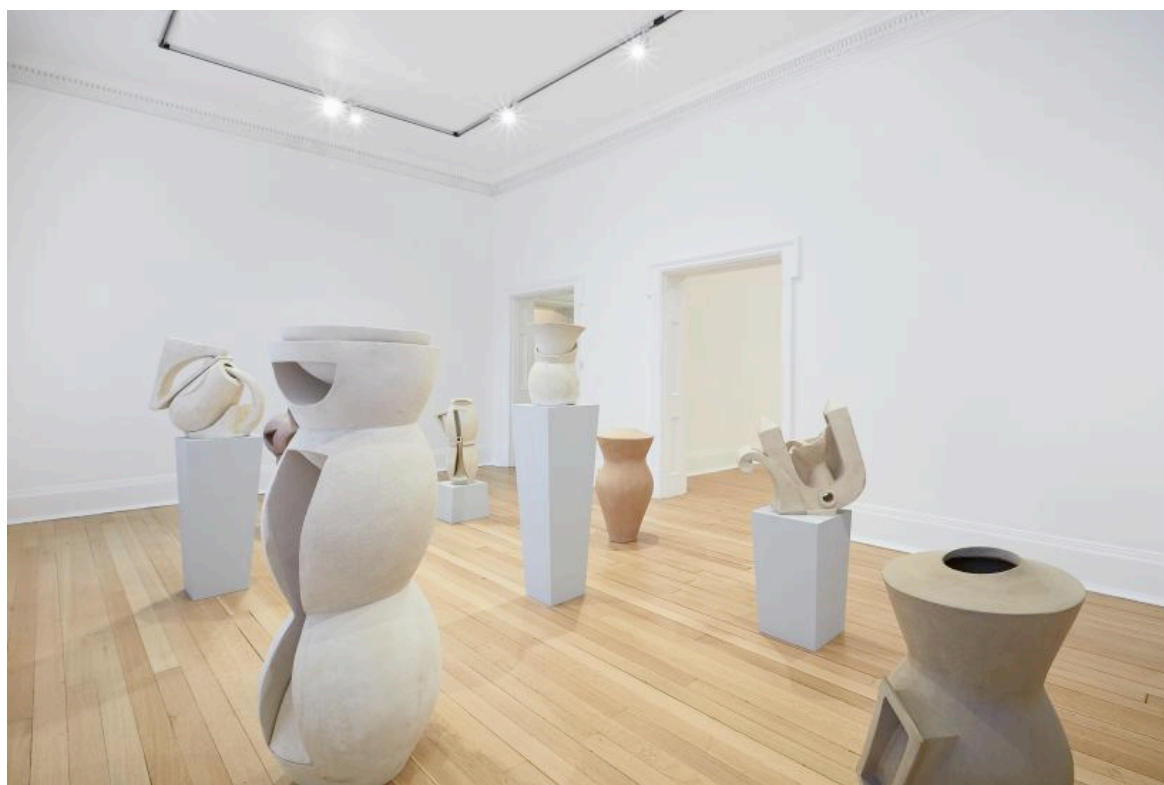


THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Glanville, Samuel. 'Phillip King: Colour on Fire & Ceramics 1995-2017'. *This is tomorrow* Online. January 2018

this is tomorrow

Phillip King: Colour on Fire & Ceramics 1995-2017



Title : Phillip King, Ceramics 1995-2017, 2017. Installation view

Phillip King: Colour on Fire & Ceramics 1995-2017

Thomas Dane Gallery

23 November 2017 - 3 February 2018

Review by Samuel Glanville

Phillip King's exhibition, spread across Thomas Dane's two gallery spaces, gives us a chance to see the variety of work produced by the artist beyond his sculptures of the 1960s. At No. 11 Duke Street St James's is 'Ceramics 1995-2017', a subtle show of thirteen of King's ceramic vessels produced in England after two years spent in Japan between 1993 and 1995 (8 of the 13 works were produced in 1995 and 1996). The ceramics mark a key departure in King's work; where previously he had produced mainly large coloured sculptures in steel and plastic, the unglazed vessels speak a quieter aesthetic language.

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Works like 'Hurdy Gourdy Birdy' (2017) are figure like, with a lid that forms a brow, curves that go in at the hip and a spout that protrudes to form a crotch. The form of 'Pitcher and Cup' (1996) is a simple vase but a square brick shape dented into it renders the vase useless as a vessel. This is the case with many of the vessels on display where use value has been negated, neck openings are blocked off, do not exist, or lead into a body that cannot hold because it has been cut open. In sabotaging the use value of his vessels King convinces us that ceramic belongs as a suitable medium for sculpture, while the anthropomorphic qualities of some of the vessels are reminders of Picasso's experiments with ceramics.

At No.3 Duke Street, the second part of the exhibition 'Colour on Fire' consists of three painted walls (one turquoise, one yellow, one red) and two sculptures. The central installation is garishly painted polyurethane blocks bent out of shape with holes cut out of them, they lean on and almost step off black plinths as if undecided whether these glossy black boxes are necessary for support. King is playing with us, for the wall elements barely touch the floor and instead hang off the plinths, they support the sculptures on their sides. Almost nothing stands on top of them even though they keep the sculpture rooted to the ground.

It is lucky that King's exhibition is around the corner from Gilbert & George's Lévy-Gorvy show of their early wall sculptures 'The General Jungle or Carry on Sculpting' (ended 2 December) because it reminds us of the tensions wrought upon the sculptural object in the 1960s. King was associated with the New Generation sculptors, such as William Tucker, many of whom were taught by Anthony Caro at Saint Martin's. These sculptors remained focussed on the object, even as they got rid of the plinth and moved their works onto the floor. For other students of Caro at Saint Martin's, like Gilbert & George, this was not radical enough and they sought to call into question the status of the sculptural object all together, famously describing themselves as 'living sculptures'.

The objects on display at Duke Street are remarkable for their difference but with both, King's sculptures are wonderful manipulations of form, colour, and texture.



Title : Phillip King, Colour on Fire, 2017. Installation view

<http://thisistomorrow.info/articles/phillip-king-colour-on-fire-ceramics-1995-2017>