

The Beetle Sculptures of Ceramic Artist Ross De Wayne Campbell

Armin Rieger

Oryctes nasicornis
at Ostkreuz Station



They are called weevils (*curculimidae*) or long-horned beetles (*cerambycidae*) and people's feelings about them are at best divided.

In Egypt at the time of the Pharaohs, the scarab was sacred, and in the story of *Max and Moritz* by German author and humorist Wilhelm Busch, a bag full of maybugs will also probably provoke mixed feelings, as it does in the story too.

They have been portrayed in art for thousands of years, not only in Egypt, these insects from the order of *coleoptera* or beetles that make up 25% of the species on Earth, a total of at least 350,000!

What is it that attracts an artist to the sculptural depiction of such a monster? If it has been suitably enlarged, its appearance is

far more frightening than any virtual figment of computer game designers' imagination, and in its incarnation as the ladybird, is too cute for words.

What is it that tempts Ross about *oryctes nasicornis*? Why does he find that is so exciting about the order of *coleoptera*? What is behind his love of creepy-crawlies? One thing is for sure and that is he is not a coleopterologist.

A woodworm is gnawing away at my desk, and my curiosity is gnawing at me, so I have made an appointment with Ross and on the local commuter train service, I travel to Ostkreuz station and walk the last ten minutes to his studio in the Lichtenfelde district of Berlin. The night before, a dung beetle (*scarabeus sacer*) had rolled me up in a huge ball of clay, and I woke up soaked