

A Shared Journey: The Barkan Contemporary Ceramic Collection at the RISD Museum

September 13, 2025 - March 5, 2028

Remarkably versatile and available around the world, clay has been used by makers for thousands of years. This soft, malleable earth can be shaped into an infinite variety of objects, then transformed by heat into something hard and durable.

Yet, if you think about ceramics, what comes to mind? A teapot, or perhaps a plate? Clay—whether earthenware, stoneware, or porcelain—is typically used to make small functional objects. But why not create something big, bold, and sculptural from clay?

Artists working in the field of ceramics in the 1950s responded to this challenge in powerful and innovative ways. Peter Voukos, who radically pushed clay beyond the functional, said, “Wielding clay is magic. The minute you touch it, it moves, so you’ve got to move with it. I always work standing up, so I can move my body around. I don’t sit and make dainty things.”

Made by nearly 40 artists, the objects in this exhibition present the undeniable embrace of clay as a viable medium for contemporary art. This trajectory continues to gather strength today. Paralleling artists’ expanding approach to ceramics, Hope and Mel Barkan developed a shared interest in sculptural ceramic forms as they built their collection, part of which they recently gave to the RISD Museum. Most of those works are shown here, along with contemporary examples from the museum’s collection.

Elizabeth A. Williams

David and Peggy Rockefeller Curator of Decorative Arts and Design

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CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Case 1

Tony Marsh

b. 1954 in New York; works in Long Beach, California

Untitled, 1997

Earthenware with glaze

Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.23a-c**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Ron Nagle
b. 1939; b. in and works in San Francisco
Untitled, 1981
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.28**



Ron Nagle
b. 1939; b. in and works in San Francisco
Kimberly Timbers, 2004
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.29**



Richard Notkin
b. 1948 in Chicago; works in Puget Sound, Washington
Heart Teapot: Metamorphosis IV, from the *Yixing* series, 1999
Stoneware
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.30ab**



Annabeth Rosen (RISD faculty 1990–1991, Ceramics)
b. 1957 in Brooklyn, New York; works in Davis, California
Untitled (Collage Plate with Dark Amber Leaves), 1997
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.35**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Case 2

Andrew Lord
b. 1950 in Lancashire, England; works in New York
Two teapots in angled morning light. Black, 1981
Earthenware
Gift of Susan Lorence **2011.102.3a-d**



Arnold Zimmerman
1954-2021, b. in Poughkeepsie, New York, worked in Hudson, New York
Under the Tracks from Inner City, 2006
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Ann Rosenthal **2023.51.2**



John Gill
b. 1949 in Renton, Washington; works in Alfred, New York
Ewer, 1978
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.52**



John Gill
b. 1949 in Renton, Washington; works in Alfred, New York
Ewer, 1978
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.51**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Case 3

Andrea Gill (RISD BFA 1971, Painting)
b. 1948 in Newark, New Jersey; works in Alfred, New York
Vase, 1984
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan **1987.102**



Chris Gustin
b. 1952 in Chicago; works in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts
Teapot, 1988
Stoneware with glaze
Museum purchase with the aid of the National Endowment for the Arts
and the Marken Scholes Shedd Memorial Fund **1989.002**



Wayne Bates
b. 1943 in Georgia; works in Murray, Kentucky
Brushstroke Platter, ca. 1985
Earthenware with slip, glaze, and sgraffito decoration
Gift of Larry Day and Ruth Fine in honor of William and Catherine
Daley **2002.82.1**



Case 4

Steven Branfman (RISD MAT 1975, Art Education)
b. 1953 in Los Angeles; works in Needham, Massachusetts
Vessel, 1994
Raku-fired earthenware with glaze
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan **2000.69**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

James Richard (Rick) Dillingham
1952–1994; b. in Lake Forest, Illinois; worked in Santa Fe, New Mexico
Untitled, 1984
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.10**



Anish Kapoor
b. 1954 in Mumbai, India; works in London
Untitled, 1993
Porcelain and earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.19a-c**



Malene Müllertz
b. 1949; b. in and works in Copenhagen
Untitled, 2000
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.26**



Malene Müllertz
b. 1949; b. in and works in Copenhagen
Rattle Sound, 2008
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.27**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Beatrice Wood
1893–1998; b. in San Francisco; worked in Ojai, California
Two Handled Chalice, 1992
Earthenware with luster glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.47



Case 5

Alison Britton
b. 1948 in London; works in Yorkshire, England
Pink Jar, 1998
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.1



Lawson Oyekan
British Nigerian; b. 1961; b. in and works in London
Passage Pot (Afe Ika Afi Eke) Saworo, 1993
Earthenware
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.31



Colin Pearson
1923–2007; b. in London; worked in England
Untitled, 1998
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.33



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Michael Cleff
b. 1961; b. in and works in Bochum, Germany
Untitled, 2000
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.5



Lis Ehrenreich
b. 1953 in Denmark; works in Aarhus, Denmark
ALBARELLO, 2003
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.12



Kenneth Ferguson
1928–2004; b. in Elwood, Indiana; worked in Kansas City
Untitled (Hare Basket), 1980
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.13



Robert C. Turner
1913–2005; b. in Port Washington, New York; worked in Alfred, New York
Ashanti, 1982
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.44ab



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Case 6

Ron Nagle
b. 1939; b. in and works in San Francisco
Untitled (Cup), 1981
Earthenware with paint and glaze
Marken Scholes Shedd Memorial Fund **81.062**



Phillip Maberry
b. 1951 in Stamford, Texas; works in Santa Monica, California
Bowl, 1981
Porcelain with glaze
Museum purchase: Edgar J. Lownes, Marken Scholes Shedd,
Georgianna Aldrich Funds, Bequest of Taube Farnsworth and Lyra
Brown Nickerson, by exchange **83.025**



Kathy Butterly
b. 1963 in Amityville, New York; works in New York
The Snake Charmer, 1996
Porcelain with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.2**

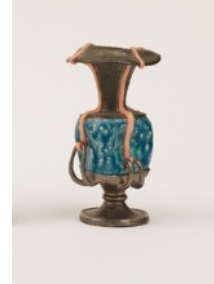


Rain Harris (RISD BFA 1997, Ceramics)
b. 1969 in Oakland, California; works in Kansas City, Missouri
Green Three-Lobe Poison Bottle, 2002
Porcelain with glaze, pearl, and wire
Daphne Farago Purchase Fund **2003.42**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Kathy Butterly
b. 1963 in Amityville, New York; works in New York
Return from Venus, 1995
Porcelain with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.3**



Phillip Maberry
b. 1951 in Stamford, Texas; works in Santa Monica, California
Untitled (PM-16-81), 1981
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.25**



Ken Price
1935–2012; b. in Los Angeles; worked in California and New Mexico
California Cup, 1991
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.34**



Beatrice Wood
1893–1998; b. in San Francisco; worked in Ojai, California
Gold Balls on Gold Vase, 1999
Earthenware with luster glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.48**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Eunjung Park (RISD MFA 1999, Ceramics)
b. 1971 in Korea; works in Seoul
Flower Tea Set, 1999
Porcelain with glaze
Gift of Michele Lederberg **2025.51**



Case 7

Anina Major (RISD MFA 2017, Ceramics)
b. 1981 in Nassau, Bahamas; works in Provincetown, Massachusetts
Hybrid Gourd, 2019
Stoneware with glaze
Mary Ann Lippitt Acquisition Fund **2022.8**



Chris Gustin
b. 1952 in Chicago; works in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts
Untitled (Teapot), 1982
Stoneware
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.15ab**



Irvin Tepper
b. 1947 in St. Louis, Missouri; works in New York
Alert, 1999
Porcelain with pigment
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.42**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Irvin Tepper
b. 1947 in St. Louis, Missouri; works in New York
New Beginnings, 2004
Porcelain with pigment
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.43**



Philip Cornelius
1934–2015; b. in San Bernardino, California; worked in California
Teapot, 1981
Porcelain with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.6ab**



Jun Kaneko 金子潤 (RISD faculty 1973–1975, Ceramics and Glass)
b. 1942 in Nagoya, Japan; works in Omaha, Nebraska
Untitled, 1982
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.17**



Peter Voulkos
1924–2002; b. in Bozeman, Montana; worked in California
Untitled, 1962
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.45ab**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Peter Voulkos
1924–2002; b. in Bozeman, Montana; worked in California
Elephant Foot, 1985
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.49**



Kenneth Ferguson
1928–2004; b. in Elwood, Indiana; worked in Kansas City
Teapot, 1978
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan **2025.39.50ab**



Case 8

Kathryn Sharbaugh
b. 1948 in Norwich, Connecticut; works in Flint, Michigan
Suspension Climb Teapot, 1988
Porcelain with underglaze decoration
Museum purchase with the aid of the National Endowment for the Arts
and the Marken Scholes Shedd Memorial Fund **1988.068**



Ruth Duckworth
1919–2009; b. in Hamburg, Germany; worked in Chicago
Untitled (Cup and Blade), 1988
Porcelain
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain **1993.127**



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Babs Haenen
b. 1948; b. in and works in Amsterdam
Troubled Walls, 1996
Porcelain with pigment and glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.16



Bodil Manz
b. 1943; b. in and works in Copenhagen
Untitled, 2006
Porcelain with transfer print
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.21



Bodil Manz
b. 1943; b. in and works in Copenhagen
Untitled, 2006
Porcelain with transfer print
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.22



Case 9

Akio Takamori 高森昭夫
1950–2017; b. in Nobeoka, Japan; worked in Seattle
Boy, 1996
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.39



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Akio Takamori 高森昭夫
1950–2017; b. in Nobeoka, Japan; worked in Seattle
High School Boy, 1996
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.40



Akio Takamori 高森昭夫
1950–2017; b. in Nobeoka, Japan; worked in Seattle
Boy Urinating, 1997
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.41



Case 10

Richard DeVore
1933–2006; b. in Toledo, Ohio; worked in Michigan and Colorado
Untitled, 1990
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.7



Richard DeVore
b. in Toledo, Ohio; worked in Michigan and Colorado
Untitled, 1993
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.8



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Richard DeVore
1933–2006; b. in Toledo, Ohio; worked in Michigan and Colorado
Untitled, 1978
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Hope and Mel Barkan 2025.39.9

