

John Masterton - Potter

We had collected ceramics for a long time, and I had always admired the work of a lot of great potters, so after I left Nortel in 2002, I thought I would have an attempt at working with clay. I went to evening classes to have a go, and it just clicked. I found I could throw pots on the wheel after a few weeks, and it grew from there. With the help of a very enthusiastic tutor, I started a part time Art Foundation course at Ware College, and got involved with helping at one of the major UK Ceramics Fairs, Art in Clay, held at Hatfield House. I then went on to take a degree in Ceramics at the University of Westminster (what used to be the Harrow Ceramics course), and graduated with a BA (Hons) in Ceramics in 2008. Since then I have been working full time as a maker (at least I haven't been doing anything else!).

I now show my work at ceramics fairs around the UK and in Europe, and sell through over 15 galleries, all around the country. In 2014 I supplied work to the Conran Shop in London and Paris. In 2016 I have had a solo show at Gallery Theemaas in Rotterdam, and participated in two international markets in Holland, at Swalmen and Milsbeek, both near the German border, as well as the UK trade and retail fairs.

I am a selected member of Anglian Potters, our regional organisation, and have been Chairman since May 2016. Local outlets for my work include Byard Art Gallery in Cambridge, Lion House Gallery in Lavenham, and the various Anglian Potters exhibitions in Cambridge in August and November/December. I work at my studio at home in Sawbridgeworth, where I also have a permanent display space.

End of 2016 shows will include Art in Clay at Farnham Maltings in Surrey on 19th and 20th November, the Anglian Potters Christmas selling exhibition in All Saints Church, Jesus Lane, Cambridge from 12th November to 11th December, and Christmas at Byard Art, Kings Parade, Cambridge from 19th November until January.

Images of my work and news about exhibitions and shows can be found on my website



www.johnmasterton.co.uk



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The Process

There are numerous stages in making my pots, which can be summarised as:

- Work is made in porcelain, thrown on a wheel, and with extruded additions.
- Fired once to around 1000°C for 'biscuit' firing, prior to glazing
- My glazes are based on ancient Chinese glazes.
- Copper red is a reconstructed 15th century glaze, and uses 0.5% copper carbonate as the main colouring oxide.
- Celadon (blue/green) uses a small amount (1.5%) of red iron oxide (Fe_2O_3), the Tenmoku (black/brown) uses around 8% red iron oxide.
- The blue is the celadon glaze with a tiny amount (0.1%) cobalt oxide added.
- All the firing of glazes is done in a gas reduction atmosphere kiln at between 1280 and 1300°C, which transforms the oxides to their final colours.
- Firing takes about 10 hours to reach temperature and then two days to cool down. I built the kiln from scratch, so feel even more involved in the process!

