

FENELLA ELMS



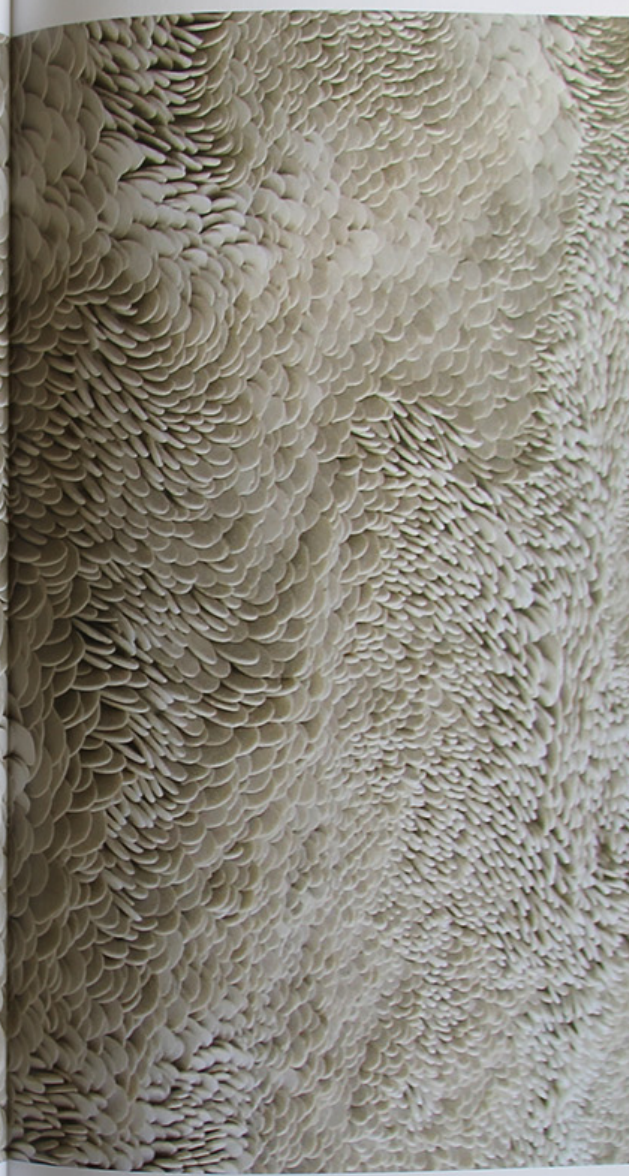
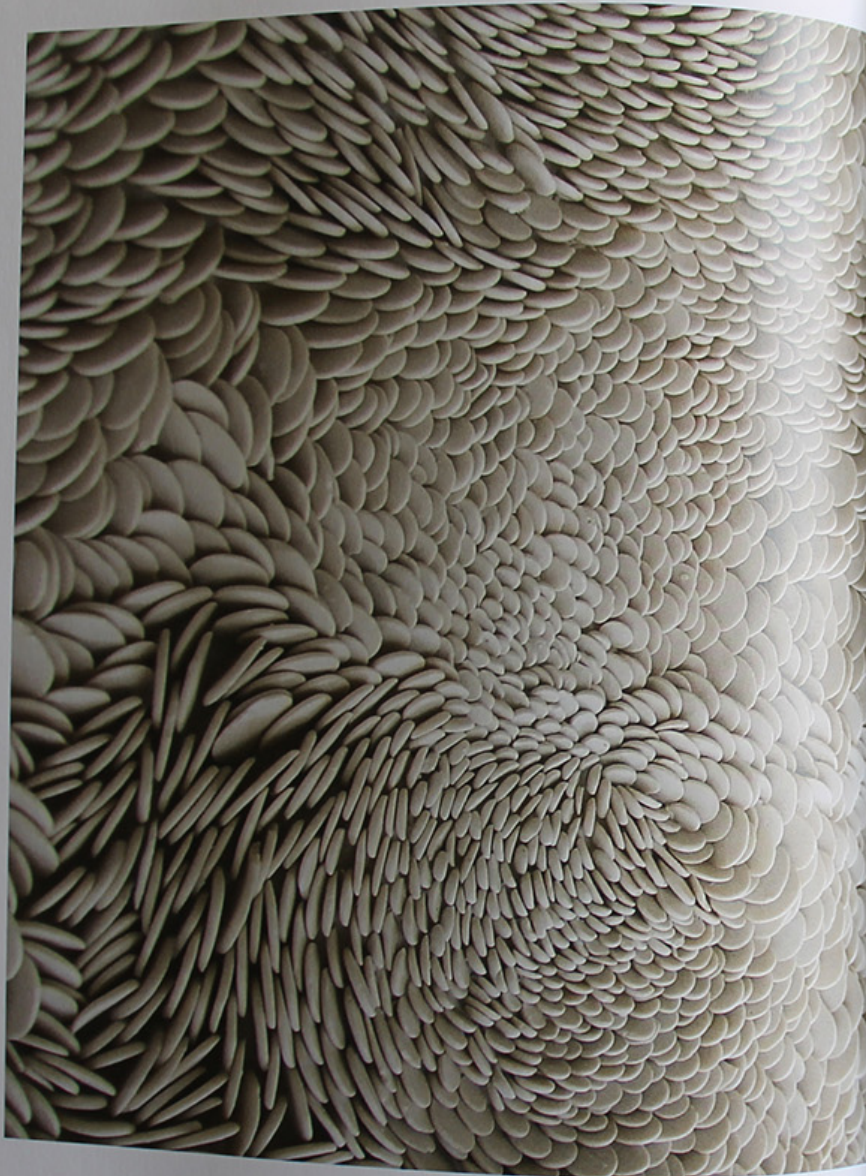
Inspired by the patterns she finds in nature, Fenella Elms' porcelain wall hangings encourage contemplation by both viewer and maker

The location of FENELLA ELMS' studio in the middle of the English countryside has a huge influence on the porcelain wall-mounted and freestanding panels she creates. Each one is made up of many hundreds of beads or strips – laid out in a painstaking process that can take over a week – to resemble a bird's feathers ruffling, the direction of grass on a lawn or a shoal of fish swarming underwater. She is fascinated by patterns found in the countryside.

'I love seeing how the flowers connect. I love looking at how insects build things. We are surrounded by fields with huge flocks of birds coming and going. I can feed on any detail like that – close up details of fishtails and feathers or whatever. I like moving, shifting things,' she says.

Elms slip-casts each porcelain bead (this can take up to a month) and then slowly and methodically attaches them to a sheet of porcelain or, in larger works, a metal casing filled with cement. She finds herself deliberately half-concentrating to make sure the patterns are neither too stylised nor too haphazard.

Elms, who was an occupational therapist and psychoanalytic psychotherapist before becoming a ceramicist, is adamant about the calming visual effects of her pieces and the meditative effect of making them. 'Repetition and rhythm are calming. It's reassuring to know where something is going but then have the surprise when it shifts a little bit,' she says. 'You let yourself be taken.'



Elms produces both wall mounted and freestanding pieces. She took up the craft at an evening class after working for 20 years in mental health care.

PRIME CLAY BODY
Porcelain
PRIME TECHNIQUE
Hand building
PRIME GLAZES
None
PREDOMINANT FORM
Sculpture and fine art