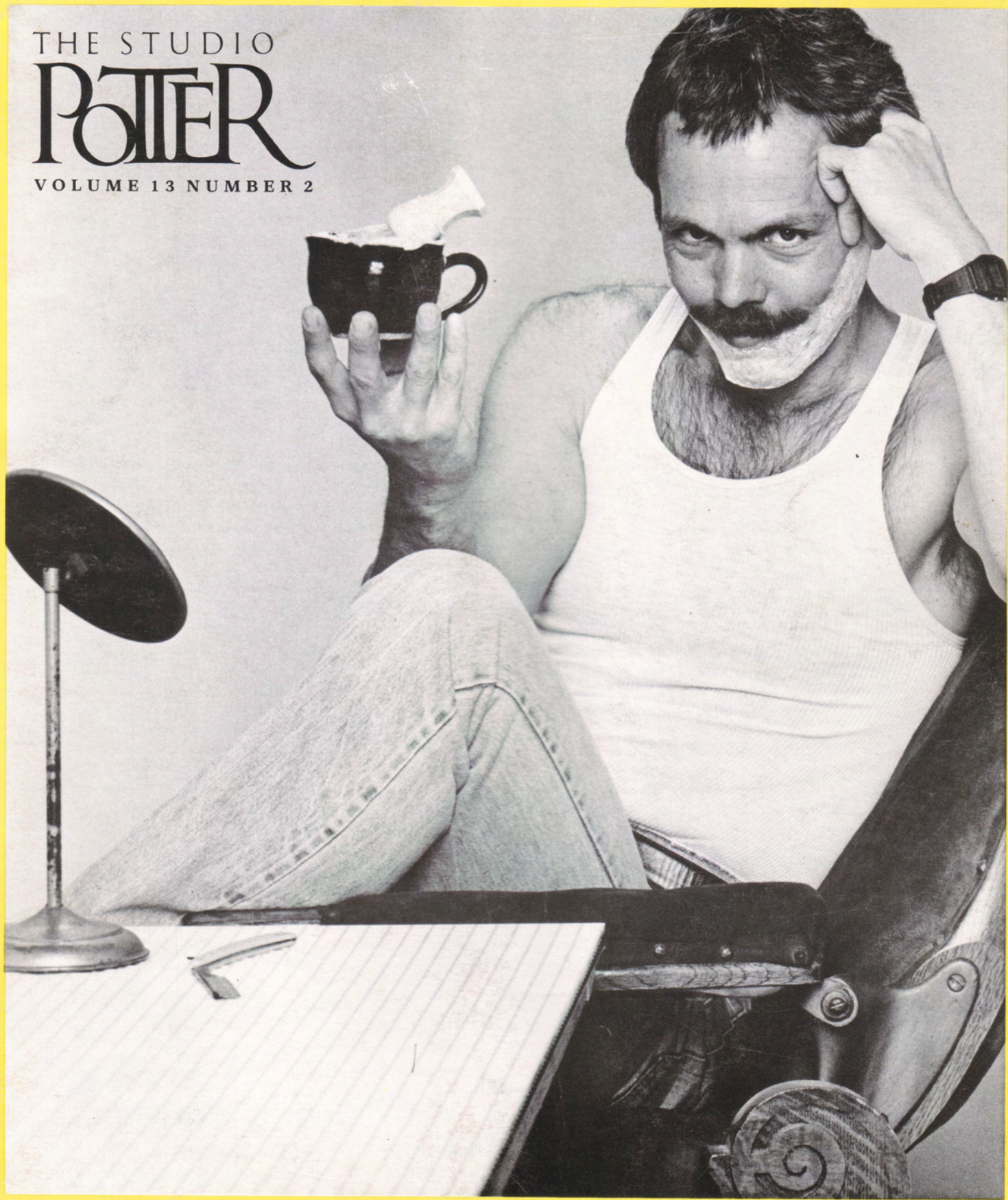


THE STUDIO
POTTER

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**Donna Polseno and
Richard Hensley**

Donna: My vessels began with an emphasis on decorative art rather than utility. During the ten years I have been out of school and living in Virginia the vessel for me has become a visual statement dealing with the containment of life, spirit, and emotion, using figurative gesture and form in an abstract way. Although not functional in the strict sense, my vessels nevertheless are affixed symbolically to traditional pottery.

Richard: It is critical for the studio potter to train him- or herself to constantly re-inform the work by taking on as much risk as character will allow. It is important to maintain that sense of curiosity which asks: "What would happen if . . . ?" rather than to succumb to the market pressures which demand a repeat performance of last month's ideas. It is an irony that to gain (or regain) control of one's work you must in fact lose control by taking as many risks as possible. Keep it fresh, keep it moving, avoid that always-looks-the-same trap that sneaks up on you when all along you thought you were doing pretty well with your clay voice and vocabulary.

I've been thinking for a year about reinterpreting the functional aesthetic which is the basis for what I make. As if to say to myself: you seem to have it right, you know the kiln, the materials, you know your own pace, and how to strive for a fresh performance in teapots and casseroles and dinner plates—*then what?* I'm trusting in what a former teacher used to say to me: "Your best pots are still in you!"

*Donna Polseno
Richard Hensley
Route 4 Box 177
Floyd, VA 24091*

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