

Inside The Artist's Studio

We started something new in our March 2021 issue of *Carolina Arts*. Our focus has always been on exhibitions and that will stay the same, but every once in a while depending on how readers react to this new feature, we'll be taking you inside an artist's studio. After all, exhibitions just don't appear out of thin air - nor does art. We'll give you a look into the environment these artists work in.

Now we had a little trouble getting our second look inside an artist's studio, but we finally worked out my problems and now have our second installment - Bulldog Pottery.

Bulldog Pottery is located at 3306 US Hwy. 220 N. (in the Seagrove area of North Carolina). The area is known as the pottery capital of America, within a 20 mile radius there are over 50 pottery shops to visit. Bulldog Pottery is owned and operated by potters Bruce Gholson and Samantha Henneke. Bulldog Pottery is 5 miles south of Seagrove and 5 miles north of Star, NC, look for the blue Montgomery County water tower and turn on their gravel driveway.



This is the Bulldog Pottery shop.

Bulldog Pottery is now open to the public by appointment and they plan for a special opening on June 5 and 6, 2021, with fresh Moka and Shino glazed pottery (Sat., 10am-5pm and Sun., noon-5pm). Bruce and Samantha request everyone to wear masks. You can still shop Bulldog Pottery online through their website at (<https://www.bulldogpottery.com/>) or on their Etsy site at (<https://www.etsy.com/shop/BulldogArtPottery>). If for any reason you can't find the answer to any question you might have, you can call 336/302-3469 or 910/428-9728 or e-mail at (bulldog@bulldogpottery.com).

In our pottery studio we create a syn-

ergistic environment together: "To make functional and decorative art, research creative processes and experiment with materials, in an ever evolving exploration of ideas, techniques, clays and glaze formulations."

About Bruce Gholson: "I create functional and decorative ceramics throwing with a variety of clays and developing unique glaze formulas. I find changing between porcelain, stoneware, and red clays, stimulates ideas and possibilities for continued exploration in my work."

"As a child my formative years were in Stillwater, Oklahoma. My fondest memories are of fishing with my dad and flipping stones over by the ponds to see the creatures that lived underneath.... usually beetles, centipedes, scorpions, lizards and snakes."

"I started making pots in 1973 after my first exposure to clay in my hometown's college ceramics facility at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK. I moved to Athens, GA, and received my BFA in ceramics from the University of Georgia in 1978. I then worked at Berea College's Clay program in Berea, KY, for three years as the graduate apprentice, making pots, managing the materials inventory, firing schedules, and studio maintenance. I lived in Floyd, VA, where I worked as a professional studio potter for 14 years. Going back to school I received my MFA in ceramics from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in 1997.

About Samantha Henneke: "I am a full-time studio potter living and working in Seagrove, NC, with my husband Bruce Gholson. Together we work in our art studio and maintain a pottery sales shop open to the public daily (now open by appointment). I grew up in Blacksburg, VA, surrounded by the Allegheny and Blue-Ridge Mountains. I attended my hometown college, Virginia Tech."

"During my 4 years of classes at Virginia Tech I searched the halls for my place in life, and I finally found my focus during my junior year while taking a pottery class. During the spring of 1991, in the basement of the dining hall I fell in love with clay. After completing one more

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Samantha finishing the rim of a tall porcelain vase.



Bruce removing a freshly thrown gourd vase off of wheel head.



Samantha and Bruce outside their studio space with Luna Bella, Bulldog Pottery's official mascot.



This was a photo of Samantha, Bruce, Koi, and Luna Bella, in their studio for a "Ceramics Monthly" studio visit which accompanied an article in the June/July/August 2016 issue.



On Bruce's table is bisque pottery ready for glazing, along with finished pieces and shino test tiles for evaluation of possible glaze combinations to be used for the next firing. Bruce is an excellent stacker of stuff as you can see behind the table of pots.