
INTERLOCUTOR

HINRICH KRÖGER

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Hinrich Kröger's ornately styled vases, plates, teacups and bowls are reminiscent of classical pottery forms, but with a distinctly punk esthetic. Decorated with images ranging from nude figures to pug dogs, these ceramic pieces connect the homoerotic legacy of Greco-Roman art to modern day fetish culture. A professional potter from an artistic family, Kröger thinks of himself as a craftsman first, but he has drawn from a wide array of modern cultural influences to develop the decidedly transgressive body of work he displays in his Berlin atelier.

Kröger currently has several pieces up at New York's C24 Gallery for their group show "Earthen Delights," running through July 1, 2021.



"Moulin Rouge Tea Service," 2008, Ceramic, faience, and gold, Teapot Dimensions: 6 x 11.25 x 7.5 in. (15.2 x 28.6 x 19.1 cm) Cup and Saucer Dimensions: 3.25 x 8.75 x 8.75 in. (8.3 x 22.2 x 22.2 cm)

You are part of a new group exhibition at New York's C24 Gallery called "Earthen Delights." C24 describes it as having an "offbeat blend of sensuality, humor and cultural provocation." How does your work fit in with that theme?

Oh, what can I say? I think, hopefully, that my pieces will catch the eye of any viewer of the works! The best thing to do is to ask the curator, David C. Terry, who chose the three of us and brought us together for this exhibition! Unfortunately, because of COVID, I'm stuck in Berlin and can't be there to give you my personal impressions of the site.

In "Earthen Delights" you show classic vases, plates, tea cups and bowls. However, upon closer inspection, they are intricately designed with bold, provocative designs. The "Moulin Rouge Tea Service," for example, features a traditional tea service with modern, dramatic art. What are you trying to convey with this contrast? Or do you see these elements as more complementary?

Actually, I'm not trying to convey anything — the work is about the object itself! I have been trained in the craft of pottery, and I've always painted. Later, I also studied painting at an art school. Since I love the craft but also have the urge to paint and draw, over time, the two things have merged. Pottery just for pottery's sake would be too boring for me. Although I do love the simple craft of pottery when it's made by other people, perhaps it's the narrator in me, but when I create pottery, it's for the purpose of later painting it with my stories. What you see in my work now has evolved to this point, over time. In the same way that a painter uses a plain wall, I use my pottery as a canvas, while paying attention to its form.



"The Pug Vase," 2008, Ceramic and faience, 26.25 x 8.5 x 8.5 in. (66.7 x 21.6 x 21.6 cm)

In your works there is a recurring theme of animals, especially dogs ("Fashionable Sighthounds," "Poodle in Love" and "The Golden Pug Set"). In "Earthen Delights," you show "The Pug Vase" and "Set With Pugs." To what extent are dogs a source of inspiration for you?

It's not so much the dogs themselves, but the way they stimulate my imagination! For example, I find pugs very funny and greyhounds very elegant. I experience the same kind of inspiration with women, men and other birds.

You have been producing and exhibiting since 1995. Can you describe the evolution of your work — particularly your preferred medium and the evolution of your style — since then? How do you think you have changed, both as an artist and as a person, since your first exhibition?

I hope that I have changed and evolved in many ways and that what I do has also evolved! But I am not as interested in myself as I am in the world around me, so it is difficult to answer.



"The Golden Cock Vase," 2009, Ceramic, faience, and gold, 27 x 9.5 x 9.5 in. (68.6 x 24.1 x 24.1 cm)

C24 Gallery describes your work as a connection between "the homoerotic heritage of Greco-Roman art and modern fetish culture." Are these themes that you find resonate in your own life? In what ways might they also serve as commentary on something larger?

Homoerotic, heteroerotic, what's the difference — eroticism is eroticism! A flower blossom can be erotic, even appear vulgar, or radiate a whole symphony of Johann Sebastian Bach or an etude of Erik Satie or a future novel, if it blossoms in the deep sea with forms and colors never seen before. The beauty of the ancient world (since you refer to antiquity), is that at least within the ruling class, there was no big difference made between homo and hetero and trans, according to the literature I have read. I do not like to be classified! And I have just as many plump, beautiful women on my dishes as sailors or thick, hairy men.



"The Golden Love Cup" (detail), 2009, Ceramic and faience, 2.5 x 6.75 x 5.75 in. (6.4 x 17.1 x 14.6 cm)

You have said that you see yourself first and foremost as a craftsman. How do you think that contributes to your work, which often transcends generations of art through its modern designs on classic ceramics?

Quite simply put, no matter what you make, skill is the foundation upon which you stand. The more craftsmanship is available to you, the more freedom you have to create without thinking about the quality, to express yourself, to let it flow! It is merely available to you and increases your horizons as a matter of course! And, fortunately, it always pushes you to the limits, which, if you are a worker, will expand!

You come from a family of artists. How do you think your family's art might have ultimately influenced your own work?

An interesting question, but also very intimate! Parents are parents and before that there were parents whose children they were and so on...I believe I was influenced by everything...books on the shelves...Sunday mornings when we came together for the only common breakfast of the week and listened without words to recordings of Vivaldi, Bach, Schostakowitsch, Beethoven, Mozart, Strawinsky and Chopin, and each of us still breathed out the smell of the slept night...

<https://interlocutorinterviews.com/new-blog/2021/5/4/hinrich-kroger-interview-c24-earthen-delights>