

'John Ward'  
Oxford Ceramics Gallery  
16 July - 20 August 2022



'Form above all, but expressed through light and colour.' - John Ward

In this newly researched exhibition, 'John Ward', Oxford Ceramics Gallery is delighted to pay tribute to the extraordinary work of leading UK potter John Ward (b. 1938). Works included date from throughout his career revealing one of the most distinctive voices in modern ceramics including examples of his monumental vessels, with their echoes of ancient Cycladic forms, as well as his more contemplative, contained forms, evocative, in his words, of 'the history held in the empty well of a bowl'.

John Ward first became fascinated with clay and its 'limitless possibilities of expression' at the age of nine, on a visit to a local pottery in Kent. It was only in 1966 that he decided to pursue pottery, enrolling at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts. Of his time there he recalls, 'there were several visiting teachers whose work I greatly admired. Hans Coper's pots encompassed both the ancient and modern, timeless and monumental. Lucie Rie's work, which I first saw in a sunlit exhibition room, glowed with its own light, life and colour. Ian Godfrey's creations exhibited a marvellous sense of form and texture as well as fun.'

John Ward's practice has focused on stoneware and the hand-building process as a way of developing his uniquely refined aesthetic. His delicately balanced coiled pots, reminiscent of ancient pots and vessels from Egypt, Persia and the Cyclades, have a quiet formality. The rhythm of forms is enhanced by the controlled use of matte glazes, either applied as graphic monochrome bands or in blends of chalk, slate blue and rust, echoing the Pembrokeshire landscape around his studio. As David Whiting suggests, 'his work evokes honed natural forms, the kind of bonier, elemental landscape he has lived in since he moved close to the Welsh coast in 1979'.

'The apparently contrasting qualities of drama and quiet reflection, is one of the most engaging aspects of his work. This sense of balance, of the tension between pushing and pulling, light and shade, movement and rest, makes Ward's work distinctive, distinguished and intriguing.' - Emmanuel Cooper

ENDS



*Image: Small Black and White Vessel by John Ward © Michael Harvey*

#### Notes to Editors

For all PRESS enquiries please contact [eva@oxfordceramics.com](mailto:eva@oxfordceramics.com)

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Open Tuesday – Saturday 11am–4pm

#### About the curator

James Fordham, Founding Director of Oxford Ceramics Gallery, is an acknowledged expert in the field of studio ceramics, and regular advisor to both museums and private collectors in the field. Through his work at Oxford Ceramics Gallery he is developing a programme of well-researched 20th century and contemporary ceramic exhibitions which make an active contribution to the development of scholarship, knowledge and understanding in the field.

#### About Oxford Ceramics Gallery

Oxford Ceramics Gallery was set up online in 2006 and opened its doors in Oxford, in 2011. The gallery has a genuine passion for ceramics underpinned by extensive knowledge gained over 25 years, enabling it to offer world class ceramics in an intimate and well-designed viewing environment, placing ceramics within art history. [www.oxfordceramics.com](http://www.oxfordceramics.com)