

## Community Spotlight: Art Gallery of Burlington



### Sustainability in the clay studio



#### Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) sustainability program includes:

- Hosting the Artist Material Fund, which collects recycled and surplus art materials from galleries and museums, making them available to the public for free.
- Building exhibitions devoid of plastic, with reduced water waste, and using non-toxic paint and recycled materials.
- Prohibiting single-use plastics in their space.
- Keeping their biodiverse Community Garden flush with flora for natural dye and food sovereignty workshops.
- Monitoring carbon emissions with the City of Burlington team.
- Promoting a shared economy in the kid's studio where people can leave and take usable materials to be creative at home.
- Conserving clay and glazes.

The AGB reduces the amount of new clay needed by using a pugmill, a machine which thoroughly mixes clay into a homogenous mixture and enables recycling harder clay with wet slop to make it usable.

Surplus glaze is also conserved and combined into a mix lovingly called “garbage green,” producing a new “surprise” colour each time.

Studio technicians and educators encourage emerging artists and new students to be discerning about the pieces that they place in the kiln. Once fired, these objects can no longer be salvaged to be reworked.

#### What do you do with all that recycled clay and glaze?

Recycled clay is used in our outreach programs, including our “Reclaiming Clay” offering with the Joseph Brant Hospital’s Mental Health Services. Free drop-in clay workshops for people accessing their Inpatient Program provide therapeutic art programming with a focus on clay techniques and artistic expression as a means of catharsis and non-verbal expression, with the potential to foster confidence, creativity, and strength. We also extended the program to employees at the hospital to thank them for their ongoing commitment to the health of our communities.

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