

Talking to ANN VAN HOEY

Evelyne Schoenmann

There is absolutely no need to introduce Ann van Hoey; She is already very well known and has won nearly all the major prizes. For instance in 2013, she took silver at the Cheongju Craft Biennale in Korea with her yellow and Ferrari red objects. Nevertheless, I hope I have managed to have coaxed a few facts out of her that were not generally known.

Ann, after having won many of the major ceramics awards and gaining a reputation as arising star, what is left for you to achieve?

I believe above all that it is important to be satisfied with what I have already achieved. There will always be more successful ceramic artists, bigger prizes and higher goals to aim at, but eight years ago, when I started out on this adventure, I would never have dreamed to have come so far now. The message is to fully appreciate that.

it, I was thinking mainly about a plane although I was working in three dimensions. I was especially preoccupied with shaping the rim of the bowl, moving from a circle to a square, from a circle to a triangle.

To do this, I cut little triangles out of the bowl, a maximum of 4cm deep. The I make deeper incisions with greater overlaps, more difficult technically speaking, to maintain the tension, and then I see the volume

I find the changes that these various incisions make in the bowl fascinating. At first, I worked very symmetrically, but with time,



How do you deal with the expectations of judges, friends and yourself?

I try to avoid exaggerated expectations so as to avoid disappointment. And at the moment, I certainly cannot complain, I am surrounded by people who really appreciate my work.

Annette Sloth from Galerie Puls enthused about your work that it was simple, minimal, perfect. Is any optimization possible for you?

Annette Sloth said that about Etude Géométrique. When I made

I became much freer, although there is still mathematical logic behind it.

The prototypes that I made for Serax evolved from a much freer approach, the inspiration of the moment. That makes a pleasant change from the strict, cautious approach I used for the studies to my bowls. But they still inspire me, and I am always happy when I can work with them again after several days working on the designs. I am nowhere near finished with them...

Henk Van Nieuwenhove described in an article how horrified the visitors to a workshop in Varazdin were to see you cutting

clay. What did you feel yourself the first time you took the scissors to it?

Using scissors evolved quite naturally in my work. To make my porcelain cups, I was using FlaxpaperClay porcelain. But it proved to be difficult to cut the fibres. But it was quite simple with scissors ... and I just stayed with it, even with ordinary clay.

The Ferrari are a combination of Old Métier and Luxurious Statement; and one of your series is called Social Clay. What would you like to express with works that make the viewer think?

It all happens fairly intuitively. At a certain point I just want to make things. And then I see what has happened. The series Social Clay developed after I had bought myself a smart phone, for example, on which I could suddenly receive e-mails and facebook messages in my studio. I found it extremely difficult to deal with, particularly not to be distracted from my work and to concentrate on the clay. So after that, I made a series of pieces with short texts on them like "Sent from my iPad" or "Join me on Facebook".

How did you get the idea of making origami - the Japanese paper folding technique, in ceramics?

In my life, there were about three things happening at once

It is very important for my technique that the clay slabs are rolled out very carefully. I still do that by hand with a rolling pin.

Every bowl consists of three slabs. I have made templates for that. It is impossible to make a bowl from a single flat slab. I calculate in advance where I want to join the slabs with slip. I trim these joints afterwards so that they cannot be seen.

To finish the interior properly, I place the plaster mould on the wheel and smooth it all with a rubber kidney.

And then I have to wait until the clay separates from the plaster. As soon as this happens, I start cutting and folding. The I use some more slip to join everything. Then I leave everything to dry very slowly and in a very controlled fashion.

I have the paint job done by a professional paint sprayer in a workshop for restoring vintage cars.

What can you tell us about your future plans?

Currently I am working on large painted objects. The gallery Terry in Delft wants to exhibit them at Collect in London, and the J. Lohmann Gallery is taking them to the Collective Design Salon in New York.

The Clay Studio in Philadelphia has invited me to work there as a guest artist in residence. But before I leave, I am going to two exhibition openings in Milan, where some of my work is on show: on 2 April at the Open to Art Competition of the Officine



and that led me to my current technique. I had been to a workshop called "Working with clay slabs" with Netty Janssens (NL), I had bought a few plaster moulds for bowls and I had just come back from a ten-day trip to Japan, where I had discovered origami. Until then, I had always thrown my bowls. Now I changed the whole way I worked: I made my bowls from thin clay slabs, using the plaster mould as a support, and because the folding alone did not work, I tried cutting and folding.

Can you tell us something about your technique and the special surface treatment of your coloured vessels?

Saffi and on 7 April of Reflections, Belgium is Design at the Triennale Design Museum during the Milan Design Week.

www.annvanhoey-ceramics.be

Evelyne Schoenmann conducts the next interview with Guy Van Leemput from Belgium

Evelyne Schoenmann is a ceramic artist. She lives and works in Basel, Switzerland, and in Liguria, Italy.

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