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SAN DIEGO



SECOND ACT

NAOMI WATTS ON HER PUSH
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PORTRAIT OF THE ARTISTS

The Creatives to
Know Now



San Diego's Festive
Holiday Happenings

LAYING DOWN ROOTS

Fresh off the opening of a brand-new store in El Cajon, Momma Pots founder and CEO Blaine Tionson is blossoming with her designer plant accessories.

BY HANNAH GEORGE

For San Diegan Blaine Tionson, growing is changing, and the entrepreneur did just that when a car accident brought her life in the restaurant industry to a screeching halt. "Looking for reconnection after so much change, I returned to my roots, cultivating a magnificent garden at my San Diego home with many, many plants," recalls Tionson. "I decided to pour my creative spirit into making beautiful vessels that would inspire others to connect with nature too." From there, Momma Pots ([mommapot.com](http://mommopot.com)) was born in 2017 in Tionson's San Diego garage. Since then, the designer plant accessories brand has sold more than 1 million products and can be found in over 700 retailers worldwide. Here, the green-thumbed entrepreneur discusses growing her business through sunshine and storms.

From top: Granite pieces from the Momma Pots Gemstone Collection; founder Blaine Tionson.



maintenance, easy-to-grow plants initially and familiarize yourself with your home environment and the specific needs of the plant you choose. Don't be afraid to experiment and observe the results, as, let's face it, we've all been members of the Plant Killers Anonymous club at some point. You'll gain valuable knowledge through trial and error. Some beginner-friendly options include Sansevieria, ZZ plants, pothos and dracaena.

What's on your holiday wishlist?

We just bought a new house, and a lot of the landscaping is commercial. All I want is a big, luscious green garden. Big on my wishlist is a picked flower garden; I will plant lots of bulbs and seeds with different blooming seasons so that flowers will bloom all year long. Also, I wish for a bunch of Protea plants and a lily pond!

What's next?

We just purchased our forever dream home, and we are spending time making it the most beautiful place to live and thrive. I will create a bountiful veggie garden with chickens and my very own 'she-shed.' I couldn't be more excited for the future!

You recently opened your first store in El Cajon. Tell us about it.

It's a 700-square-foot retail shop designed by our friends at Flourish Interior Design. The idea is to create a place where the local community and enthusiasts of Momma Pots can come together, offering a wide selection of top-quality pots and tools for plant care and fostering a sense of inspiration to connect with nature.

What is the most fulfilling part of running your own business?

Everyone told me I was out of my mind starting a pottery business. I ignored the noise, I put my head down and worked my ass off, and I was rewarded with a business that is my passion. Learning from that experience, I will always encourage, share, help and motivate others. It's so exciting to have a successful, self-made business from hard work, dedication and a lot of sacrifices.

What is your advice for plant-owning newbies?

Begin with more robust/hearty plant varieties. Opt for low-



Kelly Akashi, "Inheritance"
(2021, poston stone, cast
lead crystal, heirloom)



IN FORMATION

Kelly Akashi: Formations, The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego's newest touring exhibition, examines the past through fluid-like masterpieces that are sure to make an impact.

BY HANNAH GEORGE

The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (mcasd.org) recently unveiled an introspective new exhibition that the art-curious won't want to miss. *Kelly Akashi: Formations*, on view through Feb. 18, marks the first major touring museum exhibition of Los Angeles-based artist Kelly Akashi.

Organized by the San José Museum of Art, the exhibit provides an expansive look at the last decade of Akashi's oeuvre. Works include photography, glass objects, bronze sculptures and site-specific installations, plus new pieces created in response to her father's time in a Japanese-American incarceration camp during World War II, exploring the lasting impact of inherited trauma.

Initially trained as an analog photographer, Akashi diverts from her instruction, utilizing fluid or malleable

materials and advanced techniques like glass blowing, bronze casting and rope making. Akashi's works frequently combine glass and wax with unique bronze casts of her own hand that capture the human form in its varying states.

"Being a craftsperson means that you are a part of a bigger tradition," says Akashi. "There is a massive community that has passed down knowledge through generations. Through these oral histories, we can feel both time and the people who cared to cultivate the crafts and passed them forward."

Catch exhibition exclusives such as the debut of "Conjoined Tumbleweeds," the artist's most extensive bronze work to date, and "Be Me (Californian—Japanese Citrus)," a stainless steel cast of a fruit tree as a nod to the artist's hybrid cultural roots. Part of Akashi's ongoing *Be Me* series, it exemplifies the desire to erase the dichotomy between the self and other and experience the two in a fascinating harmony.

Kelly Akashi,
"Cultivator (Hanami)"
(2021, flame-worked
borosilicate glass, bronze)



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART SAN DIEGO