

David Pinto shows 'New Growth' at Mutual Gallery

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David Pinto's piece 'warrior'.

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Robyn Miller, Gleaner Writer

Trelawny native and potter David Pinto is on the cusp of something new.

'New Growth' is the name of his upcoming exhibition set to take place at Kingston's Mutual Gallery and Art Centre on Oxford Road this Thursday at 7 p.m.

Pinto, last week, gave a peek into the dreamy world of contemporary ceramic culture which the works embody.

"I have been cultivating 'New Growth' in the hills of Trelawny and am excited to share where that journey has taken me," said the artist, who recently published a book on sculpting.

His two groups of sculptures will reflect "a personal journey of fertility, blending the sensuality of human and plant forms", and a smaller collection titled 'Soul Serving', which are massive three-legged vessels.

Pinto's tall, human-like sculptural forms are cleverly woven into his dreamy world while his pottery shapes combine imagery from the human form and plant reproduction such as seed pods to form life-sized sensual art objects.

Massive, sensually shaped wooden tree branches have been hewn to echo, commune with and virtually form part of the ceramic pieces they support.

Several pieces from Pinto's 'New Growth' collection have been selected to be part of the Bi-Annual Exhibition this year at the National Gallery of Jamaica.

With a career spanning some 20 years, Pinto has had numerous exhibitions and taught ceramics both locally and abroad. He has also served on the board of the National Gallery of Jamaica, offered his expertise as a visiting examiner at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, and is the founder of the ceramics department at the now-defunct Cultural Arts Centre in Montego Bay.

Pinto hosts international workshops and local classes at his studio, working with leaders in his field and sharing information locally. School visits are an important part of his workshop programme geared at spreading appreciation of art, clay, and firing.

The exhibition launch is open to the general public and is sponsored by National Commercial Bank, Carreras Group, Ideal Portfolio Services, RBC Royal Bank, SuperPlus, Island Mist, JN General Insurance, BCIC, KOOL 97 FM, and Wray and Nephew.

A mere two days after his launch, Pinto will host an open house at his studio/gallery at Good Hope in the beautiful hills of Trelawny.

He will also showcase his functional work at the annual Potters' Fair at the Forestry Department on Constant Spring Road in St Andrew on December 15 and 16.

For information on the Mutual Gallery exhibit, contact Gilou Bauer at 929-4302; or email mutualgallery@cwjamaica.com.

David Pinto's 'New Growth' at Mutual Gallery

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Sculptor David Pinto with one of his pieces at the Mutual Gallery on Thursday, December 6. - Colin Hamilton/Freelance Photographer

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Robyn Miller and Ruth Howard, Arts & Education Writers

The body, no matter how it is sculpted, is a marvellous creation, much like the plant as it blooms from within its pod.

It's a message that is poignantly etched in the latest instalment of art at the Mutual Gallery and a reminder that came last Thursday at the unearthing of potter and sculptural ceramist David Pinto's 'New Growth' exhibition, in a story which takes on a life of its own.

From a single seed pod which the artist came across on the way to his Good Hope Estate studio in Trelawny blossomed interest, enough to stir him to begin a process of exploration. Blending the process with a "personal journey of fertility" that captures the "sensuality of human and plant forms", a maze of bodies of varying shapes, hues and sizes, sitting atop massive tree stumps beautifully finished yet retaining enough of their naturalness, formed the greater part of the exhibition.

A smaller collection of massive three-legged, human-like sculptures titled 'Soul Serving', completed the exhibits. This, in the artist's words, was a celebration of rituals "beyond the purely physical", such as the sharing of a meal. Of these three-legged masterpieces, arts professor at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, Eugenio D'Melon, remarked that it took great skill to know what pigmentation to use to get different colours from the pieces which had been "fired" in the kiln. "It can be a surprise," he said, while admiring Pinto's handiwork. He was appreciative of the general ambience of the exhibit, including Pinto's quotes, in black against the gallery's plain white walls, which added life to the creations not only in the beautiful backdrop they created, but also for the simplification of and perspective they brought to the works. As for Pinto, the move was a good one: "I feel that my quotations on the wall helped to communicate some of the thought process behind the work, and the image presentation and sound reinforced this to complement the sculpture," he said.

That image presentation and sound reinforcement to which Pinto refers places the artist, a study of concentration, in his studio, as he perfected yet another piece of his life-size sculptures, all this with the sights and sounds of nature spurring him on. Showing his depth,

Pinto will today display some of his smaller, functional pieces at the two-day annual Potters' Fair at the Forestry Department in St Andrew from 9a.m. to 5p.m. Pinto's creative genius, which had its full bloom from his days as an industrial design student at Rhode Island School of Design, has recently led him to "explore new twists and turns" with his triangular bowl series. The series includes his newest group of sculpted mugs and sets of square dinnerware finished with his latest glaze design. Excellent gift ideas and accent pieces, these mugs are "ideal for cappuccino, soups and even tea!" the artist suggested.

Pinto can be contacted at jamaicaclay@gmail.com for his latest set of creations or, to view his 'New Growth' exhibition, which closes on January 12, contact Gilou Bauer at Mutual Gallery, 929-4302 for an appointment.

The Journey Through Clay

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Pottery is a form of expression which allows the creation of life from inanimate materials that have the ability to stimulate the mind and start a conversation.

Ancient in its origin, the art itself requires a pair of gifted hands which are steadfast in the quest to mould and conceive a type of reality that can be appreciated in its truest form.

Potter David Pinto has such hands, and shares that his love for pottery began with a few clumsy pieces, and a desire to make ordinary objects into animated interpretations of individuality.

Seduced by clays magical transformation from soft, wet lumps into expressive objects, drew Pinto to the pottery studio during his spare time. After high school, he was given the opportunity to attend Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and graduated with a degree in Industrial Design. Most of his time spent at RISD was focused on exploring his own personal expressive style.

Twenty-five years ago, Pinto made the decision to return to Jamaica and create a studio of his own in Good Hope, Trelawny, after spending some time in New York City working and learning from several extraordinary artists.

"My personal evolution as an artist is ongoing. My major exhibitions always included exploration of new ideas and the techniques needed to realise them. I am constantly exploring new forms and refining others," Pinto told **Outlook**. His training obtained in pursuing his industrial design degree has taught him to evaluate subtle variations in form and has shaped his belief that anything he makes must be of the highest quality. "It is important to me that functional pottery functions well. However, the conversation is not about that functional aspect," said Pinto. He added, "Each vessel I make is infused with a creative spirit, a life force. When put together with other pieces, mine or another artist, it tells a story of a life, a journey through clay," said Pinto.

Pinto's masterpieces are seen by many as collectors items which was a decision he made over 10 years ago, not only to build a brand but an audience. His pieces don't only include dinnerware such as mugs, tea cups and saucers, but complex sculptures and individual pieces that adorn the halls of several hotels in the island.

Inspiration for his work comes primarily from nature. "Entire bodies of work have sprung out of a single moment, examples include the accidental discovery of a seed pod on the road to the studio, which led to a conscious collection of seed pods and my 'Fertility Pod Series', said Pinto.

His love for a strong 2oz espresso has led him to establish a solid relationship with Deaf Can Coffee, which he supplies customised mugs for.

The renown Jamaican potter has also created international workshop programmes which allow international artists to come to Jamaica to create in his studio and share their experiences and knowledge with a group of young local and international artists.

"This year April 21-27 we will host Doug Casebeer, my workshop partner and director at the extraordinary art center in Colorado, Andersonranch.org joined by guest artists Peter Beasecker and Liz Lurie," said Pinto.

"My work embodies energy and movement, it 'Elevates your Everyday' experience of a meal or a simple cup of coffee to a ritual of celebrating the moment. I find beauty in the organic richness of form and feel. My joy in the process comes from making a piece

perfectly imperfect, embracing my touch and celebrating the uniqueness in each piece," said Pinto.

To start your journey into pottery contact David Pinto at (876) 886-2866 or email jamaicaclay@gmail.com. His collections can be viewed on his website <http://jamaicapottery.com/> or instagram [@pintopottery](https://www.instagram.com/pintopottery).
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