



## ROBERTO LUGO BIOGRAPHY



Roberto Lugo creates defiant genre-mixing works that confront the function and subject matter of high art objects from Classical Antiquity, East Asia, the Italian Renaissance, seventeenth-century Europe, and beyond. Using the ancient medium of clay as his canvas, Lugo both calls attention to intergenerational experiences of racial injustice while celebrating African American and Latino culture.

Ceramic as an artistic medium is important to Lugo because of its anthropological context. Over the course of history, finely-crafted ceramic objects stood as a symbol of class, privilege, and the aristocracy. Lugo intervenes in these histories, and countless more, to create a new mode of storytelling that blends narrative and portraiture with cross-disciplinary techniques and time-honored forms in order to introduce those notably absent from the art historical canon. The result is distinctive works in clay unified by Lugo's call for representation.

Roberto Lugo holds a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and an MFA from Penn State. His work has been featured in exhibitions at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, among others. He is



the recipient of numerous awards, including a 2019 Pew Fellowship, a Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon Polsky Rome Prize, a US Artist Award, and most recently the Heinz Award for the Arts. His work is found in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The High Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Brooklyn Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Walters Art Museum, and more.



## ROBERTO LUGO

### SELECT CV

#### I. EDUCATION

- 2014 - 2015      Doctor of Philosophy Candidacy  
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
- 2012 - 2014      Masters of Fine Arts  
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
- 2008 - 2012      Bachelor of Fine Arts Concentration in Ceramics,  
Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO
- 2007              Attended School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
Concentration in Interdisciplinary Arts, Chicago, IL

#### II. SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2027              *Untitled Mid-Career Show* at The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO  
*(forthcoming)*  
*Untitled Solo Presentation* at Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles, CA *(forthcoming)*
- 2026              *American Crib: What's Happening?*. The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA *(forthcoming)*  
*in(visible) ink*. Robert Lehman Art Center, Brooks School, North Andover, MA
- 2025              *Pigeon Crib: Houston Edition*. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, Houston, TX  
*Boston Tea Party Remix: Roberto Lugo*. Praise Shadows Art Gallery, Brookline, MA  
*Roberto Lugo: Drip*. R & Company, New York, NY  
*Roberto Lugo: Orange / Black, Art@Bainbridge*. Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
- 2023              *Roberto Lugo: Hi-Def Archives*. Cincinnati Museum of Art, OH  
*Gilded Ghetto*. R & Company, New York, NY
- 2022              *Roberto Lugo: Village Potter*. Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ  
*Roberto Lugo: Pottery with Purpose*. The Hermitage Museum and Gardens, Norfolk, VA  
*Roberto Lugo*. The Wolfsonian-Florida International University, Miami Beach, FL
- 2021              *Roberto Lugo: Te Traigo Mi Le Lo Lai (I bring you my joy)*, The Currier Museum of Art,  
Manchester, NH  
*God Complex: Different Philadelphia*. Arthur Ross Gallery, The University of Pennsylvania,  
Philadelphia, PA  
*Roberto Lugo: New Ceramics*. Fairfield University Art Museum, Fairfield, CT
- 2020              *Stunting*. New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA
- 2019              *Design Miami / Curio*. Solo exhibition presented by Wexler Gallery, Miami, FL



- 2018 *Roberto Lugo at 1 West*. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD  
*Boricua, Barrio, Barro*. Taller Puertorriqueño, Philadelphia, PA
- 2017 *Jarring*. Delaware Contemporary, Wilmington, DE  
*Art Miami*. presented by Wexler Gallery, Miami, FL  
*New Life: A Table for Everyone*. University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
- 2016 *The Life and Times of Roberto Lugo*. Wexler Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
- 2015 *Roberto Lugo Solo Exhibition*. Eutectic Gallery, Portland, OR  
*Ghetto Garniture: Wu Tang Worcester*. Independent Arts Project, MASS Moca, North Adams, MA

### III. GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 *An Island of Light*, Homo Faber, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, IT (*forthcoming*)  
*Evolving (Clay): Distinct Voices Speak*. Lucy Lacoste Gallery, Concord, MA (*forthcoming*)
- 2025 *The Vessel Revisited*. The Torggler Fine Arts Center, Newport News, VA
- 2024 *The Shape of Power: Stories of Race and American Sculpture*. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.  
*It Takes a Village: From Artist & Mentor Roberto Lugo*. Main Line Art Center, Haverford, PA  
*Reflect & Remix: Art Inspiring Artists*. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD  
*50 Years in the Making*. The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA  
*Get in the Game: Sports, Art, Culture*. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA  
*The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*. Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA  
*Gyeonggi Ceramics Biennale (GCB)*. South Korea
- 2023 *The Culture: Hip Hop and Contemporary Art in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Touring exhibition  
*Figuring Space*. The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA
- 2022 *Smoke*, Jason Jacques Gallery x Last Prisoner Project, New York, NY  
*The Luxury of Clay: Porcelain Past and Present*. Hillwood Estate, Washington, D.C.  
*Past Is Present: Black Artists Respond to the Complicated Histories of Slavery*. Herron Gallery, Indiana University-Purdue University of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
- 2021 *Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room from Seneca Village*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY  
*Back and Forth: Red and Meth*. Wexler Gallery, Philadelphia, PA  
*Crafting America*. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR  
*Estamos Bien: La Trienal 20/21*. El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY  
*New Grit: Art & Philly Now*. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA  
*Objects USA 2020*. R & Company, New York, NY



- 2020 *In a Perfect World: Optimism in an Age of Anxiety.* Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
- 2019 *OBJECTS: USA REDUX.* Houston Center For Contemporary Craft, Houston, TX  
*Wynorrific Times.* Two-person exhibition, Wexler Gallery, Philadelphia, PA  
*Making A Difference.* Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA  
*Graffiti And Ornament.* The Woodlands, Past Present Projects, Wexler Gallery, Philadelphia, PA  
*Reconstructing Identities.* Fowler-Kellogg Art Center, Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, NY
- 2018 *The Burke Prize 2018: The Future Of Craft Part 2.* Museum of Arts & Design, New NY, NY  
*Making Change: The Art and Craft of Activism.* The Museum of Design/Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
- 2017 *Collective Design.* Wexler Gallery, New York, NY
- 2016 *Simple Forms Stunning Glazes.* Cranbrook Academy, Bloomfield Hills, MI  
*Art Axis Exhibition,* North Clay Center, Minneapolis, MN  
*Government Cheese.* Lillstreet Art Center, Chicago, IL  
*Recorded Matter.* Center for Craft, Asheville, NC  
*Wild Mouth.* Baltimore Clayworks, Baltimore, MD
- 2015 *The City Real & Imagined.* The Painted Bride, Philadelphia, PA  
*Theoretical Show.* The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Project Space, New York, NY

#### IV. PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD  
Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA  
Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH  
Crystal Bridges Museum, Bentonville, AR  
Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH  
Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA  
Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ  
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA  
Indianapolis Museum of Art, Newfields, Indianapolis, IN  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA  
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, TN  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA  
National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington D.C.  
Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS Palmer  
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA  
Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA  
Plattsburgh State Art Museum, Plattsburgh, NY



Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC  
Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, Providence, RI  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.  
Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington D.C.  
Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD  
Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY

## V. AWARDS

- 2023 Heinz Award, The Heinz Family Foundation  
Masters of Medium Awards, James Renwick Alliance for Craft
- 2022 Artist Fellowship, Philadelphia's Cultural Treasures, Philadelphia, PA  
Visionary Artist Award, Mural Arts Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA  
Honorary Doctorate, Saint Joseph's University
- 2021 Delphi Award, The Smithsonian Women's Committee
- 2020 Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon Polsky Rome Prize
- 2018 Ceramics Arts Network, Artist of the Year  
Burke Prize (Nomination), MAD Museum, New York, NY
- 2016 US Artist Award
- 2015 NCECA Emerging Artist, Providence, RI  
Victor Spinski Memorial Award, NCECA, Providence, RI

## VI. RESIDENCIES

- 2026 Guest Artist in Residence, The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA (*forthcoming*)
- 2025 Artist in Residence, University of North Texas, Denton, TX
- 2023 Guest Artist in Residence, Cincinnati Museum of Art, OH
- 2022 Artist in Residence, Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ
- 2021 Artist in Residence, Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH
- 2019 Fellowship, Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon Polsky Rome Prize  
Fellowship, The Pew Center for the Arts and Heritage
- 2018 Artist in Residence, Artspace, New Haven, CT



- 2016 Fellow, Barr Foundation  
Guest Artist in Residence, The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA  
Artist in Residence, Baltimore Clayworks, Baltimore, MD
- 2013 Artist in residence, International Ceramics Studio, Kecskemet, Hungary  
IAH resident artist, Penn State University, State College, PA  
NCECA Graduate Fellowship, Houston, TX

## VII. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2026 Selection Committee, Art Works Microgrant: Kensington 250, Philadelphia Foundation, Philadelphia, PA
- 2025 Juror, Spector Craft Prize, Spector Family Foundation, New York, NY
- 2018 - 2024 Assistant Professor of Ceramics, Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Philadelphia, PA
- 2015 Professor of Ceramics, Marlboro College, Brattleboro, Vermont  
Board of Directors, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME  
Board of Directors, National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts
- 2012-2014 Beginning Ceramics Instructor, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

## VIII. SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- 2026 Lecturer, Anderson Ranch Speaker Series, Anderson Ranch Art Center, Snowmass Village, CO  
*(forthcoming)*
- 2025 Artist Conversation, Government House of Maryland, Annapolis, MD  
Lecturer, Weiner Lecture in the Arts, Anita Tuvin Schlechter Auditorium, Carlisle, PA  
Artist and Curator Conversation with Carolyn Laferrière, Princeton Art Museum, Princeton, NJ  
Commencement Speaker, Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO  
Keynote Speaker, National Convention, National Art Education Association, Chicago, IL  
Guest Speaker, The Penny Stamps Distinguished Speaker Series, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
Lecturer, Booker Lowe Series, The Museum of Fine Arts' Glassell School of Art, Houston, TX  
Guest Speaker, Maryland Government Mansion, Annapolis, MD  
Guest Speaker, Pratt Munson for Easton Pribble Lecture Series, Munson Arts, Utica, NY
- 2024 Keynote Speaker, National Convention, National Art Education Association, Chicago, IL  
Guest Speaker and Instructor, Harvard University, MA  
Guest Speaker, Panel Discussion with Theaster Gates, Forman Arts Initiative, Philadelphia, PA  
Keynote Speaker, Art Educators of New Jersey Annual Conference, Princeton, NJ



- 2023      Guest Speaker, The 26th Annual Kreines Lecture on Decorative Arts and Design, Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH  
Guest Speaker, The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA
- 2022      Guest Speaker, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY  
Guest Speaker, Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.  
Guest Speaker, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery at Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA  
Guest Speaker, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington D.C.  
Visiting Artist, Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab, Florida International University, Miami, FL  
Presenter, TEDx Penn, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- 2021      Guest Speaker, Center for Craft, Asheville, NC  
Guest Speaker, Harvard College, Cambridge, MA  
Guest Speaker, Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH  
Guest Speaker, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME  
Guest Speaker, Pennsylvania Art Education Association Conference, Philadelphia, PA  
Visiting Artist, Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO
- 2019      Guest Speaker, American Craft National Council
- 2018      Guest Speaker, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
- 2017      Keynote Lecture, Penn State Forum, State College, PA  
Visiting Artist, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI  
Visiting Artist, Waubensee Community College, Sugar Grove, IL  
Visiting Artist, Haystack School of Craft, Deer Isle, ME  
Visiting Artist, Arrowmont School, Gaitlinsburg, TN
- 2016      NCAA Conference Lecture, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA  
Visiting Artist, Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, PA  
Keynote lecture, Center for Craft and Creativity, Asheville, NC  
Visiting Artist, Cranbrook Academy, Bloomfield Hills, MI  
Demonstrating Artist, Lawrence Ceramics Symposium, Lawrence, KS  
Visiting Artist, Maine College of Art, Portland, ME  
Visiting Artist, SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, NY  
Visiting Artist, Franklin Pierce University, Denridge, NH  
Visiting Artist, Millbrook School, Millbrook, NY
- 2015      Guest Lecturer, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA  
Artist Lecture, Ferrin Contemporary, North Adams, MA  
Presenter, NCECA Emerging Presentation, Providence, RI  
Visiting Lecturer, The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA

## IX. PUBLIC PROJECTS & COLLABORATIONS



- 2026 Public Installation, Art in The Parks, Madison Square Park Conservancy, New York City, NY  
(forthcoming)
- 2025 Expo 2025 Osaka, US Pavilion via Art in Embassies, Yumeshima, Japan
- 2024 Mural Arts Philadelphia x Roberto Lugo: We Here  
ArtWorks Hannan ArtPark x Roberto Lugo  
Danny Simmons Presents a Def Poetry Jam Reunion – ft. Roberto Lugo, Grounds for Sculpture,  
Hamilton, NJ
- 2023 Roberto Lugo x The Village Potter Bodega presented by R & Company, Aspen Art Museum, CO
- 2022 Roberto Lugo x The Village Potter Bodega presented by R & Company, Design Miami, Miami, FL  
Stunting, a Roberto Lugo x Nike Air Collaboration  
The Talented Mr. Trotter: You Can Be Anything mural, The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA
- 2021 Roberto Lugo x Houseplant

## X. PRESS

- 2025 “East,” *Craft in America*, PBS, Dec 19.  
Mothes, Kate. “Historic Pottery Styles Meet Pop Culture and Contemporary Issues in Roberto Lugo’s Sculptures,” *Colossal*, Dec 16.  
Werber, Alison. “Old Forms, New Fire,” *3rings*, Oct 6.  
Silverman, Erika. “Your Go-To Houston Museum Guide: The Menil to the Rothko Chapel,” *Whitewall*, Sep 16.  
Frank, Nicholas. “Pigeon Crib: Houston Edition,” *Glasstire*, Aug 14.  
“Philadelphia,” John Leguizamo Does America, *MSNBC*, S2 Ep 1, Jul 6.  
Kim, Irene. “Relationships, Resistance, and Resilience: Robert Lugo’s Orange and Black Exhibition,” *The Princeton Daily*, Apr 24.  
Blair, Elizabeth. “This art exhibition is ‘divisive’ or ‘eye-opening’ – it depends on who you ask,” *NPR*, Apr 2.  
Thomas, Mary. “Roberto Lugo’s Ceramics Are the Artifacts of a Future Past,” *ARTnews*, Apr 22.  
James, Jesse. “Roberto Lugo’s ‘Drip’ Exhibition Merges Hip-Hop, Streetwear, and Classical Ceramics,” *StupidDope*, Mar 19.  
Duong, Amy. “Roberto Lugo Presents the Drip Exhibition in New York,” *TrendHunter*, Mar 18.  
Ikeuchi, Erin. “Roberto Lugo’s ‘Drip’ is a Fusion of Streetwear and Ceramic Tradition,” *Hypebeast*, Mar 17.  
“Pottery saved this Philly artist’s life. Now he has an exhibition at Princeton,” *Axios Philadelphia*, February 21, 2025, Isaac Avilucea  
Suqi, Rima. “A Groundbreaking Exhibit Pairs Hand-Painted Nike Air Force 1s With Ceramic Teapots,” *Forbes*, Feb 21.  
“Hyperallergic Spring 2025 New York Art Guide,” *Hyperallergic*, Feb 20.



Egea, Ana Vidal. "Roberto Lugo, artist: 'For a long time I hid where I came from so that I wouldn't be judged, now I'm proud of it,'" *El País*, Feb 16.

- 2024
- Rojas, Nikki. "Potter gets fired up about helping students find their own gifts," *The Harvard Gazette*, Dec 6.
- Crimmins, Peter. "Exhibition of Black figures at the Philly Art Museum is right on time," *WHYY*, Nov 12.
- Constantine, Brandon, "Walmart's Nuevolution Project Celebrates Visionary Creatives Shaping Culture," *Complex*, Sep 14.
- Sanders, Josh. "Meet the Philadelphia artist using immersive sculptures to spark joy, foster community in Kensington," *CBS*, May 22.
- "We all want to be seen," *Art Magazine*, Feb.
- Woodcock, Victoria. "Say it with Clay," *The Financial Times*, Jan 12.
- 2023
- Baarlaer, Killiam and Helbing, Emma. "Roberto Lugo: Hi-Def Archives' Arrives At The Cincinnati Art Museum," *Cincinnati Magazine*, Mar 20.
- Studach, Mel and Martin, Hannah. "22 Black Artists, Designers, and Makers We're Loving Now (and Always)," *AD PRO*, Feb 28.
- Takac, Balasz. "Roberto Lugo at Cincinnati Art Museum - Examining Intersections of Community, Place, and Identity," *Widewalls*, Feb 17.
- 2022
- Martin, Hannah and Allen, Lila. "The Most Memorable Moments From Miami Art and Design Week 2022," *AD PRO*, Dec 9.
- Glass, Joshua. "Design Miami 2022 Gives Sights, Sounds, and Plenty of Seats," *Cultured Magazine*, Dec 1.
- Laster, Paul. "12 Museum Exhibitions to See in Miami During Art Basel," *Galerie Magazine*, Nov 28.
- Stoilas, Helen. "I like to be confrontational': artist Roberto Lugo on how propaganda inspires his work," *The Art Newspaper*, Nov 28.
- Cochran, Sam. "Craft and Entertaining Intersect in a Must-Have New Book," *Architectural Digest*, Aug 22.
- Suqi, Rima. "Go Ahead: Take A Selfie Inside Roberto Lugo's 20-Foot-Tall Vase," *Elle Decor*, May 19.
- Commander, Michelle D. "Let Me Not Forget: Harriet Tubman's Enduring Speculative Visions," *Ms. Magazine*, Feb 2.
- 2021
- Drew, Kimberly. "A Deeper Look Inside the Met's New Afrofuturist Period Room," *Elle Decor*, Dec 8.
- Saint-Elien, Medgina. "Shop These Standout Pieces From the Met's Newest Afrofuturism Period Room," *House Beautiful*, Nov 12.
- Tillet, Salamishah. "Afrofuturist Room at the Met Redresses a Racial Trauma," *New York Times*, Nov 17.
- Reid, Tiana. "The Met's Afrofuturist Period Room Thinks Inside the Box," *Artforum*, Nov 2.
- Kugel, Sara. "Ceramic Artist Roberto Lugo's Spin on Teapots," *CBS News*, Oct 3.
- Loos, Ted. "His First Art Was Graffiti. Now His Pottery Is in the Met," *New York Times*, Oct 21.
- Martinez, Nicole. "12 Emerging Latinx Artist to Discover," *Artsy*, Sep 13.



- Shepard, Louisa. "Roberto Lugo Brings Street Graffiti and Portraiture to the Arthur Ross Gallery," *Penn Today*, Sep 14.
- 2020  
Martin, Hannah. "One to Watch – Roberto Lugo", *Architectural Digest*, Jan.  
Leach, Christopher. "Stuntin' A Philadelphia Ceramicist's Dialogue on Race, Music, and Pottery," *WGNO*, Sep 28.
- 2019  
Martin, Hanna and Luckel, Madeleine. "Roberto Lugo's Homage to Two Legends," *Architectural Digest*, Dec 4.  
"Design Miami 2019 Achieves Record Attendance Opposite Art Basel," *New York Style Guide*, Dec 17.  
Waddoups, Ryan. "Design Miami's Aric Chen Name Checks His Five Favorite Things", *Surface Magazine*, Dec 3.  
Anne Proctor, Rebecca. "African American Art And A Ship Of Tolerance: Highlights Of EXPO Chicago", *Harper's Bazaar*, Sep 22.  
Isaacs, Susan. "Activist and ceramicist Roberto Lugo's striking political installation at The Walters Museum," *Artblog*, Jul 12.  
"American Academy in Rome Announces 2019-20 Fellows", *Art Forum*, Apr 12.
- 2018  
Murphy, Blair. "Best of 2018: Our Top 20 Exhibitions Across the United States," *Hyperallergic*, Dec 20.  
Owens, Cassie. "Pottery Saved My Life: A Kensington graffiti artist finds fine art success," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 26.  
Lesser, Casey. "How Roberto Lugo Is Uplifting Artists of Color in the Ceramics Community," *Artsy*, May 2.  
Lesser, Casey. "These 20 Artists Are Shaping the Future of Ceramics," *Artsy Editorial*, Feb 23.  
Brown, Glenn R. "Roberto Lugo: Undermining Indifference," *Ceramics Monthly*, Sep.
- 2016  
Archer, Sarah. "Ceramic Vases that Contain All the Beauty and Ugliness of US History," *Hyperallergic*, Jun 8.  
Essner, Elizabeth. "Roberto Lugo Is Changing the World...One Teapot at a Time," *Modern Magazine*, Spring Issue.  
Lovell, Joyce. "Agent of Change: Drawing on his own experiences, Roberto Lugo Speaks for Many," *American Craft Magazine*, Spring Issue.
- 2015  
Books, Lark. "Not Fearing the Message," Cover of *Ceramic Art and Perception #98 Graphic Clay*, Spring Issue.

# Roberto Lugo



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**R**  
&  
COMPANY

Over the  
Wave Off of  
Havana,  
2024



Amphoras  
from the  
Orange &  
Black series,  
2023





Century Vases, 2024

Ode to Frida,  
2024





The Chase (Tag) and The Chase (Cops & Robbers), 2024

Double-Bust Vessels, 2023





*Ironing Board Hair Salon, 2023*

One Mic (Nas), 2024

Where My Dogs At, Nike Air Force 1, 2025



Putti Statuettes, 2023



*Roundel with Boy  
from the Hood,  
from the Della  
Robske series,  
2023*





Marcus Garvey and Nina Simone, *Chargers*, 2022





# Select Exhibitions & Installations

*The Shape of Power, 2024*  
Smithsonian American Art Museum

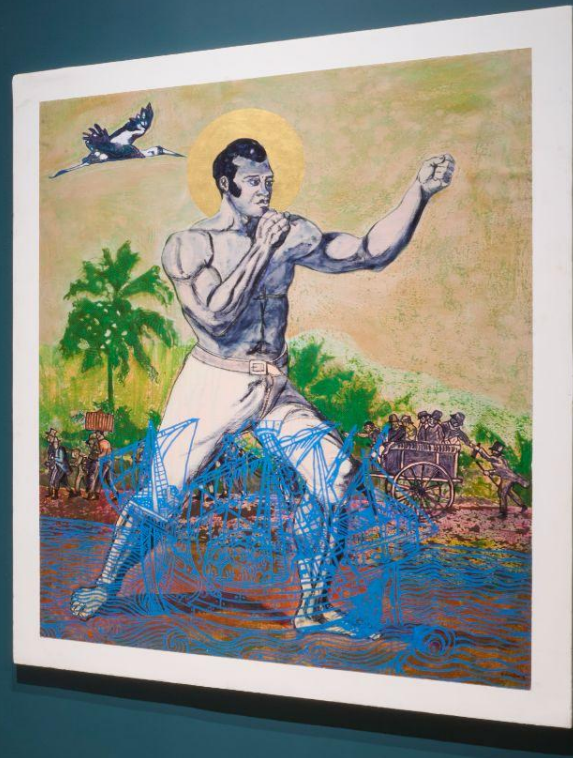


Roberto Lugo / Orange and Black, 2025  
Princeton University Art Museum



Roberto Cogo  
Madonna and Child with Two Holy Infants from the Daily Market in Rio de Janeiro, 1951

Roberto Cogo (1911-1988) was a Brazilian sculptor and architect. He is known for his work in the modernist style, particularly his relief sculptures. This work, 'Madonna and Child with Two Holy Infants from the Daily Market in Rio de Janeiro, 1951', is a relief sculpture in white marble. It depicts a woman holding two children, with two other children on either side, all set against a blue sky with clouds. The sculpture is framed by a square frame with a blue background and gold floral patterns.



The Time is Always Now, 2024  
Philadelphia Museum of Art



We Here, 2024  
Mural Arts Philadelphia, Fishtown/Kensington



*The Gilded Ghetto, The Pigeon Crib, 2023*  
R & Company

Street Shrines, 2023  
The Wolfsonian-FIU Museum



**Labor Days**  
Labor, forced and exploited, is a major subject of Ingh's artistic output, an celebrating historic abolitionists in highlighting the continued presence of complex work in today's States prison. A teacher collects harvest tubans, who freed more than 300000 people through the Underground Railroad while a 1950s Social Realist painter depicts prisoners for a critique of contemporary prison and thinking this group is a model that collapses space and time to reimagine the construction of the fugitive tubans. This display is an opportunity for visitors to see the art in the context of the

The Mammel and Rhoads African Gallery

Hi-Def Archives, 2023  
Cincinnati Art Museum





*Put Yourself in the Picture*, 2022  
Grounds for Sculpture



*Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room, 2021*  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



*God Complex: Different Philadelphia, 2021*  
Arthur Ross Gallery, University of Philadelphia

# whitewall



Installation of "Roberto Lugo: The Gilded Ghetto," photo by Joe Kramm, courtesy of R & Company.

**Roberto Lugo Uses Clay to Connect Community  
and Culture in The Gilded Ghetto**

Select Press

## Roberto Lugo's Ceramics Are the Artifacts of a Future Past

BY MARY THOMAS April 22, 2025 10:50am



Installation view of "Roberto Lugo / Orange and Black," 2025, at Art@Bainbridge, Princeton University Art Museum.  
PHOTO JOSEPH HU

Like a well-told story, **Roberto Lugo** (<https://www.artnews.com/t/roberto-lugo/>)'s current solo exhibition takes an unexpected turn. In addition to a selection of his recent ceramic works that draw on ancient Grecian vessels dating back to the 5th century BCE, the Philadelphia-based artist is showing a series of sculptural fragments that have been made strange and weathered, as if they too have just been unearthed after centuries.

On view Art@Bainbridge at the **Princeton University Art Museum** (<https://www.artnews.com/t/princeton-university-art-museum/>) through July 6, "Orange and Black" is anchored by a recent series of vases that transpose narrative scenes of Black and Latinx cultural and community histories—ranging from depictions of revered athletes, such as Roberto Clemente, to glimpses into the life of a neighborhood—onto amphora and lekythos, using the aesthetic motifs of Greco-Roman red figure pottery. Lugo's pieces dilate the act of looking, offering multiple points of entry for the viewer by evoking both the visual narrative strategies of graphic novels and the formal qualities of the tableaux that decorate these ancient Greek ceramics, examples of which are included in this exhibition.

## A Groundbreaking Exhibit Pairs Hand-Painted Nike Air Force 1s With Ceramic Teapots

Why? Because artist Roberto Lugo wants to foster connections between seemingly disparate yet socially significant objects and the people who love them.

By **Rima Susi**, Contributor. An avid explorer of design and how it impac

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ARTE >

### Roberto Lugo, artista: "Durante mucho tiempo oculté de dónde venía para que no me juzgaran, ahora me enorgullezco"

El ceramista de raíces boricuas, con piezas en el MET, inaugura 'Orange and Black' (hasta el 6 de julio) en el Museo de Arte de la Universidad de Princeton y 'Drip', en la galería neoyorquina R & Company (hasta el 11 de abril)



El artista Roberto Lugo.  
JOSEPH HU





# THE POWER OF CLAY

Roberto Lugo upends the traditional view of ceramics exploring issues like race, poverty and inequality through his pottery.

By Janelle Zara



For ceramicist Roberto Lugo, clay is a wondrous material. What begins as a chunk of wet earth has the potential to become a prized vessel that may last for hundreds of years. "Ceramics are archival materials," he says, noting that they often preserve the cultural values of civilizations long after they've passed. Ancient history endures on the orange-and-black surfaces of Greek pottery, for example, or in the blue-and-white porcelain of Chinese dynasties.

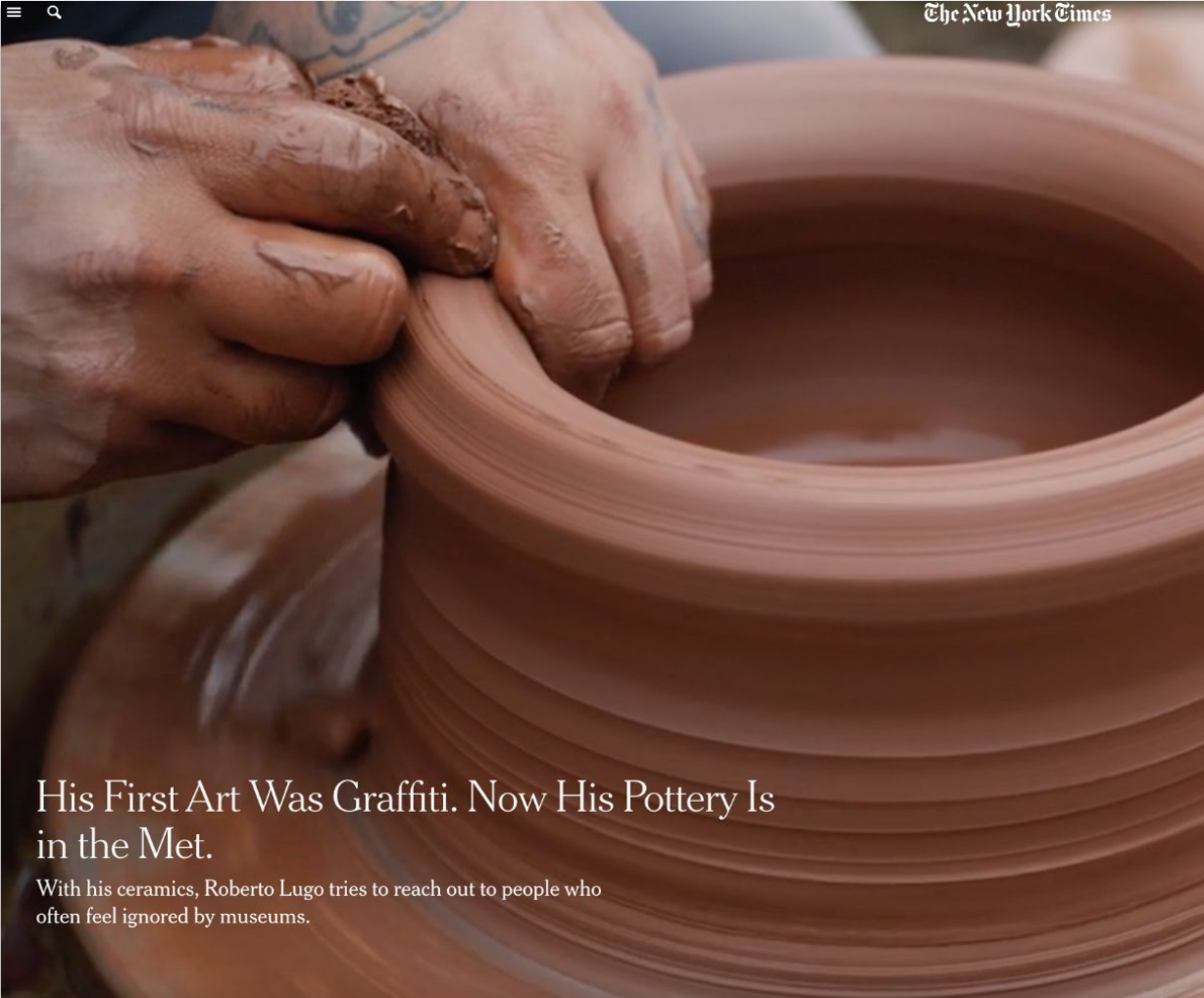
"I think about different ways that people of color have contributed significantly to society," Lugo says of the political and pop-cultural forces (think Beyoncé, AOC, Diggs, and Tupac) that he immortalizes in his work. Lugo hand-paints their portraits on classically formed urns, pots, and other vessels, alongside graffiti tags, colorful patterns, and other symbols of modern life. He's used the barrels and triggers of guns collected in buyback programs as the spouts and handles of teapots, a potent metaphor for the de-escalation of violence. "I see the objects I'm making as the artifacts of the history I grew up in," he says.

Effusively patterned, earnest, and deliberately shaped to his own American Afro-Latino experience, Lugo's contemporary artifacts, created with a small studio team in a suburb of his native Philadelphia, have earned him his own place in history. In 2019 he won the acclaimed Rome Prize, and today his work is in the permanent collections of museums including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

"He has found a way to tell stories through the images he chooses for his ceramics, documenting the contemporary human experience for marginalized communities in our country," says Ivan Snyderman of R & Company, the New York gallery that began representing Lugo in early 2022. Lugo's work will be shown at their Design Miami/ booth, with a suite of intricate porcelain vessels bearing the likenesses of Stevie Wonder, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Kendrick Lamar.

"I think about different ways that people of color have contributed significantly to society."

Clockwise from top left: Lugo's studio; the teapots; the vase with the word 'PROBOS'; the vase with the portrait of a man; the vase with the portrait of a man and the word 'PROBOS'. Photos by Tiffany Smith, Howard Lee, Sara Lee, China and Rick Wang, photo by Joe Kravitt.



## His First Art Was Graffiti. Now His Pottery Is in the Met.

With his ceramics, Roberto Lugo tries to reach out to people who often feel ignored by museums.

Mr. Lugo grew up in Kensington, which he called “definitely the worst neighborhood in Philadelphia,” adding, “As a child, it’s just nailed to you that you are in the ghetto.”

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“My first real relationship with art was doing graffiti” from ages 14 to 19, Mr. Lugo said, adding, “The city spent a lot of time covering it up.” Now he sees that phase as an important step in his artistic development.

Originally, Mr. Lugo studied ceramics intending to be a “production potter,” making basic items, not artworks, and after graduating from the Kansas City Art Institute he got a master’s degree from Penn State.

In school, his feedback from professors were “really bad,” he said, but during a trip to the library he saw in a book a picture of a Worcester pot, made by England’s royal porcelain manufacturer.





**Roberto Lugo** (b. 1981) creates genre-mixing works that confront the function and subject matter of high art objects from Classical Antiquity, East Asia, the Italian Renaissance, seventeenth-century Europe, and beyond. Using clay as his canvas, Lugo calls attention to intergenerational experiences of racial injustice while celebrating African American and Latino culture.

Pottery is vital to Lugo because of its anthropological context. Throughout history, finely crafted ceramic objects stood as a symbol of class, privilege, and aristocracy. Lugo intervenes in these histories to create a new mode of storytelling that blends narrative and portraiture with cross-disciplinary techniques and time-honored forms to introduce characters and themes notably absent from the art historical canon.

Roberto Lugo holds a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and an MFA from Penn State. His work has been acquired by over thirty-three institutions, including the Brooklyn Museum, High Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Walters Art Museum.

Handwritten text in a stylized, bold, black font, possibly reading "R&C".

# MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

## ROBERTO LUGO CELEBRATES PUERTO RICAN CULTURE IN INTERACTIVE PUBLIC ART EXHIBITION AT MADISON SQUARE PARK

Commissioned by Madison Square Park Conservancy,  
*Roberto Lugo: Alfarero del Barrio (Village Potter)* Expands Lugo's Practice with  
Largest Public Art Exhibition to Date



Roberto Lugo, *Los Días Caliente (This Is For The Hot Ones)* and *Capicú de Cariño (I Heard It Both Ways)* in *Alfarero del Barrio (Village Potter)* in Madison Square Park, 2026, commissioned by Madison Square Park Conservancy. Photo by Timothy Schenck. Courtesy of the artist and R & Company.

New York, NY | May 20, 2026—Artist Roberto Lugo brings a vibrant and resonant celebration of Puerto Rican culture and history to Madison Square Park in a new public art exhibition commissioned by Madison Square Park Conservancy (MSPC). Presented *Roberto Lugo: Alfarero del Barrio (Village Potter)* expands the artist's practice to its largest scale yet, activating the park with new interactive works, including monumental sculptures painted with colorful motifs and figures that reflect both the struggles and triumphs of Puerto Rican communities as well as their resilience and creativity. *Alfarero del Barrio* is on view from May 20 to December 6, 2026.

An acclaimed artist, ceramicist, activist, poet, and educator, Lugo reimagines historical ceramic forms through the lens of his Puerto Rican heritage, North Philadelphia upbringing, background as a graffiti artist, and love of hip-hop. Through portraiture, ornate patterning, and references to European and Asian ceramic traditions, he creates hand-painted vessels and sculptures that bring overlooked histories and lived experience into forms historically associated with prestige and power.

"*Alfarero del Barrio* is a joyous exhibition that uplifts a multiplicity of voices and traditions. We are excited to bring Roberto's work to life at such a monumental scale in New York City, home to many Puerto Rican communities," said Holly Leicht, Executive Director of MSPC.

## MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

“Roberto Lugo is revered for his work in ceramics—a medium he has remixed by infusing contemporary motifs and his own personal style, creating eye-catching works that prompt reflections on culture and humanity,” said Denise Markonish, MSPC’s Martin Friedman Chief Curator. “While *Alfarero del Barrio* nods to his ceramic practice, the exhibition expands his vision, marking a significant turning point in his artistic trajectory. At the same time, it represents Lugo’s ethos in its truest form—thought-provoking and deeply personal, imaginative and uplifting.”

In *Alfarero del Barrio (Village Potter)*, Lugo pushes his artistic vision to its grandest—and most personal—manifestation yet, presenting larger-than-life works that honor Puerto Ricans’ rich history and culture and invite community interaction and play. Anchoring the exhibition are two new hand-painted sculptures: a 15-foot-tall fire hydrant and a 20-foot-tall urn, titled *Para Los Días Caliente (This Is For The Hot Ones)* and *Capicú de Cariño (I Heard It Both Ways)*, respectively. The fire hydrant functions as a familiar symbol for city dwellers as a source of enjoyment and relief during sweltering summers, and is embellished with graffiti, Lugo’s first artistic medium as a teenager. The urn features hand-painted vignettes of Puerto Rican luminaries, including Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Roberto Clemente, Bad Bunny, Quiara Alegría Hudes, and Lemon Anderson, as well as Lugo’s parents, Gilberto and Maribel Lugo. Lugo invites parkgoers to explore these sculptures up close and even walk through an archway in the urn, effectively becoming one of its vignettes. Additional references to Puerto Rican culture and urban life—including hand-painted domino tables and custom tire planters housing native Puerto Rican plants—will be installed throughout the park.

The two new sculptures were fabricated in partnership with The Johnson Atelier in Hamilton, New Jersey. Since 2022, The Atelier has collaborated with Lugo to explore new materials and large-scale fabrication processes, expanding his practice into monumental public artworks. This partnership has produced *Alfarero del Barrio (Village Potter)* as well as major works for *The Village Potter* at Grounds For Sculpture and *We Here* at Mural Arts Philadelphia and ArtWorks Cincinnati.

*Alfarero del Barrio (Village Potter)* is accompanied by a range of public programs, including an opening celebration at Madison Square Park on the evening of Wednesday, May 20, with performances by EZENWA and Tyson Ritter from The All-American Rejects. Lugo will participate in a public program with workshops and performances this summer, at a date to be announced, and the exhibition will be the thematic anchor of MSPC’s annual Public Art Symposium, which will be held on Friday, November 13, at the SVA Theater. The symposium will feature talks with Lugo, playwright Quiara Alegría Hudes, artists Frida Kahlo (Guerilla Girls) and Miguel Luciano, and curators Max Gruber (ICA Boston) and Grace Yasumura (Grounds For Sculpture), among others, as well as a Def Poetry Jam curated by Danny Simmons. A catalog on the commission will be published online on MSPC’s website this year. More details on these and other exhibition-related programs will be available at [madisonsquarepark.org](https://madisonsquarepark.org).

# MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

The exhibition is part of MSPC's spring and summer season, which features a range of free engagements fusing horticulture, art, and community. Program details are available at [madisonsquarepark.org/community/calendar/](https://madisonsquarepark.org/community/calendar/).

## **About the Artist**

Roberto Lugo is a Philadelphia-based artist, ceramicist, poet, activist, and educator whose work reimagines historical ceramic forms through the lens of his Puerto Rican heritage, North Philadelphia upbringing, and the visual language of hip-hop and graffiti. Combining portraiture, ornate patterning, and references to European and Asian ceramic traditions, Lugo creates works that confront poverty, inequality, racial injustice, and exclusion while expanding who and what is represented within the canon of decorative arts. His hand-painted vessels and sculptures often feature portraits of cultural icons, thinkers, and community figures—including Sojourner Truth, Dr. Cornel West, and The Notorious B.I.G.—as well as family members and the artist himself, bringing overlooked histories and lived experience into forms historically associated with prestige and power.

Lugo has recently presented major public art commissions in collaboration with Mural Arts Philadelphia and Grounds For Sculpture. His work has been featured in exhibitions at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, among others. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including a 2023 Heinz Award, a Philadelphia's Cultural Treasures award, a 2019 Pew Fellowship, a Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon Polsky Rome Prize, and a US Artist Award. His work is found in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the High Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Brooklyn Museum, the Walters Art Museum, and more. Lugo holds a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and an MFA from Pennsylvania State University.

## **Exhibition Organization and Credits**

*Roberto Lugo: Alfarero del Barrio (Village Potter)* is commissioned by Madison Square Park Conservancy. Initially curated by Brooke Kamin Rapaport, the project is being organized by Denise Markonish, Martin Friedman Chief Curator; Tom Reidy, Director of Art Operations; and Tiera Ndlovu, Assistant Curator. Holly Leicht is the Conservancy's Executive Director.

Support for *Roberto Lugo: Alfarero del Barrio (Village Potter)* is made possible by MSPC's Presenting Sponsors New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and Butler Family Foundation; Leadership Sponsors AG Foundation, Sasha C. and Edward Bass and Bloomberg Philanthropies; Contributing Sponsors Anonymous Donor, The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Foundation, R & Company, The Ruth Stanton Foundation, and Lenore G. Tawney Foundation; and Friends Bunny and Charles Burson, Suzi Cordish, Scott and Ellen Hand, Johnson Atelier/Grounds for Sculpture, Helen Kauder and Barry Nalebuff, Madison Square Park Conservancy Art Council, Audrey and Danny Meyer, New York State Council on the Arts, Ron and Ann Pizutti, Jane Richards, Fern and Lenard Tessler, and Urban Art Projects (UAP).

# MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

## **About Madison Square Park Conservancy**

Madison Square Park Conservancy (MSPC) is the nonprofit entrusted by the City of New York to conserve, maintain, and program Madison Square Park, a dynamic 6.2-acre public park in the heart of Manhattan. Through its public art commissions, horticultural stewardship, and engaging programming, MSPC cultivates an urban oasis that welcomes a diverse community of over 60,000 visitors every day. MSPC has led the park to national and international distinction, including its accreditation as a Level 2 arboretum—the only arboretum in Manhattan—as well as its selection as the first public art organization to commission the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2019. Responsible for raising 100% of the park’s operating budget, MSPC ensures that this evolving greenspace continues to be a haven for neighbors, visitors, and artists for generations to come.

# # #

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