



Detail of the Mihrab of the great mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia

## the project

The *Iridescent* project takes its inspiration from an element of traditional Islamic architecture, the Mihrab, many examples of which are adorned with lustre ceramics. Twenty-one well-known ceramists have created contemporary works based on the principle of the bas-relief, the stele or the Mihrab, decorated using specific lustre techniques. The aim of the project is not the creation of utilitarian ceramic objects, but spaces of beauty, harmony and emotion.

## the film

The film briefly presents the origins of lustre ceramics in the Middle East and its evolution up to the present day. It shows us some examples of this precious heritage preserved in museums and visible at celebrated architectural sites in Iran and Tunisia.

In Nepal, Iran, Tunisia, and Europe, we are taken into the studios of some of the *Iridescent* project's participants, where we see what goes into the creation of lustre ceramics : the preparation of lustre glazes, decoration and lustre firing techniques, and the discovery of the ceramists' works as they come out of the kiln.

Finally, we are transported to Gubbio, an important historic centre of lustreware production in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy, where we meet seven of the project's participants who have come to try out their lustre techniques together and share some of the secrets of their trade.



## the book

The core of the book is the illustrated catalogue of all of the works created for the *Iridescent* exhibition by the participants in the project. Each of the artists presents their creative approach in a personal text.

The catalogue section of the book is preceded by a series of studies dealing in particular with the fascination of lustreware's iridescent highlights, its technical complexities and its history from 8<sup>th</sup> century Mesopotamia up to the present day, with many contemporary ceramists worldwide taking lustreware to new levels of expression.



Three steles by Alain Valtat, France

## the exhibition

The collection of the works created for the project is presented to the public in a travelling exhibition designed to be shown in museums, art schools and other cultural centres before it eventually joins the permanent collection of an Iranian museum.



Five variations by Azadeh Shooli, Iran

One of John Kuczwal's large steles.  
« The creative process when it happens and something good arises that is enough for me. »



an infinite play of light and colour

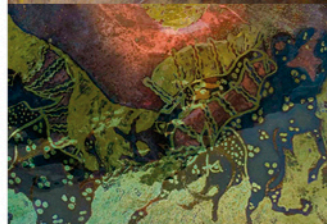
John Kuczwal,  
Australia

Sandeep Manchekar,  
India

Abbas Akbari,  
Iran

Ferenc Halmos,  
Hungary

Jonathan Chiswell Jones,  
United Kingdom

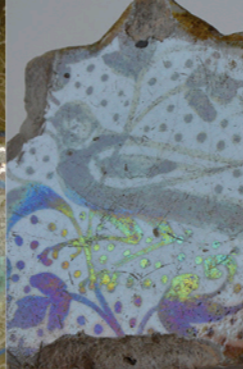


sources of inspiration

transparency, reflections

sacred architectures

early ceramics



Cover photo :  
Kashan lustre dish, 13<sup>th</sup> century, Glass and Ceramics Museum, Tehran

In the spring of 2017, Claude Passet, president of the association *Dialogue céramique*, and the Iranian ceramist Abbas Akbari discussed the possible creation of a new book on lustreware pottery inspired by the catalogue of the exhibition *Reflets* that the association had organised in 2012.

The new book would become part of the series of publications that *Dialogue céramique* had initiated in 2009 with the project *1001 cups*, followed by two others, *Inspired Clay* and *Painting Grounds*, all of them consisting of a book and a film on DVD. Two of the projects also included an important travelling exhibition.

The fourth project, *Iridescent*, includes all three components : a book, a film and an exhibition. As with the other projects, they are all completely bilingual, French and English.

The production of *Iridescent* began in October 2017, in Iran, with the shooting of some important sequences for the film. Thanks to Abbas Akbari, our little crew, made up of Claude Passet, the filmmaker Louk Vreeswijk and the ceramist Lise Cassani, were able to visit many sites essential in the history of lustreware.



dialogue  
céramique  
c/o Claude Albana Passet  
16, Petit Bel-Air  
CH-1226 Thônex/Genève  
Switzerland  
Email : claudalbana@gmail.com  
www.dialogue-ceramique.ch

a film, a book, an exhibition

Lustre is a technique of ceramic decoration characterised by its iridescence, a subtle play of light and colour that inspires fascination and wonder. Beyond the purely aesthetic qualities of lustreware, its history is closely linked to the creation of decoration conducive to spiritual awakening.

