

SPECIAL INTEREST DAY – WEDNESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2025

To be held in the Dove Suite at The Ark, Turners Hill. Timing 10.00 - 15.00

Subject: Clarice Cliff (1899 – 1972) - The Doyenne of Art Deco

Lecturer: Viv Lawes BA, MA

This Special Interest Day explores an artist whose work, inventiveness, and ability to catch the zeitgeist is still admired a century after her bold 'Bizarre' wares were launched in 1927. These Art Deco masterpieces are the products that most vividly signify Clarice Cliff's oeuvre.

The first lecture will look at why her success was so extraordinary. Born in 1899, she was a working professional whose lifespan covered the period in which women broke through the barriers of the art world. While the Royal Academy barred women from accessing the full training and privileges of their male counterparts, the pottery industry was one that had traditionally offered female artists the opportunities to excel. The context of women in the pottery industry and the structure of the art world will be explored as the background to her career.

Cliff's talents were recognised when she was still a teenager, and she went on to produce designs that keyed into the cutting-edge trends of the period, setting the bar for ceramics as a commercial art form.

The second and third lectures will look at her designs chronologically, from inspiration to marketing. The third lecture will finish with the legacy of her innovations.



Viv Lawes BA, MA



**Clarice Cliff (1899 – 1972) Wikimedia
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Fantasque 'Melon' vase, shape 14; Fantasque 'Circle Tree' Eton shape coffee pot 1930. Wikimedia Commons by Leonard Griffin



**Bizarre 'Crocus' Pattern; original 1928-1963 and Spring, 1933-1963
Wikimedia Commons**