

**ART FOR ART'S SAKE**

By CAROLYN HALL  
Special Writer

**Instructor James Purtzer Organizes BAA 'Pot Shop'**

Last night was a red letter occasion for the Bloomfield Art Association ceramics class. They opened their first high fire kiln full of ceramics.

This is the culmination of weeks of effort, study and practice by the first class of ceramists under instructor James Purtzer. Tall, affable and quiet, Purtzer has had the double task of teaching and organizing the BAA "Pot shop."

He constructed the sturdiest wedging table imaginable. On this table the clay is kneaded and pounded to an homogeneous plastic working stage with no air bubbles. He also cast plaster equipment used as bases for forming the pots.

"POTS" SOUNDS LIKE a very common word to apply to a poten-

tial work of art, but nearly all the words used by the ceramists have the same simple, earthy quality. Forming the moist clay on a spinning potter's wheel is called "throwing a pot."

Potters is an ancient art, as much related to the kitchen as the salon. Ceramics were formed for use. The shape was dictated by the clay body used, the purpose of the container and the traditional aesthetic preferences formed by the makers and users.

In spite of technological changes, ceramics remains basically the same, a clay body fired for strength and a glaze covering for waterproofing and decoration.



INSTRUCTOR JAMES PURTZER AND POT

THE HIGHER THE firing temperature the more vitrified (melted or fused) the ware becomes, the more like stone. Thus, high fire pieces, fired to about 2,300 degrees, are called stoneware. They have the same eternal permanence, richness of texture and warmth of understated color as igneous rocks. "My pots will still be here long after everybody's paintings have rotted," says Purtzer, in a rare burst of outspoken affirmation. Purtszer's pots have an heroic, eternal quality as if they could have been made any time in the last millennium but only by him.

PURTZER FOUND his forte by chance at the University of Nebraska under ceramics instructor Tom Sheffield, former Cranbrook. Purtszer is now completing his master of arts degree at Cranbrook with Maija Grotell, beloved and dedicated prime force in ceramics for many years.

Purtzer's house is like his life, largely taken up with ceramics. Who else do you know whose living room is two thirds full of big beautiful pots?

In his garage is a huge gas-fired kiln he has built. Amid hundred pound bags of clay, crocks of home-ground grog (not loach) but a clay strengthener, bisque (first firing) pots, and general, potentially useful, miscellany are pieces of equipment Purtszer has made.

ANOTHER SMALL shed reveals Purtszer's store of treasures. Old bits and parts of machinery and wood have been collected with a planned eventual use for each.

Purtzer is a builder. When much of life seems dedicated to the rapid obsolescence and waste, Purtszer constructs tools from the residue. When art seems caught in the quick quantity quest with no tomorrow, Purtszer creates for ages to come.

This same respect for the medium is imparted to his students. In this art form the artist is able to throw himself completely into the

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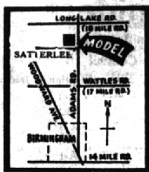
The Southern Oakland County branch of the Association for Childhood Education will hold a dinner meeting at Kimball High School at 6:30 p. m. tonight. Dr. Milton Covensky, the guest speaker, will discuss "Tradition and Change."

Dr. Covensky received his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan. His fields of specialization are "History of Ideas" and "History of Religion." He has just completed a book called "Reference Guide for Historians." At the present time, Dr. Covensky is an associate professor of History at Wayne State University.



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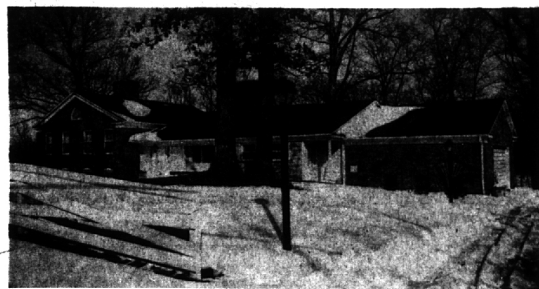


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