Permanence / Impermanence (London, 24-26 Jun 26)

London, University of Westminster, Little Titchfield Street Campus, Jun 24–26, 2026
Registration deadline: Jun 18, 2026

Tessa Peters

Permanence / Impermanence: Collecting and archiving contemporary clay practices.

This conference addresses how artworks in the ‘expanded field of clay’ can be made accessible and visible to current and future audiences. These works may be ephemeral, site-specific, participatory, or live, thereby posing significant challenges for museums.

The conference is being held as part of the three-year AHRC-funded research project, Future Ecologies of Clay. The research is being undertaken by the Ceramics Research Centre-UK, University of Westminster, in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum (Grant number UKRI748).

Conference Programme

Wednesday 24th June

12 noon
registration opens

1.20-1.50 pm
opening remarks

1.50-2.50 pm
Keynote presentation:
Artist Florence Peake in conversation with critic Louisa Buck

3.10-4.10 pm
Keynote presentation:
Academics and conservators Hanna B. Hölling and Pip Laurenson in conversation

4.30-5.30 pm
Keynote presentation:
Curators Daniel F. Herrmann and Deborah Smith in conversation

5.30-6.00 pm
closing remarks

6.00-7.00 pm

drinks reception

Thursday 25th June

9.00 am
registration opens

10.00-11.00 am
Keynote presentation:
Curators Emily Stone and Alexandra Hodby in conversation

11.15-12.00 pm
Joshua Woolford - Cascade Live: Bringing the ‘messiness’ of life and colonial history into the museum through clay;
Kate McLeod - Provisional Monuments: Raw clay, photography and impermanence.

Becky Little - Rock Becoming: Collecting practices that resist permanence;
Rosanna Martin - Tools for Kith Making: Can a pond made as a site-specific intervention in the china clay extraction region of Cornwall create new opportunities for connection across a multi-species ecology?
Marilen Rauch - Material Soundscapes: Collecting, processing and archiving site-specific clays and their sound.

Panel: Sarah Fraser, Julia Rowntree & Tessa Peters - Participation’s Traces: What matters?

Natalie Baerselman le Gros

12.15-1.00 pm
Bert Winther-Tamaki - Recovering ephemeral Japanese ceramic projects from the 1980s.

Raheleh Filsoofi - From Documentation to Collection: how process-based clay practice reshapes institutional engagement.

Fiona Jack - Leftovers: On the afterlife of the thousands of wood-fired rocks from Riverbed at Artspace Aotearoa;
Sarah Christie - Collaborating, Co-creating, Collecting;
Alicja Patanowska - Beyond the Artefact: Embodied sculpture and the limits of object-based collecting.

Panel: Simeon Koole, Charlotte Slark & Lily Crowther - Capturing multisensory experiences of clay artworks.

1.00-2.00 pm
Pause

2.00-3.00 pm
Keynote presentation:
Artist Phoebe Cummings in conversation with curator Ben Roberts - Writing Sculpture.

3.15-4.00 pm
Rupert Faulkner - Clay–Fire–Body, a performance by Hoshino Satoru, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, June 29, 2001.

Christie Brown - The Agency of Things: Transience and instability in site-specific clay artworks.

Catherine Roche - Sensory Entanglement: Writing the body into clay;
Lucy Cran - What Artistic Knowledge Is Overlooked When Participatory Art Objects are Presented or Acquired as Educational Resources?

Jules Pelta-Feldman - Coming Alive: Ceramics as always already conceptual.

4.15-4.45 pm
Anders Herwald Ruhwald - The Politics of Fire: Unit 1: 3583 Dubois St.

4.45 pm
closing remarks

5.30 pm
drinks reception

Friday 26th June

9 am
registration opens

9.00-9.45 am
Breakfast Q&A drop-in session for museum delegates.

10.00-11.00 am
Keynote presentation:
Artist Keith Harrison in conversation with curator Alun Graves.

11.15-12.00 pm
William Cobbing - Clay scrolling: sticky connections between people and landscape.

Zoe Evans - You Just Had to Be There: Striking the balance between artist's intention and integral preservation;
Laura König - But What When the Whole Point is Contact? Offering physical exploration of ceramics art in museums and galleries;
Monica Cru-Hall - Hands of Clay: Haptic learning and the challenge of archiving experience in participatory clay practice.

Ashley Thorpe - The Problem of Permanence: Ceramic objects and ephemeral encounters.

12.15-1.00 pm
Louise Chennell - Fired and Born: Preserving Rita Gudiño's clay performance.

Megan Rowden - From Workshops to Exhibitions: Designing experiential and archival frameworks

for contemporary clay.

Nicole Seisler - Preparing: A case study in covert permanence;
Olivia Fero - Against Documentation: The index cannot be archived;
Katy West - Reanimating the Archive: Artist-led interpretation and digital mediation in contemporary ceramic collections.

Michael Dika - Excavating the Ephemeral: The archaeological assemblage challenge to museum collecting practices;
Arran Gregory - Earth Body Journals: Archiving clay through process, image and transformation;
Adrian Tan - Resonance as Archive: Clay, rupture, and the politics of form in contemporary Singapore art.

1.00-2.00 pm
Pause

2.00-3.00 pm
Keynote presentation:
Artist Clare Twomey in conversation with curator and writer Martina Margetts

3.15-4.00 pm
closing remarks

To attend the conference, please register online: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/permanenceimpermanence-collecting-archiving-contemporary-clay-practices-tickets-1982785229998

For further information, please contact: Ceramics@westminster.ac.uk

Reference:
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