

Comment from a Judge of the Creativity Award

The Combination of Old and New in Post Modernism

Winnie Yang, Senior Ceramist

I feel very honored to have participated in the first- and second-round judging for the Creativity Award competition in the Taipei County Yingge Ceramics Museum's Fifth Taipei Ceramics Awards.

A tremendous transformation took place on the day of the second-round judging, when the various artists personally showed up at the site, faced their own works, and explained to the five judges the concepts and backgrounds to their creative works. Each of these extemporaneous, self-explanatory narrations had to be brief and cut straight to the works' subject-matter as well as the key aspects of its materials and modes of expression. Some of the artists gave a fluid description of their work's content, put contemporary marks on works that essentially emphasized material, and attempted methods that tallied with those used in international competitions. In the future, if the artists are expected to give extemporaneous accounts of their works in a similar way, then I hope that they would show greater verbal organization in explaining the relationship between the titles and the actual objects.

In the end, after three rounds of voting by the five judges, two works emerged as the winners of the Creativity Awards: Po-Ching Fang's *Landscape Tea Set 2006 IV* and Fang-Yi Chu's *Object Memory and its Shadow*. *Landscape Tea Set* expresses the tea set theme with which we are most familiar, but the repetitions between the main item, the teapot, and the accessories, the way void and solid fill the space approximately three feet on a side, the particularity with regard to the internal and external expression of glaze and body, the use of thoroughly mastered methods and precision firing—all these reinterpret and measure utensils with a long history. The atmosphere created by the monochromatic glaze and understated power of imagination is similar to that of the lingering resonances of the guqin (zither) on the table—Eastern connotations (whether they belong to the work or not) fill these vessels of the imagination.

If one visually gauges Fang-Yi Chu's *Object Memory and its Shadow*, it is sometimes necessary to explore and measure its thickness. It is an object that dominates and is filled with cultural signs, and one needs to read it carefully to explain the work's content. The judges gave it very high scores. Its representations bring in fantastic scenes, and it is steeped in the contemporary ceramic art of the present. Its allure lies in transcending the Eastern tradition of resting content with one's own lot, and it reveals the poise and grand measure of the postmodern. Three other works—Shan Chang's *Museum Incident Register*, Shu-Mei Su's *Before Death*, and Ming-Pin Ku's *Former Life, Present Life*—also received rather high scores from the judges in the final round of selection.

While taking part in this judging process, I could sense that the new methods of selection that the Taipei County Yingge Ceramics Museum employed for the Creative Award competition of the 5th Taipei Ceramics Awards is to show to the world a Taiwan Ceramics Award that is truly provident. Whether in terms of international profile, tourism visibility, the renewal of Yingge as a ceramics town, or promoting the city's 200-year history of manufacturing ceramics, the museum will be able to hold a distinctive, meaningful, and Taiwan Ceramics Biennale in 2008.

Here I am willing to express my optimistic expectation that Taiwan's ceramists will combine traditional and future concepts and show to the world that Taiwan's postmodern ceramic arts blends old and new.