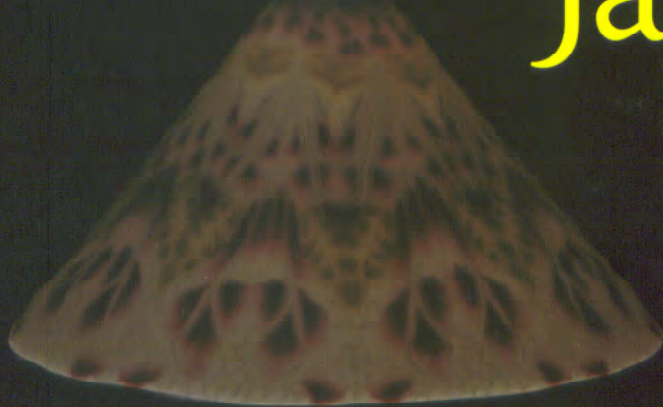


# CERAMIC REVIEW

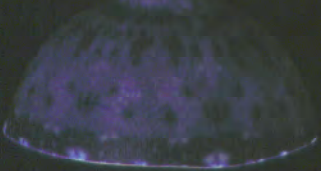
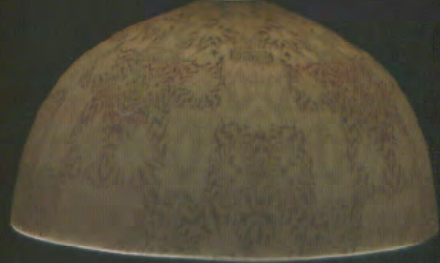
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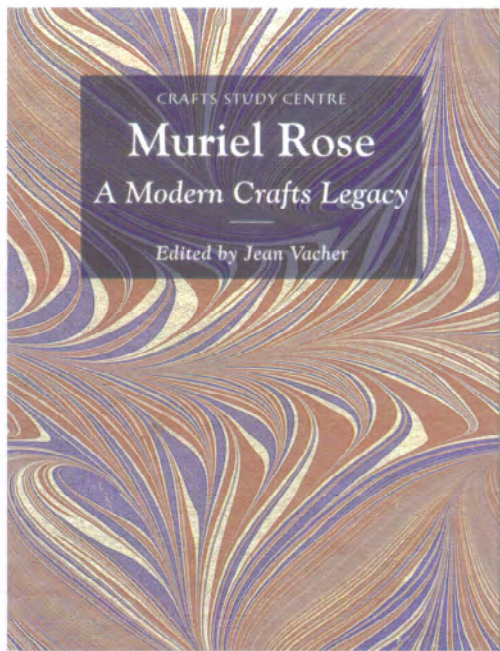
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## Japan / the West





## MURIEL ROSE: A MODERN CRAFTS LEGACY

EDITED BY JEAN VACHER

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To most potters Muriel Rose is best known for her seminal book *Artist Potters in England* (Faber and Faber, 1970), which was one of the first serious accounts of studio ceramics, starting with early French potters such as Émile Lenoble and moving forwards to the present day. Despite the partial view expressed by Rose – it tended to follow the Leach line rather than be fully comprehensive – an updated reprint confirmed the book as a classic. Like all of Rose's work, *Artist Potters* was informed by an acutely aware sense of good taste, restraint and appropriateness, written by someone who had a vision of an area of creative activity that had been little explored or investigated.

Rose, as this excellent collection of essays makes clear, was a major force in crafts in both the interwar period and in the decades following the Second World War. In the late 1920s she established the Little Gallery in London selling British craft, well-designed industrial ware such as Wedgwood's classic Queens ware, and folk art from overseas. All had to meet her personal seal of approval. Ceramics included work by Leach, Cardew, Hamada and Pleydell-Bouverie. At the same time, through the Rural Industries Bureau, she was involved in reviving traditional crafts such as quilting in depressed areas in South Wales and the North East.

When the war forced the gallery to close Rose worked as craft and design officer for the British Council. Among other duties, this involved taking a promotional exhibition of British craft to the United States in 1942, though what the Americans made of the rough earthenware, homespun fabrics and sturdy furniture as an image of Britain is anyone's guess. Nevertheless, it toured for three years. It was Rose who was the chief instigator of setting up the Crafts Study Centre, to whom she bequeathed most of her fine collection.

The beautifully designed book includes a useful overview to Rose's work by Simon Olding, while Jean Vacher gives a full account of her life, focusing on the material in the CSC's archive. More personal accounts come from Kate Woodhead and Linda Brassingham, while Barley Roscoe paints a vivid picture of a week spent with Rose after her retirement in the 1960s.

Today Muriel Rose seems a shadowy figure, all but forgotten as a relic of the past, but what this welcome book makes clear is the vital network of caring and concerned makers, critics, collectors, educationalists and curators that were involved in nurturing a new creative art form. The book also makes us aware of the need to look more closely at the history of craft in this country and identify its aesthetic roots as well as chart its progress.

**Emmanuel Cooper**