Don Reitz : clay, fire, salt, and wood.

Clowes, Jody

Madison, Wisconsin: Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004

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Jody Clowes

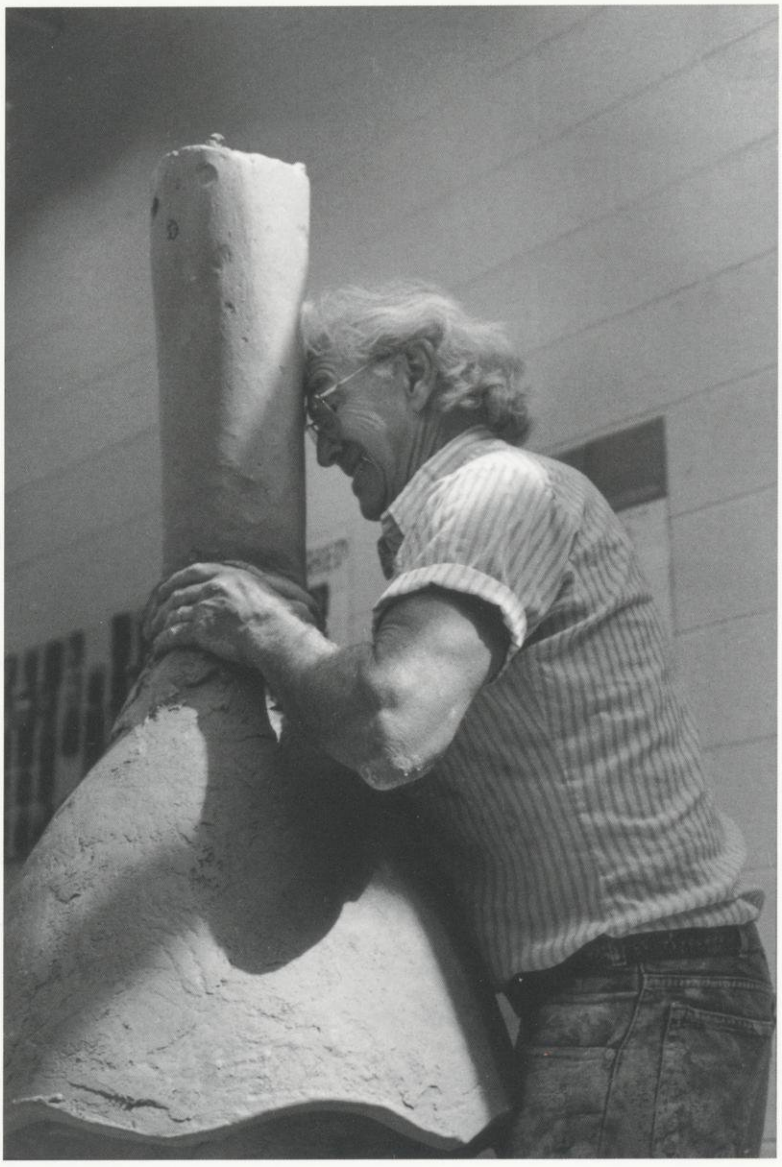
Fearless improvisation and revival in American studio ceramics

Born in 1929, Don Reitz is recognized as one of the most important and influential ceramic artists of this century. Trained at Alfred University in the early 1960s, Reitz has pursued a life-long investigation of salt- and wood-firing of his ceramic pieces in order to preserve the energy and freshness of his artistic marks and gestures. Finding that the texture and unpredictability of salt-firing suited his work, Reitz almost single-handedly revived this neglected technique, and through long experimentation developed a range of colors and surface effects previously unknown in salt-firing. Juggling and manipulating the variables in each firing, Reitz is a virtuoso who relishes knowing what he can control and what he cannot, and his work maintains a fine balance between technical mastery and improvisation. The Elvehjem Museum of Art retrospective features seventy-four ceramics that Reitz created between 1960 and the present.

A skilled technician, a natural teacher, and a fearless improviser, Reitz has served as a mentor to thousands of ceramic artists through his role as a teacher at several institutions, including the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he taught from 1962–1988 before relocating to Arizona where he now resides. Reitz has continued to travel throughout the United States and the world to impart his personal approach to working with clay and fire. In 2002 he received one of the highest honors in his field, when the American Craft Council awarded him their Gold Medal.

Don Reitz

Clay, Fire, Salt, and Wood



Don Reitz

Clay, Fire, Salt, and Wood

By Jody Clowes

With interview of Don Reitz by Mark Leach

Elvehjem Museum of Art
University of Wisconsin–Madison
2004

This book is published on the occasion of the exhibition *Don Reitz: Clay, Fire, Salt, and Wood,* held at the Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin–Madison, March 12 through June 5, 2005. The exhibition travels to The Mint Museums, Charlotte, North Carolina, October 8 through December 31, 2005.

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Cover illustration: Don Reitz (American, b. 1929) Covered Jar, 1999, stoneware, wood-fired, H. 20, Diam. 19 in. Collection of the artist, courtesy of Maurine Littleton Gallery, Washington, D.C. Photo by Michael Eaton

Back cover illustration: *Tea Stack,* 1968–1972, stoneware, salt glaze, H. 35½, Diam. 11½ in. Colllection of the artist. Photo by Jeffery Bruce

Frontispiece: Don Reitz working the neck of a Tea Stack into position during a demonstration at La Grange, Illinois, (2000).

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Contents

Director's Foreword

The Elvehjem Museum of Art has, in recent years, taken seriously its mission of documenting the work of Wisconsin artists. In 1997 we mounted a retrospective exhibition and produced a substantial catalogue of the works of John Steuart Curry; in 1999 we presented an exhibition and catalogue for the Wisconsin surrealist John Wilde, and in 2002 we documented the work of Wisconsin native Dudley Huppler.

Documenting, then, the career of Don Reitz, who taught ceramics in the Department of Art at the University of Wisconsin from 1962 through 1988, is both a mission and a pleasure. Trained at Alfred University in the early 1960s, Reitz has spent his life experimenting with salt- and wood-firing of his ceramic pieces in order to preserve the energy and freshness of his artistic marks and gestures. Finding that the texture and unpredictability of salt-firing suited his work, Reitz almost single-handedly revived this neglected technique, and through long experimentation developed a range of colors and surface effects previously unknown in salt-firing. Since the 1970s Reitz's work has focused on jars and teapot-like forms that he pushes and pulls into shape, etches boldly with knives and fingermarks, and glazes with brilliant nuance. Reitz has recently pursued wood-firing with the same passion he once reserved for salt, traveling around the country to fire his work in kilns that offer the particular effects he seeks.

A skilled technician, a natural teacher, and a fearless improviser, Reitz has served as a mentor to thousands of ceramic artists through his role as a teacher at several institutions, including the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Reitz now resides in Arizona but continues to travel throughout the United States and the world to impart his personal approach to working with clay and fire. In 2002 he received one of the highest honors in his field, when the American Craft Council awarded him their Aileen Osborn Webb Award.

While every exhibition is the product of many people, each pursuing his and her own specialty, I particularly want to acknowledge the scholarship and diligence of guest curator Jody Clowes. Jody worked for several years in the decorative arts department of the Milwaukee Art Museum as research assistant, acting curator, and associate curator. Currently an independent curator, in addition to this project Jody is also working with the Elvehjem on the metalsmith exhibition and catalogue. I especially want to thank Bruce Breckenridge, Don's fellow ceramicist and faculty member in the Department of Art at the UW–Madison, who generously suggested this exhibition to me in the first place and who provided the information necessary for a decision to be made.

For an exhibition this size, there are many tasks that are the responsibility of the staff: development specialist Kathy Paul has pursued grants and funding for the project; registrar Andrea Selbig, has pursued loan agreements and arranged shipping; exhibition designer Jerl Richmond and preparator Steve Johanowicz have planned the best

Don Reitz

possible placement and lighting for each individual work in the exhibition; curator of education Anne Lambert has worked to bring programs and speakers to the museum for visitor enlightenment; and assistant director for administration Carol Fisher has overseen the budget and contracts. For the catalogue editor Patricia Powell has gathered images and worked with authors, designer, and printer.

We are grateful to the many lenders to this exhibition, who are recognized on a separate page, and to the following organizations for their generous support: Boeckman Family Foundation, Anonymous Fund, Brittingham Fund, Hilldale Fund, Friends of Contemporary Ceramics, Sandy Besser, and Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.

Russell Panczenko
Director, Elvehjem Museum of Art

Curator's Acknowledgments

I owe tremendous thanks to Don Reitz himself for opening the door and trusting me with his life's work. True to his reputation, he has been generous, kind, and incredibly restrained: he never once gave me advice! Maurine Littleton and Lee and Mel Eagle have been real partners in this project, sorting and inventorying Don's vast personal collection and identifying many potential lenders. I would have been at sea without their efforts, and their obvious love and regard for Don made me want to do them proud. My thanks to all the lenders for sharing their treasures, and to all those who shared their insights and helped pin down the facts, including Glenn Adamson, Rudy Autio, John Balistrieri, Marsha Beitschman, Don Bendel, Karen Johnson Boyd, Bruce Breckenridge, Jane Brown, Martha Connell, Mary Davis, Paul Donhauser, Judy D'Onofrio, Michael Eaton, Bill Farrell, Fred Fenster, Ron Gallas, Kay Hensen, Bonnie Lilienfeld, Susan Kowalcszyk, Deb Kmetz, Courtney Peterson, Susan Peterson, Donna Reitz, David Smith and Renee Gouaux, Ruth Summers, Dan Talley, and James Tanner. Thanks, too, to Don's assistants Brian Harper, Matt Rud and Eric Schmidt for technical help, to Emily Pfotenhauer for research assistance, and to the Elvehjem staff for their flexibility, patience, and good humor. My partner David Driscoll is my best critic, supporter, and nudge; I'm grateful to Dave for that and much more.

Jody Clowes
Guest Curator

Passion, Discipline, and Keeping the Fire in Mind

By Jody Clowes

When Don Reitz was a kid, his father called him "Butterfly," and he's still in constant motion. His restless, searching pace is legendary among his peers; at times Reitz seems almost manic, as if he can't wait to move on to the next step or the next project. His work, like his physical presence, has both muscle and flair, projecting a curiously flamboyant power. Reitz shapes his forms with discipline and speed, then dives into their surfaces with quick, darting gestures, drawing, digging, rubbing, and pushing the wet clay into life. "That's my line!," he exclaims, pointing to a thin, bouncy incision on a piece from the 1960s, and it's true: that taut, rippling line, simultaneously confident and tense, recurs throughout his work. So do thickly pinched rims, loopy handles squeezed and twisted between his fingers, and writhing coils piled up like ribbons. Reitz's exuberant tactility is his signature—he can't leave well enough alone.

Paradoxically, he also knows just when to stop. His touch is rapid but certain, and beneath their fillips and flourishes Reitz's forms are balanced and essentially classical in their respect for pottery's figurative essence. A natural at the wheel, Reitz honed his skills as a graduate student at Alfred University, making clean-lined, simply glazed forms inspired by European modernist design. The stringency of these handsome but unremarkable pots never suited Reitz, and he abandoned them soon after leaving Alfred. Yet their proportions and solid stance are still evident in both his functional ware (for he has never abandoned pottery; see figure 1) and the expressive vessel forms that are the heart of his work.

It was at Alfred that Reitz was introduced to the nearly dormant technique of salt-glazing. Already deeply in love with the responsiveness of wet clay, he felt the energy and freshness of his marks were

too often obscured by conventional glazes. The surfaces he achieved through salt-glazing—thin, subtly variegated, with a soft pebbly texture—fascinated Reitz, and the excitement of the process hooked him too. "I will never forget the rush I felt when I threw in my first handful of salt. It started to snap, crackle, and pop, and burned little holes in my shirt. ... This was one of the elements that had been missing—physical confrontation with the process, the drama, the mystery and magic."[1]

Fig. 1. Salt-glazed functional ware, ca. 1990.

His appetite whetted, Reitz devoted much of the next two decades to developing a range of colors and surface effects previously unseen in salt-glazing. Affectionately known in the ceramics community as "Mr. Salt," he has been credited with almost single-handedly reviving the practice of salt-glazing, and through his ardent advocacy salt became basic to the repertoire of studio ceramics internationally by the late 1960s.[2] Reitz still fires his salt kiln, but since 1986 he has increasingly turned to the fresh challenge of wood-firing, which offers a peculiarly dry, complex palette and range of flame markings. Firing with wood offers a full dose of the elemental drama he thrives on. Most important for Reitz, the wood-fired surface gives even more emphasis to the marks he makes on the clay.

Juggling and manipulating the variables in each firing, Reitz is a virtuoso who relishes knowing what he can control and what he cannot. In every aspect of his work—from sketching a form to directing flame patterns within the kiln—he maintains a fine balance between technical mastery and expressive spontaneity. Reitz's improvisational, theatrical approach to handling clay is counterbalanced by his prodigious technique, discipline, and work ethic. An influential professor at the University of Wisconsin for twenty-six years who still draws crowds at workshops around the world, Reitz stresses experimentation and an intuitive, open-hearted approach to clay (fig. 2).

He doesn't talk about craftsmanship a great deal, preferring to teach by doing.[3] His doing, however, has tremendous authority. This was a marvelous anomaly during the 1960s and '70s, when most art schools barely touched on craftsmanship. "He knew things," says Ron Gallas, who studied with Reitz in the 1970s. "Working with Don was like going to the mountain."[4] Writing about a notorious 1975 workshop performance by Reitz and Peter Voulkos billed as "Pyroman Meets Gorilla: The Greatest Clay Circus on Earth," Warren MacKenzie observed that "[m]any ... participants were surprised to learn how carefully worked out and controlled are many of the elements in Reitz's work, which might appear as intuitive happenings or fortuitous accidents."[5] Even dressed in pink briefs as Pyroman, talking a mile a minute, and draping fat handles like ribbon candy, Reitz managed to keep his mastery and focused intent at center stage (fig. 3).

Fig. 2. Collaborating with students to assemble a mural from thrown, pulled, and coiled elements, ca. 1966. A staple of Reitz's workshops and teaching, these projects encouraged experimentation in handling wet clay.

Reitz was nearly thirty when he first learned to throw pots, encouraged by a college ceramics instructor who noticed his "good hands."[6] Those good hands—and their itch to touch and investigate everything within reach—have guided all his life choices. Severely dyslexic, Reitz struggled in school, but he was an expert trapper and fisherman by early boyhood, lettered trucks and signs as a high school student, gained respect as a diver in the Navy, and still speaks proudly of his artistry as a butcher. In his late twenties he was restless—newly married, working in the meat market and painting at night—when he took the leap into college on the G.I. Bill; and after just one semester in the ceramics studio Reitz was completely obsessed with clay. He eased into graduate study at Alfred, starting with summer school, but very quickly his ceramics took over his life.

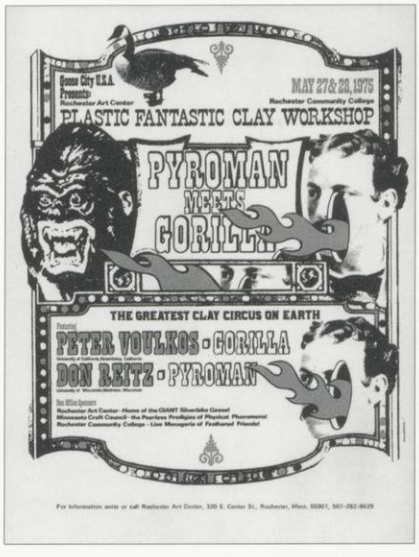


Fig. 3. Handbill for Pyroman Meets Gorilla, Rochester [Minnesota]Art Center, 1975.

In the late 1950s, Reitz was blown away by a *Craft Horizons* feature on Peter Voulkos, who had just hit his stride. He was greatly impressed by Voulkos's radical pots, but what really struck him was a simple one-liner: "No rules, only concepts."[7] Reitz has been repeating that like a mantra ever since. In graduate school he began experimenting

Fig. 4. Thrown and assembled vessels made circa 1960 at Alfred University. The form at right rejoined Reitz's repertoire in the early 1990s.

with form, altering and stacking thrown and slab-built elements, but producing little that speaks of real conviction (fig. 4). Struggling to find his own voice, Reitz realized with characteristic intensity that his whole being must "be in the cross-section of the ware." Later that year he broke all the bisqued ware he'd brought to Wisconsin from Alfred and dumped it in the leach field for a new bathroom.[8]

"I began with simple pots and those pots suggested other forms ..."[9]

All of Reitz's work is steeped in pottery form. He consistently relied on his pottery for extra income in lean times, and there are surely thousands of well-used Reitz pitchers, casseroles, and refrigerator jugs hiding out in Midwestern kitchens. "Don't be embarrassed about making functional pots if you're an artist," he declares. "If you're making dishes, that's another thing."[10] Inspired by the spirit of Abstract Expressionism that surged through the ceramics community during the 1950s, Reitz views the effects of his physical involvement with clay as imprints of his deepest self. He trusts making, not thinking, and emotion is his essential subject matter.[11] Yet for Reitz the "pottery image," with all its challenges, demands, and limitations, has remained a primary source of inspiration and possibility.[12] He throws on the wheel with tremendous passion, identifying emotionally with each movement of the clay. "I like to be able to get through the whole pot with my mind. I like to be able to feel the inside and the outside working together."[13] As with all great potters, Reitz's technical ability has become transparent: his throwing looks as easy as breathing. This mastery is a conduit for profound empathy with the rhythms and energies of vessel form (fig. 5).

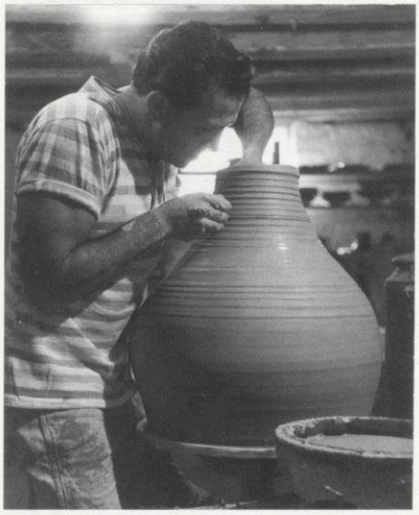


Fig. 5. Throwing the body of a large urn upside-down, ca. 1971.

While solidly grounded in ceramic tradition, by the early 1960s his pots had already become vehicles for swift, gestural drawing, wild, unnecessary kinks and curls, and explosive bursts of color. His exploration of salt-glazing was in full swing, and the range of texture and color at his command seemed to expand with every firing (fig. 6). Reitz brushed and sprayed glazes, frits, oxides, and slips onto the wet ware, introduced all sorts of strange substances before and during firing, and constantly tinkered with the volatile kiln atmosphere, learning as he went.[14] Through his efforts salt-glazing's distinctive "orange peel" texture was joined by thick glossy patches and soft swathes that

resemble dried mud. Acidic blues and browns from the spectrum of toasted bread were met by greens, oranges, purples, rusts, and lustrous metallics, swirling over and around each other in dynamic, fluid harmony. On the box forms and oval cylinders of the mid-1960s—pointedly closed, nonfunctional forms—(see cat. nos. 8–11) Reitz began to give his knobs and handles more prominence, creating elaborate networks of smooth coils that recall the even tension of wrought iron and the doughiness of braided bread. Although the work from this period is often extravagant, its eccentricity masks an essential balance and symmetry, often grounded by weighty bellies and broad feet. The pottery image is at its core.

Fig. 6. The salt-fired kiln at Verona, Wisconsin, 1961. Built alongside a drainage ditch, the kiln was flooded unexpectedly during a firing. The steam produced a curious meaty texture and inspired Reitz to try introducing salt as a brine.

"Don't you like what that mud does? Look at that, man! I just love that!" [15]

Alongside objects directly rooted in pottery tradition, Reitz also made a lot of work in the lumpen, organic vein so pervasive in ceramics of the 1960s. The bag forms from his first few years in Wisconsin are among the best of these, comical and primal, like fleshy, unfinished creatures oozing their way out of a swamp (cat. no. 5). Yet they also seem overly considered, as if they were exercises in flouting purist convention. The unassuming *Chunk* (1965; cat. no. 7), in contrast, represented a fundamentally new way of working. Virtually a found object, it began quite literally as a chunk of clay left on the wedging table. Enthralled by its unruly furled edge and sharp wire-cut ridges, Reitz decided to glaze and fire it. *Chunk* embodies what Reitz has come to prize most: the mud-ness, the clay-doing-what-clay-does-ness that he has sought like a lover ever since. As the 1960s progressed Reitz gradually relaxed his hold on the clay, squeezing, stretching, tearing, and pinching it rather than rolling perfect coils and slabs or pulling handles in the classic manner (fig. 7) .[16] His handles and knobs, in particular, evolved into complex, organic excrescences, emerging from each vessel's taut volume with peculiar inevitability (fig. 8). The expressive

Fig. 7. "I Don't Like Tea," ca. 1963. Tossed off irreverently for a juried show in Dubuque, Iowa, this funky little teapot signals the emergence of the loose, pinched appendages Reitz still favors.

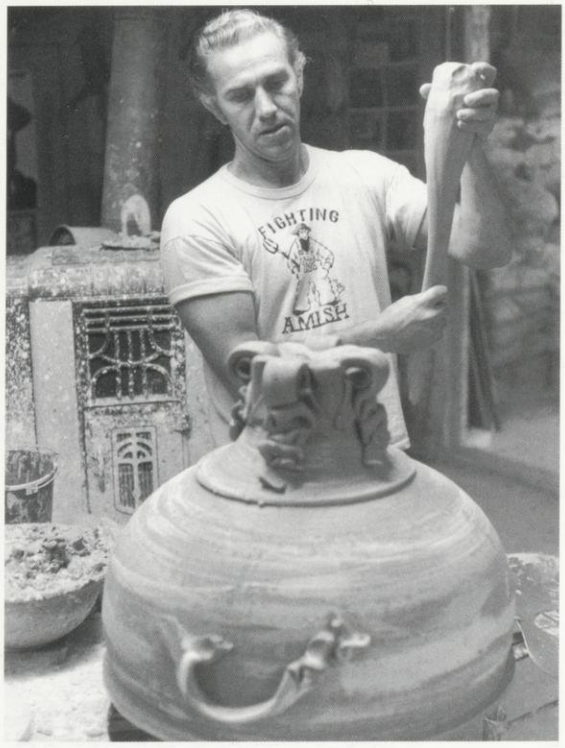


Fig. 8. Pulling handles for application to a large urn, ca. 1970.

range of these appendages is broad, spanning aggression and delicacy, whimsy and anxiety, raucous humor and fierce quietude. They punctuate the forms, breaking symmetry and enlivening the negative space, and present an indelible record of the artist's shifting moods and impulses.

Reitz loves to work big—"if it's big, it can be big and bad," he quips.[17] By the early 1970s bursitis in his shoulder forced him to throw in sections, which he combined to make forms with increasingly complex profiles. The sections were often thrown upside-down, and many of the resulting forms also invert traditional pot shapes (fig. 9). An elephantine foot might join a narrow waist and a flared neck, or a wide "skirted" midsection may be supported by an improbably narrow base. Transitions may be smoothed so that they are virtually imperceptible or marked by strong, sharp angles, as in many of the "Tie-Downs" of the late 1970s (see cat. no. 29). As his work became larger, Reitz's process became even more intimate and intuitive. Wrapping his body around a substantial form, Reitz engages it like a horse trainer or a dance master, pushing, pulling and swatting it into shape with confidence and curiosity. He nudges and cajoles the junctions where forms swell or pull back and gently rubs down the quieter passages, digging in here and tightening up there. He hates to break the flow of his relationship with each piece, preferring to complete and fire work with minimal interruption. At workshops and in writing he often asks "who is forming whom?,"[18] and it's not just a rhetorical question. Watching him work, it's clear Reitz is in passionate dialogue with his material.

Fig. 9. Urn with Three Handles, ca. 1971, stoneware, salt glaze. Location unknown.

Reitz's approach is a paradoxical mixture of Abstract Expressionist machismo—wherein clay is a receptive medium, responding to and recording his every touch—and pure, precognitive delight, which inspires him to collaborate with the clay rather than impose his will upon it. He talks about clay (he often calls it dirt) with unembarrassed love and admiration. "I remember sitting and fishing and waiting for the bobber to go and watching little waves heaping mud over my toes. … I would watch my dad dig in the garden,

and how he would turn the leaves under and hit the clods of dirt to break them up. I just really liked that. I liked to watch. When we'd plow, I'd just watch the plow folding the dirt back in. … those surfaces are wonderful to me."[19] The clarity and simplicity of Reitz's passion for clay is what compels workshop audiences to watch enraptured as he throws, assembles, and embellishes pieces for two to three days at a stretch.[20] His process touches something basic that we all understand, and perhaps need more than ever before: our capacity for a playful, respectful partnership with the elements of nature.

Firing the Tozan [wood-fired] kiln … rekindled my thoughts on what firing is all about. I know I can do some of the work, but now the fire has to do most of it. I feel I have to be inside the kiln when it's firing, or I don't know what I'm doing.[21]

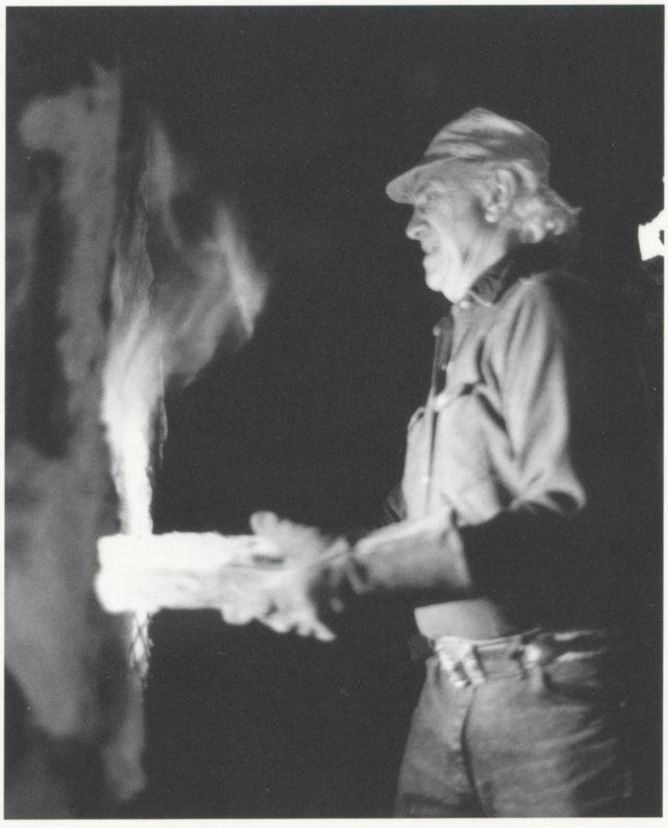


Fig. 10. Firing the Flagstaff noborigama kiln, ca. 1990.

Reitz has always preferred to fire kilns in a similarly collaborative spirit. In his early exploration of salt-glazing, he became intensely involved in directing the interplay of sodium vapor, flame patterns within the kiln, and the startling array of materials—from copper plates to banana peels—he introduced during the firing. His control of the

Salt-Glazing

By Don Reitz

The salt glaze process itself is rather simple: ware is placed into a kiln and fired to its mature temperature, at which point common salt is introduced into the kiln. The salt (chemically, sodium chloride) melts and volatilizes. Silica in the clay attracts sodium to form a glassy silicate on the surface of the ware. Chloride changes to chlorine gas in the kiln. As it leaves the hot kiln, it combines with hydrogen in the air and becomes hydrochloric acid.

Color is achieved by the use of slips, stains, dry oxides, washes, glazes, overspraying, foreign materials in or applied to the clay, placement of ware in the kiln, control of the atmosphere, fuming, direction of flame pattern—on and on! This sequence is typical in my work: a piece is formed, lines are incised, slips and clay ornamentations are applied; the piece dries enough to be handled, raw oxides are rubbed in, washes and stains are brushed or sprayed on. Glaze accents are applied and a pinch of feldspar and/or frit is thrown on the surface. The piece is then ready for the kiln.

Flame impingement, blushes, and the amount of sodium accumulation can be controlled by the stacking of the kiln. By grouping pieces close together, more sodium will form on the exposed surfaces than on the protected sections. Shards placed on the ware, pieces laid on their sides or overlapping one another will produce shaded areas. Materials such as straw, wood, metal, banana or orange peels, etc., because they burn and produce an ash, give special effects. Bulbous forms may extend over the firebox to receive extra flame impingement and salt buildup. When a piece is placed in contact with the kiln wall, beautiful patterns can develop from the seasoned bricks [which are coated with sodium from previous firings]. Stacking one section of the kiln tight and leaving other areas open will direct a flame pattern. A brick coated with cobalt wash and placed in the middle of a group of pieces will give good blushing, especially where white slips are used.

The beauty in salt is its unpredictability, but I feel the need to help this quality along. Those beautiful drips, rich blushes, variations

continued on next page

process, however, is still relative, and success depends on how well he can "put himself in the kiln,"[22] anticipating and intuiting the fire's movements. Firing with wood, his current passion, requires an even more disciplined identification with flame and ash, as well as a solid understanding of the effects achieved with different woods. "You're painting as you're stacking [the kiln]," he explains. "You're actually putting color on in your mind."[23] No matter how much experience goes into the stacking and firing, however, every kiln load offers surprises. And in the end, the artist takes responsibility for judging the results of the collaboration. Reitz culls a tremendous amount of work, relegating much of his prodigious output to the scrapheap—and many pieces go through two or more firings before he is satisfied.

In retrospect, Reitz's salt-glazed work encapsulates many of the contradictory impulses of mid-century studio ceramics. Its classicism allies it to the early work of strong potters like Karen Karnes, Bob Turner, and Val Cushing, and the increasing scale and complex, abstract glaze surfaces recall the work of Toshiko Takaezu. Reitz's energetic humor and the quick, loose way he handles wet clay, however, encourage comparisons to the voluptuous irreverence of Ken Ferguson's or Jerry Rothman's pots. Reitz's spontaneous, gut-driven approach was both inspired and validated by Voulkos, whose sure touch, fearless mark-making, and free combination of elements awed nearly everyone who saw him work. Like a butterfly, Reitz drank in ideas and impulses from every direction, and the resulting work is both synthetic and highly individual.

The interplay of these diverse elements within Reitz's work is exciting, but it also makes him difficult to pigeonhole. Even within a given form, Reitz only rarely settles on a signature shape, preferring to experiment constantly with their profiles and appendages. At several points in his career he has radically changed his palette and mark-making in response to overwhelming personal needs. While long recognized as a master by his peers—in 1981 and again in 2001 readers of *Ceramics Monthly* voted him one of the twelve most important living ceramists[24]—and widely exhibited from the beginning, Reitz was almost in his fifties before he had serious gallery representation. Never patient or detail-minded, Reitz has often been his own worst enemy in this regard, and his friends and family sometimes despair of the way he gives time and energy to others while neglecting to further his own career.

of salt coverage, and flame impingement are eighty percent the craftsman's doing. If you want dark ware, reduce the [oxygen in the] kiln. If you want lighter colors, oxidize. Temperature affects both the amount of sodium on the ware and the color, so I fire my kiln unevenly. When the kiln nears the temperature chosen for salting, you may do many things to force beautiful 'accidents.' Wood, tires, straw, and other combustible materials may be introduced into the kiln. Oil may be dripped into the firebox to give the ware a bit of opalescence. Colorants in their carbonate state (cobalt, copper, iron, etc.) may be added to water and introduced as a fine spray. When the kiln has cooled to a low red heat, fuming may be done by introducing chlorides into the kiln. Stannous and ferrous chlorides work well. They will give a mother-of-pearl quality to the ware.

Firing is a simple process. At least at the start it seems to be. But the more you salt fire and experiment, the more you realize that firing is as creative an act as forming the objects.

Adapted from "Salt Glaze Process," in *Salt Glaze Ceramics,* exh. cat. (New York: American Craft Council, 1972), 12–22, 25.

One does not make a pot for salt, but rather salt if required by the object. One does not simply throw salt into the fire to see how much sodium can be heaped onto the ware. It is more than an exercise in technique and surface activity. Each piece requires different amounts of sodium. It is knowing how to use the kiln as a tool that is important.

Don Reitz, from the foreword to Jack Troy, *Salt-Glazed Ceramics* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1977).

Sometime in the late 1970s, Reitz now says, he "lost his north."[25] Frustrated by university bureaucracy, cynical about the art market, and feeling thwarted by his tendency to spread himself too thin, he began to reach in new directions. He dropped the color he had become known for, coating pieces with cobalt carbonate and salt-glazing for a deep black surface, or relying on residual sodium on the salt kiln's interior to give the clay a soft sheen (see cat. nos. 33–35). These quieter surfaces poignantly reflect the somber mood of these years. The best of them reveal the monumental power of Reitz's form-language, and their sustained, elegiac presence contrasts movingly with the immediacy of his probing fingermarks and slashed incisions.

During this period Reitz also experimented with photo-transfers, displayed hunks of wet clay labeled "casserole" and "pitcher," and dabbled in installations of unfired clay, plate glass, sausage casings, trophy heads, water, and (once) live fish, inspired by the antiform and process art movements of the 1970s (fig. 11).[26] None of these efforts was terribly satisfying, and Reitz found himself more and more mired in uncertainty and self-doubt. Although he was taking risks, he was working with intense self-consciousness, a mode that doesn't suit him in the least. Reitz's greatest strength is his ability to drop his conscious attention and work from gut, heart, and soul.

Fig. 11. Hanging slabs of clay for an installation at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, August 1981.

This, I thought, is a situation similar to a bad kiln firing. I've always said there is no such thing as a bad firing; it's only bad if you don't learn from it, and turn adversity into positive energy.[27]

I don't know if this was art or not, I don't have a damn idea, and I don't care.[28]

In 1982 Reitz nearly lost the use of his left arm and leg in a serious truck accident. Laid up for months and in constant pain, he turned to drawing, but the blank white paper shook his nerve. Bill Brown (a close friend and former director of Penland School of Crafts, where Reitz taught over many summers) sent him a sketchpad with marks on each page to get him started, but he still missed the familiar freedom of working in clay. Eventually he asked his students to roll out thick slabs for him and began developing a palette of low-temperature slips and glazes, spilling his anguish into brightly drawn narratives on

Wood-Firing

"The flame is the vehicle to transport the ash throughout the kiln. So this is your brush, the tongues of flame, they're your brush, see, that's what you're painting with."

Don Reitz, from the video "Reitzagama … an inside view of a wood firing," which documents the construction and first firing of his anagama kiln at Clarkdale, Arizona. (Produced by Roy Hanscom and Randy Sinquefeld, Material Wonders of Kingwood, 2003.)

In the wood-fired kiln, the chemicals present in wood ash substitute for those found in mineral glaze ingredients like feldspar, whiting, and borax. Different woods contain varying proportions of these ingredients (primarily sodium, calcium, potassium, silica, and magnesium) and so produce different effects. Although Reitz now has two wood-fired kilns of his own, he often fires his work in another artist's kiln in order to achieve a particular quality.

continued on next page

somber, unreflective black clay. While he was still in recovery, Reitz's five-year-old niece, Sara, was diagnosed with cancer, and they began exchanging drawings to share their fears and encourage one another. Sara's illness and their intense correspondence galvanized Reitz, and he returned to the studio fired with fury and devotion. The pieces from this series are unlike anything he'd done previously. (see cat. nos. 37–45.) If Reitz's work had always been subtly autobiographical, now it was raw and personal. These works tell complex, coded stories only Reitz can fully decipher, with dogs and hospital beds transposed from Sara's drawings, trains and fishing holes recalled from Reitz's boyhood, long-toothed monsters and broken flowers, all wrapped together with a swift, thin, anxious line. The colors may be soft and bright, but their juxtaposition is harsh; and the bold handprint on many of these pieces has the unnerving force of a slap. Over the next several years Reitz threw his vulnerability, rage, compassion, and spiritual agony into this work. As soon as he was able to use the wheel, he began extending this new palette onto teapot and platter forms as well as slabs, and his storytelling is so intriguing that it's easy to overlook how skillfully and seamlessly he marries drawing to these complex shapes.[29]

Almost as rapidly as it had begun, however, Reitz's outpouring ran its course. By 1985 his drawings addressed spiritual and environmental concerns as often as inner turmoil, and within a year he had begun using the bright low-temperature colors on large-scale sculptures with a decidedly optimistic tone (see cat. no. 47). Returning to the salt kiln, he fired monumental pot forms of black clay, easing his way back into the mainstream of his work. The gravity and severity of these pieces prefigure his embrace of wood-firing's subdued palette, which began in earnest in 1986. Though still teaching at the University of Wisconsin, Reitz was powerfully drawn to Arizona, where he often visited his colleague Don Bendel at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. Bendel had begun working with Yukio Yamamoto, who dreamed of building Japanese-style kilns throughout the U.S. and inspiring American potters to breathe new life into the wood-firing tradition. Building and firing Yamamoto's five-chambered noborigama kiln at Flagstaff was a revelation for Reitz, whose previous experiences with wood-firing had been disappointing (fig. 12). By 1988 he had settled into a broad canyon near Clarkdale, Arizona and was working with Yamamoto both locally and during short visits to Yamamoto's

"If I am doing a series of pots which I want blushed and especially if I am using a clay body … which is light and takes orangey flashings, I fire Frank Boyden's kiln with him near Portland, Oregon. It is a beautiful kiln to fire. The wood he uses, fir and alder, gives a different effect to the pieces.

I like pieces which are more vigorous, which are more abstract by nature, to be buried and have a lot of ash. I like to go back East and fire in Peter Callas's kiln … Peter uses oak, which gives a heavier look and requires heavier pieces with a heavier glaze … Oak, cherry and hickory work well on those pieces which are more sculptural, more vigorous, more abstract, and more spontaneously done.

If I want more greens and more accenting with glazes, and want to fire over a long period of time, I will use the Flagstaff noborigama [at Northern Arizona University]. With the noborigama you have tremendous control over the fire and the flame pattern. I can stack the dogi chamber knowing the pieces will be really blasted because we will fire it for possibly twelve to fourteen days. With a noborigama I can have glazed ware, unglazed ware, softly accented ware, and hard accents from the dogi room. In each chamber I can finish firing with different woods to produce different effects. The [Ponderosa] pine ash gives a good green color. This very large, five-chambered kiln is easy to fire. It responds to every move. It's a live thing—that's what I like about wood firing, it's alive, it's part of you."

From an unpublished letter to Jack Troy (July 28, 1993) responding to his queries in preparation for *Woodfired Stoneware and Porcelain* (Radnor, Pa.: Chilton, 1994).

home in Himeji, Japan.[30] Since that time he has pursued wood-firing with the same passion he once reserved for salt, often traveling around the country to fire his work in kilns that offer the particular effects he seeks. While his wood-fired surfaces can be harsh and dense, with aggressive fire flashings and drips of glaze, Reitz's mature vessels exude power, serenity, and balance.

Fig. 12. Don Bendel, Reitz, Yukio Yamamoto, and Jim Leedy after unloading the Tozan-style noborigama kiln at Flagstaff, Arizona, ca. 1986. The thick platter in the center is by Reitz. Working with Yamamoto, Reitz says, "has awakened some things inside of me … He has made me aware that I already know, and he has encouraged me to go slower—to look deeper into the meaning of things." (*Clay Times* interview)

As he has become more involved with wood-firing, Reitz continues to explore forms that have excited him for decades: monumental jars, slim columns, big teapot-like pieces he calls "tea stacks," platters, and pitchers. He still can't resist working the surface, but he approaches it with a new consciousness of wood-firing's potential. Often now he rubs the entire piece with a dense layer of wet clay, creating a network of lumps and crevices to catch and amplify the effects of the fire (cat. nos. 59, 65, 71). Others, like the 'bag' forms to which Reitz has recently returned, are lusciously smooth, like blank pages made to record the ash stratum accumulated within the kiln (cat. nos. 69 and 70). Conversely, the broad, sloping shoulders and 'skirts' on many of his jars invite falling ash to form dramatic splashes and drips of glaze. Reitz always keeps the fire in mind, even at the very beginning stages of a new form (fig. 13).

Fig. 13. Interior of "Reitzagama" wood-burning kiln after its second firing, Clarkdale, Arizona, 2002.

Combined with the massive bulk of Reitz's recent jars, the fluid marks spilled over their surfaces suggest an abundant energy that can't be contained. His 'bags' and columns, too, often appear ready to burst, with fat, urgent coils snaking their way out of the thickly draped walls. This fullness, this sense of a turbulent and rich interior volume, is integral to the history of pottery: it is the breath that makes a form come to life. Reitz's pitchers, for example—a form he has pursued with devotion—epitomize this: they are pregnant with joyful inspiration. Their containment and repose is present in virtually all his work, and inseparable from the sense of balance and human proportion

Fig. 14. A mural in progress, 2001.

that underpins his eager, restless mark-making. Even when he strays quite far from traditional pottery form, Reitz's concerns and vocabulary remain close to his roots (fig. 14).

The new *Punch-Out* works—pounded, sliced, and slapped into shape—integrate the rough-and-ready approach of Reitz's earliest hand-built pieces with the reverent spirit of his mature wood-fired surfaces (see cat. nos. 66–68). They begin straight from the pug mill as roughly rectangular hunks, and the interior is defined by thumping them (hard!) with his fist or a length of lumber. Thick and soft, they sag slightly or lean at the waist; wide slices clarify the edges, slide out of the mouths, or curl at the feet. They are beautiful survivors, graciously yielding without caving in. Their underlying message is our essential kinship with the earth and the profound rightness of working in partnership with the elements. This is the kernel at the heart of Reitz's teaching and his life in the studio and the spark that enlivens all of his work.

Notes

1. Don Reitz, "Art Out of Need," *Ceramics Monthly* 39, no. 2 (February 1991): 50.

2. Jack Troy, "Don Reitz," *Craft Horizons* 34, no. 5 (October 1974): 48; Paul Donhauser, "United States of America," in *New Ceramics*, ed. Emmanuel Cooper and Eileen Lewenstein (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1974), 155. It's not clear who first called Reitz "Mr. Salt," although Rudy Autio seems to be the prime suspect. There were, of course, many others exploring salt-glazing—Shoji Hamada and Bernard Leach, for example, the two most influential potters at mid-century; each built a salt kiln. But the pace of Reitz's experimentation and range of his influence—he has offered an average of ten workshops annually since the early 1960s, traveling all over the world—sets him apart.

3. "We graduated some damn good students. I didn't produce them. … It is useless to give advice. People don't follow advice anyhow. Why should they? I wouldn't. You have to find out for yourself." Reitz, "Art Out of Need," 50.

4. Interview with the author, July 21, 2003. Gallas worked with Reitz at Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina during the 1970s.

5. Warren MacKenzie, "Pyroman and Gorilla Cavort in Clay Circus," *Craft Horizons* 35, no. 4 (July-August 1975): 6. Voulkos was the Gorilla.

6. Harold Mantz, who taught ceramics at Kutztown State Teachers' College. Reitz, like so many artists of his generation, was admitted to college through the G.I. Bill. Interview with the author, May 17, 2002.

7. Conrad Brown, "Peter Voulkos," *Craft Horizons* 16, no. 5 (September-October 1956): 12. Reitz and Voulkos finally met in 1966 and became close friends, often finagling opportunities to work together with colleagues like Rudy Autio and Jun Kaneko.

8. Interview with the author, July 21, 2003.

9. Don Reitz, "Form One," in *The Penland School of Crafts Book of Pottery*, ed. John Coyne (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975), 158.

10. Interview with the author, May 17, 2002.

11. Daniel Rhodes, one of Reitz's teachers at Alfred, and M. C. Richards have written most eloquently about this way of approaching clay. See Daniel Rhodes, *Pottery Form* (Radnor, Pa.: Chilton, 1976), and Mary Caroline Richards, *Centering in Pottery, Poetry, and the Person* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1964).

12. In a juror's statement, Reitz once wrote: "...I expected to be challenged by more thought-provoking pottery images. It leads me to ask a very important question: Why has the pottery image not kept pace with the more sculptural ceramics objects?" *Indiana Ceramic Exhibition 1979*, exh. cat. (Greencastle, Ind.: DePauw University, 1979). In a similar vein: "If your mind is working at all you can never make the same pot twice. The changes may be slight but they are there. How many teapots can you make and still be inspired? The number is infinite if you let it be." Don Reitz, "It Pays to Advertise But You Must Have a Product," unpublished manuscript (May 19, 1989), 2.

13. Reitz, "Form One," 160.

14. Don Reitz, "Salt Glaze Process," in *Salt Glaze Ceramics* (New York: American Crafts Council and the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, 1972), 12–22 and 25.

15. Don Reitz speaking at a workshop at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, November 13, 2002.

16. 'Pulled' handles are fat coils wetted and gradually stretched with smooth, firm 'pulls.'

17. Reitz, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, November 13, 2002.

18. Don Reitz, "Drawing from the Heart," *Studio Potter* 14, no. 4 (December 1985): 40-41.

19. Rick Berman, "An Interview with Don Reitz," *Clay Times* 2, no. 2 (March-April 1996): 11.

20. His compulsive storytelling doesn't hurt either. Reitz is a big ham with a seemingly endless store of hilarious, self-deprecating anecdotes.

21. The Tozan kiln is a type of noborigama, or hill-climbing, kiln; Reitz has often fired the one in Flagstaff, Arizona built by Yukio Yamamoto. Don Reitz, "The Gift," *Studio Potter* 15, no. 2 (June 1987): 16.

22. Reitz, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, November 13, 2002.

23. Don Reitz speaking at a workshop at Mankato State University, Minnesota, September 15, 2002.

24. "A Select Twelve," *Ceramics Monthly* 29, no. 6 (Summer 1981): 47–71; "In Recognition," *Ceramics Monthly* 49, no. 6 (June/July/August 2001): 53–79 .

25. Interview with the author, May 17, 2002.

26. Jerry L. Caplan, "Don Reitz: New Directions," *Ceramics Monthly* 28, no. 5 (June 1980): 64–65.

27. "Art Out of Need," 50–51.

28. Reitz, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, November 13, 2002.

29. See Reitz, "The Gift," and Daniel Dahlquist, "Don Reitz: New Directions," *Ceramics Monthly* 32, no. 8 (October 1984): 34–39 for a more extensive account of this period in Reitz's life.

30. Yamamoto died in 2000.

Interview with Don Reitz: The Early Years

By Mark Leach, Deputy Director,
The Mint Museums

Mark Leach: We're going to talk about your life, your background, and how that positioned you for the career that you developed. Let's start with your early life and some memories that helped to form your adult character, your outlook, and what keeps you going in your career.

Don Reitz: Our family—my dad and mom, my two brothers and a sister—had a very strong relationship. I learned discipline from my family, a discipline to continue through things, to finish things. I was the second oldest in the family, born in 1929 at the beginning of the Depression. During the Depression there was a different value system. We had little money; we raised our own food.

Dad would explain things to me by drawing in the dirt while we were gardening. In fact, people drawing in the dirt was one of my most memorable experiences in the beginning of dealing with dirt. Because I'm so very dyslexic, that made sense to me, because he drew pictures and pushed leaves and sticks around and talked. My other mentors, such as Homer Hicks, my scout master, who took us fishing on Saturdays, also drew in the dirt. This whole thing of drawing in the dirt to explain things was very important, and I'm still drawing in the dirt now. For most of my platters and things, I use my hands, my fingers, and sticks that I find. I use very few store-bought tools; I usually make my own. And that goes back to that to that time. I was drawn to clay because we grew up with clay. Mom baked in dishes made of clay; our pie cupboard had ant traps made out of clay that I filled with kerosene. And the jugs in the root cellar: I remember as a little kid going down to the root cellar and putting my hands on the handles of the jugs. You could feel the potter's marks; what a real experience.

When we first moved to Belvidere, New Jersey (oddly, the town where Peter Callas and Pete Voulkos have their kilns), I was two years old. We first had a house off the town dump, then we got a little better house in town. Dad was an accountant and a methodical, very honest man. I remember Mom getting mad at him because he would do somebody's income taxes and charge them only $2.00, and he would say to her, "They don't have much money; you know they're poor just as we are."

Mom was home all the time, baking, cooking, and that's where I learned to cook. I was cooking and had to stand on a chair to reach the table to make cookies. All of us cooked. After my brother Jake and I finished our duties, such as cleaning the house, we could go out and play baseball and do other things. That rural environment was healthy for me; I learned to depend on myself. Growing up on the rivers, fishing and hunting and trapping, I felt connected to the natural world, understanding and not fighting the elements. From the time I was in fifth or sixth grade, I got up at 5:30 in the morning to run a two-mile trap line on the Delaware River, before school. I could get $3.65 for a muskrat tail. It was a different time than now. Can you imagine a mother letting her sixth-grade son go out on the Delaware River with a flashlight on the ice flow to trap?

I had half the day's work done before I went to school. By the time I was in fifth or sixth grade I was sweeping up until 5:00 p.m. down at the meat market. I always had a jingle in my pocket. When farmers plowed in the Delaware River valley and the rain came, I hunted arrowheads, where they'd be sticking up out of the mud just like little jewels, and sold them to Doc Cummings for a nickel a piece. Once I found a tomahawk that he gave me a whole dollar for.

ML: What was your experience in school in Belvidere?

DR: Because of my dyslexia I never really could deal with the written word. By the time I'd get through reading, I'd be so confused about what I'd just read, trying to decipher each word, that of course I lost the flow of what the text was about. I'm a bad communicator in terms of writing, and I didn't learn to spell well. Of course, they didn't know about dyslexia at that time. Mom would set me on the couch and say, "You will spell that, you do know how to spell that." I'd get so mad; I really tried hard. When I was in the fourth or fifth grade, two of my

teachers, Mrs. Rosencrantz and Miss Shook, understood. I couldn't take a written test, so Miss Shook would give me the test verbally and I'd get a 100.

Sometimes to get through school I just would pretend I wasn't there; I would leave my body there, but I would just go. My nickname was "Mile-away," because I wasn't there. I hated it, so I just got through school by not being there; but I never failed anything. I would get three A's: gym, shop, and art. I was always doing something with my hands: carving, drawing, painting. There's not a time I can remember when I didn't ace a local art show. I also used to carve a stick into a chain, balls, and box, and that kind of thing. I was always doing art and always working. I learned anatomy carving in the meat markets, looking at the bone structures: pelvic bones and neck bones. At the meat market I also learned to deal with people and how to display: I'd decorate the flounder and the chops and put booties on the crown roast. And as high school freshmen Bobby Robbins and I became "R&R Sign Painters." I painted the four Rotary signs as you come into Belvidere; they're still there, but I'm sure they've been repainted.

ML: Did you find any subject in school to connect with, to excel at?

DR: I was interested in shop, carpentry; I almost went into wood. The coach (in a small school the coach was the shop teacher and also the principal) had some cedar posts in the shop for two years, and when he went away for a week, I ripped those cedar posts down, tongue and grooved them, dove-tailed them, and made a cedar chest. I put a pumice stone old finish on it and made my own hardware for it; it was beautiful. Coach came back, looked around the shop, and asked where those cedar posts were. I was so proud of my cedar chest sitting there, and I said, "Right there, Coach." He picked up a hammer and threw it at me; it bounced off a table and through a closed window. I went home. I was so proud, I expected he'd be proud too. But art was really my best subject.

ML: After you graduated from high school, what did you want to do?

DR: After high school I enlisted for five years in the Navy, where I went to torpedo school, among others. I finally ended up doing hard-hat deep-sea salvage diving and making good money. I was in the Persian Gulf when Amoco was putting in oil wells, and when their diver got appendicitis as they were pouring cement, they wired the ship that I was on:

"Do you have a diver?" So the captain asks me if I can pour cement. I'm nineteen, of course I can pour … it's a way to get off the ship. On the way over on the boat I'm reading my manual on how to pour cement. So they put me in this Amoco rig (which was quite archaic compared to ours), and I went down maybe forty-five feet underwater. I'm pouring cement from this big tube coming down, and then I holler through the telephone in the hat, "Okay, cut it off." So they cut it off, but I didn't realize I had forty-five feet of cement left in the tube, which kept coming and buried me right up to my chest. They pulled me up and laughed at my failure: "You've poured cement, huh kid?"

So for about three months I dove, working from oil rigs for $55.00 an hour. Diving was respected, because sometimes you had some difficult, risky things to do, like bring up live ammo. The deepest dive I had was on air, 330 feet down. I could only work twelve minutes on the bottom, but it took me five hours to come up to recompress; that was almost the end of my career. That's why they send nineteen-year-old kids to war, instead of older ones who think. I always deal with risk factors; there's something about the risk and the potential of failure—which is only the other side of the potential of success—that I enjoy. I could see danger, but it was never an impediment to what I was doing.

ML: After you returned from five years in the Navy, how did you reconstruct your life?

DR: I went back to Belvidere and began cutting meat again, because that's what I knew best. But then I drove a truck for Mayflower Moving Company for about three months. By then I knew I didn't want to be a truck driver. I thought I'd like to be a fisherman, so I went up to Maine and pulled in fishnets for three days before I quit; there's nothing but stink and smell and fish and guts, and my hands were killing me. I also wanted to be a lumberjack—there's a point to all this actually—so I went to Bear Mountain, and signed on as a lumberjack. I could see chopping trees, but you don't start with that. I said, "This is not for me." All these jobs I tried out were things I'd fantasized about while I was in school. I'd see a John Wayne movie like *Wake of the Red Witch,* and I was a hard hat diver. Or I'd see Johnny Weissmuller, the real Tarzan, and I was Tarzan for that day or so. That's the artistic mind challenging the real world and the make-believe world: Where is the line? Or is there a line? What's real and what's not real? I've always thought that way.

After the Navy and all these jobs, I had to do something different. The natural world has always been a big interest of mine and a source of energy and inspiration, a source of ideas, content. It's like this big book just full of what's happening. I went into the Canadian wilderness to live with Charlie, an Algonquin Indian, about seventy years old, who had never been out of the bush. He did the layered look: two hats, two coats, two pants, all that. He talked with this great accent, so beautiful. And a very wise person, he's one of my main mentors really. I explained to Charlie that I wanted to find out about myself. He asked how long I could stay. I said, "Maybe a couple of months." He said, "You should go home now; unless you stay all four seasons, you'll learn nothing." Charlie and his cousin and I lived in a hut for a year and ran trap lines. Charlie knew everything. He took my hand and put it underneath this rock, and I was petting a hibernating bear. What I learned mainly from Charlie was whatever you do, you're either an expert or you're going to die. In his world, if you're not an expert you're going to die physically; in our world if you're not an expert you're going to die mentally, financially, and everything else. I also got a sense of time from him, because we'd walk by a birch tree, and he'd say, "In thirty years I'm going to make a canoe out of this one." While I was there, he made one very light birch bark canoe, sewed it with cedar root, and used very little pitch. When he put the canoe in the water, it was straight. And then I asked him, and this is the main reason for the story, "Charlie, who taught you to do these decorative designs, who taught you to do this?" He said, "Your eyes are like windows, and everything you see comes through your windows, it goes down in your belly, and it digests, until you need it. When you need it, it comes back up through your heart and out your hand." He knew it had to come out through your heart first before your hand.

ML: How did you get from the odd jobs and the backwoods to college?

DR: Few people from Belvidere went to college; there was plenty of work, so why would you go to college and waste your time? When I was about twenty-six, twenty-seven I married Johanna Denker. I was cutting meat, and I was painting at night. I would paint scenes of bears catching fish on the walls behind the bars in local taverns and flying pheasants over their john doors. I was doing showcard and truck lettering and so forth; always just dabbling in art, which I really liked,

and then cutting meat. Finally I decided to go to art school. I looked at Pratt Institute and didn't like New York City that much. My neighbor Russell Emly suggested I go to Kutztown State Teacher's College, which had a very good art education program, then teach art. I said, "What do you mean, teach art?" He said, "You're already a teacher; you spend time with the local kids on the weekends, taking them in canoes, making forts, and the like." "That's teaching?" "Of course it is!"

So, I went to Kutztown to see the head of the art department, Italo de Francesco. "Russell Emly called me," he said. "Now why do you want to be an artist?" I had never asked myself that question and had no answer, so I said, "It just smells good in here." He accepted that but told me I'd have to take an entrance exam. I explained that I'd been out of school for many years and didn't think I could take that exam. He looked at my transcripts and said, "Don, you don't actually have to take the exam since you graduated top tenth percentile of your class." I got into Kutztown and did really well in school, because it was art, and even in the education classes I did pretty well, because I was mature enough to see some value in the subject.

ML: Was it at Kutztown that you became interested in ceramics?

DR: I was a painter, that's where high art was, on the wall, and I was an Abstract Expressionist, slap, dab, cut and throwing stones in it; it was good. I was painting, and Dr. de Francesco came in, took the brush, and worked over my work. I just walked out. I decided to get coffee and saw there a *Craft Horizons* magazine. Inside I saw a rough-looking character wearing a horizontal-striped shirt with holes in it, picking his nose, and paint pots all around him. I looked at those ceramic pieces on rockers, with holes through them, and thought they were great! Who the hell was this Peter Voulkos guy? There was one line that read, "There are no rules, there are merely concepts." And I realized that while I ran my life that way, I was doing art by the rules. And that changed my life, just like that, changed my whole concept of what art was about.

That same day the Kutztown pottery instructor, Harold Mantz, said, "You know, Reitz, you got good hands, how come you're not in pottery?" So I went down in the cellar to see what they had. Harold said, "You take this, you put it in the middle like that, you put a hole down in it and squeeze it and like this here and it comes up." He didn't

tell me about air bubbles, how to wedge, how hard it was to center, just "here's what you do, figure it out." I worked all night, used all the students' clay, not realizing students had their own clay. When Harold came back early in the morning, he said, "Wedge these all back up like this and put some of that clay back in the kids' lockers 'cause they're going to kill you. And then here's the next thing you're going to do …" There were no rules here. Put your hands in the hole in the clay and just squeeze it, it's got to go up, it can't go down. And that's how I was taught to throw.

ML: After you received your degree from Kutztown in 1957, what did you do?

DR: About the time our son, Brent, was born, I got a job teaching art in the public schools in Dover, New Jersey. I think they hired me because I was big and strong, because the teachers were afraid sometimes of going down the hall to get coffee. They'd say, "You wanna go get coffee, Don?" The kids were grouped homogenously, the most stupid thing you ever saw in the education system, which meant that all the dummies were in this class, and you knew you were a dummy because all dummies are in this class—just a terrible way to teach. I started doing my workshops in public school, to get to the kids. I started keeping my art room open until 6:30 at night to get the other teachers to come down, where I'd show them how to use some of the materials. To reach the parents, I did workshops at two or three PTA's a month. I told them there was a great need for art in this country: an artist designed what you're sitting in, your stoves, your cars; artists had to do this stuff.

After our daughter, Donna, was born, I started doing clay in the basement of the house to make more money. I dug out a hole in a dirt floor of the basement, poured it full of concrete and put a piece of pipe in it to make my first wheel, which worked with a wobble. I had a hell of a time at Alfred trying to throw with a wheel that didn't have a wobble. So I made all these pots on this wheel. I didn't know anything about firing, because students never did any firing at Kutztown. I guess Harold fired things. I only had one semester of ceramics there at Kutztown, because that's enough to get anybody hooked on clay. I got a little kerosene-firing kiln that a flower pot company was throwing out and took the little kerosene kiln out in the woods. I didn't know about cones, so I would just put the pots in there to get them hot just as quick

as I could. I had a metal rod from an electric fence that I would poke the pots with; as soon as they were runny and sticky I knew the glaze was melted, so I had to turn off the kiln. I opened the door quickly to get them out. I was using a stoneware clay, but firing at low temperatures, so I was really doing raku with commercial glazes—beautiful stuff.

In order to sell the work, I built a stand down on Route 6, with a big sign that said "Hand Crafted Pottery." The cars would slow down, but nobody stopped; I didn't sell anything for two days. Since I also had a big garden, I brought vegetables and changed the sign to read "Hand Crafted Pottery and Vegetables." People would stop to buy vegetables, and I'd give them a pot, so I got rid of all my pots. People wanted beans, I'd give them a pot. I realized that I had to learn more about technical aspects of firing, because I loved the clay.

ML: Why did you decide to go to graduate school at [the New York State School of Ceramics,] Alfred University?

DR: I'd heard about Alfred; I went to look it over. When I called, Val Cushing answered the phone (he became another mentor of mine, a wonderful, wonderful man) and suggested I attend summer school. I did just that and worked like hell, fired every kiln they had. The first time I loaded a kiln, Val just told me all this stuff had to go in this kiln. I figured if I could load a house into a moving van, then I could put those little pots in a box. The whole thing of teaching, the whole thing of learning is being able to transfer knowledge from one area, one subject, one thing to another, simply a matter of transference. That's what I based my teaching on, all these years. Val returned to ask what I'd done with all the pots. "I put them in there; they're not touching, I made sure about that. How do you fire her?" He said just to light it. I already understood combustion and knew to fire slowly. So that's how I learned to load and fire a kiln. My background has always been physical, always been natural, it's always dealt with objects. At Alfred we were experimenting with clays and post-reduction firing, introducing unorthodox things at times, and then I was discovered the salt-glazing process. It was such a wonderful time.

Reitz at the stand he set up along Route 6 in Dover, New Jersey, ca. 1958. He claims nobody ever stopped until he added "and Fresh Vegetables" to the sign, and even then he had to give away his pots.

Bob Turner was another one of my heroes; his work is totally true. I try to emulate him, not his work, but to have my art true to me. Bob told me about a show in Rochester he was jurying called the "Clothesline Show." I sent a nice cookie jar to the show. I was always a good craftsman, you see, that almost was my Achilles heel. My facility got in my way of art. The pot was rejected, and there was a note inside it from Bob that said, "Don, you're a hell of a craftsman, but it takes more. By the way, thanks for the cookies." I'd forgotten to take the cookies out of the jar.

Stoneware "refrigerator jars" made ca. 1960 while Reitz was a graduate student at Alfred. These were a mainstay of his art fair sales through the 1970s.

I began to wonder what it was about the clay, what's happening to me? And that's when I figured out a few things: I'm really in the cross-section of the work, when I'm centering on the wheel, I ask "Who's centering whom? How did I do that?" or better yet "Who did that?" I began to understand a little bit more about art, about my relationship is to the object; the object is a secondary concern to the concept most of the time.

I was at Alfred for three years, until 1962. At that time I was working with Dave Shaner. After Ken Ferguson, who'd been running the Archie Bray Foundation, went to Kansas City, Shaner took over Archie Bray. I was going to go to Archie Bray with Shaner, but Johanna really wanted me to get a teaching job for the security. This turned out to be exactly the right move. About that time Harvey Littleton called and said he was going to start a glass renaissance, and he needed somebody to teach ceramics at the University of Wisconsin. I accepted the job, expecting to teach for a year. We got out the map to find Wisconsin. Then we loaded the Pontiac station wagon with the kids, went to the gas station and filled it right up—first time I filled a tank up in many years, and I bought two packages of potato chips, put them in the car. We were broke. Off we went to Madison, Wisconsin.

Interview with Don Reitz: A Teaching Legacy

By Jody Clowes

Jody Clowes: Describe the ceramics program at the University of Wisconsin when you arrived in 1962.

Don Reitz: Harvey Littleton, the ceramics teacher, had a graduate program with a few undergraduates, housed in the basement of the old Humanities building. I was brought there to free Harvey Littleton to start the studio glass program, which really led to the glass renaissance.

JC: How did the UW's teaching environment compare with the one at Alfred?

DR: The ceramics program was good but basic, although Harvey was known for his pottery, of course. Alfred, however, had state-of-the-art kilns and probes. They taught many different areas of ceramics such as glaze calculation, plaster casting, mold making, and so forth. It was a very high-powered program.

JC: When you came to the program at the UW, did you model your teaching on anyone you had studied with at Alfred or set up the department in a way that was similar to Alfred?

DR: No, actually not. As I did everything else in my life, I assessed the situation, tried to figure out my goals, and just did it. As soon as I came in, I threw out all the chairs and couches, things that were not helping the students learn. And I threw away all their kiln gods, because they were delegating all their responsibilities to the kiln gods.

JC: By "kiln gods" you mean the little figures people make to put over the kiln before each firing.

DR: The next day when I came in, effigies of me were hanging over the kilns; it was a reaction. I met with everybody and said, "Look, I'm learning. You're learning. I am going to learn the rest of my life, and I hope you learn for a couple of months, anyhow. If I tell you to do

something it's nothing I wouldn't do or haven't done. If I don't know the answer, I'll find it out, but I'll tell you I don't know the answer. We're peers, but I'm in charge of this program, and we're going to build it into something we'll all be proud of."

JC: Would you say that your teaching style in 1962 was different from the teaching that you do now? Has your teaching style changed over the years?

DR: No, it hasn't really changed at all. I accepted everyone at their level and took it from there. I didn't set goals for the class; they met their own goals and were graded on them. I told them on the first day, you've

Stoneware, terra sigillata, ca. 1963.

all got A's. If you're here for the grade, take it and get out because I don't want to fool with you. The responsibility for learning is yours, not mine. My responsibility is to make an environment conducive to learning and to give you or help you find whatever technical knowledge you need. We started out with a lot of experimentation in a time when everyone was experimenting. We were throwing stuff in clay and throwing it off the Humanities building. It was a very expressive time.

JC: What sort of firing were you doing at UW when you first arrived? Was it important to you to expose students to all sorts of different techniques?

Stoneware, salt glaze, ca. 1965.

DR: They were basically doing reduction firing. They had a kiln that fired to cone ten on top and cone eight in the middle. This worked for them, but I thought it was totally unacceptable. We rebuilt the reduction kiln. Then we also made a kiln with a top that could be removed to make it larger or smaller depending on what we wanted to fire. Then we built a salt kiln and two raku kilns. We would salt at about two in the morning when everyone was sleeping because the fumes would go through the whole building. I had a pretty good deal with the fire people there. I'd tell them, we'll be firing the kiln tonight so when you see the smoke it's us; you can come if you want to but don't bring all the fire trucks. Everybody got along that way. It was a much easier time without the rules and regulations there are now.

JC: Did you introduce some of the sort of rigor you had at Alfred?

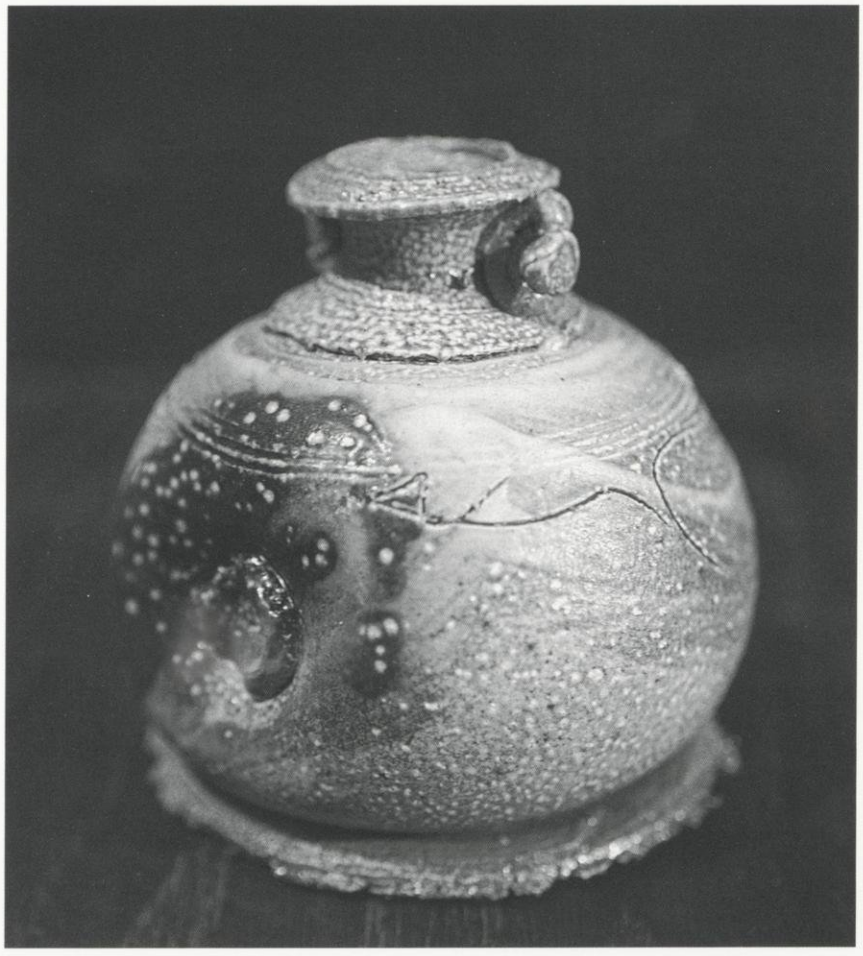
Stoneware, salt glaze, ca. 1965.

DR: I had the glaze bins rebuilt, because I wanted the students to have a broader knowledge of materials we were working with and what each material did. I did not introduce glaze calculation, because I never used it myself. We did a lot of experimentation. If it works, fine; if it doesn't, you learn from it.

JC: You didn't set particular benchmarks for them to meet?

DR: I did set benchmarks for their personal growth, but not for the objects.

JC: The technical approach you're describing is certainly different from my experience as a university student, where we learned to use recipes and measure out glaze ingredients but never about how the materials themselves interacted. We weren't encouraged to experiment. I think your approach was unusual at the time.



Stoneware, salt glaze, ca. 1966.

DR: We had a chart called limit formulas on the board, with raw materials listed, and I gave everybody four darts and said just throw them and whatever materials they land on will make a glaze.

JC: That's a great exercise.

DR: It worked. One time a student said, "There's no borax." I said, "Why don't you go wash your hands?" He washed his hands. "Did you find any borax?" "No, I didn't find any borax." I said, "Go wash your hands again." He didn't realize that he was washing his hands with borax. Anything you have in the kitchen, bleach, kitty litter, whatever you find in the kitchen will do something. The premise was that clay shrinks and everything melts.

JC: You have talked about the influence of people like Paulus Berensohn and M. C. Richards and their focus on inner discipline and a seeking approach. Did that approach affect your teaching?

DR: Actually, I'm more of an empiricist. We talked about the soul of the pot and the soul of the person and all of those things, but Paulus and M. C. were really religious about it. I read their books, but I didn't require my students to read them at this point. I expected them to come to the clay as a material that they could express themselves with. Much more of a Zen approach to clay. I was more influenced by [Peter] Voulkos and Abstract Expressionism than anything else.

JC: Tell me how you began doing so many workshops.

DR: I started offering workshops when I taught public school in Dover, New Jersey. At Wisconsin I was trying to show the students that clay is just a way to reach their goals. I had painters like William Wiley and Wayne Thiebaud come in to give a different viewpoint. Some of my students would go to printmaking, and some of the printmakers would come down to my place. The clay was this great material they could handle any way they wanted to. This idea kept growing until eventually I told the graduate students, you receive an M.F.A. in art, not in clay; I don't care if you do clay or not. For a couple of years in a row there wasn't a piece of clay in any graduate student's show. It was all paper or water and mud or papier maché or clothing, experimentation. I didn't care what they did as artists. All I cared is that they worked.

JC: When you are doing a workshop, it is obviously different from teaching for a whole semester. How has the structure of your workshops

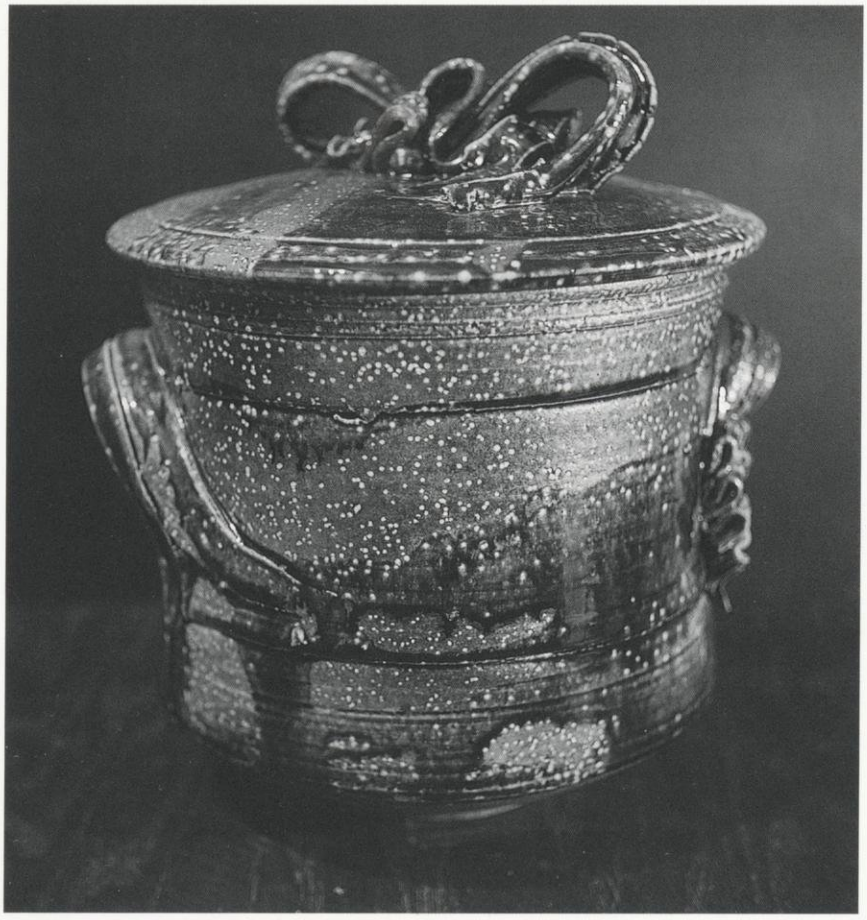
evolved? Your current workshops tend to be two to three days with a focus on demonstrations and slide talks. Weren't the early ones more participatory and often structured around a particular technique like salt-firing?

DR: Right, the early ones were at different schools, art centers, and so forth, and there might be a two-day raku workshop where we would build a raku kiln and make the pieces and fire them. They were much more hands-on. Sometimes they became performances, where we would do all kinds of weird things. We put groups of people against the walls and covered them in clay. We just had a lot of fun, and that was really the point of it. But most of the early workshops were based around either raku or salt. I was really known for salt-glazing. I was just starting the salt-glazing renaissance movement, and everyone wanted to know how to do it. They were amazed that we could build a kiln one day and then fire it the next day.

Stoneware, salt glaze, ca. 1968.

JC: That's a great way to demystify it. Would you come back to unload the kiln?

DR: Sometimes, but not that often. At some workshops we would do a wet firing: we would put the pieces in the kiln wet, fire them, and take them out all in two days. I did this at Penland [School of Crafts] early on. I started teaching at Penland about the first year I came to Madison; Fred Fenster, Skip Johnson, and I all went together. I would tell the students, here are some colored slips; now we're going to start putting these colors on wet clay and then put them in the kiln and salt them. I believe that the introduction of slips on wet clay and firing the pieces wet was my innovation. It broke down the barriers.



Stoneware, salt glaze, ca. 1974.

JC: So your use of wet-firing developed because you needed to finish work during the course of a workshop?

DR: Actually, not. This evolved because on the farm [his home and studio in Dodgeville, Wisconsin] I said I'm not going to get up from this wheel until this damn thing is done. I would make the piece and decorate it with slip while it was wet, and take it off the wheel, put it on a ware board to dry. Then I said, "Why am I putting it on a ware board?" So I put it right in the kiln. I'll never forget that because Johanna [Don's first wife] said, "Don, look, we really need a payload kiln this time. Please don't experiment." Every kiln was an experiment for me. By the next day I had the kiln finished. Johanna said to me, "When you unload that kiln, there had better be some work in there, man." I didn't lose a thing! Of course the industry fires wet all the time.

JC: Right, but very few studio potters did at that time.

DR: The tour de force was when Penland had their fiftieth anniversary and invited Warren MacKenzie and me and all the artists who taught there. Warren and I fired a kiln together. We fired, we took the door down, we threw pieces in the snow. We didn't lose a piece! It was just amazing. I used to do that. As soon as I was through firing—and this is very dangerous, of course—I would unbrick the kiln's crown so it would cool very fast. I learned that it doesn't matter how fast it cools; it's the constant rate of cooling that is important. I also got my bright colors that way. I thought glass and glaze are the same thing, so if glass people put their glass in the tank and let it fine out for four or five or six days the glass gets crystal clear. So I held the kiln at cone nine for about six, seven, eight hours and then cooled it down. And the crystal growth was tremendous, really beautiful. It's because of the long soaking at the very end. I introduced all those things at the workshops, and I demonstrated how to decorate, how to slip, everything. I would let my slip get really thick, put it on like plaster so it's like very soft clay, colored clay. I would roll it into coils and say, here you are, here's a piece of colored clay you can draw with, you know, make it into chalk. I used to do this for kids' workshops when I wanted them to see that color can actually have a dimension. It doesn't have to be flat. So I would have them roll string and stuff like that in colored tempera paint and wrap it around trees. My workshops were totally to show them a way just to let it go. I didn't care if they got any finished pieces out of a workshop or not. It was always high energy.

JC: I feel that your contribution through workshops is taking the mystery out of things and imparting your enthusiasm. Those are much bigger gifts than any technical information you could offer.

DR: Absolutely, they can find the technical information in any book. For instance, I taught them never to worry about air bubbles in the clay. I would have them put clay over balloons and let them dry into big air bubbles. When we fired them, none blew up. Then we would take them to the Mississippi and see how far they would float. One of the problems I gave my graduate students is this: Here are three pounds of clay for everybody; show me how far you can make it go.

JC: How much you can make with it, you mean?

DR: How far it will go for you. I said it that way. One student started rolling this clay into a coil. He rolled it and had people working on the

Stoneware, salt glaze, ca. 1975.

other end. He had a huge, long, thin coil. Another student mixed the clay in a slurry and took a paintbrush and painted a stripe all around the Humanities building. Another graduate student took us to the Mississippi, where she dumped her slurry in the river. So it went all the way down to New Orleans! My duty was to open their minds.

JC: You worked primarily in the Midwest for many years, but now, of course, you've been across the country and the world doing workshops. Have you noticed much difference in your students' interests or abilities over the past forty years?

DR: I'm still struggling to loosen them up. What's happening in our culture is the success equation is so high. Success [for artists] means a visual object that works and is acceptable. More people are doing clay now than ever in history. There are more good and more bad pieces. I don't see many people trying to go beyond, trying to burst the edges or push the limits of things anymore.

JC: Is that different from when you were first teaching?

DR: Absolutely. There's no question about it. They have courses now on how to write your resume and how to get a job and how to show your slides and how to become famous and get shows. It's all about that. It's not all about that! That's an overstatement, but what I fear has happened is that people are afraid to take chances. All glazes must work now, you see. Also—I have to say this—the universities hire young artists and their salary is increased based on what their students achieve. So they don't let their students screw up. They give them glazes that work and the pieces in the showcase are the successful ones. There are very few places where people are allowed to fail. To me that is a sad thing, because failure is just the other side of success. That's how you find yourself. If you look out there now, you say, "I like that piece. I liked it every time I saw it, from here to California." But you don't have to be far out on a limb. You just have to be able to realize who you are. I see few signs that people are finding out who they are, what is their bliss. They're too concerned about how "I'm not going to fail, I need that degree, I've got to get that teaching job." However, I'm still positive because there are a lot of good people out there. I think that in the long run that those that have it will last. Those that don't, won't.

JC: Have your students had an impact on your own art making?

DR: Oh, absolutely. I credit those early years especially with just blowing my mind; they were challenging me because I challenged them and they challenged me back. That's when I was doing more conceptual things like tying trees down and building bridges of clay and putting it in the kiln and firing in bunches and bundling. We were putting clay in water and letting it dissolve. That mindset with the students carried over to me and mine carried over to them. It was a great give and take. I could have never grown that fast in my own little vine-covered pottery.

Tie-Down, stoneware, salt glaze, leather, ca. 1976.

JC: I am impressed that some of your strongest pieces have been made during workshop demonstrations. Is there a qualitative difference between the work you make on stage, in a sense, and the work that you make in the studio?

DR: Sometimes I feel that just because of the immediacy of two days and the eighty people you're trying to show something, you take a lot of chances that are reflected in the work. I find that my studio work, many times, does not reflect that risk-taking, and I have thought and thought about that. Right now, I haven't worked in the studio for about two months. All the work I've been doing has been at workshops. I've got to get back in my studio and start taking chances in my studio again. I have these new forms. I want to make forms that are … what do you call something that has never been seen before? Something that's in my soul that comes out and has no relationship to a vessel or anything, it's just what can come out of my soul. I don't know how to explain it. I just want to jump off another bridge again. Actually it's strange, I think I am at the point where I was when I had my accident [back in 1982].

JC: You want to shake yourself up again.

DR: I want to shake myself up again, right. I'm getting too comfortable.

JC: How do you maintain a balance between being such a public person and yet wanting to hunker down? Have you have achieved that balance?

DR: When I'm out in the public doing a workshop, I'm very outgoing and gregarious because I really am a show-off. I love theater. I love what happens on stage, even the mistakes. An even greater thing happens when I make an apparent mistake but then I correct it and it becomes beautiful and everyone goes "Ahh." But in my studio I am very private, and even my helpers don't get it at first. I don't talk, I work. I do listen to music. I have to have something in the background. I don't like the dead silence in the studio.

JC: Twice you have been selected as among the most important living ceramists by *Ceramics Monthly* readers, which is a pretty weighty thing to carry. Why do you think that is?

DR: I honestly think it's a popularity contest. I'm not trying to take anything away from my work, because I think my work has continued to grow. I am really loved by so many people, it is unbelievable. I think

they appreciate the fact that I put myself out on a limb when I'm at workshops. I've given of myself totally to the workshop. I keep no secrets. I make no excuses for screwing up, and people like that.

JC: You make your working life an open book when you're on stage.

DR: If I'm showing slides and telling them about why I did that, it's very personal, so I share that with them.

Choked Cone Guardian, stoneware, salt glaze, 1990.

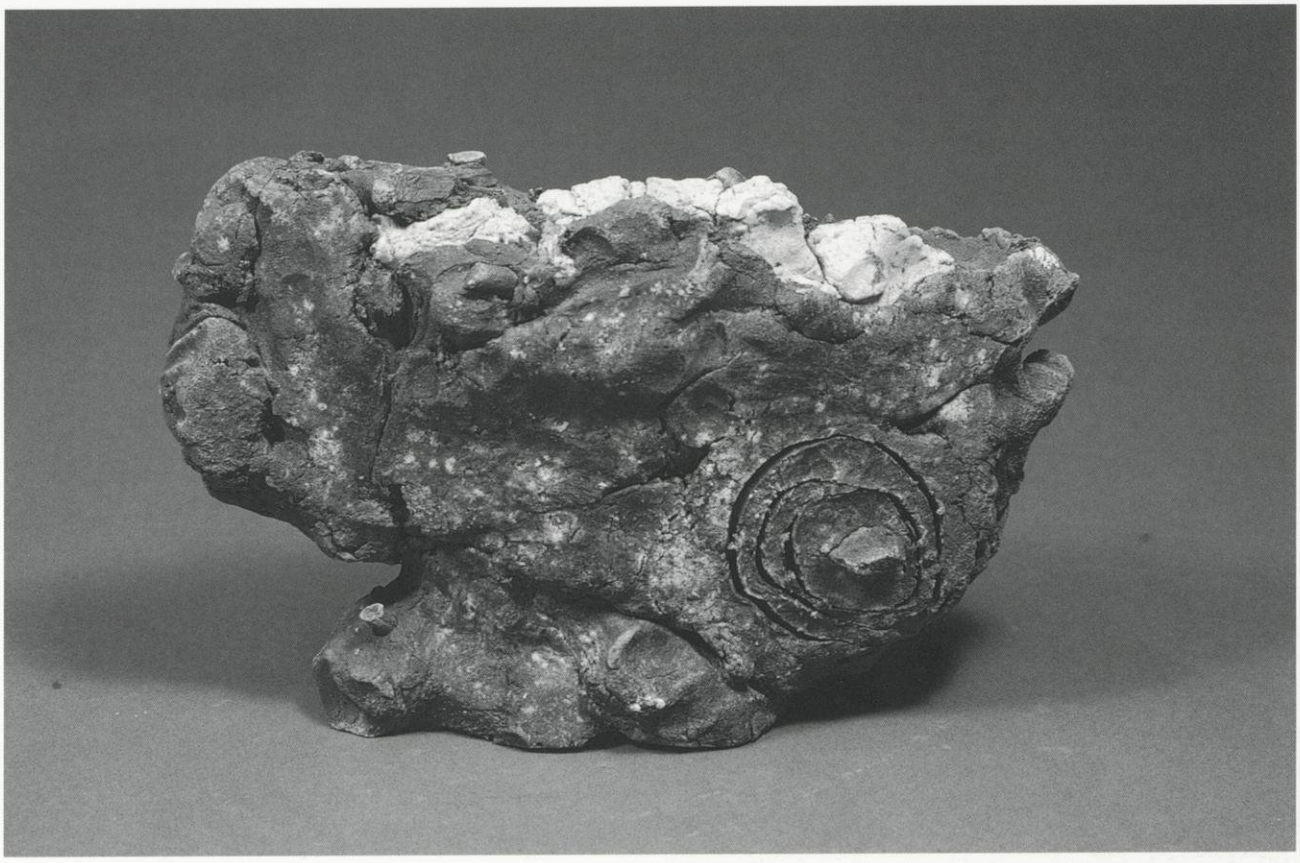
JC: And so people come to think of you as an intimate.

DR: I think that what happens is at the workshops people come to know me. They know about me when they come to the workshops, but after the workshop they really know me and I know a lot of them.

The workshops have become part and parcel of my life. I was born with the gift of being able to teach. That's how I can give back to the society that has given me so much. It's very important to give back.

JC: I was struck by a statement you made as a juror back in the late seventies about how you felt artists working in the pottery tradition needed to do more with it, to develop it further. What is it that makes the pottery image so enduring as a touchstone for you?

DR: I don't know. My introduction to clay was through pottery at Alfred. But it's about that container, that inner strength. It's my house. It's where I store things inside. The vessel just seems to have no end in terms of its potential for an artist. Another problem I gave my students: Make a container you can fill with fluid, transport it to your mouth, and drink out of it. I never told them to make a cup because I knew what I would get. I'm always thinking. Why does that foot have to be under the pot? Why can't it be on the side of the pot? I'm in love with the spontaneity of the wheel, the directness of the wheel, the energy of watching and feeling the clay move in your hands and going up. It's just exciting as hell.



Stoneware, wood-fired in the Northern Arizona University noborigama, 1986. This came out of the first firing of Yukio Yamamoto's kiln at NAU.

JC: Where do you see your work going right now?

DR: I don't think I'll make vessels for a while. My forms are going to be more slab-like structures, more organic … I'm not sure what they are going to be. But I'm going back to my Abstract Expressionist painting period, the way I do with my platters. I feel most free when I'm making platters because I can paint on them. Drawing, pulling, and gouging excites me. I want to do that but on a larger scale. I'm not talking about walls, I'm talking about objects with that dimension. I see myself really jumping off again. I've just got to push clay another dimension. I've just got to push the hell out of it.

Catalogue

1.
Teapot, ca. 1962
Stoneware, glaze
5 x 7 x 5 1/2 in.
Collection of the artist

2.
Pitcher, ca. 1962
Stoneware, glaze
10 x 7 1/2 x 6 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

Don Reitz

3.
Coffee Pot with Lid, 1962
Stoneware, spodumene glaze
12 1/4 x 7 1/2 x 8 1/2 in.
Collection of the artist, courtesy of
The Mint Museums, Charlotte, N.C.

4.
Casserole with Lid, 1963
Stoneware, glaze
H. 6 1/2 in.
Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred University,
Gift of the Artist, Gloryhole Collection, 1963.1

As a student Reitz experimented widely with slips like terra sigillata and thin washes of colorants and glazes, searching for surfaces that suited his work. "I use very little glaze. ... I learned when I was a graduate student at Alfred [University] that glazing was not for me. ... Everything was being totally wiped out by the glazes. All my marks, all my emotions, all my response to the clay, and the clay's response back to me was negated by covering it with glassy coating."

Unpublished letter to Jack Troy (July 28, 1993) responding to his queries in preparation for Wood-Fired Stoneware and Porcelain (Radnor, Pa.: Chilton, 1995).

5.
Bag Form, 1961
Stoneware, uranium, salt glaze
11 x 13 x 12 in.
Collection of Leatrice
and Melvin Eagle
Photo by Michael Eaton

"Stuff comes back to you later on; when you're ready you can understand it." Reitz had heard the ceramic engineers at Alfred describe the effects of steam on glazes, but he didn't know what they meant until the salt kiln he'd built alongside a drainage ditch was flooded during a firing. The strange "elephant skin" texture seen here is one result. Steam also enhanced the deep mustard-yellow of uranium oxide along several seams of this piece.

Interview with the author, May 17, 2002.

6.
Bottle Form, 1963
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 14 1/16, Diam. 6 1/4 in.
Schein-Joseph International
Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred
University, Gift of the Artist,
Gloryhole Collection, 1963.4

7.
Chunk, ca. 1965
Stoneware, salt glaze
5 x 5 1/2 x 6 1/2 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

9.
Box Forms, 1965
Stoneware, salt glaze, 7 1/2 x 19 1/2 x 8 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

8.
Oval Cylinder, 1963
Stoneware, salt glaze
19 3/4 x 9 3/4 x 7 1/2 in.
Collection of Leatrice and Melvin Eagle
Photo by Michael Eaton

10.
Baroque Vessel, 1965
Stoneware, salt glaze
25 x 14 3/4 x 11 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

"I wanted to embellish the surface, to enrich it, not to hide the clay, not to disguise the clay. I love what the clay does because the clay, in fact, is me. It is my motion, my spirit, my energy, my mark, my signature's all over it. Therefore, I wanted me fired and covered with stuff I liked and enjoyed."

Unpublished letter to Jack Troy (July 28, 1993) responding to his queries in preparation for writing Wood-Fired Stoneware and Porcelain (Radnor, Pa.: Chilton, 1995).

This piece was selected for the influential traveling show *Objects USA*, organized by Lee Nordness in 1969.

11.
Ex-Voto #1, 1969
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 19 1/2 in.
Collection of S. C. Johnson & Son Inc.

12.
Platter, 1963
Stoneware, uranium, salt glaze
12 1/2 x 15 1/2 x 2 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

13.
Bell Form, 1966
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 25, Diam. 22 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

Reitz always glazed the interiors of his early vessels, even when the lids don't come off, as here. The generous spill of glaze over the rim of this form gives a powerful suggestion of the interior volume, and subtly links the inner and outer walls. This emphatic drip was poured with intent, but it closely resembles the fat little rivers of glaze created by ash deposits on wood-fired wares.

"This piece seemed to require being quiet."

Interview with the author, May 17, 2002.

14.
Urn with Three Handles, ca. 1969
Stoneware, salt glaze
18 x 19 1/2 in.
Milwaukee Art Museum
Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
M1987.22
Photo by John R. Glembin

The free combination of sprigged coils, handles like rolling waves, punched dots, and incised lines on this urn reveals Reitz at his most exuberant. He explored this form intensively for several years, but by the mid-1970s his need for wild, allover decoration seemed to subside. This particular urn employs the traditional salt-glaze palette of gray and cobalt blue.

15.
Urn with Three Handles, 1972
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 17, Diam. 15 in.
Collection of Sam Maloof

16.
Tea Stack, 1968–1972
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 35 1/2, Diam. 11 1/2 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

The boyish, phallic humor of this piece is pure Reitz, and it also reflects the raunchy impudence spearheaded by early Funk ceramists like Robert Arneson and Clayton Bailey. Yet, as in most of Reitz's work, its essential quality is a classic poise and balance. Reitz didn't title this work until the mid-1980s, when he returned to the form with renewed interest. "Stack" is a reference to Peter Voulkos's stack pots, and tea, of course, refers to the teapot-like spout and handle.

17.
Tea Stack, 1970–75
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 49, Diam. 16 in.
Racine Art Museum, Gift of
Leatrice S. and Melvin B. Eagle
Photo by Michael Tropea

18.
Pair of Covered Jars, 1967
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 8 3/4, Diam. 5 1/2 in. ea.
Collection of Leatrice and Melvin Eagle
Photo by Michael Eaton

"I like to give myself problems. Why can't the lid be dominant? Who needs a flange? Why can't the foot extend outside the pot?"

Interview with the author, May 17, 2002

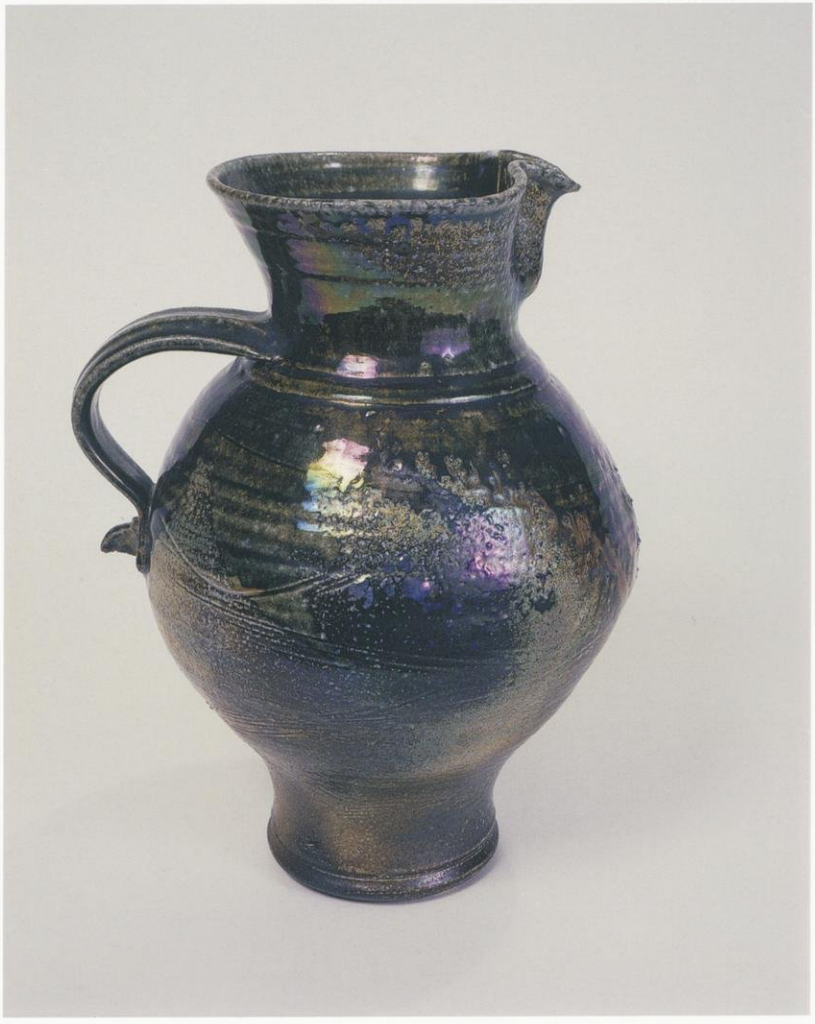
19.
Casserole, ca. 1970
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 8, Diam. 11 3/4 in.
Collection of Karen Johnson Boyd
Photo by Jon Bolton

20.
Covered Jar, 1970–1975
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 7 1/2, Diam. 11 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

21.
Covered Jar, 1975
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 18 1/4, Diam. 12 3/4 in.
Collection of Leatrice and Melvin Eagle
Photo by Michael Eaton

"This is the surface I really love, salt glaze sprayed on oxide colors, scattered frits, the windows left through to the skin of the pot."

Quoted in "Highlights," New Zealand Potter *(1981): 3*



The dramatic luster on this piece was developed by dripping oil into the kiln during the firing.

22.
Pitcher, 1973
Stoneware, salt glaze
13 1/4 x 10 x 9 in.
Tweed Museum of Art, University of Minnesota-Duluth
Gift of Glenn C. Nelson

23.
Form Three, 1974
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 17, Diam. 9 in.
Racine Art Museum, Gift of
Leatrice S. and Melvin B. Eagle
Photo by Michael Tropea

24.
Form Five, 1974
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 28 in.
Collection of Bill and Jane Brown
Photo by Tom Mills

"The hard part to do when you're working in sections is to get the piece so it looks free and alive and not as if you made it from a numbers kit … [the sections] all have to add up to a oneness somehow, sooner or later, or else you've lost the piece."

Video interview with Cathy Brawer, "Expressions," Elvehjem Art Center, 1972.

25.
Cut Out, CA. 1977
STONEWARE, SALT GLAZE
15 X 13 1/4 X 3 1/2 IN.
COLLECTION OF LEATRICE AND MELVIN EAGLE
PHOTO BY MICHAEL EATON

"My pots are a way for me to express my emotional state. A pinch was not a design problem I was working out, it was an energy that had to come out."

Quoted in Linda Jantzen, "The Color of Don Reitz," unpublished manuscript describing a workshop at Arvada Center in Denver on October 27, 1987.

26.
Vessel with Pinched Rim, 1975
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 35, Diam. 15 in.
Collection of the artist

Reitz often scrapes off the horizontal rings formed while throwing, leaving a smooth surface to contrast with his gestural joints and appendages. At other times he roughs up the surface with thick wads of applied clay, as here. (The clay body is literally rough, too; Reitz added crushed feldspar to give it a crunchy quality.) This is an early—and extreme—example of this impulse, which has reemerged strongly in Reitz's recent wood-fired work. As Reitz says, "Juicy, juicy, juicy."

Interview with the author, May 17, 2002.

27.
Teapot, CA. 1975
STONEWARE, SALT GLAZE
H. 24, DIAM. 13 IN.
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

Don Reitz

28.
Form No. 1, 1977
Stoneware, salt glaze
37 x 15 3/8 x 14 in.
Kalamazoo Institute of Arts
Director's Fund Purchase
with support from the Student
Sale Fund and Donations

29.
Tie Down, 1980
Stoneware, salt glaze, leather
H. 37, Diam. 18 in.
Collection of Dr. Joel and Diane Eide
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

This series developed after Reitz's first divorce, when he was living in his studio at the University of Wisconsin and feeling both trapped and emotionally overwhelmed. Although many of his large covered jars don't actually open, the leather thongs on the *Tie Downs* emphasize their closed interior volume.

30.
Tie Down, 1980
Stoneware, salt glaze,
leather, horsehair,
silk thread, bellfast cord
H. 31, Diam. 14 3/4 in.
Smithsonian American Art Museum
Gift of the James Renwick Alliance
and museum purchase through
Smithsonian Institution
Collections Acquisition Program

31.
Pull Yourself Together, CA. 1981
STONEWARE, ENGOBE, PHOTOTRANSFER
APPROX. 24 X 48 IN.
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST
PHOTO BY JEFFREY BRUCE

Reitz frequently describes his personal challenges during the late 1970s and early 1980s as a kind of dissociation: "getting myself back on center" or "putting myself back together." This piece represents a brief period of experimentation with photo-transfers, focused on collage self-portraits. In retrospect, it seems grimly ironic that these images predated his accident—which literally broke his body in pieces—by only a few years.

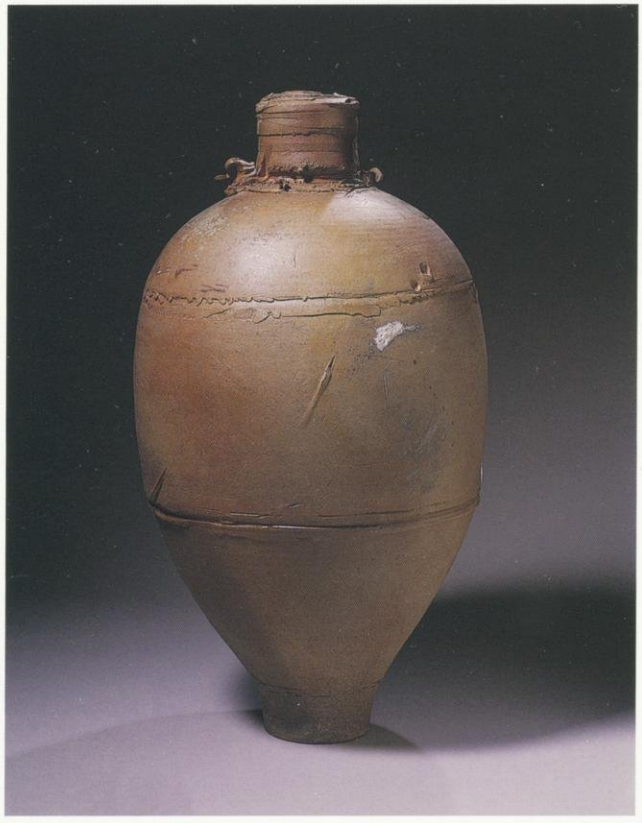
Interview with the author, May 17, 2002.

32.
Bag Form, 1981
Stoneware, salt glaze
22 1/4 x 11 1/2 x 10 in.
Collection of Leatrice and Melvin Eagle
Photo by Michael Eaton

Compare this salt-glazed bag form to nos. 69 and 70, which were made and wood-fired in the late 1990s. This hand-built form first developed when Reitz was struggling with a clay armature that kept emerging from the slab walls. The loose, fleshy quality contrasts sharply with the tidy precision of Reitz's "baroque vessels" from the 1960s (nos. 10 and 11).

33.
Column, 1980
Stoneware, residual salt glaze
41 3/4 x 13 1/2 x 10 1/2 in.
Collection of Leatrice and
Melvin Eagle
Photo by Michael Eaton

34.
Vessel, 1982
Stoneware, residual salt glaze
H. 31 7/16 in.
Elvehjem Museum of Art
Art Collections Fund and
Catherine B. Cleary Fund purchase
1982.21
Photo by Jim Wildeman



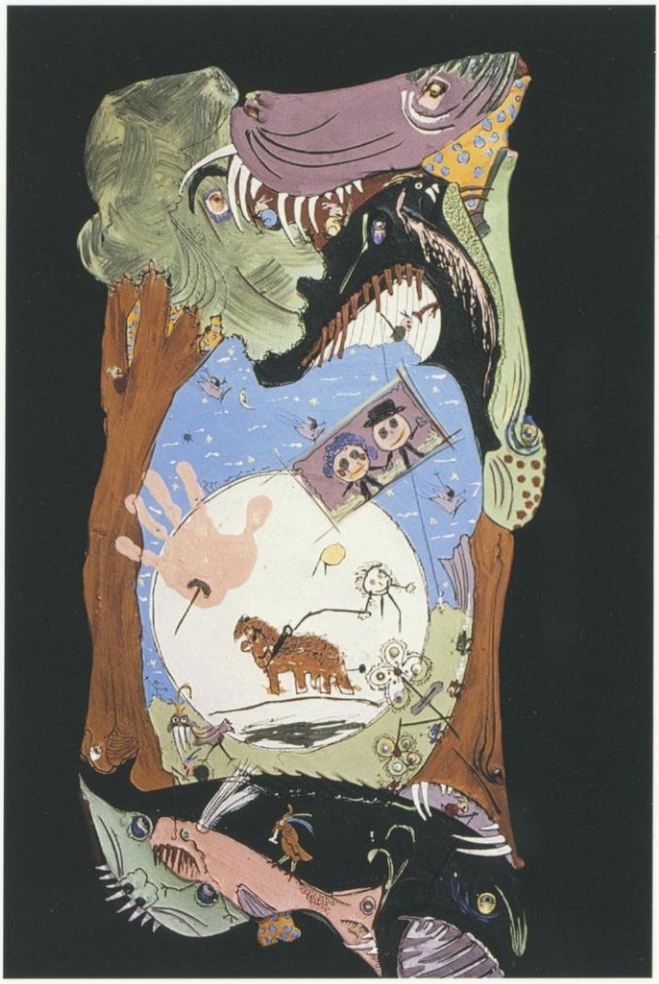
35.
Urn, 1982
Stoneware, wood-fired with
residual salt glaze
H. 40 1/2, Diam. 21 in.
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Ga.
Gift of Dr. Michael and Carol
Duffell, 1983.166

36.
Platter, ca. 1980
Stoneware, salt glaze
Diam. 20 in.
The Canton Museum of Art
Canton, Ohio, Gift of Leatrice S.
and Melvin B. Eagle in memory of
David and Jean Shanker

37.
The Journey, CA. 1983
EARTHENWARE, ENGOBE
H. 2 3/8, DIAM. 23 IN.
COLLECTION OF HARVEY K. AND
BESS LITTLETON

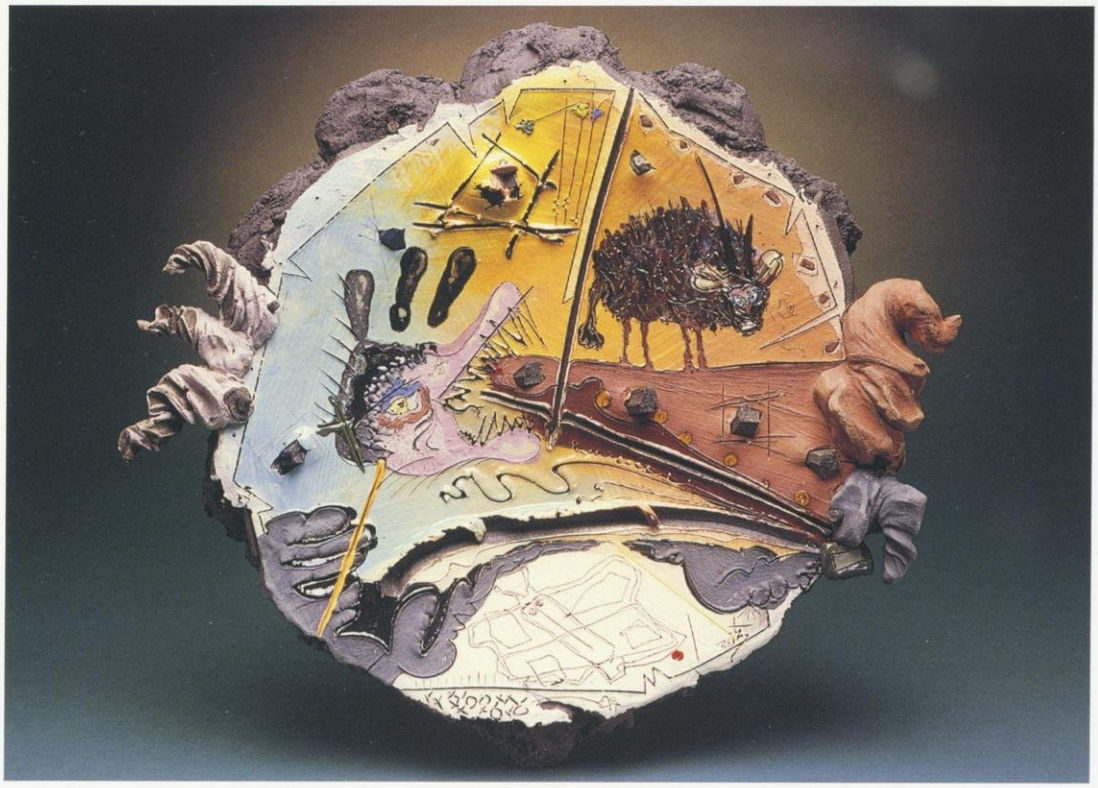
This is the first piece inspired by the drawings Reitz's five-year-old niece made to chronicle her illness. That's Sara lying in her hospital bed, surrounded by hopeful images of fishing, trees, and flowers as well as toothy monsters. The white figure alongside Reitz's aggressive handprint is his enigmatic alter ego the "Refrigerator Man," who emerged unexpectedly and recurs throughout the series, reflecting his shifting moods and anxieties.

38.
Have No Fear, 1983
Earthenware, engobe
H. 13, Diam. 8 in.
Collection of Dr. Joel and
Diane Eide
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

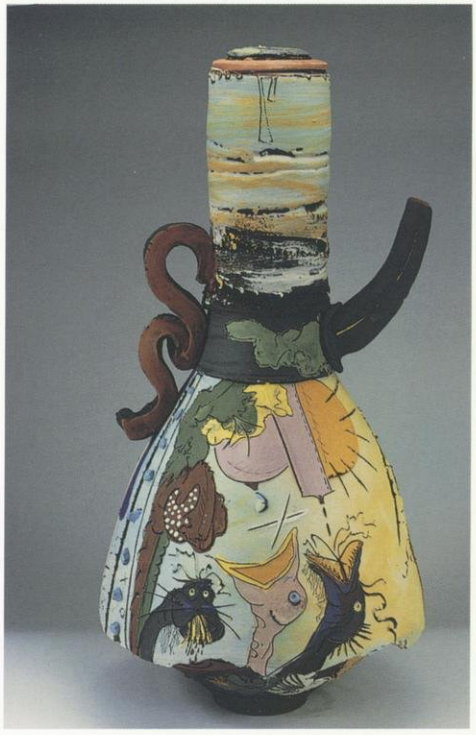


39.
A Fish's Tail, 1983
Earthenware, engobe
44 x 22 in.
Maurine Littleton Gallery

Made during a healing period for both Reitz and his niece Sara, this is one of the more optimistic pieces in the series. Sara is walking her dog, overseen by her parents, and the monsters are retreating to the edges of a fragile but clear blue sky.



40.
All Men Fear at the Outer Edge, 1984
Earthenware, engobe, glaze
21 x 23 1/2 x 4 in.
Collection of the artist



41.
Fledglings Cry, Who Will Die / Tea for Two, 1984
Earthenware, engobe
approx. H. 39, Diam. 23 in.
Collection of Lisa and Dudley Anderson

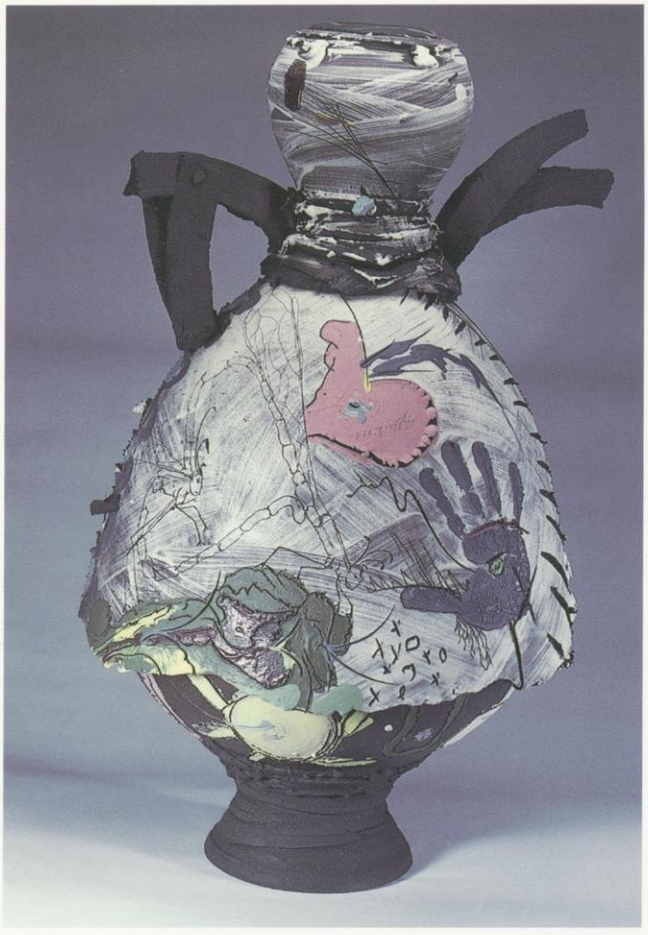
During the long recovery period following his accident, Reitz spent a lot of time reflecting on his past. This piece is about his old friend Bobby Robbins and Bobby's twin, who were suckled at the same breasts but grew up to take radically different paths.

42.
Shield: To Each She Gave Their Portion, 1984
Earthenware, engobe, salt glaze
20 x 24 1/2 x 1 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

The "She" figure is Mother Earth, triple-breasted, fending off Death: the blue-black animal on its back. Making Death a cartoon represented triumph at this point in Reitz's life, as Sara's health returned and his own body gradually regained strength.

43.
Faith + Chanda, 1985
Earthenware, engobe
H. 10, Diam. 6 in.
Collection of Diane and Sandy Besser

Reitz and his childhood friend Bobby Robbins used to lie on the tracks and let the trains run over them: that's "Faith." Chanda was Reitz's dog.



44.
Life Goes On, 1985
Earthenware, engobe
H. 37, Diam. 24 in.
Collection of Kathryn Boeckman Howd

This piece marked the reemergence of the "Tea Stack" form, which Reitz first explored in the early 1970s. The heart, for Reitz, recalls the shape dragonflies make during mating.

45.
Tea Stack, 1985
Earthenware, salt glaze
H. 46 1/2, Diam. 22 1/2 in.
Aaron Macy Memorial Collection

46.
Platter, 1986
Stoneware, wood-fired at Northern Arizona University's noborigama
Flagstaff, Arizona
H. 3, Diam. 19 in.
Collection of Studio Potter Foundation

"I began making platters [in the 1990s] ... using my body and my fingers, digging into the clay as I went. The images changed from flowers and people to those made by broken pieces of clay pushed into the surface of the wet clay. It's still a story, but not like a story you can tell. Here is a line that goes down like this, and these things go up energetically like this. And it goes 'di did did di,' and a little bit of 'ch ch ch ch,' and 'ya ya ya ya.' There, that was the story right there!"

"The Gift," Studio Potter *15, no. 2 (June 1987): 16.*

Reitz's father taught him a German drinking song called "*Ich Lieber mein Schnitzelbank*" ("I Love my Workbench"). In the broad humor of the song, *schnitzelbank* also suggests a bed.

47.
Schnitzelbank, 1987
Earthenware, engobe
32 x 32 x 8 in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Gift of R. Ford Singletary from the collection of Randy M. Leonard
M.91.281.1

48.
Sentinel, 1987
Earthenware, salt glaze
41 1/2 x 27 x 26 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

Don Reitz

49.
Platter, 1989
Stoneware, wood-fired
Diam. 24 in.
Collection of Scott Tobias

50.
THREE TEA BOWLS, CA. 1989
STONEWARE, WOOD-FIRED IN MALASPINA UNIVERSITY-COLLEGE'S NOBORIGAMA, NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA
H. 5, DIAM. 4 1/2 IN.

STONEWARE, WOOD-FIRED IN MALASPINA UNIVERSITY-COLLEGE'S NOBORIGAMA, NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA
H. 4 1/2, DIAM. 4 1/2 IN.

STONEWARE, WOOD-FIRED IN THE ARTIST'S ANAGAMA, CLARKDALE, ARIZONA
H. 4, DIAM. 4 1/2 IN.
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST
PHOTO BY JEFFREY BRUCE

"I'm not Japanese, I can't make a Japanese tea bowl as I cannot make a child-drawing because I'm not a child. And it seems to me a great waste of my time to try and make a Japanese tea bowl. I make a Don Reitz tea bowl."

Quoted in Rick Berman, "An Interview with Don Reitz," CLAY TIMES *2, no. 2 (March/April 1996). 12.*

Don Reitz

This was part of a service made for a friend. Reitz has continued to make dinnerware and serving pieces throughout his career.

51.
Covered Jar, 1992
Stoneware, salt glaze
H. 11, Diam. 9 1/2 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

52.
Vessel No. 23, CA. 1993
STONEWARE, SALT GLAZE
25 X 12 1/2 X 12 1/2 IN.
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON
GIFT OF SIDNEY SWIDLER AND
MR. AND MRS. JAMES LAWRENCE, JR.
1993.654
PHOTOGRAPHY ©2003 MUSEUM OF
FINE ARTS, BOSTON

53.
SKIRTED JAR, 1994
STONEWARE, SALT GLAZE,
H. 39, DIAM. 20 IN.
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

54.
Celebration Vessel, 1995/FIRED 2001
STONEWARE, WOOD-FIRED IN ARTIST'S
ANAGAMA, CLARKDALE, ARIZONA
H. 33 1/2, DIAM. 20 IN.
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

55.
Celebration Vessel: Melting Snow, 1997
Stoneware, wood-fired in
Dan Anderson's anagama,
Edwardsville, Illinois
H. 50 1/2, Diam. 20 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

"I'm a romantic about heat and trial by fire—and that's what I'm telling you about—the heat of the fire, the quality of the clay, and the fluidity of a piece."

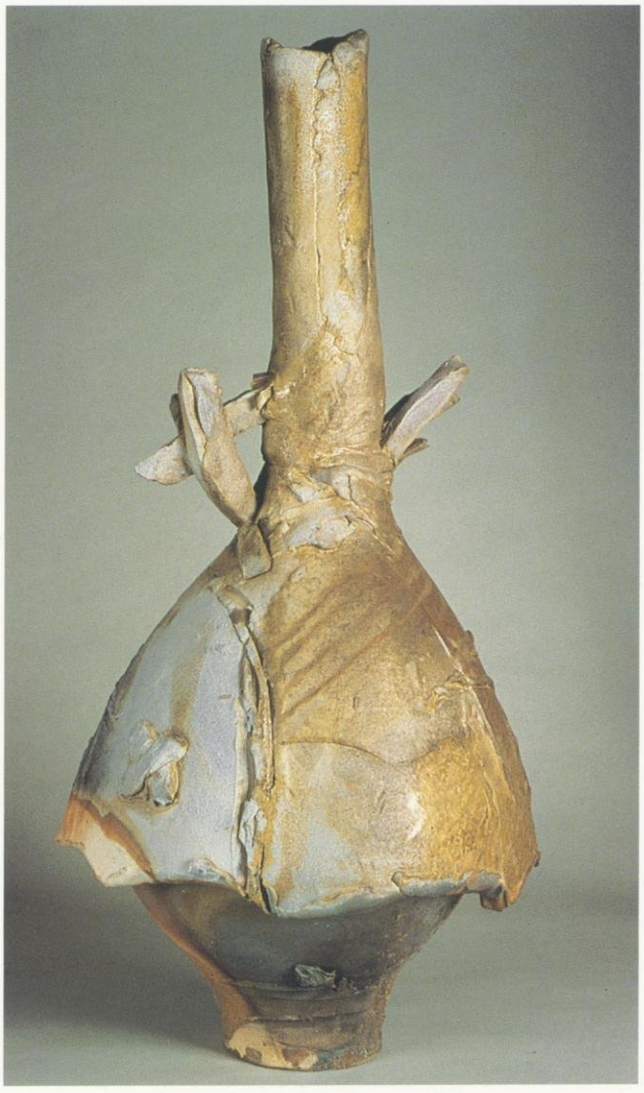
The Large and Small of It: Ceramics by Reitz and Breckenridge, *exh. cat. (Madison, Wisconsin: Elvehjem Art Center, 1971).*

56.
In Celebration of the Vessel, 1997
Stoneware, wood-fired in
Dan Anderson's anagama,
Edwardsville, Illinois
45 x 20 1/4 x 19 1/4 in.
Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum,
Minneapolis, The Nancy and Warren
Mackenzie Fund, 1998.1

57.
Platter, 1997
Stoneware, wood-fired in artist's anagama, Clarkdale, Arizona
Diam. 24 in.
The Mint Museums,
Charlotte, N.C.

Drawing on clay also means drawing in the clay, reaching in and penetrating the form with line. "I have never separated those pinches, lines, scratches from drawing. I think of them as drawing, not just on the surface but in the surface and with the surface."

"Drawing from the Heart," Studio Potter *14, no. 4 (December 1985): 40–41.*



58.
Tea Stack, 1999
Stoneware, wood-fired in
David Smith's anagama,
Stoughton, Wisconsin
H. 46, Diam. 23 in.
Collection of the artist, courtesy
of Maurine Littleton Gallery,
Washington, D.C.

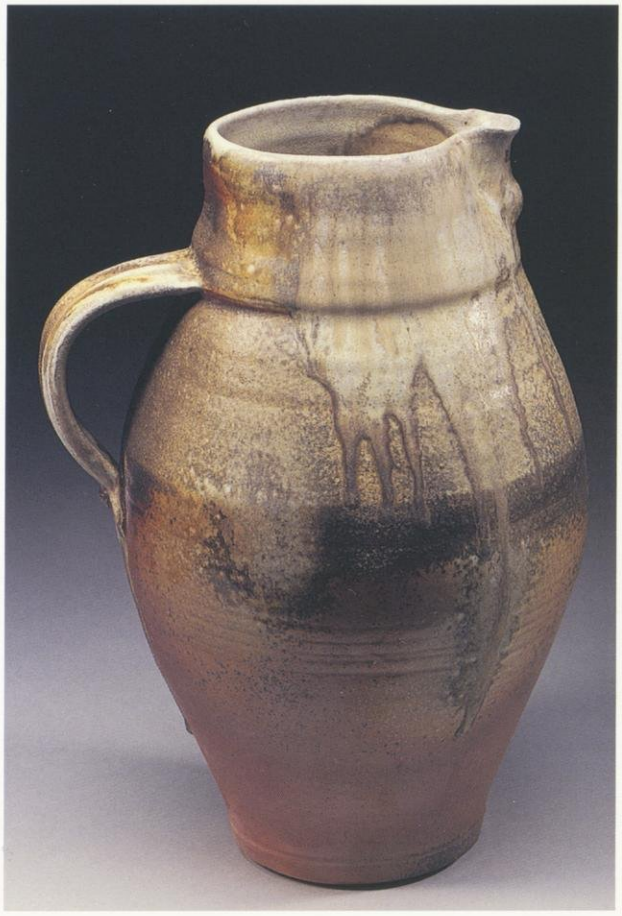
59.
Covered Jar, 1999
Stoneware, wood-fired in
Peter Callas's kiln,
Belvidere, New Jersey
H. 20, Diam. 19 in.
Collection of the artist, courtesy
of Maurine Littleton Gallery,
Washington, D.C.
Photo by Michael Eaton

Don Reitz

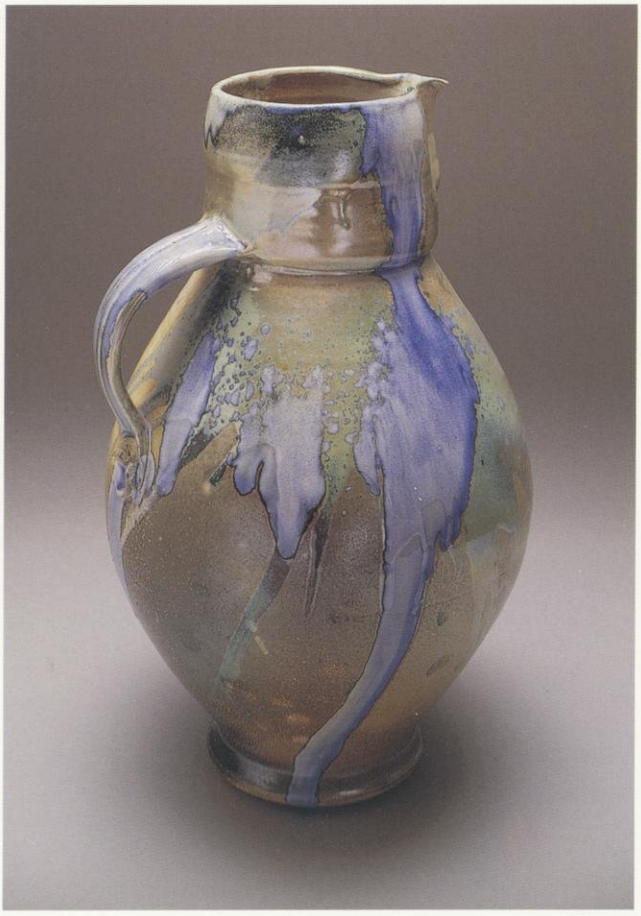
60.
Covered Jar, 1999
Stoneware, wood-fired in
Dan Anderson's anagama,
Edwardsville, Illinois
H. 21, Diam. 17 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

61.
Platter, 1999
Stoneware, salt glaze
9 1/2 x 11 1/2 x 4 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

Don Reitz



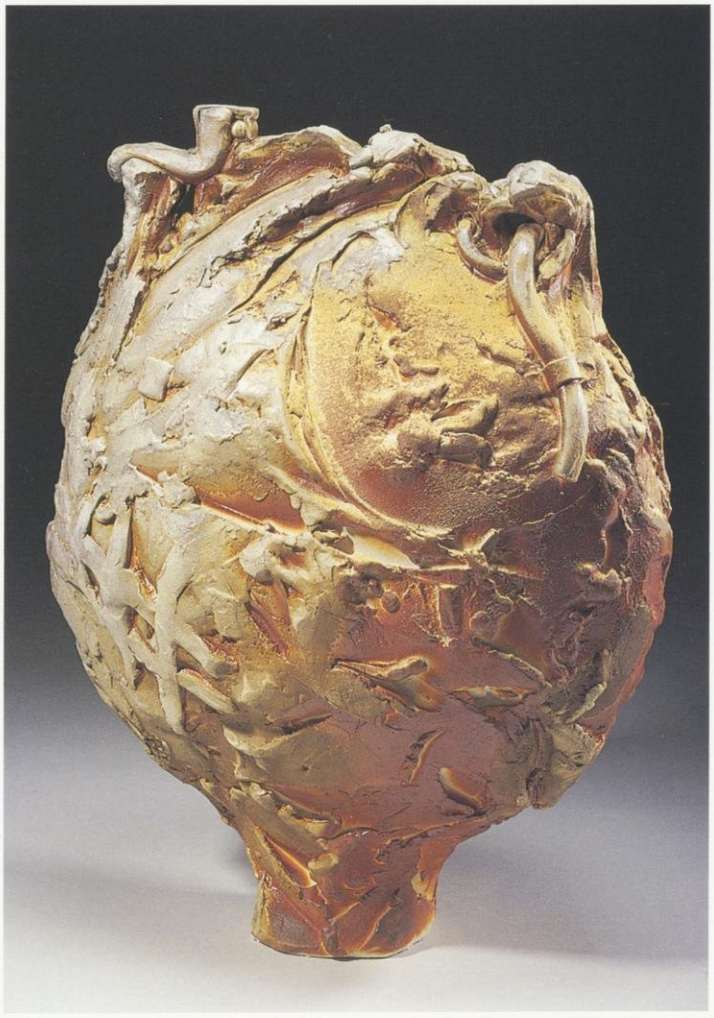
62.
Pitcher, 1999–2000
Stoneware, wood-fired in
Dan Anderson's anagama,
Edwardsville, Illinois
14 3/4 x 9 3/4 x 7 1/2 in.
Collection of the artist



63.
Pitcher, 1999
Stoneware, salt glaze
18 x 11 x 9 in.
Collection of Leatrice and
Melvin Eagle
Photo by Michael Eaton

64.
Glory Bowl, 2000
Stoneware, salt glaze, wood-fired
in the artist's salt kiln in
Clarkdale, Arizona
7 1/2 x 15 x 14 1/2 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

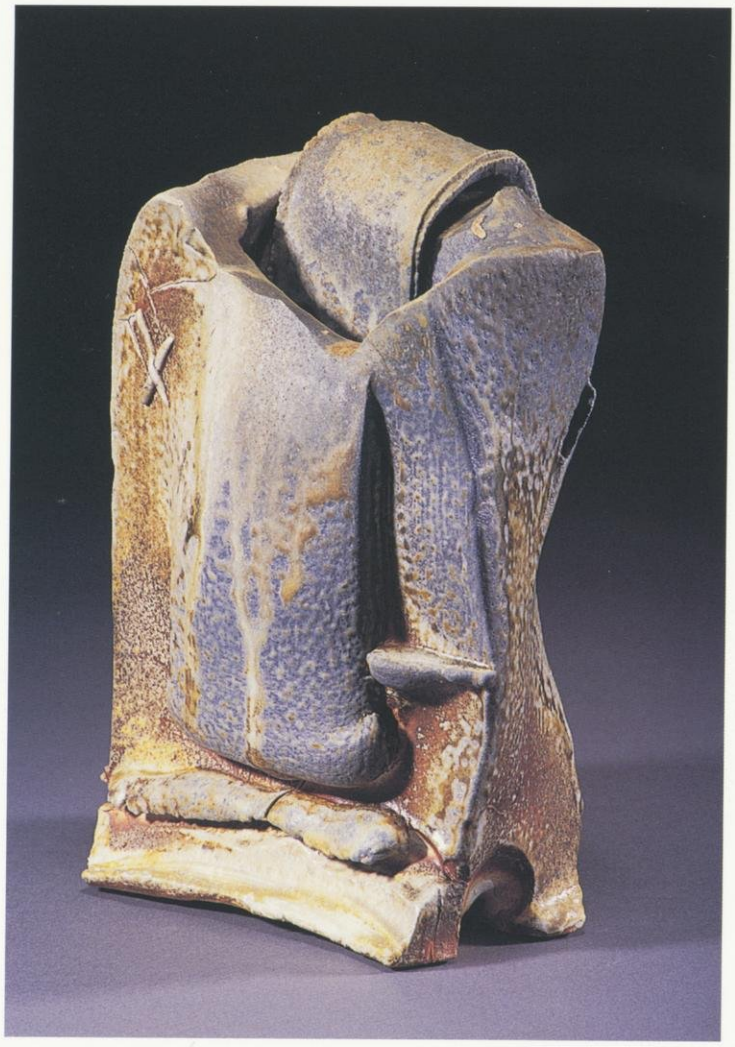
Don Reitz



"I like the textures, the rough textures of the dried mud. My forms are about the energy of the earth, the energy of the environment."

Quoted in Rick Berman, "An Interview with Don Reitz," Clay Times *2, no. 2 (March/April 1996), 7.*

65.
Votive Clam, 2000
Stoneware, wood-fired in Dan Anderson's anagama, Edwardsville, Illinois
25 x 18 x 10 in.
Collection of the artist



66.
Punch Out, 2002
Stoneware, wood-fired in artist's anagama, Clarkdale, Arizona
10 x 5 1/2 x 4 in.
Collection of the artist

Don Reitz

67.
Punch Out, 2002
Stoneware, wood-fired in artist's anagama, Clarkdale, Arizona
11 1/2 x 13 x 8 in.
Collection of the artist, courtesy Perimeter Gallery, Chicago

68.
Punch Out, 2002
Stoneware, wood-fired in artist's
anagama, Clarkdale, Arizona
11 x 10 x 7 in.
Collection of Karen H. Keland

Don Reitz

69.
Bag Form, 2001
Stoneware, wood-fired in
Frank Boyden's anagama,
Otis, Oregon
31 x 16 x 12 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

70.
Bag Form, 2001
Stoneware, wood-fired in
Frank Boyden's anagama,
Otis, Oregon
30 1/2 x 16 x 12 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

Don Reitz

71.
Column, 2002
Stoneware, wood-fired in the
artist's anagama,
Clarkdale, Arizona
54 1/4 x 22 x 15 1/2 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

72.
Mural, 2002
Stoneware, wood-fired in
the artist's anagama,
Clarkdale, Arizona
72 x 41 in.
Collection of the artist
Photo by Jeffrey Bruce

Don Reitz

Chronology

1929 Born November 7, in Sunbury, Pennsylvania, the second child of John Reitz, an accountant, and Sara Reitz. The Reitz's other children are Nancy, Francis, and Allen.

1931 The family moves to Belvidere, New Jersey, a rural town near the Pequest and Delaware rivers.

1948 Graduates from Belvidere High School and immediately enlists in the Navy, where he is trained as a diver.

1952 After his discharge from the Navy in August, Reitz runs through a series of odd jobs before living with Charlie, an Algonquin elder, on a remote lake near Montreal, Canada.

1953 Comes home to New Jersey and marries his high school girlfriend Johanna Denker in May. Becomes a meat cutter at the meat market where he had worked during high school. In the fall of 1953, Reitz takes advantage of the G.I. Bill to enroll at Kutztown State Teachers' College (now Kutztown University) in Pennsylvania.

1957 Don and Johanna's son, Brent, is born.

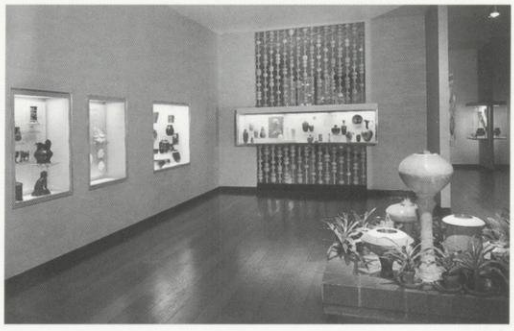
1957 In his final semester at Kutztown, Reitz is introduced to ceramics. Don receives his B.S. in art education.

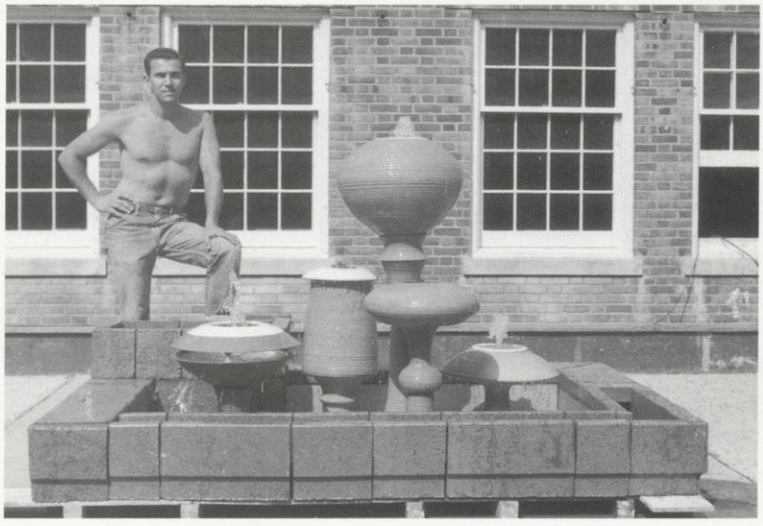
1957–60 Reitz teaches art in the Dover (New Jersey) Public Schools, working with students from kindergarten through junior high. He joins the local ambulance corps.

1958 Don and Johanna's daughter, Donna, is born.

1960 Reitz enters summer school at New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University, Alfred, New York. In the fall, he begins graduate work there and serves as an undergraduate instructor.

1961 Reitz begins his visits to Don Bendel in Flagstaff, Arizona. Bendel and Reitz build kilns and do workshops in Arizona.

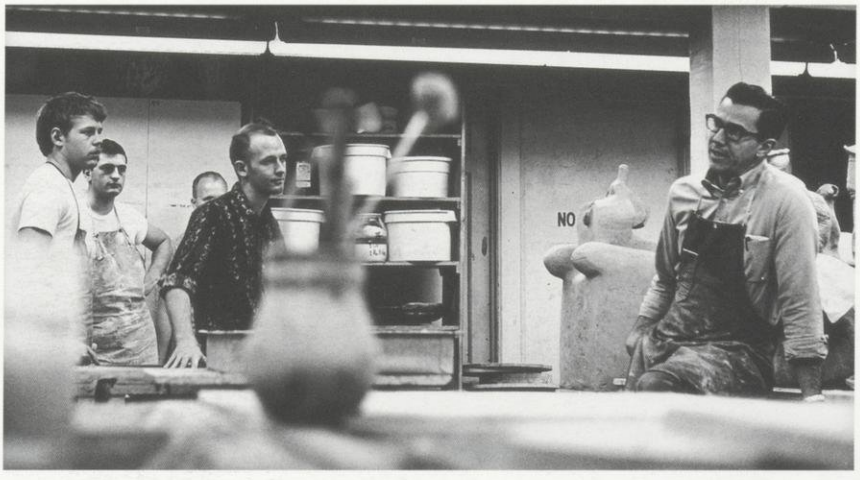




At Alfred with a fountain that won a national competition in 1961. The boxy enclosure was designed to be softened with lush plantings. It was installed in the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of History & Technology (now the National Museum of American History) in 1966, as a centerpiece of the new Hall of Ceramics. The fountain was on display until 2003 and will remain part of the Smithsonian's permanent collection. Photo courtesy National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

1962 Receives his M.F.A. from Alfred and accepts a position at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. His family settles in Verona, a small town outside Madison.

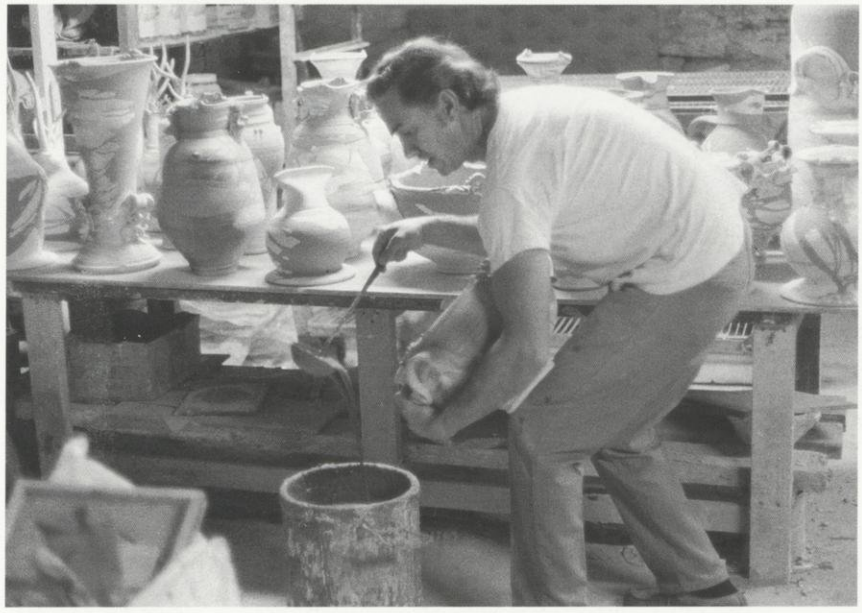
1963 Moves to a farm in Dodgeville, Wisconsin (near Spring Green) where he keeps horses and begins building his own kilns. First summer session as an instructor at Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina, where he returns every summer through 1982.



Teaching at the University of Wisconsin, ca. 1963. Colleague Wayne Taylor's work is in the background.

1966 Meets Rudy Autio and Peter Voulkos, who become his lifelong friends, at Pennsylvania State University's first "Supermud" conference.

1969 Bruce Breckenridge joins Reitz in the University of Wisconsin ceramics department and they become lifelong friends.



Applying colorants in preparation for salt-glazing, ca. 1969. "I work pretty fast. I keep a fluid dialogue going on between me and what I'm working on. I always work on wet clay—never bisque, so I can punch, and erase, or quiet things down."

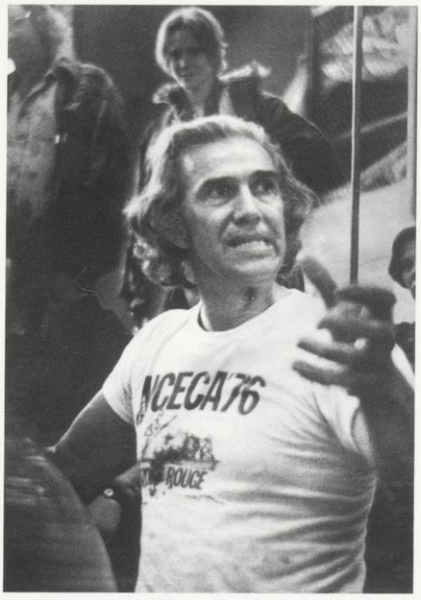
(Quoted in Linda Jantzen, "The Color of Don Reitz," unpublished manuscript describing a workshop at Arvada Center in Denver on October 27, 1987.)

1973 At the height of his professional involvements, Reitz is president of the National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts (NCECA); a trustee for the North Central Region of the American Craft Council; and a board member of the World Craft Council.

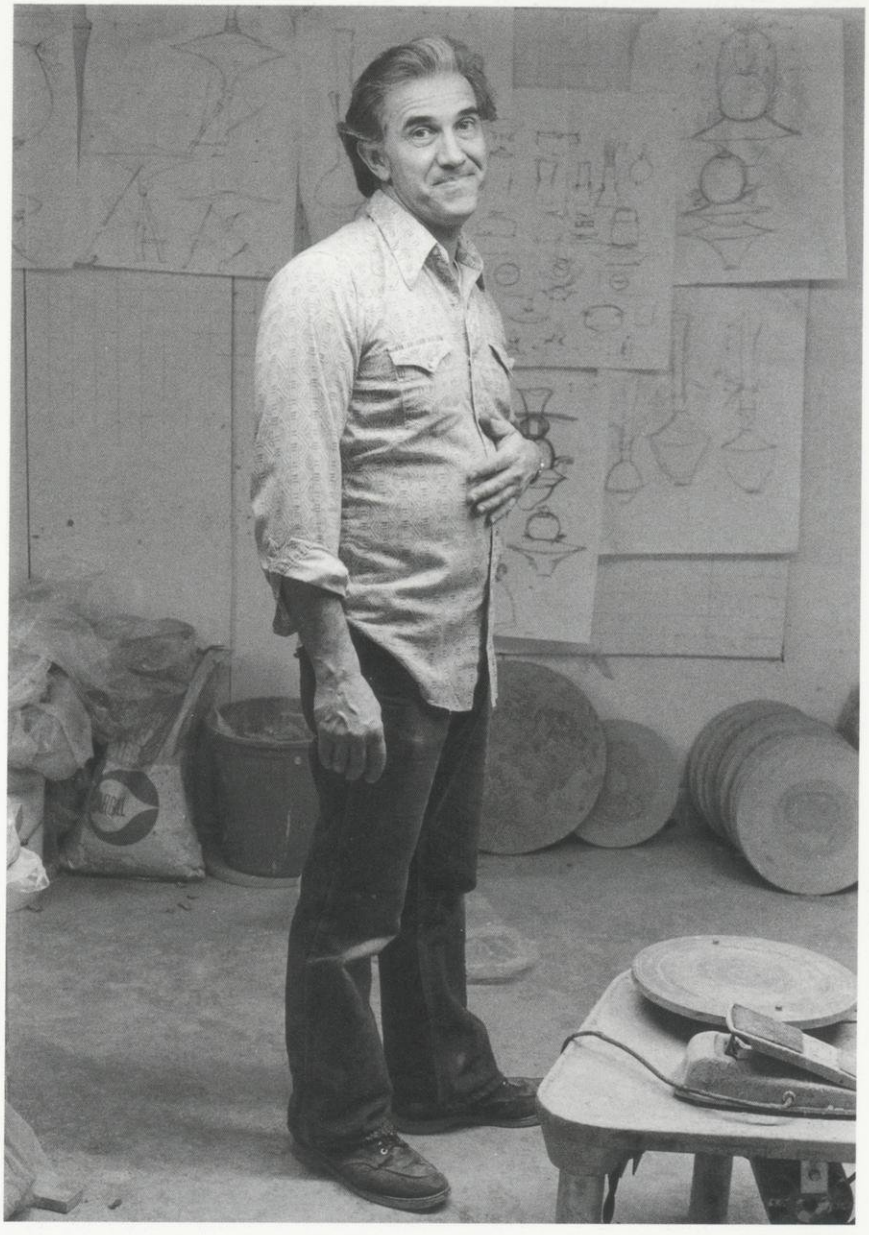
1975 Don and Johanna are divorced. Reitz lives in his studio at the university before taking an apartment in Madison, and fires his work at the UW for the next several years.

Firing his salt kiln in Spring Green, Wisconsin, 1974.

Demonstrating at the wheel at the University of Notre Dame, 1975.



At the National Conference on Education in the Ceramic Arts (NCECA), Baton Rouge, Lousiana, 1976.



In the studio, ca. 1980. "I sketch, but I never work from the sketches, because they never come out right."

(*"Expressions," video interview with Cathy Brawer, Elvehjem Art Center, 1972.*)

1980 Marries the ceramist Paula Rice and moves to Deansville, Wisconsin where he begins building kilns again.

1982 Driving back from Penland, North Carolina, Reitz has a near-fatal accident outside Cincinnati. His father, John Reitz, dies during the first days of Don's hospitalization. Shortly thereafter, Reitz's five-year-old niece Sara Gula develops a Wilms tumor. Unable to throw on the wheel, Reitz draws and paints on earthenware forms.

1983 Healing gradually, Reitz is able to throw again. He also completes a major commission for a wall sculpture at the Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Photo: D. McGregor.

Covered in clay after a participatory workshop, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1985.

With his niece Sara, ca. 1985.

1986 Yukio Yamamoto's wood-fired Tozan kiln at Northern Arizona University is completed, where Reitz experiences his first noborigama firing. Leaving earthenware behind, he returns to salt-glazing and becomes increasingly involved in wood-firing.

1987 Paula Rice accepts a teaching position and moves to Flagstaff, Arizona. Don stays in Madison for that year.

1988 Reitz quits his teaching position at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and is named Professor Emeritus. He moves to a ranch along the Verde River outside Clarkdale, Arizona, and once again begins work on a series of new kilns. Reitz works with Yamamoto in Himeji City, Japan for the first time.

1998 Reitz and Paula Rice are divorced.

2002 Builds his own wood-fired anagama kiln, which he dubs "Reitzagama."

Selected Exhibition History

One-, Two-, and Three-Person Exhibitions

1964 Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, Ohio

1966 *Donald Reitz / Jean Stamsta*, Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wis., January 16– February 27
Kenosha Public Museum, Kenosha, Wis.
Kalamazoo Art Center, Kalamazoo, Mich.
Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa.

1969 Theodore Lyman Wright Art Center, Beloit College, Beloit, Wis., January 5–26
Little Gallery Frame Shop, Shawnee Mission, Kan., March 8–30
Don Reitz / Jean Stamsta, Edward Sherbeyn Gallery, Chicago, Ill., November 12–30
Evanston Art Center, Evanston, Ill.
Madison Art Center, Madison, Wis.

1970 Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, Ind., April 13–May 3
Don Reitz / David Shaner, Frostburg State College, Frostburg, Md., December 1–18

1971 *The Large and Small of It: Don Reitz and Bruce Breckenridge*, Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Craftsmen / 3 Media: Fred Fenster: Metal, Dorothy Meredith: Fiber, Don Reitz: Clay. Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, Wis.

1973 Hoffman Gallery, School of the Arts and Crafts Society, Portland, Oreg., August
Salt Glaze Ceramics by Don Reitz, Good Library Art Gallery, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind., October
Moreau Gallery, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind., November
Habatat Galleries, Dearborn, Mich

1974 *Don Reitz and Art Sanoval*, Gallery 12, Chicago, Ill.

1975 Nostalgia Et Cetera Galleries, Ltd., Stevenson, Md., February 1–March 3
Sheraton Park Hotel, Washington, D.C., sponsored by the American Ceramic Society and the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts
Appalachiana Gallery, Bethesda, Md.

1976 American Hand Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Rochester Art Center, Rochester, Minn.
Humanities Center Gallery, Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Ind., October 30–November 17

1977 *Salt-Fired Ceramics*, Potato Gallery, Sun Valley Center for the Arts and Humanities, Sun Valley, Idaho

1978 Penland School of Crafts, Penland, N.C.
October Work, Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Ind.

1980 Chatham College, Pittsburgh, Pa.

1981 Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand
Northern Arizona University Art Gallery, Flagstaff, Ariz., March 26–April 24
Greenwood Gallery, Washington, D.C., June 4–30
Holsten Galleries, Palm Beach, Fla.
Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff, Alberta, Canada

1983 *Three Men of Clay: Don Reitz, Paul Soldner, Robert Sperry*, Image South Gallery, Atlanta, Ga., March 5–April 1

1984 *What I Say Here is the Truth*, Great American Gallery, Atlanta, Ga., February 25–March 21

1985 *Don Reitz / James Tanner*, Rochester Art Center, Rochester, Minn., May–June
Maurine Littleton Gallery, Washington, D.C., April 14–May 4

1986 Pewabic Pottery, Detroit, Mich.
Martha Schneider Gallery, Chicago, Ill.
Leedy-Voulkos Gallery, Kansas City, Mo.

1987 *Don Reitz / Paula Rice,* Jane Hartsook Gallery, Greenwich House Pottery, New York, N.Y., May 1–29
Maurine Littleton Gallery, Washington, D.C., November 1–20

1988 Whitaker Gallery, Craft Alliance Center for the Visual Arts, Saint Louis, Mo.
South Gallery, Florida Community College, Jacksonville, Fla., August– September
Piedmont Art Center, Winston-Salem, N.C., March–May

1991 *The Wood-fired Ceramics of Don Reitz,* Cheney Cowles Museum, Spokane, Wash., February 15–March 24
Don Reitz: The Narrative Vessel, Wellington B. Gray Gallery, East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C., September–October

1992 Sedona Arts Center, Sedona, Ariz., January–February
Maveety Gallery, Salishan, Wash., July 18–August 8

1993 *Don Reitz: A Kiln-Load*, Connell Gallery, Atlanta, Ga., March–April

1994 *New Work*, Artables Gallery, Houston, Tex., November 19–December 17
Maurine Littleton Gallery, Washington, D.C., November 13–December 17

1995 Lamar Dodd Art Center, LaGrange College, LaGrange, Ga., April 6–29

1998 The Select Art Gallery, Sedona, Ariz., September 17–October 6

2001 Maurine Littleton Gallery, Washington, D.C., March 20–April 7

2002 *Don Reitz, Selected Works: An Overview*, Manchester Craftsman's Guild, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Allen Priebe Gallery, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

2003 Art Under a Hot Tin Roof Gallery, Jackson, Tenn., April

Group Exhibitions

1964 *23rd Ceramics National Exhibition*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, N. Y.
20th Ceramic Invitational, Scripps College, Claremont, Calif.
44th Exhibition of Wisconsin Designer-Craftsmen, Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, Wis.

1965 *9th Annual National Show of the Greater Fall River Art Association*, Fall River, Mass., May
7th Miami National Ceramic Exhibition, Lowe Art Gallery, University of Miami, Miami, Fla., November
45th Exhibition of Wisconsin Designer-Craftsmen, Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, Wis.
13th Concorso Internazional della Ceramic d'Arte, Faenza, Italy

1966 *Pots and Non-Pots, Ceramic Invitational*, Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind., March
Ceramic Arts U.S.A., sponsored by the International Minerals and Chemical Corporation, Skokie, Ill., February. Traveled to the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., May
24th Ceramics National Exhibition, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, N. Y.
First Annual Wisconsin Designer-Craftsman Traveling Exhibition, Burpee Art Gallery, Rockford, Ill.
Southern Wisconsin Ceramics Invitational, Milton College, Milton, Wis.

1967 *49th Annual Exhibition of Art by Toledo-Area Artists*, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio, May
47th Exhibition of Wisconsin Designer-Craftsmen, Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, Wis., October
14th Concorso Internazional della Ceramica d'Arte, Faenza, Italy

1968 *Whitewater Ceramic Invitational*, Wisconsin State University, Whitewater, Wis., February 6–29
National Invitational Ceramic Exhibition, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, Ind., December
Wisconsin Crafts Show, L'Atelier Gallery, Milwaukee, Wis.

1969 *Invitational Salt Glaze Exhibition*, Fine Arts Gallery, State University College of Arts and Science, Geneseo, N.Y., January 20–February 14
Whitewater Ceramic Invitational, Wisconsin State University, Whitewater, Wis., February 3–28
48th Exhibition of Wisconsin Designer-Craftsmen, Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, Wis., March–April
Objects: USA, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Traveled nationally and internationally
Edward Sherbeyn Gallery, Chicago, Ill.
15th Concorso Internazional della Ceramic d'Arte, Faenza, Italy

1970 *Ceramic National Invitational*, Chico State College, Chico, Calif., April
Crafts 1970, Boston City Hall Galleries, Boston, Mass., April
Craft Commitment, Rochester Art Center, Rochester, Minn., December. Traveled throughout Minnesota, 1971
Ceramics '70, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, N.Y.
Wisconsin Crafts Invitational III, L'Atelier Gallery, Milwaukee, Wis., November 21, 1970–January 3, 1971

1971 *2nd Evanston Ceramic Invitational: The Place Setting*, Evanston Art Center, Evanston, Ill., April

1972 *Salt Glaze Ceramics*, Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York, N.Y., January 27–April 2
2nd Ceramic Invitational, Chico State College, Chico, Calif., April
Exhibit A: Gallery of American Ceramics, Evanston, Ill., November

4th Annual Ceramics Invitational, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
27th Ceramic National Exhibition, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, N.Y.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

1973 *The Plastic Earth*, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wis., June–August

1974 *University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Art Faculty Exhibition*, Elvehjem Art Center, Madison, Wis., March 24–May 12
Pots for Plants, L'Atelier Gallery, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, May
Salt Glazed Ceramics, Crafts Alliance Gallery, Saint Louis, Mo., June
Invitational Exhibition of Teapots, Hoffman Gallery, School of Arts and Crafts Society, Portland, Oreg.
Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York, N.Y.

1975 *Contemporary Clay*, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, Calif.
Hot Times! Five on Fire, Moreau Gallery, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind.
Functional Ceramics 1975, Art Center Museum, The College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio
Fourth Invitational Contemporary Crafts Exhibition, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., April
Wisconsin Directions, Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, Wis.

1976 *Craft Multiples*, University of North Dakota-Grand Forks
Soup Tureens: 1976, Campbell Museum, Camden, N.J. Traveled to Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York, N.Y.; Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.
Ceramics Two, Following Sea Gallery, Honolulu, Hawaii

1977 Creative Arts Workshop, New Haven, Conn.

1978 *New Art Works: Department of Art Faculty Exhibition*, Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, January 29–March 19
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

1979 *A Century of Ceramics in the United States 1878–1978*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, N.Y., May 5–September 23. Traveled to Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., November 9, 1979–January 27, 1980; DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, Mass., 1980; Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio, 1981
Indiana Ceramic Exhibition 1979, DePauw University, DePauw, Ind.

1980 *Contemporary Ceramics: A Response to Wedgwood*, Museum of the Philadelphia Civic Center, Philadelphia, Pa.
9 / Ceramics, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, Wis.

1981 *Past Presidents*, National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts Exhibition, Wichita State University, Wichita, Kan., March 25–28

1982 *Art Faculty Exhibition*, Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, April 4–May 30
The Decorative Arts in Dane County, Madison Art Center, Madison, Wis., June 5–September 5
A Craftworks Celebration, The Craftsman's Gallery, Scarsdale, N.Y.
The Anagama, Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia, Pa.

1983 *Wisconsin Directions 3*, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wis.
Summer Faculty Exhibition, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1984 *The Photographer and the Artist: The Transformed Image*, Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, January 29–February 26
Platters and Related Forms, Southern Illinois University Art Gallery, Edwardsville, Ill., April–May
Wisconsin Directions 4, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wis.

1985 *Teapots: The Sanford M. Besser Collection of Contemporary Ceramic Teapots*, The Arkansas Art Center Decorative Arts Museum, Little Rock, Ark., November–December
Wisconsin Master Artists, Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Madison, Wis., December
Utilitarian Clay, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wis.

1986 *Ceramic Invitational*, Maurine Littleton Gallery, Washington, D.C., February 13–March 7
Views 86: The Art Faculty, Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, March 15–May 4
Habatat Gallery, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.
Selections '85, American Craft Museum, New York, N.Y.
Dorothy Weiss Gallery, San Francisco, Calif.

1987 *Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical*, American Craft Museum, New York, N.Y., October 26–March 22. Traveled to Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colo., May 16–July 5; Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, Calif., August 7–October 4; Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Ariz., November 7, 1987–January 10, 1988; Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wis.,

February 12–April 10; J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Ky., May 16–July 10, 1988; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Va:, August 9–October 2, 1988
Art in Clay: Magdalena and Michael Frimkess, Don Reitz, Patti Warashina, Cross Creek Gallery, Malibu, Calif., February 21–April 1
Second National Ceramic Invitational, The Canton Art Institute, Canton, Ohio
Kalamazoo Art Center, Kalamazoo, Mich.

1988 *Colorado Invites*, Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center, Pueblo, Colo., September 14–October 24
Clay AZ Art Invitational Ceramic Exhibition, Northern Arizona University Art Gallery, Flagstaff, Ariz.
100 Years of Wisconsin Art, Milwaukee Art Museum, Wis., September 24–November 6

1989 Henry Bauer Gallery, Alfred, N.Y.

1990 *Joint Exhibition of Four International Potters: Yukio Yamamoto, Don Bendel, Don Reitz, Jim Leedy*, Komo Art Gallery, Himeji City, Japan
Erishu Art Gallery, Himeji City, Japan
Hovikodden Art Center, Oslo, Norway
Brandt's Kloedefabrik, Odense, Denmark
Sculpture Centre Goesteatelier Hollufgaar, Odense, Denmark

1991 *Walls: Large Scale Ceramic Sculpture: Eight Variations*, Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, January 31–March 10
Clay Today, Culturele Raad Gemeentehuis, Roden, Holland
Wood Spirits, Galeria Mesa, Mesa, Ariz., April–May

1992 *A Tribute Exhibition: Glenn C. Nelson*, Tweed Museum of Art, University of Minnesota-Duluth

1993 *Two Hands, One Heart: A Survey of Contemporary Ceramics*, Katie Gingrass Gallery, Milwaukee, Wis., January 15–April 13
The Year of American Craft, Maveety Gallery, Salishan, Wash.

1994 *The Collector's Eye: Contemporary Ceramics American, Canadian and British from the Collection of Aaron Milrad*, Koffler Gallery, North York, Ont., Canada, April 20–June 1

1995 *Woodstack*, Gallery of Visual Arts, University of Montana-Missoula, May
Berkshire Clay National, Maple Hill Gallery, Stockbridge, Mass., July 1–August 31
1995 Invitational Exhibition, Roswell Museum and Art Center, Roswell, N.M., September 9–November 19
Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Exhibition, Jane Hartsook Gallery, Greenwich House Pottery, New York, N.Y., November–December

1996 *Rendezvous International*, Museum of Art, Kearney, Nebr.

1997 Indigo Galleries, Boca Raton, Fla., March–April
Wood-fired Ceramics at Hard Work University, Boger Gallery, College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, Mo., October 5–31

1998 *Clay Traditions: Texas Educators and their Teachers*, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Tex., January–March
Heroes, Icons, History and Memory, National Conference on Education for the Ceramic Arts Honors and Fellows Exhibition, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, Tex., March–April
Drawing on Clay, Baltimore Clayworks, Baltimore, Md., May 2–30
Tea Bowl: Imperfect Harmony, The Greater Lafayette Museum of Art, Lafayette, Ind., September 13–November 8. Traveled to Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, January 10–March 15, 1999
Wood, Fire, Clay, New Wagner Gallery, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, Ill., November 2–20

1999 *Born of Ashes: Woodfired Ceramics*, Arkansas Art Center Decorative Arts Museum, Little Rock, Ark., January 10–February 21
Contemporary Ceramics from Georgia Collections, The Museum of Arts and Sciences, Macon, Ga., April 10–June 13
Clay Bodies, Connell Gallery, Atlanta, Ga., April 16–May 22
Different Strokes: International Woodfire Exhibition, University of Iowa-Iowa City, September 11–December 31
Nine Decades, Chester Springs Studio, Chester, Pa., September 18–October 9
Contemporary Clay: Master Teachers / Master Students, Fine Arts Center Galleries, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio, October 15–November 7

2000 *Building a Collection*, Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, Minn., January–April
World Ceramic Exhibition, Yeo Ju College, Yeo Ju, South Korea, October

2001 *Taking Measure: American Ceramic Art at the New Millennium*, World Ceramic Exposition, Livingware Gallery, Yoju, South Korea, August 10–October 28

2002 *Contemporary American Ceramics 1950–1990*, Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum, Japan, April 13–June 30. Traveled to National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan, July 30–September 1

2003 *Shared Passions: Sara and David Lieberman Collection of Contemporary Ceramics and Craft*, Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, Ariz., February 8–May 18

Selected Honors and Awards

1970 Governor's Award in the Arts, Wisconsin

1975 First Ceramic Art Award given by the American Ceramic Society, Division of Engineers, Chicago

1976 Honorary Fellow, National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts

1978 Trustee Emeritus, World Craft Council

1979 Trustee Emeritus, American Crafts Council

1981 Honored by the Maori of New Zealand for "distinguished leadership in the dispensing of knowledge between peoples," Palmerston North, New Zealand

1983 Honorary Member, Academie Internationale de la Ceramique, Geneva, Switzerland

1987 Fellow, Wisconsin Academy of Science, Art and Letters

2002 Aileen Osborn Webb Award, American Crafts Council

Selected Commissions

1964 Indoor sculpture, Kutztown State Teachers' College, Kutztown, Pa.

1967 Baptismal font, Lakeview Lutheran Church, Madison, Wis.

1974 Vessels for international board members of Johnson Wax, Racine, Wis.

1983 Pair of Wall Sculptures, Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, Mich.

1990 Wall Sculpture, Nippon Castle Research Center, Himeji City, Japan

2000 Wall Sculpture, Chandler Center for the Arts, Phoenix, Ariz.

Selected Public Collections

The Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, Ark.

The Canton Art Institute, Canton, Ohio

Elvehjem Museum of Art, Madison, Wis.

Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, Minn.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Ga.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Calif.

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Kenosha Public Museum, Kenosha, Wis.

Kutztown University, Kutztown, Pa.

Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wis.

The Mint Museums, Charlotte, N.C.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.

National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Ariz.

Palmerston University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pa.

Racine Art Museum, Racine, Wis.

Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.

Roswell Museum and Art Center, Roswell, N.M.

Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art, Alfred, N.Y.

Tweed Museum of Art, Duluth, Minn.

Books and Catalogs

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Clark, Garth. *A Century of Ceramics in the United States, 1878–1978.* New York: Dutton, 1979, 247, 321(ill.).

Conrad, John W. *Contemporary Ceramic Techniques*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1979, 83 (ill.).

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Cooper, Emmanuel, and Eileen Lewenstein, eds. *New Ceramics.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1974 (fig. 179).

The Decorative Arts in Dane County. Exh. cat. Madison, Wis.: Madison Art Center, 1982.

The Department of Art Faculty Exhibition. Exh. cat. Madison, Wis.: Elvehjem Art Center, 1974.

Different Strokes: International Woodfire Exhibition. Exh. cat. Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa, 1999.

Donhauser, Paul S. *History of American Ceramics: The Studio Potter.* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1978, 221.

Donhauser, Paul S. "United States of America." In *New Ceramics,* edited by Emmanuel Cooper and Eileen Lewenstein, 155. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1974.

Du Bois, Alan. *Born of Ashes: Woodfired Ceramics*. Little Rock: Arkansas Art Center, 1999, 42–43.

Hartsook, Jane. *25: Jane Hartsook Gallery.* Exh. cat. New York: Jane Hartsook Gallery, 1994.

Indiana Ceramic Exhibition 1979: DePauw University. Exh. cat. Greencastle, Ind.: DePauw University, 1979.

The Large and Small of It: Ceramics by Reitz and Breckenridge. Exh. cat. Madison, Wis.: Elvehjem Art Center, 1971.

Levin, Elaine. *American Ceramics: Past, Present, Future*. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1984.

Mansfield, Janet. *Salt-Glaze Ceramics: An International Perspective.* Tortola, British Virgin Islands: Craftsman House, 1991.

Murray, Rona, and Walter Dexter. *The Art of Earth: An Anthology*. Victoria, B.C.: Sono Nis, 1979, 64 (ill.).

Nelson, Glenn C. *Ceramics: A Potter's Handbook*, 5th ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984, 152–57; 216.

New Art Works: Department of Art Faculty Exhibition. Exh. cat. Madison, Wis.: Elvehjem Museum of Art, 1978.

Nigrosh, Leon. *Claywork: Form and Idea in Ceramic Design*. Worcester, Mass.: Davis, 1975, 156 (ill.).

Nordness, Lee. *Objects: USA*. Exh. cat. New York: Viking, 1970, 94.

100 Years of Wisconsin Art. Exh. cat. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Art Museum, 1988, 102–3 (ill.).

Peterson, Susan. *Researching Ceramic Art*. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1984.

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Reitz, Don. Essay. In *Dan Gunderson: A Work in Progress: Twenty Years at Stetson.* Exh. cat. Stetson University, DeLand, Fla.: Tennant, 1996.

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Rhodes, Daniel. *Clay and Glazes for the Potter*. Philadelphia: Chilton, 1973, 235 (ill.).

_____. *Kilns: Design, Construction, and Operation*. Philadelphia: Chilton, 1968, 98–101 (ill.).

Smith, Paul J., and Edward Lucie-Smith. *Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical*. Exh. cat. New York: American Craft Council and Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986.

Speight, Charlotte, and John Toki. *Hands in Clay: An Introduction to Ceramics*. Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield, 1979, 268 (ill.).

Troy, Jack. *Salt-Glazed Ceramics*. With a foreword by Don Reitz. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1997.

Troy, Jack. *Wood-Fired Stoneware and Porcelain.* Radnor, Pa.: Chilton, 1995.

Views 86: The Art Faculty. Exh. cat. Madison, Wis.: Elvehjem Museum of Art, 1986.

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Berman, Rick. "An Interview with Don Reitz." *Clay Times* 2, no. 1 (1996): 5–7; "Part Two." *Clay Times* 2, no. 2 (1996): 11–12, 16.

Boylen, Michael. "Don Reitz/Jean Stamsta." *Craft Horizons* 26, no. 2 (1966): 42.

Brawer, Catherine. "Conversation with Reitz and Breckenridge." *Ceramics Monthly* 19, no. 3 (1971): 17–19.

_____. "Don Reitz: A Ceramics Monthly Portfolio." *Ceramics Monthly* 19, no. 10 (1971): 19–26.

Breckenridge, Bruce. "Don Reitz." *Craft Horizons* 30, no. 4 (1970): 55–56.

Caplan, Jerry L. "Don Reitz: New Directions." *Ceramics Monthly* 28, no. 6 (1980): 64–65.

Dahlquist, Daniel. "Don Reitz: New Directions." *Ceramics Monthly* 32, no. 8 (1984): 34–39.

"Don Reitz: From the Soundtrack." *New Zealand Potter* 23, no. 1 (1981): 3–4.

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Farrell, Bill. "Don Reitz." *Craft Horizons* 29, no. 3 (1969): 56–57.

Gamble, Harriet. "Ceramics Meets the Blues." *Arts and Activities* 115, no. 1 (1994): 16–19.

_____. "Don Reitz: Alternative Approaches to Clay." *Arts and Activities* 98, no. 3 (1985): 40–43.

"Great American Kilns: Don Reitz's Kiln." *Studio Potter* 6, no. 3 (1978): 3 (ill.).

Hall, Sherman. "Don Reitz Workshop." *Ceramics Monthly* 48, no. 2 (2000): 50–51.

"In Recognition." *Ceramics Monthly* 49, no. 6 (2001): 53–79.

"Letters: Reitz Writes." *Ceramics Monthly* 29, no. 3 (1981): 9.

Lincoln, Joan. "What Do You Do with 314 Pots?" *Ceramics Monthly* 47, no. 4 (April 1999): 68–71.

Mackenzie, Warren. "Pyroman and Gorilla Cavort in Clay Circus." *Craft Horizons* 35, no. 4 (1975): 6.

Mansfield, Janet. "Don Reitz in Australia." *Pottery in Australia* 15, no. 2 (1976): 12–14.

_____. "Salt-Glaze, American Style." *Pottery in Australia* 20, no. 2 (1982): 34–36.

_____. "The Wonderful World of Don Reitz." *Ceramics: Art and Perception* (1990): 12–17.

Moon, Warren. "Academic Department Provides Diversity." *Wisconsin Academy Review* 31, no. 2 (1985): 42–51 and cover.

Nicholas, Donna. "The XXVII Ceramic National at Syracuse." *Craft Horizons* 32, no. 6 (1972): 27–31, 79.

Peterson, Allan. "Salt Glaze Invitational." *Craft Horizons* 29, no. 2 (1969): 49–50.

Reitz, Don. "American Grand Plaza Hotel: Ceramic Sculptures." *American Craft* 44, no. 6 (1984): 28–29.

_____. "Art out of Need: Don Reitz, An Autobiography." *Ceramics Monthly* 39, no. 2 (1991): 47–52.

_____. "Drawing from the Heart." *Studio Potter* 14, no. 4 (1985): 40–41.

_____. "The Gift." *Studio Potter* 15, no. 2 (1987): 1–16.

Reitz, Don, et. al. "Salt Glaze: Twenty Approaches to the Technique." *Craft Horizons* 32, no. 2 (1972): 26–33.

"Reitz/Soldner/Sperry Exhibition." *Ceramics Monthly* 31, no. 7 (1983): 45.

"Studio Potter Twentieth Anniversary Collection." *Studio Potter* 24, no. 1 (1995): 88–89.

Tanguy, Sarah. "Don Reitz." *American Craft* 61, no. 4 (2001): 97–99.

Thompson, Douglas. "Don Reitz / David Shaner." *Craft Horizons* 30, no. 2 (1970): 47.

Troy, Jack. "Don Reitz." *Craft Horizons* 34, no. 5 (1974): 46–49.

Van Deurzen, James. "Teaching and Shaping Art and Life: Interview with Don Reitz." *Wisconsin Academy Review* 32, no. 3 (1986), 48–51.

"Wisconsin Potters." *Studio Potter* 16, no. 1 (1987): 62–87.

"Woodstack '95: Playing with Fire." *National Conference on Education in the Ceramic Arts News* 19, no. 3 (1995).

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LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Lisa and Dudley Anderson
Diane and Sandy Besser
Karen Johnson Boyd
Bill and Jane Brown
The Canton Museum of Art, Canton, Ohio
Leatrice and Melvin Eagle
Dr. Joel and Diane Eide
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Ga.
Kathryn Boeckman Howd
S. C. Johnson & Son, Inc., Racine, Wis.
Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, Mich.
Karen H. Keland
Harvey K. and Bess Littleton
Maurine Littleton Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Aaron Macy Memorial Collection
Sam Maloof
Milwaukee Art Museum
The Mint Museums, Charlotte, N.C.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Perimeter Gallery, Chicago
Racine Art Museum, Racine, Wis.
Don Reitz
Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred University, Alfred, N.Y.
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.
Studio Potter Foundation
Scott Tobias
Tweed Museum of Art, University of Minnesota-Duluth
Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, Minn.

Jody Clowes

Independent curator and author Jody Clowes received her bachelor's in art and art history from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey and a master's degree from the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture. Clowes served as director of exhibitions for Pewabic Pottery in Detroit, Michigan. From 1994 to 2001, she worked as researcher and curator at the Milwaukee Museum of Art in the department of decorative arts.

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