

Local News

Two artists – two paths: Vessels of the Earth opens Saturday

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Elizabeth Willoughby and David Lyon create striking functional works of beauty. But, they arrive at their visions from different directions. They are the featured artists of the next Colborne Art Gallery exhibit opening 2 p.m. this Saturday.

Mr. Lyon, a master woodturner, obtains his wood from a variety of sources, some serendipitous, some preordained. He'll try anything from elm to apple and other more exotic woods.

When a block of wood is locked onto his lathe, the adventure begins.

As David says, "I see what happens. I have a vision in my head, but sometimes I have to alter it because of flaws or defects. I have to work with it."

Liz's exquisite functional pottery, with its rich, intense



Liz Willoughby with her kiln.

PHOTOS BY BOB OWEN



David Lyon holds "the big box bowl".

glazes, calls out to be touched.

When she sits down to begin making a pot, she has to have something in her head: "You have to know where you're going. The work is always better when you have something in mind."

Two disparate approaches – two routes to perfection.

While they approach their work differently, the artists have always been called to their media.

For David, it all began when he took a shop class in woodworking. Wood has always spoken to him. At one time, he could recognize most finished woods; now, he can do it with most unfinished pieces. When he enters a house, he reaches out to touch wood.

He could have chosen cabinetry, but he finds it too precise a craft. He's freer on the lathe.

Liz can remember taking her kids in their strollers to pottery section long before she began turning. She would give pottery as gifts. Finally, she took some courses, set up a studio and was off.

The two artists have much more in common.

Eleven years ago, David gave

up a marketing career in the city and moved to the country north of Warkworth to pursue his passion with wood. His spouse, Elizabeth Heon, came too but continues her market research career.

Twelve years ago, Liz pulled up stakes in the city to carry on with her pottery in Haldimand Township. Unlike David, she had already given up a 20-year career in nursing in 1982, a career she says has parallels with making pottery. Both nursing and pottery making are very human, tactile activities she says.

Both artists live in homes filled with the media to which they are bonded.

Now, both long-time members of the 10-year-old Colborne Art Gallery are participating in their second shows at 51 King Street East.

Vessels of the Earth opens Saturday, Aug. 4 and runs to Sept. 23.

The exhibit features finely finished big burl pieces, trays, platters, spelted red maple and a piece David refers to as "the big box bowl". Liz brings her varied and practical pottery, pieces that warm the hand and the soul when they are filled.