

# Galerie



Roberto Lugo. PHOTO: MEGHAN TRANAUSKAS

## How Roberto Lugo Melds Ceramics and Graffiti Art to Create His Edgy Works

The self-described 'ghetto potter,' whose pieces are on view at the Currier Museum of Art through September 26, depicts the culture and struggles of Black and Latinx communities

BY [RIMA SUQI](#)

JULY 21, 2021



Roberto Lugo. PHOTO: MEGHAN TRANAUSKAS

Graffiti artist turned ceramist Roberto Lugo refers to himself as the “ghetto potter,” and his works often marry traditional shapes with portraits of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Barack Obama, and the Notorious B.I.G. A Philadelphia native, he discovered his calling when he went to live with an aunt in Florida and saw community college classes were just \$300. Initially, he enrolled to meet people, but he found an affinity for clay. “I worked in a factory when I was 13, and pottery translated for me,” he recalls. “I was making tangible things.”

Eventually earning a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in Missouri and an MFA from Penn State, Lugo is now widely exhibited, with pieces in the permanent

collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Brooklyn Museum. Fresh off a show of commissioned ceramic pots at the New Orleans Museum of Art, Lugo has a solo show at the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire, on display through September 26. “When I go to museums and talk to the people who work there, like the security guards, they understand what my work is about and are proud to have it in their museum,” he says. “It’s amazing to me that it connects with people who wouldn’t otherwise connect with design and the decorative arts.”



A vessel part of Lugo's "Stunting" Garniture Set. PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND WEXLER GALLERY



Roberto Lugo. PHOTO: MEGHAN TRANAUSKAS





Detail of Lugo's *Vengo Dal Ghetto*: AOC. PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND WEXLER GALLERY



*Tupak/MLK Teapot*, 2020. PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND WEXLER GALLERY



*Yo Soy Boricua: A DNA Study* in resin and acrylic paint. PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND WEXLER GALLERY





Lugo at work.PHOTO: MEGHAN TRANAUSKAS