

POTTERY NORTHWEST

2021 Annual Report



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Pottery Northwest's 55th anniversary was a year of reflection and refocus. After more than half a century at Seattle Center, Pottery Northwest relocated from lower Queen Anne to the Foster/White building in another iconic Seattle neighborhood, Pioneer Square. Big thanks to all who helped with this move!

A Healthy Board & Organization

I'm pleased to share that despite the impact of COVID-19 and the financial strain of relocation, Pottery Northwest is financially strong. The Board approved our largest annual operating budget ever for 2022; it included doubling staff size, expanding benefits, and investing in new equipment. Once in our new home, we will turn our sights to the future and update Pottery Northwest's

I'm honored to announce that Shruti Kataria is Pottery Northwest's new Board President and Elisa Diaz is our new Vice President. When I first stepped into this role a year ago, amidst so much uncertainty, I couldn't have wished for a better outcome than this. I want to thank board members who carried us through many challenges and completed their terms over the last year, including Allison Kramer, Deb Schwartzkopf, and Tara Wefers.

I am also grateful to Interim Executive Directors Jennifer "Fuj" Fujimoto, Caitlin Pontrella, and the staff for their skill, dedication, and cheerful hard work over a difficult year.

Searching for a New Executive Director

In early March, we launched the search for Pottery Northwest's next Executive Director. The leadership profile was shaped by the input and feedback collected through surveys & interviews with all of you: our community members, artists-in-residence, instructors, and community. The Board looks forward to welcoming our new partner in leadership soon and we are working with Caitlin and staff to ensure a smooth and well-supported transition.

Working toward Equity

Pottery Northwest remains steadfast in our mission to build an inclusive and accessible community as we enter our next era. We are engaged in examining existing practices for inequities and creating and adopting new systems that are inclusive. (Learn more about our equity work [here](#).)

With Gratitude

It's been a joy and a challenge to lead Pottery Northwest through a difficult time. A move in the middle of a pandemic might have broken a different organization, but the Pottery Northwest community has been steadfast in its support. We know, as clay creators, that when an object is subject to pressure and heat, the result is beauty. As an organization, we have been under pressure to relocate in the heat of a pandemic; something beautiful has emerged in Pioneer Square.

I'll see you there.

Cathy Thompson

CATHERINE THOMPSON

Board President



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last year Pottery Northwest was put to the test: We navigated the global pandemic, managed a massive relocation, and have been confronting the inequities within our organization. I am immensely proud of the Pottery Northwest team for supporting each other and staying both resilient and hopeful as we evolved the community in which we live, play and work.

Relocation & Construction

Construction on our community studio at Foster/White started in November 2021 and moved along extraordinarily fast. We received our certificate of occupancy in May and reopened for a shortened semester in May. We want to express gratitude for all the folks who made this move possible including Phen Huang, Lisa Roberts and Buffalo Design, Degrazia General Contractors, our rockstar team of volunteers, and Board Members who went above and beyond in their leadership—especially James Howeth and Cappy Thompson.

Programming

Looking back, there are many things we have done in 2021 to better serve our community, increase access, support artists, and encourage innovation in ceramics.

Additionally, because of our generous donor community, we increased our scholarship offerings from an average of 13 scholarships per quarter to 33 scholarships for our Fall 2021 quarter and anticipate we will continue to increase scholarship support in 2022.

Equity Work

Pottery Northwest has spent the last year on a journey to weave our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion into all our work and operations. The staff has adopted a culture of shared leadership, and created a living manual on how to ensure inclusion in decision making, manage conflict effectively, and make plans for our future growth. We placed renewed emphasis on having a work environment that centers balance—expanding staff size, redistributing workloads, increasing compensation, and creating policies that support health, wellness, and safety. While I only have been with Pottery Northwest for a short time, I observe generosity, vulnerability, candor, and courage to show up and do the work. In 2022, we will continue to foster connection, promote innovation, and offer access to education in clay.

We hope you will join us for this new beginning and into the journey ahead.

Cheers!

Caitlin Pontrella

CAITLIN PONTRELLA

Interim Executive Director



2021 in Review

In the beginning of the pandemic shutdown, Pottery Northwest hosted free online programming with Artist Talks and Clay at Home lessons to connect our community. When King County guidelines allowed it, Pottery Northwest reopened at 25% of our capacity with studio access and online classes. We offered COVID-safe access. Generous support from our community made it possible for Pottery Northwest to continue to offer scholarship support.

When we relaunched our programs, we elected to provide additional opportunities for beginner students, to make up for the lack of hands-on access during lockdown. We increased entry level offerings from 25% to 60% of classes in Fall 2021. We also continued our Studio Access program, which allows equitable access to the studio for both experienced and beginner students.



2021 in Review

700+ community members participated in online and in-person programs

Over 80 artists represented at our Community Showcase



Integrated Design Engineers LLC

200+ Attendees at Community Showcase

150+ scholarships dispersed

Expanded staff

9 Artists in Residence

30+ Educational programs offered

Renewed commitment to incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusive practices in the studio

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