

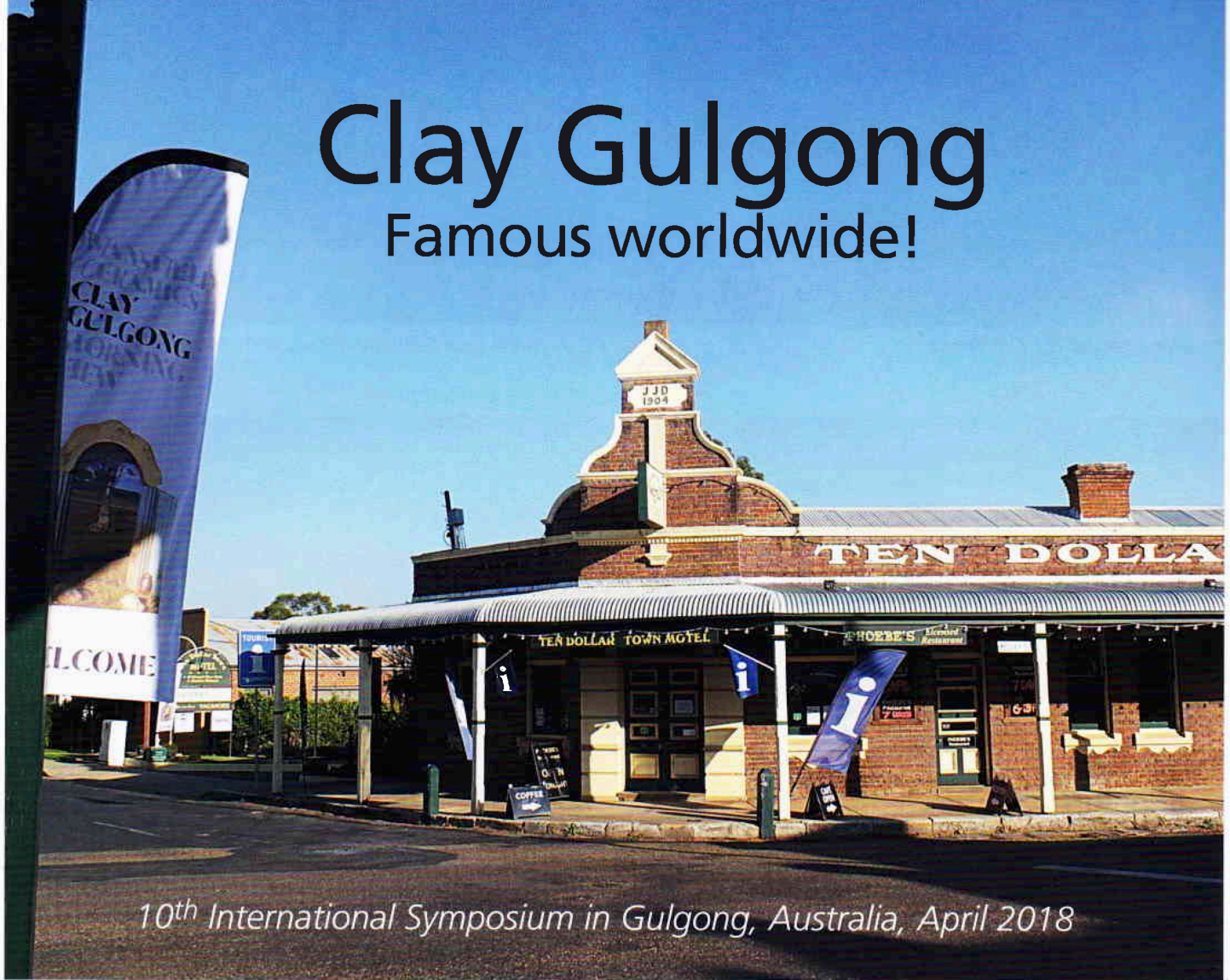
new CERAMICS

The European Ceramics Magazine



Clay Gulgong

Famous worldwide!



10th International Symposium in Gulgong, Australia, April 2018

A street scene in Gulgong

BY MICHAELA KLOECKNER

Iconic comes to mind, as does epic, if you want to describe Clay Gulgong 2018!

For the tenth time, from 15 – 22 April, the small gold prospecting town in NSW, Australia with its old time charm and its extensive clay deposits welcomed 700 participants from all over the world. Iconic ceramic artist Jane Mansfield, who died in 2013, established Clay Gulgong in 1989 with Woodfire. The Mansfield family with son, Neil Mansfield and his wife Bernadette are keeping her legacy alive and

have once again presented an action-filled week with demonstrations, exhibitions and shop-window displays and plenty of opportunities to get to know each other again.

On the Red Hill, in a white marquee beneath a brilliant blue Australian sky, world famous ceramists revealed their secrets to the enthusiastic audience. Exciting, exquisite and exotic are words you can use to describe the artists and their demonstrations.

Australian artist Robyne Latham

started the week with an installation where the audience could actively participate. The Stolen Generation belongs to a sad era in Australia that should not be forgotten. Children from Aborigine families were forced to leave their families and placed either in state care or in white families, where they grew up. A smoke ceremony took place and miniature coolamons or cribs were handmade by Robyne and members of the audience. They were then arranged in a spiral on the ground. Coolamons were used by Aborigines to collect

Elaine O'Henry



John Pagliaro



Keith Brymer-Jones





Installation by Robyne Latham

food but they were also used as cribs for their babies. Robyne used the colours black, brown, white and yellow, to reflect all the races in the world. The unfired pieces will crumble with time and thus become part of the world again.

Simone Fraser (Aus) has been working for decades with the traditional form of the ceramic vessel. Her working method is a combination of throwing and coiling, where she works rhythmically with her fingers on the coils to give them an interesting undulating, perforated surface.

John Pagliaro (USA) handbuilds his pots. As soon as he begins the process, he seems to be transported to a different world. He uses a highly intuitive method and works on the clay in an traditional rhythm. It is an unusual level of intimacy between a potter and his material.

Keith Brymer-Jones (England), potter and ceramic designer, was in Gulgong for the second time. The expert from the BBC show, *The Great Pottery Throwdown*, won all of our hearts when he threw a commemorative cup for every one of the 700

participants to take home.

Elaine O'Henry (USA), former editor and publisher of *Ceramics: Art and Perception* and *Ceramics TECHNICAL* needs no introduction. (The magazine is back in the hands of the Mansfield family now.) It was a nice surprise to see Elaine in her capacity as a ceramist and to observe her impressive skills. One of her projects was to give 50 potters in Australia an identically made and glazed bowl so that she could record the variations of various kilns and firing techniques in all their results.

King Houndepinkou



Simone Fraser



Tip Toland





Michaela Kloeckner and Aneta Regel



Neil and Bernadette Mansfield with grandson



Alan Peascod memorial exhibition



At the Clay Fashion Extravaganza



Grand finale – the fire sculpture by Renata Cassiano and Craig Hartenberger

King Houndepinkou lives in France and is of Beninese parentage. He is a relative newcomer to ceramics with only six years' experience. He made a regal appearance in his blood red coat with his fabulous model's good looks. But not only his person, his handbuilt vessels also demanded attention with their delicate decoration and golden ornamentation.

Aneta Regel, a Polish-born artist who lives in London, compares ceramics to music. She astonished the participants by fearlessly including local rocks in her sculptures. The colourful abstract objects are fired in her electric kiln.

Tip Toland (USA) is an international megastar in the world of ceramic sculpture. Her lifesize, hyperrealistic figures show people in their own private, intimate and vulnerable world. In an era where youth and beauty are

celebrated, Tip often shows us the other side of the spectrum, ageing bodies with wrinkles, sagging flesh and a bent posture. Real hair gives the sculptures a hyperrealistic appearance.

Team Kiwi (NZ) was a group of leading ceramists from New Zealand (Christine Thacker, Jim Cooper, Kare Fitzharris, Louise Menzies, Paerau Corneal, Richard Parker).

In the meantime, at Morning View, the Mansfield farm, a huge sculpture was being erected by Renata Cassiano, Craig Hartenberger and a group of volunteer helpers. This was in honour of Nina Hole. Her wonderful arch with a view still stands on the hill at Morning View.

The final day was spent at the farm of the Mansfield family, Morning View. There was

an atmosphere of excited anticipation when we were able to walk around Janet Mansfield's studio and examine her library and extensive collection of ceramics, and to view the sculptures in the dry, hilly yellow landscape.

There were further demonstrations, a competition for a fast-firing kiln, a hilarious clay fashion show and the grand finale, the unveiling of the huge fire sculpture. As the sun slowly set and the temperatures suddenly became unpleasantly cool, the sky turned cobalt blue behind the black silhouettes of the trees.

We huddled closer and closer to the huge, glowing mound of clay and waited for the night to turn pitch black. Only then did the team peel back the fibre mats and throw salt and sawdust on the glowing sculpture, creating a spectacular firework display in the night sky and in our hearts!

Further active participants at the festival included Daniel Johnston (USA), Ben Carter (USA), Majolandile Andile Dylvane (South Africa), Neil Hoffman from Tasmania (Aus), Virgil Ortiz (New Mexico), Jenny Orchard (Aus), Renata Cassiano (Mexico/Italy) and Craig Hartenberger (USA).

MICHAELA KLOECKNER
is a ceramist, lecturer and writer.
She lives in NSW, Australia.
www.kloeckner.com.au