

An important stage in the evolution towards these contemporary developments is represented in the collection created by Richard Dunning. It is a snap-shot of studio pottery at a significant juncture as well as being a fine example of a teaching resource for students learning the practical craft of pottery.



Mollie Winterburn Bottle



Richard Batterham Bowl



Colin Pearson Bottle



William Ruscoe Vase

Richard Dunning trained at Goldsmith's College, London before serving as a non-combatant in the invasion of Italy in World War II. He joined the College staff in 1949 and set about developing what was to become a successful and popular pottery course. Past students have paid tribute to his meticulous tuition in the basic skills of pottery as well as his 'quiet inspiration' and encouragement. Further information about his teaching can be found in the 'Online Exhibitions' section on the University collection website: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/art>

Mead Gallery 2008

**University of Warwick
Westwood Teaching Centre - Ceramics Display
BRITISH STUDIO POTTERY IN THE 1960s AND 1970s**

The works in this exhibition come from a collection of ceramics put together as a resource for students training to become teachers specialising in art and design at Coventry College of Education before its merger with the University in 1978. It was created by Richard Dunning who taught pottery at the College from 1949 to 1977.

During the first half of the twentieth century there was a vigorous revival in the traditional craft of pottery inspired by Bernard Leach (1867-1979) who, through his visits to Japan, China and Korea, developed an aesthetic incorporating oriental influences. The qualities he sought in his work were harmony and wholeness and he believed that utility was the first principle



Winchcombe Pottery Jug

of beauty. Numerous 'artist-potters' emerged many of whom continued the tradition of producing functional vessels - plates, bowls, jugs, bottles, etc. - whilst superimposing their individual ideas about form and decoration. They offered the public everyday objects of unique design as an alternative to the uniformity of mass-production.



Mike Dodd Lidded bowl

The Winchcombe Pottery, established in 1926 by Michael Cardew who had been Leach's



Emmanuel Cooper Footed Bowl

first apprentice, set out to revive the country pottery tradition producing plain but beautifully made everyday tableware (Nos 1, 2, 3, 4). The collection contains work by other former students of Leach: his son David Leach (No.5), Harry Davis (No.11), William Marshall (No.14), Richard Batterham (No.6), and Gwyn Hanssen Piggott (No.23). The indirect influence of Leach's

philosophy and working practice was felt by generations of potters and can be traced here in the work of Emmanuel Cooper (No.31), Mike Dodd (No.15) and Colin Pearson (No.12).

For some studio potters function became subservient to purely aesthetic or expressive objectives. Many believed that ceramics should be regarded as an art form on a par with painting and sculpture and



Lucie Rie Shallow bowl

while the vessel continued to provide the basic form, they exploited sculptural and decorative possibilities, rather than utility. Prominent among them were Lucie Rie (No.20) and Hans Coper (No.24) who introduced a flavour of European modernism while other potters exploring sculptural possibilities of form and texture include Joanna Constantinidis (No.29), Derek Davis (No.25), William Ruscoe (No.28) and Alison Britton (No.30).



Hans Coper Spade-shaped vessel



Alison Britton Stoneware jug

Dunning provided his students with examples representing both the functional and decorative traditions but he also carefully chose works which illustrated the use of different clays, construction methods and surface decoration. Students were thus able to examine and handle pieces made by some of the most eminent and influential figures in the history of studio pottery using the techniques they were themselves learning in the College's ceramics studio.

At this time, pottery was a common feature of the art curriculum in schools. Basic techniques of hand building were frequently used in the classroom, therefore in addition to thrown pots, the collection included examples of coil-built and slab-built pots as well as pinch pots. The works by Mary Rogers (Nos 18, 19) exemplify the latter while the pieces by Ian Auld (No.7) and John Maltby (No.26) are examples of slab building.

In the period since the 1970s ceramics has flourished and developed, some of the trends evident in this exhibition have continued to the present day. In the celebrated work of Grayson Perry, winner of the Turner Prize in 2003, traditional vessel-forms are retained but surface decoration is used to make subversive political comment or satirical observations about society. Currently, one of the most respected potters is Edmund de Waal, who has developed a minimalist aesthetic in which pared-down, porcelain forms are used in multiples or installations to explore scale, space and situation. In his work pottery has become pure abstract art.



Joanna Constantinidis Tall bottle