



**DACORUM AND
CHILTERN
POTTERS GUILD**



www.thedcpg.org.uk

Annual Guild Exhibition
Kevin Millward Workshop
Hiro Takashi
Philip Jolley
Matthew Blakely
Margit Kovács

Issue 16 Spring 2015

£2



Matthew Blakely

About the Guild & the Newsletter

Membership of the Guild is open to anyone having an interest in pottery and sculpture and offers members many opportunities each year to see top potters and sculptors demonstrating their skills. In addition, an annual Open Day is held with demonstrations. Exhibitions, visits and workshops are also organised at various times.

Membership Rates for 2013/14

Single £28, Family (one address) £37, Student (full time) £20. Newsletter only: £10 per annum.

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Editorial

Lynne McGeachie

Well, what a great Potters Open Day (POD) we had this year. I felt a little disorientated by its being held in March (or was that the hot toddy?) but it was great to see old familiar faces & renew acquaintances.

The event opened with Andy McInnes (of Art in Clay) giving us useful information about the importance of photographic images in getting our work accepted at shows and galleries; followed by an inspiring

talk and demonstration by Eddie Curtis – I was just itching to go home and try out some of his techniques; and ending with a fine demonstration of the excellent and enviable skill of Mike Dodd.

You will find more information about all three in the next issue of the newsletter. And there is more to look forward to, with the demo by Peter Hayes on 24 April.

Happy Potting

Committee Meeting

The committee were pleased to welcome Jackie Harrop as an observer and potential new recruit to the committee meeting. Thanks to Ros for her hospitality and sustaining soup and thank you Judi for the home-made bread.

Thanks were also recorded to:

- Bipin and the newsletter team for a fact filled issue, hot off the press
- Ronnie Powell for organising the teaching session at Longdean in November
- The exhibition team, Judi, Audrey, Lynne and Nigel for the excellent display at Letchworth
- John Powell for continuing to keep the website up to date
- Colin for his perseverance in applying for CIO status for the Guild. The statement to support the application has been finalised and highlights the many ways in which the Guild promotes the making and enjoyment of pottery.

The CIO application requires confirmation that all appropriate checks are made for anyone joining a Guild activity which involves vulnerable individuals – including children and vulnerable adults. It was agreed to clarify that under 18s can join the Guild only as part of a family membership and that they should be accompanied by a responsible adult member

Mary Anne Bonney

when participating in events. Safeguarding will be taken into account when arranging events attended by members of the public.

Plans are in hand for the exhibition in St Albans Town Hall, 3 -11 October 2015; offers of help are welcome, particularly if you are able to publicise the show locally.

We are also applying for selling and demonstrating slots at Childwickbury Art Fair which is on 3 - 5 July 2015.

By the time you read this, the detailed plans for POD will have been tested: comprehensive to-do-lists were made to ensure smooth running on the day along with proposals to attract as wide an audience as possible.

We have agreed to reinstate the welcome table at Friday meetings, to ensure that newcomers and visitors are greeted (and have the opportunity to pay where appropriate) and so that we can have a record of who is in the hall.

A thorough tidy up at Boxmoor is due, as soon as the weather is warmer and the days a bit longer. We will be looking for a team to help with the kiln and the site. If you would like to co-ordinate it or join in, or can offer help with the shelter and wood store, please let us know.

The next Committee meeting will take place on 24 April 2015 before Peter Hayes' demonstration and will review POD.



Notes from the Chair

Ros McGuirk

Despite the bitter wind, the lengthening day and the appearance of new growth reassures us that spring is on the way. I am looking forward to getting the new pottery doors hung and then I will have to chase out the spiders and take over.

Now we can all look forward to the start of a new season of potters' activities - of kiln firings, Pitstone open days, and active participation in many shows. Several members will be at Art in Clay again, often having worked there for several years before getting a chance to teach and exhibit.

This year the Guild is taking part in two other shows for the first time. One is Kimpton where we are demonstrating and doing have-a-go on the May bank holiday. This is also a new venture for the art show.

The second event is Childwickbury just outside St Albans on 3-5 July, where we will be demonstrating, selling and running workshops for three days. This is run on the lines of Art in Action but on a local scale.

Nevertheless the standard of work presented is very high and I am delighted that our application was accepted. I am also very pleased with the space we have been allocated. (For further details please look at the Guild programme in this newsletter, the website and also watch your emails.)

So, we have a busy year ahead, and, hopefully a productive one. Meantime I am happy to report that after a year of leading the committee gently through all the documentation involved in becoming an incorporated charity, Colin has finally taken on the struggle to get the online application made and sent off. (As a witness to some of this I can testify to the frustrations involved.) We will not know the outcome for some time,

due to a 'high level of demand'. Fingers crossed!

Yesterday John Higgins and I attended an Eastern Region meeting of the Crafts Council where we met people from all parts of the arts and craft world including makers, gallery owners and teachers from schools, colleges and universities.

Interestingly we were the only ones from a Potters Guild. The meeting was set up to further the aims of the Craft Council in supporting makers, to air issues and gain some cross-cultural references.

For us it was a good opportunity to do a spot of networking, to gain a better picture of where craft fits in our society and learn about the work of the Crafts Council. We also gained some good tips, a new member for the Guild and a couple of unusual potential speakers for next season's programme.

You may wish to take note that the Craft Council runs projects in the community, in schools and colleges, offers funding, encourages apprenticeships, and many other small but useful activities, like taking this seminar around the country. I could go on.

It was a very well organised and interesting event, with at least an hour of free discussion time among the attendees which was probably the most interesting of all.

I would like to say to the few members who do not use email, that I know that sometimes you miss out, and must apologise when you do, but we do our best to keep everyone informed as well as we can. You may be able to keep up to date via the website.

Happy potting



Hiro Takashi 5 December 2014

Lynne McGeachie

When we have demonstrators at the Guild, one of the aspects of particular interest to me is an account of what inspires the work they produce. How does each ceramist find his or her unique artistic voice? What inspires his or her individual creativity? So it was with great pleasure I listened to Hiro talk about her life and the influences on her work.

Hiro, her family descended from a famous Zen Buddhist priest, was born and brought up in North East Japan in the area affected by the 2011 Tsunami. This is an area with a pottery tradition, where there existed a whole village dedicated to the creation of pottery. Sadly this village had to be evacuated following the Tsunami because of the fallout from the nearby nuclear power station.

Having come to England to study, Hiro left behind her Japanese roots, or at least she thought she had. After an eight year absence she returned to her home country and was bowled over by what was there. She saw afresh the architecture and buildings of her youth and childhood; the detail of the roofs, their angles and curves. The pottery and stone Shinto shrines that most families have in their house or garden; the temples with the use of ceramics on their roofs and ridges, all inspired her. Japanese textiles were another source of exciting visual inspiration. The fabrics used for Kimonos woven to be reversible with different colours on each side. And then there were the Japanese ceramics; oribe ware with its green copper glaze and the classic shino glaze.

However Hiro also recognised that Japan was changing quickly. She had the urge to bring it back and began to dig up her memories. This is when she started making ceramic models of the houses of her childhood, in particular the house of her Grandmother with

its yard, chicken hut, storage house and outside loo. She also made pieces that told traditional stories, for instance one about a Buddhist priest who eloped with a young girl; the house with the door ajar and the steps leading down to the boat in the water. Also from her memory came the soul houses, some with kimono patterns on the walls, the barns, the Shinto shrines, the floating boats, pagodas and bell towers.

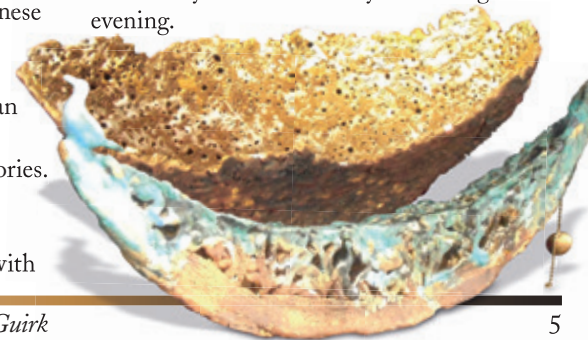
She has also found inspiration around her Somerset home where she is surrounded by towers and tors, the leafless winter hedges being the inspiration behind her weaved forms.

She described the importance to her of having an inner stillness when she worked and of devoting herself entirely to the activity in hand and it was through that calm stillness that her creativity was borne.

On the more technical side around 2012 she started mixing clays together; using red earthenware mixed with white stoneware clay and glazes left in the bucket she was able to achieve results that, although having an oxidation firing looked as if reduced. She also mixes porcelain 50:50 with white stoneware and fires up to 1260°.

After her talk Hiro showed us her tools and the range of bits and bobs she uses to impress and pattern the clay. She also demonstrated how she creates the trees and animals that are a feature of much of her work.

Thank you Hiro for a very interesting evening.



Photography by Ros McGuirk



The Guild's Annual Exhibition 2014



Ingrid Thorstad



My first thought on entering the exhibition in the Letchworth Arts Centre was: Wow! This is the best ever DCPG show at Letchworth. It filled me with confidence: the room was full of wonderful pots by 23 members, and there was something for everyone. If the DCPG exhibitions continue like this, members will be begging to participate. So many potters, with so much to contribute - there are far too many lights hidden under the proverbial bushel for much of the time.

The 'Meet the Potters' morning gave a magnificent opportunity for members to meet each other and discuss technical details over coffee and delicious cakes. Sue Lines, who is part of a group of local residents that helped to start the Arts Centre some 20 years ago or more, said how much the local group had enjoyed the exhibition and how impressed they were by the quality of the work. They were only sad that at their 'ripe old age' they no longer had room for more pots or pieces of art!

I can't be the only one who noticed the attention to detail which helped to bring it all together. Often the problem is that each exhibitor looks at their table from above and near to and generally it looks good, whereas this time, with the help of Judi Tribe's steam

iron and Audrey Hammett's will power, crumpled sheets had been turned into damask look-alikes and, because there were so many exhibitors, visitors rarely had the chance to see unsightly table legs and cardboard boxes that often mar displays.

I think we need to thank the curators for the triumph. It was a team effort and I got the feeling that they worked well together. Of course there was a lot of work to do even before they set up the exhibition. Audrey had begun, a year ago, by visiting and sounding out potential exhibition spaces before deciding on Letchworth. She worked closely with Judi. Nigel Carrick organised the publicity and liaised with the centre and Lynne McGeachie co-ordinated the potters' statements.

The unified look of these statements reinforced the sense of a group show. I think it would be wonderful if these statements could form the basis of a reference file available for members at meetings as I feel it is such a shame we don't know more about each other.

This way we can see if there is someone nearby with similar interests or a particular expertise. The addition of perhaps a telephone number and/or email address, nearest town or post code would be sufficient to enable members to contact each other.

Photography by Bipin



The Guild Annual Exhibition



Call to Members

After the success of the DCPG exhibition at Letchworth Arts Centre in December, we will be holding this year's annual show at the Old Courtroom in St Albans from Saturday 3 October to Sunday 11 October 2015. (Setting up on Friday 2 October and taking down on Tuesday 12 October).

The venue is a pre Victorian Courtroom, which is part of St Albans Town Hall and is located in the city centre next to the Tourist Information Centre. It is an unusual setting and will provide an interesting and varied display space for the Guild.

You can see photographs of the 1831 Courtroom on the St Albans Town Hall website www.stalbans.gov.uk.

St Albans is a busy shopping area with a regular Saturday market and a Farmers' Market will be held on the last Sunday of the show.

The Guild exhibition will be open daily 10.00-4.30, including Saturday and Sunday and is free for visitors. The exhibition will need to be stewarded with 2 or 3 people at a time and we will therefore need to organise a rota to cover this.

We would like as many members as possible to take part in this event. Even if you have never shown your work before, please do consider joining in. It is a great experience and a good way to meet other members of the Guild.

Please put this event in your diary and if you think you may like to exhibit, just register your interest by mailing Judi Tribe juditribe0@gmail.com (the 0 is a zero).

Nearer the time of the exhibition, we will firm up the details and will be looking for volunteers to help make the exhibition happen.

Thank you

Judi Tribe & Audrey Hammett
Exhibitions Organisers



Matthew Blakely Ceramic Landscapes



Lecture and Demonstration, 10 January 2015



The unseasonably mild weather on this January evening had most people arrive in clothing that spoke of having 'mis-underestimated' matters meteorological. Ros McGuirk did the Welcome and Notices to the gathering of more than 30 in her customarily smart way. She then settled back to hear an eminent potter explain the dog-leg turn in his way of working from tableware to vessels-with-stories-geological.

Matthew Blakely started off his 'slide' show (what do we call it now?), describing and illustrating his current work and how the pieces are achieved. He titled his presentation 'Ceramic Landscapes', which cleverly encapsulates what he is doing. This is because, at its very simplest, he goes out to known geologically interesting locations (landscapes) to seek out non-refractory materials that may behave as glazes in a firing and refractory materials for his clay bodies, to produce interesting and beautiful results.

His point of departure from his old work was this. He had, he said, very clean, very white Southern Ice porcelain (gas fired), wood-firing kilns, very beautiful (my opinion) tableware coming out of the firings, and a harder-to-find supply of, especially, hardwood, which he prefers. For years he

had been thinking of how to get surfaces that responded to the firing, something that 'dirtied' the porcelain more (the notion of which sent a noticeable shudder through the audience). This triggered his interest in geology. An Arts Council Grant allowed him to take a year out of his usual work and investigate the ideas he had been thinking about for years.

Fortunately Britain is geologically extremely rich and interesting, with the western seaboard displaying some of the oldest geology on earth. To summarise: he forged links with geology and archaeology departments, including those at the University of Cambridge; he had access to their data, experience, and technical facilities (at first he sought the chemical analyses and computer software, but when that option evaporated, he found greater satisfaction in the more 'free-style' approach to matters); he was able to accompany them on research excursions and digs; he brought back material from far and wide, and extreme geographical margins (it is important to note that he used only material that had fallen to the ground in quarries and elsewhere, and that he never actually dug into rock faces) which he fired then ground, or ground then fired, to various temperatures.

These rock materials were naturally never pure, and it was the very nature of the results of this impurity that was site specific and of interest from a firing point of view. Remember the dirty porcelain moment? Certain places produced certain results in the firing. This was the crux of his endeavour, and the point to his current work.

On a table there were several examples of pots made in his new way and there was

Andre Hess

clear consensus that they were undoubtedly beautiful pots. In each one of these pieces two things were happening:

- the pot itself, and
- the technical story of the surface effects in that pot (the information was available on an accompanying CD)

In the world of pottery/ceramics an item will often be accompanied by biographical and technical information, or this information can be easily gathered by research or by asking. In Matthew Blakely's practice this is something else altogether, something bigger, more important. The pot and the information are of, arguably, equal weight and this information is, by inference, inseparable from the experience of the pot. The pot is meant to ooze a kind of site-specificity associated with its ingredients. In other words, the ultimate worth of the pot is located in a combination of the pot itself and where (the landscape) some of its ingredients were found, and the associated effort.

That is an admirable thing to do, and is not without precedent in the wider art world. Minimalism in the 1960s was not only about simplicity (it was so not) but about site-specific engagement of the viewer's body and the way they moved about the work, and the materials (bricks, copper, corrugated iron, etc).

It did not take long, thereafter, for art to become about politics, identity, information, protest, and so on. Art as site of information, that is. And soon after that we became used to the word 'installation'. I could go on and track how we arrived at 'situational aesthetics' and Jeremy Deller, but that is for another day. Information alongside, or as part of, an artwork is therefore entirely in order, and has a long history.



So, what we have with Matthew Blakely's current work is a pot, which generates its meaning as a thing in itself PLUS the added information about its manufacture. After the undoubted aesthetic experience felt when viewing and handling these pieces it is worthwhile asking how this added information (and extraordinary research effort) is interesting and if this should be reflected in how it is experienced:

- Is having information on the geology and site where some of the ingredients were found essential for the experience of these pieces and their existence?
- Is the piece a kind of souvenir of the maker's visit to that site? And perhaps even a link to the biography of that maker and his travels?
- Is the technical work this maker is engaged in not the work of some other professional, materials scientist, or geologist?
- Is this evidence of technical effort something we ask of artists/makers in other media?
- Is the maker expecting the viewer to do



Matthew Blakely Continued



more mental work than he or she would do otherwise when looking at pottery?

- Is he appealing to nostalgia for a particular geographical place in some viewers?
- What is the viewer or purchaser to do with the information?
- What if the viewer has no feeling for that information, but simply loves the pot itself? Is that viewer experiencing a kind of impoverished version of the experience desired by the maker?
- In these days of 'landscape writing' and 'travel writing' could the story of the journey to collect the materials incorporated in a particular pot not be at least as engaging as its chemistry and knowledge of its source? Could the socio-political history of that site (quarry, or otherwise) not do the same or more?

It is good that pottery raises questions. Work that is understood immediately, in my view, is 'finished' by the end of that viewing. It possesses little or no resonance, other than its superficial properties. What would appeal to me more in Matthew Blakely's current work, personally, is not the geology, but the socio-political poignancy of the materials and their source. I'd rather hear about the children who worked there. I'd rather listen out for the sound of the quarryman's chisel. Apart from that, the work is remarkable and worth taking time over. We look forward to Matthew Blakely's next steps very much.

Andre Hess is a Fellow of the Craft Potters Association and has first-class degrees in Art History, Veterinary Science, and Public Health, and he also writes fiction.



Congratulations to Diana Tonnison who won the prize for 'Best use of Colour' at the London Potters exhibition at the Morley Gallery, London in December 2014 for her

piece 'Fish Market Boxes - Plaice, Sardines and Yellowfin Seabream', inspired by visits to local fish and produce markets around the world.

Copy deadline for the Summer edition of the newsletter is Saturday 31 May. Please send to lynne.mcgechie@btinternet.com and to bipin@thedcpg.org.uk



Kevin Millward Workshop on Improving your Throwing Ros McGuirk



throwing sessions with a few cylinders until the technique is mastered and can be done subconsciously, using muscle memory. Then it would not be so tiring, repetition would come easily and it would become the means by which any upright form could be created. Thus our pots would all be good ones, unlaboured and fluid.

(NB we achieved our cylinders without preparing the clay, but used it straight out of the bag. It was a lot easier than anticipated. Another of Kevin's tips was how to save a pot when things are getting out of kilter: "Watch the hands, not the clay".)

Thanks Kevin for a most useful lesson and for your inspiration and all your encouragement. I know that everyone in my group felt the same and we discussed other lessons we would like to have... anyone for a day on making plant pots?

Kevin had demonstrated a quick and easy version of a wall planter, but he would happily show us all kinds of small plant pots from long toms to bulb pots. And they are the easiest pots to make and sell.

Or we could follow the example of the London Potters with a session on throwing and altering forms... now you are talking... those sessions are oversubscribed every time.

Thanks also to Emily, our new workshop organiser, and to West Herts College both for the use of their pottery studio and also for providing the students who filled in the gaps at short notice when a couple of people had to drop out.

For those who missed the workshop and would like to find out more, you can see Kevin throwing a cylinder on YouTube. I find it a useful reminder of what I learned on the day.

Kevin gave a short introduction before demonstrating. He explained that the cylinder and the bowl are the two basic shapes to master before one can be regarded as proficient and ready to make more interesting forms.

Today we focussed on the cylinder. He threw one and pointed out all the different stages and hand positions. Then using about 1kg of clay for each one, we set to and made cylinders.

Following his method was a question of readjusting the hand positions at every stage. It was interesting trying to work out why it felt different and why it worked better.

It was challenging as the old grey matter had to work harder than usual and it was also encouraging to see how each cylinder improved on the last one – or not, as the case may be!

We had to think of it as a process and not to think of the end result. As a musician has to practise scales, so we should start our



Margit Kovács Public Ceramist

Marshall Colman

Pity my long-suffering partner, who is not a potter, for whenever we're on holiday I want to go into ceramics museums and pottery shops. But in Budapest the street is a ceramics museum: the potter Margit Kovács was given many public commissions and her murals can be seen on about twenty structures. In the 1930s she was asked by the modernist architect István Hamor to decorate his buildings, including the flats at 14 Ponty Street, where her relief "The Fisher Boy" (illustrated) can still be clearly seen.



serious about her subjects. Although she was folksy, her work is quite different from traditional Hungarian pottery, which is mainly slip-trailed earthenware. It has something in common with the figurative ceramics of Hungarian Art Deco and she stands alongside István Gádor as one of Hungary's major 20th century ceramists. Her themes are comfortable but she had a subtle modernist sensibility.

She said of herself, "I strive to express what is beautiful or the response I feel.

I always want to be candid in my work. I live between two contrary poles. One is fear of extinction: I want to keep pace with the age. The other is fear lest I should let myself be driven into an insincere trend: lest I should fall behind in time and life. But what is new in life I wish to assimilate and formulate in my own idiom."

She had total mastery of her medium and her method. Her work is stylised, strongly-conceived and well-executed. She worked in earthenware, sometimes with coloured tin glaze. Her later ceramics are unglazed and made of chamotte, a gritty pink clay.

"The Big Family" (1962) (illustrated) is typical. It's a deep relief, 110 x 120 cm, depicting an idealised family, an unfeasibly young father and mother at the top and eight children in pairs all around. She has not tried to hide the sections from which the relief is constructed and the absence of glaze over the rough clay shows her increasing interest in form and texture over colour.

Kovács attended the School of Applied

Arts in Budapest, and then learned ceramics in Vienna, Munich, Copenhagen and Paris. Her interest in traditional Hungarian themes developed in the 1950s, when she drew on myths and folk tales for her narrative pieces and tableaux vivants, changing her preferred material from terracotta to chamotte and developing a more expressive modelling.

The value of her public works is not fully recognised and many people in Budapest have no idea who these reliefs are by. Some, unfortunately, are obscured, neglected or have perished. Thankfully, when the huge Pioneer Store was demolished, her World Map in the foyer pool was preserved. Older Hungarians have sentimental memories of being fitted for school uniforms, having their hair cut and dropping coins in the foyer pool at the Pioneer. Now they can be reminded of their youth by Kovács's World Map in the First Site Hotel at 7-9 Kossuth Lajos Street. Ilona Pataky-Brestyánszky's book about Kovács is available in English and lists all her public art.



The Thrown Pot Written on Green Island, 1980

I found this poem in a book written by Guy Sydenham (now passed on) but his son Russel has given permission for the Guild to publish it.

Guy's book was titled 'A Potter's Life, The Island Potters of Poole'. He worked at Poole Pottery Studio in the 1960's, and later on an island in Poole Harbour.

Russel is also a potter and is part of a group called West Country Cider Mugs which includes John Leach amongst others.

Sylvia Fitzwilliam

The Thrown Pot

by Guy Sydenham

*Thwick! Thwack! Thwuck!
Throwing to the centre.
Whack! goes a lump of clay,
Squidge, Squdge, pressing to the centre,
Coning and centring watery clay.
In goes a thumb and up comes a cylinder
Staffordshire lifting all the way.
Wriggling and wobbling, squidging
and hollowing,
One long pull from base to tip.
Now faster round goes the wheel;
In goes the left hand and out
comes the fullness
Belly and lip in one smooth lift.
Gyro and centrifuge, rippling
with energy,
Achieved in seconds, man's creation,
Fire and water, earth and dexterity,
Back to the volcano and vitrifying rock:
A handful of mud, spun into a pot.*

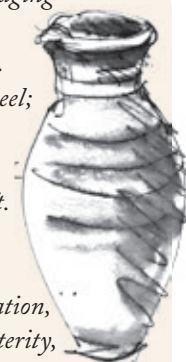


Illustration by Vivienne Rodwell-Davies



Philip Jolley demonstration

13 February 2015

Philip Jolley introduced himself with photographs of work he had made at school, including the figure of a chimney sweep he made as his O Level examination piece. His passion for clay had begun early on!

Slides of subsequent work showed a focus on strong, often complex, sculptural geometric forms and intense colours. From 2005 Philip has been developing pots, tiles and wall pieces which appear to incorporate archaeological fragments, though they are all created at the same time.

Philip's fast paced demonstration took us through many of the techniques he uses to create a vase which is at once thoroughly contemporary and, in its decoration, textures and colouring, contains multiple references to ancient architecture, ceramics and mosaics.

The body Philip uses is a 75/25 mixture of Commercial Clay ST Material and cellulose fibre (an addition of bleach or a few nappy sterilising tablets prevents the mix stinking him out of his studio as it matures).

Working on a large plaster surface, he builds up the patchwork slab which is to form the body of the vessel. Slabs and strips are laid face down: the texturing is preserved as the surface layer is dried out by the plaster.

First down is a deeply textured slab made by pressing an Indian textile printing block into thickly rolled out paper clay. Strips of coloured porcelain come next, along with a paperclay slab that has been pressed into a mould created from an architectural ornament.

The final layer is plain paperclay slab. Each addition is pressed on with a rolling pin, after the back of the previous piece has been lightly scored and brushed with slip. Rolling from one end presses out any air.

When he has finished layering, Philip uses scrap patches to bring the slab to an even thickness and smooths what will be the back/inside of the work with a modelling tool. Working as he does back from the surface of the piece – no mean feat with so many elements – requires planning: he works from sketches and will draw an outline in soft pencil on the plaster slab, to ensure that he keeps to his design.

To shape the decorated slab, it must be gently damped so that the surface that has been in contact with the plaster becomes pliable again. The slab is wrapped right round two chunky blocks of wood, the bottom edge lined up with the squared ends so that the wall will sit squarely on the base.

The edges to be overlapped are tapered by cutting or pressing with a rolling pin to ensure a neat seam and, with a small application of slip, are rolled together. The paper clay will develop surface cracks so that even the undecorated areas are rich with texture. The rectangular cylinder formed is attached with slip to a leather hard slab base, which sits on chunky feet formed of off cuts of paperclay.

Various techniques are used to create interesting edges, both for the upper rim and around the base which protrudes beyond the join with the wall: the rolled edge, smoothed, gives a feeling of weathered stone or a rough cut edge is created by scoring the slab and snapping it off over the edge of the table.

The opening is made deliberately uneven, to allow sight of the inside of the finished pot. Sprigs or further fragments of textured clay may be attached, first scoring and slipping the spots where they are to be placed and gently pressing them on from the middle outwards to remove any air.

Mary Anne Bonney

Straight lines emphasise some of the joins, they are made by pressing the edge of a wooden rule into the clay. A thin coating of coloured slip is brushed on to selected areas of texture and the inside may also be slipped before biscuit firing.

Refining continues at the glazing stage: some of the crazing in the paper clay will be accentuated by painting water along cracks and letting oxide bleed into the network of tiny fissures.

Colour is strategically applied to bring out the fragments of pattern and the different areas of the patchwork will be treated with one of three glazes: S glaze which ranges from yellow to white and flecked depending on thickness, a Ewan Henderson satin matt and a clear glaze.

The end result is a fascinating mix of colours, shades, textures and surfaces enriched with fragments of detailed pattern.

Thank you, Philip for being so generous with practical tips and for bringing with you examples of work at various stages from raw clay to finished items, and a huge range of equipment so that we could follow the process of making from start to finish.

Guild Programme

Fri April 24: Peter Hayes

Well known maker of large garden sculptures and obelisks.

Fri May 15: Members meeting

With Diana Tonnison and Richard Pearson. Diana is a textile artist turned ceramicist whose wall pieces of fish and foodstuffs are hugely popular, whereas Richard is a potter with a preference for wood and soda firings.

May 9 & 10: Jackie Lewis will be exhibiting ceramics during Open Studio Weekend. Details on www.crouchendopenstudios.org.uk



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