

**Holly Walker**

Ceramicist

Randolph, Vermont

Where is your studio?

Randolph, VT, across the stone patio from my home.

Do you work alone in your studio and do you prefer that to sharing studio space with other artists?

I normally work alone, but I do enjoy sharing my space. Most recently, NH potter Sarah Heimann and I gave ourselves our own mini-residency in my studio. We both worked on forms we had thought about, but not given ourselves time to explore during our daily studio lives. (see photo journal) I have also been mentoring a high school senior this school year. Rachael Merrill has been working on a series of ceramic vases for her senior project. It has been pure pleasure to spend a few hours each week with her. Her exhibit is in a few weeks, soon after which she will go off to Canada for college.

Do you keep regular hours of work time?

I love to work during the daylight hours, and like to quit before making dinner. I also squeeze a walk in there most days, and take time off to garden and go on bicycle/motorcycle adventures with my husband Geof.

Do you listen to music or prefer silence when you are most creative?

I often listen to classical music. Solo piano and small chamber ensembles are best for me. My CD of choice, Simone Dinnerstein's "Bach- A Strange Beauty" is titled utilizing a favorite Sir Francis Bacon quote that I find totally appropriate to my studio work. "There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion." I'm also fine with silence. The very best accompaniment to studio work is opening the windows in the summer: the sound of buzzing insects, chirping birds and mating frogs are my favorite music.

How would a visitor describe your studio? (For example: chaotic, obsessively tidy, comfortable or intimidating, etc.)

On entering, a visitor might first notice the enticing fragrance of pine emanating from my interior pine shiplap. Once inside, a calm exuberance prevails. A strong sense of order and cleanliness on the "working side" of my studio combined with an ever-changing mix of color and form relationships on the "show space" side. It is definitely friendly and welcoming.

Do you seek out conversations with other artists either formally (like a clay club or association, etc.) or informally (like looking for feedback from your artist friends or mates)?

I have a close painter friend with whom I exchange studio visits over tea on a regular basis. We both find it useful to talk with an artist working in a different medium. My

head is often bound to function, so her comments open my eyes to other possibilities I overlook. Like the time I had small slab chunks supporting a bowl's open handles as they dried, and she read the whole mass as a sculptural take on a bowl. She once called me the Philip Guston of the ceramic world, a title I love.

Do you keep current with work in your field or prefer to work without the potential influences?

I go back and forth with this one. Sometimes I feel guilty about letting go and living in the small world of my own making (my real preference), so I re-subscribe to ceramic magazines. But it's the gardening magazines that call me in. Now and then I look at ceramic work online, but usually find this to be more exhausting than inspiring- I much prefer seeing the real work. I do enjoy peering into the world of painters. I don't seem to need to "keep current", but can return to my favorite painters time and again for refueling.

What creative books or other sources do you find useful?

I return to poets/writers who distill the essence of creative thought, imagery and imagination. I find this emotionally so satisfying, grounding, and uplifting.

What distracts you most from your work?

A love of nature and a longing to move in open space.

How do you nurture yourself to remain creative?

I spend plenty of time exploring nature on walks. I eat healthfully, rest well, and exercise regularly to be at my best. I nurture exploration and a sense of play in the studio. As I look at finished pieces out of the kiln, I use my notebook to record my thoughts on the work- what is each piece asking for now?

Do you make "office" time and is that a struggle to balance the artist with the businessperson?

Yes, that is a struggle. I'm not very motivated to do office time - I'd rather do most anything else. Even vacuum. The businessperson side loses big-time. I keep hoping to be inspired in that direction some day.

How many years did it take for you to feel accomplished at your craft? And how many years have you been working in your materials or as an artist?

I have been working in clay for thirty-three years or more, and painted before working in clay. I do feel moments of accomplishment, and am thankful for that. I could not count the years I have felt "accomplished", as the sense of accomplishment is much

more elusive than time. Outside engagements (exhibit invitations, book inclusions, teaching opportunities) provide a sense of accomplishment. But beyond acknowledgement from the outside world, internally I keep aiming for a kind of perfection that I know cannot be wholly reached. I have an endless desire to keep aiming for it. A continuous longing to make and find beauty in the world propels me to be an artist. Now and then I hit the mark, for the moment, and feel a great sense of accomplishment, knowing it will dissipate.

Can you define “studio practice” as it relates to your life or share a personal philosophy about what contributed to your choice to be an artist, and how you approach that choice as a lifestyle?

I have always known that I would be an artist. But in one small moment I realized a more thorough intensity of my life as an artist. My last regular job happened to be at the Penland Gallery. I had turned 50, and decided to quit what had been a most pleasant, rewarding job. On my last day, after the goodbye party, the workday was over and I was removing my watch, which fell to the floor and broke. In that exuberant moment, I was keenly aware that my studio life would be taking precedence in my life.

I like to imagine my artist-side as a partner, so that I don't come to think of myself as only an artist. My partner is rarely absent, and its presence is keenly felt. Our relationship is one of collaboration. My “job” is to notice connections, investigate imaginings, and be attentive to visual/auditory cues that I can bring to the studio. My partner's job is to make something of all of this.

## Artist Statement

My pots are hand built, pinching up each layer of rolled coil to build form. Pinching is a slow, rhythmic process that allows time to envision a piece while working. I enjoy the directness of touch with pinching, and the quality of light on the dimpled surface. My first studio pursuit was in painting, and I continue to be inspired by both contemporary and historical paintings. I approach the surface of a pot as a painter, brushing colored slips over the raw terra cotta surface, layering multiple glazes after bisquing. When looking at a finished piece, I like to see back through the layers to the beginning of the process. I aim for the speed, the pulse, and the tempo of making to be revealed in the pot. Throughout my thirty years of working with clay, I have tended to work intuitively, encouraging a great deal of collaboration with the clay. Experiencing the clay as a living material keeps each piece fresh for me. Why earthenware? The physicality of earthenware clay - the image of it eroding and tumbling, washing and settling with organic matter appeals to my poetic nature. Earthenware is the common clay- its ubiquitous nature means that it is nearly always nearby or underfoot. The red brown of terra cotta clay provides a rich, warm hued base for layering colored slips, and lends itself to an extraordinary palette of glaze color. Earthenware clay remains open; it can still breathe when fired.



Spring 2012



Studio in winter

Holly Walker, Life in the studio



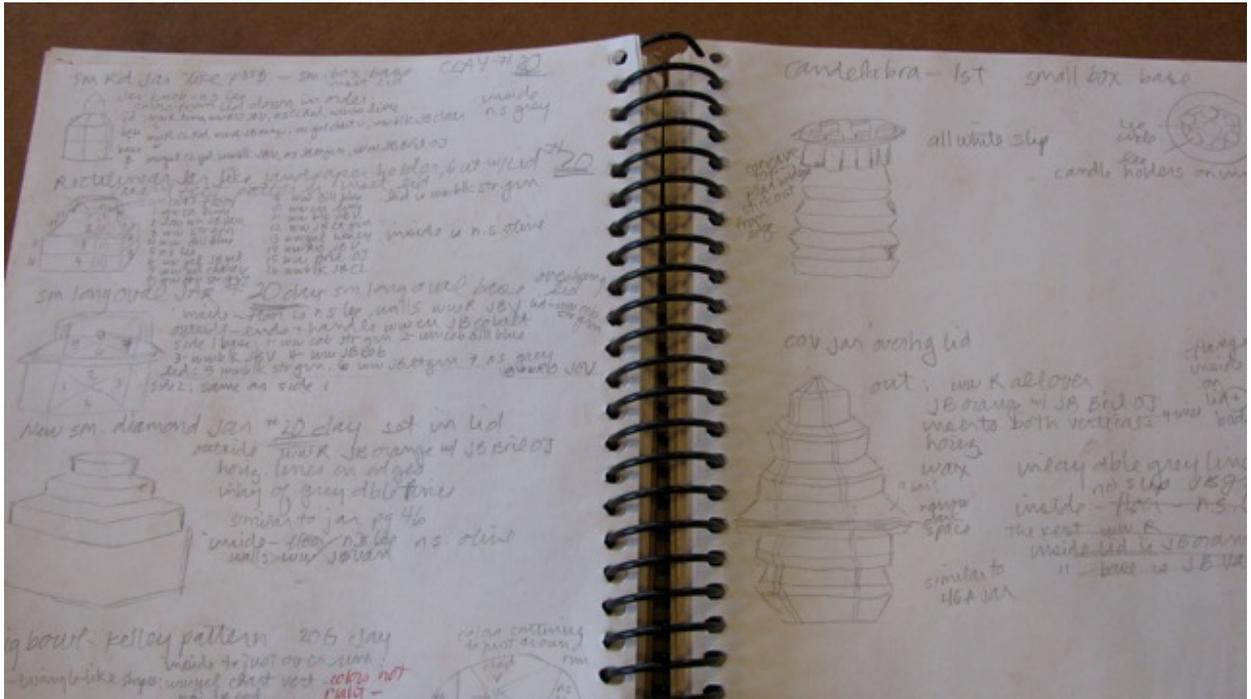
Mini-residency with Sarah Heimann



Sarah carving through the double wall



Working on my first candelabra



My notebook



New text glazes ready to paint on tiles



Bisque pots awaiting glaze



The summer sink to be



Glazing



My working palette



Part of my show space



East end of the studio



Arrival of the studio



Roof trusses



View from the house-desk, across the yard from the studio

## SELECTED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Studio potter 1979 to present.

Watershed Center, Newcastle, ME, 2012. “Invite + Ignite”, symposium participant.  
Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, Newcastle, ME, Artist in Residence 1996, 2012.  
Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC, Gallery Sales Associate 1997 and 2000 to 2002.  
Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC, Educational Outreach Coordinator 1997 to 2000.  
Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, Newcastle, ME, Executive Director 1990-1995.  
Archie Bray Foundation, Helena, MT, Artist in Residence 1982.

## EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

MFA Ceramics, minor in painting, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA. 1990.  
Studies toward MFA in Ceramics, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA. 1982.  
BFA Painting, Ohio University, Athens, OH. Magna cum laude. 1974.  
Studies toward BFA, Baldwin Wallace College, Berea, OH, 1972.  
Member, National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, yearly conferences, 1988-2001, 2004, 2005.

## PERSONAL AWARDS

Vermont Art Council development grant, 2010.  
Louisiana State University travel grant. 1988.  
New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship. 1984-1985.  
Ford Foundation Tuition Scholarship, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA. 1982.

## SELECTED TEACHING, WORKSHOPS, AND LECTURES

League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, Hanover, NH. Fall ceramics instructor, 2012.  
Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME. “The Sensory Language of the Hand” Summer Instructor, 2012.  
University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. Visiting Artist two-day workshop, fall, 2011.  
Dartmouth College, Hopkins Center for the Arts, Hanover, NH Six-day workshop, summer, 2011.  
Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC. ‘The Slow Pot Duet’ co-teaching two-week session sum-

mer, 2011, with Sandi Pierantozzi.

Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI. Critic in department of Ceramics to co-teach “Clay in Context” with Linda Sormin, spring, 2011.

Middlebury Studio School, Middlebury, VT. One day workshop, spring, 2010.

‘Handbuilt’ Conference, Philadelphia, PA. One of four presenters along with Hayne Bayless, Sandi Pierantozzi, and Lisa Naples- demonstrations and lecture. Fall, 2009.

Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, NS, Canada. Assistant Professor, fall semester, 2008. “Introductory Ceramics” and “Ceramics Technology”. Public lecture.

University of Michigan, Lansing, MI, Two-day workshop with artists Linda Casbon, Linda Cordell, and Holly Walker, fall, 2008.

League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, Hanover, NH. Two-day workshop, summer, 2008.

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH. One-day workshop, spring, 2008.

Spring Island Trust, Okatie, SC. “Pinched and Hand Painted Tableware”, one week workshop, April, 2008.

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH. One-day workshop, winter, 2008.

Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC. Visiting Artist within class led by Matt Kelleher and Shoko Teruyama, Spring Concentration, 2007.

Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC. “A Fresh Look at Handbuilt Tableware”, two week summer 2006 class. Co-teaching with Linda Casbon.

Odyssey Center for the Ceramic Arts, Asheville, NC. “Handbuilders’ Potluck”, nine-week class, 2005.

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC, 2004. One-day visiting artist- workshop and slide presentation.

Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Gatlinburg, TN. “Handbuilt, Raw Glazed, and Single Fired”. One- week workshop, fall, 2004.

Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC. Visiting artist within “Pinching Together” class led by Paulus Berensohn and Jimmy Clark, summer, 2004.

National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, Indianapolis, IN. “Science in the Studios” co-lecture with Claire Olander, chemist, Spring, 2004.

Odyssey Center for the Ceramic Arts, Asheville, NC. “Components of Creativity and Vision”, Nine-week class, 2004.

Odyssey Center for the Ceramic Arts, Asheville, NC. “Handbuilders’ Salon”, nine-week class, 2003.

Maine College of Art, Portland, ME. Two-day workshop, slide presentation, junior and senior critiques. 1996.

Guilford Handcraft Center, Guilford, CT. Visiting artist, two-day workshop and slide presentation. 1995.

Maine College of Art, Portland, ME. Lecturer, “Ceramics: 1940-Present”. 1994.

Maine College of Art, Portland, ME. Junior reviews critic. 1993.

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

River Arts, Damariscotta, ME. “Influences + Connections: Ceramic Artists at Watershed”, exhibition during symposium, “Invite and Ignite: 25 Years of Innovative Residencies”, summer, 2012

Watershed Center, Newcastle, ME. “A Pottery Invitational: 25 for the 25th”, summer, 2012.

Vermont Open Studio weekend, participant at my studio in Randolph, VT, spring, 2012.

Penland Gallery, Penland, NC. “Studio Practice” Invitational, spring, 2012.

Penland Gallery, Penland, NC. “Paper Plate, Plastic Plate, White Plate, Artist Plate”. Invitational, winter, 2012.

National Conference of Education in the Ceramic Arts, Seattle, WA, 2012.

“La Mesa” Santa Fe Clay invitational exhibition, Act Theatre, Seattle, WA.

“Well Served” curated by Julia Galloway and Deborah Schwartzkopf, Parklane Gallery, Kirkland, WA.

“Pinched” curated by Emily Schroeder and Leanne McClurg, Seattle Design Center, Seattle, WA.

Signature Gallery, Atlanta, GA. “Generosity of Spirit: the Gifts of Penland Artists” to benefit Penland School of Crafts, winter, 2012.

Parkland Art Gallery, Champaign, IL. 'State of the Art 2011-12: National Biennial Ceramics Invitational'. Guest Curator, Suze Lindsay. Winter, 2011/12.

Charlie Cummings Gallery, Gainesville, FL. 'Cup: Intimate Object VII'. Invitational, fall, 2011.

The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA. "Gifted" Invitational exhibit, fall, 2011.

Art of the Pot, Austin, TX. Annual invitational exhibit held in selected Austin studios, 2011. Invited by ceramist Claudia Reese

Aidron Duckworth Art Museum, Meriden, NH. Two-person exhibition with Vermont painter Todd Binzen, 2011.

Chandler Gallery, Randolph, VT. Two-person exhibition with textile artist Bhakti Ziek, 2011.

The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA. "Gifted" Invitational holiday exhibition, 2010.

Blue Spiral 1, Asheville, NC. "The Defining Edge", 2010. Invitational exhibit.

National Conference of Education in the Ceramic Arts, Philadelphia, PA 2010.

Three invitational exhibitions:

"La Mesa" Santa Fe Clay exhibition

"1895 Years of Pottery" at B Square Gallery, curated by Neil Patterson

"Visual Translations: relationships between drawing and form" at SALT. Art Gallery, curated by Linda Casbon.

The Art School at Old Church, Demarest, NJ. Invitational Exhibition, Curator: Karen Karnes, 2009.

BigTown Gallery, Rochester, VT. Modern Treasures for the Holiday. Invitational, 2009.

Handbuilt Conference, Philadelphia, PA. Invitational exhibition in conjunction with conference, 2009.

Dow Studio, Deer Isle, ME. Featured gallery artist, 2009

National Conference of Education in the Ceramic Arts, Phoenix, AZ. "La Mesa". Invitational Santa Fe Clay exhibition at the conference, 2009.

Lynhurst Museum, Tarrytown, NY. "All Fired Up- the Artful Tabletop", Curator: Julia Galloway, 2008.

Frog Hollow Vermont State Craft Center, Middlebury, VT. Featured Artist, October, 2008.

University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, WI. Invitational Teapot exhibit. Curator: Margaret Bohls, 2008.

Dow Studio, Deer Isle, ME. Season invitational exhibitions, 2008.

The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA. "Speaking Low- Surfaces in Earthenware", curator: Linda Arbuckle, 2008.

National Conference of Education in the Ceramic Arts, Louisville, KY. "La Mesa". Invitational Santa Fe Clay exhibition at the conference, 2008.

James Patrick Gallery, Wiscasset, ME "Core Sample", Curated by Lynn Duryea, 2007.

Baltimore Clayworks, Baltimore, MD. "Opposites Attract", Curated by Nick Joerling, 2007.

National Conference of Education in the Ceramic Arts, Louisville, KY. "La Mesa". Invitational Santa Fe Clay exhibition at the conference, 2007.

Penland Gallery, Penland, NC. "Cup of Tea", 2007.

Penland Gallery, Penland, NC. "Featured Artist- Spring, 2007".

Blue Spiral 1, Asheville, NC. "Style & Function: National Ceramics Invitational", 2006.

Design Gallery, Burnsville, NC. "Potluck: Design Gallery Potters Invite 16 Hands", 2006.

Dow Studio, Deer Isle, ME. "Potters' Showcase", Invitational, 2006.

Santa Fe Clay, Santa Fe, NM. "Earthenware", Invitational, 2006.

Peters Valley, Layton, NJ. "The Elegant Table", Invitational, 2006.

National Conference of Education in the Ceramic Arts, Baltimore, MD. "La Mesa". Invitational Santa Fe Clay exhibition at the conference, 2006.

Baltimore Clayworks, Baltimore, MD. "Winterfest 2005". Invitational, 2005.

Santa Fe Clay, Santa Fe, NM. "Cups, Cups, Cups". Invitational, 2005.

Southwest School of Art and Craft, San Antonio, TX. "The Visceral Vessel". Invitational, 2005.

The Signature Gallery, Atlanta, GA. “Hot Stuff / Clay Tigers: LSU Ceramics 1970-2005”. Traveling exhibition to LSU School of Art Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA. invitational, 2005.

National Conference of Education in the Ceramic Arts, Baltimore, MD. “La Mesa”. Invitational Santa Fe Clay exhibition at the conference, 2005.

Red Star Studio, Kansas City, MO. “Potters of the Southern Mountains”. Invitational, 2005.

Paula Winokur Pottery, Horsham, PA. “Contemporary Ceramics: Plants and Planters for the Garden and Home”. Invitational exhibition to benefit Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, 2005.

Penland Gallery, Penland, NC. “Botanical Wonder”. Invitational, 2005.

University of Northern Iowa Gallery of Art, Cedar Falls, IA. “Out of the Cupboard, Into the Light: Ceramic Works from JoAnn Schnabel’s Personal Collection”, 2005.

Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, MA. “Our Cups Runneth Over- Functional & Sculptural Ceramic Cup Exhibition”. Invitational, 2004.

Birke Art Gallery, Marshall University, Huntington, WV. “Working Potters: Mentors and Colleagues”. Curator, Gertrude Graham Smith, 2004.

Santa Fe Clay, Santa Fe, NM. “For the Table”, Invitational, 2004. Santa Fe Clay, Santa Fe, NM. “For the Table”, Invitational, 2004.

Hodges Taylor Gallery, Charlotte, NC. “Gather ‘Round the Table”. Invitational, 2004.

Blue Spiral Gallery, Asheville, NC. “New x 3: New Artists + New Works + New Year”, Invitational, 2004.

Santa Fe Clay, Santa Fe, NM. “Margaret Bohls, Julia Galloway and Holly Walker”, three concurrent solo exhibitions, 2003.

Odyssey Gallery, Asheville, NC. “Women in Clay: Pots for Daily Use”, Invitational, 2003. Curators: Suze Lindsay and Linda McFarling.

Greenwich House Pottery, New York, NY. “Made in Clay”, Ceramics Invitational, 2002.

Penland Gallery, Penland, NC. “R.S.V.P.: The Dinnerware Invitational”, 2002.

Penland Gallery, Penland, NC. “Four Hands Two Ideas One Object- Artists’ Collaborations”, 2002.

Winthrop University Gallery, Rock Hill, SC. “The Clay and Community of Penland”, NCECA exhibit, 2001.

Blue Pony Gallery, Charlotte, NC. “To Have and to Hold, Ceramics Invitational. Curators: Barbara Hill and Holly Hanessian, 2001.

Greenwich House Pottery, New York, NY. “Artists on Their Own”. Jurors: Nancy Margolis, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York and Maine, and Arnold Zimmerman, Ceramic Sculptor, New York. 1994.

Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME. “Makers ‘93”. Jurors: Michael Monroe, Director Renwick Gallery, Washington D.C.; Mark Leach, Curator Contemporary Art, Mint Museum, NC; Toni Sikes, President Kraus-Sikes Inc., WI. 1993.

Riverside Museum, Louisiana Arts and Science Center, Baton Rouge, LA. “Louisiana Competition, 1989”. Juror: Donald Kuspit, art critic and Professor of Art History at SUNY, Stony Brook, NY. 1989.

Danna Center Gallery, Loyola University, New Orleans, LA. “Loyola’s First Ceramic Invitational”. Curator: Steve Rucker, Ceramics Professor, Loyola University. 1988.

Downtown Gallery, New Orleans, LA. “Louisiana in Clay”. Curator: Don Marshall, Emeritus Director, Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, LA. 1987.

Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ. “In Recognition of Excellence”. Invitational for New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship recipients. 1986.

Creighton University Gallery, Omaha, NE. “Creighton Clay Invitational”. Curator: Jerry Horning, Professor of Art, Creighton University. 1986.

New Gallery, Bemis Project/Alternate Work Site, Omaha, NE. “New Gallery/New Work”. Invitational. 1985.

Archie Bray Gallery, Helena, MT. “Residents’ Show”. 1982.

Charles McNider Museum, Mason City, IAS. “Iowa Crafts; 14”. Juror: Warren MacKenzie, Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota. 1981.

## COLLECTIONS

San Angelo Museum of Fine arts, San Angelo, TX. Piece selected 2011.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

State of the Art 2011-2012 National Biennial Ceramics Invitational Catalog, Parkland Art Gallery, Champaign, IL. Curated by Suze Lindsay 2011/ 2012.

The Studio Potter, Summer/Fall issue, 2010. Co-Author with Linda Casbon of “Visual Translations: relationships between drawing and form”

Masters Earthenware, Lark Books-Sterling Publishing Company, New York, NY. Juror: Matthias Ostermann, 2009. Featured artist with eight-page spread. Text, quotations, and photographs.

500 Platters, Plates, and Chargers, Lark Books-Sterling Publishing Company, New York, NY. Juror: Linda Arbuckle, 2008.

Hand Building, Lark Books-Sterling Publishing Company, New York, NY. Shay Amber, 2008.

500 Bowls, Lark Books-Sterling Publishing Company, New York, NY. Juror: John Britt, 2003.

Handbuilt Tableware, Lark Books-Sterling Publishing Company, New York, NY. Kathy Triplett, 2001.

North Carolinas Taste - Full Magazine, Oxford, NC. Penland Food and Craft, Elizabeth Norfleet. Citation and photograph. Summer, 1999.

The Best of Pottery, Rockport Publishers, Rockport, MA. Jurors: Jonathan Fairbanks, Curator American Decorative Arts, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Angela Fina, potter, MA. 1996.

The Studio Potter Network, Exeter, NH. “Spotlight on Network Groups: Watershed Center”. Holly Walker. March, 1994.

Maine Craft Association Newsletter, Deer Isle, ME. “Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts. An Interview with Holly Walker”, Lisa Schoonmaker. March/April 1993.

New York Times, NY, NY. “Crafts: Color’s Influence on Form”, Lisa Hammel. Citation and photograph. 7/31/86.

New York Times, NY, NY. “Summit: 18 Fellowship Winners”, Patricia Malarcher. Citation and photograph. 9/22/85.