

# Fruits of the Earth and Sea

ceramics by  
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Manchester City Art Galleries

30 April - 20 October 1994

Kate Malone is one of the most imaginative and dynamic potters working in Britain today. Now aged thirty-five, full of exuberance and bursting with life, Malone is clearly in her prime. The current exhibition at Manchester City Art Galleries celebrates her achievements to date, and traces the development of the rich imagery she has adopted in her work over the course of the last fifteen years. It also draws attention to her public commissions, including

full the rich imagery of the sea - *Fruits de Mer* - and more recently the fruits of the earth. She is best known for her bold sculptural ceramics in the form of fish, lobsters, pumpkins and pineapples. Her work is by no means straightforwardly representational, however. Many of the pieces she produces are on a larger-than-life scale, and their visual impact is further intensified by the potter's bold experimentation with multi-coloured and multi-layered glazes. Also of interest is the relationship of her work to historical ceramics, particularly traditional Staffordshire pottery of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, excellent examples of which are to be found in the collection at Manchester.

Malone's output is very wide-ranging. She works concurrently on one-off studio pots, limited edition ceramics and serial produced wares, as well as designing for industrial production for a factory in Stoke-on-Trent, and working to special commission producing public art works. Many of these issues are discussed in a conversation recorded recently with the potter, which also traces Malone's education and career to date.



a large ceramic vase in the form of a giant pineapple which has been commissioned for the City Art Gallery Cafe in Manchester this year.

Since leaving the Royal College of Art in 1986 Kate Malone has produced a series of eye-catching pots which have explored to the

Lesley Jackson

Keeper of Art (Collections)

Manchester City Art Galleries



# Kate Malone

in conversation with Lesley Jackson

## *Where did you grow up?*

I was born in London in 1959, and at about the age of four I moved to the outskirts of Bristol.

## *Do you think of Bristol as being where your roots are?*

Yes, definitely. It's going home when I go to Bristol. I'd like to end up there. I'm a West Country girl.

## *What did your parents do?*

My dad's a sports journalist, so he wrote about football and golf, and always used to ask me when I was getting a proper job! But really, both my parents were very encouraging and supportive. Only recently have my brothers stopped teasing me about being an artist! They thought it was pie in the sky. My grandfather was an artist. My mum's also very artistic, and she's started doing pottery. It's very good. She's a natural.

## *What sort of schools did you go to? Just local schools?*

Yes, local. Westbury-on-Trym C of E school. And then a very big comprehensive school (I think it had 1400 pupils), which was, in its time, one of the prime examples of comprehensive schooling, with a good art department.

## *What do you think triggered off your interest in art? Was it the schools you went to or was it a spontaneous thing that you think would have happened anyway?*

It's very difficult to say really. I remember I loved colouring things in. I loved doing patterns inside patterns, where the concept was already there and you had to colour it in. Or beadwork, or Spirograph, and Etch-a-Sketch. I used to embroider a lot, but it was always an iron-on transfer that you bought at the shop, which I'd then do strange things to! I think that I must have always been, in essence, a craftsperson.

When I went to secondary school I used to look through the mucky window of the pottery room. You could just about see through it because it was always covered in clay. And I used to see all these things on the shelves and really, genuinely, I used to say to myself, one day I'm going to know what all those things do. I knew it was like a vocation. I probably dramatise it now, but I definitely used to pull myself up on my tiptoes and look through this window. We didn't get to do ceramics until we were thirteen or fourteen. The art teacher was a dusty character. He was this odd artistic one, and I always thought he was really cool. He encouraged my work. I've always loved the craft of ceramics and just making things.



### ***So when did you actually start making ceramics?***

When I was about fourteen. But I remember right back to primary school when you had to make fairy cakes out of dough and paint them. I can remember loving that. Then I went through my O Level and then my A Level in ceramics at school, and it was a natural progression to go on. I was told about this college where they had foundation, so I went to see it and applied. It was the obvious course to take.

### ***So even before you went to college, you knew what you wanted to do?***

I thought that going on foundation and going to college, that I'd change my mind. I thought I wanted to do ceramics, but I was very open to change.

I dipped into all sort of things, but at the end I still wanted to use clay.



*...I was very open to change. I dipped into all sorts of things, but at the end I still wanted to use clay.*

### ***So you did one year foundation...?***

Then three year BA. I've had quite a few years out inbetween the courses. I had a year out after foundation before BA when I started travelling, and then after the BA it was compulsory to have a year out before you did your MA.

### ***Was it a good ceramics department at Bristol?***

Brilliant department, yes. Mo Jupp, Nick Homoky, Wally Keeler, David Robinson all teaching: they were a really good, strong bunch. And it was the heyday of plentiful materials. When I was at college you'd walk into this rainbow of a room with all the jars of colour available, which was expensive, but we weren't limited as to how much we used. It was the heyday really, I feel. Great college, great time, great tutors. Then I went on to the Royal College of Art. I had no idea what it was really. I was just told when I was at Bristol that I should apply. I didn't realise what I was getting myself into until I got there.







***So was that a bit of a shock then?***

Yes, it was really. It's taken me ten years of living in London to become familiar with it and comfortable with it. It was a big shock. I used to turn round the corner and see the huge skyline and think, oh God, what am I doing here?

***Can you describe initially what you were making at school, and gradually how your work evolved while you were at college.***

At school I made hedgehogs with twiddly bits on. And now, twenty years on, I'm doing Lychee Bumper Car Jugs with twiddly bits on! (I've moved on an awfully long way, haven't I?) But thinking about it, it was natural forms that interested me. My A Level piece was a chunk of earth, as if you'd put a spade into the ground, and dug up a square of earth with daisies and grass growing out of the top. It was like a biology drawing, a cross-section. And there was one which was an ant breaking out of its chrysalis, and fifteen years on there's a similar great big thing called Neptune's Purse. I haven't put the two next to each other yet, but I think it will be funny to do so.

***Presumably with O and A levels you were channelled to do certain things?***

It was very open. We were allowed to make whatever we wanted in class. But then at Bristol Poly, it was quite a strict course in that the first five terms took you through the basic processes of ceramics: press-moulding, slip-casting, hand-building, raku, and all different techniques. We were given open-ended projects that we built around these making techniques. One of them was a camouflage project, and I chose the tiger. And another one was patterns in nature, and I looked at the spots on a leopard, and



joined them all up and they became a harlequin suit. I was living in the flat below my mum. She bred Siamese and Burmese cats, and the tigers were very much cats; they weren't real tigers.

I love combining different techniques in clay, like throwing and hand-building, and moulding (forming things with a mould) and then modelling, but applying it around one theme. I made all sorts of things across the spectrum of functional to sculptural ware around this one theme of tigers, and then that became the theme of my degree show. Sometimes I did steer off the tiger theme. I very much like comic books and cartoons. I wrote my thesis on joke shops and masks. I was pulling in all sorts of things. I did tigers with false noses and moustaches. It was a very eclectic gathering of things. But essentially all my learning at Bristol was to do with making and not with glazing. Although I finished up with a

BA in Ceramics, I didn't know really that copper gave you green and cobalt gave you blue in a glaze. I just knew you reached up and got a jar, mixed it with the glaze, fired it in the kiln, and you got this colour.

### ***You knew the technical background on the making side?...***

Yes, but not in glazing at all. I was very ignorant about glaze technology.

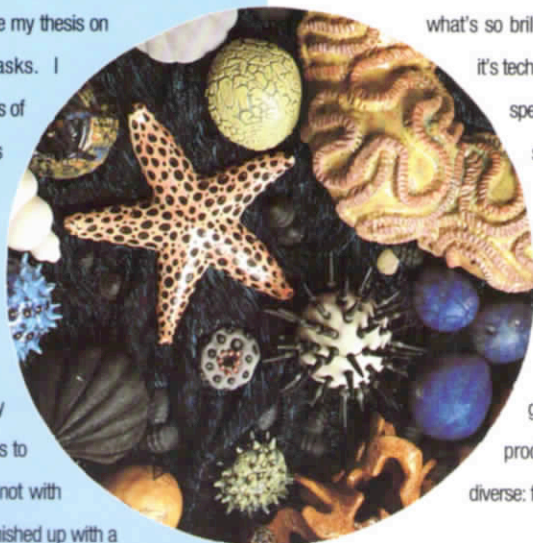
### ***How did you learn that?***

Well, that was one of the reasons that I decided to go to the Royal College, although, in fact, I got through a year and a half of the three year MA without learning that. And then I suddenly thought, stop, set yourself a programme, because everything is self-motivated. So another potter and I started a series of glaze tests together, where we actually put aside two hours three times a week to do testing.. I find it completely fascinating that you can come up with a new recipe or a new colour that's just yours, and even if somebody else uses your recipe they'll get a different result.

It's as close as I can get to the excitement that you had at Christmas when you were young and didn't know what was in a present. That charm is retained through my craft. I love that.

I've now got about two thousand earthenware colours to draw upon, and I'm researching into crystalline glazes as well. But I still feel very ignorant in the area of why things happen. I still don't know about molecular structure and stuff like that. That's what entertains me. I hope to be using clay for the rest of my life. A lot of people would think that was really boring, but to me it's a constant learning curve. That's

what's so brilliant about ceramics; it's technical at one end of the spectrum and completely sculptural and inspired at the other end. You can have a gut reaction to it, and fire it without any knowledge of glazes, and still produce results. It's so diverse: from science to art...



### ***How did you develop at the Royal College?***

It was quite a brilliant year: Phil Eglin, Steve Dixon, Rosa Quay... I can remember the first week we were there, the Head of Department, David Hamilton, spoke to us. He said, you can all carry on doing what you've done and what you're quite good at. You've proved yourselves. You've got here. You can all carry on doing that. Or you can learn things that you know nothing about. And that really rang in my mind, that I should stretch myself. Because I was all ready to keep making big bowls with tigers on, and doing this outlining and colouring in.

At the Royal College we were set different projects. (I like learning around projects, and I almost set myself projects now. The way I study fruits is almost a project in itself.) And I thought, well, I'm here to learn different things, so I really conscientiously took it upon myself to do a lot of the design projects, the RSA Bursary etc. A lot of the projects at the Royal College were real. There was a competition to design a London Underground station, and the person who came top actually designed that station. And there was another one to design a



pattern to decorate all the china that's used in all the prisons, hospitals and civil service in Great Britain: four million pounds worth of pots a year. I did all these projects, and a lot of it was paper work. I kept getting shortlisted and kept getting nearly there. It was like a carrot in front of my nose. I didn't exactly enjoy it. I hated all this cutting out and pasting up, and trying to show what I wanted to do on paper. I won little prizes. I kept getting shortlisted to four and somebody else would get it.

At the end of two years I thought, that's it, I've had enough of paperworking! I want to go back to making pots again. I'd become quite dislodged from the process of making, so I started where I'd left off at Bristol two years earlier, making a big bowl and drawing on it. I drew fish on it, but instead of leaving it flat I started building on it, modelling up the surface. At the same time I'd started doing all this glaze

testing, and I started making large pots with sea motifs on them and applying these glaze tests. Instead of binning the tests, which you often do, because you weigh out tiny amounts of hundreds of colours, I used the tests that I liked on the pots. There's a pot, a giant Bouillabaise Bowl, that's probably got a hundred different glazes on it. You couldn't realistically cost them because of the amount of glazes and the amount of hours. But I felt, I've been doing all these awards, and now I'm making these pots for me, not to sell necessarily. (We were going through business study lessons on how to price things at the time). I said, if I don't sell them, I don't mind. I was making them very much for my own personal development.

#### ***What set you off on the fruits of the sea theme?***

I had a tabletop commissioned by a client. It had tigers in the jungle all around the edge, and logically in the middle there was a pool with fish in. At the time I'd been collecting plastic lobsters and they were hanging around my studio space. I still hang things around my

space that I like. I don't necessarily think I'm going to use them for my work. But this lobster happened, and in fact it's very logical because the earthenware glazes I was testing at the time were very shiny and watery. They were like the sea, and the fact that I was soaking the kiln and getting the glazes to move and drip meant that they sort of married and stuck to this theme.

I worked around the sea theme like I had with tigers for about five or six years. I'm still working with natural forms today, but now it's the land, the fruits of the earth. And the crystalline glazes that I'm using now, because the crystals actually grow in the kiln, seem equally



appropriate to the subject matter in that crystals reflect the wonder of nature of a seed growing. With the sea theme my shiny glazes worked very well. And it seems that now, although I didn't make a conscious decision that this was the case, it's a logical thing that the crystals grow as do seeds to plants. I think that's very nice.

#### ***After the Royal College, then you had to set up your own business...***

Yes, I was given free studio space on the South Bank next to the Festival Hall, 9ft square in a dark railway arch with wet walls. It was great! I had the space organised two months before I finished college. It was run by the Arts Council, and it was to help people as a stepping stone out of college into the big wide world. The space was for about thirty people. It was a year and a half or two years that you were allowed to be there, and then you had to move on to make way for other people. It was brilliant to have that breathing space.





*But the main thing is the sense of...  
I party - always have...  
as I work... the...  
imparts the sense...*

scheme. I had a minimal income that kept me, so I still wasn't having to make pots to sell, and I carried on with glaze testing. The fact that I was having to pay for my own materials, however, made me start recycling the pots if they didn't work, and it was then that I developed multiple glaze firing. There was free electricity, and the kiln was free, so if I made a pot and I didn't like it, I would re-fire it rather than bin it. Also the fact that I couldn't afford to buy big buckets of glaze, because you normally spray or dip glaze, meant that I carried on with these little cups of glaze, and because I didn't have a compressor or a spray booth, I carried on painting the glaze on. So my style evolved through my circumstances.

However, it's always been my ambition to make bigger pots. I don't know why because it's a mad ambition to have. So after a couple of years my partner, Graham Inglefield, built a new studio around the needs of a large kiln on some land behind our house. The Crafts Council helped me buy the kiln with 50% equipment costs. Now I manage the whole Balls Pond Studio building, where 8-12 makers work and share the facilities of equipment, gallery and work space. I've always been business-minded. I'm lucky to have an appetite for work. I'd rather be working than not. Graham's work

on the studio surpassed all my expectations - it's a beautiful building, and a pleasure to work in. I spend almost all my waking hours in there. I'm a workaholic. Graham is as well.

#### *Is that why you go on long holidays?*

Yes, it is. The plan was to go back to Bristol and set up there, but my partner and I realised more and more that it was important to be in London to fulfil the ambitions that I had, so we've spent the last seven years here since college. One of the rules was that we went away every year, and we've managed it. It started off as a month and then rapidly went up to two months. In the last six years I've had a year's holiday in effect. It's not holiday because I paint when I'm away, and study an awful lot, and try and set up teaching practices wherever I go. It keeps me fresh. By the time I've finished ten months in London I'm fit to collapse. Then I come back refreshed, so it's been rejuvenating to travel regularly.



*You've talked about moving out of London again and setting up a new studio. Are you still minded to do that?*

Well, I really don't know... It's taken ten years to feel at home in London, and now I'm part of the community. I'm beginning to think of it more as home. But at Balls Pond Studio, because there are twelve people using it, my full potential in terms of concentrating on my work isn't realised. I get a lot of energy from so many people and from seeing all of them benefitting

from the whole place, but one day I'd like to think that I'm going to have a glaze room and a kiln room and a plaster room to myself. At the moment I still make everything from an 18ft square space, and that's it. We bought the kiln, but I share it with twelve others, and I'm technician and maintenance person and everything. Eventually I'd like to think that I'll go somewhere and have a set up where I can do more than one huge pot at a time and have a bit of peace, though I'd probably crawl up the walls! We hope to move in a few years.

*Could you discuss about how your trips abroad link with your work, their interrelationship? Is it simply a case of re-charging your batteries?*

No, the original intention was to add to my knowledge. Going away gives you an incredible perspective. It's helped me plan, because when you go away you think, what have I done this year?... what have I achieved?... was it what I wanted? It helps steer things doing it so regularly. But the main thing is the sense of joy. I have

*joy. I have great fun, I've partied as hard as I can. I hope my work imparts the sense of joy that I feel from life.*



great fun. I party - always have partied - almost as hard as I work. I think that is really important. If I ever become miserable and sad it will show through my work. I hope my work imparts the sense of joy that I feel from life. India's my favourite place. But wherever I go, I always look to study pottery. I go to the country



potters and find the domestic potters, watch how they work and spend days with them, and see how simply they do things. This has diffused into my work in that I use simple making techniques. The fruit dishes - fruits de mer - are made with fingers of very soft clay. The way I see the Indians making curved bottomed pots, for practical reasons so that they sit

on the stove.... I

haven't gone

h o m e

thinking,

oh I'm

going to make

curved bottomed pots, but it

has happened in a less direct way. Apart from directly studying ceramics, it's things like the tropical fruits I've been exposed to every year, and the sense of colour and light. The light of India's like no other light in the world. You can have a colour in India and bring it back to England, and it just doesn't look the same. It's the nature of the air. And the crystalline glazes

capture that for me. That's

something that I seek with

turquoise in the crystalline

glazes. The Hinduism of

India, at first I thought it

was like a noose around the

nation's neck, but now I realise

that it's not a ploy to quell the majority at all. I

see the joy that Hindus have from their religion. I've

become a bit less narrow-minded, more open to things

generally, and I hope that shows through in my work.

#### **How do you plan your trips, and how do you find out where the country potters are?**

We just arrive without any bookings, and wander the country on train, bus, bike or pony! Most people in India can speak English. Another way is I might take a postcard along with me or a photograph of me

making a pot. If you are in the middle of the country with a potter and no-one who speaks English, you just show them the photo and literally give them a potter's handshake. Then you pick up the clay and communicate that you know a bit about it and then have a go. There's no need for words in that case. It's quite nice actually. In fact, in Vietnam this time we

made friends with some people who were

deaf and dumb, and I think we

communi-cated better with them

than we had done with

anybody on the trip really,

because we were

communicating physically. I

like to think a lot of my pots

are very physical, bulbous.

My own physicality is quite

thick and strong and heavy, and

my pots are very much like that. I

realise that much more now.



#### **And you go scuba diving?**

I do, yes. At the Royal College I was making pots with pink lobsters on them, because my source material was plastic joke shop lobsters, and the only pink lobster is a dead one! I didn't realise until I started swimming and scuba diving, the life that is out there. I had an exhibition in the Bahamas and I

*...I take observations  
from nature and amplify  
them.... as if its an Alice in  
Wonderland dream.*

had to go to the private view. We had scuba diving lessons then, but snorkelling is just as good as scuba diving, if not better. Most of the beautiful things in the water are within thirty feet of the surface. It's low visibility beyond that. Where the sunlight gets to it, it's the gardens of the sea, so you only need to snorkel really. One bowl I made afterwards was called For a Moment the Seaweed Stopped and Formed a Bowl, and it was like seaweed that had suddenly frozen for a second and formed a bowl.



I actually saw it happen. And there was another one, Jellyfish on the Rocks, which was from seeing a manta ray going to hide from us, and its fins carpeted the rocks that it settled on, and so I made a piece that did that. It was from direct observations that it came alive.

***But you're not just copying things at all are you, you're using them as a starting point?***

No, it's not exactly copying. It's the details that interest me, like the bellybutton on a pumpkin where the stem goes: it's like the belly on a body. I'm very interested in the way pots relate to the body. When you have a jug, you have a lip and a shoulder and a foot, and then a handle for an arm, and it's a very physical thing. When I make these pumpkins, the underneath all have these bellybuttons that become essential to the whole piece. Pamela Johnson wrote in the Crafts magazine recently that I take observations from nature and magnify them. I hadn't realised that I do that, but I do agree. With the pineapples especially, it's the mathematics of the way the segments go. I've always loved diamonds and harlequins: the essence of joy in a harlequin's suit... What I suppose I'm trying to do is show the wonder that I have. You can't put your finger on the wonder of nature, of having a seed in your hand, and putting it in the soil, and it gets wet, and it grows into this huge thing. It's almost as if it's an Alice in Wonderland dream. I try to show that by making dream fruit.

***And are you a gardener?***

I would like to garden. I've grown snake gourds and a few pumpkins, and I dream of growing a pumpkin trellis that you walk through. I've got books about doing that but I haven't done it yet because I haven't had the time. I've grown dahlias! And each spring I fill hanging baskets.



*Is that something that, if you lived in the country, you'd like to do?*

Yes, it is, very much so. But creatively, rather than for food. I'd like to grow this arch, this sort of magical arch of things, or a circle of trees. I'm an armchair gardener, rather than a real one, I think!

*So, you'd want to grow a sort of magic garden?*

Yes, I suppose that's what the pots are really. I mean they grow through the manipulation of clay by the hand, and then instead of adding water, you add fire, and you come up with something very different: a squidgy

and we went through the five or six steps that it took to make a big bowl mould. He taught me the attitude to doing it. Loads of the projects that I take on now, I think, how on earth am I going to do it? Then I remember Mo. You don't think about the finish, you think about how you start. And when you start, you start facing each of the problems. So it's the attitude of the spirit of adventure and courage that I like to teach, and that's what Mo Jupp taught me. I think the only way you learn is just by trying it. I think students are wrong to think that they can be taught. They have to take control of their own lives and learn for themselves.



handful of clay dug from the earth is completely opposite to fired ceramic. I'm a gardener of pots really! My studio is my greenhouse! I am absorbed with the magic of the transformations in the materials I use. The balance between the elemental and the scientific is fascinating.

*At the same time as potting, you've also done quite a lot of teaching. How do you approach this, and which of your own teachers did you find most inspirational?*

I've virtually stopped teaching now because I'm so busy in the studio. I did enjoy it, but I find it very draining. Basically I try to teach an attitude rather than skills, because skills have got to be learnt not taught. I think my job is to invigorate and stimulate. It was Mo Jupp at Bristol who showed me that. One day I said, 'I want to make a big bowl and I don't know how.' I was sitting thinking I couldn't do it, and Mo Jupp said 'Right then, let's do it!' He spent about an hour and a half with me,

*Who else helped you move on significantly?*

David Hamilton at the Royal College was fantastic. He spent a lot of time on teaching design. I mentioned that I did all these projects and I thought it was a waste of time, but in fact it was the best time I could have invested, because now, when I apply for a project, I can actually present it properly. So many people - businessmen, town councillors - think artists are a complete waste of time and they're inefficient. I take pleasure in proving them to be wrong.

*Many of your one-off studio pots, although sculptural, are also vessel forms. What are you trying to achieve by making vessels as opposed to pure sculpture?*

With making a vessel, my aim is to achieve a balance between substance and spirit, to introduce a discourse between solid clay (the decorated skin) and the space inside that skin. My goal is to make the space inside seem too big, too voluminous for the walls to hold it, so



that the essence of the pot is larger than itself. I am increasingly conscious of the power of symbolism to help achieve those aims.

**One of the most potent vessel shapes in your work is the jug form. What does the jug symbolise to you?**

The jug form has always been really important to me. On special occasions at home we used a nice jug, for gravy or for water or for orange juice. Then, on our holidays in Spain, it was the jug of sangria that was the symbol of the party. I very much love

**Can we talk a bit about the influence of ceramic tradition. There's an obvious parallel between 18th century pineapple wares and the pineapple vessels that you're making now, for example. How much do you know about ceramic history?**

Not a lot, just glimpses really. I love Stoke-on-Trent and I've spent a lot of time in Hanley at the City Museum looking at the ceramics collection. I enjoy the tradition of Staffordshire, the sense of history.



traditional English ceramics, and the decorated family jug is a most striking object. I've referred to it as having parts that relate to the body. I think as well as being a physical body form, it can take on proud and sad and happy and strong and weak characteristics. It's also traditionally a symbol of friendship and sharing. All around the world, if you use a beautiful jug, you're making a ceremony of the use of the milk or the gravy or the orange juice. And so, for me, a jug - I feel really strongly about this - is a symbol of friendship and of the family. It's a secure, good, strong image. When I made the large jug for Homerton Hospital, the vessel was a strong containing form, a symbol of security. Making a large jug for a hospital was supposed to be an image of rejuvenation. It was a large jug pouring water into a bowl, called Life Pours Forth.

**You're currently working with a manufacturer in Staffordshire, so obviously you don't have a problem with the division that some studio potters feel exists between industrial and studio pottery?**

No, not at all. I like to think that I make pots that fulfill all areas: making a jug for use and a jug as a symbol for a fountain. I love the crossover. I don't think they should be separated.



***Does the idea of producing some lower price ceramics that can be afforded by a different group of people appeal to you?***

Yes, definitely. That was my motivation to work with Moorland Pottery, to be able to make things that can be used at the table. I can design a mug that's ú6 or ú8, or whatever it is, and jugs that can be used, and if they get chipped it's not the end of the world. Clarice Cliff, she was somebody I admire. A sense of joy comes through in the pieces that I've seen of hers.

***Are there other pots that have influenced you? Not just English ceramics - I'm thinking perhaps of Palissy and Palissy-inspired wares?***

No, not really. When I did the first bouillabaisse bowls, everybody said Palissy, and I had to go to the V&A to see what they were like because I didn't know. I think I've got similar sympathies to the potters in the 17th and 18th centuries, and we've come up with similar solutions.

***Do you think that's to do with spontaneity?***

Yes, I do. I mean a pineapple is a gorgeous form, and a pumpkin is a gorgeous form. I react to it in the same elemental way as somebody did two hundred years ago, I should think... to the fact that it's got cleavages and bottoms and bellybuttons. A pumpkin is this physical thing, and a pineapple is this lovely royal, regal thing. It's luscious and it's exotic. I don't feel that I look back to tradition and adapt it. I feel we've reacted instinctively in the same way to the same thing.

***So now, having had things pointed out to you, do you go museum visiting?***

No! I always think that if I get a bit short of an idea or a concept that I'll look. I buy quite a lot of books, and I

always think, oh, that'll be handy because I can refer back to it for an answer for a handle or something. But the truth of the matter is, I come up with the answers when the thing's in front of me in three dimensions, from inside me. There are very few influences on my work, I think. I love Picasso, I love Matisse, but it's the spirit of the work rather than the actual execution that inspires me. If I pick my favourite potters, it's Lucie Rie and Mo Jupp... and Takeshi Yasuda.. I think Takeshi and I share a similar thing because of our fat rich curves. I love brown pots, and yet I don't make them. I appreciate

*Well, it's everybodys' dream to have their stuff in public. The Manchester commission is a dream*

an awful lot of quiet things.

***Do you get hostility from the brown pot makers?***

I've had a little bit of hostility, but they're definitely their own group, aren't they?... I think Derek Clarkson probably thinks I'm mad with my use of crystal glazes! It's sort of anarchy with crystalline glazes in that I'm trying to make the form compete with the surface. Crystalline glazes are so staggering and so exotic in themselves that they've usually taken over from the pot and been the main thing. But I'd like to think that my forms are so exotic that they balance with the busy surface, and so the surface isn't all, but it's an integrated thing.







*How do your public commissions fit in with your private work, and how do you feel about the commission to produce a giant pineapple for the Cafe at Manchester City Art Galleries?*

Well, it's everybody's dream to have their work in a public place. The Manchester commission is perfect. It's just the one that I've been working towards for years and years. I'm really sure about it, and it's an honour to be in a place with such a collection. It's an honour to be a part of something that I respect so much. And it's a big pot commission. I've made big pots for outdoors that have been fountains, but just a big pot for itself is really exciting.

## Kate Malone

### Background Information

**Born:** 29 January 1959

#### Education

Bristol Polytechnic - B.A. (Hons), 1979-1982

Royal College of Art, London - M.A., 1983-1986

#### Studios

South Bank Crafts Centre, Royal Festival Hall, London: 1986-1988

Balls Pond Studios, 8B Culford Mews, to the rear of 157 Balls Pond Road, London N1 4DX (tel and fax: 071 254 4037); 1989 onwards

#### Teaching

Associate Lecturer - Middlesex University, London, 1990-1993

Guest Lecturer - various colleges and universities in UK, Thailand and India

#### Solo Exhibitions

Fruits de Mer - The Orangery, London (1988 and 1990)

Deep Sea - Homes and Gardens, Nassau, Bahamas (1990)

One Woman Show - Osiris Gallery, Brussels (1992)

Fruits of the Earth - The Orangery, London (1993)

#### Other Exhibitions

Royal College of Art Retrospective - Kyoto, Japan (1987)

British Crafts - Munich, Germany (1988)

Decorative Arts Exhibition - Sotheby's, London (1988)

Out of Clay: Creations in Clay by Artists, Potters and Sculptors - Manchester City Art Galleries (1988)

British Craft - Keramik Studio, Vienna, Austria (1989)

British Ceramics - Toronto, Canada (1989)

Out of Sight - Hammersmith, London (1989)

Balls Pond Studio Group Show - The Economist, London (1992)

The Furnished Landscape - The Crafts Council, London (1992)

Visions of Craft - The Crafts Council, London (1993)

Crystalline Ceramics: Experiments with Glazes by Twentieth Century Potters - Manchester City Art Galleries (1993)

Summer Show - Contemporary Applied Art, London (1993)

Hackney Contemporaries - Geffrye Museum, London (1993)

Growth - Balls Pond Studios, London (1993)

The High Table - Craftspace Touring exhibition, UK (1993-1994)

Into the 20th Century - Touring exhibition, Japan (1994-1995)

#### Public Commissions

Southampton General Hospital - Tile Panel for Hydrotherapy Pool, 1987

Otaru Maritimo Hotel, Japan - Serving Platters and Aquarium Accessories (with Nigel Coates), 1990

La Gaulette Seafood Restaurant, London - Wall Panels and Table Tops, 1990-1993

Lea Valley Park, Hackney Marshes, London - Rise and Shine

Magic Fish Sculptures, 1991

Homerton Hospital, London - Life Pours Forth Fountain, 1991

West Middlesex University Hospital, (HIV and Drug Dependency Unit), London - The Leaf of Life Wall Sculpture, Clock and Wall Lights, 1992

Castle Park, Bristol - Bronze Drinking Fountain, 1993

Chapel Allerton Hospital, Leeds - Bath for Birds, 1993

Geffrye Museum, London - Bronze Fountain for the Herb Garden, 1994

Cafe, Manchester City Art Galleries - Large Pineapple Vase, 1994

#### Awards

Crafts Council Special Project Grant for Glaze Research

Crafts Council Equipment Grant

British Council Travel Grant

Wedgwood Tableware Design Competition