

IRIS BRENDEL
7-26 April 99
Mon – Fri 13-18 h

INTRODUCTION TO CERAMICS EXHIBITION 99

I am aware of breaching two taboos :

- I) I am OLD
- II) I am a CERAMICS ARTIST

The first one you are only allowed to be if you are famous, or contribute to at least one big idea, visibly and audibly a credo: a religion, a party, peace, woman – anything noble...The word CERAMICS ARTIST should be ignored in this country where applied art is ignored and works of clay are “not even ignored” – at best it is rewritten with a name change : “Maker of objects” ? “Arranger of fragile pieces” ?

Years ago, when a ceramics oven was dismantled in St Margarethen, the sculpting community (from which community I personally knew hardly anyone) rejoiced. You could have thought that the place had been freed from a furuncle ! I do not carry the name “sculptress”, I am rather a figure turner, presser and shaper. (I only work on unused balls of clay).

My life passed surprisingly non politically. If I had stayed in my birthplace of Germany, and been bundled off to Argentina by my mother in 1933, then at best I would still have today one lampshade. Over there I heard little about the War and even less about my descent. My personal tragedies were only tangential consequences of political circumstances – so I seldom smell anything “ideological”, knowing nevertheless that in times where a good joke can be punished by the death penalty, everything gravitates to politics.

When I was young, there was the “New Look” and it was long, curly [sic] and by Dior. Stockings had seams, the men in my teenage dreams wore short hair – only artists were allowed at that time to have outlandish hairstyles. Ceramics had to be above all functional.