

NIAGARA

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STEPHEN BENWELL

Born in Melbourne in 1953, Stephen Benwell is amongst Australia's most distinguished ceramicists and was honoured 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

- 2019 *ceramics and paintings*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 2018 *Little Heroes: Paintings and Ceramics by Stephen Benwell*, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
Exhibition, Niagara Galleries, Stephen Benwell's Studio, St Kilda
- 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

1991 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

2019 National Treasures: Contemporary Ceramics, The Vivian, Matakana, New Zealand
Blue Chip XXI: The Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne

2018 *All our relations*, Arts Project Australia, Melbourne
Chaos & Order - 120 years of collecting at RMIT, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne

2017 *The Unflinching Glaze*, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales
Sydney Contemporary, Niagara Galleries, Carriageworks, Sydney
Blue Chip XIX: The Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
Recent Acquisitions: Port Phillip City Collection 2015-2016, The Gallery, St Kilda Town Hall, 30 November 2016 - 11 January 2017

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
- 2009 *Bravura: 21st Century Australian Craft*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
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 *Craft from Scratch: 8th 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

- 1982 *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 *35th 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
 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
 27th 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

Blue Chip XXI: The Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2019
Recent Acquisitions: Port Phillip City Collection 2015-2016, exhibition catalogue, The Gallery, St Kilda Town Hall, 2016, pp.14-15
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Australian-Korea Invitational Ceramic Exhibition, exhibition catalogue, Hanyang University Museum, South Korea, 2014
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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: 8th 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: 21st 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