

The world's history can be read in what man has made in clay – in fragments and potsherds all over the world as well as in big sculptures out of painted clay and glazed tile work inside palaces like Alhambra. From all periods, all over the world, clay in its fired state bears witness about man's thoughts and actions.

Just got back from Japan: - She said that she wasn't interested in ceramics – though married to one of the most famous now living ceramist in Japan. I'm not either, I said – but what interest me is clay - and fire - and humanity, people! – I'm interested in almost everything. So is he, - I'm interested in cooking, she said.

In one end of the big room was workshop and clay working space, and in the other end living room area and kitchen. After supper, he suddenly sat again throwing pots. Using the material to describe and understand the world. I remember at the age of 17, when I had just started to play with clay, one Christmas Eve coming back from church with my family, I went to my wheel in the basement of our house and I actually made a pot before the dinner. I saw it lately in my mothers house signed Christmas 62. In a museum in Tokyo I was surprised to see tools and other things from the Japanese Stone Age being just as the ones, you see in Danish museums - from our stone age. I shouldn't be surprised. We're all part of the same story.

That story is what my work is about. My firing sculpture in Iceland 2006 was called "Displacement" and was about the change of situation that happens when a new person joins a group. At the same time it is about the geological and historical situation in Iceland, being a place submitted to distortion of the earth surface and changes in the political situation. Another example is the work "Ballast" made in Denmark 2007 near a brickworks museum. In that area were in the 19th century concentrations of brickworks delivering bricks and tiles to northern Europe. They were mostly transported by ship and some as far as to The West Indies. Not because they needed bricks over there but the tall sailing ships needed ballast on their journey, when not loaded with sugar for Denmark. My work is like a pile of bricks that are waiting for ship transportation, tilting towards the water and the distant destinations and some construction elements reminds the old brick kilns. The name "Ballast" refers to the weight and significance of a big experience in ones life.

Clay is an incredible material. Soft and hard, versatile, diluted with enough water it can float away. When dry it is hard as rock. In Sahara fortresses stand for hundred of years. The plastic quality makes you want to form things out of it – somebody even used it to shape the first human creature on Earth. I wished to be a violinist. The clay can be used the same way I think. That's what I try to do in my work. Create a situation with a seducing atmosphere that can give resonance to peoples lives. Making vessels on the potter's wheel was where I started. Where the clay with the rotation and the water grows and change with effortless ease. It is when the clay is embraced by the fire that it changes into a totally new material that can keep for thousands of years. Fire eats away and fire changes the situation. A new beginning is needed after fire. Kilns are needed to house the fire so that the temperature can get sufficiently high. The look into the white glowing kiln is like a look into something we do not know, like a look into the interior of the earth. My firing sculptures are sculptures that functions as large kilns. The fire is drawing through like in kilns and the shape and structure of the sculpture must submit to the

laws of normal construction- and kiln- and heat laws. On top of that it would be fatal to forget that the construction is done with soft clay.

I work with a group of people. I use a few that from earlier projects know what it is about, but otherwise it is a mixed group from several countries with different background. The work is long prepared but I always regard it as open and susceptible to influence by unknown factors. I want the project to be new and accept the vulnerability a fragility that follows. Each new project is enlarging the landscape of possible works. In 2007 the architectural experience I Madrid indicated a new direction. As well as did the work of this year “Sesam, open“, which was made for indoor installation but where the glowing performance was still in focus.

Jørgen Hansen nov.2007