



A MONTHLY CULTURAL Q&A

JUNE 2012: JAIME GILI

MAY 2012: HOUSE OF ILLUSTRATION

APRIL 2012: ED PIEN

MARCH 2012: THE GRANTCHESTER POTTERY

FEBRUARY 2012: MIRANDA BOULTON

JANUARY 2012: EMILY SPEED

DECEMBER 2011: SALVATORE ARANCIO

NOVEMBER 2011: ROGER COLEMAN

OCTOBER 2011: MARCUS FREEMAN

SEPTEMBER 2011: JULIE VERHOEVEN

JULY 2011: CENTRUM

JUNE 2011: KAAVOUS-BHOYROO

MAY 2011: ANDY HOLDEN

APRIL 2011: AID AND ABET

MARCH 2012: THE GRANTCHESTER POTTERY

THE GRANTCHESTER POTTERY is a new initiative by Giles Round and Phil Root that came out of their residencies at Wysing Arts Centre.

It looks at the legacy of artist communities of the twentieth century and draws on historical precedents such as Roger Fry's Omega Workshop in order to create and commission new work. They are taking part in Publish and Be Damned at the ICA on 17 March.

What are you working on at the moment?

GP. We have just finished designing, making, glazing and illustrating the first full Grantchester Pottery Coffee Service. It comprises Coffee Pot, Coffee cups, Saucers, Milk Jug, Sugar Bowl, Ashtray, Small Tray, Vase and Tiled Table.

What is your most significant project so far?

GP. The Coffee Service is our biggest and most complete achievement.

What's the most difficult thing you have ever done?

GP. Trying to discover how to make large flat pieces that remain perfectly flat through the stoneware glaze fire. We are not craftspeople, more reasonably unskilled artists turning our hands to the decorative crafts. We have had to learn a lot of the rules through trial, error and consulting Kenneth Clark's *The Potter's Manual*.

You both have independent practices as artists, as well as organising The Grantchester Pottery. How does the work you do collaboratively effect those?

GP. It is more the case of how our individual practices effect The Grantchester Pottery. We both have differing styles that tend to come together in the work. For example in the coffee service, some parts were designed individually and some together. We believe this creates a kind of harmony in the design nevertheless allows it to pull in more than one direction. This makes the work more unpredictable and exciting.

How do you see The Grantchester Pottery developing?

GP. From historic precedent it seems mostly likely that The Grantchester Pottery will fail within five years. Until this time it will continue to produce decorative functional objects with a group of like-minded artists. Each piece is only marked with The Grantchester Pottery emblem. The authorship of a design will remain ambiguous. It is not important who creates a design. An artist's pattern may be executed by another onto something made by another. Anything added to our design library is open to interpretation. The Grantchester Pottery seeks to challenge conventional ideas of authorship in relation to artistic production.

Will you only produce work in ceramics or will you be working with other materials too?

GP. The Grantchester Pottery is a decorative arts studio. It seeks to produce a series of utilitarian ceramics alongside other decorative household items such as printed and woven textiles, wallpaper, painted furniture and hand painted murals. The Grantchester Pottery aims to substitute, wherever possible the directly expressive quality of the artist's handling for the deadness of mechanical reproduction.

In addition to offering a wide range of individual domestic products The Grantchester Pottery offers interior design themes for various living spaces.

Which other artists do you admire?

GP. Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Shoji Hamada, Agustín Hernández, William Nicholson, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Captain Beefheart, Sturtevant, African basket weavers, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Cady Noland, Kurt Schwitters, Blinky Palermo, Martin Kippenberger, Ettore Sottsass, Nigel Henderson, Eduardo Paolozzi, Diego Rivera, Henri Matisse, Edouard Vuillard, Franz West.

Who has influenced you most?

GP. The Grantchester Pottery draws historical precedent from Roger Fry's Omega Workshops as well as other artist decorative arts studios like the Atelier Martine, Rebel Arts Centre & Hammer Prints. Nevertheless there are very few people that we haven't taken influence from. The most recent influence has been from the 1970s feminist potters of the RCA, Memphis and 1990s Moschino.

Where is your favourite place to work?

GP. Anywhere with a large table and decent coffee. So far GP has been producing work from the pottery studio at Wysing, Cambridgeshire. The studio together with its location is partly the reason that the pottery came into being. For the time being it is very much The Grantchester Pottery's home.

What's the best advice anyone ever gave you?

PR. 'Never get into a hot air balloon.'

GR. Of the two things Great Uncle Harry ever said to me one was the piece of advice, 'If anyone ever gets in your way. Kick them.'



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