



York Art Gallery

## Sustaining the Studio - Sustaining Self

Online Symposium Programme

23 & 25 February 2021

### Synopsis

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*Exploring aspects of self-sustaining studio practice & sustaining self through engagement*

An exciting symposium of Zoom talks and panels convened by Prof. Simon Olding, exploring the sustainable pottery studio and how pottery participation through our studios and communities sustains the self through wellbeing. Important and vital to all of us, wellbeing is even more significant in the current times.

The symposium has been developed by the Leach Pottery, in partnership with the Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA) Subject Specialist Network at York Art Gallery. It is supported by Arts Council England.

### Discussion Overview

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In 'Part One: Sustaining the Studio' a Keynote by Dr Jeffrey Jones examines the symposium's overarching themes, drawing upon the context of 20<sup>th</sup> century studio pottery through to contemporary practice. A panel of practitioners will then present different studio models in relation to sustaining practice, from the Leach Pottery with Roelof Uys to independent Cornwall-based practitioners Rebecca Harvey, Richard Phethean, and Laura Crosland. Reflecting on these accounts, discussion centres on how these models remain sustainable in today's economic and creative climate; whether working in partnership with arts organisations, supplementing personal practice with course delivery, or using digital channels to reach audiences.

In 'Part Two: Sustaining the Self' focus shifts to exploring the wellbeing benefits of clay. It will consider how working with clay can help people sustain themselves and provide greater engagement opportunities with broader audiences. Helen Lee will focus on the role of clay in helping someone with dementia, Janna Edwards explores how clay can enable extraordinary change and transformation in individuals, and Mark Essen will consider how clay can resolve social inequality.

## Symposium Timetable

<b>Part One: Sustaining the Studio: 23 February 2021 (17:00-18:30)</b>		
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
Symposium Welcome	17:00 -17:05	Simon Olding
Keynote Presentation, including Q&A: <i>'There is Love, Pleasure and Co-operation in Our Work' (Bernard Leach 1947)</i>	17:05 -17:40	Jeffrey Jones
Break	5 minutes	
Sustaining the Studio Panel, including Q&A	17:45 -18:30	Roelof Uys
		Rebecca Harvey
		Richard Phethean
		Laura Crosland
		Facilitator: Simon Olding
<b>Part Two: Sustaining the Self: 25 February 2021 (17:00-18:30)</b>		
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
Symposium Welcome	17:00 -17:05	Simon Olding
<i>Why Making Pots Helps if You Have Dementia</i>	17:05 -17:25	Helen Lee
<i>Examining '15 Days in Clay'</i>	17:25 -17:45	Janna Edwards
Break	5 minutes	
<i>Who is the Potter &amp; Who is the Pot?</i>	17:50 -18:10	Mark Essen
Panel Discussion / Q&A	18:10 -18:20	Helen Lee, Janna Edwards, Mark Essen
Symposium Close	18:20 -18:30	Simon Olding

## Abstracts & Speaker Information

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### Facilitator & Keynote



Simon Olding

Image: Matthew Tyas

#### **Simon Olding**

*Facilitator*

*Simon Olding is Director of the Crafts Study Centre, University for the Creative Arts and Professor of Modern Craft. He is a writer and curator with a special interest in craft in South West England. He has recently completed a new book 'Bernard Leach: Discovered Archives' and is writing a study of the New Craftsman, St Ives.*

#### **Jeffrey Jones**

*Keynote*

*'There is Love, Pleasure and Co-operation in Our Work'  
(Bernard Leach 1947)*

Professor Jeffrey Jones presents a keynote talk exploring ideas around studio pottery and sustainability. Jeff begins with setting the scene of studio pottery in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the context in which the Leach Pottery was established and developed.

Jeff will then move his attention to different models and approaches to sustaining studio pottery practice – from historical examples through to contemporary approaches. Jeff will then explore how the studio is also a site for sustaining the 'self' through approaches to practice that support and facilitate individual wellbeing. He will focus on how his ideas are developing around the idea of 'co-operation', not just between people but also between individuals and the materials, tools and machines that they work with.

*Professor Jeffrey Jones is an academic, researcher and author who began his career as an NHS Art Therapist. Following an MA and PhD, Jeffrey pursued an academic career, rising to the role of Professor of Ceramics. Jeffrey founded and edited the electronic journal 'Interpreting Ceramics', and is the author of publications 'Studio Pottery in Britain 1900 – 2005' and, with co-editor Jo Dahn, 'Interpreting Ceramics: Selected Essays'.*



Jeffrey Jones

Image: Peter David

## Part One: Sustaining the Studio: Panel Discussion



Roelof Uys

Image: Matthew Tyas

### **Roelof Uys**

Roelof will discuss how the contemporary Leach Studio model currently sustains the Leach Pottery, a registered charity, and the individual potters themselves. He views the studio as an extension of the maker's body and mind, a place where ideas meet reality, where vision is given form and knowledge is tested, sustaining both the studio and the self.

*Roelof has been Lead Potter at the Leach Pottery since 2013, where he supervises a Studio team consisting of trained potters and apprentices and oversees the design and production of Leach Standard Ware.*



Rebecca Harvey

Image: John Reiach

### **Rebecca Harvey**

Rebecca currently sustains a studio practice with two identities supported, in the main, through sales of the modest mug produced as part of the 'Cornish Pots' collection (mid-range tableware in hand-decorated earthenware). The other aspect of her practice is the creation of one-off porcelain pieces under her name 'Rebecca Harvey' that explore freedom of expression and experimentation through materiality.

*Rebecca established her first studio in Cambridge in 1997 with the help of a Crafts Council 'Setting-up Grant' and later, in 2005, she returned to study gaining an MA in Ceramics and Glass from the RCA. Rebecca now lives in Cornwall and has a studio in West Penwith.*



Richard Phethean

Image: Bluebell Hill

## **Richard Phethean**

Richard runs a successful Studio near Penzance where he delivers courses and produces his own work. He also established a studio in an inner London borough using the stimulus of teaching as a means of financial support in the development of personal practice and, ultimately, achieving fulfillment as an artist.

*Richard Phethean is an established professional potter whose work has been exhibited throughout the UK and can be found in collections internationally. He is a Fellow of the Craft Potters Association.*



Laura Crosland

## **Laura Crosland**

*Working from the Gaolyard Studios, Laura sustains her pottery practice through various strands of activities: using social media as a promotional and selling tool, selling through galleries, pottery fairs and direct from her studio, as well as teaching workshops as a freelance potter at the Leach Pottery.*

*Laura Crosland is an early career potter currently based in the Gaolyard Studios, St Ives. She studied ceramics at Wolverhampton University before working for potters Penny Simpson, Peter Beard, and the Leach Pottery.*

## Part Two: Sustaining Self Presentations



Helen Lee

### Helen Lee

#### *Why Making Pots Helps if You Have Dementia*

The Leach Pottery, in collaboration with The Sensory Trust, runs the 'Wednesday Wanderers', a project for those with dementia and their carers. The group meets regularly for walks and to make ceramics inspired by the nature they encounter on their wanderings. Such projects are part of a growing recognition that there can be better interventions than medicalisation alone, something reflected by social prescribing in the NHS. We instinctively know that getting together with like-minded people can be supportive but just how sustaining is it and, in particular, what part does clay have to play in helping someone with dementia?

*Helen Lee, previously a psychotherapist with a private practice in London, is a potter based in the Gaolyard Studios, St Ives, Cornwall. Returning to clay after a serious illness, Helen experienced the healing nature of ceramics and has since been interested in how neuroscience sheds light on creativity and healing.*



Janna Edwards

### Janna Edwards

#### *Examining '15 Days in Clay'*

Everyone has the right to be heard, to be seen, to be given the same opportunities and to be treated as equals. '15 Days in Clay' is an organisation set up by Janna Edwards, over 15 years ago, to enable these rights.

Janna discusses how and why '15 Days in Clay' began, the challenges she has faced and her experience of running a studio. She examines the benefit that working with clay brings to an individual's life; physically, mentally, and creatively. Considering her personal experiences of working with people with disabilities and dementia, Janna explores how clay can

enable extraordinary change and transformation in individuals.

*Janna Edwards is a practising ceramicist who founded the Studio '15 Days in Clay' in 2003. The Studio initially worked with a small group of adults with learning/additional needs who met for 15 days over 15 weeks, and has since grown to enable further opportunities for a variety of groups to access clay.*



Mark Essen

Image: Nina Baillie

## **Mark Essen**

*Who is the Potter & Who is the Pot?*

What role should the arts have in resolving the issue of social inequality? How can we reframe the role of the artists' studio to be useful in the community in which they live and work? Should we consider a methodology that enables artists to develop practices that are non-art orientated, facilitating wider applications of creativity that can benefit the community and wellbeing?

This presentation discusses the studio 'Modern Clay' based in Digbeth, Birmingham, which holds a responsibility to community wellbeing through its core values: artists, education and public. Examples of the Studio's outreach and interdisciplinary educational programme are examined.

*Mark Essen set up the ceramic Studio 'Modern Clay' in 2017. Since 2019 the Studio, based in Digbeth, Birmingham, has been run by seven artists as part of a co-operative membership.*



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