POTTERS ASSOCIATION OF NAMIBIA
newsletter
January 2022

LETTER FROM THE chair

Dear Potters

The happiest and most creative wishes for the new year. May 2022 be filled with abundance (of good things) and may the kiln gods be smiling on every firing. I sincerely hope that we will be able to offer workshops, fun activities, events, and perhaps make up for the last 2 years.

The committee is yet to meet this year and discuss possible dates for events this year. Thus, please send through any dates you might have penciled in for workshops or exhibitions. We do not want to double book. If you have suggestions, or would like to offer a demo or workshop, please write to us too.

Even though there is still some uncertainty and difficulty in planning relating to covid, if everything goes well, we will host our 10th Biennale this year. We already have commitment from our sponsors, and as soon as the gallery confirms the date, organizing can kick off in earnest. We will keep you informed as we go, through social media and email.

After a very successful 3,5 months with our stall at the Namibian Craft Center, I would like to encourage more members to exhibit. The process of supplying, and paying the exhibitors, have been streamlined, so there is very little reasons to not take the plunge and sign up for minimum of 3 months. In this newsletter, you will find an article by Uschi on our stall.

I presented a very successful Obvara workshop for my pottery students last year, and hope to present one to you. Unfortunately it has not been possible to fulfil my dream of hosting pottery video evenings, which I am optimistic for in 2022.

Remember to keep in mind our AGM that will most probably take place sometime in March. I would appreciate if you could give some hard thought if you would like to assist on the committee, as a general member or take an official roll.

Once again, may 2022 be filled with happiness and fantastic pottery.

Best wishes,

Jacqui

FROM renate.

Such a long journey, so much has happened, but now all is done. My life is back to normal and finally I can play with clay again. My new pottery wheels are absolutely fantastic! What a difference it makes to work on a direct drive wheel. And the best EVER is that there is no noise! I could not have wished for more. Having said that, I have not really had time to potter around much myself, but that will come. My studio is almost the way I want it. Some things still need to be moved to be easily accessible and for the work to flow better, but time dictates where what should go. The main thing is that I have started with pottery lessons. The older children from the Bedrock Montessori School have started weekly lessons and it is wonderful to see how much they enjoy the experience of working with clay. For Christmas we have made little Christmas tree candle holders and they have all had fun making pinch pots and little ornaments as presents. Everything was bisque fired and then the fun started getting some colour onto their art works. Of course, they were eagerly waiting for the glaze

firing and for some the long wait is not so easy. But that is part of the whole process. And the long wait was well worth it. The cheerful and happy faces were a sight to behold, and they were so proud of what they had achieved.

I have not yet approached adults for pottery lessons. I knew that the response would be poor with the holidays and as from this year I am sure things will pick up and I will be kept busy. Of course, I still need to have time for my own pottery, which I have neglected over the past few years. A full -time job during the day, pottery lessons in the evenings and most weekends did not leave much time for me to potter around. But that has changed. There are certainly a lot of advantages being a pensioner. I can dictate my own time and make my own artwork a priority. How wonderful is that!

May I close by asking each and every one of you to share your experiences, short anecdotes, tips, tricks and photos for the newsletters? We really need you to assist in making the newsletters special. Any contribution, no matter how small, should be emailed to me directly at rossler@iway.na It does not matter whether you have been pottering for 30 plus years or 3 plus months. Your journey will have something special that we would all like to share in. To those who sent through their contributions last year, a huge thank you.

I wish you all a very happy and creative New Year.

Until then, stay safe.

Yours in potting,

Renate

SHARON'S WAXING LYRICAL
TRIED & TESTED TIPS

waxing.

NB! Beware! Hot wax is flammable and very dangerous! To melt wax, use a double boiler on very low heat; an old electric frying pan is ideal. For a pleasant smell while you are working with hot wax use plain candles with a few drops of lavender essential oil added or scented candles.

1. GLAZE BATIK:

Only use glazes that you know are compatible with each other, that do not run and fire to the same cone. As with the textile Batik technique, apply colours starting from the lightest to the darkest. Dip a shallow, cleaned bisque item into e.g. a white glaze. With very hot wax on your brush, block out simple designs. (Wax must be hot enough to seal glaze and penetrate into bisque). Carefully clean off any glaze residue on the waxed designs. Dip into another glaze colour and again wax a design. A few layers of coloured glaze and wax can be very effective but remember "less is more".

2. ANOTHER EASY AND EFFECTIVE HOT WAX RESIST TECHNIQUE:

Paint bold designs on your cleaned bisque with either an oxide or underglaze colour. Apply 2 coats of a brush-on transparent glaze onto these painted areas. Carefully seal over glazed design with hot wax. Dip (or spray or pour) the whole item in a glaze colour that will contrast or compliment your wax resisted design.

3. MANGANESE WAX:

As with above Batik technique, use glazes that do not run and clean your bisqued piece as usual. Upright pots should be glazed inside before starting with the Manganese wax design on the outside. Handle with care as the Manganese wax does smudge and will be permanent. Areas painted with Manganese wax will remain black and unglazed. Spraying glazes are not suitable but use dipping or pouring ones.

In a small glass container mix together: 5ml (1 teaspoon) Manganese Dioxide, 30ml Liquid Cobra Wax and a few drops of Paraffin. The mix must be completely black and flow easily when painting. If wax thickens too much while painting, place container in a small bowl of boiling hot water and add a few more drops of Paraffin as needed to painting consistency. ***Method 1**. Draw design on bisque with pencil and paint outlines and areas to remain black with Manganese wax. Leave item to dry for a while before you dip into a contrasting glaze colour. Fire to the required temperature.

***Method 2.** Draw your design on in pencil and paint the Manganese wax on the outlines and any other areas you want black. You can use very fine and delicate designs as the wax prevents the glaze from spreading while glazing. With a soft brush, paint on various colours glaze as wanted in your design. The glazes must be applied very thickly and is best to let glaze drip off the brush into the unwaxed areas of your designs. Handle your finished piece carefully as the Manganese wax smudges. Fire to temperature required for your clay and glazes.

Note: Lately it has been very difficult, if not impossible, to get hold of Cobra Liquid Wax. Please share if you know where to source it or whether there is an alternative that works as well.

LIQUID COLD WAX RESIST RECIPES:

- Mix well together in a tightly lidded container: 10 teaspoons Paraffin; 7 teaspoons Benzene; 75% of a 125ml tin Cobra floor wax polish; a few drops of food colouring of your choice. If wax thickens over time, add a few drops of Benzene to get to a painting consistency. Be aware that this mixture is very strong smelling so use in well-ventilated area. (This recipe originally from Johan van der Merwe).

- An easy cold wax resist: Mix well together to a painting consistency in a lidded container: 60% Turpentine and 40% Vaseline with a few drops of food colouring.

To clean brushes used with cold wax resists, wash with hot soapy water and if possible keep them exclusively for using only with wax resists!

CLAY

UNDERGLAZE

POTTER

Die Tonfabrik

GLAZE

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Swakopmund

HOW I CAME TO LOVE clay

One very misty, rainy, freezing cold and windy day in February backpacking through Wales, I took refuge in a little pottery studio in a small village way back in the 70s. Throwing at his wheel the potter kindly offered me some soup, in a magnificent "huggable" soup bowl/mug. We had a lovely chat about pottery, being a potter, clays, pigments and firing his pots. Escaping the wetness, encountering all the creativity and sipping his soup I wandered around his studio-cum-gallery looking at all the Anglo-Oriental pieces he made. It was awe-inspiring to see he worked mainly with ash glazes. That icy cold day I fell in love with clay! My fingers were itching to get into the muddy mixture! I could just feel the Welsh soil! There and then I was compelled to try it out!

But as I had to move on I bought that very soup mug (which I still have) promising myself that one day I would work with clay.

When I returned to live in Namibia in the early 80's I joined Doreen Hildenhagen, out at Avis, for weekly pottery classes and LOVED it. I particularly liked the idea of tableware: pieces being handled, used and felt (all pottery pieces are used in one way or another). Doreen's passion and superb teaching embedded my own passion for clay. During those pottery classes, we talked about creating an association for potters. She felt we could learn from each other along the way and resultantly I became one of the

founding members of PAN. For about ten years I was on the PAN committee as Secretary, Press Release officer, Vice-Chairperson and finally as Chairperson from 1987 – 1997.

Throwing clay on the wheel is my passion. I love seeing how the form takes place and what the clay wants and feels. Sometimes when I have a plan, something entirely different emerges whilst the clay is travelling through my hands. And another vessel is born. As an adult I still enjoy 'playing' with clay, shaping, forming, adding pieces, decorating and finally using the pieces.

The roundness of my pots reminds me of a mandala. The centre or inside part is the "negative" and is patiently waiting to be filled with the "positive" when in use. My pots, and particularly bowls, are crucibles yearning to be filled giving it the final touch to my creations! I enjoy both the contents and the pot being in sync and complementing each other. On the other hand, vessels that are decorative are also complete by just being in the eye of the beholder. Seeing my pots being held, touched, used, looked at, being a conversation piece and above all enjoyed is extremely rewarding. Despite what many say (do not touch!) pottery pieces are to hold and behold.

I am a tactile person. Perhaps as I grew up, this sense of 'touch' didn't

Tea bowl fired in Nambian sand

Popcorn Bowl

Celadon Salad Bowl

My corn platter

The Atlantic wave bowl

Waiting to be fired!

Working with clay in Sri Lanka

mature in me and I find myself, like children do, always wanting to "touch" and "feel" something, particularly a ceramic object! Reduction-firing is also kind of tactile: the constant monitoring of a live flame, adjusting the amount of gas, moving gas bottles when they start to empty, etc. The outcome of pots also depends on where they are placed in a reduction kiln; how high up in the kiln and next to which other objects they are placed including how long the atmosphere in the kiln is being reduced for. There are so many factors involved. Each firing is quite a theatrical event! Every time one opens the kiln it's like opening a Xmas gift. Anticipation! One is never 100% sure of what to expect. That's the "hold your breath" part!

My inspiration and mentor for Anglo-Oriental work came from the wonderful South African potter, Andrew Walford. On a workshop here in Windhoek, he introduced us to reduction firing and assisted in firing our first gas kiln. Together we mixed glazes and used various pigments for 'uninhibited' brush strokes, especially emphasising free wrist movements. "Just be free!" he said. Of course, reduction firing lends itself to this beautifully. My love of tea bowls also came from this time. Visiting Japan sealed that affection.

Whilst travelling I discover so many ways to express my passion for clay. Wherever I go, I find various forms, shapes, textures and colours in buildings and their surroundings, but more so in the various environments to draw from. Attending several workshops here in Namibia, SA, USA and in the UK or visiting potters and potteries all over the world is so stimulating.

Teaching children/students, Kidz Pottery, from my studio they enter the wonderful gratifying world of clay and the love for it. In return, I learn so much from my students. Two of my articles have been published in the prestigious Ceramics Review Magazine in the UK: "Potters of Caprivi" and "Pottery in Nigeria".

I have taken part in various exhibitions for PAN (Windhoek, Swakop, Omaruru) and the Association of Potters for Southern Africa (APSA); assorted group exhibitions (and won some awards) including exhibitions for the Cancer Association of Namibia. My first solo exhibition of Pottery and Photography called "Cameos of Fire and Ice" was held at Studio 77 in November 2008 and another solo exhibition entailing firing pots in sagars filled with sea sand, called "Geoscapes" at the Omba Gallery in November 2010. My husband, Rolf, and I have had several Home Studio Exhibitions in our studio in Pioneerspark. Our journey exploring and experimenting with shapes and forms, clays and glazes is unstoppable. So lucky me I have this passion for life!

Our 2021 home studio exhibition called "Clay Journeys" starts on 5th November.

Genie Albrecht

CLAY JOURNEYS 2021 STUDIO EXHIBITION

Genie and Rolf Albrecht

Challenges with a previously loved clay (whose recipe had suddenly changed!) prompted us to explore numerous other clays with our own glazes and/or adjust and reinvent new glazes. The culmination of this journey of the past three years of works (covid pandemic included) is showcased in our Clay Journeys Studio Exhibition 2021. It's been a wonderful journey of learning which doesn't stop here! We can't wait to get back into clay in the new year.

ONE VISITORS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE EXHIBITION

'Clay Journeys' by Genie and Rolf Albrecht

Entering their studio, one immediately feels that this is a peaceful and creative space, where the process of working clay has taken form and shape into art, an expression of the human spirit and the desire to make beautiful objects. The visitor cannot help but marvel at the astounding variety and quantity of the work exhibited. It is so easy to while in their studio, staying longer than planned, just to view some pieces over and over again. Some of the decoration and glazes remind one of the place where the Namib desert meets the ocean, others treat the eye with mysterious blends of colours reminiscent of nature.

Genie writes in her artist profile *"There is something spiritual about working with clay, particularly on the wheel. Observing a lump of clay flowing through one's fingers and hands as the wheel mesmerizingly brings an incredible connection to Mother Earth. Throwing clay is my passion. I love watching how a form is created on the wheel, perpetuating a mandala and transformed into tableware".*

We left their studio in awe of the quantity and quality produced by these talented potters, feeling inspired and motivated to try new approaches. Well done - it was a morning well spent and remembered. - ***Rosi Stevenson***

THE LATE HEINRICH EICHBAUM
WATERCOLOURS FOR SALE
N$1000.00

MARKET OUTLET FOR **PAN** members

With the economy of scale of the Namibian market, marketing handmade ceramics, by Namibian artists is limited. It is thus no wonder that the ones who practice pottery, do it mostly as a hobby.

In most other countries, especially in South Africa, you will find a quarterly ceramics market in cities across that country where potters/ceramicists are provided the opportunity to market their work to individuals and businesses alike.

It is thus great news for the handful of us here in Namibia who wish to make pottery a way to earn a sustainable living, when PAN started renting stall space at the Namibian Craft Centre (NCC) in Windhoek in September 2021. This bold, yet necessary move not only promotes the work of Namibian potters/ceramicists who are paid up members of PAN, but also provides a much needed outlet in the country, to those looking to sell their work.

COVID and its effects on the global economy and the job market points us back to diversifying our sources of income. Working with our hands has not been so therapeutic nor satisfying as it has been during these very trying times. The PAN stall at the NCC comes thus with double wins for those potters/ceramicists who might have lost their main source of income or are now also being depended upon by family members and or relatives who might have lost their jobs in especially the tourism sector.

The stall consists of a shelf with 30 cubicles for exhibiting work and 6 for storing work and packaging material. The administration, very much like the running of PAN, is done on a voluntary basis. Sales have been above expectation growing from N$12,000 to over N$17,000 per month at the end of December 2021. At present only 6 potters/ceramicists have taken up this wonderful outlet with a potential which to host the work of at least 8 more members. Members can take a minimum of one cubicle and a maximum of 3 cubicles at a minimal cost of N$90/cubicle. PAN is calling on its paid-up members who are interested to test the market with their work, to participate by committing to a 3-month agreement to have their work on sale at the stall.

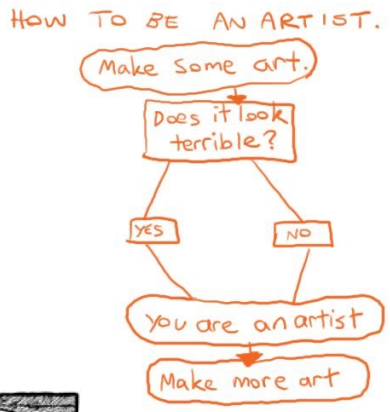
Should you wish to test the waters with your work, kindly contact the PAN committee and set your ball rolling.

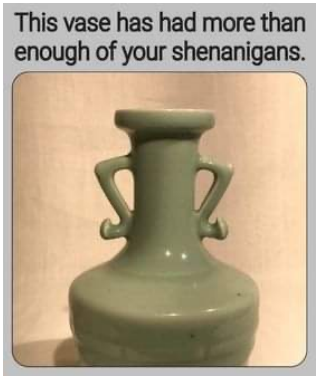
In the meantime,

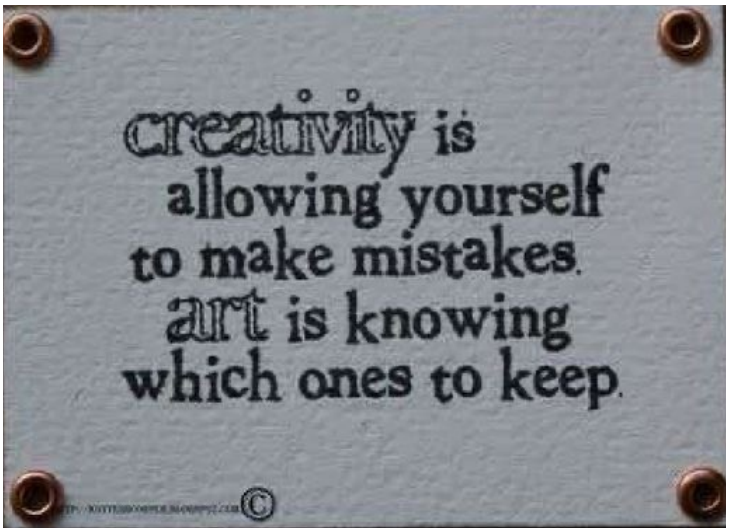
Happy Potting!

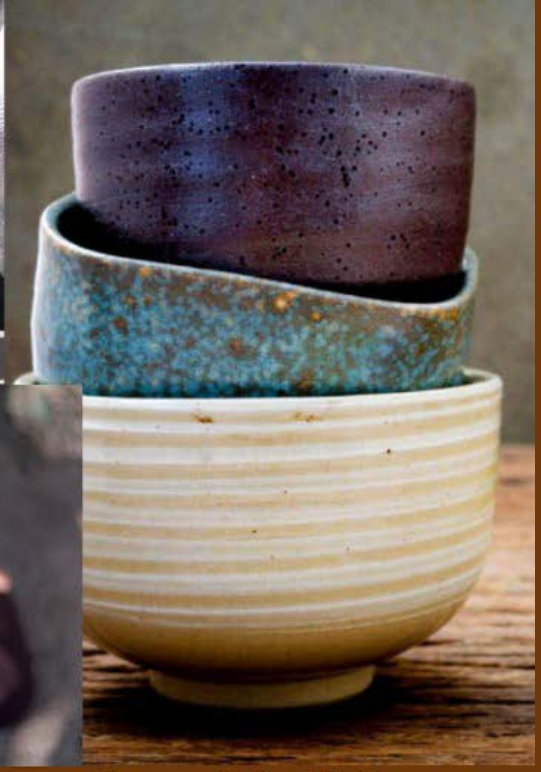
Uschi

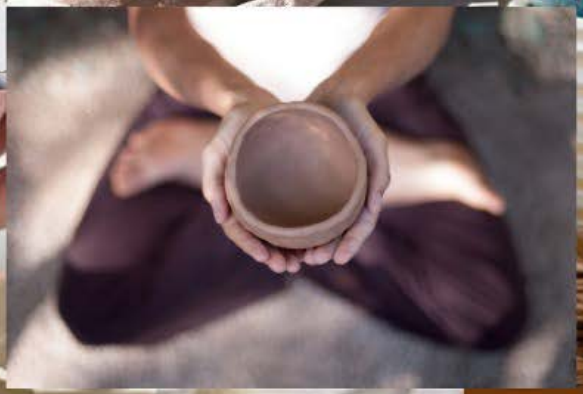
POTTERY jokes











CERAMIC CLASSES

FOR ALL
YOUNG, OLDER, NEW TO CLAY OR PROFESSIONAL,
ALL ARE WELCOME!

VENUE:- COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
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CONTACT FILLIMON KAPOLO:-

081 471 0256
FOR MORE DETAILS

POTTERS' ASSOCIATION OF NAMIBIA

PAN's main objective is to promote the art and craft of pottery and ceramics in Namibia.

Visit our exhibition at the Namibian Craft Centre to buy beautiful work from Namibian ceramic artists.

POTTERY teachers

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