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## Cool Claying in Canada with Clayamies by Cathy Simpson

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Canadian Polymer Clay Friends is our official name, but we know ourselves as Clayamies, a name that expresses who we are in Canada's two official languages. Like our country, Canada, we are a quietly unique--and very cool!--group of clayers.

Clayamies was born from a nucleus of 13 lucky swappers in January 1998. Since then, we have grown to over 90 members. Clayamies are of all ages and all skill levels, from complete newbies to full-time professionals.

**"Silk Screen Set"**  
**Michelle Bourgault**



Existing only in cyberspace, we have no formal group structure, preferring to cultivate a genuine camaraderie and fellowship focused on our love of clay. We make it a point to get to know one another as real people. Every new member is welcomed to the group at a virtual coffee-party, complete with virtual home-baked treats!

Because almost all of our members are women, we consider our handful of male "amis" to be very special indeed! Clayamies live in all provinces of Canada as well as abroad.



Approx. 34" tall; polymer clay, handspun and hand-dyed wool, assorted fibres, glass & handcrafted polymer clay beads.

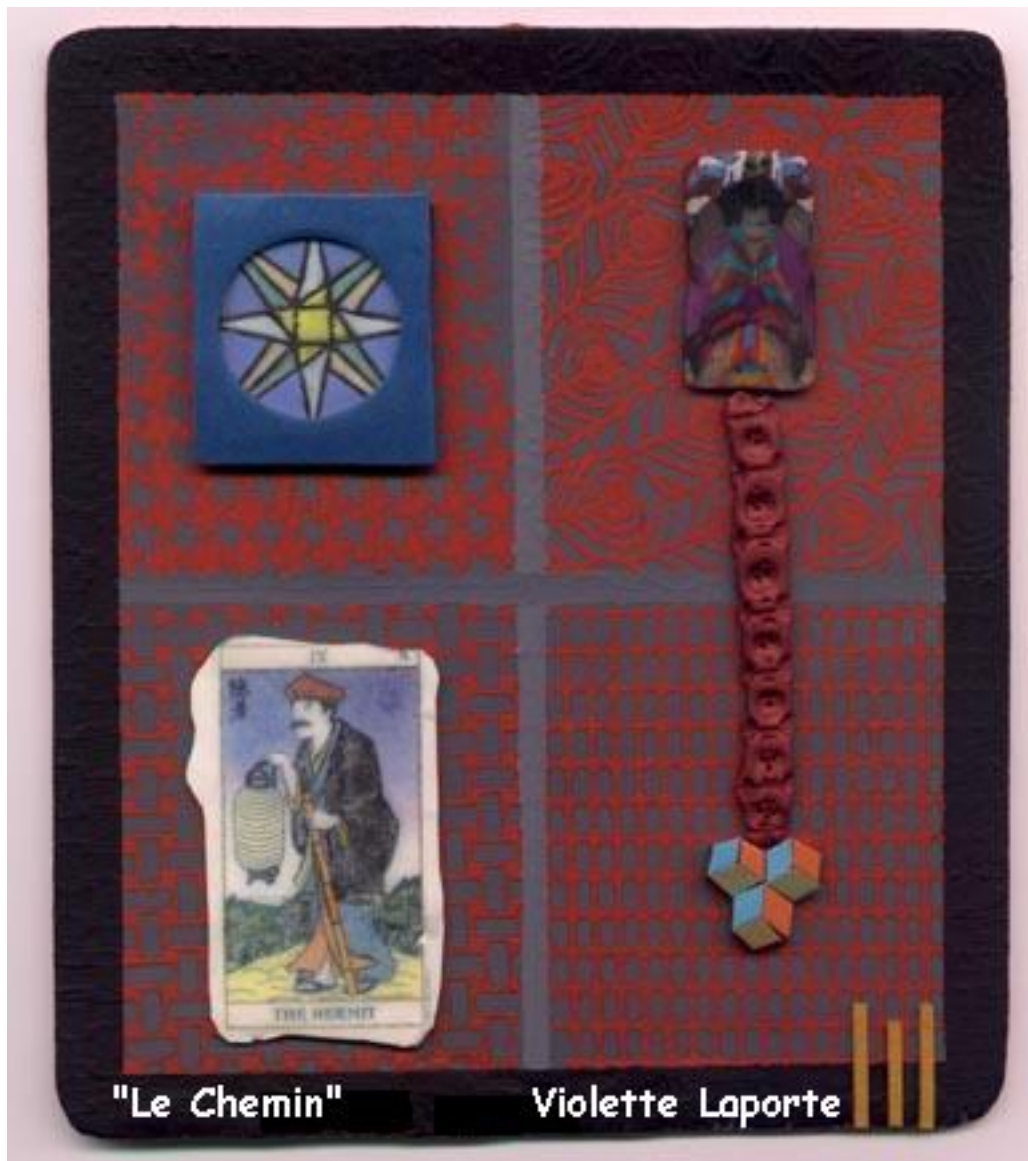
We organise all kinds of clay-centred projects, both in cyberspace and on the ground. Swaps are our raison d'etre, of course, but we also have an on-going RAC (Random Acts of Clayness) project in which members exchange surprises by snail mail.



Tin Toy Vessel: 4 inches tall, strung on cable, opens.

Some of our most popular projects include the annual clay postcard exchange, which takes place every summer, and our annual Christmas ornament swap. We exchange information as well on suppliers, techniques, problems, the joys and woes of the creative life, and opportunities for marketing, publishing, and teaching.

We talk off-topic a bit because we like to share our lives beyond clay, and since we are Canadian, we love to keep tabs on one another's weather!



Silkscreen on wood and polymer clay; 5x6 inches.

Clayamies are well-known through the clay world for their talent and expertise. For example, Dan Cormier, Margi Laurin, and Cheryl Trottier have conducted workshops, most recently at Ravensdale 2000 and Courting the Muse 2001. Work by Vio Laporte and Margi Laurin illustrated the Polymer Clay 2000 calendar as well as books such as "Foundations of Polymer Clay Design" by Barbara McGuire.



**"Balancing Act"**

**Margi Laurin**

About 24" high. The three eggs are emu (largest) then goose, then hen.

Many Clayamies make their living as award-winning professional doll artists and sculptors. Others work as production and/or commission/one-of-a-kind artisans, selling at fine craft shops, art galleries, and retail and wholesale fairs across the country.

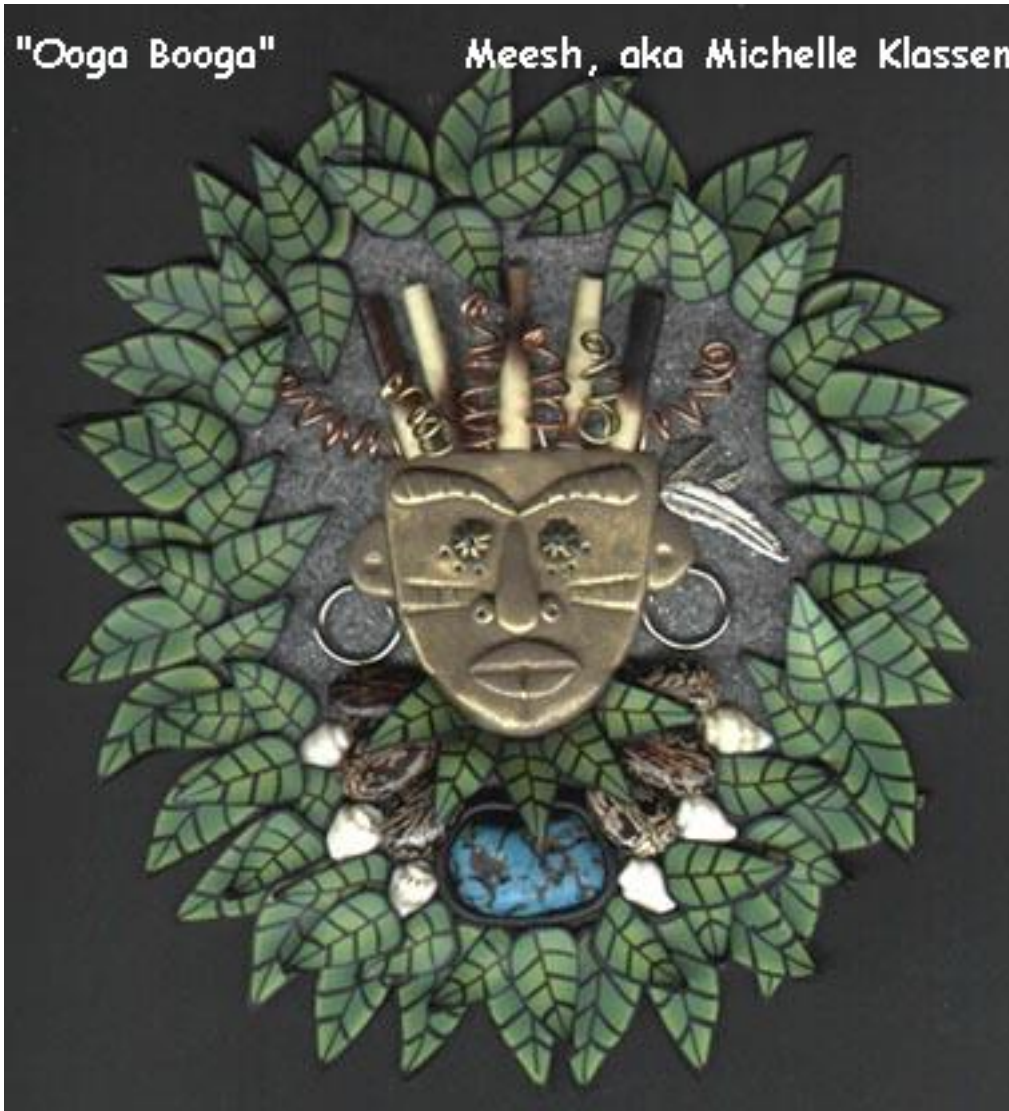


"Cousin Fergus"  
Maer Mackay

Still others of us prefer to consider ourselves hobbyists, for want of a better word--people who clay for the sheer love of this wonderful medium.

"Ooga Booga"

Meesh, aka Michelle Klassen



beans, shells, porcupine quills, wire and, of course, polymer clay

Clayamies meet on the ground whenever we can. Claymeets have been held both in the East and West regions of the country. This October sees the third annual Clayamies Clay Gathering at Mont Tremblant outside Montreal in the province of Quebec.



**Angel Christmas  
Tree Ornament  
Roberta Palmer**

For this week-long event, members stay at a chalet, share kitchen detail, and participate in all-day clay workshops and technique study sessions. Social activities are not neglected: Clayamies love to bond over a latte or a goblet of du bon vin rouge! In its beautiful forested setting, Tremblant offers lots of opportunity for outdoorsy types to take a break from claying--to walk, hike, or go for a paddle.



**Wanda Shum**

**"Teapot"**

As the founder of Clayamies, I am always astonished at the generosity and spirit of this group, not to mention the immense talent. We started out as a bunch of women scattered across this huge country who just wanted to connect with others who shared our passion. We have grown into a very special "institution" in the world of polymer clay, a group of people who genuinely care and share---people whom I have never met, yet who I am proud to number among my very best friends--the "coolest" clayers on the planet!



A concluding note to my Clayamies:  
thank you all, for being such a very special part of my life.

Cheers from Newfoundland aka The Rock,  
Cath Simpson aka "Captain Clayway"  
founder of Clayamies

Diana Wieler  
"Party Dress"



Miniature polymer clay doll: 5 1/5 inches tall

## [CLAYAMIES YAHOOGROUPS SITE:](#)

This site contains our message archives and shared files of members' latest work.

Membership in Clayamies is free and open to all residents of Canada and to Canadian residents temporarily living abroad.

For more info or to join Clayamies, please [e-mail me](#).

## A SELECTION OF CLAYAMIES LINKS

This is just a representative sample of members' sites.

[Pat Kammer](#)

[Jannie van Eijk](#)

[Cheryl Trottier](#)

[Cheryl Trottier](#)

[Mary Mackay](#)

[Violette Laporte](#)

[Gera Scott Chandler](#)

(Home of "Ethni'zens")

[Shirley Blundell](#)

"Roberta Originals"

[Roberta Palmer](#)

[Michelle Bourgault](#)

"Art and Fantasy"

[Kelly Godel](#)

"Artware"

[Krista Wells](#)

(Check out Krista's clay-covered door....)

[Kari Fell](#)

"Mostly Clay"

[Margi Laurin](#)

CLAYAMIES WEBSITE:

We have an "official" website; however, it seems to be experiencing a bit of technical difficulty at the moment and is not available.