



WABA
Symposium & Exhibition
2011–2013

World Association of Brick Artists
hosted by PETERSEN TEGL A/S
and Cathrinesminde Brickworks Museum

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Clay – a building block in our soul

Here in the area of Sønderborg we have a strong history of brickworking, which has made clay a vital building block in our soul.

There is therefore widespread pride over how Petersen Tegl in Nybøl Nor, in collaboration with skilled artists, has been able to lift this incredibly earthly material up and transform it into products with unique artistic and architectural qualities, which attract attention all over the world. It is the brick, with a soul.

The artistic group WABA (World Association of Brick Artists) and symposium guest, Bjørn Nørgaard have, together with Petersen Tegl /PM Tegl and the firm's skilled employees, found magic in the clay and brick stones. They have created a number of artworks, of which five will be placed in lively and flowering rural settings around Sønderborg Municipality.

For me personally, it was an incredibly warm and enriching experience to follow five artists from Sweden, USA, Wales, Germany and France/Switzerland respectively as they took the local clay to their hearts and combined it in their art with international inspiration. The results are on the highest artistic level.

This experience was shared by local visitors from both the Danish and German sides of the border, who streamed in on the day, the symposium held an open house. They went in to the symposium and met the artists with a curious and open mind and left with a new, local consciousness.

The participants also returned home from the symposium with new inspiration. Not least were artists, architects and other interested parties thrilled by the lecture: "The Architectonic Perspectives of the Bricks: The Singing Brick" held by Professor Christoffer Harlang. This took place on the successful theme day "Creative with Bricks" at Cathrinesminde Brickyard Museum, which is located in beautiful, natural surroundings at Flensborg Fjord not far from Sønderborg.

Our local area is made up of the town of Sønderborg, which is ringed by a network of smaller towns, villages and rural areas rich in possibilities for finding inspiration and camaraderie in close company. In addition, its location close to the German border provides a viewpoint and a diversity, which helps to make the area a cultural pivot with a basis for a high

quality of life. The municipality is working purposefully to highlight and develop this potential, by launching the kind of extraordinary projects and events that add some of the creative energy normally only connected with larger cities. We call this, 'heading towards a Countryside Metropolis'. The WABA Symposium has been a very important mile stone along this road.

Sønderborg Municipality thanks the WABA artists, Christian A. Petersen and the employees of Petersen Tegl/PM Tegl, along with our financial supporters such as the New Carlsberg Foundation, Region of Southern Denmark, the rural area committee in Sønderborg Municipality, the Danish Arts Council's DIVA programme and all the many, who have supported the symposium in different ways.

We can without hesitation attach the WABA group's motto: "Brick crosses all boundaries" to ourselves.

Helle Barsøe
cultural consultant, Sønderborg Municipality

The Brickworks Coast

The Firth

The shores around the Firth of Flensburg are brickwork shores. The coast has been lined with at least a hundred brickworks since the Middle Ages.

The Firth of Flensburg extends from the old north-south going Army or Cattle Road in the interior of the Jutland peninsula and to the sea lanes along the east coast of Jutland towards the Danish Islands or the Baltic Sea. The firth is made for seafaring. Besides, its shores and hinterlands were rich in clay, forest and peat. Thus the opportunity for large scale brick manufacture and shipping was there for the taking.

The art of brick manufacture came to these parts in the 12th Century. The earliest brickworks lay near churches and cloisters, a.o. Rydkloster, later replaced by Glücksburg Castle whence the present lineage of the Danish Royal house descends. The more recent brickworks tend to be located further out along the firth. From the 18th Century brick making became a serious export business directed towards the world outside. The number of brickworks peaked with around 70 in 1890 and declined over the 20th Century to only seven.

Clay to stone

The clay around the Firth of Flensburg derives from the last Ice Age. The upper layer has a lower content of calcium carbonate because of leaching, and it yields red tile and brick. This layer of red clay is thin, because it is only some 15.000 years since the ice retreated, so leaching has not been going on for so long. The deeper layers have a higher content of calcium carbonate and yield yellow brick.

The clay is mixed with the right quantities of sand and water, kneaded and molded into bricks, roof tiles, drainage pipes etc. The dried brick are then fired at around 1050 degrees Celsius. The clay of the area melts at around 1100 degrees Celsius. Until the latter half of the 19th Century all processing was by hand or horse power. Then steam driven machines began to take over and ring kilns gained ground. In ring kilns a series of chambers are fired in an endless ring.

The voyages

Flensburg brick is a thin brick format of 1,5 inch thickness (about 40 mm). It gained popularity in the 18th Century and has been shipped widely in

the world. After the city fire of Copenhagen in 1728, Christian Ditlev, Count Reventlow of Sandbjerg was put in charge of the rebuilding. He was an experienced gentleman, who had been in charge of the rebuilding of the city of Altona after the Swedish army had burned it in 1713. Reventlow had millions of bricks shipped to Copenhagen from the Firth of Flensburg – many of them in the Flensburg format.

Reventlow's lists over shipping capacity for building materials in the ports of the Southern Jutland east coast tell the tale of contemporary freight routes. Druntheim (Trondheim), Rumsdahl, Christiania, Copenhagen, Dantzic were common destinations. It was first of all the shipping opportunities that gave brick from the Firth of Flensburg its prominent market position in Denmark-Norway and around the Baltic Sea. The use of brick as ballast sent them as far away as the Danish West Indies.

With the advent of rail and lorry transportation, the coastal brickworks lost the advantage that shipping had given them – particularly when one brick is as good as another. Today, brickworks must make something special of their bricks, if they are to gain preference. It could be history, terroir, art, brand or design that distinguishes certain products over anonymous brick. Petersen Tegl is a striking example of such a strategy. Therefore, brick from this area now travels as far away as to Japan and New York.

The Museum

Cathrinesminde Brickworks is situated at the beach of Illerstrand opposite the peninsula of Holnæs in the Firth of Flensburg as the last out of nine brickyards at this bit of beach. It was established in 1732 by local farmers. In 1893 it had a modern ring kiln installed, and in 1968 its owner chose to close it rather than invest in a new generation of kiln, the tunnel kiln.

Thanks to local enthusiasm, Cathrinesminde Brickworks was rescued from total decay and resurrected as a museum of brickworks history in 1993. The enthusiasm was spurred by a combined ethnological research project into the working culture of the brick works and a theatre project. Therefore, Cathrinesminde stands today as a monument of classical ring kiln brickworks. It has been nominated as one out of 25 national industrial heritage sites and unites being a museum with a variety of cultural exhibition and performance events.

Torben A. Vestergaard
Museum Sønderjylland Cathrinesminde Teglværk



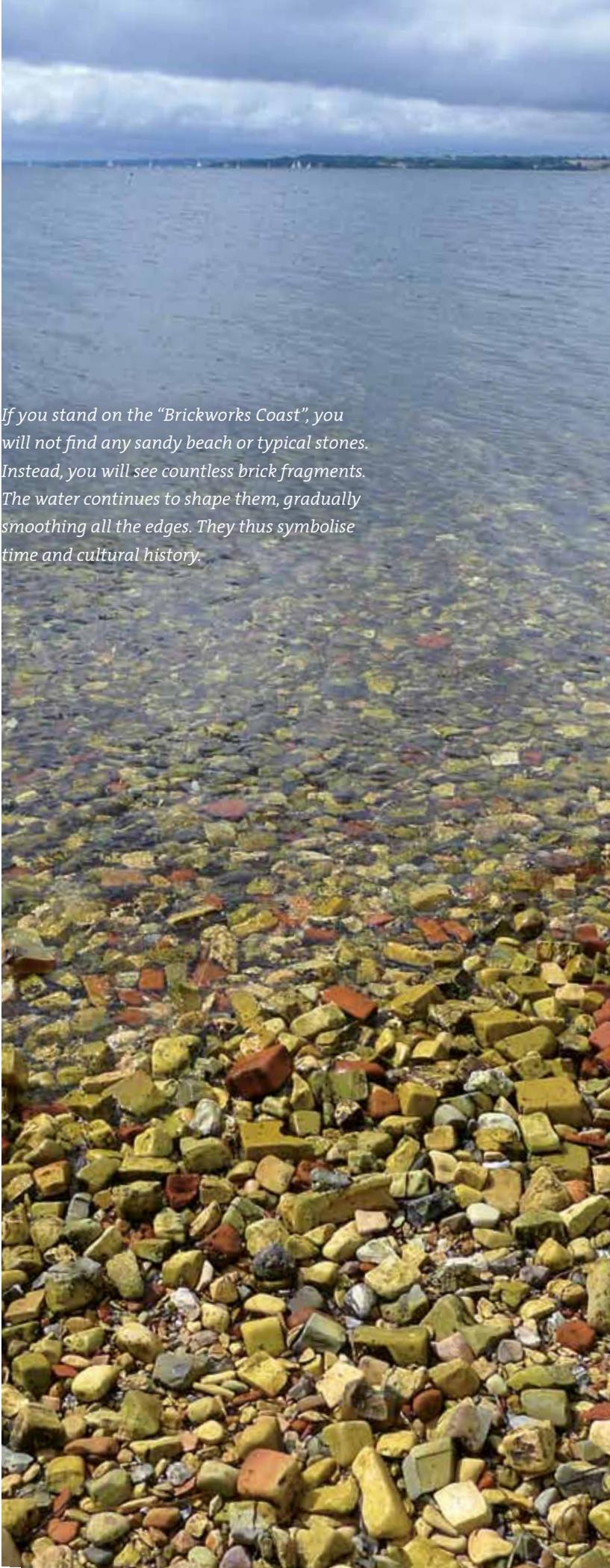
A map for Flensburg Fjord (Iohannes Meier, 1651)



A lithographie of Rendbjerg Brickworks (1850 D. Winter)



Catalogue page from Rendbjerg Teglværk 1873 showing decorative brick



If you stand on the “Brickworks Coast”, you will not find any sandy beach or typical stones. Instead, you will see countless brick fragments. The water continues to shape them, gradually smoothing all the edges. They thus symbolise time and cultural history.





Petersen Tegl A/S

When a brickyard turns into a studio

In May 2010 I travelled to Iran together with two friends. Amongst others, we visited a temple – 102x102 m once measuring 51 m in the high.

The outer brick wall was 2 metres thick and was originally constructed in 1300 BC. It is quite something to hold a 3300 year old brick in your hand.

My family has only been making bricks for a relatively short time: in 1791 we received royal permission by King Christian VII to establish a brickyard, so I am only the seventh generation, but I feel as through clay runs through my veins!

For thousands of years, burned clay has been used to create bricks, tiles, pipes, pots, plates, and other useful objects. This remarkable material extracted from the earth has also been used to create art in many different forms. Burned clay is highly resistant and you can travel around the world and marvel at the enthusiasm and creativity left behind by builders and architects. There was once a time when only red and yellow bricks were used. In those days it was so simple to be a brick manufacturer but after “my good friend” Mao died, finally, after a long time, individualism returned. Architects have now gone completely mad – and I’ve waited more than 30 years for it!

In the last 3 years we have sold bricks in endless shapes and colours to 30 different countries including USA, Russia, Kazakhstan, France, Greece, Lebanon, Dubai, Hong Kong and Japan. We work by three fundamental rules:

- 1) the customer is king.
- 2) Kunden er kongen.
- 3) Der Kunde ist König.

However, our production is not very big; if we were to produce just one Petersen brick for every person in China, it would take us 65 years!

In 1990, Ulla Viotti was given the task of making art for Malmø power station. We received an enquiry about supplying the necessary bricks and subsequently Ulla paid us a visit to go over the possibilities. I thought it was all very exciting; however my enthusiasm was not exactly shared by my staff. They only saw a lot of hassle and extra work. Ulla returned again and again with interesting plans, and gradually everybody at the brickyard became enthralled. We have worked with artists and students from many different countries.

Christian A. Petersen





In 2012, the World Association of Brick Artists (WABA) was founded and five members came to the brickyard, and it all went suddenly even crazier!

The North American collected the brick scrap (like many generations of Danes before him) which lay on the beach and had been shaped by water, weather and wind for decades and put it all in a large steel “house shaped” mesh form.

The Frenchman took the brick scrap from the brickyard and emptied it very disorderly into a box and filled the gaps with concrete. Afterwards, 10 tons of sand and a huge amount of compressed air were used to transform the block into a beautiful sculpture.

The German created a cow head from bricks of various shapes and colours. He also made a geometric structure using the Kolumba stone.

The artist from Wales produced a huge double face. The whole brickyard became very excited about the project until she began to take it apart and create entirely different sculptures from it.

The Swedish artist assembled a number of large clay panels measuring 52x92cm and created artworks from them using handprints, holes and then burned them. She also made 5 altar tables.

Having artists at the brickyard provides so much inspiration and our employees appreciate that their work is not only destined for rectangular buildings but also in the construction of beautiful architectural works of art which our descendents will cherish.

Christian A. Petersen
Petersen Tegl A/S

Such clay as "Kolumbas" are made on.





A danish brick dream

WABA artists, a small seminal group of colleagues and friends who share the passion of bricks assembled at the Petersen brick factory in August, 2011 to work and talk together for their inaugural symposium. This was a dream, conceived over a decade ago during conversations at the Yellow Brick Road brick symposium in the UK. WABA is finally a reality and the first symposium a success.

Ulla Viotti, has worked with the Petersen Tegl factory for the past twenty years and suggested we might hold the first symposium there. Christian Petersen, 7th generation brick factory owner agreed and invited us to use the facilities and sponsored the materials. Helle Barsoe, Cultural Consultant for Sonderborg Municipality in Southern Denmark wrote grants and secured funds to cover travel and room and board costs.

A very rare situation greeted us upon arrival; a great workspace, 24/7 access to equipment and materials, a liaison with top managers and hands-on assistance. In other words a dream scenario; I think we all felt like 'kids in a candy store'!

The atmosphere in the PM factory was extremely conducive to our productivity.

Christian Petersen who lives in his ancestral home adjacent to the factory, walks the facilities every day, knows each of the 100+ employees by name and is very proud of his facilities and products. The workers were friendly, curious and interested in what a group of artists would create with the products they produce. The most modern prominent international architects visit the factory regularly and the signature Kolumba brick has become the 'star' of the factory production.

I was mesmerized with possibilities upon arrival; wet, fired or reclaimed materials were all accessible, and over the course of the two-week time-frame I made good use of all three. The one condition we challenged ourselves with was to each create a sculpture that would fit a one meter square concrete base and travel the Sonderborg municipality for the next several years. I decided to design an architecturally based steel container for repurposed material.

Within the first couple of days we were out exploring the edges of the fjords, where over 100 brick factories had produced brick over the last few hundred years. The rich clay deposits of the area combined with good shipping made this area ideal for brick production. We found our number one 'brick beach' and every day or two would make another expedition to gather 'brick jewels', an activity we all enjoyed and the reclaimed/repurposed material found it's way into all our work.

I took advantage of some of the possibilities in the factory and used freshly produced wet brick to produce a variety of small 'soft houses' of yellow clay and black engobe. They were fired with production bricks and once grouped together became 'soft villages' that were wall-mounted on 1m long shelves.

A request for 32–60cm square and 4cm thick slabs of black Kolumba brick clay and a bucket of white engobe allowed me to explore the symbols I have used in my work for the past thirty years. The slabs or 'plates' will be dried slowly and fired with other Kolumba production brick.

Additionally, I used a wet brick saw to cut a variety of the fired Kolumba brick into archetypal house shapes, influenced by Danish architecture. These were then assembled and grouped, anticipating WABA exhibition possibilities.

The metal fabrication shop helped produce the house-shaped container for the 'brick jewels'. I took great care in assembling the 'brick beach' collection into the galvanized steel house container and made sure to include several very impressive Danish flint stones to connect with the historic geology and trading aspects of the culture. In numerous conversations with people in the community I came to understand how important and socially relevant the 'brick jewels' were to this place. Every inhabitant of the area, young/old/male/female has been seduced by the organic beauty of these remnants of brick history, and actively build their own collections all their lives. The brick connection here is deep and strong.

In addition to the physical work we did at Petersen Tegl, we used our evenings productively to discuss the concept of WABA and what the long-term goals for the organization might include. The discussions were dis-

seminated into a document, which will be posted on a soon-to-be-created WABA website. The symposium also included a one-day seminar, hosted by the Cathrinesminde Brick Museum in Broager, with a lecture on the 'Singing Bricks' by Architecture Professor Christoffer Harlang of the Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen. His lecture and philosophy on bricks was a perfect match with our WABA thoughts. One evening Cathrinesminde Museum Curator Torben Vestergaard gave an insightful lecture on the history of brickworks in the area.

This symposium experience was most certainly a 'brick dream'. The physical environment of Southern Denmark, the generosity of the Petersen Tegl factory, the rich brick history of the area along with WABA friends contributed to a most valuable and important experience. We all intend to return and use the experience to evolve our art and promote brick as a material that can 'make the world a better place'.

Robert Harrison

www.waba-co.com





Robert Harrison

Robert Harrison holds both Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Ceramics. He has taught Ceramics at the University level, and held administrative positions in Ceramic Programs both in Canada (the Banff Centre for the Arts) and the USA. He has served on the Board of NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) as President and the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts in Helena, Montana as President. Well known for his large scale architectural sculpture he continues to evolve and exhibit smaller scale studio works. His interests in history and world cultures have provided numerous opportunities to work and travel abroad. His work is represented in many public and private collections, nationally and internationally. In 2001 he was elected to the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) based in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2007 he was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA) and in 2008 was awarded the Meloy Stevenson Award of Excellence from the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts. In 2010 Robert was a founding member of the World Association of Brick Artists (WABA) and in 2011 Robert was honored as a Fellow of the NCECA Council.

Sønderborg House

1 x 1 x 1.25 m

Reclaimed historic Danish 'brick jewels'

Danish flintstones

galvanized steel

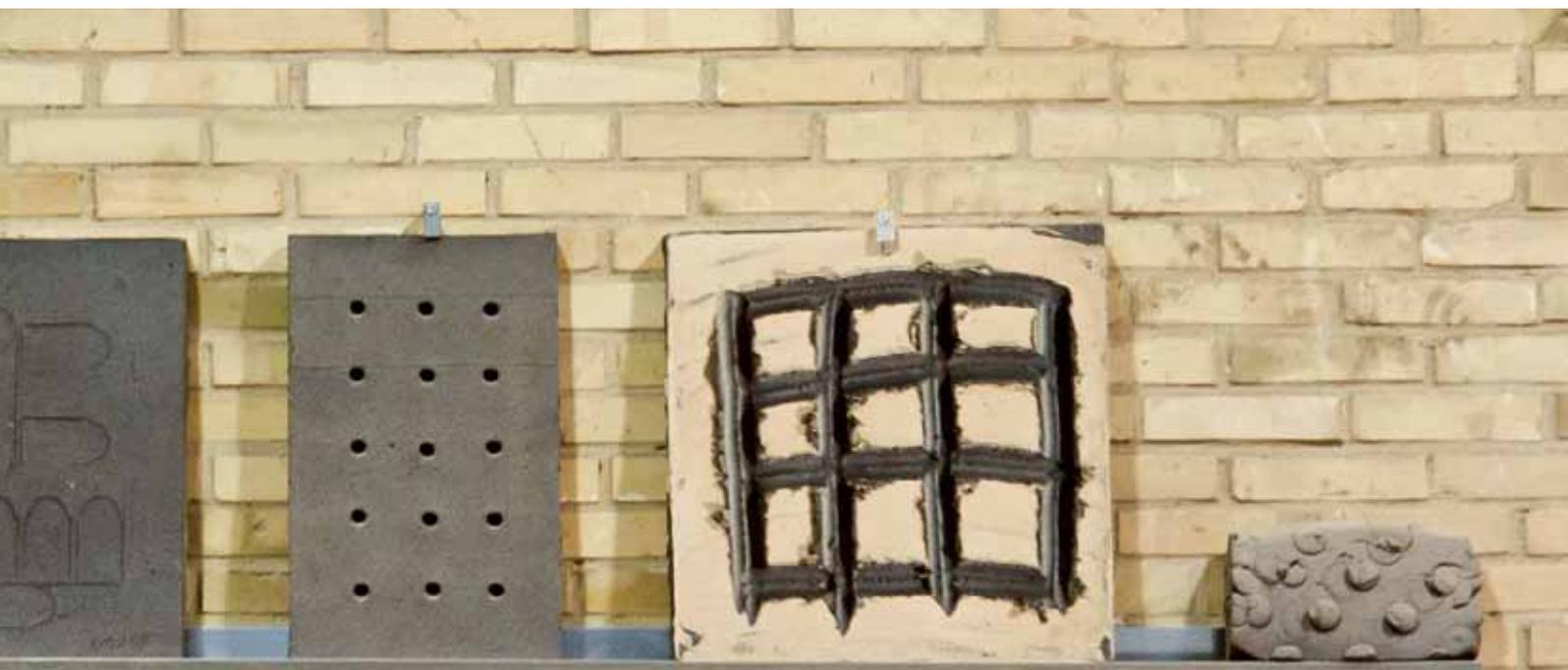
concrete base



Series of wall pieces

Various sizes on base of 60 cm squares
clay









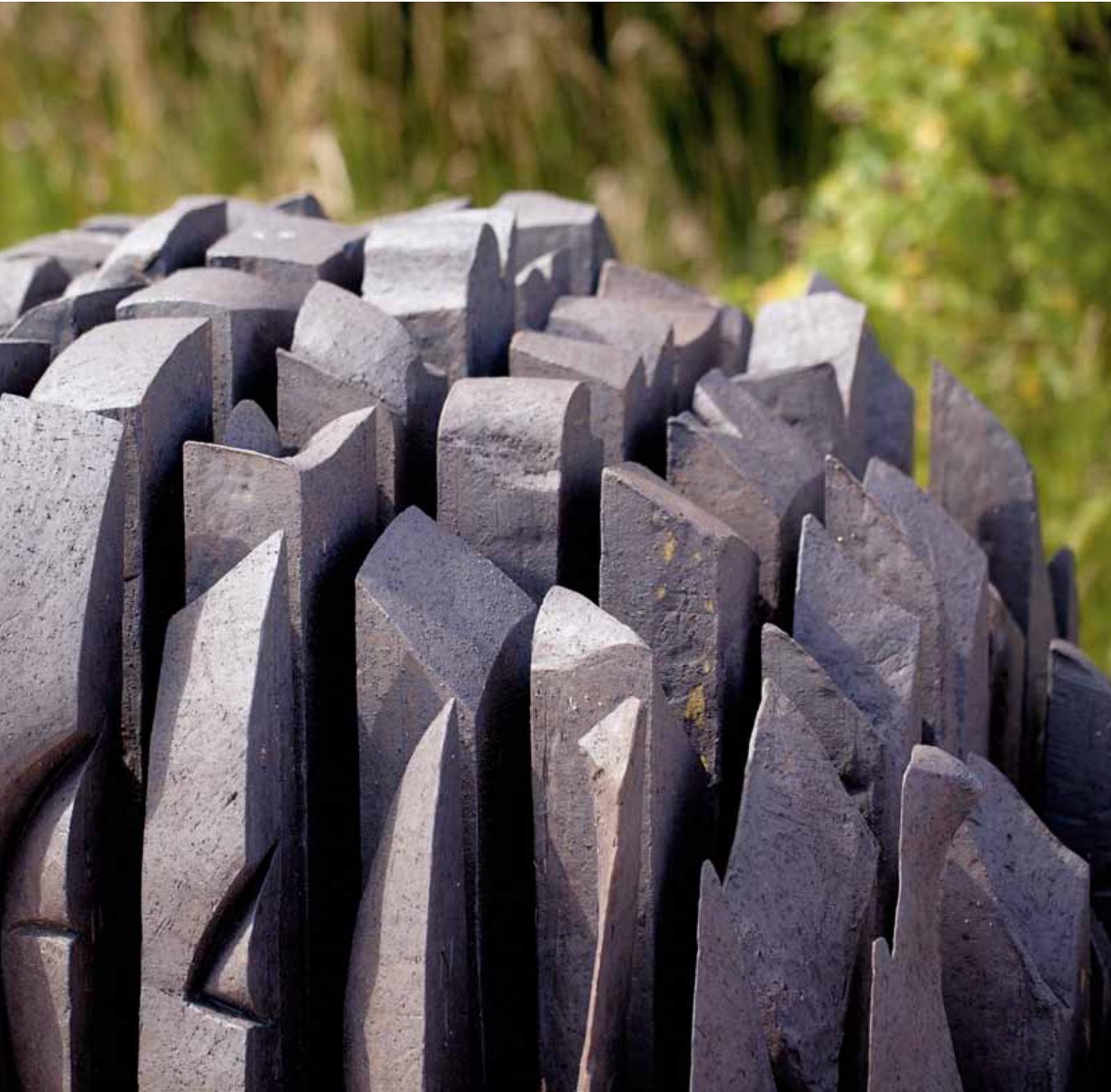
Gwen Heeney

Gwen Heeney MA RCA is an elected member of the IAC (International Academy of Ceramics). She is a Public Artist specialising in brick as a creative medium and has worked for many years in collaboration with the Brick Industry world-wide. She has Public Artworks throughout the UK and in international collections in Korea, China, USA, Turkey, Hungary and Costa Rica. She is a part time Senior Lecturer at the University of Wolverhampton, School of Art and Design, Applied Arts Department where she specialises in Architectural Ceramics. She is presently researching for a PhD at the University of Newcastle between the Fine Art and Landscape Architecture Departments. In August 2011 she was instrumental in setting up WABA, The World Association of Brick Artists with Jacques Kaufmann, Ulla Viotti, Robert Harrison and Fritz Vehring.

Without Borders

1.5 m long x 1 m wide
Petersens black Kolumba
brick/rusted steel









Without Borders

2 m long x 1 m wide
Petersen's black Kolumba
brick/rusted steel





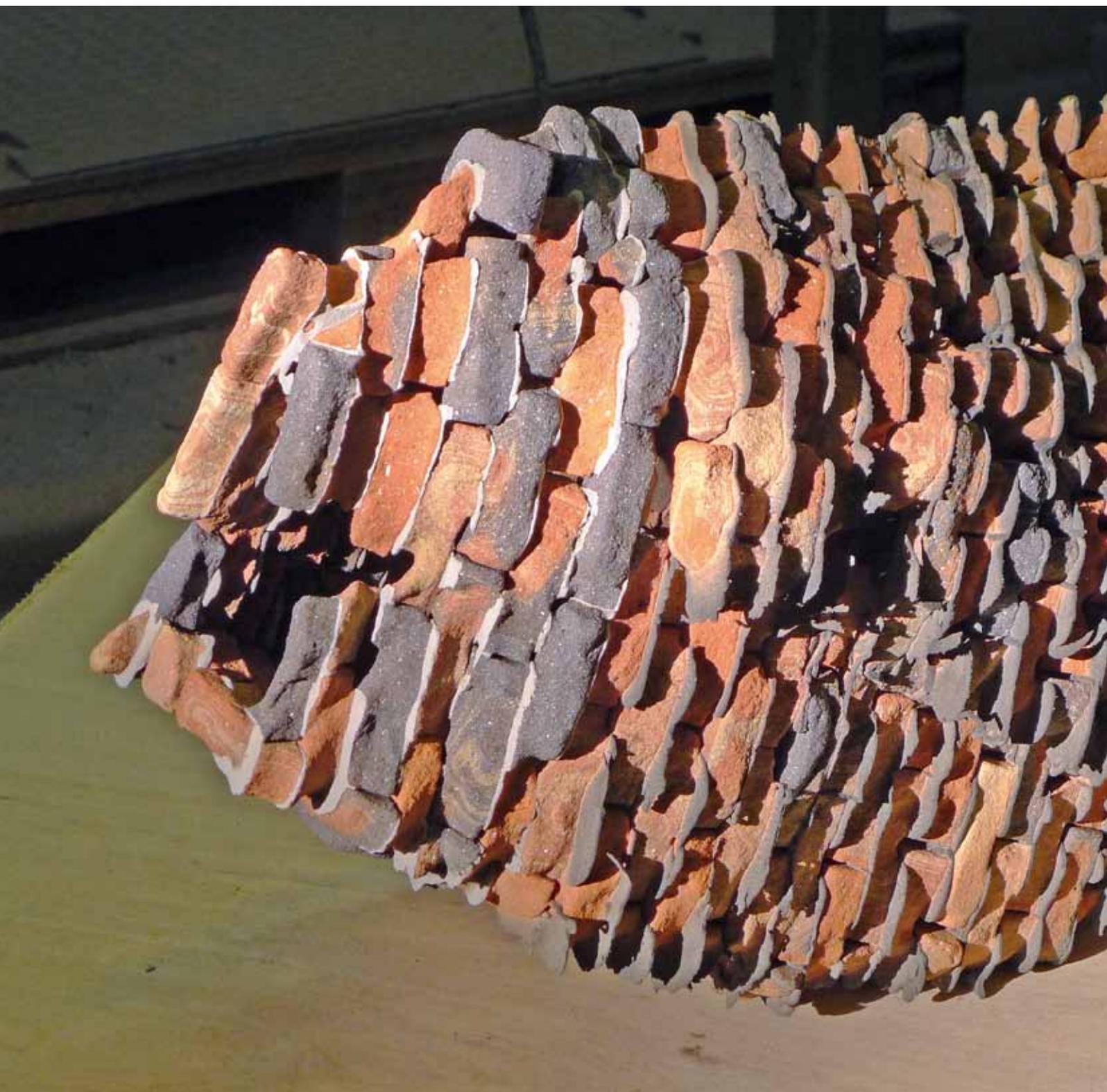
Jacques Kaufmann

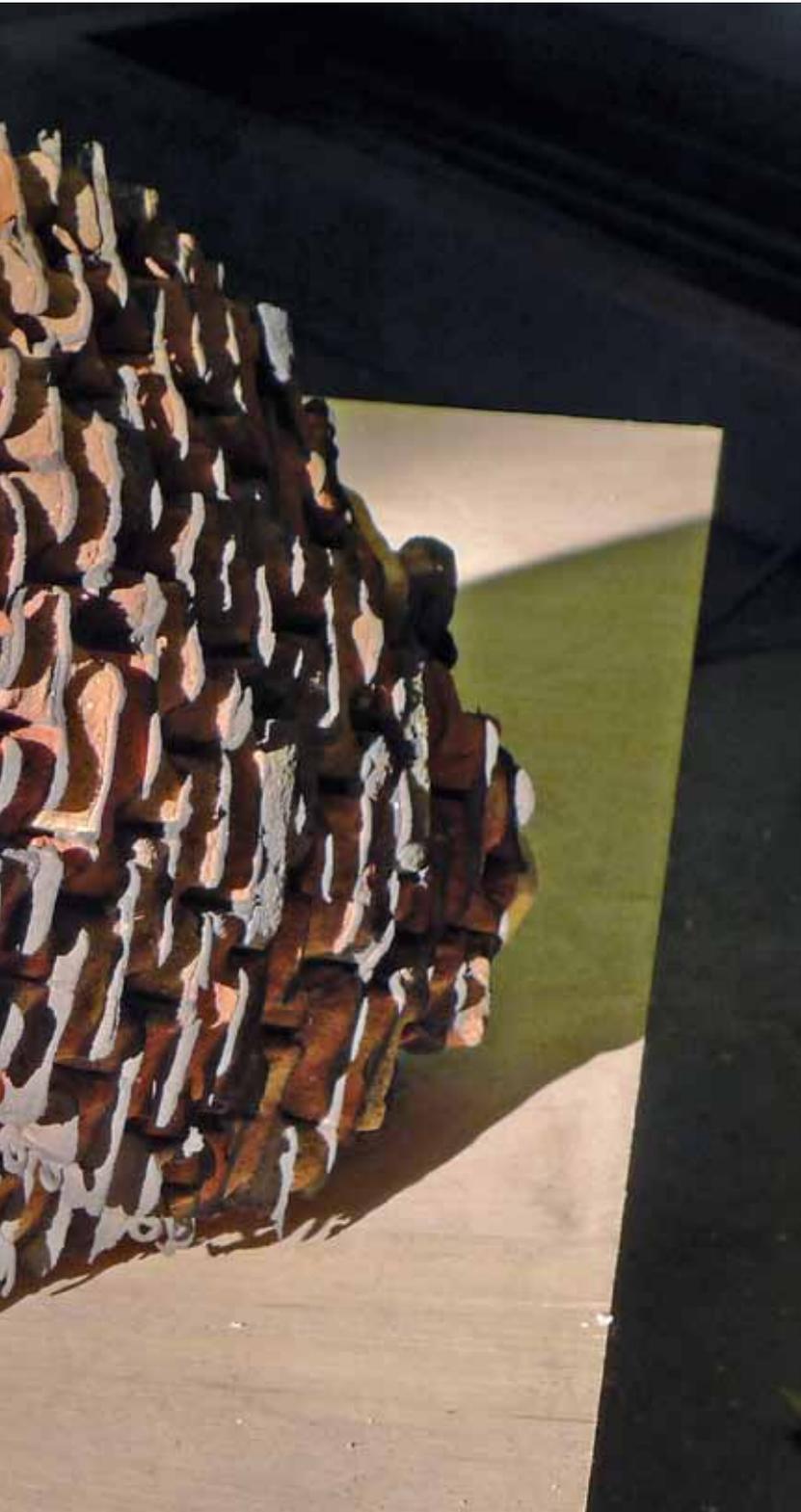
After ceramics studies at the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs in Geneva (1974–1977), Jacques Kaufmann worked in Geneva as a free artist. From 1984–1986, he worked as chief of Ceramic Action Project for the Swiss Cooperation in Rwanda. There he was confronted to intercultural exchanges, the “back to origin” of the ceramic’s technology and, as an artist, to the “earth scale”, carried by hundreds of thousands of bricks. In 1988, he opened his actual studio nearby Geneva, in France. From 1995 on, he teaches at the Ecole d’arts appliqués of Vevey, and become chair of the ceramics department in 1996. Since 1999, his activities in China has allowed him to contribute to exhibition exchanges, in Europe and China. In 2008, Jacques Kaufmann has join a group at Hepia, the University for engineering, architecture and landscape architecture in Geneva, for a research linked to green walls, at city scale. Actually, President of the International Academy of ceramic.

eroded wall

1 x 2.4 x 0.6 m
brick and concrete
sandblasted







“if, the fish”

0.75 x 0.4 m
ceramic small bricks
epoxy
sandblasting





Bjørn Nørgaard

Over the last 49 years, sculptor and professor Bjørn Nørgaard has been one of the most prominent figures through various artworks of the Danish art scene. During the 60s and 70s he sparked a colossal debate with his social criticism manifesto and provocative artwork. Later he created monumental works in ceramic and stone and brick including the Human Wall in 1982 and Thor's Tower in 1986. He also created the residential estate Bispebjerg Bakke in Copenhagen in collaboration with Boldsen & Holm. He created 17 tapestries depicting danish history – found at Christiansborg – for the Confederation of Danish Industry in 2000 as a gift to Queen Margrethe.

Bjørn Nørgaard held the post of professor of sculpture at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts from 1985–94. He has received several highly respected honors such as the Medal Ingenio et Arti, The Thorvaldsen Medal and The Eckersberg Medal and in 1994 he was appointed as a Knight of the Dannebrog.





Passage de l'amour

“The passageway is an often overlooked space which deserves much more attention than it has typically received over the years”, says Bjørn Nørgaard, who has recently created a beautiful brick passageway which places the phenomenon at its centre.

“For most people, a passageway is an in-between space a to-and-from connection in which one simply moves from one place to another. For example, a tunnel which does not connect rooms, counts for nothing.”

“I think that it is exciting that we can finally get rid of the notion that a passageway is without value. A passageway can instead be treated as a space – an unexpected place – in our lives. In our modern era, effective time is judged in comparison to waiting or wasted time. But could we envision these temporal spaces, these passageways, as the best place to live life? The unintentional passageway is perhaps the best space for us to live!” says Bjørn Nørgaard.

The recent passageway created by this artist's hand is barrel-shaped and constructed with a transparent design combining to form a beautiful structure from both the inside and out. The passageway is made from Petersen brick and masonry in the large brickwork garden in Broager.

“The passageway would of course have to be made from brick, which is a material I am very fond of explains Bjørn Nørgaard and continues: and the great thing about working with brick from Petersen is that they come in such a wide and rich palette of earth tones with shades of red, yellow, brown and black, which provides the passageway with the atmosphere I wanted to capture.”

Bjørn Nørgaard's passageway in Broager is two meters long but can be delivered to fit any desired length. It is easy to imagine it installed in parks or other places in which its universal message would bring inspiration to all that set eyes on it.





Fritz Vehring

Fritz Vehring lives and works in Henstedt, near Bremen (Germany). From 1979 till 1986 he taught at Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences in Krefeld and was appointed professor of ceramics at the University of the Arts Bremen in 1986 (emeritus since 2009). In the context of his teaching and his own artistic work, he has worked with a number of brickworks, primarily in northern Germany.

The artist's ceramic works can be found in museums and public collections in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Norway, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands and Japan. In 1983 Fritz Vehring was elected to the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) based in Geneva.

Kuh und Apparat

1 x 2,4 x 0,7 m
brick
concrete





Double Emptiness

1 x 2 x 1 meter
brick

2 stacked cubes. Open double play.







Ulla Viotti

Ulla Viotti studied at the School of Art, Blackpool, United Kingdom and Konstfack, University college of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm between 1950–1956. Since 1966 she has been invited to many international symposiums worldwide and is represented in museums and sculpture parks globally.

Since 1969 Viotti has created around 80 permanent sculptural, architectural installations for public environments such as the Swedish Parliament Library Stockholm, where she created a stone floor. Viotti has also run workshops at universities in the USA and the Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada.

Viotti also organised the first International Ceramic Symposium in Sweden in 1975 and the first Grass Sculpture Exhibition in Hammenhög, Sweden in 1996.

Since 1990 she has been working periodically at Petersen Tegl and is a founder member of WABA.

Viotti has been an elected member of the International Academy of Ceramics since 1971 and an Honourable Member of the Swedish Sculpture Society since 1996.

Archeological brick traces

hanging Kolumba slabs 0.5 x 0.5 m in metal stand
2 m high





Archeological Altar table

Kolumba slabs 0.6 x 0.9 m on long Kolumba bricks Table
1 m high with naturestone

Archeological Altar tables "Brick Hommage"

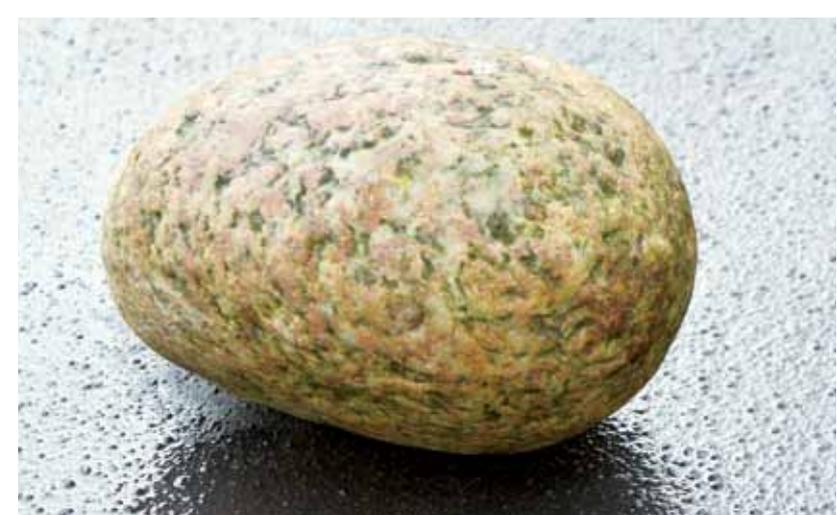
Kolumba slabs 0.6 x 0.9 m and long Kolumba bricks, with brick traces from the beach







statements



Artist statement/Robert Harrison

Working (in) a house of bricks

I have been exploring architectural concepts in both the larger site-specific outdoor and museum installations as well as a body of smaller studio works over the past thirty years, attempting to play one body of work off the other. The studio pieces are considerably more intimate, have often included a variety of materials, and allow for intensified exploration. Over the past twenty years I have had opportunities to work with both national and international brick and tile factories. My ongoing challenge is to explore the potential of these industrial opportunities and utilize the materials and tools they offer to further my creative pursuits in both large and small scales.

The Petersen Teglg factory in southern Denmark provided an extraordinarily conducive atmosphere to explore and create a site-specific body of new brick works. The work I created during the WABA symposium are all architecturally based and inherently about the material and the place. The experience offered an opportunity to explore a variety of ideas.

The small Soft Houses groupings were inspired by the iconic spires and towers of the architecture of southern Denmark. The Soft Houses were produced quickly and intuitively, over a two day period at the beginning of the symposium in response to the extremely malleable yellow brick clay produced by the factory. I conceived the houses not as individuals but as groupings or villages, where each soft house is relatively small, but develops visual strength and power as a linear group presentation, on a wall shelf, at eye level.

I chose to work with the Kolumba brick, the signature world-renowned brick of the Petersen Teglg factory in two different ways. While exploring the inventory of previously fired brick in the factory, I selected various shapes and colors of brick. A brick saw was utilized to cut the previously fired and repurposed brick material into vertical house forms, inspired by the indigenous architecture. The archetypal Kolumba Danish House forms are displayed on wall shelves in pairings to visually reinforce the concept.



Additionally, I requested freshly produced 60 cm square x 4cm thick Kolumba clay slabs for a series of wall pieces that highlight elemental human-made symbols and shapes I have been utilizing for the past 3 decades in my artistic exploration. Similarly minimal lines and shapes have been used by the human species for thousands of years to create, communicate and record various aspects of life. The massive slabs of wet clay required an instinctive and intuitive approach; I chose to push into the clay with my hands, raking and peeling back layers of material until a singular image evolved. Thick white clay slip was applied by hand to the slabs to provide a contrast with the rich deep red color of the clay.

Meant to be displayed on the wall as a group, the wall slabs or Kolumba Wall Plates illustrate a personally evolved vocabulary, important to my artistic evolution.

My concept for the traveling brick sculpture exhibiton for Sonderborg Municipality was literally born out of the brick beaches we frequented during the symposium. Collecting brick jewels became not only a daily ritual, but somewhat of an obsession. Hundreds of reclaimed/collected brick jewels were culled for inclusion in my contribution titled Sonderborg House. A container of Viking steel mesh was fabricated at the Petersen Tegl factory and then attached to a concrete base. The container was filled with only the most interesting shapes and colors of historic brick jewels, along with a selection of ancient Danish flint stones that were collected from the fjord near the factory. The mix of pre-historical site-specific stone, along with centuries old pieces of brick factory production, contained in an archtypal steel house container informs my Sonderborg House concept. Many residents of this part of southern Denmark have their own collections of brick jewels, formed by hand centuries ago and tumbled by Danish fjord waters to create incredibly beautiful unique forms.

Regardless of the opportunity or application, my continued effort is to respond to the local or regional enviornment and create work that leaves a Ceramic Echo.



www.robert.harrison.net

crosslink »

photos of the artwork at page 18-23.



"Collecting brick jewels became not only a daily ritual, but somewhat of an obsession"



Artist statement/Gwen Heeney

Without Borders

Working at the WABA Symposium in the Christian Petersen Brick Company was for me vital for the development of new ideas and enabled me to inhabit unfamiliar physical and mental spaces in which I could oscillate between the known and the unknown. The symposium gave me the freedom to take radical and experimental departures and together with the invaluable exchange of ideas between myself, Ulla Viotti, Jacques Kaufmann, Robert Harrison and Fritz Vehring, led to a number of innovative new artworks. These have been influential in the development of my research for my PhD at the University of Newcastle in the UK in which the concept of site and place has become fundamental to my creative practice.

This site on the shores of the Baltic has great historical importance for my research as it is the site of Denmark's once thriving 200 year old brick industry and the Cathrisiminde Brick Museum. Thus the site contains some of the narrative of my work to date: my passionate association with the historical and social issues relating to the brick industry.

"Narrative: A place that tells a story, where the layers of past history are evident, and preferably not consciously preserved, is one that expresses a spirit of place." (Isis Brook)

Having embarked on a PhD I am finding that connecting process, material, methodology and theory brings a totally new dimension to the way I think and journey as an artist. For instance creative writing has started to become an important element in my process and an important aspect of the way I react to my chosen sites.

During the Symposium I chose two very distinctive starting points: One a series of photographs of the brick fragments on the shores of the Baltic, discarded over hundreds of years by the industry and the other a carved double head constructed from handmade coal fired Kolumba bricks produced by Christian Petersen's Brick Company.

I took a series of photographs of the reflections on the water as it washed over thousands of exquisite coloured brick fragments shaped



and disintegrated by the Baltic waters over hundreds of years. Italo Calvino in his book *Invisible Cities* provides insight into the dark and dismal places that lay behind a beautiful prosperous city. It provoked my own creative writing into the site which holds layers of memory and is rich in association with the history of the brick industry.

“The raw physicality of the fragments is powerful. The soft hazy light of the Baltic washes over the fragmented bricks reflecting the light in the constant ripples of water. This beach however has a darker hidden narrative. It conceals a past that is steeped in hard manual labour.

The beach communicates in layers, colours and metaphors the memories that lay behind the creation of its final destiny. This exquisite sense of place: a place that exists in the present; shines through in the light of the hazy Baltic sun. Reflected in the depths of its imagery is the history of production, industrialisation and hard manual graft as the brick industry thrived for centuries on the Baltic shores exporting bricks all over the world.

This sense of toil and beauty: metaphorical shadow and light is something I am communicating in a series of artworks relating to the site. It is a sense of toil and beauty which has come about by process; the process of disintegration; of continual washing away”

The following quote by the architect Marco Frascari discusses the Venetian phenomenon of *Lume Materiale*, literally material light and this led me to embark on the development of a series of sculptural forms inspired by my photographs and writing ...

“stones change themselves in light through architecture and architecture exists because of light” (Marco Frascari)

The concept of border was also important as it connected the shore with historical social issues relating to two cultures; German and Danish. I decided to work with a double head, a visual symbol and a constant metaphor for me which has multi-layered meanings within my own work and is often de-constructed after carving into individual components and

elements. Created from large Kolumba handmade bricks it gained further significance as these bricks were originally designed for the Kolumba Roman Museum in Cologne, Germany by architect Peter Zumthor and manufactured by the Petersens Brick Company in Denmark.

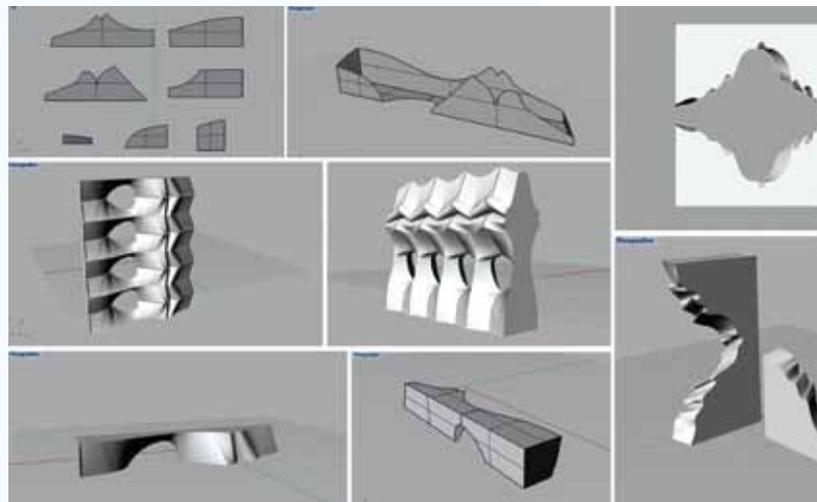
I made the decision not to rebuild the original piece but to re-configure the artwork exploring the sculptural aspects of the individual components with specific focus on light, shadow and reflectivity in both physical and metaphorical terms. The tall slices of the original head juxtaposed organic carving with strong architectural cut structures.

I emphasised the industrial implications of the artwork by stacking the de-constructed uprights in grids on steel slabs reminiscent of the work tables already in use within the brick factory and handmade by the metal workers. As the light forced its way through the upright brick forms they began to symbolise the tall brick chimneys that had once surrounded the shores of the Baltic signifying its dark past of toil and labour. On another level they became signifiers of a united nation, two cultures for which the border had no relevance.



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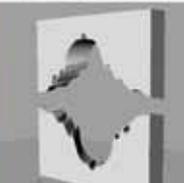
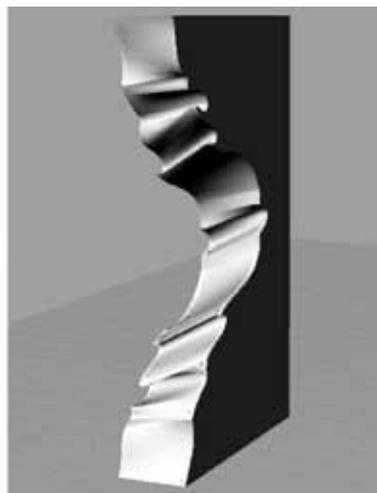
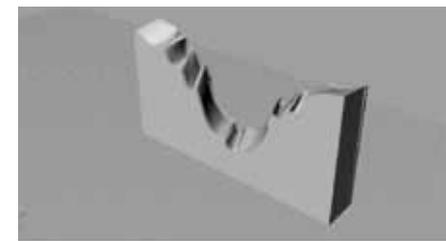
www.gwenheaneybricksculptor.com

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photos of the artwork at page 24–29.



"I am also fascinated by the use of new technologies within my practice, not as a means to an end but as a step in the process. It can be exciting to have an idea in the physical state and then experiment with it in a 3D modelling package before returning again to the physical material."



Artist statement/Jacques Kaufmann

Crazy people making bricks that exist.

Petersen Brick Factory is a special place for brick lovers.

Not only the best architects have used their materials in prestigious buildings, I mean Peter Zumthor in Koln, Frank Gehri for a project at Sonderborg, and maybe Herzog et De Meuron in the future, to name only those bests ones ...

Not only it is now the 7th generations of brick makers.

We can feel that from the workers to the top of the factory, there is an affinity with the quality of the products that are made there. So where does the quality come from?

Finally, it is very simple: by taking an opposite position from nearly all the others in the developed countries: they make “bricks that exist”.

For that, like in the traditional making process – for example in Africa, I have seen this in many places, but it seems that 3 generations earlier, it was the same in this part of Denmark – they use a lot of water into the clay, allowing in this way to give a feeling of a “living and unique material”, which is a contradiction with the main stream of brick producers, looking for “all the same” products.



This place is also special by the fact that artists are not seen as people disturbing the processes and the production. Artists are welcomed, and it was in these great conditions that the Waba group has been able to work for 2 weeks at the end of August 2011.

In between sea and land, the seashore shows great shards. It is a very unique landscape in the world, the eroded material remains the local strong history of the brick production and the unavoidable problems that come with it.

It has been my starting point for my personal work @ Petersen.

My main proposition for the exhibition in Cathrinesminde Brick Museum is a brick and concrete standing eroded wall. The wall, made in a wooden frame, by putting freely broken bricks and concrete, is eroded during the last step.

Different tools, including a stone cutting machine and a heavy sand blasting have been used. I can tell you that both, concrete and Petersen bricks are very strong ...

Ideally, the work should be displayed by seaside, the "foot into the water", as an eroded signal emerging from the sea.



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photos of the artwork at page 30-35.



“What happens if ????”

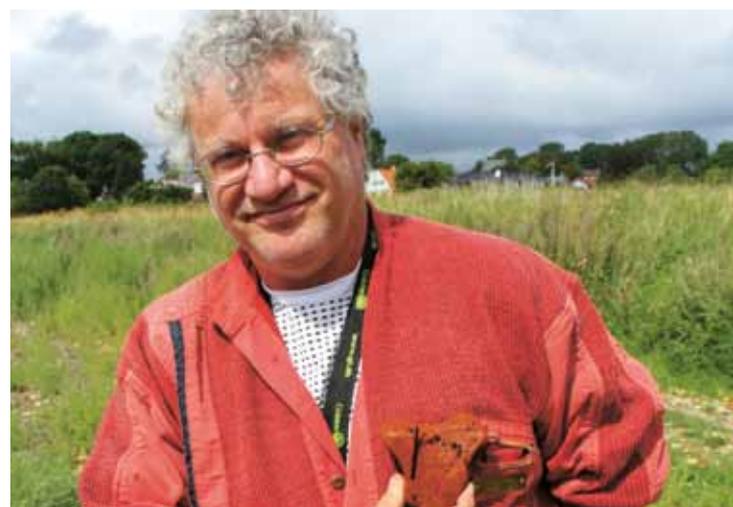
It is often a sentence that I have in mind.

To begin a work.

To enlarge possibilities, to welcome new, unexpected result.

If: means to change one aspect, one component.

It can be about the materials, the tools, the organisation of the processes.”



Artist statement/Fritz Vehring

Three weeks lasting thirty-eight years

Three weeks of collective work under ideal conditions – that is the shortest conceivable way of summing up the inaugural symposium of the World Association of Brick Artists in Denmark. Five of the artists invited by the Danish municipality of Sønderborg were asked to build brick sculptures, which would then be taken on tour to 19 different locations over the next 38 years. The relativity of time is evident in the predetermined three-week work process, which stands in stark contrast to the 38-year exhibition period. Disport and ennui clash. The work-filled weeks flew by. They expand in the memory and enhance the intensity of the disport in a form of prolonged contemplation. Working, eating, drinking and talking together with colleagues satisfies all the conditions of a symposium; away from the solitude of the artist's own studio to the long workbench of the brickworks.

As soon as the initial sketches for the major work are complete, you are submitting yourself to the judgement of your colleagues. The task of creating my double cube – an embodiment of emptiness fittingly entitled 'double emptiness' – is unexpectedly taken on by a bricklayer. I am now free to seek another theme. There is plenty of potential for stimulus. We are all consumed by collecting stones on the beach. Whereas elsewhere the waves grind the Ice Age stones into smooth shapes, it is the wasters from the many brickworks that the sea models into bizarre and self-similar shapes here. We use this material as letters, out of which we form words, sentences and individual ideas. For me, the finds placed on platforms made of mini bricks represent a criss-cross journey through the recent history of sculpture. Around 50 small models are produced somewhat sketchily and the distinctive characteristic of the find is only revealed through the presentation.



My second piece of work is also a find in a manner of speaking. Our place of residence was the agricultural college in Gråsten and the visit to the high-tea stalls on the model farm revealed a place of artistic curiosity. The milking process is robot-controlled and laser-calibrated; a symbiosis of 'cow and machine'. The artistic response to this experience is a stereotypically reduced fusion of a cubic block and an upright cow's head, inextricably linked by a black pied pattern.

It was only possible to produce such a great work of art because Helle Barsøe looked after us in the best way imaginable on behalf of the municipality of Sønderborg. Yet that was only part of the ideal conditions. In the brickworks of Christian Petersen, a production process is in operation that is without equal anywhere in the world in terms of individuality, innovation, diversity and technically perfect workmanship.

The broad range of facilities from the Petersen and Kolumba brickworks was made available to us for our works of art. All our requests for special formats and materials were met forthwith and we were given all the assistance we needed from the highly competent staff.

Also instrumental in creating the friendly atmosphere were my magnificent artist colleagues and Christian Petersen, who as a friend of art contributed to the success of this symposium in a very special way.



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photos of the artwork at page 40-45



“Vessels and bricks have been inventions of immense significance for mankind. With the vessel, a new stage in cultural development began; the brick marked the beginning of urban civilisation.

Grasping the vessel is an essential concept from which I develop helmets, heads, machines and instruments. The formal basis of these groups of works is the vessel. Yet the essence of the individual work only emerges through sculptural work processes such as compressing, cutting and mounting.

As far as the individual brick is concerned, there is nothing to grasp. It is not until they are stacked on top of and lined up next to each other that rooms, houses and cities are formed. Like with the vessel montages, the essence of the brick sculptures is only revealed during the actual process of bricklaying.”



Artist statement/Ulla Viotti

The Brick Art Center

One of the most pleasurable activities is walking on the beaches of the Flensborg Fjord, picking lovely historic brick fragments, made by the Rendbjerg brick factory, one of the most important historic brickworks in Southern Jutland.

The region is known for the nearly 100 brick factories that were working here at the end of 19th century.

Many of the beaches are full of brick traces; “industrial archeology” that bears witness to an earlier important activity and time.

There are still a few brickworks in the region with 18th century traditions.

Since 1791, the Christian A. Petersen Tegl brickworks is still in the same family. This is a brick factory with a strong creative and personable atmosphere.

Today, the tradition of firing common brick with coal continues. All the bricks are individuals and have first class results with rich exciting colours.

That is what interested me when I first visited the factory in 1990.

I was the first artist to work at Petersen Tegl factory and I have returned regularly since then. This opportunity has enabled me to develop my ideas using this unique material over a period of time.

Today the Petersen Tegl has become a “Brick Art Center”.

A large number of professional artists have followed my lead, and some of the worlds best architects have formed a positive, close collaborative relationship with Petersen Tegl.

Today, Petersen International is known globally for being a very unique and creative brick factory.

The employees feel the positive, familial atmosphere in this unique factory and are proud of working at Petersen Tegl.

In one initiative, the company has undertaken printing its own international magazine focused on brick architecture.



As a founding member of WABA, and after years of dreaming and planning of our first working symposium, it seemed natural to me to have it take place at Petersen Tegl in Denmark.

The WABA symposium began with a generous invitation by Christian Petersen to enjoy a Danish lunch on board his ship, along with a sailing tour of the fjord.

Stimulating lunch conversation included enthusiastic reports on brick production at Petersen's as an essential task in life.

With an official invitation from Sønderborg Kommune (Municipality of Sønderborg) and Cathrinesminde Brick Museum along with Petersen Tegl as the generous sponsor, the WABA members were inspired to work on individual sculptures for the traveling brick exhibition in Sønderborg Kommune along with an exhibition of numerous smaller brick objects to be held at Cathrinesminde Museum.

The daily activity of picking brick stones on the nearby beaches inspired us all to use some of these fragments for our sculptural visions.

The opportunity to work in such a positive atmosphere with strong support from interested and very helpful workers is very unique.

There was a continual exchange of positive ideas, where WABA members discussed bricks, clay, metal fabrication and wooden moulds.

The handmade bricks or 'Kolumba stones' interested us all, in part because of the large sizes available along with the exciting firing results.

My own work utilized the large Kolumba slabs for the "altar tables" with 'nature stones'.

The organization from the Municipality of Sønderborg resulted in one of "the best brick sculpture symposiums", where mission statements and the future of WABA was discussed.

WABA artists will be working together again in July, 2013 at a brick sculpture symposium in Riga, Latvia.



www.viotti.se

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photos of the artwork at page 46–51.



"The WABA symposium inspired all of us. One result of the symposium was discovering new possibilities of using large scale brick slabs. The WABA group was very enthusiastic with all the positive working possibilities at Petersens Tegl."





where is
the artwork?





sponsors

Petersen Tegl A/S
New Carlsberg Foundation
Region of Southern Denmark
The University of Wolverhampton
The Danish Arts Council/DIVA programme
Sonderborg Municipality Cultural Committitee
The Rural area Committee in Sønderborg Municipality
Museum Sønderjylland Cathrinesminde Teglværk

credits

Published: Mai 2013
Design: das Duell, Bremen (Germany)
Printing: BerlinDruck GmbH + Co. KG, Achim (Germany)
Binding: Integralis Industriebuchbinderei, Lettershop und Fulfillment GmbH, Hannover (Germany)
Paper: Design Offset creme 100g/m², FSC certified
Galaxi Brilliant white 135g/m², PEFC certified
Typeface: The Serif Semi Light / Light Italic / Bold
Photos: Robert Harrison
Gwen Heeney
Kim Holm
Jacques Kaufmann
Ulrik Pedersen, Jyske Vestkysten (page 10/11)
Connie Skovbjerg (page 57)
Anders Sune Berg (page 38/39)
Kim Toft Jørgensen
Fritz Vehring
Ulla Viotti
Translation: Simon Fletcher
Annemette Fogh, Culturebites
Anne Fries. Das Lektorat.



WABA

World Association of Brick Artists

At the beginning there was brick

Brick is a love affair

Within reach of the hand

Bricks without Borders

Brick crosses all boundaries

The Brick is both spiritual and physical

With Bricks you can rebuild the world

A position from the Brick; I exist

A Brick is a link; between nature and culture

Inside outside has no limits

A Brick has a desire about space

To build their world humans create Myths and Bricks

A brick has soul