

# THE POTTER'S NEWSLETTER™

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Homa at the Pottery Department of The Dubai Ladies Club

Dubai

## “Contemporary but with a traditional twist”,

said Homa, when I asked her to describe the kind of pottery that she makes.

She went on to elaborate that around 2500 years ago, potters in ancient Iran had a very interesting way of conveying messages through their pottery. For example a motive of a goat with its horns facing downwards told stories about the kind of farming practised during that period. When the horns face upwards, it spoke of war or civil unrest and when the potters curved the horns of goats on their pots, they were depicting hunting.

Homa was born in Tehran and went to the UK to study English and during this time she got her hands into some clay and could never let go of it. She studied under several teachers and years later

contd:-

## The Flying Kiln

Spain

“Flying Kiln” that was demonstrated at “Enganga’t 2007” in Celra, near the city of Girona in NE Spain. The event was held from the 4th-7th of April. Invited artists Richard Godfrey (UK), Ricardo Campos and Rosa Rosell, May Criado and Suso Machon (Spain) Antonia Kriezler (Germany) and Wali (India/Japan) demonstrated their various skills. Enric Mestre gave a highly entertaining lecture on his work. Demonstrations, lectures, films, events, workshops and exhibitions filled the four days making it a truly memorable occasion. Potters from all over Spain, The UK, Belgium, Germany, France and Japan attended the event and banter was a never ending stream.

All hats off to the hard working and dedicated team from L’Associacio de Ceramistes de Girona which made “Enfanga’t 2007” such a success. This together with institutional support from Celra Town Council, The City of Girona, Regional Government, The Catalan Crafts Council and commercial entities. Just goes to show what is possible if everybody pulls together.  
Potters of The World Ignite,  
Best wishes  
Wali



Wali warming up the Flying Kiln



In Flight



Silhouette



At the festival



moved to the UAE to establish her very own Abu Dhabi Pottery Workshop. No doubt her pottery is certainly contemporary as Homa uses modern glazing methods and modern firing techniques yet her style has that traditional Persian twist that makes her pottery very unique.

She has had many exhibitions and shows in Iran, UK and the UAE and the response has been pretty good. Contemporary and traditional potters in Iran do extremely well, as the society still values and appreciates this form of art. Where as in other countries one would still find these two kinds of people - There are the group of people who think pottery ought to be cheap and always bargain for a cheaper price and then there are the second group of people who are not only intellectual but also the kind of people who would have been sensitised to the idea of studio pottery and traditional pottery.

After her long stay in the UK, Homa's journey back to Tehran was a very emotional one. There she continued to have official shows and researched about pottery along with archeologists. She found out that Kofic writings were another special feature of persian style pottery. Probably because most of the ancient potters during the pre-islamic period were illiterate that archeologists found Kofic writings often misspelled and the sentences indiscipherable and so still a mystery.

On her journey to the UAE, she devised her own method of teaching. This involved pinching, coiling, slab-building, throwing, also glaze making workshops and her students are people of different interests. Homa also teaches at the men's

and women's colleges and is an active member of the New Art Centre in Dubai. Most of the time you would find Homa at work or teaching at her Abu Dhabi Pottery Workshop.

Her pottery materials are supplied regularly from the UK. She tried working on the locally available white/red clay in the UAE, but found out that it cracked while firing at 700 degrees.

Anyone who walked into the pottery studio at the Dubai Ladies Club where Homa taught every week, would notice that the studio was spic and span. Maintaining a safe and clean environment is a priority for Homa. She even insists that students clean their bats after throwing as it is the dust on the bat that can float in the air and cause ailments. Many people are discouraged to learn when they find out that pottery can be pretty hazardous to one's health, but not knowing can have its drastic consequences.

Homa believes that it is very important for every potter to be aware of potentially hazardous materials. Most products found in the market are not labeled food safe, where as places like England, require pottery to be tested before selling. Homa's classes begin with safety guidelines. Oxides like Barium are poisonous through the air, skin and by eating. Using more than 6% of Copper Carbonate can be dangerous. Even though tea pots are usually food safe, ceramic ware still need some sort of marking to indicate safety and a studio must always be mopped clean and never swept with a broom.

Her works are also on permanent display at The Museum of Pottery and Glass in Tehran. Homa's works are supplied all over the world and she is currently focused on traveling to Japan for a workshop and exhibition, France is also on the list. Opportunities like this give Homa a chance to exchange ideas and techniques from different places. She also plans to publish a pocket handy book that may come in use for college students and also a hard back version which will be written in English, Farsi and Arabic.

Homa specializes in mainly thrown Stoneware pieces. She has also taken part in various exhibitions throughout the Emirates, after her solo exhibition, which was held at the Abginch & Sofalineh Museum (The National Pottery & Glass Museum) in Tehran. Two of her pots are now on permanent display at the museum ( she is the only contemporary potter to have a permanent exhibit there). Homa has also exhibited her work at the Saadabad Palace Museum in Tehran. She teaches the 'Art of Pottery' at her workshop in the Abu Dhabi Pottery and has taught at the Zayed University, on special occasions. Homa has been taught under the guidance of Oliver De Silva, Judy Firmin, Richard Phethean, Jack Doherre Margaret and David Sensei (Japan).

Her latest achievement was winning the Judge Award (1st prize) at the 2003 Dubai International Art Centre Member's Exhibition.

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Pictures of Homa at work, her pottery and studio