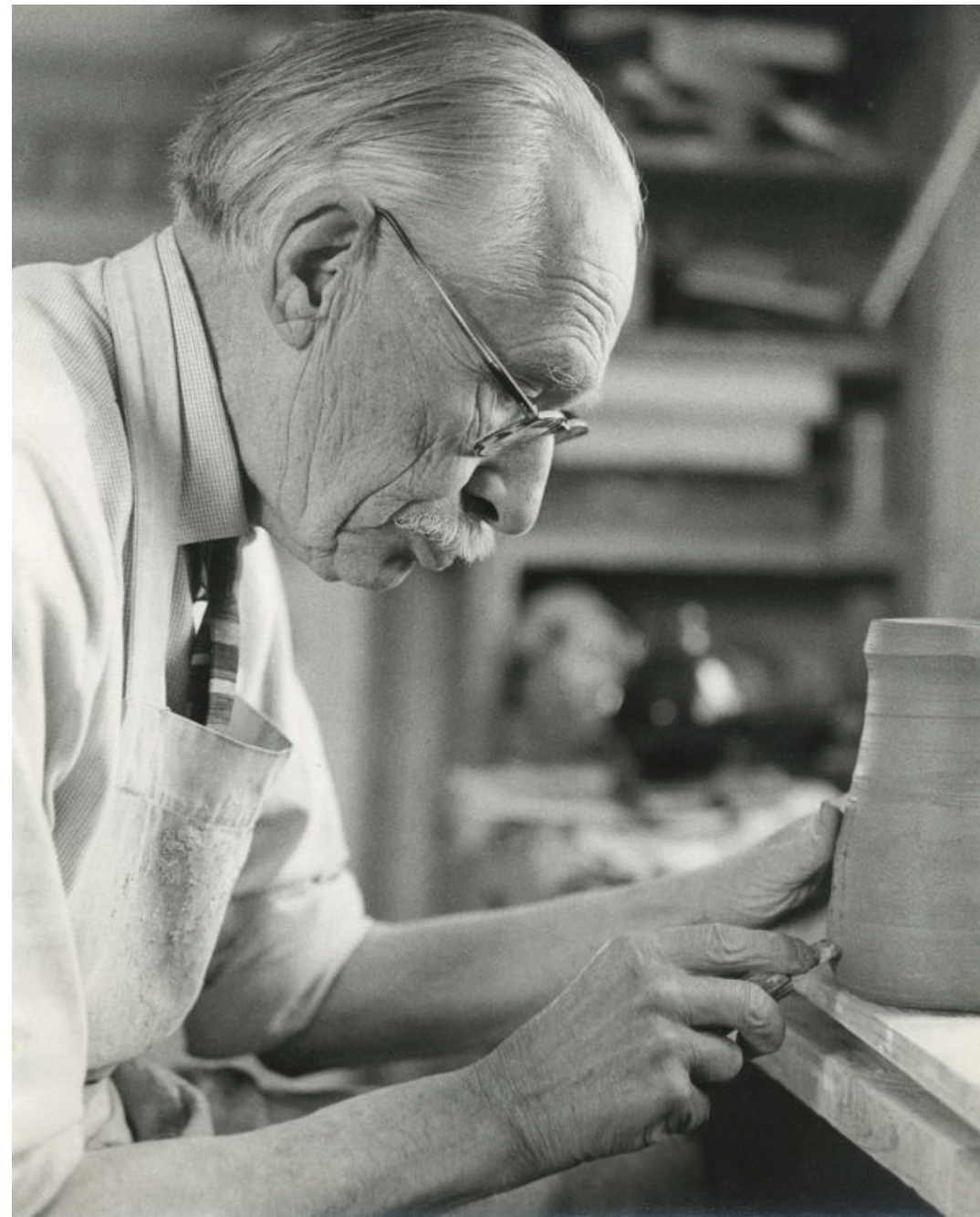


# FUNCTION



*"Pots, like all forms of art, are human expressions."*  
– Bernard Leach

At the beginning of the 20th century in Europe, most ceramic pieces were made in large factories that employed skilled craftsmen to create utilitarian or “decorative” objects, such as cups, bowls, vases, and plates. As a departure from this factory-centered practice, two figures became the most influential in shaping the modern studio ceramics movement: Shoji Hamada, a Japanese Mingei (folk) potter, and Bernard Leach, an English potter. Traveling to Japan to study, Leach combined the 19th-century Arts and Crafts philosophy of handmade objects with the Japanese view of potters as artists in their own right. In 1920, Hamada travelled to England to help Leach set up his influential pottery in St. Ives, Cornwall.

Another influential figure in Europe was Lucie Rie, who brought a Modernist aesthetic to ceramics. Having fled to England from Hitler’s regime, she made abstract, austere, and minimalist ceramics influenced by geometric shapes and nonfigurative sculpture, offering other ways to think about the possibilities of ceramic forms. Though the ceramicists in this section were experimental in their techniques and philosophies, they adhered to the traditional forms or shapes of functional ceramics.