

5 Paul Cummins, Tom Piper – *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, poppy installation, Tower of London, 2014 (Photo: Richard Lea-Hair and Historic Royal Palaces) 6 Bouke de Vries – *War and Pieces*, ceramic, loose fragments, resin, brass, plastic assemblage, 2012, H115cm. Installation view, 2014 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale. Courtesy Yingge Ceramics Museum

Note 1 [www.studiopottery.co.uk/profile/Peter Ilsley](http://www.studiopottery.co.uk/profile/Peter%20Ilsley), accessed 26 August 2014

2014 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale ran 2 March – 2 October 2014

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### BLOOD SWEPT LANDS & SEAS OF RED

Visit the growing installation of handmade ceramic poppies at the Tower London, *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, until 11 November 2014. The work, which will fill the Tower's moat with 888,246 poppies by the end, marks 100 years since the start of the first world war.

### POTTERS' NEWS

**Marcus Cornish** was commissioned by Watts Gallery Trust to create terracotta roundels of Watts Gallery founders GF and Mary Watts, to mark the recent (2011) restoration of the Gallery. The roundels are now installed on the front of the Gallery.

**Susan Phillips** won the Gold Medal for Craft and Design at this year's *National Eisteddfod of Wales*.

**Taz Pollard** won a *New Designers One Year On Award at New Designers 2014*.

**David Roberts** in collaboration with Officine Saffi, Milan, was invited to present a workshop during the biennial ceramics event *Argilla Italia*, Faenza, Italy, 5-7 September 2014. Roberts was also invited to chair the jury of the international raku competition, *EUraku*, at the festival.

**Clare Twomey** has been appointed a Crafts Council Trustee.

### OBITUARIES

**Peter Ilsley**, potter and member of the Craft Potters Association (CPA), died in August 2014. Born in 1932, Ilsley began working with ceramics in 1963. In 1989 he 'made a total commitment to crystalline glazes'<sup>1</sup> and he authored *Macro-Crystalline Glazes: The Challenge of Crystals*, published in 1999.

**Pansy Henry**, known as Pan, died in August 2014. Born in 1920, Henry was the manager of the CPA's first shop, which opened in 1960. It moved in 1967 with Henry continuing as manager until 1972. She later set up her own gallery, Casson Gallery, which she ran until 1988.

**Michael Palmer**, potter, died in July 2014. Born in 1959, Palmer discovered ceramics during his time at Cleveland College of Art in the 1970s. He also met future business partner Andrew Harding there. In 1987 they, along with Matt Jobling, established Northumbrian Craft Pottery. It was with Harding at Northumbrian Craft Pottery that Palmer continued potting until his death. CR

## CURATORIAL DELIGHT

MOIRA VINCENTELLI REFLECTS ON THE TAIWAN CERAMICS BIENNALE CURATED BY WENDY GERS FOR 2014.

Yingge Ceramics Museum in New Taipei City, Taiwan; is only fourteen years old but has established itself as one of the major players in the field of contemporary ceramics. Like a number of places in China or indeed like Kecskemét in Hungary, it is developing an instant international collection through its programme of artist residencies – at least half of whom are from outside Taiwan. At another level it nurtures the local community with one floor of the museum dedicated to the history of ceramics in Taiwan. There are displays of the indigenous women's tradition that still survives through to the local ceramic industry of mass production with a train-load of raffia-tied bowls crossing the gallery and an imaginative display of toilets and basins piled up to the ceiling. The extensive park with sculpture, water games, kilns, and bread ovens where people come to buy bread on Saturdays attests to its community commitment along with a strong local education programme.

Between May and October every year a major international exhibition takes place alternating between a straight competition and the more innovative concept of a curatorial competition. With the latter, curators are invited to develop a proposal and thus create a significant individual statement. The winner of the competition for the 2014 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale, Wendy Gers, brought a unique approach to her selection. As a South African writer and curator who now lives in France she is able to straddle difference in creating a show that ranged from work by contemporary Zulu makers through to the hi-tech of digital innovation and 3D printing. Her programme pushed the boundaries of current ceramic

practice at both ends. The show exhibited work by a number of South African artists – Andri Dyalvane, who also had a residency, makes handbuilt vessels with decoration derived from scarification patterns while Eugene Hon showed a complex digital piece based on a Chinese dragon. The exhibition challenged convention classification. The transformation of the black smoke-fired beer pot or *ukhamba* into prize-winning artwork was a process that took place in the late twentieth century but, outside of South Africa, it is rarely shown alongside contemporary work. A line of Zulu *ukhambas* were shown with another group of non-Zulu South African makers who make work in response to that form. One of the inspired aspects of the 'hang' was the way the work of the Japanese artist Igarashi Hitomi was shown in relation to the Zulu pots. Hitomi's elegant white sculptures based on the geometrical complexities of origami were displayed on a table in the centre of the room looking across to the burnished black beer pots.

That contrast of black and white was also important in the impact of one of the largest works in the exhibition. Inspired by grand seventeenth- and eighteenth-century banquets with table sculptures in sugar and later in porcelain, Bouke de Vries' *War and Pieces* is a dramatic long table installation punctuated by groups made from recycled pieces of broken *blanc de chine* porcelain combined in places with little plastic toy parts of cyborg soldiers. This was first shown at the Holburne Museum, Bath, where it was seen on a long table in the context of an eighteenth-century interior. In Taiwan the white porcelain groups emerge from a huge trough of darkened water with the centrepiece rising in the shape of an atom bomb cloud. A comment on the human condition, on modern warfare, a play on words, and a game of recycling – it formed a magnificent and provocative statement and was undoubtedly one of the triumphs of the show. CR

