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## Where Others See Blight, Artists Find Beauty

Ceramist Keiko Fukazawa and photographer Dennis O. Callwood put a unique twist on graffiti

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In their wearable graffiti—high-tops, skirt and kimono on her, pants and suspenders on him—Keiko Fukazawa and Dennis O. Callwood don't exactly melt into a crowd.

At first glance, the fabrics could be taken for colorful abstract prints, but closer inspection reveals the graphics, with their recurring themes of death and despair, angst and anger, as unmistakably the work of juvenile taggers and gangbangers.

Even if they were dressed in ubiquitous black from head to toe, this couple still wouldn't fade into the woodwork—he, at 60, with shaved head and closely cropped gray beard, surveying the world through dark John Lennon glasses; she, at 47, with a chic, hard-edged bob and a disarming way of protesting in quite good English that her English is quite terrible.

Both are artists, Fukazawa a



ROBERT GAUTHIER / Los Angeles Times

**Artists Dennis O. Callwood and Keiko Fukazawa, married for four years, are exhibiting their work together for the second time.**

widely collected cutting-edge ceramist, and Callwood—whose day job for 21 years has been as a county probation officer—an avant-garde photographer who explores social issues such as racism and disenfranchisement through the lens of his camera.

Married for four years, they currently are exhibiting together for the second time. Their show, "Art and Deviation," in the gallery at USC's Institute for Genetic Medicine through Sept. 30, presents graffiti as an art form rather than as urban blight. And they do

it in a unique way, incorporating it into their own art.

That Fukazawa and Callwood came together in the first place is the stuff of a sitcom. Meeting at a Christmas party in Pasadena in 1995, they discovered a common bond: Her work is in the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; he had recently been represented in a group show at LACMA; both were teaching art to the incarcerated.

Callwood was instantly intrigued with Fukazawa. She found him interesting and comfortable to talk to but recalls, laughing, "in the middle of the conversation I got up to get more food." He gave her his business card. "I had a friend, an artist, who liked exotic people," Fukazawa says. "I thought maybe he was good for her. I never thought of the possibility of our dating."

Callwood persisted, but when he called her, she was always "busy." Then, in April 1996, Fukazawa invited him as a guest artist to her ceramics class at the Cali-

fornia Institution for Men in Chino. It was not romance that was on her mind; she just thought he could get through to her students.

But by November 1996, she said yes when he invited her to a MOCA opening, telling her she could bring a friend. To his dismay, she did—a male friend.

Undeterred, he sent her a dozen yellow roses on Christmas Day. How friendly, she thought, romance still not on her radar. She called to thank him, and they decided to go to a movie. Over three months of dating, she began looking at him differently; a year later they were married. It was while Callwood was at Challenger Memorial Youth Center, a juvenile correction facility in Lancaster, in the early '90s that he became intrigued with graffiti as art.

The camp director asked the staff to create some programs for the teens incarcerated there, and he, quite naturally, chose art.

**Please see Artists, E3**