

# GAGOSIAN GALLERY

December 15, 2015

January 14–February 18, 2016

Opening reception: Thursday, January 14, 6–8pm

## Edmund de Waal *ten thousand things*

Gagosian Gallery  
456 North Camden Drive, Beverly Hills  
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*For this new body of work, I have made a series of conversations about materials with architectural space. How people walk through spaces, how they encounter what I make, how it is possible to make work to pause the world a little, is my imperative. At its core is one simple question: it is about what it means to belong in one place at one time.*

—Edmund de Waal

Gagosian Beverly Hills is pleased to present new works by Edmund de Waal for his first solo exhibition in Los Angeles.

De Waal's art and literature speak to his enduring fascination with the nature of objects, and the narratives of their collection and display. A potter since childhood and an acclaimed writer, his obsession with porcelain or "white gold" has led to encounters with many people and places that help deepen his understanding of the nature of the material. His latest book, *The White Road: Journey into an Obsession* (2015), traces the historical evolution of porcelain from its origin in Jingdezhen, China, through developments in Venice, Versailles, Dresden, Cornwall, and the Cherokee Country of South Carolina.

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From simple pairs to complex multitudes of small objects, de Waal draws inspiration from many sources, including the poetry of Paul Celan and the musical compositions of John Cage. At the heart of this exhibition is a series of responses to the Schindler House on Kings Road in Los Angeles; a revolutionary building from 1922 by the Viennese émigré architect, Rudolph Schindler. For de Waal, the Schindler House is "improvisatory architecture," which offered a new way of living and working, a new set of possibilities for materials, a new architecture for a new city. It was here that, according to de Waal, Cage "began to clear his mind."

The exhibition title "ten thousand things" derives from a longer phrase by Cage about work, endless repetition, and unfolding, a citation inspired by the Taoist metaphor of indefinite multitude that underscores Chinese modular patterns of thought. In de Waal's work, this is borne out in sequences of thrown porcelain vessels glazed in shades of white, cream, celadon, and a newly developed palette of textured, metallic black glazes contained by various framing devices in steel and aluminum. De Waal connects his interest in recent sculpture, from Donald Judd's sequenced forms to Richard Serra's molten lead splashes, with a new emphasis on the architectural space that his own objects inhabit, including the measured intervals and pauses between them. For the first time, de Waal combines his porcelain with steel, lead, and plaster blocks, creating a new kind of dialogue between raw materials within a sculptural framework and the architectural space that they occupy.

Three large-scale works are influenced by de Waal's readings of Celan: *Lichtzwang* (2014), a response to the Theseus Temple in Vienna; *a place made fast* (2014), a single unit housing 160 pots; and *black milk* (2015), a black-glazed diptych containing 237 taller vessels. *Composition for three voices* (2015) is linked specifically to the story of Cage's relationship with Rudolph and Pauline Schindler during the time that he lived with them in their idiosyncratic modern home; while *ten thousand things, for John Cage I-XX* (2015) proposes a sequential structure with twenty open aluminum boxes containing different arrangements of pots.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by Joan Simon.

**Edmund de Waal** was born in Nottingham, United Kingdom in 1964. He lives and works in London. His work has been shown and collected by museums throughout the world, including Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Arts and Design, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt; National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh; and Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Museum exhibitions include Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (2007); "Edmund de Waal: Signs & Wonders," Victoria & Albert Museum, London (2009); Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom (2012); "On White: Porcelain Stories from the Fitzwilliam Museum" (2013), Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; "Atmosphere," Turner Contemporary, Margate (2014); "Lichtzwang," Theseus Temple, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (2014); and "white: a project by Edmund de Waal," Royal Academy of Arts, London (through January 3, 2016). His acclaimed memoir *The Hare with Amber Eyes* was the winner of the Costa Biography Award and the RSL Ondaatje prize. In 2015 de Waal was awarded a prestigious Windham-Campbell prize for non-fiction by Yale University, and his latest book *The White Road: Journey into an Obsession* was published in November.

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Image: *the ten thousand things, for John Cage, XX*, 2015, 3 porcelain vessels and Cor-Ten steel block in aluminum box, 17 11/16 x 17 11/16 x 7 1/2 inches (45 x 45 x 19 cm) © Edmund de Waal