

Jennifer Bennett

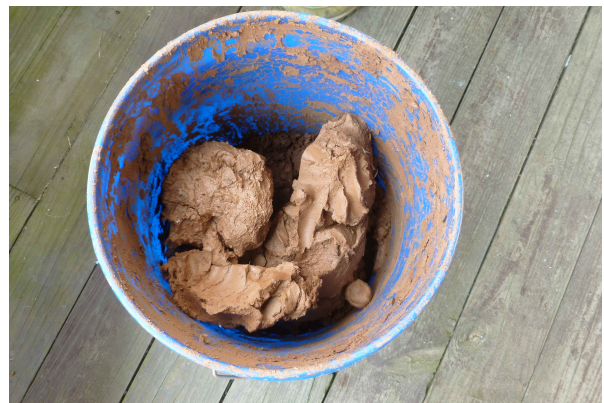
LIKE A THOUSAND YEARS AGO

The exhibitions that are planned in the US contain ceramic sculptures, which are executed in Ohio on site. The Residency Ohio 8550 in Chester Hill, sits on a piece of land, which is very clayey. This makes it possible to work directly with the Earth, to turn it into a sculpture enabled mass. The medium-sized ceramics thus produced are burned outdoors and will become black surfaced. This kind of production of ceramics, reminds us of their ancient origin, ceramics as one of the first cultural and crafted products of the people. Exhibited, they will be combined with sculptures made out of metal, whose material comes from Detroit, one of the first, thanks to the late industrialization, prosperous cities. Nevertheless, this former industrial acts in a western city, seem to be as of the distant past, the factories are abandoned, decay or rebuilt. The combination and the shapes of the sculptures, raise the question, what techniques and which combination of technology we want to develop today. It is well known, that different materials, allow different shapes. Both, the pure craft, as well as the alienated work on the machine in the factory, no longer seem adequate. It is perhaps the balance of traditional craft and new technology. The aim is to give these questions a sculptural appearance and thereby make them sensually comprehensible.

In the summer of 2014 I had the opportunity to visit the places and to familiarize myself with the production conditions.



Ohio, site where clay is extracted from



LIKE A THOUSAND YEARS AGO Workshop

Besides exhibiting my own sculptures, there will be a workshop opportunity for children, artists and neighbors at Pops packing in Detroit, where I will introduce the participants to basic knowledge in crafting and experimenting with the clay, that I bring with me from Ohio. Oldest found objects out of clay date 270'000 years ago and that will be the way we are going to work with the material. We will make little soundballs, beads and other small things, like bowls or little sculptures. The outcome shall be fired in a pitfiring. Firing clay outside is still employed by people all over the world originating from regional knowledge, that differs slightly. As the sculptures haven't been brisque fired in a technical kiln before going into the handmade fire, chances are, that pieces brake. So the aim for experiment will be in the foreground.



The firing process will take a whole night. The precise technique I will need to decide, when I am on site. By being fired in the fire, the former red clay receives it's beautiful black color.

This is a wonderful film about traditional work with clay in Africa and gives a good insight to the process.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52HKSwkI1hs>

(the firing process starts at min 58.00)

Requirements:

- space where I can either dig a whole or build a pitt fire
- wood and hay for burning
- gloves for touching hot stuff
- barbecue tongues

(Details can be prepared, when I'm there)

I am thinking about around 10 participants. If possible I would like to do two firings, so we could experiment with glazings too. That would make a total of four sessions.

1. producing the sculptures ---> after that they will need to dry for at least three days
2. first firing, start late afternoon
3. taking out the ceramics (next morning)
- (4. ----> working on them--->next fire)