



NEWSLETTER VOLUME XXXIV NUMBER 1 SEPTEMBER 2023

**Welcome to the 2023-2024 Season!  
Our First Lecture Will Be In Person on October 16 and  
on Zoom on October 17. Details are Below.**



*Dish with the Arms of Van der Meij, Japanese porcelain, Edo period, c. 1710–30.  
Diam. 8 5/8 in. (21.9 cm), Frelinghuysen Collection.*

**“Four Centuries of Blue & White: The Frelinghuysen Collection of  
Chinese and Japanese Export Porcelain”**

**by Becky MacGuire, Author and Independent Researcher**

**Sponsored by Ellen Brennan-Galvin**

**Monday, October 16 at 2:00 p.m. In Person at the Bruce Museum**

**and Tuesday, October 17 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom**

**Register for the Zoom Lecture at**

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8016780466954/WN\\_sxTh9X3RS8-gHuBUDBw1jg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8016780466954/WN_sxTh9X3RS8-gHuBUDBw1jg)**

Please join us on Monday, October 16 for this special opportunity to again enjoy the lecture in person, followed by tea and sandwiches at the newly renovated Bruce Museum, 1 Museum Drive, Greenwich. Members are invited to bring a guest free of charge. We look forward to seeing you there!

For those members who live at a distance, there will be a Zoom presentation at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 17, and you may register at the link below for that Zoom lecture.

All members will receive the customary Zoom recording.

Becky MacGuire will share with us the story of blue and white porcelain. First made in the heart of China in the 14th century, it circulated throughout the world, journeying first by land and then by sea and exciting wonder and the desire to possess wherever it went. Its qualities of hardness and fineness, the brilliant contrast of its vibrant blues with its bright white ground and the pleasing proportions of its shapes had no equal. Almost 400 years went by before a material of its quality could be produced anywhere else in the world.

The remarkably comprehensive Frelinghuysen collection of Asian blue and white porcelain, assembled over five decades, speaks of the many ways these wares were traded, collected, lived with and loved over the centuries. It includes magnificent rarities made for the first Europeans to sail to Asia, as well as iconic classics from the age of the great trading companies and wares made for the Islamic world and Japan. The collection's singular focus on blue and white also led to some much less-studied material, like a fascinating group made for the Thai royal court in the 1880s. A full complement of Japanese export porcelain provides an intriguing counterpoint to the Chinese, while later Chinese pieces reflect the increasing influence of European ceramics factories.

The forthcoming Frelinghuysen book, *Four Centuries of Blue & White*, will publish and illustrate 550 pieces from the collection, with contributions by Bill Sargent and Angela Howard alongside the speaker's text. This talk will be an early preview for Connecticut Ceramics Circle members of the forthcoming publication to be launched in London in late October.

Becky MacGuire retired from Christie's after a 30-year career as the firm's senior specialist in Chinese export art, where she brought to market the export collections of Benjamin F. Edwards III; Doris & Leo Hodroff; Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen, Jr.; James Sowell and Alvaro Condé and played a key role in larger collection sales that encompassed Asian export art, like those of David Rockefeller and Ann Getty. A senior vice-president of the firm, Becky was also Director of the New York Exceptional Sale, leading the team that sold decorative arts masterpieces to the Met, Versailles, the Musée d'Orsay and other major institutions, including the Adrian de Vries bronze sculpture now in the Rijksmuseum's Gallery of Honour. After graduation from the University of California at Berkeley with honors in art history, Becky completed the program of the Study Centre for the Fine and Decorative Arts at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She was an original appraiser on the American Antiques Roadshow and a founding partner of The Chinese Porcelain Company.

For those who cannot attend the lecture in person on Monday, October 16 at 2:00 p.m. at the Bruce Museum, 1 Museum Drive in Greenwich, you are invited to register for the lecture presented via Zoom on Tuesday, October 17 at 1:00 p.m. Recordings of this Zoom lecture will be sent to all members, whether registered or not, as is customary.

Register for the Zoom lecture at [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8016780466954/WN\\_sxTh9X3RS8-qHuBUDBw1jg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8016780466954/WN_sxTh9X3RS8-qHuBUDBw1jg)

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### In Memoriam

We remember with gratitude the life of Frances O'Neil, who served with excellence and grace for many years as the chair of CCC hospitality and from 2017-2022 as president. Fran passed away unexpectedly on July 13 and she will be greatly missed.

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### Announcement of Connecticut Ceramics Circle Grant for 2023-2024

The Connecticut Ceramics Circle (“CCC”) is pleased to announce that we will offer a Grant or Grants for research or a project in the field of ceramics. Such research or project must further the CCC’s mission “to promote the understanding of pottery and porcelain and to disseminate knowledge about diverse topics in the field of the ceramic arts.”

The total funding for the 2023-2024 award or awards will not be more than \$2500. Applications and Terms and Conditions will be available on the CCC website ([ccceramicsc.org](http://ccceramicsc.org)) beginning September 15, 2023, and completed applications must be received by January 15, 2024. Applications will be reviewed by the CCC Board of Directors, and all applicants will be notified of the results of the review process by March 15, 2024. The final project will be due one year from the date of notification of the award.

Questions regarding the requirements or process may be emailed to the CCC at [connecticutceramiccircle@gmail.com](mailto:connecticutceramiccircle@gmail.com).

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### New Metropolitan Museum of Art Exhibit, Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery

As featured in the Tuesday, August 15 Arts section of the New York Times, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has opened an exhibit of pottery made in various Native American Pueblos and unique in that it was curated by 68 Pueblo potters, artists and cultural leaders. The 60 members of the Pueblo Pottery Collective, representing 21 Pueblos, selected pottery from two significant Pueblo pottery collections—the Indian Arts Research Center of the School for Advanced Research (SAR) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the Vilcek Foundation in New York City. The exhibit features more than one hundred historical, modern, and contemporary clay works and offers a critical understanding of Pueblo pottery as community-based knowledge and personal experience.

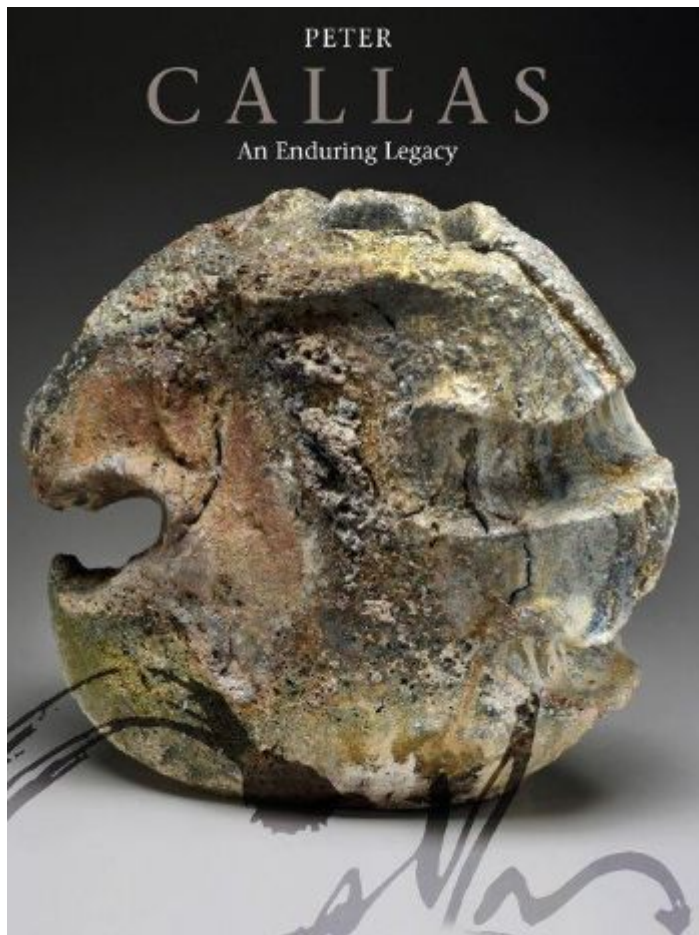
Dating from the eleventh century to the present day, the featured artworks represent the aesthetic lineages of New Mexico's nineteen Río Grande Pueblos as well as the West Texas community of Ysleta del Sur and the Hopi tribe of Arizona—sovereign Indigenous nations where pots and other ceramic works have been made and used for millennia. Visual and material languages of

pottery and intergenerational narratives are highlighted throughout the exhibition.

The exhibit is open until June 4, 2024. More information at <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/grounded-in-clay>

Image above: Lorencita Pino, *Tesuque Bean pot with lid*, 1963, Clay and mica. 12 1/2 x 13 1/2 in. (31.8 x 34.3 cm). Indian Arts Research Center of the School for Advanced Research, Sante Fe, New Mexico.

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The excerpts below are from an article by ceramist, writer, independent consultant, and former CCC vice-president, Leigh Taylor-Mickelson. The article was published in the journal Studio Potter and was inspired by the 2022 exhibit, 'Peter Callas: An Enduring Legacy,' at the American Museum of Ceramic Art in Pomona, California.

On the occasion of this solo museum exhibition, curated by former CCC speaker and ceramist Jo Lauria and coinciding with his fiftieth year as a practicing artist in ceramics, Peter Callas was inspired to contribute an autobiography, *Reasonable Madness*. We present excerpts here as part of an ongoing effort to bring the life and works of contemporary ceramics artists to the attention of CCC newsletter readers.

After a somewhat boisterous childhood, followed by some rowdy teen years, which included a military academy as well as Woodstock, Peter found ceramics in college out of pure “academic boredom.” In 1970, when “nothing



clicked,” he signed up for his first ceramics class “and immediately felt a connection with the way clay moved.” He pursued ceramics at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. He states, “I became an avid alpine climber summiting Mt. St. Helens, most of Mt. Rainer and chunks of the Cascade and Olympic Mountain ranges. The rugged, raw terrain inspired my use of clay to echo nature’s forces.” In college, he also became aware of Asian ceramics, and that ceramic history merged with his newfound love of archeology, the materiality of clay and nature.

After graduating from college, Peter was “fortunately and fatefully rejected from every MFA program.” This is a sentence you can only say in hindsight, after reflection on how life’s circuitous path got you to where you are today. Where Peter ended up was at the Archie Bray Foundation, where founding resident Peter Voulkos once lived and worked. The Archie Bray, with space to work and access to giants in the field, became the steppingstone he needed to get serious about a career in ceramics. After a year of experimentation and on his way out, then Director, Dave Cornell, sarcastically suggested, “Why don’t you go to Japan?” Peter thought, why not? And at the age of twenty-three, “after two short months with no command of the language, Japan unexpectedly became the gateway to [his] future.”

In Japan, the magic of abstract expressionism and the dynamic qualities of clay and wood firing caught his attention immediately. A serendipitous trip that led to researching the ancient kiln sites brought him to the historic village of Shigaraki. While exploring Shigaraki, he had the opportunity to participate in building a traditional anagama wood kiln. This experience was life-altering, changing the trajectory of his career and his perception of beauty.

He returned to the New York area...Initially making pots out of his parent’s garage, he built his first anagama on Grace Knowlton’s property in 1975, effectively constructing the first anagama kiln in North America. He built the kiln out of a “labor of love, hoping for the best and prepared for the worst. No one to ask for advice, no books and no internet.” After some trial and error, floods, burst water mains, and arduously excavating basalt rock, the kiln was ready to be fired in 1976.

His first studio was in Piermont, NY in a former silk mill factory. With large windows and northern light, this live/work “loft space changed the way [he] worked” and every morning he woke “with the sole mission to fill the kiln and fire it.” That same year Callas also connected with ceramic icon Peter Voulkos, who he had met initially in 1973 at his studio in Berkeley. This led to a highly successful, twenty-three-year collaboration. Initially, Voulkos made his work, shipped it to Callas, and they were finished with Callas’ touch – in his anagama kiln with firings that lasted over a week. Later, Callas would travel to California for a month at a time to help Voulkos construct his iconic monumental stack sculptures.

The collaboration resulted in critical acclaim for Callas as well as Voulkos, including favorable comments in 2002 by Roberta Smith, art critic for the NY Times. “*The resulting works -- large, stacked pieces and plaque-like plates that he treated as paintings -- were [Voulkos’] roughest and most exuberant and, in the eyes of many, his best.*” There is no doubt that while Callas’ expert wood-

firing touch impacted the latter half of Voulkos' career, the presence of Voulkos also impacted Callas. When they first started working together, Callas was making gestural work in the Iga style. He asked Voulkos what he thought, and his response was, "If you've seen it before, don't do it." Callas listened. He became more inventive and playful in his approach to the medium. Voulkos' aesthetic was not lost on this young artist.

When, ten years later he soon found his forever home and studio in Belvidere, NJ: "an 1812 Moravian farmhouse on the Pequest River with a pine forest, swimming pool, and a 3,500 square foot timber frame bank barn next to a hill fit for a kiln." He built a new anagama kiln, married, had two children, and turned his studio into a vibrant place where "art happenings" occurred with the field's biggest and best artists in and out of the wood firing tradition – Voulkos (of course), Autio, Soldner, Reitz, Ferguson, Hepburn, Kaneko, Turner, Takaezu, Weiser, Mansfield. The list goes on.

A skilled strategist, Callas continues to create captivating imagery with intuitive control and mastery of his medium. Throughout his career Callas, has influenced hundreds of other makers, emerging as an important leader in the United States arts and crafts movement. With fifty solo exhibitions and 150 group exhibitions across five continents under his belt, Callas was also twice a recipient of The Pollock/Krasner Fellowship in 2018 and 2021. His work is represented in over 35 museum collections worldwide. In 2021, the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired 8 of his pieces when Robert Ellison donated his mid-century and contemporary ceramics collection. Ellison stated, *"I have focused on expressionist forms and the potential to incite the mind toward something beyond the technical aspects of making art, beyond the mechanical task of creating physical forms out of clay that blend both historical references and contemporary intellectual values."*

Leigh Taylor Mickelson

Article courtesy of the Author and Studio Potter, [www.studiopotter.org](http://www.studiopotter.org)

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## Exciting Fall Auctions

Although fall's cooler weather has yet to make an appearance in our area, the lively annual auction schedule starts this month with Asia Week's many sales of exceptional works and Rago's early 20th-century design. It continues with Christie's October sales of "Rothschild Masterpieces," items belonging to the family of James de Rothschild from homes in Paris and from their Chateau de Ferrières. To explore these sales from the comfort of home, click on the links below and enjoy!

Christie's Asia Week: <https://www.christies.com/en/events/hong-kong-and-asian-art/asian-art-week/what-is-on>

Christie's October Rothschild

Sales: <https://www.christies.com/en/events/rothschild-masterpieces/what-is-on>

Rago 20th Century: <https://www.ragoarts.com/auctions/2023/09/early-20th-century-design/info>

Sotheby's Asia Week: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/series/asia-week-fall-2023?locale=en>

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## Elsewhere in the Decorative Arts

**September 12-28:** 'OBJECT, VESSEL, Yasuhara Kimeji, Ikegana Sogetsu, and the Art of Contemporary Japanese Ceramics.' Dai Ichi Arts gallery presents a solo exhibit of works by Yasuhara Kimeji. This show is the first exhibition in the West to introduce and present a significant collection of Yasuhara Kimeji's ceramic works alongside his contemporaries. The gallery is at 18 East 64th Street, Suite 1F. More information at <https://www.daiichiarts.com/exhibitions/>.

**September 20:** "Boucher and the Decorative Arts: Promoting and Maintaining His Fame," a lecture at 6:00 p.m. by Pascal Bertrand at the Bard Graduate Center, 38 West 86th Street, New York. Registration and more information at <https://www.bgc.bard.edu/events/1450/20-sep-2023-boucher-and>

**September 23:** Ceramicist Shary Boyle's exhibit 'Outside the Palace of Me,' opens at the Museum of Arts and Design, 2 Columbus Circle. The exhibit runs to February 25, 2024. Information at <https://www.madmuseum.org/exhibition/shary-boyle>.

**September 27:** "Allison Newsome's Most Recent, Different & Exciting Work: Spectacular RainKeep Sculptures," lecture and luncheon presented by the Pottery and Porcelain Club of Rhode Island at the Art Club, Thomas Street, Providence, Rhode Island at 11:30 a.m. Registration and information at [potteryandporcelainclub@gmail.com](mailto:potteryandporcelainclub@gmail.com).

**September 29 and 30:** Historic Deerfield Fall Forum: The Arts and Crafts Movement in America's Northeast, a Two-day Symposium. For information and to register, go to <https://www.historic-deerfield.org/events/2023-fallforumartsandcrafts/>.

**October 18:** 'Radical Pots and Cooperative Hands: Katherine Choy and the Clay Arts Center,' an exhibit at the Greenwich Historical Society, 47 Strickland Road Cos Cob, CT 06807, to February 4, 2024. For more information, <https://greenwichhistory.org/katherine-choy-exhibition/>  
**Note: Watch for notification of a CCC event at this exhibit!**

**October 19:** 'Magdalene Odundo: A Dialogue with Objects,' opening at the Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Canada, to April 21, 2024. More information at <https://www.gardinermuseum.on.ca/event/magdalene-odundo-a-dialogue-with-objects/>.

**November 13:** "Dr. Wall's Triumph: Early Worcester Porcelain from the First Period of Production, 1751-1776, and Where it is Now!" lecture by Paul Crane FSA, Independent Historian and Consultant to the Brian Haughton Gallery, London, England, via Zoom at 2:00 p.m. by the Connecticut Ceramics Circle, [cceramicsc.org](http://cceramicsc.org).

**Ongoing:** At the American Museum of Ceramic Arts (AMOCA) in Pomona, California:

**To September 17:** From a Gift to a Collection: Igal and Diane Silber.

**To December 30:** Making in Between: Queer Clay.

More information at <https://www.amoca.org/exhibitions/current/>.

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