

Queen Victoria: Inspiration and Celebration

Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India

Victoria lived from May 24, 1819 to January 22, 1901 (Died age 81)
She reigned from 1837 – 1901 (64 years). Until recently, Victoria held the record for longest reign of any British monarch and longest reign of any female monarch in history.

Victoria married her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Nine of their children and 26 grandchildren survived infancy, many going on to royal marriages.

A great patron of learning and the Arts, the style, taste and patronage of Victoria and Albert ushered in another golden age for England. Albert died in 1861 and Victoria mourned his loss for the rest of her life, wearing black and earning the name of the Widow of Windsor.

Victoria was small, around 5' tall. She grew stout in later years.

As a constitutional monarch, her realm of influence was limited, but she was a national icon and beloved queen. She was identified with strict standards of personal morality and family values. The Victorian Age saw a great expansion of the British Empire and rapid changes in military, industrial, political, scientific and cultural spheres ushering in the modern era.

As a mature woman full of wisdom, I imagine Victoria as a rock, a stabilizing force in a world of rapid and dramatic change symbolized by the butterflies.

Linda Ganstrom

Working in figurative ceramics for the past 40 years, Linda Ganstrom explores issues that relate to her personal experiences and research, while asking questions and seeking universal truths.

Growing up on a farm in central Kansas, themes of seeds, growth, transformation and potential were central to her early work. While raising two children with her artist/husband, Sheldon Ganstrom, Linda taught elementary and high school art for four years, then seven years at Barton County Community College and over twenty years at Fort Hays State University, where she previously earned three degrees. Being named a Distinguished Scholar at FHSU and Distinguished Instructor at BCCC are among her most significant academic honors. Issues addressed in her art related to her family and teaching experiences include; memory, family obligation, gender roles, spirituality and personal identity explore the various roles of women, their connections and responsibility to their

community and the environment. Changing perceptions of women's potential and achievement are reflected in Ganstrom's figurative sculptures.

Ganstrom's figures have a narrative appeal that is enhanced by the addition of mixed media elements and richly painted surfaces. They have been exhibited in over a hundred state, regional and national juried exhibitions including the San Angelo Museum Biennial Competition, USA Craft Today, The National Ceramic Competition at the Kennedy–Douglas Center, Feats of Clay, and the Ceramic International Exhibition at Zanesville, Ohio and the Crafts National at Pennsylvania State. Published in Ceramics Monthly, Ceramics Technical, Studio Potter, ClayTimes and books, 500 Figures, Editions I and II and The Figure in Clay. Ganstrom's work has also been shown in various group and one-person exhibitions and is included in public and private collections.

Bell(e)s, Ganstrom's work celebrating influential female leaders has been exhibited in the Thomas Hunter Projects Space in New York, The Spiva Center for the Arts in Joplin, MO, The Prairie Museum of Art and History and various other venues. *Through the Looking Glass Ceiling*, featuring *Alice* and the *Red Queen and White Queen* were displayed at the *National Association of Women Artists, New York City* and as part of *Equality: Women Ceramic Sculptors at the Ohio Crafts Museum*. Previous installations were hosted by the Wichita Center for the Arts, Pittsburg State University, Bethany and Hesston Colleges. Invitations by the Daum Museum of Art to exhibit in *Sculptural Ceramics*, The Museum of Nebraska Art in *Rendezvous* and The American Museum of Ceramic Art in *Form and Imagination*.

Travel to Europe, China and Mexico, in addition to extensive art travel in the US has significantly impacted Ganstrom's worldview and art. Her ecumenical, international perspective has reinforced her beliefs that all mankind is motivated by the same love and fear and that if we are to build a better future, we must respect our differences and celebrate our commonalities in Art as well as in life. This philosophy has fueled her work dealing with spiritual, religious and political themes as illustrated through the figure. The Butterfly Affect and Chaos Theory celebrate the power of the individual and our collective impact.

Service to NCECA, the National Council on the Education for the Ceramic Arts, as their current Collector's Tour Director, and as Exhibitions Director from 2008 to 2014 and on their Executive Council has been an exceptional opportunity and learning experience in leadership. Curating the NCECA Invitational Exhibitions entitled *Earth Matters*, *Push Play*, and *Flow* at prestigious venues such as the Milwaukee Art Museum and Bellevue Arts Museum, directing the NCECA Biennials in 2009, 2011 and 2013, as well as organizing various regional and national exhibitions: *Continental Divide*; *Uncommon Ground: Impact and Influence*; *Earth Moves: Shifts in Ceramic Art and Design* and *Ecumene: Global Interface in American Ceramics* have been major curatorial achievements. Implementing and supporting NCECA exhibition programming such as Projects

Space, the Gallery Expo and the concurrent, independent exhibitions program that includes over a hundred exhibitions each year are other major duties.