

Contemporary Artists On View in Mansion: Cindy Sherman and Roberto Lugo

October 2025

As part of Hillwood's ongoing efforts to connect past with the present and to broaden the interpretation of decorative arts, contemporary artists are periodically featured alongside the permanent collection in the mansion and special exhibitions. This handout highlights two artists – Cindy Sherman and Roberto Lugo – whose works were included in *The Luxury of Clay: Porcelain Past and Present*, an exhibition that was on view in the dacha and select rooms in the mansion from February through June 2022. Their works are on view in the mansion in the French drawing room (Good Trouble Vase) and French porcelain room (*Madame de Pompadour (née Poisson)* tureen and platter), continuing the dialog between historical and contemporary artists.

In addition to excerpts from the exhibition label text, this document includes links to further reading and videos to deepen your understanding of these artists' work.

Selections from the 2022 Exhibition *The Luxury of Clay: Porcelain Past and Present*

THE LUXURY OF CLAY

PORCELAIN PAST AND PRESENT

In conjunction with *The Luxury of Clay: Porcelain Past and Present*, the exhibition currently in the dacha, a selection of contemporary ceramics by the artists Chris Antemann, Roberto Lugo, and Eva Zeisel can be viewed interspersed among the objects from Hillwood's permanent collection in five rooms on the first floor of the mansion. The installation is the fourth in a series of Hillwood collaborations with contemporary ceramicists, including Eva Zeisel (2005), Bouke de Vries (2019), and Vladimir Kanevsky (2021).



8. *Madame de Pompadour (née Poisson)* tureen and platter

Cindy Sherman, designer (American, b. 1954)

Ancienne Manufacture Royale de Limoges (French, 1737–present)

Arte Magnus, retailer (New York) Limoges, 1990

Hard-paste porcelain with silkscreen transfer, platinum, enamel decoration
Museum purchase, 2006 (26.283.1–3)

In 1990 the New York firm Arte Magnus asked the contemporary artist Cindy Sherman to create limited edition porcelain tableware for manufacture by Limoges, in France. Sherman donned a wig, applied makeup, and wore prosthetic breasts to photograph herself as Madame de Pompadour, the legendary patron of the Sèvres porcelain factory. The manufactory applied Sherman's image to an imitation eighteenth-century Sèvres-style soup tureen.

Little fish—a reference to Madame de Pompadour's maiden name, Poisson—also decorate the surface of the vessel. The tureen and a platter, both in Sèvres' eighteenth-century rose pink, informally known as rose Pompadour, cheekily reinterpret and mimic the original Sèvres design for the soup tureen, which is similar to the turquoise tureen nearby.



Photo courtesy of the Wexler Gallery

ROBERTO LUGO

Roberto Lugo (b. 1981) is a Philadelphia-based American artist, ceramicist, social activist, spoken word poet, and educator of Puerto Rican descent. Known for his porcelain sculptures, Lugo's work centers on illuminating porcelain's historically aristocratic surface with imagery commenting on inequality, poverty, and social and racial injustice.

Lugo draws on traditional European and Asian porcelain forms, such as urns and teapots, as well as classic decorative patterns and motifs and combines them with his own stylized content and imagery inspired by urban graffiti and hip-hop culture. In many cases, he features portraits of people from the Black and Latino communities—including civil rights leaders, hip-hop artists, writers, and other cultural figures along with himself and family members—whose faces, stories, and values have been historically inaccessible to and absent from such luxury items as fine porcelain. "I imagine how much the world could change for a child who walks through the doors of a museum and sees a portrait of someone who looks like them on a piece of pottery," Lugo has stated. "Representation is establishing what can be possible and demonstrating how beautiful diversity is."

Lugo's work has been featured in exhibitions at numerous institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art and can be found in the collections of many institutions, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture and now Hillwood. Among Lugo's numerous awards are a Pew Fellowship, the Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon Polsky Rome Prize, and a United States Artist Award. He is an assistant professor of ceramics at the Tyler School of Art and Architecture at Temple University, Philadelphia.



Good Trouble vase
Roberto Lugo (American, b. 1981)
Philadelphia, 2020
Glazed ceramic, enamel paint
Museum purchase, 2021 (2021.4.1–2)

This recently acquired vase is part of Hillwood's tradition of procuring contemporary artworks for the collection and building on Marjorie Post's passion for ceramics. For this work, Roberto Lugo highlights the late civil rights leader and Georgia congressman John Lewis (1940–2020), on the front, and on the reverse, portrays three influential women in politics—Vice President Kamala Harris, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and voting rights advocate and politician Stacey Abrams.

Lewis is well known for referring to his civil rights work as getting into "good trouble, necessary trouble," hence, the title of the vase. Lugo based his portrait of Lewis on a police mugshot taken in the 1960s when Lewis's participation in nonviolent protests against racial segregation landed him in jail. The vase's colorful patterns reference African textiles and graffiti, while the ginger jar-shape and classical motifs along the base nod, respectively, to Chinese porcelain and ancient Greek decoration.



Photos by Dominic Episcopo. Courtesy of the Wexler Gallery

Left to right: Portraits of Stacey Abrams, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Kamala Harris on the reverse

Additional Resources

To further deepen your knowledge, links to additional resources for reading and viewing on the contemporary artists are available below. We hope you enjoy your exploration into these artists and their work.

Cindy Sherman:

- Webpage: [Cindy Sherman](#), Walker Art

Roberto Lugo:

- Video: [Roberto Lugo's Emerging Artists Presentation at the 2015 NCEA Conference](#)
- Video: [How Artist Roberto Lugo is Upending Porcelain Traditions with His Personal, Cultural Roots](#), PBS News Hour
- Video: [God Complex: Different Philadelphia Discussion with Artist Roberto Lugo](#), Arthur Ross Gallery, University of Pennsylvania
- Video: [Conversation with Roberto Lugo and Jennifer Zwillling](#), Arthur Ross Gallery, University of Pennsylvania
- [Roberto Lugo Ceramics](#), The New York Times