

HOSTLER BURROWS

Kristina Riska is a ceramic artist recognized for her unorthodox large-scale pottery and artworks inspired by nature and the properties of light and shadow. Though many of her objects resist traditional practice and can solely be considered objets d'art, she has also managed to incorporate her unconventional designs into objects for every-day use.

Riska first endeavored upon ceramic artistry as a student at the Department of Ceramic Art at the University of Art and Design, Finland in the 1980s. Defying the typical output of the student body, namely articles of pottery made for daily use, Riska instead took a vigorous, physical approach to her work. She would, as she does now, begin to conceptualize her works on paper, her designs ultimately coming to fruition spontaneously as she worked. She prioritized artistry above functionality and despite the demanding and time-consuming process she engaged in, her impressive yield was that of unique ceramic works that transcended the boundaries of art and design.

In 1986, Riska exhibited at the Gallery Bronda, which could be considered her first critical success. On display were a large collection of pots, so large in fact, that the installation proved quite difficult. The State Art Collection purchased two pieces from the show, validating the innovation and unconventional beauty of her tremendous pieces.

In 1991 Riska and the architect Kimmo Friman, then her spouse, exhibited jointly at Gallery Kluuvi. At this point in time, Riska had abandoned all the traditional tenets of pot making. Her curvaceous, imbricated, porous forms were recognized with prestigious accolades, including the State's Suomi Prize in 1995 and a silver medal at the International Ceramic Contest in Mino, Japan in 2002.

The scale of Riska's recent work can be said to be one of its most impressive attributes, some of her objects standing at over eight feet tall. They appear fragile, delicate and exhibit a quality of lightness uncharacteristic of something so monumental. Her craftsmanship is especially apparent not only in the delicacy she imbues her grand pieces with, but also in the beauty of her glazes, given the limitations of firing such sizable objects in-oven.

While her work is mostly unconventional, Riska does not entirely abandon practicality within her forms, and has designed many articles intended for daily use. Her work was popularized through her collaboration with Kati Tuominen Niittyta, which is now recognized as the widely popular Koko tableware designed for Arabia, and also her Loru tableware.

Throughout her career Riska has remained true to her creative process. Whether endeavoring upon a giant elliptical sculpture or a serving dish, an elevated aesthetic permeates all of Riska's creations.

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