

## Annual Members' Conference 'The Making of Things'

Friday 18 February, 10:00-16:30 (17:30-19:00, evening reception at Ceri Hand Gallery)  
Victoria Gallery and Museum, Liverpool University, University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 3BX

We are delighted that such a range of curators and artists have agreed to contribute to our National Network Annual Conference 2011. The ornate interior of the Victoria Art Gallery & Museum, designed by architect Alfred Waterhouse whose other buildings include the Natural History Museum and Manchester Town Hall, could not be a more perfect place to hold this event.

**How are collections of applied art and craft framed within the context of the museum collection?**

This Conference will raise a number of issues relating to craft and applied art with a focus on dynamic use of collections, collection development, exhibition making and the concerns of the artist.

The National Network is a membership programme for art professional who are working with collections of contemporary art or who have a particular interest in public collections in this country. The programme offers seminars, skills days, events, national and international trips and now an Annual Conference. It is the only UK wide programme that focuses on the many issues that lie at the heart of our work in growing, sustaining and using public collections of contemporary art.

## Timetable for the day:

- 10:00 Registration
- 11:00 Introduction by **Lucy Byatt**, Head of National Programmes, Contemporary Art Society
- 11.15 Film of **Professor Jyotindra Jain**
- It is unfortunate but due to ill health Professor Jyotindra Jain has not been able to travel. Instead we will screen an in-depth filmed interview that Lucy Byatt was able to do with Professor Jain specifically for this conference, when she was in Delhi earlier in February. In the film Professor Jain gives a wonderful overview of his research. Grant Watson, who has worked closely with Professor Jain in recent years, will be able to expand and answer questions from delegates.
- 12:00 Panel 1 – Chaired by Grant Watson:  
**Grant Watson** - Senior Curator and Research Associate, Iniva, where he coordinates Iniva's research programme and publications, and is also involved with exhibitions.
- Divia Patel**, Curator, Asian Department, and V&A will talk about the exhibition she is working on that highlights Contemporary Indian Design: *Exploring the Handmade*
- Eleanor Bradshaw** - As Inspire Fellow at the British Museum Eleanor will talk about the scope of her fellowship and the development of the exhibition she is working on with Grayson Perry, who is selecting works from the collection for an upcoming exhibition about the role of the craftsman.
- 12.45 Questions to the panel
- 13.00-14:15 Lunch and preview of the National Network website  
We are about to launch our new website for the National Network. Over lunch Robert Dingle, Curatorial Fellow at Contemporary Art Society, will be previewing the website and addressing delegates questions
- 14.15 Talk - **Glenn Adamson**, Deputy Head of Research and Head of Graduate Studies at the Victoria and Albert Museum. In his talk *The Invention of Craft*, Glenn will examine production as a framework for invention, arguing for a self-aware attitude to making in which form, metaphor and ethics are fully integrated.
- 15.00 Panel 2 – Chaired by Andrew Renton  
**Andrew Renton** is Head of Applied Arts, National Museums Wales Cardiff, a multidisciplinary museum housing collections of art, archaeology, geology and natural history.
- Neil Brownsword** is an artist, senior lecturer and researcher at Buckinghamshire New University. His talk *Tracing Labour: Creative Responses to the Hidden Histories of Ceramic Manufacture*, will contextualise key phases of his practice that explore an on-going preoccupation with the museum collection as a source for artistic response.
- Fiona Jardine** an artist and writer, her contribution to the conference, *Taxonomies and Studio Pottery* emerges from the research that she has undertaken towards her exhibition *Troglodytes: Portraits & Pottery from the Paisley Museum Collection* (11 February - 3 April 2011), commissioned as part of the Contemporary Art Society's Centenary Programme.
- David Cushway** is an artist whose practise is centered on a fascination with clay. His talk will focus on the impact that two residencies have had on his practise at the The European Ceramics Work Centre, Holland in 2005 and the Philadelphia Clay Studio, U.S.A
- 15.45 Questions to the panel
- 16.15 Round up for the day
- 16.30 Close
- 17.30-19.00 Reception at Ceri Hand Gallery (please sign up at the beginning of the day if you would like to join us on the coach to Ceri Hand Gallery)

## Biographies:

### Divia Patel

**Abstract:** *Contemporary Indian Design at the V&A: Exploring the Handmade*

Scheduled for September 2012 this exhibition will showcase contemporary fashion, interiors, furniture, architecture and much more. This presentation will focus on one of the key themes of this exhibition: the way in which designers interact with artisan communities across India to create products for a contemporary market and the issues arising from this type of production.

**Biography:** Divia Patel is a curator in the Asian Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Her areas of expertise include contemporary art and popular culture from South Asia, 19th century photography of India and 19th century paintings of Ajanta. She recently co-curated Indian Life and Landscape, an exhibition of paintings by western artists in India from the 17th -20th centuries, which toured extensively in India. She also curated The Photographers' Pilgrimage: Exploring Buddhist Sites, and the award winning, internationally touring exhibition, Cinema India: The Art of Bollywood. Her current research is focused on contemporary design in India. Her publications include Cinema India: The Visual Culture of the Hindi Film, Reaktion Press, 2002, and numerous articles on photography, contemporary art and the paintings of Ajanta.

**Grant Watson** – Senior Curator and Research Associate, Iniva, where he coordinates Iniva's research programme and publications, and is also involved with exhibitions. Until April 2010 he was Projects Curator at MuHKA, Antwerp, where he was involved in curating exhibitions and artist projects at the museum including the *Santhal Family positions around an Indian sculpture* and *Cornelius Cardew*.

**Eleanor Bradshaw** is currently a curator of contemporary collections at the British Museum. Eleanor has curated a range of exhibitions and is active in promoting contemporary acquisitions within museum based institutions.

Her interests in the visual arts began with a BA Hons in Conservation from Camberwell College of Art and lead to Eleanor taking a place on the MA in Curation of Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art. Her placement at the British Museum has allowed her to co-curate the exhibition *Impressions of Africa*, dealing with shifts in national and cultural identity of African nations post-independence. She is currently working on a small retrospective of the now controversial British sculptor and type designer Eric Gill, dealing with the interpretation difficulties of some sensitive themes. She is also currently working towards a high profile Grayson Perry commission, to open at the museum in 2011.

Alongside active participation in exhibitions within the museum, Eleanor has also been heavily involved in the World Collections Program in Uganda. Through this work, she was helped initiated a skill exchange between nations and institutions and is very much looking forward to continuing this vein of work.

### Glenn Adamson

**Abstract:** *The Invention of Craft*

When historians of art and design look back at the early 21st century, a period of unprecedented stylistic and conceptual pluralism, they may well conclude that it was the fabrication of works (rather than their content) that really mattered. In this lecture, Glenn Adamson will examine production as a framework for invention, arguing for a self-aware attitude to making in which form, metaphor and ethics are fully integrated. The talk is organized around terminology such as 'the cutting edge', friction, and tension. Such terms have their roots in the physicality of craft, but can also be radically expanded into a critical account of contemporary authorship and labour.

**Glenn Adamson** is Deputy Head of Research and Head of Graduate Studies at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where he leads a graduate program in the History of Design. Dr. Adamson is co-editor of the triannual Journal of Modern Craft, and the author of Thinking Through Craft (Berg Publishers/V&A Publications) and The Craft Reader (Berg, 2010). He also publishes criticism in publications such as Art In America, American Craft, and Crafts Magazine. His other publications include Industrial Strength Design: How Brooks Stevens Shaped Your World (MIT Press); and a contribution to Unto This Last (Raven Row). Presently he is working on an exhibition about Postmodernism, to be held at the V&A in 2011.

## Fiona Jardine

**Abstract:** *Taxonomies and Studio Pottery: CAS Centenary Exhibition at Paisley Museum and Art Gallery*

**Biography:** Fiona Jardine graduated in Drawing and Painting from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Dundee before completing an MFA at Glasgow School of Art in 2003. She returned to Duncan of Jordanstone between 2007 and 2009 to teach on the Textile Design Honours course and is currently undertaking a PhD in the Art, Critique and Social Practice research group at the University of Wolverhampton.

**Andrew Renton** is Head of Applied Art at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. Since 1999, he has emphasised the development of the Museum's collection of contemporary applied art in parallel with research into and acquisitions for the full range of post-mediaeval applied art collections. In recent years he has curated exhibitions at the National Museum in Cardiff in collaboration with Edmund de Waal and Elizabeth Fritsch, and will speak about the importance of working with artists and using collections creatively as part of an active acquisition strategy.

## Neil Brownsword

**Abstract:** *Tracing Labour: Creative Responses to the Hidden Histories of Ceramic Manufacture*

For over a decade, Neil Brownsword's work has been a sustained meditation on the decline of British ceramic manufacture in his home town of Stoke-on-Trent. Assuming the role of artist/archaeologist, Brownsword unearths/ salvages by-products from the histories ceramic production and regenerates these vestiges of labour into poetic assemblages and installations. Through its metaphoric exploration of fragmentation and the discarded, his work cites the inevitable effects of global capitalism which continue to disrupt a heritage economy rooted in North Staffordshire for nearly five centuries.

In this talk Brownsword will contextualise key phases of his practice that explore an on-going preoccupation with the museum collection as a source for artistic response. It will elucidate the innovative range of strategies he employs associated with histories of ceramic production, to highlight a rapidly disappearing culture of skills and knowledge as industry is displaced to East Asia.

**Biography:** Neil Brownsword is an artist, senior lecturer and researcher at Buckinghamshire New University. His PhD thesis (completed in 2006) combined historical and archaeological research on ceramic production in North Staffordshire from the eighteenth century to the present; the film archiving of craft skills in the industry today; and the creation of a body of artwork in response to this research.

Since graduating from the Royal College of Art in 1995, Brownsword's work has gained both national and international acclaim, and is positioned at the forefront of experimental ceramic practice in Great Britain. It resides in eminent public and private collections including the Victoria & Albert Museum, London and Fu Le International Ceramic Art Museum, China. Brownsword was also winner of the One Off category during the British Ceramic Biennial in 2009.

## David Cushway

### Abstract

David Cushway is an artist whose practise is centered on a fascination with clay. His talk will focus on the impact that two residencies have had on his practise at the The European Ceramics Work Centre, Holland in 2005 and the Philadelphia Clay Studio, U.S.A

### Biography

David Cushway is an artist based in Cardiff studied at Bath Spa University and the University of Cardiff. Recent exhibitions include: Philadelphia Clay Studio, USA (2008), Work from the EKWC, Bath Spa University, Bath (2007), The European Ceramics Work Centre, Holland (2005), Primary Object, Chapter Arts Gallery, Cardiff (2003). He has work in a number of private and public collections including The National Museum of Wales and The Philadelphia Clay Studio.

His work is underpinned by a fascination with clay as a medium; for David the history of clay use is the history of humanity; it is the material that binds us to the earth that we inhabit. The constant cycle of life and death is a recurring theme within David's practice, and the use of his own body within a figurative narrative reflects this. His practice encompasses craft, film/video, sculpture and installation. Making begins with a concept and work is created in response to that, an approach that provides a counterpoint to ceramic object making.

David's work uses the most fundamental material, clay, to explore the fundamentals of the human condition. Through the use of the body and examination of the artefact, the universal is explored through the personal. His practice is often based on personal experiences and beliefs and works to communicate the collective human experience. His practice operates in the arenas between art and craft and is often a direct comment upon the difference and indeed common ground between the two.

**Post conference reception: at Ceri Hand Gallery the Director will talk about her current exhibition with artist, Doug Jones, 17.30-19.00**

Jones has constructed four rooms inspired by a British Bed and Breakfast. The rooms are a curious portrait of both the owner - a woman whose morals, desires and aspirations haunt the objects on display - and the guests who choose to fleetingly inhabit this woman's world. A jamboree of peculiar curios, photographs and home-made ornaments - from embellished, colour-coded room keys, to hand-stitched table cloths, fur coats and bedding - the rooms convey a unique personal identity and selling point for a fading business. This obsession with detail, outmoded crafts and over-use of decorative trimmings creates a bizarre safe-house for the overlooked and undervalued. A strange mix of needlepoints adorn the breakfast room walls, reflecting loss-leading labour and a fear of the ever-changing, contemporary world.