

POSTAL ADDRESSES, AGAIN

Jean-Claude Carisse reports a letter ties such as Bell Canada and Hydro

will inform government agencies and utilities for their civic number sign. By a majority of 4-3, council passed a

PONTIAC

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Paula Murray: Deepening the mystery

many ways to pot as there are potters. You can get caught up in technicalities, but you've got to stay connected to why you're doing it. I enjoy trying to find what feeds my heart."

Paula opened her first studio in 1979 in what was once a garage. Today her show space is airy and pristine – the delicate porcelain vases and bowls are silhouetted against the steep, snow-muffled bank rising behind the house.

Her latest work, 'Breathing Space', is technically innovative whilst seemingly simple. Paper thin forms curve and almost flutter – but their natural shapes are pierced here and there with rents, splits, and spiraling cracks.

Paula discovered that when 'surface veil' fiberglass is incorporated into

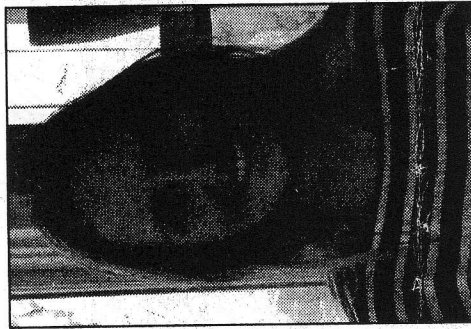
wet clay, the material cracks dramatically as it dries. Hurrying the process with a hair dryer, the piece is then fired several times, and sanded smooth in between. "I like to make it look like I wasn't there," laughs Paula. "It's a lot of work, and very time consuming – but I work at the pieces until I know they are done."

After this process is complete, the works are glazed by airbrush, then stacked in the kiln, touching each other, to be salt fired. The flames dance amongst the pots, creating patterns and shadows that accentuate the natural elements of the pieces.

Paula's themes of life and the natural world spring in part from a four-year sailing tour in 1990's. Her young family traveled in a 44-foot sloop to the

Bahamas, throughout the Caribbean to Venezuela. "Living on a boat, in the elements – you feel very connected, but very small. The scale of life puts you in tune with the rhythms of nature – with few possessions, but spiritually rich. It was a big shock to return to an environment that was so burdened with material possessions.

"It took me a while to sort out what I wanted to say when I came back. Living in impoverished places, then returning to this society, I understood more about the fragility of life. We must learn to be sensitive to the earth, and be aware of what we do to it. We need to treat it delicately, as these [pieces] are delicate. They are very light, but very strong. It's a relationship between fragility and



strength."

These ethereal pieces by Paula are making an impact. Already a recipient of many awards, she was recently shown at the SOFA (Sculptural Objects Functional Art) show in Chicago, where she sold all her work on display. "I saw icons in their fields," she enthuses. "I'd only seen

slides of some of it before SOFA shows world class work – it's a big deal."

Another star in her career is Paula's presence at the 54th International Competition of Contemporary Ceramic Art in Faenza, Italy, running from June to December this year. "It's very prestigious competition. It's the first time I've applied, so it's incredible that I was accepted."

The star piece "Fragmenting Earth", undulating porcelain bowl flawed and perfect. "[Maverick English painter] Francis Bacon once said: the job of the artist is to deepen the mystery," reflects Paula. "I find it very exciting and challenging to be engaged in the unfolding of life – to gain understanding through making."