

# NEW CERAMICS

The International Ceramics Magazine



# Peter Callas

## *An Enduring Legacy*

Exhibition until July 24, 2022  
 Julianne and David  
 Armstrong Gallery  
 American Museum of Ceramic Art



**Making Tojinbo**, collection of the artist, 2010, 45" x 24" x 20"

**P**eter Callas (1951–), regarded as one of the preminent ceramic artists in the American Studio Ceramics tradition to work with anagama kilns, influenced an entire generation of ceramic artists. *An Enduring Legacy* is a comprehensive career retrospective featuring 50 works spanning nearly 30 years of creative production. Among the 50 works featured are Callas's stately coiled vases and organically formed expressionist sculptures, masterworks that are some of the most important American works created in the wood-fired anagama kiln tradition. Other works on display include intimate tea bowls, selected works on paper and the premiere of an original film about the artist.

Beth Ann Gerstein, Executive Director of the American Museum of Ceramic Art, commented, "We are grateful to the Windgate Foundation and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for their critical support in making this exhibition possible. Peter Callas is a pivotal figure in the American Studio Ceramics movement, and exhibitions like this play a vital role in preserving and documenting the history of this uniquely American artistic movement."

Jo Lauria, curator of the exhibition, remarked, "Peter Callas is internationally recognized for his mastery of the wood-firing process using an anagama kiln. Callas's career has focused on perfecting vertical torqued sculptural forms and abstracted container shapes that function as visual records of the transformative forces of fire. The artist is a skilled strategist who creates captivating imagery through intuitive control and mastery of his medium on forms as varied as intimate tea bowls, stately coiled vases and large-scale imposing sculptures."

David Armstrong, Founder of the Museum and a member of AMOCA's Board of Director, said, "Peter Callas is one of the great ceramic artists of our time. He was the first to build an anagama kiln here in the United States, where he embarked on an adven-

**Chrysalis**, collection of David Gibson and William Ishmael  
 1991, 28" x 15" x 16"



**Hot Pocket**, collection of David Gibson and William Ishmael, 2018, 14" x 16" x 7"

**Oros**, collection of the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, 1991, 27.75" x 15.5" x 16"

ture with flame as his companion. He has mastered the firing technique for his magnificent abstract sculptures, which now reside in museums and famous collections all over the world."

#### EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Early in his career, Callas travelled to Japan, where he was introduced to the aesthetic philosophies and wood-fired glazing techniques that motivated his future work. Inspired to construct his own anagama kiln in 1975 – the first used in North America – Callas later set up a studio in New Jersey, where he continued to experiment with tunnel kilns. In his own words, kilns became Callas's "engines for creative innovation", and his works often bear the distinctive scorch marks of ash glazing. His innovations in wood-fired ceramics inspired countless others, including acclaimed ceramic artist Peter Voulkos, who collaborated with Callas for 23 years.

The exhibition brings together a comprehensive collection of Callas's works, revealing the evolution of his technique from the early 1990s to the present. The pieces gathered, ranging from abstract sculptures to expressionistic containers, highlight what curator Jo Lauria calls "the compelling results of heat, flame and fly ash deposits". Walking among the works included in *An Enduring Legacy*, viewers will be able to closely observe the nuances of creative "exchange" that occur between the artist, the clay, and the kiln.

Callas has exhibited extensively, including exhibitions at the Mashiko Museum of Ceramic Art (Japan), the Powerhouse Museum (Australia), and at the Daum Museum of Contemporary Art. His works are held in many museum collections nationally as well as in Asia, Europe, Australia, and South America. This comprehensive retrospective is Callas's first solo exhibition at the

American Museum of Ceramic Art,  
399 N. Garey Ave., Pomona, CA 91767, USA  
[www.amoca.org/upcoming-exhibitions/an-enduring-legacy/](http://www.amoca.org/upcoming-exhibitions/an-enduring-legacy/) Edt.

