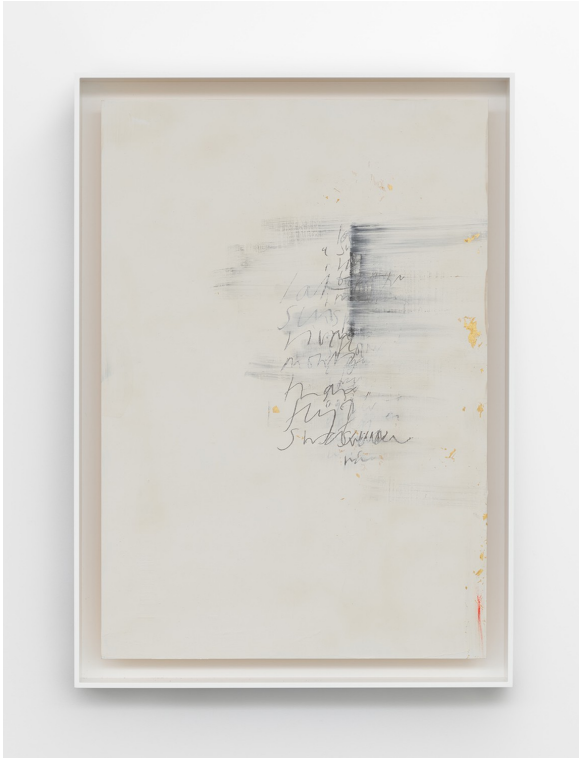


GAGOSIAN



EDMUND DE WAAL

cold mountain clay

Opening reception: Friday, November 20, 6–8pm
November 20, 2020–January 9, 2021
7/F Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong

Edmund de Waal, *Wu-chüeh: two poems*, 2020, kaolin, gold leaf, graphite, compressed charcoal, and oil stick on ash, in aluminum frame, 36 1/4 × 26 × 3 inches (92 × 66 × 7.5 cm) © Edmund de Waal

November 11, 2020

Solitude is exacting. I read [the verses] out, wrote them, effaced them, worked on them, trying to find the amount of white space around a poem so that the words emerge. . . . These works are my way of writing on a cave wall.

—Edmund de Waal

Gagosian is pleased to present *cold mountain clay*, an exhibition of new and recent works by Edmund de Waal.

A potter since childhood and an acclaimed writer, de Waal makes porcelain works that function as repositories of human memory and experience. Drawing equally from Eastern and Western traditions, de Waal's works blend a minimalist visual language with invocations of the written word, positing the act of collection—of objects, texts, materials, and thoughts—as an artistic form.

The exhibition takes its title from the famed *Cold Mountain* poems, a series of verses by the monk Hanshan, who, according to legend, lived as a recluse on a Chinese mountaintop during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE). Composed with diaristic frankness and intensity, the poems address the unavoidable passage of time and trace the introspective state that comes with monastic solitude.

Inspired by Hanshan’s practice of writing on rocks, tree trunks, and cave walls—thereby letting the elements erode his verses—de Waal’s new works are made through a cycle of inscription and effacement. He begins by coating a wood panel in liquid kaolin; while the slip is still wet, he floats flecks of gold leaf and writes lines of Hanshan’s poetry in graphite, oil stick, and charcoal. He then brushes these marks with additional layers of slip, repeating the process multiple times to produce a “fugitive poem,” a palimpsest of text that emulates the haze of memory.

Exhibited with this new series will be a selection of wall-mounted and freestanding works, some of which were included in *elective affinities*, de Waal’s installation at the Frick Collection, New York, in 2019. Made in white or black porcelain, the vessels are arranged alongside elements of gold, alabaster, marble, or steel. Held in space within vitrines, their spatial variations evoke musical scores or poetic stanzas.

De Waal’s installation *library of exile* is on view at the British Museum in London until January 12, 2021. Originally presented at the Ateneo Veneto in 2019 during the 58th Biennale di Venezia, the library—a porcelain-covered pavilion housing more than two thousand books by exiled authors throughout history—traveled to the Japanisches Palais in Dresden, Germany, later the same year.

Edmund de Waal was born in 1964 in Nottingham, England, and lives and works in London. Collections include the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford, England; Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, England; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany; Jewish Museum, Berlin; Art Institute of Chicago; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Exhibitions include *Edmund de Waal at Waddesdon Manor*, Aylesbury, England (2012); *On White: Porcelain Stories from the Fitzwilliam*, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, England (2013); *Atmosphere*, Turner Contemporary, Margate, England (2014); *white: a project by Edmund de Waal*, Royal Academy of Arts, London (2015); *During the Night*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (2016); *white island*, Museu d’Art Contemporani d’Eivissa, Ibiza, Spain (2018); *—one way or other—*, Schindler House, Los Angeles (2018); *elective affinities*, Frick Collection, New York (2019), and *psalm*, Museo Ebraico and Ateneo Veneto, Venice (2019). In 2018, de Waal created his first set design, for *Yugen*, a ballet by choreographer Wayne McGregor, at the Royal Opera House, London.

De Waal is also renowned for his family memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes* (2010), which won the RSL Ondaatje Prize and the Costa Biography Award, among others, and has been translated into over thirty languages. Other titles include a Tate critical study on *Bernard Leach* (1997), *20th Century Ceramics* (2003), *The Pot Book* (2011), and *The White Road* (2015). In 2015, de Waal was awarded the Windham-Campbell Prize for nonfiction by Yale University.

#EdmunddeWaal

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