



Clay's Tectonic Shift: John Mason, Ken Price, and Peter Voulkos, 1956-1968

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Clay's Tectonic Shift focuses on artists John Mason (b. 1927), Kenneth Price (1935-2012), and Peter Voulkos (1924–2002) and their radical early work in postwar Los Angeles where they formed the vanguard of a new California ceramics movement. The three artists broke from the craft tradition that emphasized the function of a piece. Experimenting with scale, surface, color, and volume, their work was instrumental in elevating ceramics from a craft to a fine art.

Earlier exhibitions and publications stated that key innovations in this new ceramics movement were made at the Otis Art institute and that its direction was defined by a group of students surrounding the charismatic leader Voulkos. The truth is that the new trend in ceramics was driven by the works that Price, Mason, and Voulkos made in a subsequent, independent phase when they were working as professional artists in Los Angeles, and the goal of *Clay's Tectonic Shift* is to correct that misperception. These three artists followed individual paths as they willfully propelled a new use of the medium into the mainstream professional arena, where it was widely recognized and documented. An exhibition of the same name will be on view at the Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery at Scripps College from January 21 through April 8, 2012, as part of Pacific Standard Time, a collaboration of more than sixty cultural institutions across Southern California to tell the story of the birth of the Los Angeles art scene.

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