

Ceramic Rooms: At Home with Kate Malone and Edmund de Waal

24 September 2002 – 19 January 2003

The Geffrye has engaged two of Britain's leading ceramicists each to create a 'ceramic room' which expresses their personal concepts about domestic interior space. Although linked by the medium, Kate and Edmund take very different approaches to both the use and potential of clay. In other respects their differences as artists are significant: their inspiration, work methods and vision of the world are markedly different and the juxtaposition of the spaces created by them will be exciting, provocative and fun. Despite these differences, Kate and Edmund share many similarities in terms of their open-mindedness, their international outlook and their desire to explore the versatility of clay in a creative and thought provoking way.

Kate Malone is well known for her exuberant, colourful pots, fountains and installation pieces, all of which use the organic forms and the natural world as inspiration. Giant pumpkin teapots and pineapple vases are joyous and amusing, while fruits and vegetables, nuts and berries, bees and creatures of the sea adorn her highly decorative, coiled, modelled and press-moulded pieces. Fascinated with glazes, Kate spends much time learning about and experimenting with chemistry, mixing new recipes, looking for new colours and surface effects. The majority of Kate's work at the Geffrye will be fired with crystalline glazes. Crystals are grown during the glaze firing, with recipes and kiln condition simulating volcanic activity in a way that Kate likens to 'gems growing in the earth's crust'. Kate, who describes her style as 'maximal', has travelled extensively and finds inspiration in all corners of the globe. She has a critical following in many parts of the world, where she has been featured in both group and solo shows.

Edmund de Waal has been described as 'one of the leaders of the young generation of ceramicists'. His thrown porcelain vessels with celadon glazes could be described, in contrast to Kate's work, as 'minimal'. His pieces are simple, elegant and beautiful, reflecting his admiration for both the East and for the 'fierce symmetries' of modernist style. Edmund worked in Japan and uses porcelain exclusively, a material he considers to be 'the matrix between East and West, the Sung dynasty and the Bauhaus'. Porcelain, Edmund has said, 'is a powerfully contemporary medium'. His interest in architectural space informs his work and will be reflected in pots in the Geffrye show, some of which Edmund hopes will have 'an architectural presence'. His work has been shown and acclaimed internationally, and he writes and lectures regularly.

Ceramic Rooms will be accompanied by a publication featuring an essay on Kate by Paul Vincent, Editor of *Ceramics in Society*, and one on Edmund by Julia Pitts, Deputy Editor of *Ceramic Review*. A four-minute silent film has been commissioned from Gilly Booth of Hijack. It will show Kate and Edmund in their studios, highlighting the technical aspects of their work.

This exhibition has generously been supported by **Bloomberg**

Artists' Biographical details

Kate Malone

Born 29 January 1959

Education

1986 MA, Royal College of Art
1982 BA, Bristol Polytechnic

Awards

1994 Glaze Research Grant, London Arts Board
1983 Setting Up Grant, Crafts Council

Selected Commissions

1998 Tea Pot Clock, Bental Centre, Kingston upon Thames
1995 Queen Pineapple Giant Pot, commissioned by Manchester City Art Gallery
1995 Herb garden fountain (bronze) commissioned by the Geffrye Museum, London
1991 Rise and Shine, Magic Fish, a circle of fish rising from a pond, commissioned by Lea Valley Park Public Art, London

Public Collections

The Victoria & Albert Museum
The British Council
The Crafts Council
The Museum of Ulster
Cleveland Crafts Centre
The municipal city galleries of: Bristol, Manchester, Middlesborough, Paisley and Stoke-on-Trent
Collections in America, Canada, France and Japan

Publication

Kate Malone. *A Book of Pots* by Lesley Jackson and Kate Malone. Published by A&C Black, early 2003.

Edmund de Waal

Born 10 September 1964

Education, Work and Apprenticeships

1992-1993 Work at the Mejiro Ceramics Studio, Tokyo
1992 Post-graduate Diploma in Japanese Language, Sheffield University
1985 BA Hons, English Literature (1st Class) – Trinity Hall, Cambridge University
1981-1983 Apprenticeship with Geoffrey Whiting

Awards

2000-2002 Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship
1998 British Council Award
1996 London Arts Board – Individual Artists Award
1991-1993 Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation Scholarship

Lecturing Posts

1997-present Royal College of Arts, visiting lecturer
1996-present Harrow College, University of Westminster, visiting lecturer

Public Collections

Victoria & Albert Museum
National Museum of Scotland
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Museum of Western Australia, Perth
Stoke on Trent Museum
Banque Paribas, London
IBM Collection, Copenhagen

Programme of Related Events

Adult Events

Exhibition Talk with Kate Malone and Edmund de Waal

An informal discussion during which Kate and Edmund will reflect on the pleasures and challenges presented by the *Ceramic Rooms* project and by their chosen profession.

Wednesday 6 November, 6.30 – 8.00pm. Tickets £5.00 (includes a glass of wine).

Workshop: Totally Thrown

A rare opportunity to learn from a master of his craft, Edmund de Waal, who will lead a two-day workshop on understanding and throwing porcelain. Suitable for all abilities.

Saturday 9 and 16 November, 10.30am – 4.30pm. Tickets £50.00 in advance (includes materials).

Children's Events

Teenagers' Workshop: Colourful Clocks

A workshop on hand-building a colourful ceramic clock led by Michelle Atkinson, assistant to Kate Malone. *Saturday 12 October. 11.00am – 4.30pm. Tickets £7.50.*

Autumn Half-Term Activities: Crafty Clay

A week of activities for children aged 6-15 exploring clay through colour, shape and form. Different processes and techniques will be used to make a range of objects in workshops including decorating tiles, making fantasy rooms and designing nightlights.

Tuesday 22 – Friday 25 October, 10.30am – 12.30pm and 2.00 – 4.00pm

Workshop for 3-5 year olds and their Carers: Time for Tea

A fun workshop on making a clay teapot.

Saturday 26 October, 2.00pm and repeated at 3.15pm

Holiday activities are free for individuals and families. All children under eight must be accompanied by an adult. Places are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis 30 minutes in advance of the workshop. Quizzes are available all day in the museum.

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Notes To Editors

- 1) For further details or transparencies, please contact Nancy Loader, Press and PR Officer, on 020 7739 9893 or nloader@geffrye-museum.org.uk
- 2) The Geffrye Museum presents the quintessential style of English urban middle-class interiors from 1600 to the present day through a chronological sequence of period rooms.
- 3) Admission: FREE
Address: 136 Kingsland Road, Shoreditch, London E2
Tel No: 020 7739 9893
Email: info@geffrye-museum.org.uk Web: www.geffrye-museum.org.uk
Opening Hours: Tue-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun and Bank Hol Mon 12-5pm
Travel: Buses: 149, 242, 243 or 67.
Tube: Liverpool St, then bus 149 or 242/Old St (exit 2), then bus 243