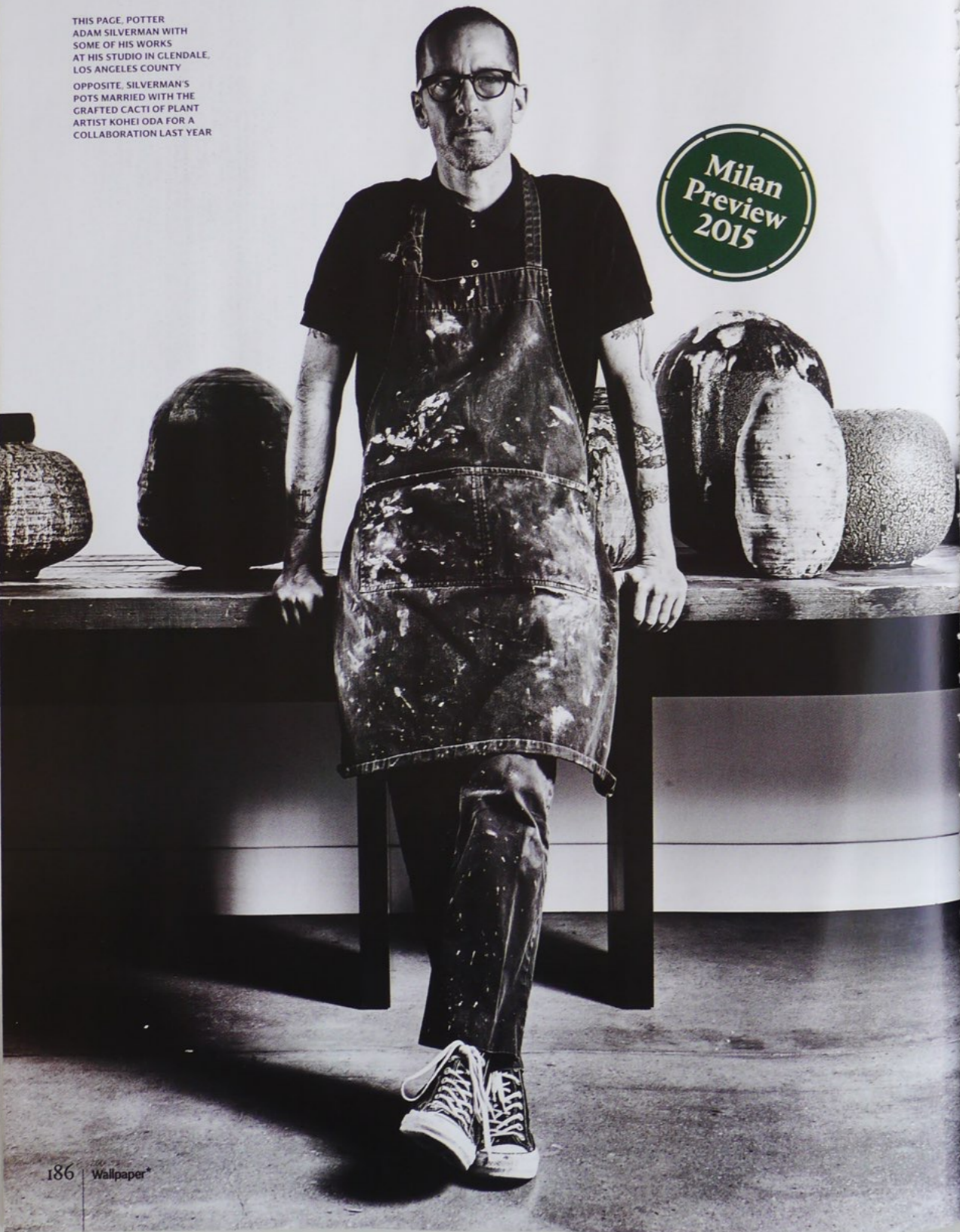


## Salone del Mobile

THIS PAGE, POTTER ADAM SILVERMAN WITH SOME OF HIS WORKS AT HIS STUDIO IN GLENDALE, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

OPPOSITE, SILVERMAN'S POTS MARRIED WITH THE GRAFTED CACTI OF PLANT ARTIST KOHEI ODA FOR A COLLABORATION LAST YEAR



# Clay mates

From a collaboration with a master cactus grower to an installation for Wallpaper\* Handmade, potter Adam Silverman has been hard at the wheel

PHOTOGRAPHY: ADRIAN GAUT PRODUCER: MICHAEL REYNOLDS WRITER: MICHAEL SLENSKE



## Salone del Mobile

SILVERMAN'S FORMS  
AND MULTI-FIRED GLAZES  
COMBINE WITH ODA'S  
HYBRID PLANTS TO  
CREATE A GNARLY BEAUTY



P

otter Adam Silverman likes to call his 2014 collaboration, 'A Tale Of Plant & Pot', with cactus guru Kohei Oda, a 'blind date'. The US architect-turned-artist was set up by art director Tamotsu Yagi. Yagi designed Silverman's 2013 monograph for Rizzoli and his daughter co-owns the Venice Beach design shop, Chariots of Fire, where the Silverman-Oda project debuted. Though the venture yielded a dynamic merger of Oda's self-described 'ugly but beautiful' grafts and Silverman's 'ambitious pots', and is now catalogued in the elegant tome *Grafted* (August Edition), Silverman admits he wasn't exactly sold on the concept at first.

'The idea of making pots for plants is fine, but I'm trying to do something a little higher up the food chain,' says Silverman, whose work is collected by the likes of LA gallerist Irving Blum and Japanese artist Takashi Murakami and has shown at Design Miami.

He's currently preparing new works for his fifth solo show at Tokyo's Curator's Cube gallery; creating lighting fixtures for a forthcoming Dior store in Seoul designed by Peter Marino; and crafting 'fucked up, lumpy, maybe beautiful' translations of Fabergé eggs with David Wiseman for Wallpaper's Handmade exhibition at April's Salone del Mobile in Milan. Still, he's no stranger to functional collaborations - 'practising my fundamentals' as he calls them - like his ongoing tableware project with Hollywood eatery Trois Mec, run by his friends and top chefs Ludo Lefebvre, Vinny Dotolo and Jon Shook.

After Yagi showed Silverman some of Oda's books, though, the artist grew more excited about the project and sent a couple of test pots across the Pacific for the haute horticulturist, who achieved stunning effects by planting his exotic hybrids inside them.

'I am not interested in the outer beauty of plants, I'm attracted to a unique plant,' says Oda, who has harvested some 2,000 different species. 'I was impressed by Adam because his approach was very essential. For a plant, a pot is a place to live. His pots and my plants shared a common point of view.'

While Silverman says he's long been inspired by the Abstract Expressionist innovations of Peter Voulkos, the unconventional godfather of the midcentury US studio movement, he admits his practice is rooted in the 'tight' training he received as an architect.

'Voulkos was very much a madman,' says Silverman. 'He wouldn't allow himself to be photographed without a cigarette and became a coke addict in his sixties, but one of the things I liked most about him was that, first and foremost, he was a potter at the wheel. He won awards for teacups and pots, and it was because he was so good at the fundamentals that he could express himself so well abstractly. That's what I'm trying to do. I'm more fearful than he was, and I wish I was more aggressive, but I'm fine with being patient and assuming I've got another 30 to 40 years of work in me.'

This patience has served him well. Silverman began throwing pots at the age of 14 and he got into Rhode Island School of Design with a ceramics portfolio.



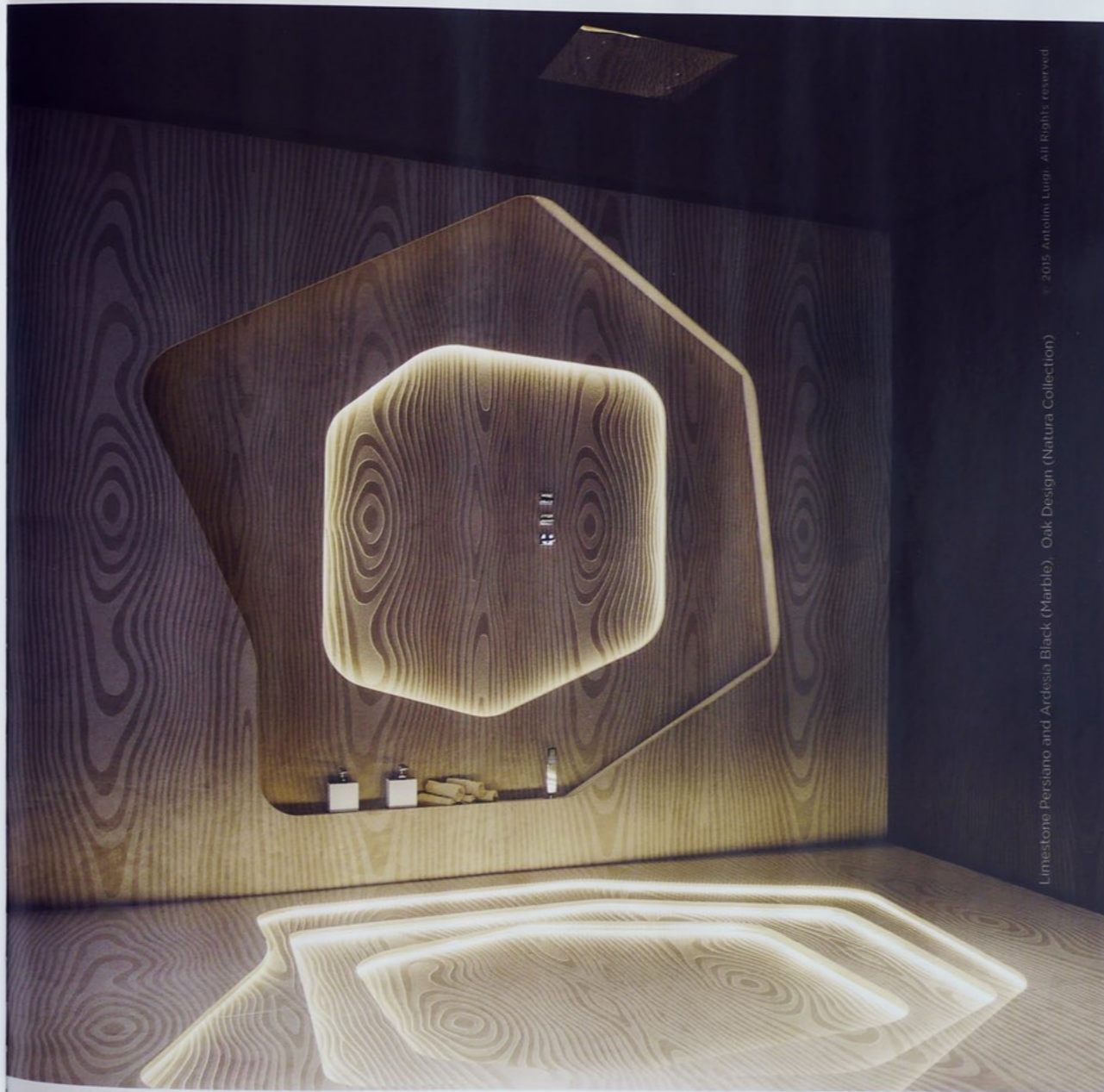
MORE 'A TALE OF PLANT & POT' WORKS, WHICH SOLD OUT AT THE PROJECT'S VENICE BEACH DEBUT AND SUBSEQUENT SHOWS IN KYOTO

He later studied architecture 'because it was the one area where you could do it all - art, history, design.' He spent four years working in LA for protégés of Norman Foster before going out on his own in the mid-1990s to work on ventures including a streetwear company. After a summer ceramics programme at New York's Alfred University, Silverman opened his own space in LA's Atwater Village, which led to his Atwater Pottery outfit. In 2008, Heath Ceramics (W'121) appointed him its LA studio director, which allowed him to work from the brand's studio while creating his own projects. 'During the next five years my work evolved,' says Silverman. 'As it became bigger and lumpier and weirder, it made less sense being in that context.'

Indeed, the Oda pots are like prickly alien life forms in bulbous rockets, while for the Wallpaper\* Handmade installation, Wiseman is crafting bronze ovoid cages and shells, inside of which Silverman will insert his bubbling volcanic forms and hammer-cracked eggs.

Now Silverman has the space he needs, a 4,400 sq ft, skylit studio in Glendale, LA County. 'I love having bigger kilns, space to breathe.' While he hopes to start making larger works, he doesn't want to scale up his operation just to meet the market. 'What feels right for me now is to come here, sit and just throw things.' ★  
*Wallpaper\* Handmade, The Arcade, via San Gregoria 43, 14 April, 12 - 4pm; 15 - 18 April, 10am - 7pm, adamsilverman.net*

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## Station master

Daniel Buren's underground art

## Going public

The rise of the private museum

## Case load

Our sweeping survey of this year's top watches

## Tribute act

Jasper Morrison makes history with Molteni

