



PORCELAIN 'DANCE' REVEALED BY RENOWNED POTTER

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If you've never worked with porcelain, shaped its delicate outlines to prepare it for the love of a potter's oven, you may not know of its "diva" personality. Or that it "dances".

This is how Jenny Strong, a pottery enthusiast who attended a porcelain workshop on Saturday in Hoheizen in Bellville, describes the material.

The event was organised by Thea Kleynhans, member of the Pottery Association of SA, and Ohna Colyn, owner of the pottery studio where the session was held.

The workshop was presented by Antoinette Badenhorst, a former Boston, Bellville resident, who is now a world famous potter who lives and teaches in America.

"Antoinette spoke about how important it is to understand porcelain, and began with a brief history of porcelain. She described porcelain's character as that of a 'diva'," said Jenny.

She said Antoinette also pointed out "the advantages and foibles" of porcelain, and illustrated how to work with these traits and show them to advantage.

Antoinette also demonstrated wheel work with porcelain, how to wedge, centre, throw and turn.

"She showed us how to do hand work with it, guided us through the dyeing process and clearly explained what can and can't be done at each stage. She gave us tips for handling and propping and ease of working."

She said they were encouraged to use and copy what they had learnt and to integrate what they found relevant into their own style.

Jenny said Antoinette spent considerable time explaining porcelain's character - what it does, why and when.

"She spoke about tools, what to use, when and why and how. Tips on tools and tips on sharpening tools, tips on turning.

"Antoinette clearly explained how and why you can do 'this', now, but not 'that', always explaining the tricky character of porcelain.

They were taught how to pack a kiln, how to fire it and at what temperature.

"Antoinette spoke about...the 'dance' - the movement, the light and colour," Jenny said. "She said: 'Try what I'm doing, then find yourself'."

Thea, also a potter, said Antoinette and Koos left the country about 15 years ago and Antoinette has since made "huge inroads worldwide".