



Blue form

Ewen Henderson

Not on display

Title/Description: Blue form

Artist/Maker: Ewen Henderson (Artist)

Born: 1990 c.

Object Type: Sculpture

Materials: Ceramic, Mixed clays

Technique: Handbuilding

Measurements: h. 370mm

Accession Number: 50744

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

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

This thin-walled, hand-built vessel has a totemic presence. The surface is expansive, dense and painterly. Made from different fragments of clay which are laminated, it fuses disparate components as one. However, Ewen Henderson does not create a homogenous whole, instead blue hued surfaces, textures and flashes of metallic glaze extraordinarily overlap, cling and fissure from the form. Henderson described clay as 'fluxed earth' [1] and his sculptures capture the alchemical essence of the material. Henderson's work is often compared to the natural world and there is an elemental beauty and energy to his practice. However, throughout his career he fiercely rejected categorisation, he sought his work to be viewed as sculpture and for it not to be solely defined by its material.

Henderson initially trained as a painter, he studied ceramics as a mature student at Camberwell College of Art from 1965 to 1968, where his teachers included Lucie Rie and Hans Coper. His early work featured interpretations of traditional forms including tea-bowls. It was from the 1970s onwards that his work took on radical and larger sculptural forms (See 50744, 50745 and 50746). On seeing Henderson's forms for the first time in 1977, ceramicist Henry Pim compared them to, '...meteorites recently arrived from another planet where no one had heard of traditional pottery techniques'. [1] Although Henderson maintained his independence from the conventions of studio ceramics, he was not alone in defying expectations and believed the work of Gordon Baldwin and

Gillian Lowndes had a strong affinity with his own. [2]

Sim Panaser, August 2020

[1] David Whiting, 'Obituary: Ewen Henderson', *The Guardian*, 9 October 2000, <<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2000/oct/09/guardianobituaries>> [accessed 12/08/2020].

[2] Henry Pim, 'Creative Games', *Ceramic Review*, 98 (March/April 1986), 14 - 16 (p. 14).

[3] Ewen Henderson curated and selected works for the 1995 Crafts Council sculptural clay exhibition, *Pandora's Box and the Tradition of Clay*, which included works by Ruth Duckworth, Dan Arbeid and Angus Suttie. Henderson chose to display his work alongside that of Gillian Lowndes and Gordon Baldwin.

Further Reading

Berthoud, Roger and Christopher Reid, David Whiting, Ewen Henderson, (Yeovil: Marston House in association with Midlands Arts Centre, 1995)

Birks, Tony, 'Ewen Henderson', *Revue de la Céramique et du Verre*, 117 (March/April 2001), 34-37

de Waal, Edmund, 'Ewen Henderson', *Crafts*, (May/June 2001), 46-49

Pandora's Box and the Tradition of Clay, (exhibition catalogue), (London: Crafts Council, 1995)

Pim, Henry, 'Creative Games', *Ceramic Review*, 98 (March/April 1986), 14 - 16
