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Jan. 2003, Vol. 31

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CHINESE CLAYART

" **Chinese Clayart**" 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)

The Chinese Ceramic Art Council, USA.

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English Editor, Deborah Bouchette

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FEATURE ARTICLE

In early January, I was in my home town-Shanghai, one of the largest cities in China. I met an American ceramic artist, Mr. Jeremy Clayton, who has been running a studio in China for a year and a half. I decided to write something about him, and share his experiences with our western colleagues.

Zhou: I was very surprised to meet you here. I was born in Shanghai, and immigrated to the US in 1989. I was in University of Minnesota-Duluth, studied ceramic art in the US. I found some thing in common between us. Would you please tell us about yourself, where did you go for your ceramics education?

Clayton: I was born and raised in White Bear Lake Minnesota. I had the pleasure of being surrounded by outstanding potters my entire life. My parents are appreciators and supporters of the local potters' community, and we spent many weekends going to the craft fairs around Minnesota. I developed an admiration and appreciation for potters at an early age. When I was 19 years old, I enrolled in my first ceramics course in college and made up my mind then that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I then went on to graduate from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis in 1999 with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a focus on ceramics.

Zhou: When and how did you come to China? Why did you start the studio in China?

Clayton: I moved to China in October of 2000. I wanted to get out of the United States for a while and live abroad. I did not have any specific plan at the time, just to find a job and live in China. I ended up spending six months working as a Communication Specialist for Microsoft here and pretty much went crazy. I decided that it was time for me to get back to working with clay because I knew that it was the only way I was going to be happy. I applied to graduate school as the first attempt to get back into clay, but was not accepted. After that I looked at residencies and things like that in the United States, but was not sure exactly what I wanted to do. At that point, a friend asked me if I like being here in China, and my answer was a whole hearted "yes", so she suggested that I look into opening my own studio over here. I looked at my options and thought that that was the best one. I have always wanted my own studio and to be my own boss, so the idea was pretty appealing. After that, I basically put a plan together, talked to people about the idea, and put as many of my friends together to help me out. I then went home, got a loan, came back, and then acquired the space and began renovating. When I look back on it now, it scares me how much I didn't know and had not a clue about what I was getting into.

Zhou: I have been running a ceramic studio in California since 1999. I had a dream to open a clay studio in Shanghai one day. But, I knew, that would be very difficult since the economy has not been good enough to do this kind of business in China. I have organized an American ceramic group show in Shanghai Art Fair 2000. But, we didn't get much sale. You are the pioneer that opened the first Western clay studio in Shanghai. Would you please tell us about your experiences, what did you achieve? What was the most difficult part?

Clayton: I must say that the last year and a half have been the most trying and rewarding months of my life. I don't speak much Chinese, and a year and a half ago, I spoke less. The most difficult aspect of getting things running was trying to understand the Chinese business culture. Things are done completely different here, and I didn't really know that, so I ended up going through a lot of unnecessary hardship and pulling my hair out while I was "learning the ropes". I'm still a little shocked that things ended up working when I sit and think about it. I feel that starting the studio and just getting the supplies and equipment to have a running studio is my biggest achievement. The ongoing challenges are finding reliable suppliers, tools, chemicals, and things of that sort. It is by no means a smooth operation at this point. I change things around about every month, depending on my suppliers! I have learned the art of patience and flexibility, and know when to really sweat about things. The whole experience has been amazing for me. I have grown in ways that I could not have imagined when I started the studio. I have learned so much about running a business, and how to do it China. I have also become more able to look at any situation and figure out my options without getting unraveled, which is definitely NOT where I was a year ago. Man, I used to freak out at LEAST twice a day about how hard it was to get things done here. All in all, I wouldn't trade this experience for the world. As far as the market for pottery here goes, it is pretty much non-existent. I don't sell a whole lot of things, and it is rarely to the local Chinese. I sell mostly to foreigners. I have found though, that it is very difficult to sell things, even if they are less than half the price of what they would be in a foreign market. I'm fine with this though, it just means that I have to find other creative ways to pay the rent.

Zhou: What is your future plans? Our newsletter subscribers are international wide. What would you like to say to your American friends?

Clayton: Well, I am still in the infant stages over here, so I am still working long days and keeping things going. My goal is to find my voice using clay actually. That is why I set up the studio in the

first place. This is my time to figure things out for myself. I haven't figured out what I really want to do with clay. I make functional things, sculptural things, and just things, hoping that at some point in time, everything will just fall into place in my mind. As far as Hands in Clay goes, I will continue to run classes and become a very community oriented place. I enjoy bringing in kids from the schools and having classes and things like that. I have a strong connection to the community here, and that is very important for me. I love working with clay, and I want others to share my enthusiasm. It's been days and keeping things going. My goal is to find my voice using clay actually. That is why I set up the studio in the first place. This is my time to figure things out for myself. I haven't figured out what I really want to do with clay. I make functional things, sculptural things, and just things, hoping that at some point in time, everything will just fall into place in my mind. As far as Hands in Clay goes, I will continue to run classes and become a very community oriented place. I enjoy bringing in kids from the schools and having classes and things like that. I have a strong connection to the community here, and that is very important for me. I love working with clay, and I want others to share my enthusiasm. It's been great hearing from former students who are now in other places in the world, and they write to me to tell me that they are still playing with clay. I think that's so cool. The business is slowly growing and I will continue to nurture it the best I can. The future has never been so exciting in an uncertain way, but it keeps me sharp I guess. To the folks back there in the United States, I guess if you ever get a chance to come China, take it! It truly is an amazing place to be right now. And if you happen to be coming through Shanghai, look me up and drop by. I am always in my studio with coffee on.

FEATURES: THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY of the web site of the Chinese Ceramic Art Council, USA, and the anniversary of the Chinese Clay Art, USA, web store, and its newly updated web site.

During the anniversary of our Chinese Clay Art, USA, web store, www.ChineseClayArt.com, we would like to announce that the new web site has three main sections: the Chinese Clay Art, USA, web store; the newsletters and China tours and cultural exchanges of the Chinese Ceramic Art Council, USA; and our studio called the Clayground. In the web store section, a full-function shopping cart is ready to serve our customers, so you can order clay tools, brushes and books direct over the Internet. Also, on the behalf of Chinese Clay Art, USA, I would like to thank our newsletter subscribers for your support during the past three and half years...

I would like to send thanks to all of you who have participated in our China tours and American Ceramics Exhibitions in China during the past four years...

I would like to thank all of our customers and our distributors in America and Canada...

I would like to thank Ms. Deborah Brochette, the English Editor of Chinese Newsletter for her wonderful job and valuable contribution...

I would like to thank Mr. Tyler Haannigan, our former web master, for his great effort and time, which have made our web site become very successful during the past many years.

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PROFILE

THREE CERAMIC STUDIOS OF SHANGHAI

Hands in Clay Pottery Studio

No. 1, Lane 210, Taikang Lu.

Shanghai, China, #200025

Tel: 86-21-5465-4042, Mobile: 1302-322-5038

Email: hands_in_clay@hotmail.com

Contact: Mr. Jeremy Clayton, Potter / Instructor

Located at the art street of Shanghai, the studio was founded by American artist Jeremy Clayton in November 2001. The Studio offers Hand Made, Functional and Decorative Ceramics, and Pottery

Classes. The studio covers 140 square meters, with working room, glazing room, gallery, and kiln room.

The Pottery Studio

220 Taikang Road, 2nd floor.

Shanghai, China, #200025

Tel. 86-21-6445-0902, Fax. 86-21-6445-0937

Email: potteryworkshop@yahoo.com

<http://ceramics.com.hk>

Contact: Caroline Cheng

Located at the art street of Shanghai, the studio was founded by Hong Kong artist Caroline Cheng in June 2002.

The Pottery Workshop offers summer residency programs as well as a one year artist in resident program.

Heritage Village for Arts and Culture

6622 Huqingping Hwy, #318, Zhujiajiao,

Qingpu County, Shanghai, China, #201713

Tel. 86-21-5924-5911, Fax. 86-21-5924-3391

Email. zhujiajiaostudio@hotmail.com, www.zhujiajiao.org.

Contact: Steven Brousseau, Art Director of Ceramics Center.

Founded in June 2002, Zhujiajiao Heritage Village is owned by over-sea Chinese, Mr. Jeffrey Wong, and the ceramics center of Heritage Village for Arts and Culture is run by Canada artist Mr. Steven Brousseau.

The main studio covers 1200 square feet and a second studio covers 1500 square feet with four gas kilns, and a pug mill. The ceramics center offers studio space, accommodations, Chinese porcelain tools and techniques, local touring to ancient villages. Periodic workshops in Chinese techniques. Visits by Shanghai artists and media.

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TRAVEL

Chinese Ceramic Cultural Travel and Exchange 2003

June 1 - 18 (18 days). Cities include Beijing, Xi'an, Jingdezhen, Yixing, and Shanghai.

Fee \$3,400, including tour guide, transportation, tickets, accommodations, meals, and international air fair. Financial aid is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

For details, please contact:

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Chinese Ceramic Cultural Travel and Exchange 2003

Itinerary June 1 - 18, 2003

Day 1, fly from San Francisco airport to Beijing.

Day 2, arrive in Beijing in the evening.

Day 3, visit Tiananmen Square and the Ancient Palace Museum. Afternoon, visit Tsinghua University-Academy of Arts and Design, and Hap Pottery Studio and Gallery.

Day 4, visit the Great Wall. Later in the evening, take the train to Xi'an.

Day 5, arrive in Xi'an in the morning. Visit the Yaozhou Ware Museum and Chenlu Ceramic Village.

Day 6, visit the Terra Cotta Warriors Museum, the Great Mosque, and the antique market. In the evening, take the train to Nanchang (or maybe fly to Nanchang).

Day 7, arrive in Nanchang in the afternoon, transfer by bus to Jingdezhen. Arrive at Jingdezhen in the evening. Stay at Jingdezhen Joint Venture Hotel.

Day 8, visit Gaoling Village (Ancient Site of Kaolin Mine), Hutian Kiln site, and exchanges with the

Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute.

Day 9, sightseeing continues, the Ancient Kiln Porcelain Factory, the Jingdezhen Ceramic Historical Museum, Ancient Porcelain Factory, and Longxin Porcelain Factory, where 12' high porcelain vases are made.

Day 10, leave Jingdezhen, overnight train from Nanchang to Wuxi.

Day 11, transfer by bus from Wuxi to Yixing.

Day 12, visit local clay studios and meet the artists (includes Clayworkshop).

Day 13, visit ceramic factories, teapot markets.

Day 14, visit Yixing museum. Afternoon, take the bus from Yixing to Shanghai.

Day 15, arrive at Shanghai in the afternoon.

Day 16, visit Yuyuan Garden and the Shanghai Museum. In the evening, boat on the Huangpu River.

Day 17, visit Hanguang Ceramic Art Company exhibition hall and their factory (in Fen-Xian County), and have a farewell banquet.

Day 18, leave Shanghai Pudong airport and arrive in San Francisco international airport in the early afternoon on the same day.

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ACTIVITIES

Yixing Purple Sand Clay Workshop by Chinese Artist Meiqun Gu The Chinese Ceramic Art Council, USA, is going to invite Yixing artist Meiqun Gu to visit the United States. Ms. Gu will travel around, presenting Yixing clay workshops and sharing Yixing techniques with western artists until the end of April 2003. For information, or to schedule a Yixing Workshop, please contact:

chineseclayart@hotmail.com

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OPPORTUNITIES

Cashier wanted for NCECA. Experienced cashier wanted at the San Diego NCECA conference, booth #507. Three days from March 12 - 14, 2003. Four hours per day in general, with a total of 15 hours. Must be familiar with credit card charge machine. High pay plus representative fee (good for conference entry). Contact Po Zhou at chineseclayart@hotmail.com

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