

Kate Malone: A Celebration of Clay

Curated by Ann Elliott for Canary Wharf Group
LOBBY, ONE CANADA SQUARE
 Canary Wharf, London E14 5AB
20 January – 14 March 2014
 Lobby, One Canada Square
 Monday to Friday 5.30am-midnight
 Saturday & Sunday 7am-11.30pm
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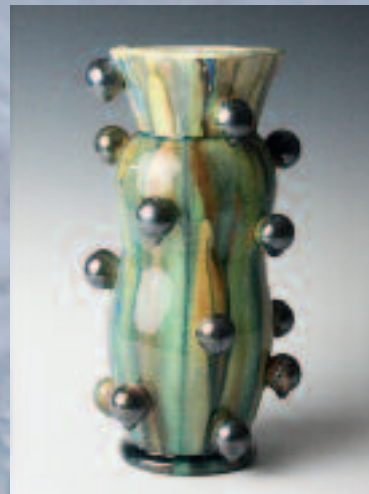
Kate Malone: A Celebration of Clay

When stepping through Kate Malone's studio door one finds oneself, mistakenly one thinks, in the family kitchen, beyond which are kilns and workstations giving onto a courtyard garden. Strewn on the table are papers, drawings, and an abandoned coffee cup. There are people too: family members, assistants, a secretary, all presided over by the energetic and ebullient Kate. The dog Booba, part of the throng, meets and greets and retires to his basket. Everything about the place is warm and generous and very focused. The open plan architecture speaks for Malone's vision of life and work.

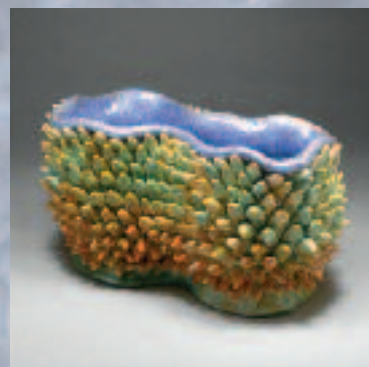
Her studio is virtually devoid of finished pots, but what is most interesting is the evidence of process and progress as Kate and her assistants work and discuss experiments, trial pieces and problems needing to be solved. As for the completed pots they have gone: to her gallery, to collectors and to collections worldwide. Everything that remains tells this artist's story from raw clay to glossy ceramic vessel.

The work of Kate Malone is firmly based in her love and observation of the natural world. The pieces are generous and giving, reflecting her liberality of spirit. When embarking on her career, Malone thought that she would make beautiful but practical ceramics, tableware for people to enjoy. Because of her robust way of working with clay she found that her pieces could not compete with the good design of mass-produced items found in Ikea or the Conran Shop. Instead she found her metier in ceramics of the most exotic kind, redolent of Art Nouveau, Majolica, Minton and Palissy for example. Historical British wares are also important to her, particularly the traditions developed in Stoke-on-Trent, which give her the feeling of being part of a continuum within the world of clay.

For this exhibition Malone has chosen to show



Striped Atomic Jar 2012
Crystalline-glazed stoneware



A Twin Evergreen Bud Bowl 2006
Crystalline-glazed stoneware



Monumental Forest Fern 2010
Crystalline-glazed stoneware

ceramics from some of the themes that recur time and again in her repertoire, which include Pumpkins, Fennels, Gourds and Atomics. Her interest in the Atom finds expression in her work through the pot becoming the nucleus around which electrons orbit. Fruits, leaves, flowers, garlands, nuts and buds are also channelled into her ebullient forms.

With optimism and joy as her defining philosophy, Malone works her magic first on the clay, which she coils or moulds into the form of a vessel. Smaller pieces are for the most part intuitively fashioned whereas larger works must be planned. Her preferred clay is T-Material. Being resilient and tolerant, this clay is excellent for large items and hand building. It also resists warping, its texture is coarse and it is off-white in colour when fired, which renders the glazes very bright, glossy and transparent. Her large pieces are built quite thickly for strength and stability. Malone also uses porcelain from time to time for its white purity.

Malone's ceramics are rarely unadorned. Many are covered in added elements, made from smaller press-moulds and bonded to the surface of a pot for additional texture and character, for example the diamond-shaped nodules on a pineapple, seeds to form an overall texture, or sprigs of leaves and acorns in three dimensions that she clusters round a pot mimicking their abundance on a tree. She also makes plaster press-moulds with which to stamp designs into a pot's surface. Her imagination in this area of her work is seemingly limitless. The electrons encircling her atomic pots are also moulded in two parts in different sizes before being attached to the pot. Malone's is a time-consuming art, done with gusto, precision and absolute pleasure.

Once it has been fired to bisque at 1000° centigrade, a pot is ready to receive its glaze. In a separate studio nearby, Malone tests glazes and experiments, keeping meticulous records of glaze recipes and firing conditions. She has thousands of these tests neatly filed in drawers



Black Mirror Atomic Jar 2012
Crystalline-glazed stoneware



A Baby Baby Pumpkin 2013
Crystalline-glazed stoneware

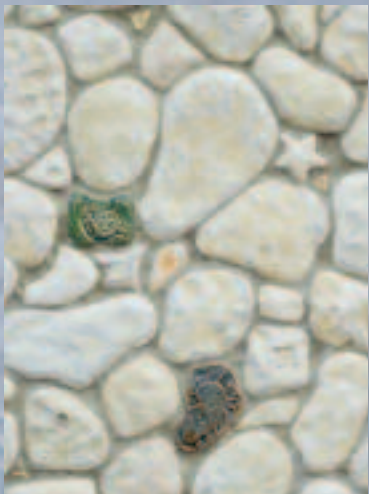
of two large cabinets and so is able to call on any glaze recipe test with confidence that it may be replicated. The colours she brings to her pots are made more luminous when seen against white clay. Watching Malone or one of her studio assistants apply with a paint brush glaze that is as thick as double cream, in colours the shades of chalky blues, pinks and browns, it is difficult to imagine that they will transform into transparent, shiny smooth surfaces of altered colour through melting and bonding with the clay body. She also uses crystalline glazes for their highly decorative qualities. The way in which they reflect light and the depth they give to the surface of a pot, particularly within the crystal clusters that grow in the glaze during the cooling process once the pot has been fired, is extraordinarily hard to predict.

At the topmost temperature in the kiln – 1260° for porcelain – the glazes Malone uses become liquid and slip down the pot to form pools in its contours or at its foot. This would ruin the kiln floor if she did not use waste moulds or dishes on which to stand the pots and catch the waste glaze. The glaze adheres to both the pot and the waste mould and must be removed using a grinding tool, a procedure undertaken by her partner Graham Inglefield. This is a risky process, but with the skill acquired through years of practice, it is a system that works.

As well as her London studio, Malone also has a studio in France, although she has not worked there recently. She does her utmost to draw on instinct in all her work, feeling that her London pots are English in essence, while those made in France assume a French aura.

Kate Malone works in three general areas: creating studio pots that are one-off pieces, occasionally producing affordable short-run production line pieces, and undertaking commissions with architects, designers and public art agencies. She is currently working on her largest architectural project to date. After two years of research and design, Malone and her team, with architects, developers, planners and Froyle Pottery, are now 25% into production of a 1,000 metre square ceramic tile façade for a building in Central London.

In 2003–04 Malone undertook a commission for the Children's Reading Room, Royal Jubilee Library, at Brighton Public Library. Titled **Wall of a Thousand Stories**, it consisted of 91 wall pieces hung on a 16-metre wall that was to be used by visitors to the library as an



American Express Headquarters, Brighton 2012 (detail)
Crystalline-glazed tiles
photo: Jim Stephenson

interactive device to tell stories. This, and a later exterior project for the American Express Headquarters building, also in Brighton, was inspired by Malone's own experience of telling her young daughter instantly conjured up stories based on three selected objects. The telling was creative, educational and funny as well as providing a vehicle whereby she could impart information that she wanted her daughter to know. Cladding the wall of the American Express building with handmade tiles gave Malone the opportunity to engage with the local community, and she worked with schools and employees of American Express to produce 15,000 individual pieces. Working with Malone herself and her studio assistants, they created unique tiles, in sparkling crystalline glazes, some of which were highly coloured, adding accents of jewel-like interest here and there

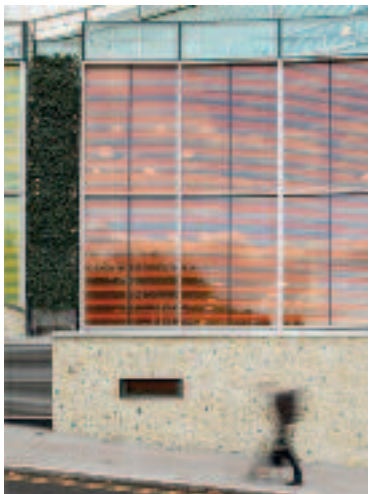
across the wall surface. These tiles were inspired by the flint and brick walls found in Brighton and also the background patterns of French porcelain pots that Malone had recently been studying.

Without the support of a very good dealer, life for the creative artist is not easy, as he or she needs to sell, to be promoted and to benefit from projects and sales brokered on their behalf. Kate Malone has worked for 18 years exclusively with Adrian Sassoon, whose dealership represents many artists who are held in high regard, not only in London but internationally. She acknowledges and celebrates this relationship with the warmth of a long-standing and professional friendship.

On leaving Kate Malone's London studio and reflecting on my visit it became clear that working with ceramics provides a mix of challenges, hurdles and demands for the artist. Notwithstanding chance and invention and also the need to be scientifically engaged with materials and processes, Malone's creativity is virtually palpable. 'Making', she says 'is sheer pleasure. Glaze is the most testing. Firing tells you that you can never take anything for granted. There are gifts and shocks; firing is toxic, difficult and risky even if you have been meticulous. The kiln does a lot of the work. If I am lucky results are good, as opposed to trips, cracks or explosions!'

By the door was a Belfast sink, beautifully made industrially but colourfully glazed by Malone – the beginnings of a new project no doubt. At the heart of it all is clay. *Hooray for Clay!* is Kate Malone's signature.

Ann Elliott December 2013



American Express Headquarters, Brighton 2012
Crystalline-glazed tiles
photo: Jim Stephenson

Kate Malone was born in London in 1959 and studied for a BA in Ceramics at Bristol Polytechnic 1979–82 and for an MA at the Royal College of Art, London 1983–86. Since 1987 she has exhibited widely in Britain, Europe, Canada and USA. Her work is in numerous private and public collections, including Arts Council, London; Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery; British Council; Crafts Council; Contemporary Art Society; Gallery Oldham, Greater Manchester; Geoffrey Museum, London; Harley Foundation Collection, Welbeck, Nottinghamshire; Leeds City Art Gallery; McManus Galleries & Museum, Dundee; Manchester City Art Gallery; National Museum & Gallery of Wales; Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery; Paisley Museum & Art Gallery; Stoke-on-Trent Museum; The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; The Cleveland Arts Trust; Ulster Museum, Belfast; V&A Museum, London; York City Art Gallery; Musée National de Céramique, Sèvres, France; Boise Art Museum, Idaho, USA; J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, USA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA; Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA; Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Montreal, Canada.

Malone lives and works in London, and at times in France. For more information visit www.katemaloneceramics.com or www.adriansassoon.com

Canary Wharf is most grateful to Adrian Sassoon for facilitating the loans of ceramics for this exhibition and to Kate Malone for working creatively and enthusiastically with us.

ADRIAN SASSOON

EVENT Tuesday 4 February, from 6.30 to 7.15 pm
 Curator Ann Elliott tours the exhibition with Kate Malone
 Tickets are free but please contact Canary Wharf Public Art Office at visualart@canarywharf.com to reserve a place

Photographs courtesy of Adrian Sassoon, London unless otherwise credited

Most of the works are for sale
 Contact Canary Wharf Public Art Office for a price list

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| LIST OF WORKS
Dimensions:
height x width x depth
or height x diameter | Small Palm Trunk 2011
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
18.5 x 16 cm | A Daisy Meadow Vase 2012
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
51 x 33 cm |
| A Twin Evergreen Bud Bowl 2006
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
18 x 31 x 16 cm | An Acorn Box 2011
Crystalline-glazed stoneware and matt base, limited edition 22 of 30 each with a unique glaze
22 x 16 cm | Medium Squash 2012
Crystalline-glazed stoneware, limited edition 2 of 30 each with a unique glaze
35 x 15 cm |
| Leafy Madame Pichet 2008
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
23 x 22 x 15 cm | An Acorn Box 2011
Crystalline-glazed stoneware and matt base, limited edition 23 of 30 each with a unique glaze
21 x 16 cm | Daisy Meadow Gourd 2013
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
53 x 32 cm |
| 'All Praise to the Acorn' Jug 2009
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
27 x 30 x 19 cm | A Pair of Lady Vases 2011
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
30 x 12.5 cm | Mother Pumpkin 2013
Crystalline-glazed stoneware, limited edition 3 of 12 each with a unique glaze
24 x 30 x 29 cm |
| Secret Garden 2010
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
67 x 56 cm | The Bud 2011
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
100 x 63.5 cm | A Baby Baby Pumpkin 2013
Crystalline-glazed stoneware, limited edition 11 of 30
17 x 18 x 16 cm |
| Monumental Fennel 2010
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
85 x 60 x 57 cm | Exotic Flower Vase 2012
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
27 x 22 cm | Black Balls and Pips Vase 2013
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
18 x 18 x 14 cm |
| Monumental Button Lady Gourd 2010
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
100 x 65 cm | Black Mirror Atomic Jar 2012
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
55 x 42 cm | Stem Vase 2013
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
16 x 8 cm |
| Monumental Forest Fern 2010
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
80 x 65 x 60 cm | Striped Atomic Vase 2012
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
29.5 x 16 cm | Snap-Dragon Vase 2013
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
15 x 14 cm |
| Monumental Acorn Pot 2010
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
64 x 65 x 60 cm | A Large Open Vase 2010
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
51 x 28 cm | Cushioned Atomic Vase 2013
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
23 x 22 cm |
| | | Monumental Atomic Necklace Jar 2014
Crystalline-glazed stoneware
Approx. 90 x 60 cm |