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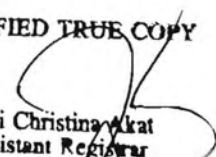
Seminar Apresiasi Kraf



KRAFTANGAN
MALAYSIA

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Contemporary Post Reduction Firing (Black Firing)

AWANGKO' HAMDAN BIN AWANG ARSHAD

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My intention in writing this paper is to document my experimental research activities with terra sigillata prepared from local Malaysian clay. These were prepared, applied and burnished on selected local Australian clay body and subjecting the burnished pieces to various low technology reduction firings. This activity is designed in response to my deep interest with low technology ceramics, particularly in identifying the potential of initiating these improvised post reduction techniques upon my return to Malaysia.

Most of the techniques employed are adapted from the available information published in numerous ceramic journals, magazines and books to illustrate the multiplicity of approaches to preparing, applying and firing terra sigillata burnished work. Some of the techniques were specially chosen because they illuminate the basic or 'standard' version, others to illustrate variations on the approach.

Although the techniques are tried, tested and proven through the test pieces as well as through the finishing on my sculptural forms, there is no guarantee others will obtain exactly the same results.

It is my earnest hope that artists, teachers and student particularly in Malaysia will find value in the pages of this report.

Terra Sigillata

Terra Sigillata, Latin for 'sealed earth', is one of most attractive, yet simple, low temperature surface finishes which can be achieved on pottery. It is an ancient technique whereby uniform slurry of ultra fine raw clay is applied to a leather-hard to dry pot by brushing, spraying or dipping. When the moisture has partially evaporated from the wet paste, this surface may be burnished if desired to a high polish. After the pot has been fired, the high lustrous surface is retained. From time to time something may go the wrong and the luster disappears. Understanding the science behind the process may help prevent such an experience for those who wish to exploit this technique.

Terra sigillata consist of a suspension of the smallest particles of clay. It is obtained by mixing dried natural clay or earth with quantities of water, blunging, with a deflocculant if necessary, to reduce it to a thin pouring consistency. This raw mixture is allowed to stand, sometimes for several days, and this permits dense coarser unusable sand and silt fractions to settle. Then, excess clear water is siphoned from the container and the top layer of superfine colloidal clay is decanted or siphoned off and reserved. Water is allowed to evaporate so that