

NILOAK and beyond:

20th Century American Swirl Art Pottery

An exhibition of rare examples of Niloak's innovative *Swirled Missionware* art pottery alongside creations from potteries around the country inspired by the iconic Niloak swirl design

Featuring swirl pottery by Evans, George Ohr, Charlie Stehm's Ozark Pottery, Dickota Badlands, Houghton & Dalton, Spruce Pine's Muscle Shoals and Marie, Rosemeade, Silver Springs, Gay Head, Ozark Roadside Tourist Pottery, North State, and others

Curated by Lawrence McElroy and Niloak scholar, David Edwin Gifford



HISTORIC
CANE
HILL

NILOAK and Beyond SPONSORS

PLATINUM

PROGRAM



GOLD



SILVER



SUZIE AND JIM DUNN
RAYMOND-GIFFORD FAMILY

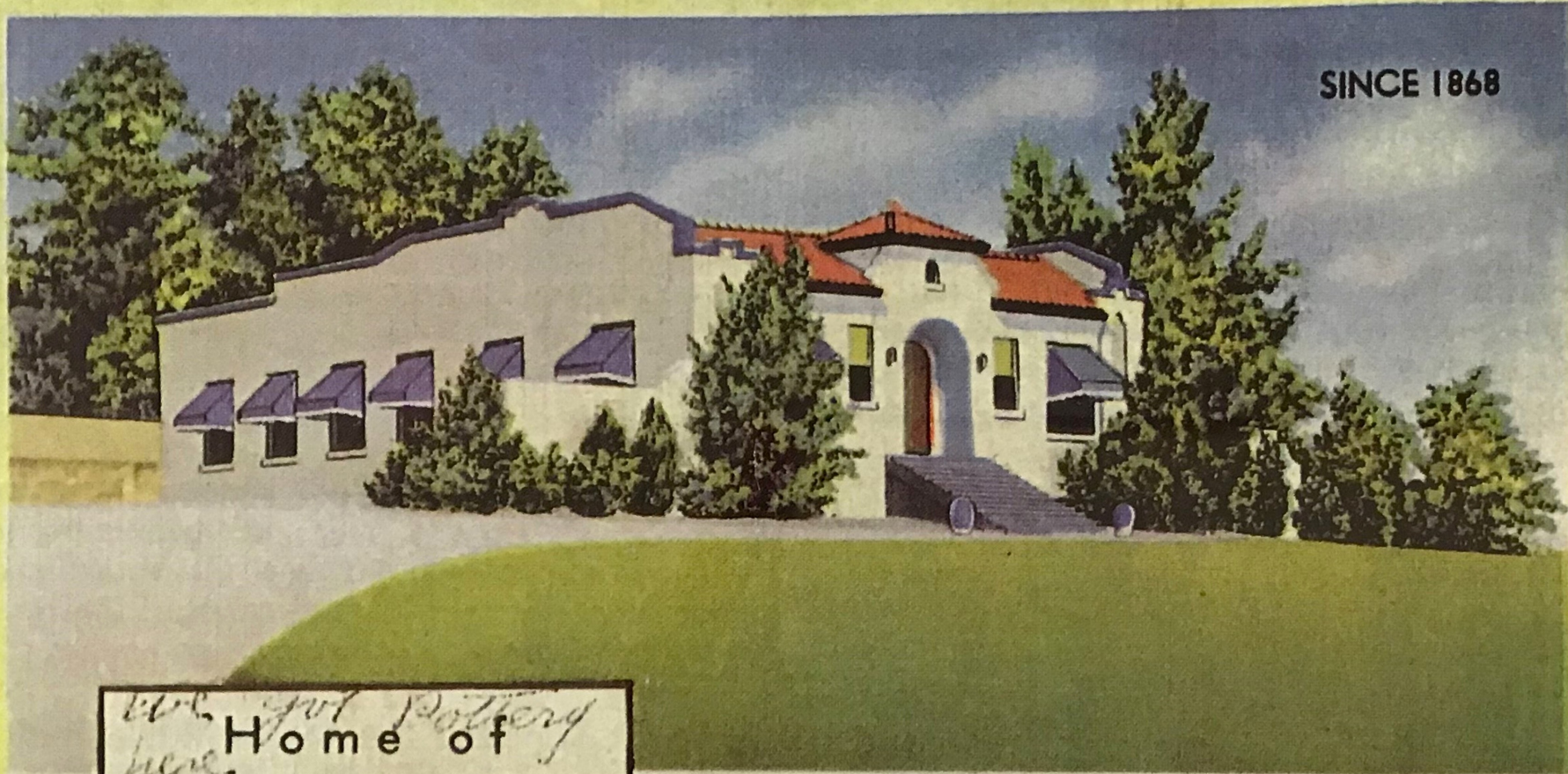
BRONZE

BOBBY AND KATHY ROBERTS
RICHARD STEINKAMP

NILOAK and Beyond CONTRIBUTORS

Arkansas Archeological Survey
Arkansas State University Museum
Butler Center for Arkansas Studies
Central Arkansas Library System
Fort Smith Museum of History
Historic Arkansas Museum
Ohr-O'Keefe Museum
Shiloh Museum of Ozark History
University of Arkansas Museum

Anonymous	Tom and Shirry Linzey
Mike Bajorek	Daniel Barrett Mathis
Mike Bullock	Terry and Lawrence McElroy
James and Judy Clements	Melvin and Pat Minton
Tim Denison	Gary Moore
Tom and Mary Dillard	Randy Mourning
Suzie and Jim Dunn	Jerry Lee Nichols
Dan Gifford	Jared Pebworth & Cindy King
David Edwin Gifford	Deb Presley
Gary and Elizabeth Hansen	Carey Rau
Todd Hanson	Kathy and Bobby Roberts
Bill Henslee	David Steele
Phil and Barb Hostetler	Mr. and Mrs. Keith Wafer
Shelly Linn	Doyle Webb
	Denise Yates



SINCE 1868

where you get Pottery here
Home of
**NILOAK
POTTERY**

Interesting Native Industry

SEE IT MADE
at
BENTON, ARKANSAS



NILOAK and beyond:

20th Century American Swirl Art Pottery

An exhibition of rare examples of Niloak's innovative Swirled Missionware art pottery alongside creations from potters around the country inspired by the iconic Niloak swirl design.

Featuring swirl pottery by Beane, George Cho, Charlie Sabin's Creek Pottery, Dickota Barlowe, Hughson & Dalton, Spruce Pine's Muscle Shoals and More, Bourneville, Silver Springs, Gay Head, Clark Roadside Tourist Pottery, North State, and others.

Courtesy of University of Missouri and Niloak Pottery, David Eason Gallery

CANE HILL HISTORIC POTTERY GALLERY

Home of NILOAK POTTERY
SEE
KANSAS

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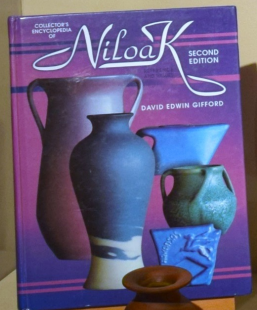
NILOAK

20th Century American

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potteries around the country inspired
swirl design

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Dickota Badlands, Houghton & Dalton, Spruce P
Marie, Rosemeade, Silver Springs, Gay Head, Oa
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Curated by Lawrence McElroy and Niloak scholar, David Ed



Object: Swirl vase
Maker: Niloak
Date: Mid 1920s
From the collection of
Corry Kay

Monumental Niloak Vase
This massive swirl vase, originally purchased by
collector Howard Miller in the 1920s, was
featured on a segment of Antiques Roadshow in
2019. This hour-de-long "Niloak" creativity
episodes in the family collection.
Maker: Monumental Swirl vase
Date: Mid 1920s
From the permanent collection of Susan Shubin





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Curated by Lawrence McElroy and Niloak scholar David Edwin Gifford

Charlie Stehm 'Niloak' Pottery

The Niloak Pottery Company

NILOAK

WELCOME

NILOAK POTTERY

SINCE 1868

Home of **NILOAK POTTERY**

SEE IT MADE at BENTON, ARKANSAS

Interesting Native Industry



Object: Handled vase
Maker: Niloak
Date: 1931 - 1932
From the collection of
Kathy Roberts

Object: Vase (carved)
Maker: Ouachita
Date: 1906
From the collection of
Randy Mourning

Object: Handled vase
Maker: Ouachita
Date: 1906
From the collection of
Anonymous

Object: Vase (blue matte)
Maker: Ouachita
Date: 1906
From the collection of
Chuck & Phyllis Tucker

Object: Rocket vase
Maker: Camark
Date: early 1930s
From the collection of the
Central Arkansas Library System



Niloak Presentation Vase
Presented to the State of Arkansas in 1925, the vase was presented to the Arkansas Historical Society by the Board of Trustees of the Arkansas Historical Society, Council of Arkansas, Washington, D.C. by the Arkansas Historical Society of Washington, D.C. in 1925. The hand inscribed State Seal of Arkansas is inscribed on the base.

Object: Glass presentation vase
Maker: Unknown
Date: 1925

The Great Seal of the State of Arkansas as it appears on the presentation vase







NILOAK POTTERY.

George Ohr:
The Last Potter of Biloxi

George Ohr (1857-1911) was a self-taught potter who lived in Biloxi, Mississippi. He is known for his highly decorative and often unbalanced pottery, which he called "salt-glazed" pottery. His work is considered a masterpiece of American pottery and is highly valued by collectors.

The Life of a Potter

George Ohr and the Biloxi Pottery

Nilok Toured Pottery

These pieces were made during a tour of the Nilok Pottery studio in Biloxi, Mississippi. The pottery is made from local clay and is decorated with a variety of patterns and colors. The pieces are highly decorative and are considered a masterpiece of American pottery.

Blue and Yellow Pottery

This piece is made from local clay and is decorated with a blue and yellow pattern. It is a highly decorative piece and is considered a masterpiece of American pottery.

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NILOAK POTTERY



Nil oak Pottery
in the collection of the
British Council for
Arts and Crafts

Object: Sweet vase
Maker: Nil oak
Date: early 1920s
From the collection of
Sir Kenneth

Object: Sweet vase
Maker: Nil oak
Date: early 1920s
From the collection of
Amy Dyer

Object: Sweet vase
Maker: Nil oak
Date: 1920
From the collection of
Mrs. H. Dyer

Object: Sweet vase
Maker: Nil oak
Date: 1920
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Maker: Nil oak
Date: 1920
From the collection of
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From Cane Hill to Nil oak
A Short History





NILOAK POTTERY

Informational panels on the left wall, including one titled "NILOAK POTTERY SEE IT MADE BY THE ARTIST" and another titled "NILOAK'S HISTORY".

Object: 1911-1912
Maker: Nilak
Date: early 1910s
From the collection of the National Museum, Ottawa

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Maker: Nilak
Date: early 1910s
From the collection of the National Museum, Ottawa

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The Missing Link

The rarest piece of pottery in the exhibition is this example of swirl pottery produced in 1906 at the Ouachita Pottery in Hot Springs, Arkansas by master potter, Arthur Dovey.

Dovey, along with Paul E. Cox (rising star in the American ceramic industry), and other Arkansas clayworkers, began an odyssey toward the development of Swirled Missionware at Niloak a couple of years later. The clay workers included Charles Hyten, Frank Long, and the Rowland and McNeil families of Benton, Arkansas. Also involved were relatives of noted Cane Hill potter, J.D. Wilbur.

From the permanent collection of an anonymous contributor



Object: Mug (standard style)
Maker: Eagle Pottery
Date: 1909 - 1910
From the collection of David Steele



Object: Mug (standard style)
Maker: Niloak
Date: 1910 - 1911
From the collection of Suzie & Jim Dunn



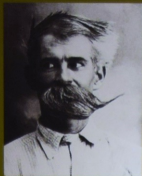
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From the permanent collection of an anonymous contributor

George Ohr: The Mad Potter of Biloxi



George Edgar Ohr (1857-1918) was an artist with a vision that was ahead of his time. Although active from 1879 until around 1910, it was not until his pottery was rediscovered a half century after his death that Ohr began to enjoy the reputation he felt he deserved. During the first period of his career, 1879-1894, Ohr focused on utilitarian pieces to support his family. In 1894, tragedy struck, when a fire in downtown Biloxi destroyed Ohr's work and his studio. Always personally attached to his work, Ohr kept many pieces salvaged from the fire and called them his "burned babies". The years after the fire became some of the most innovative and prolific of Ohr's career. Between 1895 and 1903, Ohr experimented with shape and color, creating unbelievably thin pieces that twisted, ruffled, and folded.

Ohr's son, Otto, said of his father, "His pottery was made as thin as a piece of newspaper. He could make it any kind of shape you wanted. It was a gift to him." These vibrant glazes and distinctive forms have become synonymous with Ohr and are considered to be some of his finest work.

The final period of Ohr's career saw a major shift, now only did his production slow significantly but he also stopped glazing his pottery. These unglazed pots are the most abstract and sculptural of Ohr's work. He had an unshakable faith in the merit of his work and wanted to be recognized by having one entity purchase his collection in its entirety. In that end, he made offers to the Delgado Museum of Art (now the New Orleans Museum of Art) and the Smithsonian. Discouraged by his lack of success, Ohr donated his pottery in 1910, packed away his collection, and asked that his heirs keep the collection untouched until 50 years after his death.

Only a few years after Ohr's request expired, James Carpenter, an antique dealer from New Jersey, purchased the entire collection from the Ohr family. He began introducing Ohr's work to art collectors in the northeast USA and Ohr's reputation quickly spread. By the 1970's and nearly a hundred years after his career began, Ohr was finally recognized as the master he was.

Ohr - O'Keefe Museum, Biloxi, Mississippi



Object: Swirl vase
Maker: George Ohr
Date: circa 1900

From the collection of the
Ohr - O'Keefe Museum



Object: Swirl bowl
Maker: George Ohr
Date: circa 1900

From the collection of the
Ohr - O'Keefe Museum



Charlie Stehm's OZARK POTTERY

At least one Arkansas challenger to Niloak was Charlie Stehm's Ozark Pottery of Eureka Springs. Although his pottery was produced during the 1925 Christmas season, his company was founded in 1926. Stehm was a talented Ozark craftsman of Garman descent, long-noted for his work in onyx. Stehm explained, "I probably would never have become a potter if I could have gotten the agency for Niloak in my Eureka Springs shop. I found I needed pottery, so I went out, found my clays, and became a potter." Production was limited to about 150 pieces a month which included some decorated pieces featuring scenes of the Eureka Springs area. Although his swirl production began after Charles Hyten had filed for a patent under the Niloak Pottery Company name, Stehm's work suggesting that Hyten threatened to sue Stehm, all indications point to the fact that the Ozark Pottery production ceased just before Hyten received a U.S. patent on the Missionware process. Although somewhat comparable in color, technical, and aesthetic characteristics, the significant difference between Ozark and Niloak pottery is the direction of swirls. Ozark pottery swirls rotate counterclockwise, while Niloak swirls rotate clockwise. Ozark pottery is nearly always marked, incised with the date 1926 or 1927. Hyten received the Missionware patent in January 1928. Other than the fact that both potteries produced swirl pottery, there is no known connection between Stehm and Niloak.

Photo courtesy of Tom Linzey

Gifford, D.E., (2001). Collector's Encyclopedia of Niloak



Houghton & Dalton Pottery



Curtis Houghton began making pottery in what is now Dalton, Ohio in 1842. His son, Edwin, continued the tradition that would become the Houghton & Dalton Pottery Company, taking over in 1864. Edwin's son, Eugene, became the owner in 1890 and managed the business until it was sold to the Singer Brothers in 1945. A 1933 pamphlet indicated that

300,000 pieces of pottery were being produced annually. Eugene was responsible for the shift from utilitarian ware to art pottery in the 1920s and hired other pottery experts to help in this effort. Stoin M. Stoin, who would go on to work at Niloak, as well as Weller and other potteries, was hired by Houghton in 1926. Stoin assisted Houghton off and on during the 1930s and 1940s.



Houghton produced a line of swirl pottery called "Indian". It is similar to Niloak's Swirled Missionware, but many pieces feature a powder blue interior, and some pieces have a glossy exterior glaze.

Courtesy and photos: Dr. James Houghton



Object: Swirl vase
Maker: Houghton & Dalton
Date: 1920
From the collection of Edward & Wilhelmina Taylor



Object: Swirl vase
Maker: Houghton & Dalton
Date: 1920
From the collection of Barbara & John Houghton



Object: Swirl vase
Maker: Houghton & Dalton
Date: 1920
From the collection of John & Wilhelmina Taylor



Object: Swirl vase
Maker: Niloak
Date: late 1920s
From the collection of the University of Arkansas Museum



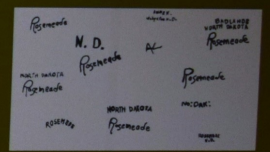
Object: Bowl
Maker: Rosemeade
Date: 1920s
From the collection of Todd Peterson

ROSEMEADE Pottery

Robert J. Hughes, owner of the Globe-Gazette Publishing Company and Gift Shop in Wahpeton, North Dakota, saw the ceramic work of Laura A. Taylor on display at the World's Fair and recognized the marketability of original North Dakota pottery. He invited her to design original pottery for production and together, they opened the Wahpeton Pottery Company in 1940. They chose "ROSEMEADE" as the name for the ceramic products, and labeled their pottery with a genuine rose sticker and/or a base stamp. Laura Taylor had previously worked for the Dickinson Clay Products Company, producing "DICKOTA" pottery. Taylor and Hughes were married in 1943. In 1944, the Wahpeton Pottery Company moved to a new factory on the south side Wahpeton and welcomed business partner, Howard S. Lewis, a ceramic engineer from Iowa State College. Lewis had previously worked for the Niloak Pottery Company, and for the Dickinson Clay Products Company, producing "DICKOTA BADLANDS" swirl pottery. While at Wahpeton, Lewis produced a small amount of swirl pottery typical of Niloak's Swirled Missionware. Lewis sold his share of the company to the Hughes in 1956. Production continued for a year also following the death of Laura Taylor Hughes in 1959, but the factory finally closed in 1961.



Laura Taylor Hughes at the wheel





Two Sisters

In the summer of 1931, the train carrying sisters Elizabeth and Lillian Barton stopped briefly in Benton, Arkansas. The young travelers departed the train and made their way to the nearby Niloak pottery factory where each one was allowed to make their own swirl pottery, exhibited here. The Bartons left their creations to be fired in the kiln and paid 25 cents to have them shipped to their home in Jonesboro, before re-boarding the train and continuing their adventure. The novice potters inscribed the date "6/2/31", along with their name, on the bottom of each vessel.





Swirl Punch Bowl Set

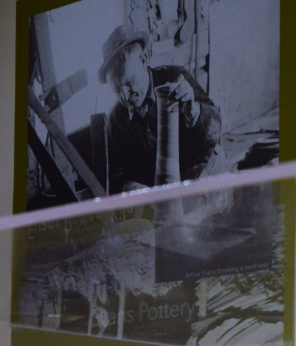
This Niloak punch bowl set is the only example of its kind known to exist. The set includes the bowl, tray, 13 cups, and most remarkably, a swirl ladle. The components feature a most remarkably, a swirl interior surface that allowed them to safely contain liquids, and evidence indicates that this set was indeed used for that purpose. A punch bowl set does not appear in any known Niloak product catalog but such a luxury item would have been very expensive when originally purchased.

Object: Swirl punch bowl set
Maker: Niloak
Date: late 1920s
From the permanent collection of the Historic Arkansas Museum



Other Swirl Makers

- Broadstone Pottery (Colorado)
- Carmel Pottery (Colorado)
- Carroll Pottery (Colorado, AR)
- Cherry Pottery (MO, NC, TX)
- Dan Mason (West Virginia)
- Debra Pottery (New York)
- Flowers Pottery (Hot Springs, AR)
- Frank Tompkins Pottery (New York)
- Garden of the Gods (CO, GA)
- Gay Wood Pottery (Massachusetts)
- Gearty Brothers Pottery (Georgia)
- Hopewell Pottery (Illinois)
- Leavenworth Pottery (Covey, AR)
- Louisiana Pottery (Colorado)
- Lowland Art Pottery (Colorado)
- MA Southwest Pottery (Colorado)
- Musical Pottery (Iowa)
- Norwood Pottery (Minnesota)
- North State Pottery (North Carolina)
- Clark Pottery (St. Louis, MO)
- Clark Glass (Arkansas or Missouri)
- Road Rocks Pottery (Colorado)
- River Valley Pottery (Colorado)
- Shaw Pottery (Florida)
- Shaw Pottery (Colorado)
- Shaw Pottery (Alabama)
- Shaw Pottery (New Jersey)



Evans Pottery Kiln
Deane, Missouri



Object: Pottery
Date: 1950s
From the collection of Tom & Andrea Miller

Object: Pottery
Date: 1950s
From the collection of Chad & Paula Taylor

Caveat Emptor (Silver Swirls)
This swirl vase is similar in shape to brown swirl vases and bears a full "Silver Swirls" mark. It was used in the 1950s. However, the vase was the 1950s, 1960s. It is assumed that some white glaze on the vase is an attempt to increase its sale value to ill-informed buyers.

Object: Pottery
Date: 1950s - 1960s
From the collection of Tom & Andrea Miller

Object: Pottery
Date: 1950s - 1960s
From the collection of Tom & Paula Taylor

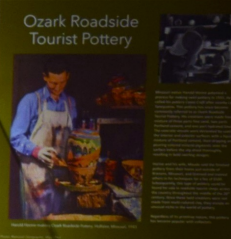


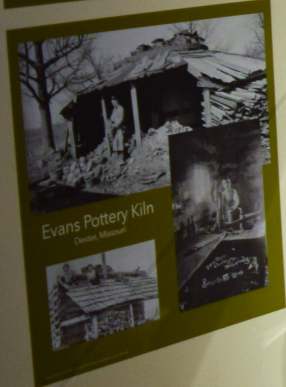
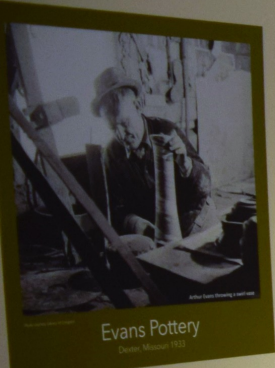
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Gifford, D.E. (2010). *Collector's Encyclopedia of Niloak*

Photo courtesy of Tom Loney





Evans Family Potteries
Oldest Pottery Family Pottery
World-Wide and Local Pottery

NILOAK POTTERY.



1850-1900
Pottery



Ozark Roadside Tourist Pottery



Harold Hoone making Ozark Roadside Pottery, Fulton, Missouri, 1942



Missouri native Harold Hoone is credited for making tourist pottery called Ozark Roadside Pottery. This pottery has been commonly referred to as Ozark Roadside Pottery. The combination of marbled colors and the use of the pottery wheel were unique to the region and exterior surfaces were of traditional design. These pieces were colored and glazed with a variety of colors, resulting in bold, striking designs.

Hoone and his wife, Maude, sold pottery from their home just east of Fulton, Missouri, and traveled to other parts of the state to sell their pottery. This type of pottery found its way to roadside shops all over the country throughout the middle century. Since these items were made from multi-colored clay, they remained popular on the road.

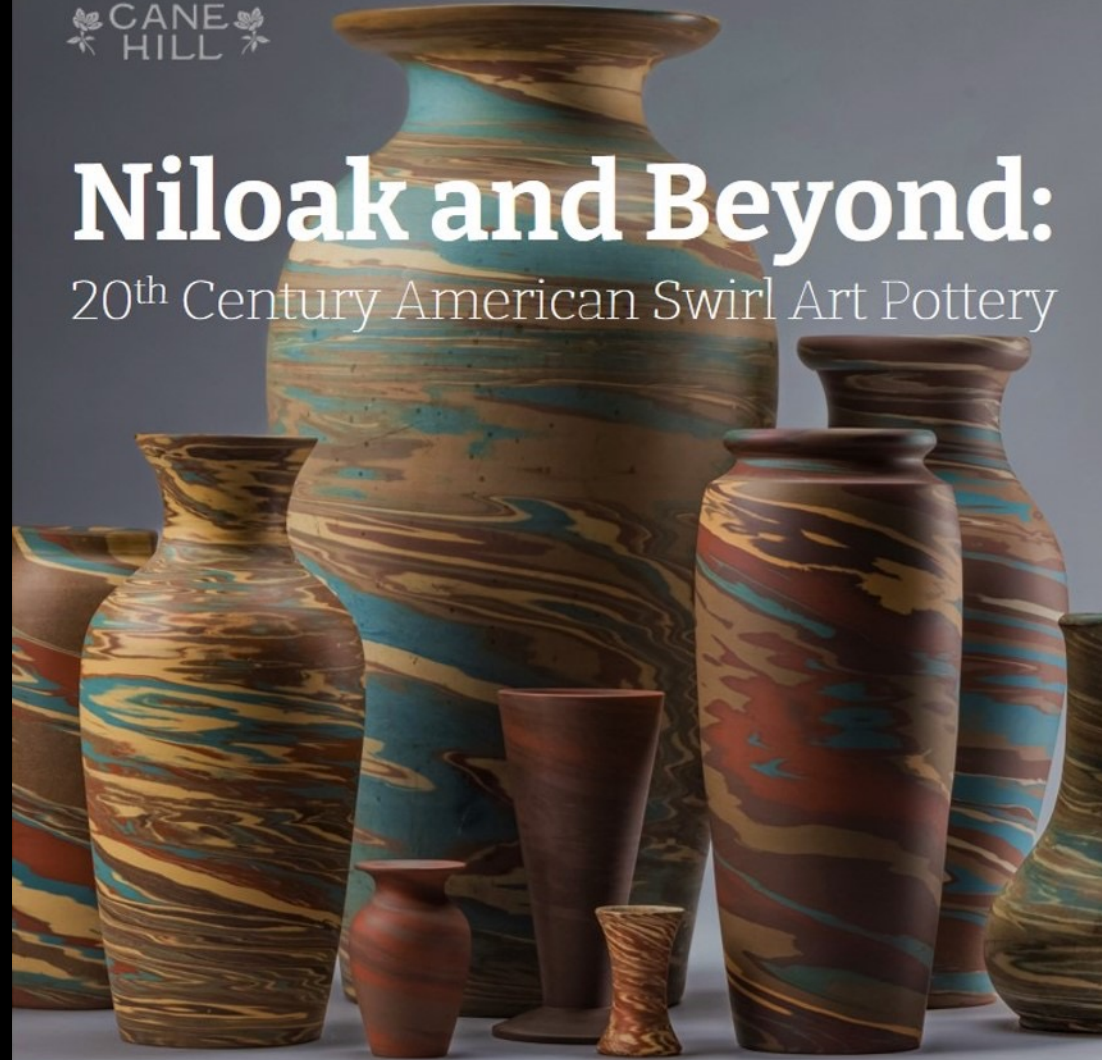
Regardless of its primitive nature, it has become popular with collectors.

Photo: National Geographic, May 1942



Niloak and Beyond:

20th Century American Swirl Art Pottery



Exhibition Catalog
Coming Soon

An exhibition at Historic Cane Hill

Curated by Lawrence McElroy and David E. Gifford