Horning receives commission  
CU artist-predictor of possibilities

by Catherine Gillis

“A good artist is a predictor of possibilities; of things to come,” Jerry Horning, assistant professor of Fine Arts, said.

Horning has been commissioned by the Nebraska Arts Council (NAC) to create some ceramic pieces for presentation to individuals and corporations supportive of the arts in Nebraska.

“I don’t know why I was chosen,” Horning said. “There are a lot of good artists in Nebraska.”

A spokesperson for the NAC said that Horning was chosen because he came “very highly recommended.” The council was also familiar with the “high quality of his work,” which has been in national competitions. Some of his work has been displayed in the Smithsonian Institute.

Senior year decision

Horning did not decide to specialize in ceramics until his senior year at South Dakota State University.

“I always liked to do anything in the arts,” he said. “I traveled with the Holiday on Ice show for two years, then entered college when I was drafted. In the Army I was put on special assignments, singing and dancing in shows. So many others were so talented and younger than I was. That was when I decided that I couldn’t be a musician.”

As a graduate student in Denver, ceramics became his medium.

“Working with clay is a way of life; an attitude towards the world,” Horning said. “Students are surprised when I talk about pots as people. If a pot has personality, it is strong and full. It has soul and life. Even the parts of a pot, the neck, foot, belly, shoulder, lip, are described in human terms.”

Social comment

Horning is beginning to expand his work by trying some social comments and strange sculpture.

“Although I am doing new things I am still doing my pots,” he said. “I feel comfortable with them.”

Horning’s wife Mary Jo is a weaver. Currently, they are combining their efforts to make some large planters for the Kiewit Center’s poolside.