



ANCIENT & MODERN

POTTERY FROM CIRCA 2000 B.C. TO 2000 A.D.



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4-8 DECEMBER 2023
MONDAY – FRIDAY 10 AM – 6 PM
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OLIVER | BRENDAN
FORGE | LYNCH

with the ceramic artist

NICHOLAS RENA





BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

“Nicholas Rena is the most ambitious sculptor using ceramics at present in the UK. He’s developed a language of symbolic vessels which he brings together in small installations of great power”

EDMUND DE WAAL OBE

Born in 1963, Nicholas Rena was educated at Eton College where he studied art under the ceramicist, Gordon Baldwin. Following a degree in architecture at Cambridge University he completed an MA at The Royal College of Art in London.

His work consists of thick earthenware oversize vessel forms with precise, smooth, highly polished finishes. The body is

often deeply stained with colour, sometimes creating violently contrasting interiors and exteriors to the vessels and each piece is finished by sanding and polishing, often to resemble stone. The size and understated simplicity create a monumental effect.

Rena was nominated for the Jerwood Applied Art Prize in Ceramics in 2001. He has had over twenty exhibitions internationally as well as at the Holburne Museum, Bath, the Soane Museum and the National Museum of Scotland and his work can be seen in many permanent public collections including the Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris; the Musée de Louvre, Paris; the V&A Museum, London and the Carnegie institute, Pittsburgh.

FOREWORD

When I was training as an architect, and then later with ceramics, I produced work that was abstract; I used to find these buildings and the forms I designed interesting and even exciting. However it was only when I at last found the seclusion of my first studio that I calmed down, so to speak, and found something instead that wasn’t simply interesting: in that studio I re-discovered an older love, one that rooted me back in time – the language of the vessel. Simple propositions such as scale and interiority and even generosity, these suddenly acquired a meaning that was richer for me than the purely abstract. I felt for the first time the thrill of a career opening up ahead of me.

If people look at my work and on occasion ask that funny question ‘but what does it mean?’ then I might talk of conviviality, and how ceramics evokes the pleasures of company; but that is only one part of it. These jugs and bowls are also a way of thinking about being alive in the first place, the strange wonderment in which our senses and our intelligence come together in a continuous stream – vibrantly or softly –

but always in a unified manner. Experience now has become altogether too fragmented but our sense of being alive is by contrast quite pure and simple, in the way it all coheres. Force of colour and of silhouette, both kept as palpable and true as in my own experience, this is the foundation of the pieces here at Forge and Lynch.

In her poem ‘Lost Birds’ Emily Dickinson famously writes that ‘hope is the thing with feathers.’ Perhaps for artists ‘colour is the thing with feathers’. That is what I realised in my early years. I was seduced by artists as different as Anthony Caro, Mark Rothko and Bridget Riley, at a time when culture itself seemed to revel in colour. When a piece of mine comes out of the kiln it is white; at that stage the work looking like an overcast sky; only when I start layering the piece with colour does my heart quicken a little, and I think yes, there’s hope here. Colour is the thing with feathers.

NR



1. **RED POTTERY FOOTED BOWL WITH
BLACK PAINTED DECORATION**
IRANIAN, THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.

Height 30 cm.; diameter 31 cm.

PROVENANCE
Art market, London, 1980-2023



2. **MEDICI
RED BOWL**

Height 30 cm.; diameter 47 cm.



3. **PAINTED POTTERY JAR**
IRANIAN, CIRCA 3500-3000 B.C.

Height 35 cm.; diameter 38 cm.

PROVENANCE
Mahboubian Gallery, London, prior to 1974



4. **NOT SO LONG AGO**
ORANGE BOWL

Height 25 cm.; diameter 53 cm.



5. **RED POLISHED WARE POTTERY JAR**
EGYPTIAN, PREDYNASTIC PERIOD, NAQADA II - III
CIRCA 3650–3100 BC

Height 23.6 cm.

PROVENANCE

Dr Ludwig Burchard (1886-1960): Christie's, London,
20 October 1999, lot 9
Charles Ede Limited, London, 2000
UK private collection



6. **BLACK-TOPPED POTTERY JAR**
EGYPTIAN, PREDYNASTIC PERIOD,
CIRCA 3200-3000 B.C.

Height 17.5 cm.

PROVENANCE

Excavated near Abusir by J.E. Quibell (1867-1935), circa 1910
Acquired by A.M. Lithgoe (1868-1934) and H.W. Kent (1866-1948)
from the Egyptian Museum, Cairo for the Metropolitan Museum
of Art
Deaccessioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, before 1960
Art market, New Jersey: Sotheby's, New York, 30 May 1986, lot 56
Lord McAlpine of West Green (1942-2014)
Private collection, England, 1989-2023



7. **TERRACOTTA ROSSA WITH
COPPER INSCRIPTION**

Height 40cm.



8. **BLACK-GLAZED POTTERY OINOCHOE (TYPE VI)**
APULIAN, FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

Height 11 cm.

PROVENANCE

Acquired from David Cahn, Basel, 1998
Ingeborg Dénes-Muhr, 1998-2017
Private collection, Zurich, 2017-23



9. **BLACK-GLAZED POTTERY OINOCHOE**
APULIAN, FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

Height 20 cm.

PROVENANCE

Acquired from David Cahn, Basel, 1997
Ingeborg Dénes-Muhr, 1997-2017
Private collection, Zurich, 2017-23



10. **BLACK-GLAZED POTTERY OINOCHOE**
APULIAN, CIRCA 400 B.C.

Height 22 cm.

PROVENANCE

Art market, London, 1980s
Sir Claude Hankes, Oxfordshire
Dr J. Robert Guy (1949-2020), mid-1980s-2005
Private collection, Zurich, 2005-23



11. **MEDITERRANEAN**
SOFT BLUE JUG FORM

Height 54 cm.



12. **BLACK-GLAZED POTTERY MUG**
APULIAN, FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

Height 9.2 cm.

PROVENANCE

Acquired from David Cahn, Basel, 1999
Private collection, Zurich, 1999-2023



13. **BLACK-GLAZED POTTERY SKYPHOS**
OF CORINTHIAN TYPE
ATTIC, CIRCA 450 B.C.

Width 13.5 cm.

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Baden-Wurttemberg, circa 1960s-70s:
Cahn auction, 1 September 2006, no. 257
Private collection, Zurich, 2006-23



14. **BLACK-GLAZED POTTERY**
STEMLESS KYLIX
ATTIC, CIRCA 530-510 B.C.

Width 18 cm.

PROVENANCE

Ernest Langlotz (1895-1978), Bonn
Robert Langlotz, Germany, 1978-2015

15. **I'LL RISE TO YOU**
GREEN JUG FORM, GREY INTERIOR

Height 88 cm.





16. CYLINDRICAL POTTERY VASE
EGYPTIAN, EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD,
CIRCA 2600-2500 B.C.

Height 23 cm.

PROVENANCE
J.H.H. Claessen (1926-2006), Netherlands



17. AS THE DEW RISES
GREEN JUG FORM, PINK INTERIOR

Height 88 cm.



18. **BLACK-FIGURE POTTERY CHALICE**
ETRUSCAN, (SO-CALLED “PONTIC”), ATTRIBUTED TO
A FOLLOWER OF THE PARIS PAINTER, PERHAPS THE
PAINTER OF BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE 178
CIRCA 520-510 B.C.

Height 16 cm.

PROVENANCE

Jürgen Haering, Galerie am Museum, Freiburg, 1986
Dr and Mrs Louk van Roozendaal, Holland, 1986-2018
Private collection, London, 2018-2023

EXHIBITED

Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam, 28 October 1989-25
February 1990

PUBLISHED

H.A.G. Brijder, J. Beelen, L.B. van der Meer, *de Etrusken*, The
Hague, 1989, p. 149, with fig. 142



19. **POTTERY PYXIS AND COVER**
ATTIC, LATE GEOMETRIC PERIOD, CIRCA 750-740 B.C.

Diameter 15 cm.

PROVENANCE

Jean-Pierre Schindler, Bern (1909-82): Münzen und Medaillen AG,
Basel, Auktion 4, 2 December 1983, no. 4
Dr and Mrs Louk van Roozendaal, Holland, 1983-2018



20. **LARGE POTTERY AMPHORA**
CYPRIOT, CIRCA 700-650 B.C.

Height 65.5 cm.

PROVENANCE
Private collection, UK, 1960-2020



21. **EARLY MORNING RAIN**
CLASSIC FORM

Height 35 cm.; diameter 47 cm.



22. **IMPASTO-WARE POTTERY URN**
VILLANOVAN, EIGHTH CENTURY B.C.

Height 15.2 cm.

PROVENANCE

Art market, London: Christie's, London, 20 October 1999, lot 164
David and Corina Silich, Switzerland, 1999-2023



23. **LARGE POTTERY TRANSPORT AMPHORA**
ROMAN, FIRST-SECOND CENTURY A.D.

Diameter 60 cm.

PROVENANCE

Anonymous collection, UK: Outhwaite & Litherland, Liverpool,
9 June 1976, lot 116
Private collection, UK, 1976-2019

Bespoke stand by Goodalls of Manchester, dated 4 June 1923



24. **LACONIAN BLACK-GLAZED POTTERY**
STIRRUP KRATER
GREEK, CIRCA SECOND HALF OF SIXTH CENTURY B.C.

Height 33.5 cm.; width 37.5 cm.

PROVENANCE
Coins & Antiquities Ltd., London, 22 April 1980



25. **PINE**
DEEP GREEN BOWL

Height 30 cm.; diameter 47 cm.

26. **PAINTED POTTERY JAR WITH
STYLISTED IBEXES**
IRANIAN, CIRCA 3000 B.C.

Height 60 cm.; diameter 46 cm.

PROVENANCE

Mahboubian Gallery, London, 1974; Christie's,
London, 2 May 2013, lot 27

PUBLISHED

The Burlington Magazine, December 1974, pl. 1





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INSIDE FRONT COVER: Detail no. 23
INSIDE BACK COVER: no. 2
BACK COVER: Detail no. 26

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