



FLINT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ***The Art of Containment* Re-Opens FIA Decorative Arts Gallery Promised Gift of Contemporary Ceramics Highlights 30+ Years of Collection**



Flint, MI – The promised gift of over 100 contemporary ceramic objects from a Bloomfield Hills resident and collector is the bedrock for *The Art of Containment: Vessels from the Sidney Swidler Collection*, the inaugural exhibition in the Ann K. Walch-Chan Gallery following the month-long closure at the Flint Institute of Arts. The exhibition, along with *Size Matters: Big & Small Works from the FIA Collection* and *The Eccentric Vision of William Stolpin*, is part of the re-opening events scheduled at the museum when it resumes its normal operating hours on Saturday, September 16. A collector since the early-to-mid-1980s, Swidler amassed 1000+ pieces, all vessels, each ceramic. His preference for

contemporary work was enriched by the interaction he could have with living artists and his architectural education honed his eye for essential elements, such as form, texture, craftsmanship, and artistic intent. He gifted 804 objects to the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California, which also featured a Swidler-centric exhibition, *The Vase and Beyond*, during its 2010 re-opening. That gift, along with the pieces promised to the FIA, marks Swidler as more than simply "a collector of ceramic pots," as he once described himself to curator and friend Hope Barkan. Rather, he is a collector whose passion informed his purchasing and allowed him to establish what art historian and decorative arts expert Dr. Martha Drexler Lynn described as a "nuanced appreciation" for the artistic development of those who created the objects he so loved, leading to a forward-looking collection that spans the work of leading figures in the 20th-century movement.

***The Art of Containment: Vessels from the Sidney Swidler Collection* opens to the public on Saturday, September 16. Current FIA members, as well as interested media, are invited to a Members Preview of the show on Friday, September 15, as part of the weekend's reopening activities following the museum's 45-day closure. The exhibition runs from Saturday, September 16, 2017 until Sunday, January 7, 2018.**

### **ABOUT SIDNEY SWIDLER**

Sidney Swidler began collecting contemporary ceramics in the early-1980s while living in Boston, Massachusetts. A Detroit Native and Wayne State University graduate, Swidler missed being drafted during World War II, but was conscripted for military service during the Korean War. A security clearance allowed him to stay stateside, during which time he took a pottery class, in which he believes he performed terribly. Swidler noted that this may have been the foundation of his interest in ceramics

and stated that his own "time on the wheel" educated him about the craft related to the objects he collected for decades. The GI Bill allowed him to pursue an architecture degree at the University of North Carolina, a state he credits for deepening his interest in ceramics. After graduation, he relocated to New England, where the purchase of ceramic piece truly started his road to collecting. Knowing himself and his personality, Swidler set rules for his purchasing: he would only collect items for which he had funds and he would only acquire vessels. His collection grew as he visited studios and ceramics conventions, where he discovered the work of hundreds of artists within the U.S. and beyond.

**FIA Curator Tracee Glab is available for phone interviews prior to the event, as is Sidney Swidler. All interested media, please call Chene Koppitz at 810.237.7387.**

#### **ABOUT THE WALCH-CHAN GALLERY**

The Ann K. Walch-Chan Gallery was named in her honor by her husband, Dr. Alex Chan. Ann Walch-Chan serves on the Board of the Founders Society and as a dedicated FIA volunteer. Her lifelong interest in the arts originated with her love of music and fine art, and it continues today as she explores her own creativity through various mediums and techniques.

#### **ABOUT THE FLINT INSTITUTE OF ARTS**

The Flint Institute of Arts is Michigan's second largest art museum and one of the largest museum art schools in the nation. The FIA's mission is to advance the understanding and appreciation of art for all through collections, exhibitions, and educational programs. The FIA is located at 1120 East Kearsley Street in the Flint Cultural Center. The museum is open Mon–Fri 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.; Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sun 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Admission to the FIA is free to members and children under 12; Adults are \$7; Senior Citizens and Students with I.D. are \$5. Saturdays are free thanks to Huntington Bank. For more information, please call 810.234.1695 or visit [www.flintarts.org](http://www.flintarts.org).