

# COPENHAGEN CERAMICS

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Press Release:  
Karen Bennicke and Steen Ipsen: Geometrical Evolution  
1 – 24 March 2012.

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## Geometric Interpretations

For its next exhibition Copenhagen Ceramics will present new works by Karen Bennicke and Steen Ipsen, two highly experienced ceramists with a particularly well-developed sense of operating visually within one of the great fields of inspiration for ornamentation – the world of geometry.

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Karen Bennicke and Steen Ipsen have both repeatedly returned to this inexhaustible source of astonishment and fascination, and for their first exhibition together they offer new and surprising visual interpretations of geometric phenomena.

Karen Bennicke has for many years remained a remarkable profile within the context of contemporary ceramics, in Denmark and internationally. First and foremost, she is a real form-person. Her ceramic objects are typically characterized by a great complexity of form; they are spatial visions, often constructions reminiscent of contemporary architecture. Through self-defined systems and an almost intuitive mathematical construction-method, she arrives at surprising, poetic expressions somewhere between exactitude, the illogical and occasionally even the absurd.

Regarding the new works, she explains: ' My theory was, that if I set up a system of geometric planes, where every broken line, each surface and side-length was indicating a shared community - would it then, out all these different figures, be possible to construct a three-dimensional work? Without cheating too much and still being able to preserve the personal expression, the tangible and experimental approach? '.

Light and shadow are always important factors in Karen Bennicke's sculptures. In the new works the choice of material helps to emphasize the multi-faceted surface, that has resulted from her process this time. The unglazed, matt clay surfaces enhance the great variation of light and shadow, bringing to mind the kaleidoscopic universe of crystals; a recurrent theme in her oeuvre, and one she has intensively been working on in recent years.

The precise approach of the textbooks is not defining the relationship with geometry for Steen Ipsen either. He perceives geometry as images and pattern. From the very start of his ceramic career he has had a keen eye for the ornamental potential within the universe of geometric form. Early examples of this are his large porcelain vessels from the 1990ies with strict, repetitively faceted forms, that turn into brightly coloured patterns on the surface. In later works he has thematically explored repetition in the form – or the 'variation of repetition', as was his title for an earlier exhibition.

Over the last five years, he has successfully made a name for himself internationally with ceramic works consisting of joined, simply coloured spherical elements, that are subsequently tied up with coloured strings in a connecting line-pattern, resulting in an abstract and highly spatial, sculptural expression. These works, rooted in the geometric, brings about associations of an erotic nature, as much as they are reminiscent of early modernist sculptural experiments of the Bauhaus, Barbara Hepworth or Henry Moore.

In his new work he focuses on the geometric shapes and the contrasts of surfaces. Light and shadow of in-between-spaces, reflections of the glazes and the rhythmic displacement of the single elements in the sculptures, are being used freely for interpretations of the cubic abstraction and for exploring the possibilities of multiple dimensions. 'What interests me, he says, is precisely the impact obtained through a non- correct rendering of the geometric forms'.

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Both artists are represented in major international museum collections. Karen Bennicke's work, including: the V&A – Museum, London; Designmuseum Danmark: Trapholt Art Museum, DK; The National Museum, Stockholm; Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg and Gifu Museum of Modern Ceramics, Japan. Karen Bennicke has received numerous awards, including the Annie og Otto Johs. Detlefs Award for Ceramics in 2010 and the Inga and Eyvind Kold Christensen Fund in the previous year.

Steen Ipsen's work is in the collections of the V&A Museum, London; Musée Magnelli, Vallauris, France; Museum of Art and Design, Hamburg; Icheon World Ceramic Center, Korea; Designmuseum Denmark; Trapholt Art Museum, DK and the New Carlsberg Foundation, DK. He received the Annie and Otto Johs. Detlefs' Award for Ceramics in 2011.

Artist talk with Karen Bennicke and Steen Ipsen on Saturday 3 March at 2 pm in the gallery.

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More information at [www.copenhagenceramics.com](http://www.copenhagenceramics.com), where press photos and press release can be downloaded.

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Wednesday — Friday: 1 – 6 pm  
Saturday: 12 am – 4 pm