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## Cal State Long Beach ceramics professor gets his own exhibit in New York

**The gallery features 75 of Jay Kvapil's pottery pieces.**



Courtesy of Jay Kvapil

**Jay Kvapil's ceramic exhibit is featured in a New York gallery through Oct. 19.**

Alba Mejia, Staff Writer  
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Jay Kvapil paces back and forth for an hour and a half in his studio at Cal State Long Beach, then decides to put a brushstroke on the flat bowl which he had shaped earlier at home. Finally, he places the ceramic piece into the kiln.

Kvapil, a ceramics professor at CSULB, has 75 of his ceramic pieces displayed in his exhibit, "Landscapes" at the Magen H. Gallery in New York, New York. The exhibit is done in collaboration with Galerie Lefebvre & Fils, Paris, a gallery in France.

His hometown in Arizona and the time he spent in Japan learning ceramics are Kvapil's main influences for designing his pottery.

After taking a 10-year hiatus from ceramics, his goal when he returned was to make work that resembled his home state, Arizona. In his pieces, he portrays the vast deserts and landscapes with neutral colors and rough texture.

"When I started back in 2004 I really wanted to go into what is the heart of pottery and firing [with] glazes that are goopy, flow and all kinds of strange things happen," Kvapil said.

Michael Nannery, the school of art's advising coordinator saw Kvapil's ceramic pieces before they were sent to the exhibition and was impressed by his attention to detail.

"I was amazed at how much work he produced and all the different kinds of forms, textures, colors and glazes," Nannery said. "I just think as a body of work it was very impressive to see that range. Just the individual pieces themselves demand a lot of attention."

The high praise doesn't come easy. Kvapil said that he destroys about one fourth of his work, and some of it has to go through the kiln about seven to eight times in order to achieve perfection. He describes the process as being a pleasant surprise with each attempt.

"Everytime I open the kiln, it's like opening a Christmas present," Kvapil said. "That being said, there are times where it's a complete disaster."

Kvapil's exhibit will be on display through Oct. 19 at the Magen H. Gallery in New York.

He said that what he does with his work could be called "controlled spontaneity," where his pieces in the kiln are semi-predictable but always have an element of surprise.

"If they were completely predictable I would be bored. I wouldn't want to do it," Kvapil said.

"It's not like making dinner where everything will come out perfect everytime. It's kind of the opposite."

Kvapil compared his work to jazz music, where tension is created with every note.

"His attention to detail and his sort of commitment to realizing a particular form or result are two things about Jay that come through in his work," Nannery said.

Kvapil studied ceramics in Japan for two years after he graduated from University of the Pacific as an English Literature major.

One of his biggest inspirations was his Japanese sensei, or teacher, who mentored Kvapil in 1975 and taught him about form, lines and glazes.

Some of his other inspirations include Gertrud and Otto Natzler, American ceramists who did work from the '30s to the '80s. He was particularly inspired by their work on crater glazes, which influences his work today.

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