

CLAY, COLOR & FIRE

A Collaborative International Mosaic Project

in Theodore M. Berry International Friendship Park, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA



“**Clay, Color and Fire**” is a new public work of art which will be located in Cincinnati’s first new park to be designed in the past 30 years - The Theodore M. Berry International Friendship Park - named for Cincinnati’s first black mayor who was also a United Nations representative to Africa. This project is proposed by a new Cincinnati partnership: the Sister Cities Association of Greater Cincinnati, the School of Art at DAAP/University of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Park Board.

WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS?

A call for master ceramist applicants has been sent to each of our seven sister cities of Munich, Germany; Nancy, France; Kharkiv, Ukraine; Harare, Zimbabwe; Gifu, Japan; Liuzhou, China; and Taipei-Hsien, Taiwan. Cincinnati participants include Jan Brown Checco (Project Manager), Suzanne Fisher (Cincinnati Designer), Kirk Mayhew (Workshop Manager), Jim Fearing (Architect), 16 student assistants in the UC clay workshop and 6 UC student assistants in project documentation.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

After juried selection of applicants, seven guest artists will travel in July 2003 to Cincinnati for a month-long summer workshop at DAAP/UC while living in the homes of Cincinnati residents. Each artist will provide one piece each of traditional and contemporary ceramic work for a group exhibition in DAAP showcases. Each artist will give a public slide lecture on the art history of ceramics in their hometown. In the workshop, each master artist will teach her/his creative process and techniques. Then the Cincinnati Designer and Architect will lead the group in design exercises following a general plan which will have been pre-approved by the Park Board. Each master artist will be assigned one column, and altogether the artists will design and fabricate nearly 7000 unglazed ceramic mosaic tiles to decorate the surface the colonnade of the TMBIFP Multi-Purpose Building.

TECHNIQUE AND PRACTICE

During four weeks of fabrication, artists will use motifs and techniques representative of their respective cultures. Red Ohio clay with a variety of colored clay slips will be used, with a possibility of some under-glaze decoration appropriate for a single high firing. Other materials such as pebbles and stone fragments from each country can be integrated. The lower sections of each column (subject to the heaviest wear) will be surfaced with complementary unglazed commercial tiles. Finally, the mosaics will be applied to the colonnade surfaces by a contracted professional tilesetter who will use specified colored grouts.



The Multi-Purpose Building of the TMBIFP