



Bowl

Gordon Baldwin

Not on display

Title/Description: Bowl

Artist/Maker: Gordon Baldwin

Born: 1979 - 1986

Measurements: h. 230 x d. 420mm

Accession Number: 50534

Historic Period: 20th century

Copyright: © The Artist

Credit Line: Donated by a private donor

As one of Britain's most distinguished ceramic artists, Gordon Baldwin has been extremely influential in moving ceramics towards sculptural forms and away from traditional functional pots.

Baldwin's early work featured functional stoneware vessels and tin-glazed earthenware, and often reflected his fascination with landscape. As he developed as an artist, his work became influenced by contemporary sculpture. In the 1950s, he employed a variety of techniques and began hand building, using both earthenware and stoneware, often reworking and re-firing pieces several times. He is recognised for the rich variety of forms he builds which combine sculptural form with abstract painterly marks. Baldwin has described his approach as 'a non-search for beauty,' finding most satisfaction in 'forms which have a certain awkward resonance,' a more challenging purity and strength. [1]

Creating a rich variety of forms, many can be seen as 'vessels', from bowls, to less obvious containers with openings. Baldwin never 'decorates' his work, the marks and colours he applies are integral to the form, like the weathered surface of a stone. [2] Looking beyond the matt blue-black colouring of this bowl, we discover a multitude of different marks and impressions in the clay. Incised lines, small pierced circular holes and a jagged edge along the rim give an impression of age-old metal, pitted and affected through heavy use, or the sense of organic material exposed to the elements over time, rather than subtle, textured layers that have been created in clay.

Baldwin has received many awards throughout his career, including an OBE in 1992 and an honorary doctorate from the Royal College of Art in London in 2000. He was short listed for the Jerwood Ceramic Prize in 1996, and to mark his 80th birthday, there was a touring exhibition and retrospective of his work in 2012.

Katharine Malcolm, May 2021

[1] <https://ehc.art/artists/gordon-baldwin/>

[2] <https://www.yorkartgallery.org.uk/exhibition/objects-for-a-landscape/>

Further Reading

Jeffrey Jones, Studio Pottery in Britain 1900 - 2005 (London: A&C Black Publishers Ltd., 2007)

Paul Rice and Christopher Gowing, British Studio Ceramics in the 20th Century (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1989)

<https://ehc.art/artists/gordon-baldwin/>

<https://www.yorkartgallery.org.uk/exhibition/objects-for-a-landscape/>

<https://youtu.be/exBjoomTCGs>

(2012 interview with Gordon Baldwin)
