



SILVERLENS

Jon Pettyjohn

STEPS

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8 June - 8 July 2023

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Clay is a uniquely sensitive material, picking up every nuance of a potter's state of mind throughout each moment of the process. The materials that are chosen, the way the tools are held, and the firing of the kiln imbue a sort of non-verbal communication, in ways like an instrumental piece of music, but with the added dimension of being both tactile and haptic. Ceramics almost demand to be touched and one's relationship with a piece comes through interaction rather than observation alone. Similarly, like a musician's solo, the potter relies on the embellishment of routine and established forms to convey their distinctive voice and vision.

All the same, in the dialogue between craft and high art, Pottery often gets camped with the former even while it embodies the latter. Technical vocabulary about clay-glaze chemistry and the illusive effects of high temperature kiln atmospheres, mostly inherited from the ancient alchemists who did the first actual research on ceramic processes in the 17th century, may not evoke a clear narrative line, yet the works themselves offer a multitude of ideas nonetheless.

Having been integral to the reintroduction and preservation of ceramic arts in the Philippines, Jon Pettyjohn's past exhibitions found him exploring these concepts and more, branching out beyond the typical applications of his craft into more experimental works. In his 2011 show, *Flux*, he explored the notion that change is constant. Through meticulously arranged works depicting the transition from wholeness to fragmentation alongside more abstract forms that resisted any utilitarian interpretation, he highlighted a process defined by transformation and subverted the expectations around the practical aspect of clay works. Subsequently, 2018's *Stoneware Terrain* mined the relationship between his environment – namely Mt. Makiling where his home and studio are located – and his creative output, a testament to the natural materials that he sources and how those earliest steps inform the rest of his practice.





Jon Pettyjohn
STEPS

Now Pettyjohn's third solo exhibition at Silverlens, *Steps*, advances the artist's pursuit of personal expression within the framework of traditions and techniques to which he has dedicated himself for close to fifty years. "It is a challenge and an honor for a potter like myself to be offered a space in a prime contemporary exhibition space like Silverlens," says Pettyjohn. "I have attempted to use my pottery skills to go a little further and say something more."

With a new series of thrown, wall-mounted platters, Pettyjohn embraces the symmetry of the potter's wheel without constraining himself to functional works. Using these cohesive, perfectly circular forms as a starting point, he has populated a diverse array of glazes and textures to create painted and relief surfaces that embody a spectrum: the orderly intention of the artist's concept leads to the coordinated havoc of raw materials reacting to the intense conditions of the high fire process. Amid the precision, an improvisational tenor evinces the rush of exploring new ground.

Facing the works on the gallery wall, framed at times by a hand-shaped lip or rim, one encounters vignettes both momentous and minute. A solid body punctured with holes neighbors one with wide, scraped strips of unglazed clay alongside another with swept remnants of the trimming process. The largest piece, with light and dark sections divided by a band like corroded thunder clouds on the horizon, suggests the fear, isolation, and anxiety of a force capable of disrupting the lives of many though it is itself a part of nature. Fittingly, it is also the only piece fired in Pettyjohn's anagama, a process that paints the storm of fire and wood ash that flows through the kiln onto the surfaces of the works within. This work is the most contorted, the darker side bending away as if rejecting its place in the whole. Seemingly in response, another striking work, calm and white, portrays two circles, one complete and the other partial and obscured like multi-phased moons in the stark clarity of daylight.

The varied and distinct interior of each piece ranges from fluidly calligraphic to geometric, reflecting the chance and unpredictability within each day. The reticulation of white glaze on a dark background nestles comfortably in its randomness while the next is disturbed with a quick swipe. Elsewhere, three different glazes run into each other, transparent layers transcending into unforeseen hues. The downward spiral repeated in a sequence of monochromatic works insinuates something like daily vigilance, only to be echoed in other pieces in the form of a brief smear of color or the impression of a brushstroke: the possibility of patterns broken. The resulting contrast between cycles of perfection and imperfection, between symmetry and distortion, captures the artist's experience over the last few tumultuous years. On both a global and a deeply personal scale, the path forward can only be reached one step at a time and with acceptance of the things that we cannot control.

-Matthew Jones







Blue Crescent, 2023
high fired stoneware and porcelain

17.13h x 17.13w x 0.79d in
43.50h x 43.50w x 2d cm



Fist, 2023
high fired stoneware and porcelain

15.75h x 15.75w x 0.79d in
40h x 40w x 2d cm



Trim, 2023
high fired stoneware and porcelain

14.96h x 14.76w x 1.77d in
38h x 37.50w x 4.50d cm

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Crawl 2, 2023
high fired stoneware and porcelain

14.57h x 14.57w x 1.77d in
37h x 37w x 4.50d cm

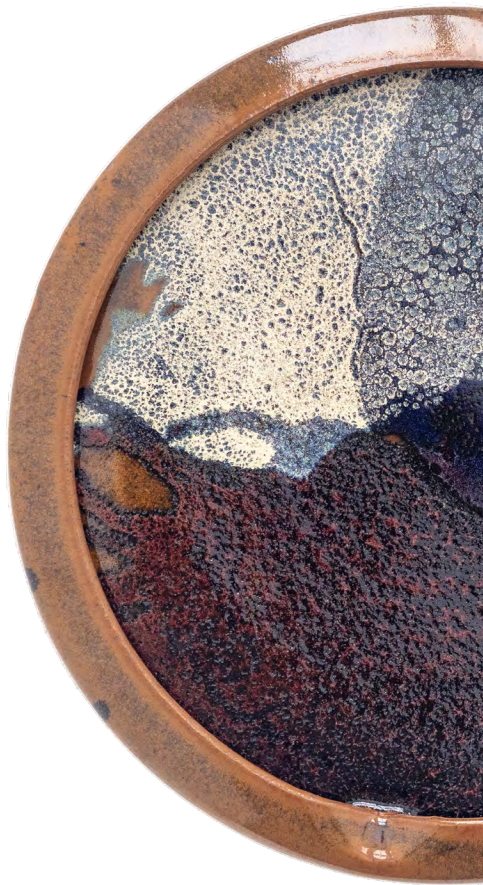


Tri-scape 1, 2023
high fired stoneware and porcelain

15.55h x 15.55w x 0.98d in
39.50h x 39.50w x 2.50d cm

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Flow 2, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

16.54h x 16.54w x 1.48d in
42h x 42w x 3.75d cm



Scarecrow, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

15.94h x 15.94w x 1.38d in
40.50h x 40.50w x 3.50d cm



Pink Cloud, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

16.93h x 16.93w x 1.38d in
43h x 43w x 3.50d cm

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Crawl 1, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

15.45h x 15.55w x 1.48d in
39.25h x 39.50w x 3.75d cm



Fire, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

14.76h x 14.76w x 1.57d in
37.50h x 37.50w x 4d cm



Crater, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

18.11h x 18.11w x 1.18d in
46h x 46w x 3d cm

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Patch, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

19.09h x 18.80w x 1.38d in
48.50h x 47.75w x 3.50d cm



Flow 1, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

17.91h x 18.11w x 1.28d in
45.50h x 46w x 3.25d cm

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Islands, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

14.76h x 14.76w x 1.77d in
37.50h x 37.50w x 4.50d cm



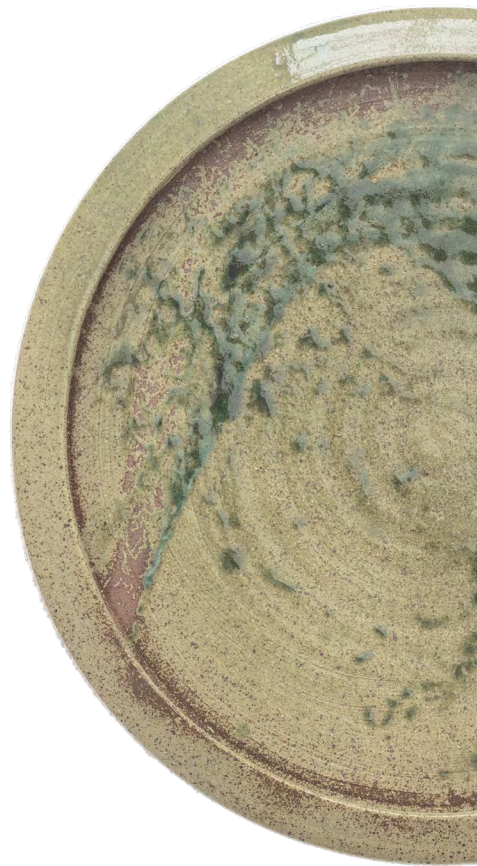
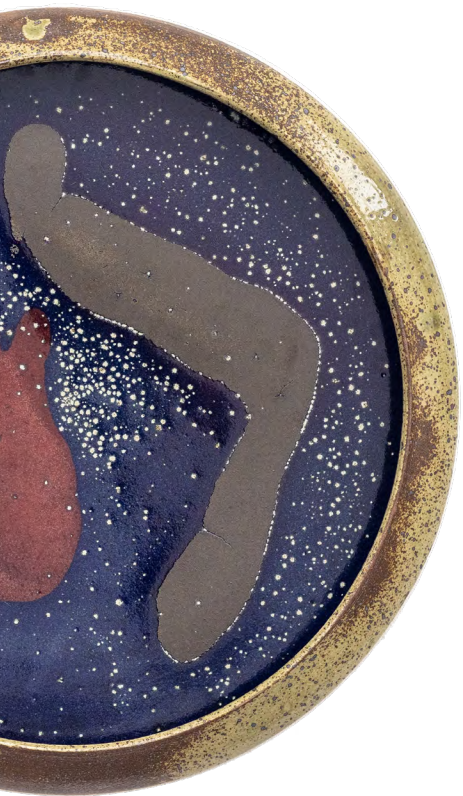
Fronz, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

15h x 15w x 1.50d in
38.10h x 38.10w x 3.81d cm

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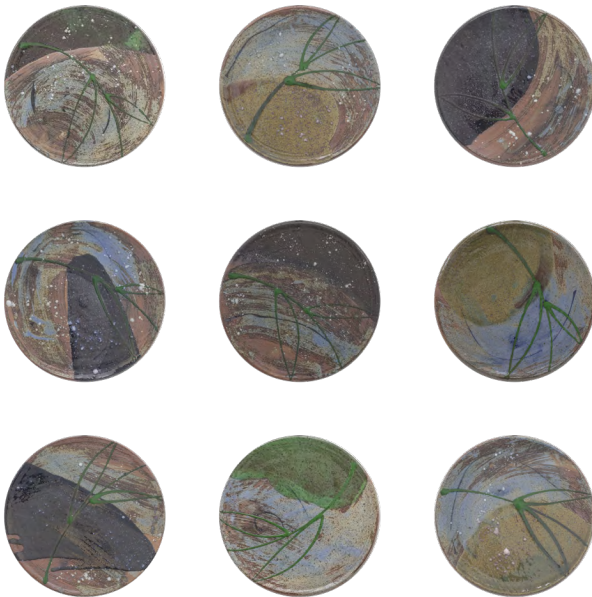


Anagama Scape, 2023
high fired stoneware and porcelain

18.50h x 19.49w x 3.15d in
47h x 49.50w x 8d cm

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Leaves, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

set of 9 round tiles

10.43h x 10.43w x 0.59d inches

26.5h x 26.5w x 1.5d cm (each)

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Sieve, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

15.35h x 15.35w x 1.18d in
39h x 39w x 3d cm



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Tri-scape 2, 2023

high fired stoneware and porcelain

15.55h x 15.75w x 1.77d in
39.50h x 40w x 4.50d cm

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Twelve Steps, 2023
high fired stoneware and porcelain

set of 12 round tiles
8.17h x 8.17w x 0.49d in
20.75h x 20.75wx 1.25d cm (each)



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JON PETTYJOHN

Bio

Jon Pettyjohn (b.1950, Okinawa, Japan), together with wife Tessy, is considered one of the pioneers of contemporary Philippine ceramics. For the past 38 years he has worked passionately in the realm of high fire Asian style ceramics. Although mostly functional he also sometimes explores the boundaries between the utilitarian and the sculptural, which he feels strongly, are of equal importance. The exploration for and use indigenous natural materials like clay, stones and ashes for ceramics are one of his major focus. Since 2000 he has concentrated on woodfiring using Anagamas (cave kilns) known for their rich natural glaze affects.

From a handful of contemporary potters in the 1970's the ceramic scene has grown exponentially in part from the Pettyjohn's influence on a new generation of clay artists many of whom have been their apprentices or students.



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JON PETTYJOHN CV

b. 1950, Okinawa, Japan



JP1 Anagama Jar 1, 2018

RESIDENCIES

- 2016 *Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park Residency*, Shigaraki, Japan
- 2012 *Southeast Asia Residency*, Fuping, Shaanxi, China

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Steps*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2018 *Stoneware Terrain*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2013 *Off on a Tangent*, Art Informal, Manila
- 2010 *FLUX*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2007 *Recent Works*, Izukan Gallery, Manila
- 2001 *Porcelain and Stoneware*, Izukan Gallery, Manila
- 2000 *Old Pots, New Pots*, Glorietta Art Space, Manila
- 1999 *"Cha Cha Cha" Tea Wares*, Ayala Museum, Manila
- 1997 *Clay Goddesses*, Ayala Museum, Manila
- 1996 *New Works in Stoneware and Porcelain*, Hiraya Gallery, Manila
- 1995 *Quadroliths*, Hiraya Gallery, Manila
- 1994 *Stoneware Forms*, Ayala Museum, Manila
- 1993 *"Head Heart Hand"*, Sining Kamalig, Manila
- 1988 *New Work*, Luz Gallery, Manila
- 1987 *New Work*, Luz Gallery, Manila
- 1985 *Stoneware Pottery*, Hiraya Gallery, Manila
- 1985 *Works in Porcelain*, Pansol Pottery Showroom, Manila
- 1979 *Jon Pettyjohn*, Sining Kamalig, Manila
- 1978 *First One Man Show*, Sining Kamalig, Manila

TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 *Touch Me, Touch Me Not*, with Tessy Pettyjohn, Silverlens, Manila
- 2011 *Clay Life*, with Tessy Pettyjohn, Alliance Francaise, Manila
- 2010 *Curved Space*, with Tessy Pettyjohn, Art Informal, Manila
- 2009 *Juxtapots*, with Tessy Pettyjohn, Alliance Francaise, Manila
- 2002 *Home is Where the Art Is*, with Tessy Pettyjohn, Glorietta Art Space, Manila
- 1990 *With Tessy Pettyjohn*, Hiraya Gallery, Manila

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 *Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila
- Watchfire*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2018 *Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2017 *International Ceramics Conference and Exhibition*, College of Fine Arts, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, Manila
- 2016 *Shigaraki Cultural Park*, Shigaraki, Japan
- Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila

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- 2015 **DADDAD-AT**, College of Fine Arts, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, Manila
Nanyang Clay Group Show, Singapore
3rd Bond Klay Ceramic Conference and Exhibition, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2014 **South East Asian Conference and Exhibit**, Lorton, Virginia, USA
Anak Ng Putik, Orange Gallery, Bacolod
Ceramicship: Five Masters from Southeast Asia, One East Gallery, Singapore
- 2013 **Sasama International Ceramic Festival**, Sasama, Japan
1st Bond Klay Ceramic Conference and Exhibition, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2012 **Southeast Asia Residency**, Fuping, Shaanxi, China
- 2009 **Ring of Fire: First Exhibition of Contemporary Southeast Asian Ceramics**, Ayala Museum, Manila
Substance, Tin-aw Gallery, Manila
The Ceramic Road of Southeast Asia, Taipei County Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taiwan
Language of Clay, Tin-aw Gallery, Manila
- 2007 **Mitsubitsuki: Japanese Images/Thematics in Philippine Art**, Metropolitan Museum, Manila
Budji Gallery, Manila
- 2005 **First International Chawan Expo**, Belgium
- 2004 **With Shozo Michikawa and Tessy Pettyjohn**, Isouain Gallery, Japan
With Hadrian Mendoza, Glorietta Art Space, Manila
- 2003 **Putik**, Pinto Gallery, Antipolo
- 2002 **Clay Speaks**, Nanyang Clay Group First Asian Ceramics Exhibition, Singapore
Aomori Wood Fire Festival, Goshogawara, Japan
- 2001 **Philippine Anagama Project**, Vargas Museum, University of the Philippines
- 2000 **Macsabal International Wood Fire Festival**, Korea
- 1999 **With Impy Pilapil**, Glorietta Art Space, Manila
- 1998 **Philippine Centennial Art Exhibition**, Kansai Int'l Airport, Osaka
Potters of Pansol, Glorietta Art Space, Makati
- 1997 **First Annual Clayarters Exhibit (An exhibition of Internet clay artists)**, Maine, USA
Philippine Representative (First Prize Winner) to the Third Asian Ceramic Festival, Intex Osaka, Osaka, Japan
- 1995 **Second Asian Ceramic Festival**, Intex Osaka, Osaka Japan
- 1990 **With Wig Tysman**, Luz Gallery, Manila
Philippine Potters, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
Luwad, Philippine Pottery, Nayong Filipino, Manila
- 1986 **An Exhibition of Contemporary Philippine Pottery**, Design Center, Philippines

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- 1983 *Clay, Philippine Pottery Today*, Design Center, Philippines
- 1982 *The Bowl Show (A traveling exhibit in Asia)*, Australian Crafts Council
- 1981 *Potter's Guild*, Design Center, Philippines
- 1980 *With Nelfa Querubim*, Sining Kamalig, Manila

EDUCATION

1972 - 1976 Escuela Massana, Barcelona, Spain

JON PETTYJOHN

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SILVERLENS

2263 Don Chino Roces Avenue Extension

Makati City, Philippines 1231

T +632.88160044

F +632.88160044

M +63917.5874011

www.silverlensgalleries.com

inquiry@silverlensgalleries.com