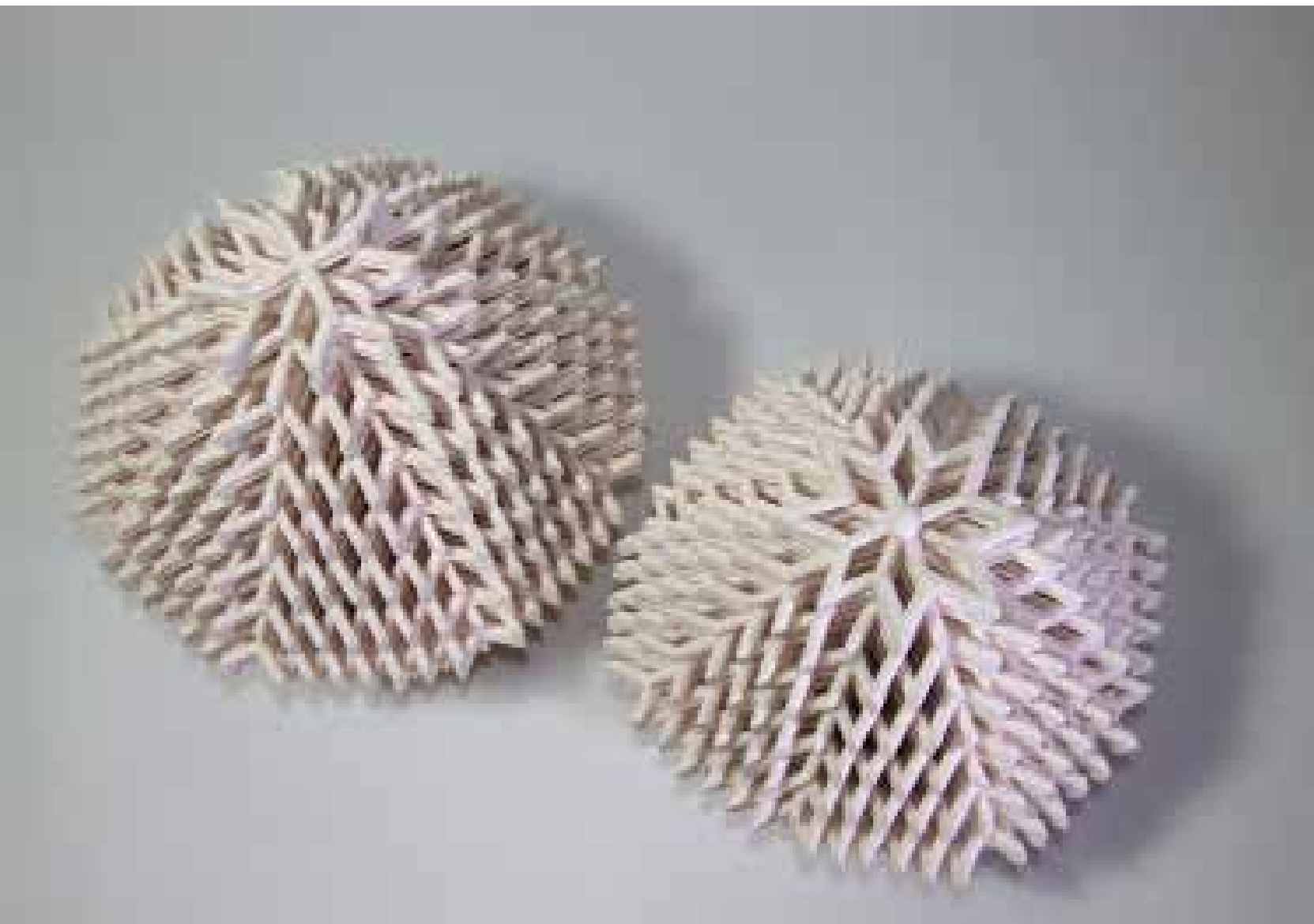


In studio with Marga Boogaard

EVELYNE SCHOENMANN



*M*arga, let's start with your biography and your professional career.

I came into contact with clay by chance. From the age of 40, I became severely hard of hearing. This is a hereditary condition in my family. It made me feel insecure and tense and I started looking for activities that would give me relaxation and in which I could express my creativity. After attending a workshop, I became enthusiastic and then took the three-year course, the Nederlandse Keramiek Opleiding, NKO, in Gouda. This was followed by the extra year of glazing and the extra year of hand moulding. They were wonderful years but also very tough

as a hearing-impaired person. With the help of solo equipment, fellow students and teachers, I persevered. In that final year, you had to start choosing your own direction. I then started experimenting with extruded rolls of clay. Just because I had already made a ball from thick rolls of clay. I thought it should be possible to do the same with small rolls. When I presented a number of works at school, my teacher said I had tapped into a source because this technique did not yet exist. And so my ceramics career began. After my final exams, the NKO bought a piece and I was immediately allowed to exhibit at the annual ceramics market in Gouda. There I won the second prize. After

that, I won several prizes such as first prize at the ceramics market in Dwingeloo, second prize at the ceramics market Dordrecht and first prize of the Nationale Kunstdagen (National Art Fair) in Rotterdam. My work can be seen in galleries and art fairs in The Netherlands and abroad, including in Denmark, Germany and Belgium. Many of my works have found a nice place there. It is very nice that my work is appreciated and that I was able to do this as my job.

By layering the individual clay rolls, you create depth, three-dimensionality. Do you think up the shapes in your head and then start to work freely, or do you make a drawing at the beginning?

It depends on what pops into my head. Sometimes I start from a drawing and go my own way after making a few layers. I can never actually predict how the end result will turn out. Working in different depths makes the work much more exciting. So many surprises arise and that makes it so interesting to work this way. Often, the next work then already arises in my head. It often happens that 4 or 5 works emerge from the basis (the drawing). These then do not resemble each other in the slightest. I love playing with the rolls and the depths and each work is unique.

I have the feeling the shapes of your art pieces arise from geometric figures which awakens the viewer's imagination. In your 2021 pieces, for instance, I see the crystal structures of snowflakes. Tell us please what animates you to make these forms.

Geometric shapes attract me the most because this is where I can use my imagination the most. The more lines and squares, triangles and round shapes I incorporate in a drawing, the more the work comes to life. The more I can play with the shapes and come up with surprises. Often, the shapes are formed from the outside in and simultaneously worked into different depths. Then turned around and formed from the outside in again. And always different from the previous work

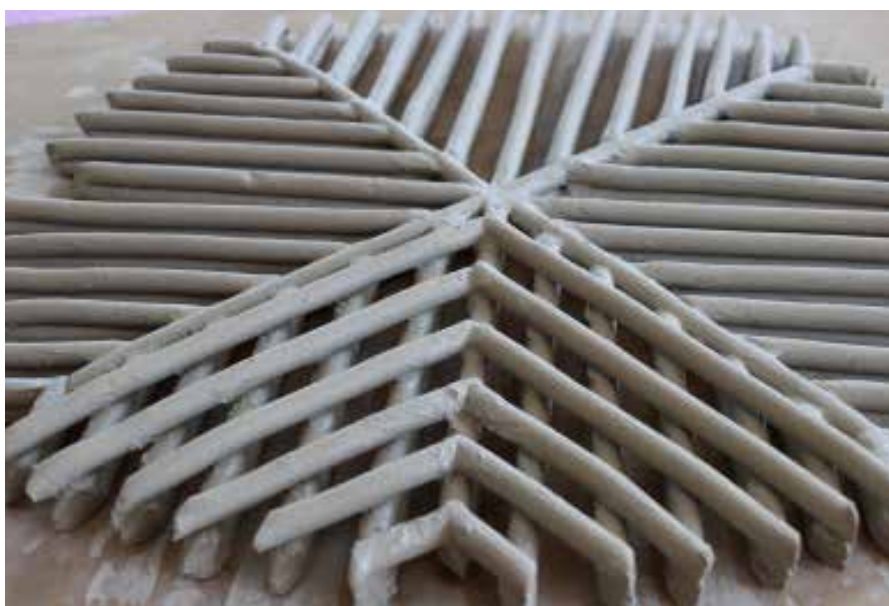
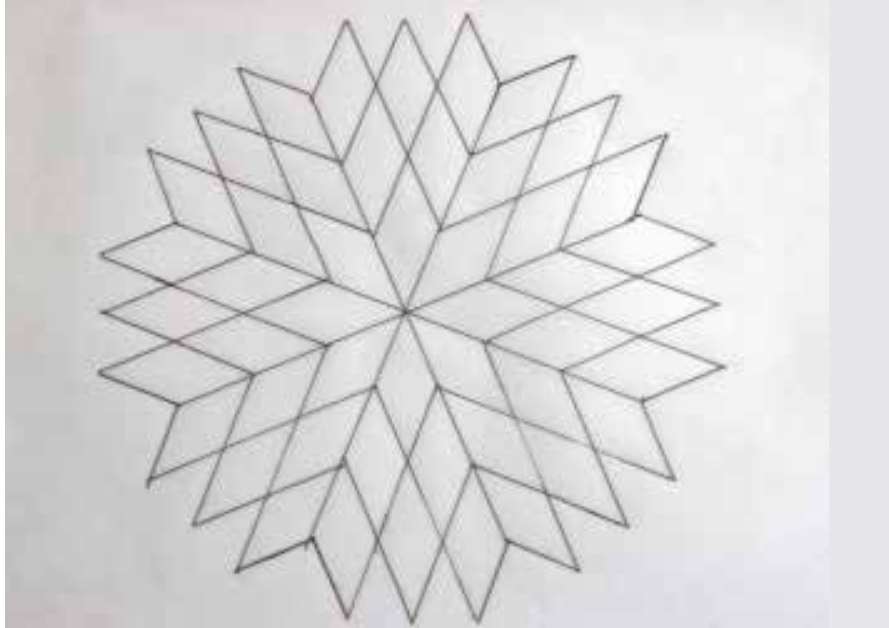
Can you use your special technique with all forms, or do the layers come out best in round shapes like bowls and spheres?

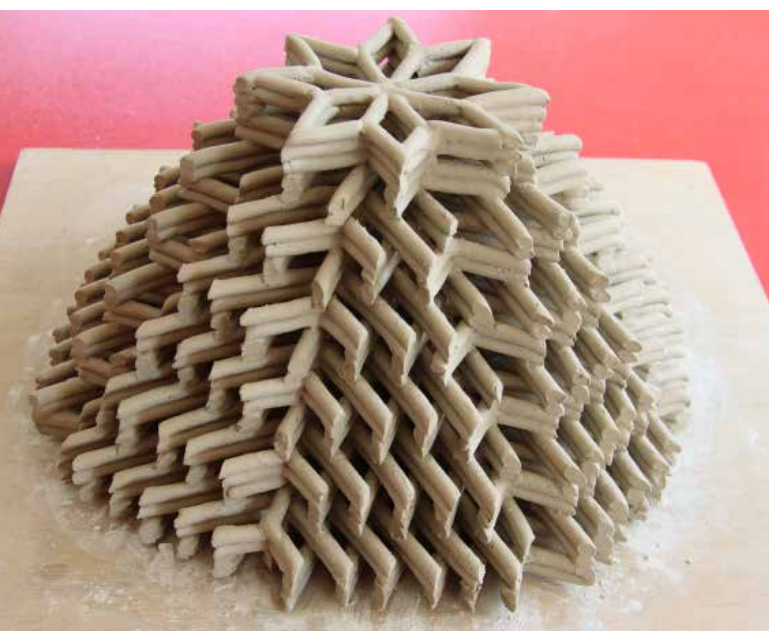
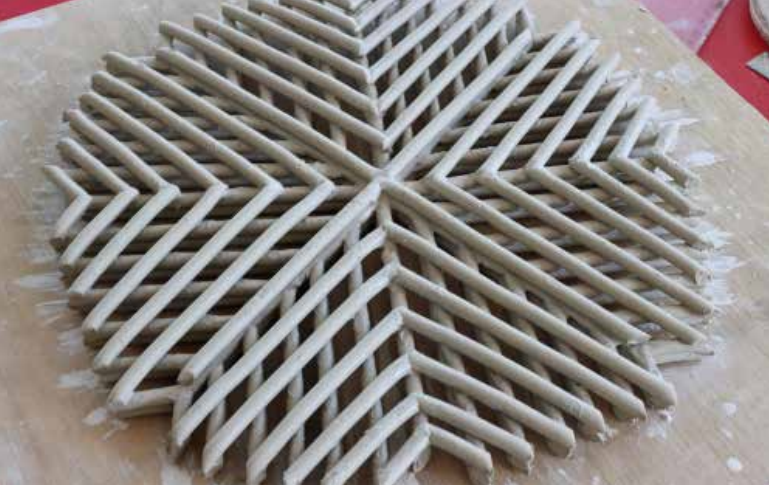
I can use my technique in many forms. A few years ago, I worked mainly with rectangular shapes in a diamond pattern. I also made many line games. My work is always evolving and changing.

Please explain the technical steps from A to Z that led to the artwork shown here.

This work is a series with different surface finishes to emphasise their uniqueness.

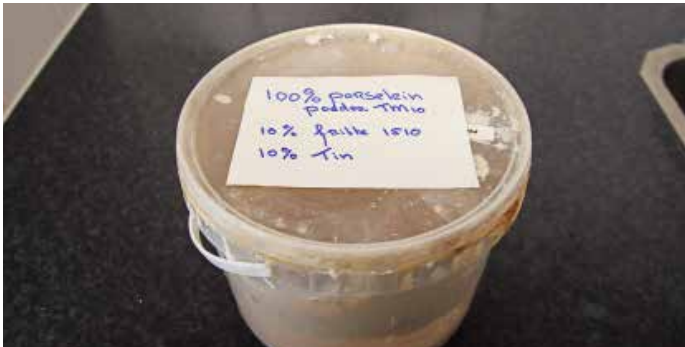
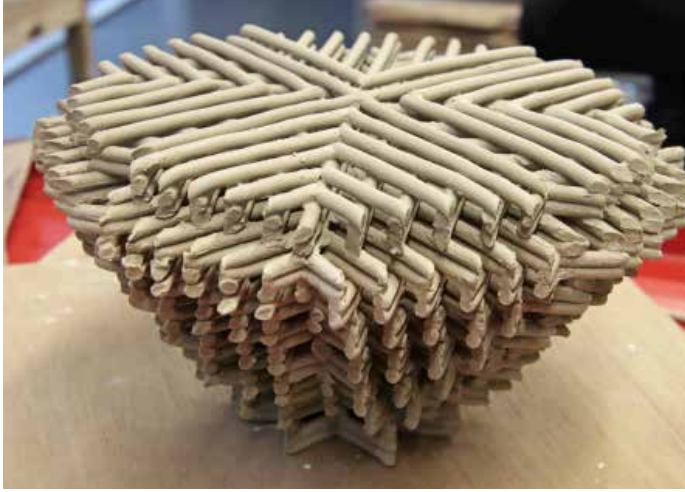
The clay I use for this is without grog so that the clay can be pressed through the extruder. I start from a design on which the rolls are divided





into eight equal parts. The subsequent rolls are connected to it in a V shape. The next layer is placed on top in exactly the same way. I do this to make the work less fragile. At layer three, the work is again divided into eights. But the lines now meet at the point where the V shapes touch. And then divide the rolls again as in layers one and two. The next layer is worked inwards. You repeat all the steps from 1 to 4 again. And so I continue working until I get to the top. This will be the bottom of the work. All the rolls are mounted together with clay sludge. I remove the excess clay sludge each time with a brush. Also, I can't form the build-up one

after the other because the work will collapse. So I wait several days each time before continuing. I also have to make sure all the triangle points are neatly formed on top of each other. Otherwise it becomes messy. By design, an interesting construction work is formed because the work becomes octagonal. So it is very important that I work very accurately and precisely with a lot of patience. If the work has to wait then it is dried under plastic. This also has to be done carefully, because if it is dried too quickly, the rolls will start to diverge from each other. And that is certainly not the intention. After a few weeks, the work can be turned. So the top



is under and forms the bottom. Then you proceed in the same order as the bottom. So build up four layers each time and then four layers inwards until you reach the top. And touch up each time and wait until the clay is leather-hard to continue again. After at least three weeks, carefully let the work dry a little more each time until it can air dry further. Very carefully, I then put the work in the kiln and biscuit fire it to 1020°C. Then I spray spattering porcelain sludge on the work. I do this until it creates a rough effect that enhances the work and makes it more beautiful. I keep the colour of my works calm. I use the colours black, white and terracotta. And sometimes I add a detail of gold lustre. This keeps the attention on the shape and does not distract. Of course, the colours black and terracotta are made with porcelain powder and the addition of oxides. When the finish is thoroughly dry I fire it in the electric kiln at 1140°C.

If you hadn't become a ceramist, what other training would have fascinated you?

I think photography. This has also become a passion alongside my work as a ceramist. Actually, it also originated with ceramics because it is very important that the photos of your works of art are of good quality. And look good on websites, brochures, etc. I also love beautiful travel, nature and animals. That's where I can put my passion for photography to good use.

The time of crises and uncertainties concerning the pandemic seems to be behind us, but there are still very sad events in this world that should concern us. How do you process them? Do they flow into your work? Do you still travel with your art?

A lot has changed recently. I use the time to experiment and seek distraction in my studio. Because I have been very busy with exhibitions in recent years, I like to focus on new developments in my work. The good times are bound to come again. I hold on to that. The work I made is called EXPECTATION. The expectation of better times for all people and climate. I hope to continue with my work and show my art at home and abroad for many years to come!

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Evelyne Schoenmann's next
interview partner is

Janina Myronowa, Ukraine/Poland

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