



President Picks Five

For this post, I decided to highlight a variety of artists who are making work that appealed to me. These five are sparking my interest now, but I am sure that the list could easily be ten times longer!

By Christopher R. Taylor, President

1

2

3

4

5

1

PETER KARNER

Two weeks ago, the staff was unpacking the work of Peter Karner in anticipation of his inclusion in our holiday exhibition *Of Substance and Style*.



I recall Peter's work featured on the cover of the March 2010 *Ceramics Monthly*, and with the arrival of his new work, everyone in the shop was excited, and eagerly awaited the next item to be unpacked from the boxes. His highly patterned surfaces, simple color pallet, and basic shapes feel like a cross between Arts and Crafts and Mid-Century Modernist styles. The tall vases have looping spirals, the teapot has a checkerboard of spots, and the diamond grid vase was breathtaking. We first discovered Peter through the ACC Craft Show in Baltimore and knew we had to include his work in our shop. Peter currently lives in Denver, Colorado, and we look forward to more work coming from out west!

2

JOYCE NAGATA

About two months ago, I was walking through our shop, and a white coffee mug grabbed my attention. A whimsical pastel flower seemed to emerge from a milky white glaze. The simplicity of the flower, stem, and two leaves reminded me of the kind of flowers that populate the gardens on children's drawings. Of course, the expressive imperfection of the cup, slight run of the glaze and semi matte surface revealed a control of materials that comes from years of practice. I was delighted to see Joyce's name on the bottom.



Joyce is a Pennsylvania potter and former Board member of The Clay Studio who also served as the former chair of our Education Committee. While it is fun to discover the work of new artists, I think it can be doubly satisfying to see a familiar name continuing to experiment, evolve, and produce new lines of successful work.

3

HEATHER DAHL

I have always been fond of the work of Heather Dahl of Vancouver, British Columbia.



Her slip cast pieces are often decorated with simple bright stripes, geometric patterns, or simple floral motifs that reveal her background in painting. Her new line of work includes new simple forms, double or triple glaze dips and a speckled surface inside and out. I am particularly fond of the canisters that would seem incomplete without the natural cork stoppers.

Heather runs her company, Dahlhaus, out of Vancouver, and has produced work for Anthropologie, West Elm, and the Art Gallery of Alberta. The Clay Studio is only one of five places in the U.S. where you can buy her work and the only place on the east coast.

4

AHRONG KIM

Each year we commission a current resident artist to create a thank you gift for our donors over \$1,000. Last year when Ahrong's lidded jars began arriving in donors' homes, my phone started ringing. People felt compelled to call and compliment her and thank us for this annual gift.



Ahrong cites the textiles and patterns from her grandmother's seamstress work as a powerful influence. Throughout her sculptural and functional work, this influence is prevalent with detailed lines of stitching. A native of Korea, Ahrong joined The Clay Studio's Resident Artist program after completing her graduate studies at the Rhode Island School of Design.

5

NICOLE AQUILLANO

As a native of Pittsburgh, a list of my favorites would be incomplete without including Nicole Aquillano. Nicole is known for pieces with images of her childhood home, stairs within that house, and the bridges that cross the rivers of Pittsburgh. You don't have to be from Pittsburgh to feel the same sense of nostalgia in her work—just look at the recent cups with the word “home” inlaid repeatedly.



Nicole studied at Carnegie Mellon University and the Rhode Island School of Design and currently lives in Boston. Her pieces are subtle narratives about place, identity, and of times past.

Chris Taylor began his tenure as The Clay Studio's President in November 2011. Taylor brings a wide variety of experience and skills to the position of President of The Clay Studio. Prior to his appointment, he held positions as the Festival Coordinator for Aliquippa Embraces Art, the Associate Director of Three Rivers Arts Festival in Pittsburgh, Executive Director of Holter Museum of Art in Montana, and a cultural program director in Chicago. His entrepreneurial spirit led him to start his own arts consulting firm, TaylorArts Group, that served small and mid-sized arts organizations such as The Mattress Factory Museum, Sweetwater Center for the Arts, Chester Springs Studio, and Attack Theatre, LABCO Dance, among many others.

In service to community, Taylor has served on a number of boards for arts and community organizations. He has also served on grant review panels for the PA Council on the Arts, a Public Art Selection Committee for the Chicago Transit Authority, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Taylor holds a BFA in Sculpture/Ceramics and a BA Religious studies from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. In 2007, he attained a Masters in Arts Administration & Policy from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a thesis topic of Arts Advocacy.

