

# GUY VADAS (Pottery Boy)

In conversation with **DANIEL DE VILLANUEVA** Photographer **ROB TENNENT**  
Fashion editor **THOMAS TOWNSEND**

# 340



Top and pants FENDI

Hailing from the vibrant cultural hub of Melbourne, pottery artisan and social media maven Guy Vadas, widely known as Pottery Boy, has carved a niche for himself. Amid a period saturated with digital experiences, he provides an authentic, handcrafted touch that harkens back to a time when the organic creation process held more sway than the digital domain, embracing an approach that blends intimacy and comfort into his creations. This distinctive style has garnered a dedicated following drawn to his unique take on ceramics as not just an art form, but a heartfelt connection.

**DANIEL DE VILLANUEVA.** Morning, afternoon, or evening! We're half a world away, but it's wonderful being able to chat with you, Guy. We're so eager to know who the boy behind Pottery Boy is. Besides ceramics—we will cover that momentarily—guide us through your hobbies and interests. Any movie recommendations? Journaling tips?

**GUY VADAS.** I think my favorite thing to do outside of ceramics is cooking! I'm into hanging out in the kitchen and cooking for my friends. I think it overlaps with the great creativity you experience through ceramics or art. Also, I've been doing some sewing classes to learn how to customize my clothes with a machine. I'm quite particular with how my clothes fit, and learning how to sew, means I can change things slightly so they fit me well. I've done a bit of hiking recently as well.

**D.V.** Clearly stated, your universe does not revolve solely around the craft of pottery itself but includes a personal and intimate approach to introspec-

tion and ideas. Was it ever your intention to merge thought and craft? How do they intertwine to deliver the final outcome?

**G.V.** I don't think it was ever an intention of mine to turn something which was so creative and so "me" into a full-time job. When I started, it was just about the joy of making and creating without any sort of expectations or requirements of what I was creating. I didn't expect it to grow to where it is today! I suppose, as it's grown, it's also taken away a lot of the creativity—it went from being just purely creative and spending time in my grandmother's sunroom, to now running a full on business. It changes the way that I interact with clay. Many of my ideas and creations early on just kind of happened; there wasn't too much thought behind it. I wanted to try, and then I'd end up with this mix of what I set out to achieve versus what I *actually* achieved and created.

**D.V.** It seems as though there's a collective yearning for a resurgence of craftsmanship,

to create things with our own hands—we seem to miss the hands-on experience when relying on technology all the time. Was this something you felt when you started with pottery and ceramics? How did it first begin?

**G.V.** So I started ceramics about five years ago, here in Australia. I didn't know what it was like in the rest of the world as there weren't many people doing it. It wasn't cool or trendy. People were starting to value craftsmanship and handmade, slow-made items and garments. I first went with my friend and we sat around a little trestle table in this little old lady's garage, where there must have been seven or eight 65 to 70-year-old women. We had tea or coffee and hand-built ceramics. That was my first introduction to it—and I *really* fell in love with it! For those women in that room, it was a moment to create and make things for their homes and connect. I connected to them, and I thought this needed to be felt. More people



Top and shirt ZEGNA  
Underwear and socks *STYLIST'S OWN*



Top, shirt, pants and shoes ZEGNA



Top and boots EMPORIO ARMANI

had to be able to connect, create and get back to using their hands. Everything is very tech, everything's online. It's not very usual to make something in real life as everyone's making things on computers all the time. **D.V.** Documenting our experiences has become commonplace, particularly for activities we find pleasure in. With that in mind, we are curious to know the circumstances that led you to begin recording yourself. What motivated you to start capturing

your pottery-making journey on camera? **G.V.** When I was a young man, maybe like 18 or 19, I really wanted to be a model. So back then, to be a model, you had to have social media. I had an account, and I started just posting a few little snippets of the pottery wheel and some little things that I'd made, and people were like, "Oh, wow, this is really cool!" They were into it straight away. Then, I filmed a few videos of me on the wheel, and they got really engaged—great responses—and then I used that social media flow to continue the process and keep things growing and building a business around that. Originally, I was inspired to start filming because people showed interest in my work. Then, people wanted to know about the process and how

## and still be beautiful,

it was made so this led to me being on camera. **D.V.** Your determination to pursue pottery truly stands out, especially when you took the bold step of selling your car to fund your studio. We're eager to know what motivated you to make such a significant commitment to your craft. When you look back on that decision, what emotions and sense of urgency were driving you to go all in and

make it work? **G.V.** I started getting into it and I rented a pottery wheel that I had in my grandma's sunroom. It was small and the rest of my family was also living there. So after about a month, my dad said to me, "Look, it's been fine having you here, but it's probably time for you to go and find an actual studio somewhere." I thought I'd look at some other studios on the other side of town, where they're teaching ceramics. But they were very cold, very sterile and run by really old artists. I wanted my place to be fun, cool and sexy—for people to be excited to go there! I thought I'd open one near where I was living. It felt right, like it was *my* moment and I needed to take it. So, to sell the car... I didn't really think too much about it. I had a feeling it would be okay. And it was! It worked out really well.

to continue to be creative and work on my craft without thinking about selling them. This puts a lot of pressure on other artists. I have the studios where we teach people and that pays my bills. It's always nice to be out of trial—to do things without any pressure to sell them. A lot of the pieces that I make, I end up just giving to my friends or family. It's made it easier in terms

of my artistic growth. I started the studio when I was only 21. So, learning to deal and engage with people *and* learning to be a good team leader and manager, was really challenging! **D.V.** With your pottery journey now well-grounded, what future paths do you foresee? Have you contemplated expanding your craft into new domains or exploring different avenues yourself?

**G.V.** The studios are going so well and I love pottery so much. They're going to continue to run but I have a few things that I'd like to do in the next few years. I just started working on doing some acting—it feels very cathartic and gets me out of my comfort zone. I'd love to see where that goes! Also, I'd like to open a restaurant where we cook and serve on plates and bowls that I've made. I'm in Melbourne, but I'm considering doing it in Sydney. **D.V.** So I have two questions regarding that. What movie genre do you see yourself acting in? And, what kind of restaurant would you have? **G.V.** Some of my movie idols would be a young Johnny Depp, River Phoenix or Leonardo DiCaprio. I'd love to play a heartthrob! [Laughs] So maybe rom-coms. I could see myself doing some. Regarding the restaurant, I have a friend who I've been chatting to about it, and she currently works in a European-inspired restaurant and it's constantly changing menu. It's it's a seasonal one and whatever she can get from suppliers, she turns it into a menu for that week or that month. I think it would be really cool because it works on *not* wasting anything. So I'd have one bar/restaurant with a sea-

## a little strange, a little different,

believe has driven such a remarkable expansion of your socials? What newness do you consider makes your channels stand out? **G.V.** Pottery has gained a lot of interest and awareness over the last five years. Social media has *allowed* it to gain that awareness. People have started to gravitate towards process videos and seeing things go from a block of clay to a vase in just a minute—it's really satisfying! That stands for other mediums, like cooking for people and making clothes. I have added a very cheeky, more interesting, fun element to the content. Typically, pottery content was done by old artists, whereas the younger sort adds more fun energy! **D.V.** Ever since you started, have you faced any particular challenges that have signifi-

cantly influenced your growth as an artist? If so, how have these obstacles contributed to shaping your artistic development? **G.V.** There haven't been many obstacles. The art is just for me; I'm not selling a lot of pieces because I don't make them to sell them. I do them for the *joy* of doing them—

sonal menu, for sure. **D.V.** As an artist, the horizon of creative opportunities stretches far and wide. In light of this, we're intrigued by the prospect of collaboration with artists from different domains. Can you imagine yourself engaging in collaborative ventures with artists from different disciplines, inter-

twining pottery with their artistic expressions? **G.V.** I think about it a lot. It's something that I would want to explore when I have a bit more time. I've always wanted to work on furniture so I would love to do some sort of ceramic and wood furniture—chairs, couches or tables. A stool with a wooden base and a ceramic top would be incredible! I also think that plastics and resins are *really* exciting opportunities because clay is very firm and strong, and a lot of plastics are quite soft and malleable. This means

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Foulard, shirt, jacket, pants and bag GUCCI



**“Love, love, love. Love is challenging!**

**It’s what we should be striving for.”**

**But I feel love is all there is.**

Belt and pants ACNE STUDIOS

**– Guy Vadas**

## “The biggest thing is for us to *understand*

that they can *connect* quite easily. **D.V.** Do you have any names of artists that you would like to collaborate with? **G.V.** An artist that I draw a lot of inspiration from and I love, is Oscar Piccolo. Another artist is Joshua Space, he's Melbourne-based and works with mainly recycled plastics. He uses bottles and bottle tops and melts them down to make chairs and really cool furniture out of them. **D.V.** How does your cul-

tural heritage influence and shape your pottery creations? **G.V.** I thought about this a year ago and I couldn't figure out if any of my cultural backgrounds came out in my pottery. And then I was at my grandmother's house—she's Egyptian—and I was looking around and noticed that pretty much all of the pottery in her house has been there for years! Since I was a kid and grew up in that home, the pottery is similar to the shapes that I make now. Maybe, subconsciously, they've inspired me to create the shapes that I do now—very classic vase-like shapes. I take the shapes and deform them or add different colors to what you would find there. There's inspiration in my creations from my grandmother's place because that felt like a safe haven for me growing up. **D.V.** As you've already begun sharing your knowledge through tutorials and individual lessons, we're eager to know about your experience as a teacher. How has guiding and mentoring aspiring artists influenced your growth and perspective? What are the most rewarding aspects and challenges you've encountered in this role? **G.V.** It's an honor to be able to teach people! It's something that I've become so much out of as a person and as a ceramicist. The majority of

making the chessboard was a real challenge. I probably made four or five that didn't work before I made the first one that actually did—and when I finally made it, it was like such a *beautiful* piece! **D.V.** From your perspective, how do you believe art—in particular, your own—impacts society on

## ourselves and be more self-aware—to understand

an emotional level? Furthermore, what specific emotions or feelings do you aim to convey through your creations? **G.V.** I've always tried to strive for this balance between symmetry and asymmetry and for people to know it's okay to be somewhere in between. Everything we look at these

## how our impact on the world affects

days tends to be relatively symmetrical, and beauty is normally connected with symmetry. To know that you can be a little wonky, a little strange, a little different, and *still* be beautiful, is a really good underlying message that has been part of my pieces. **D.V.** Navigating moments of creative block

## everyone around us.

or self-doubt is a common challenge for artists. How do you personally tackle these hurdles? **G.V.** I just take time away from making. I have that privilege because that's not how I make my money. I can take as long as I need, which is great. So if there's a moment where I don't want to be making

friends, we realized they weren't, so we thought we should share some of ours. The biggest thing is for us to *understand* ourselves and be more self-aware—to understand how our impact on the world affects everyone around us. Be true to yourself and what you like to do and *not* be ashamed. Just be you! That's it. There's nothing else out there. You've got to be you because if you don't like who you surround yourself

with, they're not the right people for you. We also spoke about love, finding it and falling in and out of love and how we both navigated that—a lot of fun to talk about and sometimes a little nerve-wracking! But Hugh's currently in Bali, so that's why we ended up with five episodes. We were

doing them weekly for five weeks, and we would

have kept going, but he's currently over there. I think we'll restart it at some point again because it was so great for us, and a lot of listeners also really appreciated it.

**D.V.** What are your notes on love? How do you feel about it? **G.V.** Love, love, love. Love is challenging! But I feel love is all there is. It's what we should be striving for. I've been in and out of love with different women my whole life, and learning to love yourself is *more* important than loving anyone else. That's my notes on love! [Laughs] **D.V.** Balancing your personal life and artistic journey is crucial to maintaining happiness. How do you manage to find harmony between bliss and commitment to art in your life? **G.V.** I find it *really* challenging at times. It's hard to find time to create and

## Be true to yourself and what you like to do and *not* be ashamed.

the people that I'm teaching are adults and not many adults are learning *new* things. So it's cool to see how they interact with something they're not good at. Understanding people is a learning process so that I can help them to achieve *better*. The most rewarding thing is when someone comes in without skills, and in only a

few months, they're making beautiful pieces they're proud of! **D.V.** Can you recount a particular experience or project that holds special significance in your journey? In what ways has it impacted your creative vision? **G.V.** I think the first ever chessboard that I made was quite different from anything that I'd made before. I'd always made vases, so enturing away from the wheel and

it, I won't create until I feel ready again. I don't force it, so I don't rush the process.

**D.V.** You launched a podcast, “Deep Dives,” with Hugh O'Donnell in January, where you explore introspection and delve into profound issues within personal experiences. Could you share with us some of the key themes and subjects you've

explored in your episodes so far? What motivated you to select such meaningful topics for your podcast? **G.V.** We were having these conversations and started thinking if other men were having them as well. After we asked a few of our other

run the studios and then also find time for me. I think only just now, after five years of doing pottery, I'm at the point where I'm starting to realize that it will take a toll on me, long term, if I don't look after myself and my mental health. It's about putting in some little boundaries for times when I don't do anything pottery related. It's hard because it's *my* thing. So learning to understand that, I need a day just to do nothing or to just cook or hang out with my friends and family—it really makes a big difference! I also make lists, which is really good. I have a very clear list of things that I want to get done for the week, and if I get all of that done, then I have time for myself. ●

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