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FUSION

A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS



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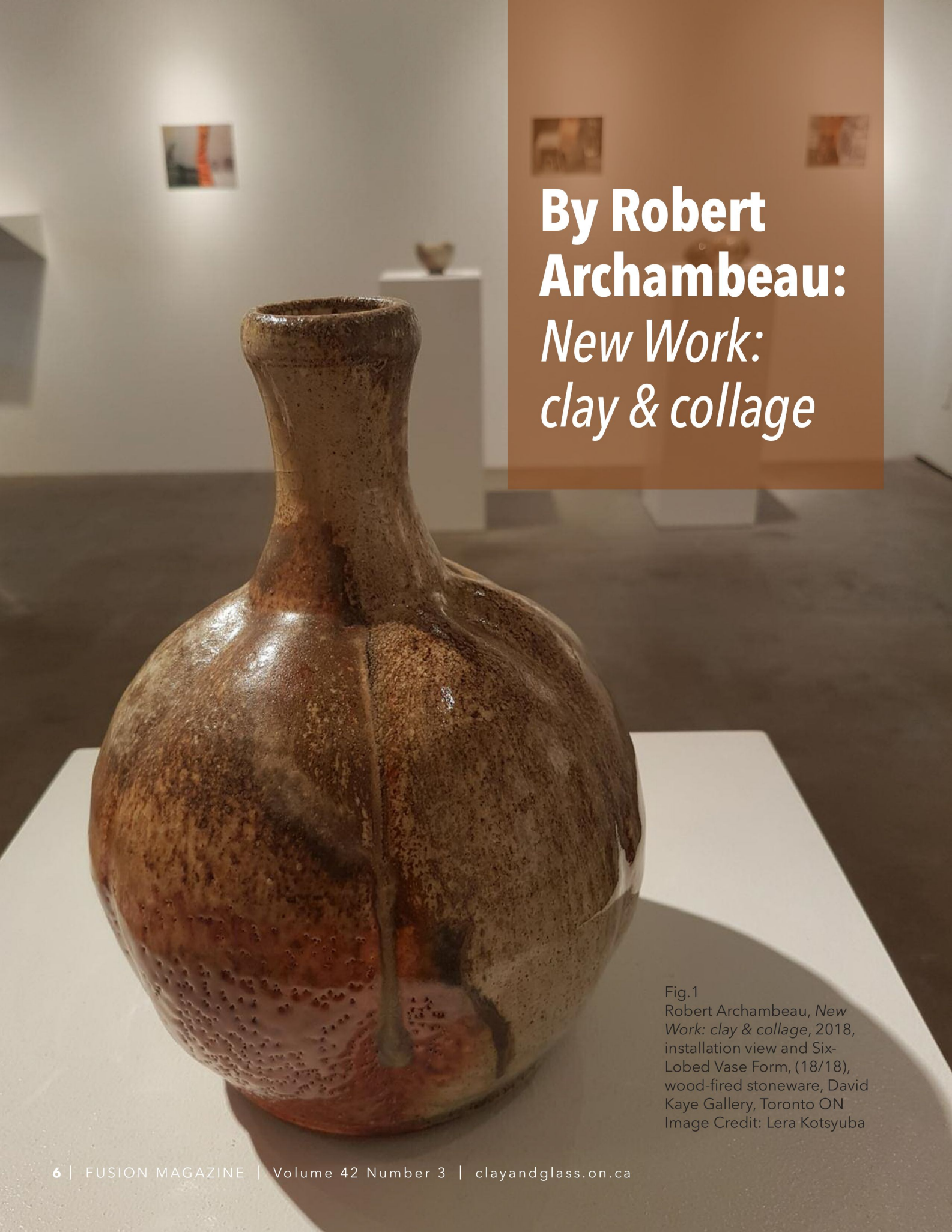


ON THE COVER

Maria Moldovan, *Arriving*, 2017

Image Credit: Richard Scrobecki (see Sarah Chate, *Carrying Places: The Art of Maria Moldovan*).

FUSION's Board of Directors, staff, and I note the very sad news that David Kaye closed his gallery, David Kaye Gallery, in late December. David was a force at Prime Gallery and, since 2006, at his own space at Dovercourt and Queen, Toronto. David's gifts are many: a gracious yet rigorous gallerist and curator; a thoughtful critic, supporter, and friend to several generations of artists; a curious and receptive engagement with art and its making; an eye for the talent. A fuller appreciation will follow. Margot Lettner, Editor



**By Robert
Archambeau:
New Work:
*clay & collage***

Fig.1
Robert Archambeau, *New Work: clay & collage*, 2018, installation view and Six-Lobed Vase Form, (18/18), wood-fired stoneware, David Kaye Gallery, Toronto ON
Image Credit: Lera Kotsyuba

The work of Robert Archambeau needs no introduction. His forms, surface treatments, and colours delight the eye of even a casual admirer of ceramics. For a veritable ceramics powerhouse like Archambeau, whose long and illustrious career has accolades from the Governor General's Award for Visual and Media Arts (2003) to Manitoba's Art Award of Distinction (2014), his approach and process reveal works of distinction.

In a delight of an exhibition, Archambeau has once again expanded the borders of his repertoire in *New Work: clay & collage*, at the David Kaye Gallery in Toronto, September 27 - October 14, 2018. Engaging with more than one medium may seem taboo to some artists, but Archambeau forges ahead and pairs his ceramics with collage. A photographer and printmaker, Archambeau's use of images adds a new complexity to his ceramic work. The exhibition itself was displayed in a way to suggest this new relationship: plinths at various heights for vessels, walls for collages. The work is on display; yet framed and posed at various heights for the viewer to walk amongst it, winding and wending along an invisible path of discovery. Ceramic forms and saturated tones surprise and frame one another, creating a sense of connection.

Clay as a medium lends itself perfectly to touch. Malleable and transformative, clay moves and yields to tactile forces, changing under human hands. Echoing this sentiment in paper, Archambeau's collage work shows the tactile nature of paper and memory, how images can also change with human hands. Archambeau uses newsprint, photographs, and magazine pages to evoke memory and place, though neither is intrinsically tied to the image in a forthright way. These visual

impressions provide a window into the mind of the artist. Torn rather than cut, the paper itself shows the artist's hand: pieces fit together to create images like a film reeling across the gallery, each image the same size, tracing a path on the wall like a visual journey through the space.

Archambeau's wood-fired stoneware holds beautiful glazes in warm tones, the stoneware itself holding the impression of the physical material through its visual weight. The wood-firing process is as laborious and delicate as it is unpredictable, with different woods lending their colours to the ash, which then becomes colour in glaze when kissed by fire. Colours depend on the structure of the kiln, its temperature, and the particular ash used to give colour to the glaze. Here Archambeau is a master: with his warm palette lending familiarity to his vessels, while echoing the tones of his collage work on wood panel, his vessel and plate forms are familiar in their scale, inviting human touch by their impressions of use as plates, teapots, and ewers. This sense of connection unites, first, the work; and then the viewer with both



Fig. 2 Robert Archambeau, installation view and *Bottle Vase Form*, (18/19), wood-fired stoneware, 2018, David Kaye Gallery, Toronto ON
Image Credit: Lera Kotsyuba



the ceramics, as they are familiar objects, and with the collages, as their images are reminiscent of stream-of-consciousness photographs.

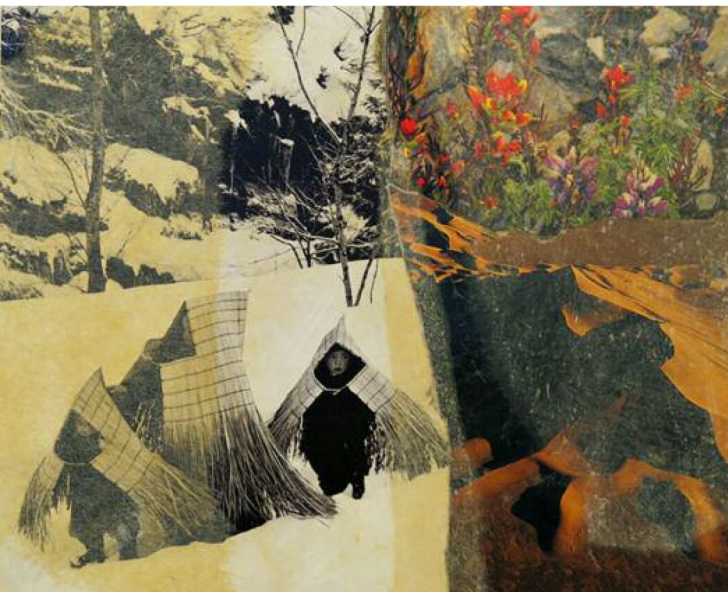
The placement of the vessel forms, whether framed or accompanied by the collages, also speaks to the relationship between the two mediums and, ultimately, to what unites them in this exhibition: process. At once telling a story, they also evoke impressions of the artist's gesture, curated by the artist. With *Bottle Vase Form* and the accompanying collages #42, 46, 38, 45, 89, 74-76, visually connected by their palette of soft warm tones, Archambeau connects images of structure and earth (clay and form of the vessel) and flowers and landscapes in the collages (earth and its natural forms) with steamship and smoke images that recall the kiln and the transformative power of fire on the vessel. Tensions between fissure and rupture are softened by the solidity of the vessel; while, in turn, the vessel evokes tensions of heat and fire and the torn edges of the collages show the process of the work, in both media.

Making is also prevalent in the strong visual impressions of the artist's own gesture. Vessels have distinctive markings and are of a scale that they can be held between two hands. The collages show the tears in paper as a physical mark; even the glue holds the brushstrokes of the artist.

This act of physical mark-making, whether pressed into clay, or on and with paper – a human connection through touch – unites the work in this exhibition. Combining collage and ceramic works, *New Work: clay & collage* gives us not only the works as they relate to one another, but a deeper understanding of Robert Archambeau's practice.

Lera Kotsyuba is an art historian and curator based in Toronto. Working across disciplines in architectural history and craft, Lera recently edited a new book by Sarah Hall entitled *A Thousand Colours*, and convened a session at the 2017 Canadian Craft Biennale on Craft and Public Art. She is currently the managing editor of *Studio* magazine.
www.lerakotsyuba.com

To see a portfolio of Robert Archambeau's *New Work: clay & collage*, go to www.davidkayegallery.com Archambeau is celebrating his 50th anniversary as an instructor – now Professor Emeritus – at the University of Manitoba School of Art with a retrospective *Robert Archambeau: A Conversation in Clay* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, November 17, 2018 - March 31, 2019, presented with the support of Michelle Archambeau and Greg Cymbalist, Daniel Anderson, David H. Kaye, David Kaye Gallery, and Stephen and Hazel Borys; go to <https://www.wag.ca>



Robert Archambeau, New Work: clay & collage, 2018, David Kaye Gallery
 Clockwise from upper left, all works paper on panel, 2018: Collages #82, #76, #38, #45, #75, #42
 Image Credit: David Kaye