

Heino gives back to artists



Ojai Studio Artists President Linda Taylor, left, is surprised upon hearing Helen Heino's announcement.

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OVN contributor

In a surprise announcement that pleasantly shocked all in attendance, Helen Heino, niece of the late renowned potter, Otto Heino, told a gathering at the opening reception July 30 for the "Made in Ojai VII" exhibition at the Ojai Valley Museum, that she will be donating all proceeds from the sale of her uncle's estate on display to be divided equally between both Ojai Studio Artists and the museum. She is executor of the Otto Heino Estate and had loaned 22 of the Heino vessels for the retrospective display and sale during the current exhibition. Now through her generous gift, 100 percent of the proceeds from the ceramics sold will be given to each nonprofit organization from the generated funds.

"Both my Aunt Vivika and Uncle Otto shared and extended their knowledge of pottery with all who expressed a desire to throw pots or understand more about the world of clay," said Helen Heino. "They were glaze masters,

wedged their own clay, threw and trimmed all their pots, glazed and then fired the pots in one of their nine kilns, many of which were built by Uncle Otto. As Uncle Otto often stated — '90 percent of the pot is in the firing' — and I know he still has a kiln fired up! He wanted to be known as 'a true potter' as it is inscribed on his headstone.

"How blessed I have been to have had such a special aunt and uncle. They both taught at many prestigious universities and art institutes and readily gave of their time, energy and gifts to the Ojai Museum and the Ojai Studio Artists. It is with this generous giving spirit reflected by Aunt Vivika and Uncle Otto that I wish to continue.

"As I stated at the reception, I donate all the proceeds from the sale of these pots shown in the 'Made in Ojai VIII' show, of more than 20 pots from my collection, to be divided equally — 50 percent to the Ojai Museum and 50 percent to OSA's Vivika and Otto Heino Scholarship Fund."

Otto Heino passed away

in July 2009 at age 94. His wife Vivika died in 1995. Both were internationally known for their contributions to the art of ceramics. And their fame and fortune grew when they reformulated a long-lost buttery yellow glaze from the Chin dynasty. A piece with this glaze is part of the donated pieces.

"The Ojai Studio Artists are so grateful to Helen Heino for her wonderful donation of pieces by Otto Heino to both OSA and the Ojai Museum," said Linda Taylor, OSA president. "Both Otto and Vivika were important members of our group from the very beginning, helping guide the group and donating works for the scholarship fund every year. Their importance as role models for artists in the community as well as their generous and sharing nature will be difficult to duplicate. I think that this spirit of generosity is the inspiration for Helen's donation."

As a tribute to both Otto and Vivika Heino, the Ojai Studio Artists devoted part of their exhibition space to the renowned potters during their annual "Made in Ojai VIII" show at the OVM. On loan to the exhibit from the artist's niece Helen Heino, and private collectors, are Heino ceramics spanning 1978 through 2009, with accompanying texts and photos.

Should all pieces be sold, the value of this donation could reach into the tens of thousands of dollars. Additionally, a raffle of a bottle by Otto Heino, valued at \$1,200, is ongoing throughout the exhibit. This round bottle is a classic shape that Otto Heino delighted in throwing. The Applewood Ash glaze was formulated from the ashes

of an apple tree that Otto grew in his apple orchard. This is a "sentimental glaze" because of its association with the artist's "best buddy," his brother, Elmer. Tickets are available for \$5 each or five for \$20 with 100 percent of the proceeds benefiting the operations and educational programs of the Ojai Valley Museum. The raffle ends with the exhibition on Sept. 19, at which time a drawing for the winner will be held. Winners do not have to be present to win.

"The importance of Otto's iconic status as a craftsman of American mid-century art and design, as well as his deep roots in Ojai along with Vivika, Beatrice Wood, and others, perpetuate the local ceramic legend continuum," said Richard Amend, OSA exhibition chair.

Interested collectors should call Ojai Valley Museum director, Michele Pracy, for appointments to view the Heino installation, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 640-1390. The museum, located at 130 W. Ojai Ave., is open Thursday and Friday, 1 to 4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. There is a \$3 admission fee.

The 27th annual Ojai Studio Artists Tour of more than 60 member studios, will take place on Oct. 9 and 10, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a reception, 6 to 8 p.m. on Oct. 11 at the Ojai Art Center. Tickets are \$31 each in advance or \$36 each during the tour weekend. Children 12 and under are free. Call 646-8126 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. or fax 646-9762 for ticket assistance. Tickets are available online at ojaistudioartists.com.