



PHOTOS: MARCUS LEITH

Table manners

Julian Stair's exploration of the meaning and value of ceramics continues in a new exhibition at London-based gallery Corvi-Mora. While his last show, *Quietus*, investigated our relationship with death through the physicality of clay, *Quotidian*, which runs from 13 November – 10 January 2015, presents a fresh interpretation of the historical dinner service and deals with the everyday use of ceramics – as well as grappling with

the perennial dilemma of how best to display tactile pots in an art gallery.

'My starting premise is that pottery is a dynamic genre and needs a dynamic means of presentation if we are unable to engage with it directly,' he explains. 'I think pots (and of course many craft and design disciplines) have suffered historically from static displays in gallery and white cube environments that paradoxically denude the work of the

very factors that brought about its existence and give it meaning.' Which meets no argument from these quarters.

His solution is to open the show with a stop-motion film, shot by Jan Baldwin (with photography by Marcus Leith), which shows a dinner party unfolding over 800 or so frames. Throughout the camera remains fixed on the table, the diners' hands and arms: this gives the viewer a sense of how a 16 place table

setting is transformed during the course of a meal. Meanwhile the clatter of cutlery on plates and the hum of conversation plays subtly in the background.

On the other side of the wall are the pieces themselves, beautifully made and carefully laid out on a table. The temptation to touch them is almost overwhelming. And ultimately the joy of *Quotidian* is the contrast between the precision and peace of the gallery

and the relative chaos of the work itself being used at the party. 'I hope these audiovisual elements will reveal the agency of pots and how, when we use these objects, all our human senses are brought into play,' says Stair. I'd say this clever, subtle exhibition works a treat. GG

Julian Stair's *Quotidian* is at Gallery Corvi-Mora, 1A Kempsford Road, London SE11 4NU, until 10 January 2015. www.corvi-mora.com