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CERAMICS

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A MAGAZINE OF CERAMICS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Please note the following due dates for all articles, reviews, book reviews, advertisements as well as exposure page photographs for 2016

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15 July 2016

15 October 2016

15 January 2017

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FROM THE EDITOR

Ceramics Southern Africa is published quarterly by
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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 the editor 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 500-2200 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 or lydia@rgholmes.co.za in an attached Word document, NOT Pdf format, nor within the body of an email.

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. Where possible, the author will be contacted prior to going to print should the Editor deem it necessary.

A two or three sentence statement about the writer must be included. Please include the name of the photographer/s.

Guidelines for Images

The files must be high resolution JPG (300dpi) or in the region of 600kb to 3 mgb.

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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.

All images must also be labelled with the name of the article or person concerned, i.e. Peter Black.jpeg.

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.

Earth tones, white, grey or black 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. Make sure the WHOLE subject is in the photograph.

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 details regarding the work (new work) or where it is on display. No images without these descriptive details will be published.

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



A new year, a new beginning..... 'Or so it goes' according to Kurt Vonnegut!

As we began editing and compiling this issue of our magazine, we were met with the sad news that Nicolene (Nikki) Swanepoel passed away unexpectedly. When something like this occurs, one often

contemplates one's own place in this universe, one's goals and achievements. Unexpected situations can occur at any moment and one has to make the most of one's time and creativity. Nikki had so much enthusiasm and many more plans for the rest of her life. Let us learn from this and not procrastinate with our own dreams.

Nikki's enthusiasm for life, animals, ceramics and this magazine will be sorely missed. Wilma Cruise came to the rescue and penned beautiful words for us in remembrance.

Nikki wrote an article on Millstone Pottery's Wood Firing Jamboree and luckily we were able, with the assistance of Nina Shand, to retrieve this and use it in this current issue.

This is the year of our 2016 Corobrik National Ceramics Biennale. Sasha Wardell will be the Awards Judge and she has generously sent an article on her work. Furthermore, Ann Marais has honoured a special gentleman - an unknown in our ceramic circles and it definitely makes interesting reading.

Our magazine is slowly settling into a routine... we have retained Sue Calf as Graphic Designer and she has once again assisted in putting together an imaginative and professional magazine. I also have to mention that Jerice Doeg, Ann Marais and Lynnley Watson have come on board to ensure thorough editing of articles. We hope that all members and friends of CSA will share our enthusiasm and continue to contribute in the future. It is amazing where some leads come from...so please keep your eyes and ears open for interesting topics and ideas.

Lydia Holmes.

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



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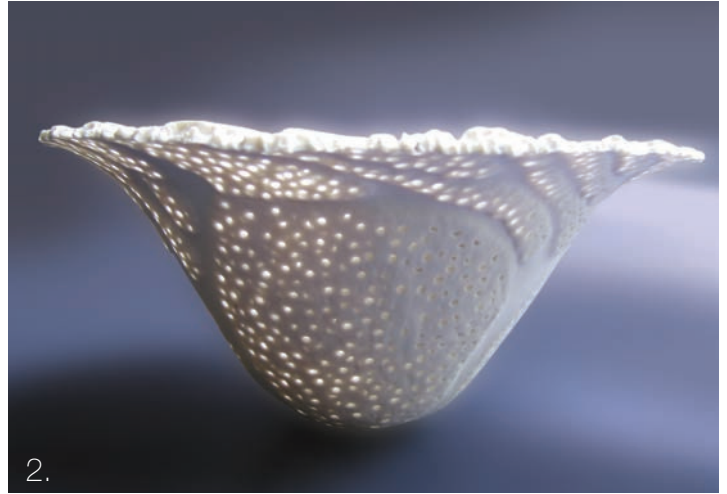
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EXPOSURE

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.



Left to right

1. Alessandro Pappada, 'A crowd of cups', Gebak - a ceramic exhibition curated by Hennie Meyer at the University of Stellenbosch Wordfees 2016
2. Rika Herbst, Forest Bowl, Icheon, Korea
3. Catherina Pagani, Imibali Gallery, Somerset West
4. Gerd Kalesse, White Christmas Exhibition, Pretoria
5. Colleen Lemkuhl, Blue Vessel, White Christmas Exhibition, Pretoria
6. Corrie Hook, Zulu-lulu Art House
7. Jane Jarvis, Plate, New work



8.



9.

Left To Right:

- 8. Margot Rudolph, Teapot, Zulu-lulu Art House
- 9. Millstone Pottery, @ Millstone Gallery
- 10. Cathy Brennan, "New Dawn", New work
- 11. Lesley-Ann Hoets, Vessel, New work



10.



11.

Nicolene Swanepoel - A Life Force Remembered 1962 - 2016

"I hope to awaken questioning, like an itch demanding to be scratched, to uncover a variety of interpretations, and to reveal the duality of the superficially attractive and its underlying "darker" nature. If we do not recognise, understand, acknowledge and integrate both the beauty and the beast, we are doomed to live lives split between the extremes of fantasy and fear" - (Nicolene Swanepoel) i

Nicolene Swanepoel died suddenly of a stroke on 10 January 2016. By any accounts she was an extraordinary person - behaviourist, veterinarian, artist, ceramist, and not least of all she was a humanitarian - or - as she would agree - an animalatarian.

It is not insignificant that on the day she died plans were already afoot to place her dogs in new homes. Nikki would not have it any other way! Animals were central to her life. Her compassion stretched to include all living creatures. Indeed, this impulse drove her art and inspired her creativity. She said,

"... perhaps we can step back and evaluate the damage we have wreaked on our environment and the creatures dependant on it due to our assumed 'superiority' and attempted control of power over everything on earth. Once we appreciate that we are but a small part of our universe... and respect all other elements in it, we might begin to try to undo and repair our destructions" (Swanepoel 2014: personal correspondence).

Although an activist Nikki was very careful not to use her art as an overt propaganda tool. She chose instead to use the artist's tools of metaphor and metonymy. This she did with devastating effect. A case in point are the spirit guardians, a group of small ceramic dogs inspired by canine Nkisi or power figures from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She called her figures my NikkiNkisi. She saw the Nkisi as "symbolic protectors of our souls, not against actual malevolence, but the terror of living with fear about something which might happen... Ultimately, the spirit guards symbolised the common desire for a peaceful and spiritually prosperous life. In bearing tokens of protection, hope and healing, they are vessels of meaning, vehicles to celebrate the universal bond between human and dog, the instinctive friendship between dog and dog, and the original kinship between human and human... Dogs restore our humanity. This is their task in the 21st century. We can help them do this if we free them from standing guard over our fears. Let them rather guard our souls" *ii*. In making these works Nicolene had to suspend conscious control over the process. This was dictated by the necessity of having to produce hundreds of versions of the same form. Invoking the notion of Yanagi's "unknown craftsman" she set about rapidly producing the forms in an unthinking, repetitive and ultimately meditative process - one that she, rather guiltily, identified as addictive.

"Addictive", "obsessive" or merely staying the course, these are all terms used to describe Nicolene. Nowhere is this more apparent than in her production of cattle heads. Emerging from her research for her Master's degree in 2004 the heads became her signature pieces. As a child of the African soil Nicolene became interested in the indigenous cosmologies. As cattle are significant cultural markers in South Africa it was natural for her to turn to the study of their importance, not only in terms of native cosmologies but also in terms of colonial and postcolonial interpretations. The heads became hugely popular. It was something of a feat for her to keep up with

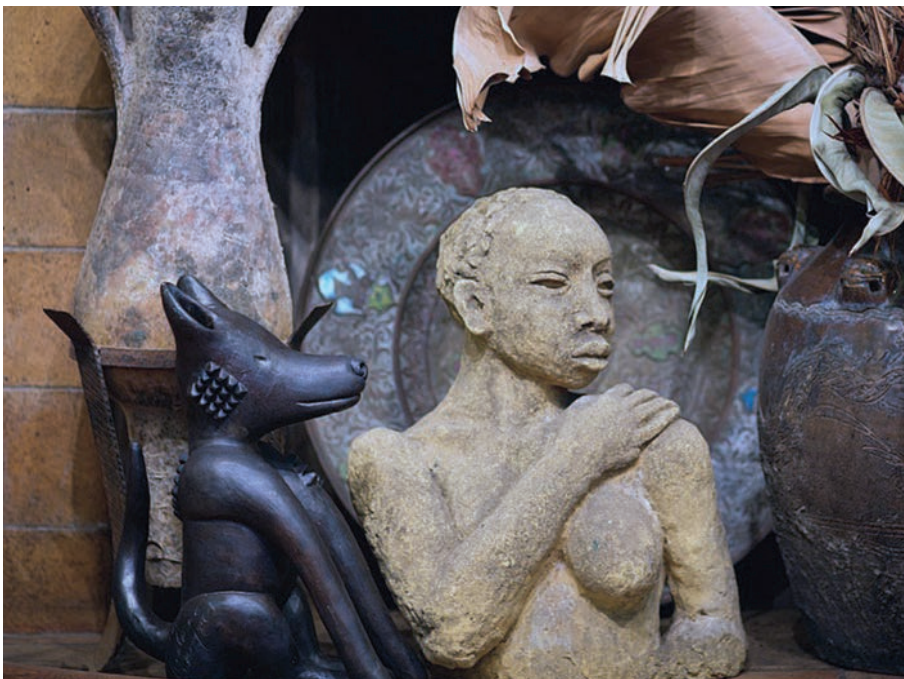
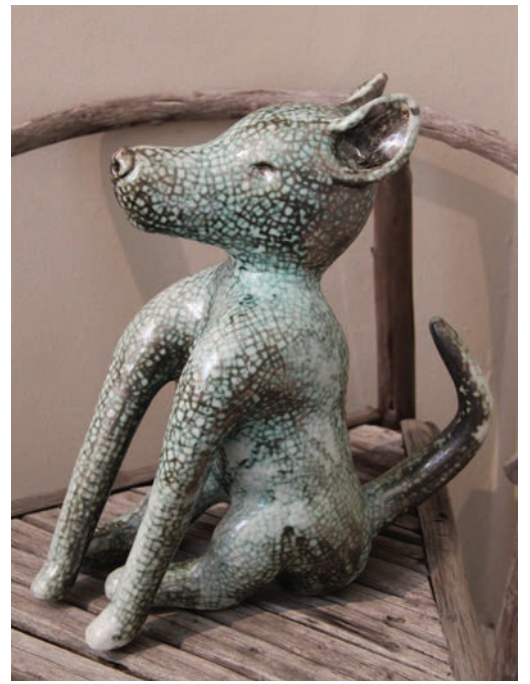
A Tribute by Wilma Cruise
Photographs by: Daniela Zondagh, David Lewin,
Nicolene and Francois Swanepoel.



the demand.

In 1999 Nicolene had a serious cycling accident which left her literally broken. She fractured most of the bones in her thorax, including five vertebrae. As she said, she was privileged not to be left "broken" or "unwhole", but to be healed through a series of long and invasive operations. "Some people may discard/disregard broken objects and broken (imperfect) people - I celebrate them, as I celebrate myself and my own fortunate (though often frustrated) life" (personal correspondence 2010). In a typical fashion that marked the toughness of her character, she turned the life-threatening event into a life-affirming one. It marked a significant career change. She decided to retire from the economically secure job as veterinarian and become a full-time artist, a passion she was to pursue to the end of her life. In the interim she went back to university and achieved a not insignificant goal of a National Diploma in Ceramics Design from the then Witwatersrand Technikon in 2004 and a M Tech in Fine Art from the University of Johannesburg in 2008.

In 2010 she turned her creative attention to the physical and spiritual fragmentation caused by the accident. In Gebroke/geheel, Nikki's fifth solo show in South Africa, she referred to wholeness after fragmentation - an inverse of the usual order of things. One is used to the whole fragmenting - not parts coalescing to create new entities. However, in this exhibition this metaphor held, not least of all at a personal level. Out of the shards of her physical and mental self she reconstructed her life. This psychical process found a correlative in



the act of creating works for Gebroke/geheel most clearly expressed in a series of pots that were partially constructed from shards, those bits of ceramics that are usually thrown away. Nicolene attended a course in ceramic restoration in order to learn how to mend ceramics. It is a process she used with a degree of irony. The pots are not, as in the usual order of things, mended, but created from broken pieces, parts that are not of the original. In the layering of meaning that is typical of her work, this technique in itself became a critique of ceramic processes. Like all of us who have undergone formal ceramic training, Nicolene Swanepoel was subjected to the rigour of the discipline. A dunted pot had to be discarded; there were to be no visible cracks. Such works were consigned to the dung heap of the rejected. If the glaze crawled or slipped or discoloured the vessel was abandoned. While all these might be useful precepts for casserole dishes, they were not good strictures for a sculptor wrestling for the means to express her thoughts cogently. The shard pots cocked a snook at that culture. To emphasise her point further Nicolene etched the places where the shards were joined, with gold lustre, a material usually reserved for the finest pots. She thus laid down the gauntlet to ceramic correctness. This battle she continued to fight to the end of her days. In her typical feisty - some would say stubborn - way she took on Ceramics Southern Africa and challenged the notion of ceramic 'correctness'. After winning the Glazecor National Award in 2005 she experienced numerous rejections from national and regional exhibitions. None of this she took lying down! When she had no success in protesting ceramic convention from the outside she joined the committee to continue the fight from the inside. She did this all with good grace and a great deal of hard work! It was a position she held until her death.

Like many sensitive people, Swanepoel was a helpless observer of humankind's own destruction.

Nicolene Swanepoel

She was aware that it is the animals who suffer the most from the profligate rape of the world. This desolation found an outlet in the black humour of her skull sculptures. Made gesturally, quickly, expressionistically, the imprint of her fingers is left in the clay. Second and fourth finger for the eyes, thumb for the mouth. The skulls are a macabre gesture, like a shout in the dark, a whistle in the wind. In the face of hopelessness, play and embrace death, they seem to say.

Swanepoel's concern with the fate of the planet manifested itself in an insistence on recycling and re-using. She did this as a partial expiation of her guilt in making "energy intensive ceramics". This manifested itself in her painted drawings which she made on old paper. The papers themselves hold histories which were over laid like palimpsests with new marks and text. She used this technique in what proved to be her last exhibition, *Pretty Ponies*, held at IS Art Gallery in Franschhoek in October 2015 where she exhibited alongside her brother Francois Swanepoel. In *Pretty Ponies* Swanepoel subverted the historical image of equine grace and power. There is a sense of irony in the use of her term "pretty" - a kind of inversion of the usual image of the horse and the kind of equestrian monument that graces town squares throughout the world: a-man-on-a-horse-on-a-pedestal - patriarchal, colonial, phallic - mostly placed above our heads to remind us of our insignificance. Depicted thus, the horse is both literally and metaphorically a vehicle for humankind's ambitions. It is used as an instrument with little thought as to its sentience. As Nicolene lamented, somewhere along the line we have lost the potential relationship with the horse-as-a-being in itself. However, there is a growing movement amongst animal specialists to see the horse for itself as horse - a need to access the world from a horse's perspective instead of from the instrumentalised human one. Nikki Swanepoel was not only aware of this new approach - she was part of it. The sense of wonder that is captured by those of us who are able to access the horse's mind - to talk horse - is only comparable to the delight a young child has for her first pony. It is perhaps this that Nikki was alluding to in her *Pretty Ponies* collection.

But undoubtedly her magnum opus was her 2014 exhibition at the Irma Stern Museum in Cape Town. Entitled, *Little Creatures/Without Pedestals Another Time, Same Place: The Re-Evolution of Animals*, this exhibition marked a mature point in her career. She was comfortable both with her means of making and her conceptual underpinnings. She wrote about her sculptures: "Lumps of clay have transmogrified into animals of various kinds. They are not made to comply with a planned design, but grow according to the whim of the clay. Each little figurine emerges into its own individual being. Most look different to anything we have yet encountered, neither animal nor human. A few may suggest (but do not represent) existing animals - equine, feline, bovine, hominid, not only the latter, but all uniquely sapient [meaning wise]" (Swanepoel personal correspondence 2014). The works on *Little Creatures/Without Pedestals* reflect Nicolene's quest to make meaning of a world in which we and the animals are bound to a common destiny. However dire straits we may be in there is a glimmer of hope in remaking and recreating. Through her art she reconnects with that which is lost.

One recalls the final scene in JM Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* in which David Lurie the protagonist leads the lame dog that he has befriended to its euthanased death. The last sentences in the book read thus:



'Was that the last?' asks Bev.
 'One more' he opens the cage door.
 'Come' he says, bends and opens his arms. The
 dog wags its crippled rear, sniffs his face, licks
 his cheeks, his lips, his ears.
 He does nothing to stop it, 'Come.'
 Bearing him in his arms like a lamb, he re-enters
 the surgery.
 'I thought you would save him for another
 week,' says Bev Shaw.
 'Are you giving him up?'
 'Yes I am giving him up.' *iii*

It has been a pleasure to see our world through
 your eyes Nikki.
 Go well my friend.
 Wilma Cruise January 2016

i Swanepoel, N. 2005. *Spirit Gods in South Africa. Ceramics Art and Perception*, No. 61 pp. 66-69.
ii Swanepoel, N. 2005. *Spirit Gods in South Africa. Ceramics Art and Perception*, No. 61 pp. 66-69.
iii Coetzee, J.M. 1999. *Disgrace*. London: Vintage Books. p 220



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Article by
Sasha Wardell

Photographs by
Mark Lawrence



Sasha Wardell On Bone China & Achieving Translucency

Bone china is a very seductive material to work with, possessing qualities of intense whiteness, translucency and strength. It is a very 'single-minded' clay, which forces the maker to work with clarity and precision. Its technical inflexibility and idiosyncratic making and firing characteristics might easily be a deterrent to investigation, however I consider these restrictions and limitations a challenge to creativity and working methods.

In 1998, after several years of working with airbrushed decoration on bone china, I felt I had reached a point of saturation with the technique and so undertook a period of research at Bath Spa University in order to develop new and different decorating processes which were aimed at maximising the translucent qualities of this material.

I became interested in multi-layer casting methods after looking at various glass techniques and in particular those of Murano glass which included the Sommerso and casing and overlaying processes. I felt this could easily be adapted to working with bone china using moulds and slip casting and the fact that these methods took advantage of the inherent qualities of bone china without the need to 'apply' decoration, appealed to me as it would ultimately mean a reduction in the number of firings required too.

The whiteness of the body offered a completely blank canvas for any addition of colour, however small so, coupled with its translucent properties, it served as a perfect material for colour experimentation too...

As my particular interests lie in the translucent properties of this material and the differing degrees of luminosity possible, I have developed three variations of decoration which aim to exploit this characteristic and so enhance these qualities in my work.

Layering and Slicing Technique:

Using commercial body stains to colour the bone china, one layer is poured into a mould and emptied immediately. As soon as the sheen has disappeared, a different coloured layer is added and so



on until the desired number of layers has been achieved. Normally three or four but more recently I have managed five - any more and the first layer can pull away from the mould wall resulting in no porosity for the subsequent layers.

When the piece is bone dry, it is removed from the mould. A sharp Stanley blade is then used to gradually pare down random areas on the curved surface of the piece, revealing little by little the underlying colours until, in some instances the last, or interior layer is exposed. The clay is extremely thin and vulnerable at this point.

The piece is soft-fired to 1000°C after which it is wet-sanded using 320 grade wet and dry paper wrapped around blocks of wood or plaster. This gives the work its 'cut-glass' appearance.

The ware is fired a second time to 1260°C, with a one and a half hour soak. The soak ensures even heat throughout resulting in optimum translucency. Finally, it is polished with wet and dry paper to achieve a satin-matt appearance.

Layering and Incising Technique:

This method follows the same multi-layer casting process as the layered and sliced pieces. However, the casts are removed from



the mould whilst they are still quite soft, normally the following day. A loop tool is used to incise, or gouge, through the layers. This has the same effect of revealing the underlying colours until the last, or interior layer is exposed.

Great care is needed to avoid going right through as the piece is particularly vulnerable at this stage and it is also important to complete the decoration in one sitting as a rhythm needs to be established.

These pieces undergo the same sanding, polishing and firings as the sliced ware.

Water Erosion:

A third technique is used to capitalise on the translucent aspect of bone china. This method is also known by other titles such as, Shellac resist, deep-etching, wash back etc. However, I feel 'water erosion' describes the process fairly accurately as it does exactly that.

A number of makers use this process and there are several resist products on the market. The most commonly used being either Shellac or Liquitex (a medium for acrylic paints) which is applied onto green ware. Other masking mediums, such as Copydex, latex or wax, can be used on biscuit ware in conjunction with resisting colours or glaze etc.

In my experience, I have found Liquitex to be the best, not least because it is 'kind' to your brushes due to it being a water-soluble product. This may sound like an oxymoron but careful, even sponging in one direction, will not disturb the pattern or masked areas.

I have found the following method the most successful: After casting a single layer of slip, thicker than usual, the piece is allowed to dry out completely. A pattern is then painted onto the raw cast using the Liquitex mixed with a vegetable dye. A damp sponge fixed to a dowel is passed all over the piece approx. five to six times, as evenly as possible, to ensure there is no irregular thinning

of the walls which would encourage warping during the firing. Care must also be taken to allow the piece to dry out between 'spongings' to minimize loss due to it being weakened by continual dampening.

Patience is of the essence when working with this technique as it can take over 3 days to complete and so I usually work on 6 pieces at a time.

These pieces have a single high firing and are subsequently polished.

Sasha Wardell commenced her formal training in ceramics in 1976 when she studied for a BA (Hons) in Ceramics at Bath Academy of Art, followed by an MA in Ceramic Design in Stoke-on-Trent. These undergraduate and postgraduate degrees included periods of industrial training secondments to the Ecole Nationale des Arts Décoratifs, Limoges, France, in 1977 and then to the Royal Doulton design studio, Stoke-on-Trent, United Kingdom in 1981.

In 1982 she set up her first studio in Wiltshire where she concentrated on her own bone china production whilst lecturing part time at various art colleges and universities across the United Kingdom. In the 90's she spent a seven year period living and working in France where she ran courses and worked in a porcelain factory near Limoges. She now divides her time between France and the UK continuing her own practice and running bone china slip casting and mould making courses in the Limousin as well as presenting international master classes working with bone china.

Sasha Wardell will be the Awards Judge at the 2016 Ceramics Southern Africa Biennale in Johannesburg.

For more details: www.sashawardell.com

Published works: 'Slipcasting' (A&C Black) and 'Porcelain and Bone China' (Crowood).

*Opposite Page:
Five layer space bows
Shasha Wardell in her studio*

*This Page: left to right
'Tide' espresso cups
'Sepia' space bowls
'Sparkle' pendant light*

Wood Firing at Millstone Pottery, McGregor

Article by Nicolene Swanepoel
Photographs by Paul de Jongh and Nina Shand

From their home and Millstone Pottery studio in McGregor (Western Cape), Paul de Jongh and Nina Shand make wood-fired stoneware with soul, fired with passion and recycled wood.

Paul has a formal ceramics background, including a Ceramic Design diploma from the Wits Technikon, and has served an apprenticeship with renowned ceramicist and gallery-owner, Kim Sacks. Nina has an MA degree in Industrial Sociology from Wits University. She conducts research and is currently editing an upcoming book on South African ceramics.

In line with their philosophy that life and work should not be artificially separated, they came to stay in McGregor, to afford them the privilege of working and living in the same place. Nina comments: "We find living in the country and selling our work direct from our studio brings many challenges. It is not always the idyllic, stress-free lifestyle our visitors romanticise it to be. However we prefer to sell our work directly to our customers, thereby strengthening the link between the maker and the user. All too often, people buy things with no regard to who made them or where they came from, thereby alienating them from the creative process. Selling direct also means we can keep the price of our handcrafted pots more affordable."

Paul and Nina make their pots collaboratively in the sense that they both have a hand in the process of each other's work: "It is also not possible for a single person to fire our larger kilns and a communal effort is required. Since we have been on this wood-firing journey together, we can trust each other with the kiln and take turns resting. Some of our pots are collaborations - where Paul will throw one element and I will use it to add to a slab etc. We are both in the studio most of the time, although I tend to get the bulk of the child-rearing responsibilities and the lifting to sport and extra murals, so Paul is in the studio more."

The wood for firings is sourced with great care and effort from far and wide, often leftover bits from construction or salvaged from demolitions and the local sawmill. Nina explains: "Most wood firers live in rural surroundings away from urban concerns. They understand their local environment and their place in it. To know the ways of the earth, the characters of the soil, the whereabouts of trees, the way different kinds split with an axe, the way they burn, the character of their embers and their ash as it falls on clay. Apart from this practical knowledge, wood-firers tend to have an acute sensory awareness of their surroundings." Nina elaborates: "The experience of the sounds of the green forest, such as water dripping, a distant birdsong, or the vision of dry dusty expanses with great clarity, will in some indirect way feed into the character of their wood fired work."

Wood firing is tough. Nina comments: "The wood firer needs to find pleasure in the hard physical work of mixing clay, or splitting and stacking wood, coupled with a sensitive intelligence about the deeper nature of the beauty of things."

Where other firings can be started and left to electronic monitoring, wood firing kilns have to be hand stoked, almost constantly, and personally monitored for perhaps just around twenty four hours but sometimes for days, even weeks. This makes wood-fired ware more expensive, something the buying public do not usually appreciate.



Cost also accumulates, as Nina explains "because work is prepared for firing over months and even years, and once carefully packed in the kiln (itself a time-consuming and precarious process), it is at the mercy and the whims of the firing process. This is influenced not only by the amount of wood put in by the stokers, but also by type of woods used, wind, ambient temperature and moisture conditions, the work that emerges from the kiln may be a heavenly gift or a disaster. Making wood-fired pots in the 21st century is not economical - perhaps not even rational. However, our reward is found in other satisfactions, such as the pursuit of curiosity, the pleasure of discovery and the possibility of unanticipated aesthetic delights."

Wood firing delivers a product that cannot be matched by any other method of firing - warm and earthy it lends itself to a more archaic human expressiveness, not only in their making, but also in their use and appreciation. It also delivers a unique sheen - a natural glaze which hearkens back to ancient times, when glazing was 'accidentally' discovered by the sheen the fired wood ash gave to the pots as it breezes through the kiln.

"There isn't a single moment when we know the kiln is fired... We watch the cones, we listen to the sound of the kiln, we draw hot pots out to inspect, we can gauge the amount of energy we still have... we watch the ash runs on some of the bigger pieces... The decision to stop firing is made by Paul as he is usually in charge of the firing... Then we fire down for a couple of hours and throw some water in and some green wood to try and bring up the colours of the porcelains through hydrogen reduction. Colour in wood-firing only really develops on the way down, at around 800 degrees c. We fire to around cone 14 - 1380 degrees c."

Unpacking is almost always a disappointment. "The pots have to sit around for a while to be looked at again before they are properly appreciated - it's those three months of work and the ultimate



Opposite Page:

1. Paul de Jongh explaining to participants the ins and outs of applying glazes and slips for wood-firing
2. Train kiln with handy wood-stack

This page: left to right:

1. Nicolene Swanepoel's work in the 120 cubic foot anagama wood-fired kiln
2. Tessa Blem-Gawith and Natasha Viljoen stoking the train kiln, with Odon Human sitting idly by
3. Anton Bosch rekindling his passion for flame fired pots



should be opening the kiln but really the pots are usually too hot to see the colour properly and there is a ocean of them and it is hard to really see the colours."

Says Paul: "Because each pot is touched about forty times before it even reaches the bisque, you are investing a large part of yourself in each piece. The pots obviously are unique in that each one is a one-off - you are working with nature - the minerals that come out of the wood and land on the pots... earth, wind, and fire.... you also have to concentrate - you can lose a firing so easily by just packing too tight. It's really a huge human toil... we don't approach firing lightly - it is a very intense and precise time. With our wood-firing kilns, you are firing directly at the pots - there is no bag wall, no flame deflectors, and fly ash scatters all over the work. Therefore, you have to get to a temperature when that melts...and you can't have bad reduction. You have to stay true to your materials."

Nina notes that wood-firing, being a team effort, underlines ancient ways of knitting a community: "Unlike an electric kiln, you cannot fire these kilns without the help of several people. In light of the growing isolation we experience in our day-to-day lives, wood-firing brings together a gathering of like-minded individuals to toil together on something of value." This is prominent in their wood-firing workshops - it counter-balances the loneliness inevitably experienced by artists who usually work in isolation in their studios.

Wood Firing Jamborees

Most of us have no choice but to fire our ceramics in electric kilns. Fortunately Paul and Nina share their facilities and expertise with us during their regular wood-firing jamborees. Here us "ordinary" potters, amateur or professional, can fire our own work alongside theirs. Attendees can take a few of their own bisqued pieces or can use some of the studio's bisque ware if they have not been able to prepare their own. Whilst the firing continues, guests attend workshops, talks and demonstrations by prominent local and international potters. These events provide an opportunity to revive creative spirits, and give a platform for discussion of ceramic matters.

Well known makers who have presented workshops include Ian Garrett, Hennie Meyer, Clementina van der Walt, Lesley-Ann Hoets, Ann Marais, Anton Bosch, Lorette Espi, amongst others. International guests have included Ruthanne Tudball, who presented a soda glaze workshop; Scottish potter Robert Sanderson, editor of *The Log Book*, who directed a wood-firing kiln building workshop; and New Zealander Chester Nealie who presented a making workshop.

A typical jamboree follows this pattern:

Soon after arrival (usually on a Friday afternoon) Paul demonstrates

the application of the unique stoneware glazes, including some traditional Japanese glazes and a natural wood ash glaze. After glazing their pots, Nina usually demonstrates and assists in 'wadding' the pots, to ready them for safe packing in the kiln.

Everyone helps to load the kiln. Millstone pottery boasts a 120 cubic foot anagama kiln, but usually one of the coffin/train kilns is fired. These kilns have a firebox and stoke hole on one side, then a horizontal box or "coffin" to pack the ware in, followed by the chimney. The fire thus get channelled from one end, so heat and ash flow mainly horizontally over the ware, to escape at the other end of the kiln up through the chimney.

The careful packing of "the bodies in the coffin" is followed by a slow start of the fire quite late on the first evening. The fire slowly simmers to build up heat gradually. With the break of dawn, the kiln will be stoked more rapidly, and by late afternoon we usually reach temperature of around 1346 degrees Celsius (cone 13). The kiln cools off over Saturday night. After much anticipation it is opened and carefully unpacked on Sunday afternoon, mostly to delightful squeals of surprise and appreciation.

Taking turns in stoking the kiln is interspersed with lively workshops (demonstrations and participatory in nature) on ceramic making techniques as well as informative talks and slide shows. All this is accompanied by scrumptious meals and refreshments that can be shared by family members of attendees who might not be attending the workshops.

The workshop concludes with eager discussion of results - how certain effects were achieved by a combination of glaze, clay type and position in the kiln, how it can be repeated, adapted and varied the next time when we again gather to fire "our" wood-burning kiln.

"In the international arena, wood firing may be viewed as unfashionable by 'cutting edge' designers or trendy youth. However, to us, contemporary mass produced ceramics is one dimensional and forgettable - in one moment you have seen all there is to see, in contrast to the gradually revealed character of a complex and subtle wood fired work. Compared to the standard electric kiln fired ware, there is something timeless and universal about wood fired work - it includes the elements of earth, wind, fire and water and continues an ancient heritage dating from the time when human beings first deliberately fired clay," says Nina.

Nicolene (Nikki) Swanepoel has a diploma in ceramic design and a master's degree in Fine Art. She has received national and international awards for her work and has written articles in local as well as international publications on ceramic art. She lives in Grabouw on a rocky outcrop with 3 dogs and 3 cats. (Sadly Nikki passed away suddenly early in January 2016. Ed.)

Article and photographs by Ann Marais

A visit to Crammix Brick Works in Brackenfell outside Cape Town: as one drives into this sprawling 20 acre property a sense of dereliction greets the visitor. This once thriving industry has come to a standstill. Bricks lie everywhere, abandoned, strewn across the ground, between clumps of grass. At a nearby defunct chimney, a tree has sprouted between the brick work, its verdant greenery a mocking gesture to this dead symbol of fire. The air of desolation increases as one approaches the very large factory building with its grimy, dusty windows that line the building. Inside, the sense of abandonment becomes sharper as one eyes the hundreds of discarded plaster moulds stacked in mounds, tiers, clumps or lying on shelves. Amongst them is Dickensian machinery, silent and still: a huge filter press looms like a giant monster from a sci-fi movie. A flatware roller machine squats like some 19th century beast. It is almost as if one can sense the ghosts of the past still lingering in the cavernous silence that now reigns. There would be the hum of the machines; the whirling, the clatter, the hissing, the heat, the scraping and clunking as the machines pressed, jiggered, jollied, rolled and fired the clay that they fashioned from slurry to cup, saucer, mug, bowl, plate and platter. One is filled with a great sense of nostalgia for what was once a living, thriving industry now fallen silent. Yet there is still some small movement as a handful of workers jigger and jolley cups and press out handles between the silent machines and dusty moulds. It is here that I have come to meet someone unique, someone who hails from the very heartland of ceramics in middle England. He is Malcolm Jackson, master mould maker and ceramic expert supremo from Stoke-on-Trent.

Now and then one comes across a character like Malcolm Jackson who operates beneath the radar and yet has such profound knowledge and expertise in his field. There is an immediate desire to unravel his history that began in the hallowed ground of British pottery. He is the link with Staffordshire and the five pottery towns - Stoke, Longton, Burslem, Hanley and Tunstall - themselves silent now too. Jackson was born in Newcastle-under-Lyme. His journey in clay reads like a novel, from 19/20th century Industrial Revolution pottery manufacture in Britain to cutting-edge German ceramic technology in 21st century Africa.

His journey with clay began at age sixteen when he was apprenticed to Palissy Pottery in Longton. (Palissy Pottery was named in honour of the famous Frenchman, Bernard Palissy.) Jackson's family had suggested that he go into mould making because it was a 'bit arty' and it covered all disciplines of the industry in general.

He joined Palissy at the cusp of great change that was coming about in the pottery industry. He experienced much that would soon be buried in history, such as the great bottle kilns still operating. He admired the enormous strength of the men who loaded these kilns. They carried huge saggars on their heads, filled with ware, and climbed up in the kiln, often two storeys high, as they packed these mammoth kilns. He remembers that there was little regard for health and safety in those days. 50lb hessian bags of glaze materials were humped around and as they were shifted clouds of toxic dust swirled about. Children, whose parents had cottages in the factory grounds, played on and around these bags in the storeroom. However, lead glazes were being phased out when he came to work there but he saw people afflicted with lead poisoning - their lips had turned blue.

Jackson was obviously an apt pupil as he quickly learnt how to make moulds as well as acquiring technical knowledge, such as about clay shrinkage, all the tooling of the machines as well as the types of production methods. He learnt about jiggering, jollying, roller machines, filter presses and the important aspects of production systems. All the



production from the machines needed to be sold everyday so the machines were kept running all the time. The operators earned their wages from the machines so they couldn't be shut down. An important element in any design would be the cost factor in the production of an item. Each pottery had their own design team (usually trained in the Stoke Polytechnic) who would create the designs and modify them with different handles or spouts, lids, patterns or glaze. Before any item could go into production there would be meetings with operators to make sure that the item could be made within a cost effective price. The operators were paid on piece work - there was no fixed wage. They were paid according to the number of successful items made (any faulty work didn't count). So the style of the finished item made from the mould was dictated by how much a person could earn a living from this item. This reflected on the designer and mould maker. The more parts there were to a design, the longer it took to produce, the less money for the operator so often it was back to the drawing board - could it be made in two pieces instead of three. This affected workers all down the line - for instance the spongers and fettlers would have less fewer seams to clean on an item if the mould was made with two parts instead of three.

MASTER MOULD MAKER



Opposite page:

1. Defunct chimney at crammix brick works factory, Brackenfell
2. General view of Oude Kaap factory

This Page left to right:

3. Malcolm Jackson
4. General view of Oude Kaap factory
5. Mcoseleli Macazela with mould and mug just made
6. Roslyn Fredericks making and attaching spouts and handles

After a year at Palissy where mostly flatware was made, Jackson had learnt all there was to learn about production methods and he was eager for more challenging work. Arthur Woods and Sons were well known for their fancy ware - tableware and gifts - so he joined this firm where he spent nine years. By the end of his term there he was the head of the mould making department. He had three journeymen under him who had to make their living every day with mould maintenance as well as making moulds according to the factory order book which called for anything from bowls to teapots to unusual giftware. Jackson says he is technically minded rather than artistic: he can make all sorts of tooling and make sure it runs true. For artwork designs they used outside modellers who made models, for example, of water jugs with relief hunting scenes around them of dogs and horses with very ornate horse head handles. Some ware was designed for specific countries i.e. America where chamber pots were endlessly popular! For six of the nine years he was at Arthur Woods they produced these chamber pots in huge quantities. They made teapots for 1 cup up to 12 cups. The monster teapots would need two handles. Jackson would discuss with the modellers how many mould pieces would be necessary and what size - they would work on a pre-determined price i.e. how much a caster would charge to make the teapot. They may



have had to change the design in order to make the item in two instead of three parts to get the price right. So it was the cost that often influenced the design of a piece.

The various operators were highly skilled in their own particular areas of production, such as the turners who finished the leather hard pot on side lathes. They had a knack for securing the pot onto the wooden lathe with their knuckle followed by the trimming which would take only seconds. Sometimes they would apply a beading with one turn of the lathe. They also applied coloured slip such as the well-known baby blue banded product popular at the time. Spouts and handles were made by apprentices after which the ware was placed in damp chambers before the final finishes were applied, such as adhering the spouts after the spout holes had been pierced in the teapot body and a hole pierced in the teapot lid for steam to escape when filled with tea. Finally all went into the green house before going into the kiln. Here each piece was checked and how many of them made. This determined how much the workers would be paid.

All the machinery needed for the potteries was manufactured in factories cheek-by-jowl with the potteries so if anything broke down help was at hand, often in the same street. There were hundreds of factories and some famous firms such as Bolton Engineers where filter presses and dead-weight pumps were made. Edward and Jones made large extruders. However, all this intensive hand labour manufacture slowly became uneconomical with the rise of new technology such as dry pressing automation which made people redundant. Cheap labour from China began to overtake expensive British labour in the end pricing of ware. Turning became too expensive so units were made in a mould. Processes and designs were streamlined to be made much simpler. The potteries were slowly dying out.

FEATURE Profile

Malcolm Jackson moved on. The call of Africa became too strong so he moved to Johannesburg with his young family where he was employed by Majolica Potteries who had brought him out from England. There he was employed as a mould maker for two and a half years. However, he had a yen to go deeper into Africa and specifically, Zimbabwe - still Rhodesia in those days. They moved up to Bulawayo where he was employed by Rhodesian Brick and Potteries.

This was a whole new story for Jackson. They arrived in the middle of Ian Smith's UDI and there were heavy sanctions on all imports. Everything had to be manufactured locally. The electrical industry needed ceramic insulators: tableware was a problem as was kiln furniture. Along with his mould making portfolio came the question - what to do about the ceramic insulators - how to press them was the first part. They realised that part of the body was not adequate for the insulators due to plastic strength or wrong firing temperatures. Complications arose every time they tried to do something simple. At the same time they needed to do something about their kiln batts and upright cranks for the tableware. The glazes were attacking the uprights of the kiln furniture and starting to add a coating to them so they were becoming salted all over and sticking and spoiling the ware. In the pre-firing stage, gas is released which attacks the uprights of the kiln furniture so there is a slight sheen to them and anything that touches them sticks. There was no diamond tooling like to-day where it can be easily cleaned so it was difficult to clean them then. Their biggest breakthrough came with the help of a local company who were mining different minerals when they managed to achieve a high firing refractory clay body. They took some of the old, broken kiln furniture and crushed that up. They made the dyes to stamp out the uprights, the bases for the pin cranks and the tops of the pin cranks which they had modified. At the same time, he was training workers to make moulds and the maintenance of them. His portfolio also included any new developments and admin work.

It was at this time that the mineral bug hit Jackson hard as he saw all the gems being mined. He met some geologists who were mining for gold down small shafts two kilometres down the road so he thought they could tap into the same seam. With great excitement they went down to the bottom of the clay pits to try and find the gold in the quartz mineral..... Alas he didn't get rich!

By now, though, it was time to move on again as things were getting pretty rough. Children had to be taught in schools how to handle themselves in difficult situations. People had to be careful where they parked their cars. Motorists were advised not to drive over potholes because they could have explosives planted in them. A lot of people were dying in the bush war and Jackson had a wife and three children to care for.

A big move came for them in 1976 with the shift to the Continental China Group in Cape Town. The company was looking to open a new plant in Atlantis north of Cape Town. Before this came on stream the company formed a team with Jackson, Klaus Fulbrooke and Reyno Cilliers at their Blackheath plant in order to change production from the hotel ware that they were producing to a stoneware body. They did mock-ups and designs for plaster profiles and shapes of plates, bowls, cups etc. for management to look at. At the same time, a glaze technician designed new glazes for this ware.

After a year or so they were given the go-ahead to build the Atlantis factory that was being financed by Rösenthal in Germany and Federale Volkskas Beleggings. Whilst still at Blackheath, he and Reyno Cilliers had produced the first shapes for Atlantis in the form of household domestic ware as well as the catering/restaurant market.

Now the game was on. They worked with new machinery imported from Germany to fit the moulds to produce the ware. It was exciting times, very fast moving and very rewarding. The German management required things to be right and very quickly so there was lots of pressure. They worked long hours modifying things, getting rid of chipping impact, glaze crazing and scratching. All the technology had to be built into the designs. They were also carrying the SABS mark so all the problems had to be addressed and corrected. Some of the shapes they did were too fragile so they had to be modified; the tooling had to be changed. Work went on behind the scenes just to produce a cup and saucer. The shrinkage had to be worked out and any distortion possibility had to be eliminated from the designs. Jackson says they were in fact selling capacity: a cup had to hold 230mls and a milk jug 250mls. If the cup was too big or too small, it had to look like 250mls. but only hold 230mls! It must not look too thick but it must not chip either. Stoneware is a heavy, dense body in itself so this also had to come into play. He became more of a technician than a mould maker. He had to know how fast the tools were spinning, to get the right speeds to do the right forming, the right compaction and the right heat. A lot of machine technology went into producing these items. The machines worked so fast that they smashed the moulds so they had to produce harder plasters. Every time a mould broke it knocked the machine out





Opposite page: left to right
 1. Filter press at Oude Kaap factory
 2. Semi automatic flat ware roller machine
 This page:
 3. Flat ware moulds, Oude Kaap factory

of line so the whole process would have to stop for half an hour while the machine was re-set and put back on line. They had to make sure that everything was ready for the next day so they worked long hours. It was a high pressure game for a good four or five years.

One can surmise that his considerable expertise and experience in all aspects of pottery production was well known in the industry and thus it was that the new owners of the Crammix Company invited him to re-structure, revitalize their ailing cups and saucers 'Oude Kaap' factory in Brackenfell in 1985. He had a good position at the Continental China Group so any change would involve considerable risk for him to give up this security and take on an uncertain venture. However, he took leave and spent some time in the Oude Kaap factory. He found that their machinery was good but their technology was all wrong. He realised that he could help them with the clay body because they were getting a lot of dunting, cracking in the kiln on cooling so their clay formula was wrong from a silica point of view. With all his experience in Zimbabwe and elsewhere he thought he could fix the problems quite quickly. After a week there he decided to take the plunge and accepted the offer. However, he initially worked for the owners for a while because there were so many things wrong that it was not good for him to sink money into the factory because he couldn't finance all these problems. It was only later that he bought out the owners. In the beginning there was also a large work force and this, too, was a big responsibility.

When he took over the management, the factory was geared towards producing cheap items (cups and saucers) for Pep Stores. He found the pricing structure was wrong, losses were high, labour costs were high so he needed to re-structure the order book. He decided that the way to go was to target the cigarette and liquor markets. They managed to achieve this with the production of ashtrays, water jugs, ice buckets and all sorts of branded products. They made huge executive ashtrays and local bank ashtrays. Sanlam and the banks ordered thousands of them every year. There were a lot of machines standing idle when he arrived so he initiated the production of small 10cms and 14cms ashtrays quickly on the jiggering machines at a reasonable price. They became involved in the badge-ing and branding market which took him into a new area of production with the introduction of on-glaze transfers. The various items had to match a company's logo exactly: for example an ashtray had to carry exactly the same colours as the cigarette packet. With the help of a company they got this down to a fine art to the extent that the cigarette company gave them recognition with a certificate to say that they were the preferred supplier in the Cape.

Jackson then turned his attention to the liquor market and began producing items for the big brands such as Bells whisky, Chivas Regal and J & B. For the J & B Met they made ceramic ice buckets, water jugs

and ashtrays, all branded with the J & B badges. They made hundreds of items each year and as the colours changed each year they became involved in coloured glaze technology. Eventually they were producing nearly every brand of water jug of different shapes. The order book showed so many thousands of this colour by that date with these logos so they knew exactly where they were. However, keeping consistent raw materials was a big issue. It took him six years to turn Oude Kaap into a profitable company.

The market place is always changing and by now they were getting orders from the retail stores for items like vases and unique gadgets for the household. Jackson, ever a keen businessman, had noticed that in the U.K. there was a burgeoning market for bisque ware amongst the studio potters who bought these ready-mades and with various glazing techniques made them into something of their own. He developed the bisque market in South Africa. At the height of this line of production, it accounted for 25% of their turnover under the 'Oude Kaap' label. Everyone bought their bisque ware - 'CPS' and 'Reinders' to the small, well-known studio potteries such as Chris Silverston, Chris Bradburn and "the tea pot lady" as Jackson called her - Clementina Van der Walt. He said she was quite famous and was the first one to introduce the painted teapots. He worked quite closely with her and has a high regard for her saying she is "a good potter with good designs"! Eventually they all started to produce their own bisque ware and he didn't pursue this line of ware further as it was not a big part of his business.

Times and circumstances are always changing. Serena Kaolin closed down. White, raw materials become a problem hence changes had to be made to the clay body and labour union problems became an issue. It was time for Jackson to retire from full-time work commitment and so he passed the mantle on to his son, Colin. 'Oude Kaap' became 'Ceramic Landscapes cc' in 2009 specializing in courtyard and garden products and items for the bonsai nurseries. In 2014 Colin closed 'Ceramic Landscapes' and joined industrial designer, Elsje Burger, in a new venture. Malcolm Jackson continues to be available on an ad hoc consultancy basis to this new company which aims to produce contemporary ceramics in new and innovative manufacturing and marketing processes.

He still does consultancy work when interesting (challenging) moulds and things of that nature are called for but for the most part he has moved into his mineralogical sunset where he is able to indulge this great passion of his. He has been a member of the Mineralogical Society in Cape Town since 1980 and has been Chairman of the society many times since 1982. He is currently Chairman. He is also vice chairman of FOSAGAMS (The Federation of South African Gem & mineral Society). His interest in this hobby is wide including Lapidary, faceting and mineral collecting. He travels far and wide and conducts mineralogical study tours. His is a full and interesting life, well-lived.

When quizzed on the loss to the pottery world of his encyclopaedic knowledge on all aspects of the ceramic industry now, he quotes a line from his supervisor during his apprenticeship days when he was told "I've forgotten more than you will ever know!"

Ann Marais has been a full time ceramist, sculptor and artist since 1977. She has exhibited with much success, both locally and abroad. She is highly respected for her writings in local as well as overseas publications. Her work is held in private as well as public collections all over the world. She is a Fellow of Ceramics Southern Africa.

The 2015 Western Cape Regional Exhibition at the Great Alphen Cellar, Constantia

Article by Ralph Johnson

Photographs by Les Hammond and various artists



Extract from the opening address by Wilma Cruise:

"There's nothing like good ceramics to make my heart soar. When I see a good pot it provokes unseemly feelings of covetousness. I just have to own it! Conversely, bad ceramics make a clunk from my stomach to my shoes. But, here is the conundrum. What is it that make ceramics good and what is it that make them bad? Perversely it has less to do with technique than the head; although obviously technique is important. Ultimately it is the thinking that guides and makes good ceramics. It is tempting - especially for the beginner potter - to emulate a pot they like. This in itself is not so bad - we all steal from the masters - but when it stays like that without an understanding of where the object is placed in the larger ceramic discourse, it is empty of meaning.

It is important for potters to contextualize their practice. For example: Are they making a sculpture or a sculptural pot? It is crucial to think through the distinctions. A pot contains interior space. A sculpture displaces exterior space. A sculpture normally has something to say. (Not that pots have to be silent.) Is the work ornamental or representational - in what tradition does it function? Whether a pot or sculpture, is the work going to be functional or decorative, critical, satirical or ornamental?

Tactile qualities are important - more so for a functional vessel than a sculpture. There is nothing like a fat, unctuous glaze smooth to the hand. Conversely there is nothing worse than a glaze that looks and feels like dry acrylic paint sitting in dry sullenness on the surface.

It matters whether a vessel is light or weighty. It matters a lot if the pot is heavy in the base requiring the engagement of one's core to lift it. Ideally when a pot is picked up it should give the sensation of leaping off the surface of the table. The weight of a sculpture need not be a major factor, although of course it must balance without falling over. A crack in a sculpture is unimportant but it is a big negative for a casserole dish. No Prately's Putty for the potter!

Finally the formal properties of the work are vital - a fact that is often ignored in contemporary ceramics. When the dominance of Anglo-American ideology with its emphasis on the form of the work was rejected, sometime in the late eighties, it seemed that potters threw the baby out with the bath water. It would be a good time to re-engage with these timeless aspects of ceramic form."

The Western Cape Regional Ceramic Exhibition at the Stephan Welz & Co. Great Cellar, Alphen Estate, Constantia was opened by Wilma Cruise on Sunday 1 November 2015. This Regional Exhibition consisted of three separate exhibitions; Juried, Invitational and Outdoor. The Juried Exhibition required work to go through a selection process with selected work eligible for awards. The Invitational Exhibition was open to all our members, the work was self selected and there were no awards. The Outdoor Exhibition comprising sculptures and installations, curated by Wilma Cruise and Lesley Porter, was displayed on a large grass square outside the Great Cellar.



Above:
1. Susan Lomas - 'Noah's Raven'
2. Mariette Gregor- Jugs
3. Dalida Seeligsohn-
'Stephen my Friend'
4. Clementina van der Walt -
'Blue Contemplation'
5. Gallery View

Opposit page:
5. Gallery View
6. Nanette Ranger - 'Earth Mother'
7. Cathy Brennon -
'African Bush Dream'
8. Gallery View
9. Rae Goosen -
'Do as I say, not as I do'

Juried Exhibition

The selectors and award judges for the Juried Exhibition were Wilma Cruise, Andile Dyalvane and Alan Lutge. The categories were New Signatures, Ceramics for Expression and Ceramics for Use.

New Signature

The CPS Sterling Award went to Dalida Seeligsohn for an abstract sculpture "Stephen my Friend" with runner up, Mariette Gregor,



5.



6.

winning the Potters Shop Award for an installation of 3 jugs. Natalie Thiert was awarded a Merit for a group of small porcelain vessels.

Ceramics for Use

In this category, the Grant Thornton Award went to John Wilhelm for a set of beautifully glazed serving dishes titled "Green Bees", runner up Susan Howard won the Reinders Potters Supplies Award for a slab and coiled pot inspired by Miro.

Ceramics for Expression

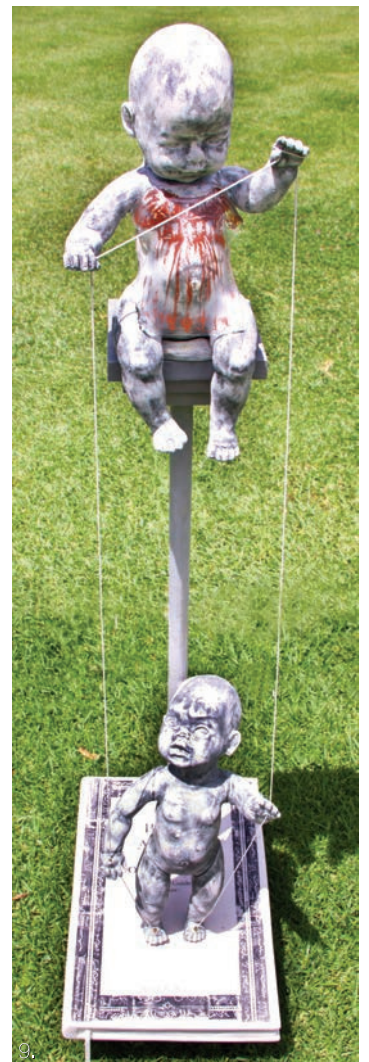
In the Ceramics for Expression category, the Cape Gallery Award went to Clementina van der Walt for a still life "Blue Contemplation" and runner up Susan Lomas won the Alan Lutge Prize for an installation inspired by the WS Merwin poem "Noah's Raven".

Merit Awards were presented to Alessandro Pappada for "Can 'o Worms", a funky set of ceramic cans and Catherine Brennon for a slab sculpture "African Bush Dream".

The Fellows Award is a new award sponsored by a Western Cape Fellow who chooses the winning piece and writes a short critique explaining their choice. This first time award, sponsored by Ann Marais, was won by Susan Howard for her hand built pot inspired by Miro.

Invitational Exhibition

The Invitational Exhibition was initiated several years ago to ensure that all members of CSA had the opportunity to have work on the Regional Exhibition. As there is no selection process, a theme is chosen for the sake of cohesion. The theme for this Invitational was "Botanical" and in keeping with the theme two of the glass display cases were filled with streptocarpus in full bloom, a novel addition to the exhibition. The work entered ranged from large coiled pots decorated with indigenous flowers to clay stones planted with ceramic succulents.



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Outdoor Exhibition

The Outdoor Exhibition on the lawn in front of the Great Cellar proved to be both an interesting feature as well as an excellent marketing tool as it attracted the public's attention and directed them to the Regional Exhibition inside. This exhibition included sculptures and installations with figurative work by Wilma Cruise, Karen Lijnes, Rae Goosen and Nanette Ranger as well as installations by Hennie Meyer, Nicolene Swanepoel, Jo Merret and Lesley Porter.

Thank-you to our exhibition management team ably led by Lesley Porter, our generous sponsors of awards, our selectors for their expertise and time, Hennie Meyer and his team for creating magical order from chaos and Stephan Welz & Co for hosting the exhibition.

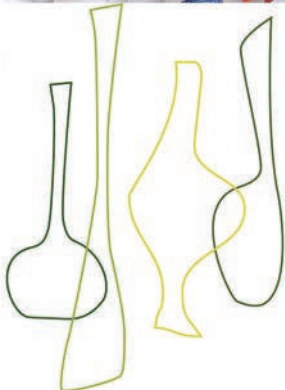
Ralph Johnson has spent the past thirty years designing and making ceramics working mainly with porcelain. He has taken part in numerous exhibitions in South Africa and abroad and has work in many public collections. He was ceramics lecturer at Stellenbosch University, Boland College and Cape Town College and now runs Master classes from home. He is a Fellow of Ceramics SA and Chairman of Ceramics SA Western Cape.

Left:

- 9. John Wilhelm- 'Green Bees'
- 10. Susan Howard – 'Inspired by Miro'



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Hylton NEL
Mad summer head,
 1968,
 ceramic

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 2016



The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum is turning 60 years this year. To commemorate this momentous milestone the Art Museum launched a series of exhibitions that explore the history of the Art Museum's extensive collection while paying tribute to the community of Nelson Mandela Bay

who have supported us throughout our 60 years. The planned commemorative exhibitions will conclude with a final exhibition of highlights titled **YEYETHU, SONKE (THIS BELONGS TO ALL OF US): 60 YEARS OF COLLECTING** which will open on the Art Museum's 60th anniversary on the 22 June 2016.

CONTACT DETAILS: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum; 1 Park Drive Port Elizabeth; 6001; 041 506, 2000; email: artmuseum@mandelametro.gov.za; website: www.artmuseum.co.za

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The Gallery @ The Pottery Studio hosts regular exhibitions featuring selected work by students and other ceramists.

Instructors John Shirley, Michelle Legg & Colleen Lehmkuhl are all award winning ceramists and active members of Ceramics S. A.



EXHIBITION

This exhibition was held at Art on Target, Target Kloof, Port Elizabeth. It was our first exhibition in this wonderful open studio, which overlooks the Baakens Valley. Guests to the opening were treated to an incredibly wide selection of ceramics, displayed to their full potential, and live music, by Lelani Fourie... and of course, a glass or two of wine.

The Award Judge and Guest Exhibitor, Ann Marais, also opened the exhibition. Marais' sculptural piece titled "An Anxious Moment for a Small Time Crook" was a delight. The expressive look on the face of the crook makes one wonder what worrying thoughts occupy the mind of this man.

Lesley-Ann Hoets, a Fellow of Ceramics South Africa, was also a Guest Exhibitor, having won the Award for Excellence in 2014. Her hand-built, raku-fired pots are feminine in form, with intricate detailed patterning on the surface. Donvé Branch's thrown and pit-fired pots individually exhibit the beautiful patterns and colours that smoke, combined with other materials, can produce on the clay surface. Branch is a Fellow of Ceramics Southern Africa. Gavin Cox's Eggcentric and Egglectic pieces also work well in this regard.

Lynnley Watson, another Fellow of Ceramics South Africa, exhibited a set of three porcelain vessels, reflecting her concerns towards global warming. Here the plight of polar bears is depicted with the skilful use of drawing and the contrast between the cool blue glaze and white slip on the surface. Lydia Holmes, also working in porcelain, created a series of small bowls and tea light holders. Inspired by patterns in the earth, landscape and night sky, Holmes created interesting, tactile surfaces with texture, blue under glaze decoration and melted glass.

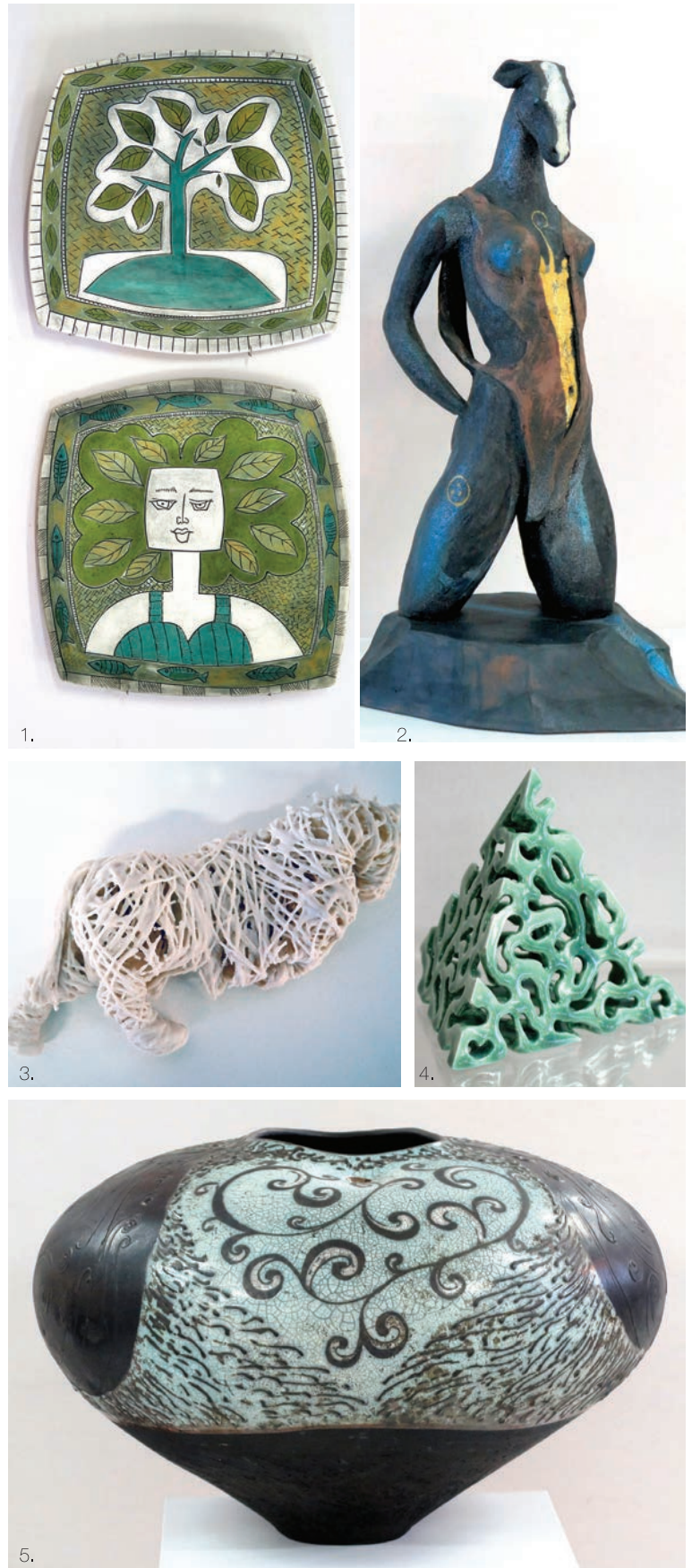
The Award for Excellence was presented to Richard Pullen, who showed an astonishing departure from his usual tightly thrown pieces. Spontaneously thrown, using charcoal clay, vessels have been manipulated and the surfaces impressed and loosely painted with splashes of colour in red and white, using an engobe and slip. The three vessels were aptly titled "Transplant", "Impressions" and "Living". "Living" was acquired for the Corobrik Collection.

Billie McNaughton was presented with the Merit Award for her set of plates inspired by Mother Earth. The plates were decorated with black sgraffito lines and hues of blue and green underglazes. Lisa Walker was awarded the Best Use of Underglaze Award for her brightly decorated vase, inspired by Chinese fabrics. The surface was sprig-moulded with lace flowers and unglazed areas provided a contrast against glazed, textured areas.

Carving through black slip on stoneware, Chantal Martin's "Koi" platters showed an elegant approach towards decorating the ceramic surface. Bentley van Wyk, on the other hand, exhibited a series of wheel-thrown bowls, with surfaces patterned by impressing small objects, such as buttons, into the surface. These were glazed with a slightly translucent peony glaze.

Heather Frankel's figurative pieces from her "Wild Woman" series are press-moulded and hand-built. The bases are treated with a wonderful blending of oxides and underglazes which bring softness to the pieces and contrast well with the rest of the sculpture. Bianca Whitehead had some fun with her bowls. They were glazed with a satin-matt white glaze and boldly decorated with colour glazes in dots, circles, blocks of colour and stripes.

Miranda Qomoyi, from East London, works with a stoneware clay which contains a proportion of locally dug material and



Above: 1. Billie McNaughton: Merit Award: 'Earth' & 'Mother Earth'
2. Diana Castle: 'Theria'
3. Jeffrey Allan: 'Fallen Horse'
4. Jeffrey Allan: Best Student Award: 'Sponge'
5. Lesley-Ann Hoets: Vessel - 'Double Brocade'

The 2015 Eastern Cape Regional Exhibition, Art on Target Gallery, Port Elizabeth



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an ash glaze which is made up with ash from a pizza oven. Qomoyi's jugs are inspired by the spiralling and textured surfaces of sea shells. They are thrown with soft clay and altered on the wheel. The handles are pulled and attached while soft, to complement the form. The platters are made from textured slabs with torn edges. These are placed in a mould and the forms are altered and softened during the firing. The use of oxides under the glaze results in earthy tones of greys, reds and browns.

Diana Castle's erotic figurative sculpture titled "Theria" and described by the artist as "a mythical buck-headed female with roots in San culture" depicts exactly that. The figure wears an animal skin and has symbolic tattoos drawn on her body. The base of the sculpture is aesthetically pleasing, in that it has been treated as a part of the sculpture.

Jeffrey Allan was awarded the Best Student Award for his porcelain piece "sponge", but it is "Fallen Horse" which really attracted attention. Allan carved a horse from polystyrene and then slip-trailed around and over it, gently building on the form. After firing, a hollow, string-like form remains. This piece shows a sensitivity towards detail, as one can see in the small knots of the

- Left to right
- 6. Richard Pullen: Award for Excellence
 - 7. Lynnley Watson: 'Vulnerable1,2 & 3'
 - 8. Lydia Holmes: 'Blue Landscape'
 - 9. Lisa Walker: CPS Best Use of Underglaze Award for a group of vessels
 - 10. Bianca Whitehead: bowls with dots



11. mane. The lack of colour on this piece lends it a feeling of emptiness. Student, Jessica Hansen, submitted two pieces "My City 1" and "My City 2". Each piece looks as though a square chunk of the city has been cut out and put on display. The buildings are slab constructions, detailed with oxides, and while "My City 1" has a ceramic "base" which is reflective of the ground beneath the buildings, "My City 2" has been skilfully joined to a kiln brick, which has a more gravelly, underground feel and look to it.

Interestingly, about half of the work on display was unglazed and even less, was utilitarian. A good selection of ceramic work from Eastern Cape artists, indeed.

Lisa Walker has been working in ceramics for 20 years. She has exhibited on various exhibitions in South Africa and has works in collection at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum and the William Humphrey's Art Gallery. Lisa currently teaches informal classes from her home studio.

14.

Above 13. Miranda Qomoyi: Jugs and Plate
14. Donve Branch: Vessel

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image: Ann Marais, WS1 s/w casting slip

FROM AFAR... A LETTER FROM CANADA

In mid-2015 I said my goodbyes and headed off for Vancouver, Canada where I am now resident. The exercise to relocate to a new life in a new country is simultaneously stressful and liberating... and prompting one to search for perspectives on all and sundry. That exercise of focussing on what matters most and what would transcend time and place started with my selection of which works in my vast studio pottery collection would be shipped to me in Canada. Whilst handling the pottery and assessing what made them collectable, it dawned on me that I did not spend three decades collecting pots... I have been collecting potters.

The premier pieces in the collection were crafted by Esias Bosch, Anton Bosch, Esra Bosch, Andrew Walford, Digby Hoets, Ian Glenny, David Walters, David Schlapobersky and Felicity Potter, Christo Giles, Neville Burde, Elza Sullivan, Hyme Rabinowitz and a few others. I did not acquire their works because they had investment value but because they resonated with my judgement of consistent superior craftsmanship and my values of the ethics of making pots. Let me put it in another way: a pretty pot is not necessarily a good pot. Sadly, I saw far too many pretty pots and far too few good pots being promoted in recent years. I also saw potters who after being awarded a prize for this or that kind of pot, fall into a rut and produce the same stuff in various guises. Or they would flit from one invention to the next, never adding depth to those qualities in their prize-winning works which brought them the earlier recognition. The question must be asked whether the potter exclusively carries the blame or do the competition jurors (and collection curators, dealers and buyers) share in the blame for promoting a pot on its face value and immediate appeal? Not so long ago, an award of merit was given at a provincial exhibition to a pot which, according to one juror, had the most amazing glaze. When I pointed out that the pot had major structural defects and when lifted felt like a chunk of concrete, the juror admitted that he only viewed it as it was displayed on the pedestal, neither scrutinising it in the round nor experiencing its tactile qualities. In other words, the pot was given recognition for its ornamental value only and the potter gained an undeserved accolade.

My preferred potters do not grow complacent about their work. They do not measure their craftsmanship or their success against peer group endorsement or public acclaim or the high prices which their works fetch. Of course they produce to sell but they do not pander to the whims of buyers... or competition jurors. Their work is not staid in appearance but is consistent in never wavering from any of the prerequisite qualities which makes a pot a good pot. They push their skills bit by bit, edging forwards in the evolution of their work. In any of their most recent works, one can read the history of what they have mastered over time and how that knowledge is the very foundation of anything new. All of this does not mean that I have never acquired the works of up-and-coming potters but only in rare instances have I added any of their subsequent works to my collection. I would abandon my interest in them if one or two years after acquiring a first work, I saw in their new works a stagnation or the greater evil of the addition of fashionable frivolities.

Exhibition-cum-competition events must of course invite and recognise new potters. These events are critical to the vibrancy of the pottery craft by attracting talent, recognising talent and promoting sales. They must also be seen as essential events in cementing pottery's relevance and status in the South African art-craft world where a multitude of expressive forms and practices vie for recognition. This demands that pottery promotional events should celebrate excellence over novelty. Who are the judges of excellence? Is such judgement the exclusive domain of the potters themselves? How about inviting the critical judgement of dealers of repute, connoisseur collectors, art historians, patrons, art critics and academic-orientated writers? These people are not incidental to the craft of pottery but are integral to it. Just because they do not have clay under their fingernails, does not mean that they know nothing about what makes a pot a good one.

All of this might make it appear that I am rather negative about South African pottery. That is not the case at all. I am a staunch supporter and admirer of South African studio pottery and have sung its praises far and wide. I am, however, not going to rave about any king's new clothes whilst knowing that the king is in fact kaalgat (naked).

Ronnie Watt
Vancouver BC, Canada
Website: www.artatworktoday.com

Ronnie Watt was accepted in 2015 as one of only 101 new members of the prestigious International Academy of Ceramics. He is currently engaged in research for his MA in Art History. The dissertation deals with South African studio pottery in the 20th century.

New Acquisitions for the Corobrik Collection: Pretoria Art Museum

Article by Gail de Klerk
Photographs by Justin Howes

The Corobrik Collection is a wonderful visual record of the growth and development of both Ceramics Southern Africa as well as that of studio ceramists over the past 40 years. It also showcases the rich diversity of cultures of our artists. The award winning entries from the 1977 National Exhibition held at the then Rand Afrikaans University (now The University of Johannesburg) were the first exhibits in the Collection. Those three award winners were Esias Bosch, Elsbeth Burkhalter and Ronnie van der Walt. Thereafter pieces were acquired from National and Regional Exhibitions.

The Collection was housed in various places but in 2001 it was moved to The Pretoria Art Museum where it is professionally cared for by the Curator, Hannelie du Plessis. In 1996 an agreement was reached with Corobrik to sponsor the Collection with annual contributions. This sponsorship has allowed for works to be acquired from National and Regional Exhibitions as well as from other exhibitions each year. Now there are 252 pieces in the Collection thereby ensuring the relevance of the Collection.

To have work in the Corobrik Collection is, I believe, a great honour as it is the only contemporary collection that is historically relevant as well as continually showing the latest exciting work created by ceramic artists today. During the past 18 months 14 pieces have been acquired. These included some historically significant donations made by Ronnie Watt before he relocated to Canada. The Association of Arts in Pretoria also donated a beautiful horse by Carol Hayward-Fell and Hennie Meyer made a generous donation of some of the mugs from his Ukusela eKapa Installation. All the other pieces were acquired from the 2014 National Corobrik Exhibition held in Cape Town and the Regional Exhibitions held in 2015.

2014 Corobrik National Ceramics Exhibition, Great Cellar, Alphen Estate, Constantia, Cape Town, November 2014

Hannes van Zyl, acquisition No. 238: Bottle with Green Dots.

Gerd Kalesse, acquisition No. 239: 'Yes, or No.' (A whimsical dialogue between two half cups on the question of oneness).

Phumlani Walter Nyawo, acquisition No. 240: 'Inkunzi' (A bull prepared to fight for the leadership of the herd).

Carol Hayward-Fell, acquisition No. 241: Horse, donated through the Assoc of Arts Pretoria Da Vinci Exhibition/July 2015 2015 KZN Regional Exhibition.

Frank Sesing Nthunya, acquisition No. 242: Green Vessel 2015 G&W Mineral Resources Gauteng Regional Exhibition.

Colleen Lehmkuhl, acquisition No. 243: Coiled pot with stripes.

Christine Williams, acquisition No. 244: 'Birds of Paradise' 2015 Eastern Cape Regional Exhibition, Port Elizabeth.

Richard Pullen, acquisition No. 245: 'Living'. 2015 Western Cape Regional Exhibition.

Garth Meyer, acquisition No. 246 & 247: Jug & Lidded Jar

Donated pieces by Hennie Meyer from his 'Ukusela eKapa' (drink Cape Town in) Robben Island Installation Project during the World Design Capital, Cape Town 2014. Acquisition No. 248: In the 46664 Robben Island installation, Ukusela eKapa commemorated the life of Nelson Mandela and celebrated the 20th anniversary of South Africa's democracy. Acquisition No 248.

The installation consisted of 10 000 individually hand imprinted clay drinking vessels (iikomityi) created by people from all walks of life during 2014.

Ukusela eKapa was made possible through the generous support of Scott Coffey of Qunci Villas, Lombok, Indonesia.

Beakers include those from well-known personalities such as Helen Zille, Patricia de Lille, Zapiro and Nic Rabinowitz among others.

Pieces donated by Ronnie Watt (now residing in Canada):

Drury Brandt, acquisition No. 249: Jug

Andrew Walford, acquisition No. 250: Vessel

Andrew Walford, acquisition No. 251: Lidded Jar

Ian Glenny, acquisition No. 252: Vessel

A major part of the collection is always on view in the Glass Gallery situated at the main entrance to the Pretoria Art Museum and many thousands of visitors see the work each year.

One may also view the Collection on the ceramics Southern Africa's website: www.ceramicsa.org.

Gail de Klerk is a Fellow of Ceramics Southern Africa and has been a member of CSA since its inception in 1972. She has served on many committees and held numerous positions within the organisation over the years. Gail is a Trustee of both CSA and the Corobrik Collection since 1997.



www.corobrik.com

1. Frank Sesing Nthunya, Acq No. 242: Green Vessel
2. Ukusela eKapa (Hennie Meyer)
3. Hannes van Zyl, Acq No. 238: Bottle with Green Dots
4. Gerd Kalesse, Acq No. 239: 'Yes, or No'.
5. Garth Meyer, Acq No. 246 & 247: Jug & Lidded Jar
6. Garth Meyer, Acq No. 246 & 247: Jug & Lidded Jar
7. Drury Brandt, Acq No. 249: Jug
8. Phumlani Walter Nyawo, Acq No. 240: Inkunzi
9. Ian Glenny, Acq No. 252: Vessel
10. Carol Hayward-Fell, Acq No. 241: Horse
11. Christine Williams, Acq No. 244: Birds of Paradise
12. Andrew Walford, Acq No. 250: Vessel
13. Andrew Walford, Acq No. 251: Lidded Jar
14. Richard Pullen, Acq No. 245: Living
15. Colleen Lehmkuhl, Acq No. 243: Coiled pot with stripes



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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.

Our Cape Town gallery is situated on an old Cape farm, on Kommetjie Main Road, near Kommetjie on the Cape Peninsula.





Craft Art in South Africa - Creative Intersections

By Dr Elbe Coetsee

Publisher: Jonathan Ball

ISBN 9781868426140

Review by Wendy Goldblatt

Elbe Coetsee is a promoter of craft art and social entrepreneurship and is passionate about the tactile quality of handmade objects. She has a PhD from Pretoria University which focussed on demographic characteristics and entrepreneurial attitudes of South African craft artists. She is also a curator for the handmade section of the Design Indaba.

This is Elbe's second book on Craft Art in South Africa working with photographer Jac de Villiers and layout artist Liane Visser. Elbe says her motivation for writing this second book is to highlight the renewed sense of creativity, culture and inspiration that is sweeping the country, in spite of the global economic and local problems. As she says in her introduction to the book, it showcases the universality and skill of some of the artists working in South Africa today and it rejoices in the sharing of creative knowledge and skills.

The book is packed with photographs of glorious craft art objects and their makers. It is divided into the various disciplines, such as Baskets; Beads; Ceramics; Fibres and Fabrics; Glass; Metal and Wire; Recycling; Wood and Cane, all including fine examples of craft pieces in the various disciplines.

The Ceramic section is by far the largest with reviews of some twenty six or so ceramists. As a point of interest, the earliest pots found in South Africa were of handbuilt unglazed earthenware and date from over 2000 years ago.

South Africa has an amazing range of contemporary and traditional ceramists who make a wonderful, exciting variety of ceramic objects and Elbe pays tribute to several of these artists and their diversity.

Dr Coetsee looks at the work of some thirty ceramists, some well known and other lesser known ceramists, all with something original to say.

She also discusses groups like Ardmore where some sixty potters work in collaboration, some throwing, others turning, yet others adding animals, carvings, handles etc. and yet another group painting the pieces after they have been bisque fired. Much of their work is now sold overseas and fetches very high prices on both auctions and exhibitions. It is now known as "modern day collectibles". Other groups such as Anthony Shapiro's Art in the Forest. Anthony runs mentorship programmes, outreach workshops and encourages his resident artists to create the 'Forest Ware' range of pottery which is sold in their gallery.

Hylton Nel mentors two protégés at his studio, Nico Masemola (now deceased) and William Ralarala who, while they work independently of him making their own individual pieces, they have many discussions with Hylton on what to make, on colour, glazing and marketability.

Another lesser known potter, Tom Joubert runs the Afrikania Pottery Studio whose geometric patterns are inspired by his African Heritage. Joubert also works with rural communities, some of whom border the Kruger Park with the objective of creating protective buffer zones round the Park through self-empowerment training and employment.

Some of the ceramists Elbe has selected are not well-known outside the Cape, which makes her book all the more interesting to discover some highly innovative and original potters whose work is relatively unknown to a lot of readers. I found the delicate hand work of Fahmeeda Omar, the large sculptured pieces of Astrid Dahl and the amazing VOC- inspired chandelier made by Ella Lou O'Meara both fascinating and intriguing and wanted to see more of their work.

Then, of course, there are the established ceramists such as Clementina van der Walt, Kim Sachs, Kathy Glenday, Ian Garrett, Hylton Nel, Yvette Weyers, Hennie Meyer, Nicolene Swanepoel and Wilma Cruise to name but a few. Each artist's work is illustrated with fantastic photographs of their work together with a photograph of the artist themselves in typical pose.

I have not reviewed the other sections of the book which deal with the extraordinary talent one finds in Basket weaving, Fibres and Fabric Beadwork, Glass, Metal & Wire, Recycling, Wood and Cane, all of which are works of art in their own right and again demonstrate the extraordinary genius that one finds in the Craft Art of South Africa.

I hope I have whetted your appetite to buy this beautiful book that I thoroughly recommend and which will be a worthwhile addition to your library and one that you will use for many years to come as a reference and as a book for both inspiration and enjoyment.

Wendy Goldblatt has been creating 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. One of the founding members of Ceramics SA (the Association of Potters as it was then called) she has served as both committee member and chairperson in that organisation. She has also acted as judge for several ceramic exhibitions and is a Fellow of Ceramics Southern Africa.


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Article and photographs by
Carolyn Heydenrych

Having made ceramics from the early age of thirteen, it is a passion that has never left me. I decided to study architecture, and then practised with my husband as Schmidt and Heydenrych Architects for twenty years. Naturally, architecture shines through in my ceramics.

Clay has been used for millennia throughout human civilizations; not only for art, but for domestic and architectural purposes as well. For instance, roof tiles were manufactured for housing. These roof tiles were made in rural Mediterranean countries by forming the tile over the person's thigh for the correct taper.

We used drawing boards until the nineties, and then transferred to Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) which is a very different process to drawing. Lines are formed by joining two dots, very mechanical, while a hand drawn line has character and even emotion, as in the way two lines join at a corner. Another problem with CAD is that architects become lazy and use cut and paste, copy, repeat, and mirror keys. This is obvious in so many contemporary buildings; just look out your windows when driving. This becomes obvious in the built form, resulting in buildings with the same facade sited next to each other in a mundane manner.

In a similar way, however, modelled 3D computer printed ceramic forms have the same effect with copying, perfection moulding and repeating. It is a hands-off means of production, losing tangibility, character and individuality. It also bypasses the joy of holding and feeling the clay while forming it. Unfortunately, we always have to fight fiercely for art over commerce.

I am very inspired by the ceramics and gold leaf work of the ancient Mapungubwe civilisation in the Musina area. To create my vessels, I used my concept of very thin porcelain walls as the gold foil and these slabs are joined together with tiny gold lustre nails as were used on the famous

gold rhino. Unlike Zimbabwe, the Mapungubwe treasures discovered on the top of this mountain were protected by surrounding sandstone cliffs from plunderers until 1933.

The ceramics of the time are beautiful, some very refined for use by the royalty who lived on the top of the mountain, and others rougher for domestic use by people in the surrounding plains. They often used woven basket imagery which they scratched onto the vessels.

When I researched the site, I discovered that the Visitors Centre for this World Heritage Site was designed by my former lecturer, Professor Peter Rich. His design won the international award for "Best Building in the World" in 2009. The forms and materials are beautifully vernacular. The construction method used was based on a 700 year old Mediterranean vaulting system, using layers of clay tiles and minimal timber guides. The tiles are joined using a quick setting gypsum mortar. All ceramic tiles and timbers were fashioned and built by the local people.

The Mapungubwe collection is housed in the Old Arts building at the University of Pretoria, and it is well worth a visit.

I try to draw every day. It is a delightful process as the subconscious works through one's hand and forms are dreamt and captured on paper. I studied under the legendary Professor Pancho Guedes, who taught us to first conceptualise and draw the building form in 3D. Thereafter we worked from that into plan, section and elevation. It created forms with inherent integrity.

My teapot was dreamed up one night. I wanted to form a teapot as a city building. After much development, the items now stand as structures with texture and line indicating elevational treatment. The tea set pieces embrace the spaces between them to create negative forms, which become more meaningful within themselves. My tea set pieces, raised on columns, are reminiscent of le Corbusier's piloti which opened up spaces underneath his buildings and

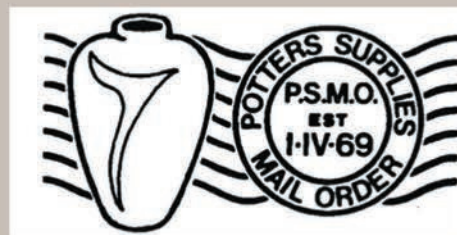
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Left to Right: 'Mapungubwe' Vessel 1, 'Mapungubwe' Tea Light
Above: Progression of Teapots

emphasised the object form.

With other vessels I explore translucence by reducing the clay surface. I cut out windows and gables, scrape off windows, carve out lines, and draw with black ink, which transfers through the clay as shadows.

The buildings drawn on the surface are ethereal, standing on sharp Daliesque columns as the buildings rise up and float into the skyline. What a pleasure not having engineers quoting "How are you going to hold that up - with helicopters?" In architecture, it is essential to pick a creative engineer. A design should be a challenge, not an obstacle.

Using porcelain has been a long journey of technique and form. In my early work, I would roll out very thin slabs and join every facet together. They took ages to build. It is similar to building architectural cardboard models, except for the problem that clay dries out all the time. The wonderful John Shirley then suggested that I slip cast them, and what a breakthrough that was! I had always thought that slip casting was 'cheating,' but it is a means to an end, enabling me to achieve extremely thin walls, beautiful translucency and an inherent seamless form.

The bowls with the reduced clay surface windows are reminiscent of the alabaster still used today for windows, mostly for religious buildings. The alabaster is more translucent than marble, being formed under water. For architects these days, however, it is not a sustainable material; now tiles and panels are made using stone chip in resin, which is recycled using ninety-nine percent waste.

After the death of my husband in 2002 I closed our practise and moved to Magaliesburg where I indulge myself in my ceramics. What a delight it is to fill my days with clay!

Carolyn Haydenrych has a Masters Degree in Architecture, qualifying Cum Laude at Wits University. Her Tea Set is in the Corobrik Collection at Pretoria Art Museum. Her work has been highly regarded for its aesthetic and technical excellence by Ceramics SA. She teaches Ceramics at Pretoria University in the Archaeological Department in association with the Mapungubwe Collection.

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Amalie Von Maltitz reflects on her Coiled Sculptures

Article and Photographs
by Amalie Von Maltitz

In 2009, Maestro Edoardo Villa was examining a small piece of mine, consisting of a box-like form containing a funnel, meant to guide light beams into the interior. He felt that the funnel had "potentialities" as he expressed it, but it should be at least a metre tall. So began the series of 'Columns' which still occupy me.

The coiling clay technique that I use goes back as far as 1965, when I attended a crafts class at the Akademie der Bildenden Kuenste in Stuttgart. Professor Schellenberger had been a student at the Bauhaus, and his lectures on simple exercises like weaving, carving spoons and forks from a twig and coiling small pots, were to become the principles for my understanding of creating form.

However, it was only in 1983 that I felt that coiling clay could be used to construct a sculpture. I had previously done mainly woodcarving, following on the training from Michaelis Art School under Lippy Lipshitz.

However, a simplified female head with hair encapsulating and supporting the form was built in very thin coils, thus becoming very fragile which in later years led to the development of internal supporting walls. I continued with ceramics, making moulds during the mid eighties, within which I pressed clay to build the hollow forms of three rock-like figures. This presented an opportunity to vary the shapes by cutting, adopting various finishes in texture and colour and different spatial arrangements to express diverse relationships.

Towards 1989 coiling had become my favoured method of building sculpture; a series of torsos on the theme of drought and fire followed. I became interested in showing some of the supporting core, by cutting through the outside layer, initially fairly at random. After 1990, having freely modelled maquettes to establish initial themes, I found it difficult to make shapes by any other method than coiling - I had started to think in coils.

An important part of my development in working with clay came with the friendship and encouragement of Thijs Nel, writer, poet and artist extraordinaire who now lives in Oudtshoorn. He was instrumental in making me realise that clay sculpture could be enhanced by glazing or using oxides; he also exhorted me to develop bigger works, but I had to grow in confidence and courage for this eventually to evolve. This came when I reached a stage sensing it was now 'me time' and I could concentrate on sculpture as well as following Maestro Villa's guidance.

It may seem a contradiction that a limitation to a vertical column as basic composition is not a restriction, but in fact became an infrastructure within which I have found, and am still finding, ever more possibilities.

The need to make the work in sections, so as to fit into my kiln, and equally important, being able to move them, became another formative factor. Technical necessities at times can present the artist with creative innovations. After enlarging the initial 'funnels', other sources of inspiration floated into consciousness - beloved 150 year old tamarisk trees standing proud against the vast spaces of the Free State grasslands; rock shapes from canyons; the traces of dwellings in the decaying rocks of Cappadocia; a vague dream of cubes and spheres interlocking and enveloped.... and claiming of their own identity in the making. The random cuts have now become considered apertures, opening up the interior with evocative hollow spaces .

In this process, I have been using mainly a heavily grogged stoneware clay and slowly over the years have felt my way into finding a few select glazes and oxides which best enhance shape and texture. However, there are always more possibilities and I am looking forward to having many more 'columns' gracing the Stalhuis garden.

Amalie von Maltitz has an initial academic background, but never totally gave up on sculpture all through her varied career as freelance teacher, gallery and collection curator at the Rand Afrikaans University and charter pilot. Ten years ago she started to concentrate primarily on her sculpture which has been mainly executed in stoneware clay.



A NEW CERAMICS GALLERY OPENS IN JOHANNESBURG

Wendy Goldblatt and Peta Hunter live in the same street. Over a cup of tea late last year they were talking about art and galleries and during the discussion Peta mentioned she had always dreamt of opening a gallery & exhibiting sculptures in her lovely garden and Wendy suddenly said 'why not open a ceramics gallery here as there are few places in Johannesburg where ceramics can be shown and sold on an ongoing basis'. As suddenly as the words were out, the idea was born and a gallery came into being.

Peta's Place is already well known for musical soirees and laughing meditations and this just became a natural extension of creative activities in a very special setting.

The Space Between Gallery opened in October 2015 with an exhibition of Lisa Firer's delicate porcelain tea lights & vessels. It was followed a few weeks later with Lalage Hunter's carved terracotta pieces and Wendy's boldly decorated porcelain bowls. The final exhibition of the year was called Original Objects - a group show that featured exquisite hand crafted jewellery, fabrics and ceramics from various artists. All three exhibitions were highly successful and the first exhibition of 2016 was an outstanding collection of Art Deco vessels and objects which attracted great interest.

Wendy is a renowned potter with over 40 years of experience both creating and teaching. Peta is a well-known stylist, designer & exhibition curator. They are both very excited about this new venture and are looking forward to hosting many interesting exhibitions. Although the focus of the gallery is to showcase ceramics, they will also exhibit jewellery & fine craft.

To find out more about exhibiting at The Space Between, please contact: Peta 0825664026 or Wendy 0833363233. Email photographs of your work to: thespacebetweengallery@gmail.com



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A Passion for Pots Pays the Bills

Article by Mary Brooks
Photographs by Darryn Brooks



For more than forty years, my husband Roy and I have had a wonderful journey in the creative world of ceramics. In the early 70's we lived in Springs as Roy was a Commercial Artist managing an Art Department at a large printing works. A friend asked me to join her and go to pottery lessons with Wilma Cruise, who was then living nearby. I had worked as a Legal Secretary and was now a stay-at-home mom with two small children and had no intention of taking these classes seriously, but the clay bug bit and my love of everything clay

began. Roy then bought a Commercial Art Studio in Johannesburg and we moved to Edenvale where I immediately enrolled at Gertie Hummitzsch's Studio. Roy and I both joined the Association of Potters of South Africa (APSA) when the late Mollie Fisch was so involved. I so enjoyed the classes with Gertie and all I longed for was a studio of my own.

An opportunity arose two years later when I helped out a company urgently in need of a secretary. I agreed on condition that I could have Thursday mornings off to attend my pottery class! In payment for services rendered, they bought me a kiln and wheel and Roy and I set up my studio in our double garage.

Teaching adults and children

I started a small class teaching children and really loved it. Before I knew it, I was teaching two classes of ten children each week. Joan Kayter of Clay Pot and I did a six month ceramic science course with Brenda Gomez and a course with Wilma Cruise who had now moved to Johannesburg. I continuously attended many workshops run by APSA (now Ceramics South Africa) gaining so much ceramic knowledge especially from Chris Green, Karin Boyum, Minette Zaaiman, Charles Gothard, Chris Smart, Eugene Hön, Tim Morris, Chris Patton, David Schlapobersky, Felicity Potter, Susan Sellschop, David Walters, Clementina Van der Walt, Suzette Munnik, Anton Van der Merwe, the late Marlies Feldmann, Hennie Meyer, Querardien Van Vliet, John Shirley and Sarie Maritz from Namibia. Among the visiting potters, the ones that impressed me the most were John Gibson from England, Elsbeth Woody and David Middlebrook from U.S.A. I was soon teaching adults as well and added 6 classes of ten adults each. I had a long waiting list! I enjoyed having students who grew at their own pace. I could encourage them to have fun for a few hours, while guiding them in making items that they enjoyed creating.

Some students now have their own studios, factories and shops and Lydia Holmes has gone from having fun in making utilitarian items in my studio at night, to becoming a talented sculptor in the Eastern Cape. Recently, one of my past students, Hansraj Mitha won the New Signatures Award at the Gauteng Regional Exhibition.

Roy joins the art studio

After many years in the advertising world, Roy felt artistically unfulfilled, so I encouraged



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him to close his studio in Johannesburg and just concentrate on fine art. We added an art studio at our home and Roy's new creative life started. He has successfully sold many paintings in South Africa and abroad. He attended a sculpture course at Wits Adult Education for a number of years and has exhibited and sold works as far as Japan. Roy and Barry Douglas demonstrated their skills at a Regional Exhibition held at Barry's Gallery in Rosebank. A sculpture highlight was a commission to create items for the 2010 Soccer World Cup, amongst them were the 3D Ekurhuleni Logo Sculpture, as well as many different sculptured faces, massive pots and elephant tusks to be used in different parts of the Ekurhuleni Metro. He also attended a course of Porcelain Painting with Ann Harris and has won many awards for his work. A highlight in this field was a commission to paint animals and plants on 48 porcelain plates for the Kings Suite at the Palace of the Lost City at Sun City.

Roy has also won the Ekurhuleni Mayoral Achievers Award for Fine Art. With a busy schedule of teaching fine arts six times a week, painting and sculpting commissions he still finds time to be involved in ceramics. In 1987 the late Yochie Silove approached Roy to be the Art Director for a quarterly publication for the Southern Transvaal region of APSA. Yochie, Sue Meyer, Doreen Hemp, Veronica Visser and Roy worked together on this project.

Expanding into production and much much more.

Roy attended a mould making course many years ago and both of us have created original items in clay, which he then moulds and slipcasts. We sold many items from our gallery at our studio in Edenvale and at various events around the town, as well as at a home industry shop which I had assisted in setting up. In 1992 Roy, myself and a handful of other artists and craftsmen approached the Edenvale Town Council for financial backing to start the Owl Outing (an owl was the emblem of Edenvale). We opened our studios to the public once a month on a Sunday which created an opportunity for them to see various artists at work in and around Bedfordview and Edenvale and they were able to purchase our wares.

For the past eight years our daughter Linsey Bannan and I teach seven classes a week. For thirty two years we have successfully held a yearly Studio Exhibition including work of all our ceramic, sculpture and art students. Linsey and I have demonstrated at Clay Festivals, Hobby Ex and at various events around the East Rand. Our son Darryn, who works in the mining field and as a professional photographer has also produced many beautiful pots.

As we look back, we realise how blessed we have been and even though it has been very hard work, We are so grateful that we have been able to bring up a small family, pay for their tertiary education as well as visit distant shores many times... all on an



income earned solely from what we both have such a passion for. Much to the our students regret, we plan to scale down the classes over the next two years and hope to retire, myself at seventy and Roy at seventy six. After thirty eight years of teaching ceramics, I think I have earned my retirement... I then intend creating my own pots in my own time.

We can be found on the web at <https://www.roybrooks-artist.com>

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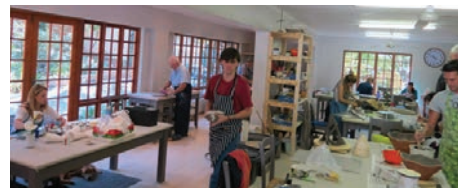
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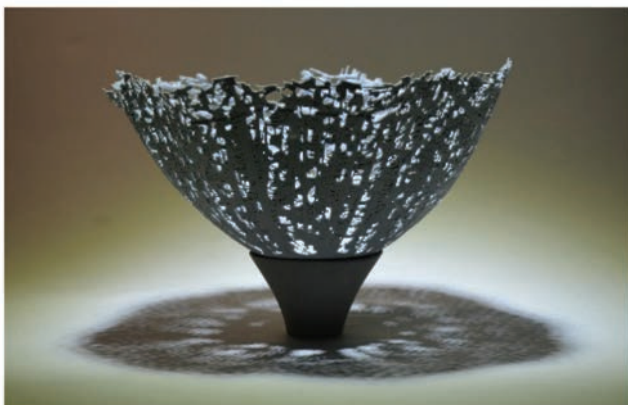
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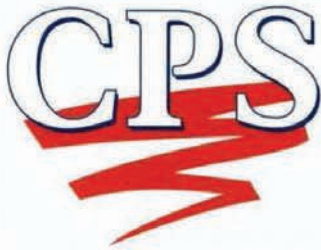


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TEACHERS PALETTE GLAZES (cone 05)



These new Cone 05 gloss glaze series were made with Teachers in mind. They are fully intermixable, and fire true to the colour in the jar or what you mix. Being able to mix your own colours means less colours you need to buy. Now in stock 8oz bottles.



FEATURES:

- MIXABLE Colours are intermixable for an infinite palette.
- LAYERING Colours can be layered without bleeding
- ALL AGES Designed for use by artists of any age

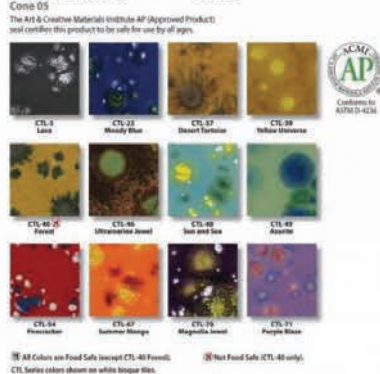
Our new shipment of Amaco now in stock.

ALSO now in stock..... Satin Matte Mid/High Fire Glazes (cone 5 - 6)

Satin Mattes break slightly over edges and texture, with a soft satin feel. These glazes are formulated to be 100% mixable (except for Orange and Red which have a different base). Use Clear Satin to lighten colour tones.



CTL Crystaltex Glazes Class Pack No. 4 39229J



CRYSTALTEX GLAZES NOW IN STOCK

Crystals fan out on flat horizontal surfaces and run on vertical pieces. Best results are obtained at Cone 05. Available in 4 oz bottles.

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Retreat Industria, 7945

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Corobrik is the proud sponsor of the Corobrik Collection, a unique portfolio of contemporary ceramic masterpieces that celebrate South Africa's creative spirit. The Corobrik Collection is on permanent display at the Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria and is open to the public during normal viewing hours.



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