



Eric Serritella Pilgrimage to the East

“Design can embody new performances for traditions and allow them to speak to the public.”

東方 朝聖者

設計能賦予傳統工藝新的紋樣，去迎合現代社會的需要。



首次看到 Eric Serritella 的和服茶壺，我們就驚歎於這個酷似和服的造型又同時兼具枯枝的外表。Eric 說，東方文化就是他創作的源泉，他從宜興的茶壺上學會了平衡精細的外表和實用性，而枯枝落葉的外形則來源於日本文化中的幽玄閑寂，這讓人想起日本俳聖松尾芭蕉的俳句“奈良菊花香滿溢，古佛滿堂寺廟深”。在 Eric 雕琢逼真的樹幹上能看出他的專注與謙恭，似乎他的每一個刻畫背後都端坐著東方諸佛。

Eric 最初接觸陶藝要追溯到 1996 年，當時他還是商業界的精英。機緣巧合地

選擇了陶瓷作為放鬆，卻沒有料到因此著迷。後來當他決心從商界離開，進行陶器創造。06 年他二度赴台師從臺灣陶藝大師陳景亮，促成他投身於錯視雕刻的藝術創作，並從聲色犬馬的紐約搬到和煦寧靜的北卡羅來納州。儘管他的工作室從原來 4 張工作臺和 3 個燒窯縮小到一個 10×15 尺的小房間。但窗明几淨的環境讓他更好地思考自己的創作。今天，Eric 已經成為美國知名的陶藝家。他的作品被多個博物館收購，也曾在海外參展，其中還包括了臺灣以及瓷都景德鎮。今年他甚至舉行了海外巡展，分享自己對東方美學的體會。

在 Eric 的設計中，你看到中國文化，日本文化甚至美國文化的水乳交融，從而產生的新的美學體驗。正如原研哉在一個採訪裡所說的，我們不能把傳統原封不動擺放在原地，保存在那裡等人來欣賞。通過設計，傳統能產生新的紋樣，並主動發聲，這也是設計所能體現的一種最大的功能。

At the very first sight we behold the Kimono Teapot crafted by Eric Serritella, it is fascinated to find it embodied both the shape of a girl in Kimono and the surface as a birch. Eric tells us that he is always inspired by Asian arts. He accepts functionality of Yixing teapots and the wabi sabi philosophy of Japanese culture and art. It reminds me of a poem of Basho, the most well-known Japanese poet of Edo Period, which goes that At Nara; The fragrance of chrysanthemums; Ancient Buddhas. From the seriously sculptured birches by Eric, we can read his focus and courtesy, as if there are Buddhas sitting behind his every carving.

The story of Eric and ceramics goes back to 1996 when he was a successful

businessman. He chose clay as a pleasure and later got indulged in it. When he left the business circle, making ceramics helped him to pay his bills. In 2006, in his second visit to Taiwan ceramist Ah Leon, Ah Leon helped him switch from making functional ceramics to trompe l'oeil sculpture. Afterwards, he moved from the rural New York state to quiet North Carolina with his studio minimized from four work tables and three kilns to merely a 10 foot x 15 foot room. But the clean environment allows him to contemplate deeper into his designs. Nowadays, he is a world-recognized trompe l'oeil ceramist. His works are not only purchased by American museums but also exhibited overseas, including Taiwan and Jingde Zhen. Presently, Jason Jacques Gallery

organizes his traveling exhibitions and shares his unique insight towards Asian aesthetics with the world.

Eric's design absorbs Chinese culture, Japanese culture and of course American culture, and their combination thereafter creates new aesthetics. What we can learn from Eric may be just the same as Mr. Hara Kenya said in an interview that we shall not remain with the traditions unchanged and waiting for the appreciation from passers-by. One of the biggest functions of design is to embody new performances for traditions and allow them to speak to the public.



- 2. 3.
1.

1.
Roar
2013
咆哮——不動聲色
2013
- 2.
Charred at a Summer's Evening
Campfire Teapot
2013
仲夏夜樹（壺）
2013
- 3.
Charred Split Log Birch Teapot
2013
孤枝獨賞（壺）
2013



採訪 Eric Serritella

1
360° — 我瞭解到你在大學裡學習的是文科，專業是演講傳播學。而且你在商業世界也取得了很大的成功。可以和我們分享一下你是怎麼成為一個陶藝藝術家嗎？

E — 陶藝原本只是我在企業工作外的休閒娛樂。但馬上我便沉迷其中並開始自製陶器。多年後當我離開商界，陶藝讓我保持生計。同時這也是我希望繼續做下去的事情。後來我製作實用陶器並拿到美國東北的手工交易會推銷，如是成為了一位陶藝家。這是我創作生涯的第一個十字路口，對這個選擇我感到非常高興。2004年，我遇到了臺灣陶藝大師陳景亮，他介紹我去臺灣學習東方美學和使用轉盤。2006年我第二次去臺灣學習陶

藝，之後我遇到了人生中的第二個十字路口。我需要在錯視雕刻和實用陶器當中做出選擇。要兩者兼顧很難。於是我選擇了雕刻這一條路。非常慶幸，我很享受雕刻陶藝帶來的成功。

2
360° — 可以給我們介紹一下你的工作室嗎？

E — 我在紐約郊區的家裡曾經有一個工作室，裡面很寬敞，有4張工作臺，3個燒窯。最近我們搬到了更暖和的北卡羅納。在另一位美國有名的陶藝家Susan Filley的工作室裡，我租了一個10×15英寸的小房間作為工作室。這個細小一點的空間讓我更有條理地擺放我的工具以及佈置工作室。當做大件的雕刻時，我要將原材料先放在地上，等所有部件組合好才重新移回桌子上。我喜歡保持整潔

的環境，井井有條能讓我保持專注。反之，看到雜亂的環境我就會分心。

3
360° — 縱觀你的陶藝生涯，你的設計理念有沒有什麼變化？

E — 在我看來，相比起早期的雕刻，最大的不同是學會了做出更“安靜”的形態，或者說更注重動態的表現和留白的空間。過去我花很多時間完善細枝末節來顯露出真實的樹幹紋理。而現在，我會更關注整體的視覺效果。我的做法是努力讓樹幹和枝葉的雕刻顯得沒有那麼繁雜，線條和多餘的空間能表現得更簡單。這好像是東方的繪畫和書法的筆觸間，會用簡單的線條勾勒出主體，周圍是留白但很有意境的畫面。我將這種安靜的形態稱為“步履輕柔”。在我看來，儘管人類並不敬畏大自然，然而大自然通過生命

的周而復始，生生不息，保持著自己的瑰麗雄奇。我盡力表現出這一點。我沉迷於陶器的脆弱但又經久不衰的特徵，這和自然如出一轍。自然和陶器一樣，如果我們不好好珍惜，就會很容易破壞。可是它經久不衰的美麗又不會被抹去。我希望人們可以重新思考我們對自然的影響，包括溫室效應，環境污染，耕地污染等等。我希望人們在看過我的作品後，會有新的看法，也會因此有所改變。畢竟，我們應該步履輕柔地行走在這個地球上。

4

360° — 和大部分西方設計師不同，你的設計中有很多亞洲藝術和美學的影子。你是怎麼形成這種風格的？

E — 亞洲的文化是我一直以來靈感的來源。儘管我在大學最初接觸藝術史是基於西方藝術和建築，我一直都偏愛亞洲美學，它的線條，節奏，細節都非常迷人。大學以後我繼續接觸亞洲藝術和文化，當博物館有這方面的展覽時，我都會去參觀。在臺灣居住的經歷也讓我直接觸到中國文化，日本文化，韓國文化，當然還有臺灣的本土藝術。在此期間我得以親身體驗這種文化，這在我的設計風格中因此有很深的影子。在臺灣的經歷

讓我融入到亞洲社會中，而不是通過閱讀或者參觀展覽來獲得關於亞洲的知識。同時我瞭解到亞洲的藝術，飲食和文化。這也是為什麼我一個西方文化中長大的設計師能培養出這種獨特的設計風格。

5

360° — 你從亞洲藝術中學到了什麼？

E — 我從亞洲藝術中學到了很多。我舉最重要的兩個吧，一是宜興茶壺中巧妙地融入了精美和實用性，另外是日本文化和藝術中的閑寂優雅。我從宜興茶壺中汲取了雕刻部件的細節和線條，而時間如剎那流光，美麗並不完美亦不會永恆則很明顯來自于閑寂優雅。另外，我還很醉心於盆栽的造型，精美的根雕和優雅的亞洲書法。這些都是我靈感的來源。

6

360° — 瓷都景德鎮是中國最知名，品質最好的陶瓷生產地。我留意到在08年，你在景德鎮舉行了一個展覽（注：實為參展）。這個展覽有沒有給你留下什麼特別的回憶？

E — 08年的時候，我的一件早期的小茶壺得到參加這個在景德鎮舉

辦的展覽的機會。我非常榮幸在我創作生涯早期就得到這樣的機會。由於這次展覽是一個涵蓋了其他藝術家規模比較大的展覽，因此我沒能親身出席。這次的經歷的確很有趣。我的作品深受17世紀宜興茶壺的影響，而正好我在中國展出的第一件作品就出現在景德鎮。我希望未來能有機會去這兩個陶瓷史上非常有影響力的城市遊覽。

7

360° — 你未來有在亞洲舉辦巡展的計畫嗎？

E — 儘管我現在還未有任何計畫，我希望更新、更重要的錯視雕刻能有機會在亞洲展出。目前紐約的Jason Jacques 美術館在幫我安排巡展。我期待有一日能帶著我的設計到亞洲展示或者出售。

我們都需要「步履輕柔」。陶器與環境一樣，既脆弱又持久。因此對待這兩者

Scorched
Ghost of the
Woodlands
Teapot
2013

木中清魂（壺）
2013



“Just like ceramics, our environment is fragile yet durable. Therefore, we should choose to walk with softer steps.”

1

360° — I learned that you studied liberal arts and earned a BA in Speech Communication in college. And you were successful in business. Could you share with us the crossroad in your life that you decided to be a ceramic sculptor?

E — In the beginning, clay was something I did for pleasure outside my corporate career. Immediately I found myself connected to it and started making pottery myself. Years later when I quit the corporate world, pottery became a way to pay my bills while I decided what to do next. I made functional pottery and took it to craft fairs around the northeastern USA. As it turned out, being an artist was my career answer and I am very glad that I made that choice at this first crossroad. In 2004, I met Taiwanese ceramics master Ah Leon who invited me to Taiwan to study Asian art aesthetics and wheel thrown pottery. In 2006 I returned to Taiwan and afterwards I confronted the second crossroad in my life. I had to choose between sculptural ceramic trompe l'oeil and functional ceramics. I knew it would be hard to do both. I chose sculptural and I have had the honor and pleasure to enjoy much success with it.

2

360° — Could you give us an insight into your workshop?

E — I used to have a studio at my home in the New York countryside where I had four work tables, three kilns and lots of space. Recently I moved to the warmer climate of North Carolina where I rent a 10 foot x 15 foot room

from Susan Filley, a well-known American porcelain artist. Working in a smaller space has helped me organize my tools and surroundings more efficiently. When I work with big slabs I have to start on the floor and then move them to the table as they are assembled. I like to keep my workspace clean. Having a visually organized space helps me focus. I get distracted if there is too much clutter.

3

360° — Are there any changes to your design concept from starting the career in the early days till today?

E — I think the most important change from my early sculptures is an evolution to a quieter form or design with more emphasis on motion and negative space. I had spent a lot of time perfecting the details to make realistic tree textures and now I can concentrate more on the overall visual design of the pieces. I focus on making the tree and branches less “busy” and the lines and negative space simpler. Like an Asian painting or a calligraphy brush stroke – clean simple lines with beautiful negative space around them. I call this quieter body of work “Walking with Softer Steps”. I strive to show how nature maintains its splendors through tenacity and triumph of existence despite the disregard we humans show her. I appreciate how ceramic mirrors the environment’s fragility and durability – easily damaged if disrespected and yet invincible in its inherent beauty. I want people to rethink their impact on the environment, like global warming, pollution, pesticides/chemicals in

farming, and so on. My hope is that after viewing my sculptures some people will acquire new ways of seeing and thus choose their actions differently. In other words, walk on the planet with softer steps.

4

360° — Different from most western designers, your designs are rich of Asian art aesthetic. How do you build up such a style?

E — I have always been inspired by Asian art. Although my initial study of art history in college was based in Western art and architecture, my preferences have always been toward the Asian aesthetic. I have always felt an attraction and connection to its flow, rhythms and details. After college I furthered my appreciation of Asian art and culture. I was often drawn to museum exhibitions where it was the theme. My residencies in Taiwan continued to expose me to Chinese and Japanese art, as well as to Korean art, and of course Taiwanese art. It also allowed me to participate in the culture, which made great contributions to my design style. Living there gave me the opportunity to participate in Asian society instead of just studying it in a book or on the wall of a western gallery. And it gave me insights into many parts of Asian art, food and culture. These all combine with my western upbringing to create a unique design sense.

5

360° — What do you learn from Asian art?

E — There are so many lessons in Asian art. I suppose the two most

influential are the incredible delicacy and functionality of Yixing teapots and the wabi sabi philosophy of Japanese culture and art. So attention to detail and flow of sculptural components come from Yixing. The passing of time and the beauty of imperfection and impermanence is evident in all of my work and come from wabi sabi. In addition I love the flow of bonsai, the intricacy of root art and the grace of Asian calligraphy. They all inspire my work as well.

6

360° — Jingdezhen, the Porcelain Capital, is the most well-known

ceramic producing base with the highest quality porcelain in China. I noticed that you have arranged an exhibition at Jingdezhen in 2008. Did it bring any special experience to you?
E — I had the opportunity to have a small, early teapot of mine included in an exhibition in Jingdezhen in 2008. It was an honor to have a piece shown there so early in my development. Since it was just one teapot as part of a larger exhibition of other artists I did not have the opportunity to attend the exhibition. It was interesting that my first piece shown in China was in Jingdezhen since my work is really influenced by the early teapots of

Yixing from the 1600s. I hope to visit both of these influential ceramic cities someday.

7

360° — Will you arrange an exhibition tour in Asia in the future?

E — I hope my newer, more important ceramic trompe l'oeil works will have an opportunity to be shown in Asia in the future, although I have nothing planned at present. Jason Jacques Gallery in New York City organizes my traveling exhibitions and hopefully we will have the opportunity to visit Asia with sculptures to show and sell someday.

1. 2.

1. Charred Split Log Birch Teapot Detail

孤枝獨賞(壺)的細節。

2. Scorched Ghost of the Woodlands Teapot

木中清魂(壺)的細節。

