

JOHN GLICK (1938 -)

Born in Detroit, MI, John Glick received his art education at Michigan schools (Wayne State University and Cranbrook Academy of Art), ultimately settling in Farmington, MI where he continues to work at the Plum Tree Pottery he founded in 1965. While Glick has created a large body of non-functional vessels and sculptural pieces, he is mainly known for his functional pottery, particularly unique sets of dinnerware as well as casseroles, plates, and teapots. "If I were searching for a perfect counterpart to the pleasures making the wares give me, it would certainly have to be hearing from people who find special pleasure in their daily use and who seem to clearly sense the enjoyment the making of it provided me." ¹

Glick's Plum Tree Pottery, since its founding, has encouraged an assistantship program as is common in Europe and Asia, allowing the volume of work the pottery produces but also providing, through mentoring, a connection with the community and the wider ceramic arts community. From this active program a number of young artists have gone on to their own careers in ceramics.

1. Glick, John. "The Studio Potter: A Question of Quality." Quoted in Clark, Garth. *American Potters: the Work of Twenty Modern Masters*. New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1981.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT – JOHN GLICK

"The potter who finds life in his work finds it daily in small glimpses, and perhaps these are the successes as much as anything. For example, shapes evolve guided by forces apparently outside my control. This is instinct, intellect and openness to change fusing, into what I think is the most positive force behind any potter's approach: evolution or growth....

I cannot show one piece and say "this speaks for my beliefs in clay." I am attracted to simplicity, as well as complexity: my work continually reflects my re-examination of how these two poles can coexist..or not, in a given series."¹

1. <http://plumtreepottery.com/johnglick/>

RESUME – JOHN GLICK

1938	Born: Detroit, Michigan
1960	B.F.A., Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan
1961	Awarded Louis Comfort Tiffany Grant in Ceramics
1962	M.F.A., Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

1962-64	United States Army
1964	Sets up the Plum Tree Pottery, Farmington, Michigan
1972-1973	Louis Comfort Tiffany Grant in Apprentice Assistance Program With Rostislav Eismont
1977	NEA Fellowship Grant Michigan Foundation for the Arts Governor's Award Farmington Community Arts Council Artist in Residence Title and Grant
1988	NEA Fellowship Grant
1990	Michigan Council for the Arts, Individual Artist's Grant
2001	Elected an American Craft Council Fellow Governor's Michigan Artist Award, ArtServe Michigan
Present	Plum Tree Pottery, Farmington, Michigan

BIOGRAPHY – JOHN GLICK

Born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1938, John Glick stayed in his native state for his education, receiving a B.F.A. in 1960 from Wayne State University in Detroit, studying under William Pitney, and an M.F.A. in 1962 from the Cranbrook Academy in Bloomfield Hills. At Cranbrook he studied under Maija Grotell and that early influence resulted in a number of procedures that he later incorporated in his Plum Tree Pottery. His thesis was concerned with the interaction of maker and user in functional pottery, and among the pieces used to illustrate his thesis was a set of dinnerware, an interest he would continue to develop. The two years following his graduation were spent in the U.S. Army where, fortuitously, he was stationed in West Germany near the Westerwald district, a salt-glaze center. During his 18 months there he had the chance to observe German potters, studying not just their work but also the methods employed in their studios, and became very interested in establishing a small pottery devoted to making original work. Upon completion of his service he returned to Michigan and began working as a full-time potter. His wife, Ruby, taught in the art department of the high school while his studio was getting settled.

In 1965 the Glicks decided to make the commitment to setting up a permanent studio and Plum Tree Pottery, where he continues to work today, was founded on the site of a large fruit orchard in Farmington, MI. He began by making dinnerware, using as examples the plates done for his Master's thesis. Orders came in slowly and then became more frequent. From the start he chose to deal directly with the family ordering the set so that the completed set would suit their needs and tastes. As his work evolved, he began guiding his clients toward newer ideas he had developed rather than continuing the work he had done in the past. Such a production requires a great deal from the potter, both physically and creatively, but Glick enjoys the challenges. His one-of-a-kind settings have been so popular that it has been difficult to keep up with the

orders. Originally his sets were conservative, with the decoration and style of the individual pieces matching. A commission from a friend, weaver Eileen Auvil, changed this when she asked that all the pieces not match, and that Glick just “have fun”¹ with it. As a result the settings became more varied and decorative combining both the client’s choices and intended use with Glick’s instincts for decoration to produce a set that was composed of unique pieces, all blending as a whole. In 1979 he was honored by being chosen to make a set of dinnerware for then Vice-President Mondale’s mansion. The set consisted of 16 place settings with six parts to each setting. Included with the set was a technical instruction set for the staff who would be dealing with the dinnerware.

His early work, in addition to the dinnerware, was primarily functional, making traditional vessels that showed a strong connection with the past. In his production he makes use of assistants, a concept more familiar in European or Asian pottery than it is in America and arising out of his experience in Germany. Glick views the apprenticeship practice as both enhancing the production volume of the pottery and mentoring young artists. In general, his assistants throw the pieces and Glick works mainly on the decoration and finishing but throughout the period of assistantship each will also learn the practical and financial aspects of running the business; make and maintain the equipment; interact with clients and collectors; and in general experience all that goes into operating a studio.

The influence of such masters as Hamada and Leach in addition to Japanese, Chinese and Korean pottery is evident in the decorative ware, but he has also been influenced by the Abstract Expressionist school. He uses the surface as his canvas, drawing with slips and glazes in a loose, free style and has also used stains and oxides to create his abstract designs. Multiple glazings are common as are multiple techniques. In addition, he often creates his own tools in order to achieve a particular effect for his work. The result is work that is in the finest tradition of the artist craftsman.

In addition to functional ware Glick has also done purely sculptural work such as electroplated stoneware sculptures done in the 1960’s and more recently wall panels. The mantel series done in the late 1990’s are still-life compositions, a collection of memories in a sense, all done in clay. Some of his vessels, as well, could rightly be said to cross over from strictly a functional piece to a more decorative one. Glick has said that this diversity of the functional mixed with the sculptural is good for his work and keeps his work evolving.

Over his long career Glick work has appeared in a large number of exhibitions, most recently “Craft in America: Expanding Traditions,” a national invitational touring exhibition that will visit eight cities in two years and which will have a book published as well. His work is also in numerous collections, both public and private, including The Mint Museum, The American Craft Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Renwick Gallery, and the Museum of Art in Yixing, P.R. China. Glick has been the recipient of several prestigious awards, among them two NEA Grants and election as an American Craft Council Fellow.

Although John Glick has worked as a studio potter continuously since the start of his career, he has also made time to give workshops and lectures and to write a number of articles, both on his craft as well as the more practical aspects of managing a pottery studio. He is generous with sharing his studio and his time through tours and events for members of the community as well as craft groups and other art organizations.

Glick states that there are two important components that have made his long career as a ceramic artist so successful: the first is love of process, the sheer joy of making pots: "You could say I am hopelessly in love with bits and pieces of the making of pots"²; and the second is the element of curiosity, the ongoing quest that keeps his work fresh and evolving. As his art has evolved, so have the methods he uses – technology as well as his own inventions have made some aspects of the work easier, and as the entire field of ceramic art has expanded, his drive to explore has led him to expand along with it. What has not changed, as Glick says, is the "private truth that tells each of us a very personal answer, woven of the same threads of mystery that has captured the spirits of artists through times past."³

1. Glick, John. "Studio Dinnerware." *Ceramics Monthly* (December 1979).
2. <http://plumtreepottery.com/johnglick/>
3. Ibid.

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_____. "Studio Management Revisited: Reflections on Working in my Studio During the Last Twenty Years." *The Studio Potter* 20 (June 1992): 15-18.

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Videos and Cassettes

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"Contemporary Ceramic Teapots." American Crafts Museum. CP-788W VHS

"Functional Pottery." American Crafts Museum. CP-777W VHS.

"John Glick: An Artist and His Work." Birmingham, Michigan: Sue Marx Film, Inc.

"John Parker Glick Interviews, 1981 July 8". Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art, Oral History Collection. 1 sound cassette (28 p. transcript)

GALLERY REPRESENTATION – JOHN GLICK

The Works Gallery, 319 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147

Pewabic Pottery, 10125 E. Jefferson, Detroit, MI 48214

Sybaris Gallery, 202 E. Third Street, Royal Oak, MI 48067

AKAR Gallery, 4 S. Linn Street, Iowa City, IA 52240

Red Lodge Clay Center, 123 S. Broadway, Red Lodge, MT 59068

The Clay Studio, 139 North Second Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

WEB SITES – JOHN GLICK

<http://plumtreepottery.com>

Main web site for John Glick and the Plumtree Pottery

<http://www.rasa.net>

Interview with Samantha Krukowski , "John Glick's Journeys and Evolutions"

<http://www.studiopotter.org>

"Towards Humanism in Apprenticeship" article by John Glick

<http://www.ci.farmington-hills.mi.us/Community/HistoricDistricts.pdf>.

Web site about historic Farmington Hills, MI. Page 46 shows John Glick home and pottery located in an old farmhouse.

<http://www.sulross.edu/~arts/john%20glick%20bio%20page.htm>

Short biography and picture of John Glick

<http://www.snyderman-works.com/works/artists/ceramics/glick/glick.html>

Illustration and statement by John Glick

http://www.thedetroiter.com/b2evoArt/blogs/index.php?blog=2&title=john_glick_retrospective_looking_back_ma&more=1&c=1&tb=1&pb=1

Review of John Glick Retrospective, September 27, 2006

<http://www.cm.aces.utexas.edu/faculty/skrukowski/writings/johnglick.html>

"John Glick: Journeys and Evolutions" Interview with Samantha Krukowski

http://www.stewartstewart.com/artists/glick_john/index.html

Biographical sketch of John Glick

<http://www.artistsguilds.com/ceramics/johnglick.htm>

Brief statement about John Glick plus illustration

April 17, 2007