



EXHIBITION ADVISORY

Exhibition: *A Change in Our Nature: Villeroy & Boch*

On View: September 26, 2026–September 24, 2028

Reception: September 26, 2026, 4:00–6:00 pm • Opening Remarks @ 4:30 pm

Location: American Museum of Ceramic Art, Pomona, CA



(Pomona, California–September 8, 2026) Opening September 26, 2026, *A Change in Our Nature* traces the evolving conceptualization of nature amid industrialization through ceramic works produced at the Villeroy & Boch factory in Mettlach, Germany.

The Villeroy & Boch company was founded in 1836 through a merger between two competing ceramics factories owned by Nicolas Villeroy (1759-1843) and Jean François Boch (1782-1858). The company went on to pioneer the combination of art and industry with a staff of skilled artisans whose innovative works provide a glimpse into life in industrial-era Germany and its changing relationship with the natural landscape.

The Mettlach artists' styles shifted over the 80-year period during which the factory operated before a fire destroyed it in 1921. While fewer people labored outdoors,

depictions of nature became a playground for the imagination. Many Mettlach artists were influenced by Romanticism, which fixated on ideas of folk culture and the medieval period, creating a new idealized image of nature through the lens of the past. The push and pull of public opinion on industrialization also influenced Mettlach's imagery. Early works were organic and asymmetrical; later works took on strict symmetry and abstraction. Art Nouveau reintroduced flowing curvilinear motifs and asymmetry while preserving certain elements of pattern and abstraction. Mettlach designers continually adapted to the tastes of the time and depicted the rise and fall of interest in several philosophical and artistic movements.

Production methods and subject matter also shifted from suiting elite preferences to catering to the rapidly growing middle class as the Industrial Revolution reshaped the economy. While expensive-to-produce Chromolith pieces awed attendees of World Fairs and Expositions across Europe and the US, they were phased out in favor of more affordable options such as etched or print-under-glaze designs. *A Change in Our Nature* underscores historical shifts in ceramics that occurred post-industrialization: visual, philosophical, and economic.

Curator Hayden Walker explains, "What's exciting about art history is the tangible way it connects us with the past; Villeroy and Boch ceramics have been cherished, collected, and used in daily life for generations, which invites an intimacy that other art forms don't. My goal with the exhibition is to show a slice of life from the past and inspire an understanding of why so many people have been drawn to these works."

Executive Director Beth Ann Gerstein shares, "The Villeroy & Boch Mettlach Collection continually presents opportunities to make surprising connections between contemporary life and work and historical ceramics. This new exhibition effectively invites today's viewers to consider the relevance and resonance of historical Mettlach ceramics in today's changing society."

A Change in Our Nature will be on view in the Robert and Colette Wilson Gallery at AMOCA September 26, 2026–September 24, 2028.

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Exhibition Overview

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Complementing the in-person exhibition experience, numerous public and educational programs will be mounted, including lectures, conversations, college-level tours, and tours for Title 1 schools serving grades K-12.

Exhibition Credits

A Change in Our Nature is curated by Hayden Walker, Project Registrar & Curatorial Assistant, Robert & Colette Wilson VBM Collection. Walker, who grew up in New Jersey, attended Scripps College in Claremont where she majored in Art History and Media Studies. At Scripps, Walker was an Arts and Administration Intern at the Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery; she has also been a volunteer Registrar at San Bernardino County Museum. Walker is pursuing coursework in Cultural Studies at Claremont Graduate University as well as taking local ceramics classes. *A Change in Our Nature* marks Walker's first time curating a museum exhibition.

The following individuals and organizations are acknowledged, with gratitude, for making this exhibition possible: Robert D. and Colette D. Wilson; Roy DeSelms, PhD.

This exhibition is funded, in part, by grants from the Dew Foundation and the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation.

CALENDAR LISTING

A Change in Our Nature opens at the American Museum of Ceramic Art, 399 N Garey Ave, Pomona, CA 91767 on September 26, 2026, with an opening reception on Saturday, September 26 from 4-6 pm. The exhibition runs through September 24, 2028. The museum is open Friday-Sunday, 11 am to 4 pm.

For more information: <https://www.amoca.org/future-exhibitions/change-in-our-nature/> or (909) 865-3146 or communications@amoca.org.

Credit

This exhibition is organized by the American Museum of Ceramic Art.

About AMOCA

The American Museum of Ceramic Art was founded in 2003, in Pomona, California. The mission of the museum is to champion the art, history, creation, and technology of ceramics through exhibitions, collections, outreach, and studio programming.

Museum Hours

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 11am – 4pm

Admission

General \$14, Senior \$9, Student/Pomona Resident \$7, Members & under 12 Free
Pay-what-you-can First Fridays are the first Friday of each month.

Location

American Museum of Ceramic Art
399 North Garey Avenue, Pomona, CA 91767
(909) 865-3146 • www.amoca.org

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