

HAYWARD GALLERY

Press Release

Date: Tuesday 25 October 2022, 10:00am

Contact: press@southbankcentre.co.uk

Images: downloadable [here](#)

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Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art 26 October 2022 - 8 January 2023



IMAGE CREDITS IN NOTES TO EDITORS

Showing until 8 January 2023, Hayward Gallery presents *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art*, the first large-scale group exhibition in the UK to explore how contemporary artists have used the medium of clay in inventive ways. Given the recent surge of interest in ceramics by artists around the world, as well as countless people who enjoy sculpting clay as a pastime, *Strange Clay* offers a timely reflection on this vital and popular medium. Featuring 23 international and multi-generational artists, from ceramic pioneers **Betty Woodman**, **Beate Kuhn**, **Ron Nagle** and **Ken Price**, to a new generation of artists pushing the boundaries of ceramics today, the exhibition explores the expansive potential of clay through a variety of playful as well as socially-engaged artworks.

Curated by **Dr Cliff Lauson**, *Strange Clay* features eccentric abstract sculptures, large immersive installations, fantastical otherworldly figures and uncanny evocations of everyday objects. The artworks vary in scale, finish and technique, and address topics that range from architecture to social justice, the body, the domestic, the political and the organic. Regardless of background or route into the material, all of the artists in the exhibition celebrate the sheer possibility and versatility of clay.

In a brand new commission for the exhibition, titled *Till Death Do Us Part* (2022), **Lindsey Mendick** explores the domestic realm as a site of conflicts and negotiations. A reflection on

the ambivalence of domestic settings and relationships, the home is represented as a battleground where vermin infiltrate every corner of the house. “Our houses are personal worlds – microcosms of hell, bliss or loneliness”, the artist explains.

David Zink Yi’s giant ceramic squid, *Untitled (Architeuthis)* (2010) sprawls across the floor of the gallery, spanning more than 5 metres and lying in what appears to be a pool of its own ink. Fascinated by the extreme biological differences between humans and squids, he explores the relationship between myth-making and the construction of identity.

In his ceramics sculptures, **Takuro Kuwata** radically reinterprets the shape of a Japanese tea bowl or *chawan* – a vessel used to prepare and consume tea in traditional ceremonies. Greatly varying in scale, the artist’s sculptures are glazed with elaborate colours and textures that evoke organic forms, pushing traditional techniques to create something entirely unique and surprising.

Fantastical creatures are displayed in a botanical installation from **Klara Kristalova**, featuring plants and ceramic sculptures. Roots, moss, grass and branches evoke the Swedish wilderness and the woodland setting of fairy tales.

Woody De Othello’s surreal clay sculptures modify the shapes of traditional household objects into over-sized, twisted and sometimes anthropomorphic forms. With his distinct approach to ceramics, Othello reimagines the mundane with a humorous twist while offering a serious reflection on society and race.

Strange Clay features works by Aaron Angell, Salvatore Arancio, Leilah Babirye, Jonathan Baldock, Lubna Chowdhary, Edmund de Waal, Emma Hart, Liu Jianhua, Rachel Kneebone, Serena Korda, Klara Kristalova, Beate Kuhn, Takuro Kuwata, Lindsey Mendick, Ron Nagle, Magdalene Odundo, Woody De Othello, Grayson Perry, Shahpour Pouyan, Ken Price, Brie Ruais, Betty Woodman and David Zink Yi.

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.”

Ralph Rugoff, Director of the Hayward Gallery, says: *“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.”*

The exhibition 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 Publishing and Hatje Cantz.

In a unique collaboration with the Southbank Centre, artists Salvatore Arancio, Jonathan Baldock, Lubna Chowdhary and Serena Korda will also present limited edition, specially commissioned artworks in conjunction with *Strange Clay*. These artworks are available in the Hayward Gallery Shop and online from 26 October 2022.

More information on the editions plus images [here](#).

Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art is curated by Dr Cliff Lauson with Assistant Curator Marie-Charlotte Carrier and Curatorial Assistant Suzanna Petot.

Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art is generously supported by Manizeh & Danny Rimer and the Strange Clay Exhibition Supporters' Group: Gagosian; Stephen Friedman Gallery; Hauser & Wirth; White Cube; and Anne Pierre d'Albis-Ganem & THE CLUB PARCOURS. With additional support from the Embassy of Sweden in London.

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For further press information and high res images please contact:

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Exhibition Listing information:

Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art

26 October 2022 - 8 January 2023

Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX

Full price standard: £15

Concessions available & Southbank Centre Members go free.

Link to *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art* web page [HERE](#)

The Hayward Gallery opening times:

11am - 9pm, Wednesday

11am - 7pm, Thursday - Saturday

10am - 6pm, Sunday

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Public Programme:

Woody De Othello in Conversation

Wednesday 26 October - 7pm

Price: Free

Listen in on a conversation with artist Woody De Othello, who features in the Hayward Gallery exhibition *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art*. In this event, the artist speaks to Hayward Gallery Curatorial Assistant Suzanna Petot.

Link to *Woody De Othello in Conversation* web page [HERE](#)

Beyond Vessels: Magdalene Odundo & Edmund de Waal

16 November 2022 - 7pm

Price: £5

Join artists Magdalene Odundo and Edmund de Waal, both of whom appear in *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art*, as they discuss clay's intricacies as a medium. In particular, they look at how a quintessential form of ceramics, the vessel, can be morphed and reimagined as an abstraction, an architecture or even a body. This discussion is chaired by curator and writer Jenni Lomax.

Link to *Beyond Vessels: Magdalene Odundo & Edmund de Waal* web page [HERE](#)

Grayson Perry in Conversation with Caroline Douglas

Wednesday 23 November - 7pm

Price: £7

Grayson Perry discusses the idea of kitsch in ceramics and contemporary art with Caroline Douglas, Director of the Contemporary Art Society.

This talk covers the ways in which artists use 'kitsch' to reflect on ideas around identity and notions of taste. Taking Perry's practice as an example, Perry and Douglas explore how working with clay questions notions of taste, notably through the use of domestic forms and popular culture references.

Link to *Grayson Perry in Conversation with Caroline Douglas* [HERE](#)

Out of the Kiln: From Technique to Concept

Saturday 26 November - 2pm

Price: £5

Aaron Angell and Serena Korda, two of the artists featured in *Strange Clay* discuss their work with exhibition curator Dr Cliff Lauson.

Ceramics span everything from the humble pot to the sculptural masterpiece – but what ties them all together is the skilled manipulation of materials. In this talk, artists working with ceramics explore and explain how their clays, glazes and firing techniques give form to their creative vision.

Link to *Out of the Kiln: From Technique to Concept* [HERE](#)

Link to the Southbank Centre online shop [HERE](#)

Further information:

www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Twitter: [@haywardgallery](https://twitter.com/haywardgallery)

Instagram: [@hayward.gallery](https://www.instagram.com/hayward.gallery)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/haywardgallery/

NOTES TO EDITORS

IMAGE CREDITS

Installation view of **Betty Woodman and Jonathan Baldock**, *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art* at the Hayward Gallery (26 October 2022 - 8 January 2023). Photo: Mark Blower. Courtesy the Hayward Gallery.

Installation view of **David Zink Yi**, *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art* at the Hayward Gallery (26 October 2022 - 8 January 2023). Photo: Mark Blower. Courtesy the Hayward Gallery

Installation view of **Takuro Kuwata**, *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art* at the Hayward Gallery (26 October 2022 - 8 January 2023). Photo: Mark Blower. Courtesy the Hayward Gallery

Dr Cliff Lauson

Dr Cliff Lauson is currently Director of Exhibitions at Somerset House, London. He was formerly Senior Curator at the Hayward Gallery at the Southbank Centre, where he organised major exhibitions of work by Matthew Barney, Bridget Riley, and Martin Creed among others, as well as the critically-acclaimed group exhibitions *Light Show* and *Space Shifters*.

About the Hayward Gallery

The Hayward Gallery, part of the Southbank Centre, has a long history of presenting work by the world's most adventurous and innovative artists including major solo shows by both emerging and established artists and dynamic group exhibitions. They include those by Bridget Riley, Bruce Nauman, Anish Kapoor, Lee Bul, Andreas Gursky, Tracey Emin, Jeremy Deller, Kader Attia and Matthew Barney, as well as influential group exhibitions such as *Africa Remix*, *Light Show*, *Psycho Buildings* and *Space Shifters*. Opened by Her Majesty, The Queen in July 1968, the gallery is one of the few remaining buildings of its style. The Brutalist building was designed by a group of young architects, including Dennis Crompton, Warren Chalk and Ron Herron and is named after Sir Isaac Hayward, a former leader of the London County Council.

About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre occupying a prominent riverside location that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. We exist to present great cultural experiences that bring people together and we achieve this by providing the space for artists to create and present their best work and by creating a place where as many people as possible can come together to experience bold, unusual and eye-opening work. We want to take people out of the everyday, every day. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as being home to the National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. It is also home to six Resident Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra).

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