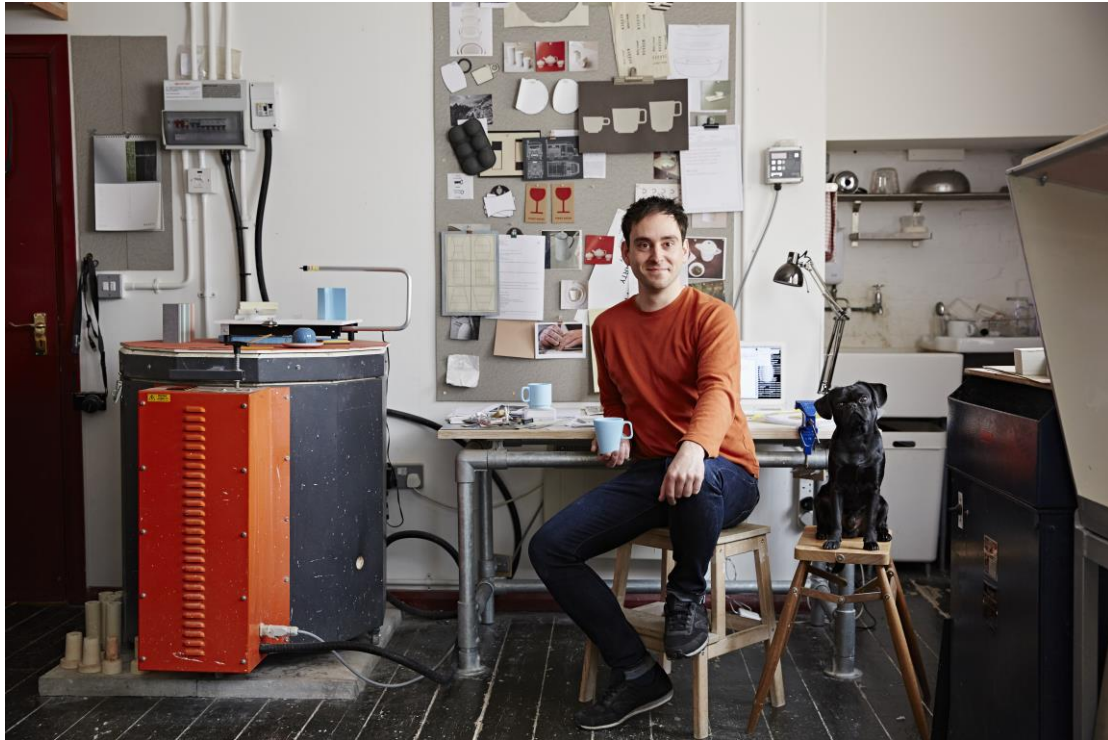


# COCKPIT ARTS 3

**Billy Lloyd**  
- Ceramicist



Renowned for his distinctive, pared down tableware, Billy Lloyd has a reputation as a designer of ceramics that retain an honesty and integrity rooted in his background as a maker. He has collaborated with The Conran Shop, The New Craftsmen, RIBA, Brooks Brothers and Conran & Partners and has been selected for numerous awards.

Billy graduated as a ceramicist from Camberwell College of Arts in 2006 and joined Cockpit Arts in 2011 following a year assisting Lisa Hammond at Maze Hill Pottery and a four-year apprenticeship with leading ceramicist Julian Stair. Billy had won a year's free studio space and business support thanks to the Cockpit Arts Award. On the selection panel that year was Priscilla Carluccio, sister of Sir Terence Conran, a connection that would prove to be invaluable.

By 2011, Billy was selling his hand thrown porcelain tableware through a number of modest stockists and commissions and had built up a steady following of collectors. However, he'd already started to feel the limitations of his work. "I felt Cockpit Arts embraced design and manufacture as well as craft," he states. "With support from the Business Development Team, I was able to carefully and strategically reposition myself as a designer, not a potter. It was a steep learning curve because I wasn't trained as a designer, but I knew at Cockpit I'd have some of the necessary resources by my side to assist me. There's a great safety net of support, which was a big attraction to getting a studio at Cockpit Arts."

It was during his first year at Cockpit that Billy was able to realise a dream: to make 50 unique mug designs using a combination of five geometric shapes, various handles and two surfaces. Encouraged by Cockpit's staff and fellow makers, he made 'An Edition Of Fifty Mugs', assuming they'd be sold as individual pieces. However, Priscilla Carluccio's sister-in-law, Vicki Conran, heard about them, and purchased the entire collection for her husband's Christmas present. The husband, of course, was Sir Terence Conran. The story generated a lot of interest in Billy's work - and a thank you note from Sir Terence himself, suggesting Billy contact The Conran Shop to work on collaboration. "The project had been intended as a one-off and when they sold as a collection I vowed never to make the mugs again," says Billy. "But it was too interesting an idea and I wanted to reinterpret them in some way. Now the mugs are made by a factory in Stoke-on-Trent and sold exclusively through The Conran Shop."





Billy feels Cockpit definitely helped him to think more ambitiously. "It gave me the confidence to work harder to earn money in a less speculative way by helping me actively pursue new clients and nurture ongoing relationships," he says. In 2013, he was selected for the Walpole Crafted mentorship programme and in 2014 he was awarded QEST funding to attend a one-to-one course in plaster model and mould making with various master craftsmen.

In 2014, Billy left Cockpit Arts. "The package you get at Cockpit is brilliant and lots of things are done for you, but I felt it was time for me to move on. It was a regenerative thing for me; the next chapter," he explains.

Billy now has his studio at Iliffe Yard in Southwark, part of a community of businesses that include architects, artists and designers, as well as craftspeople. He now spends the majority of his time designing and making prototypes for manufacture, although he does still make on a modest scale. He is currently working on a collection of coffee cups and saucers for international cycling super brand Rapha. "It's very exciting as it's the first time my ceramics will be made abroad," he enthuses.

Although Billy sees himself as a designer, he still credits his time at Cockpit for his continuing belief in the importance of craft. "Professionally and emotionally I am indebted to Cockpit," he says. "I still very much believe in design through making. I work in a workshop not an office and don't currently use tools like CAD in the design process."

"I feel very proud to be an alumni of Cockpit Arts," he continues, "and it's nice to be invited back to give talks now and again. You don't ever really leave Cockpit; you still feel part of the family."

[www.billylloyd.co.uk](http://www.billylloyd.co.uk)

Photos: Alun Callender