

# ANCIENT ARTS

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**T**he history of ceramics is the most enduring record of human activity from the prehistoric period to the present. The Babylonians used clay 5,000 years ago, and kilns have been found in prehistoric sites from as early as 32,000 BCE. Moving forward to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and today, ceramics are considered one of the top ten trends in collecting contemporary art. Certainly a major innovator in the radical changes in the medium of clay forms was Peter Voulkos, who came under the influence of Willem de Kooning and other gestural abstract expressionist painters in New York City in the mid 1950s. The radical break from the European and Asian tradition of pottery began with the sculptural ceramic work Peter Voulkos produced in the mid 1950s which resembled traditional pots only in the basic form of a hollow container. Voulkos' first and most influential student, Paul Soldner first adopted and then completely transformed the 16<sup>th</sup> century Japanese tradition of raku with unorthodox techniques of firing and structure. Because of Soldner, raku has now become a significant and important American art form. Now in his 80s, Paul Soldner is recognized as one of the most important and influential



*Deplumed* by Julie McNair  
Clay with Reduced Oils and Feathers  
28"x12"x6"

ceramists in the world today.

On August 17, 2007, The Sandra Phillips Gallery, 744 Santa Fe Drive, Denver, opens an exhibition of eight ceramic sculptors, including the work of Paul Soldner in conjunction with the American Museum of Ceramic Art. Also exhibiting in "Masters in Clay" with Paul Soldner will be highly acclaimed ceramists Maynard Tischler, Martha Daniels, Bebe Alexander, Carroll Hansen, Amy Chavez, Julie McNair and Katie Caron. Each artist is considered at the forefront of contemporary clay today. The exhibition runs thru October 6, 2007 with the opening artist reception Friday, August 17, 5:30 pm – 8 pm. As part of the exhibition, a lecture by Martha Daniels "Tales of Fire: Adventures of the Kiln in Modern & Contemporary Ceramics" will be given Thursday, September 13, 5:30 – 7:30 pm. This lecture is free but please call the Sandra Phillips Gallery (303) 573-5969 to RSVP.

*The Sandra Phillips Gallery is located at 744 Santa Fe Drive in Denver, CO. For more information call the gallery at 303-573-5969, email at [sandraphillipsgallery@hotmail.com](mailto:sandraphillipsgallery@hotmail.com) or visit their website at [www.thesandraphillipsgallery.com](http://www.thesandraphillipsgallery.com)*