

A tall Vase with flaring lip, circa 1967

Sold



REF: 10892

Width: 38 cm (15")

Description

Stoneware, dolomite glaze, the mixed clays creating an integral cream spiral, impressed LR seal. In perfect condition with no damage or restoration.

'To make pottery is an adventure to me, every new work is a new beginning. Indeed I shall never cease to be a pupil. There seems to the casual onlooker little variety in ceramic shapes and designs. But to the lover of pottery there is an endless variety of the most exciting kind. And there is nothing sensational about it only a silent grandeur and quietness'

This vessel is a significant, early example of one of Rie's favourite and most characteristic techniques, the integral coloured spiral, which first appeared in 1967. By throwing pots from two different balls of coloured clays, pressed together but not mixed, a spiral pattern is made in the thrown pot and this is particularly clear if the potter uses very little water in the throwing. It is given a different quality in the turning and again affected in the firing, especially if the glaze is a pale one, which will be coloured by the ingredients of the darker clay. Although this simple device was not invented by her, Rie was the first modern artist to use it in Britain. Iconic examples of Rie's spiral decoration are much prized by collectors.

Rie has used one of her preferred techniques here and created surface interest in this vessel by adding metal oxides to the clay body so that they will bleed into the glaze. For darkened clay Lucie used either manganese copper oxide, cobalt or iron oxide and the metals in the clay affect the expansion and contraction rate when heat is applied. It was necessary to adjust the unaltered clay to match the oxidized clay and Rie added feldspar to the white clay to make a better integrated and stronger body.

In this vessel we see, Rie's distinctive practice of applying slips and glazes gradually with a brush, to create micro-variations in texture and depth, which in turn create a dramatic but subtle range of surface effects. Here the soft diffusion of colour, contains a carefully, controlled, volcanic texture.

This vessel also displays the uniqueness of Lucie's preferred process of raw-glazing her stonewares. There is no initial (bisque) firing of the clay so the glaze and body are matured at the same time, achieving an exceptional fusion. Technically, firings were long and slow and involved a short period of sleep snatched between kiln adjustments.

This large, vessel has as a strong, clear, sculptural form. The flaring lip has the appearance of floating on the womb-shaped body acting as a container and support. It is incredible to consider that it was thrown on the wheel by such a petite, artist, and turned by her so that no throwing lines are left visible to disrupt the crisp, profile and smooth surfaces.

Lucie Rie was born in Vienna and worked in England, and was one of the most influential artist potters of the 20th century. The splendor of her works, which incorporated the innovative trends of the early 20th-century Europe that had been occurring in the fields including architecture, design and science, has never faded but has been continuing to raise its reputation even 15 years after her death. It was not until the Arts Council's retro...