

CURRICULUM VITAE: RIKA HERBST

Qualification Profile

I am a ceramicist and historian from South Africa with a passion for Porcelain, Bone China, and Wood firing. I work from my studio in Ruimsig, Gauteng and present workshops as a guest teacher at studios all over South Africa.

Specific Accomplishments

Awards & Competitions

Oct 2017 - 3rd Cluj Ceramics Biennale (2017) Cluj-Napoca Romania
Oct 2017 - XIII International Biennial of Artistic Ceramics of Aveiro, Portugal
Aug 2016 – Ceramica Multiplex 2016 Croatia
Nov 2015 - XII Bienal de Cerâmica Artística de Aveiro, Portugal
May 2015 - III Triennial of Ceramics UNICUM 2015 Slovenia
July 2013 - Cluj International Ceramics Biennale 2013 Romania
July 2013 – 11th Biennial International Artistic Ceramics Exhibition Aveiro, Portugal 2013
Aug 2012 – SA Handmade Collection Decorex – Gold Award, Best Stand South Africa
Aug 2012 – The Iconic Handmade Piece South Africa –Decorex Gauteng South Africa
Aug 2012 – Ceramica Multiplex 2012 Croatia - Honourable Mention
Aug 2011 – Decorex – SA Handmade Collection - Award for Best Product Design South Africa
Aug 2011 – CSA Regional Exhibition - Highly Commended Award South Africa
Jun 2011 - Gyeonggi International CeraMIX Biennale 2011, Korea – Certificate of Honor
Apr 2011 - 9th International Ceramics competition: Mino, Japan - Honourable Mention
Oct 2010 - CSA National Exhibition – Best Porcelain Piece South Africa
Aug 2009 – Icons – Decorex – SA Handmade Collection South Africa

Work History

Ceramicist – Bohlokoa Studio, Fairland Gauteng South Africa (Sept 2003 - Present)
Owner/Director – Bohlokoa Consulting, Fairland Gauteng (April 1999 – Aug 2003)
Investment Officer, Investment South Africa, Sandton Gauteng South Africa (Feb 1997 – March 1999)
Personal Assistant, UCB Parktown Gauteng South Africa (Feb 1990 – Dec 1995)
Admin Assistant, Harmony Gold Mine, Virginia South Africa (Feb 1985 – Dec 1989)

Education

BA Hons (ANE History: cum laude) University of South Africa, 2023
Bachelor of Arts: Art & Ancient History, University of South Africa, 2021

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Qualification Highlights

Collections:

- Quomo Art Gallery Jingdezhen, China 2024
- Shanghai Institute of Visual Art 2023
- Jianshui Purple Pottery Museum 2023
- 5th Changchun International Ceramics Symposium, China 2016
- National Museum of Slovenia, 2015
- Ceramics Museum, Aveiro Portugal 2013
- Bloemfontein War Museum South Africa 2013
- Cluj International Ceramics Biennale, Romania 2013
- KERAMEIKON Collection of Contemporary World Ceramics, Croatia 2012
- Corobrick Collection Pretoria South Africa 2011
- Korea Ceramic Foundation Korea 2011

Residency/Festival/Symposium:

- Taoxhicuan International Clay Studio, Jingdezhen 2024
- 5th Shanghai – Yunnan Jianshui International Woodfired Ceramics Festival, China 2023
- 5th Changchun International Ceramics Symposium, China 2016

Membership:

- International Academy of Ceramics
- Ceramics South Africa- Western Cape

Ceramic Artist | Cultural Producer | Researcher | IAC Member

Rika Herbst is a South African ceramic artist and cultural producer whose practice integrates contemporary ceramics, heritage preservation, and creative leadership. After a successful career in marketing, she switched to ceramics in 2003, establishing her studio. Her sculptural work is inspired by natural forms—especially trees—as symbols of cultural memory, interconnectedness, and resilience. She specialises in atmospheric and wood-firing techniques that highlight texture, process, and materiality.

Rika is deeply committed to fostering cultural dialogue through clay. Her exploration of wood-firing and atmospheric surfaces is matched by her work as a cultural organiser and advocate.

Rika focuses on documenting and archiving South Africa's ceramic heritage, with a strong emphasis on supporting underrepresented artists and preserving intangible cultural knowledge. She initiated and was part of the organizing team of the inaugural South African Clay Awards in 2024, and founded Clay Connect, a platform for professional development, exhibitions, and cultural exchange. In addition, she produces ClayChat, a YouTube-based video series where she interviews artists and shares insights into ceramic practice, community, and culture. Through research, video, exhibitions, and advocacy, she is committed to building visibility for African ceramics on the global stage.

Artist Statement – Rika Herbst

If my work could speak, I would want it to whisper. I aim to create unique pieces that inspire contemplation and enjoyment by crafting textures that compel touch and provoke memory, and by playing with light and shadow to enhance the materiality of clay. My carving, texturing, and piercing techniques form a cumulative and intensive process—one that demands time and a deep connection with the medium. By weaving a narrative that highlights the interconnectedness of our existence, I seek to explore diverse cultures and the transformation of tradition over time.

Nature is my primary source of inspiration. Trees, with their entangled branches and roots, serve as powerful metaphors for human and cultural interconnection. They are both oxygen-giving and symbolic, resilient organisms that reflect our ability to adapt and regenerate under changing circumstances.

As life evolves, so does my work. Once created, each piece becomes a path of expression, carrying an essence of life—a quiet but powerful statement of being. While the ethereal qualities of porcelain remain a passion, exploring heavier clay bodies through wood firing and natural glazing grounds my practice and opens new possibilities, like painting with fire.

My artistic practice has increasingly focused on large-scale sculptural works inspired by organic forms, particularly three-dimensional interpretations of tree structures. These sculptures are distinguished by highly textured surfaces, intricate perforations, and intentional finger-marks — marks that speak to the time, patience, and presence of the maker. The sculpting process is slow and labour-intensive, involving precise material handling and atmospheric firing techniques that allow the clay to respond naturally and unpredictably.

The trees I sculpt symbolise interconnectedness and cultural unity. Their intertwining limbs mirror the bonds between diverse communities, making each form not only a physical object but also a vessel for reflection. Through this body of work, I continue to explore themes of resilience, growth, and connection, translating both internal emotion and external structures into textured, living sculpture that invites engagement across time and culture.

Membership:

- International Academy of Ceramics
- Ceramics South Africa- Western Cape

Collections:

- Quomo Art Gallery Jingdezhen, China 2024
- Shanghai Institute of Visual Art 2023
- Jianshui Purple Pottery Museum 2023
- Ceramics Museum, Aveiro Portugal 2016
- 5th Changchun International Ceramics Museum, China 2016
- National Museum of Slovenia, 2015
- Ceramics Museum, Aveiro Portugal 2013
- Bloemfontein War Museum South Africa 2013
- Cluj International Ceramics Biennale, Romania 2013
- KERAMEIKON Collection of Contemporary World Ceramics, Croatia 2012
- Corobrick Collection Pretoria 2011
- Korea Ceramic foundation 2011

Awards & Competitions

- Oct 2017 - 3rd Cluj Ceramics Biennale 2017 Cluj-Napoca Romania
- Oct 2017 - XIII International Biennial of Artistic Ceramics of Aveiro, Portugal
- Aug 2016 – Ceramica Multiplex 2016 Croatia
- Nov 2015 - XII Bienal de Cerâmica Artística de Aveiro, Portugal
- May 2015 - III Triennial of Ceramics UNICUM 2015 Slovenia
- July 2013 - Cluj International Ceramics Biennale 2013 Romania
- July 2013 – 11^a Biennial International Artistic Ceramics Exhibition Aveiro, Portugal 2013
- Aug 2012 – SA Handmade Collection Decorex – Gold Award, Best Stand South Africa
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- Oct 2010 - CSA National Exhibition – Best Porcelain Piece South Africa
- Aug 2009 – Icons – Decorex – SA Handmade Collection South Africa

Residencies, Symposium, Festivals:

- Taohxhucuan International Clay Studio, Jingdezhen 2024
- 5th Shanghai – Yunnan Jianshui International Woodfired Ceramics Festival, China 2023
- 5th Changchun International Ceramics Symposium, China 2016

Workshops presented:

- July 2023 – Wood-firing Meraki Woodfire Kiln – Northvale Krugersdorp Gauteng
- June 2023 – Introduction to Paperclay/Porcelain – Giverny Studios, KwaZulu Natal
- June 2023 – Advanced Paper porcelain lights – Giverny Studios, KwaZulu Natal
- June 2023 – Digging Wild Clay, Gauteng
- Nov 2022 – Porcelain Paper clay – Rushmere Farm, Sedgfield, Eastern Cape
- October 2022 – Porcelain Paper clay – Melissa Barker Studio, Western Cape
- June 2022 – Porcelain Paperclay – Giverny Studios, KwaZulu Natal
- June 2022 – Wood-firing Meraki the Woodfire kiln with special Guest Hennie Meyer – Northvale Gauteng
- Mar 2022 – Porcelain Paperclay – Ceramics @ Kleynstein Studio, Pretoria

Publications:

- AbstRacT: Synchrony Revealed, Jan Rupert Art Museum, Graaff-Reinet, 2025 Catalogue
- Walk with the Light International Modern Ceramics Exhibition, Jingdezhen 2024, Catalogue
- Shanghai Institute of Visual Art 2023: International Woodfired Ceramics Works Exhibition Catalogue
- Flamingo, by Air Namibia. May 2018: Clay Naturally. Page 58 – 61
- 3rd Cluj Ceramics Biennale 2017 Cluj-Napoca Romania 2017, Catalogue
- XIII International Biennial of Artistic Ceramics of Aveiro, Portugal 2017, Catalogue
- Ceramica Multiplex 2016 Croatia, Catalogue
- Studio Potter, Jan/Feb 2015. In the studio glazing: Underglaze over glaze
- XII Bienal de Cerâmica Artística de Aveiro, Portugal, 2015 Catalogue
- III Triennial of Ceramics UNICUM 2015 Slovenia, Catalogue
- Ceramics Art & Perception No 95, 2014 Page 32-35
- Cluj International Ceramics Biennale 2013 Romania, Catalogue
- 11^a Biennial International Artistic Ceramics Exhibition Aveiro, Portugal, 2013 Catalogue
- Ceramica Multiplex 2012 Croatia, Catalogue
- Gyeonggi International CeraMIX Biennale 2011, Catalogue
- 9th International Ceramics Competition Mino, Japan, Catalogue
- Cerkanvas, Summer 2011: Page 54-55
- Beeld, July 2011 Pottebakker maak opslae.
- Ceramics Now, Featured Artist. July 2011
- SA Art Times – November 2010 Page 16/17 Issu
- <https://sahomeowner.co.za/the-allure-of-ceramics/2020>
- Ceramics South Africa Magazine
- City Vibe: Passionate Potter speaks the language of Clay. June 2009
- Garden & Home June 2003: Scratching the Surface. Page 18

Other exhibitions include:

Apr 2025	AbstRacT – Synchrony Revealed	Jan Rupert Art Museum, Graaff-Reinet, South Africa
Nov 2024	Gather Friends: Group Exhibition	FynArts Gallery, Hermanus, RSA
Sep 2024	Ceramics Southern Africa National Biennale	GIBS, Johannesburg, RSA
Apr 2024	Walk with the Light, International Modern Ceramics Exhibition	Quomo Art Gallery Jingdezhen, China
Nov 2023	Earthen Emerald: Group Exhibition	Johan van Heerden Art Gallery, Pretoria, RSA
Oct 2023	International Woodfired Ceramics Works Exhibition, Shanghai Institute of Visual Art	Shanghai Towers, Shanghai, China
Sep 2023	International Woodfired Ceramics Works Exhibition	Jianshui Purple Pottery Museum, Yunan Province, China
May 2023	Blue! Group Exhibition	Johan van Heerden Art Gallery, Pretoria, RSA
Sep 2022	Maison & Object, South African Pavilion	Paris, France
May 2022	Of Mothers and Madonna's Group Exhibition	Johan van Heerden Art Gallery, Pretoria, RSA
Feb 2022	After the Rain Group Exhibition	Johan van Heerden Art Gallery, Pretoria, RSA
Sep 2021	A Fling with Spring, Tina Skukan Gallery	Pretoria, South Africa
Aug 2021	Wood-fired & Other Ceramics, Featured Potter, Association of Arts	Pretoria, South Africa
Jun 2021	Desire – The Cape Gallery	Cape Town, South Africa
Jun 2021	Hermanus FynArts	Hermanus, South Africa
Jun 2021	Luminaries	Artbox Gallery, Pretoria RSA
May 2021	Fabergé Inspired	Johan van Heerden Art Gallery, Pretoria RSA
Sep 2020	Hermanus FynArts	Online Exhibition
Jun 2020	Gallery Synergy	Online Exhibition
Nov 2019	Connected by Fire	Rust-en-Vrede Gallery, Durbanville Cape Town RSA
Nov 2018	Ceramics Southern Africa National Biennale	Rust-en-Vrede Gallery, Durbanville Cape Town RSA
Sep 2018	Ceramics Southern Africa Regional Exhibition	MuseumAfricA, Gauteng, South Africa
Jun 2018	Hermanus FynArts	Hermanus, South Africa
Feb 2018	Legacy Exhibition, Three Potters and a Painter	Stellenbosch, South Africa
Dec 2017	International Celadon Exhibition, Huamao Art Museum	Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China
Dec 2017	Association of Arts Plate Exhibition	Pretoria, South Africa
Dec 2017	Let there be light Exhibition II, ArtBox Gallery	Pretoria, South Africa
Oct 2017	3rd Cluj Ceramics Biennale (2017) Cluj-Napoca	Romania
Oct 2017	XIII International Biennial of Artistic Ceramics of Aveiro	Portugal
Oct 2017	Ceramics Southern Africa Regional Exhibition	MuseumAfricA, Gauteng, South Africa
Aug 2017	Decorex 2017 Gauteng, The South African Craft Collective	Gauteng, South Africa
July 2017	The David Walters & Friends Exhibition: Art in Clay, William Humphreys Art Gallery	Kimberley, South Africa
Dec 2016	Eat, drink and be merry pottery exhibition, Association of Arts	Pretoria, South Africa
Nov 2016	Tellus Sculptura Exhibition, Association of Arts	Pretoria, South Africa
Nov 2016	Ceramics South Africa National Biennale	University of Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa
Oct 2016	Let there be light Exhibition, ArtBox Gallery	Pretoria, South Africa

Aug 2016	Decorex 2017 Gauteng, The South African Craft Collective	Gauteng, South Africa
Aug 2016	CERAMICA MULTIPLEX 2016	City Museum Varazdin Croatia
July 2016	5 TH Changchun International Ceramics Symposium	China
Nov 2015	XII Bienal de Cerâmica Artística de Aveiro	Portugal
Oct 2015	CSA Regional Exhibition Gauteng	FADA, Gauteng, South Africa
July 2015	The Promenade: Healing in Nature. Co-Exhibition of Icheon World Ceramic Center and the National Folk Museum of Korea	Korea
July 2015	Giftex	Tokyo, Japan
July 2015	Decor & Design	Melbourne, Australia
June 2015	Forms of Expression	Hermanus Fine Arts, Hermanus, South Africa
May 2015	III Triennial of Ceramics UNICUM	Slovenia
May 2015	Index Dubai	Dubai, UAE
May 2015	Exhibition- Rika Herbst & Stephen Graham	Alliance Francaise, Johannesburg, South Africa
Oct 2014	Art Exhibition	The Leonardo Gallery, Pretoria, South Africa
Oct 2014	The Name of The Rose Exhibition	Rust-En-Vrede Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Jun 2014	CSA Regional Exhibition Gauteng	MuseumAfrica, Gauteng, South Africa
May2014	Index Dubai	Dubai, UAE
Apr 2014	Decorex CT	Cape Town, South Africa
Mar 2014	Decorex Durban	Durban, South Africa
Mar 2014	Art Exhibition, Annica's, Michaelangelo Towers, Sandton	Gauteng, South Africa
Oct 2013	Cluj International Ceramics Biennale	Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Oct 2013	11ª Bienal Internacional de Cerâmica Artística de Aveiro 2013	Aveiro, Portugal
Aug 2013	Decorex JHB	Gallagher Estate, Gauteng, South Africa
Aug 2013	Women in Clay	Art in the Forest, Cape Town, South Africa
Apr 2013	CSA Regional Exhibition Gauteng	MuseumAfrica, Gauteng, South Africa
Apr 2013	Fragile – The Porcelain Collective	Liz Loubser Gallery, Risidale, South Africa
Mar 2013	Design Indaba	Cape Town, South Africa
Feb 2013	Ambiente – The Loft	Frankfurt Germany
Nov 2012	KulturZentrum	Kapfenberg, Austria
Nov 2012	Translucencies	Art Afrique Gallery, Sandton, South Africa
Aug 2012	Decorex Gauteng	Gallagher Estate, Gauteng, South Africa
Aug 2012	CERAMICA MULTIPLEX 2012	City Museum Varazdin Croatia
May2012	CSA Regional Exhibition Gauteng	MuseumAfrica, Gauteng, South Africa
Mar 2012	Design Indaba	Cape Town, South Africa
Feb 2012	Ambiente – The Loft	Frankfurt Germany
Dec 2011	Af - L'artigiano In Fiera	Milan, Italy
Sep 2011	9 th International Ceramics Competition	Mino, Japan
Sep 2011	Gyeonggi International CeraMIX Biennale	Korea
Aug 2011	Decorex SA Handmade Collection Gauteng	Gallagher Estate, Gauteng, South Africa
Aug 2011	CSA Regional Exhibition	Eduardo Villa Museum Univ. of Pretoria, South Africa
Apr 2011	Easter Exhibition	Ou Lettere Building, University of Pretoria, South Africa
Feb 2011	Ambiente - The Loft	Frankfurt Germany
Jan 2011	The Cube at the Clay Museum	Rust en Vrede Gallery Durbanville, South Africa
Oct 2010	CSA National Exhibition	Grande Provence Gallery, Franschoek, South Africa
Aug 2010	Decorex SA Handmade Collection Gauteng	Gallagher Estate, Gauteng, South Africa
Aug 2010	Echoes Exhibition	The Art Place, Randburg, South Africa
Aug 2010	CSA Regional Exhibition	MuseumAfrica, Gauteng, South Africa
Nov 2009	Coming Together at Christmas	Craft & Design Centre Gauteng, South Africa
Sep 2009	CSA Regional Exhibition	Eduardo Villa Museum Univ. of Pretoria, South Africa

Aug 2009	Decorex, South African Icons	Gallagher Estate, Gauteng, South Africa
July 2009	Pace	Craft & Design Centre Gauteng, South Africa
July 2009	African Landscapes in Clay	Association of Arts Pretoria, South Africa
Feb 2009	The Art of Green Living	The Peech Hotel, Gauteng, South Africa
Aug 2008	CSA National Exhibition	UJ Art Gallery, Gauteng, South Africa

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