

Vase  
(untitled)

Keramische Werkstätte Alsiko Uster  
1945



Vase, 1945  
Entwurf/Ausführung: Helene Haussmann, Fritz Haussmann  
Herstellung: Keramische Werkstätte Alsiko Uster, CH  
Material/Technik: Steinzeug, gedreht, glasiert (Rauchglasur)  
11 × 12.2 cm  
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

The Alsiko ceramics workshop established by the couple Fritz (1900–1968) and Helene Haussmann-Frei (1905–1989) found success with carefully crafted serially produced consumer goods, relying in their studio pottery on masterfully executed sleek vases with adventurous glazes.

Trained in Germany, the ceramic artists Fritz and Helene Haussmann-Frei established a pottery workshop in Niederuster in 1928, calling it Alsiko after one of the raw materials used in ceramics production: aluminum silicate. Their arguably best-known product is the Alsiko service with rounded shapes that Helene Haussmann-Frei designed circa 1933. The tableware made of fine-grained, high-fire clay—its focal point the patented non-drip teapot with its long, downward-facing spout—was available unglazed in red or black as well with glazes in various colors and was a best seller. Along with avant-garde products like these, which were modeled on Bauhaus predecessors, the Haussmanns also produced simple studio ceramics. The spherical vase with a wide opening was developed in the mid-1940s. At the time, Helene Haussmann began experimenting with glazes, inspired by Asian examples.

The dark red glaze of the thin-walled body was coated with a graphite gray smoke glazing with turquoise-colored patches and sprinkles. The elegant ovoid body seems to float above the ring on which it stands. After 1948, Helene Haussmann became sole director of the factory with its up to fifteen employees (until 1962). For the production of decorative vases and jugs, she brought in the well-known artisans Berta Tappolet, Luise Strasser, Cornelia Forster, and Amata Good, who provided the decoration for the folksy product line that was also offered. In 1952, Max Bill included a heart-shaped vase made after a design by Helene Haussmann-Frei in the compendium *Die Gute Form*. (Sabine Flaschberger)

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