

EXPLORING THE VESSEL

William Scott: Paintings and Drawings Ashley Howard: New Ceramic Works



with friend and fellow RCA alumni Martin Lungley for the international touring exhibition *Full Circle*. The exhibition was designed to showcase the possibilities of wheel-thrown ceramics, and its catalogue included contributions by Alison Britton and Emmanuel Cooper. Ashley joined the University of Creative Arts, Farnham as the subject specialist lecturer for Ceramics in 2006.

He has exhibited, demonstrated and lectured all over the world, spending considerable time in Japan. He is Fellow of the Craft Potters Association and member of Contemporary Applied Arts. His achievements on the national and international stages have recently culminated in him becoming a member of the International Academy for Ceramics based in Switzerland.

Ashley's work draws on his interest in ritual vessels, the spaces they occupy and the ceremonies that surround them. Notions of music, reverence and transience are also explored. Almost all work is thrown on the wheel although at times it might be subject to varying degrees of manipulation and altering.

A recent departure from earlier work has seen Ashley move from working in stoneware to an almost exclusive immersion in porcelain, embracing the differing challenges and possibilities of the medium. He has also drawn on his experiences in Japan to develop his use of on-glaze enamels to create a striking body of work that speaks with a very clear voice.

Important projects have included the ambitious *Ritual and Setting*, an exhibition of work made for and inspired by Winchester Cathedral and an exciting collaboration with Japanese Potter, Risa Ohgi, where Ashley threw the works and Risa decorated them. The works then travelled to the Leach Gallery in St.Ives, Cornwall for the exhibition, *Shima Kara Shima E (From Island to Island)*.

His most recent works have been included in *Heritage and Diversity* at the Hanyang University Museum Gallery in Seoul, South Korea, *InPrint Biennial 2017*, Studio Eleven, Hull and *The Teabowl: Past and Present* which runs until March 2018 at the Leach Pottery, St.Ives. His work is also featured in Dr Bonnie Kemske's recent publication *The Teabowl: East and West*.

The work of Ashley Howard remains extraordinarily fresh. He is an assured but rigorous explorer and celebrant of the past, clearly indebted to a variety of ceramics traditions, but he has been able to absorb these ideas into a very modern, resourceful and uncommonly free language of his own.

David Whiting, writer and critic.

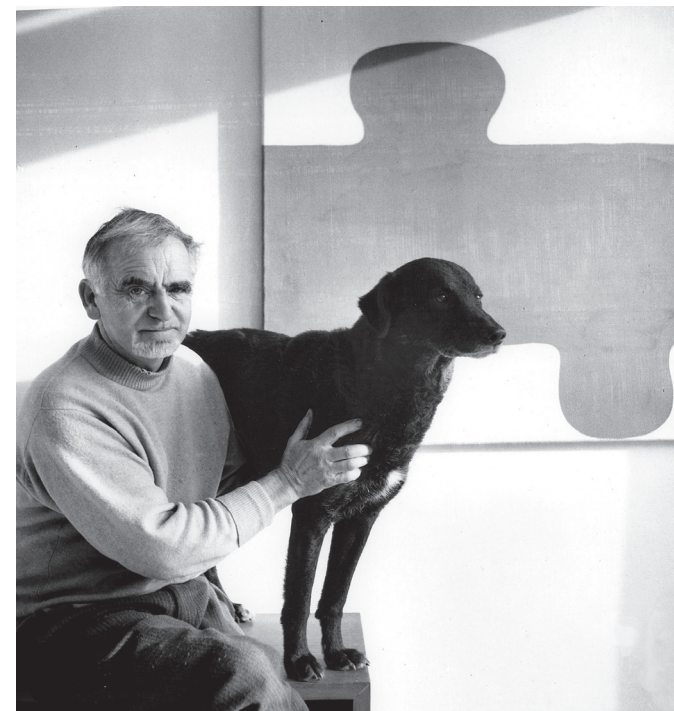
Ashley Howard studied at Medway College of Art and Design, now University for the Creative Arts at Rochester. He has built a career combining teaching with making. In 2001 he returned to full-time study at the Royal College of Art, London and it this experience that was the catalyst for a dramatic change in his work. In 2004/5 he collaborated

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William Scott with Luca, Coleford, 1968
Photograph: © James Scott 2017. Courtesy of William Scott Foundation.

objects. Increasingly these were distorted, as was the space which they inhabited. On a 1953 visit to the USA, Scott saw the work of artists such as Rothko and de Kooning; the experience made him aware of the possibilities of working on a larger scale yet also reinforced his own sense of belonging to a European tradition of still-life painting. From the mid-1950s, he executed a series of monumental tabletop still-lives in which the forms, expressed in layers of roughly applied paint, were pushed ever closer to the limits of abstraction.

By 1956, Scott's reputation as one of Britain's leading artists, both nationally and internationally, allowed him to give up full-time teaching. In 1958 he represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale, one of many occasions on which his work was chosen by the British Council to be exhibited abroad. His success continued over the following three decades, and his work was acquired by major collections, both public and private, throughout the world.

After a period of looking to ancient cultures for inspiration – Egyptian art, Celtic symbols, the cave paintings at Lascaux – in the late 1960s, Scott returned to still-life painting. Often referred to as neoclassical, these later paintings demonstrate Scott's interest in clarity, balance and harmony. They also reveal his continued loyalty to the mundane utensils which had always formed part of his artistic vocabulary although the shapes are dramatically simplified; the bowl or knife is reduced to a flat silhouette.

William Scott was born in Scotland in 1913, later moving to his father's home town of Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, where he began to study painting and drawing. He later trained at the Belfast School of Art and the Royal Academy Schools, London. His work of the 1930s and 1940s includes landscapes, still-lives and figure studies. After the Second World War he was appointed the Senior Painting Master at the Bath Academy of Art, housed at Corsham Court in Wiltshire. He continued to produce his own work and his focus was now almost exclusively on everyday

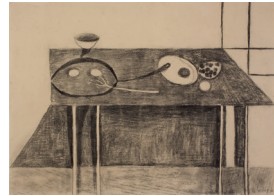
Throughout his career, Scott's work, whether concerned with still-life, landscape or the female nude, moved effortlessly between abstraction and figuration: "I am an abstract artist in the sense that I abstract. I cannot be called non-figurative while I am still interested in the modern magic of space, primitive sex forms, the sensual and the erotic, disconcerting contours, the things of life." The object itself – be it a frying pan, a toasting fork, an egg – would always remain central to his practice; a point of departure from which to proceed.

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1
Still Life with Bowl and Olives
1950
Oil on canvas
55.5 x 64 cm / 21¾ x 25¼ in



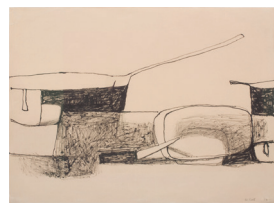
2
Study for Still Life
1951
Charcoal on paper
41.5 x 56.3 cm / 16¼ x 22¼ in



3
Untitled,
Drawing for Black Bottle and Yellow
1953
Charcoal on paper
20.3 x 26 cm / 8 x 10¼ in



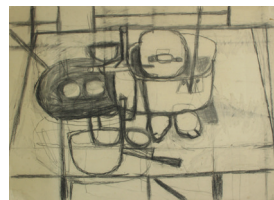
4
Black Bottle and Yellow
1954
Oil on hardboard
65 x 81.1 cm / 25½ x 32 in



5
Kitchen Still Life A
1954
Ink on paper
56 x 76 cm / 22 x 30 in



6
Monochrome Still Life
1955
Oil on canvas
76.5 x 91.9 cm / 30 x 36¼ in



7
Untitled, Still Life
1956
Charcoal on paper
55.9 x 76.1 cm / 22 x 30 in



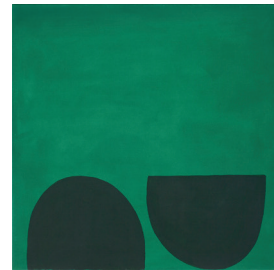
8
Still Life
1956
Gouache on paper
40 x 62.9 cm / 15¾ x 24¾ in



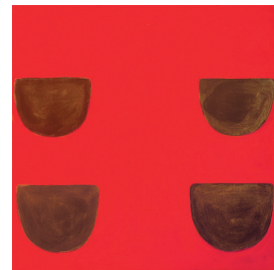
9
Painting
1958
Oil on canvas
122.5 x 153.3 cm / 48¼ x 60¼ in



10
White, Grey and Green
1967
Oil on canvas
101.9 x 101.6 cm / 40 x 40 in



11
Untitled (Green and Black)
1967
Oil on canvas
101.3 x 101.4 cm / 40 x 40 in



12
Four Forms, Brown on Red
1971
Oil on canvas
102.5 x 102.1 cm / 40¼ x 40¼ in



13
Orange Segments
1976
Oil on canvas
63.5 x 76 cm / 25 x 30 in



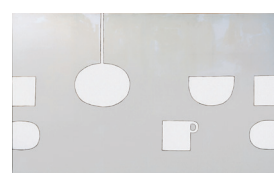
14
Segments on a Dark Ground
1976
Oil on canvas
63.8 x 76 cm / 25 x 30 in



15
Drawing towards still life
1976
Charcoal on paper
56 x 76 cm / 22 x 30 in



16
Poem for a Jug
1980
Oil on canvas
30.6 x 35.6 cm / 12 x 14 in



17
Permutations – White with Jug
1980
Oil on canvas
121.5 x 197.5 cm / 47¾ x 77¾ in



18
Hesitant Ghosts
22 x 22 cm



19
Behind the Screen
23 x 14 cm



20
Silent Music III
22 x 14 cm



21
Fluid Geometry
23 x 13 cm



22
Inner Circle
19 x 18 cm



23
Groovy Potential
19 x 19 cm



24
Spring Landscape
16 x 20 cm



25
Yellow Stretch
14 x 16 cm



27
After Rain
17 x 11 cm



28
Red Cut
18 x 10 cm



29
Galliard
17 x 12 cm



33
Constrained Freedom
15 x 11 cm



34
Diluted Landscape
15 x 10 cm



35
Opaque Reflection
15 x 10 cm



36
Frantic Peace
14 x 9 cm



37
Violent Peace
13 x 10 cm



39
Any Lengths
11 x 11 cm



40
Green Mist
11 x 10 cm



41
Hot Licks
11 x 10 cm



42
Red Swipes
9 x 12 cm