



CHINESE CLAYART NEWSLETTER

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CHINESE CLAYART

"Clayart China" is a newsletter emailed monthly to professional ceramic artists who want to know about ceramic art in China and things related. This newsletter will be a bridge between China and Western countries for the ceramic arts. Comments and suggestions are very welcome. (Copyright 2000, The Chinese Ceramic Art Council, USA. All rights reserved)

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FEATURE ARTICLES

The Banpo site Museum, Xi'an

The Banpo Museum at Xi'an is the first museum built on a prehistoric site in China. It is located on the east bank of the Chan River in the eastern suburb of Xi'an city. It is a typical example of a matriarchal clan community village site by the Yellow River Valley and dates back some 6,000 years.

The Banpo site was discovered in the spring of 1953. Its total area is about 50,000 square meters including its burial ground. The archeologists of the Department of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Science have conducted excavations on the site five times from the autumn of 1954 to the summer of 1957. There were 10,000 square meters excavated, and a mass of data obtained. Among the remains unearthed were 45 dwelling houses, 2 domestic animal pens, more than 200 storage pits, 6 pottery kilns and 250 graves, of which 73 were burial jars for babies. Some 10,000 artifacts both for production and domestic use were also discovered, together with a large number of animal bones, fruit stones and rotted grains such as millet. The museum consists of three parts: exhibition rooms for unearthed cultural relics, the Great Hall of the site, and an area for supplementary exhibition.

The Banpo Museum was built over the 1957 excavation and opened on April 1st 1958. In 1961, the state council declared the site to be one of the state monuments.

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PROFILE

The Jingdezhen Kiln of the Folk Art Research Institute

The Folk Art Research Institute is located at east suburb of Jingdezhen next to the Hutian ancient kiln site museum. It is the first research organization dedicated to the folk art history of Chinese ceramics and houses a collection of over 700 ceramic pieces and shards. The four-story building of the institute includes two exhibition rooms, meeting rooms, library, studio room, kiln room, and dormitory with eight bedrooms and a kitchen. The institute has hosted many international ceramic cultural activities. Contact: Le-geng Zhu Address: Hutian, Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, P.R. China, Zip code 333001 Tel: 86-798-8441150, 86-798-8435436

GLOSSARY

Folk Art Kiln (Min-Yao): "Folk Art Kiln" has a similar meaning as the Japanese word "Mingei." In Chinese, the word "kiln" (Yao) also means a ceramic production area or a ceramic village. That is, over the same period at the place, many ceramists used similar materials and techniques, making similar ceramic products. Different from that of Chinese imperial kilns, a folk art kiln usually produced blue and white functional wares, which were for common people's everyday use.

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TRAVEL

CHINESE CERAMIC CULTURAL TRAVEL AND EXCHANGE-2000.

Sept. 30-October 19, 2000

A 20-day experience of Chinese ceramics and culture.

The Jingdezhen Folk Art Kiln Conference, Jingdezhen Ceramic Festival (Oct. 11-14, 2000) and Chinese Ceramic Cultural Travel (Sept. 30 - Oct. 19, 2000).

Travel Itinerary

Sept. 30, Depart from San Francisco Airport (about 12 hours' flight time).

Oct. 1, Arrive in Beijing.

Oct. 2, the opening ceremony of the Ceramic Art Exhibition of the Academy of Art and Design, Hsing-Hua University. Visit the Hap Pottery (New Qingci Exhibition) and the National Palace Museum (Forbidden City and ceramic collection). Welcome Banquet with professors and local clay artists.

Oct. 3, Visit the Great Wall, and the Summer Palace. Later afternoon, take an overnight train to Xi'an.

Oct. 4, Arrive Xi'an in the morning. Visit the Provincial Museum, the Banpo Museum (prehistoric ceramic site), the Terra Cotta Soldiers Museum (6,000 of the full-size ancient clay soldiers that were buried in 210 BC and discovered in 1974). Stay at Xi'an.

Oct. 5, Fly to Chengdu.

Oct. 6, Bus to Dazu then to Chongqing.

Oct. 7, Cruise on the Yangzi River to the Three Gorges.

Oct. 8, Cruise on the Yangzi River to the Three Gorges (continued).

Oct. 9, Arrive in Wuhan.

Oct. 10, Bus via Jiujiang to Jingdezhen.

Oct. 11, Jingdezhen. Participate for four days in the Jingdezhen Ceramic Festival and the Chinese Folk Art of Ceramics International Conference. Morning, opening ceremony. Afternoon, group discussion. Evening, welcome banquet by the Mayor of Jingdezhen.

Oct. 12, Morning, lectures and speech. Afternoon, visit the Exhibition of New Century Functional Ceramic Art, Jingdezhen Ceramic Museum, Ming and Qing dynasty architectures. Evening party firing the Peace Kiln.

Oct. 13, morning, Jingdezhen traditional clay workshop including these techniques: wheel throwing, trimming, blue and white glazing, and over glaze painting. Afternoon, Hutian and other kiln sites.

Oct. 14, Gaoling (Kaolin) Village. Afternoon, closing ceremony.

Oct. 15, Bus to Huangshan Mountain. Visit one of most beautiful landscapes in China. Stay at Huang Mountain.

Oct. 16, Bus to Yixing. Arrive in Yixing at noon. Visit the Jun-ware Factory and three ceramic art

studios.

Oct. 17, Visit the dragon kiln and the teapot market. Afternoon, bus to Shanghai (about three and half hours). Evening, cruise on the Huang-pu River, beautiful night view of Shanghai.

Oct. 18, Visit the Shanghai Museum (founded in 1952, famous for its collection of ancient Chinese art including bronze, ceramics, sculpture, jade, paintings and calligraphy, etc.), Yu-yuan Garden, and the Hanguang Ceramic Art Company.

Oct. 19, Shanghai to San Francisco. Home, sweet home. For more details and fees, please contact:

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LETTER

From Lou Pierozzi

- graduate student at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, USA

As an American ceramist, I had wanted to travel to China because of the wealth of ceramic history and tradition. China has been a leader in the ceramic field for thousands of years, from the terra-cotta soldiers to the brightly colored tang horses. I believe that traveling there that somehow it would help my own personal work to evolve. However, I was uncertain as to what would inspire me and what things of interest I would find there. Each day, I was bombarded with different places and different styles of work. Each city, town and village offered me new ideas and new directions for my work.

I was amazed at the level of technique and technology in China. This level surpasses anything found in America. To see the level of craftsmanship in the yixing teapots was an incredible experience. Pots that I had thought were made from complex molds, were not. These pots made with impeccable craftsmanship were made one by one, by hand. Each pot made from a brown lump of clay with such precision.

Each day on my travels dispelled myth and what I thought could be done with clay. The experience I remember most was going to a porcelain factory in Jingdezhen. There I saw with my own eyes, men making a porcelain vase that was over eighteen feet height. This vase was made in sections with bone dry clay, each section was not even scored with a fork. The sections were put together with a little bit of slur and then the pot was heavily trimmed. This vase was then high-fired and turned out with no cracks and no flaws.

I was in disbelief at what I saw, because Americans are always trained to slip and score with leather hard parts. Never putting bone dry pieces together with no scoring. But now that I look back on that experience it makes sense to let the parts shrink before putting it together. Since, most cracking occurs in the shrinking and drying process. In American to make something out of porcelain that is two feet tall is quite a feat, to see something eighteen feet is unbelievable.

As I look back at my travels in China, I will remember China as a place that offers much to the world especially to a ceramist. China is filled with sights, sounds and smells that can inspire someone. I believe that China has done this for me and I look forward to making a new body of work that will call back all of those wonder experiences.

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OPPORTUNITY

Invitation to the: "New Qingci (Celadon) Show"

The pale green porcelain was one of the earliest (about 1800 years ago) porcelain made in China and gained the fame in the world. The word "china" may come from such products. Qingci was originated in the southern China and migrated to north and after Song Dynasty, almost every pottery towns in China were firing Qingci. Now it is so popular that almost every ceramic artist in the world when they try to do porcelain work, they will try Qingci first.

It is also true in China, up to now, all the famous pottery town are making Qingci but preserve its own characteristics. Among them the most famous ones are still in the original places namely the hometown of Yue Kilns in south Chejiang area such as Longquan.

Contemporary Qingci has many varieties some try to adopt the techniques of the ancient and imitate the ancient masterpieces, some younger generation try their own form and decorations. It is the time to review such efforts and try to unite the force so we can make better improvement. The show will also welcome the Qingci made from foreign ceramic artist and they may impact Chinese artist in creative ideas.

The show is tentatively set from Sept. 2 to October 29 at HAP Pottery Gallery, a catalog will be published and a special volume related to Qingci and the show will be included in the Autumn issue of the Chinese Potters Newsletter.

You are cordially invited to participate this show. Please read the following attachment to know how to proceed the participation.

Notes on Participation of the "New Qingci (Celadon) Show":

1. Please send me several photos (not slides) of your work including the ones you would like to send to me to show. For the foreign artist, I recommend only one piece and not too large. To the artists in China, 3-5 pieces are welcome.
2. For all the works I will pay the cost of shipping to Beijing. To foreign artist please note that you have to follow the following rules to ship your work:
 - A. To pack it well, and send it through the POST OFFICE by EMS service. Send me the receipt and I will reimburse you the EMS fee.
 - B. To mark the value of the work less than US\$50 for the EMS parcel, so no duties will be charged, otherwise I will not collect the work, and it will be treated as a dead parcel in the post office.
3. Please send me the necessary information of the work such as the name, the size, and the firing temp. The clay type and the method of making etc.
4. All the pieces are subject to sell, please indicate the price you wish to sell (nothing to do with the value you declared in Post office.). HAP Pottery will charge 25% the price you marked. If no sale is done and you want your piece back you have to pay the EMS fare to ship back.
5. You are welcome to attend the opening but you have to pay your own traveling cost. HAP Pottery may help you in finding reasonable or free accommodation in Beijing for 2 days.
6. My address:
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