



BELOW: Kristin McKirdy,
Coupe Facetée
Courtesy Sévres-Cité de la
Céramique, PAD London 2015

BOTTOM: Barnaby
Barford, *Avarice*
Courtesy David Gill Galleries,
PAD London 2015



At the beginning of the 20th century, production of ceramics was dominated by large factories employing skilled craftsmen to make utilitarian items such as pots, bowls and vases. There were a few exceptions, however, including the Cincinnati Pottery Club founded by Mary Louise McLaughlin in 1879. The late 19th century arts and crafts movement encouraged ceramists, but it was Bernard Leach who became the most important influencer, learning to pot in Tokyo then returning to Cornwall and opening his own pottery in St Ives. Fast forward to the rise of abstract expressionism and you find names such as John Mason, who took conventional bottle forms and then punched, pulled and squashed them into semi-abstractions, and Ewen Henderson, who assembled stoneware, porcelain and paper to push the technical limits of the material. Adrian Saxe and Howard Kottler derived humour from altering powerful images in their works, while later Rudy Autio and Michael Lucero used clay as if it were a canvas. Recently, ceramics have been reborn, placed firmly in an art context. Ben Williams, international ceramics consultant at Phillips auction house, says the contemporary ceramics market continues to polarise price-wise. “Established (and some fashionable) names are making very strong prices, while other artists are not finding a context in which their work sells well. There are interesting options available at several layers of

IN THE FIRING LINE

Contemporary ceramics are making a splash at the Pavilion of Art and Design (PAD) in Berkeley Square this month

BY LORNA DAVIES





ABOVE: Kate Malone, *Stealth Magma*, 2015
 Courtesy Adrian Sassoon, PAD London 2015

RIGHT: Kim Simonsson, *Spitting Girl "Gold"*, 2013
 Courtesy Sèvres-Cité de la Céramique, PAD London 2015

the market, but you have to look quite hard to find any visibility at entry levels below about £1,000, with auction house minimum price thresholds making it uneconomic to sell at those levels. All the pressure is occurring at the higher end of the scale and it's really very buoyant indeed. It's international names appealing to an international market and a scramble to acquire the best."

This month's PAD Art Fair is the place to see the best of the genre. London gallerist Adrian Sassoon, famed for his ceramics, is bringing works by Felicity Ayllett and Hitomi Hosono. He says part of the reason they show ceramics is because of PAD-goers' eye for colour. "One of our great examples of colour use are seen in the works of Pippin Drysdale from Western Australia, whose famous works are often of strong colours with great contrasts and hints of drama," he says. Sassoon "always show" the brilliantly coloured ceramics by

Kate Malone, a London-based artist who will appear in the BBC series *The Great British Pottery Throw Down*, where she is one of the judges, this month. "She has taken glaze research and the use of crystals growing in the surface of her glazes to new heights," adds Sassoon.

Other ceramics stars are included, from Pia Manu's ceramic side boards and Sandra Davolio's fragile vessels, to Jaime Hayón's *Game On* lamp, brought by Mayfair's Galerie Kreo. Fresh from his sculptural success at the V&A with his *Tower of Babel*, Barnaby Barford is showing his mesmerising mirrors, brought to PAD by St James's favourite David Gill.

The arrival of ceramics icon Sèvres-Cité de la Céramique last year may have encouraged the sea change. The Parisian museum is bringing works by Naoto Fukasawa, Clemence Van Lunen and Kim Simonsson, including her enthralling yet disturbing *Spitting Girl 'Gold'*. Leave your pottery preconceptions at the door, and open your eyes to the delight of contemporary ceramics at PAD.

**PAD is at Berkeley Square, October 14-18.
 Tickets £20**