



**Media release – for immediate release**

Attached: Portage Ceramic Awards 2016 judge Janet DeBoos

**National Ceramic Awards Appoint Celebrated Australian Ceramicist as International Judge**

**Entries are now open for New Zealand's premier ceramic event – The Portage Ceramic Awards – which this year will be judged by Janet DeBoos, a renowned Australian ceramic artist, academic and writer.**

Andrew Clifford, Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery's director says DeBoos interest in the relationship between industrial production, studio processes and domestic use will bring an exciting dimension to this year's awards.

"DeBoos is an influential artist and teacher and has been a passionate advocate for her medium for four decades. Her tireless and innovative approach to ceramics will be warmly welcomed by practitioners here in New Zealand and we are thrilled she has accepted this judging role," says Clifford.

Selecting this year's Portage Ceramic Awards winners and exhibition works is a role DeBoos says she anticipates with pleasure.

"I don't hold to a particular aesthetic in judging works. I like functional pottery because of its interaction with people, so it's about relationships, and, in fact, that relationship that exists between the maker and the user is also something I enjoy seeing.

"I like work that sees the spaces between things, so rather than it being specifically this or specifically that, I find this grey or difficult area much more interesting."

DeBoos' work has been heavily influenced by her relationship with Chinese ceramic practise, which began in 1996 at a symposium attended by Professor Zhang Shouzhi, a respected Chinese designer and Head of Ceramics at what is now Tsinghua University in Beijing. Under Professor Zhang's instigation a set of her porcelain domestic ware designs were put into production at the Huaguang Bone China Factory, Zibo. DeBoos now uses decoration heavily in her work.

The selection of finalist works for the 2016 Portage Ceramic Awards is a two-stage process.

Approximately fifty works will be selected by the judge from submitted photographs. Shortlisted artists will be invited to send their works to Te Uru Gallery for final selection, where the judge will view and choose the exhibiting works and award winners.

Artists can submit digital images of their work to the awards at: [www.teuru.org.nz/portage](http://www.teuru.org.nz/portage). **Entries close on 1 August.**

This year's prize selection includes a scholarship to participate in a workshop programme at **Peters Valley School of Craft in New Jersey, USA.**

"The opportunity for this sort of international experience is invaluable to practitioners at any level", says Clifford. "As New Zealand's leading national ceramic event, it's important that the Portage Ceramic Awards can help build international profile and networks for the New Zealand ceramics community."

**The Awards' finalists will be announced on 26 October.** The finalist works will be exhibited at Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery from 11 November 2016 – 5 February 2017.

**The overall winner, Peters Valley School of Craft workshop programme recipient and up to three merit award winners will be announced at a ceremony to be held at Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery in Titirangi, West Auckland on Thursday 10 November.**

The Premier Portage Ceramic Award carries a prize of \$15,000.

**Full entry details and criteria can be found at [www.teuru.org.nz/portage](http://www.teuru.org.nz/portage)**

Established in 2001, The Portage Ceramic Awards is New Zealand's premier showcase for ceramic arts. Administered by Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, the awards are the country's best-known barometer for developments in the field of ceramics.

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### **Editor's notes**

**Janet DeBoos** has had a significant impact on contemporary ceramics in Australia, having been the Head of Ceramics at the Canberra School of Art at the ANU for over 10 years. Prior to this, she taught at various colleges in Sydney (St George and Randwick TAFEs) and was Head Teacher at East Sydney when she retired from fulltime teaching in 1980 to run a production pottery for almost 20 years.

DeBoos exhibits regularly both in Australia and internationally and is represented in many major permanent public collections in Australia, UK, Canada, China, Taiwan, Belgium, and New Zealand including the National Gallery of Australia, The National Museum of China and the Musee de Mariemont, Belgium.

She has written two bestselling books on glazes, co-authored Handbook for Australian Potters and has written numerous articles for Australian and international ceramics journals on ceramic art practice, education and glaze technology.

Over the last sixteen years she has become a regular visitor to China, engaging in projects with industry as well as undertaking residencies, and teaching at the China Academy of Art. She has also inaugurated a biannual trip to China for students from the ANU Ceramics Workshop to the porcelain capital Jingdezhen.

She has contributed to more than a hundred group shows, and her work is held in museums and galleries in Australia, Taiwan, Greece and China.

In 2015, a career-spanning retrospective exhibition covering five decades of work was held at Craft ACT in Canberra.