

COPENHAGEN CERAMICS

**BEND,
BUBBLE
AND
SHINE**

AT
HOSTLER BURROWS NEW YORK
& LOS ANGELES

Bend, Bubble and Shine

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Preface



Gallery owners Kim Hostler
& Juliet Burrows, 2019.

Bend, Bubble and Shine; these three words, describing varying aspects of the ceramic process, also imply a kind of sorcery, vaguely reminiscent of a spell invoked over a simmering cauldron. For me there has always been a sense of enchantment to the ceramic process, whether wrought by the artist as sorcerer, or the intensity of the kiln, or the element of chance. Fantasy and methodology and finally, transcendence.

In considering how best to approach writing this introduction, I often caught myself in contemplation, my mind conjuring images of the first work I came upon by the Danish artist Axel Salto many years ago. The piece was unlike anything I had seen. The large seed-pod, an undulating form aglow with the chartreuse of the dangerous Solfatara glaze, manifested the “demonic” forces to which Salto so often alluded. That it was produced in the 1940s at Royal Copenhagen made it all the more extraordinary.

It is through this lens that I frame my thoughts around the exhibition Bend, Bubble and Shine. As with Salto’s seed pod, my pulse quickens when I experience the works of the nine exceptional artists presented here; they share that same spirited audacity and deep reverence for their chosen material of clay.

Though varying in style and process, they advance an art which is central to the creative culture of Denmark, evolving the possibilities of the medium and expanding its future. Each demonstrates a profound investigation within their practice, and they express themselves through a myriad of energies and tone. Composition, structure, proportion, and glazing in the end leave us with profound beauty and conflict, and a vibrance which emanates from the clay. These enigmatic and multi-faceted works evoke music, mystery, and narratives of which we may not know the details, but can grasp nonetheless.

It is an honor to collaborate with Copenhagen Ceramics in bringing this exhibition to the US, and working with Martin, Bente, and Steen has been a delight as well as a sustaining reprieve from the isolation of Covid quarantine; they are exemplary ambassadors for Danish art and culture. We are deeply thankful to all nine artists for their contributions to this endeavor and for the trust they have placed in us as gallerists in presenting their works to a wider audience.

We are grateful for the support of the Danish Arts Foundation, Danmarks Nationalbank’s Anniversary Foundation, Augustinus Fonden and Grosserer L.F. Foghts Fond. We wish to thank Garth Johnson, Curator of Ceramics at the Everson Museum, for the catalogue essay, and for sharing his singular voice on this project.

Juliet Burrows



1 The Copenhagen Ceramics group visits curator Garth Johnson at Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY. 2019

2 From the exhibition Ceramic Momentum, Staging the Object at CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, Denmark. 2019. (Art work, Flower Tree, by Matt Wedel, US)

3 The crew behind Copenhagen Ceramics: Steen Ipsen, Bente Skjøttgaard and Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl. 2012

4 'Inhabitants' in the gallery space of Copenhagen Ceramics 2012



The Copenhagen Ceramics Story

Copenhagen Ceramics is an artist-run exhibition platform initiated and directed by Danish ceramic artists, Steen Ipsen, Bente Skjøttgaard and Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl.

Copenhagen Ceramics aims to showcase and demonstrate the high quality and great diversity of contemporary Danish ceramics as well as works by selected international artists. The overall objective is to show a wide range of artistic modes of expression in ceramics and to encourage exchange of knowledge, insight and inspiration, with the aim of continuously broadening and supporting a close interaction with the international scene.

Skjøttgaard, Ipsen and Kaldahl, began their activities as Copenhagen Ceramics in 2012 and over a three-year period 27 exhibitions were presented in a rough gallery space at Frederiksberg in Copenhagen. Further, they curated the show, *Terres*, at Maria Lund Gallery in Paris in

2013 as part of *Nouvelles Vagues – la saison des jeunes curateurs*, organized by Palais de Tokyo. Copenhagen Ceramics published a book on the activities of the first three years, launched on the occasion of opening its next exhibition showing works by 7 Danish ceramic artists at Galleria Salvatore Lanteri in Milan, during the Design Week in 2016.

In close collaboration with CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, Denmark, Copenhagen Ceramics curated the large international exhibition, *Ceramic Momentum – Staging the Object*, which opened at the museum on May 8, 2019. The show looked at the contemporary conditions for creating ceramic works in the age of social media with their blast of images and information infinitely shared across the globe. An international seminar was held in conjunction with the opening of the show, exploring this theme further.

For the exhibition Copenhagen Ceramics selected ceramic works that display a clear autonomous work character in order to put strong emphasis on the ceramic artwork in itself and highlight those very qualities that result from great professional knowledge, artistic integrity and will to innovative thinking.

The exhibition was very well received and reviewed nationally and internationally and was seen by more than 25,000 visitors at the museum itself.

In late October 2019, the Copenhagen Ceramics trio toured eastern US, New York City and upstate NY, Toronto and finally Texas, meeting up with galleries and curators in NYC, at the Everson Museum at Syracuse, Alfred University, NY, the Gardiner Museum, Toronto, MFA Houston and the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. The seeds for the current show, *Bend, Bubble and Shine* at New York's Hostler Burrows Gallery, which this catalogue accompanies, were sown on this trip. In an exemplary collaboration with the gallery, the exhibition concept and the curating process have since been developed and executed with all its practicalities, in spite of the uncertainties imposed on everyone by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Works of 9 Danish artists have been selected for the show to present to an American audience a group of the strong voices currently characterizing the Danish ceramics scene. Bold in scale, texture and color, the works represent a vibrant, experimental milieu, which already for many years has integrated itself deeply into the international scene. Through their many solo shows in galleries abroad as well as group exhibitions, and a very active participation in the contemporary global exchange and mediation of the works on social media, Danish artists are aligning themselves strongly with an international audience while staying rooted in a Scandinavian sensibility towards material and love of form.

Touching from a Distance

Garth Johnson

—

Paul Phillips & Sharon Sullivan Curator of Ceramics

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse

NY, USA

In scholar Paul Greenhalgh's weighty new volume on global clay, *Ceramic Art and Civilisation*, he pointedly begins with the jockeying of the "literate and garrulous" potters of classical Athens' Kerameikos and ends with a discussion of California's role in shaping contemporary ceramics¹. It wouldn't have been a stretch to have started with Denmark and to have ended with... Denmark.

I can still vividly remember my first encounter with Neolithic Danish pottery. In my first college Art History survey course, I was shown a grouping of pots in the National Museum of Denmark that included the famous *Skarpsalling Vessel*. Like most of my contemporaries, I marveled at their dramatic forms, their thin construction, and their deft, even restrained decoration. Coincidentally, I was taking my first pottery class, and wrestling with slumping, cracking, and a general reckoning with the limitations of my own skills. That a 5,200 year-old pot could send me into a philosophical tailspin should have pointed me to my future as a curator then and there.

My first real encounter with contemporary Danish ceramics was no less dramatic. I stumbled upon a copy of Wendy Kaplan and Hope Barkan's 2002 catalog for their exhibition *From the Kilns of Denmark* shortly after its release. Although I wasn't lucky enough to see the actual exhibition over its long tour, the image of Barbro Åberg's *Ship of Change* (2001) on the catalog's cover was like a bolt of lightning. In a time when American Ceramics were overwhelmingly trending toward reductive minimalism, here was a sculpture that balanced geological surfaces with a strict sense of form. It was many years later that I got to actually handle her work—miracle constructions of clay doped with perlite, commonly used in gardening, which adds an incongruous element of physical lightness that balances out their encrusted surfaces.

Little did I know, but I was taking the first step in a journey into the complex history of form and surface in Danish ceramics.

While American Art Potters in the late 19th century were either cribbing French Barbotine underglaze techniques (Rookwood) or retroengineering Chinese glazes (Chelsea), Danish architect and polymath Thorvald Bindesbøll was arguably inventing abstract painting... on POTS! Bindesbøll's genius extended beyond his highly ingrained sense of design (he also designed the ubiquitous Carlsberg beer label). His integration of surface and abstraction still resonates more than a century later. Bindesbøll's roughly-glazed surfaces, with their encyclopedic spectrum of matte-to-glossy textures provide the right amount of friction between his solid forms and lyrical abstract decoration.

Axel Salto is commonly mentioned in the next breath. Like Bindesbøll, ceramics were not his native language. Before taking up pottery, Salto

enjoyed a career as an avant-garde painter and the publisher of *Klingen*, a short-lived but influential magazine that served as fuel for generations of artistic debates in Scandinavia. It is Salto's talent for self-critical evaluation and debate that links him to contemporary Danish ceramists as much as his innate knack for outré form. I am not Danish, so I won't pontificate about national character, but it is clear that Danish ceramists spend more time engaging in both self-reflection and external debate than the majority of their international peers. This thicket of criticality is exacerbated by the extraordinarily important role played by *design* in Denmark. In the United States, design had largely parted ways with ceramic art after 1945, when ceramics began to entrench themselves into academic art programs. Throughout the 20th century, Denmark's ceramic industry nurtured artistic talent — from Effie Hegermann-Lindencrone and Fanny Garde, who spent their entire careers making intricately carved porcelains for Bing and Grøndahl, to Copenhagen Ceramics co-founder Bente Skjøttgaard, who spent four years as an artist-in-residence for Royal Copenhagen early in her career.

The majority of the artists represented in *Bend, Bubble and Shine* were educated in design. In particular, Design School Kolding nurtured several generations of multi-talented Danish ceramists before its untimely shuttering of its ceramic studios in 2007. In addition to providing students with an impeccable education in technique and design, schools like Kolding managed to accomplish two seemingly diametrically opposed results. The first was to provide students with an educational lineage.

Despite the wide spectrum of styles and careers enjoyed by Danish ceramists, there is a reverence for the work of their teachers and elders. In her exhaustively researched essay for the *Kilns of Denmark* catalog, Gerd Bloxham Zettersten cites Gutte Ericksen (1918–2008), who taught at the Jutland Academy of Art as a seminal influence. Ericksen mentored a generation of artists in Jutland that are still sometimes affectionately called *Gutte's girls*. Zettersten also discusses the model provided by Gertrud Vasegaard (1913–2007), who in many ways typified the Danish approach to simple forms and spare decoration, always letting

the qualities of the clay and human touch radiate from beneath the carefully considered glazes.²

With strong mentorship eventually comes generational pushback, if not outright rebellion. Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl, Bente Skjøttgaard, and Steen Ipsen, the three artists who comprise *Copenhagen Ceramics* all come from different educational backgrounds, but each found ways to honor their elders through the thoughtful, critical ways in which they approach their medium, but fundamentally rejected the stylistic elements of their mentors.

I would like to focus on the subject of touch in this generational shift. I argue that touch is the most fundamental attribute of Danish ceramics—both on the part of the artist and the receiver. For those who have never worked with clay, this might seem like splitting hairs. But consider clay in all of its states. An artist can work with clay at its wettest; every fingerprint leaves a lasting impression. Liquid clay slip can also be poured into plaster molds to take on any form the artist chooses. More likely, the artist works with clay in its plastic state, throwing on a potter's wheel or building forms through coiling or assembling slabs. At this consistency, the artist can choose to accentuate their own tactile processes, or they can be carefully eradicated as the clay dries. In its driest state, clay behaves like a completely different material. It can be sanded, gouged, or chipped to yield a different set of marks.

One of the earliest strategies to complicate touch employed by Danish potters was the embrace of lava glaze. For the uninitiated, lava glaze blends normal silicate glaze materials with an additive like silicon carbide that causes the glaze to bloat and bubble. One by-product of this glazing strategy is an obscuring of the form and its surface. An early Danish pioneer in lava glaze was the sculptor Niels Hansen Jacobsen (1861–1941), who discovered the expressive power of ceramics while living in Paris in the 1890s. As a sculptor rather than a potter, Jacobsen was more interested in clay and glazes for their color and emotional content than he was in classical ideas of form and function. This freedom from traditional constraints led to an expressive body of work that still has the capacity to turn heads.

In the best-known work by midcentury Danish ceramists, there is a reciprocal relationship between the material and the form. The artist, guided by design principles that dictate a healthy respect for clay's material qualities, develops a vocabulary of touch, carefully calibrated to the clay's state of plasticity, dryness, texture, and even color. These choices are transmitted to the end user, who experiences the artist's choices through the visual and tactile qualities of the object, which generally extend beyond a simple form sheathed in an opaque, surface-obscuring glaze.

This already fraught compact between artist and clay was made exponentially more complicated when artists of Copenhagen Ceramics' generation set foot in design schools like Kolding in the 1970s and '80s. A pantheon of conceptually-minded ceramists from Jacqueline Poncelet in the U.K. to Ron Nagle in the United States were paving the way for Danish students to flex their own muscles and push back against the orthodoxies of their teachers. That these explorations happened within the boundaries (such as they are) of design sowed the seeds for Denmark's distinct brand of contemporary ceramics.

A revolution in attitudes toward form seems to be the obvious legacy of the artists of Copenhagen Ceramics' generation, but it is their conceptual approach to touch that has caused the greatest ripples in the global ceramics community.

I titled this essay *Touching from a Distance* in a triple nod to the depressing Joy Division records that have been spinning on my turntable during the pandemic, as well as the reality of being forced to experience three-dimensional work through phones and computer screens. Most importantly, it is a nod to the complex ways that Danish ceramists have sought to “queer” traditional notions of gesture and touch. Rarely does one see grand gesture in contemporary Danish ceramics—as in modern dance, these artists eschew Bolshoi leaps in favor of isolated Bill T. Jones movements that, while still undeniably physical, reveal more by drawing the viewer in for a closer investigation.

When it comes to the artists who are showing in *Bend, Bubble and Shine*, Bente Skjøttgaard provides the loudest, clearest fulfillment of this thesis. For Skjøttgaard, it can be argued that her glazes dictate her forms rather than the reverse. A graduate of Kolding's design program, she is perhaps best known for her work with “fat” glazes, a mutant strain of sludgy, viscous, difficult to control glaze that thickly coat whatever surface they're applied to, often dripping and running according to (and sometimes contrary to) the laws of gravity and physics.

Skjøttgaard flips the traditional script when it comes to touch. Her work is actually ultra-tactile. Forms are improvisationally coiled from toasty brown stoneware clay and pinched using her fingers and very basic tools. Finger

marks from rolling coils and joints from pinching them together are left obvious in a nod to “honest” construction. Aside from tiny *peek-a-boo* bits of naked clay here and there, the majority of her surface area is obscured by layered rivulets of fat glaze, which can be controlled in a limited sense by time and temperature in the kiln, but it is the high-wire act of giving actual *agency* to their materials that excites many contemporary artists—and that particular conceptual strategy owes a large debt to the peculiarly Danish combination of designerly deliberation and devil-may-care bravado.

Gitte Jungersen has taken the concept of glaze as form to even greater extremes. In perhaps the most radical rupture of Danish form fetish in history, Jungersen began a series of works entitled *All is Flux* in 2015. For these pieces, she created a large trough-like rectangular mold that was filled entirely with layers of glaze. In the kiln, these layers roiled, cracked and commingled in a miniature reenactment of the metamorphic processes that shaped the Earth. The end-product is a snapshot in time—a simple rectangular shape frozen in mid-boil, the furious processes of heat and chemistry frozen in amber.

The wall-based *All is Flux* objects, which measured up to six feet in length are elegiac in nature—their conservative forms made even more stark by layers of ink blackness. As they lack any sort of clay substrate, they are created completely devoid of touch. Jungersen has ceded all control to her process. In the years since *All is Flux*, Jungersen has channeled her conceptual skills into a *pas de deux* between glaze and object in the kiln. Layers of shivering blue glaze peel away from their stoneware base, evoking the repulsion of peeling skin, but simultaneously attracting with pearlescent surfaces that stand in stark contrast to their base forms.

Morten Løbner Espersen has built his career on a similar cavalier disregard for form. For Espersen, the bulbous forms on display in *Bend, Bubble and Shine* are positively baroque. Apart from a series of wriggling Ken Price-cum-scholar rock works entitled *Horror Vacui*, Espersen generally speaks through glaze—choosing straight sided cylinders or spherical moon jars as the solid foundations from which his epic glaze fantasias soar. And soar they do. For Espersen, the element of direct touch is also eradicated through the application of sizzling lava glazes in an eye-popping array of colors and microtextures... but despite long odds, his understated forms and pulsating, electric glazes inevitably seem to come to an ultimate balance.

It is difficult to analyze Karen Bennicke’s work in relationship to touch because of her incredible ability to reinvent and breathe new life into the technical aspects of her work with every new series. Now well into her sixth decade as an artist, Bennicke is exceedingly prolific while managing to never repeat herself. The one constant in her practice is her genius for

complex, tessellated geometric forms executed with unerring precision in their construction. These forms, geometric but dynamic, maintain a friction between form and surface that confounds casual observation, always breathing life into their flat planes and crisp corners. The secret? Countless *love hours* of patient planning and handwork.

If Karen Bennicke’s abstractions could be said to be self-portraits of her thought processes, the same could be said about Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl. After decades of rigorously conceptual projects that brought him in close contact with like-minded peers in Great Britain, Kaldahl has found a way to combine his fascination with branched structures and networks in biology with an unfettered ability to engage his innate sense of play through a type of surrealist automatic drawing in three dimensions. Kaldahl has invented geometric systems for the creation of organic drawing in three dimensions, effectively creating a winding, doodling, segmented line that can coil tightly, meander across a tabletop, or defy gravity in lyrical midair waves and eddies. Kaldahl chooses to emphasize the physical joints between his segments, heightening their visual impact through the addition of a glazed “skin” that emphasizes texture.

Similarly, Turi Heisselberg Pedersen looks to the natural world for formal inspiration. Her abstractions evoke blooming plants and burrowing roots in a visual language that looks to geometry, but softly inflates each faceted form with a gentle, swelling volume. Like Bennicke, every surface is obsessively touched and worked to *remove* the direct marks of the artist’s hand. Rather than coat her precise forms in glaze, which would diminish their crisp edges, Heisselberg uses a sandpaper-cum-velvet glaze that invites viewers to touch their dry surfaces, which are heightened through gentle shifts in value.

In his book *The Botany of Desire*, Michael Pollan makes the argument that plants have a long history of manipulating humans into propagating and evolving them to heighten their desirable characteristics—like color variegation in tulips or the potency of marijuana. Marianne Nielsen explores this concept through reducing her ceramic materials to a minimal palette of

highly desirable elements—delicate candy colors, glossy glazes, and time-tested clay bodies to convey the innate desirability of the plants and natural forms that she creates in her work. Nielsen explores and complicates ideas of touch in that she translates her audience’s lifetime of experience touching both plants and functional ceramics, but distills these experiences into sculptural objects that evoke physical experience more than they literally invite it.

Steen Ipsen also knows a thing or two about exploiting ceramics for their ability to inspire delight and desire. More than any other artist in *Bend, Bubble and Shine*, Ipsen uses skillful, high touch construction processes and glossy glazes to eliminate the sense that human hands ever touched the piece at all. Instead, Ipsen creates the illusion that his gaggles of voluminous, squirming ceramic bubbles and balloons are merely frozen in time as they struggle against the PVC ligatures that bind them together.

As the youngest artist in this exhibition, Pernille Pontopidan Pedersen represents an emerging generation, unfettered by the hang-ups and studied rebellious impulses of the generation that emerged before her. That is not to say that Pedersen is quite the free spirit that some may imply. Touch represents a central concern in her work, and like most other contemporary Danish ceramists, what the audience first sees is certainly not always what they get. Like early proponents of California “Funk” ceramics, Pedersen exhibits a suspicion of traditional notions of ceramic beauty. In its place, her work is often a lexicon of touch—a diary of her frank conversations with material.

In any one piece, Pedersen may explore each state of clay’s wetness or dryness that was laid out in the beginning of this essay. More than anyone else in *Bend, Bubble and Shine*, she chooses to leave her actual fingerprints in the wet clay. In any single piece, one might find pinched together slabs, volumes made through coiling, poking, and squishing the clay, but also passages that are snapped or scraped while relatively dry. Read between the lines, and you’ll see an artist struggling *with* virtuosity rather than struggling to attain it. Like Kaldahl, Pedersen engages in a degree of automatism in the intuitive creation of her sculptures, but

systems for interrogating traditional notions of touch, gesture, and even beauty are cooked into her process.

If you are lucky enough to see *Bend, Bubble and Shine* in person, be ready to check your assumptions about how each artist approaches the construction and finishing of their work. Just know that trying to enter the mindset of a Danish ceramist is a fool's errand. There are too many failed studio experiments, too many late-night conversations with other artists, too many artist-led exhibitions, journals, and collectives to make what you're looking at a straightforward manifestation of surface and form. Even the most casual viewer will be swept up in the diversity of materials and approaches—and this is a direct effect of the artistic ferment caused by the hothouse environment that is contemporary Danish Ceramics.

For those of you stuck at home and forced to “touch from a distance,” know that Danish ceramists have your back. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Copenhagen Ceramics curated a 2019 exhibition at Denmark's CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art entitled *Ceramic Momentum – Staging the Object* that took social media and the relationship between contemporary ceramics, social media, and digital screens into account. In the exhibition's increasingly relevant essay, *The Rise of the Hyper Pot*, Glenn Adamson muses about the reciprocal relationship between Instagram and ceramics, a sort of *Botany of Desire* feedback loop that has seen a rise in ceramists steering their work into *Unicorn Frappuccino* territory with colors and surfaces meant to capture eyeballs.

Ultimately, Adamson reassures us that *Hyper Pots*, with their drips, colors, and screen-friendly forms still function in the same way ceramics were always meant to “exert friction in the flow of life, like a rudder in a swift current.”³ With their twin tendencies to both embrace their forbears in an intergenerational web, as well as the impulse to thoughtfully rebel against them, one can be assured that contemporary Danish ceramics will remain a vibrant node in a global network. As I write this, during a time of quarantine, from my seat next to a *hygge* fireplace with a Joy Division record on the turntable, every molecule in my body longs to be back in Denmark, continuing these conversations in person. In the meantime, I'm grateful to be able to touch from a distance.

- 1 Greenhalgh, Paul. *Ceramic Art and Civilisation*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2021
- 2 Kaplan, Wendy Tarlow, and Hope Barkan. *From the Kilns of Denmark: Contemporary Danish Ceramics*. Rhodos, 2002
- 3 Adamson, Glenn. *Ceramic Momentum – Staging the Object*, CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, Denmark, 2019, pp. 25–33

Karen Bennicke
Morten Løbner Espersen
Steen Ipsen
Gitte Jungersen
Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl
Marianne Nielsen
Turi Heisselberg Pedersen
Pernille Pontoppidan Pedersen
Bente Skjøttgaard



An awe-inspiring methodology and consistency spanning more than half a century are the underpinnings of Karen Bennicke's ceramic practice. She works serially and thematically, but never repetitively, creating sensorial and complex sculptures from observation of landscapes, urban structures and iconic modernist architecture, such as her recent works based on a building by French architect George Adilon. Each inspiration and field of interest is examined thoroughly and developed towards a rigorously controlled concept, from which visions freely flow through her ongoing fascination with the spatial relationship between two and three dimensionality. These ceramic works display familiar references, but also defy easy identification or narrative. Bennicke continues to enthrall her audience with new forays and insights into the complexities of the geometric, seeking to erode the barriers between the logical and tangible world that we experience in everyday life, and the illogical, unknown and absurd.

SPATIAL COLLAGE III, 2021
H 38 × W 37 cm
Terracotta

Karen Bennicke

SPATIAL COLLAGE I, 2020
H 62 × W 28 cm
Terracotta



SPATIAL COLLAGE II, 2020
H 38 × W 46 cm
Terracotta





One is immediately hit with the power and richness of texture and vibrantly hued glaze surface in Morten Løbner Espersen's work. He continues to develop, series by series, vigorous works that display the microcosm of volcanic fury and gravitational forces of the melting materials during the firing process. The works vibrate with a physical intensity that directly impacts our sensual experience. His preferred archetypal vessel forms or closed-in, whimsical mushroom forms are smothered in the thick material substance of the glazes, creating a sublime tension and interaction between monumental calm and endless dynamism. Espersen erases the notion that glaze is merely a superficial outer layer by utilizing a progressive method of both painting and modeling, manipulating his palette with endless colors and textures to create a seductive, abstract universe.

Morten Løbner Espersen

Magic Mushroom #2267. 2021 (green)
H 60 × W 34 × D 39 cm
Stoneware and glazes



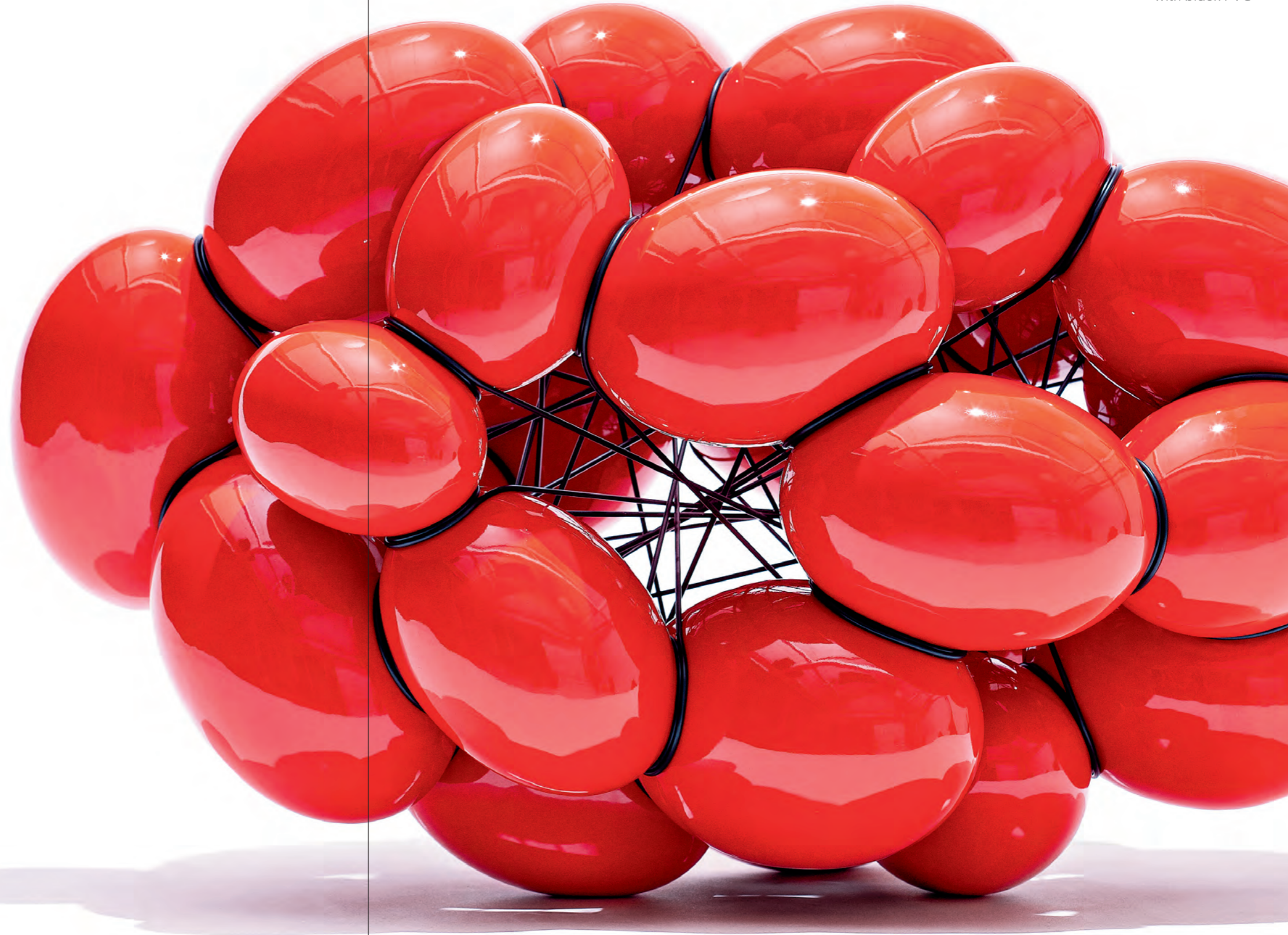
Magic Mushroom #2268. 2021 (white)
H 63 × W 28 × D 28 cm
Stoneware and glazes



In the Ellipses series Steen Ipsen extends his long-time exploration of module-based spatiality. These highly complex and elegant ceramic structures, with their boldness of colour and pop-culture brightness and brilliance, may evoke associations of cellular models of unspecified natural origin, or present themselves as purely abstracted sculptural expressions rooted in the geometric. The perfected, high gloss surfaces cast infinite reflections which optically expand the work and connect it with its surrounding space and thus the viewer. A web of tightly strung PVC connects each component of the sculpture to the next in an interlacing network, and its materiality and colour further enhance a contemporary design aesthetic that is visually decorative, immediate, sensuous and strongly physical.

Steen Ipsen

Ellipse 3/2021
H 45 × L 67 × D 47 cm
Orange glazed earthenware
with black PVC

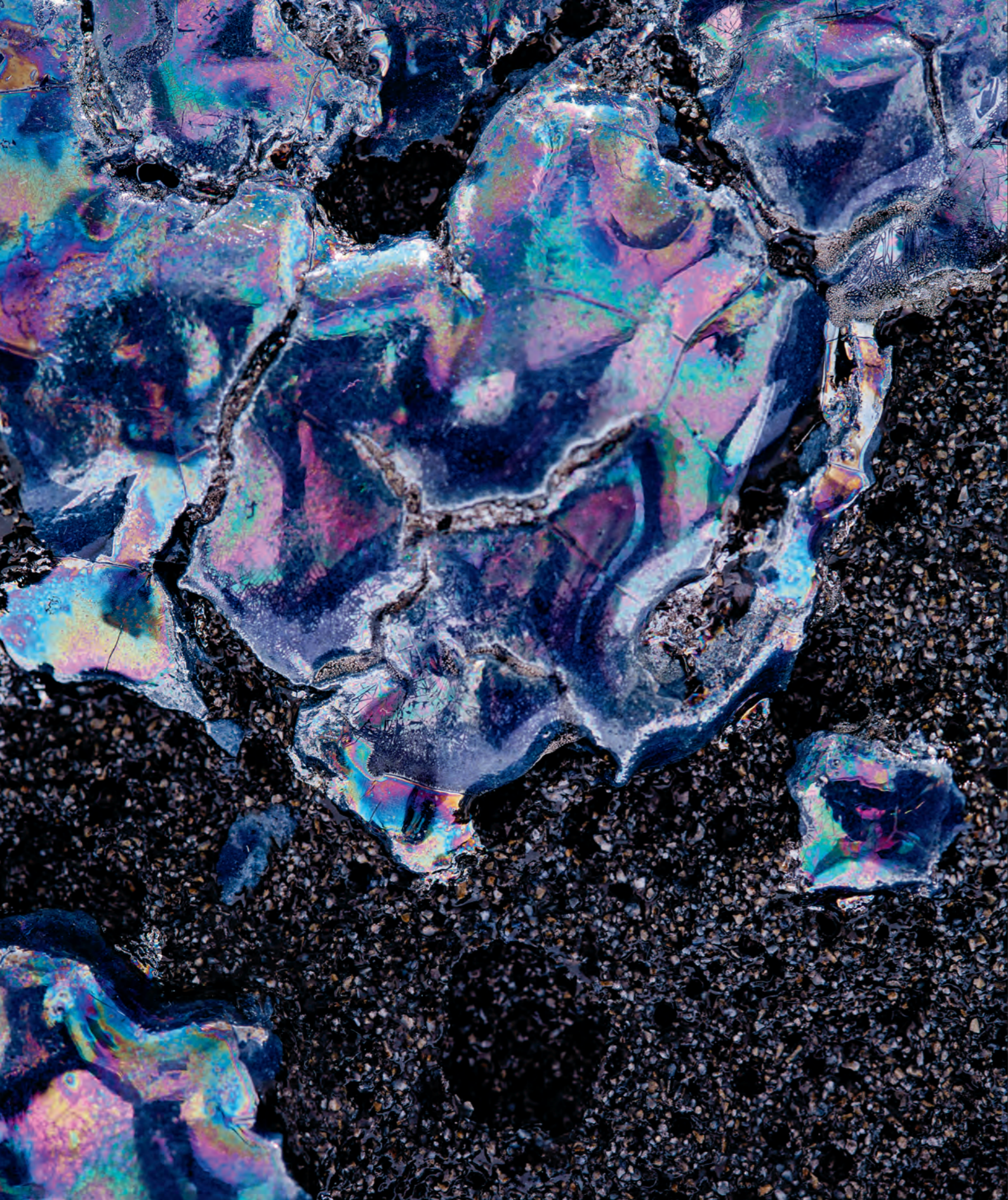


Ellipse 2/2021
H 76 × W 49 × D 49 cm
Green glazed earthenware
with orange PVC



Steen Ipsen: Ellipse 1/2021
H 44 × W 44 × D 35 cm
Black glazed earthenware
with yellow PVC





Blue #2. 2020
H 33 × W 11 × D 11 cm
Stoneware and glazes
Detail

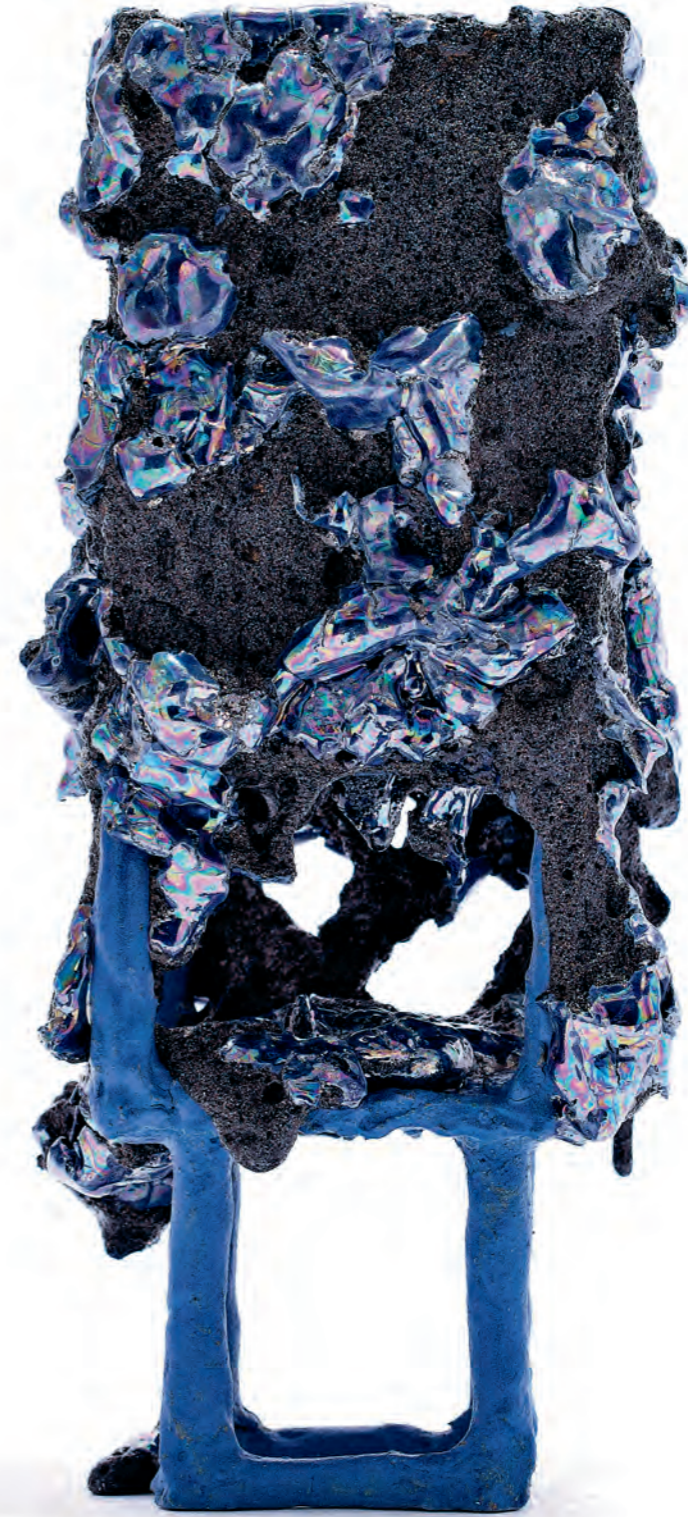
Glaze comes into being when various raw minerals coalesce and transform, becoming something new and stable as a result of the firing's dramatic, destructive and disintegrating forces. Gitte Jungersen sets about things in a radical manner in her attempts to bring out and explore the materiality of clay and glazes. She continually experiments with her foundational understanding of the ceramic process, challenging and breaking down common conceptions of the role of the clay and glaze as being that which bears and that which is borne. Jungersen has developed a raw but sophisticated and controlled artistic expression of pure physical force and bodily present substance. The transformation which occurs during the firing is retained as a frozen moment of a dynamic dimension that is felt and attracts like a quivering undertone in the finished work – a poetic expression of precise form and volcanic eruption.

Gitte Jungersen

Blue #3. 2020
H 44 × W 25 × D 25 cm
Stoneware and glazes



Blue #2. 2020
H 33 × W 11 × D 11 cm
Stoneware and glazes



The fundamental existence of objects in space is brought into sharp focus in the work of Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl. Through his process he transforms everyday minimal phenomena into sculptural expressions utilizing a precise, formal fashioning of the material. With a keen eye for the monumental within the insignificant, his works emerge out of a process that creates conditions for an intuitive form. While Kaldahl works from an overall vision, he incorporates stumbling blocks into the actual construction of the works in order to relinquish control, allowing the form to evolve and thereby avoiding predictability. Akin to doodling, where consciousness is only partially present, he builds larger structures out of smaller bits of clay tubes which, at random, become a dancing sequence that moves up and down, almost reeling out into space. The use of strong, clear colours adds an insistent dynamism and energy to the works; this in tandem with the form's own statement and potential to initiate emotion, manifest in a clear and easily decipherable expression that remains open to many different interpretations.

Orange Accumulation – Spatial Drawing #62/2020
Detail of 2-part sculpture

Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl



Orange Accumulation – Spatial Drawing #62/2020
2-part sculpture
H 77 × L 92 × W 59 cm
Executed at the Danish Art Workshops,
Copenhagen



Orange Accumulation – Spatial Drawing #62/2020
One of 2-part sculpture
H 77 × L 46 × W 59 cm





A scientific-like methodology and an interest in the phenomena of the very obvious and the banal, (and often overlooked) define Marianne Nielsen's ceramic works. She strives to obtain a visual understanding of what is commonplace, the minutia that surrounds us. How do we perceive hairstyles? How and why does a form become iconic in our common language? – for instance the profile and nature of a mountain? What do we read into the shape and colour of flowers? In her works, it is neither the figuration nor narration, as such, that are in focus; instead, it is our own experience and discernment of the subject that is being investigated. Nielsen places our stylistic concepts under a magnifying glass, revealing our re-fashioning of nature into artifice via design and use of colour. We become witnesses to a kind of form-grammatical development, as in her close reading and depiction of plant structures. It is not a scientific botanical dissection in a lab, but rather a creation of visual form and rhythm, an interpretation and an ornament.

Marianne Nielsen



Pair/2018
 Glazed stoneware
 Wall installation

Pair/2018
 H 40 × W 40 × D 1.5 cm
 Glazed stoneware
 Detail of 24-part wall installation



Pair/ 2018
 H 25 × W 30 × D 1 cm
 Glazed stoneware
 Detail of 24-part wall installation



Subtle colour and velvety soft, tactile surfaces characterize the ceramic works of Turi Heisselberg Pedersen. Her sculptures radiate an inner tranquility while possessing striking spatial presence. Working within thematic series, she translates nature's organic forms and patterns, such as bulbous plant roots or the structures of crystalline formations. Or she might look to the man-made environment for inspiration, such as architectural facade elements like balusters, and the spaces between them, experienced on her bicycle trips through town. At a time where spectacle most often grabs one's attention, these works demonstrate a powerful insistence on the ability of discernible form to be emotive via precise proportioning, texture, and meticulously constructed colour schemes. The objects retain an essence directly readable in their formal distillation and simplification, and they impart a challenging restlessness while demanding we hold our gaze.

'Objects for a dreamscape' 2021
Stoneware with slipglaze
Detail blue object

Turi Heisselberg Pedersen

'Objects for a dreamscape' 2021
H 35 × W 16 × D 16 cm, H 52 × W 23 × D 16 cm
H 17 × W 17 × D 13 cm
Stoneware with slipglaze



'Objects for a dreamscape' 2021
H 35 × W 16 × D 16 cm
Stoneware with slipglaze





An experimental and unpredictable use of materials is borne from a strong will to explore the unintentional and surprising in Pernille Pontoppidan Pedersen's ceramic works. She seeks a showdown with fixed notions regarding ceramics, and lets herself be inspired from all directions, at times with figurative references to objects we all know, or sometimes in purely abstract compositions. The sculptures are either accumulations of seemingly everyday relics with recognizable object-parts, or they hint at contemporary existence by means of a powerful and playful manipulation of the soft clay itself, and a love of the plurality of ceramic colours and textures. Pedersen spontaneously embraces the errors inherent in the ceramic process, thriving within the chaos of possibilities. The works are challenging in their equal aspects of ugliness and engaging beauty, and the manner in which they invoke both the familiar and the inexplicable.

Pernille Pontoppidan Pedersen

Making has kin in it, 2021
H 78 x W 80 x D 60 cm
Glazed stoneware and pallet



Kin is in making, 2021
H 81 x W 80 x D 60 cm
Glazed stoneware and pallet



Everything is up for negotiation in Bente Skjøttgaard's work as she surrenders control to the transformative forces of the firing. Behind her seductive glazes lie risk, potential chaos and collapse. Putting the ceramic processes to the ultimate test, she questions all the material-bound conventions of beauty and ugliness, of technical mastery, and any ideas about the 'result' of the final expression. Seemingly, the works are made with a 'light hand', this even after what may have been an insanely difficult feat of technical engineering. Skjøttgaard's process is systematic and always based on the premises of the ceramic material, often balancing on the very edge of what is possible. Her examinations develop into free-form interpretations and amorphous abstractions expressive of nature, generously glazed. The magic of Skjøttgaard's works derives precisely from the fact that she so obviously loves risking everything in the interaction with the kiln. Powerful, without caution or reservation – it is all or nothing in an ever-on-going experimentation.

Bente Skjøttgaard

Rose Yellow Fullerene #2118, 2021
H 49 × W 22 × D 20 cm
Stoneware and glaze



Group of 7 Fullerenes 2021
H 49-59 cm
Stoneware and glaze



Artist biographies

Karen Bennicke 1943—
Lives and works in Haslev, DK.
1958–61: Apprenticed in different potters studios, Denmark.

Works is represented in selected museums and private collections: Designmuseum Denmark, DK; Brandts, Odense; Trapholt Museum of Modern Art and Design, DK; CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, DK; V&A Museum, London; The Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth House, UK; Nationalmuseum, Stockholm; Nordenfjeldske Museum of fine Art, Trondheim; Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg; Grassi Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Leipzig; Museum of Modern Ceramics, Gifu, Japan; Public Art Agency, Sweden; The New Carlsberg Foundation, DK; Danish Arts Foundation.

Recent exhibitions include: Gallery Nancy Margolis, New York, 2005; 'END' Designmuseum Denmark, Copenhagen, 2007; 'European Ceramic Context 2010' Bornholm museum of fine Arts; Maison du Danemark, Paris, 2018; Erskine, Hall & Coe, London, 2019; CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, DK, 2019.

Selected commissions: Akademiska Hus, Sundsvall, 1996–97, for Public Art Agency, Sweden; The Danish Parliament, Christiansborg, 2001; Mogens Dahl's Concert Hall, 2013, for The New Carlsberg Foundation.

www.karenbennicke.dk



Morten Løbner Espersen 1965—
Lives and works in Copenhagen.
Education: École Supérieure des Arts Appliqués, Duperré, Paris, France 1989–90, Royal Danish Academy, School of Design, Copenhagen 1987–92.

Exhibitions: 2022 'Embrace' Morten Avlskarl, Copenhagen. 2021 'The Baroque skin', Kunstmuseum, Den Haag & Keramik Museum Princessehof, Leeuwarden. 'Ooey gooey alchemy', Jason Jacques Gallery, New York. 2020 'Pearls, Bombs and Moonjars'. 2019 Brutto Gusto, Berlin. 2019 'Terra Incognita' Morten Avlskarl Gallery, Copenhagen. 2019 'Terra Nova', Pierre Marie Giraud, Bruxelles. 2019. 'Terra Nullius', Bornholm Ceramic Museum, Hjorts Fabrik, Rønne. 2019. 'Vessel' The Museum of Danish America, Iowa. 2017 'Vessels', Brutto Gusto, Berlin. 2016 'The Orb' Jason Jacques, New York, USA. 2015 'Seven deadly sins' Brutto Gusto, Berlin, Germany. 2014 'Daring Grey' Pierre Marie Giraud, Bruxelles, Belgium.

Represented in public collections: V&A Museum, London. Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama, USA. Röhnska Museet, Gothenburg, Sweden; Musee Magnelli, Vallauris, France; MAD, Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA; The Swedish Art Foundation; Beumans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Holland; The Danish Arts Foundation; Designmuseum Denmark, Copenhagen; Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, Sweden; The Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan; CLAY Ceramic Museum, Middelfart; Vejen Art Museum; The New Carlsberg Foundation, Copenhagen; Trapholt Art Museum, Kolding.

www.espersen.nu



Steen Ipsen 1966—
Lives and works in Copenhagen.
Education and employments: Royal Danish Academy, School of Design/Design School, Kolding 1984–1990.

Head of Department of Ceramics and Glass, Royal Danish Academy, School of Design, Copenhagen 1996–2004. Co-founder of Copenhagen Ceramics 2012–

Represented in public collections such as: MAD, Paris, France. Clay Museum Denmark. Hetjens Museum, Düsseldorf, Germany. Danish Arts Foundation. Trapholt Art Museum, Denmark. Houston Art Collection, USA. Höganäs Museum, Sweden. Musée de Sèvres, Paris. ASU Art Museum, Arizona, USA. Museum of Art and Design, Hamburg, Germany. Musée Magnelli, Vallauris, France. New Carlsberg Foundation, Denmark. Victoria and Albert, London UK. Icheon World Ceramic Center, Korea. Design Museum, Denmark. Copenhagen Culture Foundation and several private collections worldwide.

Solo exhibitions 2010–2020: Simard Bilodeau Contemporary, Los Angeles 2020. Duran Mashaal Gallery, Montreal, Canada 2020, Galerie Provence, Denmark 2020. NeC Galerie, Paris France, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2019. NeC Galerie Hong Kong 2012. Puls Gallery, Brussels 2013, 2016. Cheongju, Korea 2013. Gallery Dock 56, Hamburg, Germany 2010/2011.

Group exhibitions 2019–2020: LA Art Show, Simard Bilodeau 2020. Art Miami, Duran Mashaal, Montreal 2019, 2020. Art Toronto, Duran Mashaal 2020. Beirut Art Fair, Gallery Pik'd 2019. Art Paris, NeC Galerie, France 2019.

www.steen-ipsen.dk



Gitte Jungersen 1967—
Lives and works in Copenhagen.
Education: Royal Danish Academy,
School of Design, 1988–1993.

Her work is represented in museums and private collections such as Designmuseum Denmark, Public Art Agency Sweden, The National Museum Stockholm, KODE Norway, Designmuseum Danmark, The Danish Arts Foundation, Musee Ariana Switzerland, Nordenfjeldske National Museum of Decorative Arts and Design Norway, Ny Carlsberg Foundation.

Recent exhibitions include: Crafted Matter, Cheongju Craft Biennale, South Korea 2019. Jungersen, A. Petersen, Copenhagen 2019. Crowd Pleaser, People Who Pot, MDR Gallery, London 2019. Ceramic Momentum, CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, Denmark, 2019. Mindcraft 18, Milan Designweek 2018. Now and Here, Bagsværd Church 2017. Fireworks Gustavsbergs Konsthall, Sweden, 2016.

Works as an external teacher and examiner at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Norway and The Royal Danish Academy, School of Design.

www.gittejungersen.dk



Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl 1954—
Lives and works in Copenhagen.
Education: MA from Royal College of Art,
London 1990.

Work is represented in museums and private collections e.g. V&A Museum, London; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; National Museum, Oslo; Röhsska Museum, Sweden; Designmuseum Denmark, DK; Trapholt Art Museum, DK; CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, DK; Danish Arts Foundation; MIMA, Middlesborough, UK; Diane and Marc Grainer Collection, Washington DC; Annie and Otto Johs Detlefs Foundation, Denmark.

Exhibitions include: Ceramic Momentum, CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, Denmark, 2019; Five Cubed, Taste Contemporary Gallery, Geneva, 2019; MarsdenWoo Gallery, London, 2019; Spatial Drawings, NeC Gallery, Paris 2017 (solo); Copenhagen Ceramics Invites, Galleria Salvatore Lanteri, Milan, 2016; Possible Gestures, Gallery Format, Oslo, 2016 (solo); X–Scapes, Copenhagen Ceramics Gallery, 2014 (duo with Marit Tingleff, NO); Danish Design at The House, Sydney Opera House, 2013; Other Objects, Copenhagen Ceramics Gallery, 2012 (solo); PULS Contemporary Ceramics, Brussels, 2011; Contemporary British Studio Ceramics, Mint Museum, North Carolina, US, 2010; The Digital Clay, Designmuseum Denmark, 2008 (solo); END – English-Norwegian – Danish group show, Designmuseum Denmark, 2007.

Associate Professor at The Royal Danish Academy, School of Design 2009–2020; External Examiner, Royal College of Art, London, 2016–19; Founding member of Copenhagen Ceramics.

www.martinkaldahl.com
Instagram: @kaldahlmartinbodilsen



Marianne Nielsen 1971—
Lives and works in Copenhagen.
Education: The Kolding School of Design, 1999.

Recent exhibitions include: Shiftings, Galerie Pi, Copenhagen, 2020 (duo w Lotte Agger); Ceramic Momentum, CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art Denmark, 2019; Planted, Galerie Pi, Copenhagen, 2018 (duo w Lotte Agger); Flower Vases (solo), Ann Linnemann Gallery, Copenhagen, 2017; Hand build, Glazed Stoneware, Bagsværd Church (solo), 2017; Grand Designs – Clever Hands, CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art Denmark, 2017; Danish Contemporary, Lacoste Gallery, Concord, MA, USA, 2016; Copenhagen Ceramics Invites, Galleria Salvatore Lanteri, Milan, 2016; Homeliness, private flat, Copenhagen, 2015; Lunch of the green (solo), Butik for Borddækning, Copenhagen, 2014; MINDCRAFT14, Milan Design Week, Milan, 2014; Elitist Folklore, Copenhagen Ceramics Exhibition Space, 2012 (duo w Anne Tophøj); Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl invites..., PULS Contemporary Ceramics, Brussels, 2011; Across, Ny Tap, Carlsberg, Copenhagen, 2010; Damascus – Copenhagen, The Danish Institute in Damascus, 2006.

Designer at Royal Copenhagen 2001–2002.
Freelance designer for Kähler Design 2009–

www.mariannielsen.com



Turi Heisselberg Pedersen 1965—
Lives and works in Copenhagen.
Education: Design School Kolding,
Denmark 1985–1990.

Her work is represented in museums and private collections such as Musée national de la Céramique, Sèvres, France, Le Musée Magnelli; Musée de la Céramique, Vallauris, France; Designmuseum Denmark, Copenhagen; CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, Denmark; New Carlsberg Foundation, Copenhagen, Denmark; Annie and Otto Johs. Detlefs' Foundation.

Recent exhibitions include: Galerie Le Don du Fel, Au delà du pot, France 2020; Ceramic Momentum, CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, Denmark 2019; Puls Contemporary Ceramics (solo), Bruxelles, Belgium 2018; Copenhagen Ceramics Gallery (Solo), Denmark 2012; Collective Design Fair, New York with J. Lohmann Gallery 2013–17; Galerie Maria Lund (duo w. Peter Neuchs), France 2010; Time Out (duo w. Lone Skov Madsen), Designmuseum Denmark, Copenhagen 2009.

Lecturing at Design School Kolding 1994–2007.
Freelance design for Kähler Design, 2017–20.

www.turiheisselberg.dk



Pernille Pontoppidan Pedersen 1987—
Lives and works on a farm in the woods
outside Silkeborg.
Education: Royal Danish Academy, School
of Design, Bornholm.

Work is represented in museums and private collections such as CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, DK; The Danish Art Foundation, DK; Science Center Uppsala, Sweden; Skive High School, DK; Ikast-Brande Municipality, DK; Erik Veistrup Collection, DK.

Grants awarded: Martha and Paul Rene Gauguin Foundation; Ole Haslund Foundation; Silkeborg Art Foundation; Annie and Otto Johs. Detlefs' Foundation (travel-grant).

Recent exhibitions include: Rv-a-l-air-libre, Galerie Maria Lund, Paris, 2021(solo); Terre in Ferro, CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, DK, 2020 (temporary sculpture); Ceramic Momentum, CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, DK, 2019; Curio, CHART DESIGN, Den Frie, DK, 2018; Grand Designs – Clever Hands, CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, DK, 2017; Everyday Life – Signs of Awareness, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan, 2017; Beyond Icons, Koldinghus, DK, 2017; MINDCRAFT17, Cloister of San Simpliciano, Milan, 2017; GLASUR – Kemi, Masse og Myte, Sophienholm, DK, 2017; Nine Suspensions, Køppe Contemporary Objects, DK, 2016(solo); Ni Bøjler, SAK-Svendborg, DK, 2016 (solo); AT FIRST GLANCE, Galleri Format, Oslo, 2015; Chaotiquement Vôtres, Galerie Maria Lund, Paris, 2014 (duo with Esben Klemann, DK); Software & Glorified Ingratitude, Copenhagen Ceramics, DK, 2013 (duo with Christina Schou Christensen); Terres – Copenhagen Ceramics Invites, Galerie Maria Lund, Paris, 2013.

www.pernillepontoppidan.com



Bente Skjøttgaard 1961—
Lives and works in Frederiksberg/Copenhagen.
Education: Design School Kolding 1982–86;
Exchange student at Bezalel Academy of Arts and
Design, Jerusalem, 1985; Artist-in-residence at
the Bing & Grøndahl Porcelain Factory/Royal
Copenhagen Porcelain, 1986–90.

Selected museums and collections: Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; V&A Museum, London; Fond National d'Art Contemporain, France; Musée National de Céramique de Sèvres, France; The Danish Arts Foundation; Designmuseum Denmark; Holstebro Art Museum, DK; Erik Veistrup Collection at CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art, Denmark; Annie and Otto Johs. Detlefs' Foundation, DK.

Recent exhibitions include: 'Glowing in the Dark' (solo) Jason Jacques Gallery NYC 2020; 'Danish Women in Contemporary Ceramics' Lacoste/Keane Gallery MA 2020; 'All Solid melts into Air', Kunstpakhuset Ikast DK 2020; FOG Design+Art San Francisco, Jason Jacques Gallery 2020; 'Regarder les nuages' Georges Maroniez/ Bente Skjøttgaard, Musée des beaux-arts de Cambrai France 2019–20; 'CERAMIC MOMENTUM – Staging the Object' CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art Denmark 2019; 'Look at me!' (solo) Galerie Maria Lund, Paris 2018; Design Miami/Basel, Pierre Marie Giraud, Basel 2018; 'Nature of Glaze' (solo) Pierre Marie Giraud, Brussels 2017.

Chairman of the Danish Arts Foundation's Committee for Crafts and Design 2016–19; Founding member of Copenhagen Ceramics.

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This catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition Bend, Bubble and Shine, Copenhagen Ceramics at Hostler Burrows, New York from April 29 until June 10, 2021

Hostler Burrows Gallery
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New York, NY 10003
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Editors

Copenhagen Ceramics

Book and Typeface design

A2/SW/HK + A2-TYPE

Printing

Narayana Press

Photo credits

p2: Joe Kramm

All other photos by Jeppe Gudmundsen-Holmgreen

Preface

Juliet Burrows

Articles

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Garth Johnson: Touching from a Distance.

Artist presentations

Martin Bodilsen Kaldahl, Copenhagen Ceramics.

Production of this catalogue is generously supported by

Danish Arts Foundation
Danmarks Nationalbanks Jubilæumsfond af 1968
Augustinus Fonden
Grosserer L. F. Foghts Fond

Published by

Copenhagen Ceramics
www.copenhagenceramics.com
info@copenhagenceramics.com
ISBN 978-87-998870-1-9



Danish Arts
Foundation



AUGUSTINUS FONDEN

STIFTET 25. MARTS 1942

KAREN BENNICKE

MORTEN LØBNER ESPERSEN

STEEN IPSEN

GITTE JUNGERSEN

MARTIN BODILSEN KALDAHL

MARIANNE NIELSEN

TURI HEISSELBERG PEDERSEN

PERNILLE PONTOPPIDAN PEDERSEN

BENTE SKJØTTGAARD