

# North Dakota Museum of Art

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## **North Dakota Museum of Art Announces Opening Exhibition for Warren MacKenzie: Legacy of an American Potter**

The North Dakota Museum of Art announces the opening exhibition of *Warren McKenzie: Legacy of an American Potter*. The opening reception will be **Sunday, November 18 from 3 – 5 pm**. The reception is free and open to the public.

**Warren MacKenzie: Legacy of an American Potter** is an exhibition presenting 300 seminal works produced by the artist over a sixty-year period (1947-2006). Recognized as a true master of 20th Century ceramic art, MacKenzie embodies eastern and western ceramic traditions and his vision of fusing art and life.

In the early 1950's, MacKenzie studied under Bernard Leach, a renowned studio potter in England who focuses on the aesthetic aspects versus the function of everyday pottery. His works also carry Japanese influences of Shoji Hamada and Soetsu Yanagi, both celebrating passion and expression in handcrafted art of ordinary people.

As a Regents' Professor Emeritus, the highest honor within the University of Minnesota, MacKenzie has contributed enormously to the field of functional ceramics. The artist, nearing eighty-four years of age, is still producing work in his studio outside of Stillwater, Minnesota.

### **WARREN MACKENZIE BIOGRAPHY**

Born in 1924 in Kansas City, Missouri, Warren MacKenzie studied ceramics at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1947 he graduated from the School and married Alix Kolesky, his collaborator in pottery until her death in 1962. In 1948 Warren and Alix moved to Minnesota to teach ceramics, sculpture, and design at the St. Paul Gallery and School of Art. Over the next fourteen years Warren and Alix apprenticed with Bernard Leach, met Shoji Hamada and other internationally acclaimed potters, and established a pottery studio in Stillwater, Minnesota. In 1953 Warren began teaching ceramics at the University of Minnesota and in 1954 the Walker Art Center presented the MacKenzies' first exhibition of pottery from their new studio. In 1966 MacKenzie was promoted to full professor at the University of Minnesota, he chaired the Department of Studio Arts from 1981 to 1985, and retired from the university in 1990. In 1984, MacKenzie married fiber artist Nancy Spitzer and continues to work at their home and studio in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Among other numerous awards, Warren MacKenzie was named a Regent's Professor, a Fellow of the International Academy of Ceramics, and was the first to receive the Minnesota Governor's Award in Crafts in 1986. In 1997 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Minnesota Crafts Council and in 1998 was honored with the Gold Medal from the American Crafts Council. His work is represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.; The National Folk Art Museum in Tokyo, Japan; the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England; Contemporary American Crafts Museum in New York; Bernard Leach Study Collection in Bath, England, the Minnesota Museum of American Art in St. Paul; the Weisman Art Museum and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in Minneapolis.

This exhibition was organized by the Rochester Art Center, Rochester, Minnesota. Additional funding from the Windgate Foundation.