



outernational monologues II The plate with no name

This outernational monologue is about the 7 aspects that bring you to build up your knowledge about west-german pottery and in the meantime discovering that the plate with no name, as stated in H. Makus books "50-er Jahre Keramik" and "Keramik der 50er Jahre" finally can be stated as recovered.

Research can take years, and one question could result in several. In 1998, Arnoldsche published the book '50'er Jahre Keramik'. The author of this book, Dr. Horst Makus, who can be stated as one of the authorities on German 50's Ceramic, asks the reader for information on 3 unknown pieces (page 330).

In his newest book, known as 'Keramik der 50er Jahre' and published 2006, one of the items mentioned in the 1998's book still remain unknown and the reader again is asked to identify this mystery piece.

We call this plate, as shown below 'the plate with no name'. Isn't it beautiful ?



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After 9 years it is time to find out something more about it, but where to start?

Possibilities to get to the point..have a closer look on/at the object(s) to build up reference and knowledge.

- Have a look at the decoration, maybe it turns up at another piece, marked by sticker
- Have a look at the markings and their variation, maybe they turn up at another piece, which is known or distinctive by sticker.
- Have a look at typology of used letters and /or numbers, they can be a great help although they are willing to change throughtout time.
- Have a look at shapes, particulary how curves and/or edges have been shaped and try to definy a style.
- Have a look at the type of clay used; firing colour, grainsize, chamotte and differentiate between them.
- Have a look at exterior details; rims, edges, pourings, handles.
- At last, look at the glaze(s) used; different colours, structure of the underglaze, colourness, inside and outside glazes

If you made this information finally yours, you can go out and search for the common matching factor(s).

What makes this worth going for and what factors will give problems?

- Decorations have been 'invented' and copied, even some have been sold to other factories and reproduced. Grades of quality were due to the human factor with especially handpainted decorations, and decorations have been copied very close to its original. (fx. Paris by Ruscha and Paris by Keto)
- Markings can be distinctive, but it is known that different factories used same numbers, and even same numbers have been used in one factory. To give an example, both jugs (from Scheurich) are marked 414-16.



- Typology of the used letters and numbers can be a good deductive factor, but needs a trained eye and knowledge about changing typology styles in factories throughout years
- Shapes are mostly related to designers, and they tend to have a style of their own. It takes long to distinguish forms by designers, a knowledge about which designer worked in which period in which factory is useful.
- The type of clay is certainly a good aspect, because the several different industries tend to stay to their used clay, although this is not.
- Exterior details like edges or functional spares can give useful information as well. For example, the outer pouring of the Ruscha '313' form by Kurt Tschörner appears in two variants, the first being the original fifties detail, the second it's sixties counterpart.



- The glaze(s) used can be a firm argument. Together with fx. the clay used and the underglaze (the glaze the decoration is on/in) an own aspect can be defined. Colourglazes used can give indications together with decoration, also do different outside and inside glazes.

Yes, these seven aspects do interact and each one of them can reveal new impressions of other, involved ones.

Time to take a look at the plate with no name again, and describe the 7 aspects as plain as possible;



- Decoration: Incised curly portrait of a girl, several spaces filled up with coloured glaze
- Marking: A handsigned lonesome 'M' like sign
- Typology: No typology available
- Shape: Asymetric shaped plate
- Type of clay: Fine grained red firing clay
- Exterior details: The upper rim of the plate is not glazed, which results in an art frame-line, the back part wall-contact area is not glazed and stands out like an art hollow rim.
- Glaze: A white underglaze which gives, together with the redfiring clay, a cloudy effect. Other colours used are purplish pink, grain yellow and a brownish red

Agree ?

Then let's try another one and compare..

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- Decoration: Different
- Marking: Marei Handarbeit Reiher
- Typology: Different
- Shape: Similar
- Type of clay: Same
- Exterior details: Same
- Glaze: Same underglaze

These points bring us to the conclusion that the plate with no name finally can be identified as Marei.

But apart from that we hope that this will encourage you, as a collector or interested individual, to continue searching for beautiful and unknown (west-) german pottery.