

# Piece of Work

ARTIST PETER OLSON UPDATES THE CLASSICAL GREEK URN WITH MODERN MUSINGS ON MORTALITY

TEXT LUIS R. RIGUAL

## FIT TO PRINT

With his series *Marked for Life*, artist Peter Olson fused together two of his favorite passions, ceramics and photography. The collection features a number of urns that take their cues from Greek antiquities, yet are layered with imagery of tattooed models photographed by Olsen, as well as original photography of museum objects, street scenes, and historic medical texts.

## THE INSPIRATION

"The overall pattern motifs were inspired by French porcelains, while the ceramic forms themselves are an amalgam of many styles," says Olson. "The temporality of our bodies and the endurance of their images link us through history with survivors of other tumultuous eras and with the work of other craftspeople as well. Whether we're tattooed or not, life and death mark us all. We are marked by this moment in time."



## DETAILS, DETAILS

The tattooed subjects for this series were photographed on a white seamless background. Olson chose the secondary image from the shoot as the visual for the urn's lid.



## FINAL PRODUCT

Each urn takes about two weeks to complete at Olson's studio, where he glazes them himself. As for whether he prefers them to stand on their own or with some kind of embellishment? "A gallery in Dallas showed some of them once, removed the lids, and put flowers in them," he says. "I took all the pieces back." [peterolson.me](http://peterolson.me)