

Belmont Art Association Meeting: May 20, 2021

Location: Our tenth Zoom meeting was brought to order by Naomi and Dari with nine members and our presenter attending:

Attendees: Naomi Ellenberg-Dukas (Co-Chair), Irene Fairley, Bert Halstead (Treasurer and Membership Coordinator), Louise Halstead, Mary Hilt, Kirstin Ilse, Anne Katzeff (Webmaster), Linda Leach (Vice President of the N.E. Polymer Guild), Dari Paquette (Co-Chair), and Jane Wentzell (Recording Secretary).

Meeting

Dari began the business meeting with four items on the agenda.

- 1. Utility Box Public Art Project:** Dari reported that because the Belmont Cultural Council awarded the BAA three times the funding for this project as they did last year, four boxes will be painted instead of three, and each artist will be compensated \$750 instead of \$330. It took time for the Belmont Cultural Council to convene to approve the BAA's request to change the grant request from three to four boxes, so it is only now that the Call for Entries is going out. The deadline for entries is June 20th.
- 2. BGA Virtual Show:** Belmont Gallery of Art's new virtual bird-themed show is up, called "Hope Is the Thing with Feathers." BAA member Becky Holmes-Farley has an accompanying solo show. The virtual reception for these shows is on June 3rd. The previous show, "Art Heals," will remain up virtually through the end of May. The work of several of our members is in both shows.
- 3. June Meeting:** Our next meeting will be on June 17th. BAA members Jessica Parsons Lomeli and Anne Katzeff will discuss the art challenges they have undertaken. Jessica has done a 30 day, one painting a day challenge. Anne has challenged herself with a 100 day series of nature drawings and paintings. Ian Todreas has challenged himself in other ways, by participating in online series and classes. He will speak to the BAA later in the fall.
- 4. Summer Break:** There will be no BAA meetings in July and August. We will reconvene in September. If you have suggestions about increasing our membership participation or about program planning, please contact Naomi or Dari.

Presentation

Our program tonight was a very enlightening demo on the subject of using polymer clay to create 2- and 3-dimensional art. Linda Leach, our speaker, holds the office of Vice President in the New England Polymer Guild. She is a mid-coast Maine artist with experience in several art forms, including oil painting starting at age 11. In 2003 she first fell in love with polymer clay after taking a class in the medium.

Initially polymer clay was thought of as a children's craft material, and then artists like Linda recognized it as a medium for professional work and developed new ways to use it. Different brands of polymer clay have different properties:

- Primo is medium hard, and it holds its shape.
- Kato clay also holds its shape, but it is softer. It also comes in a liquid form in a squeeze bottle, and is translucent.
- Sculpey is very soft.
- Femo clay is similar to Primo and Kato.

Kato and Femo are good for intricate designs.

Linda showed us the amazing ways she has found to use the different forms of polymer clay. Oil paint, mica, acrylic and pastels can be mixed with liquid polymer clay to make unique pieces. The latest use she has developed for this medium is applying it to glass vases and clay tiles. She paints Maine coastal scenes around the circumference of a vase and then bakes it at 275°F for an hour. She puts pieces in a cold oven and lets them cool in the oven to avoid breakage. She uses a 12x12" pizza oven and rests vases on polyfill in the oven. A finished vase is semi-transparent, and she has already sold several of them.

Next Linda showed us how she uses the lace canes she makes out of clay. This is truly remarkable and hard to describe. A cane is a long and narrow layered tube of different colors of clay. The design created by layering different colors of clay and then rolling them up runs the entire length of the tube. When the cane is sliced into very thin wafers, you can see the complicated design in each wafer that has been made from different colors of clay. The effect can be similar to the Japanese technique of mokume-gane. Linda can make a veneer from laying the wafers onto a flat surface and burnishing them. From a demo on Linda's website, lindaleachdesigns.com, one can see that a great amount of work goes into making a lace cane. Her website also shows many photos of her creations.

Linda Leach has won awards in her field of decorative arts, and she sells her work at shops and galleries in Maine and online. The process she has developed signifies an explosion of creativity among polymer clay artists and elevates their work for consideration as museum-quality forms of artistic expression. Prominent museums have acquired polymer art pieces for their permanent collections.

We thank Linda Leach for her gracious demonstration of how she constructs her beautiful jewelry and other decorative art pieces.

Recording Secretary: Jane Wentzell, 617- 489 - 0412
Edits and additional notes by Dari Paquette