



John Stark Art Department

For the past three years the John Stark Art department has built a strong relationship with the Fine Arts Department at Colby Sawyer College in New London. Mr. Jon Keenan, Chair of the Fine Arts Department is a well-known Raku expert and travels extensively in Japan. He is fluent in Japanese and has been eager to share his wealth of knowledge about the traditional and contemporary forms of Raku pottery with John Stark ceramic students.

Art students have had the opportunity to participate in an on-site outdoor Raku firing at Colby Sawyer College twice a year. Students bring clay work they have created and bisque fired in ceramic classes at the high school to the college, where they participate in a workshop about the process of Raku firing including proper glaze application. Then students spend several hours helping to heat the glazed works in the outdoor kiln, and then the unloading and washing off the finished forms. Completed works often contain beautiful metallic lusters and specific cracking and crazing that exemplifies this experimental form of firing.

This fall Jon Keenan has curated a ceramic show titled *Breaking the Mold – A Collaborative Exhibition with Tokyo University of the Arts*. This exhibit combines the work of New Hampshire ceramic artists with students from the Tokyo University of the Arts. This show features the work of John Stark art teacher Bess French. This show is a culmination of Jon's work on his recent Fulbright Scholarship that focuses on building community connections through the arts.

This innovative exhibit runs through November 1st at the Marian Graves Mugar Art Gallery at Colby Sawyer in New London. Take a self-guided tour through this exhibition featuring over 50 works of contemporary ceramic art.