



Form

Paul Soldner

Not on display

Title/Description: Form

Artist/Maker: Paul Soldner (Artist)

Born: 1995 c.

Object Type: Sculpture

Materials: Ceramic, Earthenware

Technique: Handbuilding

Measurements: h. 400mm

Accession Number: 50772

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: United States

Copyright: © Paul E and Virginia I Soldner Family Partnership LLLP

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

Silhouettes of figures, animals and insects dance around the surface of this spherical form. Paul Soldner's two-dimensional figurative style is inspired by ancient Egyptian and Greek pottery. The silhouetted shapes, applied as resist stencils to the body of the pot, are derived from found images in magazines which, removed of their details and original context, communicate afresh.

These shapes are then further abstracted by the firing process. During the 1960s Soldner developed a firing technique which he termed, 'American Raku'. [1] A key difference between Soldner's process and traditional Japanese raku is the use of post-firing reduction. Once the ceramic has been fired in a raku kiln, it is immediately placed in a covered container with combustible materials, whereas in traditional raku the ceramic is cooled in water after firing. The result of Soldner's smoke firing is a softer colour palette than that seen in traditional raku, and the halo effect - a white outline around shapes, can be seen here, which is achieved by varying oxygen during the reduction process.

In the mid-1950s Soldner was the first pupil of the seminal American ceramicist Peter Voulkos at the Los Angeles County Art Institute (now Otis College of Art and Design). Soldner's practice

embraces Voulkos' experimental approach to clay. He marries the spontaneity and expressiveness associated with raku ware with unexpected forms and surfaces, to create work that reconfigures ceramic traditions and possibilities.

Sim Panaser, June 2020

[1] Paul Soldner, 'American Style Raku', (1990),
http://www.paulsoldner.com/essays/American_Raku.html [accessed 26 June 2020].

Further Reading

Lynn, Martha Drexler, *American Studio Ceramics: Innovation and Identity 1940-1979*, (London: Yale University Press, 2015)

Soldner, Paul, 'American Style Raku', (1990)
http://www.paulsoldner.com/essays/American_Raku.html

Raku Pottery by Paul Soldner (exhibition catalogue, 1964)
<https://digital.craftcouncil.org/digital/collection/p15785coll6/id/2895>
