



Footed pot

Julian Stair

Not on display

Title/Description: Footed pot

Artist/Maker: Julian Stair

Born: 1982 c.

Measurements: h 12.8 x w 11.7 x d 11.7 cm

Accession Number: P.075

Copyright: © Julian Stair

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Lady Sainsbury, 2014

This porcelain footed pot, featuring *sgraffito* decoration, was created by scratching through the surface of the slip before firing, to reveal a lower layer of contrasting colour. It is representative of a short-lived theme in Julian Stair's early work from between 1981 and 1982, investigating the way light fell on pots and creating impressions of light and shadow. The form is reminiscent of Hans Coper's stoneware spade form vessels.

This was the first of the Julian Stair's works to be purchased by Lady Sainsbury. In 1982 Stair and around twelve other graduates from Camberwell had held an independent exhibition, 'Clay in the Garden' (so titled due to the exhibition's location in Covent Garden, London). The diverse show, organized on a shoe-string budget, also included works by Henry Pim, Dan Kelly, Angus Suttie and Ian Auld. [1]

The artist recalls he was in his studio one day when he received a call from Lady Sainsbury, to say she had just seen the exhibition and had purchased one of his works. So began the start of Julian Stair's relationship with the Sainsburys. They went on to help finance the set-up of his first studio in Brixton, London, with fellow ceramicist Sara Radstone, and continued to support his work. [2]

Stair describes Lady Sainsbury as an intuitive collector: 'She responded visually to materials, rather than ideas. They weren't collecting for the sake of fashion, they bought what they genuinely liked - it was about the object itself...this is why their collection has a great strength to it and continuity, an identity, an independent stance.' Stair expresses, 'The Sainsburys were fantastically important to me and other potters. There was a great generosity about them, not just through their financial support to artists, but in their spirit.' [3]

Julian Stair is one of the UK's leading ceramic artists, creating works of art on both a monumental and intimate scale. Stair has become a leading historian of English Studio Ceramics, completing a PhD at the Royal College of Art, researching the critical origins of English Studio Pottery.

Katharine Malcolm, July 2020

[1] Interview with the artist, phone call 19/06/20

[2] Cyril Frankel and James Austin, *Modern Pots* (Norwich: University of East Anglia, 2000), p.156.

[3] Interview with the artist, phone call 19/06/20

Further Reading

Frankel, Cyril, and James Austin, *Modern Pots* (Norwich: University of East Anglia, 2000), pp.156-157.

Jones, Jeffrey, *Studio Pottery In Britain 1900-2005* (London: A & C Black, 2007)

Watson, Oliver, *Studio Pottery* (London: Phaidon, in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1993)

<http://www.julianstair.com>

John M. Anderson Endowed Lecture Series: 'A Sense of Place', The Pennsylvania State University, 18 February 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTyzNba2KL4>
