

CERAMICS NOW

M A G A Z I N E



September 2026

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Ceramics Now Magazine
Editor in Chief: Vasi Hirdo
ISSN 2248-115X
www.ceramicsnow.org/magazine
office@ceramicsnow.org

Design by KRAKA Editions
www.behance.net/krakaeditions

Front and back covers: Ross Junior Owusu. Just dey Play (stacking up the pieces), 2025, Earthenware, underglazes, industrial fabric prints and mixed media. Photos by the artist.

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Ross Junior Owusu

Ross Junior Owusu is a Ghanaian mixed-media artist working between the United States and Ghana, whose practice spans ceramics, performance, and assemblage. Rooted in contemporary craft, his work examines identity, migration, and cultural memory, focusing on how identities are carried, reshaped, reconstructed across shifting geographies and asking what is picked up, and what is left behind in our Cultural journeys.

Owusu received his MFA in Studio Art from Wayne State University in Detroit and a BA in Industrial Art (Ceramics) from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana. His work draws from West African visual languages, particularly Krobo bead traditions, which he reinterprets through modular, large-scale ceramic forms that function as vessels of movement, memory, and belonging.

His work has been featured in national and international exhibitions, including the National Council on Education for

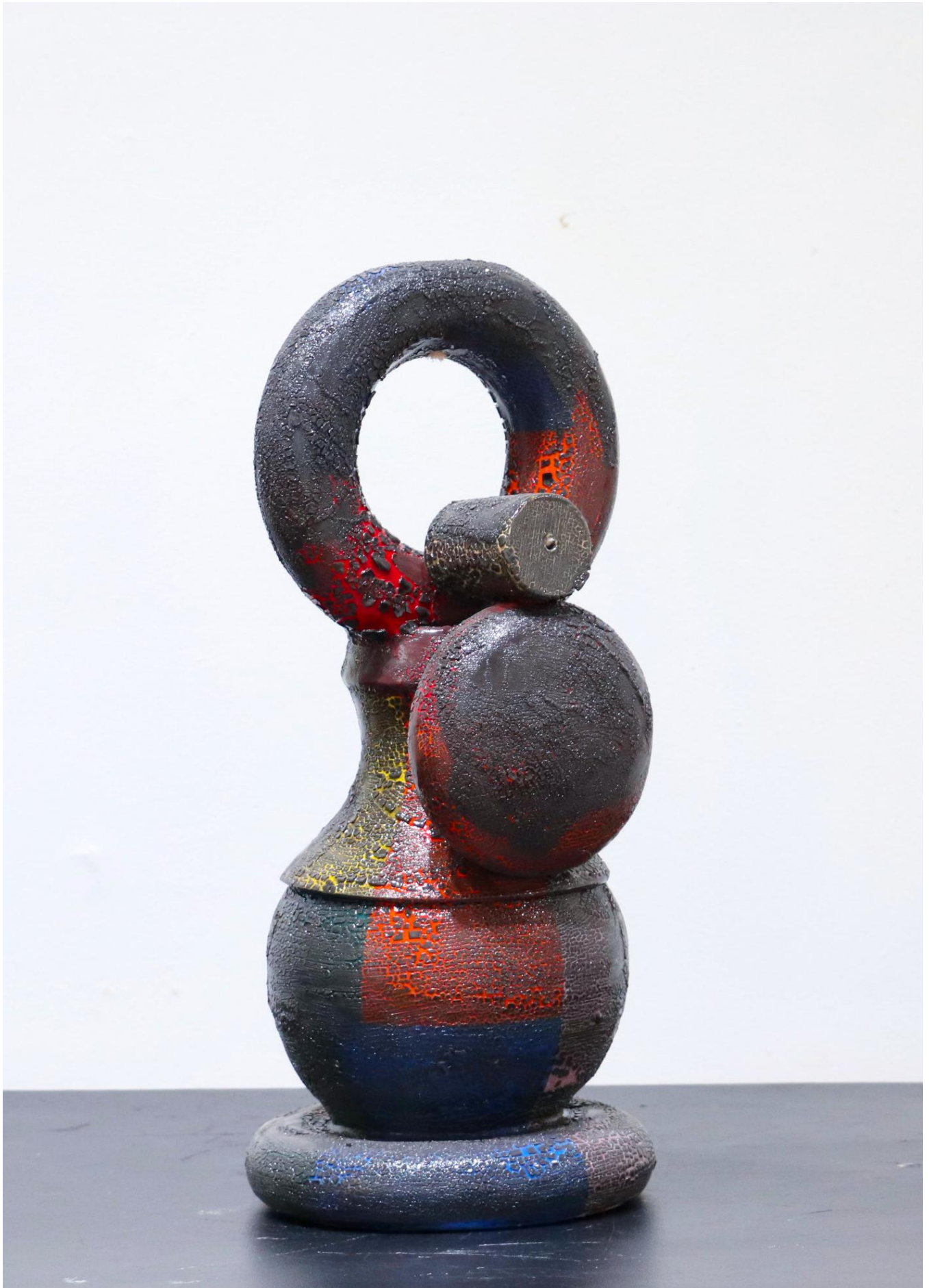
the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) Annual Exhibition and Multicultural Fellowship Exhibition, as well as solo and two-person exhibitions across the United States. His work has been recognized through awards and residencies including the Watershed Zenobia Award, Penland School of Craft, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, and the Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts.

Alongside his studio practice, Owusu is an educator committed to material-based inquiry and culturally grounded teaching. He currently serves as Assistant Professor of Art and Program Lead at Talladega College (AL), where he teaches ceramics, design, and art history, fostering interdisciplinary approaches to making and critical engagement with contemporary art practice.

Visit **Ross Junior Owusu's** website and Instagram.

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Zeer: Handwashing as Care, 2025, still from video performance, duration: 55 seconds

Just dey Play (stacking up the pieces)



Just dey Play (stacking up the pieces), 2025. Earthenware, underglazes, industrial fabric prints and mixed media, Dimensions variable. Photos: Artist



Play becomes a way of making and discovering in Just dey Play. The title describes an intuitive process in which forms are stacked, moved, balanced, and rearranged until new relationships emerge.

The modular pieces sit somewhere between stability and collapse, leaving room for chance and improvisation. Clay records these small adjustments and gestures, making the process of experimentation visible.

Astrid Sleire

Astrid Sleire (b. 1961) is a Norwegian ceramic artist who graduated from The National College of Art and Design in Bergen in 1988. Her practice explores abstract sculptural forms that balance construction and fragility, often referencing architecture and landscape in transformation. Working in her studio in Bergen, she pursues an explorative and material-conscious approach that lends her ceramic universe a characteristic intensity. Sleire's practice revolves around experimentation, a movement in material and form towards a precarious position and a balancing act, where the construction plays a supporting role while also making an immediate statement.

Sleire has presented pieces in invited and juried exhibitions in Norway and abroad. Her art has been purchased for a number of collections and museums, among them the City of Oslo Art Collection, the National Museum in Oslo, KODE Bergen, Sørlandets Kunstmuseum, Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum, Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum and Keramikmuseum Westerwald in Germany. She has carried out several commissions for art in the public space and is the recipient of the 2022 Finn

Erik Alsos Memorial Award. Until 2023, she held a position as Associate Professor of Ceramics at The Art Academy, University of Bergen.

Sleire is currently participating in the 47th edition of the exhibition Tendenser called Knadd. Formet. Brent, which focuses on contemporary Nordic ceramics, at Galleri F15. Jeløya, Moss. Her work is also presented in the current exhibition Respons! Norsk Keramikk 1975-2026, at Senter for keramisk kunst, Ringebu. Earlier this year (2026) she showed the solo exhibition Folded Constructions, at Gallery Peach Corner in Copenhagen.

Some other exhibitions worth mentioning are: SKOG Art Space, Oslo (with Karin Blomgren); Brev til lyset (2024), Østfold kunstsenter, Fredrikstad; Opphold (2023), FORMAT, Oslo; Falle til føye (2023), Kunstgarasjen, Bergen; Bakkekontakt (2021), RAM gallery, Oslo; Fortune Tellers (2022/2023), curated by Randi Grov Berger, Kunsthall Grenland, Porsgrunn.

Visit **Astrid Sleire's** website and Instagram.

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Omriss / Outline, (2026). Section of a series consisting of 27 pieces. Red fired clay, glaze, underglaze. Variable size, approx. H15 cm.
Photos: Øystein Klakegg



Du verden (2024-25). One piece in a series of five pieces. Black fired clay, glaze, underglaze. Approx. H 38 cm. Photos: Helge Hansen

Folded Constructions, 2026



Folded Constructions (2025). Red clay with blue/purple, orange, underglaze stripes. Size approx H27 cm. Photo: Bjarte Bjørkum



Installation photo from the exhibition *Folded Constructions* (2026) at Gallery Peach Corner, Copenhagen. Photos: Ole Akhøj

*Astrid Sleire's works highlight the constructed and assembled – architectural qualities. In the exhibition *Folded Constructions*, Astrid Sleire explores the movements of the material and how the shape can create a space for new possibilities. She aims to strike a balance between construction and expression, between the structural and the immediate.*

The clay is rolled out into thin sheets and then folded and joined together into zigzag-like structures. Based on the natural colour of the clay, Sleire constructs colour shades through layers of underglaze. Colour patches and stripes move across the object, forming in a pattern that may both reveal and conceal, highlight and camouflage.

Sleire's works balance at the tipping point between stable and unsettled – between clarity and visual disruptions that invite new interpretations.

Heide Nonnenmacher

Heide Nonnenmacher (b. 1951, Stuttgart) is a ceramic artist based in Nattheim, Germany. She studied art at the University of Education in Schwäbisch Gmünd from 1971 to 1974 and established her own studio in 1982. Throughout her career, she has participated in multiple international residencies and exchanges, including artist residencies in Shigaraki, Japan (2003), at the Yingge Ceramics Museum in Taiwan (2015), and in Jingdezhen-Sanbao, China (2019). She is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC).

Working primarily with porcelain, Nonnenmacher develops sculptural forms informed by structures found in nature and by the fossil landscape of the region where she lives. Her work has drawn particularly on the fossil phenomenon around Nattheim, as well as forms associated with plant and animal life and underwater organisms. She describes her process as a mixed-media technique in which absorbent materials such as cellulose, wool, sponges, and roots are used as carriers for porcelain, enabling her to construct intricate forms and fine structures.

Nonnenmacher has exhibited extensively in Germany and internationally, including at the Premio Faenza, the Korean International Ceramics Biennale, the Porcelain Biennale Meissen, the Jingdezhen International Ceramic Biennale, the Latvia Ceramics Biennale, and the International Biennial of Ceramic Art of Aveiro. Her distinctions include honorable mentions at the Korean International Ceramics Biennale in 2015 and the Taiwan Ceramics Biennale in 2016, the Hessian State Award in 2023, and the Baden-Württemberg State Award in 2014 and 2024. Her work is represented in several public collections, including the Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe, the Yingge Ceramics Museum, the Sanbao Museum in Jingdezhen, and the Württembergisches Landesmuseum Stuttgart.

Visit **Heide Nonnenmacher's** website and Instagram page.

<https://nonnenmacher-design.de/>
[@nonnenmacherdesign](https://www.instagram.com/nonnenmacherdesign)





Attitude Matters 2, 2025, porcelain, 58 cm H × 22 cm D. Photo: Ignazio Itturioz

Kirsten Spuijbroek

Kirsten Spuijbroek (b. 1981) is an artist based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She studied Product Design at ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, graduating with a BA in 2009.

Spuijbroek's work centers on difficult and often unspoken aspects of human experience, with a particular focus on grief, loss, inner emptiness, vulnerability, and emotions that are frequently avoided because of their painful nature. Rather than softening these experiences, she gives them form through sculptures that can appear erratic, uneasy, and untamed, often using a dark and restrained visual language.

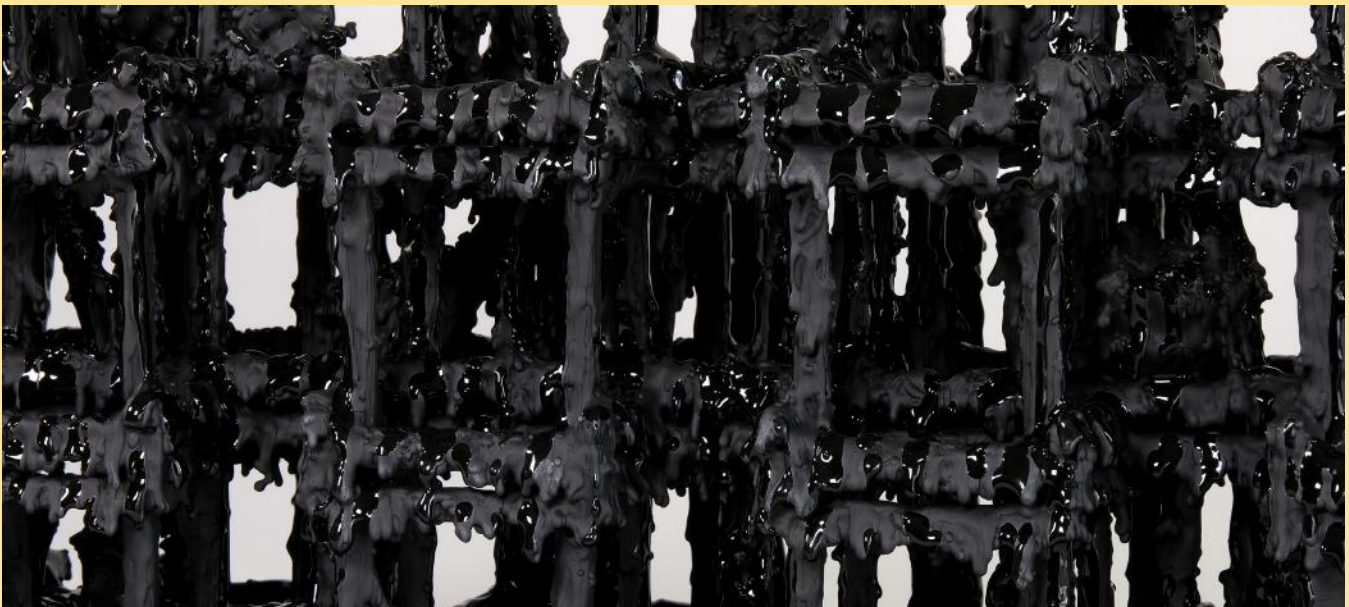
Her porcelain flower sculptures bring together fragility and permanence. Flowers become symbols of life's transience and of the spaces created by absence and loss, while the material itself allows her to explore the tension between delicacy and resilience. Spuijbroek pushes her materials to their limits, experimenting with their behavior and possibilities. Her works do not seek to resolve the emotions they address, but instead create space for contemplation and reflection.

Spuijbroek's work has been presented at venues and events including the International Biennale of Artistic Ceramics in Aveiro, Portugal; the International Museum of Ceramics in Faenza, Italy; CODA Museum in Apeldoorn; Tropenmuseum Amsterdam; and Museum Arnhem. She has also participated in numerous exhibitions in the Netherlands and internationally and completed residencies at the European Ceramic Work Centre (EKWC) in 2017 and 2022. In 2023, she was selected for the International Competition of Contemporary Ceramic Art at MIC Faenza.

Her work is held in the collections of the GRASSI Museum of Applied Arts in Leipzig and Museum Arnhem, as well as in private collections. Spuijbroek is represented by ROOF-A Gallery in Rotterdam.

Visit **Kirsten Spuijbroek's** website and Instagram.

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The City That Makes: Jingdezhen

Notes from the 52nd IAC Congress, satellite exhibitions and the 2026 Jingdezhen International Ceramic Art Biennale

By Olivia Fero

There is a street in Jingdezhen for glaze and a street for bisque, a street for tiles, a street for tools, a street for decals. Whole districts specialise the way organs specialise: underglaze painting here, porcelain flowers there. Passing through it is like moving through an exploded diagram of the ceramic process, a city organised not around commerce or governance but around making. When the keynote speaker at the 52nd Congress of the International Academy of Ceramics, Wayne Higby, Professor Emeritus and Robert C. Turner Chair of Ceramic Art at Alfred University, called Jingdezhen a city for makers, the phrase was not a slogan but a road map.

In the last week of June, the International Academy of Ceramics convened its congress, held until 2 July under the theme Inheritance and Innovation, alongside the opening of the third Jingdezhen International Ceramic Art Biennale and a constellation of satellite exhibitions. The porcelain capital, already of near mythical significance for anyone who works in clay, was for one week also the capital of the ceramic conversation, and thanks to near-instant simultaneous translation the field could argue and disagree in its own tongues rather than in weary conference English. What I saw there was a working demonstration that the anxieties currently paralysing the craft arts in Europe, Britain and America, about technology, about markets, about the survival of ceramics education itself, are not laws of nature but choices and can be prioritised differently. It was also, undeniably, a spectacle of scale and polish, and scale invites its own questions: who benefits, who gets in, and who pays?

A masterclass in a lifetime

The presentation everyone will remember belonged to Piet Stockmans. The Belgian porcelain artist, now in his mid-eighties, delivered a lecture titled *Be Yourself* that was a masterclass not only in porcelain but in how to present a lifetime's practice. Film, music, voiceover and image were edited together with a precision his own slip-cast porcelain would recognise, and through it you could watch a practice develop across six decades: the industrial designer who spent more than two decades at Royal Mosa, whose Sonja cup was produced some thirty million times; the artist who

found his signature in that pale, cold, instantly recognisable Stockmans blue; the elder statesman pouring porcelain slip across great expanses to crack and pool like drying lakebeds. Alongside the lecture he showed three new works, *Repair*, *Battle* and *The Books Are Running Empty*, finished in Jingdezhen itself. The standing ovation was well earned, and not just for an exceptional individual: it was for the demonstration that a life in clay can be composed, over decades, with the same care as a single object.



Piet Stockmans



Piet Stockmans



Piet Stockmans

The machine in the workshop

In the West we have developed a florid, well-rehearsed anxiety about technology in the craft arts, casting the CNC mill, the 3D printer and now the generative algorithm as wolves at the studio door. In Jingdezhen that anxiety simply does not exist, for economic rather than temperamental reasons: this is a city with an unbroken production ecology, where hand and machine have always coexisted along a spectrum of price and audience.

New technologies are treated as what they are: tools, chosen according to the qualities wanted in the finished piece, which include, quite unsentimentally, the intended audience and the price. In the carving district you can watch a master work a single vessel for months, and a few streets away a CNC machine produce a comparable aesthetic for a fraction of the cost. Nobody pretends they are the same thing.



Yuan Hailong



Torbjørn Kvasbø



Ingrid Lilligren



Tomas Carpio

Nick Vest, the American ceramicist who runs the MenLo residency with his wife, the Jingdezhen artist Zhou Yuye, put it plainly: no master carver has been put out of work by the machine, because to the discerning eye the difference is legible in the object itself, and a market flooded with reproductions makes the original more valuable, not less. What the machine has actually displaced is drudgery, the mediocre carving once done by already underpaid hands; automation's benefits and its costs rarely land on the same people.

There is also a category mistake lurking in the Western scepticism towards machine making. We keep asking whether an object made with a machine is authentic, as though authenticity were a property residing solely in the object rather than a relation between maker, process, object and audience. The city does not fear the machine because it has never confused the tool with the hand that chooses it.

The comparison Jingdezhen most obviously invites is not with the West but with Japan's production towns, Arita, Seto, Mashiko, where hand and machine have coexisted in an unbroken ecology and the same questions of authorship, reproduction and price have been worked through in their own idiom. Tetsuya Tanaka's lecture, *Kogei Meets Contemporary Art: The History of Japanese Ceramics from Postmodernism to Today*, argued that contemporary artists have transcended the art-craft divide altogether, dissolved by practice. Our anxiety, then, is not a universal human response to the machine but a local and recent one, and part of what an international congress like this offers is the opportunity to see as local.

The shoemaker's shoes

Dr Fang Lili's presentation proposed Jingdezhen as a model for urban regeneration, and it was the intellectual centre of the congress for me. She described the proliferation of small studios across the city and its villages, the young couples arriving to set up workshops, and the philosophy underneath: that ceramics offers a quality of life people need and value, and that this matters more than going faster, bigger and more. I kept thinking of Socrates in the *Gorgias*, asking Callicles, that dialogue's great apostle of appetite, whether the finest shoemaker should therefore walk about in the biggest shoes and own the greatest number of them. It sounds like nonsense; this is the whole question. Excellence is not accumulation. The good shoemaker does not want the most shoes or the largest. He wants the shoe that fits. Jingdezhen, in a country not known for its suspicion of scale, wears very large shoes. What needs analysis is how well they fit.

The success presented here was not inevitable. The city's history reads like a stress test. First the slow erosion of the western export market once Böttger broke China's monopoly and Meissen began producing hard-paste porcelain in 1710, European factories multiplying across the century that followed. Then the devastation of the Taiping years,

when fighting in the 1850s wrecked the kilns and sent the industry into a long decline. Then came the centralisation of all production into state kilns under communism, and, at the century's end, the dissolution of those kilns, ownership parcelled out to redundant workers in lieu of severance. Any one of these might have finished a lesser place. Instead, Jingdezhen is booming. The regenerated factory district of Taoxichuan, opened in 2016 on the site of a former state porcelain works with its twenty-two factory buildings preserved rather than razed, has become the emblem of the recovery: galleries, studios, museums and a night market where young makers take a stall for a nominal rent. The city's creative migrants even have a name, *jingpiao*, the Jingdezhen drifters, echoing the *beipiao*, the Beijing drifters of the 1990s. Estimates of their number vary wildly, from tens of thousands to, in the more expansive official counts, over a hundred thousand young creators, around five thousand of them from overseas. Ai Weiwei's hundred million *Sunflower Seeds* were made here, by hand. There are more than thirty international residency programmes, five universities teaching ceramics, and a tourist economy that is benefiting from both national and international visitors. This summer its porcelain industry sites joined the UNESCO World Heritage List.



The 52nd Congress of the International Academy of Ceramics



Delft's Ceramic Conversations: Common Ground, Market Days, Urban Blue

By Julia Ellen Lancaster

Having travelled to Rotterdam Centraal on the Eurostar, it's an easy ten-minute hop on the Intercity Sprinter to my destination of Delft. This picturesque Dutch city in South Holland, set between Rotterdam and The Hague, is known as the birthplace of Dutch Golden Age painter Johannes Vermeer and the iconic Delft Blue pottery.

With a population of just over 100,000, it is significant that around 27,000 residents are students, the majority studying at the world-renowned Delft University of Technology (TU Delft). Delft's historic, canal-lined centre felt wonderfully relaxed during my visit, partly because it coincided with the university holidays, when many students had left the city for a while, and partly because Delft was experiencing an official Red Warning heatwave, with temperatures rising to 37°C.

In the old town stands the medieval Oude Kerk (Old Church), over 800 years old and the burial place of Delft's native son, Johannes Vermeer. The church was originally laid out as a traditional basilica, with a nave flanked by two smaller aisles. Its most recognisable feature is a 75-metre-high brick tower that leans almost two metres from the vertical. According to local lore, the foundations were built on unstable ground, and cow hides were laid beneath them in an attempt to provide stability. As work continued, builders tried to compensate for the lean with each successive layer of brickwork, but to this day only the four turrets at the top remain truly vertical.

It is here, within this astounding Gothic Protestant church, that Galerie Terra

Delft staged *Common Ground: A World of Ceramics*, a major anniversary exhibition marking 40 years of the gallery and bringing together ceramic works from five continents. The coolness of the church was a welcome escape from the heat outside and undoubtedly encouraged visitors to linger a little longer among the artworks.

At the opposite end of the nave, a second ceramic exhibition was on view. Also curated by Simone Haak and Joke Doedens, Co-Directors of Galerie Terra Delft, *The Table of 40!* featured forty ceramic works by forty ceramic artists. Each piece represented one year from 1986 to 2026, together telling the story of four decades of craftsmanship, innovation and dedication to the ceramic medium.

Common Ground: A World of Ceramics, Oude Kerk, Delft

Featured artists: Li Zhen (China, Asia); Prithwiraj Mali (India, Asia); Mahala Hill (Australia, Oceania); Adeoti Afeez Azeez (Nigeria, Africa); Katherine Morling (United Kingdom, Europe); Mariëtte van der Ven (Netherlands, Europe); Eliza Au (Canada/United States, Americas); Keka Ruiz-Tagle (Chile, Americas).

In this global exhibition, eight artists from five continents ask the question: what does clay tell us about who we are, where we come from, and what we share?

Li Zhen, based in the renowned ceramics city of Jingdezhen, produces what might initially be considered relatively traditional teapots, vases, plates and bowls inspired by ceramics of the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE). By employing another Chinese tradition, that of free, hand-brushed calligraphy using metal oxides, his pieces acquire a distinctly contemporary energy, adding flow and movement to these functional forms.





Art of the “Formless”: The Ceramics of Charles Bound

By Stephen F. Eisenman

Belated discovery of a mature artist

I first came across Charles Bound’s work in September 2024, at Contemporary Ceramics on Great Russell Street in London, opposite the British Museum. I’d visited the gallery from time to time over the years, but after I moved to England in Spring 2024, my attendance was more frequent. Because they change exhibitions often, it’s a good place to gain perspective on the state of British studio ceramics and see the work of both new and veteran artists.

On this occasion, the gallery dedicated its back room – the gallery’s special sanctum — to Bound, who has been making wood-fired stoneware for some 45 years. The works stood apart from those by others then on display at the gallery including Clive Bowen, Sotis Filippedes, Doug Fitch, Jane Hamlyn, Walter Keeler, and Stephen Parry. Bound’s ceramics, unlike theirs,

are thick-walled, dark and irregularly shaped. Though nearly all works in the exhibition were vessels of some kind — amphorae, urns, plates and bowls — many approached what I would call *informe*, “the formless,” to borrow the phrase of the Surrealist author, Georges Bataille. That’s what made them so compelling.

The large plates were coarse and irregular, with gouges, gaps, and crevices. I’d recently seen some like them by the American Peter Voulkos in the Victoria & Albert Museum. They dated from the 1970s and featured porcelain infusions that exploded during firing, creating blackened holes. Bound’s plates, both thrown and coiled were even coarser and more dangerous looking — as if scarred by volcanic eruption rather than pistol shots.

The vases or urns on exhibition also had gaps, holes, or small loops (ears) that mocked function. Several of the bowls were so rough — with infused, pitted or irregular rims — you’d never dare put them to your lips. A few pots were blackened, reminding me of George Ohr — the Mad Potter of Biloxi — and his “burned babies,” earthenware

rescued from the fire that destroyed his studio in 1894. Bound uses a slip made of manganese dioxide and copper carbonate to achieve a charcoal black.

Also on exhibition were a few abstract works on paper — charcoal, acrylic, gouache and collage. They were both a contrast to and an extension of the ceramics. Some were black and gestural, recalling Richard Serra’s drawings with paint stick. Most were colorful — white, yellow and red predominated — and thus unlike the tonally variegated, but largely achromic pots. Their broad, densely packed, looping and irregularly shaped brushstrokes however, featured the same kind of expressive — almost accidental — compositions as the clay works. They suggested Abstract Expressionist Willem De Kooning’s later, lyrical abstractions, such as *Untitled XI* (1975, Art Institute of Chicago), as well as Art Informel painter Antoni Tàpies’s works on paper and canvas. In ceramic as well as paint, Bound’s work were expressive and reticent; assertive and *informe*. Who was this mature, American-British artist, till then unknown to me, who exhibited such a cogent and paradoxical body of work?



Stelae, vessels, plates and painting by Charles Bound. Photos: The Author

*Chen-Long Lin*

Where Form Meets the Boundless

By Amy Gogarty

In Vancouver, Jig Art has a reputation for presenting art, including ceramics, that builds cultural bridges. While the gallery showcases artists from diverse backgrounds, much of their focus is on ethnically Chinese artists. The Greater Vancouver Region is one of the most multi-cultural in North America, with visible minorities representing over 50% of residents. Approximately 20% of the population identifies as Chinese-Canadian, including immigrants from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and those whose families have lived here for generations. This makes for a very lively and complex cultural mix, but ceramics practice in the province of British Columbia continues to be understood largely in terms of traditions deriving from Bernard Leach and European Modernism. Jig Art's promotion of equally important influences and artists from the Chinese diaspora contributes an important and much-appreciated addition to our understanding of BC ceramics.

The exhibition *Where Form Meets the Boundless* includes work by five Taiwanese artists, Ming-Shun Cho, Yu-Ying Huang, Ming-hsiang Hsu, Shanyin Lee, and Chen-Long Lin. Four Canadian artists, Amy Chang, Wei Cheng, Ying-Yueh Chuang, and Debra Sloan provide a local component. Chang and Chuang were born and raised in Taiwan, while Cheng was born and raised in mainland China. Sloan was born and raised in Canada, although she has family connections to the Chinese community, and her work is currently included in the 2026 Jingdezhen International Ceramic Art Biennial. This diverse collection allows viewers to note influences and divergences between the two groups, encouraging a more nuanced understanding of the role of culture in shaping artistic production.

Much of the Taiwanese work focuses on function, with an emphasis on tea wares. Curator Yumeng Li explains that the focus on tea wares reflects the educational system, which promotes historical appreciation, technical knowledge, and skill, and on the importance of tea in Chinese culture. The works on view are mostly functional, but their importance extends far beyond function to embrace history, memory, family, and culture. Tiny, perfectly formed teapots, cups, and saucers exemplify the importance of tea in the artists' work, but many pieces also embrace conceptual concerns, and engage material realities, social issues, and the body.



Shanyin Lee



Ming-Hsiang Hsu



Yu-Ying Huang



Kneaded. Shaped. Fired. 47th Tendencies Exhibition

By Unu Sohn

The 2026 Tendencies exhibition is the 47th edition of a series of annual presentations that began in 1970, when Norwegian artist Erik Pløen proposed a yearly craft exhibition to Galleri F 15's then-director, Lars Brandstrup. The exhibition is on view June 20th through October 11th at Galleri F 15 in Moss, a quick forty-minute train ride from Oslo. This year's show is special as it features work by Pløen himself. In honor of his artistic development, it focuses on the medium of ceramics through a balance of more traditional craftsmanship with experimental techniques and concept-driven works.

The ten Nordic artists exhibiting include Anders Hald, Andrea Scholze, Ane Fabricius Christiansen, Anton Alvarez, Astrid Sleire, Christina Schou Christensen, Erik Pløen, Fanny Ollas, Nina Andrea Standerholen, and Wisam Al-Samad. Titled Kneaded. Shaped. Fired. because of the focus on ceramics, the show is curated by Maria C. Havstam who is the Head of the Art Department

and Interim Director of Galleri F 15. Havstam also cites the “mad potter” George Ohr for the curatorial direction focused on the material’s ability to engage the head, heart, hand, and soul.

Knead, shape, fire, head, heart, hand, soul. There are a lot of ideas being thrown around so the theme may feel muddled. Luckily, this is the basis for an art exhibition and not an important safety announcement. The title is a misnomer as some work is a mixture of unwedged slip or free-flowing glaze, while other works are unfired clay sculptures made in-situ. That being said, the Tendencies exhibition does reflect the array of contemporary ceramic practices that have grown out of studio pottery.

Ceramics is a funny medium because it teeters between truth to material and immaculate illusion. The works of Christina Schou Christensen and Ane Fabricius Christiansen both quintessentially define the material’s paradoxes, utilizing its ability to freeze time and gravity. In the works exhibited with Galleri F 15, Ane Fabricius Christiansen casts metal directly onto the clay within the kiln. Her works appear geological, perhaps even extraterrestrial. Upon the wall is a petrified

spine consisting of several layers of once molten strata. It is alchemical, drawing a parallel between the earthly remains of humanity and the awe-inspiring stalactites and stalagmites deep within untouched caves, both made of the mineral calcium.

Artist Christina Schou Christensen also uses the fluidity of ceramic materials to explore corporeality but in a playful manner. Like many artists working in relation to clay, I am very much familiar with her gloopy colors dripping and pooling out of bulbous sockets. The artist says audience responses vary from miming vomiting to expressing a desire to eat the works. There is something sickening and yet innately animal about this, like the scavenging instinct of a creature eating feces that contains undigested fats and proteins. My metaphor is fitting considering Christensen’s work incorporates reused fired clay and waste materials such as medical glass. It is poetic how the larger sculptures require internal scaffolding to mitigate tension and prevent the thick glaze or clay body from shattering, which in turn creates layered pools of glaze. The interior is externalized and a purely practical technique develops the work’s formal complexity.



Ane Fabricius Christiansen



Christina Schou Christensen

Artist Astrid Sleire's nearby installation of works can provide this comfort through the landscape of handheld geometric sculptures. This series is made from carefully arranged stacks of slab-built forms glazed in matte greens alongside shimmery transparent to reveal slivers of the red clay beneath. Titled *Omriss* (Outline), it is integral to see through the individual works, for some to layer and optically become a shared unit. The body of work was made specifically in response to the word "tendencies," to go on, and I see it as a pattern of behaviors or a rephrasing of the same sentiment. Sleire masterfully engages the viewer's eye, which scans the horizon line she has created. I find my gaze bouncing along the jagged edges, resting in the shadows, and gaining momentum as though I am on slide.

Other works also come alive when experienced through embodied looking. If you view the works of Anton Alvarez through some documentation shots against a stark white background online, then it will seem like a designed object you can purchase at a fancy wine shop that also sells Perelló olives and tasteful bouquets of wildflowers. Big mistake. Rather than the size of a can of olives, the scale of these sculptures in *Tendencies* is closer to that of tree trunks.

Alvarez uses machines he developed to create clay extrusions that may be modified and assembled as they were for this exhibition. The three sculptures Alvarez made for the gallery are massive columns, two of which are too tall for me to look into. A peek inside the shorter one reveals that the sculptures are made of unfired, raw clay. The exterior of these pillars are spray painted in expressive swathes of rainbow colors that add hue without hiding the texture. I can't help but recall the work of Katherina Grosse as I recently saw her solo exhibition at White Cube Bermondsey in London. Alvarez has spoken of his history painting graffiti and his practice reflects a continued engagement with architecture. Like pillars of the Parthenon on the Acropolis, his sculptures disguise their emotional quality through a language of utility.



Anton Alvarez



Astrid Sleire

While Alvarez expresses the use of color, or rather many colors, came from a spontaneous decision, artists Wisam Al-Samad and Nina Andrea Standerholen were more intentional with their choices. Al-Samad is a Norwegian artist who was born in Iraq and in the work titled *Aurora of Love*, he uses a color palette that draws from his Eastern background and the Northern Lights of where he now lives. The forms are inspired by Arabic words for love. Nina Standerholen also similarly draws from her background, specifically her years as a sheep shepherd. Working in Norway's oldest national park Rondane, Standerholen uses not only natural clay and sand as materials but is also inspired by the subtle colors that reveal themselves in the park year after year. Her work grows out of a deep and personal relationship with Norway's natural landscape. The curator's vision of head, heart, hand, and soul is perhaps most clear through Standerholen's practice.

I initially misunderstood this exhibition to exclusively represent Norwegian ceramicists so I was surprised to see images of Christina Schou Christensen's prior to visiting as I thought she was Danish... which she is. Rather than specifically Norwegian artists, Tendencies foregrounds the work of ten

Nordic artists. Perhaps it is only my own ignorance but I had to look into the distinction between Scandinavian and Nordic countries. Scandinavia includes the intertwined Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish countries while the Nordics include those three in addition to Finland, Iceland, Greenland, The Faroe Islands, and Åland. These other countries were not the focal point in this year's exhibition. The curator selected the artists after consulting the Clay Museum in Denmark and the Röhsska Museum in Sweden so this could have contributed to the particular selection of artists.

Additionally, Norwegian studio pottery history is recent and the ceramic art scene is therefore arguably even younger. According to Knut Astrup Bull, the Senior Curator of Design and Decorative Arts at the National Museum, no Norwegian pottery was discovered with the Vikings. Early Norse people commonly carved vessels from horn, wood, and steatite with potteries established later than other countries. Studio craft only began in Norway between World War I and World War II with earthenware tableware. Porcelain entered the scene in the late 70s, when Japanese and non-traditional west coast American influences came into the country through foreign artists coming to teach at schools in Bergen.



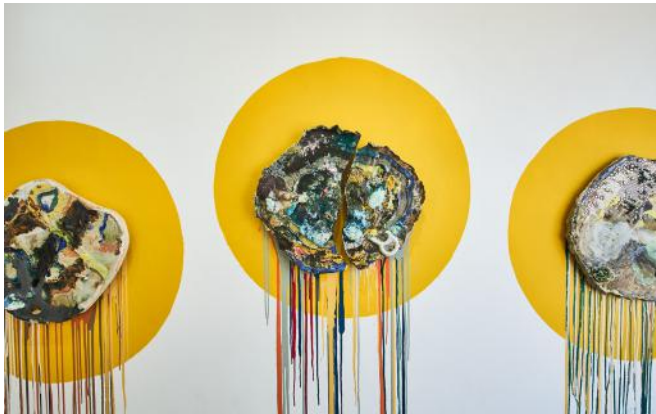
Phantasms and Frequencies: liminal sculptures by Julia Ellen Lancaster

By Ashley Thorpe

Julia Ellen Lancaster has become highly regarded for creating clay sculptures that are as complex as they are intuitive. For *Phantasms and Frequencies*, a solo exhibition held from 18 June – 5 July 2026 at the Liminal Gallery in Margate, UK, she created a painterly series of free-standing and wall-based sculptures that revel in the material possibilities of clay. These ceramic collages are produced out of free association: relationships between different recycled materials are realized in the process of creating each work. These discoveries suggest form which, in turn, encourage narrative. But what is the story that Ellen Lancaster is trying to tell?

For me, it is a story of both art history and technical process. Collage and free association are perhaps antithetical to ceramic practices which, usually,

demand a rigorous testing of materials so that the final work can be somewhat anticipated. Yet, chance does exist in contemporary British ceramic practice, not least in works by male artists such as Gareth Mason and Nao Matsunaga. However, Ellen Lancaster's formal vocabulary and use of material differ considerably from her male counterparts. This difference partly emerges from the foregrounding of a female corporeality, not to inscribe gender norms, but to assert a gendered subjectivity that resists subordination to patriarchal categories.



Situating Ellen Lancaster within a male history of art might begin with the modernist collages of Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948), whose merz works brought new kinds of found materials together in the creation of sculpture. Finding a genealogical relationship between Kurt Schwitters and British studio ceramic practices is not as fanciful as it might first seem. Schwitters escaped Nazi Germany to Britain via Norway, arriving in Leith in Edinburgh in 1940, being released from internment in 1941. He spent the last seven years of his life first in London, and then in the Lake District. His impact on British art during this time was limited but definite. Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005) made no secret about his appreciation of Schwitters whilst he was at the Slade in 1946. As he later remarked:

Schwitters made his collages (most likely) according to the laws of chance – very much part of recent art history. Although one must retain the image of raw material – rejected rubbish such as used bus tokens – the dynamic

part is the commitment of finally sticking down the objects. The excitement truly comes when the artist at that moment actually goes beyond his own preconceptions and aspirations.¹

Paolozzi, already a collagist when he became an art student in London in 1946, had become interested in Surrealism when he visited Paris in 1947². By the 1950s, he was making assemblages of objects, and by the 1960s, assemblages that included reference to both mechanised and everyday objects. By 1968, Paolozzi was teaching Ceramics at the Royal College of Art (RCA) at the behest of his close friend David Queensbury (Head of Ceramics, 1959-1983) to position ceramics education beyond industrial design. Queensbury observed that Paolozzi:

wouldn't give traditional advice. He wouldn't say 'Why does the handle on that cup have such a pedestrian angle?' Instead he'd ask 'Why do you need a handle on a cup at all? The

Anna Maria Maiolino: Poetic Earth at MAAT – Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon

March 25 – August 31, 2026





Gabriel Chaile: Archaeology of Memory at Whitechapel Gallery, London

April 1 – September 6, 2026





Whitechapel Gallery presents a new commission from Argentinian Lisbon-based artist Gabriel Chaile (b. 1985, San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina). *Archaeology of Memory* (Arqueología de la Memoria) offers audiences a significant opportunity to engage with Chaile's work, following his shortlisting for the Fourth Plinth (2024) and presentation at Studio Voltaire (2023). The exhibition is curated by Carolina Jozami.

Chaile's practice is rooted in the distinctive cultural traditions of north-west Argentina. He creates engaging anthropomorphic sculptures, often monumental in scale using adobe (a type of clay made from local organic materials) which reinterpret the formal and material language of the region's indigenous communities. Acting as both anthropologist and storyteller, Chaile investigates what he terms the 'genealogy of form' – the idea that certain forms, motifs or shapes repeat throughout history, taking on a new significance in each changed context. Throughout his work, Chaile features recurring figures and symbols that memorialise and recall a lineage of traditions and practices drawn from his ancestors and community.

For the commission at Whitechapel Gallery, Chaile created a site-specific installation that engages with the particularly rich and diverse historical and cultural identity of the East End. Continuing his long-standing interest in collecting ceramics and other items from across the globe, Chaile will scavenge and source a range of objects (decorative and functional) from the local area surrounding Whitechapel Gallery, which will then feature in the exhibition. When entering the gallery, visitors will encounter a group of adobe sculptures that act as both containers for, and guardians of, the various local objects Chaile has found. His use of ancient organic forms to display culturally diverse objects offers a particularly intimate way of connecting worlds, peoples and stories, within a configuration that evokes a site of archaeological excavation.

Chaile's fascination with collecting began with Portuguese ceramics, which he primarily found in street markets, stating: "I was interested in how these objects had a migrant story and, as I started travelling more for work, I began buying other objects that came from one culture but somehow ended up in another place entirely." This assembly of eclectic pieces formed the genesis of a 'migrant collection', comprised of objects, items and stories that foster connection with communities, highlighting both differences and affinities. For Chaile, the movement of objects speaks to the movement of people, and his work reflects on these journeys through his own experience of migration and questions about identity.



Archaeology of Memory expands Chaile's interests and practice, creating a terrain, or environment, sown with different histories and reflecting the many ways of living across diverse geographies. While his work initially appears rooted in materiality, it reveals a rich conceptual framework that offers audiences the means to approach complex issues – as he does – in the manner of an archaeologist.

A fully illustrated publication accompanies the exhibition, featuring a commissioned text by Manuela Moscoso, curator and Executive and Artistic Director of the Center for Art, Research and Alliances (CARA) New York, and an interview with the artist.

About Gabriel Chaile

Gabriel Chaile (b.1985, San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina) has exhibited extensively around the world. His large-scale public work *The Wind Blows Where It Wishes* was presented on the High Line in New York in 2023. Chaile's work was included in the Venice Biennale and the Coimbra Biennial of Contemporary Art in 2022 and the New Museum Triennial in 2021. His work has been the subject of solo presentations at the Fundación Cervieri Monsuárez, José Ignacio (2025); La Tabakalera, San Sebastián, (2024); Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley (2024); Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon (2022); the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (2017); Fondo Nacional de las Artes, Buenos Aires (2014); Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires (2015); and Nuevo Museo Energía de Arte Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires (2011).

He has been featured in group exhibitions at Guggenheim, Bilbao (2025); Islamic Arts Biennale, Jeddah (2025); Malba Puertos, Buenos Aires (2025); Madragoa, Lisbon (2025); the 14th Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Alegre (2025); MARCO, Buenos Aires (2024); C3A – Centro de Creación Contemporánea de Andalucía, Córdoba (2023); BoCA – Biennial of Contemporary Arts, Lisbon (2023); Temporary Gallery, Cologne (2023); FORMA, Paris (2023); Fondation Thalie, Brussels (2021); the New Museum, New York (2021); Galeria Municipal, Porto (2021); Plural Nodo Cultural, Bogotá (2021); Espacio Temporal, Mexico City (2021); Espacio de Arte Contemporáneo, Montevideo (2019); Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires (2019); Faena Festival, Miami Beach (2019); Art Basel Cities, Buenos Aires (2018); Museo de Arte Moderno de Cuenca (2015); and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Latinoamericano, La Plata (2012). Chaile's work is included in collections of the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires; the Fundación Costantini, Buenos Aires; Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Madrid; and Kadist Foundation, Paris.

About Whitechapel Gallery

2026 marks Whitechapel Gallery's 125th Anniversary, providing a unique opportunity to celebrate the Gallery's groundbreaking history and set a bold agenda for the future. Founded in 1901 with the aim to bring 'the finest art of the world to the people of East London', the Gallery has been responsible for bringing some of the most radical, innovative and influential artists to its East End home.

From the outset it pushed the boundaries of what a locally-focused cultural institution could do: giving voice and platform to local, national and international artists at all stages of their careers; presenting diverse practices, forms and ideas; exemplifying sector-leading learning and community outreach programmes; and being at the forefront of the global cultural scene.

From ground-breaking solo shows from artists as diverse as Barbara Hepworth (1954), Jackson Pollock (1958), Helio Oiticica (1969), Gilbert & George (1971), Eva Hesse (1979), Frida Kahlo (1982), Sonia Boyce DBE RA (1988), Sophie Calle (2010), Zarina Bhimji (2012), Emily Jacir (2015), William Kentridge (2016), Theaster Gates (2021), Nicole Eisenman (2023), Zineb Sedira (2024), Gavin Jantjes (2024), Peter Kennard (2024), Lygia Clark (2024), Sonia Boyce (2024), Donald Rodney (2025), Hamad Butt (2025) and Joy Gregory (2025) to thought-provoking group and thematic exhibitions that reflect key artistic and cultural concerns, the Gallery's focus on bringing artists, ideas, and audiences together, remains as important today as it did over a century ago and has helped to cement the East End, as one of the world's most exciting and diverse cultural quarters.

Gabriel Chaile: *Archaeology of Memory* has been generously supported by Whitechapel Gallery Commissioning Council, Dorota Aude-mars, Erin Bell.

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Installation views, 'Gabriel Chaile: Archaeology of Memory', Whitechapel Gallery, London, 1 April – 6 September 2026. Photo © Above Ground Studio (Matt Greenwood)

The Month's News In The Ceramic Art World

01

The LOEWE FOUNDATION Craft Prize 2027 is now open for submissions, marking the 10th edition of the international prize dedicated to excellence, innovation, and artistic merit in contemporary craft. Artists aged 18 and over, of all nationalities, are invited to submit original, one-of-a-kind works created in the last five years, including ceramics and other applied arts. A shortlist of 30 finalists will be selected for an exhibition and catalogue in spring 2027, when the €50,000 prize will be awarded. Applications close October 15, 2026.

02

US-based artists are invited to apply for the Box Factory Ceramics residency in Queens, New York. The program supports artists with three months of rent-free studio access in a shared, class-free environment designed for independent work. Resident artists receive 24/7 access to the studio and a personal storage shelf while working alongside the studio's wider membership community. Materials and firing fees are not included. Applications are open from August 1 to October 31, 2026.

03

Artists are invited to apply to OPEN STUDIO 2026, the second International Contemporary Ceramics Prize organized by Fondazione Cèramica Montelupo for the Cèramica Festival in Montelupo Fiorentino, Italy. The main prize is €2,000, with additional cash prizes, two artist residency awards, scholarships, special mentions, and partner prizes also available. Applications are due October 19, 2026.

04

Applications are also open for the 10th International Modern Teapot Art Biennial, taking place in Wuxi, China, from November 19–23, 2026. Works submitted through the global open call will primarily be considered for the Global Modern Teapot Art Exhibition. Selected participants receive accommodation, meals, local transport, access to official events, and a cultural visit to Yixing, the birthplace of Zisha teapot culture. Submissions close October 11, 2026.

05

Artists based in the UK are invited to apply for the British Ceramics Biennial Mentorship Programme 2026/27, open to early-career creatives working in clay who feel they face barriers to career progression or accessing professional networks. The free online programme will support up to seven artists from October 2026 to February 2027 through mentoring sessions, a bespoke artist film, promotion, peer networking, and support from the BCB team. Applications are due September 15, 2026.

05

Earthworks and Gertrude are inviting applications for a three-month ceramics residency in London. The residency offers time, studio access, and community for the development of a new body of small-scale ceramic work, alongside six months of free membership at Gertrude. The programme is free to apply to and free to participate in, with shared studio facilities and firings included, though accommodation and materials are not provided. Residency periods run from November 2026 to January 2027 and from February to April 2027. Applications are due September 21, 2026.

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What's on View



Marianne Huotari: Voyage at HB381 Gallery, New York

September 9 – October 31, 2026



Roxanne Jackson: Ovum at The Pit, Los Angeles

September 12 – October 22, 2026



Heidi Bjørgan: Unruly at Format Oslo, Oslo

August 13 – September 20, 2026



Susannah Israel: Procession at John Natsoulas Gallery, Davis, CA

August 12 – September 25, 2026



Bente Skjøttgaard: The Beech at Peach Corner Gallery, Copenhagen

August 13 – September 19, 2026



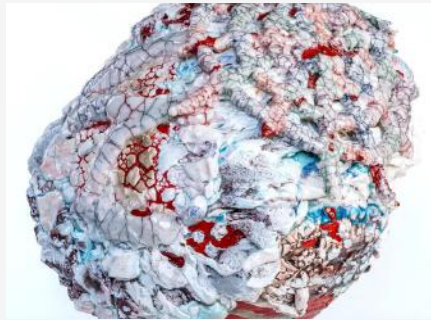
Lieu-tenant, curated by Unu Sohn at Hypha x Eastern City Studios, London

September 4 – October 3, 2026



Grethe Wittrock & Christina Schou Christensen: Gravity at Køppe Contemporary Objects, Rønne

August 22 – October 3, 2026



Kodai Ujiie: Biological Chaos Wabi: On Becoming at Bernheim Gallery, London

August 27 – October 2, 2026



Charly Blackburn: Lanthanides: Rare Earth Spectra at County Hall Pottery, London

September 7 – 27, 2026



Megan McKenzie: Iterations at Sabbia Gallery, Sydney

August 29 – September 26, 2026



Halima Cassell: Carved at Ruthin Craft Centre, Ruthin

July 4 – September 20, 2026



Clay II at Brutto Gusto, Berlin

September 10 – October 31, 2026

