

PRESS RELEASE
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SWAY
SUSAN COLLETT

Montreal November 9, 2005—**Galerie Elena Lee**, Canada's premiere contemporary glass art gallery, presents, **SWAY**, a sweeping exhibit of large-scale ceramic sculptures by Toronto artist Susan Collett. The vernissage unfolds **Tuesday November 15, 5 to 7 pm** and the exhibit continues until **December 6, 2005**.

SWAY showcases Collett's *Moiré Series*: Luminescent ceramic vessels with lacey perforations and sugary textures so delicate they seem fragile, yet rooted—an aesthetic contradiction that expresses the dualities of light and form, strength and fragility.

"SWAY evokes life's constant sway and flow and the never-ending push-pull between strength and fragility," says Collett. "The movement and undulating forms of the *Moiré Series* reflects nature's constant flux of growth and decay."

SWAY is the result of Collett's 2003 journey to China as a recipient of the prestigious Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramists. During her three-month residency in Jingdezhen, China, a renowned centre for ceramic production, her work was influenced by the scope and size of Chinese porcelain—from paper-thin cups to large-scale vases—and by the exquisite Chinese landscape.

"The unique Chinese landscape, with its multi-tiered tea farming, layered tile rooftops and willowing bamboo forests inspired the banding and movement of these ceramic forms," she informs. "Likewise, the wonderful challenge of working with Chinese porcelain inspired my work."

In China, her daily sketches of such disparate objects as piles of building bricks, light from cut window panels and the delicate design of beehives became the foundation for the *Moiré* sculptures. Returning to Canada, she began working with earthenware paper clay to build, strengthen and control the delicate forms and flowing movement inspired by Chinese porcelain, and experimenting with glazes and surface textures.

Each piece in the *Moiré Series* begins life inverted over a newspaper armature, which she then layers with hammered strips of earthenware paper clay. This provides the strength and flexibility to create large-scale works and support the clay's subsequent tearing and perforation. Contrary to a traditional container, the piece is pierced to release its interior space through delicate plays of light and shadow.

"As I exaggerate the scale and push the work towards the edge of physical collapse, a theme of strength vs. fragility becomes more potent," adds Collett. "Delicate perforations are reinforced with multi-fired glaze layers to fortify the piece, yet enhance its alarmingly fragile appearance."

It was the seemingly fragile, glass-like quality of Collett's *Moiré Series* that captured the imagination of Galerie Elena Lee, which normally exhibits works of contemporary glass art. "Once in a while we make an exception for extraordinary work in other media and Susan's innovative work was too good to pass by," said owner Elena Lee. "Her huge forms, cast in a material that somehow resembles glass, makes them appear fragile, yet so solid."

Experience the strength and fragility of SWAY, November 15 to December 6 at Galerie Elena Lee.

For further information, contact:

Galerie Elena Lee
Tel: (514) 844-6009
1460 Sherbrooke Street West
www.galerieelenalee.com

Vernissage:

Tuesday, November 15, 2005, 5 to 7 pm

Gallery Hours:

Tuesday to Friday: 11 am to 6 pm
Saturday: 11 am to 5 pm

SWAY:

An extraordinary display of strength and fragility

BACKGROUND

GALERIE ELENA LEE

Galerie Elena Lee, Canada's first glass gallery, has specialized in contemporary art glass for over 29 years. The gallery has become synonymous with glass, in Canada and abroad, and many of its artists have earned respect in international circles. The gallery's main objective is to present works that best translate the sculptural possibilities of glass. The aim is not to capitalize on a decorative medium, but to allow a deeper exploration of our socio-cultural heritage. At the same time, the gallery has pursued contemporary art's tendency to incorporate artwork into everyday life. The continuing presence at SOFA (Sculptures, Objects, and Functional Art) since 1995 in Chicago, New York and Florida has helped the gallery to establish an international presence and to introduce many Canadian artists, including recent graduates, to a wide audience. Galerie Elena Lee was awarded the *Prix SODEC d'Excellence en Exportation 2002* for her continued efforts to promote artists internationally.

SUSAN COLLETT

Toronto artist Susan Collett has been creating dramatic works of ceramic art since 1989. Her work has been exhibited in such prestigious galleries as the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art in Toronto, the Mobilia Gallery in Boston and SOFA in Chicago. Her art is featured in such collections as the Bata Shoe Museum, Ernst & Young and the Kamm Collection in Los Angeles. Collett, an accomplished print-maker, has also gained a national reputation for creating one-of-a-kind, hand-crafted ceramic fireplaces tiles. Collett studied at the Lacoste School of Art in France and the Cleveland Institute of Art. As the recipient of the Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramists, she completed a residency at the Jingdezhen Sanboa Art Institute in China in 2003, as well as at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. Her work has been featured in *Canadian Art Magazine*, *Style at Home* and she has appeared on CTV's *Dini Petty Show*.