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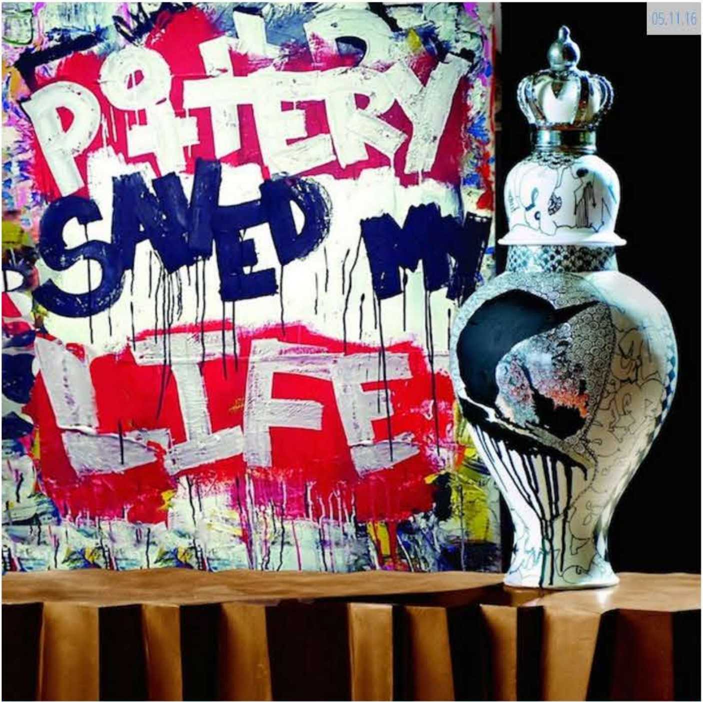
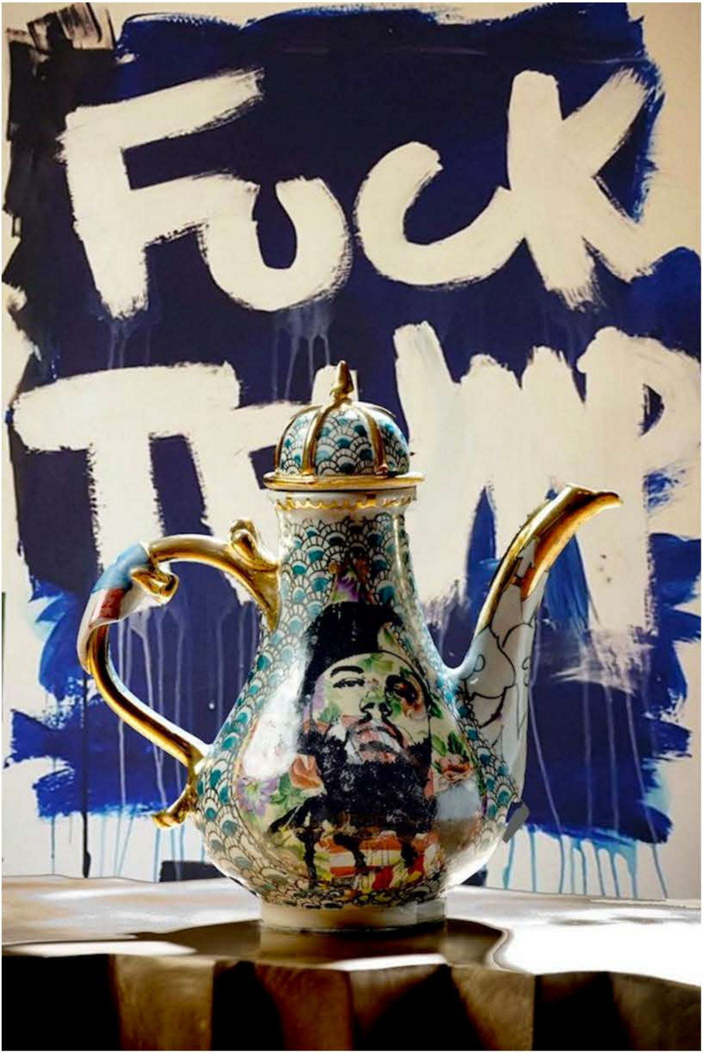
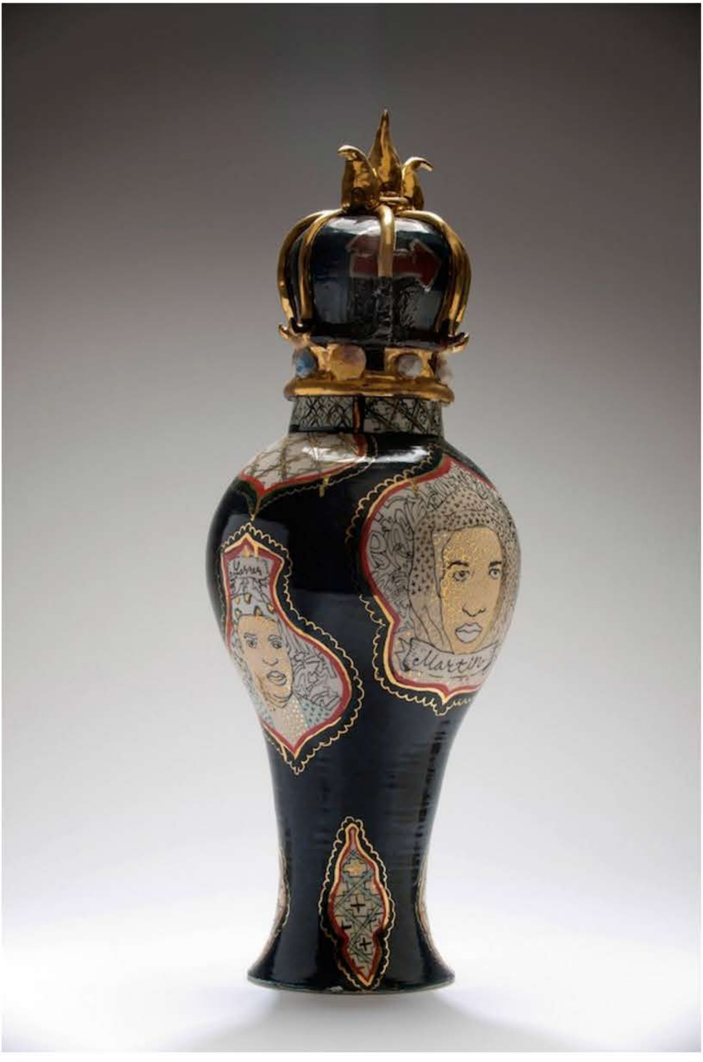


05.11.16

Exhibition | Roberto Lugo Converts Porcelain to Politics in Philadelphia

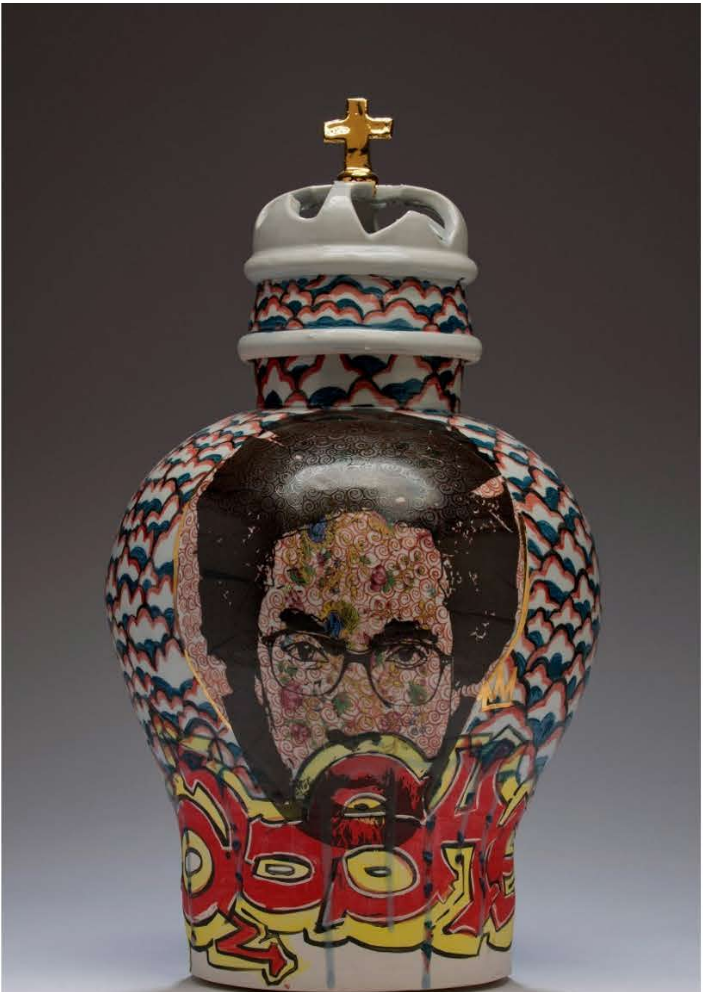
PHILADELPHIA — We've written about Roberto Lugo before and we still can't get over how cool it was that he painted "This machine kills hate," a reference to Guthrie's "This machine kills fascists," on his potter's wheel. With that in mind, you shouldn't be surprised at the ease with which he turns his vases toward social and political messages. His latest show *Defacing Adversity: The Life and Times of Roberto Lugo* (March 24 – June 11) is currently on view at Philadelphia's Wexler Gallery.

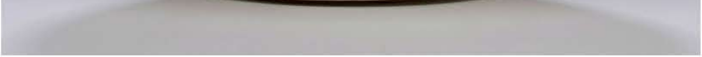




Lugo draws from his own experience to create works that confront issues such as poverty and civil rights. The biographical and political elements cannot be stripped from the work, just as Lugo's outlook can't be stripped away from the man. Pottery saved his life, he claims. You can hear more about Lugo's biography here. The Wexler describes *Defacing Adversity…*

Defacing Adversity: The life and times of Roberto Lugo will feature recent ceramic work by Lugo as well as paintings by the Philadelphia native. Lugo grew up as a child of Puerto Rican immigrants in North Philadelphia where his life was affected by the issues and challenges of inner city youth. His work depicts a clear story of how his eyes were opened to injustices in the world at a young age. Although his childhood was of limited means, he came from a culture-rich family who nurtured, guided and inspired him to become part of his own solution. Lugo represents his family and heritage often in his work as a homage to them for teaching him the value of hard work, and for empowering him to take a stand and evoke change.





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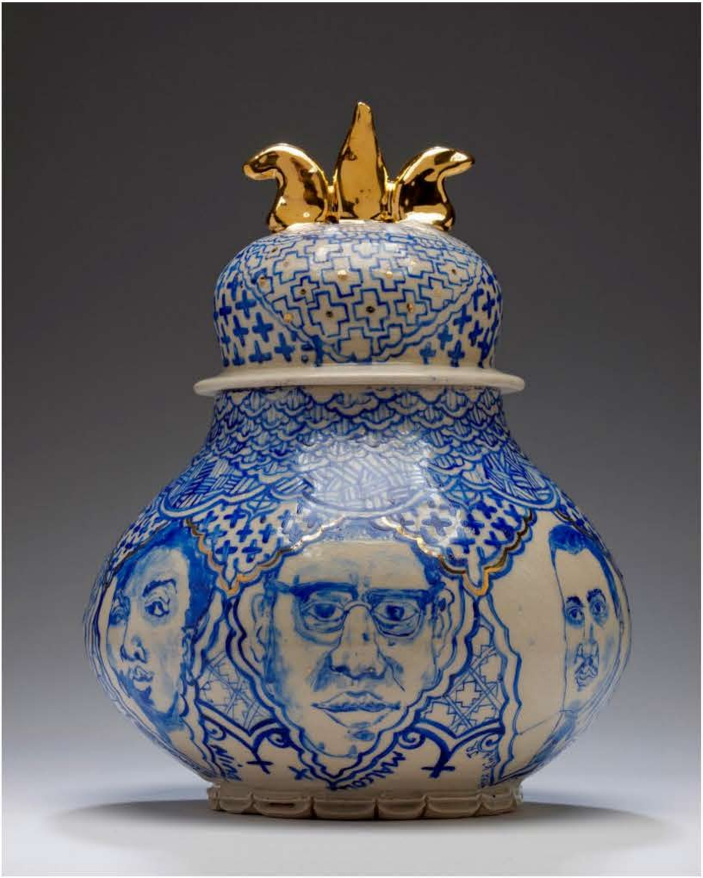

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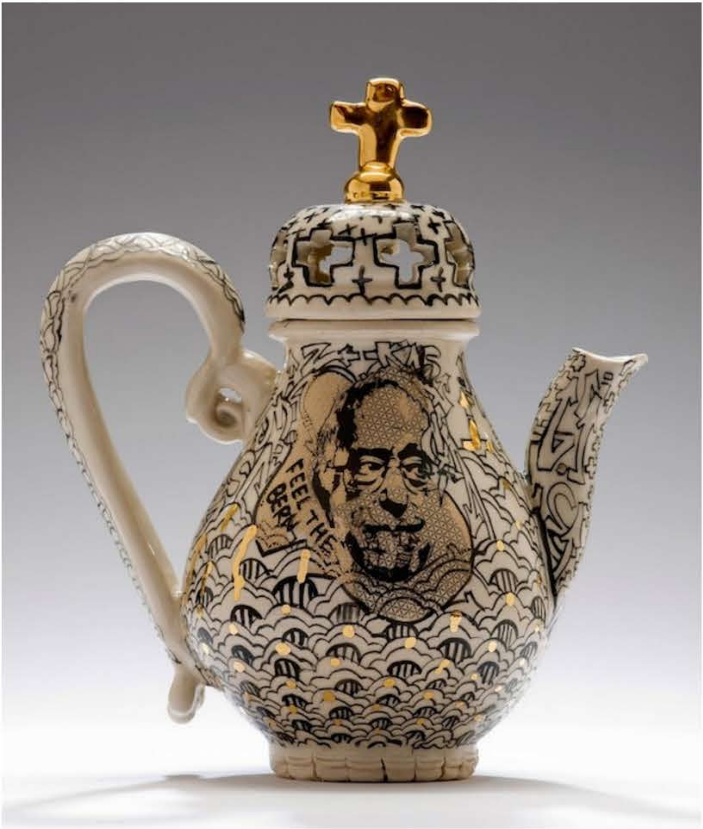
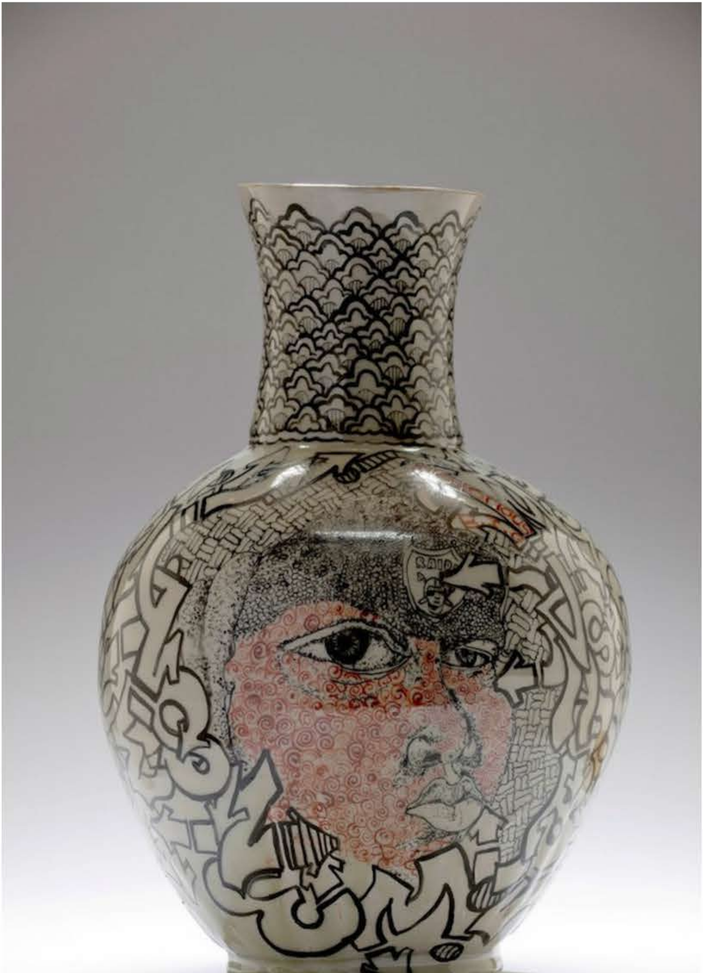
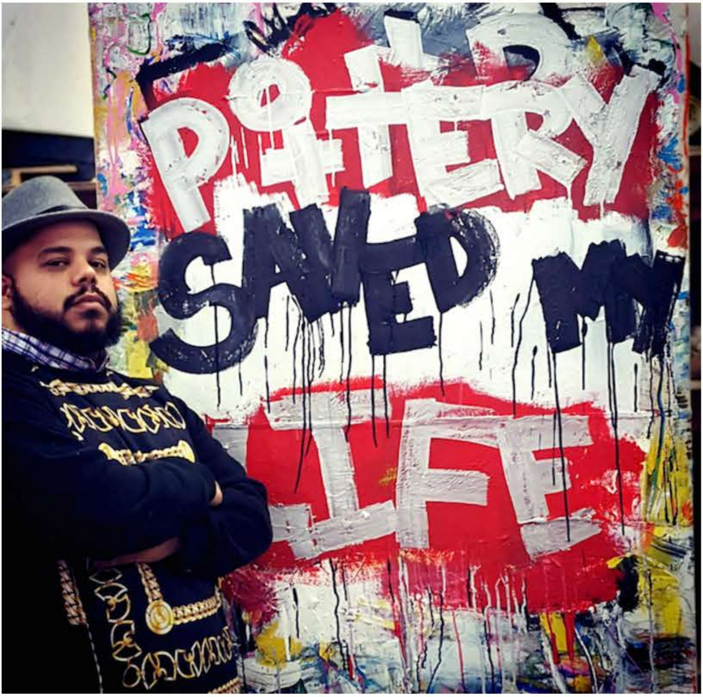


Confronting stereotypes, civil rights, poverty and immigration; Lugo uses his traditional porcelain forms to address issues that have affected and afflicted his life head on.

"He does not shy away from personal struggles or politically charged issues," said Wexler Gallery Sales and Marketing Associate Victoria Rosenberger. "Instead, he uses them to fuel the fire of his kiln, and ultimately, to communicate a new version of history where, as Roberto would say, a pottery wheel can kill hate."





By combining graffiti, hip hop, history, pop culture and porcelain, Lugo is bringing new conversations to the table of contemporary art. His work is as strong as his message, and his message supports the purpose of his work.

Challenging the traditional labels that categorize art, Wexler Gallery exhibits work that coexists in the expressive realms of design, fine art and contemporary glass and ceramics. Questioning and testing the boundaries of these fields, Wexler Gallery aims to present functional and non-functional work that consistently celebrates innovation as much as aesthetic beauty.

Text (edited) and photographs courtesy of the Wexler Gallery and the artist.

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