



1 2
3



4 5



Start from Clay By Worawut. Suteeweerakajorn

"Clay Alchemy" was an inspired concept. It was every ceramic artist's dream, but no one came up with a way to make the dream come true or was prepared to take the risk and commit both of their time and effort. Finally it has happened with the support of the Australian-Thailand Institute and Thai Airways.

The project involved twelve artists, six from Australia and six from Thailand. The differences of backgrounds, cultures, languages and the additional time constraints made it difficult to imagine how the project would evolve or what the final result would be. It was a recipe for problems and chaos.

Surprisingly, since the first night we met in Bangkok, we gelled better than expected. Many people, who met the group for the first time, thought that we had known each other for years, not weeks. The mutual interest in clay and art brought the group together and helped to break the ice and ease all awkwardness and differences. The ice was in melt down. We started building special bonds, which got stronger and stronger each day from talking and sharing experiences. We also learned and looked at our own culture from another's perspective; in the eyes of the outsiders. Some old things that we over looked or took for granted, were perceived in a new light and new facets. This broadened our perception on our own culture. We also explored each other's cultures in depth from native's perspective and thinking in such a privileged way that would be impossible as tourists. Skills and techniques from each other's expertise and professional experiences were transferred within the group. Each member willingly shared knowledge

on how their collected inspirations, were transformed and executed into wonderful and unique pieces of work. We encouraged and inspired each other throughout the project.

The project was also a great opportunity to meet new people with the same interests, to exchange ideas and thoughts and to inspire one another. All the presentations and demonstrations conducted were two ways communications. We got responses back with new elements and new perspectives of our own work viewed from different cultural and philosophical aspects. This broadens our way of thinking and of way we carry out our work in the future.

Although the project was a first step, it is a firm step to move forward to creating collaborations at several levels, both individual and public. The project has established relationships which will progress into the long term, such as exchange teaching or artist in residence programmes. The next step of the project is to produce more physical outcome from the relationship. We anticipate having collaborative exhibition within one year. The exhibition will travel around both countries. Confidently, all the benefit will be expanded to wider audiences and participants in order to generate new ideas, encourage new up and coming young artists and to progress the knowledge and skills in the ceramic world as a whole.

In relation to the trip to Australia from 8 to 17 October 2006, the most striking feature of Melbourne is the public art. The city and all the commercial spaces value and appreciate this type of art. They provide revenue and enormous space specifically for each piece. The surroundings embrace the art and show it off to its full potential. At the same time, the art transforms the ordinary space to be a better habitat. As a result, space is a crucial element of displaying a piece of art. Public art creates

beautiful cityscapes, while the space itself cherishes the art. Unfortunately, there are few public art pieces in Thailand. With most Thai public art, the surrounding is not taken into account in an attempt to maximize the effect of art in the space. My aspiration would be to see more site specific art in Thailand.

In my opinion, ceramic work in Australia is colourful with vivid colours and also composed of multi-layers. Meanwhile, the Australian audiences are astonished to see Thai ceramics in the form of conceptual and installation work, instead of pottery or conventional pieces, which Thailand has a long history of functional ceramic work. The work is not only conveyed stories of modern society, but also very quintessentially Thai.

The cultural exchange trip was very inspiring and motivating, especially the use of vivid colours, layers and the essence of space for art work. The wonderful experience as a member of the "Clay Alchemy" has imprinted on our memory, which has changed us forever. It moulds our personality and will be part of who we are and will certainly reflect in our future work in some aspects. The experience from this project is truly a life changing event of all of us.

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

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

1. Exchange ideas and suggestion with students at Chula University
2. Public art in Geelong
3. Cow sculpture at Shepparton
4. Art in commercial building
5. Public art in the city of Melbourne