



# Lidded jar

Walter Keeler

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## On display

**Title/Description:** Lidded jar

**Artist/Maker:** Walter Keeler (Artist)

**Born:** 1980 c.

**Object Type:** Vessel

**Materials:** Ceramic, Stoneware

**Technique:** Salt-glazing, Throwing

**Measurements:** h. 310mm

**Accession Number:** 50750

**Historic Period:** 20th century

**Production Place:** Britain, England

**Copyright:** © Walter Keeler

**Credit Line:** Accepted under the Cultural Gifts Scheme by HM Government from Leslie Birks Hay and allocated to SCVA, 2016

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The sculptural and the everyday unite in the work of Walter Keeler. This lidded jar is functional and domestic yet has a sculptural form. Its appearance combines craft and industrial aesthetics. The maker's hand is visible in the throwing rings, incised lines and lid; however, the angled body has the precision of mould production.

The shining salt-glaze surface which Keeler is renowned for (created by adding salt to the kiln during the firing process), references 18<sup>th</sup> Century English pottery. However, the metalwork appearance of the glaze also indicates Keeler's interest in vessel forms outside the ceramic tradition, such as milk churns and oil cans. The industrial body language of this lidded jar playfully disrupts the wheel-thrown tradition of the British 20<sup>th</sup> century studio ceramics movement, specifically that advocated by Bernard Leach.

The archetypal form firmly places this work in the tradition of ceramic domestic ware, which dates to prehistoric pottery. Keeler first became interested in ceramics during childhood, from visiting museums and archaeological digs to collecting shards mudlarking. He retains this fascination for

everyday material culture as he reimagines the sculptural qualities of utilitarian forms, including teapots, jugs and bowls.

Keeler makes objects to live with, and as ceramic historian David Whiting says, 'no-one has done more to show how continually challenging tableware can be, or how persuasively it can be re-drawn and re-made. [1] The display of ceramics has long been associated with the interior, and although Keeler's forms maintain their functionality, they are often displayed within domestic spaces as sculptural works framing daily life.

Sim Panaser, April 2020

[1] David Whiting, *Online Ceramics: Walter Keeler*,  
<<https://onlineceramics.com/product-category/artists/walter-keeler/>> [accessed 27/04/2020].

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## Exhibitions

'Power Plants: Intoxicants, Stimulants and Narcotics', Sainsbury Centre, UK, 14/09/2024-02/02/2025

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## Further Reading

Keeler, Walter, interviewed by Hawksmoor Hughes, British Library Sounds (2002)  
<https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Crafts> (accessed 27/04/2020)

Walter Keeler: Treasures of the Everyday, (Goldmark Gallery, 2018), documentary film,  
<https://vimeo.com/channels/ceramicsdocumentaries/270368217> [accessed 27/04/2020]

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