

# *Shaping Nature*

April 27 - October 29, 2023



# Exhibition Overview

*Shaping Nature* explores the relationship between function, nature, and artistry in the work of Buffalo-based potter, Junko McGee. Junko moved from Tokyo to Buffalo in 1987.

In 1995, Junko learned pottery in Western New York after enrolling in pottery classes at the University at Buffalo Creative Craft Center. Her deep connection to the region over the years includes creating specific pottery for the local Japanese community's tea ceremonies, teaching in the Buffalo school district, and participating exclusively in area art festivals.

Junko's work blends influences from both American and Japanese pottery. Her passion for experimentation focuses on discovering new techniques, forms, and textures that encourage the sensory exploration of each piece.

Nature provides both material and inspiration: from the clay used to the leaves imprinted to the changing of seasons.

The infusion of color into Junko's pottery through glazes or the use of colored clay emphasize the earth tones and organic patterns in her work.

A "people-friendly" approach guides each and every one of her creations—a core design idea that reflects the warmth and human connection between pottery makers and users.

*(Cover detail, clockwise from right)*

**Junko McGee**, *Ginkgo Leaf Twisted Bottle*, 2019, stoneware

*Photograph of Junko McGee creating a new textured vase, 2022.*

*Photograph of pottery in preparation for bisque firing, 2022.*



*(above)* **Junko McGee**, *Textured Vase*, 2023, stoneware with sodium silicate

**“My pottery is ‘people friendly’—something that is beautiful...that people can touch, enjoy the feel of, and can also use.”**

## **BEAUTIFUL FUNCTION**

Everytime you use a handmade vase, bowl, or cup—you (re)connect yourself to the person who made it.

Pottery is about sharing in the enjoyment of a beautiful form, the comfort of a usable object, and the experience in every texture.

Junko's passion for creating new works is driven by this core idea: that pottery is a way for us to hold happiness.

“The leaves I collect have a vibrant color. When you imprint it you can't see the color, but you can feel that it's in there.”

## NATURE'S INSPIRATION

Nature inspires ideas and brings joy to Junko's pottery.

Carved curves evoke seigaiha (青海波) traditional wave patterns; cracked textures suggest tree bark; and glazed colors draw on earth tones of green, brown, and blue.

Leaves collected locally—such as fallen ginkgo and oak or freshly picked Queen Anne's Lace, lavender and elm—are imprinted in her work, preserving their memory and sharing a deep appreciation of the changing seasons.

*(below) Photograph of a new set of pottery works after glaze firing, Junko McGee, 2023.*



“I like the touch of the clay...the way it feels almost like meditating.”

## CREATIVE MEDITATION

Pottery requires patience and precision at every step.

Clay material, firing temperature, glaze (or lack thereof), and even pottery shape can affect how a piece turns out.

No two works of pottery are the same, and Junko brings something new and unique to each piece she makes.

## AHM357A: Exhibiting Cultures

This course is a hands-on interdisciplinary introduction to the development of museum exhibitions and programs which feature local cultural traditions, ethnographic fieldwork, and museum-community collaborations.

**Course Instructor:** Professor Edward Y. Millar

**Student Curators:** Wonwoo Choi | Becca Mansfield | Sebastian Newell | Amelia Olander | Jaycee Pauline | Sheila Strott | Tucker Sylvester | Anjali Verma

## Art History with Museum Studies Program

Art History with Museum Studies is both an academic and professional program that provides students with a scholarly study of art, culture, and museums, while focusing on the area of professional museum work such as curatorship, education, collections management, museum administration, and development.

Our partnership with the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, centrally located on the campus, is an integral part of the museum studies component and provides opportunities for museum internships and exhibition-based courses.

## Exhibited Artworks

All works by and on loan from  
Junko McGee unless otherwise indicated.

*Blue Teapot with Bamboo Handle and Cups*  
2023  
stoneware

*Blue Textured Vase*  
2023  
stoneware with sodium silicate

*Brown Textured Vase*  
2023  
stoneware with sodium silicate

*Cone Shaped Bowl*  
2014  
stoneware

*Green Double Walled Vase*  
2022  
stoneware

*Elephant Ear Leaf Platter*  
2021  
stoneware

*Ginkgo Leaf Twisted Bottle*  
2019  
stoneware

*Nerikomi Bottle*  
2023  
stoneware

*Nerikomi Faceted Vase*  
2023  
stoneware

*Nerikomi Plates, Cups, and Chopstick Holders*  
2023  
stoneware

*Nerikomi Vase*  
2023  
stoneware

*Raku Vase with Copper Glaze*  
2015  
raku clay

*Red Teapot and Cups*  
2023  
stoneware

*Red Vase with Crane Neck*  
2023  
stoneware

*Seigaiha Vase*  
2014  
stoneware

*Shallow Raku Vase with Copper Glaze*  
2015  
raku clay

*Small Seigaiha Bud Vase*  
2023  
stoneware

**unknown artist**  
*Tea ceremony (sadō, 茶道) tools*  
n.d.  
mixed media

*Toroid Ring Vase*  
2019  
stoneware

*Vase with Orange Lanterns*  
2023  
stoneware

*White Speckled Double Walled Vase*  
2023  
stoneware



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