

# USC Pacific Asia Museum

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 17, 2015

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Nathalia Morales-Evans  
Head of Communications & Marketing  
626.449-.2742 ext. 22  
nathalia.morales@pam.usc.edu

**MEDIA PREVIEW**  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2015  
6:00 PM–8:00 PM  
USC PAM COURTYARD  
RSVP: [Nathalia.Morales@pam.usc.edu](mailto:Nathalia.Morales@pam.usc.edu)

USC PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM PRESENTS:  
**RESHAPING TRADITION: CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS FROM EAST ASIA**  
September 11, 2015–January 31, 2016

MEMBERS OPENING

Thursday, September 10, 2015, 6:00 PM–8:00 PM  
Exhibiting artist Liu Jianhua will be in attendance



Harumi Nakashima, *Forms that Enclose the Absurd-1213*, 2012, Hand-built porcelain with blue in-glaze,  
Courtesy of the artist and Yufuku Gallery, Japan  
Photograph by Tatsuo Hayashi © Harumi Nakashima

**Pasadena, CA** – USC Pacific Asia Museum presents *Reshaping Tradition: Contemporary Ceramics from East Asia*, the first major international survey of contemporary Asian ceramics organized by the museum. The exhibition presents works by internationally recognized artists **Ai Weiwei** (China), **Ik-joong Kang** (Korea), **Liu Jianhua** (China), **Ah Xian** (China), **Yeesoonyung** (Korea), **Harumi Nakashima** (Japan) and **Bui Cong Khanh** (Vietnam) to consider some of the most extraordinary developments that are reshaping ceramic practice today. The exhibition also presents select examples of pre-modern ceramics

# USC Pacific Asia Museum

from the Museum's permanent collection that reveal the impact of traditional ceramics on contemporary Asian artists.

Curated by Yeonsoo Chee, USC PAM Assistant Curator, *Reshaping Tradition* includes approximately thirty objects (twenty-one contemporary works and ten pre-modern works) all made of ceramic with the exception of two 2-D works.

"USC Pacific Asia Museum has a long history of presenting artists living in Asia and the Pacific Islands to Southern California audiences," says Museum Director Christina Yu Yu, Ph.D., "*Reshaping Tradition* continues this mission by showcasing the continuity and creativity of art and culture from those regions."

"This exhibition introduces the infinite possibilities inspired by the ceramic tradition," states Assistant Curator Yeonsoo Chee, "and by looking at these contemporary works alongside earlier objects, the visitor will gain a wider perspective on the great diversity of contemporary Asian ceramics."

## **Exhibition Overview:**

*Reshaping Tradition: Contemporary Ceramics from East Asia* supports the museum's ongoing efforts to show contemporary Asian art as part of a vital continuum that is relevant to life in Southern California today. The exhibition traces some of the most innovative and extraordinary developments that have reshaped contemporary ceramic practice. Many over the course of millennia have appreciated the diversity and depth of ceramic tradition in East Asia. With differences in artistic approaches touching upon various issues from personal to public to aesthetic, ceramic artists in this region have continued to demonstrate stunning range and creativity. Juxtaposed with examples from the museum's permanent collection representing significant ceramics tradition in East Asia, the contemporary works in this exhibition illustrate how artists today employ their tradition as a springboard for countless innovations, creating works that speak to contemporary ideas.

## **ARTISTS:**

**Ai Weiei**, one of the most acclaimed contemporary artist from China and an outspoken activist on human rights, is known for his controversial iconoclastic works that raise issues of existing norms and cultural values. With the "Colored Vases" series he challenges common notions of rarity, value, and preciousness by dipping earthenware vases that date to the Neolithic period (5,000–3,000 BCE) into buckets of industrial paint. The artist eradicates commonly accepted cultural and financial values. Precious cultural relics are covered with cheaply made paint, thus losing their authenticity and art historical value—history itself is "no longer visible, but is still there." Using the medium of ceramics, Ai critiques how Chinese history and tradition are overpowered by Western consumer culture, as well as prevalent cultural and historical vandalism in China due to market demand for antiquities.

**Harumi Nakashima** creates free-form ceramic sculptures that employ a design vocabulary borrowed from blue-and-white ware. Nakashima's hand-built, organic-yet-psychedelic ceramic sculpture—with his iconic blue-and-white dot decorations—tackles diverse issues ranging from cross-cultural interchange to the aesthetics and functionality of ceramics.

# USC Pacific Asia Museum

Born in Korea, **Ik-joong Kang** uses a variety of materials to reinterpret the moon jar of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910). His installations employ differentiated images of a porcelain moon jar on paper or on panel, often juxtaposed with his contemporary interpretations of multiple moon jars, transforming the familiar and iconic Korean art object. His work also embodies layers of poignant associations from the artist's own life and engages the viewers to visualize their own reveries.

Best known for her “Translated Vases” series, **Yeesookyung** examines Korean ceramics from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Yee intuitively works with shards of porcelain and celadon pots produced by contemporary masters. She combines these shards with epoxy then traces the seams with 24-karat gold leaf. Despite their fractured structures, the resulting forms are organic and lyrical with a precarious sense of balance, radically departing from the original ceramic vessels.

Trained as an oil painter, **Bui Cong Khanh's** ceramic works incorporate visual images that address history and contemporary society in Vietnam and the impact that global capital is having upon it. His blue-and-white porcelain vases, which reference both traditional and contemporary culture, address the dichotomies of his country's fast-changing society. Khanh's vases explore what he calls “the character of the present,” the sounds and sights of daily life. In his work, traditional forms interplay with symbols of quotidian life, encased in classic Vietnamese ornamentation. The artist will discuss his work for CONVERSATIONS@PAM on November 21 (see next page for event details).

China-born **Ah Xian** sought political asylum in Australia following the events at Tiananmen Square in 1989. Reflecting his complex life experience, the artist explores the relationship between artistic tradition and cultural context by combining the two most common media, sculpture and painting. He borrows the sculptural form of the bust, a long-standing portraiture tradition in the West, and decorates the surface using designs derived from the Chinese porcelain tradition. His series is both art historical and personal as it delves into the issue of his cultural identity as a Chinese artist working in Australia.

Trained in the Fine Arts Department of Jingdezhen Pottery & Porcelain College, **Liu Jianhua** examines the thematic overlap of contemporary art with traditional Chinese aesthetics in his ceramic installations. He avoids cultural and sociological interpretations of the Chinese ceramic tradition and instead focuses on delivering a new visual experience—what he refers to as “quiet aesthetics.” The artist will be present for the exhibition installation and opening.

## **RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS:**

### **Fusion Friday – September 18, 2015, 7:00 PM–10:00 PM**

Crash it and smash it like Ai Weiwei during a night of art, music and fun! Groove under the stars to the signature blend of eclectic and worldly sounds by DJ Rani De Leon, create art using repurposed ceramics with mosaic artist Leigh Adams, and design and fire your own teacup with artist Dave Lovejoy. Enjoy delicious food truck dining and Asian-style cocktails at the cash bar. Galleries are open all night with special tours of *Reshaping Tradition: Contemporary Ceramics from East Asia*.

### **CONVERSATIONS @PAM – November 21, 2015, 7:00 PM**

USC Associate Professor & Head of Ceramics Department Karen Koblitz converses with exhibiting artist Bui Cong Khanh from Vietnam.

# USC Pacific Asia Museum

*Reshaping Tradition: Contemporary Ceramics from East Asia* was made possible in part by major support from Stephen O. Lesser and the Pasadena Art Alliance, with generous support from The Japan Foundation.

## **ABOUT USC PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM**

USC Pacific Asia Museum is Southern California's only museum exclusively devoted to the arts of Asia and the Pacific, and the only U.S. university museum dedicated to the subject. Since 1971, the museum's mission is to further intercultural understanding through the arts of Asia and the Pacific Islands.

Among many highlights in the Museum's history is the fact that USC Pacific Asia Museum presented the first North American exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art after the Cultural Revolution, including in 1987, *Beyond The Open Door: Contemporary Paintings from the People's Republic Of China* and in 1991, *I Don't Want To Play Cards with Cézanne and Other Works: Selections From The Chinese "New Wave" and "Avant-Garde" Art of the Eighties*. In the spring of 2016 the Museum again examines China, this time via its courtly art history by presenting the major travelling exhibition *Royal Taste: The Art of Princely Courts in Fifteenth Century China*.

**Location:** 46 N. Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena CA 91101

**Hours:** Wednesday through Sunday 10AM–6PM

**Admission:** \$10 general admission, \$7 students with a valid ID & seniors (60+)  
Free for children ages 12 and under  
Free for all Museum members, USC faculty, staff, & students with current ID  
Free for all second Sunday of the month

For more information, please contact 626.449.2742 or visit [pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu](http://pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu)

For images, please review selections on separate page.

###