

Three themes structure this exhibition: **techniques** (clays and firing, shapes, decoration); **uses** (functional, sculptural, ritual); and **messages** (trompe-l'oeil, anti-classical, political). Also considered are pieces that deviate from the rules, reinvent codes and challenge procedures, even if the recipes infused with alchemy have hardly changed throughout history.

Like the Phoenix constantly reborn from its ashes, ceramics exerts an increasing yet cyclical fascination linked to the technical unpredictability of the firing and the kiln that can never be completely mastered. Since the late 19th century, the tactility and roughness that have always driven craftsmen have exercised a powerful pull on artists too, together with numerous amateurs and collectors.

Fire, the inspiration for the exhibition's title, is a technical resource sparking not only precise properties and functions, but also specific counter-aesthetics and an imaginative richness sometimes verging on the radically utopian. In many respects ceramics is an art of resistance. The recognition of a "Ceramic Age" – one, strangely enough, never previously acknowledged – seems today more obvious than ever.

The Flames can be seen as the third chapter in a series of exhibitions, coming in the wake of *Decorum* (on tapestry) and *Medusa* (on jewellery) at the Musée d'Art Moderne in 2013 and 2017 and their rethinking of the definitions of art. It is built around loans from numerous renowned institutions and collections, both public (Sèvres Manufacture and National Museum, Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée in Marseille, the Louvre, the Arizona State University Museum, etc.) and private; as well as collaboration with French and international academics and theoreticians, including the three guest specialists Frédéric Bodet, Thomas Golsenne and Stéphanie Le Follic-Hadida.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue gathering texts by specialists and artists; an international symposium on the theme *Ceramics and Politics*, jointly organised by the Society of Friends of the Sèvres National Museum and the Paris Museum of Decorative Arts, at the National Institute of Art History (INHA) in Paris in January 2022; a participative collecting project; a program of workshops and demonstrations; and a pedagogical mobile and miniaturized version of the show for people unable to attend.

Worth noting: as a gesture of respect for the Earth – the primary material for this exhibition – the furniture specially designed by the Cros/Patras agency in collaboration with Natsuko Uchino is more than 50% recycled and recyclable.

In addition, the exhibition will find an echo in a selection of ceramic works belonging to the museum and on display within the permanent collection.

Visitor information

Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris 11
Avenue du Président Wilson
75116 Paris
Tel. 01 53 67 40 00
www.mam.paris.fr

Open Tuesday – Sunday
10 am – 6 pm

Open late: Thursday until 10 pm

Admission

Full rate: 11€
Concessions: 9€

Cultural activities

Information and bookings
Tel. 01 53 67 40 80

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