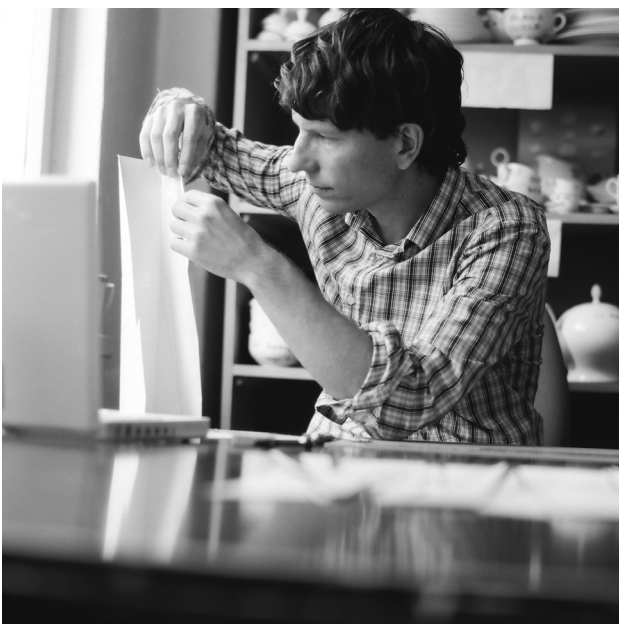


THE PRINCE OF PORCELAIN

A ceramic designer and producer, Bartek Mejor is at the forefront of a new wave of designers who are getting Poland noticed...



WI: How do you define your work, and how has it progressed and developed?

BM: My work is a combination of traditional hand craft and 3D modelling and manufacturing. I started by learning to make shapes on a potter's wheel and built my first ceramic kiln from a discarded oil drum. After taking part in an in-

ternational ceramic festival in Wales I started to look for apprenticeships with established potters and worked for one year in the studio of the London artist Daniel Reynolds. This was the beginning of my fascination with porcelain – this ancient, white, translucent material.

What inspires you at this current moment?

Right now, I want to concentrate more on the tactile qualities of ceramics and develop objects that look soft and organic but also have a certain manmade, 'digital' aesthetic. I am continuously inspired by 3D modelling programs and the endless possibilities of manipulating forms within these – they free your imagination by allowing you to control shapes in ways that would be difficult to achieve without computers. Another source of inspiration is, of course, nature. I like to pick up a detail observed in nature and then use it to create new work. For example, the idea for the *Surf* centerpiece produced by Vista Alegre came when I was sitting on a beach and looking at patterns left by waves on the wet sand. After taking some photos, I traced the lines in a 3D modelling program to create the irregular shape of the centerpiece.

Where is the line between form and function?

As a designer/maker with a strong background in craft, I operate within applied arts and see a strong relationship between form and function. Every form I create needs to be useful in some way: it could be a lamp, a plate or something else. Having said that, I am not focused entirely on the functionality of the object. It has to be functional, but at the same time it needs to inspire with its form – it needs to be desirable.

How do you hope international audiences view contemporary Polish design?

I hope people are getting gradually accustomed to seeing good design and beautiful objects made in this part of the world. Nowadays, everything is interconnected and I don't think you can identify a specific style or character to 'Made in Poland' design. Many design-

ers, including myself, were educated abroad and work in other countries as often as they work here.

What constitutes 'good design'?

When it comes to industrial design and consumer goods I agree with the influential designer Dieter Rams, who said: "less but better." This philosophy guided Jonathan Ive and his team when they designed Apple products. Good design means being true to the material and showcasing its characteristics and potential beauty, be it stone, wood, metal or plastic.

The color white dominates your collections...

This austere color choice is dictated by the material. I want to showcase the qualities of porcelain and prefer not to cover it with shiny glazes. Another reason is the sculptural nature of the pieces: the whiteness of porcelain helps to bring out the texture in contact with light. This is particularly visible in geometrical collections such as *Matrix* and *Quartz*. Nevertheless, I don't rule out using color and have recently designed pieces for clients that feature decorative patterns in several different hues.

What's next for Bartek Mejor?

I'm looking forward to a second year of working with students at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, where I teach a course in ceramic design. Also, a line of objects is currently taking shape that will form the core of a new design collection/brand I plan to launch next year. Stay tuned.

Try before you buy! Bartek Mejor's Matrix tableware is used at the Michelin starred Atelier Amaro. Purchase your own piece of Bartek from the Długa Showroom (ul. Długa 8/14) or online at decosalon.pl. For more info, see: bartekmejor.com

