

14.  
WESTER  
WALD  
PREIS 2019  
KERAMIK  
EUROPAS  
CERAMICS OF  
EUROPE



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# Foreword Patron 14th Westerwald Prize

The Westerwald pottery tradition has for centuries shaped the region of the Westerwald both economically as well as culturally. The outstanding meaning of this tradition found special recognition in December 2016. It was added to the national registry of Immaterial Cultural Heritage according to the UNESCO conventions.

A clever man – supposedly it was Gustav Mahler – once said that tradition is not the adoration of ashes, but the passing of the flame. In the Kannenbäckerland, in which pottery production has an established place, this recognition receives a double connotation and significance: on the one hand the ability, passed on since the middle ages, to achieve the high temperatures needed for stoneware production, on the other hand the certainty that the flame of fascination for the material and its seemingly unlimited artistic as well as artisanal possibilities have not been extinguished in the Westerwald.

Quite the opposite: even today 40 pottery production sites in the region are preserving the Westerwald pottery tradition and are setting new impulses. The tradition-rich material clay finds manifold uses among modern artists, who demonstrate how to use an old tradition and an old material in new and fascinating ways and translate it into modern pictorial and design vocabulary. The Westerwald prize, awarded every five years, particularly accounts for this insight and regularly satisfies with highly recommended contributions from the region as well as wider Europe.

I am pleased that many artists from all of Europe applied for one of four awards for outstanding ceramic works in this year's Westerwald prize. With the now 14th award ceremony and exhibition the region emphasizes its outstanding position in the field of ceramics in Europe. To keep this pole position initiatives are needed which support the dialogue and cooperation around the subject of ceramics and keep the cultural exchange around and on ceramics within Europe alive and supported.

Through regular competitions, through young, local ceramic artists and miscellaneous exhibitions, the Westerwald is certainly heading toward the right direction so that in the future the Kannenbäckerland will stay an internationally recognised home for historic and modern ceramics.

In the Westerwald we can see how much the pottery tradition has formed the cultural self-concept of the region. Ceramics has an important past, a diverse present and an exciting future, set apart from its qualities as a functional material of artisan craftwork, but as a basis and foundation for the artistic contest with a traditional material and the passing of the flame in the sense of a living, sustainable tradition.

*Prof. Dr. Konrad Wolf,*  
Minister of Science, Education and Culture  
of the State of Rhineland Palatinate



# Foreword Chief Administrative Officer of the Westerwald District

The Westerwald Prize was created in 1973 to honour ceramic works within a competition and an exhibition. It is to promote the dialogue between ceramics and art in the region and the cultural exchange within Europe.

This wished-for dialogue between ceramics and art has been realised in the last few years. Artists without ceramic training or those that are active in a number of genres have applied for the 14th Westerwald Prize. The borders between the formerly clearly defined sectors of the award such as design, sculpture or vessel have also become fluid. In consequence of rethinking the ceramic material in the visual arts and the dissolution of the categories the Westerwald District decided to redefine the award categories. The formerly separate areas of Design & Series, Vessels, Form & Décor and Sculpture & Installation have now been condensed into the sector "Free Ceramics".

With 10,000 Euros for the first place and 6,000 euros for the second place the Westerwald Prize has become the most highly remunerated award for ceramics in Europe. The quality of the chosen works shows this decision to be justified.

The Talent Prize is no longer contingent on an age limit, but on a university or apprenticeship course. Family planning, parental leave or a longer apprenticeship are thus taken into consideration.

My thanks go to all the applicants for their interest in the tendering. Minister Wolf I thank for taking on the patronage. Many thanks to the Society for the Promotion of the Museum for their generous monetary help with buying works. Also the sponsors as well as the members of the County Council I wish to thank for their financial engagement which is required for the implementation and an exhibition of such a high standard.

The Westerwald District is pleased to be part of the success in the life story of the winners. For all the participants I wish that the exhibition will widen their artistic horizon.

*Achim Schwickert*

Chief Administrative Officer of the Westerwald District

# Foreword Mayor of the Town of Höhr-Grenzhausen

The highly respected Westerwald Prize for the fourteenth time tendered since 1973 offers artists from all over Europe the chance to show their best ceramic works in a five-year rota. 425 international tenders show the great interest and high quality of the competition.

The submitted works fulfil the highest artisanal and artistic demands and can be seen in the exhibition *14th Westerwald Prize* in the Ceramics Museum Westerwald. I am very pleased that the town of Höhr-Grenzhausen was able to raise the prize money for the Award of the Kannenbäckerstadt in the sector *Saltfired Ceramics* from 5,000 to 10,000 euros for the first time. By this the outstanding meaning of salt glaze for our region is further supported and showcased.

This important distinction of our region was furthermore given another and very special recognition: in 2016 the pottery tradition recorded in the national database of Immaterial Cultural Heritage according to the UNESCO convention. I see it as our most important task to make sure that this cultural heritage is looked after, preserved and followed on with new perspectives.

I would like to express my congratulations to this year's winners and my thanks for the engagement and support to all those who made this event possible.

*Michael Thiesen*

Mayor of the Town of Höhr-Grenzhausen



# Jury 14. Westerwaldpreis Jury 14th Westerwald Prize

HELGA GERHARDUS

Montabaur, Deutschland / Germany

Geschäftsführerin der Museen im Westerwald GmbH

Managing director of the Museen im Westerwald GmbH

JÖRG JOHNEN

Berlin, Deutschland / Germany

Galerist und Kunstsammler

Gallery owner and art collector

DR. SABINE RUNDE

Frankfurt am Main, Deutschland / Germany

Oberkustodin des Museums Angewandte Kunst

Head curator of the Museum Angewandte Kunst

JULIAN STAIR

London, Großbritannien / Great Britain

Künstler und Kunsthistoriker

Artist and art historian

XAVIER TOUBES

Chicago, USA

Ehemaliger Professor für Keramik in North-Carolina und Chicago und ehemaliger

Leiter des European Ceramic Workcentre, 's Hertogenbosch, Niederlande

Former Professor of Ceramics in North Carolina and Chicago and former Director

of the European Ceramics Workcentre, 's Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands

DR. NELE VAN WIERINGEN

Höhr-Grenzhausen, Deutschland / Germany

Leiterin Keramikmuseum Westerwald

Head of Ceramics Museum Westerwald



# Jury's Report

## 14th Westerwald Prize 2019

425 entries from the whole of Europe were received online for this year's competition for the Westerwald Prize, which has been set annually in Europe since 1999. This year the jury consisted of the managing director of the Museen im Westerwald GmbH and the Ceramic Museum director; the Berlin gallery owner and art collector Jörg Johnen; the head curator of the Museum Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt am Main, Dr. Sabine Runde; the British artist Julian Stair and the former Professor of Ceramics in North Carolina and Chicago and former Director of the European Ceramics Work Centre, Xavier Toubes. In an anonymous pre-selection process, the jury chose 48 artists with a total of 74 works.

The exhibition, which shows a concentrated selection of the entries, does not understand itself as an exemplary overall picture of artistic ceramics in Europe, but definitely as reflector of some important developments.

In the annual announcement of the competitions up to 2004, the parameters were clearly defined. Phrases such as "handcrafted ceramic vessel" or industrially manufactured architectural ceramics" made it clear what was expected. The forms of the entries were precise and their size moderate. (The applicants carried their entries to the museum in cardboard boxes and queued outside.) In the last editions, however, wide-reaching descriptions of the prize categories and the resulting discussions made it clear that the specifications needed to be re-ordered so as to do justice to the developments in artistic ceramics. Nowadays, a ceramic vessel need not be hand-made, can just as well be defined as installation or sculpture, and does not always consist entirely of ceramic material. The divisions between the individual categories have become fluid.

The Westerwald Prize thus reflects *en miniature* the macrocosm of our rapidly changing world, in which old systems and power structures are crumbling. The positions of the great powers are constantly altering and new alliances have yet to prove stable. The perceptible instability in society also manifests itself in the arts, as can be seen in many of the works in this exhibition. In addition – and this is a remarkable thing in this Bauhaus anniversary year – one sees a deliberate formlessness in the works of younger artists. Inconceivable for older generations they have grown up as *digital natives* in a flood of two-dimensional pictures whose provenance is not always trustworthy, they appear to reject the clear, unambiguous form, or at any rate to question it. Particularly interesting are the young artist duos, who complete the gently attempts at form of the respective partner, comment on them, or express doubts about them. In these works, many instantaneousness

is visible. Although the artists make no political statements, politics nevertheless shines through in the way they work, conditioned by their process- and compromise-driven way of working.

The lack of form is also clear in the numerous experiments with material. Whereas it always used to be obvious which materials were used in a particular work, there is today no limit to choice, and probably many a workshop manager may fear for his kilns. Even the definition of ceramics – non-organic raw material stabilised by firing – is being extended. Anything that melts can be fired. The artist sees himself as an alchemist. These questions arise: is the result accepted as a stroke of chance, is the form merely a question of temperature?

The jury expressly decided to give the Free Ceramics Prize for works which are far more than merely the result of chance and of the processes used. It is true that Johannes Nagel gropes blindly towards his vessel shapes and that Jesse Magee fires native soil from Neuwied without making any attempt to free it from detritus. Both are nevertheless courageous to their results and bring carefully the consequences back into balance. These subsequent processing ensures a fragile and aesthetic equalisation. These two artists, in the same age group, demonstrate completely different but serious approaches to two primal themes of ceramics: vessel and earth.

For the prize awarded by the town of Höhr-Grenzhausen, the jury, in the same way, again selected two contrary positions. Monika Debus's amorphous, sensitively painted bodies contrast with Franz Julien's precise, geometrical shapes. The wide spectrum of possibilities offered by salt-firing is emphasised, and it is to be hoped that the younger generation will adopt this unique glaze technique – the only glaze technique which was developed in Europe at all – and use it for artistic experiments.

The Talent Prize was given to Hyunjin Kim. Her two works are the result of a personal research project lasting several years and impress one with their refined craftsmanship and their poetic aura.

The intention of the Westerwald Prize has always been to encourage discussion. The exhibition for the 14<sup>th</sup> competition contrasts different ideas of form together and invites the visitor to deal with the controversial understandings of forms. On the adjoining museum level, next to several prize-winning works submitted for the Westerwald Prize in former years, also a series of representative works from 1950 onwards is presented which serve as a reference for the development of artistic ceramics during the last century.

*Nele van Wieringen*



# Freie Keramik Free Ceramics

1. PREIS / 1. PRIZE

Johannes Nagel

2. PREIS / 2. PRIZE

Jesse Magee

Paolo Porelli





PAOLO PORELLI \_ 2018, *La Primera*, 165 x 80 x 89 cm





# Liste der Künstler / List of Artists

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BENNO BRUCKSCH S. / p. 116  
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ENRICA CASENTINI S. / p. 38  
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MONIKA DEBUS S. / p. 96  
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EZRA DILGER S. / p. 116  
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JAN HERZOG S. / p. 132  
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[www.cargocollective.com/lisakottkamp](http://www.cargocollective.com/lisakottkamp)

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JOSEPHINE METTE LARSEN S. / p. 58  
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[www.jessemagee.net](http://www.jessemagee.net)
- DEIRDRE MCLOUGHLIN S. / p. 62  
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- CHRISTOPH MÖLLER S. / p. 64  
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- JOHANNES NAGEL S. / p. 28  
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[www.martapalmieri.archiscultura.com/sito/HOME.html](http://www.martapalmieri.archiscultura.com/sito/HOME.html)
- EVA PELECHOVÁ S. / p. 70  
\*1984  
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- VIOLA RELLE S. / p. 76  
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[www.catherine-sanke.de](http://www.catherine-sanke.de)
- MARTIN SCHLOTZ S. / p. 80  
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[www.schlotz.de](http://www.schlotz.de)
- GUIDO SENGLE S. / p. 84  
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- ZSUZSANNA ZSÓFIA SINKOVITS S. / p. 130  
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[www.fise.hu/www/users/sinkovits-zsuzsanna](http://www.fise.hu/www/users/sinkovits-zsuzsanna)
- ALEXANDRA STEIN S. / p. 132  
\*1987  
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- KARL-HEINZ TILL S. / p. 108  
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[www.rauchbrand-keramikwerkstatt.de](http://www.rauchbrand-keramikwerkstatt.de)
- MIRJAM VELDHUIS S. / p. 86  
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- HORÁCIO VENTURIN S. / p. 88  
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- CAROLIN WACHTER S. / p. 92  
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- RAPHAEL WEILGUNI S. / p. 76  
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