“Celebrated by Dan Goode”

**James Faulkner, Ceramicist**

*“I chose not to follow a tradition in my making. I believe being unfettered allows me to make in a way that accords with my own inspiration. This freedom releases me: I can explore new techniques, which allow me to realise the ideas in my mind, resulting in truly original work. I am free to explore the limits of my ideas and inspirations, unbound by the established rules of ceramics.”*

James Faulkner is a one-off, an innovator. His is a story of risk in his chosen craft and a unique voice deserving of more attention.

I met James some years ago and was immediately struck by his ceramics. I studied pottery for a short time, and I am a self-confessed ‘pot-nut’, I love anything made in clay. In fact, I adore it. My own collection of pots stretches to about 70 makers, but no one makes pots like James …

James’s work is at once intriguing. It looks distressed, worn by time, but in a geological way. A way that implies age, corrosion, natural forces working on an object, patiently and not necessarily peacefully. And yet James produces this work in his studio, and he produces numerous pieces. So, this multi-faceted effect, however long it takes, is created by hand under his direction.

To say I was fascinated by this work is an understatement. Here was something I had never seen – me, the curator, talent spotter and general pot-obsessive! – and although I obviously haven’t seen everything, encountering a new technique is rare.

I got chatting to James and the more we talked the more interested I became. His was indeed a unique technique. Here was a maker stepping out of the normal bounds of ceramics into uncharted territory and with this he not only had to sell his work, but had to be its advocate, its ambassador, its champion. He would have to tell his story well for the uninitiated to understand the complexity of the process he has created. And as any maker knows, that is not easy!

Therefore, I quietly, committed to helping him get his voice out there, and I am still chasing that goal. James joined me at Handmade Kew in 2018, and I also worked with him one-to-one to build some promotional materials he could use to help spread the uniqueness of his message.

So, what is behind James’s work? Let him tell you in his own words, because no one can explain better than him about the genesis of his beautiful creations:

*“My work presents a snapshot along the journey of an object from new, to its eventual rejection and abandonment to nature. My process is all about capturing in a single piece the ineluctable passing of time. An object’s slow decay into nothingness has a beauty of its own, and this is where my process stops: my work encapsulates existence after life has passed and forgetfulness has begun.*

*The beauty of decay inspires me to create complex, time-worn surfaces on minimal geometric forms. My creations are unique, beautiful and serene and a perfect balance of form and surface.”*

I love the words he uses and his individual approach.

Most making is about life, capturing living moments, inspired by humanity, or nature, architecture etc. But here is work celebrating beauty *after* life, *after* usefulness. The extraordinary beauty of time, and the way it acts on once living, or useful, things. James’s work is quiet, peaceful, but possesses great power. Just take a look at the many layers he has built up and then artfully whittled back to reveal glimpses of colour, shape and line: a shock of blue, an earthy brown, a pale grey. Here is ceramic working in the world of fractals, like Jackson Pollock, the larger form being replicated the more one dives into a piece. Every frozen moment a work of art.

I urge anyone who loves ceramics to delve into the work, and process, of James Faulkner, to take the time to really appreciate what it is he creates and how he does it, his is a beautiful, reflective world that will never cease to amaze, and he deserves greater recognition.

James can be visited here:

www.jamesfaulkner.co.uk