

Volume Rediscovery

March 24 - May 2, 2026

This exhibition celebrates the distinct voices of eight artists, seven American and one Korean American, whose contributions to the field of ceramic arts continue to inspire artists across time and cultures. Presented in tandem with the annual conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Art (NCECA), held this year in Detroit from March 25 to 28, the selection of work includes vessels, sculpture, tile, and photography. The work of past masters Tony Hepburn, Howard Kottler, Jim Melchert and Robert Turner are joined with more recent work by John Gill, Laith Karmo, Jae Won Lee and Jim Shrosbree. Together, the group of work explores various concepts distilled through a highly personal engagement with the medium and contemporary art.

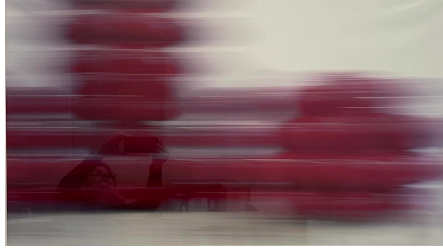
All the artists included in Volume Rediscovery have played significant roles as educators across the United States and all the artists are informative to the curator, Paul Kotula, whose history as a gallery director in metro-Detroit began four decades ago at Detroit's historic Pewabic Pottery (1985-87) and later Swidler Gallery Royal Oak, MI/1991-93), Revolution Gallery (Ferndale, MI/1993-2005) and Paul Kotula Projects (2006-present). Kotula earned his MFA from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in 1989. He has been an Associate Professor and co-coordinator of the Ceramics Department at Michigan State University since 2009.



Jim Melchert
Keyboard Flamenco, 2012
glaze and ink on broken tile, mounted on board
17.5 x 17.5 inches
\$ 8,000

Jim Melchert (1930-2023) was born in Ohio. After his undergraduate studies in art history at Princeton he taught English in Japan for four years in exchange for the rich experience of living there. Returning to the States he earned degrees in painting at the University of Chicago and afterwards ceramics under Peter Voukos at the University of California, Berkeley. Finding the Bay Area to be receptive to artists in the way that watering holes are to migratory birds, he settled in Oakland and thrived on the interaction among his colleagues and young artists at UC-Berkeley where he taught. In 1977 the National Endowment for the Arts brought him to Washington, DC to direct its Visual Arts Program for four years. From 1984 to 1988 he joined the American Academy in Rome as Director.

One can see from the diversity of Melchert's art work that he is a maverick who disregards many of the canons that define disciplines. His travels throughout the Mediterranean in the 1980s introduced him to ceramic tile as a medium ripe for further investigation. Among the places where his work has been exhibited are the Whitney Museum and the Museum of Art and Design in New York; the Museums of Contemporary Art in Chicago, Houston, and Los Angeles; the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston; at the Museums of Modern Art in San Francisco, Tokyo, and Kyoto; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and Documenta 5 in Kassel, Germany.



Tony Hepburn
Untitled, 2000
archival inkjet print; unique
27.75 x 43.75 inches framed
\$ 2,800

Tony Hepburn (1942 – 2015) was a British-born American sculptor, ceramicist, educator, and writer renowned for his conceptual artworks in clay that interrogated themes of materiality, transience, human action, and hybridity through precarious installations, drawings, and hybrid forms combining real and represented objects. Born in Manchester, England, Hepburn overcame a challenging childhood marked by educational struggles as a left-handed child forced to write right-handed, finding his footing in art at Manchester High School for Art from age eleven, where the emphasis on visual learning ignited his passion for making and recording. He earned a National Diploma in Design from Camberwell College of Art in 1963 and an Art Teachers Diploma from London University in 1965, studying under influential figures such as potters Hans Coper and Lucie Rie, and painters Frank Auerbach and Ron Kitaj.

Hepburn's career bridged Europe and the United States, beginning with early exhibitions in London, including at Primavera Gallery in 1967 and the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1968, and writing the "Letter from London" column for *Craft Horizons* from 1967 to 1970. After moving to the US in 1970 following a summer teaching stint at Greenwich House Pottery in New York, he held key academic roles, including Principal Lecturer in Fine Art at Lanchester Polytechnic in Coventry (1971–1975), Head of Crafts at the Art Institute of Chicago (1974–1975), Professor of Ceramics and Head of the Division of Art and Design at Alfred University's New York State College of Ceramics (1976–1992), and Head of Ceramics at Cranbrook Academy of Art (1992–2008). His artistic practice evolved from early clay extrusions emphasizing gravity and process to site-specific installations like the Bosch-inspired "Gates" series and mournful pieces incorporating medical imagery after his wife Pauline's death from cancer, with works held in prestigious collections such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. He became a US citizen in 2000 and continued creating drawings and writings in Chicago until his death at home on 5 January 2015.



John Gill
Vase, 2011
ceramic
26 x 17 x 12 inches
\$18,000

Over his decades-long career, celebrated ceramicist John Gill (b. 1949; Renton, WA) has made endless innovations in his medium to deliver joyous variations on the vessel form. With technical mastery, the artist embraces chance in his practice, allowing a well-honed intuition to guide his process. To build his creations, the artist joins slabs of clay to create towering vessels with swatches of bright colors that alternate like patchwork. Gill focuses his works on three main forms: vases, house pots, and jug-shaped ewers.

During his undergraduate studies at Kansas City Art Institute, Gill became enamored with the history of pottery, especially that of ancient China and Persia. Mastering the technical aspects of these traditions, he began to develop his signature style, incorporating the forms of both urban and natural landscapes, such as the shapes of pitched roofs, soaring smokestacks, and boulders lining a mighty river. Gill brings a painterly touch to his ceramic renderings of these forms, citing painters Stuart Davis, Arthur Dove, and Giorgio Morandi as major influences, and referring to his own works as "endless paintings."

The prismatic planes, dynamic spouts, and swelling curves of Gill's vessels tend toward absurdity. There is tension between the stability of the interior space-necessary for the functionality of the vessels-and the external instability of the many material variables at play in his practice. Gill deliberately fires all of his creations at a single temperature, allowing each glaze to undergo a unique chemical transformation. The result is a vessel that buzzes with a joyous variety of color and texture.

Gill's work has been widely exhibited in the United States and abroad, including at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; Pottery Workshop, Shanghai, China; and Kraushaar Gallery, New York, NY. The artist's work is held in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI; and Newark Museum, NJ, among others. In 2008, Gill was inducted into the International Academy of Ceramics in Geneva and was elected a Fellow at the American Crafts Council in 2014. In 2018, he received the James Renwick Alliance Distinguished Craft Educator Award. The artist lives and works in Alfred, NY.



Howard Kottler
Toro Toro, 1987
glazed ceramic
26 x 30 x 5 inches
\$16,000
pkp represents the Howard Kottler Estate



Howard Kottler
Face Vase, 1989
glazed ceramic
20 x 12.5 x 3.25 inches
\$14,000
pkp represents the Howard Kottler Estate

Howard Kottler is known as an innovator in his choice of subject matter and his use of commercially available porcelain blanks, ready-made molds, and decals. As a leader in the Seattle Funk movement, Kottler's works in the early 1960s were hand-formed, organic sculptural shapes with rough surfaces made by the use of organic materials that were consumed during the firing process. Additionally, his extensive research with Egyptian paste further reinforced the hand of the artist by revealing the marks of the artist's fingers and tools.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, Kottler became identified with the Pop Art movement as his work moved more toward questioning accepted standards as a vehicle for social commentary. The use of controversial subject matter for ceramic art was part of the shock effect of Pop Art's rethinking of what was appropriate for an art object.

Having learned to use decals at the Arabia Factory in Finland (1957), he began using mass-produced porcelain blanks with commercial decals that he cut and altered for maximum effect. The use of these materials developed into a major body of work dealing with social and political as well as twisted art historical images. As an example of his decal work, his plate series, numbering more than 1000 variations, was radical on two fronts: Not only was the imagery confrontational, but also, was the unheard-of use of commercially-produced ceramics as a canvas for manufactured decals. Kottler used the juxtaposition of these products to highlight the moral and ethical conflicts inherent in the reality of the social and political issues of the day namely, Watergate and the Vietnam War. Unfortunately, his intent, in these works, was often misinterpreted as an affront to craftsmanship and the studio potter.

His *Grant Wood Ware Set* (1972) pokes fun at the concept of luxury, revered historical icons, and the presentation of valued objects. Factory-produced porcelain plate blanks with applied altered commercially-produced decals slipped into seemingly precious leatherette storage sleeves and sold in faux wooden presentation boxes. A perfect rejection of the symbols of luxury and presentation.

Other series were pots and vases that relied on imagery influenced by his love of the Art Deco movement, satirical presentations of objects trapped in the molds of their fabrication, and a series of self-portrait silhouettes using his infamous Fu Manchu mustache. Kottler's ceramic art can be truly said to have set the stage for a new genre of in-your-face clay, a genre which is alive and well today.



Jae Won Lee
Blooming Somewhere Else, 2016
glazed porcelain with ceramic decals
32.5 inches high, width variable
POR

Blooming Somewhere Else by Jae Won Lee was first featured at Clayarch Gimhae Museum in 2016, the year the work was completed. Made while the artist was in residency at Laoyatan Tile Factory, Jingdezhen, China, the work is composed of several of the factory's large porcelain tiles of which Lee has altered. Cut in various widths, Lee's tiles are divided vertically with wide bands of celadon glaze and tight, rhythmic striations of collaged, almost textile-like, images of nature. Celadon, which originated in China (206-220 BCE) but is also valued highly in Korea is represented in hues of blue-to-green with its often-inherent crackled surface. These quiet passages of glossy translucent glaze are off-set by her matt-finished, colorfully composed stripes sprouting buds and flowers against an unfinished porcelain ground. Lee, whose work crosses several mediums, is aware of nature as both landscape and ceramic phenomena in this series of work. As the artist states, "I pursue the dialogue and interaction between the two contrasting but mutually complimentary elements of ying and yang. In traditional Chinese philosophy, natural phenomena can be classified into yin and yang, opposite forces locked in a state of harmonious equilibrium."

Lee, who was born in Seoul, Korea, was brought to America by her father to pursue higher education. She earned her BFA from California State University, Long Beach, and her MFA from New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred University. A recipient of two Fulbright Research Scholarships, Lee has had numerous residencies worldwide. Her work, which is driven by her cross-cultural experiences, has been exhibited internationally in numerous solo and group exhibitions. Professor Emeritus, Michigan State University, Lee currently lives and works in South Korea.



Jim Shrosbree
Rey Blanco (D), 2025
ceramic, aluminum leaf, wire, graphite
7 x 11 x 4 inches
\$ 6,000



Jim Shrosbree
N (case), 2025
Plexiglas, enamel, pigment, graphite
9 x 16 x 8.5 inches
\$ 8,000

Jim Shrosbree's work has been exhibited widely in the United States. Public collections with his work include the Detroit Institute of Art, Los Angeles County Museum, Edythe and Ely Broad Museum, Des Moines Art Center, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Mint Museum, and Daum Museum of Contemporary Art.

Shrosbree has been a visiting artist at numerous universities and art institutions including Cranbrook Academy of Art, NYU, UC-Davis, Bard College, University of Washington, University of Minnesota, Penn State University, Alberta University of the Arts, Drake University and the University of Iowa. He has received residency fellowships from Yaddo, MacDowell and Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts.

Awards include a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant, the National Endowment for the Arts (Midwest Fellowship) and Edward F. Albee Foundation, among others. Jim Shrosbree received an MFA in Ceramics from the University of Montana, Missoula. He is Professor of Art at Maharishi International University, Fairfield, Iowa where he lives and works.



Tony Hepburn
Red Box, 2000
ceramic and Formica box
7.5 x 17.75 x 12.75 inches
\$ 7,500
Provenance: The LaBan Collection / Revolution Gallery, Ferndale, MI; acquired 200



John Gill
Vase, 1986
ceramic
12.5 x 11.5 x 10 inches
\$14,000



John Gill
Vase, 1984
ceramic
14.5 x 10.5 x 4.5 inches
\$ 14,000



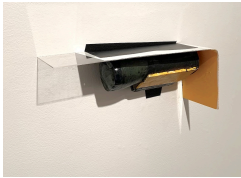
Jae Won Lee
In Her Shadow: Dear Mother, 2015
porcelain
(L) 28.25 x 22.25 inches; (R) 28.75 x 22.5 inches
\$12,000



Jim Melchert
Reno to Vegas, 1995
earthenware, glaze, pencil
12 x 12 x 1 inches
\$ 5,000
Provenance: Ruth Frank Rattner Trust



Howard Kottler
Pill Pot, 1987
earthenware
29 x 14 x 4 inches
\$16,000
pkp represents the Howard Kottler Estate



Jim Shrosbree
Veloss, (WYB), 2022
ceramic, Plexiglass, enamel
9 x 13 x 4 inches
\$ 6,000



Tony Hepburn
Draw Shave, 1994
cast and hand-built stoneware with flashing slip,. Soda-fired
30 x 39 x 7 inches overall
\$ 6,000
The LaBan Collection / Revolution Gallery, Ferndale, MI; acquired 2005



Laith Karmo
Table
teel, glass
31.5 x 30 x 70 inches
\$ 8,000



Rod - P.S., 2024
stoneware, paper
21 x 2 x 4 inches
\$ 1,500



Yellow Bowl, 2015
stoneware
19 x 8.5 x 11 inches
\$ 3,200



Pitcher, 2026
stoneware
10 x 10 x 9.5 inches
\$ 2,800



Bowl, 2026
stoneware
10.5 x 10 x 6 inches
\$ 2,500



P.A.S., 2024
stoneware, brass
14 x 10 x 4 inches
\$ 1,500

Laith Karmo moves through the world with a profound sense of wonder and a relentless desire to make sense of it. He has a lot of questions and from a young age, art became a means to examine those questions and give his ideas about the world space to stretch. The summer between high school and college, an art teacher prophetically lent him a wheel and a block of clay. The clay, he found, held answers to some of his most burning questions. A dialogue began between the two. Connections were made, stories intersected and Karmo quickly realized he was part of something bigger. By manipulating this material into something new, he was participating in one of the oldest traditions known to man, and within this medium, he found his place. Each piece Karmo creates is a direct reflection of where he is at a given moment in time — physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Karmo earned a BFA from the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, Michigan and an MFA in Ceramics from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He's participated in several national group shows and has had solo exhibitions at Paul Kotula Projects and The Butchers Daughter in Metro Detroit. He was awarded a Kresge Artist Fellowship in 2011 and maintains a studio in Pontiac, Michigan. Karmo has taught ceramics at Wayne State University, Oakland Community College and College for Creative Studies. Even after two decades of practice, clay is a medium he rediscovers daily.



Jim Shrosbree
LZ (rink), 2019
ceramic, fabric, wood, cardboard, paint
46 ¼ x 17 x 12 inches
\$ 8,000



Robert Turner
Dome, 1978 (C197)
sandblasted, glazed ceramic
10 x 7.5 inches
\$ 6,000
Provenance: Anne and George Crane Collection



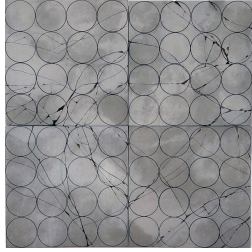
Robert Turner
Jar #1, 1997
reduction fired stoneware
16 x 10 x 10.5 inches
\$10,000
Provenance: The LaBan Collection, / Revolution
Gallery, Ferndale, MI; acquired 2000

During the 1950s and 1960s, functional potter Robert Turner helped develop and refine a stoneware aesthetic that was synonymous with American ceramics of the era. His high-fired, reduction wares were classics of their kind. Timeless and universal in shape, they had gradually evolved, first from a careful study and testing of vessel forms derived from ancient China and Greece, and then, in the 1950s, under aesthetic influences from Japanese folk pottery and Zen Buddhism, the Bauhaus, and contemporary Scandinavian ceramics. The simple, elegant forms of his wheel-thrown casseroles, vases, bowls, and covered jars were based on straight lines that were modified only sparingly by sweeping curves. Each refined and disciplined form was superbly fitted to its primary function—cooking, holding, pouring.

By the late 1960s, however, Turner's pottery had reached such a degree of perfection in both form and expression that he perceived it as a "dead end." At mid-career, feeling he had exhausted his original reasons for vessel making, he began to experiment. Building on the formal transformations of potter Peter Voulkos, he began to reconfigure the essential geometry of the pot. With form no longer following function, Turner became one of the leading makers of organically abstract "art" pots during the 1970s.

In 1971–72, drawn by the power of African sculpture, and wishing to imbue his work with a greater sense of universality, Robert Turner traveled to Nigeria and Ghana. The trip proved transformational. In West Africa he was deeply moved by the way in which art was ingrained in daily experience, and by the beauty of traditional forms of architecture, pottery, ceremonial objects, and decoration. After his return, Turner began to produce a series of distinctive vessel types named after African kingdoms and peoples—Ashanti, Ife, Oshogbo, Akan. The first is a squat, lidded pot; the others are cone and cylinder shapes. In these variations on formal themes, he endeavored to express his perception of the cultural spirit of the various tribal centers he had visited, as well as evoking the shape, color, and texture of the local landscape. The canyons, desert landscape, and adobe architecture of the American Southwest also deeply attracted Turner's attention at this time, resulting in his ongoing series of de Chelly vessels—a fourth cone and cylinder variant.

Limiting his formal vocabulary in the 1970s and 1980s to a handful of distinctive cone and cylinder shapes inspired by his African sojourn, Turner also restricted the colors and his clays and glazes to three basic hues: blue-black, red-brown, and tones of white. The outsides of his pots were often sandblasted to create chromatic variations and more inviting and tactile surfaces.



Jim Melchert
Currents, 2017
broken porcelain tile with ink on board
35 x 35 inches
\$28,000

BACK ROOM:



Alex Katz
The Orange Band, 1979
color screenprint on Arches Cover
44.5 x 32.75 x 1.75 inches
Edition: 51/80
\$12,000
Provenance: The LaBan Collection / Donald Morris Gallery, Birmingham

Peace Projects
Plate: \$130
Platter: 230



Linda Sikora
Teapot
5.25 x 8 x 4.6 inches
\$ 200



Linda Sikora
Teapot
5 x 7.5 x 4.5 inches
\$ 200



Michael Simon, American (1947-2021)
Persian Box, c. 1987
soda fired stoneware (note: minor chip at lip)
6.5 x 4.75 x 4.5 inches
\$ 2,200
Provenance: Ruth Frank Rattner Trust / Pewabic Pottery, Detroit; acquired c. 1987



John Gill
Ewer, 2016
ceramic
11 x 11 x 9 inches
\$ 6,000



John Gill
Ewer, 2016
ceramic
9.5 x 13.25 x 9 inches
\$ 6,000



Ruth Duckworth
Untitled (244391), 1995
porcelain
3 x 4.8 x 5 inches
\$10,000
Provenance: The Anne and George Crane Estate



Geoffrey Swindell, 1982
Seed Pod Vessel, 1982 (C056)
porcelain
4.5 x 3.25 inches
\$ 550
Provenance: The Anne and George Crane Estate



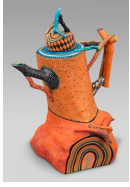
Otto Natzler
Cube with Fragmented Top, 1981 (C051)
Ceramic (note: minor chips)
8.3 x 6.6 x 6.5 inches
\$ 4,500
Provenance: The Anne and George Crane Estate



Edward S. Eberle
One Man's Dream, 2000
ceramic vessel with lid
11.5 x 6.5 x 6.5 inches
\$ 8,000
Provenance: The LaBan Collection / Garth Clark Gallery, NYC; acquired 2000



Howard Kottler
Paisley Cup, 1973 (S-71)
glazed whiteware with ceramic decal
5 x 7 x 3 inches
on reserve



Ralph Bacerra

Teapot: NBA 021, 1989 (C162)

17 x 11.5 x 9 inches

\$ 9,000

Provenance: The Anne and George Crane Estate; acquired from Garth Clark Gallery, NYC



Mie Konzo

Vase

9 x 5.5 inches diameter

\$ 200



Bryon Temple

Lidded Pot

Stoneware

5.5 x 6 inches diameter

\$ 900



Jim Chatelain

Untitled, c. 1970s

oil on canvas

20 x 20 inches

sold



Amy Vogel

Flowers (Red-yellow Tulips), 2022

archival inkjet print

22 x 17 inches (image 18 x 13 inches)

Edition: 3*

\$ 1,300 (unframed)



Laith Karmo
Untitled
12.5 x 9 inches (paper) / 22.25 x 18.5 x 1.5 inches (framed)
\$ 2,200



Jim Chatelain
Drape 2, 2023
Acrylic paint pen on paper
19 x 12.25 inches; 21 x 17.25 inches framed
\$ 2,500



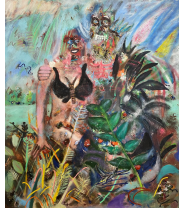
Brenda Goodman
Untitled (A-3), 1993
oil on canvas
55.75 x 44.25 x 2.25 inches
\$32,000
Provenance: The LaBan Collection / David Klein Gallery, Birmingham, MI; acquired 1994



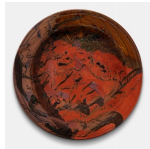
Laith Karmo
Ochre, Double Life Vessel, 2024
stoneware
8.5 x 10.5 x 10.5 inches
\$ 2,500



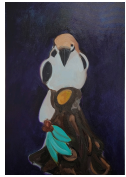
Laith Karmo
Tray, 2024
glazed stoneware
3.5 x 15.5 x 12 inches
\$ 2,200



John Maggie
Suzy & Ralph, 2021
oil on canvas
46 x 38 inches
\$ 7,000



John Glick
Platter, c. 1990 (C167)
glazed ceramic
23.25 inches diameter
\$ 2,400
Provenance: The Anne and George Crane Estate



Thomas Rapai
Untitled, 2022
oil on canvas
36 x 24 inches
\$ 3,000



Viola Frey
Still Life Series, Horse, 1987
glazed ceramic
73 x 25 x 20 inches (two sections)
\$65,000
Provenance: The LaBan Collection / Nancy Hoffman Gallery, NYC; acquired 1994



David Hockney

Red Celia (from 'Moving Focus'), 1985

color lithograph on HMP handmade paper

29.75 x 21.5 inches; 35 x 26.5 inches framed

Edition: 57/82

\$45,000

Provenance: The LaBan Collection / Lemberg Gallery, Birmingham, MI; acquired 1985



Jim Shrosbree

ceramic cups, left to right:

1) \$ 400

2) \$ 400

3) \$ 400

4) \$ 400

5) \$ 400

6) \$ 400



Jun Kaneko

Plate Form, 1986

glazed ceramic

20.5 x 23.5 x 23.5 inches

\$ 6,000

Provenance: The LaBan Collection / acquired from the artist, 1984



Jim Shrosbree

Yellow Jar, 2006

glazed earthenware

5.5 x 10.75 x 3.5 inches

\$ 2,000



Richard DeVore
Vessel #418, 1986
glazed stoneware
15.5 x 12 x 9.5 inches
\$ 7,500
The LaBan Collection / Hill Gallery, Birmingham, MI; acquired 1987



Jim Melchert
62 Vertices for Dancing, 2016
glazed, broken porcelain tile mounted on Plywood
24 x 48 inches
\$24,000



Kathleen McShane
Pacifist, 2025
canvas, acrylic, oil, collage, graphite, pastel, photographic element from Ellen Bahr
27.5 x 20.75 inches
\$ 3,900 (framed)