



Image: Marble and coloured body lights, [lyngard.com](http://lyngard.com)

Below: Jon Aaron Green featuring homeware by [thesmallhome.co.uk](http://thesmallhome.co.uk), styled by Hannah Cork



# EARTHLY Treasures

Whether brightly-coloured or neutral, misshapen or precise, the historic art of pottery has been given a modern makeover. Interiors stylist **Hannah Cork** reveals where to look for unique pieces for your home



## BACK TO EARTH

If you have more than a passing interest in interiors, you can't have missed that ceramics and pottery have become a major trend. From BBC Two's hugely popular *The Great Pottery Throw Down* attracting a legion of artisan pottery devotees, to interiors magazines and Instagram, the mass-produced is being eschewed for something

altogether more earthy.

It's hardly surprising that there has been such a growing interest in this ancient craft. There is, after all, something extremely appealing about pottery: knowing that the raw material has come from the ground and been shaped with human hands gives it a tactile quality in a world where we do so much on computers. Artisanal skills passed down

over centuries reinforce a sense of history, promoting a slower way of creating something unique. Sounds nice, doesn't it?

But with such a vast array of choices and terminology to decipher, how do you know where to begin? Ceramics, pottery, clay work, porcelain, china, terracotta, crockery, stoneware – it's a minefield! What does it all mean? And what on earth is the difference?



Above: From a selection, [carolinewinn.co.uk](http://carolinewinn.co.uk)

Right: Medium and large anthracite jugs, [thesmallhome.co.uk](http://thesmallhome.co.uk)

Below: Plex pendants, [lyngard.com](http://lyngard.com)

## A POTTED HISTORY

'Pottery' is an old English word referring to objects made of fired clay. The maker was a potter and the place was a pottery. Crockery is an Anglo-Saxon word: a crocker was a potter and a crock was a pot.

Many potters trace their roots to the Arts and Crafts movement, where factory-made items were disliked. Good pottery was referred to as 'honest pots'.

Porcelain was first made in China more than 2,000 years ago, and is now known by that name. The difference between porcelain and pottery is that porcelain is translucent while pottery is not.

'Ceramic' is an early 19th century term. Borrowed from the Greeks, it means the same thing as pottery or crockery, but was adopted by British scholars, art historians and archaeologists. In the mid-1900s, artists who decorated pottery with glaze referred to themselves as 'ceramicists'.

## BE INSPIRED

The major redevelopment in 2015 of the Centre of Ceramic

Art in York ([centreofceramicart.org.uk](http://centreofceramicart.org.uk)) has created a wonderful museum hosting a permanent, awe-inspiring collection of British ceramics. It shines a fresh light on pottery and is absolutely worth a visit. Meanwhile, the Ceramic Art London fair ([ceramics.org.uk](http://ceramics.org.uk)) attracts potters from around the world to be exhibited each spring. The Contemporary Ceramics Centre ([cpaceramics.com](http://cpaceramics.com)) is open all year round in the heart of Bloomsbury, with wonderful work on display in a programme of temporary exhibitions. Meanwhile, the Archaeology of Crossrail exhibition at The Museum of London ([until 3 September 2017; museumoflondon.org.uk](http://until3September2017;museumoflondon.org.uk)), showcases the historical pottery pieces discovered during the building of London's newest railway.

## WHERE TO BUY

When it comes to choosing pottery or ceramics for your home, there is a plethora of options – from kitchen and bathroom tiles to table and dinnerware; vases to sculptural lamp bases; pendant lights to objects and art. The trick is in knowing where to find non-mass produced pieces. Firstly, Artists' Open House exhibitions and Open Studio programmes are a great place to source pottery straight from the maker and support local craftspeople. I've recently discovered the potter Jose Carvalho ([josecarvalhoceramics.com](http://josecarvalhoceramics.com)) and ceramic artist Caroline Winn



([carolinewinn.co.uk](http://carolinewinn.co.uk)), who both live just a stone's throw from my West London home.

Ceramic Arts final shows at universities, such as The Royal College of Art, are also great for spotting new talent and designs, which are unaffected by the somewhat timid tastes of the mass market.

If buying online (and from your sofa) is more your style, then look at The Small Home ([thesmallhome.co.uk](http://thesmallhome.co.uk)) – a beautifully curated online edit of homeware that includes bowls, jugs and mugs handcrafted by Yorkshire-based David Worsley. His work is wheel-thrown, and simple and utilitarian in form, with elegant, clean lines and gorgeous glazes in anthracite and sage. Curious Egg ([curiousegg.com](http://curiousegg.com)), based in Edinburgh but available online, has a range of quirky ceramic vases at very affordable prices, sourced from around the world.

For ceramic lighting, I'd recommend Lyngard ceramics ([lyngard.com](http://lyngard.com)). Handmade in the heart of the potteries in Stoke-on-Trent, designer maker Carmen Lyngard comes from a long ancestral line of potters. Since launching her own line in 2014, her unique pendant lights have been stocked in The Conran Shop, Heal's and Skandium. Praise indeed. [hannahcorkinteriordesign.co.uk](http://hannahcorkinteriordesign.co.uk)

