

KIRSI KIVIVIRTA

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Talking Landscape, 2005
Hand building, stoneware, Ø 30 cm

PATTERN OF LIGHT

When I first came to Finland in the early 1980's I was struck most of all by the light. Finland is famous for its white June nights and winter gloom, but it is the quality, rather than the quantity of light that is striking. Because I was a Londoner, Finns often laughed at my reaction and assumed it was because I had grown up enveloped in smog or fog, like Sherlock Holmes. Of course London no longer suffered from smog in my youth but I still felt I'd never perceived such vivid colours before. The sun's angle is different in the Nordic sky. The earth's tilt brings a luminous glow to the sand, the birch leaves, the water. As the sun sets and the landscape turns into a silhouette of black and gold, it emphasises rather than erases the violet and emerald tints of the lakes and forests.

The light picks out the orange in the bark of the pine trees, the mottled blue in the rock, the silver in the granite, the pearly shimmer in the snow. Finnish artists have always been sensitive to the special light of the North in their work, giving a particular clarity to colour and texture. There is a painting by Helene Schjerfbeck from 1884, *The Door*, depicting an empty room with a white vaulted ceiling, a wooden floor and a black door lacking both hinges and handle. A deceptively banal, unembellished space, and yet each surface is rich in tone and texture. When you look carefully, endless colours can be discerned in the silent white walls, the echoing grey floor, the forbiddingly closed door. And at the base of the door there is a single brush-stroke of bright orange, the tiniest, undeniable promise of another space behind the door, a space bathed in sunshine and glowing with warmth perhaps.

From the series Construction, 1999
Hand building, stoneware, 12 x 12 x 40 cm

It is this kind of detail which is distinctive about Finnish art. Kirsi Kivivirta's ceramic works are inspired by this same attention to detail, by the same keen sensitivity to the light of the landscape. She also works in shades of black, white or stone which are imbued with subtle, translucent hues, and which interact with the light. Her large sculptures are evocative of earthly change, like ruins eroded by the wind or the sea. Her ceramic surfaces are patterned with fossil-like sinews or recall the nuances of water in motion. She includes subtle details in her tiles, a knot, a fold, a ring - a message making a connexion from the raw material to the hand of artist and the eye of the viewer. In her most recent mosaic pieces, Kirsi Kivivirta has further developed a sense of rhythm. Pattern and contour come to the fore. The clay fits together like a puzzle. A bowl or a room may take shape in the puzzle. Pale reefs are revealed by the recession of the glaciers. The inky sky is dotted with stars. The earth tilts and the sun washes over the clay, glinting on the pebbles.

EVA BUCHWALD

The writer was born in London and moved permanently to Finland in the early nineties, after completing her PhD in Finnish and Russian literature at the University of London School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies. She currently holds the post of Dramaturg at the Finnish National Theatre.



Puzzle Mosaic II, 2003

Hand building, stoneware, 75 x 170 cm



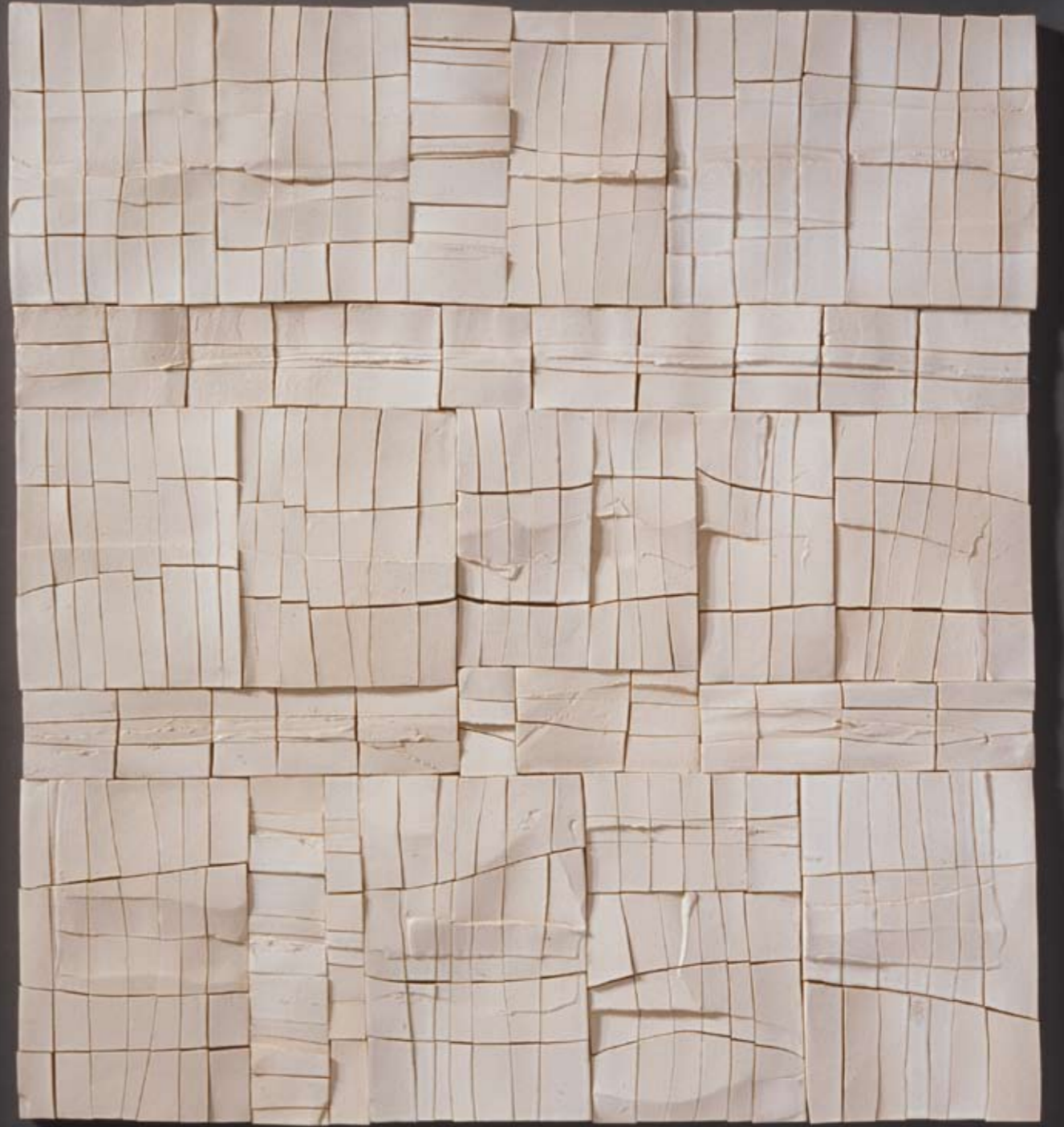
White Puzzle IV, 2007

Hand building, stoneware, 14 x 87 cm



White Mosaic, 2005

Hand building, stoneware, 89 x 96 cm



Black Stones, 2007

Hand building, stoneware, 30 x 30 cm

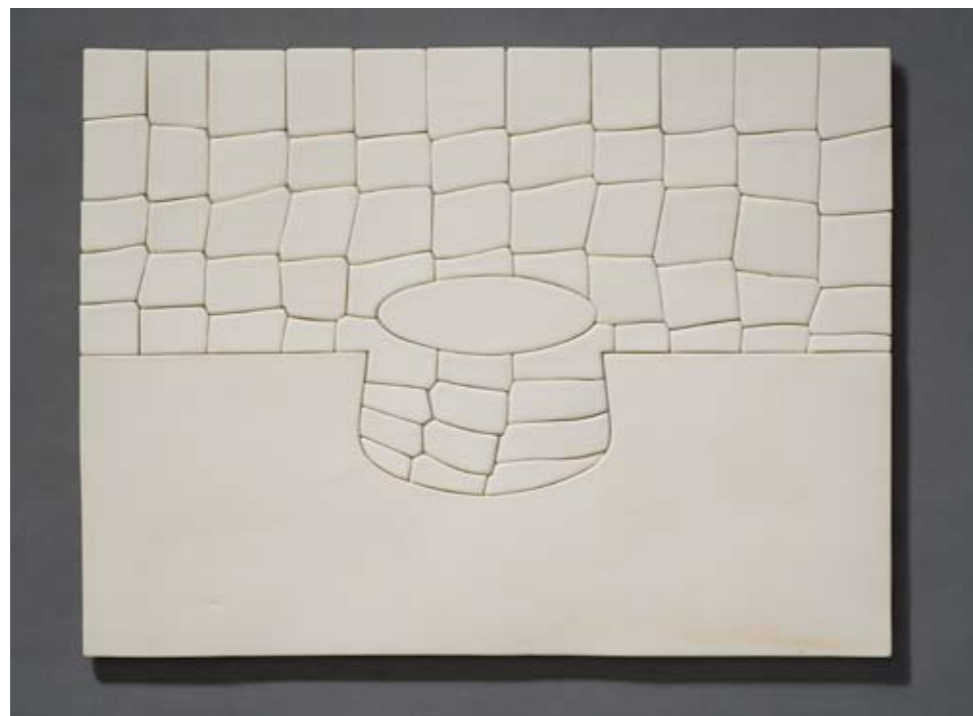


Chamber, 2007

Hand building, stoneware, 70 x 102 cm



Bowl I, 2007
Hand building, stoneware, 37 x 50 cm

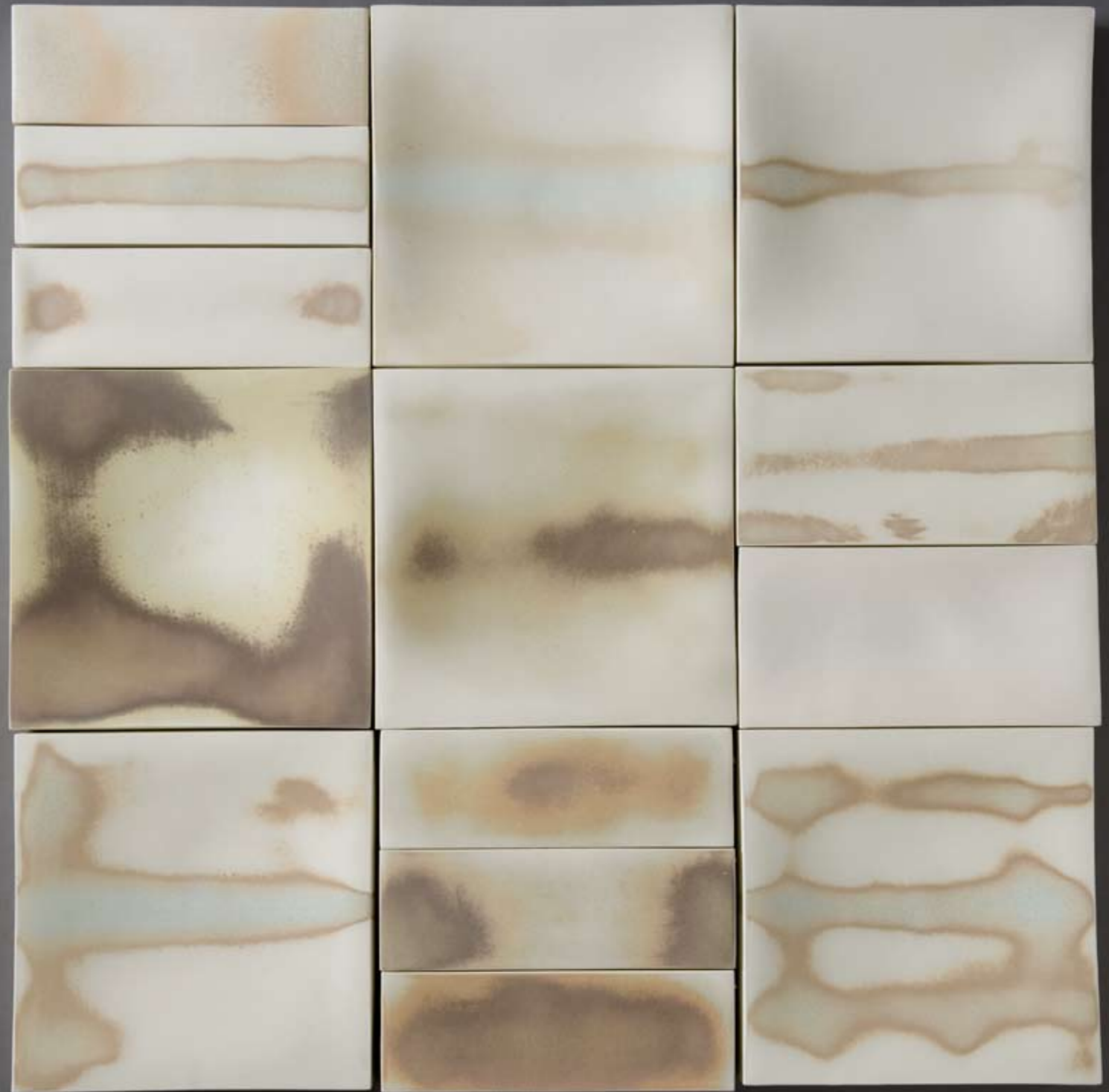


Black Bowl, 2007
Hand building, stoneware, 35 x 50 cm



Tempo III, 2007

Slip casting, stoneware, 90 x 90 cm





KIRSI KIVIVIRTA

born in Turku 1959, lives in Helsinki

STUDIES

University of Art and Design Helsinki, UIAH, 1980-85
MA, Department of Ceramics and Glass Design, 1985

MEMBERSHIPS

The Finnish Association of Artists and Designers TAIKO
Vice Chairman of TAIKO, 1990-95
Ornamo Fund, 1995-99
Board for Public Display Grants to Visual Arts, 2003-06
Artists O
Helsinki Artists' Association

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

L'Europe des Ceramistes, Auxerre, France, 1989; Finnische Keramik, Gallery Uta Goppelsröder, Bretten, Germany, 1990; North, Edmonton, 1992; Arioso Gallery, Stockholm, 1994; Junge Kunstszene Finnland, Hetjens –museum, Dusseldorf and Karlsruhe, 1995; Hot line - group, 1998 – 2002; Céramique contemporaine de Châteauroux, 2001 ; The Successors of Alfred William Finch - A Century of Finnish Ceramics, Design museum, Helsinki, 2003; The Craft Museum of Finland, Jyväskylä, 2004; 54° Concorso Internazionale della Ceramica d'Arte, Faenza, Italy, 2005

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (selected)

Adamson Ericu –museum, Tallinn, 1989
Kluuvi Gallery, Helsinki, 1994
Design Forum Finland, Helsinki, 1998 and 2005
Time Present, Kunsthalle Helsinki, 2000
Galleria 5, Oulu 2007

INTERNATIONAL FAIRS

The International Art + Design Fair, New York, 2007

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Several grants for Visual Arts since 1988
Art Council of Uusimaa, 1983
Findesignnow 02, Honorary mention, 2002
Journalists' Dozen, Habitare Fair, 2007
The State Grant, 2006-2008

COLLECTIONS

Finnish State Art Collection
The National Police School of Finland
Ministry of Education in Finland
Ministry of Finance in Finland
Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland
Design Museum, Helsinki
Tapiola Group
Brick and tile works for the residential area of Arabianranta, Helsinki
Fondazione Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza, Italy

SELECTED WORK EXPERIENCE

Practical training, Arabia Factory, 1983
Lecturer at the University of Art and Design Helsinki, UIAH, 1987-1998
Art education in ceramics, Annantalo Arts Centre, 2000-
Artist in residence, Fuping, China, 2008



