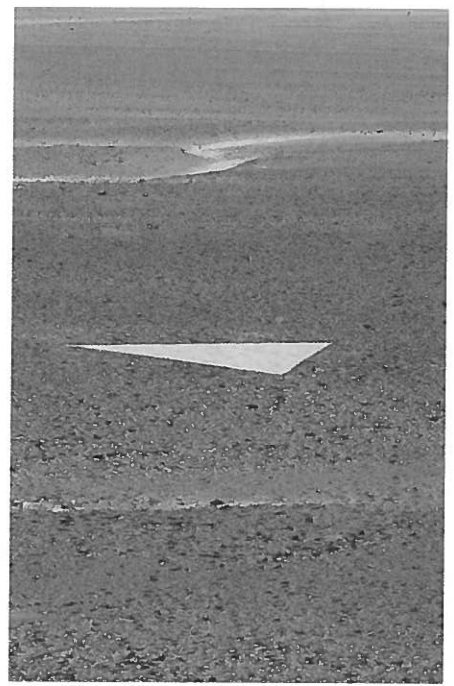


Heinz Günter Mebusch, Düsseldorf. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2013. 5. Edmund de Waal, *Breathturn*, 2013.
6. Julie Brook, *Sand drawing 2*, Hebel Acacus 575 x 600 x 600cm.



Méret Oppenheim Retrospective

MARTIN-GROPIUS-BAU, BERLIN
16 AUGUST - 1 SEPTEMBER

Best known for her fur-covered tea cup, saucer and spoon, Méret Oppenheim's iconic *Object (Le Déjeuner en fourrure)* (1936) was inspired by a café conversation with Picasso, shown in André Breton's first surrealist exhibition, and then acquired by New York's MoMA. Interestingly it's not included in this major retrospective in Berlin, marking 100 years since Oppenheim's birth in the city, and instead highlighting her experimental approach.

Encompassing sculpture, drawing, painting, photography, writing, costume and jewellery, the show unites an overwhelmingly wide oeuvre of works and groups them by themes such as "erotic objects", "dreams" and "metamorphosis". These trace key concerns returned to throughout her 50-year career as opposed to a chronological trajectory. Oppenheim's manipulation of everyday materials to create sensually charged hybrid objects is continued in works such as *Pelzhandschuhe* (1936), a pair of fur-covered female hands with protruding red lacquered nails, and *Eichhörchen (Squirrel)* (1969), a beer mug with a bushy tail in place of its handle.

However, as one of the few female surrealists, it's the works which allude to her sexuality and embrace a more intimate approach which set Oppenheim apart. Drawing sand paintings show fantastical creatures morphing gender, humans morphing into trees, and abstract and esoteric forms, all widening reality through the artist's mining of the unconscious. Oppenheim's reiteration of forms, motifs and ideas across media creates an interconnected but extremely multi-faceted and important body of work which is well worth seeing.

Leela Clarke

Edmund de Waal: Atemwende

GAGOSIAN GALLERY, MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK
12 SEPTEMBER - 19 OCTOBER

Diffidence is a key factor in Edmund de Waal's exhibition *Atemwende* at Gagosian Gallery on Madison Avenue. In the show, de Waal gives his audience a repetitive selection of black and white ceramic vessels in vitrines of the same colours. The ceramics – resembling crude vases all generally of similar sizes – are spaced in a disorderly fashion throughout their shelves. Minimal and monochrome, the artist's ceramic vessels bring to mind a litany of previous artists, writers and composers, all of whom experimented with subtle systems of repetition and hesitant gestures.

The porcelain pieces are delicate and refined, but not without naturally produced flaws that suggest they were thrown together by hand in a traditional manner. More interesting than the formal aspects of the works are the spaces between them; the liminal state between presence and absence is exemplified by these gaps. Further illustrating this contrast are the cavities within the porcelain vessels themselves. Visitors must take note of all that is not visible in works such as de Waal's in order to grasp the artist's full intentions.

The artist stands in a classic position, harking back to Bauhaus, or recent examples of Gerhard Richter's works. But de Waal's practice resists the classification belonging to that of minimal artists. His pieces are confined to their vitrines, eliminating any theatricality that they might otherwise have. Ceramics are having a moment of popularity right now, so they are just timely delicate works. Whatever the case may be, they are lovely to look at, and efficient at provoking the thoughts of "in-betweenness" that de Waal hopes to achieve.

Nickolas Calabrese

Julie Brook: made, unmade

THE WAPPING PROJECT, LONDON
4 SEPTEMBER - 6 OCTOBER

Julie Brook's (b. 1961) latest exhibition showcases two rooms of sensually rich film installations of the landscape sculptures she produced while living in central Libya (2008/2009) and the semi-desert of North West Namibia (2011/2012).

In the first room, an endlessly dark ceiling, four equidistant pillars, a concrete floor and brick walls house six semi-synchronised screens that tell the story of these remote places through the language of the desert. The earth is scooped up with a shovel, it's thrown in the air; tiny particles of mellow yellow sand dance against the deep blue of the sky. The play between light and dark begins as Brook makes incredible sculptures out of the earth. Two Tuareg guides aid her in creating this incredible aesthetic journey through the land, but it's quiet with the sound of work and nature. Meanwhile, the coolness of the concrete floor underfoot in the gallery reminds viewers of the heat in these comparably arid locations.

The second room observes the proximity of the human body with nature. Bare hands touch the rocks, light caresses the naked skin, and a piano piece by composer Howard Skempton surrounds viewers as they stand between the two screens. Aerial views of the sculptures linger on the screens, and Brook's hard manual labour, and the seemingly effortless work of nature over millions of years harmoniously meet in the visual environment she directs. The artist is truly unique and thought-provoking, while the temporality of the sculptures place the visitor in a privileged position, allowing them to revisit the structures in their original setting through the films and photos.

Hande Eagle