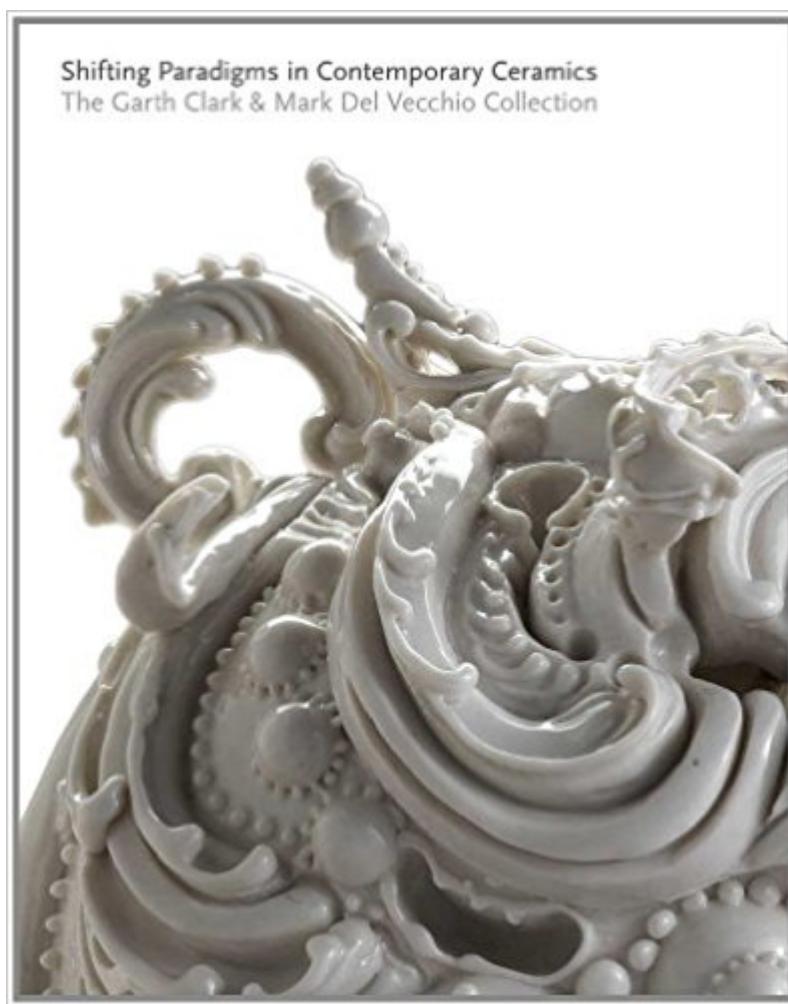


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# Shifting Paradigms In Contemporary Ceramics: The Garth Clark And Mark Del Vecchio Collection



## Synopsis

As gallerists and collectors, Garth Clark and Mark Del Vecchio have helped shape the field of ceramics by expanding notions of the medium's possibilities. This comprehensive catalogue features, for the first time in its entirety, their esteemed collection of ceramics, acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in 2007. These 478 works, produced by leading artists from more than twenty countries, range from functional wares and modern vessels to sculptural works and postmodern objects. Together, they represent major shifts in the techniques and aesthetics of ceramics from the mid-20th century to the present day. In compelling essays, Clark and Del Vecchio relate their experiences in building the collection, while other scholars examine the various facets of contemporary ceramics. With detailed entries on 125 featured works, an illustrated checklist of the collection, and artists' biographies, this book promises to be a touchstone reference.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“The breadth and quality of the collection and the detailed entries accompanying roughly a quarter of the works make this volume an effective update and expansion of Clark's *American Ceramics: 1876- the Present*. Recommended. •Choice (Choice)

Garth Clark and Mark Del Vecchio are collectors, scholars, authors, and gallerists. Cindi Strauss is curator of modern and contemporary decorative arts and design, and assistant director of programming, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

It is a beautiful and precious work. This is a rich book for anyone interested in studying Ceramic Art History, there are well written and dense texts, the writers are great. There are the iconic names of Ceramics Art with spectacular and wonderful photos. This book is a reference for those who want to study ceramics deeply.

excellent book.

Not only a superb collection but in site on what two collectors love.

A really handsome and well-produced volume, "Shifting Paradigms..." is saddled with a cumbersome title. "Paradigms" is a tin foil business/art word that is supposed to supply some glamour, but instead is remarkably overused. It's understandable, because Garth Clark and Mark DelVecchio (authors) have been crusading for ceramics for decades, trying to make pottery more sexy. But seriously, "transitions" or "progressions" would have worked as well and been less pretentious. After all, this is a book about the personal collection of two men who aren't the "pottery gods". So, maybe a less lofty title could have sufficed. Ceramics have traditionally been the "humble art"... and generally throughout the text Clark and DelVecchio follow suit in their approach. They don't call themselves "collectors", preferring "custodians" instead. And Clark has been an art historian and author for decades, previously compiling the seminal 1981 book "American Potters". Clark's personal mantra for art books is that they should "be accessible without being dumbed down." To that I say, "amen." The writing in this book stays within those guidelines very admirably. Clark begins with a witty history of his involvement with ceramics, including his memories of a few eccentric potters and patrons. Clark and DelVecchio started collecting and dealing ceramic art when they met the legendary Beatrice Wood, who complained to them about how poorly her pots were selling. Beginning by selling pots out of their home, Clark and DelVecchio went on to establish landmark ceramic galleries in Los Angeles and New York. They were also involved in a ceramic retrospective in the late 70's which was championed by the notorious critic Clement Greenberg. Greenberg figures in the book because he was such a divisive figure in regard to modern (abstract expressionist) art, and what came after (postmodernism). Ceramic art was as much transformed by post-modernism as was painting or sculpture, but because of its well-established traditions it in effect defuses some of the divide in art about whether craft is important. In ceramics, craft is inescapable. Apparently, the clay medium had enough charms to

assuage Clement Greenberg's dogmatic views about "high and low art." There is a lot of such food for thought in "Shifting Paradigms". The guest essays by Glenn Adamson and Ezra Shales are excellent, too.... Shales is particularly insightful and fun to read (which is something rare in art books). This book is organized in four sections celebrating traditional, modern, postmodern and figurative ceramics, with individual essays and large plate reproductions for all the most significant ceramic artists in Clark and DelVecchio's collection. They are careful to note that some major figures are left out because of the limitations of basing a book upon one collection ---a collection that has been constantly changing over the years. But it would be difficult to find a book that is truly as inclusive of different philosophies of art as this one is---which is why it stands as a useful reference for any student of art who has had some trouble reconciling the various "camps" of the art world. Here, those roiling waters are temporarily calmed.

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