

NEWSLETTER FREE TO MEMBERS
£1 TO NON MEMBERS



Autumn 2018

SCOTTISH POTTERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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WWW.SCOTTISHPOTTERS.ORG

Chair's Letter

BY CHRISTINE FLYNN

Wow, what a summer we have had. With the fantastic weather we have experienced, our events have gone extremely well...

Potfest, without the usual rain, Roald in Clay and the various workshops have just been tremendous. Thanks to all who helped out with demonstrations and as a volunteer. I am certainly looking forward to Akiko's workshop weekend this August and in October, Simon Thorborn will be giving a workshop at The Barony, West Kilbride during our Change in your Hand exhibition. There are only 12 places on his workshop, so please be quick to book through our new booking system to reserve your place. Kathleen Morison explains on page 11. The exhibition is unselected and only themed on 'less plastic' so I hope many of you are intending to submit work.

It is with great sadness, I have been made aware of the passing of Dave Cohen, a member and wonderful supporter of the SPA. It was only three years ago that he came and demonstrated his fantastic skills at Kindrogan. He was certainly wonderful and totally unselfish about passing on his experience to other potters. Ronnie Fulton has kindly written an obituary about Dave which is included opposite.



Dave Cohen's work

The generous offer of the gift of property at Garve has caused great excitement over the summer. I was very grateful to the many members who offered their experience and knowledge on this potential project. It was great for our organisation to be recognised as worthy of such a donation. However, as you have now been made aware, due to the combination of difficulties and circumstances, the offer of the property has been withdrawn.

Our line up of demonstrators for Tulliallan, is included in this edition, along with the application for attending. Our Scottish member and thrower will be Stuart Whatley, from Skye. A sculptural demonstrator is Zahed Taj-Eddin who's talents and skills were seen and admired at the International Ceramics Festival, Aberystwyth; and our third demonstrator is Peter Hayes, a Raku specialist.

Please sit back and read on and enjoy our newsletter to find out all about Tulliallan, the early bird special and the other events that have taken place and are organised for the next few months and even more. Remember we are looking for your 'best pot' to be submitted for the Anne Lightwood Award at Tulliallan next year. No theme just your pride and joy!

Thank you for your ongoing support and I look forward to seeing you all at Tulliallan.

Christine

Obituary David Cohen 1933-2018

As many members of the SPA know, Dave Cohen has died after a short illness. He was surrounded by his family and close friends and was as intellectually sharp and determined as always.

We all know his mastery of all aspects of ceramics, many of us have his pots and books, but Dave was more than a master potter. I personally shall miss his humour, support and friendship and was inspired by his honesty, humanity, love of family and kindness.

We could all learn from Dave. Every kiln had a test... every Raku firing an experiment.

I am sure that all potters extend their sympathy and kind wishes to Frances and the family and will appreciate his pots even more, knowing that they have a piece by the legend who was Dave Cohen.

Ronnie Fulton



Events 2018

Central Fife Open Studios

1-2 September
www.centralfifeopenstudios.org

Perthshire Open Studios

1-9 September
www.perthshireopenstudios.com

North East Open Studios (NEOS)

8-16 September
www.northeastopenstudios.co.uk

Wardlow Mires

8-9 September
www.potsandfood.co.uk

Pots in the Byre

15-30 September (weekends only)
www.broadwoodstudios.co.uk

Cowal Open Studios

21-24 September
www.cowalopenstudios.co.uk

Sheffield Ceramics Festival

22-23 September
www.sheffieldceramicsfestival.com

Workshop: Fiona Thompson/Chris Donnelly

22 September
See summer newsletter for details

Change in your Hand

29 September - 20 October
www.crafttownscotland.org

Workshop: Simon Thorborn

6 October
www.bookwhen.com/scottishpotters

York Ceramics Fair

6-7 October
www.yorkceramicsfair.com



Potfest Scotland

BY JOE MORGAN

Potfest Scotland always has a special place on my calendar. As Scotland's premium pottery and ceramics show, it's always well worth a visit.



The show is usually in early June and runs from Friday to Sunday. Situated in the majestic, peacock populated grounds of Scone Palace, the location couldn't be more perfect. With over 100 makers exhibiting from the UK and Europe, there really is something for every taste. Ranging from outlandish sculpture to the honest mug, all bases are well covered. There are also plenty of trade stands so you can top up on tools and materials that you might be running low on. And, if you're still not satisfied you can lose yourself in the hedge maze and castle gardens.

Over the years I have attended the show many times, as an exhibitor, demonstrator and as a visitor. The event has grown a goodly amount since the 'good old days' of the cattle shed. But even though the show has polished up, it still has the same

friendly inviting vibe (and a better smell). The grounds of Scone Palace are transformed into a wealth of colour and shape as the potters take over. All the exhibitors are happy to chat and discuss their work. There is a real feeling of family and inclusion.

This year I was asked by the Scottish Potters Association to demonstrate my making techniques. I trained as a thrower but these days my work is mainly built using slabs and extrusions. I make ceramic soda fired robots. So on Sunday morning I rolled out slabs, cut out shapes and answered questions on the mystic art of ceramic robot construction. I had a lovely crowd that seemed genuinely interested in what I was making. I assembled several robots and discussed the various ways and tools I use to mark and decorate them. Demonstrating for the SPA is an



excellent tool for promoting yourself and your work. It also shows the general public the amount of time and work that goes into making. I would encourage more SPA members to demonstrate at this event especially if you're exhibiting – it really can generate more sales.

Once again Potfest Scotland was a stunning show. The Cox family run it like clockwork and deserve a massive thank you. If you're keen to take on a ceramics show the Scottish Potfest is a great one to start off with. If you've never been I would strongly suggest that you go.

8bitclay.com



Tulli Allan 2019

SPRING WEEKEND WORKSHOP, TULLIALLAN POLICE COLLEGE, KINCARDINE FIFE KK10 4BE

We are delighted to announce our three exciting demonstrators for Tulli Allan: 8-10 March 2019

- Peter Hayes
- Zahed Taj-Eddin
- Stuart Whatley

We hope you can join us for this action packed weekend, and please note there is an early bird discount for booking early too! Fill in the enclosed form or find it on the SPA website.

Peter Hayes





One of the major introductions into ceramics was digging Neolithic iron age and Roman samian shards on archaeological digs somewhere in Wales while trying to survive as an art student in Birmingham.

I have always been interested in the history of ceramics – why and how ‘things’ are made of clay. This interest was extended after I spent several years travelling through Africa working with various tribes and village potters and being intrigued how, with limited technology and basic tools, they were able to get such exquisite, beautiful surfaces. I found the same inherent skills in India, Nepal, Japan and New Mexico. I tried to adopt the ideas picked up from my travels in my own work. By building up layers of textured clay combined with burnishing and polishing of surfaces, trying to achieve opposites of rough and smooth.

I have been working on large scale ceramic forms which have been placed in the landscape. My main aim is that the work should not compete with the landscape, but evolve within the environment. With this in mind I have introduced other minerals into the ceramic surface such as iron and copper. With the elements of time and erosion, the individual piece takes on its own developing surface.

In practice I go by the seat of my pants. I have always worked this way, not going by any particular rules or methods.

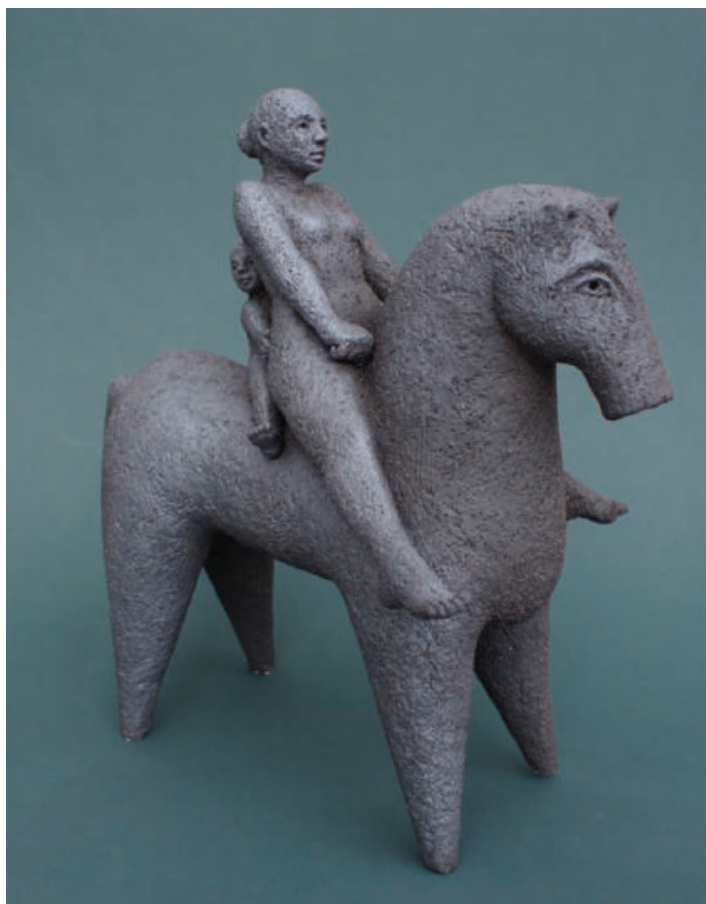
It's the material that is in charge and it will only let you make what it wants. It is my job to push it to its limits and somehow an equilibrium is made between maker and material.

Peter will be showing his making and Raku firing processes. We are planning some hands on Raku as well.

Tulliallan 2019

SPRING WEEKEND WORKSHOP, TULLIALLAN POLICE COLLEGE, KINCARDINE FIFE KK10 4BE

Zahed Taj-Eddin



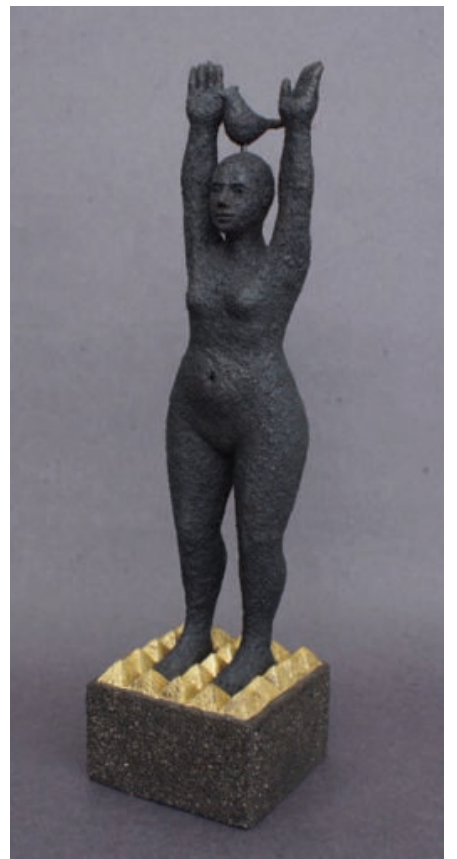
The Syrian sculptor, Zahed Taj-Eddin is a polymath, an artist, archaeologist and scientist whose sculptural practice operates across many disciplines. His fascination with ancient technology led him to study and practice a variety of specialities including ceramics, glass making and metal casting alongside work as a conservator. He also has degrees in Chemistry, Fine Art, an MA in Archaeology and PhD in Archaeological Science and Sculptural Practice. This multi-disciplinary expertise comes together to inform Zahed's artwork, which often employs ancient techniques and materials to explore important contemporary social issues with meticulous craftsmanship and precise scientific methods.

Having started his further education in Aleppo, Syria, Zahed was able to carry on his studies for an MA and PhD in London where he still lives. One of his working materials he will be demonstrating at Tulliallan is the use of **Egyptian Faience**, a material many of us are unfamiliar with.

Egyptian Faience

This enigmatic, ancient ceramic material has been described as 'the first high tech ceramic'. In a broad definition it is a kind of ceramic that contains a body of sintered crushed quartz coated with alkaline glaze on the surface. However, the material is virtually clay-free. Faience is remarkable in that it is made from the simplest raw materials, namely crushed desert sand and pebbles, combined with small amounts of desert plant ashes or salts from dried-up lakes. Through the addition of minor amounts of colouring oxides to the recipe, ancient craftsmen produced a luminescent material equal in appearance to semi-precious stones such as turquoise and lapis lazuli. Faience was regarded in the ancient world as a luxury item and ranked by the elite next to gold.

From **Shadtis, Suspended Truth in Context** catalogue exhibition at Manchester Museum.



Tulliallan 2019

SPRING WEEKEND WORKSHOP, TULLIALLAN POLICE COLLEGE, KINCARDINE FIFE KK10 4BE

Stuart Whatley



I am very happy to have been invited to demonstrate at the annual SPA meeting in 2019. The SPA has historically been very important to me, both to my pottery education and to the connections that build between potters.

I've played with clay since I was a lad, brought up on the wee island of Pabay, off the south east of Skye. This rough boulder clay led, with my Dad, to an embryonic pottery and on leaving the island began this potter's life at Edinbane in 1972. I have made a full time living ever since, making functional stoneware, mostly wood fired or salt glazed. A love of walking and sailing and the wildlife of this wonderful landscape invades all the work.

During the demonstration I would like to show the processes in making our raw glazed pots... throwing... both round and not so round... joining, turning and handling... decorating in the clay, and later glazing.



Online booking system Bookwhen and Stripe

BY KATHLEEN MORISON

The numbers of SPA workshops has increased and the current method of booking can be slow and cumbersome involving many emails bouncing to and fro. To simplify matters and make the system more streamlined, we've introduced a new system to book into workshops online. Hopefully, you will find it straightforward and easy to use. It may not be used for Tulliallan, but that depends on my computer abilities to configure the page! Time will tell!

The new system uses the booking platform Bookwhen. The event page will indicate the number of spaces still available on a workshop and your place will be confirmed immediately on payment. All you need is a credit or debit card, and you will no longer need the facility to do online banking. The Bookwhen payment links us to Stripe which is similar to but cheaper than Paypal. A small booking fee is applied which will cover the Stripe commissions.

You will need to know your SPA membership number as this is the only way to control bookings. **Your number is now on your profile page on the SPA**

website. The login link to your profile is at the very top of the home page. Your user name is your first and last name divided by a hyphen, and your membership number appears next to your name once you've logged in. If you are unable to access your profile page, Robin Palmer, membership secretary, should be able to supply the number but we hope these instructions will help you access the information yourself.

In the future, the link to a new workshop will be in an ebulletin or in the newsletter, and perhaps also on the website. Alternatively I can send out the link by email on request. People will book, as usual, on a first come first served basis. The beauty is that you won't have to email me to ask if there are spaces. Nor will you have to email me to tell me you've booked as I get an automatic email from both Bookwhen and Stripe. If the workshop is fully booked then you can email me to go onto the waiting list.

I hope you find the new system self explanatory and welcome your feedback.

kathleen.morison8@gmail.com

NEOS 
north east open studios
8-16 September
2018

North East Open Studios (NEOS) is proud to be 15 years old this year. This year there are just over 280 entrants, with 22+ working in Ceramics!

Spread across the whole of the North East of Scotland, this award winning event is looking forward to welcoming visitors into the studios, workspaces and shared spaces of the artists and craftspeople who make up the event that is NEOS.

If you can't get hold of a copy of the book that gives all the entrants' details, please go to our website www.northeastopenstudios.co.uk and follow the 'THE BOOK' link which will give you several options. Looking forward to seeing you!

Members gallery

RECENT WORK FROM SOME OF OUR MEMBERS

Belinda Glennon: Seapod. Stoneware with porcelain barnacles and many layers of glaze.



Karen James: Inside of bowl, thrown with Highwater Bella's Blend clay, fired to Cone 6 electric with Citron and Blue Hares Fur glaze.



Jill Houghton Slyte: Crank clay, very grogged. Pinched and then raku fired. 13 x 17cm approx.



Iain Campbell: Ashraf Hanna stoneware clay, pit fired. Image by Shannon Tofts

Michaela Goan: Vase. White earthenware. 50cm tall.



Almut Brandl: Sacred Fire Vase, stoneware, reduction fired with gas.



Christine Flynn: Asraf Hanna clay, handbuilt with coils, burnished and raku fired with horsehair.



Moyra Stewart (centre left): New work. Naked Raku

Leonie Garrett (centre right): Copper carbonate on cream slip. Handbuilt. 3 x 7cm.

Steve Hay: Bowl, marbled porcelain, glazed interior and sanded exterior. Fired to 1280°C

Please email us good quality photographs of your recent work if you would like them featured here in a subsequent issue.

julietmacleod@gmail.com

Moir Ferguson: Sitting Hare. Handbuilt with Crank clay, and fired to 1260°C.

Naked raku workshop

BY MARION MARSHALL

Moyra Stewart's workshop took place at her studio in Newburgh. There was a day of handbuilding in May, and two days of Naked Raku firing in June.



On the handbuilding day Moyra handed out premade bases and varying strips/lengths of clay. She demonstrated her process of making coiled pots. Using a banding wheel as a work surface, the flat strips of clay were joined together with water and scratched in order to make the pieces adhere well. It was essential to stand back and look at your work to ascertain how your pot was progressing. The clay used was Ashraf Hanna's raku body. A damp cloth was placed over the pieces when we stopped for lunch.

After lunch work continued until the desired height was achieved. Placing a pot upside down, Moyra showed us how to apply a dent to the base using a wooden tool to create slight pressure; then going round on the inside with a dry sponge; once turned upright the pot could stand – thus creating a masterpiece. The pieces were then smoothed, by using our fingers and a little water so that the surface became smooth, thus enabling the decoration progress to go without a hitch. The pot or vessel could then be shaped. Tiles were also made, by using a template. Once finished our work was taken downstairs to the kiln to be fired ready for the next workshop.

At the end of June, after signing a waiver form for Health and Safety reasons, the room was ready for action. Our pots had been biscuit fired to 1040°C. Moyra showed us decorating techniques using thin auto tape on the pots. The vases were then slipped. Moyra demonstrated by filling a jug with slip, and walking round pouring the slip over the piece, then looking to see if all was covered, dabbing where necessary. Once completed the pots were taken to the kiln for a slow dry. Glaze was then applied to the





vessels, and decoration applied and finished off. Tiles were also decorated using terra sigillata, as well as other techniques; dried as before, then glazed with thin or thick glaze.

The kilns were prepared and set up in the courtyard then covered with plastic, in case of rain. Teams were formed – three teams with five people in each. Then a supper was held for those who had put their names down, which was very enjoyable.

On Sunday morning the firing got underway, with burners put in place ready for Operation Raku. Moyra started with kiln one, getting the pyrometer and burner into position. Pots and tiles were then inserted into

the kiln, lid put on, gas lit and away she blew. This took a while as it was taken up slowly, then up to about 860°C. The results were quite amazing, some were a bit disappointing especially the tiles, but on the whole there was a great feeling of jubilation when all three kilns were going. It was thanks to Moyra's regimented operation that the day went smoothly and safely.

A very enjoyable time was had by all.

Craft Scotland Conference

BY BELINDA GLENNON

The 2018 Craft Scotland Conference – New Ways of Seeing was held at the beautiful Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh on 7-8 June.

I was really fortunate to be given the opportunity to represent the Scottish Potters Association at this event. It is not an event I have attended before so was not sure what to expect.

The format of the weekend was based around talks by a variety of key note speakers. These were a variety of globally recognised artists, designers, curators, directors. They gave varying accounts of their work, processes and inspirations. These talks were followed by a panel discussion with audience questions. There was time to socialise in between these sessions. It was lovely to meet other ceramicists who were there, as well as so many other artists!

The first speaker was Lars Sture the curator at Norwegian Crafts, running the institution's international exhibition and project programme (www.norwegiancrafts.no). He spoke about recent exhibitions he has curated looking at abstraction in natural landscapes, these had themes of 'soberness, minimalism and purity'. He then talked through ways in which Norwegian Crafts promotes maker development supporting artists with travel bursaries and residencies.

Next was textile artist Michael Brennand-Wood (www.brennand-wood.com) who makes large scale intricate lace and textiles sometimes with embedded content. His use of three dimensional line, structure and pattern makes his work unique and collected around the world.



Finally there was Yinka Ilori (www.yinkailori.com) a London based artist and furniture designer. He spoke energetically about how his use of colour and pattern is inspired by his Nigerian heritage. The traditional stories and African fabrics are woven together with contemporary design to make humorous and fun furniture.

A lively panel debate followed these talks.

In the afternoon on Day One there were 'breakout sessions' where we chose a workshop or talk to attend. My session was about The Circular Economy. I thought with the SPA's upcoming exhibition 'More Clay Less Plastic' this maybe relevant. The theory of 'make remake, use reuse' as opposed

Craft Scotland Conference continued



to 'take-make-use-dispose'. Find out more here... www.ostrero.com/about

The social evening at the City Arts Centre was a great compliment to the day with the opportunity to chat about the day, meet with other artists and makers over a drink and some food.

Day Two had a similar format with a diverse range of international speakers. All with stories of their personal creative journeys.

This gives you a flavour of the conference. I found it really engaging, loved hearing other artists' stories about their process and inspirations. Working as a potter alone in my studio (as many of us do) in a small village in The Borders it is easy to feel isolated and forget that there are people working in similar situations all over the world and we are connected by our creativity. After being unsure of what to expect when I arrived, I left the conference with a renewed sense of purpose, place and confidence in my work, something I often lack. Seeing and hearing from these very successful artists and being in an environment of like-minded people was a great experience and I would definitely recommend going to events like this if you can.

A full list of the speakers from the conference can be found at www.craftscotland.org/about/projects/conference-2018/speakers

Professional residency award in Australia

BY MICHELLE YOUNG HARES



I am really excited to have been awarded a three-month Professional Residency by Canberra Potters at Watson Art Centre in Canberra, Australia.

The award covers travel and accommodation, an equipped studio, a generous stipend and materials allowance. In return I will donate a piece of work to their collection and provide demonstrations/masterclasses and presentations during my stay.

I plan to use this time to explore new ideas without the usual money/time pressures. It will be a wonderful opportunity to experiment with new techniques, perspectives and influences, and I am so grateful to have been offered such a generous invitation. I leave early December and if you are interested in following my progress I will be posting updates and insights on my Instagram (@youngharesmichelle) and Facebook (@cermiche) accounts.

Glaze & Clay making

BY IAN KERSLEY AND IRENE HUGHES

SPA Workshop with Alan Freestone
21-22 April 2018

DAY ONE: Making and Processing Clay

The workshop was held in the Barn Gallery at the Bield where Alan enthralled and entertained the participants with his vast knowledge of the ceramics world.

He started by holding up a piece of 'clay' asking 'What is this?'. A few hesitant answers were dismissed before he told us that it was a clay body – not a clay. A clay body is a blend of different clays and other materials. There are many variations within the basic categories of Porcelain, Stoneware and Earthenware which can be modified and customised by the addition of fireclay, molochite, ballclay, bentonite, etc.

We were told that a clay body is all about compromise: the proportion of ball clay, china clay, fireclay and feldspar used is related to price – china clay is expensive, ball clay medium priced, fireclay and feldspar are cheap. He outlined how clay is formed in nature – primary (china clay) and secondary (ball clay) – and the industrial processes required to produce the finished clay. He explained the difference between oxides, stains, underglazes and overglazes, and how to prepare and use them. Also the importance of floc in clays and glazes to keep them from compacting and the use of flocculants (eg CaCl_2) and de-flocculants (eg Na_2SiO_2). Note: tap water is a de-flocculant.

The morning session was essentially theory with practical aspects presented in the afternoon, although in practice it was quite difficult to separate the two. When dealing with raw 'found' clay Alan advised quickly forming a test piece and firing it. Not to spend too much time processing it until firing showed if the clay was worth the effort. A found clay from Lunan Bay, slaked and dried on a plaster batt, proved to be a



perfectly usable terracotta clay without any modifications.

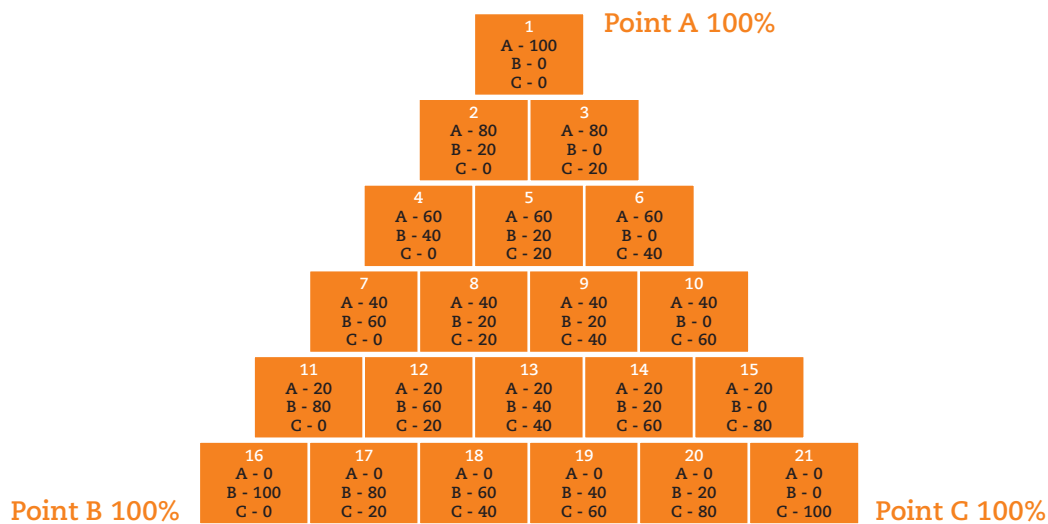
An aside to the making of plaster batts for drying out clay – softer batts are more absorbent – was followed by a demonstration of the use of a penetrometer to test the softness of a clay body, 7% is a hard clay and 2% a very soft one – essentially it is testing the water content.

Alan demonstrated kneading 15-20% molochite (40-60 and 80 mesh) into a clay body to open up the clay structure and give it added strength. He also showed how one can make a clay body from raw materials using a recipe for a Raku clay as an example:

- Start with water 40% (to 60% dry materials)
- 40% china clay sprinkled first – leave to soak
- 40% ball clay (or talc which is a better flux)
- 20% potassium feldspar
- 15% + 15% molochite (coarse and medium)

Mix and sprinkle into water, stir up and pour onto a drying batt, and when sufficiently dry knead and wedge then wrap in plastic until required.

Finally he demonstrated the ram's horn and spiral forms of wedging and the importance of getting any trapped air out of the clay.



Rules should be followed – but you can ignore them if you wish and experiment. There’s no such thing as a failed experiment. You always learn something. We learnt lots from this workshop!

DAY TWO: Glazing

The glaze day with Alan was very informative with a presentation and discussions covering methods to ensure that any glaze you have or make is the best it can be by using key resources, tools and knowledge. He started the day with an introduction to some useful online resources which are an excellent information on the field of glaze making. These are :

glazy.org highly recommended website with many useful features (bear in mind it is american therefore some ingredients may need alternatives)

digitalfire.com a technical reference site giving breakdown analysis of frits etc

claymansupplies.co.uk supplier of glaze making materials used by Alan Freestone

Triaxial Blend

Alan explained that in order to create your own or refine an existing glaze, it is important to understand that the basic ingredients of any glaze are – Glass + Flux + Stabiliser ie Flint + Potassium + Clay. Once you have a basic glaze you can vary these three ingredients, (with the addition of other chemical elements), using a triaxial or line blend as a useful method of rebalancing a glaze and trying out oxides etc as shown in the diagram above.

Using glazy.org you can enter the ingredients for your glaze recipe or select a glaze recipe from the site and study the graph provided to find a better or best fit.

Glaze Density

A key part of glaze making is to accurately check the density of a glaze. There are a number of methods to consider using, the Ford Cup or Hydrometer for example, however Alan recommends the simple Pint Weight. This is a vessel which when filled to the brim is an accurate pint volume and therefore enables an true weight/volume measurement to be taken. A pint of glaze should weigh 31/32 fl oz. If bought as a powder the specific pint weight for your glaze should be provided by the supplying company. If home made it should come from trial and error testing.

Flocculation was another key area of glaze making, it relates to the suspension of the particles in a glaze. The deflocculation of a glaze (when the particles sink to the bottom) happens when there is too much water in the mix or the glaze has been deionised. To keep a glaze in suspension you need to add a flocculant such as dilute hydrochloric acid/ vinegar, calcium chloride/epsom salts at a ratio of one egg cupful in a 20 litre bucket of wet glaze.

Glaze problems, tools and health & safety

After lunch Alan held a problem solving session with some attendees having brought examples of glaze problems that they had incurred, these included pinholing, crazing, shivering, running and bubbling.

This was a really interesting workshop with a good look at and discussion of many aspects of glazing. The attendees ranged from the very experienced to total novice and I’m sure that all benefitted from the day. If there is enough interest Alan Freestone did say he may consider doing another workshop or two taking the hugely diverse subject of glazing even further.

SPA exhibition 2018 Change in Your Hand Key dates



Our next members' exhibition will take place at The Barony Centre. See the last issue of the newsletter, and our website for further details.

Please note the change of title from 'More Clay, Less Plastic' to 'Change in Your Hand'

- Delivery of submitted pieces 24-26 Sept
- Exhibition set-up 26-27 Sept
- Launch Sat 29 Sept, 2-4pm
- Exhibition end date Sat 20 Oct
- Pick-up 22-24 Oct
- Photographs will be provided of international work at previous exhibitions – these will be professionally displayed on exhibition boards provided by The Barony Centre
- There is a maximum of five items per exhibitor – a set will count as one item – everything submitted is subject to the gallery commission fees: 40% +VAT
- Advertising: Please do all you can to advertise the exhibition using social media and telling friends and customers about it. There will be a downloadable poster on the website.
- All are welcome to come to the opening and bring friends along on 29 Sept 2-4pm.

Fran Marquis
franmarquis@btinternet.com

Claire Edgar
info@crafttownscotland.org

Simon Thorborn Workshop

Saturday 6 October 10.30-4.30

Cost for the day: £40

The Barony Centre

50 Main Street

West Kilbride KA23 9AW

www.arranceramics.com

We are very excited to have our very own Scottish potter Simon Thorborn join us for this demonstration and hands-on workshop.

Simon will be demonstrating throwing and turning in the morning, and then later giving participants a chance to throw their first pot, or improve their technique. He will provide some leather hard pots so that anyone who wants to can try turning foot rings.

Simon has been a potter since 1985 and has worked on Arran since 1986. He has a pottery and gallery at the Balmichael Visitor Centre, and the Old Byre Showroom, Machrie. Last year he expanded to Home Farm, Brodick where he produces and sells his work.

Simon also works in Raku and he became a bit of a media star last year when a video of him creating a raku piece from scratch went viral and he had enquiries coming in to him from as far away as Brazil.

Refreshments are available in the workshop. There is a small cafe in the Centre, but we advise you to bring along your own lunch. There is parking next to The Barony.

Spaces are limited to 12 people so book now <https://bookwhen.com/scottishpotters> (Make sure you click on the correct workshop)



Book review

BY ROGER BELL

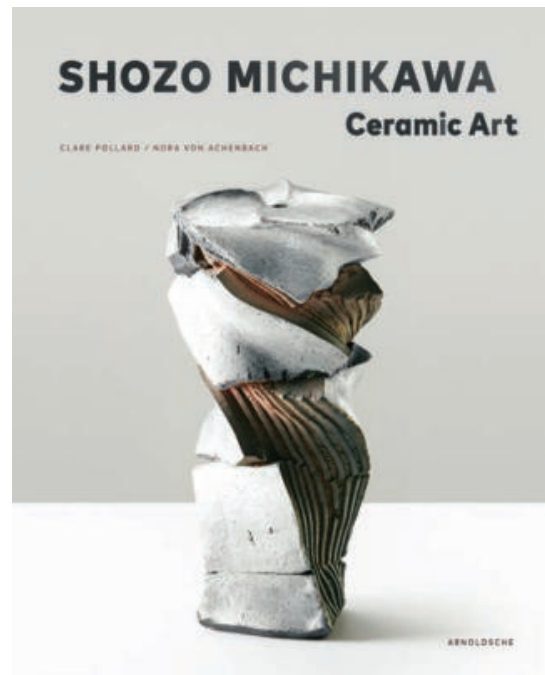
SHOZO MICHIKAWA:
Ceramic Art
Pollard/von Achenbach
Published by Arnoldsche
£28.00

I recently re-established contact with Arnoldsche Art Publishers from Germany and found a wealth of new ceramic publications in the last few years. Those I have seen are quality hard back productions on (mainly European) ceramic artists and major ceramic art collections. Prices range from £28 to £48 – good value for such specialist books. Have a look at their website.

I have chosen to review the volume on Shozo Michikawa because, while living and working in Japan, he demonstrates and exhibits throughout the world including frequently in the UK. Erskine, Hall & Coe represent him here. At Higham Hall, Cumbria he ran master classes over several years and built an anagama kiln. Some SPA members will have seen his 2013 demonstration in Scotland.

There are just nine pages of text which give a remarkable amount of information about his working methods and his links to the Chinese, Korean and Japanese ceramic traditions. Also appendices list selected exhibitions, workshops, publications and work in public collections (Aberystwyth University, National Museum of Wales and the Ashmolean, Oxford in the UK).

There are over 100 excellent photos of his work including some illustrating working methods. At first glance most pieces look pure sculptures, but all are in fact usable objects – candle holders, lidded jars, bowls, even teapots. His making techniques include cutting, twisting, distorting and re-assembly of pieces but final effects are usually dependent on his throwing, working from the inside with a throwing stick to make cracks and splits. A limited range of glazes achieve a remarkable variety of finishes. He uses white slip, transparent glaze, shino and occasionally



oxides and silver fired in an anagama kiln or gas fired reduction. Some dramatic effects result from firing in charcoal filled saggars.

A lovely inspirational book, a worthwhile addition to any ceramic library.

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My space

BY ROBIN PALMER



As I write this article, I have been moved into my new studio for about a week and I am still settling in.

Over the past year I have moved studio twice: from Inverness up to Stromness in Orkney, then from Stromness to Kirkwall. All this moving around has helped me to appreciate just how much stuff I have accumulated! I have certainly learned some useful lessons in terms of rationalising the equipment I need and use, and how I store this. I wholly recommend a good clean out at least once a year – you may find things you had forgotten you have, or find a better way of working in your space.

The studio I am renting is leased by the Orkney Creative Hub, and located on Garrison Road in Kirkwall. I am enjoying being part of a growing creative centre and no longer feel disconnected from other local crafts people. In a way, it feels like being back in Art School: there is a little buzz about the place and from behind each door, a smell of turps, or melting wax, or jewellery polish, seeps through the corridors and mingles to create a unique atmosphere.

My space is big – larger than any studio I have had in the past, and I am still trying to make sense of it. The room used to be the old wax casting space for Ortak, a jewellery company

My space continued



based in Orkney, where they would make their masters for lost wax casting. There are work surfaces spanning three walls and I have a large central table which I will run classes around. There is also a small room for my kiln and shelving for storage and drying. It's a wonderfully light space with windows along the main wall.

Where before I would start to work on one piece then move it to a shelf to create space for my next project, I now have individual areas where I can throw with stoneware, slip cast with parian, slip trail with earthenware and then glaze everything. However, in the past week, I have learned the dangers of working too close to the windows in direct sunlight. Some of my work has suffered the consequences by drying unevenly and cracking. As I said, I'm still trying to make sense of the space and learn its quirks, but I'm getting there!

The one thing I am truly grateful for in this space, and something I have not had in any of my previous studios, is hot running water! Such a simple thing but it makes a big difference! Cleaning tools is suddenly so much easier and throwing on the wheel is a pleasure. I am enjoying my new space and look forward to growing into it, losing tools along the way and forgetting where I put things as inevitably I will. Hopefully I'll find them again though during my annual tidy up (ahem)... we'll see!

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