



# The works of **Ricus Sebes**

*photos - Sonja Sebes-Top*

CHRISTOPH HASENBERG

**A**t the International Ceramics Fair in Oldenburg, Ricus Sebes was awarded the NEW CERAMICS Prize.  
“... a revolutionary innovation in the use of crystal glaze” ...  
“but adapting to a seemingly geological realm of forms that immediately awakens images of treasures in coral reefs” (jury).

## The Paradox of Opposites

I paid Ricus Sebes a visit. Sonja Sebes-Top and Ricus Sebes live in St Goar in the Gründelbach Valley of the Upper Middle Rhine Valley, which is a UNESCO world heritage site.

Inspired with romantic ideas after a holiday in France, they fell in love with this gorgeous landscape and in 2011, they bought an old mill in the Gründelbach Valley, throwing themselves into the adventure, and abandoning their regular jobs – Ricus Sebes had previously been a salvage diver with the Royal

*Vessel, 2020, 34 x 34 x 12, concrete, porcelain, crystal glaze*





Dutch Marine Corps – and they began to convert the old corn mill with much thought and love.

Sonja and Ricus had trained in ceramics in the Netherlands and had gathered initial experience there.

Against the backdrop of classic craft training, Ricus began to accept the technical challenges of ceramics and to push back the boundaries of creativity – in complete accord with his conceptions and artistic ideas.

The meaning of his works, his forms and his chromatic language is a return of the connection of opposites, an apparent semiotic contradiction.

**The Monolith, 2021**

35 x 20 x 28 cm  
mixed media  
concrete-porcelain  
porcelain  
crystal glaze





**The-Ark, 2021**  
 39 x 17 x 21  
 mixed media  
 concrete-porcelain  
 porcelain  
 crystal glaze

However I only see contradictions at first sight.

On closer inspection, I see that the paradoxical, the contradictory elements contain a higher or wider truth and need not contradict each other, instead revealing a further sense. Herein lies the expressive force of his creative intention.

These are old rules of making, rules of the overall effect of his ceramic works that are good and valid, observed or resolutely contravened.

*A form must have boundaries but colour need not.  
 Yet form tolerates any colour and colour tolerates  
 any form.*

*In this, independence is confirmed.*

But Sebes creates dependences between the elements, creates tension, oppositions, like calm versus unrest, introduces the colours of his crystals, perceptible in their full purity, in the monochrome, earth-coloured forms of his rough, thrown, handbuilt and fractured forms, formulating an impressive concision.

The earth-coloured light-dark harmonies of the fissured surfaces are indispensable and prove their worth as intermediaries between the pure, gleaming, clearly delimited planes of the coloured crystal glazes and the fractured forms that seem to have emerged under the effects of destructive forces.

Under dynamic strain such as bending, breaking, stretching, smoothing, melting and cooling, the properties of the material

**Amphora, 2021**  
 34 x 16 x 26 cm  
 mixed media  
 concrete-porcelain  
 porcelain  
 crystal glaze



and all the elements of the creative process combine on a further level, creating an impression of chaos.

The regular and irregular forms and colours of the crystal glazes and the fissured surfaces of the clay body combine to form a complex unit.

Nothing is new in the origins. Everything comes from earth and yet new things emerge daily.

We can touch these things, hold them in our hands, feel smoothness and

roughness, and see how the contrasts of the individual elements elevate and reinforce their effect to create a complete whole.

**CHRISTOPH HASENBERG**

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**Ricus Sebes** (b. 1969). After serving as a professional soldier and a salvage diver, decided to attend the ceramics technical college in Gouda. Inspired by the technical challenges of glaze technology, he also attended courses with Ian Curry and Hein Severijns. Together with his wife, Sonja Sebes-Top, herself a ceramist, he emigrated to Germany in 2011, where he could devote himself entirely to his fascination with form and colour. Sebes has participated in numerous exhibitions and competitions in Germany and other countries and has won various prizes.

