



# OF NATURE

Works from the Natzler Archive

auction 13 May 2022

# RAGO

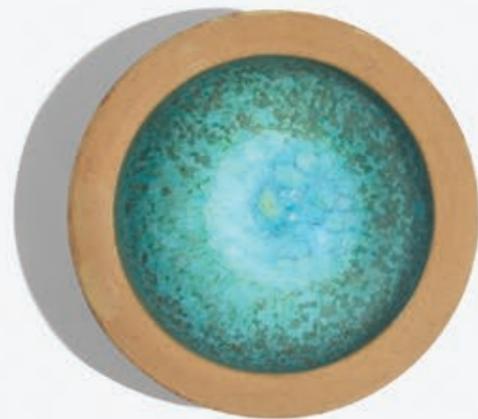
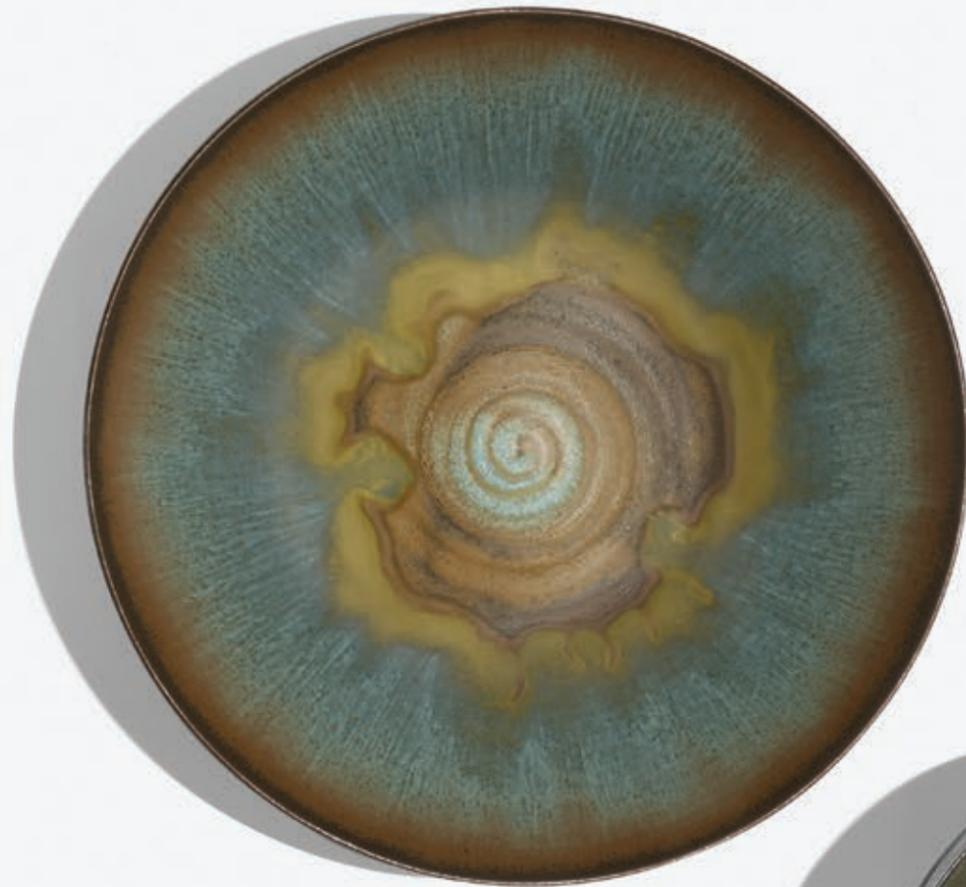


**auction**  
13 May 2022  
10 am est

**preview**  
6 - 13 May 2022  
11 am - 4 pm

## **Forces of Nature: Works from the Natzler Archive**

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# Encircling Infinity: The Natzler Ceramics



*Otto and Gail Natzler*, 1975 by Max Yavno  
Gelatin silver print, 10 3/8 x 13 1/2 (26.4 x 34.3 cm)  
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles  
The Max Yavno Collection © Center for Creative,  
Photography, The University of Arizona Foundation



by Glenn Adamson

It is November 2, 1972. Otto Natzler, in his studio in Los Angeles, is about to do something breathtakingly difficult: glaze a pot.<sup>1</sup> He's done that thousands of times before, of course, using many, many different glazes of his own invention (about 2,500 formulas, all told). But this pot is very special. His late wife, Gertrud, shaped it with her hands prior to her death in June 1971.<sup>2</sup> About two hundred pieces she had made remained in the studio; Otto had been too busy being her caregiver to glaze and fire them. So there they sat. One can only imagine what it meant for him to contemplate these final forms, the last of the last, still replete with potential. Gertrud had always been renowned for the fineness of her shapes, their every curve intuitively refined, the vessel walls a mere one or two millimeters thick. Otto began with the very last one she'd made. "It was up to me," he remembered thinking, "to do justice to it now."<sup>3</sup>

Otto always credited his relationship with Gail Reynolds with giving him the courage to face this task. They had met two years earlier, in 1970, at a reception held at Tidepool Gallery in Malibu. When Gail heard of Gertrud's death, she wrote to Otto in a spirit of combined condolence and admiration. Her words were touchingly perceptive: "The bowls seemed to encircle infinity. I saw them as the forms they were and the forms they could have become, had they spun too far."<sup>4</sup> Otto invited Gail to meet again, at a retrospective held at the DeYoung Museum in summer 1971; gradually they formed a relationship. They would marry in the fall of 1973. That same season, the Natzlers' ceramics were also the subject of a major retrospective at the newly opened Renwick Gallery in Washington DC. The exhibition included some of those last pieces of Gertrud's, which Otto came to feel were among the most beautiful he'd ever made with her,

though she did not live to see them completed. Their collaboration had begun long ago and far away, in Vienna, when the city was shadowed by the rise to power of the Nazis. They'd had a courtship through clay. Otto was unemployed—the company where he'd worked as a textile designer had been shut down because its owner was Jewish—and was in the process of disentangling himself from an early ill-matched marriage. When he met Gertrud, who had herself just begun to work in ceramics, he asked her for a lump of clay, a thinly disguised means of getting her attention. She duly provided one. He'd never so much as touched the material before, but produced two sculptures, which were promising enough that she suggested he join him taking lessons from potter Franz Xaver Iskra. At the studio, Otto marveled at Gertrud's wizardly skill at the wheel—it was as if she were born to it—and, having had a little previous experience with chemistry, he wondered openly about the commercial glazes used, which might go on pink but turn out green. How did that happen? "You hit right upon it," cried Iskra, "this is one of the great mysteries of ceramics!" As Otto later put it, "Unfortunately his answer did not quite satisfy my inborn sense of curiosity."<sup>5</sup>

When he and Gertrud proceeded to set up their own studio in 1935, it was only natural for them to adopt a division of labor in which she created the forms and he the glazes. For a few excruciating weeks, this meant that Otto ruined nearly everything that Gertrud made. "With about as much knowledge as the first potter on earth, I started to mix the materials I had bought. I mixed indiscriminately whatever came into my hands and, of course, the results were in keeping with my complete lack of knowledge."<sup>6</sup> But he learned quickly (for starters, he realized he should use test tiles, not Gertrud's vases

*Gertrud Natzler throwing a bowl on her Viennese kick wheel, early 1940s, Photo by Dorothy Hoffman*



and bowls). In later years, Otto always said that his early blind stumbling had been a blessing in disguise. First and foremost, it instilled in him an autodidact's individuality. So many of his glazes are unlike anything else in the history of ceramics. Many writers have compared the Natzler's work to classical Chinese ceramics, for lack of any other equally sophisticated precedent.<sup>7</sup> But there's actually little relationship between their work and the East Asian tradition. Gertrud used a red clay formula Otto devised for her throwing, not porcelain or stonewares, and to the extent that her forms had an external inspiration, it was the architecture of Austria itself: as Gail Natzler has pointed out, the country's baroque-era structures—the onion domes atop church towers, as well as inverted bowl-shaped motifs found on secular building roofs—have similarly graceful curvatures. Otto, meanwhile, did express his regard for the great products of the Sung dynasty, but his own output hardly ever resembles them. Even his celadon and “sang” oxblood glazes—the closest he came to the Chinese idiom—are distinctively his own.

Otto's early experimentation also yielded a key, unexpected insight. Right from the start, he took an interest in his own “mistakes,” the results of over- and under-firing, and poor fit between a glaze and a clay body. Otto realized that these effects had their own aesthetic possibilities, which could be controlled. This led him to his most dramatic and recognizable effects: “lava” cratering, achieved through multiple firings; iridescence, resulting from the purification of metallic elements in the glaze; and what he called “melt fissures,” which were caused by a rapid cooling in the firing cycle, which partially solidifies and separates the surface, exposing still-molten glaze materials beneath.<sup>8</sup>

In 1938, after only three years together in their Vienna studio, Gertrud and Otto realized—though they could not have guessed the scale of the horror that were about to unfold—that it was time for Jews like themselves to leave Austria.<sup>9</sup> After a long voyage with all of their worldly goods on board—including Gertrud's kick wheel and Otto's electric kiln—they arrived in Los Angeles.<sup>10</sup> Destitute, they went deep into debt to set up a house and studio. It was an extremely precarious time, but their work, unlike anything being made in America (or anywhere else for that matter), immediately attracted attention. Within just a year, they were covered in the Los Angeles Times, won a top prize in the Syracuse Ceramic National, and had sales outlets both in L.A. (the legendary Bullocks Wilshire, a connection via fellow Viennese émigré Paul Frankl) and San Francisco. Soon they were selling work across the country, including in New York City at design-forward stores like Bonnier's and Georg Jensen, as well as America House, the pioneering store of the national craft council, founded by Aileen Osborn Webb in 1940.<sup>11</sup>

They also made a series of other fortuitous connections, including with the pioneering wood turner and sculptor James Prestini—who on first meeting them, bought \$140 worth of ceramics in one fell swoop for his shop in Lake Forest, Illinois—and the prominent L. A. art dealer Dalzell Hatfield. He would show the Natzlers' work from 1940 to 1967, alongside works of French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, an unparalleled juxtaposition in American ceramics of the time. Hatfield was effective in positioning them in museums nationwide, including in a show at the Art Institute of Chicago, in 1946. The Natzlers were also among the craft artists actively promoted in the Museum of Modern Art's design program, with work included in the 1947 exhibition *100 Useful Objects of Fine Design Available Under \$100*, alongside Swedish glassware, aluminum pots and pans, and “a cheese slicer of great ingenuity and a rough but noble beauty.” In this context, another aspect of their work shone through: their uncompromising modernism, in which form and function were honed to the purest essence.

As their work matured, so did their thinking. Unfortunately Gertrud left no major writings or interviews, but we do have eloquent comments from her on the art of throwing, including this passage:

*It must, of necessity, start with the centering of the clay. This takes strength and an iron grip. The further the form develops, the more delicate the touch must become until in the end there is simply a describing of the curve, a movement of the hands—with the yielding clay in between—that determines the final line. There is a spontaneity without parallel while playing the clay. The word ‘playing’ suggests a similarity to the application of strength in a musical passage—a crescendo, a forte, a pianissimo. But the difference is that the moment the note has been sounded, it has already passed, while the strong pressure or the mere caressing of the pliable clay is retained in its final form.<sup>12</sup>*

*Otto Natzler brushing newly made glaze through a screen, 1939-1946, Photo by Dorothy Hoffman*



It was Otto who became the primary spokesman for the couple. As his proficiency in English improved, he began to write for an American audience. A 1964 piece for Craft Horizons modestly called “The Natzler Glazes,” a title that suggests a straightforward technical treatise, proves to be a complete account of their aesthetic framed in terms of the age-old elemental order. First he wrote about Earth, “the basic, the most static ingredient of a ceramic,” but subject to great transformation. For Otto, working clay was something like accelerated geology; the challenge to the potter was to bring out “its own indigenous movement.” Next came Water, which courses in and out of the clay body as it first made plastic, then dried and fired. The quality of a finished pot retains something of this fluidity, “giving an expression of the liquidity and thus the dynamism of the glaze.” Finally there was Fire, by which Otto meant not just heat—which he described as “sexless”—but actual flame and smoke, coursing powerfully through the kiln. “It is the creative emotional force that produces the form,” he wrote, “and it is the creative intellectual force that relates it to the natural forces of the fire, and thus the medium.”<sup>13</sup>

Reading this last line, you might think that Otto was allotting creative roles to himself and Gertrud based along traditional lines—she was the emotional one, he the intellectual—but I am sure that is not right. She might have been the thrower and he the alchemist, but they both concerned themselves deeply with the other's domain. Some of Otto's best writing, in fact, is about Gertrud's forms. In a 1968 monograph for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (which features gorgeous photography by Max Yavno, who would later create a memorable portrait of Otto and Gail) he delineated four main typologies of Gertrud's work: the round bowl, the bowl with a flaring lip, the teardrop

bottle, and double curved forms. All of these have fine points of articulation, with the last, he thought, being the “most elusive as to the arrangements of its curves and proportions. In its ideal development it gives the impression of expanding and contracting motion, as if breathing.”

Of course, Otto also responded to Gertrud's pots on their actual surface. He did not dip her pieces into glaze, or pour it over; but rather painted it on with a brush, carefully modulating the thickness of application depending on the shape, all the while anticipating the flow that would occur in the firing. And this was only the first stage. While Otto did have some glazes suitable for just one firing, he more often re-glazed a piece and put it into the kiln again, sometimes as many as three, four or even five times. This approach has become common recently among contemporary ceramists, but was then rather unusual—as was his combination of oxidization and reduction firing cycles. For the uninitiated, this distinction has to do with the presence or absence of oxygen in the kiln atmosphere, which produces different chemical reactions on the surface. Otto did not use a gas kiln (as is often assumed), only an electric, but could create a fiery, smoky, de-oxygenated atmosphere by adding organic material. He used homegrown woods, bamboo, and the seedpods of eucalyptus grown on the property, and on long walks up into his beloved High Sierra, he would gather pitch—“the blood of pines, firs, junipers”—for the purpose.<sup>14</sup>

These mountain hikes were one of Otto's great joys in the years after Gertrud's death, an experience that he shared with Gail. Again thanks to her encouragement, by 1976, he was emboldened to try his own hand at clay again—creating his first real solo work in the medium.



*Composition of three Natzler ceramics, 1940s,*  
Photo by Dorothy Hoffman

(He had earlier created a few sculptures like *Family Group*, in the present auction, which was made during an artist residency in 1956). The architectonic pieces he now embarked on making reflected the mountain landscape both literally and spiritually; his “monolith wall” works, for example, conjure the awesome experience of standing at the base of a granite cliff. As Gail points out, his late work is also in many ways a return to Vienna. The city’s architecture can again be felt as a reference, this time the Secessionist buildings of Otto Wagner such as the Kirche am Steinhof (1903-07), which he is known to have admired.

In these late years of Otto’s career, he had another artistic collaboration of sorts—this time with Gail, who had a strong background in the arts (she studied sculpture, as well as ceramics and painting, at Otis Art Institute) and was now pursuing photography. In 1982, she used profits from the sale of her bronze sculpture to invest in a Hasselblad set-up which allowed her to create extraordinary close-ups of Otto’s ceramics.<sup>15</sup> These brought new meaning to her earlier comment that the Natzlers’ work seemed to “encircle infinity.” The photos—which hover somewhere between scientific studies and abstract compositions—showed that Otto’s glazes did, indeed, seem to contain endless incident: spreading crystals like peacock feathers; shifting veils of overlaid pigment; canyons and craters that could be from some extraterrestrial planet. Gail’s photos showed even Otto things he had never seen in his glazes: “she recognizes form,” he said, “and emphasizes the form by proper lighting to produce three dimensions in a two-dimensional photograph.”<sup>16</sup> They manifest in glorious

extent what was already implicit: each Natzler pot, each sculpture, is like a vast terrain ready to be explored. It’s a thought that Gertrud expressed well: “The true lover of a pot will see a world contained in it and he will never see himself as its owner, but as the trustee through whose hand it will pass to the next.”<sup>17</sup>

As late as 1993, Otto remained fascinated with this medium that he and Gertrud had mastered so completely: “The wonderful thing about ceramics that’s different from any other art,” he told the New York Times, “is that you never know until you open the kiln after the very last firing what you have created.” He died in 2007, having completing a systematic numbered archive of his life’s work, both with Gertrud and on his own.<sup>18</sup> Sometime later, Gail was preparing to move his second home studio kiln—this one made in California—to be given to a local school, and thought to check inside. Lo and behold, there were a few pieces within, glazed and fired. In a strange and moving symmetry, she had found Otto’s final creations. And, no surprise, they were beautiful.

**Natzler Archive descriptions, research, and personal recollections courtesy of Gail Natzler.**

**1** Author’s interview with Gail Natzler, 25 March 2022. My thanks to Gail for her insights on this moment in Otto’s life, and all the other moments she shared with him too.

**2** Gertrud’s last three pots were made in April 1971 at the request of *Life Magazine* photo editor John Lowengard.

**3** Oral history interview with Otto Natzler, 1980 July 7–14, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. My thanks to Liza Kirwin for sharing this resource.

**4** Gail Reynolds Natzler, in oral history interview with Otto Natzler, 1980 July 7–14, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

**5** Otto Natzler, in *Gertrud and Otto Natzler Ceramics* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1968). Natzler said of his chemistry teacher at Realschule, Hugo Ludwig Fulda, “I think he influenced my life more than anybody else, because he directed me to use my brain for thinking and not anything else.” Oral history interview with Otto Natzler.

**6** Natzler, in *Gertrud and Otto Natzler Ceramics*, 24.

**7** For example, “Natzler Ceramics Again on View Here,” *New York Times* (Mar. 18, 1954); Roberta Smith, “Art in Review,” *New York Times* (Sept. 3, 1993).

**8** Natzler, in *Gertrud and Otto Natzler Ceramics*, 43–47.

**9** Otto’s cousin had previously located with his family from Regensburg to Los Angeles; when initially inquiring about coming to join them there, Otto wrote asking, “is there clay in California?”

**10** The wheel and kiln are now in the collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

**11** An unpublished, hand-written catalog of works that Otto prepared includes a list of galleries and stores that carried Natzler work, which includes nearly a hundred venues nationwide. On America House see Bella Neyman, “The (America) House That Webb Built,” *Magazine Antiques* (July/August 2012).

**12** Gertrud Natzler in *Form and Fire: Natzler Ceramics, 1939–1972* (Washington, DC: Renwick Gallery, 1973), 19.

**13** Otto Natzler, “The Natzler Glazes: Control Over the Accidental,” *Craft Horizons* 24/4 (July/Aug. 1964), 24, 39–41.

**14** Quoted in Florence Rubenfeld, “Otto Natzler: Solo,” *American Craft* 42/1 (1982), 2.

**15** “Gail Reynolds Natzler,” *Hasselblad Forum* (Jan. 1995), 20–23.

**16** Oral history interview with Otto Natzler, 1980 July 7–14, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

**17** Gertrud Natzler in *Form and Fire: Natzler Ceramics, 1939–1972* (Washington, DC: Renwick Gallery, 1973), 23.

**18** Numbering is in sequence of completion beginning with 101 to 10,000, then A001 to A1000, B001 and so on. Miniatures (of which only about three hundred were made) follow the same rule, A01 to A99, then to B01 to B99. W numbers were given to works made in Vienna (Wien), though of course these were assigned several decades after the fact. Q numbers designate questionable dates, as occasionally pieces were located well after their moment of production. X numbers, finally, were assigned to Otto’s ceramic constructions. My thanks to Gail Reynolds Natzler for this explanation.



400

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**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Large teardrop bottle**

USA, 1959

earthenware with Light Blue Celadon

Reduction Fired glaze

10½ h x 6 dia in (27 x 15 cm)

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Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'K445'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

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\$8,000-12,000



**The freedom of movement in which the unalterable proportions of the pot are contained will transmit itself directly from one hand to the other, from the maker to the lover of the pot, wherever he may be, perhaps a thousand years later. It is this immediacy, this intimacy of touch which makes pottery such a personal art form...The true lover of a pot will see a world contained in it and he will never think of himself as the owner, but as the trustee through whose hand it shall pass to the next.** Gertrud Natzler



401

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Angular vase form with indented lip**

USA, 1962

earthenware with Ivory Celadon Reduction

Fired glaze

3 $\frac{3}{4}$  h x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  dia in (10 x 14 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'M522'.

**EXHIBITED**

1965, Crocker Art Gallery, San Francisco

*American Studio Pottery*, 1966, Victoria

and Albert Museum, London

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$2,500–3,500

402

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Cylindrical vase form with indented lip**

USA, 1963

earthenware with Ivory Celadon Reduction

Fired glaze with melt fissures

7 h x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  dia in (18 x 15 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'M872'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$5,000–7,000

403

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Tall bottle form**

USA, 1963

earthenware with Mariposa Reduction Fired glaze

11 $\frac{3}{4}$  h x 4 dia in (30 x 10 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'M938'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$3,000–4,000





Whereas all Natzler ceramics were given at least two firings, the present work had two additional reduction firings. Its last firing was the final reduction firing containing any of Gertrud's ceramics. Otto's process for this firing included such ingredients as homegrown eucalyptus wood and bamboo, lodgepole pitch gathered during backpacking treks in the High Sierra, and a few sequoia cones from the tree where Otto had deposited Gertrud's ashes sixteen years prior.

404

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Closed form**

USA, 1987

earthenware with Graygreen Reduction

Fired glaze with melt-fissures

7½ h x 7¾ dia in (19 x 20 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'O645'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$7,000-10,000



405

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Closed form**

USA, 1973

earthenware with Burnt Peach Blossom

Reduction Fired glaze with iridescence

3½ h x 5½ dia in (8 x 14 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler +' with archive number 'O479'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$3,500-4,500



**If my contribution to Gertrud's pots was in harmony with their forms and if in some cases, as she claimed, even enhanced them, it was due to our complete understanding about the meaning of the pot itself. It was due to the feeling for nature we had shared from the very beginning of our relationship.** Otto Natzler



406

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**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Large bowl**

USA, 1959

earthenware with Sulphur Crater glaze

6½ h x 15½ dia in (16 x 39 cm)

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Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'K520'.

**EXHIBITED**

*California Design Eleven*, 1971, Pasadena Art Museum

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

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\$12,000–16,000



407

The present work is from Otto Natzler's fourth reduction firing and is one of only seven ceramics in this glaze, and the only one exhibited in museums.

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Rare and Large bowl**

USA, 1942  
earthenware with Sang and Gray  
Reduction Fired glaze  
4 1/2 h x 11 dia in (10 x 28 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number '2384'.

**EXHIBITED**

1942, Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego  
1943, San Francisco Museum of Art  
1944, Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
*Maija Grotell/Natzler*, 1946, The Art Institute of Chicago

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$10,000–15,000



408

Gertrud and Otto Natzler  
Bowl

USA, 1960  
earthenware with Blue Reduction Fired  
glaze with melt-fissures  
3 h x 12¼ dia in (8 x 31 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'K918'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$8,000–12,000



409

Gertrud and Otto Natzler  
Large bowl with unique glaze

USA, 1960  
earthenware with Grayblue Crater glaze  
7 h x 11 dia in (18 x 28 cm)

The multi-fired crater glaze is unique to this  
bowl. Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'K863'.

**EXHIBITED**  
*Southern California Ceramics*, 1980, Los Angeles  
County Museum of Art

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$15,000–20,000





**The rhythm of his body, the grace  
or brutality of his movements,  
the aristocracy or the commonplace  
of his thinking culminate in the  
fingertips of the potter. From there  
they flow into the clay. Honesty as  
well as charlatanry will be brought  
into a tangible form.** Gertrud Natzler



**410**

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**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Monumental bowl**

USA, 1956

earthenware with Yellow Crater glaze

13 h x 17½ dia in (33 x 44 cm)

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Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'H254'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

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\$35,000 - 45,000

**411**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Cylindrical bottle with lip**

USA, 1968  
earthenware with Mustard Hare's Fur glaze  
9½ h x 2¾ dia in (24 x 7 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'O205'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$3,000–4,000

**412**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Long-necked cylindrical bottle with lip**

USA, 1967  
earthenware with Cat's Eye Reduction Fired glaze  
with ash deposits, fire marks, and melt fissures  
10 h x 4¼ dia in (25 x 11 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'O069'.

**EXHIBITED**

1970, George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum,  
Springfield, MA  
1970, Boliou Gallery, Carlton College, Northfield, MN

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$3,500–4,800

**413**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Cylindrical vase form with indented lip**

USA, 1960  
earthenware with Flame Red Mat glaze  
6 h x 3½ dia in (15 x 9 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'K659'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$2,500–3,800

**414**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Pitcher with cupped top (no handle)**

USA, c.1960  
earthenware with Green Crystalline glaze  
7 h x 4 w x 4¼ d in (18 x 10 x 11 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'Q014'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$2,500–3,500





**Man's creations are part of nature  
and he must at all times work  
in accordance with its forces...  
The mysteries of the medium will  
remain just that. In all we have done  
we may have penetrated a little  
beyond the surface. If we did, it was  
because we tried to do what we  
believed was in the nature of the  
medium.** Otto Natzler

**415**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Massive bowl**

USA, c.1960

earthenware with Old Turquoise Alkaline Glaze  
interior and unglazed textured exterior

2 $\frac{3}{4}$  h x 5 dia in (7 x 13 cm)

Massive refers to the thick walls, rather than the size,  
of the present work. Signed to underside 'Natzler'  
with archive number 'Q038'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$1,500–2,000



**416**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Squat teardrop closed form with unique glaze**

USA, 1974

earthenware with Gray-brown Celadon Reduction  
Fired glaze with flowing heavy drops

overall: 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  h x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  dia in (18 x 19 cm)

6 $\frac{1}{4}$  h x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  dia in (16 x 19 cm)

The present glaze, which received two reduction  
firings, is unique to this work. Signed to underside  
'Natzler' with archive number 'O553'. Sold with  
an associated wood base.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$6,500–9,500



**417**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Vase form with lip**

USA, 1962

earthenware with Gunmetal Mat glaze

6 3/4 h x 6 1/4 dia in (17 x 16 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'M248'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$2,500–3,500



**418**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Rare double-curved bowl**

USA, 1956

stoneware with Sang and Ivory Reduction Fired glaze

4 h x 5 dia in (10 x 13 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$2,500–3,500

The present work is from the artists' only stoneware firing, made while they were visiting artists at the Idyllwild Arts Academy in Idyllwild-Pine Cove, CA.



**419**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Rare squat bottle form with long neck**

USA, 1974

earthenware with Sang and Blue Nocturne

Reduction Fired glaze with melt-fissures,

skinning, and iridescence

16 h x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  dia in (41 x 23 cm)

Gertrud made only a few of this particular form.

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'O621'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$15,000 - 20,000





**421**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Round bowl with fingermarks**

USA, 1982  
earthenware with Gray Celadon Reduction  
Fired glaze, melt-fissures, and skinning  
5½ h x 7½ dia in (14 x 18 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler X' with archive  
number 'O623'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$3,000 - 4,000



**422**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Bowl**

USA, 1940  
earthenware with Dusk Reduction Fired glaze  
4 h x 11½ dia in (10 x 28 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number '7530'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$6,500 - 9,500





**423**

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**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Rectangular pinched cylinder with turned-in rim**  
USA, c.1975  
earthenware with Sang Nocturne Reduction  
Fired glaze with firemarks  
6½ h x 5¼ w x 6 d in (16 x 13 x 15 cm)

---

Signed to underside 'Natzler'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

---

\$3,000 - 4,000



**424**

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**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Bowl with lip**  
USA, 1972  
earthenware with Peach Blossom Reduction  
Fired glaze, iridescence, and faint melt-fissures  
5½ h x 8 dia in (14 x 20 cm)

---

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'O452'.

**LITERATURE**  
*Natzlerkeramiken 1935-1990*, exhibition catalog, pg. 105 illustrates the present example

**EXHIBITED**  
*Gertrud and Otto Natzler: Collaboration/Solitude*, 15 July - 10 October 1993, American Craft Museum, New York  
*Natzlerkeramiken 1935-1990*, 8 July - 26 October 1994, Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna, Austria

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

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\$6,000 - 9,000

The present work was fired in Otto's first reduction firing after Gertrud's death. As he chose to do during the reduction process of many subsequent firings of her work, Otto included a few sequoia cones from the tree in which he had deposited her ashes.





425

Gertrud and Otto Natzler

Double-curved bowl

USA, 1947

earthenware with Dawn Celadon Reduction

Fired glaze with melt fissures

5½ h x 9¾ dia in (14 x 25 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number '8518'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$6,000 - 9,000



426

**Otto Natzler**

**Large fragmented cube on tall pyramidal base**

USA, 1992

earthenware with Sulphur and Gray Green

Crater glaze

15 h x 12½ w x 12½ d in (38 x 31 x 31 cm)

Impressed signature twice to interior 'Natzler' with artist's cipher. Incised thrice to interior and once to the lid 'III'. Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1992' with two artist's ciphers, archive number 'X591' and incised number 'XVII'.

**LITERATURE**

*Heirlooms of the Future*, exhibition catalog, unpaginated

*San Diego Reader*, 2 December 1993, pg. 71

*Ceramics Monthly*, Vol. 41 No. 5, pg. 63 illustrate the present example

**EXHIBITED**

*Heirlooms of the Future*, 22 August 1993 – 15 January 1994, Mingei Museum, La Jolla

**PROVENANCE**

Gift from Otto Natzler to Gail Natzler for her birthday in 2001

\$10,000–15,000



**The potter who is in accord with his world will be aware that his rotating wheel becomes an infinitesimal part of the force that makes night meet day, that sends his blood circulating through his veins. He will be aware that the life he gives to spinning clay may be as immortal as his very material. There are stillborn pots as well as alive ones, and the alive eye can see the difference. In pottery, form is the content.** Gertrud Natzler



**427**

---

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Large bowl with fingermarks and spiral center**  
USA, 1962  
earthenware with Steel Blue Mat glaze  
3 1/2 h x 11 dia in (8 x 28 cm)

---

The present work was such a favorite of the artists that it was never exhibited. Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'L870'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

---

\$10,000–15,000



**428**

**Otto Natzler**

**Trapezoidal disk**

USA, 1990

earthenware with Cherry Red glaze  
with crystallization

11  $\frac{1}{4}$  h x 10 w x 2  $\frac{1}{4}$  d in (30 x 25 x 7 cm)

Signed and dated to underside 'O.N.90' with  
artist's cipher and archive number 'X546'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$4,000 - 6,000



**429**

**Otto Natzler**

**Beaker form**

USA, 1987

earthenware with unique Brown glaze  
with pendulous flow

7  $\frac{1}{4}$  h x 6  $\frac{1}{4}$  w x 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  d in (19 x 16 x 9 cm)

Signed and dated to underside 'O.N.87' with  
artist's cipher and incised number 'XII'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$2,000 - 3,000



430

Otto Natzler

Oval beaker form

USA, 1990

earthenware with Cherry Red glaze  
with crystallization

9½ h x 6¾ w x 3½ d in (24 x 17 x 9 cm)

Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler  
1990' with artist's cipher, archive number 'X552'  
and incised number 'V'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$2,500 - 3,500



431

Gertrud and Otto Natzler

Three-legged round bowl

USA, 1974

earthenware with Graygreen and Sang Reduction  
Fired glaze, melt-fissures, and iridescence

5¼ h x 7¼ dia in (13 x 18 cm)

Gertrud only made eight three-legged bowls, all of  
which were glazed by Otto after her death. Applied  
archive number to underside of one foot 'O513'.

**LITERATURE**

*Natzler*, exhibition catalog, no. 12

**EXHIBITED**

*Natzler*, 4 October - 13 November 1977, Craft and Folk  
Art Museum, Los Angeles (traveled to the Scottsdale  
Center for the Arts and Northern Arizona University)

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$6,500 - 9,500





**The art of pottery is to the field  
of art what chamber music is  
to the field of music.** Otto Natzler

**432**

---

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**

**Tea bowl**

USA, c.1957

earthenware with Green Black Mat glaze

2 1/4 h x 4 dia in (6 x 10 cm)

---

Signed to underside 'Natzler'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

---

\$1,000–1,500



**433**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Cylindrical covered jar**

USA, 1987  
earthenware with Graygreen and Sang Reduction  
Fired glaze, iridescence, and fire marks  
4  $\frac{1}{4}$  h x 3  $\frac{3}{4}$  dia in (12 x 10 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'O644'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$2,000–3,000

**434**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Vase form with indented lip**

USA, 1960  
earthenware with Dark Mystic Blue glaze  
5  $\frac{1}{2}$  h x 6 dia in (14 x 15 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'L114'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$2,500–3,500



**435**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Bottle with flaring lip**

USA, 1960  
earthenware with Old Ivory Alkaline Mat glaze  
7 h x 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  dia in (17 x 11 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'K812'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Dalzell Hatfield Gallery, Los Angeles  
Gift from Mary Strobel to Gail Natzler

\$5,500–7,000



**436**

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Bowl**

USA, 1972  
earthenware with Sang and Green Nocturne  
Reduction Fired glaze and iridescence  
2  $\frac{3}{4}$  h x 6  $\frac{1}{2}$  dia in (7 x 16 cm)

The present work was fired in Otto's first reduction  
firing after Gertrud's death. As he chose to do during  
the reduction process of many subsequent firings  
of her work, Otto included a few sequoia cones from  
the tree in which he had deposited her ashes. Signed  
to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'O459'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$2,000–3,000

**437**

**Otto Natzler**

**Large cube with four pipes on a cylindrical base**

USA, 1989

earthenware with Verdigris Sulphur Crater glaze  
22½ h x 8½ w x 8½ d in (57 x 22 x 22 cm)

Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1989'  
with two artist's ciphers, archive number 'X534'  
and incised number 'VIII'.

**LITERATURE**

*Natzlerkeramiken 1935-1990*, exhibition catalog,  
pg. 120 illustrates the present example

**EXHIBITED**

1989, Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles

*Natzlerkeramiken 1935-1990*, 8 July-26 October

1994, Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna, Austria

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$8,000-12,000



**438**

---

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Rare light with triangular cut-outs**  
USA, 1964  
earthenware with Green Crater glaze  
6½ h x 4½ dia in (16 x 11 cm)

---

The present work is one of only two ceramics ever made with this glaze, both of them lights with triangular cut-outs. Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'N204'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

---

\$2,500 - 3,500



**439**

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**Otto Natzler**  
**Family Group**  
USA, 1956

earthenware with Pale Green Lavastone glaze  
15½ h x 12 w x 12½ d in (39 x 30 x 32 cm)

---

Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1956'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Otto Natzler

---

\$12,000–16,000



440

**Otto Natzler**  
**Cube with four stepped pipes on circular base**  
USA, 1986  
earthenware with Sang and Blue Reduction  
Fired glaze with iridescence  
10½ h x 6½ w x 6½ d in (27 x 16 x 17 cm)

Though dated 1986, the present work was completed in 1987. Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1986' with artist's cipher, archive number 'X490' and incised number 'VI'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Otto Natzler

\$5,000 - 7,000



441

**Gertrud and Otto Natzler**  
**Tall chalice**  
USA, 1969  
earthenware with Blue Mariposa Reduction  
Fired glaze with melt-fissures  
10 h x 8¾ dia in (25 x 22 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive number 'O288'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Gertrud and Otto Natzler

\$5,000 - 7,000



**I love to control what cannot  
be completely controlled, what  
nature creates—the accidental  
and, at times, the impossible.**  
Otto Natzler





**442**

**Otto Natzler**

**Large gyrolith and tall cylindrical  
base with unique glaze**

USA, 1990

earthenware with Deep Blue Crystalline glaze  
18½ h x 13 dia in (47 x 33 cm)

This is the only ceramic construction sculpture featuring the Deep Blue Crystalline glaze. Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1990' with artist's cipher, archive number 'X565' and incised number 'III'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$7,000–10,000

**443**

**Otto Natzler**

**Cube with recessed top and square base**

USA, 1980

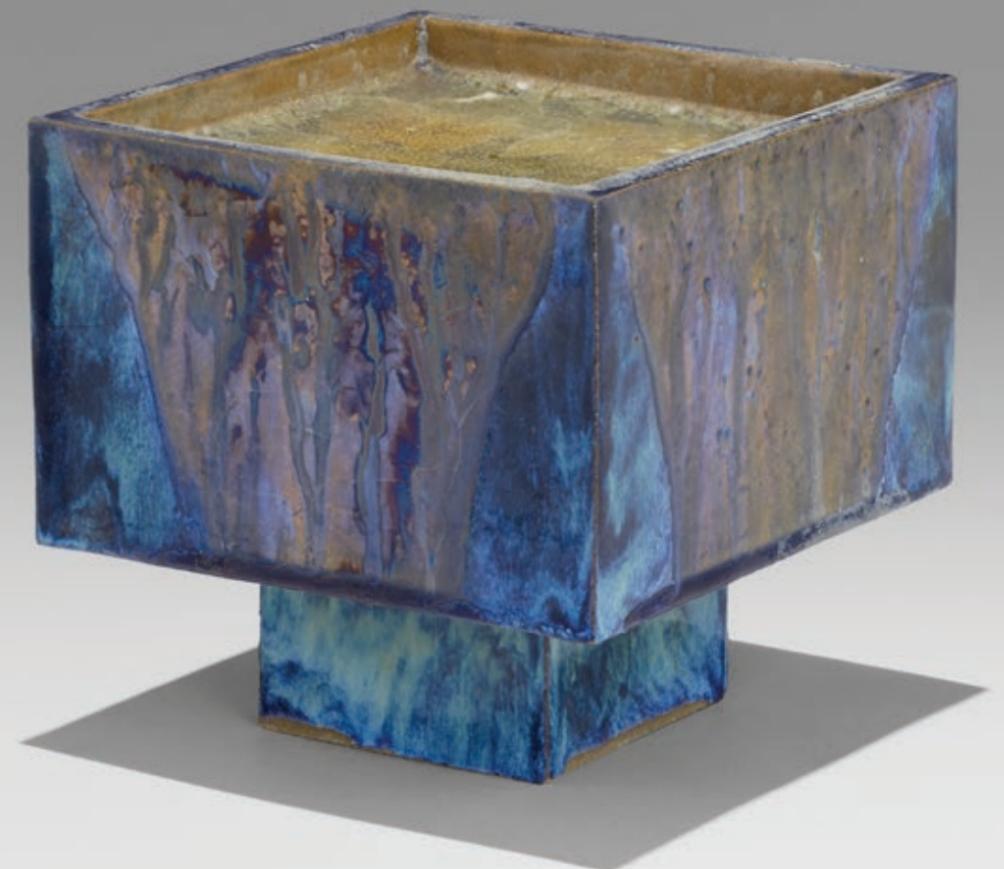
earthenware with Blue Reduction Fired glaze,  
melt-fissures, iridescence, and glass pool  
6 h x 6 1/4 w x 6 d in (15 x 16 x 15 cm)

This ceramic construction had multiple glaze and  
reduction firings; the glaze is unique to this work.  
Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1980'  
with artist's cipher and archive number 'X174'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$2,500 - 3,500





**445**

**Otto Natzler**

**Octagonal bowl**

USA, 1947/1972

cast earthenware with Pale Yellow Crystalline glaze  
2½ h x 6¾ w x 6¾ d in (6 x 17 x 17 cm)

Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1972'  
with archive number 'O522'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$2,000–3,000



**446**

**Otto Natzler**

**Octagonal vessel**

USA, 1947/1974

cast earthenware with Aventurin glaze  
2½ h x 6¾ w x 6¾ d in (6 x 17 x 17 cm)

Signed to underside 'Natzler' with archive  
number 'O523'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$2,000–3,000



**447**

**Otto Natzler**

**R (Vertical half-disk on cylinder)**

USA, 1981

earthenware with Pale Green and Black

Crater glaze and drips

4 dia x 22 h inches

Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1981'  
with artist's cipher and archive number 'X205'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$6,000–9,000





448

**Otto Natzler**

**Triangular form with three pipes on a conical base**

USA, 1978

earthenware with Blue and Green Mariposa

Reduction Fired glaze, melt-fissures, and fire marks

7½ h x 7½ w x 7½ d in (19 x 19 x 19 cm)

Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1978'  
with artist's cipher and archive number 'X126'.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Otto Natzler

\$2,500 - 3,500



**449**

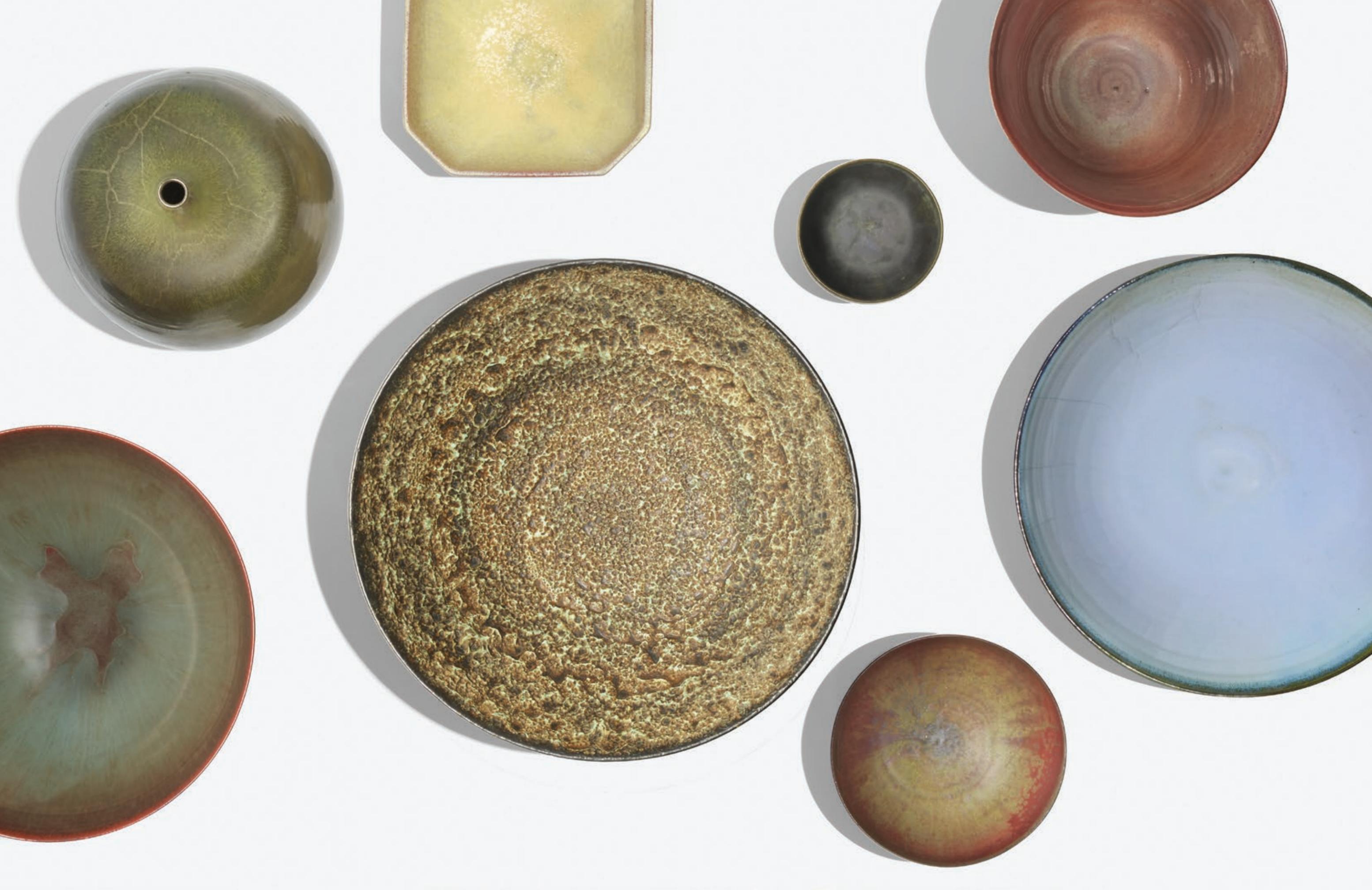
**Otto Natzler**  
**Oval form with three openings and double-oval base**  
USA, 1980/1981  
earthenware with Dark Grey Celadon Reduction  
Fired glaze, melt-fissures, and skinning  
8½ h x 8¼ w x 3¼ d in (22 x 21 x 8 cm)

Though dated 1980, the present work was completed in 1981. Signed and dated to underside 'Otto Natzler 1980' with artist's cipher and archive number 'X213'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Collection of Otto Natzler

\$3,500–4,500





# RAGO

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A collection of five ceramic bowls is displayed against a plain, light-colored background. The bowls vary in size and finish. One bowl at the top is a smooth, reddish-brown color and sits on a small white pedestal. Below it is a large, wide bowl with a mottled green and brown speckled texture. To the left, a bowl with a dark, almost black, porous-looking surface is partially visible. In the foreground, there are two smaller bowls: one with a dark, marbled finish in shades of red and black, and another with a smooth, light blue glaze. The lighting is soft, casting gentle shadows on the white surface below the bowls.

FORCES OF