

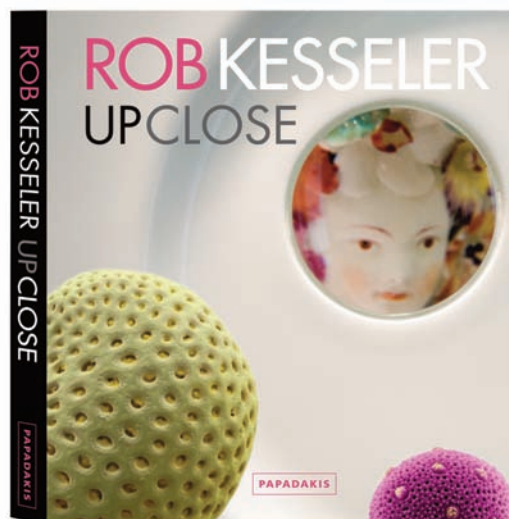
ROB KESSELER: UP CLOSE

PREFACE BY JENNI LOMAX

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The exotic forms and luscious colours of the plant world and the way in which they infiltrate every aspect of our lives have been a source of inspiration for Rob Kessler throughout his artistic career. Using a wide range of familiar materials and objects, from ceramics to furniture and drawing to photography, he creates sensual sculptures and emblematic images that celebrate each subject in a uniquely personal way. *Rob Kessler: Up Close* traces his career starting with his early work that explores the tensions between artifice and imitation and the paradoxes of representing nature through his ironic and humorous sculptures covered in familiar pictographic icons. After a transitional period in which decorative excess led to what he describes as the 'martyrdom of ornament', his most recent work reflects current enlightened thinking that seeks to exploit the benefits of collaboration between artists and scientists. Over the past decade he has worked extensively with botanical scientists at Kew exploring the creative potential of microscopic plant material. Magnified many thousands of times pollen, seeds, fruit and leaves reveal astonishing structures invisible to the naked eye. The original black and white images have been re-mastered using subtle washes of intense colour to enhance forms and reveal amazing structures. The resulting images lie somewhere between science and symbolism, the many complexities involved in representing plants concentrated into mesmerizing visual statements.

Following extensive media coverage after the publication of a collection of award-winning books, *Pollen*, *Seeds* and *Fruit*, developed in collaboration with Madeline Harley and Wolfgang Stuppy at Kew, his work has found a global audience eager to discover more about this exciting world previously hidden to all but the science community.

ROB KESSELER is Professor of Ceramic Art & Design at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London. From 2001-2004 he was NESTA Fellow at Kew and was recently made a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and the Linnean Society. He is currently working on a major project for the 2010 Year of Biodiversity in collaboration with molecular biologists at the Gulbenkian Science Institute in Lisbon in partnership with the University of Lisbon Botanic Garden and Vista Alegre Porcelain.



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