

# GAGOSIAN

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## EDMUND DE WAAL

### the poems of our climate

Opening reception: September 20, 5–7pm  
September 20–December 8, 2018  
657 Howard Street, San Francisco

Edmund de Waal, *the poems of our climate*, 2018 (detail), 24 porcelain vessels and 16 aluminum brackets with gilding in aluminum, wood, and plexiglass vitrine, 86 5/8 × 59 1/8 × 5 1/8 inches (220 × 150 × 13.5 cm) © Edmund de Waal

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August 22, 2018

*I'm trying to come closer to what it feels like to remember a poem, to carry it with you through the decades, a phrase or an image coming into your life and making the world feel denser with possibility.*  
—Edmund de Waal

Gagosian is pleased to present new works by Edmund de Waal.

In his visual art and his literary works de Waal uses objects—of his own creation as well as found artifacts—as vehicles for narrative, emotion, and history. His installations of porcelain vessels contained in minimalist structures reveal the ways in which simple forms act as repositories of human experience.

De Waal's lifelong fascination with porcelain, or "white gold," is deeply entwined with his poetic imagination. Arranged in groups and varying in size and color, his porcelain vessels recall the serial repetitions, lines, and spaces of Donald Judd or Walter De Maria. Yet, drawing on his in-depth study of and engagement with porcelain traditions, de Waal's works bear the intricate traces of his labor and the objects' creation, their arrangements variously evoking musical rhythms or the sense of intimate order of a porcelain cabinet.

On view for the first time, the new works in *the poems of our climate* bring poetry and porcelain vessels together in both physical and conceptual proximity. The cylindrical forms are arranged at intervals, forming topographies that resemble lines on a page or music in a score. Made in black or white, some vitrines recall Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1915), in which the pictorial representation of reality was abandoned for pure abstract form. De Waal's dimensional vitrines, however, become subject to ambient illumination as shadows and reflections are thrown by the objects within them.

De Waal's installations have long incorporated lines and fragments of poetry in their titles, signaling affinities, inspirations, and connections to the literary form. "The poems of our climate" is taken from a 1942 poem by Wallace Stevens, in which language is reduced to basic functions, creating an atmospheric stillness within the poem. On minute shards and tiles of porcelain, de Waal inscribed lines of the poetry that has echoed through his life and guided the creation of his pots and vessels. By emphasizing the tile's literal capacity as script-bearing object, he links the tactile nature of porcelain to the concrete, symbolic nature of poetry, a written medium that works in auditory and associative ways. De Waal's metaphysical translations capture the fleeting images of poetry and the immutability of text, giving a fragmentary, tangible form to the shape of a poem on a page, the movement between two lines, the hesitations, caesuras, or intervals.

**Edmund de Waal** was born in 1964 in Nottingham, England, and lives and works in London. Collections include the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England; Trinity Hall, Cambridge, England; Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Art Institute of Chicago; and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Institutional exhibitions include *Signs & Wonders*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2009); Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury, England (2012); *On White: Porcelain Stories from the Fitzwilliam*, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, England (2013); *Atmosphere*, Turner Contemporary, Margate, England (2014); *Lichtzwang*, Theseus Temple, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (2014); and *white: a project by Edmund de Waal*, Royal Academy of Arts, London (2015). In 2016, de Waal curated *During the Night* at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. His first set design featured in *Yugen*, a new ballet by choreographer Wayne McGregor presented earlier this year at the Royal Opera House in London as part of the international celebrations of the centenary of Leonard Bernstein's birth. De Waal is also renowned for his family memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes* (2010), which won the RSL Ondaatje Prize and the Costa Biography Award, among others, and has been translated into over thirty languages.

On September 15, from 6 to 8pm, *—one way or other—*, de Waal's first architectural intervention in the United States will open at the Schindler House, a landmark of West Coast modernism, in Los Angeles. The exhibition will be on view through January 6, 2019. De Waal's exhibition, *white island*, at the Museu d'Art Contemporani d'Eivissa in Ibiza, Spain, closes on September 16, 2018.

#EdmunddeWaalPoems

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## Press

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