

PRESS RELEASE  
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**New means of promoting and defending contemporary ceramic arts**

'While most or all public venues have been closed, information technology has opened new avenues for contemporary ceramic art', stated Pierre Dutertre, co-founder and President of the 'Printemps des Potiers'.

Notwithstanding the current health and sanitary situation, we have decided to maintain the exhibition 'Terre Minérale et Végétale', by offering an alternative digital event. Just a week after the start of the third lockdown in France, we managed to set up a 360° immersive and interactive opportunity to discover the work of the 8 ceramicists from the comfort of your home.

**Once again, this year, the cancellation of our annual symposium (ceramics market, exhibition, and conference) has resulted in great social, cultural, and economic loss not only to the tourism industry but for the seaside town of Bandol as a whole.**

Following the government's announcements, we have decided not to endure the repetition of last year's events. It is impossible for us to continue to consider the current sanitary curtailments as fatality. We cannot continue to feel so powerless. **As a result, we have gathered our ideas and thoughts with the purpose of defending artistic creation at a time when art and culture are deemed unessential.**

We chose to work with 'L'Agence du Studio de la Cagnarde' which specialises in conceiving and managing digital projects. This local business shares our concerns with local cultural issues. **The set-up of the website and the actual conception of the virtual visit of the exhibition were achieved in a seven-day record time.** Anthony Girardi contributed his exceptional photographic talents.

We don't claim to offer an experience which will compete with a real life visit of the exhibition. Besides, that wasn't our objective, attached as we are to the texture of clay, to touching and feeling a work of art. However, this endeavour has allowed us to give these eight artists' work visibility beyond borders and other restrictions. Our ambition is to offer a breath of culture to the public, using the means at hand, and possibly, to bring genuine delight ... resulting even in the acquisition of one of the works of art exhibited.

Since the news of the inauguration of the virtual exhibition on the 10th of April at 20:00, over a thousand individual visitors from 25 different countries have been to the website. We have counted more than 50,000 hits with the various elements of the online exhibition: audio guides, fact sheets, zoom-ins on the exhibited work, etc. All these features providing genuine added value, have, so far, contributed to really involving the public in their visits. **Users' feedback has been equally encouraging, beyond the interactive elements of the visit, this invitation has allowed in some aspect, a deeper and more meaningful experience of the show. This was completely unexpected.**

We are proud we didn't give in to the current circumstances, and happy to have found new means of promoting and defending contemporary ceramic arts, as we have been doing relentlessly and with passion for 37 years. Great prospects are opening up for us!

**L'association Printemps des Potiers**

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