



Maquette

Gordon Baldwin

Not on display**Title/Description:** Maquette**Artist/Maker:** Gordon Baldwin**Object Type:** Sculpture**Measurements:** 300 x 280 mm**Accession Number:** 50702**Historic Period:** 1970's**Production Place:** Britain, England, Europe**Copyright:** © The Artist**Credit Line:** Donated by Bob and Denise Catchpole, 2016

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.

In the 1960s the relationship between pottery and sculpture was explored afresh by a group of young makers. Many were associated with the Department of Ceramics at the Central School in London, where there was a practice of educating art students across subject boundaries, where possible. Ceramics students came into contact with sculptors William Turnbull and Eduardo Paolozzi, through attending their basic design course. Baldwin had studied at the Central between 1951 and 1954 and was technical assistant there from 1956 to 1957. He was one of the key figures in the developments in hand-built pottery at this time and Baldwin cites Turnbull and Paolozzi's teaching as crucial in his creative development. [1]

With little sense of any boundaries that might have limited his work, Baldwin began to produce pottery that had a sculptural presence, and sculpture in the medium of clay that related stylistically to the work of contemporary artists such as Kenneth Armitage and Lynn Chadwick. [2] The title of this piece, *Maquette*, (a word defined as 'a sculptor's small preliminary model or sketch'), highlights the decidedly sculptural nature of Baldwin's ceramics.

Paul Rice has described 'the dichotomy that has always existed in Baldwin's work between the 'vessel' and the 'sculpture' '. [3] *Maquette* encapsulates this explanation perfectly. It's part-appearance as a traditional vessel in the round (a conical bottle, narrowing from a wide base to a long tubular neck) is called into question by the extension of the form on one side, into flat, ribbed, angled planes. The raw, jagged texture of the planes expose the materiality of the clay, in contrast to the otherwise smooth, curved, 'contained' vessel form. The flat planes seemingly break away from the vessel, creating accelerated movement in different directions. This piece is a literal representation of the idea of sculptural pottery breaking away from its traditional constraints as

functional ware.

Katharine Malcolm, May 2021

[1] Jeffrey Jones, *Studio Pottery in Britain 1900 - 2005* (London: A&C Black Publishers Ltd., 2007), p. 144.

[2] Jones, p. 144.

[3] Paul Rice and Christopher Gowing, *British Studio Ceramics in the 20th Century* (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1989), pp. 140-141.

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

<https://youtu.be/exBjoomTCGs>

(2012 interview with Gordon Baldwin)
