

## Alison Britton Britain b. 1948

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*'Throughout her career, Britton has remained committed to the ceramic container, exploring both its formal possibilities and its capacity to hold and communicate thoughts and ideas. Her pots are marked by ambiguity and contradiction, sitting between the sculptural and the everyday, the civilised and the wild, the real and the imagined.'*

*A work may seem to be both the representation of a pot as well as an actual one – a pot observed through the artist's eye, informed by the experience of modern painting.'*

- Alun Graves, curator, V&A Museum, London



Slipshod, 2022 and Piebald, 2022. High-fired earthenware, slips and underglaze pigments under clear matt glaze, small additions of coloured pigment/glaze

## Alison Britton Biography

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'I first contacted Alison Britton in 2014 when I was beginning my journey with Taste Contemporary. She agreed to send me work for our first artgenève exhibition. I was excited that someone of her stature wished to work with what was then, a young gallery. Since then, I'm delighted to say that she has remained part of the Taste Contemporary family.

Alison Britton is considered a pivotal figure in postmodern ceramics. Not just in Britain, but internationally. She was part of an influential group of students who came out of the Royal College of Art in the 1970s. Their radical work challenged and deconstructed notions of ceramics at that time; it was an important movement that came to be known as *The New Ceramics*. Over the decades her profile continued to rise and her work is included in numerous national museums and important private collections worldwide including the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam; the Australian National Gallery, Canberra; the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto and Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

Taste Contemporary is proud to work with Alison Britton. Her vessels wonderfully embrace awkwardness and resist classification, while also exuding authority and confidence - they are conceived and constructed by an artist at ease with her materials.'

*Monique Deul, 2020*

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### Education

1970 - 1973	Royal College of Art, London, MA Ceramics (RCA)
1967 - 1970	Central School of Art and Design, London, Dip AD (Ceramics)
1966 - 1967	Leeds College of Art, Pre-Diploma year

### Academic Career

2019	Awarded Honorary Doctorate, Royal College of Art
2005 - 2018	Research Supervisor and Coordinator for Ceramics and Glass
1998	Royal College of Art, London, Senior Tutor, Ceramics and Glass
1984 - 2018	Royal College of Art, London, part time Tutor; Ceramics and Glass

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## Selected Collections

Hepworth Wakefield Collection, England  
Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, England  
Temple Newsam, Leeds, England  
Gardiner Mus. of Ceramic Art Toronto  
Design Museum Copenhagen  
Ibaraki Museum, Japan  
Art Institute of Chicago  
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK  
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, Wales  
Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, Oslo, Norway  
The British Museum, UK  
Aberdeen Museum and Art Gallery, UK  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA  
UCW Collection, Aberystwyth, UK  
National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan  
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia  
Museum of Contemporary Ceramic Art, Shigaraki, Japan  
Australian National Gallery, Canberra, Australia  
National Museum, Stockholm, Sweden  
Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands  
The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Australia  
British Council Collection, UK  
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Contemporary Art Society, London, UK  
Ulster Museum, Belfast, Northern Ireland  
Crafts Council Collection, London, UK  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK  
Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland  
Hove Museum & Art Gallery, UK  
York City Art Gallery, UK  
Wurttembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart, Germany  
Kunst und Gewerbe Museum, Hamburg, Germany  
Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe, Germany  
Princessehoff Museum, Leeuwarden, Holland  
Kruithaus Museum, Den Bosch, Holland  
Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum, Trondheim, Norway  
Svenska Handelbanken, Stockholm, Sweden  
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Canada  
National Gallery of Victoria, Australia  
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France  
Musée de Sevres, Paris, France

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### Taste Contemporary

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**Selected Exhibitions | Solo**

- 2020** **Dialogues, Taste Contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland**  
*Heat-Work*, Corvi-Mora Gallery, London, England
- 2018 *Making it Up*, Marsden Woo Gallery, London, UK
- 2017 *Alison Britton: Fieldwork*, Galleri Format, Oslo
- 2016 *Alison Britton: Content and Form*, [retrospective exhibition of 65 works made over 40 years] Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
- 2012 *Life and Still Life, new pots by Alison Britton* shown with curated artefacts, University for the Creative Arts, Farnham, UK
- Standing and Running*, Marsden Woo Gallery, London, UK
- 2007 *Containing*, Barrett Marsden Gallery, London, UK
- 2005 *Alison Britton New Work and the Ed Wolf Collection of Alison Britton Pots*, Barrett Marsden Gallery, London, UK
- 2003 *Alison Britton New Ceramics*, Barrett Marsden Gallery, London, UK
- 2001 *Alison Britton ; Oeuvres Récentes*, Galerie DM Sarver, Paris, France
- 1996 *Alison Britton*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne, Australia and touring to museums in Canberra, Brisbane and Perth
- 1995 *Form and Fiction, Alison Britton New Work*, Marianne Heller Galerie, Sandhausen, Germany
- 1990 *Alison Britton - A Retrospective*, Two year tour by Aberystwyth Arts Centre, touring to Newport Museum, Aberdeen Museum, Carlisle Museum, Stoke on Trent, Cardiff Museum, York Museum and Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Holland
- Alison Britton*, Contemporary Applied Arts, London, UK
- 1988 *Ceramics by Alison Britton*, Crafts Council of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
- 1987 *Alison Britton, New Ceramics*, Contemporary Applied Arts, London, UK
- 1985 *Ceramics: Alison Britton*, Miharudo Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 1979 *The Work of Alison Britton*, Crafts Council, London, UK

**Selected Exhibitions | Two Person and Group**

- 2024** **Turns and Returns – Alison Britton & Johannes Nagel, Taste Contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland**
- 2024** **artgenève, [represented by Taste Contemporary] Geneva, Switzerland**
- 2021** **Odd and Even – A Collection, Maison Louise Carré, Paris, France [presented by Taste Contemporary]**
- 2019 *An Idea Needing to be Made*, Contemporary Ceramics, International group of 12 artists, curated by Glenn Barkley and Lesley Harding, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Bulleen, Victoria, Australia
- 2018 Two Person Exhibition [with Misha Stroj], Stereo Exchange Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark

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- Contenu/Contained, 7 ceramics and glass artists [curated by Monique Deul], Musée Ariana, Geneva, Switzerland**
- 2017 - 2018 *Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery*, Yale Center for British Art, Newhaven  
Connecticut, USA and Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK  
*The Social Life of Things*, Corvi-Mora Gallery London, UK  
*English Touch* Hélène Aziza, Rue Paul Fort, Paris, France  
*Woman's Hour Craft Prize exhibition*, V&A Museum, London, UK and touring  
**artgenève 2017 [presented by Taste Contemporary] Geneva Switzerland**
- 2016 *Kneaded Knowledge, The Language of Ceramics*, Kunsthau Graz, Austria and National Gallery in Prague, Czech Republic  
*Vase: Function Reviewed*, National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny, Ireland  
*Les Plaisirs de l'Assiette*, 19 Rue Paul Fort, Paris, France  
**Artgenève 2016 [presented by Taste Contemporary], Geneva, Switzerland**  
**Artmonte-carlo [presented by Taste Contemporary], Monte Carlo, Monaco**  
**Artgenève 2015 [presented by Taste Contemporary], Geneva, Switzerland**
- 2015 *Many a Slip*, Alison Britton curated exhibition of interpretations of the cup by over 50 international artists for Marsden Woo Gallery, London, UK
- 2014 *Cut and Run* [with Jim Partridge], Marsden Woo Gallery, London, UK  
*The Ceramic Object*, Gallerie Format, Oslo, Norway
- 2013 Cheongju Crafts Biennale, South Korea
- 2012 *Libertés, Affinités*, Galerie 19 Rue Paul Fort, Paris
- 2009 *Unforeseen Events* [with Marit Tingleff], Marsden Woo Gallery, London, UK
- 2008 *Ten Years Innit!*, Barrett Marsden Gallery, London, UK
- 2007 *END*, Danish Museum of Art and Design, Copenhagen and Bomuldsfabriken Kunsthall, Arendal, Norway  
*Containing*, Barrett Marsden Gallery, London, ceramic works with curated collection of chairs from modernist designers and contemporary designer Martino Gamper.
- 2005 *Transformations, the Language of Craft*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
- 2003 *British Ceramics: Five Artists*, Frank Lloyd Gallery, LA International, USA
- 2002 *Key Figures of Modern Ceramics, Alison Britton and Gordon Baldwin*, Deutscher Amerikanischen Institut, Heidelberg, Germany
- 2001 Jerwood Prize for Applied Arts: Ceramics, British Crafts Council shortlist exhibition
- 2000 *Firing Imagination*, British Council tour of British Ceramics to Brazil  
Britisk Keramik, Keramikmuseet Grimmerhus, Denmark
- 1999 *541 Vases, Pots, Sculptures and Services*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
*British Ceramics at Galerie Binnen, Amsterdam*, Barrett Marsden Gallery with Galerie Binnen, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
*Constructions: Ceramics and the Memory of Architecture*, Marianne Heller Gallery, Heidelberg, Germany

- 1998 *British Ceramics from 1950 to the present*, Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 1997 *Oeuvres Récentes, Gordon Baldwin & Alison Britton*, Galerie Sarver, Paris, France
- 1996 *The British Are Coming*, Indigo Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida, USA  
*Das Andere Gefass*, Saarländisches Künstlerhaus, Saarbrücken, Germany  
*On the Box*, Oriol Gallery, Cardiff, Wales  
*Objects of our Time*, Crafts Council, London, UK and touring
- 1993 *The Raw and the Cooked: New Work in Clay in Britain*, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, and touring to Barbican Art Gallery, London; Taiwan Museum; Swansea Museum; Shigaraki Ceramic Sculpture Park, Japan and Musée d'Art Contemporain de Dunkerque, France. Co-curated with Martina Margetts
- 1989 *L'Europe des Ceramistes*, L'Abbeye Saint-Germain d'Auxerre, France and touring
- 1988 *Contemporary British Crafts*, National Museums of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo, Japan  
 Galerie Het Kapelhuis, Amersfoort, Holland
- 1987 *The Vessel*, Serpentine Gallery, London, UK  
*Our Domestic Landscape*, Cornerhouse, Manchester
- 1986 *British Ceramics*, Dorothy Weiss, San Francisco, USA
- 1985 *Fast Forward: New Directions in British Ceramics*, ICA Gallery, London, UK  
*British Ceramics*, Kruithaus Museum, Den Bosch, Holland
- 1984 Westminster Gallery, Boston, USA (Two-artist)  
*British Ceramics*, British Council touring exhibition, Czechoslovakia
- 1983 *Fifty-Five Pots*, Orchard Gallery, Londonderry, Northern Ireland
- 1982 *The Maker's Eye*, Crafts Council, London, UK  
 Galerie L, (Two-artist), Hamburg, Germany
- 1980 *Ceramics, Alison Britton and Jacqueline Poncelet*, Galerie Het Kapelhuis, Amersfoort and Kruithaus Museum, Den Bosch, Holland

### Selected Awards

- 2019 Honorary Doctorate, Royal College of Art, London, UK
- 2017 Shortlisted for The Woman's Hour Craft Prize, BBC, British Crafts Council and V&A collaboration
- 2014–present Chair of Trustees, Crafts Study Centre, UCA, Farnham, UK
- 2008 Honorary Fellowship, University of the Arts, London
- 2007 Honorary MA, University College of the Creative Arts, Farnham, UK
- 2001 Shortlisted for the Jerwood Prize for Ceramics
- 1990 Awarded OBE  
 Fellowship, Royal College of Art, London, UK

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## Selected Bibliography

- 2017 article in *Kunsthåndwerk*, issue 04 2017, *Den Tvisynte Bektrakteren*, by Christer Dynna, Norway  
*Crafts Magazine*, i 268, Sep/Oct re Woman's Hour Craft Prize, UK
- 2016 *Frieze Magazine*, May 2016 Issue  
*Crafts Magazine*, Issue 239, March/April 2015
- 2015 *V&A Magazine*, December 2015 Issue, [preview of solo exhibition]
- 2012 *Life and Still Life*, exhibition catalogue, Crafts Study Centre, University for the Creative Arts, Farnham, England
- 2010 *The Everyday and the Numinous: British Studio Pottery 1980 – 2009*, Tanya Harrod catalogue essay for the Grainer collection, Mint Museum of Art, New York, USA
- 2005 Review of Barrett Marsden solo exhibition 2005, Shane Enright, *Crafts Magazine*, Issue 197
- 2003 Review of Barrett Marden solo exhibition 2003, Oliver Watson, *Ceramic Review* Issue 202
- 2000 Sources of Inspiration, Edward Lucie Smith, *Crafts Magazine*, Issue 167
- 2000 *Complexity and Ambiguity, The Ceramics of Alison Britton*, Linda Sandino, Barrett Marsden Gallery
- 1998 Thinking Aloud, Edmund de Waal, *Ceramic Review*, Issue Sept/Oct 1998
- 1996 *Das Andere Gefass*, Saariandisches Kunstlerhaus, Saarbrucken, Germany
- 1995 Profile by Gabi Dewaid, *Ceramic Art and Perception* (Australia), No. 19
- 1993 *The Raw and the Cooked*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England
- 1991 *The Abstract Vessel*, John Houston, Bellew Publishing
- 1990 *Alison Britton, Ceramics in Studio*, Tanya Harrod, Bellew Publishing,
- 1990 *British Studio Pottery*, The V&A Museum, Oliver Watson, Phaidon Christie's Ltd.
- 1988 *Contemporary British Crafts*, National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan  
Alison Britton, Wendy Dubin, American Ceramics, 7/1
- 1986 *The New Ceramics, Trends and Traditions*, Peter Dormer, Thames & Hudson
- 1985 *British Ceramics*, exhibition catalogue, Kruithaus Museum, Den Bosch, Holland  
*Fast Forward: New Directions in British Ceramics*, exhibition catalogue, ICA, London, England
- 1983 *British Ceramics*, exhibition catalogue, British Council  
*Fifty Five Pots*, exhibition catalogue, Orchard Gallery, Londonderry, Northern Ireland
- 1982 *The Maker's Eye*, exhibition catalogue, Crafts Council, London, England
- 1979 *The Work of Alison Britton*, exhibition catalogue, Crafts Council, London, England

### Selected Writing | Book

2013 *Seeing Things, Collected Writing on Art, Craft and Design*. London, Occasional Papers

### Selected Writing | Journal, Catalogue Essays & Book Chapters

2020 Contributed an essay to the book *Claire Debril, La Terre Dévoilée*, Snoeck Editions, dual French/English text

2019 'A View from Afar', essay in Prue Venables' catalogue, *Living Treasures*, Masters of Australian Craft series.  
'Slip-sliding narrative and evolving form in Philip Eglin's new works.'  
Catalogue essay for *Ajar*, Philip Eglin solo exhibition presented by Taste Contemporary at artgenève, January

2018 'The Maker's Eye' statement, CC catalogue 1981, republished in *Craft*, Ed. Tanya Harrod, *Documents of Contemporary Art series*, Whitechapel Gallery

2017 'Circling', Preface in Yale Center for British Art exhibition catalogue, *Things of Beauty Growing*, British Studio Pottery, Yale Publishing.

2016 Review of Betty Woodman, ICA exhibition *Theatre of the Domestic*, *The Burlington Magazine*, May issue  
'Homework', essay on Garry Fabian Miller in exhibition catalogue, *Making Thinking Living*, Crafts Study Centre  
'Curiosity and Speculation', chapter in *Karen Bennicke: Spatial Destabilization*, Strandberg Publishing, Denmark

2016 Round table discussion on the role of ceramics in contemporary art, *Frieze Magazine*, May issue

2014 'The Relation of Craft', *Collect magazine*, Collect art fair, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK

2013 Exhibition essay, Martin Smith, 'Static Field', Marsden Woo Gallery, London, England  
'Seeing Things: Collected Writing on Art, Craft and Design', Occasional Papers  
'Overthrowing Tradition' first published in electronic journal, *Interpreting Ceramics*, 2002, revised and republished in *Interpreting Ceramics, selected essays*, Bath, Wunderkammer

2011 'Introducing: Nao Matsunaga', Exhibition essay, Marsden Woo Gallery, London, England

2010 'Laying the Table: synthesis, continuity, and the everyday', catalogue essay, RJ Lloyd Collection of Devonshire Slipware, Burton Art Gallery and Museum, Bideford

2009 'The Fiction of Form', Statement of Practice article, *Journal of Modern Craft*, Vol 2.1, March

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