

NORA MOELLE

Breaking Symmetry: the structure and dynamics of form in ceramics

PhD EXHIBITION 21 January to 7 February 2015



**IMAGES FRONT AND
BACK COVER**

*Installation of vessels in spiral from of decreasing
height (from the 'Square Mouthed Vessels' series)*
2008

southern ice porcelain, unglazed, etched
various heights
Photograph by Allan Chawner

*Open Forms (from the Merewether Beach
collection)*

2007
southern ice porcelain, unglazed, deep etched
with shellac resist
Photograph by Allan Chawner

IMAGE BELOW

Installation of Globular Bottles
various dates
southern ice porcelain, unglazed
various sizes
Photograph by Allan Chawner



IMAGE OPPOSITE TOP

Computer design vessels
2012

southern ice porcelain, wheelthrown, manipulated,
bisqued
various heights
Photograph by Allan Chawner

IMAGE OPPOSITE CENTRE

*Installation of vessels in spiral from of decreasing
height (from the 'Square Mouthed Vessels' series)*
2008

southern ice porcelain, unglazed, etched
various heights
Photograph by Allan Chawner

IMAGE OPPOSITE BELOW

from the 'Square Mouthed Vessels' series
2008
southern ice porcelain, unglazed, etched
various heights
Detail of a photograph by Allan Chawner

The potter's wheel in skilled hands can automatically produce symmetrical forms remarkable for their strength. But in an age when ceramics are no longer strictly functional, is this enough?

Nora Moelle has long been known for producing series of immaculately thrown bowls and beakers, whether in tawny salt glaze or in luminous white porcelain.

However, in recent years she has come to realise that static symmetry is less meaningful to a modern eye than a dynamic shift to individually manipulated works. She has experimented with these more lively forms, using that most intractable of clays, dazzlingly white unglazed Southern Ice porcelain. As she worked and thought about the work, her pots became increasingly more individual.

The present exhibition charts this evolution and six years of speculative inquiry, the basis for her PhD thesis.

The pots themselves demonstrate a growing awareness that the symmetrical harmony and balance, which for the Ancient Greeks signified beauty, no longer feeds the creative imagination of today.

Nora's investigations took her out into the curved space of Einstein's theory of relativity and into the rarefied realms of non-Euclidean geometry, superseding the static geometry of the ancients, the fixed cosmos, the laws of nature long thought immutable.

She followed the links between mathematical theory and the breakthrough in modern art early in the twentieth century, but also examined the practice of eccentric potters past and present.

Wheel-thrown elements still form the basic units of Nora Moelle's sculptural works, but dislocated and alienated, confronting and teasing the imagination as well as the eye. Symmetry is implicit, but rendered ironic by the immediacy and increasing tension of reassembled elements in compound sculptural compositions.

Clay is one of the building blocks of civilisation, with many thousands of years of accumulated technological knowledge. We now also know it to be a splendid vehicle for postmodern experiment.

- Jill Stowell 2015

