

SIDE-BY-SIDE

Historic and Contemporary Ceramics



"Side-by-Side: Historic and Contemporary Ceramics" at the Gibson House and Property is in collaboration with YoloArts and the 56th Annual Conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA).

Ceramic pottery is one of the most durable forms of art that has endured. It is also one of the most accurate means of archeological documentation and historic dating. As early as 24,000 B.C.E, devotional animal and human clay figurines were the first forms of human representation in art.

The first use of functional pottery vessels for storing water and food were created around 10,000 B.C.E. Around 6,000 B.C.E. communities were established and the manufacturing of ceramic vessels increased with the invention of the potter's wheel.

From there, porcelain was the next great advance in ceramics, which was made in China during the Tang dynasty from 618 to 907 AD. Hard-paste, porcelain was made from ground petuntse and mixed with kaolin, a white clay to create a delicate and translucent material.

The ceramic tradition has a strong foundation in history as artists have built on the look and feel of the ancient craft. Many modern artists have opted to reinvigorate the ceramic medium through experimental approaches and brave new aesthetics. Combining functionality and expressivity, technology allowed for the creation of more refined materials and forms.

The "Side-by-Side" exhibition looks at contemporary practices and historic source materials in dialogue with one another. Expanding the boundaries of historic practices, artists draw inspiration and create cultural commentary with their artwork in conversation with historic artifacts to build on meaning and context.

We welcome you to explore the work of artists from the greater Sacramento and Yolo region as they adapt and vary.

Adaptations and variations of a timeless tradition

CERAMIC TIMELINE

24,000 B.C.



Ceramic Figures used for ceremonial purposes

14,000 B.C.



Cuneiform tiles made in Mesopotamia

9,000 - 10,000 B.C.



Pottery making begins

5,000 - 8,000 B.C.



Glazes used in Egypt

1,500 B.C.



Glass objects first made

1,550 A.D.



Synthetic refractories (temperature resistant) furnaces used to make steel, glass, ceramics, and cement

Mid 1800s



Porcelain manufacturing increases

1920s



High-strength quartz-enriched porcelain manufactured

1940s



Oxide magnetic materials (ferrites) and ferroelectric materials come into use.

Present Day



A variety of materials and techniques from around the world are used to create artwork that creates commentary on the past and looks to the future

Artist Lei Xue

ARTISTS

Shenny Cruces

The act of collecting is an intrinsic part of my process and my work. I actively seek out objects that were once loved and displayed within the home but now reside within junk stores and resale shops. These objects are now empty vessels devoid of the personal and familial memories they once held.

The Fruit Plate series stems from a play on words. Coded language and slang have often been used to dehumanize and objectify the female body. Words like tart denote a taste in one's mouth as well as a means for placing judgement upon a female's character. This series aims to disarm language associated with female sexuality by exposing and reclaiming its power.

Historic Pairing

The oval serving dish was bought by George Woodard of Woodland and given to his mother, Dara Woodard in 1900. This artifact was a treasured family memento that was part of a full dining set, which at one time was part might have been part of cherished memories of the Woodard family. Within a museum context, we now look at the decorative aspects of the scalloped edge, gold beading against the cobalt blue trim and cut-out handles, to glean meaning about the significance of such pieces.

Artist Bio

Shenny Cruces is a Sacramento and Bay Area based artist whose work is inspired by the act of collecting and the importance of objects in one's life. Having grown up as a child of an Air Force Chief Master Sargent, what one collects and keeps has been an important aspect of her life. Shenny received a BA in Ceramics from Illinois State University in 2008 and a Master of Fine Arts in Ceramics from San Francisco State University in 2011. Her work has appeared in shows throughout California and the United States and includes 2013 NCECA Biennial, A Gilded Age at the Northern Clay Center and the Community Heirloom Project at the Palo Alto Art Center. Her work has received numerous awards including a Murphy Cadogan Fellowship, and a Kiln God Award Residency at Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts in Maine. Shenny has attended artist residencies at CRETA in Rome, Italy and Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts. Shenny is currently Associate Professor of Art and Ceramics at San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton, California.



Juicy

Shenny Cruces
Porcelain
2019
8" x 10" x 16"
\$1,200

Ripe

Shenny Cruces
Porcelain
2019
7" x 9" x 7"
\$1,200



Serving Dish

Donor: Dorothy Bigelow Trust
Ceramic/Porcelain
1900
YO1-C284-08



Candel Holder

Donor: Margaret Morris Duncan
Ceramic
1921
YO1-900-15



California Hills

Zen Du
Ceramic
2019
9.5" x 5.5"
\$220



California Jubilee Semi-Centennial Celebration Poster, 1896

"1846-1895" California's Jubilee
Monterey-July 4th to 7"
Artist: C.C. Vivian
YO1-813-41



California Hills

Zen Du
Ceramic
2019
7" x 5"
\$220

Zen Du

When I moved to California from the East coast 10 years ago, I was impressed with the landscape variety the state had to offer, along with the types of plants—a third of which are found nowhere else on Earth. For the next three years after my move, every hike was a botanical tour. Many times, I found myself feeling like Alice in Wonderland when discovering another plant that looked like something I had known but yet looked somewhat different.

The Bay Area—that is where I was settled at the time — flipped my perception of what summer landscapes looked like. The golden California hills drained of green really brought to focus the surviving plants, which were otherwise invisible to the eye, such as thistles, hemlock, and sagebrush varieties, whose oils melted by the hot sun assign a special olfactory memory indicative of a California summer.

Creating California Hills allowed me to blend my interests in both, 3D and 2D art forms. Ceramics, being such a process-oriented form of art, allowed me to create yet another notch in the memory palace commemorating those plants I had seen, proudly nodding their heads in the summer heat.

Historic Pairing

Artist Calthea Campbell Vivian designed the California Jubilee poster to celebrate the anniversary of the bear flag revolt. It was intended to capture iconic images of California's landscape and celebrate the state's history. Her poster captured the yellow tones of the California hillside in summer, when the Jubilee was held. Vivian was an artist and art teacher with a studio in Woodland in the mid 1890s. Throughout the early 1900s, Vivian taught at the California State Normal School in San Jose and the School of the California School of Arts and Crafts, now known as the California of College for the Arts in San Francisco.

Artist Bio

Zen Du is a multimedia artist who received her MFA from SFAI in San Francisco, CA and her BFA from ASU in Boone, NC, currently lives and works in Woodland. Zen, who as trained in the classical School of drawing and painting prior to receiving her MFA, is a college professor and art educator for students of all ages. Through her work, Zen aestheticizes ubiquity and redefines it through various contexts.



Portrait of the Artist

Linda S. Fitz Gibbon

Ceramic

2010

28" x 21" x 16"

\$2,750



Wedgwood Heart-Shaped Box

5.4" x 4" x 2"

Ceramic



Tilly Willy

Linda S. Fitz Gibbon

Ceramic

2021

12" x 6" x 5.5"

\$500

Linda Fitz Gibbons

Whether figurative or abstract, my hand-built ceramic sculptures reference the human body, gender, and stereotypes. Produce as well as items of popular culture such as toys and inflatables are used as contrasting symbols of nature vs nurture and the natural vs plastic environment. Like Pop Art, compositions are often large-scale replicas created through hand carving and multiple firings to produce layers of color. Although the "trompe l'oeil" sculptures appear real, molds are not used because the intent is to show the mark of the maker's hand.

A major body of my work over the years has been influenced by classic pottery forms such as Wedgwood, Willowware, and Libertyware. These are often scaled up, run over, stepped on, and/or punctured to evoke life's creative and destructive forces. They also serve as an expression of women's roll in raising children in an increasingly violent and callous society.

Historic Pairing

Wedgwood ceramics, named after English potter, Josiah Wedgwood used Greek and Roman themes to portray classical refinement. The colored creamware and layering of glazes communicate an air of the ancient composure and fragility of porcelain. The heart-shaped box is made of unglazed porcelain with a white bas relief of wreathed flowers around Aesculapius, the God of Medicine. The heart-shaped keepsake box references a certain sentimentality or nostalgia for the past.

Artist Bio

Born in New York, Linda Fitz Gibbon lives and works in Woodland, CA. A dedicated community arts educator, Linda is Art Adjunct Professor at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento and runs the ceramic program at Esparto Elementary through YoloArts. She was awarded the merit scholarships for artist residencies at the Vermont Studio Center, 2019 and 2017, and was Artist-in-Residence at Anderson Ranch Art Center, CO, 2010. The California Art Education Association awarded her a Certificate of Appreciation for Promoting Excellence in Visual Arts Education, 2014. Her work is in the collection of five museums and her work is featured at the Crocker Art Museum, UC Davis Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, Butler Institute of American Art, Arizona State University Museum, Tempe, and Yale University Art Gallery.

Wedgewood Ceramics

Josiah Wedgwood was born on July 12th 1730, in Burslem, Staffordshire, England. Born into a family of established potters, Wedgwood was known as the "Father of English Potters". In his early twenties Wedgwood began to study the new science of chemistry, he sought to understand the material science of fire, clay, and minerals and develop better clay and glazes for potter-making. Jasperware was one of his most famous inventions comprised of colored stoneware with applied relief decoration, usually in white. The unglazed stoneware base came in different color varieties of blue, green, lilac, yellow, black, and white. Classical appliqué was placed onto the object.

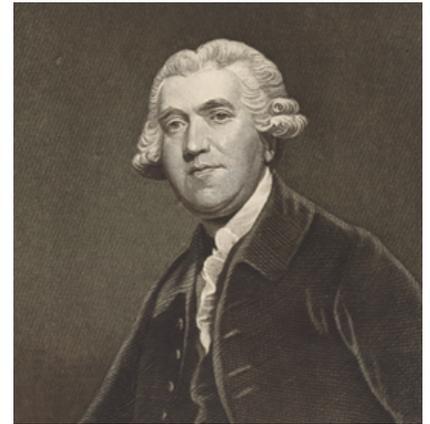
Wedgwood's pottery became popular amongst important figures around the world starting with Queen Charlotte, the wife of King George III of England. Wedgwood created a niche within the aristocratic market and gain social cachet within all classes of society. Wedgwood was granted the "Royal Warrant", which was a mark of recognition to those who have supplied goods of any kind to the Royal households. Wedgwood is still associated with great craftsmanship and and high society.

Willoware Ceramics

Willow Ware was invented in 1779 by Thomas Turner and was based on Chinese landscape designs. The white background and blue images were applied through the use of printed glaze transfers, rather than hand-painting. This process allowed for the mass production of the elaborate chinoiserie pattern. The images and story depicted in ceramics are inspired by the Japanese folk tale "The Green Willow".

Once there was a wealthy Mandarin, who had a beautiful daughter (Koong-se). She had fallen in love with her father's humble accounting assistant (Chang), angering her father. (It was inappropriate for them to marry due to their difference in social class.) He dismissed the young man and built a high fence around his house to keep the lovers apart. The Mandarin was planning for his daughter to marry a powerful Duke. The Duke arrived by boat to claim his bride, bearing a box of jewels as a gift. The wedding was to take place on the day the blossom fell from the willow tree. On the eve of the daughter's wedding to the Duke, the young accountant, disguised as a servant, slipped into the palace unnoticed. As the lovers escaped with the jewels, the alarm was raised. They ran over a bridge, chased by the Mandarin, whip in hand. They eventually escaped on the Duke's ship to the safety of a secluded island, where they lived happily for years. But one day, the Duke learned of their refuge. Hungry for revenge, he sent soldiers, who captured the lovers and put them to death. The gods, moved by their plight, transformed the lovers into a pair of doves.

Can you spot the fence, 2 doves, and willow tree?



Josiah Wedgwood



Green Willow by Hiroshige



Family Heirloom

Ianna Nova Frisby
Ceramic Assemblage
38" x 24" x 8"
2022
\$5,000



Hair Wreath

Donor: Carrie Ann Rood
Natural Materials
YO1-476-04

Ianna Nova Frisby

In the Victorian days, before family photos and scrapbooks were common, women commemorated their family by creating intricate wreaths woven from locks of hair from their family members. Have a look at the beautiful example in the front west corner of the Gibson House, if you haven't already. The work is intricate and painstaking. Imagine how long it would take just to make one branch.

Though beautiful and delicate, hair wreaths are also undeniably macabre. (After all, it's art made from the bodies of now-deceased people!) I love it. When I first toured the Gibson House, I felt like a kid in a candy store. I decided for this exposition, I would make my own ceramic interpretation of a Victorian hair wreath.

First, I needed hair. Not necessarily from my blood relatives, but from my family—the people in my life I want to memorialize. So I asked around for donations. Some were lock-generous, while some flatly declined. I get it. Hair is beautiful and attractive when it's on the owner's head, but it often arouses feelings of disdain or even disgust once detached.

To begin my project, I impressed strands of my family's hair onto a floral press mold. Later, I singed their hair on the surface while the ceramic was still hot. I used hair strands to dangle petals from the fingers cast from a mold of my own hands. Scissors are used in the creation of the work, but can also sever necessary ties. Lean in close and have a look at all the details. If you were to make a version of your own, how would you do it? Whose hair would you include?

Historic Pairing

Hair wreaths were intimate and deeply personal family heirlooms that also demonstrated the Victorian era's fascination with death. Victorian era women created hair wreaths by weaving strands of human hair into intricate designs that included flowers, ribbons, and other decorative accessories as a way to cherish and remember loved ones. After completion of a hair wreath, women would hang them in their bedrooms or gift them to their loved ones. The hair on the wreath at the Gibson House comes from William Byas Gibson's grandniece, Annette Cooper. It was started by Emma Charlotte May Cooper, Annette's Grandmother.



I Slept & Woke

Ianna Nova Frisby
Temporary Installation
2022
NFS



Victrola

Donor: Carrie Ann Rood
Wood/Metal
1920
YO1-10x67-01

Ianna Nova Frisby

Imagine traveling back in time to when this home was surrounded by open fields and none of the modern background noise we've become so accustomed to. All you heard was the wind, the birds, the farm animals and people nearby. This Victrola phonograph player might have been the first to introduce sounds from faraway places and perhaps the dulcet tones of wandering cowboys. These lovingly embroidered pillow cases remind us, however, that for all but its most wealthy inhabitants, Victorian life was not one of leisure and "easy listening." There was a chore for every hour of daylight, but for moments in between, one could wind up this player, look out the window and imagine you were somewhere else.

Historic Pairing

Beginning in the early 20th century, the invention of the phonograph led to the recording and production of music. The Victor Talking Machine Company was an international sensation and became very popular and went into mass production in 1910. The most popular companies to produce recorded music discs included Victor and Columbia in the 1920s. The music playing through the ceramic amplifiers is reminiscent of the midwest and the great plains, and likely what Mr. and Mrs. Gibson would have listened to in their limited leisure hours.

Artist Bio

Ianna Frisby teaches art at Sacramento City College and Sierra Community College while maintaining a studio at the Verge Center for the Arts in Sacramento, California. She received her BFA from Humboldt State University in 1998, an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2005. As an artist with a penchant for learning, much of Ianna's work is about processing new ideas or materials. Clay speaks to Ianna on so many levels with its ties to history, technology and geology. But sometimes inspiration requires looking outside of one's comfort zone and so Ianna has learned to incorporate other mediums into her practice. Sometimes the work begins by finding a particular object at a thrift store. Other times, an idea will get worked out by creating a series or body of work akin to Andy Warhol. A goal of Ianna's is to make work wonderful to view and experience. Whether it be enjoying the labor-intensive embroidering or perhaps finding a golden peach pit in public, her own artistic journey is full of multifarious pursuits of inspiration.



Semillas 1,2,3

Ray Gonzales
Clay/Gold Luster
2021
\$925 each



Scale

Donor: Gerda Faye
Metal/Tin
1860
YO1-C390-01A



Semillas 1,2,3

Ray Gonzales
Clay/Gold Luster
2021
\$925 each

Ray Gonzales

I largely work in abstract and incorporate rich texture with multiple glaze combinations poured over my sculptures. The resultant images many times seem to reference landscapes, seascapes, deep space as well as whatever images the viewer brings to the table. In truth, to me, these works are non-objective explorations of color, form and surface. I'm inspired by an eclectic mix of sources. Peter Voukos large clay plates, Ruth Rippon's lush glazes, Peter Vandenberg's dry slip surfaces, Van Gogh's thick textured paintings, Jose Montoya's earthy, color palette, a dry lake bed, an oil slick wet road, the first drop of watercolor medium floating in a well of water and too many others to list. Also drawing inspiration from the rich and fertile landscape of Woodland and Yolo County, the ceramic work "Semillas 1,2,3", meaning seeds in Spanish, demonstrates the rich versatility of earth and its ability to yield rich clay and agricultural abundance.

Historic Pairing

"The first treasure California began to surrender after the Gold Rush was the oldest: her land." - John Jakes
The richness of California is the agricultural potential that was discovered after the Gold Rush in 1860. Many Pioneers did not make their fortunes in gold mining using scales and pans, but in wheat farming, which was the true gold that California had to offer and led to the region's long-lasting prosperity.

Artist Bio

Ray Gonzales was born in Auburn, California and grew up in nearby Lincoln. He earned his B.A. in Ceramic Sculpture from California State University, Sacramento. Additional graduate work and a teaching credential was also earned at C.S.U.S. Continuing study included workshops in Florida, Alaska, Nevada and in California. Ray teaches Art in Lincoln's public schools as well as being an Adjunct Professor of Art for Sierra College in Rocklin, California where he teaches Ceramic Sculpture. Ray continues to exhibit primarily in the Sacramento region at The Art Foundry, Solomon-Dubnick, Galeria Posada, The Artery, Axis Gallery, The Blue Line Gallery and at Fort Mason in San Francisco. He has completed many Art-In-Public Places commissions- including 4 for the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission as well as several in Placer County. As a board member of Lincoln Arts, Ray conceived of, developed and was chairman of, "Feats of Clay", an international, ceramic art competitive that had a 24-year run and included artists from all 50 states as well as from numerous countries around the world.

Michelle P. Kern

I sometimes feel an odd sense of an absence of an object which, by means of a long-cultivated internal alchemical process, then leads me to make those things that I would like to see in the world, things that wouldn't exist otherwise. My work is mainly in ceramics and mixed media, often paired with drawings and paintings. My work revolves around themes of information and communication, drawing imagery from the history of science and technology; but blends with histories, real and imaginary, of mysticism, alchemy, and secret societies. Exploring the subconscious imagery and the intuitive connections shared by the two sets of histories, my work reflects an examination of the process of making meaning in human society, intertwined with the process of creating a personal vernacular.



Dairy Slate

Michelle P. Kern
Ceramic and Mixed Media
2022
13" x 9" x 12"



Chalkboard

Donor: Price Gittinger
Wood
YO1-C243-01

Pitcher

Donor: Elva I Dyer
Ceramic
YO1-3012-02

Historic Pairing

In 1900, according to Census records, dairying was widespread, and 918 (56%) of the county's 1,641 farms sold dairy products. About 2% of the state's dairy products, which included milk, cream, butter, and cheese, came from Yolo County's 5,946 dairy cows. Holstein Friesian cattle, known for their black and white spots, were the favored breed for milk production. A fresh pitcher of milk at the breakfast table was something that many Yolo County residents enjoyed after Jerome C. Davis opening the first creamery in 1849 in West Sacramento.

Artist Bio

Michelle P. Kern has lived and worked in Northern California all her life. Educated in art in the Bay Area, she has worked in art and arts education for several decades. She has a BFA and MFA in Ceramics from California College of the Arts. Kern has taught ceramics for the College of San Mateo since 2006. She has also taught for the Summer Enrichment Program for California College of the Arts, the Richmond Art Center, the California State Summer School for the Arts, and for the summer program for the Crystal Springs Uplands School. Kern was the recipient of the Ernie Kim Award for Ceramics in 2002 at the Richmond Art Center.



Between Seasons

William Peterson
Ceramic and Wood
2021
13" x 15"
\$295



Ariel Photographs of Yolo County

T8N_R2E_Sec 17 thru 20-0003.
West Sacramento, 1949



Winter Descent

William Peterson
Ceramic and Wood
2021
13" x 15"
\$295

William Peterson

As a longtime Sacramentan, I've grown to appreciate the amazing beauty and bounty of our region. From the fragrant fennel in Spring, to the juicy Summer corn, and the Winter citrus, each season has its selling points. However, once the glorious fall foliage flames out and falls away, my favorite season begins. This is when the light and the landscape both take on a silvery glow. When the waterways glisten and sparkle amidst the dull, resting soils. It's the time of year when shadows and fog mix and mingle on the fringes of morning and night. The Winter time is when I imagine the land realizes nap time is over, it's time to get back to work. Both "Between Seasons" and "Winter Descent" capture this, the most calm and optimistic moment of the land before the burgeoning crops and new life of Spring. Both pieces represent the man-made and organic geometry of California's Central Valley (seen from 30,000 feet above), which captures the year-round variety of our region's agriculture.

Historic Pairing

Aerial photographs of farmland over Yolo County give a sense of the changing land patterns of our region. Aerial photography became an important part of the mapmaking process in the twentieth century. Aerial photographs provide a straightforward depiction of the physical and geographic landscape of an area at a given time. When skillfully interpreted, these aerial images supply geographers, historians, ecologists, geologists, urban planners, archaeologists, and other professionals with a pictorial basis often critical to their studies. Aerial photographs are also markers of time that show the evolution of our landscape from a macroscopic perspective of our expansion. The photograph selected is of West Sacramento from 1949.

Artist Bio

William Peterson earned his BS in Liberal Studies and Communication for CSU Sacramento and spends his days in the world of graphic design and art direction. His true passion lies in clay and working with ceramic media. William has displayed his artwork at Verge Center for the Arts, Alpha Fired Arts and clayART studio814. William's art is influenced by color, window seat views, and the experimentalism of mid-century design. On any cross-country flight, I'm the guy who snaps photos out the plane window. These geometric formations-from 30,000 feet above-often find their way into my art as I express the journeys, connections and perspective that are constantly evolving in our lives.



Marionettes

Sandy Fong Whetstone

Mixed Media

2017

\$450 each for small figures



Victorian Pocket Dolls

Donor: Walter A. Sadler

Textile, Porcelain

YO1-2019-001-08, 09, 10



Marionettes

Sandy Fong Whetstone

Mixed Media

2017

12 \$450 each for large figures

Sandy Fong Whetstone

The concept behind these pieces were to explore our relationship with animals and to integrate some of my favorite mediums - ceramics, printmaking, fiber arts. In our search for connection with animals we often attribute human characteristics to them, dress them up, make them seem more like us so that we can assign value, emotions, and other human qualities. We often see ourselves as masters of the animal kingdom, that the animals are here for us to control, manage and entertain us. However, the animals have value beyond how they relate to humans. What should our relationship to animals be?

Historic Pairing

The child-like figurines allows us to explore children's items in the Yolo County Historical Collection. At the turn of the 20th century childhood looked much different than it does today. Children were simply small adults who had not yet grown into their adult roles. Therefore, most of childhood during the Victorian period was seen as training for adulthood. Pocket dolls were dressed as adult companions, toy sewing machines were used for instruction, wooden blocks taught children to read, storybooks were moral tales. Even the fashion of the day reflected adult styles but in miniature. There was not much time for "play" as we think of it today, as there was a story and purpose behind every item.

Artist Bio

Sandy Whetstone received her B.A. from the University of California, Davis in 1990, and her M.A. from California State University, Sacramento, in 1994. She has shown her work throughout Sacramento and the Bay Area. Sandy is primarily a ceramic sculptor, but has worked with printmaking, acrylics, cyanotypes, interactive installations, wool fiber, lost-wax casting, bronze, welded metal sculptures, batik, sewn soft sculptures out of old sweaters, and assemblage. Like most artists, she tends to hoard, which she battles against daily. She states that she abhors clutter but scrutinizes every bit of detritus for its potential as part of an art project. There are many artists who create magnificent works of art that challenge our ideas about the world, make us question our beliefs, our way of living, our customs and traditions, who push us to think and see the world differently -- all worthy goals. Sandy occasionally makes forays into those realms, sometimes subtly, sometimes less so; however, her primary goal is simple: She wants her art to make those that view it smile.