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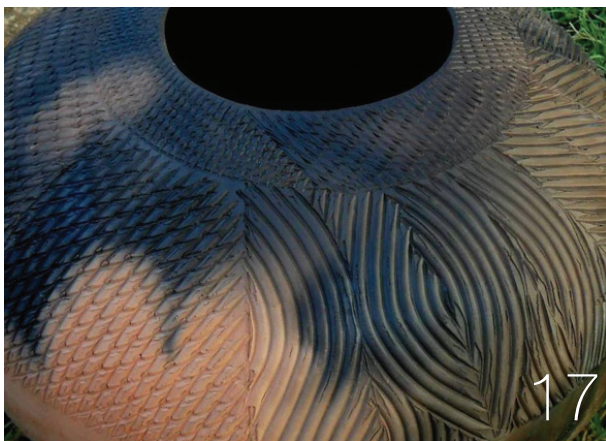
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Eurial Mbatha. Jerice Doeg. Karen Sinovich

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Contributions to the Ceramics Magazine

Editorial requirements

This information is intended as a guide for contributors. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Articles may include profiles on ceramists (self or others), reviews of ceramic exhibitions and books, upcoming events, critical reports and commentary, research papers and technical innovations. In fact, we welcome any subject of interest to ceramists, potters and sculptors, galleries and collectors, educational institutions and their students.

The average length of articles is 500-1200 words. Longer articles are welcome, they might be broken up over two issues if space is not available, or stand over to the next issue.

Please submit by email to ceramicssa.magazine@gmail.com in an attached Word document.

Your own writing style is a preference and minimal editing will take place, mostly in cases of spelling and grammar. At times, articles may be edited to meet layout requirements. When possible, the author will be contacted prior to going to print.

Guidelines for Images

The files must be high resolution JPG (300dpi) - approx. size 220 x 150mm.

Digital files may be sent in small batches (under 3 meg) to ceramicssa.magazine@gmail.com or via [Dropbox.com](https://www.dropbox.com) or similar.

All images must be accompanied by a text document which lists the following for each image: name of the artist, title of the piece, date, materials and techniques, dimensions and the photographer's name.

Please note: The quality of your images is of high importance and may determine whether or not your article is published.

If possible, seek the help of a professional photographer.

Guidelines (if taking your own images):

A good image is in focus, with proper exposure, a full depth of field and a full range of contrast (light to dark tones). Do not set work against a busy background.

White, grey, black or earth colours make a good neutral background.

Do not use lighting which will result in hard shadows or will reflect off the vessel.

Do leave a generous space around the object if at all possible.

Tight cropping is not recommended.

Choose your images carefully. At the most ten images per article. We will ask for more if required.

Please do not send Tiff images.

If you are contributing to the CSA Exposure page, 2 images would suffice. Some of these images will be deep etched (cut out) and need to be against a contrasting background with little or no shadows. Please supply a name and a short description regarding size, new work, or where it is on display. Send your images to ceramicssa.magazine@gmail.com.

The editor retains the right to include or postpone the publication of any contribution.

Opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the editorial staff of Ceramics Southern Africa.

ceramics southern africa 

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COMMENT

Welcome to the first issue of your new ceramics magazine.

After the retirement of Michael Guassardo, owner, publisher and editor of National Ceramics, at the end of 2014, we began exploring various options to continue to bring our members, and a wider public readership, a publication that will keep them up to date and interested in the ceramic arts in this country and abroad.

Since 1973, when the first ceramic magazine, Sgraffiti, became the mouthpiece of APSA (Association of Potters of Southern Africa), we have not been without a regular magazine. In 1983 Michael Guassardo took over Sgraffiti and it soon became the National Ceramics Quarterly. For 31 years this magazine kept our members in touch with each other and was exchanged in reciprocal arrangements with similar publications in several countries abroad such as the Ceramic Review in England and the Australian Journal of Ceramics.

It was eventually decided that Ceramics Southern Africa would take ownership of the magazine. Lydia Holmes, chairperson of the Eastern Cape region, has taken on the exacting role of editor-in-chief, with Sue Calf, a graphic designer and member from Gauteng, doing the layout and Cynthia McAlpine, Administrator of CSA keeping track of the finances. A huge vote of thanks must go to them and to the many contributors who have written articles, sent photographs and given encouragement in various ways.

Those are the basic facts, but, in order to remain the exciting, interesting and diverse magazine you now have in your hands, we need regular input from all our members. Tell us your stories, share your techniques, and advertise your studios and exhibitions. This is your magazine, a reference resource in your studio for information about our suppliers, and reading matter for information and inspiration when you stop for a cup of coffee.

We hope you enjoy your first copy.

National Chair, Ceramics SA

FROM THE EDITOR

Jerice Doeg, our National Chair has already introduced our new magazine and by now everyone within the organisation should know that I have taken on the task of producing a new magazine for Ceramics Southern Africa. I volunteered to put a magazine together and somehow the title of editor has been bestowed on me. I am rather uncomfortable with the title, as it is very far removed from my ordinary life and comfort zone. Once I started working with Sue Calf, our volunteer graphic designer, I realised just how little I knew regarding the production of a magazine. We have all been on a wonderful wave of new knowledge.

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed articles, personal journeys, photographs, words of wisdom and good luck wishes. I have been overwhelmed with the response by members and non-members alike. I hope the magazine will live up to expectations and that it will inspire more people to contribute to the contents of future magazines. For our "exposure" page alone, I received almost a hundred photographs. It has been difficult to select a few images.

Having come to the ceramic world rather late in life, I am the great collector of knowledge. In my opinion, there is nothing more destructive than knowledge lost, due to someone's inability to let go of their own insecurities. I have come to realise that ceramists are a collective of mad scientists, always looking for new avenues to explore and always asking "How did you do that?" Some are offended by this, resenting possible copying of their work. On a professional level, one must ask who would want to produce something that has already been made by another. Most ceramists only want to know, hoping that somewhere in their subconscious a small cog would click into place and trigger a new idea, a new direction or a solution to a problem. Sharing is one of the most important issues today to keep our craft relevant and advancing. The great pressure of mass production from abroad is already so much of a threat it would be short sighted of us to fall on our own swords or shards in this context.

EXPOSURE

Send your images for the Exposure page to ceramicssa.magazine@gmail.com. Add a short description of your work, size and where it is on display or whether it is simply new work.



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1. Ralph Johnson at the Biennale de la Ceramica in Andenne, Belgium 2015
 2. Colleen Lemkuhl, new work in the gallery @ the Pottery Studio
 3. Bob Wagner, stoneware with steel inserts
 4. Lynette Morris-Hale - new bubblegum series
 5. Gaby Snyman, new work
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6. Michelle Legg at Zulululu, Natal Midlands
 7. Monica van den Berg at IS Gallery, Franschoek
 8. Nicci Brockwell at MotMot from 22 October, Johannesburg
 9. Becky Dawson, brooch @ www.picnic-ceramics.shopstar.co.za/
 10. Lynnley Watson, Looking back, looking forward @ WHAG, Kimberley
 11. Christine Williams, Rust-en-Vrede
 12. Eunice Botes, The Black & White Exhibition, AH Gallery, Port Elizabeth



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The Landscapes of Drury BRANDT



Article and photographs by Ronnie Watt

Way back in 1913, the British art critic Clive Bell posed this question: “Who has not, once at least in his life, had a sudden vision of landscape as pure form?” He argued that when we dismiss the individual values of the objects which together constitute the landscape, we can merely “feel the landscape artistically.” However, wrote Bell, we achieve “a peculiar, aesthetic state of mind” (which he also described as “ecstasy”) when we acknowledge the parts of a landscape as pure forms within the greater pure form of the landscape. Bell was a supporter of the theory that significant form as a combination of lines and colours with the capacity to invoke “good states of mind”, dictated whether something could be considered a work of art. In other words, everything that makes art is contained within the artwork itself.

Whilst formalism celebrates the form, it dismisses the form-in-context which in the case of the South African ceramist Drury Brandt, is centred in his experience of nature, the life values he extrapolates from nature, his range of materials and gestural technique. Brandt creates monolithic, landscape-textured vessels which suggest rather than imitate or copy his observations of the landscapes and rockscapes of South Africa's mountain ranges in the Karoo, Magaliesberg, Drakensberg, Cederberg and Swartberg. The vessels



Drury BRANDT

bear fissures, cracks, folds, ridges, scratches, furrows, rough edges, stressed surfaces, overlapping planes, crevices, erosion and grain which speak of the force of creation. They do not have elegantly defined or balanced form but jut, lean, expand, contract and abruptly terminate. Creation as a process of both growth, ageing, weathering and decay, is compressed and caught in time and space. Simply put, the vessels are dramatic and expressive, and being for the most part non-utilitarian, compel the viewer to consider whether they are landscaped objects - especially taking into consideration that they are often elevated off the ground on feet - or landscapes per se. Nature invites reverie and even aesthetic engagement, or rather, aesthesis which is the engagement and alertness of the total sum of our senses but Brandt's vessels invite noesis which is the intentional act of consciousness and in Brandt's case, of objects in nature and specifically what constitutes and is expressed as form and surface.

If we apply the quick-to-hand but bland label of "organic" to Brandt's works, it can only be because they have irregular shapes based on natural forms and patterns. It is not "environmental art" which engages the natural world in debates of social, economic and political ecology. It does not fit into the category of contemporary "landscape art" (not to be confused with art of the landscape) because it is not purposefully created to embellish or accentuate external environments. And they most certainly ain't garden

pots. On the other hand, they do look good in garden settings, do merge with natural forms and do reflect Brandt's musings on environmental issues (waste and decay) and social issues (a lack of respect).

Brandt had no formal schooling in ceramics but was lured by it, at the age of 51 years, as a therapy to escape the stress of his professional career. Having shown some talent in drawing and "making things" in primary school, he was later enrolled for carpentry in a trades school where he "learned very little of the things I was supposed to, and much of the things that I was not." He was later trained as a designer-draughtsman for the engineering of steel-smelting furnaces but later established himself as a building contractor. His intrigue with the environment started at an early age. As a child he had to dig and prepare garden beds and from the subsurface he hauled fragments of tableware, broken and often intact glass bottles: "... and [I] can remember wondering about the journeys undergone by these items, what they had witnessed had they had organic life, and the joy or sorrow of loss by their owners when broken and discarded". Brandt enrolled in 1987 for ceramic classes under Digby Hoets under whom he studied until 1993. In-between and afterwards he attended workshops in South Africa, Wales and England by the British ceramists John Gibson, John Maltby, David McDowell and Richard Phetean. He also attended the Ceramic Millennium Conference in Amsterdam in 2000 where Brandt was exposed to new approaches to the modern history, scholarship and criticism of ceramics. In 2001 he was the resident artist at the Tallaght Community Arts Centre on the outskirts of Dublin, Ireland. His lack of formal qualification in ceramics is of no concern to Brandt who, for his own needs and aspirations, places greater value on a hands-on study of the medium. For form, Brandt draws inspiration from the ceramic work of Hans Coper, Peter Voulkos, Gordon Baldwin, Colin Pearson,

FEATURE Profile

Drury BRANDT

Alison Britton, Shiro Tsujumura and Claudi Cassanovis. For illustration, he looks at Robert Motherwell, Serge Poliakoff, Paul Jackson Pollock, Antonio Tàpies and Alberto Burri.

From the very start, Brandt excelled at hand-building. When he did explore work on the wheel, the thrown pieces were rather pedestrian. He re-focussed on slabbing, "breaking every rule in the book", avoiding anything that is "too slick ... stylised ... boring and too predictable" and opted for works "when on being viewed from different perspectives surprises, draws one in and intrigues." The latter applies to both his forms and textures. For Brandt, texture is to be seen and felt and allowed to invoke associations. He creates texture by stressing his clay, adding clay in layers, incorporating clay shavings, rolling clay over found surfaces, by not trimming edges, peeling off surfaces, thumbing on additional clay and applying markings. Coloured slip glazes are sometimes applied to the slabbed wet clay prior to construction, manganese and iron oxides are applied to cracks to accentuate them, decorative work is painterly but in a loose fashion, little is preconceived and much appears to be intuitive. He "embrace[s] the flaws and cracks that evolve through the various stages of making and firing" because "arbitrary effects ... add to the spontaneity and life in a piece" but rejects faults. A vessel with parts that have cracked off during the bisque-firing is sometimes valorised, gaining additional character rather than emerging in a completely new guise.

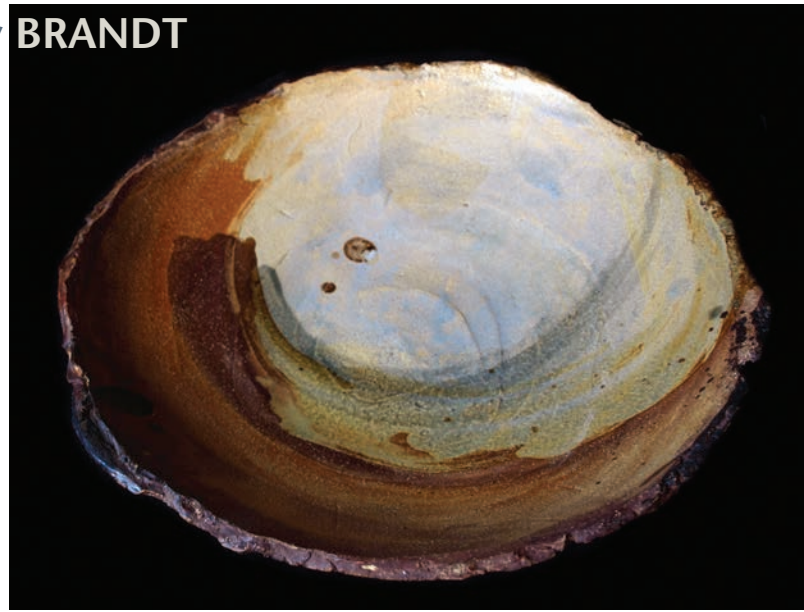
The ceramist Lynette Morris Hale wrote a critique of Brandt that capture all that it is about:

"His work is spontaneous... [but] takes into consideration all the formal elements of art, i.e. line, shape, colour and texture.

I could hear the voice of the clay - it was allowed to flop, it was allowed to crack, it slouched, it wobbled, it tore, it twisted and finally it allowed itself to be decorated by dribbled and splattered glazes, under glazes and oxides ... [but] what he allows to happen to his work is the result of conscious decisions."

Wilma Cruise, artist and writer, commented that: "[Brandt's] crude beauty... does not mean freedom from constraint. The correct balance of freedom of form and surface is even more elusive here than in works where a continuous refinement of form is permissible. Drury Brandt is aware of these boundaries: he maintains that freedom of expression takes place within the confines of a 'tradition of Informality'." Within a year of studying under Hoets, Brandt started winning recognition for his work. His work was accepted in the New Signatures section at a regional exhibition of the Association of Potters of South Africa (APSA) in 1989 and given highly commended awards and first prizes for sculptural and handwork entries at subsequent APSA events. Brandt is represented in the Oliewenhuis Art Museum in Bloemfontein, the Sandton Art Gallery Collection, the William Humphreys Art Gallery in Kimberley and the Corobrik National Ceramic Collection in the Pretoria Art Museum as well as in private collections in South Africa and abroad.

Earlier writers about Brandt saw the appeal of his work in defying or at least ignoring, the Anglo-Oriental style of ceramics.



There is most certainly nothing in his work that evokes the forms and surfaces of the Anglo-Orientalists but he is true to the tenets of that school's respect of material and process. If his work appeared as "displaced" amongst those of other South African ceramists at the turn of the century as the ceramist Nicolene Swanepoel experienced it, it would not have been for the shock value of its tears and twists but because of its sheer and in-your-face difference. His works then, as they do now, do not comfortably share spaces with functional ware and decorative pieces specifically because the viewer has to deconstruct and reassemble Brandt's works to arrive at an understanding of the individual as well as the enmeshed layers of meaning.

Just as aesthetic engagement (as opposed to casual aesthetic appreciation) with nature requires the subject to stand within and not opposed to the object, so can Brandt's works only be received when the distance between the subject and the object, as well as the distance between the landscaped object and the landscape, is reduced. A Brandt work cannot be looked at from a distance... it has to be approached and explored by touch. It is the tactile experience of the ridges, edges, crevices, planes and grain of his work, alongside his visual vocabulary, that affirms Brandt as a master at guiding whatever random occurrences there are in his material and technique, to a perfect conclusion in an imperfect world.

Ronnie Watt is a collector of studio pottery with a preference for high-temperature, reduction-fired stoneware. He has researched and written about studio pottery and ceramics with his articles and essays published in South Africa and internationally. His writings can also be found on the Art At Work Today website www.artatworktoday.com which also features extensive photo galleries.

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From the top:
LUCINDA MUDGE, *Mermaid*, h: 56 cm
LISA RINGWOOD, *Fiscal Shrike on Needle Bush branch* d: 38 cm
NICO MASEMOLO, *Green Lion*, h: 23 cm

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Exhibition Opening



Photo by Stephen White

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David Walters
Ian Calder
Louise Jennings

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Africa and the West:

Making for a practice-led PhD in Ceramics

FEATURE
Profile



Photographs by Stephen White

Article by Dr Kim Bagley

Main Image: Object/ify: Cattle: hand modelled stoneware, earthenware and porcelain. With tag and tag door in the background

Above: Object/ify (detail): Cattle: hand modelled stoneware, earthenware and porcelain.

In January this year I graduated with a practice-led PhD in ceramics. I did my research out of the University for the Creative Arts, Farnham. Farnham is a postcard-perfect British market town in the South East. I had the great privilege of working with two well-respected forces in British ceramics, Simon Olding, the director of the Crafts Study Centre, and Magdalene Odundo, the esteemed British-Kenyan artist. Both are excellent teachers and were very patient with me along my journey.

My philosophical and sometimes quite abstract investigation probed the notion of 'African-ness' in ceramic practice. It sounds absurd to do this research in an environment of red brick Edwardian architecture and a medieval deer park, but from the beginning I was reminded that aspects of African ceramics both historic and contemporary are embedded in the British studio ceramics world. On my first day at Farnham I encountered a showcase outside the technician's office that contained two pots by famous Nigerian potter, Ladi Kwali, made during a demonstration in the 1960s. The messy mixture of clay, education and colonialism in the 20th century has created traceable connections between the UK and English-speaking African countries that persist. Influence and knowledge continues to flow in both directions.

FEATURE Profile

Kim BAGLEY

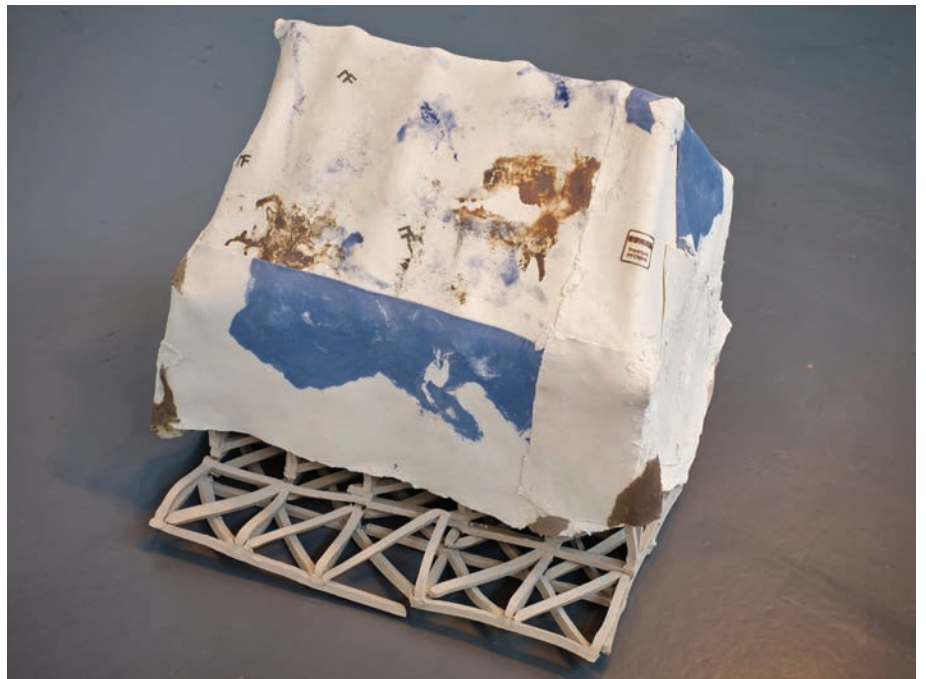
Extermination Tents: porcelain and terracotta paper clay with screen-printed oxides, painted oxides and some small glaze details.

Extermination Tents (detail): porcelain and terracotta paper clay with screen-printed oxides, painted oxides and some small glaze details.

As you may imagine, my topic was both broad and controversial. In the library I familiarised myself with the writings of Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Franz Fanon and Gayatri Spivak. I spent time reading about and interviewing artists to get a varied sense of what 'African-ness' may mean in ceramics today. In the studio I worked with animal metaphors and experimented with the hybrid material, paper clay. I tried different ways of working with multiples and installation to develop ways to express identity issues and issues of how Africa is represented. Learning to reflect on and write about my own work in relation to other artists and ideas was also an important element.

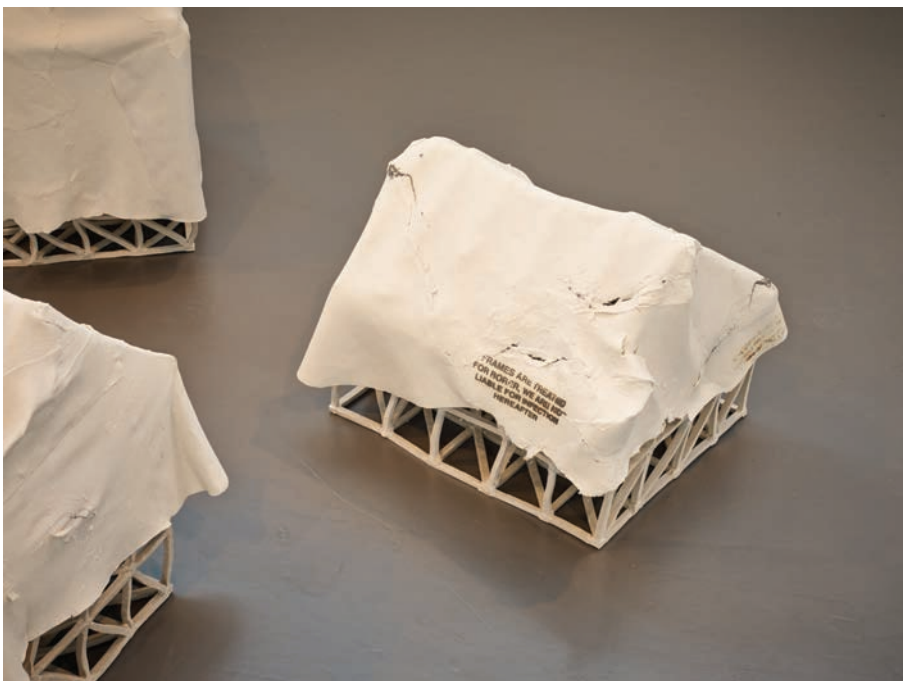
Through my reading, writing and making I was guided by a central theme or symbol: clay-as-skin. Clay imitates skin rather well and often as ceramists, whether we are making sculpture or tableware (and most things in between), we make hollow forms which suggest a skin. I was already interested in Nguni cattle and cattle forms so they were a good starting point synonymous with the province I grew up in. I made hand-modelled cattle herds and hanging works made up of hundreds of paper clay objects in the shape of the ear tags used to mark cattle. However, I was conscious of the intellectual problem of being seen to speak for 'Others'. Cattle are a rich subject that fascinates me and I continue to work with it in my practice. However, to answer my PhD research question, with my own authentic artist's voice, something didn't quite fit. I didn't feel rural enough and I am certainly not Zulu.

I turned to my white middle-class upbringing in Durban for the main installation of my thesis exhibition. I wanted to tell the story of my 'African-ness', as one voice among many others. On a visit home to Durban in 2011 I was reminded of the great big tents that pest control companies use while fumigating Durban houses to rid them of white ants and wood borer. The group of insects known collectively as 'wood-borer' pose a significant threat to the structural integrity of suburban houses in the port city. Older houses made





Kim
BAGLEY



viewed and represented. The extermination, whilst destructive and violent on a micro level, is also a process of healing, repairing and self protection. (Bagley, 2014: 226)

The final installation consisted of a group of porcelain tents over stoneware structures placed directly on the gallery floor. Moving back from this more organic arrangement are floating tents in porcelain and terracotta suspended from above and arranged in a more regular grid format. Through this careful grouping of objects, the project moved away from rural symbols. The tents are both geometric and organic. They look like house forms but, particularly the ones with the skeletal inner structures; they also have a sense of being alive, almost animal like. With these forms my exploration of the clay-as-skin metaphor came full circle. The ceramic skins cover over a multitude of thoughts and ideas. These symbolic tents cover but do not hide....

with untreated timber are particularly at risk. Some insects are local species whilst others are alien invaders that may have arrived on ships using Durban harbour.

Particularly in the older, historically white suburbs you might drive past a house that has been covered completely by a tarpaulin. Perhaps you have paid one of these companies to tent your house? They are a bizarre temporary giant skin over the house. My new animal metaphor thus became wood borer. The form I chose to work with was these fumigation tents. This is much more abstract than the cattle skin, but also has the potential for me to allude to complex issues in contemporary South Africa that range from housing to infrastructure development and migration.

I translated the striking forms of these giant 'skins' over houses into an installation of ceramic Extermination Tents made from thin porcelain and terracotta paper clay. Inner structures of grey stoneware clay that echo scaffolding hold up some of these fragile tents.

In my written thesis I described what these tent forms could represent:

The tents are purposefully ambiguous, both beautiful and light and permanent whilst tentative and sometimes fractured, under tension. Their hardness, sharpness and permanence reflect something of the ambiguity of my personal African experience and engagement with debates surrounding ways the continent is

Through the process of doing the PhD I had the luxury to really develop my practice and the ideas behind it. After three and a half years of working on my research project I realised that this is only the beginning of my artistic research. I have also found a new community of makers and developed wonderful friendships and professional relationships.

References

Bagley, K. 2014. Africa and the West: a contested dialogue in modern and contemporary ceramics. [PhD Thesis] University of Brighton/ University for the Creative Arts.

The graduate exhibition was held at the James Hockey and Foyer Galleries, University for the Creative Arts, Farnham.

Review by Tania Babb,
photographs by various artists

FORMS OF EXPRESSION

Ceramics At The Hermanus Fynarts Festival 2015



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Twenty four ceramists were invited to submit work for this exhibition which took place at the Windsor Hotel in Hermanus from the 5th to the 16th of June. The Exhibition was curated by Liz Coates of 'Pure South' and formed part of the two week long Fynarts Festival which happens in Hermanus annually.

The standard of work was very high and the exhibition was well set against the backdrop of the ocean, a stone's throw from the hotel windows. There were many pieces that demanded attention and one was immediately drawn in by the varied ceramic pieces on display. The trend of submitting a series of pieces of similarity seems to have been reinforced in this exhibition. The repetition of shape and form is a part of the impact of the exhibition and the individual work.

Hennie Meyer takes this trend to its extreme with the individual pieces hardly discernible from each other. The large composite sculpture reads as one piece even though it is made up of many parts. One has to wonder if we could attribute this to the influence of pixels on our modern life.

Along the back wall were 'The Cardinals' by Lydia Holmes: a collection of five white realistic sculptures of men with bright red, black and grey accents. The impact was striking. I could see the influence of Ann Marais in these pieces. Upon closer inspection the social commentary becomes quite shocking. Each piece was a provocatively clad male with a red Cardinal's cap and various feminine accessories.

Another exhibition offering multiple pieces was a series of slip cast raku fired Cupie dolls in cups and on children's rocking/rolling horse toys by Rae Goosen. They also elicited uncomfortable feelings. They were powerful in the repetitive use of iconic images of childhood without the cloying sentiment sometimes attached to infancy.

8.



The collection of upright mythical, colourful 'animal' heads by Heather Frankel were primitive in shape but modern in a painterly form of decoration and they were comparatively affordable.

Lynnley Watson's arrangement of small porcelain jugs, each painted with a nautical scene were quite charming and with my own ensemble of bathers suited the backdrop of the Hermanus Ocean.

Catherine Brennon's slab built box sculptures were displayed against the window. The square format strongly suggests dwellings or temples. The many tiered structures are ziggurat like. The sensitive and varied use of surface texture and a weathered glaze suggest antiquity.

Dianne Harper's collection of highly finished, glossy, visually tantalising 'shards' of ceramics, arranged mindfully on thin vertical white canvases drew ones eye to the walls of the exhibition.

The traditional functional bowls, vases and plates were all deserving of praise, from the portly raku bowls to the brightly decorated pieces. The delicate, etching-like drawings of trees and birds on Eunice Botes' vessels drew one in because of their sensitive attention to detail. Sarah Walter's altered thrown porcelain pieces had a sensuous luminosity, especially the jug with the Chameleon handle. She exhibits an intimate understanding of her clay and glaze usually attributed to studio potters, but also the skill of a sculptor in this piece.

Gemma Orkin's plates with delicate, naive drawings of indigenous flowers were more subtle in colour than her previous pieces and had a greater sophistication to them.

The exhibition was stimulating, with a variety of skill and technique being applied by the artists. | One came away with the appreciation for the emersment and mastery each artist has in his own particular way of working with clay.



9.



10.



11.

Tania Babb

Tania Babb is an award winning ceramic artist who has been practicing her craft since the eighties. www.taniababb.co.za

1. Christo Giles, reduction fired vessels
2. Ineke Nicolle, bowls and jugs
3. Ann Marais, bowl
4. Maggie Matthews, fish vase
5. Tania Babb, figurine
6. John Bauer, bowl
7. Catherine Brennon, blue pagoda
8. Gemma Orkin, daisy jug
9. Heather Frankel, gazing out over the Savanna
10. Lee Hensberg, deep bowl
11. Lynnley Watson, Ocean of uncertainty, Ocean of Hope
12. Christil von Vollenhoven, tall vessels
13. Rae Goosen, Babes in bowls



12.



13.

SON OF THE SOIL



Sbonelo LUTHULI



Article by Lynette Morris-Hale, with photographs by Glenda Karow and Sbonelo Luthuli

Sbonelo Tau Luthuli's first solo exhibition, held at the Durban ArtGallery, November 2014

On a quiet Sunday afternoon I visited Sbonelo Tau Luthuli's solo exhibition with Glenda Karow. What struck us first was the volume of work, and then we remarked on how authentically African it was. Here was someone not trying to be anybody else but himself. Sbonelo's vessels are self-portraits and speak of his experiences and longings. Looking at the titles of his work *Song of the Soil*, we got a sense of the ideas he is grappling with.

Mis-education; *Song of the Soil*; *We, the Black Jews*; *Blacked out through White Wash*; *Genealogy of Self*; *Whose Culture?* *Story to Tell*; *Emancipation of Self*; and *Stolen Legacy* were some of the titles.

Prior to the exhibition I had met Sbonelo at his uncle's house in Cato Manor, where he had told me about himself. As a young man he was brought up by his grandmother and he graduated from the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in 2011. He has already participated in many group exhibitions and, building on this success, he has become the first DUT student to hold a solo exhibition in Durban that speaks to the African Tradition of clay and ceramics. Yet although Sbonelo has achieved recognition in the ceramic world, as evident in his exhibition, this is not read as success by members of his own community. He told

me: "To black people selling art is not considered as success. Success is defined by driving a fancy car, having a girl-friend and a big house."

But this young man sees success as being a good artist and a good influence on those around him.

What started Sbonelo on his creative clay journey? He told me it was a feeling he experienced when he saw a Clive Sithole pot. The pot touched his heart and he decided then and there that he too wanted to make art that touched the hearts of people. Sbonelo also points to being influenced by the Nala family, whose pots follow the African Tradition, and Dr Yousf Ben Yochanan, who is a grandmaster of African history and has sharpened Sbonelo's understanding of what it is to be a black person in Africa.

Looking around the exhibition at the Durban Art Gallery I can say that in some of the work he has achieved his dream of making art that touches hearts. The vessels are not all of the same standard but they stand together as a cohesive whole that speak of this year, this man, and his life so far.

Sbonelo faced several challenges in putting together this presentation and he gave me insight of this when I had talked with him prior to the exhibition. He struggled with the transportation and cost of clay, and needed to make the clay stretch as far as possible. As a result his pots are beautifully thin. Also, Sbonelo did not have his own studio space. Instead he made his vessels in a sitting room in his uncle's house. Storage space of the finished work was also a challenge and he neatly stacked box upon box from floor to ceiling, again in his uncle's house. His pots stood on top of cupboards, on top of the fridge and he said he occasionally had to share his bed with a few! Some were even left to dry slowly in his wardrobe on top of a few shirts.

Firing his work was another hurdle. Durban University of Technology continues to support him by bisque firing his work, but the final firing where the magic takes place, is done in a drum filled with sawdust in his uncle's garden. Because of all these constraints he was unable to make vessels as big as he would like them to be, but nonetheless he says his reward is in the actual process of the making, the designing, the firing, and the quiet contemplation of the final polishing.

Sbonelo's inspiration comes from many sources and his pots express ideas and feelings, or tell stories. They are full of symbols, some of which become a supplication and a prayer to God, so that whoever comes to have one of them may continue that daily devotion. Other vessels symbolise the misrepresentation of the black identity in history.

Traditional Zulu pottery does not escape his attention either. He asserts: "My work subverts and challenges the conventional cannons of vessel making".

We saw these ideas in his focus on form and surface integration, form and surface harmony and ceramic disobedience to cultural traditions; in his manipulation of size whereby the original function of an object is rendered meaningless; and his play with the original or classic shape of the vessel, not being content to venture into known territory. He also subverts the iconic geometric patterns of the Zulu ukhambas by imbuing them with emotion. The surface texture on some of his work is delicious, exhilarating and tactile, leaving us in no doubt that when he designs his vessels he listens to the voice within himself, the voice that might come from the Creator.

Listening to his inner voice must have been the magical ingredient that won him the much sought after Premier Award at the National Ceramic Exhibition in 2010. In fact his winning that award is an interesting anecdote that warrants telling here.

The story is that a ceramic lecturer at DUT encouraged Sbonelo to submit his work for selection to this prestigious annual exhibition and he contacted me to ask me to help him fill out the forms and to comment on his work. For this purpose, it was in my home that I first met Sbonelo.

The vessels were well crafted and carefully burnished but it was not that which grabbed my attention. Rather I was struck by how he handled the surface decoration.

It was as if Mick Jagger was singing opera! Sbonelo brought an expressive revolution to the surface of the vessel, something generally unseen in Zulu pots before 2010.

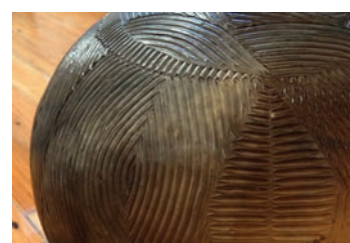
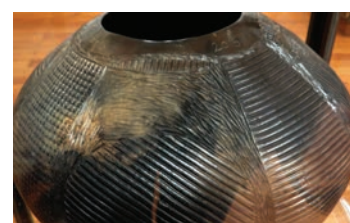
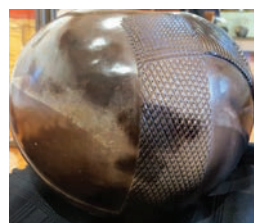
A few weeks later on the first day of the Southern Africa Ceramic Exhibition in Cape Town, I received a call from a committee member. She said, "Sit down, Lynette. You won't believe who won first prize. It was Sbonelo! Later I was told that the international selector had whittled his choice down to two pieces and he had told the chairperson of the Ceramic Association's Cape branch that he "had to choose between a work that was all intellect and a work that was all heart." He decided on the piece that was all heart. So started the auspicious career of Sbonelo Luthuli!

What is Sbonelo's vision for the future? He says that he hopes government will start supporting visual artists. His wish is that they will direct an equal amount of money into the visual arts as they do into music. Sbonelo says that visual artists make art that reflects the times they live in and, looking back, the South African visual artist's work will serve as a reference for how South Africans lived their lives. Sbonelo wants to make even larger vessels than those he exhibited at the Durban Art Gallery and to master the art of smoke firing his huge celebrations of African culture.

Lynette Morris-hale has been involved with ceramics since 1995, as an art educator introducing ceramics at High school level and now currently running her own teaching studio in Durban. She has won awards at Regional and National level and has work in private and public collections in South Africa. She is currently the Chairperson of KZN Ceramics Southern Africa.

Opposite: Sbonelo Luthuli

Sbonelo Luthuli's work displayed at the Durban Art Gallery, November 2014



Review of Exhibition -

at Kim Sacks Gallery

Article by Wendy Goldblatt

The first thing that struck me as I walked into Kim Sacks gallery was how exciting and colourful black and white can be. Of course, Kim's gallery space enhances any exhibition held there but, nevertheless, the variety of surfaces, textures and finishes from shiny black through to matt white are amazing.

John Shirley has some of his beautiful translucent porcelain bowls with splashes of black and shades of grey forming an abstract pattern which cast interesting shadows.

Lisa Firer, who has become known for her perfect cylindrical shapes of which several are on display both with a black body and a white one, also has some intriguing new shapes which look like collapsed paper bags, each with a strong design in black on the white body.

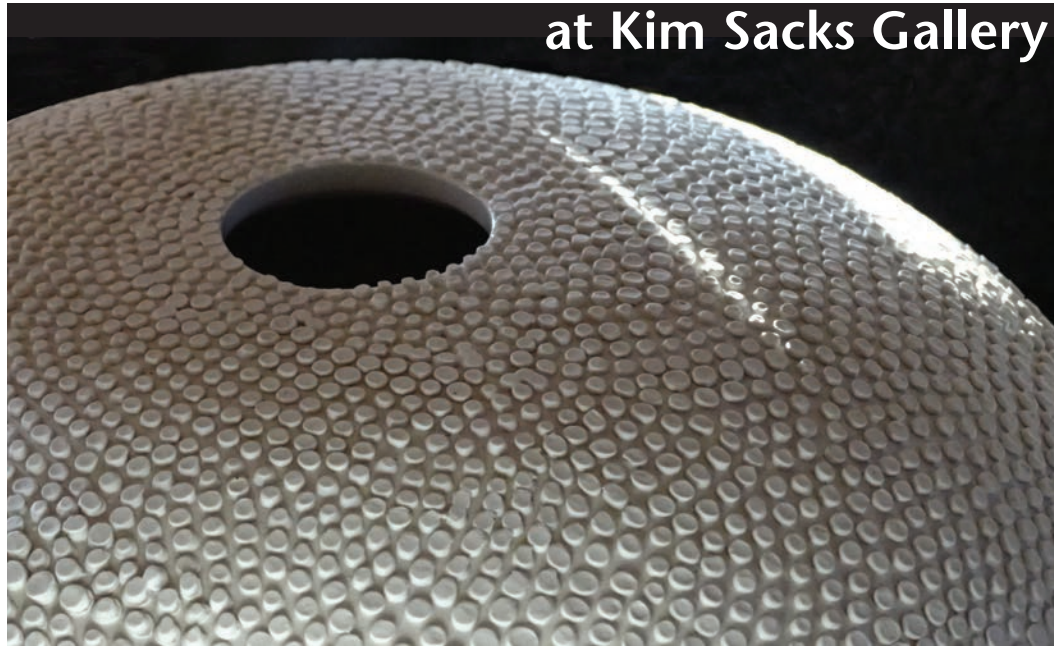
Dale Lambert has some of her finely thrown round bowls, some in matt black and others in white with just a touch of black on the rim.

Ian Garrett has some interesting shaped pieces decorated with his contrasting surface finish of burnishing, some matt area and etched lines incised on the surface.

Eunice Botes exhibits an interesting variety of shapes with fine linear decorations suggesting foliage and plants both in white on black and black on white porcelain.

There were some exciting platters by Louise Gelderblom decorated with incised black lines, incised and partly rubbed off, giving a light and dark grey background.

Katherine Glenday exhibited three stunning pieces, two tall, almost cylindrical vases and one tall rounder one, with a



vibrant splash of colour on one side, the colour seems black but is not dense and one sees colours shining through against the white porcelain background.

Kim's delicate hand-pinched dishes have a patina of scratched lines through the matt black surface; they looked as if they had just been dug up from an archaeological dig where they had lain, undiscovered for years.

Thembi Nala exhibited some interesting lidded jars which she had carved and then blackened and burnished to a rich shiny surface.

Carolyn Heydenrych showed some of her architectural shapes with crenelated castle-like tops and cut-out square windows, which she then decorated with fine black lines.

But, besides ceramics which made up most of the exhibition, there were some wonderful tall black and white basket-like vessels made of plaited cotton which had been coiled and sewn rather like a coiled clay pot. There were also some delightful playful animals made in the same technique.

However, for me, Maia, who is Kim's 18 year old daughter, stole the show with her very innovative and original origami bird-like shapes which floated over the exhibition like hovering spirits. These beautiful objects were made from finely pleated special paper painted in parts with black designs and intricately folded and shaped and were quite beautiful.

This review covers some, but not all, of the exhibitors at this beautifully mounted and varied exhibition.

Above Right: Elke Martin

Right: Sandy Godwin

Below: Dale Lambert



Black & White Contemporary

Photographs by Kim Sacks



Wendy Goldblatt has been working in ceramics for over 40 years. She has exhibited on both National and Regional exhibitions throughout the country and has work in many private collections both in South Africa and overseas.

She was one of the founding members of Ceramics SA (the Association of Potters as it was then called) and has served as both committee member and Chairperson in that organisation. She has also acted as judge for several ceramic exhibitions.

She was also a founder member of the South African Craft Council for whom she organised and mounted over 7 National Craft Exhibitions country wide, sponsored by FNB. In addition she is also a member of the World Craft Council where she has represented South Africa at several Conferences around the world. She still enjoys making her small porcelain pots and also teaches in her studio in Abbotsford, Johannesburg.



Above and Below: Exhibition at Kim Sacks Gallery

Right: Alessandro Pappada

Far Right: Clementina van der Walt

Bottom Right: Kim Sacks



FOUR WOMEN

IRMA STERN MUSEUM opening address by Wilma Cruise

2 AUGUST 2014

Seductive, intimate, colourful, humourous, tactile, desirable. These are the adjectives I use to describe this cornucopia of ceramic art on exhibition.

The journeys in the title are all individual, but they are linked by a common theme. The obvious one is the material - clay. But it is more than mere stuff, or mud; it is a material that allows the journey - permits its embarkation. Without its malleability, its ability to reflect the mark of the maker, the journeys would not begin. But there is something more about the link in these four journeys. They all tell personal intimate stories. Yet, embodied in the small tales lie the seeds of the grand narrative. In this respect I recall the potter Edmund de Waal's memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes*. De Waal inherited a number of Japanese netsuke. In attempting to trace the provenance of these tiny works of art, he discovered the story of his family, which was played out against world events including the two world wars. The small domestic objects came to embody the sweep of world history within the confines of their small shapes. It was as if the inanimate held within it a sense of the animate.

That ceramic utilitarian objects are invested with meaning should be no surprise. They inhabit our lives, entering our private space with sensual insistence. We see them and touch them with hand and lip. Their warmth or coolness, their smoothness or roughness on skin becomes part of us. We interact with them daily, mostly unthinkingly, but at unexpected times they come to reveal their repository of memory. As Lisa Ringwood says, "Somewhere there is a warm memory of old enamel plates, a Delft vase on a dresser, a ginger jar high up on a cupboard you can't reach and you just know there is a secret in there..." Or, this is Sarah Walters speaking about the beauty and strength of the functional pot: "The capacity

[they] have to sit quietly in our everyday lives and add sparkle to the intimate, daily rituals that we perform, like drinking tea from a favorite mug".

Let me tell you about these 4 artists:

Curator Catherine Brennan I have known since a girl. Her family lived across the road from us when we were growing up on the East Rand. Although I was - I suppose I still am - a bit older than Catherine we were even then linked by ceramics: I showed my first ever ceramic work/pot in her mother's gallery. Brennan's preoccupation is with boxes, containers, what she calls dream boxes. Most recently these have transmogrified into houses - dream houses, houses of our fantasies. But one cannot see into these small clay abodes, their domestic heart is hidden from the viewer. However by interacting with them, lifting a roof for example, allows a glimpse into their secret interiors. One house that I peked into in this way held, like a jewellery box, small objects - precious, close, intimate. The works are invested with that most powerful ethos - domestic serenity.

Sarah Walters was born in KwaZulu Natal, but moved with her family to the United Kingdom when nine years old. She then moved back to the Western Cape, South Africa, to be with her family. Up until that point her focus had been on sculpture, but on arriving home, her father the exemplary potter, David Walters, offered to teach her to throw. Greatly influenced by her father she has immersed herself in the creation of the functional pot in the belief that their capacity to convey meaning far outweighs their functional service.



Left to Right:
Catherine Brennan
Lynette Morris-Hale
Lisa Ringwood
Sarah Walters

photographs by Lawrence Brennan, Harry Locke and Malcolm Venter

FOUR JOURNEYS IN CLAY

On this show she shows two landscapes made up of a collection of pots. Each collection evokes a journey - an exploration down the tunnels of history. The first is entitled "Journey in Jade" it is an investigation into the history of celadon - that grey-green-blue glaze so beloved of Chinese porcelain.

Contradictorily, Sarah fires her celadon ware in an oxidizing atmosphere (that for the non potters, is in an electric kiln instead of one that uses an open flame that consumes oxygen), yet she has managed to achieve a wonderful glassy unctuousness to her glazes.

The second major body of work is entitled "Journey in Porcelain". Porcelain marked the trade routes from east to West and had implications for the Cape of Good Hope. Walters' pots reflect this journey right down to the historic stamps she has used to emboss the large hand crafted porcelain jars.

Clay has been part of Lisa Ringwood's life since the age of 7. Like Walters she engages with what she calls "the rich history and tradition that has gone before me. I delight," she says, "in taking this history, bringing it into the present and combining it with the serene and whimsical moments that I observe on my daily excursions into nature". This marriage of history and the 'now' moment one experiences in nature is exquisitely captured in her work. Her large platters are beautifully crafted, hand-formed objects that provide the surface for her painterly explorations. Ringwood renders in minute detail indigenous birds perched on a twig of indigenous flora placed in a Chinese ginger jar. Interests in nature and history coalesce and marry in a single image. Thus a boubou on a leucodendron, or a sunbird on a branch of flowering coral tree. The details of the ginger jars are rendered with the same attention to detail as the fauna and flora, merging past and present.

Lynette Morris -Hale's work takes a swipe at Rococo. She takes an

irreverent approach to the daintiness and the decorative quality of Rococo. As she describes her work: "My surfaces are bumpy, with slip and glazes running freely - I am doing Rococo with little control and much control. Sentimental aspects amuse me, so I have silly little hearts and silly big hearts on the surface - nothing to me is more sentimental than ridiculous little cupids - so they appear as well."

Morris Hales' silliness and humor belie a serious concern. She has long engaged with the idea of the feminine or to be more precise feminism. Her pots have previously and humorously taken a swipe at the idealized feminist image of swelling breasts and tiny waists.

In her Rococo ware she has used over the top decoration to allude to feminine frippery, but, the soundness of the structure of the vessel is a parallel "to the underlying strength many women possess despite all the silly frills and high heel shoes".

Always threatening to lose control, these pots challenge our sensibilities with their excess and yet, they draw the viewer in with a wondered curiosity.

What these four women then share is a toughness that belies the intimacy of their craft. They are all formally trained and have been at their craft for years. What am I saying by this? Basically that the ceramics you see before you is informed. It comes from a deep thinking place. It might deal with the personal and sentimental, what Ringwood calls "domestic nostalgia". But it is not sentimental.

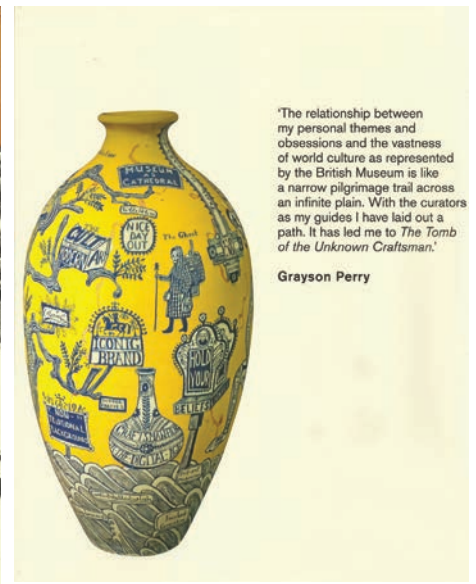
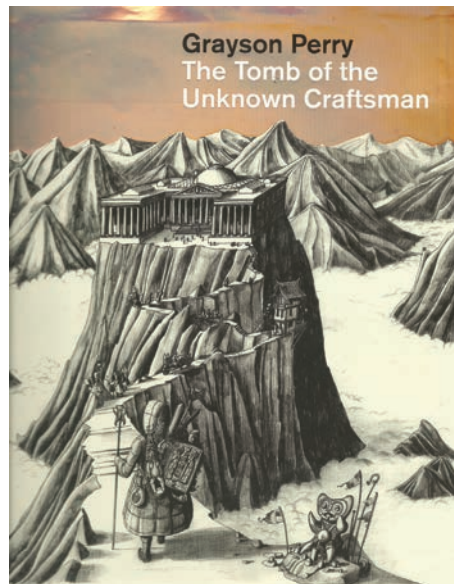
It is strong, well thought out and well crafted - and yes beautiful!

Wilma Cruise - has a number of academic qualifications; is a sculptor, a sometime poet and a writer of articles on art and ceramics. She has had many solo exhibitions, published a book on ceramics and is the creator of the monument to the women of South Africa.



The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman
by Grayson Perry
The British Museum Press,
2011, pp. 204
ISBN 978-0-7141-1820-8

Review by Gregory Kerr



In his popular BBC4 radio series and subsequent book, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, the Director of the British Museum, Neil MacGregor, wove an intriguing history around historical objects housed in the Museum. These ranged from Paleolithic chopping tools to the solar powered lamp and each was discussed as a metonym for the culture that produced it. It is a pity that the series just missed the interactions and artefacts placed in the Museum by Grayson Perry in 2011 as part of his intervention documented in this marvellous book.

Perry is, I am reliably informed by the Editor of this journal, a ceramist, so let's get that out of the way. He is indeed. He makes pots, vessels, sculptures, contrivances and follies out of clay. But calling Perry a ceramist is like setting a reminder that Michelangelo was a sketcher. Perry is a practitioner in the perfect spirit of the late Post-Modernist liberation. He is a scavenger, archivist, historian, thinker, writer, explorer, curiosity and sensation-seeker, potter, painter, weaver, sewer, knitter, sculptor, illustrator, satirist, critic, biker transvestite, hospitality host, shaman, fetishist, even sketcher, and from all this the ultimate bricoleur. An excursion into the trails of his responses to the things in the Museum, his comments, the artefacts and the delightful sense of a childlike self-parody are both an arcane glimpse into a private world and paradoxically probably the most lucid explication I have encountered of the life and soul of recent contemporary art. I would say to the person who wishes to get a glimpse into the metaphysical universe inhabited by the creative mind to forget about Edward de Bono or E Paul Torrance and to read this book with care.

Much of my 44-year career as an art teacher has been shot through with one of the great difficulties that art articulation produces; the exposure to the inner temple behind technique, skill, taste and design - into what Robert Hughes, writing about Cezanne, referred to as the ropes and pulleys behind the Magic Mountain. In essence, how does one reveal the ultimate truth behind all of our efforts in painting on cave walls, molding bronzes, throwing pots, erecting installations or doing performance; that all of these are grounded on assumptions that are beyond sensible and useful reasoning?

It is the challenge that must convince one's pupil that while one may certainly drink out of such and such a particular tea cup, the ultimate business of the thing has less to do with its capacity to hold tea than with its ineffable and elusive form.

This notion of form has been much bandied about since 1908 when Clive Bell first published his seminal *Art* in which he coined the phrase, Significant Form. For Bell, it was a discernible (to the discerning, it has to be admitted) element somehow aligned with primitive impulses and archetypical structures. For us who emerge from Modernism, the argument for a detectable, special thing is irrelevant, but the notion of a vital kind of *Zeitgeist* that either informs, or is a part of informing significant artefacts is as valid as it ever was. It is, I suppose, the division that a philosopher might make between art and craft.

And yet, it is Perry's mission to explore and exploit the very craftiness of his chosen objects in a craft of his own that constitutes the business of the interaction with the Museum. It is a splendid and appropriately Post-Modernist irony that in pursuing the craft, Perry most mordantly points to the art. Perry, like MacGregor, seizes on particular artefacts to generate his responses, but unlike MacGregor, who looks out at the social matrix that

generated and is reflected by the artefact, Perry looks in. The selection has to do with the degree to which each artefact resonates with his art-making interests and obsessions. A pot for Perry is nothing like a pot for, say, Bernard Leach. For Leach, the magic lies in the sublime energy of the making; for Perry, an ancient vase is a vehicle for a provocative mayhem and the Zen is buried in a kind of dystopian frenzy of cultural detritus. And this energy is culled from everything he considers in the exhibition. The result is a splendid journey through the vagaries, conceits, intrigues and convolutions of a brilliant thinker, sharp-eyed jackdaw, amused outsider and sometimes-shocking exponent of the loaded object school of imagery. Perry likes shrines, he likes old papyrus, he likes Egyptian toys and Medieval texts because on each can be layered a personal palimpsest of contemporary sentiment. Sometimes this is bathos, as in *The Frivolous Now*, a ceramic jug decorated with contemporary pop cultural phrases such as 'body armour', 'cyber bullying' and 'cute you tube clips' and *Grumpy Old Gad* - a perfect Amphora decorated in Red Figure Ware but including contemporary high-chroma advertising stickers ('Fresh Fish Best Prices in Town') in the glaze decoration.

But in some cases, the bathos can take on a patina of menace such as in *Head of a Fallen Giant*, an oversized bronze skull infested with nails, tin toys, medals and flags. Perry remarks:

I wanted to make something that looked like an ethnographical artefact that was about England. At once mystical and banal, this is the skull of a decaying maritime superpower. Like a World War Two mine washed up on the beach encrusted with the boiled down essence of empire in the form of tourist tat.

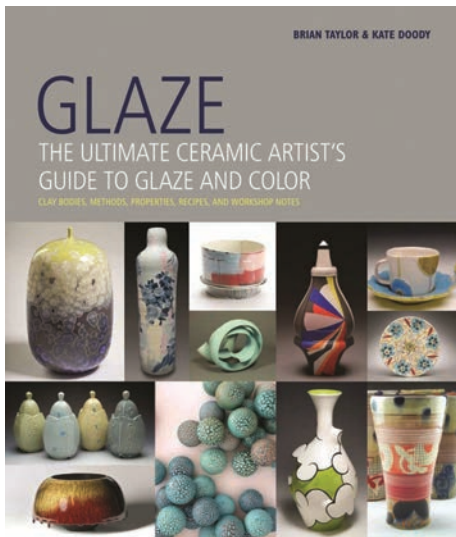
Perhaps it is this precipitate plop into the punch line of the everyday that gives Perry's life and work the special capacity to engage on so many levels, not least the whimsical, engaging and charming. His first essay in the catalogue is a history of his pilgrimage to Germany with his childhood Teddy, Alan Measles, on the motorcycle AM1. In this delightful introspection into his own childhood daemons, fantasies and refuges, Perry takes his transitional object and turns him, first jokingly, then more earnestly, into a god - or at least a pope-like demigod - and onto his childhood comforter he pins a raft of delicious allusions. Best of all, Alan Measles is given an hilarious Joseph Beuys history of wartime air crashes and recovery:

While serving as a jet fighter pilot in the great psychic war 1965 -75, Alan Measles was shot down over Latvia. He was dragged out of the crashed plane by local village women including Klara (later known as Claire) and nursed back to health using traditional medicine. Under the tutelage of a shaman Alan abandons his role as a warrior and sets out on a thirty-year journey as a wandering holy man.

Thus Perry, with his alter-ego Claire and his Doppelgänger Alan, contrives an aesthetic and a narrative that is firstly a whimsical insight into a particularly English boy's world view, full of model planes and Germans and tin toy cars and simultaneously a triumphant declaration of the big picture of what makes art worth having and doing.

PORT ELIZABETH – 6 JULY 2015

Gregory Kerr is an artist and writer. He holds a PhD in Aesthetics and Criticism and was until 2000 Professor in Fine Arts at the University of Stellenbosch. His studio is in Schoenmakerskop, near Port Elizabeth, and he conducts painting workshops for adult students around the country. www.gregkerr.co.za



Glaze, the Ultimate Ceramic Artist's Guide to Glaze and Color
By Brian Taylor and Kate Doody
Published by Barrons, 2014
Recommended Retail Price R494.00
ISBN number 978-0764166426
Review by John Shirley

A new ceramics book is always something that I find exciting and Glaze, the Ultimate Ceramic Artist's Guide to Glaze and Color is particularly so.

Firstly let me start by saying that this is a beautifully presented book, almost a coffee table book on glazes, and undoubtedly the most beautiful book on the subject that I have come across.

The book is divided into sections, namely Understanding Glazes, Color, Making and Testing Glazes and finally a Directory.

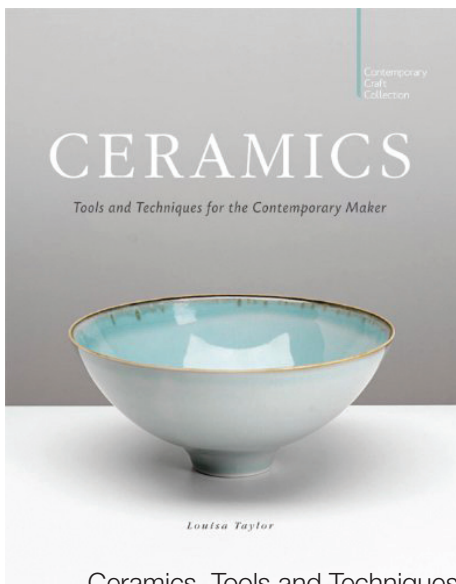
The sections on understanding glaze and making and testing are clearly laid out and well researched giving many details which would be helpful to both the aspiring glaze maker as well the professional ceramist. Throughout the book is well illustrated and easy to follow and is a wonderful reference on the subject it covers,

but it is the section on color and the directory where the book really comes into its own.

The color section starts with basic color theory and goes on to cover a number of colors individually, technical information on ways of achieving them - again lavishly illustrated.

The directory, where 100 leading ceramists show their work and give details of how they use glaze and color is, in my mind, the most exciting section of the book giving us insight into the way the individual artists work and go about achieving the results they achieve.

This is a book that I would recommend unreservedly whether you are just beginning your journey with glaze or have been working with them for years, this volume offers something for everyone on the subject and will make a valued addition to any ceramic library.



Ceramics, Tools and Techniques for the Contemporary Maker
by Louisa Taylor
Published by Jacqui Small
ISBN number 978-1906417673
Review by John Shirley

John Shirley

John Shirley is a ceramic maker and educator. He has lectured at The University of Johannesburg since 2000 and also teaches in the informal sector. He works in porcelain and bone-china and has exhibited extensively both locally and internationally. He is a founder member and Fellow of Ceramics Southern Africa and was accepted as a member of The International Academy of Ceramics in 2009.

If you only want to buy one all-round ceramics book covering almost all aspects of ceramics for both the beginning enthusiast, as well as the more advanced ceramist, I cannot recommend this title strongly enough.

Ceramics, Tools and Techniques for the Contemporary Maker is a simply beautiful how-to hands-on volume, covering everything from clay preparation and wedging through to a number of post firing techniques, and everything in between.

Each process is clearly described and the book is filled with many excellent photographs, and the cover image of a bowl by British ceramist Chris Keenan sets the tone for the visual feast that is to follow.

At the end of each chapter is a gallery as well

as an artist's profile expanding on the subjects covered.

Almost anything I could think of has been covered in this book in a clear and detailed, easy to follow manner. The sections covered are:

- Materials and Tools
- Forming Techniques
- Glazing and Firing Techniques
- Decorative and Finishing Techniques
- Resources

This is an excellent book covering a huge amount of material and would make a great addition to any ceramic library.

The author, Louisa Taylor, holds a Master's degree in Ceramics and Glass. She has received numerous design awards and her work has been featured in respected design publications. She lives in England.

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Marjorie Wallace experimenting with printing



I have been experimenting with printing onto my ceramic surfaces. I believe that this is a new printing method I discovered in my quest to achieve a certain effect.

In this particular case I wanted to reproduce, onto bisque ware, an Indian woodblock which had been given to me. Once I had perfected the method below, I started experimenting with cutting my own images in lino.

I tried many different possibilities until one day my daughter came home with a bottle of water-based lino-printing ink.

This particular lino printing ink is manufactured by Rolfe's and is labelled Linoleum Printing Ink. It is available from craft or art suppliers. It is important that it is a water based ink.

Pour about a tablespoon of the ink onto a sheet of strong glass. Using approximate measures, add a teaspoon of cobalt oxide, and about a teaspoon of water. Mix this thoroughly with a metal artist spatula until all the ingredients are well integrated. Transfer this to a corner of the glass sheet and use only a small amount of this ink at a time. Take a small amount with the spatula and place it in the centre of the glass sheet. Using a small ink roller, roll until evenly spread (as with lino printing). Once you have achieved an even consistency roll a layer of ink onto your wood block.

Cut a piece of Cling Wrap to size and place it carefully over the inked woodblock. Remove carefully and place on the bisque ware. Rub carefully until you can see that the image has been transferred. Glaze and fire!

For environmental reasons, wash the cling film after use and then dry it flat on newspaper. This will also improve its use the next time round.

Marjory Wallace

Marjorie Wallace is responsible for production at Mutapo Pottery, a small studio pottery in Harare, Zimbabwe. She is a Michaelis graduate. Work from the pottery has sold in retail outlets in Cape Town, Copenhagen, Dar Es Salaam, Johannesburg, Kingston (Canada), Lagos, Luanda, London, Maputo, Maun, Paris, Vienna, Stockholm, Tokyo. www.designnetworkafrica.org

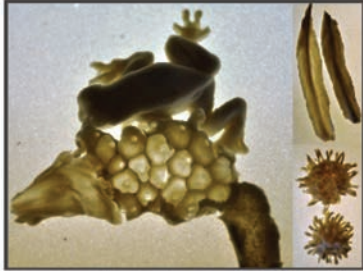


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Signing pots and taking on a legacy



There is a saying that a potter does not need to sign his pots. His mark is enough to identify them. This idea was coupled with a romantic figure, the humble country potter. It is the character made alive in Bernard Leach's "A Potters Book", which I inherited from my father, Sammy Liebermann. Unfortunately he passed on when I was still a teenager, leaving behind a huge legacy of pottery making, while I ended up spending the last 25 years of my life working in various potteries around the country. The business itself, Liebermann Pottery, was passed on to my cousin Adriaan Turgel in the early nineties.

Curiously collectors are looking for signatures as well as stamps, such as the kind Liebermann Pottery used on the bottom of their tableware. My mother, Mary Liebermann, signed some of her work, decorated plates and sculptures and tiles, usually very modestly with a simple initial. Our friend Wendy Lauritiano, has been researching the history of pottery in South Africa. My parents brought their pottery skills to South Africa in 1954, from Chelsea Pottery in London, where they were both apprentices. We, their descendants are of interest to her. One day she asked me, who Vusi was? He was unrecorded on the pay roll but had sold many signed works through Liebermann Pottery. I had to tell her who Vusi really was. Vusi was my mother! Even though my mother graduated as an artist from two different universities she denied being an artist. She was a designer, not an artist, she said. An artist was someone who strapped themselves to a rock and captured the sea. Signing her work as Vusi, her African alter ego, was both a marketing strategy and a way for her to enjoy signing her art work without betraying the idea of the humble potter, who finds it too ostentatious to sign his work. I didn't buy into any of this contrived humility as a teenager and decided to study fine arts after school with the intention of making art and signing it properly.

I was not going to be a potter, or a ceramicist, or whatever. I know I've ended up being one but that is due to a series of events and opportunities, as well as disasters, which kept me continuously working with clay as a way to make a living.

The first of these came along in the late eighties. I made a series of squishy clay characters called Grommets and these grommets became very popular. Through them I was able to pay for all my expenses at university. They were not art nor were they pots and they were not signed, nor were the dragons and fairies and witches that followed in their wake. They were just easy to make and easy to sell. Before

Wilma Cruise

OPENING: 19H00

FRIDAY 28 AUG 2015

EXHIBITION ENDS ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2015

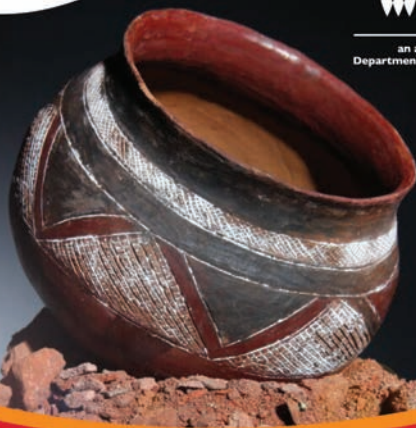
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completing my degree I went to Cape Town to join a small Marionette company. I made the heads and hands and feet for the puppets, which were then assembled, dressed and strung up onto wooden crosses. The clay bits were fired at Gail and Bruce Walfords Pottery up the road from where I lived on red hill farm. So the Walfords were the first other Pottery I worked in other than Liebermann Pottery.

From there I went to Hymie Rabinowitz, up in his studio called Eagles Nest. He sent me directly to Yogi de Beer, an apprentice of his, who lived not far away. I did not learn to make big magnificent pots as Yogi was doing. Instead a visiting English potter whose name I forget shared with me a vast number of quick gimmicky small things that are easy to make out of clay, good fillers in the kiln, humorous but definitely not worth signing. This was in about 1992.

Now in 2015 I consider it very important to sign some of my work. I also think it is important to keep one or two best pieces if working on a range. Unlike the Liebermann Pottery table ware range which is still in production after 50 years, I have worked through many ranges in my life and once I got to the end of it, never made another like that. It is a real pity if one is only left with the seconds after the best work has flown the studio without record.

After my first child was born I lost all interest in making things with faces and I never went back to it again except for one or two special orders and to help students. I became interested in simple forms. But I could not get away from decorating. Primarily I am a decorator, by default, it has been the custom that men are throwers and women are decorators. I did a range of thrown cups with trees showing the changes in season. Trees have become a favourite motif for me.

I was offered a job in Plettenberg bay, where I was employed to decorate a number of tableware ranges that were being thrown by one eyed Mathew. This was a very pleasant job as I was one of a small group of women who would chatter away while filling endless boards of cups and bowls and plates with all kinds of fruits, flowers and birds. I was lucky to have a special appreciation for brush marks. Every mark was noted and just like a pot thrown on the wheel, a particular few marks could sing in a way that others didn't.

Later on I bought this Pottery business along with my husband at the time, Oliver Koter. We called it Olisa Pottery and it stood alongside the road between Knysna and Plettenberg Bay for many years. There followed a period of stability during which we produced quite a number of lines. There is a fair amount of cross pollination in the area of Knysna and Plettenberg Bay and we were influenced among others by the potters Lesley Anne Hoets and Ronnie van der Walt who trained some of our best throwers. Eventually I sold Olisa Pottery, and set up studio by myself. I wanted to bridge the gap between art and craft and I began to make my own pots with the idea that the vessel is the vehicle of expression. I wanted to sign my work but I also wanted my work to sign itself. By that I mean that I was looking for a peculiar integrity which would make it unnecessary for a work to be signed in order to identify it. By then I had I come to love the process of pottery making for its particular rhythms, its smells, its familiarity and for the magic that comes from making a vessel, for all that a vessel represents and for clay's way of bringing one into a moment, into this material world, by virtue of the way it feels between ones finger. While I enjoyed the time alone I am most comfortable working along with others, sharing with and learning from them.

For a while I have been a nomadic Potter and have lived and worked with other Potters. My work got smaller and smaller the more I moved and for the last few years I have concentrated on tiny porcelain pinch pots and a range of porcelain pendants. I have made hundreds and signed only a few. Now my journey brings me back to Johannesburg, where I started, presenting a whole new scope of opportunity. I am very excited to have started a new pottery school in Raedene. As a teacher I don't have a rigid syllabus. Everyone must make pinch pots and from there the clay is their teacher and they must find their own signature. I am merely there to remind people of the natural limitations that exist and to facilitate the process.

Lisa Liebermann

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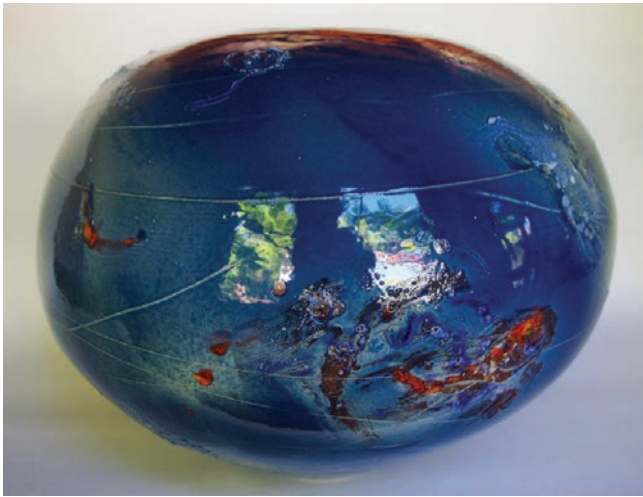
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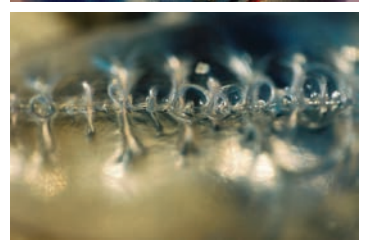
By Laura du Toit

The subconscious journey of inspiration remains an intriguing process. Recently, for example, when photographing the blue spheres in my Albatross series, I spontaneously revisited film-based images from 20 years ago. The ocean in Hermanus had delivered an exceptional amount of blue bottles and similar marine creatures that year and I photographed them in detail. When I saw the deep resemblance between the details of my work and those of the blue marine creatures, I realised what the source of my inspiration had been and was inspired once more to continue.

GLAUCUS ATLANTICUS is a deep ocean Nudibranch which swims on the surface and feeds on blue bottles reminding one of an albatross flying over the ocean.

Laura du Toit has been working with clay for the past 25 years. She is inspired by the writing of Kabir, an Indian mystic who lived in the 8th Century:

*Inside this clay jug are canyons and pine mountains,
And the maker of canyons and pine mountains!
All seven oceans are inside, and hundreds of millions of stars.
The acid that tests gold is there and the one who judges jewels.
And the music from the strings that no one touches, and the source of all water.*



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An exciting array of Southern African potters and ceramic artists, both rural and urban, including Lisa Liebermann, are showcased at Liebermann Gallery. The Gallery is located in the historic Gas Works, close to the trendy Melville shopping area.

Liebermann Pottery in Johannesburg has an extensive range of traditional handmade cottage tableware, dinnerware and ceramic picture tiles, brilliantly-coloured contemporary garden planters and vases, with their distinctive Liebermann ambience. For the Bonsai enthusiast, the Liebermann Gallery has the largest selection of planters on the continent.

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cox-Pottery>

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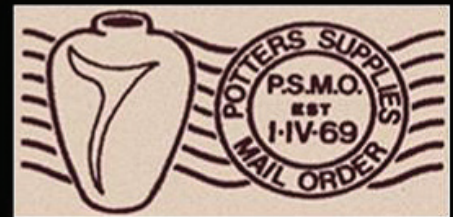
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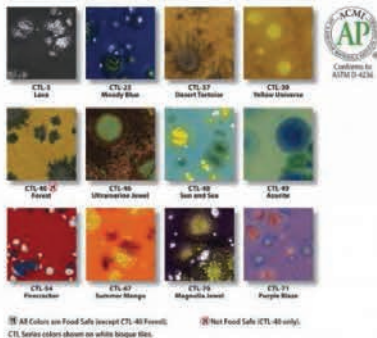
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