

# MECHTHILD POSCHLOD

## *Thrown and Handbuilt*

ANTJE SOLÉAU

Some time ago, an envelope from Kassel landed on my desk. Besides a friendly letter, it contained a handful of photos. They showed classic vessel ceramics at its best. Sturdy vessels, thrown on the wheel, coated with choice glazes. In the attached letter, Mechthild Poschlod, a ceramist from Kassel who was until then unknown to me, invited me to visit her studio. I accepted the invitation and last autumn I went to the Atelier an der Losse ("Studio on the River Losse") and was overwhelmed by the quality of her work both in terms of craftsmanship and design.

Mechthild Poschlod was born in Gelsenkirchen in 1958. After working in various studios, she did a ceramics apprenticeship in Osnabrück, and after a period as a journeyman studied fine art ceramics from 1982 – 1987 at the Kunsthochschule Kassel under Prof. Ralf Busz and his close associate Young Jae Lee.

Deep-sided bowl, h 10.5 cm - ø 17.5 cm

photos - Martin Alig, Kassel





Since the mid-1990s, she has been living in Kassel again and since 2006 she has been sharing a studio with the painter, Fritz Th. Röbbing. Like Guido Sengle, Mechthild Poschlod is a typical representative of what is known as the Kassel School, which was founded in the 1960s by Walter Popp at the Kunsthochschule in Kassel and was later continued by Ralf Busz. Young Jae Lee, from Korea, brought Far Eastern influence into this classic school, complementing it perfectly. Besides setting up and working in her own studio, Mechthild Poschlod also trained as a psychoanalytical art therapist, working in this profession for many years in the clinical field.

Mechthild Poschlod's vessels are thrown on the wheel. Parallel to this she also makes slab-built sculptural pieces. The thrown pieces are coated with a layer of thick glaze, the hand-built ones are given a special treatment. They are all made from Westerwald stoneware, which often comes from various clay-pits and is always mixed by Mechthild by hand, without a pugmill. All of her work – irrespective of whether thrown or slab-built – is characterised by a consistent severity of form and precise structure. Thus the biconical form appears repeatedly as a theme of her drinking vessels as well as her vase sculptures.

The join between the two cones is sometimes especially emphasised, enlivening the surface. It is Mechthild's aim to explore a sense of balance, lending the objects an inherent coherence. The glazes range from matt white to glossy black-brown. In addition, there are often delicately coloured glazes with a fine crackle pattern or with pyrite inclusions – mainly in the grey-green range, but there is sometimes a delicate pink or a strong yellow. They are very similar to each other but always give a different appearance to the individual forms. A theme with variations ...

Poschlod's works are "quiet, calm, dignified and yet always perceptibly defined by a grain of Kassel", as Walter Lokau said in his speech in Hünfelden last September. Her flawlessly thrown, usually small, thick-walled, deep bowls, plates or grooved vases are always well balanced. They are works that need you to examine closely. They are marketed at exhibitions



Deep-sided bowl, h 9.5 cm - ø 10 cm

Cylindrical vase, h 11 cm - ø 12.5 cm







and increasingly at special markets. These focused vessels are juxtaposed with her severe slab-built box or cube shapes. As far back as her graduation piece at art school, she explored cubic bodies built by hand. With them, she examined how the individual focal point could be varied, placing it at the top or the bottom, with vertical or horizontal incisions, top to bottom, side to side or diagonal. They give structure to the hollow forms and make them recognisable as such. The slight curvature of the planes is barely perceptible to the eye but can be sensed with the finger tips. The pieces are sprayed with a light-coloured engobe and

left -  
Spindle-shaped vase  
h 17 - ø 7.5 cm

below -  
Cylindrical vase, smoked  
h 8 cm - ø 14 cm





then burnished with an agate tool, often several times. After the final firing, they are then additionally sanded so that they give the sensation to the hand of velvety, smooth, warm marble. The time consuming process of burnishing is a meditative task for Poschlod, during which she new ideas develops almost as a matter of course.

Mechthild Poschlod's works can be found in numerous private collections as well as in the National Museums in Berlin, at the Landesmuseum Württemberg in Stuttgart, the KERAMION Foundation in Frechen and the applied arts museum, Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt am Main.

#### ANTJE SOLÉAU

*lives in Cologne. She is a freelance journalist for German and international arts and crafts magazines.*



**Mechthild Poschlod**

Biegenweg 2 - 34123 Kassel, Germany, 0049 (0)561 / 282835  
[mail@poschlod-kassel](mailto:mail@poschlod-kassel) | [www.poschlod-kassel.de](http://www.poschlod-kassel.de)

**MECHTHILD POSCHLOD** was born in Gelsenkirchen in 1958. After working in various ceramics studios, she trained as a ceramist, subsequently working in a studio in Osnabrück as a journeyman ceramist. After that, she studied fine art from 1982 – 1987 at the Kunsthochschule Kassel, specialising in ceramics, under Prof. Ralf Busz and Young Jae Lee. Besides setting up and working in her own studio, she trained as a psychoanalytical art therapist, working for several years in the clinical field. Together with painter, Fritz Th. Röbbing, in 2006 she founded the artists' community, Atelier an der Losse in Kassel, where she has subsequently worked freelance, which involves participation in exhibitions and markets. Work by Mechthild Poschlod can be found in many private collections as well as in leading museums in Berlin, Stuttgart, Frechen and Frankfurt am Main.



centre  
 untitled  
 h 22 cm - w 23

right -  
 untitled  
 L 48.5 cm - h 10 cm

