

The Design Brand That Came Out of Nowhere

Feldspar's objects for life

A 400-year-old Devon longhouse on an isolated patch of Dartmoor may not be where you'd expect to find the nerve centre of an ascendant design empire, but this remote farm building serves as home, workshop and studio for Cath and Jeremy Brown – the husband-and-wife team behind **Feldspar**.

One of the most exciting UK design brands to emerge in recent years, Feldspar currently produces a diverse range of contemporary homewares, including fine bone china vases and tableware, all-natural soaps and candles, and luxurious lambswool blankets. All products are designed and prototyped in their moorland studio, made by some of the most skilled craftspeople around the UK, and stocked by the likes of **Fortnum & Mason**, **Alex Eagle**, **Mint**, the **V&A** and **The Store x Soho House**.



Co-founder of Feldspar, Cath Brown wearing the Russet Moor Blanket (£540).

The success – even, the existence – of Feldspar is something of a happy accident. Rewind a couple of years and Jeremy was the creative director of the **UN's Ethical Fashion Initiative**, charged with bringing marginalised communities of makers into the supply chains of international fashion houses, while Cath was designing schools and buildings for a **Soho architecture firm**. But despite having 'made it' as urban creatives, with the demands of Jeremy's role meaning he was lucky to be in London for six days a month, and a baby on the way, the pair were hankering for a change of pace and a more natural lifestyle.

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(Left) Co-Founder Jeremy Brown in the Feldspar workshop.

(Right) Feldspar Gold Stem Vase (£150).

They found it in the wilds of Dartmoor. They secured an unfurnished farmhouse in Devon, left their jobs and London life behind them and, newborn in tow, replanted themselves in the wilderness. The initial plan was to take some time out, then find consultancy work with other companies, but things have panned out rather differently...

Cath and Jeremy had all the time they needed, but none of the furniture or household essentials. In the weeks after their move, they set about designing and making objects for their new home, experimenting with different materials and techniques to create everything from a dining table to coffee cups. Jeremy had trained in carpentry and had professional experience in product design behind him (*Wallpaper** listed him in its 'next generation of designers' in 2007 and the **San Francisco MoMA** took some of his surrealist wine glasses into its collection), and both of them share a practical, get-it-done approach to problem solving.

As the pieces came rolling out of their improvised workshop in the building's former stables, they began to see the possibility of turning their personal domestic project into a viable business. Their first collection was a set of tactile, dimpled china coffee cups, prototyped in the workshop, then hand-made by ceramic craft specialists in Stoke-on-Trent. By the time retailers and galleries such as **Alex Eagle** and **Mint** started showing interest, and the **V&A** wanted to include their products in its spotlight on ceramics, it became clear that the Browns' new enterprise needed a name. **Feldspar** – the mineral family used as a bonding agent ceramics and glass and found in abundance beneath Dartmoor – suited it perfectly.

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Feldspar Gold Bunch Vase (£150), Gold Stem Vase (£150) and Gold Bud Vase (£130).



Feldspar Russet Moor Blanket (£540).

'We wanted to try to make things where we didn't have to compromise, where we could control every aspect, from initial idea, to material development, to the finished product, and pay fair prices for the highly skilled craftsmanship involved. We want our products to be used and treasured – objects for life and objects for living, used every day but looked after, and designed to last for life. We're so tired of hoards of stuff; the loads and loads of things that we all accumulate. We wanted to pare things down and have less stuff that is more beautifully made. It's like what William Morris said: you should have nothing in your house that you don't know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.'

– **Cath Brown**, Feldspar

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Feldspar Gold Espresso Mug (£35).

The collections expanded, the list of stockists grew, and Feldspar's ceramics, soaps, and blankets are now available from some of the most cherished design and homeware retailers in the UK. Although spanning several craft disciplines, Feldspar products are united by both aesthetic and philosophy; they are designed to be timeless and immune to changing trends, engineered for lifelong everyday use, formed from **sustainable, natural materials**, and made without compromising on the quality of materials or craftsmanship.

Two years on, and the Feldspar studio is busier than ever, mastering that balance between use and beauty across an ever more varied range of product collections, and experimenting with an increasingly diverse range of materials. A series of reinvented **parlour games** is in the pipeline, as are new products in **Jesmonite** and a line of homewares crafted from clay excavated from the Dartmoor soil. Whatever comes out of that Devon longhouse in the years to come, it's clear that, although it will certainly be considered, beautifully crafted and made to last, it – like the story of Feldspar – **will be anything but predictable.**

The Feldspar range is available to order at feldspar.studio.

*For more information about **Feldspar**, its story and its products, please contact
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