

CERAMICS

SOUTHERN AFRICA

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ISSN 2412-5199



2 - Comparative Essay

Chapter will deal with the idea on the research of architect Steinhilber to what he calls the 'cultural' societies, cluster of cultural groups many of whom squatter in it

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Deon Venter, Heather Cawood

Front Cover: Rae Goosen: Worthless

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CERAMICS

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

Digital files may be sent in small batches (under 3 meg) to ceramicssa.magazine@gmail.com, lydia@rgholmes.co.za or via Dropbox.com (invite: lydia@rgholmes.co.za) or a similar transfer method.

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.

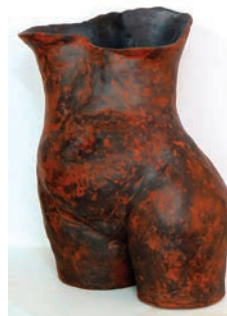
Tight cropping is not recommended. Make sure the WHOLE subject is in the photograph.

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.



EDITORIAL

By the time you read this magazine, everyone would probably be back in their studios creating new work for local and international exhibitions on offer. Taking time to experiment while producing work appears to be the biggest obstacle for artists. We all need to add time to our schedule to experiment and play to improve our work and set it on a different course. There is nothing more rewarding than finding that one experiment can lead to the creation of a new body of work.

It was interesting to note, while discussing the standard of South African ceramics with Sasha Wardell last year, that she had a high opinion of South African ceramics - she was of the opinion that work on offer compared well to work from other countries. Although we feel far removed from the world of the movers and shakers in the north, we should not be discouraged to take part in international competitions and exhibitions. The cost of transporting work seems to be our only obstacle in this regard. We all need to work together to overcome this burden so that our ceramic work can be showcased elsewhere. It is a case of "united we stand, divided we fall". We should be celebrating every achievement by South African artists and endeavour to help those less fortunate to put their work out there. We have young members starting out, needing a hand up, and it is surely up to the long-standing members to assist and mentor.

In this issue we have the promised tribute to Bryan Haden, along with the last reviews of the exhibitions from 2016 - the Western Cape Regional Exhibition as well the Tellus Sculptura Exhibition in Pretoria. Graciela Olio has written for the magazine before, and this time it is her own work which is featured. Personal journeys by Christine Gittens and Ann Rimbault bring interesting insight into working ceramists and a visit to Milan inspires Denise Clur to draw and create her own sculptures in reaction to those of Henry Rosenthal.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate two of our contributors on their academic achievements. Ronnie Watt on receiving his Master of Arts Degree and Wilma Cruise her Doctors Degree.

On a lighter note...You might wonder what the goofy accompanying image has to do with the editorial...I am simply hoping to inspire the photographers amongst us to take better photographs! Simply placing a white board (or a blank artist's canvass) behind work on exhibition can make a big difference to the presentation.... and fewer headaches for the editor and designer.

Enjoy all the articles on offer and wishing everyone creative success in 2017.

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

Lydia Holmes.



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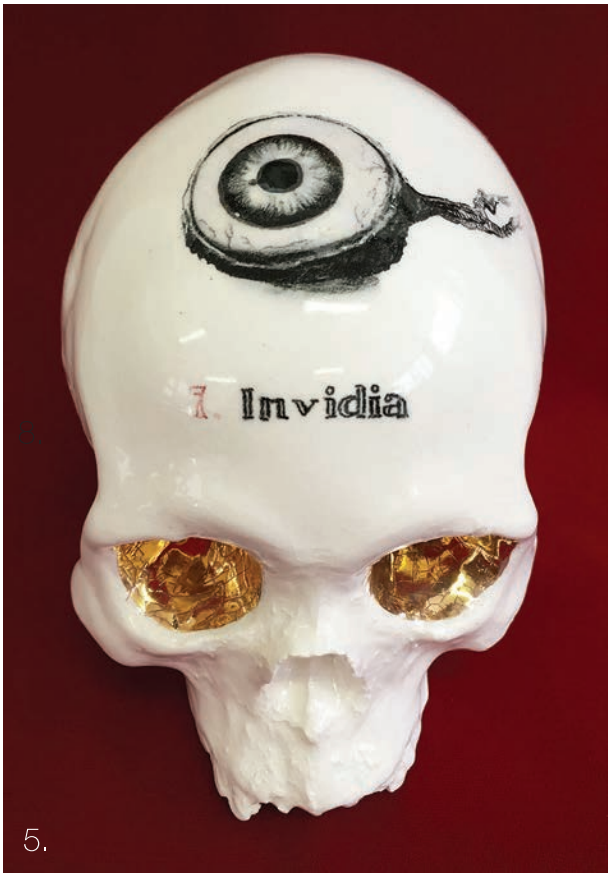
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1. Hilary Abrahams, *Dressing Bottles*
2. Lynnley Watson at the Drostdy Gallery, *Graaff Reinet*
3. Trayci Tompkins, *'Renaissance IV'*
4. Joanne Merret, *Totem*



5.



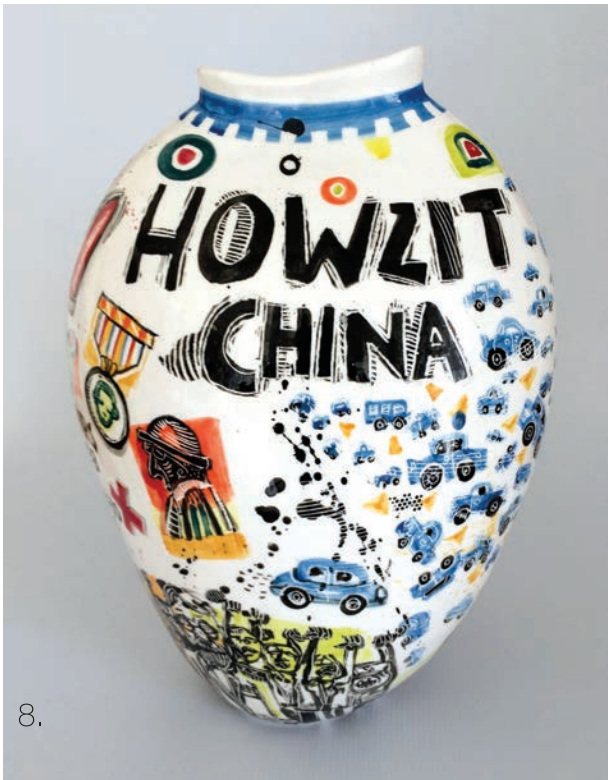
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5. Christiaan Diedericks, *Envy-Invidia* at Tellus Sculptura
 6. Monica van den Berg at Tellus Sculptura
 7. Elke le Roux, *Fishy Dish*
 8. Andrew Mogrige, *'Howzit China'*
 9. Ann Marais, *'Selfiehood'*

THE CURATE'S EGG

CSA WESTERN CAPE REGIONAL EXHIBITION 2016

At The Stephan Welz Great Cellar, Alphen Hotel Complex



Review by Ann Marais
Photographs by various artists

This exhibition was opened by Toni Burton, well-known founder and owner of the community outreach organisation, Zizamele Ceramics. During her speech, Ms Burton spoke on some important issues pertaining to social challenges in the Cape Town community and indeed, the whole of South Africa with regard to the very serious unemployment crisis in the country. Therein, she urged CSA members to commit to the training of even one person. This could empower that trainee, equipped with the necessary skills, to start her or his own business thereby 'putting bread on the table for a family'. She said that employment is first prize but not always possible, so mentorship is the next best thing. This will ensure that the great body of knowledge and skills residing in the pottery community would not be lost, as well as giving the gift of knowledge to those less fortunate. Furthermore, she noted in an amusing and rather disconcerting aside that the CSA membership is ageing fast so they better get on with it as soon as possible!

CSA Western Cape Chair, Nicolette Fourie, announced that the national chair of CSA has been passed over to Ralph Johnson, who previously held the position of Western Cape Chair of CSA. She also thanked the three selectors: Esther Esmiol, Curator, Social History Collections at Iziko Museum; Potter Lisa Ringwood and Toni Burton, who gave out the awards as follows:

Reinders Pottery Supplies Award for Best New Signature - Wendy Whittaker

Grant Thornton Award for Best Functional Ware - Christo Giles

Cape Gallery Award for Best Expressive Work - John Bauer

Cape Pottery Supplies Award for Best Porcelain Piece on Show - Amelia Jacobs

New Signature Merit Certificate - Ena de Villiers, Rudy Sennett, Christopher Morgan-Wilson

Functional Ware Merit Certificate - Catherina Pagani, Karen Kotze

Merit Certificate for Excellent Expressive Work - Angela Gilbert, Pieter Mostert

CSA Invitational Prize inspired by Social Media - Susan Lomas

CSA Invitational Prize inspired by The Marine World - Christopher Morgan-Wilson

Fellows Award - Christina Bryer

Each year the mandate of the Western Cape Regional Exhibition is expanding as is evident by the growing number of themed sections. In 2016, these included a juried section; two invitational



sections viz 'Inspired by Social Media' and 'The Marine World'; a section for sculptural work on the large lawn outside the exhibition hall and a raffle section in aid of the newly instituted Western Cape Benevolent Fund which will provide assistance where possible for members in need. This fund raising programme by the Western Cape branch of CSA was created in 2016. On this exhibition, Fellows Wiebke von Bismarck contributed a large, white coiled vessel, Hennie Meyer a black, grid sculptural form and Ralph Johnson donated two, white porcelain bottles. These were to be raffled off during the course of the exhibition run and the proceeds collected would accrue to the Benevolent Fund.

Upon entering the exhibition, viewers were greeted with a refreshing change in the display of works. This change (a good part of The Curate's Egg) resulted in the creation of a large, airy space and an interesting re-design of exhibition furniture. Gone were the blocky, and blocking, white plinths: they suddenly seemed so 20th century in this new, spacious arena where viewers and ceramics alike had room to breathe and be seen. There were two sections - the central space occupied by wooden tables (made by master craftsman, Alan Lutge) with black iron legs that echoed the ceiling-high, black iron beams which support the roof of the building, whilst other tables had more conventional wooden legs. Some pots on Perspex stands seemed to float in these airy surroundings.

However, a less palatable part of the egg, was a hotchpotch arrangement of white plinths and glass-fronted cabinets (very pharmaceutical and anthropological in character!) where the rest of the works on show were crowded, jostling for space and attention. Too many works, not enough space...

After a while, one gradually became aware that those old-fashioned, white plinths were not such a bad idea after all. They had a magic element - they reflected light. Without their auxiliary help in parts, some good works suffered near visual anonymity in the cavernous gloom, notably three very finely crafted, double walled and coiled vessels by Susan Howard. They were at near ground level, in a glass cabinet and viewers needed to crouch achingly low to enjoy their tactile, stony surfaces and beautifully proportioned forms. A further unfortunate consequence of the lack of uniform lighting was the patchy shadows formed by the visual interruptions between spotlight highlights. In this illuminated 'lucky dip', some works where the spotlight fell on them, were either given good publicity or mercilessly exposed with all their faults, like a Jerry Springer reality show.

The second visually sentient reaction came as the eye rested on a long table at the entrance whereon were placed a collection of pots, almost as a highpoint, as if they had been deliberately placed as a lesson to all that here were standard bearers of the potter's art; iconic, classic ceramics showcasing all the conventions of this abstract art in form, shape, spatial relationship, proportion, surface treatment and assured expression. The success of this table top tableau was re-enforced by the intuitive placing of each pot - a deliberate schemata of contrast and counterpoint of form, height, surface, colour and expression. The beginning belonged to five, red coloured, bell-shaped pots with carved, diverse motifs reminiscent of North African jewellery. The top knots on the lids referenced coiffured hairstyles found in north Africa



Opposite page:
Work by Ralph Johnson, Wiebke von Bismarck, Hennie Meyer, and David Walters.
Below : Gallery view. Pieter Mostert

This page: clockwise from the top
Wendy Whittaker, Amelia Jacobs, Below; Chris Morgan-Wilson



EXHIBITION

explained the maker, Ralph Johnson. The counterpoint behind - two large, white, coiled pots by Wiebe von Bismarck in her inimitable, graceful style with fluid, incised lines describing the curvilinear planes of the forms. Next door, (one of the best parts of the yolk!), another von Bismarck treasure - an enchanting, fat, full-bellied oblong pot with a funnel-like neck and fine, incised lines that accentuated the sensual form of the vessel, whilst the surface rivalled the richness and tone of Jasperware. It drew the eye like a magnet. Next door, four, small, modest, but nevertheless pleasing mugs by Hennie Meyer, nestled together before the eye travelled to the immaculate, porcelain agate vases by David Walters. Lastly, in complete contrast in colour and shape was a black grid sculptural form, again by Hennie Meyer. A spirit of grace and calmness united all these works in an harmonious whole.

There was another table of pots that drew attention, not only for the scrupulous attention to the classical ceramic canons of careful crafting in line, form, volume, weight and surface treatment applied to the ware by their makers, but also for that genre of pots that are subject to multiple types of unconventional firings. There were examples of pit firing (Thea Kleynhans), smoke firing (Wiebke von Bismarck), raku firing (Ineke Nicolle) and saggar firing (Christine Gittens, on a visit from Wales). Various unorthodox materials were employed by the makers in their firings such as horsehair, banana peel, feathers, newspaper, ferric chloride and chemical salts of various types. The palette ranges were soft pinks, terracotta, burnt brown, soft greys and some black markings. Some pots floated on Perspex stands whilst others were grounded on tables and it was here that the airy space of the exhibition format showed to advantage.

expression of this group of work together and this was that the carefully controlled forms were later subjected to unpredictable (and therefore unknowable), firing processes outside of their makers' control: a psychological gamble between 'containment' followed by 'abandonment'!

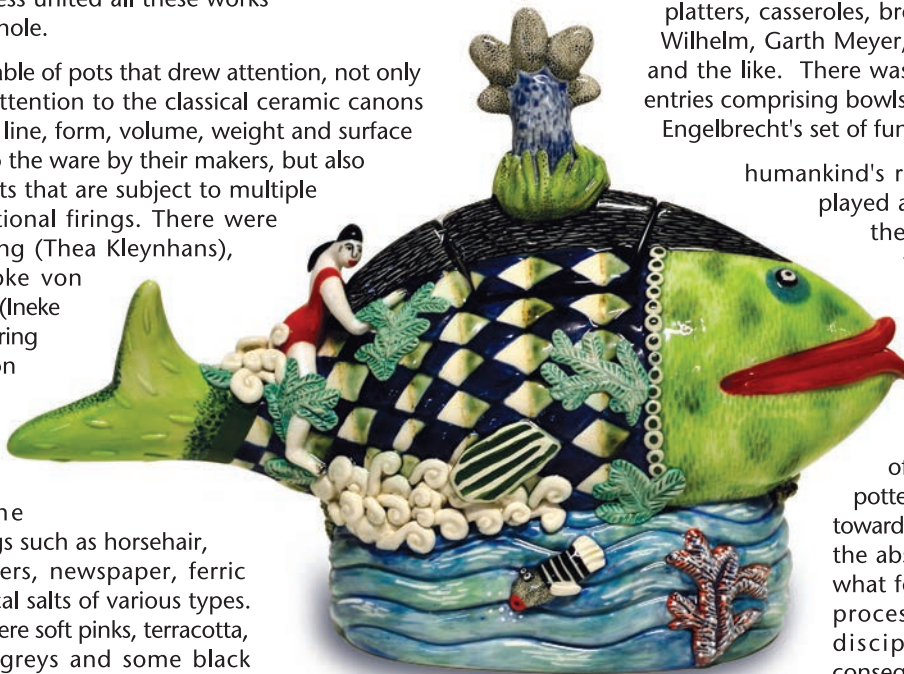
A quiet, Zen-like expression captured the essence of the work of two potters (both prize winners) where archetypal ceramic ware - the bowl and the cup - encapsulated the under-stated rigour of "no fuss, no shouting" form that exists in essential, unadorned simplicity. The reference here is to Christo Giles' entry of three sang de boeuf bowls. It is this



perennially with awards. The same stark purity of form and expression characterised Amelia Jacobs' porcelain, cup-like vessel with lid to which a small ladle was attached. In monochromatic restraint, the porcelain surface was blushed with dark, fynbos smoke and the translucent porcelain lid carried a small stick of dark French oak as a ladle handle. In this simple arrangement, existed a world for introspective meditation.

The dominant influence in the 20th century of pots dedicated to all things 'useful' mainly in a domestic environment, by the Big Five (Bosch, Rabinowitz, Hayden, Morris and Walford) has waned. Nico Liebenberg's strong, robust, large, blue and white platters and bowl were the only notable remnants of this proud tradition of pots for the home. Unfortunately absent on this exhibition were the jugs, bowls,

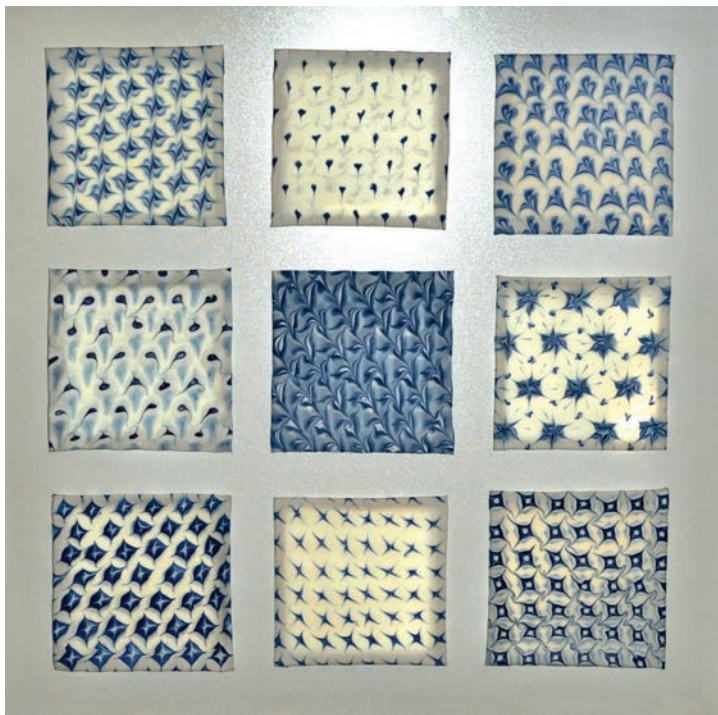
platters, casseroles, bread crocks, mugs etc. of John Wilhelm, Garth Meyer, David Walters, Martin Swart and the like. There was, however, a small coterie of entries comprising bowls and platters, including Hylett Engelbrecht's set of fun, funky mugs.



humankind's recorded history, pottery has played a significant part in recording the cultural life of communities through archaeological sites and in museum collections around the world and so one can track a given group's changing cultural concerns and social conventions. In the early years of CSA, the focus of the studio potters of Ceramics South Africa was toward an inward gaze centred around the abstract qualities of their ware - what form? what glaze? what firing process? It was an introspective discipline where the cultural consequences of their domestic ware

and its effect on the world outside the home were of secondary importance. However, their gaze has changed radically in the 21st century. They are coming out of their ceramic closets as the world around impinges uncontrollably upon their creative consciousness. A new involvement in outside issues was evident in this exhibition. It would seem there are several factors responsible for this new connection to the outside world, to their thinking and to their creative output. A most overwhelming intrusion into their creative consciousness must be through the ubiquitous, unavoidable conduits of social media and information through the computer, iPads, tablets and





smartphones, as well as old-fashioned TV and radio. The perilous state of so many facets of life on planet earth are broadcast minute-by-Apple-minute. Awareness of an apocalyptic future looming for the human race through environmental meltdown permeates 24/7.

Secondly, and perhaps co-incidentally, attention to worldly concerns was given a voice on this exhibition by the fact that one of the invitational sections was devoted to the environment. This environmental section attracted a good number of entries, seemingly for two main reasons. Potters, as makers, are intimately bonded to all things natural, and nature, as subject matter, is a natural consequence of this connection. Secondly, their intimate involvement with all things natural would make it inevitable that they would voice their concerns about the deteriorating state of the planet's health on this platform. Chris Morgan-Wilson's prize-winning entry for this section, "Coral Garden" aka "Killing in the Oceans", was one of several works highlighting the phenomenon of coral die-off occurring in many parts of the world's oceans. His entry shows a jagged form, bleached white as a symbol of coral extinction. Rae Goosen's ceramic open book, in a discussion about ocean bleaching, was entitled 'The Real Crime is in the Ocean'. Ali Navabi's over-the-top, unobvious entry entitled "Ignorance", employed far more hard-core visual imagery. In her marine tableau, a suspended can of 'black oil' flowed thickly, saturating the mermaid and surrounds beneath. Barbara Lotter's attention focused on another environmental disaster suffocating the oceans and its marine life, i.e. pollution, in her entry entitled "Survival" (walled in seal). Here the culprit was plastic. The work showed a seal resting in a tyre against a breakwater wall, whilst in front bits of

*Opposite page: Catherine Brennan, 'Bird Dream Box'
Tiffany Wallace, 'Lady and Fish Adventure'
Hennie Meyer, 'Penny and a Sparrow'*

*This page: Christina Bryer, 'Indigo Swatches',
Karen Kotze,
Christo Giles*



plastic floated freely.

But it was not all doom and gloom in the marine world, for some ceramicists and potters choose to represent a more sanguine view on the theme. Tiffany Wallace's delightfully jaunty and finely crafted, slip cast teapot "Lady and Fish Adventure" showed a lady astride a very colourful, red-lipped, smiley fish. Various bits of marine life (snails, small fish) were tagging along for the ride. The lid of the teapot spouted a growth of seaweed. Equally up-beat was a school of funky fish with big eyes and human teeth by Alessandro Pappada. They had been anthropomorphised by various expressions of surprise, delight, chagrin, anger etc. Their fish scales had been glazed in delicious iridescence that echoed the shimmering light of the sun reflected in sea water. In similar playful vein, "FUNDERWATER," an amorphous, jelly-like form by Delida Seeligsohn, in bright marine blues, reds, yellows and greens, captured the magical, hidden world of sea creatures in Disney technicoloured clarity. The form's luscious surface enticed a (forbidden!) hand to caress its glassy skin.

With regard to teeth as an important anatomical feature as subject matter, Karin Lijnes showed a black head of a baby. In a deliberate departure from conventional representation of a small human's facial anatomy, this baby sported a set of very large, white, adult teeth. The baby is laughing - at what? at whom? The head was placed in the centre of the exhibition, THE focal point, where it sat isolated, alone, apart on a high table, separated from the rest of the exhibition by a large volume of space around it - almost in quarantine. It created an unsettling, uncanny frisson in its incongruity of subject matter and visual irony, further pressed home by the title "Smile" - at what was this half-child/ half-adult smiling and laughing? It left the viewer with much food for thought, a mark of a good artwork that does not merely entertain visually but also opens up a space for deeper interrogation of the world we inhabit,

In the juried section of the exhibition, Laura du Toit's environmental concerns were expressed more subtly, but nonetheless powerfully, in her great, hot orange and red globe entitled ominously "Two Degrees Plus". By way of positive contrast, her cool blue orb entitled "Blue Marble" alongside alluded to the life-giving, life-sustaining forces that power the earth's natural, physical, and metrological systems, such as lines on the surface of the orb that mimicked the meridian longitude and latitude lines, and a world of small fish she observed swimming in rock pools, inhabited parts of the orb.

Visual representation of the natural world was expressed in many more entries, some of a positive nature that showcased, in physical form, the wonders that abound in nature, as well as more metaphysical, intangible qualities that play their part in the dance of life. One speaks here of that notion of quiet growth seen in Jennifer de Charmoy's vessel entitled "Fecundity". There was a subtle sensation of soft fertility with the sensual, gentle bulging form wrapped in a mellow, creamy white surface. This sense of wonder at nature's organic designs could be read in Ena de Villiers' prize winning, small, hand-built, shell spoons. These asymmetrical spoons mimicked not only the shiny sheen of shells but also the idiosyncratic (to humans) shapes that natural algorithms create as is necessary for the functioning of a life form.

Madoda Fani, the 2016 National Ceramics Biennale winner, embraced the insect world in his finely carved and burnished vessel "Umfazi Two". Here an enlarged insect occupied the entire space along one curve of the vessel. The eyes, antennae, legs and elongated,

EXHIBITION



segmented body were rendered in precise, careful carving that make of this vessel and others alike, some of the finest ceramic work being produced in South Africa to-day. Students in ceramic studies would do well to take good note of what makes outstanding creative achievement.

This statement applied equally to the winner of the Fellows' Award this year given by Hennie Meyer to Christina Bryer for her framed, translucent porcelain panel of indigo swatches. Hanging in a window that set it against the light, this panel with its mathematically determined patterning, that was executed in Bryer's unique ceramic slip processes, provided viewers with a visual high point in dedicated craftsmanship and skill.

In reference to the metaphysical, Catherina Pagani's two "Dream Boats" presented a multi-layered, universal narrative of the invisible world of dreams. Imprinted in the bottom of each boat was a blurry, white painted figure as metaphor for the ghost-like figures that populate the dream world. The elongated body bore witness to the trance-like figures in rock paintings found across the rocky landscapes of Africa. The boat-like forms brought to mind the funeral boats of the Japanese, as well as a metaphor, perhaps, for the boat in Hades where Charon ferried the souls of the dead across the River Styx in Greek mythology.

The social media invitational section was small but interesting and cleverly interpreted with themes devoted to various aspects of our digital world such as the virtual, emotional language of the keyboard (emoticons), the dangers of playing politics on Facebook and the current global craze for the 'selfie'. The prize-winning ceramic entry of Susan Lomas spelt out in emoji-speak, the emotions used to express in virtual language, 'smile' and 'love'. Her skill in manipulating clay materials was notable for how the various ceramic components convincingly simulated the hard, metallic quality of the perforated board supporting the keys, as well as the white, plastic-like blocks carrying the letters and number symbols such as :) < . # 3. This idea of documenting how we as humans have translated our emotional feelings into this new, computer-generated, world language was a clever conceptual construct and could become one of those important ceramic recorders of our 21st century cultural history for historians of the future. Hennie Meyer, in an unusual engagement for him with politics, made reference to the political row on Facebook in 2015 over a racial slur by one Penny Sparrow, with his wall-mounted plate, entitled "A Penny and A Sparrow". His clever linking of the innocuous motifs of an English penny and the image of a sparrow bird in juxtaposition on the plate, contextualised how meaning can change from innocence to loaded gun. Ann Marais focused on the world-wide phenomenon of the 'selfie'. A small figure is shown, in a moment of narcissistic self-admiration, gazing at his cell-phone image with undiluted delight.

With regard to 'self' and our personal, invisible world of emotional engagement that influence our lives, the desire to find comfort,



*Clockwise:
Susan Lomas, 'Smile'
Various smoked fired ware,
Catherina Pagani, 'Dream Boats'*

emotional security and meaning is reflected in some works of Catherine Brennan. The perennial popularity of her 'Dream Boxes' (there were three on this exhibition - 'Leonotis Dream', 'Grey and Yellow Bird' and 'Shoreline Dream') demonstrate clearly that she has tapped into an important need in our emotional make-up that manifests in a desire to find storage and protection for our intimate, personal treasures that reflect and hold fast that which we hold dear. These dream boxes facilitate a private space for introspection and reflection of important people, places and events in our lives.

After viewing this exhibition, each visitor comes away with an image or two that stick in the memory amongst the overload of visual stimulation. There were many parts to this Curate's Egg, some bad (weak forms; clumsy manipulation of materials; incoherently conceived content; poor design arrangement and plain bad crafting that cannot be explained away as free-form expression) but it might be as well to reflect on the particularly good parts - some gems. In this category was an earthenware, coiled pot by Pieter Mostert that garnered an award for 'excellent expressive work'. It exhibited all the prized canons of a formal aesthetic in the traditional world of studio pottery. The expression was reductive, stark with no appendages to impede the eye as it travelled over and around the fulsome, outer, undulating curves that described the inside volume. Soft bulges articulated these curves with controlled subtlety. No excessive gestures disturbed the gentle passage of the eye as it traversed the form. The surface was finished in a svelte, silky, burnished, burnt orange terra sigillata. The journey was restful, quiet, calm and untroubled. Paradoxically, its simplicity was also its complexity as it takes a skilful hand and eye to create a form that cannot be improved. It needs all the potter's craftsmanship and aesthetic sensibility to pull off the perfect pot.

Placed outside on the lawn, far away from the main exhibition hall was Rae Goosen's magnificent installation 'WORTHLESS'. At the

opposite end of the scale to Pieter Mostert's reductive vessel was Goosen's library of 'worthless' (on sale, 50% off) books packed with such a multitude of intellectual, lateral, emotional, witty, worrying, speculative, visual, salacious, poetic, technical, literary, political and historical content that viewers needed at least half an hour to peruse this extraordinary ensemble. Superficially, this installation purported to be a "book sale" - there were three boxes on the ground stacked with books- "Fantasy Futuristic", "Politics Poetry" and "Alchemy Archaeology" going cheap, or else there was simply no more room on the over-burdened table to carry them. The trestle table top was piled with books, some open, some closed, some on top of each other in a higgledy-piggledy pile. There was an ode, a love letter to a beloved tree: a book entitled "The Self" followed by the printed text. Many books had photographs, drawings and pictures printed on them: one showed a boy leading a muzzled hyena: another a picture of a rhinoceros: yet another showed pictures of ancient ruins and sculptures of Romulus and Remus. These printed images were blurred and vague as if made fragile by the decay of time and the acid damage of paging fingers. They were redolent with the nostalgia of past histories, past family lives and old Victorian morality. In a witty double entendre, there was a 'Manual on Self-Improvement' illustrated alongside by a pig with wings and smoking a cigar. The books were of different colours and sizes and their surfaces were smoky with cracked glass over the printed images. A truly fascinating, poignant world of books that Goosen fears will disappear in our approaching paperless world. (the Bishop, surely, gave the Curate a new, fresh, wholesome egg - ostrich size - here).

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.

Installation by Rae Goosen: 'Worthless'



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image: Ann Marais, WS1 s/w casting slip

Place - Affection: Graciela Olio's

Graphic Ceramics exhibited at the International Art Residencies at Talavera de la Reina School of Arts, Toledo, Spain during April 2016

Article by Manuel Velázquez
Photographs by Graciela Olio
Translated by Tomás Quinteros



Graciela Olio was born in La Plata, Argentina. She studied at the Fine Arts Faculty, UNLP (National University of La Plata), where she obtained her degree as Teacher and Graduate in Plastic Arts with a main focus on Ceramics. Later she undertook Photography and Engraving Studies and attended Tulio de Sagastizabal's Seminars on Artwork Clinic. Graciela lives and works in her studio in La Plata. She is a Full Professor in the Ceramic Workshop Chairs 2-4 of the "Prilidiano Pueyrredón" Visual Arts Department (DAVPP), UNA (National University of Arts), Buenos Aires. She is a Researcher of the Graduate Course in Combined Artistic Languages at DAVPP-UNA. She conducts Seminars on her research at national and foreign institutions and she participates in national and foreign Symposia, Congresses and Conferences. She regularly participates in competitions, solo and group exhibitions all around the globe. She is an Argentine representative member of the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) based in Geneva.

Spinoza points out in his Ethics: "Affections are simultaneously actions and passions." Common references to the concept of "place" are presented in an excessively colloquial manner; that is to say, they present places from a perspective that defines them as "singular and concrete portions of space". However, I herein consider the concept of place as a space of affection, affording "place" the potential to generate affections.

In Graciela Olio's works (produced within the programme of International Art Residencies at Talavera de la Reina School of Arts, during April 2016), the "place" is present in the form of recollection,

memory and nostalgia, which transports a past affection to the present -a paradox that introduces past and present simultaneously. In her work, affections are accompanied by elements triggered by the graphics printed on her ceramic pieces.

Here, affections are signs which, printed onto ceramic, appear in the context of memory and imagination. Memory, evocation, nostalgia, and image are the constituent elements of her pieces. This series constitutes simple three dimensional shapes of houses, sixteen in total. Porcelain, Keraflex porcelain sheets, stoneware and red clay are used as sculptural material. These are enhanced with digital printing and photographic transfers. Olio makes use of a visual discourse manifested through traditional images from Talavera de la Reina and images taken from Simulcop books -a brand of Argentine school books used between 1960 and 1980. She also makes use of a series of drawings made by Alejandra Gonsbatt, an Argentine visual artist who lives in Munich, Germany.

This works fall into a present moment by way of a critical nostalgia. Here, vividness of memory is all that is needed to trigger the affections in viewing the ceramics. A sign, according to Spinoza, can have several senses, but it is always an affect. He states that our bodies have the capacity to transform into images, all those spaces and things which escape from us in time, which we keep

in our memory and activate through recollection. With images, we protect ourselves from the flow of time and from the loss of space that we undergo in our bodies. Places occupy our memory as images, like a place in a transposed sense.

Whenever somebody is affected by the image, they will consider it present even though it does not exist: the affection of joy or sadness will be the same. This condition, in which affection is always immersed, makes it an element in constant movement. The affection is not static. The affection does not arise from perception; it is not a physiological process, because affection is also passion. "Spinoza - states Deleuze - distinguishes, rigorously, affection from affect"¹. He further explains: "The affection is the instantaneous effect of an image upon me. Perceptions, for instance, are affections. The image of something associated with my action is an affection...²"

In this way, Graciela Olio's ceramics are not only scenery, but also an evocation, and an affection, since they remind us of our own impermanence. Her ceramics are little houses like the ones we live in, but they are also places of imagination and escape, places of Utopia³. The real place image is contrasted by the imaginary place image, in which everything is different, everything is good. This offers an approximation to what places are in their sense of affection.

Affections create images, and Olio's pieces are entities built from affections, from lived experiences and from a series of relations and links. Her ceramics, therefore, constitute a body built by affections, and it is these affections that produce a different use of ceramics. Her work is not a physical entity, but it is rather a collection of experiences lived and not lived; it is a series of meanings anchored in those experiences, and in their recollection as well as in their oblivion. The ceramic is shown here as an absolutely mysterious entity, since it is not only the present moment, but also memory, mark, imagination and promise. It emerges as a meaning which reappears under the name of affection. It is in this sense that Graciela Olio expresses herself in a creative operation that revises the notions of place and affection.

¹ Gilles Deleuze, "Spinoza and the three Ethics", op. cit.

² Idem.

³ Utopias are sites with no real place. They are societies in themselves but perfected, or their reverse. They are fundamental and essentially unreal spaces. In Greco-Roman tradition such places are known as Arcadia, and in the biblical tradition as Paradise.

***Manuel Velázquez** was born in 1968 in Tuxtla Gutiérrez Chiapas. He is a visual artist and an independent curator. Prominent Curatorships: 2011, Paisajes-memorias, collective work by Mariana Velázquez, Graciela Olio, Roberto Rodríguez and Abel Zavala, at Celda Contemporánea del Claustro de Sor Juana Gallery, Mexico City. 2011, Dejar al fuego - dejar al agua, by Gustavo Pérez and Rafa Pérez, at Andrea Pozzo de la Universidad Iberoamericana Gallery, Mexico City. 2012, Pérez de aquí, Pérez de allá. Rafa Pérez and Gustavo Pérez. Pinacoteca Diego Rivera (IVEC). Xalapa, Veracruz. 2012, Lugar-paisajes. Roberto Rodríguez, Abel Zavala, Maribel Portela, Paloma Torres, Mariana Velázquez, Elsa Naveda, Leonor Anaya, Graciela Olio. Jardín de las Esculturas de Xalapa (IVEC) Xalapa, Veracruz. BA at the University of Veracruz, Master in Art Studies at Ibero-American University and Candidate to be Master in Visual Arts at UNAM. He was Headteacher at the School of Plastic Arts of the Chiapas Science and Arts Institute, Founding Headteacher of Jardín de la Esculturas de Xalapa, in Instituto Veracruzano de la Cultura. He is a professor at the Plastic Arts Faculty of the University of Veracruz. He lives and works in Xalapa, Veracruz. Mexico.

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Graciela Olio
Opposite page left to right

Serie Refugio I. 2016. Stoneware printing with laser decal. Handbuilt. 20 x 20 x 25 cm. PH: Escuela de Arte de Talavera. Artwork done at the International Art Residency School of Art Talavera 2016, Spain.

Serie Refugio III. 2016. Keralflex porcelain, printing with gum bichromate process / photoceramic. Handbuilt. 20 x 20 x 25 cm. PH: Escuela de Arte de Talavera. Artwork done at the International Art Residency School of Art Talavera 2016, Spain.

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Después de la tormenta. 2016. Red clay, mini-bricks, porcelain transfer printing. Handbuilt. 32 x 32 x 20 cm. PH: Escuela de Arte de Talavera. Artwork done at the International Art Residency School of Art Talavera 2016, Spain.

Serie Refugio II. 2016. Stoneware printing with laser decal. Handbuilt. 20 x 20 x 20 cm. PH: Escuela de Arte de Talavera. Artwork done at the International Art Residency School of Art Talavera 2016, Spain.





Review by Runette Kruger
Photographs by various artists

Prominent curator and artist Gordon Froud, at the request of Ceramics SA and in collaboration with Gordart, brought together the work of some 30 sculptors in clay for the exhibition titled G&W Minerals Tellus Sculptura. Sponsored by G&W Mineral Resources, the show ran from the sixth to twenty-third of November 2016 at the Association of Arts Pretoria, and was accompanied by an exhibition of decorated plates created by both ceramic artists and those who ordinarily work in other media.

As such, the exhibition was unusual in combining sculptural and 'utilitarian / decorative' work, and the curator's stated aim was precisely to address the continuing difference in status between fine art and 'craft'. The use of clay for the making of both 'high' and 'low' art was, in this sense, significant. The curator also intentionally convened the work of well-known and celebrated artists such as Wilma Cruise and Robert Hodgins, with those of emerging artists.

The scope of topics addressed and approaches taken was vast, given the number of participants and the non-themed approach. Unable to sort the works by subject, technique, or any other classification, I found myself trying to decipher the particular qualities of those works which captured my attention for various reasons. As a maker, I confess I appreciate evidence of skill, and I found myself drawn to works that displayed a clear command of the tricky but rewarding medium. This capacity was not only evident in the more meticulously executed works, however. An unmistakable ability to coax loveliness and meaning from the medium was also present in works that seemed freely, easily made, 'rough' and even 'clumsy'. There were also works that mesmerised on account of their fresh beauty, or that shocked and engaged in the process of conveying a disturbing message. Some works simultaneously displayed two or all of these qualities, namely effortless finesse, uncomplicated charm, and depth of content.

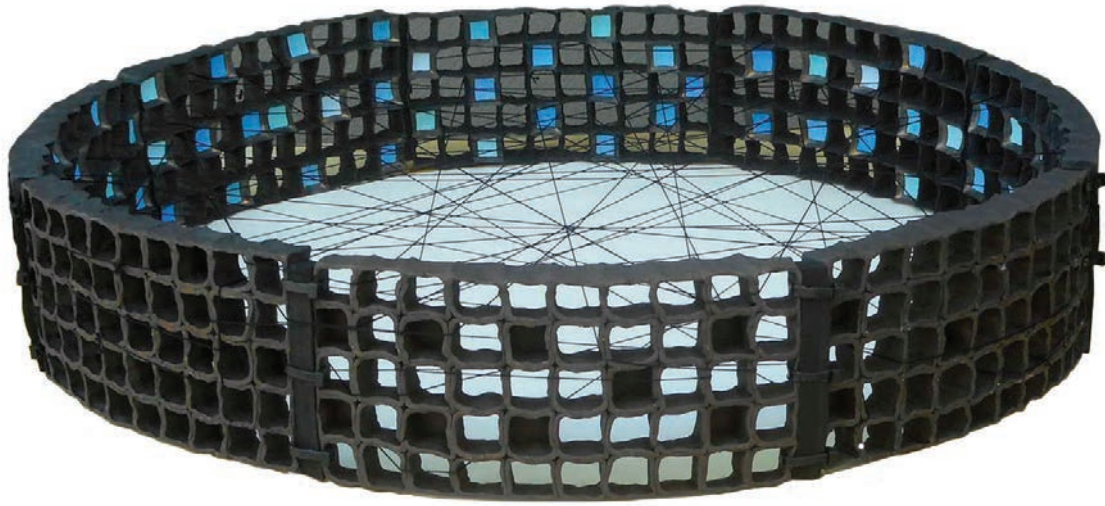
Marina Walsh's 'Mutterbild I & II' consists of two large portrait studies. They seem to depict a younger and older version of a remembered loved one, or perhaps a mother and daughter, in confident modelling which captures a solemn and pensive mood. 'Janus church figures' by Thabang Moswa reveal the figure/s of a male in uniform sporting two faces staring sternly in opposite directions. Perhaps they are witnessing the apparently inevitable schisms that appear along the fault lines of our most revered institutions. In contrast, Gordon Froud's 'Trinity',

assembled from cast dolls' heads attached to legs, and treated in silver, gold and bronze guilders paste, display his signature irreverent and often slightly blasphemous humour. Further figure studies that stood out included those by Ella Cronje, Lydia Holmes, Nalize Venter and Lettah Mantshwe.

Cronje's 'Till death do us part' depicts a naked male figure, his genitals highlighted in gold. His head is thrown back and a shiny red and gold studded tongue jumps out at the viewer. Displayed on a Popeye-like forearm, a tattoo of a gold banner swirling around a juicy, red heart pierced by a syringe, captures the central theme of the work. An assortment of colourful pills and capsules are strewn around his feet. This work, meticulously executed, reflects on the dark, even lethal, side of pleasure in its extreme forms.

'Cardinal Ortega dresses with reluctance' by Lydia Holmes portrays the ungainly eponymous cardinal. He is decked out in his prominent ruby ring, a fetching black and red dress and matching shoes, all complimenting his red cardinal's cap. The source of his reluctance is not clear, although his fashion sense is impeccable. Equally mysterious is the seated and masked female figure 'Nonnetjie' by Nalize Venter. She sits pensively, an owl mask obscuring her face and an unharmed mouse appears on her lap. The word 'nonnetjie' refers to the Afrikaans name for the common barn owl with its heart shaped face, and also to a nun, and Venter's figure is aptly dressed in a chaste, dark dress. Her intentions remain unknown. The female figure in Lettah Mantshwe's 'Ready to go' is similarly inscrutable. Seated demurely on top of a kind of cart, her arms are folded in resignation across her torso while she glances into the distance. I found myself liking this unknown woman, and wondering about the nature of her imminent yet delayed journey. In all of these figures, sensitive observation of the body and psyche of the human being, and of the modes of being human, are enhanced by a dexterous ease in handling the medium. Lastly, Marina Walsh's 'The refugee' is less intriguing in terms of the figure itself, which is slightly generic and hence difficult to identify with, than for the astounding technique of embedding pieces of fired and glazed porcelain into the basalt clay that makes up the figure's torso. The result is a breath-taking expressive landscape of cracked dark/light, glazed/matt contrasts.

Non-figurative works that stood out include Pholile Hlatwayo's 'Spiked



Form', reminiscent of an egg-shaped sea sponge or anemone, and Hennie Meyer's 'Earthgrid'. This work consists of a two meter wide circular frame constructed from curved sections of grid placed on end to form an enclosed arena. The grid units resemble metal grills, but the edges of the square intersections are softened and pinched, preserving the maker's finger prints. String criss-crosses the open space of the 'arena'. The work is technically excellent but it also commands attention on account of its sensitive aesthetic.

I loved Kevin Collins's two works 'Jermyn Street number one' (the shirt) and 'Jermyn Street number two' (the bow tie) for similar reasons, namely that they were confidently executed and embody a particular kind of beauty because of the way they were made. The diptych depicts a newly bought, still folded shirt and a bow tie draped over its cardboard packaging. The shirt has been modelled from thin slabs of light coloured clay inlaid with pale blue strips/stripes - the texture of the canvas used to roll the clay is visible throughout. A clothing label, buttons and

painstakingly etched buttonhole stitches round off the neatly folded shirt. Its accompanying bow tie is pale pink with inlaid white polka dots. Amid the attention to detail, traces of the making process - hairline cracks around a bent strip, vague indentations of a modelling tool, an area smoother than the rest for having been lightly sponged, the somewhat ragged edge of a slab - remind the viewer that this is at once a shirt and tie and a skilfully altered ball of formless mud. The shift between 'realism' and the visual cues that this is not a shirt but worked, soft clay, enhance the enjoyment of the piece in a way that an overworked, utterly realistic rendering would fail to do. Leaving edges as they are, combined with a facility for detail, strike a fascinating, and brave balance. I was attracted by the unpretentious playfulness of the work.

This Page:

Hennie Meyer, 'Earthgrid'

Nalize Venter, 'Nonnetjie'

Ella Cronje, 'Till death do us part'

Lydia Holmes, 'Cardinal Otega dresses with reluctance'



EXHIBITION

There were, however, also works that disturbed by courageously highlighting issues of identity and sexuality. Gender defying 'Butch Teddy' by Christiaan Diedericks depicted a slip cast teddy bear glazed in a rather sickly pink. Teddy is in his sports gear, a rugby ball tucked under one furry arm, and his right eye peers out from a deep blue, cobalt bruise. Carol Nathan Levin's 'Cutie catcher' (that seemingly harmless, familiar origami 'fortune teller' with numbered panels), and Rosemarie Marriott's 'Tablo', subtitled 'Tableau - silent and motionless group of persons etc. ...', take as theme the violated wilderness that childhood is for some (or many). In *Tablo*, a complex installation juxtaposes unflinchingly precisely modelled glassy eyed rats and pigs with various toys, including three dolls hovering on the wall behind. The viewer is left to complete the disturbing narrative for her- or himself.

The works by artists Wilma Cruise and Robert Hodgins highlight the notion of power from opposite sides of the gender divide. 'Blue Doris' is described by Cruise (1997:17) as a depiction of the artist Doris Bloom, whom she admired for her strength and singlemindedness. Cruise chose to embody these attributes by endowing the figure with male genitals and robust hands and feet. Although the professed intention was one of admiration, the figure is somewhat dehumanised - she has no face, and we tower above her as she seems to be completing some demeaning task. From an opposite subject position, namely that of a well-to-do and important male executive, 'The business man' by Hodgins literally has no 'inner strength': the hollow, pinstriped torso of the suited entrepreneur has slumped under the weight of his large head. Here, the qualities of the clay readily convey Hodgins' astute observation of the human character.

Given this imposing assembly of sculptural work, the plates did not disappoint, and those of Deirdre Pretorius, Nicholas Hauser and Sibusiso Nkosi, especially, caught my attention. Pretorius's offering, a vintage Johnson Brothers china plate with delicate pink blossoms and fine gold rim, has been enhanced with a digital transfer in Old English Text, which declares in the words of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that 'All that is solid melts into air'. I found this critique of the shenanigans of the bourgeoisie on a symbol of middleclass status, intriguing. Hauser's 'Afrobot' I & II depict a stylised, somewhat clunky robotic being in a cloud of linear patterns, the latter impertinently painted on the back of the plate. Lastly, in 'Izazi zaze Mpumalanga (the wise from the east)', Nkosi has created a poetic image combining astronauts, every day street scenes and a giant human heart on fire. Mpumalanga means 'place where the sun rises'. Nkosi's surrealist Afro futurism shows exceptional originality and vision, and he is a young artist to look out for.

Overall, the show had a scope and depth not ordinarily associated with the humble medium clay. Froud managed to assemble a powerful combination of works where beauty and quiet charm were played off against raw engagement with key social issues and personal expression.

Runette Kruger is Head of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at the Tshwane University of Technology. She teaches Art Theory 3 and supervises postgraduate candidates. She is enrolled for a PhD in Visual Studies at the University of Pretoria for which she has devised an agentic and dissident utopia. Her research interests include utopia, cities, globalisation, agency and dissent.

Sources: Cruise, W. 1997. Artist as subject: subject as object Volume 1. Unpublished Master's Dissertation. UNISA.



Robert Hodgins' 'Businessman'

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Tribute and photograph by Ronnie Watt

Bryan Haden

- A potter of pots (1930-2016)

It required of Bryan Haden to die so that he could be plucked out of obscurity. That is so sad. Unlike his two fellow pioneer South African studio potters Esias Bosch (1923-2010) and Hyme Rabinowitz (1921-2005) whose lives and works continue to be celebrated, Haden's contribution to the founding of this country's pottery art-craft and his oeuvre are scarcely remembered other than by the cognoscenti. The fame which Bosch and Rabinowitz won, eluded Haden partly because he never set out to be a celebrity potter and partly because he got stuck in doing what he did best: making everyday functional pots but doing so with enviable flair and with the mastery to translate function into expressive form.

His oeuvre was by own choice limited to "pots that are usable" (Haden 2010) in simple, traditional shapes and included platters, casseroles, jugs, bowls, dishes, samovars, teapots, tea bowls and large lidded storage jars of up to one meter in height. The pots had to meet basic functional needs because, said Haden: "... pots are primarily containers; they should... advertise their functions" (Clark and Wagner 1974:38). Making functional pots (more aptly, utilitarian wares) earned Haden (and also Bosch and Rabinowitz) the ill-fitting labels of being studio potters in the Anglo-Oriental tradition which undeservedly became equated with functionality. Haden's sources of inspiration should rather be sought in the types of pottery in which he was trained in England, the work of the English potters whom he admired and his personal life experiences.

Bryan Everard Haden was born on 19 September 1930 on the farm Bonnefoi in the district of Carolina in Mpumalanga Province in South Africa. His mother was Ruth Everard Haden, one of the group of five exceptionally talented women painters in the Everard family. After his school years in Swaziland he enrolled at the University of Natal where he opted to study ceramics under Hilda Ditchburn (1917-1986). After four years of study, Haden set off to England in 1953 to visit potteries and on his return teamed up with Derek Sherwood to establish a studio at Hay Paddock (a former World War II army transit camp) in Pietermaritzburg. An electric kiln was built to produce functional pieces in oxidised stoneware with limited production in porcelain. His early work was sufficiently impressive to earn him participation in a South African Craft Exhibition in Washington, U.S.A. The studio was closed in 1958 and for the next four years Haden busied himself with other work which included a stint as a crew member on a whaling boat, felling timber and teaching art at the missionary school at Goromonzi in the Mashonaland East province of the former Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where he met and married his wife Heather. Returning to Bonnefoi in 1963, Haden established his second studio but a year later, he



set off to work in stoneware at Aylesford Monastery Pottery associated with a Carmelite Friary in Kent. The monastery pottery was established by Bernard Leach (1887-1979) and Colin Pearson (1923-2007). Haden's work was to throw Elizabethan-type ware including goblets, loving cups, cherubim pots and large holders for Holy Water. In 1965, he returned to South Africa to take up a teaching post at the Greenpoint Art Centre in Cape Town and in the following year he set up house and studio on the mountain slopes of Gordon's Bay. The studio boasted an oil-fired draught kiln as well as a wood-fired kiln, the latter which Haden favoured for his stoneware.

Haden identified Leach and Michael Cardew (1901-1983) as having significantly influenced his own approach to pottery but the potter he most admired was Harry Davis (1910-1986) of Crowan Pottery, near Praze in Cornwall with whom he worked for two months during his visit to England in 1953. He was asked to sign up with Davis for a five year period but declined the opportunity, a decision which Bryan later deeply regretted. The fine appearance and strength of Davis' pots were legendary. The British studio pottery historian Jeffrey Jones (2007:85) cited a 1966 lecture at which Davis was hailed as "one of the great quartet of 20th century potters, alongside Leach, Cardew and [Sh_ji] Hamada [1894-1978]". Bosch, too, did not withhold his admiration for Davis, speaking of him as "the most complete potter", when compared with Leach, Cardew and Raymond Finch (1914-2012) (Bosch, Anton 2016).

Haden would not be drawn into an intellectual analysis about studio pottery or his own oeuvre and would brush such discussions off by saying in an off-handed manner that: "All I wanted to do was to make pots." The first formal recognition of his eminence came in Garth Clarke and Lynne Wagner's *Potters of Southern Africa* (1974:41): "His basic work has a rugged appeal in the robust strength of the honest craftsmanship in which he believes. But in his more personal pieces this robustness and vigour is balanced by a refinement of form and decoration..." In

Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa, Wilma Cruise (1991:48) praised Haden's understanding and skilled use of materials and his generosity in form, the result of which was that "[t]here is nothing effete or atrophied in the forms".

Haden's quirky personality was revealed in the narratives of him by his apprentices. Nico Liebenberg served a short apprenticeship in 1987 and described the studio as often chaotic but energised. When Liebenberg first arrived for duty, Haden had completely forgotten that he invited the student potter to take up a residency. It was with Liebenberg that Haden one night after he had harvested the beehives, had a schoolboy-ish honey-flinging fight in the studio. Verena Baraga, now resident in Switzerland, was admitted as apprentice in exchange for furnace bricks supplied to Haden by her husband. Assuming that she wouldn't last very long as an apprentice, Haden restricted her to wedging clay and making tea for the first nine months. Then came the day when Haden had to throw plates and he did so quicker than Baraga could wedge the clay for them. He thought it was hilarious but Baraga lost her cool and demanded that he honour his side of the arrangement and teach her to throw pots. He agreed and she served at the studio for six years (1975-1981). Rudi Botha served with Haden from 1979 to 1980. He arrived for his first day of duty only to find no one at the studio. When sometime later Bryan did make his appearance it was to instruct Botha to help fix a dilapidated farm tractor, a chore that took a whole week to finish. Botha also recalled the regular adventure of fetching wood from the nearby Lourensford Estate in a rusty old truck that had no floorboard between the driver's seat and the pedals. Another apprentice was John Wilhelm who served at the studio from 1980 to mid-1982 and then partnered with Baraga to establish The Mill Street Pottery in Cape Town until 1995. Wilhelm remembered how, when the wood pile was running low, Haden would rip up sections of the Black Wattle fence around the property

to keep the firing going. There was no formal display and sales area in the Gordon's Bay studio but pots were stacked in a small wooden shed and not always with price labels on them. It was as though, says Wells, there was no urgency to sell work. It would frequently happen that no one was in attendance at the studio and when buyers arrived, they would make their selection and leave payment in or under one of the pots or nothing more than a "thank you for the pot" note. Wilhelm recalls a customer who came back to the studio after having bought a teapot which did not pour. It transpired that Haden had forgotten to drill the hole from the pot into the spout and his laconic reply to the buyer was "Well, you should make the tea thinner".

Haden suffered a stroke in 1997 which ended his studio pottery career. Scant coverage was given of his work in the Sgraffiti editions during the time when Haden was active and hence little can be gleaned from that archive about the reception of his work. Equally regrettable is that his work is only represented in the collections of the Durbanville Clay Museum, Durban Art Gallery and the Pretoria Art Museum. Fortunate are those who can claim ownership of a work by Haden... we own not only a Haden pot but own a small piece of Haden, the man himself.

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Persevering with Perseverence and her Clay

Article by Kate Shand
Photographs by Kate Shand and Nina Joubert

Millstone Pottery hosted a three day work low-firing pottery workshop in 2016 with various rurally-based potters in attendance and facilitated by ceramicist Michelle Legg. This is the first in a series of three articles, each featuring a rural-based potter from the workshop, namely Perseverence Ramatshekisa, Nesiwe and Thembi Nala.

I sat bolt upright in bed “the clay has disappeared!” It was three a.m. I nudged my partner awake, almost shouting “it’s gone, the clay is gone”. We stumbled out of bed. I grabbed my cellphone to use the torch function. Out on the balcony I shone the torch on the grass below where just a few days previously we had heaved the twenty kilogram bag of clay from our trailer into the garden where it appeared to be quite safely stored. The torchlight confirmed my fear. The clay was missing. If working with clay has taught me one thing it is to surrender to what is. The clay has disappeared and there is nothing I can do at this hour of the morning except to go back to bed and try to get some sleep.

In the morning I waited until a reasonable hour to contact the rubble remover who had been at our house the previous day carting away all the alien vegetation which we had removed from our garden, along with other refuse, and I surmised, the precious bag of clay. I had visions of us rummaging through the Pringle Bay dump in search of the clay. I did not have much time as the clay was a vital component of a workshop at Millstone Pottery which started at ten a.m. that very morning. “It’s your lucky day” the man said, “I had not emptied the truck yet”. I breathed a sigh of relief; it was all going to be fine. On my way out of Pringle Bay I collected the bag of clay, the rubble man must have thought I was crazy - all this fuss over a bag of what looked like dry earth.

So why was this particular bag of clay so precious? Just a few days before, Perseverence Ramatshekisa, a well-known Venda potter, had made the long journey from her village, Mukondeni (near Elim in Northern Limpopo) to Johannesburg to deliver the clay and various unfired pots to my house so I could transport it to McGregor. She was flying down to the Cape for the workshop a few days later and couldn’t bring the clay and pots with her. The clay is from a pit in Mukondeni called Mulondoni and has been the main clay source for her village for nearly seventy years.



According to Perseverance, the Venda only started making pots in 1947. I had imagined an ancient tradition of Venda pot-making spanning centuries. I was surprised but Perseverance was adamant about the date. She explained that the skill of making pots belonged to the people who were called the Vhalemba or Vhashavhi. They started making pots where they were living, and they were not allowed to marry into other cultures. After they started breaking this law and marrying into other cultures, their skills were transferred to the Venda people.

Perseverance has been making pots for thirty seven years, since she was about nine years old. She followed in the footsteps of her mother and grandmother, both Venda potters. She is part of a pottery collective of about twenty women who broke away from the original large group and they all still make pots in the village. Forty potters in total - that is a large number for one village to sustain - especially when you consider the speed at which Venda pots are made. When I mentioned this to her, she said "I think there is even more but because there is no business anymore, others are no longer working as potters".

Perseverance was invited to Millstone Pottery in McGregor to demonstrate the Venda pot-making process. She started by hammering the solid lumps of clay into small pieces and then sieving them and adding water until the clay reached the right consistency. The clay was left to rest for a few hours. When it was ready she made a doughnut shape with the almost black clay. Next she pulled and scraped the clay up and shaped it into a pot. Once she was happy with the shape the rim was finished and she then waited for it to dry a bit before turning it upside down. There was a circular hole at the bottom of the pot determined by the doughnut shape. She then pinched and scraped until the hole was closed. Her hands are practiced and deft and she worked with very few tools, only a scraper and a burnishing stone. My eyes surveyed the rows of contemporary tools used by the urban potter. This way of pot-making is significantly different from the usual coiled method. It is also a remarkably quick process of creating pots. This leads to an unintended and unfortunate consequence - the market has become flooded and the Venda pottery tradition is potentially under threat of oversupply.

Once the pots reached leather hard stage they were decorated with ochre, burnished and put aside to warm in the sun in preparation for firing.

Perseverance fired her pots on the Saturday evening with the help of her husband, Joseph. Joseph played soccer for Moroka Swallows for many years and travelled the world playing for the national team of Bophuthatswana. Now he helps Perseverance with the business of making, firing and selling pots. They make a dynamic couple. I wondered for a moment how he integrates his international experience with the contained life of a Venda village.

Traditionally Venda pots are fired at night as there is less wind and according to Perseverance "the wind is the main reason the pots crack". A large bonfire was made with the pots carefully placed and then surrounded by a haystack of grass. Joseph put a match to the grass and it exploded into a spectacular bonfire. For the first few minutes it felt dangerous but exciting - if there had been a breath of wind anything could have happened.

Once the hungry flames had burnt down, the embers in the pit glowed all night as the pots underwent their alchemical process. There is something quite poetic and



magical about digging clay from the earth, creating a pot with nothing more than a pair of hands, a scraping tool, and a stone, and then placing it into the middle of a fire to transform it from earth to ceramic. The relationship is so direct and visceral. In the morning Perseverance removed the pots from the ashes. Amazingly, and almost impossibly, all the pots survived the intense and sudden heat of the flames. She finished decorating the pots with graphite (obtained from mines in Limpopo) and polish.

Some of Perseverance's pots were decorated with fish. The fish is a spiritual symbol in the region and the use thereof as a decorative element was introduced by a European man visiting the village. She explained that "he asked us to decorate our pots with fishes as it would make them more attractive. It really worked as everyone started looking for the pots with fishes on them".

Most of Perseverance's pots sell for between R200 and R800 (depending on size and decoration) but some of the very big pots can sell for as much as R3000. These pots are "big enough for you to get inside". But making ends meet is a daily struggle. Perseverance says she's lucky because her husband has a car and she therefore doesn't have to pay transport costs to deliver her pots to the few outlets she supplies beyond the main road in Mukondeni. Mukondeni used to be a thriving village with many tourists passing through but the tourism trade has gone (for reasons not quite understood) and Perseverance mainly sells to "a woman with a shop in Krugersdorp and another with a nursery in Fourways".

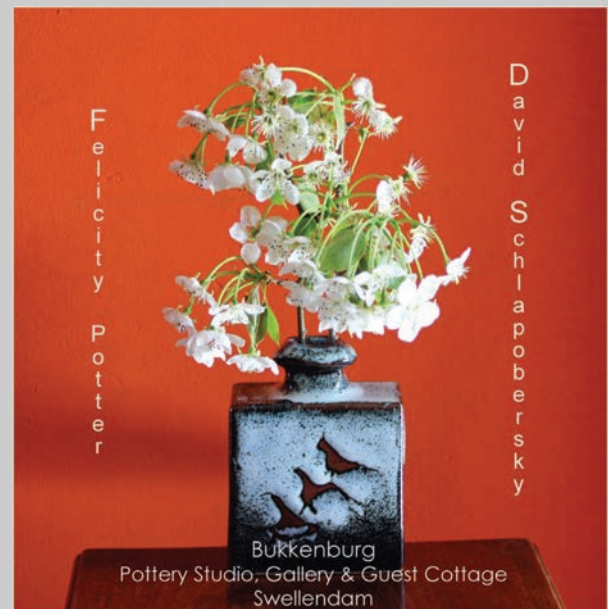
I asked Perseverance, who has been making pots professionally since she matriculated in 1988, if any of her daughters (she has four children, two boys and two girls) would follow in her footsteps. "They can't, it is too hard, but they know how to make pots" she said.

FEATURE: TRADITIONAL POTTERS



So back to that bag of clay. I'm not sure what would have happened at the workshop if we had lost Perseverence's clay. I don't think she would have been able to make any pots using this method. But fortunately it survived the two thousand kilometer journey and we were fortunate to both witness and participate in the Venda pot-making process. The Venda clay is so elastic, pliable, and easy to work with, that it makes our commercial clay seem dull, floppy, and clumsy. It is, however not easy to get access to this clay. According to Perseverence it is not impossible for outsiders to obtain it, but it will require protracted negotiations with the local chief.

Kate Shand is a published author, artist and community arts counsellor. She has a Master's Degree in Heritage Studies from Wits University. Kate has three daughters and lives in Johannesburg.



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AN INTERVIEW WITH WENDY GERS

Interview by Rika Nortjé

'This book is a tribute to the generosity of South Africans and potters all over the world who helped me with the book.' - Wendy Gers.

Most of us know Wendy Gers as the author of *Scorched Earth* (book review in the previous edition of *Ceramics Southern Africa* magazine). In August she visited South Africa to do a series of book launches and I was lucky enough to catch up with her for a quick coffee and interview prior to the launch at the University of Johannesburg.

Wendy was born in Paarl and educated in Pretoria and Potchefstroom. She completed her Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) at UKZN in Pietermaritzburg and continued with an Advanced University Diploma in Information Studies, Library and Information Science. She moved to Port Elizabeth shortly after enrolling for her Master of Arts (M.A.) in Art History, also at UKZN. Here she worked as Exhibitions Officer from 1996 - 2000, while completing her MA part-time. During our interview, she jokes about having lived in a succession of towns and cities in SA that starts with a 'P'!

South African Studio Ceramics, c1950s: the Kalahari Studio, Drostyd Ware and Crescent Potteries, Wendy's MA thesis, presented a post-colonial reading of representations of race and gender on artistic and popular domestic pottery. In 2001 she relocated to Spain with her husband. As she was barred from formal employment opportunities in Spain, she continued with her research into Southern African potteries. This was the beginning of *Scorched Earth*. She also volunteered at the Museo Comarcal de Manresa (near Barcelona), learned Spanish and started a family.

Wendy is a researcher by heart. When I asked her if she preferred writing books or curating, she responded that essentially they are the same, as both involve equal doses of scholarly rigour and creativity. We spoke about how things are connected - especially in South Africa where the boundaries between art and craft are blurred, in comparison to France, where there is a bigger divide between ART and CRAFT. When I asked if she thought if the multitude of cultures inhabiting our country played a roll, she answered 'most definitely'. She feels that South Africa's multiculturalism has resulted in a mutual respect for diverse forms of artistic expression and material cultures. She believes that in South Africa certain crafts are more respected than in France. This is due to the fact that many South African Art Museums have embraced multicultural pluralism in their collection and display of art and craft, resulting in a significant erosion of historically entrenched hierarchical distinctions between arts and crafts.

In the course of her research for *Scorched Earth*, Wendy found links from not only the 'Anglo-Oriental' and the Michael Cardew lineage in which many South African potters were schooled, but links with artists from other Southern African countries, as well as Canada, Holland and Scandinavia. The book enables readers to explore the links and connections between artists, potters, designers and regional potteries. Wendy explained that she is interested how tastes evolve and mutate, and in our interview she explained how the boundaries between the 'commercial' and 'artistic' ceramics are also very blurred. She cited Maartin Zaalberg as an example, for his role in promoting Anglo-orientalism via APSA Cape Province (of which he was chairman for many years), as a studio potter in his own right, and as the owner of Zaalberg Potteries, a pottery that mass produced highly popular wares. Similarly, the esteemed pioneer artist, Durant Sihlali, was a painter, sculptor and printmaker and also a decorator at Crescent Potteries.

Writing a book like this is a huge task and when I asked what kept her motivated, she answered: 'This was a part of South African history that is completely overlooked and it just had to be done. I had to do

it, because no one else was interested in this field, and I had to do it well! That was what kept me going. The more I learned, the more enthusiastic I became and the larger the project grew! Finally, the project had to be scaled back massively - the book is just a small part of all the research.'

Most of her research is based on interviews with potters, their families, friends and collectors. She also consulted the Zaalberg archives (IZIKO SA Cultural History Museum, Cape Town), the Nilant archives (University of Pretoria), various British archives, as well as South African National and Provincial archives in Cape Town, Pretoria and Durban. Wendy also mentions that often people feel that the information they have is not important enough to be in an archive, which makes it hard for researchers to find relevant information. She talks about the massive research archive that she has amassed (including a study collection and unpublished research) over the past 15 years. She would love to donate it to a public or private research institution for posterity. She wishes this archive could be used in the future for MA or PhD Research Fellowship in Southern African Art History, so that the information contained therein could continue to expand, and contribute to our national heritage.

When she goes home after her annual visit to South Africa and local book launches, she will get back to working on her various independent curatorial projects. Wendy explains, 'I am working with contemporary conceptual art, which has ceramic components.' Having curated the 2014 Taiwan Ceramics Biennial, she is currently curating an exhibition entitled 'Post-colonialisms?', which opens in November at the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Centre in Tel Aviv, Israel. Eighteen artists, including an alumnus of UKZN, Tim Modisa, will be participating in the exhibition and a prior residency. A few weeks later, in December, The First Ceramic China International Ceramics Biennale opens at the Henan Museum in Zhengzhou, China - which Wendy is also curating. This exhibition includes 42 artists from 23 countries, including 3 from Africa: local artist Katherine Glenday, Ngozi Ezema (Nigeria) and Barhélémy Togo (Cameroon / France).

In between her curating jobs, she lectures at l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art in Limoges, France. Co-founder of the research laboratory, La Céramique comme expérience (CEE), her responsibilities include lecturing and supervising MA and post-MA students. This is a 2-year project that focuses on digital tools and technologies, ceramics and glass. Students are taught to think with code (3D modelling) and then move on to working with the material, not the other way around. In a world of rapidly evolving art education, digital skills are essential to ensuring that artists are competitive and can create in a variety of ways.

Wendy currently lives in France with her husband and two sons. She remains committed to contributing to the development of the Southern African ceramics community.

Rika Nortjé (née Stockenström) was born and raised in Kimberley in the Northern Cape. She obtained a National Diploma in Ceramic Design at the then Technikon Free State in 1998. She taught at the Kimberley Art Centre for two years before being appointed at the William Humphreys Art Gallery in 2003. There she worked as Art Projects Leader for 12 years, during which time she obtained a B.Tech Ceramic Design at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and a Degree of Master of Arts (Art History). In 2015 she married and later that year she relocated to Johannesburg to be with her husband. Currently she does freelance work in collections management and curating.



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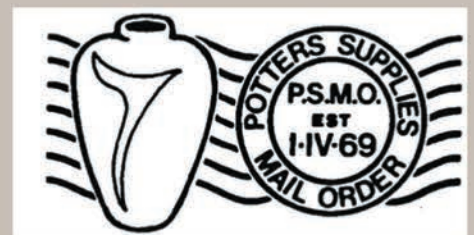
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CHRISTINE GITTENS: FROM CAPE TO CARDIFF

I received a BA Applied Art at the University of Stellenbosch in 1970, majoring in Graphic Design. After graduating I worked in various fields all connected with museums: documentation, research and display. In 1976 I did a Post Graduate Diploma in Museum Science and in 1979 I received a BA (Honours) in Afrikaans Cultural Studies.

Around this time I became interested in ceramics. My introduction to pottery was through evening classes, accompanying an enthusiastic friend to what was then known as the Stellenbosch Technical College. Little did I know that those evenings under the tutelage of Mrs Trumpelman would direct the course of the rest of my life. As it turned out my future would be shaped by that first contact with clay. The magic of turning what is essentially earth into beautiful objects is still as fascinating to me as it was when I first experienced it.

I set up a workshop in my garage in 1982 and had my first solo exhibition two years later in the Edrich Gallery in Stellenbosch. In 1983 I moved to Kolonieshuis on the corner of Ryneveld and Dorp Street in Stellenbosch and Dorp Street Gallery came into existence. Initially meant as a showcase for my own work it soon became clear that artists were looking for a venue to show paintings as well. A vibrant and interesting time in my life followed. I met wonderful people and made friendships that lasted a lifetime. I ran a small but inspiring teaching studio, presented and attended workshops and exhibited my own work on regional and national level. The gallery, in turn, hosted exhibitions by artists that have since become household names nationally and internationally.

My own work from that period was given recognition and is represented in a number of public collections in South Africa. I received three highly commended awards from the South African Association of Potters: twice on Regional level and once on National level.

After ten years in Dorp street my life was set to change dramatically. The year was 1993. A move to the United Kingdom became a possibility and then a reality. Cardiff, capital city of Wales was the destination. A turning point, new chapter and the huge challenge to continue my career in the United Kingdom was now a fact. I was excited about



my move and the opportunity to work in a new and stimulating environment - which it certainly was!

The first objective was finding studio space. A studio was available in The Model House Craft and Design Centre in the quaint, ancient hilltop town of Llantrisant. This was a suitable studio with the added benefit of interaction with other craft makers. The first step was to make a body of work and then join various organizations that would give me opportunities to participate in their activities and get my work known. I joined the South Wales Potters Association and was fortunate enough to get selected for membership of the prestigious Makers Guild in Wales and British Craft Potters Association. This would shape the next twenty years of my life.

From 1999 until 2006 I worked from my privately owned studio in Llantrisant (the Old Bakehouse Pottery Studio) where I also ran a craft gallery. In 2006 I sold The Old Bakehouse and moved my studio back to the Model House. Currently I am working from there and from home where I do the saggar-firings. I am actively involved with both the Makers Guild in Wales and the South Wales Potters Association I am also a professional member of the Craft Potters Association of Great Britain. I have been teaching classes in

beadmaking from my studio and teach workshops in throwing, specialising on improving skills on a one-to-one basis.

ABOUT MY WORK

Presently I am concentrating fully on developing my own work and am experimenting with various low-firing techniques on a burnished, unglazed clay surface.

My work consists of traditional classical shapes presented in a contemporary style. Surfaces are burnished and left for the fire to create colour and markings on the smooth receptive clay skin of the vessels.

I use a variety of "naked raku" firing techniques for my work. Saggar firings with salt, copper and sawdust give subtle hues of colour to the burnished surfaces of the vessels. I also work with horsehair and feather-carbonization and often combine different techniques through multiple firings. Recent work shows the results of experiments with ferric chloride and foil saggars.

I bique-fire my work in an electric kiln and use a gas-fired raku kiln for the saggar-firings.

A few years ago I started producing a new line of thrown ceramic jewellery to compliment my vessels. This has proved to be a quite successful and enjoyable venture. I regularly teach workshops in Craft in the Bay. I teach from my studio on a one-to-one level for advanced throwers, and I do workshops in schools facilitated by the Makers Guild in Wales.

Inspiration comes from my love for classical concepts of beauty, continuous links to my African roots and the pure joy of clay as a medium of expression.





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Ceramics has been an important part of me for most of my life. I qualified as a potter at the Johannesburg College of Art in the late 1970's and besides some overseas travel and a few years in advertising, I have been teaching and making in clay ever since.

In September this year, we held a studio exhibition, celebrating my thirty-five years of teaching. Teaching is a very important part of what I do. I was given my first teaching job as a teenager, when I took over from Clementina van der Walt. She gave me the best teaching advice which has remained with me ever since: "if you don't know the answer, say so and then go and find out!" During college I set up my own studio, first at my parent's home in Parktown North and for the past twenty-seven years I have had a studio at our home in Bordeaux, which has expanded in every direction except upwards. My husband David is an engineer and very supportive, practical and hands-on. He has maintained the studio and has been involved throughout the years of its existence. Our daughter Lynsey sculpts, throws and paints when she can, and our son Daniel helps with maintenance and my frustration with technology. It has been wonderful having my whole family involved in the studio.

I am fortunate in that I enjoy teaching. I like working with people and have met so many interesting people through the years, many who have become good friends and are still potting in my studio. I have enjoyed watching new friendships grow and guiding students in whichever direction they are interested, be it handwork, throwing, sculpture or decorating.

Edson Mahlangu and Becky Love each approached me to work in my studio and they have fitted in perfectly. We make a very happy team. We have all grown in different ways and they both fill various needs in teaching and bringing their own special skills and personalities to the studio. We all teach different classes as well as run pottery teambuilding workshops together. Edson is enjoying throwing porcelain, and Becky has her own range of jewellery: Picnic Ceramics. We take pride in our students making beautiful work, exhibiting, starting their own studios and most of all, loving working with clay.

The other important part of what I do is my own ceramics. My teaching studio has always been busy and when my children were young and my parents were elderly, I had limited time to spend on my own ceramics. Reduced family needs gave me more time to concentrate on my own work. I have often focused on dinnerware, inspired by my love of cooking and entertaining. I enjoy making multifunctional pots, where lids invert as bowls, or bowls and lids work either way up. I designed a local, contemporary tagine and have made many for hotels, restaurants and for private use, and we still make tagines in the studio.

I started attending a mentorship programme run by John Shirley, which I loved and still enjoy. John helped me find direction in my work as well as giving technical advice and I have enjoyed the contact and input from my peers. I spent three years making rhino inspired ceramics to raise awareness of poaching and raise funds for The Endangered Wildlife Trust, to help fight poaching. My work included thrown vases with rhino silhouettes, and sculptures. I had a successful solo exhibition in 2013, entitled 'All Fired up for Rhinos'. My installation illustrated the terrible increase in poaching and was selected in the top fifteen art works at the Thami Mnyeli Fine Art Exhibition in 2013. It was also well received when exhibited at the Gordon Institute of Business Science the following year.

Antoinette Badenhorst's visit and workshop started a new direction in my work and I've been focusing on porcelain since then. I also did an on-line course with Antoinette on thrown dinnerware and have been preoccupied with throwing dinnerware which is translucent enough to see through. When our children left home, instead of having the empty nest syndrome, I turned my daughter's bedroom into my porcelain studio. Here I am able to focus on my throwing

in a tranquil setting, viewing the garden. My decoration is mostly inspired by nature, particularly tree bark, rivers and landscapes.

While my husband was based in Durban on business, I visited him when I could. I set up a makeshift studio in the spare room of the flat with camp table and tools mostly borrowed from the kitchen. I made a series of small ceramic sculptures, called Bean People, inspired by Audrey Blackman's technique. They tell the story of our lives there, going on walks, picnics, cleaning windows, visiting the beach. The time in Durban has been so different to our normal lives and part of processing the experience was recreating it in miniature. The scale of the pieces was determined by my need to bring them back leather hard in my hand luggage when I flew home, and I became an expert packer.

When I was in college, with the guidance of Karin Boyum, I developed my own porcelain, and I have 100 kilograms maturing in a drum in the back garden, waiting for the right time. My ceramics has always been a reflection of my life, and everything that I do and feel, makes its way into my work. I will continue to create the objects which inspire me, and it might nearly be time to crack open that drum of porcelain!

Anne Rimbault



Anne Rimbault's
Pottery Studio
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Anne Rimbault's favourite new tools

I think potters all borrow tools from their kitchens and tool sheds as well as finding interesting tools at stationers and sewing shops.

One of my favourite smoothing tools is my daughter's first plastic-covered baby spoon. On the opposite side of smoothing, for texture on my rhino sculptures I use a wrinkled old granadilla.

Since I've been working in porcelain, I have a few new finds. Firstly, surforms rust so I've changed to stainless steel microplanes (kitchen equipment) for initial turning.

To carve porcelain, I use a cuticle pusher which has a soft rubber wedge on the other end, perfect for smoothing handles and joins.

Emery boards are great for light sanding while buffers are perfect for smoothing and tidying up underglaze on rims.



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Anne Rimbault studied ceramics at the Johannesburg Art College in the 1970s and has been teaching ever since. Her current work is fine porcelain dinnerware.



Edson Mahlangu has been working in pottery since studying fine arts at Mzilikazi Art Centre in Bulawayo in the 1990s. He specialises in teaching throwing.



Becky Love is a civil engineer by training but has worked in ceramics since graduating from Wits in 2013. She is presently working on decorated vases.

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



Article by Denise Clur
Photographs by Sunil Deepak and Denise Clur



The street in Milan is so quiet at night. Manin Street. It must be very early morning now. I am awake and I can look down from five stories and see the glowing street lamps, the silver painted park railings, pointed and shaped like the spears of ancient Roman soldiers.

The foliage of the trees in the Indro Montanelli Public Gardens hides the horsemen, but I know that they are there - just a stone's throw away beneath me. In the daylight I will cross the street again to visit them. They will still be there - each horse on his own plinth. On the tallest plinth, an upright rectangular structure of concrete-like composite, is a small bronze plaque:

- Quatro cavalieri dell'Apocalisse E il bianco cavallo della pace¹ H. Rosenthal

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse - the energy of the four bronzes draws me from various vistas, and so I draw them from every angle. Sitting in the long grass which is mostly clover and daisies; sitting on a park bench until the sun is hot and my drawing arm aches. I have marvelled and been mystified.

So now, back in South Africa, I come across the slim New Testament, bound in red leather, inscribed to me by my grandmother and dated 1956. I decide to look up the verse in Revelations which brought forth the sculptures. Agnostic that I am, I do not think I ever opened this volume before. Nearly sixty years have scuffed and split the binding at the base of the narrow spine. The delicate leaves are of such fine paper. I have had to read Revelations a few times, just trying to make sense of the ramifications of the mind of John of Patmos. What an imagination and what an inspiration for an artistic rendition.

In Chapter 6: "And I saw when the lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying: Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and

he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

So that was the white horse, in the front, facing the park gate, with the horseman's thin right arm, Giacometti-like, pulled back at an angle to draw the string with his left arm stretched forward so strongly to hold the bow. Was there ever actually a bow on this sculpture? That small Henry Moore head with a peak above the forehead - the peak must be the crown. Half of the horse's rear legs seem buried in the substance of the plinth from which it leaps - head, spine and tail a continuous wave, a streak, taut and active and the rider standing upright on non-existent stirrups.

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say: Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given unto him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."

The bodies of the horses look like shapeless sausages. However, one has to look again at the delicate curvature of this horse's neck, at the modelling of the truncated hindquarters where this horse rears up from his plinth. His tail is a thumb pressed metallic stub. The rider's up-stretched arm wields a great sword, but the left hand rests so softly on the arch of the horse's neck - a feminine gesture made by a rider who is depicted in the sculpture as female. She has small breasts and the weight of her seated pelvis is heavy on the horse's slanting back. Her head cloth flags behind her alert head. She sits in a sidesaddle posture but is riding bareback.

"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say: Come and see. In addition, I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt

not the oil and the wine.”² The third horseman symbolizes famine, often associated with war and its effects: death (the colour black). One can see the dejection and starvation of both horse and rider. The cadaverous angular treatment of the horse's haunches is Picasso-esque, and so apt.

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” The head of the pale horse, on the tall plinth, strains upwards, open mouthed, in Guernica type agony.

The white horse of peace must belong to some other part of the Bible to which I have not as yet been directed. At first glance I thought it was a blob of concrete. However, one observes the subtle angles of each stylised leg, as well as the lowered head of the peaceful, grazing animal.

I am in awe.



Denise Clur qualified and worked as a science teacher. She subsequently studied painting on a casual basis with various artists and attended a few etching classes with William Kentridge. At a later stage, having completed a BSc Hons. in Chemistry she lectured at Johannesburg College of Education where she met Gavin Bell who was teaching evening classes in pottery to some lecturers. She has since worked in ceramics and attended various workshops. While on a trip to Italy with her daughters, she came across the sculptures which inspired this article.

- ¹ The four horsemen of the apocalypse and the white horse of peace.
- ² This probably highlights social injustice - oil and wine being for the wealthy.



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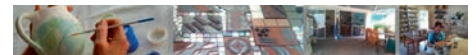
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