

## NEWSROOM

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## VESSELS OF MEANING

THE TORGGLER'S LATEST EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE VESSEL AS BOTH OBJECT AND IDEA.

by [Kelley McGee](#) | March 13, 2025

Above: PHOTO CREDIT: Courtesy of Walter McConnell and Cross MacKenzie Gallery. *A Theory of Everything: White Stupa* (detail), 2016. Cast porcelain with crystalline glaze.

Read time: about 1 min

From ancient jars and urns to contemporary masterpieces, ceramics have long straddled the line between function and art.

But perhaps more than any other medium, ceramics carry the weight of their utilitarian origin. The art form holds an unavoidable connection to ancient history in the form of the jar, cup, bowl and pitcher – all items central to cooking, storing and transporting goods from the very beginning of human civilization.

Today, ceramic as an art form has evolved far beyond that functional context, as evident in the newest exhibition at the [Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center](#). Whether you are an art enthusiast, history buff or simply curious about the evolution of everyday objects, [The Vessel Revisited: Fundamental Forms in Contemporary Ceramics](#), on display in the Anne Noland Edwards Gallery, offers a unique opportunity to explore this art form in a new light.

The community is invited to engage with renowned works from leading artists across the U.S. examining how once utilitarian objects have been reimagined as works of art. The elevation of the commonplace, along with related questions of value, are some of the most significant themes of art in the last 100 years.

“For millennia, ceramic objects have served as essential tools for daily life,” said Holly Koons, Executive Director of

the Torggler. “This exhibition highlights how contemporary artists are continuing to interpret and reimagine the boundaries of the medium, transforming the familiar into something extraordinary.”

*The Vessel Revisited* exhibition features works by Pattie Chalmers, Chotsani Elaine Dean, Azza El Siddique, Molly Hatch, David Hicks, Sin-ying Ho, Jennifer Ling Datchuk, Aida Lizalde, Roberto Lugo, Walter McConnell, Jennifer McCurdy, Maxwell Mustardo, Milena Muzquiz, Jolie Ngo, Denise Pelletier, Arlene Shechet, Stephanie H. Shih and Bari Ziperstein.

## RELATED LECTURE: “BROKEN VESSELS, RESTORED SOULS: CERAMICS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM AND ART.”

As part of the exhibition programming, the Torggler and the CNU Jewish Studies program will host a public lecture on March 30, 2025, presented by Dr. Joanna Homrighausen. The lecture will explore Jewish mysticism and the art inspired by it. This lecture will begin with Jewish art from past centuries that engages “mystical” themes, from ritual implements to calligraphed manuscripts, then turn to more recent Jewish artists who have worked with Jewish mystical texts, themes and symbols.

Homrighausen, who earned a PhD in Religion from Duke University, teaches Judaic Studies at William & Mary and writes and teaches on sacred words, sacred texts, and how individuals and communities reproduce, ritualize, and revere them through lettering arts and scribal crafts.

There will be a reception preceding Dr. Homrighausen’s talk beginning at 12:30 p.m. in the Torggler’s atrium, followed by her lecture at 1:30 p.m. in the lecture hall. This program is presented in collaboration with CNU’s Department of Philosophy and Religion and sponsored by the Bertram and Gladys Aaron Endowed Professorship in Jewish Studies.

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