



Open call for contemporary commissions for English Ceramic Circle Centenary display at V&A South Kensington

The English Ceramic Circle (ECC) is the largest and oldest society dedicated to the study of ceramics and enamels manufactured, decorated and used in the UK. In 2027, the ECC will mark its 100th anniversary with a special display celebrating British ceramics past and present, highlighting the significant artistic and technological contributions of potters working in Britain from 1600 to now. This display, opening in October 2027 and running until September 2028 and held in the Ceramics Galleries at V&A South Kensington, will showcase the work of a range of contemporary artists who take direct inspiration from historic British ceramics. It aims to show audiences how ceramic traditions can be used and reinterpreted in thought-provoking ways. Where appropriate, the contemporary works will be placed in dialogue with historic examples drawn from the V&A collection.

As part of this display the ECC is seeking to commission up to three new works. We are currently inviting proposals for UK-based ceramic artists to respond to the display's theme of dialogues between historic British ceramics and contemporary making.

Up to three works will be chosen from an open submission process.

We particularly encourage proposals from early- and mid-career practitioners (between 3 and 15 years' experience working with clay).

Artist Fee and Brief:

Artist Fee: £3,000 per artist.

Artists should propose a work that uses clay as the primary medium and is inspired by or interrogates an aspect of British ceramic production pre-1900. If the proposal is selected, the finished work will be exhibited as part of the ECC Centenary display in Room 146 at V&A South Kensington, and proposals must take this location into consideration.

Opportunities for display in this space include inside a display case or wall mounted. Only moderately sized works can be accommodated. Case and room dimensions and elevations available on request.

We invite artists to respond to historic British ceramics broadly defined, but proposals may wish to address the following themes:

- **Material innovations** e.g. early experiments in porcelain in the seventeenth & eighteenth centuries; distinctly 'British' materials such as creamware, Parian or bone china.

- **Global Connections** e.g. the transfer of styles, materials or techniques to Britain; the migration of workforces from other areas of the globe to Britain.

In the spirit of dialogue between past and present, artists are encouraged to respond specifically to the V&A's holdings of British ceramics.

The selection process

The successful proposals will be selected by a panel and will be notified in December 2026. If selected, you will be supported by V&A curatorial staff as you continue to research and develop your project.

Finished works must be delivered to V&A South Kensington in September 2027, however practical details regarding installation (dimensions, weight, display method etc.) will be required by June 2027.

Works will belong to the ECC and will be loaned to the V&A from the ECC for the duration of the display from October 2027 to September 2028. In addition, each successful artist will actively contribute to public programming related to the ECC Centenary display. This could include, but is not limited to, a talk, workshop, or tour. The successful artist will provide relevant content for marketing and social media during the making process.

The ECC will then arrange its donation to a public museum in the UK to strengthen the ties between historic and contemporary ceramics in their collection.

Selected artists will also be given ECC membership for the duration of their involvement with the project.

How to apply:

- i) Artists should submit a 300-word artist statement about their practice. Please also state how this opportunity would benefit your career.
- ii) Artists should submit a 500-word proposal which describes the idea and vision for their piece, and how it engages with or interrogates British ceramic history. It should also describe the physical form it will take and approximate dimensions, and the materials you expect to use. **Please include a visual representation of the idea.**
- iii) Artists should link to their website or online portfolio of projects.

Deadline:

15 November 2026

Contact:

Please send proposals or any questions to **ecc100@englishceramiccircle.net**

The ECC:

The English Ceramic Circle (or ECC for short) is the oldest society dedicated to the study of British ceramics and enamels. Members interested in ceramics at all levels of knowledge are always made welcome. Founded in 1927, we aim to advance knowledge by presenting new research on these subjects at our meetings and by publishing this research. The Circle's worldwide membership embraces collectors, curators, archaeologists, potters, auctioneers, dealers, social historians and all those with an interest in the history of ceramics made in the British Isles.

V&A South Kensington:

V&A South Kensington is a world of extraordinary global creativity, with unmissable exhibitions, experiences and educational programmes for all. One of London's most iconic buildings, it is home to national collections of art, design, fashion, photography and furniture to theatre, performance, architecture, and ceramics, as well as the UK's National Art Library. It is a place where everyone can experience a story of creativity that spans 5,000 years and every creative discipline, which brings that story to life through programmes and activities for all ages and specialisms, and world-leading research and conservation.