

# One to watch

Recent graduate *Luke Fuller* is influenced by the industrial environment of Wales and the geological processes of the earth, which he translates into his organic vessels and sculptures

I tend to describe myself as an artist or maker and like most artists working in clay, I have an affinity with it as a material in its raw unfired state. This is due to the sculptural qualities and opportunities of form it offers, as well as its connection to the earth and landscape around us. Clay is one of the original products of recycling; from mountaintop to riverbed, this natural material offers me the chance to engage with the elemental earth and, through my practice, build upon the traditions and lineage of human making.

Human interaction with raw materials and our subsequent manipulation of them fascinates me and directs my practice. I have always had a desire to understand our built environment and the origin of objects, through looking at human history and our engagement with the land. I believe this fascination has stemmed from my family's industrial history, as past generations have worked at steelworks, coal mines and ironworks in Wales, using their hands to source materials. I visit the town of Port Talbot regularly to see family and friends. The local environment has been a huge inspiration in developing my practice as the surroundings host such a diverse landscape from mountaintops and reservoirs to sand dunes and coastline, as well as the largest steelworks in the UK. This intersection between the natural world and our built

environments interests me due to the relationships that are formed from the town's industrial history and its dependence on the surrounding natural landscape.

My desire to learn how our environment is formed is only possible through learning and engaging with materials and processes. I believe as a maker it is key to work with a material that you are passionate about, as this determines your level of engagement. If one uses a material solely for the purpose of a finished outcome it creates disconnection between the maker and the work. I feel it is important to ask myself why I am using a particular process and how I can maximise the various qualities clay offers. For me, some of the most powerful and interesting works are those that are challenging to understand and read in their manufacture, as this demands a certain level of skill and thought.

My aim for my practice is to convey man's connection to the earth through the application of clay and the processes I use. By looking to traditional methods and the re-evaluation of them, I hope to be able to keep them relevant to contemporary society, as we are living in an age where our digital and virtual worlds are increasing exponentially. Traditional methods and processes are vital and are the foundation for making; they simply offer the opportunity to be built upon.

68 Ceramic Review | November/December 2019



I have always taken every opportunity to learn as many new skills as possible, whether these are centred around ceramics or not. I studied 3D Design and Craft at the University of Brighton, which provided me with a skill set in wood, metal and polymers, with ceramics as my specialism. I have been introduced to a broad range of approaches to materials, allowing me to draw upon these experiences when working with clay. I believe that having a basic skill set in other materials allows for a fresh approach or perspective, which in turn brings alternative ways of working.

My most recent series of work, *Faults*, is the result of an investigation into the Earth's geological processes and forms. The project was originally conceived through my fascination with industrial methods and our dependence upon raw materials to create the world we now perceive. The work is produced using a layering technique inspired by sedimentary rock formations to create press moulds. I have used my knowledge of plaster press moulding to reinterpret the mould-making process, which allows me to create undercuts to produce one-off versions. The technique creates cracking across the outside surface of the piece, which is uncontrollable as the surface is moving due to the outer clay wall shrinking unevenly. This is similar to a fault in geology, which is a fracture in a volume of rock where compressional or tensional forces cause

displacement. The processes used allow for these objects to be uncovered as if they have literally been pulled from the ground itself.

In 2017, I worked for the artist Nic Webb as his studio assistant in East Sussex. During that time, we found that we shared similar opinions and thoughts on making and artistic practice and have become good friends. I regularly visit his studio to produce my own work, as it is a great place for experimenting and testing new ideas away from busy city life. This is a wonderful opportunity, as an artist's studio can be a very personal space, but Nic has been extremely forthcoming and generous in sharing it.

Since graduating in 2018, I have received representation from Sarah Myerscough Gallery. The gallery has shown my work at shows such as *PAD Art and Design*, *Collect* and *Masterpiece*. This has been a fantastic chance to showcase my work and one which I am extremely grateful for. I am looking forward to exhibiting at future shows with the gallery and I am also currently producing a new body of work at the Royal College of Art that will be showcased in June. This work will be a new direction where I hope to test new ideas and push the scale of my work further. ■

For more details visit [lukefuller.co.uk](http://lukefuller.co.uk); [sarahmyerscough.com](http://sarahmyerscough.com)

70 Ceramic Review | November/December 2019

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