

Selfridge Ceramic Art

The 2006 China Travel Diary to Jingdezhen

Our one month visiting artist residency in Jingdezhen, China had us staying in a traditional Chinese home in the small village of San Bao. Every day after breakfast, we made the 6 kilometer journey to the workshop. Every day we saw new vistas of the old China in our village. Everyday life was very interesting.



The village women washing clothes (sometimes ours) in the stream that powers the China stone pounders.



Old historic pots function as a fence.



The duck herder with his flock of ducklings, in the main street, heading for the open grazing spaces.



Our local water buffalo on the road towards Jingdezhen.



Everyone was a "free range" chicken in San Bao and Jingdezhen.



Ducklings headed home in the evening.



Gateway entrance to a tourist ancient kiln site replica in San Bao.



Mama hen leads the way.



Old saggars used as fence for vegetable garden.



Costumed restaurant workers, near our studio, groom the grass in their spare time.



Kuan Yin deities in the antique vendors market in Jingdezhen.



Various deities in the antique market.



Painting over-glaze enamels on the Mao deities.



Mao and his wife ride a rocket from one of the 1960's Five Year Plan for "we will surpass the West".

We explored around the defunct factory areas in Jingdezhen and discovered many incredible vistas. It was a bit humbling as potters to see how so much work had been abandoned. The rich history of Jingdezhen is, in many cases, piles of shards.



An impromptu sculpture of old mill stones, probably never used, in the abandoned National Porcelain Factory.



Over 20 years ago, they stopped firing the large coal fired kilns. This is the remains of a porcelain factory that made cups and butter dishes for a famous Danish butter manufacturer.



Jiangbo and the Swedish couple and their two children in front of the huge chimney for the abandoned coal fired kiln.



Heaps of butter dishes on the factory floor.



Porcelain cups litter the landscape.



Entrance to an otherworldly environment of porcelain reject plates.



Awe striking vistas of stacked plates.



Plates for a dinner party of millions.



Never wash another plate. Looks like installation art to us.



The porcelain pathway between the old and new buildings.



Tulip Magnolias blooming in March, behind the police station.



Police car in front of a modern (brutalist) apartment block in Jingdezhen.

Jingdezhen had many methods of conveyance. The traffic was sometimes frightening, but it seemed everyone paid attention, honked their horns constantly as warning and only yielded to things larger than themselves.



Cyclist with pole on his bike to transport pots.



A real working rusty bicycle with mechanical brakes.



Smoggy traffic viewed from the cab.



Motorcycle taxi drivers bored and resting in the sun on glaze street.



Sculpture gallery sellers pass the time with streetside Ma Jong game.



A view of the market street on a rainy day.



Urban Jingdezhen from the passenger seat of the cab.



Weaving a jute bed frame near the carpenter's workshop.



The back route to the studio from the ceramic institute and food alley.



Public latrine for a nearby apartment building. It is emptied daily with buckets into "honey wagons". This is used as "night soil" fertilizer.

One Sunday, we went as a group to the ancient kiln village of Yaoli. It was a great chance to get outside of Jingdezhen and see the Chinese countryside and this historic village which is a major tourist destination for Chinese tourists exploring their history.



This sign explains some of the history of this area which was a major production area for the Song dynasty even before Jingdezhen's rise.



This river, which flows from Yaoli to Jingdezhen, was used by small boats to transport kaolin to the potteries in Jingdezhen



A brick structure on the road to Yaoli, surrounded by refuse. Its use unknown to us.



The river flowing through Yaoli.



Narrow streets from historic Yaoli.



Vegetables drying in baskets on the bridge.



One of the bridges over the river in Yaoli.



A walkway bridge over the river in Yaoli on a pleasant Sunday afternoon.



A sunken boat next to the walkway bridge.



Chinese children relaxing on the polished stone seats.



Ancient sagger used as a planter.



Chinese carved woodwork still in evidence in many historic places.



Mao portrait in the entrance to a villager's home.



Family casket being made and stored in old fortress type houses in Yaoli.



Refurbishing Buddha.



This Buddhist monk had appealed to the Ministry of Religions to have the temple in Yaoli.



A blossoming peach tree in Yaoli.



Bamboo shoots looking like living sculptures.

After touring around Yaoli, we went higher in the mountains to a small village for lunch and a look at the terraced tea plantings.



Water buffalo working mountain rice paddy with tea bushes behind.



Mountain village vista with lots of vegetation.



First of the season tea picker,
with traditional bamboo basket.



Bamboo baskets, two of which
we couldn't resist.



Fused stacked bowls from Song dynasty.



Shard pile around ancient kiln.



On the way back to Jingdezhen, we stopped
at the large dragon kiln where workers
make woodfired roof tiles from the sagger
clay as well as "ongi type" paddle pots.



Roof tiles, first made in a bucket
mold and then quartered for
drying and firing.

Back in Jingdezhen, we explored our urban environment, especially the market place with its exotic variety of tasty and visual treats.



The egg lady with many varieties of tofu and vegetables in the background.



Small live fish jumping their last jump in a hot wok. A whole new meaning of fresh.



Fish and parts of fish on sale.



A bucket of tasty live eels.



Just awakened butcher with his mighty cleaver in front of him.



Fresh bunnies in the marketplace.



Live frogs in netting.



Food alley noodle maker prepares the dough.



Slicing Shanghai style noodles into wok.



Stir fry of vegetables and fresh
Shanghai style noodles.



Ramen making demonstration.



Thinner and thinner ramen with each doubling over.



The final pull for a perfect meal.



Mao deity, relaxes with a smoke - sculpture at the gift shop at the Old Kiln Site Museum, Jingdezhen.



Mural at another school of ceramics, Jingdezhen.



Large Young Mao tile mural in front of Old Kiln Site Museum, Jingdezhen.



Beautiful bower of bamboo at Old Kiln Site Museum, Jingdezhen.