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PRESS RELEASE

## Phillips Unveils the Most Important Group of Works by Lucie Rie and Hans Coper to Ever Come to Auction

*Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, Exceptional Ceramics: Selections from the Estate of Jane Coper and the former Collection of Cyril Frankel*

To be Sold at Phillips London on 1 November 2023



Hans Coper, Seven 'Cycladic' form works



Lucie Rie, Selection of works

LONDON – 21 SEPTEMBER 2023 – Phillips is proud to announce what is undoubtedly the most exceptional and significant group of works by Lucie Rie and Hans Coper to ever come to auction. Originating from two major collections: the Estate of Jane Coper and the former Collection of Cyril Frankel, these pieces stand as the definitive ceramics that mark the artistic partnership and life-long friendship between these titans of British Studio Ceramics. Featuring a curated selection of 106 standout lots, *Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, Exceptional Ceramics: Selections from the Estate of Jane Coper and the former Collection of Cyril Frankel* will take place at Phillips Berkeley Square on 1 November 2023. A preview of highlights will be open to the public from 4 to 13 October, coinciding with Frieze Week and PAD, followed by the full auction preview from 25 October to 1 November.

**Domenico Raimondo, Head of Design, Europe and Senior International Specialist**, said, “These unparalleled collections present a unique opportunity to acquire some of the masterworks that shaped the narrative of British Studio Ceramics. These pieces are intimately linked to the personal lives and artistic partnerships of Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, serving as a testament to their enduring legacy. The sheer magnitude of these two collections, entwined with the central figures in the lives of these two potters, is extraordinary.”

### Lucie Rie and Hans Coper

Dame Lucie Rie (1902-1995) and Hans Coper (1920-1981) established themselves as pioneering forces in British Studio Ceramics, both finding refuge in the UK during the late 1930s to escape Nazi persecution in Austria and

Germany. Rie, already an established potter, set up her home and workshop in Albion Mews, London. Initially focusing on crafting ceramic buttons for fashion houses in the years of post-war austerity, Rie was able to hone her expertise in creating glazes with exacting colour specifications, laying the foundations of her meticulous control over glazing techniques.

Without any prior ceramics training, Coper sought employment in Rie's workshop, where they first collaborated on buttons and later tableware. The start of a life-long friendship, Coper gave Rie the confidence to break away from attempting to follow the style of Bernard Leach, the prevailing figure in the pottery scene during this period. This led to Rie's completely new approach to ceramics, with instantly recognisable bowls and vases with unique timeless forms and often a strong use of colour.

Initially, Coper's creations leaned towards large, powerfully thrown forms. Yet, due to declining health, his later work scaled down to a more manageable size. Coper's final group of works, collectively known as the 'Cycladic' series, are rare and finely crafted pieces that hold significant value for collectors. Seven 'Cycladic' pieces will be offered in this sale.



**Lucie Rie**  
*29 buttons and brooches, circa 1948*  
Estimate: £2,000 - 3,000



**Hans Coper**  
*Large 'Spade' form, circa 1965 and 'Spade' form, circa 1965*  
Estimates: £60,000 - 80,000 and £30,000 - 50,000

## Property from the Estate of Jane Coper

Jane Coper (1932-2022), whose discerning eye and lifelong dedication to her husband Hans Coper's work are manifest in this collection, was also an artist in her own right. Her intimate photographic records of Hans's creative process offer a rare window into the life and art of this master potter. Yet, Jane's influence extended beyond her photographic documentation, as her perceptive eye shaped our understanding and appreciation of the exceptional accomplishments of Lucie Rie and Hans Coper. Among the pieces coming from Jane Coper's collection are those intimately intertwined with her and Hans's daily life, including cherished favorites and perhaps prototypes or one-off creations. Additionally, the assortment includes numerous cherished gifts from Rie over the years. Notably, certain works from the Estate of Jane Coper were inherited via the Lucie Rie Trust.



**Hans Coper**

*Large vase with central volume, circa 1954. and Composite vase, circa 1954*

Estimates: £150,000 - 200,000 and £15,000 - 20,000



**Hans Coper**

*'Sack and Disc' form, circa 1972 and 'Sack and Disc' form, circa 1972*

Estimates: £50,000 - 70,000 and £50,000 - 70,000



**Lucie Rie**

*Vase, circa 1957*

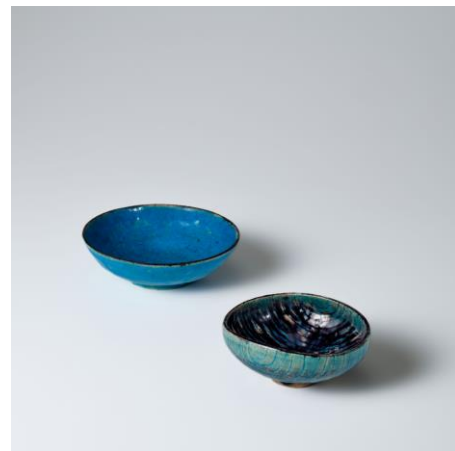
Estimate: £10,000 - 15,000



**Lucie Rie**

*'All debts cancelled' bowl, 1949*

Estimate: £30,000 - 40,000



**Lucie Rie**

*Bowl, 1950 and Oval bowl, 1950*

Estimates: £2,000 - 3,000 and £2,000 - 3,000

A small bowl by Rie bears the sgraffito inscription: *'FOR HANS COPER CHRISTMAS 1949. FROM HIS BOSS LUCIE RIE. ALL DEBTS CANCELLED'*. Beneath Rie's characteristically dry wit, the dedication attests to the closeness of their friendship.

Two small, jewel-like blue bowls, one unusually stamped with the Bimini seal, represent rare examples of pots made during this period, and demonstrate the fluidity with which Rie shifted between making buttons and making pots.



**Hans Coper**, *Monumental ovoid pot*, circa 1968 and **Lucie Rie**, *Set of 7 graduated jugs*, circa 1940

Estimates: £150,000 - 200,000 and £20,000 - 30,000



**Hans Coper**

*Large dish, circa 1955*

Estimate: £80,000 - 120,000



**Lucie Rie**

*Large vase with collar, circa 1984*

Estimate: £30,000 - 40,000

## Property formerly in the Collection of Cyril Frankel

Cyril Frankel (1921-2017), celebrated director and filmmaker, became captivated by the world of British Studio Ceramics after acquiring a piece by Lucie Rie in 1953. This marked the beginning of a passionate collecting journey, ultimately leading to his influential role in elevating the recognition of modern potters. Frankel's dynamic approach to arts coverage, including pioneering work on the BBC's Monitor series, further solidified his legacy as a figure who championed the significance of contemporary studio pottery.

Cyril Frankel directly acquired *Footed bowl* from Lucie Rie in 1981. This exquisite piece featured in the 1982 Lucie Rie BBC Omnibus, directed by Cyril Frankel himself and narrated by Sir David Attenborough. The documentary coincided with a major retrospective exhibition of Rie's work at the Victoria and Albert Museum, which also marked her 80th birthday. The documentary captures Rie in her studio, engaging in her craft and discussing her artistic endeavors. A notable moment occurs when Rie retrieves this very bowl from the kiln, presenting it to Attenborough, who admires it with the exclamation, "That's a stunner!"



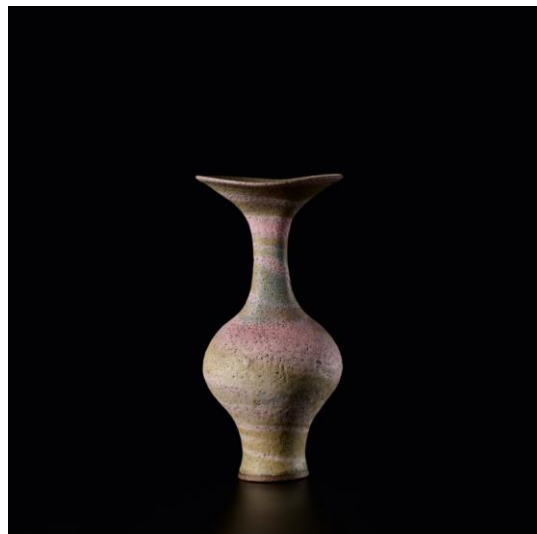
**Hans Coper**  
*Large pot with indents*, circa 1975  
Estimate: £100,000 - 150,000



**Lucie Rie**  
*Footed bowl*, circa 1981  
Estimate: £50,000 - 70,000



**Lucie Rie and Vilmo Gilbello**  
*Coffee table*, 1961  
Estimate: £20,000 - 30,000



**Lucie Rie**  
*Vase with flaring lip*, 1979  
Estimate: £30,000 - 50,000

Believed to be the only piece of furniture made by Lucie Rie, this coffee table was specially commissioned by Cyril Frankel. Rie utilised bricks from her kiln in the creation of this unique piece.

In 1987, the Post Office released a commemorative presentation pack of stamps showcasing the work of four distinguished British studio potters. Among the designs was a depiction of this Lucie Rie vase.

**Auction:** 1 November 2023

**Auction viewing:** 25 October to 1 November

**Location:** 30 Berkeley Square, London, W1J 6EX

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#### PRESS CONTACTS:

LONDON – Katie Carder, Head of Press and Corporate Communications, Europe

[kcarder@phillips.com](mailto:kcarder@phillips.com)

LONDON – Anna Chapman, Press and Strategic Partnerships Officer

[achapman@phillips.com](mailto:achapman@phillips.com)

PHILLIPS NEW YORK – 432 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022

PHILLIPS LONDON – 30 Berkeley Square, London, W1J 6EX

PHILLIPS HONG KONG – G/F, WKCDA Tower, West Kowloon Cultural District, No. 8 Austin Road, West Kowloon

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