

# CERAMIC ARCHIVE

School of Art, Aberystwyth University



## Bulletin

ISSUE No.13 2014/15

### NEWS

#### Ann Carr Collection

In January 2014 we accepted a major acquisition of 330 pieces of studio pottery to be known as the Ann Carr collection. This was donated to the University by Julian Carr in memory of his mother, Ann Carr (1928-2013) who was a friend, neighbour and admirer of Michael Cardew. As part of his close circle in the Wenford Bridge area she was among the first to be there at kiln openings, even at times participating in kiln firings at the pottery. In turn, Cardew was a frequent supper guest at her beautiful modernist house, Fellover. It was built in 1960 as her home and for the private primary school which she ran for many years. The house was filled with the pots that she had collected and used with pleasure throughout her life. It even had a small pottery in the basement where Cardew and other Wenford potters came to teach the children. She shared with Cardew her interest in classical culture, was passionate about Greece and was fluent in modern Greek. Latterly she spent parts of the year at her small flat on the island of Naxos. It provided a haven at times in the 1970s when Michael Cardew was writing his autobiography.

This important collection is all associated with the Wenford Bridge Pottery established by Michael Cardew in 1939. However much of the work was produced by some of the significant potters who worked with him there. As well as the work of Michael Cardew himself, other significant makers include – Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, Svend Bayer, Ladi Kwali, Danlami Aliyu, Michael OBrien, Seth Cardew and Richard Batterham. With the help of a Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales Grant, over the summer of 2014, the collection was catalogued and photographed by Robert Sanderson and Coll Minogue who brought their expertise on woodfiring, pottery and photography to the task. The whole collection is now on the Ceramic Collection website.

In 2013 we were awarded an Audience Development grant from Arts Council Wales. We were lucky to have Ruth Lloyd whose experience running the V&A Residency programme was invaluable. Her report encouraged us to develop a larger scale touring show and more ambitious work. Following this, in the autumn of 2014, we were successful with an Arts Council Wales grant of £20,906 which was the largest we have had. This was to develop two major exhibitions, and related interdisciplinary project work around the Ann Carr Collection – working with school children, university students and also the general public. *The Hot Pot Project* was born – see more below.

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*Young curators working with the Ann Carr collection in the Hot Pot Project*

The second part of the grant has supported the development of *Philip Eglin Slipping the Trail* and responding to the Buckley pottery in our collection. This exciting project in collaboration with Ruthin Crafts Centre and Swansea Mission Gallery started by a visit of Philip Eglin to the collection. He immediately responded to the early slipware and began to make drawings. Later, he undertook a workshop with children from Llwyn-yr-Eos school in Aberystwyth and since then has created an important

new body of work, mostly based on the theme of cooking and eating. The exhibition opens for the International Ceramic Festival in 2015.



Philip Eglin drawing in the Ceramic Gallery

The Ceramics Gallery achieved the status of a Quality Assured Attraction for 2013/15 from Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS) for Museums.

## Exhibitions and Related Events

### Michael Flynn (Winter 2013-14) Llantarnam Grange touring exhibition

The winter show in the gallery was of the work of Michael Flynn, a touring exhibition from Llantarnam Grange, for which Moira Vincentelli wrote an essay. In November, Michael Flynn gave an illustrated talk about his work and his interest in European folklore and myth to students from Creative Writing and Fine Art in the Institute of Language, Literature and Creative Arts. The students then responded to the work in an interdisciplinary workshop which resulted in some lively poetry, prose and performances.

### Fireworks Now (Summer 2014)

The summer exhibition in the gallery was a touring show from Craft in the Bay, Cardiff and was based on ceramics from the Fireworks Studio in Cardiff. In June the curator, Alex McErlain, gave a gallery talk followed by a symposium with some of the exhibitors.

### Ceramics and Landscape (August–October 2014)

In relation to our acquisition of a major example of James Tower sculpture we organized a display of work from the collection which made a relationship with landscape.



James Tower, Butterfly Form, 1980

### Ceramic Celebration: South Wales Potters' 50th Anniversary (November–January 2015)

In the autumn we showed the exhibition Ceramic Celebration featuring the work of twenty of the South Wales Potters' current members. We had collaborated in the development of this show and organised to digitise the early newsletters of South Wales Potters (1965-1980) which will be available through the website. Moira Vincentelli wrote an essay for the catalogue and, in November, we held a gallery event with Moira Vincentelli and two of the artists, Alison Lochhead and Joe Finch.

### The Hot Pot Project (24th January to 14th June, 2015)

A series of changing installations and special events using pots from the Ann Carr Collection of Wenford Bridge Ceramics.

### Tanya Harrod: Writing a Biography of Michael Cardew

In February 2015, Dr Tanya Harrod the prize winning author of *The Last Sane Man: Michael Cardew, Modern Pots, Colonialism and the Counterculture*, gave a lunchtime talk in conjunction with the Hot Pot Project. This was followed by a seminar about the experience of writing biography which launched a series of workshops on creative writing led by Katherine Stansfield in relation to the exhibition.

### Creative Writing Workshops with Katherine Stansfield:

Local poet and novelist Katherine Stansfield, ran a series of Creative Writing workshops based around the Hot Pot Project, considering the aesthetic qualities of the objects on display – their shape, colour, texture – and their practical use, with a focus on making and eating. There was a public reading of the writing produced during the project, by the participants at the end of April.

### People's Collection of Wales event

In March 2015, Josie Walter led another event in the Hot Pot Project cycle with a talk in the cinema. Josie is a potter, lecturer and writer and is author of *Pots in the Kitchen*. She looked at



Josie Walter being interviewed about cooking pots in the Ceramic Gallery



different types of pots from the round-bottomed earthenware pots used to cook in an open fire through to a wonderful cone-shaped form that looked a bit like a lid but was actually for turning a Spanish tortilla.

The talk was followed by a handling session in the Ceramic Gallery and looked at some of the cooking pots from Buckley pottery made in Wales around 100 years ago. We discussed how they had been used, examined the bases and the wear and tear and considered whether they had been used in the oven or only as serving dishes. Hazel Thomas and her team from the People's Collection in the National Library of Wales were there to record particular inputs from members of the audience who had stories to tell about their own pots or ones from the collection.

### Schools Project with Llwyn yr Eos, Penparcau School

In 2015 we ran an extensive schools project with a series of events and activities with Llwyn yr Eos School, Penparcau relating to the Hot Pot Project. Workshop leader, Oliver Morris, began a ten-week programme of activities that took place both at the school and the Arts Centre. They all saw Michael Cardew's ever popular film *Mud and Water Man*, made in 1976 when he was already 75. They also visited the Hot Pot exhibition and handled the ceramics in the collection. They had more hands-on experience when they made slip decorated plates in the Arts Centre's pottery and slip decorated tiles and drawings with Philip Eglin at the school.

### Young Curator's Intervention in the Hot Pot Project

At the end of March, Anna Evans and the Young Curators group from Ceredigion Museum worked a wonderful transformation in the gallery. Inspired by the food theme of the Hot Pot Project they had experimented with decorative schemes using coloured pulses such as peas and lentils, rice and tea to develop patterned bases for the cases in the Ceramic Gallery. The designs were inspired by, and responded to, the designs on the Michael Cardew pots. Anna had also worked with Penweddig School who had made drawings from some pieces she had taken into the school. These were then photocopied and made small and then re-used in the display. Some of the pots had Michael Cardew quotes flowing out of them on curling pieces of paper. Other cases had long streamers of paper with designs based



on the work and, most spectacularly, the whole thing was an inventive and layered intervention coming out of the experience of working with the ceramics from Wenford Bridge and learning more about Michael Cardew and his work.



Intervention with textile fruit by Laura Cameron

### Family Activities

The Family Activities programme continues to be enjoyed by local families. Over 200 people took part in six events running from September until March in 2013/14 and almost 300 took part in the programme 2014/15. We also participated in the Families Arts Festival in October 2014. The 2015 winter programme was scheduled around the Hot Pot Project and the families particularly enjoyed having their salt-dough pieces on display in the gallery display cases amongst the Ann Carr pots. Louise Chennell was nominated for the Aberystwyth University Student Led Teaching Awards 2015 for her work with this project.

### Acquisitions

#### Ceramic Collection

From the 2013 International Ceramics Festival we acquired work by Sung Jae Choi (Korea), Virginia Scotchie (USA), Stephen Dixon (UK), Rafael Perez (Spain), Monika Patuszynska (Poland) and Conor Wilson (UK).

The collection continues to support Welsh makers and has purchased contemporary pieces from Michael Flynn and Susan O'Byrne and a fine jug by Walter Keeler from the South Wales Potters show. We are grateful to the Contemporary Art Society for Wales who donated a piece by Len Rees made in 1999.



Walter Keeler jug

We acquired five historical pieces from Gérard Mermoz who curated *Keramic Conversations: From Vallauris to Fat Lava*, 2013. We also acquired eleven pieces by Harry & May Davis from Crowan Pottery, which they ran from 1946 until they moved to New Zealand in 1962. Other acquisitions included a piece by Ken Eastman (UK) who reinterpreted the 'Old Imari' pattern for Royal Crown Derby, Stephanie Quayle (UK) from her Exhibition in Aberystwyth Arts Centre, 2013 and Gillian Still, *Seven Dwarves looking for Snowwhite*, 1985.

### Archive Acquisitions

We acquired a selection of sketchbooks and drawings by Denise Wren from Ms. Amber King.

### Access and Loans

We offer ceramic study days for students and the general public with invited speakers and artists. These may include handling sessions, access to the stores, and also to archive material and oral history recordings.

In 2014 we lent three works by Shoji Hamada and two by Bernard Leach to the Tate St Ives for the exhibition, *Relocating St Ives* and in 2015 three works by Ladi Kwali to the exhibition of her work in the Craft Study Centre, Farnham.

### Digitisation

In 2013 Moira Vincentelli arranged KESS funding for an MPhil project in collaboration with the National Library of Wales. This was a study of the potential of digitisation and was undertaken by Jack Snow who completed successfully in 2014.

In 2015 we worked with Sarah Higgins and students from the MA in Digital Archiving who were investigating the sustainability of our Oral History collection of tapes and recordings. They produced excellent work with helpful recommendations for how we should store and make the collection more accessible.



Michael Cardew, Gwari casserole dish from the Ann Carr collection

### The Archive Team

Moira Vincentelli: Emeritus Professor in Art History & Curator of Ceramics

Louise Chennell: Curatorial Assistant and Archivist of Ceramics

Kathy Talbot: Archive Assistant

Neil Holland: Curator of Collections

### Grants

Arts Council of Wales Audience Development Grant £5000 (2013-2014)

The Federation of Museums & Art Galleries of Wales awarded a grant of £1238 for photography work of Ann Carr Collection (2014)

Arts Council of Wales £24000 (2014-15) awarded a grant for £20,906

James Tower ceramic sculpture with assistance from The Art Fund and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund – April 2014

Prof. Moria Vincentelli was awarded a *Strategic Insight Programme* (SIP) grant of £2500 for a visit to India and working with Sanskriti Foundation and Indian Pottery in Himachal Pradesh. Vineet Kacker will be a demonstrator at the ICF.

### Web Page and Contacts

The website address is <http://www.ceramics-aberystwyth.com>

E-mail contact is [contact@ceramics-aberystwyth.com](mailto:contact@ceramics-aberystwyth.com)

Postal address: Ceramic Archive, School of Art, Buarth Mawr, Aberystwyth University, Aberystwyth SY23 1NE

**Ceramic Archive:** Tel: (+0044) 01970 622192

**Gallery opening hours:** Open: Mon-Sat 10 am–8pm (Sundays 12–5pm) please check before visiting to avoid changeover or maintenance closures.

**Aberystwyth Arts Centre:** Tel (+0044) 01970 623232 (for exhibition details)

**School of Art:** Tel (+0044) 01970 622460 (for general information, enquires and queries).

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