

Australian artists's work from left to right: Janet, Sony, Simon, Sue, Prue and Vipoo



Thai artists's work from left to right: ดุษฎี, พิพัฒน์, สุโรจนา, อมรเทพ, ปรินดา, วรวิฑู

Clay Alchemy how it happen

By Vipoo Srivilasa

Clay Alchemy is the second phase of a program of work I have been working on for a number of years. Clay Alchemy's main objective is to set the ground work for long term relationships between ceramic artist in my birth country, Thailand, and my new home Australia. The project was organised by myself with significant funding by The Australian – Thailand Institute. This organisation promotes bilateral relations with Thailand and expansion of institutional, cultural and people-to-people links. I, and all involved, are highly grateful to the Institute for their incredible support for this and other programs that enhance understanding and collaboration between our two nations.

The first phase of the program was a solo exhibition of my work in Bangkok, establishing myself as a professional artist within Thailand and building a good working relationship with the Thai art community. Its success was essential for the development of the Clay Alchemy project.

The Project involved six Australian ceramic artists visiting Thailand and six Thai ceramic artists visiting Australia in 2006.

The Artists involved were:

Australian artists

Janet Mansfield
Sony Manning
Simon Lloyd
Sue Kneebone
Prue Venables
Vipoo Srivilasa

Thai artists

Dusadee Rumanee
Phiphat Chit-arirak
Surojana Sattabutr
Amornthep Mahamart
Prinda Setabundhu
Worawut Suteeweerakajorn

The cultural and artistic exchanges took place through a number of different events, such as:

1. A reciprocal hosting in each country by local participants, who provided unique experiences, access to studios and other venues that would not normally be possible.
2. Artists studio visits - observe where the art works are created and discuss various ceramic art practices.
3. A series of lectures and demonstrations at ceramic art departments of universities and organizations that promote ceramic art.
4. Studying the ceramic art tradition of each nation.
5. Exploration of local food and culture of each country.

The tours and events, now completed, are only the first step for the Clay Alchemy project. The participants are now committed to maintaining long term contacts and enhancing the relationships of the art communities of both countries. Through this understanding and respect for each other, the artists involved will be in a position to collaborate and create bodies of works which will exhibit in both Bangkok, Melbourne and hopefully travel to other part of Australia and Thailand.

In specific, discussion are continuing within the group to develop a series of work that are inspired by the personality and interests of their new friends. This sort of inspiration could only have happen through the friendships built within the journey of the Clay Alchemy project.

In organising this project, I fervently expect we will increase technical knowledge, cultural understanding, establish professional contacts and friendships, encourage and support the exchange of information within the ceramic arts community and expand opportunities for future exhibitions.

For more detail of the project visit www.clayalchemy.net

- 1.Vipoo with everyone
- 2.Vipoo with Australian artist in Thailand
- 3.Vipoo with Thai artists in Melbourne

