JOHN MALTBY

"This is the day of the Artist Craftsman, not of the journeyman potter. That means any young person taking up a craft today, as a vocation, only justifies him/herself by finding something to voice or say i.e. his life or true character extended into his pots. Formerly, this was not the case but today it is. We want from the potter, the same sort of good quality which we expect from the Author, Poet, Painter or Composer" (quoted from a letter written by Bernard Leach to his grandson John in 1960.

With the proliferation of the "Leach Tradition" in workshops throughout the country, it is easy to forget that Bernard Leach placed the development of individual style, through learned and shared craftsmanship, as of the utmost importance. It is in his individual and idiosyncratic work in which his greatest genius lies (his vision of young ferns sprouting through bracken in Cornwall, or the singular austerity of the 'Pilgrim' motif, are expressions of a personal and unique vision, a quality also common to other British artists — Palmer, Blake, Dylan Thomas and the primitive Alfred Wallis (all similarly occupied with the small-scale).

In 1928, St. Ives became, for a brief period, the centre of the most advanced artistic activity in the West, B.L. who had been there for 8 years, was surrounded by, and became friendly with, a group of painters and sculptors of major international importance, amongst whom were Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Naum Gabo and Antoine Persner. Their influence upon each other in their developing styles is clear — but B.L. remained stylistically the outsider; his thoughts focusing upon the East rather than upon shared discoveries by those by whom he was surrounded. This singularity of vision, whilst remaining B.L.'s greatest strength has, I believe, proved to be a strange springboard for what has become the "English Studio Tradition", and I have tried, in my own work, to find a common ground upon which I might feel more easily relaxed than upon this anglo-oriental source.

The peculiar "Englishness of English Art" has a distinctive quality found profusely in its arts. The Architecture, painting, sculpture, Literature and Poetry are of an intimate flavour. It is inseparable from the landscape and climate, and in my own pots, I have tried to return to this national inspiration; to sea and sky, rocks, churches, birds and flowers, and my English reaction to them (in this exhibition, all the pots have been made in the last three months, and their subjects are those which have preoccupied me during that time, though many of them are of older memories that go back to childhood). These subjects are a leitmotif running through our creative tradition, our experience of them shapes our thoughts and attitudes, and they are always present in our work, sometimes more clearly stated than at others, but always inexplic-
high-temperature colours used as a result of experience with Japanese enamels.

All the forms are hand-built — and I've been told that the majority lean slightly either in form or pattern. This is not a conscious awareness, but perhaps part of that subliminal consciousness which I have tried to describe and which pervades our natures. I have indeed strong memories, as a small boy, of leaning into the fierce winds of the East coast where I was born. The motifs of harbours, ropes and nets come from the coastal villages of the south-west peninsula in which I live, and the architecture of Wells cathedral plays an important part in some of the pots. The resolution of form and pattern in equal and complementary balance is a recurring challenge. I am constantly surprised at how the slightest change of thrust in a form can so radically change the organisation of the motif placed upon it, but working in such a way, with no two pots attempting to be alike and with such small change being of such importance, it has been essential to develop methods of making and firing appropriate to such demands. The kiln is fired frequently and quickly, with continuous assessment and adjustment of new pots from day to day. Temperature is accurately controlled and such adjustments are required. Monitory, though always a danger when bills have to be paid, is hopefully continually overcome by a constant return to newly inspired forms and patterns in nature. The greatest pleasure is to visit a particular locality, to return, and to make a series of pots about such an experience. That this is possible is the result of the developing climate of changing taste and attitude to the pot as object and to the technological changes mentioned. It has allowed such experiences to be hopefully more relevant and flexibly interpreted. The modern potter is a child of our time, and there is no creative place for a nostalgic longing for a past era, or for a culture which we might admire but with which we have no identity, for a society which takes no account of technological revolution (or a ceramic art which confuses such revolution with progress). I have, therefore, tried to use the English tradition of painting and sculpture as a springboard for the work and not that of the Western domestic functional tradition. (Though I recognise readily the beauty which such a way has produced, I do find the presence of a casserole on a pedestal somewhat uncomfortable). To this end, Ogata Kenzan's achievements in the 17th century have been inspirational: there is a stylistic unity between his work and that of his contemporary painters and sculptors, yet, at his best, the ceramic quality of the work speaks loudly. His voice is inextricable from his craft. This is what I am trying to do in my own work.

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"Oeso y Artist Grefftwr yw hi, nid oeso y crochenydd gruffawr cyflogedig. Mae hynny'n golygyr mair unig ffordd y gall person ifanc sy'n ymgymryd á chrefft fel gwledigadhaedd heiddiw, gyfliamhau ei hun yw trwy ddoed o hyd i rywbeth i'w dweud h.y. rohi mynegiant i'r fynych a'r wir gymeriad drwy ei boliau. Nid felly yr oedd hi gynt, ond dyna'r swyddfa heiddiw. Disgyfrir yr un math o ragoriaethau oddi wrth y crochenydd ag a ddigwyrrt oddi wrth yr Awdur, yr Bardd, y Peintwr a'r Cyfan- soddwr. (Dyfrifad o'ryfr a ysgrifennodd Bernard Leach i'w wfr John ym 1960.)

Gydlyd iedaniad eang "Traddodiad Leach" mewn gwelthai yrthob rhan o'r wlad, mae'n hawdd cofi golygyr a'r ffaith i Bernard Leach roi'r lle mwyaf blaennawr i ddolbygarodd arddull unigol, drwy gruffawr ached wedi ei ddygu a'i rhannu. Yn ei waith unigol a chwbl arbenig ei hun ygwir ei athrythri ar ei gorau. Mae ei welediad o reodyn ifanc yn egino drwy'r rhedyn unoesg yng Nghymru, neu lynned hynod y math 'Pererin' ym mynegiant o weledigadwa'r bersonol ac unigryw, nodwedd sy'n gyffredin o ardyntadaid Prydeinig eraill — Palmer, Blake, Dylan Thomas a'r artist gynteg Alfred Wallis pob un fel ei glyhdyn yn ymwneud â grandiau fachan.

Ym 1929, daeth St. Ives am gyfnod byr yng nghaithlon y gylltai garedig artistig mwyaf blaennawr y mør Gorllewin, Cafoedd Bernard Leach, a oedd wedi bod yno am ddwy'i chron. mae ei amgylchi gan gan ar òl draed o beintwyr a cherflunwyr o gyn brwsigwyd rhynghwadol, a daeth ei gyfali iddiyn. Yn ei pithl roedd Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Naum Gabo ac Antoine Panser. Mae ei dylanwad y nhaill ar y siail ym nathblygiau eu harddulluau yn amliw — ond yna oed wedi cadwodd Bernard Leach ar wahân, gan ganolbwyntio ei fedyddiau ar y Dwyrain ym hytrach nag ar y Gardneraduriaid a oedd yn gyfrifon i'r holl o'ir gwmpas. Yn y swm a roedd yr hynod ymwybyddwyd gwledigaeth hwn, er mai ‘dyme brif gyfrifwr Bernard Leach, yn ffinonnenll ryfedd o'r hyn a daeth yn "Traddodiad Swdio Seisng" ac ym o'r gwraeth ffl ym hwyr wedi ceisio ddoed o hyd i'r dir gyfrifon lle y byddwn ym teimlo'n wy trefcelog nag ar y tir engl- ddiwyreinion hwn.

Mae ansawod nodweddiodol "Seisngwyd ddwy Seisng" i'w ganfod yn helaeth ym ei chelhedydd. Mae rhwy o'en o agosawdwyd ym perthyn i'r Benseromaeth, y Peintiadau, y Gerffliniaeth, y Llyneddiant a'r Farddoniataeth. Mae'n anwahanadwydd oddi wrth y tirlun a'r tynnog, ac ym ysgol ymwelwyd, ym hun ceisial ddychwelyd at yr ysbrydiaeth genedlauol hon, at ôl ac'aws, craigiau ac egoiwysi, adar a blodau, a'n hmyhef Seisng iddynt. (Yn y tri mis diwethaf y gwneud yr holl botaun sydd yr yr arddangosfa hon, a'u pynciau yw'r maill sydd wedi bod yno mynd â'm byd yng yr ystem yr amser hwnnw, er bod llawer ohonynt ym ymwneud â

hen atgalno i gyfnod fy mhilhlentiodod.) Y pync- ciau hyn yw'r prif ddyrchfuddiaw sy'n lifo drwy'n traddodiad creadigol; mae'n profiad ohonynt yn ffurfi o ein meddyliau a'ı saith ohonynt, ac maent bob amser yn bresennol ym ei gwraith. weithiau wedi eu mynegi'n hwy amliw nag ar amserau eraill, ond bob amser y rhan anheggor anwahanadwyr o'r gwfrhychau a luniwn.

Mae creu'r ymwbyddiaeth Olewinol o'r pot fel cyfrwng ymwybodol ar gyfer mynegiant personol a phrifat o'r fath wedi golygu ymddrech hir, ond ymdrech lwyddiannus yno sicr, mae hyn- sawod o chwaith ddolbygar, yngych a chwyly- dro technologol ym maes cerameg wedi roi i ni gyfrwng ysbrydliad o amrywiaeth y goldir ei odel- nyddio ar gyfer amrywiaeth iannig o’r tynegiant. Mae’n ymdodref ro ei bod yn bwsig ym i ni fod yn ymwybodol o’r posibiliddu newydd y bynnag. Roedd y cyfrwng Momoyama ym Siapan, cyfnod pani
Welwyd fhwydrad afiethus mewn pattrwm a chynllun, yn mynd law yn llaw â datblygiad y lliwiau cooch ac anr a'r lliwiau syfâr oherintair yn hanes ceramig. Yn yr un modd, mae i'n gyfnod ni ei ansawdd ei hun ac ni eilir arnywybyddu'r dechnoleg berthnasol. Rhwyd wedi ceiiso ei defnyddio yn fy ngwraith lle bynnag y gallu fod yn berthnasol, ac mae'r lliwiau melyn ac chych in lliwiau tymheredd uchel a doddiwybyddu yn ddiweddar ac a ddefnyddir yr enghraifft o drin enamelaus Siapaneaid.

Caiff y ffurfiol i gyd eu llunio â llaw — ac mae rhai wedi dweud wrth fedal ni ei ffurf neu batrwm y rhan hwyaf ohonynt yn gogwyddo rhwyf gymaint. Nid rhwybeth ymwbyddol wrthiadaid yr hyn, ond fe all fod yn rhan o'r 'rhysemybyddiaeth yr wyl wedi ceiiso ei ddisgynfryd ac sy'n treiddio drew yn natur. Yn wir mae gennym atgofion cil cychydol i ychydig o frwyto am y sylweddol i ddod â'r cysgu'r ffurf hefyd y gall y newid i fwyto am y ngwyddo llungyll ychydig o ddathlu. Caiff yr ymchwil yr ymateb o'r ffurf a thair na'd efin ffurf a gwydefawr ac yr holl ffurfau'r dyrwsyddiaeth. Nid oes un ymddengys ac mae'r lliwiau melyn ac chych in lliwiau tymheredd uchel a doddiwybyddu yn ddiweddar ac a ddefnyddir yr enghraifft o drin enamelaus Siapaneaid.