

## Artist and Potter, Kate Braine, To Exhibit Twenty-Years of Work In Her Chelsea Studio Home

### 'Tendril Is The Night' Curated by Fru Tholstrup



This June, London based artist, Kate Braine, will reveal twenty-years of work at her historic 18<sup>th</sup> Century townhouse on Cheyne Row. The exhibition, 'Tendril Is The Night', curated by Fru Tholstrup, will present over 300 of Braine's sculptural pots, which have been directly influenced and born out of the striking interiors in 20 Cheyne Row. In addition, the garden bears a 'Pottery Graveyard' of 500 glazed tendrils sprouting from the soil.

On display throughout the house, the exhibition will see Braine's works emerge from the walls, shelves and plinths of the unique space. Braine's vast array of sculptural pots take inspiration from the natural world. The works are created organically as Kate rolls and moulds the clay, shaping each design into its own being. From the botanical to marine life, forms manifest themselves in the artist's subconscious and emerge through her pots, resulting in works that are both at once recognisable and yet simultaneously otherworldly.

**Fru Tholstrup commented:** 'On entering Kate's historic Cheyne Row house, where her studio resides, I was immediately mesmerised by the vast array of her sculptural pots. I realised that these extraordinary pieces should be exhibited in-situ creating an immersive experience for the onlooker. It has been a pleasure to curate 'Tendril is the Night' for Kate's first exhibition showing two-decades of her inspirational work.'

Born in London and having grown up in Cheyne Walk, Kate has deep rooted synergies with the local area. Cheyne Row is a fitting location from which to work, due to the street's great ceramic legacy, having been the home and workshop of celebrated Victorian potter, William de Morgan. De Morgan transformed Cheyne Row into a place of interest for London's contemporary artistic and literary crowds, making Chelsea the heart of the London ceramic scene. It was on Cheyne Row itself that Josiah Wedgwood established his *London Decorating Studio*.

Charting the development of Braine's practice over the past two decades, audiences will first encounter a collection of white glazed 'Storm Lamp Tendril' pots, which are lit from within. Along the corridor, a series of three-dimensional 'Veg and Vag' shapes adorn the entranceway wall. The inspiration for this body of work came from slices of onion and garlic, but the title is derived from

people's varied and humorous reactions. Opposite, flat cut-out shapes in a Tenmoku dark brown glaze, follow the stairs upwards.

Continuing through the house, visitors are confronted by the dramatic atmosphere of the green malachite sitting room, which is off-set by a mass of rich red pots. Mainly featured in this room are Kate's 'Shiny Poppy Red Glazed Triffid' works and the 'Red Poppy Glazed Flower Pots', with melted Murano glass. These works were particularly inspired by the dynamic sculptural glass creations of Venetian artist, Napoleone Martinuzzi, also on view in the room. Martinuzzi's vibrant use of red tones, are heavily present throughout both Kate's body of work and her studio home.

Glass plays an important role in Kate's practice. In several series the artist has combined glass with clay, adding a further dimension to the ceramic work. Kate is committed to using sustainable materials in her work, recycling found and broken glass in her pots, to achieve a striking pooling effect.

Venturing on, audiences will encounter a pine panelled dining room which features a contrasting range of white shiny glazed 'Coronet Pots' and 'Carmen Rollers Creatures'. In addition, resting along the top of the book case, Kate's plaster feet and hand forms add to the ethereal feeling of the room.

Through the archway, back against the malachite walls, works range from 'Flower Pots' with bright aquamarine melted glass, to sea creatures that seem to have unfolded their arms and legs – as if asleep on the ocean floor. In the nearby bar, a 'Buttoned Metallic Tendril Pot', sits against the gloom of the black marbled surround, perfectly placed next to the old hand beaten copper basin.

Entering into the large, light Edwardian drawing room, originally an artist's studio, visitors find themselves in the heart of the exhibition. Here, Braine's series and colourways are united. On the large windowsill, 'Teal Glazed Walking Creatures' have manifested, as if threatening to crawl down the wall. The opposite table bears the weight of a twenty-piece series, delicate 'Rusty Orange Scorched Lava Alien Flowers', with droplets of glass beads nestling in their leaves, which adorn the dark green marble top. On the mantel piece, above the fireplace, a series of 'Dark Forest Green Lagoon Beings', with geometric circle cut outs and multi fringe layers, dominate the space.

In the centre of the room lie various slash pots, including the large-scale 'Sunbathing Teal Glazed Sea Creature' and the 'Underwater Sleeping Monster' series. Two quince coloured marble plinths lead the way to the garden, topped by white glazed 'Flowered Tendrils'.

In the garden, visitors encounter Braine's 'Pottery Graveyard'. Kate's broken pots have been recycled to form a bed of 500 shooting 'Red Poppy' glazed tendrils, which sprout through the soil, emerging as if reborn from the earth below. A life-sized bronze figure of Chuck Berry, performing the duckwalk with his guitar, created by Kate, also stands amongst the clay. It is here that visitors are met by Braine's studio, a former Turkish Bathhouse, which has found a new life as the artist's pottery retreat.

Upon re-entering the house, sitting on a marquetry table, as if it has just scuttled down from the rafters, is a dark brown gothic spider like creature, which inhabits its wooden clad surround. Leading on upstairs, in Kate's master bedroom, a collection of larger white glazed 'Coronet Cut Pots' add to the lighter interiors. In the bedroom above 'Shiny Ice Blue Coronet Cut Pots' are set against the paisley material of the large bookcase. Above the fire place are 'Apocalypse Forms' in shiny white and matte turquoise glaze. The book shelf adjacent displays larger shiny turquoise 'Multi-Tendril Sea' works.

'Tendril Is The Night' marks an pivotal moment in Kate Braine's career, presenting her work in the exact location that has inspired her practice.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About Kate Braine**

Having studied sculpture at City & Guilds School of Art, Kate's early career centred on bronze portrait busts and body casts. Kate's early sculptural work, and subsequent courses in ceramics at the Park Walk and Marlborough schools, led her to a fascination with pottery and the qualities of clay. Having produced ceramics over the past two decades Kate has come to hone and develop this side of her practice in recent years.

Kate Braine has created portrait busts of well-known figures, including Sir David Tang (2018), Ian Board (1990) and 'Head of Francis Bacon' (1991), which were subsequently sold at auction. Kate's Portrait Bust of Sir David Tang realised a price of £6,250 over the estimate of £500 at a Christie's London auction in 2018. Kate produced a full-scale body cast of music legend, David Bowie, which was later shown at The Gallery in Cork Street within his one-man exhibition. Kate was also commissioned by Felix Dennis to produce a life-size sculpture of Chuck Berry for his Garden of Heroes. In addition, Kate's works have featured in exhibitions at Argile Gallery, Art for Mayfair and The Mall Galleries. Kate's works have appeared in a number of charity auctions, including the 1991 Bonhams sale for the Rhino Rock Wildlife Trust.

In addition to her artistic practice, Kate founded iconic jewellery company, Legge and Braine, with Charlotte Legge in 2003, following their time together at City & Guilds School of Art.

### **About Fru Tholstrup**

Fru Tholstrup is a London-based art consultant with a deep knowledge of the contemporary global fine art market, advising collectors and international businesses on building museum-quality art collections. She spent 10 years as a Director of the London and Berlin based Haunch of Venison gallery and is known for her role launching Sotheby's flagship London Art Gallery, S|2 in 2013 and working closely with the S|2 Brand in New York and Hong Kong. Recent independent projects have included the critically acclaimed group show '21st Century Women' at Unit London and the curation of the art collection for the Hôtel de Crillon in Paris.

### **Social Media**

Kate Braine [@k8brainebots](https://twitter.com/k8brainebots)

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#KateBrainePots

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