



THE NEW CERAMICS

sculpting and
handbuilding

Claire Loder



Frankie Locke, *Curved Form*,
2009. Carved stoneware, 13
x 17 x 13 cm (5 x 6¾ x 5 in).
Photo: John Taylor.



Nathalie Khayat, *Seed 2*,
2011. Texture printed in
porcelain slabs, unglazed,
30 x 45 cm (11¾ x 17¾ in).
Photo: Elie Bekhazi.



organic structures are far from negligible: they are fluid, robust and decorative, without being frivolous or visually distracting. Her sculptures are expressive and informal, and although there is an ordered repetitiveness in some of her textured surfaces, the forms themselves are unordered and asymmetric – a nod to the unruly chaos of nature. Some pieces are large in scale, like her *Premature Blossoms*, and all bear the mark of Khayat's hands. 'I rarely use tools,' Khayat says. 'The majority of time, I let my fingers do the work by pushing the clay in or out to create indentations or bumps.'



Nathalie Khayat, *Seed 2*, 2011. Texture printed in porcelain slabs, unglazed, 30 x 45 cm (11¾ x 17¾ in).
Photo: Elie Bekhazi.

She builds the structure first then adds the layers that define the form. 'Through that work, I explore themes that are of interest to me: sound, rhythm and vibration, inner silence and landscape, stillness and movement.' Khayat uses porcelain for its whiteness, purity and translucent qualities – she often leaves it unglazed. Other pieces are built in stoneware, glazed and raku-fired.

Amy Jane Hughes' *Trésor Découvert* (*Treasure Uncovered*) series is a conversation with a very specific point in ceramic history. Using various handbuilding methods (coiling, press-moulding and sprigging), Hughes re-imagines the tightly controlled *objets d'art* of the French Royal Sèvres Factory in the late 17th and 18th centuries. Hughes describes how these prestigious porcelain wares 'carried no visible suggestion of their material identity and [were] so lavishly decorated that each detail was left in competition on the surface, striving to attract attention.' By comparison with the original wares, Hughes' vessels are delightfully rough-hewn forms. They are irreverent, but maintain a referential decadence; while echoing the Sèvres wares, they celebrate the material qualities of the clay. The expressive nature of the making is evident. It allows us to imagine Hughes' hands on the clay as the vessels take form.

Lisa Stockham makes slab-built vessels from sections of clay imprinted with patterned texture. Some vessels are handbuilt from small, individual press-moulded sections or fragments. Strongly influenced by textile imagery, Stockham produces clay slabs that imitate sheets of fabric or frayed material. Focusing on a decorative detail, the motif is repeated and pushed to the extreme.



Bibliography

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Further reading

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LEFT: Ted Vogel, *Campfire Stories – Stump*, 2006–2009. Earthenware, 71 x 71 x 28 cm (27 x 27 x 11 in). Photo: Dan Kvitka.

RIGHT: Nathalie Khayat, *Premature Blossoms 1, 2, 3 & 4*. Unglazed porcelain, left to right, ht: 95 cm (37½ in), 125 cm (49¼ in), 120 cm (47¼ in), 80 cm (31½ in). Photo: Elie Bekhazi.

