

Introduction

The Burlington Art Centre has over the past twenty-five years presented and promoted the work of Canadian ceramists to the public. During this time there has been a vast change in the perception of what the clay artist is. Today there is general knowledge and appreciation of this medium. But the foundation of this new understanding was laid long before the Art Centre's Permanent Collection came into being. Starting after the Second World War a small group of artists made the production of the handmade clay object their focus. These artists wished to produce affordable, primarily function objects of beauty, which were to be used and enjoyed in every day life. It is with great pleasure that the Burlington Art Centre honours two of these remarkable people, Jack and Lorraine Herman, who for nearly six decades have worked and still continue to work at their art and their craft. Their work has been the inspiration for many ceramists. Many of the shows, exhibitions and guilds that exist today are the result of the hard work and dedication of people like Jack and Lorraine who knew to follow their instincts and passions.

A Life Together

One of the greatest joys in life is to be able to work at something one loves. This is the reason that one sees so many exhibitions, plays and concerts by people in their seventies and eighties who would have long ago retired if they had followed a nine to five existence. Jack and Lorraine Herman are both closing in on sixty years of working with clay, still producing work of the highest quality. The two of them have continued to work, to define and refine their personal styles that readily complement each other.



Jack Herman is a potter's potter. He is one of the post war ceramists who defined the direction that clay took starting in the late fifties and early sixties. The lidded casserole, circa 1965 is typical of the work of that period with the low generous shape, linear abstract pattern and highly functional form (notice the wide, circular, thrown handle which is easy to pick up and which can be easily turned over to sit on the table). Since the beginning

Jack always has maintained the strong functional direction in his work but by the late sixties his work showed much more of the artist's hand. The large casseroles from this date show more of the artist's touch. The pronounced throwing rings, the

sculptural handles and the vigorous brush work have all become hallmarks of his style. His forms, no matter what the size, have a sense of generosity and vigor. The glazing, though often a simple base coat with one or a series of bold brush strokes, reinforce the form.



Lorraine Herman, Elizabethan Princess

Lorraine Herman, on the other hand is the complete compliment of her husband. Her work is hand built and often highly decorated with complex repeat patterning. Her ceramic boxes demonstrate her sophisticated understanding of ceramic sculpture and the relationship of pattern to form. Ceramic sculpture is an additive sculptural process which is primarily dependent on slab, coil and pinch pot construction.

Lorraine Herman's charming figure studies, ranging from the sculptural finial figures mounted on the oval slab constructed box bases, such as "Cleopatra with her Asp" or "Leda and the Swan", show her remarkable manipulation of the medium. Likewise the sculpture of her Tudor princesses or the bust of Queen Victoria illustrates the fluidity of the medium that is manipulated by hand-building as opposed to the reductive method of cutting away at a block of material to reveal a form. While the reaction to this work is delight, the sophistication needed to successfully create this work can never be dismissed.

The Hermans also collaborated in the creative process. Jack throws functional work which Lorraine decorates. The sophisticated 'folk art patterns that appear on cups, plates and pitchers enhance the thrown forms. Jack has tempered his usually generous forms, creating larger flat areas that are then enlivened with Lorraine's decoration. The meshing of their apparent strong points to create work can only be the product of a lifetime of working together. These two ceramists have created the model for two generations of potters to follow. They have devoted their lives to the creation of their work. They have applied discipline to perfecting the craft of their work and have stayed true to their vision of what constitutes a good pot. They have long passed the idea of what is fashionable and have concentrated their energy on refining their expression. The work has become timeless. Jack's flower brick is a masterful statement on the sculptural nature of functional work. Lorraine has the remarkable skill of elevating the mundane object with wit that will continue to enchant the viewer long after the initial viewing. They are the lucky ones who have had a creative life together and have left us with joy of their labour.

- Jonathan Smith

A Life Together: The Hermans - Jack & Lorraine

June 6 - August 16, 2009



Clockwise from Top Left: Lorraine Herman, Box; Jack Herman, Plate; Jack Herman, Planter; Lorraine Herman, Plate "Bueno"

Cover Images: Jack Herman, *Baluster Vase*, Jack Herman, *Casserole*, Lorraine Herman, *St. Francis*, Lorraine Herman, *Cleopatra and Her Asp Box*.

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Gallery Hours
Monday to Thursday 9am to 10pm
Friday and Saturday 9am to 5pm
Sunday 12pm to 5 pm



Lorraine Herman, *Queen Victoria, Catlady and Dog, Pattern Box*; Jack and Lorraine Herman, *Milk Jug*

Jack Herman, *Flower Brick, Casserole Dishes*