



Consider the Cup: Cup and Mug Invitational

NOV. 20-DEC. 31

opening reception
nov 24th 5 - 8pm

Take a moment to consider that cup.

That one right in front of you. Maybe you've just bought it and added it to your collection. Or think about an old favorite at home; perhaps an intimate part of your breakfast ritual or after dinner coffee.

If your appreciation was initially its appearance, consider the potter's aesthetic decisions; shape, size, proportion, color and decoration. What about its tactile qualities? Did the potter move you with delicate porcelain or smooth earthenware or hearty stoneware? Did you respond to the bright color of an electric kiln? Do you love the rich color of the gas reduction firing or the surprises of wood fire or the surface of the mysterious atmospheric process? All were derived from the decisions of the potter. The comforting shape and feel of the piece is a result of years of study and caring. The shape and thickness of the lip that makes it easy to enjoy your drink takes us well beyond decisions and into technical facility.

Or are there other things about it? Maybe you visited the studio of the potter who made it. Whenever you use it, does it remind you of that interaction, do you feel a closer connection because you know the maker? If you haven't met the potter does the cup give you hints of gender, or personality or culture? Then just consider the years of commitment and work that allows any studio to exist. Consider the years of study, the hours upon hours of frustrating efforts and second jobs the allowed pottery only after dinner or on the weekends. Consider the uncountable failures and sweet breakthroughs that led up to this wonderful vessel of yours.

But we've just begun. What sort of a cup will it be? Or will it be a mug? Mugs have handles, but cups do or don't. If there's a handle, is it extruded or pulled or braided? Is it intended for a specific purpose, to hold a particular liquid - and where does that takes us. Will the potter hew close to a traditional form, strike out in a new direction, or chose a road somewhere between the two?

And still more decisions when the potter sits down to actually make the cup you've come to love: will it be thrown on the potter's wheel, hand-built or slip-cast? Will it be short or tall, wide or slender, robustly thick-walled or delicately thin? Will it be covered with a single glaze, several glazes, or no glaze at all? Will it have legs or feet? And on and on and... and we've only just touched on the subject.

So with this exhibit we encourage you to consider the cup, and further to consider the potter who has dedicated a life to produce that one cup. Your cup.

Hayne Bayless, Curator
Chuck Stern, Exhibitions Coordinator