



FULL FATHOM FIVE
Designer: Vicky Lovatt
Shape: 42/12 Height: 12"/30cm
LIMITED EDITION: 50

To some, this may seem a grotesque misogynistic work. This depends, of course, on your perspective, and which literary words you choose to hold true. Throughout the play, there are references to falconry, and it is through this window that we can soar into higher echelons as we witness Petruchio enduring the same deprivations as Katherine in much the same way as owners socialise birds of prey. When he says he will deny her of sleep, he does not sleep. It could be said that Petruchio outwits Katherine simply because he loves her. He calls things that are not, as if they were – all because he loves her. It is here that the Moorcroft shrew is given life:

PETRUCHIO

"No, not a bit. I find you quite gentle. I was told that you were violent, proud, and sullen. But now I see that people have been lying about you, for you are funny, playful, and beautifully behaved, not sharp-tongued, but as sweet as flowers in springtime.

Translated by Nicola into Springtime flowers, Lily of the Valley and Mascari, **The Taming** is effortless in its beauty. In gentle, submissive motions, the designer's flower heads of regal purples and pure whites bow their heads in reverence to a vision of beauty. A vision that was decided at the outset by Nicola to celebrate grace. In her real life disposition and peaceful nature, Nicola's own personality emits this grace, and **The Taming** goes into the Moorcroft's **A Tribute to William Shakespeare** as a true reflection of this gentle soul

To complete the homily to William Shakespeare, although many designs have flooded through, trial after trial, in waves of frantic perfection, it transpires that **The Tempest**, would be cast in clay through Ariel's Song, and we add with delight, Caliban is not part of the design.

*Full fathom five thy father lies
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell
Ding dong*

Hark! Now I hear them-ding dong bell.

Full Fathom Five by Vicky Lovatt is inspired by the second stanza of Ariel's song, where Ferdinand, the Prince of Naples, has just been washed ashore having survived a shipwreck in which his father has supposedly drowned. Before the young nobleman can catch his breath, the spirit Ariel arrives to taunt him in song with those words. These lines suggest Ferdinand is truly alone, and not merely lost. It is true that many are tossed and buffeted in storms of life itself, and yet we are, on occasion, able to see the beautiful truth – a strange, creative force within us propels us forward. Shadows may still lurk in the darkness, but they are just that – shadows, and they will soon pass. Indeed, Ariel's song is a ruse. Alonso, Ferdinand's father, lives, as do the crew members of his miraculously preserved ship and all its passengers. The storm has been entirely conjured up by a mischievous spirit who is woven into Vicky's design with all the froth and bleakness of a perfect storm – so perfect, in fact, that you have to hold your breath, as you toss and turn with surging waves, the drama appears real in **Full Fathom Five**. Shakespeare, the most celebrated playwright of all time, humbles the human spirit to show that a drama can be made out of a crisis but a crisis should never be made out of a drama.



A TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Some say, Shakespeare's ability to bring his characters to life is surpassed by none. He runs with innate knowledge of king and the beggar, the hero and the pickpocket, and the sage and the idiot – all have a voice as they speak and act with equal truth. Indeed, our beloved playwright and poet not only transports himself to distant ages and foreign nations, but he also allows his human characters to have great depth. For a Moorcroft designer, his inspiration is endless, as he opens the gates of the magical world of spirits; calls up the midnight ghost; introduces a humorous nature to death, courting and nuptials; and hijacks scenes with fairies and sylphs – and all of them, like the birth of each Moorcroft design, exist only in his imagination, and possess such truth and consistency, that even when deformed monsters like Caliban, the offspring of the witch Sycorax and the devil in Shakespeare's **The Tempest**, take centre stage, Shakespeare extorts such conviction, that if there should be such beings, they would conduct themselves in exactly the same way Shakespeare describes.

In a word, as the famous bard takes intriguing characters into nature, through wood and clearing, he does something rather special, and takes nature into the regions of fancy, lying beyond the confines of reality. We are lost in astonishment at seeing the extraordinary, the wonderful, and the unheard of, in such intimate nearness. Unsurprisingly, Moorcroft, itself rooted in the Arts and Crafts tradition, seeks to entice the natural world into the interior, spearheads a homily to Shakespeare primarily through flowers to mark the 400th anniversary of death. Indeed, flowers in all his plays hold deep significance – no more so than in his excruciatingly complicated play, *Cymbeline*.



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A Tribute To William Shakespeare 04/16



FAITHFUL
 Designer: Vicky Lovatt
 Shape: 104/6 Height: 67/15cm
 NUMBERED EDITION

Faithful is the work of Moorcroft designer Vicky Lovatt, inspired by *Cymbeline*, and considers the illusions of death and identity. The words are for Fidele, meaning faithful, upon 'his' alleged death. In fact, Fidele, is a maiden called Imogen, disguised as a boy, and she is not dead at all.

*With fairest flower
 While summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,
 I'll sweeten thy sad grave; thou shalt not lack
 The flower that s like thy face, pale primrose, nor
 The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins, no, nor
 The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
 Out-sweeten'd not thy breath*

The Moorcroft designer weaves bluebells, primroses and the leaf of eglantine (the sweet briar rose) to dazzle against an elegant black ground with vibrant violets, buttermilk primroses, and the flushed pinks of a young maide – all bubbling up from a swell of inspirational, clear-blue, life-giving waters. Vicky displays her innate zeal to lift the spirit in a glorious ascension to the firmament as flowers glide effortlessly up a slender stem against a mysterious black curtain. And why the cowslip?

*On her left breast
 A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops,
 l' the bottom of a cowslip:
 here's a voucher,
 Stronger than ever law could make;
 This secret will force him to think I have pick'd the lock
 And ta'en the treasure of her honour.*

Imogen's honour is an essential tenet of the story as the devious Iachimo endeavours to convince her husband that she has given herself to him. This is not true. Iachimo steals into her bedroom and observes a mole on her left breast which appears like 'the bottom of a cowslip.' So there we have it. Shakespeare's celebrated *Cymbeline* captured through floral design just 'as you like it.

Cousin to Emma Rice, artistic director of Shakespeare's Globe in London, England, Moorcroft's senior designer Rachel Bishop has also championed *Cymbeline* in her own contribution to Moorcroft's **A Tribute to William Shakespeare** in her design named, **Imogen**. Innogen was known as the name of a legendary British queen. Interestingly, the first recorded use of Imogen is by Shakespeare himself for his own British princess, who travels incognito as Fidele. It is thought that Shakespeare may well have written Innogen, and it was printed as Imogen by mistake, thereafter becoming an accepted form of the name. Many have considered it a misprint. Further evidence of this was that Shakespeare used the older form Innogen for a ghost character in early editions of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

With much ado in such a complicated plot, Rachel decided to simplify her tribute to Shakespeare and take only the azure harebell as her inspiration, spurred on by the fact that before bluebells were an endangered species, people would wear them in their lapels to honour the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. It is widely thought that Shakespeare was referring to wild bluebells and not the harebell in *Cymbeline*. In truth, they do not make the precipitate assault on the senses that bluebells do in a wood when the massed carpet of colour is so astounding that, for a second, you are lost for words, and the trees seem to be growing out of a layer of hazy-blue



IMOGEN
 Senior Designer: Rachel Bishop
 Shape: 85/11 Height: 117/27.5cm
 NUMBERED EDITION

smoke swirling along the ground. And so it is with Rachel's **Imogen** as bluebells nod their delicate heads in an intense profusion of azure blue as stylised ribbons of sage green dangle as if stage props awaiting the black stage curtains on the rim and base of the vase to close. Centre stage is the bluebell, dazzling under an intense brilliant-white ground. Another Shakespearean masterpiece, *The Taming of The Shrew*, has also been translated into the Applied Arts by another Moorcroft Design Studio member, Nicola Slaney. This romantic comedy, contains a passionate volley of humorous insults and slurs, as each suiter endeavours



THE TAMING
 Designer: Nicola Slaney
 Shape: 158/8 Height: 87/20cm
 NUMBERED EDITION

to tame *The Shrew*. That is, until Petruchio arrives on scene. He remains undaunted despite Katherine's vehement denial of his advances. With cunning, Petruchio manages to outwit Katherine, and she is brought to a place where she is prepared to see matters through his word only. It is then, that her real transformation begins. The play ends with Katherine willing to obey Petruchio, now her husband, in all his requests, much to the amazement of the banquet guests, stunned at the taming of the shrew.