

1 Miniature *Moon Jars*, H9cm max 2 Adam Buick using the traditional technique for constructing a *Moon Jar* 3 *Moon Jar*, stoneware with Waun Llodi splash, H34cm

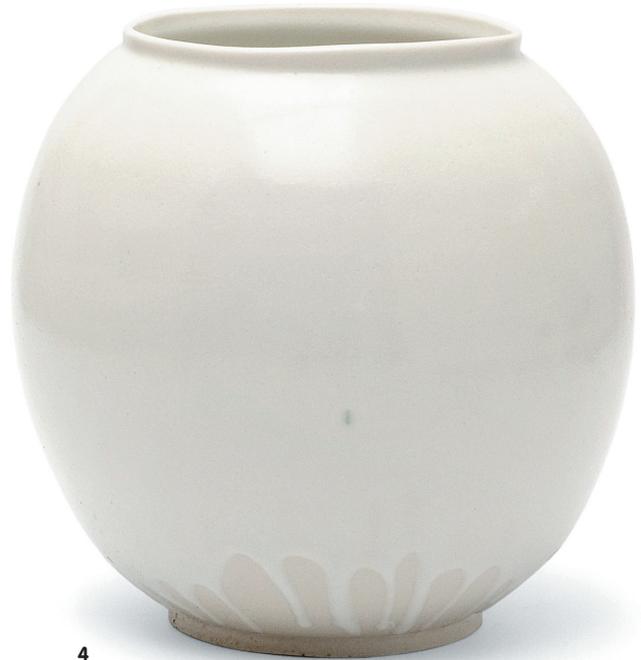
4 *Moon Jar*, porcelain, H29cm 5 *Moon Jar*, porcelain and Waun Llodi clay mix, H27cm 6 *Moon Jar*, stoneware with Aberiddy stone, H43cm

# Searching for Perfection

Adam Buick reveals his preoccupation with a single spherical form.

It's always necessary to seek for perfection. Obviously, for us, this word no longer has the same meaning. To me, it means: from one canvas to the next, always go further, further... Pablo Picasso

A pot inspired me. Amazed me. I had got excited about objects and forms before but for some reason this simple form would not leave me alone or, more to the point, I cannot let it go. A spherical jar with an open rim and narrow foot ring is all it is; yet, I have been making them for over four years. A trivial amount of time to those who have been making for forty years or more. It is, however, virtually the only form I have concerned myself with since I saw my first *Moon Jar* in the British Museum in 2004. *Moon Jars* are a Korean form from the Choson dynasty (1392-1910), originally made from plain white porcelain. At the time they represented the epitome of austere Confucian taste. The one I saw Bernard Leach had brought back from Seoul. Leach and his contemporaries in Japan admired it for its lack of self-consciousness and the beauty of its slight imperfections. I was also struck by these qualities, its serenity and simplicity.



**Technical Information** See page 70  
**Exhibitions** *Elemental Jars: A Study of My Surroundings*, Oriol Joanna Field Gallery, Torch Theatre, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, 23 October-29 November 2009  
**Stockists** Cecilia Colman Gallery, London; Mission Gallery, Swansea; Harbour Lights

Gallery, Porthgain, Pembrokeshire; Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion; Oriol Plas Glyn-y-Weddw Gallery, Llanbedrog, Gwynedd  
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I see that I am unusual among potters, as I have no range. I make one form and that is all I do; however, to my eye no two are alike. It is neither deliberate nor accidental and this is what I find really interesting. I am in control of my skills; I know my form, how to make it, how to repeat it, yet I never do. A single pot inspired me and I have never tried to replicate it. I have always tried to capture its inspiring qualities and essential form. It is the form that enthralled me, makes me want to make another and another. Due to the making process and, perhaps, my immature skills, I can make the shape proficiently but the subtleties of the form are beyond my complete control. I relish and nurture that lack of control, as I am certain I do not want to produce identical pots. But I do want the form to be perfect. I want perfection, yet the form I am striving for is far from perfect. Paradoxical though it is, I think this is what fascinates me and what drives me to continue.

I have found in a single form great freedom. There are many challenges for the ceramic artist; overcoming the technical, combining surface and form, conveying concept, respecting aesthetics and finding individuality. There is skill in throwing – that goes without saying. It is easy to underestimate the skill involved in glazing, turning or firing. Transforming a lump of clay into a successful piece of work is an art form, a journey with process after process that all require creative

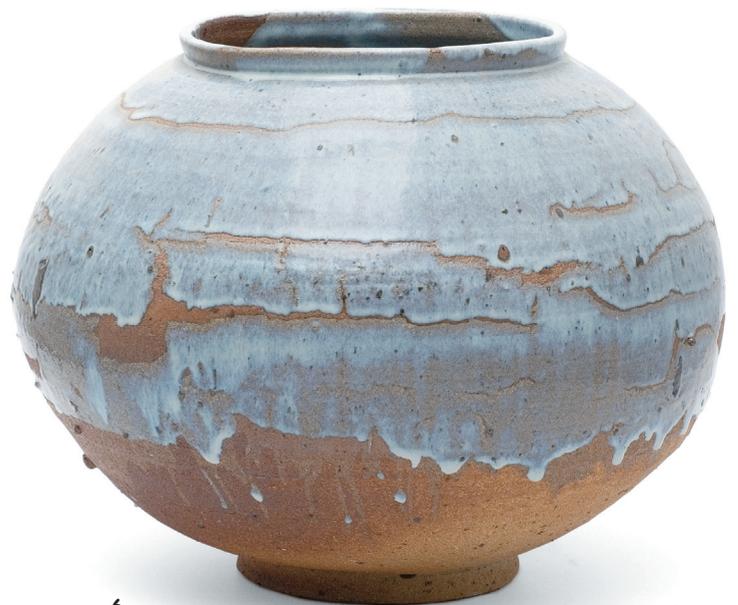
energy and artistic vigour. I am still discovering new aspects to my chosen form and this just goes to show how much is involved in designing and perfecting the making of a new shape. As ceramists we are concerned with two major aesthetic considerations: form and surface. By immersing myself in the study of a single form it has given me the freedom to explore its surface treatment. By having a constant I am free to experiment.

*Practice means to perform, over and over again in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, of desire. Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired.*  
Martha Graham

Artists are historically concerned with perfection – some obsessed, others reacting against it. For me, perfection is transient as the aesthetic values that concern me now may not be the same in years to come. Furthermore, those aesthetic values are subjective. I have an ideal of how I want a piece to look and I strive for that. The idea that practice invites perfection is quite apt as on rare occasions a jar comes out of the kiln and all the processes involved have been harmonised in such a way that one catches a glimpse of that intangible ideal. That glimpse of 'perfection' is rejuvenating as it enlightens me to new aspirations and invites me to go further... 



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