



**THE DESIGNER MAKER** FENELLA ELMS @FenellaElms; fenellaelms.com

WORDS: EMMA LOVE (THE DESIGNER MAKER) PICTURES: BILD FELD AB (HIGH-STREET HIT), DAVID PARKER (THE DESIGNER MAKER)

'I'd always joked that one day I would become a potter. And then ten years ago, for my 40th birthday, my husband bought me a wheel,' recalls Fenella Elms, who previously worked as an occupational therapist. 'Things escalated quickly and one course of evening classes just wasn't enough.' So she did an art foundation at Swindon College, followed a year later by a part-time HNC-level course in ceramics. 'When I was at school, pottery was taught by the English teacher's wife. I enjoyed it, but I couldn't see how I would ever make a career out of it,' she says. 'It's so exciting as an adult to go back into education. I was lucky that I had support from my husband, so I could take time out and not earn for a while.'

As a ceramicist, Elms got off to a flying start. Soon after graduating, she won the Ceramic Review Award for Exceptional, Innovative and Challenging work at the Ceramic Art London

exhibition. Today, her pieces take several forms. She makes wall hangings, or 'flows' - which comprise tiny, individually made discs of clay joined to a sheet of porcelain with slip and then fired to make a single piece - and sculptural 'edges', which are created by cutting sheets of porcelain slip into strips and stitching them to linen. 'The approach I take to porcelain isn't so different from my approach to psychoanalytic practice,' she explains. 'It's all about the subconscious, where things aren't forced or contrived. I do masses of preparation and drawing, then I put it all aside and wait to see what emerges.'

Elms, who works from a converted milking parlour in an outbuilding next to her Wiltshire home, concludes: 'I enjoy looking at the world around me. It's nice realising that all the time I spent staring at the details of plants or ripples in water was for a reason.'

**Don't miss!** 'The Other Art Fair' at London's Ambika P3 gallery. It's different from usual events because not one of the 100 artists exhibiting is represented by a gallery, so you can meet them and even try bartering on price. There will also be talks and workshops, a food market and cocktails by Sipsmith. April 24-27; 35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 (theotherartfair.com).

**HIGH-STREET HIT**

Ikea's limited-edition 'Bråkgig' furniture and homeware collection combines geometric patterns, pale wood and cool candy colours. Our highlight is the mismatched tableware, which will cheer up any tea party at a purse-friendly price.

'Bråkgig' chest of drawers, £65; boxes, £7 for a set of two; bowls, £10 for a set of two; tray, £12; chair, £40, all Ikea (ikea.com)



Baxter

EMOTIONS