

Ceramics

Art + Perception

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111

USD	\$50
EUR	€18
GBP	£12
AUD	A\$27
HKD	HK\$323



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Breaking Ground: First Indian Ceramic Vase

The attempt to be inclusive – to do away with hierarchical distinctions – was fairly successful, as were efforts to create a space for new dialogues centered around contemporary art practices using clay.

by Anjali Khanna, Visar Kader and Benoit Hoesfeld



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The Contingent

In the studio, a sort of tension is needed to create a body of work – a set of mental and physical conflicts that give the making atmosphere of urgency.

by Kerry James

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Tip Toland: Fragile Embodiments

Seattle-based artist Tip Toland has investigated the realist figure in ways that not few artists have not.

by Matthew Rangan



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Artist's Statement by Nicola Stralove April 2 follow with by

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These images
illustrations
Brian Enchaffort, 2020
events, glass, glass fragments
by/for a New York
gallery, 2020 and
inspiration of the artist
and Van Deren Warner.

Although the design is simple,
Xiong Kaibo creates hundreds of
different forms with them.



The Echo of the Ancient: Xiong Kaibo's Potteries

Witnessing Xie Genshan

Xiong Kaibo is a young ceramist in China, whose ceramic works are credited as "the echo of the ancient and the melody of the contemporary" by Chauncey J. Hamlin, a noted Chinese artist. The ceramic works of Xiong Kaibo give the viewer a strong sense of artistic freedom, conveying the simple and unadorned features of painted pottery and the mellow and dignified features of bronze. He takes ceramics as his words to illustrate the profound and free-wheeling history of Chinese culture.

Xiong Kaibo was born in He Nan province, the origin of *Fa* porcelains and *Jun* porcelains. The *Fa* porcelains and *Jun* porcelains produced in He Nan province back in Song dynasty are famous in China, representing the apex of ceramic works in China of that time. The agate in the glaze of *Fa* porcelains gives it a soft and smooth color. As there are limited examples of such ceramics left and they have unique glazing color, later critics have given them the name of *The League of the Chinese Ceramics*. The transformations of the *Jun* porcelains within the blue are its distinguishing features. *Jun* ceramics during firing, undergo processes of melting, crystallizing, flowing, wire drawing and cracking, in which the glaze color will change and the texture will overlap leading to unique artistic effects. Ever since he was a little kid, Xiong Kaibo has been exposed to this traditional culture of ceramics and therefore his work is impacted by the traditional aesthetic values.

Exposed to such a culture for 30 years and with the growth in his own skills of ceramic making, Xiong Kaibo passed the entrance examination to the China Academy of Art, which is a famous art school. He spent seven years there on professional studies of ceramics and finally obtained his master's degree. During

his study at the China Academy of Art, he was taught by many famous ceramists, including Xu Hanting, who is the master on red pottery manufacturing, Takenishi Yasuda, a famous Japanese ceramist, Huang Jiachun, a Korean professor on glazing. He learnt ceramics from Chauncey J. Hamlin in 2013 when he started to study for his doctoral degree at Tsinghua University, which is considered to be a leading university in China. "The impact of the world-class ceramists, combined with the personal character of Xiong Kaibo, determines the artistic style of his ceramic work today.

According to Xiong Kaibo:

"It is of great importance for the ceramic work to have its roots. Taking local culture as the root and absorbing the advantages of foreign culture will enable the ceramists to create the ceramics which will both carry a strong personal aesthetic and also remain contemporary."

Xiong Kaibo has been focusing on the ceramics-making for over 30 years, making more than 1800 pieces of ceramics which have simple and elegant features of ancient painted pottery but also have the mellow and dignified features of bronze, conveying typical charm of ancient artworks.

On materials selection, he broke the down the distinctions between working in porcelain and pottery. Xiong Kaibo illustrated his clay making, explaining: "I have chosen the material used to be the base material, proportionally adding porcelain and sagger soil. This is how I make the clay, which will not make the ceramics crack". The fire resistant sagger soil has strengthened the resistance of the ceramics and the absorbing ability of the glaze. The glazing layer will be strengthened and hence will make the ceramics have a matte effect, adding the simple and erudite charm of the ceramics.

On the formation of the ceramics, they have simple square and circular shapes in most cases, with several legs to support the whole artifact. Although the design is simple, Xiong Kaibo creates hundreds of different forms with them. They have uniformity yet they are different. It can be found in his ceramic work that often the slip trails or the natural cracks of the clay have been left on purpose so that the ceramic could be more natural and authentic.

On the firing of the ceramics, Xiong Kaibo uses the kiln methods used to make Jun porcelain. He said that "Electric kilns are used to elevate the temperature and hence create the oxidizing atmosphere in the beginning and then a limited amount of coal gas will be used to decrease the temperature." This kind of firing process will lead to differing effects, contributing to the unique ceramic works and strong personal artistic features.

Practice, together with innovation, is the key to the sustainable development of ceramics.

On the shaping of the ceramics, Xiong Kaibo claimed that "For most of the ceramics I have used the slab method, which was a manufacturing method of Chinese red pottery".¹ However, he extended the use of that slab method which previously had only be used to make red pottery of small size and light weight to pieces over 30cm height. The whole ceramic work is only supported by several legs. Before the final shaping process of each work, he would make a small sample product. With the shaping pattern of the sample product, he will spend considerable time to make an analysis of details and overall design, grasping the length, thickness of the lines, the manipulation of the shaping of the mouth and feet of the ceramics and then finally use them for the final products. In order to solve the issue of supporting the whole piece of ceramic work with four legs, he analyzes the shapes, processing resources and materials, trying every possible solution and finally adopting the combination of different shaping methods.

On the glazing of the ceramics, Xiong Kaibo said: "We use the flammolite glazing, taking the cheap clay as the bottom material and improve the matrix through a lot of experiments and hence increase the matte opaque effect".² This matte glaze does not have abundant crystalline nor glimmering light spots. However, it does have wonderful matt glazing effect.

I question him: "How can ceramics, which are made using the oldest materials, convey the living status and spiritual state of people in the modern day? How can shapes and glazing colors convey personal emotions?" He answered:

*"We need to break the limitations set by traditional ceramic manufacturing methods. Instead of focusing on ease of use, we should take it as an abstract status, through which the artists convey his artistic pursuits. We should innovate, trying to use the resources produced locally, combining different materials, integrating the traditional shaping, processing and modern shaping process. Practice, together with innovation, is the key to the sustainable development of ceramics."*³

Art creation is always the combination of the old and the new. As a country with a profound history of ceramic making, China should maintain the most privileged ceramic resources and ceramic manufacturing traditions. The ceramic works of Xiong Kaibo are created within the profound ceramic culture in China, adding to the unique charm of ancient artifacts and hence having their own styles. Whether it's the glazing and the design, his works are forthright, simple and natural. Meanwhile, they have the unique oriental presence - elegant tones and elegance. ■

*Depicting the artist
Xiong Kaibo
March 2024, 1000
city, China
Xiong Kaibo
Xiong Kaibo*

References

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<http://www.xiongkaibo.com>, accessed 2024, 2024.
2. Ibid.
3. Xiong Kaibo Interview
2024, January, 2024.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

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Interviewing with Xiong
Kaibo on ceramic
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Ceramics Technical

