

## GAGOSIAN



### Art Seen – Fire & Clay

*Uli Van Neyghem visits the Fire and Clay exhibit of Ceramic Art at the Gagosian Gallery in Geneva.*

Uli Van Neyghem



Using ceramic as artistic medium, artists all over the world find innumerable ways to express themselves. The Gagosian Gallery in Geneva underlines this beautifully with their new temporary exhibition called Fire and Clay, uniting the works of 8 international artists from 6 decades.

Starting with works from Peter Voulkos, who was one of the driving forces of the California Clay Movement, that emerged, as the name suggests, in California in the 1950s and moved 'pottery' from the design 'corner' onto the artistic stage. Voulkos created free-form ceramic works that he described as being kin to jazz compositions: improvisational and free spirited.

Betty Woodman, who was one of the most well known female American ceramists, is represented with two works, an earlier piece, still with a glazing in subdued natural tints from 1983 and a stunning vase in her later brightly coloured and witty style, dated 2016 (not long before her death in 2018). Woodman was part of the Pattern and Decoration movement that started in the mid-70s, in opposition to Minimalist art, which valued austerity and demeaned ornamentation and craft.



After highlighting these two pioneers of ceramic art, the exhibition moves on to innovative approaches of the present moment.

Featuring the works of two Japanese artists Shio Kusaka and Takuro Kuwata, the exhibition again opposes a female and a male approach.



*Artist: Shio Kusaka*

Kusaka's feminine pieces in pastel colours and faint lines of geometric patterns unite the traditions of Japanese stoneware with minimalism and abstraction. Don't miss the tiny crack inside the yellow bowl. It has been mended with gold, in line with Japanese traditions, that treat breakage and repair as part of the history of an object, rather than something to disguise.

Kuwata, in contrast, approaches the traditions of Japanese ceramics with bold irreverence, vivid colours and innovative techniques.



*Artist: Grant Levy-Lucero*

American artist Grant Levy-Lucero creates pieces that are shaped like Greek or Roman amphora, but bear the instantly recognisable iconography of today's consumer brands (Heinz Ketchup, Nivea Creme etc): 'artifacts' of our future's past, so to speak.

All artists represented in the exhibition have found their unique artistic language to interpret ceramic art: step into the gallery and find out more. Don't be shy! Gagosian Gallery is a contemporary art gallery, owning sixteen gallery spaces worldwide. It maintains a commitment to historical, museum-like exhibitions, apart from selling the works of upcoming and famous artists to wealthy international collectors.

The entry to the Fire and Clay exhibition is completely free and visitors are welcome.



*Artist: Peter Voulkos*