

**The South African Contemporary Ceramic
Collection at the William Humphreys Art
Gallery,
1984 – 2009
Volume 1**

Rika Stockenström

Student number: 207517313

Examiner's Copy

Supervisor Professor Ian Calder 80107

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This thesis and catalogue has not been, nor is to be, submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

Rika Stockenström

Kimberley

November 2014

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Rika Stockenström

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ABSTRACT

This thesis catalogues and contextualises the South African contemporary ceramics collected during 1984 – 2009 at the William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley, South Africa. The study contextualises this museum's motivations for acquisitions of contemporary South African ceramics during this period, describes the original motivations for collecting as well as subsequent historical developments up to 2009 in evaluating various ceramic media of the contemporary ceramic collection.

The ceramic media includes unfired clay, raku, smoke fired, earthenware, stoneware, porcelain, bone china and paper clay.

PREFACE

The primary research for this MA about the South African contemporary ceramic collection at the William Humphreys Art Gallery was conducted *in situ* at this museum in Kimberley, South Africa.

This research consists of 2 volumes:

- Volume 1: Interpretive text
- Volume 2: Catalogue. A database with photographs of works of South African contemporary ceramics studied at the William Humphreys Art Gallery

Throughout the text (Volume 1), reference is made to ceramics in the catalogue (Volume 2). Throughout the thesis reference is made to the catalogue. The thesis consists of photographs and the relevant information of each piece in the collection collected from 1984 – 2009.

Prefatory Note

1. The Harvard 'short form' of referencing is used in this thesis.
2. Titles of literature are given in italics in the text of the thesis, and in the bibliography of references provided at the end of Volume 1.
3. References appear within brackets and are accompanied by page numbers. Where one author has several references, a date is added to identify the source.
4. Titles of artworks and ceramics are in italics.
5. Title of art exhibitions are in italics.
6. Measurements are in centimetres, height before width, for example '12.5h x 15'. 'h' is added after the height, as this catalogue will be available to visitors at the gallery who are not necessarily familiar with the standard use of height before width.
7. Foreign words and terms are indicated in italics.

8. Illustrations of ceramics are numbered sequentially; WHAG accession numbers refer to the museum records.
9. Unless stated otherwise, photographs of WHAG ceramics in Volume 1 and Volume 2 were taken by Russell Scott (in 2010).
10. Unless stated otherwise, photographs of markings of the WHAG ceramics were taken by Rika Stockenström or Anna du Plessis.
11. Unless stated otherwise, photographs of WHAG openings were taken by Sandy Ward, Kimco, Kimberley.
12. A glossary of key terms, definitions and technical aspects as applied to the Collection is provided.
13. Additional addenda of WHAG archives appear after the list of references.
14. In Volume 2, under '**Title/Description**': if the title is entered into the section, it is placed in inverted commas, where the description is without.
15. In Volume 2, '**Condition Remark**' is only completed if condition of the piece is not listed as 'Excellent', ie if there is some remark to be made.
16. The acquisition numbers in this catalogue (Volume 2) will not follow each other, as all artworks at WHAG are accessioned in the same way. Hence, the 'missing' acquisition numbers are not omissions, but rather belongs to an artwork that is not made of clay and therefore not included in this thesis.
17. The following abbreviations are used in this thesis:
 - WHAG: William Humphreys Art Gallery
 - UKZN: University of KwaZulu Natal
 - CVA: Centre for Visual Arts
 - pers obs: personal observation
 - pers comm: personal communication

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When I started my academic research for this thesis, I was struck by a comment made by Nilant in his text on South African contemporary ceramics, that ‘... we should always remember that a real potter creates objects for decoration or use in the house and not specially for the enrichment of a collection in a museum’ (Nilant 1963: 2). Fortunately this view has changed and it has become increasingly significant in South Africa to recognise ceramics, whether functional or sculptural, as an art form and to exhibit and collect it as such.

My relationship with ceramics started as a high school learner, who at the age of 15, dropped Biology to take Ceramic Design as a second art subject. As a first year student at the then Technikon Free State (now Technical University of Technology, Bloemfontein, Free State), I flew through the basic ceramic training we received, as I was already well-versed in the hand-building methods all first year students had to learn. By the end of my first year, I had to make the difficult decision of what to major in. At the time, Johan Verster was the lecturer who took second and third year ceramic students, and he convinced me that taking ceramics as a second subject would be a waste of time – that in order to become a ‘real’ potter, one needs to know how to throw on the wheel, understand the mysteries of glaze and clay recipes and understand the ins and outs of running a studio. I decided to major in ceramics and although I could never throw competently, in time I developed a passion and understanding of ceramics that has endured and inspired me to further my studies during my professional career.

This passion was fuelled even more when I started working at the William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG) in Kimberley, Northern Cape, South Africa in 2003 as the Art Projects Leader. At the time, Judy Horner, the then Curatorial Assistant, had already started a file on the ceramists whose work WHAG had collected since 1984. When she left, I took over the research and in 2005, after completing a B.Tech Ceramic Design at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, started having conversations with the late Juliet Armstrong about possibly obtaining a Master’s Degree, when she visited WHAG while exhibiting at the *David Walters & Friends – Mentors* exhibition. With the collection growing rapidly, I realised that information was getting lost and that I needed to complete the database. The discussions with Armstrong made me realise that this research could

easily translate into an MA dissertation. Ann Pretorius, director at WHAG, supported me in this endeavour from the start, as she understands and agrees that pivotal information should be recorded and is as important in the collection as the artworks themselves. As WHAG has a small staff and a busy schedule, very little time can be spent on research and it often lags behind, as is the case in most art museums in South Africa, according to personal conversations with museum staff across the country. A museum may have the following: Director, Assistant Director, Curator (or possibly more than one for different collections), a collections manager/s, Museum Technologists / technicians, Educational officer, tour guides. Below is an organogram of the William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG Annual Report, 2012 – 2013):

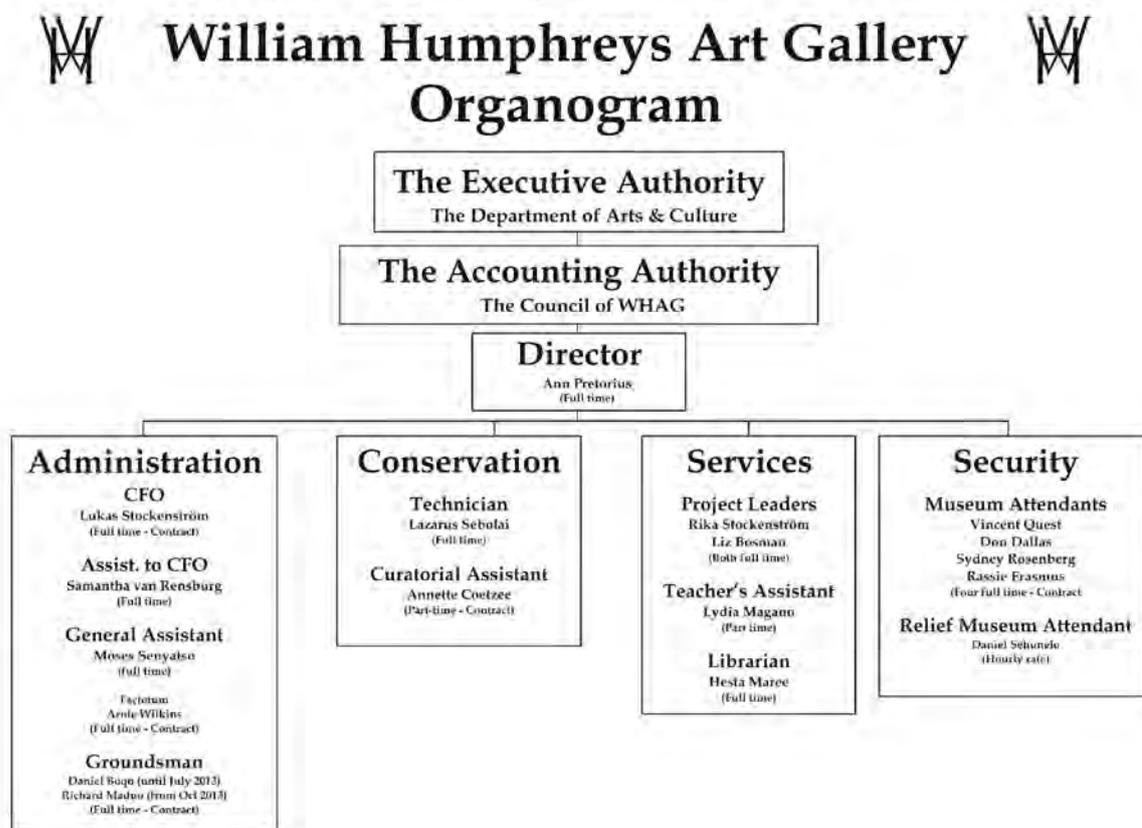


Fig. 1: Organogram of the William Humphreys Art Gallery.

The small staff is a direct result of lack of funding. As will be discussed in chapter four, the WHAG is a National Museum and receives its allocation from the Department of Art and Culture, National. This research will be conducted at the WHAG where I am currently employed as Art Projects Leader.

This thesis aims to catalogue and contextualize the holdings of the contemporary ceramic collection of the William Humphreys Art Gallery from 1984 to 2009. My primary intention is to produce a useful reference tool that incorporates descriptive and contextual material for the curatorial and professional practices of the WHAG ceramics collection. For this purpose, I have developed a database of the ceramic collection that includes photographic documentation of works and fields of data that provide descriptive information such as the acquisition number, titles/description, marking remarks, size and photographs of the piece itself and its markings. A printout of this database is bound as the Catalogue (ie Volume 2) of my thesis; the text of Volume 1 provides an overview of historical and contextual issues and discusses individual aspects of the ceramics collection. It will present four chapters of text as follows:

Chapter One is the introduction to the MA thesis and explains why I initiated this research.

Chapter Two provides an outline of the aims and objectives of the study. It also gives an outline of the contemporary ceramic holdings of the William Humphreys Art Gallery.

Chapter Three consists of the history of the William Humphreys Art Gallery and its collections from 1952, when the museum first opened its doors and even before that. In this chapter I also explain in depth how the different collections were added to the WHAG collection and how the collecting of contemporary ceramics came about in 1984.

Chapter Four contextualises the acquisition of contemporary ceramics, explains the motivation behind collecting, evaluates the contemporary ceramic collection at the William Humphreys Art Gallery and presents features of the catalogue.

Chapter Five presents my conclusions.

It is important to note that all research done is original and that the primary resources of this thesis are the ceramic artworks themselves. These have been handled, inspected and documented first hand and are an important part of recording discovery. Photographs of the ceramic pieces were taken by Russell Scott in February 2010 of the works collected from 1984 to end of 2009 and photographs of the markings were taken either by myself or Anna du Plessis who worked as a volunteer at WHAG in 2011. These items listed refer to either the thesis: Volume 1, or the catalogue: Volume 2. Both of these consist of explanatory text and documentary photographs of the collection.

Below (Fig. 2) is a diagram explaining the format of the catalogue: Volume 2.

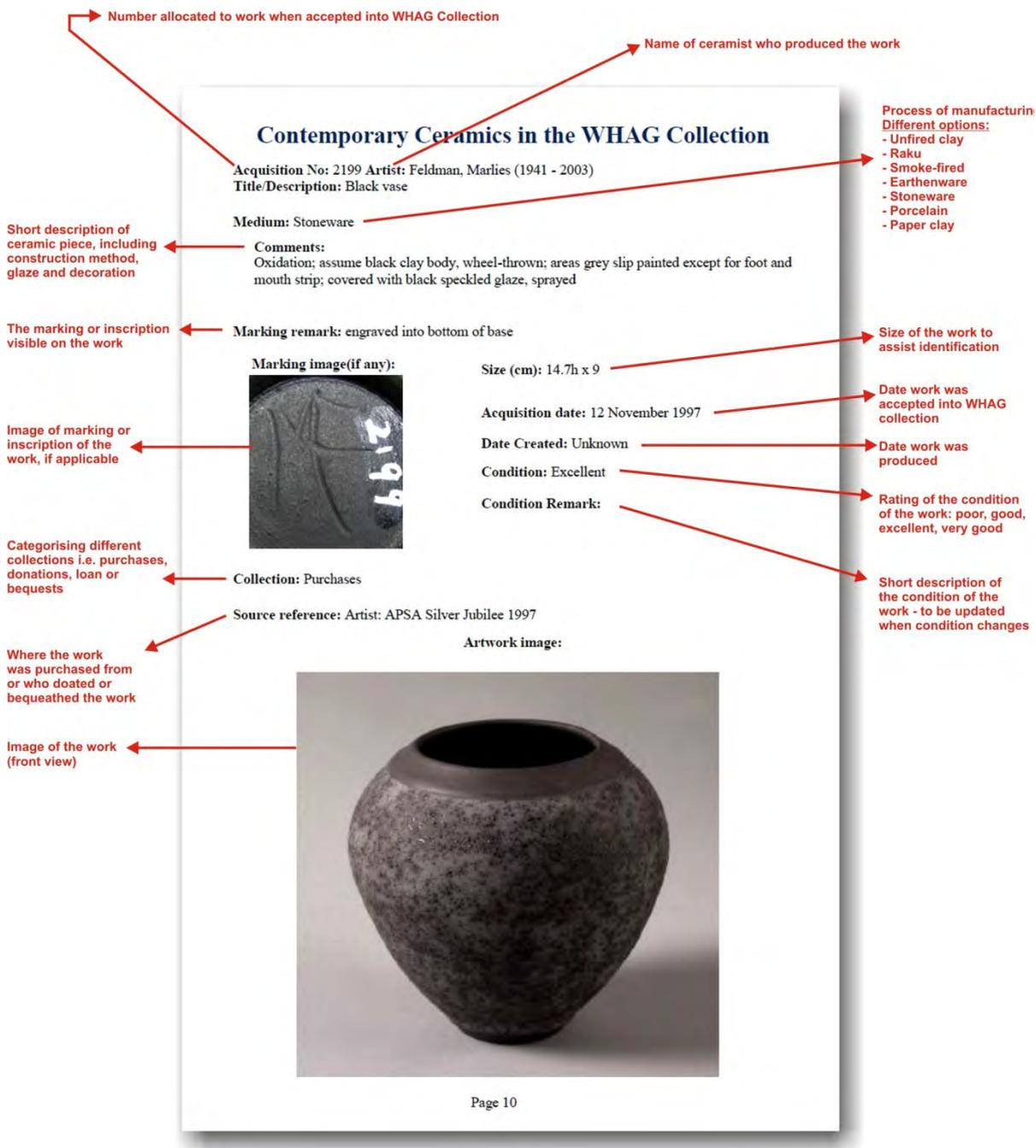


Fig. 2: Diagram explaining the format of the catalogue: Volume 2.

The secondary sources are listed in the bibliography. Throughout the process of research for the thesis and the catalogue, information was gathered from the WHAG archives. The archives used were:

WHAG archives:

- Filing system: each exhibition has a swing file, stored in the records room at WHAG or in Ann Pretorius' office. These files are opened as soon as discussions around an exhibition starts and contains correspondence (between WHAG staff and the artist/s and/or involved parties), photographs not used in the library's photo albums, invitations, catalogues, selling lists and/or other information.
- Acquisitions Register: these are (to date) 3 books that contain information on acquisitions from the first work that was acquired for WHAG's collection to date (example page Addendum A).
- Card system: a card is made for each artwork accessioned into WHAG's collection (example card Addendum B).
- Computerised database: all known information is added to the computerised database and added to as information becomes available (example page Addendum C).
- Exhibitions register: a book that keeps record of all the exhibitions held at the WHAG since its first exhibitions (example page Addendum D).
- Photo albums, containing photographs of exhibition openings and other events at WHAG, from 1994 to date.
- Scrap books, containing newspaper clippings and invitations to exhibitions and other events at WHAG from 1961 to date.
- WHAG annual reports (can be requested from WHAG).
- Ann Pretorius, Director at WHAG, personal data files.
- WHAG minutes of meetings.
- Rika Stockenström personal data files.

Chapter 2: Aims and objectives

To contextualise the ceramic holdings of the WHAG, it is necessary to give a brief outline of the history of the collection which consists of:

- Individual ceramists (as discussed by Cruise 1991), for example Elza Sullivan (acquisition number 2215) and John Wilhelm (acquisition number 3256).
- Factory ware (as discussed by Nilant 1963 and Gers 2000), large scale productions originating with designers; this category is beyond the scope of this thesis.
- Collaborative studios, work that was produced in group production, for example Ardmore (acquisition number 3346), Rorke's Drift (acquisition number 3903) and Zizamele (acquisition number 4020). In the computerised database, this work is noted to be part of an 'associated group'.
- Student work, pieces that were made by an individual while studying at a tertiary institution – for example Fahmeeda Omar (acquisition number 4153) and Sharon Weaving (acquisition number 4162).

The catalogue and thesis will concentrate on individual ceramists, collaborative studios, and student work, also including 'traditional' ware. However, as mentioned, my research will exclude the collection of factory ware as it is a very small collection and not pertinent to this thesis.

'Traditional' Ware

The term 'traditional', which according to the Oxford dictionary, means 'of or based on or obtained by tradition', will be used for the purpose of this thesis for logistical reasons. The word 'traditional' also implies a fixed mode and does not allow for change or contemporaneity. Andrew Verster made the following comment in the introduction of *Maggie Mikula, From Clay, A Retrospective*:

Africa abhors the ugly, so that no matter what is made, be it a spoon, a mask, a house, a village or something to wear, an object for ceremonial use or for everyday life is made to please all the senses. And although one might be able occasionally to detect the imprint of the individual maker, this is of lesser importance than the object itself. The artist as superstar, as celebrity, is a Western concept. And then there is the question of tradition. Whilst there is room for innovation, for invention, for

improvisation, everything that is made carries with it the history of centuries, the trappings of style, of material, and of craft in an unending line. (Verster 2004: 10)

Although Verster was referring to Mikula's work (Bauer 2004), I will use his explanation of the term 'traditional' to apply to my interpretation of the word 'traditional', pertaining to WHAG's acquisitions as well as to artists inspired by or practicing in directly indigenous material cultural forms of ceramics.

I want to emphasize that I do not wish to use 'traditional' as a derogatory term and intend no disrespect to any person or culture whilst using it. For the purposes of my study of the WHAG ceramic collection I will take it that whilst the term is imprecise in a contemporary South African context, it popularly encompasses the productions of traditionalist, rural ceramist-practitioners (pers comm I. Calder 2014). This terminology will include those ceramists' technologies who use Indigenous Knowledge Systems to make and fire their work. According to the World Bank website, <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/basic.htm>, (accessed on 15 August 2010) Warren (1991) and Flavier (1995) present a definition suggesting:

Indigenous knowledge (IK) is the local knowledge – knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. IK contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms. It is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities. (Warren 1991)

Indigenous Knowledge is (...) the information base for a society, which facilitates communication and decision-making. Indigenous information systems are dynamic, and are continually influenced by internal creativity and experimentation as well as by contact with external systems (Flavier *et al.* 1995: 479).

Very little published/printed information is available on the history, contents and basic information of the WHAG contemporary ceramic collection. This catalogue will be a worthwhile project for researchers and the museum in general – for staff and visitors alike. To date, the WHAG has used three systems to catalogue new acquisitions: the first being the acquisitions register, second the card system and the third which was implemented in 1995, a computerised database. According to personal conversations with registrars at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum in Port Elizabeth and Oliewenhuis in

Bloemfontein through the course of my research, these systems have been the preferred methods of cataloguing new acquisitions in museums in this country and are all standard museum documents. The acquisition process will be explained methodically in this thesis (see chapter four). The acquisitions register, acquisitions card system and computer database (which is constantly in the process of being updated by Annette Coetzee, Curatorial Assistant at WHAG), will serve as a basis for the catalogue. Furthermore, the WHAG exhibitions register and exhibition files which include exhibition catalogues, selling lists and correspondence to the participating potters written by Rosemary Holloway, the previous WHAG director, as well as Ann Pretorius, current Director of WHAG will be used to supplement the information for this thesis. Although all these record systems are pivotal in the research process, some are not complete as a result of: staff constraints, lack of information at exhibitions, a general database which does not allow detailed information to be stored, to mention a few reasons. This will be discussed at length in chapter four.

Chapter 3: History of the William Humphreys Art Gallery and the Collections



Fig. 3: The entrance of the William Humphreys Art Gallery, 2014 (photograph by Annette Coetzee).

The history of the William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG) starts well before 1952 which was the year the art gallery first opened its doors to the public. The Kimberley Athenaeum, formed in 1903, with the Art Section being formed just before World War I, was to promote all aspects of culture in a booming mining town which was in many ways isolated from the rest of the country. Over 40 years, a collection of South African artworks was assembled. In 1940 the Athenaeum was disbanded and the collection was given in trust to the Kimberley City Council, and would eventually find a place at WHAG.

The second collection to be included at the WHAG, was a private collection of early South African paintings bequeathed to the city by Dr Max Greenberg, a Johannesburg physician who went to school in Kimberley.

The third collection of artworks was donated by William Benbow Humphreys (1889 – 1965), then Member of Parliament for Kimberley. William Humphreys was an avid collector of European and British paintings, furniture and *objets d'art*. Initially his collection was housed at his home in Kimberley. In 1948, when the Northern Cape

Technical College was constructed, he donated a portion of his collection to the people of Kimberley and the Northern Cape. The terms of the donation were that suitable premises should be constructed for an art gallery. He donated £5 000 towards the building costs subject to various terms, including that the gallery should bear his name (Pretorius 2003:75).

On 5 December 1952 the William Humphreys Art Gallery was officially opened by Harry Oppenheimer. William Humphreys chaired the sub-committee of the Technical College Council which ran the affairs of the gallery until 1957 when the gallery was proclaimed a State-aided institution (Addendum E), directly under the jurisdiction of the National Department of Education. WHAG became the second National Art Museum, the first being the South African National Gallery in Cape Town, Western Cape, to be followed by the third and last, Oliewenhuis which opened its doors on 11 October 1989 and is a satellite museum of the National Museum in Bloemfontein, Free State.

In 1993 Nick Meyer, a friend of the gallery, bequeathed his collection of silver, porcelain and glass *objets d'art* to the WHAG and items on display from this collection have always been well received by visitors to the gallery (Pretorius 2003:77). This collection included a number of 'traditional' ceramic pieces. The Humphreys Bequest and Meyer Collection paved the way for contemporary ceramics to fit in with the rest of the fine art collection with ease.



Fig. 4: Detail of photograph of Nick Meyer, currently hanging in WHAG's 'Rogues Gallery' (photographer unknown).

According to Rosemary Holloway, as written in the 1984 Lantern article, the gallery exhibitions ‘covered widely divergent aspects of the arts from the more conventional exhibitions of painting and sculpture to ceramics, tapestries, furniture, illustrated books, child art, basketwork, cartoons, and photographs’ (Holloway 1984:46). However, the collection at this time included no contemporary ceramics. For the purposes of this thesis, the term ‘contemporary’ is used to represent ‘from 1920 to recent time’, that is ‘in our lifetime’ (see http://arthistory.about.com/od/current_contemporary_art/f/what_is.htm) accessed September 2013). In fact, the acquisition of contemporary ceramics by municipal, provincial and national museums was not undertaken in South Africa at all (or very rarely, as in the Tatham Art Gallery’s acquisitions of contemporary SA potters in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal, c1975, ref I. Calder 2013) as formerly ceramics were generally considered ‘craft’ and not ‘high art’. Jill Addleson, former Director and Curator of collections at the Durban Art Gallery, writing about collecting Mikula’s work in the early 1980’s in *Maggie Mikula, From Clay, A Retrospective*, the catalogue published for the retrospective exhibition held at Tatham in 2004:

Prior to this, the art museums in South Africa concentrated on studying and acquiring South African ceramics made in the Western tradition. If you wished to see indigenous ceramics you had to visit museums like the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg, or the Campbell Collections in Durban, which did acquire those works. For the most part, the South African art museum of the Sixties and Seventies – and even into the early Eighties – simply did not acquire indigenous ceramics. In fact, some of these art museums did not acquire ceramics at all during those years. One of the reasons was that, at the time, there was furious debate raging between what was considered to be Art (which was perceived to be a ‘higher’ art form than ceramics and which therefore ‘qualified’ to be represented in art museums) and what was regarded as Craft – ceramics, tapestries and so on – (and which was thus ineligible to be collected by some high-minded art museums of that period). This debate held great sway in academic circles at the time. This observation is not criticism of the acquisitions policies of the South African art museums of the period. It is merely a reflection on the preferences, the politics and general philosophy which then prevailed in South Africa, and elsewhere. (Addleson 2004: 15)

This changed gradually as the boundaries and divisions between ‘fine art’ and ‘craft’ became blurred; opinions changed as public galleries purchased ceramics to exhibit alongside what was historically regarded as ‘fine art’ (modernist paintings, prints,

sculptures) – as was the case at the WHAG. Wilma Cruise explains in the introduction of her book *Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa*:

If Post-Modernism means anything at all, it means that the distinctions between high art and low art have become blurred. The elitism of Modernist art has given way to the eclecticism of Post-Modernism. There is a blurring around the edges between categories of art and artifact. In South Africa Post-Modernist attitudes, accompanied by a general shift in perception as to the nature of South African society, have resulted in a willingness to look afresh at traditional crafts of all sorts. Clay work, as a previously marginalized ‘applied’ art, has benefited from this new approach. In 1985 and in 1987 ceramics exhibitions were mounted by the South African National Gallery, demonstrating that by the mid-eighties ceramics had moved from the craft fair to the central arena of the art museum. (Cruise 1991:13)

Exhibiting ceramics

According to the Exhibitions Register at WHAG (separate from the Acquisitions Register, this archival document recording exhibitions from as early as 1961), the museum first exhibited ceramics on 18 November 1968 at a *Group Exhibition*, where Clifford Barnes displayed high fired stoneware, Carol Pharo’s Batik and Erich Frey’s jewelry.

Stoneware medium neglected says artist

"I ADMIRE those Japanese potters who never sign a pot but know that it will be recognised by the particular way it has been cut off the wheel-head or by certain finger impressions says potter Clifford Barnes.

"I make stoneware fired at 1300 deg. C. Modern technology has made stoneware temperatures easier to obtain and recipes for copper or "sacrificial red" are no longer secrets. It is a great pity that more South African potters do not make stoneware, because I feel it is the artist's medium.

The lantern and floor vase I have sent you have been made by a peculiar method which involves the use of scaffolding and rope. It is neither thrown nor coiled and gives a sculptured quality to pots.

Good design is important and therefore an art training is essential. I studied art, but not pottery, in Johannesburg and in U.K. Merely decided to do pottery as a hobby about six years ago. An engineer friend and myself designed and built our own wheels, kilns, etc. At present I have a 30 cubic foot oil-fired kiln."

Erich Frey: master goldsmith

Creative works in precious stones and precious metals are normally placed either on the conventional side of our society, that is where jewellery becomes already antique or on the "avant" side of an equally interested group of connoisseurs. The split in the opinion about the values in jewellery is caused not so much by a difference in the values of Rands and carats as rather by a difference in opinion about design.

When it comes to exhibitions, there is the same split of opinion on how and where to group this type of work. Whether it should be displayed in shopwindows and showrooms or whether it should be an appendix to art — exhibitions or design centres.

Wherever it may end up eventually, there is generally no doubt that works in precious stones and precious metals can be as adventurous creations as any work of art in any other medium and the history of metal art has proved this many times.

The way one learns the art and craft in metal and stones has various approaches: You may take up an apprenticeship with a jeweller workshop or studio, and work your own way later in your own studio, or study at an Art and Craft School.

Erich Frey has tried during many years in many different ways and has worked on many possibilities. He was an apprentice and made his master degree with the guild. He studied later at well-known Art and Craft Schools and eventually became lecturer. He took part in many exhibitions overseas and in South Africa. The last exhibition was held in Cape Town "Index 68" and the "Art and Craft Show" in Munich, Germany.

However different the outcome of Erich Frey's work is and his treatment of precious stones and precious metals, he never forgets, that everyone of his works ends up in a close relationship with a human being. With this in mind, his works are always balanced and end never in an extreme.

D.F.A. 15.11.65

D.F.A. 16.11.68

William Humphreys Art Gallery EXHIBITION
 JEWELLERY — ERICH FREY
 POTTERY — CLIFFORD BARNES
Official Opening
 by Mrs. Lesley George
 ON Monday, Nov. 18
 at 5.30 p.m.
 The public is cordially invited to attend
 NOTE: A collection of semi-precious stones mined and prepared by Mr. D. P. Voges of Griquatown will be on display.
 1p12196aL18

Fig. 5: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, November 1968 below: WHAG scrap book, 1967 – 1969.

In 1975 the ELC Art and Craft Centre in Rorke's Drift exhibited figurative and non-figurative tapestries, ceramics made by Dinah Molefe, Ivy Molefe, Nester Molefe, Lephinia Molefe, Ephraim Ziqubu, Joel Sibisi and Gordon Mbatha (labeled as 'stoneware,

1350°C with matt Kaolin glaze on metal oxide decoration’), ‘fabrics (silk screen on pure cotton material)’ and ‘graphic works (linocut, etching, woodcut and dry point)’ (WHAG archives, file no 3/4/62).

Note that the ceramics in both these exhibitions were exhibited with what was regarded as ‘craft’, other than the graphic works. In 1979, the first exhibition consisted solely of ceramics; Thelma Marcuson’s porcelain ware was displayed at WHAG. Although a total of 131 pieces were on display, and 31 pieces sold, none were purchased for the gallery collection.



Fig. 6: Thelma Marcuson in the Blue Boy wing at WHAG, setting up the display (WHAG archives: file 3/4/37).



Fig. 7: Thelma Marcuson and unknown WHAG staff member in the Blue Boy wing with the display (WHAG archives: file 3/4/37).

The ELC Art and Craft Centre, Rorke’s Drift exhibited again in 1983 (WHAG archives, file no 3/4/62).



Fig. 8: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 13 July 1983: WHAG scrap book, 1982 – 1984.



Fig. 9: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 12 July 1983: WHAG scrap book, 1982 – 1984.

Policy Change: Ceramics at WHAG

That same year (1983) WHAG's council made a decision that would change the future of acquisitions at WHAG. According to the council meeting minutes in the WHAG archives, it was decided on 28 September 1983 that contemporary ceramics would be purchased for the gallery's permanent collection. According to a letter to Thelma Marcuson from then Director Rosemary Holloway, dated 12 October 1983, Ann Shuttleworth, a Kimberley resident had arranged for Marcuson to organise an exhibition at WHAG (WHAG archives, file no 3/4/88). Also mentioned in the letter, was that WHAG's council had 'decided to extend the scope of the art gallery's South African collection to include ceramics and we are hoping that the exhibition in May will afford us the opportunity of acquiring the nucleus of our new collection' (sic). In 1984, at the exhibition entitled *Ceramics – Group exhibition* the gallery purchased the first contemporary ceramics – a total of 21 pieces. The potters who exhibited were mainly studio ceramists from the then Transvaal area (now Gauteng) and exemplified the type of work made in contemporary studios at that time. This consisted mainly of high fired wares: Tim Morris (acquisition number 3872), Digby Hoets (acquisition number 3867) and Susan Annandale (acquisition numbers 3863 - 3865), porcelain: Thelma Marcuson (acquisition numbers 3873 - 3876) and Sue Meyer (acquisition numbers 3869 - 3871), as well as smoke-fired ware by Gael Neke (acquisition number 3877), and a ceramic sculpture piece by Sonja Zytchow (acquisition number 3883).

8 Friday May 4 1984

Kimberley

Ceramics exhibition at art gallery

THE ceramics exhibition, which is to open at the William Humphreys Art Gallery next Wednesday, will form the nucleus of a new collection.

The director of the gallery, Mrs Rosemary Holloway, said the gallery council had decided to branch out and start collecting ceramics. 'Up to now we have collected only paintings and sculpture, but the council has decided to broaden the spectrum of the collection,' he said.

'This is one of the reasons the exhibition was arranged. The council hopes to purchase some of the exhibits and use them as a basis for a ceramics collection.'

Mrs Holloway said it had not yet been decided which items would be purchased.

'We are waiting for the purchasing committee to make their recommendation before a decision is made,' she said.

The exhibition, which feature 15 of South Africa's foremost potters, will be opened by the general manager of De Beers, Mr W K Hartley. It has been arranged with the assistance of the South African Potters' Union, and will run until May 23.



THESE farmyard animals, which are made to fit the palm of one's hand, form part of the ceramics exhibition display which will open at the William Humphreys Art Gallery next Wednesday.

THE ARTS



by
Jenny Callaghan



MISS Christine Ross-Watt holds one of the pots which form part of the ceramics exhibition to be held at the William Humphreys Art Gallery. The pots were moulded by David Schlapobersky and the designs and glazing was done by Felicity Potter.

Fig. 10: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 4 May 1984: WHAG scrap book, 1982 – 1984.

The ELC Art and Craft Centre, Rorke's Drift exhibited for the third time in 1989. It was only at this exhibition that WHAG purchased six Rorke's Drift ceramic pieces (acquisition numbers 3901 - 3906), as well as two tapestries from Rorke's Drift (WHAG archives, file no 3/4/132).

Diamond Fields Advertiser Monday April 10 1989

News



Master potter breaks tradition

MASTER potter Mr Gordon Mbatha, who was in Kimberley for the opening of the ELC Art and Craft Centre, Rorke's Drift, exhibition of pottery and rugs last week started work at the centre in 1965 as a weaver.

Three years later when a Danish couple came to the centre to teach pottery, Mr Mbatha broke with African tradition to become the first man to work with clay.

'Moulding clay had traditionally been women's work,' he says.

In the early days there were lots of problems relating to firing and glazing.

In 1972 renowned Cape Town potter Maritjie van der Merwe offered her help.

Over a number of years she spent several months at the centre helping potters to perfect pieces which today are highly sought after as works of art.

These thrown and coiled stoneware ceramics painted with designs in metal oxides, are glazed with kaolin. The unique African patterning is achieved by incising designs.

Mr Mbatha, who has the distinction of having taught an entire generation of potters, is in charge of a workshop where he encourages nine workers to express personal originality.

Items on sale at the gallery include oven-proof casseroles, and vases and plates. They are priced from R40.

MR Gordon Mbatha is supervisor and teacher at the Rorke's Drift pottery workshop. He is seen here with one of 31 pieces which are on display at the William Humphreys Art Gallery.

Fig. 11: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 10 April 1989: WHAG scrap book, 1984 – 1989.

Ceramic Exhibitions of the 1980's: Expansions at WHAG

Other than the Rorke's Drift exhibitions, numerous other significant South African ceramic exhibitions were hosted by WHAG after 1984, such as:

- 1985 *Corobrik Ceramic Exhibition*, The Association of Potters of South Africa, Orange Free State and Northern Cape branch (WHAG archives, file no 3/4/94)
- 1986 *This is me*, Association of Potters of South Africa, Kimberley branch (WHAG archives, file no 3/4/119)
- 1986 Kimberley Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition at the William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG archives, file no 3/4/121)
- 1987 *Kimberley Society of the Arts* (WHAG archives, file no 3/4/131)

Northern Cape Potters Club: 1993, 1995, 1996 and 1997 (WHAG Exhibitions Register) exhibitions were held at WHAG. Works from local potters, as well as guest potters, were purchased in small numbers for the collection at these exhibitions. According to Cynthia McAlpine (pers comm 2014), who has been involved with the CSA (Ceramics Southern Africa, formerly known as APSA, Association of Potters of Southern Africa) for 20 years, the Kimberley Potters Club was never affiliated with the then APSA.

These initial acquisitions were the beginning of what was to become one of South Africa's best contemporary ceramic collections (asserted publicly by Juliet Armstrong in 2006, David Walters and Ian Calder at the *David Walters & Friends* exhibition opening, 2013). In 1995 the collection was significantly amplified by the Norma Guassardo Bequest. According to correspondence in WHAG archives, Michael Guassardo contacted Rosemary Holloway in 1995 regarding donating the late Norma Guassardo's collection which she had assembled over the years (WHAG archives, Norma Guassardo Bequest, 1996 file). Michael and Norma had presented a glaze and decorating workshop a few years prior to this. They had consequently become friends with the gallery and it was Norma's wish that the small collection would find a home at WHAG. Michael came to Kimberley in September 1996 for the official presentation evening. In his notes for the opening event, he mentioned that 'the collection is not of any great note, but is rather a reflection of the type of work she loved and admired. These few pieces not only gave her much happiness but also, in their own quiet way, challenged her creative instincts' (sic). As mentioned, this was an intimate, catholic collection from potters across the country. Work by established potters, including Hyme Rabinowitz (acquisition numbers 3947, 3948, 3957, 3958 and 3965), Angelique Kirk (acquisition numbers 3939, 3943 and 3944), Bruce Walford (acquisition number 3951 and 3966), David Walters (acquisition numbers 3952 and 3953) and Andrew Walford (acquisition numbers 3959 and 3963) were included in this bequest. Michael also added a few of her pieces in the bequest (acquisition numbers 3933 - 3938). A total of 34 pieces were bequeathed.



Fig. 12: The late Norma Guassardo (photograph provided by Michael Guassardo, 1996).



Fig. 13: Michael Guassardo, at the opening of the bequest exhibition, 1996 (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).



Fig. 14: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 22 April 1996: WHAG scrap book, 1992 – 2000.

In 1997 WHAG purchased 24 pieces from the *Association of Potters Southern Africa (APSA) Silver Jubilee Exhibition* held at WHAG (WHAG archives, file no 3/4/202). A variety of work was acquired at this exhibition:

- Two black stoneware vases by Marlies Feldman (acquisition numbers 2196 and 2199).
- A high fired, unglazed ‘Aztec calendar plate’ by Franco Getzy (acquisition number 2200).
- A colourful, earthenware vase on a wooden box stand by Carol Hayward Fell (acquisition number 2201).
- A blue porcelain bowl by Peter Jaff (acquisition number 2202).
- Two smoke-fired pieces by Ann Marais (acquisition numbers 2203 and 2204).
- Two bright stoneware teapots by Karen Sinovich (acquisition numbers 2205 and 2206).
- A wall hanging of small tiles by Bea Jaffray (acquisition number 2207).
- A raku vessel by Rosemary Jaffray (acquisition number 2208).
- A three legged stoneware bowl by Ena Maartens (acquisition number 2209).
- Two raku platters by Ingrid Meijer (acquisition numbers 2210 and 2211).
- Two crystalline glazed porcelain vessels by John Shirley (acquisition numbers 2213 to 2214) as well as a small porcelain vase with lid, black pigment and gold lustre decoration (acquisition number 2212).
- A high fired butter dish with lid by Elza Sullivan (acquisition number 2215) and a stoneware salad dish (acquisition number 2216).
- A pair of chalice vessels with three legs from Querardien van Vliet (acquisition numbers 2217a and 2217b).
- A sculpture, entitled ‘The Victors’ by Elsbeth Burkhalter (acquisition number 2218).
- Two smoke-fired vessels by Cilla Williams (acquisition numbers 2219 and 2220).
- A large stoneware platter by Bryan Haden (acquisition number 2221).

These acquisitions showed the diversity of South Africa’s studio ceramics at the time.



Fig. 15: Mr and Mrs Den Bakker (APSA), then WHAG Director Rosemary Holloway and Mrs Papefus, who opened the *APSA Silver Jubilee* exhibition, 1997 (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).

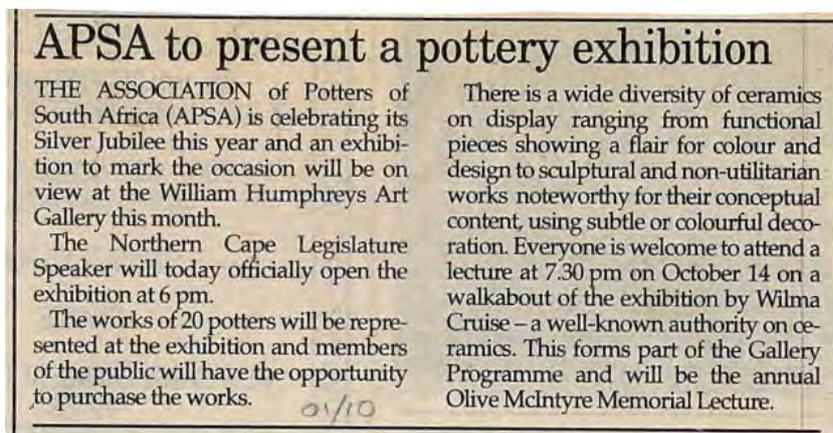


Fig. 16: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 1 October 1997: WHAG scrap book, 1992 – 2000.

David Walters & Friends Exhibitions at WHAG

Since 2002, *David Walters & Friends*, the official name of this annual exhibition, has exposed WHAG and a local audience to a high standard of ceramics from around the country. This exhibition started off small enough to fit into David Walters' car and consisted mainly of ceramists who lived in the Cape region. It has continued to date and attempts to foreground new potters at every exhibition. Over the years of WHAG's association with David Walters, this exhibition has become multi-faceted.

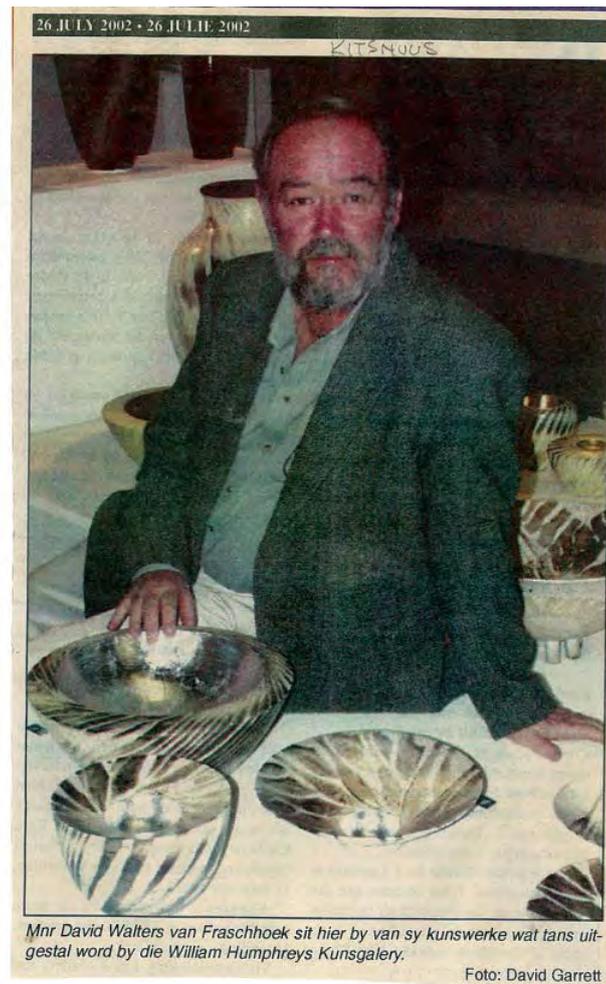


Fig. 17: Kitsnuus newspaper clipping, 26 July 2002: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.



Fig. 18: Noordkaap newspaper clipping, 24 July 2002: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.

At the 2005 *David Walters & Friends - Mentors* exhibition, Melanie Hillebrand, Hennie Meyer, Chris Silverstone from the Potters Shop and Juliet Armstrong were asked to invite potters who they had mentored through the years. Meshack Masuku, David Walters and Sarah Walters presented workshops at the gallery to local adults that included throwing and smoke firing.



Fig. 19: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 1 July 2005: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.



Fig 20: Melanie Hillebrand, David Walters, Sarah Walters and Meshack Masuku at the *David Walters & Friends Mentors* exhibition in 2005 (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).

That year David Walters reported in the National Ceramics: ‘The William Humphreys is an ‘A’ rated National Gallery, and has the distinction of welcoming and promoting this ceramics exhibition, collecting contemporary ceramics for its permanent collection, and selling really well – all habits dismally wanting in many other national galleries.’ (Walters 2005:19). The *David Walters & Friends* exhibition became an established feature at WHAG. With these exhibitions as well as other ceramic exhibitions, WHAG has been promoting South African contemporary ceramics since the WHAG’s first ceramic exhibition in 1968.

In June 2007 Juliet Armstrong, introduced to the gallery by David Walters, organised an *African Ceramics Colloquium* at WHAG (WHAG archives, file ‘Ceramic Conference and Magwaza Exhibition 2007’), which attracted a wide variety of participants. This colloquium was sponsored by the National Research Foundation, First National Bank, WHAG and the University of KwaZulu Natal. Juliet Armstrong invited a selection of rural ceramists from KwaZulu Natal to present workshops and exhibit their *utshwala* wares (Sorghum beer. Garrett 1997: 61) for sale to the general public during that week. According to Juliet Armstrong, this was the first time that a specific selection of indigenous knowledge systems had been presented on a formal basis acknowledging the professionalism and technological skill inherent in this kind of work (pers comm 2011). Workshops and papers were delivered embracing the disciplines of Fine Art and Art History. The participants who presented papers were:

- Per Fredriksen (*Cracking pots and spirits of distraction: clay and pollution ideas in households*).
- Leonard van Schalkwyk (WHAG archives, file ‘Ceramic Conference and Magwaza Exhibition 2007’, the programme states ‘Abstract still to be given’).
- Yvonne Winters (*A play on clay: the cultural narrative and African children’s modeling*).
- John Steele (*Rural potters in the Eastern Cape, South Africa: what next?*).
- Juliet Armstrong (*An overview of the ceramic portraits of Themba Mhlongo*).
- Juliette Leeb du Toit (*Competing nationalisms and modernity in South African ceramic traditions c 1945 – 1980*).
- Ian Calder (*Ceramics of the Pottery Workshop at Rorke’s Drift Art and Craft Centre*).

- Ian Garrett (*Contextualising my own work in relation to some African traditions of hand built and pit fired ceramics with which it is associated*).

The workshops included practical demonstrations: pit-firings and hand building skills in which the public could participate, presented by Peni Gumbi, Azolina Mncube, Bonisiwe Magwaza, Sholoni Magwaza, Mgodini Magwaza, Juliet Armstrong and Clive Sithole. The inclusion of other academic disciplines at this conference signaled a shift in the wider appreciation of South African ceramics, and especially at WHAG, a more focused intention to collect local and indigenous works. A total of 50 *izinkamba* ('*Ukbamba*' (*plizin-*). Globular shaped black drinking vessel. Kennedy 1993: 226, Reference Garrett 1997: 61) were sold at the exhibition that was held on the 25th of June 2007.



Fig. 21: Magwaza ladies: Shongaziphi, Juliet Armstrong, Zikoti, Busephi, Moira Patience (FNB) and Bonisiwe (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).

Noordkaap

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PEOPLE watch as pots are fired in a dried aloe leaf pit fire in front of the William Humphreys Art Gallery.
Photo's: Anneke du Toit

PROF. JULIET ARMSTRONG explains how to make a clay mask.

Potters showcase talent

Anneke du Toit

THEY are illiterate and do not understand English or Afrikaans. But they can do and understand something most of us will never be able to do. They have an indescribable spirit.

The rural potters of KwaZulu-Natal can judge size and symmetry with the precision of a mathematician.

To sit on a chair at a table and work on their pots, is uncomfortable. They sit on the floor, legs straight, turning and shaping their works of art.

These potters were brought to the William Humphreys Art Gallery for an exhibition and an African Ceramics Colloquium. Academic papers were presented

and workshops given.

Prof. Juliet Armstrong, head of the Centre for Visual Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, was the driving force behind this week long event.

Armstrong studied Fine Art at university and was interested in ceramics, but at the time it was not an option and she majored in Sculpture.

She then went to England where she studied Industrial Ceramics. On her return to South Africa she studied Ceramic Sculpture.

"I have had babies and carried on with life, but never given up on ceramics," she says.

Ten years ago she managed to get funding from the National Research Agency to conduct research on indigenous ceramics.

"The skills these rural potters have, are highly specialised. It is not just a pot they are making, it is a language they are speaking, they are communicating a message."

The pots they make, are used for various things. Some are used for drinking - those used for drinking in larger groups will obviously be bigger. The opening is small so that it is easy to drink from.

"When you drink from the pot, you would take a sip, wipe it with your hand, turn it slightly and pass it on to the next person."

They are also shaped so that the grit from the sorghum beer would stay in the pot while you drink from the top.

When finished, the grit will be taken out by hand and put on the ground a few steps outside the home. This attracts the ants from inside the home to the outside.

Pots with necks, would not be used for drinking but for pouring.

"Women would not make pots when they are hot, meaning they are pregnant, breastfeeding or menstruating."

During the workshops Clive Sithole explained that working with clay has a rhythm.

"Your must keep your hands where they are comfortable and move the pot around."

It creates a squeeze, squeeze, "turn... squeeze, squeeze, turn... kind of rhythm which is hypnotic to watch."

Sithole explains that brandishing a pot is when you use a smooth, flat stone to rub against the clay. It removes rough patches and gives the pot an even texture.

"The movement you make just takes your mind away," Sithole explains. After the pots have dried in the sun for a while, they are fired.

The Zulu potters treated onlookers to a traditional dried aloe-leaf fire. They made a fire pit in the front lawn of the Whag and packed the dry leaves into it. On top they packed their pots and again covered them with dry aloe leaves.

This was lit from the top and burned through to the bottom.

The pots are only removed once everything has burned out and the pit has cooled down.

The sponsors who made this week possible were the Whag, First National Bank and the National Research Fund.

● Nog 'n storie en foto's op bl.6.

Fig. 22: Noordkaap newspaper clipping, 4 July 2007: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.

In 2009 the exhibition called *David Walters & Friends... in conversation with Gabisile Nkosi* was presented. This exhibition was displayed alongside the graphic works of the late Gabisile Nkosi and the intention was to motivate the artists who exhibited to respond to the work of Nkosi and make their ceramic pieces accordingly. Students from UKZN ceramic faculty came to WHAG to present a ceramic workshop in hand building and enamel painting.



Fig. 23: Previous Director of WHAG, Rosemary Holloway, David Walters, Malcolm and Ros Christian at the opening of the *David Walters & Friends... in conversation with Gabisile Nkosi* exhibition, 2009 (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).



Fig. 24: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 3 August 2009: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.



Fig. 25: Noordkaap newspaper clipping, 5 August 2009: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.

These workshops and the colloquium brought an audience to the gallery who would not normally visit the gallery and gain knowledge specific to the medium. The *David Walters & Friends* exhibition became an established feature at WHAG (WHAG archives, David Walters & Friends, 2002 – 2009 files). At this annual event a platform is created for new potters, for example Madoda Fani (acquisition number 3257) and Thakane Lerotholi (acquisition number 3791) to display their work alongside established potters, for example Hyme Rabinowitz (acquisition number 3771 and 3772) and Clementina van der Walt (acquisition number 4154).

By the end of 2009, the collection consisted of 323 pieces. According to my current research, WHAG holds one of the largest public contemporary ceramic collections in South Africa. Although the William Humphreys Art Gallery collection includes early pottery illustrating the Indigenous Knowledge Systems from South African communities as well as contemporary ceramics, there are still some imbalances that need to be addressed and corrected with the addition of work of significance that is not currently included in the collection. Indigenous ceramics by ethnic groups, for example Ndebele (acquisition numbers 3190 to 3193 and 3189), Zulu (acquisition number 3918), Sotho (acquisition numbers 3194, 4107 - 4109) and a Tswana storage vessel from Botswana (acquisition number 3918), have previously been exhibited exclusively in cultural history museums in South Africa. ‘Historically, the study of rural pots has tended to occur in the field of ethnographic research: pots have been analysed in terms of social structures within a given society instead of within aesthetic parameters’ (Cruise 1991:123).

According to Ann Pretorius, current director of WHAG since 2001, one of WHAG's strategic objectives is to exhibit these smoke-fired ceramic pieces in the collection in an attempt to include various aspects of our formerly marginalised intangible heritage and also to acquire more 'traditional' work to complement the existing collection, as explained in a letter to Public Works, requesting a new wing to be built for a dedicated contemporary ceramics exhibition:

One of the reasons for expanding this already important ceramics collection is the fact that ceramics are more easily accessible than fine art for a lot more people, both financially and aesthetically and it is easy to include different cultures. Boundaries between cultures are easily expanded and the acculturation process is a common practice nowadays with contemporary ceramists such as Clive Sithole, Ian Garrett, etc. producing some of the most magnificent ceramic works where indigenous knowledge systems and western technology have merged to produce the most stunning results. (Ann Pretorius 27 February 2006)

The WHAG contemporary ceramic collection lends itself to acknowledging the significance and value of certain of these indigenous knowledge systems. It is in view of this that Ann Pretorius states that the WHAG council intends to amplify the collection with works that would be inclusive of all cultures in South Africa to create a collection that reflects on all aspects of ceramic making in South Africa from 1920 to the present (pers comm A. Pretorius 2009).

These vessels are displayed in such a way as to embrace all the different aspects of ceramics in this country ranging from studio ceramics to traditional ritual vessels to constitute a collective contemporary ceramic collection. 'Potters of Southern Africa' was published in 1974 by G. Clark and L. Wagner and according to my records this was the second book written about ceramists in Southern Africa, the first being F.G.E. Nilant's 'Contemporary Pottery in South Africa'. In the G. Clark and L. Wagner's Author's note, they write 'Tribal African pottery, attractive as it is, has understandably not had much effect or influence on any of the white potters, as the culture is alien and the work aesthetically and technically limited. Only the Rorke's Drift pottery has been able to produce a contemporary African style, using traditional forms and decorations as a foundation' (Clark, Wagner 1974:11). Nilant notes in 'Contemporary Pottery in South Africa' that 'a few remarks about native pottery in South Africa will be appropriate,

particularly because it has in some instances had an influence on the shape and decoration of contemporary pottery in the Republic' (Nilant 1963:32). Thirty-six years later 'tribal' or 'native' pottery has influenced many ceramists across ethnic and gender boundaries in South Africa and ceramics are being exhibited alongside paintings, sculptures and graphics in museums and galleries. Works in the WHAG collection influenced and derived from these traditional wares can clearly be seen in the pieces by Clive Sithole (acquisition numbers 3328 and 3513), Ian Garrett (acquisition numbers 2197 and 2198), Ann Marais (acquisition numbers 2203, 2204 and 3252), Maggie Mikula (acquisition number 3830) and Cilla Williams (acquisition numbers 2219 and 2220). More research has been done (for example Ian Garrett's MA dissertation, entitled 'Nesta Nala: Ceramics. 1985 – 1995') and it is now obvious that the works are not at all 'aesthetically and technically limited' as was claimed, but aesthetically pleasing on every level, highly technical and worthy of being acquired and displayed alongside other work produced by their white counterparts.

The WHAG collection also houses a small collection of industrial and studio made ceramics predating the advent of the ceramic collection in 1984. This includes Linnware, Drostdy ware and Crescent ware, all noted ceramic productions dating from the 1930's to industrial ware from the 1960's (Nilant: 1963) (Gers: 2000). The WHAG has other ceramic works in the collection which are not from South Africa, such as Eastern and European wares. Both of these categories will be excluded from the catalogue as this thesis will only focus on Southern African studio ceramics, 'traditional' ware and ceramic sculpture as noted in chapter four.

WHAG also realises the importance of collecting the work of local potters and so purchased work made by the contemporary San people living in Platfontein outside Kimberley, better known as the !Xun and Khwe communities (acquisition numbers 3183, 3184 and 3185) as well as work by six studio ceramists from Kimberley: Jannie Botha (acquisition number 3890), Erica Follett (acquisition number 3894), Elmarie Wood-Callander (acquisition numbers 3262, 3263 and 3893), Toni Pretorius (acquisition numbers 4019, 4161), Marlene Gasson (acquisition numbers 3931 and 3932), Grietjie Meerholz (acquisition numbers 3886 and 3887) and Pieter Mierke (acquisition number 4152). All these works are important in the holdings, as they represent the history of not only South African ceramics more broadly, but specifically local artworks from the Northern Cape and Kimberley region. This accords with the purpose of the museum, as stated on the first

page of all the Annual Reports: 'The vision of the William Humphreys Art Gallery is to be a centre of excellence in Kimberley, the Northern Cape and South Africa.'

Chapter 4: Context, Motivation and Evaluation

This chapter consists of three sections that set out to contextualize the acquisition of contemporary ceramics and the WHAG collection itself. It will explain the motivation behind collecting contemporary ceramics and will conclude with an evaluation of the holdings of this collection at WHAG.

Context: Nilant and Dubin

Views on ceramics and motivations for collecting contemporary ceramics have changed much in the period reviewed in my thesis; my view is that ceramic collections embody transformation on many social and institutional levels, particularly in keeping with the dramatic national changes in South Africa since 1994. I feel that a primary challenge is to design exhibitions that are more inclusive of all cultures in South Africa and also more accessible to a broader spectrum of visitors.

Steven Dubin's 'Transforming Museums. Mounting Queen Victoria in a Democratic South Africa' explains how museums in South Africa have handled changes after 1994. He felt that directors and curators have been both obliged to and considered it desirable to reconsider and re-evaluate existing collections to determine whether they are inclusive of all cultures and art forms. In this they subscribe to what Dubin (rather blandly) terms 'playing 'catch up', striving to fill in what they recognise as wide gaps in their holdings, as well as insufficiencies in their awareness and understanding of the world' (2006: 5). In particular the value and status of ceramics, beadwork and weaving (considered craft forms) have experienced renewed interest and has been repositioned as being a significant form of creativity. Two major exhibitions in South Africa shifted perceptions:

For all the importance of *The Neglected Tradition*, curated by Steven Sack, an exhibition held in a commercial gallery a few years earlier also helped shatter established frames of reference. That show was *Tributaries: A view of contemporary South African art* (1989), sometimes referred to as the *BMW show* because of its sponsorship by the South African subsidiary of the German car manufacturer. (Dubin 2006:42)

WHAG is a National Museum. Government Gazette, No. 1491, of 27 September 1957 states ‘that the Honourable the Minister of Education, Arts and Science has been pleased to declare, by virtue of the powers vested in him by section *one* and sub-section (1) of section *four* of the State-aided Institutions Act, 1931 (Act No. 23 of 1931), the William Humphreys Art Gallery, accommodated in the buildings of the Northern Cape Technical College, Kimberley, to be subject to the provisions of the said Act with effect from the 1st October, 1957’ (sic) (Addendum E). In 2001 the WHAG was listed as a National Public Entity according to the Public Finance Management Act, ‘[Schedule 3 amended by s. 45 of Act 29 of 1999 and substituted by GN 402 in GG 22047 of 16 February 2001.]*’(1)’. In 2001 the enabling legislation, the ‘Cultural institutions act 119 of 1998’ was amended to ‘Cultural Laws Second Amended Act 69 of 2001’.

It is important to understand that each National museum is governed by a Council appointed by the Minister of National Department of Arts and Culture. Because public entities are autonomous, each museum has its own policies regarding acquiring and accessioning work. The Council members serve for a term of three years and meet quarterly at WHAG.

From this council, sub-committees are elected, one of which is the Acquisitions Committee. This committee includes the Director of WHAG. All acquisitions have to be agreed on by this committee and approved by full council. Artworks for possible purchase for the collection are sourced from exhibitions at WHAG and elsewhere: directly from artists’ studios, consultants, auctions or private collections.

In this section, I will discuss three main points regarding WHAG collection practices: firstly the Acquisitions policy itself, secondly the processes of acquisition, and lastly the process used to record data: the acquisitions register, catalogue/card system and computerised database which I have been using to catalogue the museum’s ceramics holdings for the purpose of this thesis.

Acquisition policy

The acquisition of contemporary ceramics is regulated by the general acquisitions policy of WHAG. There is no separate policy for purchasing ceramics. Regarding the policies

governing the Museum's operations, Director Ann Pretorius' personal working data note that:

- The Acquisitions Committee is a sub-committee elected by the members of Council to consider all proposed entries to the collections and make recommendations to the Council.
- It is Council's prerogative to delegate authority to the Acquisitions Committee as it sees fit.
- An artwork is offered to the Acquisitions Committee from various sources:
 - Artists
 - Exhibitions – WHAG and others
 - Art consultants
 - Donations
 - Bequests
 - Private collections/sales
 - Auctions
- All entries to the collection are dealt with in the same way and judged by the same criteria.
- Council's strategic objective of transformation of the collections is a priority in terms of acquiring the work of pioneer and contemporary black artists not previously represented in the collection.
- Artworks of excellence from a broad spectrum of South African artists will also be considered.
- Once the Acquisitions Committee has considered a specific work it is then referred to full Council for their consideration and on their recommendation will be acquired or not.
- Council approves the acquisition and expenditure.

Acquisition process at WHAG

As soon as the work has been accepted by council and paid for, it is entered into the acquisitions register (example Addendum A) and given an acquisition number. The headings in the acquisitions book are: Number (acquisition number), Artist, Title, Medium,

Size in centimeters, Date accepted, Source (who or where the work was purchased from), Price and Remarks. A card is then written or printed with the following information: Inventory number, Potter, Location (where it will be stored), Board-meeting date, Price, Insurance, Object, Process, Inscription, Size, Source, Condition on receipt, Photograph negative number, Entered by (example Addendum B). The object is photographed and is then entered into the computerised database (example Addendum C). This will be discussed at length in the next section. The object is then marked with the acquisition number: a mixture of acid free Palaroid B52 and acetone, which is considered standard museum practice as confirmed during my visit to the African storeroom facilities at the British Museum (pers obs, 2007), is painted on the base of the object. It is left to dry overnight and the number is written with either black water base pen or white water base ink. I try to write this on an area that will not scuff and later disappear or become illegible when the object is moved over time. A label is then prepared and it either goes on display, or is stored in the ceramic store room.

Acquisitions register and catalogue/card system

A frequent question is why WHAG continues to use the acquisitions register and card system when all the information is entered on a computerised database. As previously mentioned, these are all standard museum practices, and although all possible measures are taken to avoid losing information due to computer malfunction or digital conservation constraints, the practice forms part of basic risk management for the museum (discussed in the next chapter). According to a conversation with Ann Pretorius, current Director at the WHAG, she managed the acquisitions register and card system before she became the Director in 2001. Additional information was added to the hard copy card system, for example photographs of the artists, correspondence, provenance of the artwork, conservation reports and information of loans. Ideally, all additional information should be scanned and entered into the database, but this proved to be problematic for the following reasons:

- Staff constraints:

In big museums, like the British Museum (BM) in London, staff is hired on contract or interns are paid to enter data (pers obs 2007). The British Museum is a national institution and has a staff of about 1 000 people – full time, part time and

on contract. The BM has funds available for exhibition officers, curators, collection managers and data capturers. At the WHAG, we only have one staff member who is responsible for the acquisitions process. Even though it is pivotal to have the information in triplicate, it is a massive amount of work and the curatorial assistant who is responsible for the entering of data, only works five hours a day. This is not her only responsibility. Because of staff constraints and the fact that WHAG is in the fortunate position to be able to purchase new work annually, there is often not enough time to enter all the relevant information and over time a back-log is created and valuable information is even lost. Another problem is that very often the relevant information is not available and needs to be researched, which in the case of bigger institutions, would be the curator's responsibility. WHAG does not have any curators, so other staff members, such as myself, have to assist with the research. WHAG also does not have a Collections Manager, so these responsibilities are shared between the staff members.

- Financial constraint:

Staff constraints are a direct result of financial constraints. The WHAG receives its allocation from the National Department of Arts and Culture. The building is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works, but all other expenses of the WHAG is budgeted for from the allocated budget. This includes art purchases, community projects, exhibitions, insurance, transport of artworks and council members, staff salaries and benefits. I will not be writing in depth about the WHAG's financial status, but the current budget does not allow any of the above-mentioned positions to be created and filled.

- Constraints of the database:

Even though the computerised database allows for more information to be added as time goes by, there are restrictions on how much information can be added. This is a growing collection with new artworks added annually and the program can only handle a certain amount of data.

For all of these reasons, it was decided that the collections data should continue to be completed in triplicate, and that as much information as possible be added when additional research is done in order that important information concerning the collection is preserved.

The Computerised Database at WHAG

This is one of the new ways of recording information first stored as a 'flatfile'. In pursuance of inclusion of photographs, the objective is to move to or utilize a relational database to facilitate the query of data and so enhance the search functionality and improve the retrieval of the stored data.

According to <http://www.techterms.com/definition/database> (accessed on 14 January 2014), a database is

A data structure that stores organized information. Most databases contain multiple tables, which may each include several different fields. For example, a company database may include tables for products, employees, and financial records. Each of these tables would have different fields that are relevant to the information stored in the table.

Early databases were relatively "flat," which means they were limited to simple rows and columns, like a spreadsheet. (See also "flat file database"). However, today's relational databases allow users to access, update, and search information based on the relationship of data stored in different tables. Relational databases can also run queries that involve multiple databases. While early databases could only store text or numeric data, modern databases also let users store other data types such as sound clips, pictures, and videos.

(<http://www.techterms.com/definition/database>).

According to <http://www.techterms.com/definition/flatfile> (accessed on 14 January 2014) a 'flat file' database is as follows:

A flat file database is a database that stores data in a plain text file. Each line of the text file holds one record, with fields separated by delimiters, such as commas or tabs. While it uses a simple structure, a flat file database cannot contain multiple tables like a relational database can. Fortunately, most database programs such as Microsoft Access and FileMaker Pro can import flat file databases and use them in a larger relational database.

Flat file is also a type of computer file system that stores all data in a single directory. There are no folders or paths used organize the data. While this is a simple way to store files, a flat file system becomes increasingly inefficient as more data is added. (<http://www.techterms.com/definition/flatfile>). (sic)

According to <http://net.tutsplus.com/tutorials/tools-and-tips/relational-databases-for-dummies/> (accessed on 14 January 2014) a 'relational database' can be defined as 'a type of database that organises data into tables, and links them, based on defined relationships. These relationships enable you to retrieve and combine data from one or more tables with a single query'.

The background to the current database architecture is as follows: according to the WHAG Council minutes, 29 November 1995, the database system, Microsoft Office Access for Windows 95 Professional, was approved by then Director, Rosemary Holloway and implemented in 1995 by Ann Pretorius, then Collections Manager at WHAG. Initially the technical side of the program was managed by Gavin Evans of Redfarn Computers in Kimberley (WHAG Council minutes, 12 February 1997) and various staff members were involved in entering data, including Pretorius. In 2004, Annette Coetzee was appointed as Curatorial Assistant at WHAG and she elected to update and customise the database, as there were shortcomings in the program. Microsoft Access 2003, which is currently in use, is more flexible and can be customised and altered according to specific details of the artworks and needs of the end users of the information. This is an on-going process as information is collated, added and constantly improved.

I work closely with Coetzee as my duties include curating the permanent, as well as temporary ceramic exhibitions. The museum has an automatic back-up system (Cobian Backup 10) which saves information every day. Coetzee saves data on an external hard-drive every quarter, which is kept on site in the Records room. Also, a back-up of the computer database is made regularly and stored at the Africana Library in Kimberley.

Since the implementation of the program, Coetzee has taken digital photographs on site of all the ceramic pieces in the collection for the purpose of the 'thumbnail' photographs used in the computer database; this will make it possible to use as a research tool for enquiries for school learners, students, museums, authors, auditors and the general public interested in researching this collection.

The entire contemporary ceramic collection to date (1984 to end of 2009) was photographed in February 2010 by a professional photographer, Russell Scott. Due to time and financial constraints, the photographs were taken only from one side, with only a few exceptions, for example Bonnie Ntshalintshali's sculpture, 'Tamfuti', which was

photographed from four sides. For the purpose of the database and this thesis, extra photographs were taken of the markings (signatures) of the potters.

When I started my research in 2006, the information provided in the existing 'flatfile' system was not sufficient for the purposes of this research. In most cases, the information in the database was not complete. Very often only the inventory number, artist code, artist, if applicable, the title, image size, price and acquisition date was entered. Also, category was noted only as 'ceramics' to differentiate between ceramics, paintings, graphic works, etc, but it does not offer enough information by classifying the different types of ceramics. Here, the different types were classified and more precisely described in order to evaluate. It is important to realise, that even though all measures were taken to obtain information for the catalogue, some areas will still be entered as 'unknown'. For example, the artist F. Aratsi, who was one of the first ceramic artist's work to be acquired in 1992, could not be located. His work was purchased from a F. van Schalkwyk on 25.3.1992 (according to the WHAG acquisitions book), but no additional information is available in the WHAG archives. I could also not find information about him/her in *Sgraffiti* magazines or the *National Ceramics* magazines. These fields will remain noted as 'unknown' until such time as the information can be added.

The catalogue (Volume 2) created for the thesis is in a similar format as the database. One of the changes made is that the amount paid for each piece will be omitted, as this information is confidential and sensitive. The WHAG's 'Disclosure of Value' policy, which was approved 13 March 2006, states:

Standard museum practice precludes disclosure of the monetary value of works of art in public collections in a public document. Council has agreed that this is fundamental to the institution's mandate and ability to protect and hold in trust these collections for posterity as a priceless part of the National Estate.

Also, the lay-out of the acquisition page has been slightly altered, to accommodate a slightly larger photograph of each artwork than in the original lay-out of the WHAG database, which only has a small thumb nail photograph by which the work can be identified and recognised.

The motivation behind collecting ceramics

Exhibitions like *The Neglected Tradition and Tributaries: A view of contemporary South African art* showed artworks created by white and black South African artists, and also included crafts alongside ‘fine art’ and this ‘strategy encouraged visitors to view all these objects in new ways.’ (Dubin 2006:42). In terms of WHAG’s strategic objectives, Ann Pretorius explained in an article in *de arte*: ‘The current collecting policy remains focused on South African art but now includes a broader acceptance of traditional artifacts that were previously relegated to ethnographic collections and ceramics and craft.’ (Pretorius 2003:78).

It must be remembered that, according to the Acquisitions policy, the WHAG collects items of excellence and technical prowess as opposed to ethnographic collections which are collected to record indigenous groups. In the past, ‘traditional’ ware was acquired to show examples of artifacts that were ‘typical Zulu’, for example. The labels then read ‘Unknown, Zulu’ (personal observation while taking part in the International Training Programme at the British Museum, London as well as WHAG’s collection). Currently, when a piece is acquired for the collection at WHAG, it will be for aesthetical reasons, rather than anthropological reasons, and the label will now read, for example, ‘Buzephi Magwaza’.

From my text in chapter one, I recall here Nilant’s observation that ‘... we should always remember that a real potter creates objects for decoration or use in the house and not specially for the enrichment of a collection in a museum’ (Nilant 1963: 2). Fortunately this view has changed and it has become increasingly significant in South Africa to recognise ceramics, whether functional or sculptural, as an art form and to exhibit and collect it as such. Exhibiting contemporary ceramics, and specifically functional ware, has only been one of the steps in the right direction. Recognising ceramics as an accepted art form, important enough to be included in a national collection, motivates ceramists to produce more work and encourages them to maintain high standards, as is evident in the ongoing annual ceramic exhibition, *David Walters & Friends* held at WHAG. This exhibition first started in 2002 and every year it draws a large crowd. Every year the standard seems to

improve as WHAG purchases work for its permanent collection. WHAG has, since the University of KwaZulu Natal and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University started participating in the *David Walters & Friends exhibition*, purchased numerous exceptional pieces from students. This encourages students in a country where ceramic-making is not supported by local or national government and where tertiary institutions are scaling down or closing ceramic faculties. Eugene Hön wrote in the *National Ceramics*, 100th issue in 2012: ‘The closure of ceramic academic departments nationwide and across the globe, places the responsibility of recruitment on the profession and ultimately organisations such as Ceramics SA’ (Hön: 2012: 32). Staff members at WHAG hope that by supporting students, WHAG might also play an important role as Ceramics Southern Africa has to date.

Collecting by museums also influenced other commercial fields, for instance interior decorating trades and the tourist and hospitality industries (for example OR Tambo Airport Shop; Design Indaba each year in February, Cape Town; annual *Decorex* shows in Johannesburg; Magazines such as *Ideas*, *VISI* and *Garden and Home*; *Top Billing* on SABC3 television). South Africa is well known for tourism, where exceptional ceramics are purchased by a world audience: ‘A South African pottery bowl or an old Zulu milk pail can feasibly be found in a loft apartment in New York or a home in New England or, in fact, anywhere else on earth’ (Sellschop, Goldblatt, Hemp 2002:11). Also, by 2009 (the range of this study) South African museum collections had expanded to include works of Zulu ceramics (Garrett 1997: 65).

Evaluating the WHAG collection

The primary function of any museum/gallery internationally is to collect and preserve. ‘What had begun as an elite undertaking to save, record, and produce the cultural heritage of the past and present in the Romantic era (begun by but not limited to the intellectuals and artists of the time) had exploded into a popular public project’ (Crane 2006: 320). According to the constitution written by the South African Museums Association (SAMA), museums are defined as ‘... dynamic and accountable public institutions which both shape and manifest the consciousness and understanding of communities and individuals in relation to their natural, historical and cultural environments, through

collection, documentation, conservation, research and education programmes that are responsive to the needs of society' (http://www.sama.za.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=73) (accessed in April 2010). According to Beverley Thomas, Director of the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown, South Africa, and past president of SAMA, as well as Dr Helene Vollgraaff, Policy Research Specialist at the National Heritage Council of South Africa, the constitution's authorship should be attributed to SAMA (pers comm 15 April 2010 and 19 April 2010). WHAG elected to collect ceramics as it is an accessible medium for the greater public where they are able to easily relate to the medium as opposed to the so called 'high art'. The majority of WHAG visitors range over diverse cultural and economic backgrounds and consequently council and staff at WHAG need to be more open to people who cannot access the more conceptual aspects of Fine Art, but easily enjoy the ceramic workshops and exhibitions (this is a personal observation, 2006, during employment at WHAG).

My view is that Kimberley is very isolated from the main centres in the country due to its geographical location. Often exhibitions offered to museums in bigger cities, might not be shown in Kimberley because of the expense. Travelling to the bigger cities is also expensive, and staff members are often not able to attend exhibitions shown elsewhere, therefore our exposure at WHAG is sometimes limited. Fortunately, because of the successful exhibitions held in the past, we have managed to maintain good relationships with artists, curators and experts in other state aided museums, private galleries and consultants. In the past we have managed to acquire excellent pieces because people were referred to us when they were considering selling their private collection, as was the case with the Van der Walt collection (acquisition numbers 4033 – 4044).

Ceramics acquisitions from 1984 to 2009

As previously mentioned (chapter three), contemporary ceramics were not acquired by museums in South Africa in the 1970's and 1980's. Initially, when the WHAG started acquiring contemporary ceramics in 1984, there was no benchmark to follow about how to manage a collection of a relatively 'new' medium – not being one of the 'fine art' media. In the gallery's past, for example when the Meyer collection was added, the only information entered at the acquisition process was the item (for example 'Vase') and its

provenance. It was only in later years when staff at the museum realised that additional information, for example better categorising of media - 'stoneware' or 'smoke fired' should be added. Staff members at WHAG at the time had limited experience in ceramics and unfortunately important information was lost. One must also keep in mind that WHAG had always operated with a very small staff and were often overwhelmed with the amount of work that needed attention.

Initially all functional ceramics and some ceramic sculpture pieces purchased for the collection were numbered with a capital C for 'ceramics' – making the accession process very confusing in the years to follow. In a conversation with Ann Pretorius (2014), she suggested that this was done in order to classify or categorise the contemporary ceramic collection, rather than alienate it from the rest of the collection. This was rectified in 2007, when all the C numbered ceramics were given standard acquisition numbers, the same as other artworks purchased. All ceramic purchases from this point on were numbered using the same system as all other artworks in the collection. Some ceramic sculptures pieces, made with clay, were given standard numbers when purchased in the earlier years. Oddly, Bonnie Ntshalinshali's 'Tamfuti' (subsequently 3899, initially acquisition number C37) and Sonja Zytchow's 'Acrobird' (subsequently 3883, initially acquisition number C21) were given 'C' numbers, while F Aratsi's 'Fishman' (acquisition number 1803) was given a 'regular' acquisition number, even though they were purchased within the same period. This inconsistency was one of the many problems that needed to be addressed in later years. The lingering confusion or distinction between 'high art', in this case sculpture, and 'craft', functional ceramic ware, is obvious. It must be noted here that two other collections – the 'Walter Westbrook' (a then Kimberley painter who donated artworks to WHAG) and 'Meyer' collections – also initially received 'W' and 'M' numbers respectively when they were first taken into the collection and was rectified in the same way. This proves that the ceramic collection was not unique in its categorisation, but only a means of grouping a body of work that was introduced into an ever growing collection.

Another distinction was that ceramic labels made for exhibition purposes were different, as the ceramic labels only contained the name of the potter. Other works in the gallery had the name of the artist, title of work, medium, in some cases purchase or bequest information and the acquisition number (also referred to as accession number). This was also rectified in 2014 when the new dedicated wing was curated.

In 2007, along with one other South African from the Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg, as one of twelve museum workers from all over the world, I was invited to participate in the International Training Programme presented by the British Museum in London, United Kingdom. This programme consisted of visits to exhibition spaces and storage facilities where artworks were cleaned and restored, libraries and also sister-museums of the British Museum (BM) in and around London. Because we were South African, we were permitted the opportunity of spending some time in the Africa Section's storage facility. We were amazed at ceiling high shelving stacked with boxes that all contained artifacts from Africa. These boxes were carefully labeled on the outside, had a lid that closed from the top and the work was covered in acid-free tissue paper, resting on acid free foam. At the time, the BM was in the process of preparing to move their holdings to another storage area in the city, as the current facilities could no longer contain the massive and ever growing collection. I was overwhelmed with the amount of work stored in these boxes. However, the information on the labels was completely inadequate. The labels contained the following: the acquisition number, the country (ie South Africa), region or province (ie Natal or Kimberley area) and lastly, 'Bantu' (sic) instead of an artist's name. Artworks or artifacts from Africa have been collected by anthropologists, archaeologists and people interested in the arts for centuries. Unfortunately, the pivotal information that explains provenance, the artist's name etc. was almost never as important as the artwork/artifact itself. This is a similar situation at WHAG, where quite a few artworks are labeled as 'unknown', as the artists' information was not available when the work was accessioned. This changed in the later years as the confusion surrounding the practicalities of collecting, documenting and displaying contemporary SA ceramics became better formulated at the WHAG. Despite the fact that the BM has so many staff members, information is still inadequate. One can reason that their holdings are much larger than the WHAG's, but the basic problem is the same: museums are always understaffed and have to make the best of what they have with the funding, resources and time available. Unfortunately, in cases like these, there is no way to successfully trace the potter who made a specific piece a century ago. So staff at a museum can only work with the information available while entering data and producing labels.

Chapter 5: The Contemporary Ceramics Catalogue

For the purposes of this thesis, I have divided the collection into groups based on functional ceramic media for organisational purposes and for my estimation of qualitative (for example historical trends, aesthetic features), not statistical and quantitative issues in the collection. I am fully aware that this runs a critical risk of ‘pigeon-holing’ and ‘categorising’ works in ways not intended by the Museum, nor the ceramists represented in the collection, but did so only in an attempt to be methodical and thorough.

For structural reasons in the context of the WHAG 'database schema' (which is defined as ‘a collection of meta-data that describes the relations in a database. A schema can be simply described as the "layout" of a database or the blueprint that outlines the way data is organized into tables. Schema are normally described using Structured Query Language as a series of CREATE statements that may be used to replicate the schema in a new database.’ according to <http://databases.about.com/cs/specificproducts/g/schema.htm>) (accessed on 15 January 2014), ceramic items have been categorised ('logically grouped') according to their media of ceramic manufacture/production in fields (which I refer to as 'data-tags'). Previous accession categories used by WHAG accessioners focused more on utility in ceramics, as in 'vessel', or 'sculpture' and on methods of clay manufacture, as in 'hand building' and 'throwing'. Whilst useful in their groupings, I decided to emphasize ceramic media rather as the basis of my schema (with the addition of a new medium - 'paper clay') to categorise the contemporary ceramics collection.

‘Data-tags’ have been applied in the computerised database to all entries, as follows:

1. Unfired clay
2. Raku
3. Smoke fired
4. Earthenware
5. Stoneware
6. Porcelain
7. Bone china
8. Paper clay

From each group of media mentioned above, I selected one sample artwork to focus my discussion. This selection is a personal qualitative selection based on an outstanding or unusual feature of the work that typifies its medium, materiality or the stature of the ceramist. The information provided below each selected artwork, is information that I gathered through the process of discovery for this MA. Extracts will be used for additional information labels to be displayed with the permanent exhibition in the dedicated contemporary ceramics wing at WHAG.

While taking part in the International Training Programme in 2007 at the British Museum in London, one of the discussions was on production of signage and labeling of artworks or artifacts. I recall that the curators working on specific exhibitions were limited in label size, as research has shown that a visitor can only take in a certain amount of information while perusing a display. As there are always limitations in exhibition space, the physical size of the label also plays a roll, as one does not want to view endless amounts of labels and the focus of the exhibition – the artwork or artifact itself – becomes the secondary focus.

With this in mind, I set about asking the basic contextual questions: who, what, where, when and how? Who is the artist, what did he/she do or make? Where was the artist from and where did he/she live? When did this happen? How did the artist work, ie what was the method of working? This of course will open a myriad of questions, but having to keep within the constrictions, I had to edit the information into an interesting, factual information piece for the labeling in the new contemporary ceramics wing.

Visitors to the WHAG are not always knowledgeable in the medium or the history of South Africa. One has to be very careful to not overload the viewer with subject specific technical terminology, but still see that the information is relevant and places the artwork within South African and if possible, global context.

Unfired clay

Unfired clay means just that: it is clay that has not been fired. Unfired clay is not ceramic as the chemical changes caused by heat have not taken place. Authorities such as Hamer specifically do not include clay works in their definitions of ‘pottery’, and even ‘ceramics’:

Pottery made of a porous body which is waterproofed, if necessary, by a covering glaze. The criterion for this division is the porosity of the body. If the fired body has a porosity of more than 5%, then it is earthenware. Many potters add to this criterion of porosity a consideration of the temperature at which the glaze is fired. The softer temperatures below 1100°C (2012°F), which are associated with earthenware glazes, allow a greater range of colour and a particular quality shine and texture. By considering only the porosity of the body, one ignores the glaze which is probably more important since most earthenware is almost completely glazed. It is also in the glaze that differences between earthenware and stoneware are first apparent. The physical hardness or softness of the glaze is also a possible criterion and so is the presence or otherwise a well-formed body-glaze layer. (Hamer 2004: 123)

This definition is not helpful in our African context, as there are many artworks which use clay as both a raw and structural material for personal, and group-expressions; the important works of Hezekiel Ntuli use clay as a vehicle of self-expression. His early work (c1930s: pers comm I. Calder 2014) the sculptures were not fired at all.

Acquisition number 1839 and 1840, Hezekiel Ntuli (1912 – 1973), ceramic sculptures (Fig 26)



Ntuli was born during 1912 in Northern Zululand to a Zulu father and Swazi mother (KCAL, Newsbook 21). He later attended a mission school in the Entumeni district of

Eshowe to which his family had moved. Beginning with the sculptures donated to the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg during 1931, Ntuli became well known for his ceramics which he continued to produce at his home at Mlalazi near Eshowe for some forty years until his death in 1973 (Calder 1997:3).

As a child he used to make clay oxen (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/hezekiel-ntuli>) (accessed on 18 January 2014). As an adult, he was ‘discovered’ by Stanley Williams, when he found Ntuli on a sidewalk in Pietermaritzburg selling his clay animals to pedestrians. (<http://www.revisions.co.za/biographies/hezekiel-ntuli/>) (accessed on 18 January 2014).

Williams became his patron and ‘was instrumental in his indenture with the Department of Native Affairs in Pietermaritzburg’ (Calder 1997:3). WHAG’s collection of Ntuli’s work consists of four busts of men and women. He was, however, also very well known for his sculptures of South African animals: wildlife and Nguni cattle (Calder 1997:3). His work was modeled from solid lumps and clay and textures were made by hand and various tools. The works were never fired, although some were decorated with clay slips, enamel paint, black ink and sometimes varnish (Calder 1997:4).

According to ‘Revisions’ website, (<http://www.revisions.co.za/biographies/hezekiel-ntuli/>) (accessed on 18 January 2014), his work was collected by:

- Killie Campbell Collections, University of Natal, Durban
- National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria
- Zululand Historical Museum, Eshowe
- Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg

Hezekiel Ntuli is the only artist in the WHAG collection whose sculptures are made of unfired clay, and in my opinion a master in his medium. The detail achieved in his sculptures of animals is remarkable (pers comm I. Calder 2014) and one can only speculate to which level his work had influenced ceramists afterwards. Also, his portraits are very expressive, as is evident in the detail photograph of acquisition number 1840 below:



Fig. 27: Detail of acquisition number 1840 (photograph by Russell Scott).



Fig. 28: Hezekiel Ntuli (photographer unknown, WHAG archives).

Raku

According to Frank and Janet Hamer, explained in *The Potter's Dictionary of materials and techniques*, Raku is a:

Japanese word feely interpreted as 'enjoyment'. It was an ideograph engraved on a gold seal and given by the ruler Hideyoshi to Chojiro in 1598. Raku thereby became his family title. Chojiro is credited with being the first to produce, in 1580, a low-fired glazed pottery by a direct process, which involved putting the pots into and taking them out of the red-hot kiln. The raku process gives the potter control of colourful expression when subjecting pots to oxidations and reductions during their cooling. The openness of the body and the soft nature of the glaze enable subtle variations of colour to be achieved. Originally only oxidation was used following neutral firings. Reduction was introduced in the mid-20th century by Paul Soldner in the USA. The term raku is sometimes widened to include low temperature treatments involving reduction and smoke. Popular modern raku is often recognized by a velvety black body contrasted with black-stained crackle of white, yellow, blue and turquoise glazes some with lustrous glints of reduced copper red. Glazes are often poured so that they overlap and integrate but leave areas of unglazed black body as important shapes in the composition. (Hamer 2004: 290)

Acquisition number 3887 (was C25), Grietjie Meerholz, *Raku ginger jar* (Fig 29)



In the period under discussion (1984 – 2009), only 7 Raku pieces were collected for the WHAG collection. In my opinion, the reason for this is that most potters who exhibit at WHAG are full-time potters, who run their studio as a business and they do not make ceramics as a hobby. Raku is, from personal experience, a very technical and difficult firing method and due to thermal shock, a high volume of work is lost through breakages in the firing process. Therefore, it is not a viable means of making an income.

Up to the end of 2009, 2 pieces were purchased from Grietjie Meerholz, one of which was a Raku piece (acquisition number 3887). The other was a small porcelain bowl with a white crackle glaze (acquisition number 3886). Both of these were purchased in 1985. She was a Kimberley potter who displayed work at the *Corobrik Ceramic Exhibition – Regional Exhibition of the Association of Potters of South Africa (Orange Free State and Northern Cape)*. Mrs Grietjie Meerholz was the organiser of this exhibition (WHAG archives file 3/4/94) and exhibited 9 pieces on this exhibition. Other well-known potters (Jonathan Keep, now residing in the UK, David Walters, Ian Glenny, Silje Horne and Barry Dibb) were some of the potters who exhibited their work with other local potters. According to staff members at WHAG, Mrs Meerholz passed away soon after and her husband moved away from Kimberley, although the dates for these are not known. For this

reason, the information on the database is not complete (date of birth and death). In this case and others, where information on the work was not available, I used my own discretion and knowledge from undergrad studies to formulate the information needed in the ‘comments’ category.

Smoke fired

The late Jane Perryman, well-known and respected potter from the United Kingdom, who researched and produced smoke-fired ware, writes the following in her preface of *Smoke-fired Pottery*:

‘There are several terms to describe Smoke Firing. Some potters describe the process as ‘carbonising’ and others as ‘blackening’ (i.e. producing blackware). Smoke firing is based on what has been learnt from primitive fires; that when there is not sufficient oxygen, the fuel, needing oxygen to burn, will combine with the oxides in the clay and leave a carbonaceous reduced black surface’ (Perryman 1995: 6).

Hamer also explains: ‘The creation of tonal shading on pot and modeled surfaces by burning carbonaceous matter around the pieces. Unglazed biscuit pieces are smoked in sawdust or leaves to give partial carbonization by the infiltration of carbon into the pores of the body’ (Hamer 2004: 338).

In a South African context, many examples can be used to in this category. Much research have been done by Juliet Armstrong (Whitelaw 2014: 9) and by Elizabeth Perrill (Perrill 2012) on Zulu pottery. I have learned, through the years working at WHAG, that each potter / ceramist makes his or her own rules, creates his or her own methods of smoke firing. Some potters, for example David Walters, will fire his work in an electric kiln to bisque temperature first, then resist areas with slip, wax or masking tape and then smoke the work in a big oil drum with only newspaper (pers obs 2005, *David Walters & Friends - Mentors* exhibition). Other potters, for example Zulu potters, will also fire twice, but neither with an electric kiln. Materials such as aloe leaves, grass, wood, dung, euphorbia plants and corn stalks may be used in these firings (Perrill 2012: 40 and 42). However, the different firing techniques will not be discussed here, as I chose Ian Garrett’s *Jar* as the example to be discussed.

Acquisition number 2197, Ian Garrett (1971 -), *Jar* (Fig. 30)



Ian Garrett was born in the Eastern Cape in 1971. He obtained a Bachelors degree in Fine Art at Rhodes University in 1992 and in 1997 a Master's degree in Fine Art at the University of Natal (now University of KwaZulu Natal).

Garrett feels that he is influenced, not only by the Zulu women he spent much time with while completing his MA at the University of KwaZulu Natal, but also by other cultures 'such as Neolithic English Beaker Ware, North American Pueblo, Chinese Yangshao, early Etruscan, Minoan and Cypriot and Western European Hallstatt' (Marais 1999:8). Elbé Coetzee, author of 'Craft Art in South Africa', explains Garrett's method of constructing his pieces as such:

After coiling and pinching his pots of terracotta clay, Ian burnishes them with an agate pebble to compact the clay particles and smooth the surface. Using mussel shells or quills, he incises delicate geometric patterns onto the surface to enhance the shape of the wide- and narrow-necked jars and pots. Although these decorations are sometimes characteristic of Zulu pots, the intricacy of Ian's work is exceptional.

Like the Pueblo potters of New Mexico, Ian double-burnishes his pot to achieve a high-gloss finish. He says, 'I am interested in exploring techniques and processes that add to the surface effects in ceramics, the richness of colour, sheen and texture'.

Although Ian uses many of the ancient techniques, he has merged them with his own creativity. (Coetzee 2002: 83)

He either smoke fires or pit fires his pieces, depending on what finish he desires, using materials found locally – dried aloe leaves, cow dung, Jacaranda or any other available soft wood. After the firing, the work will be polished with commercial cooking fat to bind the patina (Garrett 1997: 32).

According to Garrett's Curriculum Vitae sent by the ceramist to WHAG in 2004, he is represented in the following collections:

- Johannesburg Art Gallery
- Durban Art Gallery
- Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg
- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum in Port Elizabeth
- Corobrik Collection, housed in the Pretoria Art Museum
- MTN Corporate collection
- KPMG Corporate collection

Ian Garrett, in my mind, is the poster boy for transformation and cross-pollination of indigenous knowledge in South Africa - a white male, in the midst of a changing South Africa, creating spectacular pots previously exclusively made by Zulu women. I recall meeting him in 2010 at the African Ceramics conference held at the Centre of Visual Arts at UKZN, arranged by Juliet Armstrong. He presented a practical workshop and although I can remember nothing of this, I do remember him sitting in one of the studios, students noisily milling around and him calmly burnishing a small pot which was to be smoke fired later: almost oblivious to the chaos around him but ready to answer any questions posed to him. The making and burnishing of these pots had seemed to become second nature to him. The symmetry in his work and technical prowess left me with no other choice than to select his work as discussion point.

Earthenware

James Chappell's book *The Potter's complete book of clay and glazes* explains earthenware as 'A low-temperature porous clay which is often sealed by firing with a covering glaze' (Chappell 1977: 441). According to Hamer, earthenware is

'Pottery made of a porous body which is waterproofed, if necessary, by a covering glaze. The criterion for this division is the porosity of the body. If the fired body has a porosity of more than 5%, then it is earthenware. Many potters add to this criterion of porosity a consideration of the temperature at which the glaze is fired. The softer temperatures below 1100°C (2012°F), which are associated with earthenware glazes, allow a greater range of colour and a particular quality shine and texture. By considering only the porosity of the body, one ignores the glaze which is probably more important since most earthenware is almost completely glazed. It is also in the glaze that differences between earthenware and stoneware are first apparent. The physical hardness or softness of the glaze is also a possible criterion and so is the presence or otherwise a well-formed body-glaze layer. (Hamer, 2004: 123)

Acquisition number 4029, Ardmore: Mlambo, Slulamile (1985 -) and Xaba, Virginia (1975 -), *Beetle Tureen* (Fig. 31)



According to Ardmore's official website (<http://www.ardmoreceramics.co.za/world-of-ardmore/about>) (accessed on 18 January 2014):

Ardmore Ceramic Art was established by Fée Halsted on Ardmore Farm in the foothills of the Drakensberg Mountains of KwaZulu-Natal, where she lived after obtaining her BA (Fine Arts) Honours degree and lecturing at Natal Technikon. Here she met Bonnie Ntshalintshali, daughter of their housekeeper, whose polio meant that she was unable to work in the fields. Fée and Bonnie quickly developed a synergy and under Fée's mentorship, Bonnie's natural skills as an artist blossomed.

The Ardmore studio was given 'impetus in 1990 when Fée (Halsted-Berning) and Bonnie (Ntshalintshali) won the nationally acclaimed Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art' (Scott 1998: 9). Not only did this give Ardmore recognition for ceramic artists, but perceptions were shifted and clay was regarded as a viable sculptural/plastic medium. Bonnie Ntshalintshali's work was also included in *The Neglected Tradition*, an exhibition held at Johannesburg Art Gallery in 1988, (<http://www.artthrob.co.za/03jan/news/keene.html>) (accessed on 18 January 2013) along with Noria Mabasa (Dubin 2006: 41). This shift in critical appraisal and perception resulted in shifting acquisition policies in museums that saw the acquiring of functional ware as well as ceramic sculpture, regardless of race.

Ardmore is represented in the following collections:

International:

- Museum of Arts and Design, New York
- American Folk Art Museum, New York
- Ford Foundation, New York
- Museum der Kulturen, Basel, Switzerland

South African:

- Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg
- Durban Art Gallery
- Carnegie Art Gallery, Newcastle
- Johannesburg Art Gallery
- Pretoria Art Museum
- Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg

- Absa Art Gallery, Johannesburg (Including the Volkskas Bank Collection)
- Telkom Art Gallery, Johannesburg
- Coca Cola South Africa Art Collection, Johannesburg
- South African National Gallery, Cape Town
- Webber Wentzel Collection, Cape Town
- King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth

Ntshalintshali passed away in 1999. The new dedicated contemporary ceramic wing at WHAG was named the ‘Bonnie Ntshalintshali South African contemporary ceramics wing’. Fée Halsted officially opened it at the 2012 *David Walters & Friends* exhibition. This decision was made in recognition for her achievements and as a celebration of South African ceramics.

In my opinion no other earthenware created in South Africa can equal those made at Ardmore. The pieces are vibrant in colour, the imagery is evocative and playful but still realistic and they are technically sound – a challenge considering the sculptural quality. Ardmore is also one of the few success stories in South Africa where artists from the community have been uplifted and in time made completely self-reliant and creating a new, positive South African identity.

Stoneware

‘Stoneware’ is described as the following in Hamer’s *The Potter’s Dictionary*:

‘A hard, strong and vitrified ware, usually fired above 1 200°C (2 192°F), in which the body and glaze mature at the same time and form an integrated body-glaze layer. The quality of the glaze owes much to the establishment of this layer and it is therefore the glaze quality which determines a ware’s acceptance as stoneware. This quality shows as an integration of the colours of body and glaze. Stone glaze surfaces are scratch resistant.’ (Hamer 2004: 350)

Acquisition number 3928 (was acquisition number C73), Esias Bosch, *Vase*
(Fig. 32)



In 2012, Ronnie Watt wrote an article that was published in the 100th issue of *National Ceramics*, ‘Celebrating the 40th anniversary of Ceramics Southern Africa’. The article was entitled ‘Red-hot roots’ and gave an interesting retrospective look on the development in ceramics, as in general ‘Anglo-American’ in South Africa. According to Watt,

‘Anglo-Oriental pottery’ can be defined as high-temperature reduction-fired utilitarian ware that was wheel-thrown with the emphasis on understated but quality of form, subtly glazed and minimally decorated. The materials were preferably locally sourced and blended by the potter and forms were achieved through repetitive throwing. Appreciation of the intrinsic qualities of a pot came via its utilitarian value and as a rule the potters would not identify their work with their monograms or marks. It was the pot rather than the potter, that commanded respect. (Watt 2012: 13)

Watt wrote the following of Esias Bosch:

Esias Bosch (1923 – 2010) was the first of the South African studio potters to become intimately familiar with the Anglo-Oriental style and then assimilate those ethics and aesthetics in his work. After studying under Billington in London he secured

an appointment with Ray Finch at Winchcombe Pottery, Gloucestershire. Finch was a student of Michael Cardew (1901 – 1983) who was Leach’s first apprentice at St. Ives from 1923 to 1926. Bosch later worked with Cardew at the Wenford Bridge studio in Cornwall where he learnt the basic of wood-fired kilns and in 1959 he worked with Cardew at Abudja in Nigeria. (Watt 2012:13)

Esias Bosch was born on 11 July 1923 in Winburg, Free State. He initially entered university as a dentistry student, but after a week he quit and enrolled for a B.A in Fine Arts. After Bosch qualified from the Johannesburg School of Art in 1946, he moved to Kimberley to teach art at Diskobolos School for handicapped children. He did not enjoy the restrictions of teaching and applied for the Robert Storm bursary. He won the bursary which enabled him to study at the Central School of Art and Design in England – studying ceramics. From here he met Raymond Finch, who had been a student of Michael Cardew, and started working at his studio. After spending a year at Finch’s studio, he had the opportunity to work at Michael Cardew’s Wenford Bridge Pottery in Cornwall. During that period, Bosch had the privilege to meet Shōji Hamada when he visited England and he and Leach came to Cardew’s studio. He moved back to South Africa in September 1952 and lived in Durban, teaching at the Durban Art School for two years. In 1955, he and his family moved to Pretoria, where he lectured part-time at the Pretoria Art School. There he set up a studio and started producing functional earthenware. In an interview with Madeleine van Biljon for the *Lantern*, he was quoted saying: ‘A sugar bowl must be attractive enough to be displayed by itself. For me, something is lost if a potter produces for exhibiting only and not also for use’ (Bosch and De Waal 1988: 25). After a visit to Cardew in Nigeria, he returned to South Africa and he and his family set up house and a studio in ‘Die Randjie’, in the White River area, where he lived until he passed away. Here he produced stoneware (1961 – 1975), porcelain (1975 – 1979) and from then on he focused mainly on large tiles, ‘producing highly decorated lustre tiles and, more recently, laminated vitrified tiles of extreme thinness, decorated with ceramic stains under clear glaze. He also executes oil paintings and silk screened cloud studies’ (Bosch and De Waal 1988: 13).

In 1979, Bosch ceased all pottery work and devoted his talents to creating ceramic wall panels. That genre of Bosch is deserving of an individual essay. It must suffice for now to mention that his tile panels – in stoneware and in the hi-tech ceramic material

he later developed for that purpose – are extraordinary achievements in design and size. They grace buildings such as the Wesbank Building (formerly the Schlesinger Centre, a mural of approximately 92.9 m² comprising of more than 5 000 tiles) in Johannesburg; the interiors of the Town House and Vineyard hotels in Cape Town; the corporate headquarters of Foskor, Sasol, the SABC and the head offices of the Merensky Foundation and of the South African Academy for Art and Science. The largest of these was a mural of stoneware tiles for the Johannesburg International airport (now the O.R. Tambo International airport) which measured 57.9 metres in length and was 6.4 metres high. Seventy firings were required to produce the mural's 3 000 tiles. During recent renovations to the airport and without consulting any party about the preservation of it, the mural was demolished and consigned to a dump heap. (<http://www.artatworktoday.com/the-artists/esias-bosch/>) (accessed 19 January 2014)

‘Bosch was the guiding star, setting standards which everyone admired but few could emulate. Their (referring to Tim Morris, Hyme Rabinowitz, Andrew Walford, Bryan Haden and Liebermann) teachings and mentorships live on in the present-day work of David Walters, David Schlapobersky and Felicity Potter and Lindsay Scott, to mention but a few’ (Watt 2012:13).

Even though Bosch's strongest influence did not come from Africa, his work was still unmistakably African, as Berna Maree reported for the *Panorama* magazine in June 1990: ‘...the colours, motifs, textures, forms and landscape. He is inspired by the birds, flowers, plants and insects, the misty blue-greys of the horizon and deep ochre and brown textures of the veld – and by the rich variety of the African landscape’ (Maree 1990: 53).

Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate a list of institutions which have holdings of Bosch's work. It is only mentioned in the ‘art@work today’ website that ‘his work had been accepted into all but two of the nine major South African public collections’ (<http://www.artatworktoday.com/the-artists/esias-bosch/>) (accessed on 19 January 2014).

To date, WHAG has not had the opportunity to purchase a porcelain piece or a tile produced by Esias Bosch. One can only hope that these acquisitions will be included in the collection in the near future, as the collection seems incomplete without them.

Porcelain

‘A vitrified, white and translucent ware. A few wares fit this description. The one usually implied is that fired at 1300°C (2372°F) plus. In this, the body and the glaze mature together to create a very thick body-glaze layer which gives the whole piece an important strength’ (Hamer 2004: 272).

Acquisition number 3247, David Walters, *Turquoise and cobalt bowl* (Fig. 33)



David Walters was born in Natal (now KwaZulu Natal) in 1950. He did an apprenticeship with Tim Morris in 1969 and studied BA Fine Arts at the University of Natal (now University of KwaZulu Natal) (ref curriculum vitae sent to WHAG in 2005). David and his wife Michelle (nee Anderson), set up Nkwaleni Pottery in Hilton before moving on to Caversham Mill where he was the founder and driving force behind its first craft route, Natal's Midlands Meander (<http://www.davidwalters.co.za/david.html>) (accessed 19 January 2014). After floods devastated his studio and house in 1987, Walters and his family moved to Norfolk, UK. There he worked until 1997, when they moved back to South Africa and settled in Franschhoek (Walters 1999: 14).

David Walters has a long association with Kimberley. He first exhibited at WHAG in 1985, at a group exhibition arranged by the then Association of Potters Southern African (APSA). One piece was acquired from that exhibition: ‘Celadon lidded decoration vase’ (acquisition number 3891, was C 29). Prior to that, he had already exhibited on two

occasions with Elsa van Gas, a local ceramic enthusiast. The first was in 1981 at 'Gallery 5' which was owned by Van Gas. He exhibited again with Van Gas, now under the auspices of 'Pro Arte', at an exhibition held at her house. In 2002, after Walters' return from the UK, Pro Arte and WHAG joined forces and this was when the *David Walters & Friends* exhibitions commenced (pers comm, Elsa van Gas, 2014). This exhibition grew annually and at present it is safe to say that Walters was instrumental in assisting in the acquiring of the largest part of the WHAG contemporary ceramic collection.

Over the years, WHAG has collected Walters' work from the *David Walters & Friends* exhibitions, and adding to the collection work made prior to his move to the UK (by means of acquiring work from the Van der Walt family, acquisition number 4084). Walters specialises in porcelain, making mostly functional ware as he had in the UK, but also experiments with other firing techniques – smoke firing (acquisition number 3224), raku, (acquisition number 4157) and stoneware (acquisition number 4084).

Walters mainly throws on the wheel and he uses glazes, with one exception, that are made by him. In an email, dating 26 October 2006, he explains: 'I have used the double dipping technique for a long time. My glazes are formulated to work together, so that I can pour or dip glazes one over the other, and get new and unexpected colours and textures from the resulting blend. I have always thought that these effects give something of a landscape feel to the piece, and I enjoy the challenge of working across a round surface, virtually cutting the circle, and making the viewer even more conscious of the throwing process by negating its roundness' (pers comm D. Walters 2006).

The *Turquoise and cobalt bowl* (acquisition number 3247) was an easy exemplar to select. The glaze is magnificent and the rippling centre deliberate (detail below). David Walters is a skillful thrower and even more importantly, one of the few South African ceramists who constantly experiments, but whose work stays instantly recognisable because of its uniqueness and high quality.

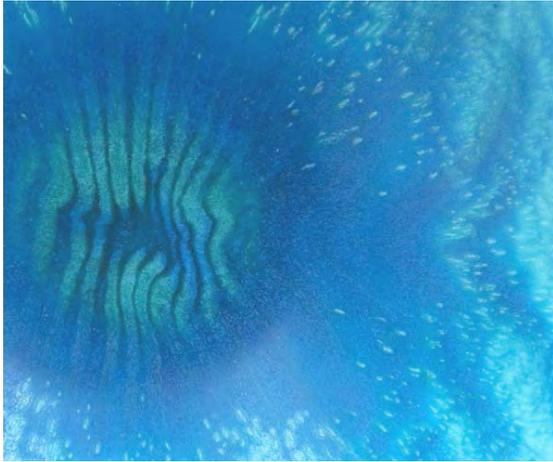


Fig. 34: Detail of acquisition number 3247.



Fig. 35: Top view of acquisition number 3247.

According to David Walters, his work has been collected widely internationally and internationally by galleries, museums, private collectors and sold to numerous hotels and restaurants in Franschhoek amongst others (pers comm 2014).

Bone china

Hamer defines Bone china as:

‘A British porcelain in which the body is first fired to translucent state without a glaze. The glaze firing is at a lower temperature. For the bisc (sic) firing, the body is supported in powdered aluminium oxide to inhibit warping. The ware was developed in the late 18th century by Josiah Spode to meet the demand for a white translucent ware which arose with the importation of Oriental porcelain’ (Hamer 2004: 33).

He continues later in the chapter saying that ‘It is bisc (sic) fired to 1280°C (2336°F) and glaze fired below 1080°C (1976°F)’ (Hamer 2004: 33).

Acquisition number 3544, Juliet Armstrong, *Paper form with tusks* (Fig. 36)



According to the KZN SA Gallery website, Juliet Armstrong was born in 1950 in Durban. She obtained her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1972, and a Master of Fine Arts in 1981, both at the then University of Natal (now University of KwaZulu Natal). She studied industrial ceramics and glass blowing in England at the Leicester Polytechnic and where she obtained a postgraduate diploma. She started working as a lecturer at the University of Natal at the Pietermaritzburg campus when she returned from travelling in the US and Germany and became a senior lecturer in 1986, a position she held until 1999 when she was promoted to Associate Professor. She also acted as Head of Department of Fine Art and Art History on a staff rotation (http://www.kznsagallery.co.za/news/2012/August/juliet_armstrong_1950_2012.htm) (accessed on 17 January 2014).

While studying at the then Natal University, she was heavily influenced by Hilda Ditchburn and Malcolm MacIntyre-Read, who were both lecturing at the university at the time (Rall 2014:27). Their views were very different: Ditchburn was meticulous and would reject work that was cracked, where MacIntyre-Read saw cracking as part of the process if it was not a functional work. They both encouraged her to work in historical as well as contemporary ways (Rall 2014: 29).

Armstrong preferred working with a white, translucent body from the 1970's and tirelessly aimed to devise a translucent bone china. At the time this was very expensive to purchase and import to South Africa and Armstrong conducted many tests to replace the imports with local material. She formulated a recipe in 2007 which she managed to control and manipulate in such a way as to push boundaries over the years (Rall 2014: 37).

In contrast to the tight forms that Juliet made with her slip moulded cones she did a series of pieces where she did not use moulds but rather free formed the vessels. She made thin slabs which were manipulated in a variety of ways before being draped over a form until leather hard. These were then fired in a bed of calcined alumina or alumina hydrate (a refractory material) in a saggar (an unglazed fired clay vessel that could be reused for numerous firings). Sometimes she poured the casting slip between layers of cling wrap and then manipulated the thixotropic material in order to create textures. She sometimes used slip trailing on these surfaces and because of the thixotropic nature of the slip these remained raised areas on the surface. The texture is usually but not exclusively on the outside of the vessel. Some pieces, eg. sponge piece are very heavily textured. (Rall 2014: 39)

Often these bowls had, as in the case of Acquisition number 3544, *Paper form with tusks*, stands of glass or tusks turned into thorns that were glued on after the firing.

These were not glazed outside as they were fired in a saggar. They were fired to 1260°C and have a 'surface quality that makes glazing unnecessary' (Rall 2014: 40).

Juliet also produced a range of hangings made with paper clay, influenced strongly by *isibodiya* or pregnancy skirts worn by Zulu women in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. WHAG acquired such a piece in 2004, but unfortunately due to adhesive failure, the work fell from the wall and the work was broken beyond repair in c 2011.

Certain technical aspects are threads that run through all her work. She felt that the media she used were a seminal and integral part of her means of artistic expression. Her technical execution had a specific intent and she wanted to maximize the qualities of the materials, the surface texture and fragility. The translucency and fragility were of paramount importance to the meaning of the work and she felt that, for example the delicately formed and injured "skins" created a metaphor for the vulnerability/fragility of pregnancy. In the process of transforming these particular ceramic materials she believed they

became metaphors of human expression. It is very clear when examining the full range of Juliet's work that the technical aspects of the process of making are integral to the understanding of her work. (Rall 2014: 41)

Armstrong's work is represented in the following collections:

- Carnegie Art Gallery, Newcastle
 - Corobrik Collection
 - Durban Art Gallery
 - South African National Gallery (Iziko), Cape Town
 - Johannes Stegmann Gallery, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein
 - Johannesburg Art Gallery
 - Mangosuthu Technikon, Durban
 - MTN Corporate collection
 - Museum Services, Pietermaritzburg
 - Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum, Port Elizabeth
 - Pretoria Art Museum
 - RFC Corporate Finance Collection, Sydney, Australia
 - Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg
 - University of Stellenbosch Art Gallery
 - William Humphreys Art Gallery
- (Stretton 2012: 82) and (Bell, Clark 2014: 126)

Juliet Armstrong achieved unprecedented technical levels and coupled with her love and enthusiasm for her students and her medium alike, she inspired everyone she was in contact with and continues doing so after her passing.



Fig. 37: Juliet Armstrong with one of her bone china vessels at the *David Walters & Friends... in conversation with Gabisile Nkosi* exhibition, 2009 (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).

Paper clay

In 2004 Hamer defines paper clay as ‘A compound of shredded paper pulp and clay. It has surprising green and dry strength and fires like a normal body when the paper has burnt away. Rolled out into very thin sheets it is strong and flexible enough to be used for the printing of etchings, dry points and engravings, surviving the press and peeling away from the plate without tearing. Delicate shapes can be joined dry or wet using a slurry mix to create sculptures. They will have the normal fragility of the fired clay’ (Hamer 2004: 251).

Acquisition number 3255, Betsy Nield, *Box and lid (7 leaves)* (Fig. 38)



Betsy Nield was born in 1958 and completed her N4 with Distinction at the Cape College under Dr Ralph Johnson. She started working with porcelain paper clay in 1998, which she produces herself. She fires her work at high temperatures (1290 - 1310°C), depending on the clay body and translucency (ref Curriculum Vitae sent by the ceramist to WHAG in 2006). Her work is easily recognisable for the realism she achieves by replicating leaves and paper boxes with paper porcelain. Nield has been involved with the Ceramics Southern Africa Western Cape branch, as well as the National branch since 1991 and is

‘tireless in promoting ceramics in general whenever and wherever she can’ (Marais 2004: 17).

In the *National Ceramics* magazine of Spring 2004 (number 69), Nield discusses, step by step, how she makes her paper clay boxes and leaves: a paper clay pulp is made from toilet paper and mixed with porcelain clay or casting slip into a thick creamy consistency. The slip is then painted or spread with a metal kidney onto the paper template (box) or onto the leaf. Once it is carefully peeled the template or leaf, it is worked off and then ready to be fired. (Nield 2004: 4). The work remains unglazed, as Nield believes ‘no glaze equals no food use – period’ (Marais 2004: 19).

Nield’s work is represented in the following collections (<http://www.ceramics-sa-cape.co.za/portfolio/nield-betsy>) (accessed on 19 January 2014): Iziko Museums of Cape Town, Durbanville Clay Museum and the Corobrik Collection.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

When I initially started with the research for this thesis, my intention was to complete the database, adding as much information I could find. It turned out to be much more than I could ever have anticipated. The William Humphreys Art Gallery is still actively collecting and presently holds 550 South African contemporary ceramic pieces. For the period under discussion in this thesis, 1984 – 2009, 323 pieces were collected, meaning that from January 2010 to October 2014, an additional 227 pieces were acquired for the collection. The statistics for the contemporary ceramic collection, 1984 – 2009 are as follows (Fig. 39):

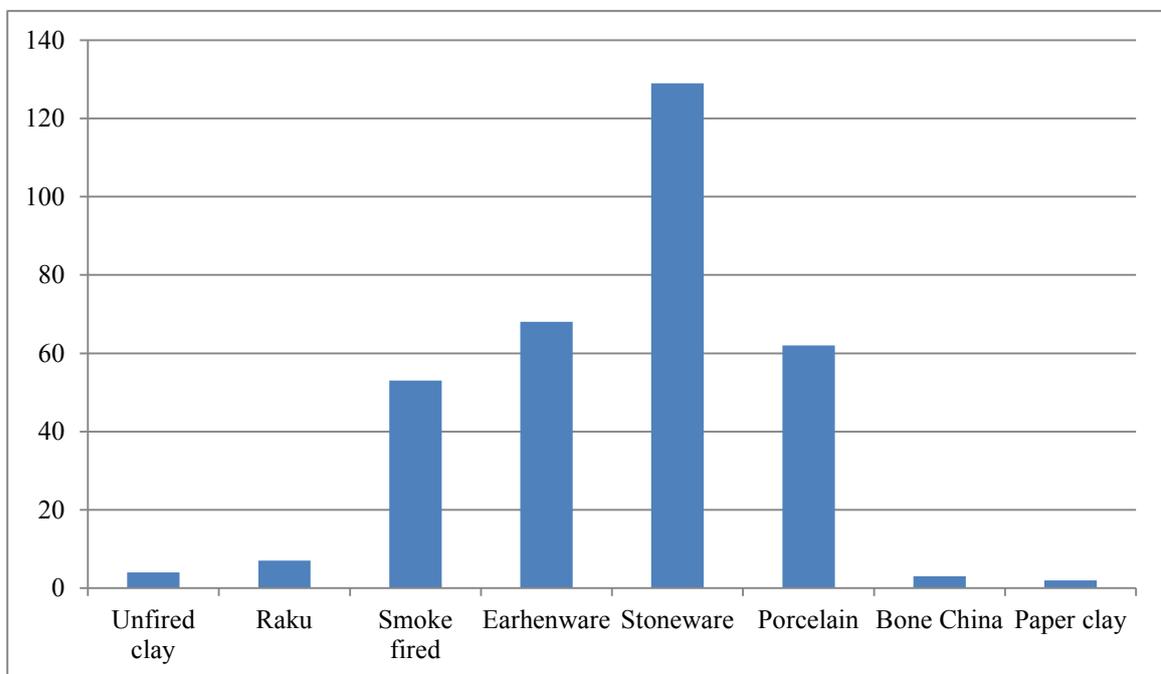


Fig. 39: Graph illustrating the statistics of contemporary ceramic pieces purchased at WHAG: 1984 – 2009.

As is evident in the graph above, much emphasis was placed on the acquiring of stoneware pieces. This was due to the Anglo-Oriental influence (Cruise 1991: 10), the production of reduction stoneware in the 1970's, 1980's (for example Tim Morris and Esias Bosch) and to date (for example David Schlapobersky and Felicity Potter).

I have always been fascinated with the ceramists as much as their beautiful creations. WHAG staff often does the transporting of ceramic exhibitions, as the fragile works cannot withstand the rough handling of commercial couriers. As I became increasingly

more involved with the annual *David Walters & Friends* exhibition through the years, I often did much of the transporting of the works to the different regions. This gave me the opportunity to meet many of the ceramists, to have conversations with them and see their working environment. In my opinion there is nothing as magical as a ceramist's studio. Although I have not worked with clay myself for many years, I still adore the smell of wet clay, a kiln firing and glaze dust in the air. Meeting the ceramists also gave me a deeper understanding of why they create what they do. This catalogue is in many ways a factual, almost scientific report on the WHAG's South African contemporary ceramic collection. The labels that will be added to the final exhibition space will give, although edited versions, basic background to selected ceramists and their work. The catalogue, Volume 2, will be available to visitors to peruse while viewing the display. I hope that these will only add to the splendor of the exhibition, and not detract from it.

The information collated from many resources and entered into the WHAG contemporary ceramic collection database is by no means complete – this is an ongoing process. As discussed in chapter three, there are many constraints within museums, the problem not being a WHAG one, but rather a universal one. I recall having conversations with Curators working at the British Museum in 2007, as well as Curators and Directors at museums in South Africa in the 11 years I have been a staff member at WHAG. It was and always is the same conversation: not enough funds, not enough time and not enough resources. At WHAG we have a minimum of ten temporary exhibitions a year, in 2011 we had 18. Temporary exhibitions are time-consuming with immediate deadlines, forcing staff members to rather focus on immediate deadlines instead of on much needed research.

The South African contemporary ceramic collection has had many homes before that. Initially it was housed in glass boxes on white pedestals in the New wing.



Fig. 40, 41 and 42: Three different views of the ceramic exhibition in the New wing, 2004 (photographs by Sandy Ward, Kimco).

As the collection grew, a decision was made to move it to the Meyer wing, which gave me the opportunity to display most of the collection. Unfortunately we had to move the Meyer collection to storage as the Meyer wing was not big enough to house both collections. This in turn filled up an already bursting storage room. In 2012, the new ‘Bonnie Ntshalintshali’ wing was officially opened by Fée Halsted at the *David Walters & Friends Ukhamba* exhibition.

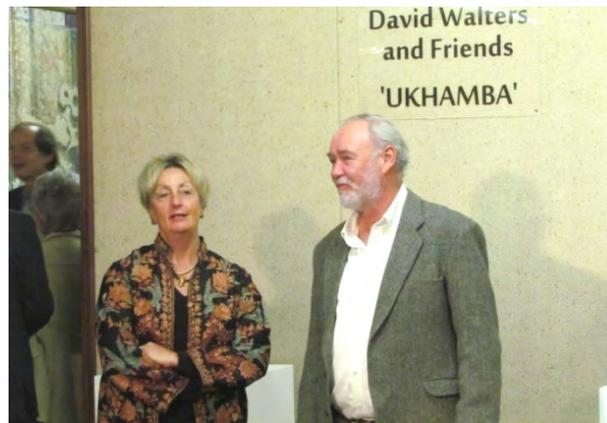


Fig. 43: Fée Halsted and David Walters at the opening of *David Walters & Friends Ukhamba* exhibition, 2012 (photograph by Louise Jennings, UKZN student).

Due to procurement issues, service providers, problems with installation of the glass paneling and a shortage of pedestals, the contemporary ceramics exhibition was only completed in February 2014. Much needed storage facilities were added to make room for the growing contemporary ceramic collection.



Fig. 44 and 45: Storage facilities adjacent to the Bonnie Ntshalintshali South African contemporary ceramics wing, 2014 (photographs by Annette Coetzee).

At last this magnificent collection could be displayed in a dedicated wing. There can at last be no doubt that ceramics have an equal standing in the WHAG collection and this should debunk the notion of ‘high art’ versus ‘craft’. The old labels will be replaced with newly

designed ones that have relevant information. The pedestals were painted a light grey to set off porcelain (for example Catherine Glenday, acquisition numbers 3766, 3767, 3768 and 3769) and bone china (for example Juliet Armstrong, acquisition number 3544) as well as the gleaming blackened *izinkamba* of the Magwaza family (acquisition numbers 3343, 3540, 3541, 3542, 3543 and 3790) (Todd 2006). These pedestals fit in visually with the dark grey walls and charcoal flooring, which created a dark neutral backdrop to which the deserving ceramic collection could stand out. I spent weeks on a planning board, and then physically moving the pieces around in an attempt to set up an exhibition that would show the essence of the collecting history of WHAG from 1984.



Fig. 46, 47, 48 and 49: Four views of the Bonnie Ntshalintshali South African contemporary ceramics wing, 2014 (photographs by Annette Coetzee).

My process of discovery for the thesis and catalogue was as follows:

Chapter one was the introduction, where I explained the reasons for this journey, where my research was done and the resources I used to complete this thesis (Volume 1) and catalogue (Volume 2).

In chapter two I set about contextualising the holding of the WHAG contemporary ceramics collection.

Chapter three provided a broad history of the collections of the museum and explained how WHAG came about collecting ceramics. I described how the boundaries between ‘fine art’ and ‘craft’ became blurred as contemporary ceramics was accepted into WHAG – a National museum.

Chapter four presented my views on the motivations for collecting contemporary ceramics at a National museum.

Chapter five expounds on the contemporary ceramics catalogue: how I divided the collection into groups based on ceramic media for organizational purposes. Here I also discuss one ceramist from each medium, providing more information about the ceramist and his/her work.

Just as the research of the collection is not complete, neither is the collecting or exhibiting. WHAG will continue to look for pieces we missed out on in the past. WHAG does not have a specific ‘wish list’ for acquisitions, but the following would be a recommendation (in no particular order):

- Esias Bosch (hand-painted tiles)
- Fée Halsted
- Marietjie van der Merwe
- Hendrik Stroebel
- Rhé Wessels
- Steve Shapiro
- Lesley-Ann Hoets
- Wilma Cruise
- Eugene Hön
- Noria Mabasa
- Barbara Jackson
- Henriette Ngako
- Nesta Nala
- Susan Sellschop (sculpture)
- Neville Burdy
- Hilda Ditchburn
- James Hall

- Chris Green

The following ceramists should also be included in the WHAG collection. Even though they are not South African, their influence on Southern African ceramics is very important, and would complement the collection and add to a better understanding to visitors, placing much of the work in a universal context:

- Shōji Hamada (1894 – 1978)
- Bernard Leach (1887 – 1979)
- Michael Cardew (1901 – 1983)
- Lucie Rie (1902 – 1995)
- Clarice Cliff (1899 – 1972)

Unfortunately WHAG will possibly never have the financial means to purchase works of these internationally acclaimed ceramists, but one would hope that there might be a well-wisher who could donate in the future.

I feel honoured and privileged to be able to work with one of South Africa's most significant contemporary ceramic collections – one that is continuously growing despite national budget limitations in the heritage sector. I hope that this research will underpin the expansion of this collection and will expand on the already wide range of media in the collection – breaking the stereotype of pre-transformation museums in South Africa.

Glossary

Unless otherwise stated, the following glossary entries are from Lara du Plessis' MAFA thesis, *Marietjie van der Merwe: ceramics 1960-1988* (CVA: UKZN, 2007) which sourced from *Potters of Southern Africa* (Garth Clark, 1974) and *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques* (Frank Hamer, 1975 and 2004).

Acid. To the potter there are acid solutions used in slips, and slops, acidic compounds used in bodies and glazes, and acidic gases liberated during firing. An acid is a chemical compound which liberates protons, the positive electrical charges at the centre of atoms. Acids go into solutions with non-acidic compounds from which solution new compounds, called salts, may be precipitated. (Hamer 2004: 1)

Acquisition. Act of acquiring; thing acquired. (Sykes 1982: 9)

Agate ware. A decorative ware made from partially blended dark and light clays which give striations. (Hamer 2004: 2)

Amasumpa. Raised nodules on ceramic or wooden vessels. (Garrett 1997: 60)

Barium carbonate. BaCO₃. A barium compound occurring as the mineral witherite. Barium carbonate is also prepared from the mineral barytes by precipitation. Both are used in glaze recipes to introduce barium oxide. (Hamer 2004: 19)

Bequest, bequeath. Leave (personal estate to person) by will. (Sykes 1982: 84)

Bisc / Bisque. Hard Biscuit. Unglazed fired pottery. (Hamer 1975: 25)

Biscuit. Unglazed fired ware. (Hamer 1975: 26)

Body. Materials from which the pot is made. A mixture of clay and non-plastic materials that has suitable malleable and firing properties. (Clark 1974:198)

Bone China. A British porcelain in which the body is first fired to translucent state without a glaze. The glaze firing is at a lower temperature. For the bisc firing, the body is supported in powdered aluminium oxide to inhibit warping. (Hamer 2004: 33)

Burnishing. Compacting and polishing leather hard clay. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Celadon Glaze. Glaze, originating in China, fired in a reduction atmosphere. The subtle pale grey- green glaze is obtained from a small percentage (usually 1% to 2%) of iron. (Clark 1974:198)

Carbonisation. The chemical alteration of organic material by the removal of oxygen and oxides to leave only carbon as in the production of charcoal and the slower production of coal. The term has been extended by potters to mean the impregnation of a porous body, and in some cases a glaze, by finely divided carbon as smoke. The result is a velvety black body. (Hamer 2004: 51)

Ceramic. 1. of (the art of) pottery; of (substances produced by) process of strong heating of clay etc. minerals 2. article made of pottery; substance made by firing clay etc. minerals at high temperatures. (Sykes 1982: 150)

and

Clay products made permanent by heat (the ceramic change). (Hamer 2004: 55)

Ceramic change. The change from clay to pot, upon which the whole pottery industry is founded. Clay can be dried and reconstituted to plastic state *ad infinitum* but once it has been subjected to 600°C (1112°F) it is no longer clay but a hard material which cannot be disintegrated and dispersed by water. (Hamer 2004: 55)

Cobalt (oxide). This is the major oxide used for producing blues. (Chappell 1977: 419)

Coiling. A method of forming by hand in which coils of plastic clay are wound one on top of the other and joined to form the sides of the vessel or sculpture. (Cruise 1001: 200)

Copper oxides. CuO and Cu₂O (previously called cupric oxide and cuprous oxide). Both oxides are strong colouring oxides in glazes and give green to black and red-brown. (Hamer 2004: 81)

Crackle. Crackelle. Craquelle. A craze in the glaze used as a decorative feature. (Hamer 2004: 91)

Crawling. Bare patches where glaze has failed to adhere to the clay, or where the glaze has retracted into drops. (Clark 1974:198)

Crazing. A fine network of cracks in the glaze caused by differences in contraction between the body and glaze during cooling, or delayed expansion of the body. (Clark 1974:198)

Crystalline (crystal) glaze. Glazes which contain crystals within the amorphous (glassy) matrix of the glaze. The glaze itself is not entirely composed of crystals. Crystals give opacity, matt surface and visual effects. The crystals grow mostly during cooling by isolation of the essential oxides from the surrounding fluid glaze. The process is known as devitrification and is given encouragement by seeding and by controlling the rate of cooling. (Hamer 2004: 99)

Decorate. Furnish with adornments. (Sykes: 1982: 248)

Design. 3. preliminary sketch for picture, plan of building, machine, etc.; arrangement of lines, drawings, etc., decorating or distinguishing a thing; art of making these. (Sykes 1982: 258)

Dolomite. A calcium magnesium carbonate used as a flux in a glaze. (Clark 1974:198)

Drape-moulding (also known as 'slump-moulding'). The action of forming by draping a slab of clay over a mould, usually made from plaster. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Earthenware. A low-fired body which is non- vitreous and opaque. Fired between 1050°C and 1180°C. (Clark 1974:198)

Enamel/s. A soft melting glass used to decorate pottery, metal and glass. (Hamer 1975: 126)

Ethnography. Scientific description of races of men. (Sykes 1982: 331)

Feldspathic Glaze. Glazes containing feldspar as the primary flux. Feldspar is the principal flux in stoneware glazes. (Clark 1974:198)

Flux. The ingredient in glaze which promotes the fusion of the silica by lowering the melting-point. (Clark 1974:198)

Glaze. Smooth, glass like surface layer on the fired clay body. It is applied to the clay body, usually after the initial bisque firing, and melted on during the glaze firing. (Clark 1974:198)

Grog. A filler, usually fired and ground clay, added to a clay body on order to improve texture, increase strength and decrease shrinkage. Grog opens the clay body and thus facilitates drying. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Hand building. Technique of building with clay where the wheel is not used. (Clark 1974:198)

Handle. [Handgrip of a vessel]...is the first part of a pot to be touched by a user. It is therefore a focal point of the pot and is both functional and decorative. It should be so conceived. There are two types of handle: loop and lug. (Hamer 1975: 152)

High- temperature. Glaze which matures above 1200°C. (Hamer 1975: 155)

Impressed decoration. Decorative motifs stamped directly into the clay by a metal, wooden or biscuit device. (Hamer 2004: 178)

Incise. Make a cut in; engrave. (Sykes 1982: 505)

Iron oxide. FeO or Fe₂O₃ or Fe₃O₄. The general name for compounds of iron and oxygen. They are the commonest colourants in individual pottery usually giving yellow, browns, blacks and greys. (Hamer 2004: 187)

Kaolin. China clay. Al₂O₃.2SiO₂.2H₂O. The purest clay, approximating closely the idealised clay mineral kaolinite. It contains very little iron impurity and is therefore white. (Hamer 2004: 199)

Kaolin Glaze. Glaze rich in kaolin giving a typical matt surface. (Clark 1974:198)

Lid. A hygienic cover [closure for a vessel/container] which provides a visual focal point and a stimulus for tactile appreciation. (Hamer 1975: 179)

Low- temperature. Glaze which matures in the range up to 1050°C. (Hamer 1975: 187)

Lustre/s. [Iridescent] Metallic surface [fired onto a] glaze. The pure metal is deposited on the glaze surface by many different methods but all involve reduction from an oxide or a resinates to the pure metal. (Hamer 1975: 187)

Magnesium carbonate. Magnesite. MgCO₃. Crushed-ore source of magnesium oxide for glazes. (Hamer 2004: 220)

Marbled ware. A marble is a variegated stain. It is achieved by partially blending two differently coloured clays. (Hamer 2004: 228)

Model. Fashion, shape, (figure) in clay, wax, etc.; give shape to, frame, (document, argument, etc.). (Sykes 1982: 650)

Modernism. A movement in Western art that developed in the second half of the 19th century and sought to capture the images and sensibilities of the age. Modernist art goes beyond simply dealing with the present and involves the artist's critical examination of the premises of art itself. (Kleiner and Mamiya 2006: 876)

Motif. Distinctive feature, dominant idea, in artistic or literary composition. (Sykes 1982: 660)

'Objet d'art'. Small artistic object. (Sykes 1982: 699)

On-glaze or on-glaze enamel. Ceramic colour applied on top of the fired, glazed surface and given an extra firing to a lower temperature than the first glaze firing; the original glaze remains undisturbed. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Oxidation. In pottery this refers to the combination of oxygen with an element or compound. Such an action occurs in the firing at temperatures above red heat and, if required, is achieved by the introduction of excess air to the fire or by allowing pure air to track through the muffle. (Hamer 2004: 248)

Oxide. A chemical combination of oxygen with another element. There are two types of oxides, metal and non-metal. Metal oxides are numerous and form the fluxes, colourings and opacifiers. Non-metal oxides are few and are the glass-formers and the volatiles. (Hamer 1975: 248)

Oxidizing fire. A clear fire in which oxygen in the kiln is allowed to flow freely and in which the oxides remain unaltered. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Paper clay. A compound of shredded paper pulp and clay. (Hamer 2004: 251)

Pattern. 3. (decorative) design as executed on carpet, wallpaper, cloth etc. 5. decorate with pattern. (Sykes 1982: 752)

Pigment. Colouring-matter used as a paint or dye, usually as insoluble suspension; natural colouring-matter of animal or plant tissue (Sykes 1982: 775)

Pitfire/firing. A method of firing pots in which the pots are placed below the surface of the ground in a pit or a simple construction such as a drum. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Porcelain. A high- fired vitreous white body with translucent quality due to its glassy nature. Fired between 1250°C and 1400°C. (Clark 1974:198)

Press moulding. Forming plastic clay in a plaster mould by pressing it against the mould face. (Clark 1974:198)

Raku. The raku process gives the potter control of colourful expression when subjecting pots to oxidations and reductions during their cooling. (Hamer 1975: 290)

Reduce/Reduction. The action of taking oxygen away from metal oxides. The potter uses reduction to coax different effects from the same metal oxide in the clay or glaze, e.g. black pots from a red clay, or a metallic lustre from a white tin glaze. This is achieved by controlling the atmosphere surrounding the pots during the firing and/or cooling. Altering the atmosphere alters the metal oxide used for the colouring. (Hamer 1975: 299)

or

The process in which oxygen is taken away from metal oxides. In reduction the potter controls (reduces) the flow of oxygen in a fuel-burning kiln during firing or cooling, in order to alter the colour of the metal oxides in the clay or glazes. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Registrar. Official recorder, person charged with keeping register. (Sykes 1982: 874)

Resist. A technique in which a slip or glaze is prevented from adhering to the surface at a particular point. Wax, melted or emulsified, and paper, are commonly used. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Sagger. Refractory box [container] in which ware is set in the kiln for support and protection from combustion gases. (Clark 1974:198)

Salt glaze. The glaze is achieved by throwing salt into a fuel-burning kiln during the firing of the ware; the salt combines with the clay of the body to form a sodium alumina-silicate glaze. Usually the term is applied to stoneware ceramics, where the procedure occurs at

approximately 1 200°C, although there are low-temperature variations of the technique. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Sgraffito. Scratched decoration incised with a pointed tool, usually through a layer of slip to reveal a contrasting surface underneath. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Slabbing (slabs). Forming a ceramic from sheets of clay. The slabs (sheets) are wire cut, beaten out or rolled out. They are then cut and used in soft state or stiffer to construct the projected piece. (Hamer 2004: 332)

Slip. Clay mixed with water to a smooth liquid consistency, sometimes coloured with a coloured oxide, and used decoratively over the clay body. (Clark 1974:198)

Slip-casting. A pottery forming process which uses moulds to give the forms and uses liquid clay (slip). (Hamer 1975: 2751)

Slip-trailing. A decorative technique in which slips are trailed by being extruded through a nozzle onto the unfired ware. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Smoke fire/firing. Some potters describe the process as ‘carbonising’ and others as ‘blackening’ (i.e. producing blackware). Smoke firing is based on what has been learnt from primitive fires; that when there is not sufficient oxygen, the fuel, needing oxygen to burn, will combine with the oxides in the clay and leave a carbonaceous reduced black surface. (Perryman 1995: 6)

or

The creation of black and tonal shading on pot and modelled surfaces by burning carbonaceous matter around the pieces. (Hamer 1975: 338)

Stains. Ceramic stains. Prepared stains. Prepared oxides. Modified oxides. Inorganic colouring, usually purchased in powder form, for adding to bodies, slips, glazes and enamels, and for use as underglaze and inglaze decoration. (Hamer 2004: 349)

Stoneware. High- fired vitreous body which is fired between 1200°C and 1350°C. (Clark 1974:198)

Studio ceramics. A class of pottery made by artist-craftsmen rather than workmen in factories, the ware being modelled or thrown, glazed, decorated and fired by the designer,

or under his immediate supervision. (Savage & Newman 1985: 277) (Reference Gers 1998: 35)

Talc. Magnesium silicate. French talc. Steatite. Soapstone. $3\text{MgO}\cdot 4\text{SiO}_2\cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$. An insoluble mineral and convenient source of magnesium oxide for bodies and glazes. (Hamer 2004: 354)

Tenmoku. The Japanese name for dark, reduced stoneware glazes with a high concentration of iron. Good tenmokus have a depth and a range of colour varying from black to iron red and yellow. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Terracotta. This term usually indicates earthenware made from unglazed red-burning clay. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Terra sigillata. Literally, 'sealed earth'. The term refers to a clay suspension (slip) of fine particle size which is painted onto the ware, sealing it and imparting a high sheen. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Throwing. Technique of making pottery on the wheel. (Clark 1974:198)

Turning. Trimming, skimming, shaving. Removing unwanted clay to achieve a particular form, thin a pot wall or create a foot-ring. (Hamer 1975: 303)

Ubukufusa. To blacken, smoke. To discolour or destroy the fresh colour of something. (Garrett 1997: 61)

'*Ukbamba*' (*plizin-*). Globular shaped black drinking vessel. (Kennedy 1993: 226) (Reference Garrett 1997: 61)

Underglaze. Ceramic colour usually applied under the glaze on the raw clay or bisque ware, and covered with a glaze. (Cruise 1991: 200)

'*Utswala*'. Sorghum beer. (Garrett 1997: 61)

Vitrification. The fusion or glassification of clay. A vitrified body is hard and impermeable. (Cruise 1991: 200)

Zinc silicate. Willemite. $2\text{ZnO}\cdot \text{SiO}_2$. A naturally occurring crystalline compound and also the crystal which forms as large crystals in crystalline glazes. (Hamer 2004: 393)

Bibliography

Thesis

1. Primary sources:

- The collection of William Humphreys Art Gallery South African contemporary ceramic collection: 1984 – 2009
- The ceramists whose work was acquired for this collection

2. Secondary sources:

WHAG archives:

- Filing system: each exhibition has a swing file, stored in the records room at WHAG or in Ann Pretorius' office. These files are opened as soon as discussions around an exhibition starts and contains correspondence (between WHAG staff and the artist/s and/or involved parties), photographs not used in the library's photo albums, invitations, catalogues, selling lists and other information.
 - Acquisitions Register: these are (to date) 3 books that contains information on acquisitions from the first work that was acquired for WHAG's collection to date (example page Addendum A).
 - Card system: a card is made for each artwork accessioned into WHAG's collection (example card Addendum B).
 - Computerised database: all known information is added to the computerised database and added to as information becomes available (example page Addendum C).
 - Exhibitions register: a book that keeps record of all the exhibitions held at the WHAG since its first exhibitions (example page Addendum D).
 - Photo albums, containing photographs of exhibition openings and other events at WHAG, from 1994.
 - Scrap books, containing newspaper clippings and invitations to exhibitions and other events at WHAG from 1961.
 - WHAG annual reports (can be requested).
 - Ann Pretorius, Director at WHAG, personal data files.
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6. The following web links used during my research are accessible in February 2014:

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Organogram of the William Humphreys Art Gallery.

Fig. 2: Diagram explaining the format of the catalogue: Volume 2.

Fig. 3: The entrance of the William Humphreys Art Gallery, 2014 (photograph by Annette Coetzee).

Fig. 4: Detail photograph of Nick Meyer, currently hanging in WHAG's 'Rogues Gallery' (photographer unknown).

Fig. 5: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, November 1968 below: WHAG scrap book, 1967 – 1969.

Fig. 6: Thelma Marcuson in the Blue Boy wing at WHAG, setting up the display (WHAG archives: file 3/4/37).

Fig. 7: Thelma Marcuson and unknown WHAG staff member in the Blue Boy wing with the display (WHAG archives: file 3/4/37).

Fig. 8: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 13 July 1983: WHAG scrap book, 1982 – 1984.

Fig. 9: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 12 July 1983: WHAG scrap book, 1982 – 1984.

Fig. 10: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 4 May 1984: WHAG scrap book, 1982 – 1984.

Fig. 11: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 10 April 1989: WHAG scrap book, 1984 – 1989.

Fig. 12: The late Norma Guassardo (photograph provided by Michael Guassardo, 1996).

Fig. 13: Michael Guassardo, at the opening of the bequest exhibition, 1996 (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).

Fig. 14: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 22 April 1996: WHAG scrap book, 1992 – 2000.

Fig. 15: Mr and Mrs Den Bakker (APSA), then WHAG Director Rosemary Holloway and Mrs Papenfus, who opened the *APSA Silver Jubilee* exhibition, 1997 (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).

- Fig. 16: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 1 October 1997: WHAG scrap book, 1992 – 2000.
- Fig. 17: Kitsnuus newspaper clipping, 26 July 2002: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.
- Fig. 18: Noordkaap newspaper clipping, 24 July 2002: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.
- Fig. 19: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 1 July 2005: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.
- Fig 20: Dr Melanie Hillebrand, David Walters, Sarah Walters and Meshack Masuku at the *David Walters & Friends Mentors* exhibition in 2005 (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).
- Fig. 21: Magwaza ladies: Shongaziphi, Juliet Armstrong, Zikoti, Busephi, Moira Patience (FNB) and Bonisiwe (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).
- Fig. 22: Noordkaap newspaper clipping, 4 July 2007: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.
- Fig. 23: Previous Director of WHAG, Rosemary Holloway, David Walters, Malcolm and Ros Christian at the opening of the *David Walters & Friends... in conversation with Gabisile Nkosi* exhibition, 2009 (photograph by Sandy Ward, Kimco).
- Fig. 24: Diamond Fields Advertiser newspaper clipping, 3 August 2009: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.
- Fig. 25: Noordkaap newspaper clipping, 5 August 2009: WHAG scrap book, 2000 – 2013.
- Fig. 26: Acquisition number 1839 and 1840, Hezekiel Ntuli (1912 – 1973), ceramic sculptures.
- Fig. 27: Detail of acquisition number 1840 (photograph by Russell Scott).
- Fig. 28: Hezekiel Ntuli (photographer unknown, WHAG archives).
- Fig. 29: Acquisition number 3887 (was C25), Grietjie Meerholz, *Raku ginger jar*.
- Fig. 30: Acquisition number 2197, Ian Garrett (1971 -), *Jar*.
- Fig. 31: Acquisition number 4029, Ardmore: Mlambo, Slulamile (1985 -) and Xaba, Virginia (1975 -), *Beetle Tureen*.
- Fig. 32: Acquisition number 3928 (was acquisition number C73), Esias Bosch, *Vase*.
- Fig. 33: Acquisition number 3247, David Walters, *Turquoise and cobalt bowl*.
- Fig. 34: Detail of acquisition number 3247.
- Fig. 35: Top view of acquisition number 3247.
- Fig. 36: Acquisition number 3544, Juliet Armstrong, *Paper form with tusks*.
- Fig. 37: Juliet Armstrong with one of her bone china vessels at the *David Walters & Friends... in conversation with Gabisile Nkosi* exhibition, 2009 (photograph by

Sandy Ward, Kimco).

Fig. 38: Acquisition number 3255, Betsy Nield, *Box and lid (7 leaves)*.

Fig. 39: Graph illustrating the statistics of contemporary ceramic pieces purchased at WHAG: 1984 – 2009.

Fig. 40, 41 and 42: Three different views of the ceramic exhibition in the New wing, 2004 (photographs by Sandy Ward, Kimco).

Fig. 43: Fée Halsted and David Walters at the opening of *David Walters & Friends Ukhamba* exhibition, 2012 (photograph by Louise Jennings, UKZN student).

Fig. 44 and 45: Storage facilities adjacent to the Bonnie Ntshalinshali South African contemporary ceramics wing, 2014 (photographs by Annette Coetzee).

Fig. 46, 47, 48 and 49: Four views of the Bonnie Ntshalinshali South African contemporary ceramics wing, 2014 (photographs by Annette Coetzee).

Addenda

Example page of the Acquisitions Register

Addendum A

| ACCESSION NO. | ARTIST | TITLE | MEDIUM | SIZE IN CM. | DATE ACCEPTED | SOURCE | PRICE | REMARKS |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 4151 | Meyer, Hennie | Baggage I | Ceramic | 28,5x 13,1x12,5 | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R1600 | ✓ |
| 4152 | Mietke, Pieter | Smoke-fired vessel | Ceramic | 18,5x 21d | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R500 | ✓ |
| 4153 | Omar, Famedda | Peace | Ceramic | 22,3x 12,5x 5p | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R350 | ✓ |
| 4154 | vdWalle, Clementina | Vase with red figures | Ceramic | 30,6x 16,6d | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R2200 | ✓ |
| 4155 | Van Rensburg, Sue | Struggle Pot | Ceramic | 33x 24,5d | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R1152 | ✓ |
| 4156 | Walters, David | Black Petals and vase | Ceramic | 70x 40 | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R600 | ✓ |
| 4157 | Walters, David | Memory Sticks | Ceramic | | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R4000 | ✓ |
| 4158 | Walters, Sarah | Small plate | Ceramic | 40x 14d 11r | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R80 | ✓ |
| 4159 | Walters, Sarah | Oblong plate | Ceramic | 7,2x 16x27 11r | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R256 | ✓ |
| 4160 | Walters, Sarah | Small jug | Ceramic | 12,6x 8 | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R96 | ✓ |
| 4161 | Pretorius, Antoinette | Messenger | Ceramic + wood | 136x 43 | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R1000 | ✓ |
| 4162 | Weaving, Sharon | Dawn | Ceramic | 19x 19,5d 11r | Sept 2009 | Purchased from the artist | R350 | ✓ |
| | | | | | | | 381744,86 | |

Example card of the card system

Addendum B

Inside of card



Outside (folding) card

| | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| INVENTORY No. INVENTAIRE No. 2197 | WILLIAM HUMPHREYS ART GALLERY WILLIAM HUMPHREYS-KUNSTMUSEUM POTTER POTTENMAKER Griet, Jan | LOCATION PLEKAAFWYSING C |
| BOARD-SETTING DATE RAASVERGA- DINGSDATUM 11/21/98 | OBJECT VOORWERP Jar - brown pit-fired burnished Earthenware | PHOTOGRAPH NO. No. FOTO NO. No. |
| PRICE PRIJS | SIZE GROORTE 23.8 h x 10.5 neck SOURCE BRON Purchased from Artist | ENTERED BY INGESCHRIJF DEUR |
| INSURANCE VERZEKERING | CONDITION ON RECEIPT TOESTAND BIJ ONTVANGS | |

Example page of the computerised database

Addendum C

WHAG • INVENTORY OF ARTWORKS

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Ac Nr: <input type="text" value="2197"/></p> <p>Title: <input type="text" value="Jar - brown pit-fired burnished"/></p> <p>Collection: <input type="text" value="Purchases"/></p> <p>Category: <input type="text" value="Ceramics"/></p> <p>Condition of ceramic: <input type="text" value="Excellent"/></p> <p>Remark: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Associated Group: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Contemp SA ceramics? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Source: <input type="text" value="Purchase"/></p> <p>Source reference: <input type="text" value="Artist"/></p> | <p>Artist: <input type="text" value="Garrett, Ian (1971 -)"/></p> <p>Medium: <input type="text" value="Smoke fired"/></p> <p>Comments: <input type="text" value="Oxidation; light brown clay,"/></p> <p>Image Size (cm): <input type="text" value="23.5h"/></p> <p>Price: <input type="text" value="450"/></p> <p>Aq date: <input type="text" value="1998/02/11"/></p> <p>DateCreated: <input type="text" value="1998"/></p> |
| <p>Preview:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Card system</p> | <p>Marking:</p> |
|  |  |

Example page of the Exhibitions register

Addendum D

| EXHIBITION | DATE | OPENED BY | REMARKS |
|--|----------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| DAVID WALTERS AND WCAPSA FRIENDS | 3.6.03 | JUDGE MAJIEDT | GROUP EXHIBITION |
| ELMARIE WOOD-CALLANDEE CERAMICS | 2.9.03 | DR JOCK ROBBER | WITH MAGGIE NEUMAN |
| DAVID WALTERS + FRIENDS (WCAPE + NATAL) | JULY 04 | PETER HOTTIE | GROUP |
| DAVID WALTERS & FRIENDS | July 05 | | GROUP |
| DAVID WALTERS & FRIENDS (Functional) | 25.07.06 | Prof. Juliet Armstrong | GROUP (14) |
| DAVID WALTERS & FRIEND (Big Pots & Porcelain) Su Walls | 26.07.07 | Judge | GROUP |
| A tourist's view. | 27.02.08 | Jaco Pawel | |
| DAVID WALTERS + FRIENDS (SERIES) | 24.7.08 | DAVID WALTERS | GROUP |
| David Walters + Friends ...in conversation with Gabisile Nkosi | 30.7.09 | Malcolm Christian | Group |
| David Walters + Friends 'After the light' Kobus Moolman + Christopher Duigan | 22.07.10 | David Walters | Group |

Clippings of Government Printer, 27 September 1957

Addendum E

No. 1491.] [27 September 1957.
**DECLARATION OF THE WILLIAM HUMPHREYS
ART GALLERY, KIMBERLEY.**

It is hereby notified for general information that the Honourable the Minister of Education, Arts and Science has been pleased to declare, by virtue of the powers vested in him by section *one* and sub-section (1) of section *four* of the State-aided Institutions Act, 1931 (Act No. 23 of 1931), the William Humphreys Art Gallery, accommodated in the buildings of the Northern Cape Technical College, Kimberley, to be subject to the provisions of the said Act with effect from the 1st October, 1957.

The Government Printer, Pretoria.