

**eupees keramisch werkcentrum**

# **OPENING PROJECT**

**eupean ceramics work centre**



light

complex

precise

multiple

nuclear





The Centre arose in response to a pressing problem, but rather than offering solutions it seeks to practise and maintain a spirit of permanent enquiry. Instead of theoretical dogmas, it offers activity and stimulation, while emphasizing precision and purpose. The problematic situation is undeniable. Historical reasons explain the present and recent situation of ceramics. Some features that are thought of as characteristic of ceramics have a traditional, or even nostalgic element. One can think of considerations such as the availability and cheapness of the material, the low-tech character of the activity, the link with a past marked by belief and supremacy, the assumption of enjoying a particularly favoured relationship with nature. These factors led to an ideological construct that seeks to justify rejection of analysis and enquiry and gave rise to certain methods and ideologies that appropriate to themselves what they see as the values of ceramics. A respectable niche and reassuring sense of identity was thus created at some times and in some countries.

Most of the attempts made since Modernism to revitalize ceramics were still conditioned by this isolationist spirit, and show a very peculiar understanding of ceramics as a process leading towards definite conclusions and function.

When it became a 'movement', ceramics turned away from the problems of modernity, assuming that it had no contribution to make beyond its own narrow field. In this way, it was relegated to a historical limbo. Most ceramists were left on the periphery of culture and, ironically, also on the periphery of ceramics. In contrast, it is striking to realize how vital, diverse and rich in options traditional ceramics are and how, for example, Picasso and Miró took up the challenge.

Such reflections on the recent history of ceramics, its present situation and relation to other artistic media led to the concept of the European Ceramics Work Centre. But this is not all.

As a proposal, it does not want to be a simply critical, reactive attitude, but an opening, a venture for the future development of ceramics. While acknowledging the richness and diversity of tradition, the Centre steps out towards the new.

In trying to respond to the needs of ceramics and the visual arts in general, the Centre relies on its belief in labour, process and product as carriers of meaning. We see it as a challenge to engage in a project at a time like the present, when taking responsibility for any action seems so often impossible.

The Centre is not focused on production, style or exhibition; it rather aims at providing a space for creativity and for questioning existing values about art in general and ceramics in particular.

Xavier Toubes

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The European Ceramics Work Centre (Dutch: Europees Keramisch Werkcentrum, EKWC) aims to develop artistic exploration into ceramics as both fine art and applied art. The concept evolved out of an urge to strive for a better understanding of ceramics and to bridge the gap between the artist's studio and a wider, more public situation. With this in view, it offers for the artists a place where they can live and work in a professional environment.

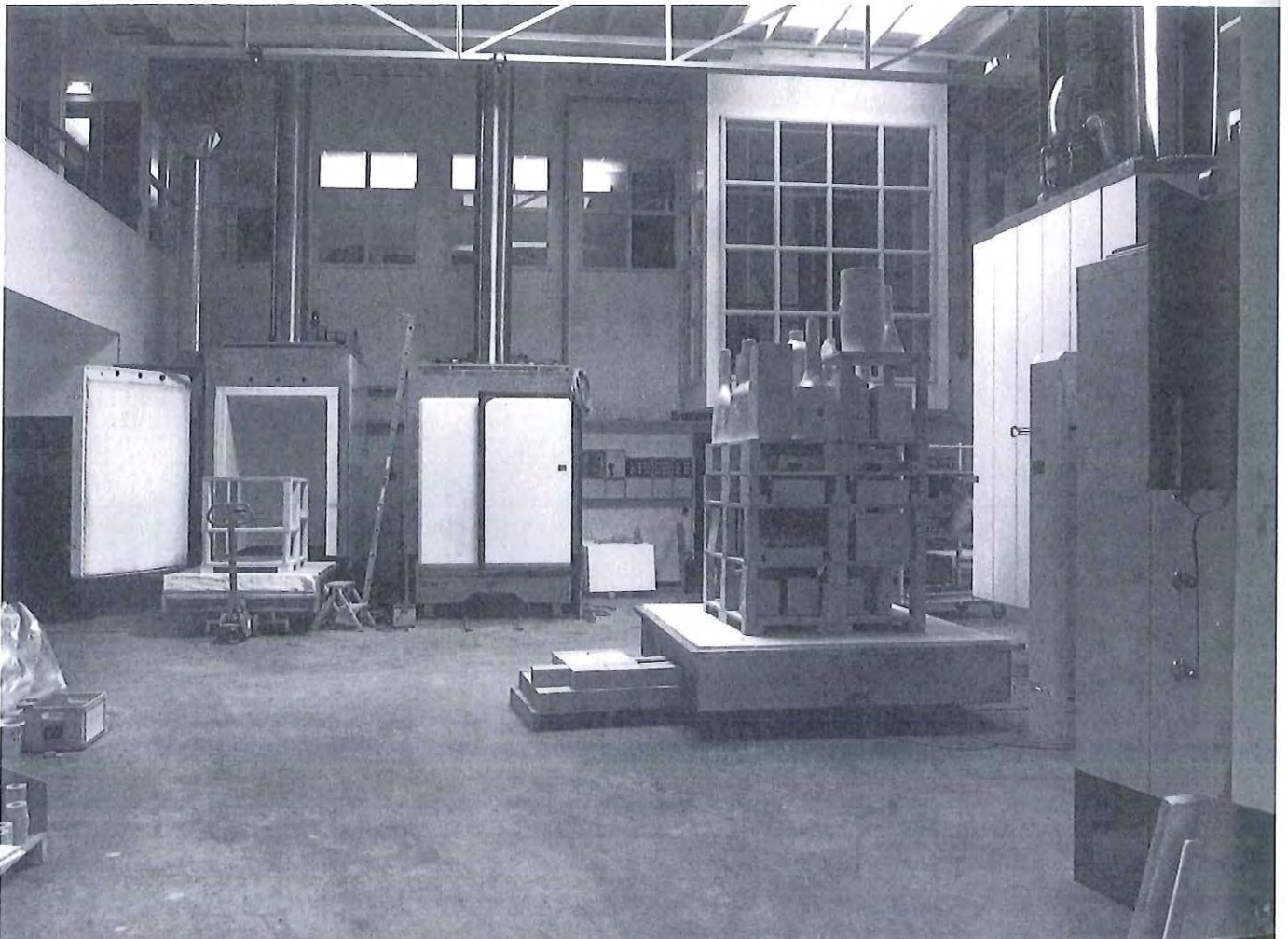
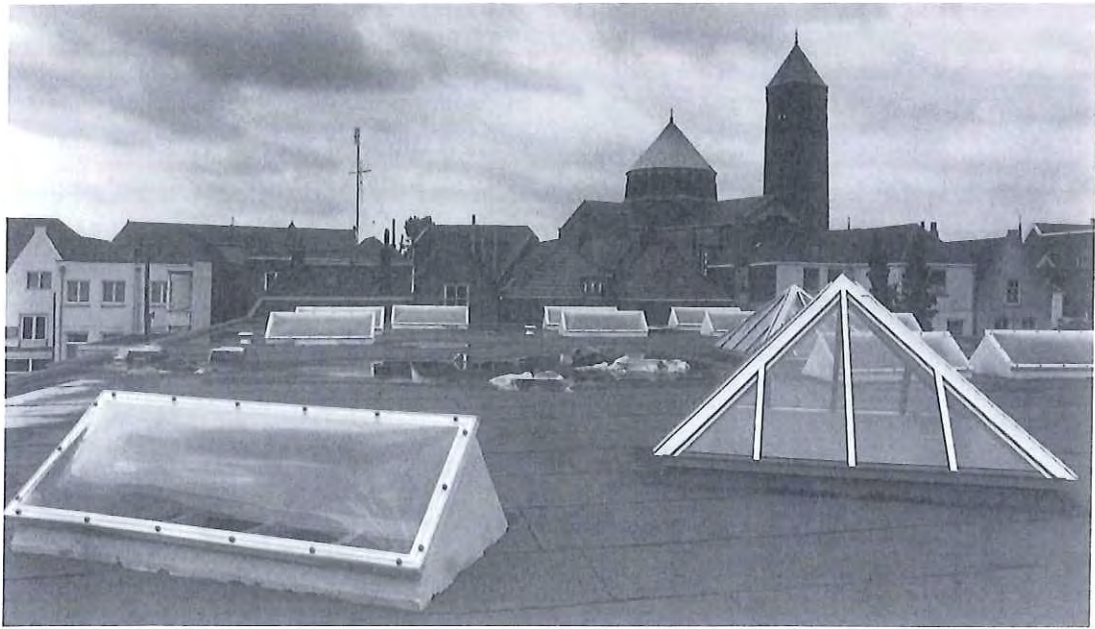
The Centre is a cross-cultural, non-profit contemporary art workspace, open to all visual artists working in all disciplines and from all countries.

The EKWC is located in central 's-Hertogenbosch, in the Netherlands, and covers an area of 2000 square metres, with separate living quarters. The Centre has very advanced technical facilities. First-class technical assistance is provided, together with efficient administrative support services.

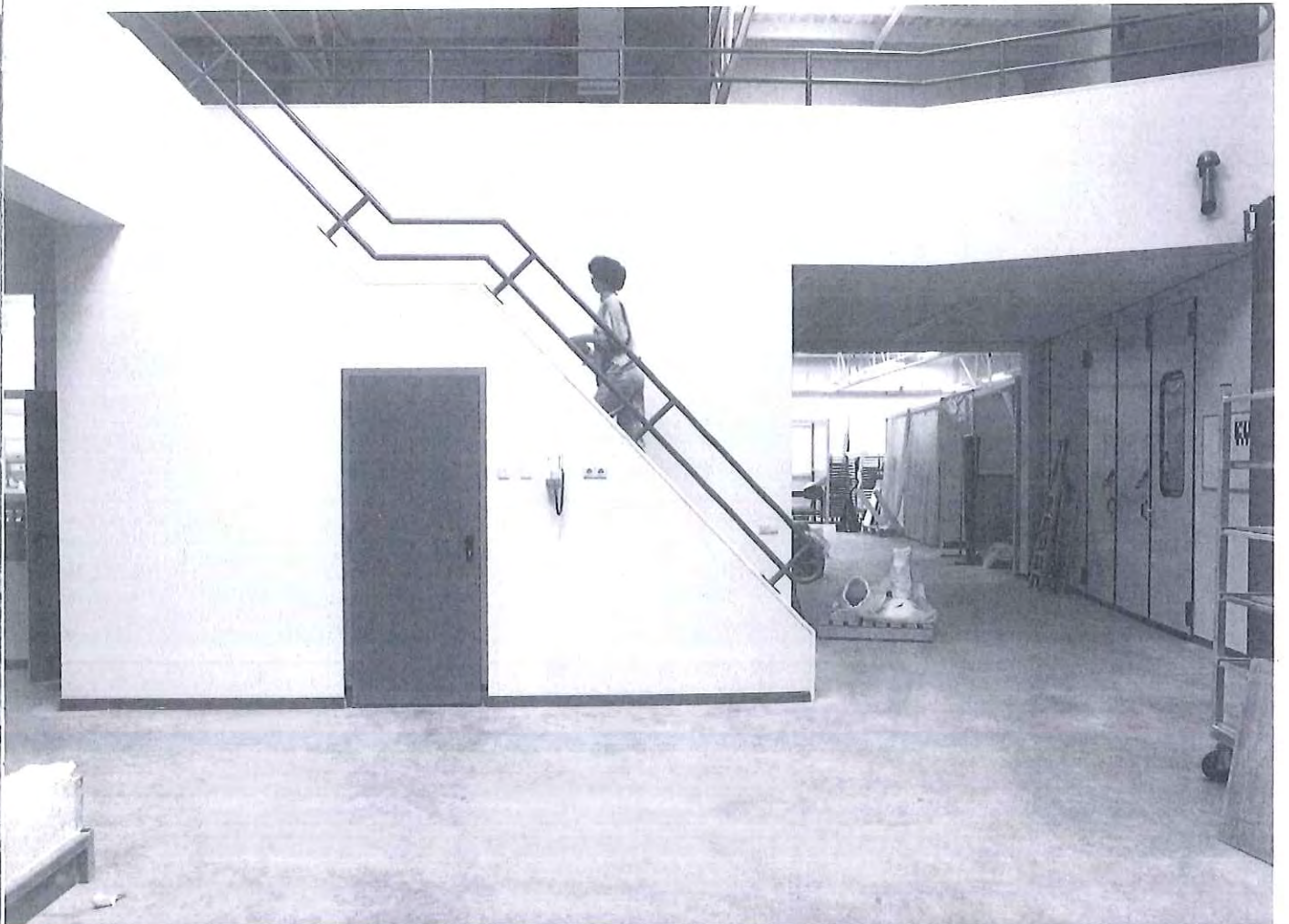
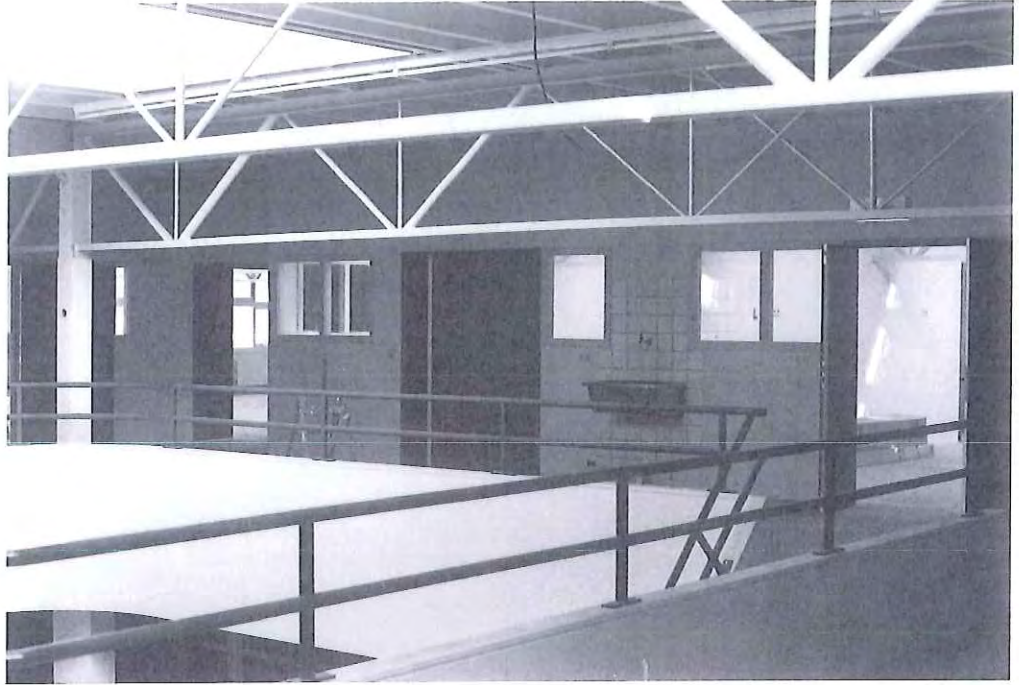
Artists work independently in their own studios. In addition to 12 individual studios, varying in size from 40 to 80 square metres, there are workshops for plaster, metal and wood. A separate building houses 12 private apartments and there is a large kitchen and a common room in the main building.







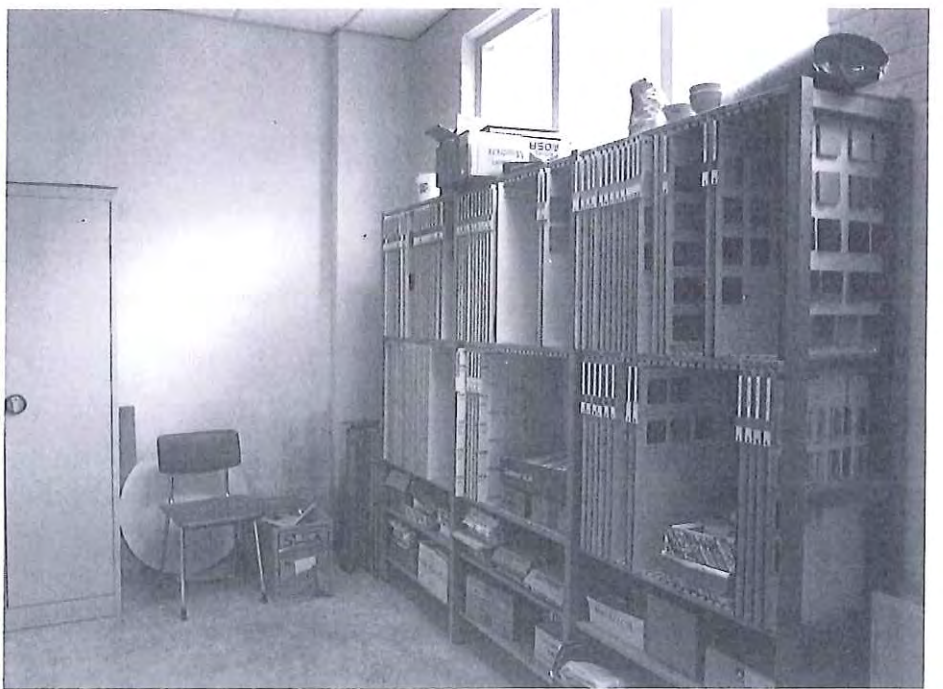
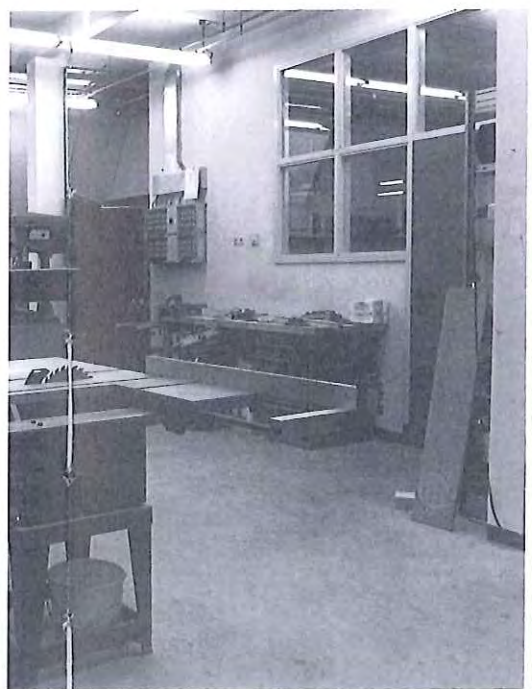
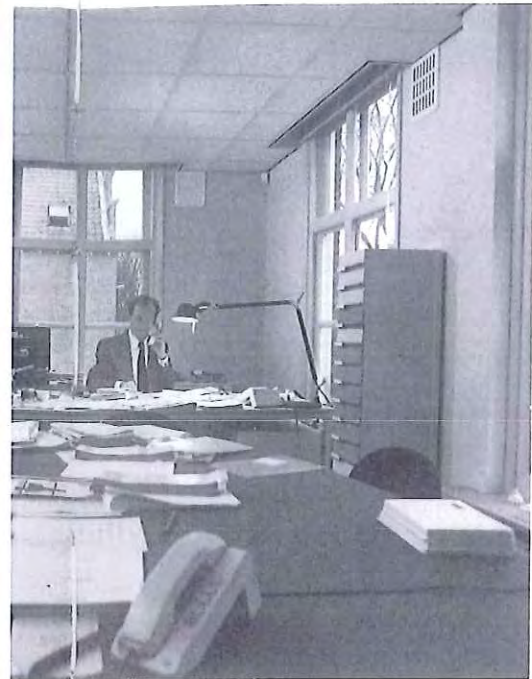




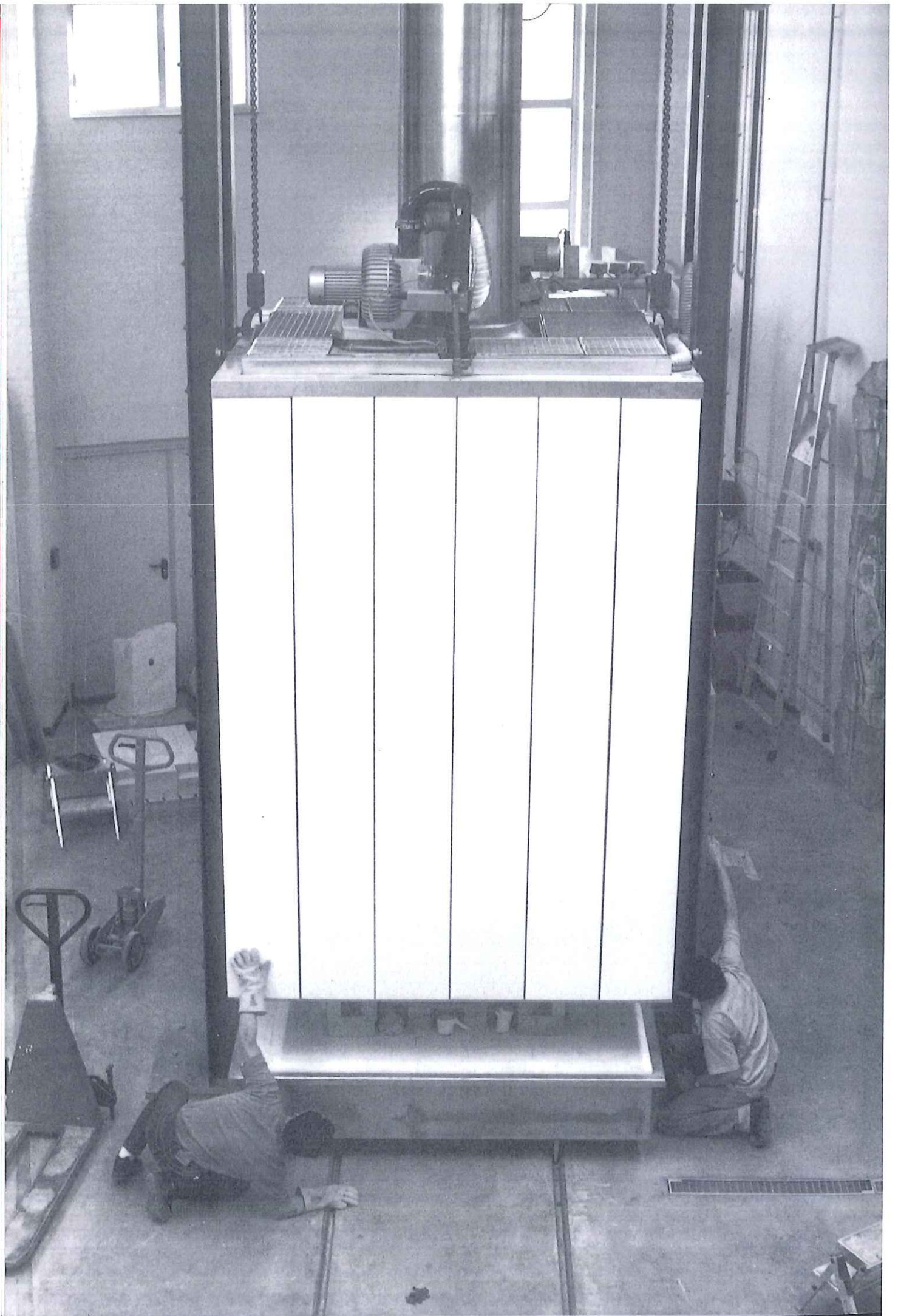


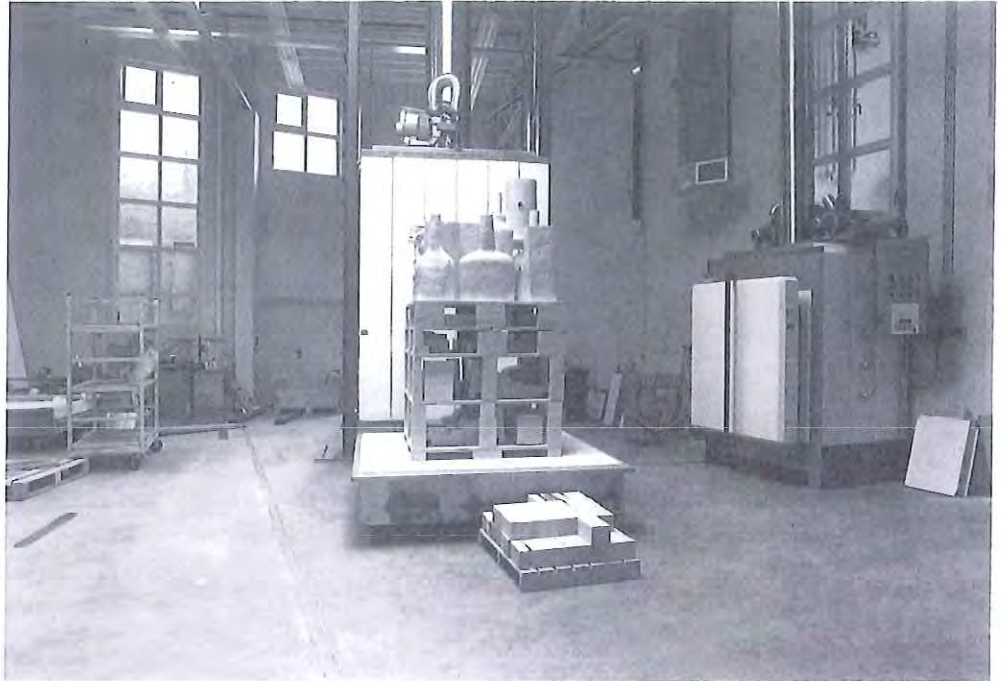












4 computer network-controlled  
gaskilns

effective capacity:

1. 84 x 60 cm/33" x 23 1/2"  
height: 115 cm/45 1/2"  
1550°C/2642 F
2. shuttle kiln  
84 x 116 cm/33" x 45 1/2"  
height: 170 cm/67"  
1300°C/2372 F  
4 movable floors
3. shuttle kiln  
84 x 232 cm/33" x 91 1/2"  
height: 130 cm/51"  
1300°C/2372 F
4. tophat kiln  
120 x 120 cm/47 1/2" x 47 1/2"  
height: 230 cm/90 1/2"  
1300°C/2372 F  
2 movable floors

3 computer-controlled  
electric kilns

effective capacity:

5. 45 x 45 cm/17 1/2" x 17 1/2"  
height: 60 cm/23 1/2"  
1300°C/2372 F
  6. 80 x 60 cm/31 1/2" x 23 1/2"  
height: 105 cm/41 1/2"  
1250°C/2282 F
  7. shuttle kiln  
72 x 80 cm/28 1/2" x 31 1/2"  
height: 115 cm/45 1/2"  
1300°C/2372 F
- 3 computer-controlled  
electric testkilns 1300°C/2372 F



















**Staff EKWC**

Susi van der Aalst, secretary  
Anne Brands, household supervisor  
Hans Buitenkamp, workshop assistant  
Hèlen van Delft, secretary  
Yvette Lardinois, presentation officer  
Peter Oltheten, workshop supervisor  
Anton Reijnders, workshop coordinator  
Bo Ruimers, workshop assistant  
Han Sietsma, workshop assistant  
Adriaan van Spanje, general director  
Xavier Toubes, artistic director

**In collaboration with**

Ernest Aryee  
Frank Åsnes  
Henk Geel  
Ronald Heijligers  
Erik Korsten  
Jo Luites  
Rob Luypen  
Janice Shales  
Sandra Themen  
John Toki  
Petra Ulrich  
Babs Welter



## Swedenborg's Angels

For the last twenty-five years of his studious life, the eminent philosopher and man of science Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) resided in London. But as the English are not very talkative, he fell into the habit of conversing with devils and Angels. God granted him the privilege of visiting the Other World and of entering into the lives of its inhabitants. Christ had said that souls, in order to be admitted into Heaven, must be righteous. Swedenborg added that they must also be intelligent; later on Blake stipulated that they should be artists and poets. Swedenborg's Angels are those souls who have chosen Heaven. They need no words; it is enough that an Angel only thinks of another in order to have him at his side. Two people who have loved each other on earth become a single Angel. Their world is ruled by love; every Angel is a Heaven. Their shape is that of a perfect human being; Heaven's shape is the same. The Angels, in whatever direction they look



—north, east, south, or west— are always face to face with God. They are, above all, divines; their chief delight lies in prayer and in the unravelling of theological problems. Earthly things are but emblems of heavenly things. The sun stands for the godhead. In Heaven there is no time; the appearance of things changes according to moods. The Angel's garments shine according to their intelligence. The souls of the rich are richer than the souls of the poor, since the rich are accustomed to wealth. In Heaven, all objects, furniture, and cities are more physical and more complex than those of our earth; colours are more varied and splendid. Angels of English stock show a tendency to politics; Jews to the sale of trinkets; Germans tote bulky volumes which they consult before venturing an answer. Since Moslems venerate Mohammed, God has provided them with an Angel who impersonates the Prophet.

The poor in spirit and hermits are denied the pleasures of Heaven, for they would be unable to enjoy them. [From: *Jorge Luis Borges, The Book of Imaginary Beings.*]

From August 1991 until January 1992, twenty-five artists were invited to participate in the Opening Project of the European Ceramics Work Centre. This was not meant to be a model for the future operation of the Centre, but rather to give an idea of its possibilities as a workspace for the interaction of contemporary artists from different disciplines in their approach to the exploration of the ceramic process.

This book is a record of the first months of the Centre and shows a selection of the work done there by the invited ceramists, sculptors, designers, painters and architects.



**Solo Exhibitions (selection)**

- 1962 Galeria Ateneo, Madrid
- 1969 Galerie Nouvelles Images, The Hague
- 1986 Museo de C eramica, Barcelona
- 1991 Galeria Aeles, Madrid

**Group Exhibitions (selection)**

- 1967 Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Faenza  
International exhibition. Gold medallist
- 1972 Museo Espa ol de Arte Contempor neo, Madrid  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London  
International Ceramics
- 1989 and 1990 'Presencia de la Cer mica Espa ola' (travelling exhibition)

**Collections/Public Works (selection)**

- Museo Espa ol de Arte Contempor neo, Madrid
- Mills College of Oakland
- Sculpture at the Autopista del Atl ntico, La Coru a



'Ceramic B', 135 x 65 x 128 cm

