

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vilcek Foundation launches digital experience *Pueblo Pottery: Stories in Clay*

The online experience centers the voices and insights of the community curators behind Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery

NEW YORK, August 1, 2023—The Vilcek Foundation has launched [*Pueblo Pottery: Stories in Clay*](#), a digital experience to complement the exhibition of [*Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery*](#). The multimedia project is community driven, and incorporates audio, essays, videos, and interactive tools developed with the curators of the Pueblo Pottery Collective.

Pueblo Pottery: Stories in Clay is accessible on the Vilcek Foundation website, designed by Pentagram. Users can explore three-dimensional views of selected works, accompanied by descriptions of form, design, and meaning. The three-dimensional views were captured using photogrammetry with the support of Cortina Productions and Forum One.

The exhibition *Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery* opens in New York this July, with presentations at the Vilcek Foundation and The Metropolitan Museum of Art that will be on view through June 2024. *Pueblo Pottery: Voices in Clay* is an interactive educational tool that creates new pathways for people to explore the insight of the curators and artists whose work makes *Grounded in Clay* such a powerful exhibition.

“*Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery* is rooted in the living traditions of Pueblo nations, community members, and potters,” says Vilcek Foundation President Rick Kinsel. “For this experience we use every technical and creative resource available to us to amplify the voices of the Pueblo Pottery Collective, and to support and extend the impact of this exhibition. *Pueblo Pottery: Stories in Clay* expands on the community curatorial aspects that make *Grounded in Clay* so powerful.”

To help develop the digital experience, the Vilcek Foundation engaged Brian D. Vallo as a leading consultant. A member of the Pueblo of Acoma tribe in New Mexico, he served as governor in 2019–21, and has more than 30 years of experience working in areas of museum development, cultural resources management, repatriation of ancestors and cultural patrimony, historic architecture preservation, the arts, and tourism. Vallo curated the selection of works and wrote content for the digital experience, and identified selections from the community curators to incorporate into the project.

“The Pueblo people of the American Southwest represent some of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in North America,” writes Vallo. “Two significant ancestral Pueblo settlements on this vast landscape include what are known today as Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon. Pottery created at these places over a thousand years ago represents a form of material culture that is enduring and that has evolved over time.”

“The pottery-making tradition is rooted in the enduring cultural heritage of the Pueblo people,” he continues. “Pottery-making is handed down from one generation to the next. In most Pueblos... the tradition is carried on through observation and a hands-on process of working with the clay and other materials.”

Says Vilcek Foundation Director of Digital Brian Cavanaugh, “By leveraging technology we amplify Native American voices and offer a window into the profound stories and traditions embedded within each vessel. The Vilcek Foundation embraces technology as a tool for empowerment, enabling the world to hear diverse narratives that have been woven through generations. This forges a path where Native voices are celebrated.”

“The exhibition of *Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery* is groundbreaking in many ways, as it is a community-curated exhibition of work originating in Native American communities that centers the lived experience and voices of Native American curators,” says Vilcek Foundation Curator Emily Schuchardt Navratil. “We wanted to bring *Grounded in Clay* to life in the digital realm, to honor these pottery pieces and traditions, and to amplify the voices of the Pueblo Pottery Collective beyond the physical exhibition.”

Pueblo Pottery: Stories in Clay can be accessed at <https://pueblopottery.vilcek.org>. The Vilcek Foundation encourages individuals to explore the digital experience and to reach out to learn more about the exhibition, *Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery*.

The Vilcek Foundation

The Vilcek Foundation raises awareness of immigrant contributions in the United States and fosters appreciation for the arts and sciences. The foundation was established in 2000 by Jan and Marica Vilcek, immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia. The mission of the foundation was inspired by the couple’s respective careers in biomedical science and art history. Since 2000, the foundation has awarded over \$7 million in prizes to foreign-born individuals and has supported organizations with over \$6 million in grants.

The Vilcek Foundation is a private operating foundation, a federally tax-exempt nonprofit organization under IRS Section 501(c)(3). To learn more, please visit vilcek.org.