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Museum of Contemporary Craft exhibition honors Gertrud and Otto Natzler, two pioneers in modern ceramics

The Ceramics of Gertrud and Otto Natzler
August 2, 2008 – January 25, 2009

PORTLAND, OR — July 30, 2008 — Internationally known for their distinct glazes and elegant hand-thrown vessels, Gertrud and Otto Natzler worked collaboratively for nearly forty years, producing more than 25,000 works out of their Los Angeles-based studio. *The Ceramics of Gertrud and Otto Natzler*, on display at Museum of Contemporary Craft, August 2 – January 25, provides a survey of these works and pays tribute to the lives of two leaders in the history of modern ceramics.

The Natzlers, forced to flee Austria during World War II, arrived in Los Angeles in 1938, and quickly set up a ceramic studio that created vases, bowls, pots and other hand-thrown vessels that elevated ceramics from a decorative art to a fine art. Their works have been featured in innumerable exhibitions and housed in dozens of museum collections, including Museum of Contemporary Craft, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

While Gertrud worked as the master potter, creating delicate and refined porcelain forms, Otto developed more than 2,000 individual glaze formulas, each of which he meticulously recorded. They also supported themselves by teaching classes at their studio, introducing artists to modern European ceramics and sharing their approaches to the wheel and experimental glazes. After Gertrud's death in 1971, Otto continued his practice, creating slab forms until he passed away in 2007 at the age of 99.

Focusing on loans from a local collection and several museums, *The Ceramics of Gertrud and Otto Natzler* celebrates the Natzlers' work and highlights their continued influence by including pieces by contemporary artists Jeremy Briddell and Adam Silverman. Selected audio recordings, including Otto Natzler's lecture at the Portland Art Museum in 1975, two documentary films and a complimentary brochure with an essay by Prudence Roberts provide additional context.

RELATED PROGRAMMING

Craft Conversation: Dawn Odell and Namita Wiggers on *Shards*

Thursday, October 9, 6:30 PM | *The Lab at Museum of Contemporary Craft* | Cost: Free

Join Dawn Odell, assistant professor of art history, Lewis & Clark College, and Museum of Contemporary Craft Curator Namita Gupta Wiggers as they facilitate a discussion of *Shards: Garth Clark on Ceramic Art*, the award-winning anthology by craft legend Garth Clark. Illustrating the history of modern ceramics, Clark's anthology confronts some of the field's more controversial topical issues and will undoubtedly provide an evening of lively conversation. Please e-mail education@MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org to receive a free copy of the excerpt from *Shards* to be discussed.

- more -

724 Northwest Davis Street | Portland, Oregon 97209 | 503.223.2654

Museum of Contemporary Craft

Curator Walkthrough

Tuesday, October 14, noon | Tour convenes at Museum front desk | Cost: Free

Learn more about the exhibitions on view in a guided tour with Curator Namita Gupta Wiggers.

CraftPerspectives Lecture: An Evening with Garth Clark

How Envy Killed the Crafts Movement: An Autopsy in Two Parts

Thursday, October 16, 6:30 PM | Swigert Commons, PNCA, 1241 NW Johnson | Cost: Free

Co-presented by Oregon College of Art and Craft (OCAC) and Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA)

New York gallery owner, curator, writer and historian Garth Clark presents a provocative lecture and dialogue based on his new essay examining how aesthetics, economics and art-envy has “killed” the crafts movement. Clark will first present his paper and then engage in an extended conversation with the audience. One of craft’s most influential thinkers, Clark has edited and contributed to over 50 books, is author of over 200 essays and articles, and was the recipient of the prestigious Mather Award from the College Art Association. Sue Taylor, assistant chair of the Portland State University Art Department, provides an introduction.

This lecture is presented as part of the OCAC Jamison Lecture Series. The Jamison Lecture Series encourages critical and provocative discussions on art, and provides a forum for dialogue about modern craft and the nature of our visual culture.

ON VIEW IN THE MUSEUM

Community Showcase: Oregon Potter’s Association

September 9–October 19, 2008 | The Lab at Museum of Contemporary Craft | Cost: Free

Saturday Demonstrations: September 13, 20, 27, October 4, 11, 18 (1–4 pm)

Artist Documentaries

August 2, 2008–January 25, 2009 | Museum of Contemporary Craft exhibition upper gallery | Cost: Free

Two documentaries about Gertrud and Otto Natzler will run continuously in the exhibition showcase: *The Ceramic Art of the Natzlers*, *Artists of the World Series* (1966) and *Earth, Fire, Water and Wind: The Ceramics of Otto Natzler* (1992). Total running time: 40 minutes.

ON THE WEB

Podcast

A lecture by Otto Natzler is available as an audio podcast at MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org. This lecture was presented at the Portland Art Museum in conjunction with the exhibition *Natzler Ceramics* at the Contemporary Crafts Gallery (now Museum of Contemporary Craft) on March 11, 1975. From the archives of Museum of Contemporary Craft.

A NOTE TO THE MEDIA

For more information about this exhibition, to schedule an interview with the Museum curator or staff, or for access to press images, please contact Rebecca Burrell (contact information listed on top of page).

ABOUT MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Committed to the advancement of craft since 1937, Museum of Contemporary Craft is one of Oregon’s oldest cultural institutions. Centrally located at a new site on Portland’s North Park Blocks, the Museum is a vibrant center for investigation and dialogue, expanding the definition of craft and the way audiences experience it. Admission to the Museum is free; donations are welcome.

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Museum of Contemporary Craft

THE CERAMICS OF GERTRUD AND OTTO NATZLER

AUGUST 2, 2008 – JANUARY 25, 2009



These images are available as high resolution JPEG files at our online press center: www.MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org/info_press.php

If you would like to receive the passwords to download these images, or obtain more information, please contact:
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CAPTIONS

All photos by Dan Kvitka.

1. Gertrud and Otto Natzler, *Untitled oval bowl*, c. 1940s; Ceramic with Pompeian glaze; 3 3/4 x 5 x 1 1/2 in.; Collection of Carol and Seymour Haber.

2. Gertrud and Otto Natzler, *Untitled massive bowl with recessed rim*, date unknown; Ceramic; 3 1/2 x 7 3/4 in. diameter; Collection of Carol and Seymour Haber.

3. Gertrud and Otto Natzler, *Untitled rectangular vase with foot (X008)*, 1977; Ceramic; 6 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 1 3/4 in.; Collection of Carol and Seymour Haber.

4. Gertrud and Otto Natzler, *Untitled yellow bowl*, date unknown; Ceramic; 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 in. diameter; Collection of Carol and Seymour Haber.

5 and 6. Gertrud and Otto Natzler, *Untitled chalice (H633)*, 1957; Ceramic, Nocturne glaze with crystal formations; 5 x 8 3/8 in. diameter; Collection of Carol and Seymour Haber.

7. Gertrud and Otto Natzler, *Bright Blue Bowl*, 1968; Ceramic; 5 1/4 x 3 in. diameter; Collection of Museum of Contemporary Craft; Gift of Tom Hardy; 1998.68.13.

8. Gertrud and Otto Natzler, *Teardrop Bottle*, c. 1962; Ceramic; 10 x 5 in. diameter; Promised gift of Carol and Seymour Haber.

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