

# BREAKING THE MOULD

new approaches to ceramics



black dog  
publishing

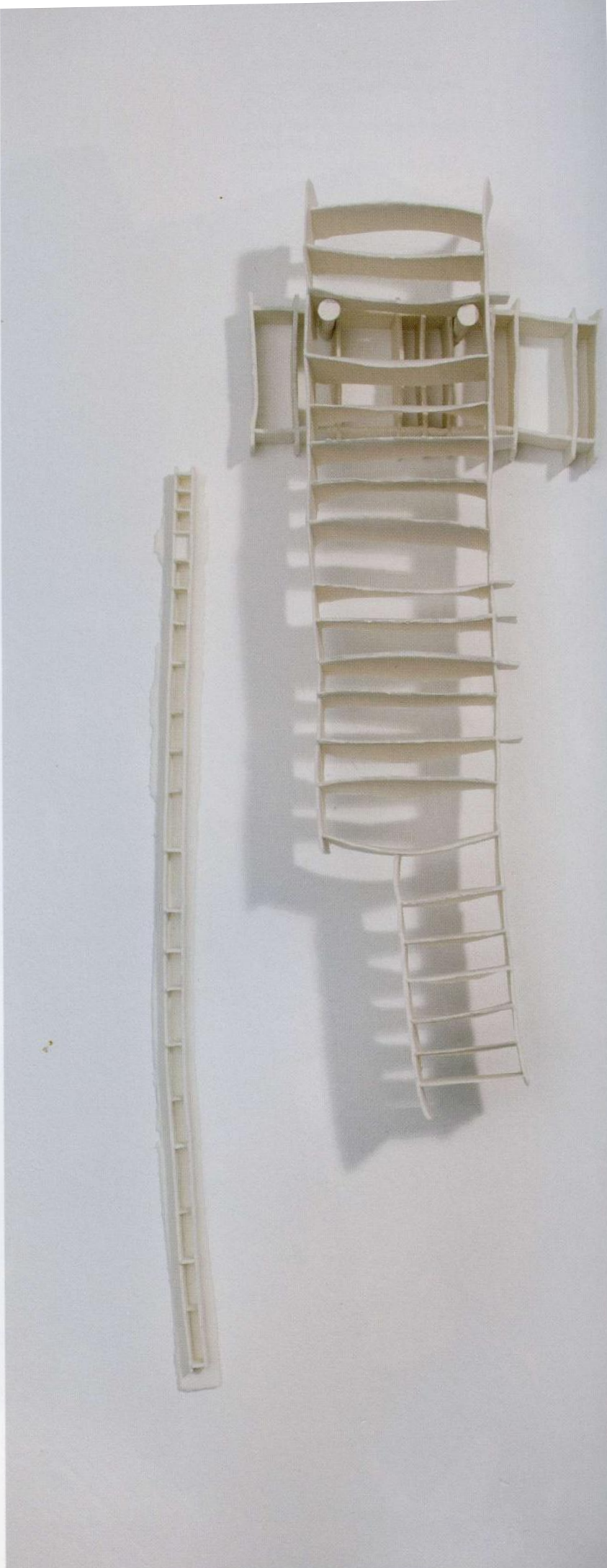


# Isobel Egan

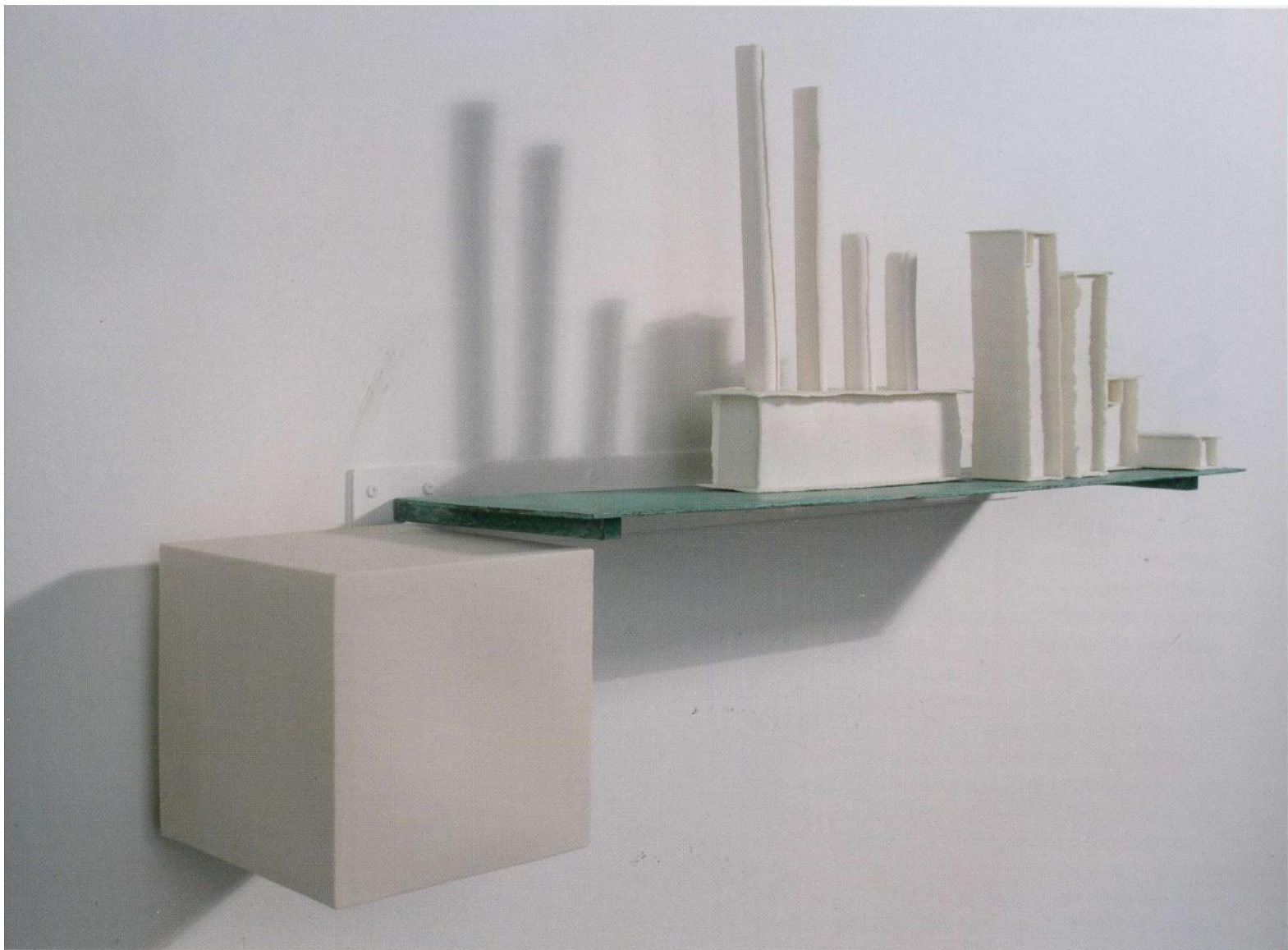
Born and educated in Ireland, Isobel Egan is one of Ireland's bright young ceramicists. Her delicate structures, in exquisitely crafted porcelain, explore issues of fragility, personal space and memory. Using shards of material so thin, they could almost be slips of paper, Egan constructs miniscule environments—abstracted rooms, cities and houses. Citing the writings of Phyllis Richardson on architecture, Peter Gray on psychology and Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* as inspirations for her work, Egan's delicate structures explore the fragility of life, personal space and memory.

The little box rooms of her sculptures recall the cardboard box houses and other fantastical environments of childhood—flimsy structures made robust by force of imagination. They also suggest trinket boxes and secret compartments where items of personal value are stored, or taking this one step further, the places where we hide our memories. They question the stability and durability of our homes and our environments, the reality of the walls that we construct around us. These references invite the viewer to contemplate their own experiences of space, childhood and memory. In her own words: "The box structures are like micro works of architecture. They represent environments for the nurturing of imagination.... The walls in these pieces, although somewhat malleable, represent the essential boundaries that define personal integrity."

Egan is drawn to the pallor and delicacy of porcelain, which she enforces by mixing fibres into the porcelain slip. Many of the structures are balanced on copper shelves, the worn green of the copper highlighting the whiteness of the porcelain.







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1 From *Intimate Spaces*, 2005  
hand built, slip-cast porcelain (ceramic fibres  
combined with porcelain slip)  
20 x 50 cm  
photograph by Phillippe Lauterbach  
2 From *Intimate Spaces*, 2005  
slip-cast porcelain  
62 x 29 cm  
photograph by Phillippe Lauterbach  
3 From *Intimate Spaces*, 2005  
slip-cast porcelain  
12 x 55 cm  
photograph by Phillippe Lauterbach