

# Lotte Glob's Sculpture Croft

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## A Furnace Of Mysterious Creation

**GEORGINA COBURN finds an artistic vision in tune with its natural surroundings in artist Lotte Glob's remarkable creation in Sutherland**

**DESTINED TO become a major landmark in the North, the new studio and sculpture croft created on the shores of Loch Eriboll by ceramic artist Lotte Glob is an amazing achievement.**

Designed by architect Gokay Deveci (also responsible for the Lotte Glob House which currently functions beautifully as a gallery on site), the new studio reflects the natural light and energy of the world inside.

It is as much a fusion of the artist's personality and her creative process as it is a celebration of the surrounding landscape in ceramics, land work and architecture.

A single view through the vertical windows of the studio brings objects on display and outside sculptures together in the landscape. There is an ever shifting view of nature and creation inside and out which is perfectly realised in the artist's method and the architect's design.

Often using raw and unrefined materials the artist initiates a process of metamorphosis in sculptures such as "Geode 151, 152" and "Rockstar". Crafting materials collected from her journeys into the surrounding hills and firing them at 1300 degrees, each piece reads like a contained world with raw elements fused together at the time of its birth. This process is echoed in the geology of the rugged and ancient landscape outside.

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Consistently challenging our perception about ceramic art, the open studio, house and grounds reveal a range of work from sculptural pieces, strange creatures, flying stones and books created from fused ceramic and rock to more functional pieces such as tiles, basins, tableware and fountains.

The outside water feature surrounded by a stunning ring of blue and turquoise glazed tiles and a fountain in the centre is populated by floating rocks that drift mysteriously around the circular pool in a kind of question mark.

Wandering around the sculpture croft each piece is intriguing, inviting further investigation as the viewer attempts to uncover its origins. Animal, pod and plant forms, incorporating skulls and stumps of wood as heads, the grounds are alive with imagination yet absolutely of their place.

Flying stones of ceramics and mirrors bound to the earth with metal rods form a silhouette against the sky and act as a marker on a site where the architecture successfully blends with its surroundings.

Piles of boulders, natural features and materials attract the eye in a way that makes us look again at the environment all around. It is a magical, inspirational place for people of all ages to explore.

Always evolving new work, the current exhibition includes some beautiful examples such as "Crust" which reads like an enfolded triptych in the hands. An abstract work of strong colour utilising the fused glass technique seen in the artist's pool bowls, this piece transcends the boundary often placed between applied arts or craft and visual art.

Other new works like three robust "Arcane Shields" of fused rock and "Fragments" which read like the remnants of geological force are powerful works of art and part of an energetic process, forever grappling with elements and techniques that continue to shift like the earth's crust.

For me, the real beauty of this artist's work is contained in her fused books, heavy with the weight of their materials, contents hidden and bound in a furnace of mysterious creation.

"The Book of the Sea" with its imprint of kelp and glaze melted into the surface, gathering in pools like those at the edge of the ocean, is a wonderful example. Nature is vast and unstoppable; we cannot dictate tides or the phases of the moon. Creation and destruction are eternal forces of life on a microscopic or universal scale. Between the covers of a book we can never open is absolute knowledge of creation.

"21 Day Walk With a Pencil", with its encrusted slab-like cover, demonstrates the remarkable quality of etching on clay and the technique behind some of my favourite "land books" in the exhibition.

The contrast between the delicacy of the etching and the fused weight of stone is exquisite. Our expectations about traditional drawing methods are expanded further by the use of a pouring jug to model a human form across the surface of a plate.

The artist's craft represents not only design, architecture and art in synergy with the landscape but a way of being and a process of making art which is deeply nurturing and dynamic.

Lotte Glob's art is impossible to separate from the land that it inhabits and I can think of no better way of understanding and gaining appreciation of its unique and rugged beauty than contemplation of her works. They are about a physical process but also about vision, one which will continue to be realised as the sculpture craft evolves.

*(Lotte Glob's Sculpture Craft is at 105 Laid, Loch Eriboll, Sutherland (9 miles east of Durness), and is open from 26 May – 26 June, and 28 September – 28 October, 11am to 5pm daily. All other times by appointment)*