

CERAMICS NOW

M A G A Z I N E



June 2026

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Front cover: Eva Zethraeus, Lavender Calliandra with white tips, 2025. Photo by Sebastian Waldenby
Back cover: Eva Zethraeus, Lavender Calliandra with platinum details (detail), 2025. Photo by Sebastian Waldenby

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Eva Zethraeus

Eva Zethraeus (b. 1971, Sweden) is a ceramic artist based in Gothenburg, whose work investigates the intersections between nature, transformation, and materiality. Her sculptures, often inspired by organic growth, cellular structures, and imagined life forms, explore the tension between beauty and decay, fragility and resilience.

Zethraeus studied Ceramic Art at HDK-Valand Academy of Art and Design in Gothenburg, receiving an MFA in 1998. Over the past two decades, she has established a distinct voice within contemporary ceramics, known for her intricate, handthrown structures that suggest organic systems in flux. Her works frequently appear in clusters or as modular installations, evoking the dynamic, interdependent relationships found in nature.

Her practice has been presented in solo and group exhibitions in Sweden and internationally. Exhibitions include various curated shows and Art Fairs in Europe, Asia, and the USA including Design Miami, The Fogfair, TEFAF in New York, and Design Miami. In 2026, she exhibited new works at HB381 Gallery in New York.

Eva Zethraeus's work is represented in several prominent public collections, including the Röhsska Museum, Nationalmuseum and The High Museum in Atlanta, USA and the Public Art Agency Sweden (Statens konstråd), Västra Götalandsregionen, and several Swedish Embassies.

Throughout her career, she has been awarded numerous grants and residencies, including three work grants from the Swedish Arts Grants Committee (Konstnärdsnämnden). She has also participated in masterclasses and residencies in Europe, Japan and the USA where she has continued to refine her experimental techniques with clay, glaze, and firing processes.

Eva Zethraeus continues to live and work in Gothenburg, Sweden, where she maintains her studio practice at Konstpedemin and participates actively in the contemporary ceramic art community.

Visit **Eva Zethraeus's** website and Instagram page.

<https://www.evazethraeus.se/>
[@ezeth](#)





Photo by Sebastian Waldenby

Lauren Kalman

Lauren Kalman is a visual artist based in Detroit, whose practice is rooted in contemporary craft, sculpture, video, photography and performance. Through performances using her body, her work investigates constructions of the ideal and the feminine and their impacts on self-image and identity, the politics of craft, and the built environment.

Raised in Cleveland, Kalman completed her PhD in Practice-led Research from the School of Art and Design at the Australian National University. She earned a MFA in Art and Technology from the Ohio State University and a BFA with a focus in Metals from Massachusetts College of Art.

Her work has been featured in exhibitions at the Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Museum of Arts and Design, Museum of Contemporary Craft, Cranbrook Art Museum, Contemporary Art Museum Houston, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Mint Museum, World Art Museum in Beijing, and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris among others. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Françoise van den Bosch Foundation at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Smithsonian Museum of American Art,

Detroit Institute of Art, Museum of Arts and Design, and the Korean Ceramics Foundation.

She has been awarded residencies at the Corning Museum of Glass, Bemis Center, Australian National University, Corporation of Yaddo, Virginia Center for Creative Arts, Brush Creek Arts Foundation, and Haystack. She has received Chenven Foundation, Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation, Puffin Foundation, Puffin Foundation West, and ISE Cultural Foundation grants. In 2020 she received the Françoise van den Bosch Award for her career's impact on the jewelry field, in 2022 she received the Raphael Founders Prize in Glass from Contemporary for Craft, and in 2023 she was named a Kresge Arts in Detroit Fellow.

She a dedicated educator and believes strongly in empowerment through education. Currently she is Professor and Chair of the Department of Art, Art History and Design at Wayne State University in Detroit.

Visit **Lauren Kalman's** website and Instagram page.

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@laurenkalman





To Have or to Hold..., 2024





The title To Have or To Hold... is derived from traditional wedding vows and explores embodied responses to loss of control, fear, social dissonance, and the desire for human connection. The project is a meditation on building, control, and destruction. The precariousness of life. The desire to hold close. The ability to smother.

To Have or To Hold... is comprised of performance videos and ceramic objects. I produce wheel thrown ceramic vessels that I distort through holding or compressing in the negative spaces of my body. The carefully controlled form of the vessel is lost with the imprint of the body leaving both a permanent distortion of the original form and the lasting imprint of the absent body. Once the vessels are formed, they are not altered; tension cracks, folds, and textures are all fired in place.

This project was supported the Wayne State University Humanities Center Faculty Fellowship Program

Shinhye You

Shinhye You is a ceramic artist born in South Korea in 1993 and currently based in London. Shinhye's connection with clay began in 2013 at Kookmin University in South Korea, where she earned her BA and MA in ceramics. She has been based in London since gaining her MA in Ceramics & Glass at the Royal College of Art in 2023.

Her works have been featured internationally, including the Aveiro Ceramic Biennale, Ceramic Art Andenne, International Ceramic Biennale in Siegburg, Ceramic Art London, and more.

Working across ceramics, writing, and installation, Shinhye crafts written fiction rooted in magical realism, translating it into visual forms with clay as her primary medium. Her ceramic pieces serve as tangible remnants of her imagined worlds, evidence of human lives and magical creatures that once existed. Emerging after the death of their fictional inhabitants, these works stand as empty vessels, lyrical echoes of a bygone existence.

Through these pieces, Shinhye explores the afterlife of once living beings, capturing the residue of fragile

human presence and perished beliefs in a delicate interplay between reality and imagination. While her works originate from her imagined narratives, personal experiences, memories, and emotions deeply inform them. Through the creation of imagined worlds, she reflects on themes of loss, longing, displacement, and the transient nature of human existence.

Her sculptures evoke a sense of melancholy and beauty, inviting viewers to encounter traces of lives that can no longer be fully observed or recovered. Rather than presenting complete stories, they offer fragments and remains through which audiences may connect with their own memories, griefs, and desires. In this way, Shinhye's work seeks to create an emotional space where fiction becomes a vessel for shared human experience, resonating with the tenderness and sadness that accompany both remembrance and loss.

Visit **Shinhye You's** website and Instagram page.

<https://shinhyeyou.creatorlink.net/>
@_red.ant





No, I Won't Forgive You, 2025. Jade Porcelain. 1280 reduction, 15x12x15cm. Photo by Chuan Fa

Mingshu Li

Mingshu Li (b. 1994) is a Chinese ceramic artist based in Oslo, Norway. She completed her Master's degree in Medium and Material Based Art at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO) in 2020. Her practice explores non-traditional approaches to clay through sculptural structures shaped by airflow, repetition, and extrusion-based processes.

Working between cultural contexts, Li approaches ceramics as a material language for reflecting on identity, migration, and the relationship between form and place. Her recent projects investigate the historical movement of ceramic patterns between China and Europe, treating decoration as a carrier of cultural memory and transformation rather than a fixed surface element.

Her work has been exhibited internationally and is included in several public collections, including KODE Art Museums (Norway), Jingdezhen Ceramic University Museum (China), the International Museum of Ceramics in Faenza (Italy), the Municipal Art Collection of El Vendrell (Spain), and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Art Collection.

Visit **Mingshu Li's** website and Instagram page.

<https://mingshuli.com/>
 @ming_shu_li



The strawflowers' journey #6, 2025, stoneware and glazes, 20x31x56 cm



Pink Tubes' Form #pp, 2023, porcelain and glazes, 58x39x41 cm, photo by Kamil Kak

Anca Ion

Anca Ion, born in Bucharest, is a Spanish ceramic artist and craftswoman recognized by the Catalan Craft Council. She trained in Contemporary Applied Arts, Fire Arts in ceramics and glass at Massana School and the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Recently, she was selected for the Homo Faber Guide, and she is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics.

Her alternative figurative sculptures explore the relationship between people and nature. Inspired by Greek mythology, archaeology, science, and direct observation, she investigates the organic and geometric forms found in nature and their connection with mathematics. Working with stoneware, porcelain, and other high-temperature

clays, her pieces evoke roots, sponges, imaginary beings, and expanding forms, conveying fragility and strength at the same time.

Her work has been included in contemporary exhibitions in Spain, Portugal, Korea, Italy, Poland, Denmark, Hungary, Slovenia, China, and Romania. She received the Mention of Honour for Las Kokedamas at the N.A.C.E. Unique Piece Contest 2021 in Spain, and the 1st Prize for Substrats at the 16th National Award of Ceramic “Ciutat de Castelló” in December 2022. Her work belongs to the National Heritage of Castellón.

Visit **Anca Ion**'s website and Instagram page.

[@anca3ion](https://ancaion.wixsite.com/ancaion)



Vol-Xia I, 2025. refractory, porcelain, clay foam, glaze, glass, modelling technique, 1250°. L43, W25, H30 cm



Geodes I, 2026. stoneware, porcelain, glaze, glass, modelling and added technique, 1250°. L34. W30. H20 cm



Geodes II, 2025. stoneware, porcelain, glaze, glass, modelling and added technique, 1250°. L40. W40. H23 cm



Reflections on Picasso × Barceló. In Conversation with Miquel Barceló

By Brona Ferran

I have come to Andalucía to visit a stunningly visual exhibition, that combines ceramic works by two of Spain's most eminent modern and contemporary artists — Pablo Picasso and Miquel Barceló — together with a selection of pottery from the archaeological collections of the Museo de Almería and the Museo de Cádiz. It opened in Almería, a Mediterranean city, in December last year and has now moved west, to Cádiz, a historical gateway to the Atlantic Ocean. Those lucky enough to visit this exhibition encounter an assemblage of clay-based pieces in which forces of continuity between past and present are mutually enveloped. Its co-curator, Miquel López-Ramiro,

Artistic Director of the Museo Picasso in Málaga, has described to me how the exhibition “approaches ceramics not as an object but as a medium that traverses time. From Neolithic pieces to Picasso and Barceló, clay emerges as a material that preserves memory, gesture, and transformation.” Indeed, unlayering past into present, and memory into a rounded contingency with that which remains unfinished, this is an edgy, raw exhibition that communicates how clay, and its working, lies at the centre of human existence.

As a project it extends an idea first introduced by López-Ramiro and his colleagues at Museo Picasso in 2024, when works by Picasso were paired with those of Jeff Koons (link), in the context of the Alhambra Palace in Grenada. In this latest instantiation or ‘dialogic pairing’, the process of ‘reflection’ is brought to life in a multiplicity of ways, including adaptations in the display of the material in the venues, with López-Ramiro co-curating the exhibition together with Tania Fábrega, director, Museo de Almería; and Laura Esparragosa, director, Museo de Cádiz. As López-Ramiro has stated, the movement between venues facilitated:

a change in the interpretation of the project: from the stratigraphic depths of the Mediterranean to the openness of the Atlantic as a space of circulation and encounter. In Almería, the Mediterranean appears as a space of cultural sedimentation, of continuity. In Cádiz, the Atlantic introduces notions of openness, displacement, and crossing. Two geographies, two ways of relating to material, that allow us to understand ceramics not only as origin, but also as transit.

In this way, the exhibition is configured as a system of reflections, not in the sense of reproduction but as a movement of repetition and difference, where past, present and possible futures come together on a single surface. In Almería the relationship with a depth of time was fundamental, but in Cádiz, the interpretive axis shifts. It moves not so much toward origins as toward transit. Ceramics cease to function merely as vestiges and become objects in motion. The exhibition does not change in its conceptual core, but its breathing does.



Meanwhile, both museums have each contributed ten works shown in each venue, respectively, contributing to the sense of difference with repetition to which López-Ramiro is referring. In Almería, deft use of light and shadow amplified a sense of epiphanous interplay between the exhibition's different elements, that appeared to rise up in front of the exhibition viewer like a *dramatis personae*. The presentation in Cádiz invites us primarily to look down, as if giving us a historical overview of the interconnections between ceramics from very different periods; Ramiro speaks of the lower, large table, there as being like a shoreline, on which various objects have been stranded.

Of over a hundred objects on display, fifty-eight are by Barceló and thirty-eight are by Picasso. Several of the latter are rarely-seen items from the personal collection of Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, whose Foundation has been a key supporter of the 'Reflections' series. He tells us at the preview of the residual force of influence on his grandfather throughout his life of his exposure in boyhood to a Mediterranean cultural iconography. Picasso lived from his birth in Málaga in 1881 until the age of ten.

The thirty seven works by Picasso in the exhibition were made at the Madoura Pottery in Vallauris in the south of France the 1950s and 1960s. He created thousands of works there from the mid-1940s onwards, glazing and painting both on standardised forms on fragments of pottery discarded in the workshop. This sense of playful discovery and a levelling out beyond high art to something more collectivist, finds its way also into how the exhibition display in both Almería and Cadiz museums is organised.

Linking things together, moreover, is a sense of liveness infusing Barceló's practice. His works here, as the co-curators observe, "bear the marks of the physical process, becoming living surfaces that retain the energy of the moment".



Reflections. Picasso x Barceló exhibition at Museo de Almería, 2025. Photos by Chema Artero © Museo Picasso Málaga © Museo de Almería

“I was a young artist and my work for many years had been ignored”. He draws a parallel with ceramics, that for a long time were viewed “as not fancy at all” but have recently come into fashion. At the same time, as Barceló tells me, ceramics “have always been there”.

Born in Mallorca, in 1957, Barceló is an artist whose works generally have a heightened contemporaneity, combined with an elemental earthiness, evident in works in various media, from performance to painting, from sculptural installations to a style of ceramics that conveys a sense of disrupted interference with notions of finitude or completion. This is here brought into exciting juxtaposition both with lesser-known aspects of Picasso’s postwar ceramics and with astonishing examples of works from the Phoenician, Bronze, Iron, Roman and Middle Ages, all held together with a curatorial vision that celebrates -- in anti-hierarchical fashion — the powerful intimacies of relation that the practice of pottery has carried over generations.

López-Ramiro has commented also on why it seemed appropriate to bring these two artists together, speaking of their meeting point in the finding “in ceramics a space of freedom. For Picasso, it is a domain where painting, sculpture, and object come together. For Barceló, it is a physical, almost corporeal territory, where gesture becomes inscribed in the material itself. What they share is a direct relationship with matter—clay as language—and a capacity to transform the everyday into the symbolic.”





Vessel, Sculpture and Other Fictions

By Olivia Fero

What if the vessel-versus-sculpture debate that has preoccupied contemporary ceramics is not merely unresolved, but unanswerable? Not a genuine question at all, but a category mistake: the philosophical error of treating one kind of thing as if it were another.

The British philosopher Gilbert Ryle first deployed the category mistake in *The Concept of Mind* (1949) to demolish the mind-body dualism that had dominated Western discourse since Descartes, rejecting the idea of the mind as a “ghost in the machine” separate from the body. He uses a famous example to illustrate this error: a visitor is shown around Oxford, sees the colleges, libraries, playing fields, and professors, and then asks, “But where is the University?” His error lies in the assumption that the University is the same kind of thing as a building, when in fact it is an organising principle rather than a physical entity.

I want to suggest that “vessel” and “sculpture” operate the same way. They are not properties inherent in clay; they are not physical attributes we can isolate. They are interpretive frameworks, or institutional filing systems, that we project onto objects to organise our understanding. When critics look at a ceramic object and ask, “I see the clay, the glaze, and the form, but is it a sculpture or a vessel?”, they are making the exact error of the visitor to Oxford. They are waiting for the “Art status” to appear as a distinct entity, when in reality, “sculpture” and “vessel” are simply the ways we organise our interactions with the material.

So, what is the persistent ontology of these objects? We discover this by looking at the “clayness” of the object itself. While critical frameworks shift, the materiality remains stubbornly fixed; it has its own tendencies to crack or warp and absolute limits like the thermal transformation of quartz inversion. That transformation happens at 573°C regardless of whether the object is destined for a museum or a kitchen table. This material stability creates a unique professional condition. While the sculptor operates with a fixed context of Fine Art and variable materials, the ceramicist operates under an inversion. For them, the medium is stable but the context is fluid. The ceramicist stays faithful to one material, but that material demands they walk through different institutional doors: the factory, the kitchen,

the building site, and the museum. They are materially monogamous, but institutionally promiscuous.

These categories and hierarchies did not arrive with the clay. They were built into Western cultural institutions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: museum departments, funding bodies, degree programmes, professional organisations. The South Kensington Museum (later the V&A) was founded in 1852 explicitly to serve the “applied” and “decorative” arts, terms that encoded a secondary relationship to “Fine Art” from the start. A century and a half later, we still navigate museums whose floor plans make the category mistake concrete: turn left for painting and sculpture, turn right for ceramics and textiles. It is worth noting that the Cartesian dualism Ryle originally attacked, mind separated from body, thought from matter, and the aesthetic hierarchies it spawned are not universal. They are a specifically Western inheritance. Where Western aesthetics inherited a hierarchy that placed intellectual conception above manual execution, other ceramic lineages organised themselves around material transmission: technique passed from master to apprentice, knowledge held in the hands. The vessel/sculpture question simply does not arise in the same way when the framework was never dualist to begin with.



Peter Voukos, Rocking Pot, 1956, stoneware with colemanite wash, 13 5/8 x 21 x 17 1/2 in. (34.6 x 53.3 x 44.6 cm.), Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the James Renwick Alliance and various donors and museum purchase.

Takuro Kuwata's work inhabits the strictest of all ceramic institutional filing systems, the Japanese tea ceremony, which is the spiritual heart of the Mingei folk craft tradition. In this context, a bowl is traditionally expected to be quiet, humble, and earthy. Yet, Kuwata's bowls appear to be exploding, forcing the sober spirituality of the tea room into a collision with the synthetic, technicolour excess of contemporary Japanese Pop culture. He utilises the *ishihaze* or "stone explosion" technique, allowing stones within the clay to burst through the surface during firing. He also applies thick, molten glazes in metallic golds or vivid neon pinks that slip and crack, purposefully defying the maker's control. This is *wabi-sabi* amplified to a state of hyper-materiality.

Under the traditional binary, we might try to categorise these as failed vessels or abstract sculptures. However, applying Bill Brown's "Thing Theory" (2001) offers a more precise reading. Brown argues that we look through objects when they function for us, like the transparent vessel, but we confront them as Things when they stop working, such as when



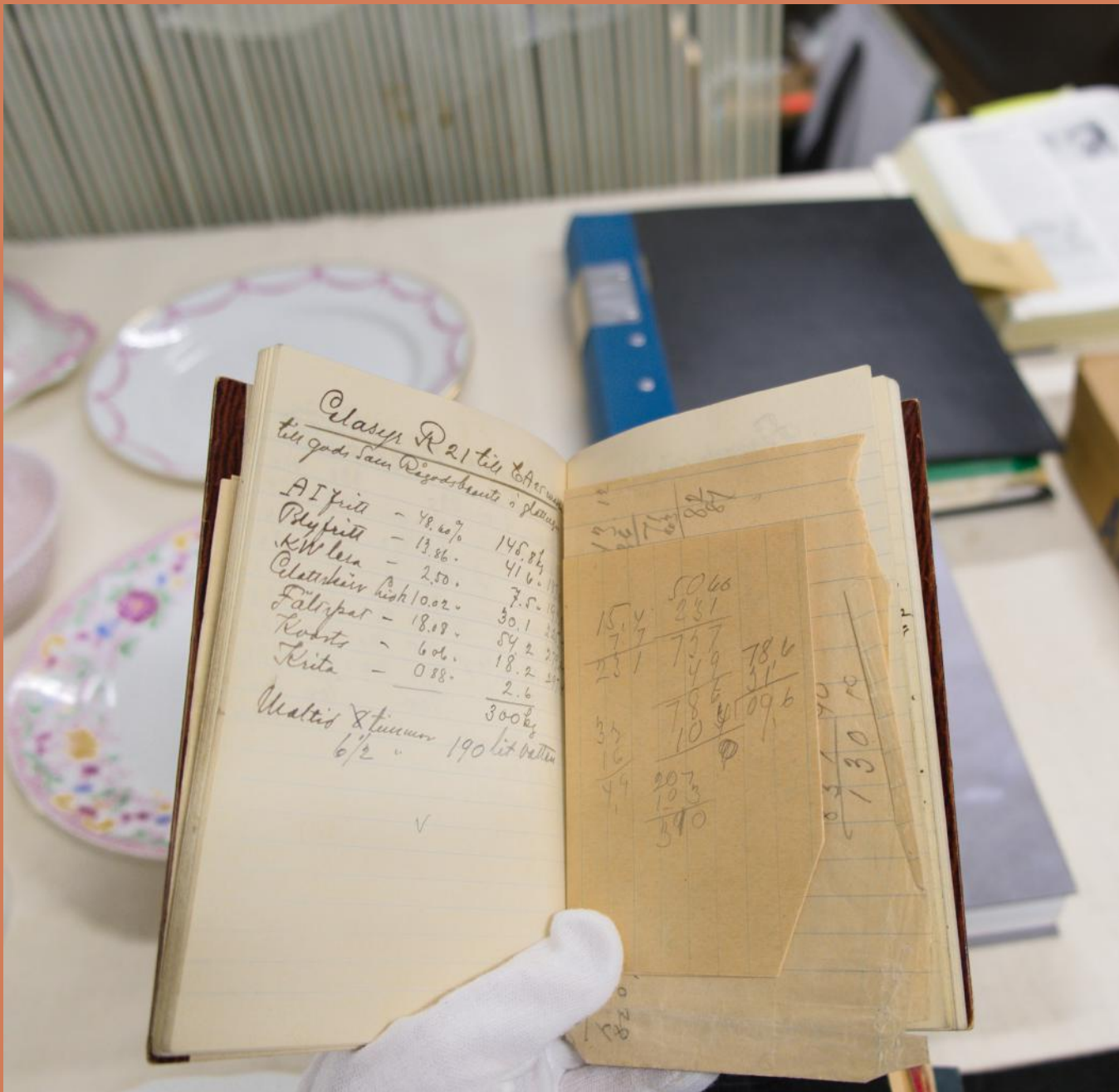
Takuro Kuwata, *Bowl: Porcelain*, 11.81 x 15.35 x 14.96 in. (30 x 39 x 38 cm) / *Tea Bowl: porcelain, glaze, pigment*, 6.77 x 8.58 x 7.48 in. (17.2 x 21.8 x 19 cm).
 Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94. © Takuro Kuwata.

a tool breaks or a car stalls. Kuwata's bowls hover in this disruption. The glaze does not coat the form; it overwhelms it. The stones do not support the wall; they rupture it. This is not merely an aesthetic choice, it is an ontological one. Richard Sennett's book *The Craftsman* (2008) offers a vocabulary for this disruption. Sennett argues that skilled making is not the elimination of resistance but a dialogue with it, that "salutary failure," where things go wrong in instructive ways, is central to how craft knowledge develops. Kuwata's practice embodies this principle at an extreme register. By inviting the clay to rupture and the glaze to overwhelm, he engages in what Sennett, building on the foundations David Pye (1995) laid when coining the phrase, calls the "workmanship of risk" that forces the material to assert its agency. The resulting object is neither just a cup nor just a statue. It is a material event. It refuses to be a transparent vehicle for tea, having instead become a "Thing" that asserts its own volatile presence.

If Kuwata disrupts the vessel through rupture, Magdalene Odundo disrupts it through silence. Standing before her work at Thomas Dane Gallery in London in 2024, I found myself gripped by a forbidden impulse: I wanted to touch them. The burnished surfaces had the quality of those bronze sculptures that punctuate European squares, boars, saints, lucky toes, rubbed gold by generations of hopeful hands. I noticed the knobs on the forms registering in my body before my mind could name them, some read as vertebrae, others as navels. The angled, looping necks created a negative space where a head should be. I caught myself imagining what it would feel like to scream into one of these openings, and then, stranger still, the sense that they might already hold the exhalations of others. The gallery had become, without announcement, a spiritual site. I was not asking whether these were vessels or sculptures. The question had simply become unavailable to me. I was too busy being experiencing the work.



Magdalene A.N. Odundo DBE, *Untitled*, 2017, multifired terracotta, 23 1/4 x 13 3/16 in. (59.1 x 33.5 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94. © Magdalene A.N. Odundo DBE.



Rörstrand J matt glasyr. A story.

By Anne-Marie Dehon

"The things we want are transformative, and we don't know or only think we know what is on the other side of the transformation".¹

- R. Solnit

Introduction

I am fascinated by stories that melt in the kiln with minerals and metal oxides in the thick viscosity of ceramic glazes and remain for centuries after cooling.

Since I started working in ceramics eighteen years ago, glaze has been at the heart of my practice. I have been interested in both the process of making it – learning to predict and influence the result – and the significance of the color of this vessel's outer layer.

Ceramics has historically been woven as craft, with narratives about industry, technology, and nature. This triangle draws my attention because it conveys a romantic image of craftspeople resisting industry and healing the scars left by large-scale production on the environment. For my own reasons, I both submit to this romantic idea while at the same time, I strive to keep a peripheral and critical perspective on the ceramics of today's reality. I think both those stories of resistance and critical perspectives are important to be told and re-told today.

My curious and creative investigations of nature/industry/technology triangle through ground minerals have intensified through

the years of practice and teaching. It fostered both my deep knowledge of the matter and my writing practice. In my glaze and writing, I strive to maintain a close relationship with both the materials I work with and the stories I encounter along the way.

A year ago, I was selected for the project Vad Händer? (What is happening?) run by Folk&Form and the Konsthantverkcentrum. Each of the ten selected artists was invited to explore the archive of one museum in the region Västergötaland in Sweden and see what happens then.

The creative process of the ten craft artists selected for the project Vad Händer was on display at the Textile Museum of Borås (Sweden) until the 15th of March 2026.

In the list of the proposed museums to collaborate with in the project Vad Händer?, I was chosen to work with the Rörstrand Museum in Lidköping. Rörstrand is a Swedish porcelain factory. It started in 1726 in Stockholm before moving to Göteborg in 1926. It later moved to Lidköping, where production moved to Sri Lanka in 2007, leaving behind empty buildings, a museum, and its archives.

Chapter 1. When a color is dead.

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The Clay Studio presents American Crib: What's Happening? by Roberto Lugo, a Radical Americana exhibition

By Jennifer Zwilling

Radical Americana was born out of a desire to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, to capitalize on the Semiquincentennial in a way that paralleled the major celebrations that came along with the Centennial, the Sesquicentennial and the Bicentennial here in Philadelphia. As an art historian, the Centennial has long been a focus of my academic interest. As a Bicentennial baby, the 200th anniversary of our

country has loomed large in my personal history. The chance to contribute to the major commemorative moment of our lifetime by collaborating with other cultural organizations to support the artists in our city was a powerful motivator to take on this major project. A cohort of leaders from craft, art, history, and cultural organizations around Philadelphia gathered in the fall of 2024 on the roof deck at The Clay Studio and shaped the project that would become Radical Americana.

The group put out a call for proposals that encouraged artists to research artwork from 1776, 1876, or 1976 and make new work in response. They were asked to choose a partner site where they would do their research and one where they proposed to exhibit the finished work. The group juried the applications and matched artists with research and exhibition sites. The partners also had the opportunity to invite an artist to work with them. The Clay Studio invited Roberto Lugo to respond to the prompt. The subsequent group of 45 artists and 25 research and exhibiting locations is now launched as our full Radical Americana project.

The existing sense of collaboration between cultural institutions in Philadelphia is an important aspect of what Radical Americana is celebrating. Many of us in the group have worked together at various organizations over the last twenty-five years. Our strong relationships built on shared experiences allowed us to trust each other and work together effectively toward a shared goal: to celebrate the creativity that has thrived in Philadelphia for more than 250 years. Radical Americana is a citywide cultural experience across Philadelphia's diverse neighborhoods that honors the critical role of artists in shaping our nation's history, and in leading our cultural discourse today. Our wide network of exhibiting and research organizations around the Philadelphia region connects and contextualizes the importance of marking the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The programming around the exhibitions and the subsequent symposium (in November 2026) is uniting people to discuss the continued relevance of the Declaration's ideals. Our hope is that the Radical Americana project will spur collective, creative problem-solving to illuminate innovative ways of creating a future where people from all cultural and economic groups have an equal share in Philadelphia's vibrant and creative community.



At The Clay Studio our keystone Radical Americana exhibition is Roberto Lugo's *American Crib: What's Happening?*. Lugo represents the core of what Radical Americana aims to celebrate: taking inspiration from the past to tell important truths about today's society. He grew up in Philadelphia, finding creativity where he could, in graffiti and looking up to Philadelphia musical heroes like Questlove and Black Thought of The Roots. When he found ceramic art he pursued it with dedication to college and graduate school where he immersed himself in the history of art. He then used that knowledge to fuel new creations positioning Civil Rights Movement leaders and Hip-Hop artists in place of royals and war heroes on triumphant urns and elaborate teapots.

Roberto Lugo created a welcoming imagined living space celebrating his Philadelphia roots and cultural heritage. The artwork incorporates research undertaken at the Philadelphia Art Museum to emphasize the expanding dimensions of his storytelling. Visitors are invited to relax on the sofa, have a cup of tea and read a book from Roberto Lugo's library, and be inspired. This deeply personal reflection on America's socio-political landscape celebrates the power of art to communicate. Lugo mixes historical pottery traditions with pop culture, humor, and critical clarity to address complex issues, including cultural identity, mental health, social justice, and the resilience of underrepresented communities. *American Crib: What's Happening?* is a poignant reflection on Lugo's personal history and his hopes for a better world.

In addition to references to art history, social justice, and pop culture icons, Lugo's *American Crib* is also an homage to the trials and triumphs of his family and his own upbringing in Philadelphia. The largest ceramic in the exhibition is *A Pot to Piss In*, a 40 inch tall urn adorned with a portrait of his grandfather, and a self portrait. Each time Lugo gives a tour of the space he starts by telling the story of his grandfather Alberto Ayalo. He was so dedicated to making his family's life better that he is still known in his Puerto Rico home town as the man who carried a refrigerator up the mountain on his back. He brought his family to Philadelphia for a better life only to sustain an injury at work that he never recovered from. Lugo's family has spent decades in and out of hardship, and he is keenly aware that his life as an artist is a privilege and a way to honor his grandparents' and parents' love and hard work.





In *American Crib* Lugo invites us into a home-like space, where he shows us his creativity, his passion, his academic interests, and his deep love for his family, including his two sons. One is represented in the painting *Nuggie Sauce*, and one has his artwork on display as well. A sofa reminiscent of the one he remembers from his grandmother's house is upholstered in fabric designed by Lugo featuring images repeated around the gallery: a fire hydrant, a row house, a tire planter, and a pigeon. On a sideboard nearby rests the grand Greek style urn *The Day My Sister's Chain Was Stolen*. The visual narrative circling vase is an episode from the Lugo family, rather than a Greek myth, lifting up the stories of urban American life to the level of legends. All around the gallery we see the juxtaposition of everyday life and museum worthy art, generously offering visitors the chance to slow down and enjoy the humanity inherent in the world Roberto Lugo has built. He says the show is "about us as humans and how beautiful things can happen when we allow ourselves to be in a room with people who are different than us."

Philadelphia has been home to talented artists working in various mediums for centuries — from Indigenous weavers to European silversmiths — who have built the city to be what it is today. People from across cultural groups have been active participants in crafting our city. *Radical Americana* invites artists, cultural organizations, and visitors to explore and contemplate the moment of our country's founding in 1776 and subsequent commemorative moments: the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, the Sesquicentennial in 1926, and the Bicentennial in 1976. These events spurred creativity and cultural exchange, making further innovation and creativity possible. We are capitalizing on this moment of commemoration to highlight Philadelphia's unique position as a place where diverse artists can live and work, where creativity can spur innovation for the future, and where viewing and participating in the arts can initiate respectful civic discourse. We hope that the artistic output of *Radical Americana*, and the 2026 Semiquincentennial, will have an equally positive impact on our cultural heritage for decades and centuries into the future.



The Forgotten Man – Reckoning the Past in the Present

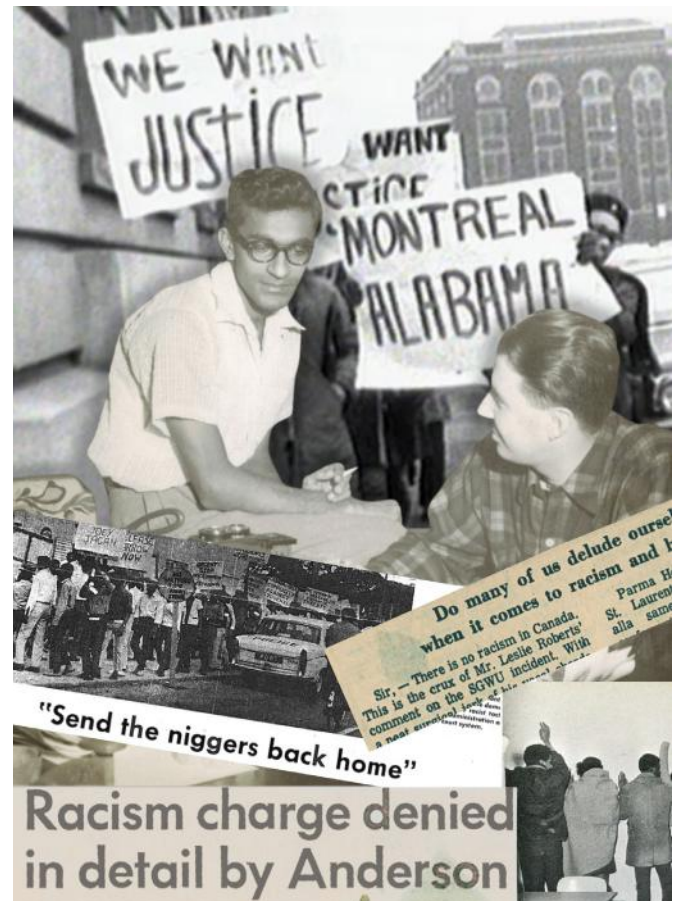
By Heidi McKenzie

In the spring of 2020, my mother casually mentioned that my father had been involved in the Sir George Williams Affair. At the time, she was living in long-term care. It was COVID, and we were visiting on FaceTime. I had been reading some of my reflections on mine and my late father's lived experience of race. My mother interrupted my monologue, "...of course there's the time when your father was interviewed about his relationship with Perry over that race thing by Readers' Digest ...". My mother passed a few months later, but not before I was able to bring her my father's photo albums and she identified a photograph of Perry Anderson with my father, emphasizing that they had been "thick as thieves" during their PhD studies in Biology at Western University in the early 1960s.

I hadn't known about the Sir George Williams race protests of 1969. I knew about Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Junior, Smokey Carmichael, the Black Panthers... But nothing of Canada and its reckoning with anti-Black racism.

I was born in May of 1968 in Fredericton, New Brunswick. My mother was white, born and raised on a farm in Ohio. My father's biological mother is mythologized as being adopted from Ceylon by French missionaries, his father a descendant of Indo-indentured workers. I pass for Indian. My father's genes dominated my DNA. He was a dark-skinned, Indo-Trinidadian, double diaspora'd into Canada at the age of 23. He came to study at McMaster University in Hamilton in 1953. By the time I was born, he was a tenure-track Biology professor at the University of New Brunswick. In 1969, my father was 39 years old. He and my mother had fled Sudbury from his first teaching post early in 1968, as my father's lab had been burned to the ground, and bricks thrown through their windows – an attempt to run the threat of the “other” out of town. These are facts that were never mentioned to me when I was growing up – in fact never mentioned at all, until after my father had retired, and was able to unpack his memories with the expansiveness of time, so necessary to heal the depth of racially-motivated trauma.

In 2023, I was invited to create a solo exhibition for Le centre céramique Bonsecours, part of the ceramics CEGEP in old Montreal. After grappling for some time, I realized that the story I had to tell in Montreal, for Montreal, was this story of systemic racism within a Canadian academic institution in Montreal in the late 1960s; the story of young people of every colour standing up for Black equality in Canada; the story of allyship, of other West Indians of Indian descent taking a stand for their Black colleagues; my father's story, that portrays him as an immigrant of colour supporting his white friend whose overt anti-Blackness sparked unprecedented violence; the story of decades of racial tension between West Indians of African descent and West Indians of South Asian descent that underpinned my father's story.



*Fourth image: *Forgotten Man*, detail, digital print negative and cyanotype print on porcelain over LED lightbox, 13 x 17 in, with *Time* magazine, February 22, 1969 issue, featuring a citation of the artist's father.

Claire Curneen: Between my finger and my thumb at Ruthin Craft Centre, Ruthin

March 28 – June 28, 2026





The Month's News In The Ceramic Art World

01

Artists are invited to apply to **THROW/BACK**, the 2027 NCECA Annual Exhibition, curated by Adriana Proser and Ellen Hoobler and presented at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, from March 10 to June 6, 2027. Running alongside CHARM, the 61st NCECA conference, the exhibition explores how ceramic artists navigate continuity and change, preserving and transforming forms, materials, and cultural histories across time. Open to artists from around the world, the call welcomes applicants aged 18 and older working primarily with clay, including mixed-media and selected video works where ceramic processes remain central. The deadline to apply is June 17, 2026. NCECA members may apply free of charge, while non-members pay a \$50 entry fee.



nceca
CHARM
MARCH 10-13, 2027
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

02

Ceramic artists are also invited to apply for the Virginia A. Groot Foundation Grant, which supports artists in developing their work and advancing their careers. Each year, the foundation awards three major grants: \$60,000 for First Place, \$30,000 for Second Place, and \$20,000 for Third Place. Open to artists aged 21 and over who are not currently enrolled in higher education, the grant is intended to support time, travel, materials, and creative development. Applications are due January 9, 2027.

03

Emerging ceramic artists in the United States are invited to apply for the 2026 Chrysalis Award, presented by the James Renwick Alliance for Craft. Now in its 10th year, the award supports artists in the early stages of their careers who demonstrate excellence and a strong commitment to developing their practice. This year's edition focuses on ceramics, with the recipient receiving a \$5,000 unrestricted award, a one-year JRACraft membership, and the opportunity to present their work at a JRACraft event. Applications close August 23, 2026.

04

The Ceramics Research Centre-UK, in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum, invites audiences to **Permanence/Impermanence: Collecting & Archiving Contemporary Clay Practices**, taking place at the University of Westminster, London, from June 24-26, 2026. The three-day conference explores how ephemeral, site-specific, participatory, and live clay practices can be collected, archived, and made accessible to future audiences. Speakers include Florence Peake, Louisa Buck, Alun Graves, Phoebe Cummings, Clare Twomey, Natalie Baerselman le Gros, Tessa Peters, Nicole Seisler, Ashley Thorpe, and others. Tickets cost £25.

05

Young artists worldwide are invited to apply for the 14th Shiwan Cup International Youth Ceramic Sculpture and Architectural Ceramic Art Competition, organized by the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) and the Guangdong Shiwan Ceramics Museum. Open to applicants aged 18–45, this year's competition responds to the theme Where Ends Begin. A total of 100 works will be shortlisted, with awards including a Grand Prize of ~\$26,000 and additional prizes across several categories. Applications are free and open until August 31, 2026.



06

County Hall Pottery in London is inviting applications for its 2027 Potter in Residence Programme, a year-long opportunity for makers working with clay across design, function, fine art, craft, and experimental practice. The residency runs from January 4 to December 23, 2027, and combines supported studio time with a part-time role contributing 20 hours per week to the studio, gallery, and teaching programme. The selected resident will receive dedicated studio space, kiln and materials access, professional support, a solo exhibition, and a £20,000 salary. Applicants must have the legal right to live and work in the UK. Applications close July 30, 2026.

07

Australian ceramic artists have three major award opportunities coming up. The North Queensland Ceramic Awards 2026, held at Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in Townsville, invites entries for its biennial exhibition and offers a \$10,000 acquisitive major prize, alongside several additional awards. Entries close July 7, 2026. In Victoria, the Clunes Ceramic Award 2026 is also open, with a \$10,000 major prize and a finalists' exhibition in Clunes from October 4 to November 1, 2026. Entries close August 9, 2026. The Shelley Simpson Ceramics Prize 2026, presented by Mud Australia in partnership with Craft Victoria, will also support Australian ceramicists with a \$10,000 cash prize and a dedicated finalists' exhibition at Craft Victoria in Melbourne. Entries close July 31, 2026.

What's on View



Beneath the Surface: A Century of Studio Ceramics in Britain at Museum & Art Swindon, Swindon

May 9, 2026 – February 27, 2027



Emergence at The Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery, Waterloo, Ontario

May 23 – August 15, 2026



GENSKÆR: Clara Toksvig, Thea Djurhuus, Sophia Moe at Peach Corner Gallery, Copenhagen

May 21 – June 27, 2026



Architect of the Bizen Renaissance: Mori Tōgaku at Joan B Mirviss, New York

May 7 – June 26, 2026



Ming-Miao Ko: Devenir and Monika Debus: Beyond Salt and Earth at Centre Céramique Contemporaine La Borne, La Borne

May 9 – June 30, 2026



Laura Pöld: Beautiful Pulsating Web at Kahan Art Space, Vienna

March 18 – June 29, 2026



Henry Goodman Exhibition for Emerging Artists at the Art Gallery of Burlington, Ontario

May 21 – June 21, 2026



Serena Korda: Triple Goddess at the Harley Gallery, Worksop

May 16 – September 6, 2026



Nancy Bowen: From A to Z and the Bodies In Between at Nunu Fine Art, New York

June 5 – July 25, 2026



Shared Material at &Gallery, Edinburgh

June 6 – July 1, 2026



Hsu Yunghsu: The Doubt of Sisyphus at Arkad Foundation, Seravezza

June 4 – July 30, 2026



Keiyona Stumpf: Subtle Sensuality at SCHENKWEITZDÖRFER, Cologne

June 5 – August, 2026

