THE OTTAWA GUILD OF POTTERS
LA GUILDE DES POTIERS D'OTTAWA

*Celebrating Clay · Célébration de l'argile*

# Lucy Willemsen

## Birds and Birch
## Oiseaux et Bouleaux

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All photos by Lucy Willemsen

# Birds and Birch

Birch bark has so many fascinating qualities. I began my love affair with it years ago, making birch bark cards; and painting switch plate covers, a wall, and even a pair of mukluks to look like birch bark. Did I say I love birch bark? I avidly continued depicting birch bark as I began my clay journey; and birds were a natural addition, benefiting from my experience with hand carving wooden birds. In this series, I particularly enjoyed rendering an idea directly into my piece entitled “Morphing”, which is a snowy owl morphing into the birch.  Vases comprise much of my work, and I love them adorned simply, with pussy willow stems or branches. My inspiration springs from our home beside a lake, with streams and forest where I spend a lot of time in the wonders of nature.

Lucy Willemsen

# A Quiet Moment

The white birch provides a resting perch for the ever-alert male cardinal.
Vase / planter.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware and paper clay; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 11"; Width: 6" 4 lbs and 1 oz.

# Hungry Fledglings

"Where's our lunch?" A trio of fledgling chickadees are perched at the cusp of independence, but perhaps a few more home-delivered meals will come their way, care of the parents.
Vase with brown rim and blue interior.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 9"; Width: 7½" 4 lbs and 2 oz.

# Morphing Snowy Owl

This idea came to me in a dream, and I couldn't wait to see if I could turn it to reality as a piece of mysterious work.  What do you imagine happens next?

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware and stoneware paperclay; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height 14"; Width:  5½"  4 lbs and 12 oz.

# White Breasted Nuthatch

This little fellow forages on trees at any angle.  Here, I captured it climbing down a birch in its distinctive head-first orientation.

Flat-backed wall vase / planter with brown rim and blue interior.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware and stoneware paper clay; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.

**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.

**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 8"; Width: 8"  3 lbs and 1 oz.

# Stand of Birch

The male northern oriole seeks the highest perch to launch into song to court his mate -- and our hearts, while signalling the welcome spring.
A trio of bud vases, with brown rims and blue interiors.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 8-13½"; Width: 1¾ - 2½" 3 lbs and 3 oz.

# Pair of Songbird Mugs

Start your morning with my blue jay and cardinal songsters, nestled in these mugs.
Sculpted antler handle, with brown rim and blue interior.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Thrown on the wheel and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 4½"; Width: approx. 3½" 2 lbs and 2 oz.

# Pair of Owl Mugs

While human "night owls" are named for theIr nocturnal capers, did you know that many of our feathered owl friends are also active during the day, to adapt to prey availability?
So too, and happily, these great horned owl and snowy owl mugs can come out any time you please.
Sculpted antler handle, with bright blue interior.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Thrown on the wheel and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 4½"; Width: aprox. 3½" 2 lbs and 2 oz.

# Woodpecker Vase

The downy woodpecker peers out from his nest in a tree cavity.
The natural look of this birch vase is enhanced with a simple few branches.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware; fired to cone 6, in oxidation
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 9"; Width: 3½" 2 lbs

# Cardinal Vase

The cardinal is such a beautiful contrast against the white birch.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 9"; Width: 3½" 2 lbs and 1 oz.

# Barred Owl

It is always a special day when I see a barred owl, with its piercing eyes.
Flat-backed wall vase / planter.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware and paper clay; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 12"; Width: 7½"  6 lbs and 8 oz.

# Birch Platter

The protective male cardinal sings to defend his nesting territory.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 15"; Width: 5"  2 lbs and 1 oz.

# Screech Owl

The ever watchful little screech owl.
Container / planter.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware and paper clay; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 13"; Width: 5"  3 lbs and 3 oz.

# Woodpecker Wall Vase

The downy woodpecker in search of insects.
A flat-backed wall planter, with brown rim and blue interior.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware and paper clay; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 13"; Width: 5½"  3 lbs and 6 oz.

# Hawk Wall Vase

Hawks are fierce hunters with keen eyesight which can spot prey from far away.
A flat-backed wall vase, with brown rim and blue interior.

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 13"; Width: 5"  3 lbs and 3 oz.

# Bluebird Container

Did you know that bluebirds tend to come back to the same breeding ground year after year?

**Material:** Underglaze and glaze. Stoneware; fired to cone 6, in oxidation.
**Method:** Hand built and sculpted.
**Dimensions / Weight:** Height: 3"; Width: 8½"; Length: 11"  4 1bs

The Ottawa Guild of Potters is proud to present this exhibition "Birds and Birch," by Lucy Willemsen.

At any Guild sale, you'll see a crowd around Lucy's stand. Intrigued by a ceramic birch-bark vase where a skillfully-carved bird makes its home, viewers will circle the piece, turning it gently in their hands, searching for further details of forest life. Here we see the bright red of a cardinal. There, the sharp eye of a hawk peers at us. Details and life spring out from Lucy’s work, fed by the bright, colourful landscape that surrounds her countryside home in Quebec.

Many thanks to Dave Drapeau, our webmaster, for his ever-giving patience, and to Collin Jang, for her helpfulness and attention to detail on her role as proof-reader. Thanks also go to Nancy Riggs and Rowena Luk of the Communications Committee for their work in promoting the exhibition.

Exhibitions committee
Elizabeth Davies, Joanna Richardson, Isobel Salole

# Biography

Lucy is a multimedia artist who has worked with wood, leather, paint, sculpture and various other textiles over the past 42 years while raising a family and running a bed and breakfast.

In the fall of 2018 Lucy took a beginners class in clay with the intention of figuring out how to make birch bark pottery, using her wood carving skills to create natural, realistic shapes and textures in her nature-inspired works. Since then, she's thrown herself into learning the art form and has built a home pottery studio where she creates day and many a night!  Lucy also has fun playing with colour, and taking on the challenge of commissioned works.

Home is beside the lake and in the forest of Val des Monts, Quebec. The natural landscape inspires many of her clay creations that are hand built or made on the wheel. Her striking birch bark series is the clearest example of this.

Lucy lives to create, and she creates to live; her hands are never idle.  When she isn't in her pottery studio, Lucy enjoys spending time with her husband, their animals, gardening, trail blazing, making wooden puppets and cooking up a storm.

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