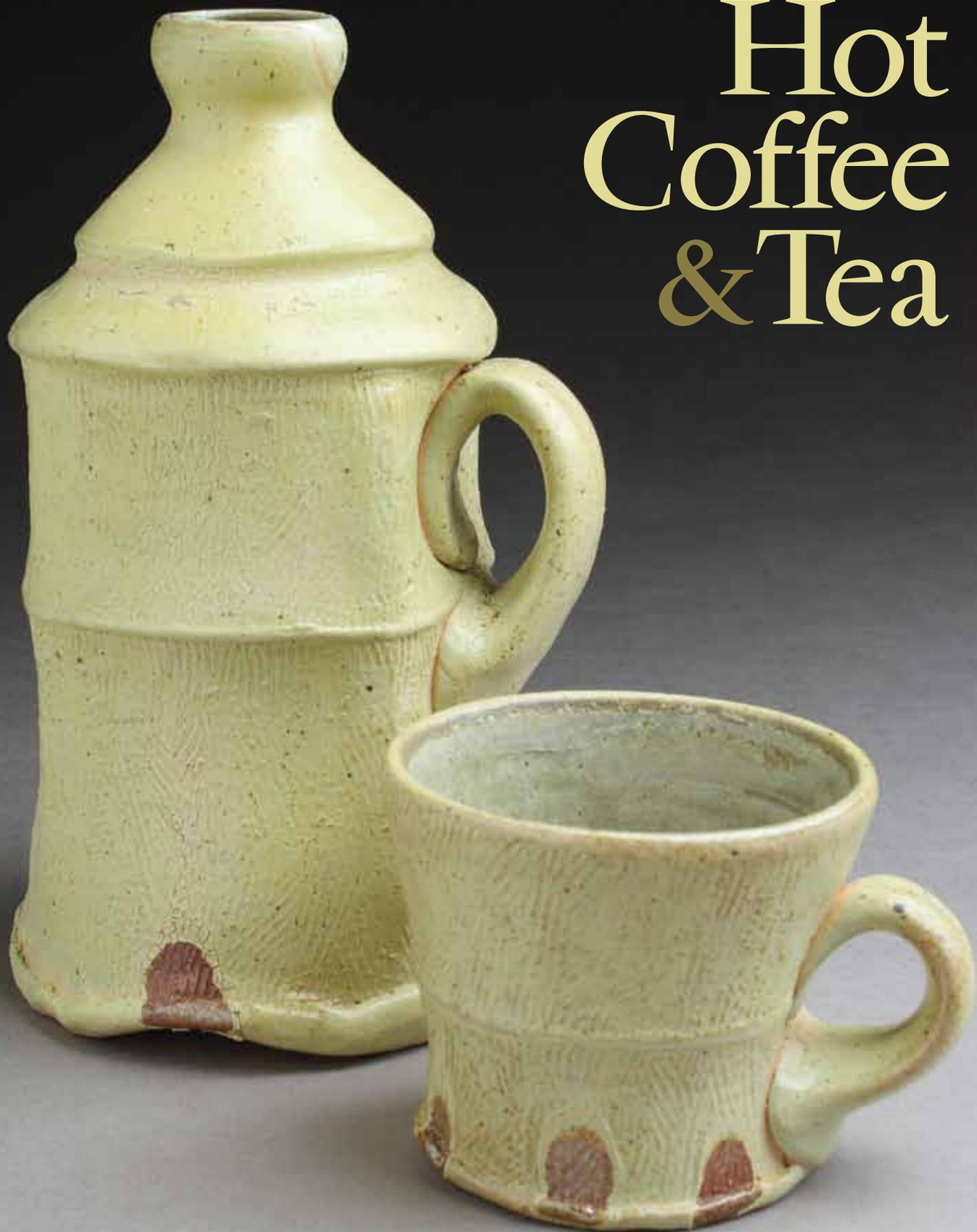


Kenyon Hansen

Hot Coffee & Tea





I start off by throwing two cylinders. The first is made with a flange at the base. After I measure it with calipers, I throw the second cylinder about two inches taller, and make the interior about ½ of an inch wider than the exterior of the first. Once they have set up a bit, I slide the larger over the smaller one and connect them at the base.

Next, I roll a coil and connect the two walls inside at the top of the inner wall. The pot then goes back to the wheel where I collar in the neck above the double wall and finish the forming at the top.

I throw a ridge in the shoulder to fit the lip of a mug, and I measure that before I throw the mug to fit the ridge.

Once everything fits, I add texture, line, and handles to both the mug and thermos.

Opposite: Thermos set, 8 in. (20 cm) in height, stoneware with glaze, wood fired.

For the last year I've worked in Matt Kelleher and Shoko Teruyama's studio in the mountains of western North Carolina. During the winter months, I was unable to drive to the studio because of the heavy snowfall and steep winding driveway, so I walked. Each morning I would pack a lunch and fill a thermos with coffee or tea for the long studio day ahead. The long trek gave me time to think about the pots I would make that day. After a while, I recognized my own habit of carrying the thermos and I began thinking about the challenges and possibilities it could hold as an object made of clay.

I enjoyed solving the problems of making double-walled vessels. The technical challenges made the process of invention fun. Brainstorming several possible ways to create a thermos, and the



Thermos set, approximately 9 in.
(23 cm) in height when stacked,
stoneware with glaze, wood fired.



Three lidded pitchers, to 15 in. (38 cm) in height, stoneware, anagama fired for 6 days to cone 11, 12-hour reduction cooling.

consequential failures and learning curve kept me actively involved in the process. In the end, though, with the technical problems resolved, I am much more interested in the aesthetic issues and the roles such pots play in our lives.

Finely crafted, thoughtfully made pottery can contribute to a renaissance of tradition and habit. My hope is that the pots I make can play a role and be a factor in a renewal of ritual. I strive to create pottery that is both considered and balanced, containing a healthy dose of spirit and care.

Many of the forms I'm interested in are built around the act of consuming and sharing liquids. I make coffee pots, lidded pitchers, teapots, and thermos sets. Part of my interest in these forms revolves around how much I enjoy drinking coffee and tea. I am very curious to explore how these forms function. I find it challenging to build such complex pots, with so many different elements needing to harmonize, allowing it to function both visually and physically. Clay allows me to play with the physical language of these forms. When I throw or handbuild, I'm engaged in the conversation. Curiosity often pushes the dialog, while the desire to find something new guides me forward.

Marketing my work is still very new to me. I've been making pots for about seven years and continue to be my own worst critic. Perhaps my own insecurity, or the belief that the next firing will be better, has prevented me from applying to more shows and other opportunities. I've participated in a few small art fairs, and have sold work out of a couple of art centers. I approached my first two galleries very recently, so that's still new to me. This year's "Strictly Functional Pottery National" was the second professional opportunity to which I'd ever applied—a residency at Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts being the first. I was accepted into both. So maybe I've simply been waiting for my work to evolve into something more personal, in its own slow time.

Kenyon Hansen lives in Marshall, North Carolina, and will soon be a resident at the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts in Helena, Montana. His work was included in "Strictly Functional Pottery National 2010" (www.strictlyfunctionalpottery.net) and also can be seen at the Signature Shop (www.thesignatureshop.com) in Atlanta, Georgia, and at Crimson Laurel Gallery (www.crimsonlaurelgallery.com) in Bakersville, North Carolina.