

ARTIST STATEMENT : By Cheryl Jones



*Old boats of textured wood,
Dark preserved wood from the mud,
Turning to stone*

Starting hobby pottery as a young mum up the North Coast, winning first and second prize in the Kendal Show [1986] hitting the big time!

Later I moved to the South Coast where I completed a series of ceramic courses at Dapto and West Wollongong Tafe, [1991-2000], there I had the good fortune to have great teachers, Lawrence Mearing to whom warm me to the martial and an intellect of ceramics teachings, the late Allan Peascod a teacher to whom taught me a great deal in the art of aesthetics and history in ceramics, he was a master of it, he's works are admired all over the world. He was an ambassador for ceramics and will be sadly missed.

I also had Don Court to whom I hold respect, for his knowledge in the history and his passion for ceramics of the oriental. He also is an inspiration to me; I feel their presence when I work. I continued my studies at the National Art School [2000-2002], I had been involved in study for 11 years and have accomplished techniques with many teachers.

With hard work, and freedom to apply Knowledge I had gained from my tafe years, I found my time at National Art School was the best learning experience for the development of my work. Finishing with a degree, and high distinction in ceramics.

Since Art School I built my gas kiln, 2004, and 2005 completed building a studio I have continued to produce works. I run workshops, classes and do the odd project with the community.

I developed a strong desire to make Viking Ships forms at N.A.S, though I had been interested in the Celtic and medieval aesthetic. I think another influence for the boat forms, came from my childhood memories. Helping my Dad build our sailing boats, finishing them with hours of sanding to 000 finishes and the thrill of seeing the wood grain appear as the shiny varnish flows on those beautiful curved hulls.

The aim of my works is to be a little functional with individual content, having a slightly ruined look eg; bits of shards, sprigging, patterns suggesting old artifacts designs, cracking, crazing and smooth lush parts.

Maybe fit for the table, side-board, but also maybe part of a mock medieval feast, the –ship of plenty, supplying bread and fruit for dressed up Serfs, Lords and Ladies, Kings and Queens. Romance, particularly under candlelight!



The Ships are made of paper clay. The glazes are complex; they are built up of layers of washers over glazes over slips, glaze techniques I have been developing for the past ten years. I fire the works on wadding and shells in a reduced atmosphere for nine to eighteen hr's 1270-80 C degrees.

Sometimes the ships nearly sink. I take chances in the firing's [Round-Ship] was fired upside-down balancing on two bricks," last time I did that the bricks melted, the ship sunk [angle grinder], the kiln was a mess and I

have a good scar on my thumb from angle grinding the brick of the boat. The Round ship curved inwards and the bricks were on a good lean towards the other ships, but they just survived, chance is what makes the ships unique.

*From mud to press mold, slips to glaze, launching both my
Platters and boats into the flames of the gas kiln.
Destined for the garden or a side-board, window light or
spot lit plinth,
Fancy banquet or common feast-ending in the washing up,
floating them in the big sink
Romance and practicality to hold, touch and see; arranging
fresh
Bread and fruit aboard an ancient craft.*

Angle-grinder ship 2005.



With the assortment of glazes textures and patterns, particularly in the platters, give a response to lures the eye and exploring its sometimes busy surface.



Photos: Top left 'Round Ship' 2007, Middle 'Angle Grinder Ship' 2005, Bottom: 'Black –Gold' Platter 2006, left: Scarab tea, winner of the Sydney teapot show: 2008, 80cm-40cm

Egyptian Paste

A technique Older than the Pyramids



It's pretty it's tricky and it's intriguing. It's self glazing clay, a technique older than the Pyramids. The Egyptian word for it was tjeht "that which is dazzling, gleaming," like the sun in the sky. Egyptian paste was thought to glisten with a light that was symbolic of life, rebirth and immortality. It was prized for its brilliant luster and, although the ingredients were not in themselves precious, the recipe for combining, making, carving, and adding details, then firing them, was a well-kept secret, a sort of alchemical process of transforming base elements into a substance simulating precious gems. Even now, though we can

approximate the substance, we cannot manipulate it to produce supreme works of art such as those manufactured by highly skilled ancient Egyptian artisans for more than 5000 years.

I would like to share some of my trials in getting it right. Even though that is a matter of taste, because the variations are enormous. I have had plenty of failures, but this intriguing substance has captivated me and I want to learn more.

Efflorescence is a self-glazing method in which the soluble sodium salts (Egyptians used natron) are directly mixed into the raw mixture. As the clay body dries, salts leach out to the surface forming tiny crystals on the object, when fired the crystals melt and form the glaze in the surface of the object. Except where it has been touched or where it rests, this is the reason the beads are fired on kanthal wire, suspended between stands.

This is the technique that is mostly used in the western world, even though it is tricky it seems to be the easiest technique to do. This is the technique I have dabbled with for years... I have been experimenting with different recipes, colorants, the mixing, DRYING, (which has to be done right). The firings can have the most dramatic variations eg; from variable temperatures, whether it is gas or electric. And the end result can be different even though the same procedure has been done.

The technique I would like to master is cementation. The process is done by placing the dried object (made of fritt, calcium, feldspar and gum binder) in a crucible half-filled with packing powder (made of soda potash, silica calcium and a little copper), then covered and fired. The powder reacts to the object, and glazes it. When all has cooled off, the packing powder breaks away leaving the object glazed all over.

My interests and trials with Egyptian Paste has been on and off since 1996 and more ongoing for the last 4Four or five years.

I have been teaching small groups, having one or two day workshops in Sydney, Bega and the Wollongong area. I am starting up one day workshops at home over the warmer months of the year.

Chell Jones