

**INTERVIEW**

# Mark Campden

**Have generations of makers influenced your work in unique or unexpected ways?**

The influence my father has on my work is very evident, not just that I work within the same majolica tradition but also that we shared an interest in ceramics from the Middle East. I never expected to start making lustre pottery until my mother gave me my father's notes, these sent me down that challenging path.

**How does this influence manifest in your work?**

As I grew up with parents who both worked in clay, one a potter and the other a sculptor, I suppose it was a natural progression to live in a very similar way. My father was a craftsman of the highest standard and strove to attain this in all things in life, I have inherited these values and hopefully bring my own making to the highest level possible.

**What is the most important thing you have learned from previous generations of makers within your family?**

There is no shortcut to achieving quality made and well finished work.

**Describe the relationship between generations of makers in your family.**

I do find that discussing and evaluating my work with my mother is very important to me. I really value her honest and critical feedback, it being from someone with an inherent understanding of the processes I use and the results I am seeking to achieve.

**Can you trace the evolution of your inherited skills?**

Inherited skills are very important, some crafts have only survived because of them. There is an added sense of responsibility to retain skills, especially when the craft in question is in decline or is practiced only by a few people.

**How do you balance respect for tradition with innovation, against current design trends or the need to respond to the demands of the marketplace?**

I find working within the majolica tradition still allows a very broad range of design and technique that can have a contemporary feel. I don't pay much attention, at least not consciously, to current trends. I find my work evolves in a natural way over time, the more successful designs survive and the less successful die out. A friend once gave me a quote from Tony O'Malley, he wrote, "Never be swayed by anything but by your own work and vision"

**Have you found your own voice, or do you feel that being part of a family tradition can restrict your creativity or originality?**

I feel I have found my own voice, since my father died and later my wife, I became the only potter left in the family and had to change and adapt the business to suit my way of working. This led to being able to express myself more and be fully immersed in all aspects of the making process.

**How important is it to pass on your skills and culture of making to the next generation or to ensure a sense of continuity?**

I think it is very important to pass on your skills and work ethics to the next generation, whether directly to your children, or through teaching, workshops and apprenticeships.