

## In the Studio

Object Factory: The Art of Industrial Ceramics  
Robert Dawson



Robert Dawson  
*Verticality*, 2008  
Bone china; ceramic print decal  
13/16 x 98/16 x 61/16 in.  
13/16 x 10 3/4 in. each plate  
Photo: Hannah Louise Lamb

*Object Factory: The Art of Industrial Ceramics*, on view from May 6 to September 13, highlights inventive work in ceramics by artists and designers from around the world. Among those artists is England's Robert Dawson (born 1953), whose work ranges from unique individual objects to large-scale public art commissions. A graduate of the Royal College of Art, Dawson's work is informed by his knowledge of and appreciation for historic pattern and ornament. *Object Factory* features Dawson's *Verticality*, 2008, a wall installation of 36 bone china plates; each plate is printed with a fragment of "Blue Willow," a traditional pattern based on Chinese blue-and-white designs and used in production ceramics in Great Britain and the United States since the 19th century. Familiar elements from

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the original pattern—Chinese pagodas, bridges, willow trees, and boats—have been scanned into a computer, deconstructed and rearranged on the plates to create a staccato and chaotic pattern that the viewer's eye tries to "read" as a coherent scene. This intervention transforms the familiar into the exotic, creating a dynamic tension reinforced by the parallelogram created in the arrangement of the 3 dozen plates. "*Verticality*," says Dawson, "is yet another reading in a long line of reinterpretations of the 'Willow' pattern."