

UBUNTU MANIFEST: DECOLONISING RESEARCH &
CURATORIAL PRACTICE IN CERAMICS.

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PART 0 Abstract

This thesis is concerned with engendering new knowledge in the understanding, appreciation, and experience of modern and contemporary ceramics. It focusses on two recent creative outputs. The initial, *Scorched Earth: 100 Years of Southern African Potteries* (2016), is a scholarly publication, and the latter, *Post-colonialism?* (2016/2017), is a socially-engaged international exhibition, held at the Benyamini Contemporary Centre in Tel Aviv, Israel. These research projects span different disciplines, including art and design history, worker's history, post-colonial and curatorial studies. They engage with diverse research methods, including critical scholarship and curatorial research. In spite of their different origins, these projects are unified by a specific geopolitical and ideological trope - settler colonialism - and a self-reflexive socially engaged methodology, *ubuntu*.

Responding to the dearth of critical scholarship on commercial, popular, and tourist ceramics on the African sub-continent, *Scorched Earth* surveys 32 potteries located in South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, and Lesotho that produced industrial artware between 1880 and 1980. This is the first substantial scholarly reference text in this field and has produced ongoing changes in both South African museum collection policies, exhibition practices, and alterations in the art market.

Post-colonialism? explored settler colonialism in a political environment characterised by ongoing oppression and gross human rights abuse. The exhibition spoke out against the occupation of Palestine and other annexed territories. As the first major politically-engaged international ceramics exhibition in Israel, it has contributed significantly to the local

ceramics scene and has been recognised as one of the ten most significant Israeli exhibitions of 2017. The project has also been the subject of international debate about art practices in Israel, the cultural boycott, and contemporary socially engaged ceramics practices.

This thesis surveys decolonising research in art and curatorial practice with specific reference to Israel and South Africa; regions characterised by harsh settler colonial regimes. It presents *ubuntu* as a moral philosophy and component of self-reflexive methodology for research and curatorial projects. The term *cryrator* is advanced as constituting a component of curatorial praxis in conflict zones. The thesis encourages new ways of thinking on how to historicise, de-westernise, and decolonise knowledge.

0.1 Technical notes

0.1.1 Dedication & Acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, Noah and Gabriel Lauritano, John and Gerda Gers, Carolyn and Brian Birch. Heartfelt thanks go to my supervisors, Prof. Andrew Livingstone (Director of Studies) and Dr Alexandra Moschovi, University of Sunderland, Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries, University of Sunderland, for their guidance and encouragement. I am also grateful to the support staff at the University for their generous technical assistance.

0.1.2 Notes on style & referencing

- Harvard style referencing is adopted with discursive footnotes at the base of the page.
- Footnotes are not always at the end of the sentence. Some are attached to specific words.
- The Bibliography references all quoted texts and wider sources.
- The western norm is used for 'western' names, with first names preceding family names. The inverse order is applied when citing Chinese and Taiwanese individuals, as per the East Asian norm.
- Hyper-text internal cross-reference links are indicated by bold script.

0.2 Glossary

0.2.1 Affective labour

While Socialist and Marxist feminist theorists have explored immaterial and affective labour since the 1970s, the term is a recent invention. Immaterial and affective labour practices are significant forms of gendered labour and are 'understood within certain feminist traditions as fundamental both to contemporary models of exploitation and to the possibility of their subversion' (Weeks, 2007, p.233). The spaces of affective labour are numerous and, among others, include office and domestic work, as well as independent consulting such as curatorial work (Adkins and Lury, 1999; Buurman, 2016; Gutierrez-Rodriguez, 2014; Trott, 2017).

0.2.2 Cryrator

This term was coined in November 2016 by Shlomit Bauman¹ during the *Post-colonialism?* project. It was used as an empathetic pun to refer to my frequent and uncontrollable tears when dealing with the personal and political traumas that artists shared with me during the project. This pain was magnified by the emotional discomfort and vulnerability of being filmed during the curatorial process, and by my previous lived experiences as an anti-Apartheid activist.

0.2.3 Knowledge ecologies or ecology of knowledge

The concept 'knowledge ecologies' (also referred to as knowledge ecosystems) was developed in the 1990s and in recent years has been spread to a wide variety of disciplines (Pallaris and Costigan, 2010, p.2). Knowledge can be theorised as both a 'thing' and a 'flow' - the former is a static resource, and the latter a dynamic stream - embracing various states of the known and the unknown; tacit (subjective) and explicit (objective) states. It also exists in symbiosis, combining these multiple dimensions (Norris et al., 2003, p.16).

As the term 'ecology' implies, a diversity of interconnected natural and artificial organisms, elements, and processes evolve in response to their environment. Similarly, a knowledge ecology consists of a diversity of interdependent and interconnected technologies, processes, methodologies, entities, strategies, tools, frames, individuals, and

¹ Bauman is an artist, designer, and lecturer in Ceramic Design at the Holon Institute of Technology (HIT), Tel Aviv, as well as the Curator of the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Centre's gallery.

communities that respond and adapt to changing circumstances. Contemporary theorists emphasise the significance of the quality of knowledge that is developed through practice and knowledge networking as it enables innovative learning, outcomes, and solutions (Norris et al., 2003, p.17). Inevitably, the greater the diversity of the knowledge, the more chances of responding, adapting, evolving, and ensuring resilience (Pallaris and Costigan, 2010, p.2).

0.2.4 Practice-led research

If research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-led (Candy, 2006, p.1).

0.2.5 Self-reflexive research methods

This method places the researcher at the centre of an analysis knowledge production. Social research methods including interviews and oral histories are central to this research method. Personal aspects such as values, motives, politics, employment, status, age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and ability are imbued in the design, process, and outcomes of social research. In parallel, the researcher is 'produced' through social research. Thus, researchers need to develop a critical reflexive awareness of the knowledge production and of research as productive of identity (Hughes, 1999).

0.2.6 Settler colonialism

For the purpose of this dissertation, settler colonisation is defined as an ongoing global phenomenon, and settlers are generally people who moved from their countries of origin to other nations with the intention of remaining. Settler colonialism is frequently associated with European history but is by no means limited to former European colonies. Sometimes settler colonial forms operate within colonial ones, sometimes they subvert them, sometimes they replace them; but even if colonialism and settler colonialism interpenetrate and overlap, they remain separate as they co-define each other (Cavanagh and Veracini, 2010).

Settler colonies are synonymous with complex and frequently violent relationships with indigenous peoples. A dominant settler regime is imposed upon indigenous people through military force, political and legal institutions, and they are denied sovereign access to their land and associated resources.

0.2.7 Ubuntu

This noun is borrowed from the Zulu & Xhosa languages and describes a South African ideology focusing on peoples' allegiances and interpersonal relations. The term came to prominence during the presidency of Nelson Mandela and in recent years has been applied to a variety of phenomena including a popular open source computer operating system, business ethics, and educational, medical, legal, environmental, moral, and cultural instruction (Auchter, 2017; Beets, 2012; Henrico, 2016; Le Grange, 2012a, 2012b; Letseka, 2012; Mulaudzi, Libster and Phiri, 2009; Oviawe, 2016; Venter, 2004).

However, for the purpose of this thesis, the more philosophical interpretation is preferred. *Ubuntu* refers to the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity. It is a moral theory that implies a collaborative, symbiotic co-dependency (Ifejika, 2006; Le Grange, 2012a; Letseka, 2012, p.48; Moyo, 2016). While *ubuntu* offers a specifically African counterpoint to the individualism of much Western philosophy (Stuit, 2011, p.85), it would be both false and ethnocentric to suggest that the *ubuntu* ethics are uniquely African. The term has been compared to *bildung* by, among others, the German scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt (Letseka, 2012) and it also resembles the Spanish notion of *convivencia* (Luschei, 2016). My deliberate use of the term *ubuntu* is due to its associations with South Africa during the second half of the 1990s. This post-Apartheid period was characterised by the redress of human rights violations, and accompanied by a climate of national unity, fostered by Nelson Mandela.

0.2.8 workers' history

For the purpose of this study, workers' history concerns the research, interpretation, and analysis of workers' history, and associated heritage and culture.

0.3 Introduction

0.3.1 Overview

We are victims of one common misconception; - the superstition that we understand the changes that are daily taking place in the world because we read about them and know what they are (Mark Twain, *All Kinds of Ships*, 1892, cited in Stefik, 1986, p.34).

Key interlocutory questions of the Postmodern Turn thus feature those of the sociology of knowledge concerning the relations of knowledge to the sites of their production and consumption practices – [that are both essential] aspects of ‘ecologies of knowledge’ (Clarke, 2005, pp.xxiv–xxv).

Over the past two decades, my practice as an independent researcher and international curator has focused on advancing the field of Modern and contemporary ceramics. Engaged with the ecologies of knowledge production (see **0.2 Glossary**) in non-western sites of production and consumption, my academic and curatorial research seeks to engage with multiple aspects of the ceramics domain including industrial artware, indigenous artists, studio pottery, contemporary art, and design installations. Both my research and curatorial practice aims to expand the cannon of Modern and contemporary ceramics by undertaking socially engaged projects that push the boundaries of established knowledge ecologies (see **0.2 Glossary**).

Developing a corpus of academic research and artistic knowledge that is rooted in non-Western ceramics nations is central to articulating a more nuanced and democratic global history of ceramics. My research and curatorial practice are ideologically, practice-led, (**see 0.2 Glossary**) and material-led. It constantly explores opportunities for reflection on the contemporary world, articulating conceptual theoretical paradigms and expanding critical discourse. While the subjects and focus of my academic research and exhibitions differ, they are linked by a common desire to produce innovative, and critically engaged visual and intellectual experiences. This socially engaged research and curatorial agenda aspires to unveil what Walter D'Amico describes as the 'possibility of healing' individuals and communities (Mignolo and Vazquez, 2013a).

0.3.2 Thesis structure

The research is presented in two parts. The initial section focuses on academic research as represented by the publication, *Scorched Earth: 100 Years of Southern African Potteries* (Gers, 2016a). The latter part of this thesis focusses on practice-based research in the form of international curatorial projects. *Post-colonialism?* an international residency and exhibition project that I curated in Israel at the end of 2016, is the primary focus of this section. While the two above-mentioned projects focus on different regions, contexts, and epochs, they share a grounding in post-colonial theory and ceramics. They overlap and intersect in terms of their explicitly political agendas and explorations of contested histories associated with ceramics practices in non-western developing nations.

Part 1 explores research questions, research methods and includes a detailed literature survey of Southern African and British commercial ceramics sectors. It develops a unique research methodology that responded to the data and intentions. Book and professional peer reviews lay the basis for the development of a series of claims in respect to *Scorched Earth's* contribution to knowledge. Areas for further research and consideration are presented before concluding Part 1. The arguments presented in this section draws heavily upon supporting material contained in the extensive Appendices.

Part 2 focusses on the curatorial project, *Post-colonialism?*, and commences with a contextual overview of South African curatorial practices from the late 1980s to 2000s, before presenting research methods and methodology. Research methods including a literature review of Curatorial theory & practice in contemporary ceramics. research questions and methodology are subsequently considered. The impact of the research is evidenced in exhibition and peer reviews. These present *Post-Colonialism?s*' international significance and contribution to knowledge. Areas for further research & consideration are considered before concluding Part 2.

Part 3 sums up the two research projects and concludes. Extensive Appendices in Part 5 follow the Bibliography in Part 4. The latter documents my output as a scholar; details research undertaken for *Scorched Earth*, such as lists of public and private ceramic collections, museum, libraries and archives I consulted; and presents peer, book, and exhibition reviews for both *Scorched Earth* and *Post-colonialism?*, among other elements. These documents testify to the significance, reach and impact of the two projects.

PART 1 *Scorched Earth*

A peer reviewed monograph is submitted for this degree of Doctor of Philosophy by existing published or creative work, *Scorched Earth: 100 Years of Southern African Potteries* (Gers, 2016a). This 395-page study contributes to ongoing international scholarly efforts to write revisionist ceramics histories of so-called non-western 'peripheries.' *Scorched Earth* surveys 32 potteries that produced industrial artware between 1880 and 1980. The monograph focusses on the histories of the various potteries, surveys wares produced, lists production methods, supplies makers marks and staff biographies. It contains 402 biographies, 290 professional studio photographs,² 71 archival images, 70 makers marks, 1 map and 6 other images that serve as section divisions.³

I have chosen to focus my academic scholarship on a region that I know intimately. While I have been based in France for over a decade, I was born and educated in South Africa and continue to visit regularly, maintaining a Research Associate post at the Research Centre, Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD), Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Johannesburg. The monograph is located with my ongoing research practice that investigates non-western ceramics. This is manifested in peer-reviewed publications

² Professionally edited studio photographs were taken between 2008 and 2014. In 2008 Natalie Fields (South Africa) and I undertook a national photography shoot with me and is responsible for the bulk of the illustrations. Fields contributed 705 edited photos of ceramic wares of 15 public and private collections and three tile murals to the image database. In 2013, Damien Artus (France), photographed my study collection. 69 photos from this database were retained for inclusion in the manuscript. Micha Birch-Hanemann (South Africa) assisted with photographing complimentary works from significant potteries that lacked illustrations and contributed 33 photos to *Scorched Earth*. These studio photos were taken in 2012 and 2014.

³ Artistic images of kilns firing were used as section dividers, and these were generously supplied by the artists Laura du Toit (South Africa), (image opposite title page) and Richard Yates (USA) (Gers 2016a, p.vi, v, 345, 350, 385).

(both past and forthcoming), including journal articles, book chapters and catalogues for international curatorial projects. See **Appendix 5.1 Resume**, for further information.

1.1 Contextual overview: South African Art History from the 1990s to 2000s

My academic research interests have their roots in my undergraduate student years, 1990-1993, in the History of Art Department at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, during the final years of Apartheid. South Africa was undergoing a period of fundamental transition, just prior to the first democratic elections of 1994. Former white universities were transforming the demographics of their student and staff bodies, pedagogies, and research agendas. As aspiring art historians, my colleagues and I were aware of the painful legacy of Apartheid in respect to the dearth of research into local art, design and craft practices and traditions. As part of our undergraduate studies, we were required to undertake original research that focussed on local artists, crafters and heritage institutions.

Various overlapping academic disciplines underpin my research and inform my research methodologies, including global art and design history, visual and social anthropology, and gender and cultural studies. More specifically, my research practice is grounded in feminism, post-colonialism, de-colonial studies and whiteness studies as expressed via

objects and artefacts, and as manifested through scholarly publications and exhibition in cultural and heritage institutions. Many fundamental questions for my research were posed in the *South African Critical Arts Journal* in 1990, including the necessity of developing a local framework for analysing women's oppression, and the production, distribution, and consumption of representations of gender. The editorial of this journal advocates the necessity of exploring instances of resistance, developing a focus on contradictions and cracks in dominant representations, engaging with women's point of view, and generating alternative representations of women (van Zyl and Shefer, 1990). This text fostered a desire to deconstruct received canons of gender, as well as other entrenched hierarchies including, workers' history (see **0.2 Glossary**), 'high' and 'low' arts and crafts, race and identity construction in South Africa.

These research interests were manifested in my MA thesis which focussed on three specific South African ceramic studios from the 1950s; the Kalahari Studio, Drostdy Ware and Crescent Potteries (Gers, 2000). My research in progress for my MA thesis laid the basis for a major exhibition of Southern African ceramics from the 1950s, staged by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth (formerly known as the King George VI Art Gallery), where I worked as Curator between 1996 and 2001. The exhibition, *South African studio ceramics, a selection from the 1950s* (1998), toured nationally for a year and was accompanied by a scholarly catalogue that explored questions of the representation of black Africans on these wares (Gers, 1998).

Other noteworthy texts that have sharpened my interest in gendered narratives of historical exclusion, popular cultures and artefacts include Nochlin (1971), Sparke (1995), and Buckley (1990). The intersection of Orientalism (Said, 1977), colonialism, imperialism and decolonizing

studies (Lester-Irabinna, 1999; Mignolo and Vazquez, 2013a, 2013b; Said, 1993; Zavala, 2013) and post-colonial identity politics (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995; Bhabha, 1998) resonated with aspects of my lived experience and understanding of the history of Apartheid, and socio-cultural mechanisms of oppression and control. Modern and colonial photographic practices, museum and exhibition practices also play a key role in public education and propaganda - fabricating identities, cohesion and ultimately creating consent (Coombes, 1997; Edwards, 1992; Edwards, Gosden and Phillips, 2006; Phillips, 1998; Phillips and Steiner, 1999; Pinney, 2011; Pinney et al., 2003; Steiner, 1994).

Anthropologists, ethnographers and art historians have made significant progress in the deconstruction of the complexities of things, objects and commodities (Appadurai, 1988; Coombes et al., 2002; Edwards, Gosden and Phillips, 2006; Henare, Holbraad and Wastell, 2006; Hudek, 2014; Miller, 2009; Phillips and Steiner, 1999) including non-western tourist and popular art (Graburn, 1977; Jules-Rosette, 1984; MacCannell, 1999; Sturken, 2007; Urry, 1990) and the contexts of their circulation, collecting practices and display histories (Clifford, 1997; Clifford, Dominguez and Minh-Ha, 1987; Henare, Holbraad and Wastell, 2006; Marcus and Myers, 1995; Miller, 2009; Phillips and Steiner, 1999; Steiner, 2002).

1.2 Research methods

Scorched Earth is a self-reflexive (see **Glossary 0.2.5 Self-reflexive research** methods), interdisciplinary, qualitative research project using methods gleaned from literature, ethnography, post-colonial studies,

and global art history. Four key research methods were implemented, including a literature review, ethnographic research methods, a survey of private and public collections, and the development of a personal study collection. These interdisciplinary research methods, associated with the diversity of potteries included, as well as the depth and geographic breadth of this investigation, differentiate my research from previous studies on South African ceramics.

1.2.1 Literature survey: Southern African & British commercial ceramics sectors

1.2.1.1 Resources surveyed

An extensive ongoing literature review was conducted within libraries and archives between 2002 and 2012. Both British and Southern African sources were reviewed as South Africa, and many of the neighbouring countries, were formerly under the sovereignty of the British Crown. South Africa was a British dominion from 1910 to 1961. This period correlates closely to the period under focus in *Scorched Earth* (1880-1980).

Often relevant information was found in allied fields, notably associated with the urban development of various South African cities, as well as the brick and ceramics industry. Archival research included a review of original Dutch manuscripts from the Dutch East Indian Company, British colonial and subsequent Republic period deeds of company registration and incorporation, death records, commercial and industrial litigation.

This research was conducted via the South African National Archives Repository. This digital archive, which is constantly being updated, acts as a centralised portal for a certain number of records from national, provincial, and other themed archives. Eight national and provincial archives were searched and subsequently consulted in-situ, as listed in **Appendix 5.2.1 South African public archives consulted, Table 1.**

Similarly, three South African institutional archives were consulted, as listed in **Appendix 5.2.2 South African institutional archives consulted, Table 2.** A dozen private archives were consulted in person, and are listed in **Appendix 5.2.3 South African & international private archives consulted, Table 3.** A total of seven South African public, institutional & private libraries were consulted, as noted in **Appendix 5.2.4 South African public, institutional & private libraries consulted, Table 4.** Similarly, records held in the five London-based public and institutional libraries were consulted, as listed in **Appendix 5.2.5 Public & institutional libraries consulted in England, Table 5.**

The need to write a contemporary inclusive, revisionist history of commercial and industrial artware in Southern African over the period 1880 to 1980 is evident when one surveys literature concerning ceramics. In view of the context of Apartheid's discriminatory access to secondary and tertiary art education which skewed the practice of ceramics and created an apparently binary schism between educated white artists making glazed ceramics (both in individual studios and commercial production facilities) and (often rural) African artists making low-fired, unglazed earthenware vessels and, to a lesser extent, figurines. Publications, including monographs, theses, journals, magazines, as well as websites confirm this cleavage (Armstrong, 1998b, 1998b; Armstrong and Calder, 1996; Bell and Calder, 1998;

Cruise, 1992; Du Plessis, 2007; Garrett, 1997; Hillebrand, 2001, 1991; Ncokazi and Steele, 2008; Steele, 2007; Stretton, 2012; Thornton, 1990, 1973; Venter, 2014; Vermeulen, 1983; Watt, 2014a, 2012a, 2012b, 2011a, 2011b; Zaalberg, 1985). While the significant legacy of Rorke's Drift challenges this binary (Battiss, 1977; Calder, 1999; Hosking, 2005; Offringa, 1988; *The Rorke's Drift Art and Craft Centre*, 2012), little was known about other commercial and industrial artware potteries, and there was a clear necessity to challenge and complexify these popularly perceived tropes.

Two historical publications contribute to a partial survey the South African ceramics industry (viz potteries and factories making commercial artware). The initial was written by an Art Historian from the University of Pretoria, Dr F.G.E. Nilant (1963) and the second was authored by Garth Clark and Lynn Wagner (1974). These publications are grounded in their respective epochs, in the case of Nilant, this was the late 1950s and early 1960s; while Clark and Wagner focused on the early 1970s.

My research for *Scorched Earth* drew upon Nilant's list of potteries operating in the early 1960s, and expanded upon his brief and superficial historical overviews. Noting significant omissions in the list of potteries, as well as racial, religious, class and gender biases, and patriarchal focus, my research aimed to redress these concerns. Similarly, Clark & Wagner's *Potters of Southern Africa*, is significant as it acknowledgement of a relatively broad and culturally diverse ceramics spectrum, and includes three commercial potteries, Thaba Bosigo, Kolonyama and Rorke's Drift. However, the monograph is flawed by significant omissions; a lack of critical substance and depth; racist, Eurocentric and patriarchal biases. Detailed analyses of the focus, scope and omissions of these monographs are included in **Appendix**

5.2.14 Detailed analysis of Nilant’s Contemporary Pottery in South Africa and Appendix 5.2.15 Detailed analysis of Clark & Wagner’s Potters of Southern Africa.

1.2.2 Ethnographic research methods

Interviews with relevant individuals

Over the process of my research for *Scorched Earth* I interviewed and/or corresponded with over 137 former (and some current) pottery staff members (including directors, senior management, designers, artists, and workers), private collectors, ceramics dealers, museum and heritage professionals, independent researchers and other experts in the field. In an endeavour to shorten the ‘back matter’, Jacana Media’s editorial team removed all interviews and correspondence from the Bibliography (2016a, pp.374–383). However, all the people that I corresponded with and/or interviewed are listed in the Acknowledgements section (2016a, pp.352–356). This notwithstanding, the most important interviews are listed in the Endnotes (2016a, pp.357–373).

In most instances, I corresponded with individuals over extended periods, probing into the history of the pottery. Where possible, multiple interviews were conducted with individuals using oral history techniques developed by the prominent oral historian, Linda Sandino (Sandino, 2006; Sandino and Partington, 2013). These self-reflexive research techniques enabled me to develop an awareness of the complex

interactions between individuals, their work, and the greater socio-economic context within the Southern African region, and also to critically locate myself within the field.

Creation of an on-line platform for research & information sharing

To respond to the perceived lack of information about South African glazed ceramics, and more specifically to address research gaps, a specialist Facebook group, South African Pottery History, was created in 2011. My aim was to reach out effectively to this niche sector by creating a non-academic platform for information sharing. From its inception, I regularly posted queries and shared other information that may be of interest to the ceramics community. As social media was still relatively new in South Africa and many people were initially insecure with this platform, individuals frequently responded to my on-line queries via private messaging or email. This however changed over time.

The platform allowed me to open my research queries to a broader audience and initiate contact with numerous potters and collectors that I was previously not aware of. For example, through the page I entered into exchanges with the potters Digby Hoets and his sister, Penny Hoets, on the subject of John and Valmai Edwards, as documented in the Endnotes 189 (2016a, p.369).

Since the publication of *Scorched Earth*, the activity of this page has increased significantly. Individuals regularly post photos and queries about provenance of pottery, makers marks, the identity of decorators,

as well as architectural commissions involving wall tiles or ceramic panels. This is a closed group and as the sole administrator, I personally assess all requests to join and exclude individuals who have no apparent connection to the community. On 10 September 2018, it had 1009 members. According to Facebook statistics (obtained on 10 Sept 2018) there are 589 Active members in the group. Over the 60 day period spanning from 12 July to 09 September 2018, the group had had 67 Posts, 222 Comments, and 1397 Reactions. See **Appendix 5.2.17 Screenshot of statistics from the Facebook group, South African Pottery History.**

1.2.3 survey of private & public museum collections

In response to an informal survey (via telephonic communication and email) of the holdings of Southern African public collections of local ceramics, twenty (alphabetically listed) public institutions were visited, as listed in **Appendix 5.2.6 Ceramics collections in South African public museums & art galleries, Table 6.** Ceramics and associated archival collections were viewed, photographed, documented, and studied.

A final list of five public collections of major significance was determined in response to these initial visits: Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town; Ditsong Cultural History Museum, Pretoria; Iziko Social History Collections, Cape Town; Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth; and the Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg. In 2008, I commissioned a professional photographer, Nathalie Fields, to assist me with visual documentation. She set up a mobile studio photography lab and took studio photos in-situ in the five

aforementioned museum collections, as well as in eleven private collections (**see Appendix 5.2.7 Private ceramics collections, Table 7**). Working alongside Fields, I documented each individual item via an excel spreadsheet that contained the photo reference number, provenance, accession number, a brief description, dimensions, and additional data.

Additional complimentary studio and professional in-situ photos were necessary and were generously supplied by academics and curators in South African institutions. Six contributing institutions are listed in **Appendix 5.2.8 Additional professional photographs supplied by South African academic & heritage institutions, Table 8**. Similarly, individual artists, collectors, researchers, and the family and friends of pottery workers were extremely generous in supplying complimentary studio photos, as listed in **Appendix 5.2.9 Additional professional photographs supplied by individuals, Table 9**.

High quality additional archival photos and images were supplied by institutions, including two South African academic institutions and two national cultural history museums, as listed in **Appendix 5.2.10 Additional archival images supplied by South African public institutions, Table 10**, and by fifteen individuals, as listed in **Appendix 5.2.11 Additional archival images supplied by individuals, Table 11**. These were used in *Scorched Earth*, to enhance and / or complexify the readers' understanding of the said potteries.

1.2.4 Personal study collection

Ceramic works

A study collection of Southern African ceramics was developed in parallel. Works were acquired from charity shops, flea markets, bric-a-brac traders, antique and Africana dealers, and internet sales platforms including E-Bay and BidorBuy. A significant number of tiles were obtained at the Liebermann Pottery 'Seconds' shop in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Most of the works in this collection are relatively minor in scale and significance but were essential to representing the diversity of the oeuvres of the various potteries, and to understanding the breadth and scope of the Southern African ceramics industry. Works from my study collection were professionally photographed, and forty-two colour illustrations of individual objects or groups of wares were included in the text (Gers 2016a xix, 44, 47, 55, 57, 58, 60, 62, 79, 80, 81, 85, 97, 98, 104, 105, 108, 110, 112, 127, 164, 165, 171, 173, 174, 200, 206, 208, 210, 211, 217, 218, 221, 223, 225, 232, 233, 234, 293, 305, 319, 327). For ethical reasons, the provenance of these images has been clearly attributed.

In addition, a small collection of Dutch and British Africana has been constituted. It serves as a useful tool to visualise, analyse, and contextualise international trends in ceramics, and in some instances, key influences on the local scene. While most of these wares have been professionally photographed, they were not included in *Scorched Earth* as I chose to prioritise the illustration of Southern African wares.

Documentary material

A small collection of documentary material has been generated over the years. It includes material obtained during visits to studios, factories and collectors. Six archival images from this collection were included in *Scorched Earth*, as noted in **Appendix 5.2.12 Archival images from the author's study collection, Table 12.**

1.3 Research questions

Painfully aware that Modern Southern African commercial, tourist, and artistic ceramics lack critical visibility, this self-funded research project aimed to expand knowledge of the field. Two main types of research questions were explored: contextual and methodological.

1.3.1 Contextual

- Apart from a handful of South African factories that have been previously researched,⁴ what other factories were operational in Southern Africa during the period 1880 to 1980?
- Why was the industry so fragile, and why did it appear cyclic?

⁴ Previously researched factories included the Olifantsfontein complex (Heymans, 1989; Hillebrand, 1991); the trio of factories that were established in the 1950, the Kalahari Studio, Grahamstown Potteries and Crescent potteries, which were the focus of my MA thesis (Gers, 2000); Liebermann Pottery and Tiles (Strydom, 1974; Van der Horst, 1988); and Rorke's Drift (Battiss, 1977; Calder, 1999; Hobbs and Rankin, 2003; Hosking, 2005; Le Roux, 1998).

- What was the relationship between South African potters and potteries, and those located in neighbouring countries?
- Why was the history of South African artistic, commercial and tourist ceramics associated with white men, when it was evident from my initial research that black artists and artisans comprised the bulk of the skilled and unskilled workforce?
- Existent research showed interesting gendered divisions of labour at Rorke's Drift pottery (Calder, 1999; Le Roux, 1998). Was this a unique phenomenon, or was it common to other Southern African potteries?
- How should narratives of physically and mentally challenged potters be configured within this history?

1.3.2 Methodological

- How could I convey the diversity of the history of this sector using a combination of studio photos, text, and archival documents (primarily catalogues and vernacular photos)?
- As the research advanced, I was compelled to reflect upon a scholarly response to incomplete and impartial memories and even amnesia in the bibliographic research process, particularly from white pottery staff and management in respect to the names of their black co-workers and staff.

This research project commenced in 2002 when I left South Africa for Barcelona, Spain. Denied the right to work in Spain, this project was the logical extension of my MA thesis and touring exhibition of South African ceramics from the 1950s (Gers, 1998, 2000). I worked on the project until 2013, when I contacted a leading South African publisher

with the final manuscript (including an illustrated timeline), an excel spreadsheet of image captions containing detailed individual records for over 800 selected studio photos and archival images, and a large database of professionally edited studio photographs and archival images.

Due to the small size of the book-buying public in South Africa and the lack of an established market for books on local ceramics, the publisher required significant sponsorship. As I was living in France, fundraising from a distance was relatively slow. However, in 2014, the necessary funds were obtained from three private trusts and Corobrik, a brick company. The book was printed in China In late 2015, shipped to South Africa by sea, and finally launched in February 2016.

1.4 Research methodology

...the history of decorative arts and design appears to be a Western capitalist-materialist construct (Groot, 2015, p.32).

How can we decenter the subject, the object, and ourselves, and also find sites for ourselves to stand and 'profess'? Not all questions can be answered (Clarke, 2005, p.304).

The decentering of Modern, colonial, settler colonial (see **0.2 Glossary**) and neo-colonial narratives of ceramics in *Scorched Earth* was attempted via the interdisciplinary research methods previously

presented in this thesis, in combination with situational analysis tools (Clarke, 2005; Gray, 2017; Müller-Bloch and Kranz, 2015; Rose, 2016), and framed by postcolonial theory (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995; Clifford, Dominguez and Minh-Ha, 1987; Mignolo and Vazquez, 2013a, 2013b; Minh-Ha, 2009; de Sousa Santos, 2009; Zavala, 2013). The confluence of these research methods and critical frameworks has resulted in a distinctive hybrid methodology. Drawing upon a self-reflexive anachronic cartographic methodology of writing history, *Scorched Earth* explores an intersection of relatively quotidian objects and peoples' histories.

1.4.1 Embracing incapacity & research gaps

The past and history are different things (Jenkins, 2003, p.7).

The above quotation suggests that history is a different entity from the past, and that the 'truth' of the past is not available through a detailed reconstructionist exercise. The *writing* (own emphasis) of history is necessarily situated and inscribed in its epoch, tools, methods, frameworks, epistemological and philosophical assumptions, and historiographies. Jenkins, as per Foucault, argues that history is never innocent but nonetheless is always ideological in terms of moral judgements about right and wrong, the history of ideas and science, and how the world works. History is always made for someone, has a purpose, and is fundamentally about power (Franchetti, 2011; Jenkins, 2003; Nichols, 2010; Peltonen, 2004).

Scorched Earth thus sought to engage with methods of writing and presenting history in a manner that materialises the partiality of the research project, and the many limits of the survey. Determining factors are both personal and institutional. They include my financial and professional capacity - and at times, incapacity - to travel in Southern Africa and conduct unfunded research, the availability of informants, and the economic logic of a publisher. The research project features notable absences of information, hereafter referred to as research gaps. A self-reflexive methodological approach with three complimentary strategies was developed to 'materialise' these research gaps and subtly underscore the incomplete nature of the monograph.

1.4.1.1 Structural design

Drawing upon Nagel and Wood's argument that artworks are uniquely placed to produce temporal and spatial incongruities and heterogeneities (Nagel and Wood (2010), cited in Kernbauer (2017), p.9), I chose to design the book's structure and contents in a corresponding manner. Various strategies were designed and implemented to confer specific incongruities and heterogeneities, including:

Nonlinear narrative

The contents of *Scorched Earth* are listed alphabetically rather than chronologically. Similarly, I chose omit a time-line that I had developed at an earlier stage of the research project. This detailed contextual timeline, which I envisaged as an illustrated frieze, is included in

Appendix 5.2.16 Unpublished time-line for *Scorched Earth*. While the time-line would no doubt facilitate an understanding of the chronological development of the industry, I chose to embrace the agency of temporal incongruities to encourage readers to forge their own histories, allowing for ‘repetitions, regressions, distensions, duplications, folds and bends’ (Rancière 1996, cited in Kernbauer, 2017, p.9). The adoption of an anachronic structure ‘aimed to defend the incongruity of ideas, events, actions against their obliteration via historiographical thinking’ (Kernbauer, 2017, p.9).

An incomplete and eccentric map

The incomplete design and eccentric contents of the analytical map of some major potteries in Southern Africa on the opening pages of *Scorched Earth* (2016a, p.xi) visibly renders gaps in the cartography of the Southern African ceramics landscape. The map presents Maker’s Marks of some of the most significant potteries and features design variations of Maker’s Marks associated with some key potteries.⁵ However, the map excludes potteries whose wares are only known through archival texts,⁶ as well as Luck Bean Farm (2016a, p.234), Joy China, a subsidiary of the South African Glazing Company (2016a, pp.288–297), and Thamaga Pottery (Botswana) (2016a, p.311). I chose to include an incomplete map as I believe that these omissions embody the research methodology of embracing incapacity and gaps in research findings and communicating these absences in a visual manner.

⁵ For example, the map features two different Maker’s Marks for the following individual potteries; Hamburger’s Pottery, The Ceramic Studio, Lucia Ware, and The Old Jar.

⁶ These include Groenkloof Brick, Tile and Pottery Works (2016a, p.114), Milton Pottery Company / Pretoria Potteries (2016a, p.255), and the Vereeniging Brick and Tile Company (2016a, p.330).

Research gaps and contested information

The final strategy for embracing incapacity, absence, and research gaps is incorporating both incomplete and contested information. This inclusion of incomplete information is exemplified by the inclusion of many partially identified pottery staff members. For example, biographical entries for staff from Izandla Pottery (2016a, p.150,151), Kolonyama Pottery (2016a, p.189), Liebermann Pottery & Tiles (2016a, p.227), Mantenga Craft Pottery (2016a, p.248), Thaba Bosigo (2016a, p.298), Thamaga Pottery (2016a, p.317,318), and The Old Jar Pottery (2016a, p.324) are incomplete, as first names or surnames of many staff members are listed as 'unknown'.

An example of contested information is found in the entry for Rorke's Drift. The pottery employed families and extended families sharing a common surname, and with similar first names. This practice has increased the complexity of writing accurate biographies for various staff members.⁷ Confusion is compounded by the numerous variations in the spelling of an artist's first and last names and has resulted in contested and contradictory information when bibliographic reference sources are triangulated with museum, institutional⁸ and private collections and online databases. For example, *Scorched Earth* includes separate entries for artists known as Nesta (aka Nester) Molefe and Nestah Molefe (Gers, 2016a, p.275). Current research indicates they were separate individuals: however, it is possible that existing sources are incorrect and the works were produced by one person.

⁷ For example, Loviniah Molefe, the daughter of the senior potter Dinah Molefe, and her relative, Lephina Molefe, worked at the pottery.

⁸ It is worth noting the significance of Motsamayi's catalogue raisonné of Bernstein Collection of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (2012).

The nonlinear narrative, inclusion of an incomplete and eccentric map, and rendering of research gaps and contested information in the text, is only observable to a very attentive reader. Most readers would probably not notice these subtle perversions that serve to destabilise the authority of the monograph. They require a discerning reader to make an effort in terms of mentally creating a time-line, and recognise that this project is a work in progress, and a subjective snapshot of my research at a specific moment.

1.4.2 Objectifying ‘workers’ histories’

During the mid- to late 1970s, some key South Africa historians engaged in a concerted effort to develop an African urban history. This history was perceived as a working class history, despite - or perhaps in spite of - race, gender, class, cultural, economic and other contestations (Bozzoli, 1979). Peoples’ histories evolved and extended over the years and have embraced segments of the art world including protest posters, cartoons, t-shirts, graffiti, murals, peace parks (Miescher, Rizzo and Silvester, 2009; Poster Collective of the South African History Archive, 1992; Williamson, 2004), documentary, and vernacular photography (Ballen, 2011, 2010, 2008; Bester, 2015; Barbara Buntman, 1996; B. Buntman, 1996; Godby, Gule and Hayes, 2013; Hayes, 2015, 2007; Krantz, 2008; Mofokeng, 2013; Mulhearn, 2015; Newbury, 2009; Schoeman, 2010; Whitehead, 2014; Wilson, 1986) and township art (Becker, 2006; Miles, 1997; Nettleton and Hammond-Tooke, 1989; Proud, 2006; Sack, 1988; Williamson, 2004).

Among other forms of artistic expression, the exclusion of ceramic objects from an inclusive peoples' history has skewed the cultural landscape. Potteries and ceramics factories are sites of working class history 'par excellence' as they are both institutions with a visible and identifiable 'brand' identity, and yet they simultaneously allow for the production of special commissions and original works that facilitate the expression of individual voices. It is this duality that draws me to potteries, as sites of working class labour history that intersect with art, craft, and design histories. In parallel, the humble nature of most of the ceramics surveyed in *Scorched Earth* ensured their accessibility across most of the economic spectrum of the population, and thus found questions about how objects define us.

The items represented in *Scorched Earth* cannot be reduced to mere consumable goods. They are co-constitutively entangled with people as they are situated at the intersection of discourse surrounding gender, race, and class (Appadurai, 1988; DeGrazia, Grazia and Furlough, 1996; Naples, 2013); and are a 'trove of disguises, concealment, subterfuges, provocations and triggers' (Hudek, 2014, p.14) that act as a platform for defining multiple contemporary articulations of self and other, decorating and defining living and public spaces, as well as dining practices. They may act as markers of desire, identity, and community. Objects also define us via their autonomy: they exist before us, and possibly without us (ibid 2014, p.15). In acknowledging the agency of objects, the subject is destabilised. This is not a static or binary relationship: rather, it is one characterised by detours and feedback loops. Embracing these dynamic relations, *Scorched Earth* formulates detailed discursive narratives involving potteries, their staff, and their oeuvres, as it maps a specific cultural moment in Africa.

1.5 Reviews

Peer and book reviews of *Scorched Earth* can be found respectively in **Appendix 5.4.1 Book review by J. Hopp** and **Appendix 5.4.2 Book review by E. Beck**.

Johnathan Hopp acknowledges that the book is an ‘invaluable reference text’ that ‘succeeds in concentrating hundreds of disparate sources into a clear and highly accessible text.’ A self-reflexive ‘sense of responsibility’ is also noted in terms of the absence of value judgements in respect to quality and other canons within ceramic art. Hopp notes:

The book approaches its subject in a clearly democratic and non-biased approach which extends to the treatment of its entire body of knowledge.

According to the author, serially produced ceramics represent unmediated forms of quotidian artistic expression. He argues that

Their account, and the account of those who have conceived and made them, are a people's history, and [they] are a document of local identity.

A designer involved in small scale production, Hopp is especially sensitive to the contemporary globalised economic landscape of ceramics manufacture and distribution. He notes that small scale production is no longer economically viable and that this ‘brief historical window’ offers important insights into a unique historical moment of locally nuanced artistic practices and consumer preferences.

Ester Beck notes that *Scorched Earth*

gives an in-depth, systematic, clear, historic overview of about 30 factories... and places this ceramic production within its political, social, and cultural context.

She observes the aesthetic hegemony of white immigrants (who she refers to as 'colonialist' creators of British and Dutch extraction) and how this dominated the sector, as well as noticeable parallels between the (now defunct) Israeli ceramics industry that was founded by German and continental European immigrants, and an obvious European cultural hegemony. For Beck, this bland and generic European aesthetic is a global phenomenon challenged by indigenous potters; including Africans (in South Africa) or Palestinians (in Israel), whose oeuvres offer more original, sincere experiences of specific localities.

Additional book reviews by Dr Melanie Hillebrand, former Director of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth and Susan Sellschop, the late South African ceramics artist, teacher and crafts activist, can be found on my [Academia](https://johannesburg.academia.edu/WendyGers)⁹ site. These two reviews attest to the significance of this research within a Southern African context but fail to understand the international import of the scholarship, as reflected in the reviews by Hopp and Beck. The latter two reviewers recognise the wide-ranging collapse of the ceramics industry as a trans-national cultural and economic phenomenon experienced by the USA, Britain, South Africa, Israel, and many western and northern European nations.

⁹ <https://johannesburg.academia.edu/WendyGers>

1.6 Contribution to knowledge

1.6.1 The first substantial scholarly reference text in this field

Scorched Earth is the first *substantial*¹⁰ scholarly reference text that presents an overview of the production of commercial and tourist ceramics in Southern Africa between 1880 and 1980. The monograph consists of 416 pages including an 11-page introduction and 395 pages of contents. The hardcover and large format¹¹ ensure optimal conditions for viewing the studio photographs of selected wares, the majority of which are presented on a full page.

Scorched Earth includes the first comprehensive listing of early brickworks in South Africa (endnote 7, p. 357), potteries located in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi (endnote 14 p. 358), and Swaziland (endnote 38 p. 360); commercial tiles manufactories (endnote 13 p. 385), sanitary whiteware manufacturers (endnote 8 p. 385), producers of planters and garden pots (endnote 11 p. 385), and glazed stoneware storage bottles (endnote 12 p. 385).

¹⁰ This large format monograph consists of 416 pages. The only other comparable monograph, is Cruise's *Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa* (1992), which consists of 208 pages and focusses on individual studio potters and ceramic artists from the 1980s.

¹¹ Dimensions of the book are 288 x 247 x 40mm (L x W x H).

The introductory essay contextualises the production of glazed ceramics in South Africa and explores some of the complex relations between colonial forces, indigenous peoples (the Khoikhoi and Khoekhoen), the 'Bantu', and Dutch and British colonialists (Gers, 2016a, pp.xiii–xix). There is no other existing scholarly text that attempts to present a multi-cultural historical overview of the Southern African pottery traditions.

The contents of the two preceding publications that survey aspects of the local commercial ceramics scene (Clark and Wagner, 1974; Nilant, 1963) have been critically reviewed previously (see **Appendix 5.2.14 Detailed analysis of Nilant's *Contemporary Pottery in South Africa*** and **Appendix 5.2.15 Detailed analysis of Clark & Wagner's *Potters of Southern Africa***). Both publications are extremely succinct and partial in their focus. They reveal patriarchal visions characteristic of their respective epochs and are marred by important omissions - some of which appear to be racist and anti-Semitic. In response to these omissions and biases, *Scorched Earth* aimed at producing a more inclusive and nuanced overview of industrial artware in the greater Southern African region, including South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Botswana.

1.6.2 Interdisciplinary research methods & methodology

It is argued that the original combination of interdisciplinary research methods and innovative research methodologies employed in this thesis constitute a contribution to knowledge. Classical art historical research techniques (literature survey, surveys of public and private

collections, ethnographic research methods and the development and study of my personal study collection) and new digital forms of research (social media special interest groups) were applied to my research questions and aims. The ensuing research methodology embraced an anachronistic, alphabetical presentation. Incapacity, absence, and objectified 'worker's histories' is similarly an unprecedented contribution of knowledge.

1.6.3 Presents a century of ceramics workers' history

As *Scorched Earth* is based on extensive primary research, the vast majority of individuals featured in this publication are unknown within existing literature. A list of 147 significant black (African) and Indian artists is included in **Appendix 5.2.13 Abridged listing of black & Indian Southern African artists and potters, Table 13**. With the exception of Durant Sihlali, Austin Hleza, and Meshack Masuku, these artists are unknown to scholars and the broader public.

1.6.4 Encourages further research

While *Scorched Earth* acts as a seminal database for the Southern African commercial artware sector, the book acknowledges the project is incomplete and the final selection of potteries is both personal and eclectic (2016a, p.x). A self-reflexive methodological response to research gaps is considered in an earlier section, **1.4.1 Embracing incapacity & research gaps**. It is hoped that other researchers will

draw upon this resource and engage with the intersection of ceramic art and design, commercial and individual studios, artists and artisans in Southern African ceramics and the relationships between South African artists and potteries and those of our neighbouring countries.

The legacies of significant black and Indian potters and potteries also require greater scrutiny as the socio-political environment has privileged white artists. Indeed, to date, most ceramics research from this region - both popular (for example, originating in the magazine of the Southern African Potters' Association, *Ceramics South Africa*) and academic - has tended to focus on individual white artists. These include Mary Stainbank, Hilda Ditchburn, Hyme Rabinowitz, Esias Bosch, Andrew Walford, Juliet Armstrong, Maggie Mikula, Katherine Glenday, Marietjie van der Merwe, Thelma Marcuson, Clementina van der Walt, Hylton Nel, Hendrik Stroebel, Wilma Cruise, and Carol Hayward Fell, among others (Bauer, 2004; Bosch and Waal, 1989; Brown, Brophy and Starkey, 2012; Cruise, 2012, 2005, 2004, 1992; Du Plessis, 2007; Garb and Nel, 1996; Hillebrand, 2001; Liebenberg-Barkhuizen, 2002; Lovelace, 2013; Martin, Brophy and Botha, 2011; Omar, 2012; Schmahmann, 2017, 2002; Stevenson, 2011; Stevenson and Nel, 2003; Stretton, 2012; Tatham Art Gallery, 2004; Venter, 2014; van der Walt, 2017; Wright, 2009; Zaalberg, 1985).

This substantial list of research outputs contrasts in volume to the quantity of research focussing on Black and Indian potters and potteries. Two specific South African potteries are the focus of the majority of publications on ceramics made by black artists: notably, Rorke's Drift (Battiss, 1977; Calder, 1999; Hobbs and Rankin, 2003; Hosking, 2005; Le Roux, 1998; Motsamayi, 2012; Offringa, 1988; Riaan Bolt Antiques, no date; Watt, 2014a) and Ardmore (Ardmore, 2012; Halsted and Cohen, 2010; Scott, 2001). Another popular research

'genre' is African pottery typologies, such as Zulu pottery (Armstrong and Calder, 1996; Bell and Calder, 1998; Garrett, 1997; Jolles, 2005; Perrill, 2008a; Perrill and Garrett, 2011) or Xhosa Pottery , although since the 1990s scholars have begun to address the oeuvres of prominent individuals such as Andile Dylvane, Azolina MaMncube Ngema, Nesta Nala, Austin Hleza, Nico Masemula, and Clive Sithole, among others (Armstrong, 1998a; Dyalvane, Mshudulu and von Geusau, 2016; Garrett, 1997; Huysmans, 2011; Jolles, 2012; Perrill, 2017, 2016, 2008b, 2007a; Schutte, 2012; Watt, 2014b).

Further research into South African ceramics spanning from the mid-1980s to present is currently being undertaken by Ronnie Watt, an independent South African scholar residing in Vancouver, Canada. Watt has consulted me on two occasions with research queries and has requested the use of various image from *Scorched Earth* for his PhD thesis, which he is undertaking through the University of South Africa (Watt, 2018a, 2018b).

1.6.5 Impact on South African museum collection policies & exhibition practices

Prior to my research and/or the publication of *Scorched Earth*, popular, commercial, and tourist ceramics were not actively collected or displayed in heritage institutions. This has changed significantly: some leading South African museums that now have active collection policies include Iziko Social History Museum, Cape Town; the Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg; and the William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberly. These institutions regularly showcase ceramics exhibitions

that are diverse and include serially produced wares alongside unique creations.

The Ceramics Curator of Iziko Museums of South Africa attests to the importance of the monograph in **Appendix 5.3.2 Review by E.**

Esmiol, IZIKO Museums of South Africa:

Her recently published book *Scorched Earth, 100 years of Southern African potteries* (2015) is a major research work – a genuine ‘Who’s Who’ of South African production pottery. No serious collector or museum curator can do without this book as a source of reference. The work has immense value, with carefully researched information, dates, artists’ information, markings and photographs covering a large range of potteries active in South Africa during the 20th century. Ms Gers’s work has undoubtedly impacted positively on the curatorial work done at museums such as Iziko... (Esmiol, 2018)

1.6.5.1 Art & Ceramic Collections, University of Pretoria

Gerard de Kamper, Chief Curator of the University of Pretoria Art (UP) & Ceramic Collections notes that *Scorched Earth* has had a significant influence on their collections. It has been used for arranging exhibitions and updating information on their South African Ceramics displays in their Permanent exhibition. De Kamper has also used information from *Scorched Earth* in his MA thesis and in a booklet on UP’s South African Ceramics collections (De Kamper, 2018; Tiley-Nel and De Kamper, 2016). His email exchange is transcribed in **Appendix 5.3.4 Review by G. de Kamper, University of Pretoria .**

Iziko Social History Museum, Cape Town

Esther Esmiol, Curator, Iziko Social History Museum notes that the early sharing of my ongoing research enabled the museum to enrich its collections in four manners:

- a) via augmenting the diversity of wares collected
- b) via developing more representative collections
- c) via the acquisition of outstanding works illustrated in *Scorched Earth*
- d) via knowledge gleaned from subsequent visits to significant potteries (Esmiol 2018, **Appendix 5.3.2 Review by E. Esmiol, IZIKO Museums of South Africa**)

Esmiol explained that my ongoing research into South African ceramics also made a significant contribution to FIRED, 2012 - an important¹² permanent exhibition showcasing Iziko's South African ceramics collections within The Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town. Prior to this exhibition, the ceramics collections had been in storage for many years after the fusion of various Cape Town Museums into a single flagship structure, Iziko. My contribution to FIRED took the form of:

- a) ongoing discussions regarding the layout, focus and scope (Esmiol, 2018, **Appendix 5.3.2 Review by E. Esmiol, IZIKO Museums of South Africa**)
- b) significant contributions to the exhibition's text panels and time line (Esmiol, 2016, Footnotes 9, 22 & 25; Jolles, 2012)

¹² 'Fired' was awarded the Best New Museum Project of 2012-2013 by the Western Cape government.

c) a press review of the exhibition (**Appendix 5.3.2 Review by E. Esm Yol, IZIKO Museums of South Africa**)¹³

Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg

Following the publication of *Scorched Earth* in 2016, numerous extended labels containing information from the monograph were developed for the Tatham's permanent ceramics collection. Similarly, information about South African potteries derived from *Scorched Earth* has been included in five issues of *Outlines*. The tri-annual publication of the Tatham Art Gallery acknowledges *Scorched Earth* as the source of the information (see Venter 2018 in **Appendix 5.3.3 Review by K. Venter, Tatham Art Gallery**). Print runs of *Outlines* consist of 600 issues. Approximately 300 of these are distributed by post to Friends of the Tatham Art Gallery (FOTAG), schools in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, universities and colleges that teach art, and Art Museums country wide. The remaining *Outlines* are placed in the Gallery's entrance foyer where they are distributed to local and foreign visitors. *Outlines* are also distributed online via the Tatham's website (Venter, 2018a, 2018b).

¹³ The review dealt with both the *Fired* exhibition and an accompanying temporary exhibition, *Dinner for 101*. The latter was marred by an associated incidence of censorship, and the article, which delved into the controversy, was never published. It was rejected by *La revue de la Céramique et du verre*, as it was considered too regionally specific, and *Art South Africa*, as *Dinner for 101* was a very brief temporary exhibition held at the Castle of Good from 26 February until 17 March 2013. A copy of the review can be found in my [Academia](#) page.

William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberly

The Art Gallery has started actively collecting Rorke's Drift ceramics. In addition, they are undertaking research into the historical documentation in their archives concerning temporary exhibitions of Rorke's Drift ceramics, prints and weavings held at the Art Gallery (Nortjé, 2016).

1.6.6 Changes in the South African art market

- A market for these so-called 'Africana' ceramics has been firmly established within the antique dealers' sector.
- Wares have been prominently incorporated into the sales catalogues of many art auctioneers, including Bernardi Auctioneers, Pretoria and Johannesburg; Cannons Auctioneers, Pietermaritzburg; Old Johannesburg Warehouse Auctioneers; Russel Kaplan Auctioneers, Johannesburg; Riaan Bolt Antiques, Cape Town; and Piér Rabe Antiques, Stellenbosch, among others.
- There is a burgeoning collectors scene that is active in the Facebook group, South African Pottery History.
- Justin Kerrod, ceramics dealer and author of *Southern African Ceramics, their Marks, Monograms & Signatures* (Kerrod, 2010) notes that prices of various wares have escalated.

I'm happy to say that since the book [*Scorched Earth*] was published there has been a steady rise in demand for the known names, Bosch and Linn Ware in particular. As you might know, the market in general is tough, so I think the growth, although not huge, is significant.

I'm [also] happy to report that your book is mentioned very often when people see the pottery we have in our store - quite funny as most think I don't know about pottery and advise me to get your book! (Kerrod, 2018)

1.6.7 Debunking misinformation Modernist biases

Presenting a more nuanced history of Stoneware and Porcelain in South Africa

Scorched Earth challenges the previously established claim that Hilda Ditchburn was the pioneer of stoneware in South Africa (Cruise, 2005, p.143): endnote 170 (Gers, 2016a, p.368) notes that in fact the pioneer. Similarly, the manuscript notes that while working at Linnware in the early 1950s, Michael Gill was possibly the first artist to produce porcelain in South Africa (2016a, p.21).

Myths about Esias Bosch

As evoked previously,¹⁴ the authors of the two pioneering texts on South African ceramics celebrated Bosch as a pivotal figure in twentieth century ceramics. This centrality was later consolidated by the publication of a large monographic review of his oeuvre (Bosch and

¹⁴ See **Appendix 5.2.14 Detailed analysis of Nilant's Contemporary Pottery in South Africa** and **Appendix 5.2.15 Detailed analysis of Clark & Wagner's Potters of Southern Africa**.

Waal, 1989). His pre-eminence within South African ceramics discourse has blinded both cultural institutions and collectors to the depth and diversity of locally produced works. It has also skewed research agendas, which have overlooked pioneer black ceramics artists such as Hlunzaan, the Ssuobba-||kèn and her female ancestors, Abraham Stephen Vil-Nkomo, Hezekiel Ntuli, M.T. Mhlongo, and Samuel Makoenyane, among others.

Bias about taste

Scorched Earth engages directly with the diversity of Southern African industrial artware. Via its inclusion of popular and more aesthetically sophisticated wares, it aims to engage with and challenge myths about 'taste' and the cultural insignificance of popular ceramics.

1.7 Areas for further research & consideration

Scorched Earth is theorised as a metaphorical, partial, eclectic, and incomplete mapping exercise of certain ceramic constellations within a specific geo-temporal sphere (2016a, p.x). I attempted 'to focus on potteries that I feel historically significant or representative of a sector of the industry' (ibid). Due to the degree of subjectivity involved in these choices, another researcher might find other potteries more significant or representative of a specific sector.

1.7.1 Potteries & artists

The following four areas require further academic research:

1. In addition to more detailed research into the various potteries included in *Scorched Earth*, other contemporary potteries merit research, as presented in footnote 14 (Gers 2016a, p.358).
2. Similarly, the period pre-dating 1880 and post-dating 1980 are also rich areas for future research.
3. The oeuvre of Indian potters operating in Durban in the early years of the twentieth century (Gers, 2016a, p.xvi) merits further research. Besides the Adams folder in the National Art Library, London (NAL) (Adams, 1916), there are no known records of these artists and artisans.¹⁵ The 1860 Heritage Centre (formerly known as the Durban Cultural and Documentation Centre), was reopened in 2017 after a decade of closure. This Durban-based archive for Indian indentured history may offer important resources for research into Indian potters in South Africa.
4. *Scorched Earth* does not include images of work by Kolonyama 'freelance' artist, Tsitso Mohapi (Gers, 2016a, p.185) because I was unable to obtain publication-quality images. Nonetheless, I note the significance of his oeuvre and advocate the necessity to critically examine his earthenware dioramas presenting narratives of the Xhosa history, and explore their role within the tourist sector and the construction of Eastern Cape art and craft history.

¹⁵ It is noted with regret that *Scorched Earth* does not include images of early Indian potters or their work, as the costs of reproduction of NAL images was prohibitive.

1.7.2 Heritage institutions

Excepting IZIKO South African Cultural History Museum and the Tatham Art Gallery, the publication of *Scorched Earth* has made little impact on many South African heritage institutions due to funding cuts. These institutions include the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth; MuseuMAfricA, Johannesburg; Roodepoort Museum, Johannesburg; and the Clay Museum, Durbanville, Cape Town. These institutions lack sufficient budgets for acquiring art works for their respective collections and books for their library. Like many other local municipal museums, they are chronically short-staffed and basic infrastructure requires attention.¹⁶ While the Institutions cannot actively acquire ceramics, the senior staff acknowledge that *Scorched Earth* has raised the profile of South African ceramics (thereby adding value to their cultural significance),¹⁷ and is an important tool for identifying previously unknown works, documenting wares in their collections, and in the longer term aid in developing a consciousness of commercial ceramics as a manifestation of worker's history and popular

¹⁶ Carolina Geldenhuis, who is responsible for a forthcoming reinstallation of a ceramics display at the Roodepoort Museum explained that the collections of this museum have been relocated to a central storage facility at MuseuMAfricA. In the past week the electrical wiring for half the building was stolen and she had to access stores with a torch to obtain works for the reinstallation! (Geldenhuis, 2018c)

¹⁷ Emma O'Brien, Director of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth, explains:

The book *Scorched Earth* is valuable as a recourse on SA ceramics and is an important publication to raise the profile of SA ceramic studios. The impact on our current collection is however limited because we have not had a purchase of works of art budget in over eight years. The museum has been in this crisis since the city took away our budget at the end of 2010. One can cynically say that the legacy of the 2010 world cup was a debt that saw the city reduce our funding for running costs and critically remove our funding to purchase art for the collection. Until this crisis state is resolved discussion around the impact of the book on the collecting policy is difficult (O'Brein, 2018).

or worker's culture, as noted in **Appendix 5.3.5 Review by C. Geldenhuis, Roodepoort Museum** (Geldenhuis, 2018c, 2018d).

Funding cuts have seen the Clay Museum Durbanville in Cape Town devolve into a structure that resembles a community centre with craft workshops and a commercial gallery that appears to serve a predominantly white constituency. Their permanent collection is augmented by one piece per year, and the Museum presents one annual exhibition of works from their permanent collection (Jansen van Vuuren, 2018). It will be interesting to observe if, and to what capacity, this institution can benefit from the research contained in *Scorched Earth*. The location of the Clay Museum, close to the industrial and commercial pottery sector of Cape Town, offers a rich potential for harvesting workers' histories and engaging with diversity in terms of their collections, exhibitions, education and associated programs, and van Vuuren expressed her interest in pursuing a project of this nature (ibid).

PART 2 Post-colonialism?

I want to emphasize the importance of approaching both our theoretical explorations and our movement activism in ways that enlarge and expand and complicate and deepen our theories and practices of freedom (Davis, 2016, p.104).

The main curatorial research project I have chosen to examine for this Doctor of Philosophy by existing published or creative work is *Post-colonialism?*, an international research, residency, and exhibition project facilitated by the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center (BCCC), Tel Aviv, Israel, that I curated in November and December, 2016. The project aimed to raise pertinent contemporary questions about the situation in Israel, to ‘create dialogue and explore the various aspects of ceramics and so extend its scope in the broad spectrum of material culture’ (Klein, 2017). The multicultural project culminated in an exhibition of works and installations by 19 artists, including nine Israelis, one Palestinian, and nine international artists in residence. The project was accompanied by a series of symposia, masterclasses, a research tour and a detailed website¹⁸ that was conceived as both an archive and catalogue. It marked the fifth anniversary of the BCCC, and was their most ambitious project to date, requiring extensive international fund-raising and establishing partnerships with higher education institutions, galleries, residencies and contemporary art centres.

¹⁸ The original website was recently deleted, and an abbreviated version has been included on the new Benyamini Website, <https://www.benyaminiceramics.org/en/ceramic-galleries/past-exhibitions/2016-2/postcolonialism/>. A compilation of the exhibition catalogue texts that were featured on the original website, are included in Appendix 5.12.

Post-colonialism? has its origins in the 2014 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale (TCB), which included a small sub-section devoted to this concept. It was also here that I met the BCCC's curator, Shlomit Bauman, who subsequently invited me to develop an exhibition proposal for a more substantial exploration of this subject in Israel. My initial reflection upon *Ubuntu* (see **Glossary 0.2.7 Ubuntu**0.2 Glossary) as a curatorial strategy associated with reparation, redress and social justice in developing nations is documented in the TCB *Handbook*. The title of my curatorial essay, 'Reflecting on the 'making of' the 2014 TCB: From the curator, with love!' (Appendix 5.5) also responds to the my highly mediated curatorial experience in Taiwan, which in turn catalysed an analysis of affective labour.

The notion of curatorial love is derived from Hilary Rose's research that acknowledges the importance of Love in relationship with discourse and knowledge construction (Rose, 1994). It is interesting to note the date of this text, as it corresponds to the first democratic elections in South Africa. Public debates concerning the central importance of compassion and forgiveness were a seminal feature of the South African socio-political landscape of the mid to late 1990s, as the fledgling democracy sought to lay morally sound foundations for the post-Apartheid era. *Ubuntu* was also central to the foundations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This historic moment also corresponds to the debut of my curatorial practice at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum (formerly known as the King George VI Art Gallery).

A more scholarly analysis of *ubuntu* as a curatorial model was presented a year later at the *Australian Ceramics Triennial* in a panel entitled 'Curatorial models and protocols in international ceramics

biennales: 'Ubuntu' co-creation, collaboration and dialogue as the hallmark of the 2014 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale' (Gers, 2015a).

These two projects, *Post-colonialism?* and the 2014 TCB, need to be seen in the context of my international curatorial practice, which includes exhibitions in China (Gers, 2016c) and South Africa (Gers, 1998, 1996; Gers, Hillebrand and Newman, 1999). These exhibitions share many key characteristics, including a socially engaged vision that affirms Davis' call to enlarge, expand and complicate theoretical and practical agendas (Davis *ibid*), in conjunction with a commitment to diversity, and *ubuntu* curatorial methodologies.

Part 2 thus commences with a contextual overview of South African curatorial practices from the late 1980s. Research methods including a literature review of curatorial theory & practice in contemporary ceramics is then presented. Research questions and methodology are subsequently considered. The impact of the research is evidenced in exhibition and peer reviews so as to define *Post-colonialism?*'s impact and contributions to knowledge. Areas for further research & consideration are presented before concluding Part 2.

2.1 Contextual overview: South African curatorial practices from the late 1980s

Employed as Curator at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, from June 1996 to December 2000, my

curatorial practice is grounded in the cultural politics of the early years of Democracy and the virulent debates concerning the arts of the late 1980s onwards. The brief overview that follows is a subjective account of key moments in South African curatorial history from this period.

Under Apartheid, the anti-apartheid movement (which included students, trade unions, and religious groups, among many other sectors), artists and art historians passionately debated the role and function of art in the struggle for democracy (Campschreur and Divendal, 1989a; de Kok and Press, 1990; Nettleton and Hammond-Tooke, 1989; Pissarra, 2011; Williamson, 2004). Was art merely an instrument of the struggle or did it lose its significance if too overly didactic? (Campschreur and Divendal, 1989b).

From the 1990s, with the advent of democracy and the re-writing of South African history, the transformation of museum staff, collections and curatorial policy, and exhibition content was prioritised (Coombes, 2003; Corsane, 2002; Dubin, 2016; Galla, 1999; Harris, 2002, 1997; Rassool, 2007; Rassool and Witz, 2008; Rodéhn, 2011; Sheriff, 2014). Human remains and repatriation, including the landmark case of the repatriation and reburial of Sara Baartman in 2002, were vigorously debated in the public sphere (Crais and Scully, 2010; Hendricks, 2010; Legassick and Rassool, 2000; Parkinson, 2016). These debates need to be seen in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), established in 1995 through an act of parliament to simultaneously investigate human rights violations and forge bridges between victims and perpetrators of violence.

The first high profile deployment of post-colonial theory in a public art museum was explored in the highly contested 'Miscast' (1996)

exhibition by artist, scholar and curator Pippa Skotnes, at the South African National Gallery. The installation incorporated archival images and texts that critically reflected racist attitudes and research into the Khoisan people during the colonial era. Skotnes aimed to show that they were:

[...] cast out of time, out of politics and out of history – miscast' (Skotnes, 1996, p.17). Viewers were 'forced to reconsider her or his own understanding of the term 'Bushman', in the light of the legacy of selective representation that is revealed by the exhibition (Lane, 1996, p.5).

Skotnes used mirrors to implicate the visitors in the installation, as they realised that the act of looking is both subjective and voyeuristic. The installation aimed to symbolically 'restore' human dignity to the Khoisan via the use of irony (Lane, 1996, p.9). However, this irony was not understood by many Khoisan representatives and a furore ensued, which ultimately gave these marginalised communities a voice and platform to raise other concerns such as land restitution and the right to self-determination (ibid.).

'Miscast' made a significant contribution to the National Gallery's efforts of re-appraising the past and highlighted the necessity to articulate the complexity and 'situated' character of history, research, and the highly specific circumstances of their accounts (Bank, 2008). 'Miscast' also had a catalyst effect of highlighting questions of representations of 'others' in public collections, including the aging dioramas in the South African Museum, Cape Town Hendricks, 2010, p.6,7; Rassool, 2007; Rassool and Witz, 2008).

I had the opportunity to visit and was deeply moved by the first Johannesburg Biennale, Africus (Transitional Metropolitan Council:

Johannesburg, 1995), and Okwui Enwezor's second Johannesburg Biennale, 'Trade Routes: History and Geography' (1997). The latter aimed to

look beyond the givens of history, contesting the vogue of the terms 'multiculturalism', 'postcolonial' and 'globalisation' as reproducing neo-colonial relations, to explore 'how economic imperatives of the last five hundred years have produced resilient cultural fusions and disjunctions (1997, p.7,8).

However, racial and cultural politics intervened, and this was doomed to be the last Johannesburg Biennale (Allain, 2008; Axel, 2008; Budney, 1998; Preller, 2016).

Racial and cultural politics remain at the forefront of curatorial debates in Southern Africa. These include, for example, the 'Spear' scandal associated with the artist Brett Murray's depiction of the president's flaccid genitals (Hassim, 2013; Hudson, 2013; Miller and Schmahmann, 2017, pp.118–120; Pauwels, 2016; Santos, 2014; Zapiro, 2012), the appointments of the first black heads of prominent formerly 'white' heritage institutions,¹⁹ and the high profile dismissal of the first black Director of the Iziko SA National Gallery, Riason Naidoo (Blackman, 2014; Minnaar, 2014; Pissarra, 2017; Thamm, 2014). Among the reasons cited for Naidoo's dismissal was the deinstallation of an important bequest of British art, in favour of the display of local art (Thamm, 2014).

¹⁹ Black leaders of significant formerly white heritage institutions include Rooksana Omar (Chief Executive Officer of Iziko Museum, 2010-present) (*Chief Executive Officer of Iziko Museum – Iziko Museums*, 2010), Khwezi Gule (Johannesburg Art Gallery's new Chief Curator, 2018-present) (Marshall, 2018) and Mduduzi Xakaza at the Durban Art Gallery (2011-present).

2.2 Research methods

2.2.1 Literature review

Curatorial theory & practice with a focus on contemporary ceramics

Almost two decades ago, the pioneer museum studies scholar, Mary Anne Staniszewski, identified a form of historical amnesia towards innovative display practices of the past (1999). Since then, the practice of curating has developed into a scholarly field of knowledge production taught at universities around the globe, with peer reviewed journals and a plethora of academic publications to theorise diverse aspects of the practice. Consider for example, exhibition histories that documents pioneers, (Hoffman, 2017; Obrist, 2008; Thea, 2016, 2009) contemporary professional practice (Balzer, 2015; Ferguson, Greenberg and Nairne, 1996; George, 2015; Hoare et al., 2016; Hoffman, 2017; Hoffmann, 2013; Martinon, 2015; Obrist, 2015, 2015, 2011; Smith, 2015; Wade, 1999), significant exhibitions, biennales and triennials (Altshuler, 2008; Filipovic, Van Hal and Øvstebø, 2010; Gardner and Green, 2016; van Hal, 2010; Kompatsiaris, 2017; Richards, Westwell and Dvorak, 2013; Vanderlinden and Filipovic, 2006; Voorhies, 2017); forms of curating (Martinon, 2015) including curating as research (Cerevetto, 2015; Mörsch, Sachs and Sieber, 2017; O'Neill and Wilson, 2010), pedagogic strategies, forms of authorship (Fotiadi, 2014), social and political activism (Bonansinga, 2014; Byrd et al., 2017; Corrin, 1994; Globus, 2011; Kwon, 2004; Newell, Robin and Wehner, 2016; O'Neill, 2012, 2007; Reilly, 2018; Zeiske and Sacramento, 2011), theorising scenography (Chaumier, 2012; Davallon, 2000; Gawin, 2013; McLuhan et al., 2008; Merleau-Ponty and Ezrati, 2006; Tzortzi, 2016), and inventing utopian reveries

(Butler and Lehrer, 2016). Furthermore, specialist practices are starting to receive attention, including new media (England, Schiphorst and Bryan-Kinns, 2016; Graham and Dietz, 2015; Muller and Edmonds, 2006), fashion (Vänskä and Clark, 2017), performance (Rugg and Sedgwick, 2007), graphic design (Camuffo and Mura, 2013), architecture (Chaplin and Stara, 2009) and craft (Lind, Adamson and Ylvisåker, 2015; NETS, 2003).

International contemporary ceramics is arguably at the same junction as that described by Staniszewski. The field lacks professional independent curators and innovative platforms for developing and forging original and experimental research practises, and diversity of scholarly journals is limited. Indeed, scholarship about ceramics and contemporary clay-based art practices are primarily museum-bound and dominated by British and north American artists writing about recent installations (Brown, Stair and Twomey, 2016). While some recent texts explore ceramic curatorial histories from the perspective of a professional scholar and curator, most of these focus on Britain and North America (Beighton, 2016; Breen, 2017; Carey, 2016; Droth, 2017; Gers, 2017b, 2015a; Gotlieb, 2016; Gray, 2017; Shales, 2107).

Despite - or perhaps in spite of - the concentration of scholarly texts on British and North American contexts, East Asia has developed a dynamic, well-funded,²⁰ established network of ceramic biennales, including the Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale (aka the Korean Ceramics Biennale); Taiwan Ceramics Biennale; International Ceramics Festival Mino, Japan; and the Hangzhou International Contemporary

²⁰ I note that while a diversity of European ceramics biennales exist, they are poorly funded, and do not have the same capacity for assembling works and installations from across the globe, or for publishing catalogues.

Ceramic Biennale Exhibition, China. As biennales are often the sites of curatorial innovation, it is worth considering the legacy of three international leading ceramics biennales.²¹

- 1) The British Ceramics Biennale does not produce a (digital or print) catalogue. Its website presents a broad overview of the official exhibitions and events associated with the biennale. There is no evidence of curatorial discourse in terms of the advancement of the theory and practice of exhibition making, its manifold ideological and critical framings, the singularity of the endeavour, or contextualisation.
- 2) Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale (aka the Korean Ceramics Biennale) evolves constantly (Cho, 2016). The catalogue of the 2013 Biennale (an international competition) contained no curatorial essay or explanations for the obtuse thematic groupings into which the works were classified (Korea Ceramic Foundation, 2013). However the accompanying Special Exhibition, Hot Rookies, contained a curatorial essay by the Guest Curator, Misun Rheem, and a contextual analysis by Jinah Kim, Assistant Curator (Kim, 2013; Rheem, 2013). In contrast, the catalogue for the 2015 and 2017 Gyeonggi International Ceramics Biennale & International Competition contained numerous texts including commentaries and Q&As by the jurors for all the winners of the Main Awards, and occasional, randomly attributed commentaries and Q&As for artists awarded an Honourable Mention (Korea Ceramic Foundation, 2017a, 2015).

²¹ For further information on ceramic biennales models consult Gers (2015b), Elliot (2013) and Cho (2016).

Many of the texts for the 2015 and 2017 catalogues lack critical rigour and are often superficial due to their brevity. Furthermore, some of the disjointed Q&As suggest problems of translation between the writers and artists. However, there is one notable exception: The catalogue for the Invitational Exhibition, *Factory* by Neil Brownsword, contains two scholarly essays by academics, Ezra Shales and Tim Strangleman (Korea Ceramic Foundation, 2017b). This performative exhibition included demonstrations of tacit knowledge and aspects of intangible cultural heritage by Korean and British artisans, and appears to indicate a new willingness on behalf of the Korea Ceramic Foundation to engage with curatorial discourse within the exhibition catalogue of the winner of the Grand Prize.

Finally, a recent press release for forthcoming 2019 edition claims that several significant changes have been made to the biennale's formulation. However, the announcement lacks information about the nature and scope of these changes (Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale (GICB), 2018).

- 3) Since 2012, the Taiwan Ceramics Biennale (TCB) has shown itself to be one of the most innovative biennales in the region, and alternates between an international artist competition and curatorial competition.²² The first two curatorial competitions are marked by attempts at rigorous and professional curating by Moyra Elliott (the TCB Curator for 2012) (Elliot, 2013) and I (the TCB Curator for 2014).

²² See a 'Reflexion on the Significance of the TCB in terms of the International Ceramics Biennale Circuit (Gers, 2014a, pp.61–61).

2.2.2 Personal research practice

Following the lead of Elliott, I conceived a biennale in 2014, entitled *Terra-Nova*, with four thematic groupings. These groups were formulated to respond to the four temporary exhibition halls, although ultimately, the biennale exceeded these spaces and was deployed across the museum.²³ The four themes were:

- Glocal Identities (which had a large subsection focussing on postcolonialism);
- Shattered, Upcycled & Recycled;
- 3D and CNC Ceramics;
- Digital Materialities (Gers, 2014a, 2014b).

The exhibition was radically inclusive and I consciously avoided sentimental or poetic themes that characterise so many East Asian biennales. It made a number of significant contributions to knowledge. For example, the introduction of ceramics 3D printing skills and knowledge to the local artistic fraternity via a series of intense masterclasses by the Unfold design duo. Furthermore, the Yingge Museum redeveloped their Aboriginal collection immediately after the 2014 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale in response to Kukuli Velarde's installation in the local history section of the permanent collection (Gers, 2017a).

A third iteration of the curatorial biennale is being prepared by a respected Taiwanese ceramics artist and writer, Ting Ju Shao. The biennale theme is 'Humanistic Returns: the Spiritual Origin of Ceramic Art' and the biennale website features a curious large branding design of three figures wearing space suits; one bearing a light sabre, entering

²³ For example, installations and interventions were located in the permanent collections of the second floor, the entrance foyer, and other spaces within the Yingge museum.

a cave. At the time of writing, the catalogue for this biennale had been delayed (Chiang, 2018) and the biennale website was incomplete, lacking critical curatorial content and images of the exhibition (Yingge Museum, 2018).

This brief and cursory survey of three leading international ceramics biennales confirms that they are uneven in terms of an application of critical and innovative curatorial practices. I believe that this is largely due to the lack of appreciation of the value of curatorial labour, especially the benefits of a rigorous (non-sentimental) approach to innovative and scholarly curatorial discourse and practice. Many individuals do not appreciate the efficiency of a dedicated independent curator, who is spared the burden of museum administration such as fundraising, selection committees, loans, among many other issues.

The following statement by Ho Cheng-kuang, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, Artist Publishing Co, Taiwan, a jury member of the selection committee for the 2014 TCB, sheds light on this matter:

Today, whether internationally or in Taiwan, 'curatorial exhibitions' have become dominant in the art world. This kind of exhibition does have its advantages, for example, in that the curator's organization of the art works can bring out the importance of certain issues or untangle their artistic contexts. However, too much focus on the curator can lead to a loss of focus on the qualities of the artists and their works. In future major exhibitions, will the selection of a curator be necessary? I believe this issue will be posing a big challenge for Taiwan's art museums and other museums, and that it is an issue that the arts community must reflect on (Ho Cheng-kuang, Juror's Statement. Cited in Gers, 2014a. p.29.).

Ho Cheng-kuang's cynicism about the 'cult of the curator' is justified in certain exceptional circumstances within Fine Arts, but not in ceramics. The benefit of a professional curatorial grounding for a biennale in facilitating research processes, knowledge production, and generating intellectual debate, most certainly outweighs the disadvantages of an exhibition that features little or no substantial scholarly and/or artistic legacy for the field. It is argued that Ho Cheng-kuang's deference to the art community reflects his sense of the instability of curatorial practices and, more precisely, their lack of foundation within the craft and ceramics sectors within Taiwan.

2.3 Research questions

Post-colonialism? aimed to challenge the established boundaries of curatorial practice within the specific social, institutional and cultural context of the BCCC and contemporary Israeli curatorial practice within contemporary ceramics and clay-based art and design practices.

2.3.1 Contextual

- What are the local legacies of historical and cultural imperialism, and specific Modern and contemporary settler colonial practices?
- What are the possibilities for artistic and intellectual resistance via the creation of counter narratives, strategies of subversion, mimicry, pastiche, parody, and hybridity?
- How would the friends of the BCCC (including students, collectors and supporters), the public, the media and the Israeli state respond to an overtly critical exhibition?

2.3.2 Methodological

- How could the BCCC facilitate a broad-based discussion on this delicate subject?
- How can 10 local (Israeli and Palestinian) and 9 international artists collaborate on this exhibition?
- How can artists and curators collectively convey rage, hope, disgrace, and compassion for contemporary Israel?

Some key aspects of the conceptualisation and planning of this international residency, conference and exhibition project are discussed by BCCC Director, Marcelle Klein, in the opening sequences of the film, *Post-colonialism?* (Gur, 2017). The brief opening sequence does not include the selection criteria for artists (that included creativity, pertinence, clarity, risk taking, international diversity and representativity, age diversity, and interdisciplinary work and practices) who responded to the Open Call and submitted a complete application. The selection criteria and other key issues in the conception and management of the project are presented in **Appendix 5.6 Technical aspects of the ‘making of’ *Post-colonialism?***.

2.4 Research methodology

2.4.1 *ubuntu*, affective labour & displays of relationality

This section considers the development of an *ubuntu* methodology in my curatorial practice. The significance of this moral philosophy and self-reflexive research, professional and practice-led methodology is two-fold: Firstly, it is located in necessity of developing a shared language of reconciliation in the face of the enduring legacy of Apartheid (Stuit, 2011). *Ubuntu* counters Apartheid's morally deficient discourse and was an essential tool for imagining the potential healing of traumas associated with Apartheid, which I experienced in my youth. I also note that the term Apartheid is frequently used by scholars and activists in respect to Israel, including the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). Secondly, *ubuntu* serves a broader international purpose of changing the terms of the conversations, developing a shared vocabulary of struggle, de-westernising language and conceptual tools, altering the principles and assumptions of knowledge creation, countering the structural violence of our societies. It ultimately contributes to the decoloniality of knowledge, and has the potential to facilitate an intersectionality of liberation movements that imagine 'freedom dreams together' (Davis, 2016; Mignolo, 2017, p.45; Salomon and Davis, 2016, p.49).

Being self-reflexive, this methodology is in constant evolution in response to specific projects; associated participating artists, host institution staff, means, priorities and exhibition venues. Two

articulations of *ubuntu* will be explored in this section: via the Handbook of 2014 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale (TCB), and *Post-colonialism?*, BCCC. I have chosen to exclude the First Central China Ceramics Biennale, Zhengzhou, Henan (2016-2017) (Gers, 2016b) from this analysis as it was a professionally challenging project due to censorship of artists, art works, the catalogue, the re-design and re-installation of the exhibition by the Henan Museum, and the lack of professional press. Anthony Stellaccio, the sole Western correspondent of the First Central China Ceramics Biennale, alludes to these challenges in his review of the biennale:

Curation is a synchronized movement of (hopefully) visionary creativity and (sometimes) agonizing administration, and a curator brings these elements together in more or less successful marriage depending on their abilities. In an act of midwifery, curators bring about exhibitions by negotiating logistics, spaces, budgets, bureaucracies, personalities, concepts, and, in some cases, the challenges of representation, intercultural communication, censorship, and the toxicity of politics in its myriad personal, social, cultural, and governmental forms. These obstacles, however, failed to impede Gers' work, which remains some of the most intelligent, progressive, and relevant curatorial work in the field of ceramic art (Stellaccio, 2018a, p.53).

While Stellaccio's definition of curating as an act of midwifery engages with the deep entanglements associated with the mechanics of the process, it fails to register the context of historical narration and the co-creation of knowledge ecosystem characterised by fluid feed-back loops (Enwezor, 2007, p.110; Fotiadi, 2014; Oprea, 2017); and more importantly for the purpose of this thesis, the apparatus of mediation of these encounters. My curatorial practice in East Asia and Israel is

marked by institutional demands for public displays of affective and quotidian curatorial labour by medial networks, including professional photographers, professional film teams, and museum staff documenting the curatorial project via their mobile phone cameras. Demands for formal professional images as well as more informal images for social media are made on behalf of the host institution, the public, and sponsors. These requests are difficult to circumnavigate as they are seen as forming part of the 'job' and are essential to the official exhibition narrative or 'making of' an exhibition.

The 2014 TCB Handbook

The 'making of' an exhibition is a critical zone for creativity, discourse analysis and knowledge development. A publication of this genre was pioneered by the Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel (MEN), and since 1994 all major exhibitions at MEN are accompanied by a *Texpo*.²⁴ These guides explore the evolutionary development of their exhibitions, and include the intellectual formulation of key themes and sub-themes, and their spatial elaboration via 3D renderings, architectural and scenography plans. They are fluid spaces of creativity, dialogue, and negotiation where the exhibition project is co-conceived with their international team of designers and scenographers. As MEN produces a substantial hard-cover catalogue for each major exhibition, these *Texpos* are in many ways akin to 'second books,' a unique French anthropological tradition²⁵ that involves the production of two publications based on fieldwork experiences. The initial was a 'scientific' monograph, and the second was a more literary study that evokes the

²⁴ They are available free as pdfs on the MEN website, <http://www.men.ch/fr/publications/expositions/texpos/>

²⁵ This tradition extended from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the 1970s, and is evident in the works of Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, Marcel Griaule, Michel Leiris, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, among others (Debaene, 2014).

atmosphere of their encounters. The literary study was intended to complement the scientific one, or in some instances, anticipate its publication (Debaene, 2014).

Using MEN's *Texpo* as a conceptual model, I developed a Handbook for the 2014 TCB (Gers, 2014b) which aimed to present the making of the exhibition as well as the making of the individual works by participating artists, via sketches and images of work in progress. Yet the 'atmosphere' and context of curating in Taiwan is far more complex than merely developing key concepts, generating architectural and scenography plans, 3D renderings, etc. I experienced intense pressure from the institutional demands for displays of affective and quotidian curatorial labour. The TCB was the subject of a documentary film and I was requested to cooperate with a film crew and professional photographer. Regular briefings were held in which I was informed about the content of the film, requested to wear make-up for film shoots, and follow dress protocols for key events including (but not limited to) the opening ceremony, international conference, an official reception with the mayor of New Taipei City, and formal dinner with the former Minister of Culture.

I realised that MEN's *Texpos* rendered its authors invisible and eliminated their impact on the research process as the booklets reveal a lack of self-reflexivity, frictions, and contestations. I believe this lack of self-reflexivity may be a result of the fact that the authors - primarily (white male) professional curators - produced the *Texpo* with external consultants from the comfort of their offices in the Villa de Pury: an idyllic setting, with sublime views of the Neuchâtel lake. The institution, via its curatorial team, are both the patron (as initiator, primary researcher, and keeper of the relevant collections) and sponsor of their exhibitions. The relationship between the curatorial team and the team

of scenographers and designers is a professional customer-client relationship associated with the outsourcing of non-essential tasks to specialist external service providers (Gonseth, 2013). This relationship of subordination may explain the apparent absence of friction or contestation.

Not wishing to reproduce the *Texpos* short-comings, the aims of the *TCB Handbook* included:

1. The advancement of ceramics discourse
2. An indication of how biennales are produced by a curatorial team
3. The creation of a platform for artists to present the 'making of' their work, in their own words, with accompanying sketches and photographs (Gers, 2014b, p.12).

The *TCB Handbook* included a photo essay entitled 'Reflecting on the 'making of' the 2014 TCB: From the Curator, with Love!' (Gers, 2014b, pp.19–23) as well as texts and images from the participating artists. The photo essay, reproduced in **Appendix 5.5 Source Gers, 2014**

Figure 6 Photo Essay, *TCB Handbook*, recounted aspects of my curatorial work and local experiences in Taiwan:

an individual journey of learning, understanding and introspection. The photos aim to provoke questions about the limits of the ability to learn new 'cultural' languages, working methods and attitudes. The combinations of different groups of photos question the boundaries of personal and professional life. They also infer a culture of voyeuristic performativity that is becoming globally normalized via social media. Yet, this essay is far more than a series of tourist mug-shots. It aims to present a series of landmarks, and is a kind of palimpsestic travelogue, in

which I have tried to include a sense of myself as 'other' (Gers, 2014b, p.19).

This 'othering' of myself as an *ubuntu* strategy involved the respectful acknowledgement of my hosts' generosity, recognizing my lack of knowledge in respect to local cultural norms, history, and more specifically, the ceramics scene. It was a gracious response to the communication and cultural breach between myself, Taiwanese artists, and the Yingge Museum, and required that I participate in the voyeuristic performativity of affective labour and other protocols requested by my hosts. The photo essay primarily displays images of work within different Taiwanese environments. Many of the images depict meetings – with artists, art works, museum colleagues, students, and the venerable local ceramics star, Ah Leon, who failed to teach me the elegant gestures required for holding a teapot and serving local Oolong tea (Gers, 2014b, pp.20–23).

While for many curators the omnipresence of the media is essential to international visibility, it may be perceived as a form of narcissistic self-realisation. This phenomenon has been investigated by the leading international curator, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, in her *Logbook* for dOCUMENTA in 2012. The *Logbook* provides installation shots and information on the main exhibition and fringe events, and presents 'an inner perspective on the making of dOCUMENTA' (Christov-Bakargiev, 2012, p.13). The publication not only includes numerous professional and private e-mails, but also many mobile phone pictures. She is depicted with her 'elective affinities' - artists, colleagues and family members. This quasi-autobiography exhibits the curator's authority by exposing her familiarity and friendship with important others, and effectively 'outs' professional and private correspondence. It displays how immaterial and affective labour such as networking, travelling, and

meeting people have moved to the core of contemporary curatorial practice in our contemporary capitalist neoliberal art world (Buurman, 2016).

The bilingual (English – Chinese) TCB *Handbook* cannot ‘compete’ with the scale and force of Christov-Bakargiev’s substantial *Logbook*, and more importantly, as with MEN’s *Texpo*’s, this was not my intention. The *Handbook* was a gift to the numerous local and international artists who attended the opening ceremony, international conference and cultural tour. Therefore, it was printed in smaller edition than the (large format) catalogue, which was considered to be the official textual legacy of the TCB. Rather, the *Handbook* was conceived as pocket-size guide with a format resembling a city travel guide, that served a symbolic gesture of welcome to the TCB. It functioned as an introduction to the 2014 TCB project and the *ubuntu* philosophy and methodology that it espoused.

2.5 Reviews

Post-colonialism? attracted significant attention in the Israeli media, including press coverage by local print media (newspapers and magazines), broadcast news (radio and television), and the Internet (on-line magazines and blogs). A comprehensive list of this on-line and print media coverage is presented to the Press page of the *Post-colonialism?* website (Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center, 2018).²⁶ In this section, three key reviews will be examined. They span

²⁶ The *Post-colonialism?* website has an extensive listing of all the press the project has received to date. This is an ongoing project, and I note that there are forthcoming reviews and other texts that will be uploaded in due course.
<http://www.benyaminiceramics.org/postcolonialism/press/>

a variety of different media, forms and origins, and include an exhibition review in an American professional journal, an Israeli TV news magazine review, and unsolicited email correspondence from a British artist and Ceramics Biennale administrator.

2.5.1 Exhibition review by A. Stellaccio

An exhibition review by participating artist, Anthony Stellaccio, is presented in **Appendix 5.7.1 Review by A. Stellaccio**. The author describes the project as follows:

Executed by Shlomit Bauman, Yael Novak, and the staff of Benyamini, curated by Wendy Gers, and funded by a number of sponsors, the compound residency, symposium, exhibition, and conference was a major logistical undertaking for a local art center with grass-roots credibility, international reach, a liberal inclination, and progressive vision.

“Benyamini central command,” together with its satellite artists, forged the substance of Post-Colonialism? by conjoining structured intellectual discourse, time on the ground in Israel, and time in the studio: a mixing of the cerebral, emotional, and physical. Anything less was impossible for a fearless curatorial team and a carefully vetted selection of socially conscious artists working in one of the most contested and contentious parts of the world (Stellaccio, 2017, p.48).

With his characteristic dry sense of humour, Stellaccio describes the project as an opportunity to ‘brace for a collision with how we see it

[post-colonialism], or fail to see it, lived by people around the world' (Stellaccio, 2017, p.48). Stellaccio, who travelled with Pablo Ponce, an Argentine artist, throughout the region prior to his residency, evoked the emotional trauma involved:

To witness the conditions enforced and endured in some of Israel's most complex and contentious territories is to wreak havoc on the psyche, to undo preconceived notions of place, and to demand reflection and response under unusual strain (Stellaccio, 2017, p.49).

Yet, Stellaccio remained lucid about the aims of the project and explained:

Making art about Israel was not, however, the purpose of the project. Rather, it was precisely a range of experiences that the Benyamini organizational team wanted to be shared... the organizers created a safe environment for dialog by embedding Israel's occupation of Palestine within a set of contemporary experiences and perspectives from around the world. This was a discussion and not a referendum on any one country, with the creative team behind *Post-colonialism?* expertly and, if I am not mistaken, also subversively, framing a controversial topic in a broader and thus more palatable fashion, for lack of a better word (Stellaccio, 2017, p.50).

Stellaccio is particularly eloquent about his participation in the project and its impact on himself:

Postcolonialism? was, without question, a landmark event, even if its impact was localized and the changes it may help spur are not yet visible. In no case shall I feel hopeless or misguided in my assessment. Rather, I walked away from the Benyamini Center with a compelling sense of solidarity, and a treatise to reject neutrality as

a form of indifference and to both take and implore greater action on behalf of those in need. I am moved in this direction not only by life-changing and eye-opening experiences in Israel, but by the current, uncertain, and alarming course of politics in my own country, the US, and by the increasing appearance of far-right governments around the world (Stellaccio, 2017, p.51).

Stellaccio concludes his review with an expressive incitement to unite and resist injustice (Stellaccio, 2017, p.51).

2.5.2 TV review by i-24News

The review by i-24News, an Israeli international 24-hour news and current affairs television channel that broadcasts in English, Arabic, and French, is worth noting (Margit, 2016) as it is underscored with tension, the use of euphemism, and strategies of digression. The (anonymous) female host of the Morning Edition is clearly uncomfortable with this news item. She commences the program with a maladroit introduction of the journalist and TV anchor-woman, Maya Margit, as well as the theme of the exhibition:

But, brains before beauty, therefore we are going to go straight to Maya Margit. Ummm [uncomfortable laugh and pause], now, it's morning... colonialism, and because it is morning, we need to talk about colonialism. Exactly. Exactly. (0:01-14).

In her review, Margit notes that the 'whole picture of colonialism cannot be seen at once' (2:14), and many of her interviews with the artists are euphemistic. For example, her conversation with Ayelet Zohar (Israel) highlights the story of donkeys in a Gaza zoo that were painted to resemble zebras. Zohar's hybrid donkey-zebra-quagga. Zohar explains this hybrid beast 'perform[s] ideas of simulation and mimicry, and

evolve[s] questions of nature and artifice' (2:48-53). While this mimicry or simulation is analogous to the association of post-colonialism with contemporary Israeli society, neither the artist nor Margit express this. However, Margit's interview with Tim Modisa (Botswana) is more overtly critical as the artist links the current situation in Israel to Apartheid (3:15).

In her concluding remarks, after showing her (film) review, Margit notes that:

every artists I asked noted that we cannot use the word post-colonial here in Israel because of the specific context, and it is very controversial for most Israelis, I would say, that... it is a difficult word to use, in Israel, but it is interesting, nonetheless, and I don't think the exhibition tries to answer the question exactly. If you look at the title of the exhibition, it has a question mark (4:29-38).

The numerous remarks on the title of the exhibition reflects Margit and the presenters' discomfort with the subject. This discomfort mounts throughout the broadcast and concludes with an incomplete statement by the presenter who repeats, 'right, exactly, [the exhibition title] it has a question mark, so maybe [it does] not get at the type of criticism...' (5:03-06). The film is cut mid-sentence and the exact nature of the criticism is unknown. This tactic of engaging with the exhibition title enables the presenters to engage superficially with the artists and their works and avoid the real subject of the exhibition, settler colonialism.

These displays of profound discomfort are a fairly classic response to Settler Colonisation and reflect both guilt and frustration over current affairs. As noted by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin,

Some settlers may have difficulties in establishing their identity in their new environment, while others embrace a hybrid form of new native identity (1998, p.193,194).

While possibilities for a 'hybrid form of new native identity' are currently extremely limited in Israel, this interview indicates nevertheless that resistance is not binary. On the contrary, it is complex, ambivalent and fluid (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995, p.3,4).

2.5.3 Unsolicited email correspondence from R. Ewing-James

In March 2018, I presented a keynote address at the *Restating Clay* Conference, York Art Gallery. My address, entitled *Beyond 'Ubuntu': radical curating & research in ceramics*, articulated work in progress for this thesis and presented a self-reflexive analysis of my curatorial projects in Taiwan and Israel. My presentation included a screening of the short version of the *Post-colonialism?* film.

The following unsolicited response was received from Rhiannon Ewing-James,²⁷ Creative Producer, British Ceramics Biennial:

I feel your talk will have real positive impact on how I approach working with artists and artwork in the future, thank you for that (Ewing-James, 2018).

²⁷ Note, I was not aware of her presence in the audience as I had, and still have not yet met Ms Ewing-James.

The full content of Ewing-James' correspondence is transcribed in **Appendix 5.8.2 Informal review by R. Ewing-James**. It is hoped that the impact of a self-reflexive approach to curating in association with the *ubuntu* philosophy will be apparent in the next British Ceramics Biennial.

2.6 Contributions to knowledge

Post-colonialism? contributed to knowledge through various means:

- It enabled debate at various levels (institutional, national and international) 'regarding broad cultural questions' regarding contemporary Israel (Bauman, 2017). In particular, it advanced unique articulations of Settler Colonialism and other forms of Imperialism, notably transnational capitalism, and 'speaking out' against the ongoing Zionist occupation of Palestine and other territories. These debates were articulated via a range platforms and media, including the *Post-colonialism?* film, a series of international seminars, lectures, masterclasses, the print media and online press.
- It 'facilitated a broad-based and relevant discussion on the nature and future of the ceramic field [in Israel], its context as part of material culture and its humanistic significance' (**Appendix 5.8.1 Review by Shlomit Bauman**). As the BCCC's first overtly political exhibition, it facilitated debate about the relationship between ceramics and contemporary civil realities in Israel.
- The *Post-colonialism?* project offered a site for self-reflexive research into the act of curating and the terminology associated with a specific form of affective labour, *cryrating* (see **Part 0.2 Glossary**).

2.6.1 Impact

Post-colonialism? contributed to knowledge via debates and dialogue at various levels including institutional, national (Israel and Palestine), and international. Debate at a national level occurred through a series of lectures, seminars, and masterclasses, as well as via the press and a monographic publication, among other forms.

2.6.1.1 Debate among BCCC management team

Post-colonialism? was a challenging project for the Benyamini leadership team in terms of the size and scope of the project, and the subsequent logistical, financial and political implications. It was intensely debated by the BCCC management committee.²⁸ Most management team members were nervous about the project but united and worked together as a close-knit group to manage all aspects of this demanding project.

2.6.1.2 Debate among participants

Firstly, I established a reading group with a digital archive. A series of key theoretical texts such as *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995) and *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1998) were uploaded. This

²⁸ I was witness to this lack of consensus. During an initial meeting between myself and the management committee (including Marcelle Klein, Shlomit Bauman, Ravit Lazar, Ester Beck and Yael Novak) on 15 September 2016 in Barcelona, committee members explained that their individual perceptions of settler colonialism in Israel varied considerably.

ensured that we all shared a common language for discussing the theoretical basis of the project. The reading list was open and interactive and artists from across the globe shared reading lists, texts, and musings on their readings.

2.6.1.3 National impact

Seminars, masterclasses & research tour in Israel

During the three week residency period in November 2016, a number of seminars were organised by the BCCC, as listed in **Appendix Appendix 5.9.1 *Post-colonialism?* seminars and masterclass**. Most of the artists also participated in a research tour that included visits to important natural heritage sites (such as the Dead sea & Negev Desert), socially-engaged craft NGOs (such as Desert Embroidery: The Association for the Improvement of women's status, LAKIA), and lectures by a variety of experts in diverse fields such as Israeli urban planning and geology, including Dr Carmit Ish Shalom, Geologist.²⁹ These seminars, masterclasses, lectures, and informal gatherings were opportunities for Israeli, Palestinian, and international artists to get to know one another better; and learn, debate, and discuss the project and the social, cultural and political issues associated with it.

Accolades

The local impact of the exhibition is reflected in the attribution of a significant accolade by an important Israeli online arts magazine, *Portfolio*. This magazine was created in the wake of the demise of left-wing newspapers, and cuts in newspaper coverage of the arts. Peleg

²⁹ Further information about the research tour can be found on the *Post-colonialism?* website (Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center, 2017)

Rotem, seasoned independent arts journalist and founder of the magazine, listed *Post-colonialism?* as the one of 10 most important exhibitions of year alongside major solo exhibitions by internationally acclaimed artists such as Louise Bourgeois and the Ai Wei Wei. A screenshot of the web-page with the Hebrew language review, is presented together with an English translation in **Appendix 5.7.3 Review by P. Rotem.**

Rotem's review of the 10 most important exhibitions of year focussed primarily on *Post-colonialism?*:

In January, the international exhibition of Post-Colonialism? was presented at the Benyamini Gallery. Curated by Wendy Gers from South Africa, and raised artistic questions on current issues that are usually silenced (Rotem, 2017).

2.6.1.4 International impact

The *Post-colonialism?* project has had an international impact due to its wide dissemination via various media including:

- The dedicated English language website [link](#).
- Exhibition reviews in international journals (see **2.5.1 Exhibition review by A. Stellaccio** and **Appendix Appendix 5.7.1 Review by A. Stellaccio**) as well as the other reviews listed on the Benyamini press page
- A series of lecture presentations at international conferences in the England, France, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, USA, Canada, and India, as presented in **Appendix 5.9.2 International lectures on Post-colonialism?**
- The i-24News TV review that is available on YouTube, as considered in **2.5.2 TV review by i-24News.**

- The *Post-colonialism?* film, (Gur, 2017) is also available on YouTube, and via hypertext links from the Benyamini website as well as the *Post-colonialism?* website, which is independent (but linked) to the initial. According to YouTube, 1 700 people have watched the long video. This figure is however not entirely representative as it does not account for the number of viewers who have seen the film in the various public screenings. **Appendix 5.11 Public screenings of the *Post-colonialism?* Film** details the screenings that have occurred in France, Belgium, England, India, and Israel.
- Oren Arbel and Noam Tabenkin Arbel's research project for *Post-colonialism?*, entitled *First Reduction* (multimedia with thrown and modified clay vessels and video) has been included in a forthcoming bilingual Hebrew/English publication by Efrat Dgani (2018) on contemporary craft in Israel (Arbel, 2018).
- The acquisition of at least two works from the *Post-colonialism?* exhibition by museums. Rock Wang's work, *U need code*, was acquired by the Art and Design Museum of the Holon Institute of Technology, Israel. Katya Izabel Filmus donated a glass trident that was produced for *Post-colonialism?* to the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY, USA in 2017 (Filmus, 2018).
- **Appendix 5.10 Exhibitions of works from or inspired by *Post-Colonialism?*** further attests to the constantly growing impact of the project. The following participating artist are associated with this phenomenon: Sharbani Das Gupta, Johnathan Hopp, Neha Kudchadkar and Pablo Ponce.
- The *Post-colonialism?* has also had a significant international reach and impact via the (ongoing) social media posts of the participating artists and the BCCC.

These various media and events have resulted in an exponential multiplication of the reach and international impact of the project.

2.6.2 Unique glocal articulations of contemporary Settler Colonialism & other forms of Imperialism

The *Post-colonialism?* project explored unique glocal articulations of Settler Colonialism and other forms of Imperialism: notably, transnational capitalism. While the participants were strictly requested to focus on Israel and make works that responded to this specific context, these were filtered by personal experiences of conflict,³⁰ preoccupations with the body,³¹ land and the built environment,³² material culture,³³ and the global flows of capital, commodities and labour.³⁴ The BCCC curator, Shlomit Bauman, explains:

We found the opportunity to examine these perspectives particularly edifying at this time and place, where global trends – global economy vs. local production, issues of sustainability and the erasure of local idioms – coalesce with local geopolitical issues (settler-colonialism, occupation, migrant work, refugees) (**Appendix 5.8.1 Review by S.Bauman**).

This focus on a specific locality is important as it challenges the erasure of specific identities and complexifies potential binaries associated with the colonial narrative, including colonizer / colonized; civilized /

³⁰ Danijela Pivasevic Tenner (Serbia/Germany), Magdalena Hefetz (Israel), and Manal Morcos (Palestine)

³¹ Eva Avidar (Israel), Sharbani Das Gupta (India / USA) Oren Arbel and Noam Tabenkin Arbel (Israel) and Neha Kudchadkar (India)

³² Modisa Tim Motsomi (Botswana), Pablo Ponce (Argentina), Anthony Stellaccio (USA) and Ronit Zor (Israel)

³³ Talia Tokatly (Israel), Rock Wang (Taiwan), Johnathan Hopp (Israel), Cory Lund (Canada), Katya Izabel Filmus (England), Ayelet Zohar (Israel)

³⁴ Hagar Mitelpunkt (Israel)

primitive; jew / arab; Israeli / Palestinian; western / eastern; north / south; advanced / retarded and good / evil. The development of multiple rich and nuanced transcultural narratives are necessary for developing empathy, tolerance, dialogue, and mutual understanding in contemporary Israel.

2.6.3 ‘Speaking out’³⁵

Post-colonialism? joins a long tradition of exhibitions that present a multiplicity of voices articulating alternative narratives of culture, gender, power, and agency. In this instance, the exhibition ‘spoke out’ against the ongoing Zionist occupation of Palestine and other (formerly neighbouring) territories which are no longer officially disputed, such as the Galilee & Golan Heights. Similarly, the accompanying film, *Post-colonialism?* (Gur, 2017) effectively translated the nuanced context of artistic production, the intentions of the artists, documented affective curatorial labour and evoked historical and contemporary hegemonies within Israel.

Post-colonialism? defied PACBI’s cultural boycott, a fact that all participating artists were aware of. Modisa Tim Motsomi eloquently responded to this subject:

Prior to the residency I had many conversations with regard to this issue [the cultural boycott], many of which were against my participation in such an event. I think that having been to Israel

³⁵ This term has significant currency in Israel and is associated with NGOs such as ‘Breaking the Silence’. These politically-engaged structures facilitate tours of occupied territories and other contested sites, and facilitate platforms for personal testimony or ‘speaking out’ by former perpetrators of human rights violations, notably soldiers of the Israeli Defence Force.

and having garnered the little experience within the month I spent there my viewpoint is that a cultural boycott is not the most effective means through which to try change the situation. Many of the people I met in Israel were not of the stereotypes that are envisioned through the media. I think that having heard some of the personal stories I have become more empathetic to the situation, for both sides. Granted there are many problems in relation to Israel and its occupation of Palestine which has been further exacerbated by certain entities of late. I think that projects of this nature help highlight a way forward that is more discursive and less violent and I am proud to have been part of such an adventurous and brave project. The success of it alone shows that art can still be relied on to shed light on our current world circumstances, and hope more projects of this nature can be conducted in the future (Gers and Motsomi, 2018).

Similarly, Neha Kudchadkar argued that:

My experience [in discussing the project] has been that people are really moved by the project and the bravery of the Benyamini Team. Also, there were numerous questions about cultural boycott of Israel and how a group of thinking artists could agree to go and make work in Israel. I am personally more and more convinced against cultural boycott as a tool of protest. I choose to believe that that the work we made and the conversations we had made an impact. It shifted something in each of us, and in many of our viewers. The projected cemented lifelong friendships and contributed some love to a world that needs it sorely (Kudchadkar, 2018b).

The artists who chose to participate in this project believed that an international 'coalition' of Palestinian, Israeli, and foreign artists, and a curator, could create spaces for dialogue and raise nuanced, responsible and timely questions of power, land, abuse, and settler colonialism - within Israel. They were convinced of the agency of art, and that it was ultimately possible to make a difference (Gers, 2017a).

2.6.4 Invention of the concept, *cryrator*

I have adopted the term *cryrator* (see **Glossary, 0.2.2 Cryrator**) and argue that it is a theoretical model for a specific form of affective labour originally associated with the coordination of the *Post-colonialism?* project. *Cryrating* testifies to the pain and trauma of the affective labour involved in curating an exhibition project about Settler Colonialism in a constantly degrading political environment, as the Zionist project destroys Palestine, and in the longer term, Israel.

This model is grounded in broader contemporary curatorial trends toward the intensified deployment of affect in immaterial labour, as discussed previously. *Cryrating* seeks to counter the notion of the celebrity hyper-medial *ubuntu* curator that brings diverse people, exhibitions and projects together. Rather, as the *cryrator*, I was moved to profound despair and frequently broke down as I grappled with the impossibility of responding to an ongoing genocide. I subsequently censored my public image in the *Post-colonialism?* Film, as I was uncomfortable with the multiple scenes of my emotional distress. I requested the *Post-colonialism?* film director, Yale Gur to remove many of the scenes depicting me weeping. The final film only shows two

images of me crying, with Magdalena Hefetz and Neha Kudchadkar, as illustrated below in Figures 1 and 2. The concept of the *cryrator* reflects upon the new medial conditions of feminist and socially engaged exhibition-making, and invites further research into the strained relationships between social and technological reproduction as central sources of value in contemporary curatorial theory and practice.



Post-Colonialism?

1,700 views

👍 9 💬 0 ➦ SHARE ≡ ⋮

Figure 1 Still from Postcolonialism? Film, Gers & Hefetz

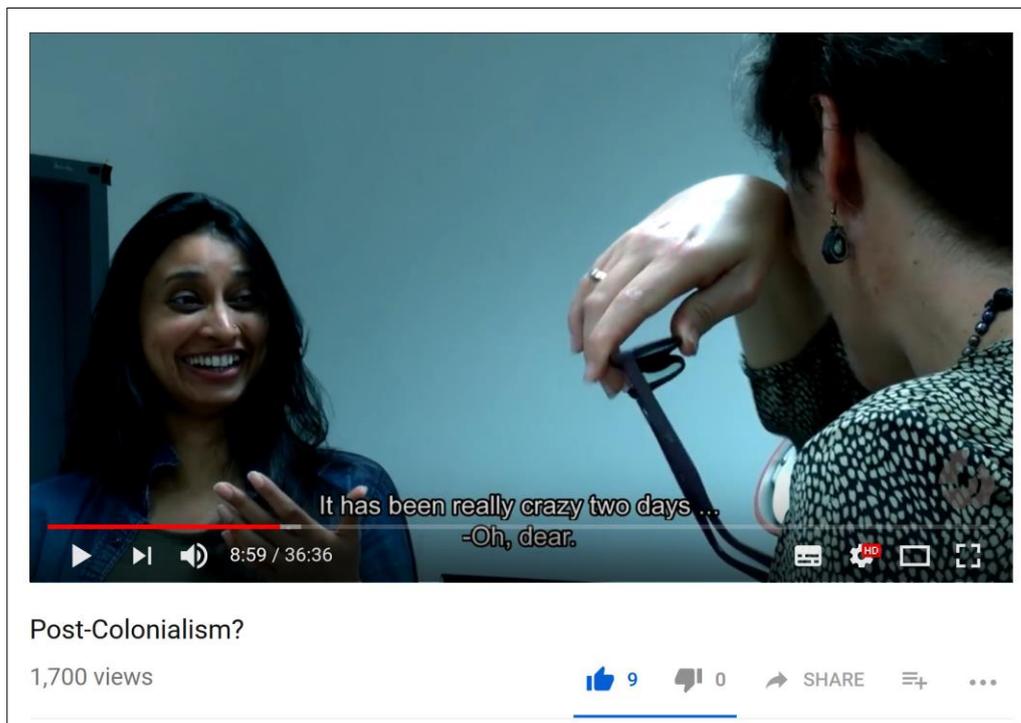


Figure 2 Still from Post-colonialism? film, Gers & Kudchadker

2.7 Areas for further research & consideration

2.7.1 *Post-colonialism? 2*

In the general debriefing session after the exhibition, all the artists unanimously agreed that the *Post-colonialism?* project was successful, and many expressed the desire to renew the experience in the future. The international artists were interested to see how the socio-political situation would evolve, and many participants, myself included, wished to spend more time in Israel and develop a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of Israeli and Palestinian material culture, history, and contemporary society.

2.7.2 Palestinian partnership

In the same general debriefing session, the project was criticised for its lack of real engagement with Palestinian material culture, history, and contemporary society. A partnership with a Palestinian organisation, such as RIWAK,³⁶ Qalandiya International,³⁷ or the International Academy of Art, Palestine³⁸ is essential to developing a more diverse and sophisticated project. However, this is currently impossible due to the PACBI campaign.³⁹ This 'catch 22' situation is extremely complex to navigate, and with the ongoing escalation of unjustified violence by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians (Al Jazeera and news agencies, 2018), the possibility of official cooperation between Israeli and Palestinians art communities remains a moot point.

2.7.3 Censorship & self-censorship

The issue of self-censorship was one that was unavoidably inscribed in the project, and why the Benyamini Centre felt they could not engage a local curator in this project, as noted in the introduction of the film, *Post-colonialism?* (Gur, 2017).

Another level of self and state censorship exists in respect to the nomenclature of contested histories, which is a political minefield in both Israel and Palestine. The project featured many challenging

³⁶ <http://www.rivaq.org/our-story>

³⁷ <https://www.qalandiyainternational.org/why-qalandiya>

³⁸ <http://www.artacademy.ps/new/about-us>

³⁹ For further information on PACBI, see <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi> Part 2 of my curatorial essay on the *Postcolonialism?* project contains a personal response to PACBI, notably the cultural boycott (Gers, 2017a)

moments when basic terminology was debated. For example, the use of popular terms that refer to Israeli military campaigns against Palestine, such as the Palestinian term 'nakba' are illegal within Israel. It is similarly illegal to refer to a Palestinian who lives in an occupied town or region (besides Gaza and the West Bank) as Palestinian, as they are considered by the state to be an Israeli citizen. As a foreign curator, the Benyamini leadership team conceded that I was permitted to use these banned terms on the basis that I could potentially feign ignorance! Thus, the film shows an extract of a discussion with between Bauman, Manal Morcos (Palestine), and I. Morcos, who lives in an occupied Christian Palestinian city in the Galilee region, wished to leave the project over these precise terms. She requested that her nationality be listed as Palestinian, and her country of residence, Palestine. These demands were met despite the illegal nature of this request.

When writing catalogue texts, I always work in a transparent, collaborative manner; sharing my work in progress with artists and institutions to ensure that concerned parties are in agreement with the form and content. This practice is not without tensions, regardless of the focus of the text.

Within the *Post-colonialism?* project, I was politely requested to tone down some of the terms I used to describe the ongoing genocide and to include additional contextual information regarding the history of the region and the current political situation. Does this amount to self-censorship? I don't think so. The frank and, at times, heated dialogue resulted in mindful, nuanced, and well-crafted writing, which all parties felt was consensual.

Participating artists also sensed the challenge of self-censorship.

Modisa (Tim) Motsomi, a participating artist from Botswana, explained:

The experience of living, working and travelling in Israel was extremely interesting. The challenge which all the participating artists faced was the apprehension, to some extent, of being a little bit too critical of the authorities. Being mindful and respectful yet simultaneously critical was the resolve, and I think that because the works on display used metaphor and symbolism to great effect, all the works had a poignant subtlety (Gers and Motsomi, 2018, p.10).

2.7.4 The relationship between a documentary film & an exhibition

The *Post-colonialism?* film (Gur, 2017) raises a series of important questions about the nature, scope, and role of film in documenting an exhibition.

- Is it a surrogate for the artistic work and affective labour associated with the *Post-colonialism?* project?
- Has the documentation of the affective labour associated with the project displaced the focus away from the central thesis of the exhibition, namely a critical questioning of contemporary Israeli politics, material culture, history and art?
- To what extent has the film made the *Post-colonialism?* project globally mobile and contributed to its international legacy?

How could these questions regarding the relationship of film to an exhibition and residency project be addressed in future research projects? In principle, I believe that the film maker, host institution, and

participants should negotiate their vision for the film in advance of a project. The boundaries of public and private activities should be made clear in order to avoid discomfort by project participants. However, in retrospect, the success of the *Post-colonialism?* film is due to the camera's presence during moments when public and private worlds collide. As key protagonist, I was initially extremely self-conscious, vigilant about the presence of the camera in what I perceived as private moments, and trying to find the boundary between these two domains. However, due to the emotional charge of the subject, settler colonialism in Israel, as expressed through the traumatic and guilt-ridden personal experiences of many of the participating artists, this was extremely difficult. About half way through the project, I relaxed my vigilance about the perceived boundaries between public and private issues. I trusted that the filmmaker's intentions were benevolent and embraced the notion that there were no boundaries between public and private spheres in contemporary Israel. Within the context of the *Post-colonialism?* project, both realms were so inherently political it was frequently impossible to distinguish between them, and this binaristic duality seemed irrelevant.

2.7.5 Proactive implementation of emotional support networks for Curators working with trauma

With hindsight, I recognise the necessity of proactively implementing psychological preparation and ongoing support for Curators working in conflict zones, with traumatic subjects or highly sensitive content. This recommendation is based on the acknowledgement that Curators lack specific skills in the psychological management of trauma. They are not

psychologists. Their mental health as well as that of the individuals they work with may be compromised. I recommend this as a fundamental necessity for the future projects.

PART 3 Conclusion

This Doctor of Philosophy, through existing published or creative work, has presented a pair of socially engaged practice-led ceramics-related projects. This conclusion summarises the research presented in this thesis, including their significance and impact, before considering the links between the two projects and their joint contribution to knowledge.

The significance of *Scorched Earth* as the first substantial scholarly reference text in the field is confirmed. The monograph answered my initial research questions and presents a series of socially engaged workers' histories of the Southern African ceramics industry between 1880 and 1980. It debunked certain misinformation and Modernist biases apparent in preceding research. Its value as a primary resource for collectors, dealers, scholars and the museum community is already apparent. Changes have been effected in the South African ceramics market place. Certain South African museums curators confirm that it has had an impact upon provenance work, collection policies and management, and exhibition practices (Esmiol, 2018; Geldenhuis, 2018a, 2018b; Venter, 2018b). Four projects have drawn upon, or are currently working with, the research contained there-in.

- It has served as a reference source for the Gerard de Kamper's Master's thesis (De Kamper, 2018).

- *Scorched Earth* has been an invaluable resource for a scholarly publication on ceramics by the University of Pretoria, *South African ceramics : museum ceramic collections of the University of Pretoria* (Tiley-Nel and De Kamper, 2016).
- It has been used for a series of four public-facing publications, *Outlines*, that present the histories of works in the collection of the Tatham Art Gallery (Venter, 2018a, 2018b).
- Ronnie Watt notes that *Scorched Earth* is a key resource for his ongoing PhD research into South African studio pottery from the 1970s to present, and has requested the right to reproduce certain images (2018a, 2018b).

In *Scorched Earth*, the presentation of a series of object-based workers' histories is undertaken via inter-disciplinary self-reflexive research methods, including situational analysis. Grounded in post-colonial theory, this original methodology was employed through the conception and design of the monograph, and embraced research gaps via an anachronic, alphabetical structure, acknowledgements of research gaps in the text, and other structural devices such as the absence of a time line. These methodologies facilitate an awareness of the incapacities I face as a researcher and support my attempt to render this history as both incomplete and ongoing. This embodiment of incapacity renders a degree of agency to the objects and those that created them, as they remain elusive and subterfuge. The monograph thus simultaneously sheds light upon and actively participates in the entanglement of an incomplete peoples' history with an object focus.

Post-colonialism? was a creative platform that facilitated dialogue between international, Israeli, and Palestinian artists. In exploring aspects of settler colonialism via a series of personal artistic responses by 19 local and international artists, *Post-colonialism?* reveals the ways

in which individuals and a group, grapple with these difficult issues and also provides original glimpses into how we might understand and respond to this complex situation. The project contravenes the PACBI boycott and focusses on a shared humanity, unity, and the necessity of speaking out. While this project may seem to be a utopian multicultural love fest, it also acknowledges the radical nature of this fraught dialogue, censorship, self-censorship, complicity with systems of authority and power, and the structural binaries entrenched within the Israeli cultural sector.

The *Post-colonialism* project was responsible for the inception of the concept *cryrator*, via the lived experience of emotional pain and conflict. My emotional discomfort and vulnerability of being filmed during the curatorial process was magnified by contextual trauma associated with the distress of socially-engaged participants from Israel and Palestine, and my own experiences as an anti-Apartheid activist. It blurred attempts to distinguish between personal and political relationships. *Cryrating* suggests a radical humanisation of the curatorial practice and reflects upon the new medial conditions of feminist and socially engaged exhibition-making. It invites further research into the strained relationships between social and technological reproduction as central sources of value in contemporary curatorial theory and practice, and as a sphere for empathy and *ubuntu*. Indeed, *Post-colonialism?* hinted at how that *ubuntu* proximity might feel and operate – painful, terrifyingly vulnerable, yet also enlivening, as we dare to speak out and dream, together.

Thus in *Post-colonialism?*, an interdisciplinary interrogation of contemporary curatorial theory and practice, collaged with the methodology of *ubuntu*, and the new term *cryrator*, constitute a contribution to knowledge. This mixed methodological model can be

used by other scholars in the arts to articulate research protocols and frame critical research that deals with both the act of speaking out against injustices, and the painful work of reparation, redress, and social justice in developing nations in association with the public persona of the curator.

While the *Post-colonialism?* international research, residency and exhibition project and the publication, *Scorched Earth*, address massively different geo-political and temporal contexts (Israel in late 2016, and South Africa between 1880 and 1980), they are both framed by post-colonial theory and *ubuntu* associations of political redress. Both projects contribute to the expanding corpus of texts and practices concerning ceramic practices that are critically engaged with revisionist, postcolonial, and decolonizing discourses in regions where ceramics discourse is marginalised and/or lacking. The pair of projects are united by a conscious endeavour to resist dominant discourses and address some omissions in existing ceramics scholarship and curatorial practice. They disrupt Western knowledge canons - notably modern, neo-colonial, settler colonial, and capitalist hegemonies - and redress invisible and/or marginalised subjects and subjectivities. The projects presented in this thesis critically engage with the devastation associated with colonial encounters, exploring agency, and other forms of resistance, including speaking out, and the anachronic hypostatization of research gaps.

I propose that the monograph, *Scorched Earth*, and curatorial project, *Post-colonialism?* form part of a set of eclectic, intersecting, and politically-engaged knowledge ecosystems. My deliberate choice of the phrase 'knowledge ecosystems' is used to challenge the phenomenon of 'knowledge ecologies', which I argue are far vaster phenomena, and in my view, a pretentious claim for an individual researcher. Like

Bonaventure de Sousa Santos, I recognise that researchers have limited capacity for embracing the infinite forms and terrains of knowledge (2009, p.116). But, in opposition to his use of the term 'knowledge ecologies', I prefer the more modest notion of an 'ecosystem', which has a specific geo-local implication and notions of unique and contingent responses to specific local phenomena.

My self-reflexive research and curatorial practice is especially sensitive to the specific geo-localisation of the knowledge ecosystems they operate in. Both projects presented in this thesis have an 'Achilles' heel' or fundamental challenges and potential short-falls that are related to their specific geo-political contexts and temporal milieu. However, I have endeavoured to turn the specific weakness or vulnerable point of each project into a site for critical innovation and original contributions to knowledge.

Both individual projects have possibilities for further research, and these methodological and contextual issues are considered in parts 1.7 and 2.7. However, my vision for enhancing this contribution to knowledge is rather to extend the legacies of these two projects and facilitate a more globalised dialogue, engaging with other knowledge ecosystems. The intersection of Modern and contemporary ceramics histories and post-colonialism is the subject of potential collaborations with other international partners. I am particularly interested in facilitating the development of a more nuanced and multicultural discourse. I envisage that this discourse will be developed collaboratively with local artists, art theorists, historians, and institutions in South East Asia (India or Indonesia), North Africa (possibly Morocco) and South America (possibly Peru). The exact form of this dialogue is to be determined with partners, which have yet to be confirmed.

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PART 5 Appendices

Appendix 5.1 Resume – Academic Research

Research: Books & Catalogues

- 2019 *Computational Ceramics*. Co-editor with Jonathan Keep.
- 2017 *Cont{r}act Earth, First Central China International Ceramics Biennale*. Henan Museum, Zhengzhou, China.
- 2016 *Scorched Earth: 100 Years of Southern African Potteries*. Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 395 p. **LINK**
- 2014 *Terra Nova: critical trends / contemporary ceramics. Catalogue of the Taiwan Ceramics Biennale*. Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taipei. **LINK**
- 2014 *Terra Nova: critical trends / contemporary ceramics. Handbook of the Taiwan Ceramics Biennale*. Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taipei. **LINK**
- 1998 *South African Studio Ceramics from the 1950s*. Nelson Mandela Metro. Art Museum, Port Elizabeth. **LINK**
- 1996 *Walter Battiss: An African Artist?* Nelson Mandela Metro. Art Museum, Port Elizabeth.

Research: Book Chapters & Journal Articles

- 2019 Samuel Makoenyane - pioneering Modern South African ceramics. *Journal of African History*.
- 2019 Mining the colonial archive - Modisa Tim Motsomi. *African Arts*.
- 2019 Critical herstorographies: Reclaiming the artistic and historical significance of Ssuobba-||kèn and her maternal ancestors.
- 2017 Plunder Me Baby – Kukuli Velarde and the ceramics of Taiwan’s first nations: Virtual Ventriloquism as articulated in the 2014 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale. In: *The Ceramics Reader*. Bloomsbury Academic Press, London. pp. 389-396. **LINK**
- 2016 Ceramic Displays, African Voices: Introduction by Elizabeth Perrill & Wendy Gers. *Interpreting Ceramics*. 17. **LINK**
- 2015 Biennale Bonanza. *Ceramics Art & Perception*. 101, pp.24-32. **LINK**
- 2014 Le Numérique, futur de la céramique ? *La Revue de la Céramique et du Verre*. 199, pp.66-72. **LINK**
- 2014 Taiwan. L’optique radicalement novateur de la biennale de céramique 2014. *La Revue de la Céramique et du Verre*. 196, pp.16-17. **LINK**
- 2014 Céramique Sud-Africaine: Dynamisme de la diversité du KwaZulu-Natal. *La Revue de la Céramique et du Verre*. 195, pp.22-32. **LINK**
- 2013 Hiatus in Harare. *Art South Africa*. 13. Dec. pp.73-75. **LINK**

- 2012 Stephen Cohen - 'Out of the cave and into the cauldron'. *Art South Africa*. 10(3), pp.48-51. **LINK**
- 2011 Re-Presentations' of Southern San Parietal Art on Drostdy Ware Pottery from the 1950s. *Image & Text*. 18, pp.8-29. **LINK**
- 2011 Robyn Orlin - 'Performing Africa Abroad' *Art South Africa*. Vol. 10(1), pp.30-31. **LINK**
- 2001 Journey of a South African Soul. *Ceramics Technical*. 13, pp.54-57. **LINK**
- 2000 South African studio ceramics in the collections of our heritage institutions. *SAMAB*. 25(1), p. 6.
- 1998 Latvian Immigrants Negotiating a South African Identity. Negotiating Identities. *Proceedings of the 14th Annual Conference of the South African Association of Art Historians, 15-17 July 1998, University of South Africa, Pretoria*. Pretoria: University of South Africa. pp. 28-36.
- 1997 Images of gender and the 'other' on the domestic ceramics of Drostdy Ware. *Proceedings of the 1997 Conference of South African Art Historians Association*. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch. pp. 40-47.

Research: Exhibition & Book Reviews, Translations & Editing etc.

- 2014 Elizabeth sans Perrill... Book review. *African Arts*. 42(2), pp.93-94. **LINK**
- 2014 Wild moments. Translation. In: *Instants sauvages / wild moments*. Jean Luc & Françoise Souflet (eds), Illus. Carl Spriet. pp.94,95. Translation & adaptation of a travelogue by Lucette Barthélémy.

- 2013 Guest reviewer for Tully, Ann-Marie. Actions speak louder than words in 'The Alice Sequence': A series of exhibitions by Wilma Cruise *De Arte*. 48(88) pp.7-20.
- 2013 Paris... exhibition review. *Art South Africa*. 12 (1). pp.44-45. My Joburg, La maison rouge, Paris. **LINK**
- 2013 Ceramic Art London: pour tout les goûts des amateurs de céramique. Exhibition review. *La Revue de la Céramique et du Verre*.151. Juillet-août. pp.76-77. **LINK**
- 2010 Geo-Graphics. Exhibition review. *Art South Africa*. 9 (3). pp. 66-67. Geo-Graphics, Bozar, Brussels. **LINK**
- 1999 Newman, C., Hillebrand, M, & Gers, W. (eds) *Zulu Headrests of the Msinga District*. Exhibition Catalogue. Port Elisabeth: King George VI Art Gallery.

Research: Public Facing Scholarship

- 2018 Parsing the Earth: Reflections upon the First Indian Ceramics Triennale. *Catalogue of the First Indian Ceramics Triennale*. Jaipur: JKK.
- 2018 Wendy Gers in conversation with Modisa Tim Motsomi regarding the Post-colonialism? Exhibition at the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Centre, Israel. *Ceramics Southern Africa*. March. pp.9-12.
- 2015 In Black, White and Brown. *Blanco*. Esteka: Santiago, Chile. **LINK**
- 2013 Taipei. *Art South Africa*. 2(1), pp.40-43. **LINK**

- 2012 In Memoriam, Juliet Armstrong - Porcelain and izinkamba. *Art South Africa*. 11(2), pp.88-89. **LINK**
- 2012 Opening the Treasure Chest. (Survey of contemporary SA Ceramics.) *Art South Africa*. 10(4), pp.54-59. **LINK**
- 2012 The Strength of SA Ceramics. *Exhibition Catalogue of the Southern Guild Design Foundation Awards held at the Everard Read Gallery. 3 Aug-9 Sept.* Wilderness: Southern Guild. pp.88-91. **LINK**
- 2000 South African pottery studios: Zaalberg Pottery. *Reflections of Yesteryear*. 2(1).
- 2000 South African pottery studios: Hamburger's Pottery. *Reflections of Yesteryear*. 1(12).
- 1999 South African pottery studios: The Ceramic Studio and Linware. *Reflections of Yesteryear*. 1(5).
- 1998 South African pottery studios: Crescent Potteries. *Reflections of Yesteryear*. 1(3).
- 1998 African South African pottery studios: The Kalahari Ware Studio. *Reflections of Yesteryear*. 1(2).
- 1998 South African pottery studios: Grahamstown Pottery, Drostdy Ware. *Reflections of Yesteryear*. 1(1).
- 1998 The Kalahari Studio. Stephan Welz and Co. In Association with Sotheby's Decorative and Fine Arts [Catalogue for Auction to be held in] Cape Town, 20 October 1998. [Cape Town]: [Stephan Welz and Co. In Association with Sotheby's.] pp. 25.

Appendix 5.2 Research for *Scorched Earth*

Appendix 5.2.1 South African public archives consulted

1	Cape Town Archives Repository
2	Cape Town Records Centre
3	Durban Archives Repository
4	Free State Archives Repository
5	Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository
6	Port Elizabeth Archives Repository
7	Public Records of Central Government since 1910, Pretoria
8	Public Records of former Transvaal Province and its predecessors as well as of magistrates and local authorities, Pretoria

Table 1 South African public archives consulted

Appendix 5.2.2 South African institutional archives consulted

1	Iziko South African Cultural History Museum archives ⁴⁰
2	Nilant Archives, University of Pretoria ⁴¹
3	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum ⁴²

Table 2 South African institutional archives consulted

⁴⁰ These archives were especially rich in respect to the archives of Roland and Leta Hill, Maarten Zaaleberg and Hyme Rabinowitz. While the latter studio potter was not featured in *Scorched Earth*, he was associated with Rorke's Drift and a key figure in APSA.

⁴¹ The Nilant archives contain much of Nilant's the original research for his seminal publication on Southern African potteries (1963) as well as other relevant unpublished material such as (unsorted) files of newspaper cuttings about Liebermann Pottery and Tiles, and an unpublished Honours dissertation on this enterprise.

⁴² The library of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum contains excellent documentation of South African ceramics, including a full set of journals and magazines from the South African Potters' Association.

Appendix 5.2.3 South African & international private archives consulted

1	Ray Finch, England (Gers, 2016a, p.368, endnote 164).
2	Michael Gill, England (Gers, 2016a, p.366, endnotes 132,139).
3	Peter Haines, England. (Gers 2016a, p.372, endnotes 230,232)
4	Dr Tanya Harrod, London, responded to research queries and shared material from her archives, in relation to education and Modern South African ceramics, drawing my attention to the Herbert V. Meyerowitz (Meyerowitz, 1943, 1936) and Samuel Makoenyane (Damant, 1951; Dreyer, 1999).
5	Lisa Liebermann, Knysna, facilitated the scanning of family photograph albums, and select images from this archive are reproduced in <i>Scorched Earth</i> (Gers 2016a, pp.201,203, 204).
6	Hester Locke, shared a Drostdy Ware test plate, as well as photos (Gers, 2016a, p.365 endnote 115).
7	Toff Milway showed me his collection of work by Tsitso Mohapi (Gers, 2016a, p.368, endnote 165).
8	Albrecht Schließler generously offered me a book on his father Otto Schließler, a reputed German ceramics artist (Gers, 2016a, p.362, endnote 65).
9	Norman Steele-Gray shared a Drostdy Ware catalogue with me (Gers 2016a, pp.360, 364, 365, endnotes 28, 103, 116).

10	Adriaan Turgell facilitated the access to and the photography of significant works in Liebermann Pottery and Tiles (Gers 2016a, pp.206, 207-212, 217, 218, 221-223, 225, 228-233, 368, 369).
11	Thomas Vermeulen, Pietermaritzburg generously shared his research archives associated with his thesis (1983), including photographs and his study collection (Gers 2016a 235, 237, 238, 370).
12	Ronnie Watt, formerly of Johannesburg, generously shared his collection of South African studio pottery. Rorke's Drift works from this collection were ultimately excluded as similar works in public collections had already been photographed.

Table 3 South African & international private archives consulted

Exclusion

It was not possible to visit Fernand Haenggi's archive, based near Basel, Switzerland. The founding owner of the prominent Johannesburg art dealership, Gallery 21, contributed of information and photographs concerning diverse potters and potteries, as recorded in endnotes 179, 180 and 253 (Gers, 2016a, p.369,373). Unfortunately, his snapshots of Liebermann Pottery and Tiles and Lourenço Marques Pottery were excluded as they were not of publication quality.

Appendix 5.2.4 South African public, institutional & private libraries consulted

1	Brenthurst Library
2	IZIKO South African National Gallery ⁴³
3	National Library of South Africa, Cape Town
4	National Library of South Africa, Pretoria
5	University of Cape Town ⁴⁴
6	University of KwaZulu-Natal library, Durban
7	University of KwaZulu-Natal library, Pietermaritzburg

Table 4 South African public, institutional & private libraries consulted

⁴³ This library has excellent scrap-books and other archives of South African newspaper cuttings that focus on the art scene.

⁴⁴ This library holds the Marietjie van der Merwe archives, which were useful for developing a history of Rorke's Drift.

Appendix 5.2.5 Public & institutional libraries consulted in England

Records held in the five London-based public and institutional libraries were consulted.

1	British Library ⁴⁵
2	National Art Library ⁴⁶
3	RCA Library
4	University of the Arts Library
5	SOAS Library

Table 5 Public & institutional libraries consulted in England

⁴⁵ The British Library held important colonial trade records concerning the export to South Africa of bricks, sanitary ware and ceramics.

⁴⁶ The NAL's holding of John Adams' papers documents the early ceramics history of the Durban Technical College, as well as details the presence of Indian potters in Durban (Adams, 1916).

Appendix 5.2.6 Ceramics collections in South African public museums & art galleries

The following (alphabetically listed) public institutions were visited. Ceramics and associated archival collections viewed, where possible photographically documented, and studied.

1	Albany Museum, Grahamstown
2	Ann Bryant Art Gallery, East London
3	Ceramics Museum, Durbanville; Cape Town
4	Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town
5	Ditsong National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria
6	Durban Art Gallery, Durban
7	Gertrude Posel Gallery, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (now known as WAM)
8	Iziko Social History Collections, Cape Town
9	Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town
10	Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town
11	Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein
12	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth (formerly known as the King George VI Art Gallery)
13	Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein
14	Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria – permanent collection, the Gertrude Agranat Bequest (see Gers 2016, endnote 180, p.369) and the Corobrik Collection of Ceramic Art.
15	Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
16	Roodepoort Museum, Ekurhuleni, Gauteng

17	Sanlam Art Collection, Bellville, Cape Town
18	Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg - permanent collection and Peter Millin Study Collection
19	Voortrekker Museum, Pietermaritzburg
20	William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberly

Table 6 Significant South African ceramics collections surveyed

Exclusion

I note that that it was not possible to visit the ceramics collections of MuseuMAfricA, Johannesburg. As the oldest heritage institution in Johannesburg, this institution undoubtedly has a significant collection. However much of their collection is not catalogued, and between 2008 and 2013, it was boxed, in storage, and not available for viewing.

Appendix 5.2.7 Private ceramics collections

Many private ceramics collections were visited over the period of my research. The following eleven (alphabetically listed) collections were considered of major significance and were selected to be documented via professional studio photographs.

1	Alphen Collection, Cape Town
2	Clive and Ann Berlyn, Mtatha
3	Brenthurst Trust, Johannesburg
4	Gerard de Kamper and Nick Wellmans, Pretoria
5	Jan Middeljans, Pretoria
6	The late Clive Newman, Port Elizabeth
7	Gordon Radowsky, Cape Town
8	Adriaan Turgel, Johannesburg ⁴⁷
9	Douglas van der Horst, Cape Town
10	Wilhelm van Rensburg, Johannesburg
11	Prof. Mark Watson, Port Elizabeth

Table 7 South African private collections that were professionally documented

⁴⁷ Turgel facilitated the photography of both commercial wares (Gers, 2016a, pp.209, 229, 230, 231, 369) and unique pieces (Gers 2016a, p.368).

Appendix 5.2.8 Additional professional photographs supplied by South African academic & heritage institutions

1. Leon du Preez, Curator of the Ann Bryant Art Gallery offered two images of works by Ikhwezi Lokusa Pottery including Columbus Soshwebe's, Two Figures (seated back to back) and Jim Ngxabazi's, Kneeling Woman (Gers, 2016a, pp.133, 134).
2. Esther Grobelaar, Curator of Iziko Social History collections, Cape Town arranged for the photography of newly acquired works by Lucks Bean Pottery (Gers, 2016a, pp.236, 239).
3. Diana Wall, the former Ceramics Curator at MuseuMAfrica arranged for the photography of early wares produced by F.W. Armstrong (Gers, 2016a, p.90).
4. Kobie Venter, Curatorial Assistant, at the Tatham Art Gallery contributed images of significant recently acquired wares including a spectacular Lucia Ware vase (Gers, 2016a, p.291) and Globe Potteries coffee set (Gers, 2016a, pp.86, 87).
5. Prof Jeanne van Eeden, History of Art Department, University of Pretoria arranged for the professional photography of a fireplace in the University Club hall decorated with historically significant tiles produced by The Ceramics Studio (Gers, 2016a, p.25).
6. Rika Nortjé, former Curator of the William Humphries Art Gallery contributed images of recently acquired wares produced at Rorke's Drift (Gers, 2016a, pp.268, 270, 271, 279).

Table 8 Additional professional photographs supplied by South African academic & heritage institutions

Exclusions

Collections belonging to the late Joe Faragher (who had a small but important collection of pottery from Ihkwezi Lokusa and Faragher's Pottery) and the late Hyme Rabinowitz (who had a collection of Rorke's Drift) were originally included in this list. However, professional photography of their collections was ultimately cancelled due to their respective states of poor health.

Appendix 5.2.9 Additional professional photographs supplied by individuals

1. Carolyn Birch, Pietermaritzburg, lent a tile Liebermann tile panel for photography (Gers, 2016a, p.205).
2. Denis Blewett, Johannesburg, contributed a studio photo of a charger produced by Marrakesh Ware (Gers, 2016a, p.253).
3. Laura du Toit, Stellenbosch, photographed Leta Hill's hearth tiles in the Stellenbosch Council Chamber (Gers, 2016a, p.190).
4. Chris Hartley-White, England, allowed me to photograph his collection of Izandla Pottery (Gers, 2016a, p.150).
5. Alan Miller, USA, provided images of wares produced by Faragher's Pottery, Swaziland (Gers, 2016a, pp.66, 70, 73).
6. Dr Helen Mentis, Johannesburg, facilitated the professional photography of her collection of Mantenga Craft Pottery (Gers, 2016a, p.240).
7. Sietze Praamsma, Canada, collaborated extensively with documentation of his collection from Thamaga Pottery, Botswana (Gers, 2016a, pp.306, 311, 312, 317, 318).
8. Thomas Vermeulen, Pietermaritzburg, supplied images of tiles produced at Lucky Bean Farm (Gers, 2016a, pp.238, 370).

Table 9 Additional professional photographs supplied by individuals

Appendix 5.2.10 Additional archival images supplied by South African public institutions

<p>1. Corine Meyer, Curator of the Ceramics and Precious Metal Collection, Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History, Pretoria assisted with acquiring archival images from Herry Duys, The Old Jar Pottery, (Gers, 2016a, pp.320, 321, 324). Jan Middeljans, Technician at the same institution, contributed a Globe Potteries advert from 1923 (Gers, 2016a, p.364).</p>
<p>2. Anthony Starkey, Lecturer, Durban University of Technology (DUT), supplied images of studios and a building plan of the original Pottery Department at the former Natal Technical College from the archives of the Durban University of Technology (Gers, 2016a, pp.x, xv).</p>
<p>3. Esther Grobelaar, Curator, Iziko Social History collections, Cape Town arranged the scanning of images from the archives of Iziko Social History Collections. These included archival images of Zaaleberg Potterij, the Kalahari Studio, and Le Hi Potteries (Gers, 2016a, pp.xvii, xviii, 191, 192, 332, 333, 335, 336, 373).</p>
<p>4. Gerard de Kamper, Chief Curator Collections, provided a scanned sketch by Erich Mayer from the University of Pretoria Art Collection (Gers, 2016a, p.14).</p>

Table 10 Additional archival images supplied by South African public institutions

Appendix 5.2.11 Additional archival images supplied by individuals

<p>1. Dorte Deans, Canada, supplied extensive archival photos of the staff and wares produced by Thamaga Pottery, Botswana (Gers, 2016a, pp.308, 309, 310, 314, 316, 372). She also shared an unpublished manuscript from the archives of her late mother, Bodil Pearson, as noted in Endnote 232. This information was extremely useful for writing her biography (2016a, pp.313–315) and constructing the history of Thamaga Pottery (2016a, pp.306–311).</p>
<p>2. Joe Finch, Wales supplied scanned archival portraits of staff and a catalogue of Kolonyama Pottery (Gers, 2016a, pp.175, 177, 184, 187, 189 & p.368 endnote 162).</p>
<p>3. Joe, Ruth, Mary, Tamsin and Lynette Faragher, Cape Town, Johannesburg and London provided archival images from Faragher's Pottery and Ihkwezi Lokusa (Gers, 2016a, pp.67, 69, 130, 131).</p>
<p>4. Archival images of Swaziland's Mantenga Craft Pottery staff and a catalogue were supplied by Johannes Gaston, USA (Gers, 2016a, pp.247, 248, 249).</p>
<p>5. Peter Hayes, England, contributed numerous archival images of staff and wares produced at Thaba Bosigo, Lesotho (Gers, 2016a, pp.298, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 357).</p>
<p>6. Lisa and the late Mary Liebermann, Knysna, supplied archival images of staff from Liebermann Pottery and Tiles (Gers, 2016a, pp.201, 203, 204).</p>
<p>7. William Martinson, East London, supplied numerous archival images of various early South African potteries (Gers, 2016a,</p>

pp.xii, xiii, 114, 255, 320) as well as 4 studio photos of Linnware chargers (2016a, p.34).
8. Toff Milway, England supplied a scanned archival portrait of Bill van Gilder working at Kolonyama Pottery (Gers, 2016a, p.188).
9. Keslina Ngubo, Mtatha supplied images of Izandla staff members at work (Gers, 2016a, pp.142, 144, endnote 141).
10. Ole Nielsen, Australia, assisted with archival images of Rorke's Drift artists (Gers, 2016a, pp.265, 266).
11. Sietze Praamsma, Canada, supplied an archival photo of the re-building of Thamaga Pottery's kiln (Gers, 2016a, p.372).
12. Adriaan Turgel, Johannesburg and Cape Town, supplied archival images of mother parents, Phyllis Turgel and business partner, Denis Morgan Blewett, Marrakesh Ware (Gers, 2016a, pp.252, 253).
13. Douglas van der Horst, Cape Town supplied scanned archival images of staff of The Ceramic Studio (Gers, 2016a, pp.xvi, 11).
14. Thomas Vermeulen, Pietermaritzburg, supplied an archival image of Valmai Edwards from Lucky Bean Farm (Gers, 2016a, p.235).
15. David Whiting, England, contributed an image of Thaba Bosigo (Gers, 2016a, p.360).

Table 11 Additional archival images supplied by individuals

Appendix 5.2.12 Archival images from the author's study collection

1. Archival images of Ikhwezi Lokusa pottery as well as other material (such as presence sheets and production records) were rescued from a waste skip outside the pottery in Mtatha in 2007 (Gers, 2016a, p.128).
2. Richard Koch shared a catalogue of Hamburger's Pottery (2016a, p.116).
3. The late Hester Locke of Grahamstown Pottery, gave me a some archival photos (Gers, 2016a, pp.91, 92, 96, 100).

Table 12 Archival images from the author's study collection

Appendix 5.2.13 Abridged Listing of black & Indian Southern African artists and potters

Scorched Earth includes 147 Black African and Indian artists and potters, the vast majority of which are previously unknown. They are included in the following list:

Note 1

Scorched Earth also includes numerous brief biographies of partially identified artists, whose surnames or first names were not known at the time of submission of the manuscript. These individuals were included in *Scorched Earth* in order to stimulate future research. For reasons of brevity, these individuals are excluded from this list and from the head-count of 147 Black African and Indian artists and potters.

Note 2

This list excludes black and Indian pottery staff who are clearly identified as having only administrative or technical roles, such as drivers, kiln packers, store, show room and sales managers. This latter group of individuals are included in the book, to facilitate a broader understanding of the sector, and encourage further research.

Crescent Potteries

'Stompie' Ernest Manana (40), Nicodemus (Darius) Molefi (40), Memling Morningstar Motaung (40,41), Isaac Sello (36), Durant Sihlali (42)

Dykor Ceramic Studio

Ben Bonani (51), Beauty Magandlela (51), William Thabane (48), Jeremiah Skhosana (53), Kansamy (aka Robert or Bob) Chetty and his unidentified brother (48), Johannes Themba (48), Abram Thage (53)

Faragher's Pottery

David Fakuduze (68), Balunzi Masuku (71), Meshack Masuku (71,72), Petros Masuku (72), Jobe Mavuso (72)

Ikhwezi Lokusa Pottery

Lunga Bunywana (132), Simbongile Cutshela (132), Moses Dimane (132), Nqobile Gugushe (132), N Gubangca (132), Nteda Makwenkodwa (133), Xolile Maliphale (133), Bongoza Mathemba (133), Nceba Mazoko (133), Nkosivumile Mchunu (133), Zakade Mtshulana (133), Eric Mtswane (133), Mncedisi Mzileni (133), Bonga Mzomba (133), Novulile Ndabangaye Thandeka Nkohla (134), Jim Ngxabazi (134), Kenilworth Peter (129), Zanele Raraza Phindile Sihele (134), Zipho Sihlali (134), Michael Sityalweni (134), Columbus Soshwebe (134), Sibongile Sotyalweni (135), Andile Tshali (135), David Velaphi (136), Agnes Xhasa (135)

Izandla Pottery

George Coo (143), Buyiswa Dudumashe (143), Thandekile Faya-Mafanya (143), Ntombi Gcaba (143), Constance Gwala (144), Florence Jara (144), Elsie Thembeke Jumbile (144), Rahaba Nozityilelo Langa (145), Keslina Madosini (145), Vivian Madosini (146), Grace Mase (146), Zuziwe Mathokazi (146), Leslie Mbelekana (146), Peter Mbi (147), Ndileka Mbobana (147), Cynthia Mjacu (147), Soslina Mlala (147), Faniswa Mnakaniso (147), Nokuzola Moyakhe (147), Fundi Mpayipheli (147), Lawrence Makwazewa Mvokwe (147), Nonzwakazi Mzazela (147), Keslina Ndabeni (147), Miriam Lumka Ndabeni (148),

Beatrice Ngaleka (148), Cynthia Ngubo (148), Keslina Matuzana Ngubo (148), Thandeka (aka Ria) Nkohla (148), Lungisa Ntlokwana (148), Lindiwe (aka Lindie) Nyoni (149), Aeneas Quinta (149), Khawuleza Sakwe (149), and Florida Xintolo (150)

Kolonyama Pottery

Frank Mahope (184), Florina Matala (185), Moto Matsa (185), Tsitso Mohapi (185), Mathabo Nthanko (186), Julia and Emmanuel Setsabi (187)

Liebermann Pottery and Tiles

Fine Hadebe (210), Joseph Madisha (218), John and Wilson Mahlabane (218), Judy Matjebe (219), Jonas Mello (219), Matthews Milebi (219), Kainus Mkhari (219), Dolly Mofokeng (220), Philemon Morotoba (220), Patch Mpofo (220), Wison Mzumba (221), Sam Ngwenya (221), the Nkomo family (Lucien, Margaret, Miriam and Alice) (221), Jane Tshabalala (221)

Mantenga Craft Pottery

iSibongo Gumede (245), Austin Hleza (245,246), Aaron Msibi (247), Joel Msibi (247), Sipho Nzamande (245)

Rorke's Drift

Isaiah Buthelezi (270), Euriel Damane (270,271), Thamasqua (Thami) Rutherford Jali (272), Miriam Khumalo (272), Christopher Khuzwayo (272), Mirriam Khumalo (272), Lindumusa Mabaso (272), Bhekisani Manyoni (272), Elizabeth Mbatha (273), Enval Mbatha (273), Gordon Mbatha (273), Judith Mkhabela (273), Gideon Mkhize (274), I. Mkhize (274), Phineas Mkhize (274), Dinah Molefe (274), Ivy Molefe (274), Lephinah Molefe (274), Loviniah Molefe (275), Nestah Molefe (275), Caiphaz Nxumalo (276,277), Victor Shabangu (277), David Sibisi (277), Florence Sibisi (277), Jabulisiwe Sibisi (277), Joel Sibisi (277), Aaron Xulu (279), Ephraim Ziqubu (279), and Ivy Zulu (279)

Thamaga Pottery

Teko Dikgobe (306), Metsiyame Dikobe (306), Mosiane Ikobe (306), Molebe Kebonang (306), Moswarakgosi Kebotsamang (306), Mmanko

Moeng, (306) Tsitsipane Monageng (306), Taki Sepakile (306,317), Motobedi Tshipi (306,317), Radiau Tshipi (306)
The Old Jar Pottery Jeram Bhana (323), Kansamy (aka Robert or Bob) Chetty (323); ⁴⁸ Pieter Malele (324)

Table 13 Abridged list of black & Indian Southern African artists & potters

Appendix 5.2.14 Detailed analysis of Nilant's *Contemporary Pottery in South Africa*

The first text on Southern African potteries is F.G.E. Nilant's pocket-size publication that contains an 18 page chapter on 'Pottery in South Africa today' (1963, pp.38–56), and 27 poor-quality, small black and white illustrations. It was the only publication on this subject for over a decade, and was thus influential. Nilant's mixture of different research methods including quantitative and qualitative surveys, that evaluate the output of South African earthenware manufacturers, as well as surveys the tastes and opinions of pottery by local consumers, based on the widely distributed questionnaires. The final chapter, explores the economic aspects of the industry, and is contributed by Dr A.J.E. Sorgdrager, head of department of Cost Accounting at the University of Potchefstroom.

⁴⁸ Kansamy (aka Robert or Bob) Chetty worked at numerous potteries and while he is listed twice under Dykor and The Old Jar respectively; is counted once in the total number of Black and Indian potters (Gers, 2016a, p.323).

Omissions

Nilant excluded the noteworthy Cape Town, Zaalberg Potterij, a significant manufacturer of popular wares that operated from 1951 to 1983 (Gers, 2016a, pp.331–343). He similarly omitted the potteries established and operated by Indian South Africans, such as the early Indians potteries in Durban (Gers, 2016a, p.xvi), and the Indian-operated pottery, Riverside Pottery Works in Silverton, Pretoria (Gers, 2016a, p.358).⁴⁹ The publication is also marred by exclusion of a major pottery operated by Jewish citizens, Liebermann Pottery and Tiles, Johannesburg (1955-present) (Gers, 2016a, pp.200–233).

Racial bias

Nilant explains that he is ‘concerned ... mainly with factories and studios of *European* pottery’ (own emphasis) (1963, p.32) within South Africa. Observing contemporary parlance, Nilant uses the term European to refer to ‘white’ South Africans, although the design, produced and consumption of locally made ceramics was by no means restricted to this small, affluent, privileged group.

In a brief section devoted to an analysis of labour, Nilant notes the high cost of training (both financial and in terms of time), and then bemoans the ‘migrating habits of the African’ (1963, p.89). Nilant’s perverse reference to migratory habits is in fact an oblique allusion to Apartheid’s network of other discriminatory legislation that imposed economic migration upon many impoverished rural communities, and controlled the flux of labour movement within urban centres (Delius, 2017; Mayer, 1980; Wolpe, 1972).

⁴⁹ The latter is relatively close to the University of Pretoria and it is unlikely that Nilant was not aware of this operation.

Gender bias

Nilant's extremely brief survey of history of the pioneering women's factory, the Ceramic Studio and Linnware, has misogynistic overtures in its downplaying of the significance of the achievements of this visionary endeavour.

Patriarchal focus

Contemporary Pottery in South Africa is responsible for establishing Esias Bosch as a pivotal figure in South African ceramics (1963, pp.54–56). It is argued that Bosch's inclusion in this book is unwarranted. Bosch's commercial studio, Alwyn Potteries, located in Pretoria and later at White River, only endured approximately two years. It thus constitutes a footnote in the history of South African production wares, as the artist specialised in producing original stoneware vessels. This mythologizing of Bosch set the tone for subsequent publications, including Clark and Wagner (1974), which compounded his heroic status as the pioneer of artistic studio pottery in the neo-Cardewian⁵⁰ idiom.

Class bias

In his concluding remarks, Nilant observes that

Only during the last two decades have the public in South Africa slowly begun to become earthenware-conscious and they have begun to distinguish between a good piece of art and junk.

⁵⁰ Bosch was apprenticed to Ray Finch at Winchcombe and then to Michael Cardew in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Bosch's unsigned work of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s is inscribed in this formal austerity of Anglo-Japanese stoneware tradition established by Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada (Clark and Wagner, 1974, pp.11, 14–25).

Before that there existed little chance for such development. Although good taste in art in general has developed within a very short period in South Africa, the development is still not fast or extensive enough to prevent less favourable influences from affecting certain branches of the manufacture of earthenware (1963, p.98).

What is good taste and who defines it? Is Nilant referring to people of colour in his reference to 'less favourable influences'? The capacity to develop to create diverse ranges that respond to the multiple ethnic and cultural groups that constitute the local population is essential in the industry. A greater degree of multiculturalism may have prevented the industry from failing at the end of the 1950s.⁵¹ Indeed, *Scorched Earth* has shown that potteries such as Crescent Potteries (2016a, pp.36–47) and The Old Jar (2016a, pp.319–329), which allowed design and decoration to be undertaken by African artisans, or like Zaalberg Potterij (2016a, pp.331–343) that engaged in the diversification of wares to primarily produce popular and inexpensive commercial wares, endured far longer than many potteries that remained resolutely high-brow and Eurocentric.

Appendix 5.2.15 Detailed analysis of Clark & Wagner's *Potters of Southern Africa*

Garth Clark and Lynne Wagner's text was penned during a holiday in South Africa (Hayes and Hayes, 2009; Rabinowitz, 2012). Contrary to

⁵¹ The failure of the industry is considered in *Scorched Earth* (2016a, p.xviii,xix)

the title, 'Potters of Southern Africa' includes three commercial potteries, Thaba Bosigo, Kolonyama and Rorke's Drift, in addition to a dozen South African studio potters.⁵² The inclusion of the two Lesotho-based potteries, Thaba Bosigo and Kolonyama, serve as a rather exaggerated justification for the use of 'Southern Africa' in the title. Research into the epoch confirms that the book is not representative of the leading potters or potteries of the period, and both the inclusions and exclusions are significant. The following list presents an overview of some of the key omissions, areas lacking critical depth, as well as patriarchal and Eurocentric biases.

Omissions

- All contemporary university ceramics instructors were excluded. These instructors were influential as there were so few opportunities for a ceramics education, and included Jurgen Hamburger at Rhodes University, Hilda Ditchburn at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (Cruise, 2005); Richard Adams and Anita Lipshitz at the Johannesburg Technical College (Stevens, 2016).
- Like Nilant, Clark and Wagner's monograph excluded Liebermann Pottery and Tiles, although the introduction acknowledges this omission (1974, p.13).
- The preface by the pioneer gallerist, Helen de Leeuw, similarly laments the exclusion of the work of the acclaimed, pioneering (feminist) artist, Lilly Pinchuck.

⁵² Potters include Esias Bosch, Bryan Hayden, Sonja Gerlings, Alice Heystek, Charles Gotthard Jacobs, Helen Martin, Thelma Marcuson, Tim Morris, Hyme Rabinowitz, Marietjie van der Merwe, Hannatjie van der Wat and Andrew Walford.

Lack of critical substance and depth

- Clark and Wagner's entries for the individual potteries are superficial and racially biased, focussed on the Anglo-American managing staff.
- Thaba Bosigo is presented primarily via a photo essay with an accompanying biography of the British artist Peter Hayes, the founding manager. Hayes explained to me that the chapter was misleading as most of illustrations, with the exception of two photos of 'Letima' pots (1974, p.159,160), were not standard production wares, being personal works (Hayes and Hayes, 2009).
- Likewise, the entry for Kolonyama is extremely superficial, focussing exclusively on the British and American staff, and their connections to Winchombe Pottery and Harrow School of Art. It ignores African and other local staff members, essential to the success of the pottery.
- In the Rorke's Drift section, after discussing the western staff, and Cardew-derived glaze recipe, the monograph lists black staff members, and acknowledge the social and artistic significance of the project. The Rorke's Drift section is concluded with a depreciating remark, stating that this 'experiment' (sic) (the endeavour had been operational since for over a decade) was 'unlikely to be repeated with the same simplicity and honesty' (1974, p.148). Rorke's Drift's is the only South African pottery from the 1960s that is still existent (Watt, 2014a). Their rich and nuanced history is characterised by complex internal relations and external challenges between Rorke's Drift and the community (including the police and Apartheid authorities). Internals rivalries included inter-departmental oppositions, clashes between the management and artists, as well as labour and gender divisions within the ceramics department (Hobbs and Rankin, 2003; Hosking, 2005).

Racist, Eurocentric and patriarchal biases

In the introduction, the authors define the normative spectrum of contemporary ceramics:

At the one end of the spectrum is the ceramic engineer of Germany and Scandinavia, concerned with technical achievements to the exclusion of all else, while at the opposite end, one has the extreme left of the avant-garde in America and parts of Europe (1974, p.9).

Potters of Southern Africa subsequently models local contemporary ceramics development on British traditions, and perceives the local scene as deficient. The authors presenting a long-winded introductory overview of the Leach-Hamada-Cardew dynasty (1974, pp.10–12), bemoan the lack of local innovation. This normative modelling on the technical and creative prowess of Western nations results in an incapacity to engage with the artistic contribution of numerous innovative, original artists that were active in this period.

Potters of Southern Africa dismissed 'tribal African' (sic) pottery as 'alien' to White potters and both 'aesthetically and technically limited' (sic) (1974, p.11). The authors also ignore the complexities of racial and cultural diversity that characterised the resonant engagements with transnational Modernism evident in the works of Rorke's Drift and Thaba Bosigo.

The monograph prominently celebrates Esias Bosch as the founder of the 'pottery movement in South Africa', which apparently commenced with his return from England to South Africa in 1952 (1974, p.9). This association of Bosch with the birth of an unspecified 'pottery movement' is problematic, as it ignores the creativity of centuries of indigenous and

potters as well as preceding generations of settler (white and Indian) artist-potters.

In conclusion, Clark and Wagner's monograph *Potters of Southern Africa* is important as it gives readers a glimpse into the diversity of the ceramics scene in the early 1970s, a period of relative calm, between the Sharpeville Massacre (21 March 1960) and the Soweto Uprising (16 June 1976), in the wake of massive government repression of the 1960s under H. F. Verwoerd. This period predates the existence of terms and concepts such as 'transitional', 'protest', 'resistance' or 'township art' which formed a vital part of a lexicon of critical concepts for exploring art from this period. *Potters of Southern Africa* is significant in its acknowledgement of a relatively broad ceramics spectrum, and in terms of the degree of agency attributed to the artists of Rorke's Drift.

Despite its racial, patriarchal and Eurocentric biases, omissions, and lack of critical substance and depth, the book heralded a more culturally diverse appreciation of contemporary South African ceramics. This acknowledgement of diversity was embraced in a more substantial manner by a subsequent survey of studio ceramics by Wilma Cruise, *Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa* (1992). This monograph surveyed individual studio potters operating in the late 1980s, and prominently included numerous rural and urban black ceramics artists.

Appendix 5.2.16 Unpublished timeline for *Scorched Earth*

The illustrated timeline dates from 2013, and was excluded from the manuscript. The underlined text refers to photos and archival images that illustrate key historic moments. Many of these images were subsequently included in the final text.

TIMELINE KEY

BCE (Before the Common Era) refers to the years up to 1 BC.

CE (Common Era) refers to the years from AD 1 to the present.

Present-day place names have been used for places that were not known as such in the past.

31000-25000 BCE	The earliest known ceramic artefact, a 'Venus' and animals figurines were produced at Dolní Věstonice, Czech Republic.
16000 BCE	Early pottery vessels from Yuchanyan Cave in China.
10000 BCE	Pottery developed in North Africa.
5500-4500 BCE	Early pottery made in Europe.
3500 BCE	First potter's wheels used in Iraq.
440 BCE-200 CE	Sculptured terra-cotta heads and figures produced at Nok in Nigeria
140 BCE	Pottery at Bambata Cave in the Matopo Hills, Zimbabwe

100 BCE	Pottery at Spoegrivier Cave on the Namaqualand coast, Northern Cape.
200-400 CE	Early Iron Age 'Western Stream' pottery spread through Botswana and across the Highveld to KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, followed by an 'Eastern Stream' from East Africa that moved along the eastern coast into Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal after 500 CE.
300	Khoekhoe-style pots with lugs and pointed bases at Boomplaas Cave, near the Cango Caves in the Swartberg, Western Cape.
618-906	Early exports of Chinese porcelain to the Islamic world.
700s	Herders with distinctive pottery present in the Seacow Valley in the Karoo, Northern Cape.
ca.750	The Lydenburg Heads.
800	Decorated Khoe-San pottery at Blinkklip Kop, Northern Cape.
900s	Growing diversity of Iron Age pottery styles and decoration in south eastern Africa, reflects the spread of people from East Africa who were probably ancestral to later Nguni-, Sotho- and Tsonga-speaking people.
1000	Iron Age agriculturalists with new styles of pottery had reached the Great Kei River in the Eastern Cape.
1050 -1270	Mapungubwe on the Limpopo River was the most important southern African trading centre in gold, ivory and cattle for beads, textiles and porcelain from Arabia and the Orient.

1270-1450	With the decline of Mapungubwe, Great Zimbabwe became the political and economic centre of a gold- and ivory-trading state between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers.
1368 -1644	China exports ceramics to Europe.
1417-1424	Chinese fleet reached East Africa and began trading along the African coast.
1497	Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama traded with San foragers at St. Helena Bay and with Khoekhoe herders at Mossel Bay, Western Cape.
1517	Portuguese merchants trade in Chinese porcelain.
1595	Dutch colonization of the East Indies began, and in 1598 Dutch traders began taking Chinese porcelain to Europe by sea.
1652	Dutch settlement founded by the <i>Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC)</i> at the Cape.
1666-ca.1790	Wheel-thrown European-style coarse earthenware produced at the Cape for local use. <u>VOC works</u>
1678	First official consignment of Chinese porcelain delivered to the VOC settlement at the Cape.
1700s	Boers migrate to interior and seize land inhabited by Bantu and Khoi peoples. Without land, these communities are forced to work on Boer farms to support themselves.
1756	VOC import slaves from West Africa, Malaysia, and India, establishing the dominance of whites over non-whites in the region.

1779-1781	First in a century-long series of wars fought by Xhosa-speaking people in the Eastern Cape to defend their land against colonial expansion.
1806	Following the British occupation of the Cape, imported British ceramics became dominant at the Cape.
1830-1833	James Hancock, 1820 British settler made domestic pottery at Salem near Grahamstown, Eastern Cape.
1867	Diamond mining commences in South Africa. Massive expansion in in construction industry, as evident by hundreds of early brickworks. <u>1867 Lemmon & Mutch Brickfield & Quarry, Pretoria.</u>
1880-ca.1958	John J. Kirkness, Groenkloof Brick, Tile and Pottery Works, Pretoria. <u>1880 Groenkloof</u>
1903 -1909	Vereeniging Brick and Tile Company. <u>1903 Vereeniging</u>
1907	Consolidated Rand Brick Pottery and Lime Company (Conrand) commences production of industrial sanitary whiteware (urinals, baths, lavatories, basins and pedestals, wall and floor tiles), bricks, earthenware pipes, fire clay goods, stoneware bottles, ink bottles, salt-glazed bricks, crucibles and liners for the gold industry, drainage and sewage pipes. <u>1907 Conrand</u>
1908-1915	Transvaal Pottery, Olifantsfontein, Gauteng. <u>Trans Pot - Bottle kilns</u>
1908	A constitutional convention is held to establish South African independence from Britain. The all-white government decides that non-whites

	can vote but cannot hold office. A few people in the new government object, believing that South Africa would be more stable if Africans were treated better.
1910	The South Africa Act takes away all political rights of Africans in three of the country's four provinces.
1912	The African National Congress is formed.
1913	The Natives Land Act removed the right of indigenous Africans to own land outside of the established Reserve areas in South Africa.
1915-1921	John Adams (1882-1953), Head of the Art Department of The School of Art, Durban. <u>1915 Pottery Room.</u>
1915-1929	Milton Pottery Company / Pretoria Potteries
ca. 1918	Professor Frederick William and Ruth Beatrice Armstrong produce art pottery in the brick-works of Grahamstown <u>1918 Armstrong 3602 (Pink Vase)</u>
1922-1938	Grahamstown Pottery under F. W. Armstrong.
1920s-1957	Globe Potteries, Pretoria. <u>1920s Globe</u>
1920s-ca.1946	Lane's Ceramic Works, Durbanville.
ca.1920s-1955	Rand Ceramic Industries, Johannesburg.
1925-1942	The Ceramic Studio, Olifantsfontein. <u>1937 Ceramic Studio</u> <u>Joan Methley Quembe Post Office tile panel, Umzinto, KwaZulu-Natal.</u>
1930s	Leta Hill produce a series of tiles for the grate of the banquet hall of the Stellenbosch Town Hall. <u>Image from Laura du Plessis</u>

1930s-1940s	Hezekile Ntuli (1912 – 1973) and Samuel Makoanyane (1909 – 1944) were among the first recognized African male ceramic sculptors.
1934	Prof; F. W. Armstrong of Grahamstown Pottery exhibited approximately one hundred pieces of pottery at the British Empire Games, Wembley Exhibition, and was awarded a Gold Medal.
1935-1941	Le Hi Potteries, Cape. <u>Image of pottery from Iziko SACH</u>
1936	Representation of Voters Act: This law weakens the political rights for Africans in some regions and allows them to vote only for white representatives.
1937	Leta Hill appointed Head of the Pottery Department at Michaelis Art School, University of Cape Town.
1938	Commemorations of Great Trek. <u>Image of Commemorative Kommetjie.</u>
1938	Jürgen Hamburger appointed Pottery Instructor at the Grahamstown Art School, Rhodes University.
1938	Leta Hill commissioned to produce tile panels of marine life for the new Aquarium in Seapoint, Cape Town.
1938- ca.1965	Grahamstown Potteries.
1939	Fewer than 30% of Africans are receiving any formal education, and whites are earning over five times as much as Africans. 1942-c.1962 Linnware, Olifantsfontein. <u>1942 Linnware.</u>

1945-late 1950s	South African Glazing Company - Boksburg East Potteries, Lucia Ware & Joy China.
1946	African mine workers are paid twelve times less than their white counterparts and are forced to do the most dangerous jobs. Over 75,000 Africans go on strike in support of higher wages. Police violence results in over 1000 workers being injured or killed.
1946-1981	Hilda Ditchburn appointed head of Pottery department, Fine Art Department of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. She was a seminal teacher of the Anglo-Oriental tradition in South Africa. 1947 Ditchburn 4487
1947	Leta Hill commissioned to make dinner services for the use of the English Royal family during their visit to Government House.
1947-1986	Hamburger's Pottery, Grahamstown. Photo of catalogue cover.
1948-1973	Kalahari Studio in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Franschhoek. Image 1948 Kalahari
1948-1953	Vaal Potteries, Johannesburg
1948-1968	Drosty Ware, Grahamstown Pottery.
1949-present	Continental China, Cape Town.
1949	Leta Hill exhibition of 200 objects, Association of the Arts Gallery, Cape Town.
1950	The Population Registration Act formalised the racial classification of all people in South Africa and the Group Areas Act allocated residential areas on the basis of race. Marriages between races was outlawed.

1950	S.A. Industries Exhibition, hosted by the Witwatersrand Agricultural Society (now known as the Rand Easter Show), Johannesburg. The Kalahari Studio was awarded a gold medal.
1950-1962	Silwood Ceramics, Johannesburg.
1950s -1960s	Transvaal Ceramics, Johannesburg.
1951-1972	Flora Anne, Johannesburg.
1951	The Bantu Homelands Act. Declaration that the lands reserved for black Africans are independent nations. The government stripped millions of blacks of their South African citizenship and forced them to become residents of their new 'homelands'. Blacks were considered foreigners in white-controlled South Africa, and required passes to enter.
1951	Maartin Zaalberg produced South Africa's first reduction fired stoneware artistic pottery.
1952	Museum Africa is the first South African museum to collect locally produced glazed pottery, made by F.W. Armstrong.
1952-1992	Crescent Potteries <u>Photo of stand at Rand Easter Show</u>
1952-1959	Dykor Ceramic Studio, Pretoria.
1952-1957	Brackenware Crockery Manufacturers, Cape Town.
1952	Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act. This misleadingly-named law requires all Africans to carry identification booklets with their names, addresses, fingerprints etc.

1952	The Kalahari Studio exhibited on the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival Fair, Cape Town. <u>1952 Van Riebeeck Festival</u>
1953	Michael Gill produces the first porcelain studio pottery in South Africa at Linnware, Olifantsfontein.
1953-2001	National Ceramic Industries, Germiston.
1953	The Preservation of Separate Amenities Act establishes "separate but not necessarily equal" parks, beaches, post offices, and other public places for whites and non-whites.
1953 -1984	The Old Jar Pottery (TOJ), Benoni. <u>1953 The Old Jar 038.</u>
1953	Bantu Education Act: Through this law, the white government supervises the education of all blacks. Non-whites cannot attend white universities.
1954-present	Liebermann Pottery and Tiles, Johannesburg.
1954	South African Association of the Arts, Arts and Crafts Exhibition. Participants included Audrey Frank (Linnware), Helen de Leeuw, A. & J. Hamburger (Hamburger's Pottery), Miss Methley (Linnware), Esias Bosch, Michael Gill (Linnware) and Thelma van Schalkwyk (Linnware).
1955	Exposition Internationale des Chefs d'Oeuvre de la Céramique Moderne, Cannes, France. The Kalahari studio won three awards, including a gold medal.
1955	Post-World War II industrial boom. <u>1955 Cullinan Advert.</u>

1956-1961	Marrakesh Ware, Johannesburg. <u>Photo of Menucha Turgel from Adriaan Turgel</u>
Late 1950s - the mid-1970s	Walsh-Marais Pottery, Durban & Pietermaritzburg.

1960	Sharpeville Massacre, 69 people died, 187 people were wounded and a State of Emergency was declared. The African National Congress and the Pan-African Congress were banned.
1962	The United Nations establishes the Special Committee Against Apartheid to support a political process of peaceful change.
1963	Esias Bosch awarded a silver medal by the Smithsonian Institution in the Ninth International Exhibition of Ceramic Art, Washington DC, USA.
1963	Nelson Mandela, head of the African National Congress, is jailed.
1963	Prof F.G.E.Nilant, University of Pretoria publishes <i>Contemporary Pottery in South Africa</i> . Scan of book cover
1965-1967	Liebermann Pottery and Tiles commissioned to produce tile mural for The Garden Room, Brenthurst, Johannesburg. 1965 Lieb Brenthurst 5114
1965-1994	Faiarte Ceramics - Angola, Johannesburg, Rustenburg.
1967-1968	Liebermann Pottery and Tiles commissioned to produce tile mural for KWV Headquarters, London.
1968-present	Rorke's Drift Pottery, KwaZulu-Natal. 1968 Nielsen RD pottery workshop
1968-ca.1979	Thabana Li Mele Pottery, Lesotho.
1968-1985	Grahamstown Pottery operated by Continental China.

1968	Liebermann Pottery and Tiles commissioned to produce tile mural of horse racing for Barclays Bank, Greyville, Durban.
1970s	Resistance to apartheid increases. Churches and Trade Unions join protests. Whites join blacks in the demonstrations.
1970	Durban Art Gallery purchased Rorke's Drift works, and became the first South African art museum to actively acquire the work of black artists.
1970s	The all-black South African Students Organization, under the leadership of Steven Biko, helps unify students through the Black Consciousness movement.
1970-ca.1981	Faragher's Pottery, Swaziland.
1970-ca.1977	Mbabane Pottery Development Centre, Swaziland.
1970s & 1980s	Art Potteries, Kempton Park.
1972-ca.1981	Thaba Bosigo, Lesotho.
1972-mid 1980s	Cresset House, Johannesburg.
1972	Association of Potters of Southern Africa (APSA) founded, today known as Ceramics Southern Africa (CSA).
1972-present	Ikhwezi Lokusa Pottery, Mtatha.
1973-present	Thamaga Pottery, Botswana. <u>1973 Thamaga Anita & Mma Mompoti</u>
1973	First APSA National Exhibition, Association of Arts Gallery, Pretoria.

1973	Joe Faragher and staff from Farahgar's Pottery produced a three story mural for the Standard Bank head office in Mbabane, Swaziland.
1973	Maarten Zaalberg received a commission from Cabana Beach Hotel, Umhlanga Rocks, to produce tile panels for lift interiors, lift landings, bedroom and corridor lamp-shades, dressing table panels, vanity counter aprons, doorknobs, door-panels, room numbers, stair tiles, ashtrays and candle-holders.
1974	Garth Clark and Lynne Wagner published <i>Potters of Southern Africa</i> . Scan cover of book
1974-ca.1983	Lucky Bean Farm.
1974-ca.1989	Mantenga Craft Pottery, Swaziland. 1974 Hleza Image .
1975	Art South Africa Today Exhibition, part of the twenty-fifth Republic Festival. Rorke's Drift works are separated (with many other craft and 'naive' works) from 'mainstream' art.
1975	First Nation Exhibition of The Association of Potters of Southern Africa, Association of Arts Gallery, Cape Town. From left to right: Esias Bosch (Globe), Suzanne Passmore, Annette Lewis Barr & Hyme Rabinowitz.
1975	Second Kolonyama Workshop, Lesotho. Image of Bill van Gilder demonstrating .
1976	Controversial article by ceramics lecturer Malcolm MacIntyre-Read, University of Natal, criticising 'hairy brown stoneware,' published in <i>Sgraffiti</i> (No. 10).

1976	The Soweto uprising. Protests against discrimination and instruction in Afrikaans result in 575 deaths, thousands of injuries and imprisonments. Steven Biko is beaten to death in jail.
1976-1977	Bitou Crafts Pottery, Knysna.
1976	Third Kolonyama Workshop, Lesotho.
1977-1996, 2001-ca.2010	Izandla, Mtatha. <u>Izandla group portrait</u>
1977-1986	Mapepe Craft, Henley on Klip, Transvaal.
1977	Bill Van Gilder, Maarten Zaalberg (Zaalberg Potterij) and Andrew Walford judge the 1977 APSA Oude Libertas National Ceramics Exhibition, Rand Afrikaans University. Highly Commended Awards received by John Dunn (Wall Clad Tiles), Kolonyama Pottery, Mantenga Crafts and Andrew Walford, among others. Winning pieces purchased to initiate a National Collection.
1978-2011	Old Nick Pottery, Plettenberg Bay.
1978-present	Argilla Pottery, Pretoria.

1980	Establishment of The Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, SADCC, by the Governments of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The SADCC objectives included the reduction of Member States dependence, particularly, but not only, on apartheid South Africa; the implementation of programmes and projects with national and regional impact; collective self-reliance and international understanding and support.
1980-ca.1985	Old Pont Pottery, Emithini, near Port Edward.
1980s	People and governments around the world launch an international campaign to boycott South Africa. Some countries ban the import of South African products and many major companies withdraw from South Africa.
1981	Lindsay Scott, Izandla received a Highly Commended award for his raku-fired bowl with lid. APSA National Exhibition, Genkor Gallery, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg.
1981	Maarten Zaalberg '30 years in South Africa' Exhibition, Yellow Door, Cape Town.
1983	Outspoken American sculptor, David Middlebrook undertakes a lecture tour in South Africa and teaches as guest ceramist of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, and criticises local interpretations of the Anglo-Oriental tradition.

1983	Joe Faragher and Ikhwezi Lokusa commissioned to produce a large mural for the University of Transkei's outdoor theatre. <u>Image 1983 Mural Walter Sisulu University</u>
1983-1984	Liebermann Pottery and Tiles commissioned to produce tile murals for Southern Sun Hotels, including Johannesburg, Muizenburg, Beacon Island (Plettenburg Bay), Drakensburg and Hluhluwe.
1980s	Increasing civil disobedience, demonstrations, and other Anti-Apartheid protests.
1985	Ardmore Ceramic Art Studio established in KwaZulu-Natal.
1986	The Clay Museum opened at Rust-en-Vrede in Durbanville, Western Cape. <u>Image of opening of Clay Museum</u>
1986	Columbus Soshwebe of Ikhwezi Lokusa Pottery won a prestigious bursary in the 24th Sanlam New Artists Exhibition.
1987	One of David Velaphi's pots gained a Highly Commended award at the APSA Eastern Cape Regional Exhibition, NMMAG, Port Elizabeth.
Late 1980s	Some of the segregationist laws are repealed including the Separate Amenities Act.
1988	David Velaphi and Eric Mswane of Ikhwezi Lokusa Pottery jointly won the Durban Art Gallery Award at the Corobrik National Ceramics Exhibition.
1988	Ikhwezi artists completed a twenty square metre sculpted tile mural for Magwa Tea Corporation headquarters, Mtatha.

1989	Andrew Walford received a silver medal from the University of Pretoria.
1986	Columbus Soshwebe of Ikhwezi Lokusa Pottery won a prestigious bursary in the 24th Sanlam New Artists Exhibition.
1990	Bonnie Ntshalintshali and Fée Halsted-Berning of Ardmore Ceramic Art jointly won the Standard Bank Young Artist Award.
1991	South African President F.W. de Klerk repeals the rest of the apartheid laws and calls for the drafting of a new constitution.
1991	Wilma Cruise published <i>Contemporary Ceramics in South African</i> . <u>Scan of cover of book</u>
1992	Hyme Rabinowitz was awarded the Honorary Degree of Master of Fine Art by the University of Cape Town.
1994	Nelson Mandela inaugurated as President after the first national democratic election
1994	Nesta Nala represented South Africa at the Cairo International Biennale for Ceramics.

Appendix 5.2.17 Screenshot of statistics from the Facebook group, *South African Pottery History*

The following screenshot of 'Group Insights' was taken on 10 September, 2018.

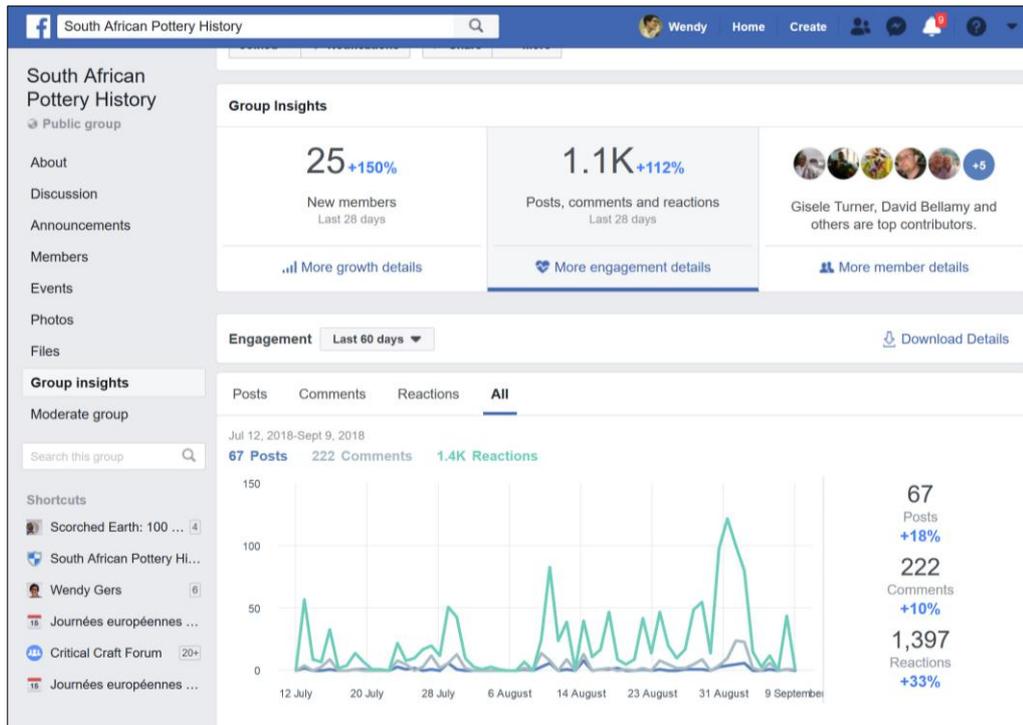


Figure 3 Statistics, Facebook group, *South African Pottery History*

Appendix 5.3 Peer reviews for Scorched Earth

Appendix 5.3.1 Jacana Media: confirmation of double-blind peer reviewing

Author: Bridget Impey, Managing Director, Jacana Media

Date: 1 October 2014



Ms Leora Farber
Director: Research Centre: Visual Identities in Art and Design
Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture
University of Johannesburg
leoraf@uj.ac.za
1 October 2014

Dear Ms Farber

***Scorched Earth: 100 Years of Southern African Potteries* by Wendy Gers, Jacana Media, 2015**

I confirm that the above publication was double-blind peer reviewed before publication. Wendy Gers is a lecturer at l'Ecole Supérieure d'Art et de Design de Valenciennes, France. She is a research associate at the University of Johannesburg and an associate advisor at The Design Cradle, Cape Town.

The peer-review process for the book *Scorched Earth: 100 Years of Southern African Potteries* ISBN number 978-1-4314-2126-8 was as follows. After proof-reading and editorial changes had been completed, the text was sent to the two peer reviewers who were asked to give a short report and recommend if

- a) Work demonstrates conceptual and technical expertise and can be published as is
- b) Work satisfies all requirements. Minor corrections are required.
- c) Work satisfies basic requirements but essential corrections are required.
- d) Work is uneven and in need of substantial extension or elaboration in order to be included in this publication.
- e) Work is of unacceptable standard both conceptually and technically.

The text was evaluated by both reviewers as falling into category a. Feedback was given to the authors and the minor suggestions for recommended revisions were made to my satisfaction before going to print.

Yours sincerely



Bridget Impey
Managing Director: Jacana Media

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Appendix 5.3.2 Review by E. Esmiol, IZIKO Museums of South Africa

Author: Esther Esmiol, Curator: Iziko Museums of South Africa

Date: 7 May 2018

Source: The impact and contribution of Wendy Gers's research into Southern African potteries (Esmiol, 2018).

Contact with Wendy Gers dates back to 1996 when Ms Gers made application to the former South African Cultural History Museum (today forming part of the Iziko Museums of South Africa group in Cape Town), to study South African ceramics in the museum's collection. At the time she was a curator at the former King George VI Art Gallery (present day Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum) in Port Elizabeth. Her interest in South African ceramics was related to an exhibition that she was curating on the topic, and research towards the submission of a thesis for a Master of Art degree with the Centre for Visual Art at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The exhibition was supported by a research publication *South African studio ceramics, a selection from the 1950s* (1998), a precursor to her thesis *South African studio ceramics, c.1950's: the Kalahari Studio, Drostdy Ware and Crescent Potteries* (2000). These research publications were extremely important as very little had been published on these potteries at the time - the only other small, outdated reference work in existence was F.G.E. Nilant's *Contemporary pottery in South Africa* (1963).

Ms Gers's initial contact with the museum was the start of many years of correspondence, assistance and the sharing of information and research. Her recently published book *Scorched Earth, 100 years of Southern African potteries* (2015) is a major research work – a genuine 'Who's Who' of South African production pottery. No serious collector or museum curator can do without this book as a source of reference. The work has immense value, with carefully researched information, dates, artists' information, markings and photographs covering a large range of potteries active in South Africa during the 20th century.

Ms Gers's work has undoubtedly impacted positively on the curatorial work done at museums such as Iziko, and specifically in the following areas:

Research

Ms Gers kindly shared the draft text for her M.A. thesis (which eventually culminated into *Scorched Earth*) early on with museum curator Esther Esmiol. Without access to Gers's research at an early stage, it would have been impossible to grow the museum's ceramics collection in the way it transpired, as each acquisition needs to be fully motivated for and accompanied by proper information. Gers's research publications provide all the answers – not only with regards to dates, markings and names of artists associated with the various potteries, but most importantly, the context and interpretation of the period in which the works had been produced. These are all important pointers when establishing significance and reasons why objects should become part of a permanent national collection, such as that of Iziko Museums. Without Gers's research and publications to rely on and constantly refer back to, the work of a museum curator in the field of South African ceramics would have been a much greater challenge.

Because of her research projects and the need for professional photography for her publications, Gers's photographer for *Scorched Earth*, Natalie Fields, photographed a substantial number of South African ceramics in the Iziko collection. Gers kindly made these photographs available to the Iziko archive. Iziko in return has through the years provided Gers with professional photographs taken by Iziko's photographers, for example works by Samuel Makonyane and Lucky Bean Farm.

Ms Gers's knowledge of South African production potteries has been shared with the Iziko curator over many years and assisted the museum to identify works in its collection that were formerly unidentified, such as a small collection of Lucky Bean Farm tiles. Without hesitation Ms Gers shared magazine articles and information from her archives, thus strengthening the museum's documentation on these collections items. She also deciphered a Leta Hill maker's mark, which again contributed to enriching Iziko's records and documentation based on the work of this early 20th century Cape Town based potter.

Ms Gers also kindly edited articles which the Iziko ceramics curator had written, such as an article titled 'Reflections on FIRED – an exhibition of South African ceramics at Iziko Museums', published in *Interpreting Ceramics*, Issue 17 (2016), and a draft article on historical trade ceramics as a source of inspiration for contemporary South African ceramics (not yet published).

Collecting

The impact of Gers's work cannot be underestimated when one looks at collections development and growth within museum collections, in particular the Iziko ceramics collection. Research and collecting go

hand in hand. If it was not for the research work that Gers had done, Iziko would not have known about many of the production potteries in existence in South Africa, and would not have been in a position to make quick references and checks on works as they became available at commercial auctions, or offered as donations from private collectors. Iziko's South African production pottery collection has grown significantly since Ms Gers's research became available, especially with regards to the following potteries: Kalahari Studio, Globe Potteries, Crescent Potteries, Dykor Ceramic Studio, Drostdy Ware, Hamburger's Pottery, and Liebermann Pottery and Tiles.

Quite a number of the outstanding works illustrated in *Scorched Earth* has since been acquired for the Iziko collection, especially Kalahari Studio wares. It was through Ms Gers's research that the prominence and importance of this outstanding Cape Town based studio had been highlighted.

Ms Gers's list of South African potteries has inspired Iziko to grow its ceramics collection and to make it as representative as possible of all or most of these potteries. Her work also inspired the museum curator to visit potteries outside Cape Town, such as Liebermann's in Johannesburg, using the opportunity to acquire items for the museum's collection.

Exhibition conception and design practices

During 2012 Iziko opened an important exhibition of South African ceramics (FIREED) to showcase the range of works within its holdings. The exhibition features ceramics of an archaeological, historical and contemporary nature, and had been installed in the evocative Granary space at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. The show is of a semi-permanent nature but is being updated from time to time when new acquisition pieces are added to the display.

Ms Gers contributed towards FIREED in assisting the exhibition's curator, Esther Esmiol, with advice on issues of layout, focus and scope. She also made important contributions towards the texts which were produced for the exhibition, i.e. she wrote the text for a panel on South African production potteries and commented on the text panel on South African studio potters. Ms Gers also made additions to the time-line text and made overall comments on all the text panels produced. She has been publicly acknowledged in the exhibition for her contribution. Ms Gers also published a review on the FIREED exhibition.

During recent years Ms Gers has been curating important international ceramics exhibitions. Articles written for exhibition catalogues and various magazines had been noted with interest, as these are in the forefront of new trends and developments in the world of contemporary ceramics. Ms Gers has become a leading figure in the field and an inspiration to all. Through these projects she also opened up opportunities for young ceramists to join in artists' residencies, for example the South African ceramist Andile Dyalvane.

Other curatorial activities

Ms Gers's work has impacted positively on a wide range of curatorial activities. Through the establishment of her South African Pottery History facebook page, she has made it possible for members to always be updated on the latest developments in ceramics around the world. She regularly shares links to critical articles, provide updates on her travels, curation and teaching projects, thus enabling members to be connected to developments in the field of ceramics.

In 2012 Ms Gers visited Cape Town and kindly gave a guest lecture titled *Southern African ceramics - yesterday, today and tomorrow* at Iziko, at the Castle of Good Hope, on 14 July. Her presentation focussed on landmark potteries from the 1950s to 1970s, and was followed by an informal round-table discussion on current issues and future trends related to ceramics. It was an important opportunity for potters and people working with ceramics to come together to discuss topics of mutual interest.

Ms Gers, together with Elizabeth Perrill of the University of North Carolina, played an important role in motivating for African ceramics to be recognised as a discussion topic at the ACASA (Arts Council of the African Studies Association) 16th Triennial Symposium held at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York during March 2014. Under the heading 'African Ceramics on Display: Beyond Didactics and Demonstrations', Gers and Perrill convened a group of scholars to present short papers. The Iziko curator, a recipient of an ACASA travel grant, formed part of the team of panellists and did a presentation on the way in which the FIRED exhibition was approached.

Attending the symposium provided an excellent opportunity to network with curators of ceramics in other parts of Africa and the world. And of course visit New York's fine museums, such as the famous Metropolitan Museum of Art which houses a collection of more than two million works of art spanning 5 000 years of world culture, from prehistory to the present. The Brooklyn Museum where the symposium was held, was another excellent museum with many interesting collections and displays. At the time they had just redisplayed their African art collections in an exhibition titled *African Innovation*. Another inspirational installation at the Brooklyn Museum was an exhibition titled *Connecting Cultures: A World in Brooklyn*, which provided an introduction not only to the museum's collections, but also to a new way of seeing collections across, and beyond, the traditional divisions of geography, material, and chronology, in order to make connections that are sometimes difficult to see in separate, conventional galleries. *Connection Cultures* were arranged around themes such as Connecting Places, Connecting People, and Connecting Things, drawing on the rich resource of collections from all over the world held at the Museum. If it was not for Ms Gers's support and role in placing ceramics on the ACASA agenda, the Iziko curator would not have had the opportunity to be exposed to world class museums and their latest installation trends and topics.

Appendix 5.3.3 Review by K. Venter, Tatham Art Gallery

Author: Kobie Venter, Documentation Officer, Tatham Art Gallery

Date: 14 May 2018

Source: Email from Kobie Venter (Venter, 2018b)

Dear Wendy

Thank you for contacting us. We certainly think of you and your book with much affection!

Scorched Earth certainly had an impact on the way we displayed ceramics in the Gallery, and on the quality of the text we used. Attached is a series of texts, condensed from your book and acknowledged individually, that we used in different display cases in the Ceramics Room. The display of South African Studio Pottery was assembled before your talk, and the text added after the book launch on 4 August 2016.

This particular display was on view in our Gallery from August 2016 until February 2018. Five Outlines (we publish one every four months) contained photos and a description of this exhibition, with some reference to your book.

I'm attaching two (rather bad..) photographs of the Outlines involved.

Regards

Kobie Venter





Figure 4: Photos of *Outlines*

Note: the large blue jar featured on the cover of the *Outline*, September to December 2016 was first published in *Scorched Earth* (p.291).

Texts from Outlines, Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg, 2016-2018.

Source: Kobie Venter,

Date : 14 May 2018.

Conrand: Transvaal Pottery

(1908-1915)

Location: Olifantsfontein, near Pretoria

Transvaal Pottery, located on the premises of the Consolidated Rand Brick, Pottery and Lime Company (Conrand) in Olifantsfontein, was

established by Sir Thomas Cullinan (1862-1936), an eminent Randlord, upon the discovery of a seam of white-firing clay below the brick clay.

Cullinan appointed Harold Emery, an engineer from Stoke-on-Trent in England, as Works Manager of the pottery. Cullinan also sent his son Roland to Stoke-on-Trent to study ceramics. Emery had brought about 30 English potters and other staff from Stoke-on-Trent on contract. Conrand also employed about 80 Boer children from the Potchefstroom Orphanage from 1909 as indentured apprentices.

Conrand produced slip-cast creamware crockery in addition to various domestic goods such as wash jug and basin sets, food and storage jars, vases and promotional wares.

The earliest known example of Transvaal Pottery creamware is a large dinner service from 1908, which was presented to Louis Botha, the first prime minister of the Union of South Africa.

Despite Cullinan's huge personal and financial investments, the pottery never really made a profit and was closed in 1915.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Conrand: The Ceramic Studio

(1925-1942)

Location: Olifantsfontein, near Pretoria

Gladys Short and Marjorie Johnstone, both dynamic young pottery graduates of the School of Art of the Durban Technical College, established The Ceramic Studio. They rented workshop premises and accommodation from the Cullinan family within the abandoned Transvaal Pottery complex. Joan Methley, Audrey Frank and Thelma Currie joined them. These five women established a pottery that was

legendary for being almost entirely staffed by women decorators, designers and artists.

The Ceramic Studio aimed to produce artistic pottery that reflected the personality of South Africa, and was not merely a soulless imitation of that which originated in other countries. Thus the women of Olifantsfontein decorated tiles and to a lesser extent domestic ware with images of local history, flora, fauna and San parietal art (Bushman paintings).

During World War II, The Ceramic Studio suffered a shortage of English glaze components and was faced with closure. In February 1943 the benevolent Cullinan family bought the pottery, which was renamed Linnware.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Conrand: Linnware

(1943–ca.1962)

Location: Olifantsfontein, near Pretoria

When The Ceramic Studio became Linnware, many of the original staff remained. Its monochrome tableware was largely based on Ceramic Studio prototypes. Vases, chalices and large planters were hand-thrown on a potter's wheel. Saucers and plates were slip-cast.

Linnware pottery is characterised by a dark red earthenware body. Most crockery was decorated with the trademark Linnware deep turquoise glaze, but the pottery also manufactured wares with pale grey, pale yellow, mauve and rich mulberry glazes. These glazes, which display a wonderful depth and luminosity, were achieved by means of a technique known as double-glazing.

From the outset, Linnware was operated on a more commercial basis than The Ceramic Studio. Despite this new orientation, production dwindled between 1952 and 1955 due to an influx of cheap Asian ceramics. The final closure of Linnware occurred between 1952 and early 1962

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Crescent Potteries

(1952-1992)

Location: Luipaardsvlei, near Krugersdorp

The pottery was named after Crescent Potteries, Stoke-on-Trent, England. The link, if any, is unknown.

Crescent Potteries took over South African Artistic Potteries in 1952. Designer Albert Brown was joined by the Shain brothers and Albert Schiessler. When the pottery closed down in 1963, Morrie Shain and Schiessler were joint directors. Other staff included Durant Sihlali, Stompie Ernest Manana, Isaac Witkin, Nicodemus (Darius) Molefe and Memling Morningstar Motaung. Curiously, Isaac Witkin, renowned international sculptor who was born in Johannesburg, worked as a designer for Crescent from 1955 to 1957 as a young student.

Crescent Potteries is perhaps most well-known for its souvenir African wares, decorated with sgraffito motifs of Africans and wildlife. From the mid-1950s to the early 1980s, Crescent Potteries produced souvenir wares for almost every game park and wildlife reserve in South Africa, and for various museums and oceanaria.

Crescent Potteries probably produced the most diverse range of utilitarian and decorative wares yet manufactured by a single South African pottery. Crescent Potteries is also recognised as rather unique

in that, from 1957, it almost exclusively employed African staff in its design, production and decoration departments.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Dykor Ceramic Studio

(1952-1959)

Location: Pretoria

Dykor was established in 1952 by Izak Perold. Initially, Dykor made vases and troughs for gift shops and florists. In the mid-1950s Dykor manufactured a wide variety of large, bold, colourful plates, elongated platters, bowls and ashtrays. From 1957 to 1959 it produced decorative plates featuring colourful, stylized images of African women. In 1959 it ceased production of domestic ware, and focused on ceramic tiles and concrete.

Initially, Perold and the Chetty brothers threw wares on the wheel. Later the majority of the wares were slip-cast.

Perold was a self-trained ceramist who learnt his trade as manager of Globe Potteries. Aware of current tendencies in Scandinavian pottery, and of the colourful fusion of Nordic and African traditions in the wares of the Kalahari Studio, Perold decided to branch out in a similar vein. His Scandinavian-inspired wares often feature bright primary-coloured streaks of glaze that melt into a darker base glaze.

Dykor was, according to Perold, the first and only pottery to manufacture earthenware mosaic tiles in South Africa. Perold is significant as he overcame his lack of formal artistic or technical education and through Dykor produced some extremely sophisticated wares.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Flora Ann

(1951-1972)

Location: Robertsham, Johannesburg

Flora-Ann was established in Robertsham by RR Verity. The history of Flora-Ann is somewhat enigmatic. Its designer was G Woolley and it employed 30 African staff. The company was acquired by Silwood Ceramics in 1962, which was subsequently purchased by Liebermann Pottery and Tiles. Archival records suggest that Flora-Ann appears to have outlived the demise of Silwood Ceramics.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Globe Potteries

(ca.1920-1957)

Location: New Muckleneuck, Pretoria, on the site of the current Austin Roberts Bird Sanctuary

Globe Potteries remains something of a mystery and it seems as if it operated just below the radar of public opinion. This lack of information is particularly odd, given its longevity. It appears that Globe's isolation was entrenched by a complete lack of desire to engage with the media and other marketing structures, as well as its lack of participation in exhibitions and commercial fairs.

Izak Perold, who later founded Dykor, was a manager at Globe before 1952. Esias Bosch, one of the most important studio potters in South Africa, worked as a decorator at Globe between September 1952 and January 1953. Well-known artist and lecturer Douglas Portway worked part-time at Globe between 1949 and 1950 as a decorator.

In 1957 Globe was sold and amalgamated with Elwood Pottery.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Grahamstown Pottery & Drostdy Ware

(1922-1965; 1968-1985)

Location: Grahamstown.

In 1909 Frederick William Armstrong, headmaster of the Grahamstown School of Art, the first South African tertiary art school, discovered some deposits of pure white clay in the Grahamstown brickfields. This led him to pioneering the production of art pottery in Grahamstown with his wife, Ruth.

In 1938 Armstrong sold the pottery to Jürgen Hamburger, who operated it under the name of Grahamstown Pottery until 1948, when he in turn sold the pottery to Norman Steele-Gray. Steele-Gray began new lines, including Drostdy Ware, which was often decorated with distinctly South African imagery. Drostdy Ware also manufactured decorative tiles bearing motifs derived from San parietal art (Bushman paintings), native studies, indigenous flora and African wildlife. In 1968 Continental China purchased the firm and restructured it, keeping the original name. The new management cut down on the range of wares and produced cheap, popular coffee mugs and other domestic ware. Continental China closed down their operations in Grahamstown in 1985.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Hamburger's Pottery

(1947-1986)

Location: Grahamstown

Jürgen Hamburger was born in Germany, where he trained as a pottery apprentice and later studied ceramics under Marguerite Wildenhain. He worked in various German ceramic studios before opening his own pottery near Berlin. In 1938 Hamburger and some of his family left Germany due to increasing Semitic persecution and he was eventually

appointed as pottery instructor at the Grahamstown Art School, South Africa, where Professor FW Armstrong sold Grahamstown Pottery to him.

In 1948 Hamburger sold this pottery to Norman Steele-Gray and eventually established Hamburger's Pottery, which primarily manufactured crockery and domestic ware characterised by restrained decoration such as sgraffito and slip-trailed images. Hamburger's oeuvre was rich, varied and complex, and was grounded in the Northern European modernist ceramic design traditions articulated by the Bauhaus. His tea, coffee and dinner services with simple geometric decorative motifs recall the oeuvre of Austrian/English potter Lucie Rie. Stylized organic abstractions of leaves, flowers and fruit are among the most successful of Hamburger's wares.

In 1977 Hamburger sold the studio to Richard and Margreet Koch, who in approximately 1986 renamed the enterprise Koch Pottery.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

KALAHARI Studio

(1948-1973)

Locations: Bramley, Johannesburg; Cape Town

Directors of this studio, Aleksanders Klopcanovs and his wife Elma Vestman, were both born in Eastern Europe and met at the Academy of Fine Arts in Riga, Latvia, where they studied. They fled to Sweden in 1944 during political upheavals in their country. Vestman continued her studies at the Royal Academy in Stockholm and worked with the acclaimed ceramicist Wilhelm Käge. Klopcanovs specialised in figurative painting at the Royal Academy, and followed Vestman to South Africa, where she had been working at Linnware, Olifantsfontein, since 1947. In 1948 they left Linnware and set up the KALAHARI Studio

in Bramley. In 1950 they relocated the studio to Cape Town. The name KALAHARI was inspired by Scandinavian ARABIA ware.

The pottery became known for its quality of design and production methods. Vestman contributed to the technical development of ceramics in South Africa, in terms of her highly-skilled handling of multi-coloured glazes and multiple firings, and the application of refined and sophisticated designs.

In 1973 the couple immigrated to Switzerland, but in 1976 they returned to South Africa where they tried to re-establish KALAHARI ware in Cape Town. Their efforts were not very successful, as there had been a shift in the taste and sensibilities of the South African public. They retired to Franschhoek in 1989 and died there in the nineties.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Rorke's Drift

(1968 to the present)

Location: Rorke's Drift, near Dundee, KZN

(historical battle site between British and Zulu)

The ceramic studio at Rorke's Drift was founded in 1966 by Kirstin Olsson, and further established by Danish artist Peter Tybjerg (who had been much influenced by the ceramics of Pablo Picasso). Tybjerg built the original coal-fired kiln and trained Dinah Molefe, Gordon Mbatha, Joel Sibisi and Ephraim Zigubu, as well as Dinah's daughter Lephinah and relatives Ivy and Nesta. These ceramists formed a central team at Rorke's Drift. When Tybjerg left in 1969, another Danish couple, Anne and Ole Nielsen, took over until 1970. Gordon Mbatha has led the pottery workshop from 1970 to the present.

From 1971 Marietjie van der Merwe served as a technical adviser and mentor to the pottery until her death in 1992. In the mid-1970s Van der Merwe organised a training course for Gordon Mbatha, Ephraim Zigubu and Joel Sibisi with Hyme Rabinowitz in Cape Town. The majority of the thrown wares produced by the male potters were decorated with figurative, animal or zoomorphic motifs. These motifs were derived from a variety of sources, including indigenous mythology, oral history and biblical stories. After 1972, when Mbatha and Sibisi were trained in print making, incised decorative images became the hallmark of Rorke's Drift thrown wares.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Lucia Ware

(1945-late 1950s)

(SA Glazing Company, Boksburg East Potteries, Joy China, Vermont)

Location: Boksburg

The South African Glazing Company initially manufactured ceramic wall tiles and electrical porcelain. Boksburg East Potteries had different subsidiaries, of which the Lucia Ware output was especially prolific. Moulds were shared, so the same item may be found with different company marks: Vermont, BEP Ware, Lucia Ware and Joy China.

BEP and Lucia Wares were slip-cast. Some Lucia items are crudely modelled on Crown Devon, Royal Doulton, Wedgwood and Beswick originals. Both potteries struggled with technical problems and a lack of quality control is evident, such as heavy forms, crude mould seams and glaze flaws, but there are some good quality exceptions.

Lucia Ware became the major mass producer of popular pottery, especially monochromatic vases and ornaments. A limited range of stock glaze colours was used on these articles.

By enabling a large proportion of South Africans to decorate their homes with inexpensive and popular ornaments, this company offered many the possibility of creating an illusion of a certain sophistication, luxury, belongingness, adventure and cultural identity.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

The Old Jar Pottery (TOJ)

(1953-1984)

Location: Benoni

The Old Jar was founded in 1953 by Henk Jacobs, who was born in Amsterdam and studied ceramics at De Plasmolen. TOJ was named after De Olde Kruyk, a Dutch Pottery where Jacobs had been apprenticed.

Initially the pottery manufactured bowls for the florist industry, and later introduced the hand-decorated majolica-style pottery for which it is renowned. Blue painting on a white background was dominant in the early years as cobalt oxide was an easy-to-use, stable colouring agent. At first Jacobs did all the decoration himself, but soon employed decorators. He would paint an eighth of the surface and the decorators were obliged to complete the rest. Early pieces are characterised by delicate chromatic nuances and abundant, fine-detailed brushwork

Herry Duys, also from Holland, was a gifted manager of TOJ and expert at marketing. The studio attracted headlines in the early sixties when it invited various prominent South African artists such as Walter Battiss,

Giuseppe Cattaneo, Anna Vorster, Dirk Meerkotter and Gordon Vorster to participate in a 'clay spree'. These artists decorated vases and clowned around to the great enjoyment of the press and other guests. Jacobs went back to Holland in 1964 and sold the factory to Duys, but it closed in 1984 because of cheap imported ware from Taiwan.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Zaalberg Potterij

(1951-1983)

Location: Parow East, near Cape Town

In the early 1950s Maarten Zaalberg founded a South African branch of the Dutch Zaalberg Potterij. In Holland, he had studied sculpture and modelling and worked in his father's pottery, which had become a leader in the field of Dutch artistic pottery. His immigration to South Africa came about as a result of his friendship with Sophie Louw, who studied pottery in Cape Town and then worked with Bernard Leach in Cornwall. Sophie and her father visited Zaalberg Potterij in Holland on their way to and from Cornwall in 1948/1949. Sophie (later Sophie Bodenstein) worked at the Parow pottery until late 1953.

Zaalberg initially made artistic stoneware pottery, but soon re-orientated his pottery to manufacture popular mass-produced earthenware. From 1968 Zaalberg was able to return to making artistic pottery, when he built a large studio next to his Durbanville home. This was coincidentally the year that his brother in Holland, Meindert Zaalberg, was honoured with a major retrospective exhibition at a museum in Rotterdam.

Zaalberg was a founder member of the South African Ceramics Awards and was instrumental in establishing the Clay Museum at Rust-en-

Vrede, Durbanville. In 1982, when he retired from the pottery, Maarten rededicated himself to creating unique artistic wares.

(Ref: Wendy Gers, *Scorched Earth*, 2016)

Appendix 5.3.4 Review by G. de Kamper, University of Pretoria

 **Gerard de Kamper** <u01272357@up.ac.za> Thu 31 May, 11:43   

to me ▾

Hi Wendy

I used 'Scorched Earth' for setting up and updating information in our South African Ceramics displays in our Permanent 'World of Ceramics' exhibiton. I also used it as a refferance in both my Masters on the Universities Collections (Still at the external exameners) and a booklet on the South African Ceramics collections done by UP

Gerard

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Figure 5 Email from G. de Kamper

Appendix 5.3.5 Review by C. Geldenhuis, Roodepoort Museum

Author: Carolina Geldenhuis,

Date: 14 May 2018

Source: Instant Message from Carolina Geldenhuis

Dear Wendy.

Feels like I said only negative things yesterday. Unfortunately the truth is that our museums are understaffed and underfunded. 😞 All your research so far is a very valuable resource for us in the museum. It provides expert knowledge in a very useful and accessible format. Being a "neglected history" there is not a lot of information available on the topic. As a curator in a cultural history museum with a very diverse collection it is impossible to know everything (we do not have specialist curators and can't afford to pay for specialist guest curators) with the result I am constantly looking for more information. I find your research an excellent reference that helped me to identify and accurately date the South African Studio Ceramics in our collection. The majority of the items in our collection was bought from a collector in 1992 (one of the last purchases the museum made) and very little information was collected (for example all the pieces were dated circa 1950 and I have subsequently, with the help of your research determined more accurate dates). Furthermore the fact that your research also includes the social history and the context within which the items were created, sold and used makes it an even more relevant and useful resource for us in the museum. This information helps to make what easily can be perceived as "old South Africa white biased history" be relevant and inclusive. I will send you pictures of the little exhibition I've put up for International

Museum Day. Porcelain and ceramics (as well as fibre and textile art) are a personal passion of mine.

I mentioned yesterday that in the City of Johannesburg Museums fall under the Department of Community Development along with parks, cemeteries, libraries, sports and recreation centres. Our key performance area is the promotion of social cohesion. The result is that (with very limited resources) we try to change perceptions and address inequalities in the collection. This resulted in moving away from an object based collection to also include intangible heritage. For example at the moment we are working on a project in conjunction with Wits History Workshop recording the oral histories to tell and record the story of the people of Juliwe that was forcefully removed in the 1960s to Dobsonville. A lot of attention was given to Sophiatown (and of course District 6) but there were many more affected by the Groups Area Act.

Anyway, I wish you all the best.

Please visit us whenever you are in the area. Wish we had money to fund a South African Ceramic Museum!

Carolina Geldenhuis.

Author: Carolina Geldenhuis,

Date: 19 May 2018

Source: Instant Message from Carolina Geldenhuis

Thank you very much for the pdf. I will not share the document with anyone but will acknowledge your book as a research refence. I was delighted that it also contained information on Dykor (up to now I could never find info on Dykor) and examples of Transvaal Potteries. Now I know what to look out for. [I am] sure there is some in the collection...

Appendix 5.4 Book reviews for Scorched Earth

Appendix 5.4.1 Book review by J. Hopp

Forthcoming Book Review for African Arts, vol.51-4, winter 2018

Source: Johnathan Hopp, New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred

Date: 08 May 2018

Scorched Earth is an account of potteries operating in southern Africa during the twentieth century. With this book, Wendy Gers offers a survey of 32 small-to-medium sized potteries that engaged in serial

production of various domestic and commercial wares. Each chapter of the book is devoted to one pottery, and includes a brief history, types of materials and techniques employed, and an account of the people involved in its history and operation. Gers is an independent Curator and Art Historian, specialised in ceramics. Former curator at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, a founding coordinator of an international ceramics research laboratory for the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts (ENSA) Limoges, France, and a Research Associate at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Amongst others, Gers has curated the First Central China International Ceramics Biennale at the Henan Museum (12/2016 - 03/2017), and Terra-Nova, Taiwan Ceramics Biennale at the Yingge Museum, Taipei (05/2014 - 11/2014).

The book is first and foremost an invaluable reference text. It succeeds in concentrating hundreds of disparate sources into a clear and highly accessible text. The book is based on field research of great extent within an academic territory with very few wide-scoped and structured sources of information, a project which demands locating and gleaning knowledge from a multitude of publications, interviews and private collections. The reward for this labor is a text which has all the potential to become a central reference point, sparking interest in the field, and enabling and spurring further research. *Scorched Earth* takes on this challenge consciously and, with a sense of responsibility, each pottery's story is told with an analysis as to its significance, but without judgment as to its importance within the canons of modern art.

As Gers states from the onset, apart from a few well known and appreciated potteries (located in Europe, east Asia and north America), there is very little academic or public attention paid to serially produced pottery. The dedication of a book of almost encyclopedic magnitude to such a subject means challenging the conventions of modern art which

brought about this sort of disregard. Scorched Earth offers a "leveled out" picture, in which conventional hierarchies are erased. Its focus is on a marginalized form of artistic creation - production potteries, in a geographical region hardly recognized before as important to the history of this field. The book approaches its subject in a clearly democratic and non-biased approach which extends to the treatment of its entire body of knowledge. The author includes potteries with artistic intentions and a long list of exhibitions, some with more commercial intentions, and some which developed out of social projects. The various ceramic wares made are all mentioned and illustrated equally, from the high-brow tableware and crockery, decorative non-functional wares and hand painted vases, to the cheapest tourist souvenirs, tiles and storage jars. All are included, researched and listed with equal care. This attitude extends further into the stories of the people involved in the potteries, as a section of individual biographies of staff appears within the text devoted to each operation. Decorator, potter, founder or designer, black or white, temporary or permanent, all (research permitting) are mentioned, and elaborated on according to their contribution to the oeuvre of the specific pottery.

Serial production is a form of artistic expression which seeps into daily life and is experienced first-hand with little mediation. Crockery, souvenirs, painted tiles, and various decorated wares are all part of our lives, objects we come into contact with on a regular basis, usually without too much consideration. Their account, and the account of those who have conceived and made them, are a peoples' history, and are a document of local identity. During the late 19th and most of the 20th century, there existed a pocket of time in which it was feasible to maintain small scale, local modes of serial production in southern Africa. These types of operations, surveyed in Scorched Earth, are unique in the way they integrated design, production and consumption, all practiced locally, in a relatively intimate geographical sphere. In

contrast, today economic feasibility only seems to exist when design occurs in one place, production in another and consumption is everywhere, on a global scale. Within this latter mode of operation, the personal stories and identities of the individuals involved becomes irrelevant, and the space for creativity and self (and local) expression is minuscule. Between the global dissemination of industrial modes of production during the 19th century, and the time of their concentration at specific global centers, in the late 20th, there is a brief historical window to observe the effect of local serial production. Within this mode, the story of the individuals involved, their interactions with their customers and suppliers, their aspirations and identities are central and are clearly evident in the products of their labor.

Scorched Earth is geared towards ceramics and art researchers, historians, collectors, artists, designers and makers, but also to any individual interested in an accessible, well researched peoples' history of the 20th century in southern Africa. Its wealth of knowledge invites the readers to make their own cross-sections around subjects with little scholarship, such as souvenir making, or the use of sgraffito and hand painting in production pottery.

Appendix 5.4.2 Book review by E. Beck

Author: Ester Beck, Certified Clinical Psychologist, ceramic artist and manager of the Israeli National Ceramics Library and Archives at the BCCC.

Translation from the Hebrew - *Library News* by Ester Beck, 01/2017.

Source: Ester Beck

The South African, France-based curator Wendy Gers published a book about the history of the ceramic industry in her native country, a first in this field. For 10 years she researched the subject in depth with the agenda of bringing back the awareness of this industry and craft, and the resulting objects, within the esthetic and artistic sphere in South Africa. The book gives an in-depth, systematic, clear, historic overview of about 30 factories (Gers says she has material for a second book), and places this ceramic production within its political, social, and cultural context.

Gers tries to show and analyse the extent to which cross-influences existed between the white "colonialist" creators of British and Dutch extraction and the indigenous black creators, how their esthetics, if at all, conversed and got expressed. It is noticeable, when reading through the book, that the white hegemony with its visual tradition of shapes they brought with them dominated the field, even when black potters worked within the workshops. The local touch is very minor, and when existent, it gets expressed mainly in surface decorations like scenes typical of African life, a bit like on souvenirs. Only in very few cases, like for instance in the Thaba Bosigo workshop in Lesotho, initiated and run

for quite a few years by British ceramic artist Peter Hayes (who demonstrated in Israel over 20 years ago), and in Rorke's Drift in Kwa-Zulu Natal there is clear formal and decorative expression coming from Blacks themselves with their visual traditions. These two workshops were located each within a "homeland", independent Black areas, and Rorke's Drift was initiated and run by a social Church initiative for the Black community. It is very enlightening and interesting to read the interviews relating to that undertaking.

As an Israeli reader viewing the visual content of the book, I couldn't not notice the esthetic similarity with items produced in Israel at the same time: in our local industry we too were nourished by the immigrant German and continental European esthetic the European- trained ceramists brought with them, and by the clear cultural "European hegemony". And here too the influence of the local was expressed by those immigrants in their conception of orientalist decorative motives, often made to be given to foreigners. It is striking that most of the ceramic production Gers shows in her book could have been made anywhere at the time, a sort of global style without a clear local esthetic. And as in South Africa with the Black potters, also in Israel the pottery of the local Arab population had an independent parallel existence to the main "modern" ceramic industry.

Appendix 5.5 TCB Handbook photo essay

影像隨寫 Photo Essay

Photo Essay

Curator / Wendy Gers

This photographic essay documents some fleeting interactions with individuals, institutions and public spaces that have deepened my understanding of Taiwanese cultural heritage. They bear witness to some brief moments when I become acquainted with a specific cultural context that was unfamiliar to me. The sum total of the informal, serendipitous and formal dialogues, negotiations and experiences have involved personal losses, gains and shifts.

The photos that I have chosen to include are not all beautiful or technically 'good' or 'strong' images. I deliberately chose photos that recount an individual journey of learning, understanding and introspection. The photos aim to provoke questions about the limits of the ability to learn new 'cultural' languages, working methods and attitudes. The combinations of different groups of photos question the boundaries of personal and professional life. They also infer a culture of voyeuristic performativity that is becoming globally normalized via social media. Yet, this essay is far more than a series of tourist mug-shots. It aims to present a series of landmarks, and is a kind of palimpsestic travelogue, in which I have tried to include a sense of myself as 'other'. I have thus chosen to include images from five 'moments' in my visit to Taiwan in March 2014. They speak about work, laughter, communication and highlight moments of flux, doubt, dialogue, delight and co-learning.

The groups of images are:

1. The Official 'Crate Opening' event at the warehouse of Safety Packing and Transport Co., Keelung.
2. A lecture that I gave at National Taiwan University of Arts, Taipei.
3. A meeting with Yingge Staff and collaborators to discuss work in progress for the Taiwanese contribution to the 'Shattered, recycled & upcycled' section of the TCB.
4. One of my many studio visits to Taiwanese artists included a serendipitous chance to be taught by Ah Leon how to hold a teapot gracefully!
5. Images from various different night-markets that attest to the rich gastronomic heritage of Taiwan.

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Source Gers, 2014

Figure 6 Photo Essay, TCB Handbook, 2014

Appendix 5.6 Technical aspects of the ‘making of’ *Post-colonialism?*

Yael Novak and Shlomit Bauman, both members of the Management Committee of the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center, and I constituted the selection committee for *Post-colonialism?* Yet, the Chairperson of the selection committee was insistent that I had ‘the final decision’. I was also encouraged to invite other artists, who I felt may complement the project (Bauman, 2015).

After discussions among the selection committee, the following criteria were devised and implemented (Bauman, 2015; Gers, 2016c; Novak, 2016):

- creativity – favouring artists who approach the theme from diverse angles of investigation
- pertinence to the project theme
- lucidity - favouring artists who had a clear vision and understanding of what they intend to do during the residency
- risk taking - favouring artists who would utilize the time and experience to try a new direction in their work
- geographic / national diversity and representativity - favouring artists from a variety of countries and cultures around the globe
- age diversity - we aimed to ensure a variety of age profiles

- interdisciplinary work and practices - favouring artists whose work is characterised by a variety of different practices, both in terms of form; and in terms of approach (objects vs installations - collaborative vs individual practices).

In addition it was necessary to 'match' international artists with the facilities and environments offered by host institutions. These included:

- 1 place for a glass artist, at the Collaborative Art Center, Givat Haviva
- 2 places in design academies at Shenkar College of Engineering and Design and HIT, both located in Tel Aviv
- 3 places in contemporary art academies at Oranim Academic College, Kiryat Tiv'on; Tel Hai Academic College, Qiryat Shemona; and Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem
- 1 place within the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center's pottery school
- 2 places at a contemporary art centers (without ceramics facilities), Hacubia – a place for art, Jerusalem and Umm el-Fahem Art Gallery, Umm el-Fahem

The latter art gallery was situated in an occupied Arab city, and required a mature artist, due to the level of political instability and local unrest. Forms of local unrest include (but are not limited to) weekly protest fires, lit every Friday evening, to mark the onset of the Jewish shabbat. Film footage of these weekly fires was recorded in the documentary film on the occasion of my visit to Sharbani Das Gupta at the Umm el-Fahem Art Gallery (Gur, 2017).

A pair of selected artists, Kukuli Velarde (Peru / USA) and her partner Doug Herren (USA), had to withdraw for family reasons, and she was replaced by Rock Wang (Taiwan). Wang was invited in order to ensure representation from East Asia, due to his interest in Taiwan's complex colonial histories, and because I believed his work would resonate with the focus of the exhibition.

The organising committee developed a program whereby each participating international artist delivered a workshop at their host institution. All artists participated in a research tour and public seminar program (see **Appendix 5.9 Conference & lecture presentations of *Post-Colonialism?***).

Appendix 5.7 Exhibition reviews

Appendix 5.7.1 Review by A. Stellaccio

POST-COLONIALISM?

A Reflection by Anthony E. Stellaccio

The term “post-colonialism” can confuse with its depth and complexity just as easily as it can confound with the nearly fraudulent vagueness of its definition. Characteristic of much post-modern intellectual discourse, one can argue that post-colonialism finds its meaning somewhere between elitism and chicanery, on a middle ground favoring subjectivity over specificity and polyvocality over a singular, authoritarian narrative. But let us attempt to accelerate, to speed past the idea of post-colonialism as an abstract theoretical inquiry altogether and brace for a collision with how we see it, or fail to see it, lived by people around the world.

In passage from the conceptual to the concrete, one will traverse territory that is essential for understanding the impetus behind a recent symposium and exhibition entitled “Post-Colonialism?” Organized by the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center in Tel Aviv, Israel, Post-Colonialism? was an assemblage of artists from Taiwan, Argentina, the US, the UK, India, Serbia, Botswana, Israel, and Palestine—each parcel of land having its own history as a home to conflict, claims, colonizers, and colonized. However, the uniqueness of the nations or individuals brought together in Tel Aviv did not betray the universal features of the post-colonial condition, and this was a cornerstone of the project. Sadly, the similarities of the collected stories highlight the ubiquity of the global trade in oppression, domination, elimination, and injustice, and, on a broader level, call human nature itself into question.

The seven Israeli artists and sole Palestinian participating in the Post-Colonialism? project worked from their home studios, while important art schools and ateliers around Israel, working collaboratively for the first time, hosted the foreign artists for a three-

week work period. Executed by Shlomit Bauman, Yael Novak, and the staff of Benyamini, curated by Wendy Gers, and funded by a number of sponsors, the compound residency, symposium, exhibition, and conference was a major logistical undertaking for a local art center with grass-roots credibility, international reach, a liberal inclination, and progressive vision.

“Benyamini central command,” together with its satellite artists, forged the substance of Post-Colonialism? by conjoining structured intellectual discourse, time on the ground in Israel, and time in the studio: a mixing of the cerebral, emotional, and physical. Anything less was impossible for a fearless curatorial team and a carefully vetted selection of socially conscious artists working in one of the most contested and contentious parts of the world. However, variable factors permitting each artist a different level of engagement with the current conditions in Israel led to equally varied results. Limits on time and travel, for example, were remedied by executing ideas conceived at home with on-site adjustments of a mostly technical nature. Canada’s Corywn Lund fell into this category, ambitiously bringing a cumbersome plaster mold to Israel from his adoptive home at the Rhode Island School of Design in the US. With this, Lund continued a body of politically focused work using oratory podium “microphone bouquets” as a central motif. Although explicitly political in nature, Lund’s microphones, over-fired to be made flaccid in a way both complimentary and contradictory to their relevance, were not innately specific to or directly derived from the situation in Israel. I found myself on the other end of this spectrum.

Having had the opportunity to spend an entire month traveling through Israel and the West Bank before the start of the sym-





1 Corwyn Lund's *Decayed Microphone Bouquets for Israel*, 6 ft. 8 in. (2 m) in length, mixed media. 2 Modisa Motsomi's *Terra Incognita, Terra Nullius, Terra Pericolosa*, 5 ft. 7 in. (1.7 m) in height, clay, wood, vinyl, pencil drawing. 3 Anthony E. Stellaccio's *Lean*, 5 ft. 6 in. (1.2 m) in length, clay, glaze, cement, wood, sand, fragments of Bethlehem separation wall. 4 Katya Izabel Filmus' *First Generation—Last Generation*, 4 ft. (1.2 m) in length, glass, latex embroidery thread, olive tree root, sandblasted inscription, video (edited by Yoav Bezaleli). 5 Oren and Noam Tabenkin Arbel's *First Reduction*, 6 ft. 3 in. (1.9 m) in length, clay, wheel work, video.



ALL PHOTOS: SHAY BELEFRANK



posium, which I did together with Argentina's Pablo Ponce, my experience of Post-Colonialism? was charged with a local brand of intensity. To witness the conditions enforced and endured in some of Israel's most complex and contentious territories is to wreak havoc on the psyche, to undo preconceived notions of place, and to demand reflection and response under unusual strain. Perhaps most of this mental undoing was done by Hebron, which is physically segregated by armed security forces, barricades, barbed wire, checkpoints, international observers, and the lifeless strips of uninhabited city lying between Palestinian quarters and an

expanding Jewish settlement. Seeing such tragic losses of reason and compassion for the first time cannot but cause preconceived viewpoints and premeditated artistic visions to crumble.

Making art about Israel was not, however, the purpose of the project. Rather, it was precisely a range of experiences that the Benyamini organizational team wanted to be shared. It seems hard to fathom, after all, a project of this nature taking place, let alone being funded, within Israel's current and increasingly restrictive, far-right political environment. Although Post-colonialism? did come to fruition, in a way miraculous for any place other than



I am not uncomfortable with such grandiose assertions. Post-colonialism? was, without question, a landmark event, even if its impact was localized and the changes it may help spur are not yet visible. In no case shall I feel hopeless or misguided in my assessment. Rather, I walked away from the Benyamini Center with a compelling sense of solidarity, and a treatise to reject neutrality as a form of indifference and to both take and implore greater action on behalf of those in need. I am moved in this direction not only by life-changing and eye-opening experiences in Israel, but by the current, uncertain, and alarming course of politics in my own country, the US, and by the increasing appearance of far-right governments around the world.

I can no longer remain passive. No matter the challenge nor the scale of our response, our hope for a better world must endure and, more importantly, it must be put into action by individuals and communities of citizens with shared values and a commitment to moral justice. Make no mistake, I am no doomsayer or, in more contemporary parlance, a catastrophist. Problems such as ours have persisted through time, but this is, in part, because so many of us acquiesced to the seemingly unalterable arc of history. Resist.

Participating artists include Oren Arbel and Noam Tabenkin Arbel (Israel), Eva Avidar (Israel), Katya Izabel Filmus (England), Sharbani Das Gupta (US), Magdalena Hefetz (Israel), Johnathan Hopp (Israel), Neha Kudchadkar (India), Corwyn Lund (Canada), Hagar Mittelpunkt (Israel), Manal Morcos (Palestinian), Modisa Motsomi (Botswana), Danijela Pivašević-Tenner (Germany), Pablo Ponce (Holland), Anthony Stellaccio (US), Talia Tokatly (Israel), Rock Wang (Taiwan), Ayelet Zohar (Israel), and Ronit Zor (Israel).

More information on the Post-Colonialism? project can be found online at www.benyaminiceramics.org/postcolonialism.

the author *Anthony E. Stellaccio is a freelance artist and scholar trained in fine art and folklore. His participation in the Post-Colonialism? project was funded by the Association of Israel's Decorative Arts and the Lighton International Artists Exchange Program.*



6 Sharbani Das Gupta's *Mind Maps*, 4 ft. (1.2 m) in length, plaster, clay, glass. **7** Eva Avidar's *My Choice Clay*, 5 ft. 6 in. (1.7 m) in height, handbuilt ceramic. **8** Magdalena Hefetz' *I broke her*, video, 2014. **9** Johnathan Hopp's *Inconclusive Conversations: 1. Garo and Sonia Sandrauni 2. Monologues*, 6 ft. 6 in. (2 m) in length, mixed media. **10** Rock Wang's *U Need Code*, 4 ft. 6 in. (1.4 m) in height, industrial ceramic tiles, ceramic decals.



the Holy Land, it is even harder to imagine the project being realized with the explicit purpose of talking exclusively about Israel. Instead, the organizers created a safe environment for dialog by embedding Israel's occupation of Palestine within a set of contemporary experiences and perspectives from around the world. This was a discussion and not a referendum on any one country, with the creative team behind *Post-colonialism?* expertly and, if I am not mistaken, also subversively, framing a controversial topic in a broader and thus more palatable fashion, for lack of a better word.

Thanks in part, perhaps, to this aspect of its design, *Post-Colonialism?* proved to be an unprecedented achievement for Benyamini, with extensive national and international coverage as well as substantially increased gallery traffic. Yet I do not mean to infer that the triumph of the endeavor is to be measured by calculable numbers or aggrandizing press. Rather, it is the more intangible impact suggested by those statistics that defines success in this case. Indeed, the greatest commendation and contribution of the undertaking is that it was a socio-political art project that provoked thought and drew attention to a pertinent issue in a very real way despite very real risks. And if I may take this chance to chastise the field, there are too few of these efforts in the ceramic arts, even where the threat of suppression and retaliation are completely absent. There is plenty of socially and politically oriented ceramic art to be sure, but a baseline of apathy and self-indulgence also exists. In its place, more concerted efforts to create communities of dialog and committed protagonists in the face of pressing local and global problems would be most welcome.

As for the artworks themselves, these varied more in character and content than in quality. The latter is something I am unfit

to discuss in greater depth because I participated in the project. (Images are provided here so readers can fill in the gaps in my writing with their own judgments). What can be said is that the show ranged from large-scale, interactive installations to a handful of shelf-bound, intimate objects. Collectively, the artworks incorporated numerous media including performance, were created collaboratively as well as individually, and offered numerous interpretations of post-colonialism.

Taiwanese artist, designer, and musician, Rock Wang, made his unique contribution to the exhibition with a tile-mosaic made of dozens of individual QR codes. Each coded tile, in addition to helping create one master QR code, links to images and information relevant to Taiwan's colonial history. The work, entitled *U Need Code*, underscores the importance of technology in political and social movements but also reminds us of the potential for its misuse, control, and impotency.

While Wang's work set one aesthetic and technological boundary for the show, it also became a counterpoint for other works, those more conventional and those more classical, like Eva Avidar's figurative sculpture. More classical yes, but perhaps no artist illustrated the variety of interpretations of post-colonialism better than Avidar. Graphically depicting her struggle with cancer and the internal colonization of the body, *My Choice* is both personal and poignant, but not intentional as a metaphor for the occupation of land. Nonetheless, works like Avidar's highlight art's ability to seamlessly bridge the personal and political, the individual and the universal, and the artist and the viewer through an economy of interpretation and self-identification. What is this if not the timeless power of art? In turn, what is this project if not an attempt to focus that power for the betterment of humankind?

Stellaccio, A. 2017. *Post-colonialism?* A reflection by Anthony Stellaccio. *Ceramics Monthly*. Dec. pp.48-51.

Appendix 5.7.3 Review by P. Rotem

Author: Peleg Rotem

Title: Ten important art events in 2017

Date: 28 December 2017

Source: *Portfolio Magazine*, <https://www.prftl.co.il/archives/99326>

פורטפוליו | אירועים | אמנות | אופנה | איור

השנה | הגשות | חדשות | סיורים | אודות

תחילת מלחמת רוחם/יום חמישי, 28 בדצמבר 2017 | אמנות

סיכום 2017: פורטפוליו מסכם שנה בעולם האמנות הישראלי

מגוונים ושינויים פרסונליים במוזיאונים הגדולים, תערוכות הענק של לואיז בורד'אה ושל אי ווייווי, התערוכה "אדווחים" במוזיאון פתח תקוה ו"אנונימי-X" במוזיאון חיפה, בית אנה פרנק בגלריה דביר, המיצג פרוטקטיב אדג' בגלריה שלוש, ודיאגו ארט ישראלי בטיימס סקוור והצצה למבט מתערוכות 2018 < פורטפוליו מסכם שנה בעולם האמנות הישראלי

הנקודים בפורטפוליו

- 1 לפרק את אי ווייווי | אמנות
- 2 הרשימה המשוממת // 26 באפריל 2018 | איור אמנות עיצוב
- 3 סמייסטר & ולש במוזיאון והיצוב חולין | חדשות עיצוב
- 4 5 דברים לראות בביתן הפרויקטים של צבע טרי | אמנות
- 5 החיים ע"פ זויה צ'רסקי // ברינות בבית הספר | אמנות

ינואר < פוסט קולוניאליזם בבית בנימיני

בחודש ינואר הוצגה בבית בנימיני התערוכה הבינלאומית **פוסט קולוניאליזם?** שאצרה ונדי גרס מדרום אפריקה, והעלתה באמצעים אמנותיים שאלות אקטואליות על נושא משותף בדרך כלל. בחלק מהתערוכה האמנית אילת זור עטפה את כל המבנה של בית בנימיני ברשת הסוואה, שגרמה למקום לבלוט עוד יותר במיבטו שברורו של אביב.

Figure 7 Screenshot of *Portfolio Magazine* review

**Summary: 2017: Concluding Portfolio Year in the Israeli Art World,
*Portfolio Magazine***

Author: Peleg Rotem

Date: 28 Dec 2017

Summary 2017: Concluding the Portfolio Year in the Israeli Art World

Personal exhibitions and changes in the large museums, the huge exhibitions of Louise Bourgeois and the Ai Wei Wei, the exhibition "Citizens" in the Petach Tikva Museum and the "Anonymous X" at the Haifa Museum, the Anne Frank House at the Dvir Gallery, the Creative Edge Show at Chelouche Gallery, Portfolio summarizes some of the most important exhibitions in 2018 in the Israeli art world.

In January, the international exhibition of *Post-Colonialism?* was presented at the Benyamini Gallery. Curated by Wendy Gers from South Africa, and raised artistic questions on current issues that are usually silenced. As part of the exhibition, Ayelet Zohar covered the entire structure of the Benyamini Centre with a camouflage net that made the place stand out even more in its surroundings in southern Tel Aviv.

Translation from the Hebrew original by Google translator.

Appendix 5.8 Peer reviews

Appendix 5.8.1 Review by S.Bauman

Author: Shlomit Bauman, Curator of BCCC Gallery

Title: Summary *Post-Colonialism?*

Source: (Bauman, 2017)

The complex *Post-Colonialism?* project is motivated primarily by the desire to evoke a discussion within the ceramic field regarding broad cultural questions related to our life in Israel here and now. The importance of discussing the ceramic field using sociological and cultural research terminology is important and essential for the continuity, as well as the creation of an independent discourse that enables its multi-layered interpretation. Now, upon the fifth anniversary of the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center located in Tel Aviv, Israel, we believe it is most appropriate to venture into such a discussion.

Beginning in the 16th century, colonialism has been instrumental in various forms of imperialist control over vast territories worldwide, whose effects are painfully felt to this very day. This control extended to practically all areas of life: land and natural resources, labor, culture, education, and religion. Empires have consolidated their control using both covert and overt aggression until their structural and moral collapse. Closer to home, the colonialist character of the Zionist movement is subject to internal debate. Some view Zionism as embodying the return of Jews from the diaspora to a sparsely inhabited Land of Zion as a national solution particularly after the Holocaust.

Others view Zionism as a colonialist movement that has occupied a territory and expelled its indigenous Palestinian population.

While we are preoccupied with this debate, new mechanisms of control have been created that are once again transforming the socioeconomic power relations across the globe. In recent decades a combination of a global capitalist economy and an instrumental democracy has generated profound processes leading to the demise of localism and authenticity and to the erasure of entire traditions and cultures, and so transforming the relations between humans and their natural habitat. These new mechanisms of control are some of the issues of the post colonialism discourse that examine the effects of such processes. Central for our purposes are the effects on local material culture, particularly in Israel. These in turn suggest new cultural trends in the craft and ceramic field that deserve to be studied. For example, the closure of factories designing and producing ceramics accelerates the erasure of local cultural identity. Reflecting the global trend, this process challenges the very concept of “localism”, which becomes increasingly elusive as globalism takes root.

The realization that these processes are occurring simultaneously all over the world has led to the acknowledgment that diverse perspectives are essential as a grounding for this project. In other words, the obvious conclusion is that the attempt to discuss the changes in material culture affected by post colonialist processes must be informed by global developments. Given this reasoning and with reference to the ceramic field in particular, the Benyamini Center Gallery initiated an international event designed to discuss the individual, artistic and design implications of global events on ceramic art and design. The project has evoked a dialogue between foreign and local ceramic artists and designers focused on a relevant issue with worldwide manifestations that are examined from diverse perspectives.

We found the opportunity to examine these perspectives particularly edifying at this time and place, where global trends – global economy vs. local production, issues of sustainability and the erasure of local idioms – coalesce with local geopolitical issues (settler-colonialism, occupation, migrant work, refugees).

The choice of Wendy Gers (France, South Africa) as the project's curator was motivated by the identification of an essential element in her curatorial approach, which interprets and examines the ceramic field with an understanding of economical, gendered and cultural power relations. The international ceramics exhibitions she has curated clearly suggest her broad-based and critical perspective on local and global questions that preoccupy us as individuals and as a society. Post colonialism has been selected as an all-embracing theme for examining these multicultural questions.

The *Post-colonialism?* project culminated in an exhibition at the Benyamini Center Gallery at the end of 2016, beginning 2017. The project was undertaken in an exceptional collaboration between the Benyamini Center and eight Israeli academies, colleges and art schools that have ceramics facilities. At the same time, these institutes hosted nine international artists on residency programs, during which they gave lectures and master workshops to students and members of the public. Ten local artists participated in the project together with the international artists.

Beyond the large-scale and complex production – which included residency programs, lectures, symposiums, research and an exhibition – constructive discussion was generated among thousands of participants, including artists, students and members of the public.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the project facilitated a broad-based and relevant discussion on the nature and future of the ceramic field, its context as part of material culture and its humanistic significance.

Appendix 5.8.2 Informal review by R. Ewing-James

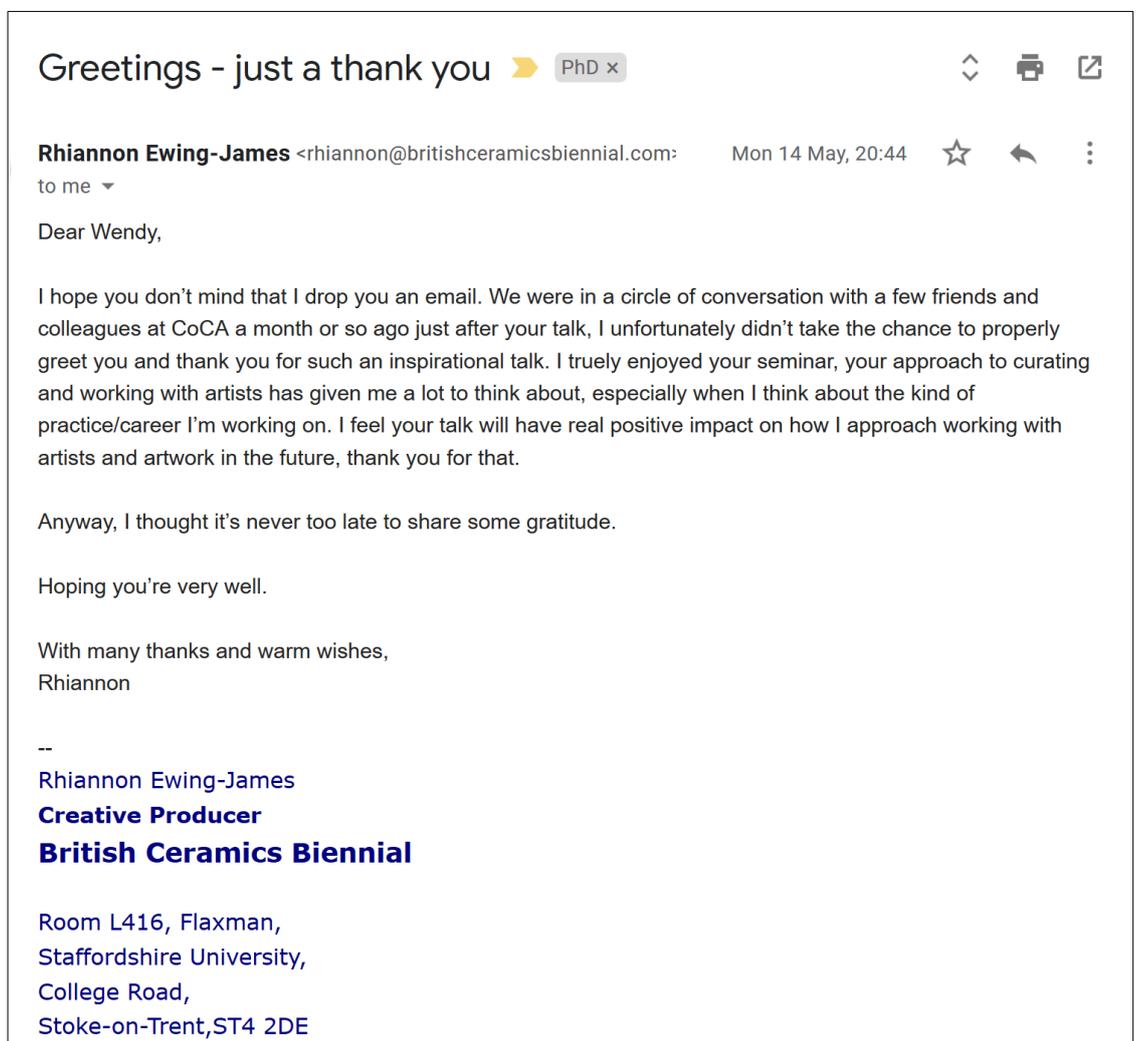


Figure 8 Email from R. Ewing-James

Appendix 5.9 Conference & Lecture presentations of *Post- Colonialism?*

Appendix 5.9.1 *Post-colonialism?* seminars and masterclasses in Israel

Seminars

- Opening Seminar, 05 Nov 2016, BCCC with presentations by Eva Avidar, Johnathan Hopp, Ronit Zor, Magdalena Hefetz, Katya Izabel Filmus, Talia Tokatly, Pablo Ponce and Danijela Pivašević Tenner (Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center, 2016a).
- Status Report, 25 Nov 2016, BCCC with presentations by Ayelet Zohar, Sharbani Das Gupta, Rock Wang, Corwyn Lund, Manal Morcos, Hagar Mitelpunkt, Modisa Tim Motsomi, Anthony Stellaccio and myself (Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center, 2016b).
- Closing Seminar, 21 Jan 2017, BCCC, presented by Shlomit Bauman (Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center, 2017b).

Masterclasses

- Katya Izabel Filmus, Glass Masterclass, Givat Haviva Art Center, 7 & 27 Nov 2016
- Anthony Stellaccio and Neha Kudchadkar, Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, 14 Nov 2016
- Rock Wang, HIT, Holon, 15 Nov 2016
- Neha Kudchadkar, Hacubia, Jerusalem, 17 Nov 2016
- Modisa Motsomi, International School, Oranim College, 17 Nov 2016
- Hagar Mitelpunkt, BCCC, 17 Nov 2016
- Corwyn Lund, Elite Center, Shanakar College, 17 Nov 2016

Note: Admission was free to all seminars and masterclasses.

Table 14 *Post-colonialism?* seminars & masterclass in Israel

Appendix 5.9.2 International Lectures on *Post-colonialism?*

Shlomit Bauman (Curator BCCC)

- *Clay Matters* Conference, PXL-MAD, Hasselt, Belgium, 16-18 November 2017
- The Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Canada, 14 September 2017 (Bauman, 2018).

Sharbani Das Gupta (participating artist)

- Artist presentation, New Mexico State University, 2017
- Artist presentation, SUNY Fredonia, 2017 (Das Gupta, 2018)

Katya Izabel Filmus (participating artist)

- Artist presentation, Corning Museum, NY, USA, July 2017 (Filmus, 2018).

Wendy Gers

- Keynote speaker, *Restating Clay* Conference, York Art Gallery, March 2018 (York Art Gallery, 2018)
- Guest lecture, Ecole d'art de Beauvais, France, 10 July 2017

Marcelle Klein (BCCC Director)

- Conference presentation, *Restating Clay* Conference, York Art Gallery, March 2018 (York Art Gallery, 2018)
- Conference presentation, *In Your Eyes* Conference, Kustuchting Sachsen Anhalt in Halle, Germany, 12 December 2017 (Klein, 2018)

<p>Neha Kudchadkar (participating artist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist presentation, <i>Clay In Conversation</i>, Mumbai, February 2017 • Alumni guest artist lecture, Royal College of Art, London, March 2018 • Artist presentation, The Piramal Museum, Mumbai, December 2017 • Artist presentations, Mumbai Art Room, Mumbai, March - May 2018.⁵³
<p>Pablo Ponce (participating artist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture about <i>Post-colonialism?</i> at the Dutch Ceramics Triennial, CODA Museum, Apeldoorn, March 2018 (Ponce, 2018a)
<p>Anthony Stellaccio (participating artist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist presentation, Red Dirt Studio, Washington DC, 2017 • Artist presentation, The Baltimore Community College, USA, 2017 (Stellaccio, 2018b)
<p>Talia Tokatly (participating artist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist presentation, Department of Ceramics and Glass Design, Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem, 11 December 2017 • Artist presentation, The Art Gallery, Givat Hayim Ichud Emek Hefer, December 2017 (Tokatly, 2018a)

Table 15 International lectures on *Post-colonialism?*

⁵³ During her exhibition, *Pinch your thumb and three fingers*, Mumbai Art Room (March - May 2018), Kudchadkar led a number of private tours for curators and gallerists and informally shared the *Post-colonialism?* project with guests (Kudchadkar, 2018b).

Appendix 5.10 Exhibitions of works from or inspired by *Post-colonialism?*

Sharbani Das Gupta (participating artist)

Das Gupta has referred to border walls and attendant distortions of perception in the maze that she is constructed at *Indian Ceramics Triennale*, Jaipur, September 2018 (Das Gupta, 2018).

Johnathan Hopp (participating artist)

Hopp has continued to develop a series of works based on the same concept of the works developed for *Post-colonialism?*. Works from this series have been exhibited at:

- *Hofen Homer* (trans. *A Handful of Clay*), Beit Hankin Gallery, 28 March - 28 May 2017
- 17th *Musrara Mix Festival* in Jerusalem, Musrara School's Gallery, 6 June - 5 July 2017
- Jerusalem Design Week, Hansen House, 7 - 14 June 2018 (Hopp, 2018).

Neha Kudchadkar (participating artist)

Kudchadkar has continued to develop installations based on the same concept of her work shown in *Post-colonialism?*, including:

- *Pinch your thumb and three fingers*, Mumbai Art Room (March - May 2018) (Kudchadkar, 2018c)
- *Somethingpolis I*, Indian Ceramics Triennale (September – November 2018) (personal observation) (Kudchadkar, 2018b)
- *Somethingpolis II* and *Bits (Somethingpolis III)*, Project 88, Mumbai (September – October 2018) (personal observation) (Kudchadkar, 2018a).

Pablo Ponce (participating artist)

Ponce has continued to develop a series of works inspired by his works developed for *Post-colonialism?*. Works from this series have been exhibited at:

- El Vendrel Ceramics Biennale, Spain, 29th Sept – 29 Oct 2017. His work *Checking Point Chechenia* is now part of the Museo Municipal El Vendrell, Spain.
- Dutch Ceramics Triennial, CODA Museum, Apeldoorn, 11 March - 10 June 2018. Ponce's work for the Triennale, *Checking Point II*, was awarded the juror's prize (Ponce, 2018a, 2018b). Two reviews of his recent works are presented below in **Appendix 5.10.1 Review of P. Ponce's work (1)** and **Appendix 5.10.2 Review of P. Ponce's work (2)**.

Talia Tokatly (participating artist)

Tokatly has expanded her 'Fox Laughs' installation for *Post-colonialism?* and exhibited it at a two-person exhibition (with Tirzah Froind), entitled *I see you*, at the Givat Haim Ichud Art Gallery (10 Feb. 2018-24 March 2018) (Tokatly, 2018b)

Table 16 Exhibitions of works from or inspired by *Post-Colonialism?*

Appendix 5.10.1 Review of P. Ponce's work (1)

Source: Augustijn, P. (2018) 'Combinatie von teatrale technieken en klei: Pablo Ponce: Ik wil door mijn werk comuncieren', *KLEI Keramiek Magazine*, March-April, pp. 4-7.

Courtesy: Pablo Ponce.

Note: This article reviews Ponce's *Post-colonialism?* work, *Wondering Walls*, produced for *Post-colonialism?* and some subsequent works inspired by the project.



Pablo Ponce e.a., links: Scene uit muziek/theaterproductie *13.0.0.0.0 Het einde der tijden*, 2012 | rechts: Installatie *Las Capsulas de la Amnesia / De capsules van de vergetelheid*, 2012; keramiek; diverse afmetingen. Afstudeerproject Gerrit Rietveld Academie Amsterdam. Foto Piet Augustijn

Combinatie van theatrale technieken en klei

Pablo Ponce: "Ik wil door"



Pablo Ponce, *Checking Point II*, 2017; steengoed, kraterglazuur, zeep uit Palestina; totaal 141 x 26 x 29 cm | menselijke figuur h. 49 x 9 cm

"Ik zie mezelf als een Homo Universalis; net als de renaissancekunstenaar werk ik met verschillende kunst disciplines om grenzen te verleggen. In mijn werk worden de werelden van theater en beeldende kunst samengevoegd. Ik maak installaties van keramiek in combinatie met videoprojecties." Het werk van de in Argentinië geboren en in Amsterdam wonende autonoom beeldend kunstenaar Pablo Ponce gaat over sociaal-politieke kwesties en de relatie tussen tijd en ruimte. Het intrigeert hem al jaren dat sociale en politieke conflicten in diverse landen en continenten meestal een herhaling van de geschiedenis zijn en daardoor actuele thema's blijven. "Een voorbeeld: ik zie een overeenkomst tussen de afbeelding op het schilderij *De derde mei 1808 in Madrid* (1814) uit het Prado in Madrid van de Spaanse schilder Francisco Goya (1746-1828) en de huidige gebeurtenissen in Syrië. Mijn werk laat de relatie zien tussen mijn ruime ervaring als professioneel theatervormgever en onafhankelijk beeldend kunstenaar. Door theatrale technieken als licht en geluid te combineren met klei creëer ik multidimensionale ervaringswerelden."



Pablo Ponce, links: *El arado*, binnenkant van een capsule uit de installatie *Las Capsulas de la Amnesia / De capsules van de vergetelheid*, 2012. Foto Piet Augustijn | rechts: binnenkant capsule uit de installatie *Las Capsulas de la Amnesia / De capsules van de vergetelheid*, 2012

mijn werk communiceren"

DOOR PIET AUGUSTIJN

Pablo Ponce (La Plata, Buenos Aires Province, AR, 1974) volgde de opleiding Docent Decorontwerp aan de Kunstacademie La Plata in Buenos Aires (1992-1998) en enkele jaren later een opleiding Kostuum en Kenschetsing aan het Theater Colón, eveneens in Buenos Aires (2001). In de tussentijd jaren ontwierp hij decors en kostuums voor toneelstukken in Argentinië en Mexico en exposeerde hij schilderijen en tekeningen. Hij verhuisde van Argentinië naar Mexico en kwam in 2001 naar Nederland waar hij zich tot 2008 bezighield met schilderen en tekenen. In 2009 schreef hij zich in op de Keramiekafdeling van de Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. "Ik was op dat moment heel erg bezig met keramiek en wilde grote beelden maken. Omdat ik de techniek niet goed beheerste, ging ik naar de open dag van de Rietveld en ik was meteen enthousiast. De opleiding bleek meer conceptueel te zijn dan mijn opleiding in Argentinië en ik kreeg meer kennis van de materialen. In Argentinië heb ik heel goed leren tekenen en ik heb alle manieren geleerd om een beeld goed op te bouwen. Dus nu is het meer in balans. Ik kan nu bijvoorbeeld schilderen op keramiek en op porselein." In de jaren daarna ontwikkelde Ponce een beeldtaal die uit verschillende kunst disciplines bestaat: videoperformances met beeldende kunst. Hij werd daarbij geïnspireerd door kunststromingen als Arte Povera en Dada. "Ik maak installaties met keramiek, maar ik gebruik de keramiek op een andere manier dan mensen gewend zijn. Niet als gebruiksvoorwerp of als kunstobject. Ik verwerk de keramiek in een installatie, waarna het moeilijk te herkennen is als keramiek. Dat vind ik interessanter. Al het materiaal dat ik gebruik, heeft een specifieke functie en een symbolische betekenis. Ik ga uit van de klei en voeg op intuïtieve en onderzoekende wijze

materialen en objecten toe die ik tegenkom of vind op straat en die ik gebruik om mijn concept vorm te geven en mijn werk een nieuwe expressie te geven. Ik werk vrij en intuïtief zodat mijn gevoelens tijdens het werkproces in de klei vastgelegd worden. Op deze manier kan ik nieuwe dingen ontdekken en tegelijkertijd gebruik ik mijn ervaring met het materiaal om het concept te vervolmaken. Keramiek is een veelzijdig materiaal dat ik op een onconventionele manier kan gebruiken."

CAPSULES

Zijn afstudeerproject aan de Rietveld Academie in 2012 was de installatie *Las Capsulas de la Amnesia / De capsules van de vergetelheid*, bestaande uit 13 capsules van keramiek. De vraag die bij het maken ervan centraal stond, was: hoe kun je bepaalde ervaringen behoeden voor vergetelheid, hoe kun je de tijd stilzetten, momenten bewaren en een bepaalde realiteit vasthouden? "Het gaat om pijnlijke herinneringen, bijvoorbeeld aan de Argentijnse dictatuur, om episodes uit de geschiedenis die veel mensen liever vergeten. De capsules laten diverse gebeurtenissen zien die in onze maatschappij plaats hebben of plaats gevonden hebben, vanuit een politieke, sociale of ethische context", zei Ponce daar toen over. "Het zijn capsules van keramiek en je kunt als bij een kijkdoos naar binnen kijken. Binnen is bijvoorbeeld een treinstation of een gevangenis te zien. In ieder object probeer ik een moment uit onze maatschappij te pakken met verschillende politieke contexten en het moment blijft daar terwijl de tijd buiten de cocoon doorgaat. Dus aan de buitenkant is een capsule robuust en is er rust en binnen blijft dat ene moment in tact. Het werk gaat over herinneringen. Ze bevatten momenten uit moeilijke fases in onze wereldgeschiedenis, momenten die voortduren in het individuele en collectieve geheugen. Ieder individu beschouwt de werkelijkheid vanuit een ander perspectief. Sommige



Pablo Ponce, links: *Wandering Walls*, 2015; keramiek, videoprojecties; totale installatie h. 120 x 700 x 120 cm. Galerie De Witte Voet Amsterdam, 2015 | rechts: *Wandering Walls*, 2015. Film still uit installatie Galerie De Witte Voet Amsterdam, 2015

omstandigheden of politieke constellaties (dictaturen!) keren telkens terug, als geesten uit het verleden. De menselijke barbarij is diep geworteld en lijkt onoverkomelijk. Het zijn deze tragische feiten die ik in mijn werk wil laten zien. Allemaal momenten die binnen bewaard blijven als herinnering."

De installatie maakte na de eindexamenpresentatie deel uit van de muziek/theaterproductie *13.0.0.0.0 Het einde der tijden*. Geen opera, geen musical, maar een muziekproductie nieuwe stijl. "Hedendaagse gecomponeerde muziek is voor een 'te' select publiek. Het is niet eenvoudig om origineel en uniek te zijn, maar toch... het concept komt het meest in de buurt van een Gesamtkunstwerk", zei Pablo bij de presentatie van het werk. Anders dan te doen gebruikelijk was er voor een andere benaderingswijze gekozen, een soort omgekeerde volgorde van het maakproces waarin deze productie zich heeft voltrokken. Eerst waren de vier componisten Kate Moore, Ana Mihajlovic, Florian Maier en Reza Namavar, kunstenaar Pablo Ponce en tekstschrijver René Puthaar benaderd en van input voorzien om werken geënt op de Mayacultuur en het aflopen van de *Mayakalender, Het einde der tijden*, te maken. Vervolgens werd dit concept aangeboden aan regisseur Floris Visser die alles mocht samensmeden tot een geheel waarin geen ongewenste onderbrekingen zitten zoals bijvoorbeeld een applaus wat het hele ritme kan verstoren. Daarna zijn er meerdere uitvoeringen geweest in het hele land.

BORDERLESS

Uit 2014 is het project *Borderless*, werk dat voortkwam uit het verschijnsel immigratie, in het bijzonder in relatie tot de politieke systemen in de landen van herkomst die in oorlog zijn, of arm, of allebei. Rijke landen sluiten hun grenzen, mensen die niet in het bezit zijn van de juiste documenten komen er niet meer in, politieke vluchtelingen of mensen zonder huis en haard worden zonder pardon op het vliegtuig gezet. Maar de begrenzingen en barrières zijn nooit zuiver fysiek, dikwijls zijn ze ook psychologisch van aard en hebben ze een sociaal-culturele achtergrond, ligt er discriminatie – uit angst voor het vreemde en voor de vreemdeling – aan ten grondslag. "Al

deze zaken die samenhangen met immigratie zijn vervat in mijn fantasielandkaarten. De genoemde factoren zijn allemaal aanwezig in dit werk, maar gezien vanuit grafisch perspectief. Een tijdje geleden ontdekte ik een andere wereld in landkaarten, een wereld gezien van bovenaf. Het heeft mij altijd moeite gekost om kaart te lezen en de plaatsen te vinden die ik zocht; meestal zag ik alleen lijnen die elkaar kruisen, of kleuren, een bepaalde textuur. Ik probeerde altijd vormen te herkennen die ik kon herleiden tot bekende elementen. Het idee om met twee verschillende gezichtspunten te spelen leek mij erg aantrekkelijk. Het scheppen van nieuwe werelden binnen de huidige sociaal-politieke context is voor mij noodzakelijk. Het kritisch nadenken over onze maatschappij moet wel een gedroomd universum opleveren, waarbij verholde, als van onder de drempel van het bewustzijn vandaan komende boodschappen als speldenprikjes fungeren."

WANDERING WALLS

Wandering Walls (2015) is een project van interactieve installaties met beelden van keramiek en videoprojecties waarin dansers werken met de spanning tussen klei en beweging. Het werk is een metafoor voor immigratie en identiteit en was eind 2015 te zien in Galerie De Witte Voet in Amsterdam. Immigratie is aan de orde van de dag. Je wordt geboren op een plek op aarde. Mag je dan naar een andere plek verhuizen? Pablo Ponce verhuisde naar Mexico en vervolgens naar Europa. De vrijheid die Europa heeft is een schijnvrijheid. De een mag zich wel verplaatsen over de wereld. De ander niet. Welke vrijheid is dat? "Veranderen is een deel van mijn leven. Ik kan ervan groeien. Ik zoek altijd naar nieuwe ervaringen, ook met mijn kunst." In deze installatie werkte Ponce met vingervormen als symbolen. "Ik kreeg inspiratie op Sicilië, toen ik daar in de zomer was", zegt hij erover. "Ik heb Griekse theaters en tempels gezien, een versmelting van verschillende culturen uit Italië en Afrika en dat was mijn inspiratie. Het project gaat over deze verschillende culturen en daarnaast over immigratie. Vingervormen zijn dan natuurlijk een sterk symbool. Elke keer als je een paspoort of een visum aanvraagt, moet je je vingervorm geven." "Voor mij was de eerste keer toen ik vanuit Argentinië ben

Pablo Ponce: "Keramik is een veelzijdig materiaal dat ik op een onconventionele manier kan gebruiken"



Pablo Ponce, *Postkolonialisme*, 2016; steengoed uit Hebron (Palestina) en Hoog Gola (Israël), mixed media, video; totaal h. 100 x 110 x 180 cm

verhuisd naar Mexico. Op weg daar naar toe heb ik ook vingerafdrukken moeten geven. Ik was net afgestudeerd aan de kunstacademie, dus ik had veel energie om met het echte leven te beginnen. Maar in deze tijd is immigratie in Europa niet meer positief, er is geen vrijheid meer om op de wereld te gaan wonen waar je wilt. Daarover gaat deze installatie. Ik wil erover communiceren en een discussie losmaken, want ik zou willen dat mensen kunnen kiezen waar ze wonen. In het werk zitten alle personen vast in hun eigen cultuur, wereld en problematiek en lopen ze tegen fysieke en mentale muren op."

CHECKING POINT

Pablo Ponce is een van de geselecteerde kunstenaars voor de Keramiek Triënnale 2018 die vanaf 11 maart te zien is in CODA Museum in Apeldoorn. Hij laat daar zijn nieuwe werk *Checking Point* zien. "Mijn nieuwe werk is een voortzetting van mijn vorige project, getiteld *Postkolonialisme*, en maakt deel uit van het artist in residence-programma in Israël waaraan ik deelnam. Op eigen initiatief heb ik twee maanden door de West Bank/Palestina en Israël gereisd. Dit kunstproject is een beschouwing over de onderdrukte positie waarin het Palestijnse volk in met name de bezette stad Hebron leeft. Mijn interesse is gefocust op hoe de checking points het dagelijks leven van de Palestijnen beïnvloeden. Van een 'normaal' leven met enkele ongemakken werd het een zeer ongemakkelijk leven dat later veranderde in berusting. Mijn werk heeft ook een universele visie. In de geschiedenis hebben zich vergelijkbare situaties voorgedaan, met massale immigraties tot gevolg en dit gebeurt nog steeds. Ook het gebruikte materiaal speelt een belangrijke rol, namelijk op symbolisch niveau. De klei om de checking points te maken komt uit Israël en het menselijke beeld is geheel bedekt met zeep uit Palestina. In Palestina wordt zeep gemaakt volgens een eeuwenoude traditie. Door de bezetting moesten veel zeepfabrieken sluiten. Voor mij symboliseert de zeep de kwetsbaarheid van het Palestijnse volk."

"Ik wil met mijn werk vooral communiceren. Dingen worden snel vergeten. Dingen duiden, politiek en maatschappelijk. Religie, geloof en mystiek zijn belangrijk in het leven, mijn ideeën

daarover kan ik kwijt in de installaties. Met sfeer, licht, geluid, film, beweging en klei probeer ik dat tot stand te brengen."

In 2019 werkt Pablo Ponce drie maanden bij *sundaymorning@ekwc* in Oosterwijk. Momenteel werkt hij in zijn eigen werkplaats in Amsterdam, maar reist hij ook regelmatig naar Argentinië om daar te werken.

• Pablo Ponce, Atelier HW10, Hendrik van Wijnstraat 10, NL-1065 AS Amsterdam, +31 (0)6-36046586; pabloecnop@hotmail.com | www.pablo-ponce.com

• Keramiek Triënnale 2018. CODA Museum Apeldoorn, Vosselmanstraat 299, NL-7311 CL Apeldoorn, +31 (0)55-5268400. Open: dinsdag t/m vrijdag 10.00-17.30 uur, zaterdag 10.00-17.00 uur, zondag 13.00-17.00 uur. Van 11 maart t/m 10 juni 2018. www.coda-apeldoorn.nl | www.nvk-keramiek.nl



Pablo Ponce aan het werk op de Tel Hai Kunstacademie in Israël, 2017

Figure 9 Review of P. Ponce's work (1)

Appendix 5.10.2 Review of P. Ponce's work (2)

Source: Augustijn, P. (2018) 'Keramiek Triënnale in Coda Museum: Hedendaagse figuratie in klei' KLEI Keramiek Magazine, May-June, pp. 10,11.

Courtesy: Pablo Ponce.

NKC KERAMIEK

KERAMIEK TRIËNNALE IN CODA MUSEUM

Hedendaagse figuratie in klei

"Ik ken geen materiaal dat zo weinig glamour heeft, zo weinig betekenis in zichzelf draagt als keramiek. Een materiaal dat uit zichzelf niets wil, modder is, krijgt uitsluitend betekenis door de bewerking en de verbeelding van diegene die het vormt. Dit is geen klacht, ik zie dat als een kracht. Klei provoceert de maker om met een uitgesproken verlangen het materiaal te vormen en er leven in te blazen. Keramiek is bovendien een hele lijfelijke en ambachtelijke kunst: met kennis van zaken met je handen in de materie wroeten. Het maakproces van keramiek is zo niet alleen een productiemethode, maar veeleer een methode van werken", zei beeldend kunstenaar Gijs Assmann in zijn inleiding bij de Keramiek Triënnale 2018 in CODA Museum. "Kenmerkend voor het werken met keramiek is namelijk de gelaagdheid van het maakproces. Het onderscheidt zich van het gebruik van andere materialen doordat het werken naar een eindproduct verschillende stappen kent, waarbij steeds een metamorfose optreedt die het loslaten van een oorspronkelijk bedacht idee noodzakelijk maakt en constant opnieuw het kijken en herijken van aanvankelijke gedachten provoceert. De maker geeft bovendien een deel van de realisatie uit handen tijdens het krimpen van de klei en tijdens het stoken in de oven."

DOOR PIET AUGUSTIJN | FOTOS ANGELA STOUTEN

"Deze editie van de Keramiek Triënnale focust op figuratieve, sculpturale keramiek. Keramiek is een materiaal dat in de geschiedenis van de sculptuur een relatief onbeschreven blad is. Hoewel klei en keramiek in de geschiedenis van de beeldhouwkunst van groot belang zijn geweest, heeft de sculpturale keramiek geen eigen terrein in de geschiedenis verworven. In dat perspectief is het niet zozeer

een materiaal van deze tijd, als wel een materiaal voor deze tijd. In een tijdsgewricht dat bepaald wordt door de waan dat alles gaat over objectiviteit, snelheid en beschikbaarheid stelt keramiek eisen als geduld, traagheid en concentratie. In plaats van deze tijd te weerspiegelen door te tonen wat er al is, voegt veel figuratieve, sculpturale keramiek toe wat er in het heden vaak ontbreekt: traagheid, handwerk, ambacht en rijpheid, kortom 'slow sculpture'. Sculpturale keramiek

nu probeert vanuit het ambacht en vanuit persoonlijke achtergronden van kunstenaars een positie binnen de beeldende kunst te vinden. Zo bezien is ambachtelijkheid – met name die in de keramiek – ook een wijze van zelfbeschikking: maken als een manier om grip te krijgen op het onbekende, een manier om allerlei aspecten van de wereld naar je eigen hand te zetten, de wereld vorm te geven, een eigen kader te geven en te begrijpen. Zo is het maken van keramische sculpturen niet



Links: Hendrik Schrik, *Remix*, 2016, porselein, mal- en handopbouw, totaal: h. 180 x 220 x 40 cm | rechts: Yves Malfliet, *Souvenir van een land waar ik nooit ben geweest*, 2017, Boonse baksteen met glazuur, vanadium, koper, aardewerk, steengoed, porselein, goudluster, hout; h. 182 x 307 x 61 cm

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Links: Pablo Ponce, *Checking Point II*, 2017; steengoed, kraterglazuur, zeep uit Palestina, totaal h. 52 x 26 x 29 cm | menselijke figuur h. 49 x 9 cm. Winnaar stipendium | midden: Alida Everts, *Flora*, 2016-2017; gebakken zwarte klei, geplaatst op vlak van 280 x 280 cm. Winnaar stipendium | rechts: Ieva Bertasiute, *Finger-prints*, 2016; bone china porselein, handopbouw; h. 45 x 30 x 20 cm. Winnaar stipendium

alleen een vorm van zelf verwerkelijking van de kunstenaar, in het eindproduct zit de ervaring van de maker opgesloten."

CODA Museum in Apeldoorn presenteert tot en met 10 juni de *Keramik Triennale 2018*, een tentoonstelling geïnitieerd door de Nederlandse Vakgroep Keramisten (NVK). De *Keramik Triennale* toont het werk van 34 kunstenaars uit Nederland, België, Frankrijk, Duitsland, Engeland, Denemarken, Finland, Letland, Litouwen en Turkije. Deze zijn geselecteerd uit 360 inzendingen uit heel Europa. In de gevarieerde tentoonstelling komen uiteenlopende aspecten van figuratie aan bod. Met deze internationale tentoonstelling geven CODA Museum en de NVK een stand van zaken op het gebied van de figuratieve sculptuur in Europa. Drie van de geselecteerde kunstenaars ontvingen een werkstipendium van de NVK: Pablo Ponce, Alida Everts en Ieva Bertasiute.

Over de winnaars schreef de jury het volgende:

In al zijn vibraties straalt *Checking Point II* van Pablo Ponce (La Plata, AR, 1974) sociale betrokkenheid uit. Tijdens de selectie vroegen we ons af of het formaat bijdroeg aan de overtuigingskracht en of het achterliggende verhaal het stuk wellicht tot slechts een pamflet zou reduceren. Maar toen we het werk in werkelijkheid zagen, werden al deze vragen irrelevant. De fysieke aanwezigheid en formaat van het stuk alsmede het gebruik van de verschillende materialen in relatie tot de inhoud cumuleren tot een werk met een krachtige synergie.

In het werk *Flora* van Alida Everts (Hoogeveen, 1951) zien we van een afstand een werk met een monumentale aanwezigheid, met scherpe contrasten en een duidelijke omtrek. Dichterbij gekomen voel je de kale zwarte klei, de schijnbaar nonchalante manier van maken, maar ook dat elk onderdeel met zorg is gemaakt. Het ritme van aanraken, knijpen, buigen en duwen voelen. Alida omarmt het intrigerende potentieel van klei door het te gebruiken als driedimensionale verf. Dit alles geeft het stuk een overtuigende vitaliteit.

Finger prints van Ieva Bertasiute (Kaunas, LT, 1983) leek eerst en vooral te maken te hebben met het digitale: de dots and the bites en het 3D printen dat sterk gehyped wordt als de grote verandering die komen gaat en alles in ons dagelijks leven direct beschikbaar zal maken. Maar het eigenlijke stuk refereert aan het tegenovergestelde: het

gaat over een vertraging en erkenning van de levenscyclus waar we allemaal deel van uitmaken. Het gaat over een tijdrovende, stapsgewijze toevoeging van materiaal, met als resultaat een iconische basisvorm, 'gewoon een pot'. Of een foto of een pot-foto. Het werk viert de keramische traditie, maar refereert tegelijkertijd aan de digitale wereld.

"Keramik is niet het materiaal van deze tijd maar voor deze tijd. Het voegt toe wat hard nodig is: traagheid, geduld en technisch kunnen. En vertedering en verwondering. En dat kunnen we ook best gebruiken", aldus Gijs Assmann.

Keramik Triennale 2018. CODA Museum Apeldoorn, Vosselmanstraat 299, NL-7311 CL Apeldoorn, +31 (0)55-5268400. Open: dinsdag t/m vrijdag 10.00-17.30 uur, zaterdag 10.00-17.00 uur, zondag 13.00-17.00 uur. T/m 10 juni 2018. www.coda-apeldoorn.nl | www.nvk-keramiek.nl



Performance *Pieta Ronde* van Judith Bloedjes. Uitvoering Angela Dirven en Johannes Fischer, acrobaten

Figure 10 Review of P. Ponce's work (2)

Note: Ponce's work for the Ceramic Triennale, *Checking Point II* (illus. above left), is a continuation of the Post-colonialism? project. This new work was awarded the jurors' prize in the Triennale (Ponce, 2018b).

Appendix 5.11 Public screenings of the *Post-colonialism?* Film

Full length film (37:37)
1. Ecole d'art de Beauvais, France, 10 July 2017, in a lecture given by Wendy Gers.
2. Andretta Pottery, Himachal Pradesh, India, 22 September 2018, in an informal lecture given by Wendy Gers.
3. Plymouth College of Art, England, 12 March 2019, in a workshop given to MA Fine Arts students.
Short version of the film (8:26)
1. <i>Clay Matters</i> Conference, PXL-MAD, Hasselt, Belgium, 16-18 November 2017, in a keynote address by Wendy Gers.
2. <i>Restating Clay</i> Conference, York Art Gallery, March 2018, in a lecture given by Marcelle Klein.
3. <i>What's the story? Thoughts and questions about the History of Israeli Ceramic Art</i> , BCCC, 9 Feb 2018, in a lecture given by Shlomit Bauman.
4. Plymouth College of Art, England, 12 March 2019, in a workshop given to BA Fine Arts students.

Table 17 Public screenings of the *Post-colonialism?* film

Appendix 5.12 Original texts from the *Post-colonialism?* website

5.12.1 Introduction

The Postcolonialism? Project : Residency- Exhibition – Symposium was raised as an idea in the beginning of 2014. This challenging project was included in the events to mark 5 years since the opening of the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center in 2011. The title of this international multicultural project includes a question mark at the end of Post-colonialism?; this is the essence of the activities initiated by the Benyamini Center. It is our aim through the on-going activities and exhibitions to raise questions, to create dialogue and explore the various aspects of ceramics with the intention of extending its scope in the broad spectrum of material culture.

The original idea was to have an international exhibition and instead of bringing artworks we decided to bring the artists since we are interested in the dialogue, which evolved into an opportunity for a multi-cultural conversation here in Israel. To lead this project we were fortunate to engage Ms. Wendy Gers (from South Africa/France), a knowledgeable curator with experience in international projects and an expert in modern and contemporary ceramics with a unique interest in post colonialism, to be the curator and leader of the project in conjunction with a local advisory board (Shlomit Bauman and Yael Novak) representing the Benyamini Center Gallery – the initiator of the project.

From an open international call for participation, 19 artists were selected from Israel and many places around the world. The international artists were hosted for a residency of 3 weeks by our partner institutions- who together enabled us to create an event that could reach a large audience. The guest artists were given studio space to make their work for the exhibition as well as the opportunity to engage with students and the general public who attended their masterclasses around the country.

A dream of a multicultural art event with visitors from abroad, artists with ambitious projects, a program that involves touring the country, visiting sites of relevance to our discussion and documentation of the process along the way, requires resources beyond the capabilities of a small cultural institution such as ours. Our supporters' generosity and strong belief in the value of this project made Post-colonialism? possible.

We are grateful to all the participants, the partners, the supporters and the volunteers who enabled the realization of this dream. Special thanks to the Benyamini Team who have the vision and insight as artists and as people and who are dedicated to making the Benyamini Center an ongoing creative process.

Marcelle Klein

Director

5.12.2 Overview

Post-colonialism? is an eclectic artistic inquiry into local and global legacies of historical imperialism and specific modern and contemporary colonial practices. 19 artists (10 local, 9 international) explore ideological, socio-political, cultural and environmental issues within Israel. Collectively these are dispatches of rage, disgrace and compassion. They evoke anxious dialogues of hope, fear, horror and resistance. Many of the works engage in forms of artistic and intellectual resistance via the creation of counter narratives, strategies of subversion, mimicry, pastiche, parody and hybridity.

But, the 'post' in post-colonialism has not arrived – as evidenced in the works on exhibition which are primarily engaged with aspects of contemporary colonisation. Post-colonialism? maps volatile constellations of land, occupation, borders and check-points; maimed, moulded and manipulated bodies; fugitive vessels; transnational flows of capital and commodities and diasporic itinerancies. These constellations are at times graceful, sometimes awkward. Some are poetic, others are embodiments of pain. Most of the works are anti-monuments that subjectively mine aspects of this subject. Works are linked by a generosity of spirit and the necessity to speak out.

5.12.3 History

Over a period of about 30 months this exhibition was conceived, confirmed and produced. Members of the Benyamini administrative team and I negotiated the project in person and via regular digital

meetings through the recent upsurge in violence as the possibility of a third Intifada reared its ugly head. In retrospect, it is both ironic and prophetic that all the preliminary formal meetings were held in cities with interesting colonial histories - Taipei, Dublin and Kansas City.

Our open call for participants in February 2015 resulted in 85 applications. Local and international artists were encouraged to question the current situation in Israel and develop original, personal works that responded to the central question, 'What is the significance of post-colonialism in contemporary Israel, and beyond?' A selection committee of representatives from the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Centre and I chose the finalists. Criteria for selection included pertinence of proposed project and the possibility to execute it in the requisite time (particularly in respect to the international artists in residence). We also endeavoured to obtain a broadly representative geographic spread, with artists from the region, Africa, the Americas, Europe, East and South East Asia. The international artists were hosted by a variety of Academies and other art institutions.

As the project evolved, the title was changed from the plural 'Post-colonialisms' to the singular, for reasons of translation into Arabic and Hebrew. Two artists withdrew and were replaced. All international participants faced a series of difficult questions and dialogues about contravening the international cultural boycott. The international artists and I chose to come to Israel to obtain first-hand insights and experiences, and make informed decisions. The experience of living, working and travelling in Israel has confirmed our resolution to respectfully speak out.

5.12.4 Partner Institutions

- Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design
- Oranim Academic College
- Tel-Hai Academic College
- Givat Haviva
- Umm al-Fahm Art Gallery
- Shenkar College of Engineering and Design
- HIT – Holon Institute of Technology
- Hacubia – A place for art
- Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center

5.12.5 Supporters

- Mifal Hapais
- Tel Aviv municipality plastic art department
- AIDA – Association of Israel's Decorative Arts
- Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Tel Aviv
- Israeli Culture and Sport office
- LIAEP – Lighton International Artists Exchange Program
- Yehoshua Rabinovitch Foundation
- CAAI- Ceramics Artists Association of Israel

5.12.6 Curatorial Essay: Daring to Dream

No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or Black, or Western, or Oriental. Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things; in Eliot's phrase, reality cannot be deprived of the "other echoes [that] inhabit the garden." It is more rewarding - and more difficult - to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about "us." But this also means not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly reiterating how "our" culture or country is number one (or not number one, for that matter).

— Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 1993.

This essay is a reflection on the international cross-cultural residency and exhibition project, *Post-colonialism?*, held by the Benyamini

Contemporary Ceramics Centre, Tel Aviv (hereafter Benyamini) from November 2016 to January 2017. While centuries of global imperial conquests have contributed to an age of racial and cultural pluralism, this not resulted in the elimination of prejudices or national projects based on domination and supremacy, as noted by the Palestinian-American theorist Said. The pertinence of the focus on post-colonialism within contemporary Israel, a nation engaged in maintaining a relation of domination along ethno-national lines, is evaluated via a consideration of the diverse responses of the 19 participating artists. This essay also presents an overview of the local cultural context, characterised by an international cultural boycott, and contextualises my experience of the South African cultural and economic boycott from the 1970s to the early 1990s, and how this informed the structure of this profoundly human undertaking.

Part 1

We live in a world that is increasingly considered to be post-colonial, as the chapter associated with the historical scramble by western powers for foreign territory and resources seems closed. Yet, many contemporary examples of neo-colonial projects exist, as access to territory and resources is still highly polemical within many regions. Consider for example China's status as Africa's largest trading partner, investing billions of dollars into African governments and infrastructure in return for the petroleum and minerals that fuel the Chinese economy.

The Israeli situation far more complex than the previously mentioned example of contemporary economic exploitation of Africa by China, as it involves the violent occupation of a contested territory as a legitimate

homeland for Jews, and a solution for two millennia of Antisemitism. Israel's failure to accept that Palestine was an inhabited territory, has resulted in a long-term internal conflict that remains unresolved.

The decolonization of Israel and Palestine, the intrinsic corollary to the ongoing Settler Colonial project, is fraught because it involves unravelling many knotted strands that include social justice, cultural equality and land rights. Any hypothetical future cartographic project would need to untangle issues of occupation, the fragmented patchwork of Palestinian concessions, and the repatriation of vast numbers of Palestinian refugees and exiles living outside Israel's formal borders. Any dialogue about decolonisation would necessarily foreground human rights abuses, international geo-political strategy in the Middle East, indigenisation, autonomy, and new practical ways of pursuing reconciliation, justice, and peace. But these questions are mute in the current Trump-Netanyahu era, and the decolonization project remains a nebulous 'elsewhere', that is too far-fetched to merit serious consideration.

While the residency and exhibition project purported to explore the meaning and relevance of Post-colonialism within contemporary Israel, it soon became abundantly clear that any potential local iterations of post-colonialism was intimately entangled with, and dominated by Settler Colonialism (Veracini 2013). This is clearly expressed in the *Post-Colonialism?* film by the Palestinian artist, Manal Morcos, who laments, 'which Post-colonialism? We're in the Colonialism itself...' (17:16-18). Premised on occupation and the elimination of indigenous populations, Settler Colonialist studies focus on authority, and how invasive settler societies, over time, develop distinctive identities, narratives of self-determination and sovereignty.

The bulk of artists in the Post-colonialism? residency and exhibition project explored aspects of historic and contemporary Settler Colonialism and its links with transnational capitalism. These include:

- histories of conquest and trophies of war - Ronit Zor and Modisa Tim Motsomi
- liberty of movement - Pablo Ponce
- access to basic resources including water and blood - Manal Morcos
- global movements of people and commodities - Hagar Mitelpunkt
- the role of language, literature, history, commerce, popular culture (particularly souvenir dolls) and 'the illusion of restoration' (Ibid 6:36) in the settler project – Talia Tokatly
- the central presence of the military and the phallus as a symbol of this testosterone-infused environment - Anthony Stellaccio
- the role of press conferences as propagandistic sites of collective loss and tragedy – Cory Lund⁵⁴
- perverse and insidious mechanisms of state control over inhabitants - Oren Arbel and Noam Tabenkin Arbel
- a subtly nihilistic state of permanent transnational migration responded to heroic notions of Jewish conquest, self-determination and sovereignty - Katya Izabel Filmus
- tensions regarding the lack of a nuanced, multi-cultural local design history - Johnathan Hopp in collaboration with Garo and Sonia Sandrouni.
- complex and contradictory relationships with land, including occupation, no-man's land, borders and crossings in Neha Kudchadkar's photographic triptych.

⁵⁴ Lund's use of a floor covering that simulated the popular Israeli 'Sesame' tiles from the 1950s and 1960s clearly locates the work within the Israeli built environment.

- For Rock Wang, the successive colonial and neo-colonial occupations of Taiwan have resulted in a 'pixelated' hybrid material culture, that may be expressed across language and cultural divides via QR codes.

What is interesting in this rather crude analysis, is the centrality of land and notions of occupation in the works. The intrinsic corollary to this ongoing colonial project, the decolonization of Israel, is not imaginable under the current regime. Any future hypothetical decolonial project would be fraught because settlements and internal colonies have no real spatial separations. Furthermore, vast numbers of Palestinian refugees and exiles are living outside Israel's formal borders. Relations between Arab Palestinians and Jewish Israelis are charged with racial tensions, religious and identity politics. What is essentially a carefully crafted land-grab by the Israeli state has become a paradoxically global dialogue about displaced peoples, human rights abuses, and geo-political strategy in the Middle East. In the same way that the decolonization project may be argued to be a nebulous 'elsewhere' – a series of open-ended discussions on indigenisation, autonomy, anti-state and anti-capitalist politics.

In the context of this ongoing struggle for justice in the region, it is useful to consider the writings of Gilles Deleuze who explored ideas of movement in thought and becoming. Over many years he considered individual and collective struggles to come to terms with history, and defy intolerable conditions. He argued that in becoming, individuals can achieve an ultimate existential stage in which life is simply immanent and open to new relations, friendship and opportunities. He wrote: "History amounts only to the set of preconditions, however recent, that one leaves behind in order to 'become,' that is, to create something new" (1995:171).

Notions of transcending the past, evolving states of becoming, possibilities of a nebulous 'elsewhere' were expressed by Manal Morcos in the *Post-Colonialism?* film, who explained that she does not want to express anger at her situation as a Palestinian in her art, and mused that this international exhibition project involved 'daring to dream, or daring to hope [of a post-colonial state] ...' The artist further emphasised that 'daring is everything' (17:52-58).

Works on the exhibition that explored aspects of the dream of a transition towards a post-colonial state, or an infinitely nebulous state of becoming, include:

- Ayelet Zohar's 'Efraim is becoming a Quagga' and 'Museum of (Un)Natural History' that highlighted the issue of perpetual transformation, simulation, simulacrum and dissimilation.
- The possibilities of cartographic revisions and borders in flux were explored by both Sharbani Das Gupta and Danijela Pivašević-Tenner.
- Eva Avidar celebrates the (female) bodies' vibrant creative agency in defiance of disease.
- Neha Kudchadkar's installation of diverse ceramic objects and accompanying sound-piece signified complex negotiations and responses to the 'others' within periods of extreme systemic violence associated with social transformation.
- Magdalena Hefetz's video performance of destruction and burial symbolically exposed the political regime, as she safe-guards this precious evidence for a future 'judgement day'.

Decolonisation or a state of potential transition was also expressed in some remarkably profound off-hand remarks by Ayelet Zohar and

Anthony Stellaccio in the *Post-colonialism?* documentary film. Zohar responds to Stellaccio's accidentally shattered sculpture by noting that, 'We're all traumatized, but it is an opportunity to think out of the box.' (20:50-52). Stellaccio, discussing the possible restoration of his destroyed work notes that,

I think that the question about whether it could be put back together again is one that is very appropriate for Post-colonialism? Like you have all this fragmented land. Is there some process by which we can put it all back together again? I didn't. I just made something new. Maybe that's the answer (31:38-50).

Part 2

Questions of engaging (or not) with the contemporary Israeli cultural scene due to the political context is central to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement and the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). Initiated in 2005, the BDS movement aims to raise awareness about the Israeli occupation and Israeli violations of human rights. BDS and PACBI lobby against the "normalization" of the asymmetrical condition of Israeli-Palestinian relations, insisting on the recognition of an oppressor and a victim, or the invisibility of the latter in mainstream Israeli society. Their wide-ranging guidelines include the refusal of Arab and Palestinian artists to participate in local exhibitions in Israeli art institutions, and international exhibitions that include the works of Israeli artists or are sponsored by the Israeli state. The BDS discourages foreign artists from collaborating with 'complicit' Israeli institutions, and independently-funded projects that present Israelis and Palestinians together, even when addressing

the Occupation. The notion of what constitutes a 'complicit' institution is obviously contentious. Technically all public Israeli universities, museums, art institutions as well as private institutions that receive state grants, are considered to be complicit. As this results in a blanket discretization of institutions with oppositional agendas, PACBI devised a compromise. If an Israeli institution wishes to not be boycotted, it must publicly denounce Israel's violations of international law, accept the full and equal rights of Palestinians, Israeli Arabs, and recognize the Palestinian right of return. But this outright denunciation of the state is currently impossible. Cultural workers fear violent reprisals from state agents, and self-censorship is rife (Bauman 2016, Tamir 2015).

PACBI does not prohibit foreigners from visiting Israel. Rather, they encourage visitors to educate themselves about the occupation, and participate in a proactive anti-occupation activity, such as an Arab-led tour of the occupied territories. Udi Edelman, a curator at the Israeli Center for Digital Art, reflects on the question of inviting international artists to Israel.

Going all the way with it means deciding that we will no longer invite international artists, but that is a very difficult think and it isn't necessarily the right decision. On the other hand, it would be interesting to have international artists consider these questions more deeply (cited in Littman 2015).

Political factors conjugate with separate education programs for Palestinians, Jews and Israeli Arabs, and a lack of teaching the Arabic language and culture within Jewish schools, resulting in separate parallel cultural scenes. Within Israeli art and culture institutions, one of the key issues associated with developing a multi-cultural audience is that of bilingual Arab-Hebrew programs and materials. Institutions that

aim to be democratic and non-complicit, ensure that they employ both languages, even if Israeli Arab and Palestinian artists are not part of their programming, this is a matter of principle. Furthermore, many cultural institutions hope to develop mixed audiences in the longer term.

But what if Israeli Arab, Palestinian, Israeli and foreign artists could be convinced to investigate questions of power, land, abuse, colony, and history... within Israel? Is it possible to create spaces for dialogue among local and international artists? The Benyamini's Chief Curator, Shlomit Bauman posed this provocative question. In May 2014 Bauman initiated discussions with me to curate a project concerning Post-colonialism in Israel. Her choice of a South African curator was opportune, as both countries have histories of state orchestrated racially and culturally engineered division. Indeed, the term Apartheid is frequently applied to Israel, including in a recent UN report (presented to the UN on 15 March 2017), which argues that Israel is guilty of policies and practices that constitute the crime of apartheid based on 'key instruments of international law' (cited in Gladstone 2017).⁵⁵

Part 3

I grew up in South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s, at the height of Apartheid. From the 1960s until democratic elections in 1994, South Africa was the subject of international economic sanctions and a

⁵⁵ These Apartheid crimes include the enforced 'fragmentation of the Palestinian population, Israeli restrictions on Palestinians' movements and other limits imposed on Palestinians but not on Israelis in Israel'. The report concluded that the Israeli apartheid regime 'oppresses and dominates the Palestinian people as a whole' and is a 'crime against humanity under customary international law and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court' (Gladstone 2017, White 2017)

cultural boycott. During this period, the UN established a Special Committee against Apartheid, and the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid was operational from 1976 to 1991. The international cultural and economic boycott of South Africa by international governments and corporations alike, decimated foreign investment, crushed cultural dialogue, and was unquestionably too much for the apartheid regime to bear.

South African diplomatic relations with Israel evolved after the first multiracial elections in 1994, and diplomatic relations were established with the State of Palestine in 1995. Former South African President Nelson Mandela had close relations with Yasser Arafat, and visited both Israel and Palestine, calling for peace. Prominent South African civil society leaders continue to engage with the Israeli-Palestinian cause, including the 2010 Nobel Prize winner, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, a loyal supporter of the BDS.

As a child and adolescent, I recall visiting municipal and national art galleries and museums in most major cities (including Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, and Cape Town), and being painfully aware of the lack of diversity of works on display. Black artists were absent from art exhibitions, but abundantly present on craft shows. This was in stark contrast to the small commercial art gallery scene in major cities, which was vibrant and socially engaged, particularly after the Soweto uprisings of 1976. I recall there were (infrequent) occasions to consider South Africa's artistic scene on a somewhat warped international stage. For example, the participation of South African artists in Chile's Valparaiso Biennial in 1987 during the Pinochet regime, caused an out roar locally. Issues of national diplomacy between pariah states, as well as censorship, privilege,

merit, class, race, and visibility came under the spot-light (Butcher 2015:53).⁵⁶

As the winds of change started blowing, from the late 1980s, there were increasingly lively civil society debates about the role of arts in society by outspoken figures such as Nadine Gordimer, Mongane Walle Serote, Njabulo S. Ndebele, and Albie Sachs (Campschreur and Divendal 1989, Sachs 1990) and Sue Williamson's 1987 publication of *Resistance Art in South Africa* somehow officialised this genre of expression. It is important to note that during this epoch many South African artists were forced to reconcile issues of political engagement and personal censorship as a consequence of the possibility of violent reprisals by security apparatus. While there were obviously exceptions to this generalisation,⁵⁷ my personal sense of the 1970s and 1980s was that of a period of muffled dissidence and a paucity of engagement with contemporary realities by the majority of cultural institutions, especially public art museums.

Part 4

When I signed an agreement with the Benyamini in August 2015, the political situation in Israel was significantly more stable than it currently is. World leadership was far less overtly dominated by the right wing. Brexit had not occurred, and neither had Trump been elected. While from September 2015 to June 2016 there were severe security issues

⁵⁶ A similarly controversial situation developed in the 2014 São Paulo Biennale with regards to Israeli government sponsorship (Cervetto 2015).

⁵⁷ I especially recall Jane Alexander's trio of 'Butcher Boys' seated menacingly directly in front of the entrance of the South African National Gallery, Cape Town.

within Israel, and the possibility of a 'Third Intifada' loomed large with a spate of stabbings. Known as the 'Wave of Terror' by Israelis or 'Habba' (an outburst) by Palestinians, this violence related in part to tensions between Palestinians and Israelis regarding the status of the Temple Mount. Fortunately, a fragile state of relative peace ultimately returned and the Post-Colonialism? residency and exhibition project planning was finalised.

Sixteen Israeli applications and 59 international applicants responded to the Benyamini's international call. In terms of a breakdown by nationality, European artists accounted for 25 percent of total applicants,⁵⁸ 21 percent of the total applications came from Israel, 17 percent the USA, followed by 12 percent from the United Kingdom,⁵⁹ 5 percent from South Africa, and 4 percent respectively from Australia and India. In addition, applications were received from Botswana, Turkey, Indonesia, Japan, Georgia, Canada and Peru. The truly global diversity of the applicants reflects the pertinence of the questions raised by the project, and underscores the international relevance of these questions for contemporary art, craft and design practitioners.

A recognition of the fundamental importance of socially engaged *international* platforms characterised by respectful dialogue informed the unique structure of the project. The residency and exhibition project thus included an online reading group, *in situ* lecture series, demonstrations and a research tour. These additional components enabled participants to learn more about post-colonialism in general (from a literary, and philosophical perspective) as well as explore a

⁵⁸ Applicants were received from residents of Sweden, Italy, France, Denmark, Northern Ireland, Croatia, Germany, Slovenia, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Finland and Portugal. The most numerous were from Italy, with 4 applicants.

⁵⁹ Applicants were received from residents of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

diversity of local colonial and neo-colonial relationships. This voluntary reading group attempted to ensure that we all shared the same conceptual and analytical tools, and could discuss works with an appropriately nuanced lexis.

The research tour included a series of lectures and visits to relevant sites. For example, we had a guided visit of the Dead Sea, the world's saltiest water body, that is also the lowest place on earth, 421,5 m below sea level. Our visit commenced with a lecture by the geologist, Dr Carmit Ish Shalom. She focused on the over-exploitation of this natural resource resulting from uncoordinated competition between the mineral industry (salt and potassium), tourism and agriculture. This ruthless exploitation is causing the sea's rapid exsiccation, and extensive, hazardous sink-holes around its rim. We also visited a Bedouin non-profit organization, Desert Embroidery: The Association for the Improvement of Women's Status, in Lakia, southern Israel. This pioneering embroidery program generates income for Bedouin women and preserves traditional handicrafts. They operate a mobile library serving over 1 500 children, as well as educational programs for women and youth.

Conclusion

The nineteen selected artists explored complex and contradictory epistemologies of post-colonialism, settler colonialism and decolonialisation in a nation that is 'becoming' and that is a characterised by polyphonic, and chaotic negotiations, opinions and ideologies. They wrangled with local politics and power structures including the state and multinational corporations; the constantly

evolving built landscape and material culture. Works and installations explored forms of artistic and intellectual resistance via the creation of counter narratives, strategies of subversion, mimicry, parody, simulation and simulacra and hybridity. Moving beyond binary social relations, the exhibition 'spoke out' ⁶⁰ against occupation, human rights violations, abusive state and exploitative capitalist programs operating in the region.

The Post-colonialism? residency and exhibition project consolidates the Benyamini's achievements, and celebrates its fifth anniversary. It demonstrates a desire to challenge the status quo within Israeli ceramics, design and visual arts. The exhibition's trilingual labels and signage defied current norms in the cultural sector. The courage of the Benyamini organising committee is noteworthy, as there was a lot of uncertainty as to how international and local artists would respond to the project, particularly in the light of a constantly degenerating political context. Furthermore, it is worth noting that from 2011, the Israeli government has engaged in civil lawsuits against BDS activists and cultural workers perceived to be disloyal to the Israeli state.⁶¹ Despite preliminary fears, the residency and exhibition project has facilitated the building of professional networks between Israeli, international artists

⁶⁰ An understated yet clearly critical introductory statement was displayed in the entrance foyer. It set the tone for the exhibition, noting that it 'spoke out respectfully' against occupation and human rights violations. The wording of the introductory statement was carefully determined, and I deliberately toned down the rhetoric. I chose not to use words like 'resistance' in the introductory statement although I believe that the exhibition was an act of resistance. The Benyamini Centre as an institutional entity, as well as its staff may be persecuted and suffer the consequences of showing an exhibition of this nature. Furthermore, the engagement of the artists and work speaks for itself. I didn't need to underline and highlight the obvious in my introduction! Is this self-censorship? No. I see it as a sign of political maturity. My stance ensures that the art works and installations have centre-stage, and the Benyamini continues to undertake its excellent work.

⁶¹ In early 2017, the Israeli government's 'boycott bill' was updated to include an entry ban to any person "who knowingly issues a public call for boycotting Israel..." The ban also applies to people who call for boycotts of any Israeli institution or any "area under its control" i.e. the settlements (Lis 2017).

and the sole Palestinian artist. It also permitted international artists to develop nuanced understandings of the political situation within Israel. Inclusive and engaged with local realities, *Post-colonialism?* is a truly audacious project that demonstrates the courage and vision of the Benyamini's leadership.

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5.12.7 Texts about art works, Installations & Interventions

Eva Avidar

Eva Avidar's naked self-portrait biting an apple investigates the partial self, and the sculpture's construction involved an intimate journey of self-compassion. The artist battles with an internal colonisation of cancerous cells. The invisible forces of destruction are manifested externally via scars from a breast mastectomy and liver transplant. While for Christians the forbidden fruit is a metaphor for illegal or immoral indulgences or pleasures, for Jews the apple is a symbol of hope in Rosh Hashanah celebrations. This double-entendre of the apple is magnified as some viewers will think that the apple is choking the protagonist. But for the artist, the apple is a positive symbol. Her body is a source of knowledge and cultural production that defies

traditional essentialist identities for women. Avidar makes art and celebrates her vibrant creative agency as a retort to her fugacious existence. *La lucha continua!*

Oren Arbel and Naom Tabenkin Arbel

'First Reduction' an installation by Oren Arbel and Naom Tabenkin Arbel is inspired by a short story by the contemporary Syrian writer, Zakaria Tamer, in which a large man is surgically remodelled to ensure he consumes a pre-determined rationed air quantity. Their 'machine' compresses unfired vessels made of different layers of 'local' clay bodies. This survey of crushed iconic archaeological forms speaks of ancient and recent histories of conquest, and the systemic violence associated with assimilation and 'normalisation'. Tamer's poem follows:

The First Minimazation / Zakaria Tamer

Abed Al-Nabi Al S'ban, a tall, hulking, broad-shouldered man, was arrested and charged with breathing more than the air quota allocated to him at any given moment. He did not deny it, but claimed his giant lungs were solely to blame. Soon thereafter, he was rushed to the hospital. A few weeks later he emerged a new man, short and skinny, his shrunken breast easily accommodating his small lungs, which consume notably less than his official quota of air.

Tamer, Zakaria. Paper Tiger. 2008. Translated to English from the Hebrew version by Michal Ashkenazi.

Sharbani Das Gupta

Sharbani Das Gupta, who was born in India, but resides in the United States, was in residency at the Umm el-Fahem Art Gallery. In a logical continuation of her socially engaged practice that explores environmental issues, the artist's 'Mind Maps' installation engages with questions of locality and partition (via her great-grandfather's personal diaries that record his life against the backdrop of the Indian independence movement and partition).

The installation consists of a series of clay cubes engraved with imaginary topographical contour maps. The cubes are presented on a plaster base that also suggests an aerial view of landscape. Dense palimpsests of history are suggested by the layering of these forms. The work may be viewed through tinted, fused glass 'VR' headpieces that facilitate a subtle optical illusion. The transformative power of this simple device suggests that perception of reality is often decided by the lens of our personal beliefs. Das Gupta's work suggests that slight alterations to a given context, may reformat our vision and understanding. Concerned about rebalancing historical perceptions of privilege and education, the artist believes that our future will be drawn on our capacity to imagine and enact a new post-national world.

Das Gupta's second work, 'The Language of Stones' is a personal homage to the many courageous people she has met during her residency. The tectonic plates of black clay, juxtaposed with a few small rounded pebbles, reference local funerary traditions, cairns and stones associated with protest and demolition. The work was not conceived, but emerged gradually out of a process of assimilation, and trying to

dissolve into the environment of her residency. The work evokes a calm solemnity and irenic gravitas.

Katya Izabel Filmus

Katya Izabel Filmus, a British artist presents an installation of found objects, cast glass and latex works that she has made during her residency at Givat Haviva. 'First generation - Last Generation' also contains a video that presents a series of eight 1-minute extracts from train journeys across Europe. It is presented behind a frosted glass 'screen'. It poetically evokes notions of travel and migration, a metaphor that is also embodied in adjacent works. On the wall, a series of four embroidered latex skins refer to some of the artist's family ongoing diasporic peregrinations. The navel is a central feature as it symbolises the link between successive generations, and is also a potent form of scar tissue. The contours of various national borders have been stitched on the epidermises, and evoke a patina of transnational peregrinations.

Below the skins, a wall shelf displays various glass and other objects. This eclectic and highly aestheticized ensemble is displayed in a manner that emphasizes conjunctions between materials and their symbolic connections. Objects include a cast glass book that contains a text by the Palestinian poet, Kamal Nasser (1925-1973), a brutally chopped, desiccated olive root - a potent shared cultural symbol of local agriculture and resistance; a replica of an elaborate Victorian trivet that would have been used on an open fire to support a tea pot and an elegant brass hanging scale, with imperial measurements, both allude to the formation and standardisation of colonial knowledge systems.

Collectively Filmus' works investigate highly personal negotiations of multiple, transnational identities.

The Last Poem (Kamal Nasser).⁶²

Beloved, if perchance word of my death reaches you
As, alone, you fondle my only child
Eagerly awaiting my return,
Shed no tears in sorrow for me
For in my homeland
Life is degradation and wounds
And in my eyes the call of danger rings.
Beloved, if word of my death reaches you
And the lovers cry out:
The loyal one has departed, his visage gone forever,
And fragrance has died within the bosom of the
flower
Shed no tears...smile on life
And tell my only one, my loved one,
The dark recesses of your father's being
Have been touched by visions of his people.
Splintered thoughts bestowed his path
As he witnessed the wounds of oppression.
In revolt, he set himself a goal
He became a martyr, sublimated his being
even changed his prayers
Deepened their features and improvised
And in the long struggle his blood flowed

⁶² Translator unknown Translation obtained on internet.
<http://www.ummah.com/forum/showthread.php?157808-Kamal-Nasser%92s-last-poem>
<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-last-poem-8/>

His lofty vision unfolded shaking even destiny.
If news reaches you, and friends come to you,
Their eyes filled with cautious concern
Smile to them in kindness
For my death will bring life to all;
My people's dreams are my shrine
at which I pray, for which I live.
The ecstasy of creation warms my being,
shouting of joy,
Filling me with love, as day follows day,
Enveloping my struggling soul and body.
Immortalized am I in the hearts of friends
I live only in others' thoughts and memories.
Beloved, if word reaches you and you fear for me
Should you shudder and your cheeks grow pale
As pale as the face of the moon,
Allow it not to look upon you, nor
feast on the beauty of your gaze
For I am jealous of the light of the moon.
Tell my only one, for I love him,
That I have tasted the joy of giving
And my heart relishes the wounds of sacrifice.
There is nothing left for him
Save the sighs from my song...Save the remnants
of my lute
Lying piled and scattered in our house.
Tell my only one if he ever visits my grave
And yearns for my memory,
Tell him one day that I shall return
to pick the fruits.

Magdalena Hefetz

Magdalena Hefetz's video, 'I Broke Her', depicts the destruction and burial of 40 meters of clay slabs printed with images of the wall that divides Abu Dis – a suburb of Jerusalem. Her iconoclastic performance speaks of a heroic act of hope for the destruction of the many walls that divide this territory. While the performance may be a form of satire, it is also a tool for exposing and destabilising the political regime, helping to dream of spaces in which freedom can be imagined.

Johnathan Hopp

'Inconclusive conversations'

1. Garo and Sonia Sandrouni.
2. Monologues.

Johnathan Hopp's installation is a research space that surveys an ensemble of recent and new drawings and painted sketches, 3D renderings, experimental prototypes, fired and unfired ceramic objects designed and decorated by Hopp, as well as popular commercial pottery. The series entitled 'Garo Sandrouni' engages with Armenian folk ceramics, an iconic local tourist commodity that is sold throughout Israel, but especially in Jerusalem. The series includes found objects (Armenian style commercial pottery), and Hopp's forms that were decorated by Garo and Sonia Sandrouni, a couple of highly esteemed Armenian potters from Jerusalem. Hopp's response to the Sandrouni forms is articulated in a bisqueware series decorated with water colour paint.

A second series of poetic monologues explores form and surface. Some of the works present Hopp's ongoing research into pattern via experimental print techniques. Others represent attempts to create new vessels that avoid established ceramic archetypes – seeking originality both in terms of form and surface.

Hopp's ongoing research work into souvenir wares is based on his interest in these humble, domestic, popular objects to sites and signifiers of memory; personal, collective and national identity construction. As an Industrial Designer, he laments the apparent dearth of local design and craft history, and is interested in the mobility of iconic forms (both formal and graphic) – within the greater Mediterranean basin and on a more global scale. 'Inconclusive conversations' is an open and permeable display of work in progress, and these intimate dialogues are ongoing and incomplete. They map Hopp's personal quest for identity construction as they investigate of tropes of the locality, self, and the 'other'.

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Neha Kudchadkar

Neha Kudchadkar lives and works in Mumbai, India. During her residency at Hacubia, Jerusalem, the artist created a series of works called 'sharing stories'. This installation includes disparate iconic ceramic elements that have been magnified and distorted [bamba

snacks, window latches, a kirpan (Sikh dagger), a nargilah, a photo frame, and a section of razor wire]. They have been gleaned from Partition literature (notably by Sadat Hasan Manto) and documentary narratives about Israel and Palestine (by Ben Ehrenreich). Objects become signifiers that embody complex negotiations and responses to the 'other' within periods of extreme systemic violence. The ceramic pieces are tied together by a narration of fragments of the original stories.

A series of three photographs, 'home/land' documents micro-performances in various Israeli-Palestinian spaces. The sites of these photos include a Jewish settlement in the West Bank, and a location near the wall in Jerusalem. They explore the various complex and contradictory relationships with land, including rootedness, up-rootedness and the act of engaging in agriculture as ways of claiming and re-claiming sovereign rights to land. While the works were photographed in specific locations, the artist has aimed to strip the scenes of any overtly identifiable geographic references. Rather, they evoke no-man's land, crossings and 'speak out' about local injustices. The prickly pears in one of the photos is a motif associated with Palestinian fences and used to indicate borders of fields and territories. The plant has also been appropriated by Israelis to symbolise their national identity that is prickly on the exterior and sweet in the interior. In another image, the controlled and channelled movements of people is contested. In all three images, there is a conscious attempt to remove and neutralise any specific markers of gender, race, class and privilege. The act of installing and performing these images, involved a deliberate act of contesting state and private control mechanisms.

Kudchadkar's works evokes a subtle liminality - ephemeral, in-between moments, where stories and histories are unresolved. Liminality is of

importance in post-colonial theory since it identifies the interstitial environment in which cultural transformation can take place, and new poetic and discursive forms are constituted.

Acknowledgements

The photos with the prickly pears and the Jerusalem wall were taken by Noa Bachner, and the sound piece was realised in collaboration with Yael Gur. A poem by Fikrat Goja, entitled 'No Address' was used in Kudchadkar's opening performance.

Corwyn Lund

Corwyn Lund, a Canadian artist based at Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art, produced sculptures which hybridize microphone bouquets and funerary flower arrangements. These serve as *memento mori*; reminders of mortality and loss delivered through the mass media. Lund's work posits the motif of the microphone bouquet as a universal memorial, continually reconstructed anew at every news conference, which are primary sites of collective loss and tragedy.

Lund's sculptural installation consists of oxide-rich earthenware elements and a digitally printed textile that mimics a popular Israeli flooring material. His incorporation of a 'Modernist' grid, deployed as a means of over-writing prior histories, stems from his research into Israeli architecture and urban planning. 'Decayed Microphone Bouquets for Israel' attempts to move beyond a mediated view of contemporary Israel, towards an engagement with the actualities of its socio-political and architectural landscape.

Hagar Mitelpunkt

Hagar Mitelpunkt's video installation, 'The Kiln', explores smoke as a subversive metaphor for mobility in a region characterized by rigid population control. Motifs projected on the smoke include consumer products, other sponsored adverts, as well as weightless images of bodies floating in water. Her video is projected into the Benyamini Centre's storage room. The tightly stacked mass of plinths serve as Mitelpunkt's screen. This charged space physically embodies the accumulation of commodities. The resulting fragmentation of the projected images poetically evokes insidious and uncontrolled global capitalist flows of people and produce.

Manal Morcos

Manal Morcos' installation, '68', commemorates the Nakba of 15 May 1948. It contains two sets of 68 glass medical vials; half representing blood and the others representing water from the Jordan river. The clinical language of the presentation of these vials evokes the trauma of this (and other subsequent) historic events that involved the expulsion of Palestinians, and the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian towns and villages. But, both the blood and water are fake and thus evoke local histories of 'corruption' concerning these two commodities. The sale of false Jordan water, some of it 'Made in China', to tourists and pilgrims, is the subject of many local jokes. Blood also has other sinister contemporary associations. Israeli media recently exposed a scandal concerning the systematic (racist) destruction of blood donated by Sephardic Jews.

Morcos' work engages with Baudrillard's notion of postmodern simulation and simulacra, whereby society has moved beyond questions of imitation, duplication, and parody. Rather, signs of the real are substituted for the real. According to Baudrillard, we have become estranged from real things and their use-value, as markets and personal relations are dominated by all pervasive multi-national capitalism. The violent occupational wars associated with Zionist expansion, and the commodification, disembodiment and faking of natural resources and life by private and state interests are powerfully evoked by Morcos' installation.

Modisa (Tim) Motsomi

Modisa Motsomi, who hails from Botswana, and was in residence at Oranim College, Kiryat Tivon, produced a large mixed media sculpture and wall intervention, 'Terra-Incognita, Terra-Nullius, Terra-Pericolosa'.⁶³ The work focuses on multi-layered meanings of body, land, memory and mapping. The artist has created a site-specific response to diasporic flows, control and statehood, and the invisibility of migrants. Motsomi 'mines' various contested dualities, including place and space, the 'native' and the 'other', the whole and the partial. His project embodies metanarratives of identity in relation to geographic contextualisation.

The installation incorporates '*tape!*', a local adhesive vinyl product for covering walls and shelves. Motsomi uses this material as a *trompe l'oeil* covering for his plinth and on the wall, where it maps space, creating and defining a patchwork of layered terrains. This popular

⁶³ These Latin terms originate in colonial mapping practices, and refer to unknown, unoccupied and dangerous territory.

material evokes simulated marble, and serves as a metaphor for the artifice of luxury and the symbolic act of dominion over vast resources.

The metaphor of artifice is also evoked in the glazing of the figurative sculptural form that connotes metallic, bronze-like qualities. The use of the plinth and the stacked and layered qualities of the sculpture also evoke histories of conquest and notions of trophies. Topographical mapping practices are incorporated into the vinyl and onto the ceramic forms. This highlights the visible and invisible negotiations inherent in the map-making process, and imaginatively play with the notion of defining, naming and claiming land and assumptions of sovereignty.

Danijela Pivašević-Tenner

Danijela Pivašević-Tenner, a German artist who grew up in the former Yugoslavia, developed a participatory project with artists and students at the Benyamini Ceramics Centre. During her installation sessions, she questioned participants about territorial border lines and personal boundaries. She asked for information about participant's backgrounds, including which territories the participants came from and their genealogy. The artist also investigated questions of national stability over the past century and issues of continuity. Informal personal genealogical map drawing sessions were also undertaken.

Pivašević-Tenner's roof-top installation of fine red and white earthenware rods, 'Things you see from there, you don't see from here,' engages with a polysemic visual language and evokes basic written communication via linear glyphs, as well as primitive weaponry, and notions of borders. While different urban constellations and islands are

evoked. Visitors are encouraged to interact with the work. They can move or remove the batons. They can fight new wars, make new cities or borders or conceive new languages. Everyone is ultimately responsible for their actions!

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Pablo Ponce

Pablo Ponce, an Argentinian artist living in the Netherlands, has travelled extensively in the region of West Bank prior to his residency at Tel Hai College. His work, 'Broken Embraces' consists of a series of architectonic models that incorporates clay from Hebron and the Golan Heights area in Israel. The installation speaks of his experiences of walls and checkpoints and includes a video of children crossing the notorious Hebron checkpoint in the centre of the old city. The video captures the insidious normalisation of this inhumane system of population control, and engages subtly with a subversive form of parody of the invisible guards as an impatient adolescent bangs a turnstile gate.

Anthony E. Stellacio

Anthony E. Stellacio, an American artist in residency at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, travelled extensively in the greater Middle East prior to his residency. His work 'Lean' is a hybrid manifestation of

historical and contemporary elements from the built environment – recalling rock niches of ancient Petra, contemporary water tanks and military watch towers. Its form and surface treatment of gravel and concrete allude to aggressive practices of engagement. In a recent interview the artist explained that the creation process was very instinctive and the form is a ‘subconscious’ response to his experiences in Israel and the region.

Within the exhibition, ‘Lean’ acts as a phallic sentinel as it lies in a corner; mute, defrocked and immobilized by large wedges. At the same time, the sculpture is highly present and actively interferes with the gallery space. It engages with works by Eva Avidar, Modisa (Tim) Motsomi, Oren Arbel and Naom Tabenkin Arbel and Corwyn Lund, that literally or metaphorically evoke bodies and their reception. Stellacio’s inclined member is a complex and contradictory ode to virility and castration, victory and defeat, within this volatile, highly militarized region.

Talia Tokatly

Talia Tokatly’s installation, ‘Fox Laughs’ evokes a poetic world of associative dialogues and is a wry, feminist reference to Ted Hugh’s famous poem, ‘The Thought Fox’. The Hebrew title, צוחקת שועל involves a linguistic play on the gender of words, associating a masculine fox with the feminine conjugation of laugh. This playfully subversive title, with its allusion to androgyny, poetry and trickery serves as an evocative introduction to the work. A cacophonous, poetic ensemble of iconic Hebrew books and manuals, dolls of kibbutzniks and sultry Arab ladies selling pitas, carved tusks, ironically restored souvenirs and other apparently whimsical bric-a-brac speak of travel, dislocation, memory

and exoticism. Her careful intervention within the Benyamini library dialogues subversively with the ceramics archive, as a shrine of factual narratives, monolithic and canonical surveys of slick, whole ceramic forms. Tokali's 'foxy' presence in this space creates a symbolic instability of form and language, explores rupture and restoration, issues of translation and 'lost in translation'. Tokaly is a trickster, and her installation offers a space of radical transformation that mixes the past and present, colonial and post-colonial objects, facts and fictions, creating a new polysemic language and ways of seeing the world. Her delicate pastiche of intertextual chaos reflects the unstable pluralism of contemporary Israeli society.

Rock Wang

Rock Wang is an industrial designer from Studio Qiao, Taipei, and was a resident artist at the Holon Institute for Technology. 'U Need Code' is a blue and white tile panel of QR codes that enables viewers to explore Taiwan's colonial histories, under Dutch (1624-1662), Japanese (1895-1945), and Chinese occupations (from 1662, 1949-now) via a website that proposes 729 images. The title is a pun on 'Unicode', a code in the computing industry to standardise the encoding, representation, and handling of text. Unicode's set of code charts cover most of the world's writing systems, with more than 128,000 characters representing 135 modern and historic scripts and symbol sets. According to Wang, Unicode, been made accessible by QR codes. QR codes allow people to communicate across languages in a new, creative ways.

For the designer, post-colonialism is a lived experience, and visible in everyday life. The projected images that are linked to the QR codes include architecture, objects from daily life (teapots and ceramic

objects), ceremonies (for example the tea ceremony and religious ceremonies), clothes, adverts, food and beverages. This database corresponds to the historical periods of occupation, and includes images 10% native 5% Dutch, 75% Chinese and 10% Japanese codes.

Ayelet Zohar

Ayelet Zohar's multiple interventions in the Post-colonialism? exhibition include a camouflage net wrapping of the Benyamini building; a life size replica of a donkey transformed into a zebra sub-species, the quagga, in the library; and a dozen dioramas in the entrance vestibule. While the wrapping dialogues with Christo's wrapped monuments, it's also a subversive reference to former prime minister Ehud Barak's controversial claim that Israel was 'A villa in the jungle,' an illustrative idiom that highlights the racist and imperialist discourse that insidiously underlies many Zionist ideologies and actions. The artist has worked with camouflage for many years, starting with Dead Sea, 2004, an installation of arctic camouflage nets and salt at the Slade School, London.

'The Quagga' is a styrofoam maquette originating from Lidia Zavadsky's donkey sculpture, Ephraim... Ephraim (2000, Eretz-Israel Museum, Tel Aviv), and which served as a point of departure for the 'Donkey' exhibition held at the Benyamini in late 2012. Following two central ideas in Postcolonial Theory, Mimicry and Hybridity, Zohar creates a series of mimics and copies that echo the event of painting donkeys with zebra stripes that took place at the Gaza zoo in 2009, resulting in a representation of a 'natural hybrid', the quagga. What does the skin of an animal signify. The chain of assimilation is a key aspect of post-colonialism.

The whimsical dioramas in 'The Museum of (Un)Natural History' reference practices of natural history museums, as well as early works by the renowned photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto. The dioramas display an amalgamation of natural and fabricated objects, materials, shapes and scenes that reflect a world of hybridity, created by global influences and sources. This polyphonic layering of inter-textual references highlights questions of visibility and invisibility; mimicry and hybridity; assimilation, simulation, simulacrum and dissimulation, quixotic fantasies of alterity and the privilege and pain of 'feeling at home' in Israel.

Ronit Zor

Ronit Zor's 'Displacement' sculptural installation evokes iconic architectural forms - Bedouin tents and Egyptian obelisks. The relatively permanent obelisks and the ephemeral constellation of suspended tents generate narratives of permanence and impermanence. These transnational displacements of archetypal forms allude to historical and contemporary acts of colonisation. The Bedouin tents are a feature of numerous impoverished Bedouin villages, that are unrecognised by the Israeli state, and not marked on local maps. According to This is a deliberate effacement of history. The display of these phallic obelisks near the hollow tents insinuate an element of sexual vulnerability.

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