



Feats of clay hope to draw crowd

LATOYA NEWMAN

THE DURBAN Art Gallery is on a mission to rekindle public interest in ceramics through their latest exhibition, *All Fired Up: Conversation Between Kiln and Collection*.

Curator Jenny Stretton said having long outgrown the title "pottery", contemporary ceramic art is a fusion of art and science as its practitioners devise "ever more innovative ways" to formulate new clays and ways of forming them.

Elaborating on the exhibition, Stretton said it had been quite a complex showcase to put together.

"The exhibit is about unearthing the DAG's existing collection and discovering what's being made by contemporary clay artists and seeing how these two connect."

She said that with a mandate to "foster an understanding of our heritage and new



creativity", *All Fired Up* was an ideal tool for this.

"We have an extensive collection of European ceramics and it is interesting to see how these meet, cross-culturally. It is a meeting of the younger and older generation," she said.

The exhibition will see a string of artists – comprising former students and lecturers of the Durban University of Technology and the University of KZN – showcase their works alongside a selection of those from the DAG's collection.

"We have exceptional ceramic artists in this province. The exhibition will see a mix of works on display from urban ware to vessels to sculptures... and an array of shows and forms of clay," Stretton said.

Each of the invited artists has made a selection of works from the collection that has inspired them, to sit alongside their own pieces.

Stretton believes ceramics have a special role to play: "Because ceramic art is three dimensional it has more claim to the immediate dynamics of society than other visual art forms.

"It intrudes, demands space, almost as people do, and can alter its form as one circles it.

"South Africa is at a point in its post-liberation history at which the political and social scrummage has thrown out ideas, scenaria, and ready made credos.

"What we need are vessels to contain them and this exhibition has options aplenty."

She continues: "Each artist has his or her own expression and I am trying to celebrate their works."

● *All Fired Up* opens tomorrow and will run until April 24.

A special guided tour of the exhibition has been arranged for Friday, March 9, at 10am, to be given by the highly respected American scholar Elizabeth Perrill.

For any further information call the DAG at 031 311 2264.