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### NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

#### Faculty of Craft Design ~ Ceramics

# **Industrial Craft**

### Forging a Culture of Collaboration

by

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#### <u>A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S</u>

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#### INTRODUCTION

Vessels are basic archetypal, timeless. A container is a fundamental prop (and symbol) of civilisation. A container is an object made with a specific relation to people in mind (Britton, 1981, intro).

The contemporary production of ceramic vessels is a richly diverse field of activity. The various objects produced relate to people in a variety of ways. This is obvious in how they are used. A contemporary vessel may be an everyday utilitarian object, a decorative piece of domestic art or a precious museum piece. It is, therefore, inevitable that the makers of each type of object approach their work from very different perspectives. The industrial manufacturer works to rigorous standards and limitations based on function, quality and price. The domestic potter also works to these limitations, but his manual production methods inevitably lead to a very different product. In contemporary studio practice, vessels are made as vehicles for expression, with function optionally "actual or metaphorical" (Dormer , 1986, p.28).

Unnecessary divisions have arisen in the last one hundred years between craft and industry, and yet again more recently between the functional and non-functional traditions of craft. Despite its mutual material, this multi-faceted culture of production has failed to exploit the common ground it shares. Concerns, such as the handling of the material, the technologies of firing and glazing and the aesthetics of form and surface decoration have developed virtually separately in each mode of production. This situation has adversely affected all involved.

Jennifer Harris maintains that

While the ability to reach out to a far bigger market still remains the major advantage for craftspeople in any 'marriage' of craft and industry, the manufacturer too might learn something from the current 'revival' of craft about consumer taste and product quality. As far as the public, the consumers of craft are concerned, they need to see the crafts as a vital contemporary force which can confidently engage with industry rather than as objects providing solace for a lost rural idyll. (Harris, 1996, p.45).



This expresses exactly how collaborative activity could initiate a new culture of ceramic production. Master craftspeople whose work is collected by museums and who regularly feature in craft magazines are practically unknown outside this domain. This work reaches a very limited audience. Manufacturers mass-produce objects which become part of the everyday surroundings of thousands of people. The designs of these products tend to be the work of general industrial designers with limited knowledge of the material they are working with. Though technically proficient, these objects tend to be aesthetically weak. The general standard of mass produced ceramics could be dramatically improved by innovative collaboration between both parties. This would, in turn, raise the public awareness and appreciation of ceramics and lead to greater interest in the crafts.

According to Robin Levien of Queenbury Hunt Levien,

The sensibility gained through making and the values of a craft approach combined with industry would "humanise mass-produced products (Ceramic Review No. 173 – Sept/Oct 1998 p.22).

In my opinion this represents a worthy goal, a new mode of production – Industrial Craft.

In order to examine how Industrial Craft could be achieved I have firstly studied how the British ceramics industry has developed. Chapter one deals with the progression of the industrial manufacturing since Wedgwood. This chapter illustrates how this conservative industry has continually shown an insular attitude towards design.

Chapter two describes Finland's Arabia, an example of an alternative model of production .Here we see how craft and industry can complement each other, craft acting as an model for manufacturing, while industry takes on the role of patron.

Chapter three is a study of Rosenthal, a German firm whose design ethic is based on continual collaboration. Here progressive and traditional designs combine to produce a range of products which satisfy all the market needs This is a company which has made a moral decision to further good design, while maintaining a healthy profit margin.



Chapter four deals with collaboration between craft and industry in Britain, the inevitable failures and important successes. In conclusion, I will argue that collaboration between craft and industry is a viable means of creating better standards of design in the field of ceramic manufacture.



#### INDUSTRY

The forms of some artefacts are durable because of their virtually unchanging function and scale in relation to the human body (Rowley 1995).

The production of ceramic vessels is not an avant-garde activity. It can be easily traced back to pre-historic times. This history has provided contemporary makers with a diverse legacy. They inherit many attitudes that are based on past ideologies that still permeate institutions and those that run them. It is only through questioning and challenging the established divisions that progress is made. Indeed, Thackara & Jane argue that in design terms, "The avant-garde in Britain may almost be defined by reference to its' rejection of obsolete creative boundaries" (Thackara & Jane, 1986 ,p.12). It is time that all producers of ceramic products, either craft or industry based seek to combine their skills to create a higher standard of mass-produced object. Mass production has been defined as

a way of organising productive processes that is specifically directed at overriding the accumulated craft knowledge's and skills of artisan workmen and women in order to create a system for managing a designed flow of information, supply, manufacture, assembly and distribution, all part of each aspect of which are interchangeable and all material elements of which are, usually, machine made. (Rowley, 1997, p.18).

This type of production was fully established in China as early as the Sung dynasty (A.D. 960-1279), (ironically these mass- produced Sung wares are now considered rare and precious art objects). In Britain the production of ceramics remained the domain of the local potter until the late 1600s. Under the influence of immigrant potters from the continent, ceramic production began to organise itself on a more industrial level. Josiah Wedgwood (1730 – 1795) was the primary instigator of mass production of domestic wares in a modern industrial sense.

Wedgwood's genius lay in his organisational skills and as he himself stated, his goal was to "make such machines of men as cannot err" (Axel & McCready 1981 p.30). Wedgwood's stature was achieved through the numerous technical advancements of others which he then perfected. By the late 1750s, improved



earthenware bodies had been developed, and liquid glazes, plaster of paris moulds and transfer-printed decoration had been discovered. Wedgwood quickly perfected all these innovations. He set up on his own in 1759 and by 1766 he was "Potter to Her Majesty" (Clark,1995, p.50). In 1769 Etruria, the first modern ceramic factory was opened in Staffordshire. It included the systematic training of workmen, efficient division of labour, systems of handling materials, production lines and controlled kilns.

"One of technologies increasing successes in the provision of a democracy of excellence" (Dormer 1990 p.135). This was exactly what Wedgwood achieved through his creamware range. Re-named Queensware, this was the first British earthenware of a high enough standard to be used as tableware. Porcelain was now available to a much wider market. It was a symbol of eighteenth century progress – a product of good quality and reasonable cost that was easily mass-produced.

By 1825, with the invention of bone china, all the major technical innovations had been achieved. Division of labour was complete. Design was confined to the drawing-board and carried out by people with limited knowledge of the machines and materials they were designing for. Each craftsperson was responsible for a small segment of production. The majority became unskilled labourers. Aesthetically, standards of design were low. Wedgwood championed the Neo-Classical. Meanwhile, other manufacturers moved to the fore with Regency Styling, which at least achieved excellence in porcelain painting. A Rococo revival followed. From 1830 onwards, therefore, there was considerable stylistic confusion with varied uses of historical styles and elements such as Neo-Classicism, Regency, Neo-Rococo, Exoticism and Chinoiserie. Frequently single pieces were made up of combinations of these styles. By 1836 the British government had founded a commission to try to find a means of raising design standards. This resulted in the founding of twenty National Schools of Design. Despite these and the more successful schools funded by private enterprise, the decline of standards continued.

1851 proved to be the beginning of a new era. The Great Exhibition prompted a fervent public debate on standards of design. Influential reformers such as Pugin and Ruskin were quick to lay the blame for this decline in aesthetics on the industrialists. Ruskin especially, could not accept the machine as compatible with



art. A Gothic Revivalist, he believed an object's integrity was strengthened by its imperfection. The ceramics section of the exhibition was especially criticised. The lack of originality, over-wrought ornamentation and general lack of basic proportion was evident to all. This exhibition represented the genesis of the division between the crafts and industry. The moral outrage of Ruskin and others at both the merchandise and working practises of the industrial revolution would soon inspire William Morris to found The Arts & Crafts Movement.

Ironically, the Great Exhibition also showed the first examples of aesthetic progress in the field of ceramics as demonstrated by Minton's majolica wares. By the late 1860s the Victorian upperclasses became avid ceramic collectors. Art-pottery, a craze which originated in France, heralded a new status for ceramics as a medium of individual expression. Significantly, most objects now included the maker's signature or mark. Royal Doulton was the acknowledged leader of this field. Talented students from the Lambeth School of Art, under the leadership of George Tinworth, gained critical acclaim at the 1871 Kensington International Exhibition. Emboldened by their success, permanent studios were built and the Doulton art-pottery range was launched. Ruskin himself praised the work of George Tinworth. At the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, Doulton's art-pottery was proclaimed to be "the Etruscan vases of the Nineteenth century" by the New York Times. Despite the phenomenal success of the Doulton art ~pottery, the studios never operated at a profit. Henry Doulton rejected any proposed efficiency improvements which would have lowered the quality of the work. He used his position as an industrialist to become a patron of the ceramic arts. The progressive social and aesthetic atmosphere of the studios provided the ceramists with the ideal environment to perfect their art. Doulton's art- pottery studios are, perhaps, the first example of the successful collaboration of crafts and industry.

Apart from the art departments of large industrial potters, art ~ pottery also thrived in small businesses although, for the most part, these potters confined themselves to surface decoration. As a middle class pursuit, few of these potters would stoop to work with clay; as Clark explains, it was the "meanest of earth's substances" that could only be transformed by "the cunning of the artists hands" (Clark 1995 p.132). As exceptions, the Martin brothers and Sir Edmund Elton were perhaps the first studio potters of the twentieth century.



After the turn of the century, a second generation of artist-potters began to produce wares. Despite having names such as Ruskin Pottery, this generation was more industrial in outlook than their predecessors. These potters continued to practice the craft of experimental glazing. The Flambé wares of this period are exceptional.

This tradition of vernacular fashions in British ceramic decoration can be traced right up to the "Bizarre" wares of Clarice Cliff. By 1930, both she and Susie Cooper were household names. This continued the legacy of Royal Doulton's star decorators such as Tinworth and the Barlow sisters. The insular world of Staffordshire continued to prosper, largely ignoring outside design influences. The industrial wares produced at that time were masterpieces of hand-painted surface pattern. Industry had combined with highly skilled craftspeople, or specifically in this case craftswomen, to produce popular quality wares. This was abruptly brought to an end by World War Two. Utility restrictions were quickly enforced with the result that decorated wares could only be made for export. The export market was inherently conservative and the wares produced were typically traditional. By 1948 the products of Staffordshire constituted the "anti-thesis of Modernism". This is further illustrated in the titles of ranges such as "Buttercup" by Wiltshaw & Robinson and "Hedgerow" by Wade, Heath & Co. It was evident that the industry was highly "conservative in matters of design, this long period of enforced production for export intensified these propensities, and was one of the main reasons for Britain's retarded development at the start of the 1950s" (Jackson 1991 p.20).

By 1912 the Arts & Crafts Movement in Britain was fading. Their exhibition of that year had been a financial and an aesthetic failure. Yet, the ideals of this movement had spread across the continent. It established important basic principles which were then rejuvenated by new concepts. Organisations such as the Deutscher Werbund and the Wiener Werkstätte did exactly this. The 1914 Cologue Exhibition of the Deutscher Werkbund was a triumph. In a critical step forward, co-operation with industry was seen as the only way to overcome the faults of industrial production. Significantly, industrialists formed part of the Werkbund. Even companies who were not involved saw design as a way of improving their products. Peter Behrens was hired to design the entire range of AEG's (the German electrical company) related products, including its building, the worker's living quarters, relevant publicity and the ensuing products. These



industrialists saw this as a way of promoting and nurturing loyalty and pride in their workforce.

The Werkbund was always a very diverse organisation – this is clearly illustrated in their yearbooks where buildings, trains and ocean liners were pictured beside furniture, applied art, paintings, posters and sculpture. This reflected the wide range of people that were interested in the ideas of the Werkbund. A precarious equilibrium was established between the artists, architects, craftspeople, industrialists, businessmen, publishers and teachers which made up the organisation. Despite the varied interests of the members the common issue which the Werkbund explored was the effects of industry on culture and life-style. Renewed suspicion of industrialisation was a strong reaction after World War One, and temporarily, there was a return to pure arts and crafts ideals.

During this time, the architect Walter Gropius (a member of the Werkbund) founded the Bauhaus at Weimar. Initially, its structure was based on a medieval guild with a strong emphasis on craftsmanship. After its move to Dessau in 1925, the Bauhaus (and the Werkbund, its precursor) reclaimed mass-production as a legitimate form of expression. Its workshops for artisans became research laboratories where models were perfected for industry. "The aesthetics of the machine had returned and only now produced satisfactory results" (Burckhardt 1980 P.13). The development of the Werkbund and the Bauhaus fluctuated between widely different theoretical positions but ultimately culminated in Functionalism. This theory was basically an extension of the Arts & Crafts ideals harnessing the concepts and practices of 'truth to materials' and 'craftsmanship' into the new mantra, 'form follows function'. The aim of the Bauhaus was to find the standardised "essential form" of an object. This was achieved through a method of design which logically linked purpose, material and means of manufacture.

Enormously influential internationally, its affects did not readily translate into the British ceramics industry. Similarly to Art Nouveau, Jugenstil and the successionist movement before it, Modernism failed to impact on the British design of this time.

The wartime utility scheme had caused much tension between the ceramics industry and government authorities. While reluctantly accepting the decoration restrictions, a major dispute arose in 1943. The utility scheme sought to impose



their own designs on industry. This was completely rejected. The government design organisation, The Council of Industrial Design (C.O.I.D.) merely succeeded in arousing suspicion and distrust as it sought to further what were in effect modernist theories of design. This lead to a polarisation of opinion as manufacturers saw modernism as a threat to the traditions of the industry. The C.O.I.D. continued its crusade in a patronising manner. Clearly illustrated in an article circulated to schools and colleges by the C.O.I.D. in 1948. In the picture of a Clarice Cliff pitcher and beakers, the caption reads "Now unfortunately outmoded, but still to be seen and avoided. The unfunctional handle and the decoration provide a useful cautionary study" (McLaren 1997 p.6).

In July 1952, the utility restrictions on decorated pottery were lifted. Despite the efforts of the C.O.I.D., the public was quick to reject the utility design in favour of any colourful alternative.

Modernism finally reached Staffordshire through the power of market forces. In August 1952, Roy Midwinter brought a range of samples produced by his father's company to America. "He found his traditional patterns rejected outright" (Peat p. 55), and was advised to view the work of his American contemporaries. A revolution in shape design had occurred in Sweden and in the USA during the 1940s – this was evident in Eva Zeisel's 'Museum' and 'Tomorrows Classic' services, in Russel Wright's 'American Modern', and in the products of West coast firms such as Metlox and Hallcroft. Midwinter quickly reacted and the 'Stylecraft' range was launched by February 1953. Less radical than Roy Midwinter had proposed, it still signified a turning point in British ceramic design.

Jessie Tait, Midwinter's inhouse designer, provided the abstract pattern for the shape. Influenced by contemporary textile design, her surface design continued to be of huge importance to the success of Midwinter's ranges. She also adapted designs, which Midwinter had commissioned from outside artists and designers, for production. These included the work of Hugh Cassan and the young Terence Conran.

The surface decoration of this period was influenced by new innovative methods of application. Photolithography, developed in the U.S.A., could render images which were indistinguishable from hand-painted decoration. Unfortunately, these were mainly produced by 'litho houses' and bought in by manufacturers with the result



that pattern and form were not developed together. Silk screen printing, however, dictated an aesthetic of its own. An on-glaze decoration, it provided a texture on the surface. This process lent itself to bold colours and simple stylised shapes.

Both of these techniques were used in the Midwinter range along with sponged colouring. Midwinter continued to dominate the market. In June 1955 the 'Fashion' range was launched. A more fluid shape than its predecessor, this range fully represented the American aesthetic.

In the mid-1950s, there were 280 industrial potteries in Britain, 100 of these potteries were outside Staffordshire. It was these out-potteries, as McLaren describes them, that continued to develop the new design aesthetic. Denby established an oven-to-table range, which was based on a craft aesthetic. Glynn Colledge, a studio potter developed this range within the factory. Hornsea produced strikingly modern vases using asymmetry, surface texture and colour that was clearly influenced by Lucie Rie and Hans Coper. Poole Pottery produced the 'Freeform' range in 1956, designed by A.B. Read and Guy Sydenham, its biomorphic shapes and elliptical mouths reflected a soft- tech approach. These small companies pioneered the way for the larger companies. Royal Doulton finally launched the Avon (earthenware) and Albion (china) shapes in 1955. Though still a minority taste, contemporary styles now represented a significant sector of the market. By the end of the 1950s difficult economic conditions at home and increased competition abroad lead to a general trend toward the amalgamation of these numerous small firms into larger groups. This resulted in "The idiosyncrasy and exuberance which marked so much pottery designs of the 1950s was largely quelled although the look continued in the work of firms such as Hornsea" (McLaren 1997 p.37.).

At the outset of this decade, in the British context, 'modern' was a derisive term. Picasso's involvement in ceramics was seen as subversive and the C.O.I.D.'s attempts to promote progressive design at the 1951 Festival of Britain had failed dismally. An amazing amount of development happened during the 1950s, an entire new style was established and popularised mainly by one firm – Midwinter. This period was characterised by the growing influence of designers. Consultant designers made their mark through experimentation and innovation, qualities which were generally not tolerated in inhouse designers. As consumers demanded a more integrated approach to interiors, links were made between ceramics,



textiles, glass and wallpaper companies. Indeed, it is this sort of inter-disciplinary design which could further invigorate industry today.

The merging of small firms into the large groups which still dominate today, is the most regrettable trend to have emerged from that time. This "simplification of the marketplace " occurred as companies struggled to remain viable (Mc Cready 1995 p.29). This meant only the most profitable ranges of products were manufactured .The reduction of product ranges was also exacerbated by the use of pressure moulding as a production technique. Though efficient for basic shapes ,this technique is expensive to set up, therefore reducing the incentive to experiment. In "Craft Enterprises in Britain and Germany", Alan Doran analyses the importance of the specialised activities of skill-intensive small firms. He maintains that they produce "Consumer goods which meet minority tastes and complement the standard mass-produced items", and that "they are often responsible for technical innovations both fundamental and incremental" (Doran 1984 p.4). During the 1950s studio pottery began to take over this role. Clearly this is an important contribution. If these small firms are no longer as plentiful, large firms should be prepared to generate this kind of diversity through collaboration with craft.



#### ARABIA

In this chapter, I will argue that there are alternative models for the relationship between craft and industry which have thrived in other countries. This has lead to a higher standard of industrial design in these countries. Craft has enriched the language of design and this is clearly illustrated in the everyday products of Arabia.

Collaborative activity in British industrial ceramics has rarely succeeded in an actual product being put into production and becoming commercially available, yet this is surely the criterion which signals successful collaboration. If it is the objects which we see and use daily that are important, the standard of ceramic wares available to the consumer today should reflect the extensive and elaborate body of knowledge that exists at this time among producers of ceramic wares. Clay and glazes are both visually beautiful and tactile materials. Products available in the retail outlets, clearly do not exploit these qualities. Dieter Raus argues that

We are all strongly influenced by the design of the things we constantly see about us. The objects we use everyday unquestionably have an effect on how we feel about life, about ourselves and about our world. Indeed, they affect the whole climate of our society. The ways in which we relate to ourselves and to one another. Design can be a most revealing measure of change as well as a catalyst for change. For this reason it is not only wise but also absolutely necessary that careful consideration be given to the whole question of industrial design (Hiesinger & Marcus 1983 p.82).

The rare objects which have been manufactured with these qualities, therefore should be acknowledged and applauded. Anna-Marja Ihatsu has pointed out that "Finnish craft has a different history to that of British craft .The field of craft has always been quite close to that of design and craft has never seemed an 'archaic' activity." (Harrod (ed) 1997 p.305) This attitude has meant that Scandinavia's industrial and craft traditions have never become fractured in the way that has occurred in Britain. In many senses they have been producing "Industrial Craft" since the beginning of the century. While we struggle to overcome obsolete creative boundaries, it is evident that those boundaries were never part of the Scandinavian process of production either in art, craft or industry. The exhibition "Modern Art in Finland" which toured London, Leeds, Brighton and Dublin in 1953, combined a display of sculpture and paintings with decorative ceramics,



glass and rugs, illustrating that the "close relationship between art and design is fully realised and accepted throughout Scandinavia" (Opie 1989 p.11). The most impressive achievement of Scandinavian tradition is the freedom and flexibility industry has granted its designers and artists, for this reason I have chosen Finland's Arabia as a case study of collaborative activity.

This culture of non-segregated creativity has meant that multi-disciplinary design is a common occurrence. The renowned Finnish designer, Timo Sarpaneva has won major international prizes in diverse materials. He has worked in glass, ceramics, metalware, textiles and graphics, amongst other materials. Significantly, in the early part of this century, many art directors and designers working in factories had full fine art training before becoming involved in either ceramics or glass production. Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, to note that Arabia has been cited as representative of the "ideal relationship between art and industry" (Siltarvori 1987 p.33).

Founded in 1873, Arabia was a subsidiary of Rorstrand, a Swedish firm. Its function was to give the company an access to the Russian market. It produced sanitary ware and bricks, as well as table and decorative ware. By 1938 it was the biggest producer of porcelain in Europe. This early financial stability allowed the factory to invest much more than was usual in model design and quality. The earliest designs were merely copies of standard wares which were being produced on the continent, but by the turn of the century, a more dynamic approach to design was beginning to emerge within the company. In 1906, as Finland herself was becoming an independent country, self consciously Finnish products began to be designed. This trend strengthened during the 1910s as the factory began to run design competitions. These resulted in enthusiastic responses as "artists awoke to the potential of industrial design" (Siltarvori 1987 p.34). With surprising ease, a real and mutually beneficial link had been created between craft and industry. This idea was quickly taken up in other fields of the applied arts, especially glass where it was a hugely successful device in raising standards of design. By the 1920s, Arabia had begun to employ individual ceramic artists. Pottery was not yet considered an art form and these artists used mainly serial production methods, designing new forms on paper. They decorated wares and produced one-off pieces. These activities soon evolved into distinctive ranges of products. Gradually these ranges began to overshadow the design competitions as a source of ideas for production.



The influence of the ceramic artists continued to grow. Finally in 1932, the art department was founded under the gifted directorship of Kurt Ekholm. The influence of the artists under Ekholm's direction resulted in a new approach to product design based on functionalism. The factory catalogue acknowledged this – "our age has a new slogan - purposeful simplicity" (Siltarvori 1987 p.36). Despite this, the production of the art department continued to be diverse as the artists continued to be personally influenced by eclectic interests which were expressed in their one-off pieces. Creative freedom was an absolute policy, and this primary group of artists of the 1930s matured into a formidable creative force. Typical of this was Toini Muona, who joined the department in 1931. At the first Milan Triennale of 1933, Muona won a gold medal. One of the first Finnish ceramists to gain international acclaim, she won gold medals at Brussels in 1937 and again in Milan in both 1951 and 1954 using simple techniques such as hand-moulding, pinching and imprinting. Muona cultivated an 'aesthetic of flaws' (Aav & Statzler 1998 p.277) which was very influential. An accomplished thrower also, her work came to be identified as Finnish in character. With the superior technical and material support of the factory, her personal brand of "organic modernism" (Kalha 1992 p.86) continued to develop and progress justifying her international stature (see fig.1). By 1938 the department employed up to 30 people. The Arabia factory and art department were now the centre of both Finnish mass-production and studio ceramics.

In the 1940s the Arabia system was criticised, especially, by Sweden. It was implied that Arabia artists were isolated, and their concentration on their studio pieces was irresponsible while working in industry. Ekholm's reaction was perfectly considered – he defended the right of any ceramic artist to concentrate on their own work, no matter where they were working. The artists now included potters and hand-builders who collaborated with the continuing work of experimental glazing and firing. In order to fully assure this freedom, Ekholm founded a design department specifically to create industrial wares. Under the leadership of Kaj Franck, this department quickly evolved into a separate, highly individual team within the factory. The founding of this department coincided with a time of financial crisis. World War Two had just ended and important export markets were in upheaval. Arabia needed a new product which combined






Toini Muona ~ Bowls ~ late 1930's early 1940's.



industrial rationalisation with economic efficiency. By 1953 the Kilta tableware range, designed by Franck was in production (see fig.2). Despite considerable opposition from management, Franck had produced a range of beautiful utilityware which reflected a new age and outlook. A limited, open-range of multi-purpose domestic ware, it was inexpensive, practical and stackable. Not only a commercial success, it was hailed as a design revolution.

The art department continued in its role as flagship for the company. It was expensive to maintain, but its presence brought considerable prestige throughout Europe. The successes of the ceramists at the international exhibitions of the time meant interest in craft in Finland was very high.

Harri Kahla has pointed out that

Arabia popularised the crafts ideals and ceramic aesthetic pioneered by Finch (the founder of modern craft practise in Finland). Backed up by the factory, ceramists such as Toini Muona, Friedl Holzer-Kjellberg, Aune Siimes, and later Kyllikki Salmenhaara cultivated the craft into an art of individualist expression and technical skill, remaining within the unpretentious framework of traditional pottery (Kalha 1992 p.90).

Friedl Holzer-Kjellberg's work exemplifies how the system sought to remain flexible (see fig.3). She revived rice grain porcelain – a Chinese technique dating from the eighteenth century. Although she was an art department ceramist, the technique was transferred to commercial wares in the late 1940s and proved an instant commercial success.

Similarly, Kjllikki Salmenhaara joined the industrial design department in 1947 where she worked for a few years until she was invited to join the art department. She prepared all clay mixes and glazes and by the late 1950s was internationally recognised as an extraordinary thrower. Always functional, the trademark of her wares was their lack of finish and rough clay mix (see fig.4). Amongst other awards, she won a gold medal at the 1960 Milan Triemalle.

The legendary art department of Arabia still continues today. Ten ceramists have workshops at the factory. The site also includes a museum / gallery where their work is shown. They are salaried, like all the other workers, and their work is company property.





## Kaj Franck ~ The Kilta Range





Friedl Holzer-Kjellberg - Porcelain Bowl - 1947







Kjllikki Salmenhaara - Chamotte Stoneware - 1958



If Arabia sells a studio piece, the ceramist receives a commission. Individual artist exhibitions are organised by the company. In addition, there has been a visiting artist program in operation since the 1940s. This offers all the technical and material support that is given to the art department. Every year other foreign ceramists avail of the program. Peter Voulkos, for example, was part of the 1983 visiting group.

In 1998, the Arabia factory celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Kati Tuominen-Niitylä, a member of the art department received the grand prix at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Ceramics competition held in Mino, Japan, for her White Moon plate. Her Roma range of tableware of 1997 has been judged a modern classic at the 1998 Finnish Design 10 exhibition. Clearly Arabia is continuing to be a prestigious name in international ceramics.

Arabia's factory system is not unusual in Scandinavia. Yet, from a British perspective, the concept seems very radical. If we are to develop the crafts, we must also think of new ways of positioning them in society. To position them along side enlightened industry is, in my opinion a valid option. The problem is one of bad habit, "thinking of craft and design as utterly separate categories of activity. A habit that is made more rigid by the institutional divisions of Art, Craft and Design" (Levien, Studio Pottery No 33, Autumn 1998 p.34). Doulton's Art Pottery, Ruskin Pottery, the experimental studio at Wade, Heath & Co., Manchester Pottery in 1950 and the Clayburn Pottery linked to Midwinter in 1953, these are all examples of isolated occasions where there has been genuine craft production within industry in Britain. Unfortunately it has merely failed to establish a strong tradition to ensure its continuation.



## <u>R O S E N T H A L</u>

The ceramics manufacturer, Rosenthal, is based in Selb in Upper Franconia, Germany. Housed in magnificent buildings such as Morandinis Mirror House, The Rainbow House with its façade by Piene and a factory designed by Walter Gropius, it is immediately evident the company takes its mantra of 'Design and Innovation ' very seriously. From the most expensive limited edition expresso cup to the lowliest mug of the Thomas range, Rosenthal's standards of manufacture remain constant. In addition, more unusually, their standards of design are equally consistent; each is an appropriate and elegant solution to a design brief set with differing demands and limitations. Tableware design is a discipline which rarely attracts major attention. It is the most traditional genre in "one of the few remaining industries in which neither the methods nor the materials of manufacture have changed over the centuries" (Walker 1992 p.44). The progression of Rosenthal's tableware from traditional past forms, however, to its contemporary forms parallels the progression of design on a universal level. Regarding itself as the logical heir of the Bauhaus tradition, Rosenthal aims at the coalescence of the arts, craftsmanship and technology. As Richard Latham, co-founder of the Studio Line noted, one word in German ~"kunst" - translates the three words - artist, craftsman and designer.

Rosenthal's present status has principally been achieved through the efforts of one man. Philip Rosenthal Junior inherited the company in 1945 by which time a prosperous pre-war business was practically unworkable. Buildings were unsuitable, factory equipment out-dated and, due to the sealing off of Eastern Europe, three of the company's plants were lost. In post-war Europe, good quality raw materials such as kaolin and even coal were difficult to source. Despite this, the company began to re-establish itself. Rosenthal (Jr) had inherited a conservative company, a producer of traditional wares. He believed that the key to recovery lay in conquering the American market. He also recognised, however, that this market had undergone major changes. In post-war years, there was a considerable turning away from conservatism. Rosenthal would have to adjust to entirely different imperatives.

In the pre-war years, the company's founder Philip Rosenthal (Sr) had been committed to a high standard of design and by the late 1880s he had established a



design department which enjoyed a high degree of freedom and independence. The results were commercially successful ranges which, while remaining traditional, were distinctly more restrained and elegant than their lavish counterparts in other firms. In 1910, when Rosenthal (Sr) founded an art department to produce ornamental items, he sourced the best available designers of the time. It is this commitment to design in Rosenthal's policy which has been its major strength throughout its history.

Following on in this tradition, Rosenthal (Jr) rebuilt the design department, employing such renowned designers as Tapio Wirkkala and Jean Cocteau, amongst others. The entire inventory of production was reviewed and the board judged only three ranges as suitable for the contemporary climate (the Maria Weiss, Moosrose and San Souci lines). Beyond that, an entire new inventory would have to be established. Due to the quality of the resulting inventory, Rosenthal's European sales recovered but the American market continued to elude the company. To solve this problem, Rosenthal sought a designer whom he believed could access the contemporary spirit of the American market. To this end, he employed Raymond Loewry, a Frenchman who had built up an internationally renowned design practice employing hundreds of artists all over America. His brief was to design a medium-price dinnerware set. The result of this collaboration was the Form 2000 range. Designed jointly by Loewy and the American, Richard Latham, its forms were refined and graceful but not traditional. Another innovation was its apparent ease of decoration. Only approved designs would be applied, and only by qualified technicians. This became a feature of Rosenthal's products – forms which took decoration well and then a variety of quality decorations designed specifically for that form. The range was an instant success winning Rosenthal a major share of the American market.

This triumph lead to one of the most exciting developments in tableware production history. In 1961, the maintenance of Philip Rosenthal's Studio Line became a named policy of the company. The concept of the range was to produce work designed by many various designers, the brief set no limits on these designers, and the diversity of the resulting range was the trademark of the line. Philip Rosenthal maintains that

History has shown that nothing that was an imitation and not a genuine expression by artists and designers of its time, from Greek vases to Meissen porcelain, from a Jacobean chair to one by Marcel Brener, has ever maintained cultural or material value. Thus we



realised we had to find, motivate and work with the genuine designers of our time (Hiesinger & Marcus 1983 p.27).

Those designers who worked on the line were designers whom the company considered to be the best available. This of course inevitably meant that these designers were also well known, in some cases famous names. Above all they were talented and, in reality, the marketing of this range was thus achieved through those associations. Kaj Franck wrote in an article entitled "Anonymity" that to make the designer the selling point of an object degrades it, the consumer and the designer" (Hiesinger & Marcus 1983 p.35). This may be valid in some cases but in Rosenthal's case the excellence of the work produced renders that argument obsolete. In this instance, the end in every way justified the means. Such diverse designers as Walter Gropius, Timo Sarpanera, Lord Queensbury, Mario Bellini, and even the late fashion designer, Gianni Versace, have all contributed to the Studio Line. Hank Stoal, head of product development said the "idea of the Rosenthal Studio Line has given us a profile and a personality. We must continue in this way, always searching for new substance, and always questioning what we do" (Schmitz, 1990 p.84). In conclusion, it is fair to say that the eponymous renaming of the Studio Line to simply Rosenthal in the early 1990s was due to the importance of the values and image that it projected. These were, innovative design from the best designers and artists executed in materials of the highest quality. The resulting prestige of the company was apparent. The Studio Line and the company Rosenthal became synomous in market terms.

The Studio Line was exceptional in the quality of its actual products. From the very beginning of the range, the designs stood up to critical scrutiny. Even 30 years later they look vigorous and contemporary. This may be the result of another major innovation of Rosenthal – the establishment of an independent jury to pass judgement on each object that was proposed for manufacture. If the majority of this jury does not approve the product, then it is not accepted for production. The jury is also active during the product development stages, offering constructive criticism to the designers. The actual jurors are representatives of many different fields of expertise and are an international group. Amongst the present jury are Mai Felip Hasselbarth, the current President of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design and Director of the National Gallery in Berlin, Lord David Queensbury former Head of the Department of Glass and Ceramics at the Royal College of Art in London and partner in the Queensbury Hunt design practice and



Dr. Heinz Spielmann, head of the Modern Art Department of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, Hamburg. These individuals are representative of the knowledge and expertise embodied in the jury. In addition, the same jury selects produce from other firms to be sold alongside Rosenthal in their Studio Houses throughout Europe. While careful to maintain standards, Philip Rosenthal is adamant that "in the struggle for genuine design, progressive firms must be allies as well as competitors" (Hiesinger & Marcus 1983 p.29).

Rosenthal's Studio Line originated in 1959 when Walter Gropius designed the TAC 1 tea-set (see fig.5). Collaborating with Louis A. Mc Mullen in 1968, this classic for the Studio Line was continued into the dinner service – the Gropius Service. Although true to his position as founder of the Bauhaus, this service was designed with function as the foremost consideration, unsurprisingly, the result is an inspirational fusion of practicality and aesthetics. Produced in porcelain noire, Rosenthal's exclusive black porcelain, variations of gloss, glazed or matte finishes add a subtle hint of decoration. Mixing the traditional white with the black in sets, emphasises the inherent white quality of the porcelain. This subtle trick shows us the luminous quality which won porcelain the historic title of "White Gold".

Another major success was Timo Sarpaneva's Suomi service (see fig. 6 a ). The Finnish multi-media designer joined Rosenthal as a freelance artist in 1970. The service, launched in 1974, won the designer the 1976 Italian Republic's Presidential Gold Medal, the highest honour given for excellence of design for manufactured porcelain forms. The design exemplifies the clean pure line and form for which Rosenthal has become famous. Combining porcelain and stainless steel, this service recalled Wirkkala's Century range. An acclaimed expert in glass, ceramics, metals, textile and graphics, Sarpaneva hand -carved each piece of the Suomi service from wood before production. He has commented that "original ideas born in the studio should be combined with the technical, machineimplemented manufacturing process. Handicrafts and industrial design production go hand in hand" (Hiesinger/Marcus 1983 p83). The clean- lined shape, soft contours, satin finish and broad surfaces of this form make it highly suitable as a base for painted decoration. As a plain white service, it exudes a sculptural presence, nonetheless Rosenthal does not discourage surface pattern.





Walter Gropius & Louis A Mc Mullen ~ The TAC 1 Tea Set ~ 1969



## Figure 6 (a)

The Suomi Service ~ Timo Sarpaneva ~ 1976

Figure 6 (b) Suomi with surface decoration ~ Edward Paolozzi





Independent artists are engaged as designers of surface decoration whose collaboration with the company is not less valued than those who design forms for entire services. This perhaps is the most interesting aspect of the practice of surface decoration at Rosenthal. Traditionally viewed as a minor, unimportant art form ~ surface decoration on ceramics was literally woman's work. It is apparent that such objects become re~incarnated when successful surface pattern or colour is applied. Moreover, variants of surface detail can change the character of the original piece significantly. A service like 'Suomi' which is quite obviously complete in form, function and aesthetic quality in its original white colouring, is not destroyed or degraded by the application of surface decoration, but merely changed.

The British artist, Eduardo Paolozzi has designed a dense geometric pattern based on computer technology which instantly creates an entirely new persona for the Suomi Service (see fig. 6 b). Philip Rosenthal (jr) has argued that

Pure functionalism was a necessary reaction to all the limitations and kitsch that eclecticism (perhaps with the exception of art nouveau) produced after the Rococo period. But like all necessary reactions, whether in politics or porcelain, it went too far, it destroyed the flowers with the weeds. The purely aesthetic function is genuine and important too. (Hiensinger / Marcus 1983 p.23).

This attitude towards the decorative function of objects is very positive , as it recognises the value of good ornamentation. This is an area where craftspeople can really contribute to industry. Decoration which integrates surface and form is a skill at which they excel. A particularly outrageous example of surface decoration was, not surprisingly, supplied by the fashion designer, Gianni Versace. His designs were applied to the Mythos service by the German, Paul Wunderlich (see fig. 7 a). Wunderlich's work often includes surrealist elements and inspired by the legend of Icarus, the distinctive feature of the service is the fine relief of feathers on all the pieces, although this detail is somewhat lost on the white service. With the addition of the Versace surface decoration – typically rich sumptuous colouring, gold and elaborate patterning - the service became a brilliant and beautiful parody of the traditional eighteenth century opulence of the porcelain of Meissen and Sèvres (see fig. 7 b). This is a clear example of a product strengthened by the edition of surface decoration.







The Mythos Service - Paul Wunderlich







Mythos with surface decoration ~ Versace



When the product developer, Hank Staal was asked about significant milestones in Rosenthal's recent past, he instantly refers to Cupola, the service designed by the Italian, Mario Bellini (see fig. 8). It is quickly apparent that technically the manufacture of these pieces is complex. The coffee cups' handles are set at a slant, indeed all the handles are large sweeping arcs. Staal admits that this product took a long time to perfect, but clearly found the process enthralling. "It is a terribly interesting shape, since the real classic elements have been interpreted in a new way" (Schmitz 1990 p.80-89). There is a fifties feel to the design work, as thick curved ridges dominate the handles and plate borders. This range is typical of what David Pye calls the "workmanship of certainty" (Dormer 1990 p.144). Pye differentiates between craft and industry by asserting that craft is the "workmanship of risk" where self-expression guides the creative process, while in industry, the creative process is a continuous matter of trial and error until the perfect creation of a piece is a certainty. This theory is far superior to the hand versus machine distinction of craft and industry (a simplistic legacy of the Arts and Crafts movement). In any porcelain creation - a hollow body loses 25% of its volume during firing, flat surfaces cave in, extremities become deformed - the technical difficulties are immense. The continuous refinement and fine-tuning of prototypes and the subsequent work of perfecting processes to produce a predictable end product is achieved through a very craft based process.

The design process at Rosenthal is based in the Design Studio at Sehb under the management of Hank Staal. Almost 50 employees (modelmakers, glassblowers etc.) produce the designs of over 100 international freelance designers who collaborate with Rosenthal. An entirely new range, from concept to product, takes anything up to 4 years. Development will progress from sketches and polystyrene models to plaster models and porcelain samples. "At least two corrective phases must be calculated for the porcelain samples because no matter how great the experience of the craftsman, the exact shape of finished porcelain cannot be predicted with 100% accuracy" (Design Report No.5 May 1996 p.126). The production of any piece requires the collaboration of many people. Rosenthal is a rare example of a large company who has incorporated collaborative activity into its structure. In common with Arabia, a creative and experimental atmosphere has been carefully cultivated







Mario Bellini ~ The Cupola Service ~ 1986





Robin Levien ~ The Trend Range


Even within the limitations of industry, good design can produce products of quality. The Trend line of tableware produced by the inexpensive Thomas range of Rosenthal is an example (see fig. 9). Designed by Queensbury Hunt, it became the best selling contemporary tableware in Europe for over 10 years. This confirmed the Queenbury Hunt practice, in that "good design and mass market appeal are not irreconcilable concepts" (Walker 1992 p.7). Robin Levien was the young designer who actually designed Trend. He admired the design process he saw at work in Rosenthal. Influenced by them, his "methods are distinguished by a craft-like concern for detail, for materials and the skill of their model-making, so that a design for mass production can come out of a very craft-like process, of hands-on design and discovery" (Walker 1992 p.7).

It is apparent in the Trend design that this approach was very successful. The initial concept came from David Queenbury himself. In the late 1970s, as a member of Rosenthal's jury, he suggested that they were failing to take into account changing attitudes to food and dining. His concept was to market an informal tableware set containing a theme - thereby adding extras like recipe books and special dishes to the set. This concept eventually was restricted to a new marketing approach but the designs proved excellent. The strength of design of Trend stems from the initial concept, its informality and understyling. In form and surface finish, it is complete. Pattern is not actually needed. The surface finish is only achievable in porcelain - a series of shallow glaze filled ridges suffice as decoration. Although usual for patterned versions of tableware to be more popular, when the range was launched it sold almost 80% in white and even now 50% of sales are undecorated. The design truly brings together eye appeal, function, construction and price. It is clear that Rosenthal's design commitments extend over all price brackets. They take their job as manufacturers to the mass market seriously, "these objects return aesthetics to the world of daily life" (Wolk 1992, intro).

The artistic spirit of Rosenthal's Studio Line is intensified in the Limited Edition range. These collaborative, small-scale production runs offer artists with "no connection to ceramics" a chance to experiment and produce pieces of interest(Axel & Mc Cready 1981 p.37). The prestigious list of artists includes Roy Luhensten, Henry Moore, Marcello Morandini, Victor Vasarely, Salvador Dali and Niki de Saint- Phalle. Editions range from 6 to 5,000 pieces.







Henry Moore ~ Moonhead ~ 1968



Henry Moore's "Moonhead" (see fig. 10), for example, stands out as a beautiful statement of style and its appropriate medium. The luminosity and silken quality of the porcelain is beautifully wrought in this sculpture. Compared with more typical Henry Moore materials, the effect is other-worldly. This is only one piece of many –

our company is full of ideas. We communicate with quite a lot of people so the creative current is correspondingly very strong. The idea for a project may derive from an artist, from a passing thought, a craze. Sometimes old ideas are at the core of it (Staal : Graphis Vol 47 No.266 Mar/Apr1990).

Breaking down the boundaries between art and design, craft and industry while still running a successful company is probably not the safest way to success. Rosenthal as a company has been willing to take risks. They have been handsomely rewarded. With examples such as this, there is no reason for craft and industry to be suspicious of each other.

Porcelain has always been the object of commerce, it offers a long historical legacy for the relationship between artist and industry – an endowment that provided both with not only a wealth of technical information, but also a wide range of aesthetic possibilities. (Axel & Mc Cready 1981 p.34).

Collaboration is clearly beneficial for all.



# <u>CRAFT</u> <u>&</u> COLLABORATION

Contemporary studio pottery is a multi-stranded tradition. It is composed of different elements which continue to thrive independently. These mini-traditions have each been the dominant force in ceramics at different times.

In 1928, Bernard Leach published the phamplet "A Potters Outlook", a "Cultural Evangelist" (Clark 1995 p.145). Leach built up a mythology around pottery which to some extent still has influence today. For Leach, pottery was not an activity but rather a way of life. In its very essence this lifestyle was anti-modern – an aesthetic based on its opposition to the industrial. Based on the traditions of Sung pottery and the slip-wares of the English peasant potter, Leach emphasised rural self sufficiency, truth to materials and utility. This type of production was deemed morally superior to the fine-art pot as championed by William Staite Murray. Published in 1940, 'A Potter's Book' confirmed Leach's status as the most influential potter of his time.

During the 1950s, the work of Hans Coper and Lucie Rie brought a new aesthetic to British pottery. Rejecting Leach's rural romanticism, this pottery was a modern, urban art form. The language of Modernism was as reductive and repetitive as the traditional pots of Leach, yet it provided an important catalyst for progress and development in the studio pottery tradition. In 1959, Lord Queensbury became Head of Ceramics at the Royal College of Art & Design. Almost immediately he began to reform the design nature of the course. Gradually, a graduate course in ceramic art was constructed. Queensbury persuaded the reluctant Hans Coper to teach one day per week at the R.C.A. His presence proved to be inspirational. The generation of ceramists which graduated from the course in the early 70s continue to be a potent force in studio ceramics. Their work explores a post-modern aesthetic of decoration, pattern, literal subject matter and figurative imagery. Ceramic techniques were appropriated from industry and history. This is illustrated in the work of Carol Mc Nicoll who began using slip-casting as a studio technique.

According to the exhibition catalogue of "The Raw and the Cooked – New Work in Clay in Britain",

clay is not a craft material but an authentic medium for sculpture. The works take myriad forms, in concept, scale and meaning: the continuing exploration of the vessel form, fusing languages of painting, sculpture and architecture in a physical language of its own, is balanced by works concerned with the ironical representation of ceramic traditions, with figuration, with landscape (physical, mythological, metaphorical), and with identity (Margetts 1993 p.13).

Clearly the ceramic production being described here aims to be consumed as art. It is therefore inevitable that links with industry would not be considered useful to the majority of these potters. There is some tension between the functional and non-functional traditions in ceramics. This is based on issues of status. At the present time, an association with industry could constitute a lose of status. Clearly the politics of the craft world have contributed to the divide between craft and industry.

In 1985/86 Janice Tchalenko and Carol Mc Nicoll collaborated with Fleshpots Ltd. To produce ceramic wares for Next Interiors. This is a rare example of successful collaboration between craftspeople and industry in Britain. The success of this venture can be attributed to the determination of the individuals involved. The Next Interiors buyer, Sandy Dobson employed Tricia Guild to co-ordinate the project as a design consultant. She, in turn, commissioned the craftspeople Janice Tchalenko and Carol Mc Nicoll. Their goal was to reproduce their work rather than reinterpret it. This aspiration meant that the products, though in some cases flawed, retained a high level of integrity despite the pressures of mass production. Although Next have a policy of using British manufacturers if possible, there was difficulty in sourcing a manufacturer.

It is indicative of the craft industry divide that most of the large factories had never heard of either craftsperson. There was a general lack of interest in the project. The range of techniques used by Tchalenko and Mc Nicoll – sponging, slip-trailing and sgraffito were deemed beyond the range of the industry. Despite Next's initial offer of £50,000 worth of orders, this was dismissed as too small to justify retooling and reorganising working routines. Meanwhile, other small firms that expressed interest were rejected as they could not accommodate any expansion of the project. Fleshpots finally took on the project.



The challenge now moved to the actual reproduction of the prototypes. Each person's work posed very different problems. Tchalenko's prototypes were thrown, reduction-fired stoneware, decorated with lustres. This had to be translated to a mould-produced earthenware. Tchalenko is a potter in the Leach tradition. She completed the studio pottery course at the Harrow College of Art. A skilled production potter, she did not slavishly follow the ethos of Leach. By 1979, she was experimenting with brightly coloured wares using sponged, slip-trailing and painted decoration. In 1980, she was awarded a Crafts Council grant to continue this experimentation. Her decorative wares, representing an alternative to the 'oriental' wares of Leach and the pared down modernity of Lucie Rie, won her popular acclaim (see fig. 11). By early 1985 she had already collaborated with Dartington pottery on a range of tableware. Already blurring the divide between craft and industry, it was unsurprising that she was commissioned in the Next initiative (see fig. 12).

The reproduction of Carol Mc Nicoll's work was less of a challenge, as her protoyypes were already cast earthenware. Carol Mc Nicoll graduated from the R.C.A. in 1973. Part of a highly talented generation which included Alison Britton, Jacqueline Poncelet and Jill Crowley, her work since leaving college has developed into three areas of interest. Firstly, this included a "continually changing spectrum" of repeatable domestic items such as tableware and vases (Lewenstein – Ceramic Review 117 – 1989 p.16). Secondly, she makes one-off pieces of intricate construction (see fig. 13). Thirdly, she designs for industry. Mc Nicoll has taken an industrial technique such as slip-casting and explored and extended the boundaries of this craft. She has much to offer industry on these terms alone.

Decorative effects were the most problematic area of reproduction as a workforce had to be trained. A mixed group of B.A. graduates from local colleges and workers from within the industry were trained to emulate the decorative techniques of each craftsperson. The application and scraping back of slip in Mc Nicoll's wares and details such as the use of small shaped sponges in Tchalenko's work had to be mastered. Each piece was completed by one decorator. The implications of this are far reaching – this constituted a revival of hand-painting in Stroke-On-Trent at a time when Wedgewood were reproducing Clarice Cliff wares using photolithography.







Janice Tchalenko ~ Stoneware Bowl ~ 1985







Janice Tchalenko ~ Designs for Next ~ 1985/86







Carol Mc Nicoll ~ Slipcast & Assembled Bowl ~ 1989



The results of this project were highly successful, with sales trebling Next's projections. The production was constructed so that the decorations and designs would be changed frequently – this meant the product in the shop was of an approximate one thousand edition. The potters were paid on a royalty basis. The project was expanded and other craftspeople commissioned. In all, 13 different studio potters contributed designs. Over a 3 year period, Next bought a million pounds worth of pottery a year. These all sold successfully in the shops. This ended when Next pulled out of the houseware market. By that time Fleshpots employed 240 people. Eventually the company failed through over-expansion. The important factor in this project is the fact that the general public had responded to the ceramic products.

The significance of the next project is emphasised when compared with other attempts of collaboration between craft and industry. Many of these have failed. This was been accepted as inevitable and no progress was made. Michael Cardew argued for collaboration in his essay "Industry and the Studio Potter" as early as 1942,

Beauty in manufacture is not achieved automatically (as the Functionalists 'vainly talk') by paying rigid attention to use and convenience only; it is achieved by a balance and a synthesis of use and beauty; and this involves hard work and many failures on the way (Clark 1995 p.92).

Cardew's unpaid work for Copeland Pottery in Stoke was completely ineffectual. He subsequently altered his views, refuting that any collaboration was possible.

In an offer inspired by Arabia, Lucie Rie was invited to work at Wedgewood in 1963. She was offered any materials she wished, surprising the management by choosing the trademark Wedgewoods blue and white jasperware. In her own studio she produced beautiful prototype inlaid cups and saucers. Only ever intended for limited production, these products proved to be too expensive even for that. It can be argued that if she had produced more highly priced objects such as vases or bowls, these would have been profitably produced and sold. Levien argues that a simple agreed design brief could have eliminated these problems ( Levien, 1998, p.20). This is similar to the 1990's experience of Susan Pryke with IKEA. She was invited to design a new tableware range for the 365+ range. When these final designs were presented, the production costs of many of the products were too high. It became apparent to Pryke that IKEA had expectations of



a certain level of knowledge of manufacturing based on how they worked with Scandinavian craftspeople and designers. Her craft based education at Leicester and the R.C.A., did not include this kind of learning. This illustrates yet again the need for mutual understanding between a craftsperson and a potential manufacturer.

These examples of collaborative activity between craft and industry clearly illustrate how segregated these areas of ceramic production are. There seems to be a general lack of flexibility on both sides. This may be beginning to change. There has been several calls in the educational system for a new type of post-graduate course to be established. It would be specifically aimed at the graduates of craftbased courses who wish to apply their skills in a design context. This would equip the craftsperson with the skills of a designer including computer and communication skills, to enable them to work effectively with industry. This proposal has been attributed to Karen Yair of Sheffield Hallam University, and it has inevitably been supported by ceramists such as Kathryn Lawerance at Central St. Martin's and Susan Pryce at De Montfort University. This would provide a crucial progression for ceramic design.

Martin Hunt has observed that innovation in industry tends to be driven by the will to more efficiently produce standard products He maintains that innovative designers who understand these new processes and are familiar with the materials they are working in, can use them in ways unforeseen by their inventors. Simply, new processes should provide new opportunities for design. Craft-based designers would be uniquely qualified to identify these new opportunities.

The biggest revolution in the recent history of the ceramics industry was the introduction of CADCAM in the early 80's. Computer-Aided Design and Computer-Aided Manufacture have changed the industry immensely. The modelling process in ceramics manufacture has always retained a high degree of craft-based skill as prototypes were produced using turning, profiling and hand-modelling. This was the slowest part of the industrial process. In the past it took two years to develop a range of tableware, with CADCAM it can be developed in 12 weeks. This is achieved through "object orientated" drawing systems which provide wire model simulations instead of drawings and a fully automated prototype production.



At the moment CADCAM is extremely expensive and only the largest companies can afford to buy the system. Smaller firms may rent time from specialist agencies. The expense of CADCAM has resulted in it being used in conjunction with traditional methods of modelling, rather than replacing them. It makes sense to use CADCAM for complex pieces, and traditional methods on simpler forms.

This has lead to valuable interaction between the technological and traditional methods. It has been accepted that experience in real life 3-D modelling is invaluable practice for modelling in virtual reality. It is also apparent that CAD cannot simulate the tactile qualities of details such as handles, which may be assessed from a plaster prototype. It is imperative for standards of mass-produced ceramics that croft-based designers interact with this equipment and use it to its full potential. As design education now consists of a broad, non-specialised approach, it is foreseeable that product designers with no knowledge of ceramics could be responsible for the output of the ceramic industry . CADCAM can ensure technical proficiency, but cannot produce aesthetic quality ~ this requires the flexibility and creativity of a designer.

CADCAM could also herald a new age of small scale manufacturing of diverse ranges. As economies of scale have been dramatically reduced in manufacturing, perhaps minority markets and individual taste can become part of industry again. At the moment there is great potential in industry for change; it merely demands that the status quo be challenged. I believe craftspeople are the most qualified to achieve this.



### CONCLUSION

I produce craft ~ with my own hands, through factories and with computers. (Jeroen Bechtold @ www.euronet.nl)

In "Patterns of Making ~ thinking and making in industrial design", Helen Rees argues that "former polarities have become a spectrum and the moral dichotomy between factory and studio lost its content and meaning long ago". (Dormer 1997 p135). This is the reasoning which exposes the craft and industry divide as being

p135). This is the reasoning which exposes the craft and industry divide as being largely self inflicted and mutually undesirable. I respect the traditional craftsperson's choice to produce work as they see fit. Yet, equally, I believe that craftspeople who wish to use their skills in other fields, such as design, have much to offer industry. As soon as design for production is recognised as a creative experience craftspeople will be more willing to engage with industry.

As I have shown, industrial manufacturers such as Arabia and Rosenthal have cultivated an industrial environment where creativity is valued and, most importantly, used to its fullest. The "Next Interiors" project confirms that collaborative projects can work, resulting in products of aesthetic integrity as well as technical proficiency. This should not become a unique venture. A postgraduate course in design skills for craft graduates could provide a catalyst for a renaissance in the ceramics industry. This is made especially important with the advent of CADCAM. It is an amazing tool for manufacture but it must be used creatively by people who understand the materials with which they work.

Industrial Craft as a mode of production would lead to the consumer attaining greater understanding and appreciation of the aesthetics of ceramics. This in turn could only create an appreciative environment for all makers who work in this medium.



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