

Dear Selection Committee,

Please consider this letter as my application to be considered as a mentor artist for Carfac SK's Foundational Mentorship Program.

I have participated in the Foundational Mentorship seven times since 2001, twice as a mentee artist (paired with Alicia Popoff in 2001 and with Anita Rocamora in 2010) and five times as a mentor artist (paired with Maia Stark in 2015, Louisa Fergusson in 2016, Paige Mortenson in 2018, Tabata Bagatim in 2023 and Ya-Li (Bear) Won in 2025.) Each pairing was unique and stimulating, providing me with new knowledge, challenges, and experiences. I found the learning positive and reciprocal, strengthening my creative practice and community and that is why I am interested in again being a mentor this upcoming 2026-2027 programme year. Sharing of new ideas and perspectives with other makers is invigorating and keeps me moving forward as an artist. Mentoring is also a way for me to give a little something back to the artistic community that has helped me learn, grow and succeed over the past twenty five years.

The core strength of the mentorship program is its emphasis on self-directed learning and as a mentor artist I consider it my role to assist and support my mentee artist as they work towards their stated objectives. Their goals and creative practice are the priority. I believe a successful mentoring partnership is based on trust, good communication, professionalism and adaptability. I appreciate the thoughtful dialogue and sharing of knowledge that results from working closely with another artist over an extended period. I have found in previous pairings my mentee artist's objectives resulted in explorations that opened new directions for me as well. Sometimes the mentee artist's intentions changed partway through their mentorship, and I had, and continue to have, the flexibility to adapt to the mentee's learning goals as they evolve. The creative journey is always interesting and rarely linear!

I have had an active ceramic art practice since 2000, focusing on both sculpture and small batch production ware and it is this diverse knowledge and experience that I will draw upon to support a mentee. I have a strong base of technical knowledge related to hand building and wheel throwing, decorating, and firing clay. After completing my BFA in sculpture I have continued learning and exploring

through residencies at the Banff Centre and the Medalta Artists in Residence Program as well as participating in four international artist collaborations and numerous workshops. I have experience in writing grants and exhibition proposals. My exhibition history includes 3 solo exhibitions, 2 two-person exhibitions and numerous group exhibitions, provincial, national and international. I am an active member of the Wolverine Woodfiring Collective and enjoy the challenges of collaborative atmospheric firings. I have taught community pottery classes through the Saskatoon Potters Guild since 2011. I hold juried marketing status with the Saskatchewan Craft Council, and I have marketed my ceramic work in various ways, ranging from wholesale to juried markets to pop up sales. I have operated Paula Cooley Ceramics as a small business for over 20 years. As a full-time artist I set my work hours and therefore have the flexibility to work with a mentee artist whose schedule may be limited by work and/or family commitments.

I look forward to sharing knowledge, skills, and a productive journey with a mentee, and the other artists that will come together for this unique mentorship program. Thank you for considering me as a potential mentor artist.

Sincerely,

Paula Cooley