

CREATIVE BOOM

Woody De Othello: "Strange Clay delves into the weird and wonderful world of modern ceramics"

By Dom Carter

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Installation view of Klara Kristalova: Camouflage, Perrotin, Paris, September 7–October 7, 2017. Courtesy Perrotin. Photo: Claire Dorn.

Explore how contemporary artists are using clay in inventive ways with **Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art**, an upcoming exhibition hosted by London's [Hayward Gallery](#).

Ceramics are on the rise, and to celebrate the medium's exploding popularity, Hayward Gallery in London is taking a look at the oddest offerings it has to offer with Strange Clay. Running from 26 October until 8 January 2023, Strange Clay features 23 international and multi-generational artists who have made an impression with their ceramic art.

Including works from the likes of ceramic legends Betty Woodman, Beate Kuhn, Ron Nagle and Ken Price, Strange Clay also contains sculptures by pioneering artists who are pushing the boundaries of the form today. The common theme running through all the pieces though is an exploration of how clay can be used as an expansive material to produce playful and socially-engaging artworks.

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Curated by Dr Cliff Lauson, Strange Clay will host everything from eccentric abstract sculptures, to large immersive installations and otherworldly evocations of everyday figures and objects. Spanning a multitude of scales, finishes and techniques, Strange Clay is an unabashed celebration of the sheer possibility and versatility of clay.



Woody De Othello, on and ON, 2020 Ceramic, underglaze, glaze 43.2 x 43.2 cm © Woody De Othello. Courtesy of the artist; Jessica Silverman, San Francisco; and Karma, New York (photo: John Wilson White)



Klara Kristalova, Sun, 2019 Glazed stoneware 26 x 32 x 28 cm © Klara Kristalova and Perrotin. Courtesy Perrotin. Photo: Claire Dorn



Ron Nagle, Ms. Artismal, 2018 Ceramic, catalyzed polyurethane, epoxy resin, acrylic 17 x 10 x 10 cm © Ron Nagle. Courtesy the artist and Matthew Marks Gallery / Modern Art. Photo: Don Tuttle

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Beate Kuhn, Kakteenkranz, 2008 Stoneware, white body, thrown, assembled 21 x 38 x 34 cm
Courtesy Die Neue Sammlung - The Design Museum. Photo: Die Neue Sammlung (A. Lorenzo)

As well as showcasing existing work, the exhibition also contains a new commission titled *Till Death Do Us Part* by Lindsey Mendick. This stunning piece "explores the domestic realm as a site of conflict and negotiations", where the ambivalence of domestic settings and relationships are represented as a battleground where vermin infiltrate every corner of the house.

Dr Cliff Lauson, Curator of *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art*, says: "Strange Clay brings together some of the most exciting artists working in ceramics in recent years. Using innovative methods and techniques, they push the medium to its physical and conceptual limits, producing imaginative artworks that surprise and provoke in equal measure."

Meanwhile, Ralph Rugoff, Director of the Hayward Gallery, adds: "Vibrant, playful and provocative, *Strange Clay* brings together a diverse range of artists - from across the world as well as the UK - whose work is inventively redefining the place of ceramics in contemporary art. Their work celebrates the medium's special characteristics in order to explore an array of timely concerns."

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Grayson Perry, *Women of Ideas*, 1990 Glazed ceramic 42 x 27 cm © Grayson Perry. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro



David Zink Yi, *Untitled (Architeuthis)*, 2010 Burnt and glazed clay 29 x 575 x 115 cm / 11 3/8 x 226 3/8 x 45 1/4 inches © David Zink Yi. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Stefan Altenburger. Photography Zürich
 Betty Woodman, *House of the South*, 1996 Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint 403.9 x 624.8 x 24.1 cm



Installation view of *The Art of Betty Woodman*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, April 25–July 30, 2006. Photographer: Eli Ping. Courtesy The Woodman Family Foundation. © Woodman Family Foundation / DACS, London.

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Klara Kristalova, Wooden girl, 2021 Stoneware 62 x 25 x 31 cm © Klara Kristalova and Perrotin.
Courtesy Perrotin. Photo: Tanguy Beurdeley

Other standout works at the exhibition include David Zink Yi's giant ceramic squid, *Untitled (Architeuthis)* (2010). Impossible to miss as it sprawls across the floor, this 4.8 metres sculpture appears to be lying in a pool of its own ink. Made as a response to the extreme biological difference between humans and squids, this piece explores the relationship between myth-making and the construction of identity.

Visitors should also look out for the ceramic sculptures of Takuro Kuwaya, who radically reinterprets the shape of a traditional Japanese tea bowl or chawan. By playing with the scale of his work and glazing them with elaborate colours and textures that emulate organic forms, he pushes traditional techniques into new territories to create something entirely new and surprising.

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Ken Price, Oki, 2007 Fired and painted clay 53.3 x 45.7 x 40.6 cm © Ken Price Estate.
Courtesy the Ken Price Estate and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels. Photo: HV-studio

Elsewhere, Klara Kristalova's botanical installation features plants and ceramic sculptures. In his piece, roots, moss and branches evoke the forest surrounding the artist's studio in the Swedish wilderness and the woodland setting of fairy tales.

Strange Clay is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue with essays by Dr Cliff Lauson and Amy Sherlock, texts by Allie Biswas, Jareh Das, Hettie Judah and Jenni Lomax, and a roundtable discussion with four of the artists in the exhibition chaired by Elinor Morgan, co-published by Hayward. Tickets to the exhibition cost £15 and can be booked now by visiting [Hayward Gallery online](#).

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