SOUTH AFRICAN STUDIO POTTERY OF THE LATER TWENTIETH CENTURY AND ITS ANGLO-ORIENTAL EPITHET

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that *South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century and its Anglo-Oriental epithet* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Ronald Watt November 2016

Title:
South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century and its Anglo-Oriental epithet

Summary:
South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century has consistently been described as ‘Anglo-Oriental’, because it was perceived to adhere to the standard forms of utilitarian wares in plain or subdued colours and decorations, as promoted by the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery. This dissertation investigates the validity of such an epithet, based on evidence that the pioneer South African studio potters and their successors were exposed to broader pottery influences, and that the oeuvres which they developed reflect what they borrowed, adapted and re-interpreted from such influences. The studio pottery careers and influences of the pioneers Esias Bosch, Hyme Rabinowitz and Bryan Haden are discussed, and the oeuvres of the second generation of studio potters are also investigated. Attention is given to both the ethics and aesthetics of their studio pottery practices. The dissertation further explores whether the era’s studio potters contributed towards the creation of a distinctive South African pottery identity.

List of key terms:
Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery; Bryan Haden; Craft pottery; Esias Bosch; Hyme Rabinowitz; Michael Cardew; Pottery ethics and aesthetics; South African ceramics; South African studio pottery; Utilitarian pottery

PREFACE

In 1981, I purchased four pieces of South African reduction-fired studio pottery (Figs. 1 to 4) at a group exhibition hosted by the Beuster-Skolimowski Galleries in Pretoria: a large bowl by Andrew Walford, two small lidded pots by Ian Glenny and a tall bowl by Tim Morris. Little did I know then that these four pieces were to be the foundation of my collection of studio pottery, which by 2014 had grown to represent the oeuvres of many of the celebrated South African studio potters of the late twentieth century. I acquired the works directly from the studio potters or found them in galleries, thrift shops, antique dealerships and small collections, or when offered on auction.

1. Andrew Walford, Bowl (1981).

2. Ian Glenny, Lidded pot (1981).

I was not content with merely collecting works of exceptional quality and beauty but also wanted to learn about the lives and work ethics of the studio potters in whose work I had become invested. My career as journalist and later as television programme producer consumed all of my time and attention until 2010, when I set about to research and document the lives and work of some of these studio potters. I discovered that very little which could be taken as accurate and authoritative about South African studio pottery had been published. That prompted me to create a database of factual information with what I could glean from available printed sources or by interviewing the studio potters in person. I had, by then, followed the general trend of grouping together the studio potters of

3. Ian Glenny, Lidded pot (1981).

4. Tim Morris, Bowl (1981).

the later twentieth century as followers of the ‘Anglo-Oriental’ tradition of studio pottery.

In 2014, I accepted the invitation to serve a short editorial internship with the *Studio Potter* magazine in the United States of America. Part of my editorial duties involved the indexing of the contents of past issues and in doing so, I could read articles and essays written by some of the foremost American potters and ceramists, as well as academics in the field. Their various writings about the rise and development of American studio pottery included introspection and debate around the extent and scope of the influences of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery. I was again reminded of the lack of available critical writing about the South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century, when I researched and wrote my opening address for the *Anglo-Oriental: Connecting Past to Present* exhibition at the Clay Museum in Durbanville in November, 2015. Those experiences strengthened my resolve to research and investigate the actual influences in the work of the earlier South African studio potters, and discover how that contributed to their personal interpretations and expressions of studio pottery.

This dissertation does not offer detailed biographies of the pioneer South African studio potters or their successors. It does however, refer to events and influences which were critical to their development as studio potters. It is also not an in-depth critique of their individual oeuvres, except for discussions about how their ethics and aesthetics did or did not fit the genre of the studio pottery of their time. The dissertation explores the categorisation of later twentieth century studio pottery as representative of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery. It measures this perception against the ethics and aesthetics of that tradition, as defined in the writings of Bernard Leach, as well as in the tenets of the Japanese *mingei* folk craft movement, as forwarded by Sōetsu Yanagi, a close associate of Leach.

Chapter 1 describes and defines the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery and

its impact outside of England. Chapter 2 introduces the pioneer South African studio potters who have consistently been described as followers of the Anglo-Oriental tradition. The second generation of South African studio potters and their exposure to several other influences is discussed in Chapter 3. A selection of retrospective views on the actual nature and character of the later twentieth century South African studio pottery is presented in Chapter 4. That chapter also explores whether an alternative descriptive naming can be justified for South African studio pottery/ceramics. My findings are summarised in the conclusion, where I forward that there is no justification for the continued overreaching use of the 'Anglo-Oriental' epithet, when referring to the later twentieth-century South African studio pottery.

Many studio potters, ceramists and academics were generous with their time for interviews and correspondence. I wish to make specific mention of David Schlapobersky and his partner Felicity Potter, David Walters, Ann Marais, Chris Green, Chris Patton, Digby Hoets and his wife Penny, Andrew Walford and his wife Leanda, Ian Glenny, Dr. John Steele of the Department of Visual Art at the Walter Sisulu University, and Wilma Cruise. I attach significant importance to the commentaries in some of my correspondence with Cruise, Steele and Schlapobersky. Excerpts of these have merited inclusion in the appendices with permission. Other sources of valuable information that deserve to be acknowledged include: Ceramics Southern Africa and its quarterly magazines *Sgraffiti* and *National Ceramics Quarterly*; the seminal books *Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa* by Cruise, and *Potters of Southern Africa* by Garth Clark and Lynne Wagner; the family of Tim Morris, for access to his scrapbooks and personal writings; the Rabinowitz Family, for making available the unpublished memoir of Hyme Rabinowitz; and Anton, Esra and Andree Bosch for insights into Esias Bosch's life and work.

The appendices also include two timelines. The first positions the emergence of the pioneer South African studio potters in relation to the principal figures in earlier twentieth century English studio pottery, and one another. The other

timeline positions the emergence of the successors of the pioneer South African studio potters. These timelines serve as a basic chronology. A further appendix provides an organogram illustrating the direct and indirect links between studio potters and studio pottery influences.

Unless indicated otherwise, the photography was undertaken by the author. The majority of the South African studio pottery works illustrated in this dissertation are either part of my personal collection, or were previously part of the collection. Many of the earlier studio potters did not place identification marks on their work, and rarely did they indicate the year of making. The identities of the makers of the illustrated works have been verified using published resources, by the studio potters themselves, or in consultation with their peers, their associates or family members. More often than not, works are dated by timespan other than year. Measurements of works were seldom provided in illustrations in publications, or only indicated in part. Where measurement details are not available, this is indicated.

The encouragement of Barry and Claudia Oliphant is gratefully acknowledged. They helped free up my time for research and writing, and were always at the ready to assist in any way they could, not least of which was to act as my personal ‘cheerleading squad’ when the challenge of completing a dissertation appeared much too daunting.

I am indebted to my supervisor, Prof. Bernadette Van Haute for her support and enthusiasm for the theme of this dissertation, whilst guiding me to focus on that which was of relevance.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents Albert and Landa Watt.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation engages with the individual and collective oeuvres of South African studio potters of the later twentieth century, and has three objectives. The first is to establish to what extent the pioneer generation of studio potters followed the precepts and practices of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery. The second is to identify and qualify other influences which shaped the ethics and aesthetics of the pioneer generation and their twentieth-century successors. The third objective is to consider whether a distinctive South African studio pottery identity resulted from an entanglement of influences.

With "later twentieth century", I denote the period beginning in 1952, when the pioneer studio potter Esias Bosch (1923-2010) commenced producing studio pottery in South Africa, to the end of the twentieth century, by which time only a few stalwart studio potters continued to ply their craft. For the purpose of the research, I define "studio potter" as a person who practises pottery as a professional or semi-professional career; operates and manages an independent studio pottery, or has a dedicated pottery studio; primarily specialises in utilitarian ware but also produces one-off pieces which could be considered ornamental, sculptural, environmental or architectural; and whose personal oeuvre has achieved a distinctive style. This definition borrows in part from the published writings of Bernard Leach (1887-1979) and Sōetsu Yanagi (1889-1961). Leach was the founding father of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery that gained shape in the 1920s, and which laid the foundations for a specific approach to materials, processes, forms, ethics and aesthetics. Its philosophy and practice were pervasive, and initially, resulted in the global pursuit of the making of utilitarian, reduction-fired stoneware. Yanagi was the driving force behind *mingei*, the Japanese folk craft movement, from which the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery borrowed some aesthetic and ethical tenets.

The studio pottery of the later twentieth century was and continues to be

associated with work designed for use. Throughout the dissertation I make use of the term “utilitarian” wares to denote what some authors describe as “functional” wares. This preference for “utilitarian” merits clarification. Michael Cardew (1901-1983) (2005), the leading studio pottery figure in England of the era under discussion, opposed the term “functionalism” and considered it a “sterile exercise of aesthetic puritanism which invaded the world of design” (Partington 2000). Raymond Finch, a contemporary studio potter of Cardew, too held “functionalism” in contempt, considered it a modernist concept from arts-related discourses, rejecting it as a “posh” word (Partington 2000). Both Cardew and Finch favoured the word “useful” to describe the intent of their pots. In making use of “utilitarian” to describe the broad genre of studio pottery of the twentieth century, I denote that such work was orientated towards being practical, irrespective of whether it was indeed used in the service of household chores, or otherwise for display.

This dissertation excludes reference to the production studios and ceramic factories in existence at the time of the emergence of the pioneers of South African studio pottery. The production studios and ceramic factories, as opposed to studio potteries, are those which engaged in the mass production of utilitarian wares and ornamental ‘art pottery’. Their histories have been documented by F.G.E. Nilant in *Contemporary Pottery in South Africa* (1963), Wendy Gers’s *South African Studio Ceramics: A selection from the 1950s* (1998) and Gers’s *Scorched Earth: 100 Years of Southern African Potteries* (2016a).

Alongside my discussion of the studio potters is a narrative of the rise of South African post-modern ceramics. Some ceramists of the time sought to distance themselves from studio pottery and were vocal in their criticism. In that process, the perception that the later twentieth-century studio pottery was ‘Anglo-Oriental’ became further embedded. For a better understanding of the history and nature of post-modern ceramics, I recommend the reading of Garth Clark’s foreword to *Post-modern Ceramics*, which he co-authored with Mark del Vecchio (2001).

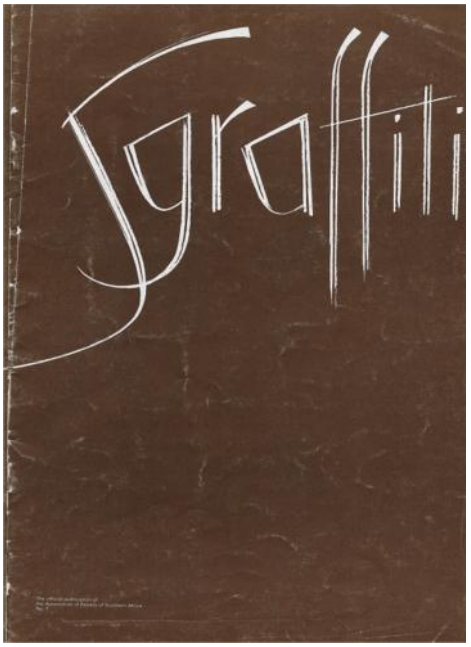
Scant contemporary writing about the studio pottery of the later twentieth century, whether popular or academic, has resulted in a loss of detailed knowledge about many of the leading studio potter figures and their achievements. There are Master of Arts dissertations at the Centre for Visual Art of the School of Literary Study, Media and Creative Arts of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which are valuable sources of information about specific expressions of twentieth-century pottery. Amongst those is Mathodi Freddie Motsamayi's *The Bernstein collection of Rorke's Drift ceramics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: A catalogue raisonné* (2012), along with dissertations dealing with leading pottery and ceramics teachers such as Candice Vurovecz's *Hilda Ditchburn: A teacher and pioneer of stoneware ceramics in Southern Africa* (2008) and Lara du Plessis's *Marietjie van der Merwe: Ceramics 1960-1988* (2007). There has, to date, not been any attempt at a purposeful critical review of the rise and development of South African studio pottery. Similarly, no academically-grounded research has been conducted on the ways in which the studio potters of the later twentieth century engaged with their social, cultural and natural environments, and the resultant aesthetic expressions of that in their studio pottery.

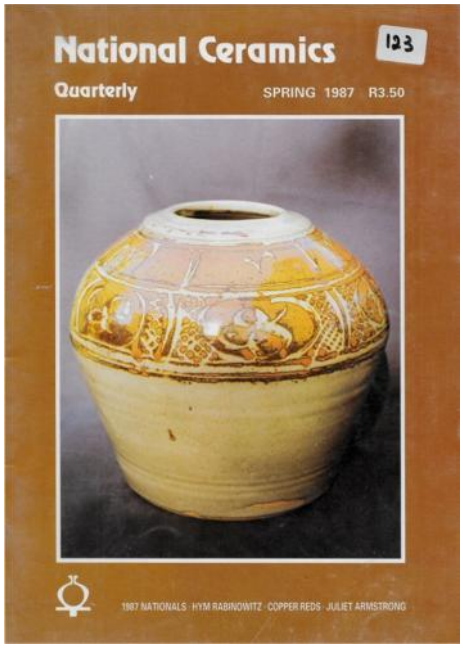
With so much emphasis placed on the 'Anglo-Oriental' roots of South African studio pottery, the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery and its ethics and aesthetics require clarification. For that purpose, I have consulted the writings of Leach and Yanagi, respectively. Two of Leach's books, namely *A potter's book* (1940) and *Beyond East & West: Memoirs, portraits and essays* (1978) are considered to be the definitive guides on the theory and practice of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery. In brief, it entailed the tenets of involvement and control by the potter in every stage of production, the perfection of form by means of repetitive work, and an output of simple but pleasing forms of primarily utilitarian ware. Those tenets were also shaped by the concept of hand-crafted wares for everyday use, as embodied in *mingei* and discussed by Yanagi in *The unknown craftsman: A Japanese insight into beauty* (1972). The studio pottery

philosophy of Shōji Hamada (1894-1979), the Japanese studio potter so closely associated with both Leach and Yanagi, is found in *Hamada: Potter*, a semi-biographical work written by Leach (1975). One of Leach's apprentices, who would later greatly influence the pioneer South African studio potters Bosch and Hyme Rabinowitz (1920-2009), was Cardew, whose studio pottery ethics and aesthetics were explained in two definitive biographies, viz. *Michael Cardew* by Garth Clark (1978) and *The last sane man: Michael Cardew* by Tanya Harrod (2013). The rise and legacy of English studio pottery in the Anglo-Oriental tradition has been placed in perspective by Eileen Lewenstein and Emmanuel Cooper in *New ceramics* (1974), Jeffrey Jones in *Studio pottery in Britain 1900 – 2005* (2007) and Oliver Watson's *Studio pottery: Twentieth century British ceramics in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection* (1993). Further important insight into the reach of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery outside of England is offered by the Australian art historian Damon Moon in *Across the Ditch: Australian Ceramics in the Post War Period* (2008:[sp]) and by the American author Mark Hewitt, in his 1997 article in *Studio Potter* entitled *Further thoughts on Mingei: The impact of the movement on 20th-century American ceramics.*

The earliest book on South African pottery, *Contemporary pottery in South Africa*, by Nilant (1963), focused on South African production potteries. Other than providing information on the consumer reception of commercial pottery, Nilant's book offers very little insight into the rise and status of studio pottery. The two seminal books on South African studio pottery are Garth Clark and Lynne Wagner's *Potters of Southern Africa* (1974) and Wilma Cruise's *Contemporary ceramics in South Africa* (1991). Clark and Wagner's book is for the greater part dedicated to the leading studio potters of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Cruise's book covers the fields of studio pottery and post-modern ceramics. She devoted a section of the book to those studio potters whom she categorises as "craft potters" working in the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery.

Only two biographies on South African studio potters who hail from the later twentieth century, have been published. Andree Bosch and Johann de Waal co-authored the biography *Esias Bosch* (1988) and Neil Wright produced *A potter's tale in Africa: The life and work of Andrew Walford* (2009). Rabinowitz's undated and unpublished memoir titled *A few remembrances,* is the only existing biographical document written by one of the pioneer studio potters. These two biographies and the single memoir introduce the pioneer South African studio potters' early contact with the leading English studio pottery personalities of their times, but also tell of their exposure to other influences. These writings also reflect on the challenges in training, materials, processes and technology which the pioneer studio potters were required to overcome in setting up their studios and gaining public recognition and support.





5. (Left) Cover of the inaugural edition of *Sgraffiti*, the quarterly magazine of the Association of Potters of Southern Africa, August 1973.
6. (Right) Cover of the inaugural edition of *National Ceramics Quarterly*, the successor magazine to *Sgraffiti*, Spring 1987.

The histories and oeuvres of the many other studio potters must often be reconstructed from fragmented and incomplete documentation. The quarterly

magazine *Sgraffito* (1973-1987) published by the Association of Potters of Southern Africa (APSA) and its successor, the *National Ceramics Quarterly* published by Ceramics Southern Africa (CSA) from 1987 onwards, are important sources for such insights. Maarten Zaalberg's *The 1985 Yearbook of South African ceramics* (1985) offers a catalogue of those studio potters and ceramists who received awards at the APSA exhibitions prior to 1985. The catalogue has fragmentory information about their training, preferred materials, processes and forms. Exhibition catalogues and reviews by art critics, and the occasional magazine and newspaper article on studio pottery and studio potters, provide additional information about the earlier studio potters. Justin Kerrod's *An Introduction to Southern African Ceramics: Their marks, monograms and signatures* (2010) lists names and dates of studio potters, ceramists and production studios. Pottery is briefly discussed in *Three Centuries of South African Art* by Hans Fransen (1982). The magazines *Lantern*, *ArtLook* and *Ceramix and Craft South Africa* included articles on studio pottery. A single essay on studio pottery, namely that of Bosch, was featured in the third volume of the Foundation for Education, Science and Technology's *Our Art* edited by Heine Toerien and Georges Duby. The Haenggi Foundation created the internet database *Southern African Art and Art History* (www.art-archives-southafrica.ch), with archives of text and image material, about Bosch and Tim Morris (1941-1990). There are three facebook pages dedicated to Bosch (Esias Bosch – Studio Potter & Artist), Rabinowitz (Hyme Rabinowitz – Studio Potter) and Morris (Tim Morris – Studio Potter & Artist) with selected archival texts and images (www.facebook.com). Art critiques of the studio potters' exhibitions appeared in newspapers. Articles which showcased their lifestyles and works were published in popular magazines. The former engaged with the aesthetics of their ouvres, and the latter tended to romanticise their lives and lifestyles.

The Pretoria Art Museum holds the Corobrik Ceramic Collection, which constitues a national collection. Studio pottery and ceramic works, which form

part of the PELMAMA Permanent Art Collection, are to be found in the Pretoria Art Museum and the Oliewenhuis Art Museum in Bloemfontein. One of the major public collections of South African studio pottery and ceramics is housed in the William Humphreys Art Gallery in Kimberley. Other significant collections include those at the Clay Museum at the Rust-en-Vrede Arts Centre in Durbanville; the Sasol Collection at the University of Stellenbosch; the Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg; the Iziko Social History Collection in Cape Town; and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Art Museum in Port Elizabeth. The Corobrik Collection can also be viewed on-line (www.ceramicssa.org) and the illustrated catalogue of the PELMAMA studio pottery and ceramics has been published on-line as a pdf document (www.pelmama.org).

Insight into which influences and circumstances shaped the ethics and aesthetics of the earlier studio potters, was gained from my interviews and correspondence with some of the leading figures of the later twentieth century. This qualitative method of research enabled me to supplement the limited published material about the studio potters, or, in the absence of such reference material, to serve as newly documented primary research resources. I conducted interviews with Bryan Haden (1930-2016), Andrew Walford (1942-),[1] Ian Glenny (1952-), Chris Green, Yogi de Beer, Minette Zaaiman, Elza Sullivan, dr Ralph Johnson, Digby Hoets (1949-),[2] Ann Marais, David Walters and others. An interview was also conducted with the art historian and practicing ceramist Cruise, who has addressed studio pottery and ceramics in several authoritative writings. The studio potters with whom I corresponded included David Shapiro, Joe Finch and David Schlapobersky. Data about the

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1. Andrew Walford's brother Bruce was also a studio potter. Hereafter all references to "Walford" will refer to Andrew Walford, unless otherwise specified.
2. Digby Hoets's brother Garth and sister Lesley-Ann are also studio potters. Hereafter, all references to "Hoets" in the text will refer to Digby Hoets, unless otherwise specified.

careers and oeuvres of studio potters and ceramists who were active at the time of my research, as well as their views on the identity of South African pottery and ceramics, was gathered by means of a research questionnaire.

I elected to research the South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century from a post-modernist point of view. Post-modernist art history opposes that an artwork/artefact has a single or preponderant meaning (www.theartstory.org/definition-postmodernism.htm), as determined by the artist at the time of its making, but promotes that the manner in which it is received plays a significant role in determining meaning. Whereas in modernist art history the artwork/artefact is considered, by itself, an absolute narrative, the post-modernist approach recognises that the artwork/artefact can be 'read' as having agency to generate and gain meanings about what it constitutes in context of its culture, history and prevailing values. Post-modernist art history therefore compels, rather than invites, an investigation of contextual meaning, thus also allowing for the challenge of epistemological categories, which may impose a hermeneutic limit on an artefact. This approach is of particular relevance in the study of studio pottery, and even more so in utilitarian studio pottery, which was a dominant genre in the later twentieth century in South Africa. This is because the primary forms in studio pottery are, in practical terms, finite, where interpretations of forms are constrained by the plasticity of pottery materials and limitations of kiln technology.

Dr. Robert J. Belton of the University of British Columbia defines context as "the varied circumstances in which a work of art is (or was) produced and/or interpreted" (Belton 1996:[sp]). He further qualifies context as being primary, secondary and tertiary. According to Belton, primary context is that which pertains to the artist, inclusive of biography, education and training, attitudes, beliefs, interests and values. The secondary context acknowledges the milieu in which the work was produced, with due recognition of prevailing socio-political, religious and economic values. Belton (1996:[sp]) describes the third context as

the reception and interpretation of the work, specifically “the colour of the lenses through which the work is being scrutinised” whether that be artistic biography, psychological approaches, political criticism, feminism, cultural history, formalism, structuralism, semiotics, reception theory, etc.

The lens or theory which I consider to best frame my argument is that which holds that material culture must be read as ‘entangled narratives’ of makers and users amidst prevailing circumstances and values. The leading proponent of the theory of entangled narrative is Prof. Ian Hodder. Although Hodder originally evolved this theory in his anthropological research (www. archaeology.stanford.edu/people/ian-hodder), it subsequently became acknowledged in material culture studies, which in turn resonates with the discipline of art history. As will be detailed further in subsequent chapters, this theory dismisses the practise of categorising objects by style and chronology and, from a post-modernist viewpoint, acknowledges that the object can accrue meanings beyond its obvious function and the maker’s own intent.

The theoretical perspective of material culture as an entanglement of narratives, borrows from current archaeological meta-methodology. From archaeological and anthropological viewpoints, the object in material culture is acknowledged as an embodiment of itself, its time and its society, beyond its obvious functional form and usage. The object is therefore not understood merely to be that which its outward form and function suggest, but in fact, all that it represents and reflects. Amongst the leading advocates of this approach, along with Prof. Hodder, are the archaeologists Prof. Bjørnar Olsen at the University of Tromsø, Prof. J. Theodore Peña at the University of California Berkeley, Prof. Jeroen Poblome at the University of Leuven, and Prof. Michael B. Schiffer at the University of Arizona. Hodder (2012:3468) explains that entanglement develops between artefacts and humans in a complex environment underpinned by technology, social obligation, exchange relations, phenomenological understanding, ideological perspective and social jockeying. In this web of relations, the artefact is dependent on the human

for its making, use, maintenance, meaning and assigned value. The artefact is therefore both a narrative of itself, and a narrative of how it is entangled with the culture in which it exists.[3]

In line with this research theory, I will examine the nature of studio pottery inclusive of the values associated with it during the twentieth century, but also investigate how and why South African studio pottery of the later-twentieth century became associated with the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery.

This requires taking into account not only the oeuvres of individual studio potters, but also the reception of the collective genre of studio pottery in a specific time frame.

For a better understanding of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery as it arose and developed in England and later elsewhere in the world, I discuss its founding philosophy and the forms in which it was expressed in Chapter 1. That overview presents the setting in which South African studio pottery became established, and for the resultant perceived association with the Anglo-Oriental tradition. A discussion of the careers and oeuvres of the pioneer South African studio potters (Bosch, Rabinowitz and Haden) follows in Chapter 2. The emergence of the second generation of South African studio potters is traced in Chapter 3, which also introduces the debut of the country's post-modern ceramists and the latter's dismissal of studio pottery as being trapped in the Anglo-Oriental mould. Some retrospective perspectives on the actual influence of the Anglo-Oriental tradition as it manifested in South Africa in the later twentieth century, are introduced and analysed in Chapter 4. To balance those views, I then draw upon the considerations of currently active studio potters and ceramists on the

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3 The term "artefact" denotes "something made or modified by humans" without the typical (and non-obligatory) association of being of cultural or historical interest (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary* 2004. Sv "artefact").

validity of introducing an alternative descriptive epithet for the South African studio pottery and ceramics of the time in question. The research findings are presented in the conclusion. Foremost amongst the findings is that the influence of the Anglo-Oriental tradition was exaggerated during the later twentieth century, where in that process, other important studio pottery influences were either ignored or under-played.

This dissertation will serve to clarify that the studio pottery of the later twentieth century was not monolithic in either its influences, or in the forms in which it was expressed. It will also highlight the need for further investigation of the lives and works of the later twentieth-century studio potters, whose achievements would otherwise remain obfuscated by the ‘Anglo-Oriental’ epithet.

CHAPTER 01

The rise of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery – its character and scope of influence

The South African ceramist and art historian Prof. Ian Calder (2010) has reflected that the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery was done a disservice by presenting it as a "a single monolithic tradition" as espoused by Bernard Leach. I endorse Calder's statement that the popular use of the 'Anglo-Oriental' epithet is not grounded in a proper understanding of that tradition. Here I present an abbreviated history of the founding and rise of the Anglo-Oriental tradition and also share the views of eminent academics about what it constituted and represented. This will provide the context for my investigation of the history of South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century, and my assessment of how, if at all, it reflected the Anglo-Oriental tradition.

The school of pottery arising in England in the 1920s and which came to be known as the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery, embodied a specific approach to materials, processes, forms, ethics and aesthetics. Within the span of three decades, it had gathered a following amongst a host of potters who sought to emulate its ethics and aesthetics. Those potters found ready support for their wares amongst consumers who sought to enrich their lives and lifestyles with hand-made utilitarian and ornamental wares that, in some sense, represented a continuation of a handcraft tradition. By the middle of the twentieth century, studio potteries as far afield as the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand were producing pottery which, by the dictum of Bernard Leach (1940:20), could only be good if the pot was "a genuine expression of life" and revealed "sincerity on the part of the potter and truth in the conception and execution of the work". In their interpretations of the Leachian philosophy that shunned industrialism, modernism and capitalism, the new generation of studio potters created a formulaic look for their studio pottery in which, according to Australian studio pottery art historian Damon Moon (2008:[sp]), individual

expression was so deeply obscured that “one couldn’t tell whether a faceted celadon glazed jar was made in Melbourne or London.”

7. Bernard Leach and Shōji Hamada at their first joint kiln firing in Mashiko, Japan, 1942.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, by which time the industrial revolution had mechanised production and restructured economies and societies, there came to be a longing for a return to the aesthetics of the hand-made artefact. The architect of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain, William Morris (1834-1896), took inspiration from the call by John Ruskin (1819-1900) to preserve individual craftsmanship and challenge the uniformity and anonymity of mass-made machine goods. The Arts and Crafts Movement extended into the first decade of the twentieth century and promoted the “humble anonymous craftsmen producing simple, useful articles for everyday use” (Lewenstein and Cooper 1974:14). The Movement saw it that craft was not a skill, but a defined area or type of work that conferred a certain dignity, and from which the crafter could gain a “spiritual satisfaction” (Watson 1993:13).

Parallel to the work produced in England's functional ware potteries, an industry that focused on producing 'art pottery' came into being. A number of production potteries established special art departments or studios within their operations and employed designers, modellers and painters to create "art wares" (Lewensteinand Cooper 1974:9). Those employees were not given individual recognition. It was only after World War I, in both a ravaged and redefined society, that potters in Britain emerged as 'artist-crafters' within the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery. In such an incarnation, the potter was both designer and maker, in whose work art and craft would be unified and in which the potter's 'textural signature' could be found. That 'signature' referred to finger prints, throwing lines, interventions, and imperfections embedded in the clay and glaze. The studio pottery historian Oliver Watson (1993:12) has explained that "the actual touch of the artist's hand on the material [became] an important part of the artistic expression and an important mark for the owner in pointing to the object's uniqueness and worth."

In the mid-1920s, the term 'studio pottery' described hand-made pottery produced individually on a small scale by a single person or a small studio team, whether for the express purpose of function, or as aesthetic statement (Watson 1993:12, Jones 2007:8). The two leading figures in Britain at that time were Leach and William Staite Murray (1881-1962). Both shared the European interest in the aesthetics of ceramics dating to the Tang and Song dynasties originating from the seventh to the thirteenth century, caches of which were discovered during the cutting of new railway lines in 1899 through China's Henan Province. The tombs that were unearthed during the construction revealed a very different type of ceramics compared with the known underglaze-blue, polychrome and *sang de boeuf* [1] glazed wares of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The Tang and Song stoneware works were admired for their demure, harmonious shapes and monochrome glazes (Watson 1993:18, Vurovecz 2008:16).When European artist-

1. *Sang de boeuf* describes a blood red colour derived from using a copper-rich glaze (Savage & Newman 1974:254).

potters started to echo such Oriental aesthetics, art galleries took notice and began to promote their individual (as opposed to serial) works. This opened the door for Staite Murray, who was Head of Pottery at the Royal College of Art from 1925 to 1939, to present his finely proportioned and decorated pots as an art form in its own right (Jones 2007:8). Leach, on the other hand, aspired to fuse the Eastern aesthetics of form and decoration with English practicality (Lewenstein and Cooper 1974:16-17) or, as described by the British studio pottery art historian Jeffrey Jones (2007:81), to hold "the exotic Eastern and the indigenous English […] in a creative tension which gave opportunities for a playful crossover of techniques, styles and sensibilities".

Leach spent the years 1910 to 1920 in Japan, and during that time, cultivated an appreciation for Japanese concepts of art and beauty. In that period and also later, he travelled extensively in the Far East, which fuelled his fascination with Song dynasty and Korean pottery. He studied traditional Japanese pottery under Urano Shigekichi (1851-1923), the Sixth *kenzan*,[2] and later claimed to have jointly inherited the title of Seventh *kenzan* with his potter friend Tomimoto Kenkichi (1886-1963). On his return to England, and with the help of his potter-friend Shōji Hamada, Leach established a workshop at St. Ives in Cornwall, where during the initial years of production, he specialised in creating a range of slip-decorated, domestic earthenware and alongside those, pieces inspired by medieval period Chinese stoneware (Watson 1993:19). Leach's early studio pottery career at St. Ives is of particular relevance because of the style he was developing there and for his philosophy that was taking shape. The essential features of his philosophy were that the artist was the craftsman, all the processes from conception to completion were of equal importance, and that the production of

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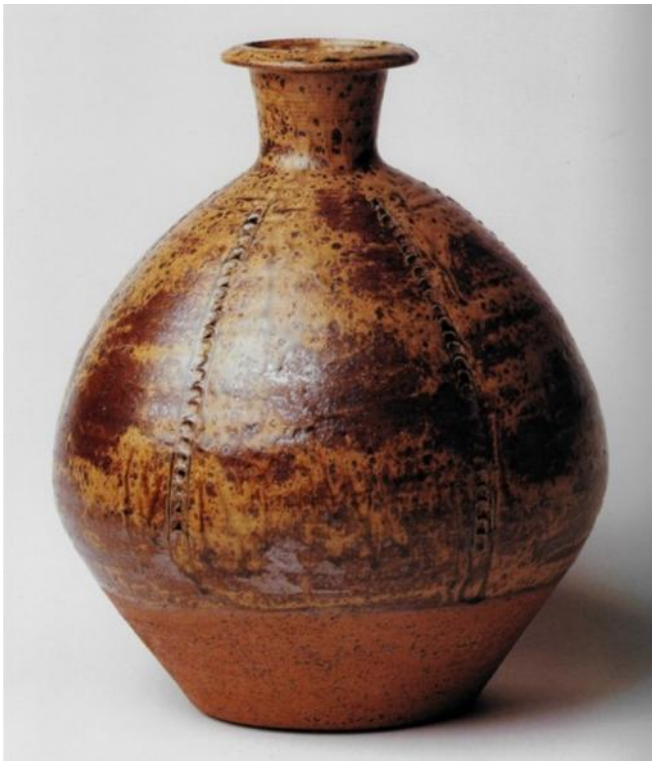
2. *Kenzan* can be roughly translated as the honorific title for a visionary master potter (Wilson 1999:9, 13). Leach's claim to the title of *kenzan* has been disputed by Richard Wilson (1999: 9-13), in whose opinion such a title would have elevated Leach to the status of a Japanese master potter. Wilson argues that Leach's *kenzan* teacher merely handed him a volume of glaze recipes, and that such a gesture was considered to be a "certificate of competence", as opposed to an acknowledgement of succession.

standard wares did not exclude the studio potter from creating individual pieces (Watson 1993:19).



8. Bernard Leach, Vase (c. 1955).

A second significant influence on Leach was the rise in the 1920s of the Japanese folk craft movement known as *mingei*. *Mingei*'s principal promotor, Sōetsu Yanagi, defined folk craft as "unself-consciously handmade and unsigned for the people by the people, cheaply and in quantity" (Yanagi 1972:198). Yanagi found support in his contemporaries Leach, Hamada and the Japanese potter Kawai Kanjiro (1890-1966) for his stance that true beauty was revealed in anonymous, humble, selfless, and ego-less utilitarian folk craft (Watson 1993:15).

For Watson (1993:22), it was the fusion of elements of *mingei*, the Arts and Crafts movement's concern with the spiritual degradation of industrialised life, and the growing interest in oriental religious beliefs, that culminated in the 'ethical pot' that underpinned the Anglo-Oriental tradition of study pottery. The essence of the 'ethical pot' was summarised by the Japanese art specialist Ellen P. Conant

9. Shōji Hamada, Square bottle (1942).

(1992:2) as an “amalgam of philosophical, religious and aesthetic elements that saw beauty in utilitarian objects made by and for common people”. The blending of Leach and Yanagi’s philosophies manifested in the Anglo-Oriental tradition in which the potter engaged with every stage of production as a statement that “the finished product … is only part of the whole” (Cruise 1991:41). Jones (2007:31) offered this summary of the most significant features of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery:

> the cultivation and appreciation of accidental effects; the celebration of the unique pot as an expression of the creative identity of the individual maker; the recognition of the potter as artist rather than designer; an understanding of the pot as a vehicle for the exploration of formal qualities as opposed to a ground for representational decoration; the direct engagement of potters with the technology of their craft, particularly kiln technology; a respect for and a delight in the ‘caprice of the fire’; the re-evaluation of the potter’s wheel as a creative tool; the acknowledgement of Chinese Sung dynasty ceramics as a standard to be emulated; an emphasis on the pottery workplace as an artist’s studio; and the growing imperative towards self-sufficiency.

To those points raised by Jones, a further feature of this tradition must be added. Tanya Harrod, the biographer of Leach's apprentice Michael Cardew, states that the 1920s introduced an awareness that throwing clay on a potter's wheel was a "performative act […] a semi-spiritual act, in which, as both Leach and William Staite Murray put it, 'the pot is born rather than made'"(2013:54).

The Leachian way of understanding studio pottery was promoted in his first book, *A Potter's Book* published in 1940. The book proposed that a potter and his assistants could produce a range of utilitarian wares and individual works in a studio as a feasible enterprise. Proof of that was already delivered by Cardew who, after his three-year long apprenticeship under Leach, set up a studio in Winchcombe, Gloucestershire in 1926 to produce a range of "homely" wares (Jones 2007:24-25) that would appeal to a contemporary market. Leach's approach to studio pottery hinged as much on materials and processes as it did on the recognition of the 'heartbeat' of the work of the 'artist-craftsman'. The 'artist-craftsman' constituted a fusion of artist and craftsman in the potter's way of thinking and doing. In his introduction to Yanagi's *The Unknown Craftsman*, Leach (Yanagi 1972:97) offered this explanation:

> Handcraftsmanship, if it be alive, justifies itself at any time as an intimate expression of the spirit of man. Such work is an end in itself and not a means to an end. If, however, it ceases to serve a functional need, it runs the risk of becoming art for art's sake and untrue to its nature, depending upon the sincerity of the craftsman.

In linking art and craft with that proviso, Leach left the door open for the artist-potter to achieve individual recognition. Leach himself did not aspire to be "the unknown craftsman" whom Yanagi admired, and he therefore also produced works for galleries which sold at three times the price of his regular output, well above the means of the average skilled British worker. Leach also used his 'BL' potter's mark to establish the provenance of those works (Clark 1999:25). There was a growing opinion that Leach's philosophy did not match his output. Jones (2007:27) quoted an example of such criticism from *Country Pottery* by Andrew McGarva in which McGarva cited a review from 1959: "Bernard's

ambitions, both for his own work and that of pottery in general, were too lofty and over-reached the proper bounds of a humble craft in the pursuit of artistic expression."

Parallel with this new development in English studio pottery, the Bauhaus movement (1919-1933) in Germany explored functional design and new ways of processing materials, resulting in what Mark Hewitt (1952:87) described as "tightly-machined pots". It also prepared the way for potters to design mass-produced wares in studios within ceramic factories such as Arabia in Finland and Gustavesberg in Sweden. In the years after World War II, the teaching of craft pottery flourished in England's art schools and colleges, with some institutions leaning towards the aesthetics of the Anglo-Oriental tradition and others favouring the modern ceramics, of which the British studio potters Lucie Rie (1902-1995) and Hans Coper (1920-1981) were the leading proponents. Rie's work focused on subtle, industrial shapes and Coper developed pot forms into sculptural works. The stage for their styles was set by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), who started in 1946 to create pottery in a hitherto unknown idiom. His exhibition of ceramics in 1950 in London illustrated the way in which pottery could be interpreted as a thoroughly modern art form (Watson 1993:29). In the 1960s, the English art schools and colleges and in particular the Central School of Art and Design in London, shifted their focus from teaching pottery as craft practice to the encouragement of individual creativity in the "investigation of form, material and captured movement" (Watson 1993:30), which translated into the "vessel" that stood opposite to the pot.

This was the point in time when English post-modern ceramics came into its own right. Post-modern ceramics was, by then, well-established in the United States of America, where it was preceded by the abstract expressionism of which Peter Voulkos (1924-2002) was the leading ceramic exponent. Pottery was dismissed by the pro-post-modern art historian and critic Garth Clark (1975:4) as 'traditionalist' whilst he elevated ceramics to the 'avant garde'. Generally speaking, studio pottery became associated with stereotypical, high-temperature,

reduction-fired stoneware with dark-coloured or neutral glazes, and subtle brushwork decoration. This perception continued into the late twentieth century, as captured by American studio potter and teacher John Britt (1996) in his satirical writing, when he described the tradition's followers as "Neo-Leachians [who] can be heard chanting, generally in a high pitched, whinny squeal, 'beauty, form, and function...' over and over." The pioneer South African studio potter Esias Bosch was dismissive of the art-craft debate and commented that "a pot must be appreciated for what it is"[3] (my translation) (Grutter 1976:38). He did, however, make a clear distinction between pots that are functional and "parlour pots"[4] (my translation), which serve no purpose other than to be appreciated for their distinctive beauty (Grutter 1976:38).

The English studio potters who built on the Leach-Hamada foundation, and to various degrees perpetuated the Anglo-Oriental tradition, included Cardew, at his original Winchcombe studio, and his later studios at Wenford Bridge, Cornwall and Abuja, Nigeria; Raymond Finch (1914–2012) at Winchcombe; Kenneth Quick (1931–1963) at the Tregenna Hill Pottery, Cornwall; Warren MacKenzie in the United States of America; Harold Hughan (1893-1987) in Australia; and Peter Stichbury (1924-2015) in New Zealand.

At the International Conference of Craftsmen in Pottery & Textiles at Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon, July 17-27, 1952, a subtle but significant shift led away from studio pottery as craft towards studio pottery as art, in the sense that "the crafts person's products [should] command a market as works of art" (Vurovecz 2008:40). Two of the conference themes centred on issues which had been debated, often with acerbity, by potters and ceramists. One theme addressed the craftsman's function in an industrialised society. The other explored the craftsman of the day as an inheritor of traditions from every culture and age, and the influence of these traditions on his development and

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3. *'n Pot moet geniet word vir wat hy is.*
4. *Voorhuis potte.*

outlook (Vurovecz 2008:40). Leach, Hamada, Yanagi and Cardew were in attendance. Leach was already critical of the standard of studio pottery in the post-World War II years, and thought that the craft was "suffering from aesthetic indigestion" (Leach 1978:238). During 1953 Leach, Hamada and Yanagi visited the United States of America on an extended tour, where Leach argued that American artist-potters were over-intellectualising, and failed in the effort to integrate elements of the world's best traditions into an evolved American tradition (Diffendal 1952:54-56). For Leach, the blending of the pottery traditions of the East and the West was "a question of marriage, not prostitution. […] Can the free-form geometry of the post-industrial era assimilate with organic humanism of the pre-industrial?" (Cooper [Sa]:[sp]).

10. Left to right. SōetsuYanagi, Bernard Leach and Shōji Hamada at the International Conference of Craftsmen in Pottery and Textiles at Dartington Hall, England, in 1952.

On the one hand, according to his wife Janet (1918-1997), Leach was "the great granddaddy of the 'do your own thing' generation" (Hatcher 1998:4). The studio potter and art historian Gary Hatcher, however, had a different

impression of Leach, stating that "[he was looking] over his shoulder, romanticizing [sic] earlier times […] [and that] *mingei* was the embodiment of the romantic return to the past" (Hatcher 1998:4).

The Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery, as an all-encompassing label for what Leach promoted, never achieved nor aspired to achieve a set formula for process, form or decoration. Instead, said Cardew (1983), what it did awaken in the studio potter, irrespective of culture, tradition and reference world, were spiritual standards. I found a reflection of what Cardew might have meant by this in a comment of Leach, when he was interviewed by Dean Schwarz (2002:76) in 1978:

> Well, in my lifetime […] I've only made two pots that the inside was bigger than the outside. Well, you can't see what's inside, but you can see the pot. You know how big or small the pot is or what texture it has. But the hole!? It's marvellous how subjective art is. With some teabowls the inside seems bigger than the outside. That's what's good about them. With humans it's what's here [points to his heart] that makes the difference. If you don't have it in the heart, nothing you make will make any difference […] The trouble with so much art – it has too much 'I' in it. The trick is to get the 'I' out, to let God in.

By the time of the emergence of the South African pioneer studio potters, the pottery of the twentieth century had evolved into many styles. Studio pottery was not an insular concept nor practice. Though the Anglo-Oriental tradition had played a significant role in its development, the result was not rigidly prescriptive when it came to materials, processes, forms or decorations.

CHAPTER 2

The pioneers of South African studio pottery: Esias Bosch, Hyme Rabinowitz and Bryan Haden

In this chapter, I discuss the pioneer South African studio potters Esias Bosch, Hyme Rabinowitz and Bryan Haden, and explore the nature and impact of their exposure to the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery. The critics of the earlier South African studio potters regularly referred to their work as being 'Anglo-Oriental', and even the respected art critic Lucia Burger (1989:26) reported in her review of the 1989 APSA-Corobrick exhibition of "[…] the dull familiarity of the pots in the 'Leach tradition'" (my translation).[1]

I present the argument here that the studio pottery pioneers Bosch and Rabinowitz were influenced to a greater extent by the philosophy and work of Michael Cardew than by that of Bernard Leach, where Bosch and Rabinowitz had direct contact and work experience with Cardew. Haden (2010) identified Leach, Cardew and in particular a contemporary studio potter of Cardew, Harry Davis (1910-1986) of Crowan Pottery, as having "significantly influenced [my] own approach to pottery". Jeffrey Jones (2007:85) cited a 1966 lecture at which Davis was hailed as "one of the great quartet of 20th century potters, alongside Leach, Cardew and Hamada". Bosch, too, did not withold his admiration for Davis, speaking of him as "the most complete potter", when compared with Leach, Cardew and Finch (Bosch, Anton 2016).

Cardew was apprenticed to Leach's St. Ives studio in 1920, and Davis was appointed as a paid worker at St. Ives in 1933. Cardew left St. Ives in 1926 and Davis resigned in 1937. Both did so in order to establish their own studios. Cardew set up his studio, named the Winchcombe Pottery, in the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire. He later established a second studio in Cornwall, known as Wenford Bridge. It is of critical importance to understand how Cardew, though

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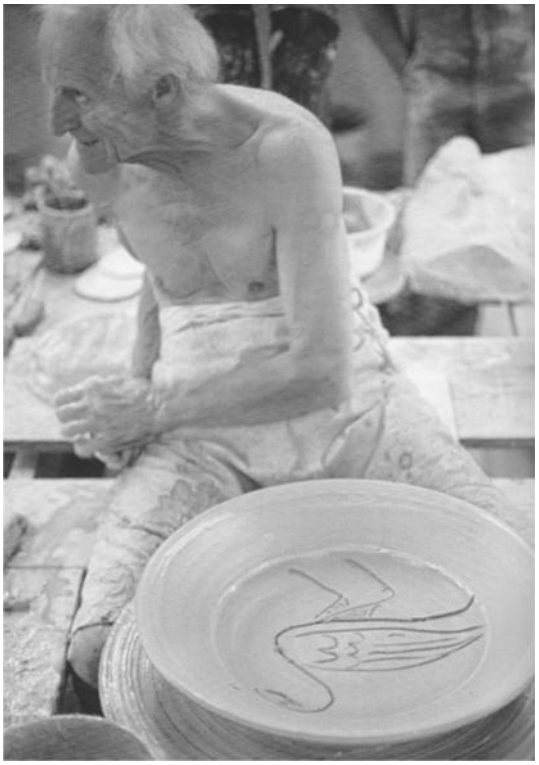
1. […] *die vale bekendheid van die potte in die' Leach-tradisie'*

grounded in the Anglo-Oriental tradition, evolved the distinctive philosophies and oeuvres to which Bosch and Rabinowitz would eventually be directly exposed.



11. Michael Cardew demonstrating his studio pottery techniques during a visit to the United States of America in 1976.

Cardew's objective in establishing his own pottery was to "run [it] on traditional country pottery lines but meeting the needs of a contemporary audience and market" (Jones 2007:24). Until 1939 when he established a second studio at Wenford Bridge in Cornwall, the pottery output included bread crocks, cider jars, pudding dishes and egg bakers, in which Jones (2007:25) read "the robust handling of the clay with the marks of the thrower's hands left on the surface of the pot, the direct and lively decorative processes, the sheer vigor of the conception and execution of these extraordinary objects".

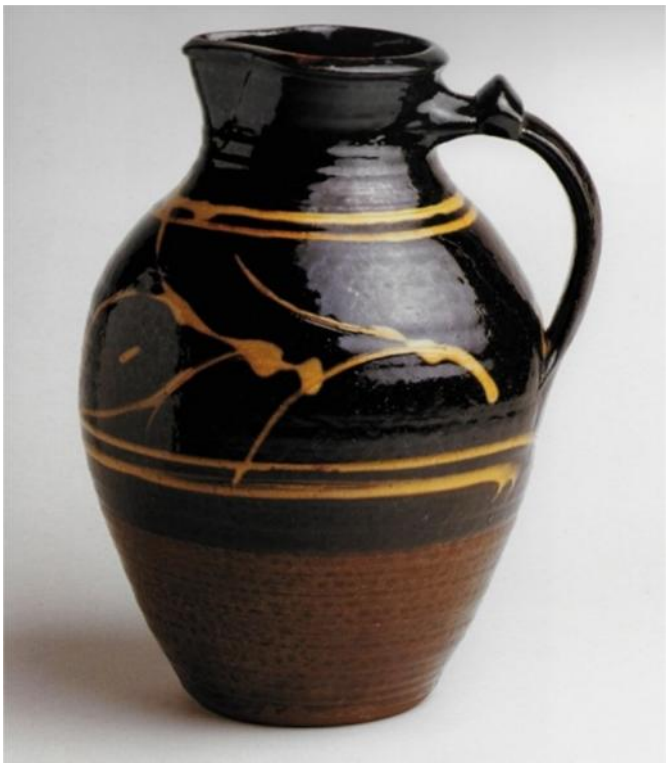
Jones (2007:24-25) further interpreted this as "a concerted effort on Cardew's part to reposition himself and his work within a changing contemporary social context" and favouring a "more homely world of common humanity".

Cardew's one and only quest, according to Oliver Watson (1993:12), was to produce functional ware. He quotes Cardew's comments, that the potter's task was to make "domestic, useful, usable pottery, which is what pottery is all about […] Potters make things you can eat and drink from, in considerable quantities" (Watson 1993:12). According to studio pottery and ceramics historian and critic Garth Clark (2006:6), Cardew "was the real thing when it comes to serving utility". He had no aspirations to make "art pottery" but wanted to make "nice" pots to be used. As Cardew (2011/2012:65) explained: "by 'nice', I mean convenient, well designed, good to look at and to handle and to live with, not too much more expensive than those produced by the 'factory system', and above all, alive."

12. Michael Cardew, Plate (1929).

Cardew's style of work at Winchcombe showed his admiration for English country pottery, which was typically dipped in slip for decorative purposes before bisquing; finally to be fired with lead-based earthenware glazes to create

an impregnable and durable surface, which was then further decorated in different coloured slips[2] before being lead-glazed. A decoration could have been as simple as a finger swipe through the slip, sgraffito,[3] brushwork or slip-trailing.[4] An example of a slipware plate in this style made by Cardew at his Winchcombe studio is shown in Figure 12, and an example of a jug decorated by slip-trailing is shown in Figure 13. His decorative themes were regularly abstracted, diagrammatic and stylised images from nature and the materials and processes underscored his commitment to "honesty" (Harrod 2012:53, 98-99).



13. Michael Cardew, Jug (1938).

Little separates Cardew in his early years from being an studio potter independent of his mentor Leach. Leach, too, appreciated the values of traditional English

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2. Slip is a liquid clay with the consistency of a thick cream (Savage & Newman 1974:265).
3. Sgraffito is the technique of scratching off parts of one or more layers of underglazes or slips to create contrasting images, patterns or texture (Savage & Newman 1974:261).
4. Slip-trailing is the application of a slip by means of a tube or nozzle to create a decoration (Savage & Newman 1974:265).

country pottery, and his studio initially produced “a well-designed range of domestic slipware closely based on traditional mediaeval shapes” (Lewenstein and Cooper 1974:16) of the highest quality, and in which craft and art were fused. Progressively, Leach introduced individual pieces, which, as in the range of standard wares, represented a combination of “the intellectual qualities of Japanese appreciation of form and decoration with the practical approach of the traditional English potter - a fusion of East and West” (Lewenstein and Cooper 1974:15-16). On the other hand, according to the British ceramist and writer Emmanuel Cooper (2002), “as a westerner [Cardew] thought it inappropriate to base his work on oriental forms, and was drawn almost instinctively to the softness of English earthenwares”. After his exposure to traditional African pottery and specifically to indigenous Nigerian pottery, Cardew liberally borrowed from those forms, colours and decorations to innovate or adapt designs. One such new design was a casserole dish that evolved from a traditional three-handled Gwari soup tureen, of which Cardew’s adaptation is shown in Figure 14. Cardew jokingly described the new shape as “pure chamber pot” with additions which made it “pure *Africa*” (Harrod 2010:264). In the view of Cooper (2000:286), the African influence can also be seen in Cardew’s brushwork decoration “with simple divisions of the surface enlivened with animal motifs”.

Neither the St. Ives studio under the management of Leach nor the Winchcombe studio for the period that Cardew was in charge, could be considered successful enterprises. St. Ives approached near-bankruptcy by 1930, and Cardew “lived in considerable penury and survived by dint of enormous hard work and self-deprivation” (Watson 1993:19). It was the modern production techniques introduced by Leach’s son David (1911-2005) in 1930, which saved St. Ives. The studio could, from then onwards, produce a relatively cheap range of standard domestic wares alongside one-off pieces, notably the series of large vases, which were designed (but not necessarily thrown) and decorated by Leach.

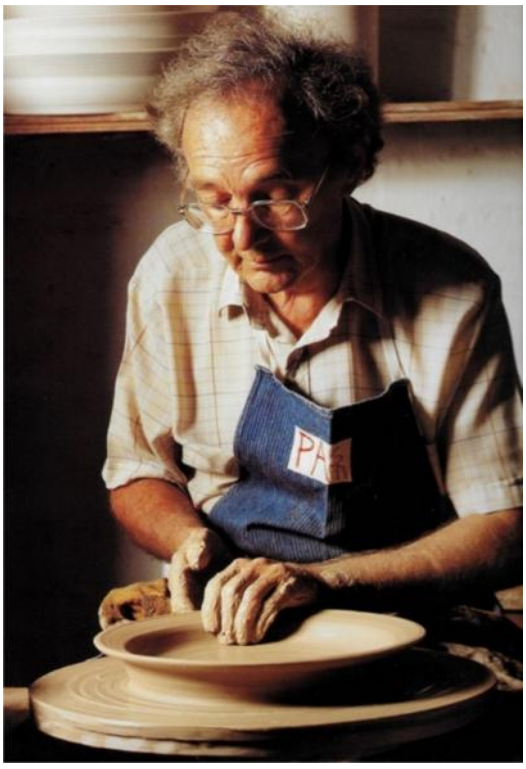
Tanya Harrod (2012) details Cardew’s career in great detail in the biography *The last sane man: Michael Cardew, modern pots, colonialism and the counterculture*.

Harrod traces how Cardew accepted an appointment in 1942 to manage the pottery at Achimota College in Ghana in after his second studio at Wenford Bridge failed as a profitable studio. Cardew resigned the Achimota position three years later, and from 1945 to 1948, he ran an independent pottery at Vurne-Dugarne on the River Volta in Ghana, which was his third commercial studio failure. In 1950, Cardew headed for Nigeria, to take charge of the Pottery Training Centre in Abuja, which he ran with considerable success until 1965. This era of work in Nigeria saw Cardew switch from earthenware to stoneware, and his work accrued a stylistic African influence (Jones 2007:116), coinciding with the first steps by Bosch, Rabinowitz and Haden to establish their own studio potter careers. They would, in time, become familiar with both the ethics and aesthetics underpinning the distinctive Cardew ethos. A timeline of these three pioneer potters' exposure to English studio pottery, as shown in Appendix 1, illustrates their succession as students and apprentices of Cardew and of his contemporaries.

14. Michael Cardew, Gwari casserole (c.1957/1958).

A bursary enabled Bosch to enroll in 1949 at the Central School of Art and Design in London (Bosch & De Waal 1988:16) to study under Dora Billington (1890–1968), who headed the ceramics department. The course in pottery was geared towards training students as school craft teachers, but this held no

appeal for Bosch. When Bosch expressed his wish to Billington to be a potter, she referred him to Raymond Finch at the Winchcombe Pottery (Bosch & De Waal 1988:17), where Finch was left in charge during Cardew's time in Abuja. Bosch was accepted in 1950 as an apprentice, with an initial period of undertaking menial tasks without pay, followed by a period of six months during which he was permitted to throw pint jugs on a kick-wheel. Finch also involved Bosch in the making of the pottery's first stoneware pots, which had "the most wonderful tomato red" (Wheeler1998:56) but, because of the high silica content, many of those shattered. About the Winchcombe experience Bosch would later recall: "[it taught me a] no nonsense approach to work – working with throwers who had great skill and understanding […] what I have done in later years was partly because of the sound approach at Winchcombe" (Wheeler1998:56).



15. Esias Bosch in his studio at White River.

To gain further experience, Bosch moved on to Cardew's studio at Wenford Bridge in mid-1952 (Bosch and De Waal 1988:18). There, working alongside

Cardew, who was home on leave from Abuja, he gained valuable experience in wood-firing and Cardew's "purist approach" of a strong discipline in producing quality work was imprinted on Bosch (Bosch and De Waal 1988:20). In this time, he met Leach, Hamada and Yanagi, who came to visit the Wenford studio. Later he accompanied Cardew on a visit to St. Ives, where, as Bosch recalled, the studio which was organised along traditional Japanese lines with three or four throwers, while Leach did the decorating, "was producing a great deal of domestic wares […] in order to make a living" (Bosch and De Waal 1988:20).

Bosch's return to South Africa in September 1952 and the subsequent development of his career are discussed by Andree Bosch and Johann de Waal (1988) in the biography *Esias Bosch*. With some months to spare before taking up the post of Head of the Ceramics Department at the Technical College in Durban, found employment at the Globe Potteries in Pretoria, where his job was to decorate earthenware ashtrays, vases and ornaments with 'San' designs. His original bursary required of Bosch to serve a two year period at the Technical College, but in his free time in a backyard studio, he produced his own slip-glazed domestic earthenware on a Leach kick-wheel, fired in an electric kiln. The Durban public showed little enthusiasm for Bosch's pieces not because of their quality, but because of unfamiliarity with hand-thrown domestic ware, and the prevailing sentiment that only imported English pottery would be of an acceptable standard (Bosch & De Waal 1988:23-24). His next appointment was as part-time lecturer in ceramics at the Pretoria Art School, which permitted Bosch to continue with his earthenware production in a studio in the city suburb of Hatfield. His range of work had expanded to also include vases, fruit bowls and tile panels. The decoration on some of those earthenware works such as illustrated in Figure 16 bore a striking resemblance to the combed, finger-brushed and trailed slip decorations with which he had become familiar at Winchcombe and which could be traced back to the decorations on Cardew's earlier English country pottery.

By 1960 when he had established himself as an earthenware studio potter of some repute, Bosch expressed serious interest in pursuing wood or oil-fired stoneware

pottery. The year before, he was invited by Cardew for a visit to Nigeria, where they toured pottery workshops in Kano, Sokoto and Abuja. Bosch and Cardew would meet up again in 1968 when Cardew visited Bosch at his studio in White River.

The conversations between Bosch and Cardew were dominated by philosophical and technical discussions about pottery. Bosch (Bosch & De Waal 1988:26) later recounted:

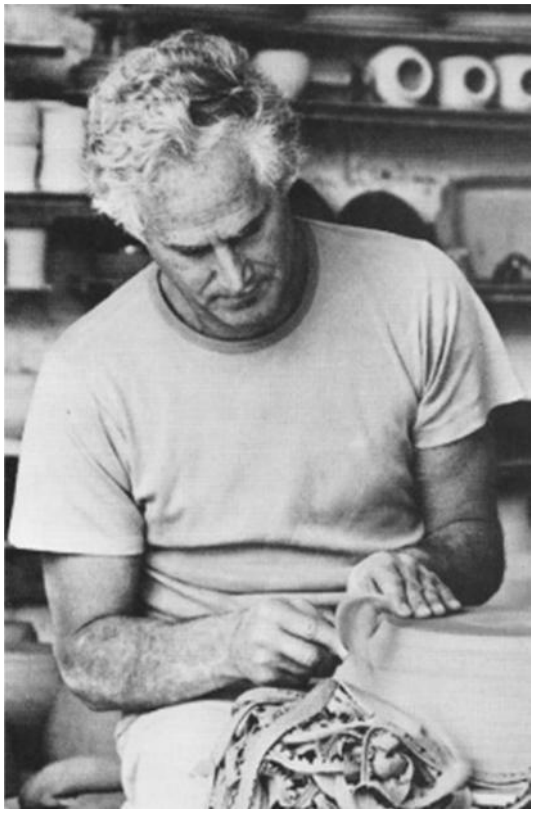
> I regarded him as a very great potter. A man of tremendous ability, he brought a certain intellectual, or philosophical, credibility to the new ceramic craft movement. His philosophy concerning the relationship between craft and art was simple, yet to an extent revolutionary: he held the view that any individual who created form which was new and not a repetition of what had been made before, was an artist. The medium was irrelevant. The opposite was also true; the individual who reproduced what had been created before, in whatever medium, could never be an artist but remained a craftsman. Usefulness did not preclude the possibility that an object might be a work of art.

16. Esias Bosch, Dish (late 1950s).

17. Esias Bosch, Lidded box (c.1978).

18. Esias Bosch, Jug (c.1978).

Two examples of Bosch's reduction-fired stoneware dating to the late 1970s and 1980s are shown in Figures 17 and 18. The first is a lidded round box with floral motifs in wood-ash and iron glazes. The other is of a jug in a vibrant blue iron glaze.



19. Hyme Rabinowitz photographed in the early 1970s at his Eagle's Nest studio.

The unfolding of Rabinowitz's career as studio potter is narrated in his unpublished memoir titled A Few Remembrances ([Sa]) which was made available to me by his widow Jenny Rabinowitz during my fieldwork interview with her in 2011. During a visit to England in 1956, he visited studio potteries in Cornwall and met Kenneth Quick (1931–1963) at his Tregenna Hill pottery studio in St. Ives. Quick was a former apprentice of Leach. He mentioned to Rabinowitz that Leach had a vacancy at his St. Ives studio, and Rabinowitz went to be interviewed by him. Having already made plans to crew a yacht back to South Africa, Rabinowitz could not provide Leach with a definite commitment to take up the vacancy. The crewing opportunity did not materialise, but Quick offered to take Rabinowitz on as studio assistant for a six-month period. As assistant, he was required to mix clay in a bucket and deliver the pots to customers by bus, packed in a haversack. During this period, he met Cardew, who was preparing to return to Abuja, at the Wenford Bridge studio. In 1957, Rabinowitz made his way to Kano in Nigeria, where Cardew was setting up another training centre. He made no

mention in his memoir of actually engaging in any studio pottery work whilst with Cardew in Nigeria.

The memoir narrates that Rabinowitz returned to South Africa late in 1957, and was offered studio space at Higgovale, where he built a wood-fired kiln. For a six month period in 1961/1962, Rabinowitz worked as assistant to Bosch in White River and then returned to Cape Town to set up his final studio at Eagle's Nest. A financial award by the Cape Tercentenary Foundation which was founded to promote the arts, culture and natural environment in the Western, Eastern and Northern Cape Provinces (www. cape300foundation.org.za) enabled Rabinowitz to visit England once again in 1966. Cardew, who by then had abandoned his work in Nigeria, agreed to take him on as assistant at Wenford Bridge. Cardew, as Rabinowitz ([Sa]:39) recalled, did not teach but demanded of his students to observe, practice and "listen to his sophisticated opinions". There was also time to visit Leach who told Rabinowitz that he had been given a very favourable report by Cardew. In a letter to Bosch, Cardew described Rabinowitz as having been "a tremendous help" at Wenford Bridge (Cardew 1967). Rabinowitz's link with Cardew was acknowledged when he was invited to exhibit his work along with 13 of Cardew's former pupils at a retrospective exhibition to honour Cardew that was hosted by the Beardsmore Galley in London in 1993. In press coverage of the event, Rabinowitz was described as the studio potter who "carried the [Cardew] tradition back to southern Africa" (*National Ceramics Quarterly* 1993:11).

Examples of Rabinowitz's work produced at the Eagle's Nest studio are presented in Figures 20, 21 and 22. The first and second figures show his use of fish as a decorative theme. The wax-resist technique was used to create the stylistic line drawings of two fishes to contrast with a field of tenmoku[5] glaze on the pot stand. On the bottle vase, the two fishes, air bubbles and cross-hatching were incised in the clay, after which the work was dipped in a chun[6] glaze.

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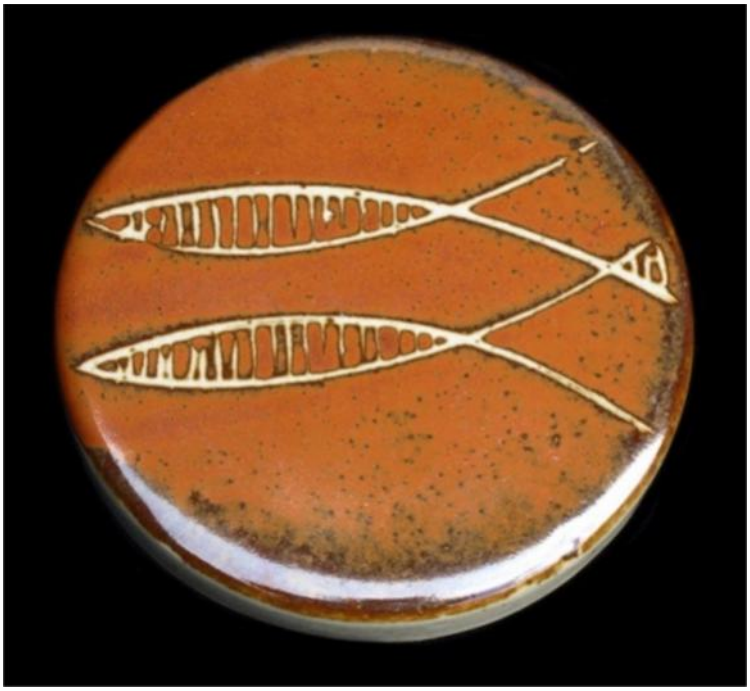
5. Tenmoku is a glaze rich in iron-oxide, which, depending on the type of kiln and method of firing, produces a very glossy, deep maroon to black colour (Rhodes 1973:289).
6. Chun is an opalescent bluish glaze (Rhodes 1973:267).



20. Hyme Rabinowitz, Pot stand (post-1962).

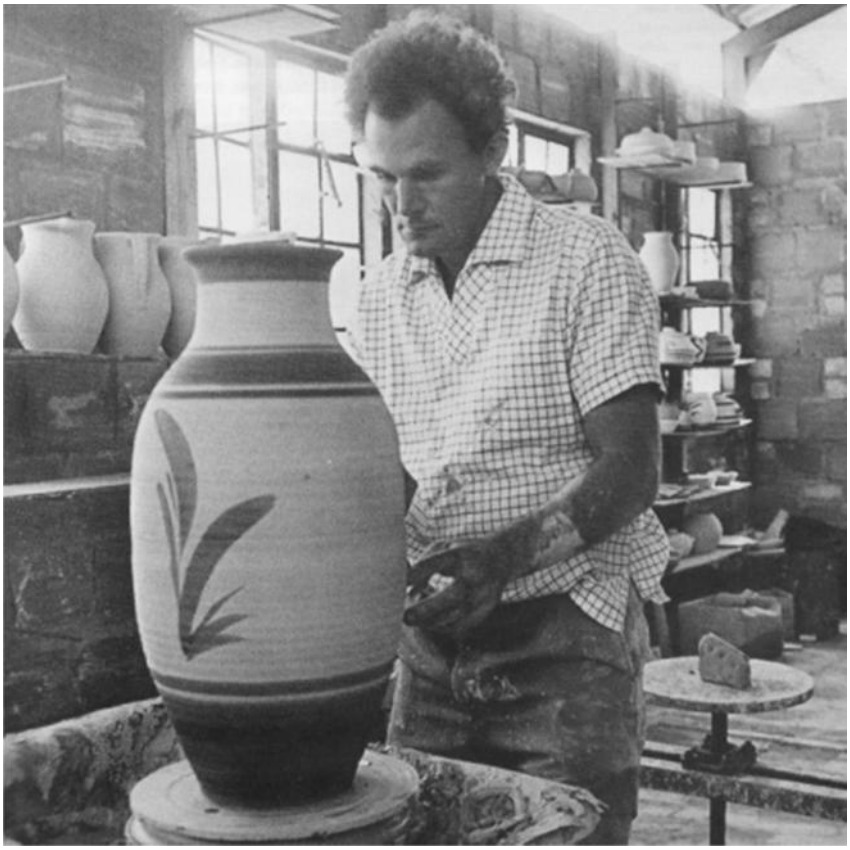
21. Hyme Rabinowitz, Slabbed bottle vase (post-1962).

22. Hyme Rabinowitz, Bowl (post-1962).

The third work is a bowl, of which only the inside was decorated with cobalt brushwork of a geometric design on a field of chun. Rabinowitz never ceased to experiment with glazes. He corresponded about glazes with Bosch and the New Zealand studio potter Peter Stitchbury (1924-2015), who was the earliest of Cardew's Western apprentices at Abuja (Rabinowitz, Jenny 2011; De Beer 2015), and even exchanged works with them to compare the results of various glazes on different clay bodies.

After four years of studying fine arts at the University of Natal during which time he was also instructed in ceramics by Hilda Ditchburn (1917-1986) (Ditchburn 1960), Haden set off to England in 1953 to visit potteries and secured a two month long appointment with Davis at Crowan Pottery in Cornwall. Davis was formerly a thrower at Leach's St. Ives studio from 1933 to 1936, whereafter he took up the position of Head of the Art School at Achimota College, at which Cardew would succeed him. Davis wanted Haden to sign up for a five-year period of service at Crowan, but Haden declined the opportunity, a decision which he later deeply

regretted, because of the fame that Davis had garnered for the fine appearance and strength of his pottery (Haden 2010).



23. Bryan Haden in his studio in Gordon's Bay, photographed in the early 1970s.

On his return to South Africa, Haden established a studio at Hay Paddock in Pietermaritzburg to produce functional pieces in oxidised stoneware. His early work was sufficiently impressive to earn him participation in a South African Craft Exhibition in Washington, but financial constraints compelled Haden to close the studio in 1958. He established his second studio on the family farm Bonnefoi in Mpumalanga Province in 1963, but one year later he set off to work in stoneware at Aylesford Monastery Pottery in Kent. The monastery pottery was established by David Leach and Colin Pearson (1923-2007). Haden's work was to throw Elizabethan-type ware including goblets, loving cups, cherubim pots and large holders for Holy Water. In 1965, he returned to South Africa to take up a

teaching post at the Greenpoint Art Centre in Cape Town, and in the following year, he set up house and studio on the mountain slopes of Gordon's Bay.

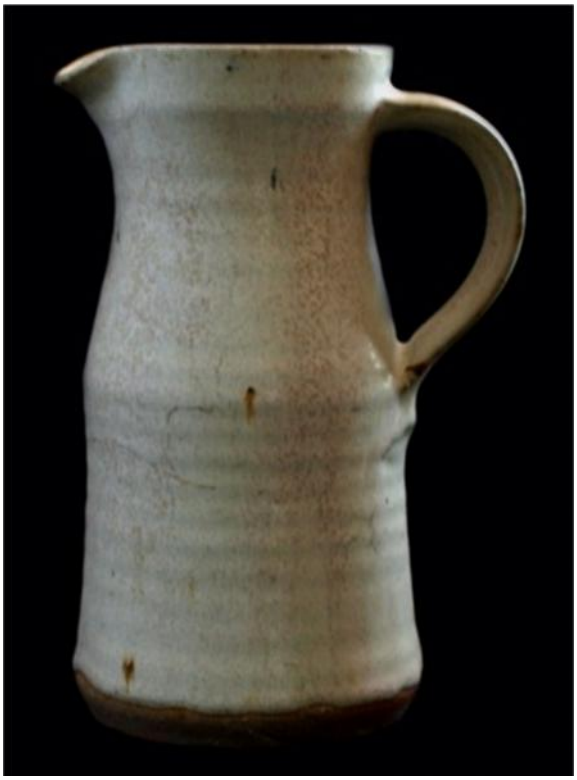
Compared with Bosch and Rabinowitz, scant coverage was given of Haden's work in the *Sgraffiti* and *National Ceramics Quarterly* editions, and hence, little can be gleaned from this archive about the reception of his work. He suffered a stroke in 1997, which ended his studio pottery career, and by the time that I interviewed him in 2010, he was not able to communicate without difficulty. He was firmly linked to his fellow-pioneers Bosch and Rabinowitz, and was included in exhibitions which featured their work. His style had little in common with those of Bosch and Rabinowitz, and in my reasoning, harkened back to the types of pottery in which he was trained in England.

24. Bryan Haden, Bowl (1980s).

Figure 24 is of a Haden bowl decorated with tenmoku and a thick wood-ash glaze. The next illustrated work (Fig. 25) is of a tall lidded jar with minimalist pinched decorations and sgraffito waving grasses. The glaze is a thick celadon.[7] The third example of his work (Fig. 26) is that of a jug in a feldspathic glaze which, as in the case of the illustrated bowl, was thickly applied.

7. Celadon is a transparent glaze in various hues of jade colour (Rhodes 1973:266).

25. Bryan Haden, Lidded jar (post-1966).



26. Bryan Haden, Jug (post-1966).

I will now proceed with a discussion of the extent to which the oeuvres of the

pioneer studio potters can be determined to embody the tenets of the Anglo-Oriental tradition, as well as the pottery philosophy of Cardew. Having dedicated more than five decades of his life to studio pottery, during which time he accumulated and refined a vast array of experiences and influences, Cardew distilled his studio pottery philosophy in eloquent, but simple terms. In a paper based on his lectures at the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco and at the Alfred University in New York in September 1976, Cardew (2011/2012:64-69) posed the question: "why make pots in the last quarter of the 20th century?". His thoughts on the validity of producing functional wares in a studio pottery and of creating individual styles without sacrificing the principles of what makes a valuable pot, are reflected in the ethics and aesthetics of the studio pottery of Bosch, Rabinowitz and Haden. Of particular importance is Cardew's insistence that form is the non-negotiable foundation for whatever style the studio potter might pursue:

> Pottery is about one thing only: the majesty of form […] What makes form so 'majestic'? The universe we perceive and feel and know (the only universe we can know) is form - whether felt, heard, tasted, smelled, seen, or created by thought. Form is the only shape in which we can live. It predates all our mental categories and includes them as contributors or attributes of its power. Whatever you express, in any medium, you do it in, by, and through form. Form says more than any discourse or process of reasoning, and it says it more neatly - that is the true meaning of the saying: 'the style is the man.' And this is what a potter is doing, well or less well, according to his talent, his perseverance, his skill, his capacity for work, his capacity for pleasure, his power of concentrating the whole of himself on what he is making. All arts use form, but pottery tends to be almost all form […] (Cardew2011/2012:69).

The throwing of good forms precedes all else in studio pottery practice. Cardew did not stint in his criticism of the abandonment of form, which he considered was being promoted in the late 1950s by the leading London art schools. Of the works included in the 1958 exhibition in London, *Ceramics: Pre-history to Picasso,* he dismissed it for having presented "hardly any *pots* at all, mostly 'ceramics', i.e. odd shapes & queer objects" (Harrod 2012:279). He expressed scathing views on post-modern ceramics in his review of the 1972 *International Ceramics* exhibition

at the Victoria and Albert Museum, describing the works at that exhibition as academic and the product of art schools where "[t]he New Academicians, the faculty, are a formidable body armed with straw dogs and many clockwork oranges" (Harrod 2012:353).[8]

Rabinowitz's unpublished autobiographical notes included his very concise endorsement of Cardew's stance on form: "Cardew held that form was all-important and I tend to agree" ([Sa]:65). Haden did not leave a legacy of personal writings about his approach to studio pottery nor of his thoughts on form. Critiques and commentaries on Haden's work, however, hailed his "refinement of form" (Clarke and Wagner 1974:41), that there was "nothing effete or atrophied in the forms" (Cruise 1991:48) and that he threw pottery with "generosity in form" (Cruise 1991:48). A former apprentice, Nico Liebenberg (2010), recounted Haden's dictum that "pots must have perfect proportions".

F.G.E. Nilant (1963:55) lauded Bosch's "simplicity of […] shape" while the art historian Hans Fransen (1982:339) found appeal in Bosch's "balance of shape and decorative elements". According to the art historian Eunice Basson, Bosch (Bosch and De Waal 1988:37) had "a strong sensitivity for pure, simple form" and the highly acclaimed South African studio potter Thelma Marcusson made reference to his "elegance of form" (Bosch and De Waal 1988:44). Clark and Wagner's (1974:14) analysis of Bosch's forms deserves special attention:

> His interpretation of the representation of form is a key criteria when Bosch's work is discussed. Form is not just the physical but also the space it commands and that was an invitation for Bosch to explore the identity and diversity of a form of which he knew the possibilities in advance: "When I throw a pot or bowl… I know what the form will

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8. 'Straw dogs' is a metaphor for 'something worthless' (Lao Tzu [Sa]:43) and 'clockwork orange' refers to Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* published in 1962, which the author subsequently defined as someone with "the appearance of an organism lovely with colour and juice, but is in fact only a clockwork toy to be wound up by God or the Devil" **(**www.thefloatinglibrary.com**)**.

> be. It may alter slightly to compensate for the characteristics of the clay, but merely to sit and produce in the hope that some good will emerge, is a waste of time.

Clark and Wagner did not quote Bosch in full and the balance of the statement was included in the Bosch and De Waal (1988:24) biography: "you must have the shape visualized [sic] from the beginning, but only with practice can you control the shape". The key word in this last part of the quote is "practice" or, more correctly, "repetition", which allows for the mastery of throwing on the potter's wheel or in decoration with requisite speed. His further thoughts on this subject were documented in his biography (1988:18):

> There is basic donkey-work that you must do if you have intentions of becoming a good potter. One of these things is throwing. You have to throw again and again and again. A form develops, it is not something you get right the very first time. Only if you make a few thousand of one item, can you eventually begin to perfect that form.

Bosch was witness to how Cardew could throw up to fifty pieces in a morning and after inspecting his work, break all those which did not meet his standards. He recalled that it was not unusual for Cardew to retain only five to ten of the thrown pieces after a throwing session. Bosch himself would develop as a "prodigious" (Clark and Wagner 1974:17) studio potter. The arts and crafts promoter and dealer Helen de Leeuw (1917-2006) (Clark and Wagner 1974:17) reported that Bosch threw thirty casserole dishes in half an hour. At Winchcombe Pottery, he showed his ability to decorate rows of dishes "with speed and dexterity", which had a lasting impression on Finch (Bosch & De Waal 1988:21). During the era of his porcelain production, Bosch could decorate as many as 400 pieces within two or three days (Bosch & De Waal 1988:41). Like Cardew, Bosch too would be ruthless in destroying any of his works which did not meet his exacting standards. His daughter Esra Bosch (2016a) recounted that Bosch would walk past the shelves with an outstretched arm to sweep unworthy pots onto the studio floor.

It was quite typical of the studio potteries in England to have a team of employed workers, with apprentices in tow. At both the Winchcombe and Wenford Bridge

studios, Cardew never employed as large a team as Leach did, but had a fair few apprentices. Cardew (2011/2012:67) advocated that "a potter needs assistants or pupils, since you can't run a pottery [studio] of reasonable size without helpers […] in a workshop of two or three more people, rather than in a one-man studio." Bosch's only apprentice was Rabinowitz, who in turn never had apprentices in the formal sense, but drew young studio potters such as Yogi de Beer into his circle. Joe Finch, son of Raymond Finch, was invited by Bosch in 1968 to work with him in the White River studio, but as it turned out, said the younger Finch, there was little with which he could assist (Finch 2016). The South African studio pottery movement was, in any case, in its infancy in the 1960s, when Bosch and Rabinowitz established their White River and Cape Town studios, and there would have been little clamour for opportunities to serve as their apprentices. Haden's first apprentice was Verena Baraga, who joined his Gordon's Bay studio from 1975 to 1981; followed by Dave Wells in 1978; Rudi Botha from 1979 to 1980; John Wilhelm from 1980 to mid-1982, and Nico Liebenberg in 1987. When questioned about his early training under Haden, Wilhelm commented that Haden was emphatic that pottery was a traditional utilitarian craft (Guassardo 2014:18). Wilhelm followed in the footsteps of Haden in producing utilitarian wares, for which he later received national recognition when he was given the First National Bank Award for Functional Ware at the 1st Corobrik National Biennial held in Pretoria in 1992.

Bosch, Rabinowitz and Haden were obliged to run self-sufficient studios in which the production and sale of standard range wares had to finance their much smaller output of one-off pieces. Bosch and Rabinowitz, perhaps more so than Haden, would have been exposed to such a studio production strategy at the Winchcombe and Wenford Bridge studios. The same production principle also held sway at the St. Ives studio, where the creativity of the throwers was held in check by the demand to produce mass orders of standard wares. The American studio potter Warren McKenzie (1924 -) served as an apprentice at St. Ives from 1950 to 1952, which co-incided with Bosch's apprenticeship at Winchcombe and Wenford Bridge. According to McKenzie, the liberty that

Leach allowed his studio workers to make their individual pots in their spare time was not enough for "experiment and personal expression" (Lewis 1991:54). There is no record of Bosch having produced one-off works whilst at the British studios. His time and attention were devoted to gaining the knowledge that would enable him to establish his own studio in South Africa (Bosch and De Waal 1988:21).

At Cardew's studios in Britain and Nigeria, Bosch listened to Cardew's endless discourses on the nature and making of pottery and also on the nature of the potter. As regards the latter, Cardew (2011/2012:69) summarised that "[self-expression through creating form] is what a potter is doing, well or less well, according to his talent, his perseverance, his skill, his capacity for work, his capacity for pleasure, his power of concentrating the whole of himself on what he is making".

Without distracting from the unique styles they developed as they matured as studio potters, meanwhile taking into account their training and exposure to influences and their personal studio pottery philosophies, it can be deduced that Bosch, Rabinowitz and Haden were more aligned with Cardew's philosophy than they were with Leach's. In the end, Leach, as individual standing apart from his studio, proved to be greater as an artist-potter than as a country production potter. Cardew, on the other hand, successfully merged art with craft production, an approach also clearly evident in the ethics of the South African pioneers. Interviewed in 1960 by the journalist Madelein van Biljon (1960:262-268), Bosch defined himself as "artist-tradesman-potter" (my translation), equipped with professional skills and manual dexterity, totally dedicated to the creation of 'artful' pottery and in humble service thereof.[9]

During his apprenticeship at Winchcombe, Bosch was permitted to stamp his

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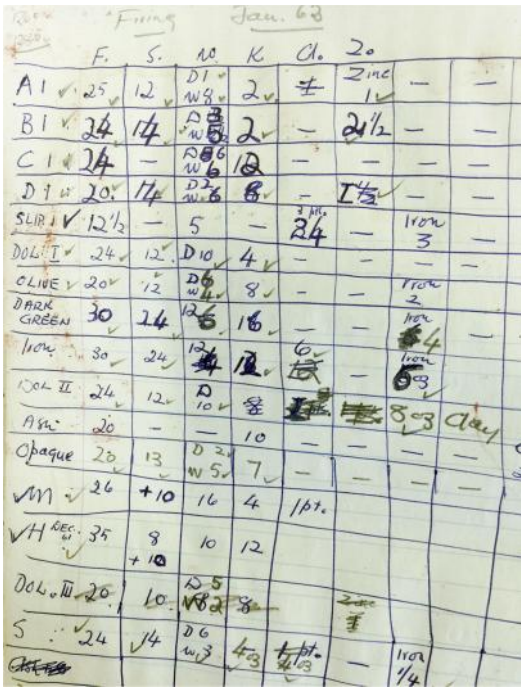
9. *kunstenaar-ambagsman-pottebakker*

initials alongside the studio's 'WP' mark. While teaching and working in Durban from 1952 to 1954, his potter's mark depicted an aloe (Fig. 27). The popular view was that Bosch's abstinence from the potter's mark, monogram or signature on his studio pottery, confirmed his association with the Anglo-Oriental tradition, evidencing the *mingei* tenet of anonymity it observed. Bosch, however, explained in an interview with Chris Barnard (1979:13) that he would not claim authorship of his pottery in such a "self-aggrandised" way, due, rather, to the fact that he had become exasperated with "the sick tendency of South Africans to chase after [famous] names, buying the name rather than the pot".

27. The potter's mark of Esias Bosch depicting a stylised aloe.

In view of such, the popular perception that Bosch, Rabinowitz and Haden were steeped in the Anglo-Oriental tradition and that they were acolytes of Leach and exponents of his style, is an untenable one. They most certainly did have personal contact, albeit brief, with Leach and were intimately familiar with Leach's *A Potter's Book* (1940), in which he promoted his philosophy and discussed pottery techniques. Bosch held an unflagging admiration for Leach. His son Anton Bosch (2016) noted that Bosch used Leach's standard glaze formula (Fig. 28) and derived his decorative motifs of a bird in flight (Fig. 29) and of three small mountains (Fig. 30) from decorations Leach (Fig. 31) used repeatedly. It must, however, be noted that a line drawing of a bird was a popular decorative element in English studio pottery, and that Cardew also made frequent use of it. Bosch, in turn, transmitted the bird and three-mountain themes to his children Anton and

Esra, who continue to incorporate it in strikingly similar form (Figs. 32 to 34) to that of their father. For Esra, Bosch had cut stencils of the bird design, which she could trace and adapt (Bosch, Esra 2016b).



28. A page from Esias Bosch's glaze recipe book.

At the time of their study and work in British studio potteries, Bosch, Rabinowitz and Haden also became familiar with traditional English country pottery, as well as the modern studio pottery movement, and the fledgling post-modern ceramics movement. In Nigeria, Bosch and Rabinowitz were introduced by Cardew to traditional African pottery, which both held in high regard. Bosch admired the forms of the traditional pottery of Nigeria (Bosch and De Waal 1988:29), and Rabinowitz said the pottery showed "genius" ([Sa]:42).

29. Esias Bosch, Charger (1980s).

30. Esias Bosch, Bowl (interior) (1980s).

31. Bernard Leach, Plate (undated).

32. Esra Bosch, Platter (2006).

33. Esra Bosch, Platter (2010).

34. Anton Bosch, *Village of peace* (2014).

Their studies and apprenticeships abroad, however, did not groom Bosch, Rabinowitz and Haden as studio potters working in any specific style. Whatever knowledge and experience they gained in England had to be matched with available materials and technology, as well as consumer preferences in South Africa. The first firings of their kilns were never guaranteed to be successes. In fact, Bosch came close to abandoning his White River studio in 1961, when nearly all of the pots from the first firing of his oil-fired kiln cracked and shattered (Bosch and De Waal 1988:34). Their earlier studio pottery was produced for South African consumers, who were not as familiar as the British with traditional functional wares. Such familiarity and support would have to be cultivated in South Africa, and that, along with appreciation for utilitarian pottery made by someone laying claim to being an artist-potter, would be a challenge that faced the pioneers as well as their successors. Bosch's summary of the matter of influences and the hurdles on the path towards becoming a recognised studio potter might well have carried the endorsement of Rabinowitz and Haden:

> You know, you are young, you have done four or five years of art school, you are young, so you absorb everything and it takes you

years really to know what it is all about. No one really influenced me. You come back to a different country, you work with completely different sorts of material, in a completely different environment. I mean the influence you had sort of filters out and you do your own thing (Gallery 1982:14).

CHAPTER 3

The second generation of studio potters

The pioneers Esias Bosch, Hyme Rabinowitz and Bryan Haden inspired a new generation of South African studio potters. In this chapter, I will discuss their introductions to pottery, describe their oeuvres, and establish their direct or indirect links to the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery, as well as the other pottery influences to which they were exposed. I am also presenting in some detail the history of the rapid growth of the general pottery community, and will introduce the debut of post-modern ceramics, which came to stand in direct opposition to pottery. It is in this period that the use of the 'Anglo-Oriental' epithet to describe the body of South African studio pottery became firmly entrenched.

The establishment of the Association of Potters of Southern Africa (APSA) in 1972 was testament to the proliferation in the numbers of potters seeking to emulate the work and achievements of the pioneers, either as professionals or as amateur potters. Within a short space of time, APSA had branches in Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein and the Vaal Triangle (De Klerk 1997:18). To communicate with its members, APSA published the quarterly magazine *Sgraffiti*, which first appeared in August 1973. Inbetween the years of Bosch, Rabinowitz and Haden, setting up their permanent studios in 1960, 1962 and 1966 respectively, and towards the late 1980s, a large number of hobbyist potters flowed in and out of private pottery schools, either run as such, or as adjuncts to studio potteries. The studios and teachers mentioned in Zaalberg's *The 1985 Yearbook of South African Ceramics*, the various editions of *Sgraffiti* and other sources, include Angelique Kirk, Ann Leader, Barbara Robinson, Barry Dibb, David May, Elza Sullivan, Gordon Wales, Helen Martin, Jo Bosman, Lesley-Ann Hoets, Margie Malan, the Frank Joubert Art Centre, the Greenpoint Art Centre, John and Valmai Edwards, the Ruth Prowse School of Art, Marietjie van der Merwe, Marissa Horn, Maxie Heymans, Minette Schuiling (Zaaiman), Robin and Joy Standing, Sarie Louise Maritz, Sonja Gerlings, Susan Annandale,

Katinka Twigg, Suzann Passmore and Sylvia Baxter Studio. In addition, workshops were hosted by the established studio potters such as Bosch, Rabinowitz, Haden, Tim Morris (1941 - 1990), Andrew Walford, Ian Glenny, Chris Patton (1939 -), Chris Green, Bill van Gilder and Toff Milway. The popular appeal of the workshops is illustrated by the attendance of "a group of 50 to 70" at a workshop by Morris in 1975 at his Muldersdrift studio (*Sgraffiti* 1975a:9).

The tertiary academic institutions which offered full-time instruction, diplomas and degrees in pottery or ceramics from the 1960s to the end of the century included the technikons of the Witwatersrand, Vaal Triangle, East London, Durban and Pretoria, the universities of the Witwatersrand, Natal, Pietermaritzburg, the Free State, and Port Elizabeth as well as the Paarl College (Johnson 2016, Sellschop 2016). Liebermann Pottery in Johannesburg and the Kolonyama production studio in Lesotho offered a few opportunities for apprenticeships. New studio technology and "instant" materials made a direct contribution to the growth in numbers of studio potters and hobbyist potters. Electric kilns for the firing of earthenware and stoneware; low-temperature overglaze and underglaze colours; prepared clays; and even a ready supply of a vast array of bisqueware, which eliminated the need to throw or slab anything, made pottery all that more appealing (Schlapobersky 2010/2011).

APSA, craft galleries and shops, as well as formal art galleries, were active in hosting exhibitions of pottery and boosting public awareness, as well as cultivating an appreciation thereof in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Regional and national pottery competitions were organised by APSA. The first national exhibition was staged in Cape Town in 1975, and attracted entries by some 100 potters (*Sgraffiti* 1973:3). The most prominent promoters in Johannesburg of studio pottery were Helen de Leeuw, Fernande Marie-Louise Haenggi and Fernand F. Haenggi. De Leeuw established The Craftsman Market and subsequently the Helen de Leeuw Gallery in Johannesburg, whilst the Haenggis promoted the foremost of the early studio potters such as Bosch, Morris and Walford at their Galley 101 and Gallery 21. Gallery exhibitions were also

presented in Johannesburg at 13 Abel Road, Carriage House Art Gallery, Crake Gallery, Gallery Elysia, Monty Ashman, Goodman Gallery, Things, the Everard Reid Gallery and Trevor Coleman Gallery. In Pretoria, the Ernst de Jong Studio Gallery, Greenclogs, and in particular the Skolimowski Galleries, as well as Klaus Wasserthal, showcased the best of current studio pottery. In Cape Town, the studio potters were supported by the Waterkant Gallery (formerly Goodman-Wolman), Craft Corner, Binnehuis, Gallery International and Yellow Door. The Natal Province offered exhibition opportunities at Artefact and the Walsh-Marais Gallery. Other galleries that regularly featured studio pottery included the Blou Gallery in Ermelo, Gallery S in Nelspruit, Gallery 5 in Kimberley, Gallery 82 in Bloemfontein, Lookout Pottery Gallery in Plettenberg Bay, the Strydom and Jordaan Gallery in George, and the Anthony Adler Gallery in Port Elizabeth. The output of the potters was sufficiently large for APSA to have its own gallery named *Potters* in the 1970s in Rivonia in Johannesburg, to promote and sell the work of its members. It also had an adjunct shop selling "rejects and seconds" and "those odd pots that are cluttering up your studio" (*Sgraffiti* 1975b:3). The nucleus of a national collection of pottery came about in 1977, when Oude Libertas (Stellenbosch Farmers Winery) purchased some of the winning pieces as event sponsor of the national exhibition. Oude Libertas continued to add to the collection until 1982, when Corobrik took over the sponsorship and followed suit with expanding the collection. The Corobrik Collection is housed in the Pretoria Art Museum. *The 1985 Yearbook of South African Ceramics* featured 119 "potters, craftsmen and artists", who received winning and highly commended awards at the 13 national exhibitions between the years 1973 and 1984 (Zaalberg 1985:7).

The regional and national exhibitions from 1973 to the early 1980s were dominated by "artists working in the traditional manner" (Werth 1978:5), whose works were mostly reduction-fired stoneware and usually utilitarian in nature. The *Ceramics '75* national exhibition drew comments of concern about the standard of execution from two of the judges, Mike Kamstra and Gordon Wales. Kamstra's (1975:15) critique noted that: "the overall quality of the pieces submitted was

mediocre […] It would appear that if potters have an eye for anything at all it is at most only for one aspect of their work at a time; it is either the glaze OR [sic] the shape of one section of the piece OR [sic] the inside OR [sic] the outside […] very few pieces were complete, resolved and integrated."

Wales (1975:17) penned an open letter to potters and referred to works at the exhibition, which in his opinion, fell short of even the most basic standards: "handles badly applied, goblets that would never stand with wine poured in, the overuse of corks on pots that called for lids, finish of the foot rim that would scratch any surface they were placed upon, pieces mounted on the most inappropriate backing, and worst of all, the unthoughtful use of glazes and design".

Kathy Jones (1976:4) subsequently observed that the national exhibition in 1976, titled *Mud*, again showcased pieces lacking practicability:

> One questions the validity of some of the thrown ware which purports to provide functional everyday objects that will give the user more joy than their machine-made equivalents, but which fails to take into account such factors as the relationship between the base of a goblet and its bowl, leading to a precariousness of balance both visually and practically; or the requirement that a teapot pour well and be relatively easy to lift; or that a casserole dish with a lid should not be so heavy when filled, it must require a mighty pair of biceps to lift it from the oven.

Spies Venter (1979:4) lamented in 1979 that the work of established potters on exhibit at that year's national exhibition showed "a lack of soul, a stereotypical style that will eventually lead to their downfall"[1] (my translation) (Venter 1979:4). The generalised criticism of the standard of pottery continued into the 1980s. In his opening address at the APSA Western Cape Regional Exhibition in 1980, Dr. R.H. van Niekerk (1980:5) opined that "the enormous popularity of traditional

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1. *'n siellоosheid, 'n stereotipe styl wat uiteindelik tot diesulkes se ondergang gaan lei*

craftsman pottery amongst the South African buying public has also tempted many a potter to stick to his wheel and keep turning out what is all too quickly snapped up for the sitting-rooms and redesigned rustic kitchens on Constantia and Sandton". The repeated appearance of utilitarian wares in exhibitions, this time at the 1981 national exhibition, was also criticised by Muffin Weideman (1981:4), who observed, "all the traditional studio pots were once again on show: the plates, jugs, casseroles, goblets and also the tiles. This work was of a technically high standard and showed good craftsmanship, but should they really be exhibited again? They can be viewed any day of the week in craft shops and department stores."

Francis Geissler (1982:6) recalled that it was *de rigeur* for pottery in the 1970s to have been produced by means of reduction-firing and that "the only allowable alternative to brown and beige, was beige and brown". By Wilma Cruise's (1991:12) measure, the mid-1970s pottery lacked in "expressive manipulation of form and colour that challenged the restraint advocated by the Anglo-Japanese approach or the diluted concepts of the Arts and Crafts ideals […] Stylistic considerations were overlaid with moral dicta".

The negative reception of utilitarian pottery in general was bolstered by the emergence of the new ceramists who positioned themselves as artists rather than craftspeople, seeking to expand the boundaries of material, form, content and intent. The trend towards a reinterpretation of pottery was first set in the US during the 1950s, and followed in Britain during the 1960s. At the root of the new approach were the individual ventures of Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) in 1947, and Joan Miró (1893-1983) in 1953, to translate concepts captured in their painting in clay (Levin 1988:196). The abstract expressionism for which Picasso and Miro set the tone was further explored and developed in clay by Peter Voulkos (1924-2002) in the United States of America. Damon Moon (2014:[sp]) described Voulkos's work as "abstract impressionist ceramic interventions". Lewenstein and Cooper (1974:19) explained that Voulkos's work originated in basic pottery forms, but that his pursuit was to achieve sculptural forms, rather than conceptual

containers. Watson (1993:30) added that Voulkos's work made no reference to "the vessel" but served as "investigations of form, material and captured movement". At the English schools of art, the shift from the pot to the vessel and sculptural forms was preceded by a period of experimentation, in which pottery was "an open-ended activity for which there were no fixed standards or preferred methods of making" (Jones 2000:[sp]). Amongst the leading proponents of this approach was Dora Billington (1890-1968), head of the pottery department at the Central School in London. One of Billington's students was Hilda Ditchburn (1917-1986), who would later teach pottery at the Natal University College (renamed as the University of KwaZulu-Natal) from 1941 to 1981. Ditchburn was known to have appreciated the work of Bernard Leach, but was an ardent admirer of Michael Cardew's philosophy and working methods (Vurovecz 2008:22). Her approach to teaching was that students had to master the fundamentals, but that this ought to happen in a "liberating atmosphere" (Vurovecz 2008:69, 72). The works of the university's third year ceramic students in 1975, according to Marietjie van der Merwe (1975:8), who was their external examiner, was "highly imaginative" and "their own interpretation of form-image was emerging". In the same year, Garth Clark (1975:4) sounded the warning that South African potters had become totally preoccupied with Leach, Shōji Hamada, Sōetsu Yanagi and William Staite Morris, in their belief that the making of utilitarian wares was the only ceramic tradition. He highlighted the parallel practice, through the ages, of making clay objects which "always reflected their times in ritual, religious and decorative clay artifacts" and referred to the contemporary English ceramists' approach "where imagery supersedes craft" (1975:4, 6).

The drive for creative expression in ceramic materials was urged on by Malcolm P. MacIntyre-Read, who joined the ceramics department of the University of Natal in 1972. In his article *Colour me clay – please* published in *Sgraffiti* (1976:4), he challenged the prevailing adherence to materials, forms and colours, which he monikered "Hairy Brown Stoneware", that could on occasion introduce a "flash of green or deep red thrown in by [his mate] Happy Accident…" and

would then elicit "choruses of eulogist falsetto gasps at the wonder of it all".[2] This satirical comment, wrote Cruise (1991:13) "was regarded [as] nothing short of heretical" by the stoneware aesthetists of the time.

In tracing the worldwide development of post-modern ceramics, Yoshie Shilove (1988:27), the editor of the short-lived South African magazine *Ceramix Art and Craft*, held the view that the challenge to the Anglo-Oriental aesthetics came to fruition in the "super object" style of the 1970s, which "accented super realism, tactile illusion and fetish finish, to make contextual art statements". By the 1980s, with the addition of "colourful surface patterning", wrote Shilove (1988:27), ceramics became "the vessel for adventurous expression with new vitality unfettered by utilitarian constraints". As happened elsewhere in the world, the *avant-garde* art galleries of South Africa gave ceramic works an enthusiastic welcome.

When ceramic works rapidly took centre stage at the regional and national exhibitions in the 1980s, some of the potters and supporters of their style of work grew vocal in their criticism of such prominence. The Cape Town-based studio potter Steve Shapiro (1987:5) reviewed the 1987 national exhibition, and lamented the "measure of success achieved by the ceramicists in their relentless campaign to drive the potters to some dark places where presumably tenmoku is the colour and function is the purpose".

The *Sgraffiti* edition of September 1982 featured a letter to the editor by Joan Winn (1982:6-7), in which she referred to the ceramic entries at a regional exhibition as "lumps of clay that have been poked, prodded and squeezed into some grotesque shape", and that the pottery community "seem to be ruled by the students of technikons and art schools". Several years earlier, Walford (1978:7)

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2. The reference to "Hairy Brown Stoneware" relates to the popular dark brown tenmoku glaze which produces streaks of brown or black in a pattern suggestive of fur and hence also known as "hare's fur glaze" (Rhodes 1973:289).

went as far as to suggest that special categories be created in national competitions to judge and display work produced by “traditional potters” and “people who are creating objects in clay”. Cruise (1997:27) recalled an incident which aptly illustrates the deep divide that existed between South African potter and ceramist fraternities. At a pottery exposition in 1997, where Green had just finished throwing a pot, four ceramists who were in attendance for a panel discussion on ceramics were invited to decorate the pot. Three of the ceramists engaged in a “painterly dialogue” of responding to one another’s decorative marks. The fourth ceramist, Suzette Munnik, stepped forward and struck a well-aimed blow at the pot with a hammer. Cruise saw in Munnik’s intervention that it “fit squarely in the tradition of twentieth century art and twentieth century ceramics”.

Though they were hailed for their bold and adventurous expressions in post-modern ceramics, the ceramists did not escape criticism from within their own ranks that their works did not consistently show proof of mastery of technique and form. Cruise (1990:21), who was by 1990 firmly established as the country’s leading ceramist, wrote about this:

> In ceramics there is a tendency to forget ‘the bloody horse’. There is so much polishing of the saddle and dressing the bridle that the gutsy, breathing, living, animal is forgotten. Technique becomes subordinate to the real thing. Instead of being in service to a visually exciting object it becomes an end in itself - the horse is forgotten or at least neglected.

In this chapter, I have thus far established that the large community of potters in the later twentieth century favoured the production of utilitarian works. This body of work attracted valid criticism both from within as well as outside the potter fraternity, where it was argued that there was an endless repetition of the same forms, in the same colours, and with the same style of decorations. It all pointed, wrote Cruise (2009:18), to the bland copying of the outward forms of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery, rather than exploring that which its idealism invited. The result, she stated, was that “Anglo-Orientalism soon degenerated into a hollow copy of itself” (2009:18).

It is against this backdrop of the status of twentieth-century South African pottery, that I profile a selection from amongst several potters of interest, viz. Tim Morris, Chris Patton, Andrew Walford, Digby Hoets, Ian Glenny, along with the partnership of David Schlapobersky (1953-) and Felicity Potter (1935-), towards the assessment of the impact of Anglo-Oriental tradition on the collective genre of South African studio pottery.

These studio potters share in common the establishment of distinctive oeuvres in which stylistic and ideological influences can be read, but which became fused with their personal interpretations and expressions of pottery. To various extents, these second generation studio potters anchored the tradition of hand-made utilitarian pottery in South Africa, but also produced one-off ornamental works. They were either self-taught, served pottery studio apprenticeships, had some training at the informal pottery schools, or were graduates of the pottery and ceramic departments at tertiary institutions. Their successful participation in national and regional competitions as well as their exposure at South African and international galleries boosted their professional profiles. For example, prior to 2000, Hoets was the overall award winner at APSA's national exhibitions on three occasions (1972, 1978 and 1987). In the later twentieth century, Morris, Hoets, Walford and Glenny had successful solo or group exhibitions abroad: Hoets in Germany; Walford in Japan, Britain, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands; Morris in Namibia, Italy, Germany and the United States of America; and Glenny in Canada, Austria and Germany.

Though none of them ever claimed to be an ‘Anglo-Orientalist’, they would repeatedly be described in publications as exponents of the Anglo-Oriental tradition. In her book *Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa*, Cruise grouped Walford, Glenny, Rabinowitz, Haden, Shapiro, Yvonne Levy and Joel Sibisi as being representative of that tradition (1991:6). In John Steele’s (2015a:123) *Anton and Vale van der Merwe: reinterpreting Afro-Oriental studio ceramics traditions in South Africa*, he named Bosch, Rabinowitz, Haden, Morris and Walford as “amongst the founding fathers of reinterpretation of Anglo-Oriental principles”.

He also listed a group of studio potters who "in unique ways […] have worked in an Anglo-Oriental tradition that has become transformed into a local Afro-Oriental blend", which from the 1970s onwards included Anton van der Merwe, Barbara Robinson, Lindsay Scott, Glenny, David Walters, the partnership of Schlapobersky and Potter, Hoets, Shapiro, Graham Bolland, Yogi de Beer, Paul de Jongh, John Ellis, Christo Giles, Nico Liebenberg, Garth Meyer, Patton, Vale van der Merwe, and to some extent also Steele himself. Steele made his selection on the grounds that the potters showed an "implementation of some Oriental ethos" (2015:129) and that "many of the *mingei* tenets remained as grounding philosophy" (2015:133).

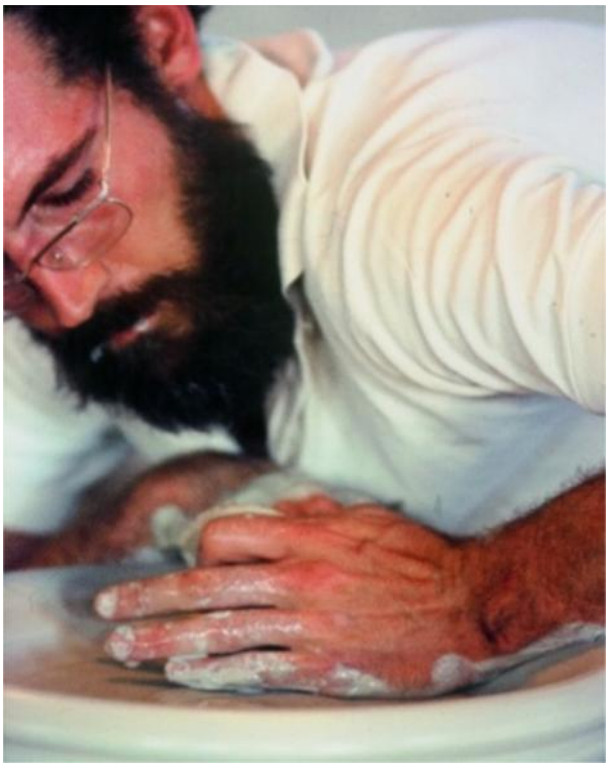
The qualification which Cruise applied in her selection of potters of the Anglo-Oriental tradition, was their understanding and assimilation of Bernard Leach's ideas, which permitted the potters to work within the constraints of the aesthetics of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery, even as their work "evolves and improves by small increments as they strive to achieve simplicity, harmony of form, and appropriateness to function" (1991:41). Esther Esmyol (2013:[sp]) considered Rabinowitz, Bosch, Morris and Walford as "the most notable exponents" of the Anglo-Oriental tradition, which she described as a genre of "typically dark-coloured or neutral glazes in combination with subtle brushwork decoration". The Clay Museum at the Rust-en-Vrede Gallery in Cape Town presented an exhibition in 2014 entitled *Anglo-Oriental – Connecting past to present,* which included retrospective exhibits of the oeuvres of Bosch, Haden, Rabinowitz, and Morris, as "masters who have worked in the Anglo-Oriental tradition" (www.rust-en-vrede.com). Alongside their works, the museum exhibited the works of "17 current day master potters" from across South Africa who produce work in this tradition (www.rust-en-vrede.com), viz. Bolland, de Beer, De Jongh, Ellis, Giles, Glenny, Hoets, Liebenberg, Meyer, Patton, Scott, Shapiro, the partnership of Schlapobersky and Potter, Van der Merwe, Walford and Walters. As recently as 2016, the art historian and curator of ceramics Wendy Gers (2016b) referred to her meeting with Walford, who she described as a "master of the Leach-Hamada tradition".

To the above names, I am adding others who, in my opinion, exemplified studio pottery of that era: Elza Sullivan, Michael and Norma (1937-1995) Guassardo, Chris Green, Neville Burde, Rosten Chorn (1954–2005) and Maarten Zaalberg (1924–1989). I am also including the Kolonyama studio in Lesotho, which, though it was a production studio, had close links with the South African studio potters. Kolonyama represented the English studio pottery tradition via the expertise of its first English-trained studio potter-manager Joe Finch, and then in succession his father Raymond Finch (1914-2012), Bill van Gilder, Toff Milway and Malcolm Bantock. Walters, a graduate of the University of Natal, where he studied under Ditchburn, reflected in correspondence that:

> [P]eople like Morris, Rabinowitz, Bosch – even me, to an extent – received the Anglo Oriental 'feel' secondhand, so to speak. The traditions brought to the pottery world by Leach et al., had already become a part of the 'language' of clay by the time we came along. I am not sure how conscious we were of that influence – we were thoroughly aware of it, of course, but I don't picture myself in a bamboo grove on Mount Fuji[…] If one is tempted to imitate – well, I have always thought of that as sincere flattery; and also, lets face it, there are only so many ways to throw a pot! The bloody things are all round, for a start, and gravity is distinctly not on your side (Walters 2010).

Morris, whose oeuvre was characterised by wheel-thrown, reduction-fired utilitarian and ornamental wares, but who also excelled in hand-built pieces, studied pottery under Ruth Duckworth (1919-2009) at the Central School of Art in London, where he graduated in 1964. Duckworth had broken away from traditional forms to develop her style of "one-off, handbuilt pots of monumental presence" (Watson 1993:141). Susan Sellschop (2008) pointed out that though Morris was trained with the skills and understanding to produce high temperature ceramics that followed the aesthetics of the Anglo-Oriental tradition, he showed more interest in the contemporary English art styles of the 1960s. But she noted that he "realised that he could build a stable career from working in high-fired stoneware and porcelain, making utilitarian wares that were still in style in South Africa at that time." To Clark and Wagner he had asserted: "today the potter must reflect the times in which he lives and, whether

rightly or wrongly, ours is a period of rapid transition with very temporal values. The constant ebb and flow of mores and attitudes cannot be reflected in a stagnant form, albeit near-perfect" (Clark and Wagner 1974:125).



35. The studio potter Tim Morris.

To this aesthetic end, Morris was capable of presenting decorations in a classical style, as well as in a modern graphic idiom with equal flair. Figure 36 shows a tall reduction-fired floor vase in which he combined slab-built walls with a wheel-thrown neck. The base glaze is tenmoku in a hue of shiny copper-brown. Each wall has a cartouche featuring a floral design. Though it is a robust work in being large and heavy, it also exhibits refined classical lines and decorations. The double-handled bowl in Figure 37 dates to the early 1970s. The interior of the bowl is decorated in concentric rings of earthy tones, using oxide glazes. There is no mistaking that it fits the fashion style of the 1970s hippy and craft cultures. By comparison, the square platter shown in Figure 38 has a distinctly more modern feel. The simple but strong graphic design is in a matt glaze.

Morris never became complacent with his mastery of conventional forms and would explore the furthest limits of what consumers would accept in his work. He produced several sculptural forms (Fig. 39) unusual to his regular output, however, when his more unconventional works failed to attract public support, he did not hesitate to abandon that type of work.

36. Tim Morris, Floor vase (1980s).

37. Tim Morris, Bowl (1970s).

38. Tim Morris, Square platter (1980s).

39. Tim Morris, Totem pot (early-1970s).

Morris did not draw analogies between his pottery philosophy and that of the Anglo-Oriental tradition. He raised the point in an interview with Sally de Vasconcellos (1979:8) that he strove, but found it difficult "…to be a humble, simple craftsman, in a very non-humble, materialistic world". However, in an interview with Jenny Hobbs (1983:[sp]), his comments came close to echoing the

tenet of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery that the subject must be subservient to the object:

> All I'm trying to do is simply make things with a bit of magic in them. There's no message in my work. I'm not trying to challenge or educate anybody, just making what I think is beautiful. A lot of the soul-searching that goes on in the arts is really like people turning over rocks to find what's underneath. The sort of remark that really pleases me is when someone says, 'that's a super pot, I like it.'

Clark and Wagner confirmed that Morris did not "subscribe to the aggrandisement of pottery as an expensive elitist art form" (1974:121) and, as recounted by his wife Marlene when I interviewed her in 2010, urged buyers to "use the bloody stuff, don't put it on the wall!" (Morris 2010).

40. The studio potter Digby Hoets in his studio at Carlswald in 2015.

Hoets set aside his production of utilitarian wares in 1983 to pursue the making of very large pots more suitable for architectural and landscape ornamentation. From 1973 to 1976, he produced a range of utilitarian wares at his studio in Johannesburg, and from 1976 onwards at his studio in Halfway House. These earlier utilitarian wares, according to the artist and art critic Gregory John Kerr (1984:28), confirmed Hoets as "a direct descendant of [the] fusing of [Anglo-Oriental] traditional functionalism and the personalized [sic], individual

‘statement’” (1984:28). Hoets’s clean forms and crisp decorations set his work apart from the utilitarian wares produced by his studio potter peers. The lidded pot featured in Figure 41 has minimal colour work, which is restricted to the rim and handle of the lid and the neck of the pot.

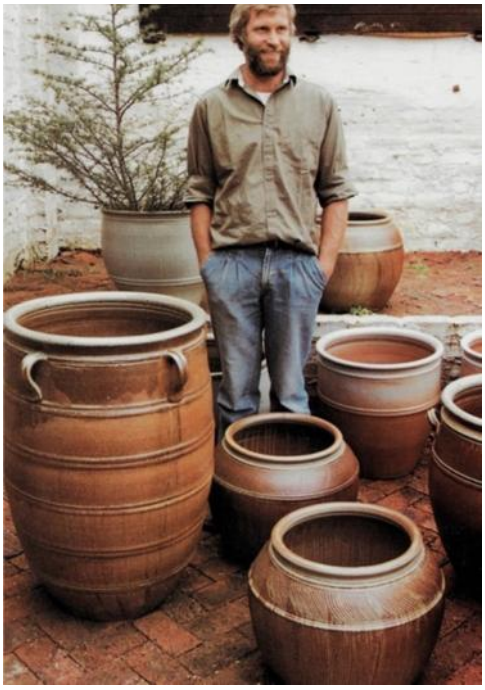
41. Digby Hoets, Lidded pot (c. 1975).

He did attempt a more painterly style of decoration for his reduction-fired stoneware. Kerr (1984:23) saw in that “a deference to the decorating techniques traditionally associated with reduction firing”, which gave Hoets’s pots a “somewhat ‘Japanese’ quality”. He later abandoned brushwork decoration in a quasi-Oriental style, in favour of poured slips, which he combed into low relief patterns (Cruise 1981:12), and then progressed to stencils of graphic designs which he applied with sprayed glazes (fig 42). By the early 1980s, Hoets’s large pots had already attracted a dedicated following. The decorations were restricted to dipped, drizzled or combed ash glazes, with or without surface features, such as raised bands and rouletting (fig 43).

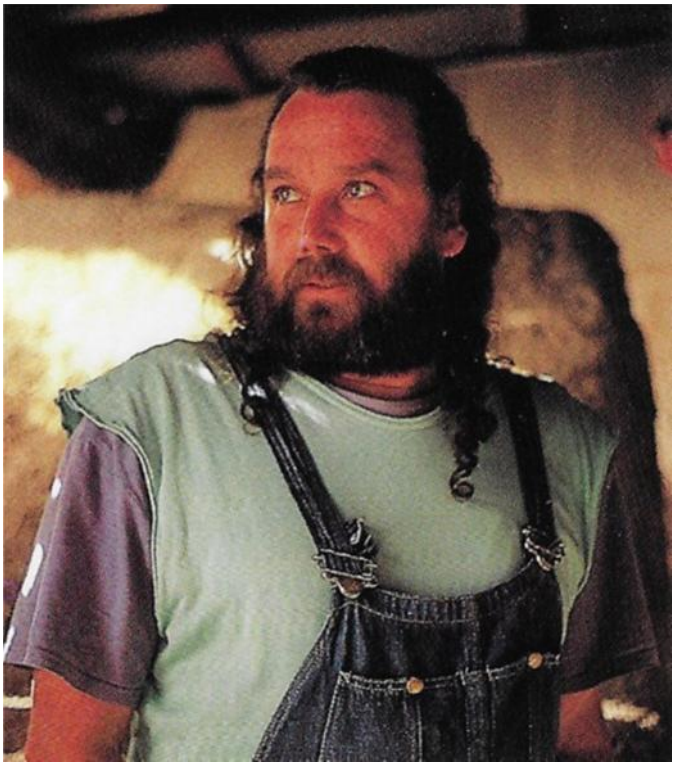
In an article published in *Lantern* in 1974, Hoets emphasised that he would not compromise either function or aesthetics in his work: “my criteria for well-made pots are that they must be well thrown, require little or no turning, lids

must fit well, handles must be functional and well applied, decoration must be carefully done and suit the pot" (Katz 1974:39).

42. Digby Hoets, Bowl (1980s).



43. Digby Hoets and his large pots with mainly ash glazes, photographed in 1987.



44. The studio potter Ian Glenny in his studio at Dargle, photographed in 1991.

After finishing high school, Glenny enrolled at the Natal Technikon to study fine art but did not complete his diploma. He set up his first pottery studio in Durban but then opted to relocate to Dargle in the Kwazulu-Natal Midlands in 1976. He is for the greater part a self-taught studio potter, but acknowledges Walford as his mentor. Glenny created an 'Oriental' feel in many of his works, of which the tea bowl called a *chawan* (Fig. 45) is an example. The bowl has a calligraphic decoration that is reminiscent of the forms of Far Eastern ideograms, applied with the wax-resist technique on a field of rich brown tenmoku.

In my interview in 2010 with Glenny, he declared his admiration for Leach and the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery. In his estimation, he met the tenets of the Anglo-Oriental tradition and of the *mingei* folk craft movement. He mentioned that he sourced his own materials, such as the clays, which were dug in the vicinity of his studio and the gathering of ashes from burnt *veld* in his surrounds. His use of ash in a glaze is shown in Figure 46. He also emphasised that he created utilitarian wares and took charge of every process

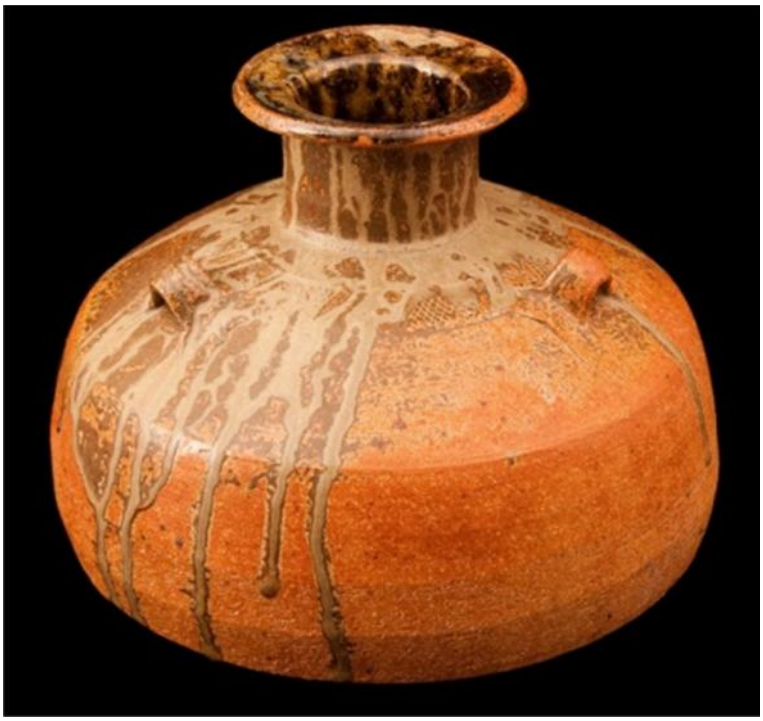
in a studio in a rural setting. That, however, did not imply that he purposefully aspired to be an Anglo-Oriental traditionalist: “I went for traditional English ceramics… with a little bit of Oriental… domestic ware... saleable, so that I could make a buck out of it. I didn’t want to be a starving artist” (Glenny 2010).

45. Ian Glenny, Tea bowl (1980s).

The vase in Figure 47 serves as an example of Glenny’s blend of traditional English and Oriental features. The form is formal, with the belly and neck in a dark tenmoku. It is illustrated with a cartouche of waving grasses within a vignetted border, all applied by means of the wax-resist technique. When interviewed for Cruise’s book *Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa*, Glenny equated himself with “the artist-craftsmen in the *mingei*-tradition” (Cruise 1991:44). Contrary to what is expected of a craftsman following the *mingei* tradition as Glenny (2010) understood his own work, he did not suppress his artistic ego:

> You cannot separate the pot from the potter. That would take away my legacy. […] Sometimes I walk into my studio gallery and look at my special pieces in the display cabinets… and they still freak me out because of what I could achieve and because they could not be

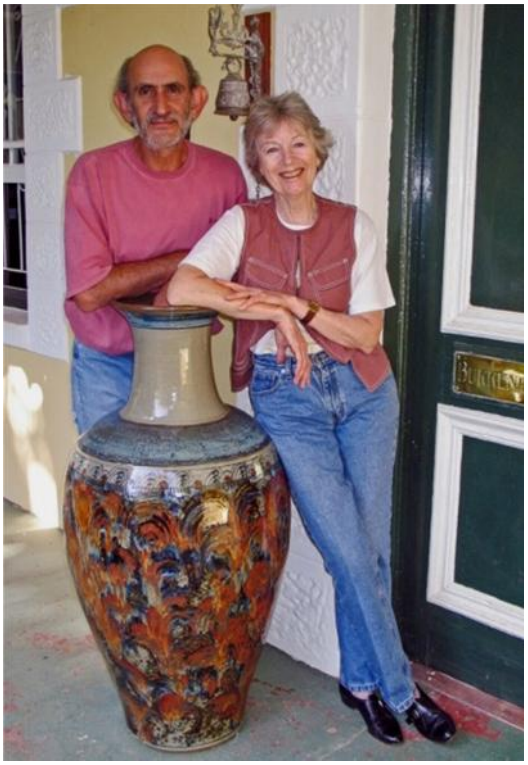
repeated. It happens in the fire… the pieces emerge from the kiln, expressing themselves.



46. Ian Glenny, Jar (1980s).

47. Ian Glenny, Vase (1980s).

Named Bukkenburg, the Swellendam-based studio pottery of Schlapobersky and Potter was founded in 1996, but is preceded by more than 20 years of work in Johannesburg, where they had studios in Halfway House, Parkwood and Parkview. Schlapobersky throws the pots, and Potter then does the decorating. Apart from a few pottery lessons at the hands of Gordon Wales, they were mentored by Morris, from whom they learned the discipline of repetitive throwing to master form.



48. David Schlapobersky and Felicity Potter at their Bukkenburg studio, photographed in 2003 with an urn made in 1993.

The Bukkenburg output is primarily utilitarian and the wares are created with the intention to find a meaningful and relevant place and context in their destined environments: “our role is to add good art and craft, and usefulness to daily life because people seem still to have a desire for that in their lives, more especially if they have something of the background and an understanding of the work” (Schlapobersky 2010).

49. David Schlapobersky and Felicity Potter, group of stoneware (late 1980s).

50. David Schlapobersky and Felicity Potter, group of stoneware (mid-1980s).

51. David Schlapobersky and Felicity Potter, tea set and cake plates (1990).

His reference to “background”, explained Schlapobersky (2015a)**,** was a reference to him and Potter following the tradition of materials and process as espoused by “Leach and his followers”. He furthermore made specific mention of “the requirements of form and function and design, as well as the necessary technical know-how and science”, to which he added “the often rigorous and challenging aspects of acquiring the discipline”. For Cruise (1991:68), it was all contained in Schlapobersky and Potter’s “statement of belief […] that implies that work and life are indivisible”, from which flows that the studio potters’ personal commitment can be read in each handmade item. Cruise saw in this a direct parallel with “the pastoral ideologies of Leach and Cardew” (1991:68) and the Anglo-Oriental tradition that held that the finished product was merely a part of the whole (1991:41).

Like Morris, Patton was an immigrant studio potter. He was trained at the Belfast College of Art (now the University of Ulster's School of Art and Design) by David Heminsley (1927–2007), who in turn was apprenticed to Harry Davis. His first formal studio was established in 1966 at Castle Ward near the village of Strangford in County Down, followed by a studio in Hillsborough, County Down. Consumer taste dictated his output there: “Irish people want to know what a pot is for. It has to have a function or else it is of no use” (Patton 2010). Though familiar with the prevailing English and Irish post-modern ceramic genre, Patton persevered with the production of utilitarian wares: “I was pigheaded and stuck to the Leach-Hamada-Cardew legacy… I

held onto that philosophy and style of craft. I saw myself as a craftsman-potter rather than an artist-potter… but could have been either. It was all a bit schizophrenic" (Patton 2010).

52. Chris Patton in his studio at Muldersdrift in 2015.

During a visit to South Africa in 1975 he met Morris, and after immigrating to the country in 1982, Patton set up his studio not far from Morris's at Muldersdrift. The Morris-Patton friendship was cemented by common backgrounds. Both were born into middle-class families, were educated in art schools and held similar philosophies about pottery. Patton was as popular as Morris for his pottery workshops, where he would share not only his techniques but also his pottery philosophy. He shared Morris' belief that mastery of form could only be achieved through repetitive throwing, after which pottery became a spontaneous and free-flowing process: "pottery is not a conscious thing. It is also not a routine. It is like writing… you don't concentrate on the manner of the pen stroke but on what you are saying. […] I make a thousand pots per year… by the time I get to the 999th pot, it is beginning to get quite good" (Patton 2010).

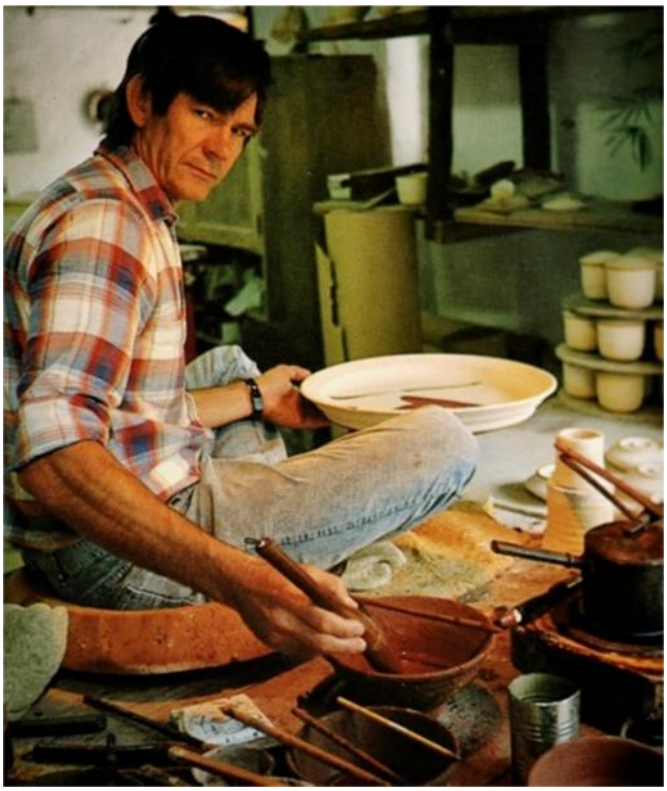
53. Chris Patton, Casserole (1986).

I am illustrating Patton's oeuvre with two examples (Figs. 53 and 54) of his utilitarian works, both featuring brush work decorations. Both the casserole and the rectangular dish have unassuming forms and were made explicitly for utilitarian purposes. The appeal in Patton's work does not lie in the decoration or ornamentation, but in the meticulous forms which he throws or hand-builds.

54. Chris Patton, Rectangular dish (1980s).

Walford attended the Durban Art School in 1959, but the training did not meet his expectations. He then enrolled as apprentice with the Walsh-Marais Pottery, followed by an apprenticeship at the Liebermann Pottery Studio in 1959. He was invited in 1964 to work at the Gustavsberg Studio in Sweden, which specialised in

the production of porcelain ware. In the following year he went to Germany, where he established a studio, whilst teaching at the Hamburg Art Academy. Earlier he had met Lucie Rie (1902-1995), Leach and Cardew on a visit to Britain, and in 1969 he visited Hamada in Japan. On his return to South Africa, he established his studio at Shongweni. Clark and Wagner (1974:188) saw little evidence of any Scandinavian influence in his work of the early 1970s, but recognised the Japanese and Korean pottery philosophy in his oeuvre. Walford explained that it was only because he was solidly grounded in technique, materials and processes, that he could selectively introduce elements of other schools and styles of pottery (Walford 2010).



55. The studio potter Andrew Walford in his studio at Shongweni, photographed in 1990.

He has been firmly cast as an exponent of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery, most likely because of the combination of his production of reduction-fired utilitarian ware, similarities with the aesthetics of Japanese and Korean pottery and in particular his brushwork decorations, his choice of materials, his

studio processes, and his following of the Zen philosophy. Examples of his work which reflect the “Oriental” aesthetics are shown in Figures 56, 57 and 58. The slabbed bottle form is decorated on two sides with gestural brush work contained in cartouches. The teapot and tea bowl are forms which he has been producing with little variation, and they too show the brushwork cartouche concept. The vase dates from the early 1970s, and features a design applied in broad strokes with a thick Japanese-style brush.

56. Andrew Walford, Slabbed bottle (1980s).

At both occasions in 2010 and 2015 when I interviewed Walford, I questioned him about his relationship with the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery. In the earlier interview, he replied that he did not object to being branded as the flag-bearer of that tradition. but has reservations about its validity: “I am wearing the shoes and they pinch [...] describing me as Anglo-Oriental is a bit like playing calypso on the violin” (Walford 2010). In a later interview, he stated that it was debatable that he was an Anglo-Orientalist: “if you look at some of my shapes, for example for the ikebana [pots], it is an ‘Oriental’ shape

but the interpretation is South African. […] Maybe the way I fire the kiln to get the best results out of it is Anglo-Oriental" (Walford 2015).

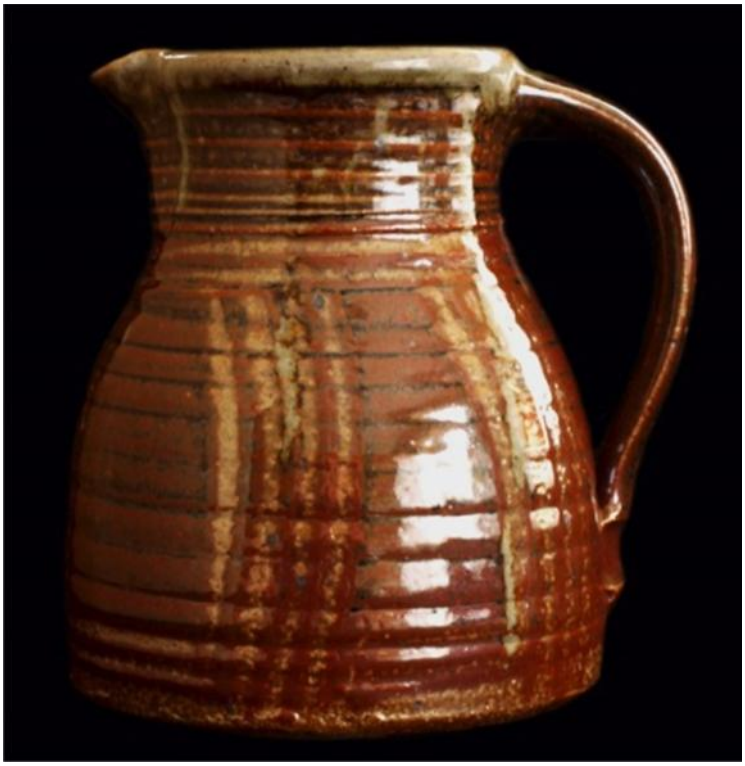
57. Andrew Walford, Teapot and tea bowl (1988).

58. Andrew Walford, Vase (early 1970s).

I have selected additional works by studio potters from the same era to illustrate the forms and decorations which are associated with the South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century. These are shown in Figures 59 to 67.

This chapter traced the growth and development of South African studio pottery in the later twentieth century and introduced a few leading figures who spearheaded the second generation of studio potters. I have explained that the general standard of pottery of that era attracted both appreciation and criticism. The negative reception of studio pottery intensified with the emergence of South African ceramists, who sought to break with a craft tradition. It is my opinion that the ceramists, in their often fierce criticism of studio pottery, contributed towards an entrenched use of the 'Anglo-Oriental' epithet. I also presented evidence that the pioneer South African studio potters and their successors did not all share a common influence, but were exposed to diverse schools of philosophy, studio practise and style. I further illustrate in an organogram in Appendix 2 that the two main influences were the Anglo-Oriental tradition of Leach-Hamada-Yanagi and the English post-modernist school, via the Central School of Art. The organogram also illustrates the direct or casual relationships between the studio potters of the later twentieth century, whether through training, apprenticeship, employment or mentorship. The appendices include a timeline to position the pioneer South African studio potters with Leach, Cardew and Raymond Finch, and a further timeline to introduce the emergence of the second generation of South African studio potters in relation to the pioneers.

59. Barbara Robinson, Lidded box (mid-1980s).



60. Chris Green, Jug (early 1980s).

61. Edu Vaughan Scott, Planter (early 1980s).

62. Bruce Walford, Lidded jar (1980s).

63. Christo Giles, Umbrella stand (1996).

64. Neville Burde, Dish (1981).

65. Maarten Zaalberg, Vase (early 1980s).

66. Jerice Doeg, Pot (1984).

67. David Walters, 3 Jugs (1990s).

CHAPTER 4

The ‘Anglo-Oriental’ epithet - retrospective views and considerations of an alternative identity for the South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century

I have in the preceding chapters provided an explanation of the actual scope and impact of the influence of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery, as well as other influences in South Africa in the later twentieth century. I have also presented reasons why the use of the ‘Anglo-Oriental’ epithet for that era’s pottery became embedded.

Because the epithet continues to be used to identify the country’s earlier studio pottery, I conducted a series of interviews and entered into correspondence with contemporary studio potters and ceramists to establish if, and by what measure, any association between the Anglo-Oriental tradition and the earlier South African studio pottery can be found to be justified. The interviewees and correspondents included Wilma Cruise and Ann Marais, who have written extensively and with authority during the preceding and current centuries about South African studio pottery and ceramics; Dr. Ralph Johnson, the accomplished ceramist and a leading figure in the ranks of CSA; Dr. John Steele at Walter Sisulu University, who has in recent years conducted research on studio pottery; the ceramist David Walters, as a peer of many of the earlier studio potters; and Digby Hoets, Ian Glenny, David Schlapobersky and Yogi de Beer, who emerged in the 1970s as studio potters and continue to be so today. Cruise, Steele and Schlapobersky raise critical points to which I refer in this chapter. Because of the relevance of the insights they shared, their correspondence which I abbreviated with their permission for points of relevance, are attached as Appendix 4 (Cruise), Appendix 5 (Steele) and Appendix 6 (Schlapobersky).

Cruise (2015) maintains that the ‘Anglo-Oriental’ epithet for the South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century continues to be valid:

> I think that up to the 80s and early 90s, Anglo-Orientalism was a kind of dominant ideology, which more or less took over the studio pottery movement and held it in its claw […] it was a thing that we all aspired to [...] we all wanted to be an Esias Bosch or Andrew Walford and whoever else was doing it at that time.

She makes the point that those who followed in the footsteps of the pioneer studio potters took on the "outward trappings" of their work, but neglected to come to understand their underpinning philosophies (Cruise 2015). Walters (2015) and Johnson (2015) concur that there was not a full understanding of that which constituted the Anglo-Oriental tradition. According to Johnson (2015) the nuances in the expression of that tradition were not recognised, and hence "because there was some kind of resemblance [to the Anglo-Oriental tradition], it was presumed to be 'Anglo-Oriental'". For Cruise (2015), it was an era when there was no free-flow of knowledge: "we were all left in the dark, scrabbling around". Hoets (2015a) recalls that his early studio pottery experiences evolved around emulating what he saw and in that process, gaining the knowledge to master and control processes.

Some of the interviewees point to the absence of any other pottery tradition or influence at the time when the second generation of studio potters emerged, and hence, that that there was no alternative to the Anglo-Oriental tradition. De Beer (2015) stated that: "we followed [the Anglo-Oriental tradition] blindly... it became entrenched… no one offered a viable alternative". In Marais's (2015) view, the Anglo-Oriental tradition in South Africa in the 1970s "was the only movement with currency". Walters (2015a), on the other hand, holds a different view, and says that South Africa's pottery history was not linear: "we did not take Anglo-Orientalism lock stock and barrel". Glenny (2015) is in agreement, noting that the economic realities of being a studio potter in that era required of studio potters to match the expectations of consumers: "I had to adapt [...] I realised that exclusively producing reduction-fired stoneware would not be viable… I was not going to be a martyr for the [Anglo-Oriental] cause. I explored other influences, which helped me survive."

Schlapobersky (2015b) describes himself and his partner Felicity Potter as "grateful beneficiaries" of "at least some of [the] legacy" of the Anglo-Oriental tradition. Cruise (2015) acknowledges that a Scandinavian influence came via Andrew Walford and that English country and English modern pottery influences were transmitted in the oeuvres of Tim Morris and Chris Patton. In Hoets's (2015a) opinion, there is a need to consider the influence of English industrial pottery production via the potters who trained and worked in that industry and then came to South Africa as pottery teachers.

Both Schlapobersky and Steele present the argument that the Anglo-Oriental tradition was not a monolithic expression of studio pottery and that by using such an epithet to describe the earlier studio pottery, the studio potters of that era are done an injustice. Schlapobersky (2015b) wrote:

> The perception that [the Anglo-Oriental tradition] was this immovable obstacle, held in place by these unreasonable and unyielding practitioners of a particular discipline within a certain tradition can be seen as just that – a perception […] those [Anglo-Oriental tradition] ethics and aesthetics were often misunderstood and/or misapplied [by its critics] […] and in there, much of the "feeling" and philosophy behind the growth of high temperature pottery [was] compromised.

Steele (2015b) says that the "Anglo-Oriental" epithet denies recognition of the individual stamps of identity which the studio potters of the later twentieth century established in their oeuvres:

> [I]t is likely that even some of the original "tenets and aesthetics of the Anglo-Oriental school of studio pottery" may well have been variable, depending on circumstances, yet were coherent enough to warrant becoming known as an Anglo-Oriental way of thinking underlying studio practice, despite reinterpretations according to own personalities, raw materials, creative impulses, financial and other constraints, as well as personal and collective circumstances and agendas. Thus, just as the likes of Cardew and so on consolidated what has become known as the Anglo-Oriental tradition in ways that suited their own personalities, so too did first-generation South African studio potters Bosch, [Hyme] Rabinowitz, [Bryan] Haden, Morris and Andrew Walford. […] Thus, I think it is wise to differentiate between various Anglo-Oriental influences and unique

> uptakes thereof in the Southern African situation, thereby avoiding a potential pitfall of lumping a group of potters together without recognising unique individualities.

Also included in my research was a questionnaire (Appendix 7) made available to members of CSA. I sought to discover via the questionnaire whether the respondents considered that a collective South African studio pottery/ceramics identity evolved in the twenty first century, which sets it apart from the studio pottery of the later twentieth century. The contact details for the CSA members were gathered from its 2015 national website (www.ceramicssa.org) and the 2015 CSA – Western Cape member directory (www.ceramics-sa-cape.co.za). The opportunity to participate in the research was also announced on the facebook group sites South African Pottery History and South African Potters Info Share. The response to participate was poor, with only 25 studio potters/ceramists returning completed questionnaires, and the analysis of the replies can therefore not be considered as representative. I did, however, gain some insightful data from the responses.

The profiles of the respondents show a wide diversity, inclusive of utilitarian, ornamental, sculptural, environmental and architectural works. Seventeen respondents produce utilitarian works, but not necessarily exclusively. Only two of the studio potters/ceramists source their own clay materials, whilst the others make use of commercial clays. Nine make use of off-the-shelf glazes, where the others prepare their own glazes.

As regards influences on their oeuvres, four of the respondents - Gavin Cox (2015), Paul de Jongh (2015), Digby Hoets (2015b) and Garth Meyer (2015) made specific mention of the Anglo-Oriental tradition, whilst four others identified ‘Oriental’ influences: Ashleigh Christellis (2015), “Chinese/Japanese”; Meyer (2015) and Louise van Niekerk (2015), “Oriental”; and Richard Pullen (2015), “Anglo-Asian”. Other respondents indicated “African” (du Toit 2015), the British ceramicist Grayson Perry (Goosen 2015), “primitive, pre-industrial” (Swanepoel 2015) and “British” (Hayward-Fell 2015) influences.

My research questionnaire also sought to establish whether contemporary studio potters/ceramists engage in creating a distinctive South African identity or infer an association with South Africa or Africa in their oeuvres. The respondents gave replies that ranged from describing an identity that was “African inclined” (Botes 2015) to incorporating “African elements” (van Niekerk, 2015) and being “African but not ethnic” (Cox 2015). The respondents identified elements such as colour (Du Toit 2015, De Jongh 2015, Giles 2015, Miller 2015, Rimbault 2015, Rudolph 2015), texture (Du Toit 2015, Rimbault 2015, Rudolph 2015), elements of traditional African pot building (Miller 2015) and traditional African firing techniques (Goosen 2015) as being reflective of a South African identity in their oeuvres. Lisa Lieberman (2015), however, questions whether any stranger from another country would recognise the South African origin of her work. Walters (2015b) replied that his works were perceived in South Africa as being Eurocentric, whereas, when viewed in Europe, the works were regarded as ‘African’.

Eighteen of the respondents further indicated that they derive their decorations from the natural environment. Laura du Toit (2015), for example, finds inspiration in “geological formations, patterns in nature, images from space, celestial bodies, elements in nature”. Walters (2015b) interprets landscapes and Rika Herbst (2015) seeks out “textures”. Schlapobersky (2015b) offered the explanation that alongside brushed designs of flowers, birds and fish, “[the flames of the kiln] capture something of the vibrancy and harshness of the African landscape, the richness in its minerals and the fire in its light”.

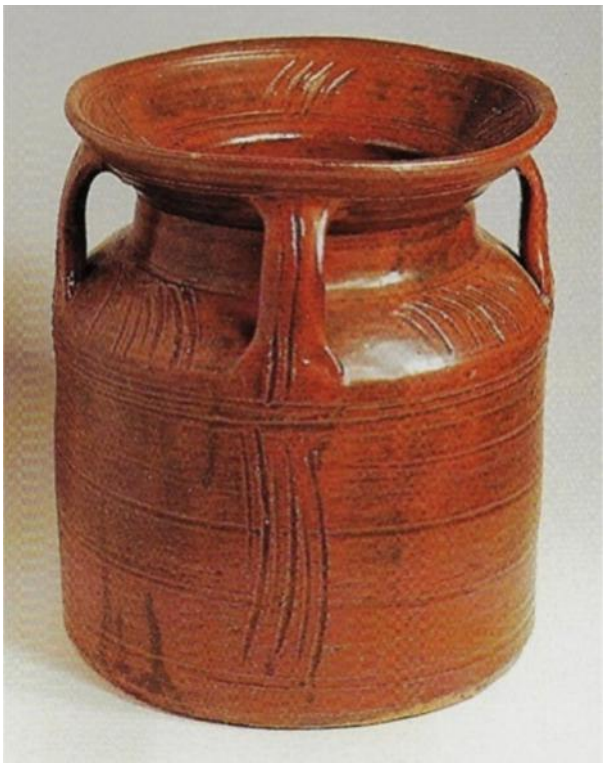
These responses are similar to the features which commentators in the later twentieth century have identified as being reflective of South Africa or Africa in the oeuvres of the studio potters. The first claim of a direct link between one of the pioneer studio potters and South Africa was made by F.G.E. Nilant (1963:55) in 1963, when he wrote about Esias Bosch: “Bosch is consciously seeking a typical South African product. No imitation Delft or Stoke-on-Trent

for him, or slick Bushman drawings on pots, which can be produced anywhere in the world".

An example of the pot forms of Bosch, which suggests a strong association with Africa is his interpretation of Michael Cardew's *Gwari* casserole (Figs. 14 and 68). As mentioned earlier, Cardew described this form, which he found in Nigeria, as having the very essence of Africa. He produced *Gwari* casseroles with two or three handles, but they seldom varied in their form of a pot with a rotund belly, of which the upper edge was at times decorated with a pinched design, a neck with a flared rim, and a handled lid. In Bosch's version, the *Gwari* casserole became an open, three-handled jar, with a distinctly similar belly embellished and pinch-decorated edge, the neck ending in a flared rim (Fig. 69). Elements of this Bosch design can also be seen in his other forms of the same period, such as a three-handled jar with a cylindrical belly, neck, and flared rim with incised decorations (Fig. 70).

68. Michael Cardew, *Gwari* casserole (1973).

69. Esias Bosch, Jar (mid-1970s).



70. Esias Bosch, Jar (mid-1970s).

Earlier authors made reference to the association between studio potters and their environments. Clarke and Wagner (1974:122) discussed the decorative work of Morris, in which they saw “motifs […] drawn from nature: stylised butterflies, birds, seeds, grasses, and flowers created with a few careful sweeps of the brush”.

Cruise (1991:46) made specific mention of Hyme Rabinowitz's studio setting "in a rural retreat", "amongst fynbos" and that "place is an important element in the creation of his pots". An example of Rabinowitz's reference to flora is shown in Figure 71. Many of the studio potters of the late twentieth century chose rural settings for their studios: Bosch at White River; Glenny and Walters in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal Province; Walford at Shongweni in the same province; Hoets in Halfway House when it was still semi-rural; Morris, Patton and Chris Green in the vicinity of Muldersdrift; and Haden at Bonnefoi in rural Mpulanga Province and later on the outskirts of Gordon's Bay.

The colours and illustrations on the studio pottery of the later twentieth century lend themselves to be interpreted as reflections of the textures and colours of the South African or African landscape. That, however, would flow from personal perceptions except for where the studio potter applied a decoration that was distinctly typical of the South African or African environment, such as Morris's illustration of a Bushveld landscape (Fig. 72). The blues and browns of a charger by Steve Shapiro (Fig. 73) could be seen to represent textures in nature. Garth Hoets's charger (Fig. 74) could represent a mountain landscape capping either a lake or an outline of the subcontinent. I am including additional examples (Figs. 75 to 80) of later twentieth-century studio pottery which feature motifs from nature in slip-trailed or brushwork decoration. The motifs cannot be considered to have an exclusive association with South Africa or Africa.

In an article in *Ceramic Review*, Cruise (2002:34) described Hoets's pots as "[taking] on the colours of the veld; the grey-greens of the hardwood trees, the ochres, browns and washed out textures of a winter on the highveld". Haden (2010) spoke of his portrayal of the Bonnefoi landscapes, veld flora and vlei weeds. In Walford's artist's statement on his online studiopottery.co.uk member profile page, mention is made of the "natural colours on the pots [which] are reminiscent of reflecting afternoon sun and shadows on the cliffs rising steeply next to his home" (Walford, n.d.). Murray Schoonraad (1988:22) was in no doubt that Bosch's work showed that it was rooted in Africa:

> Although his art can be labelled as international, it is rooted deeply in Africa. His green glazes were once described as being reminiscent of the Knysna forests; his browns can be compared to the different hues of a newly ploughed field on the highveld. All his colours are toned to look as though they are baked in the African sun. His art has the solidity of this great continent and his rich colours reflect this ageless land.

Penny Kirk (1979:42) found symbols of South Africa in Bosch's work:

> The veld flowers, grasses, doves, tortoises and lizards which appear so often as simple decorative motifs reflect his South African environment. The octagonal warm brown slab pots are reminiscent of sturdy red-ochre smeared African huts. The scraffito striations upon the upper surfaces seem to draw recollection from thatched roofs and mud walls. The sun, cloud and bird symbols of his murals recollect child schema as much as commercial symbols for a wall reflecting light and space.

Madeleine van Biljon (1960:262) stated as early as 1960 that though Bosch's work was "international", she recognised the "rich, dark atmosphere" of Africa in his choice of colours. She added that when he used paler colours, they appear to have been "bleached by the fell African sun".

Earlier commentators do not appear to have made any great issue of the influences of indigenous cultural pottery in establishing an 'African' or 'South African' identity in the oeuvres of the studio potters. Writing in 1974, Clark and Wagner (1974:11) were in fact dismissive of such influences: "Tribal African pottery, attractive as it is, has understandably not had much effect or influence on any of the White potters, as the culture is alien and the work aesthetically and technically limited". By 1983, however, Stanley Cohen (1983:13) saw adopted features of African pottery in the forms and decorations of works at that year's national ceramics exhibition: "a great deal of the work had formed a strong indigenous flavour, for it seemed reminiscent of ethnic pottery […] and a style of decoration that derives from tribal designs and local ways of working clay."

For Ian Calder (2010), the ways in which Rabinowitz and Bosch developed their

materials, technique, form and decoration, served to emphasise that they succeeded in establishing "a working visual vocabulary – an idiom – of [South African] ceramics". It is important to note that neither Bosch, Rabinowitz or Haden ever made a formal claim that they produced pottery with a "South African" or "African" character or identity. Bosch, according to Kirk (1979:42) assimilated and applied symbols and their meanings to fit purpose. Kirk made specific mention of "the forms and symbols, the patterns and the meanings of the Oriental, European and African traditions" (1979:42).

The question has been posed here as to whether the origin, forms and decorative elements of South African studio pottery merit a naming which would establish a distinctive collective identity and a definite link to South Africa or Africa. In June 2014, Nina Shand of the Millstone Pottery Studio invited a group of South African ceramists and academics to collaborate on a new book that would reflect on the country's historic and current pottery and ceramics (Shand 2014). She had consulted Wendy Gers, who suggested a working list of themes in which the naming of each theme incorporated the use of "Afro" as a descriptive adjective to establish origin and character. Amongst the suggested themes were "Afro-Modern", "Afro-Minimal", "Afro-Engaged", "Afro-Oriental" and "Afro-Earth". At the time of writing this dissertation, the book project was a work in progress but, arising from an awareness of cultural, political and academic sensitivities about the appropriation of the term "Afro", Shand advised that: "'Afro' is for each author to decide whether the concept sits easily in their chapter and adds value to their chapter or not" (Shand 2016). Both Calder (2016) and Cruise (2016) reject any "Afro" linkage to South African studio pottery on the grounds that there is neither a justification nor a need for that.

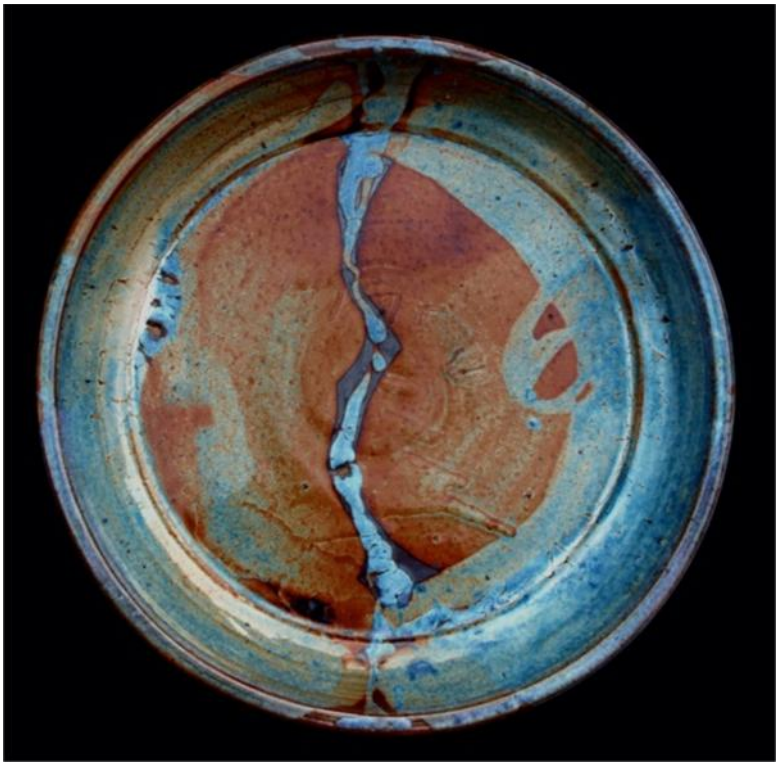
Only Christellis (2015), Herbst (2015), Walters (2015b) and Rimbault (2015) are in favour of considering a descriptive naming for South African studio pottery/ceramics, with Rimbault suggesting that it be "South African contemporary." Schlapobersky (2015b) argues that the potters' oeuvres are just too diverse in their reflection of "many origins and orientations" to justify a

naming. De Jongh (2015) says a “homogenous naming” would be impossible. Goosen (2015) is mindful that South African pottery/ceramics does not have unique features, but has “appropriated others’ ideas and assimilated them to make them our own in a diverse and unique culture”. Johnson (2015) recalls that when the Kenyan-born British ceramicist Magdalene Odundo whose contemporary interpretations of African pottery are highly acclaimed, adjudicated at the 2014 national exhibition, she remarked that she could have seen any of the works on display anywhere else in the world. Marais (2015) dismisses any attempt to attribute a South African or African epithet to contemporary pottery/ceramics, with her comment that although there is an African influence, the expressions of the works are too varied and that “one size does not fit all”. In Walters’s (2015b) view, the “polyglot of influences” to which South Africa’s potters/ceramists are receptive, discourages working towards the building of such an image. The potters/ceramists, says Johnson (2015), have also shown correctness of restraint in appropriating elements of African identity and avoiding the pitfall of lapsing into “derivatives of African craft”.

My interviews and correspondence with contemporary studio potters and ceramists leaves me with no doubt that the studio potters of the later twentieth century claiming to have pursued an Anglo-Oriental aesthetic, were in fact practising a romanticised interpretation of the tradition and selectively adapted its tenets to suit their circumstances. Any claim that the Anglo-Oriental tradition was pervasive in the oeuvres of the studio potters of that era is a denial that the studio potters were exposed to other influences and were at liberty to borrow and innovate as they saw fit. In the interviews, correspondence and the responses to the questionnaire, I found no valid grounds to justify any descriptive naming for the South African studio pottery of that era or for contemporary studio pottery and ceramics which would unambiguously identify it as either South African or African.

71. Hyme Rabinowitz, Bowl (1980s).

72. Tim Morris, Square plate (1980s).



73. Steve Shapiro, Charger (1980s).

74. Garth Hoets, Charger (1987).

75. Elza Sullivan, Rectangular dish (1990s).

76. Andrew Walford, 3 Vases (1990s).

77. Bryan Haden, Lidded jar (1980s).

78. Tim Morris, Bowl (1980s).

79. Chris Green, Lidded jar (1980s).

80. Bruce Walford, Hand basin (1980s).

CONCLUSION

The identity and character of the studio pottery of the later twentieth century in South Africa have consistently been labelled as ‘Anglo-Oriental’. My research focused on discovering and documenting the actual contribution of the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery as well as other influences to the shaping of South African studio pottery ethics and aesthetics during that era. Having those facts at hand, I could then consider the validity of the use of the ‘Anglo-Oriental’ epithet to describe the individual oeuvres of the studio potters and the collective genre of studio pottery of the later twentieth century to which they contributed. In my dissertation, I have tracked how the epithet of ‘Anglo-Oriental’ was initially used in South Africa to describe a genre of predominantly utilitarian studio pottery, then used to set it apart from post-modern ceramics and more recently, to associate it with a specific group of later twentieth-century studio potters.

I applied a post-modernist research approach, which invites the reading of multiple meanings in an artefact, but with the premise that any meaning must take into account the prevailing circumstances and values at the time of the making of the artefact. Included in such considerations are the studio potters’ personal circumstances, work experiences and social environments; their individualistic artistic aspirations; the availability of materials and technology; consumer preferences; popular perceptions and appreciation of studio pottery as a skilled craft and the social, cultural, historical, economic and political landscapes of the time. From a post-modern point of view, studio pottery can therefore be read as an entangled narrative or, as explained by Poblome (Poblome et al.:4), not merely as an object of its time, but as a sign of its time. In my scrutiny of published material I found that important details on influences and personal approaches to studio pottery were either ignored or obfuscated, with more attention paid to the “what” and “how” than to the “who” and “why”.

The primary and secondary sources on South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century are very limited, and regularly lacking critical detail about the

lives and oeuvres of the studio potters. More attention was paid to the discussion of materials, glazes and processes which in pottery slang is known as “pot chat”. By choice or circumstance, some studio potters never gained the prominence which their standards of work merited, and were therefore barely mentioned or not documented at all. One such example of a “lost history” is that of Rosten Chorn (1954–2005), who rose to some prominence by the early 1980s, but is now only known by the briefest of entries in *The 1985 Yearbook of South African Ceramics* (Zaalberg 1985:21). The studio potter David Wells, grandson of a founder-member of one of South Africa’s earliest twentieth-century production potteries (Fine Lynn Ware) and an apprentice of the pioneer studio potter Bryan Haden, had an uninterrupted career as potter since 1978, but earned the attention of only a single short article in *National Ceramics Quarterly* (Guassardo 2006:11-13). Nevertheless, despite their limitations, the published resources did facilitate my understanding of the evolution and expression of South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century.

The interviews I conducted with the studio potters and also with the relatives and associates of deceased studio potters (notably of Esias Bosch and Tim Morris) shed greater light on how they perceived themselves as artist-craftsmen, and how their oeuvres represented their personal expressions of the art-craft. This also led to the discovery of private writings and articles in niche publications, from which I could glean that the studio potters did not feel themselves obliged to strictly adhere to pottery traditions, nor considered themselves held captive by any specific studio pottery influences. For whatever reason, studio potters who were often directly associated in published material with the Anglo-Oriental tradition, even when their oeuvres patently challenged such an assumption, did not challenge such claims.

This study does not aim to measure the South African studio pottery of that era against the Anglo-Oriental tradition of studio pottery which, as I explained in Chapter 1, was in any case not prescriptive in what such studio pottery constituted or how it had to be expressed. Bernard Leach, as founding father of the Anglo-

Oriental tradition, and Sōetsu Yanagi, as the driving force behind the *mingei* folk craft movement, emphasised intent over content. On the part of the studio potter (or what Leach called the "artist-potter",) it had to be the pursuit of making utilitarian wares for everyday use, but could also include the making of one-off works in which the studio potter presented a personal, artistic expression of pottery. The 'art-pot', however, in the same way that it applied to the pot, was not absolved from the requirement of having a good form. Form referred to shape, weight, balance and how a piece fitted its function. Whereas *mingei* hailed the unknown craftsman, Leach did not shun the craftsman's privilege of claiming authorship. We see in both the Anglo-Oriental tradition and *mingei* philosophies an emphasis on the direct involvement of the craftsman in all the stages of production. Production was not directed from a distance, or delegated, but required a personal engagement with materials and studio technology. The physical presence of the studio potter can be read in the shaping and handling marks which were deliberately or inadvertently left on the pot. These ethics and aesthetics of the Anglo-Oriental tradition and *mingei* movement were defined in Leach's *A Potter's Book* published in 1943 and Yanagi's *The unknown craftsman, A Japanese insight into beauty* of 1972. Both books were instrumental in spreading the tenets of the Anglo-Oriental tradition far beyond the borders of England and contributed directly to promoting pottery as a craft practice. Both books, however, were also appropriated by enthusiasts to romanticise the potter as a humble craftsman dedicated to a noble, traditional craft.

In my tracing of the early history of South Africa's studio pottery, I introduced other pottery and art movements that held sway in the mid- and later twentieth century. Specific mention was made of the modern and post-modern movements, which overlapped with the time when the pioneer South African studio potters Bosch, Haden and Hyme Rabinowitz and some of their successors received their training and work experiences in England and Europe. I presented my argument that an influence of great significance on the pioneer studio potters was that of Michael Cardew, who was Leach's first apprentice and who, as an independent studio potter, later developed his own style of English country pottery. The South

African pioneers became directly or indirectly familiar with Cardew's earlier oeuvre and, more importantly, with Cardew's later assimilation of African influences in his work. Bosch was the trailblazer of studio pottery in South Africa, in mastering pottery production processes with the materials and technology which was available at the time. He also broke new ground in introducing hand-made utilitarian wares to a consumer market more familiar with 'English' factory-made wares. Whilst the pioneer studio potters did not proclaim any allegiance to the Anglo-Oriental tradition, we can see some of the tradition's tenets reflected in their lives and work: the hand-making of mostly utilitarian wares in rural-based studios, working with self-sourced materials, and achieving their mastery of form through repetitive throwing. Considered individually, those tenets could be associated with many other pottery traditions, but by directly linking them, the Anglo-Oriental tradition became established as a working *philosophy* as opposed to a *practice*.

The synoptic overviews of the careers of a focus group of second generation of South African studio potters had the specific purpose of introducing the range of pottery influences to which they were exposed. Tim Morris, for example, had first-hand exposure to modern and post-modern ceramics in England, Chris Patton was steeped in Irish pottery and ceramics, and Andrew Walford became very familiar with Scandinavian and German ceramics. Other influences came to South Africa via the private pottery schools that flourished from the 1960s and onwards, many of which were established by pottery teachers who were trained at the English art schools or in English pottery factories. Tertiary institutions also attracted foreign pottery and ceramic teachers such as Malcolm P. MacIntyre-Read from Wales and David Middlebrook of the United States of America. The teaching career of Hilda Ditchburn, who was trained at the Central School in London, spanned four decades, and from the ranks of her students at the Natal University College and University of KwaZulu-Natal came many of South Africa's acclaimed studio potters and ceramists. Morris and Walford stood prominent amongst the second generation of studio potters. Their oeuvres, in which a reflection rather than a dominance of any influence can be read, inspired

and set benchmarks for emerging studio potters. With their individual interpretive styles they enriched South Africa's genre of studio pottery. In my opinion, both Morris and Walford are deserving of the same ‘Master Potter’ title, which the Association of Potters of Southern Africa bestowed on Rabinowitz in 1990, and on Bosch in 2000. Haden, the third of the pioneers, preferred to promote the work of his apprentices and contemporaries rather than his own, and hence his own opus became obscured and only acknowledged by the cognisanti of studio pottery.

I presented contemporary commentaries and critiques that the overall character of South African pottery in the later twentieth century was dominated by utilitarian wares in repetitive forms and decorations, and not necessarily with faultless technical features. ‘Anglo-Oriental’ was generally used to describe a style of pottery that was utilitarian-orientated and created by potters who subscribed to a craft ethos. Its critics, notably those amongst the post-modern ceramists, liberally used the same epithet to dismiss the pottery as unimaginative and trapped in traditional forms and practices. The manner and intent with which the epithet was applied in the later twentieth century suggested that South African studio potters were captured *en masse* by the philosophies of Leach and Yanagi, and produced works which were distinctly ‘Anglo-Oriental’ in style. There was in fact never a distinctive archetype of an Anglo-Oriental studio pottery style, but at best, many forms of expression of the ethics and aesthetics of the Anglo-Oriental tradition’s philosophy, for example, to be handmade, of simple but elegant form and to serve a function. Judged against such criteria, many of the South African studio potters of the later twentieth century were producing works with very un-Anglo-Oriental aesthetics, whilst also avoiding ceramics. Any alternative epithet suggesting a linkage of whatever nature to the Anglo-Oriental tradition would be invalid. ‘Anglo-Oriental-inspired’, ‘rooted in the Anglo-Oriental tradition’, ‘Anglo-Oriental-derived’ and ‘quasi-Anglo-Oriental’ would be a perpetuation of a forced association.

The retrospective views which I invited from academics, studio potters and ceramists on the character and identity of South African studio pottery of the later

twentieth century (as discussed in Chapter 4) endorse that the relationship between the studio potters of that era and the Anglo-Oriental tradition was informal and casual, or even incidental. Dr. John Steele (2015b) stated that the studio potters' "uptakes of whatever influences were often highly individualistic", and Wilma Cruise (2009:18) commented that the studio pottery of that era had the outward appearance of the Anglo-Oriental tradition but did not embody the ethos of the tradition. If any link to the Anglo-Oriental tradition must be acknowledged, then my assertion is that such a relationship would not stretch beyond the selection of (mostly) natural materials, forms to fit the purpose, the presence of the potter's hand in all of the processes and, in the words of David Schlapobersky (2015b), the creation of a lifestyle "around the rhythms of [a] working studio".

Based on comments that some of the South African studio potters of the later twentieth century reflected their natural environments in their works, I explored the validity of an alternative epithet that would serve to establish a specific identity for South African studio pottery. I could not find any justification for that and I urge that caution must be exercised in using what appears to be reflective of South Africa or Africa in the studio pottery's materials, forms or decorations to establish a definite link to the sub-continent or the continent. Naming it 'South African' or 'African' (or 'Afro') risks being challenged on the grounds that the studio potters were schooled in Western pottery technology and aesthetics and produced forms not traditionally associated with indigenous cultures. Labels such as "New-Zealand pottery", "Australian pottery" and "American pottery" do not describe that pottery as being distinctive of those countries, but merely denote provenance. The forms of studio pottery in those countries are more universal than geographic- or culture-specific. The very same applies to South African studio pottery.

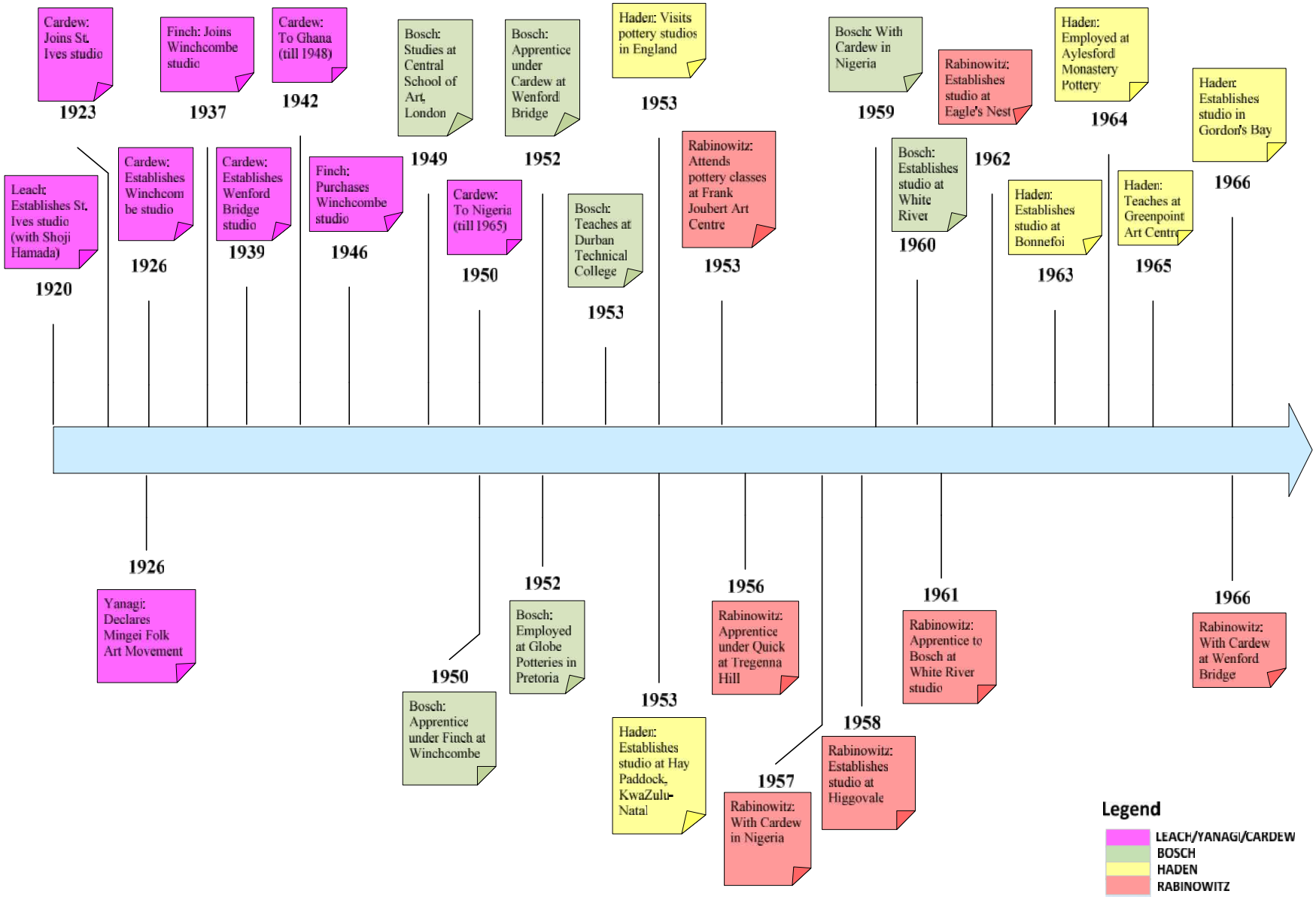
Flowing from my research findings, I contend that the South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century is not done justice when labeled 'Anglo-Oriental', because it stood significantly distant in ethics and aesthetics when measured against the tenets of the Anglo-Oriental tradition. The 'Anglo-Oriental'

epithet does not give credit to other significant pottery influences and contemporary forces, which contributed to the shaping of individual oeuvres. What Kirk (1979:42) wrote about Bosch's shaping of his oeuvre, can be applied to any studio potter/ceramist of the later twentieth century and of our own time:

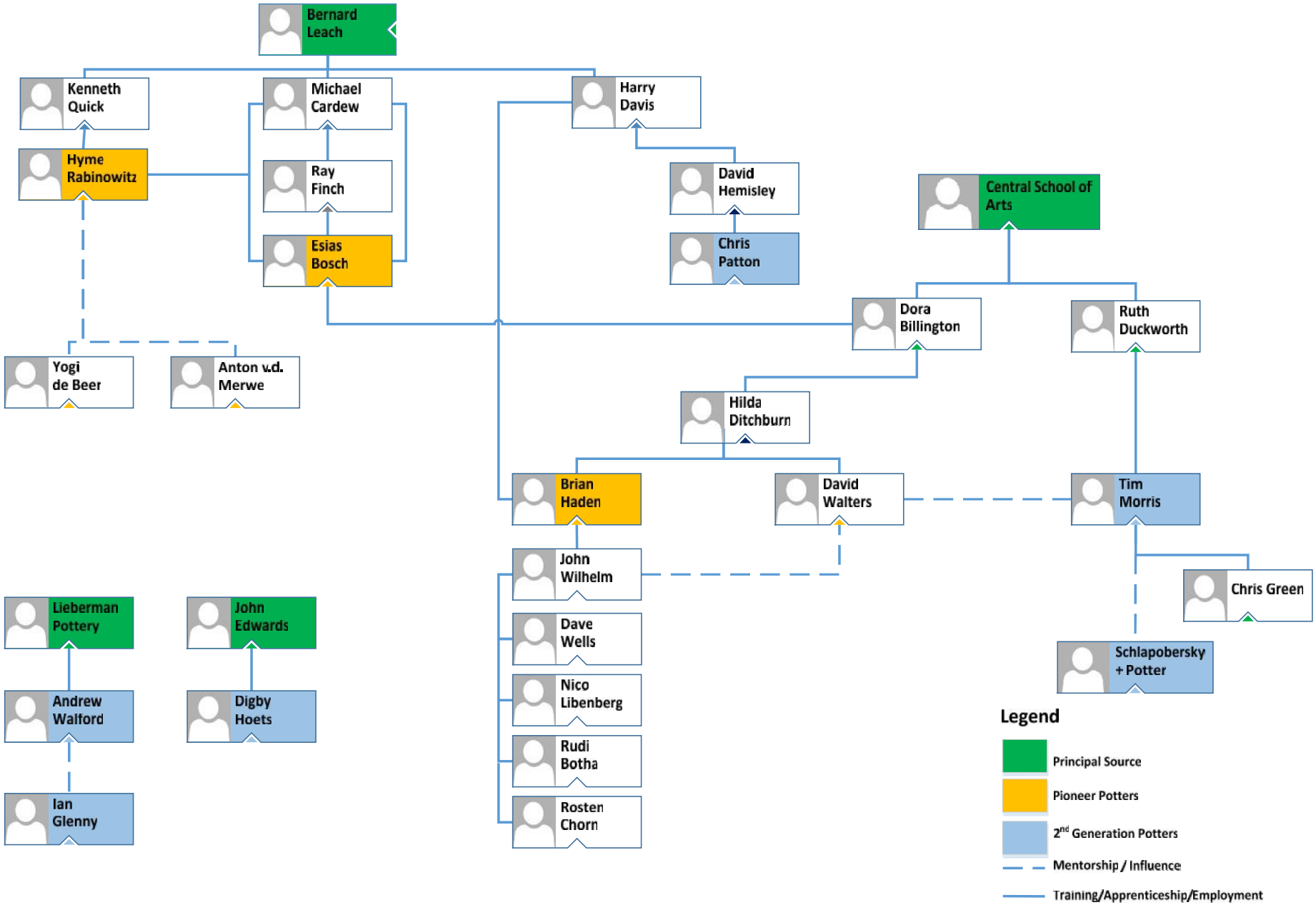
> He builds soundly on traditions of old, seeking new meanings for himself. […] In making a pot by manipulating forms a potter is re-experiencing and correlating many complex layers of meaning related to his life. To a certain extent these aspects even reflect into the mind of the owner of the pot too. […] But when a pot is owned without any knowledge of the maker's cultural identity or his own world of meanings, much of the authenticity of the symbolism is lost.

The South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century should be acknowledged for precisely what it is: an expression of mostly utilitarian pottery forms reflecting many influences but not dominated by any single pottery tradition. When that studio pottery is measured only against sign values (form, material, decoration, manufacturing process, etc.) and without due recognition of contextual meaning, then it must be considered that the 'Anglo-Oriental' epithet discriminates against the individual studio potters and their oeuvres, as well as against the collective genre of South African studio pottery of the later twentieth century.

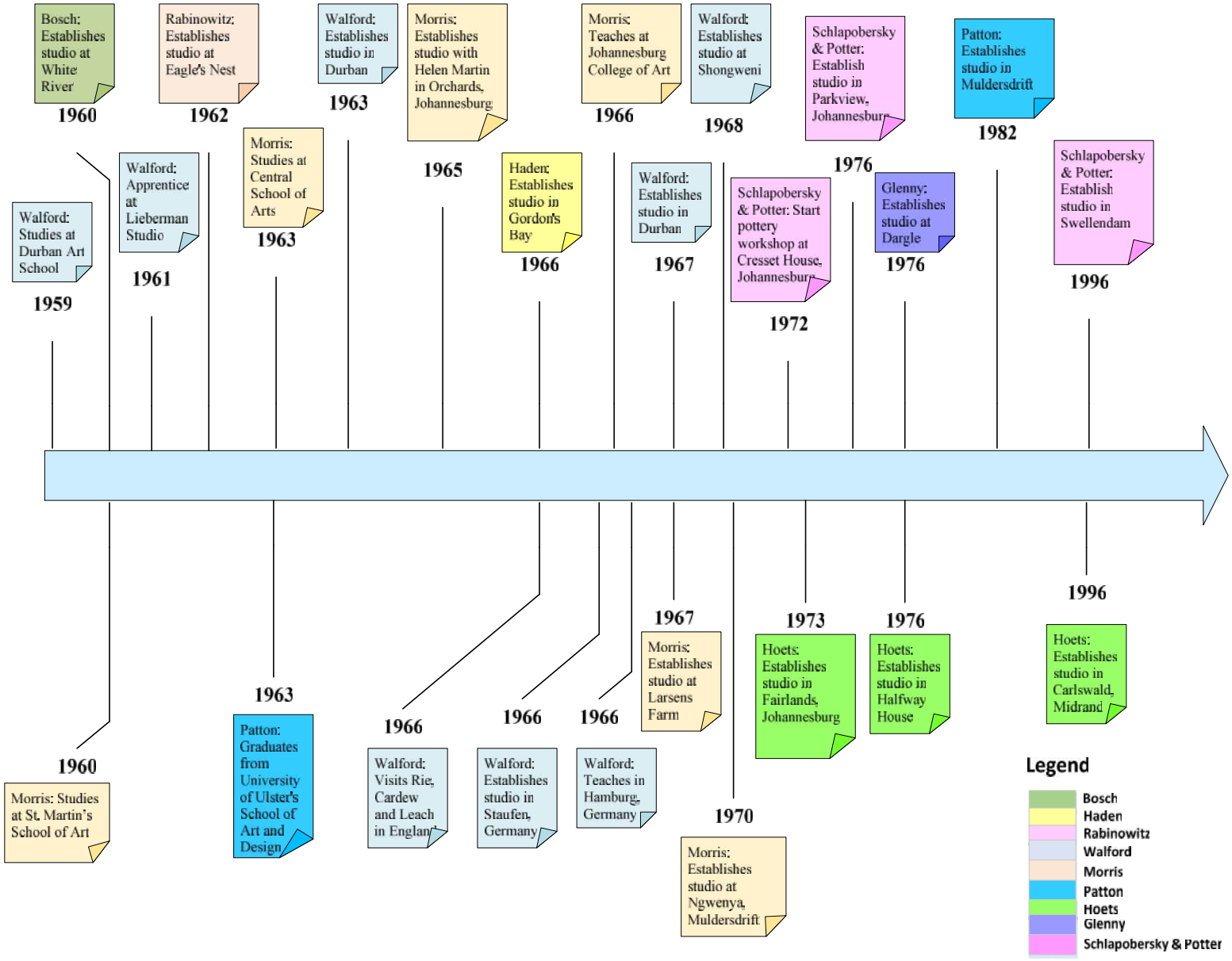
Appendix 1. **TIMELINE OF THE PIONEER STUDIO POTTERS OF SOUTH AFRICA**



Appendix 2. **ORGANOGRAM: TRAINING, APPRENTICESHIPS, EMPLOYMENT AND MENTORSHIPS**



Appendix 3. **TIMELINE OF THE SECOND GENERATION OF STUDIO POTTERS OF SOUTH AFRICA**



Appendix 4. **INTERVIEW (ABBREVIATED) WITH WILMA CRUISE, 28 JUNE 2015**

The Anglo-Oriental label given to the South African studio potters of the 1950s to 1980s – was it valid?

I do think it is a valid label. I think that up to the 80s and early 90s, Anglo-Orientalism was a kind of dominant ideology which more or less took over the studio pottery movement and held it in its claw… it was a thing that we all aspired to… we all wanted to be an Esias Bosch or Andrew Walford and whoever else was doing it at that time.

Did you see Anglo-Orientalism reflected in the forms and decorations or in the thinking?

In everything… primarily in the thinking. It was not just an ideology… it was a way of life… it wasn't just a way of making. It came with its own very tight strictures. The best practitioners had the feeling for it… it came out in the forms… but those who came after or those who aspired did not always achieve it… they took the outward trappings of it.

Did they lose something about Anglo-Orientalism along the way?

Yes, because they did not understand fully what was driving it. They were copying the form. You had to get into the mindset of it. I still think that Andrew Walford is the best exponent of it, because he completely understood that Zen underpinning.

Was the studio pottery community of that time very patriarchal?

Absolutely. I was a victim of that. We were labelled garage potter tannies and urban potters were sneered at because we used electric kilns and did not dig our own clay or make our own tools. We were sneered at and denigrated at workshops. Us women had to kow-tow to the Tim Morrises. And Esias Bosch… he would not part with his recipes because they are secret. There was not a free-flow of knowledge. There was a hierarchy of potters and those at the top guarded

their secrets very well. In those days the potter shops had not yet opened, there was not the access to overseas magazines because of the cultural boycott… we were all left in the dark, scrambling around.

There were not only Anglo-Oriental influences at that time. …Tim Morris and Chris Patton brought their experience of English pottery. […] Andrew Walford brought the Scandinavian influences. […] Those were variations on a theme. I agree but the overall ideology that drove the studio pottery movement at that time was a very patriarchal one, one of self-sufficiency, true to material, honesty of form.

Describe the legacy of the Anglo-Orientalists.

We have ignored a lot of the legacy. With the big dramatic switch in the late eighties/early nineties, I think there was a loss of attention to form… to the awareness of form that the Anglo-Orientalists gave us. […] We threw the baby out with the bathwater. I lament that to quite a degree because formal elements are more important than decorations. A lot of people just stopped paying attention to form.

What other factors influenced studio pottery in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s - culture, politics, economics …?

The hippy movement… Eastern-religion… self-sufficiency… anti-materialism… influenced people's need to connect with the earth, connect with things that they made themselves or were made for them.

Was the multi-cultural setting of that era reflected in the South African studio pottery?

The South-Africanism… the Africanism… was generally ignored. […] The studio potters were not looking around at what (other) was happening in South Africa. In a sense we could have been a transplanted colonial version of the English studio pottery model.

I do not see anything that makes it South African or African. One of the sweet ironies is that Ardmore is held up as African… it is the most un-African pottery you can get, because indigenous traditional pottery emphasises formal elements and shape and exquisite restraint and the less-is-moreness and Ardmore is colourful and exuberant and illustrative and imitative…

If any studio pottery at all reflects Africanness, it must be that of Ian Garret?
Absolutely. He knew where it came from and understood it and did not merely copy outer form.

Do you agree that South African studio pottery did not achieve a collective South African identity?
Yes.

Your comment on the Afro-Oriental label?
I have great difficulty with that. What is Africanist?

Do you agree that we have a lack of critical thinking about South African studio pottery/ceramics?
There is no engagement… no critical awareness… that goes back to Anglo-Orientalism where people were aspiring to it but were merely copying the outward form of it.

Is it valid to approach South African pottery as entangled narratives?
The South African studio pottery movement of the previous century was white, middle-class, mostly urban, except for a few, and probably still is largely that.

The question potters ask is how (to make it like this or that) and not why (to make it like this or that).

How do you break out of that mould?

Education… but that can't be achieved because the ceramic institutions are closing down. Reading of more academic articles?

Appendix 5. **CORRESPONDENCE (ABBREVIATED) WITH DR JOHN STEELE, 17 JUNE 2015**

Describe your interest/involvement at academic level in studio pottery and provide dates where applicable.

My academic attention [as a 'research' type of focus] on studio ceramics in South Africa is really rather recent, dating back to the end of 2013, when I decided that it would be interesting to take a good look at the ceramics praxis of Anton van Der Merwe, at Starways Arts in Hogsback, Eastern Cape. This looking is in process, and I have so far written three articles, which set the scene for an article which I am working on at present, which aims to contextualise Anton and his studio ceramics as being broadly founded on a lineage that includes aspects of Anglo-Oriental ethics and aesthetics. I may well, in due course in another paper, seek to further contextualise his ceramics praxis by means of in-depth comparison with lifestyles and works of some other southern African studio potters of his era. I am also interested in following up, in due course, on comparing technical issues pertaining to raw materials and glazes, as well as kiln architecture, fuels and firing cycles, with reference to generating a fuller understanding of Anton's ceramics praxis relative to some of his peers.

The three articles "setting the scene" are:

- 2014. Outside city limits: introducing Anton van der Merwe of Starways Arts, in Hogsback, Eastern Cape, South Africa. *South African Journal of Art History* 29(1):1-13.
- 2014. Starways Arts: a built environment expressing holistic lifestyles dedicated to visual and performing arts in Hogsback, Eastern Cape, South Africa. *South African Journal of Art History* 29(3):76-89.
- 2015. Maximum firepower: Vale van der Merwe, an emergent ceramic artist at Starways Arts, Hogsback, South Africa. *South African Journal of Art History* 30(1):47-58.

Taking into account the tenets of the ethics and aesthetics of the Anglo-Oriental school of studio pottery (Leach, Hamada and Yanagi), are those misunderstood and misapplied in the often-voiced critique that the pioneering era of South African studio pottery was dominated by a monolithic expression of Anglo-Oriental practice and forms?
I think the short answer to this question is: "yes". But, I am not quite sure that I understand this question properly… so will put down some thoughts, then can try and clarify if further questions arise.

There is no doubt that certain Anglo-Oriental influences played a huge role in focusing intent and approach for some pioneering first-generation southern African studio potters such as the 'big five' of Bosch, Rabinowitz, Hayden, Morris and Andrew Walford, and that they in turn influenced others. (Yet at the same time there were probably also other studio potters in Southern Africa who went about things rather differently… I do not know much about this, but just expect that there were others, and perhaps the likes of Wendy Goldblatt, Eugene Hön and Kim Sacks amongst others, as well as early APSA Exhibition Catalogues, could throw some light on that?

I feel twitchy when faced with the term "monolithic" when thinking about southern African studio ceramics, from whatever point of view… yes, surely there were influences, some stronger than others, but upon closer inspection it seems to me that despite some similarities, uptakes of whatever influences were often highly individualistic.

I have by no means dug deeply into this topic, but think that it is likely that even some of the original "tenets and aesthetics of the Anglo-Oriental school of studio pottery" may well have been variable, depending on circumstances, yet were coherent enough to warrant becoming known as an Anglo-Oriental way of thinking underlying studio practice despite reinterpretations according to own personalities, raw materials, creative impulses, financial and other constraints, as well as personal and collective circumstances and agendas.

Thus, just as the likes of Cardew and so on consolidated what has become known as the Anglo-Oriental tradition in ways that suited their own personalities, so too did first-generation South African studio potters Bosch, Rabinowitz, Hayden, Morris and Andrew Walford.

It is my impression that despite certain similarities, there are huge differences in the oeuvres of these potters [as can be seen in your own private collection], which are worth investigating in minute detail in order to bring out richness in diversity.

Thus, I think it is wise to differentiate between various Anglo-Oriental influences and unique uptakes thereof in the Southern African situation, thereby avoiding a potential pitfall of lumping together a group of potters without recognising unique individualities.

I am not really well-versed enough in the finer details of the pioneering era of South African studio pottery to comment much on the statement that that era could have been "dominated by a monolithic expression of Anglo-Oriental practice and forms", except to agree that there were indeed powerful forces and energising ways of living and working in a studio context (I have already expressed that this view lacks appreciation of probable diversity at that time).

Following on from that: it has occurred to me that it might be worth investigating whether these forces have come to be articulated as having been perceived as being "monolithic" partly because the Anglo-Oriental emphasis in SA was largely patriarchal in origin… and thus that 'others' did not really feature in this main picture? I suspect that there may have been many other influences at work in South Africa (perhaps, for example: Lucie Rie, Hans Coper, Elizabeth Fritch), all compounded by the fact that potters are individuals with particular creative characteristics and unique personal circumstances resulting in distinctive styles, marketing strategies and solutions to technical issues, including firing at lower temperatures in electric kilns.

I think a valuable future study could focus on female (and some male) southern African potters who clearly and deliberately deviated from, or actively resisted take-up of Anglo-Oriental ethics and aesthetics. There are likely to be peers of Andrew Walford, for example, who have a lifelong oeuvre celebrating alternative ethics and aesthetics…

Having said all of that, there is also no doubt that Leach/Hamada/Yanagi ways of thinking and working, as initially manifested in *The Potter's Book*, was hugely influential in southern Africa as a practical guide underpinned by workable philosophy. I do not, however, subscribe to the thinking that these influences were monolithic and without nuance.

In your opinion, which local factors (e.g. technology, materials, teaching, consumer preferences) positively or negatively influenced the earlier studio pottery production?

I think that generally the **technolog**y of creating works from clay and firing them at high temperatures became widely known, and thus contributed to an identifiable way of conducting ceramics practice, and thus positively influenced earlier studio pottery production because it became possible to successfully do things. I suppose this could also be regarded as having a negative impact in that there may have been tendencies towards similarities between potters on occasions, but I still maintain that the differences between approaches and products of the 'big five' far outweigh similarities.

My guess is that earlier studio pottery production in southern Africa almost had to be invented from scratch, and thus that identification and successful use of local **materials** played an important role in creating an identity for local works. I expect that it might be found that the 'big five', and many others thereafter, differentiated themselves from each other according to their particular ongoing experimental passions and quirks in the realms of testing different clays and glaze materials. My guess is that willingness to experiment with and actively engage with local materials is one of the identifying factors for potters under discussion. I think that

the need to find out about and then use local materials was a good thing, and can thus be called a positive influence, certainly in as much as that utility ware was expected to have certain characteristics such as presence, durability, and not be porous.

I am not sure how **teaching** others can be considered in a negative light, even though some principles may get changed and so on…

I think that **consumers** played a huge role in validating studio pottery production, of both Afro-Oriental as well as other styles. Consumer and collector interest made it possible for many potters to live their dreams and work day in and day out creating marketable works and thereby living meaningful lives, on their own terms. Sure, there must be incidences where market dictates became severely dominant, but overall I think the early studio pottery movement was fortunate to be supported by a buying public that was both discerning and appreciative of the aesthetics and values accorded to handmade ceramics for daily use and appreciation. None of the 'big five' were dilettante potters – they all needed to make a living, as have many studio potters since then, of both Afro-Oriental and other traditions.

In your opinion, which local influences (e.g. environment, cultures, politics) positively or negatively influenced the earlier studio pottery production?
I think that all of the above influenced earlier studio pottery production to varying degrees, especially considering that none of the potters under discussion lived in a social vacuum. It will be useful to try and identify ways in which these factors influenced potters, and consumers, in their daily lives and then try and tease out some implications thereof.

I am just beginning to realise that something which has been bothering me without properly being aware thereof is the phrase "positively or negatively" (above as well). I think that the questions correctly identify relevant matters for discussion, which then become limited by trying to box outcomes as negative or

positive. Negative or positive according to what yardstick? Can such a yardstick be accurately specified?

Can it be claimed that South African studio pottery evolved a distinctive identity (e.g. colours, decorative themes)? If so, would it be valid to ascribe a descriptive naming to contemporary South African studio pottery and what descriptive name would you give it?
Strongly yes, and I think the descriptive name Afro-Oriental is good.

OR

Lacking a qualified motivation that South African studio pottery evolved a distinctive identity, can it nevertheless be claimed that the studio pottery represents an entangled narrative in which can be read a history of its rise and development, promoted and/or compromised by local-specific conditions and circumstances?
I think that instead of "OR" one can put "AND": that early SA studio pottery represents an entangled narrative, in which can be read a history of its rise and development, promoted and/or compromised by local-specific conditions and circumstances.

Appendix 6. C**ORRESPONDENCE (ABBREVIATED) WITH DAVID SCHLAPOBERSKY, 30 AUGUST 2015**

[…] from our experience those [Anglo-Oriental tradition] ethics and aesthetics were often misunderstood and/or misapplied in [the] critique [that the pioneering era of South African studio pottery was dominated by a monolithic expression of Anglo-Oriental practice and forms]… And in there, much of the "feeling" and philosophy behind the growth of high temperature pottery [was] compromised.

That pioneering era of South African studio pottery referred to involved relatively few practitioners, and yet attracted many supporters and devotees. For many who would want to become potters, the process itself was very difficult to understand, and the requirements seemingly unattainable, for many reasons. It could therefore be suggested that the people who were prominent at the time became associated with the idea that they were obstacles to the ambitions of those entering the pottery world, thus perhaps feeding into the "critique that the pioneering era of South African studio pottery was dominated by a monolithic expression of Anglo-Oriental practice and forms."

The apparent insistence by those pioneers in pursuing what might be regarded as the "tenets of the ethics and aesthetics of the Anglo-Oriental school of studio pottery" could have appeared as dogma to some, and yet for others provided an effective structure and/or foundation into a very meaningful and productive career and lifestyle.

Some of them had the background and grounding, having had some of their foundation in close proximity to its source, which enabled them to convey some of the essence of the tradition; others even approached that aspect with an air of authority – something which elicited rather unwelcome condemnation.

Their pursuit was passed on and absorbed by some of the next generation, who picked up on it sometimes with renewed energy and conviction, and who developed in their own way and in turn passing it on.

The perception that there was this immovable obstacle, held in place by these unreasonable and unyielding practitioners of a particular discipline within a certain tradition can be seen as just that – a perception. […] Those involved in that pioneering phase were relatively few, and it was of a rather short duration; and as the critique gained momentum, they, the pioneers, appeared to move away and get on with their own professional pursuits.

As the idea of "ceramic art" became more prominent, the Anglo-Oriental approach and its practitioners as one of the primary nurturing arenas for the growth of studio pottery in South Africa was increasingly under attack. On reflection, we have a growing sense that this was almost inevitable, as the younger generation and newer ideas were pushing for a place in the world, and to be recognised.

Many of the essential building blocks of the tradition, i.e. the often rigorous and challenging aspects of acquiring the discipline, the requirements of form and function and design, as well as the necessary technical know-how and science, and equally importantly, the philosophical approach, were progressively disregarded by many of the new generation in the studio pottery and ceramic environment. […] New priorities were emerging and a new reality was being created - perhaps more suited to the needs and aspirations of the time. […] The language of studio pottery was changing, as were the priorities of basic design, form and function.

While reflecting on your questions, we are mindful of the hugely valuable contribution these people made to the development of studio pottery in South Africa, and grateful to have been beneficiaries of that vision, and at least some of their legacy. What we learned during that time equipped us to create a lifestyle

around the rhythms of our own working studio ongoing since 1973, with so much of what we do and aspire to rooted in that tradition – first in Johannesburg until 1996, and then rural Swellendam since then. We were also encouraged to share that legacy with others as they emerged, and have been active all our working lives, conducting workshops and short courses, and being active in several aspects of community arts programmes.

Appendix 7. **RESEARCH PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE**

South African Studio Pottery of the later 20th Century:
The Anglo-Oriental Legacy Transcended and Transformed.
MA in Art History (UNISA) Dissertation – Ronald Watt

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The aim of the research is to establish the initial impact of the Anglo-Oriental school of studio pottery in South Africa during the second half of the 20th century, and the extent to which its ethics and aesthetics were initially absorbed and subsequently adapted by the South African studio potters.

For this research, I am involving studio potters and teachers, connoisseur collectors, art critics, art historians, curators, and dealers. The information you share is for the specific purpose of Ronnie Watt's research and may be utilised as research data for the dissertation as well as for publications or other research reporting methods such as journals and conference proceedings, which might flow from the dissertation.

The focus falls on utilitarian pottery production in its broadest meaning. Even if you consider your own work and interests to fall outside of that ambit, your feedback would be welcome.

Complete and return to:

E-mail: nonsuchskye@outlook.com

Mail: Ronnie Watt
Suite 209, 991 Hornby Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 1V3
Canada

Please provide as much information as possible so that you can present a comprehensive overview of your studio pottery career and work. You are welcome to attach any additional notes or documents which you consider to be of relevance.

Sincerely,

Personal information
Full name and surname: ……
Call name: …….
Date of birth: ……...……..
Postal address: ……...
E-mail address:……..
Telephone and/or mobile number: ...…….
Studio name: ……..
Location of studio (city/town): ……..
Website: …….

Training
List in chronological order your pottery training experiences and qualifications, and their dates (e.g. private pottery school, technikon, university, apprenticeship, mentorship, internship, study tours). Where possible, indicate the names of your teachers, lecturers and mentors.
……

Your regular studio pottery output
Describe your regular pottery output (e.g. utilitarian, ornamental, sculptural, environmental).
……

Are you a career studio potter or part-time studio potter? (Indicate with X where applicable.)
Career studio potter …..
Part-time studio potter …..

Do you teach pottery? (Indicate with X where applicable.)
Yes …..
No …..

Your preferred clay materials. (Indicate with X where applicable.)
Stoneware …..
Earthenware …..
Porcelain …..

Do you dig your own clay materials? (Indicate with X where applicable.)
Yes …..
No …..

Your preferred glazes
Describe your preferred glazes and indicate if those are commercial (off the shelf) products or self-prepared.
……

Your kiln. (Indicate with X where applicable.)

Gas …..
Electric …..
Diesel …..
Wood …..
Pit …..

Do you do high temperature reduction firing? (Indicate with X where applicable.)

Yes …..
No …..

Do you employ studio assistants? (Indicate with X where applicable. If yes, state how many.)

Yes ….. …..
No …..

Do you have full-time studio apprentices? (Indicate with X where applicable. If yes, state how many.)

Yes ….. …..
No …..

Your preferred surface decorating – themes

Describe your preferred decorative themes (e.g. elements of nature, abstract, figurative, geometric).

……

Your preferred surface decorating – method

Describe your preferred decorative methods (e.g. sgraffito, rouletting, pinching, trailing, brush, inlay, wax resist).

……

Which attributes would you ascribe to your work? (E.g. rustic, frugal, rugged, refined.)

……

Do you express your studio pottery ethics (principles/values) and aesthetics (form and decoration/appearance) in an artist's statement? If yes, please attach your artist's statement or summarise it here below.

……

Where do you sell your output? (Indicate with X where applicable.)

From the studio …..
Art and craft galleries …..
Exhibitions …..
Craft markets …..
Via a website …..

Is your work represented in any public (museum) or corporate collections? If so, where?

……

Do you write and publish about your work? (e.g. articles for magazines/journals, your website or an internet blog.) If so, please elaborate.

……

Are you a member of a pottery society? If so, which?

……

How do you stay in contact with the international studio pottery world? (Indicate with X where applicable.)

Printed magazines/journals	…..
On-line subscription to internet magazines/journals	…..
Internet group forums (including facebook)	…..

Is there a "school" of pottery (in terms of practice, philosophy or forms) which you favor? If yes, please motivate.

……

Would you consider that your work reflects a distinctive South African identity (e.g. colours, decorative themes). If yes, please elaborate.

……

Do you think it is valid to ascribe a descriptive naming to contemporary South African studio pottery to distinguish it from studio pottery practiced elsewhere in the world? If yes, what descriptive naming would you give it?

……

Any additional information and comments

……

Your signature

……..

Date: ……..

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