

# HARRIET ELKERTON

Harriet Elkerton would like to envelop you in a handcrafted existence. Her objects, with their unassuming simplicity, are designed for living, for enhancing everyday pleasures. Natural materials, plants and food play a key role in this lifestyle; Harriet uses these elements in her display, on hand-constructed shelves and tables, suggesting how easily these pieces will fit into a domestic environment. It is important to her that people are “getting something real”, that these objects will happily take on any purpose they are put to, and give you enjoyment while you use them.

Harriet’s functional objects are slip-cast porcelain, with unctuous glossy white glazed interiors. They undulate and they ripple and they move, but they are also still quite crisp; there is a clean, modern aspect to them. Each piece is slightly different and this irregularity is intentional – Harriet’s use of paper to create the models establishes an inherent instability in the process. The moisture in the plaster causes the paper to buckle, to stretch, leaving unpredictable shapes in the final mould. She deliberately leaves the evidence of construction visible: the seam lines, the torn pieces of tape. Once the porcelain is cast, the kiln has its way with the material too; the waves encourage deforming and movement in the final form of the object. Harriet sets up these moments of unexpectedness, to get a handmade feel, an individuality, from repetition: “I like having the process translated, so you can see from stage one all the way through. I like that people still see them as paper in the end.” There is a rhythm and cadence to these objects, especially when they are grouped together. Relationships and familial traits become visible - the back and forth of surface and form, of the hand of the maker and the unpredictable nature of materials. And, secretly, there is an underlying structure and order to Harriet’s pieces. Mathematical ratios underpin her choice of sizes, creating harmony within the collection.

Her decorative ware, which Harriet displays nestled amongst the functional pieces, explores the interaction of materials and craft processes, and interrogates the purpose of tools and functional items. She combines found objects, such as shards of rusted iron or abandoned splinters of wood, with purpose-made porcelain additions, skilfully uniting them with cotton, leather or wire, through stitch, wrapping and other craft methods of attachment. The inheritance of these objects is discernible in her functional vessels; there is a language of deliberate skill speaking through her work and a desire to keep visible the hand of the maker.

Words by Melody Vaughan | [melodyvaughan.co.uk](http://melodyvaughan.co.uk)