



One thousand and one cups

MUSÉE ARIANA, GENEVA | 7 APRIL TO 28 AUGUST 2011

PRESS RELEASE

Geneva, April 2011 – The association "*Dialogue céramique*", led by the Genevan ceramist Claude Albana Presset, devised an impressive project: to commission one hundred eminent ceramists from the five continents to create a series of ten bowls, which were placed in showcases specially-designed by Roland Eberle for a world-wide itinerant exhibition lasting two and a half years. After India, China, Korea and France, the Musée Ariana is hosting the exhibition on one of the last stages of its tour, before it continues to the Musée des Beaux-Arts in La Chaux-de-Fonds and the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Winterthur.

This vast and ambitious project was inspired by the *kulhar*, the humble Indian terracotta bowl which sits perfectly in the palms of one's hands and from which *chai* can be sipped, a sweet, spiced tea whose aromas blend with that of the clay. The *kulhar*, made in millions for centuries just to be used once and then discarded, is now in danger of extinction, soon to be replaced by the anonymous plastic cup. The exhibition of the "One Thousand and One Cups" pays tribute to this universal, fundamental and archetypal container.

The results are striking. This series of bowls illustrates the infinite diversity of ceramic materials and ornamental styles : coiled terracotta, turned stoneware or cast porcelain, painted, engraved or printed decoration. All of the pieces, whether experimental or setting out to perpetuate traditions, reaffirm the universality of the container, the vitality and richness of the ceramic medium.

A catalogue and a film, "*Voyages d'argile*" ("*Journeys in Clay*") accompany and document the theme.

Parallel to this exhibition, the Musée Ariana has invited two artists who participated in the "One Thousand and One Cups" venture, **Arnold Annen** and **Yoshimi Futamura**, to develop their projects on a monumental scale.

The ceramic expression of **Yoshimi Futamura**, a Japanese ceramist living in Paris, is intimately linked to the forces of nature in all its complexity, with its upheavals and ruptures. The raw material, sometimes smoothed, sometimes torn apart, allows the subtlety of the ceramist's work to show through. The chamotte stoneware is softened by a thin layer of porcelain and the hemispherical bowl is set free; it bursts open into a disk or turns over on itself to form a sphere.

Arnold Annen has flirted with the physical limits of porcelain for several years, making the walls of his recipients as thin as possible, even removing superfluous flakes of porcelain with a blowtorch. The spare, taut shapes produced by this ceramist from Bern reveal the immaculate whiteness and extreme translucence of porcelain biscuit. Striations, spikes and excrescences animate the surface, without diverting the object from its essential simplicity.

The encounter of these two contrasting worlds, united by their artistic exigency and formal rigour, will undoubtedly prove fascinating !

Exhibition space has also been assigned to various partners, who will in turn present for a month the results of their reflections on the theme of the bowl. The creative workshops for women from the Champ-Dollon Prison, *Les Arts et l'enfant* of the *Service Cantonal de la Culture*, a History of Art class from the Institut Florimont, the 2D and 3D Ceramic Design sections of the Centre for Professional Training in the Applied Arts (CFPAA), participants in an international seminar on the Korean technique of *buncheong* and the Musée Ariana's summer workshops for children will consecutively invest this space with totally new, surprising and certainly enriching propositions.

To accompany the exhibition at the Musée Ariana, two Geneva galleries are staging collective exhibitions on the same theme:

7 – 27 May 2011

Atelier Michelle Dethurens, avenue Cardinal-Mermillod in Carouge 18

"Bols fous, bols sages", with Béatrice Deschenaux, Aline Favre, Noémi Fauconnet, Rebecca Maeder, Chloé Peytermann, Monique Sandoz

31 May – 15 June 2011

Galerie Marianne Brand, rue Ancienne in Carouge 20

"111 bols", with Christine Fabre, Jo Fontaine, Adriana Hartley, Marie-Noëlle Leppens, Michel Pastore, Brigitte Pénicaud, Gustavo Perez, Evelyne Porret, Simone Perrote, Sasha Wardell

The exhibition **"One thousand and one cups"** will be at

- the Musée des Beaux-Arts in La Chaux-de-Fonds from 25 September to 13 November 2011
- the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Winterthur from 25 February to 6 May 2012

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