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Guest Ceramics Instructor Kevin Kowalski Unlocks the Secrets of Mocha Diffusion Pottery

[Mocha Diffusion Workshop to be held at Art Center April 8, 9](#)

Guest ceramics instructor Kevin Kowalski, who will be conducting [workshops](#) on mocha diffusion pottery at the Art Center on April 8 and 9, is living his dream of teaching others how to work with clay and create distinctive ceramics.

"When I was in high school, I took a class in clay and the wheel," he recalls. "Once I put my hands in the clay, I fell in love with it right away. It was great to be able to transform a lump of clay into something beautiful—it felt like home."

Kowalski attended junior college and then went on to California State University, Fullerton to earn his BFA in Ceramics. For the past seven years, he has been teaching ceramics at Esperanza High School in Anaheim, Calif.

"My instructors were making a career out of teaching, and I thought I could do that as well," he added. "I try to teach in a style that lets students choose their own path."

His path to teaching ceramics has also inspired him to conduct a series of guest workshops and to offer his popular and unique pottery for sale online.

Kowalski's mocha diffusion pottery is unusual because it involves mixing acid with ceramic colors and then dropping the mixture onto the surface of a wet clay slip. Since the clay tends to be more alkaline or base, the acid on top of the clay creates a chemical reaction resulting in beautiful patterns.

The process of mocha diffusion dates back to 18th-century England, and is derived from the word "Mecca," where moss agate gemstones were found. The beautiful rocks showed veined patterns suggestive of trees or ferns.

"I had not heard of mocha diffusion until I started looking into new techniques," says Kowalski, who has been perfecting the method for the past year. "Social media has now made it a household name in the pottery world."

He says the decorative process is not that difficult, but that it involves exact timing: The mixture must be applied to clay that hasn't started to change color in drying, and the viscosity of the slip coating must not be too thin or too thick.

The result is an intriguing pattern that often suggests leaves, trees, and geometric formations.

Kowalski says he wants to create a sense of exploration for the students who enroll in his mocha diffusion workshop at the Art Center.

"It's about exploring a new decorative technique," he says. "I want to provide a workshop that allows students to experiment and mix things without a scale. Trial and error is one way to work on pottery—the process doesn't always have to be so precise."

Meet artist Kevin Kowalski during a free reception and presentation at the Art Center on April 7, 6:30-9 p.m. To register for his mocha diffusion pottery workshop on April 8 and 9, go [here](#). His ceramic artwork may be viewed on Instagram [here](#), and his pottery is available for purchase [here](#). For a short video on the process of mocha diffusion, go [here](#).

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