

MOORCROFT

SENIOR DESIGNER, RACHEL BISHOP
CELEBRATES 25-YEARS AT MOORCROFT

A SILVER SALUTE

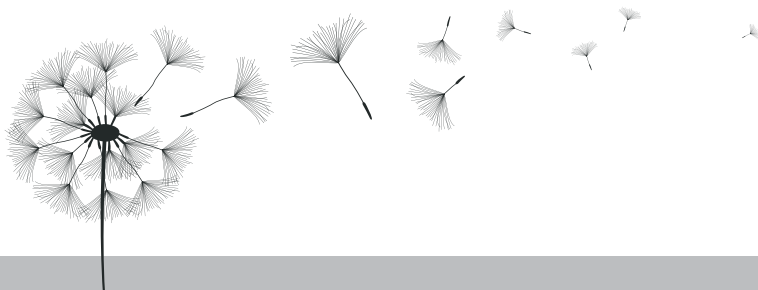


A SILVER SALUTE

RACHEL BISHOP'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

Rachel Bishop adores flowers, a family trait if ever there was one, and it was a trait nourished at an early age. Rachel grew up in the New Forest with its idyllic rays of light and colour created by the sun as it danced with the leaves and branches of an ancient woodland. Throughout her 25 years at Moorcroft, Rachel has dedicated herself to each new idea with her own, very special passion for colour, design harmony and ingenuity, but what has always won the hearts and minds of her followers in all of her design triumphs, has been her use of flowers, their shapes, their colours and even their more spiritual qualities. Many of her designs feature quintessentially British flowers such as bluebells and daffodils, but her profound love of flowers goes far beyond that. In this collection, we see a mere capsule of Rachel's favourite flowers and design styles, some coming with subtle nods to the designers of yesteryear and who continue to inspire her today. Morris, Voysey and Mackintosh - even Moorcroft's founding father, William Moorcroft himself, comes into the mix.

In her 25th year at Moorcroft, we continue to see remarkable designs from Rachel who graduated from Staffordshire University with a BA honours in design before joining Moorcroft as sole designer in 1993 aged just 24. On her arrival, she had become only the fourth Moorcroft designer in 100 years, yet Rachel continues to astound, enrapture and delight enthusiasts with her unique Moorcroft style and her instinctive choice of colour, in very much the same way that she has done over the past 25 years. On this, her silver design anniversary, we salute her skills of today as well as her ability to reach back into the past and unlock the secrets of yesterday.

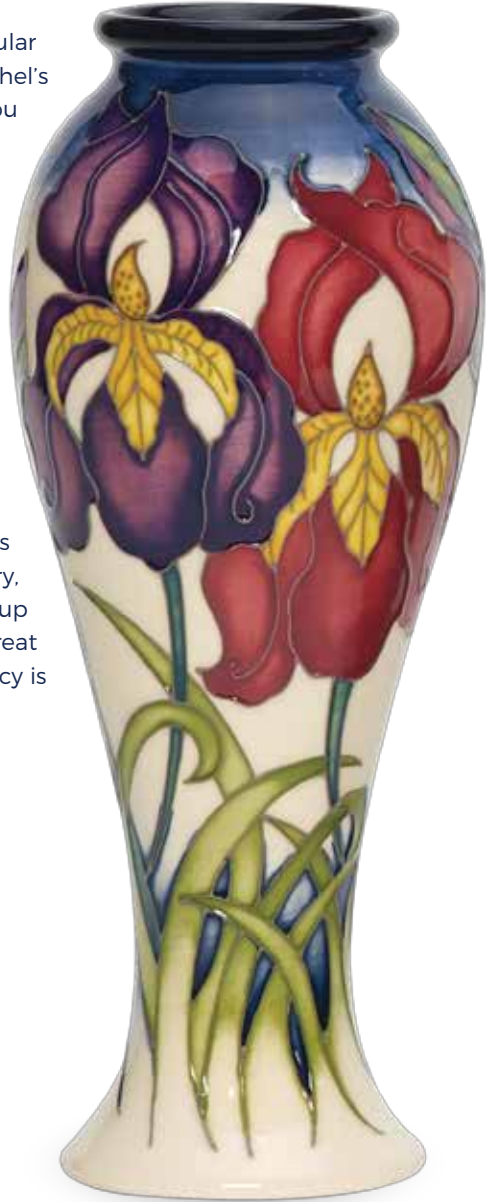


A SILVER SALUTE

Shape: 75/8

Numbered Edition

Designed on one of the most popular Moorcroft shapes of all time, Rachel's celebratory design is there to make you smile. Its presence signifies that its creator has survived 25 years in a job which she loves. The iris is a floral symbol for 'twenty-five years' and it is the rich purple and dark, reddish-orange blooms which capture the attention of all those who set eyes on it. Almost uniquely, Rachel makes little use of the leaves, giving the impression of a bunch of flowers rather than a structured design. Certainly, the rim and the neck are a shaded dark blue, but the designer has left the base of the vase in pure ivory, giving an impression of flowers floating up to the sky in thin air - the mark of a great designer who has realised that her legacy is in her work.



TIME FLIES

Shape: 365/15 **Limited Edition:** 50

Rachel's signature dandelions continue to seek their own destiny after flowering has ceased. This time, they arrive at Moorcroft mixed with wild grasses and colourful flowers of the hedgerow. All of them take their rightful place at the front of the designer's anniversary collection. Many would agree that on reaching her 25th milestone, 'time flies'. Well, so too do dandelion seeds, especially when subjected to the breath of a child, eager to know the time! In this delightful design, dandelion seeds still cling precariously to their 'clock' which nestles among a hedgerow made up of blackberries and brambles. Because time can fly, Rachel's blackberries are ripe yet still interspersed with white blossom, not unlike gemstones in a wild shrubbery. *Time Flies* is absolutely classic Rachel Bishop.



THE WINDS OF MARCH

Shape: 11/6

Limited Edition: 40

Daffodil designs are almost as old as Moorcroft itself. In truth they stretch back to the days when William Moorcroft was employed by James Macintyre & Co., between 1897 to 1913, and it was during those years that the humble daffodil made its debut as a fine Florianware vase. After that, only a handful of pieces made an appearance. Daffodils did not re-emerge in Moorcroft design until decades later, largely because of the efforts of its new, young designer, Rachel Bishop. It was in 1995, that Rachel created a ground-breaking design simply called Daffodils. The flower had literally leap-frogged into contemporary Moorcroft, where Daffodils became one of the most successful limited editions of its time. These days, a year does not pass at Moorcroft without a new, stunning and vibrant daffodil design. Unique colouration and shapes convincingly lends the flowers to the Moorcroft style, and every time that Rachel has bestowed her rich pigments and detailed linework on daffodils they have emerged from the kilns with what can only be described as well-earned floral royalty. In *Winds of March*, more glorious daffodils parade their trumpets against a dramatic, dark background, their petals, which we are so accustomed to seeing as yellow, take on two distinctive colours; a soft, creamy buttermilk and wholesome ochre. All of us will celebrate these cheerful blooms and the designer who has captured them so wonderfully for 25 years after literally resurrecting them from history.



PRETTY PENNY

Open Editions

Against all odds, fritillaries can still carpet a field where every flower sways open in the breeze not unlike a Moroccan lantern. Yes, such fields are rare, but there is a history attached to them which reaches back into the mists of time. In late spring, the old market at Covent Garden would find itself overflowing with the burgundy-pink chequered blooms of snakeshead fritillaries. Bunches picked from the water meadows adjoining the River Thames were taken to the market by local children to be sold for a 'pretty penny or two'. Sadly, modern agricultural practices, particularly that of draining land and applying weed killers to produce crops for us all to eat, have decimated those carpets of wild fritillaries, leading to a sharp decline across the country.

As a requiem for this delicate, late-spring beauty, which Rachel tellingly describes as 'so exotic you can hardly believe it belongs in our country'.



CL1



72/6



364/5



965



VOYSEY'S ORCHARD

Shape: 101/14 **Limited Edition:** 25

Within the decorative arts, Charles Voysey (1857-1941), was an adventurous designer who embraced the notion of actually bringing the garden into the house, with birds and trees as favoured motifs, symbolising 'unspoilt nature'. In 1899, Voysey created one of his most famous designs, hand woven into a woollen carpet manufactured by A. Morton & Co. in 1897 (the year that William Moorcroft was first employed by James Macintyre & Co), for the nursery at Berrington Hall, Leominster. The woven carpet shows the influence of William Morris's principles of pattern design with its use of plant forms and animals as standard motifs. In a very similar way, many of Rachel's designs are dominated by flowing patterns incorporating birds, deer, hearts, flowers and trees in silhouette. The Moorcroft designer has manipulated Voysey's patterns of yesteryear into immaculate and very contemporary ceramic artwork for modern homes. *Voysey's Orchard* is a quaint testament to this talent and, curiously, it is also the namesake of the home which Voysey built for himself and his wife at Chorleywood in Hertfordshire.



SAPPHIRE BLUES

Shape: 10/5

Numbered Edition

Blue is not a colour readily identifiable with the senior designer at Moorcroft, but when it arrives to take a bow in a Bishop design, it is usually very special indeed and more often than not, inspired by an unusual experience. This, Rachel recalls vividly, was the outcome of trip to the Lake District in freezing cold weather when her car decided to die on her. Waiting for rescue, she sat mesmerised at the landscape with its frost-laden trees and dark blue sky. The result was an anniversary design complete with geometric lines and elegant purity. The designer introduces a vision in deep indigo and sapphire blues. She sees cold and tranquil lakes surrounded by a mountain landscape with stylized trees adorned exquisitely with simple hoops for branches. Flowers in the foreground have been tubelined in extra thick slip clay to achieve a tactile surface, whilst hints of emerald give the trees a gem-stone effect. This is Rachel at her very best – a piece worthy of a good home.

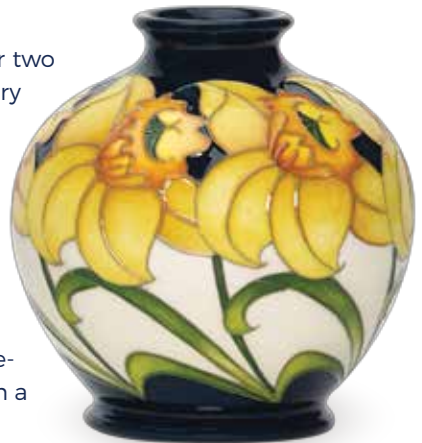


SUNRISE IN SPRING

Shape: 41/4

Limited Edition: 50

Rachel Bishop must be forgiven for asking for two daffodil designs in her 25th Anniversary Collection. As much as anything, it was because, however much she tried, she could not make up her mind as to which was the most representative design for the occasion. The 41/4 shape had always been a favourite, but it was the pure yellow of her daffodils in *Sunrise in Spring* which won the day. These daffodils had all the qualities of spring sunshine – always a welcome sight to discover in flowers on a cold day.



OTLEY CHEVIN

Open Editions

As the days lengthen and the earth warms, the Yorkshire Dales begin their calls to keen walkers everywhere, but before you surrender to the siren summons of the green lanes and purple moors, it is worth spending at least a few hours enjoying one of the finest experiences the English countryside has to offer. In late April and early May, attention shifts to the colourful delights and perfumes of a walk in Otley Chevin at the height of the bluebell season. The reason is flowers, literally millions of them, lowering their heads into a sea of blue. For a precious few weeks, the spring sunshine filters through what is still a sparse canopy of leaves to illuminate the display, whilst all around the air is suffused with the heady scent of the bluebells. It is just such a scene, of a carpet of bluebells, that inspired Rachel to create this incredibly nostalgic *Otley Chevin* trio.



104/6

PLQ 5

372/5

HAZEL BISHOP

Shape: 80/12 **Limited Edition:** 30

Hazel Bishop's love of flowers went beyond knowledge gleaned from literature and into the realms of experimentation and change, and it was Rachel's mother who actually cultivated a brand-new variety of dahlia now called *Hazel Bishop* which are planted in Birmingham's Botanical Gardens. It was at this point that her greatest influence on her daughter can still be seen. For Hazel, subtle changes of colour in a flower were a cause of excitement: new shapes in a floral species were a source of wonder. A handful of flower species came close to Hazel's heart, and one of them was the dahlia. The design is structured in a contemporary rework of the old Florian style, but with rich burgundy flowers, each with strong, yellowish centres. The linework on the leaves encases a dark, blue-black ground colour against which the dahlias sit organised and proud. This is very much a daughter's tribute to her mother.



IMAGINATION

Shape: JU7

Numbered Edition

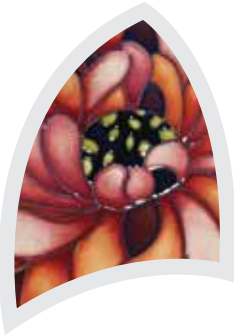
Even in her early years at Moorcroft, Rachel already had an instinctive grip on the Arts and Crafts style of England's much-loved art pottery. A quarter of a century later, that style must surely flow through the senior designer's veins, just as it must have done with William Moorcroft. It is always cheerful news when a moment of celebration brings with it a design good enough to cause a sharp intake of breath at its artistic and technical qualities and the surge of imagination which must have literally fired its creation. Something truly magical must have happened. For *Imagination*, Rachel selected the familiar yet classical JU7 jug shape, covering its surface with soft cream flowers and buds all set against a lightly-washed yellow ground. Rachel's jug has a dark neck, rim and handle matched with the same colour at the foot. So good is *Imagination* that it must be one of those designs which would have caused father William to raise his eyebrows in approval before gently nodding his head as a sign of respect to the next generation! This design has all the qualities of something very special indeed.



REFLECTIONS ON WILLIAM MORRIS

Shape: 159/18 **Limited Edition:** 15

At Moorcroft, everyone knew that William Morris would secure a place in Rachel's 25th Anniversary Collection. From the outset of her career, she has consistently professed a love both of him and his work and Rachel's career has been a manifestation of the truth of that statement. *Reflections on William Morris* is a prestigious vase by any definition. Although not flambé'd by Wendy Mason's magical paintbrush, it comes as close as it could without actually crossing the flambé line. The red and dark orange shaded flowers wind their regal way up the body of the vase, accompanied on their journey by greenish blue leaves all set against a coral, pink and red ground colour (similar to the one used by Rachel in her hugely successful 1993 Pansy range). At a major event, the first trial of *Reflections on William Morris* was picked up in admiration more times than any other vase on display.



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