

DEEP IN THE BLUES

Treasures from the Monterey Bay and beyond

Mark Tanous



MUSEUM OF MONTEREY

Mark seems to be about having a fine old time with art... certainly this is the most fun I have ever seen had with stoneware, which is a notoriously prim old maid for the most part, even worse than blowing glass. You know glass and stoneware might seem to be all cute and pretty but there is no substance. Now I don't know if Mark's colors have anything to do with the Monterey Peninsula, though admittedly the closest I usually get to that is Castroville to buy some artichokes, but they are great colors and seem to me to be all Mark. Mark, I am sure, always has a great fine time and lets no moss grow on the bottom of his feet.

– David Gilhooly

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MOM

Disclaimer

Due to the natural variations of clay and minerals, which limit our control, and the variety of applications for our pieces over which we have no control, our pieces are sold with the understanding that the user is solely responsible for determining suitability for any purpose. Therefore, our maximum liability shall be limited. No guarantee is expressed or implied regarding consistency or viability of our pieces.

Nor will we be responsible.

THE REDUCTIONISTS

For more on The Reductionists www.marktanous.com

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Design: Takigawa Design.

Dear Friend,

Most of the pieces in this collection have been in the private residence of Anthony Jazper and Gaia Fortuna. As long time Peninsula residents, Anthony and Gaia spent a great deal of their life traveling up and down our coast collecting objects of desire. They were especially interested in ceramics. This catalogue contains selected pieces and the accompanying stories. Ever curious, Gaia asked many questions and kept notes on the lives of the pieces before they came into the J&G collection. Gaia passed before Jazper and after she left his side, he lost the desire to acquire. He said, "Before I had beauty at my side and they were just things. Now it would be as if I were trying to replace her true beauty in my life."

On their passing, it was their wish that the collection be shown at the Museum of Monterey and sold to those who wished to start their own collections. So please enjoy the fruits of their labors, they sure did.

Mark Tanous

& The Reductionists

FISHING VILLAGE

Gaia and I started collecting on a whim.

We were young, in love, and discovering the world and the water's treasure together. She was new to California, I had been here since I was three. I knew nowhere else.

I like to say my family were descendants of the Phoenician, the great shipping tribes of the eastern Mediterranean. She was from Sicily. We both loved the water. We swam, boated, or just laid in the sand as often as we could. And we collected...

We started casually; first at a tag sale picking up a few curiosities, then getting more serious looking for specific items that turned out to be ceramics.

We found there was lots of information about styles, firing temperatures and atmospheres. We decided to educate ourselves. Our first real find was a group of pieces from a Japanese finishing enclave located above the San Francisco Bay.

We had had a very successful day of abalone fishing and our pockets were full of cash. Gaia saw an unassuming wooden sign leaning against a tree that read: curios. We made our way up to a small cluster of cabins tucked in the forest. One had the tell-tale signs of retail: an open door and a designated parking spot.

As we entered we were greeted by an elderly Japanese man. His store was packed, dusty, and dark. We noticed a glass case tucked in the corner. It was illuminated by light spilling in through an open window. When we approached the glass case the man said, "You have a very good eye." The case held half of a dozen bright blue vessels. At first they appeared to be made of turquoise, sort of a coral turquoise.

He said they were found off the coast by his sister. She was a free diver from the old school. She would row her little boat out into the bay filled with rocks. She would grab a rock and jump over the side giving her more time at the bottom to explore and gather shells. During one of her trips she came across what seemed to be a small boat that had sunk and was partially covered with sand. She could see some bottles and made a few dives to retrieve them. She knew a storm was coming in and quit for the night. She knew there were more and planned to go out the following morning. The elderly Japanese man said he never saw his sister after that morning. "My parents told me," elderly man said. "A wave capsized her boat. They thought one of the stones must have hit her and she never came back. That was 92 years ago. I was 4."

Gaia and I purchased the set of bottles and their story and our adventure began.





Blue Wind 3



Blue Collar



Bottle Earth 5

INK BOTTLES



Fallen Oak 6



Fallen Oak a2

After the Great Opium War and the demise of the British East India Company, the opium and heroin trade changed direction. It moved from China to the U.S. and Europe.

As the trade became more popular and more lucrative the bad guys started to take over. Winston Chong, a Chinese entrepreneur, came up with a plan to smuggle this precious commodity.

He created the Fallen Oak INK company. His signature bottle had an acorn-like drape over the shoulders of his containers. During the day he filled his bottles with deep, dark ink and in the evenings he filled a few with deep, dark liquid heroin to ship to the Barbary Coast.

Printers and typesetters in San Francisco became his distribution arm.

The bottles that are stamped with BLK 47 were used to smuggle the heroin. It is thought that the number 47 represents the number of days between when Chong conceived of the idea and when he got his first profit.



THAT'S DEEP BRUCE



Cobalt Tiger



Croc Crock 3

Before Bruce took the “straight” job at the Marine Lab, he ran diving boats out of the Moss Landing Harbor. He would jump in the water and salvage every chance he got. They say he spent more time in the water than on land.

His original training was as a Navy Seal in Guam during the war. When his stint in Guam ended he spent a few years bouncing around Asia. After the Music Revolution of the 60s, he moved back to California where he bought a boat and ran up and down the Central Coast accruing pieces he found interesting. His collection was eclectic and varied--just like him.

Gaia and I spent a couple days every summer with Bruce until he lost his license for “parking” his boat in the Harbor Master’s quarters at the lighthouse, twice.



Repair



Scarlett Brew



Volcanic Repair

KAVA BOWL

Gaia and I were good friends with Coleman West. Coleman had been fishing the rocks in Big Sur for most of his life. He made a meager living selling fish to the restaurants up in Carmel. He was a poke pole fisherman. Eight feet of bamboo, foot and a half of baling wire, eight- ten inches of fishing line and a hook. Coleman would move down to the shoreline at low tide and put his baited hook in the crevasse and hollows of the rocks and wait for a rock fish to bite. Back then, in the late forties, there were plenty. Coleman grabbed these Kava bowls out of a cave near Nepenthe. It was tradition for the South Sea sailors to bring with them their bowls for making Kava liquor. Coleman thought these were from Tahiti but we realized that the crab insignia was a West Coast variety and were made here by some enterprising craftsman. Imitation is the highest form of flattery.



DE MENTHE



Stillwater z1

Wild Bill had told me about DeMenthe--how she had that kind of arresting beauty that left you thankful for sight. Man, was he right...again.

DeMenthe filled your lungs with air and put a smile on your face.

We found her little place near Doc's lab. Wild Bill had told me that she was a recluse. He had said, she didn't socialize any more. She claimed it drained her energy. She also claimed "All the interesting people are dead."

Her place was a smart mix of Zen Temple and the Louvre. It was filled with beautiful things that calmed us. What caught our eye, and what we were lucky enough to acquire from her, were a set of Three Vases. They were beautiful in a strange way; purple veins seemed to grow out of the blue bottom and reach up to a yellow rim.

She had a boyfriend who worked as a lifeguard at Stillwater Cove back when Del Monte Forest was run by the Morses. One day one of these vases washed up from that clear emerald water and on to the white sandy beach. The vase had the texture of coral and was the color of tropical fish. He grabbed a mask, swam back into the surf and retrieved two more vases. It turned out they were butter jars from a Portuguese fishing boat that had been on its way up the coast to San Francisco. Eighty years in the bay will do that to a pot.



Stillwater z3

NECTAR ROC





ROC Nectar 2



ROC Nectar 4c

Robert Obrien Carlyle had a women's shop off of Market. The shop carried hats, bags, and his own line of cosmetics. His most popular product was a face and body lotion called "*Island Nectar.*"

"*Island Nectar*" was just plain coconut oil he imported from Hawaii in large ceramic vessels. He told his customers a story of these nut-brown young men scaling the trees to knock down the nuts. He said they sweltered in the heat of the fire to render out the oil. He painted an island paradise for his female customers. Robert was a clever marketer.

In the winter of 1898, a small cargo ship sunk off the coast after hitting an out cropping of rocks near the Golden Gate. Gaia and I found the jars that were used to import the oil at a little shop in North Beach. Richard, who sold us these pieces, said Robert Obrien Carlyle was upstairs asleep. They had been partners for fifty-eight years.



ROC Nectar 3

FERRIS TAUB & HENRY MILLER



Taub Banded

They say Miller got the name from Taub, but I think Taub got it from Miller. Their friendship began in Paris during the Great Depression. Miller was writing, trying to find another glass of wine. Taub was drawing and painting before finally settling on clay as his medium. Like everyone else in Paris, he was trying to make a living. Along the way, he realized if he made some functional pieces, along with his “arty” stuff, he could sell it to the women in the markets.

Taub and Miller loved Paris: the smell, the taste, the women. Oh, and the city itself. After a long decade of drinking and creating, they started to long for their native tongue so they moved back to the States. While traveling they stumbled upon Big Sur. Miller immediately fell in love, and although he had no means, he stayed down the coast.

Ferris, on the other hand, saw opportunity on Cannery Row. He opened a bar to service the fishermen and the canning crews. He called it Tropic of Decanter as a “tip of the hat” to his long time friend Henry, and to their time together in Paris.

Ferris found the bar life to be draining. To fill his personal reservoir he began to pot again. He created a series of simple bottles that he displayed and sold in the bar.

Gaia and I found most of these pieces at tag sales in Pacific Grove and Carmel.



Taub Emerald Oil



Taub Sweet 1



Taub Balloon 6



Taub Shino Dot 3

CHINESE WATER JAR



Chinese Water a



Chinese Water r4

The people of the Guan Zhou region of China had a very special relationship with water. It was so scarce that families would have to receive water rights from Emperor Soolip before they could move to the region. Water rights were granted in the form of a medallion, which the senior female in the household would wear around her neck.

When families started immigrating to California they brought water from their rivers in the jars marked with the medallion. This water was used on special occasions to welcome a child into the world, or to cleanse the lips of a bride to be, or offered as the last sip before dying. These jars held a special place in the lives of their owners.

Gaia and I collected these five medallions over a twenty-six year period, which began in 1949.



Chinese Water b3



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding for this exhibition was provided by Celadon, Inc., a nonprofit arts funding organization, Dr. Richard Kanak, and Dr. David Shin.

Deep in the Blues could not have been realized without the many individuals who have lent support for this exhibition.

I would like to express my thanks to Museum of Monterey and its Board for hosting the exhibition.

I am grateful to my family and friends for their support and contributions to this project, particularly Jennifer Holmes, Dylan, Hunter and Scarlett Tanous. My parents, Joseph and Louise Tanous.

This project is only possible with the support and contribution of:

Jim Wood Photography

Celadon, Inc.

Mario Castro, LLC

John Micheletos

Dylan Tanous edicted buy

John Enns

Diane Eisenbach

Victoria Thompson

Jennifer Holmes, muse

Gail F. Enns

The Reductionists

Chris Horsley of Mike's Signs

Finally, we thank Jerry Takigawa and his design staff.