

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT

Pucker Gallery

Vessels by Ipek Kotan

Boston



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Why would a ceramist make a bowl that takes such an extraordinary amount of time and effort when she is almost certain that nobody will recognize this? Why would she glaze the inside of the bowl instead of the outside?

That's Ipek Kotan!

Born in Turkey, educated in the UK and US, and residing in the Netherlands, Kotan works with the most difficult material a ceramist can choose—porcelain—and with it makes the most difficult forms imaginable. She shifts from thick walls to thin rims and glazes only the interior, both processes that increase the risk of cracking in porcelain exponentially. She wants her bowls to be as perfectly shaped and as smoothly polished as is feasible. Her amazing glazes are the unexpected, delicious filling of the cake, discovered after the first bite. It can take months to create a piece, and her forms and glazes carry a high chance of developing cracks. She does not assume this risk and take all this trouble to show off. No, it is a result of her perfectionism. She wants her bowls to be perfect in form, feeling, and color and such effort is required to reach this goal. This is what makes her so special. Could she seek a process and focus that is faster and more efficient, with a more certain chance of success? Perhaps, but that is not for Ipek Kotan.



Sculptural vessel form #8

Satin-matte crystal glaze
Porcelain
1 x 4 x 4"
IK24



Sculptural vessel form #34

Satin-matte bronze crystal glaze
Porcelain
1.25 x 4.5 x 4.5"
IK29



Sculptural vessel form #50

Cobalt blue glaze
Porcelain
1.5 x 4 x 4"
IK39



Sculptural vessel form #43

Amber crackle glaze
Porcelain
.75 x 3.75 x 3.75"
IK37

I first met Ipek at a presentation of the European Ceramic Work Centre (EKWC) in the Netherlands about ten years ago. This unique Dutch art institution offers ceramists and other artists equipment, professional help, and a place to stay while experimenting with clay, usually for no more than three months. (Ipek, in typical fashion, spent a year and a half there—the first and only artist allowed such a long tenure). During our first meeting, Ipek explained to me her methods and revealed her objectives. I was intrigued and impressed at the same time. I remember thinking: This is an artist who gives one hundred percent, an artist completely devoted to her work and her almost unreachable ideals. She showed me a beautiful, smoothly polished bowl, glazed inside with the most unthinkable shining color. She turned it around and showed me a tiny crack—one I could hardly see—and told me without hesitation: “this one will be thrown away.” I was stunned.

After that meeting, I was honored to acquire three of her larger pieces for Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. The ceramic collection of this Rotterdam-based museum focuses on the simple container/vessel throughout the years and in different forms, from primitive cooking pots of the Middle Ages to artistic vases and decorated bowls. It focuses on the container as a vehicle for artists to experiment, to express their emotions, or to develop their ideal of the perfect form. It is clear that Kotan’s work belongs to this last category.

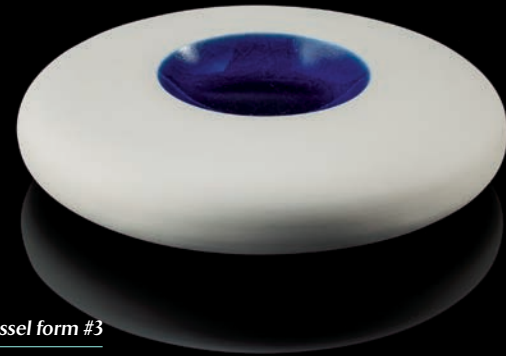
Kotan has worked passionately to improve her skills—continually inventing forms and glazes, experimenting with firing

techniques, and strengthening her muscles. Imagine the hours it takes to prepare 20kg (44 pounds) of clay, mixing it enough to make her bowls. Then imagine the hours it takes to throw the objects, the hours of precise trimming over several sessions intertwined with periods of drying, and the final drying process that can take several months, during which the piece must be professionally monitored with a hygrometer. The humidity of the object must be slowly brought down from 90 to about 45 percent.

In the end all the hours may have been for nothing, because at the first bisque firing (which takes 40 hours), pieces often crack and sometimes break in half. Pieces that survive this process then need to be hand-sanded, glazed, and fired again (for about 45 hours). If Kotan wants a glaze to be more intense, a reglazing and refiring is required. For pieces that endure the entire process, Kotan carefully finishes them by sanding and polishing by hand. All told, it takes her almost half a year to make one perfect bowl.

For several years, I have had two of Kotan's small bowls in my personal collection. Though they are museum quality (many have been acquired by museums), I believe private collections are the best place for the work. Her bowls need to be held in your hand so they can be cuddled and caressed. Friends and relatives visiting my home are encouraged to hold these objects, and, without exception, they, like me, fall in love with Ipek's bowls.

— Dr. Mienke Simon Thomas was senior-curator
*Decorative Arts and Design in Museum
 Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam from
 1993 until 2022.*



Sculptural vessel form #3

Cobalt blue glaze
 Porcelain
 1 x 4.25 x 4.25"
 IK22



Sculptural vessel form #5

Shimmery blue crystal glaze
 Porcelain
 1 x 4.25 x 4.25"
 IK23



Sculptural vessel form #10
Satin-matte crystal glaze
Porcelain
5 x 12.5 x 12.5"
IK25

Sculptural vessel form #159

Metallic bronze glaze

Porcelain

5.25 x 12.75 x 12.75"

IK6



Sculptural vessel form #29

Aqua blue crackle glaze
Porcelain
2.5 x 9.25 x 9.25"
IK27



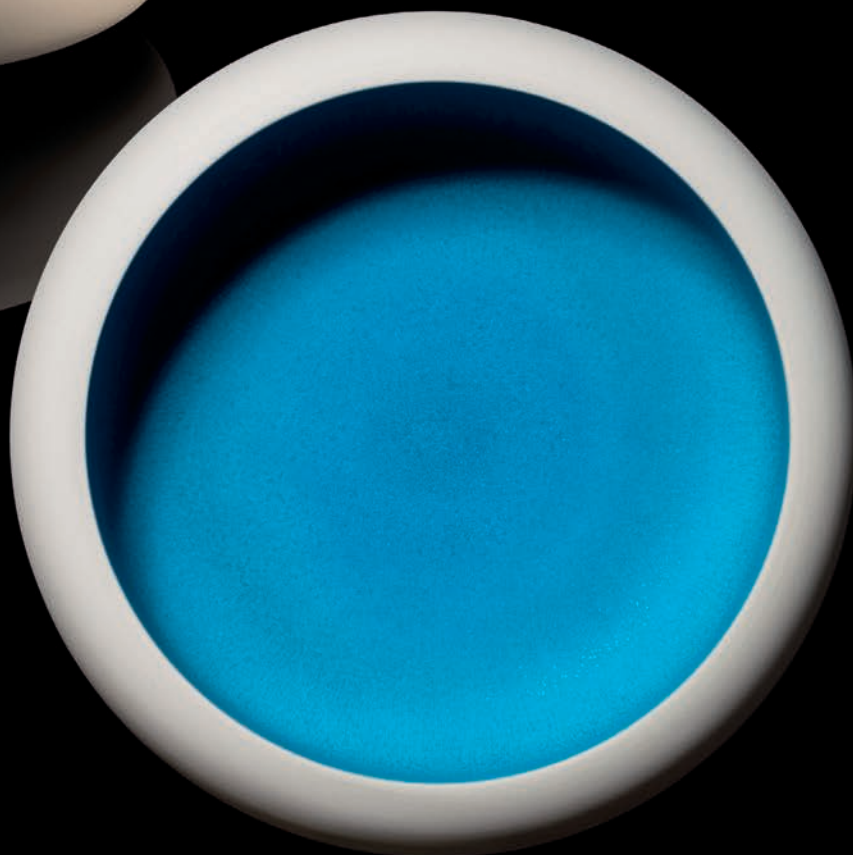
Sculptural vessel form #42

Satin-matte crystal glaze
Porcelain
2 x 6.5 x 6.5"
IK36



Sculptural vessel form #53

Shimmery blue crystal glaze
Porcelain
2 x 5.5 x 5.5"
IK41



Sculptural vessel form #2

Shimmery blue crystal glaze
Stoneware
2.75 x 9.5 x 9.5"
IK42

Sculptural vessel form #31

Amber crackle glaze
Porcelain
2.25 x 7.25 x 7.25"
IK28



Sculptural vessel form #49

Aqua blue crackle glaze
Stoneware
1.5 x 6.5 x 6.5"
IK43

Sculptural vessel form #34

Iceberg blue satin-matte glaze
Black porcelain
3.75 x 4.25 x 4.25"
IK30



Sculptural vessel form #38

Amber crackle glaze
Black porcelain
3.25 x 4.5 x 4.5"
IK32



Sculptural vessel form #125

Satin matte red glaze with white crystals
Porcelain
4.75 x 8.5 x 8.5"
IK5

Sculptural vessel form #3

Clear crackle glaze
Stoneware
2.50 x 9.75 x 9.75"
IK21



Sculptural vessel form #50

Light amber crackle glaze
Porcelain
1.5 x 8.5 x 8.5"
IK9



Sculptural vessel form #18
Shimmering blue glaze
Porcelain
4 x 11 x 11"
IK14

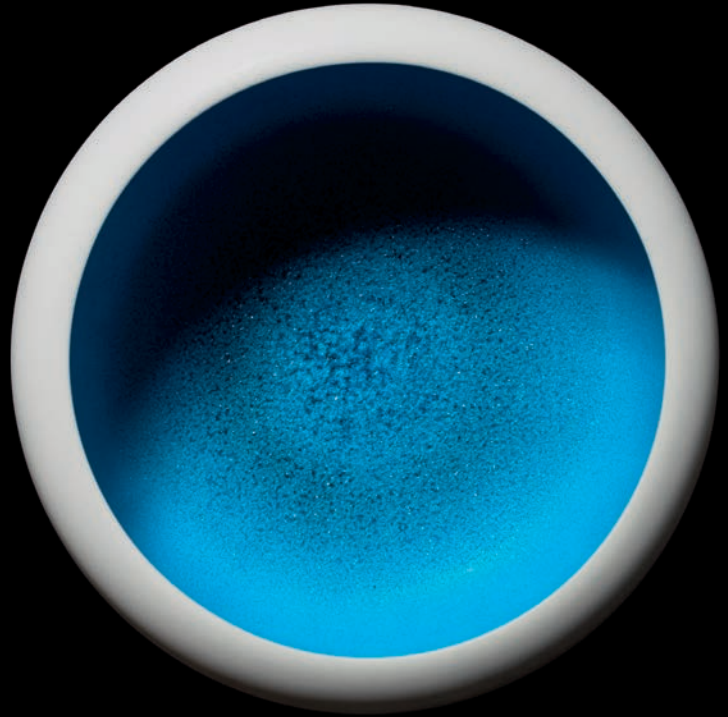
Sculptural vessel form #44

Shimmery blue crystal glaze

Porcelain

2.75 x 7 x 7"

IK38



Sculptural vessel form #27

Light blue crackle glaze

Porcelain

1.75 x 7.5 x 7.5"

IK26



Sculptural vessel form #4
Blue-green satin-matte glaze
Porcelain
2 x 8 x 8"
IK10



Sculptural vessel form #26
Satin-matte red glaze
Porcelain
2.75 x 8.75 x 8.75"
IK20



Sculptural vessel form #3

Light blue glossy crackle glaze

Porcelain

3.5 x 12.5 x 12.5"

IKB



Sculptural vessel form #22

Deep blue crackle glaze
Porcelain
2.75 x 6 x 6"
IK18



Sculptural vessel form #38

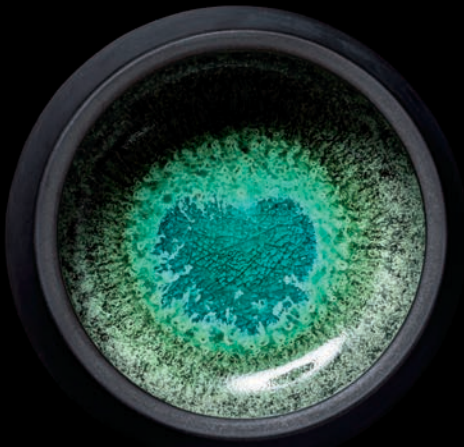
Deep blue crackle glaze
Porcelain
.75 x 5 x 5"
IK17

Sculptural vessel form #26

Satin bronze glaze
Porcelain
.75 x 3.5 x 3.5"
IK15

Sculptural vessel form #18

Clear crackle glaze
Porcelain
.75 x 3.5 x 3.5"
IK16

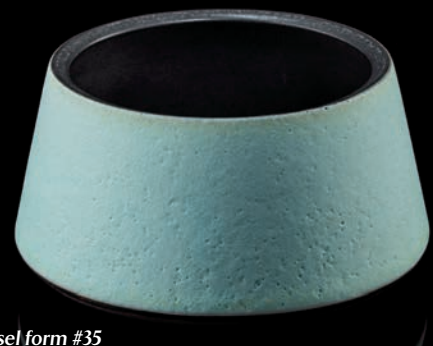


Sculptural vessel form #41

Lichen green crackle glaze
Black porcelain
2.25 x 4.75 x 4.75"
IK35

Sculptural vessel form #51

Satin-matte crystal glaze
Porcelain
1 x 4.75 x 4.75"
IK40



Sculptural vessel form #41

Amber crackle glaze
Porcelain
1 x 4.75 x 4.75"
IK34

Sculptural vessel form #35

Iceberg blue satin-matte glaze
Black porcelain
2.5 x 4.75 x 4.75"
IK31



IPEK KOTAN

Ipek Kotan's work stems from a visceral need to create with her hands using natural materials, and a love of the ubiquitous vessel form, still essential 30,000 years after its invention. She sees the vessel as the embodiment of timelessness, endurance, and the universality of the human experience. Generosity, openness, sharing, and offering are the core of its DNA, weaving it tightly into the better parts of the story of humankind. Kotan is interested in what the vessel symbolizes historically and metaphysically rather than its potential as a functional object. She uses it as a canvas and frame in which to explore sculptural, modern, and minimalist expressions.

Kotan was born in Istanbul, Turkey in 1977 and studied media arts with an emphasis on photography at Emerson College in Boston. She attended Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in Providence and completed her foundation studies in drawing, painting, ceramics, and metal

smithing. In 2010, she received her master's in ceramics from Staffordshire University in Stoke-on-Trent, England.

Kotan's work is represented in over 250 private and public collections and museums worldwide, including: the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Netherlands); Staatliche Kunstsammlungen (Dresden); and Museen der Stadt Landshut (Germany). She has done commissions for Cartier, Barneys New York, Christian Liaigre, and the former first lady of Turkey, among many others. She is the only artist to complete a year-long residency at the European Ceramic Work Centre, also known as *sundaymorning@ekwc*.

She has been featured in art publications *Ceramic Review*, *New Ceramics*, *Art Aurea*, *Klei*, and popular magazines such as *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Maison Française* and *Elle Decor*. She has lived in Turkey, the United States, Indonesia, England, Austria, and Switzerland and currently resides in Leiden, the Netherlands.

PUCKER

ESTABLISHED 1967 BOSTON

GALLERY

PUCKER GALLERY

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GALLERY HOURS:

Monday through Saturday
10:00 AM TO 5:30 PM

Sunday
1:00 to 5:00 PM

We are open to all and taking the necessary precautions for visitor and staff safety. We welcome appointments to maximize visitor experience.

Pucker Gallery is a member of the Boston Art Dealers Association and the New England Appraisers Association.

CREDITS:

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to view current and past
exhibition catalogues and
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the Week email list.

COVER:

Sculptural vessel form #14

Turquoise crackle glaze with speckles
Porcelain
4.75 x 10 x 10"
IK12

Sculptural vessel form #2

Shimmering blue glaze
Porcelain
2.25 x 7.5 x 7.5"
IK11

Sculptural vessel form #20

Iceberg blue satin-matte glaze
Porcelain
2 x 6.5 x 6.5"
IK19

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT | Vessels by Ipek Kotan

Dates | 21 January through 5 March 2023

Public Opening Reception | Saturday 21 January 2023 | 3PM to 6PM

The artist will be in attendance.

Please visit www.puckergallery.com for a list of virtual gatherings and events accompanying *In Search of the Perfect*.

