

Cousins in Clay: Seagrove, NC A Kinship among contemporary clay artists

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The "Cousins in Clay" are stirring things up a bit in central North Carolina in the rural pottery community called Seagrove. On June 5 and 6 there will be seven nationally known studio art potters, all with university art degrees in Ceramics, gathering together in Seagrove to sell their work and talk with the public at two studio locations. Johnston and Gentithes Art Pottery in downtown Seagrove will be hosting Allison McGowan. Five miles south of Seagrove's single stop light on Alternate 220, is Bulldog Pottery, where Gholson and Henneke will host Michael Kline and Val Cushing. There is a long traditional history of working potters making pots in Seagrove, and this tradition remains strong and continues to grow in new ways. The event's name, 'Cousins in Clay,' is attributed to fellow potter Michael Kline who referred euphemistically on his blog Sawdust and Dirt to a "visit to his clay cousins in Seagrove", Bruce and Samantha decided to invite Michael to participate in their first Bulldog Pottery Studio Art sale, and titled it "Cousins in Clay". This is now an annual event. The Alfred University connection that Samantha and Bruce have with fellow Seagrove potters Carol and Fred has expanded "Cousins in Clay" to be held at two locations this year. At this annual event there will be invited guest artists from across the country with this year's being Professor Emeritus Val Cushing from Alfred, NY, and Allison McGowan, also an Alfred University graduate, living in Concord, NC. "Cousins in Clay" is a kinship based on shared appreciation for the pursuit of excellence within the diverse language of clay. Val Cushing, retired from Alfred University in 1997, taught for 40 years and has a legendary career as an influential and highly regarded ceramic artist and teacher. Cushing makes strong and harmonious functional pottery forms that are inspired by nature and he continues to show and lecture around the country. Allison McGowan hand-builds tailored forms covered with luminous glazes over textured surfaces. Bruce Gholson and Samantha Henneke specialize in unusual molybdenum crystalline glazes and imagery that reflect their interest in the natural world. Michael Kline is known for his floral brush patterns that gracefully wraps around his wood fired pottery forms. Fred and Carol delve into storytelling with the narrative decoration on Fred's pottery and Carol's lyrical and highly decorated sculptures. Come for the day or spend the weekend in the Seagrove pottery community, where the three corners of the rural Piedmont counties of Randolph (known for the NC Zoo), Moore (known for Pinehurst Golf), and Montgomery (known for the beautiful Uwharrie Mountains) come together. For the Alfred 'Cousins' - Val Cushing, Bruce Gholson, Samantha Henneke, Carol Gentithes, Fred Johnston and Allison McGowan: the Alfred art school gave them a spirit and tradition of their own, and a lifelong group of valued friends and colleagues. Their mountain cousin, Michael Kline is a graduate from the University of Tennessee and will join them, bringing together a rich diversity of contemporary ceramics for this two day event. Visit our Web site www.cousinsinclay.com for more details and information on accommodations in the area. Contact: Samantha Henneke or Bruce Gholson : bulldog@bulldogpottery.com or call 336-302-3469