We thank Professor Georgette Zirbes and Professor Ivica Vidrová for making the gift of lifelong experience to both Slovak and American artists – and for making the gift of this superb exhibit available for all of us to enjoy. Collaboration and education across two cultures is one of the purposes of this exhibition at the Residential College. When Eileen and I created the Weiser Professional Development Awards this is exactly the kind of exchange and collaboration we had hoped would occur.

- Ambassador and Mrs. Ronald N. Weiser  September, 2008
Georgette Zirbes: "My work in this exhibition is the direct result of a residency at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, Slovakia. I participated with the support of a Weiser Professional Development Award, administered by the Center for Russian and East European Studies. While in residence, I worked closely with Professor Ivica Vidrová, her assistants and her students. My work from this residency incorporates shards of place from Modra, a faience folk tradition from the wine producing area near Bratislava which dates back to the 16th century. Meaningful conversations emerged across time and between places. The relationship of my surface drawings and shard compositions evoke these personal connections."

Ivica Vidrová: "My initial works were defined by two themes I was interested in. The main theme, which pertains and most probably always will, is EARTH – soil, clay and everything that is happening with it. Rocks, formations, imprints, footprints and wounds, rough structures on unlimited surface that I create borders for, become familiar with and elevate in my own way.

Combining refined porcelain and the rough stone clay technologically creates a lot of surprising defects that I aesthetically accept and respect. "Limited coloration" is the result, which I often elevate by gilding in discreet thin lines."

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Georgette Zirbes studied at DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, (B.A.), the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, (M.A.) and Kyoto City College of Fine Art, Kyoto, Japan. She has recently retired from teaching as a Professor of Art at the School of Art and Design, The University of Michigan. She is a former Fulbright grantee to Japan and to Czechoslovakia and a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Award. She has received numerous research grants from the University of Michigan. She was honored with a Distinguished Alumni Award from DePauw University. She was awarded the Arthur T. Turner Professorship from The University of Michigan, for outstanding contributions to undergraduate education. She received a Weiser Professional Development Award for a residency at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, Slovakia. Recently she completed a residency at the Sazia Ceramic Art Institute in Jingdezhen, China. She has participated in solo and collaborative exhibitions and projects all over the U.S. as well as in Europe, Japan, and China. Her works are included in permanent collections of several galleries in Germany, Czech Republic, Russia, Latvia, Hungary, China, and the U.S.

Ivica Vidrová was born in 1942 in Bratislava. She received her university studies at the Academy of Applied Arts, Department of Ceramics in Prague. Mrs. Vidrova is currently working at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. She has lectured as a Visiting Professor in Norway at the University of Tromsø, Clear Lake and at the University of New Jersey. She is recipient of the Weiser Professional Development Award for a residency at the School of Art and Design, University of Michigan. Mrs. Vidrova has exhibited in solo and group shows in several Slovak galleries as well as European ones, (Germany, Norway, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Italy, Czech Republic, and in America and U.S.A.). She has received several international awards and also her works are in the collection of many galleries in Norway, Hungary, Czech Republic, Croatia, Turkey, and Taiwan (U.S.A.).