

Summary of Dossier in English

“Atelier Terre Croix Baragnon” the ceramics workshop of the city of Toulouse’s Cultural Center (Toulouse France) is seeking an affiliated membership in the International Academy of Ceramics. A public workshop oriented towards research and experimentation in contemporary ceramics, the Atelier Terre would clearly benefit from such a membership by enlarging its network of international contacts, further promoting exchanges between artists, institutions, and galleries, and sharing the fruits of its own long experience (see Document I, selected list of ceramic artists by year with illustrations of their work and complete list of all activities by year).

The Atelier Terre was created nearly 40 years ago in a context unique to France: André Malraux, Minister of Cultural Affairs under Charles De Gaulle in the 1960’s, promoted policy democratizing access to culture. Cultural centers were created throughout the country actively supporting the arts, including workshops open to the public and serving as a springboard for new talents. The Atelier Terre aims, then, to provide its members not only with basic technical training for working with clay, but also with tools for research and experimentation as a means of developing their own creative process. In support of such training, the Atelier Terre has sought participation of ceramic artists. Over the years, numerous ceramists from France and other countries of international renown have accepted to conduct master classes. Annual and master classes take place in an ambiance conducive to the expression of creativity with few constraints and where risk taking is encouraged; This results in synergy beneficial to all participants. One of the first ceramic artists to work with the Atelier Terre was Aline Favre (Switzerland). More recently, drawing upon the cultural diversity in the Cultural Center and with openness to intermingling, the Atelier Terre has collaborated with a dancer, a musician, a food designer, and other visual artists, to open new perspectives.

The head of the Atelier Terre for the last 10 years, Cecilia Olabarrieta, originally from Argentina, is an architect by training. In addition to teaching activities, she actively seeks innovative approaches in contemporary ceramics by identifying trends and inviting ceramic artists to the master classes, as well as exploring collaborations with artists from other fields as mentioned above. She is also responsible for conceiving exhibitions of the Atelier Terre and collaborations with other institutions and galleries (a short biography is given in Document II).

The workshop is open to the public with a selection based only on artistic openness and willingness to work in a group. Members bring to the workshop experience in various fields, other visual arts, architecture, other visual arts, teaching, science, etc. Such diversity enriches exchange favorable to research and experimentation at both individual and group levels. Some of the members subsequently move on to specialized schools or internships with professional ceramic artists, and become professional ceramists themselves.

The educational program comprises both basic and advanced classes. Basic training covers initiation to the classical techniques of working with clay including decoration and color use, with the aim of moving towards exercises involving more creativity. Advanced training focuses on research and experimentation with the aim of developing greater creativity working within a proposed theme. Information on the education program is detailed in Document III.

An overview of recent representative master classes is provided in Document IV, and recent exhibitions of the Atelier Terre are illustrated in Document V.

The Atelier Terre is a unique training center for the public in contemporary ceramics; it provides tools for members to build their own personal artistic expression in an environment of transmission and research. It has long sought collaborations with ceramic artists outside France and would welcome the opportunity to broaden the scope of its activities by becoming a member of the International Academy of Ceramics.