

Contemporary Ceramics

Changing the World with a Flower Vase –
4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, Albisola
&

Helvètes vulcains –
A Selection of Pieces from the mudac Ceramics Collection,
enriched by several recent works



Alberto Garutti

Che cosa succede nelle stanze quando gli uomini se ne vanno?, 2009
Earthenware, enamel and zinc silicate

Courtesy Attese Edizioni. Photo ©: Fulvio Rosso

Press conference at the mudac Tuesday July 5, 10am

Exhibition from July 6 thru September 25, 2011

Opening reception Tuesday July 5 from 6 to 9pm, with the artists present

mudac

MUSÉE DE DESIGN
ET D'ARTS APPLIQUÉS
CONTEMPORAINS

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4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, Albisola
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A Selection of Pieces from the mudac Ceramics Collection, enriched by several recent works

The mudac is devoting its entire temporary exhibition space to a two-part display of contemporary ceramics. One part (second floor) welcomes the Albisola (Italy) 4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, built around the theme of flower vases; the other part (ground floor and one second-floor gallery) features a selection of pieces from mudac's own Ceramics Collection, highlighting contemporary Swiss creation and including several recent works.

The international artists and designers invited to Albisola, renowned since the Renaissance as a major handcrafted ceramics center, have come up with audacious vases that both sustain and subvert our daily habits.

For this show, the Swiss artists and ceramicists have embarked on experimental research linking work with clay to issues raised by contemporary culture concerning the body, and the representation of our surroundings and the forces of nature.

Changing the World with a Flower Vase - **4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, Albisola**

The mudac takes pleasure in welcoming the Albisola 4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, built around the theme of “Changing the World with a Flower Vase.” For this edition of the Biennial, over 25 artists and designers — including Andrea Branzi, Alessandro Mendini, and Michelangelo Pistoletto, as well as Alexis Georgacopoulos, Florence Doléac and Adrien Rovero — accepted exhibition curator Roberto Costantino's invitation to dream up and develop original and surprising vases. Stemming from the renowned ceramics center of Albisola, along the Ligurian coastal region, many of the pieces entail truly remarkable technical feats. The flower vase theme lends itself to a wide range of applications, and offers much leeway for expressivity in such a supposedly commonplace object. These works, as refreshingly innovative as they can be radical, attest to their creators' renewed interest in this ancient medium.

A catalogue in four languages (French, Italian, English and Spanish) accompanies the *Changing the World with a Flower Vase* exhibition.

Annex 1: Curator Roberto Costantino's full presentation text.



Andrea Branzi
Cocci, 2009
Ceramic, enamel, silkscreen



Florence Doléac
Lolo 2, 2008-2009
Ceramic, enamel



Alessandro Mendini
Tre sfere 2 – bronzo, 2006-2009
Ceramic, enamel, bronze



Adrien Rovero
Borderline, 2008-2009
Ceramic, enamel, steel



Alexis Georgacopoulos
Duetto 2, 2008-2009
Ceramic, enamel



Michelangelo Pistoletto
Vaso Specchio del Terzo Paradiso (1), 2009
61 pièces
Ceramic, enamel, platinum

Helvètes vulcains –

A selection of pieces from the mudac Ceramics Collection, enriched by several recent creations

In spotlighting Swiss creations, mudac takes pleasure in presenting a selection of its ceramic holdings, now including recent works by Caroline Andrin, Arnold Annen, Philippe Barde, Frank Baumgartner, Annick Berclaz, Margareta Daepf, Magdalena Gerber, Patricia Glave and Sophie Hanagarth, Sylvie Godel, Laure Gonthier, Christian Gonzenbach, Jacques Kaufmann, Setsuko Nagasawa, Mai-Thu Perret, Michèle Rochat, François Ruegg and Hans Stofer.

Contemporary production attests to the link that the artists have forged with the history of ceramics, while at the same time projecting the medium into today's cultural context. For many of the artists, ceramics is tied to the landscape. That is to say, certain earthenware pieces possess organic features that bring nature to mind: baked earth scoria or glazed porcelains. Other creators vary the images decorating everyday dishware, scratching or shaping found objects, or even printing cards or cityscapes onto them. This trip to the heart of working with clay fully immerses visitors in the mudac collections, and affords them a close-up view of the most recent creations in the realm of Swiss ceramic artistry.

The show's title, *Helvètes vulcains*, attempts a bold hypothesis: What if Swiss creators, far from the Mediterranean Sea and the Sicilian volcanoes, created kilns in their workshops in the midst of the Alps to fire clay? Considered part and parcel of the fire arts, the medium of ceramics bears witness to the strength of the extreme temperatures applied to solidify its creations. *Changing the world with a flower vase* (4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, Albisola) represents a "meta narration" on the theme of volcanoes, with a playful passing reference to the great Latin brothers of yore. Beyond the Alps lies Vulcano, the Sicilian island of Vulcain, god of fire, from whence stem the names of the other mountains spewing forth their lava the world over. Deprived of volcanoes, it is as if the Swiss artists use their workshop kilns like so many craters, burning the clay into black scoria, into snowy porcelains. Their handling of the earthy material in some ways resembles work in the vein of landscaping, topography and representations of the body and nature. This part of the show presenting the mudac Collection also refers to the Geneva (Switzerland) writer Charles-Albert Cingria and his *Florides Helvètes*, a narration of the author's travels across Switzerland as if he were a foreign ethnologist. Moreover, the reference to antiquity also serves as a reminder of all that contemporary ceramics owes to its ancestral links. To have the *Homo Helveticus* reappear on the scene is a humorous play on the old-fashioned issues of national identities, in an era where cosmopolitan blending is all the rage.

Text by Denis Pernet, *ad interim* curator and organizer of *Helvètes vulcains*

A brochure with texts by Denis Pernet is available about *Helvètes vulcains*.

Magdalena Gerber
Tellerstories (2001-2005)
ceramic dish, ceramic printing





Philippe Barde
PB/PB, 2011
Ceramic, enamel



Christian Gonzenbach
Elucreh Esenraf, 2010
Ceramic, bronze enamel

Annick Berdaz
Untitled, 1998
Porcelain , paperclay



Laure Gonthier
Black Hiatus, 2008-2009
Black sandstone



Setsuko Nagasawa
Vase, 2007
Porcelain



Michèle Rochat
Le Goût du Jour, 2007
sandblasted ceramic



Jacques Kaufmann
Membranes I (de la série *Entre rien et quelque chose*), 2007
black clay, scumble-glazed porcelain



Christian Gonzenbach
You are here, 2007
Ceramic, enamel, iridescent sheen



Mai-Thu Perret
Octopus, 2011
Ceramic, enamel



Practical information :

Press conference	tuesday 5 July at 10am, over coffee and croissants, with several artists.
Opening	tuesday 5 July from 6pm onwards, with several artists.
Catalogue	A catalogue in four languages (French, Italian, English and Spanish) covers the exhibition <i>Change the world with a vase of flowers</i> with texts by Roberto Costantino, Chantal Prod'Hom, Andrea Branzi, Giacinto di Pietrantonio, Beppe Finessi, François Burkhardt, Alessandro Biamonti (<i>IV Biennale di Ceramica nell'Arte Contemporanea</i> , Corraini Edizioni, Mantova, 2009, 143 pages, ill. couleur). Price : CHF 45.-.
Publication	A brochure about <i>Helvètes Vulcains</i> is available, with texts by Denis Pernet (<i>Céramique contemporaine - Helvètes Vulcains</i> , édition mudac, Lausanne, 2011, 40 pages, 18 ill. couleur). Price : CHF 10.-
Guided tours	tuesday 26 July at 12.15 noon, in French tuesday 30 August at 12.15 noon, in English saturday 3 September at 11.00 am, in French
Guided tour for teachers	Wednesday 24 August at 1.30 pm
Workshops	Workshops about contemporary ceramics Wednesday 31 August, 2 to 4 pm Sunday 4 September, 11am to 1pm Wednesday 7 September, 2 to 4 pm Wednesday 14 September, 9am to 11am.
Dates	6 July to 25 September 2011
Opening hours	Tu-su: 11am-6pm Closed on Mondays, except in July and August: 11am-6pm Open on 1st August : 11am-6pm
Illustrations	A CD-rom with images of the show can be obtained on request. Images can also be downloaded from our website, www.mudac.ch . Choose the option « press ». Login : presse2011 ; password : images2011
Press contacts	Claire Favre Maxwell or Susanne Hilpert Stuber, curators, mudac Denis Pernet, ad interim curator Phone 0041 21 315 25 30 e-mail: denis.pernet@lausanne.ch claire.favre-maxwell@lausanne.ch susanne.hilpert-stuber@lausanne.ch
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Concept and realisation

Roberto Costantino (*Changer le monde avec un vase à fleurs* - IV^{ème} Biennale de céramique dans l'art contemporain d'Albisola)

Chantal Prod'Hom, director

Susanne Hilpert Stuber, curator, mudac

Claire Favre Maxwell, curator, mudac

Denis Pernet, ad interim curator, mudac (*Helvètes vulcains*)

Sponsors



Changing the world with a vase of flowers

Traveling exhibition

4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art

6 July – 25 September 2011

Artists and designers

Simone Berti, Jurgen Bey, Alessandro Biamonti, Andrea Branzi, Linde Burkhardt, Fernando e Humberto Campana, Lorenzo Damiani, Paolo Deganello, Florence Doléac, Marco Ferreri, Alberto Garutti, Alexis Georgacopoulos, Marti Guixé, Pekka Harni, Corrado Levi, Morgan Maggiolini, Hugo Meert, Alessandro Mendini, Donata Paruccini, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Adrien Rovero, Denis Santachiara, Paolo Ulian, Vedovamazzei, Alberto Viola, Luca Vitone

General and artistic direction

Roberto Costantino

Consultants for contemporary art and design

Alessandro Biamonti, François Burkhardt, Giacinto Di Pietrantonio, Beppe Finessi, Francesca Pasini, Chantal Prod'Hom

The traveling exhibition of the 4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art comes to Fondazione Pier Luigi e Natalina Remotti of Camogli (in 2011 it will visit mudac Lausanne) with a collection of pots and vases produced by the design and prototyping workshop of Attese Edizioni, starting from the territory with an ancient tradition of ceramics, Albisola in Liguria (Italy), in collaboration with internationally acclaimed artists and designers.

Albisola is a town with an age-old tradition of pottery, known as a small European capital of ceramics thanks to the historic hospitality and fertile cooperation offered to artists who over the course of the 20th century have made the place famous all over the world, including Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Nicolaj Diulgheroff, Bruno Munari, Arturo Martini, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Guy Debord, Asger Jorn, Pinot Gallizio and Wifredo Lam.

The title of this traveling exhibition of the 4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, *Changing the world with a vase of flowers*, acts as a guideline and opens up many creative possibilities, emphasizing “a destiny of art and design among the small things and great transformations that can also be caused by the beating wings of a butterfly”, as Roberto Costantino, artistic director of the event, writes in the catalogue.

The exceptional relationship between ceramics and the art avant-gardes of the 20th century is a part of the local cultural heritage, developed today by the design and prototyping workshop of the Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, enhancing the territory with the immaterial assets of design, contemporary art and digital crafts, through the combination of the traditional skills of craft workshops and the most advanced techniques of high-tech production.

The internationally renowned artists and designers invited to participate have reacted in an innovative, radical way, responding to the appeal with personal, original, technically ingenious interpretations that shift and subvert the meaning of the vase.

All the artists and designers involved have rethought the identity of the object and its potential artistic, conceptual and symbolic value, proposing unusual sculptural constructions that redefine and renew our relationship with its use, the very architecture of the vase and its relationship with space.

Florence Doléac, for example, with the projects *XLS* and *Lolo*, shifts vases from the usual horizontal plane of tables to the vertical walls of the space that contains them. **Adrien Rovero** also reflects on the relationship between vases and their usual context of display, and with subtle humor designs the vase *Borderline*, with a clamp to position it anywhere, starting with the edges of tables. **Andrea Branzi**, on the other hand, with his *Cocci*, manipulates historical references, combining Greek morphological models in a disorienting way with imagery from the avant-gardes of the 20th century. **Fernando and Humberto Campana**, with the *Tile Vase*, appropriate the tradition of the ready-made through the recycling of simple tiles that are modified and joined with wicker to create

unusual forms for vases. **Alessandro Mendini**, with the vases *Tre sfere*, made in precious materials like gold, bronze and black lustre, evokes soap bubbles that intersect and stand out in space like abnormal, fragile presences. **Linde Burkhardt** in *Tre per due* divides her vases into two halves – each part is like “the double” of the other – to generate free compositions in space, arranged by the user in temporary, changing compositions. **Alberto Garutti** urges the viewer to ask “*What happens in rooms when the people have left?*” and decorates the Giara, Idria and Tulipaniera of the age-old pottery tradition of Albisola with majolica and zinc silicate – the phosphorescent white color can be seen only in the dark, when the museums are closed – to update these vases, like ghosts of the past. **Martí Guixé** treats the surface with the combinatory and innovative practice of compositional elements already successfully applied in his food design, using the outer walls of his *Surfvase* as surfaces to decorate with the flowers that climb between the handles and the hemp cords that wrap them. Simone Berti, with his spectacular monuments to vases of flowers, **Luca Vitone**, in *Eppur si muove*, ponders minority cultures that are reluctant to absorb dominant models, and recovers the identity symbol of Rom communities – the wagon wheel – which is transfigured into a vase, undulated like a flag with the colors of the 19th-century anarchist movement. **Michelangelo Pistoletto** promotes the collective design of *Mirror-vases of the Third Paradise* – a multitude of vases that reflect in each other, losing their contours and taking on new, infinite forms that celebrate the migration of identities and the proliferation of differences. **Paolo Ulian** gives form to the *Vaso Rosae* by rolling up sheets of terracotta, miniaturizing the monumental minimalist sculptural tradition in a vase in the form of a rose, while **Vedovamazzei**, in *Reset*, set the vase back to zero, perforating it in two points, on its diagonal axis, to then pierce it with a flower, like an arrow through a heart.

The prototypes shown in the traveling exhibition of the 4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, *Changing the world with a vase of flowers*, are produced by Attese Edizioni in signed and numbered limited editions.

The travelling exhibition of the 4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art will be hosted by the mudac in Lausanne from 6th July to 25th September, after having been presented at the Italian Cultural Institute of Madrid-Italian Embassy in Spain and at the Pier Luigi and Natalina Remotti Foundation in the city of Camogli (Genoa – Italy).

Changing the world with a vase of flowers

Traveling exhibition

4th Biennial of Ceramics in Contemporary Art

Produced by

Attese Edizioni, Savona -Italy

Partners

mudac-Museum of Contemporary Design and Crafts of Lausanne; Italian Cultural Institute of Madrid; Fondazione Pier Luigi e Natalina Remotti-City of Camogli; Fondazione De Mari-Cassa di Risparmio di Savona; Unione Industriali della Provincia di Savona; Cassa di Risparmio di Savona; Cittadellarte - Fondazione Michelangelo Pistoletto, Biella;

Catalogue

Corraini Edizioni. Texts by: Alessandro Biamonti, Andrea Branzi, François Burkhardt, Roberto Costantino, Giuseppe Di Lella, Giacinto Di Pietrantonio, Beppe Finessi, Corrado Levi, Francesca Pasini, Luciano Pasquale, Chantal Prod'Hom