Press Release

Gordon Baldwin

7 February to 16 March 2013

Gordon Baldwin is a towering figure in British ceramic art. Recently turned 80, he has made these atmospheric, largely monochromatic sculptures in a spirit of reflection on his recent major retrospective exhibition, Gordon Baldwin: Objects for a Landscape, currently touring the UK. The works thus represent a development of his themes, although he also considers them to contribute some concluding comment.

Baldwin has long acknowledged the influence of experimental twentieth-century composers, such as the minimalist music of Philip Glass and Terry Riley on his work, and has written of his admiration for the writers of the Surrealist movement and his application of aleatoric operations following the example of Cage. But these are just a few of the nodes within his ‘mythic landscape of memories’. Another enduring reference point is a beach in North Wales, ‘… that I call the place of stones. It was found decades ago by a blind pin in a map. This chance event discovered me and chance has directed my projects and widened my horizons. In this place I looked for emotional correspondences.’

His new abstract vessels follow two principal themes. The densely black enclosed forms of The Buds are Bursting series have a tense, explosive nature, analogous to the potential energy of the jet black buds of ash trees - part of the British landscape now in jeopardy. A contrasting series of tall vessels have the colour and texture of deep snow. These gradually open up from the base, in a sequence of shifts and sensual transformations, with the addition of speculatively drawn lines that seem to plot their elemental journey. As distilled moments of experience, the works prompt reflection on the unknowable and unfathomable, and do so in ways that are imaginative and profound.

Gordon Baldwin (b. 1932), studied at Lincoln School of Art and at the Central School of Art & Design, London. One of the most significant ceramic artists of our time, he was appointed OBE in 1992 and awarded an honorary doctorate by the Royal College of Art in 2000. His work is featured in important public collections worldwide and has been the subject of a number major retrospectives including a 1983 exhibition originated by Cleveland County Museum, Middlesbrough, with national tour; a 1989 retrospective held at the Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam; and the current touring exhibition, Gordon Baldwin: Objects for a Landscape, originated by York Art Gallery and selected by Tatjana Marsden. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated 160 page book, edited by David Whiting, and can be seen at Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery, 2 February to 11 May 2013.

Gallery opening hours are Tuesday to Friday 11:00 - 18:00 and Saturday 11:00 - 16:00. The nearest tube stations are Barbican, Farrington or Old Street.

For more information, images or to arrange an interview with the artist please contact Siobhan Feeney or Tatjana Marsden

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