Since leaving the Royal College of Art in London in 1986, Kate Malone has established a reputation as a potter who is part of the 'new ceramics', a post-modernist who calls freely and confidently on a diverse and rich vocabulary of historical references for her exotic and imaginative objects. In the space of four years, Malone has created her own distinctive style, innovative and assertive, her work re-affirms the role of ceramics in society, extending and exploring new and different areas with assurance and authority. She is a potter responding to and helping promote a wider awareness of ceramics and its decorative possibilities, seeking commissions for restaurants, hotels, hospitals and the like, persuading architects and designers to incorporate specially made ceramics in their schemes. These are the sorts of artistic and practical challenges which Malone's energy and enthusiasm relish.

Most of her work retains links with the vessel but while many of the pieces could be used as containers — the jugs could hold flowers and the pillows carry fruit — these are decorative rather than functional objects. Common to all the work is a rich strand of fantasy, both in the free handling of familiar forms and in the colourful sea-based decoration. All celebrate the plastic qualities of clay and the colour and range of glaze. The sources for the shapes and the free use of decoration are wide; the jugs re-interpret the traditional forms of Staffordshire wares, the curvaceous shapes recall the art pottery made at the turn of the century, while the colourful textured surfaces relate to the powerful artistic styles of art deco and art nouveau. But these diverse references give little indication of the strength and force of Malone's pots which, for all their roots in the past, belong entirely to our own time.

At school Malone was fascinated by the pottery room with its rows of intriguing jars and the teacher whose clay splattered and informal dress suggested a world far removed from the hide-bound academic atmosphere of books and blackboards. Though intrigued, timetabling conspired to keep her away from the delights of potting until she was fourteen, when she knew as soon as she worked with clay that this was what she wanted to do. 'I've always been good at selling things — my mother sold second-hand cars, and if I sold one I got commission. I never doubted that I could make a living from ceramics'. The ceramics course at Bristol Polytechnic, and the inspirational teaching of Mo Jupp and Nick Homoky provided a sound foundation, before she was accepted as a postgraduate ceramics student at the RCA. At the college Malone learnt a great deal about design, and was able to develop this by working with pottery factories. Though sure of her identity and her future as a potter, her study and career are broken by long periods of travel abroad — these tours include lectures at such memorable institutions as Bangkok University.

After leaving college, Malone was offered
one of the studios in the South Bank Craft Centre, underneath the arches of Charing Cross railway bridge. Though small this was ideal for Malone as it kept her in touch with other potters and makers, and gave direct access to a buying public. Here she continued to hand-build either by coiling or press-moulding, making bowls, jugs and vase forms. All were fired to earthenware temperatures to enable the widest and brightest range of colours. With space and equipment limited Malone started to dab on her colours, an effect she discovered could yield an attractive mottled surface. An ambitious glaze testing programme was started to explore the colours and textures which could be obtained. After hundreds if not thousands of trials, Malone’s enthusiasm for testing ever more variations of colour continues unabated, and many of the tantalising results are displayed on the wall of her workshop. The tests involve adding small quantities of metal colouring oxides and or stains to a bought-in clear glaze base, using the common oxides as well as experimenting with more unusual materials such as vanadium. Recent tests adding tacle to the mixture have produced attractive matt finishes. Trials with prepared decorative glazes have produced unusual textured effects, used to enrich and further enrich surface and form. Malone’s testing follows the time-honoured method of try it and see rather than calculating possible results. She regrets that at the RCA there was little academic glaze and clay technology to encourage a scientific rather than an empirical approach.

As well as making one-offs, many produced in series but each one differently coloured or decorated, Malone enjoys designing for industrial production. This not only makes the work of the studio potter available at reasonable prices, but presents the challenge of designing for slip-casting and commercial glaze finishes. A collaboration with the Stoke-on-Trent firm of James Kent resulted in a range of jugs with a mottled blue, green and brown pattern. When the company went bankrupt, Malone searched out another factory, and re-thought her designs. This new range includes the familiar jugs, but in addition has bowls and vases. Some are hand-painted by Malone during visits to the factory, their marine decoration freely rendered in bright colours on a white ground. Others are decorated with stamps and sponges in more standard patterns.

Three years ago Malone, with her partner Graham, bought a building in north London, and they are still renovating the house as well as building a studio in the large yard. Despite more or less camping out for much of this time, Malone has continued her work with undiminished vigour. Shapes and glazes change and develop and she has ordered a large trolley kiln which will enable her to build and fire enormous jugs. The theme of the sea remains, explored through surface, form and decoration. Cool transparent watery blues and greens, exotic orange and yellow coral colours, and textured frothy glazes, vie with applied decoration of such sea-creatures as crabs, star-fish, shells and sea weed. In some of the latest pieces Malone has inlaid fish and such like in the surface to give an effect reminiscent of ancient fossils. Press-moulded fish ornaments — ‘skin fillers’ — are a direct expression of the marine theme, while double-skinned bowls with convoluted and pierced surfaces are more interpretative and organic. For a recent commission for the dining room of a hotel in Japan, designed by Nigel Coates, Malone was commissioned to make a group of bowls which are to be wheeled round for serving food, further extending her range of shapes.

The abiding theme of the sea, particularly in the use of vibrant colour, goes back to happy childhood memories of summer months spent at her grandmother’s hotel on Majorca. ‘Next door there was a swimming pool with sea decoration, and this made a big impression on me!’ Rummaging in the spare room of her mother’s house recently Malone was delighted to find the pots she made at school — they were all similar to the organic shapes she now makes and had marine decoration. This continuity of theme and idea clearly pleases her, and its continual exploration suggests that there is still much to discover. ‘I feel I’ve hardly begun’, says Malone planning new watery adventures and even bigger pots. This is a potter to keep your eye on.
Mae'r rhan fwyaf o'i gwraith yn dai cysylltiad â'r llestr ond tra y gelid defnyddio amryw o'i heteman i ddal pethau — galla'r gygiau ddal bloeda a'r clustogau gynnau rhwythau — gwTHRchyau addumot yn hytrach na'r rhai defnyddiol ydynt. Yr hyn sy'n gyfradd i'r gwraith i gyd yw haen gyfoethog o ffansi sy'n cael ei harddangos yn y dull rhwydd o drafod flurfiaw cyfarwydd ac yr addu llwgar seilioedd ar y môr. Mae'r cyfan yn mawr hyd ansawdd hyblyg clai a llw ac amrywiadaeth gwydrbeddau. Mae tarddiad y flurfiaw â'r defnydd rhwydd o addum yr bun amrywio; y gygiau yn ail-ddehongl flurfiaw traddodiadol llestr Sywdd Stafford, y flurfiaw lluniaid yn dwyn y golof grochenwch cell trod a ganiif, tra mae cysyllti rhwng ansewd llwgar yr arwynebau ac ardduiau artistig pwerau art daoco ac art newydd. Ond nid yw'r gyfeiriadaeth amrywiw i mynegi nemor ddîm o gryfall a gym pyliau Maloney sydd, er bod eu gwneud i yn gorffennol, yn perthyn i gyfAngwyb i'n hoes ni.

Pan oedd hi yr yr ysgol swyneyd Maloney
Malone mede mewnusod pysgod a phethau cyf.

Chafodd hynny gryn argraff amaf.\textsuperscript{3} Wrth chwiellota
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roedd Malone wrth ei bodd pan gafodd afael ar
y potyau a lunioedd pan oedd hi yn yr ysgol -
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