


GAGOSIAN GALLERY



Edmund de Waal, "Atemwende"

Mike Bruce



 Critics' pick

De Waal, the son of a Dutch businessman and a native of Nottingham, England, is a quintuple threat: best-selling author (*The Hare with Amber Eyes*), curator, critic, art historian and ceramic artist known for elegant, minimalist arrangements of small clay cylinders. These are usually produced by the dozens, fired in the same monochromatic glaze and exhibited within matching, purpose-built cases. The work's tension derives in part from the contrast between the sharp geometric edges of the displays and the evident imperfections of the cylinders, which are shaped on the potter's wheel to give each a distinct identity. The overall result suggests cuneiform tablets, or perhaps beads on an abacus, as there is indeed a calculated sense of order, reminiscent of a code or story of some sort. Remarkably, this is De Waal's first exhibition in New York, and features more of his signature forms, finished, this time, in black with gilt edging.