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THE TEAPOT PROJECT

Module 2 of MA in Glass and Ceramics
University of Sunderland 2018

As an illustrator comfortable with working from commissions, and in anticipation of continuing this option but applied to ceramics, I chose to create a series of commissioned teapots.

These commissions were solicited from my cousins, brothers and their partners who were sent a questionnaire regarding their preferences. Some of them replied and they are therefore the clients. The replies for the most part were in line with how I would have expected them to reply. I am also familiar with their lifestyles, interests, houses and gardens which provide a wealth of information about who they are.

To facilitate this project I researched the subject in books, some magazines and online. Other experiences such as visits to conferences, exhibitions and collections have all broadened my perspective on ceramics in general and in particular in the UK. These are included in this review.

Project Purpose

Number 1 Focus

The teapot project allows me to focus on one object but from many viewpoints, combining an interest in form and function as well as improving my technical skills with clay construction and glazing.

Number 2 Content

Each teapot is to catered for the individual after a review of their requests. This variety suits my varied interests which range from graphic and illustrative skills, carving in relief and modeling in full 3D.

Number 3 Objective

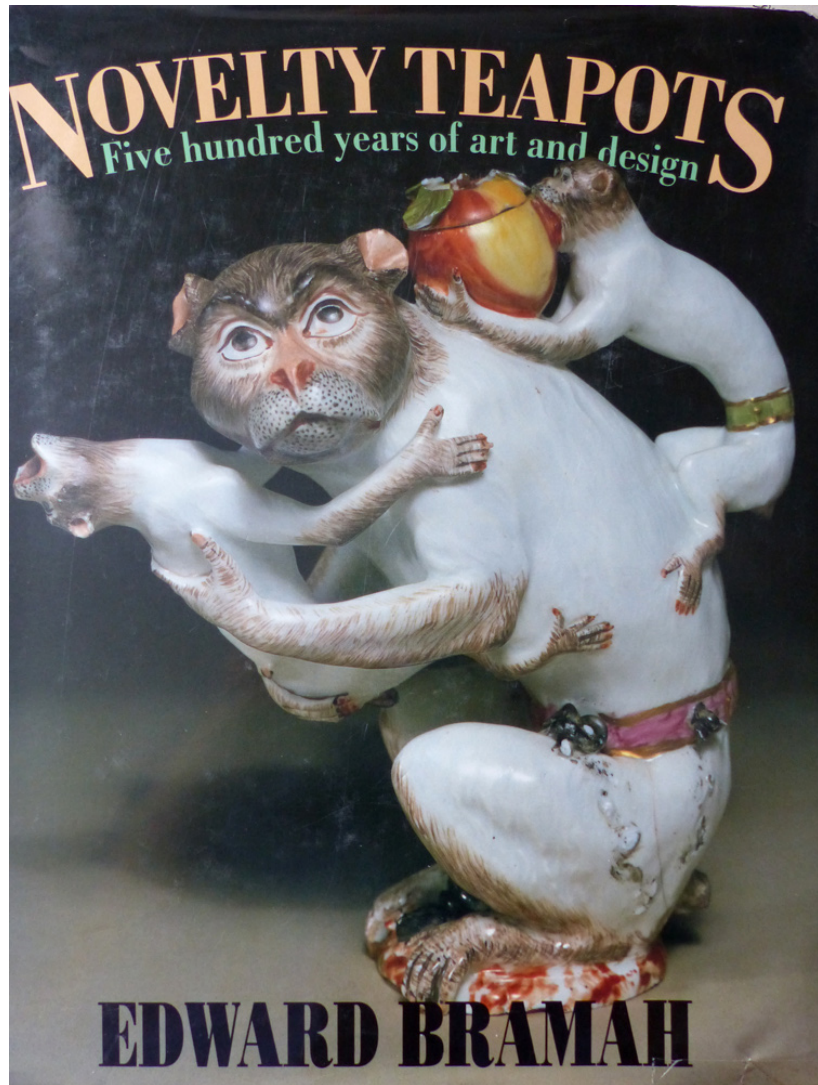
Having a cup of tea can be a social event or a time to sit quietly and pause in a busy day. I personally feel the need to spend more relaxed time both socially and individually. This project reminds me of this!

Questionnaire

1. If I were to make a mug for you what size, colours, designs etc would you prefer?
2. If I were to make a cup and saucer for you what size, colours, designs etc would you prefer?
3. If I were to make a teapot for you what size, colours, designs etc would you prefer?
4. If I were to make a teapot for your parents, what would be the highlights of their life or feelings that it could express?

The responses were varied from exact answers to general discussions and vague suggestions.

Novelty Teapots by Edward Bramah



Edward Bramah was a professional tea taster with T J Lyons and worked with representatives of the China National Tea Export Corporation, Shanghai to revive the 300 year old trade in China tea.

The book features subjects such as the Oriental Tradition, and The English Cottage Teapot.



There are also examples of prints both European and oriental that provide insight into the act of selling or drinking tea.

*A cup of Tea and a Dish of Chat
Coloured Aquatint
Egerton, c. 1825*



'Made in England' by Price and Kensington Cottage Ware reg. 845007

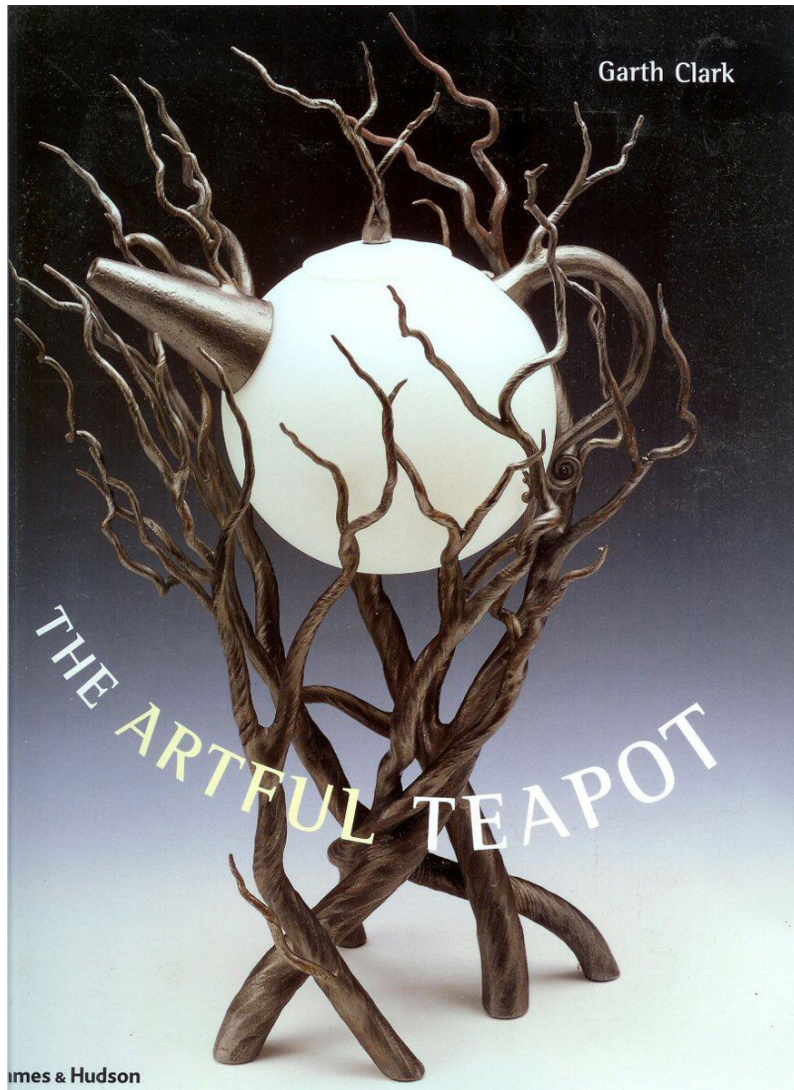
Staffordshire creamware portrait of Admiral Rodney c. 1780. Commemorating the Peace of Versailles, made possible by Lord Rodney's defeat of the French fleet.



Belleek teapot on stand 1865

18th century shell shaped teapot in the oriental tradition

The Artful Teapot by Garth Clark



Garth Clark <https://cfileonline.org/garth-clark/> is a well known ceramic collector, gallery owner and writer on ceramics and is currently editor in chief of cfile.org, a resource for contemporary ceramics. He was the keynote speaker at this year's **Restating Clay** conference held at York, and upset a few people describing his observation that the previous model for a studio potter was:

studio ► promote ► market and is now
studio ► market ► client

This book is a wealth of information about the history of tea in China, Japan, Britain and Europe, America. The chapters cover categories of and approaches to teapots and feature examples of makers.



Example: Chapter 8 Tannic Ark

In this chapter Clark talks about the appearance of animals on teapots, citing the dragon on Ming dynasty porcelain (mid-fourteenth to mid-seventeenth century) as being the first. He reviews the mythic and the symbolic use of animals as well as the potters who have used them.



Beatrice Wood 1900

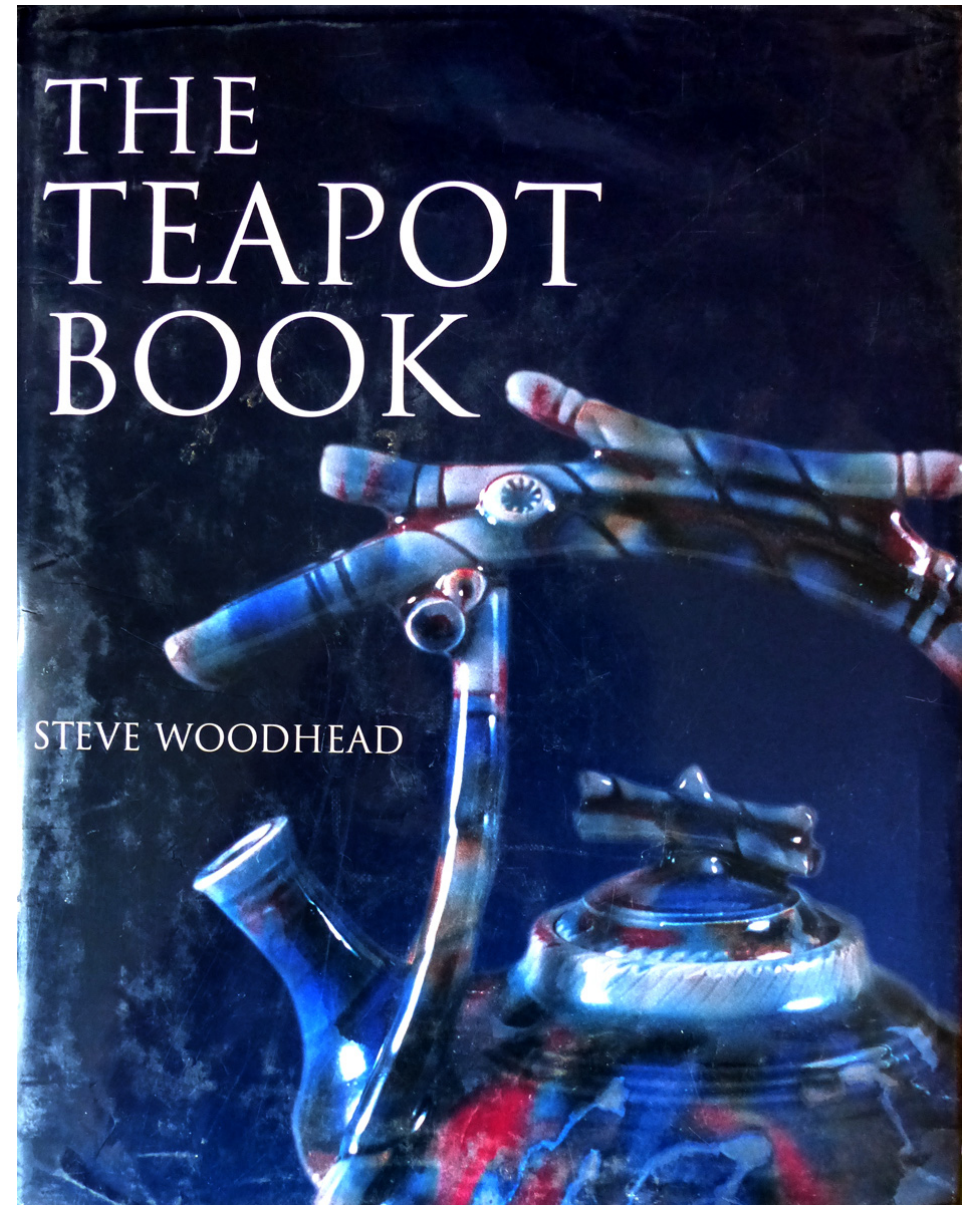
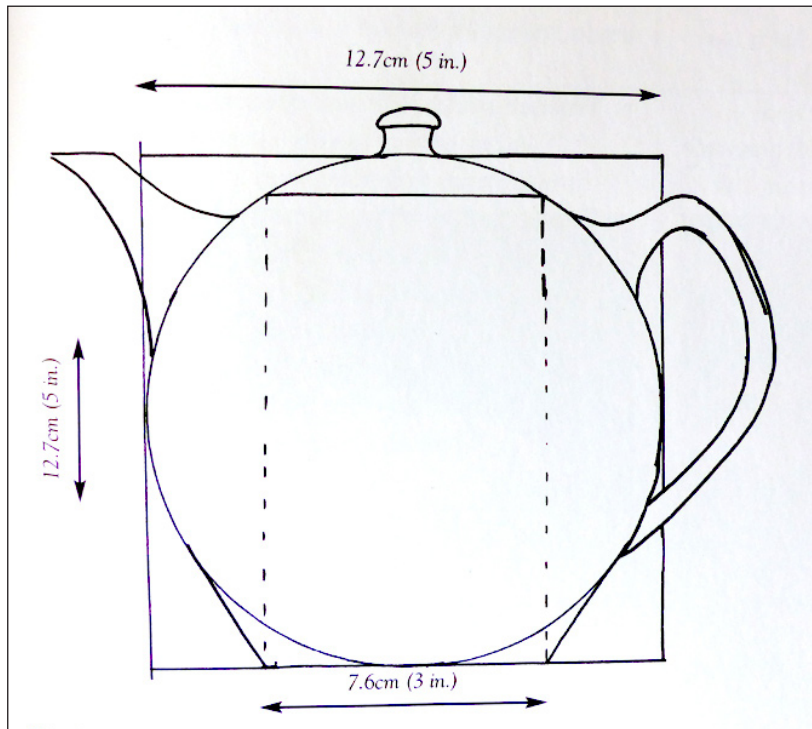
Annette Corcoran 1989

Akio Takamori 1990

Sergei Isupov 1997

The Teapot Book by Steve Woodhead

This book describes the parts of a teapot, methods of construction, stages of construction and contemporary examples (c. 2005) of teapot makers.



Teapot Parts



HANDLES

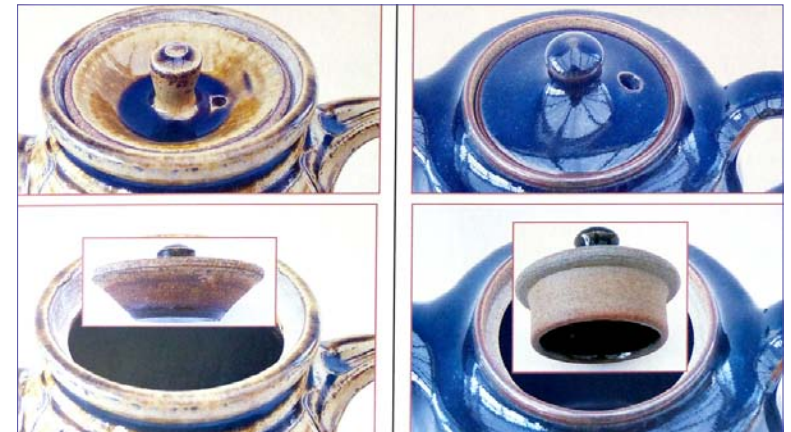


SPOUTS



FEET

LIDS



Research - Magazine Articles

Reinventing Betty.

(2018). *Ceramic Review*, (290), pp.26-31.

An article by Tim Parsons discussing the history of the Brown Betty teapot, the

findings of Ian McIntyre's research and his collaboration with Cauldron Ceramics to refine the design, packaging and marketing to a contemporary market. <http://the-brownbettyteapot.com/>

This collaboration was described in detail at the Ceramic Art London talk given by Ian McIntyre.



Research - Internet

Naturally in this digital age the internet has provided examples of more contemporary teapots and influences.

Natalya Sots <https://www.natalyasots.com/teapots>

Natalya Sots is from Pavlodar, Kazakhstan but now lives Chicago's suburb of Schaumburg. Her work is playful, colourful and entertaining. She willingly shares her process, which appears to be hand built - <https://www.natalyasots.com/process>



Research - Internet

Aitch <http://www.aitch.ro/> is from Romania and is mainly an illustrator and designer who has branched into 'clay-play' <http://www.aitch.ro/CLAY-PLAY>. The dancing lady reminded me of an etching I had done some years back. Her free flowing brush strokes in blue against the white is very refreshing, reminiscent of delft ware.



Research - Internet



Jason Walker <https://ferrincontemporary.com/portfolio/jason-walker/> is an American ceramicist. Here is an extract from his artistic statement "So here lies the crux of my quest. At the very heart of our own description of nature we exclude ourselves from it..... The way in which we perceive nature inadvertently describes the way in which we perceive ourselves. Ultimately, my quest is a journey to define for myself what it means to be human in the present time."

Research - Internet

Kurt Weiser <https://ferrincontemporary.com/portfolio/kurt-weiser/> *'For years the work I did in ceramics was an effort to somehow express the beautiful nature of the material. Somewhere in the midst of this struggle I realized that the materials are there to allow you to say what you need to say, not to tell you what to say. So I gave up trying to control nature and decided to use what I had learned about the materials to express some ideas about nature itself and my place in it.'*
Kurt Weiser



Research - Internet

Barnaby Barford <http://www.barnabybarford.co.uk/works/tower-babel> The Tower of Babel is made up of 3000 individual porcelain shops based on photographs Barford took when cycling through all the postcodes of London.

I came across his work when researching for the essay 'Ceramics in the Expanded Field' which focused on the changing approach to ceramic display and collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

photo: Theirry Bal



Conference

Restating Clay: Making, Learning, Communicating & Collecting Contemporary Studio Ceramics

The York Centre for the Ceramic Arts

19 & 20 March 2018

Unfortunately I could only attend day one, but it was worth the journey to hear the keynote speaker Garth Clark, and to listen to the other speakers. In particular I enjoyed the talk given by **Sara Radstone** about her exhibition *More Than Words* (17 Nov 2017 – 10 June 2018) in the main ceramic area of the York Art Gallery.

photo: David Harrison



Conference

Ceramic Art London 2018 - Central St Martins, London 23-25 March 2018

Presented by the **Craft Potters Association**, in partnership with **ual:central st martins**, official media partner the magazine **Ceramic Review**

This 3 day conference consisted of 12 talks by major ceramic artists and a juried exhibition of 90 ceramic artists, who were of the highest quality and diversity and willing to share tips and experiences. The keynote speaker was **Grayson Perry**, <https://www.victoria-miro.com/artists/12-grayson-perry/> and the other talks I attended were given by:

Emma Lacey - presenting collaborative student and business projects, <https://www.emmalacey.com/>



Natasha Daintry - describing her commission for Chatsworth, <http://treasurehouses.co.uk/2018/03/sowing-colour-natasha-daintry-introduces-riot-light-colour-chatsworth/>

Keith Harrison* - explaining his latest work, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/keith-harrison/>

Phoebe Cummings* - reflecting on her floral contemporary sculptures, <http://www.phoebecummings.com/>

Ian McIntyre - reinventing the Brown Betty teapot, <http://ianmcintyre.co.uk/>

Matthew Raw* talking about tile design in conjunction with Assemble, <http://www.mraw.co.uk/home/pages/home.html>

Keith Brymer-Jones - describing his journey as a potter. <https://www.keithbrymerjones.com/>

**all have enjoyed V&A residences*

Conference Exhibitors

Richard Miller

<https://www.richmiller.co.uk/>

“Zircon glazed stoneware storage jars. Transfer decoration depicting images relating to my family history and Britain as a colonial power. Screen printed gold lustre medieval encaustic tile designs”

Rich Miller



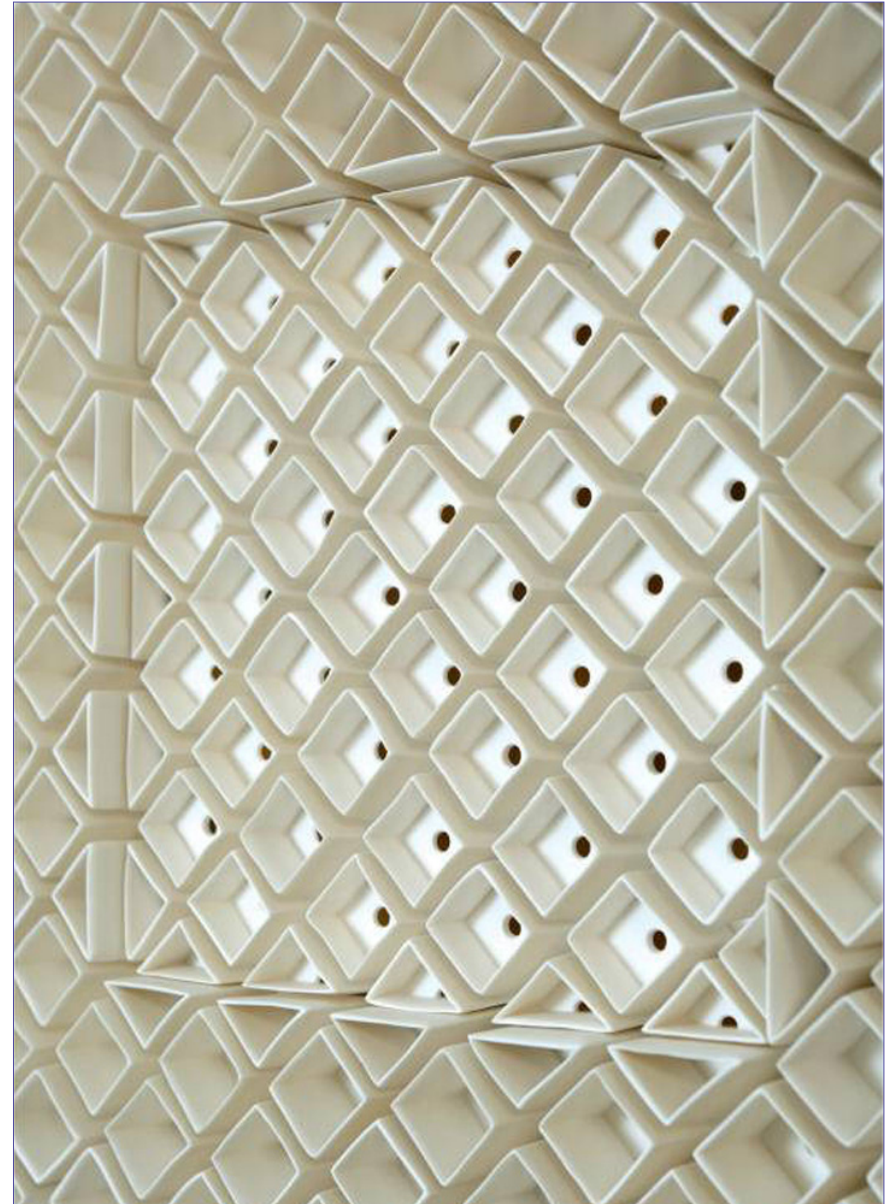
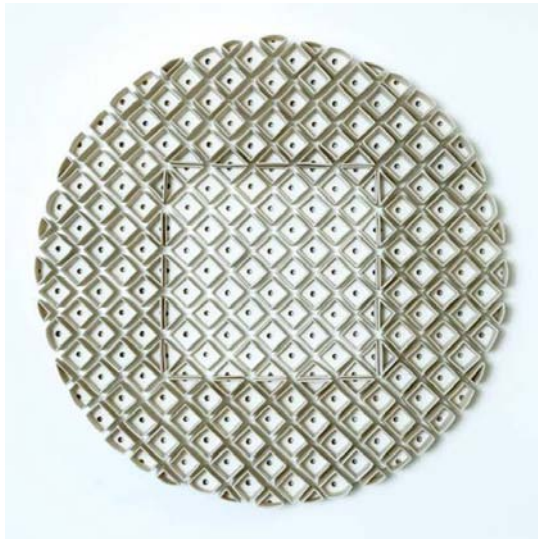
Conference Exhibitors

Isobel Egan

<http://isobeleganceramics.com/work.html>

"My work represents a relationship with space and how it shapes us, both physically and emotionally. It investigates the interrelationships between us and the buildings we inhabit. The structures I make connect these ideas and in doing so reflect on the human condition."

Isobel Egan



Conference Exhibitors

Helen Beard

<http://www.helenbeard.com/>

"I'm a potter and illustrator. I work from my Islington studio where I make, draw, design and sometimes teach. I love the local area and find that it inspires much of my work. There are all sorts of characters who crop up again and again in my sketchbooks and on my pots, from swimmers in the parks to traders at the local markets. By grouping my pots together, I like to tell a story - creating whimsical scenes that capture the small yet precious moments that make up our daily lives."

Helen Beard



Conference Exhibitors

Barbara Hast

<http://www.barbarahast.de/works.html>



Exhibition

Roger Law: From Satire to Ceramics
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts
18th Nov - 3rd Apr 2018

"It was a long march from working as a caricaturist in London's East End to Jingdezhen, China's Porcelain City. But I eventually made it." - Roger Law

After a career as a cutting edge satirist Roger Law moved to Australia, took up print making and ceramics full-time and now makes his large vessels in the home of porcelain, Jingdezhen.

<https://rogerlawceramics.com/>



Exhibition

Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

20 Mar 2018 to 17 Jun 2018

<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/calendar/whatson/things-beauty-growing-british-studio-pottery>

A carefully considered overview of British studio pottery that features the work of well established potters and the historical ceramics that inspired their work. The work is divided into Moon Jar, Vase, Bowl, Charger, Set, Vessel, Pot and Monument.



Moon Jar
Adam Buick 2016 UK



Bowl *unknown 12 century China*

Vase
Unknown 960-1279 China





Charger Ralph Toft
A Mermaid Holding
a Mirror and a Comb
1676 - 83



Set
Roger Fry
for Carter, Stabler and Adams Ltd
Part of a Tea Set c. 1914

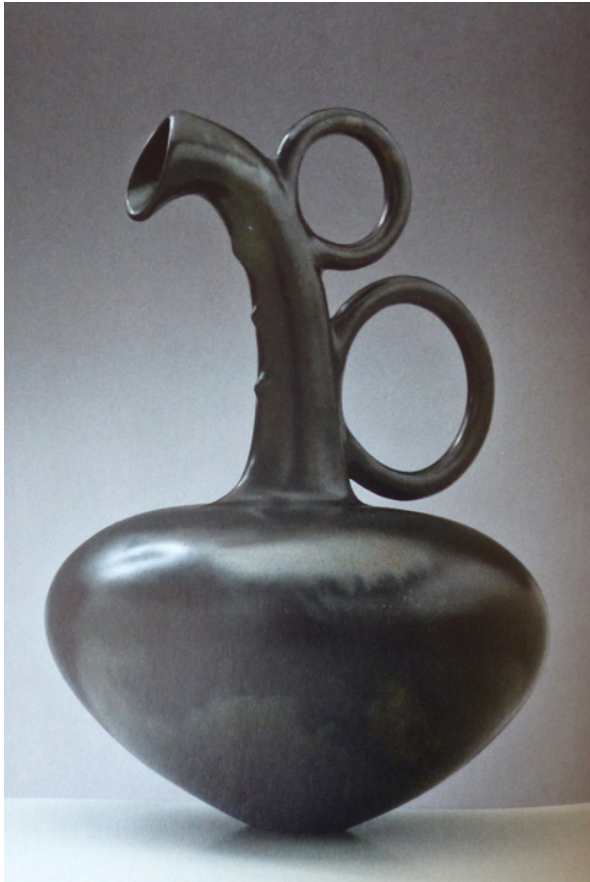


Monument
Clare Twomey
Made in China
2010



Vessel
Elizabeth Fitch
Quantum Pocket II
1992

Shapes across time...



*Pot Magdalene Odundo,
Assymetrical Reduced Black Piece, 1992*



*Early Bronze Age
Palestine 2900 BC*

*Early Bronze Age
Anatolia 2500 BC*

*Early Hittite
Anatolia 1800 -1700 BC*

Influenced by the past

Whilst watching back to back episodes of Time Team (Channel 4 Catch Up), I have been reminded of how human culture can be dated and defined by fragments of pottery found at various depths in the soil. Most of these fragments are from functional ware and causing me to think about my practise.....

There are two specific cultures that I look to when searching for a meaningful creative source. They are the Jomon culture of Japan and the Minoan culture of Crete.

Jomon - Jomon ceramics remind me of the sea, fire and trees and the forces of nature. In recreating a Jomon pot I learned a great deal about hand building and most of my ceramic work in the last few years has developed from making the one reproduction of a pot.



Minoans - As well as being attracted to their strong pot designs that express dynamic movement, I am also influenced by the expression of the natural world in which they lived. When in doubt I look for inspiration in my personal world, drawing on experiences, surroundings and personal feelings.



Collections

Before leaving London I spent a day in the Victoria and Albert Ceramics collection, noting items that I might ask to study in their study room. One piece in particular caught my eye. Made in Paris in 1884, designed by Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, sculpted by Auguste Rodin and made of biscuit porcelain. I have asked to study this piece on Thursday May 31st when I am in London.

In the past year I have visited the British Museum, the Bowes Museum, The Asmolean Museum and the Rijks Museum, looking specifically at ceramics and sculpture. I have a lot of photos to process and think about.



Teapot Project

Testing - Alternative making

After a brief workshop with Rob Winter on creating and throwing a teapot on the wheel, I created three teapots using the coiling method - 2 hand made and one wheelthrown. One teapot was made out of terracotta and the other from crank.



Teapot Project

Oak Teapot

In response to my cousin Nell and her partner Malcolm's interests, I chose to create a porcelain teapot featuring oak leaves, acorns and a small quote "*the acorn sleeps in the oak*". Firstly I made the hollow sphere, added a foot, handle and spout, created a gallery and made a lid.

The oak leaves and acorns were roughly applied and as the porcelain dried the forms were refined.

Bisque fired to 1060°C





Teapot Project

Rooster Teapot

This teapot is made of terracotta and was not designed for any member of the family in particular. It was created from an interest in creating a teapot with a sassy attitude.

Bisque fired to 1000°C

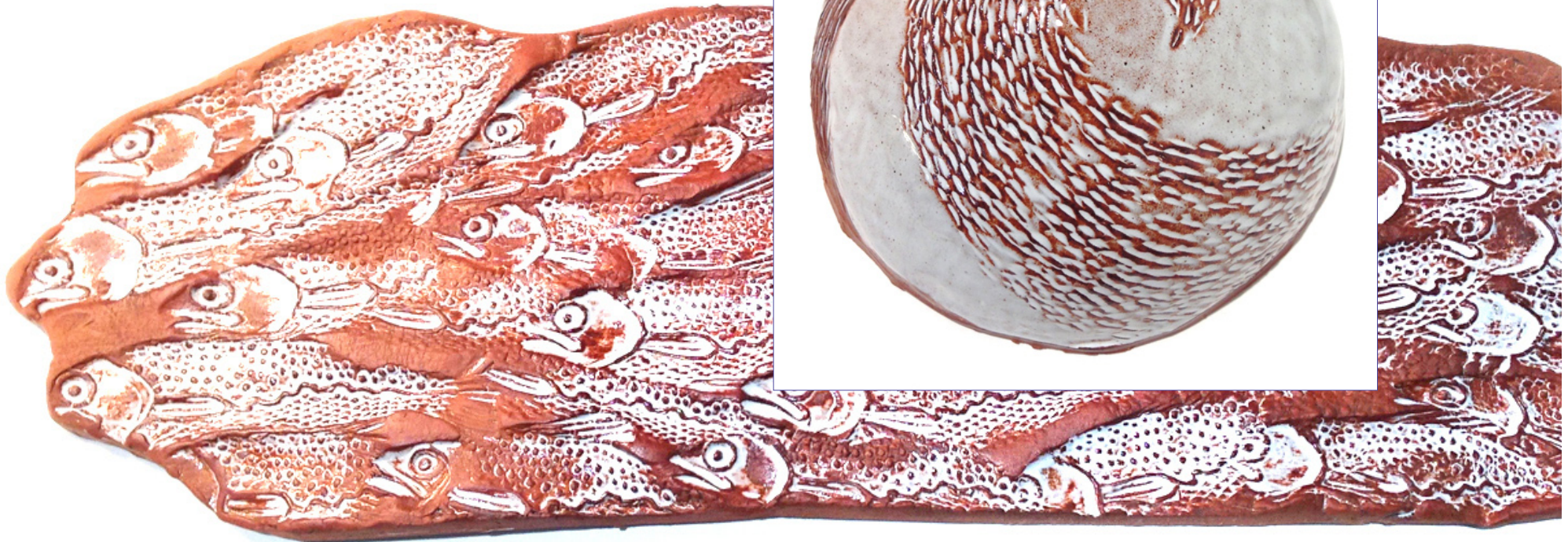


Teapot Project

Glazing - Terracotta

Testing for the Rooster tea-pot with Stephen Murfitt's majolica glaze with no colour added.

Stephen Murfitt lead majolica sprayed onto the hemisphere and fired to 1100°C. The fish were brushed and then wiped.



Teapot Project

Glazing - Terracotta

Based on my majolica tests I took one of the coil built terracotta bisqued teapots, sprayed it with Stephen Murfitt's majolica glaze and painted over it with Amaco Velvet under glazes.



Examples of the matt unfired and glossy fired glaze. Fired to 1100°C.



Teapot Project

Stoneware - VC AA Green Glaze

This stoneware teapot has been looking naked for too long, so I glazed it without a test! It was sprayed a little too thinly I think as there was a problem with the air-brush. But I am not too dissatisfied with the result. Unfortunately the reason I stopped putting strainer holes in the teapots became all too apparent when the holes were blocked by glaze. I thought I'd cleared it, but not enough.



The glaze contains tin oxide and copper carbonate as the colorants. Fired to 1290°C.

