



MATERIAL MATTERS – THE NEW PODCAST DEVOTED TO ALL THINGS MAKING

Artist and author Edmund de Waal is one of the first makers to appear on Material Matters, the new podcast from the British design writer and critic Grant Gibson. Over the course of six 30-minute interviews, the former Blueprint and Crafts editor talks to different designers, artists and makers about their relationship to a particular material or technique with which they're intrinsically linked.

Conducted in the subject's workshop – rather than in a studio – listeners find out how they came to be involved with the material in the first instance, what they love about it, and how their relationship with it has developed over time.

Importantly too, this initial discussion is used as a springboard to talk more widely about their career and lives.

Series one of Material Matters features: potter Edmund de Waal on porcelain; artist Celia Pym on textiles; wood turner Eleanor Lakelin on timber; designer Bill Amberg on leather; and Peter Layton on glass. Meanwhile in a special bonus recording Gibson talks to New York-based curator and critic Glenn Adamson about his new book *Fewer Better Things*, which focusses on material intelligence in the digital age.

'I'm delighted with the line-up that we've put together for the first series of Material Matters,' says Gibson. 'The idea is simple really. We've interviewed makers and designers from different disciplines, working in a range of materials, to find out a little more about them. Some – like Edmund de Waal and Bill Amberg – are already internationally renowned, while others such as Celia Pym and Eleanor Lakelin are hugely talented and on the cusp of building a significant following. I think it was important too that we met them on their home turf, rather than dragging them into a studio. It means that listeners hear a compressor go off in the middle of my chat with Eleanor, for example, and are even introduced to Edmund's dog.'

He adds: 'It has long been my view that there's a huge amount of untapped talent on the British craft scene. The idea of this podcast is to get the makers' voices to as wide an audience as possible. I hope it will be listened to by architects, designers and artists as well as collectors and interested members of the public. I literally couldn't be more excited.'

'Real conversation about making is rare. Grant Gibson's new series is a wonderful way to overhear passionate and informed discourse. I'm honoured to be part of this first series,' says Edmund de Waal.

'I listen to podcasts all day in the studio – they've replaced the radio for me. And I love hearing artists and makers talking about their materials and ideas. Grant's podcast is the perfect combination. I think it will prove to be a great platform for makers to share their stories and to provide the craft world with a stronger, more resonant voice,' says Celia Pym.

'I think it's a great idea. It seems to me that Material Matters is filling an important hole in the market for an intelligent but accessible podcast about design and making. My gut feeling is that it will prove to be hugely popular and I was delighted to take part,' says Bill Amberg

Material Matters with Grant Gibson series one is available on iTunes and other platforms free of charge on 23rd January.

For more information contact Anna King
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Notes for editors:

Biogs of subjects for series one:

Bill Amberg

Bill Amberg and his studio of artisans work with a deep-rooted curiosity about how leather can be best used to showcase the material's innate beauty and high quality.

Over the years Bill has worked with the likes of Liberty London and Paul Smith. Today the studio draws on an array of skills and techniques from disciplines such as: bookbinding, saddlery and shoe-making, on projects that range from interiors and furniture to bags and accessories.

As the studio's reputation for high-end, luxury interior finishes has developed, it has secured commissions in landmark buildings such as: The Shard, Selfridges, Harrods, The Leathersellers Hall, and The British Library. Bill has also collaborated with the likes of Leica, Suntory, Grey Goose, Matthew Hilton, and Café Royal.

His work has been recognised in the cultural sphere too. The V&A selected his Rocket bag for its design classic archive, and he and his team won the Condé Nast Traveller's Innovation & Design award in 2012. He was awarded an honorary degree from Northampton University for his

contribution to leather design and manufacturing, and more recently, an honorary doctorate from the University of the Arts London.

Edmund de Waal

Edmund de Waal is an internationally acclaimed artist and writer, best known for his large-scale installations of porcelain vessels, often created in response to collections and archives or the history of a particular place. Both his written and artistic practice have broken new ground through their critical engagement with the history and potential of ceramics, as well as with architecture, music and poetry.

His interventions and artworks, exploring themes from diaspora and memorial to anxiety and the colour white, have been made for diverse historic spaces and museums worldwide, including the Schindler House, Los Angeles; the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Royal Academy of Arts, London; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; and the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, Cardiff. Major permanent installations can be found at the V&A Museum, London; the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; and the University of Cambridge. Recent gallery exhibitions include a collaboration with Ai Weiwei for Kunsthaus Graz, Austria; a project with the Morandi Foundation for Artipelag, Stockholm; the poems of our climate at Gagosian, San Francisco; Irrkunst with the Walter Benjamin Archive for Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin; and ten thousand things at Gagosian, Los Angeles. De Waal's first set design featured in the 2017/18 Season at the Royal Opera House for a new ballet, Yugen, by choreographer, Wayne McGregor as part of the international celebrations of the Leonard Bernstein centenary.

De Waal is also renowned for his family memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, which has won many literary prizes, including the Royal Society of Literature's Ondaatje Prize and the Costa Biography Award, and has been translated into over 30 languages. Other books include *The White Road*, *The Pot Book*, *20th Century Ceramics* and a study on Bernard Leach for Tate.

He was made an OBE for his services to art in 2011. In 2015 he was awarded the Windham-Campbell Prize for non-fiction by Yale University. He has received honorary doctorates from the University of the Arts London, Nottingham, Sheffield, York and Canterbury Christ Church universities and is an Honorary Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He is on the Advisory Committee for The Royal Mint and a Trustee for the V&A Museum, the Gilbert Trust and The Saturday Club Trust.

Celia Pym

Celia Pym is an artist living and working in London. She has been exploring damage and repair in textiles since 2007 with extensive experience of repairing small everyday holes from snags and cumulative wear to more dramatic damage, from animal nesting, water and moth issues.

Her work has been exhibited internationally, and she was shortlisted for the Women's Hour Craft Prize and the inaugural Loewe Craft Prize, both in 2017.

In 2018 commissioned by the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, she completed an international project, *Flying Gold Cape*, mending a heavily damaged cape from the Museum's archive collection and taking it on the road for people to wear and perform in. She was the recipient of the Crafts Council's Penland Fellowship 2018. Her work is held in collections of the Crafts Council UK and Nouveau Musée National de Monaco.

She is currently a visiting lecturer in Textiles at the Royal College of Art.

Peter Layton

Peter Layton is a pioneering glass artist. He founded his studio London Glassblowing in 1976, after starting his professional life as a ceramist, learning at the Central School of Art and Design under the likes of Ruth Duckworth and Gordon Baldwin. Subsequently he travelled to the States and worked in the ceramics department of the University of Iowa. By coincidence Harvey Littleton and a number of other potters were working on new hot glass techniques there at the time and he became smitten with the material.

Peter's work has been exhibited around the world and is held in the collections of a number of museums in the UK, USA and Europe, including the V&A and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

Last year his Highgrove series was selected personally by The Prince of Wales for an exhibition to mark His Royal Highness's 70th birthday.

The workshop is available for bespoke private, corporate or public commissions. Each one is given careful and comprehensive consideration to provide unique and inspired solutions to any given brief. These may be free-blown, hot-worked in solid glass, or moulded and kiln-formed as required, and in consultation with the client.

Entry to the studio and gallery is free and visitors can pull up a chair to watch master makers at work. London Glassblowing also offers glass making classes.

Eleanor Lakelin

Eleanor Lakelin has made vessel forms since 2011, studying with established makers whenever possible but largely teaching herself to hollow and carve works of increasing scale and ambition. Her sculptural objects are created using a traditional woodworking lathe and centuries-old chisels and gouges alongside modern carving techniques.

Eleanor works only with trees grown in Britain, felled due to decay. A deep knowledge and a passionate interest in the natural properties of wood result in forms that seem true to the spirit of the material and which encourage us to look at the complexities of nature with a new perspective. Her work is rooted in the rhythm of growth, the eroding power of the elements and the passing of time. Material is transformed into objects that invite touch and reflection, reminding us of our elemental and emotional bond with wood and our relationship to the earth. Eleanor's work is exhibited internationally and included in prestigious museum and private collections. She lives and works in London and is represented by Sarah Myerscough Gallery.

Glenn Adamson

Glenn Adamson is a curator, writer and historian who works at the intersection of craft and contemporary art. Currently senior scholar at the Yale Center for British Art, he has previously been director of the Museum of Arts and Design; head of research at the V&A; and curator at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee. Adamson's publications include *Art in the Making* (2016, co-authored with Julia Bryan-Wilson); *The Invention of Craft* (2013); *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion* (2011); *The Craft Reader* (2010); and *Thinking Through Craft* (2007).

Most recently Adamson was the co-curator of *Voukos: The Breakthrough Years* at MAD (2016); curator of *Beazley Designs of the Year*, at the Design Museum in London (2017); and co-curator (with Martina Droth and Simon Olding) of *Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery*, at the

Yale Center for British Art (2017). His new book *Fewer Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects* was published by Bloomsbury in August 2018.

Grant Gibson

Grant Gibson is a UK-based design, craft and architecture writer whose work has turned up in places like The Observer, New Statesman, The Guardian, Daily Telegraph, FRAME, Dwell, House & Garden and quite a few others. During a long career in magazines, Grant has been editor of Blueprint, deputy editor of FX, and acting executive editor of the RIBA Journal. More recently he has been editor of Crafts and a contributing editor of the Dutch architecture title MARK. He was also the launch editor of the London Design Festival Guide and co-founded Real to Reel, the UK's first film festival devoted to making. Grant was made an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Art in 2011.

He launched the new podcast Material Matters in 2019.