

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sasha Ali
Manager, Exhibitions & Communications
sasha@cafam.org | 323.937.4230 x 25

MELTING POINT: MOVEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY CLAY

January 28 - May 6, 2018

LOS ANGELES, CA - The Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) presents *Melting Point: Movements in Contemporary Clay*, a group exhibition of **22 artists** whose experimental manipulation of clay expands the technical, aesthetic, and metaphoric potential of the ceramic object. Organized around the **themes of anti-disciplinary process, object temporality, and sociopolitical interpretations**, the exhibition presents sculpture, site-specific installation, time-based work, and performance. *Melting Point: Movements in Contemporary Clay* launches CAFAM's new biennial series of large-scale, thematic exhibitions focusing on **divergent practices in contemporary ceramics**. The exhibition is on view January 28 through May 6, 2018.

"CAFAM is incredibly excited to launch its first clay biennial and our larger ceramics initiative," says **CAFAM executive director Suzanne Isken**. "With this exhibition series and our increased number of public programs focusing on clay, we are expanding our commitment to exhibiting diverse artists who push the envelope with a broad range of approaches to material and concept."

"A larger spotlight has been placed on ceramics recently, and we wanted to take the opportunity to mark this moment of increased interest in clay from a craft perspective, featuring artists who are all heavily invested in the material," say **curators Holly Jerger and Andres Payan**. "These artists possess a deep understanding of clay and its processes, history, and potential. Their dynamic range of works exemplifies the aesthetic and conceptual expansion we have witnessed in the ceramics field over the last couple of decades."

Since the 2000s, many ceramic artists have expanded on ideas first explored in the California Clay Movement of the 1950-60s by **challenging traditional ceramic processes** that result in perfect, fired forms. Instead, they choose to experiment with multiple firings and accumulated glazes to generate unknowable, dense sculptural forms that defy perfection. Ohio-based artist **Matt Wedel's** *Flower Trees* (2011) are large-scale, angular botanical forms that are coated with heavy, unconventional glazes. Southern California-based **Cheryl Ann Thomas** reinterprets the traditional coiling method by using very thin coils that collapse upon firing. She often puts two vessels in the kiln at once, causing both to collapse on each other to create a single, unpredictable form.

Several artists explore the temporality of clay through time-based works and performance. New York artist **Walter McConnell's** large-scale enclosed environments contain works made with unfired clay that morph over the course of the exhibition. Los Angeles artist **Armando Cortes** examines the value of manual labor in his performative piece, which includes dragging a large piece of black clay into the gallery for its eventual breakdown. Los Angeles-based **Wayne Perry** will use his artist residency at CAFAM to throw vessels on-site and add them to his installation of unfired pots that will change over time.

Artists in the exhibition also use the ceramic object to address personal and political concerns. St. Louis-based **Kahlil Robert Irving's** installation series *Undocumented* was created in the aftermath of the Ferguson uprising, with a multitude of black glazed vessels congregated atop a scaffold to signify a gathering of Black bodies in both celebration and resistance. San Antonio artist **Jennifer Ling Datchuk** navigates beauty standards and her mixed Chinese and European identity through a series of porcelain powder puffs embellished with human hair.



Anthony Sonnenberg, *Vase (My Kind of Witches Cauldron)*, porcelain, stoneware, found ceramic objects, underglaze, glaze, 2017. Courtesy of the artist



Kahlil Robert Irving, *ConcernedStudent1950; or The Johnson Family Reunion* (from the *Undocumented Series*), glazed stoneware, wood, 2015. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: David Johnson

The featured artists are **Brian Benfer, Susannah Biondo-Gemmell, Ling Chun, Armando Cortes, Patsy Cox, Julia Haft-Candell, Stanton Hunter, Kahlil Robert Irving, Trevor King, Jennifer Ling Datchuk, Linda Lopez, Walter McConnell, Ben Medansky, Jonathan Mess, Kristen Morgin, Wayne Perry, Jami Porter Lara, Brian Rochefort, Anthony Sonnenberg, Emily Sudd, Cheryl Ann Thomas, and Matt Wedel.**

OPENING RECEPTION

An opening reception for *Melting Point: Movements in Contemporary Clay* takes place on Saturday, January 27, 2018 from 6 - 9PM. The reception is free for CAFAM members and open to the public for a \$12 entry fee.

CREDITS

Melting Point: Movements in Contemporary Clay is organized by Holly Jerger, exhibitions curator, and Andres Payan, curator of public engagement, at the Craft & Folk Art Museum. This exhibition is funded in part by The Boardman Family Foundation; the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs; and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. In-kind support provided by Laguna Clay Company.

PROGRAMS

CAFAM will offer a full slate of exhibition-related programs, including artist-led workshops, demonstrations, and gallery walkthroughs with curators. Details can be found at www.cafam.org/programs

Open Clay Studio with Eunice Lee

Thursdays: February 15, 22; March 8, 15 | 11AM - 1PM

CAFAM's new studio sessions offer space, basic supplies, and casual instruction. Supplies include clay, underglaze, and surface decoration tools. Firing will be provided. For ages 17+. (\$30 members / \$40 non-members; per session)

CraftNight: Ceramic Wall Hangings with Gopi Shah

Thursday, March 1 | 7 - 9PM

Local ceramic artist Gopi Shah leads an evening workshop on making ceramic wall hangings using pre-fired beads, coils, bells, and countless ceramic pieces. (\$10 / free for members)

Wheel Throwing Workshop with Wayne Perry

Saturday, March 10 | 1 - 4PM

Melting Point exhibiting artist Wayne Perry leads an introductory wheel throwing ceramic workshop on wedging, throwing, and trimming hand-thrown clay forms on the wheel. Advanced registration required at workshops@cafam.org (\$55 / \$45 members; includes clay and firing)

Clay Wearables: Ceramic Jewelry with Alyson Iwamoto

Saturday, March 24 & Saturday, April 7 | 1 - 3PM

Ceramic artist Alyson Iwamoto leads a workshop on making clay jewelry and wearables ranging from pendants, beads, brooches, or necklaces. Advanced registration required at workshops@cafam.org (\$70 / \$60 members; includes materials and firing)

Curator Walkthrough of *Melting Point: Movements in Contemporary Clay*

Sunday, March 25 | 2PM

Curators Holly Jerger and Andres Payan lead a gallery walkthrough of *Melting Point: Movements in Contemporary Clay*, with details about the exhibiting artists and clay practices currently redefining the field of ceramics. Space is limited, RSVP required: rsvp@cafam.org (Free)



Ling Chun, *LOAF*, ceramics, hair, copper, 2017.
Courtesy of the artist



Matt Wedel, *Flower Tree*, ceramic, 2011.
Courtesy L.A. Louver, Venice, CA
© Matt Wedel



Cheryl Ann Thomas, *Spring*, colored porcelain, 2015. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: W. Scott Miles

CLAY LA: Pop-Up Shop

January 28 - May 6 | During museum hours

The CAFAM Shop will host a series of pop-ups featuring *Melting Point* exhibiting artists and ceramic makers from the Los Angeles area. More details at www.cafamshop.org

Situated on historic Museum Row since 1965, the **Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM)** is an invaluable contributor to Los Angeles culture, exhibiting current artists with intriguing perspectives and distinctive practices. Exploring the leading edge of craft, art, and design, CAFAM gives audience to diverse makers and artists whose work is often not represented in larger art institutions. The museum is a place to see art and make art — all under one roof. CAFAM coordinates a robust roster of hands-on workshops led by professional artists and makers. The intimate, atypical museum space and independent spirit at CAFAM combine to create an atmosphere of excitement and innovation, where people in Los Angeles deepen their relationships to art, creativity, and one another. For more information, visit www.cafam.org

Location: 5814 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Admission: FREE every Sunday Regularly: \$7 for adults; \$5 for students, teachers, and seniors; free for CAFAM members

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11AM to 5PM; Saturday & Sunday, 11AM to 6PM; closed Mondays. Every first Thursday of the month, extended hours 6:30 - 9:30PM.