

# NIAGARA

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## STEPHEN BENWELL

Born in Melbourne in 1953, Stephen Benwell is Australia's most distinguished ceramicist and was honored with a retrospective survey of his work at Heide Museum of Modern Art in 2013. In the same year, Benwell was selected to exhibit in *Melbourne Now*, the National Gallery of Victoria's survey of contemporary creative practice. Benwell has been the recipient of the Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award, has been a finalist in the Hobart Art Prize, the Fletcher Jones Art Prize and in 2009 was awarded the Inaugural Deakin University Small Sculpture Award and an Australia Council Visual Arts Board New Work Grant.

Stephen Benwell received a Diploma of Art from the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne in 1974, a Diploma of Education from the Melbourne State College in 1976 and received a MFA from Monash University in 2005. The artist has travelled extensively and undertook a studio residency at the Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris in 1984–1985. His work is regularly exhibited in Australia and overseas and is held in a large number of private and public collections including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the National Gallery of Australia, The National Gallery of Victoria, The Art Gallery of South Australia and The Art Gallery of Western Australia.

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 *Red Sails: recent ceramics, paintings and bronzes*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 2015 *Roman holiday: paintings, statues and vases*, Sydney Contemporary, Carriageworks, Sydney
- 2014 *April in Paris: Artist's Books and Ceramics*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne  
*3 Vases*, 136 Johnston St: A Chapter House Lane Project, Melbourne
- 2013 *Stephen Benwell: Beauty, Anarchy, Desire - A Retrospective*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
- 2012 *Stephen Benwell*, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide  
*Walking to Oracles: New Paintings and Ceramics*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 2010 *New Ceramics*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 2007 *Recent Works*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 2005 Niagara Galleries, Melbourne  
*The Impassioned Shepherd*, The Faculty Gallery, Monash University, Melbourne
- 2002 Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 2001 Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 1998 George Gallery, Melbourne
- 1997 George Gallery, Melbourne
- 1996 Craftspace, Sydney
- 1995 Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 1993 Craft Victoria, Melbourne
- 1992 Gallery TAO, Tokyo, Japan  
Powell Street Gallery, Melbourne
- 1991 Garry Anderson Gallery, Sydney  
Powell Street Graphics, Melbourne
- 1990 Powell Street Gallery, Melbourne
- 1988 Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney
- 1987 Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney

1986 Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston  
Powell Street Gallery, Melbourne

1985 Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney

1984 Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney

1983 Distelfink Gallery, Melbourne

1982 Distelfink Gallery, Melbourne

1981 Crafts Council Gallery, Sydney  
Profile Gallery, Melbourne

1980 Jam Factory, Adelaide

1979 Craft Centre, Melbourne

1977 Craft Centre, Melbourne

1975 Craft Centre, Melbourne

#### **GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

2017 *Sydney Contemporary, Niagara Galleries, Carriageworks, Sydney*  
*Blue Chip XIX: The Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne*

2016 *Contempottery, Mailbox Art Space, Melbourne*  
*Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Woollahra Council, Sydney*  
*Quiddity, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne*  
*OVERUNDERSIDEWAYS DOWN, Manly Art Gallery & Museum, Sydney*  
*Blue Chip XVIII: The Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne*

2015 *Benwell/Halpern, Shepparton Art Museum, Shepparton, Victoria*  
*group show, Chapter House Lane, Melbourne*  
*RMIT Ceramics Auction 2015, RMIT Ceramics, Melbourne*  
*Chapter House Lane Annual Fundraiser, Chapter House Lane, Melbourne*  
*Blue Chip XVII: The Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne*  
*DADA Lives!, Hatch Contemporary Arts Space, Ivanhoe, Victoria*

2014 *(small) GEMS, Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney NSW*  
*Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne*  
*Blue Chip XVI: The Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne*  
*The Gathering II, Wangaratta Art Gallery, Victoria*  
*Important exhibition of Australian Ceramics, a tribute to Janet Mansfield Oam (1934-2013), Mossgreen Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria*  
*Australia-Korea Invitational Ceramic Exhibition, Hanyang University Museum, Seoul, South Korea*

2013 *Melbourne Now, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne*  
*Diorama, Wollongong City Gallery, New South Wales*  
*Tenements of Wonder, Greenwood Street Project, Melbourne*

2012 *Subversive Clay, 2012 Australian Ceramics Triennale, Light Square Gallery, Adelaide*  
*Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne*  
*Smash Hits: '80s and '90s ceramic from the Collection, Shepparton Art Museum, Victoria*  
*Blue Chip XIV: The Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne*

2011 *Blue Chip XIII: The Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne*

2010 *Muster: A Round Up of Works from the Stockroom, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne*  
*Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award Finalists' Exhibition, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria*  
*Hobart Art Prize Finalist Exhibition, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart*  
*Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne*  
*Fletcher Jones Art Prize Finalists' Exhibition, Geelong Gallery, Victoria*  
*Bravura: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australian Craft, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide*

2009 *Deakin University Contemporary Small Sculpture Award Finalists' Exhibition, Deakin University Art Gallery, Melbourne*  
*Auckland Art Fair, New Zealand*

2008 *Australian Ceramic Stories, Dubbo Regional Gallery, New South Wales*

- 2006 *Surface Connections*, Manningham Gallery, Victoria  
*Melbourne Art Fair*, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne  
*A Secret History of Blue and White*, Vietnam Fine Arts Museum, Hanoi and touring  
*Australian Contemporary*, SOFA, Navy Pier, Chicago  
*Australian Glass and Ceramic Artists*, Galerie Ursula Rosenhauer, Goettingen, Germany  
*Crust: Examining Artist's Approaches to Clay Surfaces*, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland and touring
- 2005 Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney
- 2004 Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney  
*Sidney Myer International Ceramic Award*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria  
*The Victorian Connection*, Ceramic Art Gallery, Sydney
- 2003 *Changing Surfaces*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Shepparton, Victoria  
*Hyper-crafting*, Faculty Gallery, Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University, Melbourne
- 2002 *Melbourne Art Fair*, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
- 2000-01 *Craft from Scratch: 8<sup>th</sup> Triennale (Australia and Germany)*, Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt; Customs House, Sydney; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
- 1999 *Drawn in Form*, Brisbane City Art Gallery, Brisbane  
*Sidney Myer International Ceramic Award*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria
- 1996 *Sidney Myer Award*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria
- 1995 *Fletcher Challenge Award*, Auckland  
*Australian Art 1940-1990*, Museum of Fine Arts, GIFU  
*Delinquent Angel*, Muso Internazionale delle Cermiche, Faenza, Italy  
*Sidney Myer Award*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria
- 1994 *The Art of the Object*, Craft Australia, Sydney  
*The Rigg Award*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
*Sidney Myer Award*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria
- 1993 *Sidney Myer Award*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria
- 1992 *The National Craft Award*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
*The Ninth R.M Ansett Art Award*, Hamilton Art Gallery, Tasmania  
*The Market, Kitsch and Cultural Production*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne  
*Sidney Myer Award*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria
- 1991 *The Woven Language*, Victorian Tapestry Workshop, Melbourne
- 1990 *Stephen Benwell and David Potter: Survey Exhibition*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 1989 *Creating Australia*, Queensland Art Gallery and touring nationally  
*Perth Crafts Triennial*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth  
*Australian Decorative Arts 1985-1988*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
- 1987 *Ceramic Showpieces from the Permanent Collection*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria
- 1985 *Quatre Artistes Australiens*, Australian Embassy, Paris
- 1984 *Australian Decorative Arts: The Past Ten Years*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
*Mayfair Ceramic Award*, Meat Market Craft Centre, Melbourne
- 1982 *Fletcher Brownbuilt Pottery Award*, Auckland  
*Canberra Festival Craft Prize*, Griffin Gallery, Canberra
- 1980 *Recent Ceramics: An Exhibition from Australia*, touring Great Britain and Europe  
*Third Mayfair Ceramic Award*, Meat Market Craft Centre, Melbourne
- 1978 *Australian Clay*, Canada, U.S.A  
*Second Mayfair Ceramic Award*, Meat Market Craft Centre, Melbourne
- 1977 *35<sup>th</sup> Concorso Internazionale Delle Ceramiche D'Arte*, Faenza, Italy
- 1976 *Wood and Clay*, Australia and New Zealand
- 1975 *Craft Victoria '75*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

#### **AWARDS / COMMISSIONS**

- 2010 Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award, Shepparton Art Gallery
- 2009 Deakin University Contemporary Small Sculpture Award, Deakin University Art Gallery

2009 Australia Council Visual Arts Board New Work Grant  
 2003-2007 Monash Graduate Scholarship  
 1999 Friends of Shepparton Art Gallery Award, Shepparton Art Gallery  
 1998 Australia Council Grant  
 1996 Sidney Myer Award, Shepparton Art Gallery  
 1995 Bathurst Art Purchase Award  
 Sidney Myer Award, Shepparton Art Gallery  
 1994 Sidney Myer Award, Shepparton Art Gallery  
 1993 Fellowship Award, Australia Council  
 1992 Sidney Myer Award, Shepparton Art Gallery  
 1990 Gold Coast City Art Gallery Art Award  
 1989 Victorian Tapestry Workshop commission  
 1988 Melbourne City Council commission  
 St Kilda Art Acquisition Award  
 1987 Box Hill Art Award  
 Australia Council Grant  
 1984 Australia Council Grant  
 1983 Australia Council Grant  
 1982 Australian National Gallery commission  
 1981 Diamond Valley Art Award  
 Canberra Festival Craft Prize  
 1980 Australia Council Grant  
 Mayfair Ceramic Award  
 1976 Australia Council Grant

#### **ARTIST'S TALKS**

2016 RMIT, *How I got my start: Mme du Pompadour and other anecdotes*, Melbourne  
 2013 Heide Museum of Modern Art, for *Stephen Benwell: Beauty, Anarchy, Desire - A Retrospective*, Melbourne  
 Wollongong City Gallery, for *Diorama*, Victoria  
 2010 Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award Master Class, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria  
 27<sup>th</sup> Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award

#### **COLLECTIONS**

Artbank, Sydney  
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide  
 Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth  
 Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Victoria  
 Box Hill City Council, Melbourne  
 City Art Institute, Sydney  
 Geelong Art Gallery, Victoria  
 Latrobe Regional Art Gallery, Victoria  
 Melbourne University, Victoria  
 Melbourne State College, Victoria  
 Monash Medical Centre, Melbourne  
 National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
 Newcastle City Art Gallery, New South Wales  
 Phillip Morris Collection, Sydney  
 Parliament House, Canberra  
 Powerhouse Museum, Sydney  
 Queen Victoria Hospital, Melbourne  
 Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania  
 Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane  
 Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane

Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria  
St Kilda City Council, Melbourne  
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London  
Victorian Ministry of the Arts, Melbourne

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### BOOKS/CATALOGUES

- Red Sails: recent ceramics, paintings and bronzes*, exhibition catalogue, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne 2017
- Blue Chip XIX: The Collectors' Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2017
- Blue Chip XVIII: The Collectors' Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2016
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- Blue Chip XVII: The Collectors' Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2015
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- Important exhibition of Australian Ceramics, a tribute to Janet Mansfield Oam (1934-2013)*, exhibition catalogue, Mossgreen Gallery, Melbourne, 2014
- Max Delany, Fleur Watson et al., *Melbourne Now*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Victoria, 2013
- Melbourne Now Exhibition Guide*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Victoria, 2013
- Jason Smith, *Stephen Benwell: Beauty, Anarchy, Desire – A Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2013
- Diorama*, exhibition catalogue, Wollongong Art Gallery, NSW, 2013
- Janne Faulkner & Harley Anstee, *Using Australian Colour*, Hardie Grant Books, 2013
- Blue Chip XIV: The Collectors' Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2012
- Blue Chip XIII: The Collectors' Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2011
- Danny Lacy, 'Stephen Benwell: The Significance of Rubble', *2010 Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award*, exhibition catalogue, Shepparton Art Gallery, 2010
- Kim Dickey, 'Landscapes of Still Life', *2010 Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award*, exhibition catalogue, Shepparton Art Gallery, 2010
- Stephen Benwell: New Ceramics*, exhibition catalogue, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2010
- Dr. Julia Jones, 'Australian Ceramic Stories', *Australian Ceramic Stories*, exhibition catalogue, Dubbo Regional Gallery, NSW, 2008
- Luke Morgan, 'Sighing over ruins: Stephen Benwell', *Stephen Benwell Recent Works*, exhibition catalogue, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2007
- Craft from Scratch: 8<sup>th</sup> Triennale (Australia and Germany)*, Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt, 2000
- Christopher Menz, *Australian Decorative Arts: 1820s–1990s*, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1997
- Stephen Rainbird, 'Selected Australian Works', *Queensland University of Technology Art Collection*, 1995
- Grace Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia: A History*, NSW University Press, Sydney, 1992
- Peter Timms, 'Revealing and Concealing', *Stephen Benwell and David Potter: Survey Exhibition*, Shepparton Art Gallery, 1989
- Daniel Thomas ed., *Creating Australia 200 Years of Art: 1788 – 1988*, International Cultural Corporation of Australia, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988
- John McPhee, *Australian Decorative Arts in the Australian National Gallery*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1982

### ARTICLES/REVIEWS

'OVERUNDERSIDEWAYS DOWN', *The Journal of Australian Ceramics*, vol. 55, no. 1, April 2016

*Sydney Contemporary: Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, Vault*, no. 11, 2015, p. 61  
Kimberley Chandler, 'Stephen Benwell: Beauty, Anarchy, Desire – A Retrospective'. *Ceramics: Art and Perception*, no. 98, 2014, pp. 94-97  
Robert Nelson, 'Lumps of clay shaped into the past', *The Age*, 11 September 2013  
Sonia Harford, 'Potted history of one who broke the mould', *The Age*, August 9 2013  
Owen Craven, 'Stephen Benwell – Beauty Anarchy Desire: A Retrospective', *Art Almanac*, August, 2013  
Ruth Learner, *Stephen Benwell: ceramicist*, *Australian Art Review*, Issue 35, Sept-Oct 2012  
John McPhee, 'Collection: Recent Works by Stephen Benwell', *Artist Profile*, Issue 13, 2010  
Robert Nelson, 'The dated and discredited brought back with a twist', *The Age*, 28 March 2010  
Margot Osborne, 'Bravura: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australian Craft', *Art Monthly Australia*, Issue 227, March 2010  
John McPhee, 'Ceramic beefcake and other desires: The art of Stephen Benwell', *Art & Australia*, Volume 47, Spring 2009  
Courtney Kidd, 'A disciplined eye', *Australian Art Collector*, Issue 47, January – March 2009  
Megan Backhouse, 'Art around the galleries: Stephen Benwell', *The Age A2*, 17 November 2007  
Stephen Bowers, 'Essay and artist profiles – Stephen Benwell', *A secret history of blue and white – contemporary Australian ceramics*, Asialink Centre of The University of Melbourne and Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Design, 2006  
Robert Nelson, 'Arcadia all on the surface', *The Age*, 6 July 2005  
Roger Taylor, 'The dynamic of the vessel', *World Sculpture News*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Summer 2002  
Barbara Wels, 'Stephen Benwell – Niagara Galleries', *Craft*, Vol. 32 No. 241, 2001  
Bronwyn Watson, 'Deutsche mark', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 May 2001, p. 8  
Chris Sanders, 'Stephen Benwell – within the tradition of vessel making', *Ceramic Art and Perception*, No. 27, 1997  
Chris Sanders, 'Stephen Benwell', *Pottery in Australia*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1995  
Alec Selenitsch, 'Stephen Benwell – recent ceramics', *Craft Victoria*, Spring, 1994  
Joe Pascoe, 'Stephen Benwell – castle and shrines', *Ceramic Art and Perception*, No. 14, 1994  
Gudrun Klix, 'The art of the object', *Craft Australia*, 1994