A message from Reena Kashyap, Director Emeritus, to the Clay Art Center Community.

1 message

Clay Art Center <development@clayartcenter.org>
Thu, Apr 30, 2020 at 7:02 AM
Reply-To: Clay Art Center <development@clayartcenter.org>
To: communications@clayartcenter.org

To the Clay Art Center Community:

I am writing with a sense of longing and reflections -

As with many other organizations, our beloved Clay Art Center’s doors are temporarily closed due to the Covid-19 crisis. While we long to go back to normalcy and return to class or to our studios, we must pause and continue to do what is necessary to keep safe, isolate and be a part of the social pact to
secure the health of our entire community. **Together we are finding innovative ways of being creative with our heart and hands and to immerse ourselves in making, seeing, touching, hearing and experiencing art in hope that a better tomorrow awaits us.**

My inability to access clay and a studio has given me valuable time to devote hours and days on a long overdue project of archiving Clay Art Center’s materials and history of its founders and the six plus decades that has followed. As I read about the struggles and challenges of our founders’ journey and stories of innumerable artists who followed, I am struck once again by their passion, determination and the sheer grit that helped keep the centers doors open over the last 63 years.

Clay Art Center was founded in 1957 as a privately owned art center for the advancement of the ceramic arts. A lone beacon on the east coast at the time, it became a haven for clay artists, many who have had significant careers and influenced contemporary ceramic practice. In 1997 I made a decision to invest in the center, improve the facilities and build the Education, Community Arts and Artist-in-Residence programs.

In 2006, my dream to transform Clay Art Center to a non-profit organization became a reality. In 2007, at Clay Art Center’s 50th anniversary, I donated my business assets to the newly formed non-profit. This marked a turning point in its history and the official emergence of Clay Art Center as a public non-profit institution. The first Board of Directors crafted the first Strategic Plan and adopted its mission: “to kindle a passion for the ceramic arts and provide a community for that passion to flourish.” My desire to leave a legacy for the next generation of clay artists became a reality.

**What is undoubtedly clear is that we stand together in this unfathomable crisis and if history serves us a reminder, this time too shall pass.** To quote Winston Churchill, “It would be foolish to disguise the gravity of the hour. It would be still more foolish to lose heart and courage.” With your support, we can continue to provide access to the arts through our virtual classes, virtual artist talks, and online gatherings. We will also continue offering affordable or free access so that we can provide inspiration, opportunity for creativity, and connections for all.

When we re-open, Clay Art Center will passionately embrace our shared values and purpose, our love for clay and community. With resolve, we will be ready to
welcome and serve our community of artists, students, teachers, donors, board, staff and visitors to re-discover the possibilities that clay can serve to transform lives and bring beauty and meaning to life.

Our board of directors at Clay Art Center is providing a match for all new gifts to our 2 Strong Hands Campaign up to $20,000 through May 31. This ensures that the engagement and support which our community has set in motion will continue growing in the weeks to come.

Stay healthy, stay at home and stay connected as we continue to support each other virtually and hoping soon, in person. To those of you who have already given, thank you. For those of you who want to help make sure we re-emerge strong and ready to serve, please make a donation today.

With gratitude for your attention,

Humbly,

Reena Kashyap
Director Emeritus