



From Precepts to Praxis: The Origins of British Studio Pottery

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At the turn of the twentieth century, the international reputation of British pottery was at an historical low point, caught in a no-man's-land between the faltering Arts and Crafts movement, European art nouveau stoneware, and Stoke-on-Trent's mass-produced, transfer-printed earthenware. From the neoclassical to the neo-Gothic, a century of revivals had ended with a handful of art potteries offering what Charles Holme, the founder and editor of *The Studio*, described as "unornamental 'ornaments' with which thoughtless people crowd their living rooms".¹ Despite the technical achievements of Josiah Wedgwood in the eighteenth century, ceramic innovation was seen to have passed to continental Europe and the great porcelain factories of Sèvres and Meissen. As late as 1919, a Danish commentator delivered this harsh judgment: "The development through more than a thousand years of *all* the ceramic arts, porcelain not excepted, was brought to a standstill by the great English industry."²

Following a "craze for all things Japanese" in the 1870s and art nouveau in the 1890s, France became the main centre for creative ceramics in Europe.³ Ernest Chaplet, Jean-Joseph Carriè and Emile Lenoble, along with artists such as Paul Gauguin, established "a sort of mythical status"⁴ around their sculptural stonewares, challenging the hegemony of two centuries of porcelain production. In contrast, English industrial earthenware was seen as good only for a quick profit. *Japonisme* did have a moderate impact in Britain; the fashionable collecting of porcelain by James McNeill Whistler and Oscar Wilde reinforced the undisputed dominance of "Blue" (East Asian blue and white underglaze decorated porcelain), and art potters such as Bernard Moore imitated Japanese flambé glazes. But in individual ceramic practice, *Japonisme* was more or less limited to the Martin Brothers, who combined the Victorian celebration of the grotesque with copies of esoteric Japanese glazes and techniques such as *mishima* (slip inlay).⁵ The British were broadly suspicious of the curvilinear and organic art nouveau style; arch-modernist Roger Fry described it as "the eczema",⁶ Arts and Crafts painter Walter Crane as "that strange decorative disease".⁷

The Arts and Crafts movement's success in revitalizing architecture, furniture, metalwork, and textile design was not matched by a similar revival

Bernard Leach, *Charger, Tree of Life*, 1923–25 (detail of cat. 52)

of craft pottery. William De Morgan, its most prominent figure, and a friend of William Morris, gained prestigious architectural commissions with his Hispano-Moresque and lustre tiles. But he was essentially a decorator and, by his own admission, pottery making came last on his list of factory priorities:

Miscellaneous decorated pots—good for wedding presents and the like, but of no use except to put flowers in when they do not run—as indeed now and then they do not.⁸

After years of financial struggle, De Morgan gave up his factory in 1905 and became a successful novelist. Morris’s dictum of truth to materials (“something that could not be done with any other”),⁹ and his belief in unifying design and production, failed to galvanize nineteenth-century ceramics. Yet these precepts, hybridized with early British modernism and antiquarian discovery, would soon create the conditions for a new type of ceramic artist to emerge: the studio potter.

Previously, the division of labour had made it extremely difficult to manage both the creative and technical stages of ceramic production; now, Reginald Wells, William Staite Murray, and Bernard Leach would establish autonomous artistic practices for the first time in British ceramics. Clive Bell, Herbert Read, Frank Rutter, and especially Roger Fry, were among the fresh generation of writers who provided a critical framework for the new studio pottery. It was above all Fry—a critic, artist, curator, and founder of the Omega Workshops—who helped shape the concept of pottery and he did so in four distinct ways: as abstract form; as a new modernist phase of orientalism;¹⁰ as an English vernacular revival; and as an autonomous artistic entity. Aided by a number of significant exhibitions during this period—one of contemporary French art, and others of Chinese and English pottery—these themes would define the identity of studio pottery throughout the interwar years.

PRECEPTS

The early twentieth century was a fertile time for British art. The fine arts were dominated by artistic groups and alliances, ranging from the conservative Royal Academy to the more progressive Allied Artists Association. Established by the critic Frank Rutter, the Association was modelled on the French Salon des Artistes Indépendants,¹¹ and notable for exhibiting Wassily Kandinsky’s work in Britain for the first time in 1909.¹² This cultural interchange of artists, many of whom shared the goal of integrating art with daily life, became the crucible for the development of studio pottery.

Fry was a scholar of Italian Renaissance painting and had been Curator of Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Enamoured with developments in French painting, he declined the directorship of the National Gallery in London to concentrate on contemporary art. As co-founder of the

Burlington Magazine in 1903, Fry took an intentional “backward step” into the past, which he considered necessary to “the formulation of a Modernist interpretation of art”.¹³ In this respect he was in alignment with European avant-garde movements such as Germany’s Die Brücke, and Cubism and Fauvism in France, which favoured expressive and vital forms of art that drew on non-western cultural artefacts as aspirational models.

The seminal exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists* was held at the Grafton Gallery in 1910.¹⁴ Described as an “Art Quake”,¹⁵ it was the first London showing of paintings by the late artists Gauguin, Paul Cézanne, and Vincent van Gogh, and a younger generation including Picasso and the Fauves (figs. 3–5). Curated by Fry, it propounded his view that representational painting, or “tempered realism”,¹⁶ inhibited the expressive potential of art. His famous dismissal of Impressionism and his championing of “primitive art” challenged the hierarchy of fine and decorative art, and provided a new critical language.¹⁷

While much has been written about the paintings in *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, far less attention has been given to the nine vases “*en faïence*” that were included. Thrown by the French potter André Metthey and painted by Matisse, André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck, Othon Friesz, and Pierre Girieud,¹⁸ the pots were material demonstrations of Fry’s ideas at a time when abstraction was a defining issue in avant-garde art. The potential to paint in three dimensions gave the Fauves freedom to transcend the ineluctable flatness of the canvas and accelerated the move to pure abstraction.¹⁹ Crucially, Fry emphasized form over content, a move that art historian Wilhelm Worringer described in 1909 as “the decisive step from aesthetic objectivism to aesthetic subjectivism”.²⁰ Fry offered up the Fauve pots as emblems of his new ideal:

In these there is often scarcely any appeal made through representation, just a hint at a bird or an animal here and there . . . The artist plays upon us by the rhythm of line, by colour, by abstract form, and by the quality of the matter he employs.²¹

His rationale helped establish pottery as an abstract art form, which became the core tenet of its avant-garde reappraisal during the interwar years. Rutter, who talked of the painters in Fry’s show as revolutionaries, radicals, and “pictorial anarchists”,²² was the first critic to refer to the pots, which he argued, “should help to convince people of the merit of their purely decorative principles”.²³ Bell’s theory of significant form, published four years later, reinforced the inclusiveness of this new order:

No one ever doubted that a Sung pot or a Romanesque church was as much an expression of emotion as any picture that ever was painted.²⁴

The second major theme of interwar studio pottery was the concept of orientalism, motivated particularly by the rediscovery of early Chinese pottery



FIG. 3 Henri Matisse, Vase, 1907, 11 in. (28 cm). Private Collection



FIG. 4 André Derain, Vase, 1907–09, 7½ in. (19 cm). Private Collection.



FIG. 5 André Derain, Vase, 7¾ in. (20 cm). Private Collection

(fig. 6). It emerged out of an unlikely symbiosis: collectors were looking for novel types of pottery to collect, while modernists looked for new exemplars of art. Europe's relationship to East Asia changed as *Japonisme* gave way to a growing interest in the arts of China, culminating in major exhibitions at the Royal Academy in 1935²⁵ and the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1939.²⁶ An editorial in the *Burlington Magazine*, unsigned but likely to have been by Fry, made the case in these terms:

There are signs that the present rapidly increasing preoccupation with Oriental art will be more intense, and produce a profounder impression on our views, than any previous phase of Orientalism. For one thing, we are more disillusioned, more tired with our own tradition, which seems to have landed us at length in a too frequent representation of the obvious or the sensational. To us the art of the East presents the hope of discovering a more spiritual, more expressive idea of design.²⁷

Political unrest in China over the previous decade had resulted in what was seen as the great opening-up of archaeological finds. Scholars and collectors suddenly had access to material from earlier dynasties, previously only known through study of the extensive Chinese literature on ceramics. Doubt was cast on the centuries-old supremacy of porcelain; collectors such as George Eumorfopoulos departed from a preference for the refined and technically proficient examples of "Blue", and began to acquire examples from



FIG. 6 "Song Jar" in Herbert Read, *The Meaning of Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1931), 21. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University

the earlier Tang and Song (Sung) dynasties.²⁸ The British Museum curator R. L. Hobson was the leading authority, publishing many books and articles. Some even found their way to Japan, where in 1918 the young potters Shōji Hamada and Kawai Kanjiro copied early Chinese glazes at the Kyoto Ceramic Testing Institute.

In 1910 the Burlington Fine Arts Club organized the exhibition *Early Chinese Pottery and Porcelain* in Savile Row, London. While most antiquarians viewed these “simple and ruder early wares”²⁹ merely as a prelude to later refined porcelain, Fry saw the work as possessing an authenticity that had become lost through over-elaboration. In his review of the exhibition he discussed a “Sung” bowl at length in language that combined traditional connoisseurship with formalist criticism. It was “delicate”, but also “primitive” and “rough”, hard in texture with a “plastic . . . simplicity of form”. In Fry’s analysis, the Arts and Crafts principles of veracity to materials and workmanship were offset by a modernist desire for vigorous expression: “accident and purpose seem to work together for an undreamt-of perfection”.³⁰

Fry applied the same critical rationale that he had brought to Fauvist pottery and early Chinese wares to the next antiquarian re-discovery, early English earthenware. Provincial pottery from Staffordshire, Devon, and Kent came to symbolize a proud pastoralism, representative of the English temperament (fig. 7). The “unsophisticated” aesthetics of slipware were bound up with concepts of nationhood; Hobson memorably described their robust, simple clays and glaze as “home grown and racy of the soil”.³¹ As with the Tang and Song Chinese wares, early English pottery had previously been ignored due to its perceived crudity and rudimentary technique. But antiquarian collecting raised its profile, perhaps fuelled by wounded pride at the international standing of British ceramics, and the chance for a “good profit”.³² Ironically, the lead instigator of the reappraisal was Marc-Louis Solon, a Sèvres-trained French ceramic artist working at Minton & Co., who criticized English indifference to “the productions of his native country”.³³ Echoing Morris’s concern for “truth to materials”, Solon laid the ground for the vernacular revival that would be championed by Leach, Wells, and Michael Cardew two decades later.³⁴

In 1913 the Burlington Fine Arts Club again acted as a catalyst with the exhibition *Early English Earthenware*, which ranged from Gothic earthenware to late seventeenth-century stoneware. In the illustrated catalogue, Hobson and the collector J. W. L. Glaisher described the subject matter as a necessary precursor to technical developments, emphasizing its Englishness and rejecting any possibility of continental influence. Up to this point, early English pots had been presented as indebted to “the leading foreign types”.³⁵ Now, slipware was reinterpreted as free of “foreign strains”,³⁶ and quintessentially English.³⁷

In marked contrast to the “stamp collecting” attitude³⁸ of the antiquarians, Bell and Fry contextualized early English pots within contemporary debate. Bell likened the “rude and primitive” spirit of the work and its “perfect



FIG. 7 Ralph Simpson, *Dish*, ca. 1689, lead-glazed earthenware, with trailed slip decoration, 16¾ in. (42.5 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Bequeathed by Mr Wallace Elliot



FIG. 8 Thomas Toft, *Dish*, 1670–89, lead-glazed earthenware, with trailed slip decoration, 2¾ × 17¾ in. (7 × 44 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London

seriousness” to the ideal of the younger generation of European artists, who prized “a rustic imagination untrammelled by the rules of art”.³⁹ Fry paid early English wares the ultimate compliment by comparing them to Tang pottery, “some of the greatest ceramics in existence”,⁴⁰ and extolling their “great refinement of taste” and “structural design”.⁴¹ However, both felt the purity and innate expressiveness of the Gothic work had become degraded by the 1600s. Bell criticized the seventeenth-century Staffordshire potter Thomas Toft’s slipware for its “sprawling smears”,⁴² and Fry concurred, condemning it as lacking “any faculty of detached contemplation” and “expressive only of a beery jocularity” (fig. 8).⁴³

Above all, Fry found in early English pots the principle of integration. “Pottery is of all the arts the most intimately connected with life,” he wrote. He elaborated this view further:

A poet or even a painter may live apart from his age, and may create for a hypothetical posterity; but the potter cannot, or certainly does not, go on indefinitely creating pots that no one will use. He must come to some sort of terms with his fellowman.⁴⁴



FIG. 9 Roger Fry, poster for Omega Workshops Ltd., 1918, lithograph, 30 × 19⁷/₈ in. (76.2 × 50.6 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Given by Miss Margery Fry, J.P., sister of the Artist

This principle underpinned Fry's founding of the Omega Workshops the previous year (fig. 9). Omega has been variously described as an Arts and Crafts workshop, a British equivalent to the Wiener Werkstätte⁴⁵ or the "studios of the Italian Renaissance",⁴⁶ and "a job creation scheme for fine artists who painted objects rather than making them".⁴⁷ His aim was to establish a collective of artists, working anonymously on murals, textiles, carpets, furniture, and interior design, "with the object of allowing free play to the delight in creation, in the making of objects for common life".⁴⁸ Fry took personal responsibility for the pottery, hand-throwing the first examples himself. These had a geometric design rationale based on spheres, cones, quadrants, and triangles, finished in plain white or coloured glazes (fig. 10).⁴⁹ He described the work as being "made on the wheel by artists" instead of being "executed to their design". The intention was to achieve the "spontaneous freshness of primitive or peasant work" but exaggerated throwing rings, visible tool marks and overall weightiness meant the pots were often dismissed as amateurish.



FIG. 10 Roger Fry, collection of domestic ware, illustrated in Edmund de Waal, *20th Century Ceramics* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 45. Yale University Library

PRAXIS

Following the devastation of World War I, Britain's cultural life only started to recover in the mid-1920s. A few proto-potters had already made a faltering start; one was Dora Lunn, who founded the all-female Ravenscourt Pottery in London in 1916; another was George Cox, the first to cite Song pottery as a model for contemporary practice.⁵⁰ "To the scientific critic I would offer a hundred books with a thousand different compounds," he wrote. "Amongst none of them will he find how to make a Sung bowl."⁵¹

Reginald Wells was one of only a few potters who were able to maintain a career that bridged World War I. Trained in sculpture at London's Royal College of Art, he was a polymath who made bronze and ceramic figurative sculptures, designed aircraft, and later became an architect. Although little recognized today, Wells helped to set the trend both for the vernacular revival and the orientalist tradition. Based in Wrotham, Kent, an historic centre for slipware, he dug clay from the same beds as his seventeenth-century predecessors. He relocated to London in 1909 and, after the war, abandoned slipware to become one of the first potters to produce Song-inspired stoneware.

More revivalist than modernist, the faux antiquity of Wells's generic vases and bowls, detailed with lugs, tripod feet, and textured glazes (figs. 11–13), reflected not only the fashion for antiquarian collecting, but also the increasing interest in pottery as an abstract art. He freely acknowledged the impact on his work of the new Chinese ceramics displays at the V&A and even changed his mark to "Soon" (though he claimed the similarity to "Sung" was purely coincidental).⁵² Curator Bernard Rackham described Wells's pots as "abstract

sculpture” and presented his work as emblematic of a general shift in England away from the “fine” arts towards the so-called “applied” arts.⁵³ Pottery, as a new plastic art form, partially filled the void in British modernist sculpture following the death of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska while on active service. As the sculptor and gallerist Frederick Lessore commented in 1926:

The most characteristic movement in contemporary sculpture has unquestionably been the development from purely realistic or imitative art to an art that is essentially formal, abstract and interpretative . . . One notable instance is the rise of pottery, which was considered formerly only an applied art, and which to-day, in the hands of the best potters, ranks as high as any other branch of sculpture, of which it may justly be considered the most abstract form.⁵⁴

In terms of critical recognition, press coverage, exhibitions, and commercial success, William Staite Murray was by far the most important studio potter of the interwar years (see cats. 28, 29, 50). His reputation too has since suffered, mainly because of partial accounts by Leach and gallery-owner Muriel Rose, who promoted Leach’s work, while relegating Staite Murray to a



FIG. 13 Reginald Wells, *Jug*, 1909, earthenware, slip decoration on a red clay under a transparent glaze, height 8¼ in. (20.9 cm); depth 9½ in. (24 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London



FIG. 11 Reginald Wells, *Vase*, 1922, stoneware with lugs in dark brown body covered in blue glaze over dark reddish purple, 6⅞ in. (17.5 cm). Aberystwyth University, School of Art Museum and Galleries Ceramic Collection, Aberystwyth, Wales



FIG. 12 Reginald Wells, *Bowl*, 1922, stoneware with brown body showing through blue splashed glaze, 6⅞ in. (15.5 cm). Aberystwyth University, School of Art Museum and Galleries Ceramic Collection, Aberystwyth, Wales

marginal position.⁵⁵ Staite Murray was an iconoclast amongst early potters as he rejected the idea of pottery as craft, positioning it instead as an interface between painting and sculpture. However, his approach was concurrent with broader developments in contemporary art and helped to establish credibility for studio pottery that benefited all potters, including Leach.

Staite Murray’s route into ceramics was through London’s avant-garde art scene. Like Fry, he learnt to throw pots at Camberwell School of Arts & Crafts, and his first artistic collaborator, the Vorticist artist Cuthbert Hamilton, had exhibited at Fry’s *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition* in 1912, again at the Grafton Gallery, before joining Omega in 1913. Staite Murray worked with Hamilton at the Yeoman Pottery, Kensington, between 1915 and 1919, making shallow glazed earthenware bowls with schematized, abstracted designs. In 1919 he exhibited with the Arts League of Service, an organization of artists and performers that included other Vorticists such as Frederick Etchells, Edward Wadsworth, and Paul Nash. He then left the Yeoman Pottery and established his own studio in south London to experiment with stoneware.

In 1924 Staite Murray had the first of six consecutive annual shows at Paterson’s Gallery in Bond Street. Like Wells and Leach, he emulated the simple forms and high-fired monochromatic glazes of Song dynasty wares. A camaraderie and creative exchange marked this early period of studio

pottery, as stoneware was a technically challenging material. Staite Murray fired tests for Leach with his innovative high temperature kiln, while Shōji Hamada taught Staite Murray how to trim foot rings and decorate using a Japanese brush, techniques that became signature features of the latter's work.

Staite Murray found a critical ally in Herbert Read, who took over Fry's mantle as the leading theorist for ceramics after the war. While working as a junior curator in the Ceramics Department at the V&A, Read co-wrote *English Pottery* with Bernard Rackham, who was Keeper of the Department from 1918 to 1938.⁵⁶ Read claimed that pottery, unlike sculpture, did not have to overcome figuration in order to make the leap to abstraction:

Sculpture, whether glyptic or plastic, had from the first an imitative intention, and is to that extent less free for the expression of the aesthetic sense than pottery, which may be regarded as plastic art in its most abstract form.⁵⁷

Like Fry, Read confirmed the supremacy of Tang, Song, and English Gothic pottery and stressed the “primacy of formal values” in evaluating contemporary work.⁵⁸ Staite Murray quickly adopted Read's arguments. In his only major essay, “Pottery from the Artist's Point of View”, published in 1924, he constructed an image of the studio potter as a modern artist engaged in an integrated art world. Referencing the Japanese potters Hon'ami Kōetsu and Ogata Kenzan, and recent developments in French ceramics, he stressed that pottery should be exhibited alongside painting and sculpture as “part of an organised decorative whole”.⁵⁹ Unlike Leach, he felt pottery was a tradition not to be revived but re-interpreted—it should be a modern discipline addressing contemporary issues. Practicality was unimportant: “The forms are abstractions and as such readily contemplated as pure form.”⁶⁰

True to his aim of integrating pottery with painting and sculpture, Staite Murray exhibited alongside many of Britain's most progressive artists over the next decade. In 1925 he exhibited at London's Lefevre Gallery with Paul Nash, Ben and Winifred Nicholson, Jacob Epstein, and Reginald Wells, amongst others. The *Observer* critic P. G. Konody wrote approvingly: “It asks nothing of its followers but a real interest in plastic forms and inventions, a real passion for experiment, and a real absence of conceits and prejudices.”⁶¹ The Lefevre show marked the beginning of a friendship with Ben Nicholson, who proposed Staite Murray for the avant-garde Seven and Five Society in 1927. As his connections grew, he went on to exhibit with Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood in 1927, Ben and Winifred Nicholson in 1928, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth in 1930, and Ivon Hitchens in 1933. By the mid-1920s his pots had become more assured, with rich glazes, expressive brushwork, and prominent unglazed foot rings. His interest in materiality and abstraction was particularly akin to that of Nicholson, who produced his first abstract painting in 1924 and wrote about “working my ‘idea’ into material” and a desire to make “not only an everyday object but an object (‘idea’) beyond this temporary existence”.⁶² They also

shared an interest in heterodox spirituality; Staite Murray was one of the first to embrace Buddhism in Britain,⁶³ while Nicholson was a Christian Scientist. Art was to be appreciated obliquely, through “feeling judgement” as well as the cognitive mind. Staite Murray even described the act of throwing as a microcosm of greater forces: “the earth itself might almost be a vast potter's wheel”.⁶⁴

Staite Murray was acclaimed in the national press for his annual exhibitions at Paterson's Gallery. *The Times* critic Charles Marriott became a champion for his work in particular and studio pottery in general, writing thirty reviews over fifteen years in which he praised Staite Murray's pottery as “a work of art”,⁶⁵ and as a means of exceeding painting and sculpture in its ability to express abstract ideas. In 1927 he wrote, “The difficulty . . . is to avoid superlatives”,⁶⁶ and in 1928 he described Staite Murray as “one of the most distinguished artists in Europe”.⁶⁷ This period was the peak of Staite Murray's critical success. In 1930 he moved from Paterson's Gallery to the more prestigious Lefevre Gallery, site of his earlier breakthrough group exhibition; this positioned him alongside painters of the calibre of Georges Seurat, Henri Matisse, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Amedeo Modigliani.

To understand the later reception of Staite Murray's work, it is necessary to see how his career first mirrored and then opposed that of Bernard Leach, who returned to Britain in 1920. Leach had spent eleven years in Japan, and returned with the ambitious plan, financially supported by the St Ives Handicraft Guild, of establishing a pottery that would “turn out more than a couple of thousand pieces per annum”.⁶⁸ This vision was built upon a Japanese hierarchical model of skilled artisans producing large quantities of “industrial craft (hand industry)”,⁶⁹ a collaboration, as he later put it, between “more or less unconscious peasant craftsmen and men of international culture”.⁷⁰ In Japan he had effectively been an amateur, relying on skilled potters for support, and for this reason he brought Shōji Hamada to St Ives to help establish the new enterprise. Although only twenty-six at the time, Hamada came well prepared; he had recently completed 10,000 glaze tests based on early Chinese wares at the Kyoto Ceramic Testing Institute. Leach would recall Hamada's technical contributions at St Ives with disarming frankness: “Here was someone who could tell me why such and such a thing happened.”⁷¹

Together Leach and Hamada built the pottery from scratch, sourcing materials, developing their own clays and glazes, constructing a *noborigama* multi-chambered kiln, and then learning to fire it. Leach's early work consisted of stoneware, slipware, and raku made for the tourist trade in St Ives. He found it difficult to achieve consistency at first but nonetheless started to exhibit in 1921 in a variety of minor galleries and fairs. More a decorator than a maker, Leach had initially trained in drawing and etching. Slipware, with its limited palette and linear graphic qualities achieved through trailing and sgraffito, suited his talents. He also developed expertise in underglaze decoration using Japanese brushwork, which he employed both on stoneware pots and a successful range of tiles (fig. 14).

Leach positioned himself as a commentator on studio pottery, subscribing to two clipping agencies for references to ceramics, through which he built up an astute understanding of the press. He developed a flair for generating publicity and building a brand identity, based on narrative tableaux: his birth in Hong Kong; his time in Japan and early training with Kenzan; his travels in Korea; and the pre-industrial idyll of his life in Cornwall. It culminated in the implication that he formed a unique bridge between Orient and Occident, “the only foreigner since Hearn to whom it has been given to understand the inner life of Japan”.⁷² His “first independent”⁷³ exhibition at the Arts and Crafts Movement-oriented Cotswold Gallery was described as “one of the most original and stimulating one-man shows now on view”,⁷⁴ although a critic in *The New Age* commented, “There is something ineffably sad in the passion of a man for a country which is not his own.”⁷⁵

It was, however, Hamada, rather than Leach, Staite Murray or Wells, who unexpectedly launched studio pottery into the mainstream in 1923 with two



FIG. 14 Bernard Leach, *Vase, Leaping Salmon*, 1931. Stoneware, oxidised, matt white bracken ash glaze with iron brushwork. 12 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (32.7 × 15.5 cm). York Art Gallery, York, The Milner-White Collection (cat. 23)

exhibitions at Paterson’s Gallery. The details of how these shows transpired are vague; Hamada said he simply walked in to the gallery, off the street, and asked the owner William B. Paterson for an exhibition; Leach ascribed it to an issue of personal chemistry, saying, “Old Man Paterson took to Hamada.”⁷⁶ What is certain is that they established studio pottery as a worthwhile subject in the British art press. Painter and critic William McCance, reviewing the first show in the *Spectator*, defined Hamada’s pots as a symbiosis of material and technique, integration of form and surface, and creative autonomy: “Each pot is as unique as a good piece of sculpture”⁷⁷ (see fig. 15). It was a success, with established collectors such as George Eumorfopoulos purchasing work.⁷⁸ Hamada’s second exhibition followed six months later, generating the first review of a studio pottery exhibition in *The Times*. Charles Marriott penned a short column in which he described all the emergent hallmarks of “Anglo-Oriental” pottery: Hamada’s use of local materials; his use of English, Chinese, and Korean precedents; and the resulting blend of “East and West”.⁷⁹

Yet while Hamada, Staite Murray, and Wells had clear artistic identities and prospered, Leach appeared contradictory. For Leach, the 1920s was a mixed decade. After a good start, his career went briefly into eclipse; while Murray and Wells were receiving positive reviews in the British press, there



FIG. 15 Shōji Hamada, *Bowl*, 1922–23, earthenware, with incised decoration through a white slip and brown glaze, 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (18.2 × 6.5 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London



FIG. 16 Bernard Leach, *Teapot*, 1924–30, with brown decoration over light brown ground, 5 × 8½ in. (12.8 × 21.9 cm), York Museums Trust

were no significant references to Leach in 1924 or 1925. He continued to extol the virtues of handmade craft pottery for daily use (fig. 16), but struggled technically, as a note in a Birmingham newspaper indicated:

We have been suffering from a teapot with a defective spout. It is most versatile and will shed its contents anywhere besides into a cup... the maker incises his name on every piece, with the place of origin. This, we thought, should be a guarantee of general excellence, and we still think it should.⁸⁰

Alongside his slipware production, Leach exhibited more expensive individual stoneware pots in prestigious galleries. But while Staite Murray sold one piece, entitled *Cadence* (fig. 17), to the collector Eric Milner-White in 1927 for the unprecedented sum of 100 guineas,⁸³ the highest price Leach was able to charge was 30 guineas.⁸¹ Tensions began to grow between the two potters, and these were compounded when Staite Murray rather than Leach was offered a teaching post at the Royal College of Art. The core difference lay in the two potters' philosophies. Leach's formative thinking had been shaped in Japan with Sōetsu Yanagi and the aristocratic Shirakaba-ha (White Birch Society). Yanagi had adapted Arts and Crafts tenets to his doctrine of *mingei*, a revival of functional craft for everyday life.⁸² Along with Hamada, and potters Tomimoto Kenkichi and Kawai Kanjiro, Leach was a signatory to what was in effect Yanagi's manifesto, "Intention to Establish a Museum of Japanese Folk Art", published in 1926.⁸³



FIG. 17 William Staite Murray, *Cadence*, 1924–27, pale body with iron specks; white slip and ivory glaze breaking to warm white with brush-decoration in sepia and blue glazes, 13¾ × 6⅞ in. (34.9 × 17.5 cm), York Museums Trust

Despite the superficial similarities between the stoneware of Leach, Wells, and Staite Murray, and the apparent closeness of Leach's slipware to the historical objects celebrated in Read's *English Pottery*, Leach's *mingei*-derived agenda was antithetical to Fry and Read's modernist formalism; his work was not discussed in terms of abstraction. Leach and Staite Murray both took the "backward step" that Fry had found necessary, but unlike Staite Murray, Leach was a revivalist. He intended his pots metaphorically to stay in the past, instead of using the past, as Nicholson expressed it, as a point from which to move forward, "one step at a time on a firm basis".⁸⁴ Leach's emphasis on utility and slipware revered a time that no longer existed: a tendency, described by W. A. Thorpe, to "escape from towns into the country, from civilisation into genteel savagery . . . true to their art, but at the cost of being false to their age".⁸⁵

The difference between these two approaches became evident in 1927 when Leach organized simultaneous exhibitions of stoneware at Paterson's Gallery and slipware at the Three Shields Gallery in London's Holland Street.

In debt, and without the support of Cardew (who had left the Leach Pottery in 1926), Leach's rhetoric became more emphatic:

There is a need to escape from the atmosphere of the over-precious; and . . . contribute to national life. A growing public wants to enjoy the use of its crockery, and that can only be if it is inseparably practical and beautiful.⁸⁶

Critic Charles Marriott responded with a defence of the importance of “cloistered virtue” in art—the need for rigour and intellectual enquiry in artistic practice—and remarked that Leach's slipware did “not actually descend to the factory”.⁸⁷ The exhibitions were unsuccessful, and Leach became yet more embittered. The war of words came to a head the following year with the publication of *A Potter's Outlook*, timed to coincide with a further two-exhibition experiment in London, with stoneware shown at the Beaux Arts Gallery, founded by sculptor Frederick Lessore, and a new range of practical everyday stoneware pottery—a replacement for Leach's impractical slipware—exhibited at Philip Mairet's New Handworkers Gallery.

A Potter's Outlook, often forgotten today because of the success of Leach's later, more affirming publication, *A Potter's Book*, was an angry and incoherent attack on virtually every aspect of British ceramic culture and disparaged both the Arts and Crafts sources he drew upon and the modernist context for his own work. From artistic pottery to industrial manufacture and contemporary art, Leach denounced what he did not like, but was vague about identifying positive models. He condemned William Morris for being as bad as the excesses he rejected, but then attacked industry in terms Morris might have used: “Factories have driven folk-art practically out of England.”⁸⁸ These broad-based criticisms were common in the era's artistic manifestos but Leach also targeted subjects closer to home. In a barely disguised attack on Staite Murray, he wrote:

What have the artist potters been doing all this while? Working by hand to please ourselves as artists first, and therefore producing only limited and expensive pieces, we have been supported by collectors, purists, cranks, or “arty” people, rather than by the normal man or woman. In so far we have tended ourselves to become abnormal, and consequently most of our pots have been still-born: they have not had the breath of reality in them: it has been a game.⁸⁹

The one aspect of ceramic production that is granted unreserved admiration in *A Potter's Outlook* is its historic exemplars: “Chinese T'ang, and Sung, and some Ming, Corean Celadons, Japanese Tea-Masters' wares, early Persian, Peruvian, Hispano-Moresque, German Bellarmine, some Delft, and English Toft Dishes.” However, as we have seen, these precedents had already been rediscovered by modernists and antiquarians in the decade before Leach's return; in other words, he was now a beneficiary of an established critical view.

Yet, from this point on, Leach claimed responsibility for discovering the “Sung Standard”. He also asserted that, along with Hamada and Cardew, he had “revived the technique of the 17th century slip-ware potter”, ignoring the earlier Wrotham slipware produced by Wells.

Leach's career took off after the publication of *A Potter's Outlook*, but at a cost in that the pamphlet played a part in undermining the critical credibility of studio pottery, damaging a fragile identity that had taken a decade to establish. From this point on, studio pottery would struggle to present itself as a progressive artistic practice; Leach instead chose to steer it towards a commercial craft strategy, based on *mingei* theory.

In the late 1920s Leach arranged a series of exhibitions of the work of his Japanese potter friends, who were by now the central figures of the *mingei* movement. Hamada exhibited again at Paterson's Gallery in 1929 and 1931, for which he brought pieces over from Japan; the Beaux Arts Gallery hosted presentations of work by Kanjiro in 1929 and Kenkichi (jointly with Leach) in 1931. Leach was an effective promoter, writing features on Kenkichi in *Apollo* and *The Studio*; his catalogue essay for Hamada's exhibition in 1929 portrayed the ethos of the Japanese pottery village of Mashiko as a romantic, pre-industrial idyll in which the artist potter was “living and working as one” with peasant potters, making “kitchen wares” together.⁹⁰ Yanagi also contributed to the polarization of British ceramic discourse at this time, writing in 1931 that pottery must remain rooted in handicraft, and condemning all other pretexts as “insincerities” and “novelties”.⁹¹ Beauty, he argued, was dependent on utility: “Pieces made only for decoration are inevitably in one way or another diseased or abnormal.”⁹²

The different rationales behind Leach and Staite Murray's work put the two men at odds with each other. The superficial similarities of materials and shared historical references masked a fundamental difference between revivalism and modernist aspiration. Two concurrent solo exhibitions in 1931 highlighted the divide: Staite Murray at the Lefevre Galleries near Bond Street, and Leach at Muriel Rose's Little Gallery in Sloane Square.⁹³ The press contrasted Staite Murray's desire for “individual excellence” with Leach's aim “to give the public pottery of excellent quality at the lowest possible prices”.⁹⁴ Charles Marriott employed oppositional terms to characterize the difference between the two potters: the “collector's cabinet” and the “kitchen table”; a “museum attitude” versus the “day to day”; “cake” rather than “bread-and-butter”.⁹⁵ For the first time, the ethical commitments of studio pottery were at the forefront, although issues of class and patronage, which made it possible for Hamada's modestly priced Japanese pots to come to Britain, were never openly discussed. To extend Marriott's metaphor, Leach continued to have his cake and eat it, taking the moral high ground with his affordable domestic pottery while charging high prices for his stoneware pots in Bond Street galleries.

After *A Potter's Outlook*, Leach successfully revived his career by repositioning himself as a producer of affordable pottery, reinforced by his orientalist

credentials. At the end of the 1920s, and into the mid-1930s, press coverage reflected this change with P. G. Konody noting in the *Observer* “how completely our leading ceramic artists are under the spell of China and Japan”.⁹⁶ Staite Murray, meanwhile, further immersed himself in the rapidly maturing British modernist art world. His first solo exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery in 1930 was endorsed by Herbert Read, who allowed his essay “The Appreciation of Pottery” to be published anonymously a year in advance of its inclusion in *The Meaning of Art*,⁹⁷ in which he further developed his ideas about pottery as an abstract art form, first voiced in *English Pottery* in 1924:

Pottery is at once the simplest and most difficult of all the arts. It is the simplest because it is the most elemental; it is the most difficult because it is the most abstract. . . . Judge the art of a country, judge the finesses of its sensibility, by its pottery; it is a sure touchstone. Pottery is pure art; it is art freed from any imitative intention.⁹⁸

Marriott was, as ever, complimentary about Staite Murray’s pots, although he reserved his highest praise for Read’s essay—it was “one of the most remarkable pieces of aesthetic writing that we have ever read”.⁹⁹

Staite Murray also exhibited with the Seven and Five Society, including their final show in 1935, billed as the first completely abstract exhibition in Britain. But after *A Potter’s Outlook*, appreciation of studio pottery changed. Even Marriott, a critical weathervane who had published over thirty reviews on studio pottery over sixteen years, lost confidence in Staite Murray. In 1932, in a review of one of his shows at the Lefevre Gallery, Marriott wrote, “he has lately been in some danger of forgetting that a pot is after all a pot”.¹⁰⁰ Staite Murray’s position was also compromised by the evolution of British modernism¹⁰¹ into the “International” style, with new critics like Geoffrey Grigson championing industrial design and challenging the primacy of the hand; even Herbert Read withdrew his qualified interest, promoting the machine aesthetic in his book *Art and Industry* in 1934.

If Marriott was newly sceptical about Staite Murray, he was far more dubious about the “smug, bucolic roughness” that had become commonplace in studio pottery.¹⁰² Reviewing Leach’s Beaux Arts show in 1933, he wrote in terms that indicated a growing disenchantment: “It is not easy to give in words an adequate impression of such an exhibition as that of stoneware pottery . . . because, except in quality, one pot is, after all, very much like another pot.”¹⁰³ Marriott’s interest diminished still further; he only published four reviews of pottery exhibitions between 1934 and 1936. While in his first cautious review of Leach in 1923 he had praised the pots for their “dignity of shape, depth of colour and quality of surface”,¹⁰⁴ he now described the slipware as bringing back “happy memories of childish ‘writing’ with treacle on the nursery suet pudding”.¹⁰⁵ Studio pottery had lost its most prominent supporter.

Elsewhere in the critical establishment the formalist theory that had underpinned studio pottery was losing its relevance. In 1935 Clive Bell acknowledged the changing art world, writing that Post-Impressionism “has, unless I mistake, run its course. It is complete.”¹⁰⁶ The rationale of abstraction was no longer enough in a “post-cubist” world. For a decade pottery had represented three-dimensional abstract plastic art in Britain. Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth now took on this mantle, while surrealism started to draw inspiration from literature and psychoanalysis. The “Leach School” continued, with David Leach joining his father at St Ives and Michael Cardew producing slipware at the Winchcombe Pottery in Gloucestershire. It also generated a new wave of women potters: Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie took up pottery after seeing Roger Fry’s Omega pots, studied under Dora Billington at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, and spent a year with Leach before setting up her own Coleshill Pottery in Berkshire in 1924, where she was joined by Norah Braden, another of Leach’s ex-pupils, in 1928. However, no potters rose to the challenge of realigning studio pottery to the new developments in painting and sculpture, except perhaps Thomas “Sam” Haile, who had trained under Staite Murray and created powerful surrealist-inspired and allegorical slipware and stoneware, but whose promising career was cut short by his premature death in 1948.

Staite Murray’s last major show was at the Lefevre Gallery in 1936. Despite his prestigious teaching post he was increasingly isolated, having lost an important support structure after the disbanding of the Seven and Five Society in 1935. Soon after making some of the best work of his life—a series of monumental anthropomorphic pots painted with semi-abstract imagery (figs. 18 and 19)—he left England to visit relatives in Rhodesia, two months before the outbreak of World War II. He was stranded there for the duration, and then decided to stay. He never made pots again and only visited England once more, in 1957.

Leach’s fortunes at this time are somewhat harder to summarize. In 1932 the Whitney heiress Dorothy Elmhirst and her husband Leonard invited him to establish a pottery on their newly acquired Dartington Estate in Devon. Leach barely exhibited for the next two years, after which he travelled to Japan on a fifteen-month research trip, also funded by the Elmhirsts. His return in 1935 coincided with the collapse of the critical standing of studio pottery. He only participated in two exhibitions at the Little Gallery over the next four years—a solo exhibition in 1935, followed by *Contemporary Japanese Crafts*¹⁰⁷ in 1936. The *Observer* critic Jan Gordon raised the question of whether Leach’s work was art or craft, a debate that had been irrelevant when pottery was considered a legitimate art form but would now recur over many decades. Gordon pointedly described the contradictions of Leach’s position:

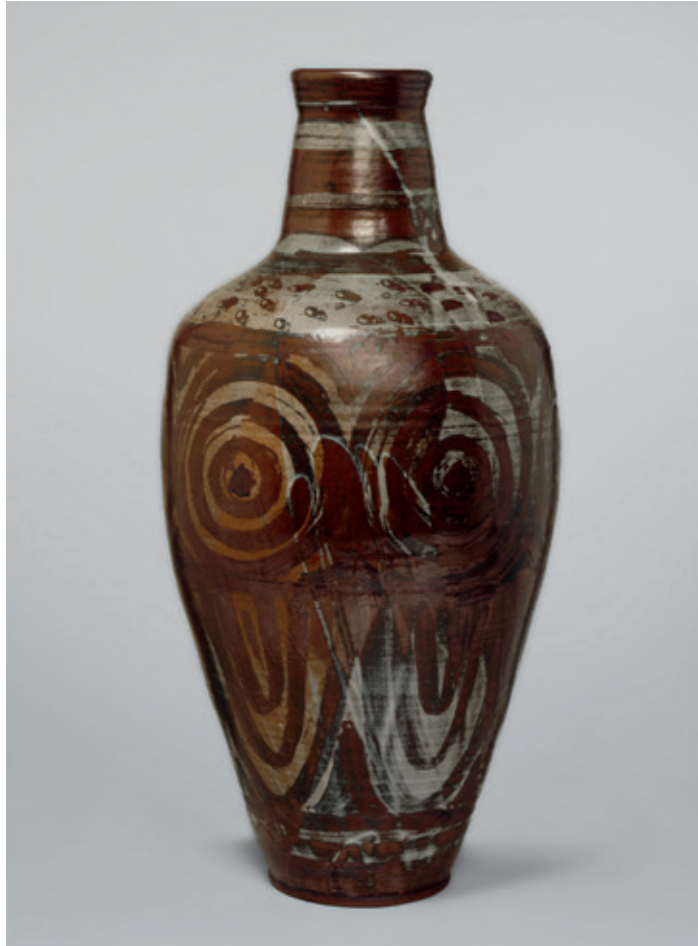


FIG. 18 William Staite Murray, *Wheel of Life*, ca. 1939, stoneware, painted decoration in shades of brown on a grey glaze, 24¾ × 11¾ in. (63 × 30 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London



FIG. 19 William Staite Murray, *Motet for Strings*, 1937–39, iron glaze, incised and brushed decoration of three stringed instruments in blue, brown and white, 19¾ × 11½ in. (50.3 × 28.2 cm). York Museums Trust

Though potters always lay claim to be craftsmen, the high art of potting, that is, the production of rare pieces with unique glazes, belongs to the most high-brow Fine Arts, and is cherished as such. Much pottery is abstract Fine Art camouflaged in the sheep's clothing of a humble craft.¹⁰⁸

Leach's final exhibition, *Contemporary Japanese Crafts*, featured his work alongside a selection of Japanese export goods ("practicable chairs, mats, spoons, trays . . . brushes and papers"). He had exploited oriental exoticism over the previous sixteen years, but now his associations were becoming politically problematic. With the rise of imperialism in Japan, Hugh Gordon Porteus, critic and poet, described the country as the "Germany of the East" in a premonition of the Axis alliance.¹⁰⁹ The last national press reference to Leach prior to World War II was published in *The Times* in 1938. The article, entitled "Attractive Fireproof Ware",¹¹⁰ was a survey of cooking pots published in the lifestyle section. It included Leach and Cardew's work along with

stoneware made by the Denby factory, Swedish fireproof ware, and "rustic faience" from Provence. It was an inauspicious end to the critical debates that had surrounded studio pottery for over two decades.

Leach spent the late 1930s in a caravan on the Dartington Estate writing *A Potter's Book* (1940), a publication that would symbolically close the first phase of studio pottery.¹¹¹ Its mix of romantic utopianism and practical advice would inspire a new generation of potters seeking refuge from a war-torn world. In the opening essay, "Towards a Standard", Leach set out his ambition: "I am endeavouring to lay hold of a spirit and a standard which applies to both East and West."¹¹² He asserted the "mood, or nature, of a pot to be of first importance".¹¹³ As in *A Potter's Outlook*, Leach was articulate in his dislikes: industrial pottery had "bad forms and banal, debased pretentious decoration".¹¹⁴ Ruskin and Morris's "pseudo-medieval crafts little related to national work and life".¹¹⁵ Le Corbusier, Gropius, and the Bauhaus were over-intellectual. *A Potter's Book* was widely reviewed by a range of critics, from Nikolaus Pevsner to Gordon Forsyth, a designer and the Principal of Stoke-on-Trent College. All challenged the narrowness of Leach's vision and anti-industrial sentiments. Herbert Read wrote two separate negative reviews of the book:

Thus is formulated a new academicism. Not only are many other sorts of past ceramic achievement dismissed by it as debased or at best misguided, but the future is closed. It will admit only hand-made wares of the kind produced by the author . . . He does not perceive that his own self-conscious and backward-looking sophistication may obstruct the growth of a new tradition of mass-produced pottery.¹¹⁶

Artistic genres are by their nature flexible, not fixed, and pottery had always adapted to express ideas and fulfil needs specific to its time. Studio pottery had emerged in the early twentieth century out of the modernist desire to explore ideas of form, expression, and materiality. It produced a diversity of results, including Fry's Omega maiolica tableware, Reginald Wells's Chinese and slipware-inspired pots, and Staite Murray's spiritually inflected abstraction. But Leach, unlike Staite Murray, did not allow room for other interpretations of pottery. Although Dora Billington wrote, "Throwing has been saved in England by the studio potter",¹¹⁷ Leach's insistence on artisanal craft downgraded studio pottery, relocating it from the galleries of Bond Street to shops on the High Street. Despite this, Leach would go on to become the central figure of British studio pottery. His pots had many virtues, but his rhetoric set in motion an ambivalence to modernism, industry, the avant-garde, and the city as a valid site for artistic production. In so doing, he created an unnecessarily oppositional framework that studio pottery has been attempting to reconcile ever since.

NOTES

1. Charles Holme, "The Potter's Art: Object Lessons from the Far East", *The Studio*, no. 103, vol. XXIV (15 Oct., 1901), 50.
2. Emil Hannover, *Keramisk Haandbog*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Henrik Koppels Forlag, 1919), quoted in Bernard Rackham and Herbert Read, *English Pottery: Its Development from Early Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Ernest Benn, 1924), 124.
3. Anna Jackson, "Orient and Occident", in *Art Nouveau 1890–1914*, ed. Paul Greenhalgh (London: V&A Publications, 2000), 101.
4. Jennifer Opie, "The New Ceramics: Ceramics: Engaging with the Spirit", in *Art Nouveau*, ed. Greenhalgh, 193.
5. A layer of roughly applied slip leaving exaggerated brush marks.
6. Roger Fry, *Architectural Heresies of a Painter* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1921), 18.
7. Mario Amaya, *Art Nouveau* (London: Studio Vista, 1966), 6.
8. May Morris, "William De Morgan, Recollections", *Burlington Magazine*, nos. CLXXVIII and CLXXIX, vol. XXXI (Aug./Sept. 1917): 77.
9. William Morris, *Art and the Beauty of the Earth: A Lecture Delivered by William Morris at Burslem Town Hall, 13 October, 1881* (London: Longmans, 1898), 22.
10. While recognizing the problematic nature of the terms "orientalism" and "primitivism", this essay will not adopt an ahistorical position. As these concepts were central to the development of studio ceramics, it is important to hear the language of the formative years of English studio pottery in order to fully understand this nascent period.
11. Charles Harrison, *English Art and Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, rev. edn, 1994), 30.
12. Anna Gruetzner Robins, *Modern Art in Britain, 1910–1914* (London: Merrell Holberton in association with the Barbican Art Gallery, 1997), 7.
13. Harrison, *English Art*, 46.
14. Having initially favoured "expressionism", Fry coined the term "Post-Impressionism" for the exhibition.
15. Desmond MacCarthy, "The Art Quake of 1910", the *Listener*, 1 Feb., 1945, 123–29.
16. Roger Fry, "The Grafton Gallery —1", *The Nation*, 19 Nov., 1910, 331.
17. "Primitive" was a nascent term used during the 1910s and did not become associated specifically with African or Oceanic art until the 1920s. Modernist and conservative critics regarded "primitive", "savage", and "barbaric" as interchangeable terms in the early part of the century; but by 1910 Fry was using the term "primitive" descriptively rather than quantifiably, to describe a sense of mind or approach to art, rather than to specify particular cultures or periods in history. His interest in "primitive" art lay in the belief that it offered regenerative powers, a counter to the decayed classical tradition of high naturalistic art. Fry employed the word "primitive" frequently, using it to describe a variety of art forms irrespective of cultural origin, including the paintings of Cézanne, Matisse, and Gauguin; the drawings of the Kalahari bushmen of South Africa; children's art; Sassanian sculpture; Piero della Francesca's paintings; and crucially for the development of studio pottery, Song pots.
18. The collaboration was orchestrated by the dealer Ambroise Vollard.
19. Use of "abstraction" as a term in the early modernist era was used broadly to apply to simplified, as well as purely abstract, form.
20. Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, trans. M. Bullock (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), 3–25. Originally published as *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (Munich: R. Piper Verlag, 1908).
21. Roger Fry, "Post-Impressionism", *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. LXXXIX (Jan. 1911): 862.
22. Frank Rutter, *Revolution in Art* (London: Art News Press, 1910), 53.
23. Frank Rutter, "Success de Scandals", *Sunday Times*, 13 Nov., 1910, 14.
24. Clive Bell, *Art* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1914), 58.
25. *International Exhibition of Chinese Art*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1935.
26. *Chinese Art*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1939.
27. [Probably Roger Fry], "Oriental Art", *Burlington Magazine*, no. LXXXV, vol. XVII (Apr. 1910): 3.
28. Edward Dillon, "Early Chinese Pottery and Porcelain at the Burlington Fine Arts Club", *Burlington Magazine*, no. LXXXVIII, vol. XVII (July 1910): 211.
29. Dillon, "Early Chinese Pottery", 211.
30. Roger Fry, "The Chinese Exhibition", *The Nation*, 23 July, 1910, 593.

31. Robert Lockhart Hobson and J. W. L. Glaisher, introduction, *Early English Earthenware*, exh. cat. (London: Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1914), ix. Glaisher's collection was subsequently presented to The Fitzwilliam Museum.
32. Marc-Louis Solon, "The Solon Collection of Pre-Wedgwood English Pottery", parts 1 and 2, *Connoisseur*, vol. 1 (Dec. 1901): 244.
33. Solon, "The Solon Collection", 248.
34. Charles J. Lomax's book *Quaint Old English Pottery* was typical of the collecting brotherhood's new interest in early pottery—"simple forms . . . crude designs"—and, like Hobson's writing on Chinese pottery, it had an international reach. Leach persuaded Tomimoto Kenkichi to buy the book while in Japan; they looked at it in Kenkichi's studio and made notes in the margins.
35. Marc-Louis Solon, Preface, in Lomax, *Quaint Old English Pottery* (London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1909), xiii.
36. Rackham and Read, *English Pottery*, 37.
37. Current scholarship suggests that many of its signature techniques were imported from the Low Countries. Robin Hildyard, *European Ceramics* (London: V&A Publications, 1999), 15.
38. [Probably Clive Bell], "Early English Earthenware", *Athenaeum*, no. 4494 (14 Dec., 1913): 710.
39. Bell, "Early English Earthenware", 710.
40. Roger Fry, "The Art Pottery of England", *Burlington Magazine*, no. CXXXII, vol. XXIV (March 1914): 335.
41. Fry, "The Art Pottery of England", 335.
42. [Probably Bell], "Early English Earthenware", 710.
43. Fry, "The Art Pottery of England", 335.
44. Fry, "The Art Pottery of England", 330.
45. Isabelle Anscombe, *Omega and After: Bloomsbury and the Decorative Arts* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1981), 9.
46. "A Visit to the Omega Workshop", *Drawing & Design*, vol. 5 (August 1917): 76.
47. Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1999), 20.
48. Roger Fry, "Pottery", *Omega Workshops* pamphlet, London, undated (1914), 4.
49. For further information on Roger Fry and the Omega Workshops see Julian Stair "The Employment of Matter: Pottery of the Omega Workshops", in *Beyond Bloomsbury: Designs of the Omega Workshops 1913–19*, ed. Alexandra Gerstein, (London: Fontanka, 2009).
50. Cox left for the United States in 1914 after declaring bankruptcy.
51. George J. Cox, *Pottery, for Artists Craftsmen & Teachers* (New York: Macmillan, 1914) viii.
52. Oliver Watson, *Studio Pottery* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993), 262.
53. Bernard Rackham, "The Pottery of Mr. Reginald Wells", *The Studio*, vol. 90 (December 1925): 359; see also Frederick Lessore, "The Art of Reginald Wells Sculptor and Potter", *Artwork*, no. 8, vol. 2 (Dec./Feb. 1926–27): 234.
54. Frederick Lessore, "The Art of Reginald Wells, Sculptor and Potter", *Artwork*, no. 8, vol. 2 (Dec./Feb. 1926–27): 234.
55. Muriel Rose, *Artist-Potters in England* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1955).
56. Rackham and Read, *English Pottery*.
57. Rackham and Read, *English Pottery*, 4.
58. Herbert Read, "English Pottery: An Aesthetic Survey", *Apollo* (Dec. 1925): 318.
59. William Staite Murray, "Pottery from the Artist's Point of View", *Artwork*, no. 4, vol. 1 (May/Aug. 1924): 202.
60. Staite Murray, "Pottery from the Artist's Point of View", 202.
61. Paul George Konody, catalogue essay, *Pictures, Sculptures & Pottery by some British Artists of To-Day*, exh. cat. (London: Lefevre Gallery, Feb. 1925) 1.
62. Ben Nicholson, first draft of an article with editing, 30 Nov. 1966, Tate Archive, TGA 8717-3-1-19.
63. For further reading, see Julian Stair, "Factive Plasticity: The Abstract Pottery of William Staite Murray", in *Ben Nicholson and Winifred Nicholson: Art & Life 1920–1931* (London: Philip Wilson, 2013).
64. William Staite Murray, notes for "Lecture at 'Charterhouse' Godalming, March 1935", Crafts Study Centre Archive, 9.65. Charles Marriott, *The Times*, 13 Nov., 1925.
65. Charles Marriott, *The Times*, 13 Nov., 1925.
66. Charles Marriott, "Mr William Staite Murray", *The Times*, 11 Nov., 1927.
67. Charles Marriott, "Stoneware Pottery", *The Times*, 3 Nov., 1928.

68. Specially contributed [probably Bernard Leach], "An Art Pottery in Cornwall", *The Pottery Gazette and Glass Trade Review* (1 Dec., 1920): 1661.
69. Kenji Kaneko, "Modern Craft, Kogei, and Mingei: Learning from Edmund de Waal's Study of Bernard Leach", in Edmund de Waal and Kenji Kaneko, *Rethinking Bernard Leach: Studio Pottery and Contemporary Ceramics* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Publishing, 2007), v.
70. Bernard Leach, foreword, exh. cat., *Contemporary Japanese Crafts* (London: Little Gallery, 5–23 May, 1936), 3.
71. Bernard Leach, *Hamada*, (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1975), 25.
72. "An Exhibition of Pottery and Etchings by Bernard Leach", exh. cat. (London: Cotswold Gallery, 16–30 Nov., 1922).
73. "An Exhibition of Pottery and Etchings by Bernard Leach".
74. "Bernard Leach", *Arts Gazette* (2 Dec., 1922).
75. "Cotswold Gallery. Mr. Bernard Leach. An Artist in Japan", *The New Age* (30 Nov., 1922). The publication was hostile to revivalist strains in the Arts and Crafts movement; see Adam Trexler, "Crafting a New Age: A. R. Orage and the Politics of Craft", *Journal of Modern Craft* 4/2 (July 2011): 161–82.
76. Bernard Leach, *Hamada Potter*, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1975), 47.
77. William McCance, "The Pottery of Mr Shôji Hamada", *Spectator*, 26 May, 1923.
78. Four pieces from 1923 are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, courtesy of W. Winkworth, S. Greenslade, and B. Leach.
79. Charles Marriott, *The Times*, 1 Nov., 1923.
80. F. S. R. [probably Frank Rutter], "In Quest of a Teapot", *Birmingham Post*, 9 Dec., 1925. The Leach Pottery is not named in the article but is clearly the target, as the teapot in question comes from "a small pottery in the West Country".
81. A guinea was equivalent to £1 1s. (100 guineas = £105).
82. For further information on the development of *mingei* theory see Yuko Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory: Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 2004).
83. For a detailed account of this, see Nagata Kenichi's essay in *The English Arts & Crafts Movement and Hamada Shôji*, exh. cat. (Japan: Artist Inc., 1997).
84. Ben Nicholson, first draft of an article with editing, 30 Nov. 1966, Tate Archive, TGA 8717-3-1-19.
85. W. A. Thorpe, "English Stoneware Pottery by Miss K. Pleydell-Bouverie and Miss D. K. N. Braden", *Artwork*, no. 24, vol. VI (Winter 1930): 257.
86. Bernard Leach, press release (St Ives, Spring 1927), Leach Archive, 1392.
87. Charles Marriott, "Leach Pottery", *The Times*, 23 March, 1927.
88. Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Outlook*, Handworkers' Pamphlets, no. 3 (London: New Handworker's Gallery, 1928), unpaginated.
89. Leach, *A Potter's Outlook*.
90. Bernard Leach, exh. cat., *Shôji Hamada* (London: Paterson's Gallery, May 1929).
91. Sôetsu Yanagi, exh. cat., *The Pottery of Shôji Hamada* (London: Paterson's Gallery, Oct. 1931), 1.
92. Yanagi, *The Pottery of Shôji Hamada*, 4.
93. The Little Gallery had been established in 1928 and sold contemporary English craft, imported crafts, and modern manufactured goods. For a full account of the gallery, see Kate Woodhead, "Muriel Rose and the Little Gallery" (MA diss., V&A/RCA, 1989).
94. "Pottery for Use and Ornament", *Western Morning News*, 10 Nov., 1931.
95. Charles Marriott, "Present-Day Potters", *The Times*, 30 Nov., 1929.
96. Paul George, "Modern English Pottery", the *Observer*, 1 Dec., 1929. Konody included Charles and Nell Vyse in his survey; they produced a wide range of ceramics, from thrown stoneware pottery to slip-cast figurines, and also designed for Doulton. Although their Song-inspired pots were technically superior to those of Murray and Leach, they did not receive the same critical recognition.
97. Herbert Read, *The Meaning of Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1931).
98. Herbert Read, "The Appreciation of Pottery" in William Staite Murray, *Catalogue of Pottery, Paintings and Furniture*, (London: Lefevre Gallery, 1930).
99. Charles Marriott, "Mr Staite Murray", *The Times*, 7 Nov., 1930.
100. Charles Marriott, "Lefevre Galleries", *The Times*, 7 Nov., 1932.
101. Charles Harrison describes early Modernism as "insular", in *English Art and Modernism 1900–1939* (1981) (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, rev. edn 1994).
102. Charles Marriott, "Mr Staite Murray", *The Times*, 26 Apr., 1934.
103. Charles Marriott, "Mr Bernard Leach", *The Times*, 5 Dec., 1933.
104. Charles Marriott, "Leach Pottery", *The Times*, 14 Nov., 1923.
105. Charles Marriott, "Mr Bernard Leach", *The Times*, 25 Apr., 1936.
106. Clive Bell, "What Next in Art?", *The Studio*, no. 505, vol. CIX (Apr. 1935): 176.
107. Leach, foreword, exh. cat., *Contemporary Japanese Crafts*.
108. J. Gordon, "The Rise of Potting", the *Observer*, 3 May, 1936.
109. Hugh Gordon Porteus, "Contemporary Japanese Crafts", *The New English Weekly* (May 1936): 115.
110. "Attractive Fireproof Ware: Blue—Yellow-Green—White—Pastel Shades", *The Times*, 19 Oct., 1938.
111. Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Book* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940).
112. Leach, *A Potter's Book*, 17.
113. Leach, *A Potter's Book*, 18.
114. Leach, *A Potter's Book*, 3.
115. Leach, *A Potter's Book*, 4.
116. Review of *A Potter's Book*, *Listener*, 8 Aug., 1940, 210.
117. Dora Billington, *The Art of the Potter* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1937), 111.