

Roaming Tales, by Linda Sormin

Opening September 14 in the TechLab at the Surrey Art Gallery
(Part of the national traveling exhibition "Mobile Structures")

Linda Sormin's installation *Roaming Tales*, combines the world's oldest technology, ceramics, with the world's newest technology: LCD screens, surround sound, digital video projections, and live webcam feeds.

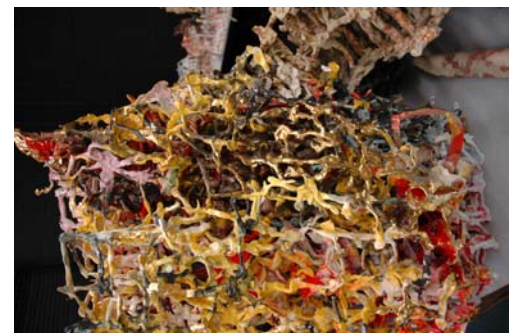
Sormin's recent installations have been collaborative constructions, filling rooms with both fired and unfired ceramics as well as masses of found or donated objects and remnants of other artists' works. She says: *"I am curious about the hierarchies we form around art objects and old and new media. I use discarded sculpture and shards of ceramics kitsch, cheap and valuable ceramic pieces, and personally treasured souvenirs donated by people in the community. A friend just offered me pottery from the collection of his grandmother who passed away this year."*

Roaming Tales will be installed in Surrey Art Gallery's TechLab, the only dedicated venue for producing and exhibiting digital art forms in an art museum in Canada. (*Roaming Tales* is part of an internationally travelling exhibition called *Mobile Structures*, which explores the relationship between ceramics and architecture in Canadian Art.)

Because Sormin's installations are site-specific, each installation is thematically unique. At Surrey, Sormin is addressing the themes of high and low as well as old and new. She says: *"I'm excited by the potential of deepening/broadening understanding of "community" -- to bring "dirty" and "clean", "high tech" and "low tech", "wet" and "digital" art practice into dialogue, into tension in one space."* She will build right up to the ceiling and all around the TechLab, allowing viewers to be above, under, and inside the art. In the theme of old and new, sounds and moving images will be presented on screens ranging from old black-and-white security monitors to brand new portable LCD screens.

Sormin writes: *"Hand-rolled coils are pinched and clustered into unruly lattice structures that roam through and colonize their environments... Linked to another, and yet another, the coils grow into forms that surround the space, reach across the room and extend beyond the peripheral vision. Every bit of clay is pinched, prodded or clutched. The often romanticized "maker's touch" becomes wilful and excessive, ubiquitous and unrelenting... It mirrors the way that information in culture invades our consciousness – intensifying through repetition and accumulation. It discloses an aggression that is not immediately apparent. It is, rather, a violence that moves quietly, in small increments."*

Linda Sormin was born in Bangkok, Thailand and grew up in south Western Ontario. In 1993 she graduated with a BA in English literature from Andrews University in Michigan, then worked in community development in Thailand and Lao PDR before returning to Canada in 1997. Studying ceramics at Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario, she earned a Crafts and Design diploma in 2001. She attended the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University where she received her MFA in 2003. Sormin's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at the Surrey Art Gallery, Lohin-Geduld Gallery (New York, 2004), the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (San Diego, 2003 and Baltimore, 2005), York Quay Gallery (Toronto, 2005), World Ceramic Biennale (Korea, 2001) and the Taipei County YingKo Ceramics Museum (Taipei, Taiwan). Sormin has taught ceramics at Emily Carr Institute, but is now a professor of ceramics at Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, where she currently resides.



Top two images are details from *Cheh-ae Siah* (2006), bottom image is a detail from *Roaming Tales* (2007)