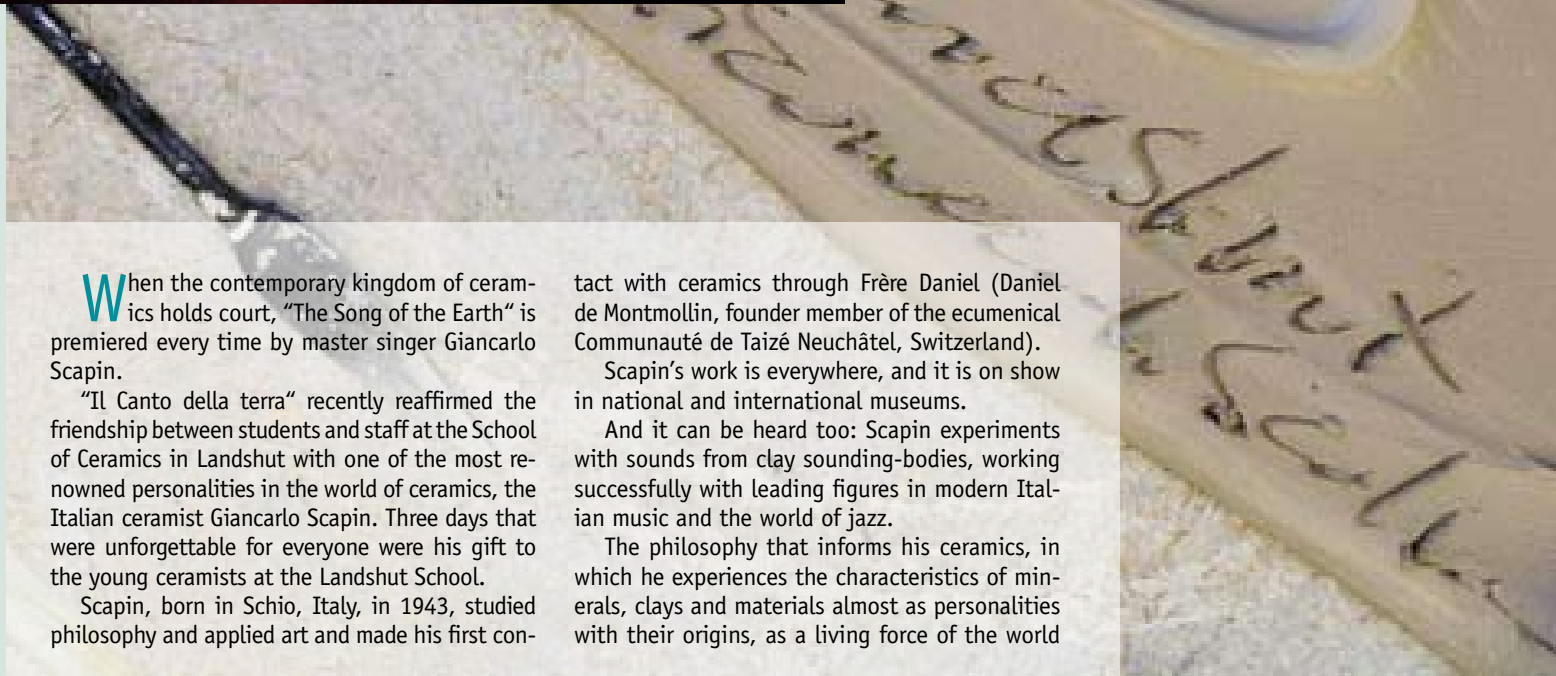


Scapin and "The Song of the Earth"

Annette Ody / Iris Haschek



When the contemporary kingdom of ceramics holds court, "The Song of the Earth" is premiered every time by master singer Giancarlo Scapin.

"Il Canto della terra" recently reaffirmed the friendship between students and staff at the School of Ceramics in Landshut with one of the most renowned personalities in the world of ceramics, the Italian ceramist Giancarlo Scapin. Three days that were unforgettable for everyone were his gift to the young ceramists at the Landshut School.

Scapin, born in Schio, Italy, in 1943, studied philosophy and applied art and made his first con-

tact with ceramics through Frère Daniel (Daniel de Montmollin, founder member of the ecumenical Communauté de Taizé Neuchâtel, Switzerland).

Scapin's work is everywhere, and it is on show in national and international museums.

And it can be heard too: Scapin experiments with sounds from clay sounding-bodies, working successfully with leading figures in modern Italian music and the world of jazz.

The philosophy that informs his ceramics, in which he experiences the characteristics of minerals, clays and materials almost as personalities with their origins, as a living force of the world



photo: Peter Litvai



ILLUSTRATIONS

opposite page
left - Carmen Böhme
top right - Julia Himmelmann
bottom right - Charlotte von Grafenstein

above l. to r. - Carmen Böhme
- Ziaye Beierlein - Mara Sachse
- Giancarlo Scapin with Sybilla Foglietti
centre l. to r. - Julia Himmelmann
- Mandy Hämisch
below - Johannes Schmid

and of existence, is the decisive factor in his approach to the craft skills of making, forming and thus of a kind of ceramic art that is at one with the maker.

Scapin makes the creation of his ceramics into creation myths.

The students at the School of Ceramics were privileged to be able to observe this. Thanks to Scapin's sculptural vocabulary in the maestro's demonstrations and explana-

tions, they quickly learned that in dealing with clay, craft tradition and philosophy must blend to form a lyrical whole. According to Scapin, it is only true mastery that leads to achieving the (ceramic) expression of love in idealized form. Love and devotion to Mother Earth as well as the play of masterly skills are the inspiration of the creative process and the works. Developing a such sense of inspiration is the difference between master and student:

Just as a musician understands his instrument and in every moment of the encounter, establishes an authentic, even an erotic relationship with it, Scapin demonstrated that "la terra must be felt with the heart, that you must hear the song of the earth to be able to shape it with humans' wings, their hands." This reminds us of Paul McCartney, who said "You embrace the guitar like a woman".

"Intelligence is not only located in the head but in the whole body, and therefore in the hands as well - the bones of the human hand correspond to the bones of a bird's wing, so ceramists like us can fly by forming", is how Scapin explained it to the students.

That the young ceramists at the Landshut School of Ceramics listened to Scapin's "Song of the Earth", and that each of them in their own way will continue to sing it can be seen

from the variety of the work produced and from what they have said:

"Scapin really enabled us to 'take off', and he challenged us to test our limits. His energy and his strength are expressed in his almost tender relationship to clay. We should not simply use clay, we should help it to express something. He moved us so deeply that we now have a completely different relationship to ceramics: We will hear it ringing out and we will continue to sing its song in our work. And we will follow Scapin's philosophy:

"Play a lot, never watch television, read a lot and fall in love!"

Annette Ody M.A. in art history and literature, master ceramist and principal of the State School of Ceramics in Landshut

Iris Haschek, art teacher, accompanied the project, team teaching with Annette Ody at the State School of Ceramics in Landshut

All the ceramics from the workshop will go on show from Saturday, 6 February - Monday, 7 June at the Keramik-Museum Berlin Schustehrusstraße 13 D-10585 Charlottenburg Berlin, Germany Tel. +34 (0)30 - 3 21 23 22 www.keramik-museum-berlin.de

