

OPEN CALL: THE BURTON CERAMICS RESIDENCY 2025-26



**BURTON
AT BIDEFORD**

The Burton at Bideford is delighted to announce an open call for our 6th Ceramics Residency. Bringing contemporary art into conversation with our historic collections, this residency provides a unique opportunity for an artist in the early stages of their career to explore and develop their practice.

The Burton has one of the leading ceramics collections in the South West region, with a specialism in North Devon slipware within the RJ Lloyd Collection spanning over 300 years and 500 works. As we celebrate our 75th anniversary in 2026 we are excited to invite an artist to look inward at The Burton's ceramic collections, history and people; creating new work that reimagines the relevance of this work for our community now and in the future.



Michelle Shields, *Slipware jug*, 2022.

About The Burton at Bideford

The Burton at Bideford is an art gallery and museum based in North Devon, situated in the historic town of Bideford where craft, agriculture and maritime heritage meet at the water's edge.

Founded in 1951, we are a National Portfolio Organisation and one of the leading cultural venues in the South West, attracting over 160,000 visitors last year. With two exhibition spaces, a dedicated ceramics gallery, a museum, a commercial craft gallery, a shop, a workshop space and a café, we provide opportunities for people of all ages to access and engage with artists, collections and exhibitions.

Placing community at the heart of our activities, The Burton also offers a rich programme of outreach activities to engage those who do not have easy access to a traditional arts venue in a predominantly rural region. Located in the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the uniqueness of place is a key part of our context and our vision for the future.

Our programme celebrates internationally renowned artists alongside nurturing local creative talent. In 2025 our exhibitions include the major solo project 'Melting Ice | Rising Tides' with Emma Stibbon RA, our annual schools exhibition presenting work by children across Torridge, a partnership with The Hepworth Wakefield to present 'Into Abstraction: Modern British Art and the Landscape', and an installation of lithographs by Spanish Catalan artist Joan Miró in collaboration with Hayward Touring.

About The Burton Ceramics Residency

The Burton Ceramics Residency has been running since 2017 and provides a unique opportunity for an artist in the early-stages of their career to explore and develop their practice in relation to The Burton's collections.

Bideford was a significant centre for pottery production in the 17th and 18th centuries, supplying pots across England, Ireland, Wales and North America. With over 1,000 individual pieces, The Burton has one of the most significant ceramic collections in the South West and our residency invites artists to explore contemporary responses to:

- The RJ Lloyd Collection of North Devon Slipware.
- Ceramic items within The Burton's wider Collection.
- The heritage of North Devon's local ceramic industry.
- The Burton's 75-year legacy as a gallery rooted in community and place.

We welcome proposals that engage with themes of sustainability, legacy, and place-making, while reflecting on how The Burton's past informs its present and future.

Previous recipients of the residency include Juneau Projects, Florence Dwyer, Michelle Shields, Simon Bayliss and Connor Coulston.

What does the residency offer?

The Burton Ceramics Residency offers a research residency resulting in an exhibition at The Burton in Spring/Summer 2026. Supported by The Burton team, the residency artist will:

- Research and develop a project that responds to The Burton's ceramic collections.
- Present a resulting exhibition that reflects on the journey of the residency and its outcomes.

In addition, the residency artist will:

- Take part in a public event about the residency – depending on the residency artist's interests this could be a talk, a workshop, an exhibition tour, engagement with a school, etc.
- Provide documentation or information for marketing, social media and reporting.
- Donate one work resulting from the residency to The Burton's collection, strengthening conversations between contemporary and historic ceramics in the collection.
- Participate in an evaluation of the residency.

Duration: the residency is flexible to the artist's proposed approach, but we anticipate 15-20 days' work with completion before Summer 2026.

Artist Fee: £3,000 inclusive of all associated costs.

Contract: the residency artist will be contracted on a freelance basis and is responsible for paying their own tax and national insurance where applicable.

Left: Michelle Shields, *G Coding the Collection, 3D Printed Harvest Jugs, 2022*.
Right: RJ Lloyd Collection, *Puzzle Jugs*.



Location: residency activity will take place at The Burton at Bideford and remotely depending on the artist's proposal. Please note that there is no workshop or accommodation available on site.

Copyright: The copyright of works created during the residency remains property of the artist who grants The Burton full use of photographic images of the works in perpetuity without additional payment.

Who is the residency for?

This residency is for early-career UK-based artists who work with ceramics in their practice. An interest in researching and engaging with collections is important, and we are excited to hear from applicants for who this residency would enable a significant development in their work.

The Burton will provide administrative, curatorial and pastoral support during the residency, but we expect the selected artist to be self-motivated to lead on the research and production of their own work during the residency.

As a small team, we value collaborating with people who:

- are good communicators in both verbal and written communication.
- are able to work under their own motivation but enjoy connecting as a team.
- have an interest in creative approaches to interpreting cultural works of art and historic objects.
- share our commitment to sustainability and environmentally-engaged practice.
- value accessibility and inclusion in their approach.

How to apply

To apply for The Burton Ceramics Residency 2025-26 please include:

1. A 1-2 page A4 written statement or 5-minute audio/video recording to tell us about:
 - Your practice and experience to date.
 - Your interest in this residency.
 - Initial ideas for how you might approach the residency and public event.
2. A pdf or word document of supporting materials to demonstrate the quality of your work. This might include a website link, photographs (5 maximum), video clips, written material.
3. A completed equal opportunities monitoring form.

Applications should be emailed to info@theburton.org with the heading 'The Burton Ceramics Residency 2025-26'.

The deadline for applications is 10am, Monday 20 October 2025.

Selection Process

Applications will be considered using the following criteria:

- The creative strength of your work and ideas.
- Your proposal for working with The Burton's ceramic collections.
- The impact this residency will have on your artistic development.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview in the w/c 3 November. The interview panel will include Warren Collum (Exhibitions and Collections Manager, The Burton), Harriet Cooper (Director, The Burton) and an external artist advisor.

If you have any questions while making your application or require this information in a different format please get in touch with us as info@theburton.org

Key Dates

- Application deadline: 10am, Monday 20 October 2025
- Interviews: w/c 3 November 2025
- Start date: December 2025



Connor Coulston, detail from *Will you love me if I sign a NDA*, 2022.

