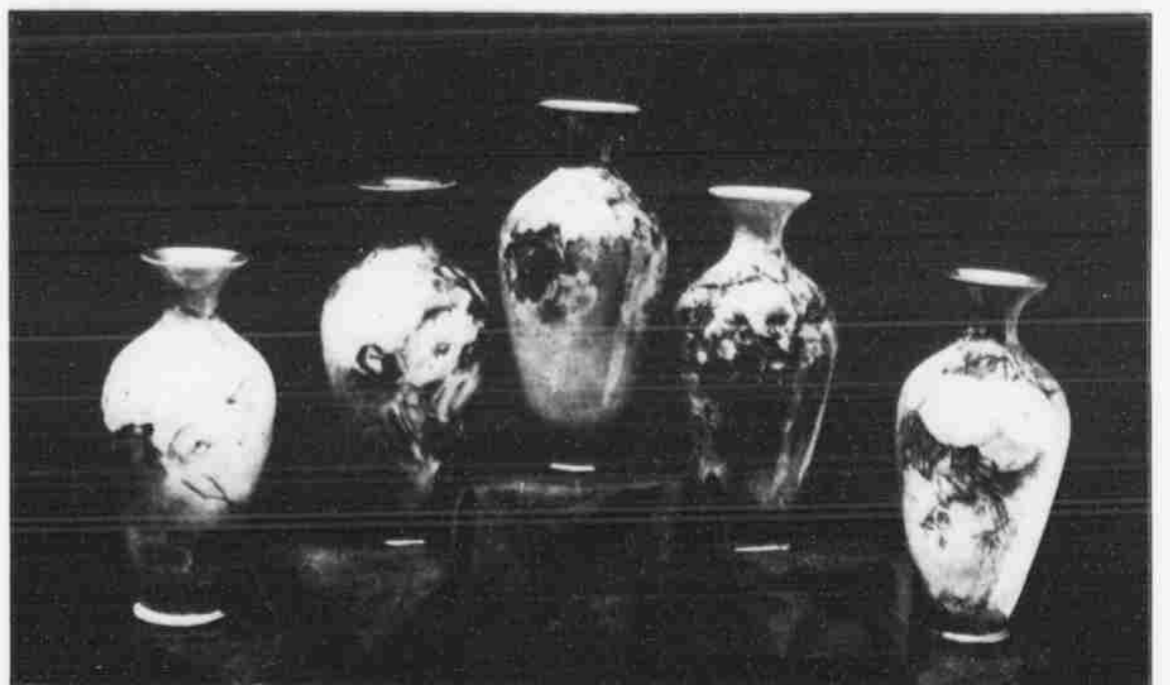
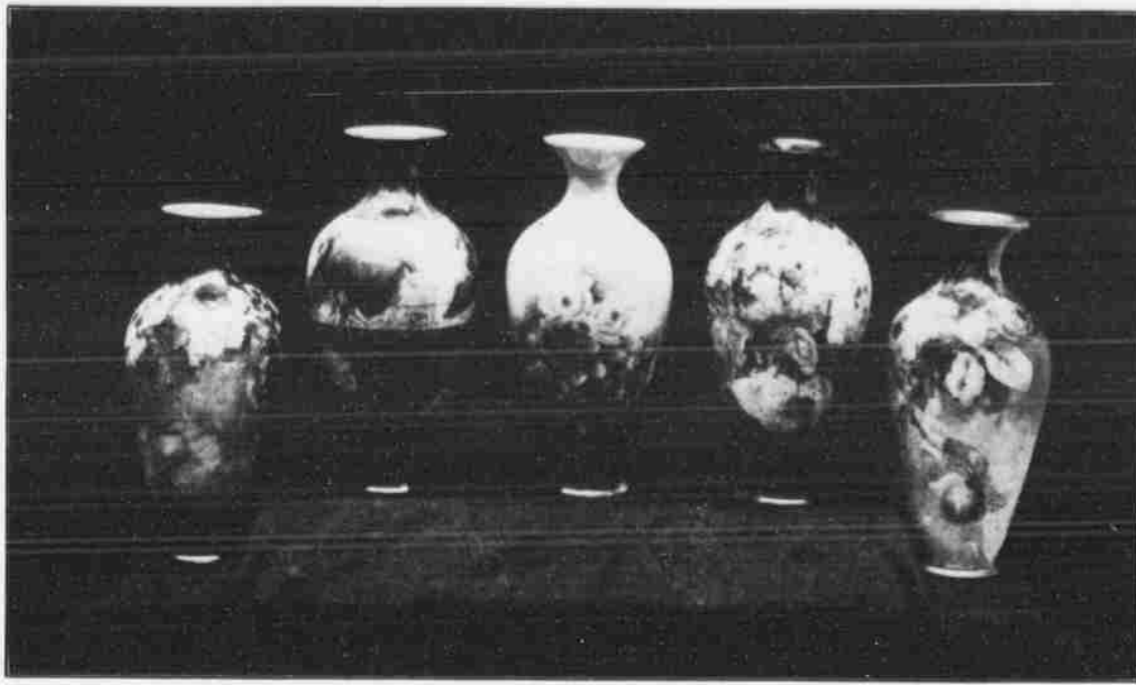


Ceramic Art and Its Followers

Vases by Nebraska Ceramic Club
Photographs Made by a Staff Artist



THE Nebraska Ceramic club was originally composed of only practical china decorators, for the purpose primarily of exhibiting at the World's Columbia exposition at Chicago. Since that time the club has continued to exist, with the principal object of giving an annual exhibition and sale and occasionally taking up a little work usually in the form of papers on correlated subjects at the regular meetings. This has generally been done in a rather aimless way, but last year the club started out with a definite plan which was so far a success that a similar idea was followed this year. Last year's work was found to be almost too heavy, as it consisted of a dozen plates of original design, the subject for each month being different. As the club only has nine meetings a year, this doubled up the plates on three months. Several of the members confine their efforts to special lines of work; others are amateurs without the time or facilities for keeping up with such an elaborate scheme, and others still are professional decorators, who, especially at certain seasons, are rushed with order work and classes. This year's work was accordingly simplified, retaining the working idea which was found to sustain the interest of the members, but reducing the number of pieces each member should decorate. The work for September, October and November was for all members, a Beelceek vase, to be decorated with roses in an original design and according to the decorator's individual taste. These vases were presented at the regular meeting, November 3, and only two of the twenty-two active members failed to comply with the conditions. Of the twenty vases shown two were strictly conventional

in design, one in monochrome by an out-of-town member and the rest in naturalistic style, varying from roses of delicate pink with light tintings to deep ruby roses with richly colored backgrounds. At the ninth annual exhibition of the club, which will begin on Saturday, the 29th, all these vases will be shown together, and separate from the individual exhibits of the members, giving a better opportunity for comparison of the differences of technique and thought of the members.

The Nebraska club is endeavoring to secure the traveling and comparative exhibit of the National League of Mineral Painters for public inspection at the time of its regular annual exhibit as the National league numbers among its working members some of the foremost decorators of china in the United States. This exhibit has, among other items, thirty vases of larger size and different in shape from those decorated by the Nebraska club, which are in competition for a gold medal. There are about fifteen portrait heads in competition for a silver medal and the same number of plates competing for a bronze medal. The fact that the Nebraska club has never joined the National league has made it difficult to secure suitable dates and terms with this exhibit, but the club is hopeful that the matter will be arranged so that Omaha people can compare the work of outside artists with that of its own decorators who are anxious to prove that they have no fear of the results of such a comparison.

The Nebraska club is limited to an active membership of forty-five and now has half that number. It is very much to be hoped that the tenth anniversary of the club will see the roll full, as the interest is greatly

increased, while the size of the club insures a continual changing of the leaders in work, bringing out as it does a greater variety of ideas. For the rest of this year the work of the club requires a paper each month by one member to be illustrated by work from three other members. This brings only four members into active service each month and permits each group to enjoy the work of the others and devote more thought to their own.

Last year the club made provision for the admission of members who could not do the work required of active members by providing for an associate list. The associate members have immunity from work and fines, have the privilege of voting, but are not allowed to exhibit and must not do any actual china painting unless they become active members. Associate members have the preference over outsiders in case they desire active membership and the list is full.

Although the plans for another year's work are necessarily indefinite and nebulous now, the interest this year has been so keen that there is no doubt but another annual exhibit will find the club with a still more interesting quota of work to show.

As an art and an industry there is probably no branch of decorative work that has gained as general favor as ceramics, or china painting.

While it is among the oldest branches of art, it is of but comparatively recent years that it has come within the reach of those who have been chiefly instrumental in bringing it to its present standard. Ceramic art in America can be found to date back as far as 1646 and 1769, but it was not until about 1850 that its pursuit

warranted any number of decorators or firing establishments here. It was in 1861 that Edward Lycett, a skilled decorator, came from England to New York to establish the work that has earned for him the title of "father of amateur china decorating in America," but even at this time all material had to be imported from abroad.

In 1874 a class was organized in Cincinnati for the purpose of experimenting in overglaze colors and it was the work of this class that formed the great part of the exhibit at the Centennial exposition of 1876 that gave to this new art the impetus of which its subsequent success is largely the result. China painting as an art has met with unparalleled success, and today assumes a place of almost national importance. This success has only been reached through repeated failures and at the sacrifice of time, money and labor, and the old adage, "Experience is the best teacher," was never more apropos than when applied to china painting.

The fact that ceramics admits of such a profitable combination of art with the commercial—a combination in which the latter has only served to stimulate the advancement of the former—has especially recommended it to favor, and to this is due in no small degree its remarkable recent advancement. The general culture of the age demands originality and individuality in its arts and china painting makes the same demands upon one's powers as any other branch and the same methods of study must be pursued to attain success.

While the rolls of America's most successful china painters includes the names of many men it is a matter of comment that

the great majority are women. Of these women the name of Mrs. Bellamy Storer is known world-wide as the originator of the famous Rookwood pottery, which, while it is a distinct branch of ceramics, being under-glaze decoration, is still a branch of this art. The wonderful beauty of the colorings has made Rookwood among the valuable and expensive wares to which the leading potters are every year paying tribute in attempted imitation.

One of the great mediums of ceramic advancement is the exhibit which has done so much, through comparison, to appreciate a proper appreciation of its merits. The next requisite after a proper appreciation is a buying public. The shrewd buyers always choose the best, thereby becoming a factor in raising the standard of that class of art work. Naturally the ceramists are divided into two classes, those interested from a wage point of view and those interested because of their love of the art. Frequently it is said that ceramic art is only a fad, that having so extensively engaged interest is already on the decline, but present day indications certainly do not verify such an assertion.

Improved materials and kilns for the perfection of this work are every year being brought out at great expense of time, work and money, and the last few years have seen the issue of several books on the subject and the establishment of several publications in its exclusive interest. All of these have contributed to the advancement of ceramics, but it is the true worth and beauty of decorated china that have given it its place among the branches of the truest art, and that will certainly retain it there.

Gleanings From the Story Tellers' Pack

WHO DOUBT, says the Saturday Evening Post, if any French mot or repartee ever surpassed in delicacy the reply made by an East Indian servant of Lord Dufferin, when he was viceroy of India. "Well, what sort of sport has Lord — had?" said Dufferin one day to his "shikarry," or sporting servant, who had attended a young English lord on a shooting excursion. "Oh!" replied the scrupulously polite Hindoo, "the young Sahib shot divinely, but God was very merciful to the birds."

Major Pratt, the United States army officer who is in charge of the Carlisle Indian school, admits that many of his graduates who return to tribal life fall into Indian ways again. Therefore, he is doing all he can to prevent the educated Indians from going back to the reservations.

He tells of an incident he saw at a western Indian agency. A squaw entered a trader's store, wrapped in a blanket, pointed at a straw hat and asked: "How muchee?"

"Fifty cents" said the merchant.

"How muchee?" she asked again, pointing at another article. The price was quoted and was followed by another query of "How muchee?"

Then she suddenly gazed blandly at the merchant and asked mildly:

"Do you not regard such prices as extortionate for articles of such palpably and unmistakably inferior quality? Do you not really believe that a reduction in your charges would materially enhance your pecuniary profits? I beg you to consider my suggestion."

She was a graduate of the Carlisle Indian school.

A good old German lady who keeps native wine and some chickens in a suburb was waiting on a guest when one or two hens set up a cackling of such vehemence that it suggested to the stranger dire disaster—either already happened or impending—in the chicken park. Immediately the big rooster took up the refrain, and in his hoarse bass and inexcusable falsetto—"malady and not melody"—made more rumpus than all of the other fowls put together.

"What in the world is the matter with those chickens, Frau?" asked the visitor.

"Ach! De schicken, she haf de eggk laid; an' venn she an eggk haf laid de rooster he bin so glat he help her sing."

A well known lawyer and writer, a resident of Oneida county, N. Y., who has long since passed away, used to tell a joke on himself, says a Utica paper. His story was to the effect that he called for a hootjack at a country hotel at which he stopped. Now this lawyer and writer had very large feet, and the hostler to whom he made the request, after casting a glance at the big boots, exclaimed: "Why, man, it isn't a hootjack you want for those! You need the fork of the road!"

"Down in Tennessee one day," said Senator Carmack of that state, quoted by the New York Times, "I met a person whom I knew slightly, and who was of convivial habits. He had all the symptoms of a 'left-over.' In fact, as he came down the street he had so close a resemblance to a

man who had surely been imbibing the previous night that I stopped and said to him:

"'Did you have a good time last night?'"

"'I did,' he chirped, with a cheerful grin. 'I had a magnificent time. It's a funny thing, though, senator,' he added confidentially, 'I was out all night, and yet I can't remember a single thing that occurred after 9 o'clock.'"

"'You can't,' I said. 'Then how on earth do you know that you had a magnificent time?'"

"'Because,' he explained, 'I heard the policeman telling the judge about it in the morning.'"

A certain woman of title recovered from a rather severe illness. An adept with the brush and a regular exhibitor of water colors in connection with the local art gallery, it was supposed she had overworked herself.

When the doctor was called in an old nurse, who had been in the family many years, bored the medical man with her opinions as to the cause of the attack.

"It's them long hours an' hard work of the paintin' what's done it," she remarked directly she saw him. The doctor was preoccupied and scarcely heard the remark.

"Has her ladyship exhibited any traces of hysteria?" he suddenly demanded, turning to the talkative nurse.

"Oh, no, sir," was the unexpected reply. "They was water colors, all on 'em—real beauties, too!"

By all accounts the affable manner which Prince Henry displayed in this country is habitual with him. While jaunting around on his auto he nearly always travels incognito. On a recent trip he stopped to buy some benzine and the storekeeper was so pleased with his customer that he offered him a cigar, which Henry took with thanks. Later in the day he stopped at a tavern, shared his sandwiches with the host's children, chatted with the hostess and on parting got from her a bunch of roses with the injunction to place them in water as soon as he got home.