

# kb2011

07. Internationale Keramik-Biennale 2011 der Stadt Kapfenberg

## HISTORY

Carrying things around has always been important for human being. In the beginning, before he learned to braid baskets out of twigs, man used animal skins and pumpkins. Those baskets were only suitable for carrying solid and dry goods. Transporting oil, water, or wine was simply not possible unless somebody had the idea to put a coat of clay around the baskets. The dried clay sealed the gaps between the twigs but it also had the tendency to crumble away. However, drying the baskets in the sun hardened the clay, making them suitable for carrying liquids as well.

Later on, vessels were only made out of clay and the first simple earthenware containers had been produced around 9000 BC. Approximately 7000 BC, man deliberately put clay containers into the fire and so hard ceramic ware had been developed. By putting pressure on a turning vessel with a skilled hand, one was able to create an even-shaped, cylindrical form. Around 3000 BC this technique had been sophisticated and was leading to the development of the potter's wheel. Because of this natural desire for beauty and value, man began to decorate these vessels. Therefore, each epoch and each culture developed its very own particular style, making it easy for archaeologists to classify individual periods. Anyone with the artistic sense admires the variety of forms, the coloring and the ornamentation.

Pottery belongs to the oldest authenticated crafts in Kapfenberg. From 1328 until 1751, today's Schmiedgasse was called the „pottery mile“ and also the name of the district „Hafendorf“ refers to this craft. In the 15th century the emperor personally intervened in a dispute between The Kapfenberg and the Kindberg potters, ruling that the potters in Kapfenberg were only allowed to produce black, red and gray colored pottery. Potters in Kapfenberg benefited from the fact, that the guild was sitting in their market town and that their Paymaster had to be elected out of four masters from Kapfenberg. In 1726 emperor Charles VI granted Kapfenberg's pottery guild a privilege, which also included the journeyman's rights and duties.

This short historical summary clearly reveals the importance of ceramics, not only for mankind but also for the early history of Kapfenberg. Apart from producing ceramics for our daily purposes, people with creative skills were always tempted to exclusively use clay for artistic expression and to evaluate the possibilities this new material has to offer.

Historical roots, the certainty that there is no similar artistic competition in this region, the knowledge and the skills of Waltraut Gschiel in this field, the co-operation with the Academy Graz, the establishing of a forum of contemporary ceramics as well as the importance for our German twin-town Frechen, are motives enough for organizing this biennial ceramics festival in Kapfenberg.

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