

WEXLER GALLERY



Back and Forth: Red and Meth

Ceramic and Graffiti featuring Roberto Lugo with collaborators

Salvatore Annunziato, Charlie Cunningham, Kyle Mello Dixon, Griff Jurchak, and Ashley Porrini

October 22 - December 30, 2021

Wexler Gallery

201 North 3rd Street, Philadelphia

Opening Reception: Friday, October 22, 6-8pm

PHILADELPHIA - Artist, activist, spoken word poet, and educator Roberto Lugo has become a major figure in contemporary ceramics. His third exhibition at Wexler Gallery, ***Back and Forth: Red and Meth***, has Lugo sharing the space with collaborators Salvatore Annunziato, Charlie Cunningham, Kyle Mello Dixon, Griff Jurchak, and Ashley Porrini. Lugo reimagines the gallery space as a visionary Latinx shop filled with functional and wearable items such as lamps, pipes, bowls, clothing, sneakers, and prints. Shown alongside his signature ceramic sculptures, Lugo's functional art solidifies his reputation for making art that is alive and meant to be lived with. The exhibition runs October 22 through December 30, 2021, with an Opening Reception with the artists on Friday, October 22, 6-8pm.

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“I wonder what the streets could look like in a gallery; the intersections of my culture reflected in those corridors. Where the emblems of my community and my pottery thrive together. I consider the shoes, the mixtapes, the style, and all the ways that we stunt. And I ask, why can’t pots be a part of that? Throughout my life I’ve experienced a constant back and forth: people who look like me inspiring a society that steals from and oppresses them. My work is my response. What happens when our culture has the autonomy to be able to express itself, celebrate itself, and evolve free of hate? The permanence, broad cultural context, and lavishness of ceramics embody the reality posed with these objects. What does a lamp look like influenced by hip hop? What if the fire hydrants we grew up playing in became prized cups to drink out of? What if the graffiti on the streets adorned the walls of our homes and museums? What happens when something ephemeral, like writing our names on the wall, is put on a pot that lasts forever? My work is a testament to the preservation of our culture; *wrestling with the temporary and eternal, back and forth, like red and meth.*”

—Roberto Lugo

The show comes during a time of immense creative growth, as evidenced by the acquisition of Lugo's work by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in conjunction with his inclusion in their upcoming exhibition *Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room from Seneca Village* this fall. In the past year, Lugo has participated in several notable group exhibitions at institutions such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, El Museo del Barrio, and The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Additionally, Lugo has had solo shows at The Currier Museum of Art and the Fairfield University Art Museum.

Known for his graffiti-inspired porcelain sculptures, Roberto Lugo’s work centers around the notion of representation. Specifically, representing the culture and struggles faced within Black and Latinx communities through the lens of craft history. Lugo chooses to depict Civil Rights leaders, hip hop artists, musicians, writers, and cultural figures representative of Black and Latinx culture. Their likeness is elevated to a space that was historically inaccessible to people of color. Drawing from iconic forms, such as an urn or a teapot, Lugo works with the existing associations inherent to a form, while adding his own stylized imagery and content. The result is a complex, contradictory body of work that embodies both poverty and resilience as well as opulence and wealth. He combines status symbols from European society and urban America to create works of art that cross boundaries and weave together seemingly disparate cultures into one multifaceted vision.

For more information or images, please contact Director of Sales Samantha Goldberg at 215.923.7030.

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IMAGE DETAILS IN HEADER GRAPHIC (L TO R):

Griff Jurchak, *Large Drawing*, 2021

Roberto Lugo, *Black Thought Teapot*, 2021, Glazed Ceramic

Roberto Lugo, *Custom Backpack*, 2021, Hand Painted Canvas, Ed. 1/10

ABOUT WEXLER GALLERY

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. Founded by Lewis Wexler and Sherri Apter Wexler, Wexler Gallery opened in 2000 in the historic district of Old City, Philadelphia and expanded its presence to New York City in 2018. Since its inception, the gallery has proudly showcased extraordinary work by both master artists and the emerging talent of today.

201 North 3rd Street, Philadelphia PA 19106, 215.923.7030

<https://www.wexlergallery.com/>

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Roberto Lugo, 2021, *Self Portrait Vessel With Rat Sculptures*, Glazed Ceramic, 19 x 20 x 17 in



Roberto Lugo, 2021, *Large Handbuilt Vessel (Erykah Badu)*, Glazed Ceramic, 25.25 x 21 x 21 in

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Roberto Lugo, 2021, *Large Vessel With Pit Bull Bust Sculptures and Column* – Collaboration With Griff Jurchak and Salvatore Annunziato, Glazed Ceramic, 34 x 24 x 15 in

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Griff Jurchak, *Cramped*, 2021, Ink on paper, 72 x 76 in



Griff Jurchak, *Cramped*, 2021, Ink on paper, 72 x 76 in

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Roberto Lugo, *Custom Backpack*, 2021, Hand Painted Canvas, 9.5 x 3.5 x 8 in



Roberto Lugo, *Custom Backpack*, 2021, Hand Painted Canvas, 9.5 x 3.5 x 8 in

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Roberto Lugo in clothing collaboration with Mello



Roberto Lugo in clothing collaboration with Mello

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Molly Hutter, *Portrait of Roberto Lugo (In collaboration with Roberto Lugo)*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in

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Moly Hutter, *Portrait of Griff Jurchak (In Collaboration With Griff Jurchak)*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 in