

A SAMPLING OF CONTEMPORARY WOODFIRED CERAMICS FROM SOUTH INDIA

The inspiration for this exhibition came about during my visit to India last year. While I have visited Auroville and Pondicherry many times over the past 15 years and have been aware of Golden Bridge Pottery, it was only during a three-month stay in Auroville in early 2010 that I met and interacted with the Golden Bridge founders, Ray Meeker and Deborah Smith, and with the other artists who have been invited to participate in this exhibition. Established 40 years ago, Golden Bridge Pottery, based in Pondicherry on the Coromandel Coast of southeast India, has played a pivotal role in the promotion and advancement of studio pottery throughout India. Their teaching programme has bred some of the best contemporary ceramists and professional studios in the country. The eight artists featured in this exhibition are, or have been, connected with the Golden Bridge Pottery, where they have had the opportunity to fire with wood as fuel, both in conventional kilns and in the anagama. Although they are not strictly woodfirers, they have discovered in wood-firing the expression and affirmation of their motivation, spirit and aesthetic sensibility. What struck me most when viewing the participants' work in their studios was each artist's enthusiasm and commitment, and I strongly believed that the world needed to see the quality of work that is produced in India. This exhibition is a result of my belief in them, their talent and their future. It showcases works that explore an Indian vernacular interpretation of the extraordinary effects found in the wood-firing process. I would like to thank 'Woodfire Tasmania 2011' for providing a perfect platform for this teaser show. In particular, I would like to extend our joint gratitude to Neil Hoffmann for his unstinting help and support throughout the organisational process. This is the first time that Indian contemporary ceramists will be showing as a group in Australia, and hopefully this marks the start of many bigger shows in the future.

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