

Lucie Rie: The Adventure of Pottery

4 March - 25 June 2023

Press View: 3 March 2023,
10.45am - 1pm



Lucie Rie, *Bowl*, 1977, thrown porcelain with manganese glaze and sgraffito decoration, Middlesbrough Collection. Purchased with assistance from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

“To make pottery is an adventure to me, every new work is a new beginning.” – Lucie Rie

Kettle's Yard is delighted to present *Lucie Rie: The Adventure of Pottery*. This major exhibition will offer a rare opportunity to experience Lucie Rie's (1902-1995) ground-breaking ceramics across six decades. Featuring over 100 works from private and public collections, the exhibition will consider afresh the singular nature of Rie's artistic achievement. Her remarkable body of work, exceptional in its variety, elegance and experimentation, continues to astonish and inspire today.

Rie was born and grew up in Vienna at the height of the Secession movement, and later trained at the city's school of Arts and Crafts under the famed Wiener Werkstätte. Her prize-winning pots of the 1920s and 1930s are infused by modernist tenets of experiment and rigour, characteristics that informed her artistic approach to the end of her career. A 1936 earthenware tea set will be an early highlight in the exhibition, its simple shapes and fine rims complemented by the red clay's unglazed, burnished surface.

In 1938, Rie fled Austria to escape the Nazi persecution of Jewish people, choosing to settle in London, a watershed in her life and work. During the war she turned to making ceramic buttons for the fashion industry, experimenting with miniature forms and new glazes. *The Adventure of Pottery* will feature an array of buttons including knotted and twisting

shapes that the artist used to study form, colour and texture on a smaller scale.

One of a few female potters working independently in Britain, Rie consistently forged her own path. She re-established her career in London after the war, gaining a reputation for her refined tableware and ambitious one-off bowls and vases. Her work, striking for its modernity and individuality, stood out from that of other English studio potters who primarily looked to medieval and East Asian traditions. Nevertheless, Rie drew inspiration from many sources such as Neolithic and Bronze Age ceramics, modern design and the natural world. Works from this period exhibit Rie's signature use of *sgraffito* (etched linear designs), and the painterly, expressive use of glazes. Constantly experimenting, Rie developed forms, colours and surfaces that pushed the boundaries of studio ceramics. Unusually, her pots were only fired once, the glazes applied by brush while the clay was still raw and unfired.

Rie's innovation continued into her later decades, with long-necked vases and footed bowls demonstrating elegance offset with colourful glazes full of expressive life. *The Adventure of Pottery* will showcase works from this period finished with vibrant turquoise, bronze and yellow glazes, including a pink bowl adorned with delicate inlaid lines and a golden manganese drip, which Rie completed in 1990 at the age of 88.

Andrew Nairne, Director, Kettle's Yard said: "We are delighted to be collaborating with MIMA (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) to present this major new exhibition dedicated to the work of Lucie Rie. The pieces on display will showcase the astonishing breadth, versatility and beauty of Rie's work across her long career, as well as her technical innovations that have permanently extended the language of studio pottery."

Lucie Rie: The Adventure of Pottery will travel to Kettle's Yard from MIMA, Middlesbrough, where it runs from 10 November 2022 – 12 February 2023. A selection from the exhibition will be shown at the Holburne Museum, Bath, from 14 July 2023 – 7 January 2024.

The exhibition is designed by David Kohn Architects.

The exhibition at Kettle's Yard will be accompanied by a fully illustrated publication, including new texts by Kimberley Chandler, Tanya Harrod, Helen Ritchie, Eliza Spindel, Edmund de Waal and Nigel Wood. For international trade distribution, please contact ACC Art Books - uksales@accartbooks.com

During the exhibition Kettle's Yard's Clore Learning Studio will be transformed into a 'Button Workshop', which draws inspiration from Lucie Rie's ceramic buttons made between 1941 and 1955.

Lucie Rie: The Adventure of Pottery is organised by Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge and MIMA, part of Teesside University, in association with The Holburne Museum, Bath.

Exhibition supported by the AKO Foundation



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'The Button Workshop' is supported by the LOEWE FOUNDATION

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Lucie Rie, *Coffee set*, c.1960, stoneware. Private Collection. Photograph: David Gerrans.



Lucie Rie, *Bowl*, 1971, Crafts Council Collection: P107. Photo: Stokes Photo Ltd.

Notes to Editors

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About Kettle's Yard

Kettle's Yard is one of Britain's best galleries – a beautiful and unique house with a distinctive modern art collection, and a gallery exhibiting modern and contemporary art. Supporting this is an established learning and community engagement programme, archive and programme of chamber concerts. In February 2018, Kettle's Yard reopened after a two-year development by architect Jamie Fobert. The new Kettle's Yard includes exhibition galleries, education spaces, a café and welcome areas. Kettle's Yard's mission is to contribute to society by inspiring and engaging audiences through art, learning and research of the highest quality. We believe that great art should not be the privilege of the few, but for everyone. Our values reflect Kettle's Yard's creator Jim Ede's support for artists and belief in art's power to make us look again and change how we act in the world.

www.kettlesyard.co.uk

About MIMA

MIMA connects art, people and ideas to enable creative lives and positively contribute to society. We are an international art gallery and museum. We commission, collect and re-think modern and contemporary art. As the artistic heart of the School of Arts & Creative Industries at Teesside University, MIMA is dedicated to learning, research and innovation. Find out more at mima.art and tees.ac.uk/creativearts.



Lucie Rie, *Turquoise bowl with bronze rim*, 1980s, stoneware. The Derek Williams Trust on long term loan to Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales. Images courtesy of Erskine, Hall & Coe; Photography by Michael Harvey.

About David Kohn Architects

David Kohn Architects is a London-based practice working internationally on arts, education and residential projects. Current projects include new markets halls for Birmingham City and Lendlease in collaboration with art collective Eastside Projects, a new campus for New College Oxford and a new architecture faculty for the University of Hasselt in Belgium.

The practice has a specific focus on working with artists, exhibition and gallery design. Collaborations with artists have included Fiona Banner RA, Simon Fujiwara, Rosalind Nashashibi and Pablo Bronstein. Exhibition design clients include the Royal Academy, Wellcome Collection, Waddington Custot, Raven Row and Design Museum. Gallery design clients include the ICA, V&A, Sotheby's, Christies, Thomas Dane, Stephen Friedman and Stuart Shave Galleries.

The practice also collaborated with Fiona Banner RA on A Room for London on the roof of the Southbank Centre for which it won D&AD, Designs of the Year, Condé Nast and New London and RIBA London awards.

www.davidkohn.co.uk



Lucie Rie, *Vase*, 1970s, stoneware, porcelain slip and dolomite glaze with incised vertical lines. From the Crafts Study Centre, University for the Creative Arts, P.76.5. © Estate of Lucie Rie. Photograph: Whitechapel Gallery / Stephen White Photography.

**For further information
and images**

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