

Teacher's Pack

Richard Deacon

Like You Know, Ceramic Works

27th November 2021-30th January 2022



Tomorrow, And Tomorrow, And Tomorrow H, 2000

“...they are so unlike anything else, but at the same time so familiar”

The New Art Centre is delighted to announce an exhibition of Richard Deacon's ceramic sculptures.

The very large, complex, inventive works that are at the heart of our exhibition [along with smaller more playful essays in porcelain] were created at Niels Dietrich's internationally reputed ceramic workshop in Cologne, where Deacon has been working regularly since the turn of the millennium. Coiled, unknowable forms are juxtaposed with angular trapezoids, all dripping with layers of glaze – with typical Deacon contrast of open structures that 'show their workings', alongside mysterious sealed forms that hint at a hidden world within.

As with the best of Deacon's sculpture, these ceramic works urge the viewer to absorb all they see, challenge the work from every angle, and interpret each purposeful yet unpredictable mark, outline, and pattern.

NAC Press Release



Tropic, 2007



Like You Know, 2002

Explore Richard Deacon's Work by LOOKING, THINKING & SPEAKING

Looking

Materials and formal elements

- What processes has Deacon used?
- Why has Deacon worked on such a large scale with such a fragile material?
- Why is there little continuity between each piece?
- What material do the artworks resemble?
- Why has Deacon used such a varied colour palette?
- Are there any formal similarities between the works? (Shape, colour, size)

Thinking

Context and Themes

- Are they ceramics or sculpture? Or are they both?
- What household items are often made from clay?
- How do the titles relate to the works themselves? (e.g. *Tomorrow, And Tomorrow, And Tomorrow H*)
- Where does clay come from and how does that relate to Deacon's work?
- Are they biomorphic forms?
- What else do they remind you of?

Speaking

Personal Opinions and Ideas

- How do the works make you feel as a viewer?
- What adjectives might you use to describe Deacon's work?
- Which of the works is your favourite / most intriguing / the one you least like / most dominant etc.? Why did you make that selection?
- If you could display them somewhere else, where would you display them?
- Do you think they work together as a group or should be displayed separately?

Facts about Richard Deacon

- Deacon was born on 15th August 1949 in Bangor, Wales.
- He studied at Somerset College of Art in Taunton 1968-9, St Martins School of Art 1969-72, and the Royal College of Art 1974-77.
- He had his first one-man show in 1978 at The Gallery, Brixton.
- Deacon has also had solo exhibitions at the Tate Gallery (London & Liverpool) and Whitechapel Gallery.
- He was one of three artists to represent Wales at the 52nd Biennale of Art in Venice.
- The artist won the Turner Prize in 1987.
- He was elected as a Royal Academician in 1998 and awarded a CBE in 1999.
- In 2005 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Leicester.
- Tate Britain did a major survey of his work in 2014.

Facts about Deacon's Ceramics

- For greater stability, grog (crushed, unglazed pottery), is added to the damp clay.
- A hole is made in the bottom of the sculpture to allow the hot air to escape.
- Prospective joins are roughened with a fork and dampened with water.
- The firing process is a week-long at 1040 °C.
- The painting begins with an all-over white glaze.
- Afterwards, Deacon drips colour on the white glaze.

Artistic Context

- British Sculptors that emerged in the 1980s: Tony Cragg, Anish Kapoor, Bill Woodrow, Richard Wentworth.
- Deacon is interested in Donald Judd's work.

Activities & Prompts:

- (@leap_then_look) Sculpt a piece of clay with your eyes closed. Try different actions like poking, pinching, twisting, squeezing, to achieve shape and form.
- Create a story or narrative for one of these objects, where has it been before arriving here?
- Working in small groups, use your bodies to create Deacon-inspired shapes and forms.
- As a group, list adjectives on post it notes that describe Deacon's work. Pull them out of a hat at random, and each sketch a design that they feel communicates that word.
- Do this 5 times before choosing your favourite to recreate as a soap carving (use a simple block of soap and tools such as spoons, lolly sticks and butter knives).

We would love to see photographs of your creations! Please tag us ([@ ilovesculpture](#)) or email edu@sculpture.uk.com.

Bibliography:

Juncosa, Enrique. 'Richard Deacon: The Shape of Utopia.' In *Richard Deacon*, Málaga: Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, 2013. Published following the exhibition *Richard Deacon* at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga in Málaga, 109-115.

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New Art Centre, *Richard Deacon: Like You Know-Ceramic Works 2000-2007*. Salisbury: New Art Centre, 2021. Published following the exhibition *Richard Deacon: Like You Know-Ceramic Works 2000-2007* at the New Art Centre in Salisbury.

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Schmid, Claudia, director. *Richard Deacon-In Between*. Germany: Bildersturm in coproduction with 3sat / WDR, 2012.