DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

Betty Woodman

Selected Press

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

Elderton, Louisa, “Betty Woodman,” *Great ~~Women~~ Artists*, edited by Rebecca Morrill, London and New York: Phaidon, 2019, p. 434

BETTY WOODMAN



Woodman’s practice combined the flat medium of painting with three-dimensional ceramics. She took her first pottery class at the age of sixteen and trained as a functional potter at the School for American Craftsmen in Alfred, New York. In 1952, she visited Florence and, surrounded by what she described as piles of rubble and hope, was inspired to pursue art. Her avowed eclecticism and blurring of the distinction between fine art and craft made the art world slow to appreciate her creative talent. The influence of Italian Renaissance colours are evident, presented via methods of far-ranging periods and cultures including tin-glazed Majolica ware, Japanese Oribe ware, Chinese Tang dynasty ceramics and eighteenth-century European porcelain, and with the form of the Classical vase a recurrent motif. Collaboration with other artists, including Joyce Kozloff (p.223), encouraged Woodman to adopt a vibrant, witty style, in which she challenged the idea that ceramics are synonymous with functionality, existing merely to carry matter, as demonstrated by works such as *A Single Joy of Song*, made the year before her death. The large-scale installation combines canvas with glazed earthenware shapes to depict a theatrical domestic interior where ceramic forms enter the realm of painting.

A SINGLE JOY OF SONG
2017, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas and wood, 304.8 × 711.2 × 30.5 cm (120 × 280 × 12 in)

Betty Woodman, born Elizabeth Abrahams, 1930, Norwalk, Connecticut. Died 2018, New York.

Robinson, Leanna “Betty Woodman,” *Artillery*, September/October 2019, pp. 52 -53

ARTILLERY



FEATURE REVIEW By Leanna Robinson

Betty Woodman
David Kordansky Gallery

No conversation about the history of ceramics in art, especially about works created by female artists, would be complete without mention of Betty Woodman. The artist, who recently passed at age 87, shifted the conventions of ceramics—that of functional objects to be used in the home—and lifted the medium beyond the scope of its interior confines. At the beginning of Woodman's career, ceramics was in a limbo space between art and artisan and was dominated mostly by men. Today, ceramics has been folded into the norm of acceptable mediums and Woodman is aptly considered a cornerstone of the medium.

Her solo show at David Kordansky Gallery builds on themes that she explored throughout her career, and offers an experimental study and celebration of the female form and interior spaces through ceramics, paint and other mixed media. The scenes created in the works are relatable and unpretentious—visions of vases, bedrooms, a kitchen, lattice fencing, plates and kitchenware, interior walls and carpets. The confines of simple home and interior motifs give Woodman boundaries to push up against and experiment with. Through novel uses of the medium, she extends earthenware from its usual forms; she takes the idea of what a vase is and abstracts it.

Woodman keeps the organic nature of the materials intact, even throughout her various experimentations. By keeping edges rounded and imperfect, it gives the impression that Woodman is not trying to conquer the materials but rather is shaping them. The paint looks distinctly like paint, the earthenware like earthenware, especially in the parts that are unglazed.

The exhibition could be broken up into two types of works—ones that lend themselves to be viewed more like paintings, and ones that appear more like sculptures. The sculptures are technically pitchers and vases, yet upon first glance would not appear as such. They shift and morph as the viewer walks around them, and in some cases, such as *His and Hers Vases: Life Drawing* (2018), appear completely different whether viewed from the front or the back.

One of the first things noticeable upon entering the space is the jubilant use of color. Woodman uses an unapologetic amount of pink, a color that is typically associated with hyper-femininity and seems to do so in a completely unironic way. The works also feature a barrage of patterns, all of which are lifted from distinct inspiration. The checkerboard tablecloth in *Summer Tea Party* (2015–16) is a nostalgic throwback to domestic kitsch, while the background hints at Japanese-textile work with its cherry blossom print. Other textile-inspired motifs are thrown in the mix, with the floral pattern in *Lady and Leaning Vase* (2011) and again in *Tuesday Afternoon* (2016). Woodman uses color and patterns to create space, rather than shading and light, as in *Lady and Leaning Vase* (2011). By splitting the background up into color blocks, she creates the illusion of walls, floor and object. In some instances, the work has a sense of cut-out paper and creates an illusion of collage.

Woodman plays with the appearance of foreground and background by having elements outside of the 2D picture plane, either by affixing ceramic pieces directly onto the canvas alongside the painting, or by having clay on the floor in front of the canvas as in *Bedroom with Lattice* (2009) and *Tuesday Afternoon* (2016). This choice to play with the picture plane and use 3D materials alongside paintings to create a cohesive piece is extremely trendy right now, and yet these works do not seem to be following a trend. This is evident not only in the 2D/3D commingling but also in the variety of forms that Woodman molds the material into. In *The Front Hall* (2014), broken pieces of ceramics create a giant leaning vase, which overcomes many ceramicists' worst nightmare—that of creating a work and then having it break at the last minute.

A thread present in many of the works is that of playing with the motif of equating women's bodies with objects through sometimes suggestive and other times more obvious. Equating women's bodies with objects has a long history in art, yet Woodman's work lacks the misogynistic trappings typically associated with such an idea, perhaps because she is a woman, and perhaps because the works are a celebration of forms, both material and human.



L to R: Betty Woodman (all), *Lady and Leaning Vase* (2011); *Summer Tea Party* (2015–16); *Venus #7*- Homey (2014); all courtesy David Kordansky Gallery

Robinson, Leanna “Betty Woodman,” *Artillery*, September/October 2019, pp. 52 -53



Robinson, Leanna, “Betty Woodman,” *ArtilleryMag.com*, September 3, 2019

ARTILLERY

Betty Woodman

David Kordansky Gallery

By Leanna Robinson | September 3, 3019



Betty Woodman, *Venus #7- Homey*, 2014, courtesy David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

No conversation about the history of ceramics in art, especially about works created by female artists, would be complete without mention of Betty Woodman. The artist, who recently passed at age 87, shifted the conventions of ceramics—that of functional objects to be used in the home—and lifted the medium beyond the scope of its interior confines. At the beginning of Woodman’s career, ceramics was in a limbo space between art and artisan and was dominated mostly by men. Today, ceramics has been folded into the norm of acceptable mediums and Woodman is aptly considered a cornerstone of the medium.

Her solo show at David Kordansky Gallery builds on themes that she explored throughout her career, and offers an experimental study and celebration of the female form and interior spaces through ceramics, paint and other mixed media. The scenes created in the works are relatable and unpretentious—visions of vases, bedrooms, a kitchen, lattice fencing, plates and kitchenware, interior walls and carpets. The confines of simple home and interior motifs give Woodman boundaries to push up against and experiment with. Through novel uses of the medium, she extends earthenware from its usual forms; she takes the idea of what a vase is and abstracts it.

Woodman keeps the organic nature of the materials intact, even throughout her various experimentations. By keeping edges rounded and imperfect, it gives the impression that Woodman is not trying to conquer the materials but rather is shaping them. The paint looks distinctly like paint, the earthenware like earthenware, especially in the parts that are unglazed.

The exhibition could be broken up into two types of works—ones that lend themselves to be viewed more like paintings, and ones that appear more like sculptures. The sculptures are technically pitchers and vases, yet upon first glance would not appear as such. They shift and morph as the viewer walks around them, and in some cases, such as *His and Hers Vases: Life Drawing* (2018), appear completely different whether viewed from the front or the back.

Robinson, Leanna, “Betty Woodman,” *ArtilleryMag.com*, September 3, 2019



Betty Woodman, *Summer Tea Party* (2015–16), courtesy David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

One of the first things noticeable upon entering the space is the jubilant use of color. Woodman uses an unapologetic amount of pink, a color that is typically associated with hyper-femininity and seems to do so in a completely unironic way. The works also feature a barrage of patterns, all of which are lifted from distinct inspiration. The checkerboard tablecloth in *Summer Tea Party* (2015–16) is a nostalgic throwback to domestic kitsch, while the background hints at Japanese-textile work with its cherry blossom print. Other textile-inspired motifs are thrown in the mix, with the floral pattern in *Lady and Leaning Vase* (2011) and again in *Tuesday Afternoon* (2016). Woodman uses color and patterns to create space, rather than shading and light, as in *Lady and Leaning Vase* (2011). By splitting the background up into color blocks, she creates the illusion of walls, floor and object. In some instances, the work has a sense of cut-out paper and creates an illusion of collage.

Woodman plays with the appearance of foreground and background by having elements outside of the 2D picture plane, either by affixing ceramic pieces directly onto the canvas alongside the painting, or by having clay on the floor in front of the canvas as in *Bedroom with Lattice* (2009) and *Tuesday Afternoon* (2016). This choice to play with the picture plane and use 3D materials alongside paintings to create a cohesive piece is extremely trendy right now, and yet these works do not seem to be following a trend. This is evident not only in the 2D/3D commingling but also in the variety of forms that Woodman molds the material into. In *The Front Hall* (2014), broken pieces of ceramics create a giant leaning vase, which overcomes many ceramicists’ worst nightmare—that of creating a work and then having it break at the last minute.

A thread present in many of the works is that of playing with the motif of equating women’s bodies with objects through sometimes suggestive and other times more obvious. Equating women’s bodies with objects has a long history in art, yet Woodman’s work lacks the misogynistic trappings typically associated with such an idea, perhaps because she is a woman, and perhaps because the works are a celebration of forms, both material and human.

Pagel, David, “Eye candy on a gigantic scale made with canvas, clay and paint,” *LATimes.com*, July 16, 2019

Los Angeles Times

Eye candy on a gigantic scale made with canvas, clay and paint

By David Pagel | July 16, 2019



“Bedroom With Lattice” by Betty Woodman, 2009. Glazed earthenware, paint and canvas, 92 by 85.5 by 15 inches. (Jeff McLane / From Charles Woodman, the Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery)

The 12 works by Betty Woodman (1930-2018) on view at the David Kordansky Gallery insist on fun first: Vibrant colors, jaunty contours and animated compositions pinball your eyes around the showroom.

Your body follows, helplessly and eagerly, leaving your mind scurrying to catch up with your emotions, which are like putty in Woodman’s



Betty Woodman’s “Lady and Leaning Vase,” 2011. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint and canvas, 85.5 inches by 43.75 inches by 0.5 inch. (Jeff McLane / From Charles Woodman, the Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery)



“The Chapel” by Betty Woodman, 2011. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas and wood, 105 inches by 86 inches by 13 inches. (Jeff McLane / From Charles Woodman, the Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery)

hands. It’s as though the artist had gone into her studio wanting nothing more than to amuse herself — to surprise her eyes, mind and heart by what she did with her hands.

That’s no mean feat, especially for an artist as visually sophisticated — and impatient with conventions — as Woodman was. Her playful works entertain in the deepest sense of the word. They introduce us to feelings and ideas we are otherwise unaccustomed to, and they sharpen our perceptions.

Cloth and mud are the main ingredients of Woodman’s category-straddling works. Some, like “The Front Hall” and “Lady and Leaning Vase,” hang like paintings or tapestries. To their loosely draped swathes of painted canvas Woodman has attached variously shaped slabs of glazed and fired clay. Like well-chosen earrings, these embellishments enhance the beauty of her compositions.

Others, such as “Red Pitcher Yellow Flowers,” “Venus #2” and “His and Her Vases: Life Drawing,” rest on pedestals, like vases or vessels. But Woodman has flattened their 3-D volumes, transforming their



Betty Woodman’s “His and Hers Vases: Life Drawing,” 2008. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer and paint, 38-3/8 inches by 69-5/8 inches by 9-1/2 inches. (Jeff McLane / From Charles Woodman, the Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery)

utilitarian forms into shallow-relief sculptures that have the presence of gigantic handcrafted medallions or fat, freestanding paintings.

Still others, like “Tuesday Afternoon,” “Bedroom With Lattice,” “Summer Tea Party” and “The Chapel,” hang on the wall and stand on the floor, their canvas and clay components forming tableaux that recall stage sets for intimately scaled dramas.

The fourth — and show-stealing — group of works rest on pedestals over which Woodman has spread unstretched paintings, like tablecloths or picnic blankets. The 2-D surfaces and 3-D forms in “Aztec Vase and Carpet: Mariana” and “Aztec Vase and Carpet #7” flip flop, catching viewers in low-tech yet highly satisfying ambiguity. It’s fascinating to circle these pieces, stopping every few steps to compare and contrast their nooks and crannies.

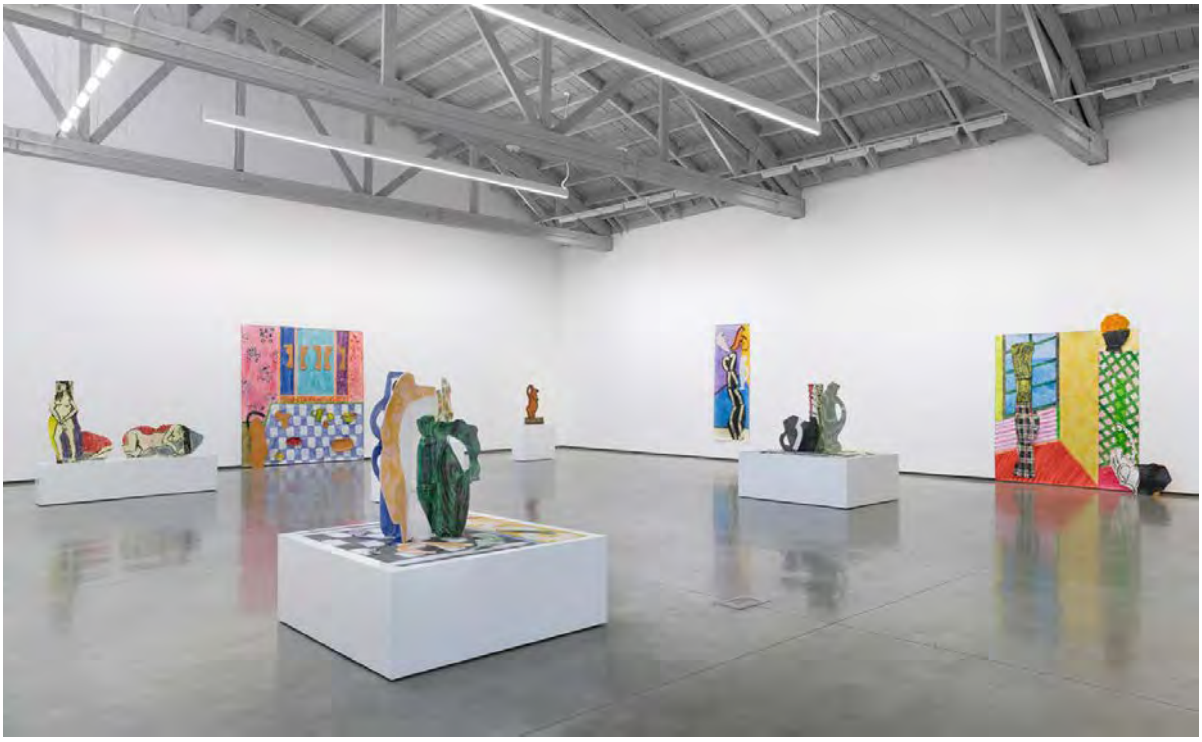
In art historical terms, Woodman’s works are painted ceramic sculptural tableaux that function as mini-installations. They can also be called mixed-media collages. In person, they are all that and more: a thrill to see, a thrill to think about.

Jansen, Charlotte, “Betty Woodman: the ceramic artist with a painter’s touch,” *Wallpaper.com*, July 10, 2019

Wallpaper*

Betty Woodman: the ceramic artist with a painter’s touch

Los Angeles-based David Kordansky Gallery stages her first posthumous gallery exhibition, bringing together sculptures and paintings from 2008 to 2016 while a series of never-before-seen works on paper published exclusively here give new context to her clay



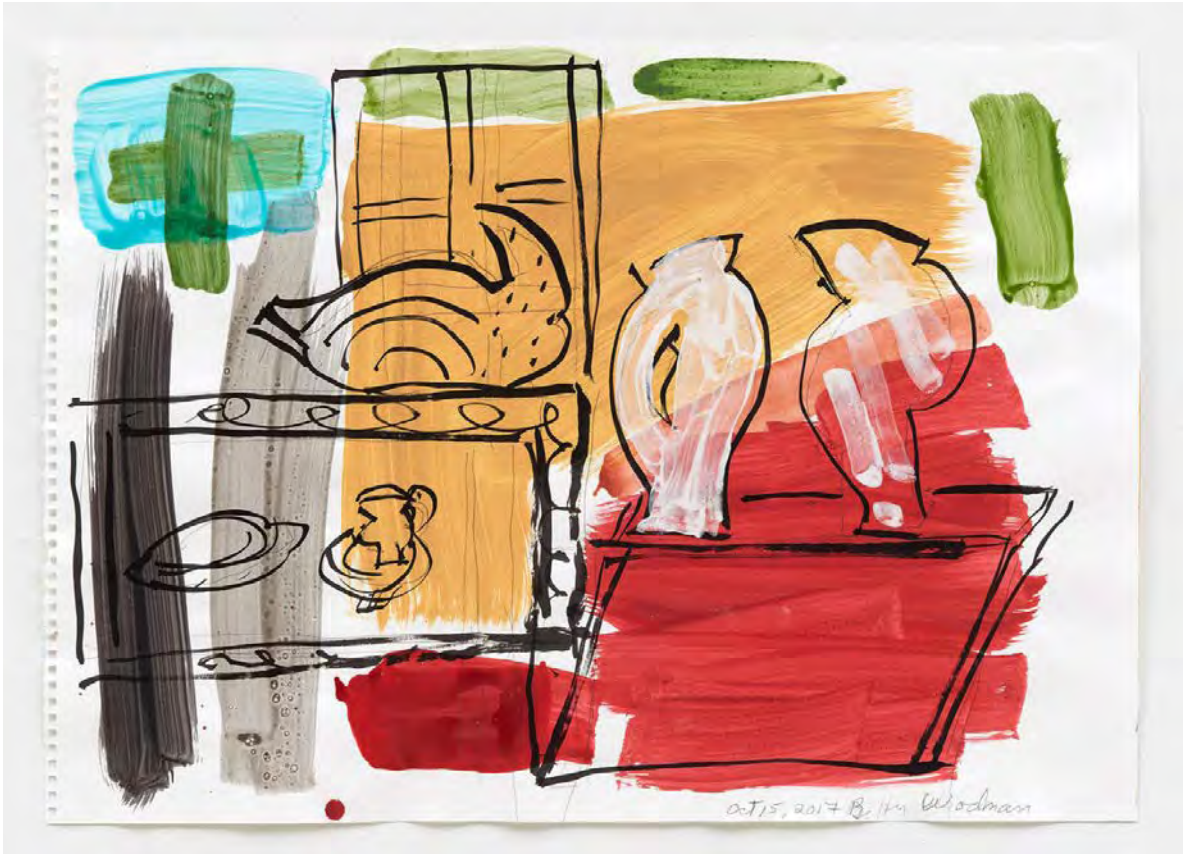
‘Shadows and Silhouettes’ at David Kordansky, Los Angeles. Photography: Jeff McLane. Courtesy of Charles Woodman / The Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

‘What do I do now?’ the late Betty Woodman – who passed away last year – wondered, at 75, when her 2006 retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art had closed. Quietly and consistently influential, the artist practiced her craft steadily over 50 years and held a teaching post at the University of Colorado for more than thirty. She had been working with clay since she was 16: it was through her pottery that she met her husband of five decades, George, and it was clay that helped her deal with the tragic death of her daughter, Francesca, in 1981.

This long-term dedication to her medium didn’t mean Woodman was stuck – if anything, her legacy is her inventiveness. She was the Madonna of ceramics; endlessly curious about different techniques and approaches, she never stopped pushing her art in new directions right up to the last years of her life as a new exhibition at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles proves.

‘Shadows and Silhouettes’ is the first posthumous exhibition on Woodman and brings together sculptures from 2008 to 2016, while a series of never-before-seen works on paper reveals more about the role of the pictorial in her sculptural spaces. Often combining the two, paintings started to play an increasingly important role in this last period of Woodman’s work, arising from a desire to give context to her clay after the Met.

Jansen, Charlotte, “Betty Woodman: the ceramic artist with a painter’s touch,” *Wallpaper.com*, July 10, 2019



An unseen work on paper by Betty Woodman, dated October 15, 2017, India ink, acrylic paint on sketch paper. Photography: Thomas Mueller. Courtesy of Charles Woodman / The Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles



Il Giardino di Pinto, 1993, at European Ceramic Workcentre, ‘s-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands. Courtesy of Charles Woodman / The Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Jansen, Charlotte, “Betty Woodman: the ceramic artist with a painter’s touch,” *Wallpaper.com*, July 10, 2019



Red Pitcher Yellow Flowers, 2012, by Betty Woodman, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, and acrylic paint. Photography: Jeff McLane. Courtesy of Charles Woodman / The Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

One of the major themes in Woodman’s oeuvre was her constant fascination with vases and vessels, returning to the most revered shapes of the oldest art form, and yet finding new things to do with them. She took unexpected materials, like lacquer paint, and applied it to earthenware; she transformed an ancient slip gaze, terra sigillata, by using it on paper.



From left, *Aztec Vase and Carpet #7*, 2014 glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, and canvas; and *Bedroom with Lattice*, 2009, glazed earthenware, paint, and canvas, by Betty Woodman. Photography: Jeff McLane. Courtesy of Charles Woodman / The Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Jansen, Charlotte, “Betty Woodman: the ceramic artist with a painter’s touch,” *Wallpaper.com*, July 10, 2019



‘Shadows and Silhouettes’ at David Kordansky, Los Angeles. Photography: Jeff McLane. Courtesy of Charles Woodman / The Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles



October 23, 2017, by Betty Woodman, India ink, acrylic paint on sketch paper. Photography: Thomas Mueller. Courtesy of Charles Woodman / The Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Her practice was rife with experimentation, mixing the old and the new, and drawing on diverse cultural references, from Matisse’s cut-outs to Minoan art, the capitals of Roman columns or Tang Dynasty tomb figurines. Woodman always simultaneously embraced the perfunctory and domestic nature of ceramics while being unafraid to make connections between clay and art history, design and architecture.

On show at David Kordansky are works so exuberant they seem to dance: the gingham tablecloth and meta-ceramics in Summer Tea Party (2015-16); the reclining nude figures of Hers Vases: Life Drawing (2008); or the motifs of Aztec Vase & Carpet: Mariana (2015). Colour, shape, pattern and texture are all staged to kindle narratives of their own.

Woodman never lived in LA – she was part of the potter community in Colorado and divided her time between New York and Tuscany, where she had a second home, working while the California Clay Movement was kicking off, all surfer dudes and psychedelia.

As Woodman herself said, ‘ceramics was always macho world’. Yet her uninhibited experimentation, the freedom and lustrous joy of her work, seem perfectly at home here.

Guadagnino, Kate, “T Suggests: Painterly Ceramics, Grateful Dead Body Oils and More,” *NYTimes.com*, June 21, 2019

The New York Times Style Magazine

T Suggests: Painterly Ceramics, Grateful Dead Body Oils and More

A roundup of things our editors — and a few contributors — are excited about in a given week.

By Kate Guadagnino | June 21, 2019

Betty Woodman’s Exuberant Late Works



Betty Woodman’s “Tuesday Afternoon” (2016). Photo by Jeff McLane. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles



Betty Woodman’s “Venus #2” (2012). Photo by Jeff McLane. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Before Betty Woodman’s riotous sculptures earned her a solo show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2006, she made ceramic tableware that she presented at biannual sales held at her Colorado home. Perhaps it was because she shifted her practice slightly later in life that she was able to make inventive work up until the end of it (the artist died last year). “Shadows and Silhouettes,” opening next week at David Kordansky Gallery, in Los Angeles, picks up where the Met show left off, with 12 Woodman works that date from 2008 to 2016. Most compelling are those that combine painted canvas and glazed earthenware — it’s as though the clay elements of Woodman’s imagined interiors refused to be merely depicted and decided to burst through the works’ surfaces. In “Tuesday Afternoon” (2016), a three-dimensional vase sits just in front of a canvas, its form echoed in the painting by a blank space like a cutout, or a phantom of what once was. “It’s a kind of mysterious move that started to crop up in some of the late paintings,” says Stuart Krimko, the gallery’s research and editorial director. “The vessels become like characters, and the relationship between the vessel and the figure becomes more psychologically charged.”

Indeed, Woodman’s Venus vases, two of which are on view, show a female nude on one side and a decorative vessel on the other. If Woodman was thinking about what *she* would leave behind when she left this realm (namely, her body of work), Krimko believes she was also making a case for living with beauty. “There wasn’t much separation between what happened in the studio and what happened in the other rooms of her house,” he says. “For her, aesthetics, right down to the mug you drink your coffee out of, was not a surface-level thing; it was part of what it means to be human and truly linked to survival.”
“Shadows and Silhouettes” will be on view at David Kordansky Gallery from June 27 through Aug. 24, 2019

Crow, Kelly, "Collectors Get Fired Up for Ceramics," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 8, 2018, p. A14

ART & AUCTIONS

Collectors Get Fired Up for Ceramics

Pottery takes center stage at London's Frieze art fair and auctions; 'there's a lot of cross-pollination going on'

BY KELLY CROW

ASIAN COLLECTORS have long prized porcelain vases as much as paintings, but until recently, art lovers elsewhere largely treated ceramics like a second-class craft. Now, the global art market is trying to elevate clay art into the realm of the blue chip.

Christie's and Phillips for the first time added stand-alone auctions of 20th-century and contemporary ceramics to their high-profile set of evening sales in London with examples by artists like Paul Gauguin, Lucio Fontana and Thomas Schütte. All but three of the 36 pieces in Christie's $4 million "Un/Breakable" sale on Tuesday found buyers.



Across town at the art fair Frieze London, which overlapped with the week's auctions, at least half a dozen galleries also offered ceramic works in their booths, including Robert Arneson's 1983 bust of his wife Sandra Shannonhouse, "Woman in Gold," at Venus Over Manhattan's booth. It was priced at $650,000.

The fair concluded Sunday.

Gagosian's gallery in Geneva has a "Fire and Clay" show running until Dec. 15 that includes potters Shio Kusaka, who is based in Los Angeles, and Ron Nagle, who is from San Francisco. In New York, the Museum of Arts and Design just opened an exhibit of apocalyptic ceramics by Los Angeles's Sterling Ruby. It runs through March.

Pablo Picasso's granddaughter Marina Picasso gave the contemporary ceramics market a jolt three years ago when she enlisted Sotheby's to sell off a portion of her inherited trove of the artist's playful pottery. Collectors over the course of three sales bought every ceramic piece, in some cases paying six-figure sums that would have been unthinkable a decade ago. Richard Attenborough's estate sale of Picasso ceramics at Christie's two years ago stoked a similar buy-it-all frenzy, with a Picasso vase selling for $909,407.



The canny push from auction houses also comes at a time when collector confidence remains highest in the middle of the market, where pieces typically sell for between $500,000 to $5 million, as opposed to the trophy top of the market, where pieces can top $100 million, according to the auction-tracking firm ArtTactic's Contemporary Art Market Confidence Report issued Tuesday.

Trophies are still selling at Sotheby's, though: On Friday, its sale of part of New Jersey management consultant David Teiger's estate included a $12.4 million Jenny Saville, "Propped," that reset the record for a living female artist at auction.

The mood has nudged collectors to bolster ceramic pieces for dozens of artists like Peter Voulkos, whose 1958 stoneware abstract, "Rondena," sold at Phillips last December for $915,000, over its $500,000 high estimate. The sale also established a new auction high bar for a 20th-century ceramic made by a U.S. artist.

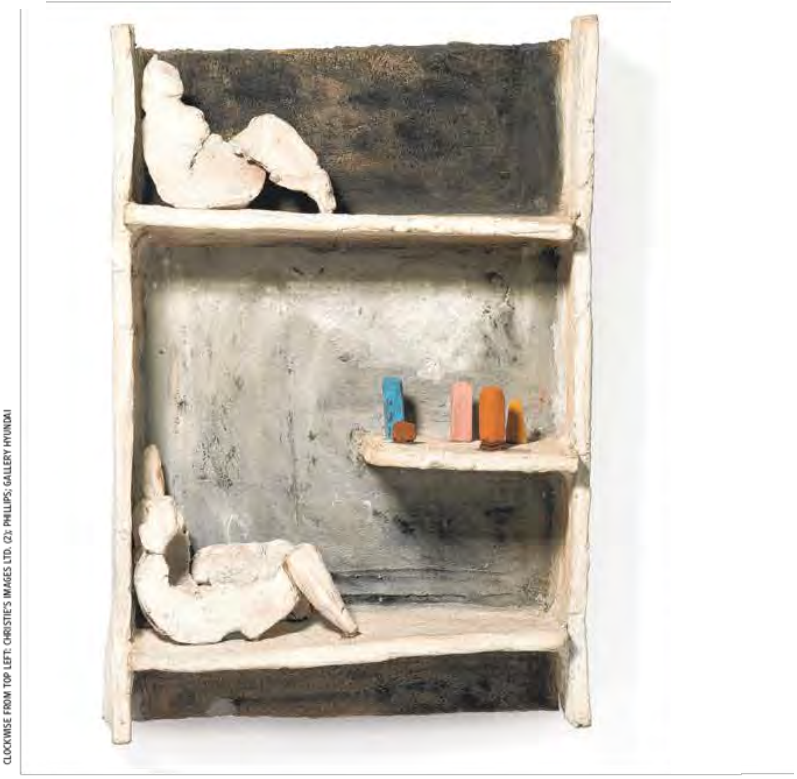
That price still pales in comparison with the $38 million paid for a Chinese ceramic at auction—Sotheby's sold a Northern Song-era vessel for washing paintbrushes—but the overall recalibration could expand the collector base.

Watch for prices to rise for modern ceramists like George Ohr—the self-proclaimed "Mad Potter of Biloxi"—as well as postwar potters Lucie Rie and Hans Coper. Their works have long been funneled into decorative-art sales alongside lamps and sofas, rather than with paintings and other fine art. But Christie's expert Leonie Mir said such designations are blurring because younger contemporary collectors don't sift or rank artworks strictly by medium anymore.

Neither do contemporary artists like Ai Weiwei, who incorporates all sorts of materials in his work. Among his recent installations: Room-size piles of hand-painted porcelain sunflower seeds and river crabs.

"There's a lot of cross-pollination going on," said Meaghan Roddy, a senior international specialist at Phillips, who sold the river crabs, or "He Xie," for $793,000 on Friday.

Here's a look at four other artists from Frieze Week who got creative with clay.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHRISTIE'S IMAGES LTD. (2); PHILLIPS; GALLERY HYUNDAI

Ceramic, clay and terra-cotta pieces by Fausto Melotti, above, Pablo Picasso, below, and Kathy Butterly, bottom.

PABLO PICASSO

Picasso started making earthenware plates and bowls in the 1940s as a breezy summer pastime, but he stuck with it for the rest of his life—eventually making more than 600 types of pieces. On Tuesday, Christie's top lot was a 1950 terra-cotta "Large Vase With Veiled Women" that sold for $526,175, slightly over its $520,000 low estimate.

But there are signs that collectors are starting to flip his pottery like they do his paintings: Christie's also sold his 1950 "Tripod (A.R. 125)" vase depicting his mistress, Françoise Gilot, for $195,000—but the seller paid Sotheby's $272,060 for it only two years ago.

FAUSTO MELOTTI

Fausto Melotti initially gained fame in the 1930s for making wiry, geometric sculptures, but after his Milan studio was destroyed during World War II, he turned in grief to terra-cotta. He started making clay scenes with tiny figures often separated as if living on separate floors.

Today, Melotti's quivering metal sculptures have sold for as much as $665,000, but Christie's reset his clay record Tuesday by selling 1959's "The Chalks," for $416,975.

KATHY BUTTERLY

New York artist Kathy Butterly has spent the past couple of decades crumbling clay into forms that appear to topple, yet don't. She has used nail polish as a glaze, sometimes firing her pieces dozens of times and risking destruction in the process, according to her dealer James Cohan, who has a solo show of her work, "Thought Presence," up through Oct. 20 in New York. On Friday in London, Phillips's $3.3 million sale included her 7-inch piece, "Overgrown," that sold for $21,160. It was priced to sell for up to $20,000.

BETTY WOODMAN

Betty Woodman, who died earlier this year, studied pottery in New York in the late 1940s, but after that she spent time in Tuscany, where she gained a reputation for creating vases that looked like they'd been deconstructed and pinned to the wall. In 2006, Woodman was the first living ceramist to get a retrospective of her work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and since then her market has started to tick upward. On Friday, Phillips sold her 2007 "Balustrade Relief Vase 07-4" for $61,850, tripling its high estimate.

Guadagnino, Kate, “Funky Ceramics Are Everywhere. Including in Galleries.,” *NYTimes.com*, June 14, 2018

THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

Funky Ceramics Are Everywhere. Including in Galleries.

The fine art world has started to embrace works made from clay — a material it once deemed lowly.

Kate Guadagnino | June 14, 2018



Clockwise from top left: Work by Ruby Neri, Julia Haft-Candell, Didi Rojas and Woody De Othello. Credit Clockwise from top left: courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, photo: Lee Thompson; courtesy of Parrasch Heijnen Gallery; courtesy of Didi Rojas; courtesy of Jessica Silverman Gallery

More than sewing, flower-arranging or zine-making, clay might offer the perfect antidote to modern times. Hyper-tactile, it taps into a primal desire to shape earth — what the potter and writer Edmund de Waal has described as thinking through the hands — and is beloved for its immediacy. “You move and the clay moves with you,” says Aneta Regel, who was a finalist for this year’s Loewe Craft Prize and who, 12 years after graduating from London’s Royal College of Arts, now finds her works — lumpy, funky, cooked until cracked — aligned with a prevailing taste for artfully imperfect handwork, more generally, and for ceramics, in particular. If it is unsurprising to find mounting evidence of the trend on Instagram and at lifestyle-leaning boutiques like Samuji in New York and CristaSeya in Paris, it is notable that clay’s proliferation has, over the past decade, extended to the fine art world, which has long been wary of the material, widely considered to be lowly, functional and inexpensive. One of de Waal’s early teachers liked to say that his pots “had to be cheap enough to drop,” a condition that recalls the train tracks around Kolkata, India, strewn with shards of terracotta as a result of riders’ tossing their empty cups of chai out the window.



Betty Woodman, “Striped Napkin Holder,” 1983. Credit Courtesy of Charles Woodman/The Estate of Betty Woodman and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles; photo: Thomas Müller

That has not been the attitude taken at recent art fairs. At Frieze New York last month, Matthew Marks Gallery showed a speckled and contorted coil by the ceramic artist Ken Price, while Parrasch Heijnen showed craggy forms by Julia Haft-Candell, one of Price’s artistic heirs. On the walls of Martos Gallery’s booth were paintings by Dan Asher; in the center, several small sculptures of his — modest unglazed stacks of what looked to be clay scraps. A low-slung table at the Blum & Poe booth was set as if for coffee with friends — or, dare I say, a craft fair — with pretty but plain-looking mugs and bowls by J.B. Blunk. In a way, it was among the most provocative displays at an event so focused on remarkably high prices, underscoring how, by placing ceramic works in this context, these artists and gallerists are not merely signaling a stylistic shift, but asking age-old questions about what qualifies as art.

Of course, plenty of modern artists have at least dabbled in ceramics — most of the Fauves took a turn painting on pitchers and platters, and then there are the several thousand ceramic works by Picasso, from plates with faces to vases with tails, some of which were recently on view at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art outside Copenhagen. As Picasso worked in Vallauris, France, an emerging band of California sculptors (Viola Frey, Peter Voulkos, John Mason) made strides in establishing clay as a primary fine art medium. As did Betty Woodman, who started out as a “precocious studio potter,” says Stuart Krimko, the research and editorial director at David Kordansky Gallery, which works closely with the artist’s estate, and who ended up being the first living woman to have a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art — in 2006. Woodman struggled for most of her career to be taken seriously, in part because she was a woman, in part because she worked in a medium that was relegated to the realm of decorative arts, but her work resisted easy classification. (Krimko mentions her “sort of proto-pillow pitchers that she dubbed erotic burritos.”) According to the sculptor Arlene Shechet, a friend of Woodman’s and a witness to her ongoing frustration with her lack of acceptance, “She’d ask me, ‘Why should we agree to be in any of these ceramic shows?’”

Perhaps thanks to battles already waged, today’s contemporary artists seem to be relatively free of hang-ups about turning to clay. In addition to planning a coming retrospective of Woodman’s work, David Kordansky recently exhibited a series of large-scale pots by Ruby Neri depicting naïvely painted female nudes, their breasts in relief and their ponytails doubling as handles. Neri, whose father is the Bay Area sculptor Manuel Neri, trained in painting at U.C.L.A. in the late ’90s and transitioned to making fully ceramic works around 2015. “At first, I didn’t know if I could overcome ceramics’ heavy-handed history,” she says. “And I’d sort of pooh-poohed ceramics in grad school, like a teenager rebelling against their parents, but once I crossed over I realized it allowed me to shed all this debris, like fabricating armatures to put other material on top of, and focus on the enjoyable aspects of making work.” She considers the move a breakthrough, but says she does not feel inclined to push clay to its technical limits, as a traditional ceramist might.



From left: Ruby Neri, “Women with Burdens,” 2018; detail from Woody De Othello’s “At Night I Can’t Sleep,” 2018.
Credit From left: courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. photo Lee Thompson; courtesy of Jessica Silverman Gallery.

Shechet, who makes sculpture in clay as well as in a variety of other mediums, believes there is indeed still a line between fine art and crafts, and that good art is imbued with conceptual rigor and chases a higher aim. “More than any one material, what interests me is making works that are about being human,” says Shechet, whose partly porcelain sculptures will be installed in New York’s Madison Square Park in September. Though one could argue that, especially when compared with, say, bronze, ceramics, these fragile works that can’t help but retain traces of their maker, possess an inherently human quality.

This philosophy pertains to work by a new generation of ceramic artists as well. Didi Rojas, a recent Pratt graduate, experiments with sculpting clay shoes — color-blocked Balenciaga sneakers, pearl-studded Gucci boots — expressly not made for walking. (Some of her latest creations are currently up at Andrew Edlin Gallery on the Bowery in downtown Manhattan and are about to go on view at Fisher Parrish in Brooklyn.) “Shoes are self-portraits of their wearers,” Rojas says, “and I like the idea of making something attainable through material, one made of the very ground we walk on.” Woody De Othello, who graduated from California College of the Arts last year and is set to have a solo show at Jessica Silverman Gallery in San Francisco this September, also uses clay, with all its associations of functionality, to build nonfunctional versions of everyday objects, such as a warped air vent or a blocky TV remote. He hopes that viewers will see themselves in the pieces, which droop downward as if they’ve had a long day, and uses a high-gloss, almost reflective glaze to heighten the effect. “A lot of times when people look at my sculptures,” De Othello says, “they experience a desire to reach out and touch.” Does he allow it? “It’s definitely not allowed.”

Tanner, Leigh, “Mimicking Forms and Gestures: Betty Woodman and Zhao Yang Dual Solo Exhibitions at Chi K11 Art Museum Shanghai,” *CoBoSocial.com*, April 24, 2018

Mimicking Forms and Gestures: Betty Woodman and Zhao Yang Dual Solo Exhibitions at Chi K11 Art Museum Shanghai

Leigh Tanner | April 24, 2018



Courtesy of K11 Art Foundation.

chi K11 art museum is simultaneously presenting House and Universe, distinguished American artist Betty Woodman’s first Asian exhibition, and Ālaya, Chinese artist Zhao Yang’s inaugural individual museum exhibition in mainland China, through June 17, 2018. This unlikely pairing of two solo shows uses the language of “body” and “gesture” as the connective tissue linking the work of two artists of starkly different backgrounds and artmaking practices. Woodman is known for her inspired reimagining of traditional ceramic techniques, while Zhao’s exhibition is made up entirely of figurative paintings. Set on mirror exhibition layouts, the entrance to one solo show leads you through the exit of the other, creating an evenly matched, but disorienting experience for the viewer.

Woodman’s exhibition’s title, House and Universe, is pulled from a chapter title of the same name in French philosopher Gaston Bachelard’s The Poetics of Space. Bachelard’s 1957 book phenomenologically examines architecture through lived experience and context, with the chapter in question depicting the relationship between a “house” and its surroundings. This titular reference nods to Woodman’s relationship with the domestic, specifically the manner in which she uncoupled pottery from its functional existence in the home and forged a practice beyond traditional gender expectations.

Her vivid works brim with references to the art of Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Pierre Bonnard. In her practice, she also drew extensively from the ceramic and visual traditions of China and Japan, as well as ancient Etruria, Greece, Crete and Egypt. The exhibition reflects this by featuring an array of bright colors and tactile elements, all hinting at different visual heritages and drawing the viewer in for a closer look. Much of the work exhibited speaks to the ways in which Woodman engaged with the Western art historical canon, but key pieces such as Kimono Ladies (2015) highlight her interest in Japanese forms. Six anthropomorphised vessels take the form of women draped in kimono-like fabric and grouped as if dancing, showcasing Woodman’s skill as both a painter and a fabricator of organic forms.

House and Universe successfully demonstrates the breadth and innovation of Woodman’s practice by including works that illuminate her ability to defy categorization. From the early 2000s, she started experimenting with integrating paint, canvas, ceramics and other materials into a single work. Paola’s Room, a diptych from 2011, perfectly encapsulates the contrast between the paired two-dimensional canvases, adorned with paint and ceramic cut-outs, and the corporeal earthenware piece positioned at the canvas’s base. The painted, molded and etched curves of the glazed earthenware mimic the shapes on the canvas’s surface. The exhibition also includes artworks such as Aztec Vase and Carpet #4, which is installed on the floor and once again features a mixture of glazed and painted ceramic and canvas, mixing the flatness of the canvas with the three-dimensional edges of the vessel.

The wall text opening the exhibition declares an intention to deconstruct “the development of the artist’s creations,” but as most of the works come from the last decade, the audience gets a better sense of her late-career brilliance rather than the development of her own unique visual language. One exception to this is the inclusion of Easter Egg (1984), part of her well-known Pillow Pitchers series inspired by traditional Etruscan vessels and Chinese porcelain pillows.

Not merely visually enthralling, the end of the exhibition features a rotating loop of videos with documentary footage of Woodman discussing her work and various projects. Bringing to life her creative process, even just a few minutes spent watching serves to illuminate the myriad of visual references she intuitively wove into her works. It also has the advantage of giving viewers the feel of Woodman’s hands in the very ceramic vessels, shapes and cut-outs found in the space.



Betty Woodman, *Kimono Ladies*, 2015. Courtesy of K11 Art Foundation.

Tanner, Leigh, “Mimicking Forms and Gestures: Betty Woodman and Zhao Yang Dual Solo Exhibitions at Chi K11 Art Museum Shanghai,” *CoBoSocial.com*, April 24, 2018



Betty Woodman, *Easter Egg*, 1984. Courtesy of K11 Art Foundation.

House and Universe is made all the more poignant by Woodman’s passing on January 2nd of this year at age 87. Betty Woodman was the first and only living woman artist to be given a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Her significant legacy can be seen in the many young artists working with the visual language she pioneered. The exhibition’s timing is especially apt considering the focus on representation of woman artists at Art Basel Hong Kong in late March, most especially through Asia Art Archive’s invitation of the Guerrilla Girls, an anonymous group of feminist artists using humor to expose inequality in the art world. For this iteration of the prominent art fair, the artists took the opportunity to divulge the abysmal statistics regarding the participation of woman artists in Hong Kong’s art scene and the fair itself.

In contrast to the kinesthetic works of Woodman, Zhao Yang’s Ālaya consists of 39 paintings created between 2012 and 2017, majority of which appear to feature female figures. The curves of Zhao’s painted forms mimic the arcs of Woodman’s ceramic creations. These formal thematic links point to corresponding visual languages, but the confluence ends there. Zhao’s title is a transliteration of आलय, the Sanskrit word for “storehouse” or “receptacle” derived from Buddhist terminology. The exhibited works “constitute the holistic spiritual world to which the artist aspires while also demonstrating his attempt to inject an effect of stagnation” according to the exhibition’s press release.

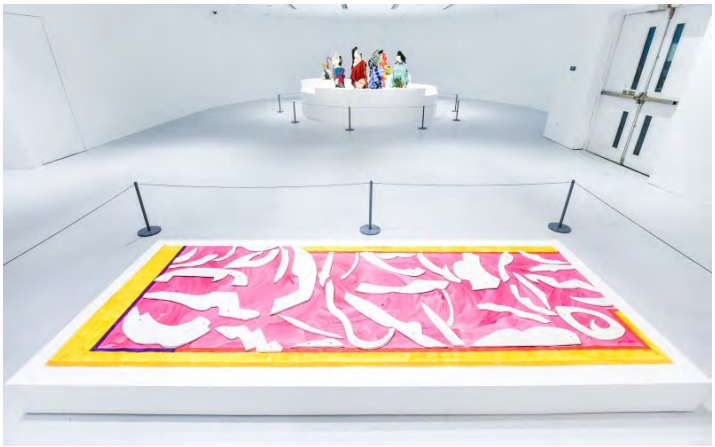
The muted palette and reiterative nature of his paintings speak to a form of meditative practice. One such striking a series consists of paintings of varying sizes which all include a mermaid-like female figure reclining on her side near or in the ocean. In The Tears of the Mermaid (2015), she appears to have no arms and is suspended on a white background, blue cubes, as if geometrically contorted bubbles, emanating from her wake. Whereas The Daughter of the Sea (2015) features the figure with her back to the viewer lying on a beach under a pale sky, the coloring rendering her near disappearance into the rocks and sand around her. Vague (2015) replicates this same posture only with coarser brushstrokes and a deep mauve palette, a less peaceful imagining of the moment.

Zhao’s paintings continually investigate the human body and our relationships both to our own forms and each other. Figures are found in pairs or alone, abstracted or in detail. They either float in space or stand firmly in the landscape of his devising. And yet, they are bound by the artist’s interest in the hybrid between reality and fiction, myth and history, Eastern and Western fairy tales. This commitment to the exploration of form mimics Woodman’s own aptitude for deconstructing and composing gesture, the most compelling dialogue that ties these two artists work together.

About the artists:

Betty Woodman has been inventing and re-inventing new and traditional forms, producing exuberant, brightly colored, and witty works since the early 1950s. During the Pattern and Decoration movement in the ’70s, her career gained the momentum it has had ever since. This was the year she invented one of her most acclaimed works, the Pillow Pitcher, in which she crafted a vessel out of a bulbous shape pinched at both ends like a pillow. She also produces painterly wall pieces and large-scale installations, platters, and, most enduringly, vases in an endless array of styles, ranging from human figures to eccentrically concocted, multi-sided Cubist abstractions. The artistic traditions of Italy and the Mediterranean region inform Woodman’s work, which is also marked by Chinese and Modernist influences, and the ebullience of her unbounded approach.

Zhao Yang, born in Jilin province, 1970 and graduated from the China Academy of Art in 1995. Currently lives and works in Beijing. Recent exhibition include: Zhao Yang: In Between, Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, TNUA, Taipei (2016); ‘Zao’ by ZHAO Yang, ShanghART, Shanghai (2016); China 8, Contemporary Art from China at the Rhine and Ruhr, Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg(2015); Une histoire: art, architecture, design des années 1980 à nos jours, Collections contemporaines, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France(2015); Semi-automatic Mode 2, ShanghART Beijing, Beijing (2014); A Mirags Similar Truth Trugbild, ZHAO Yang Solo Exhibition, Galerie Eigenheim, Weimar, German (2013); The Battomless Pit, ZHAO Yang Solo Exhibition, Upto Art Space, Shanghai (2012); Sparkling Signpost, ZHAO Yang’s Solo Exhibition, Mouart, Beijing (2012); Jungle: A Close-Up Focus on Chinese Contemporary Art Trends, Platform China, Beijing (2010); BLADE – Reconstruct Leifeng Pagoda, SZ Art Center, Beijing (2009) etc.



Installation View of the exhibitions. Courtesy of K11 Art Foundation.

Jie, Wang, “Art space pays tribute to iconic American artist,” *Shine.cn*, March 27, 2018

Art space pays tribute to iconic American artist

By Wang Jie | March 27, 2018



Photo Credit: Ti Gong

The chi K11 art museum is exhibiting the works of renowned American artist Betty Woodman for the first time in Asia.

“House and Universe” features a variety of Woodman’s mixed-media works from the past decade, including sculptures, triptych vases, large installations and canvas pieces, in addition to some of her earlier works.

The artist, born in 1930, died in January 2018 of natural causes.

Woodman became “fascinated with the magic of ceramic glaze” in her school days. And she was the first living female artist featured as a subject of a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2006. Her artistic earthenware creations are a vast departure from the daily functionality associated with pottery. She managed to break away from the inevitable connection between household containers and domestic life, in turn redefining people’s impressions of women and their traditional roles within the home.

Woodman’s works leverage the spirit of regional cultures through a multiple of historical eras through the use of clay. They embody the traditions of ancient Crete, Egypt, Greece and Etruria, as well as featuring the styles of Baroque architecture and artists such as Pierre Bonnard, Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse.

Woodman has also been inspired by China’s Tang Dynasty tri-color glazed ceramics and kimonos of Japan that fuse the planarity of the second dimension with the tangibility of the third to create the technical clay of contemporary art. At the exhibition, K11 has specifically established a women’s festival “I AM WHO I AM” and a spring-themed event “Metamorphosis” in which the art space has been “dressed up” into a butterfly-esque museum in order to pay tribute to the artist on behalf of all women. There are not only real butterflies and butterfly decorations, but also the installation work “The Butterfly Lion” created by Chinese contemporary artist Zhou Li.

Using stainless steel and other metallic materials, the work depicts the graceful lightness of butterflies, suggesting that the butterfly undergoes a sublimation of life after emerging from its infant stage. Meanwhile, a number of exclusive butterfly products will also be launched, including “The Sound of Me,” a limited-edition hand crank music box with visuals specially designed by Icelandic artist Kristjana S. Williams. Visitors can convert their names or whatever they would like to express into a butterfly pattern on punched paper tape that the music box will play as their own personal melodies.



Photo Credit: Ti Gong

Sandomir, Richard, "Betty Woodman, Who Spun Pottery Into Multimedia Art, Dies at 87," *NYTimes.com*, January 5, 2018

The New York Times

Betty Woodman, Who Spun Pottery Into Multimedia Art, Dies at 87

Richard Sandomir | January 5, 2018



Betty Woodman in her Manhattan studio in 2006, the year a retrospective of her work appeared in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Credit Nicole Bengiveno/The

Betty Woodman, a sculptor who took an audacious turn when she began to transform traditional pottery, her usual medium, into innovative multimedia art, moving her work from kitchen cupboard shelves to museum walls, died on Tuesday in Manhattan. She was 87. Her son, Charles, said the cause was pneumonia.

Ms. Woodman's evolution from artisan to fine artist culminated in a retrospective in 2006 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, its first for a living female artist. "I am coming out of left field," she told The New York Times when the exhibition opened. "They don't know what they've got hold of."

One of the 70 works in the show, "The Ming Sisters," is a nearly three-foot-high triptych of cylindrical vases arranged side by side — each with irregular, winged cutouts — that depict Asian women in gowns on one side and brightly colored paintings of vases on the other. Reviewing the show for The Times, the critic Grace Glueck wrote that the "sharply outlined spaces between the figures, ghostly gray intrusions, play an important part in the presentation of the figures." Another work in the retrospective was "Aeolian Pyramid," which reflects Ms. Woodman's late-in-life shift to very large installations of ceramics, some of them fused with paintings. "Aeolian," which comprises 44 pedestal-mounted vase shapes, gradually tiers upward in a dramatic, pyramidal design. "The composite keeps squeezing out real space, which keeps muscling back in," the critic Peter Schjeldahl wrote in his review in The New Yorker. "The result is a visual 'Hallelujah Chorus.' " He added: "At the age of 76, she is beyond original, all the way to sui generis."

Using clay as her primary medium, Ms. Woodman's vividly colored ceramics drew on innumerable influences, including Greek and Etruscan sculpture, Italian Baroque architecture, Tang dynasty glaze techniques, Egyptian art and Islamic tiles. They also evoked paintings by Picasso, Bonnard and Matisse. "You should be able to think of Matisse," she told the Canadian newspaper The Globe and Mail in 2011, "but hopefully you don't stop there; you realize that it makes a reference, but it goes beyond." Ms. Woodman — usually attired in a kerchief, a boldly striped dress and wildly patterned stockings — worked at her potter's wheels and kilns at her studios in Boulder, Colo., the Chelsea section of Manhattan, and Antella, Italy.

Her husband, George, a painter and photographer, died last March; her son is an electronic artist, and her daughter, Francesca, was a photographer whose erotic and melancholy pictures won her acclaim before she committed suicide in 1981, when she was 22. "She just emotionally fell apart," Ms. Woodman said in Scott Willis's documentary film "The Woodmans" (2010), which explored George and Betty Woodman's fierce devotion to art. "I don't know why. Maybe I've been an absolutely horrible mother. I can't go back and rewrite it, and I don't really think it's true." In the months after her daughter's death, Ms. Woodman said, she began to shift from making functional pottery to creating the idiosyncratic vessels — like pillow-shaped pitchers — that altered her career.
"How did I deal with the guilt?" she asked in the film. "I tried to stay away from it. Because I think there's no way to deal with it."



"The Ming Sisters" is a triptych of cylindrical vases that features paintings of Asian women in gowns on one side and paintings of vases on the other. Credit Salon 94

Sandomir, Richard, "Betty Woodman, Who Spun Pottery Into Multimedia Art, Dies at 87," *NYTimes.com*, January 5, 2018



Ms. Woodman and her husband, George, a painter and photographer, in 2011. He died last March.

She was born Elizabeth Abrahams on May 14, 1930, in Norwalk, Conn., and moved frequently with her family around New England. Her father, Henry, was a supermarket worker and woodworker who built bookcases and cabinets; her mother, the former Minnie Koffman, was a secretary. In seventh grade, fed up with the sewing and cooking classes that girls were relegated to, Betty successfully petitioned her junior high school principal to let her take wood shop, where she learned to turn wooden bowls on a lathe.

While still in school, during World War II, she also made model airplanes, including a Messerschmitt, for air-raid wardens to use to identify German aircraft, she told the Archives of American Art in an interview in 2003. As a high school student in Newton, Mass., she was seduced by clay, fascinated by its versatility. A pitcher was her first creation. After graduating from the School for American Craftsmen at Alfred University, then located in southwestern New York State (it later moved to the Rochester Institute of Technology), she began her pottery career in earnest, making things for people to use. "Functional ware was everything," Charles Woodman said in a telephone interview. "Cups, plates, saucers, bowls, large salad bowls, bowls to eat cereal out of. You could get an entire table setting of Betty's."

He added, "When I was a child, we'd have pottery sales twice a year in the front of our house in Boulder." But making pottery that landed in cupboards and not museums was not enough for her. "I was always interested in my work being seen in a broader context," Ms. Woodman told The Guardian in 2016, when an exhibition of her work, "Theater of the Domestic," opened at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. That show focused on what she had done since the Met retrospective. One piece, "The Summer House," a four-panel, 28-foot-long still life, demonstrated how far she had come from making functional pottery. In pink, green, gray, blue and yellow hues, Ms. Woodman depicted a cheerful room with ceramics, or shards of them, and a wooden shelf attached to the canvas. Three small vases sit on the shelf, and a diptych of vases rests on the floor in front of the painting. "With their ear-like handles and dark peripheries, they might be items of Etruscan pottery," Rob Sharp wrote in his review of the show on the website Artsy. "But they are flattened and distorted, their properties bent out of shape, lending the impression of a theatrical set or frieze."

"The Summer House," a four-panel, 28-foot-long still life, with ceramics attached to canvas, demonstrated how far Ms. Woodman had come from making functional pottery. The time-honored vase remained central to the work of Ms. Woodman, who, Ms. Glueck wrote in 2006, "brought it to spectacular new life in contemporary art."

For Ms. Woodman, "the vase is the archetypal ceramic object," she told the curator of the London show during an interview. She added: "The vase is also a symbol for a figure, a woman. Metaphorically, it's a container; it has that connection for everyone."



Betty Woodman at work in her studio in New York in 2014.

“Betty Woodman (1930–2018),” *Artforum.com*, January 3, 2018

ARTFORUM

Betty Woodman (1930–2018)

January 3, 2018

Artist Betty Woodman, a sculptor known for ceramic works that are playful yet rigorous combinations of, among other things, Etruscan sculpture, Egyptian art, Sèvres porcelain, and Henri Matisse, has died.

Woodman was born in Norwalk, Connecticut in 1930. She described her first encounter with clay in a high school art class, according to an interview with Priscilla Frank in the Huffington Post, as “sort of like magic . . . We were given some clay and using our hands we could just make it into a shape. The first thing I ever made was a pitcher. As far as I was concerned that was what I wanted to do. It fell into my hands.” She studied pottery at Alfred University’s School for American Craftsmen, graduating in 1950. In 1952 Woodman traveled to Italy, where traditional forms of earthenware, such as majolica, made a deep impression upon her. Since then, she had spent a portion of every year living there with her husband, the artist George Woodman, who died last March. (The Woodmans are a famous artist family: Their daughter, the late Francesca Woodman, was a photographer; their son, Charles Woodman, who is still living, is an electronic artist. A documentary about the clan, The Woodmans, was released in 2010.)

Betty Woodman has had numerous solo exhibitions throughout the United States and Europe, including “Florentine Interiors” (2017) at Galerie Hubert Winter in Vienna; “Theatre of the Domestic” (2016) at the ICA in London; “Interior Views” (2014) at Galerie Francesca Pia in Zurich; and “Of Botticelli” (2013) at Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi in Berlin. Her last New York solo exhibition was in 2016 at Salon 94—the gallery represents her—and was titled “Breakfast At The Seashore Lunch In Antella.” “The Art of Betty Woodman,” which opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2006, was the artist’s first retrospective in the US.

“Unfussy but remarkably erudite, her pottery comfortably foregrounds ceramics’ conventions and place within (or outside of) this erstwhile art-historical canon,” said Suzanne Hudson of Woodman’s show at LA’s David Kordansky Gallery for the April 2015 issue of Artforum. “The rigor of Woodman’s engagement with the medium was here belied by the visceral convolutions of color and runny streaks of paint that turn the surface of her vessels into canvaslike grounds.”

Madden, Kathleen, “Betty Woodman,” *Vitamin C*, London and New York: Phaidon, 2017, pp. 294-297

Known as a pioneer who resisted more conventional approaches to ceramics, with a passionate tenacity to explore her medium, for over sixty years Betty Woodman has investigated a variety of techniques to transform clay. At the beginning of her career in the 1950s, what she made was considered craft in opposition to art, but her inventive approach transformed her sensibility, while influencing others, changing the very definition of 'ceramics'. Before her important 2016 exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London (her first solo presentation in the UK), Woodman had a major retrospective at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2006, the first given to a living female artist. Distilling the techniques of clay and kiln firing, Woodman experiments with how the medium intersects with ideas of sculptural form and the art object through questioning conceptual ideas about pots, a universal form that permeates human history.

Woodman has claimed inspiration from Greek, Etruscan and Roman vessels, as well as eighteenth-century porcelain, Chinese Tang dynasty pottery and Japanese Oribe pottery, but she also makes reference to painters ranging from Fra Angelico to Picasso. She believes in material and process as primary and will use whatever is necessary to realize her vision.

Domestic spaces have inspired and been transformed by Woodman's sculptural works, while also contextualizing her clay structures in an intimate situation. Using bold and vibrant colours, she has explored the shape of utilitarian forms such as the vase, but has increasingly become more abstract, producing objects that are related more to a Bonnard painting or a Matisse cutout, referencing the calligraphic quality of the latter's linear shapes. By indicating the domestic, she reflects an emotional state and perspective on the world. *Aeolian Pyramid* (2001/2006) is a phalanx of intrepid vase-like forms, painted with partial depictions of vases and made in misshapen and mismatched combinations. This assemblage of distorted vessels is organized into an orderly pyramid with each row of elements receding from a bulkier array to a slimmer form at top.

The Summer House (2015) is a radical three-dimensional composition where Woodman emphasizes the act of painting in an elongated wall work that incorporates salvage culture by incorporating shards from around her studio. Exuberantly colourful, such works integrate acrylic on canvas with glazed earthenware, depicting a domestic interior as flat and dimensional. The table is skewed at an angle and holds several pieces of pottery not necessarily arranged, but very present. A window and a door open onto, and seem to incorporate, the interior landscape, engaging the tension between two- and three-dimensionality in art. Woodman has famously accentuated decorative patterns making her surfaces into paintings. Above all, she disrupts conventions, while highlighting the scope of what can be achieved with ceramics as a sculptural and painterly engagement.
• Kathleen Madden

Betty Woodman Born 1930, Norwalk, Connecticut. Lives and works in New York and Antella, Italy. Selected Solo Exhibitions: 2016 – 'Breakfast At The Seashore Lunch In Antella', Salon 94 Bowery, New York; 'Theatre of the Domestic', ICA, London; 2015 – Museo Marino Marini, Florence; 'Illusions of Domesticity', David Kordansky, Los Angeles; 2014 – 'Interior Views', Galerie Francesca Pia, Zürich; 2013 – 'Of Botticelli', Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin; 2011 – 'Places, Spaces and Things', Gardiner Museum, Toronto; 2006 – 'The Art of Betty Woodman', The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; 'Theatres of Betty Woodman', Ariana Museum, Geneva, and touring to Museu Nacional do Azulejo, Lisbon. Selected Group Exhibitions: 2017 – 'Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary Art in the Spirit of the Mad Potter', Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, Florida; 2016 – 'Liverpool Biennial', UK; 'The Natural Flow of Things', La Casa Encendida, Madrid; 2014 – '1st Bienial Internacional de Arte Contemporaneo Cartagena de Indias', Colombia; 2012 – 'Playing House', Brooklyn Museum, New York; 2011 – 'Postmodernism: Style and Subversion, 1970–1990', Victoria & Albert Museum, London; 'Paul Clay', Salon 94, New York; 2009 – 'Dirt on Delight: Impulses that Form Clay', ICA, Philadelphia, and touring to Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Betty Woodman



† *The Kitchen Table*, 2014
Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas, wood
160 × 152.4 × 31.8 cm
(63 × 60 × 12½ in)

↗ *Wallpaper #7*, 2014
Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint,
58 individual elements
182.9 × 228.6 cm
(72 × 90 in)

→ *Aeolian Pyramid*, 2001/2006
Glazed earthenware, wood, paint
381 × 426.7 × 254 cm
(150 × 168 × 100 in)

↔ Overleaf:
The Summer House, 2015
Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas, wood
859.8 × 240 × 30.5 cm
(338⅛ × 94½ × 12 in)
Installation view, ICA, London, 2016

Madden, Kathleen, “Betty Woodman,” *Vitamin C*, London and New York: Phaidon, 2017, pp. 294-297





Madden, Kathleen, “Betty Woodman,” *Vitamin C*, London and New York: Phaidon, 2017, pp. 294-297



Betty Woodman

Madden, Kathleen, “Betty Woodman,” *Vitamin C*, London and New York: Phaidon, 2017, pp. 294-297



Panicelli, Ida, “Betty Woodman,” *Artforum.com*, Critics’ Picks, November 6, 2017

ARTFORUM

Rome

Betty Woodman

GALLERIA LORCAN O’NEILL
Vicolo dei Catinari 3
October 20–November 18



Betty Woodman, *Outside and In*, 2017, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas, wood, 75 1/2 x 119 x 10 1/2”

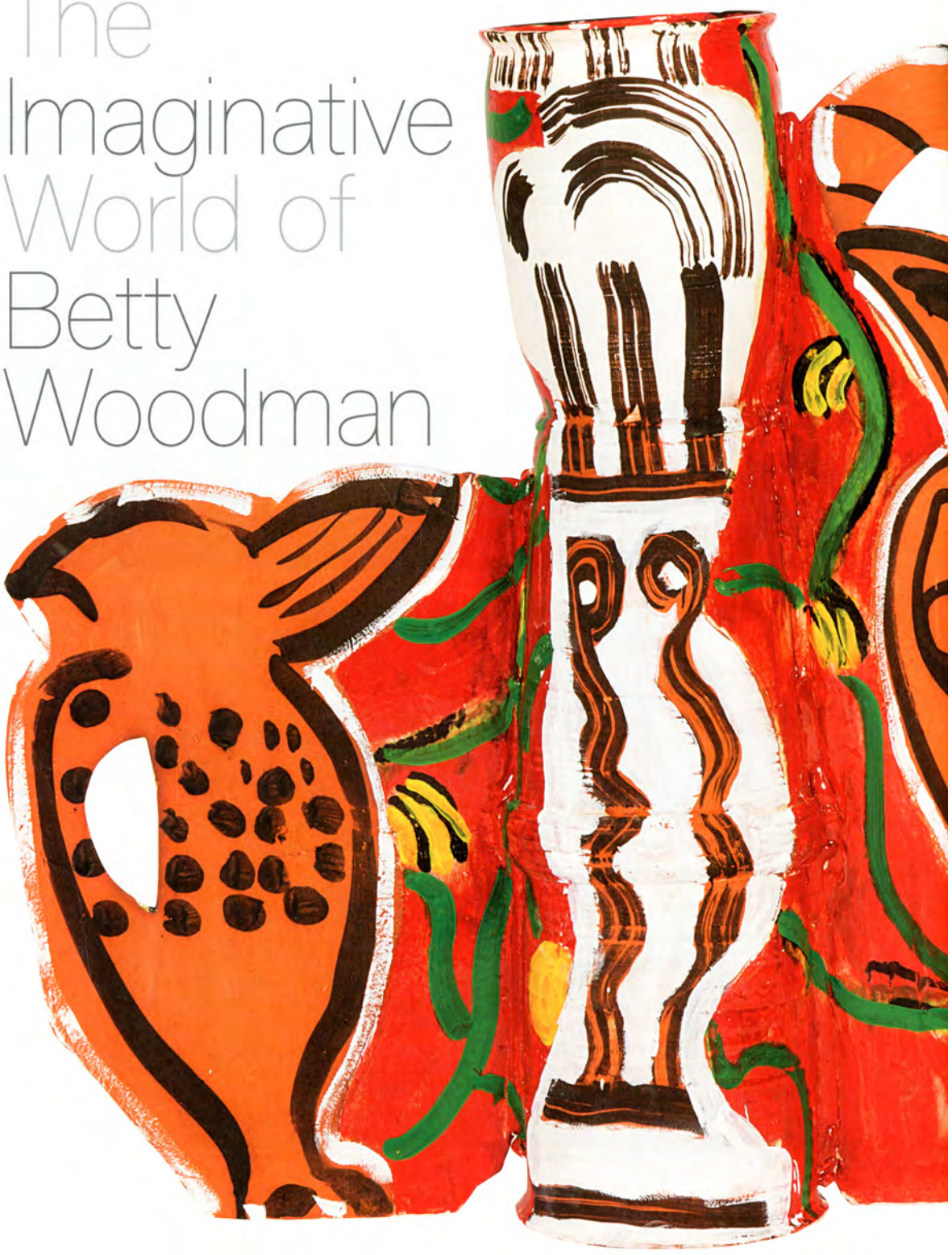
In recent works claiming both the territory of painting and sculpture, Betty Woodman pushes the boundaries of her chosen medium, ceramics, and her work seems here fresher and freer than ever. The artist challenges notions of likeness, mixing real objects and their representations, always maintaining her sense of humor on high frequencies. Her signature vases, plates, and pitchers dialogue with painted trompe l’oeil interiors: Sitting in the round on shelves, the vases appear again on the canvas as two-dimensional shapes, or even as their own incongruously painted shadows. In one of her most compelling works, *Country Dining Room*, 2015, a painted table rendered with a striking diagonal inclination juts out on its lower end into three dimensions, becoming a pedestal for glazed jars, while flat ceramic cups and plates appear on its checkered tablecloth. Our focus needs to adjust to a constant play between foreground and background in order to reconstruct the objects and make sense of their distorted proportions. The spatial complexity of these compositions is even more acute in *Outside and In*, 2017. Woodman lets ceramic shards seemingly fly away on the wall, denying the limitations of the canvas and of gravity, and taking possession of the surrounding space with a dash of bravery.

Woodman has never been so daring: Her idiosyncratic point of view skews into puzzling perspectives, causing raised floors, walls, and doors to intersect at unnatural angles. We peer into her joyfully colored domestic interiors, but it’s like looking into rooms that Matisse painted under the influence of a hallucinatory drug. It’s a roller coaster for the eyes, but a pleasant one for sure.

— Ida Panicelli

Essner, Elizabeth, “The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman,” *Modern Magazine*, Summer 2017, pp. 82-89

The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman



Essner, Elizabeth, “The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman,” *Modern Magazine*, Summer 2017, pp. 82-89



ELI PING PHOTO

On the Way to Mexico by Betty Woodman, 2012. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, and acrylic paint.

By Elizabeth Essner

THE WORK OF BETTY WOODMAN is at once classical and convention-defying. A bold-faced name in the overlapping worlds of art and ceramics, Woodman boundlessly explores the domestic. The vessel is her subject, muse, and primary form. Over the course of a six-decade career, her use of clay has grown to incorporate a host of other materials and approaches, as she made a purposeful transformation from postwar production potter, making pots for the home, to celebrated artist, making pieces about pots for the home.

Meeting Woodman in her Chelsea loft and studio makes it clear that her work and life are intertwined. Everything in her world comes from the same impulse: the color on the walls, her carefully chosen coffee cup, her signature striped dress, paired with gridded socks and yellow sneakers. “Domestic activities are sort of clues for me,” she explains.

Home is not only the Manhattan loft but also a Tuscan farmhouse that she and her late husband, artist George Woodman, who died earlier this year, have owned for nearly half a century. Indeed, she first spoke to me by phone from her studio there in the olive-groved foothills of Antella, just beyond Florence. “It’s nice to belong after living here for fifty years,” she told me, pausing to whisper a greeting in Italian to a just-arrived guest.

Essner, Elizabeth, "The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman," *Modern Magazine*, Summer 2017, pp. 82-89

She explains that for a long time, "I wasn't really accepted as an artist here—partly because I'm a woman, partly because I'm a foreigner, and partly because I work with ceramics." But, as of late, that has changed.

As is evident from many a museum exhibition roster these days, we are in a moment of art historical rediscovery, with women artists and ceramics at the forefront. For Woodman, this has created a curious juxtaposition: she is simultaneously a major figure and a bit of a novel talent. In the United States, she has been a part of the larger conversation all along, intersecting with the Pattern and Decoration movement in the late 1970s, and then represented by the genre-bending Chelsea gallery of Max Protetch for more than two decades. In 2006 the Metropolitan Museum of Art organized a retrospective of her art, its first for both a living ceramist and for a living woman artist.

Although she has always had an international presence, for European audiences Woodman is still something of "a new figure in the contemporary context," says Vincenzo de Bellis, curator of *Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic*, the first solo museum exhibition of the artist's work in Italy and the U. K. Taking a different format in each of its two locales, the highly praised show highlighted Woodman's innovations over the last ten years. While





Ceramic Pictures of Korean Paintings, 2002. Glazed earthenware, clay, and canvas. From left to right the vessels are: ***Rose Lattice Tree Vase, Tiger Lily Tree Vase, Evergreen Tree Vase, Lotus Tree Vase, Camellia Tree Vase.***

Rose et Noir Pillow Pitcher, 1989. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, and paint.

CHRISTOPHER BURKE PHOTOS

Essner, Elizabeth, "The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman," *Modern Magazine*, Summer 2017, pp. 82-89



her work has often resisted definition, de Bellis likens her method to collage in three dimensions. He sees "Betty's work as a reflection of painting in whatever she does, whether it is ceramic or flat work on canvas—everything is color and composition."

Woodman forthrightly says her inspiration "comes more directly from other works of art." As a result, her pieces leap across art history, pulling from everywhere: Matisse, Tang Dynasty decoration, Renaissance painting, Islamic art. Woodman synthesizes all of them in her work, which is instantly recognizable as hers alone.

Theatre of the Domestic originated in 2015 at the Museo Marino Marini in Florence. There, Woodman's work was shown in the former church alongside that of the museum's namesake sculptor, Marino Marini—two modern approaches that embrace the classical. Fittingly, the museum is not far from Antella, making Woodman's Italian debut a long-awaited homecoming. At the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, the show featured *The Summer House*, a twenty-eight-foot-long still life of changing perspectives. In the piece, vessels become flat, winged, patterned, and plain—or cloudy incantations on canvas. The Mediterranean sun abounds, making the work feel as effortless as it is complex. Notably, *The Summer House* also illustrates Woodman's library of influences—the distinctive wash of yellow hints at the palette of Fra Angelico, the table nods to the paintings of Pierre Bonnard.

As she describes it, her "long love affair with Italy" began just after World War II when, Woodman says, there was "a sense that maybe you could do anything." After studying ceramics at the School for American Craftsmen in western New York, she made her way to Florence. She found a job by knocking on the door of a pottery

Essner, Elizabeth, “The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman,” *Modern Magazine*, Summer 2017, pp. 82-89



Essner, Elizabeth, “The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman,” *Modern Magazine*, Summer 2017, pp. 82-89



MARK BLOWER PHOTO

The Summer House, 2015. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas, and wood.

Essner, Elizabeth, “The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman,” *Modern Magazine*, Summer 2017, pp. 82-89



studio started by painter Giorgio Ferrero, with sculptor Leonello Fallacara making the forms. Woodman joined the studio for nearly a year, working with the material she still favors: humble glazed earthenware, which she has compared to fabric for its fluidity and immediacy. Of the artists at the workshop she says, “They didn’t know anything about the rules and I knew all the rules. And then I realized, maybe the rules were just there to be broken.”

Woodman has not only broken the rules, she’s rewritten them. “There’s no point in making work where I know what the solution is,” she says. “I have to be reaching for something that I’m not sure about.” The Pillow Pitcher form is an early example, a voluptuous pouring vessel that stands just outside of function. “If one goes to the Islamic section of the Met, there are all these beautiful pitchers,” she says. “In a way, the Pillow Pitcher became a vehicle for capturing the essence of those pitchers. I started to make a reference to their handles and spouts. My Pillow Pitchers also became a very nice surface, big enough for me to paint on and play with.”

Today, this act of making continues to lead Woodman’s way. “It’s during the process that my ideas are formed,” she explains. For example, she began to paint on canvas with the 2002 installation *Ceramic Pictures of Korean Paintings*. The piece originally required clay-painted walls, but canvas became her solution after a New Year’s Eve spent washing the clay off a photographer’s studio walls. In turn, an architectural commission set just below a skylight at the American Embassy in Beijing led Woodman to use acrylic paint on the canvas instead of clay, since the latter could wash away with a ceiling leak. “That, of course, opened up an enormous possibility of color,” she says. “I think this has something to do with my training as a craftsperson. The practical issues become part of the process.”

Woodman’s recent Wallpaper series began as glazed ceramic castoffs meant as wall-hung parting gifts for visitors to her exhibition at Salon 94, the New York gallery that now respresents her work. But when she saw the pieces together, she fell in love with the installation. Although she made good on her promise to send what she has called “spare parts” home with her audience, the format has since become a new body of work.

Today, Woodman’s restless energy crackles against her insights, well-earned at the age of eighty-seven. For some, this moment would be a time to slow down, to look back, to take stock. Instead, Woodman is looking forward. As we stand in her New York studio, she maps out her newest series, Courtyards, already creating another insight into her ever-creative world. M

Essner, Elizabeth, “The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman,” *Modern Magazine*, Summer 2017, pp. 82-89





Clockwise from top:
Wallpaper #9, 2015. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, and acrylic paint.

Aztec Vase and Carpet #8, 2015. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint, and canvas.

Roman Girls, 2008. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, and paint.





JEFF ELSTONE PHOTOS (2) PING PHOTO

Hudson, Suzanne, “Making, Using,” *Theater of the Domestic*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016, pp. 10-18

Making, Using

Suzanne Hudson

Hudson, Suzanne, “Making, Using,” *Theater of the Domestic*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016, pp. 10-18

In 1950 Betty Woodman began working with clay, and she has since been identified with the medium, if in different ways. Writing on the occasion of her exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 2006, Janet Koplos described the arc of Woodman's career as one marked by a progression from production pottery to clay-based fine art: "She has gradually shifted from daily use to special use to symbolic, almost ritual use."[01] Ceramics remain the constant: the history of their design, forms, and imagery; their making, distribution, and employ; and their unstable and period-specific categorical assignations within and outside of art historical canons. Duly impressed by Woodman's avid assimilation of so much material culture, most writers on the artist offer a litany of exemplars for her unfussy but remarkably erudite pieces, with reiterations of precedents in Minoan, Egyptian, Greek, and Etruscan art, as well as Tang dynasty and Japanese Oribe glazes and Sèvres porcelain. As metonyms for the bodies that have used such vessels, her pieces are often vertical. They may stand in for a human or animal body, which they often figure with varying degrees of mimeticism: consider for example the fabric-swathed *Kimono Ladies* (2015), the contours of the model filling out *Green Nude* (2007), or so many instances of would-be figures rising out of open bivalves like abstract Venuses.

But these same vessels also became the literal ground on which Woodman experiments with painting, meaning that such an already-capacious list of references swelled to include the paintings of Pierre Bonnard, Pablo Picasso, and Henri Matisse, among others. Thus could Barry Schwabsky take the same retrospective as an occasion to discuss Woodman's work in relation to modernist painting as "the terrain . . . on which the force of [her] art has asserted itself most saliently."[02] And in the years since, Woodman has literalized the role of her clay forms as supports for her painting. To the slabs worked on the wheel, Woodman inscribes a spiral with her finger, the index and indentation of which remains legible in the final object. Like the tooth of a canvas weave that registers through the coats brushed atop it, this arabesque insinuates itself in the final composition, though sometimes the design – applied without regard for parity with the underlying form – might or might not follow the clay. For in addition to the purposive and deeply considered thrown forms that remain a hallmark of her work, Woodman's pottery comfortably foregrounds her engagement with its surface, which sometimes flaunts such runny applications of color as to appear a representation of a radically self-reflexive performance of its having been painted.

While this interest – or the critical recognition of this interest – has intensified in recent years, it in fact carries forth a process begun some decades ago. Woodman initially left it to her husband, George, to adorn the pots that she threw in a mutually determining division of labor. In the early 1970s he stopped doing this decoration, and she for a time left the results as they were. Then, Woodman began to lavish upon them geometric fields, loose translucent marks, and visceral convolutions of hyper-saturated palettes. This shift in making and its attendant exhibition protocols happened alongside a nascent and then more fully articulated feminist appropriation of marginalized

01
Janet Koplos, "Echoes and Shadows," in *Betty Woodman* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2006), 23.

02
Barry Schwabsky, "Betty Woodman and Modernist Painting: Beginnings," in ibid., 39.

Hudson, Suzanne, “Making, Using,” *Theater of the Domestic*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016, pp. 10-18



12 **Venus #7: Homey, 2014** Size: 36.5 x 14.75 x 6 in (92.7 x 37.5 x 15.2 cm)
Materials: glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, cement

Hudson, Suzanne, “Making, Using,” *Theater of the Domestic*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016, pp. 10-18

or more overtly denigrated cultures, media, and characteristics: “Africans, Orientals, Persians, Slovaks, peasants, the lower classes, women, children, savages . . . sensuality, pleasure, decadence, chaos, anarchy, impotence, exotica, eroticism, artifice, tattoos, cosmetics, ornament, decoration, carpets, weaving, patterns, domesticity, wallpaper, fabrics and furniture.”[03] For Woodman, as for many other artists working at this time in the increasingly attenuated shadow of the prominent critic Clement Greenberg, who espoused an influential vision of an autonomous modern art, critical scorn became the basis for an affirmative production that welcomed the applied arts with all their implications of domesticity.

Alienated – or simply bored – by the officious classicism of Minimalism and emboldened by liberation politics, those involved in the *Womanhouse* exhibition, organized by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro in Los Angeles in 1972, to a person insisted upon the imbrication of art and life. Here, painting on canvas, instead of being the default, was but an option to be mined alongside other media and handicraft traditions. In New York, the gallerist Holly Solomon supported artists associated with Pattern and Decoration, a group including not only women such as Schapiro, Joyce Kozloff, and Valerie Jaudon – authors of the above enumeration of once-taboo mentions – but also men such as Robert Kushner, Kim MacConnel, and Robert Zakanitch. These artists believed that designs sourced from quilts, mosaics, and textiles could serve the purposes of ambitious art. They draped paintings with swags of fabric, covered them in hearts and flowers, and decked them out in colors sometimes so exuberant as to seem nearly hallucinogenic. In so doing, they further challenged the long-standing consideration of femininity as the purview of the cosmetic, an old opposition between the Rubenistes and the Poussinistes (the camps in the seventeenth-century Paris Académie who respectively privileged color and line). The seductions of pigment, applied after the tensile pictorial scaffold was, as it were, erected, came to be associated with feminine guiles, and were considered suspect for their perceived superficiality relative to the intellectual rigor of the underlying structure.[04]

Woodman was thus not alone in borrowing a range of stylistic and iconographic elements, or in refusing to apologize for subjective, inevitably gendered, investments in her forms. Indeed, the shift to embrace a wider array of resources was if not ubiquitous then at least widespread. And yet the difference between Woodman and her peers is important: what constituted a reclamation for others (who regularly began in painting and left it behind or corrupted it from within) was something more like a confirmation for Woodman, who “could recognize such strategies previously less common in the history of Western painting, as endemic to the tradition of ceramics.”[05] As it happened, within a decade of Woodman’s commencing to paint her own pots in the 1970s, she began to show at Max Protetch in New York, a gallery known for emphasizing art that crossed architecture, craft, and design. This meant that what was “endemic to ceramics” became part of larger conversations about contemporary art at the moment of its increasing pluralism and embrace of interdisciplinary practice,

03
Valerie Jaudon and Joyce Kozloff, “Art Hysterical Notions of Progress and Culture,” in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 164.

04
See Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color: Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age*, trans. Emily McVarish (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

05
Schwabsky, “Betty Woodman and Modernist Painting: Beginnings,” 40.

Hudson, Suzanne, “Making, Using,” *Theater of the Domestic*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016, pp. 10-18

citational promiscuity, and transcultural address. Indeed, this contributed to the rise of neoexpressionist painters – Julian Schnabel, Eric Fischl, Francesco Clemente, and so many others – who were active internationally in fine art–oriented galleries and museums. Bolstered by this support, they assumed a prelapsarian attitude, showing little concern for the potent political and social interventions made by the art of the 1970s. Actions such as festooning the canvas with broken crockery achieved the look of spontaneity, and were meant to signify emotional catharsis while appropriating the handmade as parodic excess – an excess specifically keyed to a feminine register, recuperating the position of the woman as emoter but reserving it for male use in the realm of more traditional painting.

Implicated in but not beholden to such fluctuating institutional priorities, which she predated and survived, Woodman has continued to refine the architecture of her clay and the glaze that coats it. Less ideological than pragmatic, Woodman's work evidences a nondogmatic approach to experimentation that is recuperative in its wide sense of the aesthetic. She has taken to including in her arrangements large drawings and paintings of graphite, ink, and lacquer



March 11, #1, 2015 Size: 14 x 17 in (35.6 x 43.2 cm)
Materials: india ink, acrylic paint on sketch paper

with terra sigillata (a slip glaze often used on ancient ceramics) and wax on handmade paper or canvas. Woodman's testing extends to the materials themselves, as the example of the terra sigillata on paper or her use of lacquer paint on earthenware suggests. Such works also emphasize the exigencies that their processes occasion, as in a group of recent drawings resulting from Woodman's analysis of paints: she saved the papers on which she was trying acrylics, and these abstract fields of color became the backgrounds for linear drawings. As with another series of pots marked with the numbers of the glazes that adorn them, these share a sense of collaboration with the circumstances that their instantiation cause.

Pots additionally come to rest upon vibrantly patterned canvas carpets in floor-bound cliques that likewise feature leftover scraps of clay, sometimes unglazed and bonelike. As in the monumental *Wallpaper 9* (2015), the relics may also be tacked to the wall

Hudson, Suzanne, “Making, Using,” *Theater of the Domestic*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016, pp. 10-18



Horizontal Garden, 2005 Installation view in the Great Hall at the Metropolitan Musem of Art, New York
Size: 29 x 32 x 18 in (73.7 x 81.3 x 45.7 cm) Materials: glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint

Hudson, Suzanne, “Making, Using,” *Theater of the Domestic*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016, pp. 10-18

as a frieze or sprawling wallpaper reimagined from these accidental shapes that resulted from the intervals left between the outlines Woodman cut on her first pass. One thing generates another. Old works present future prospects, as when in 2007 Woodman returned to *San Marco* (1989–90), a small Athenian figurine, and coaxed from it a new notion of a winged pot on a wooden base, which became the *Vase Upon Vase* works such as *Vase Upon Vase:*



Vase Upon Vase: Diana, 2009–13
Size: 66.5 x 23 x 17 in (169 x 58 x 43 cm)
Materials: glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, wood

Ariana (2010) and *Vase Upon Vase: Diana* (2009–13). New relationships continue to manifest. Transformation might happen within a single pot, or by virtue of combinations of ceramics grouped into clusters, as in *Amante Triptych* (2007) or *Red, White and Blue Vases* (2013). It might also arise from the meeting of unstretched acrylic paintings together with glazed earthenware and structures that extend out from the wall on wooden shelves, morphing from two dimensions into three (as though redoubling the passage of clay from a flat sheet to a round shape asserting volume). *Country Dining Room* (2015), the first table, pointedly takes the trope of the grid and returns it as a tablecloth, a recurring motif thereafter. These polychrome tableaux exploit illusionism in other ways, chiefly by juxtaposing images of vases, real vases, and shadowlike silhouettes.

As vestibules, Woodman's new rooms extend her large-scale environments of the early 1980s, where she represented arcades and balustrades in immersive installations. *The Red Window* (2014), a Matisse-esque rendering of a salmon-hued chamber with a scarlet aperture, counters Leon Battista Alberti's oft-quoted description of painting as portal: absent of any depiction of the outside world,

Hudson, Suzanne, “Making, Using,” *Theater of the Domestic*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016, pp. 10-18

the black-framed brushy red square stays resolutely on our side of the picture plane. Perspective is further warped in *The Summer House* (2015), a massive four-panel painting with a table at its midline. Like a freestanding vase on the leftmost register that sprouts painted flowers crossed with pinned vines made from remnants, the table juts forward, into real space, bearing a shelf for the display of three pots (a dish and others hang from the vertical surface above). Beneath, painted floorboards converge in what would be the vanishing point were it not so askew. A window offers a self-conscious frame onto a liquefied purple monochrome beside another in kelly green. A door to the far right features baseboards at the same angle at which the central slab is turned, though the jamb is flush to the picture plane.

Woodman's rooms revel in the fundaments of representation. Like a magic trick executed over and again, each performs how a simple diagonal can make space, and also how – as in the case of the conspicuous white profile (paradoxically, it appears like a shadow) in *Nina's Room* (2012) – a flourish of flat, unmodulated material can cancel it. Signs of artifice are omnipresent. And the pots, capable of holding water but refusing to facilitate service, are confirmed as ornamental in this association. Their function, or lack thereof, is by nomination, not design. Or, better, their function is otherwise. There is use and then there is use under the sign of the exhibition, and underscoring this distinction seems to be very much the point. Despite Woodman's maintenance of traditional form, her kraters intended for this destination are never filled with wine. That happens elsewhere, apart from the halls of display, or at least the galleries proper (for the Met, Woodman sited massive vases in the entrance hall, where they enjoyed the accompaniment of tremendous floral bouquets, and her past publications have included photographs of her tables in her New York apartment and Italian home set with pieces of her design, and people eating off them or stuffing them with flowers), where her vases sit on exaggerated plinths, a nomination of belonging in such literally elevated climes. Woodman's recent inventions radicalize this effect of being in our space but apart from our use; we will never sit at her makeshift table or feel her carpets underfoot. These items refer to patterns of sociability, which they model at a purposive remove. As though compensating for their employ remaining only hypothetical, Woodman supplies for them the domestic context to which they might otherwise aspire.

Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn writes: "Betty's vases never conform to what we think of as a vase – even a superb one. Rather they are exaggerated variations on a vase, bettered."[06] This is true whether we encounter them in a kitchen or a Kunsthalle. Irrespective, this exaggeration is a key part of their claim on aesthetic experience as a kind of theater. The discontinuous motifs likewise trigger passage around them. *Vase Upon Vase: Orpheo* (2013), a bubblegum-pink pedestal holding up a kind of monochromatic creamish hinged shell, becomes an orange-tipped fan atop a base of vertical ribbons when seen from the opposite side. *Aztec Vase and Carpet #6 Easter* (2014) appears as a pinwheel plucked from its stick. Viewed from distinct vantages, the work's central element utterly shifts from emerald and citrus lines

06
Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn, "Forward," in *Betty Woodman* (New York: Salon 94 and Skira, 2014), 12.

Hudson, Suzanne, “Making, Using,” *Theater of the Domestic*, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016, pp. 10-18

on one plane to black calligraphy and cornflower-blue polka dots on another. Circumambulation around the work is key, since sides are separated and far from selfsame, each revealing itself in turn. Taken together, the aspects do not coalesce, but show perception to be corporeal, contingent, durational. They force a mode of physical inspection that is forever irresolvable, that will not achieve a gestalt. One is left to synthesize the nature of surface and support, the lateral edges, noncontiguous planes, and their relationships, and so forth – and what all of this has to do with an abstract notion of the form.

These technical-cum-compositional decisions have profound implications for the history of ceramics as a set of habits and conventions as well as chemical reactions and obdurate material realities with which every practitioner must contend. Yet beyond this, both through Woodman's attention to the painted surface and the institutional-categorical vicissitudes that have framed her appearances at decisive moments, her work has entered into, and exerted pressure on, contemporary art as such. This last is a heterogeneous field to be sure, and the point is not that craft finally, as it were, has a place at the table (although it does, but so does everything else). Rather it is that Woodman's keeping hold of the domestic in form and reference through ceramic vessels offers a counternarrative of these same decades from the perspective of a humanist engagement with art that might orient itself less to display than to service. Of course, the former brackets the latter, and this is Woodman's point. It is worth noting that even Greenberg offered advice about how to live with modernist painting that seemed primed for more public destinations. In 1964 he boasted, “Big abstract paintings turn out to be astonishingly easy to live with,” and that one need not worry about “the matching or consistency of color.”[07] This is not to suggest that the paintings' existence at some conceptual remove from the everyday realities of their bourgeois surroundings brackets them from them. Quite the contrary: in their separation from the home, the paintings are functionalized anew as portals. Even for Greenberg, then, at moments, often private, when ensconced within his dwelling and asked to speak about the items assembled therein, art was inextricable from the rest of life. Woodman assumes this. If the rest of us did, she would not need to stage domesticity to make her point, though this limit condition paradoxically has proven especially generative of works that insist upon the pleasure of art making as the precondition for art using.

07
Clement Greenberg, “A Famous Art Critic's Collection” (1960), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 182–83; and Clement Greenberg, “The Clement Greenbergs Who Live with the Abstractions of Contemporary Art,” *Vogue*, January 15, 1964, 92–95.

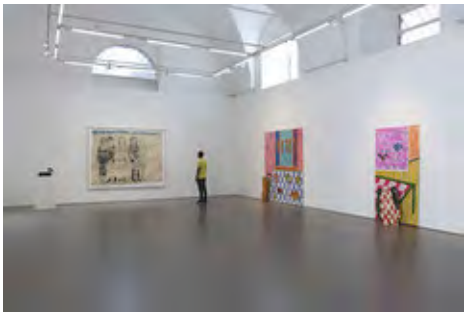
Valacchi, Maria Chiara, “Betty Woodman and Kiki Smith, *Artforum.com*, Critics’ Picks, October 2016

ARTFORUM

Betty Woodman and Kiki Smith

GALLERIA LORCAN O’NEILL
Vicolo dei Catinari 3
September 21–November 19

Exhibiting together for the first time, Betty Woodman and Kiki Smith initiate an intense dialogue through a selection of their large-scale paintings, tapestries, sculptures, and graphics. Along the long walls of the main gallery, Smith’s atonal and transcendent works interface with Woodman’s colorful and flamboyant vision of domestic interiors, creating a complete visual imbalance that dwells, respectively, on natural landscapes and private imaginative spaces.



View of “Kiki Smith and Betty Woodman,” 2016.

Four large canvases by Woodman (*Summer Tea Party*, 2015; *Reversal*, 2016; *Betty’s Room*, 2011; *Table and Rug*, 2016) are characterized by the presence of vases and fabrics created in ceramic; resting on the floor or suspended in the air, they emerge from the pictorial compositions with a powerful chromatic resonance. Two jacquard tapestries by Smith, one depicting a deer (Fortune, 2014) and the other featuring two eagles (*Guide*, 2012), alternate rhythmically with four bronze sculptures depicting three birds of prey (*Roost, Mantle*, and *Perch*, all 2016) as well as a fox (*Visit*, 2014), the latter hovering on a precarious support. These works direct the viewer’s eye toward Smith’s large collage of women, composed on a support of Nepalese paper (*Gathering*, 2014).

The exhibition continues with separate groupings of their work. A series of six still lifes by Woodman, painted in mixed media on paper (dating from the past thirteen years), recall the artist’s early works that emphasize functionality. The show concludes with works by Smith—a new series of works in graphite and gold leaf and a bronze dove in flight. Finally, the gallery’s outdoor atrium contains a bronze bench designed by Woodman (*Bronze Bench #3*, 2003), on which the two artists sat for a photo that was sent to announce this wonderful show.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

— Maria Chiara Valacchi

"The seductive art of Betty Woodman," *Telegraph.co.uk*, July 9, 2016

The Telegraph

The seductive art of Betty Woodman



Betty Woodman with her pottery CREDIT: GRAEME ROBERTSON/EYEVINE

9 JULY 2016 • 8:00AM

Walking into Betty Woodman's loft in New York City is like stepping from a monochrome world into shocking Technicolor. Her spacious studio is full of raucously coloured paintings, to which she has attached flat pieces of fired clay and other three-dimensional elements.

For a moment after entering, I feel dazzled and a little disorientated, as though I have walked into a picture by a great colourist such as Bonnard or Matisse. "I've tried to calm down my colour," says Woodman, an 86-year-old ceramic artist. "But, somehow, it gets out of control. Do you want a cookie?"

She pours coffee from an Italian stove-top pot into cups that she produced in collaboration with the famous French porcelain manufacturer of Sèvres. Mine is decorated with golden polka dots and a splash of lime green. "It's a different experience than drinking out of a paper cup," says Woodman, who in 2006 became the first living female artist to be honoured with a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. "More intimate. I used to have this idea that beautiful things would make people's lives better. I was naive, but I still believe that, I think."

In the wake of Modernism, the pursuit of the straightforwardly beautiful can feel passé – an inadequate ideal for our fractured world. Yet, for six decades now, Woodman has strived to produce objects of exuberant, emphatic beauty, with little purpose beyond enriching the lives of those who encounter them.



Roman Fresco by Betty Woodman CREDIT: BRUNO BRUCHI

"A lot of art is made to raise your consciousness about the horrors of the world," she tells me. "But that isn't what I'm doing. Beauty is a very important part of my work. I want to seduce myself."

Anyone who saw Woodman's recent exhibition at the ICA in London – her first solo show in the UK – will know exactly what she means: it featured her unusually shaped, rowdily painted pots, arranged in gorgeous tableaux. In recent years working with ceramics has become fashionable in contemporary art – from well-known potter-artists such as Grayson Perry, to emerging talents, including Aaron Angell and Rachel Kneebone. As a result, Woodman is, suddenly, very much in vogue. "This fad for

artists to use clay has given me much greater legitimacy in the art world," she says.

Her latest project is a commission for the Liverpool Biennial. An imposing public artwork, it takes the form of an enormous fountain, 50ft across, mounted to the base of a Grade II listed art deco ventilation tower servicing a road tunnel under the River Mersey. Inspired by ancient Egyptian art, as well as baroque Italian architecture, Woodman fashioned the fountain's scrolling, frieze-like forms in clay, before casting them in bronze.

"The plumbing will be on the surface, like a kind of drawing," she explains. "It's a counterpoint to the weight of the bronze. There should be this ballet of water."

Acclaim has not come quickly to Woodman. "It's been a long fight," she tells me, with equanimity. "For years, my work wasn't really looked at."

The child of "free-thinking" second-generation Russian-Jewish immigrants who loved classical music, Woodman "discovered" clay, aged 16, while attending a pottery class at high school in Newton, a suburb of Boston. "I loved it," she recalls. "With clay, you make something out of nothing. It's like magic."

Inspired to become a potter, she attended the School for American Craftsmen, then located at Alfred University in New York state, before travelling to Italy, where she spent a year in the early Fifties working in a pottery in Fiesole. There, she became intoxicated with "the tradition of clay in Mediterranean countries".



Country Dining Room, 2015 by Betty Woodman CREDIT: BRUNO BRUCHI

"It was thrilling to be doing the same thing that had been done since 3,000 BC," she says. The trip also initiated a lifelong "love affair" with Italy: Woodman still spends half of each year there, in a Tuscan farmhouse, 10 miles outside Florence, that she has owned since the late Sixties.

In 1953, Woodman married her boyfriend, George, a painter whom she'd met years before in a pottery class in Boston when he was a philosophy freshman at Harvard. Early in their marriage Woodman worked as a "production potter". "I really didn't have ambition," she says. "George was the artist, I was the potter. I made thousands of functional pots. It was a successful career."

For years, she lived in Boulder, where George taught painting at the University of Colorado (he later became a photographer). To begin with, she entrusted the decoration of her ceramics to her husband. Gradually, though, as she started to consider herself an "artist", she felt frustrated. "Boulder is a nice place to make art, but an impossible place to be an artist," she says. "If you weren't in New York, nobody would look at what you did."

Eventually, in 1980, George and Betty moved to the Big Apple, where they bought a loft in Chelsea for $50,000 that is now worth $6 million. The following year, their daughter, Francesca, a talented photographer, committed suicide, aged 22. Some of her melancholic photographs still grace her parents' hall, a rare monochrome note in Woodman's colourful world.

"Can you imagine?" Woodman says, quietly, when I bring up Francesca's death. Over time, she says, "obviously it's changed – but we think about it plenty, I'm sure. We don't live with [her work] all over us – it would be too much, too painful, we can't."

By the Eighties, Woodman was painting her pots herself, in the loose, gestural manner that has become her trademark. She joined a gallery and pushed the boundaries of ceramics by experimenting with form. She created "functional" objects, including a letter holder and an asparagus server, which were deliberately impractical and wild in appearance, as well as bright, vigorous vessels with joyous handles fluttering like ribbons. Etruscan pottery, Japanese Oribe ware, Italian majolica, Sèvres porcelain – she found inspiration everywhere.



A Visit to Rome by Betty Woodman

Her signature invention was something she called a "pillow pitcher" – a voluptuous, squishy-looking vessel, like a puffed-up cushion, finished with a handle and spout. Its swollen, breast-like "body" offered a large surface that Woodman could decorate with abandon.

Over the years, Woodman's ceramics have grown in scope and ambition. "I became interested in not just the vase but the spaces in between vases," she explains.

She started making large-scale installations, marshalling pots against painted backdrops. The pieces I see in her studio are essentially large acrylic paintings incorporating ceramic elements.

Does she now consider herself a painter first and a potter second? "Yes," she says. "These days I'm most interested in making paintings." Is she ever tempted to make "pure" paintings, without ceramics? She chuckles. "No, this is pretty pure painting. The issue with painting is: how can you say something new when it's already all been said? Well, perhaps I have something new to say that has to do with the combination of materials. Clay is a very important part of it."

Betty Woodman features in the Liverpool Biennial 2016 (biennial.com), until Oct 16

Bui, Phong, "Betty Woodman with Phong Bui," *The Brooklyn Rail*, April 2016, pp. 67-69

in conversation

Betty Woodman WITH PHONG BUI

On the occasion of Betty Woodman's two simultaneous exhibitions, *Breakfast at the Seashore Lunch in Antella* at Salon 94 (January 21 – February 26, 2016), and *Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic* (February 3 – April 10, 2016) at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in London (her first solo presentation in the U.K.), she spoke with Phong Bui before an audience at Salon 94. Following that cold, Valentine's Day Sunday, the two spoke again back in New York, at Woodman's Chelsea studio. The following is an edited version of their two conversations about her life, work, and evolving process.



Portrait of Betty Woodman. Pencil on paper by Phong Bui. From a photo by Taylor Dafoe.

PHONG BUI (RAIL): The late Arthur Danto's essay, "Communicating Vases," in the catalogue for your 2006 retrospective at the Met, not only illuminated my understanding of your work, it imbued the objects you have made with dignity. To paraphrase Danto's wonderful description, your works often consist of two or more vessels, unified by surface patterns and the implied gestures of their appendages, that are simultaneously juxtaposed, as if they were engaged in some kind of performance whose meaning is reflected in the way their shapes and sizes relate to one another. They're ensembles of internally co-responsive parts—a duet or trio in music, or an intimate conversation between two people. Danto brought up Matisse's great painting *The Conversation* (1908 – 12) which shows the painter standing in profile, like a Doric column, dressed in striped pajamas, talking to his wife, Amélie, in opposite profile sitting on an armchair, dressed in a *robe de chambre*. It looks as though he were telling her, "I love you dear, but I love painting more." That's a good place to start. In other words—did such a conversation ever happen between you and George? [*Laughter.*]

BETTY WOODMAN: It happens frequently, even though we've been together for sixty-three years and we love each other. When we go to work in each of our studios, we're not busy knowing each other, we're only busy knowing what we're doing. We're concentrating on our work, so we would both agree that our works are the most important. It's a mutual understanding that we're constantly cultivating.

RAIL: It's amazing that, in your very first pottery class in high school, you instantaneously felt the magic of ceramic glaze—how the application of a dry, rusty color becomes a shiny, green-and-black glaze after firing in a kiln. You immediately wanted to become a potter. You were barely sixteen.

WOODMAN: There was no question that I really responded to this material. I had been interested in music and art, among other things, but I had a visceral and profound response to the way clay felt in my hands. I had a wonderful teacher in high school, Miss Miles, who helped me look for a pottery school because I decided I really wanted to be a potter. I wasn't interested in being an artist at the time. I wanted to make functional objects that would better lives by virtue of the pleasure of beauty. I was very interested in the whole issue of keeping craft traditions alive. I should add that the loss of control when the object that you've just made is put inside a kiln and you don't know how it will turn out is a big part of the magic that I love. Later, when George graduated from Harvard, where he went as an undergraduate at his father's insistence—

RAIL: To study philosophy!

WOODMAN: Not exactly! George was always a painter. But Harvard didn't have painting classes in those days, so he ended up studying philosophy instead. That was when I met him, while I was teaching pottery classes at a studio, which used to be the swimming pool of a dormitory, after studying at the School for American Craftsmen at Alfred University from 1948 to 1950. As soon as George graduated in 1953, we got married and moved to Albuquerque, where he went to graduate school in painting at the University of New Mexico, and I started a pottery business with Elenita Brown called Roadrunner Pottery. We produced all sorts of domestic objects and trotted them around to various stores to try to sell them. I didn't think of myself as an artist, or of having my work seen in the context of other works of art, until we started spending more time in New York in the 1970s.



Installation view: *Betty Woodman: Breakfast At The Sea Shore, Lunch in Antella*, Salon 94, January 24 – February 26, 2016. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Jeff Elstone.

RAIL: That was just about the time the P & D [Pattern and Decoration] Movement gained visibility and momentum, which was very connected to feminist art, in rebelling against Minimalism and Conceptualism. Before moving to New York you had a Fulbright grant to Italy in 1966, and you met Richard Serra in Rome—he was also a Fulbright recipient that year.

WOODMAN: The four of us—me, George, Richard, and Nancy [Graves]—spent lots of time together. We practically lived together for the year. I'll never forget when Richard decided he wanted to have a live pig at a gallery in Rome where he was invited to do a solo show.

RAIL: Galleria La Salita. Yes, it was his first solo show since his graduate work in painting at Yale. After seeing great paintings in museums in Europe, and being exposed to Giacometti's and Brancusi's sculptures in particular, he gave up being a painter altogether. That first show was an attempt to get away from his academic origins. There were stuffed and live animals together: chickens, rabbits—

WOODMAN: —and a live pig. Exactly! A big live pig in a dog cage, which Richard and Nancy had taken from the zoo in Florence and placed in the middle of the gallery. There's a long and memorable story about the pig, but what was important was that the show got onto the evening news on television. It was controversial, yet many people saw it. It was also an important year for Nancy, because it was at the Rome zoo that she became interested in the camels.

RAIL: When did you first come to New York?

WOODMAN: We came to New York for a semester in 1977 so that George could meet artists, critics, and galleries interested in P & D and show them his work. He had been involved in pattern-based painting for many years. There was a group called Criss-Cross in Colorado that was interested in pattern to which he had been a mentor and tutor. It was through George and the critic Amy Goldin that I met all of those wonderful P & D artists, Joyce Kozloff, Bob Kushner, Miriam Schapiro, and Cynthia Carlson, among others. It was an exciting time—all of us were visiting each other's studios, looking at and sharing what we were doing. When I finally came to New York in 1980 there was a ceramics studio on Jones Street called Clayworks Studio Workshop, set

Bui, Phong, "Betty Woodman with Phong Bui," *The Brooklyn Rail*, April 2016, pp. 67-69



Betty Woodman, *Balustrade Vase 04 – 4, Gauguin #1*, 2004. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, and lacquer, 60 × 40 × 10 inches. Courtesy the artist.

up by Susan Peterson, who I knew through the clay world. I invited Joyce and Cynthia to do collaborative projects with me there.

RAIL: At the time, Amy was immersed in the study of Islamic art; she became an eloquent, supportive critic of the P & D Movement.

WOODMAN: Exactly! Amy was the voice and Holly Solomon was the gallery that showed the works. They both championed the P & D Movement and its artists.

RAIL: What sort of work did you do at Clayworks Studio Workshop?

WOODMAN: My two collaborations with Joyce and Cynthia.

RAIL: Can you describe your first, with Joyce?

WOODMAN: It was fascinating because we talked about my point of view from a crafts background, and her point view from an arts background, and how those differed. Her use of clay, for example, was partially a feminist gesture. She thought that clay was something that women were involved with. And my feeling was that the world of clay at that time was totally dominated by men. Of course, in some societies, clay was something that women did and in others something that men did. I don't think it's gender-specific.

RAIL: It was certainly true with the California Clay Movement—the participants were all men: Peter Voulkos, Stephen De Staebler, Kenneth Price, Robert Arneson, Billy Al Benson, Jim Melchert—

WOODMAN: —It was primarily, of course, happening in the West Coast. I was living in Colorado, and I think Colorado looked more to the West Coast than to the East Coast in terms of what was going on in art at the time. But I also think it was affected by the fact that when the ceramics movement in the United States developed, at the end of the Second World War, there was all sorts of funding given to universities to accommodate GIs returning from the war, as well as people in general. So, these art departments started to include ceramics as a discipline. And there was always a male teacher.

At any rate, in my collaboration with Joyce I made the forms and she decorated them. It developed as we went along. There were a bunch of pieces where either she or I would puncture holes, and she would reattach the small pieces from the holes. Later we had a show at Tibor de Nagy in 1981. But the first thing we did together was a series of little puffy porcelain cups that I made in Colorado and dropped off in her loft in SoHo while I was on my way to Italy so she could paint them. I remember feeling bad about our collaboration because a dozen cups was an afternoon's work for me. But for her to decorate them took three months. Anyway, we had a long discussion about how much money we should charge, and how we were going to split it up. It was very funny because I was just telling Joyce I had just been to Tiffany's and I said, "I saw cups that were 100 dollars each!" Tibor came down and said, "Charge whatever you want, but zero percent of 100 is zero." We decided that we would charge 100 dollars a piece, which seemed like a lot of money, but we figured a few of our friends would buy some and it would be fine. Sydney and Frances Lewis, the owners of a now defunct chain called Best Products from Richmond, Virginia, with whom many artists traded art for washing machines and so on, came in and bought them all.

RAIL: What about your collaboration with Cynthia?

WOODMAN: Cynthia was doing wonderful things. She was doing work with extruded paint, using a technique she learned from her friend's father, who was a cake decorator. We made all sorts of tiles and flowers, among other things, which then led to a huge installation, *An Interior Exchanged* at the Fashion Institute of Technology in 1982. It was in a great long corridor that opened up into a room, which in some ways changed the whole interior of the building. It was another product of the difference between the way craftspeople and artists think. For a craftsperson, material is the most important; for an artist, the concept seems to be the most important.

RAIL: One of the joyous aspects of your work is that it intensifies a sense of both pleasure and growth. The wall installation, for example, reveals what you have learned from your friends and your environmental awareness—it reflects your willingness to experiment and your curiosity about process over result.

WOODMAN: For me, environmental work, and work that relates to architecture are absolutely within the tradition of clay. Collaborating with Joyce and Cynthia reinforced my awareness of it. It was a matter of opening my eyes to Islamic tiles and mosaics from other cultures outside of the United States, among other things, that the P & D artists were interested in.

RAIL: Would you say that George approached P & D from a different perspective?

WOODMAN: During those years, George's paintings evolved from an interest in pattern as a formalist and minimalist stance rather than decoration. This was encouraged by his studies of philosophy and the mathematics of tessellations. His difference of perspective brought a significant contribution to the study of pattern. At that time I was still making functional things. Actually, after we decided to live in New York City part of the time, I realized I could not keep making functional pots at the same time that I was making works of art that were shown in galleries in New York. It meant that I was dividing my time into four months in Colorado, four months in New York, four months in Italy.

I had to give up making functional pots, because that was the hardest thing to do for four months and then stop. It is something that one does with a sense of rhythm; you don't just start it and stop it. So, I decided to make this dinner party called *Presenting Food* at the Fabric Workshop when Kippy [Marion Stroud] had a space in Chinatown in 1985. It was a crazy collaboration with a good friend, the master caterer Daniel Mattrocce. I made all of the dishes, vases, pitchers, and platters, and he made the food. We invited fifteen people from the art world to participate in this dinner.

RAIL: Was it Gerrit Lansing's place?

WOODMAN: Yes, it was his place, the temporary space of the Fabric Workshop. I made a proposal to Kippy and she embraced it. It was lots of fun. It was eating as a kind of performance, what Rirkrit [Tiravanija] is doing now with his social practice. I've been doing social practice all my life! I think that the art world, when they take something, it becomes theirs, and they change the rhetoric.

RAIL: One thing that most of us familiar with your work would agree with is that you have what could be referred to as a promiscuous appetite for influences—the opposite of Harold Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence*. You seem to absorb everything, whether Greek, Etruscan, or Roman vessels; 18th-century porcelain or Classical pots; Tang Dynasty pottery or Japanese oribe pottery; Matisse, Picasso, Bonnard, Gauguin, or Fra Angelico—the references are endless. How do you mediate all that? How does it manifest in the moment that you begin to make a work? How does the image emerge and where do you begin? With a line or a wash of color, consciously or unconsciously?

WOODMAN: My first approach to any work of art is to think about material and process. I ask the same question that you ask, "How do they do that?" I also work compulsively. People often ask me, "How do you stay on working at your age?" What else would I do? This is what I love, and it's what I'm really very interested in. You mentioned Fra Angelico, who was an amazing colorist. There's a little 13th-century painting that I saw at the San Marco museum in Florence that I just thought was wonderful. So I wrote out a list of all the colors in it, and used those colors in making a piece, *Fra Angelico's Room* (2012). And I've done this with other works of art. For a while it was Gauguin whose use of colors captured my interest. So I tried to reference those colors in another work of mine, *Balustrade Relief Vase 04 Gauguin #1* (2004). The paintings in the show involving images of a table—*The Kitchen Table* (2014), *The White and Black Set* (2015), and *Sicilian Dining Room* (2015)—come directly from Bonnard paintings. Every work of a certain period is of a table with important objects on it, so I took off from that reference. I've done a whole series of pieces of the table motif for about two years. It's grown and become more abstract, so that the table protrudes into three dimensions, which pushes the perspective in bizarre ways. These pieces have also grown when I've felt the need to integrate clay. The ceramic elements are more realistic, in a way, because of the kinds of things that are on the table: the pitcher, the teacup, and so on. I worry: "Is it a caricature? No? Yes? What am I doing?" I just get involved with the piece itself.

RAIL: I always felt that Picasso was envious of Bonnard for the latter's sensitivity to the minute subtleties that occur between things, and also for his sensitive treatment of colors, which generate intimacy particularly in, interior scenes. Mercedes Matter tells the story of Franz Kline remarking to Guston that Bonnard's nudes would never be able to get out from those bathtubs. [*Laughter.*] Which brings me to my next question: your images are simultaneously floating and anchored. In Barry Schwabsky's essay, which also appears in the catalogue of your retrospective at the Met, he observes there is a co-existence of object/image that oscillates between what is considered flat, silhouetted, and what is three-dimensional. Did you always feel at ease working through such polarities in your work? Do you worry about what makes sense when you move between those two conditions?

WOODMAN: I am really a visual person: the decisions that I make are visual, and not necessarily intellectual. So that would be the difference between Picasso and Matisse, or Bonnard's fragile images. I just look

Bui, Phong, "Betty Woodman with Phong Bui," *The Brooklyn Rail*, April 2016, pp. 67-69

at those nudes, for example, in the bathtub and don't worry about how they are getting out. [*Laughter.*] To me, Bonnard's nudes look right just as they are. In other words, each of my works has a different kind of balance each time. Sometimes the three-dimensional element is more pronounced. Other times it's not.

RAIL: When did you become more aware of viewers looking at your work differently, as works of art rather than functional objects?

WOODMAN: I'm always a little tentative about what I'm doing and how people are going to look at it. I think all artists are. At the same time, I don't pay too much attention to it, because I try to follow the work where it takes me. I am using the word "painting" today, and I haven't dared to use that word before in my work.

RAIL: They are painted on pre-primed, very finely woven canvases, with acrylic paint, right?

WOODMAN: Yes.

RAIL: And they're painted mostly in one sitting?

WOODMAN: They're pretty much painted in one sitting. I paint on the floor.

RAIL: Do you make small studies or do you just trust your spontaneous, direct rapport each time you begin a new work?

WOODMAN: I don't make studies, except for the large pieces. I have one piece now at the ICA that's ten meters long in four panels. That required studies, partly because I couldn't paint it all at once because of the size of my studio. Otherwise, for the most part, I make decisions about color as I go along. Sometimes it's a decision to use color like Fra Angelico. Other times it's not. It's always one piece that feeds the next. These pieces are usually painted with acrylic, but I also use white clay.

RAIL: Have you ever destroyed a work when it doesn't turn out the way you expected it to? You are so prolific that you remind me of Milton Avery, who sought to make a painting per day, and succeeded. Do you make a piece a day?

WOODMAN: I'll share a funny story about destroying work. Just think of it! How do you get rid of a clay object? You can take a hammer and break it into tiny pieces, then put them into a trash bag or bury them! Either way, it's a depressing experience. At one point in Colorado, I decided that I was being too self-destructive, so I decided to put the works out for the trash men to take away. First, my neighbor came out and took a piece. [*Laughter.*] I of course said, "No, no, no. You can't do that! I'm throwing these away!" And he said, "Well, I'll just take this piece." So he took one. Next, the trash men put the work in the cab of the truck. [*Laughter.*] And so I said, "Look I'm throwing these away. You can have that one, but the rest should be thrown away." I came back from Italy the following year and the Boulder paper [*The Boulder Daily Camera*] was listing items for sale. It listed a pink Cadillac and the next thing was a Betty Woodman pot. [*Laughter.*] God knows where it came from. So it's not so good just to put them out.

RAIL: Can you tell us the genesis of the wall pieces? How they came about?

WOODMAN: That goes along with the story of not throwing things away! It started roughly in 2010. When I work with clay, I make slabs on the wheel, stretch them like pizzas, and then throw them on the floor. Then I cut them into various shapes, some representational, some abstract. I started to become interested in the leftover pieces because they were different from what my eye and my hand would do. I put a couple of holes in a few of the leftover pieces, thinking I could probably use them as additional elements to something else. I came back from Italy one year and I just couldn't move in my studio. I had boxes and boxes of all these spare parts. So I asked my assistant to take a piece of brown paper, and to lay the pieces out to make a drawing, so I would at least know what was in the boxes. When he did that, the brown paper looked like a carpet, a rug, a runner. I thought it was really interesting. So I started to make simple ones, using one or two colors painted on canvases that could be laid on the floor like rugs. Some included cutout slabs, arranged as allover patterns on top. Others would be a combination of three-dimensional and two-dimensional elements together. Then, somehow, I had a show at the gallery's Freeman Alley space and I wanted to give things away that everyone could take home with them. So I saved a wall and glazed a whole bunch of these pieces. I did it with no particular plan. Just, every time I fired a kiln, I left a few shelves and glazed a bunch of pieces: pink ones with red spots, green ones with yellow. Then I took a piece of plastic the size of the wall and laid them out in a pattern so that we could put it up in the show, and we announced that it was first come first serve. Everybody could take a piece.

RAIL: What!

WOODMAN: Yep. [*Laughter.*] Where were you? It will happen again—or it may not. [*Laughter.*] But when it was finished, it was really beautiful and I didn't want to give it away at all. But I had already announced that I was going to give them away so I did. Then I started making other pieces. Actually Jeanne [Greenberg-Rohatyn] said she wanted a piece for the gallery on 94th Street [Salon 94] so that was the first one. It's grown since then. The one for the show in the ICA, which has a very complicated long corridor, has 300 parts in it. The wall piece is becoming more and more a part of my work, and it grew out of chance, not by planning ahead!

RAIL: In his essay Barry also mentions that, similar to Matisse's use of scissors in his cutouts, you use a heavy needle, formerly used for sewing mattresses in Italy, to cut into clay. Looking at this particular wall piece *Wallpaper #10* (2015) now, several other references come to mind. Firstly, there is the ecological reference, to recycling. Secondly, there's an emphasis on negative space, the space between that allows the quasi-referential form to appear. Lastly, Arthur Danto, in his essay, referred to your work as a spirited communication, which was based on your comments about making objects that are both potentially functional and intended as works of art. He thought of them as "communicating vessels" because they exist between reality and a dream world. Arthur offered a wonderful reference to Descartes in his famous *Meditations on First Philosophy*, where Descartes argues that there may be no internal difference between dream and waking experience at all. Instead of sitting by a stove, snowbound in Germany, dressed in his warm dressing gown and writing his philosophical thoughts on paper, he might really be lying naked in bed, cozy under the duvet of his bedroom in Touraine, dreaming that he was snowbound in Germany. Whatever test he might use to tell the difference could itself be dreamt. There is, after all, no internal criterion to determine if something is real, so there need be no criterion of whether something is dreamt.

WOODMAN: When you're working on something, you always wonder, "Can I get away with this? Is it working, isn't it working?" It's the space between that I've been interested in for a long time, it's been important in the development of my work over time. I think that when I started to make, say, a triptych that came from an observation of a little Picasso drawing, the spaces in between became as important as the three actual pieces. It's especially true of the *Wallpaper* piece. But most of the changes in my own work really evolve from one piece to the next: from looking at my own work, the works of others, and things in my studio. It happens when you see something that you didn't see previously, like



Betty Woodman, *Aztec Vase and Carpet #1*, 2012. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint, and canvas, 59½ × 49 × 34 inches. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Bruno Bruchi.



Betty Woodman, *The Summer House*, 2015. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas, and wood. 338 ½ × 92 ½ × 12 inches. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Mark Blower.

those scraps of clay that became the wall pieces. It's similar to the space that I've explored for years and years between artist and craftsperson, which is both interesting and challenging, and I don't think that one thing is inferior to the other. Each has a different goal, a different function. It's my responsibility how and where my work is viewed in different contexts.

RAIL: How do you respond to ceramics becoming an accepted medium, even a popular one, in the last decade? Arlene Shechet, Joyce Robins, Nicole Cherubini, Cameron Jamie, Rachel Kneebone, and Sterling Ruby—just to name a few—are being celebrated these days!

WOODMAN: If ceramics wasn't enough, now fiber seems to be the next fashionable medium. It's fascinating that it has become the latest chic material and everybody has to use it. One thing I notice—with a few exceptions such as the artists you mentioned, whom I would describe as masters of their material—is that many artists using clay today are very careful to say that they know nothing about this material; they're just using it. There is a lot to know about this material. It's complicated, difficult, humiliating, fascinating. It's called the world's greatest hobby! I think that as things sort themselves out, artists who use clay will have to learn something about the material to use it in interesting ways. Remember that photography was not perceived as an art form until the last two decades. Now it's certainly a mature art from, and I think the same will happen with clay. Many artists who have always used clay are finally being acknowledged. I am very pleased that it's become acceptable, and that I am the beneficiary of that acceptance.

PHONG BUI is the Publisher of the *Brooklyn Rail*.

Sherlock, Amy, "Feel More," *Frieze*, no. 177, March 2016, pp. 124-129

FEEL MORE

Ahead of her solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, **Betty Woodman** talks to *Amy Sherlock* about ceramic histories and modern painting

I first learned about Betty Woodman when I was a 20-year-old student researching the photographic self-portraits of her daughter, Francesca. I was haunted by Francesca's stark, melancholic images and equally fascinated by Betty's exuberant, colourful and defiantly decorative ceramic objects, which were seductive in an entirely different way. Yet, later, seeking out Betty's works among the bowls and vases in the ceramics galleries of the Victoria & Albert Museum, it struck me that, despite these differences, both artists were dealing with similar underlying questions about domestic spaces and how to exist with them as a woman.

That was in 2007, a year after the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York had given Betty, then 76, her first US retrospective – its first ever of a living female artist. Still, my back-to-front route to her work says much about the peripheral status of her chosen medium – clay – in contemporary art as recently as a decade ago. Much has changed since then; if, today, Woodman's work feels familiar, it is not only the result of her numerous recent solo exhibitions but also by way of the many younger artists whose ceramic practices owe a great debt to hers.

Woodman's work always begins on the wheel, though it often ends up being flattened, cut out or joined to other pieces, stacked or squashed together. Her extensive knowledge of ceramic technique and tradition – from which she borrows ceaselessly, reinterpreting and recombining – is clear, as is her longstanding interest in the social histories of the cups and plates, bowls and pitchers that we use every day and which have been with us since the very earliest civilizations. For almost seven decades, Woodman has experimented with the vessel form – adding to it, fragmenting it, pushing it beyond function and almost beyond recognition. Some of her pieces are like sketches for imagined pots – all Crayola-box colours and decorative flourishes – magically taken shape. As critic Peter Schjeldahl has noted, Woodman doesn't make pots that invite touching. Her works are frontal: painted surfaces as much as three-dimensional forms.

Betty and her husband, the painter and photographer George Woodman (who decorated her early pots, until she took over, in around 1970), divide their time between New York and Antella, a small town in the hills outside Florence, Italy.

Woodman visited London in October; we met near Regent's Park on a crisp autumn morning to talk about the evolution of her work and her upcoming projects.

AMY SHERLOCK
Tell me how you started out.
BETTY WOODMAN
I took a class in ceramics at high school. It was a period when, if you were teaching and you did a summer course, you got paid a little more money; it was sort of required to bolster your position in the public school system. My teacher had gone to Cranbrook Academy in Michigan and taken a course with Maija Grotell, who was a big figure in the history of American ceramics. This teacher talked the school into letting her teach a pottery class in a room in the attic.

At that moment [around the 1940s], pottery still saw itself as responding to industrialization; the ideals of the art and crafts movement and the writings of people like Herbert Read were in the air. When I was starting out, I was intent on being a potter and making functional things. I had all these ideas about improving society; a philosophy that if people had beautiful, handmade objects, it would somehow make them better, make life better and so on. And I still believe it. I think if you are drinking your coffee out of a nice cup, it's a more intimate and meaningful relationship than with a Styrofoam mug.

AS *When did you move away from making vessels and functional objects?*

BW My first trip to Italy in 1951 was very important. At that time in the US, there was a dominant aesthetic in ceramics that had come by way of Bernard Leach and Shōji Hamada, which was about an idealization of English folk art and traditional Oriental techniques, a synthesis of the two. In fact, Leach's book [*A Potter's Book*, 1940] was really the only one we had, and we all read it as if it were the Bible.

But, in Italy, I became aware of a whole other world of ceramics that I had no idea about. It wasn't brown and it wasn't functional. There was a sort of moral dimension to Leach's pottery, and to the aspirations of Standard Ware. It was supposed to be about simplicity and humility: a humble potter and a humble pot.

AS *Yes, and that was the contradiction of Leach, around whom there was a real personality cult and who was quite dictatorial about what ceramics could and should be.*

Sherlock, Amy, “Feel More,” *Frieze*, no. 177, March 2016, pp. 124-129



Sherlock, Amy, "Feel More," *Frieze*, no. 177, March 2016, pp. 124-129

BW He came to teach at Alfred University for a couple of weeks in the 1950s.

AS *Did you do any classes with him?*

BW No, he came to the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred: they were training ceramic designers and their graduate programme had people who were interested in making art. I went to the School for American Craftsmen, across the street.

From the mid-1940s, the GI Bill [1944 Servicemen's Readjustment Act], allowed men returning from the war to study without having to pay for it, which meant you had all kinds of people able to go to college that couldn't before. College art departments expanded and there started to be ceramic departments.

Our school was an experimental school [established by the philanthropist Aileen Osborn Webb, founder of the American Craft Council, in 1944], which was set up to teach people to be craftsmen. You didn't get a degree; you worked with either clay, fibre, metal or wood for two years – it was kind of an apprenticeship system.

AS *What did you find in Italy?*

BW At first, I was just overwhelmed by the Etruscan pots. I was amazed by the shape of them, particularly the way the handles extend the forms. Because they are earthenware fired at a low temperature, you could get away with a grand gesture like that, which is very hard to do. I think to try to make this kind of extended handle would be brutal and unpleasant – if not impossible – in stoneware.

AS *Have you always worked with earthenware?*

BW No. I've worked with everything. That's one of the riches of clay: there are so many kinds. You can go from earthenware to stoneware to porcelain … Each of the materials, in my hands, dictates what I can do, to an extent. I am interested in making something that takes the material as far as it can go, without being impossible.

I think it's important that the work doesn't seem labour-intensive; it may be,

1



Previous page
Vase Upon Vase: Orpheo, 2013, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, wood, 166 × 58 × 41 cm

Courtesy previous page the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles; photograph: Brian Forrest



2

but I'm not really interested in people looking at my pieces and saying: 'Oh! How did she do that?'

AS *Sometimes that can be a distraction. What about with something like the 'pillow pitcher', which is one of your most recognizable forms? Its shape is very unusual: there is definitely an element of: 'How is this made?'*

BW I gave up making the pillow pitcher a long time ago precisely because it was so recognizable. It originally came about because I was making some large pieces, which were two hanging flower pots put together horizontally. These were dubbed the 'Erotic Burrito' series (1971–75). The pillow pitcher evolved out of that – it grew larger and wider and I added the handle and spout. I was – I am – very interested in the pitcher. It seems to me that, in the Western world, the pitcher is the archetypal ceramic object. The pillow pitcher became a vehicle for acknowledging that long history, as well as a surface upon which I could explore my interest in painting.

AS *There's something comforting about the pillow pitcher. It's almost a maternal form.*

BW I think clay is like that: it's a material that doesn't put you off. It's interesting: I taught for many years and realized that everybody thinks they understand clay; everybody thinks it's easy to work with. I believe this is because it's so much a part of everybody's life – everyone has plates and coffee cups, which is perhaps also one of the reasons that, for such a long time,

Sherlock, Amy, "Feel More," *Frieze*, no. 177, March 2016, pp. 124-129



it wasn't accepted as a 'high' art material.

AS *Have you ever considered your work to be feminist, in terms of its engagement with domestic objects and 'low' or 'craft' materials?*

BW I was making work in the late 1960s and '70s, when the first wave of feminist art was around. Lucy Lippard taught in Colorado, where my husband was also teaching, and we all had our consciousnesses raised.

I could make arguments for myself as a feminist, for example, in terms of my relationship to function. Functional, to me, as a woman, meant nurturing, nourishing and so on – a relationship to food, which was very much related to my work in ceramics.

1
The Summer House, 2015,
glazed earthenware, epoxy
resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas,
wood, 240 × 800 × 30 cm

2
Cherry Blossom Time, 2005,
glazed earthenware,
epoxy resin, lacquer, paint
165 × 68 × 22 cm

Courtesy
1 the artist; photograph: Bruno Bruchi •
2 private collection;
photograph: Christopher Burke

But, at that time in America, the world of ceramics, where it intersected with 'high art', was totally dominated by the macho, and you had to be one of the boys in order to be accepted.

AS *I'm thinking particularly of the west-coast scene centred around Pete Voulkos and the people that came out of his programme at Otis College of Art and Design in the 1950s and '60s. For many of them it seemed to be about wrestling with the material.*

BW My attitude was that it's not about wrestling. It's like bricks: you take a small piece and put another on top, then another, and you come up with a building.

I knew some of those guys – not well, mostly, but I was very friendly with Paul Soldner [Voulkos's first student in the ceramics programme at Otis], who died a few years ago. I owe a great deal to Paul because, in the late 1960s, when he built a house in Aspen, Colorado, I invited him to Boulder, where I was working. He was interested in what I was doing, so he asked me to participate in the Scripps Annual in Claremont, California, in 1968.

The show at Scripps gave me more visibility and, a few years on, when Ken Ferguson was curating 'Eight Professional Potters' at the Kansas City Art Institute in 1976, he approached me. This was at a moment when everyone was very aware of the lack of visibility of female artists, largely thanks to the feminist movement. Suddenly, it was like: 'We have to have a woman in the show,' so I was invited.

'I taught for many years and realized that everybody thinks they understand clay; everybody thinks it's easy to work with.'

BETTY WOODMAN

AS *You were the only woman in the show?*

BW I was one of two women in the show. Which was fine. I hope people didn't just see me as a token woman and that they actually looked at what I was doing. But then, who knows?

AS *Was there a point where you thought: 'I am an artist. I'm no longer a potter.'*

BW Yes. I think it was probably about 30 years ago that I realized that I wanted my work to be seen outside of a ceramics context – around the time that I started to show with Max Protetch in New York, which was in 1983.

At that time, Max was also working with Scott Burton, who encouraged me. He was making sculpture that was furniture – or the other way around. It was about functional and art objects not necessarily being in opposition. For instance, he made those chairs outside

Sherlock, Amy, "Feel More," *Frieze*, no. 177, March 2016, pp. 124-129



1

the AXA Equitable building in New York, which are still used: people sit on them every day. In the same way, I think that some of the confusion of my work has been that I move back and forth between the actual object and something else. Both Scott and I were interested in making forms that were domestic, but situating them outside of that context.

From my own point of view, I feel as though I am sort of a cross-dresser, and it confuses people. For many years, I have considered myself to be an artist among other artists: I have my material and you have yours. I wouldn't call myself 'conceptual'; on the other hand, I have a few ideas in my head.

I'm also very interested in painting; I have been looking at painting for a long time. You know, I live with a painter – my husband George – and our lives have always been very involved with those of other artists, so this is what the conversations are about. When you look at a painting – by Barnett Newman or whoever – you realize that black isn't just there; it's what's underneath that is affecting it. I wanted to make works that were visually rich; I wanted people to look at them as they would a painting.

1
Portugal, 2005, installation view in the Great Hall, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006

2
Rose et Noir Pillow Pitcher, 1989, glazed earthenware, expoxy resin, lacquer, paint, 53 × 66 × 55 cm

Courtesy 1 the artist and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; photograph: Peter Harkawik • 2 the artist; photograph: Christopher Burke; collection: Joan Hardy-Clarke

AS *It seems to me that you often take a vessel and you attach surfaces to it to form a kind of canvas: the ceramic form becomes a support for the painted plane.*

BW Obviously I continue to use the vessel and, in a sense, that's the subject matter of my work. But I am interested in taking it someplace else.

Over the past few years, I have also been making actual paintings on canvas and, by themselves, I think they look perhaps not very good or dated or they reference Pierre Bonnard, or whoever I am interested in, too closely. But the addition of the ceramics changes the way you see the painting; it gives it a different reading.

AS *When I look at your work, I also see that you are referencing many historical craft traditions: Japanese Oribe glazes, American slipware, Meissen rococo flourishes and so on.*

BW I don't think anything I make is simple. I hope there's enough in the work that, if you continue to look at it, you read it in new ways.

The new piece for the ICA show is made up of four canvases – it's nearly nine-and-a-half metres long – which will run along one wall. It's called *Summer House* and it depicts a domestic interior, in sections. There is a painting of a table and, at the bottom, a wooden structure that juts out, so it looks as though it's coming out of the surface. And, on the shelves, there are some actual vases, which somewhat recall the painted objects on the table behind. I am playing with perspective and with the movement between two- and three-dimensionality. The works in my show at Salon 94 earlier this year – 'Breakfast at the Seashore Lunch in Antella' – are all dealing with these ideas, too.

AS *And illusion? In a way,* Summer House *is a return to much earlier pieces such as* Aspen Garden Room *[1983]. You create the illusion of a space with objects – columns, frames – that suggest an architecture, but which aren't quite functional.*

BW It's also about the illusion of scale. It's not really architecture: it's alluding to that, it's about that, but it's smaller than reality.

AS *Yes, with* Aspen Garden Room *I felt that particularly acutely because I'm tall and I had to really stoop to get in there.*

BW Exactly, stooping is part of it. I didn't want it to be a real room that you could inhabit, but an array of different elements – materials and forms – that suggest how a room is constructed.

AS *It reminds me of Livia's Garden Room at Palazzo Massimo in Rome – a beautiful, whole-room fresco of a garden scene that they found while they were excavating the villa of Emperor Augustus's wife, Livia, just*

Sherlock, Amy, "Feel More," *Frieze*, no. 177, March 2016, pp. 124-129

outside the city. There are certain trompe l'oeil *details, like a little fence and a garden wall; you feel as though you could be outside although the room was actually subterranean.*

BW It's an amazing museum, isn't it? And nobody's ever been; it's perfect! I can get off the train and walk right over there, or stop for a visit before I take the train home to Florence.

But the point about rooms ... Well, I have my whole theory about playing house. In some ways, I think that's what making pottery is all about. I've made work at the Sèvres factory, just outside of Paris, on and off since 1986, and all of that exquisite porcelain seems like a game, a way of pretending to be a princess – as though you, too, could be Marie Antoinette or someone like that. With *Summer House* or *Aspen Garden Room*, it's a similar kind of illusion: it's not the space you live in, but it's a space you might imagine.

AS *Or daydream?*

BW Yes.

AS *There's a wonderful Gaston Bachelard quote from* The Poetics of Space *[1958], where he says the primary function of the house, of all houses, is to shelter the daydreamer. I think it's true: the home is a projected space as much as it is a concrete one. I think your pots belong to daydreams, in a sense: they mesh objects and illusions with different historical spaces and cultural traditions.*

BW At this point, there's a lot of art around that seems really intent on making you feel bad; perhaps aiming to raise your consciousness of all the evil in the world in the hope that you'll do something about it. I don't think that's what I am doing. I'm trying to make you feel more, and to make something that I get pleasure out of seeing.

AS *You believe in beauty?*

BW Oh, yeah, I'm afraid I do! Not only that, but both George and I are visual artists: we really believe in looking at art. And I think that's become unfashionable. There's so much art being made that really has nothing to do with looking: it's about reading. Which is all very well ...

AS *Who or what have been your biggest influences?*

BW Well, this whole business of the table, which I've been obsessed with for a couple of years, came from Bonnard, particularly the paintings that he made from his breakfast room looking out into the garden. Often, in his paintings, there's an interior with a window and you look through it, you look beyond. That has been with me for a long time.

AS *What about Henri Matisse? Your wallpaper works and balustrade vases make me think of his cut-out pieces.*

BW You know, I think for many years I tried to stay away from Matisse, because I felt it was too much. I had too many people look at my pieces and say: 'Oh, yeah, Matisse.' But, obviously, his work has been a great joy to me.

AS *I was thinking more in relation to your point about not wanting your work to feel laboured. The cut pieces have an amazing ease and fluidity.*

BW Absolutely. And, you know, as you learn about Matisse, it didn't come easily to him at all. It was a lot of trying and things not working and trying again. But the look of it is peaceful.

AS *How do you feel about the re-emergence of clay as a medium amongst young artists at this point in time? And the currency that the decorative, more broadly speaking, now has within the art world?*

BW Clay has certainly become an acceptable material to make art with, but it seems as though it's important for people – for artists – to say: 'I don't know anything about this, but I am doing it.' And, it's a little frustrating, you know, because why don't you know anything about it? You could do something about that. But, in order to be accepted in the art world, it seems necessary to ...

AS *Deny the craft?*

BW ... know nothing. And that kind of work is not very interesting.

AS *Did you ever see yourself as rebelling against something?*

BW No, I don't think so. I think I've always believed in what I am doing and I've been very firm about it – aggressive about it, in a way.

I'm 85 and part of the current interest in my work is because, suddenly, clay is acceptable; but the other thing is that the art world is now interested in older artists who have perhaps been overlooked.

There are lots of things I'd still like to do, but, you know, I'm pretty fortunate. ◆●

'For many years, I have considered myself to be an artist among other artists. I wouldn't call myself 'conceptual'; on the other hand, I have a few ideas in my head.'

BETTY WOODMAN

Amy Sherlock is reviews editor of frieze *and is based in London, UK.*

Betty Woodman's solo exhibition, 'Theatre of the Domestic', curated by Vincenzo de Bellis, is at ICA, London, until 10 April. A version of the show was on view at the Museo Marino Marini, Florence, Italy, in late 2015, and a catalogue will be published this spring. She is also included in the Liverpool Biennial 2016, UK, which opens in July. Earlier this year, she had a solo show at Salon 94, New York, USA, and she recently had solo exhibitions at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, USA, Mendes Wood DM, São Paolo, Brazil (both 2015), Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich, Switzerland (2014), and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin, Germany (2013).

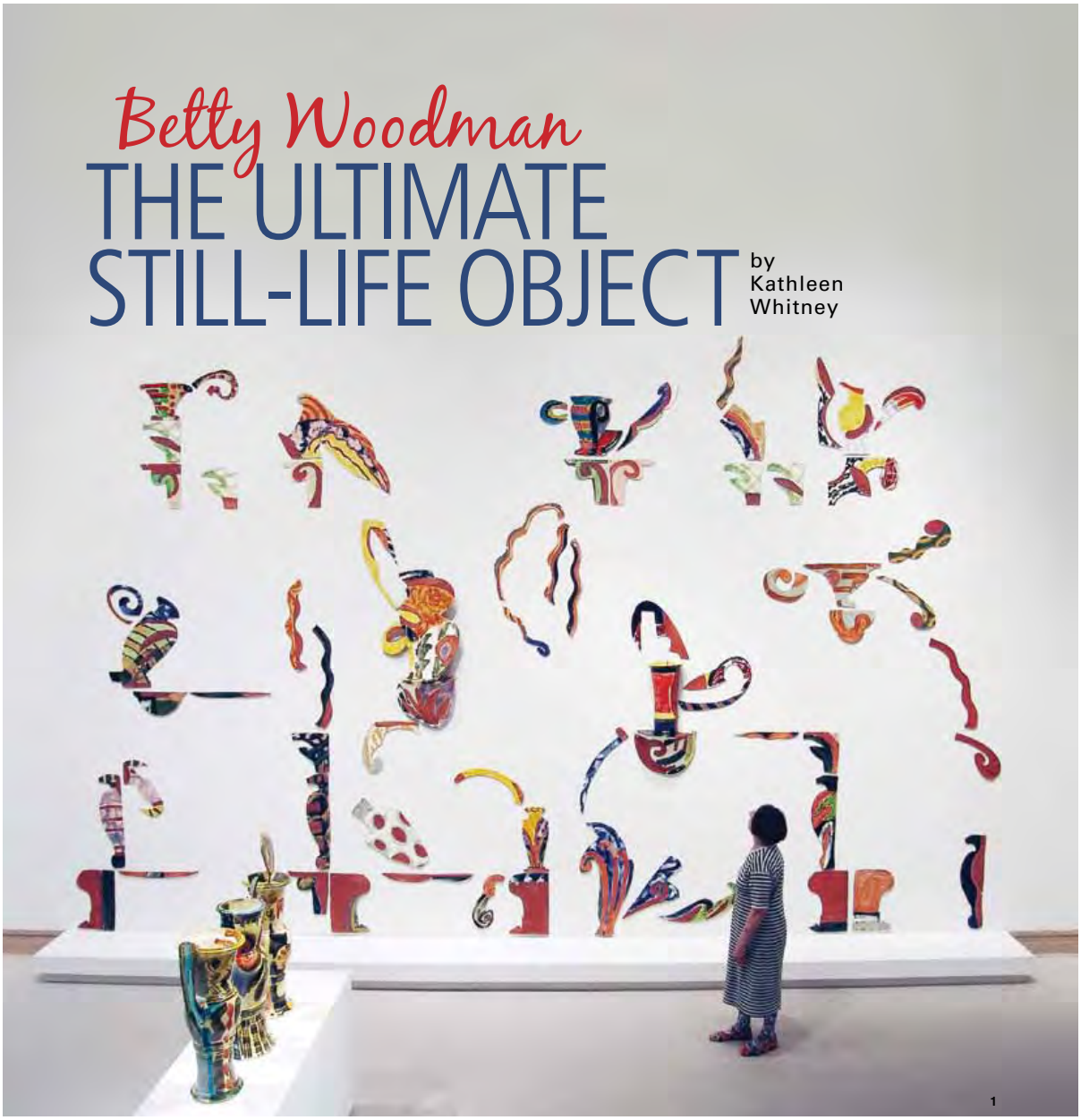


2

Whitney, Kathleen, “Betty Woodman: The Ultimate Still-Life Object,” *Ceramics Monthly*, March 2016, pp. 48-51

Betty Woodman
THE ULTIMATE STILL-LIFE OBJECT

by Kathleen Whitney



1 Betty Woodman pictured with *House of the South*, 20½ ft. (6.23 m) glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint, 1996. From *The Art of Betty Woodman*, April 25–July 30, 2006, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. *Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, California.*

Betty Woodman’s eclecticism is astonishing; her influences are wide-ranging and include Persian vases, wallpaper, Japanese prints, and Baroque architecture. While fully embracing abstraction, her sculptures verge on realism; her early interest in functional ceramic objects is always visible. Woodman’s work plays in the territory between the high arts and craft and at the borders between painting and sculpture: it is shot through with humor and sensuality. Her imagery is bound to the realities of life, dealing with the accoutrements of pleasure and the experience of beauty. She blends the furniture of the table—platters, vases, cups, and tureens—with the history of art and architecture. Woodman has spent over six

Whitney, Kathleen, “Betty Woodman: The Ultimate Still-Life Object,” *Ceramics Monthly*, March 2016, pp. 48-51





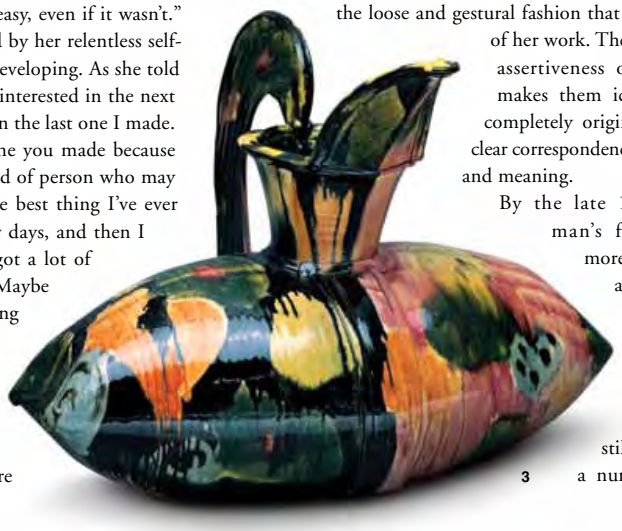
2 *The Red Window* (overall and detail), 7 ft. (2.2 m) in height, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas, 2014. **3** *Rose et Noir Pillow Pitcher*, 32 in. (81 cm) in height, glazed earthenware, epoxy, resin, lacquer, paint, 1989. **2, 3** *Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, California.*

decades looking at art of all kinds and incorporates elements of old and new into each object. Conceptual boldness and extreme experimentation are her work’s most prominent characteristics. She has broken through the limits of traditional ceramics through innovative uses of materials such as lacquer paint on earthenware and terra sigillata on paper. One of the most significant aspects of Woodman’s work is its quality of effortlessness—as she says; “I want the work to look as if it was rather easy, even if it wasn’t.” This sense of effortlessness is contradicted by her relentless self-questioning and desire to keep her ideas developing. As she told the American Craft Council; “I’m always interested in the next piece I’m going to make perhaps more than the last one I made. Well, [you can be] seduced by the last one you made because you think, ‘Oh! Look at that.’ I’m the kind of person who may be totally seduced by it and think it’s the best thing I’ve ever done. . . . And then I look at it for a few days, and then I sort of realize, well, you know, this has got a lot of problems. Maybe it’s not that wonderful. Maybe I need to go back and think about something else, do something else.”

Woodman’s career started with a commitment to clay; the vase form became an obsession. She studied at the School for American Craftsmen at Alfred University in the late 1940s where she began her career as a production potter. By the early 1960s, Woodman’s ideas shifted away from function, partly in response to a move to Italy where she and her painter husband, George Woodman, spend part of each year. The Italian influence shows itself in forms inflected by the aesthetics of the Mediterranean, majolica, and Baroque architecture. The area between the stone balusters of Baroque staircases particularly fascinates her; her employment of negative space is a major facet of her work.

In the early 1970s, Woodman became involved with the Pattern and Decoration movement and began to emphasize surface design. She incorporated imagery from outside of what was considered fine art, focusing on the geometric and floral patterns used on fabrics, wallpaper, and quilts. In 1975, she produced the first of what became known as her pillow pitchers. These were loosely based on Cretan pitchers and made by joining two cylinders horizontally and pinching the ends closed. A narrow sash of clay that becomes a spout and handle often conceals the join. These forms are not functional and their pillowy curvatures provide a challenging surface for glaze painting. The glaze is painted on in the loose and gestural fashion that is the hallmark of her work. The simplicity and assertiveness of these forms makes them iconic; they are completely original and have a clear correspondence between form and meaning.

By the late 1990s, Woodman’s forms became more diagrammatic and Cubist in appearance. She began using the vase form, the ultimate still-life object, in a number of differ-



3

Whitney, Kathleen, "Betty Woodman: The Ultimate Still-Life Object," *Ceramics Monthly*, March 2016, pp. 48-51

ent ways; flattening and deconstructing it, breaking it into its constituent pieces (tops, feet, spout, handles) and painting/glazing in the details. She also does the opposite, emphasizing the three-dimensional, by presenting a faceted arrangement of vase-like objects with features so disparate that the back and front are stylistically unrelated. Around this time, she also began creating multi-part wall installations. These aggregations play with shifts between two- and three-dimensionality with a particular stress on the negative space between objects. *House of the South*, is one of numerous examples of enormous, mural-like arrangements of flat and modeled ceramic parts. Some of the pieces lay flush to the wall, others project out from it; the space in between the pieces is as important as the pieces themselves.

The densely packed and layered composition, *Aeolian Pyramid*, is one of the most spectacular of her pedestal-mounted assemblages. It's a tiered, pyramidal arrangement of 44 flat pink, yellow, white, and black vase shapes cut from earthenware slabs and patterned with small raised or incised textures. Each is a different shape and size; there is much confusion between foreground and background, which works to the piece's advantage. The imagery painted on the slabs is floral, geometric, and Mediterranean in style; the effect is of an archeological site or a shrine.

Over the course of the past decade, Woodman has been combining painted patterns on canvas with painted or glazed ceramic elements to create still-life tableaus that combine illusionism and tactility. The canvases serve as a backdrop to ceramic pieces and are tacked directly to the wall or placed on the floor. The ceramic pieces are used in a variety of ways; positioned on a table-like shelf that appears to be projecting from the painting, placed on the floor in front of a painting or posed on top of a rug-like painted floor cloth. She also places sculptures on top of cut wood pedestals that magnify the extremely deconstructed nature of her ceramic vases. A recent Woodman exhibition at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles, California, featured examples of all of these arrangements.

The *Red Window* combines several techniques and objects; a painted, wall-mounted canvas with a number of curving thin slab pieces nailed directly into it paired with a tall, freestanding ceramic sculpture. Every looping brushstroke on the canvas is articulated and magnified. Attached to the canvas are four calligraphic black and white ceramic fragments that create a vase form in the negative space between them. An adjacent unglazed trio of fragments implies a handled pitcher with the flesh-pink of the background showing through between them. These stand above a pale brown area painted to resemble a heavily grained wood tabletop. A white, painted, uneven shape on the canvas resembles the big ceramic sculpture on the floor below it. This red, black, and white form resembles a vase, but the flanges coming off its sides make it into something exotic, both organic and architectural.

The Boardwalk is a canvas with a wedge-shaped tabletop built into it. The painting resembles a beach scene with blue sky, expanse of sand, and striped wooden boardwalk with a white fence. The tabletop echoes the stripes and bears two cylinders hidden by two



4

Whitney, Kathleen, "Betty Woodman: The Ultimate Still-Life Object," *Ceramics Monthly*, March 2016, pp. 48-51







4 *Aeolian Pyramid,* 14 ft. (4.27 m) in length, 44 vases, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint, 2001–2006. From "The Art of Betty Woodman," April 25–July 30 2006, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. **5, 6** *Aztec Vase and Carpet: Bumble Bee,* 5 ft. (1.5 m) in length, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas, 2013. **7** *The Boardwalk*, 4 ft. 5 in. (1.3 m) in height, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint, canvas, wood, 2014. **4–7** *Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, California.*

large, flat, platter-like oval slabs. Each platter has painted on it half of a striped and curvy-footed vessel with spectacular red and yellow, long stemmed blooms emerging from it. When looked at from the side, the cylindrical forms come into view. They echo the stripe and grid motif of the canvas behind them but with a totally different color scheme. This view is so unexpected, its imagery so different from the front, that it has the impact of a totally different piece.

The aspects of surprise, difference, and multiplicity are typical of Woodman's work. It is especially so of *Aztec Vase and Carpet: Bumble Bee*. The object is made up of a tall, central cylinder with a number of flat slabs projecting from it. These slabs effectively divide the piece into four quadrants, each of which is glazed so differently as to create the experience of seeing four different objects. The sculpture is placed on a black and white striped canvas "rug" on which are scattered colorful flat forms that look as if they were cut out from the vase's projections. This sculpture is almost encyclopedic in the number of references it makes. She's parodied Cubism's intention to show three dimensions while using only two. She's plundered art history in combining the wild projections and geometric and curvilinear surface decoration of ancient Aztec ceremonial objects with Modernist abstraction. As an aside, she's borrowed the imagery of Persian carpets.

Woodman's eclecticism is carefully considered; it is pure pluralism, not a random gathering of styles and systems. Her organization of diverse sources into a single vision requires extreme selectivity. The fact that she doesn't stick to a single standard, that she is the beneficiary of centuries of global art history, is what fuels the variety and vitality of her work.

Now in her 80's, she continues to produce significant work. In 2014, she was the *American Craft Council's* Gold Medalist recipient. Her work is in more than 50 museum collections, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art. She has had over 100 solo exhibitions around the world. Her 2006 retrospective at The Metropolitan Museum was the first such show to be given to a ceramic artist or a woman. She taught for 40 years, most recently at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

the author *Kathleen Whitney is an artist and writer living in Los Angeles, California.*

"Review of Betty Woodman: The Theatre of the Domestic at ICA, London," *AestheticaMagazine.com*, February 20, 2016

Aesthetica

Review of Betty Woodman: The Theatre of the Domestic at ICA, London

by Imogen Greenhalgh
February 20, 2016

As you walk around a Betty Woodman vase, perhaps what strikes you first is its face, or better, faces. Circle around each piece and the surface will undulate and veer – form, in Woodman's work, never rests. Take a piece in her new show at the ICA, Posing with *Vases at the Beach* (2008), a painted diptych. From the 'front', a woman's pale body reclines across the component parts. Bursts of blue and sunny yellow evoke the shoreline in the work's title. Yet follow it round to its back and something utterly new awaits. That's the benefit of three-dimensional works, quipped the American artist at a talk held at the gallery: you can get two paintings out of one piece.

In their shifting, colourful unruliness, Woodman's works each become a perfect distillation of their creator, or more precisely, her multifaceted career. Like fractals, theirs is a prolific, expanding story writ small. If you're not familiar with Woodman (and many in Britain aren't: the ICA rights a wrong in being the first institution in the UK to offer a solo presentation of her work), this new show introduces you to just the last decade of the 85 year-old's cheerful oeuvre. They follow what Woodman has characterised as a watershed moment in her working life, namely the major retrospective of her work at New York's Metropolitan Museum in 2006. After that, she believes, she was free. If the Met show was a turning point, it didn't lead to entirely new departures – and happily so. Many of the post-2006 works are an obvious continuation of decades of artistic practice: the grouping of vessels, for instance, like a pair of actors on a stage, and the near devotional interest in the rituals of the home. The show's title, *Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic*, could apply quite comfortably to a retrospective spanning her wider career.

So what has changed? If clay is still her medium, her "magic" as she calls it, she's looser with it, incorporating painting more defiantly than before. She admits having become "besotted" with Pierre Bonnard, and like all her influences, she nods to his legacy with frankness. Upstairs, the French painter's presence grows, softly emanating from each of her benign, inviting coloured rooms. With their shared love of the domestic and apparent repudiation of the wider world, the kinship might seem obvious. Dig a little deeper, however, and a common fascination with context – how objects interact with each other and the places they occupy – begins to materialise. Bonnard's interest in cutting up and dispersing his works, building in spaces to his paintings, starts to resemble the trained potter's inevitable interest in the works' negative spaces.

To think of Woodman as a straightforward potter or ceramicist would be deceptive – her works owe a great deal to her painter's eye, and a concern for context makes her an ally of the installation artist too. While the years spent creating functional, usable vessels still surfaces in her latest works, perhaps what is most radically 'new' is her stepping back from this – a movement demonstrated most clearly in her rugs and wallpaper pieces. *Wallpaper 9* (2015) lets go of function altogether. Here, the interstitial spaces between flitting coloured offcuts of clay will never contain. Like cooking, Woodman jokes, it's when you use up your leftovers that you get truly creative.

If the era after the Met is Woodman at her least self-conscious, then *Wallpaper 9* is perhaps the most euphoric expression of this new-found liberty. Made from boxes of scraps she never used or discarded, their attraction grew out of the fact each represented a form her hand would never cut and her mind would never conceive. In these hovering odds and ends outstretched across the walls, we perhaps see, in its truest form, Woodman's art set free from her craft.

Sharp, Rob, “As “The Great Pottery Thrown Down” Grips Britain, 85-Year-Old Betty Woodman’s Experimental New Ceramics Go on View in London and New York,” *Artsy.net*, February 5, 2016

As “The Great Pottery Thrown Down” Grips Britain, 85-Year-Old Betty Woodman’s Experimental New Ceramics Go on View in London and New York

BY ROB SHARP
February 5, 2016



Installation view of “Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic” at ICA, London. Photo: Mark Blower, courtesy of ICA London.

A canvas depicting a domestic interior washed with light blue, grey, and green spans one side of a first-floor gallery at London’s Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA). Its obvious antecedents are the paintings of the French Post-Impressionist Pierre Bonnard. Bright, clashing colors appear behind a stretched perspective of a tabletop that is adorned with ceramics. With their ear-like handles and dark peripheries, they might be items of Etruscan pottery. But they are flattened and distorted, their properties bent out of shape, lending the impression of a theatrical set or frieze.

The work in question, The Summer House (2015), makes its debut as part of Betty Woodman’s first U.K. solo show, “Theatre of the Domestic,” which opened to the public at the ICA on February 3rd and coincides with a show at Salon 94 in New York. It contains over 30 works, most of which were made in the last decade. It is somewhat unbelievable that Woodman, who enjoyed a significant retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2006 (and who is the mother of the late visionary photographer Francesca Woodman), should have to wait until the age of 85 to make her debut here, but the show’s organizers hope to make amends.

“It struck us that her work in the last 10 years has been a period of extraordinary experimentation,” said Katharine Stout, the ICA’s head of programme. “She’s thinking about her ceramic pieces much more in a sculptural sense, thinking carefully in the context in which they are being presented.” This experimentation includes employing studio offcuts in pieces such as The Summer House and the same year’s Wallpaper 9. In the former, the offcut outlines of pots hang like orange-peel decorations from the canvas wall. The latter stretches along an ICA corridor, pieces spiraling, flowing, and curling from it like an elaborate mantelpiece.

Sharp, Rob, "As "The Great Pottery Thrown Down" Grips Britain, 85-Year-Old Betty Woodman's Experimental New Ceramics Go on View in London and New York," *Artsy.net*, February 5, 2016



Betty Woodman at work. Photo courtesy of ICA London.

"It struck us that her work in the last 10 years has been a period of extraordinary experimentation," said Katharine Stout, the ICA's head of programme. "She's thinking about her ceramic pieces much more in a sculptural sense, thinking carefully in the context in which they are being presented." This experimentation includes employing studio offcuts in pieces such as The Summer House and the same year's Wallpaper 9. In the former, the offcut outlines of pots hang like orange-peel decorations from the canvas wall. The latter stretches along an ICA corridor, pieces spiraling, flowing, and curling from it like an elaborate mantelpiece.

"She's assessing a context for her work within her own work," said Stout. "She is playing with the notion that pottery is a utilitarian object, used within the home, and creating a setting for it within the artwork."

The exhibition also serves as a showcase for Woodman's diverse array of influences—Matisse, Picasso, Sèvres porcelain. On the ground floor, visitors meander around delicate freestanding ceramics like Posing with Vases at the Beach (2008), another Bonnard-influenced work comprising two glazed earthenware vases, placed side by side, meeting with extended two-dimensional wing-like structures. On one side of the object, Woodman has painted a beach scene in which a nude bather brandishes her back.

Elsewhere, Fabric Girls (2015) drapes fabric over the same combination of materials—glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, acrylic paint—to create a series of "dolls" in Japanese costume. Woodman continually uses her brushstrokes to break her objects' forms, underlining their imperfections. As Stout added: "There's always a layering of knowledge. For her what's important is 'Where do I take it? What do I then say with that?'"

Woodman's mainstream success has come relatively late in life, no doubt due, in part, to the public's current enthusiasm for ceramics. The 2006 show at the Met was her first U.S. retrospective, and historic pieces like Floral Vase and Shadow (1983) evince both the requirements of a grand stage and the Baroque influences of her adopted home, Tuscany, where she currently splits her time with New York. The scale of the retrospective forced Woodman to reconsider her practice. "I'm not doing what I was doing at 16, 30, or 50, when I was focused on the history and function of ceramics," the artist said in a 2013 interview with the Wall Street Journal. "Now I'm considering painting, sculpture, and art history."

The ICA show's first outing was at Florence's Museo Marino Marini last September. The curator of both the British and Italian shows, Vincenzo de Bellis, said he became aware of Woodman's work relatively recently and set about finding an appropriate space to exhibit it. "She doesn't get to be shown a lot," he said. "I saw the work in Art Basel and that was when I really realized what it was about."

Sharp, Rob, “As “The Great Pottery Thrown Down” Grips Britain, 85-Year-Old Betty Woodman’s Experimental New Ceramics Go on View in London and New York,” *Artsy.net*, February 5, 2016



Installation view of “Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic” at ICA, London. Photo: Mark Blower, courtesy of ICA London.

The work is also well placed to take advantage of a rising tide of interest in younger ceramists. Jesse Wine, Aaron Angell, the Grantchester Pottery—who showed at the ICA in 2013—Giles Round, and Caroline Achaintre have all recently made waves in the medium. French artist Camille Henrot is also a known fan of Woodman’s. Glazed ceramics were one of the trends at both last year’s and at Design Miami/ and Frieze London, where Angell and Trisha Baga both showed work.

“We came to it because it’s so contemporary,” concluded Stout. “The latest developments in contemporary art don’t have to be made by a 20-year-old, they can be made by an 85-year-old. We’re not a museum, we’re not recognizing her for her place in art history, we’re recognizing her for what she’s making now.”

Ellis-Petersen, Hannah, “Sculptor Betty Woodman at the ICA: ‘Ceramics was always a macho world’,” *TheGuardian.com*, February 3, 2016

theguardian

Sculptor Betty Woodman at the ICA: ‘Ceramics was always a macho world’

Call her a potter at your peril. As Betty Woodman’s first solo UK show opens, the 85-year-old powerhouse opens up about small-minded curators, super-sized art and her lifelong affair with the sticky stuff

by HANNAH ELLIS-PETERSEN
February 3, 2016



‘People don’t know how to define my work’ … Betty Woodman at her show Theatre of the Domestic. Photograph: Graeme Robertson for the Guardian

In the hands of Betty Woodman, the possibilities of clay seem endless. Voluptuous vases, ornate wallpapers and even a gaggle of kimono-clad women burst into life from her pottery wheel. But call this octogenarian a potter at your peril.

Woodman learned her craft making dinner sets and decorative crockery, but from the 1950s onwards, she pushed her work into the realm of sculpture, creating vibrant, unruly pieces that have occupied art galleries rather than kitchen cabinets. It is only now, at the age of 85, that Woodman has her first solo show in the UK, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London.

Theatre of the Domestic is an expansive collection of the sculptor’s work from the past decade, incorporating triptychs of vases, wall-mounted mosaics and even canvases that push the boundaries of ceramics.

Born in 1930s Connecticut, Woodman has been so influential in the US that she was the subject of a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art 10 years ago, a rare accolade for a living artist. Yet even Woodman herself is unsure why it’s taken so long for the UK to catch up.

“I think it’s partly because people sometimes don’t know how to define my work, or where it fits into art history,” she says. “When I started out, ceramics was not even a material you made art out of. People might have liked what I was doing, responded to it, bought it, eaten off of it, but it had nothing to do with being an artist – it was about being a craftsman.”

Ellis-Petersen, Hannah, “Sculptor Betty Woodman at the ICA: ‘Ceramics was always a macho world’,” *TheGuardian.com*, February 3, 2016

The ICA show is a testament to a prolific spirit – Woodman is still creating work in her studios in Chelsea in New York and a farmhouse in Tuscany. Ideas, she says, come to her by making rather than sitting, thinking and planning. The more she creates, the “more I am inspired and the more one thing leads to another. I’m not interested in repeating myself.”

One wall of the ICA gallery will be covered with Woodman’s “wallpapers”. The idea for the works was a happy accident, born from a decision to glaze the offcuts of ceramics she had been holding on to and then mount them arbitrarily on a wall for people to take home. Taken with the pattern, Woodman has been making these mosaic-style pieces ever since.

As a female artist starting out in the 1950s, it was not always an easy ride for Woodman. She fell in love with clay as a teenager and her family supported her decision to become a potter, but the ceramics world was not always so welcoming.

“At the beginning, people were quick to dismiss me or not take me seriously,” she says. “Back then, the world of ceramics was totally male dominated, it was a very macho world. If you weren’t willing to be one of the boys, it was very difficult to be a part of it. But I’m a little combative, so I guess I also enjoyed it.”

It was only in the 1970s, when art curators began to be embarrassed by their all-male lineups, that Woodman was invited to exhibit her work, which acknowledges the rich history of the vase, from ancient Roman and Etruscan vessels to more recent Mediterranean styles, while pandering to no one.

In the ICA show, a naked female figure, painted from a life model, adorns a pair of pots on one side while bright abstract patterns cover the other. On the floor above, a new work stretches eight metres across, combining a painted canvas of a domestic scene with several pieces of pottery, such as jugs and plates, pinned to its surface.

Rather than slowing down at 85, Woodman says old age had proved liberating. “I was always interested in my work being seen in a broader context, to be displayed in museums, not shut away in cluttered cupboards,” she says. “And though it’s taken me a long time, with these recent works, these paintings, I’m really putting it out there.”

Farrell, Aimee, “Betty Woodman’s Cheery Ceramics Come to London,” *NYTimes.com*, Art, February 3, 2016

THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

Betty Woodman’s Cheery Ceramics Come to London

By AIMEE FARRELL
February 3, 2016



Betty Woodman in her studio, Italy, 2012. Credit Stefano Porcinai/Courtesy of the artist

The bright-eyed, 85-year-old American artist Betty Woodman has been creating with clay for almost 70 years, since she took a one-off pottery class in high school. “I still have the naïve belief that having beautiful things around you might make you a better person,” she says. Fittingly, her work — on display beginning today at London’s Institute of Contemporary Art — depicts cheery and inviting interior scenes, composed of her glazed earthenware vessels among large acrylic canvases.

Throughout her career Woodman has been caught up in changing perceptions of ceramics: “For many years it was a medium that it was not permissible to make art with,” she says. “Now it’s suddenly acceptable; everyone is looking at clay. It’s become the next hot thing. Why? The art world market always needs something new — and ceramics are fashionable.” A new school of young artisans is helping to transition the medium from folksy to sophisticated; and just last week in Paris, Schiaparelli’s couture collection was presented in front of a wall lined with plates — on a runway that appeared to be scattered with broken dishes.

Woodman’s first solo exhibition in the U.K. comes in the wake of her buzzed-about Salon 94 showing in New York — and crucially, in perfect synchronicity with the upcoming London Fashion Week. Also on view will be a series of experimental “wallpapers” comprised of ceramic off-cuts arranged in pleasing configurations.

By far the largest of the works on show is “The Summer House.” The four-part painting consumes an entire gallery wall, and shows a Pepto-Bismol pink table full of pots and plates and vases, some wrought in 3-D. According to Woodman’s husband George, this particular piece recalls the couple’s colorful Chelsea loft. And the idea of the table, and the domestic objects found there, is central throughout. All of which raise the question: What kind of ceramics grace the table at the Woodmans’ own Manhattan and Tuscany homes?

Farrell, Aimee, “Betty Woodman’s Cheery Ceramics Come to London,” *NYTimes.com*, Art, February 3, 2016



Installation view of “Betty Woodman” at Museo Marino Marini, Florence, Italy, Sept. 20 – Nov. 28, 2015.
Credit Courtesy of the ICA

“I have soup bowls from Joan Platts, who’s working in New York. I have plates by Aspen’s Alleghany Meadows, and old and new pieces by Linda Sikora,” says Woodman, wearing a saffron Issey Miyake dress and green-soled black Camper shoes with knee-high, mustard pop socks. “I’ve been using a vase by a woman named Deborah Dell from Colorado. It’s wonderful — and perfect for all the anemones that are in the New York at the moment.”

What the makers she gravitates towards appear to share is not a unified style, but a nuanced understanding of their medium. Similar to Woodman, they know inside out what clay will and won’t do, and how to exploit that. As to whether the couple ever disagree on the contents of their table, Mr. Woodman says sagely: “We’ve been married for 63 years; our tastes have converged.” His own work — specifically a collection of photographs from the last few years — will go on show in Buffalo in the spring.

Woodman’s personal appetite for studio pottery remains ferocious: “If I need something, I make it,” she says. “Last summer we found we were eating too much ice cream, so I made smaller bowls so we wouldn’t eat as much.”

Roux, Caroline, “Betty Woodman and her vast body of work in ceramics”, *FinancialTimes.com*, Visual Arts, January 29, 2016

FT FINANCIAL TIMES

Betty Woodman and her vast body of work in ceramics

Caroline Roux
January 29, 2016

At 86, and with new shows in London and Manhattan, the artist shows no sign of wanting to slow down



Betty Woodman at her studio in New York

On the dining table in Betty Woodman’s Chelsea loft are a cluster of cups and saucers in Sèvres porcelain. There are the recognisable colours of the venerable French house — the deep aubergine, the peerless cobalt, the pink enriched with gold — though the shapes and decoration are defiantly different from their 18th-century antecedents. Saucers, extended like those of sauce boats, have unevenly crimped edges; they are streaked with gold lines and dotted with spots. Cups, gilded at the rim, have a free-form fluidity. These prototypes for limited-edition pieces have been in the works for quite some time. “It’s been a while — years,” shrugs the American artist impatiently at the French manufacturer’s sluggish approach to completion.

Betty Woodman is 86 years old, and her vast body of work in ceramics is testimony to a life spent doing, rather than waiting around. An exhibition of new pieces that opens in London’s Institute of Contemporary Arts next week will provide more proof, were it needed, that she’s showing no signs of slowing down.

“I work compulsively,” she says as we move down a long corridor lined with pastel-painted doors to her capacious studio, where a small, yellow, well-used kick-wheel sits in the corner by the window. “I’m trying not to be so compulsive, but since my New York show opened on Thursday night [at Salon 94], I’ve managed to finish these two pieces.” (It is now Sunday afternoon.)

The two new works are magnificently scaled canvas wall pieces, with plenty of nods to Pierre Bonnard — brightly painted perspective views into cosy but light-drenched rooms where the domestic objects are all in three-dimensional ceramics.

Roux, Caroline, “Betty Woodman and her vast body of work in ceramics”, *FinancialTimes.com*, Visual Arts, January 29, 2016

Her output has always been matched by a hearty, even promiscuous, appetite for influences. Over the years she has taken inspiration and forms from Roman, Greek and Etruscan vessels; from the glazes of Japanese Oribe and the Chinese Tang dynasty; from Italian Bargello needlepoint; from Matisse; from the curling handles of fine 18th-century porcelain and classical pots. The results are brilliantly coloured, restless forms, always centred on the idea of the vessel but breaking the boundaries of that notion at every turn. Floor rugs made in painted canvas have vases growing out of them. Vases shaped like shells sprout two-dimensional flowers cut from clay.

At the ICA, though, she will be demonstrating a new strand of practice, creating two vast “Wallpaper” pieces, which consist of studio offcuts being reconfigured into energetic 3D friezes. “The biggest will be a 20ft-long abstraction,” she says. “I’ve always been inspired by what’s left around in the studio.” As Katharine Stout, the curator of the ICA’s exhibition, says, “We’re all talking about salvage culture, and here’s Betty just getting on and doing it.”



Woodman’s ‘Posing with Vases at the Beach’ (2008)

Betty Woodman was born Elizabeth Abrahams in Connecticut in 1930 to socialist Jewish parents. “They were very open-minded,” she says, her bob steely grey, her dress the black-and-white striped T-shirt style she likes best, this time teamed with yellow sneakers. “My father worked for a supermarket but made furniture for a hobby, and I got a lot from my mother, who worked in an office. She didn’t give me any sense that a woman should stay at home and look after the children.”

A single pottery class aged 16 set her on her life-long love of clay, and she went on to study at the School for American Craftsmen in Alfred, New York, where students were taught to make a living from craft practice. “The school was trying to preserve these traditions, like weaving and blacksmithing, at a time when manufacturing was eroding it all,” she says. Frank Lloyd Wright’s daughter, Frances, led the marketing course. The British potter Bernard Leach, then the doyen of studio practice and exponent of minimalist Japanese aesthetics, came to teach. “I stood at the side of the master!” says Woodman.

But it was a trip to Italy, rather than Leach’s Anglo-Japanese mantra, that worked its magic on the young potter. “I went to Florence in 1951, just after the war. It was filled with heaps of rubble, but also with hope. And I fell in love with it. I’ll never forget seeing the Duomo — a pink and white building! They didn’t have buildings like that in Boston.”

The colours of Renaissance art and the confident, exuberant decoration of Majolica pottery has influenced her ever since. Once she married her husband George, a philosophy student-turned-fine artist, the pair would travel to Italy yearly, finally buying an old farmhouse in the Florentine suburb of Antella, where they now spend up to half the year.

The Woodmans’ New York home, a former industrial space bought 36 years ago, incorporates George’s own studio, filled with his latest photographic works, as well as Betty’s. Antella, on the other hand, provides spectacular views of the Tuscan countryside.

Roux, Caroline, “Betty Woodman and her vast body of work in ceramics”, *FinancialTimes.com*, Visual Arts, January 29, 2016

“The coming and going between the two places has had an enormous influence,” says Woodman. “The stopping and starting is hard but the different conditions are good. In Italy I have red clay, and work with a white slip and a transparent glaze and then colours. And in the US, it’s a white clay with rich colour slips.”

For years Woodman kept a studio practice going, turning out thousands of more functional pieces. But a series of events, including the tragic suicide in 1981 of their daughter, the photographer Francesca Woodman, at the age of 22, meant Betty taking stock of her practice. For the last 30 years, she says, she has identified herself as an artist rather than a ceramicist, the various vessels and clay pieces as surfaces on which to deliver her work as a painter.

Francesca’s work has gone on to be increasingly highly feted and valued: a finite supply of photography with the young artist both psychologically and physically at its centre. Betty’s work, meanwhile, seems inexhaustible.

‘Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic’, ICA, London, February 3-April 10. ica.org.uk

Photographs: Tim Knox; Bruno Bruchi

Yablonsky, Linda, “Young at Art,” *W Art*, May 2015, pp. 76 - 79



Yablonsky, Linda, “Young at Art,” *W Art*, May 2015, pp. 76 - 79

Young at Art

Some of today's hottest new art world discoveries (like 100-year-old Carmen Herrera) were definitely not born yesterday. Linda Yablonsky reports. Portrait by Andreas Laszlo Konrath





Last fall in New York, one of the most talked about works at the Independent Projects art fair was a fountain of foaming soap bubbles. As mountains of suds rose and fell, the sculpture, *Cloud Canyons*, continually morphed into different shapes. It was fun to watch, and nervy enough to suggest the hand of a new artist with nothing to lose. Imagine the startled expressions on fairgoers' faces when they learned that it was by the Filipino-born David Medalla, 72, who made the sculpture in 1963 and had been absent from the New York scene for decades.

The art world's obsession with youth may be fading. With prices for even facile works by emerging talents accelerating at warp speed, collectors hunting for greater substance are turning to artists who are pushing 80, and counting. Many of these game-changers broke out in the 1960s and '70s and were driven by feminist, racial, and gender-identity politics to alter every existing medium and invent a few new ones. By experimenting with nascent technology and unconventional materials that included their own bodies, they opened the door for much of the video, performance, and digital art we have today.

But back then they didn't fit into any mainstream categories or prevailing styles. What's more, many had the bad luck to be women or minorities at a time when the market shunned almost everyone who wasn't white and male. Or, like Barbara T. Smith, 83, who anticipated the kind of endurance art that has lately been in vogue, they lived in provinces like California, which the East Coast establishment had a hard time accepting as a place for serious art. Fortunately, these undervalued artists are finding champions in people half their age—curators and dealers who learned about their work in school and can now give them the kind of prominence they never enjoyed.

The most striking example may be the painter Carmen Herrera, who turns 100 this month. Born in Cuba, where she studied architecture, she has lived and worked in New York for more than 60 years. Her circle included Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, and Willem de Kooning, yet she was relegated to outlets for Latin American art. She emerged on the contemporary art scene only in 2009, when she was given an attention-getting solo exhibition in Birmingham, England. Another solo show followed at London's blue-chip Lisson Gallery, giving her commercial traction and a major presence at art fairs, where people are regularly stopped in their tracks by her radiant abstractions. One of these is presently hanging alongside paintings by Ellsworth Kelly and Frank Stella in the exhibition inaugurating the Whitney Museum of American Art's new building in New York, and Herrera will have her own show there next year. "The more I saw of her work, the more groundbreaking it seemed," says Dana Miller, the show's 41-year-old curator. "Carmen was engaged with the same investigations as Stella, but she didn't get the same critical attention. The stories I've heard—gallerists told her they couldn't sell a woman's work!"

Art fairs have largely contributed to the resurgence of older artists by providing dealers a platform to present little-known works in an up-to-date context. "We used the opportunity of the fair to do some good for the artist and his legacy," says Adam Lindemann, the dealer and collector who brought Medalla's *Cloud Canyons* to the Independent Projects art fair. Leslie Tonkonow did the same last year at her booth at Art Basel Miami Beach, where densely rubbed graphite drawings on paper scrolls unspooled from the wall with a majesty that attracted gaggles of admirers. The works looked like the type of painting-and-sculpture hybrids popular now, but they were made in the 1970s by Michelle Stuart, an 82-year-old artist who signed with Tonkonow in 2010, after about a decade without representation. "Michelle was a huge influence on me when I was in school in the '70s," says Tonkonow, who has placed pieces by Stuart with museum curators. "They're people in their 30s and 40s who came of age professionally when Michelle wasn't that visible," she says. »

Opposite: Carmen Hererra in her New York studio, with works in progress. Above, from top: Lorraine O'Grady, 2014; O'Grady's *Art Is... (Troupe Front)*, 1983.

Yablonsky, Linda, “Young at Art,” *W Art*, May 2015, pp. 76 - 79



1. John Mason, 2015. 2. Jack Whitten's *USA Oracle (Assassination of M.L. King)*, 1968. 3. Carmen Herrera's *Untitled*, 2012. 4. Joan Semmel in front of her *Skin Patterns*, 2013. 5. Melvin Edwards in New York, 2012, with his *Curtain for William and Peter*, 1969/2012. 6. Barbara Kasten's *Construct 32*, 1986. 7. Edwards's *E. C.'s View*, 1979. 8. Kasten in 2015 with her video installation *Axis*, 2015. 9. Claude Rutault in New York, 2014, with his work *A Saturday Morning on the Grande Jatte or at Port-en-Bessin*, 2010. 10. Mason sculptures at his exhibit "Crosses, Figures, Spears, Torques," at David Kordansky Gallery, in Los Angeles, 2013.

Tonkonow also represents Agnes Denes, who, at 83, is typical of the current zeitgeist. This spring, sponsored by the Nicola Trussardi and Riccardo Catella foundations, Denes has reprised her legendary public artwork *Wheatfield—A Confrontation* for Expo Milan 2015. She first made the piece in 1982, on two acres of landfill that would become New York's Battery Park City. Massimiliano Gioni, 41, artistic director of the New Museum, as well as the director of the Trussardi Foundation, calls it "one of the most powerful urban interventions in the history of land art." At his invitation, Denes is installing the piece on a vacant lot in Milan. "I have always been a fan of looking back or sideways," Gioni says. "Not because I get a narcissistic kick out of 'rediscovering,' but because it's important to cultivate a sort of biodiversity in the art world by expanding its vocabulary and cast of characters."

The New York gallerist Alexander Gray, 44, works almost exclusively with overlooked artists of advancing age. His roster includes the painters Jack Whitten, 75; and Joan Semmel, 82; the sculptor Melvin Edwards, 77; and the 80-year-old photographer and performance artist Lorraine O'Grady. Each has made a powerful impact on younger artists, but until Gray came along, all were a distant memory. "It's uncanny how today's process-based abstraction parallels Jack Whitten's increasing visibility," Gray notes. "And when Lorraine shows up at a Lower East Side gallery opening, the kids flock around her. She loves it." O'Grady was in the 2010 Whitney Biennial, and Edwards's retrospective at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas is on view through May 10. Despite his towering presence on the African-American art scene in New York, he didn't have much of a market until five years ago, when Gray got involved.

It was the early work of another neglected black artist, the 81-year-old Color Field painter Sam Gilliam, that interested David Kordansky, a 37-year-old dealer in Los Angeles. Gilliam's lyrical "Drape" paintings from the '60s and '70s—twisted and hugely scaled unframed canvases—are in the collections of major museums, but his life and career were in free fall until 2013, when Kordansky mounted a show of his abstractions, curated by a market darling, Rashid Johnson. Kordansky started his business 12 years ago with artists primarily of his own generation, but he confesses that the latest crop leaves him cold. "You have all these little burgomeisters making their process paintings without knowing that Sam Gilliam had done it all in 1968," says Kordansky, who also represents the 88-year-old ceramic sculptor John Mason. "There's not a lot of young art that I'm interested in now. It's super-cynical. So I look to these older artists, who ask more existential questions."

So do young art stars like Nate Lowman, who did a show in January with the 73-year-old sculptor Keith Sonnier at Eneas Capalbo's tiny Manhattan gallery, the National Exemplar Gallery. "Nate's my neighbor," Sonnier says. "He suggested we do something together, and Eneas likes to couple younger artists with older ones." Capalbo, 39, calls Sonnier one of his favorites. "When I started the gallery, I wanted to show things that weren't so familiar. His art shaped what we have today."

Similarly, the postconceptual photographers Liz Deschenes and Sara VanDerBeek have helped draw attention to Barbara Kasten, 79. For much of her career, Kasten was hard to categorize and virtually absent from public view. Her brilliant stroke was to marry the handmade and the mechanical in photographs of architecturally-inspired mirrored objects built in her studio. The results are beautiful abstractions, but because

Yablonsky, Linda, "Young at Art," *W Art*, May 2015, pp. 76 - 79

"Younger artists see her work on the Internet and mistake it for digital media," says the curator Alex Klein of the artist Barbara Kasten, 79.

she identified herself as a photographer, sculptor, and painter, dealers didn't know how to place her. Finally, four years ago, the New York gallerist Stefania Bortolami spotted a couple of Kasten's staged photographs at Foire Internationale d'Art Contemporain, the annual art fair in Paris, and eventually signed her up. "I knew Barbara's work from school and told Stefania to see it," says her gallery partner, Christine Messineo. For her, Kasten is an analog precursor to the digital manipulations of today and a weather vane for artists like Deschenes, VanDerBeek, Walead Beshty, and Eileen Quinlan, who also use film. "Barbara Kasten: Stages," the first major survey of her multidisciplinary work, is on view through August 16 at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. "She's become a role model for younger artists, her new peer group," says Alex Klein, the show's 36-year-old curator. "Younger artists see her work on the Internet and mistake it for digital media."

Likewise, Betty Woodman, 84, was misperceived as a ceramist even though her pots often serve as canvases for her paintings. Her work caught the eye of Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn, whose Salon 94 gallery, in New York, embraces ceramic sculpture and design as well as fine art. "People used to think you couldn't make art out of clay, but that attitude has broken down," says Woodman. "She's in a hurry in a different way than younger artists," Greenberg Rohatyn speculates. "Because she doesn't think she'll be here much longer. She's really determined. Her work is so good that it fills me with anxiety—I want to deliver for this woman!"

The Paris dealer Emmanuel Perrotin had similar feelings about Pierre Soulages, 95, and Claude Rutault, 73. Both are revered in France, but Rutault was relatively unknown in New York, and Soulages had only four small shows there since the '60s. When Perrotin opened his Manhattan branch in 2013, he gave them both solo shows. Meanwhile, the Lebanese-born Etel Adnan had wide renown as a poet and an essayist, but when Photios Giovanis showed the 90-year-old's abstract landscapes at his Callicoon Fine Arts in downtown New York, the gallerist broke new ground. "Small as her paintings are, they're emblematic of a historical moment where different places in the world come together in a single figure," he says. "I think that's why she has risen to prominence."

Another artist who was ahead of the curve is Lynn Hershman Leeson. Though vaguely remembered for her identity-slipping performances of the '70s, what connects with audiences today is her interactive art, which anticipated the digital revolution and the withering of privacy. At 73, Hershman Leeson recently had the satisfaction of seeing a 50-year survey of her work at the ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany, 60 percent of which had never been exhibited anywhere. She was poised for rediscovery, therefore, when Bridget Donahue, 35, opened her gallery on the Lower East Side this year with "Origins of the Species," a sweeping show of Hershman Leeson's photographs, drawings, and wallpapers detailing the social and ethical issues surrounding genetic manipulation. The artist says that people in Donahue's generation get her, "because many of my works, like my telerobotic surveillance doll or my breathing machines, were born when they were."

Now that museums have whole departments devoted to performance and so-called new media art, we can look forward to discovering more of the pioneers of these disciplines. "People weren't ready to address the themes in Lynn's work back when she was making it," says Donahue of Hershman Leeson—and, by extension, of many of her contemporaries. "I'm interested in seeing who has the courage to correct some history." Stay tuned. ◆



11. Betty Woodman's *Aztec Vase #13*, 2011. 12. Pierre Soulages, 2014. 13. Michelle Stuart's *#7 Echo*, 1973. 14. Barbara T. Smith with *The Field Piece*,1968–1972, in 1971. 15. Sam Gilliam in his studio, Washington, D.C., 2013. 16. Gilliam's *Change*, 1970. 17. Agnes Denes's *Wheatfield—a Confrontation*, 1982. 18. A young Denes. 19. David Medalla, 2014. 20. Woodman in her New York studio, 2009. 21. Medalla's *Cloud Canyons*, 1963/2014. 22. Lynn Hershman Leeson's *Plug*, 1985.

Hudson, Suzanne, "Los Angeles, Betty Woodman, David Kordansky Gallery," *Artforum*, Reviews, April 2015, pp. 256-257

LOS ANGELES

Betty Woodman

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

"Illusions of Domesticity," Betty Woodman's first solo show at David Kordansky Gallery, was also her first one-person exhibition on the West Coast in a decade—the latter landmark made all the more remarkable by the recent visibility of ceramics in the area, with shows featuring the work of Peter Voulkos and Ken Price, among others. Yet while these efforts to showcase ceramics (and thus to retroactively rectify its omission from standard twentieth-century narratives, which privileged painting and sculpture) have primarily been retrospective in their purview, detailing the place of pottery in the art world of postwar California, Woodman's installation was decidedly contemporary in chronology and reference. Unfussy but remarkably erudite, her pottery comfortably foregrounds ceramics' conventions and place within (or outside of) this erstwhile art-historical canon. The rigor of Woodman's engagement with the medium was here belied by the visceral convolutions of color and runny streaks of paint that turn the surface of her vessels into canvaslike grounds. Indeed, many of the artist's recent pieces that were on view (all works exhibited were made between 2008 and 2014) incorporate unstretched canvas within their polychrome tableaux, and feature glazed earthenware and structures that extend out from the wall or rest upon vibrantly patterned canvas carpets. These are archetypal but also unremittingly intimate works, in their evocations of domestic spaces and of the bodies that might activate them (but that will never sit at her makeshift tables and imbibe wine from her vessels—hence their status as "illusions").

The human-scale structures paradoxically make plain Woodman's assertion that their employ is hypothetical. *The Red Window*, 2014, a Matissean rendering of a salmon-hued room with a scarlet aperture, perhaps goes the farthest in countering Alberti's oft-quoted description of painting as portal: Absent of any depiction of the outside world, the black-framed brushy red square stays resolutely on our side of the picture plane. Woodman's wall work—showing a window that cannot be "seen through"—presents a destabilized representational device redoubled by the artist's contrary thrown vase forms (one of which is incorporated within *The Red Window*), which similarly imply but ultimately withhold their usefulness. *The Red Window*—alongside other works that were mounted to the gallery's walls, including the massive and exuberant *Paola's Room (diptych)*, 2011, which spanned a full third of the back gallery's wall—further suggested the possibility of the work's serving as a scrim, an abstract theatrical backdrop for some imagined improvisatory activation.

The poster accompanying the exhibition showed Woodman standing, arms akimbo, behind one of her vases, so that the artist was occluded by her own work. Proposing a kind of physical engagement that is also a form of play, the photograph proved complementary to the sentiment expressed in the attendant press materials, namely that Woodman "conjures the trappings of a bourgeois home as splendorous perceptual experiences," which are contingent on the phenomenological negotiation of objects and space. The discontinuity of the artist's designs was revealed when one walked around the vase sculptures Woodman had installed around the gallery. *Vase Upon Vase: Orpheo*, 2013, a bubble-gum-pink pedestal supporting a kind of monochromatic cream-colored bivalve, becomes an orange-tipped fan atop a base of vertical ribbons when seen from the opposite side. *Aztec Vase and Carpet #6 Easter*, 2014, appears as a pinwheel plucked from its stick. Viewed from distinct vantages, the work's central element utterly shifts from emerald and citrus lines on one plane to black calligraphy and cornflower-blue polka dots on another. Circumambulating these structures is an endless but endlessly satisfying labor. The painted colors, applied without regard for parity with the underlying form, show structure and surface to be engaged in a parallactic play, revealing visual satisfaction to be independent of compositional coherence.

—*Suzanne Hudson*



Betty Woodman, *The Red Window*, 2014, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, and acrylic on canvas, 85 × 82 × 13".

Mizota, Sharon, "Review, Betty Woodman at David Kordansky Gallery," *The Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 2015

Los Angeles Times

Review Betty Woodman at David Kordansky Gallery



Betty Woodman's "The Chartreuse Table." (Brian Forrest)

By SHARON MIZOTA
March 11, 2015

Betty Woodman is best known as a ceramicist, but her work is perhaps more engaged with painting. In an exhibition of exuberantly colored, hybrid works at David Kordansky, the 84-year-old artist plays with her signature vase form, popping it in and out of the picture plane with joyous abandon.

The show is titled "Illusions of Domesticity," and Woodman's references are the traditional framing devices of still-life painting: windows, tables and rugs. The casual brushwork and high-keyed palettes of Matisse's domestic interiors come to mind, as do the spatial tweaks of Cezanne's tabletops.

Large ceramic vessels decorated in abstract patterns sit on the floor in front of painted canvas "windows," rest on eccentrically designed wooden tables or emerge from the center of painted "rugs." Sometimes, as in "The Red Window," the shape of the ceramic echoes a blank silhouette on the painted surface, as if the object has jumped off the canvas. In "The Chartreuse Table," Woodman places a vase, complete with abstract flowers, on a wooden shelf that extends a painted table almost seamlessly into real space. It's fun to decipher what is "real" and what is illusion, but even more satisfying to realize that Woodman thoroughly collapses such distinctions in an ecstatic, overall rhythm.

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015

ISN’T A HOUSE A GREAT VESSEL THAT CONTAINS FURNISHINGS, ROOMS, AND THE LIVES OF ITS INHABITANTS? ISN’T A HOUSE, PERHAPS, A VASE? ANDREW BERARDINI HAS A SEAT ON MATISSE’S ARMCHAIR, BUT MAYBE THE CHAIR IS IN THE WRONG HOUSE, NAMELY THE BIG CLAY-DUSTED STUDIO-VASE OF BETTY WOODMAN. HER CHUBBY CERAMIC ODALISQUES, WITH THEIR ALLURING FORMS, COVERED WITH FRAGMENTS OF PRECIOUS STONES, EMBROIDERIES AND MINIATURES, TUG HIM INTO A GRAND THEATER OF FORMS AND COLORS, WILD THINGS AND AQUATIC CREATURES.

One of America’s foremost contemporary ceramic artists, **Betty Woodman** (born 1930 in Norwalk, Connecticut) has been consistently challenging the limits of the medium since the 1950s, inventing and re-inventing new and traditional forms and moving beyond the conventional domain of craft. Woodman has also produced painterly wall pieces and large-scale installations, platters and, most enduringly, vases in an endless array of colors and styles. Woodman has traveled extensively, finding inspiration in cultures around the world. Her practice is informed by the artistic traditions of Italy and the Mediterranean regions, as well as by Chinese and Modernist influences. Her work has been shown around the world, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art dedicated a retrospective exhibition to it in 2006.

COMIC STRIP GAZE, COSMIC SHIP GRAYS, CERAMIC SLIP GLAZE: FROM HENRI MATISSE TO BETTY WOODMAN

BY ANDREW BERARDINI



Above and Opposite, Top - *Aztec Vase and Carpet: Bumble Bee,* 2013. Courtesy: David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.
Photo: Brian Forrest

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015

COMIC STRIP GAZE

A. BERARDINI

WHAT I DREAM OF IS AN ART OF BALANCE, OF PURITY AND SERENITY, DEVOID OF TROUBLING OR DEPRESSING SUBJECT MATTER, AN ART WHICH COULD BE FOR EVERY MENTAL WORKER, FOR THE BUSINESSMAN AS WELL AS THE MAN OF LETTERS, FOR EXAMPLE, A SOOTHING, CALMING INFLUENCE ON THE MIND, SOMETHING LIKE A GOOD ARMCHAIR WHICH PROVIDES RELAXATION FROM PHYSICAL FATIGUE.

Matisse, “Notes of a Painter,” 1908

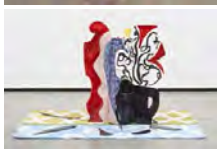
Sit too long in that armchair and the wallpaper will creep. The mundane stillness of domestic parlor games for bourgeois businessmen, the stagnancy of air plumped with stale tobacco smoke and roast chicken and potpourri, the numbed-ass stasis of sitting in that comfy armchair, hour after hour, year after year, and the wallpaper will creep for sure.

Vines undulate and tangle, roping their way through the windows, the glass crackling and webbing into conjoined shards, its translucent body refusing to fully shatter. Fat, thickening green arms vein over the ceiling, the plaster cracking and dusting, sprouting tufts of leaves that hydra into arms of their own. The pouched lips of pods perch above the bookshelf and peel back to unsheathe ornamental daggers with poisonous jewel petals, the colors so sumptuous they can only mean death. But even from that comfy armchair, those colors itch to be tongued, the daggers throated, a dangerous little *Bonheur de Vivre*.

*
* *

Betty Woodman has made more than one unruly wallpaper, the scraps of ceramic dancing in patterns along the wall, each swathed with paint. But even as a canvas painter, her paintings are never flat-faced 2D tableaux, but whole rooms. Matisse always wanted his cutouts to hang pinned and not glued to the wall, so that they could curl off like sculpture (for the sake of conservation, museums paste down the unruly curls). Dispensing with paper, the bright stony swirls of color of Betty Woodman jut with glassy glimmer off the wall; they’ve gone beyond paper.





Aztec Vase and Carpet # 6 Easter, 2014. Courtesy: David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo: Brian Forrest



Aztec Vase and Carpet #5, 2014. Courtesy: Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo

*
* *

In this room, white birthed a brood of colors, each a chip off the old beam, prismed out into unique forevers, literally radiant. The pure, scattered hues skitter throughout the room and in their unfettered flight might as well be birds. The carpet boils, the wood slats crumble to mulch and the threaded Persian filigrees sprout, joining the cacophony of life bursting in this drawing room jungle.

The vines are trees, the trees a jungle and the wallpaper tatters. The walls disappear into fetid wet trunks, each waxy leaf a sharpened tongue, and even the slightest movement makes them lap like a dog’s, dripping with hunger.

Our armchairist thinks it's a garden and we let him.

THE CHIEF FUNCTION OF COLOR SHOULD BE TO SERVE EXPRESSION AS WELL AS POSSIBLE…. THE ICY PURITY OF THE SOUR BLUE SKY WILL EXPRESS THE SEASON JUST AS WELL AS THE NUANCES OF FOLIAGE.

Matisse, “Notes of a Painter,” 1908

FOR ME, A COLOR IS A FORCE. MY PICTURES ARE MADE UP OF FOUR OR FIVE COLORS THAT COLLIDE WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE COLLISION GIVES A SENSE OF ENERGY. WHEN I PUT GREEN, IT DOESN’T MEAN GRASS. WHEN I PUT BLUE, IT DOESN’T MEAN SKY.

Matisse again, interviewed by Pierre Courthion, 1941

*
* *

Betty Woodman is a slatherer. Hardly a straight line or a precise corner finds its way into her wriggling lines. Her color has all the reckless joy of drunken, fistfighting rainbows. In her color sample vases, like *Double Color Sample Vase* from 2011, smears of colors, each

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015

named, circle the pottery. The impulse to collect them all in a messy array that has some playful drive towards a complete spectrum is appealing, like directing different fireworks into a canvas of clouds. We cannot compete with the stars but we can manage to concoct our own explosive bursts of colored light when those celestial bodies are hiding.

*
* *

The regal procession of a warrior queen passes through the gnarled and roped tree trunks, her sunkissed handmaidens wearing gold daggers cinched to their waists, breasts bound with the pelts of jungle cats and wildebeests. Plump odalisques with inviting forms, but a hungry hand might quickly regret taking these warriors for concubine slaves. Any daring to finger their concupiscent curves might not realized their arm’s been chopped clean off till it wetly smacks the earth.

Each of the queen’s handmaidens drips with decorative jewels of jasper and jade, ruby and sapphire, carrying in their arms a particular treasure from a wide and ancient world. Greek amphorae and Etruscan oinochoes, Korean celadons and Tang porcelain, glass tiles flowing with arabesques from Mecca and Alexandria, mosaics from Teotihuacan, Rome, and Byzantium, Lapita burial urns nabbed from New Caledonia, Turkish embroidery and kabuki masks, Persian carpets and Indian miniatures. Her highness’ taste tended toward glass and ceramic. If to the patriarchy women were like sand, then their heat had transformed her tribe into glass, glittering in beauty and as sharp as necessary. If made from clay thought to be so easily molded, she would fire her women into stone with hardened skins and flaunted colors.



Vase Upon Vase: Orpheo, 2013. Courtesy: David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo: Brian Forrest

FUNCTIONAL CONCERNS HAVE REALLY BECOME CONCEPTUAL. VASES ARE NOW ABOUT VASES.

Betty Woodman

It probably started out as a simple vase. The vase seemed incomplete, lonesome, it needed friends. Piece by piece, with architectural flourishes, random swirls and imaginary plinths, details of a house emerged. It is not quite a house; climbing more than 20 feet up the naked white wall, one can just see its shape and color. The vase did not so much find its *House in the South*, 1996, as it made itself the perfect home. If a vase is just a container, than why can’t a room or a house be a vase, too?

“TOO MATISSEY” A WOMAN COMPLAINED WHILE VIEWING THE SPECTACULAR BETTY WOODMAN RETROSPECTIVE AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, A SHOW THAT, ON THE DAY THAT I SAW IT, PIQUED A GOOD DEAL OF CHAT AMONG STRANGERS… NONE OF THE WORK IS TOO MATISSE-LIKE. THOUGH THE MASTER OF COLOR IS VERY MUCH EVOKED, NOTHING COULD LESS REFLECT HIS IDEAL THAT ART SHOULD BE LIKE A GOOD ARMCHAIR THAN WOODMAN’S ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE THEATRICALITY.

Peter Schjeldahl, “Decoration Myths,” *The New Yorker,* May 15, 2006

So the vase became aware of the table, the table became aware of the room, the room became aware of the house, and when the house becomes aware of its people, it becomes a theater. The vases in *Theater II – The Rockettes* (2001), are Busby Berkeley beauties strutting their stuff down a grand staircase, each shaking its unique curves. The theater is a slow one though, it takes a few human lifetimes for them to shake a leg, but they are all primed and ready should time crack-shatter them into movement, or should an earthquake dance them off the stairs.

*
* *

The Queen arrives and that armchair-bound adventurer cannot quite see her. His eyes fathered this fuckfest of color, but he can no longer control his creations. They are wild things, like their father in his Fauvist youth.

Hours pass. Then they are not hours, they are millennia. The continents shift and the oceans rise, seawater seeps into the room and the hot air cools into languid liquid, the trees make ways for the slowdance of seaweeds and the fish slither their bodies against the long,

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015



Top - *Vase Upon Vase: High Fashion*, 2008/2012.
Courtesy: Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo

Bottom - *Vase Upon Vase: Bella*, 2011-2012.
Courtesy: Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015



Lansdowne Room Revisited, 2009.
Courtesy: Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015



Entrata Rosa, 2009.
Courtesy: Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015



Finestra con persiane, 2009.
Courtesy: Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015



The Red Window, 2014. Courtesy: David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo: Brian Forrest

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015

loose stalks. Other creatures, their names just divers’ jokes and Latin colorings, weft their way in, fronded bodies like long-fingered hands that soak and suck their way across an ocean. The handmaids transform to mermaids, no less fierce for their fins. The man turns ultramarine and with a long and beautiful thrash of limbs suddenly loosed from time, he cyclones the edge of the room, then swims away in a burst of blue.

BRILLIANT COLORS ARE IMPORTANT AS PART OF MY MATERIAL. MY FIRST RESPONSE IN ANY ARTWORK IS TO MATERIAL. I’M A GREAT ADMIRER OF MATISSE; FOR AN ARTIST MY AGE, IT’S HARD NOT TO HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY HIM. FOR YEARS, I STAYED AWAY FROM HIS WORK BECAUSE IT WAS TOO ATTRACTIVE. NOW I’M MATURE ENOUGH TO COMMIT MYSELF TO IT.

Betty Woodman, interviewed by Vibhuti Patel, *Wall Street Journal*, May 7, 2013

Betty is loose and fearless and committedly whimsical. She takes a form and bends it till it’s a woman, a man, a pillow, a window, a room, a theater. She’s a magician that can turn a lump of clay into just about anything. From wherever she began making simple earthenware pots to her current travels through the wild frontier of a swirling kaleidoscope, the movement was ever beyond, to the farthest edge of what her simple pots could become.

*
* *

The ocean recedes, the room returns, but this comfy 19th-century parlor has been warped by its metamorphoses. It is now a clay-dusted studio with a kiln and a half-century of ebullient craft. The queen remains, undiminished in strength but is now more mother than killer. With the blossoming of time her conquests have settled into the care of glass and clay, the flow of pure color that can sometimes be found in paint, lustrous and crackled, abstract and figured, ripe with laughter and ponderous pauses. Unruly as her warriors, though, who refuse to only carry water or cradle the dead, but climb the walls and stack themselves into pyramids, in loose painterly joy. Limbs spread-eagled, they wear their sexual freedom with exquisite grace. The slathery colors wash over shapely bodies, and they prance and gambol with theatrical flourish and unfettered joy.

Brush in hand and kiln at the elbow, our queen crafts an army of irrepressible pots that would be sculptures that would be pictures that would be rooms, just like this one.

Their isn’t an armchair to be seen: only Betty Woodman.



Black and White, 2014. Courtesy: Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich. Photo: Annik Wetter

di Andrew Berardini

Una casa non è forse un grande recipiente che contiene arredi, stanze e le esistenze dei suoi abitanti? Una casa non è forse un vaso? Andrew Berardini si è seduto sulla poltrona di Matisse, ma quella poltrona non era nella casa giusta, era nel grande studio-vaso, ricoperto di polvere d’argilla, di Betty Woodman e sono state le sue paffute odalische di ceramica, dalle forme invitanti, coperte di frammenti di pietre preziose, ricami e miniature, a trascinarlo in un gran teatro di forme e colori, tra cose selvagge e creature acquatiche.

Quel che sogno è un’arte fatta di equilibrio, purezza e tranquillità, senza oggetti minacciosi o angoscianti; un’arte che sia per chiunque lavori col cervello, ad esempio l’uomo d’affari o il letterato, un lenitivo, un calmante della mente, qualcosa di simile a una buona poltrona su cui riposare dalle fatiche fisiche.
Henri Matisse, “Note di un pittore,” 1908

Rimanete seduti troppo a lungo su quella poltrona e la carta da parati comincerà a strisciare. La noiosa staticità dei giochi da salotto per uomini d’affari borghesi; l’aria stagnante, carica dell’odore stantio del fumo di tabacco, dell’aroma di pollo arrosto e della fragranza di potpourri; l’intorpidimento al sedere causato dal rimanere seduti in quella poltrona comoda ora dopo ora, anno dopo anno: la carta da parati si metterà sicuramente a strisciare.

Le piante rampicanti ondeggiano e si aggrovigliano, facendosi strada, come se fossero delle corde, attraverso le finestre; il vetro si incrina e forma ragnatele di schegge unite tra loro, come se il suo corpo traslucido si rifiutasse di andare in pezzi completamente. Grossi tralci verdi, sempre più fitti, venano il soffitto e, mentre l’intonaco si crepa e si riduce in polvere, da essi spuntano ciuffi di foglie che come idre generano altri rami. I baccelli, con le loro labbra sigillate, si posano sulla libreria e si aprono per sfoderare pugnali ornamentali con preziosi petali velenosi, dai colori così sontuosi da poter significare solo morte. Perfino da quella poltrona tanto comoda, quei colori suscitano in noi il desiderio di toccarli con la lingua, di ingoiare i pugnali: un piccolo pericoloso *Bonheur de Vivre*.

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015



Wallpaper #4, 2013. Courtesy: Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich. Photo: Annik Wetter

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015

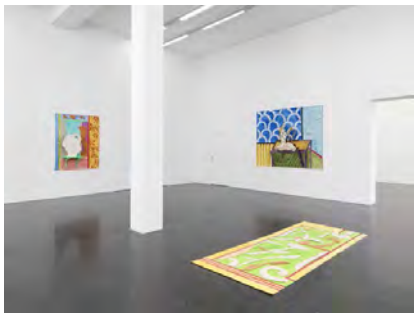


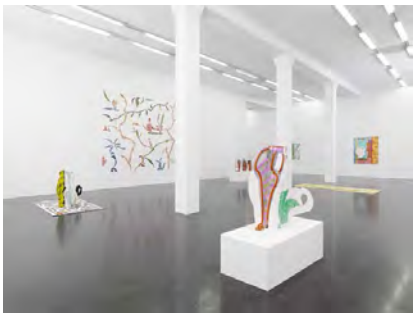
Aztec Vase and Carpet 2, 2012. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015



“Of Botticelli” installation view at Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin, 2013.
Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin





“Interior Views” installation views at Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich, 2014.
Courtesy: Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich. Photo: Annik Wetter

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015

* * *

Betty Woodman ha creato qualcosa di più di una carta da parati dal motivo disordinato. I frammenti di ceramica danzano lungo la parete seguendo schemi precisi, ciascun frammento avvolto in uno strato di pittura. Ma anche come pittrice su tela, i dipinti di Betty Woodman non sono mai piatti *tableaux* bidimensionali, ma intere stanze. Matisse voleva che i suoi ritagli (*cutout*) fossero fissati alla parete con le puntine e non incollati, affinché potessero ripiegarsi come sculture (i musei, per motivi di conservazione, fissano con la colla questi riccioli ribelli). Lasciando perdere la carta, i vortici di colore duri e brillanti di Betty Woodman sporgono dal muro con una lucentezza vitrea; sono andati oltre la carta.

* * *

In questa stanza il bianco ha partorito una cucciolata di colori, ciascuno dei quali è un frammento del fascio di luce originario, che è stato scomposto da un prisma dando vita a delle eternità uniche, letteralmente raggianti. I colori puri, sparsi, si muovono freneticamente in tutta la stanza e nel loro volo senza freni potrebbero benissimo essere degli uccelli. Il tappeto bolle, le assicelle di legno si sbriciolano trasformandosi in pacciame e le filigrane persiane intrecciate germogliano, unendosi alla cacofonia della vita che esplode nella giungla di questo salotto.

Le piante rampicanti sono alberi, gli alberi una giungla e la carta da parati stracci; le pareti scompaiono in tronchi umidi e fetidi; le foglie ceree sono come lingue affilate e anche il più piccolo movimento le fa lappare come la lingua di un cane affamato.

Il nostro poltronista pensa si tratti di un giardino e noi glielo lasciamo pensare.

* * *

La funzione primaria del colore dovrebbe essere quella di rendere il miglior servizio possibile all’espressione... la purezza gelida del cielo, d’un blu siderale come le sfumature indefinibili del fogliame d’autunno.

Henri Matisse, “Note di un pittore“, 1908

Un colore, per me, è una forza. I miei dipinti sono fatti da quattro o cinque colori che si scontrano fra loro, in una collisione che dà un senso di energia. Quando uso un verde, non significa erba. Quando uso un azzurro, non significa cielo.

Matisse di nuovo, intervistato da Pierre Courthion, 1941

* * *

Betty Woodman ama ricoprire. Tra le sue linee contorte non trova strada quasi nemmeno una linea dritta o un angolo preciso; i suoi colori hanno in sé tutta la gioia spericolata di arcobaleni ubriachi che fanno a pugni. Nei suoi vasi con campionature di colori, come *Double Color Sample Vase* (2011), la ceramica è dipinta tutta intorno con diversi colori, ciascuno dei quali contrassegnato da un nome. L’impulso di riunirli tutti in un insieme caotico, che tenda giocosamente verso uno spettro completo, risulta attraente, come l’idea di sparare tanti fuochi d’artificio diversi su una tela fatta di nuvole. Non possiamo competere con le stelle, ma quando tali corpi celestiali si nascondono possiamo inventarci le nostre esplosioni di luce colorata.

* * *

La processione regale di una regina guerriera passa in mezzo ai tronchi nodosi e connessi degli alberi; le sue ancelle, baciate dal sole, portano pugnali d’oro assicurati in vita, i loro seni sono coperti con pelli di gatto selvatico e di altre bestie selvagge. Sembrano paffute odalische dalle forme invitanti, ma una mano avida potrebbe pentirsi presto di aver tentato di prendere queste guerriere come concubine. Chiunque osasse toccare anche solo con un dito le loro curve che suscitano desiderio potrebbe non rendersi conto che il suo braccio è stato reciso di netto finché questo, coperto di sangue, non cada rumorosamente a terra.

Ciascuna delle ancelle della regina è ricoperta di preziosi gioielli di diaspro e di giada, di rubini e zaffiri, e porta tra le braccia un tesoro particolare, proveniente da un mondo antico e lontano. Anfore greche e *oinochoe* etruschi, *celadon* coreani e porcellane Tang, piastrelle di vetro traboccanti di arabeschi provenienti dalla Mecca e da Alessandria, mosaici che vengono da Teotihuacan, Roma, e Bisanzio, urne funerarie Lapita trafugate dalla Nuova Caledonia, ricami turchi e maschere kabuki, tappeti persiani e miniature indiane. Sua Altezza la regina aveva una certa predilezione per il vetro e la ceramica. Se per il patriarcato le donne erano come sabbia, allora il loro calore aveva trasformato la sua tribù in vetro, dalla bellezza risplendente ma affilato al punto giusto. Se, invece, erano fatte di argilla, ritenuta facile da plasmare, con il calore del fuoco trasformava le due donne in pietra, dalla pelle dura e dai colori sgargianti.

* * *

Gli aspetti funzionali sono diventati davvero concettuali. I vasi ora parlano di vasi.

Betty Woodman

Probabilmente tutto è cominciato con un semplice vaso. Il vaso sembrava incompleto, solo, bisognoso di amici. Pezzo dopo pezzo, aggiungendo decori architettonici, vortici casuali e plinti immaginari, hanno cominciato a emergere i dettagli di una casa. Non si tratta propriamente di una casa; se ci si arrampica per cinque metri lungo la parete bianca, si riesce a vederne solamente la forma e il colore. Così il vaso non ha trovato la sua *House in the South* (1996), ma si è trasformato nella casa perfetta. Se un vaso è semplicemente un contenitore, perché una stanza, o una casa, non può essere anch’essa un vaso?

* * *

“Troppo matissiana”, si è lamentata una donna mentre visitava la spettacolare retrospettiva di Betty Woodman al Metropolitan Museum, una mostra che, il giorno in cui l’ho visitata io, ha suscitato molte discussioni tra sconosciuti... Nessuna delle opere è troppo matissiana. Benché il maestro del colore sia spesso evocato, niente potrebbe corrispondere meno alla sua idea che l’arte dovrebbe essere una comoda poltrona della teatralità disordinata di Betty Woodman.

Peter Schjeldahl, “Decoration Myths,” *The New Yorker*, 15 maggio 2006

Così il vaso ha preso coscienza del tavolo, il tavolo ha acquisito consapevolezza della stanza, la stanza ha preso coscienza della casa e quando la casa prende coscienza dei suoi abitanti allora si trasforma in un teatro. I vasi presenti in *Theater II – The Rockettes* (2001), sono bellezze alla Busby Berkeley che scendono pavoneggiandosi lungo uno scalone, mettendo in evidenza ciascuno le proprie eccezionali curve. Si tratta di un teatro lento, però. Ci vogliono alcune vite per far scuotere loro una gamba, ma sono pronti a reagire nel caso il tempo dovesse produrre delle crepe, costringendoli al movimento, o un terremoto li costringesse a scendere le scale danzando.

* * *

La regina arriva e l’avventuriero legato alla poltrona non riesce quasi a vederla. I suoi occhi hanno dato inizio a quest’orgia di colore, ma lui non riesce più a controllare le sue creazioni. Sono cose selvagge, come lo era il loro genitore durante la sua giovinezza fauvista.

Le ore trascorrono. Poi non sono più ore, sono millenni. I continenti si spostano e gli oceani si innalzano; l’acqua del mare penetra nella stanza e l’aria calda si condensa in un liquido languido, gli alberi lasciano spazio alla lenta danza delle alghe e i pesci sfiorano con i loro corpi i lunghi steli morbidi di queste ultime. Altre creature, i cui nomi sono solo scherzi dei subacquei a cui è stata data una coloritura latina, si insinuano con i loro corpi frondosi, simili a mani dalle lunghe dita che attraversano l’oceano succhiando e sputando acqua. Le ancelle si trasformano in sirene, non meno pericolose con le loro pinne. L’uomo diventa una creatura ultramarina e con un lungo e meraviglioso movimento degli arti, improvvisamente slegato dal tempo, si avventa come un ciclone sul margine della stanza e poi se ne va nuotando in un’esplosione di blu.

* * *

I colori brillanti occupano un posto importante tra i materiali che utilizzo. In qualsiasi opera d’arte la mia prima risposta è al materiale. Sono una grande ammiratrice di Matisse; per un’artista della mia età è difficile non essere influenzata da lui. Per anni mi sono tenuta lontana dal suo lavoro, perché era troppo attraente. Ora sono abbastanza matura da potermi dedicare a esso.

Betty Woodman, intervistata da Vibhuti Patel, *Wall Street Journal*, 7 maggio 2013

Betty è rilassata, impavida e programmaticamente stravagante. Prende una forma e la piega finché diventa una donna, un uomo, un cuscino, una finestra, una stanza, un teatro. È una maga che può trasformare quell’ammasso di argilla in qualsiasi cosa. Dal momento in cui ha iniziato a creare semplici vasi di terracotta fino all’attuale viaggio attraverso la frontiera selvaggia di un vorticoso caleidoscopio, il movimento è sempre stato in avanti, verso l’estremo più lontano di ciò che i suoi semplici vasi potevano diventare.

* * *

L’oceano si ritira, ritorna la stanza, ma questo confortevole salotto dell’Ottocento è stato modificato dalle sue metamorfosi. Ora è uno studio ricoperto di polvere d’argilla, con una fornace e mezzo secolo di arte spumeggiante. La regina c’è ancora, intatta nella sua forza, ma è diventata più madre che assassina. Con lo scorrere del tempo, le sue conquiste sono state affidate alle cure del vetro e dell’argilla, al fluire del colore puro che qualche volta possiamo ritrovare nella pittura, lucida e screpolata, astratta e figurata, carica di risate e di lunghe pause. E tuttavia ribelli come le sue guerriere, che si rifiutano di limitarsi a portare acqua o a cullare i morti, e che si arrampicano sulle pareti e formano piramidi, abbandonandosi a una gioia simile a quella di un pittore. Con le braccia e le gambe divaricate, esibiscono la loro libertà sessuale con grazia squisita. I colori inondano corpi armoniosi, saltano e fanno capriole, lasciandosi andare a gesti teatrali e a una gioia sfrenata.

Reggendo il pennello e con la fornace a portata di mano, la nostra regina costruisce un esercito di vasi inarrestabili, che sarebbero sculture, che sarebbero figure, che sarebbero stanze, proprio come questa.

Non c’è una poltrona da vedere, solo Betty Woodman.

Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Glaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015



Shell and Garden 10, 2013. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin

Mason, Brook, S., "Ceramics on Fire," *Modern Magazine*, September 28, 2013

MODERN

Ceramics on Fire

DEALERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC PINPOINT PROMINENT ARTISTS IN CLAY

By BROOK S. MASON





WITH CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS moving far from the confines of craft to the haute museum world, a new crop of collectors is embracing the artistry of clay. What appeals to them, say a host of dealers and curators, is the degree to which clay artists are turning to vessels and other functional forms while blurring the boundaries between fine art and the decorative arts.

"These days, more key ceramists are waking up to the universal vessel form and they're addressing artistic issues like painting and sculpture," says Emily Zilber, Ronald C. and Anita L. Wornick Curator of Contemporary Decorative Arts at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She reports that the museum has considerably more than a hundred examples in its permanent collection. "Now the vessel is part of a broader artistic conversation," she says.

Zilber points to the brilliant Betty Woodman, whose work shows a wide range of influences, from Fra Angelico to Matisse and contemporary painting, as "a foundational figure," noting that a new generation of clay artists such as Steven Young Lee and Kurt Weiser are following her lead.

The work of Woodman is front and center at Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn's **Salon 94** galleries in New York. She has held three exhibitions devoted to the eighty-three-year-old ceramist in a scant three years and will shortly publish a catalogue documenting Woodman's recent work. "Betty goes far beyond the mere vase form and treats her surfaces as canvases, while her work falls into the realm of contemporary sculpture at the same time," Rohatyn says.

More than fifty museums possess Woodman's work, among them the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Woodman's vase forms, which can stand up to three feet high, go for as much as $85,000.

As proof of contemporary collectors' estimation of Woodman, Rohatyn will feature the artist's latest work at Frieze London, slated for October 17 to 20. Other fairs where Rohatyn regularly showcases Woodman's distinctive artistry include Frieze New York, Unlimited at Art Basel, and Art Basel Miami Beach. "I think Betty's work appeals to a wider audience than ever before, one that looks beyond the materials and traditional vase forms to contemporary art," Rohatyn says.

Leslie Ferrin, whose **Ferrin Gallery** is located in the Berkshires, sees clients acquiring the works of Steven Young Lee and Kurt Weiser, who were both included in the recent exhibition *New Blue and*



Top, left to right: **Steven Young Lee's *Vase with Scroll Pattern* of 2013 is porcelain with copper inlay.**

Kurt Weiser's porcelain *Chinese Cubist I* vase dates from 2013.

Below: **Four works by Betty Woodman, left to right: *Shell and Garden: Windowsill*, 2013; *Venus #3*, 2013, *Early Spring*, 2013; and *Polka Dot*, 2012.**

Rossetti, Chloé, “Vessels,” Critic’s Pick, *Artforum.com*, June 28, 2013

ARTFORUM

“Vessels”

06.28.13

AUTHOR: CHLOÉ ROSSETTI

05.07.13-07.03.13 The Horticultural Society of New York

Betty Woodman’s ceramic sculpture *On the Way to Mexico*, 2012, presides over the entrance “Vessels” as both gatekeeper to this group exhibition and harbinger for the display beyond. The fiery glazed red-and-orange front of the piece feels a world away from its back, a unified, muted surface where a thick cream-colored line meanders its way slowly around a black background shot through with fleshy pink. Moving around the work is akin to crossing a border, leaving one aesthetic realm for another.

This transmogrification is, on a base level, a metonym for the process of creating a vessel from clay, as well as an archetype for the kind of ceramic pieces on display. These are vessels from the hands of artists who long ago abandoned functionality for form: A flurry of extra handles sprout all over Beverly Semmes’s fire engine–red *Smoke*, 2012, and wings of Matisse-like color and clay are sutured to Woodman’s *Vase Upon Vase: Bella and Vase Upon Vase: Joy* (both 2011). Francesca DiMattio’s pieces are perhaps the most formally driven, as functional vases are broken and fused to other vessels with riotously textured materials to create new, almost impossible forms. *Putti Vase*, 2013, for instance, is a discordance of premade ceramic pieces, lumped and burned together in a clamor of colorful protrusions, while the vase in question in *Staffordshire Vase*, 2013, is fused to another piece of porcelain among a litany of baby-blue forms, writhing from the ether into life.

Perhaps the most extreme cycle of transformation occurs in the juxtaposition of Brie Ruais’s two works. Her video, *Nobody Puts Baby in the Corner (Big Push in a New Space). March 26, 2012. 10:15 PM–10:58 PM*, 2012, shows the artist slamming her body into hundreds of pounds of clay as she slowly pushes it up the crease of a wall. An earlier product of this process, *Unfolding (Liquid Color)*, 2011, is hung nearby—a starburst of the artist’s body weight in clay, spread out, flecked with blue, yellow, and green, and cut into sections hung infinitely close together. One might imagine the universe beginning, and maybe ending, in such a way.

Rosenberg, Karen, "Vessels," *The New York Times*, June 1, 2013

The New York Times

© 2013 The New York Times NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2013

Art in Review

'Vessels'

Horticultural Society of New York
148 West 37th Street, Manhattan
Through July 3

Nothing in "Vessels," at the Horticultural Society of New York's quiet little gallery in the garment district, looks as if it could actually hold a plant. That's a compliment, as far as the show's five ceramics artists are concerned; they make sculptures, not mere receptacles.

Two glazed earthenware pieces by the ceramist Betty Woodman, who is also exhibiting at Salon 94, have a funky, give-and-take relationship with their painted wooden pedestals. Both are titled "Vase Upon Vase." Nearby, the red, tubular strands of Beverly Semmes's "Smoke" suggest a hookah with too many pipes.

The younger artists Nicole Cherubini and Francesca DiMattio are just as canny in their use of hollow volumes. Ms. Cherubini flattens clay over cardboard boxes, in homage to Rauschenberg's trompe-l'oeil sculptures of the early 1970s, and mounts them as minimal wall reliefs. Ms. DiMattio makes festive but impractical-looking containers that look like pieced-together fragments of porcelain.

The standout is an emerging artist, Brie Ruais, who uses clay as aggressively as Richard Serra once used lead; in her short video-performance "Nobody Puts Baby in the Corner (Big Push in a New Space)," she kicks and punches a big blob of it against the wall. Also by Ms. Ruais is "Unfolding (Liquid Color)," a giant, multicolored starburst made by redistributing a piece of pigmented clay equal in weight to the artist's body. Both works flesh out Chris Murtha's argument that "the history of ceramics is too often perceived as a struggle between art and craft, but more so it has been a battle with objecthood."

KAREN ROSENBERG



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND NICOLE KLAGSBURN GALLERY, N.Y.

The 2011 "Unfolding (Liquid Color)" by Brie Ruais.

Patel, Vibhuti, “An Art Traveler Lets Go of the Vessel,” *WSJ.com*, May 7, 2013

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

An Art Traveler Lets Go of the Vessel

By VIBHUTI PATEL
May 7, 2013



Betty Woodman at Salon 94 Freemans gallery, where her exhibition, ‘Windows, Carpets and Other Paintings,’ opened this week. Noah Rabinowitz for The Wall Street Journal

Half the year, artists Betty Woodman and her husband, George Woodman, live in a Chelsea loft that houses their offices, studios, a kiln and living space. Summers are spent in their Tuscan farmhouse where the kiln is outdoors, the studios underground. There, they raised their children, the late photographer Francesca Woodman and electronic artist Charles Woodman.

In her six-decade career, Ms. Woodman has exhibited work in revered museums like the Metropolitan and Florence’s Pitti Palace. Twenty years ago, France’s Ministry of Culture invited her to create limited-edition vessels from the historic porcelain at the Sèvres factory in Paris. “I’m no longer a potter but I’m still seduced by objects of use and [Sèvres’s] unbelievable glazes,” she said of her ongoing work there.

Now, through June 15, Salon 94’s downtown Freemans gallery is presenting “Windows, Carpets and Other Paintings,” a site-specific installation for which Ms. Woodman has re-created both the interior and exterior of an Italian palazzo using her hybrid painting-sculpture ceramic pieces. The artist, who turns 83 next week and still jogs along the Hudson, spoke with The Wall Street Journal over tea served in her quirky Sèvres crockery.

Patel, Vibhuti, “An Art Traveler Lets Go of the Vessel,” *WSJ.com*, May 7, 2013

This new installation is described as a “theatrical vision of home, courtyard and garden.” Was it inspired by your life in Italy?

In Roman wall painting there’s often an image of an exterior. There are many examples of this in Pompeii. Modernists like Bonnard and Matisse paint a window with a view. In Italy, a palazzo’s outside is a façade, a mystery, but the inside opens up, one courtyard leads into another—there’s no front yard with flowers, as in America. Here, I’m bringing my life together.

What initially drew you to ceramics?

I was interested in craft, in making things that can be used. At 16, I took a ceramic class and loved the clay—it’s plastic, it moves, it’s responsive to your hands, then it dries and stiffens. Firing and glazing totally transforms it, it’s like magic. From nothing you make something, things you could use—pitchers, bowls. Glaze is beautiful color; as glass, it’s different from paint. Years later, ceramics still fascinates me; it’s what I know how to do.



Betty Woodman overseeing the install of her show at Salon 94. Noah Rabinowitz for The Wall Street Journal

It seems the vase, in particular, has been your muse.

I’m attached to the vase. It’s existed as long as man has made art. Everywhere—in painting, sculpture, wall paintings, Roman mosaics, fountains—there’s usually some vessel. It holds something, it’s a universal symbol for woman. In each piece here, there’s a vase, its fragment or handle, it’s a wall image, it tops a column or a person. The flat two-sided “Venus vases” are new—I’m letting go of the vessel. They don’t hold anything, but they’re shaped like vases. One side is painted as a ceramic vase, the other became a female figure so I drew breasts, a navel and pubic hair on it. They’re like drawings, amusing surprises.

The addition of paint and other elements is an interesting evolution.

I’m not doing what I was doing at 16, 30, or 50, when I was focused on the history and function of ceramics. Now I’m considering painting, sculpture and art history. Ceramics are an important part of these pieces but they aren’t the only part—my work uses painting with ceramics, I make sculpture and combine that with painting, as in these Aztec vases. Presented on “rugs” of painted canvas, they’re a collage.

Your signature use of vivid colors recalls Henri Matisse.

Patel, Vibhuti, “An Art Traveler Lets Go of the Vessel,” *WSJ.com*, May 7, 2013

Brilliant colors are important as part of my material. My first response in any artwork is to material. I’m a great admirer of Matisse; for an artist my age, it’s hard not to have been influenced by him. For years, I stayed away from his work because it was too attractive. Now I’m mature enough to commit myself to it.

Describe your process.

These vases are elaborate still-lifes, a series of vase-forms, a vehicle to paint. First I work with the ceramic form, then wait a month before painting on it, as on canvas. I stretch my imagination because when you paint with ceramic colors they don’t look like they will when they’ve been fired. The blue looks pink, the colors change in the kiln. It’s a complicated game, there are always surprises. If I don’t like it, I can change it with paint.

How did you apply the process here?

For this installation, I made a small drawing, then a full-scale painting on the floor to see how it’ll look. The wall pieces are made in sections. I don’t want to repeat myself so I keep challenging myself with other materials, combining them in a collage, using clay in non-ceramic ways. With clay, when you think everything’s under control, something goes wrong. Once made, it’s static. The material is unpredictable. I don’t always know where I’m going.

You’ve also acknowledge eclectic influences—Japanese prints, Hindu temples, Fra Angelico…

We’ve traveled, visited museums, so the influences are diverse. I don’t travel to be influenced. Influences often come from book illustrations. Indian temples have striking colors, as do Fra Angelico’s paintings. Some viewers are spiritually moved by them. I’m moved by their form and color.

Has George, also an artist, been a collaborator in your work?

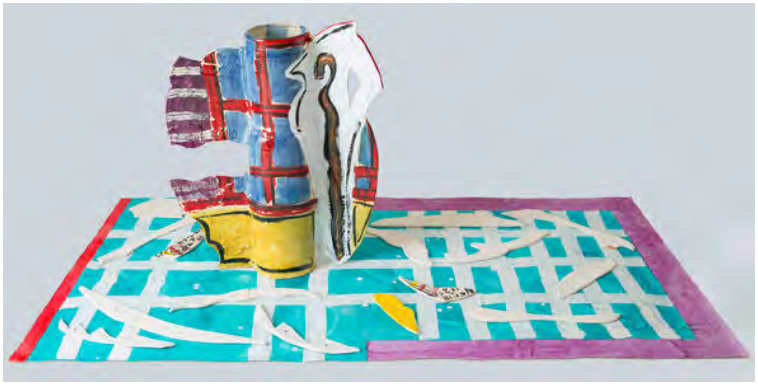
I’ve made 10,000 pieces of pottery which he painted. He’s a painter but never thought decorating my ceramics was part of his artistic life. I resented his not taking it as a serious activity. We’ve been together for 60 years, and decided we’d be more happily married not collaborating as artists.

Viladas, Pilar, “On View | Betty Woodman’s Playful Ceramics,” *TMagazine.com*, May 3, 2013

ON VIEW

On View | Betty Woodman’s Playful Ceramics

CULTURE | BY PILAR VILADAS | MAY 3, 3013



Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York Betty Woodman’s “Window Vase #1 and Carpet,” 2012.

The sculptor Betty Woodman is known for her exuberant riffs on the vase — boldly colored and patterned ceramic pieces which she has said “could be functional, but I really want them to be considered works of art.” Woodman’s new exhibition, “Windows, Carpets and Other Paintings,” which opens May 7 at Salon 94 Freemans in New York City, includes more remixes of the vessel form, but also works that examine the relationship between indoors and outdoors. In “Of Botticelli,” a site-specific mural that fills an entire wall of the gallery, ceramic fragments represent columns wrapped in vines and crowned by vases, hinting at an unseen garden view. Other pieces, which combine ceramics with painting on canvas, hang on the walls and are framed to look like windows. Still others sit on the floor like carpets. And in “Wallpaper,” Woodman recycles 90 cast-off bits of clay — pieces cut away during the making of her ceramics — by glazing them and arranging them on a wall, where they will be free to visitors for the taking.



Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York Betty Woodman’s “Of Botticelli,” 2013, 126 by 384 inches.

“Front/Back,” *ArtBeat*, October 1, 2011

Betty Woodman "Front/Back"



This event has ended.
At Salon 94
Media: Sculpture, Installation

For almost 50 years, Betty Woodman has blurred the border between craft and high art, art and decoration, ignoring conventions of form and function. Today, Woodman's dualities are accepted, and we enjoy her vases for their complexity. It is thus with great pleasure that Salon94 presents Front/Back - new work by the renowned Betty Woodman.

Woodman's vases are vases. But, they also are paintings of vases on vases. Her generous sized vessels, many with winged panels, provide surfaces for paint. Scavenging imagery from ancient Greek and Etruscan ceramics, Japanese woodcuts, Korean folk painting, modernist painting, architecture and fashion, Woodman marries painting and sculpture into her exuberant sculptures.

“The centrality of the vase in my work is certainly a reference to a global perspective on art history and production. The container is a universal symbol- it holds and pours all fluids, stores foods, and contains everything from our final remains to flowers. The vase motif connects what I do to all aspects of art. I can mix the motifs of a classic Greek vase on one side of a triptych with the details of a Japanese print on the other all conveyed with a palette based on the hues of a recollected Hindu temple.” (Betty Woodman, 2010)

On one side of the sculptures there are paintings of nudes, flowers and Japanese ladies in kimonos. These motifs are depicted in a deliberately casual way, with broad, loose expressionistic brushstrokes. The front and back of the vases do not correspond- for each figurative front there is an abstract back. Incongruous and playful, the duel sides never match. Ever present is the image of the vase itself painted on the vessel, plus the possibility of seeing an image of a female figure. Their backs bare, extremely simplified often exposing the clay beneath.

Shown alongside the two sided vases are three large works from her ongoing “Aztec vases” series, which are four sided vases with complicated shifts in spatial reading. Also shown as dramatic backdrop, “Sunset” (2010), is a two dimensional canvas and ceramic installation relating the composition of Japanese screen painting, to Bonnard's private world of interiors and windows.

The work of Betty Woodman (b.1930, Norwalk CT) been collected in over 50 museums around the globe, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Modern Art New York, the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, and the Gulbankian Museum in Lisbon. The Gardiner Museum in Toronto is showing Woodman s porcelain work until Summer 2011 and in March 2012 she will curate the exhibition Playing House at the Brooklyn Museum.

[Image: Betty Woodman "Aztec Vase #7" (2007) Ceramic 38 X 24 X 24 in.]

Panicelli, Ida, "Betty Woodman, Salon 94," *Artforum*, Summer 2011, p. 406

ARTFORUM

REVIEWS

Betty Woodman

SALON 94

Installations of Betty Woodman's works often have an element of theatricality, and in this exhibition, "Front/Back," her ceramic vase sculptures sang together like characters in an opera. Brilliantly united by their chromatic relationships, they evoked a coloratura worthy of Rossini.

Though Woodman's ceramic vases always maintain their function as containers, she positions them on the edge between painting and sculpture, challenging categories of utility, craft, and art. Most sport two planes or fins, which jut out from the vessels' sides; on these surfaces, Woodman paints images inspired by a variety of sources, from Eastern painting to modernist masters. Female nudes—stretched out like Cézannesque bathers—alternate with vividly colored geometric shapes, naturalistic elements, and bright abstract surfaces. The two sides of these sculptures are oftentimes completely different, which is customary for this artist, but in many cases here one side was white, monochrome, or bare ceramic, almost as if to belie the coloristic energy of the opposite face. Though this wide-ranging eclecticism may suggest a lack of formal discipline, Woodman orchestrates the fusion of these disparate styles and art historical references with deep aesthetic intelligence.



Betty Woodman, *Aztec Vase #7*, 2007, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint, 38 x 32 x 24". From the series "Aztec Vase," 2004–.

In three large-scale sculptures from her series "Aztec Vase," 2004–, Woodman adds two additional planes: The painted images thereby proliferate on four different sides. Vibrant shapes, dissonant and audacious colors, diagonal lines, and austere monochrome backgrounds flow from one surface to the other—a repertory of Woodman's preferred figures, themes, and hues, presented in close contact. As the singers of a concertato separately execute their arias and the individual motifs flow together in a single harmony, these vases modulate different pictorial themes that make up a complex whole. In her incessant investigation of the relationship between two and three dimensions, positive and negative space, Woodman here achieved a new synthesis.

The exhibition's installation resembled a theater. The vases were all oriented in the same direction; depending on your perspective, they could seem like the audience in seats or performers on a stage. They faced a painted wall installation, *Sunset*, 2010, which depicts the silhouette of a ceramic flower vase supported by a gray grid next to a sort of Japanese screen—a yellow frame that encloses a cascade of vivid rose petals. The flower vase, however, remains unpainted, the ceramic left bare, as if the vase were a shadow of itself, removed from its leading role onstage. Woodman thereby succeeds in shifting our attention to the relationship between illusion and reality: In fact, nothing "happens" where the viewer's glance focuses. And perhaps this is precisely where the irony of Woodman's work resides—in an approach that allows us to enter her personal theater, where an idiosyncratic shifting of roles and viewpoints confounds our expectations.

—*Ida Panicelli*

Yablonsky, Linda, " Artifacts I Feats of Clay," *TMagazine.com*, July 7, 2011

ARTIFACTS

Artifacts I 'Feats of Clay'

CULTURE I BY LINDA YABLONSKY I JULY 7, 2011



Courtesy of Salon 94 Gallery "Fabric Girls" by Betty Woodman.

Move over, concrete jungle! New York is suddenly a city of ceramics. By some odd coincidence, restless aggregations of fired clay are popping up in galleries all over town. Don't expect the stuff of any potter's wheel in any of them. These are unique, handworked forms that constitute some of the most radical experiments in art today.

Modest they are not. Among the more suggestive works are Ron Nagle's diminutive sculptures in "Paul Clay," the punning title of a cramped but exhilarating group show of ceramic objects at Salon 94 Bowery. "Phil Tilt," for example, looks like a paddle cactus with a slit along one edge and a nubby ochre glaze powdered in pink. Another Nagle, a kind of pink bootie, has a protuberant pink tongue emerging from its surface.

The variety of color, form and texture in the rest of the upstairs reception area can be mind-expanding, while the gallery's lower level offers a garden of molded and tortured earthenware delights that veer between figurative and abstract, extravagant and primitive, polished and cutesy.

Betty Woodman dresses a hand-on-hip chorus line of brilliantly glazed ceramic torsos in patterned fabrics from India. Arlene Shechet's clay stands up to manipulations that create a spaghetti-like black vase and a squat blue gnome of a teapot worthy of the Mad Hatter. Jonathan Meese's phallic terra cotta missiles tower over Hope Atherton's fallen hawks and Francesca DiMattio's

cracked porcelain jugs. Julia Kunin's gnarly "Janus of Flowers" has an amazing pink, purple, gold and turquoise glaze. And Jessica Jackson Hutchins throws all caution to the wind by setting three irregularly shaped pots amid the black, bulbous papier-mâché forms enveloping an old blue couch like some latter-day "Rape of the Sabine Women."

More theatrics are on display at Hauser & Wirth on the Upper East Side, where the Peruvian-German-Chinese artist David Zink Yi is making his New York debut with a giant ceramic squid that lies on the floor in an inky pool of corn syrup, as if it had just emerged from the deep and expired on the spot. To make it, Zink Yi threw an armful of soft clay to the floor and fired it three times through a Belgian kiln large enough to cope with it. The process produced a fleshy glaze with streaks of rich color, and an object as astonishing as it is bizarre.

At the other end of the scale, two impish little vessels by the ceramic artist Kathy Butterly stand out in "Contemporary Clay," a back-room show at TriBeCa's RH Gallery that also includes an inchoate porcelain Buddha by Shinique Smith that is glazed in 14-karat gold.

Another show at the same gallery features work by the Korean-born artists Lee Ufan and Young Sook Park. A pair of wall-mounted terra cotta squares by Lee have deep, apostrophe-like depressions that reminded me of Lucio Fontana's slashed canvases, though Lee seems to have put his thumbs to work rather than a knife. And Young's two, huge and gleaming white Moon Jars in the gallery's windows take a traditional practice to its ultimate limit.

More muted and thrown ceramic pots and odd, birdhouse-like constructions that float in a spectacular reflecting pond of black honey at Gavin Brown's South Village gallery represent Peter Nadin's return to the New York exhibition scene after a 20-year hiatus. In a separate room, Nadin has erected a veritable forest of terra cotta noses and dark, abstract figures that bedeck soaring hemlock plinths.

In Chelsea, Casey Kaplan Gallery has become a supermarket of ceramics with "Everything Must Go!" — an amusing show of more than 80 artist-designed domestic objects. They include not just coffee cups and collectibles but skateboards, lamps, games, footstools and a toilet, all commissioned by Cerámica Suro, a small factory in Tiaquepaque, Mexico, that normally does custom work for hotels and casinos.

Nowhere in any of these shows is there a "readymade" found object or an industrial-strength fabrication where the seams don't show. Clay is a sensitive, visceral medium that betrays every pinch, twist and wink of its artists' process, and it says "touch me" like nothing else.

Smith, Roberta, "Paul Clay," *The New York Times*, June 30, 2011

The New York Times

ART IN REVIEW

'Paul Clay'

By ROBERTA SMITH I June 30, 2011

Is ceramics the new video? The most ancient, widespread and versatile of all art mediums has become increasingly fashionable over the past few years. While artists committed fully to its traditions, rigors and potential are enjoying increasing visibility, scores more seem to be either converting to it or dipping in and out as the mood strikes.

This cacophonous exhibition of ceramic vessels, sculptures and objects by some 45 artists spanning several generations makes no distinctions, although it concentrates fairly firmly on what I would call art world, as opposed to ceramics world, ceramics. Its almost absurdly crowded installation ricochets from good-sized sculptures — the largest is Jessica Jackson Hutchins's "Symposion," a triple-tiered orgy on a couch — to small, thick dishes that suggest gaudy bent bricks by Matthias Merkel Hess, who recently earned an M.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles. Mr. Hess is also represented by a full-scale stoneware cast of a large trash can, an immovable object if ever there was one.

The show includes numerous artists who work almost exclusively in fired clay, including eminences grises like Ken Price, Ron Nagle and Betty Woodman, and younger colleagues like Andrew Lord, Arlene Shechet and Shio Kusaka. Others, like Rosemarie Trockel, Jonathan Meese, Liz Larner and Daniel Buren, are well-established visitors from other mediums. And still others, among them Steve Keister, Hope Atherton and Tam Van Tran, may be switching allegiances to ceramics.

In contrast, Sterling Ruby, Anna Sew Hoy and Ms. Hutchins combine fired ceramics with other sculptural mediums, while Huma Bhabha, for one, simply employs clay as one material among several in her particular brand of sculptural assemblage.

Ceramics deserve more orderly and respectful attention than this jam-packed show and its punning title provide. (Paul Clay? All Klee?) Still, it restlessly roots around in too many different areas not to expand your horizons.

Brie Ruais, a recent graduate of Columbia's M.F.A. program in sculpture, uses thin, irregular, hand-built vessels as occasions for writing and also contributes a muscular Process-Art work that literally climbs the wall. Takuro Kuwata, already considered something of a ceramics master in Japan, despite being barely 30, makes his New York gallery debut here, alternating between spare white porcelain plates, bowls and teacups, ringed in bands of saturated color, à la Kenneth Noland, and tea bowls, jars and spheres whose aggressive craquelure suggests more glaze than clay.

Also not to be missed are the fanciful ceramic vessels made by Zulu artists of Ardmore, a South African collective established in 1985. Mixing animals, plant forms and vivid patterns into profoundly hybrid objects that seem both Neo-African and Neo-Victorian, they go a long way toward explaining the enduring, alluring, polymorphous vitality of ceramics.

Dixon, Guy, “The view through Betty Woodman’s window,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 25, 2011

THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1844

Visual art

The view through Betty Woodman’s window

GUY DIXON
From Saturday’s Globe and Mail
March 25, 2011

Matisse could be in the room with them.

In the soaring, top-floor exhibition space at Toronto’s Gardiner Museum, above the permanent collection of delicate ceramics, Betty Woodman’s huge, robust creations twist and curl. The colours leap out. Contrary to the very idea of fastidious ceramics, Woodman’s works are effusive, a late-career hurrah by one of the most important ceramic artists working today.

The exhibit has the same effect as stepping into the Museum of Modern Art’s groundbreaking 1992-1993 New York retrospective of Henri Matisse, which opened up into a huge space showing the large, exuberant cutouts he made at the end of his life.

“I’m a great admirer of Matisse,” says Woodman. “Usually my work has some historic connection. And I’ve done many pieces which look at modernist painting, looking at Matisse, looking at Bonnard, looking at Gauguin. You should be able to think of Matisse – but hopefully you don’t stop there, you realize that it makes a reference, but it goes beyond.”

Dressed in a red-checked, floor-length dress, the American artist, who was born in 1930 and has for years split her time between New York and Italy, is compact and unassuming. Her greeting is a gentle, if hesitant, smile. She’s also, even after decades as a master of ceramic art, still sometimes at pains to find the right words to describe her work.

“I’m not looking at it in an ironic way, which is often how art is looked at by other artists,” she says of her work. “I would say I’m not capable of that kind of irony. I don’t aspire to it. I think there’s admiration [in the work of Matisse and other modernists].”

For example, in the work of Matisse and his contemporaries “there’s always a view through a window,” she notes, so she’s done many pieces based on the idea of the light and scenery beyond the window.

But as its name suggests, the most monumental work on show at the Gardiner, *Ceramic Pictures of Korean Paintings*, also takes inspiration from that country. The piece was originally installed at Missouri’s Daum Museum of Contemporary Art in 2002 to fill an 18-metre-long wall. Its ceramic pieces are applied to huge painted canvases.

Dixon, Guy, “The view through Betty Woodman’s window,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 25, 2011

Since then, Woodman has continued doing large-scale work. Two years ago, she hung a nine-metre-tall permanent installation at the U.S. embassy in Beijing. And last summer, she created a six-metre-high piece for the American Academy in Rome, which protrudes from the wall another four metres or so.

When she started in the 1950s, Connecticut-born Woodman worked on a much smaller scale as a traditional potter, making ordinary cookware and dishes. But by the early 1980s, she had moved to New York with her husband, the painter George Woodman, and rose to prominence primarily through New York’s Max Protetch Gallery by completely re-imagining pottery’s uses and motifs.

Now, she is known not only for deconstructing traditional ceramics – “Instead of putting the handle on the cup, I’ll put the handle on the wall,” she says – but for her versatility in colour.

She’s even played with form and colour as an artist-in-residence at the historic Sèvres porcelain factory near Paris, where she reinterpreted the techniques of French ceramics.

Woodman jokes that ceramics certainly isn’t “video art” – its link to the past can hinder its larger recognition in the contemporary art world. But she insists that her reinterpretation of ceramics isn’t about rejecting tradition, it’s about building on it.

“It was not, ‘One day I’m a potter, and the next day I’m an artist.’ It was a gradual expansion. I realized that I didn’t want to throw away all of that experience. So I looked for ways that I could still use my skills, my experience and my pleasure in pottery and yet move away from strict function [and traditional pottery]. And I did that by changing scale, and by going to museums and thinking about the kinds of things clay had been used for.”

Central to this process was rethinking the vessel. Woodman’s deconstructed vases and huge wall hangings became metaphors for that core form of pottery, which in turn has always been a metaphor for the human figure – and a recurring symbol in the works of the modernists she has drawn from.

“It’s there throughout the history of art, there’s always a vessel. No matter where you look, there’s a pitcher pouring water, there’s a vase sitting there. Whether you are looking at Greek tombstones or looking at Roman painting, or looking at Matisse or looking at Bonnard, there’s vases – vases of flowers,” she says.

And with her Toronto exhibition, as Matisse did with his cutouts, she takes that essential form which has guided her career and renders it huge in celebration.

Betty Woodman: Places, Spaces & Things continues at Toronto’s Gardiner Museum until June 5.

THE NEW YORKER

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: ART

BETTY WOODMAN

A swimmingly beautiful show stars a decorative cadenza, "Roman Fresco/Pleasures and Places," which Woodman created in 2010 at the American Academy in Rome. The array of lyrical vase forms in clay, wood, and paint is more than eighteen feet high, on a wall, and twelve feet deep, on the floor below. It summarizes classical aesthetics with symphonic passages of Woodman's wonted, Matissean gesture and color. The mood is Mediterranean, the impact nonchalantly grand. Humbler works, mainly slab-fronted or slab-winged vases, dance attendance. Through Jan. 21.

Through January 21

SALON 94 BOWERY
243 Bowery, at Stanton St., New York, NY
212-979-0001
salon94.com

McQuaid, Cate, “A Compelling Look At A Family Of Artists,” *The Boston Globe*, January 12, 2011

The Boston Globe

A compelling look at a family of artists

By Cate McQuaid

Globe Correspondent / January 12, 2011

“Betty, Charlie, Francesca & George” at samson is a family show. George Woodman, a photographer and painter, and ceramicist Betty Woodman have been married for more than 50 years. Their children also grew up to be artists: Charlie Woodman makes videos. Francesca Woodman, who took her own life in 1981 at 22, specialized in moody black-and-white photographs, often featuring occluded self-portraits. Since Francesca’s death, her career has soared, with a large retrospective coming to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art this year.

The samson show is the first time all four have exhibited together, and the exhibit is inevitably full of intrigue. How have they influenced each other? It’s hard to resist reading family psychodrama into the interplay of the art — Betty’s ceramics and paintings are so exuberant in gesture and color, for instance, but Francesca’s photographs very nearly withdraw into themselves, leaving a nimbus of hurt.

It’s not entirely fair to make those associations. Betty’s works here are contemporary, as are Charlie’s and George’s; Francesca’s date as far back as 1972, when she took an extraordinary “Self-Portrait at 13 (Boulder, Colorado),” in which she sits, face obscured by her hair, amid a blurred composition of lines and planes of light and dark.

In Francesca’s photos, her figure captivates; she had a performer’s canny sense of how her body appeared in space. In one image from the “Eel Series,” her nude body curls gracefully around an eel coiled in a bowl. An untitled photo shot at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, N.H., captures her lifting her arms in bark bracelets, her left arm in perfect alignment with the birch tree behind it.

In 2006, the Metropolitan Museum of Art staged a rare retrospective of a living artist, Betty Woodman. Her ceramics are gaudy and audacious, embracing abstract expressionism, moving cheekily between 2-D and 3-D as painting and ceramics breezily collide, and not just in her effusive glazes. “Neapolitan Interior” sets a winged ceramic vessel on the floor before a painting of a sun-washed room; the painting explodes into 3-D with the garishly plaid pot planted in front of it.

The translucent hues in George’s painted photographs make a sweet counterpoint to Betty’s parade of color. The title of “Classical De Stijl” encapsulates George’s aesthetic: He layers colorful geometries reminiscent of the early-20th-century Dutch De Stijl movement toward pure abstraction over black-and-white photos. Here he applies pale, angling polygons of paint over a shot of classical statuary — three headless female nudes. Sometimes the painted passages gracefully direct the eye; sometimes they frame images. But sometimes they merely get in the way. George’s many female nudes make a wild contrast to his daughter’s nude self-portraits; the father’s are steeped in the historical baggage of the artist’s gaze, and the daughter’s are subjective, as much about absence as they are about form.

Charlie’s video “Heaven” more effectively blends abstraction with representation. It’s a contemplative piece, also in black and white, which begins nearly completely in the dark, until glimmers of light appear. Are we gazing up through fluttering leaves? Or down at flashes of sunlight skittering over water? The piece moves from naturalism to abstraction almost imperceptibly; as soon as you think you know what you’re seeing, it changes.

“Betty, Charlie, Francesca & George” is a fascinating exhibit, one that should be expanded and mounted by a museum.

Good eye

Independent curator Meredyth Hyatt Moses has always had an eye for the impertinent but gorgeously crafted object. She and Gallery NAGA director Meg White have joined forces for a freewheeling group show that doesn’t stick to any particular agenda, and the result is ebullient.

Taylor, Alex, "Reviews: New York, Betty Woodman, Max Protetch," *ARTnews*, May 2008, p. 147

ARTnews MAY 2008

Reviews: New York

Betty Woodman

Max Protetch

This expansive show of ceramic sculptures, paintings, and combinations of the two revealed Betty Woodman's extraordinary achievements. A slab-and-throw ceramicist, Woodman typically attaches a slab of clay to the body of a vase in such a way that the vase is transformed from a "closed" form into a sculpture of "open" volume—emergent, ample, and curvaceous.

The works in this show, especially the four earthenware vases from the "Winged Figure" series (2008), seemed especially voluminous. The sculptures evoke intensely charged emotions, from the pathos of the hunched *Winged Figure: High Fashion* to the swooning ecstasy of *Winged Figure: Pretty Bird*, all Aegean green and turquoise blue.

On the one hand, Woodman has done more than any artist since the shaggy-man days of Peter Voulkos and Robert Arneson to endow ceramics with the emotional range and formal energy of traditional sculpture. On the other, the Connecticut-born Woodman has revived an idea of the Mediterranean in art that was supposed to have ended with Picasso and Matisse. The hand that turns the potter's wheel also paints.

Standing in front of the artist's 2007 *Pink Room* (which consists of two glazed earthenware vases set against a painted pink backdrop), the viewer was transported not to a place but to an old myth: an Eden of sunbathers and immodest nudes. Like much of Woodman's work, *Pink Room* brings to mind Matisse's hotel-bound paintings of the south of France. Woodman's pinks and yellows are nearly as expressive as the Fauves' but less decorous in application. Woodman has a voluptuary's sense of the substance of paint. She drips. She slathers. She glazes.

—*Alex Taylor*



Betty Woodman, *Winged Figure: High Fashion*, 2008, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, and paint, 32½" x 22" x 19". Max Protetch.

Castro, Jan Garden, "Betty Woodman, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Max Protetch Gallery," *Sculpture*, January/February 2007

sculpture
January/February 2007
Vol. 26 No. 1



Betty Woodman, *Aeolian Pyramid*, 2000, Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, and paint, 120 x 168 x 91 in.

NEW YORK

Betty Woodman

Metropolitan Museum of Art and Max Protetch Gallery

Betty Woodman is the first living clay artist to exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum. Her works, which began as decorative utilitarian clay vessels, have become increasingly layered and conceptual. The Met and Protetch exhibitions offered dialogues among the thrown vessel, painting, and sculpture and across the history of art. As Metropolitan Museum Associate Curator Jane Adlin tells it, the Woodman exhibition came about at the artist's suggestion as she was serving the curator homemade blueberry pancakes. Adlin asked her superiors up to Philippe de Montebello and all said yes. Then Woodman suggested replacing the vases in the atrium with her own, and this out-of-the-ordinary request also sailed through official channels.

The Met exhibition opened with early experiments in color and form, from the stoneware *Erotic Burrito* (1971) to the glazed earthenware *Italian Basket* (1978). All demonstrate creative, varied ovoid forms leading to *Tang Pillow Pitcher* (1981), a shape that plays with "pillowy" sides bulging out horizontally. This shape is present in the original Tang Hu vessel, but Woodman's pitcher adds an elongated neck and handle.

The Met galleries showcased Woodman's fluency with clay. Clay may be thrown on a wheel, sliced, incised, extruded from tubes, and otherwise shaped using inventive techniques. Woodman even paints with clay slip in the 18-foot-tall *Roman Panel*, a canvas, glazed earthenware, terra sigillata, epoxy resin, lacquer, and paint work designed to tower over viewers and to command its space at the Met. The wall piece (its model was shown at the Protetch Gallery) alludes to Baroque murals yet adds many self-consciously aesthetic gestures: three white vases on shelves have loose, black calligraphy and cutaway clay parts are nailed on. *Roman Panel* collapses the usual distinctions between finished and unfinished, colored and uncolored, flat and three-dimensional, clay and canvas.

One of Woodman's most recent pairs of "his/her" vessels, *Ferris Wheel* illustrates some of her free-wheeling ways and the complexity of her compositions. The two vessels, which seem to resemble cats, one sitting and one standing, have a symbiotic relationship, with one slightly taller and the other slightly longer. The two main faces of each vessel have strikingly different images. Among the images on one set of sides is a blue vase divided between the two vessels. It seems to be pouring itself from one to the other, and the image travels across the space between them. The other side of this "his/her" pair is ornamented with a series of color tests, as well as words and numbers—*69, shrimp, blue gray, 170/914, Delph, sky, 14P*—painted in different colors, along with curving brown lines. The title *Ferris Wheel* suggests the circular movement of the wheel used to form the initial work, the color wheel, and notions of things with recurring cycles.

In Woodman's work, aesthetic properties are paramount. Even forms that refer to use value are not primarily functional. Woodman has, for example, worked with the Sèvres Porcelain factory in France to re-create a soft paste porcelain recipe. Her deliciously impractical cup-like forms are named *Colette, Berlioz, Moliére*, and *Violette le Duc*. As we look into the lumpy yet elegant *Colette* demitasse with its scalloped edges and big saucer, we may slip into the Parisian whirl of budding intimacies and seductions. These two exhibitions offered sunlit views of an artist who has shaped, painted, and glazed her way around and into art history.

—*Jan Garden Castro*

Perrault, John, “Review: Betty Woodman,” *American Ceramics*, January 10, 2007

Betty Woodman

Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, New York

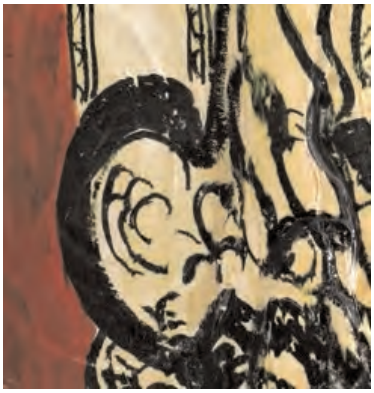
In her retrospective, Betty Woodman has brought forth a generous sampling of her ground breaking oeuvre. Her choices were, however, not always choice. The space itself was far too small and tall, leading to a lot of skying of pieces that would have looked better at eye-level. All of us who have followed Woodman’s genius through the years rejoiced at this precedent-breaking exhibit and I am sure that the museum’s stamp of approval has gained her new fans. A solo exhibition of contemporary ceramics in the Met, at last!

But if you missed this important exhibition, do not lament. The book is in many ways better. Arthur Danto’s essay is brilliant and philosophical. It is not just that the vessel is central to Woodman’s art — which of course it is — but that after a certain point she tends to present paired forms that interrelate. Danto ruminates, analyzes, and philosophizes to illuminating effect. As in his now classic cogitations on Warhol’s Brillo boxes, one is left surprised and wondering why no one had thought of his thesis before: Woodman’s vessel couples “talk” to each other.

On the other hand, Barry Schwabsky in his essay posits her work as a union of ceramics and painting. More recently, I have twice linked Woodman to Picasso. Schwabsky does so too and goes on to ask why Woodman’s Picasso-ness seems pertinent in ceramics but not in contemporary painting and sculpture. I don’t think it is because ceramics is behind the times but because contemporary painting and sculpture is in denial. Woodman coming at the cubist problematic from another tradition, that of ceramics, has unveiled the repressed. This late flowering of trans-cultural appropriation, multiple-points of view, and the collage aesthetic is just about as anti-minimalist and anti-Dada as one can get.

John Perreault

Japanese Lady *(2005), 33” x 35” x 17½”, glazed earthenware.*



Duncan, Michael, “Woodman’s Decorative Impulse,” *Art in America*, November 2006, pp. 193-199



Duncan, Michael, "Woodman's Decorative Impulse," *Art in America*, November 2006, pp. 193-199



Woodman's Decorative Impulse

Shown in a recent retrospective at the Metropolitan, Betty Woodman's spirited ceramic works embrace theatricality and modernist fragmentation.

BY MICHAEL DUNCAN

Betty Woodman's conceptually rigorous, formally audacious ceramic sculptures and installations of the past two decades make any lingering art-world condescension toward pottery seem absurd. Given the pluralistic eclecticism of contemporary art, clay has become as likely a medium for great work as, say, garbage, wax, toothpicks or dead animals. But it is not the medium that is the real message to be gleaned from Woodman's recent dazzling retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. What seems most surprising is that the 76-year-old artist has emerged as one of the contemporary art world's most visible and viable inheritors of modernist painting.



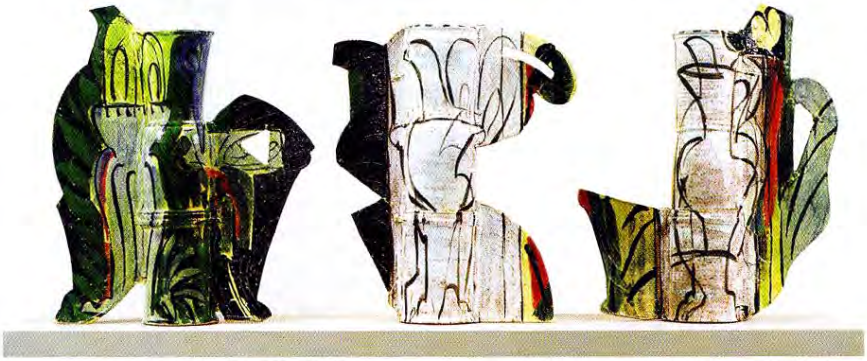
Betty Woodman: Etruscan Series Vase, *1966, stoneware, 11 by 6½ inches. Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.*

Oppposite, on wall, House of the South, *1996, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer and paint, 159 by 256 by 9½ inches; at the Metropolitan Museum. All photos this article, unless otherwise noted, courtesy Max Protetch Gallery, New York.*

Her recent works are glazed with bright colors in loosely painted images and designs that refer to and further the spatial experiments of Picasso, Matisse, Bonnard and Vuillard. In *The Bathers Revisited Triptych* (2004), for example, Woodman paints green fronds and sketchy vases on the extended surfaces of a trio of glazed earthenware vases, emulating the wispy, gestural drawing style of Matisse's *Bathers By the River* (1909-16). In her multipart

Duncan, Michael, "Woodman's Decorative Impulse," *Art in America*, November 2006, pp. 193-199

Rather than following the Asian bent of many American ceramists of her generation, Woodman gleaned ideas from plainspoken Italian earthenware.



The Bathers Revisited Triptych, ***2004, earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer and paint, 37 by 88 by 8 inches. Collection Bunty and Thomas Armstrong, courtesy Metropolitan Museum.***

works, Woodman determines the set arrangement of components, taking account of the negative space between their irregular shapes. Here the three vase fronts collectively evoke a garden tableau featuring depicted pottery surrogates as stand-ins for Matisse's nudes. Similarly, in *Divided Vases—Bonnard's Window* (2006), featured in a concurrent exhibition of new work at Max Protetch Gallery in New York, she painted on the surfaces of two large vases a fractured vase and window in the vibrant contrasting colors of the French master.

Woodman's formal extravagance and exuberant use of color enable her to transcend the self-imposed restrictions that plague many contemporary artists—particularly painters. Her underrated medium, and her abandonment of many of its strictures, allow her the freedom to tackle painting issues that have long been mired in the swamp of critical theories and art-historical torpor. In her formally variegated, intricately decorated painted works, she refuses to accept the narrowed, browbeaten status for painting as practiced by artists such as Robert Ryman, Gerhard Richter, Christopher Wool and Luc Tuymans. Ideas about color, volume, representation and decoration proliferate. Her work exudes the spontaneity of her physically active process. An element of uncertainty, too, enters the mix, since Woodman's vivid colors are liquid glaze pigments that must be applied blindly—they come to fruition only with firing. In their application, she must rely purely on past experience and intuition.

Energizing her enterprise is a sophisticated investigation into the ramifications of the vessel throughout history and across cultures. Working in both two and three dimensions at once, she probes this theme in a style based on Cubist fragmentation and postmodern deconstruction. Like the experiments of Cubism and Futurism, Woodman's work emulates the fractured effects of kinetic vision. With postmodern cheek, she skips through wildly diverse references to the styles and practices of the art-historical past. Yet no matter how outlandish and extended the formal or conceptual workout, Woodman's art is grounded in the primal shape of the pot.

For example, *Aztec Vase #4* (2005), a recent sculpture in the Met survey, is a nearly yard-high, multifaceted, cylindrical vase with ceramic appendages resembling flat extended handles. Irregular attachments cut out from flat slabs of thrown clay are a trademark device Woodman uses to apply picture planes to the sides of her three-dimensional vases. Here, they form four niches that are splashily painted in different, disjunctive designs: loops, stripes, a vase shape, and tangled Matisse-like curved lines. With its four false fronts, the work's over-the-top, hybrid presence offers a theatrical Cubism-in-the-round. Presenting fragmented images of itself while still retaining its utilitarian function, the vase is a kind of embellished variation or elaboration on the formal ideas of Picasso's painted bronze *Glass of Absinthe* (1914), a work that critic Barry Schwabsky aptly states in his catalogue essay might be considered the "single salient precursor object" for Woodman's enterprise.[1]

Employing the negative space of the walls and often spilling out onto the floor, her installations investigate the formal properties of the vase. The vessels seemingly have exploded into component parts. Woodman's free-form displays flirt with chaos, gleefully pushing the formal envelope, sometimes in the mode of a busy Cubist still life, sometimes that of a sparsely articulated Matisse cutout. Although at times seeming slapdash or hard to grasp spatially, they have a conceptual coherence that distinguishes them from being merely abstract or neo-baroque flourishes. They are both more open and more conceptually rigorous than the contemporaneous, hyperactive relief sculptures of Frank Stella.

In the unpredictably clustered "Balustrade" installation series (1995 to present), for example, Woodman presents vases with flat, painted false fronts, surrounded by ceramic fragments that resemble loose shards, errant handles, plant fronds and the gestural squiggle shapes of Matisse's late cutouts. The idea for these works came, the artist says, from the vase-shaped silhouettes found in the negative spaces of many staircase balustrades. Compounding the formal complexity, the false fronts of the "Balustrade" vases often feature painted images of vases and their edges are sometimes shaped as vessel-like silhouettes. Ideas of the vase as a skin or structural support are turned inside-out as the works compound flat, solid and fractured representations of themselves.

Tang Pillow Pitcher, ***1981, glazed earthenware, 19¾ by 22 by 13 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art.***



Although the Met exhibition, curated by Jane Adlin, included works from the past 50 years, the show was less a retrospective than a sprawling installation that extended to the rafters of the awkward, box-shaped special exhibitions gallery in the Wallace wing. Works hung frieze-style above the entryways and high on the

Duncan, Michael, "Woodman's Decorative Impulse," *Art in America*, November 2006, pp. 193-199



Aeolian Pyramid, ***2000, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer and paint, 120 by 168 by 91 inches.***

walls made the gallery seem a cavernous, art-filled studio space. While this increased the visual excitement, the raucous extravagance, audacity and joyful eccentricity of Woodman's recent installations overwhelmed the small selection of early work, making the trajectory of her development a bit hard to follow.

Placed in a smaller antechamber gallery, the early pots and variations on dinnerware offered a surprisingly tame prelude. The examples of Woodman's more traditional works made in the 1950s and '60s included three "Etruscan Series Vases" (1966), small works decorated with loosely shaped white dots painted by her artist husband, George. Her trademark style of splashy bright color and curvaceous line first appeared in a few works from the late '70s, all fanciful elaborations of serving ware: a tureen, a tray, a basket and an overscaled, delightfully strange napkin holder.

In 1975 Woodman first made her most popular and unique single form, the "pillow pitcher"—exemplified here by *Pillow Pitcher* (1980) and *Tang Pillow Pitcher* (1981)—a single pot that consists of two horizontal pinched vessels joined mouth-to-mouth, the seams covered by a flat band into which is set the top spout. Over the years Woodman has experimented with a variety of glazes and spouts in these skillfully made works, and their plump, symmetrical forms demonstrate her command of ceramic conventions. Although all these early works feature quirky decorative flourishes—arabesque handles, fanciful drippy glazes, comically crude overscaled forms—they don't really portend the radical, shocking formal explosion of the mid-'80s.

The development of Woodman's work is tracked in more detail in the handsome catalogue that accompanies the exhibition. In their essays, Schwabsky and Arthur Danto probe the philosophical and conceptual strengths of the work, while Janet Koplos tracks the development of Woodman's art from conventional ceramics to sculptural installation. The major events of Woodman's biography have clearly marked her artistic growth. Soon after training in western New York State at the School for American Craftsmen at Alfred University (1948-49), she fell in love with the culture and art of Italy. Rather than following the Asian bent of many American ceramists of her generation, she gleaned ideas and motifs from plainspoken Italian earthenware and majolica, as well as from the sensuous forms of ancient Etruscan pottery.

In 1953 she married George Woodman, and the couple moved to Albuquerque, where George attended graduate school in painting and Betty worked from a backyard adobe kiln. Upon graduation, George began teaching painting and esthetics at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and Betty set up a ceramics studio. The couple bought a farmhouse outside of Florence in 1968 and since then has spent part of the year there. Making utilitarian pottery in both locales, Betty taught in Colorado, first in community centers and finally, from 1978 to 1998, at the university. A voracious traveler and reader, she has alluded in her work to nearly every period of art history, particularly early 20th-century modernism. In her catalogue essay, Koplos details Woodman's avid enthusiasms for Early American spongeware, Tang Dynasty glazes, Okinawan folk pottery, Indian textiles, Baroque architecture, the splashy patterns of 16th-century Japanese Oribe tea-ceremony sets, and, perhaps most importantly, the New York branch of the Pattern and Decoration movement.[2]

Woodman became associated with P&D in the late '70s, initially through her husband, whose geometric pattern paintings were featured in exhibitions of the Colorado Criss-Cross group.[3] When P&D emerged as an

Duncan, Michael, “Woodman’s Decorative Impulse,” *Art in America*, November 2006, pp. 193-199

Formal extravagance and exuberant color enable Woodman to transcend the self-imposed restrictions that plague many contemporary artists.



Reflective Vases, *2006, canvas, terra sigillata, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer and paint, 89 by 86 by 9 inches.*



Right, Roman Panel, *2006, canvas, terra sigillata, glazed earthenware, lacquer, paint and wood, 216 by 84½ by 12 inches.*

the light-yellow images have the appearance of a wildly misregistered, vibrating silkscreen print. Although Woodman was inspired, Danto tells us, by seeing a stack of ancient amphorae that had been recovered from the hold of a sunken vessel in the Mediterranean, the result is something more raucous.[4] Enhanced by the irregular negative spaces between the pots and the curvaceous cartoon images, the installation reads as a busy chorus line, profanely dancing away all connotations of the “sacred” vessel. The association with dance spectacles isn’t accidental: Woodman titled a similar installation, featuring 15 vases climbing a double staircase platform, *Theater 2: The Rockettes* (2001, not in the exhibition).

In Woodman’s precisely arranged vases, Danto detects a “communicative vitality” that enables them to appeal to “our disposition to connect with one another in moments of shared relatedness.”[5] Woodman uses the vases in her double-sided tableaux as interlocking characters, able to tell two sides of a story or two entirely different tales. Figure drawing animates the painting on one side of works such as *River Viewing/Studio Screen* (2004)—with its Japanese woman kneeling at riverside. Here, the work’s flip side depicts a pattern whose colors are indicated by their glaze pigment numbers, a visual joke used elsewhere in Woodman’s work. On one side of its two-vase tableaux, *Bonnard’s Ladies III* (2004, not in the exhibition) depicts three women in boldly patterned fabrics; the other

Duncan, Michael, "Woodman's Decorative Impulse," *Art in America*, November 2006, pp. 193-199

side includes their still-life counterparts, three black-and-white decorated vases.

Intrigued by the elaborate embellishments of Italian baroque architecture, Woodman has made a series of wall works mounted on canvas and painted in *terra sigillata*, a watered-down clay commonly used as a ceramics finishing coat. The 18-foot-high *Roman Panel* (2006) features a loosely structured, ornamented column and balustrade done in *terra sigillata*. The work is punctuated by three wooden shelves, each holding a vase with a flat false front decorated with the image of a black and white vase. While impressive, the forms and ideas of the panel pieces are still very much in progress; her Protetch exhibition featured seven complex new works in painted clay on canvas or paper.

Springing out of the galleries, the Metropolitan exhibition included, in the museum lobby and Trustees' Dining Room, six Woodman vases used to hold flowers. The vases seemed themselves in full bloom, although with their extravagant flower arrangements—the glorious result of the Lila Acheson Wallace Endowment—they were a bit cramped in the Beaux-Arts niches of the lobby. As the exhibition catalogue reveals, Woodman regularly uses her vases to hold flowers in her homes and studios, something that radically changes their character, especially in regard to height and volume and the positions of the vases on their pedestals. Given the audacity of her work, it seems apt to hope for future exhibitions that will include floral components throughout.

Woodman mixes elements of sculpture, painting and architecture to create a ceramic amalgam of her own. The flat fronts of her simple cylindrical vases allow her to indulge through drawing in the creation of pots with fantastic baroque flourishes, wild arabesques and extended spouts. They are theatrical false fronts, props that encourage extreme fictional personae and decorative fantasy. Woodman's work champions the theatricality of the decorative impulse, and the desire of artists to make objects that transcend, indulge, fill to the brim, explode and expand our expectations. □



View of* Japanese Lady, *2005, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer and paint; at the Metropolitan Museum. Photo Katarina Jerinic.

1. Barry Schwabsky, "Betty Woodman and Modernist Painting: Beginnings," in Janet Koplos, Arthur C. Danto and Barry Schwabsky, *Betty Woodman*, New York, Monacelli Press, 2006, p. 43.
2. In conversation, artist Robert Kushner noted the similarity, too, of the fancifully painted utilitarian vessels and plates of Japanese ceramist Kitaoji Rosanjin (1883-1959).
3. Founded in 1974 by three of George Woodman's students, Clark Richert, Richard Kallweit and Charles DiJulio, Criss-Cross was dedicated to exploring the ideas evoked by P&D. They published an art journal and organized several multimedia exhibitions in the West. See *Criss-Cross at the Yellowstone Art Center*, Criss-Cross Art Communications, No. 13, Billings, Mont., Yellowstone Art Center, 1981; Michael Paglia, "Paint by Numbers," *Denver Westword*, Oct. 9, 1997.
4. Arthur C. Danto, "Communicating Vases: The Centrality of the Vessel in Betty Woodman's Art," *Betty Woodman*, p. 33.
5. Ibid., p. 32.

"The Art of Betty Woodman" was on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York [Apr. 25-July 30, 2006]. A 290-page catalogue published by Monacelli Press with essays by Janet Koplos, Arthur Danto and Barry Schwabsky accompanied the exhibition. Concurrently, "Betty Woodman: New Works" appeared at Max Protetch Gallery, New York [Apr. 20-May 27]. "Betty Woodman: Teatros" opened at the Museu Nacional do Azuelejo, Lisbon [Nov. 23, 2005-Apr. 2, 2006], and traveled to the Musée Ariana, Geneva [May 11-Oct. 1, 2006]. Works by Woodman were also featured in "From Clay to Bronze: George Jeanclos, Peter Voulkos, Betty Woodman" at Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica [July 29-Aug. 26, 2006].

Author: *Michael Duncan is a freelance writer and curator based in Los Angeles.*

Duncan, Michael, "Woodman's Decorative Impulse," *Art in America*, November 2006, pp. 193-199

Woodman uses the vases in her double-sided tableaux as interlocking characters, able to tell two sides of a story or two entirely different tales.



Above, two views of **Divided Vases—Bonnard's Window**, *2006, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer and paint, 34½ by 35¾ by 6 inches.*

Right, two views of **Floating Kimono Vases**, *1992, earthenware, 37 by 54 by 10 inches. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Donald Newhouse, courtesy Metropolitan Museum.*

art-world phenomenon after the New York artist-organized meetings of 1975-76, the couple began to spend more time in Manhattan, acquiring a loft in 1980 near the flower district. The iconoclastic spirit of P&D—born to challenge Minimalism, the art market, High Art snobbery and the patriarchal artworld—seems the primary instigating source in Woodman's liberation from the world of conventional ceramics.

A 1980 collaboration with Joyce Kozloff at New York's Tibor de Nagy Gallery featured Kozloff painting intricate Islamic designs on Woodman's glazed earthenware. Woodman's first installation, a 1982 collaboration with Cynthia Carlson, juxtaposed her ceramic tiles and Carlson's wallpaper, both decorated with a cake froster—Carlson's trademark painting tool. (Woodman went on to use cake-decorating tools to achieve curly shapes and flourishes in many platters and vases.) Woodman's freewheeling drawing style is in the mode of the early work of P&D painters Robert Kushner, Brad Davis and Robert Zakanitch, while her installations relate to the columned, decorative arcades of Ned Smyth. Throughout most of the '70s, Miriam Schapiro had tapped the potential of many forms of traditional women's crafts, while Kim MacConnel, perhaps the movement's chief disciple of Matissean color and design, had experimented with abrupt juxtapositions of patterns in his painted fabric works. Since their heyday in the late '70s and early '80s, the instigating P&D artists have all continued to develop in interesting directions. Woodman's breakthroughs of the past decade have confirmed the lasting viability and freshness of the ideas evoked by the movement.

As is true of the P&D artists, a kind of ipso facto feminism permeates Woodman's art. But her muscular fragmentation of the vase makes her enterprise a very rigorous, contemporary representation of traditional "women's work." With Woodman's multiple households celebrating decoration, food, flowers, children and guests, domestic life has nourished and enlivened her esthetic. Vases represent the bounty of her gardens, studios and kitchens, and her large installations can be seen as loosely symbolic representations of her homes/studios. The implied motion of her fragmented imagery reflects a practice that involves much physical energy and a lifestyle of traveling, intellectual curiosity and sociability.

The most daring work in the Met's survey, *House of the South* (1996), presents vases, pedestals and ceramic fragments scattered over a roughly 13-by-20-foot expanse of wall. The effect is of an abstract drawing or sprawling Matisse cutout applied directly to the wall, while also suggesting a bizarrely decorated pottery shop or studio. The work toys with gravity, placing two freestanding vases on shelves amid flat clay images of vases, pedestals and disembodied handles. Several images of vases are lifted, tilting off their nonfunctioning pedestals, ready for acrobatic tumbles. Woodman sweeps away the idea some viewers might retain of vessels as cool, pristine containers. The traditional feminine connotations of the vase, too, seem blithely toppled.

In this expansive mode, Woodman comically uses vases as human surrogates. Installed on seven ascending platforms, *Aeolian Pyramid* (2000) was the Met showstopper: a triangular stack of 35 vases with similarly shaped flat fronts painted with images of fragmented vases. Only vaguely similar,





Duncan, Michael, “Woodman’s Decorative Impulse,” *Art in America*, November 2006, pp. 193-199



Above and below, two views of His/Her Vases—River Viewing/Studio Screen, *2004, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer and paint, 29 by 72 by 9½ inches.*



Piche, Jr., Thomas, “At The Met: Betty Woodman,” *American Craft*, September 30, 2006

american craft



Piche, Jr., Thomas, "At The Met: Betty Woodman," *American Craft*, September 30, 2006



View of "The Art of Betty Woodman" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art with, right foreground, *Tang Pillow Pitcher*, 1981, glazed earthenware, 19 3/4 by 11 by 13 inches, promised gift to the museum by Inge Peters. OPPOSITE PAGE: In the Great Hall of the Met, 2006, Woodman's *Japanese Lady*, 2005, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint, 33 by 35 by 17 1/2 inches, one of five urns created by the artist for the hall. Photos/courtesy Max Protetch Gallery

BY THOMAS PICHÉ JR.

Betty Woodman has an unerring eye for composition and for color, texture and placement. She takes complicated shapes and combines them with complicated patterns to create metaphoric objects. She employs a scale that suggests big ideas. She contrasts volume and plane, mass and interval with an appeal to the eye and the mind, all in measured balance. The memory of "The Art of Betty Woodman," her retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (April 25-July 30), fortified by the posh monograph published to coincide with it,* is like the lingering taste of a rich dessert that manages to be good for you, too.

Woodman's work is smart, knowing, well-traveled and well-read. Although the medium and techniques she employs are based in conventional ceramic tradition, her allusions and illusions point in a multitude of directions. One is variously reminded of the classically antique (Greece and Etruria, for example), of the Asian (Chinese Tang, Japanese Oribe) and the European (Italian baroque, French rococo). An account of formal and conceptual strategies includes nods to Cubism and Matisse, expressionistic gesture and flat stain, Pattern and Decoration, and Jasper Johns.

The exhibition begins with a historical preamble that offers a quick survey of ceramic works made by Woodman during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Here, the viewer is shown objects that illustrate the artist's early grounding in functional forms, a foundation that is soon complicated by her regard for historical precedent and conceptual play. Included are Woodman's signature "pillow pitchers" of the 1970s, objects that acknowledge utilitarian Cretan vessels, but which she makes her own through the application of a knowledgeable range of historical glaze types. Similarly, several examples from her 1966 series of vases based on Etruscan ceramics herald the sort of synthesis that will become standard practice in her work during the 1980s.

Piche, Jr., Thomas, "At The Met: Betty Woodman," *American Craft*, September 30, 2006



The bulk of the exhibition is devoted to the large-scale vases and groupings of vessels for which Woodman has become well-known during the past 20 years. One does not think of vase first off with these objects, but of sculptural assemblage (although the floral installations in her five large urns in the Met's Great Hall highlight the work's potential for utility). The basic composition has at its core a tall, cylindrical vessel to which is attached flat, irregularly shaped flanges. The combination produces an eccentric, glyphic shape that emphasizes the means of the work's construction as a cut-and-paste-on aesthetic that juxtaposes volume and silhouette, center and adjunct, torque and stasis. The artist treats these stuttered assemblages as supports for expressive decoration calligraphically applied in vivid hues. There is a spontaneity to the surface treatment, an all-at-once quality, as if a moment's inspiration were quickly captured. This characteristic well matches the flutter of the shapes themselves. In the most successful examples, such as *Still Life Vase #11*, 1990, loosely brushed decoration mimics and accentuates the jigsaw puzzle-piece outline of the overall shape. Other times, there is a fragmentary or cropped aspect to the surface painting, as if a preexisting figural pattern had been attached to the irregular shape, and the area that did not conform to the ceramic was cut away.

Absence, shadow, interval and rupture are important components of Woodman's work. What is not there is as important as what she sculpts, shapes and paints. The space around her objects, enclosed within her forms and between assembled elements is as compelling as what is tangibly articulated. The works seem to reach out into space, beckoning the viewer to approach and complete the equation. Scale is also a component of this engagement: inflated beyond mere domestic functionality, Woodman's vases seem to demand an audience, not just a single beholder.

This quality is made explicit in her balustrade relief assemblies, so-called for their allusions to the gap between balusters used in architectural settings. These wall reliefs are anchored by a columnar vase set on a wall-mounted ceramic shelf and elaborated by the addition of flat, cutout ceramic forms that attach directly to the wall. The compositions are usually the size of a large easel painting, but at 13 by 21 feet, *House of the South,* 1996, takes on an architectural

sensibility that dominates its wall. This installation is composed of dozens of largely two-dimensional painted cutout fragments that evoke high-shouldered, baluster shapes and other vessel forms, mixed up with architectural bits and squiggles. The overall effect is schematic but animated. The wall becomes as important in these works as what the artist has fabricated and highlights the conceptual basis of Woodman's mature oeuvre, which is imbued with evocative meaning rather than homely purpose. Her constructions might hold the occasional bouquet, but they are better contemplated on their own.

In 1929, Adelaide Alsop Robineau was the first American ceramist to be given a retrospective exhibition at the Metropolitan; few others (if any) have been so favored during the subsequent 76 years. Today, Robineau's painstaking work in ceramics is considered to be among the best produced in America during the last century. Although the formal considerations of Robineau and Woodman are quite different, their conceptual aims are not so far apart. These include a focus on the vessel tradition; their masterful balance of form and decoration; the amalgamation of aesthetic inspiration from eastern and western models, historical and contemporary, ceramic and not; and the urge to stretch the boundaries of their chosen medium to reflect ideas explored in other, non-craft, media. Is Woodman the 21st-century Robineau? Is that even a useful question to ask? Given the nature of the infrequent honor accorded Woodman by the Met, one feels challenged to work harder to determine what it is that sets her life's work apart from that of her peers. Although Robineau, too, enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the museum's curators during her lifetime, her standing has ultimately been confirmed by history. Whether Betty Woodman takes up this mantle is a consideration that will be best settled by time's passing. ■

**Betty Woodman*, 288 pages, essays by Janet Koplos, Arthur C. Danto and Barry Schwabsky, is $60 from Monacelli Press, 212-777-0504.

Thomas Piché Jr. is director of the Gibson Art Gallery, State University of New York at Potsdam.



BELOW: *The Ming Sisters*, 2003, earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint, 32 by 84 inches, collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchase, gift of the A. L. Levine Family Foundation by exchange, photo ©2005 Metropolitan Museum of Art. OPPOSITE PAGE: Woodman at the *Met* with the installation *House of the South*, 1996, glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint, 13 1/4 by 21 1/4 by 5/4 feet, photo Katarina Jerinic, courtesy of Max Protetch Gallery.

Schjeldahl, Peter, "Decoration Myths," *The New Yorker*, May 15, 2006

THE ART WORLD

DECORATION MYTHS

Betty Woodman's ceramics.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



A set of Woodman vases, titled "The Portuguese in Japan" (2000).

COURTESY METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

"Too Matissey," a woman complained while viewing the spectacular Betty Woodman retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum, a show that, on the day that I saw it, piqued a good deal of chat among strangers. The profusion of ceramic vessels and abstracted images of vessels, ranging from teacups to vast installations, shocks with aggressive forms and blazing colors, and its obvious, hellbent determination to please solicits opinion. None of the work is too Matisse-like. Though the master of color is very much evoked, nothing could less reflect his ideal that art should be like a good armchair than Woodman's rough-and-tumble theatricality. The show can put you in mind, too, of Picasso, Miró, and Joan Mitchell, and of Cubism, Surrealism, and Abstract Expressionism—elements of modernity that, over a half-century career, Woodman has thoroughly rethought in low-fired clay. At the age of seventy-six, she is beyond original, all the way to sui generis. She has been well known in art circles since the nineteen-seventies, when her work was associated (incorrectly but advantageously, given the art world's chronic disdain for anything that smacks of "craft") with a briefly fashionable movement called Pattern and Decoration. A dearth of wider fame is due to the strangeness of her project, which entails a simultaneous emphasis on painting and sculpture in a disrespected medium, with references to arcane Mediterranean and Asian decorative traditions. An approving critic, on this occasion, is tasked with discovering significant questions to which Woodman's art is the right answer. How can something be important that seems, at first blush, so capricious?

Start in the Met's entrance hall, where the massive, banal urns that are routinely filled with bouquets of fresh flowers have been replaced, for now, with Woodmans: cylindrical vases fronted with flat, jaggedly cut out slabs bearing glazed and painted, shattered representations of vase forms. When I was there (the arrangements change, week to week), masses of cherry blossoms, lilies, and subtly accenting blue-green eucalyptus complemented such opulent hues as, in a vase titled "Portugal," an indigo like an organ chord, at once rumbling and clarion. It's only décor, but what décor! I found myself reflecting, glumly, on the timid or arch character of most decoration today. Since decoration is art that is meant not to be looked at directly but to be taken in peripherally, Woodman's work may seem overqualified, in its peremptory splendors. But, in effect, the work dreams of a world in which beautiful invention is to be expected, as an aesthetic civil right. It's not Woodman's fault that the rest of the culture won't perform at her level—though the rest of the Met certainly does. Leaving the show, I wandered into the museum's collections of Italian Renaissance and ancient Greek pottery with eyes pried open. Those pieces were made not to be pedestalled, as treasures, but to enhance lived protocols of perception and feeling. I also checked in with Matisse. Woodman is indeed a comparable colorist. Her conjunctions of high-keyed and earthen shades, often with swift black lines and chalk-white grounds, first startle, then gladden. She lacks Matisse's Arcadian harmony—her color jangles—but this is not a failure so much as an authentic note of an American sensibility too restless and pragmatic to dawdle in regions of *calme, luxe, et volupté*.

Born Elizabeth Abrahams, Woodman became a potter at an early age, in her home town of Newton, Massachusetts, where her father worked for a supermarket and her mother for Jewish charities. She was enchanted by the alchemy of glazes: drab when brushed on, brilliant when they came out of the kiln. In 1948, she entered the celebrated ceramics program of Alfred University, in western New York, where she absorbed—but always resisted—the gospel of Japanese-influenced functionalism preached by the Englishman Bernard Leach, who was then preëminent in the field. While teaching pottery two years later, in Boston, she met her future husband, the painter and photographer George Woodman, who regularly decorated her pots, until she took over that job, in the early seventies. They lived in Boulder, Colorado, where George taught, and they had two children. They moved to New York in 1980. She joined the Max Protetch Gallery, which is committed to cross-currents of art, architecture, and design, in 1983. (A terrific show of her pieces there, which runs through the end of

Schjeldahl, Peter, "Decoration Myths," *The New Yorker*, May 15, 2006

this month, confirms that she is now doing her best work.) The late furniture sculptor and radical aesthetician Scott Burton, who disparaged distinctions between art and utility, encouraged her ambition—she has said that she finally dared to think of herself as an artist, period, around that time. The Woodmans now divide their year between a loft on West Seventeenth Street and a hilltop house in Antella, Italy, with a view of Florence.

Woodman is an omnivore of ceramics traditions, among them Etruscan pots, Italian majolica, the Baroque, Tang-dynasty glaze techniques, Islamic tiles, Okinawan folk pottery, and Moorish-Spanish ware. The Mississippi potter George Ohr is also a likely influence. But she resents being termed a "ceramicist," quite properly, in that her work is superior to even the best professional ceramics as art, yet it's impossible as craft. It's hard to think of a principle of good potting that she doesn't violate. To make her slab forms—which sprout like eccentric wings from the sides of many of her vases, glued on with epoxy—she throws platterlike expanses on a large wheel, then stretches and cuts them. The slabs crack frequently, and she repairs them with flattened globs of the same clay. (You can tell the patches by the imprints of her shoe soles.) Colors that she can't achieve with glaze are slathered on in paint. More generally, Woodman trashes an aesthetic cynosure of ceramics: tactility. What we identify as fine art functions at a middle distance, where eyesight is most efficient. Ceramics claim space within arm's reach, where vision blends with touch. The arid, rough surfaces of Woodman's earthenware give exploring fingers scant welcome. (You mustn't touch, of course; but you wouldn't want to.) Her anti-craftsiness sharply distinguishes her from another major ceramic artist, Ken Price, who exaggerates tactile seductiveness and chromatic beauty at the same time; his parti-color, glass-smooth recent works are too well made for any conceivable human need. I'm a fan of ceramics, which should not require distortions as violent as Woodman's or Price's to merit serious consideration. But there it is, in a civilization that has gone numb to qualities of the handmade.

Hybridizing painting and sculpture was a collective project of avant-gardists in the nineteen-sixties. (Frank Stella's work has been forcing the issue ever since.) Woodman demonstrates that in this pursuit art aspires to the condition of ceramics, which naturally marries decorative surface to three-dimensional shape. She does so by deconstructing that unity, divorcing surface from shape as dramatically as possible. The sculptural character of her outsized, flamboyant vases is a given. (It is weaker in teacups, tureens, and other service genres; suggestions of dinner-table amenity plainly exasperate Woodman's belligerent muse. She is a vase artist, first and last.) She concentrates on aggrandizing the pictorial, to the point of incorporating actual paintings, in mediums including ceramic-slip glaze on paper or unstretched canvas, as grounds for wall reliefs of curved shards and shelved vessel forms. The marvellous "Roman Panel" is eighteen feet high. Suites of winged vases offer two viewing points, not front and back but front and front. Each side deploys a different over-all design that leaps the gaps between the vases. Her aim is to charge negative space—the air around her pieces—with active presence. It doesn't always work; sometimes shapes just sit or hang there. But the dynamic is miraculous in "Aeolian Pyramid," a stepped array of thirty-five big, slab-presenting vases of abstracted Greek design in black, yellow, and pale terra cotta. The composite keeps squeezing out real space, which keeps muscling back in. The result is a visual "Hallelujah" Chorus. The freshness, variety, and unquenchable inventiveness of her work at the Met, and in the show at Protetch, bespeak a great insight: that seemingly exhausted formal repertoires, such as those of canonical modern art, can be made brand-new by translation into an independent artistic language. ♦

Ayers, Robert, “The AI Interview: Betty Woodman,” *ArtInfo*, May 9, 2006

BLOUIN ARTINFO



"The Bathers Revisited Triptych," 2004
Betty Woodman

The AI Interview: Betty Woodman

by Robert Ayers

NEW YORK, MAY 3, 2006—No one else works like Betty Woodman. She makes exuberant ceramic sculptures that are often discreet jugs, pots or urns. But equally often, her ceramics gather in groups, clamber up walls or describe spaces that can be entered.

Woodman’s achievement has been recognized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which is presenting her first U.S. retrospective (and the first retrospective that august institution has ever granted a living ceramics artist). “The Art of Betty Woodman” is on view through July 30.

Woodman has shown with the Max Protetch Gallery since 1983, and to coincide with the Met retrospective, the gallery is presenting her “New Works” at its Chelsea space until May 27. In addition, The Monacelli Press has published a gorgeous monograph—largely designed by Woodman herself—with essays by Janet Koplos, Arthur Danto and Barry Schwabsky.

Woodman spoke with ArtInfo in her Chelsea studio, just as she was opening her kiln to reveal two large figure pieces.

“This is an exciting moment,” Woodman says, as she opens the kiln. “It doesn’t matter how much experience you have, you just don’t know what you’ll find. When I paint these pieces, the colors, the surface, everything is very different. [She points to the blue robes worn by some figures emerging from the kiln.] This is cobalt sulfate; it’s like a palepink wash when I put it on. I’m never sure quite how strong a blue it’s going to be. You think you know what you’re doing—and at the moment usually I do—but really you don’t!”

Standing here in front of your kiln prompts my first question. Your show at the Met has raised all those problems again about where your work sits between craft and art. That must be something you’re very conscious of, isn’t it?

When critics write about my work for the first time, they make this ridiculous disclaimer, “I don’t know anything about clay, but…” If you’re writing about painting you don’t say, “I know nothing about paint.”

But before you came to work in New York City in 1980, you made work that was far nearer to the crafts tradition, didn’t you?

Yes. Most artists don’t admit this. A lot of artists begin by doing something else, but then they drop it when they have their new persona. But my husband George and I both taught in Colorado, where I was a production potter. I made dishes and casseroles and all kinds of things to make an income. That was our bread and butter.

But at the same time, I also had a studio in Italy, so I didn’t try to duplicate what I did in Colorado in Italy. Why bother? In Italy I wasn’t involved in functional work, so I was involved in things that were more experimental in the use of color.

So would you say that the beginnings of the work you’re making now were discovered in Italy?

Yes. I went to Italy when I was very young, so I think that I have a way of looking that is colored by that. But there were also technical things that I discovered in Italy—an awareness of the low-fired tradition and an understanding of the kinds of things that you can get away with when you fire clay at a low temperature that you can’t at a high temperature. Particularly in the use of color. When I was in college, everybody wanted to do higher-temperature stoneware which was much more limited in its color. I went off to Italy after I graduated and I saw all this stuff like Etruscan pottery that was very important to me.

But then as soon as you got to New York, you were accepted by a gallery.

Yes. I walked straight into the arms of a gallery. And after a few years, Max invited me to join his gallery. People in galleries are always looking for what might be the next thing, and the buzz was that it might be ceramics, but Max was interested conceptually. He was taking my work as art, and presenting it as art.

But it still belongs to a tradition of vessel making, it seems to me.

Yes. That’s a given. When I stopped making those pots in Colorado—and I made tens of thousands of pots—I didn’t want to let go of that huge experience. Why not figure out how to keep that experience in my work? The first pieces where function was essentially their subject matter, rather than how they were used, they really came out of that.

But then you bring that tradition into the realms of sculpture and picture-making. In fact, it seems to me that your work sits midway between sculptures and pictures. Doing a picture of a sculpture is one thing, but making a sculpture of a picture …

… Is what I do! Yes, you’ve got it. That’s exactly what I’m doing.

And that’s echoed in the way that you’ll bring different media together in the same piece.

All of us make art in such different ways, but some things happen subconsciously and some things happen consciously. Everybody has certain things that are ‘given.’ The way I feel about

working with clay is that it’s something that I know how to do. It’s a given. But you can’t just do what you know how to do. You have to have different challenges. If it gets too easy, it’s no fun when you open the kiln. You have to be on the edge; you have to be unsure of yourself.

And is that surprise factor why you sometimes paint your pieces completely differently on each side?

Well, some pieces are physically very different from one side to the other. But when I started doing that, I think what I said—and it clarified it for me when I said it—was that it’s very much about the history of ceramics, which is the history of painted form, and the fact that you can change your perception of the form by how you paint it.

But at this point I think that the truth of the matter is that I really love the painting and I’m very interested in it. It’s a lot of work making these pieces and it’s like I have two different canvases, to be honest. I’m not sure they have to be seen all the way around, or that there’s a relationship. I think really it’s just simply that I can make two different paintings on this one object.

Glueck, Grace, "The Humble Vase Shows Its Colors And Its Versatility," The New York Times, April 28, 2006, p. E33, E36

WEEKEND Arts FINE ARTS LEISURE

The New York Times E33 N

FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2006

ART REVIEW

The Humble Vase Shows Its Colors And Its Versatility



Metropolitan Museum of Art

"Floral Vase and Shadow," a 1983 work by Betty Woodman, part of her solo retrospective at the Met.

By GRACE GLUECK

FIXATING on the vase, a time-honored vessel that goes back maybe to the dawn of history, Betty Woodman has brought it to spectacular new life in contemporary art. Her work both challenges and invokes the traditional elements of vase and vesselhood so imaginatively that it lives in a class by itself. You can experience its power in her first retrospective, "The Art of Betty Woodman," at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The exhibition is also a first for the Met, a collector of pots from all ages that has until now never given

The Art of Betty Woodman
Metropolitan Museum of Art

a solo retrospective to a living maker of them.

Vessels in the shapes of pillows, bodies (human and animal), flowers and plants; vessels that range in form from Greek to Chinese to Aztec; vessels as baskets, cups, soup tureens and letter holders; vessels inspired by architecture and clothing; vessels that cast ceramic shadows of themselves; vessels that hug a wall or sit on a shelf; ceremonial vessels; even one in the form of an erotic burrito — Ms. Woodman has neglected no source that might be used as a basis for her exuberantly extravagant creations.

Although ceramics remain her basic medium, her art, with its wild colors and eccentric shapes, has gradually breached the border between craft and high art to intersect with painting and sculpture. "House of the South" (1996), a mural-size wall installation in the exhibition laid out in rectangular picture form, is composed of dozens of painted ceramic parts in

Continued on Page 36

Glueck, Grace, "The Humble Vase Shows Its Colors And Its Versatility," The New York Times, April 28, 2006, p. E33, E36

ART REVIEW

The Humble Vase Shows Its Colors and Versatility

Continued From Weekend Page 33

varied flat and relief shapes. Some actually project from the wall: full vases and cutout fragments, arranged so that there is lots of space between elements that is as much a part of the composition as they are.

Some of the spaces suggest the empty areas between the fancy uprights of a balustrade, a source of fascination for Ms. Woodman. Some of the uncompleted larger elements look like columns in the making. In another vein, wriggly free-form shapes invoke both vegetation and the handles of baroque urns. With its vibrant colors and complex interactions of spaces and shapes, "House of the South" is perceivable as a full-fledged painting rather than just an arrangement of ceramic forms.

Ms. Woodman's decision to become a potter goes back to her teenage years, when she took a high school class and became fascinated with the magic of ceramic glaze, which turned a piece from dull to brilliant when fired in a kiln. She studied ceramics at the School for American Craftsmen at Alfred University, where her first real effort was a custard cup made to fulfill the school's requirement that students create a production item. Her two-year course over, in the early 1950's she sojourned in Italy, where she fell headlong in love with Mediterranean art. In its more Baroque aspects it seems to have provided the basic impetus for her work ever since, no matter how far-flung her inspirations.

By 1975 her painterly style was establishing itself, cued partly by the Pattern and Decoration movement of the 70's, whose participants (including her husband, George Woodman, then a painter) explored a wide range of art from every era. That year she produced what is probably her most popular and original creation, the pillow pitcher, whose form she invented. It was made using two cylindrical pots, each pinched together at one end, then joined mouth to mouth at the other, the joint concealed by a strap of clay leading to a traditional pitcher spout and handle. She still makes them from time to time.

Not meant for function, the generous, puffy shape provides a natural painting surface, exemplified in "Tang Pillow Pitcher" (1981), whose glazed white earthenware face is drippily splotched with dark green and rust-colored paint in Ms. Woodman's broad stroke. Its deliberately casual manner is perhaps influenced by Abstract Expressionism as well as by exposure to Italian ceramics. What makes her work so engaging is the very looseness of her approach to shape and paint application, refreshingly different from the tight intricacies of more punctilious ceramists, including some of her contemporaries.

This approach is seen at its best in her two-sided works in the form of double- or triple-related figures that play on the pot's relationship to the body. Essentially flat cutout pieces that flange off a columnar base, they are painted with different images on front and back, so that you can't say you've really seen them without looking on both sides. In "The Ming Sisters" (2003), a monumental triptych inspired by Japanese and Korean arts and crafts, each piece is cut out in a different but similar configuration. They stand coquettishly in a row, their bright white gowns adorned with childlike floral motifs in lively colors on one side, a gleefully different set of patterns on the reverse. Here, too, the sharply outlined spaces between the figures, ghostly gray intrusions, play an important role in the presentation of the figures.

Pursuing an early fascination with ceramics all the way to the Met.

"Aeolian Pyramid" (2000) dominates the exhibition in a knockout arrangement of several dozen flat vase cutouts in pale pink earthenware stamped with tiny raised designs. Each is of a slightly different shape; each is also adorned with painted Greek motifs in black and yellow. Their setup in a large, striking pyramid makes a bravura stage set for this scintillating show.

As a bonus, Ms. Woodman has done five ebullient substitutes for the pompous urns in the Met's Great Hall that hold the floral arrangements refreshed weekly there. It would be nice if the Met got to keep them.

"The Art of Betty Woodman" continues through July 30 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street, (212) 535-7710.



Photographs courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art

"Vase and Carpet Diptych," from 2003, in the Woodman retrospective.



"Aeolian Pyramid," from 2000, consists of numerous flat vase cutouts.

Budick, Ariella, “Glaze and haze: Mastering clay pots and rooftop smoke,” *Newsday*, April 27, 2006

Newsday

ART REVIEW

Glaze and haze: Mastering clay pots and rooftop smoke

THE ART OF BETTY WOODMAN through July 30 and **CAI GUO-QIANG ON THE ROOF** through Oct. 29 (weather permitting) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Ave. at 82nd Street, Manhattan. For exhibition hours and admission prices, call 212-535-7710 or visit www.metmuseum.org.

BY ARIELLA BUDICK
STAFF WRITER

The Metropolitan Museum isn't generally considered the go-to place for contemporary art, but two shows opening this week belie its reputation as a bastion of the dead. "The Art of Betty Woodman" turns an airy gallery over to the joyful, expansive work of a 77-year-old, mostly unknown clay-shaper who operates in the crevices between painting and sculpture. Meanwhile, up on the roof, viewers can see the wondrous imaginings of Cai Guo-Qiang, a Chinese-born multimediaist who has lived in New York since 1995. Both exhibits (as well as the magnificent installation of Rauschenberg combines and a selection of Kara Walker's meditation on Hurricane Katrina) signal a heartening embrace of living artists.

Woodman's appearance at the Met is both odd and strangely apropos. Viewers might wonder why the Met would lavish a retrospective on someone so unfamiliar even to the savviest insiders. But the museum brims with objects made of clay, and Woodman's cheerful constructions converse with Greek pottery, Etruscan sculpture, Minoan statues, Egyptian figurines, Tang dynasty vases, majolica and Sevres porcelain, Italian Baroque architecture, and the paintings of Picasso, Matisse and the Abstract Expressionists.

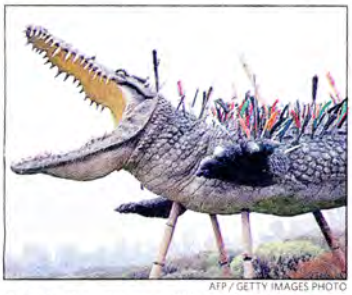
Crafted from ceramic, her sculptures naturally suggest such functional items as pitchers, amphoras and vases. Early in her career, the Norwalk, Conn.-born artist did make whimsical but serviceable bowls, jars and teapots. Things changed, though, after she saw Frank Stella's wall reliefs in 1958, which taught her that painting could spring out of the frame and act in a three-dimensional arena.

Her work gradually became less useful and more about the concept of use. Or as she puts it in a wall text: "I start to think of myself as an artist. . . . Vases are now about vases." Her brightly hued "Floating Kimono Vases," skillfully splattered with violet, gold, green, salmon and black, sprout humanoid appendages. They engage in animated dialogue as the viewer looks on, sensitized both to the pieces and to the blank space separating them.

Where Woodman almost wallows in the sensuality of her material, Cai Guo-Qiang's speciality is the emphatically evanescent, and his masterpiece at the Met dissolves into air. This is "Transparent Monument," a dense puff of smoke that appears in the sky precisely at noon every day, accompanied by a sharp thunderclap. At times, it looks like a dark rain cloud of the sort that follows cartoon characters around when they're blue. At others, it resembles an inkblot leaking across the sky.

For his rooftop exhibit, Cai has also contributed two 12-foot-long crocodiles cast in resin, which hover over the ledges of the garden's southern edge. Colorful objects — knives, forks and other sharp utensils — pierce their armored bodies and compromise their ferociousness. These almost messianic amphibians recall the nine life-size tigers, each pierced by dozens of arrows, that Cai hung from the ceiling of Mass MoCa last year.

The sight of these fearsome predators racked by such human-inflicted agony is terrible and beautiful in equal measure, a meditation on the nature of violence.



AFP/GETTY IMAGES PHOTO

A 12-foot resin crocodile by Cai Guo-Qiang graces a rooftop exhibit at the Met; below, Betty Woodman's clay-shaping creations



PHOTO BY DON POLLARD

Loos, Ted, “Yes, They’re Clay, but Don’t Dare Call Them Ceramics,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 2006

The New York Times

ART

Yes, They’re Clay, but Don’t Dare Call Them Ceramics



“The Ming Sisters” is among her works being shown at the Met.

By TED LOOS
April 23, 2006

IN 1988, the artist Betty Woodman had an idea: wouldn’t it be wonderful to replace the traditional urns in the Great Hall of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the ones that hold enormous flower arrangements, with vases of her own design?

Ms. Woodman, now 75, makes exuberantly painted clay vessels, often referring to art of the past, from ancient Roman pottery to paintings by Bonnard. Working with the Public Art Fund, Ms. Woodman came up with a proposal to transform the museum’s lobby. The Met’s answer was firm.

“They said, ‘Don’t be silly,’ “ she recalled the other day, seated in her light-filled studio, part of the large Chelsea loft she shares with her husband, George. Ms. Woodman, who is five feet tall, was wearing hip Camper shoes and a bright yellow corduroy dress that telegraphed her passion for color.

As for the rejection, she’s over it. First of all, the vases ended up in the Museum of Modern Art’s lobby a year later, primarily because of the art world powerhouse Agnes Gund, a collector of Ms. Woodman’s work.

More important, the Metropolitan has come around, in spades. It has given Ms. Woodman its highest compliment: a full retrospective, something it doesn’t often do for living artists.

“The Art of Betty Woodman,” featuring about 70 examples of her work from the 1950’s until this year, will be on view from Tuesday through July 30. As part of the show, Ms. Woodman also got what she wanted originally: the Great Hall flowers, endowed by Lila Acheson Wallace, will be placed inside five of her one-of-a-kind creations for the run. The blossoms will have to get used to being upstaged.

Loos, Ted, “Yes, They’re Clay, but Don’t Dare Call Them Ceramics,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 2006

“I am coming out of left field,” Ms. Woodman said with a laugh as she discussed her relatively late-blooming career and her dynamic presence in the museum. “They don’t know what they’ve got hold of.” Framed by the neon-yellow trim of the studio’s large north-facing windows, she sat in a well-worn gray office chair, the same height-adjustable model she uses when working at her potter’s wheel nearby.

This may finally be the moment when Ms. Woodman’s work enters the public’s art consciousness. Though she has been known in the art world for years — she joined the influential Max Protetch Gallery in 1983 — she has never achieved the fame of many of her peers.

No doubt that is partly because what she does crosses artistic boundaries. “She’s in her own category,” said Jane Adlin, the curator who organized the exhibition. “I can’t find anyone comparable.”

Ms. Woodman’s work frequently incorporates some kind of vessel, but it is not usually intended to be used as a vase or cup. (Even the Met’s flower vases must have liners placed inside so that they don’t leak.) Outsized and exaggerated, the pieces are part conceptual artwork and part well-wrought sculpture.

“Her work is easy to look at, but there are layers of information,” Ms. Adlin said.

Ms. Woodman has scoured many sources, including Islamic and Asian art, for her works. “I’ve been interested for a long time in Roman and Egyptian wall paintings,” she said. “Always, in these paintings, are images of pots. The vessel is always there, throughout the history of man. It’s a very universal image.”

Triptychs are a favorite approach. In “The Ming Sisters” (2003), featured at the Met, three white vases stand side by side. They are painted all over with bright motifs from old Chinese vases, as well as more abstract markings. Where handles would be on a conventional vase, Ms. Woodman, riffing on that shape, added flat, winglike pieces that gave her space to extend the decorative pattern.

Some of her hanging works have shapes and colors that may remind viewers of Matisse’s cut-outs. In “Roman Panel” (2006), an 18-foot-high work designed specifically for the high-ceilinged Kimmelman Gallery at the Met, Ms. Woodman attached curving pottery shards directly to a painted canvas.

These works are far removed from the dinner sets and decorative bowls she started making in the 1940’s. At some point along the way — when exactly, she isn’t sure — Ms. Woodman made a leap into a new realm. As she put it, “I’m not making pots anymore, even if I use that language.”

Ms. Woodman has spent decades trying to avoid being placed in a ceramics and craft ghetto, while at the same time defending her chosen medium as worthy. It’s definitely a case of wanting it both ways, partly because she has heard every confused or dismissive reaction to her work, starting with, Ms. Woodman said, “ ‘My wife has a hobby, too.’ “

She said that a woman recently told her, upon hearing of her Metropolitan exhibition, “ ‘Oh, I

didn’t know they were interested in showing ceramics.’ “

Because of this history, she can be touchy on the topic of labels. “I think I’m sort of happy to call myself a potter,” Ms. Woodman said, “but it’s a different thing if you call me a potter.”

“In my most recent work, I’m much more interested in the history of painting than in the history of ceramics,” she added. “I think what I am is a sculptor. It’s awkward for me, but that’s how I would refer to myself. I have to learn to say, ‘I make sculpture.’ “

Even so-called experts haven’t always known what to make of her work. “I’ve gotten negative reactions for 25 years,” said Mr. Protetch, Ms. Woodman’s dealer and friend, from “narrow, unthinking art world people who are more impressed by superficial things than they are by substance.”

With his artist ensconced at the Met, Mr. Protetch can feel that his perseverance was justified. “I’m exonerated, and Betty is recognized for the really important figure that she is,” he said. (His gallery in Chelsea has a concurrent exhibition, “Betty Woodman: New Works,” through May 27.)

In her private life, part of her charm is her renowned cooking ability, which didn’t hurt in securing the retrospective.

“Betty seduces people with food,” Ms. Adlin said. A few years ago, she was having breakfast at Ms. Woodman’s studio with a museum colleague. “In her wonderful, inimitable style, she asked us when we were going to give her a retrospective,” Ms. Adlin recalled, adding, “She was doing these incredible blueberry pancakes.”

They talked briefly, but nothing was definite. “The next thing I know, she’s calling to follow up,” Ms. Adlin said. “It’s within Betty’s nature to push for what she wants.”

Ms. Adlin expected resistance from the museum’s higher-ups. But her boss — Gary Tinterow, who directs the department of 19th-century, modern and contemporary art — knew Ms. Woodman’s work and loved it. Even the Met’s director, Philippe de Montebello, signed on right away. “I was pleasantly shocked that the director wanted to do this show,” Ms. Adlin said.

Ms. Woodman was not surprised. “Probably more square footage there is covered by ceramics than at most other institutions,” she said. “It shouldn’t be that big a step to accepting my work, and I don’t think it was.” She pointed out that the museum owned several of her pieces.

“Obviously, I’m thrilled,” she added. “I just wish my parents were alive to see it.”

She was born Betty Abrahams and grew up in Newton, Mass. Her father, an amateur cabinetmaker, worked for a supermarket, and her mother was a fund-raiser for a Jewish philanthropy. By high school, she had enrolled in her first pottery class. “I’ll never forget it,” she said. “We painted this glaze, and it was a rust color. And then it went into the kiln, and it came out green and black. It was magic!”

Part of the appeal was finding something to do with her restless hands. To this day, as Ms. Woodman talks, she repeatedly smoothes the available surface in front of her, as if she were shaping it

out of clay.

In 1948, Ms. Woodman entered the School for American Craftsmen, then in Alfred, N.Y., making a custard cup as her first object. When she moved to Boston two years later, she began teaching a pottery class at night. It had four members: Ms. Woodman’s mother, a young couple, and her future husband, a Harvard student named George Woodman.

The teacher and student soon began dating. (“You’re not allowed to do that,” Ms. Woodman admitted.) But Mr. Woodman was two years younger, and his parents didn’t want the couple to marry yet. So Ms. Woodman went to Florence for nine months, and Italy was a revelation.

What impressed her? “The possibilities of color,” she said. “It was certainly Etruscan forms and Classical forms, the whole Mediterranean tradition. I saw the possibilities of what one can do with clay.”

The Florence stay also introduced her to what she called “the nonpurity of the thrown object.” There was an offhandedness to the way that clay objects were made and used in eras past.

Today Ms. Woodman’s work, with its brio and rough textures, has a dashed-off look, even though it is anything but. “I’m not an artist who wants the viewer to wonder, ‘How did they ever do that?’ “ she said. “It may be a huge amount of work to do, but I don’t want it to look like a lot of work.”

From the beginning, the unusual process of making ceramics appealed to her, with its combination of spontaneity and planning.

“Clay is interesting because you have two separate periods of working at it,” Ms. Woodman said. “One is where you’re working with wet clay, and it’s plastic and it’s all about form. It’s a moment when clay is at its most seductive and most beautiful.”

Ms. Woodman’s homage to this moment, “Joined Vases” (1972), featured in the retrospective, is composed of four shiny white porcelain pots squashed together. The lips of each are joined together with extra material in a kind of kiss.

The second phase comes a month or so later, after the clay has dried, when the piece is glazed and placed in the kiln. There are plenty of ways to go wrong in each. “After 50 years you know what you’re doing, but clay can always put you down,” Ms. Woodman said. “Things can break. They fall apart, they blow up in the kiln. There’s an element of not being in control.”

Until the early 1970’s, her husband decorated all of her pottery, but that ended in an argument when she felt he wasn’t taking it seriously enough. “We decided we’ll stay married, but he’ll stop doing it,” Ms. Woodman said.

Mr. Woodman, a painter and photographer, began teaching at the University of Colorado in Boulder in the late 1950’s, and the couple settled there. Ms. Woodman also taught there for 20 years, until 1998. Since the late 1960’s the couple have spent part of the year at a home in Antella, Italy. They have a son, Charlie, but their daughter, Francesca, committed suicide in 1981.

Loos, Ted, “Yes, They’re Clay, but Don’t Dare Call Them Ceramics,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 2006

“It changed us totally,” Ms. Woodman said, “but I don’t think it has really worked its way into my pieces. It got more into George’s work than mine.”

Perhaps their most definitive action as a couple came in 1980, when they decided to buy their current Chelsea loft and enter the shifting currents of the New York art world. “We said, ‘We’re 50 years old, and we’re middle-aged,’ “ Ms. Woodman recalled. “ ‘We can live a comfortable life in Colorado or we can figure out a way to do something that would certainly be more interesting.’ So we opted for that.”

Lately, she has been working nonstop to prepare the Met exhibition, where her work will be given a whole new audience. “The remark that I perhaps hear most from the viewer about my work is, ‘It makes me feel good,’ “ Ms. Woodman said. “Often, I think that’s what’s in the way of me being taken as a serious artist.”

She has been around a long time, however, so she takes the long view. “I’m not offended when someone has that response,” Ms. Woodman said. “If something makes you feel good, you might look at it again and realize there’s more to it than just that.”

Chandler, Mary Voelz, "Met exhibit honors artist's feats of clay," *Rocky Mountain News*, April 22, 2006, pp. 1D, 6D

Met exhibit honors artist's feats of clay

Betty Woodman taught in Boulder

By Mary Voelz Chandler
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Betty Woodman's international reputation rests on exuberantly shaped and colored vase forms and elaborate installations, but she began by working on the functional end of the clay spectrum.

The artist taught for years in Boulder's Parks and Recreation Department Pottery Lab program, which she joined after moving to Boulder in the mid-1950s. She had studio sales. (A new book notes that her first one netted $250, enough to buy a couch.)

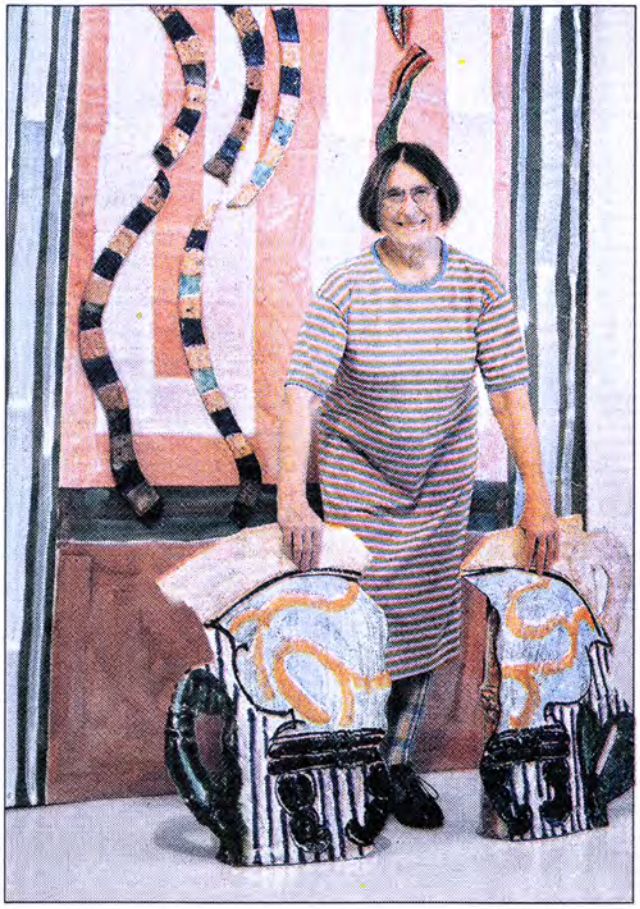
And then, in 1978, she began teaching at the University of Colorado, where she served as inspiration and mentor for a cache of fine ceramists, including Scott Chamberlin, who now teaches there. Woodman has since had work in numerous museum collections, had steady gallery representation and been honored with prizes and fellowships.

But now the artist — who splits her time between New York and Italy with her husband, painter and photographer George Woodman — is on the verge of perhaps the biggest honor of her life: "The Art of Betty Woodman," a retrospective with about 70 works dating to the 1950s, opens Tuesday at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Met describes the show as the first major U.S. retrospective of Woodman's work and of a female ceramist.

In conjunction, her longtime New York gallery, Max Protetch, Thursday opened a show of new work. Accompanying both exhibitions is a well-illustrated book, *Betty Woodman*, from Monacelli Press.

Despite all this attention, the artist who will turn 76 on May 14

Flip to ART on 6D



GEORGE WOODMAN, 2006

Artist Betty Woodman among examples of her ceramic work. The artist, a longtime Boulder resident, now splits her time between homes in New York and Italy.

Chandler, Mary Voelz, "Met exhibit honors artist's feats of clay," *Rocky Mountain News*, April 22, 2006, pp. 1D, 6D

Art: Woodman's work evolves from decor to fine art

Continued from 1D

doesn't claim to know the answer when first asked the significance of the show at the Met.

"That's an interesting question," Woodman said from her New York studio last week. She laughed. After all, she has had shows in museums around the world, studied everywhere from Angkor Wat to the Sevres porcelain factory in France.

"But I'm an American," she finally answered. "This is the Met. It's very exciting."

It's also very busy. Squeezing in this recent phone interview wasn't easy. She had just returned from the Metropolitan, where she and Jane Adlin had been working on the installation of four of Woodman's large-scale vase forms. (Adlin is assistant curator in the museum's Department of Nineteenth-Century, Modern and Contemporary Art.). After this late-afternoon conversation, kept brief at Woodman's request, she needed to return to work on one of the large pieces for the Protetch show.

Planning for the show at the Metropolitan began several years ago, though the curators first involved have retired.

"The museum has had a long history in my work," she said, noting that when R. Craig Miller, now the Denver Art Museum's curator of architecture, design and graphics, was associate curator of 20th century art at the Metropolitan in the 1980s, he acquired several of her works for the museum. Meanwhile, the Met's fine arts end of the operation also was collecting it. The same holds true in Denver, where the museum owns about a dozen pieces.

"It just spans the collections," Woodman said of her work, which in the Metropolitan show dates to 1951. "Gradually my work has simply evolved out of the area of decorative art to fine art."

That's because over the years, Woodman has moved from one end of the spectrum of clay — in her case, the earth-tones of austere Japanese-inspired vessels — to the other, the sculptural, bright, expressionist forms and hues of the Italian ceramic tradition with some Tang dynasty technique at the ready. With 50 years of practice, experimentation and response behind her, Woodman is beyond worrying about the details of her artistic evolution.



The Ming Sisters are among the vase forms that earned Betty Woodman an international reputation.

"In terms of my goals, it's just the work. People can want it, or they can reject it. It depends on the take of the person in charge."

As Adlin notes in her foreword to the new book about Woodman: "Her conceptual boldness and her ambitious experimentation have produced a series of innovations that are unique in postwar art (from color to pattern). The three-dimensional sense of 'clayness' and the two-dimensional quality of the painted surface create an unmistakably new and exciting ceramic art."

Born in Norwalk, Conn., in 1930, the artist's family moved to Boston in 1935. Her love affair with clay began at age 16 when she made a pitcher in her first pottery class at Newton High School in Boston. As she notes in the chronology in the new book: "This is it! I decide to become a potter."

She studied at the School for American Craftsmen, which was located at Alfred University in New York, to this day an incubator for talent in clay. (It's now the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University.) After returning to Boston, she met and in 1953 married Harvard University student George Woodman.

A year later, they moved to Albuquerque so he could earn his master's degree in painting. That accomplished, in 1956 they moved to Boulder, where he had a teaching job at CU. She already had traveled to Italy, where they eventually purchased a home, just as they eventually purchased a home in New York.

Upon moving to Boulder, she almost immediately discovered the Pottery Lab and began working seriously and teaching. Betty created the pots and vases and other vessel forms, and George painted them. As a painter, he had developed a strong reputation for his work in the repetitive style of imagery known as pattern and decoration and was heavily involved in the art scene here, too.

Eventually, Betty began her own painting and glazing, a signature style in which flashes of bright color and patterns that recall classical vases and flowers crawl over surfaces that swell and, really, seem to breathe.

After they retired from CU in 1996, Betty continued to travel, study, and show extensively. Along with numerous friends and colleagues (and plenty of work), they also left behind two large pieces in Denver's Percent for Art collection:

Betty Woodman's is in the Denver International Airport terminal: Head up the escalators, and those joyous, curvy balusters lined up at either end are hers. The piece was commissioned in the early 1990s, for 28 "vases." George Woodman's also is a ceramic work: the tile mural along the back wall of the Buell Theater lobby, a $130,000 project that features repetitive botanical shapes.

Area residents will get a refresher course in her work when the Denver Art Museum's new Frederic C. Hamilton Building opens in October. Woodman's 1988 installation *Somewhere Between Naples and Denver*, more than 170 pieces of highly glazed ceramic with the feel of a garden, will fill the 750-square-foot Close Range Gallery.

"What could possibly have been better than Betty Woodman?" said Diarine Vanderlip, the DAM's curator of modern and contemporary, about her choice of the installation, which first went on view in 1988. Woodman gave it to the museum in 2001.

"I wanted a Colorado artist to have a really strong presence. It's Betty Woodman and a woman and from Colorado. She changed the face of ceramic art."

The Woodmans several years ago decided to split their time between New York and Italy, and now Boulder is just a place to visit.

"I don't miss it," she said. "But I miss my friends. I miss it when I go back and have a wave of nostalgia. When the plane comes down and you look at the mountains, and say, 'Oh.' "

But living in three places "got to be too much. But I don't miss it. My life is very full."

Chandlerm@RockyMountainNews.com or 303-892-2677.

Woodman on view

- **Metropolitan Museum of Art:** "The Art of Betty Woodman," a retrospective with about 70 works dating to the 1950s, Tuesday through July 30; 1-212-535-7710; www.metmuseum.org.
- **Max Protech Gallery:** "Betty Woodman: New Works," exhibition at the New York gallery to coincide with the Metropolitan show, through May 27; 1-212-633-6999; www.maxprotetch.com.
- **Denver Art Museum:** Her installation *Somewhere Between Naples and Denver*, opens the Close Range space upon the Oct. 7 opening of the new Frederic C. Hamilton Building; 720-865-5000; www.denverartmuseum.org.

Chandler, Mary Voelz, "Met exhibit honors artist's feats of clay," *Rocky Mountain News*, April 22, 2006, pp. 1D, 6D

Boulder memories

Betty Woodman returned to Boulder in February for an exhibition and symposium designed to mark the 50th anniversary of the City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Pottery Lab program.

She taught there for years, and the show included her work as well as that of noted ceramists such as Wayne Higby and Steve Briggs.

"The program is very dear to my heart," Woodman said. "We worked very hard to establish it."

When she started, there were seven students there; when she left, there were 400 students taking classes each week, she said, "From 4-year-olds to senior citizens."

About 200 people attended the symposium. "As I said to George (Woodman), it felt like being at my own funeral," Woodman said.

Two months later, she received an e-mail saying the program faced closure to save money.

"The city of Boulder wants to close down the program," said Woodman. "It is being threatened today, and it shouldn't be. These things are very important."

Boulder Parks and Recreation Director Jan Gedden says it's a matter of the program paying more of its own way, as in 70 percent to 90 percent, rather than 40 percent.

"It's a phenomenal service, I'm not denying that," said Gedden. "But we have to balance the business interests with the passion for a program."

Mary Voelz Chandler

Princenthal, Nancy, “Betty Woodman: Useful Fictions,” *Betty Woodman,* Sedalia: Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002, pp. 6, 10-13

Betty Woodman: Useful Fictions

On a curving, 65-foot-long span of the Daum Museum's interior, Betty Woodman is executing a five-panel mural, painting directly on the wall for the first time in nearly 30 years. The imagery – vases filled with blossoming plants – is indomitably cheerful, the brushstrokes broad and free. One of the panels, Lotus Tree Vase, features lithe blue-stemmed lotuses whose petals, in tropical shades of hot pink and orange, dance across a spring-green ground. Against a background washed in the earthen tones of Pompeiian painting, the blossoms of Camellia Tree Vase glisten a shameless red; Tiger Lily Tree Vase, on the other hand, sends forth blooms that are light and lazy as butterflies. An airy diagonal grid supports the lollipop-round roses of Rose Lattice Tree Vase, while the curling fractured form rising above Evergreen Tree Vase is not even really floral, but seems rather to have risen from its diamond-patterned vase like fragrant steam, or a charmed snake; on either side, graceful green leaves wave it on.

It is hard to imagine compositions of greater exuberance or simplicity, the momentum of their formal and emotional uplift the very figure of innocent joy. But the garden path Woodman takes us on leads to the thorniest questions of presentation and representation, singularity and multiplicity, form and function, the decorative arts and the (ostensibly) transcendent ones. It is altogether typical of her work that the Ceramic Pictures of Korean Paintings (the panels' collective title) do not constitute any conventional kind of mural, but rather a variety







Princenthal, Nancy, "Betty Woodman: Useful Fictions," *Betty Woodman,* Sedalia: Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002, pp. 6, 10-13

of relief or mosaic, and they are based, literally, in three-dimensionality. To begin with, the broad bands of color applied directly to the wall, a gray strip at the bottom followed by two soft shades of blue, red, yellow or green, are made of heavily diluted clay, not paint. More to the point, the vases are actual pottery vessels, and they sit on the floor; the branches and blossoms that hang on the wall above – some big and just regular enough to suggest serving plates – are also made of earthenware. Complications multiply with the vases, which are both integral and split. That is, the free-standing cylindrical vessels are presented in pairs, each bearing before it, as if it were a heraldic shield, half of a flat, loosely vase-shaped form; the jagged inner contours of these paired fronts generally match but don't meet, like continents that have drifted. Moreover, each pair of false faces is painted (glazed, really) with the image of a colorful vase whose shape is related, but not identical, to that of the vase described by the flat form's contours (these depicted vases derive from the Korean Paintings of the mural's title).

Smart, lush and joyous, even funny, Woodman's work can also, though this is no longer her intention, be used (the new work is, still, a species of flowerpot). It is essential to her practice that she chose to train as a potter, not an artist, and dedicated herself early and unwaveringly to the loftiest craft imperatives. At the School for American Craftsmen in rural New York State, where she studied, students were taught not only aesthetic principles and technical skills but also to make saleable objects; they were required to have a sample item ready for commercial production when they graduated, at which time they received a "journeyman's certificate." These are Bauhaus principles (the Bauhaus was dedicated above all to the integration of the fine and applied arts, and it, too sponsored sales of student products), principles that were sustained in this country briefly but famously at Black Mountain College (which Woodman's forward-thinking parents had urged her to attend). Recalling, in a recent interview, her ambition to "be a potter and serve society in some way," Woodman said she was convinced that "Using beautiful handmade things would make people better." Moreover, she concluded, "I still believe that."[1]

Following graduation, and brief periods of residence abroad and back in New England, Woodman went West, living first in New Mexico and then, for more than 40 years, in Boulder, Colorado. Although the Minimalism that prevailed in New York was not altogether opposed to functionalism (Donald Judd, for instance, made furniture), Woodman didn't find the city a congenial environment until the advent of the Pattern and Decoration movement. On the crest of this briefly prominent (and rather heedlessly dismissed) project to reaffirm the connection between painting and the decorative arts, Woodman and her husband, then a painter, returned to the East Coast, moving to New York City part-time in the early 1970s. But rather than any particular regional culture, what has perhaps remained most important to her work is Woodman's decidedly international outlook. She spends roughly half the year in Italy, which she first visited 50 years ago, and where she and her husband have had a farmhouse, outside

Princenthal, Nancy, "Betty Woodman: Useful Fictions," *Betty Woodman,* Sedalia: Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002, pp. 6, 10-13

Florence, since 1967. Roman painting, Etruscan and Classical Greek pottery, and the particular atmosphere of the Tuscan landscape are lasting influences.

But so, too are Native American pots, studied firsthand when she lived in the Southwest. Early on, Woodman was encouraged to look toward Asia for formal and technical inspiration, and she continues to do so, traveling frequently and studying avidly. Tang dynasty three-color glazes and 17th-century Japanese Oribe ware have been cited as influences.[2] In the current work, the influence of Korean





East/West Triptych, 2000
38 ¾" x 88" x 9"
View A and B

painting, which Woodman saw on a trip in the summer of 2001, is visible in the almost comically broad stylization (in Woodman's description) of the depicted vases. Kimonos, the silk wrappers that are vessels for the body, are a visual resource that Woodman often avails herself of, both directly and through the mediating influence of French Orientalism, Pierre Bonnard's in particular. Other Modern masters she credits include Picasso, who worked in pottery with as much relish as in any other medium, and whom Woodman praises with unfashionable enthusiasm. Just as important is the example of Matisse, with whom Woodman has been connected by nearly every critic who has written about her work. The fluidity of her line, the Mediterranean light of her palette, the hot jazziness of some of her imagery, and, elsewhere, its aquatic cool, all evoke Matisse.

The eclecticism of Woodman's influences is evident even in her current work's titles: Naples in the Afternoon, East/West Triptych. As has been true of Woodman's freestanding vases for some time, these are not just false-fronted but also double-sided, the applied imagery changing decisively from one face to the other. Often, the color range is more restricted on one side, generally to neutral earth or flesh tones plus creamy whites and black – and, as in June in Italy, a nearly hypnotic azure blue. These relatively restrained colors are generally associated with comparatively serene imagery: Classically detailed vases, geometric patterning, simple foliage. The reverse sides tend to be given over to riotous color, and to represent, fragmentarily, the most lavish Neapolitan gardens, or swirling Japanese kimonos, or sun-speckled Tyrrhenian seas. Sometimes even the product names and

Princenthal, Nancy, "Betty Woodman: Useful Fictions," *Betty Woodman,* Sedalia: Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002, pp. 6, 10-13



upper:
Mirror Image Vases: Vases within Vases, 2000
30" x 39" x 5 ½"
View A and B

lower:
Bonnard's Ladies I, 2001
34" x 67" x 6"
View A and B

identifying numbers of glaze colors become a kind of concrete poetry: Lunch in the Country depicts a bountiful spread on one side – we see lemons, coffee cups, greenery, blue sea and sky – and, on the reverse, the kind of labeled swatches that Woodman has prepared as color tests for various glazes.

In these freestanding pairs and trios of vases, as in most of Woodman's multi-part work (including the mural), imagery continues from one vase to the next. This characteristic gesture is realized with particular clarity in the Balustrade Vases, from a series that began more than a decade ago. Originating in the observation of shapes between the columns of a balustrade, the Balustrade Vases include flat shards hung on the wall, their slender, curvy, almost calligraphic forms implying (generally misleadingly) the possibility of assembly, as in a jigsaw puzzle. (Woodman's sensitivity to spatial – and temporal – gaps extends even to wordplay, as when she creates puns by splitting compound words: witness the Still Life Vases and Wall Flower Pots, both of the late 1980s). At the center of every Balustrade composition is a single false-fronted vase mounted on a ceramic

Princenthal, Nancy, "Betty Woodman: Useful Fictions," *Betty Woodman,* Sedalia: Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002, pp. 6, 10-13

shelf, each vessel boasting a splash of painterly panache – a swish of flouncing kimono, a glimpse of a fire-red blossom.

All the flat fronts in Woodman's work, including the shards, are made from clay thrown on the pottery wheel, and then thrown again but this time onto a stable surface (a canvas-covered panel on the floor), where they are stretched and cut. The spiral ridges that appear in these forms are the track of Woodman's finger as the clay turns on the wheel; the occasional raised patterns are imprints of the soles of her shoes, from when she patched the clay as it lay flat on the floor. There is something unmistakably archaeological about these traces, just as the shards themselves suggest anthropological findings. But the deliberate falsehood of Woodman's flat fronts is not to be neglected; many have the boisterous Élan of grandly fake facades in overnight boomtowns of the 19th-century West. (Similarly, the vases have false bottoms, like thieves' luggage, since they're generally assembled from two or more stacked units.) Then again, some seem visually reckless to the point of fantasy, as if their wildly curvaceous contours, their impossible handles and spouts and equally improbable thinness, are the projections of vessels – of women – dreaming of themselves as more flamboyant, svelte, seductive selves.

The extraordinary ease with which Woodman moves between two and three dimensions, her seemingly effortless limitless ability to turn negative, inside space to positive, externalized form is perhaps her most distinctive achievement. Of course, vases are centered (literally) on empty interior space, meant merely to contain it and hold themselves available for its contents (as do the visible aspects of our bodies), and Woodman continues to entertain that paradox. At the same time, she animates the gap from one false vase-front to the next in an uncannily ambiguous way, creating an imaginary connecting form that is both flat and volumetric. Janet Koplos has observed that Woodman plays off the conventional fact that vessels can be summarized by their outlines – by a flat silhouette – because they're predictable. "But in Woodman's works," Koplos continues, "outline and volume are not the same."[3] Similarly, Barry Schwabsky has written of the flat fronts, "the 'real' three-dimensional vessel thereby becomes little more than a prop, or support, for the planar image that is ostensibly nothing but its abstraction."[4] Between the irresistible comforts of convention and the even greater pleasures of surprise; between material form and its abstract, ideal (or, at least, ideated) premise, lies the extensive body of Woodman's work. Stretching across disciplines and media with the same grace and ease with which it defies conceptual and stylistic boundaries, it never betrays its basis in the broadest definition of utility.

Nancy Princenthal

[1] "The Painted Garden, Betty Woodman: An Interview", Studio Potter v. 27 no. 1 (December 1998).
[2] Janet Koplos, "From Function to Form". Art in America vol. 78 no. 11 (November 1990), p. 170.
[3] Koplos, p. 170.
[4] Barry Schwabsky, "The Pot is Betty Woodman's Central Idea", Betty Woodman at the Centro Giovanni Lotti (exhibition brochure).

Koplos, Janet, “From Function to Form,” *Art in America*, November 1990, pp. 166-171

From Function to Form

Combining lessons gleaned from Mediterranean and Oriental ceramics with formal insights taken from abstract painting and sculpture, Betty Woodman creates complex hybrid works.

BY JANET KOPLOS



Koplos, Janet, "From Function to Form," *Art in America*, November 1990, pp. 166-171

Betty Woodman's recent works are recognizably vases, but their embellishment is like little in the ceramic canon. Her primary art, as her exhibition at Max Protetch last May demonstrated, is painting, but it's a different sort of painting, a hybrid that is fully three-dimensional and touchable, that can be surveyed from all sides and even held. Over recent years as conventional painting and sculpture have grown closer to each other, Woodman has wrested the surface treatment of her ceramics into a new, looser relationship with its form. The idea seems simple, but its realization is complex. The formal attractions of her work are the colors, the contours and the fascinating spatial ambiguities in the relationship between the object and its surface; the intellectual attractions are her references to painting, to forms and glazes from ceramic history and to the vessel's ancient associations with the human body.

At more than 30 inches high, Woodman's recent freestanding vases are taller and narrower than typical tabletop vases. Some of these freestanding works are single vases (the "Still Life Vase" series), some are pairs (the "Kimono Vases") and one work at Protetch was a trio. Each of the freestanding vases sports elaborately formed appendages that take the place of handles but do not invite gripping. These are large and irregular shapes that she has cut from flat slabs of clay and attached to opposite sides of each vase. All Woodman's works are notable for intimations of movement, created partly by the dynamic shapes of these appendages, which jut out in sharp, quick "gestures," and partly by her unpredictable blotches and sweeps of applied color. The appendages divide each vessel into front and back faces of equal importance but different painted character: one



Opposite and this page, Betty Woodman: Still Life Vase #3, *1989, glazed earthenware, 36 by 34 by 10 inches. Collection Martin and Deborah Hale, Mass.*

Koplos, Janet, "From Function to Form," *Art in America*, November 1990, pp. 166-171

All Woodman's vases are notable for their intimations of movement. The effect is created by the dynamic shapes of the works' appendages, which jut out in sharp, quick "gestures," and by unpredictable blotches and sweeps of applied color.



Installation view of the "Wall Flower Pots" series, 1989.

side is spare while the other is packed with incident, or color patches on one side are blurry while on the other they're clear and discrete.

Another series, the "Wall Flower Pots," consists of small vases that sit upon wall-mounted sconces but are hidden behind two-dimensional vase-shaped cutouts. The pots themselves are visible only from an angle. Additional cutouts, reminiscent of the appendages of the freestanding works, are mounted around them on the wall. These cutouts, simpler and more fluid than the appendages, bring to mind the sweeping arm movements of an orchestral conductor.

Color has been an almost constant feature of Woodman's work from her earliest days as a maker of functional pottery. After completing studies at the School for American Craftsmen, she went to Italy in the early '50s and was exposed to vivid majolica earthenware traditions there. (The low-temperature firing which allowed bright color was, at the time, derided in America as a hobbyist's technique.) For many years, her husband, the painter George Woodman, decorated her forms. Later, she left the work plain, and gradually she worked out her own painting approach. Her forms have also changed, growing increasingly exaggerated over the years. Beginning in the '70s she gradually shifted away from pottery for daily use to forms so specific they approached parody, and later to forms intended to be looked at rather than used. The grayed, soft earthenware clay of the recent works is flushed with hues ranging from acid to pastel, achieved by means of slips which have the dry stability of a brushstroke—thus keying the work to the traditions of canvas as much as to those of clay.

Woodman's painting intimates an associative, imaginable space, and at the same time the color moves in *real* space because it is applied to three-dimensional objects. The single-vessel "Still Lifes" demonstrate bravura painting—strong contrasts in generous doses. In *Still Life Vase #3* (1989), a painted, fabriclike expanse of dark, almond-shaped dots on a creamy ground "drapes" from the vase to an appendage on the right, while a reversed pattern of cream dots on black runs off the other way; both tenderly yet ardently trace the change from roundness to flatness. At the top of the right-hand appendage is an abrupt arc of red; counterbalancing it, the bottom left-hand appendage is a vestigial handle, on which brown dentation bites a black patch. Here, as always, Woodman's color is as discontinuous as her form. The strength of the tropically rich painting in *#3* almost overwhelms the vase's decisive form. Real and painted edges are nearly indistinguishable. This is Woodman's forte: the painting adheres to the vessel, yet its operation remains almost shockingly independent of it.

Still Life Vase #3 evokes Matisse—glazed. Here Woodman, through color and pattern, aspires to express an entire slice of life, from exterior vegetation to interior decoration. In the shapes and hues of her color patches she captures the richness of a Matissean environment—still lifes on tables, textiles, art works, views through windows. She achieves this despite only rarely painting a shape that corresponds to something specific (one such is the multilobed green flare at the top of *#3* that looks like the compound leaf of schefflera or horse chestnut).

The freestanding twin "Kimono Vases" are the descendants—and a distillation—of a set of three flower vases that Woodman created for a lobby display at MOMA in 1988. While the spatial relationships among the MOMA vessels pleased her, she concluded that the center vase was unnecessary—or even an impediment—to the effect. The voids between the elements were as compelling as the solids. So she produced the "Kimono Vases" series in which the center of each two-part work is the carefully defined and measured space between the vessels. While painting is essential to the effect of the "Kimono Vases," distinctive outline plays a stronger part in these works than in the "Still Lifes."

The central void of the "Kimono Vases" is outlined by the edges of the flat, unmatched, odd-shaped appendages (Woodman says she's "not a straight-line person," which is putting it mildly). The appendages destroy the bilateral symmetry of the vessels' profiles, and their "gestures" invigorate what would otherwise be passive space around a centripetal vase. Their curves and diagonals set one's eyes in motion, and only the horizontals of the rims and bases of the

Koplos, Janet, “From Function to Form,” *Art in America*, November 1990, pp. 166-171



Above and below, Kimono Vases February, *1990, glazed earthenware, 38 by 50 inches overall. Collection Janet and Robert Kardon, Penn.*



Koplos, Janet, "From Function to Form," *Art in America*, November 1990, pp. 166-171



Delphinium, *1989, glazed earthenware, 42 by 19 by 7 inches.*

Here color is as discontinuous as form; the painting adheres to the vessel, but its operation is almost shockingly independent of it.

vessels provide a place to rest. Appendage shapes on *Kimono Vases February* (1990) hint at a handle and a spout. Others might be compared with wings, knife blades, flippers, tails, unfolding palm fronds. But these associations are incidental: the appendages function primarily as invented abstract forms.

More consequent than such associations is the physical change from vase to appendage, from volume to flatness. Here Woodman is conceptually playing off the fact that conventional ceramic vessels-in-the-round can be summarized by their outlines—by a flat silhouette—because their three-dimensionality is regular and predictable. But in Woodman's works, outline and volume are not the same, the vessel is not schematically summarizable, and the artist heightens this three-dimensional complexity with mixed spatial messages from her two-dimensional painting.

Woodman's inspiration for the loose relationship of painting to form comes from ceramic history. Once she adapted the forms of ancient Mediterranean ceramics for her "pillow pitchers" and appropriated Tang dynasty three-color glazes for their coloring. Now she borrows the chaotically free split decorations of early 17th-century Japanese Oribe ware. But perhaps a more potent precedent for the complexity of her color patterns is the layering of kimono and obi, each with its own intricate brocade. The kimono is a flat garment wrapped around a volumetric form, like Woodman's painting wrapped around her objects. Perhaps, then, the appendages can be equated with kimono sleeves in motion. Other Japanese ghosts can also be seen in these works: part of *Kimono Vases March* (1990) is painted with a wallpaperlike repetition of vertical green lines and dots of salmon-red that brings to mind the Irises screens of the 17th-century painter Ogata Korin.

In the "Wall Flower Pots," the hues range from muted to garish (one work combines turquoise, purple, yellow and red, for example), and the strong color occurs only in

continued on page 213

Koplos, Janet, “From Function to Form,” *Art in America*, November 1990, pp. 166-171



Still Life Vase #4, *1990*, *glazed earthenware, 30 by 34 by 8 inches. All photos courtesy Max Protetch Gallery.*

DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

BETTY WOODMAN

1930-2018
Born 1930, Norwalk, CT
lived and worked in Boulder, CO, New York, NY, and Antella, Italy

EDUCATION

1950 Alfred University, The School for American Craftsmen, Alfred, NY

SELECTED SOLO / TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS
(* indicates a publication)

2019 *Shadows and Silhouettes*, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2018 *The House and The Universe*, chi K11 Art Museum, Shanghai, China
Betty Woodman: Ceramics with Painting of the Modern Age, presented by the Liverpool Biennial and Cooper Gallery, Cooper Gallery, Barnsley, England
Gestural Interactions, Loveland Museum, Loveland, CO
AUDACIOUS: A Posthumous Exhibition Honoring Betty Woodman, 15th Street Gallery, Boulder, Colorado

2017 *Betty Woodman: Recent Works*, Galleria Lorcan O'Neill Roma, Rome, Italy
Florentine Interiors, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria
Galeries Royales Saint-Hubert, Brussels, Belgium

2016 **Betty Woodman: In The Garden,* curated by Patterson Sims, Greenwood Gardens, Short Hills, NJ
Kiki Smith, Betty Woodman, Galleria Lorcan O'Neill Roma, Rome, Italy
Dialogue: Betty Woodman / Sol LeWitt, James Barron Art, Kent, CT
Breakfast at the Seashore Lunch in Antella, Salon 94 Bowery, New York, NY
**Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic*, curated by Vincenzo De Bellis, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, England

2015 *Betty Woodman*, curated by Vincenzo De Bellis, Museo Marino Marini, Florence, Italy
Betty Woodman, Mendes Wood, São Paulo, Brazil
Illusions of Domesticity, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

2014 *Interior Views*, Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich, Switzerland

2013 *CONTRO VERSIES CONTRO VERSIA: an inaccurate history of painting and ceramics*, Gallery Diet, Miami, FL
Of Botticelli, Galeria Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin, Germany
Windows, Carpets and Other Paintings, Salon 94, New York, NY

2012 *Betty Woodman*, David Klein Gallery, Birmingham, MI

2011 *Roman Fresco/Pleasures and Places*, Salon 94 Bowery, New York, NY
Betty Woodman: Front/Back, Salon 94, New York, NY
Betty Woodman: Places, Spaces & Things, Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Canada

2010 *Three Kilns Occupied by Three Pieces*, Tuscia Electa Arte Contemporanea, Impruneta, Italy
Betty Woodman: Roman Fresco/Pleasures and Places, American Academy in Rome, Rome, Italy
Betty Woodman: Ceramics and Works on Paper, Harvey Meadows Gallery, Aspen, CO
National Artist Award, Anderson Ranch Art Center, Snowmass Village, CO
Paintings, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY; Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

2009 *Betty Woodman: L'allegra vitalità delle porcellane*, Museo Delle Porcellae, Palazzo Pitti, Giardino di Boboli, Florence, Italy
Galleria Bagnai, Florence, Italy

2008 *Betty Woodman: Trois Grandes Dames III*, Galerie Besson, London
Rooms and People, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY

2007 *Betty Woodman: Memories*, Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinatti, OH
Betty Woodman: Transcending Boundaries, Gallery Camino Real, Boca Raton, FL

2006 *Somewhere Between Denver and Naples*, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO
The Art of Betty Woodman, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
Betty Woodman, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
Theatres of Betty Woodman, Ariana Museum, Geneva, Switzerland

2005 *Theatres of Betty Woodman*, Museu Nacional do Azulejo, Lisbon, Portugal
Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
Il Giardino Dipinto, Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY

2003 *Recent Work*, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
Souvenirs, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY

2002 *Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, MO
Two Bronze Benches and Four Ceramic Pictures of Korean Paintings, Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ

2001 *Betty Woodman*, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY

2000 *Betty Woodman & Robert Barni: due e vasi*, Centro D'Arte La Loggia, Monterfiridolfi, Italy
Pots Paper Prints, Mizel Arts Center at the JCC, Denver, CO
Clay, Bronze, Paper, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
A Conversation with Pat Steir, Art Resources Transfer, New York, NY
Works from the 1980s, Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York, NY

1999 *Blanden Memorial Art Museum, Fort Dodge, IA
Recent Work of Prints and Vases, Bethel College, St. Paul, MN
**Betty Woodman: Glass*, CIRVA, Marseille, France

1998 Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
**Betty Woodman*, Provincial Museum voor Museum Kunst, Oostende, Belgium

1997 Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
**Betty Woodman*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Dunkerque, France

1996 Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
**Betty* Woodman, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

1995 International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy

1994 Carin Delvourt van Krimpen Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Max Protetch Galllery, New York, NY
Gallery Camino Real, Boca Raton, FL
Il Giardino Dipinto, Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, France

1993 Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
Il Giardino Dipinto, Het Kruithuis Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands

1992 *Matrix 119*, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT
**Somewhere Between Naples and Denver*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA

1991 *Betty Woodman: Works in Clay*, Johnson County Community College, Gallery of Art, Overland Park, KS
**Opera Selecta: The Work of Betty Woodman, 1975-1990*, Musée des Arts Modernes, Aix-le-Bain, France

1990 Francesca Pia Gallery, Bern, Switzerland
Recent Work, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
**Opera Selecta: The Work of Betty Woodman, 1975-1990*, Het Kruithuis Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands

1989 Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Unique Porcelains, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY

1988 **Somewhere Between Naples and Denver*, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO
Recent Work, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco, CA

1987 Boulder Center for the Visual Arts, Boulder, CO
Carlton College, Northfield, MN
*Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis, MO

1986 Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Susan Hilberry Gallery, Birmingham, MI

1985 **The Ceramics of Betty Woodman*, Freedman Gallery, Albright College, Reading, PA
Gloria Luria Gallery, Bay Harbor Islands, FL
Presenting Food, FabricWorkshop, Philadelphia, PA
Italian Vases, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY

1984 *The Aspen Garden Room*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO
Garth Clark Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
*Douglas Drake Gallery, Kansas City, MO
Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY

DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

1983 Garth Clark Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
The Houston Room, Hadler/Rodriguez Gallery, Houston, TX
Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY

1982 Garth Clark Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
An Interior Exchanged, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, NY

1981 *A Cloistered Arbor Room* Bennington College, Bennington, VT
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, NY
Okun-Thomas Gallery, St. Louis, MO
Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

1980 Amalgam Art Limited, London, England
*Galleria Pirra, Torino, Italy
Canvas Constructions and Painted Pots, Hadler/Rodriguez Gallery, New York, NY
Mostly Italian Pots, Hadler/Rodriguez Gallery, New York, NY
*Rochester Art Center, Rochester, MN

1979 Art Latitude, New York, NY
Hills Gallery, Santa Fe, NM

1978 Casper College, Casper, WY
Greenwich House Pottery, New York, NY
Lyda Levi Gallery, Milan, Italy

1977 *Honor Exhibit*, Colorado Women's College, Denver, CO
Kansas State College, Emporia, KS
*United States Information Service Gallery, Milan, Italy

1976 Clay and Fiber Gallery, Taos, NM

1975 Nelson-Fosdick Gallery, Alfred University, Alfred, NY
Contemporary Crafts Gallery, Portland, OR

1974 *One Hundred Italian Pots*, Boulder, CO

1972 *Raku*, Kunsthandel Ina Broerse, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

1970 *Salt Glaze*, Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, NE

1969 *Salt Glaze*, Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts, Helena, MT

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
(* indicates a publication)

2021 **The Flames, The living art of ceramics*, Musée d'Art moderne, Paris, France

2020 **With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972-1985*, curated by Anna Katz, CCS Bard Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY
For a Dreamer of Houses, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX

2019 **In Quest of Beauty: Assemblage, Assemblage in the Ahmanson Collection*, Ahmanson Gallery, Irvine, CA
Making Knowing: Craft in Art, 1950 - 3019, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Abstract, Representational, and so forth, Gladstone Gallery, New York, NY
She Persists: A Century of Women Artists in New York, 1919-2019, Gracie Mansion, New York, NY
**Pattern, Crime & Decoration,* curated by Franck Gautherot et Seungduk Kim, Le Consortium, Dijon, France
**Less Is a Bore: Maximalist Art & Design*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA
Les chemins du Sud, Musée régional d'art contemporain, Sérignan, France
Christian Holstad, Grayson Perry, Tal R, Betty Woodman, Victoria Miro, Venice, Italy
**With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972-1985,* curated by Anna Katz, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

2018 *By Fire, Ceramic Works,* Almine Rech Gallery, New York, NY
Taurus and the Awakener, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Fire and Clay, Gagosian, Geneva, Switzerland
Pattern, Decoration and Crime, curated by Lionel Bovier, Franck Gautherot, and Seungduk Kim in collaboration with Le Consortium, Dijon, France, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO), Geneva, Switzerland
In the Company of Women: Women Artists from the Collection, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ
VASA VASORUM | The Vase in Contemporary Art and Design, Peters Projects, Santa Fe, NM
Studio Eine Phantastik, Shedhalle, Zurich, Switzerland
In My Room: Artists Paint the Interior 1950-Now, The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

Molding / Mark-Making: Ceramic Artists and Their Drawings, curated by Margaret Mathews-Berenson and Allison Peller, Dorsky Gallery Curatorial Programs, New York, NY

2017 *Personalities in Clay: American Studio Ceramics from the E. John Bullard Collection,* New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA
The Ehrlich Collection of American and British Ceramics, San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, San Angelo, TX
Home: Homage to Colin de Land, Massimo De Carlo, Milan, Italy
Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter, curated by Garth Clark, Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL
**Pompei@Madre. Materia Archeologica,* curated by Massimo Osanna and Andrea Viliani, Museo Madre, Naples, Italy
Une maison de verre, organized by CIVRA, Centre International de Recherche sur le Verre et les Arts plastiques, Musée Cantini, Marseille, France
I Go, You Go, Good To Go, Unclebrother, Hancock, NY
Midtown, organized by Maccarone, Salon 94, Salon 94 Design, and Ali Subotnick, Lever House, New York, NY
Please fasten your seat belt as we are experiencing some turbulence, Leo Xu Projects, Shanghai, China
Les Unes Avec Les Autres, Galerie Du 5E, Marseille, France
Ref•er•enced, Danese Corey, New York, NY
DOMESTIC - like a preraphaelite brotherhood, Truth and Consequences, Geneva, Switzerland
Victors for the Arts, Part 2: Abstraction, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI
Betty Woodman: Recent Works, Galleria Lorcan O'Neill, Rome, Italy

2016 *A Century of Collecting: 100 Years of Ceramics at the Everson,* Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY
A Round About, Present Company, Brooklyn, New York
Clay Revisited: Traditions in Shards, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA
HOVAB@Macky: Shark's Ink, BMoCA at Macky, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, CO
The Natural Flow of Events, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain
**Liverpool Biennial 2016*, Liverpool, England

2015 *Vessels*, Blackston Gallery, New York, NY
A Peg to Hang It On, White Flag Projects, St. Louis, MO
**CERAMIX: Art and Ceramics from Rodin to Schütte*, Bonnefantenmuseum,

Maastricht, Netherlands
Honoring the Past, Ebracing the Future: AMOCA's 10th Anniversary, American Musseum of Ceramic Art, Pamona, CA

2014 *Tangents 2 Body/Colour*, Stedilijk Museum, s-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands
What Would Mrs. Webb Do?, Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY
Craft Matters, Schick Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY
The Annual 2014: Redefining Tradition, National Academy Museum, New York, NY
BIACI - 1st Bienial Internavional de Arte Contemporáneo Cartagena de indias, Colombia, Cartagena, Colombia
Speaking Through Paint: Hans Hofmann's Legacy Today, Lori Bookstein Fine Art, New York, NY

2013 *Spectrum Suite*, Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York, NY
Vessels, The Horticultural Society of New York, New York, NY
The Four Woodmans, Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, NY

2012 *La Demuere Joyeuse*, Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich, Switzerland
Playing House, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
The Woodmans, Gallery Diet, Miami, FL

2011 *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion, 1970-1990*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England
**Carolina Collects: 150 Years of Modern and Contemporary Art from Alumni Collections*, Auckland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

2010 *Betty, Charlie, Francesca & George*, Samson Projects, Boston, MA
Sèvres, Porcelaines Contemporaines, The Menshikov Palace, The Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia
Interactions, organized by The Clay Studio, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Connecticut, D'Amelio Terras, New York, NY

2009 *Compass in Hand: Selections from The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Carla Acardi, Sol LeWitt, Betty Woodman, Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia, Italy
The Legend of Bud Shark and his Inedible Ink, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Denver, CO
**The 184th Annual: An Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary American Art*, The National Academy Museum, New York, NY

Hot Stuff from the Hothouse: Floral Images from RAM's Collections, Racine Art Museum, Racine, WI
**Dirt on Delight: Impulses that Form Clay*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; Walker Art Center, MN

2008 *Shark's Ink, Revisited*, Foster Gallery, Eau Clair, WI
**Conversations in Clay*, Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, NY
**The 183rd Annual: An Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary American Art*, The National Academy Museum, New York, NY
Outsider, Galleria Alessandro Bagnai, Florence Italy
Contemporary Ceramic Art: A Survey, Harvey/Meadows Gallery, Aspen, CO
**Concreta*, Palazo Pretorio, Certaldo, Italy
Multi Part Art: Contemporary Art in the Collection, The RISD Museum, Providence, RI
New, Novel and Never Shown Before 2008: Recent Gifts to the Collection (Part 1), Racine Art Museum, Racine, WI

2007 **Marseille Artistes Associés 1977-2007*, La Vieille Charité, Marseille, France
**The Woodman Family*, Biagiotti Progetto Arte, Florence, Italy
Shy Boy, She Devil, and Isis: The Art of Conceptual Craft, Selections from the Wornick Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
An Art of Our Own: Women Ceramicists from the Permanent Collection, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY

2006 *Hot Off the Press Prints of 2006 From New York Printshops*, The Grolier Club, New York, NY
The Bong Show or This is Not a Pipe, Leslie Tonkonow Gallery, New York, NY
**Couples Discourse*, Palmer Museum of Art, University Park, PA
International Architectural Ceramics, Gimhae Culture Foundation Clayarch, Gimhae, Korea
Great Pots: The Vessel as Art, 1900-2000; 20th Century Ceramics from The Newark Museum, The USB Art Gallery, New York, NY

2004 *Picasso to Thiebaud: Modern and Contemporary Art from the Collections of Stanford University Alumni and Friends*, Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for the Visual Arts, Stanford University, Stanford, CA
Art for a Landmine Free World, Vietnam Veteran's of America Foundation, PaceWildenstein, New York, NY

2003 *Skowhegan: Faculty Exhibition*, Institute of Contemporary Art at Maine, College of Art, Portland, Maine

Retrospectacle: 25 Years of Collecting Modern and Contemporary Art , Denver Art Museum, Denver,
Floating Time 2003-Lethe, River of Forgetfulness, Stedelijk Museum voor Hedendaages Kunst, 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands
**The Legacy of Modern Ceramic Art, Part II: Modern Ceramic Art from an International Perspective*, Museum of Modern Ceramic Art, Gifu, Japan
**Shared Passion: Sara and David Lieberman Collection of Contemporary Ceramics and Art*, Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, Arizona
Clay Works: American Ceramics from the Everson Museum of Art, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York

2002 **Contemporary American Ceramics, 1950-1990: A Survey of American Objects and Vessels*, Aichi Preferctural Ceramic Museum, Aichi, Japan. Travels to National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto; Iberaki Prefectural Ceramic Museum; Nilgata Prefectural Museum of Art; Setagaya Art Musem, Tokyo; Fukuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
**Gifts in Honor of the 125th Anniversary*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia

2001 **Ceramic Continuum: 50 Years of the Archie Bray Influence*, Holter Museum of Art, Helena, Montana
A Snake in the Garden: Contemporary Approaches to Slipware, Aberystwyth Arts Centre, University of Wales, Wales, England
**World Ceramic Exposition*, World Ceramic Centre, Ichon, Korea
USA Clay, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
**Le Cirva à 15 ans*, Galerie d'art Conseil Génèrale des Bouches-du-Rhone, Aix-en-Provence, France

2000 **Color and Fire: Defining Moments in Studio Ceramics, 1950-2000*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
**Elbows and Tea Leaves: Front Range Women in the Visual Arts (1974-2000)*, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, CO; travels to Durango Arts Center, Durango, CO
**Allan Chasanoff Ceramic Collection*, Mint Museum of Craft and Design, Charlotte, NC
Gallerie Beaubourg, Chateau Notre-Dame des Fleurs, Vence, France

1999 *Glass on Site*, Urban Glass, New York, New York
**Choice from America, Modern American Ceramics*, Het Kruithuis Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands
Contemporary Art From the Daniel Jacobs and Derek Mason Collection, Hand Workshop Art Center, Richmond, VA

Dish, Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York, NY
**The Art of Craft: Contemporary Works from the Saxe Collection*, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco
Clay into Art: Selections from the Contemporary Ceramics Collection in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

1998 *La Geste et la Couleur, Une Poetique Ceramique*, Biennale Internationale de Ceramique Contemporaine, Musée Magnelli, Vallauris, France
Vaselle d'Autore per il Vino Novello, Torgiano, Italy
What's Hot at Shark's, Foster Gallery at University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, WI

1997 *Image, Plate, Vessel, Andrew Lord, Ken Price, Betty Woodman*, Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York, NY
**The View From Denver*, Museum Moderne Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria

1996 *Tuscia Electa*, Comune di Greve in Chianti, Italy
Working Proof: 20 Years of Prints from Shark's Inc., University of Colorado Art Galleries, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO

1995 Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT

1994 Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Staten Island Cultural Center, Staten Island, New York, NY
**Working in Other Dimensions: Objects & Drawings II*, The Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, AR

1993 *In Touch*, Olympic Winter Games, Lillehammer, Norway

1992 *DeVore, Turner, Woodman & Volkos*, Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis, MO
Investigations 1992, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
**5x7*, New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University, Alfred, NY

1991 **The Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park*, Shigaraki-yaki, Japan
The Painted Vessel, Oriel Gallery, Cardiff, Wales, England

1990 *Vessels from Use to Symbol*, American Craft Museum, New York, NY
Featured Artists from the Max Protetch Gallery, Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC
Par Hazard: A Changing Installation of Recent Acquisitions, Douglas Drake Gallery, New York, NY

1989 *Max Protetch Gallery: 20 Years*, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
Craft Today USA, Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, France
Six Master Craftsmen, Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Pots: Focus on Function, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
Fragile Blossoms, Enduring Earth: The Japanese Influence On American Ceramics, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY

1988 *A Fine Place to Work: The Legacy of the Archie Bray Foundation*, The Arkansas Decorative Arts Museum, Little Rock, AR
Power Over the Clay: American Studio Potters, Detroit Art Institute, Detroit, MI
**A Decade of Pattern*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Olympic Arts Festival, Seoul, Korea

1987 **American Ceramics Now: The 27th Annual Ceramic National*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY
Feats of Clay, Newhouse Gallery, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island, NY
**A Decade od Pattern*, The Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
**Four Americans at Sévres*, American Center, Paris, France
**Contemporary American Ceramics*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Seoul, Korea
A Group Exhibition: Andrew Lord, Ron Nagle, Ken Price, Peter Voulkos, Betty Woodman, Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, NY
**Clay Revisions*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA
Homage: 1986 NEA Artist Fellowship Recipients, Garth Clark Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

1986 **Architecture of the Vessel*, Bevier Art Gallery, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY
**American Potters Today*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England
Painted Volumes: Ceramics by Twelve Contemporary Artists, The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA
**The Fabric Workshop: A Tradition Continued*, Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, PA
McIntosh-Drysdale Gallery, Washington, D.C.
**The Poetry of the Physical*, American Crafts Museum, New York, NY

1985 *High Styles: Twentieth-Century American Design*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

Tradition + Innovation: Decorative Art by Castle, Chihuly, Paley, Woodman, Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin, TX
Mary Heilmann/Janice Tchalenko/Betty Woodman, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
Architectural Ceramics: Eight Concepts, American Crafts Museum II, New York, NY
Clay, Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, OH
Dillingham, Turner, Wood, Woodman, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM
**Architectural Ceramics*, Gallery of Art, Washington University, St. Louis, MO
Gloria Luria Gallery, Bay Harbor Islands, Florida
Adornments, Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, New York, NY

1984 **Contemporary American Clay*, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
Masters in American Clay, Gallery One, Toronto, Canada
Rituals of Tea, Garth Clark Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston, MA
**1 + 1 = 2*, Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, New York, NY
Forms that Function, Katonah Gallery, Kotonah, NY
Image/Vessel/Image, Garth Clark Gallery, New York, NY
Then and Now, Garth Clark Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

1983 **Who's Afraid of American Clay*, Het Kruithuis Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands
**Ornamentalism*, Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY
**Ceramic Echos*, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO
Wellesley College of Art Museum, Wellesley, MA
Clay Invitational 1983, DBR Gallery, Cleveland, OH

1981 Maya Behn Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland
**The Vessel*, Delahunty Gallery, Dallas, TX
For Tea, Detroit Gallery of Contemporary Crafts, Detroit, MI
**The New Fauves*, Hadler/Rodriguez Gallery, Houston, TX
Hadler/Rodriguez Gallery, New York, NY
**Ritual and Function*, Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, Providence, RI
**Usable Art*, Myers Fine Arts Gallery, State University College of New York, Plattsburgh, NY

1980 *Exhibition of Ceramic Arts*, Ceramics at the Eighth Annual Chunichi International, Nagoya and Tokyo, Japan
**For the Tabletop*, American Craft Museum, New York, NY

Crafts/Sculptures, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA
**Robert L. Pfannebecker Collection*, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Contemporary Ceramics: A Response to Wedgewood, Museum of the Philadelphia Civic Center, Philadelphia, PA
**American Porcelain*, Renwick Sculpture Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
**Contemporary American Potters/New Vessels*, Iowa State University, Ames, IA

1979 *Thrown Pottery*, Amalgam Art Limited, London, England
**Colorado Women in the Arts*, Arvada Center for the Arts, Arvada, CO
Clayworks Studio International, with Cynthia Carlson, Clayworks Studio, New York, NY
**A Century of Ceramics in the United States*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY
Colorado Crafts/Seventeen Views, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO
Landscapes, Hills Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
International Ceramic Exhibit, Faenza, Italy

1978 Faculty Show, University of Georgia, Cortona, Italy

1977 *American Crafts '77*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Fiber, Metal, Clay: A Contemporary View, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor, MI
National Ceramic Educators Conference Invitational, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO
Functional Ceramics, Yaw Gallery, Birmingham, MI

1976 *Eight Professional Potters*, Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO

1974 *Christmas 1974 Exhibition*, American Crafts Council, New York, NY

1973 *Objects for Preparing Food*, The American Craft Museum, New York, NY; Renwick Gallery, National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.

1972 Salt Glaze International, The American Craft Museum, New York, NY

1968 Ceramic Annual, Scripps College, Claremont, CA

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2014 Gold Medal for Consummate Craftsmanship, The American Craft Council,

Minneapolis, MN
Etti Prize for Sculpture, National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts, New York, NY

2010 National Artist Award, Anderson Ranch, Snowmass Village, CO

2009 Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

2008 Lifetime Achievement Award, Brooklyn Museum/Modernism Design Award, Brooklyn, NY
National Academician, National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts, New York, NY
Dunwiddle Prize, National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts, New York, NY

2007 Doctor of Humane Letters Honoris Causa, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO

2006 Doctor of Fine Arts Honoris Causa, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

2004 Premio Internazionale Vietri sul Mare, Fondazione Museo Artistico Industriale, Salerno, Italy

2000 Honorary Fellow, National Council of Educators in Ceramic Arts

1998 The Visionary Award of The American Craft Museum, New York, NY

1995 Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, Bellagio Study Center, Bellagio, Italy

1993 Distinguished Research & Creative Lectureship, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO

1987 Governor's Award in the Arts, CO

1986 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship

1980 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship

1966 Fulbright-Hays Scholarship to Florence, Italy

DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
(* indicates non-periodical book, catalog, or other publication)

2020 Halle, Howard, “The Whitney Museum is offering a free online pottery course that anyone can take from home,” *TimeOut.com*, April 28, 2020
Lesser, Casey, “This Collecting Couple Lives with a Rotating Cast of Craft Masterpieces,” *Artsy.net*, April 24, 2020
Medford, Sarah, “Double Vision,” *WSJ.*, March 2020, pp. 79-80
Adamson, Glenn, “Crafting art at the Whitney,” *TheMagazineAntiques.com*, January 27, 2020

2019 **With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art, 1972-1985*, edited by Anna Katz, essays by Elissa Auther, Anna Katz, Alex Kitnick, Rebecca Skafsgkaard Lowery, Kayleigh Perkov, Sarah-Neel Smith, and Hamza Walker, Los Angeles and New Haven: The Museum of Contemporary Art and Yale University Press, 2019
**Great ~~Women~~ Artists*, edited by Rebecca Morrill, London and New York: Phaidon, 2019
Budick, Ariella, “Spinning craft into art at the Whitney Museum,” *FT.com*, December 22, 2019
Anderton, Frances, “5 design things to do on your holiday break,” *KCRW.com*, December 20, 2019
Jansen, Charlotte, “The Art Movements of the 2010s,” *Artsy.net*, December 18, 2019
Quinn, Bridget, “A New Book on Women Artists Is Welcome, But Uneven,” *Hyperallergic.com*, November 20, 2019
“From Betty Woodman's Ceramics to a Robert Rauschenberg Fabric Collage, Rarely Seen Collection Works Revealed in the Whitney's 'Making Knowing: Craft in Art',” *ArtFixDaily.com*, November 18, 2019
Knight, Christopher, “Review: More is more. Why the ‘Pattern and Decoration’ show at MOCA is pure pleasure,” *LATimes.com*, November 4, 2019
Sayej, Nadja, “Finally, The Foremost Encyclopedia Of Women Artists Has Arrived,” *Forbes.com*, October 9, 2029
Robinson, Leanna “Betty Woodman,” *Artillery*, September/October 2019, pp. 52-53
Pagel, David, “Eye candy on a gigantic scale made with canvas, clay and paint,” *LATimes.com*, July 16, 2019
“Betty Woodman: Shadows and Silhouettes,” *SurfaceMag.com*, Summer 2019
Jansen, Charlotte, “Betty Woodman: the ceramic artist with a painter’s touch,” *Wallpaper.com*, July 10, 2019

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

Miranda, Carolina A., “Datebook: Getty Villa shows treasures from the Roman villa that inspired its design,” *LATimes.com*, June 27, 2019
Guadagnino, Kate, “T Suggests: Painterly Ceramics, Grateful Dead Body Oils and More,” *NYTimes.com*, June 21, 2019
Reynolds, Pamela, “'Less Is A Bore' At The ICA Offers Maximal Relief In A World Of Tasteful Art,” *Wbur.org*, June 20, 2019
Sheets, Hilarie M., “LA’s Go-To Gallerist,” *Robb Report*, May 2019, pp. 124-125
"Meet The Committee: David Kordansky," *Frieze.com*, January 23, 2019
Loos, Ted, "It’s O.K. if a Deal Falls Through. There’s Always More Art.," *NYTimes.com*, January 23, 2019

2018 *Phaidon Editors, *Destination Art: 500 Artworks Worth the Trip*, London: Phaidon, 2018
Sutton, Benjamin, "The Unforgettable Works of 15 Artists Who Died in 2018," *Artsy.net*, December 27, 2018
Cohen, Alina, "The Artists Everyone Talked about during Art Basel in Miami Beach," *Artsy.net*, December 7, 2018
Wagoner, Mackenzie, "Westward Expansion," *LALA*, Fall 2018, p. 52
"Fire and Clay," *WSIMag.com*, November 5, 2018
Crow, Kelly, “Collectors Get Fired Up for Ceramics,” *The Wall Street Journal* , October 8, 2018, p. A14
Davis, Laura, "13 weird and wonderful art works to rediscover on the streets of Liverpool," *liverpoolecho.co.uk*, July 8, 2018
Shaw, Anny and Gareth Harris, “Galleries at Art Basel pay tribute to ‘generation of giants’,” *The Art Newspaper*, June 15, 2018, pp. 1, 4
Guadagnino, Kate, “Funky Ceramics Are Everywhere. Including in Galleries.,” *NYTimes.com*, June 14, 2018
Flanagan, Keith, "Why Top Designers Are In Love with This Material," *ArchitecturalDigest.com,* April 30, 2018
Tanner, Leigh, "Mimicking Forms and Gestures: Betty Woodman and Zhao Yang Dual Solo Exhibitions at Chi K11 Art Museum Shanghai," *CoBoSocial.com*, April 24, 2018
Freeman, Liam, "Meet the billionaire shaking up Hong Kong’s cultural scene," *Vogue.com.au*, April 18, 2018
Finkel, Jori, “Los Angeles’s David Kordansky Gallery gives Betty Woodman her first retrospective in years,” *TheArtNewspaper.com*, March 26, 2018
Fantz, Christy, "University of Colorado art museum acquires Sharkive collection," *DailyCamera.com*, February 20, 2018
Chiragdin, Neil, “Mind before matter in ceramics exhibition,” *QChron.com*, February 8, 2018

DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

Fantz, Christy, “University of Colorado art museum acquires Sharkive collection,” *DailyCamera.com,* February, 20, 2018
“Shanghai's K11 Mall Decked Out in Pink for New 'Pink Love' Installation,” *ThatsMags.com*, January 31, 2018
Williams, Maxwell, “Art Los Angeles Contemporary fair perks up, but is it enough?,” *TheArtNewspaper.com*, January 31, 2018
Zara, Janelle, “From Tropical Palettes to Organic Juice, Art Los Angeles Contemporary Cements Itself as a Quintessentially LA Fair,” *ArtNet.com*, January 26, 2017
“Ceramics from America via Liverpool on view in Barnsley,” *YorkshirePost.co.uk*, January 23, 2018
Archer, Sarah, “Wendell Castle, a Legend of the Furniture and Design Worlds, Dies at 85,” *Hyperallergic.com*, January 23, 2018
Lesser, Casey, “The Eccentric Mississippi Artist Who Pioneered American Ceramics,” *Artsy.net*, January 22, 2018
“AUDACIOUS: A Posthumous Exhibition Honoring Betty Woodman,” *15thStreetGalleryBoulder.com*, January 17, 2018
"Liverpool Biennial touring programme brings the work of Betty Woodman to the Cooper Gallery," *ArtInLiverpool.com*, January 15, 2018
Clark, Garth, "Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary Ceramics
Marshal, Barbara, “How did Boca Museum get one of last works by this famous artist?,” *MyPalmBeachPost.com*, January 9, 2018
In The Spirit Of The Mad Potter," *AntiquesAndTheArts.com,* January 9, 2018
Adamson, Glenn, "Betty Woodman (1930–2018)," *frieze.com*, January 8, 2018
Sandomir, Richard, "Betty Woodman, Who Spun Pottery Into Multimedia Art, Dies at 87," *NYTimes.com*, January 5, 2018
Brice, Carleen, “On The Loss of Pioneering Artist Betty Woodman,” *DenverArtMuseum.org*, January 5, 2018
“In Memory of Betty Woodman,” *SACI-Florence.edu*, January 4, 2018
Bear, John, "Betty Woodman, renowned artist and force behind Boulder Pottery Lab, dies at 87," *DailyCamera.com*, January 4, 2018
Wenzel, John, "Betty Woodman, groundbreaking ceramics artist with history in Boulder, dies at 87," *DenverPost.com*, January 4, 2018
Shaw, Anny, "Pioneering US artist Betty Woodman dies aged 87," *TheArtNewspaper.com*, January 3, 2018
Boucher, Brian, "Betty Woodman, Visionary Sculptor of Ceramic Vessels, Has Died at 87," *ArtNet.com*, January 3, 2018
Adamson, Glenn, “Pattern Recognition: In the 1970s and ‘80’s a bold group of American artists embraced vibrant color, ornament, and craft.” *Art in America*, September 2019

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

2017 **Vitamin C: Clay and Ceramic in Contemporary Art*, London and New York: Phaidon, 2017
**Victors for Art: Michigan's Alumni Collectors*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2017
Barni, Selva, "Betty Woodman: New York/Florence," *Purple Magazine*, Fall/Winter, 2017
Drake, Cathryn, "Divine Comedy, Naples,"*Artforum.com*, December 24, 2017
Panicelli, Ida, "Betty Woodman," *Artforum.com*, Critics' Picks, November 6, 2017
Essner, Elizabeth, "The Imaginative World of Betty Woodman," *Modern Magazine*, Summer 2017, pp. 82-89
Smith, Roberta, "'*Midtown': That Chair's Charming, but Can I Sit in It?*," NYTimes.com, May 25, 2017

2016 **Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic*, edited by Vincenzo de Bellis, texts by Vincenzo de Bellis, Suzanne Hudson, Stuart Krimko, and Betty Woodman with Katharine Stout, Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2016
Valacchi, Maria Chiara, "Critics' Picks," *Artforum.com*, November 2016
D'Agostino, Paul, "About & Around: A Round About," *BKMag.com*, November 17, 2016
Ponti, Laura, "Last Chance: Kiki Smith & Betty Woodman at Galleria Lorcan O'Neill, Rome," *BlouinArtInfo.com*, November 17, 2016
Milner, Catherine, "'Thinking Outside The Pots," *Financial Times*, November 16, 2016, pp. 98-104
Kim, Martin, "Lessons from Betty," *Ceramics Monthly*, Clay Culture, December 2016, pp. 20, 22
Valacchi, Maria Chiara, "Betty Woodman and Kiki Smith," *Artforum.com*, Critics' Picks, Rome, October 2016
Neuendorf, Henri, "Gallerist David Kordansky on Today's Market, and the LA Art Scene," *Artnet.com*, People, October 26, 2016
Dietz, Claire, "Imagination In Clay And Light For Black Box," *Daily-Iowan.com*, October 13, 2016
Zuccaro, Alexandra, "Betty Woodman: In The Garden," *ModernMag.com*, Exhibition, October 10, 2016
Agostini, Sara Dolfi, "Expo Chicago, porta principale della cultura afroamericana," *ArtEconomy24.ilsole24ore.com*, October 3, 2016
Hennessy, Christina, "Making her imprint: Greenwich collector elevates the art of creating and cultivating ceramics," *CTPost.com*, October 3, 2016
Sumpter, Helen, "Liverpool Biennial 2016, Various Venues, Liverpool, 9 July-16 October," *ArtReview*, September 2016, pp. 130-1312
Sardina, Jessie, "Fresh Art," *CS Modern Luxury*, September 2016, p. 46

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

Muñoz-Alonso, Lorena, “See What Dealers Are Bringing to Frieze London,” *Artnet.com*, Art Fairs, September 29, 2016
Gottschalk, Molly, “What Sold at EXPO CHICAGO,” *Artsy.net*, Artsy Editorial, September 26, 2016
Tully, Judd, “Healthy Sales but Less Chest Thumping at Expo Chicago,” *BlouinArtInfo.com*, September 25, 2016
Mason, Brook S., “Ceramics on Fire,” *Modern Magazine*, September 28, 2013
Neuendorf, Henri, “See The Top 10 Booths at EXPO Chicago,” *Artnet.com*, Art Fairs, September 23, 2016
Whittaker, Iona, “Expo Chicago: First Impressions,” *Randian-Online.com*, September 23, 2016
Sargent, Antwaun, “The Art in the Smithsonian’s New African-American Museum Gives a Powerful, Nuanced Portrait of Black Experience,” *Artsy.net*, September 22, 2016
Indrisek, Scott, “Get Ready for Expo Chicago,” *BlouinArtInfo.com*, Visual Arts, Fairs, September 22, 2016
Heckel, Aimee, “121 years of Boulder art on view at BMoCA, other venues,” *DailyCamera.com*, September 22, 2016
Corral, Alexis, “5 Ceramic Techniques You Need to Know,” *Artsy.net*, August 26, 2016
Bin, Valentina, “Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic,” *ArtReview.com*, August 23, 2016
Gierhart, Ben, “Art & Craft: Redefined,” *Voice-Tribune.com*, August 11, 2016
“The seductive art of Betty Woodman,” *Telegraph.co.uk*, July 9, 2016
Bui, Phong, “Betty Woodman with Phong Bui,” *The Brooklyn Rail*, April 2016, pp. 67-69
Sherlock, Amy, “Feel More,” *Frieze*, No. 177, March 2016, pp. 124-129
Whitney, Kathleen, “Betty Woodman: The Ultimate Still-Life Object,” *Ceramics Monthly*, March 2016, pp. 48-51
"Betty Woodman," The Artist Project, *MetMuseum.org*, February 2016, video
Shurvell, Joanne, “Marion Wagschal at Canada Gallery and Betty Woodman at the ICA,” *DeMagazine.co.uk*, February 29, 2016
“Review of Betty Woodman: The Theatre of the Domestic at ICA, London,” *AestheticaMagazine.com*, February 20, 2016
Coomer, Martin, “Betty Woodman,” *TimeOut.com*, February 16, 2016
Frank, Priscilla, “How Betty Woodman Became The Queen Of Ceramics,” *HuffingtonPost.com*, February 9, 2016
Bazhenova, Ekaterina, “Betty Woodman ‘Theatre of the Domestic’ Exhibition at ICA, London,” *Purple.fr*, February 8, 2016
Sharp, Rob, “As “The Great Pottery Thrown Down” Grips Britain, 85-Year-Old Betty Woodman’s Experimental New Ceramics Go on View in London and New York,”

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

Artsy.net, February 5, 2016
Buck, Louisa, “The Buck Stopped Here: Betty Woodman on full throttle at the ICA–aged 85,” *TheArtNewspaper.com*, February 4, 2016
Allsop, Laura, “Talking Pottery and Magic with Betty Woodman,” *AnOtherMag.com*, February 4, 2016
“Ceramicist Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domesitc, ICA,” *CultureWhisper.com*, Visual Arts, February 3, 2016
Farrell, Aimee, “Betty Woodman’s Cheery Ceramics Come to London,” *NYTimes.com*, Art, February 3, 2016
"Sculptor Betty Woodman at the ICA: 'Ceramics was always a macho world'," *FlyNewsOnline.com*, February 3, 2016
“Betty Woodman: Exhibition, ICA, London, UK.,” *DamnMagazine.net*, February 3, 2016
“Exhibitions of works by Betty Woodman opens at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London,” *ArtDaily.com*, February 3, 2016
Ellis-Petersen, Hannah, “Sculpture Betty Woodman at the ICA: ‘Ceramics was always a macho world’,” *TheGuardian.com*, February 3, 2016
Stout, Katharine, “Betty Woodman: Theatre of the Domestic at the ICA,” *LuxuryLondon.co.uk*, February 3, 2016
Roux, Caroline, “Betty Woodman and her vast body of work in ceramics”, *FinancialTimes.com*, Visual Arts, January 29, 2016
“Betty Woodman Breakfast At The Seashore Lunch In Antella”, *Artforum.com*, Must See New York, January 21, 2016

2015 Elstone, Jeff, *Betty Woodman: Wallpaper #9*, 2015, Video
“Our Favorite Pot-Themed Exhibitions Since 2013,” *CFileOnline.org*, December 30, 2015
Moss, Richard, “The best art exhibitions to see in London in 2016,” *Culture24.org.uk*, December 22, 2015
“ICA Celebrate Their 70th Anniversary With Programme Of Multidisciplinary Experimentation,” *ArtLyst.com*, November 17, 2015
“Betty Woodman at Museo Marino Marini, Florence,” *MousseMagazine.it*, November 4, 2015
“Firenze: Museo Marino Marini,” *Mousse*, October-November 2015, Nº 50, Diary, p. 304
Yablonsky, Linda, “Young at Art,” *W Art*, May 2015, p. 76-79
Hudson, Suzanne, “Los Angeles, Betty Woodman, David Kordansky Gallery,” *Artforum*, Reviews, April 2015, pp. 256-257
Mishan, Ligaya, “Agnes Gund’s Most Treasured Cooking Tool,” *The New York Times*, April 29, 2015, p. D7
Indrisek, Scott, “Marjolijn de Wit’s Future Archaeology,” *BlouinArtInfo.com*, April 29,

2015
Rinaldi, Ray Mark, “Denver’s The Art hotel books big-name artists to fill its walls,” *DenverPost.com*, April 22, 2015
Mizota, Sharon, “Review, Betty Woodman at David Kordansky Gallery,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 2015
Yablonsky, Linda, “Soft Focus,” *WMagazine.com*, March 2, 2015
Berardini, Andrew, “Comic Strip Gaze, Cosmic Ship Grays, Ceramic Slip Gaze: From Henri Matisse to Betty Woodman,” *Mousse*, No. 47, February 2015
Federico, Florian, “Tom of Finland and Betty Woodman at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles,” *CuraMagazine.com*, February 16, 2015
“The Week in Craft: February 11, 2015,” *CraftCouncil.org*, February 11, 2015
“Exhibition of new work by Betty Woodman opens at David Kordansky Gallery,” *ArtDaily.com*, February 2, 2015
Singer, Jill, “Saturday Selects, Week of January 26, 2015,” *SightUnseen.com*, January 31, 2015
Hoffman, Ali, “The 30 Best Things To Do In L.A. In February,” *Refinery29.com*, January 30, 2015
Paul, Mona, “Betty Woodman: Illusions of Domesticity,” *WideWalls.ch*, January 30, 2015
Drohojowska-Philp, Hunter, “Betty Woodman at David Kordansky Gallery,” *KCRW.com*, February 5, 2015
“Exhibition | Betty Woodman: Color, Light, Form and Unrelenting Ambition at David Kordansky,” *CFileOnline.org*, February 4, 2015
Johnson, Christopher, “Book Review | Betty Woodman, 2014,” *CFileOnline.org*, February 4, 2015

2013 *Jhaveri, Shanay, ed. *Western Artists and India: Creative Inspirations in Art and Design*. Mumbai: The Shoestring Publisher, 2013
Casadio, Mariuccia, “Clay Molds,” *Vogue Italia*, August 2013.
Rossetti, Chloé, “Critics Picks: Vessels,” *Artforum*, June 28, 2013
Rosenberg, Karen, “Vessels,” *The New York Times*, June 1, 2013
Patel, Vibhuti, “An Art Traveler Lets Go of the Vessel,” *WSJ.com*, May 7, 2013
Viladas, Pilar, “On View | Betty Woodman’s Playful Ceramics,” *TMagazine.com*, May 3, 2013

2012 Freudenheim, Tom. “When Artists Take On Museums,” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 13, 2012, p. D6

2011 “Front/Back,” *Artbeat*, October 1, 2011
Panicelli, Ida, “Betty Woodman: Salon 94,” *Artforum*, Summer 2011, p. 405
Yablonsky, Linda, “Artifacts | Feats of Clay,” *TMagazine.com*, July 7, 2011

Smith, Roberta, “Paul Clay,” The New York Times, June 30, 2011
Dixon, Guy, “The View Through Betty Woodman’s Window,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 25, 2011
“Betty Woodman,” *The New Yorker*, January 2011

2010 *Fichner-Rathus, Lois. *Understanding Art*. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010
*Marzio, Peter C. *American Art & Philanthropy: Twenty Years of Collecting at the Museum of Fine Arts*, Houston. Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2010
Betty Woodman: A Visit to Rome. Mageefilms, 2010, Video

2009 *Bortolotti, Paola, David Caméo, Ida Panicelli and Oliva Rucellai. *Betty Woodman - L’Allegra Vitalità delle Porcellane*. Florence, Italy: Palazzo Pitti, Museo delle Porcellane, 2009
*Panicelli, Ida, Mieke Bal, Massimo Minini, Giorgio Verzotti, and Barry Schwabsky. *Betty Woodman*. Brescia, Italy: Galleria Massimo Minini, 2009
Chinese Pleasures by Betty Woodman, U.S. Embassy Beijing. CScottfilms, 2009, Video

2008 Taylor, Alex. “Reviews: New York, Betty Woodman,” *Artnews,* May 2008, p. 147
Ciappi, Andrea. “Betty Woodman regina della ceramica,” *La Nazione*, May 24, 2008, p. XI

2007 Cesana, Simona, “Betty Woodman,” *Ceramica*, no 104, 2007
Cesana, Simona, “Betty Woodman: Le Felici Trasgressioni della Ceramica,” *Artigianato*, April/June 2007
Drake, Cathryn. “Form and Fantasy,” *Ceramic Review*, Volume 223, January/February 2007, pp. 30-35
Castro, Jan Garden. “Betty Woodman,” *Sculpture*, January/February 2007
Cohen, David. “Prints of 2006 From New York Printshops,” *The New York Sun*, January 25, 2007
Perrault, John, “Review: Betty Woodman,” *American Ceramics*, January 10, 2007
Reichl, Ruth. “Breaking the Mold,” *Gourmet*, January 2007

2006 *Koplos, Janet, Arthur C. Danto, and Barry Schwabsky. *Betty Woodman*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2006
*Rich, Sara K. *Couples Discourse*. University Park: Palmer Museum of Art: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006
Puryear, Martin. “Shaping the Future of Craft,” 2006 National Leadership Council, American Craft Council

"Readings on Color," *Studio Potter*, Volume 35, no. 6, December 2006, pp. 62-65, 94
Duncan, Michael. "Woodman's Decorative Impulse," *Art in America*, November 2006, pp. 102-109
Piché, Thomas Jr. "At the Met: Betty Woodman," American Craft, October/November 2006, pp. 44-47
d'Albis, Antoine. "La Manufacture de Sèvres, De Vincennes à Woodman: histoire d'un clin d'œil," *La Revue de la Céramique et du Verre,* 150, September/October 2006, pp. 20-27
Sims, Patterson. "A Kind of Wonderful Aesthetic Continuum," *Ceramics Magazine* Europe 28, August/September 2006, pp. 30-35
Andrean, Carole, "Betty Woodman: More is More", July/August 2006
Atkins, Nigel. "Betty Woodman: More is More," *La Revue de la Céramique ed du Verre 149*, July-August 2006, pp. 30-38
MacMillan, Kyle. "Met Exhibit Glazes Artist's Career," *The Denver Post*, June 11, 2006, pp. 1F, 5F
Goldman, Edward. "Gulity as Charged," transcript from Art Talks on KCRW 89.9, June 6, 2006
Richard, Frances. "Betty Woodman," *Artforum*, May 2006
Brenner, Julie. "One Good Urn Deserves Another," *Art News*, May 2006
Schjeldahl, Peter. "Decoration Myths: Betty Woodman's Ceramics," *The New Yorker*, May 15, 2006, pp. 89-90
Gardner, James. "Betty Woodman," *The New York Post*, May 5, 2006
Ayers, Robert. "The AI Interview: Betty Woodman," *Art Info*, May 3, 2006
Glueck, Grace. "The Humble Vase Shows Its Colors and Its Versatility," *The New York Times*, April 28, 2006, pp. E33, E36
Budick, Ariella. "Glaze and Haze: Mastering Clay Pots and Rooftop Smoke," *Newsday*, April 28, 2006, B21
"An American Picasso," *John Perreault's Art Diary*, April 27, 2006
Loos, Ted. "Yes, They're Clay, But Don't Dare Call Them Ceramics," *The New York Times*, April 23, 2006, p. AR31
Chandler, Mary Voelz. "Met Exhibit Honors Artist's Feats of Clay," *Rocky Mountain News*, April 22, 2006, pp. 1D, 6D

2005 *Drake, Cathryn, Paulo Henriques, Patterson Sims, and Roland Blaetter. *Teatros Théâtres Theaters*. Milano: Skira Editore, 2005
Vivas, Antonio. "Betty Woodman: Fuciones y Ficciones," Revista Internacional Ceramica, no. 99, 2005, pp. 79-8
Erbacher, Kathy. "Ceramist Creates Joyful Clay, Paper Worlds Betty Woodman's Art Invites Exploration," *CSA Journal 27*, June 2005

2004 *Galusha, Emily, and Mary Ann Nord. *Clay Talks: Reflections by American Master Ceramists*. Minneapolis: Northern Clay Center, 2004
*Ming, Bai. *World Famous Ceramic Artists' Studios*. Hebei: Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House, 2004
Ravagli, Antonella. "Ceramics from New York," *Tile Fashion*. March 2004
Miles, Christopher. "Report From Santa Monica II: Tracking Patterrns," *Art in America,* 92, no. 2, February 2004, pp. 77-81

2003 *Adlin, Jane. *Betty Woodman at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, American Ceramics Vol. 14 No. 2, 2003
*Clark, Garth, and John Pagliaro, eds. *Shards: Garth Clark on Ceramic Art*. New York: D.A.P. and Ceramic Arts Foundation, 2003
*D'Albis, Antoine. *Traité de La Porcelain de Sèvres*. Dijon, France: Editions Faton, 2003
Cunningham, Caroline. "Ceramicist Betty Woodman Sets the Table for Two Collectors," *House & Garden*, September 2003
Ollman, Leah. "Seeing the Pattern," *Los Angeles Times*, September 21, 2003, p. E46
Finn, Joan. "Korean Paintings Are Inspiration for Betty Woodman's Ceramic Art," *The Montclair Times*, January 23, 2003, p. B1

2002 *Ramljak, Suzanne. *Crafting a Legacy: Contemporary American Crafts in the Philadelphia Museum of Art*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, and New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002
Bischoff, Dan. "Reveling in the Joy of Clay," *The Star-Ledger*, December 20, 2002.
Nash, Margo. "Jersey Footlights: Do Touch This Art," *The New York Times*, November 24, 2002, 14NJ14
"Betty Woodman: Useful Fictions," *kerameiki techni: International Ceramic Art Review*, April 2002, pp. 31-36

2001 *Princenthal, Nancy. *Betty Woodman*. Sedalia, Mo.: Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002
Netzer, Sylvia. "Betty Woodman," *American Ceramics,* 14, no. 1, Winter 2001, p. 54
Princenthal, Nancy. "Betty Woodman at Max Protetch," *Art in America*, 89, no. 11, November 2001, pp. 153-154

2000 *Natalini, Arabella Brunton. *Nelle Ceramiche C'è Tutto*. La Loggia, Italy: Centro d'Arte La Loggia, 2000
*Vincentelli, Moira. *Women and Ceramics: Gendered Vessels*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2000
Perryman, Jane. "Rites of Passage," *Ceramic Review*, May/June 2000

Eden, Victoria. “Baroque Splendor,” *Ceramic News*, May/June 2000, pp. 34-3
Schwabsky, Barry. “Review,” *American Craft,* April/May 2000, pp. 65-67
“Review,” *The New York Times*, February 4, 2000, p. E33
Danto, Arthur C. “Sessualità, banalità, identità,” *Tema celeste/arte contemporanea*, January/February 2000, pp. 70-71
“Betty Woodman Pushes the Envelope,” *New York Arts*, 5, no. 1, January 2000.
Color and Fire: Defining Moments in Studio Ceramics 1950-2000, Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art with New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2000, Video

1999 *Berlind, Robert. *Betty Woodman: Between Sculpture and Painting*. Fort Dodge, Iowa: Blanden Memorial Art Museum, 1999
*Eden, Michael, and Victoria Eden. *Slipware: Contemporary Approaches*. London: A + C Black, and Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999

1998 Williams, Jerry. “The Painted Garden: An Interview with Betty Woodman,” *Studio Potter*, 27, no. 1, December 1998, pp. 44-65
“Inspiration from Past Times and Distant Places,” *The New York Times*, October 18, 1998, 14NJ15.

1997 *Hall, Julie. *Tradition and Change: The New American Craftsmen*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977
“Engine of Delight,” *Keramik Magazin* (November/December 1997): 22-24.
Lutticken, Sven. “Betty Woodman: Stedelijk Museum,” Flash Art (March /April 1997): 128
Perreault, John, “Betty Woodman: The Joys of Negative Space,” Plexus.org, January 15, 1997

1996 *Danto, Arthur C. *Betty Woodman*. Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1996
*Guichon, Françoise, and Elizabeth Woodman. *Betty Woodman: Glass*. Marseille: CIRVA, 1996
“Revelations in Clay,” *House & Garden*, September 1996

1995 *Higby, Wayne. *5x7: Seven Ceramic Artists Each Acknowledge Five Sources of Inspiration*. Alfred, NY: New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University, 1993
Garten, Cliff, Janet Koplos, and Betty Woodman. “What’s Clay Got to Do with It: Criticism and the Ceramic Arts,” *Studio Potter*, 24, no. 1, December 1995, pp. 1-12

1994 Berlind, Robert. “Betty Woodman at Max Protetch and the Musée des Arts Decoratifs,” *Art in America*, 82, no. 12, December 1994, p. 110
Berlind, Robert. “From the Pedestal to the Wall: Works on Paper by Betty Woodman,” *American Ceramics 11*, no. 4, Fall 1994, pp. 40-43

1992 Plaganis, Margaret. “Putty in Her Hands,” The Hartford Advocate, June 18, 1992, p. 23
McNally, Owen. “Museum Show Embraces As Art Ceramic Work Once Called ‘Craft’,” *The Hartford Journal*, May 28, 1992, pp. A8, A12

1991 *Houston, John. *The Abstract Vessel: Ceramics in Studio*. London: Bellew Publishing, 1991
*Stroud, Marion Bolton, ed. *An Industrious Art: Innovation in Pattern and Print at The Fabric Workshop*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc, 1991
“Keramicos,” *International Ceramics Magazine*, February 1991, p. 63
Betty Woodman: Thinking out Loud. A production of Charles Woodman Video, 1991, Video

1990 *Conway, Patricia. *Art for Everyday: The New Craft Movement*. New York: Clarkson Potter, 1990
*Lynn, Martha Drexler. *Clay Today: Contemporary Ceramists and Their Work*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1990
*Miller, R. Craig. *Modern Design in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1890-1990*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Harry N. Abrams, 1990
*Staal, Gert, Janet Koplos, and Peter Schjeldahl. *Opera Selecta: Betty Woodman*. ‘s-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands: Het Kruithuis Museum, 1990
Ceramics: Art and Perception, no. 2 (1990): 74-75
Koplos, Janet. “From Function to Form,” *Art in America*, 78, no. 11, November 1990, pp. 166-71
Koole, Corine. “De aarzelende vazen Betty Woodman,” Beelding, no. 7, September 1990, p. 9
“Review,” *The New York Times*, April 20, 1990, p. C28

1989 *Clark, Garth, Robert A. Ellison, and Eugene Hecht. *The Mad Potter of Biloxi: The Art and Life of George Ohr*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1989
*Woodman, Elizabeth. *American Ceramics: Everson Museum of Art*. New York: Rizzoli International 1989
“Review,” *The New York Times*, April 7, 1989, p. C21
“Betty Woodman,” *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, Spring 1989, p. 109

Hammel, Lisa. “Good Cheer in Dainty Porcelain,” *The New York Times*, March 23, 1989, p. C1

1988 **American Ceramics 1876-Present*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1988
*Kuspit, Donald. *Somewhere Between Naples and Denver*. Denver: Denver Art Museum, 1988
*Rosenthal, Mark and Charles F. Stuckey. *A Decade of Pattern: Prints, Pieces and Prototypes from the Fabric Workshop*. Philadelphia: The Fabric Workshop, 1988
Brenson, Michael. “Betty Woodman,” *The New York Times*, April 22, 1988, p. C33
Lippard, Lucy R. “Visual Arts / Betty Woodman,” *Boulder Daily Camera*, February 1988, p. 15

1987 Kazanjian, Dodie. “Portrait of the Artist,” *Artsreview*, 1987, p. 40
Harris, James R. “Betty Woodman,” *The Greenberg Gallery*, May 1, 1987

1986 *Clark, Garth and Oliver Watson, *American Potters Today*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986
*Dormer, Peter. *The New Ceramics: Trends and Traditions*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986
*Perrone, Jeff. *The Ceramics of Betty Woodman*. Reading, Pa.: Freedman Gallery, Albright College, 1985-86
“Pick of the Week,” *The Village Voice*, December 2, 1986, p. 64
Smith, Roberta. “Review,” *The New York Times*, November 14, 1986, p. C28
Miro, Marsha. “History Inspires Superb Potter,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 22, 1986, p. 3F
White, Cheryl. “Vessels: The Human Connection,” *Artweek,* April 19, 1986, p. 3

1985 Cobb, James B. “Betty Woodman,” *American Ceramics 3*, no. 4, Fall 1985, pp. 68-69
Higby, Wayne. “The Vessel is Like a Pot,” *American Ceramics 3*, no. 4, Fall 1985, pp. 38-41
Perrone, Jeff. “Let Them Eat Cake,” *The Village Voice*, February 5, 1985, pp. 88, 93

1984 Sikes, Gini. “Pattern and Place,” *Metropolis*, October 1984, pp. 17-19, 26
“In Search of the Cutting Edge,” *Studio Potter*, 12, no. 2, June 1984, pp. 1-20
Glueck, Grace. “Review,” *The New York Times*, January 20, 1984, p. C1

1983 “The Italian Experience,” *Studio Potter*, 11, no. 2, June 1983, pp. 10-12
Levin, Kim. “Review,” *The Village Voice*, February 8, 1983, p. 58

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
T: 323.935.3030 F: 323.935.3031

1982 *Jensen, Robert, and Patricia Conway. *Ornamentalism: The New Decorativeness in Architecture and Design*. New York: Clarkson Potter, 1982
*Wechsler, Susan. *Low Fire Ceramics*. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1982
"Review," *American Ceramics*, 1, no. 1, Winter 1982, p. 53
McTwigan, Mich. "An Interior Exchange: Cynthia Carlson and Betty Woodman in Collaboration," *Arts Magazine*, May 1982, pp. 134-35
"Fear of Clay," *Artforum*, no. 8, April 1982, pp. 70-71
Frank, Peter. "New York Reviews," *Artnews*, March 1982, p. 214
"The Pattern with Exchange," *SoHo Weekly News*, March 9, 1982, p. 52

1981 **American Potters: The Work of Twenty Modern Masters*. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1981
*Axel, Jan, and Karen McCready. Porcelain: Traditions and New Visions. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1981
Perreault, John. "Usable Art," *Portfolio*, July-August 1981, pp. 60-63

1980 *Lane, Peter. *Studio Porcelain*. London: Chilton, 1980
*Parks, Dennis. *A Potter's Guide to Raw Glazing and Oil Firing*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980
"Betty Woodman-New York," *Ceramics Monthly*, November 1980, pp. 40-43
Woodman, Elizabeth, and George Woodman. "Ceramist's Odyssey of Clay: Italy," *Craft Horizon*, May 1980, pp. 18-19

1979 *Caruso, Nino. *Ceramica Viva*. Milan: Hoepli, Ulrico, S.p.A, 1979
*Clark, Garth. *A Century of Ceramics in the United States, 1878-1978*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979
"Twelve Colorado Potters," *Studio Potter*, 4, no. 1, December 1979, pp. 13-27.
"About Pots," *Decade*, February 1979, pp. 44-47

1978 *Donhauser, Paul. *History of American Ceramics: The Studio Potter*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1978
Wechsler, Susan. "Oggetti Utile per la Casa," *Cucina Italiana*, March 1978, p. 27
DeVore, Richard. "Ceramics of Betty Woodman," *Craft Horizon,* Volume 38, no. 1, February 1978, pp. 28-31

1977 *Troy, Jack. *Salt-Glazed Ceramics*. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1977.
Review," *The New York Times*, January 17, 1997, p. C27

1976 “Role of the Potter,” *Studio Potter*, 2, no. 2, December 1976, pp. 8-12

1975 *Tyler, Christopher, and Rick Hirsch. *Raku*. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1975

1972 “Salt Glaze: Twenty Approaches to the Technique,” *Craft Horizon*, April 1972, p. 29

1971 McKinnell, J., “Review-Student Union Gallery, Colorado State University, Fort Collins,” *Craft Horizon*, August 1971, p. 44

1969 Woodman, Elizabeth. “Teapot Construction,” *Ceramics Monthly*, March 1969, pp. 12-15