



Jug

Tony Birks

Not on display

Title/Description: Jug

Artist/Maker: Tony Birks (Artist)

Born: 1974 c.

Object Type: Vessel

Materials: Ceramic

Technique: Handbuilding

Measurements: h. 220mm

Accession Number: 50724

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England

Credit Line: Accepted under the Cultural Gifts Scheme by HM Government from Leslie Birks Hay and allocated to SCVA, 2016

This hand-built jug is by ceramics writer and teacher Tony Birks. It was made at the time that Birks was teaching slab-work and writing *The Potter's Companion* (1975), a hugely popular instructional guide to making ceramics. The jug demonstrates the possibilities of using slab building to create curved sculptural forms, and as Birks says, it shows how 'pots made from sheets of clay can be exhilarating and lively'. [1] The edges of the large handle have curled during the firing process, giving it an organic quality, which is mirrored by the pin-holed yellow lichen-like surface.

Birks studied ceramics at the Central School of Arts and Crafts during the 1950s. His experience there had a lasting impact on him. Across his writing, teaching and curating from the 1960s to late 2000s, he championed ceramicists who explored new and experimental approaches to clay, many of whom were connected to the Central School including Ruth Duckworth, Hans Coper, Gordon Baldwin and Ian Auld. These ceramicists also feature in Birks' personal collection which was gifted to the Sainsbury Centre Collection in 2014.

Sim Panaser, August 2020

[1] Tony Birks, *The Potter's Companion*, New edn (London: Conran Octopus, 1993), p. 79.

Further Reading

Greenhalgh, Paul (ed.) *Encounters with Ceramic: The Writings of Tony Birks* (Sainsbury Centre, 2021)

Birks, Tony, *The Potter's Companion*, New edn (London: Conran Octopus, 1996)

Birks, Tony, *Art of the Modern Potter*, (London: Country Life Books, 1976)

Birks, Tony, Hans Coper, (London: Collins, 1983)

Birks, Tony, Lucie Rie, (London: A&C Black, 1987)
