

ART & OTHER TACTICS

CONTEMPORARY CRAFT BY ARTIST VETERANS

SEPTEMBER 26, 2015 – MARCH 27, 2016



MUSEUM CRAFT DESIGN

This exhibition is co-presented with Craft in America, the Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles and the Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco. Segments from the Service episode can be viewed on monitors located in the gallery.

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ART & OTHER TACTICS

Craft has been a channel for creativity, expression, and transformation in the lives of artist veterans since the years after World War II, when returning soldiers played a pivotal role in initiating the Studio Craft movement. This exhibition features contemporary artworks by artist veterans who chose to explore their creative calling after serving in the military. As a whole, these selected works are potent articulations embedded with personal and political messages about military conflict and its outcomes.

While military service and reactions to war are the driving forces for a number of these artists, others confront these themes less overtly in their work. Although not all of the artists are combat veterans, military training has shaped each one in profound ways. Many of these artists have stated that their time in the military helped to affirm their life goals and gave them focus and a strong sense of discipline, perseverance, and enhanced self-awareness.

This collection of work defies generalization, yet some common characteristics are evident. In some cases, the intensity of the subject matter necessitates a physical manifestation on a large scale. Seriality and repetition characterize several other works. These serial installations are comprised of multiple, smaller components arranged collectively as powerful and unified sets—a striking echo of the tactical military ideology of operating as a team or unit. For a few artists, time-honored craft traditions provide an unexpected springing point for illuminating contemporary concerns.

The overarching assertion that emerges from this group of work is the idea that craft is an empowering and constructive antidote to the war experience and a language for expressing the aftermath of service.

—**EMILY ZAIDEN**, *Guest Curator*

THE GREATEST GENERATION: WWII VETERANS

PETER VOULKOS

Stack (1990)
Stoneware

Peter Voulkos changed the course of ceramics in the mid-20th century from functional to sculptural. He was born in 1924 in Bozeman, Montana to Greek immigrant parents. During World War II, Voulkos was drafted to be an armorer-gunner in the Pacific; when he returned, he took his GI Bill stipend to pursue painting. While studying painting at Bozeman State College, Voulkos took a required clay course. He would joyfully wrestle with clay for the rest of his life. Voulkos started as a traditional potter creating pieces that were technically crafted. In 1953, he was invited to Black Mountain College to teach. There he was exposed to abstract expressionist, modern dance and other East Coast thinkers and artists. At this juncture he transitioned from a functional potter to a sculptor.

Peter Voulkos was physical with clay. He would throw huge vessels on the wheel then cut into these vessels, deconstruct them then construct large sculptures from the pieces. He taught his physical sculpture method of pottery at UC Berkeley and was an evangelist for clay as an expressive medium. Voulkos used clay to express process, personal expression and deconstruct traditional methods of pottery.



EARL PARDON

Bracelet (1951)

Sterling silver, copper, brass, ebony and ivory

“*In Nature and its awesome wonderment I find this equally true—a growth of moss can be visually more significant than a forest; a singular stone can be more interesting than a mountain.*”

A pioneer in the post-World War II studio crafts movement, Earl Pardon is an influential jewelry artist. Like other men in his generation, Pardon took his GI Bill stipend and pursued painting at Memphis Academy of Arts. Pardon maintained his painting practice throughout his career and started to integrate sculpting and jewelry making into his artwork.

Earl Pardon was heavily influenced by modernist thinking and embraced color and form as a means of expression. For Pardon, jewelry was an opportunity to create “portable” art: sculptures that you can carry on your body. Many of Earl Pardon’s pieces use enamelling to combine his painting practice with his jewelry making. Pardon seemed to embrace the unpredictability of life and art, he once said his work “[has] a life of its own... I loved the things you don’t expect.”



Photo by MICHAEL MCKELVEY

FRANCES SENSKA

Tea set (1990)

Glazed stoneware



Photo courtesy of Humler & Nolan Auction Gallery Cincinnati, Ohio

Frances Senska is known to many as the grandmother of ceramics in Montana. Senska spent the first 15 years of her life in Kamerun (now Cameroon). Born in 1914 in Batanga, Kamerun to Presbyterian missionaries, Senska learned to love crafts from her father who funded his medical degree as a cabinetmaker and a construction foreman. In 1929, Frances Senska’s family moved to Iowa where she attended high school and college. She earned her degree in applied design and lithography.

Frances Senska joined the Navy in 1942. While stationed in San Francisco, she took classes in ceramics at the California Labor School. In 1946 after Navy service, Frances Senska became a teacher at Montana State University in Bozeman. Senska had a long career teaching and practicing ceramics.

ARTHUR ESPENET CARPENTER

Last Music Stand (2001)

Walnut, rosewood and brass

“*My whole thing has been utility. If it isn’t comfortable and if it doesn’t last and if it doesn’t function, it’s no good. Furniture to me is something the body touches.*”

Arthur Espenet Carpenter is known for his sleek distinctive furniture. Not knowing what he wanted to study, Carpenter received a BA in Economics from Dartmouth College, then joined the Navy for four years.

Back in New York after his service, Carpenter was inspired by Edgar Kaufmann’s *Good Design* exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art. Carpenter responded to the beauty achieved in utilitarian objects. He bought a lathe—not knowing much about woodworking—and moved across the country to San Francisco. Carpenter lived in the Mission District of San Francisco for \$20 a month rent, living off a GI Bill stipend of \$100 a month. In the mid-1950s, Carpenter eventually had his own thriving custom furniture business.



WARREN MACKENZIE

Vase (date unknown)

Stoneware

Warren Mackenzie is a functional potter, but his effect on the medium is layered in complexity. Two years into his art studies, Mackenzie was drafted. During the war, Mackenzie was placed in a military silk-screening shop creating training posters for soldiers. Mackenzie was sent overseas to Japan to relieve soldiers stationed in Yokohama; he was placed in a craftsman map-printing plant.

When Warren Mackenzie was released and tried to resume his art studies, all the painting classes were full, so he took a ceramics class. In this ceramics course, a classmate discovered Bernard Leach's "A Potter's Book", and inspired, in 1950 Mackenzie arrived at Bernard Leach studio in England and learned the philosophy of functional *mingei art*: an early-Twentieth century Japanese folk art movement, the philosophy is based on "hand-crafted art of ordinary people". Warren Mackenzie is credited with bringing *mingei art* to Minnesota and was cleverly dubbed "Mingei-sota style". Warren Mackenzie's everyday pots are described as graceful, balanced, and expressive.



OTTO & VIVIKA HEINO

Vase (1960)

Stoneware

The middle child of twelve, Otto Heino was born in 1915 to Finnish immigrants in East Hampton, Connecticut. When Heino was drafted he signed up for the Air Force and was sent to Fort Bragg, Georgia. After a series of intensive physical tests, Heino was sent to England to be a waist gunner on a B-17 bomber. Heino survived over 40 bombing missions throughout Europe over a five and a half year enlistment.

After his release from the Air Force, Heino first encountered clay at Bernard Leach's Studio in England. He later met his future wife of 47 years, Vivika, who was the Assistant director of the League of New Hampshire Arts and Crafts and his teacher.

In 1950 they were married and by 1952 they moved to Los Angeles, where Vivika and Otto taught classes at the University of Southern California. During this time Vivika was a technical advisor for 20th Century Fox Studios; she and Otto made 751 pots for the movie *The Egyptian*. Otto Heino collaborated with his wife throughout his ceramic career.

“Our pots have life.
They don't just sit there.”
—Vivika



RAMONA SOLBERG

Necklace (1967)

Silver set with coral, lapis and turquoise stones

Ramona Solberg was a prolific jewelry maker who explored new cultures and reveled in making jewelry from non-precious metals and found objects. In 1943, Solberg, then in her early twenties, enlisted in the Women's Army Corps until 1950. During this time Solberg traveled all around the world; she studied weaving in Morelia, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico and learned to enamel in Norway. After her service, she pursued her Master's Degree at the University of Washington in Seattle and studied under Ruth Pennington, a craft activist and metalsmith.

This silver necklace is an unusual example of Ramona Solberg's work since she tends to work with non-precious metals. She is quoted as saying, "I don't want my jewelry to go into deposit boxes. I want it worn to Safeway and to ball games." Drawing inspiration from Fred Woell's "American throw-away" jewelry, Solberg used seemingly banal found objects as a central component in her work. Solberg designed her pieces with larger bodies in mind. She would often wear her own jewelry to test it's wearability on a larger figure. Ramona Solberg's jewelry reflects her life, travel and creativity.



WILLIAM DALEY

Composite Form (1967)
Unglazed stoneware

William Daley creates unglazed thin-walled vessels in concave and convex shapes, forming architectural objects. These complex shapes are formed through a multi-layered process, beginning with detailed sketches to figure out the matrix and form.

Before graduating high school, Daley realized if you were enlisted in the army, you would not have to take final exams... and so, Daley was sent to Florida for flight training. There, Daley met an older soldier named Lloyd C. Long. Almost immediately after entering combat, Daley was shot down, captured and sent to prison camp. When William Daley arrived at prison camp in Stettin, Poland, he encountered Lloyd C. Long. During their time in prison camp, they kept each other engaged by discussing philosophy and religion. After a failed escape, Daley was liberated from the camp 10 months later. William Daley taught for nearly 40 years in New York, Iowa and eventually in the Arts and Crafts Department at Philadelphia College of Art.

William Daley continues to spend many hours in his studio working and creating his complex sculptures. Clay, like all primal materials, has personae. It holds secrets, embeds traditions, and feeds the boundaries that nurture change. Consequently, materials hold the inherent structure of "the possible becoming."

PAUL SOLDNER

Vase (1955)
Glazed stoneware

As an adolescent, Paul Soldner pictured himself with a career in medicine. Soldner served as a medic for three and a half years during World War II. After his experience in the military, his interests changed and he became fascinated with photography. He pursued a Bachelor's of Art Education at Bluffton College in Ohio, then a Masters in Art Administration at University of Boulder in Colorado. After eight years of teaching in public school, Soldner wanted to pursue pottery and enrolled in the Los Angeles County Arts Institute. Paul Soldner was one of Peter Voulkos's first students. In 1956, Paul Soldner was asked to be a stand-in professor at Scripps College in Claremont, CA; this temporary position turned into a 37 year college teaching career.

"Paul Soldner was the Miles Davis of Ceramics," a student said, "he contributed change in so many ways." Soldner's most well known experiment is the American Raku; a technique that uses low-temperature salt firing. Paul Soldner had a playful approach to the medium and transmitted that joy and playfulness to the many students he taught and inspired.



HARVEY LITTLETON

300° Rotated Ellipsoid (1980)
Barium-potash glass with multiple cased overlays of Kugler color, then cut and polished

Glass was part of Harvey Littleton's upbringing. His father, Jesse T. Littleton, was the director of research for Corning Glass Works in Corning, New York. Beneath his father's shadow, Littleton studied physics at University of Michigan. After transferring to art school, Littleton volunteered for the Navy and Army and in 1942, was enlisted into Signal Intelligence. In April 1943, the 849th Signal Intelligence unit was sent to Oran, Algeria. In 1946 while Littleton was waiting to be released from the military, he took a sculpture course and modeled and fired a small clay torso; Littleton took the torso back with him and casted it in Vycor glass at Corning Glass Works.

Harvey Littleton laid the groundwork for the American Glass Studio movement in 1962. Littleton and other artistic contemporaries held two experimental glass-blowing workshops at the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio. Dominick Labino provided glass marbles with a low melting point; this and other experiments in the workshops led to opening a small glass studio at the University of Wisconsin. After opening this studio, Littleton became an evangelist for the medium of glass.

300° Rotated Ellipsoid (1980) integrates his process of stacking cup-shaped glass into one another so they become concentric. Then, he distorts and stretches the concentric cups while still molten. Littleton was interested in color, but more interested in the strength of the form; the glass has the ability to bend and simultaneously freeze a moment in time.

ED ROSSBACH

El Salvador (1984)

Muslin, camouflage netting, sticks, plastic, plastic tape, wire, tied, dyed, linoleum block printed, constructed



In making baskets, contemporary artists relate themselves to artisans of the past and to the constructional/aesthetic problems that concerned them...Without our being aware of it, Indian baskets have established standards for contemporary basket makers. They define all baskets.



Rossbach pushed the boundaries of fiber arts and weaving by mixing traditional methods of basket making with unconventional materials: foil, Mylar, twigs, staples, plastic bags and styrofoam. In 1941, midway through his Masters Degree, Rossbach joined the Army's Signal Corp and served in Alaska's Aleutian Islands from 1942 to 1945. After studying at Cranbrook Academy of the Arts, Rossbach became head of the UC Berkeley weaving department and began his long teaching career there.

Rossbach pushed the bounds of conventional 1950's Scandinavian modernist functional design to create experimental, nonfunctional art pieces. Rossbach's art uses raw materials to weave forms that explore context, scale and juxtaposition to create irony.

HARRISON MCINTOSH

Low Bowl (1972)

Stoneware

While many trends in craft have passed in his lifetime, Harrison McIntosh has adhered to a decorative and sleek design aesthetic. Each piece is made with intention.

Harrison McIntosh began observing and painting with his brother as a child. His family moved to Los Angeles in 1937 and in 1938 McIntosh worked as a gallery manager at the Foundation of Western Art. McIntosh took his first ceramics class at University of Southern California with Glen Lukens, a well-known ceramicist.

After the first class, McIntosh built a studio in his garage. "I got an old sewing machine and built a treadle wheel to do this kind of thing in my studio at home." In 1942, Harrison was drafted to the Army and sent to San Francisco, then to a training camp in Mount Diablo. Because of his disinterest in combat, McIntosh requested to be a medic and was granted this request. McIntosh stayed in the state of California during his service and was eventually discharged because his wife was critically ill. After the war, Harrison McIntosh continued practicing decorative pottery and sold his work to patrons in Beverly Hills and continued to create pieces for over seven decades.



THE SILENT GENERATION: KOREAN WAR VETERANS AND THE COLD WAR

JAMES BASSLER

Silk Tapestry (1965)

Silk, synthetic yarns, batiked



James Bassler's father was a baseball player and a Mennonite. Bassler spent his childhood traveling around the country for his dad's career; during the off-season his father would hook rugs. The family eventually settled in Santa Monica. After Bassler transferred to UCLA he discovered he was no longer interested in his declared major of sociology. "And so I just walked up to the art department and said I felt like I should be there, and became an art major." Immediately following his decision, Bassler was drafted to the Korean War.

During Bassler's initial training at Fort Ord, in Maine, he contracted pneumonia and was spared combat in Korea. After his recovery, Bassler was sent to New York to train as a marksman. During this time, the soldiers were given a three-day pass into New York City. He went to the Brooklyn Museum and saw the Peruvian Textiles; he peered upon one piece called the *Cabeza Grande* (100-300 BCE). Bassler describes it as "the mantle piece of all mantle pieces" and thought to himself, I want to make that. During the time he was stationed in Germany, James Bassler was exposed to textiles from around the world.

James Bassler takes his time at the loom to create tapestries. "In the 1990's, the Department of Design, UCLA, changed the curriculum to focus on electronic imaging. My reaction was to research the technology of pre-Columbian cultures, the loom. I realized then, that the sophistication of the tool was not of importance. It was up to me, driven by ideas and process, to make valid visual statements through my work."

VAL CUSHING

Acorn Series: Covered Storage Jar (2002)
Glazed earthenware

“

I see materials and processes ...in ceramics to be so endlessly interesting, there is always going to be something out there in front of me that I'm never going to be able to catch up.



Val Cushing was born in Rochester New York in 1931. In 1952, the September after completing his Bachelor of Fine Arts, Cushing was drafted to the army. After 22 weeks of training, Cushing was interviewed to be in the Military Police Force. Cushing was subsequently sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey to serve as a MP.

On his days off, Cushing would take the train into New York City and marvel at the pots at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Cushing filled sketchbooks with drawings and ideas and was especially inspired by Islamic pottery.

After his service, Val Cushing returned to Alfred College and became a professor and taught there for over 40 years. Val Cushing was an excellent instructor and created whimsical pieces throughout his career. "Respecting function and the traditional materials and processes of ceramic art, he has created a body of work that is artistically fresh and adventurous—an invigorating infusion of the visual and the tactile."

JB BLUNK

Self-Piercing Element (1976)
Redwood



JB Blunk was an inexhaustible woodworker in Northern California. He crafted functional abstract furniture in his early career and later focused on composition and form. Blunk used a chainsaw to tame the redwood, and would then fine-tune the pieces with smaller woodworking tools.

Midway through college at UCLA, JB Blunk was drafted to the Korean War and served in the army. Blunk was discharged after two years in Japan. He spent time researching Japanese pottery and met Isamu Noguchi who had a profound effect on Blunk's life. In Japan, Blunk encountered the *mingei* philosophy (folk craft). Blunk became an apprentice for several months and by the time he returned to California in 1954, he was thoroughly steeped in the Japanese stoneware tradition.

JB Blunk is known for his large scale seating sculptures but has explored wood as a method to create form in many different capacities. JB Blunk spent much of his career in Inverness, CA on a small private plot of land creating works for public and private commissions as well as creating furniture that blended with the body. One of his breakthrough public commissions is *Planet* (1969) housed at the Oakland Museum of California; this mammoth beautiful seating sculpture greets you as you enter the natural history wing. Throughout JB Blunk's work one can see balanced asymmetry and a "controlled dynamism" coursing through his furniture and sculptures.

JIM LEEDY

Untitled (1992)

Stoneware, glaze

On a bright day during the Korean War there was a moment of calm in battle, and Jim Leedy decided to take a swim in a near-by river. Still in his military garb, he submerged himself in the cool lake. He saw his reflection in the water, but as he looked through his own image he saw hundreds of decaying bodies on the floor of the river.

Jim Leedy served in the Army and was deployed to Korea. In Blue Fields Virginia, Leedy was a cartoonist and photographer for the high school newspaper; later he served as a military photographer in the Korean War. After the war, he furthered his studies at William and Mary College and Columbia University in Art History. The osmosis of artists and ideas in New York were essential in his development as an artist.

While art is a means to process the nightmares of war, art also served as a mechanism to express the beauty he discovered throughout his life. Leedy worked in a number of different mediums throughout his career; *Abstract Expressionist Shang II* (1953) and *Nature's Force* (1997) are pieces in clay. Within Abstract Expressionism, the idea of following the natural material influenced Leedy's work in clay—"I wanted paint to look like paint and clay to look like clay, in the end. But I had to start somewhere and, having already made a lot of utilitarian things, the natural starting point seemed to be to make pots that were not utilitarian."

DOLPH SMITH

G.I. Peace (2015)

Mixed woods, spray paint, polycarbonate, miniature chain, discarded building materials

“

There are smaller ladders inside the home as we must continue to strive to improve and be good artists and citizens.



Dolph Smith never saw an original piece of art growing up in Memphis. He joined the U.S. Military in 1954. While serving as a Morse Code Intercept Operator, Smith was sent overseas and began to circulate between sites along the East/West border in Allied-occupied Germany. There he helped to intercept Russian communications and followed the Soviet military's movements. While stationed in Europe, between the Korean and Vietnam wars, Smith traveled around the continent engaging in cultural activities and seeing inspiring art. After his service, Smith earned his degree from Memphis College of Arts in 1960 and became faculty in 1965 and taught there for 30 years.

Dolph Smith has natural ability for storytelling through his sculpture. *GI Peace* (2015) was created specifically for this exhibition. "The service lifted me up in so many ways...The ladders stand for the many ways the G.I. Bill helped me and they are lifting me up to the small home representing the security I found for family and career."

JOHN MARSHALL

Flow (2002-2014)

Silver, glass and basalt

“

*The erosion, the wearing down that time inexorably marks on all things, environments and beings is addressed in the darker, heavier element of the basalt.” –John Marshall’s reflections on his *Flow* (2002-2014) series.*

John Marshall abides by the philosophy that there is always more to learn. He is a product of great metalsmithing mentors; many teachers, professors and artists supported Marshall throughout his career. After high school, Marshall was drafted to serve in the 82nd Airborne Division and served in the 11th division, spending most of his service in Germany. Marshall eventually used his GI Bill stipend toward an education at Syracuse University. He then received his BFA in silversmithing and design from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1960.

Flow (2002-2014) is a series of silver glass and basalt sculptures. Drawing and rendering are a major part of Marshall’s design process; the sketches are reflected in the actual metalwork and animate the surface of the silver. Marshall wants the basalt and silver to be exposed.



PHILIP CORNELIUS

Sarcophagus Siren (1996)

Porcelain thinware

Philip Cornelius was a coffee drinker who made teapots. “Do the wrong thing and have it come out right,” says Cornelius. He developed his style of thinware teapots over a thirty-year period. His process starts with a slab of porcelain and molds the slab into an abstract teapot shape.

Philip Cornelius had an affinity for art from a young age but did not pursue it until attending Claremont Graduate School, where he studied under Paul Soldner. Before engaging in ceramics, Philip Cornelius studied science at San Jose State but was drafted in the middle of his college career. During off-duty hours in his 18-month military service, Cornelius explored the museums in Europe. After he finished his Masters from the Claremont Graduate School, Philip Cornelius continued his art practice and taught at Pasadena City College.

Philip Cornelius’s thinware teapots highlight contradictions in imagery and material. The fragile looking pieces are in fact very strong and sharp spikes accompany the songbirds on the teapots. Cornelius also explores mayhem and war, “putting [the pots] in the kiln is like putting them in a tomb...It’s like they’ve been through a war.”

DON REITZ

Untitled "Tie Down" Jar (1975)

Salt glazed stoneware

Don Reitz saw art within life. In 1948, after high school, Reitz joined the Navy. "I was involved in damage control, firefighting, carpentry and salvage diving. I'm really good at doing those things where I'm my own boss." says Reitz. Don Reitz went back to school on the GI Bill at Kutztown State Pennsylvania. During his interview he was asked, "Why do you want to be an artist?" He responded, "It smelled right when I walked in here."

After graduating, Reitz taught in the public school system in Dover New Jersey. In addition to being a full-time teacher, Reitz set up a kiln. To further his studies, Reitz took a summer session at Alfred University and with the help of Val Cushing and Bob Turner, Reitz was accepted into the graduate program. "In the late 1950s, ceramics went through a period of tremendous change and experimentation. Old rules were being broken....I became discontent with glazing pots." For the next few decades, Reitz used salt glazes and naked stoneware to achieve the look he wanted. "I remembered what Peter Voukos once said: 'There are no rules, only concepts.' I was living my life this way, but I had been living art by the rules. Salt changed that for me."



HIDDEN SCARS: ARTIST VETERANS WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM

ROBIN SHORES

She Thought She Was Pharoah (2006)

Wood, metal, dog leash, wire, mixed media

Queen Mary Crossing the Desert (2010)

Mixed media, wood, synthetic foliage, plaster,
natural fibers

In late 2003, photographs from Abu Ghraib were exposed to the American public. Robin Shores reflects on abuses of power in war in his "Death Boat" series. Both female figures "...represent the abuse of American political and military power, both internally and externally." Shores recognizes the inevitability of abuse. A soldier would have to be a strong person to resist the pressures of Abu Ghraib. "American society was torn by these and other abuses, while at the same time other young men and women were dying fighting in Iraq..."

Robin Shores served on the Destroyer Naval Vessel in 1965 during the Vietnam War and was deployed to the Gulf of Tonkins in 1968. After his service, Shores took his GI Bill stipend and enrolled in University of Buffalo, where he discovered his calling in sculpture. His artwork reflects on current and past wars and issues surrounding neo-imperialism.

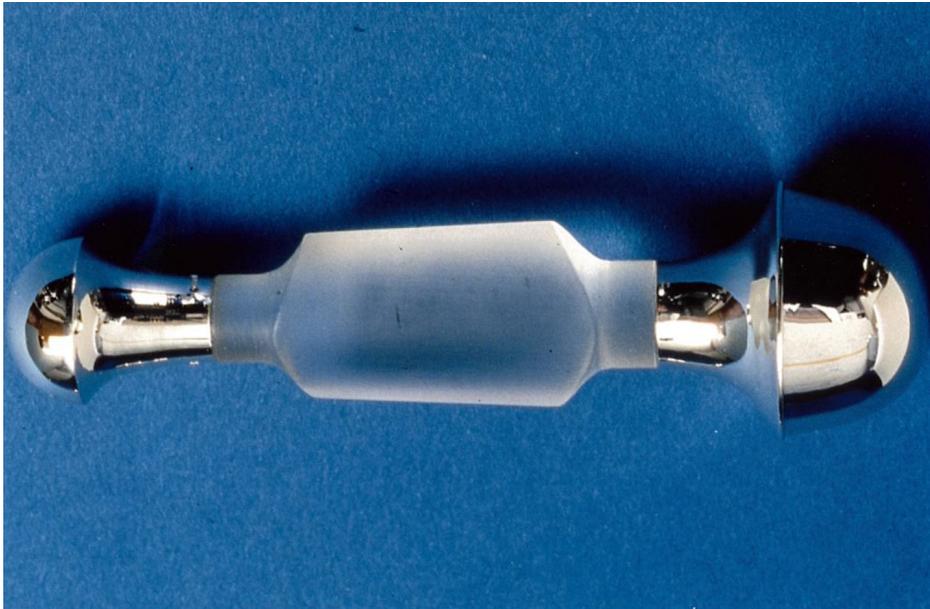


ROGER HORNER

Baby Rattle (1988)

Fine silver, spun acrylic

Born in Pasco, Washington, Roger Horner learned his craft during his 25 year military career. Roger Horner's father made woodworking tools available for the children in his family. In 1965, Roger shipped out to Vietnam where he served as an advisor for calling in airstrikes (naval bombers) and medical evacuations. Horner led platoons, then companies, and ultimately, his own battalion. He had learned to cut and polish stone while stationed in Fairbanks, Alaska and discovered casting during a stint at Ford Ord in Monterey, California. In military hobby shops, Horner continued to shape stones and forge many utilitarian objects in metal.



KEN HRUBY

Juggernaut of Babylon (2005)

Cast urethane, oak, steel

In its full-scale iteration, *Juggernaut* (1995) towers at 8.5' tall; black boots are arranged on a massive wooden wheel, which teeters on an inclined ramp. Boots appear throughout Ken Hruby's artwork; feet are essential to an infantry soldier's existence. In Hruby's words, "Each one of these boots has a history. Mud. Cracks. Gum. The untied laces add an element of risk."

Ken Hruby served for 21 years as a professional infantry officer, serving in Korea and Vietnam. He was born at a cavalry post in Black Hills South Dakota into a military family; during his childhood Hruby lived internationally in Japan and Germany. In 1961, Hruby was accepted to West Point. After his military service, Hruby enrolled in the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and eventually became a professor at the SFMA Boston. Hruby spends his time at SFMA reexamining his life as a soldier and exploring the uneasy relationship that exists between the military and the society it serves.



THOMAS ORR

Duc Pho (2013)

Terra cotta, white engobe, sandbags, mixed media

"Three Suns" Green Markers with Suns (2006)

Earthenware, multiple-firings

Marker with Stripes (2012)

Glazed kiln refractory, steel frame

Thomas Orr's first encounter with clay came in the Vietnam War when he slipped face-down in a muddy hillside. As a young man, Orr's desire to fight in Vietnam led him to enroll in Infantry Commander School. After graduating, Thomas Orr became an officer in the 23rd infantry, the largest division in Vietnam. While keeping his men alive was the main objective, many fellow officers and some of his soldiers died and vanished during the time he served.

Thomas Orr planned to foster normalcy in his life after the war. Orr decided to go back to school to study oceanography at Chico State University. He was required to take an art credit and enrolled in a ceramics class. He was absorbed by the medium. For twelve years, Orr lived on 40 acres and harvested his own clay from the foothills of Chico and wood fired his own pottery. One night, Orr dreamt he was on a hillside looking upon the Chico Valley engulfed in explosions; this vision pushed him to go back to school.

In the installation piece *Duc Pho* (2013) the bowl represents a vessel: the physical bowl as a vessel for nourishment, the skull as vessel and human form as vessel. *Duc Pho* is where Thomas Orr's battalion was headquartered in Vietnam. The mound of sandbags buried under empty rice bowls memorializes the losses that Orr has carried with him over the decades.



GEOFFREY BLAKE

Communion Chalice (2000)

Sterling silver, blood wood

Born in Maine, Blake grew up in Hampton, New Hampshire. In April 1967, Blake joined the Air Force and was first stationed in Tacoma, Washington. In early 1970, he was then stationed in Clark Air Base in the Philippines. After four years in the Air Force, Geoffrey Blake applied for an apprenticeship at Old Newbury Crafters. ONC (Old Newbury Crafters) is still a functioning silversmithing company that makes handmade flatware, silverware.

Geoffrey Blake's silverware is precise yet has a distinctly handmade quality. In the 1960s there was a reaction from consumers that all silver flatware looks mass-produced and manufactured. This sentiment added to the success of ONC Sterling. Customers could order a set of silverware and know that it would be handmade; hammer marks were preferred by some of the patrons. Blake is a master craftsman and still hammers his unicorn insignia into each handmade piece.



MICHAEL ASCHENBRENNER

Damaged Bone Series #7 (2000)
Glass and mixed media

In 1968 during the Tet Offensive, Aschenbrenner jumped from a helicopter and injured his knee; for two weeks he had no access to medical aid. This injury stayed with him both physically and mentally and is reflected in much of his work. After his service Aschenbrenner attended University of Minnesota; a ceramics professor suggested exploring glass to best convey his concepts.

The glass forms subtly show the form of a human bone in Michael Aschenbrenner's *Damaged Bones* series. Like injuries in war, the forms are splinted with wooden sticks wrapped in medical tape. The glass forms themselves are ghostly, "Life itself is fragile—like bone, like glass; and therefore all the more precious. The glass objects connect us to the limbs and bodies left behind and the limbs splinted, wired or bandaged left to heal."

**RECENT VOICES:
CRAFT PLATFORMS FOR
EXPRESSION AND THE
MILITARY TODAY**



TOM PULLIN

The Truth (2013)
Steel, bronze, sand

See the Truth (2013)
Steel, rivets

Tom Pullin's metal work explores the death, pain and truths of war. After twenty-four year career in the U.S. Army, Pullin went to Corcoran School of Art and Design to pursue a Bachelors of Arts in sculpture and metalsmithing. In an interdisciplinary class combining technologies in 3D with traditional metalsmithing techniques Pullin created *The Truth* (2013). *The Truth* (2013) started with a laser scan of a skull maquette, this scan is 3D printed in plastic. The plastic print is submerged in plaster to create a mold then molten brass is poured into the plaster mold.

The Truth (2013) reflects on an military experience, Tom Pullin was sent on a mission to recover evidence of a helicopter crash from the first Gulf war. A grave was found nearby in the sand, and Pullin and soldiers in his unit spent the next two days digging up the remains. A skull was found and taken to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware for DNA testing. The evidence showed that the skull likely came from a fourteen year old girl. The memory of pulling out the skull and holding it in his hands inspired him to create an art piece in honor the family that lost their daughter.

JESSICA PUTNAM-PHILLIPS

Pretty Little Things: series (2015)

Porcelain, glaze, laser decals, vintage commercial decals, gold luster

“Through the exploration of ceramic tableware and non-traditional imagery I seek to challenge the entrenched ideas of domesticity and gender roles while exposing the social and cultural issues faced by military women.

Jessica Putnam-Phillips was born into a military family. She was raised all over the world as a “Navy-brat”. Putnam-Phillips served in the US Air Force as a military intelligence specialist and deployed to the Middle East. During her time in the Middle East she became fascinated with gender roles. After earning a Bachelors of Art from the University of North Carolina she relocated to Arlington, Vermont and opened Battenkill Pottery.

In Jessica Putnam-Phillips’ “Pretty Little Things” series, ceramic platters and plates depict female servicewomen in combat juxtaposed with traditional tableware motifs and decoration. Putnam-Phillips combines military iconography with traditional elements of classical Willow Ware china patterns.



Pretty Little Things-Two in the Bush (2015)

JENN HASSIN

A Battle Lost: 8030 (2015)

Paper, cotton, nylon, gold foil

Born in Austin, Texas, Jenn Hassin served in the United States Air Force. Hassin trained and served as a dental technician in England until 2009. Hassin intended to continue studies in dentistry at St. Edward’s University in Austin but changed to an art major. Hassin currently owns and operates her own studio; her intention is to make a difference through the art produced in her studio in Austin.

A Battle Lost (2015) confronts veteran suicide in the United States. Jenn Hassin hopes to bring awareness to this issue. *A Battle Lost (2015)* is comprised of 8,030 rolled condolence letters (a number which represents the amount of veteran suicides in 2014). The gold foil is “inspired by a Japanese practice called Kintsugi where they fill cracks in pottery with gold.” Kintsugi both highlights imperfections and damage and makes the piece stronger and more precious.



AARON HUGHES

Tea Project: Teacups-9 of 779 (2009-ongoing)

Porcelain

Collaboration with Amber Ginsburg

In January of 2003, Aaron Hughes was pulled out of his undergraduate work at the University of Illinois. He received orders to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a truck driver with the 1244th Transportation Company in the Army National Guard. Within the first three months of his deployment everything he understood about himself and the world crumbled. And ever since those first three months of his fifteen-month deployment – a deployment filled with anxiety, destruction, and hate – he has been seeking out metaphors, poetics, and moments of beauty, in order to construct new languages and meanings out of personal and collective traumas. He uses these new languages and meanings to create projects that attempt to de-construct systems of dehumanization and oppression by transforming individuals and society.¹

Aaron Hughes is currently working on an ongoing project TEA that utilizes the space created when someone sits, sips, and reflects over a cup of tea to demonstrate a shared humanity through questions, stories, and metaphors. He writes, "When someone sits, sips, and reflects over a cup of tea a space is created to ask questions about one's relationship to the world: a world that's filled with dehumanization, war, and destruction; a world that is filled with beauty, love, and humanity."

¹ In the words of the artist Aaron Hughes



Photo of **AARON HUGHES** performing the *Tea Project*

DANIEL DONOVAN

Invasive Detachment (2013)

cassius basalt clay, white underglaze, wood

Deaf Mute (2013)

wood-fired stoneware, underglaze, wood

Good Plan (2014)

porcelain, underglaze, gold luster, wood

“*I was put in a position to engage my mortality more immediately and daily than many have the opportunity to experience. Much of the work that I create deals very closely with mortality and the anxiety many people feel accompanying the ability to conceptualize of their own death, prior to the experience.*”



Originally from Seattle Washington, Daniel Donovan became a combat soldier and served in the U.S. Army for eight years. Donovan received his undergraduate degrees in philosophy, an emphasis in ethics, and in fine art from Central Washington University. Currently he is pursuing his Master of Fine Arts and teaching in Montana State University. Donovan says, “[the human experience] has become of great interest to me to investigate, through art, how much of our lives are influenced by the finite nature of human existence and the brief time we have to explore life...”

Matt Krousey

Crane Platter (2014)

Wood-fired stoneware, slips, glazes

Barbed Wire Platter (2015)

Salt-fired stoneware, slips, stains, glazes



Matthew Krousey grew up in rural central Minnesota and was surrounded by hardwood forest and the vast expanse of prairie. Krousey served for nine years in the Minnesota Army National Guard and is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2008, Krousey received his BFA in ceramics from the University of Minnesota. Currently he works from his studio in Minnesota and exhibits his ceramic vessels and sculptures around the world.

For Matthew Krousey, ceramics is a means of preserving the environment in Minnesota, "This region is being vastly altered by human hands, which is the reason I seek to preserve it upon the durable ceramic surface." Krousey uses stoneware and fires his pottery in a wood or soda kiln at 230°F. Exposing the clay underneath the glaze shows the beauty of the material. The sandhill crane and barbed-wire motifs on Krousey's platters both appear in the Minnesota rural landscape.

THOMAS DANG

Bombs Away (2010)

hand-formed and painted earthenware, resin

“

My goal was not to extend any political viewpoint on war but to express my experiences of combat. The “Bombs Away” installation is a symbol of warfare and addresses the cynical comedy of warfare and articulates the metaphors of biological and chemical weapons.



Thomas Dang was born in 1983 in Glendale, California. He received his Master of Arts in Art and Master of Science in Microbiology at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). He is a United States Marine who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and currently serves as the Company Gunnery Sergeant for Golf Company 2nd Battalion 23rd Marines. When he returned to the United States it was difficult to readjust to civilian life. "I was so used to being on alert all the time that I had a very hard time relaxing. My temper was high and my patience was low. I didn't have the ability to cope with simple daily tasks."

Bombs Away (2010) are hand-painted ceramic, each missile like structure contains a resin aquarium-like midsection filled with models of pathogenic organisms. Thomas Dang comments on the beauty of biological forms and the ugliness of biological warfare.

Photo of **THOMAS DANG** provided by the artist

EHREN TOOL

Untitled Squad (2015)

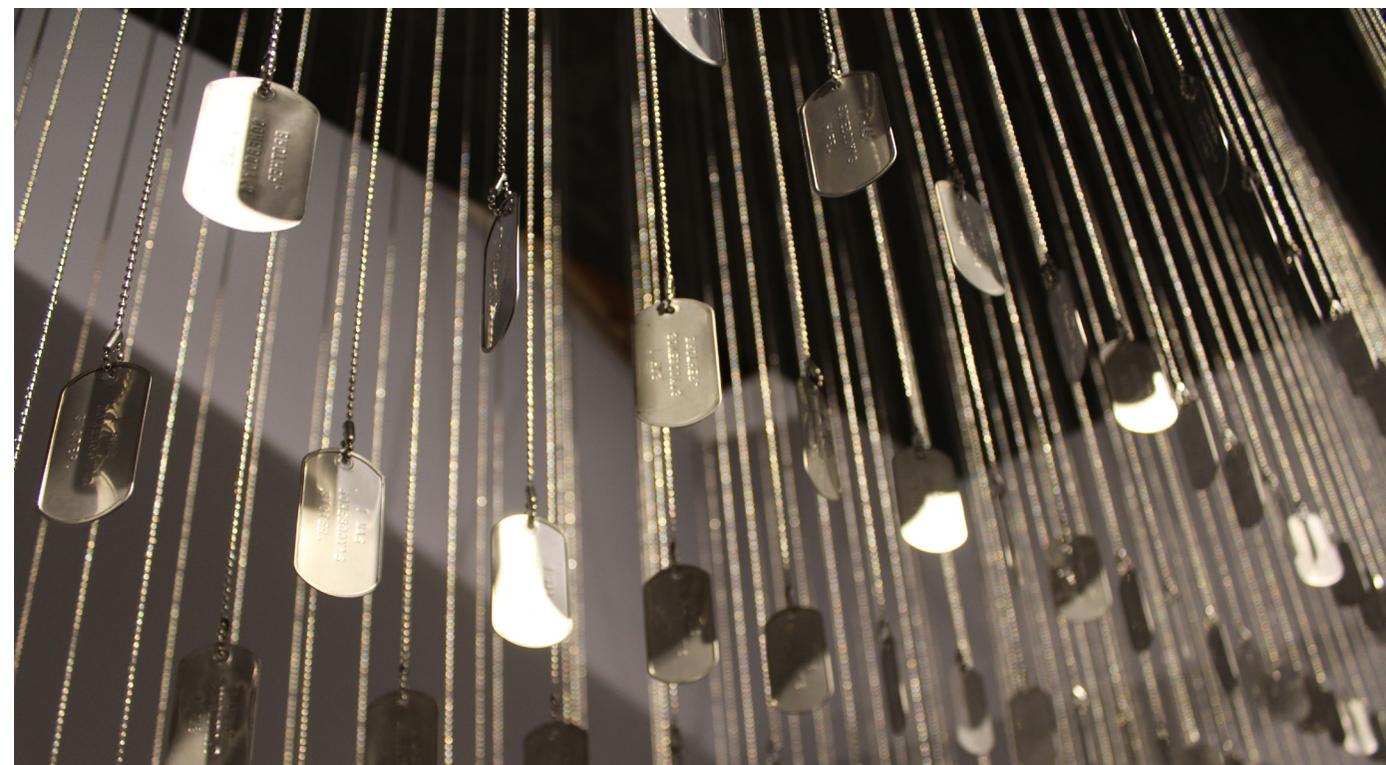
Wheel-thrown and altered stoneware, undreglazes, decals

“*I would like to steal my artist statement. Written in stone on the Indiana War Memorial Building is ‘To vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the world.’*

The purpose of Ehren Tool’s small cups is to start a conversation. Each cup has symbols, pictures and decals imprinted on its surface; a modest cup can engage any person or group in a discussion about the ethics of war.

In 1989, Ehren Tool joined the Marine Corps and served during the first Gulf War in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. After five years of active duty, Tool was honorably discharged as a Sergeant . After his service, Ehren Tool attended Pasadena City College and received his BFA from the University of Southern California in 2000, and his MFA from the University of California at Berkeley in 2005.

Ehren Tool throws each cup by hand; then transforms each piece while the clay is still malleable. From a simple white cup, it becomes a piece full of symbolism —photographs from other soldiers service, imprinted symbols of war (gas masks, rifles or bullets)—symbols that represent different military regalia. Tool gives the cups away, the cups are not complete until they engage a person in a conversation with themselves or another.



TERI MCCANS

Faith in Myself, Faith in My Leadership, Faith in the Oath I Swore for my Country... (2011)

Wood, aluminum, steel

Through Teri McCans’s two overseas combat tours in Iraq, prior service as a firefighter, and current transition into law enforcement, she has experienced firsthand the intersection of tragedy and beauty. After her service, McCans received her BFA at the College of New Jersey and currently resides in Denver, Colorado.

Teri McCans’s watercolor compositions explore strained conflicts between stability versus fragility, strength versus weakness, and male versus female. She translates her personal response to conflict through a meticulous control of color, a clean aesthetic, and a deliberate use of negative space. In *Faith in Myself, Faith in My Leadership, Faith in the Oath I Swore for my Country...*(2011) McCans memorializes fallen soldiers as friend, sibling, relative, or spouse.

DREW CAMERON

Beyond Zero: 1914-1918 (2014)

Prints on print paper

“Language, or accessing the language, to articulate the complex associations and memories wrapped up in military service can be a mountainous task. Starting with a nonverbal activity, with the intention of exploring those places, is a phenomenally empowering action.”



Portrait of Drew Cameron
Photo credit: **KARI ORVIK**

The son of an Air Force family, Drew Cameron grew predominantly in Iowa City and enlisted in the U.S. Army when he was seventeen. The military was an opportunity for Cameron to uphold family tradition and forge his own path into adulthood. Cameron served from 2000 to 2006 and was an active duty field artillery soldier for four years with a tour in Iraq in 2003. In late 2003, Cameron was honorably discharged as a Sergeant (E-5); in the same year he became a medical administration in the Vermont Army National Guard. After received a Bachelor's in Forestry in Vermont, Drew Cameron transitioned into papermaking and started the Combat Paper Project with a book artist Drew Matott.

Drew Cameron leads Combat Paper workshop where veterans take their uniforms, cut them and use those shred of fabric to create paper. "Hand papermaking is the language of Combat Paper. By working in communities directly affected by warfare and using the uniforms and artifacts from their experiences, a transformation occurs and our collective language is born."¹

¹ Combat Paper

ASH KYRIE

Untitled Media Images (2015)

Copy paper and wheat paste, site-specific installation



“There is no political message here, just a way of illustrating the gap between war as it is and the way it is portrayed in the media.”

Ash Kyrie was raised in northern Wisconsin and at eighteen Kyrie joined the Army National Guard. Kyrie served the standard six year military contract, became an e-5 sergeant and deployed to Iraq during the first rotation of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Ash Kyrie served as a Sergeant from 2003 to 2006. After his service, Ash Kyrie began a journey in peace activism. In 2009, Kyrie was part of the Article Nine Peace Walk from Hiroshima to the Tokyo. Ash Kyrie continued the conversation about peace, power structures, war and media in his graduate studies at Ohio State University concentrating in Comparative Cultural Studies.

During Ash Kyrie's *Untitled Media Images* (2015) performance, the viewer is invited to tear, scratch and atter the image. The essence of these photographs cannot be removed from our memories. Remnants of the images lay on the floor as they are left by the participants. Kyrie explores the disconnect between what is portrayed in the media versus what he experienced while serving in the military.

JILL ALLEN

Vitradetector (2008)

Earthenware, wire, plastic



While military service and reactions to war are the driving focus of the practice for some artists, for others, the work is less explicitly personal and political. Artist Jill Allen vowed to become a visual artist if she survived her combat experience in Iraq, and currently makes playful sculptures based on imaginary "nano-worlds."

Jill Allen served in the U.S. Army as a Supply Specialist from 1989-1992, and spent seven months in Saudi Arabia and Iraq during Desert Storm and Desert Shield. After her service, Allen then furthered her education with a BFA from the University of Illinois in Champaign, and a MFA from the University of South Carolina in Columbia. She currently teaches in Philadelphia, PA.

JESSE ALBRECHT

Suicide Hotline—Cheaper Than Healthcare (2013)
Stoneware, wood soda-fired, engobes

Abu G & Me & Jail (2006)
Stoneware

“

My work becomes the means of collecting and analyzing data about the historical, cultural, ethical and contemporary aspects of war and the act of making provides relief in the process. There is a value to expressing something in creation; the piece becomes an object that becomes data of war.

Jesse Albrecht grew up in a small Wisconsin town. He recalls stories from his family about relatives fighting at Tarawa, Pearl Harbor, New Guinea and Vietnam. Albrecht joined the National Guard at nineteen--wanting to experience life as a soldier firsthand. Halfway through a MFA program Albrecht was deployed as a combat medic. Albrecht served in Iraq with A Co 109th Area Support Medical Battalion as an emergency medicine Non Commissioned Officer. The transition back to civilian life was unsettling, but returning to graduate school helped Albrecht process the overwhelming experience in Iraq.

Albrecht works in multiple media in his artistic practice. *Suicide Hotline—Cheaper Than Healthcare* (2013) confronts the issues facing veterans and the dysfunction of mental health at the VA hospital. His own experience with the VA mental health process was problematic, providing more trauma than help.

Abu G & Me & Jail (2006) navigates the perspectives of civilians and military. "When the Abu Ghraib pictures surfaced and while I was disgusted like everyone else...I also thought--well, I would much prefer a naked pyramid any day of the week over my head getting cut off and the video being posted on the internet for the family to see. But there are videos of American soldiers killing on the internet. The [news] cycle starts and everything else falls away."



GIUSEPPE PELLICANO

War Pigs (2012)
Glazed stoneware

Giuseppe Pellicano served as a Medic in the United States Army from 2000-2004 in Germany and California with a deployment to Kosovo. In 2012, Pellicano received his BA in Studio Arts from North Central College in Naperville Illinois in and is currently attending the Oregon College of Art and Craft's MFA program.

War Pigs (2012) is a representation of the behaviors of politicians or people in power, and it's an attempt to remove the delusional humanistic camouflage they hold and reveal the animalistic truth. *War Pigs* (2012) is part of a conversation that began in the Warrior Art Group, founded by Giuseppe Pellicano. Pellicano describes the Warrior Art Group as, "a grassroots organization established to create a zone for veterans, active duty military members, and their spouses."

JEREMIAH HOLLAND

Variant Memory of Non-Specific Tragedy (2012)

Walnut, antique lock set

Trajectory of the Human Condition (2012)

Red Oak

“

I don't get my inspiration from my experiences [in the military]. I came to art school to find a new place for myself, but when I got here, I was Jeremiah, the Marine. It was an identity crisis. I was in no-man's land. I had left behind my identity as a Marine but I didn't consider myself as an artist.

Jeremiah Holland's sculptures toe the line between furniture and form; he uses wood to create forms that mimic natural phenomenon. The pieces explore elements of design, scale, aesthetic and function; he extracts inspiration from his farm in Virginia.

Born in 1976, Jeremiah Holland grew up in Rockbridge County, Virginia. Jeremiah Holland joined the Marine Corps at nineteen; he served for 14 years both in the infantry and as a combat engineer. Holland served at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina, the Navy Medical Center in Bethesda and in Europe. "At one point I worked in casualty affairs, with the injured and the families of servicemen who'd died. I got tired of the violence and destruction." After his service, Holland earned his Bachelors of Fine Arts degree from the Corcoran College of Art and Design. He currently resides with his wife and two children on their small farm in Fairfield, Virginia.

JUDAS RECENDEZ

Large Vase (2014)

stoneware, red iron oxide with gold tenmoku glaze



Judas Recendez grew up in a small town in California where he experimented with clay in his youth. In 2002 Recendez enlisted in the Army and by 2003 he started basic training. "I want to protect who I love. I thought the military was the best way to do that."

In 2006, during his second tour in Iraq, Recendez was the gunner on top of the lead vehicle in the convoy; the vehicle hit an IED on the side of the road that detonated. Recendez suffered immediate amputations of both of his legs and remained hospitalized for more than 11 months.

Judas Recendez's ceramics practice was reinvigorated during the year of recuperation after his injury. While most pottery wheels are controlled by a foot pedal, Recendez has an adapted wheel controlled by his hand. During his rehabilitation, Recendez used the clay as an expression of his post combat experience. Recendez's art practice is a means to improve the world through a life long dialog with clay. He works from a studio at his home in Fredericksburg, Virginia.