

KATE MALONE

Inspired by Waddesdon



KATE MALONE

Inspired by Waddesdon

ADRIAN SASSOON

LONDON, 2016



The two strands of my own career have been brought together through Kate Malone's exhibition *Inspired by Waddesdon*. On one side I work with French eighteenth-century decorative arts and on the other I raise awareness of the wonders of contemporary works of art. They often live well together, but here we can discover a story of the historic authentically inspiring the contemporary.

About forty years ago my breath was taken away at Waddesdon on first seeing the outstanding eighteenth-century works of art and Sèvres porcelains within the Manor. Many visits later, in the autumn of 2014, I was fortunate to be shown another magical part of the estate; the family's gardens at Eythrope. I was in the company of ceramic artist Kate Malone on her first visit to Waddesdon – we hoped something would come of that visit and here it is...

Past and present generations of the Rothschild family have engaged, encouraged and supported a vast range of talents to create and maintain Waddesdon's buildings, collections, gardens and parkland. Studying and absorbing that level of achievement has triggered Kate Malone to create a wonderfully indulgent and intricate series of ceramics for this exhibition in the Coach House at Waddesdon.

Adrian Sassoon
May 2016

INTRODUCTION

Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild built Waddesdon Manor, his Neo-Renaissance chateau perched on a hill in Buckinghamshire, from 1874 to 1880 to entertain the fashionable world and to display his extraordinary collection; a collection rich in materials of all kinds, from paintings and furniture to textiles, books and manuscripts, silver and silver-gilt, sculpture, mounted hardstones and ceramics. Waddesdon is justly renowned for its Sèvres and Meissen porcelain, but perhaps less familiar are the earthenwares in the collection, including Renaissance tin-glazed maiolica and terra cottas by Clodion. It is this collection, the archival documents which underpin it, and the history of the family who created it, which have proved a fertile hunting-ground for inspiration for this exhibition by Kate Malone. Whether drawing on architectural elements, a delicate detail from one of the Sèvres ship vases, or evoking a lost eighteenth-century avenue recreated on the estate by Baron Ferdinand, she has absorbed and reinterpreted the essence of Waddesdon in a completely original way, with her characteristically innovative use of both her core material – her clay – and her glazes.

Through this collaboration, it was always clear that Kate would be drawn to the material qualities of the collections and landscape. What was not so obvious to the curatorial team with whom she worked, but has proved one of the most engaging aspects of the project, was the inspiration she would draw from the people who have inhabited the Manor through its history. As her research progressed she became increasingly fascinated, not only by two personalities who dominate Waddesdon’s story; its creator, Ferdinand, and his sister and heir, Miss Alice (both of whom Kate has evoked in clay), but by some of the other, lesser-known characters – gardeners, household and estate staff, for example. Her observation and use of detail to translate their worlds into clay has encouraged us to look anew at our collections. Another key inspiration was the Rothschild tradition of gardening, and in particular the garden created by Alice at Eythrope. Here, she created a garden famed in its day for exacting standards and horticultural innovation, such as the three-dimensional carpet bedding sculptures. The kitchen garden, now restored to its nineteenth-century glory by the present generation of Rothschilds, was a natural fit for Kate, already famous for work inspired by organic forms, colours and textures.

Ferdinand and his heirs did not collect contemporary art. Like many members of the Rothschild family, his tastes focussed on the eighteenth-century. The Manor’s present engagement with contemporary art springs from Lord Rothschild, who manages the Waddesdon Manor on behalf of the National Trust as Chairman of the Rothschild Foundation. In recent years the Foundation has both acquired pieces of contemporary art for the permanent collections and also encouraged a programme of exhibitions and opportunities for artists to create responses to the place and its contents. *Kate Malone: Inspired by Waddesdon*, instigated by Hannah Rothschild and Adrian Sassoon, is part of this exploration and is a beautifully comprehensive response to it. Ferdinand, with his appreciation of beauty, technical skill and what he called “association” (the connections which works of art can make and the ways in which they can open our eyes to something new) would surely have enjoyed the surprising and delightful ways in which Kate has reflected his grand creation.

Pippa Shirley

Head of Collections and Gardens
Waddesdon Manor (Rothschild Collections)



KATE MALONE: INSPIRED BY WADDESDON

Kate Malone and her clay are at one with each other. Clay is the most sensuous of materials, and lends itself best to organic and naturalistic shapes where sculptural forms exude a life of their own in the hands of the potter. She says her first loves were coral and the sea, and her very distinctive style emerges from where the sea meets the land in exuberant vegetation, with marine and earthly colours. For her, pottery is an intensely intimate occupation, and she speaks wistfully of her pots as constantly surprising her because, for all her expertise (she has spent thirty years researching and developing crystalline glazes), she still has that nail-biting moment of excitement and anticipation on opening the kiln. The result is an act of skill, serendipity and drama.

So too is Waddesdon: it is one of the most dramatic houses imaginable. A fairy tale palace of elaborate architectural forms, emerging from the ground with rusticated masonry, rising through walls with scalloped detailing or trelliswork patterns planted with trained topiary, through great glass windows and with high sloping roofs and soaring iron finials reaching to the sky. Inside it is a sumptuous treasure trove of gorgeousness, with fabulous textiles, redolent with gold, and filled with wonderful Old-Master paintings, French eighteenth-century furniture, ceramics and metalwork, and exuding the very essence of French style, quality and craftsmanship, with a wonderful nineteenth-century Rothschild flourish. Brilliantly crafted by Baron Ferdinand, this Rothschild taste is immensely grand in the best and most exciting sense of the word, and lends itself perfectly to the voluptuous work of Kate Malone.

The seeds for this exhibition were sown when Kate first visited the gardens at Waddesdon and Eythrope with Adrian Sassoon in 2014. A year later she returned, staying twice at Waddesdon, rising at dawn to visit the birds in the aviary and view the landscape. She also spent considerable time studying the maps, plans, historic designs and engravings in the archives. She grew to know and admire Baron Ferdinand and Miss Alice and became imbued with their love of the house, its grounds and its collections.

Kate is fascinated by the mechanics of Waddesdon, from its inception in Baron Ferdinand's eye to the mature and beautiful apparition that the visitor sees now. For her, Baron Ferdinand achieved his dream layer-by-layer, seam-by-seam, beginning with an idea, changing it, and gradually building up his total work of art. She sees this layering as a parallel to her own work, relishing the way Waddesdon grew, from maps showing the site before the house was built, including the original names of fields, to Baron Ferdinand's planting of semi-mature trees in the new landscape, to his piecemeal use of old textiles to produce splendid curtains and pelmets. She became fascinated by the further layering of intricate craft and decoration in tassels (*passementerie*), where a wooden core is overlaid with threads in geometric patterns to achieve the exquisite detailing of form and colour which still resonates so wonderfully in the curtain trimmings today. Where Baron Ferdinand

began with his house, she begins by making a pot and, despite vast differences in scale, both add layers and enrichment, he to bricks and mortar, she to clay and glaze. He recorded his monumental achievements in his famous *Red Book* of 1897, while she gathers her ideas in a glorious red-paged scrapbook where each page is spattered with gold, containing photographs, preliminary designs and notes honouring and interpreting his great legacy in ceramics today. While his precious textiles have to stay in the dark to preserve them, Kate’s ceramics gleam with light.

At first she was inspired by the kitchen garden (*potager*) at Eythrope, by the extravagant globular and elongated forms and rustic colours of the exceptional range of vegetables that Lord Rothschild grows now. Her aspirations grew as she became curious about how such an enormous entity as Waddesdon worked in its heyday; how the park was designed and planted, how the plumbing worked, how it all came together, admiring not just Baron Ferdinand and Miss Alice, who only came for occasional social visits, but all those full-time staff who were growing, cleaning, cooking and serving, who devoted their lives to this extraordinary dream-like place. Gradually the idea evolved of creating shapes and decoration to celebrate each aspect of Waddesdon, from the park and its planting, to the building and its architecture, to the contents of fine and decorative arts, and to those people who achieved it all, culminating in Baron Ferdinand and Miss Alice who lived in its opulent splendour. In choosing this huge breadth of resources, Kate has entered a new and different world where nature and man together create a singular and intriguing vision of Waddesdon today.

Kate has honoured Waddesdon in a breathtaking array of pots and materials, shapes and decoration, coloured glazes, lustres and even gilding. Pieces are in red or white clay, or porcelain, they are made in moulds or modelled, and they are exquisitely complex. Baron Ferdinand and Miss Alice each have vases dedicated to them, reflecting their individual contributions to the house in personal and touching detail. Baron Ferdinand’s vase appeared in its final apparel when Kate opened the kiln with me on 24 March 2016; he is tall and dapper, in inky purple both befitting a Victorian gentleman’s suit and a reminder of his love of purple beech trees. He has a tapering ‘hat’ echoing the fairy-palace roof towers at Waddesdon, with cubes (‘magma’) ingeniously connecting the ‘body’ and ‘hat’ as floating handles which acknowledge his collection of gold snuff boxes and, in place of an iron finial, a large floral bird imitates the ornamentally-planted ‘Great Bird’ outside his aviary. Miss Alice’s vase is totally different; hers is shorter and rounder and echoes the trelliswork found in the topiary around the base of the turrets on the house and marquetry, carpets and even radiator covers inside. These diamond patterns are filled with porcelain daisies in relief; the handles are influenced by eighteenth-century French designs by Le Lorrain and Delafosse, and the cover is another Waddesdon roof tower, but with a pumpkin finial as a reminder of her pride in the Eythrope *potager*.

Kate created moulds from the fruit and vegetables at Eythrope, including rhubarb, cabbage, sweet corn, apples, courgettes, onions, artichokes (a favourite of hers), quince, and fourteen different varieties of pumpkins, potting some individually, or firing others together into what she calls an





Detail of Baron Ferdinand and Miss Alice Lidded Vases

‘Eythrope Hot-Pot’. Of the myriads of pumpkins, one of Kate’s hallmarks, some have been treated in a wholly new way, being decorated in transfer prints, made especially in Stoke-on-Trent from her chosen images. Kate has been able to research this technique with funds allocated to the project from the Rothschild Foundation. The subjects are all from the archives at Waddesdon, and include maps of the estate (culminating in the grandest *Tattooed Pumpkin*), flowers from an embroidered waistcoat design, and an engraving depicting various characters embodying the crafts, all of which were so vital to Waddesdon. These funds have also enabled Kate to experiment with red clay and creamy glazes to produce jugs with *appliqué* decoration. These rustic pieces celebrate all the builders and gardeners and other staff at Waddesdon. One water jug is covered with transfers of the plumbing plans: a very watery conceit. Other decorative details range from simple foliage to the Sèvres porcelain ship-shaped pot-pourri vase of which Waddesdon has three staggering examples. Sèvres is also represented in an undulating vase (vase ‘*pot pourri Hébert*’ of c.1760) which is reinvented with what Kate calls a ‘smiling toad’ where the vase meets its cover, and is washed in a rich pale-turquoise crystalline glaze, reminiscent of the Sèvres *petit verd* ground colour.

The park is perfectly represented by the *Pair of Waddesdon Estate Vases*, monumental in scale and technically brilliant in the conversion of the coil structure into a curving, everted and smooth profile, with varied green and bluish glazes moving from landscape to sky, with *appliqué* sprigged trees that refer back to Baron Ferdinand’s planting and, around the foot, with the incised names of the ancient fields which preceded the park. Another large vase is an *Oak Estate Urn*, with woody handles growing from the foot to the neck with applied oak leaves and acorns, all in an autumnal yellowy-gold glaze. Other shapes have applied beech masts from the park or tile shapes from the exterior of the house. Even more complicated are the worm-tunnel patterns from the rusticated masonry on the *porte-cochère*, which are cut into the wet clay, then the raised areas left behind are modelled by hand to make an extraordinary effect, at once Mannerist and resembling an octopus’s tentacles.

Inspiration from the interior of the house ranges from book binding to jewellery. Kate was keen to create both a shape and pattern based on the curtain tassels, having been intrigued by *passementerie* ever since the 1980s when she saw a girl making some by hand. Her large *Sanchi Tassel* vase is a *tour-de-force* and owes some influence to a first-century, carved-stone ribbed pillar seen on a recent trip to India, which could be made either way up, and resembled the wooden core of a tassel. For decoration she has invented a knotted pattern whereby a whole vase is covered with knots, each being meticulously weighed to ensure the exact gradation in size to cover the curves. From tiny diamonds to swathes of landscape, from tree roots to roof finials, from plumbing plans to silken knots, Waddesdon is revealed in a new glory.

Great and enlightened patrons, be they Baron Ferdinand in the nineteenth-century or Lord Rothschild at Waddesdon today, or art dealer Adrian Sassoon, all make the difference between an artist

spending their life making ordinary objects to being able to dream of experimenting with new ideas, materials and techniques to devise extraordinary works of art. The patrons’ role in this exhibition has offered Kate a thrilling opportunity and her response is inspirational. Both Waddesdon and Kate are phenomena and they have come together so powerfully that each has taken the other to new heights of artistic magic. Her commitment to and enjoyment of the project are evident in the artwork shown here, and echoed in her remark, ‘It makes me laugh when I consider that I am making curtain tassels, fields, leaves and pumpkins glamorous; in a way, elevating the source materials’. She continues, ‘A tree though is the most perfect thing already and impossible to elevate’. Her surprise when she opens the kiln is echoed by our amazement at the endless threads of Waddesdon that she has woven into her pots, and her legacy will be the words on her circular stamp declaring on the bottom of each piece, ‘Kate Malone at Waddesdon’.

Dame Rosalind Savill
May 2016

Detail of Mottled Double
Eythrope Pumpkin Box





Baron Ferdinand Lidded Vase, 2016
Height 73cm (28³/₄")

Miss Alice Lidded Vase, 2015
Height 57cm (22¹/₂")

Young Ferdinand Vase, 2016
Height 43cm (16⁷/₈")





Waddesdon
Passementerie Vase, 2016
 Height 41cm (16 1/8")

Waddesdon
Passementerie Knotted Gourd, 2016
 Height 36cm (14 1/8")





Praise to the Beech Tree, 2016
Height 44cm (17³/₈")



Praise to the Oak Tree, 2016
Height 42cm (16¹/₂")



Baby Bud Leaf Vase
2015
Height 11.5cm (4½")



Baby Bud Winding Alice Leaves Vase, 2016
Height 10cm (3⅞")



Baby Bud Beech Vase
2015
Height 10cm (3⅞")



Small Waddesdon Wall Vase Turquoise, 2016
Height 15cm (5 7/8")



Waddesdon Wall Vase Yellow, 2016
Height 23cm (9")



Small Waddesdon Wall Vase Green, 2016
Height 15cm (5 7/8")



Small Lidded
Oak Jar, 2015
Height 20cm (7⁷/₈")

Small Lidded Oak Jar
Fallen Acorn, 2015
Height 17.5cm (6⁷/₈")

Small Lidded
Oak Jar, 2016
Height 17cm (6⁵/₈")



Pair of Waddesdon Estate Vases, 2016
Height 70cm (27 1/2")



Eythrope Blackberry Pot, 2016
Height 25cm (9⁷/₈"")

Carved Green Pumpkin, 2015
Height 28cm (11")

A Ribbed Angel Fennel, 2012
Height 51cm (20¹/₈"")

Small Lidded Oak Jar, 2016
Height 17cm (6⁵/₈"")

Lidded Oak Jar, 2015
Height 37.5cm (14³/₄"")



Pumpkin Merry-Go-Round, 2016
Height 32cm (12⁵/₈")



Eythrope
Hot-Pot, 2016
 Height 26cm (10 1/4")



Eythrope
Artichoke Vase, 2016
 Height 28cm (11")



Stack of Eythrope
Pumpkins, 2016
 Height 26cm (10 1/4")



Mottled Double Eythrope
Pumpkin Box, 2016
 Height 26cm (10 1/4")



Assorted Eythroe Pumpkins, 2016
Heights from 6cm (2³/₈") to 18cm (7¹/₈")



Craft and Creativity, Tattooed Pumpkin, 2016
Height 24cm (9 1/2")



Waddesdon Fields Pumpkin, 2016
Height 16cm (6 1/4")

Eythrope Folly Pumpkin, 2016
Height 12cm (4 3/4")

This series of work was developed with the support of The Rothschild Foundation



Waddesdon-Inspired Terracotta Water Jugs, 2016
Heights 14cm (5 1/2") and 11cm (4 1/4")



Waddesdon-Inspired Terracotta Bowls, 2016
Heights 15cm (5 7/8")

This series of work was developed with the support of The Rothschild Foundation

Oak Estate Urn, 2016
Height 54cm (21 1/4")





Small Acorn Pot, 2016
Height 13cm (5¹/₈")



Little Triumphant Acorn Vase, 2015
Height 17cm (6⁵/₈")



Baby Bud Acorn Vase, 2015
Height 10cm (3⁷/₈")





KATE MALONE		Selected Solo Exhibitions		Selected Group Exhibitions		Large Scale & Public Commissions		Selected Public Collections	
1959	Born London, England	2016	<i>Kate Malone: Inspired by Waddesdon</i> , Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury	2016	<i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , Salon of Art & Design, New York, USA	2015	Tiled building façade, with EPR Architects, 24 Savile Row, London	UK and Europe Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol Crafts Council, London Geffrye Museum, London Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, Norwich The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford The McManus, Dundee The Portland Collection, Welbeck, Nottinghamshire Ulster Museum, Belfast, Northern Ireland Victoria and Albert Museum, London York Art Gallery, York Sèvres - Cité de la Céramique, Sèvres, France	North America The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada Boise Art Museum, Boise, Idaho, USA Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA Mint Museum Uptown, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA The Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, USA
1979–1982	Bristol Polytechnic, Bristol, BA (Hons) Ceramics	2014	<i>Kate Malone: A Celebration of Clay</i> , One Canada Wharf, London		<i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , Pavilion of Art & Design London, London	2012	<i>Bud</i> , sculpture, The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, USA <i>Walls of Endless Stories</i> , four exterior walls clad in unique crystalline-glazed elements, American Express offices, Brighton		
1983–1986	Royal College of Art, London, MA Ceramics	2010	<i>Kate Malone New Work</i> , Robilant + Voena Gallery, London		<i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , Masterpiece London, The Royal Hospital Chelsea, London		<i>Walls of Endless Stories</i> , four exterior walls clad in unique crystalline-glazed elements, American Express offices, Brighton		
		2007	<i>A Natural Obsession: Kate Malone and Junko Mori</i> , The Harley Gallery, Welbeck, Nottinghamshire		<i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , TEFAF, Maastricht, The Netherlands <i>Big Ceramics: Discover Clay on a Monumental Scale</i> , Wolverhampton Gallery, Wolverhampton	2005	<i>Wall of a Thousand Stories</i> , Children’s Library, Royal Jubilee Library, Brighton Public Library, Sussex		
		2005	<i>Next to Nature</i> , Blackwell, The Arts & Crafts House, Bowness-on-Windermere		<i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , TEFAF, Maastricht, The Netherlands				
		2002	<i>Ceramic Rooms – At Home with Kate Malone and Edmund de Waal</i> , Geffrye Museum, London	2015	<i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , Salon of Art & Design, New York, USA <i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , Pavilion of Art & Design London, London <i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , Masterpiece London, The Royal Hospital Chelsea, London <i>Summer Exhibition 2015</i> , Royal Academy of Arts, London <i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , COLLECT, Saatchi Gallery, London <i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , TEFAF, Maastricht, The Netherlands				
		2000	<i>Nuts & Berries</i> , Dover Street Gallery, London <i>Fruits of the Earth</i> , The Orangery, London	2014	<i>Adrian Sassoon</i> , Salon of Art & Design, New York, USA <i>Out of Sight: Drawing - Lives of Makers</i> , Contemporary Applied Arts, London				

Kate Malone would like to thank:

Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild for creating Waddesdon Manor and the generations of Rothschilds who followed for their care and vision in achieving “the best of art and the best of nature”.

Thanks to my expert art dealer Adrian Sassoon for promoting my work for the last twenty years and his team, particularly Mark Piolet and Andrew Wicks, for playing a leading role in bringing this exhibition to light.

Thanks to my extraordinary studio assistants whose focus, patience and skills have enabled this new body of work to be realised: Helen Evans, Anna Barlow, Erika Albrecht, Enrique Perezalba Red, Tom Skeens, Patricia Mato Mora, Maureen Maguire and intern Roisin O’Connor.

Thanks to Will Taylor, for his beautiful film which accompanies the exhibition.

Thanks to my lovely family, who pander to my addiction to make pots with utmost patience and care. I could not, would not, have made these pots without them.

Thanks also to Sarah Weir who encouraged me to “make mistakes and surprise myself”. To all the knowledgeable curators and staff at Waddesdon who have made this project such a pleasure, and to Pippa Shirley for curating the exhibition and her wonderful introduction to this publication.

Special thanks go to Dame Rosalind Savill for her wonderful and well-researched essay. It was such a pleasure to open the kiln with you at my side and share the first glimpses of my Waddesdon-Inspired works of art.

Finally, thanks to The Rothschild Foundation who funded an invaluable month of research, allowing me the time to study and experiment. This has stimulated and informed work within the exhibition and will continue to impact on my work for many years to come.

Adrian Sassoon would like to thank:

Hannah Rothschild for introducing an artist like Kate Malone to Waddesdon.

Curators Pippa Shirley, Rachel Jacobs and the entire team at Waddesdon Manor for making so much happen and hosting this exhibition.

Dame Rosalind Savill for her insightful and intelligent essay.

Published by Adrian Sassoon to coincide with the exhibition:

Kate Malone: Inspired by Waddesdon

8th June – 23rd October 2016
The Coach House, Waddesdon Manor,
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP18 0JH

ISBN 978-0-9954570-0-3

Photography by Sylvain Deleu
Kate Malone studio portrait by Anthony Lycett
Waddesdon collection imagery © The National Trust,
Waddesdon Manor

Design: Joerg Hartmannsgruber, White Card, London
Printing: Gavin Martin Printers, London
Editors: Mark Piolet and Kathleen Slater

ADRIAN SASSOON

14 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1BB
(by appointment)
+44 (0)20 7581 9888
email@adriansassoon.com

www.adriansassoon.com



A Row of Waddesdon-Inspired Jugs, 2016

Heights 13cm (5¹/₈”) to 17cm (6⁵/₈”)



ADRIAN SASSOON

14 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1BB
(by appointment)

T: +44 (0)20 7581 9888
email@adriansassoon.com

www.adriansassoon.com