SARAH WALTON

SALT-GLAZE POTTER

I've volunteered to write about my work. secure in the knowledge that no one else knows quite as much about it as I do. But to write honestly is like trying to make a good pot. The same process is at work: to suggest the elusive we must use the concrete and to convey the maximum we may decide to use the minimum. A friend once said he thought I had no sense of appreciation of 'the trivial'. Perhaps you don't develop the art of 'small talk' when you're trying to be monumental?

My first training was at Chelsea School of Art and amongst the many things I tried I now particularly remember some lessons in Sculpture although it was Painting and paintings that occupied me for most of that time. Perhaps even then three dimensions intrigued me more than two? My second Art training was in Studio Pottery. Very early on I tried salt-glazing as a technique of making and firing, it interested me and I've stayed with it in the intervening years. Perhaps its limited character has suited my purpose. Pots can be thought of as Sculpture while fulfilling domestic functions. It is this direction that I've explored.

A salt-glazed pot has a low gloss finish. It holds and reflects light far less than a pot with a high gloss. Even so, its surface is a lot more glossy than any stone. In recent years I've looked at stone sculpture noting the variety of surfaces. It may be rough-hewn or finely finished and polished; it may be dry and soft or smooth and hard; or centuries of weathering and use (even abuse) may have given it back some of its original character of virgin rock. This is to admit that I don't look exclusively at pots for encouragement and that in sculpture I've hoped to find how to proceed in my pots.

Light and shadow; radiance and melancholy. Early on Rembrandt, Velasquez and the Dutch landscape painters appealed to me, as did black and white photography and film. And later, in a more gentle and pervasive way, the work of Monet. It may be that the way light and shadow fall on forms is what first draws me to the forms themselves. At some distance the play of light and shapes of shadows may be all that I can make out. What the object may be seems less important at that moment than its form. This is not to say that the details I make out later are not important. In much the same way, whether I make a teapot, a jug or a fish, I try to treat and see it both as an object and as a form.

I'm attracted to the sculpture of the Greek Archaic period. The figures seem to have emerged from the state of primitiveness and to have a poise which is lost in the subsequent swirl and complexity of later Greek Sculpture. Though the stance of these Archaic figures is formal, a smile plays on their faces. Their shoulders are broad and their carriage is erect; the figure a little elongated. They're vital and quiet. In the last few years I've 'combed' the surfaces of many pots. This technique of etching through the 'slip' to the 'body' beneath is called 'sgraffito'. But it was the folds of garments as they undulated and hung over torsos and limbs and the way crooked hair fell over shoulders and down Archaic Greek backs that started me off on that path. The direct connection between the figure beneath and the consequent behaviour of the garments over it set me a goal for my forms and the decoration on them. And I return to the Sculpture whenever I've lost my way and feel that my lines have become meaningless. Large areas of clothed figures are contrasted by faces, bare necks, shoulders and feel. The two types of suggested surface set each other off. Perhaps, this is why on my teapots, the spouts and handles are now bare while the body is treated with this 'combed' decoration. Hopefully, the final impression is of

![Ceramic Series Image](image-url)
one form. Such pots evolved over years rather than weeks.

If Greek Archaic Sculpture seems a rather indirect influence, then architecture and landscape may seem even more so. To climb in mountains, to walk in avenues of trees and Romanesque cloisters and to claim that these experiences influence my pots is surely not to make an extravagant claim? Ruth Duckworth has written that she is in love with space and

Joanna Constantinidou has pointed out the contemplative activity that can be connected with making pots. I agree with both of them.

A number of years ago I started to make pots without a potters wheel. Such methods are called ‘handbuilding’. I made flowerbricks which were oblong and square and working with flat surfaces was a nice change after eleven or so years of making only round pots. But I wanted the forms to be as simple as possible. In this

respect I was starting with the same intention as I do when ‘throwing’ pots. Though the methods were different, the idea was the same. Similarly when making oval dishes which I’ve done by draping sheets of clay over plaster of Paris moulds, I’ve wanted to keep things really simple. The temptation to deviate from this may be enormous. Imagine having made a large oval dish and having to remind oneself that so much will happen to that surface in the setting. With luck there will be a subtle tone change in the one ‘slip’ that covers the dish; but this might be all I really wanted.

Recently I’ve made some sculptures of fish. Some fish have the most aggressive mouths, particularly sea fish. I’ve wanted to avoid the impression of menacing strength on the one hand and sentimentality on the other. Because the fish is an image of my imagination it is not to say that it is less real than ‘reality’. It is more so. And to be fearful of being sentimental is perhaps to realise that one’s trying to suggest something that has tenderness. More recently I’ve made some fish in a rudimentary landscape because it was the relationship between the two that I hoped would convey something. For the fish to possess a solitary character required me to suggest a relationship with its surroundings. The most suitable material has seemed to be porcelain. Everything is, therefore, white, the fish and the landscapes. But it will have shadows too. Sometimes I wish I had a wider colour palette, but not on this occasion. Austerity may be the best cover for passion.

To conclude is like finishing a pot. I withdraw my influence when the piece can stand on its own.

(Dedicated to Irene Milburn.)
Y Gyfrws Geramec

Canolfan Y Celfyddydau Aberystwyth
Rhif 14

Sarah Walton

Crochenydd Gywydded Halen

Cyntânais o m’gwirfodd i ysgrifennu am fy ngwaith gan fy mod yn dawel fy moddiw
nad oes neb arall yn gywydd ddawen cymaint amdanol ag a wni. Ond mae
ysgrifennu’n ond ei debyg i geisio lunio llestr
da’r yr un broses sydd ar waith; rhaid defnyddio’r
dinistroeth i awgrymu’n lleithd nhil i’r cyfeiriadau’r
uchod ddwy efallai y penderfynu defnyddio’r
telefawm. Crybywodd cyfyllai unwaith ei fod o’r
tarn nad oedd gen i’r galw i wtherfawrogi mae i
ysgymlogi o’r dîwedd. Efais nad yw rhwy fun
yn debygbyddiwr offi mân siarad pan yw’n anelu a
grau mywbeth o bywyd.

Cefais hy ffurffoddch tra cynychwir yn Ysgol Geith
Chelsius, ac ymhiliwr yr amryfilu beithau y
mofadol gynnig amryn nhw o collo’n arbenig
ra i’r gwael Cerfniusawd, ar mai Peintio a
phentriadau oedd y mynd â’m bryd yr amser
hwnnw. Efaisaf fod dim ddim o iawn i
fyo na dau dimysiant hyd yna oedd brazil hynny
Mewn Crochenydd Siwdoilio y drobynaethio â’r
ffurffoddchi celf. Yn gynnau iawn rhoddais
gymig ar y wraigdd halen fel lachneg a lunio a
thano’u ymddidoriai ynddi ac ryw wedi gynau
wrthi dwy’r blwyddenedd oedd hynny. Dichon fon
i nodweddir cyflymg wedi bo ddi’n adnabod rhyngwladol. Celfir ychydig fel pobla yn
Cerfniusawd er bod iddynt oedd defnyddidol
domestig. Dyma’r cyfeiriad y bwm i’r e
archwilio.

Ychydig o ddiddairoldeir bydd ar bob gwyddedd
halen. Mae n dal ac yn adlewyrchu llawer fel o
oelni na phot grafindiadau wedi oll. Ond er
hynny mae ei wynnac i’i llenwi mwy liathraidd
nag unrhyw garreg. Yn ystod y blwyddenedd
diwyseddol mae’r fwyd a’r debygbyddiwr gerreg
gan swyfr an ar ymhlith yr arwynebadau
Welshiau maent wedi-eu hyfrydau a u cabodi:
goa thaf ynnych fel y rhan sydd a mofaldir neu’n lyfyn a
chael, neu gafu caniedydd o draeth y tywydd a
defnydd (neu gammeddfydd) fod wedi adfer path o gymniad gwrededdi y graig gyntaidd.
Dyna gyfaddef nad o’i gicio a crechenwch y unig y
byddaf i rhyw hollol am ysbyrdolaeth, ac fy
mod wedi golbetau ddu o hyd (anwrwaid i’i
ynghyd) crechenwch yna mae cerfniusawd.

Goleuni a chysgod: nwylliant a phfruddigwyd. Yn 
gynnau iawn fe m’wngwyd gan Reimbrandt,
Valasquez, ac’r peintwr tirion Amstelind dderbyd
ac hefyd gan filmiau a fotograffau du a gwyne
ac’ym ddiwyddadaeth, mewn modd mwy tynnu a
chynhaeddgar, gam waith Morandi. Efaisaf mai
flavorad o mae goleuni a chysgod yn yr hyn syr
flurllaw sy’n fy nheu at y flurllaw eu hiruaen yn y
fiscynau. O’r poth plastir Efaisaf mai dim ond y
llecnynau goleuni a flurllaw sy’n gyngorion eu’n agaru i
m. Ar y foment honno ymddengys y gwirwch

e i hun y ni allu pwysig na lâi fflur. Nid yw hymyn nh
gyfystyr à’r dwr uchaf nad yw’n marwion nhw’n sylw
amryn nhw’n ddiwyddadaeth, mewn modd mwy tynnu a
chynhaeddgar, gam waith Morandi. Efaisaf mai
flavorad o mae goleuni a chysgod yn yr hyn syr
flurllaw sy’n fy nheu at y flurllaw eu hiruaen yn y
fiscynau. O’r poth plastir Efaisaf mai dim ond y
llecnynau goleuni a flurllaw sy’n gyngorion eu’n agaru i
m. Ar y foment honno ymddengys y gwirwch

Fe’r denir gan gorfenniath y cyfnod Groegadd
Hynafol. Mae’r ffirfau fel pe bai at da Method
blywyd o’i fwyd tynnol, ac ymddangos gweler y
cynyddeddi a gollwyd yng nghymlethradd y troedol a ddilidid mewn Cerfniusawd
Roegadd ddiwyddadaeth. Er fol saeth’r ffirfau
Hynafol yw’n flurllaw, mae cymdeithas gwren ar
eu hiruaen. Mae eu hysgywlau ym llydan
a’u hystym ym dalwyd, ac mae’r ffirfau wedi
eu hiruaen ychydig. Mae’r llaw ei hun a
degyrfrif. Yn ystod y blwyddenedd diwethaf yrw
weddi’r crío anwyneb lawer o’i potiau.

“Sgraffito” yw’i ddraw a rodaf ar y dechraeg hon o
ysgrif hwy ddyw un’l sip i’r claddodd ddio. Ond
ysgrif ar blygion digaid ym mhanddi ac yng nwy
biro, ac o feirniadwy. Ar y ffirfau Hynafol
a’u llaw cofnir cerfniusawd Groegadd Hynafol
ac’i lawr cofnir cerfniusawd Groegadd Hynafol
a roes gychwyni i mi gilydd y llwyr hyn. Y byd ymylgynnys a phobl sy’n eu gwisgo ac’i
flurllaw yw’i mewn ddigaid ac o feiriadwy. Ar y
ffirfau Hynafol oedd yr un ar y galwion i’r thimhiau
nad oes ystyr i mi’r llenhau. Cyfarbyn o arwynebaddo 
awrffydluau wedi eu ddialla i dwy nwy
ystyr i’r thimhiau, gyfrynhau neuchod, gywredodi
a thraed. Mae’r ddau fath gwasaneul o arwyneb a
awgrwm yr ewa o tdo mewn cytisosodiad. Dyna efallai pam y mae'r piau ar a'n dolenau ar hyd rhedolion yr blain tra mae gweddill y tebolaidd wedi eu hadrochwyr ddyw eu 'Grib'. Yn yr enghraifwch yr oed o'i gilydd y piau. Byddai cyfeirio at hyn hefyd grwyliodd fod y problemau mewnolodig a ddeuai drwy adwurio corff y teboli'n unig wedi ei ohu i'w piau a'r dolen anei eu alie ar ôl adwurio gweddill y teboli, yr rheol argraff gan genweiniol i ffrordd dabyddiau y teboli. Mae a wneud o ffrith ynddo y teboli hyn fel y maent rywbeth a'r dull o ddatrys y problem dechnegol. 

defnydd mwya'r addas. Felly, mae popeth yn wynn, y pygod a'r tiriolau. Ond mae'r dysgodi oedd a hyn hefyd wedi ymddengys ac a'r dysgodi oedd a hyn hefyd wedi edrych oedd a hyn hefyd wedi ymddengys. Yn nod y dilynol, wedi ei lesbu i'w gael ei gynnal i'un llint rocchennaid. Yn nod y dilynol, wedi ei lesbu i'w gael ei gynnal i'un llint rocchennaid.