



Grey Form

Gabriele Koch

Not on display

Title/Description: Grey Form

Artist/Maker: Gabriele Koch (Artist)

Born: 2012

Object Type: Pot, Sculpture

Materials: Ceramic, Earthenware

Technique: Coiling, Smoke-firing

Measurements: h. 170mm

Accession Number: 50753

Production Place: Britain, England

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Gabriele Koch's vessels are seductive and atmospheric, striking in their balance of precision and fluidity. Clouds of grey and brown tones move around the body of the vessel; its smooth, taut surface is accentuated by the flattened form. The surface pattern feels alive and is reminiscent of geology and skies. This elemental quality of Koch's work derives from her processes of burnishing and smoke-firing. These are also techniques her work shares with indigenous American and African pottery, and it was after seeing examples of these types of burnished pots in museums that she pursued this approach in her work. [1]

Although Koch's work echoes tradition, it is resolutely modern. Her work focuses on the vessel as an abstract sculptural form (see also 50751, 50752, 50754). Here the thin-walled narrow mouth of the vessel creates tension between the inner volume and expansive exterior surface. Koch cites artists and architects including Le Corbusier, Anish Kapoor and Ruth Duckworth as reference points for her interpretation of space. [2]

Koch constructs her forms in layers by hand using the coiling technique. Once the form is complete and nearly dry a coloured slip is added. The pot is then burnished with a metal spoon before firing. This step is crucial in ensuring the slip adheres. The pots are first biscuit fired and then undergo smoke firing in a small outdoor kiln. Sawdust is placed around the pot which is lit from the top and left to burn. Sometimes the pot is withdrawn before the sawdust is completely burnt. The form is then completed by wax-polishing.

Sim Panaser, June 2020

[1] Jane Perryman, 'Gabriele Koch' in *Smoke Firing: Contemporary Artists and Approaches*, (London: A&C Black, 2008), pp. 55-60, (p. 55).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Further Reading

Birks, Tony, Gabriele Koch: Hand Building and Smoke Firing, (Catrine: Stenlake, 2009)

Birks, Tony, 'High Tech: Low Precision', *Ceramic Review*, 144 (November/December 1993), 23-27

Perryman, Jane, 'Gabriele Koch' in *Smoke Firing: Contemporary Artists and Approaches*, (London: A&C Black, 2008), pp. 55-60

<https://www.gabrielekoch.co.uk/>

