

EDMUND DE WAAL



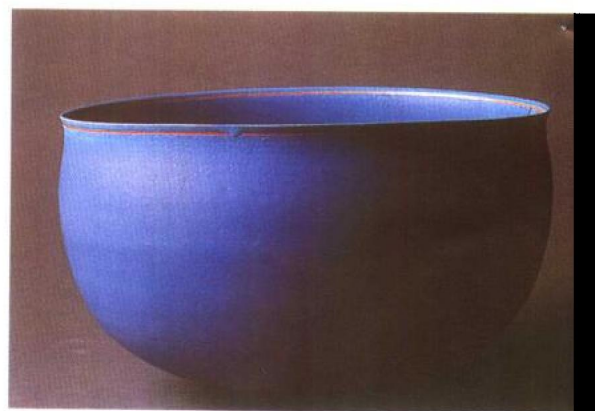
# Design Sourcebook

# CERAMICS



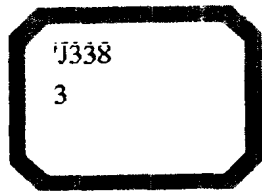
# Design Sourcebook

## C E R A M I C S









# Design Sourcebook

## C E R A M I C S

E D M U N D   D E   W A A L

N E W   H O L L A N D





# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION page 6

CLEAR CONSTRUCTION page 8



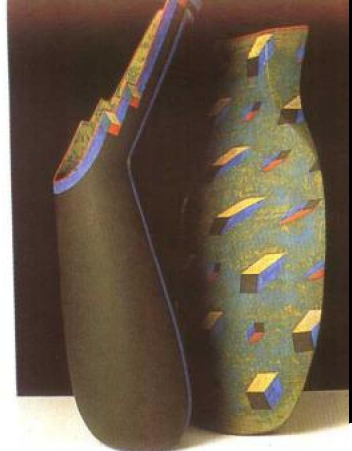
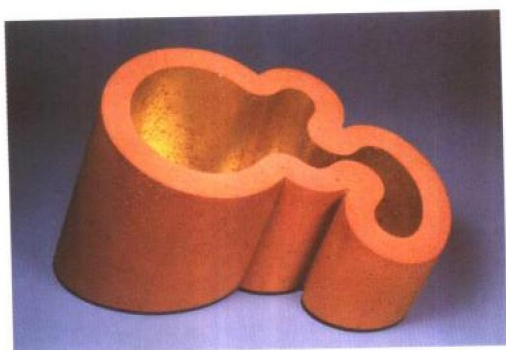
THE NEW AUSTERITY 10

ARCHITECTURAL FORM 34

RETHINKING THE FIGURE page 46

ELEMENTAL FORMS page 60





VESSELS INTERPRETED      page 74

REINVENTING THE WHEEL      page 102

ENDPIECE      page 124

INDEX OF ARTISTS      page 126

GLOSSARY 128

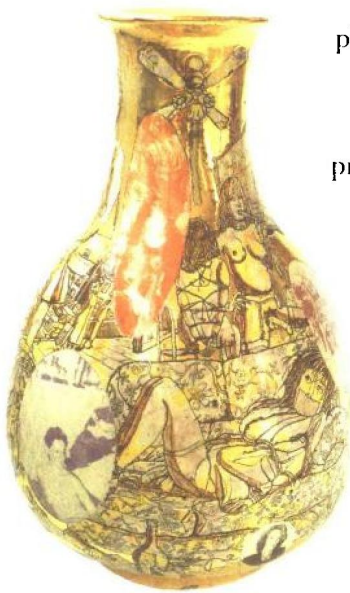
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 128

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS 128



# INTRODUCTION

CERAMICS ARE UNLIKE THE OTHER ARTS. We feel we know ceramics, we handle them everyday, we welcome them into our domestic lives and place them at the centre of our rituals. They are often an unremarked constant in the background of our days. But they are a Trojan Horse,



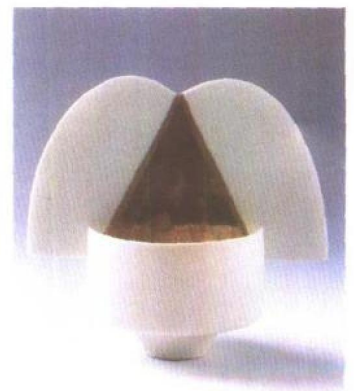
planting a reminder of a profound transformative process in the midst of the continuity. This process, the changing of common clay into something strange and other, is at the heart of our myths of making. Adam, after all, was made from clay. Fired clay, malleable earth made hard through its interaction with fire, is all around us, geologically, historically, architecturally and, increasingly, technologically. The art of ceramics, however deeply it is

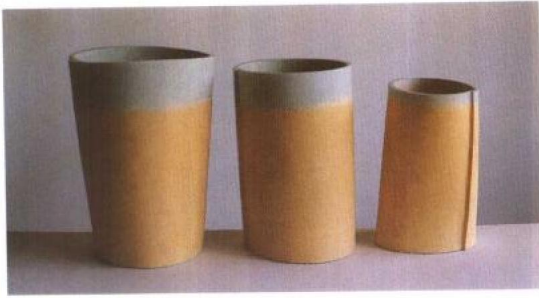
buried, still retains the pulse of this change, a memory of this bridging of two

states of being. This means that everything from porcelain coffee cup to figurative

sculpture shares a basic metaphorical language. Some of the richness of this

language is unfolded in this book.





The twentieth century revival of interest in hand-made and decorated pottery is described as the studio ceramics movement. There are many divergent figures within this

movement but there is a shared interest in the qualities and ideas that can be found in pottery.

This is a book for makers and students, for collectors and users of studio ceramics – a sourcebook of ideas and images. It has been divided into chapters, not of competing schools of artists but of general approaches to ideas. It cannot hope to be comprehensive: it is a very personal selection of work that I find beautiful, intriguing, moving or even funny. Much of it is very different from the kind of ceramics that I make. But one of the real joys of ceramics is just that exhilarating breath of difference, the sense of ambiguous and continuous reinvention that is a marker for art.



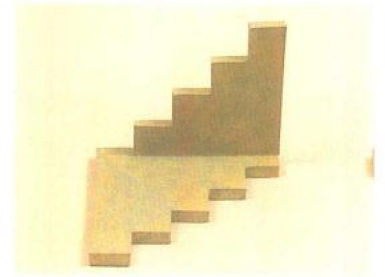
Edmund de Waal

EDMUND DE WAAL




# CLEAR CONSTRUCTION


MANY POTTERS ARE INTRIGUED by simple forms and clear construction, finding that there is great




subtlety to be explored within these parameters. One of the pleasures of these ceramics is that they seem to tell you how they were made. When you have them in your hands, the story of their making unfolds: whether quick or laborious, unstudied or complex, the process of their creation and the process of handling them come together. In this way, less is very often more.

 **Cargo Dishes (detail). Edmund de Waal.**  
Porcelain, celadon glazes. Max. Ø 38 cm  
(15 in). 1997

*These dishes have strong profiles that are distorted through gentle warping. The edges of the dishes are left unglazed to accentuate them and to contrast with the celadon.*

 **Cut-outs (detail). Ken Eastman.**  
White stoneware clay, coloured slips and oxides. Slab built and painted, fired several times at 1800°C. 16 x 16 x 16 cm  
(6¼ x 6¼ x 6¼ in). 1998

*Eastman explores shadows and angles in his constructed pieces.*

 **Dish. Julian Stair.** Stoneware. Thrown and constructed. Ø 62 cm (24½ in). 1998

*Constructed from thrown elements, this large dish is a striking example of balance and tension between contrasting shapes. The spiral in the middle of the dish, made during the throwing, contrasts with the almost architectural precision of the rim.*







# THE NEW AUSTERITY

There have always been simple pots. Sometimes their simplicity reflected a particular ceremonial use, as in the white glazed pots used on Chinese altars. Sometimes, as with the fiercely plain ceramics of Henry Cole in Victorian England or the pottery of the



Bauhaus, they displayed a strongly negative attitude towards ornamentation. Sometimes it was just the speed of the making of a pot that necessitated simplicity. But more often austerity is a reflection of a belief that the form of a pot is primary and that glazes, surfaces and decoration

should not overwhelm it. This is not an aridly conceptual view of form, rather it is a rich, and sometimes seductive, way of exploring form. It is an approach that is regaining momentum: it is a new austerity that finds a counterpart in contemporary minimalist architecture and sculpture. These pots show that it is possible to make work that resonates with the past, yet is truly challenging.

● **Still Life, Two Bottles, Goblet and Beaker. Gwyn Hanssen Pigott.** Porcelain. Max. height 27.5 cm (10 7/8 in). 1992

*The way in which the shadows intersect between the pots in this group has been given particular attention.*

● **Vase. Rob Barnard.** Stoneware, naturally occurring ash glaze. Anagama-fired. 22 x 14 cm (8 3/4 x 5 1/2 in). 1997

*Fired using wood in a Japanese-style kiln, the beauty of this pot depends on the tension between the random markings from the flame and the deliberate clarity of line of the thrown form.*



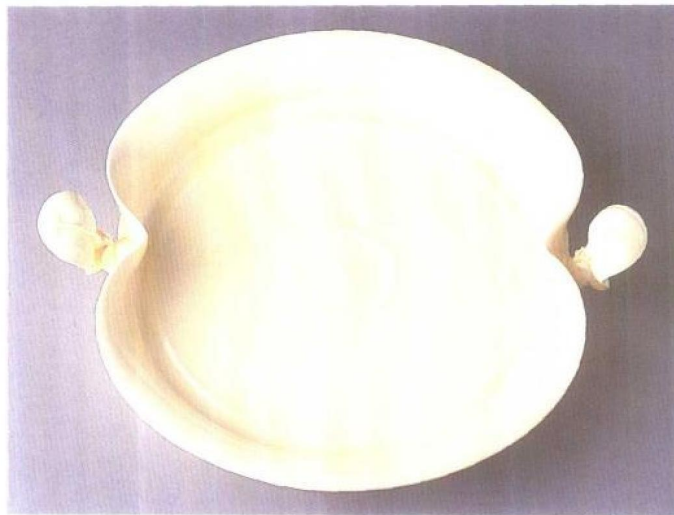




☉ **Platter with Handles. Takeshi Yasuda.** Creamware/hi-temp earthenware.

Ø 32 cm (26 ¼ in). 1998

*Yasuda exploits the plasticity of the clay with great dexterity. The two handles distort the roundness of the platter, creating a vortex of spiralling movement.*



☉ **Milk Jug and Sauce Boat. Takeshi Yasuda.**

Creamware/hi-temp earthenware.

Jug: 17 x 8 x 11 cm

(6 ½ x 3 ¼ x 4 ¼ in).

Sauce boat: 13 x 12 x 18 cm

(5 ¼ x 4 ¾ x 7 in). 1997

*These pots seem thrown almost to the point of collapse – lips seem impossibly thin and forms impossibly stretched. The handles are playful and challenge the user to handle the pot in unexpected ways.*



☉ **Plateau with Handles. Takeshi Yasuda.**

Creamware/hi-temp earthenware. Ø 34 cm

(13 ½ in). 1998

*This is a pot for the display of food that also manages to echo archaic Chinese bronze ritual vessels, through its applied handles. One of Yasuda's strengths is that his pots are historically resonant in this subtle way.*

☉ **Bowl with a Handle. Takeshi Yasuda.**

Creamware/hi-temp earthenware. Large bowl:

Ø 40 cm (16 in). Small bowls: Ø 24 cm

(9 ½ in). 1998

*These domestic pots work well when handled, used and stacked; the vestigial handles giving a sense of security. All these pots have a soft cream glaze that looks both to eighteenth century English creamwares and to Chinese stoneware glazes, yet is distinctly contemporary in its austerity.*





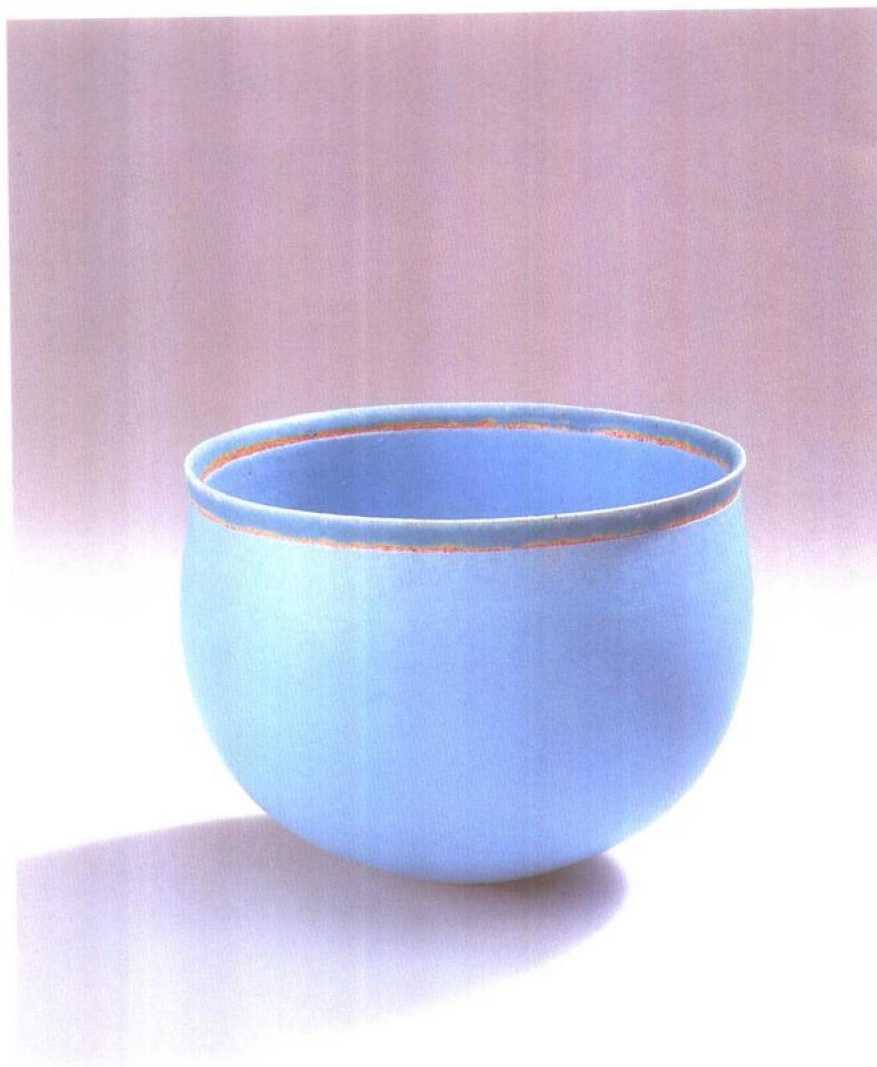




► **Turquoise Bowl. Alev Ebüzziya Siesbye.**

Stoneware. Hand-built. 9 x 12 cm (3½ x 4½ in)  
1997

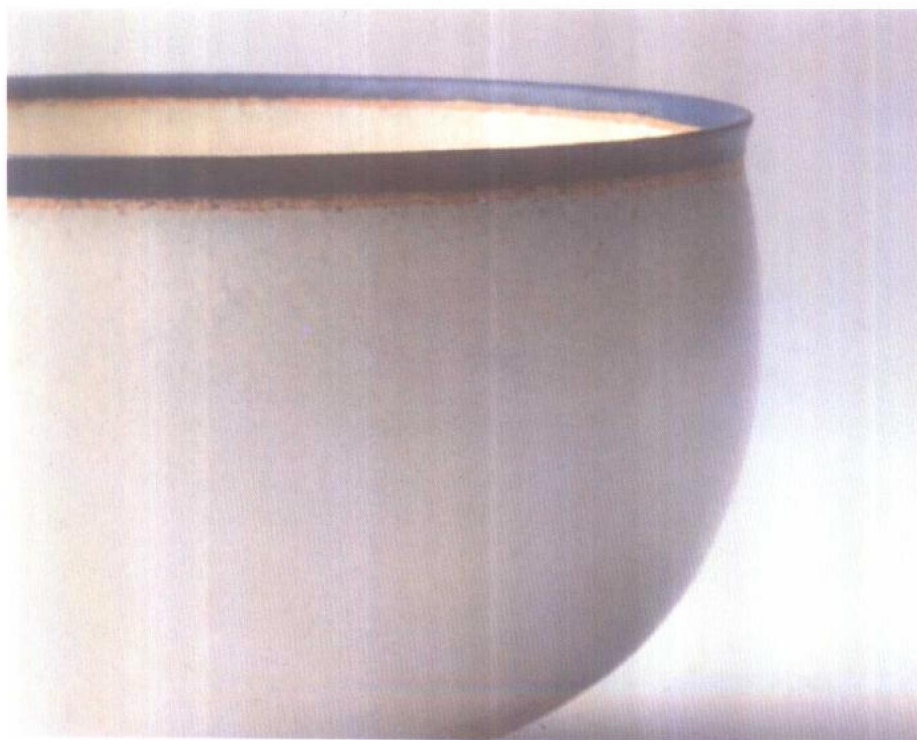
*Saturated colour is a hallmark of Siesbye's work. Her bowls have the depth of colours of Islamic ceramics; the drenched tonality comes from the light absorbing matt surfaces of her glazes.*



◀ **(Untitled) (detail). Alev Ebüzziya Siesbye.**

Stoneware. Hand-built. Ø 25 cm (9¾ in). 1996

*The rim of this bowl, with its sgraffito line revealing the exposed clay beneath the glaze, shows how adept Siesbye is at creating visual tension between the interior and exterior.*



► **Sky Blue Bowl with Lapis Lazuli Rim. Alev Ebüzziya Siesbye.**

Stoneware. Hand-built. 8 x 10 cm (3¼ x 4 in). 1997

*The slight change of direction in rim and foot echo each other, setting up a complex visual dynamic. Siesbye's bowls give the vertiginous sense that they have actually levitated.*







➤ **Sealmark Detail.**  
**Edmund de Waal.**

*These impressed marks are a mixture of old seals and found objects. The glaze is a celadon, reminiscent of Korean and Chinese glazes.*



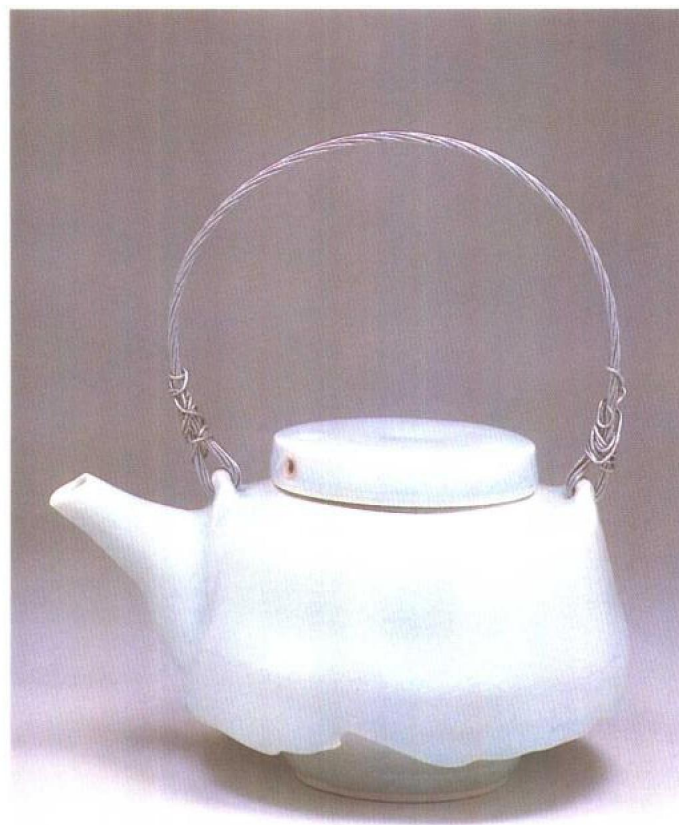
➤ **Large Lidded Jar.**  
**Edmund de Waal.** Porcelain.  
Thrown. Max. height 42 cm  
(16½ in). 1998

*The shallow ribs on this large lidded jar mark out its proportions. Sealmarks are applied, then the pot is dented so that there is no obvious front or back.*



➤ **Bottle Vases.** Edmund de Waal. Porcelain. Thrown. Max. height 32 cm (12½ in) high. 1997

*These bottle vases were made as a pair to sit close to each other. They were thrown precisely, then gently knocked to indent them. This asymmetry means that they fit easily into the hand.*



➤ **Teapot.** Edmund de Waal. Porcelain and galvanized wire. Thrown. Max. height 28 cm (11 in). 1997

*The skirt of this teapot was thrown, then torn to give a "running" edge. The combination of steel wire and porcelain seemed pleasingly incongruous: a cheap material in conjunction with a precious one.*