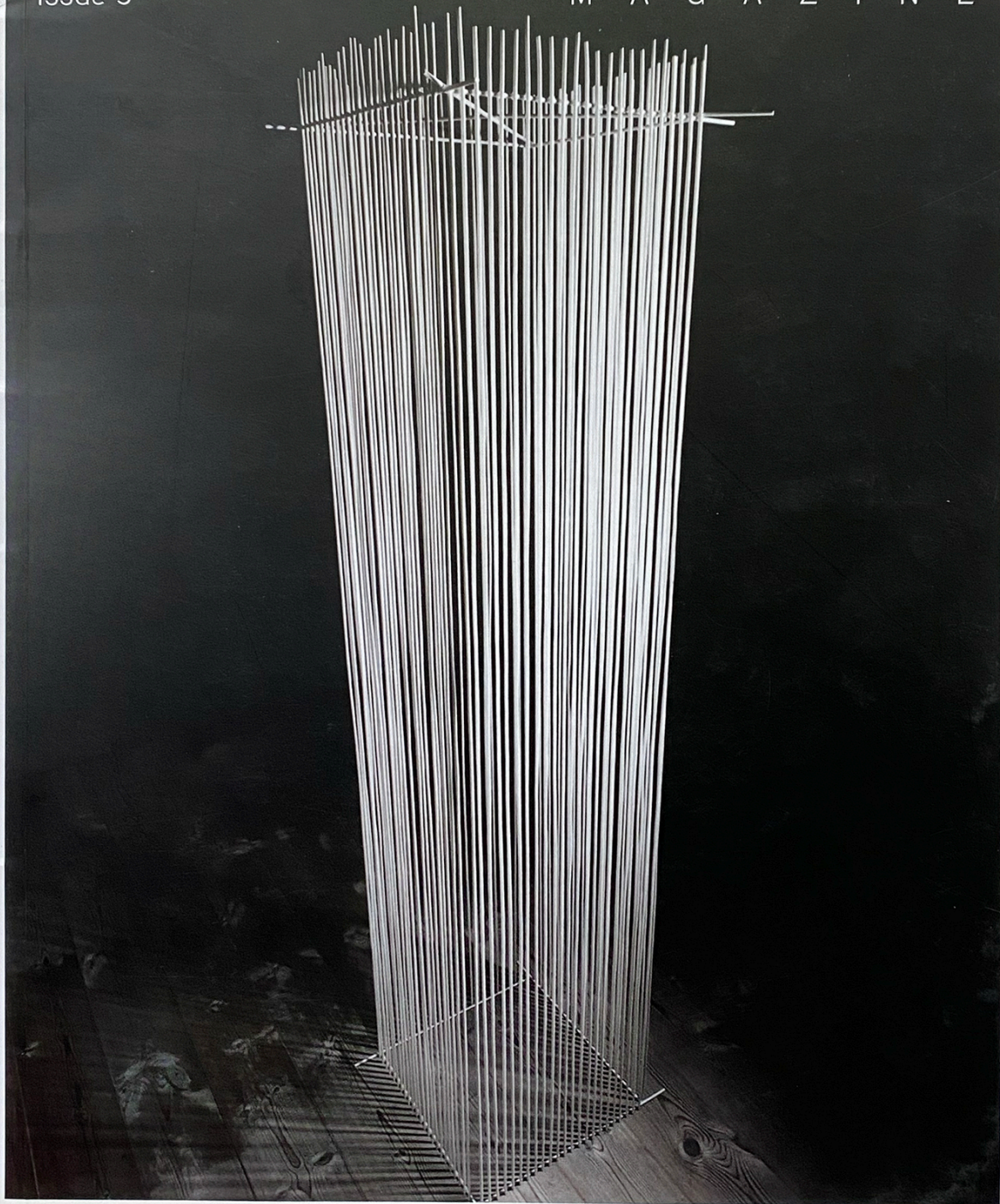
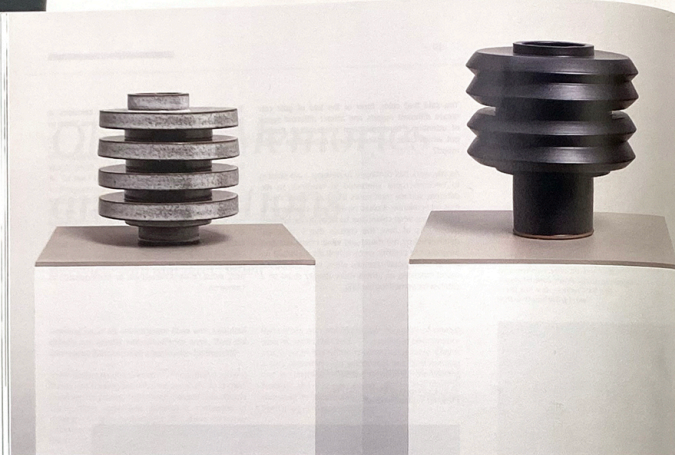


CERAMICS NOW

Issue 3

M A G A Z I N E





Flax vessel, 2011, Glazed stoneware, 8.8 x 8.8 x 10 inches / 20 x 20 x 25 cm

Vessel for Applied Paris, 2014, Glazed stoneware, 10 x 10 x 12 inches / 25 x 25 x 30 cm

Interplays

Interview with Ian McDonald

You are trying to bring the details and qualities of pottery into sculptural objects. Where do you think the border between pottery and sculpture is? How would you differentiate them?

I do think about the sculptural form and the form of pottery, but I tend to think about the differences in terms of boundaries less and less. I think within my more recent projects, the objects have been made in a similar way in terms of multiple parts being dissected and reassembled into singular objects. Some are made on the potters wheel, some are built in various other ways, but they all share a similar approach in that way, the boundaries and possible hierarchy of objects within my work are less of a focus. The difference for me is more formal but in terms of value, all the objects are of equal importance to the overall vision.

In your solo exhibitions, the conceptual value of objects is emphasized through multifaceted arrangements and, more recently, through the objects' connection with their support. What do you have in mind when setting up an exhibition?

Since I am always making multiple objects, I see my exhibitions in terms of an arrangement and some type of object is missing formally and make that work fulfil the language of that arrangement. At some point when everything starts to influence how an arrangement is viewed, it was only natural that the support would have equal importance to the object it displayed. This has proven to

become tricky for me. In some cases, the display and support can become overbearing and start to distract or even render the objects entirely interchangeable which for me could be either good or terrible. More recently, I have been thinking of taking the influential support away and trying to find a more neutral space where objects can be interpreted on their own. It's not easy.

Is the functionality of your work important to you?

Yes, it is for certain work, but this appeals to me in both practical terms as well as a conceptual starting point. Some work originates from a mood based on a vessel whereas others are clearly defined as functional objects. It relates back to your first question in that the differences are more formal, but the values are the same.

Please describe your concept of the economy of form.

The economy of form has to do with how to identify what is most important to the form or basically how much information I need to describe an object. I sometimes feel like contemporary ceramics has a lot to do with too much technique. I sometimes feel more like plunging my thumb into a lump of clay and calling it a bowl. It might perform in very much the same way as a technically savvy bowl. My work tends to be more precise than that, but I am mindful of overworking forms. I think my work is at its core, clear, concise and to the point.

I am far more interested in the language and point of view that originates from my work than I am in ritual.

Your vocabulary of shapes and forms is improvised within a set parameter. Aren't you tempted to experiment with other forms or other materials?

I have worked with many other materials and forms but in most cases I set the parameters as a way to understand the ways I am working with in a deeper way. I have also found that the material and process of ceramics is of critical importance to my work. It's such a unique process that can't really be cheated in that way the ceramic form has become a way to highlight both other materials and ceramics itself. I feel like I can always find something new in a simple cylinder or another basic form.

You are using the same potter's wheel you used 20 years ago. Are you a man of rituals?

I'm not really a man of ritual in that I tend to roam around the landscape of ceramics. I fire at different temperatures, different atmospheres and try new clays and glazes all the time. This can sometimes be painful, but the payoff is bigger. I have begun to narrow down some parts of the process, but I don't want to become too dependent on any one technique so to speak. I am far more interested in the language and point of view that originates from my work than I am in ritual.

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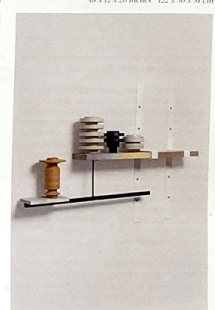
Wearing (Hass), 2011, Glazed stoneware, powder coated steel, iron, flux fiber, 30 x 12 x 56 inches / 76 x 30 x 141 cm



Wearing (Shelving unit - All in one), 2011, Glazed stoneware, iron, iron, powder coated steel, wood, concrete, 48 x 12 x 60 inches / 122 x 30 x 152 cm



Arrangement #1 (Boris Eimstein Gallery), 2011, Glazed stoneware, powder coated steel, painted wood, 48 x 12 x 20 inches / 122 x 30 x 51 cm



with Re
Sigilla
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