



20th Studio Anniversary

INES and CHRISTOPH HASENBERG

OVERTURE

“Hello Frau Hasenberg, this is Bernd Kranz from the Park Hotel in Siegburg. In our excavations on the Oberer Markt, we have found clay. There is light grey clay around 11 metres deep. Can you use it?”

It was March 2014 when we received this message, and after a quick inspection of the inner city clay pit, we found a place to store it at the Siegburg municipal builders' yard. A few hours later, 9.5 tonnes of genuine Siegburg Clay were in storage there under plastic sheets.

The laboratory analysis showed it was a semi-fat clay with a low iron content that vitrified at 1240°C. This great mountain of Siegburg clay has been waiting to be used ever since.

In the creative process, we have developed new forms of cooperation. Ines's preference for painting on ceramics meant that Christoph made large-scale pieces, or at least, ones that would fill the chamber of the new kiln, a metre tall.

So we thought up a symposium for it, wrote it all down and set things in motion. All we needed was sponsors and some financial backing.

Highly motivated, we set to work, preparing the clay by hand, drying it, breaking it up, watering it, screening, dewatering ... the whole programme – but it was only a few hundred kilos of the whole 9.5 tonnes.

The prepared clay threw well, and soon the first results were ready. Bisqued, painted with slip and glazed, glaze-fired as a wonderful series of mugs, the pots were presented, outside the competition, at the pottery market in July, which we had thought up and just launched, on the occasion of the First Siegburg Ceramics Prize, entitled Contemporary Pots for Drinking and Pouring.

Our colleague Georg Hach from Freiburg has tried out throwing the Siegburg clay, firing it with wood. Everything was fine.

opposite -
Group of Columns
h 96 cm

below -
Pots for drinking and
pouring
Siegburg clay
photos – Helge Articus





A QUICK LOOK BACK TO 1996

It was almost twenty years ago, in January 1996, that our search for a house with a studio and a shop turned up this old Victorian house in Kaiserstraße, Siegburg. It had not been redecorated and it was in the state it had been in since the 1950s. It dated from 1895 and had been empty for some time. But with its charm and its history, it offered us every opportunity for a small pottery, a kiln house and a shop, and even more space to live in, but it has also meant no end of work.

We met at the Technical College in Höhr-Grenzhausen ...

Siegburg, the “mediaeval pottery town”, with its great historic importance for Rhineland ceramics, seemed suitable to us to set up a pottery in and to settle in the heart of a town with 40,000 inhabitants. Cologne as a cultural centre with its many major museums, galleries, theatres and concert halls of all sizes is easily accessible, and the distance to Höhr-Grenzhausen with the Technical College was also doable.

We started our adventure of enriching the town of Siegburg with contemporary, applied and fine art modern ceramics in May 1996. The necessary conversions, decorating, technical improvements, electricity, gas, water, floors, windows, all took time and a lot of work. One year later, in May 1997, we opened the workshop and the gallery, still living partly in temporary conditions.

From these temporary measures, a well restored house evolved that suited our wishes and ideas perfectly, with living quarters, a workshop and a gallery, in the centre of Siegburg.

Our range covers tableware, one-off pieces with a concise, recognisable handwriting, some smaller garden pieces, mural images and sculptures, most thrown, some handbuilt.



Hemispherical bowl (ø 60 cm) on a plinth with drawings
photo – Helge Articus

The gallery grew slowly, the trips to pottery markets became more frequent and the distances greater. At first, it was pottery markets in the Rhineland that were in our diary, and as the years passed, markets all over Germany and in other countries followed. At these markets and in our gallery in Siegburg, the number of our ceramic friends and customers grew steadily and a large, faithful circle of regular customers and collectors developed, who visited us regularly, either on the road or, in December, at our pre-Christmas events at home.

In 2012, we also took over a large studio in a city-centre location, with a lot of space inside and out for large-scale pictures and space for workbenches and workshops. In the creative process, we have developed new forms of cooperation. Ines's preference for painting on ceramics meant that Christoph made large-scale pieces, or at least, ones that would fill the chamber of the new kiln, a metre tall. The new project of making pieces that both of us could work on, not at the same time but each working on their own ideas, quickly took concrete shape and developed into a very autonomous, exciting approach to work full of contrasts. The sculptural pieces, always reminiscent of vessel forms, are vigorously built with thick walls, emphasising the aesthetic of the grogged clay; they now offered space for Ines's abstract brushwork and still had room for Christoph's linear designs.

International competitions and participation in exhibitions, e.g. in Faenza (IT), Alcora (ES), European Ceramics, the Museum of Applied Arts in Cologne, the Museum für Kunst und Kultur in Dortmund, participation in the North Rhine Westphalia State Prize, Museum Tiendschuur-Tegele (NL) and galleries, purchases for public museums all confirm that we are on the right path and motivate us to implement new ideas.

We have been making small pieces, tea bowls, pitchers and drinking mugs, painted and decorated like the large pieces and every one was like a small, three-dimensional picture.

After all these years, we have had a very fulfilling time behind us, with wonderful colleagues, friends, faithful customers, supporters and many hardworking helpers. Thousands of ideas are still waiting to be put into effect, and they are not becoming any fewer, they keep on growing. That is probably true of everyone who is a ceramist for passion and don't know any other way ... and we intend to keep on working.

We wish to thank our friends and colleagues for allowing us to belong and to be a part of this family, and we look forward to the years to come.

INES HASENBERG trained in Römhild as a thrower, then worked in Berlin and on the island of Amrum before qualifying as a ceramic designer at the Ceramics Technical College.

CHRISTOPH HASENBERG, is a trained glass and porcelain painter. He trained as a porcelain designer in Krefeld under Karl-Heinz Modigell, Dieter Crumbiegel, Fritz Vehring and E. A. Sundermann. After many successful years as a porcelain designer in industry, in 1990, he accepted an offer from the Ceramics Technical College in Höhr-Grenzhausen to teach there.



photo – Helge Articus

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