



The Grain of the Clay: Reflections on Ceramics and the Art of Collecting

Allen S. Weiss

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Ceramics give pleasure to our everyday lives, from the beauty of a vase's elegant curves to the joy of a meal served upon a fine platter. Ceramics originate in a direct engagement with the earth and maintain a unique place in the history of the arts. In this book, Allen S. Weiss sharpens our perception of and increases our appreciation for ceramics, all the while providing a critical examination of how and why we collect them.

Weiss examines the vast stylistic range of ceramics and investigates both the theoretical and personal reasons for viewing, using, and collecting them. Relating ceramics to other arts and practices—especially those surrounding food—he explores their different uses such as in the celebrated tea ceremony of Japan. Most notably, he considers how works previously viewed as crafts have found their rightful way into museums, as well as how this new-found engagement with finely wrought natural materials may foster an increased ecological sensitivity. The result is a wide-ranging and sensitive look at a crucial part of our material culture.

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