



Above: Waleed Rasheed: "I don't disfigure a shape, but start through a non-shape and re-form it".
Right: **Two Forms.**
Handbuilt, unglazed.



Adventure Beyond Familiarity

*Waleed Rasheed writes about his philosophy
and the techniques he uses in his ceramics*

TECHNIQUES:

First: I prepare the clay by washing to remove salts and impurities. After that I add sand and pigments; then I dry it in the sunshine. After that I knead it well to homogenise it all together, then store in plastic bags for a week before using.

Second: I form the shapes then I leave them to dry slowly at room temperature, first firing at 1050°C to turn the clay to bisque. Sometimes I add coloured slip on some areas.

Third: I prepare glazes using a high percentage of oxides mixed with acidic glaze or base glaze plus melting reagents and a glaze stabiliser.

I SEE CERAMIC ART as a self-independent art, having its own forms, colours and structures. However, I declare my objection and disobedience to the old concepts, or the stereotypes of ceramics that are intended to be a utilitarian or applied art. There are two confusing aspects of ceramic art for me: first, between the desire for expression and expression itself and the material for expression and, second, between construction and the material of construction. Therefore, I see ceramic art as not mental stimulation but, by composing abstracted ideas or idealistic shapes, it will continue as a marker for humanistic and spiritual values.

A shape is a language, its words are written on the surface and colour that must be poured in a new modern cast to help me understand all the things that I have formed and transformed, that is, to explain why I have allowed a dominating form to exist in the artwork under a mask that seems characterless.

It is normal that all shapes are made through the feeling of its inside volume; the work must have harmony and react with its dimensions and mass because its correlation will not be according to the subject itself nor to the involving emotions, but to the direct senses.

That is why all my shapes are spontaneous and simple. When I start to create work, my hands work spontaneously and my eyes search in it, because clay as a substance has no meaning in itself yet has a tremendous influence on me as a ceramic artist. I sense the originality of the artwork from inside – the shape and non-shape; and in order to stabilise the world by means of time and place, I try, in this sense, to abstract the beautifulness of touch in colour, shape and non-shape before reducing it towards a visible world.



I have a strong desire to distort the shapes I make because I find an extra freedom which pushes me towards art creation rather than towards abilities of the mind although I wish to discover those abilities too; and so much of my work ends as disfigured structures. Because of the full awareness of the ceramist for his materials, the world and shapes around him, he is led to discover new shapes and structures rich in beauty. However, I always try to put my shapes and structures in a modern cast and I decorate the forms in relation to the modern humanitarian civilised world. My work can be categorised as decorated shapes, coloured dances, free lines, renewed volumes, music and running away from oneself into a scattered self in disorder.

I have reached this level of knowledge through my readings in ceramic art and art in general, and through various and endless experiments and, finally, my desire to destroy my shapes and then reshape them.

Waleed Rasheed is an artist from Iraq . He graduated in Fine Arts in Iraq in 1985

TECHNIQUES, continued:

I start by rubbing these glaze ingredients to push them through the pores on the fired clay, until I reach the surface I am looking for. Then firing again at 990°C. Sometimes I add pieces of wood or cloth to gain a carbon reaction with the glaze at 900°C.

Finally, I wash and rub the shape with naphtha on a piece of cloth to get the surface patina I want.