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## KATE MALONE

World-class ceramist from London

She has been described as a ‘fearless innovator’ and a ‘maverick’ by renowned historian Lesley Jackson. And Kate Malone’s experiences in Thailand reflect her reputation as a born adventurer.

The UK ceramist has two studios in central London and also has a studio in a cave in the south of France. She has one of the largest studio kilns in London and works on projects both public and private. She is concerned with organic forms and her work is strongly sculptural. Her pots take on the forms of vessels and although her works function, that is not their prime motivation. In fact, Malone sees herself as a ‘maker of decorative objects’.

Travel is a huge inspiration for her life and work. “I met my partner Graham Inglefield 30 years ago, in 1983, and since then we have taken 6 weeks from every year to travel the world during December and January,” she recalls. “We do this to rest from the intense pace of our work”

Before their daughter Scarlet was born 14 years ago, Malone kept a painted watercolour diary of her travel adventures with Inglefield. The diaries were put aside, but Kate has given Hello! an exclusive look

at private recordings of her trip to Thailand in 1980.

“The first trip to Chiang Mai in 1987 included an overnight train ride, trekking by foot, an elephant ride, culminating on a trip down the river on a raft,” she explains. “We also trekked north right up to the Mae Hong Son river.”

Adding to the spirit of adventure, Kate rode a motorbike alone around the outskirts of Chiang Mai, studying local pottery, trading techniques and being inspired by the different culture. This mission of discovery was in tune with her desire to link ceramic ‘arms across the world’. Other Thailand travel highlights include a journey south by bus to Koh Samui and a boat trip out to the Similan islands. Using nature as an inspiration, she took time to discover incredible coral reefs, sea life and cavernous caves inhabited by swallows and bats.

Her memories of shopping in Thailand are equally vivid. She purchased a bronze pair of horses from a dealer in Chiang Mai and shipped them home. The horses have graced her garden for more than 25 years and their presence remains inspirational. “They energise me when I am in the backyard sipping my morning tea and



pondering what pots to make.”

Besides nurturing her artistic side, Malone also found time to splash out for personal pleasure in Bangkok. Her face lights up when she recalls the delight of having clothes custom tailored. She says: “I remember so well the excitement of having clothes made in Bangkok as it was a rare feature in the UK at the time.”

Many things about Thailand are forever etched in Kate’s memory. She fell in love with the beautiful scenery, the vibrant artistic way of life and, most meaningfully to her, the deep focus and devotion of the people. All these sentiments are manifested in her diaries, which are beautiful works of art in themselves. When asked to recall her most cherished memory, Malone barely pauses. “The Grand Palace still fills me with wonder and inspiration,” she says. “I am still in awe of the intense spirit and magic of how the ceramic and glass mosaics fuse together and form such a beautiful building”.

One cannot talk about Thailand without mentioning Thai cuisine. Kate echoes much of the world in her love for the spicy treats of the Kingdom. “It’s amazing,” she says. “It’s so delicious and healthy, and discovering new dishes is an adventure in itself. I just love the taste and also the presentation.”

Summing up her feelings about Thailand, she concludes: “In all my visits to Thailand, it is the grace and charm, the spirit and devotion of the Thai people that remains as the lasting impression and inspiration for me. I strive towards an honesty and purity in my work, and towards communicating an optimism that is inspired by the positive things I experience when we travel. We experienced a lot of this in Thailand. It is inspiring and I’m delighted that Thailand is a country that continues to adapt and evolve eagerly and wonderfully.”

Find out more from Kate Malone at <http://www.katemaloneceramics.com>

