

Amsterdam Ceramic Artist Corien Ridderikhoff

Pottery that connects ancient tradition with modernity

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Published in Neue Keramik/New Ceramics Magazin december 2020

A portrait of the ceramic artist Corien Ridderikhoff born in Amsterdam (1953) and still active in the heart of this artistic breeding ground. For 42 years now she has steadily working on her impressive oeuvre, always renewing her technique and embracing new ideas. The blue white geometrical shaped and decorated Tulip Towers became her most prominent trademark.



Corien Ridderikhoff in the European Ceramics Work Centre, 2019, photo Ad van Lieshout

Education

Although Corien Ridderikhoff grew up in a family which was art minded, it was not naturally for her to go to artschool. To be sure of a job it was advised to Corien to do an education in manual skills.

The Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, nowadays an artschool, was at the time also a teacher trainings college for craftsmanship. There she specialized in

Ceramics and Wood. Especially the lessons of teacher Adriana Baarspul made her enthusiastic about devoting her life to ceramics.

Fascination for Japanese culture

In Paris she visited, during a study trip, the Musée national des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, or Musée Guimet for short, where a lot of Japanese ceramics can be seen. This had a major impact on her work. Corien, who was already fascinated by the Japanese culture started to make tea bowls and pots combined with wooden and ivory lids. She also fabricated lid boxes out of stoneware clay plates, in the form of houses, temples and pagodas. This work was usually glazed with reduction glazes, such as celadon, ash glaze and tenmoku glaze. The designs were mainly ment as tableware.

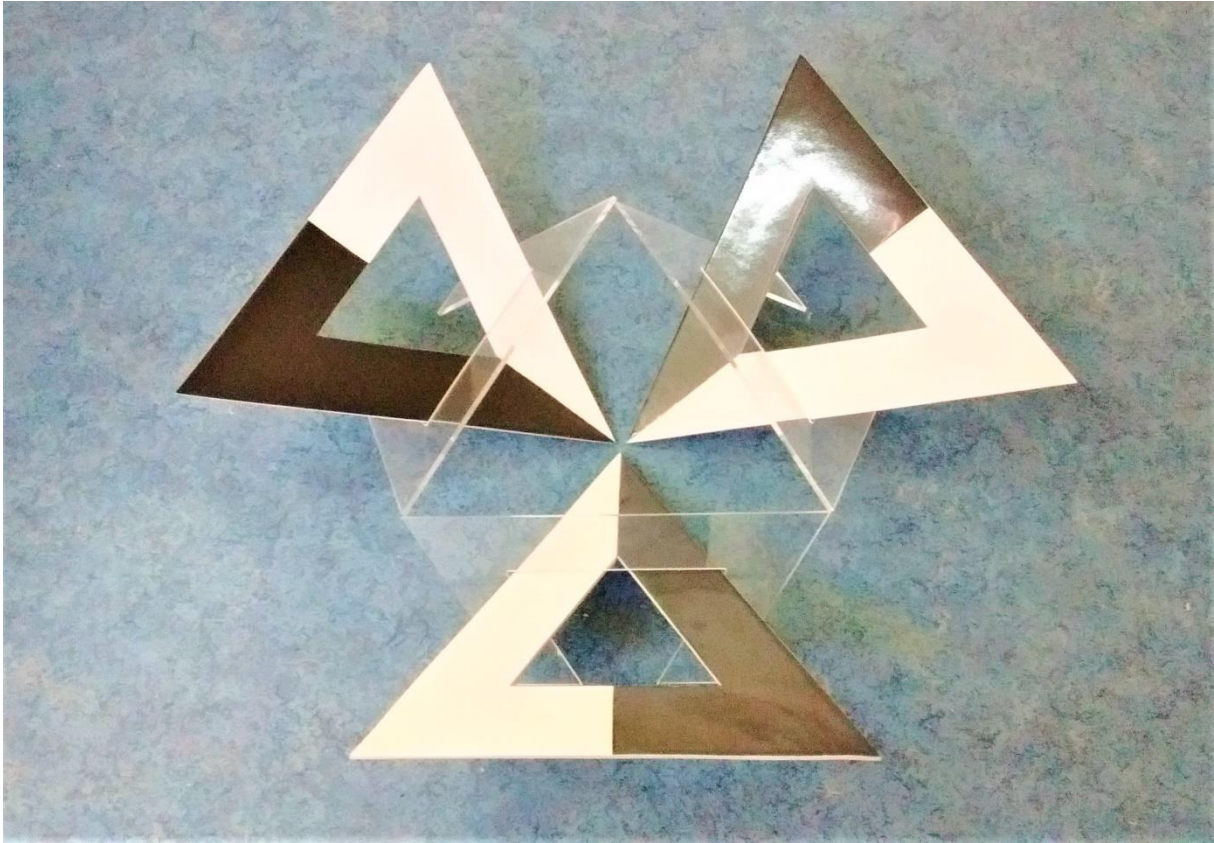


Pagoda, 1978, Salt glaze on French grès, Height 22 cm length 16 cm width 16 cm
Made in de Ceramik Work Centre Heusden, Photo Corien Ridderikhoff

Characteristic of the work is always a very accurate and subtle finish. Corien works on the wheel with stoneware as well as porcelain. The angular shapes are made up of slabs of porcelain.

The latter method has been mostly applied since 1980 when the work of Corien Ridderikhoff became geometrical in shape and decoration.

At the same time her objects became more sculptural such as (stair) pyramids, regular polyhedra (Platonic Elements) and large objects composed of triangles of porcelain and sometimes in combination with plexiglass.



Triangles, 1982, Porcelain triangles, plexiglass semi-triangles, Diameter 80 cm height 25 cm
Photo Corien Ridderikhoff

European Ceramic Work Centre (EKWC)

The lifelong relationship with European Ceramic Work Centre is an important factor in the career of Corien Ridderikhoff. It started after her final exam at the Rietveld Academy in 1977.

The Ceramic Work centre was then located in Heusden a small fortified city on the river Maas in the Dutch southern province of Brabant. There she could experiment with methods of shaping and glazing and firing. The foundation for a professional career as ceramic artist was laid there.

Corien returned several times to the Ceramic Work Centre. By 1987 she created there a new rectangular designed teapot. The spouts and handles were made of triangular tubes and the body part of the pot was composed of angular diamond shaped cast components. The glazing was done in several stages. First a coloured glaze, then after biscuit-firing a wax decoration dipped in black glaze and finally high fired.



Tea set, 1985, Tea box, teapot, tea bowl, Porcelain, Height 10 cm length 14 cm width 8 cm
Box and teapot cast, bowl made on the wheel by Nirdosh Petra van Heesbeen
Developed in the Ceramic Work Centre, Heusden, Photo Corien Ridderikhoff

Last year Corien was artist in residence in the EKWC, by now established in the Brabant town Oisterwijk, where she developed a casting method for her pentagonal Tulip Towers.

The Tulip Tower

Another key moment in the artistic development was in 2004 when Corien visited the Ceramics Museum Princessehof in Leeuwarden.

The permanent collection of the museum contains one of the rare preserved Dutch 17th century so called Tulip Vases. And there the idea arose to give the Dutch tradition her own twist.

A tulip vase is a vase that is made to show cut flowers and in particular tulips, but mainly serves as a decor piece. In the 17th century, the ceramic tulip vases came from Delft and were decorated with a Delft blue or Chinese decor.

Tulip vases then called flower pyramids or flower holders, were placed as showpieces in the middle of the table in the main room. Only a century later people spoke about tulip vases.

Like other Dutch contemporary ceramic artists, such as Jan van der Vaart and Bas van Beek who were inspired by the typical Dutch tulip vases, Corien

developed her own design. The special features of her tulip towers are the pentagonal pyramidal stacked elements with geometric blue and white decorations.



Tulip Tower in production from 2014 until now, Porcelain, Diameter 21,5 cm height 30 cm
Till 2019 hand built from plates, after developing a casting method in the European Ceramic Work Centre, Oisterwijk the Tulip Towers are cast. The geometrical decoration is made with the wax resist method, Photo Corien Ridderikhoff

Batik Technique

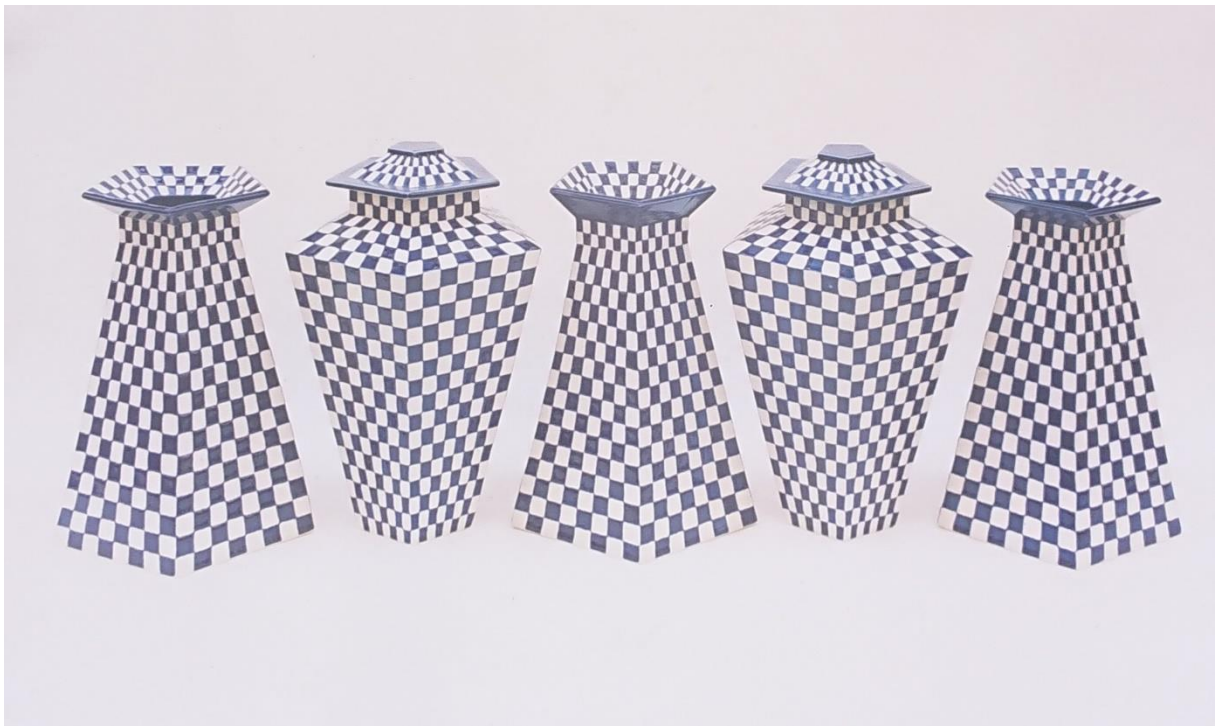
The tulip towers are made of porcelain built from plates and recently also made of cast elements. The work is decorated with liquid wax (batik) and then dipped in an indigo-blue glaze, creating a contrast between matte white and glossy blue after the glaze firing (1220 - 1250 degrees). This thick glaze also has a nice relief effect and invites you to touch.

Cabinet sets

Other products in the typically Dutch tradition are the so called Cabinet sets consisting of (lid)vases with purely decorative function.

A Dutch cabinet set usually consists of 3, 5 or 7 vases (with a lid), usually made of Delft Blue porcelain. This set of vases used to be hand painted and were all unique. Especially in the 18th century, the Delft blue cabinet set was a popular decorative element on top of a cabinet in the living room.

The cabinet sets of Corien are made in her unmistakable design and execution techniques. This also applies for a third product based on a Dutch tradition : the jenever (gin) bottles and cups. The Japanese influence is well expressed in the sake-like cups.



Cabinet set, 1996, Porcelain, Height 30 cm length total ca. 65

Built from plates. The geometrical decoration is made with the wax resist method

Photo Corien Ridderikhoff



Sake(gin) jars and cups in production from 2004 until now, porcelain, Jars height 21 cm length 4,5 cm width 4,5 cm, Cups 4,5 x 4,5 x 4,5 cm, Cast with wax decoration, Photo Peter Lange

Tiles and smiles

Apart from the main products, Corien also makes all kinds of other things with her own signature.



Ready made teapots with a golden smile, The faces are painted with goldluster by Corien and then fired at 850 degrees, Photo Corien Ridderikhoff

An important line in her oeuvre is tile making. After working on stacking shapes she likes to explore the flat surface. Recently she has taken two new paths in this field. One road leads to the “map tiles” with linear recesses in the tiles containing glaze in the form of a map like an atlas. The other tile line consists of grids made by cutting out rectangular shapes.



Labyrinth, 2004, 92 tiles made of frost-resistant stoneware, 160 cm x 160 cm
Located in a private garden in the Netherlands, Made in the European Ceramic Work Centre, 's Hertogenbosch, Photo Corien Ridderikhoff

Furthermore Corien Ridderikhoff makes ceramic jewelry, mini vases and candle holders usually in cast shapes. And as a funny distraction there is a "family of found objects" consisting of white porcelain teapots, coffeepots and cups found at flea markets that she provides with faces with a golden smile.

Collaboration with other artists

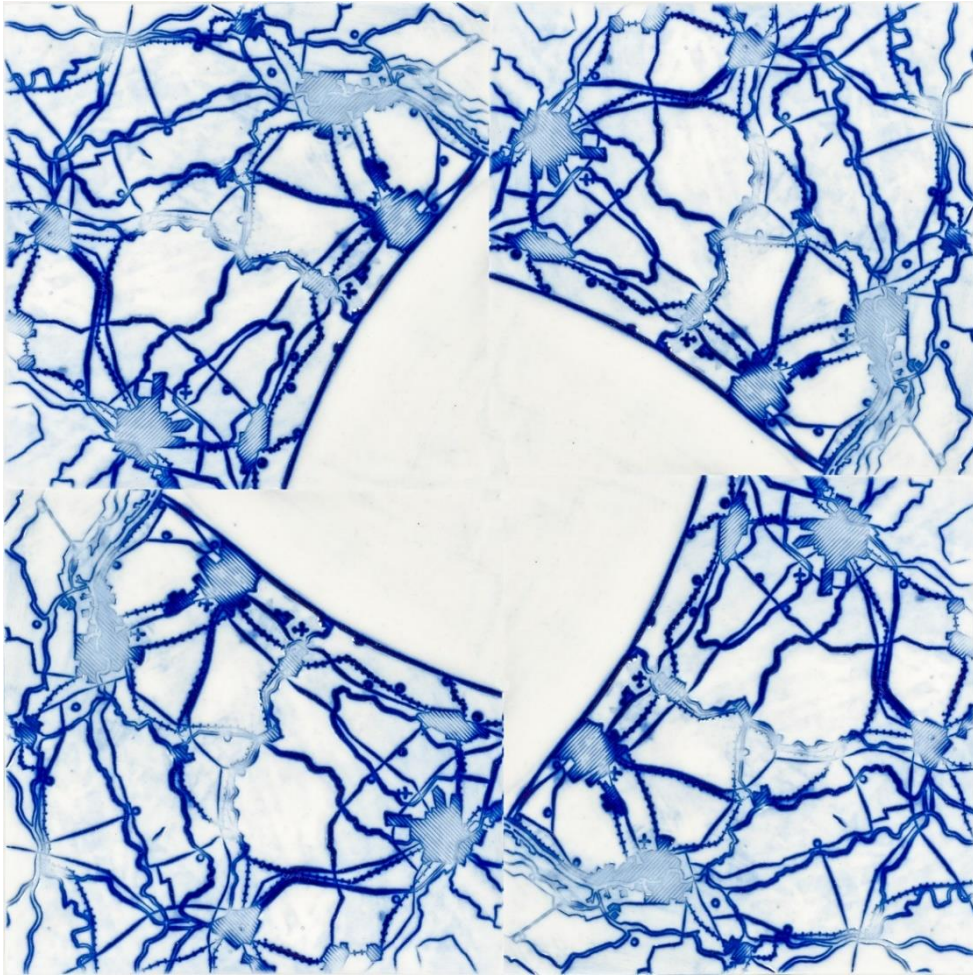
In 1978 Corien Ridderikhoff established together with colleague potter Klaartje Kamermans the Kleikollectief (Clay Collective) in the old Amsterdam neighbourhood known as De Negen Straatjes (The Nine Streets). They mainly made usable ware but also unique objects.

Corien worked with artists who made decorations in their own style. Among others Anki Posthumus, Eddy Varekamp and up to present day Gerhard Belgraver and Gerda van Kersbergen. Her little birds and chicks still populate a series of Coriens plates and cups that are popular among costumers.



Bird service, 2019, Cast pottery by Corien Ridderikhoff with engobe decoration by Gerda van Kersbergen, Photo Corien Ridderikhoff

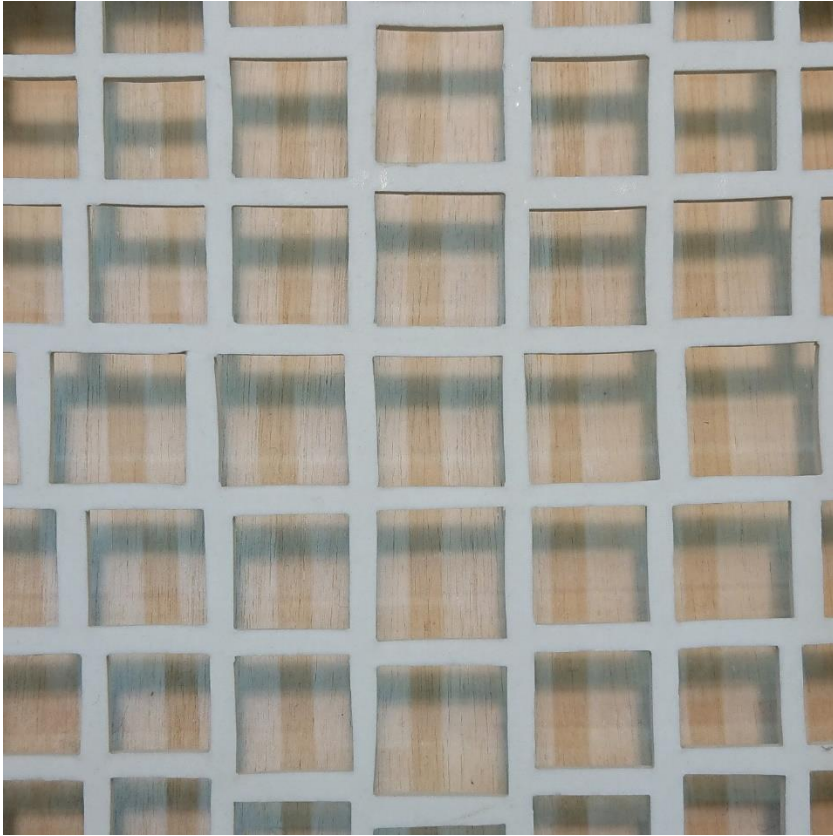
Since 2015 Corien continues independently on the Kloveniersburgwal one of the oldest parts of the Amsterdam City Centre. On a working day she often works on several things at once, because with some technology you have to wait until you can take the next step. She has to make strict plannings for (international) orders. Her Dutch production with a touch of Far East inspiration is located in many private as well as public collections.



Country tiles, in production form 2017, Four porcelain tiles with printed stamps of the province Noord Holland, Inlaid with blue glaze, Measures of one tile 12 x 12 cm height 4 cm
Photo Peter Lange



Cups, 2019, Porcelain, Diameter 6,5 cm height 10 cm, Cast with wax decoration, center pieces with drip glaze, Made in the European Ceramic Work Centre, Oisterwijk, Photo Ad van Lieshout



Grid tile, 2017, Porcelain tile with cut out squares, 25 cm x 25 cm height 4 cm
Photo Corien Ridderikhoff



Portrait of Corien Ridderikhoff, Photo by Merel Knaup