

Hilltown Families

Ceramic Exhibit Offers Rare Glimpse Into A Very Distant Past

September 9, 2014 at 12:00 pm ([Art](#), [Hampden County](#), [Hilltown Families](#), [Museum](#), [Suggested Activity](#))

Tags: [art education](#), [Art Exhibit](#), [Art History](#), [ceramics](#), [history education](#), [potter](#), [pottery](#)

Ceramics Exhibition Explores Craftsmanship Over 6,000 Years At **Mount Holyoke College Art Museum** through May 31, 2015

Have you ever taken a ceramics class? The feeling of the clay molding into recognizable shapes like bowls and plates is so satisfying, matched only by the feeling of accomplishment once the piece has been fired and glazed and is ready to be used. The creation—and usage—of functional objects has been part of the human experience for as long as humans have existed, and the ways in which these objects are made and regarded has evolved over time. From the purely practical and utilitarian to veritable objets d'art, ceramics have served a wide range of people in an even wider range of ways.

And as the world's peoples grew, developed, and traveled, so did their tools and artwork; this allowed for further dispersion and interchange of ideas and techniques.

Now through May 31, 2015, visitors are invited to examine a selection of pottery that spans over five continents and six thousand years of human existence and craftsmanship. The **Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's** latest exhibition, *The Potter's Tale: Contextualizing 6,000 Years of Ceramics*, highlights objects from the museum's extensive collection of ceramics, with an



A wonderful example of ceramics as an “objets d’art.”

emphasis on the exchange of ideas and objects between cultures. The works on view also include several objects never before displayed as part of the Museum's collection, plus several loans that have been included to encourage deeper dialogue amongst viewers.

When you visit the exhibition, try to identify some common themes and motifs throughout the ceramic pieces on display. Can you find similarities in the construction or decoration of several objects, each from different cultures or time periods? Using your knowledge of world history, what can you infer about the potential interactions or exchange of ideas between the creators of two similar, yet disparate, objects on display? What do you think is the likelihood that several independent creators came up with the same, or similar, design or motif—each on their own, without active external inspiration or stimuli? Consider the significance of the transition of fundamentally functional objects (one could even consider a ceramic pot or bowl to be a tool) to fundamentally decorative ones.

Admission is free to all. The Museum is open from 11am-5pm Tuesday through Friday and 1-5pm Saturday and Sunday; closed Monday.

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum. 413-538-2245. Lower Lake Road, South Hadley. For more information: www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum

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