



argilos

Ceramic Newsletter
Spring 2010

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- Who's Your Mug?
- Jeff Oestreich in P.E.
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- Books & Web site reviews

Dear Members

I'd like to thank those of you who were able to enter work for the National Exhibition. 14 people entered 31 pieces, of which 22 pieces were accepted. Well done - and I hope your work fares just as well in Franschhoek. Grande Provence is a wonderful gallery and you can be justifiably proud to have your ceramics displayed there.

The travelling selector ensures the standard is maintained throughout the regions and we have, with one region to go, the highest acceptance percentage! I trust your regional entries will be equally successful.

The bone china workshop conducted by John Shirley was great (reported on in this newsletter) and highlighted John's skill and understanding of his chosen medium. Jeff Oestreich was just remarkable. An experience of note.

Our proposed Mug exhibition at the Tin House Gallery is an opportunity to establish a constant showcase for ceramics. After this initial exhibition, individual or pairs of potters may have mini exhibitions, with openings and press releases every 5/6 weeks. Your work will be sold with a commission to Tin House.

Whilst you are working for "Who's Your Mug?" please make one (for use) to give to the Association for use at workshops etc. This will help greatly in arrangements if we have our own wonderful handmade mugs.

Whilst you are planning next years work, plan too to get your profile onto the National website - www.ceramics.org.za It's great exposure and it's free.

Enjoy your new Argilos and remember it's here for your use - let's hear about what you are doing with clay. We're planning a swop column and a Q & A feature for future issues. Please contact Delphine if you are likely to have an entry for the summer issue.

Best wishes and keep your hands muddy!

Margie



Calendar of events



2010

November

Ceramics Southern Africa - Regional Exhibition
@ New Creations on Newington Art Gallery
13 Newington Street
Richmond Hill, PE
Stephanie Liebetrau: 041 373 7136
24 November to 16 December
Opening 24th of November @ 6pm

Ceramic Fair 2010 @ NMMU (Ceramic Dept)

- Indoor ceramic market Friday 26th and Saturday 27th November, 9 am - 4 pm.
- Selected exhibition in the Red Earth Gallery.
- 3 day workshop schedule (25th - 27th) conducted by past students and local ceramic artists plus the
- Annual Ceramic Department sale of student's work.

2011

February

- AGM on Saturday 12th (provisional date)
- Who's your mug? show @ Tin House, Cuyler street

May

- Ceramics Southern Africa - Eastern Cape Regional Ceramic Exhibition
@ EPSAC 16th - 27th May
Opens Tuesday 17th May
Selected group exhibition

November

- Ceramic fair/market 2011 @ the Walmer Town Hall on Sat 5th and Sun 6th: Indoor ceramic market, demonstrations, workshops, café corner.

Ceramics Southern Africa - Eastern Cape presents the Ceramic Fair 2010 25th - 27th November @ NMMU Ceramic Department

Indoor Ceramic Market

This will take place on Friday 26th and Saturday 27th November in a spacious and light drawing classroom equipped with power points and lights. This is a very secure venue, no packing up is needed on the evening of the 26th and no problem if the weather is a little capricious. It will be open to the public from 9 am to 4 pm.

Stall: spaces of +/- 3 m² will be allocated to each participant on arrival. The rental of one stall will be charged according to the participant's sales to a maximum of R400 for members and R700 for non-members for the 2 days.

The setting-up will be done on the Thursday 25th. If you don't have display material like tables and plinths, there are a number available in the ceramic department but first come first served. Space is limited. Contact delphinieniez@hotmail.com or call Delphine at 072 020 9589 to make sure there is still availability.

If you don't have enough pieces, and we know this is a rather short notice, you may want to exhibit

with another ceramist and share a space.

Selected exhibition in the Red Earth Gallery

Each participant in the indoor market will have the opportunity to submit 1 or 2 of their best pieces to be exhibited in the well appointed Red Earth Gallery along with the best student's work (Julia Keevy will be selecting the pieces and her decision will be final). CSA-EC will take a 15% commission on sales from the Gallery.

Workshops

The NMMU Ceramic Department will be hosting a 3 day workshop schedule in conjunction with Ceramics South Africa- Eastern Cape conducted by past students and local ceramic artists. Workshops are open to all, old and young. Most are participating and the work completed will be fired at the department and ready for pick up by the Monday 29th.

For a detailed program contact Julia Keevy
julia.keevy@nmmu.ac.za



Left : Vutisango Ndvandva will be leading a workshop demonstrating his innovative coiled vase techniques .

John Shirley's Bone China workshop.

On Saturday the 25th September a small group of us gathered at NMMU for the workshop given by John. This tall, quiet man has been making pots for 40 years and on Saturday generously shared his wealth of experience with us.

At present John is working in bone china. Although it took him a year of hard work, trial and error before he successfully managed to make and fire his first pots in this medium, he generously demonstrated all his methods and recipes to us.

He started by making the model for his pot. He then gave us the recipe for the bone china and showed us how he goes about mixing it. While the ingredients slaked, he then started mixing his plaster for the mould. What a revelation! For anyone who battles with heavy moulds this was truly amazing. By using paper plaster he reduces the weight to a third. After a break for tea, John then demonstrated his method of making a mould and casting two pots. John decorates his pots with salts and had his entry for nationals with him to show us the finished result. Just beautiful. Thanks John.

Donvé Branch



Exciting partnership with the Tin House on Cuyler.

In February 2011, the charming *Tin House on Cuyler* situated in the heart of Port Elizabeth will be hosting "Who's your mug?" our first themed exhibition.

It heralds the start of a new venture between the Tin House and the members of Ceramics Southern Africa - Eastern Cape.

Every five to six weeks, a different individual artist (or group) will have the opportunity to display their work in this gallery meets coffee shop. Each change over of potters will have an opening and we wish to make use of this time by presenting to the public a short power point presentation of the artist at work in his studio, illustrating his or her working methods and philosophy.

We are inviting all our members to participate in our themed exhibition with a completely new concept. "Who's your Mug?" will be an intimate rendezvous with beauty and novelty, which is bound to stimulate

one's senses.

Being an art gallery and a coffee shop will allow the visitor to browse through the ceramics and have a moment of extreme luxury at a very affordable price:

Customers will be able to choose a mug on display and literally order coffee thus "test-driving" the favoured mug.

By experiencing a moment with this object, made with talent and passion, the coffee lover will become an art lover too.

The proceeds of the first sale for each artist will go to a charity and sales thereafter will be subject to 30% commission. Price your mugs between R70 and R200 and enter a minimum of two.

If you're interested in having a monthly display of your work or exhibiting a piece on "Who's your mug?" please contact Delphine.

delphinenez@hotmail.com



Left above : A view of the cosy, homely mood at the Tin House on Cuyler. Work by Richard Pullen shown on centre shelves. Left below: Mugs in all manner of aesthetic type.



Peeling



Crawling (or creeping)

Potter's Spot:

Hints on the causes and solutions of some common errors found with ceramic glazing.

Shivering and peeling

These errors can create real problems in a glaze, especially with functional ware coming into contact with food or drink. It is characterised by sharp slivers of glaze which shear away from the vessel especially on distinct edges e.g. rims, edges of handles, relief decoration etc. It is usually due to poor glaze fit and is the opposite of crazing and is observed more on

stoneware than earthenware. The solutions are thus opposite to crazing namely decreasing the silica content in the clay or glaze and increasing the feldspar content in clay or glaze to enhance the glaze fit. When using bisque, make sure that all the dust or grease has been removed. Also avoid over sponging with dirty water.

Crawling

Crawling or creeping is

characterised by the glaze body pulling away from itself in patches, leaving bare areas. This is as a result of the high surface tension in the melting glaze. It can be due to dust on the item or a very powdery glaze that does not completely adhere to the surface. Crawling is more common in matt glazes. Adding a gum to a powdery glaze recipe; or a flux to a matt glaze recipe will reduce crawling, however,

an excess of some fluxes, such as magnesium or zinc, can also result in crawling. By calcining the zinc, the problem is reduced. If using bisque, or previously made items that have stood for a while, make sure that these items are clean before glazing. If one glaze is to be applied to another, make sure that the first is totally dry before applying the second.

"Milky" Transparent glaze

When transparent glaze is applied too thickly, colours turn out dull and unclear. Make sure glaze is applied thinly to avoid this problem.

Researched by East Cape Clay and Plaster using Five Common Ceramic Faults and How to fix them by Robin Hopper; The Potter's dictionary of materials and techniques by Frank and Janet Hamer and the potter's bible by Marilyn Scott.

A conversation with Lynnley Watson.

This Argilos our Spring edition, we decided to profile Lynnley Watson, a well-established ceramist who has been working with clay since the 1970's. Watson began her academic training in Fine Art Painting and thereafter went into Ceramics. Following her studies she spent three years in Europe apprenticing at various acclaimed studios. Watson has won many awards, and has exhibited nationally and internationally. Her work is in private and public collections here and abroad.

Visiting Lynnley at her studio was a delightful experience. I felt like I was entering a haven of rest and creativity as I wound my way between the 'English' styled garden and came upon two chairs nested in between the trees, surrounded by mobiles, bits of drift wood and little sculptures. Inside her studio the creative environment continues with sources of inspiration and ideas all around.

I sent Watson some questions/statements earlier and these are her comments:

Why clay as a means of Expression?

I chose clay mainly for its tactile qualities and its versatility. It is an easy material with which to create volume. Being an additive rather than a reductive process, it allows greater flexibility. The various stages from construction, surface treatment to glazing have such a vast range of techniques that can be employed, and one is forced to experiment. Exciting discoveries are made which keep one involved and eager to find out more. It also satisfies, to a degree, my love of painting and drawing.

A work that is a defining moment in your career?

This would be my sculpture called "The Nanny". I was engaged on so many levels when I made her: emotionally, physically, and spiritually.



I drew from my experiences as a child, but more from empathy for the domestic worker who makes so many sacrifices in her own personal life.

Current project?

I don't have one at the moment, and I am allowing myself the space to just be "in the gap" instead of automatically filling it, which would be my usual response. It's a bit scary, but necessary. I am experimenting with porcelain and getting to know it as a material, but am also enjoying oil painting again. I am happy for the time being to switch between the two disciplines.

Favourite Colour?

I don't think I have a favourite colour, but I do like to contrast cool blues with warm colours. My colour palette tends to be subdued rather than bright.

Are there any particular styles that inspire your work?

I can't think of a particular style that inspires me. My search over the last few years has been to find a medium that allows me to complete the work at the leather hard stage, before the firing (as far as is possible) I have increasingly become interested in image making on ceramics so its not surprising that I should turn to porcelain.

The butteriness of the leather hard clay and its silken fineness make drawing a line a sensual pleasure, quite different from other clays.

It's these qualities, and the whiteness which gives contrast to graphics that intrigues me.

My sculptures are representational but I try to express something more than just the visual. I want people to identify with what the sculpture represents on a subliminal level. It gives me great pleasure when someone tells me that my work has affected them.

In the process of contacting Lynnley Watson to do the profile, I found she was out of Port Elizabeth in Hamburg, South Africa. The exciting and inspiring reason for her trip was that she is presently involved in the establishment of the ceramic studio at the Keiskamma Art Project! All in all the opportunity to learn more about this artist was a motivational experience. To see how she has walked a long journey in the discipline of visual arts and truly lived a life pursuing this passion.

Janice Rautenbach

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Jeff Oestreich workshop.

The Eastern Cape was privileged to host Jeff on Monday for a full day workshop. For those not sure how to pronounce his surname it is akin to "AStrike". Jeff arrived on Sunday morning from Durban. After a light lunch we went down to NMMU to prepare for Monday.

Jeff started his day talking about his work and the pieces he had brought with him. The range of colours, importance of tea bowls, generosity and simplicity of his work, art deco influence and his time working with Bernard Leach. He then showed his slides. These introduced us to the man. Pictures of his cats, neighbours, Leach and his pots.

Jeff then started to throw. Faceting with a cheese slicer, imprinting and adding pieces of coloured porcelain. The afternoon was spent mainly trimming and more faceting and decorating.

All this accompanied by anecdotes and stories of his life as a potter and teacher.

Jeff then headed for Cape Town where he will be doing another workshop. He is the guest exhibitor at the nationals and will also be the award judge.



WEBSITES WELL WORTH BROWSING

www.amaridianusa.com

<http://potsilike.blogspot.com/2008/11/cup-intimate-object-vi-now-online.html>

www.vam.ac.uk/collections/ceramics/index.html

www.londonpotters.com

www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

www.galeriebesson.co.uk

(Next issue, we'll review sites and really get deep about ceramics, clay philosophy and deconstructionism, okay?)



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