



CERAMIC ART LONDON 09

Spring 2009 sees a welcome return for one of the UK's leading design fairs, Ceramic Art London. The international selling exhibition returns to London for its fifth year, showcasing the world's best contemporary ceramists.

above: Robert Cooper, Courtesy Ceramic Art London

opposite top to bottom: Elke Eder-Eich, Courtesy Ceramic Art London

Claire Loder, Courtesy Ceramic Art London

Rebecca Appleby, Courtesy Ceramic Art London

Ceramic Art London has steadily established itself as the UK's most prominent platform for contemporary ceramics and continues to retain its distinctiveness by being the only fair where the public can buy directly from the makers, rather than galleries.

It was a love for ceramics and a wish to share that enthusiasm with the public that led the Craft Potters Association to set up an annual, accessible platform for the medium. The diverse and exquisite pieces on show exhibit the vital traditions of a centuries old medium and at the same time showcase the best British and International contemporary ceramics.

CAL 09 will become a temporary home for eighty leading ceramists, both familiar favourites and fresh talent from the UK, Denmark, Italy, South Africa, Germany and Japan. Works range from large textural wall pieces by Stine Jespersen to

quirky teapots by Virginia Grahams. The thought provoking work of Akiko Hirai, painterly vessel forms of Craig Underhill and Kate O'Connell's contemporary take on classic decorative plates, stand alongside the beautiful functional pieces from Jack Doherty and Lisa Hammond.

Work on show also includes: Kaori Tatebayashi's intimate clay preservations, which transform inanimate objects into endearing keepsakes; Chris Keenan's serene, Orient-influenced vessels; Stine Jespersen's textured wall hangings made from hundreds of pieces of clay, inspired by the theme of repetition, and Claire Loder's larger than life ceramic heads, which invite the viewer to contemplate the interior world of the subject.

There is also an opportunity to see a display of new work by the emerging stars of the Royal College of Art's renowned Ceramics and Glass Department, showing



contemporary trends in studio ceramics, which complements the main fair.

CAL 09 is supported by an education programme of free talks and screenings that include artist presentations by CAL exhibitors Lisa Hammond and Eddie Curtis along with a Desert Island Pots interview with Sir Christopher Frayling, Rector of the RCA and Chair of the Arts Council. All talks and demonstrations plus a fully illustrated catalogue and exhibition guide are included in the ticket price.

This year's organiser, Marcia Allen, comments, "I've participated in the Fresh Art Fairs and visited the first Frieze Art Fair, but CAL was a new kid on the block for me. My first visit in 2007 was a revelation: ceramic art was being presented in an entirely new and fresh way. My visit to CAL 08 confirmed my first favourable impressions that here was a fair that would become a calendar fixture for the serious collector and enthusiast.

"The Royal College of Art is a brilliant venue for the fair and provides an opportunity for the public to enter a building they associate with artistic excellence, but may never have visited.

"The pristine white display areas, like mini white cubes, give the participating exhibitors a 'clean canvas' to work with. Having spent months in their studios where the thinking and making happens, it is interesting to see how each ceramic artist presents their work in this new context. Some exhibitors surround themselves with their work while others favour the minimalist approach.

"However, even a deceptively unstructured work will have involved a great deal of time and specialist knowledge to create and some works on display may become seminal pieces in the maker's career. All ceramic makers are represented at CAL. There are potters who produce work where the decorative effect is controlled, potters who are more open to the forces of nature and favour results which are not entirely predictable and ceramic artists who use glaze to underline shape and form rather than as simple decoration - it is a matter of personal preference which you prefer.

"One thing all makers have in common is the desire to create balance and harmony, using the combined effects of glaze, decoration and texture. Ceramic Art London is not only a fair where you can view and buy the best in contemporary ceramic art, you can also have a more interactive relationship with the event by engaging with its programme of workshops, demonstrations and talks. There is truly something for everyone."

Ceramic Art London runs 27 February - 1 March 2009 at the Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2EU. www.ceramics.org.uk