POTTERS ASSOCIATION OF NAMIBIA
newsletter
July 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE

chair

Dear Members,

The organisation for our 'Bowled Over' exhibition is progressing well and I do hope everyone is busy making beautiful bowls. We need to showcase the relevance of PAN as an association and this will only happen, if many, if not most of you, submit their work. The interest shown in the workshops has been very encouraging, and since there are quite a few more planned for this year, I hope you will make use of these fantastic opportunities to learn new skills or brush up on some old ones. Sadly, the Raku workshop was advertised rather late and potters did not have the required bisque pieces. Although we cancelled the Raku workshop this year, we are planning to offer it in 2024.

We are pleased that PAN has gained quite a few new members through the advertisements and the workshops. This is great news. Hopefully we will also get a few more volunteers to help on the committee.

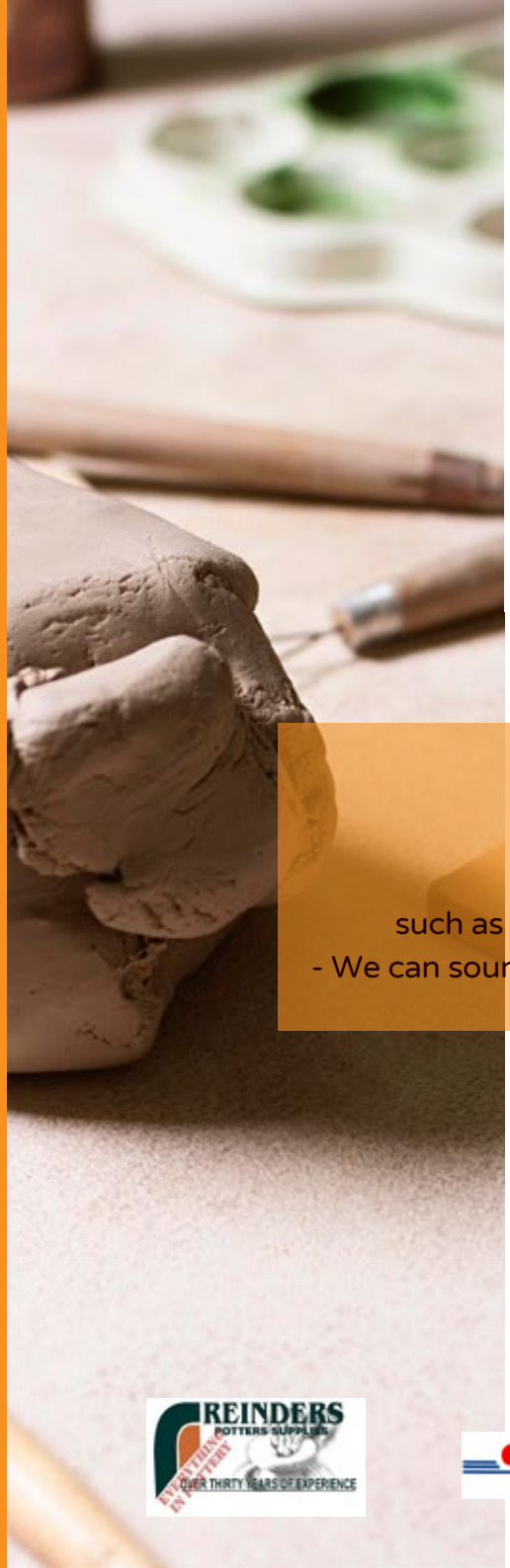
Thanks to Jacqui's input and our members submitting work for sale, our stall at the Craft Centre is still going strong, and sales are good. Estee pays the members promptly, which should encourage more potters to make use of this service. Again, rental fees for a cubicle are very reasonable, so please send us an email if you too would like to make use of this space.

Despite reminders placed on the WhatsApp group, only the trusted regular contributors have submitted content for this newsletter. Thank you, Sharon and Genie. Without you, there would not have been a newsletter. You are truly appreciated. Good news is, that Carola is busy working on contributions for the next newsletter, which will make very interesting reading. A huge thank you also goes out to Carola for designing our beautiful flyers, which Annabelle can then post on the various social media platforms. Carola, you really make such a difference, and your input is truly valued.

It is quite challenging being both Chair and Secretary and the information hub for everyone interested in PAN or pottery related matters. Attending and responding to it all from so far away is especially challenging. Juggling my time between PAN duties, pottery classes, part-time bookkeeping job and producing pieces for the Craft Centre and a tourist centre in Luderitz is not easy. At times, it feels like I am just touching ground without making any progress, which is quite disheartening. But, when the going gets tough, I must remind myself that I am doing this for PAN, for the love of clay and to bring together likeminded people. Having said that, I wish to appeal to you, our dear members: Please be a part of the Association. List on our website, contribute small bits to the newsletter, attend workshops, fund raisers, exhibitions, discussions, and being mindful of what you, as members can bring to the table, as it is everyone's involvement (not just the committee) that have the power to make or break PAN. Please decide wisely. Since PAN's inception 35+ years ago, many people have put in a great deal of work and effort, all for the love of clay and sharing with likeminded people our love for such a rewarding creative process. Let us all continue that dedication.

Yours in potting,

Renate



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"MAKING SENSE"
EXHIBITION BY

ai weiwei.

BY **GENIE ALBRECHT**

A chance opportunity to visit an Ai WeiWei exhibition at the Design Museum in Kensington, London, was a palpable highlight of our recent trip last month.

Ai Weiwei is a Chinese contemporary artist-activist working in different disciplines. In 2015 he was exiled from China for speaking out against the government. His art reflects social justice amongst other philosophies and ideas. "Today, all I can do is pick up the scattered fragments left after a storm and try to piece together a picture, however incomplete it may be" (Ai Weiwei)

His exhibition "Making Sense" showcases various art materials. Of particular interest is his use of porcelain as large installations laid out on the floor. So I thought I would share four particular impactful exhibits with you. As it was quite aptly written, I've quoted from the Making Sense Exhibition catalogue scribed by Justin McGuirk

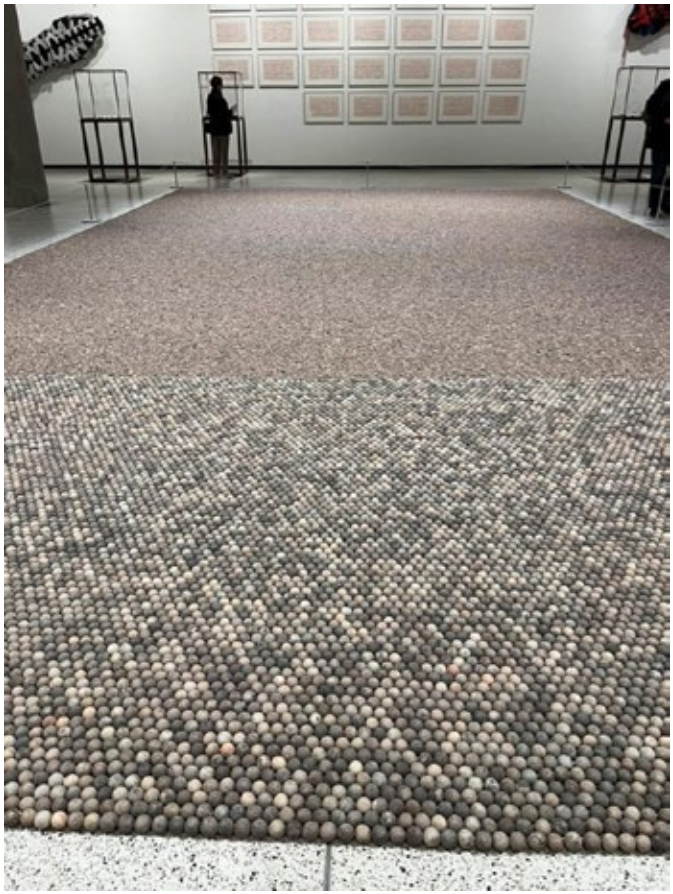
(Chief Curator) and Rachel Hajk (Assistant Curator) of the Design Museum, London.

'SPOUTS 2015' "This field is made up of more than 250,000 porcelain spouts crafted by hand during the Song dynasty (960-1279CE). If a pot was not perfect when it was made, the spout was broken off and discarded."

There is also a metaphor here with people's mouths silenced or "broken off", as happened to Ai Weiwei himself. I thought, in Africa, it could be akin to the wretched ivory poaching and trade of elephant tusks and rhino horns 'broken off' and sold.

Another installation, 'Untitled' ~ Porcelain Balls 2022' To quote from the exhibition catalogue: "When Ai first encountered these balls, he had no idea what they were. It turned out that they are cannonballs made during the Song Dynasty (960-1279CE) from Xing ware, a high-quality porcelain. Ai was struck by the fact that this precious and seemingly delicate material was once used for weapons of war. There are more than 200,000 here, which makes it hard to comprehend that they were all hand-made".

The clay balls look smoke-fired, which makes sense of the 'firing' method and are displayed in two halves of earthy colours in one massive yet delicate floor installation.



LEFT RIGHT STUDIO MATERIAL~ Porcelain 2018.

Again from the exhibition catalogue: "These fragments are the remains of Ai's porcelain sculptures that were destroyed when his 'Left Right' studio in Beijing was demolished by the Chinese state in 2018. You can see the complete sculpture called 'Bubble' nearby. The remains are a form of evidence of the repression that Ai has suffered at the hands of the Chinese government, as well as a testament to his ability to turn destruction into art."

Alongside the installation is his 'BUBBLE 2008'

The catalogue says, "With this sculpture, Ai wanted to test the limits of porcelain craftsmanship, as this is the largest sphere it is possible to make in porcelain without it cracking in the kiln". What I found amazing is the vast mass of porcelain produced way back then. And also how chunky the pieces are when one thinks of porcelain being so delicate!

REMAINS, 2015 ~ Porcelain

Referring to the catalogue, "Porcelain is well known to be precious and fragile. Remains is a reminder that these qualities also apply to life itself. The porcelain bones here are replicas of human bones excavated at a labour camp in operation in the late 1950s under the Chinese leader Mao Zedong. Thousands of intellectuals - including Ai's father, the poet Ai Qing - were exiled or killed during the purges of this period".

These bones look so fragile yet sturdy and are displayed in a glassed-in box. Like porcelain bones don't generally disintegrate - a great way to depict the human bone.

I so enjoyed his exhibition; we spent a long time there, going back and forth to all the exhibits and displays. Undeniably worth the price of the ticket and the time spent reflecting on Ai Weiwei's art creating powerful statements. So if you are ever in London, The Design Museum is certainly well worth a visit of modern and contemporary art.

Genie Albrecht
June 2023

Aprons!

Aprons are for sale for **N$350.00**. Contact us if you are interested.

potters.namibia@gmail.com

50 YEARS OF POTTING AND STILL

going strong.

CONTRIBUTED BY
SHARON FLEWELLYN

"Tips and Tricks" throwing demonstration by Uschi Hallwachs in Swakopmund.

This past cold, wet weekend in Swakop was enjoyed by a small group of clay enthusiasts who eagerly absorbed Uschi's generous sharing of her skills attained as a market/production potter in South Africa. She is mostly self-taught and attended many workshops by well-known potters, mentioning Lindsay Scott and the late Tim Morris as favourites. She also enjoys watching YouTube tutorials by the dwindling number of older generation British potters who still practise their traditional pottery methods of making and firing.

Uschi throws very quickly and efficiently – no unnecessary fiddling about! She stressed the importance of throwing with one's elbows anchored firmly down and that both one's hands should always work together as one tool. She doesn't wedge her clay much and says coning up and down, centering, does it.
A piece of wet genuine chamois holding an unglazed Johnsons' tile on the wheel head is Uschi's favourite batt system. This enables her to later slide off the thrown item, the base perfectly flat and smooth, so she doesn't need to trim it.

Uschi collecting wild clay >

Uschi has been collecting "wild" Swakop river clay and spoke enthusiastically about the endless supply we have at our doorstep. She doesn't go to any lengths to clean the clay, just wipes off stones and sticks etc from the dry surface before slaking it in water and then drying to a workable consistency. This wet clay is black, smelly, and amazingly plastic with a very greasy feel and throws easily. But it is not suited for tall items as it cannot hold itself up and slumps easily. It fires to a maximum of 1050 deg C – it will melt at a higher temperature – and the fired colour is beautiful bright warm terracotta!

The demonstration started off with Uschi throwing small items with the river clay. She showed how she throws conical shapes upside down for small pots for cacti, unique donut shaped birdfeeders, and hanging planters. Decorative handles, impressed rims and knobs were later added and painted with white slip. Attaching a wooden batt to the wet chamois on the wheel head, Uschi then threw a large wide, cylinder for a casserole pot. She split the rim as a gallery for the lid to sit on, measured it with callipers and then proceeded to throw a lid and a separate knob. The lid was thrown as a shallow bowl to fit exactly on the gallery. Later the lid was inverted on the bowl as a trimming chuck. Uschi says this Swakop river clay should be ideal for casseroles once suitably glazed on the inside only. We were all surprised that it behaved so well especially as the clay was very wet and sticky.

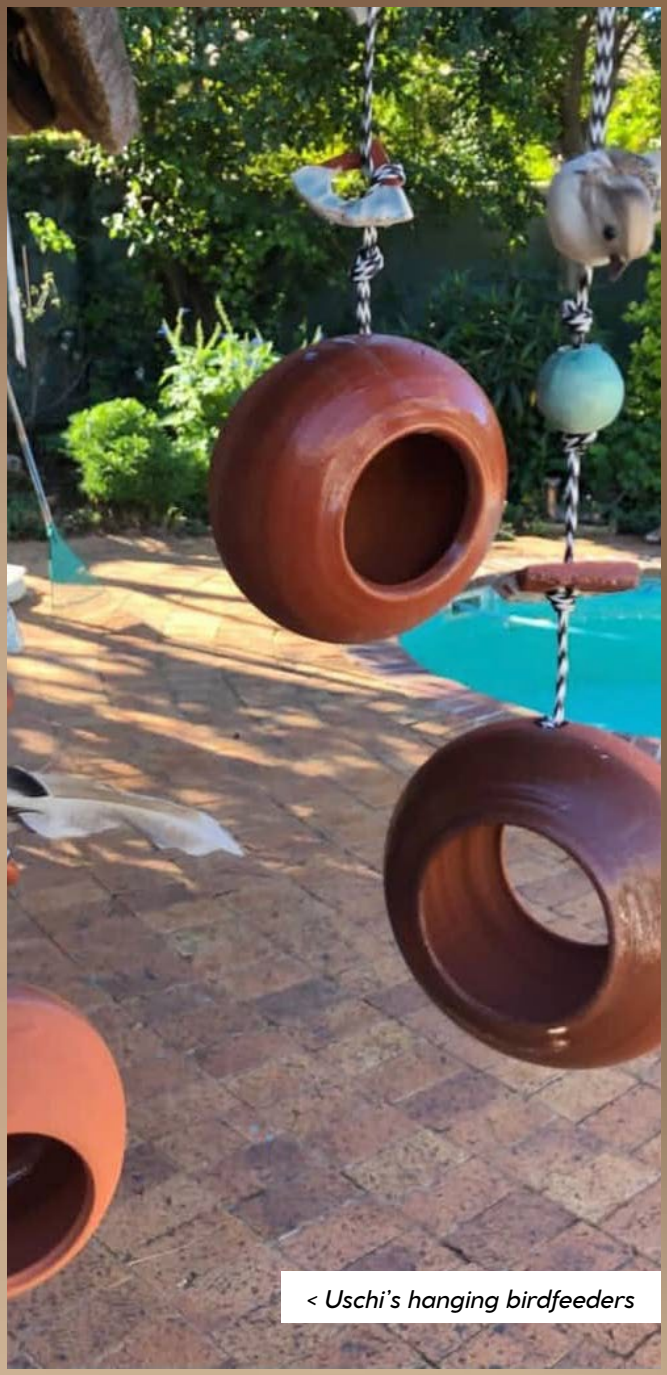
Throwing the casserole pot >

River clay casserole >

A very important tip: when completing throwing a pot, draw the cutting wire under the pot away from oneself – not towards oneself! This prevents the wire from lifting up and possibly cutting through the base of the pot.

Putting decorative handles on hanging planter >

After cleaning away the black river clay, Uschi used rather soft recycled white stoneware and threw a small box as a closed unit. Using the end of a wooden clothes peg she indented the box to demarcate the lid section, which would be cut through with a needle tool at the leather hard stage. This narrowed area of the lid forms the flange which perfectly fits into the bottom part of the box. When leather hard Uschi inverted the separated lid onto the box base, using it as a chuck and carefully turned it off ensuring it fit well. She stressed the importance of piercing a tiny hole into the lid of the sealed wet box to allow air to escape as it dries and shrinks.



< *Uschi's hanging birdfeeders*

Next Uschi threw a thick-walled wide cylinder, opened down through to the batt. Using an 'affro' comb she textured the outside, before widening the shape from the inside. With her fingers she then gently stroked the pot walls from the inside to form a rectangular shape. This bottomless bowl was joined on to a slab base and decorative handles attached when leather hard.

Uschi never uses a roller for making slabs and demonstrated her slab slinging technique on a piece of Masonite on the floor.

Uschi threw numerous other items including a candle stick and jugs and planters etc, and pulled handles, all the while chatting and sharing important points. The item that had everyone fascinated was the making of her large oval dish. She threw a large thick-bottomed plate on a wooden batt, stressing the importance of compressing the base very well before pulling up the wall. She tidied up the shape, and then wired through under the pot. Next she carefully cut a narrow leaf shape into the center of the base and, before removing the leaf, she pulled water through under the base with her cutting wire. After removing the leaf shape from the bottom she dribbled water into the cut-out and again under wire pulled water between clay base and batt. Then with hands on the outside of the bowl she gently pushed the walls towards the center to close up the cut-out. A coil was worked in to seal it and smoothed with a rubber kidney. The oval dish was put aside to be turned off the next day.

On our return the next day Uschi turned off all the items she had thrown. Our cold wet weather had not played along so the pottery was still rather soft, but this did not deter Uschi. She finished off the pieces with decorative handles and impressed patterns and textures. She uses very few tools: her favourite soft kidney is made from a shoe inner, her turning tool is a vegetable peeler and her scoring tool she made by pushing 6 sewing machine needles into a handy blob of Prattleys Putty. We felt proud to pass on a valuable tip to Uschi – the absolute necessity of having a hairdryer to dry clay in the winter Swakop studio!

Thank you Uschi Hallwachs for so generously sharing your knowledge and wisdom with us – we learnt so much! Thanks too to hostess Carole Keibel for opening her home to us potters and spoiling us with delicious food.

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THROWING WITH canvas batts

If you struggle with safely wiring off thrown plates and platters, try this trick that works well for me.

I cut artist canvas into sizes exactly matching that of my wooden batts for throwing plates. Attach batt as usual to your wheelhead. Spread a thin layer of slip on top of the wooden batt and this is the "glue" to stick canvas down on it. Make sure canvas is smoothly attached with no wrinkles or bubbles. Now you can throw a plate as usual with no need to under wire cut it off.

When throwing complete remove your plate, together with canvas and batt, from wheelhead. Do not remove plate from the canvas covered batt until plate is leatherhard and ready to be turned off. Flip plate over onto another batt, and carefully peel canvas off the base without having to wire it off a wooden batt! Turn off as usual.

This works well for me and has prevented many large plates being ruined. Good luck!

Sharon Flewellen

GOOD STUDIO practices

SHARED BY
SHARON FLEWELLYN

oldforgecreations

4/10

Best Studio Practices

Good studio practices can greatly reduce the amount of dust produced. These include:

- **Cleaning equipment, tools, and surfaces before the clay or glaze dries.** The more clay/glaze dries, the more likely it is to produce dust.
- **Never sand pieces dry, always add water.** The water catches the fine particles and you get a paste instead of dust.
- **If something will produce unavoidable dust, do it outside whenever possible.**
- **Clean surfaces regularly with water.** Use a damp sponge for surfaces and a mop for the floor, rather than sweeping.
- **Clean fabrics regularly.**
- **Be mindful of air movement.**

oldforgecreations

Mixing Glazes

It's best to mix glazes outdoors if you have the option, but you can keep dust to a minimum with careful movements. If you mix the dry ingredients and add them to water like I do, this is the most important part to do outside. Finally, **put a lid on the mix immediately after combining the dry ingredients and water.**

Trimming and Sanding

Trimming bone dry pieces produces a lot of dust and some of that dust is the really fine PM2.5 and PM1.0 particles. Same with sanding greenware. **If it's producing dust, it's going to be bad for the air quality.**

Trim before the piece is dry and wet sand if possible, wear a mask if not.

@oldforgecreations

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10/10

Should You Worry About Silicosis?

There are a load of variables and ultimately it's a personal risk calculation, but **from what I've seen the best practices are most likely sufficient to avoid silicosis**. A lot of them are highly effective at reducing the amount of silica in the air, and a well fitting filter masks would be enough for the times where it's unavoidable.

No amount of silica dust is good, but low enough levels should at least allow you to die of something else first.

www.oldforgecreations.co.uk/blog/silicosis-what-it-is-and-how-to-avoid-it

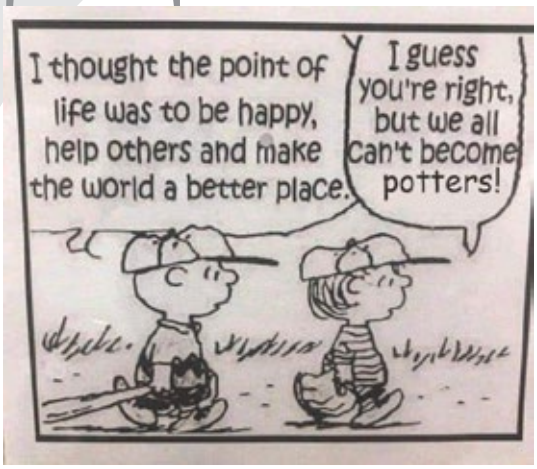
POTTERS' ASSOCIATION OF NAMIBIA

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

Inspiration



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POTTERS' ASSOCIATION OF NAMIBIA

Exhibition

BOWLED OVER

7 September 2023
to
23 September 2023

at
Bellhaus Atelier & Galerie
Windhoek

Exhibition Opening 7 September 2023
10:00 to 13:00

Gallery times: Tue– Sat 10:00 – 13:00

THE POTTERS' ASSOCIATION OF NAMIBIA
P O BOX 80307 WINDHOEK NAMIBIA
Tel. 081 861 8869
www.pan.iway.na
potters.namibia@gmail.com

RULES OF ENTRY:

Entry fee: N$ 50.00 for PAN members; N$100.00 non-members

1. DELIVERY DATE:
Entries must be delivered to the Bellhaus Atelier & Galerie, 18 Bell Street, Grüner Kranz, Windhoek, between 09:00 and 12:00 on 5 August 2023. Potters from out of town need to arrange with the Windhoek committee members for delivery Late entries will NOT BE ACCEPTED.

2. ELIGIBILITY:
All entries must be your own original work, be of at least 80% fired clay, may not have been exhibited before, and must be for sale.

3. ENTRIES:
All entries submitted must be bowls. You may submit up to 7 items in total, 2 of which may be part of, or make up a set and shall be sold as a set. Each item must be clearly marked with your name and item number on a label stuck to the underside. PAN and Bellhaus Atelier & Galerie reserve the right to reject any items they may deem unsuitable for exhibition. PAN will add 10% Commission to your price indicated on this form and Bellhaus Atelier & Galerie will add an additional 25%. Your entries must be accompanied by a short biography, and your artist statement with your inspiration for the artworks in your own words.

4. PAYMENT FOR WORK SOLD:
Bellhaus Atelier & Galerie will pay over monies from artwork sold four weeks after the exhibition. Please allow a further four weeks to PAN to pay over the funds received to the artists.

5. UNSOLD WORK:
You will be contacted regarding collection of unsold work.

6. PUBLICITY:
PAN and Bellhaus Atelier & Galerie reserve the right to use photographs of any work on exhibition for publicity purposes; for this exhibition or any future exhibitions organised.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES:
You exhibit at your own risk. PAN and Bellhaus Atelier & Galerie will not be held responsible for any losses caused by damage, theft or any other unforeseen misfortunes. Reasonable care will be taken at all times. You must insure your own work if so required.

ENTRANTS DETAILS

SURNAME:

FIRST NAME:

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

MOBILE:

E-MAIL:

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BANK _____

ACCOUNT NAME _____

ACCOUNT NO _____

BRANCH CODE _____

My N$ _____ entry fee.

CASH ☐ EFT ☐

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood the conditions of entry and agree to abide by them.

....
Signature Date

EXHIBITION NO.	ITEM	TITLE, CLAY TYPE, FIRING METHOD, DECORATION, ETC.	MY PRICE (EXCL. COM)	SOLD/ UNSOLD	GALLERY SELLING PRICE
	A	Thrown □ Handwork □ Mould □ Stoneware □ Earthenware □ Porcelain □ Oxidation □ Reduction □ Raku □ Saggar □ Pit Firing □ Soda/Salt Firing □ TITLE: _____			
	B	Thrown □ Handwork □ Mould □ Stoneware □ Earthenware □ Porcelain □ Oxidation □ Reduction □ Raku □ Saggar □ Pit Firing □ Soda/Salt Firing □ TITLE: _____			
	C	Thrown □ Handwork □ Mould □ Stoneware □ Earthenware □ Porcelain □ Oxidation □ Reduction □ Raku □ Saggar □ Pit Firing □ Soda/Salt Firing □ TITLE: _____			
	D	Thrown □ Handwork □ Mould □ Stoneware □ Earthenware □ Porcelain □ Oxidation □ Reduction □ Raku □ Saggar □ Pit Firing □ Soda/Salt Firing □ TITLE: _____			
	E	Thrown □ Handwork □ Mould □ Stoneware □ Earthenware □ Porcelain □ Oxidation □ Reduction □ Raku □ Saggar □ Pit Firing □ Soda/Salt Firing □ TITLE: _____			
	F	Thrown □ Handwork □ Mould □ Stoneware □ Earthenware □ Porcelain □ Oxidation □ Reduction □ Raku □ Saggar □ Pit Firing □ Soda/Salt Firing □ TITLE: _____			
	G	Thrown □ Handwork □ Mould □ Stoneware □ Earthenware □ Porcelain □ Oxidation □ Reduction □ Raku □ Saggar □ Pit Firing □ Soda/Salt Firing □ TITLE: _____			

UNSOLD WORK:

☐ will be collected by myself

☐ will be collected by:

Name:_____

Contact number: _____

POTTERY teachers

WINDHOEK:

Jacqui Jansen van Vuuren
jacquivv@gmail.com
081 861 8869

Ansie Ward
ansieward@gmail.com
081 272 9905

Mitchell Milton Gatsi (Sculpture)
Tafy Tang Arts
Mitchell.putukara@gmail.com
081 612 8691

Genie Albrecht (kids)
geniealbrecht998@gmail.com
081 128 8963

College of the Arts (COTA)
Filemon (Tuesdays and Wednesdays)
081 804 2067 / 081 471 0256

SWAKOPMUND:

Sharon Flewellen
frameworx@afol.com.na
081 203 2113

Carola Lorck
lorckc@iway.na
081 298 7274

LUDERITZ:

Renate Williamson
rossler@iway.na
081 243 3766

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NO FURTHER NEWSLETTER IS SCHEDULED UNTIL SUCH TIME AS SEVERAL CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO RENATE AT

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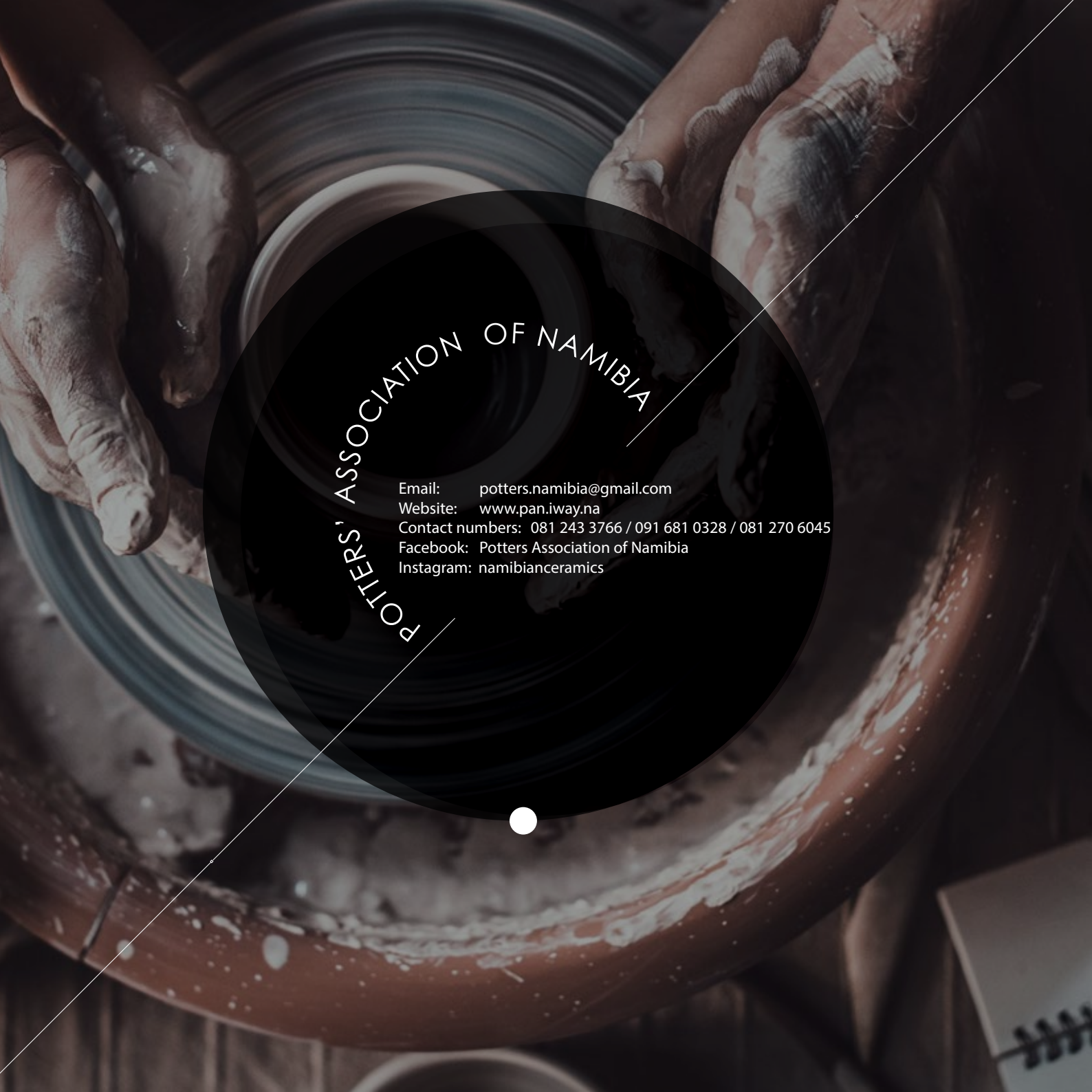

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