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National Council on Education
for the Ceramic Arts

**MATERIAL
WORLD**
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Row 3: *Kelly & Kyle Phelps . David Peters . Jarred Pfeiffer*

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PANEL: TAIWAN - LOCAL, GLOBAL CERAMICS COMMUNITY

Elenor Wilson, Moderator • Jia-Haur Liang, Win Yi Kung & Wen Hung Chen, Panelists

A Local, Global Ceramics Community in the 'Heart of Asia'

by Elenor Wilson, Moderator

"Taiwan – The Heart of Asia" is the Republic of China's current slogan for international promotion. In fact, it's true in many ways; one of those is its thriving ceramics community. Often overlooked for more well known centers of ceramics in East Asia such as Jingdezhen, China, and Shigaraki, Japan, Taiwan has a varied and rich history of ceramic art that has come to produce a dynamic scene of heritage, education, and contemporary design in the 21st century. The focus of this panel and its essays published here, is to highlight these three areas of Taiwanese ceramic culture illustrating its emphasis on both local investment and global influence.

Heritage is represented by Wen-Hung Cheng, Director of Education for the New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum. The museum encompasses a forward thinking ideology of ceramic arts promotion through its strong programs such as the International Taiwan Ceramics Biennale, Artist-in-Residence Programs, and Summer Ceramics Festival. In his essay, "Bridging Local and Global, The Yingge Ceramics Museum," Cheng expounds on the Museum's unique role in bringing the historic pottery town of Yingge from a 19th-century manufacturing community into a thriving, 21st-century hub of artisans that attracts artists, scholars, educators, and tourists from all over the world.

Though all three areas of ceramic culture in the following essays share pedagogical underpinnings, Education is specifically represented by Jia-Haur Liang, artist and assistant professor of Crafts and Design at the National Taiwan University of the Arts. Jia-Haur's students represent an impressive group of emerging artists that strive not only to promote their own abilities in design and craftsmanship through their work, but also to focus on their unique cultural identity as Taiwan Nationals. Liang's essay, which he co-authored with his wife, Yi-Hui Wang, assistant professor in the Department of Arts and Creative Industries at National Don Hwa University, focuses on a specific exhibition, Contemporary Ceramic Art in Asia. This annual exhibition has had a profound influence on Taiwanese higher education in the fields of crafts and ceramic arts because of its shared exchange among four East Asian countries. Liang eloquently illustrates its component foci, and importance to his teaching both in Taiwan and abroad.

Contemporary Design is represented by Wen-Yi Gong, artist and owner of Wu Xing Design Company. Wen-Yi's private company is involved in large-scale public and private art commissions, locally produces award-winning ceramic products, and invests in local education of ceramic art through classes and workshops in the Taipei area. In his essay, Wen-Yi explains that Wu Xing Design is a growing, powerful force in introducing ceramics to daily living throughout Taiwan; local communities, international artists, and travelers all learn about the joys of ceramic art and creative opportunities in working with clay through Wu Xing Design.

Combined, these three perspectives of contemporary ceramic art practices exemplify a powerful community on both a local and global scale. The ceramics community in "The Heart of Asia" is dear to my own heart; I'm pleased to introduce a glimpse of the three years I spent living there and working with people who share a common passion for a material that mirrors our perpetual efforts to be a part of something local, yet build something global.

Bridging Local & Global, The Yingge Ceramics Museum

by Wen-Hung Cheng

Yingge is a renowned ceramics manufacturing town in Taiwan. The pottery-making history started in 1804 with the Wu-An family, who emigrated from mainland China. Yingge has six major types of ceramics in parallel development: architectural, sanitary, industrial, artistic, functional, and studio pottery. These facilitate almost 80% of the ceramic industry in Taiwan. Over time, Yingge's production of ceramics changed from labor-based manufacturing to automated processes, and then after the year 2000, production emphasis returned to handmade craft and studio pottery. In that year, Yingge completed the reconstruction of its historic Old Pottery Street and the opening of the New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum, which transformed Yingge from an industry town to a major

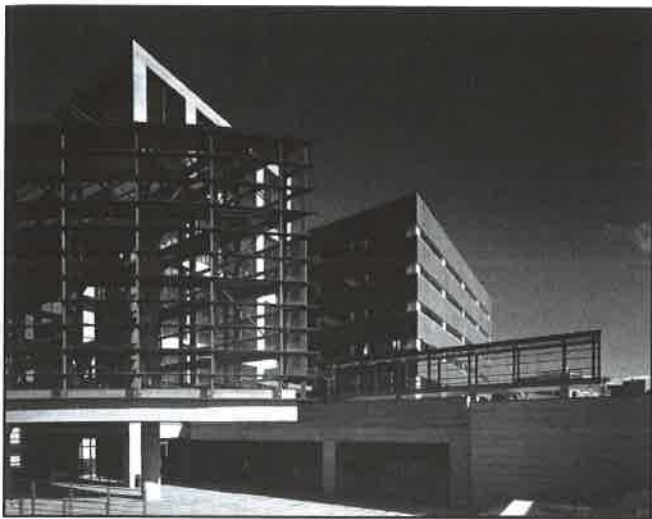


Elenor Wilson, *Window Vase*. Porcelain, 12 x 3 x 3" 2013

tourism destination, from a manufacturing center to a hub for creativity, and from a town of laborers to a community of artists. Yingge continues to draw many individual artists and studio potters who set up thriving studios. Therefore, ceramic products in Yingge have become more diverse and vital to the town and its artists foster a local ceramic society prepared for globalization down the road.

The role of the Yingge Ceramics Museum is to educate and integrate local and international audiences through a variety of activities. To achieve this goal, we have designed those activities with three emphases: public ceramic education programs, professional ceramic training, and international ceramic exchange. All public ceramic educational programs are designed around seasons, festivals, and exhibitions. The programs focus on experience of the senses by creating connections between ceramics and food, texture, aroma, and environmental ambience. Examples include: plum pickling—an annual activity focusing on combining ceramics and agriculture; family events such as a little potter camp in which kids stay overnight at the ceramics museum; tea celebration events in which artists brew a pot of tea using their own ware, allowing visitors to experience the functionality of their tea ware and also appreciate the beauty of the setting; and finally, DIY—hands-on programs in which we try to build up an imaginative journey for kids and stimulate their innovative thinking.

As an international ceramic museum located in the renowned pottery town of Yingge, we definitely carry our community's expectation of continuing grand traditions and promoting local ceramic



The Yingge Ceramics Museum

industry. Therefore, the museum organizes the Ceramic Academy, a platform for professional education and training. Annually, we host more than ten series of ceramic training courses conducted by veteran potters, designers, and artists. Since 2011, every course is recorded and digitalized. The courses involve many fields of ceramics study, such as traditional techniques, product design, glaze research, and artistic expression. We also provide an Anagama kiln-sharing platform for artists. Both local and international artists can organize an Anagama kiln firing and share the unique process with the public; it benefits the museum and the artists.

The Yingge Ceramics Museum tries to construct an international platform for bridging local and global ceramics communities. Our international exchange platform plays a crucial role in not only bringing the best ideas from abroad, but also highlighting the excellent works of Taiwanese artists. Beyond organizing workshops and symposia, in 2010, the museum expanded artist involvement more deeply by launching the Taiwan Ceramic Residency Project. Resident artists offer classes to local audiences, and arrange public events and present lectures, all of which become an extension of their studio practice. The museum values the Residency Project not only to contribute to our local society, but also to establish strong collaborations, building a connection between international artists and Yingge. This effort will continue to reshape our 200-year-old pottery town, providing a stronger international stage, and preparedness for the next century of prosperity.

Exploring New Perspectives from the Exhibition of Contemporary Ceramic Art in Asia

by Jia-Haur Liang

Following the idea of globalization, the rise of international exchange exhibitions and curated shows explore “glocal” issues. Although international exhibitions and competitions play an important role in the development of contemporary ceramics, “glocal” identities emphasize the importance of local ceramics heritage, notions of place, social, natural, political, and cultural history from a global perspective. The *Contemporary Ceramic Art in Asia* exhibition started ten years ago. It is organized by university faculty members from China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan on a revolving basis, and exhibited at different museums each year. It has become one of the most significant ceramic art exhibitions in Asia. In 2010, it was hosted by Honik University, Korea. In 2011, it was organized by Guangzhou Academy

of Fine Arts, China. Then in 2012, it was led by the Taipei Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taiwan. In 2013, the exhibition opened at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan and the Aichi Ceramics Museum in Aichi, Japan, during July and August respectively. The exhibition goals are three-fold: to create a new, dynamic vision of ceramics; to encourage innovation and arrange a platform for international group critique; and to provide an international arena for Asia's upcoming generation of artists. Additionally, the works included in the *Contemporary Ceramic Art in Asia* exhibition explore a defined series of concerns.

The first in that series is *Function and Formation*: a bowl is never “just” a bowl. It functions beyond the obvious purpose of its utility; the metaphoric concept of containment is the point of focus. Though its functional role is as a container, the notion of the vessel as container of ideas is appropriate; meaning is contained in the vessel beyond the physical object. The vessel acts as a medium to express the experience of the artist and carry the possibility of meaning to its viewer. The simple vessel is able to carry complex meanings from one person to another; the vessel acting as a vehicle for expression has the potential to communicate.

The second concern is *Blurred Boundaries*: artists celebrate ceramic traditions and histories and cross-reference formerly disparate fields within ceramics. Furthermore, they acknowledge the connections ceramics is making with the broader fields of art discourse and new media.

Thirdly, *Material Thinking*: clay is the material of choice. Those that choose clay, are accustomed to using it to communicate their ideas with audiences; therefore, when they start to create artworks, ideas and materials must be considered together. Indeed, these concepts are often developed through the relationship with the material because the intrinsic character of clay and ceramics has come to play such an important role in communicating ideas.

Next is *Plurality*: groupings, or a set of objects that have something in common, have been embraced by artists as a strategy to reinforce the presence of their work. This reflects the current art world, which accepts a plurality of concepts and practices. Therefore, it requires that ceramic artists working with a set of objects displayed in groups have a clear understanding that each individual object must be vigorously assessed by standards of the artist's own thought.

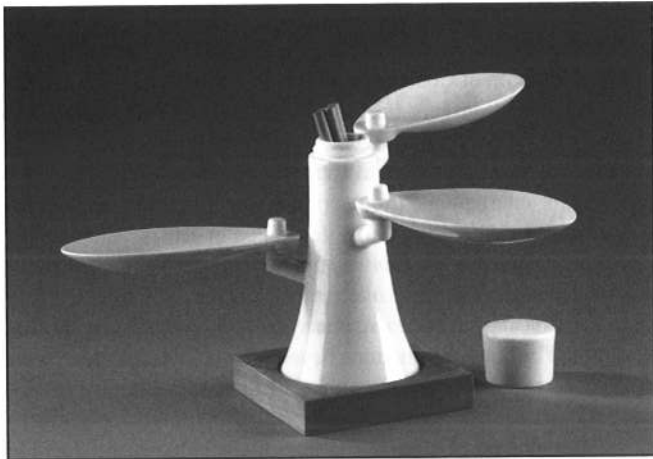
The final concern is *The Social and Human Condition*: clay, becomes a tool for revealing artists' complex emotional reactions to different aspects of the social condition. Artists confront internal and external realities and choose ceramic art as an instrument for social awareness and change.

Contemporary Ceramic Art in Asia has become one of the leading ceramics exhibitions in East Asia. The number of universities participating in the group show has increased since its inception. Most importantly, in 2013, there were nine Taiwanese universities represented and ninety-seven works by Taiwanese artists in this exhibition. Its consistent exploration of these five perspectives: *Function and Formation*; *Blurred Boundaries*; *Material Thinking*; *Plurality*; and *The Social and Human Condition*, have become an important part of ceramic education in Taiwan and East Asia, and vital to connecting faculty and students internationally.

Wu Xing Design

by Wen-Yi Gong

Wu Xing Design Company was established in 2006 and focuses on team-based creative solutions. From the outset, the studio's major business assignments were public art projects. We have



Wen-Yi Gong, ceramic serving vessel, WuXing Design Studio

now developed our business model to include project commissions, ceramics design and production, brand management, educational promotion, and international exchange.

Taiwan is lacking an academy for ceramic art at the University level. Students who have received education in ceramics have little choice but to find a job if they want to evolve and improve as ceramists. Because Wu Xing Design offers a genuine hands-on experience, great facilities, and an exciting studio environment, students are eager to join our team to learn, work, and further develop their creative skills.

In 2013, Wu Xing Design launched the first ceramic studio inside a commercial cultural center in Taiwan. Drawing on professional studio management experience and in close cooperation with the business institution, Wu Xing Design created a space for interactive learning in ceramics. With this collaboration, Wu Xing Design wishes to promote ceramics and ceramic artists through an artist residency program and ceramics exhibitions. Demonstrations during scheduled workshops and courses designed for customers, as well as the sale of creative ceramics products, will help generate increased interest in ceramics culture—the art and esthetics of the craft. And, hopefully it will become a familiar part of people's daily lives.

Wu Xing Design's public artwork projects focus mainly on ceramic materials. The finished works have been installed at airports, metro stations, parks, schools, public institutions, and private companies throughout Taiwan. In addition, through the marketing of our ceramic design and production, we aim to introduce ceramic art

into people's lives. In 2012, we launched a residency project for ceramists, aiming at exchange, learning, and development of talent. At Wu Xing Design, we strive to engage life, society, and the international world with our creative ideas and imaginative ceramics.

Elenor Wilson is a studio artist and the Associate Editor of *The Studio Potter* journal. She holds an MFA from SUNY–New Paltz, 2009. She recently returned from a three-year stay in Taiwan, which included residencies at both the New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum and WuXing Design Studio.

Wen-Hung Cheng, is the Chief Director of Education at the New Taipei City Ceramics Museum. As a potter and educator, his dedication can be outlined by the following three facets: educating the public to enhance its understanding of ceramics, providing professional training for better competitive capability of local pottery businesses, and building a ceramic platform between local and global communities.

Jia-Haur Liang is an artist and writer. He maintains a broad practice and interest in ceramics with a specific focus on sculptural and installation works. He holds BFA and MFA with teaching certificate from National Taiwan University of Arts where he studied crafts and design from 1996 to 2002. Jia-haur, currently assistant professor of Crafts and Design, National Taiwan University of Arts, and his wife Yi-hui Wang, assistant professor, Dept. of Arts and Creative Industries, National Don Hwa University, both completed their PhDs at The University of Sydney, Australia, in 2009, and co-authored this paper. Jia-haur's current research is to examine the "transitional space" of ceramics in regard to the quality of hollowness—not only that between any internal and external space, but also the theoretical transitional space ceramics inhabits between historical craft and contemporary art practice. His work in ceramics is broad, ranging from functional design ware to conceptual objects through wide-ranging use of materials and expressive quality of clay. His functional tableware is used daily in the Azuma Restaurants, Sydney.

Wen-Yi Gong is the Artistic Director of Wu Xing Art Design Co., Ltd., Taipei, Taiwan. He is also an adjunct lecturer at National Taiwan University of Arts. His honors include the Gold Medal for the First New Taipei City Ceramics Awards, practical ceramics category. Wen-Yi is committed to promoting ceramic art as a part of daily life.

Panel: **workshop** Speculative writing continued from Page 46

been exhibited nationally and internationally including at the GIC-Biennale 2011, Icheon, Korea; in exhibitions at the Jane Hartsook Gallery, Greenwich House Pottery, NY; and other venues. He has received numerous awards including an Individual Artist Award from the Maryland State Arts Council and the McKnight Foundation. He has served residencies at the European Ceramic Work Centre (2007) and at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia (2010). David received his BFA from the University of Wisconsin–River Falls in 1997 and his MFA from Southern Illinois University–Edwardsville, in 2000.

Kim Dickey, BFA, Rhode Island School of Design; MFA, Alfred University, is currently a Professor at the University of Colorado–Boulder. From 1991 to 1994, she served as director of Greenwich House Pottery in New York. Dickey is widely internationally exhibited and collected: from Germany, the UK and the United States; to Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Gallery representation has included Garth

Clark, Thomas Healy, Sherry Leedy, Robischon Gallery, and White Columns. She has exhibited at Mass MOCA, the Everson Museum, the American Craft Museum, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Honolulu, among others. Currently, her work can be seen at robischongallery.com.

Paul Sacaridiz is a professor in the Art Department at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His work has been the subject of reviews and articles in *Ceramics: Art and Perception*, *The New Art Examiner* and *Art Papers*, among others. He has served artist residencies at The Ragdale Foundation, The Vermont Studio Center, The Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, and the Arts/Industry Program at Kohler Company. He is the recent recipient of the *Romnes Faculty Fellowship* from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is a 2014 *Fellow* with the National Council of Arts Administrators, a recent inductee to the International Academy of Ceramics, and also serves on the board of the Archie Bray Foundation.

