



ROWENA GILBERT CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS

Rowena Justine Gilbert

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AWARDS/EDUCATION

- 2016 **The Sussex Guild of Professional Designer Makers**
Selected Guild Member
- 2013 **Craft&Design Selected Award Finalist - Ceramics**
Craft&Design Magazine
- 2011 **Craft&Design Selected Award Finalist - Ceramics**
Craft&Design Magazine
- 2002 **The Best Up and Coming Local Artist Award, Brighton & Hove**
Ceremony held at The Dome Concert Hall & Corn Exchange

2002	BA Honours Degree in Three Dimensional Crafts 2.1 University of Brighton - Specialising in Ceramics and Polyester Resins/Plastics	
1999	BTEC Diploma Foundation Studies in Art and Design Brighton College of Technology	
	Final Major Project	Distinction
	Core Studies	Distinction
	Specialist Studies	Merit
1998	A-Levels - Christ's Hospital School, Horsham	
	Art and Design – Fine Art	A
	Art and Design – Fashion and Textiles	A
	Design and Technology	A
	Mathematics	B

SELF - EMPLOMENT

09/10/2003 – (ongoing) **Self Employed Ceramic Artist Designer Maker & Web Designer**
Studio 3, Level 5 (North), New England House/Street, Brighton, BN1 4GH

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Cameron Contemporary Art	Hove, East Sussex
The Biscuit Factory	Newcastle Upon Tyne
The Crafts Centre & Design Gallery	The Headrow, Leeds

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

The Garden Gallery	Stockbridge, Hampshire
Henley Royal Regatta - Regatta Gallery	Steward's Enclosure, Henley on Thames
The Whitehouse Gallery	Kirkcudbright, Scotland
Artichoke Gallery	Ticehurst, Sussex
Junction Art Gallery	Woodstock, Oxfordshire
Sussex Guild - De La Warr Pavilion	Bexhill, Sussex

PAST EXHIBITIONS

The Devon Guild of Craftsmen	Bovey Tracey, Devon
Ferrers Gallery, Centre for Arts and Crafts	Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire
New Ashgate Gallery	Farnham, Surrey
Northern Lights Gallery	Keswick, Cumbria
Brighton Festival of Artist Open Houses	Fiveways Trail, Brighton, East Sussex
Walford Mill Crafts	Wimbourne, Dorset
The Royal Exchange Theatre Craft Shop	Manchester
Brantwood Coach House Gallery	Coniston, Cumbria
Cambridge Contemporary Art	Cambridge
Henry Paddon Contemporary Art	Eastbourne, East Sussex
Tayberry Gallery	Perth, Scotland

Bell Fine Art
For Arts Sake
Bluemoon Gallery
Gallery 43
Gray's Inn Road Gallery
Henley Royal Regatta - Regatta Gallery
Stark Contemporary Gallery
The Bruton St. Gallery
The Shangri-La Exhibition, Shaikh Zayed
Worthing Museum & Art Gallery
Hove Museum & Art Gallery
Phoenix Arts Association
Top Drawer London Spring & Autumn Shows
The London Architecture Art & Design Show
Festival of Crafts, Farnham Maltings
British Craft Trade Fair

Winchester, Hampshire
Hendon Gallery & Ealing Gallery, London
Tunbridge Wells, Kent
Chelmsford, Essex
Holborn, London
Steward's Enclosure, Henley on Thames
Lewisham, London
Bruton Street, London
Dubai, U.A.E
Worthing
Hove, East Sussex
Waterloo Place, Brighton
Earls Court, London
British Library, London
Farnham, Surrey
Harrogate, Yorkshire

P R E S S

Sussex Life Magazine
InsideSussex Magazine
The Biscuit Factory Gallery Magazine
ETC Magazine, Sussex Edition
The World Of Interiors Magazine
Period Living Magazine
Winter in Perth Guide Magazine
Aesthica Magazine
Homegirl London Trends Article
Tableware International Magazine
Elle Decoration Magazine
House Beautiful Magazine
Guardian Newspaper
Metro Newspaper
Vogue Magazine
Countlan Magazine
Fashion Stylist
Kitchens, Bedrooms & Bathrooms Magazine
Craft&Design Magazine

E V E N T S O R G A N I S E R

New England House Open Studios Show www.nehopenstudios.co.uk

This is a three day annual event for 50+ artists/designers/makers from Brighton and Hove. I have been the sole organiser, designer and marketer of the event for eight years, and joint organiser for the seven years prior to then.

A R T I S T ' S S T A T E M E N T

The main focus with my ceramic work is finding that perfect fusion of strong design, innovative style and spontaneous expression, that counterpoint of form, design, colour and texture. I love well-made things that hold a simple but powerful expression. I love working with a very simple colour palette but using different

surface textures such as mattes and gloss, to give my work an extra depth. I also love simple but bold gestures, stylish yet artistic.

My ceramic work above all is a celebration of the natural world. This is sometimes subtle, through earthy colours and matt textures, and sometimes in more overt ways – motifs of cornfields, sunflowers and seed pods have peppered past collections. I enjoy a mix of precision and playfulness, layers and layers of clay slips are built up in a very controlled manner, and then marks etched boldly into the surface are impulsive and free. Mimicking nature, the uniform precision of the pieces contrasts with the spontaneous designs engraved, scratched or etched into their surface, introducing a level of organic unpredictability into otherwise flawless objects. I liken this thought to geology, layers of clay echo periods of time, memories; slow, controlled, ordered. The surface evokes moods, tensions, actions, reactions.

My work is informed by my travels and my coastal hometown of Brighton, where the colours of the beaches and the flora and fauna of the nearby South Downs provide a source of inspiration. Moods and personal experiences also influence my work in more subconscious ways. After recent travels in Southeast Asia, the beaches of the Thai coast provided fresh inspiration for pieces that have taken my work in a new direction. Following the trip, experiments with new colour palettes led to an unintentional spread of hundreds of turquoise blue swatches, spread out in my studio like an ocean of tiny tiles.

The Reef series pieces are a response to this time spent swimming and snorkelling in Thailand, and convey the mesmerising effect of spending hours under the water: forms flutter across the aquamarine surface of the pieces, fish darting between corals and aquatic plants; the glaze ripples like water. The Coast Series are a response to the skylines and shores of these tropical islands, capturing the constantly changing hues and movements of these spaces with accents of waves splashing against rocks and birds in flight.

The Reef and Coast Series mark a step away from the more controlled work of past years. Natural themes still dominate, but not the figurative forms of past work; this is a more abstract interpretation. The new pieces embrace intuitive mark-making, showing that even as the work has matured, it has become more playful. I am very excited to see how these new feelings and ideas will develop.

Some technical notes: The first stage is very scientific: researching and developing clay slips. All the colours in my ceramics are my own creations. Variations in percentages of metal oxides and stains in the clay body, differences in clays, glazes, firing temperatures, all affect the final colour. It takes months to finalise a colour palette for a new series.

The next stage is very rhythmic and therapeutic: I cast the bowls or vases with a certain colour clay body, then brush layer upon layer of coloured clay slips on the insides and outsides of the body. I work on around eight pieces at any one time as the layers need to dry to a leather-hard stage before the next layer can be brushed on. Depending on air temperature and humidity - and the amount of layers I am wanting - this can take a few weeks as slow drying is essential to ensure no cracking in the final stages.

The next stage is exciting, spontaneous, intuitive and artistic. Here I cut through the layers of coloured clay using various metal tools I have shaped. This method is called sgraffito yet the technique I use has been developed by myself for over 14 years so is very different from traditional sgraffito ceramics. This is the stage where I feel I am an artist creating my vision: my coloured canvas is ready for me to be impulsive and free, evoking moods and tensions, actions and reactions...

And the final stage is calm and controlled, cleaning up the piece, bisque firing, masking areas and applying different glazes before the final firing (1170°C with an hour long soak at the top temperature). And then the magical moment - opening the kiln after the final firing to see what I have created.

All pieces are individually designed and hand made by Rowena in her Brighton studio and have her signature mark on the base.