



Seastack  
25 x 10 inch (h/w)

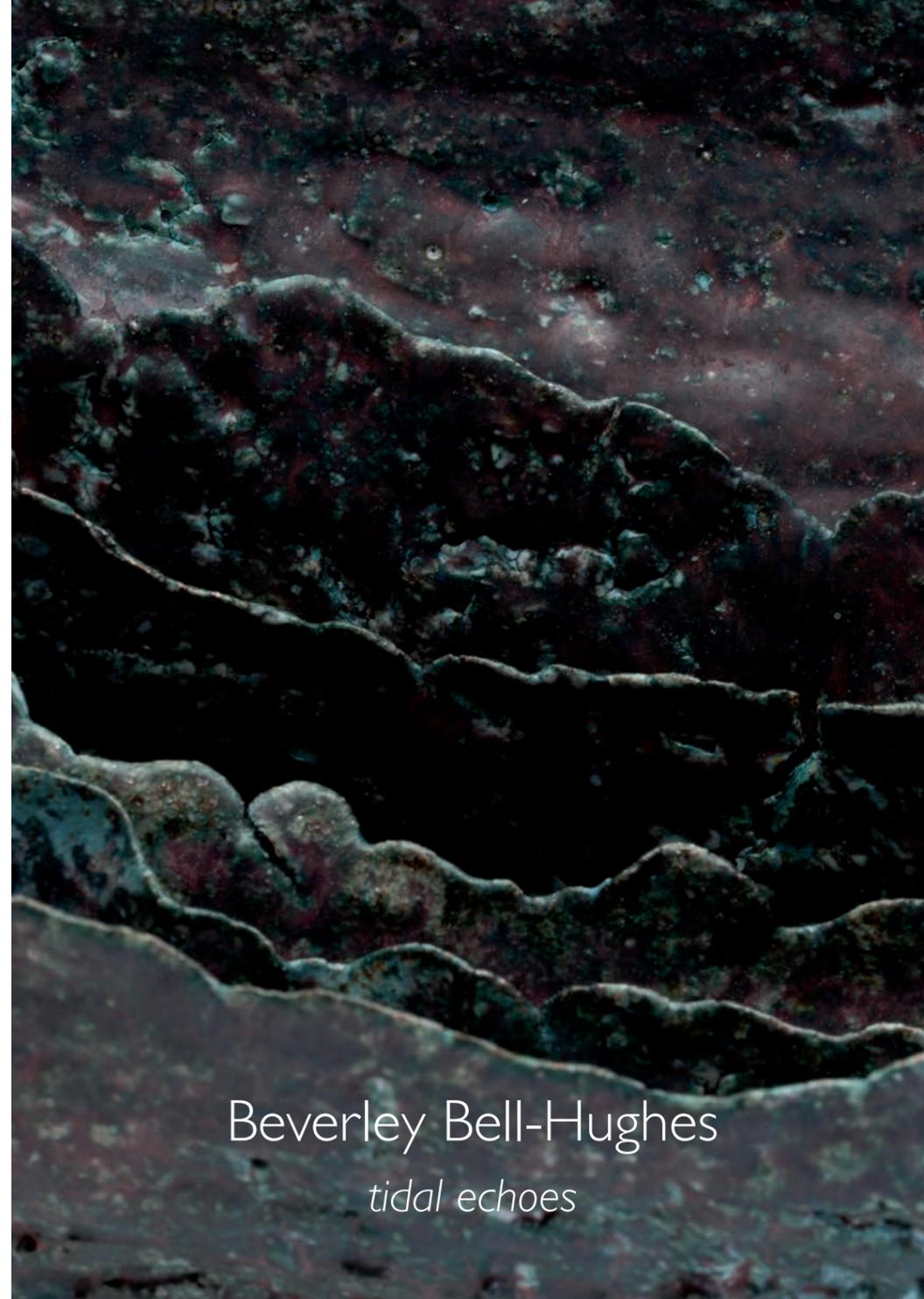


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Photography: Works by Dewi Tannatt Lloyd. Beach by Terry Bell-Hughes  
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Beverley Bell-Hughes  
*tidal echoes*



Seastack  
18 x 10 inch (h/w)



Sea Crib  
16 x 13 x 8 inch (l/w/h)

*Tidal Echoes* presents a new body of work by Beverley Bell-Hughes, most of it produced specially for this Ruthin Craft Centre exhibition during the Covid lockdown. Bev draws much of the inspiration for her ceramics from Conwy Morfa, a sandy beach and mussel bank in Conwy Bay, just 5 minutes' drive from her home. Most days, in the late afternoon after a day of making (and under pressure from her dog Ben) she walks the sands there. The beach has been quiet without all the tourists, she says, which has been blissful. She likes to visit the beach after the tide has gone out. The eddies and fissures left in the sand, along with beachcombed rocks and shells, all feed into her work: 'The exhibition is called *Tidal Echoes* because everything that I make relates to the sea and the beach. The echo is a suggestion; something to do with the sea but not exactly what has been seen.'

Bev has been making ceramics since 1967, when she went to study at Harrow School of Art. In all that time she has paused only 'to make children instead of pots'. And so, apart from the small task of raising 4 children, and some time making ceramics in the kitchen

(I'm not good at cooking'), Bev has worked out of her studio (or shed, as she calls it), in her garden in Llandudno Junction, Wales since 1978. She and her husband (ceramicist Terry Bell-Hughes) each have their own studio but share the same kilns. Terry helps Bev with her firings (as both their ceramics are fired to a high temperature in a reduction firing using natural gas) and he assists her where needed.

Bev reflects on the pressure of making work for exhibitions: 'I am not keen on making ceramics for exhibitions but it is good if I'm given enough time to do it, as doing it gives one a focus for new work. You do not end up making the same work but the starting point is the same: the natural world and the beach.' And even after all her years making ceramics, she can still be surprised: 'You still don't know what you are going to get. The pot I am making at the moment started off as one thing and I've changed it into something else and I'm still not happy with it. I've been making it all week. I'll change something perhaps three times. But I tend not to fire more than once if I can help it.' She is a visceral maker, something she attributes to the visual impairment that has

been with her since birth: 'If I wasn't visually impaired I might make something completely different. I might not even be a potter. The visual impairment has actually become my pots. It's what I do. It's all to do with feeling the clay, that's the most important thing to me.'

Bev doesn't put ideas down on paper, she goes straight to her clay. Making, for her, is about forming each piece through feel and manipulation, then working with slips and oxides to achieve the particular colours she wants. It takes a very very long time and is hard on the hands and shoulders. 'Making is a continuous process, one thing leads to another. It just follows though. I work in total silence and with no electric light by choice, so one is totally involved with the making and pinching of clay and in a meditative state of being.' Many of her works carry the same title: *Drift Wave*, *Razor Wave*. The pieces are made in series (or waves) and they are similar but not the same.

Bev thinks of her work in her solo exhibitions as groups of individual ceramics put together; a group of pieces that complement each other.

Her work, she says, needs space and doesn't look good 'cluttered' up. Some of her pieces need to be high up, off the ground, as the bases are very important and some can be turned on their sides. Here in Ruthin there is the space to do her work justice. The whole exhibition tells of her love affair with the sea. In fact, Bev's ceramics are so much of the sea, they look as if they should smell salty. They are faithful to all her (and our) long-held memories of seashores, of rough elemental seas and the patterns left in sand by powerful tides. After seeing her ceramics, it can be no surprise that Bev prefers her muse – nature – to be a bit edgy: 'I like going to the beach when the waves are quite strong. I love thunderstorms and I like huge waves. I like it when it's raining as well and windy on the beach. I like it wild.'

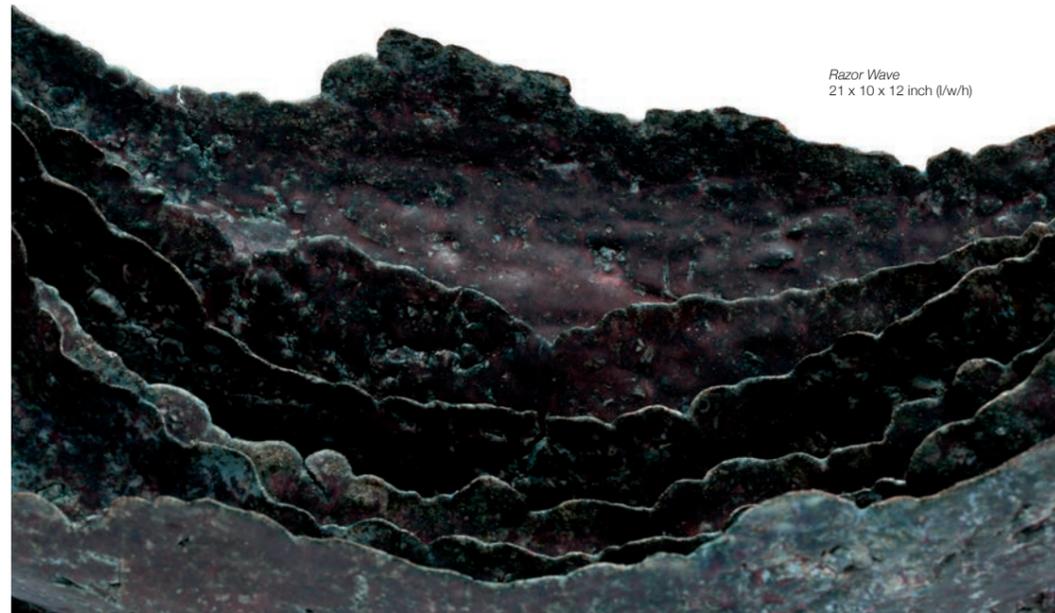
Jane Audas  
Design historian,  
craft writer and curator



Razor Wave  
17 x 11 x 9 inch (l/w/h)



Razor Wave  
21 x 10 x 12 inch (l/w/h)



Razor Wave  
21 x 10 x 12 inch (l/w/h)



Drift Wave  
16 x 10 x 9 inch (l/w/h)



Sand Pocket  
9 x 9 x 6 inch (l/w/h)