



FOCUS: VESSEL /
The Vessel in Ceramics
and Porcelain

8th Ceramics Talent Award
of the Nassauische Sparkasse/2016

Introduction

The Ceramics Talent Award of the Nassauische Sparkasse, which was launched in 1990, is advertised internationally and takes place every three years. The submitted works are judged and presented in an exhibition at the Keramikmuseum Westerwald.

In previous years, the titles of the exhibitions were:

1991 – The Thrown Vessel
1994 – Ceramic Sculpture
1997 – Ceramic Planes
2000 – Large-Scale Outdoor Ceramic Sculpture
2003 – Installations in Ceramics
2010 – Mixed Media – Ceramics plus ...
2013 – The Figure / Sculpture in Ceramics

For 2016 the title is:

**FOCUS: VESSEL/
The Vessel in Ceramics and Porcelain**

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The Assignment

For this competition, moulded, thrown, slipcast or assembled vessels, bowls, vases, montages, etc. are requested, interpreted in clay or porcelain, as art or craft, or as a design element. Large-scale pieces, groups of vessels or smaller, delicate pieces are equally welcome. Classic interpretations will be taken into consideration on the same footing as modern, contemporary or futuristic forms.

An international panel of expert judges will select the participants of the exhibition on the basis of the documents and

photographs submitted and will then invite the participants selected to dispatch their work to the exhibition venue. The judges will then allocate the prizes and commendations among the works received.

The prerequisite for acceptance to the competition and exhibition is an interpretation of the theme of the vessel in classic or modern form that is artistically and aesthetically interesting.

Definition of the Vessel

Vessels formed in clay have been in existence for more than 20,000 years. Fired without a kiln, burnished, decorated with scored designs and bands, these first vessels are evidence of the inventive spirit and aesthetic outlook of our ancestors. The use of vessels to transport and store food and drink made a different and improved diet possible as well as guaranteeing efficient storage, both of which were important steps in the developmental history of humankind. Scorch marks on very early vessels prove that cooking food was not unusual. Later vessels in the shape of urns, pots, jugs, or bowls, including those thrown on the wheel, together with a flood of found shards, document our ancestors' development.

As documents of earliest cultures as well as of later industrial history, these vessels, used for domestic or cultic purposes, root us in a historic process that conveys a sense of the creative potential of our predecessors and their everyday lives, just as our present day artefacts made today do, reflecting respective ways of life.

In German, the word "Gefäß" (vessel) is connected to the words for "to grasp" (fassen) and "barrel" (Fass). Generally, the word now refers to a container made of rigid material for

liquid or fine-grained materials, and interestingly, both in English and German, the terms have a medical use in denoting the network of lymph and blood vessels.

Museums of the world exhibit vessels made of a wide range of differing materials: alabaster, bone, bronze, glass, silver and gold, copper or crystalline quartz, in addition to ceramic vessels made of clay: art work of great aesthetic value, highly valued and perfectly crafted.

Prehistory, the Stone Age, Cycladic culture, Egyptian or Islamic art, Greek vases with elegant, sophisticated painting, Etruscans and Romans, the art of the vessel in Indian, Chinese or Japanese culture down to the porcelain factories in Meißen, Fürstenberg and so on, and contemporary modernism: craftspeople, designers of all genres and artists of all ages have devoted themselves to the theme of the vessel, varied and refined its design, painted scored and distorted it – made and decorated it in a freely creative or classic approach.

The plastic, malleable properties of soft clay have inspired artists from antiquity and driven them to peak creative

achievements. Individual one-off pieces, small series and reproducible sets for affluent urban living and dining customs bear witness to developments in everyday life and festivities, life in homes and gardens and to architecture. Potters, who used clay for thousands of years to make useful and beautiful things, were among the most highly esteemed craftspeople – and like blacksmiths, they were familiar with the use of fire. The development of ceramics, with its mass-produced, lovely faience, colourful majolica, lustreware and saltglaze, one-off raku and wood-fired pieces, porcelain and translucent bone china, was preceded by technical progress in kiln construction and a refined knowledge of raw materials and glaze technology. Innovations in respective production and decoration techniques right up to the latest 3D printing technologies make entirely different, innovative ways of forming appear possible.

Contemporary vessel ceramics has re-established itself – besides providing artefacts for glossy lifestyle magazines, it has turned to provocative representations, trenchantly executed, and/or decor in text or brushstroke. *Dokumenta* in Kassel, the Venice Biennale, COLLECT, SOFA, ART London exhibit and commit to the vessel. The pioneers and trailblazers of this degree of acceptance in the context of fine art were Shoji Hamada and Bernard Leach in the UK, Paul Soldner and Peter Voulkos in the USA or artist personalities like Walter Popp, Beate Kuhn and Wendelin Stahl in Germany. Outstanding teachers advocating this attitude revealed a potential that went far beyond the practical use of pot and bowl. They set standards and integrated a Far Eastern meditative view of the vessel with the interpretation from Western thought in

Exhibition Concept

With the 2016 Talent Award and the theme, **“FOCUS: VESSEL”**, the Keramikmuseum Westerwald and the Nassauische Sparkasse wish to provide a space for clay as a medium in a millennia-old field of ancient artistic representation as well as for a dimension defined by contemporary, modern influences. Working with clay as a seemingly simple material that like in antiquity is still won from the earth writes the history of culture. Archaeological finds tell us of the lives of our ancestors, and our artefacts will give evidence of our present-day lives to future generations. The work selected by the judges will be presented in an accompanying exhibition.

Eligibility

All artists who work with clay and porcelain are eligible to apply with a maximum of two items that have been made by the artists themselves, which are not more than 2 years old and have not won a prize or a commendation in an exhibition elsewhere. All submitted work that is selected by the judges must be available for the accompanying exhibition.

the “foot/belly/neck” – or by defining and rigorously implementing suitable harmonious volumes – in other words, the proportions of the body of a vessel as corresponding to the Golden Section – as desirable...

A large number of figural artefacts currently contrasts with this wide (and newly discovered) love of the vessel in clay and porcelain. In this context a thoroughly experimental and unorthodox treatment of clay or porcelain as a medium becomes evident: large formats are possible, decor is used in an interdisciplinary way, free from any bond to a culturally defined code of use, creatively varied or reinterpreted in old techniques. Practitioners are involved in a lively, creative international exchange. Additives, “cold” brushwork commercial ready-to-use glazes, printing techniques, gold, platinum, innovative casting techniques, materials that burn out, scorch marks in wood, salt, raku, paper or smoke firings: the possibilities are virtually endless.

The 2016 Nassauische Sparkasse Talent Award wants to document such creative, currently widespread interpretations at the highest level and to present artistic forms of expression in contemporary vessel-orientated ceramics in their most interesting variations.

A malleable material – clay/porcelain – interpreted to produce appropriately creative, artistic objects that impress the judges – a hardening or firing process to at least 900°C – that is the essence and theme of the current Nassauische Sparkasse Talent Award. The awards and the exhibition of the judged exhibits are an appreciation of outstanding work: **“FOCUS: VESSEL” 2016**.

This, in 2016 the eighth edition of the Nassauische Sparkasse Talent Award, places the vessel in ceramics in an international context at the centre of attention. In particular, young ceramists will have the opportunity to present contemporary interpretations in or with clay and porcelain.

The Terms and Conditions of entry to the 2016 Nassauische Sparkasse Ceramics Talent Award **“FOCUS: VESSEL”** are intentionally broadly framed. Artists will be accorded every freedom with regard to their understanding and concretisation of the theme.

The exhibition concept and presentation are the responsibility of the Museum in consultation with the judges.

In case of any sales, 35 % sales commission must be included in the sales price.

The Nassauische Sparkasse will insure all exhibits that have been requested and delivered from their arrival at the Keramikmuseum Westerwald until they are collected and leave the building.

Furthermore, I/we agree to the publication of my/our work in print (e.g. catalogue or press) and internet/social media for the purpose of advertising the exhibition by the Nassauische Sparkasse or by third parties. I/we will make no charge for this.

Prizes

From among the works they have selected for exhibition, the judges will choose two pieces of prize-worthy work viewed in the exhibition (no age restriction). The prizes are worth €5,000 each.

In a separate selection procedure, two further works by artists under 35 years of age will be selected, for which one prize to the value of €5,000 will be awarded.

Judges

The judging and appraisal of the works as well as the selection of the prizewinners is the sole responsibility of the panel of judges appointed by the Nassauische Sparkasse. The judging sessions are not open to the public. Evaluations and awards of the prizes, with comments, will be set down in written form.

Applications for and participation in the competition imply the acceptance of the Rules and Regulations of the Talent Award competition and thus also of the judges' decision. Their decision is final; there is no recourse to law.

Dates

Closing date for entries:

Sunday, 14 February 2016, 2400 hrs

The first round of judging – online judging – mid-March 2016

After the online judging, the finalists/exhibition participants will be requested to deliver the selected works to the:

**Keramikmuseum Westerwald
Lindenstraße 13
56203 Höhr-Grenzhausen
Germany**

Judging of the prizewinning pieces: May 2016

Vessels of all kinds are suitable for submission – classic, modern, imaginative, surreal ... in dimensions that can be moved, presented and handled with the means available to the Museum.

The second prize will be awarded in the form of a bursary. This award is intended to point the way for the promotion and development of young talents in the world of ceramics today.

The official award ceremony is to take place during the opening of the exhibition at the Keramikmuseum Westerwald.

The judges in 2016

Rainer Pribbernow / Nassauische Sparkasse, Wiesbaden
Corporate Communications

Dr. Alexander Klar / Hessisches Landesmuseum Wiesbaden
art historian

Katarina Siltavuori / Designmuseum Helsinki
art historian / curator

Ting Yu Shao / Taipeh
artist / ceramist / writer / illustrator

Thomas Hirschler / Berlin
ceramist / lecturer / Nassauische Sparkasse prize winner, 2003

Exhibition opening and award ceremony:
Friday, 23 September 2016

Colloquium the following day:
Saturday, 24 September 2016

Exhibition closes:
End of January 2017
(Follow-up exhibitions may be planned)

The text of the call for entries and the application forms will be available as an interactive application portal on the website of the Keramikmuseum at:
www.keramikmuseum.de