

Anaheim Bulletin

SISTER

SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1923

A natural artist

Chris King showcasing stoneware designs at Orange County Fair. He will open a studio this September.

By Annalisa Burgos
Anaheim Bulletin

Chris King has enjoyed creating things with his hands since he was a boy.

The 28-year-old Anaheim multimedia artist boasts work in oil painting, drawing, blown glass, welded metal, wood and now, clay - what artists refer to as the ultimate building material.

"I work with completely natural materials from the earth," King said. "Clay is just amazing. You can do anything with it. And ceramics have a lot of history."

King, one of dozens of artists showcasing their wares at the Orange County Fair in Costa Mesa, creates functional and sculptural ceramic stoneware, everything from a \$10 mug to large four-foot vases worth more than \$500.

He specializes in handmade,

Please see **KING, Page 14**



STARR BUCK/Anaheim Bulletin

Chris King, who designs functional and sculptural stoneware, has about 1,000 pieces on display at the Orange County Fair.

KING

FROM 1

high-fire ceramics, sculpting clay on a potter's wheel and baking the pieces at 2,400 degrees Fahrenheit in a kiln, or large oven, for 12 hours. The kiln can hold about 100 pieces at one time.

After the first baking, King glazes each piece with a mixture of glass, metals, sand, silica and other earthen materials, which combined with the clay creates tones of white, blue, orange and brown.

The piece is baked for another 12 hours, melting the glaze

onto the clay sculpture, and is removed from the oven and cooled.

Although each artwork may consist of the same materials, the glaze and clay combine differently on each piece, making the end designs unique.

King said his work can be costly, especially with three kilns and gas bills amounting to about \$400 month, but he prefers working with clay to other materials.

"It's more tactile. You have to be graceful," he said. "It's also sort of a meditative process."

King studied art at the University of Utah from 1991-95. When he returned to the Ana-

heim area, he began learning clay techniques, reading ceramics books and attending classes at Golden West and Santa Ana colleges. His hard work landed him a job as a teacher and co-director of the ceramics program at the Irvine Fine Arts Center.

Since May 2000, King has been saving money to start his own business, King Designs, and open a 1,200-square-foot ceramic art studio in an industrial area in Anaheim.

Earlier this year, King was invited to help develop a more interactive craftsman area at the Orange County Fair. He devoted hundreds of hours to creating more than 1,000 artworks

for the fair alone and has been demonstrating his techniques at the fair since July 13.

Fellow artists Garrett Stryker and Kirby Piazza of Wabi-Sabi Pottery have been showcasing ash-fired stoneware, while dozens of art students from local colleges also share the intricacies of their art forms.

When the fair ends Sunday, King said he'll concentrate on preparing for his gallery opening and studio open house in September.

He'll also focus on refining his art.

"In my current work, I'm concerned with producing graceful, elegant and soft

forms which convey a harmony or serenity," he said. "My glazing of these forms brings a complexity to the surface reminiscent of the pure beauty and variability found in nature."

► See King and other local artists demonstrate their techniques at the craftsman corner of the Orange County Fair, which runs through Sunday.

► King Designs gallery grand opening and studio open house is from 6 to 10 p.m. Sept. 22 and from noon to 5 p.m. Sept. 23. The gallery is on 552 S. Central Park Ave. unit C, near Manchester Avenue and Santa Ana Street. For more information, call (714) 772-2900.