

PRESS RELEASE

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MARTIN SMITH

static field

9 May to 15 June 2013

Martin Smith has achieved international recognition as one of the UK's leading ceramic artists. In this impressive body of new work he continues to investigate the formal language of the vessel, while developing new approaches to surface illusion. The exhibition comprises three related series, wall works, autonomous horizontal forms and pairs of related vessels, all developed from geometrical shapes and solids, especially the cylinder, cone and circle.

The wall works make use of digital and silkscreen printing processes. One of the works began in a sequence of arcs, struck from each corner of a rectangle, before being digitally stretched to generate a moiré or interference pattern. Sections of the drawing were then broken down into circular elements and transferred to standard industrially-produced plates using ceramic decals. The plates are presented in a linear progression within a box frame, thus allowing the design to evolve as the eye travels across their surfaces. Here and elsewhere surface alters the perception of form.

Smith employs a wide range of techniques, often engineering his own equipment to achieve the ends he seeks. Model-making and mould-making have been key processes in the creation of many past works,

Martin Smith (b. 1950) studied at Ipswich School of Art and Bristol Polytechnic before undertaking a Degree by Project in the Ceramics Department of the Royal College of Art. Since the start of his career in the late 70s he has exhibited internationally. A major retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, in 1996 and in 2001 he made *Wavelength*, a site-specific work for Tate St Ives. His work can be found in many public collections worldwide including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Museum Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; and Kanazama Crafts Council, Taiwan. He is Professor of Ceramics and Glass at the Royal College of Art, London.



but to make the new curved and flaring freestanding vessels he has returned to throwing. The patterning of the meticulously incised surfaces is based on the circle and is achieved using an adjustable jig of his own invention. By these means an interior surface is incised with an interference pattern built up from concentric circles that start from different points, and the pattern that surrounds a vertical form is developed from the shifting lines of multiple encircling bands.

This collection of new works is precise and rigorous, yet quietly sensuous, a tension that is played out between the complex illusion of the surface and the captivating simplicity of the form.

Gallery opening hours are Tuesday to Friday
11:00 - 18:00 and Saturday 11:00 - 16:00.
The nearest tube stations are Barbican,
Farringdon or Old Street.

For more information, images or to arrange an
interview with the artist please contact
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Image: detail of work in progress in the artist's
studio. Photo © Martin Smith (2013)