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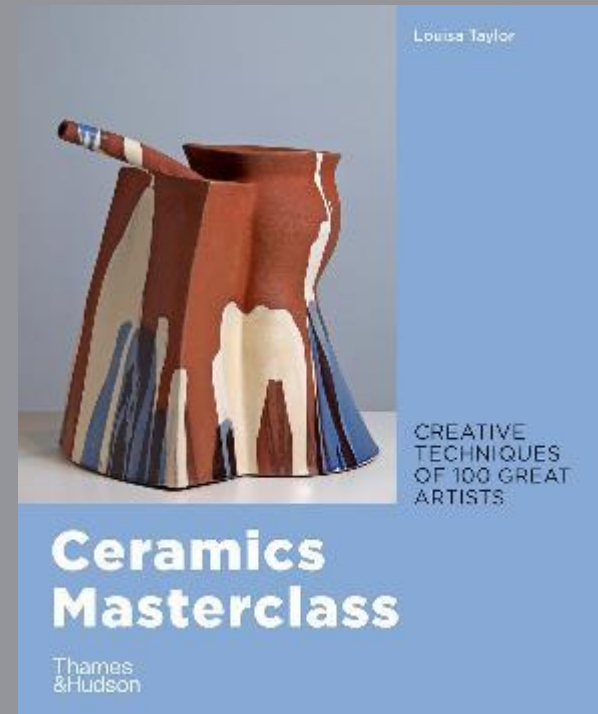


Ceramics Masterclass

Louisa Taylor

An exploration of the artistic process, methodology and techniques of 100 great ceramic artists, offering both practical advice and inspiration

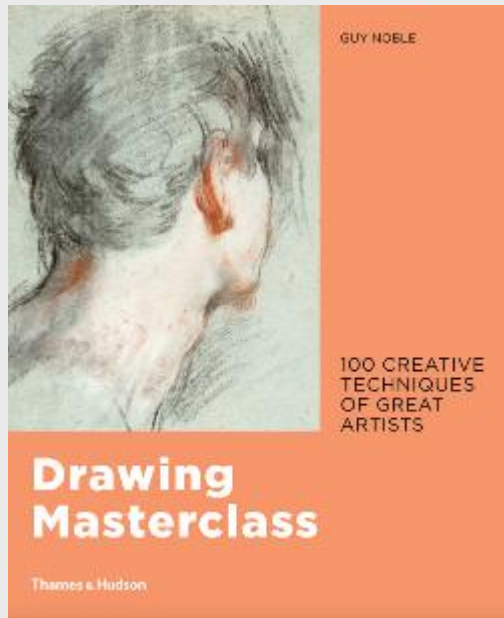
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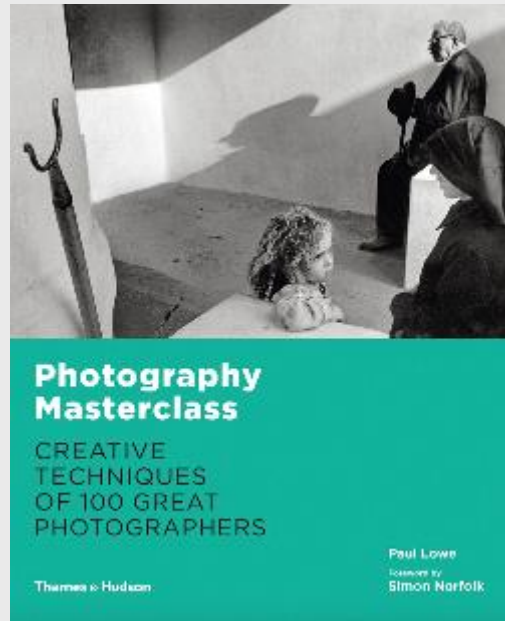
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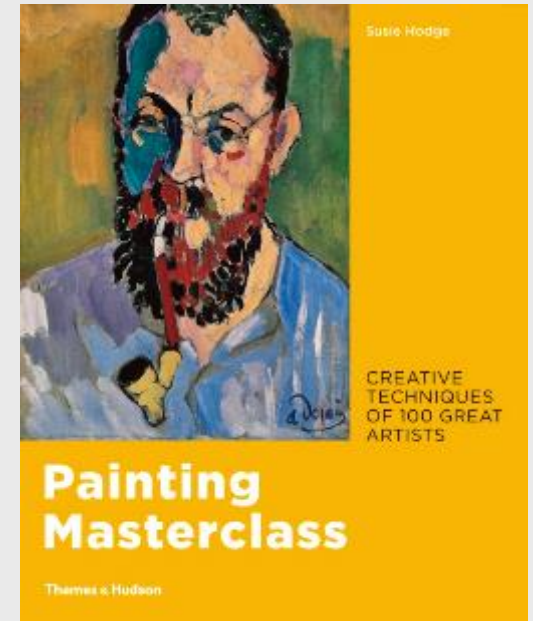
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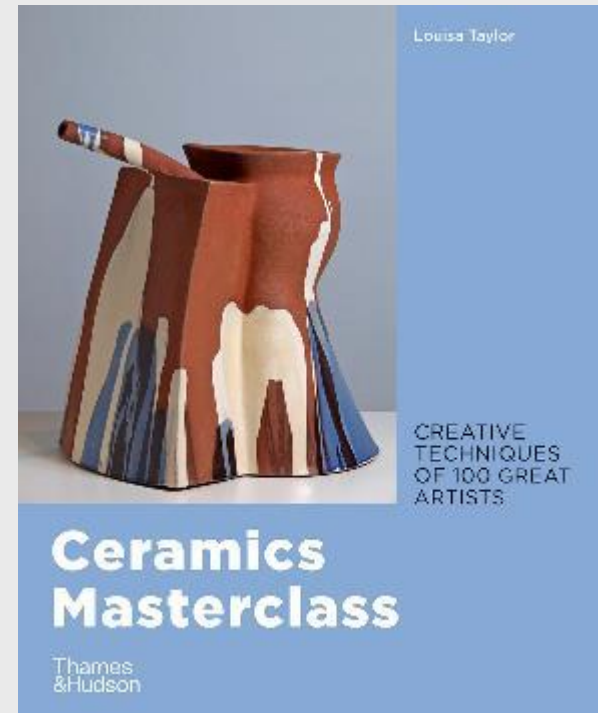


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Key Sales Points

- Features an in-depth ceramic techniques section covering skills integral to working with clay: indispensable for all practitioners.
- Represents a global perspective of the field, including dynamic and ground-breaking approaches to clay as well as historical examples.





A stoneware vase c.1970
Stoneware
Height: 27.5 cm (10 7/8 in)

Influenced by the Bauhaus movement and modernist designers such as Josef Hoffman (1870–1956), Rie followed the principles of minimal form and surface, a stark contrast to the Oriental inspired work of her contemporaries, including Bernard Leach (1887–1979) and Michael Cardew (1901–1983). By nature, Rie was known for her direct and unfussy manner saying, 'I like to make pots – but I do not like to talk about them'. She used a kick wheel to throw her pieces and simply enjoyed exploring the qualities of the clay. Quiet but self-assured, this tall fluted vase asserts a confidence reflective of Rie's character and modernist ideals. The bulbous base of the vase is visually balanced by the elongated neck which flows and expands in to a rhythmic flared rim.

Rie's ability to create a sense of tension and control within the form is enhanced further by her use of a textured grey/white glaze. An early adopter of the electric kiln, Rie preferred the aesthetics of oxidised stoneware firings and pioneered the technique to her advantage. Subsequently, others have found it very difficult to replicate her glazes. For this piece, what is known about her methods is that it is likely she added metal oxides such as copper, manganese and cobalt to the clay body prior to throwing. This was followed by layers of white slip covering the vase. After bisque firing, she applied a dry stoneware matt glaze which she proceeded to fire to a stoneware temperature of 126°C. As the glaze melted, the oxides in the clay body bled through the layers and left inky blue-green traces blotting the surface and softening the overall form.

See also

Michael Cardew (p.00), Michael Powolny (p.00),
Bernard Leach (p.00)

Lucie Rie (British, 1901–1995) was born in Vienna and studied pottery at the K.K. Kunstgewerbeschule (Vienna School of Arts and Crafts). She enjoyed considerable success before having to flee Austria from Nazi-Germany rule and relocated to Britain in 1938. Rie established her studio in central London and during the post-war years produced buttons and jewellery for Binn Design. She progressed to making functional wares including her distinctive vases and honed tableware collections. Through

her experiences, Rie had gained substantial glaze knowledge and her colours ranged from chalky whites to vivid citric yellows, electric blues and sugary pinks. In 1946, Hans Cooper (a German refugee himself) without any previous ceramic experience joined Rie as her studio assistant which led to a lifelong friendship until his death in 1981. Together the pair encouraged each other to develop their own individual styles and thus cement their position as important studio potters of the twentieth century.

Technique

For this piece, Rie used the pottery wheel to throw a cylinder shape which she then swelled to create the belly area of the vase. From here, she collared the top of the form and brought the clay towards a narrow opening. She was then able to skillfully draw the next stage of the vase up in to a long, exaggerated neck. To complete the vase, Rie flared the rim very wide almost to the point of collapse.

Recipes

Emulate the style of Lucie Rie with these examples of oxidised stoneware glaze recipes.



Dry Stoneware Matt base glaze 1260 degrees °C	
Nepheline Syenite	40%
Barium Carbonate	15%
Wollastonite	15%
Flint	10
China Clay	10
Calcium Borate Frit	10
Additions +	
Strong Blue	
Cobalt Oxide	2%
Citric Yellow	
Sun Yellow Stain	8%
Sugar Pink	
Nickel Oxide	8%



Rustic ware platter 1565–1585
Earthenware with coloured glazes
40.6 x 53.3 x 4 cm (16 x 21 x 1½ in)

This oval platter is a typical example of Palissy's imaginative scenes often referred to as *Pièce Rustique* (Rustic ware). A grass snake undulates in the centre of the platter, a trickling stream bubbles and twists among darting fish and a snapping crustacean. Lizards, shells, fern leaves, acorns and pebbles adorn the rim. A frog perches on the edge of the platter, his hind legs tucked with the energy of a coiled spring poised to leap. Palissy's great skill was his ability to convey movement and imply the creatures within the scene could come to life and scuttle away. From his experience of stained glass, Palissy set out to mimic the brilliant shine and gloss of enamels and translate these qualities into ceramic earthenware glazes. Through much experimentation, he emulated watery realism by painting his ceramics with rich cobalt blues, purples, green and honey lead glazes to complete the scene.

The subjects within Renaissance art often centred around religious themes, and symbolism was used to convey coded messages to the viewer about anything from fertility and wealth to immortality. Rabbits represented lust, goldfinches embodied the soul and snakes were considered evil because of connotations with the manipulative serpent in the garden of Eden. It is unclear whether Palissy sought to embed a deeper level of symbolism into his dioramas, although he was particularly intrigued by frogs. To him they represented the generation of new life. What is also curious is that the scenes he created were imaginative representations of his interest in the natural world and his creative intention was purely decorative.



Source

Palissy experimented with press-moulding techniques after being inspired by bronze casting processes. He was considered one of the first potters to adopt the use of plaster moulds for ceramics in this way. Records of his notebooks and journals suggest he kept live specimens such as frogs, snakes and lizards in jars on the shelves in his studio until he was ready to take casts of them.

Technique

Palissy's press-moulding technique involved rolling slabs of clay to a set thickness and transferring the slab to a plaster mould before smoothing them down to take the form. The process of taking the cast captured the finest of detail and Palissy took an imprint by pressing wads of clay into the mould and allowing it to firm a little. He then carefully removed the clay version of the

Bernard Palissy (French, 1500–1590) was a sixteenth-century Renaissance artist with interests spanning science, natural history, paleontology and stained glass. He focused his attention on ceramics after being inspired by Italian Maiolica wares and dedicated the next 16 years of his life to perfecting his techniques – nearly making himself bankrupt in the process. Palissy is most famous for producing large dioramic plates and sculptural vessels which depict pond scenes teeming with life and curiosity. During his career he earned a notable reputation and was extremely popular among royalty and distinguished members of society. In 1545 he was commissioned by the Queen Mother of France, Catherine de Medici to create a large-scale grotto in the grounds of the Tuileries Palace in Paris. Although this project was never completed, Palissy enjoyed high success during his life time but his luck ran out in 1588 when he was imprisoned for his Calvinist beliefs and died of mistreatment at the Bastille in 1590.

creature from the mould and arranged it artfully within the composition. Eventually, when Palissy was satisfied with the variety and placing of the casts, he scored the clay areas to be joined, applied slip and positioned into location.

Left: A press mould of a clam shell.

Right: One of Palissy's original moulds of a frog c.1550.

The Eagle Has Landed 1999

Wood-fired stoneware

87.6 × 58.4 × 58.4 cm (34½ × 23 × 23 in)

Free of ceramic conventions, this sculptural work by Peter Voulikos imbues his unrestricted and powerful approach to working with clay. Confrontational in stature, the form stomps and asserts its place as an assemblage of chunky thrown fragments punctured by rugged lumps of tom clay. Sections are stitched and remodeled like patchwork, unafraid to hide the scars of the process. A bottle-like neck is squashed and smeared on to the top of the form, perhaps its purpose is to return a sense of order and offer containment. However, a crudely cut hole near the base contradicts this notion and renders its function ambiguous. Freshly worked, this piece juts and slumps under its own weight yet maintains its stance.

Random flashes of ochre yellows and muddy browns swirl and orbit the form. Voulikos achieved this effect by wood firing his pieces using a traditional Japanese anagama kiln. The unpredictable nature of the technique adding to the overall spontaneity of the piece. Experimental and progressive, the strength of Voulikos's work was his ability to improvise and be decisive – there is no sign of hesitation within the construction of this piece or sense it has been laboured over. He was known to work intuitively saying, 'The quicker I work, the better ... if I start thinking and planning, I start contriving and designing. I work mostly by gut feeling.' Voulikos's energetic and radical approach to the material led him to the forefront of the discipline.

See also

Bernard Leach (p.00)

Shoji Hamada (p.00)

Rudy Autio (p.00)

Peter Voulikos (American, 1924–2002) is considered one of America's greatest clay artists/sculptors. Charismatic and rebellious, he initially studied painting and printmaking at Montana State College, spending much of his time in the ceramics department. After graduation, Voulikos established a studio at Arche Bay Foundation in Harora and made functional pottery to support his painting. He was visited by Bernard Leach (1887–1978), Shoji Hamada (1884–1978) and the philosopher Satori Soetsu

(1883–1967) and was encouraged by Hamada to take a freer, material-led approach to his work. Subsequently, Voulikos met a group of Abstract Expressionist artists, including Willem de Kooning (1904–1997) and Franz Kline (1910–1962) who inspired him to work spontaneously and with expression, Voulikos remarking, 'Clay is just thick paint, and paint is nothing but thin clay.' Amongst his practice, Peter Voulikos was a highly regarded educator and his influence and contribution to the field has left a lasting legacy.

**Method**

Voulikos referred to his sculptures as 'ice buckets' and 'soring stacks'. He used a variety of methods to construct the works including slab built and thrown sections which he combined and freely assembled. He provoked disorder by slashing, piercing and striking the clay, allowing areas to collapse and distort in the process.

**Method**

An anagama kiln is a wood-fired climbing kiln with a long chamber typically built up a slope or hillside. The design enables a slow draw of air to be pulled through the kiln which increases temperature and deposits ash over the wares. The silica content in the ash reacts with the silica present in the clay body and creates distinctive 'flashing and glazed areas'.





75 Figurative

Big-bird, two-handed ceramic vase 1951

Earthenware

Unknown dimensions

Lively and playful – this piece is a continuation of Picasso's interest in mythology and zoomorphic shapes. The face motif is bright-eyed and welcoming, large horn-like handles protrude and arch around the sides of the vessel. A watchful owl perches on the creature's head, coexisting in symbiosis. Picasso's considered application of semi-monochrome colours – whites, greys and browns – imply this could be a nocturnal creature. Freely decorated with coloured slips in Picasso's signature style, the outline of the figure has been carved through the layers using the sgraffito technique. Collections of flicked lines dash the surface and resemble feathers and scales, suggesting the texture and feel of the creature's body. The overall composition is characterful and expressive.

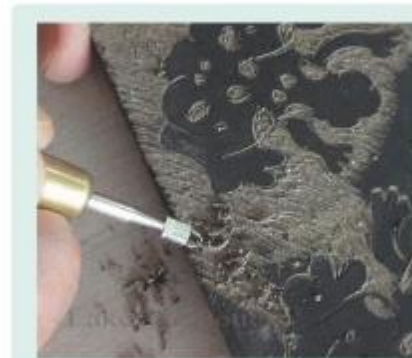
Picasso worked in collaboration with the potters at the Madoura workshop who made his pieces to his specification, often supplied as separate shapes and vessels to allow him to experiment with the assembly and construction of the piece. Picasso played with the figurative likeness of pottery shapes such as the belly, shoulders and neck area of a vase and painted his characters in response to how he positioned the components as one overall piece. Picasso did not have much previous experience working with clay and learnt a lot through trial and error. His experimental and dynamic approach was very different to the traditional Leach style of the same era and inspired a new generation of potters who were seeking an alternative aesthetic.

Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973) is widely regarded as one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century. In the later years of his life, and already phenomenally successful, Picasso turned his interests to clay after a visit to Villars, France, in 1946. The small coastal town was known for its pottery production and Picasso established a friendship with Suzanne Ramié (1905–1974) and Georges Ramié (1901–1976) who owned Atelier Madoura. The

See also

Suzanne Ramié (p.00)**George Ramié** (p.00)**Jules Agard** (p.00)

couple allowed Picasso to work alongside them in the studio and introduced him to Jules Agard (1905–1986), a local potter who made his vessels for him, which Picasso decorated in his playful style using slips and oxide. Picasso was a prolific worker and produced over 3,500 pieces ranging from plates, bowls to jugs and pitchers. His intention was to create functional wares that were more accessible and affordable to everyday people.

**Technique**

Decorating slip is essentially liquid clay. It is a mixture of clay and water coloured with metal oxides or pigments. It is applied when the clay is at the leather-hard stage and can be used like paint to create expressive and visually interesting surfaces.

Picasso painted with slips and used sgraffito techniques to decorate his works. Sgraffito is an Italian word for 'Scratch back' and the method involves simply drawing through layers of slip to reveal the clay body underneath, creating a striking contrast.

Atmosphere 2015

285 porcelain vessels in 9 aluminium and plexiglass vitrines
 Each: 30 x 300 x 25 cm (11 3/4 x 118 x 9 7/8 inches)
 Overall dimensions variable

Suspended high in the air, nine large horizontal vitrines filled with obscured arrangements of over 200 celadon and grey porcelain vessels occupy the vast Sunley Gallery space of the Turner Contemporary in Margate, Kent (UK). The installation is a site-specific response by de Waal to the cloud formations, transitions of light and the changing landscape of the North Sea, in relationship to the architecture of the gallery building. The only way to view the vitrine is by looking up in the same way as we view clouds. De Waal refers to this as 'skying' – an expression used by the naturalist painter John Constable (1776–1837) to describe the simple pleasure of lying down on your back and observing the sky. When this piece was displayed in 2015, mats were laid on the floor of the gallery to allow visitors to immerse themselves in their own 'skying'.

With influences from minimalist artist Donald Judd (1928–1994) and architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969), these series of cloudscapes convey de Waal's restrained response to the endless moment of light and experience of weather. Positioned at alternating heights, the vitrines layer and overlap each other. Inside, carefully arranged groups of simple thrown forms are masked by different levels of opacity of the vitrine. One is clear, four are semi-opaque and the remaining four are very opaque. The installation is named after a quote by impressionist painter J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851) who famously said, 'Atmosphere is my style'. Together these subtle distinctions in tone and variation reflect the changing landscape and ambience created by light.

**Form**

A vitrine is a glass display cabinet, typically used to present collections of objects. The box-like shape conveys de Waal's interest in containment, preciousness and distilling memory. He explores the architectural quality of the vitrine and combines this with groupings of curated pots. The vitrines are constructed from an array of materials – from painted steel, aluminium, blackened oak and acrylic. De Waal plays with sections of blurred glass or acrylic to distort and skew our perception of the contents inside.

**Material**

Edmund de Waal uses porcelain because it offers beautiful translucent qualities and purity of colour. He throws his pieces using a pottery wheel to create fluid and sensitive forms. Porcelain is notoriously temperamental to work. It shags, collapses, cracks and warps, but the pay-off is a luscious clay body that is responsive and elegant. De Waal fires his pieces in either an oxidised (electric kiln) or reduction (gas kiln) environment depending on the aesthetic of glaze he is aiming for.

Edmund de Waal (British, b.1964) is an internationally acclaimed artist and writer who was drawn to the expressive qualities of clay from an early age. At 17 he undertook a two-year apprenticeship with Geoffrey Whiting (189–1998) in the Dutch traditional style and he progressed to setting up his own studio making domestic functional pottery. De Waal studied English at Cambridge University followed by a post-graduate degree in Japanese. He spent a period of time in Japan, continuing with his interest in clay and broadening his experiences. In recent years, de Waal has become best known for his large-scale installations in which he explores themes of collecting and collections, memory and displacement. Edmund de Waal has enjoyed success as a multi-prize-winning author for his book *The Hare with the Amber Eyes* (2010). As an artist and a writer, de Waal states, 'For me, my pots represent a series of words and language'. De Waal is rightly regarded as a leading conceptual artist who is able to blur the lines between art and craft.

See also
Geoffrey Whiting (p.00)