



Core Artists explore The British Museum



"This project has enabled members to access the British Museum, it has encouraged members to think creatively and produce some thoughtful work. Some members have been inspired to visit the British Museum independently to do research. A lovely project."

Rebecca P Cresswell,
Core Arts Ceramics Tutor

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Core Arts

Core Arts is an award winning Mental Health Charity based in Hackney, London.

Core Arts exists to enrich the lives of socially excluded people with severe mental health issues.

Our mission is to promote positive mental health and wellbeing through creative learning. Providing quality education, training, sporting activities and employment initiatives enabling people who experience mental health-issues to overcome barriers, fulfil their potential to achieve their personal goals and aspirations and make a full contribution to society.

Artists Explore the British Museum

A group of ceramicists from Core Arts has been visiting the British Museum over the last year and exploring the collection through visits to the Ceramics departments, study room, various temporary and permanent exhibitions and special curator talks.

The ceramicists then built on these experiences, using the Museum collections as inspiration to develop their own artistic practice.

This display shows some of that work, and shares the artists' perspectives on the process and inspiration behind it.

The original artworks can be seen at Core Arts from Thursday 6th May to Friday 1st September 2017. Viewing by appointment only.

Private View at Core Arts

**Thursday 4th of May 2017,
6.00pm - 8.00pm**

Events entrance:
109 Homerton High Street,
London E9 6DL

www.corearts.co.uk

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The British
Museum


THE LORD LEONARD AND LADY ESTELLE
WOLFSON FOUNDATION



GIFT TO A QUEEN

LORRAINE SANIE

My necklace was inspired by different scarab symbols I saw at the British Museum.

The ancient Egyptians used symbols in their Art and Religion. One symbol was that of the scarab beetle, which symbolized the restoration of life. The scarab was a popular design for charms and jewellery. I could imagine an Egyptian Queen wearing scarab jewellery.



THE ROMAN PERIOD

LAURA EMERTON

I was inspired by the many Roman artifacts at the British Museum. In particular this plate was inspired by the Roman army's invasion of Britain. At the time they were the most powerful army in the world. They were highly advanced for the day, being extremely well equipped and organized. I armed my Roman soldier with the traditional armory of the day.

I picked a cat because like mental health, treatment of them has been very harsh to say the least. From being worshipped as gods/goddesses in Egypt 4000 ago to having half of their population killed in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Bastet was a goddess in ancient Egyptian religion, worshiped as early as the 2nd Dynasty (2890 BC). As Bast, she was the goddess of warfare in Lower Egypt, the Nile River delta region.

The rise and fall of the domesticated cat.

Domesticated in ancient Egypt to control vermin that were harming crops and causing diseases, cats were - like today - very good at catching mice and rats! The cats controlled the rat population which reduced disease and deaths and also allowed a larger supply of food for the poor. This therefore changed the quality of life for Egyptians and cats become a sacred creature representing life. They were associated with the goddesses Bast, Isis and Pasht. By the time the Egyptian empire fell, cats were revered as master hunters and were worshipped like gods by all Egyptians including the

pharaoh. If an Egyptian killed a cat they were immediately given the death penalty yet the fear of the almighty cat itself made this a rare occurrence. The pharaoh's were mummified and buried with statues of cats. This represented good luck and safe companionship to the afterlife. Even today archaeologists are finding more and more hieroglyphics, statues and carvings of cats, emphasising their importance in Ancient Egypt. Some cats were even mummified and their bodies left to lay in tombs and shrines. It was illegal to sell a cat outside of Egypt, as they were such an important asset to their beliefs and society.

By the middle ages cats were associated with superstition and witch craft, they were considered animals of sin and were thought to be associated with Satan. When the Black Death (The Plague) started in 1348 the rulers ordered the killing of all cats who were the initial suspect of the disease (or the devils work). Ironically because of this mass killing the rodents spread and populated Europe in abundance, which spread and worsened the pandemic. Many believe that the mass cull of cats cost millions of lives.

EGYPTIAN CAT BASTET

JILL MERRY



The British Museum has inspired my making as a ceramic artist, since my art school days at Camberwell College of Art. In my final year I was inspired by the Ming Dynasty funeral horses and their green and yellow glazes. Which I have used on my architectural poodle sculptures.

This project Exploring Ceramics at the British Museum has been enjoyable. I have been inspired by a Japanese piece made by Kakiemon, they have in the past been inspired by Chinese ceramics. I also looked at the prints and enjoyed a print of Dancers practising at the bar by Edgar Degas. This inspired me to make one of my dancing poodles influenced by my childhood love of wanting to be a dancer and to have a Poodle.

DANCING POODLE AT REST

REBECCA CRESSWELL



This piece was inspired by a Funerary urn from the assembly of Chinese ceramics, in the Sir Percival David Collection at the British Museum.

The day before visiting the museum my grandfather passed away. This played on my mind while viewing the collection.

Two "Funerary urns with Celadon glaze" from the Longquan region, in the Southern Song dynasty, (12thC-13thC), were on display in the collection. Decorated with animals from the four directions, North, East, South, West, these inspired this piece.

For many centuries in China there were long held burial traditions to place things in the grave with the deceased. Sustenance for the afterlife was placed in many beautiful artifacts, often ceramic. Vessels filled with grain or other forms of food or drink, sustained the deceased on the passage to the spirit world.

FUNERARY URN

JULIA PARKINSON



MY VASE

JUSBEER KAUR

I was inspired by a piece in the British Museum to make this vase. The colours used reminded me of my childhood and some old pottery my parents had. I used a utensil to form some grooves in the clay and modelled it with my fingers.



PEACE OF MIND

BEVERLEY MASON-SMITH



My name is Beverley and I create pottery at Core Arts. When I make pottery it relaxes me and allows me to express my creativity. I often use bright colours because I want my pottery pieces to symbolise me. A bright and happy person. Making pottery has helped me mentally and physically because I always get a feeling of relaxation when I place my hands on that spinning piece of clay. Pottery is truly a beautiful art-form.

At Core Arts I have learned a new skill in ceramics. I have been successful in creating my own special glaze effects. I have recently started to make fruit bowls in ceramics.

Making fruit bowls by hand, I find difficult but interesting.

Feeling the texture of the clay in my hands is like a therapy, its like all my worries are gone when I am on the wheel.



GREEN AND BLACK BOWL

FABIO D'AGOSTINO

Fabio D'Agostino is a musician and is participating in ceramic design and production through the Core Arts programme.

I am of Italian / French British descent and thus have been exposed to a wide set of cultural influences. The British Museum offers a wonderful selection of Artefacts, many of which continue to inspire my work and I hope to continue my association into the future.

Green and Black Bowl, is inspired by a piece of Ceramic Art in the Percival David Collection.

It has glossy ink-black exterior with a swirl motif on its outer rim. The bowl interior is an olive green glaze.

The inspiration for the black exterior was the iron oxide that Ding potters used in producing the stoneware bowl, with a metal-bound rim and a black glaze of the 11th / 12th Century, (Northern Song Dynasty), shown in the Sir Percival David Collection.

The swirl motif with its natural clay colour was inspired by the Oinocoe jug decorated with large spirals made in Campania in 600BC.

Other influences were the spiral decorations on the red figured hydra water jar made in Capania in 380 BC and the Terrocotta 'Power of the Bull' figurine from the Episkopi 750 BC.

I approached the design and production by throwing the pot, then turning it to achieve the desired shape. The black was achieved through a black under-glaze applied to the biscuit fired piece. The swirl motif was scratched in by hand using a sgraffito technique. The olive green on the inside of the bowl was achieved through applying various layers of glaze, a terracotta glaze coat applied, then everything was fired. The last stage was a transparent glaze against the black surface and a green glaze to the terracotta surface to achieve the olive green. I gave the bowl a final firing.

UNTITLED

ED BURTON



THE WISE YOUNG ELEPHANT

LISA CHU

My elephant was inspired by the Japanese Kakiemon ceramic elephants. These were made over 300 years ago, when elephants would not have been seen in Japan.

I am from China, and in Asian cultures, the elephant is a symbol of wisdom and strength. I wanted to create a small, young elephant, who despite his youth could still be wise and strong.

ROMAN GREEK ART

JULIEN SIMON



PRIMORDIAL SOUP

CAROL GLENNIE

A lifelong fascination for fossils and particular admiration for those to be found in the floor in the atrium of the British Museum inspired me in equal measure with the works to be found in the Percival David Collection gallery, especially those which inspired Iznik ceramics.

Debilitating depression has led me to research the development of my treacherous brain and discover mathematical chaos, fractal geometry, emergence and complexity. As Dr

Robert Sapolsky so eloquently says... "the complexity of human brains and human behavior come from...emergent properties. All that chaotic, strange attractor stuff... all of us spend a lot of time thinking we're not up to the ideal appearance / intelligence. What strange attractors and chaos shows, is that the notion that there is an ideal or that there is an essential optimist whatever is a myth. We are all deviant from the optimum because the optimum is just an emergent, imaginary thing.

BUDDHA HEAD

ABBIE CRAVEN

Buddha is universally viewed as a symbol of enlightenment. The head, when presented separately to the body, represents the wisdom attained by Buddha.

The marked balls on the head depict the Buddha's curly hair; the mound at the top of the head, called the 'Ushnisha' represents the attainment of enlightenment, wisdom and knowledge. His half-closed eyes indicate a meditative state. The small dot between the eyes represents the 'third eye'. Buddha's faint smile indicates his serene nature. Elongated ear lobes represent the Buddha's previous wealth in relation to the wearing of jewellery.

Buddha's appearance varies according to the country in which it is made. Buddha statues are not solely used by those following Buddhism, but universally as a symbol of calm and peacefulness.





POLAR BEAR

JOHN JONAS

I am interested to explore subjects from the natural world. I've made several animal sculptures such as my polar bear. The natural world is a source of inspiration to many, and this is evident in a number of works at the British Museum.



THE CROW, THE FOX, THE OWL, THE BLACKBIRD AND THE LONG TAIL TIT

ELLEN WILLETTS

These pieces are about many things, I can not say exactly what because I'm still working on them and them on me. I think I just need to make them and see what happens.

While looking around the museum I was particularly attracted to the animal imagery. I suddenly remembered my desire to carve / make small animal forms that I wanted to hold in my hands, much like a pebble that I have in a coat pocket. (I find myself turning it in my fingers, exploring its form, how my thumb fits in to one of its indentation, its texture).

I have a strong need to feel a connection to something in the natural world. The disconnection I feel from myself and others is pushed to the edge by living in a city.

I love rock art of the Bubalus Period, (12,000-8,000 years ago). The people of this time had such a close relationship with the animals they depicted, and I find it fascinating to see that they had the desire to make images of these creatures that they were so deeply connected to.



A MAIDEN OF KARYAI

SEMA HUNT

I find the greek statues on the St Pancras Church, on the Euston Road, very fascinating. I could look at them all day, I find them uplifting.

When I was at the British Museum I saw a Greek statue from 420 BC, that reminded me of the ones on the Euston Road. This inspired me to sculpt my own statue.

Queen Nerfertiti was the Queen of Egypt and the wife of Pharaoh Akhenaten during the 14th Century BC. She was born in 1360 b.c.e. She remains a mystery to scholars today.

Her name means 'a beautiful woman has come'. She was one of the most beautiful, mysterious and powerful women in ancient Egypt of her time.

She and her husband established the cult of Aten, the sun god. She also promoted artwork that was radically different from her predecessors.

She was Queen alongside her husband from 1353 to 1336 and may have continued to rule the New Kingdom after his death. They had 6 children. Nerfititi is known to have had 6 daughters.

A bust (sculpture of a person's head and shoulders) of her discovered in 1931 is one of the most recognised and copied works of ancient Egypt.

Up to this day, there is gold jewellery, ornaments and sculptures in her memory.

I chose my piece of work on Queen Nerfititi as I have always admired her beauty and elegance as a young child growing up and also until this day as an adult. I even had a lovely gold chain as a teenager with her bust on it...that unfortunately I went on to loose.

Her bust has been a modern icon for many women and many cosmetic lines.

QUEEN NERFERTITI

**MARIA ELVA
(EMPRESS MARIJAH)**



THE CROWN

**MARIA ELVA
(EMPRESS MARIJAH)**

This piece of my work is to collaborate with the time of Ancient Egypt when Queen Nefertiti ruled from 1353 to 1336 B.C.E.

It is to emphasise the wealth in gold and other precious metals and stones at that time.

LOOKING BACK TO THE 60'S

GILLIAN NOEL

In the 60's I was drawing at the British Museum while I was studying interior design. The piece for my focus is an Assyrian bas relief, which I wanted to use as an inspiration for my ceramic piece.

This I have done by using the figures to decorate the side of a pot. I have enjoyed the way the figures are continuous and rhythmic. Placing these figures in such a way that they are always in transition, trying to complete an evolution.

I am so pleased to still have this original artwork for this project after all these years to give it an application.



This anthropomorphic statue is comprised of a human torso with the head of a falcon. The falcon was a solar symbol in ancient Egypt, and the association of Horus with the animal, alludes to his solar nature. Horus, whose name meant ‘high’ or ‘above’, was the son of Isis and Osiris, and the rightful heir to the Egyptian throne. Statues of Horus the Child –called Cippi- were thought to have magical healing properties

Sculptors in ancient Egypt occupied indeterminate roles, half technician-half priest. There is some evidence that they were initiated into ‘sacred knowledge’. The ancient term for sculptor is ‘s-ankh’ which means ‘to keep alive’ or ‘he who keeps alive’, highlighting the ‘living materiality’ of sculptures. Sculpted and carved images of the gods were often kept hidden away in temples. The chief cult statue was cleaned and dressed daily. A rite called the ‘opening of the mouth’ was thought to awaken the statue, transforming it to the seat of divine power itself, after which it was afforded the respect of a god.

Ancient Egyptian statues challenge modern categories of art, and notions of reproduction and purpose. Meskell (2004) sought to understand materiality and the creation of sacred forms, which transcend ‘object/subject’ categories. She looked for parallels in Hindu statues such as the murthi, made for rituals out of mud or clay which only temporarily house the divine essence. The subject is somebody with agency-the capacity to act. In modern times this would usually be the sculptor, with the statue being the object. As these divine images are an embodiment, the subject/object categorisation becomes problematic. It could be argued that the sculptor works in accordance to the inferred objectives of the statue, acting as a channel to breathe life and open

the way for divinity to occupy it. As priest, the person defers to the object, the sculpture, working on behalf of the divinity seated within it (Harrison 2017).

As a figurative sculptor my body of work consists mainly of gods, demons and monsters. I find ancient civilisations and mythologies inspiring. Their stories have travelled almost with their own force and power into modern times, as if each retelling generates momentum, making them stronger and giving them form.

I sometimes feel that I cannot take full credit for the pieces I’m the most proud of, as it feels as if I am acting as a channel, in order for the energy of that myth to be made solid. In that respect I relate to the notion of sculptor as object, the object as a driving force, itself.

References:

Harrison, P, 2017. Profane Egyptologists: The Revival and Reconstruction of Ancient Egyptian Religion. London: UCL Press & Routledge (fc) Meskell, L, 2004. Object Worlds in Ancient Egypt: Material Biographies Past and Present. Oxford: Berg.

HORUS

CELINE PILLAY



This ship was inspired by the ships on show at the British Museum and is a modern interpretation of them.

Ancient Nations used ships as a primary way of invasion and conquering countries and importing and exporting goods.

SEA CAT

SOLOMON GLAUSIUSZ



VISTING THE SEASIDE

SOLOMON GLAUSIUSZ

This is a modern interpretation of an ancient figurine in contemporary attire in which she might be enjoying a seaside outing. It is also an illustration of the engraved facial techniques seen at the British Museum.

THROUGH EVERY CHANGE I AM THE SAME

JESSICA SCOTT

Wabi-Sabi is a Japanese cultural tradition that focuses on embracing and finding beauty in an object's imperfections. One form of this is Kintsugi; a process where repairs in ceramics are dusted with gold powder. The repairs become part of an object's history rather than something to be hidden or a sign of its obsolescence. Broken items can be found all over the British Museum and are seen as being just as important historically as items that have remained intact. I wanted to reflect this in my work.

The images that inspired me were The Great Wave off Kangawa; a 19th Century woodcut by Hokusai and a monoprint of a wave by Maggi Hambling. I liked the idea of contrasting an image of water, which is always in a state of flux with a material such as clay, which you literally have to dig out of the earth. The function of my piece is fluid; it can be seen as an art object or a domestic object. This embraces the underlying sense of transience that underpins Wabi-Sabi.



POLAR

MOLLY LINE

Inspired by Inuit carvings, I decided to make a ceramic polar bear. I love white glaze as it has such a creamy quality to it and reminds me of the translucency of bone carvings. Inuit sculptures tend to be small scale due to the natural materials the artist had to hand, so I decided to work with a piece of clay that was manageable and malleable in two hands.





FLAGON

MARIA SYLVESTER

I was attracted to the design, the ornamentation, shape, colours, fine detailing and relief work of the Basse Yutz flagon at the British Museum.

Even though it is so beautifully crafted, there is a utilitarian aspect to it as a vessel for holding liquid.

The dog or hyena almost reminds me of a dragon or a mythological creature, which I was interested to make an interpretation of.



core arts exists to promote the artistic and creative abilities of people who experience severe and enduring mental health issues.

Core Arts, 1 St Barnabas Terrace, London E9 6DJ

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