

NEW CERAMICS

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The European Ceramics Magazine



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ISSN 1860-1049
US-\$ 12,00 | £ 7,50

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DELHI 2014

Regina Heinz



Ceramics events seem to have a bonding effect and facilitate lasting friendships. Proof of that once more was the International Ceramic Conclave, which took place in New Delhi, India from November 23rd to December 1st 2014.

The event was organised by the Delhi Blue Pottery Trust and wonderfully hosted by three of its current trustees Ravi Batra, Anuradha Ravindranath and Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal. The trust was set up in 1991 and is the oldest pottery-related institution in the country, having started out as Delhi Blue Art Pottery in 1952 on Factory Road on the outskirts of Delhi. With a history of almost 60 years, Delhi Blue has constantly striven to promote pottery through its multiple activities. It runs courses at its Sanskriti Pottery Centre and organises exhibitions, workshops, demonstrations and pottery markets on a regular basis.

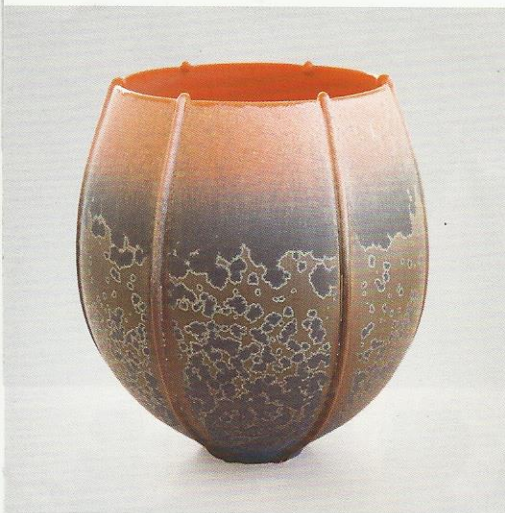
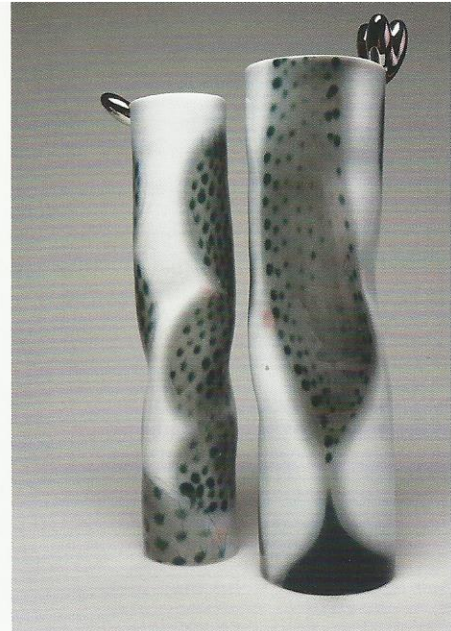
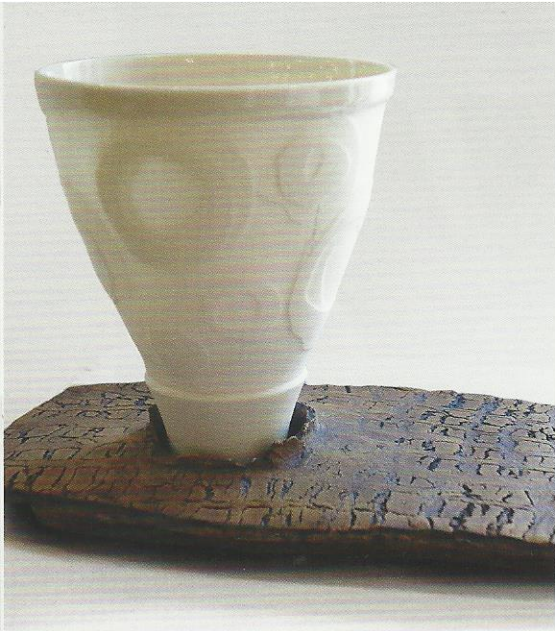
Yet the International Ceramic Conclave was the first international exhibition of its kind organised by the trust. Twenty-four ceramists from twelve countries across the world, representing Belgium, Ireland, Russia, Korea, Spain, Czech Republic, UK, USA, Japan, Germany, Singapore, Australia and the Netherlands were invited to exhibit at the imposing Habitat Conference Centre in New Delhi, with presentations, slide shows and demonstrations running alongside the exhibition.

Adil Writer, a well-known Indian ceramist and participant in the 1st Sasama festival had initiated the event. He had proposed to invite the participants of the

1st International Ceramic Festival in Sasama, Japan in 2011 to this exciting exhibition in Delhi and the majority of us were very happy to accept, not least to renew old friendships and to explore new markets.

Shozo Michikawa (Japan), Regina Heinz (Austria/UK), Sasha Wardell, (UK), Rafa Perez, (Spain), Vladimir Groh and Yasuo Nishida (Czech Republic), Martin McWilliam (UK/Germany), Patty Wouters (Belgium), Jane Jermyn (Ireland) and Seungho Yang (Korea) represented the 'old group' from Japan and were accompanied by a group of Russian ceramists, Elena Mach, Elena Potapova, Igor Chernyaev,





Arbeiten von

- top
- left - Patty Wouters
- centre - Steven Low
- right - Vladimir Groh + Yasuo Nishida

- above. - Jane Jermyn

- left - Ted Secombe
- belwo - Vineet Kacker



ceramic treasure boxes at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chennai.

This only reinforced my feeling that India is a 'land of growing opportunity', both for studio pottery and large scale sculpture and installations. The week in Delhi left us in high spirits as our exhibition was incredibly well visited and enthusiastically received. Our lectures and workshops, organised over two days in parallel with the exhibition, were sold out and fellow potters, school children, journalists, the general public, artists, interior designers, collectors, in short almost everybody came to see the exhibition. All were interested and curious, all came to admire, to exchange ideas but also to buy and all made our long trip rewarding in every sense. It was great to meet our Indian colleagues; in particular I enjoyed speaking to Shampa Shah, who also has written books on tribal art, Pandurangiah Daroz and Vineet Kacker, just to name a few. Mr. Daroz has accomplished many large scale public art projects and Vineet Kacker will be representing India and demonstrating at the International Ceramic Festival in Aberystwyth later this year. He will follow in the footsteps of Palaniappan, another Indian potter who demonstrated at Aberystwyth in 2007. Palaniappan is a traditional potter who specialises in large scale hand building techniques and storage containers. At Aberystwyth he demonstrated building one of his traditional horse sculptures. He still gives courses in his workshop in South India, a great opportunity for every ceramist who would like to learn new skills.

We all were sad when it came to say goodbye. As I said at the beginning, the intensity of the experience has reinforced old and started new friendships and the question 'where will we meet again' was on all our minds. I am confident there will be another 'conclave' soon

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Olga Ravinskaya, Tania Punans, by Svetlana Pasechnaya (Ukraine) as well as by Ann van Hoey (Belgium), Eddie Curtis(UK), Pollie and Garry Uttley (UK), Steven Low Thia Kwang (Singapore), Ted Seacombe (Australia), Tetsuya Tanaka (Japan) and Willy van Bussel (Netherlands).

We all did not quite know what to expect: after all, studio pottery does not really have a tradition in India. Traditionally, Indian potters used to make and still make (though in diminishing numbers) terracotta functional ware, storage containers as well as devotional objects for the temples, such as the famous terracotta horses, which are made in various sizes, from one foot tall to larger than life-size. We learned that Delhi Blue Pottery and The Golden Bridge Pottery, run by the American couple Deborah and Ray Meeker in Pondicherry, South India since the 1970s, played a vital role in educating contemporary Indian studio potters and in introducing stoneware and wood firing for functional as well as sculptural pottery to India. A small group of us visited Deborah and Ray after the exhibition in Delhi. Now in their seventies, they still run courses on a regular basis alongside their production pottery and Ray also works on large scale public art projects throughout India. In fact, one of his huge wood fired sculptures is sited at the Habitat Centre and was one of the first exciting clay objects we spotted when setting up the exhibition.

Indeed, there seems to be a demand for large scale public ceramic sculpture in modern India, as Adil Writer, our host in the hot South assured us. As a former architect, it was hard for him to find ceramic artists who supply artwork for architectural projects. Now as a ceramist, he makes the artwork himself and has worked on numerous projects. One of the latest is his impressive installation of 500



opposite page top

- participants of the Ceramic Conclave Delhi 2014

bottom - Habitat Centre Delhi

top right - bowl by Willy van Bussel

centre right - plate by Elena Mach

right - Treasure Box by Adil Writer

below - Golden Bridge Pottery, Pondicherry

bottom r. - exhibition of the Ceramic Conclave Delhi 2014

