
PYRE



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Presidents Report

by Cher Shackleton

As the year comes to a close my ears are still buzzing from The POTober workshops.

Again a great event. Thank you to the committee for their help and to the delegates who registered.

They came from around Australia and as far away as Switzerland.

The Selective Exhibition is early in the year. Please find the details in this edition of PYRE.

Remember you need to be a financial member to participate.

I wish you and your families all the very best for the festivities and hope the New Year brings peace and contentment.

Thank you all for your support.

Cher



POTober

by Bela Kotai



Just to remind me to never think I know enough, I always keep a copy of the book 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' handy. Back in the day, when China was dinnerware and what we make was called crockery, - I was a young and ignorant boy learning ceramics from my father. Reluctantly learning - learning only as a by-product of enduring many long hours helping in the studio for less than reasonable money.

Ceramics was the family business and as many of you know, my father played a formative role in the development of studio ceramics in WA.

At the time, it didn't seem at all strange to me that there would be a story - a book - a film, about a large jug and the potter that made it. The Pitcher - of Dorian Gray. Since, I have found out that some pitchers do not have handles but have frames and I have learned a lot of other things besides.

My father was a traditionalist and hated what he called 'Modern Art', but he did share one thing with the modernists. The belief that - at its core - the lifetime project of the artist is to continue to develop. Never be

content with what has been done and always be ready to pursue the next idea.

An attitude that forms a personal, internal Avant-Garde that spills into the real world when we show our work. Artistic development, together with the need to know more about ceramics, brings us together for this long weekend.

Thank you for being here tonight to celebrate the launch of the fourth biennial Potober - which includes this show of works by the demonstrators and delegates. In launching Potober 2016, I want to extend the warmest welcome to everyone participating in this important event. Many of you have travelled great distances to be here and if previous Potobers are any guide, you are in for an October-potfest-treatathon.

Acknowledgement is given our host, North Metropolitan TAFE for the use of these facilities and for showing continuing support for Potober over the years.

Recognition and thanks are also due my colleague Njalikwa, who has been laboring in the background doing much of the on-site preparation, ensuring everything runs smoothly. He does what he does with an energy and enthusiasm that makes me feel tired when I watch.





I want to commend the members of Ceramic Arts Association and the hard working committee for organising Potober 2016. An event through which the Association has provided a strong cohesive force during some of the most difficult years I can remember. Special thanks to Cher Shackleton for her initiative and leadership in suggesting the idea back in 2010 and then guiding and shaping each Potober since. Back then, when Cher first proposed there be an Octoberfest of pottery – disturbing visions flashed before my eyes. Handmade pottery and wheel-spun philosophy. Bavarian steins and Aussi Einstiens. Pots and Panadol. I had my doubts. It seemed a crazy and fragile idea. But Potober endures and thrives. It thrives because, - I don't think there is anyone who wants to work in a field that has no visible future – nor is there anyone who doesn't want to feel optimistic about the future they see. Beneath the bravado, deep down, we potters are a needy bunch.

In the middle of the night, when we are alone in our studios with the impatiently waiting clay, we need to believe the light of appreciation shines out there and we need to know that it carries with it, the warmth of acceptance. A lot of that much needed light and warmth comes from Potober - the event that brings our community together. The gathered, concentrated light of our collective experience. The warmth of fraternity found in sharing what we have discovered. It reveals to us, once again, the complex and rich world of ceramics. A world of materials and methods, of makers and doers.

The how, why and what of clay and glazes, of kilns and concepts, of the past and the future. Closing the gap between us and the world we live in.

So, what else does that light reveal? Well, a bit more these days than it used to.

Until a couple of years ago, the outlook for ceramics was quite gloomy. The speed that potters were leaving pottery was matched by the speed that buyers were abandoning the handmade for the slick, bare, cheap and mass produced ware of other countries.

A preference for reductive design in everything from architecture to art. A look that had its origins in the noble idea of functionalism from the Bauhaus, degenerated into a universal hatred for ornament and a systematic 'paring back' to the barely adequate. We are left with a plainness that has become the default style of the last thirty years – probably because it is also very cheap.

Less may have been more, early in the 20th century. Early in the 21st century, less is just less. The bare and white turns out to





be a desolate visual wasteland – devoid of grace or interest.

So too is the digital world. A fake place where escapism is the only enduring experience. Probably as a consequence - or reaction, to both – and to the persistent human desire for the analogue experience - we are now witnessing a resurgence in the numbers of people wanting to make things from clay. Classes are filling quickly and waiting lists for classes are growing. A strong surge of interest, just as it was in the mid fifties when my father began teaching.

Perhaps a powerful new beginning?

So too are other attitudes changing. Our old rivals and critics, the fine artists, have also been shown some light. When Grayson Perry won the Turner Prize in 2003, in a visual and public way he shouted from the rooftops for all to hear - the hidden thing we have all known for some time.

“The king has no clothes.”

He flung open the royal closet and revealed how bare it really is. How threadbare the remaining roles for the fine arts are. Why fewer and fewer people care.

The medium is not the message and Grayson Perry showed us, and them, what happens when you lose sight of the main purpose. "It is about time a transvestite potter won the Turner Prize", Grayson said. We all agree. Grayson Perry won the Turner, not because he dealt a knockout blow in the endless and futile 'art versus craft' debate, instead, he put on a nice frock, went to town, and took the Turner. With it, he also took the artistic high ground. The brave create their own good fortune.

It is hard not to like him for the anarchy he visits on



the fine arts world. That doesn't mean we should stop trying not to like him. He also gives us a serve - with a sharp reminder that we need to be relevant, to be bold and to be constantly developing. Be braced by tradition - but looking forward more than we look back. Be pressing against our own boundaries and always encroaching our frontiers.

"Perry's use of the traditions of ceramics and drawing, and his uncompromising engagement with personal and social concerns put him out front" was a quotation from the judges.

The content of what was described as his 'troublingly beautiful pots' serves to underline for both potters and fine artists that, in any art-form, it ever boils down to persuasive subject matter within the work. The message is the message.

There is no art where there is no meaning - and there is no meaning without evident and shared feelings. Without meaning in art, there is no reason why anybody should give a damn.

Since art was first made, the 'North Star' of persuasive subject matter has been 'things that people care about'. The expression of shared truths and the re-statement of eternal verities.

The revelation of insight. The reassurance of tradition.

From a relationship that goes back an eternity, ceramics is already hooked into everyone's lives. This is the great strength we have using ceramics as an artistic medium. We are already halfway there.



This idea locates the starting point and central theme for Potober. - Making meaningful things with clay and putting them into the lives of others. I do not know the direction our art-form will take this time around, but I do know that it will be different from the last time.

The forces that shape and direct its progress are different, and so too will be its heroes.

Because of his talent, audacity and dress sense, I think Grayson Perry is one of the heroes of the new age of ceramics.

If I had the power, I would make this coming Sunday, Grayson Perry Day. A day when we all show our daring and courage by coming to Potober wearing our best frock.

Right now, I don't have that power - and I don't have a thing to wear.

Wisely, the only power that Cher has granted me is the power to open this event and this exhibition, so it is with great pleasure and pride that I declare Potober 2016 open.



The lustre workshop by Jonathan Chiswell Jones

by Janet Kovesi-Watt



A potter who works in reduced lustre is a new find for POTober, and we were lucky to have Jonathan Chiswell Jones from the UK to introduce us to this centuries-old technique. Readers of Greg Daly's book on lustre will have seen a handsome vase of his as the frontispiece. He conducted a workshop within the POTober format, at which the participants were provided with pre-made and glazed, fired, porcelain plates and the clay-paste pigments incorporating silver and copper with which to decorate them. Jonathan passed on his recipes for these - see box.

By the afternoon of the first day the plates were decorated and loaded into the kiln, to be warmed up overnight. The stacking was unusual, in that since the glaze was not going to actually melt, the plates could be rested on their rims, propped up at an angle, so as to be exposed to the atmosphere of the reducing fire which would bring out the lustre. Jackie Gasson volunteered to mind the kiln next morning until the pyrometer read 650, when a glance through the spy hole showed that the cones were already down, so Jonathan immediately put the kiln into a short spasm of reduction, after which he pulled out one of the test rings. When the dry clay was rubbed off there was already a good lustre deposit, so after one more reduction spasm for luck, Jonathan decided to finish. Next day the results were rewarding. Pots on the top shelf were rather over-fired and over-reduced, but showed good copper lustre. Pots in the centre came out best. Jonathan made sure that pots were labelled to indicate where they had been in the kiln, explaining that there are so many variables which can affect the results in this technique that every detail needs to be recorded for future reference and understanding.





During the weekend Jonathan answered questions and quietly demonstrated brushwork and pattern making, using iron oxide mixed with a little medium on white china plates. He always marked the centre with a tiny dot which could be wiped off afterwards with a cotton bud. He showed how to divide the surface into three by imagining it as a clock face, putting tiny dots on the rim at 12, 20 past and 20 to the hour. For five, you need to mark at 12 minutes past, then 24, and so on. He explained the importance of the negative spaces, and how every positive mark then creates a space.

While in WA Jonathan and his wife visited King's park where he sketched the flowers. Perhaps kangaroo paws may appear in his future work.





Experimental info and recipes

Transparent glaze pre-fired at cone 05. During the third, lustre firing, this glaze begins to soften at the lustre temperature of cone 19, 670 or so, enabling the metallic pigments to fuse with it:

Lead bisilicate	41.8
Calcium-borate frit	33.3 (we used 3134)
Nepheline syenite	4.5
China clay	9
Zinc oxide	4
Silica	5.6
Bentonite	1.8

add tin oxide 10 for a white glaze.

Carrier for clay paste for the silver pigment:

China clay 84, Red iron oxide 4, Bismuth sub-nitrate 4. These were calcined at 700 and then ball milled for at least two hours with 8% of silver chloride. A second batch was mixed with 16%, but the first gave a good silver result more economically.

The copper clay paste consisted of:

Copper carbonate 20, China clay 70, Bismuth sub-nitrate 10, which was also calcined at 700 and then ball milled. (The silver chloride and Bismuth came from US pigments.)

The pigments were mixed with water and a little medium on the palette. It is best to use the pigments not too thickly. Jonathan gives many of his bowls a preliminary underglaze coat, applied by spray or with a broad brush.

Blue/purple: Cobalt carbonate 110; Manganese dioxide 25; Copper carbonate 20; China clay 6; Bentonite 3.

Members' Selective Exhibition 2017

Members' Selective Exhibition 2017 Heathcote Gallery Melville

25th March – 30th April 2017

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

1. Entrant must be a full and financial member of CAAWA.
2. Each piece must be an original work by the artist and have been made in the last 12 months.
3. The work shall not have been previously exhibited.
4. Collaborative work will be accepted, but work produced jointly will be acknowledged in the catalogue, price list and any awards.
5. All members are eligible for the Kusnik Award (the Award of Excellence) valued at \$2000, with the exception of the two previous exhibition winners. All members are eligible for the Judge's Award valued at \$500 and the People's Choice Award \$500.
6. Up to 3 pieces may be submitted. One piece could consist of a group. This will be priced as one unit and not individually priced.
7. Pieces can be displayed either on wall or plinth but not a combination of both.
8. Any display requests should be made to the exhibition coordinator. The final decision will be at the discretion of the gallery and the CAAWA coordinator.
9. Each piece is to be marked clearly with name, number and retail price.
10. **Delivery time 10 – 3 pm Monday 20th March to Heathcote Gallery.**
11. If you are unable to deliver at this time, please contact Judith Paisley email: j.paisley@ozemail.com.au
12. Work delivered after 4pm on Monday 20th March will NOT be accepted in the exhibition.
13. Exhibitor must be available to collect any unselected work on **Tuesday 21st March.**
14. All entries must be for sale.
15. A Statement of Supplier Form to be submitted if you do not have an ABN.
16. Gallery commission is 30%.
17. Entry fee of \$50 non refundable.
18. The selector's decision is final.
19. All care will be taken with exhibits but no responsibility for accidental breakages.
20. Any exhibit requiring power must have an electrician's safety tag. (An occupational health and safety requirement).
21. The committee reserves the right to use images of the work for the promotion of the exhibition
22. Unsold work to be collected from Heathcote Gallery on Sunday 30th April 4pm or by arrangement

(Please retain this page for your information. Sign and return page 2 to :

j.paisley@ozemail.com.au

and make payment by 1st March 2017)

Final Call for Entries 1st March 2017 (Return this page only)

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Email.....Ph.....

ABN.....GST RegYes/No

Statement of Supplier form

Entry Fee \$50

Direct Debit, Cheque or Credit Card (please circle)

Credit Card details

Name on the Card.....

MasterCard /Visa Number.....(please circle)

Exp Date.....

Cheques payable to Ceramic Arts Association of WA Inc.

Post to Di Sigel, 9 Hartington Way Carine 6020

Direct Debit Westpac Karrinyup BSB 036027 Acc 257310 Acc name, Ceramic Arts Association of WA Inc (notify treasurer of deposit). diannesigel@hotmail.com

TITLE OF WORK 1.....

DESCRIPTION.....RETAIL PRICE.....

TITLE OF WORK 2.....

DESCRIPTION.....RETAIL PRICE.....

TITLE OF WORK 3.....

DESCRIPTION..... RETAIL PRICE

Your bank details for work sold

ACCOUNT NAMEBANK.....

BSB.....ACC NUMBER.....

If you are entering as part of a pottery club (only 2 are eligible per club membership), a signature of the club President is required.....

Iagree to the terms and conditions

Signed.....Date.....

I agree images of my work can be used on the CAAWA website and Facebook YES/NO

CAAWA Calendar 2016

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PLACE
Dec 8th	7.30 -9	End of Year Social	COMMUNITY ROOM PEPPERMINT GROVE

Editorial

by Anna Mulders

Thanks to everyone who contributed and made it easy for me to put together this newsletter. I look forward to receive your stories and images about your ceramics experience. Would you like to share your practice? Do you have some stunning new pots to show? Have you been experimenting with new techniques or glazes? Did you participate in a great workshop?

Please email me at ceramics@ammulders.net.