

Dave the Potter, David Drake, Edited Collection

Deadline: Mar 1, 2012

Michael Chaney

The editor invites chapter proposals for an edited collection exploring the work of Dave the Potter, or David Drake (ca. 1800-1874), a nineteenth-century African American slave and potter who worked in Edgefield, South Carolina. In addition to making some of the largest hand-built pottery of the period, Drake incised writing onto his storage jars and pots—signatures, proverbs, couplets of poetry, and witticisms. Some of this writing is documentary, but much of it is proverbial and poetic. Overtly disobeying prohibitions against slave literacy, these inscriptions range in tone from the audacious ("I made this jar" or "Cash Wanted") to the absurd ("Making this Jar—I Had All Thoughts/Lads & Gentlemen—Never Out Walks"). Save for a few commentators, such as craft historian John Vlach, journalist and fiction writer Leonard Todd, McKissick Museum curator Jill Beute Koverman, and my own chapter in *Fugitive Vision* (Indiana, 2008), Dave the Potter and the implications of his art and writing have hardly been discussed by the scholarly community. This collection is an attempt to rectify that scarcity of commentary.

Possible topics include:

- Dave the Potter as subject of contemporary art and writing in Leonard Todd's *Carolina Clay*, or Laban Carrick Hill and Bryan Collier's award winning children's book *Dave the Potter*, or Chicago artist Theaster Gates's exhibit and installation "To Speculate Darkly".
- Dave's place in a revamped art history or literary canon of the US, of South Carolina, of African Americans, or of the Diaspora
- Comparisons of Dave and other artisans, artists, or writers
- Dave's work as the site for an intervention into theories or methods of critical race studies, history, art history, slave signatures, inscriptions, poetry, heroic couplets, hybridity, pottery, colonoware, ceramic form, notions of interdisciplinarity, fungibility, canonicity, Diaspora, etc.
- Analyses (from a range of approaches) of Dave's poetic inscriptions

as well as his vessels

This list is more suggestive than exhaustive: the editor and the university presses interested in this collection welcome a range of topics, approaches, and disciplines.

Queries should be submitted to michael.chaney@dartmouth.edu.

Please send 400-600 word proposals as well as a C.V. to the same email address by March 1st 2012. Completed chapter-essays for accepted proposals will be due by June 1st 2012.

Reference:

CFP: Dave the Potter, David Drake, Edited Collection. In: Arthist.net, Nov 30, 2011 (accessed Jul 16, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/2345>>.