



# Future Lights



Accompanying Exhibition  
2019

## ***Future Lights***

*British Ceramics Biennial 2019*

Accompanying Exhibition

7 September – 13 October 2019, China Hall, Spode, Stoke-on-Trent, United Kingdom

### Artists:

Karolina Bednorz

Maria Braun

Chloë Dowds

Rhiannon Ewing-James

Maria Gasparian

Kate Haywood

Maria Joanna Juchnowska

Manos Kalamenios

Yuka Kikumoto

Amy Mackle

Maria Punkkinen

Francesca Romei

Kristina Rutar

Supawan Sihapoompichit Morris

Atis Šnēvelis

Alice Walton

Wendy Ward

### Curators:

Rhiannon Ewing-James

Jana Göbel

Zora Žbontar

## Zora Žbontar

How to Bring Ceramics Back to Life

The Exhibition *Future Lights* and Conditions of Contemporary Ceramics

To address the various aspects of contemporary ceramics critical discourse is becoming more and more intertwined with the social and anthropological views of ceramics. It reveals that any interpretation of objects should take into account not just their artistic values, but also their function as well as the cultural and socio-political context in which they are embedded.

For the exhibition *Future Lights* at *British Ceramics Biennial 2019* the ceramic artists who are part of an international group *Future Lights in Ceramics 2016 to 2019* take the Bauhaus idea of the radical modernisation of life as a starting point. They understand ceramics not only as art objects, but also try to reinterpret and research innovative ideas in making ceramics that would be useful in today's society and everyday life — in the spirit of the Bauhaus. They talk about current questions of modernisation, conduct research into positive and negative effects of ceramic production and strive to raise public awareness about ceramics. In a relevant way, they address Bauhaus tradition in relation to ceramic techniques and social themes.

The exhibition *Future Lights* presents works referring to the theme 'the spirit of the Bauhaus' and the 100 year anniversary of the Bauhaus movement. A brief look into the history of Bauhaus ceramics shows that it was mostly intended for everyday use. Walter Gropius recognised the importance of mass-producing pottery goods. The school's workshop in Dornburg, therefore, was divided into a production workshop as well. The serial production enabled the distribution of ceramic products and influenced the dining habits of the middle class. The Bauhaus ceramic workshop collaborated with earthenware and porcelain factories. Gradually the potter's wheel was replaced with ceramic casting and prototypes were made for serial production. Otto Lindig and Theodor Bogler designed castable pots. The Bauhaus' works were successfully presented at the trade fairs in Leipzig and Frankfurt in 1923 and exhibition in Stuttgart in 1924.<sup>1</sup>

The exhibition *Future Lights* presents artists inspired by the Bauhaus in their search for innovative ideas in making ceramics. They collaborate with bigger factories, like the Bauhaus artists before them, but often also work in smaller studios with other artists, present themselves online and at international exhibitions, are self-employed and their social position is often precarious. As a platform, *Future Lights* strives to reduce the negative elements to do with the socially marginalised position of contemporary ceramic professionals. The main idea of the initiative *Future Lights* is to provide opportunities for their future work, build new bridges, offer support and bring together professionals, helping them to work in a variety of different fields such as ceramic sculpture, design, fine arts, curating exhibitions, and scientific research. The positive outputs of this platform include giving the artists the opportunities to exhibit internationally, connect with their social communities by preparing workshops and educational lectures in their hometowns. Artists learn a lot from each other through sharing and exchanging ideas about their ceramic practices, comparing education system in the field of ceramics in different countries, sharing information of ceramic opportunities, for example, residency schemes and programmes. Often, these opportunities are hard to find. The *Future Lights in Ceramics* international competition was part of the *Ceramics and its Dimensions* project and is now part of the project *Creative Entrepreneurship in Ceramic Regions – Developing, Educating, Encouraging (CerDee)*, run by Porzellanikon – Staatliches Museum für Porzellan.

1

Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus 1919-1933*, Berlin, 2010 (Bauhaus-Archiv, Museum für Gestaltung), pp. 68–71.

When analysing the works at the exhibition *Future Lights* one can easily detect a strong connection to tradition. Artists use tradition as a starting point to make objects that combine innovative ideas and seek new solutions for the challenges of our everyday life. In my reflection I will try to present the works through three categories in relationship to the Bauhaus: reinterpretation of tradition; experimentation with ceramic techniques; and articulation of social themes.

#### Reinterpretation of Tradition

Rhiannon Ewing-James is referring to the onion pattern first created at the Meissen porcelain factory in the 18th century. Chinese porcelain was very popular in Europe and its symbolic meaning, in the context of decoration, was not always familiar to the Western eye. The European gaze transformed the oriental pomegranate into a more familiar plant – the onion – and made an example of chinoiserie decoration. Besides that, in her work, Ewing-James is also addressing the Bauhaus movement *Aster*. Her work combines ceramics with different materials by presenting this pattern in three materials: porcelain, linen and neon light. Kate Haywood, on the other hand, exhibits compositional groupings of objects. She often applies aspects of ritual, ceremony and adornment to her works, regularly exploring our relationship with objects, and how they can allow us to form and trigger memories. In her current artwork she

'focuses on ambiguities between material and form, developing ways in which ambiguity can lead us to poetic/open readings of sculptural forms'. The manner in which she manages 'to treat the ceramic material as a language that must be listened to' is interesting – sharing this idea with Anni Albers, textile artist and printmaker who worked at Bauhaus. Amy Mackle, however, presents a composition of objects that was stimulated by the classic images and objects from the Bauhaus. She successfully combines different geometrical forms and textures of clay in vivid colours, simultaneously reflecting the Bauhaus spirit and today's society.

Chloë Dowds and Maria Gasparian are referring to the colour theory of Josef Albers, Wassily Kandinsky and Johannes Itten. The former follows Albers' theory from the book *Interaction of Colour* with an installation of twelve cylinders of different shades of grey porcelain with orange inlay. The orange colouration appears stronger against a darker shade of grey. Gasparian exhibits architectural ceramics – clay bricks that can be incorporated into buildings, landscapes and can be assembled to form a bench – that are coloured and glazed with reference to the colour theory by Kandinsky and Itten.

Karolina Bednorz, Yuka Kikumoto, Maria Joanna Juchnowska, Atis Šnēvelis and Francesca Romei are conducting research into new forms in ceramic tableware and make objects that are user friendly and combine new ideas in design. Bednorz uses one of the popular Bauhaus shapes – the triangle – as the base for the whole set: espresso cup, cup, mug, drink glass, saucer, plate, breakfast plate, bowl, espresso set, cup set, mini vase and medio vase. Along the lines of Bauhaus ideas, she similarly seeks new solutions for the challenges presented by the quick tempo of our everyday life. Kikumoto is interested in the differences and similarities between European and Japanese cultures in their attitude towards tableware. She uses slipcast techniques to create functional mugs inspired by Japanese culture for the European user. Juchnowska transforms tradition into new design form – the Egg vessel, covered with gold pipe. Šnēvelis draws on the Bauhaus as inspiration in making a pot with various geometrical shapes. A functional object is transformed into sculpture. Romei decorates her *Viba vase* in Piet Mondrian style.

### Experimentation with Ceramic Techniques

Maria Braun, Manos Kalamenios, Maria Punkkinen, Alice Walton and Wendy Ward are interested in ceramic techniques, technological innovations and experimentation in design in tableware and sculptures. Braun brings together tableware and cookware that is suitable for any stovetop by using special InducTHERM porcelain and laboratory glass. Kalamenios designs plates with geometric shapes and sharp edges. The plates are shaped by the effects of firing the material using a technique the artist developed whereby he uses special porcelain that, fired at high temperature, behaves like glass but keeps the materiality of porcelain. He named it *Mallow* due to the soft-to-the-touch feel of the ceramic, like a marshmallow. Punkkinen exhibits two works. The work *Metamorphosis* is the result of the experiment with the mold making process. She explores the line between art and design and follows the material of porcelain. With her work *Silence* she creates the play of light and shadow. Walton follows the spirit of the Bauhaus in the way she strives to create experimental pieces that reflect our world and rethink the world we are living in. The two objects feature primary colours and basic forms of a circle and a cylinder. She combines hand-building techniques and new decorative solutions in a fascinating way. Ward explores new combinations of handcraft and technology. Using new technology, a prototype is made first before it is subsequently crafted. The spirit of the Bauhaus can be detected in the clean lines and minimalistic shapes of the design.

### Articulation of Social Themes

Supawan Sihapoompichit Morris and Kristina Rutar address social themes. The former deconstructs a ceramic vases and shows interest in its inner side and texture. She is critical towards mass production and consumption of ceramics, especially on the effects it has on the environment, pointing out alternative views of clay as a sustainable material. Rutar researches the relationship between form and surface by wheel throwing and is reinterpreting functional form into sculptural form. Her main interest is the exploration of elements of body, in its broadest sense, including the articulation of the social structures and individual perception of the environment, personal space within society and the relationships created between an object and a beholder.

Cultural exchange has always been important in ceramics, which is evident in *Future Lights* as a platform. The ceramic artists at the exhibition *Future Lights at British Ceramics Biennial* are showing critical and multicultural conceptual works. They are rethinking ceramics as an art object and researching its new possibilities. The exhibition reveals artists' interest in developing new concepts and technologies, encouraging a deeper understanding of ceramics. These artists collectively show that ceramics do not belong only in galleries and museums, but also play an important role in society by engaging in critical dialogue with public spaces, promoting international exchange and participating in critical discourse about our contemporaneity.

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### Artist's Statement

Bauhaus was to merge practical and theoretical knowledge from artists and designers to find new solutions for the challenges of modern life. The *Triangle* series joins its own sculptural form with an understanding of traditional porcelain casting technique. The hand-applied colourful pattern follows its shape and is inspired by traditional Italian majolica technique.

As modern life demands more multitasking, even making the time to simply enjoy a drink gets harder. The cup's shape prevents mechanical gestures, urging its user to stop with other tasks and focus on setting the cup down on the table. This encourages a moment of reflection and pause, which gives quality time to the day.



*Tri-angle*, 2019, porcelain, ceramic patterns applied by stamp on raw glaze, fired at 1250°C, various sizes

## MARIA BRAUN

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### Artist's Statement

*Univessels* is a hybrid of tableware and cookware, designed to fit the new way of living and dining. Made out of heatproof InducTHERM porcelain and laboratory glass it can be used on any kind of cooktop. The functional inductionable pattern enables these vessels to be used on induction stoves as well.



*UniVessels*, 2017–2018, InducTHERM porcelain and laboratory glass, 5,5 x d. 20, 8,5 x d. 15 cm,  
Image Credit: Inga Masche

## CHLOË DOWDS

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### Artist's Statement

My *Shadow Vessel* series is very much inspired by the work of Josef Albers and his colour theory. Using colour as the subject matter is a fascinating area for me. I wanted to explore subtly changing the shades of grey porcelain while keeping the orange inlay the same shade. The result is very interesting as the orange appears stronger on a darker background and lighter against a lighter background, though I have not altered the orange porcelain slip recipe. I've deliberately used a very simple shape, the cylinder, to carry my concept. This idea came directly from Albers' experiments, especially in his book *Interaction of Colour*. *Shadow Vessels* are the beginning of my own exploration inspired by Albers. Each vessel is 10 cm high and 4 cm wide and the vessels are grouped together to form an installation. You can see their interactions in the accompanying images and I hope to invert the colour, making one orange bodied vessel with grey porcelain inlay to sit amongst the other vessels.



*Shadow Vessels*, 2019, porcelain, throwing with inlay details, 47 x 10 cm



## RHIANNON EWING-JAMES

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### Artist's Statement

*Aster* references the blue and white onion pattern created by several European porcelain production factories and their oriental pomegranate pattern counterparts produced in China for several hundred years. The sameness and change in the motif cast through the translation of materials reflects the subtle differences between production factories and contemporary material culture across Europe and Asia. With reverence to the Bauhaus movement, *Aster* brings together hand skill in three materials: Chinese porcelain, Irish linen and neon light. Through minimal graphic aesthetics this work speaks to tradition, craft, art and their relevance in everyday modern life.



*Aster*, 2018, neon light, 30x30x5cm, Image Credit: Malachy McCrudden, Production Credit: AM Lighting, Arts Council Northern Ireland, R-Space Gallery, Franz Porcelain, British Ceramics Biennial

## MARIA GASPARIAN

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### Artist's Statement

*'Architects, sculptors, painters, become craftsmen again... go into the buildings, bless them with fairy tales of colour, chisel ideas into the bare walls...'*

Walter Gropius, *First Bauhaus Manifesto* (1919)

This address to artists is as relevant today as it was 100 years ago.

Expressing the unity of function and aesthetics, propagated by the Bauhaus, these mass-produced clay bricks were crafted, coloured and glazed and can be incorporated into buildings and landscaping to bring colour and life into city spaces.

With geometrical motifs and colours reflecting on the colour theory developed by Wassily Kandinsky and Johannes Itten, these add patterns to brick bonds and street furniture.



*Bau Brick*, 2018, clay bricks, coloured, glaze, 40 x 42 cm, Image Credit: Agnese Sanvito

## KATE HAYWOOD

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### Artist's Statement

*'Being creative is not so much the desire to do something as the listening to that which wants to be done: the dictation of the materials.'*

Anni Albers

'The spirit of the Bauhaus' is felt strongly in Anni Albers words. By treating material as a language that must be listened to, 'new ways of expression' can be found. I work at the edge of my consciousness towards an unknown point, but it often feels familiar when I arrive. It is the material language that is familiar and by thinking with materials one's internal thoughts can be made concrete. Materials and objects can function as a looking glass, reflecting new ways of seeing by adjusting our thoughts as our view is temporarily altered. These thoughts, embedded in material form, develop from non-verbal thinking and can be read in the same way – felt more than reasoned.



*Lidden*, 2018, porcelain, stain, thrown, modelled, polished, 9.5 x 10 x 2.7 cm,  
Image Credit: Dewi Tannatt Lloyd

## MARIA JOANNA JUCHNOWSKA

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### Artist's Statement

The idea of the *Egg Vessels* decoration objects was to create porcelain objects with two functions, both useful and decorative. By using the classical Meissen decoration technique, rich in gold and platinum, in combination with the new design idea of the extra function of 'mobile decoration' that gives users the opportunity of assembling the vessels in many different variations, I have endeavoured to incorporate traditional techniques into the new design form. The user of the objects can decide on the final look of the design of the vessels and how they wish to view them by assembling both of the parts.



*Egg Vessel with Gold Pipe*, 2018, porcelain, matt gold casted, hand painted, 25 x 36 x 20 cm (right page),  
Image Credit: Maik Krause

## MANOS KALAMENIOS

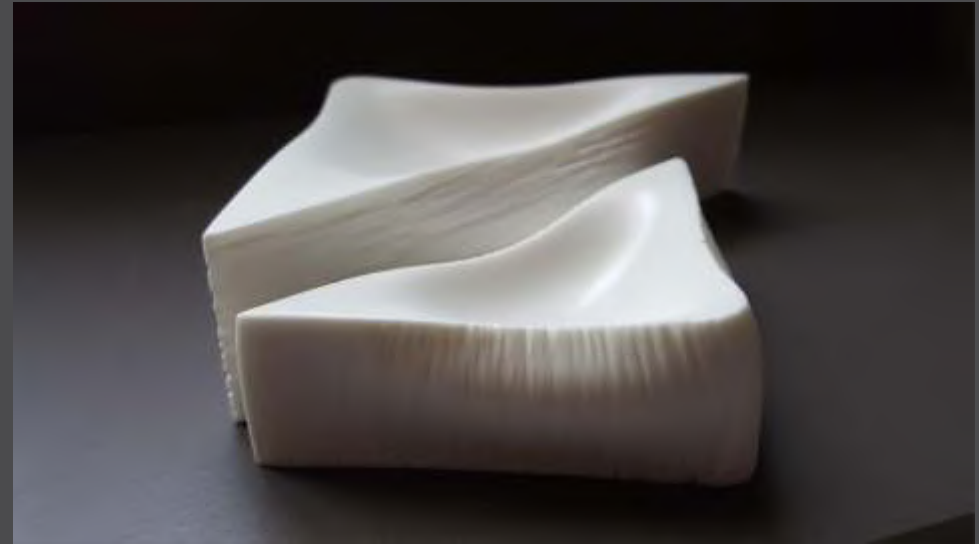
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### Artist's Statement

Since my early years in my academia Bauhaus has been one of my favourite movements due to the geometric shapes and sharp edges. All my work to date consists of geometric shapes and sharp edges as demonstrated in the *Mallow* series. *Mallow Strata* enter the kiln totally flat and are transformed due to pyroplasticity and gravity.



*Mallow Strata*, 2019, Mallow porcelain, slip casting, engraved, 40 x 40 cm

**YUKA KIKUMOTO**

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Artist's Statement

These mugs have a smooth texture with hand carving.  
Filled with hot tea or coffee, the user feels a pleasant  
warmth.



*Texture Mug Series, 2018, porcelain, slip casting, 8.5 × 11.5 x d. 8.5 cm*

**AMY MACKLE**

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**Artist's Statement**

This work takes inspiration from the essence of the Bauhaus and its values: experimentation, modernity, pushing the boundaries of what had come before. A new way of thinking. Stimulated by the classic images and objects associated with the Bauhaus this collection of objects seeks to reflect on the Bauhaus spirit and where we stand now both as makers and as a society. Each piece is hand-built in stained porcelain, to which are added plastics and discarded materials collected over a period of time from the shoreline beside my studio.



*Untitled, 2019, porcelain with additions of discarded material, hand-built, 40 x 40 x 40 cm*

## MARIA PUNKKINEN

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### Artist's Statement

Maria Punkkinen's practice centres on experimentation with methods of mold making and surface techniques, and the effects they have on the material she uses. To this end she skirts the line between art and design, always staying true to the authenticity of the material and the techniques around contemporary ceramics. *Silence* was originally inspired by a Finnish metal band's album cover where a nude woman is covered by a white yarn, creating an engaging play of light and shadow. *Metamorphosis* concentrates on finding the boundaries of delicate porcelain and its tiniest details.



*Silence*, 2019, pressed stoneware, porcelain, red clay, oxides, glazes, 28 x 8 x 5 cm



## FRANCESCA ROMEI

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### Artist's Statement

The project is about a brand new decoration inspired by Piet Mondrian's work. As one of the most representative artists of the Bauhaus movement, I set out to rethink the classical Mondrian style, applying it to the cylindrical ceramic surface of the *Vibe Vase*, with the aim of revolutionising the way we see the white ground, against a grid of vertical and horizontal black lines and the three primary colours.



*Vibe Vase*, 2019, earthenware, glaze, 24 x d. 13, 19 x d. 13, 13 x d. 12 cm

## KRISTINA RUTAR

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### Artist's Statement

*Anatomy of a Void* offers a dichotomous perception of the environment and surroundings, on the interpretative as well as the aesthetic level. The forms indicate variations of decaying objects, evoking a sense of skeletal remains or stone-like fossils of anonymous beings. There is an emptiness inside the objects which is impounded by web-like structures. The space within and around the sculpture's form emphasises a sense of freedom and captivity, growth and decay, construction and deconstruction. In this captured moment of evasive emptiness we see reflections of fragility in relationships, echoing the unravelling of an individual. The object's form is subordinate to emptiness, which dictates the material's form that shifts to its needs. It bends, perforates, deforms and cuts into the flesh of its own form, asserting a space of its own. *Anatomy of a Void* is a purposeful carving of emptiness, an attempt to seize its quintessence, giving form to something absent and distant.



*Anatomy of a Void I.*, 2019, stoneware, wheelthrown and altered, 29 x 20 x 15 cm

## SUPAWAN SIHAPOOMPICHIT MORRIS

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### Artist's Statement

My work focuses on the subject of norm criticality towards environmental issues to do with production and consumption. Currently I have been working on how to de-traditionalise ceramics tradition. I would like to tackle the aspect of sustainability, since clay is a limited resource. I have been researching into how to encourage and capture the subtlety of texture, surface, colour and form in clay. My aim is to extend the properties, characteristics and usage of clay and other ceramic techniques in order to create a unique character of nature.



*The Reincarnated Artefacts – Dug, unglazed porcelain, Seal P.U.D, gold leaf, 28.5 x 12 x 12 cm*

## ATIS ŠNĒVELIS

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### Artist's Statement

Atis Šnēvelis is greatly influenced by the early Bauhaus masters such as Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian and László Moholy-Nagy. He admires how they unveil new perspectives on art and aesthetics the Bauhaus masters, the *Seahorse* teapot combines nature and function. Recognising the Bauhaus movement of constructivism as the inspiration for his work, Šnēvelis explores how the curved aesthetic of the seahorse form transforms the functional object's use and shape.



*Teapot Seahorse*, 2016, stoneware, hand-built, 18 x 42 x 9.4 cm

## **ALICE WALTON**

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### Artist's Statement

For this work I have drawn inspiration from the 'the spirit of Bauhaus' and endeavoured to create modern, experimental pieces which reflect our world and attempt to influence it. Using primary colours as a starting point, I have deconstructed our modern landscape to create unique geometric forms. For this theme I have combined experimental hand-building techniques with the new demand for handcrafted ornamental sculpture, an evolution of the original Bauhaus model. By using the timeless material of clay and integrating this new decorative aesthetic, I hoped to be able to illustrate and re-imagine our modern city surroundings. Furthermore, I have expanded from the original Bauhaus concept of simple forms with singular colour and created a new interpretation of geometric form with intricate surface treatment and a varying primary colour palette. This is a homage to 1920's design and shows the spirit of modern British ceramics.



*Fountain*, 2018, coloured porcelain and glaze, hand-built, 9 x 9 x 9 cm, Image Credit: Alick Cotteril

## WENDY WARD

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### Artist's Statement

The collection *Fields: Lamp and Votive* presented for the BCB exhibition reflects 'the spirit of the Bauhaus' through both the design process and aesthetic. As a designer I believe function is key and it is my aim to develop functional, desirable products that are user orientated. Materials, also, are considered in this way and I believe porcelain is the ideal material for lighting as it naturally diffuses light, creating a warm glow and adding a sense of warmth to an interior. This approach addresses the needs of today, moving the ceramics market away from ornamental products. I feel this is also a key factor in keeping handcraft alive. In using the Bauhaus approach to design, I am constantly sourcing new methods of making and looking at new combinations of handcraft with technology. Each design is prototyped through new technology before it is crafted. The designs feature clean lines with a sense of minimalism, reflecting the spirit of the Bauhaus. The porcelain material is left with its natural finish; it is not hidden in any way. *The Lace Droplet* design plays with geometry as each segment is placed around the bulb. Regarding the design, form very much follows function as I take into consideration how the bulb is changed or how the user will relate to, and use, the product. In the spirit of the Bauhaus and as a designer, I strive to find innovative solutions in ceramic design.



*Fields Collection: Votive*, 2019, porcelain, pearl lustre glaze, slip casting, 6 x 6 cm

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