Canada's foremost ceramic artists, recognized nationally and internationally for a practice that spans several decades and continues to evolve with remarkable depth and clarity of intention. A graduate of NSCAD University, where she earned her BFA in Ceramics, McCurdy later completed an MA in 3D Design–Ceramics at the Cardiff Institute of Higher Education in Wales. This academic grounding provided the conceptual and technical foundation for a career that has consistently merged craftsmanship, research, and material sensibility.

McCurdy's work has been widely exhibited across Canada and abroad, establishing her as a leading voice in contemporary ceramics. She has presented major solo exhibitions including *The Ties That Bind* at the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery and two nationally touring exhibitions: *Mothers/Daughters*, originating at the Mary E. Black Gallery in Halifax, and *S.O.S: Sources of Support*, organized by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Her retrospective, *The Fabric of Clay*, curated by the Burlington Art Centre, toured to Saint Mary's University Art Gallery and the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, reinforcing her influence and legacy within Canadian craft.

Her work is represented in a significant number of public and private collections, such as the Gardiner Museum, the Royal Ontario Museum, the International Museum of Ceramics in Faenza, the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, the Burlington Art Gallery, the Canadiana Fund, the Art Bank of Nova Scotia, and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. These collections highlight her enduring contribution to the field and the resonance of her work across diverse audiences.

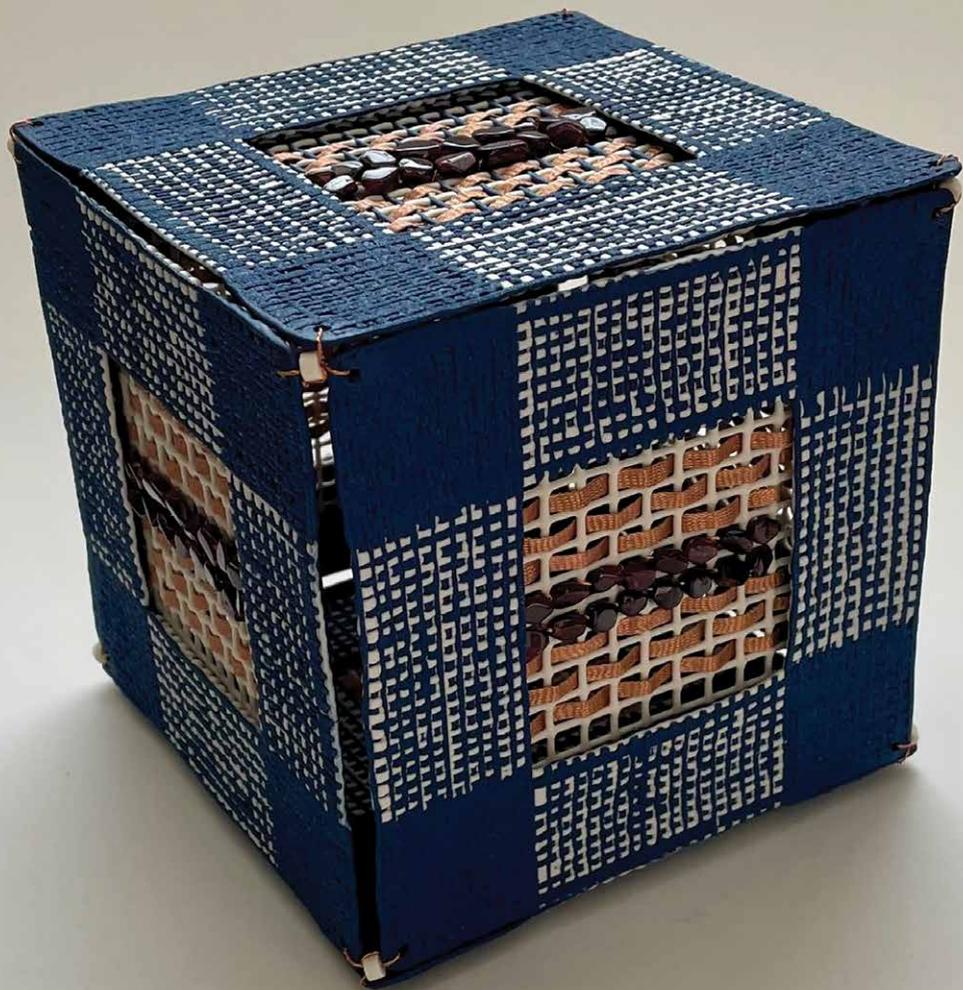
McCurdy's ceramics have been featured extensively in international periodicals, including *Ceramics: Art and Perception*, *Ceramics Monthly*, *American Ceramics*,

Contact, *Fusion*, *Arts Atlantic*, and *Ontario Craft*. Her work continues to receive new scholarly and curatorial attention, most recently through the digital publication *Craft and Craftivism: A Biographical Dictionary of Ceramic, Fibre and Glass Artists in Canada*.

Recent exhibition highlights include her participation in the 2019 Marion McCain Exhibition of Contemporary Atlantic Art, the Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale in Korea, *Alone* at Acadia University Art Gallery (2021), and *Contained* at the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery (2022). In 2025, she exhibited in *Collective Memories* at the Gardiner Museum as well as *Fusion: Fireworks 2025* and *What Holds* at Vessels + Sticks Gallery, demonstrating the continued relevance and evolution of her practice.

Throughout her career, McCurdy has explored themes of containment, memory, domesticity, and identity. Her work frequently incorporates references to textiles, patterns, stitching, surface impressions, linking clay to histories of women's labour, craft traditions, and generational knowledge. These elements underscore her longstanding interest in how material culture embodies personal narrative and cultural lineage.

Within *The Power of Objects*, McCurdy's work exemplifies how crafted forms can act as vessels of memory, resilience, metaphor, and inherited knowledge. Her pieces echo the exhibition's emphasis on material as witness; holding traces of the maker, the histories that shaped them, and the cultural dialogues they continue to foster. Through her use of clay as a continuation of the textile language and as a carrier of domestic and intergenerational narratives, McCurdy demonstrates the potent capacity of objects to preserve, reveal, and transform the stories we inherit. ■





Maja Padrov

Maja Padrov is a Serbian-born Canadian ceramic artist whose practice spans more than two decades and is recognized for its technical refinement, material sensitivity, and sculptural presence. Born and raised in Serbia, Padrov moved to Canada in 1997 and soon after graduated from the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design (NBCCD) with a diploma in Studio Ceramics. This transition between cultural and geographic contexts deeply shaped her understanding of clay as a language of belonging, memory, and reinvention.

Since establishing her studio practice, Padrov has built a career that bridges functional and sculptural approaches to ceramics. Her work is characterized by precise forms, subtle surfaces, and an exploration of rhythm, repetition, and organic symmetry. Through both wheel-thrown and hand-built processes, she engages clay as a medium capable of holding emotional nuance and architectural structure. Her forms often reference natural patterns or quiet interior spaces, inviting viewers into a contemplative relationship with the work.

Padrov is also a respected educator, having taught part-time at NBCCD and delivered numerous workshops across Canada. Her approach to teaching emphasizes material understanding, thoughtful experimentation, and the integration of tradition with contemporary practice. She has participated in international artist residencies in Canada, Hungary, Serbia, and France, each of which has expanded the cultural and technical influences present in her work.

Her ceramics have been exhibited nationally and internationally and are held in public and private collections across North America, Europe, and Asia. She is the

recipient of grants and awards from the New Brunswick Arts Board, the Sheila Hugh Mackay Foundation, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Canadian Clay and Glass Association; recognitions that speak to both her artistic excellence and her contribution to the ceramic field.

Padrov currently lives and works in the Village of Gagetown, New Brunswick, on the unceded territory of the Wəlastəkwiyik Peoples. Her studio practice is shaped by the rhythms of rural life, the landscape surrounding her, and the cultural heritage she carries from her origins in Serbia. These intersecting influences ground her work in both place and personal history, allowing her to move fluidly between contemporary expression and traditional craft discipline.

Her ceramic forms often embody a quiet strength, pieces that feel simultaneously familiar and enigmatic, rooted yet open to interpretation. Padrov's surfaces are carefully considered, often revealing a restrained palette and deliberate texture that amplifies the object's silhouette and structure. She approaches clay with sensitivity to its capacity for transformation, shaping pieces that reflect balance, clarity, and the meditative processes of making.

Within *The Power of Objects*, Padrov's work underscores how ceramic forms can act as vessels of cultural continuity and personal narrative. Her pieces reveal the subtle interplay between memory, migration, and material, demonstrating how objects carry the lived experiences of their makers. Through her refined approach to form and surface, Padrov exemplifies the exhibition's understanding that crafted objects hold agency, embodying identity, resilience, and the quiet power of place. ■

Heather Waugh Pitts

Heather Waugh Pitts is a Nova Scotia–based ceramic artist whose work emerges from a life deeply shaped by place, memory, and the layered histories of the land she calls home. Raised in a small coastal village, Pitts grew up surrounded by industrial sites, gravel pits, rusting tanks, abandoned structures, that imprinted themselves on her understanding of material, surface, and transformation. At the same time, forests, bogs, driftwood, bleached bones, and the constant presence of the Atlantic shaped her sensitivity to natural textures and tonalities. These dual influences form the foundation of her distinctive porcelain practice, which captures both the rawness and fragility of the environment.

Although primarily self-taught in ceramics, Pitts holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Ecology, a degree that fostered her interest in the interdependence between humans, materials, and constructed environments. Her earlier career as the owner of a successful interior design firm (1999–2025) exposed her to a wide range of artistic mediums (including Venetian plaster, frescoes, murals, oil painting, and surface design) all of which now enrich the tactile and sculptural vocabulary of her contemporary work. Her design practice took her across residential, commercial, and institutional contexts, from museum installations to commissioned murals and specialty finishes.

Pitts began working with clay at a community studio, where she discovered in porcelain a medium that mirrored her sensibilities: malleable yet demanding, delicate yet durable, capable of holding narrative through form and texture. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she dedicated herself fully to ceramics, building a home studio with her husband and immersing herself in two years of intensive experimentation. These explorations allowed her to integrate her broad material background into a cohesive ceramic language that reflects both ecological memory and human emotion.

Her work is represented by galleries across Canada and has been acquired by collectors in Europe, the United States, and Asia. She has produced custom installations for interior designers and bespoke ceramic collections for notable clients such as Roman and Williams (NY) and award-winning Canadian chefs, the most recently project was the creation of 400 pieces for Mystic a restaurant nominated the Best New Restaurant in North America, by the 6th Annual World Culinary Awards 2025. Her work has appeared in *Where She Creates*, *Rising Tide* (a nationally recognized cookbook), and numerous lifestyle and design publications. Pitts continues to build a practice grounded in intuition, material investigation, and a profound respect for the environment that inspire her.

Each hand-built porcelain vessel or sculptural form holds the layered impressions of foraged materials, industrial textures, or trace elements from the landscapes that surround her. Her surfaces often blur the lines of agitation and quietness, creating space for moments of amazement and contemplative stillness, speak to cycles of decay, resilience, erosion, and renewal. The result is a body of work that feels simultaneously classical and contemporary, intimate and expansive.

Within *The Power of Objects*, Pitts's work illuminates how ceramic vessels can act as emotional and ecological markers, carrying the imprints of both natural and industrial histories. Her porcelain vessels reveal the subtle dialogue between environment and memory, demonstrating how objects become vessels of lived experience and sensory knowledge. Through her attentive engagement with material, Pitts presents in tangible form the beliefs that crafted objects hold stories not only of their makers, but of the worlds, human and nonhuman, that shape them. ■

PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID MUIR



Ralph Simpson

Ralph Simpson is an internationally acclaimed Canadian plant-fibre artist whose innovative weaving and sculptural techniques have positioned him as a leading figure in contemporary fibre arts. Born and raised along the Petitcodiac River in New Brunswick, Simpson's early fascination with plants and ecosystems laid the foundations for his artistic practice. His work is deeply rooted in environmental observation, sustainability, and an intimate understanding of botanical materials.

Simpson holds an MSc in Forest Research Biology from the University of New Brunswick and a Fine Craft Diploma from NBCCD, where he received the Governor General's Medal for High Achievement. This combination of scientific training and craft expertise informs his meticulous approach, allowing him to engage plant fibres not only as materials but as ecological narratives. His sculptures reveal the intrinsic structures of natural forms, translating the rhythms of growth, decay, and transformation into woven compositions that hold both physical and symbolic resonance.

His commitment to sustainability is central to his work. Simpson forages all his plant materials through environmentally responsible methods, prioritizing invasive, introduced, or abundant species. Through this approach, he positions craft as an ecological act: one that honours the intelligence of natural systems while encouraging viewers to consider their relationship with the environment.

His studio practice in Fredericton reflects this ethos, functioning as both workspace and site of ongoing research into regional plant life.

Simpson has taught more than 100 workshops across Canada, the United States, Poland, and Spain, sharing his knowledge widely and nurturing new creative communities. His dedication to education and knowledge exchange forms a vital part of his artistic identity. His work has been featured in publications such as *Basketry+*, *Fibre Focus*, Collect Art Fair 2025, Salt Spring National Art Prize and *Rewilding Magazine*, and he has published his own catalogue, *Ralph Simpson – Plant Fibre Artist*.

He is the recipient of the Nel Oudemans Award from the Sheila Hugh Mackay Foundation and grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and Arts New Brunswick. His work has been shortlisted twice for the Salt



PHOTO CREDIT: KELLY SIMPSON

Spring National Art Prize (2021 and 2025), and in 2023 his sculpture "Rose Hip" was acquired for New Brunswick's permanent art collection. Simpson's pieces have been exhibited nationally and internationally, with exhibitions in the UK, Spain, Poland, and the United States.

Drawing from traditional basketry while pushing its expressive potential, Simpson creates vessels, sculptural forms, and botanically inspired structures that explore the emotional and ecological stories embedded in plant fibres. His work bridges craft, fine art and environmental study, offering tactile expressions of the landscapes that surround him.



Within *The Power of Objects*, Simpson's work highlights how natural materials embody ecological memory and regional identity. His plant-fibre sculptures reveal the inherent intelligence of organic matter, showing how objects shaped through environmental understanding can act as witnesses to place, climate, and transformation. Simpson's work affirms that crafted objects carry agency, inviting viewers to engage deeply with themselves and the natural world through material, texture, and form promoting a holistic view of life itself. ■



Stephanie Stoker

Stephanie Stoker is a fibre and textile artist based in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador (Ktaqmuk), whose practice intertwines sustainable craft traditions, natural dye processes, and an ethics of care. Her work is informed by extensive experience in theatre, education, and community development; fields that have shaped her understanding of storytelling, collaboration, and the embodied nature of creative labour. Stoker approaches fibre as a medium that holds narrative, memory, and the often-invisible work of care embedded in everyday life.

Central to her practice is weaving, which she engages both as a technical process and as a contemplative method for exploring relationships between material, time, and social responsibility. Her work frequently critiques systems of overconsumption and waste while proposing craft-based alternatives rooted in reciprocity and sustainable making. Through natural dye, embroidery, and handwoven structures, Stoker constructs pieces that call attention to the value of slowness, tactility, and ecological awareness.

Stoker holds a Diploma in Textile & Apparel Design from the College of the North Atlantic, a BFA from NSCAD University, and a Post-Secondary Instructor's Certificate from Memorial University of Newfoundland. She is currently an MFA candidate at the Grenfell Campus of Memorial University, where her research investigates how fibre practice can serve as a site for community connection, environmental resilience, and cultural continuity. She also teaches full-time in the Textile & Apparel Design program at the College of the North Atlantic, where she mentors emerging makers and fosters inclusive learning environments.

Her practice is deeply rooted in place, shaped by close attention to the textures, rhythms, and patterns of nature. She sources many of her natural dye materials from local landscapes, working through processes that honour the slow, cyclical timelines of natural gathering and transformation. Through this sustained relationship with land and ecology, her practice becomes a means of resistance, engagement, and appreciation to those who came before her and those who will remain after. The results are works of quiet power, mindful statements, and material authenticity.

Stoker's work has been featured in exhibitions across the province and country and has been recognized for its thoughtful engagement with environmental ethics and contemporary craft discourse. Her pieces often combine woven elements, natural pigments, and meticulously crafted details that reflect her commitment to sustainability and care-based artistic practice.

Whether through handwoven textiles or embroidered surfaces, Stoker constructs objects that ask viewers to reconsider the value of handmade labour and the cultural significance of fibre traditions. Her work contributes to ongoing conversations about gendered labour, material lineage, and the politics of craft in a consumer-driven world.

Within *The Power of Objects*, Stoker's work underscores how fibre-based practices can hold and transmit stories of care, ecology, and everyday resilience. Her handwoven pieces highlight that crafted objects are agents of personal experiences, holders of cultural memory, and promoters of ethical intention. Through her integration of sustainable materials and thoughtful processes, Stoker presents in tangible form the asseveration that objects created with intention become carriers of identity, connection, and hope. ■

Yalda Bozorg



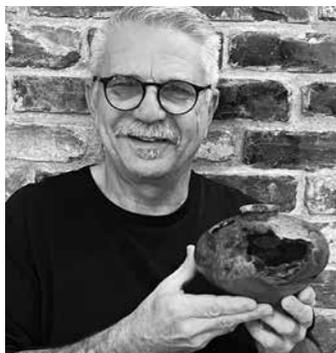
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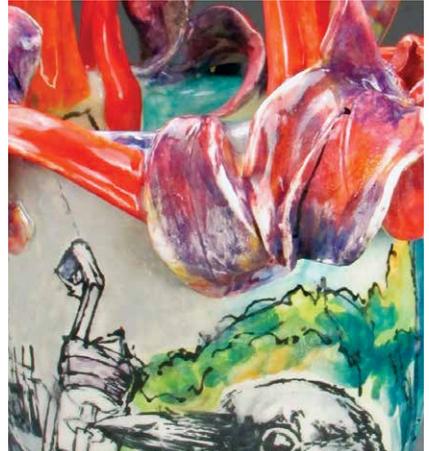
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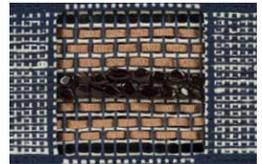
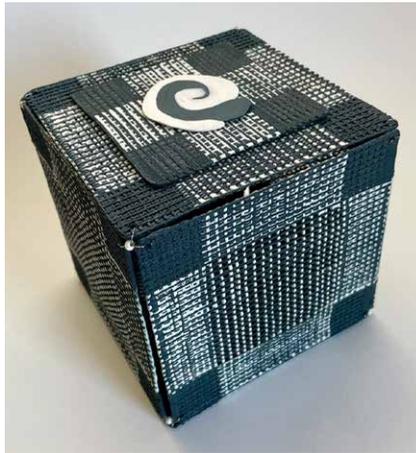


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Maja Padrov



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Stephanie Stoker



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