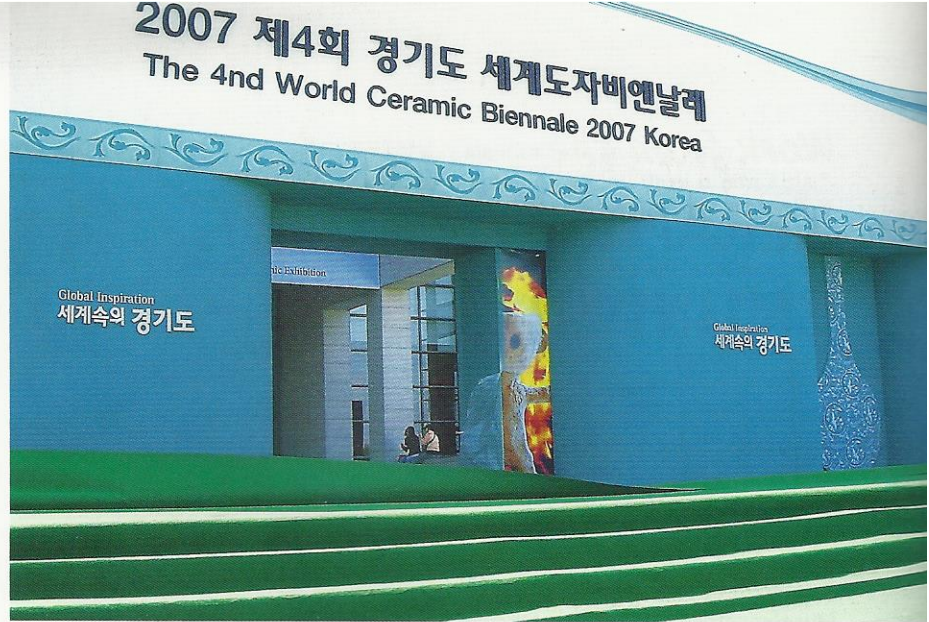


CEBIKO 2007

THE 4th WORLD CERAMIC BIENNALE IN KOREA

Patty Wouters



ILLUSTRATIONS
top -The entrance to the exhibition hall of the 4th World Ceramic Biennale in Icheon

below left -
Bronze Prize Ceramics as Expression:
Rebecca Maeder (Switzerland)
"Zoophytes"
300 x 300 cm

below right -
Silver Prize Ceramics as Expression:
Chunbok Lee (Korea)
"Forest in Höhr-Grenzhausen"

About 60 km southeast of Seoul an important historical area is situated in Gyeonggi-do Province. In this region more than 250 potteries and ceramic industries produce ceramic ware, traditional and contemporary. Because this region has a lot of clay pits, many potters have lived there during the past thousands of years. Several potteries, ceramics factories, galleries and ceramics museums can be visited.

The World Ceramic Center is located on the top of a hill at Seoulbong Park, looking out over the lake and the surrounding hills of the city of Icheon. It specialises in contemporary ceramics and organises exhibitions with the work of major Korean and international ceramic artists.

The Joseon Royal Kiln Museum is situated in the city of Gwangju, about 15 km West from Icheon. It is the home of the royal kilns that were

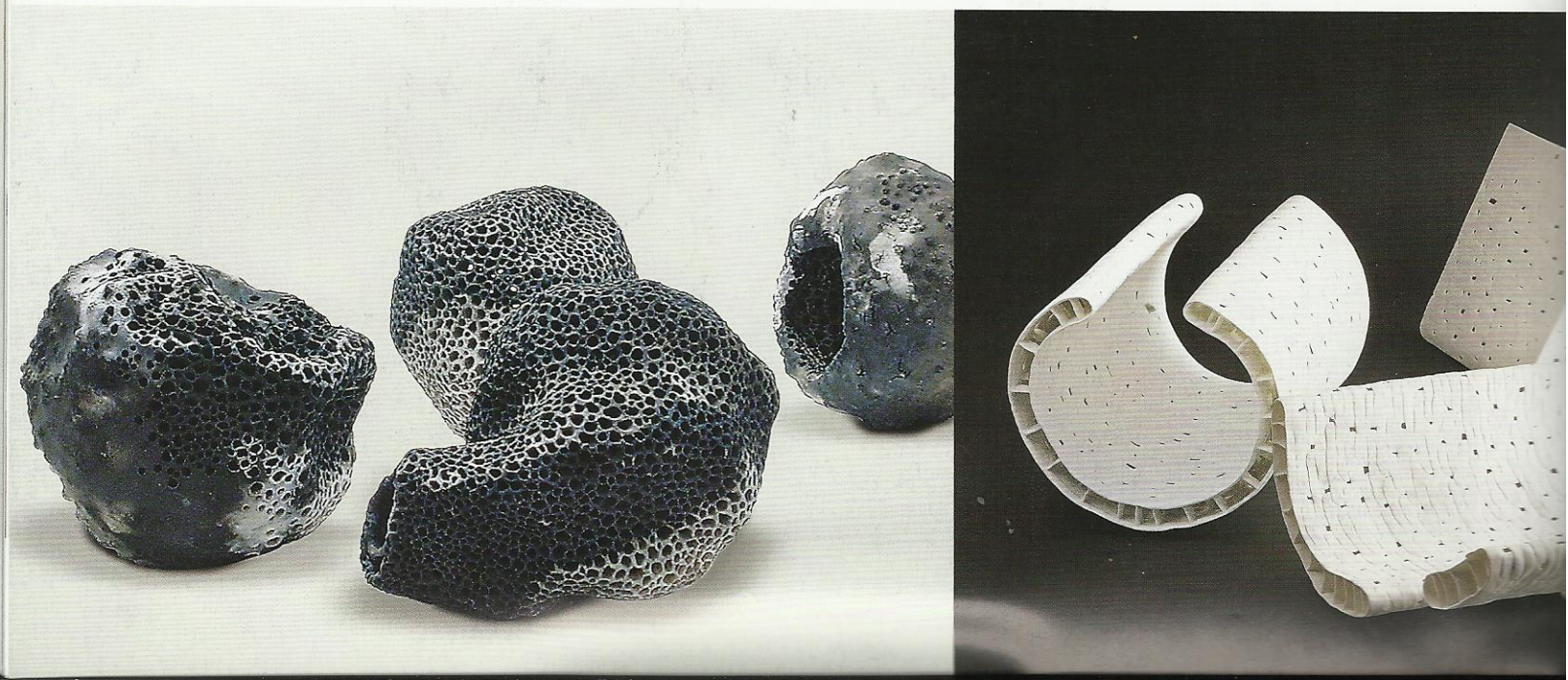
established during the Joseon dynasty and have been operating during the past 400 years. Its permanent collection focuses on traditional ceramics which were produced at these royal kiln sites. A very good educational exhibition is set out, giving a good overview of the different periods, styles and techniques throughout the history of Korean ceramics. This museum also organises special exhibitions about traditional artworks of contemporary Korean ceramists.

The Ceramic Livingware Gallery is in Yeosu about 20 km east of Icheon. Yeosu is the major production centre of Korean domestic ware. This museum has a permanent collection of ceramics of recognized international ceramic designers and renowned ceramic companies, illuminating the trend of ceramic design and beauty in utilitarian ceramics for kitchens, res-

taurants, bathrooms, etc. The display in this museum is serene and shows domestic ware in a very attractive way.

These three large museums are housed in modern buildings, designed in a contemporary architectural style.

Throughout the centuries Western countries have been impressed with the Chinese ceramics and porcelain. Nowadays Japan plays a leading role in contemporary ceramic art. Most of us are not aware that the development of the Japanese ceramics is based on Chinese and even more on Korean ceramic skills and knowledge. During the Japanese occupation in the 16th century more than 7000 Korean pottery families were forced to move to Japan to set up and improve Japanese pottery production. Korea has thus played an important role in the development of ceramics in the Far East.





At the beginning of the 21st century the World Ceramic Exposition Foundation (WOCEF) was founded with the intention of creating a forum to show and encourage new developments in the ceramic field, artistic creations as well as utilitarian ceramics. WOCEF organises international and Asian/Korean exhibitions, educational programs, research, marketing and assistance to local ceramic industries. The main goal is promoting world ceramic culture and art.

One of the most important events is the organisation of the World Ceramic Biennale of Korea (CEBIKO) which takes place in the three cities of Icheon, Gwangju and Yeosu. In May-June 2007 this event takes place for the 4th time.

This year about 2500 application files were sent in by 1500 artists from 66 countries. Therefore this biennale

can truly be called a global ceramic event that shows the latest developments in contemporary ceramics.

The jury had the task of selecting the best entries for the two international competitions and exhibitions: one focused on ceramics for use and one focused on ceramics as expression. Two hundred ceramic works were selected and 26 ceramists were awarded with prizes of 5,000 to 10,000 Euro.

The jury set out several criteria: imagination and fresh ideas, quality, skilled use of materials and processes, aesthetic value and experiment.

A series of 10 porcelain objects titled "Architectural Volume" submitted by Bodil Manz (Denmark) was awarded with the "Grand Prize". The ceramic work of Bodil Manz is without doubt of a very high quality on an artistic and technical level and

deserves such a prize.

The Gold Prize for "Ceramics for Use" was given to a young Korean artist Una LEE for her porcelain light object. It is an impressive large hanging light object in porcelain (3 mtr 60cm long!) which is technically extremely well made and beautifully assembled in such a way that the translucency of porcelain is shown as well as the interesting shapes which remind one of white coral.

The Gold Prize for "Ceramics as expression" was awarded for the sculptural object by Claire Lindner (France) titled "Leviathan". This biomorphic porcelain form looks like a creeping animal and is intriguing because of its form, texture and graphic expression.

Silver prizes were given to Antonella Cimatti (Italy), Michael Geertsen (Denmark), Aoki Ryota

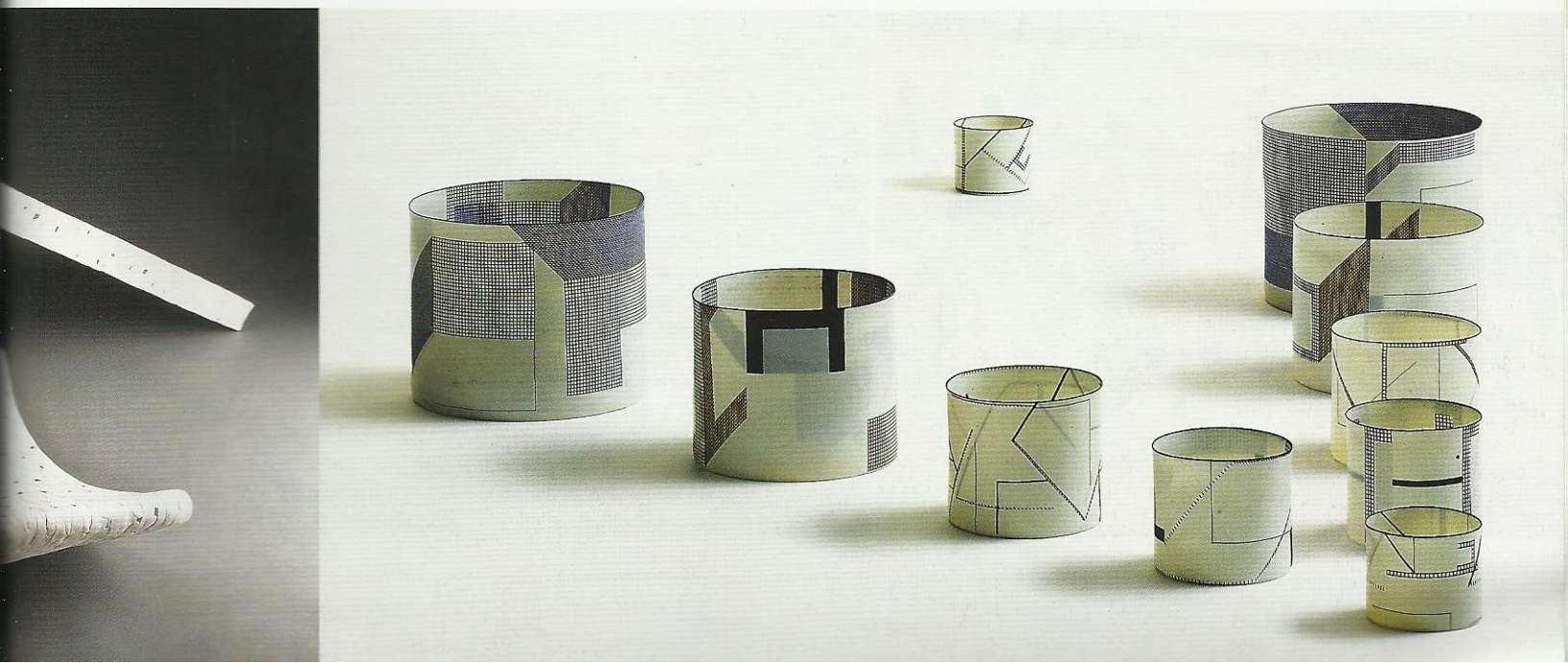
ILLUSTRATIONS

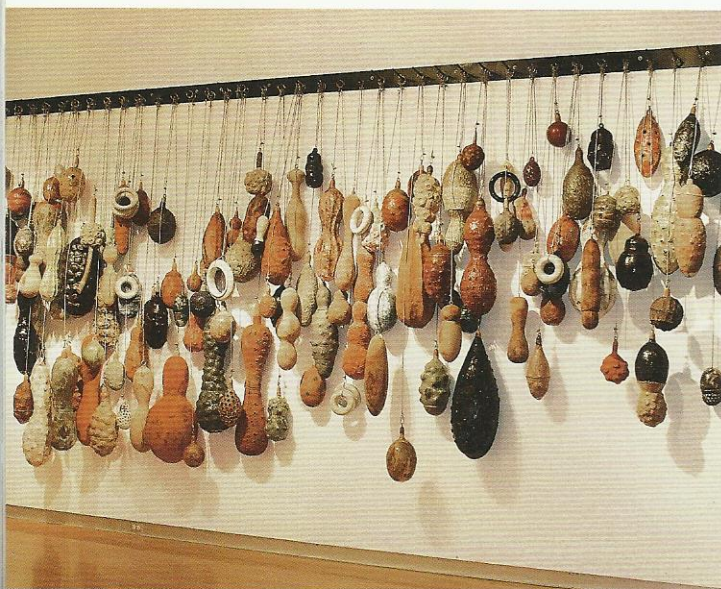
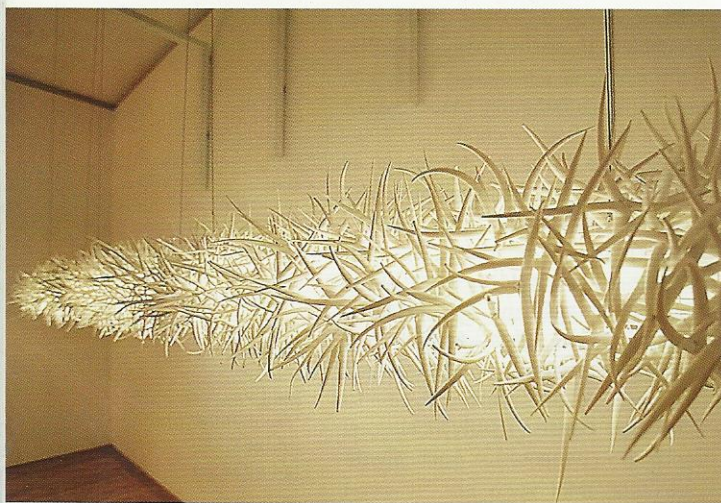
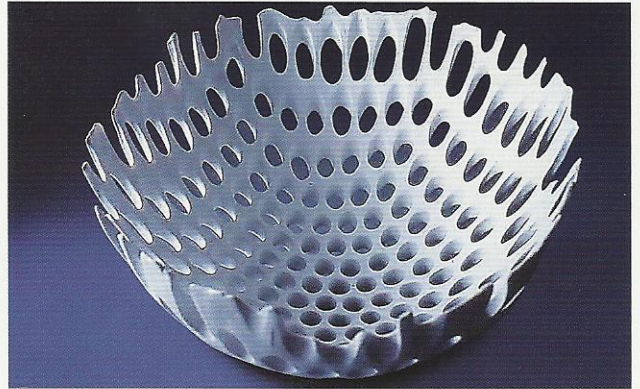
top - left to right one of the exhibition rooms of the Ceramic Livingware Gallery in Yeosu

The display of the selected ceramics for use: beautifully set up and lit

One of the exhibition rooms in the Ceramic Livingware Gallery in Yeosu

below - Grand Prize: Bodil Manz (Denmark) "The Architectural Volume" 134 x 134 cm





ILLUSTRATIONS

left from top to bottom

- Gold Prize, *Ceramics as Expression*: Claire Lindner (France) "Leviathan" - 350 x 25 x 15 cm

- Gold Prize, *Ceramics for Use*: Euna Lee (Korea) "Supernatural 01" 360 x 45 x 45 cm

- David Hicks (USA) - "Still life at 27"

top right - Bronze Prize, *Ceramic as Expression*: Yasuko Sakarai (Japan) "Spread" - 48.5 x 47.5 x 38 cm

below - Silver Prize: Michael Geertsen (Denmark) - "Blue Object" 130 x 30 x 42 cm

(Japan) and Chunbok Lee (Korea).

Describing all the works of the 26 prize winners and the 200 selected ceramic works for the exhibitions would – of course - take too long. The well-edited catalogue shows all the ceramic works with the title, the name of the artist, the dimensions and a brief technical description. At the back of the catalogue all the artists are named with a portrait and a short resume. Useful additional information about the amount of entries per country is also mentioned at the back of the catalogue.

There were 39 entries from Germany, of which 6 were selected: Nanna Bayer, Jochen Rueth, Monika –Jeanette Schoedel-Mueller, Werner

Bernhard Nowka, Petra Benndorf and Michael Cleff.

In total 84 entries were selected from Asian countries and 104 entries from all other countries. Therefore this biennale can truly be described as a major world ceramic event.

The theme of this year's biennale is "Reshaping Asia". The organisers had the intention of focusing and reflecting on the past, the present and the future of Asian ceramics. Looking at Asian history it is almost obvious that this theme should be chosen. Many Asian countries have been challenged by post-modernism and post-colonialism. This has lead Asian people into an identity crisis for some 50 years during the latter half of the twenti-



ILLUSTRATIONS

top - Juror's Choice, *Ceramics as Expression: Zi Yi Chao and Zi Wei Chao (China)* "Red China" - 108 x 68 x 50 cm

right - Bronze Prize, *Ceramics as Expression: Sujin Park (Korea)* "A Pregnant Woman" 40 x 20 x 110 cm

below - Special Prize, *Ceramics for Use: Martina Zwölfer (Austria)* - "Series of Vases with perforations" - 40 x 13 x 33 cm

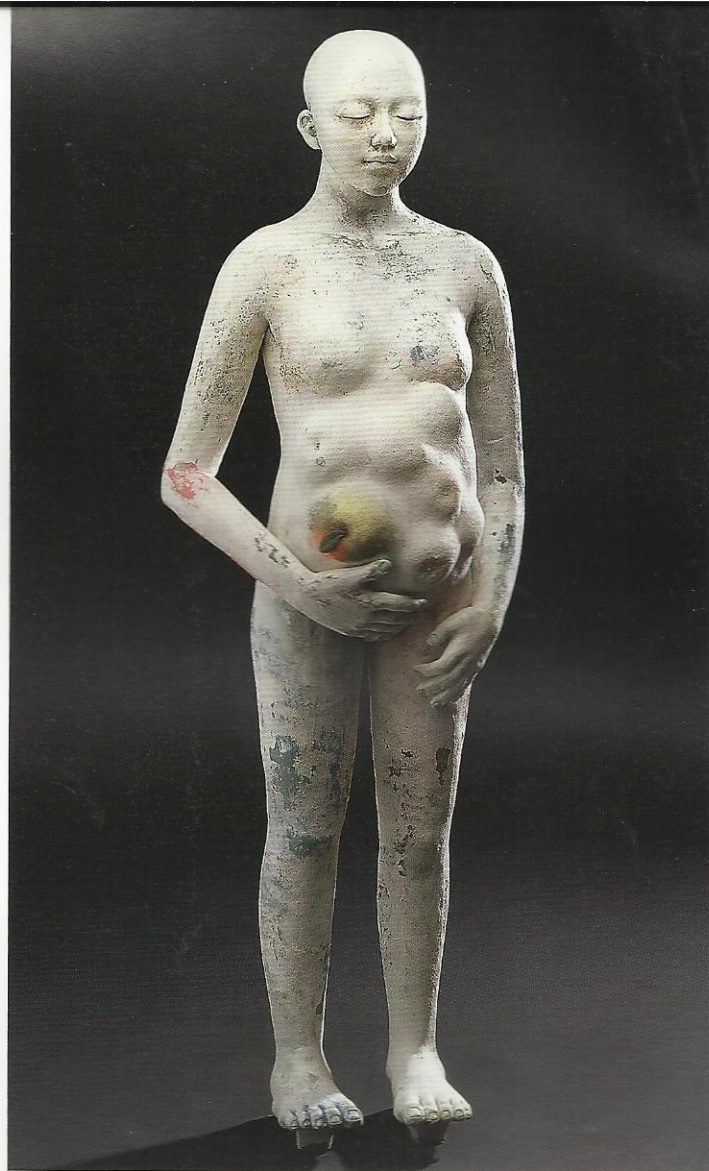
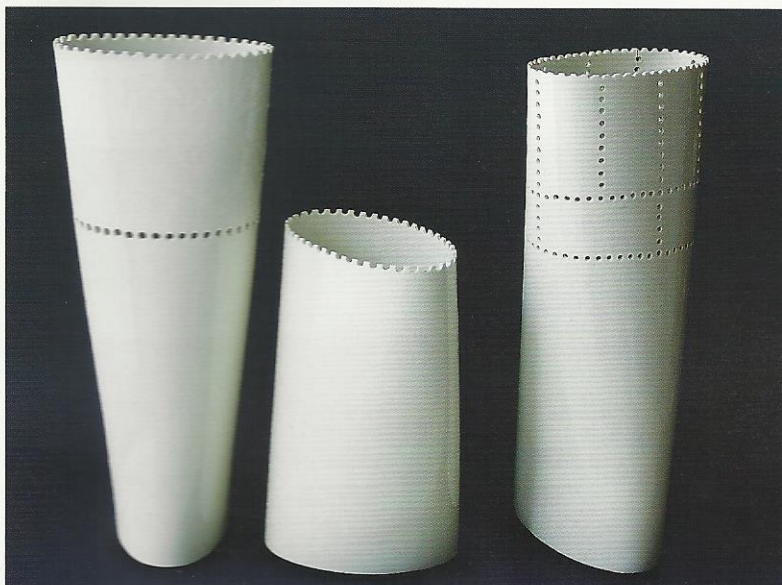
eth century. Due to colonialism, Asian countries have been intimidated by their Western rulers. A reflection can be seen in modern Asian arts. In the late 20th century, many Asian artists were creating modern art which was similar to Western art, ignoring their own identity and cultural heritage. At the beginning of 21st century a signifying change seems to be occurring. Asians seem to be more aware of their artistic and cultural history and more interested to study and cherish it.

Specially focused on this theme, an exhibition was curated with ceramic works of 26 contemporary artists from 14 countries, Eastern as well as

Western. The concept and intention of this exhibition was a search for the meaning of "Being Asian" expressed through ceramic art.

Another exhibition was also installed in collaboration with the Museum of Asian Art of Istanbul, Turkey, showing how many historic ceramic pieces have been transported from the East to the West.

The weekend of April 28-29 an international ceramic symposium focused on the theme of "Reshaping Asia" took place. Several interesting lectures and slide presentations were presented by specialists like John Carswell (former director of the South Asian department of Sotheby's, UK),



Kristine Michael (ceramic artist, curator and art critic from India), Jaeyoung Kang (Curator of Wocef, Korea), Ayse Erdogdu (curator of the Topkapi Palace Museum in Turkey).

It is only regrettably that the number of international visitors to this event was rather limited. Is it because Korea is not a common country to travel to? Was the international communication between WOCEF and the ceramic magazines, art schools, museums, curators and collectors around the world not developed thoroughly? We need to take into consideration that it is only the fourth time that this international event has taken place, so international contacts still need to be developed more. But an event of such a high international level with so many different exhibitions and such high quality of work certainly deserves more international attention.

Patty Wouters is a ceramic artist from Belgium and visiting professor at EWha University in Seoul, department of Design and Ceramic Art.

INFORMATION -

A unique and exclusive tour through Korea is offered by S. Euna YOO, director of SEY ARTNET, who is a specialist in promoting Korean arts and culture. The tour includes visits to the most important artistic, cultural and ceramic sites in Korea, such as the old royal palaces, Buddhist temples, studios of well known Korean ceramic artists, galleries, museums, artist villages, etc. Of course the cities of Icheon, Yeosu and Gwangju will be visited. Enough time will be offered for individual visits to markets and shopping centres. To sign up for this trip or for more information contact S. Euna Yoo: sey@seyartnet.com You will find a detailed program of this trip on the website: w.seyartnet.com