

PAPER, CLAY – PAPERCLAY

The combined use of ceramics and paper

B I O M O R P H

I was engaged in the alternative use of clay and porcelain during my studies at the College of Arts and Crafts and since then I have been continuing this research in order to establish new aesthetic values. I have been present in the national and international fields of expertise with my sculptures and I have gained a reputation with them.

In recent years paper has appeared in my repertoire as a new medium, and I have taken great interest in the combination of the two natural materials, as well as the common possibilities that the two materials share.

When starting my experimentation of the blending of the two materials, I was assisted by international samples and then I elaborated my new methods.

The use of fibre with clay is not a new idea, since numerous ancient cultures utilized straw for making bricks, moreover, additives, which changed the structure of clay and appeared in the manufacturing of pots. In this day and age the mixing of the two materials was dealt with for the first time in America in the 1970s and some experiments for a good recipe had been made in England, Canada and Australia with all different results.

The combination of paper with clay can be slipcasted, modelled and used on the wheel too, and offers an excellent opportunity for ceramists. Both the paper and the clay take on a new role. The clay gives the plasticity and the volume, while the paper increases the strength and the drying crack resistance, and also significantly decreases the weight, the possibility of distortion and the percentage of shrinkage. On one hand it simplifies the handling of material, while on the other hand it makes the correction of checks and breakings easy. The work procedure is placed on a new base; for example, if the object dries, work can be continued by sprinkling a little water. Thanks to this, it is possible to combine the wet parts to the dried material and the fibre naturally helps to join the parts together. Slabs can be made and layered together. The form is placed on an entirely new base as well, large scale and unusually shaped pieces can be prepared from it.

Besides mixing clay I am interested in using stoneware, porcelain and cardboard on the same object and in the differences and similarities of the character of the material.

I acquired greater artistic freedom to carry out my ideas because I discovered a new means to express them, which lead me on a typically unique path. My works of art show what kind of aesthetic values can be created.

After my first steps I received support from the National Cultural Foundation Programme and then I was able to work in the Egon Schiele Art Centre. I was the first Hungarian artist who won the UNESCO – Aschberg IFPC fine arts bursary with my project 'Paper and Clay' in 2000, and I could work in

the Netherlands at the EKWC (European Ceramic Work Centre), which provided significant financial and technological support.

My works-ceremonial objects, animals, plants are from the pages of a crypto-zoology and botany. My forms are not ambiguous, they are layered with meaning and if the layers are comprehended, the forms can be understood.

I consider creation a ritualistic process, it is symbolic and is made from an ancient material, from mud – the model of vitality. The forms grow through each other and form created vegetation as fiction. It is pseudo nature, but in any case, the forms permit the laws which determine the growth and movement of every being. They pulsate, as if in slow motion, and move under the influence of mysterious powers towards an open space as a contrast to the static state of solidified dead material.

The use of seals, the rough worn surface, lines and the various scales of point systems, provides archaic and fragmentary results.

On some of them the form is in the form, or in other words, there is emptiness in the form, space rest and inner tranquillity. Opening the surface reveals the inner life of the form. The perforations appear on both sides as a double grid, and while in motion the work of art provides the viewers with an altered state of perception, thus movement becomes an art component. My works are embossments and they create an illusion of space, the third dimension of ambiguity.

Among the forms of changing appearance of two natural materials: clay and paper, I chose those two materials which I use in the object. Laminated cardboard is a hard structured material that can be cut and painted. I fixed onto

it the naturally coloured stoneware, which is not glazed and can be easily shaped into forms, and the unglazed porcelain. The heaviness of ceramic material and the lightness of paper render a delicate balance possible, which appears in my works of art and creates a new visual aspect in the art of ceramics.

My first steps in the process of creating my works of art are the use of a sketch. I always use a sketch when I begin creating my works. I prepare a small-scale plan of the work I want to carry out and then I enlarge it to its definite size. I work with casted and rolled slabs. I dip and slip-trail it on basic forms shaped from sponge. I also use flex and paper as additives, sometimes I cover the fibre surface, at other times I make use of the visual differences of the paper clay.

Paper clay is an exceptionally many-sided material and that is not an exaggeration. We have a new medium that is easily produced, in other words, a low-tech medium which requires no special equipment. It does not require much know-how, enough experience by using it.

Practicing artists do not always want to learn new things and new techniques and waste time experimenting. It is worth learning this new technique because paper clay renders it possible to create works of art which are difficult to prepare with conventional clay. I hope the use of paper clay will spread in Hungary and bring a significant change in the art of contemporary ceramics.

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