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The Burke Prize reinforces the Museum of Arts and Design's commitment to celebrating the next generation of artists working in and advancing the disciplines that shaped the American studio craft movement. Named for Marian and Russell Burke, two passionate collectors of craft and longtime supporters of MAD, the prize is an unrestricted award of \$50,000 given to a professional artist age forty-five or under working in glass, fiber, clay, metal, and/or wood. The winner was selected by a jury of professionals in the fields of art, craft, and design. The prize is accompanied by a display of the winner's work in MAD's atrium.

Winner

Selva Aparicio, Chicago, IL

Finalists

Alex Chitty, Chicago, IL

Kira Dominguez Hultgren, Urbana, IL

Julia Phillips, Chicago, IL, and Berlin, Germany

Brie Ruais, Santa Fe, NM

Jury

Camille Ann Brewer

Artist and Arts Information Professional

Garth Johnson

Paul Phillips and Sharon Sullivan Curator of Ceramics

Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, NY

Charisse Pearlina Weston

Artist and Writer

2021 Burke Prize Winner

We are immensely grateful to Marian and Russell Burke for their establishment of the Burke Prize—now in its fourth cycle—which has done so much to empower the mission of the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD), and to support young and emerging artists. MAD first opened its doors in 1956 with the radical aim of placing the underappreciated mediums of clay, fiber, glass, and wood and the fields of jewelry, textile, and furniture design at the center of its focus. Originally nurtured by the vision of philanthropist and patron Aileen Osborn Webb, the Museum continues to uphold its founding, egalitarian mission to promote a view of the world unobstructed by traditional definitions of fine art through attention to craft and handmaking. At the Museum of Arts and Design we celebrate craft as both a noun and a verb, providing a platform for the exploration of craft in history, culture, and society, and we are dedicated to supporting emerging and established artists who innovate ways of making in craft media.

The Burke Prize plays a significant role in MAD's continuation of this mission. Through the ongoing generosity of Marian and Russell Burke, the Museum is able to further its commitment to supporting the next generation of artists at the forefront of the field of craft. Dynamic possibilities and exhilarating new directions for craft are represented in the work of all five of our extraordinary finalists, and we are privileged to recognize them as they continue to shape the future of the field.

My sincere thanks go out to Marian and Russell, to every artist who applied for consideration, to the esteemed jurors who selected the winner and finalists, and to the museum staff involved in managing, implementing, and publicizing the prize.

Tim Rodgers

Nanette L. Laitman Director



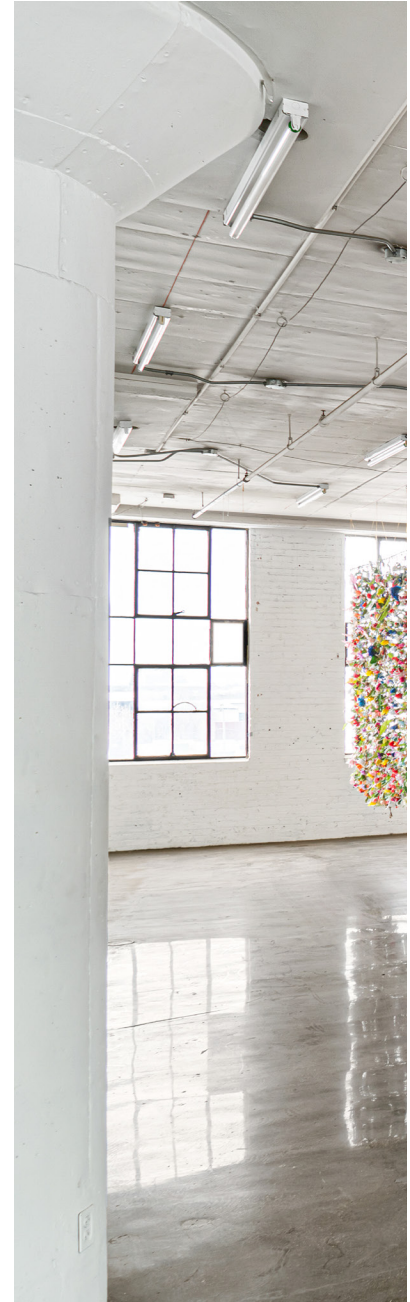
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2023 Winner

Selva Aparicio



Selva Aparicio is an interdisciplinary artist working across installation and sculpture to dig deeper into ideas of memory, intimacy, and the temporality of life. She was raised on the outskirts of Barcelona, a land once cherished by the Catalan bourgeoisie, abandoned and reduced to ruins during the Spanish Civil War. It later transformed into a refuge for squatters, immigrants, and society's outcasts, now being reclaimed as a natural park. She found solace in nature from a young age and cultivated a profound interest in the ephemeral, as inspired by the natural world around her. She received her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2015 and her MFA in sculpture from Yale University in 2017, honing a praxis that foregrounds a unique reverence for the discarded in explorations of life, death, and rebirth. Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions at venues including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The International Museum of Surgical Science, Chicago; Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT; Can Mario Museum, Spain; CRUSH Curatorial, New York; The Kyoto International Craft Center, Japan; Instituto Cervantes, New York; and the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, among others. Aparicio was awarded the JUNCTURE Fellowship in Art and International Human Rights in 2016, the Blair Dickinson Memorial Prize in 2017, and a MAKER Grant from the Chicago Artist Coalition in 2020. She was named one of the 2020 breakout artists in Chicago by NewCity Art and received both the Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation's Artadia Award in 2022 and the 3Arts HMS Fund Award in 2023. Her sculpture *Auto-da-Fé*, exhibited at EXPO Chicago 2023, was also donated to the DePaul Art Museum with funds from the Inaugural Barbara Nessim Acquisition Prize. She is currently serving as the International Randall Chair in Sculpture and Dimensional Studies at Alfred University in New York and working on two outdoor permanent sculpture commissions for Belgium's Beaufort 2024 Triennale and the Heraclea Archeological Park in Italy.



Previous spread:

East of Eden (detail), 2023

Reclaimed cemetery teddy bear and dandelion seeds
14 x 17 x 14 in. (35.6 x 43.2 x 35.6 cm)

Our Garden Remains, 2021

Reclaimed cemetery flowers, decorations,
and artificial sinew
96 x 576 x 20 in. (243.8 x 1463 x 50.8 cm)



I resonate deeply with craft as a field given the materiality of my practice and the significance of my processes to the overall effect of my work. The connections I forge with my materials – from gathering and processing to creating and preserving – allow me to remain connected to my roots and celebrate the ability to make by hand. From my earliest days, I’ve honed a strong, deferential relationship with nature and sought out the creative freedom inherent in its gathering, making, and repurposing. I was raised by proto-hippies who named me Selva, meaning “jungle.” Like my namesake, I was immersed in a world full of plants, animals, and handmade objects. Crafting was both practical and necessary, particularly for the generations of women before me who made our family’s livelihood through weaving, sewing, and crocheting. I taught myself construction to fix our house and learned skills like stone carving from the travelers who visited it. Amidst the often-tumultuous nature of my household, I found solace in nature and began to develop my own sense of liberation through craft.

Reminiscent of the late 19th-century focus on the craft field as it responded to industrialization, my work reminds viewers of the parallels between nature and everyday life as well as the limitations of machines when it comes to beauty and creativity. My celebration of natural ephemera and everyday materials underscores the organic nature of culture and community, of making and memory, of life, liminality, and loss. In my work, ephemeral materials are paired with time-honored techniques like weaving, carving, and sewing, as seen in pieces like *Childhood Memories* (2020) and *Our Garden Remains* (2022). Although my work often stands in stark contrast to the fast-paced technological world it holds in conversation, it raises all too similar questions about our arrival in the present and the viability of the future under existing systems.

A recurring theme in pieces like *Entre Nosotros* (2020) and *Ode to the Unclaimed Dead* (2022) is the function of art as a therapeutic outlet. Not only do these pieces make clear statements about the escalating instability of our world and the abundance of materials derived from problems like waste and overconsumption in an almost countercultural fashion, they also provide viewers opportunities to publicly engage with themes like death and human objecthood, and to confront the heavy emotions that are often bound up with the taboo nature of these topics. *Ode* in particular seeks to expose the inherent failings of a system that disproportionately relegates the impoverished and disabled while attempting to reclaim an infinite number of memories stolen away by the poverty, illness, and isolation so rampant in western society. *Ode* speaks both to global issues like war and pandemic as well as to the more personal interactions we have with loss on a daily basis.

While it will never cease to be made, it is my hope that craft as an artistic field will continue to lend its talents to sociocultural and environmental issues while reflecting on ever-present concerns like relevance and sustainability. Pushing boundaries and encouraging intersections between visual art, installation, architecture, public health, environmentalism, urban planning, and even the academic pedagogy that all too often favors restrictive black and white binaries – just to name a few personal favorites – will enable us to innovate our artistic explorations and forge new connections within and between the communities who engage with our work. My philosophies tend to align with those of more contemporary authorities like Mildred Constantine and Faythe Levine, who remind us that craft is malleable and holds the power to be fluid in its definition. By using my passion for public exhibition and my platform as an artist whose work depends upon the careful fusion of form with function, mind with soul, vision with technique, and the visual with the visceral, I aim to continue normalizing the presence of more freeform works like mine in academic and fine arts spaces. Although lines between disciplines continue to shift and blur, even within my own portfolio, I firmly believe that art and craft are not mutually exclusive and that both can and must coexist in all spaces where culture, heritage, and community are made and shared.



Entre Nosotros (Among Us), 2020
Cast Portland cement tiles from deceased donors
132 x 132 x 132 in. (335.3 x 335.3 x 335.3 cm)

Velo de luto (Mourning veil), 2020
Cicada wings and three generations of woman's hair
Dimensions variable



Childhood Memories, n.d.
Carved oak and hair loom
Overall installation: 234 sq. feet (21.7 sq. m)

Hysteria (detail), 2020
Thorn branches, ligament, and obstetric table
108 x 48 x 72 in. (274.3 x 121.9 x 182.9 cm)



Hysteria, 2020
Thorn branches, ligament, and obstetric table
108 x 48 x 72 in. (274.3 x 121.9 x 182.9 cm)



East of Eden, 2023
Reclaimed cemetery teddy bear and dandelion seeds
14 x 17 x 14 in. (35.6 x 43.2 x 35.6 cm)

I want to express my gratitude to Marian and Russell Burke for providing the resources for this celebrated prize, which uplifts craft—in its sense as both a verb and a noun. Your support is so important. Thank you.

As part of the application for the Burke Prize 2023, artists were asked to write a statement answering the following two questions: How do you view craft as a field now, and how do you envision it in the future? How do you see your practice within craft's trajectory or the trajectory of your specific discipline(s)?

As I reviewed the applications and read through scores of artist statements, the African concept of *sankofa* continued to come to mind. A word in the West African dialect Twi, *sankofa* means “to retrieve” and is commonly associated with the proverb, “It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten.” Retrieving history allows one to gather, learn from, and understand historical perspectives and technologies in order to pivot, to carry on, and to move the artwork into well-considered and purposeful directions.

I wanted to know and understand how each artist situated themselves in a historical trajectory within their respective craft media or the field in general. What from the past put the wind in their sails, pushing and motivating them as artists? In light of a historical perspective on making, how did these Burke Prize applicants employ, manipulate, and engage their chosen media to make an impact on this field we call craft?

Selva Aparicio, through her work and her statements, answered my questions with eloquence.

Sourcing from her own family history, and personally acquainted with the need for craft to satisfy the body and soul, Aparicio examines her role as a maker in a long lineage of craft practitioners. This context informs the materials Aparicio chooses and dictates her approach to manipulating those materials, providing a sense of grounding, knowing, and comfort in the work she produces with her hands. Citing parallels to nineteenth-century craft makers' criticisms of the advancement and widespread distribution of industrial-made objects, she articulates how her practice uplifts the power of the hand and exposes the limitations on beauty and creativity in the machine-produced product.

For me, Aparicio's work had an immediate visual impact due to the care and respect she shows for her materials. Much of the richness and patina of her work asserts the presence of the artist's hand in its making. While the work seduces the viewer with its beauty, further engagement forces a slower look, close observation, and, finally, contemplation. Aparicio takes as her subjects death, loss, and mourning, which she presents in a quiet, intimate way. In my mind, this is the only way, because death is a personal experience, different for everyone but universal in its intimacy.

Congratulations to you, Selva! This Burke Prize is well deserved.

Camille Ann Brewer

Artist and Arts Information Professional

In my career as a museum curator, serving on the Burke Prize 2023 jury was one of the greatest opportunities I have had to survey the landscape of craft. A total of 384 artists submitted their work for the prize, through a process that was more akin to a grant application than a juried exhibition. In addition to submitting their work, the artists had to write a response to the prompt, “How do you view craft as a field now, and how do you envision it in the future? How do you see your practice within craft’s trajectory or the trajectory of your specific discipline(s)?”

My immediate reaction was to be thankful that I didn’t have to answer those questions—but they’ve been lodged in my brain ever since. In a field that has always venerated our elders, I’m a relative newcomer, with just over a quarter-century of engagement under my belt; yet the changes I have seen have been seismic. I remember pitching articles for the late, lamented *CRAFT* magazine, where Manhattan gallerists turned up their noses and encouraged artists working in clay or fiber not to sully themselves with anything affiliated with the c-word (a debate with which our hosts at the Museum of Arts and Design are all too familiar).

Now, it seems like every painter under forty-five with an MFA from Yale is clamoring to align their work with craft, whether through working in mixed media or through a focus on materiality, which serves as a lingua franca between the worlds of craft and art. For most of my life, the media has used ceramists as a punchline—to show that potters are too impractical or too sensitive to survive in the modern world. Now, it seems like every pharmaceutical ad has gauzy B-roll of someone smiling at a potter’s wheel; a British TV network even released a feature-length biopic about British ceramic designer Clarice Cliff. Craft is seen not only as holistic but also as somehow ... cool?

The five finalists for the Burke Prize 2023 reflect the diversity of the jury. The artists work in a range of materials, but the through line that connects them is an innate curiosity that goes beyond the mastery of material to incorporate science, engineering, ecology, or any number of disciplines. If this year’s finalists don’t hew to your personal concept of “craft,” it’s time to take a step back to marvel at the facility of these young artists in responding to contemporary issues. It wasn’t long ago that art critics argued that fine art should be autonomous, but craft has always been expansive, reflecting identity, material culture, and even technology.

I’m still thinking about what my response would be to the Burke Prize prompt, but I know that the trajectory of craft hasn’t been this favorable in a long time. Strap in and enjoy the ride.

Garth Johnson

Paul Phillips and Sharon Sullivan Curator of Ceramics
Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York

Selva Aparicio describes her work as “an extended death ritual that foregrounds a particular reverence for the deceased and discarded,” wherein systems of power are made legible through the transcendence of her chosen objects beyond their “material and spiritual limbo[s].” Her practice is shaped by the meticulous accumulation of specimens and their fragments excavated from the heterotopias of the dead. Ranging from cicadas and dandelions to human “cadavers,” these materials serve as the central and defining vehicles of her practice. Works like *Ode to the Unclaimed Dead* (2022) make apparent that Aparicio’s artistic methodology hinges on the feat of a seemingly arduous labor that serves as a stand-in for unrendered care—hundreds of dandelion seeds adorn the exterior of a wooden casket, meant to represent the many individuals who pass on without loved ones to claim their bodies afterward. There is a poetry in imagining their delicate sway as viewers pass, and in pondering the inherent fragility of the dandelion in this transitory state, positioned against the grain of manufactured wood, fastened to form the most ruthless of enclosures. This is a composition caught between a beginning and an ending, and I find this gesture to be the most compelling feature of Aparicio’s practice.

Her other works focused on the human body highlight, without necessarily disrupting, the ways in which, in our society, death transforms individuals into the commodified symbols and materials of the living. The body of work considered here takes this one step further by translating body prints of those who have passed on, specifically those who have donated their bodies to scientific research, into art commodities. What her resulting grid of metonymic remainders makes apparent is that nothing of the body remains intimate in death—scars, birthmarks, and other emblems of a life lived are reduced to illegible formal arrangements coded onto Hydrocal tiles that adorn, as outer skin, various sculptural formations, as seen in the wall-mounted piece *Hopscotch* (2020) or the outdoor installation *Entre Nosotros* (2020). In encountering these works, I cannot help but wonder: What does it mean to turn the intimate surfaces of the bodies of others, of strangers who cannot consent to this treatment, inside out?

Works like *Entre Nosotros* bring to mind the long and ongoing practices of the medical and scientific communities that harm/ed and reduce/ed to flesh the bodies of Black people, women, and people of color, proffering them as specimens for study and tools for the furtherance of an oppressive ideological regime, both before and after death. I am reminded of Henrietta Lacks, whose cells were harvested—without her consent—in 1951 during her treatment for cancer at John Hopkins University. Her cells were subsequently passed from one researcher to the next to be commercialized within the context of scientific research and are now referred to as “HeLa immortal cells.” In an unpublished essay, artist and writer Fields Harrington poignantly lays bare, by way of scholar Hortense Spillers, that “what enables the breach of Henrietta Lacks’ biological jurisdiction is an antecedent ‘hieroglyphics of the flesh,’ a violent capture and containment that allowed for [her cells] to ever be treated as a specimen in the ‘first’ place, to be collected and put to work on and beyond the floors of the laboratory at John Hopkins University.”

It is interesting to consider these works by Aparicio in contradistinction to 2019 Burke Prize winner Indira Allegra’s recent collaborative project *TEXERE*, “which transforms human losses into ever-evolving digital memorial tapestries” by inviting others to create their own weave of remembrance. There is a profound intimacy and care in this project that eludes the anonymity of the digital or the unspoken/unspeakable, insofar as those who know are invited to share the intimacies they experienced with those departed in whatever capacity they can bear in the wake of mourning. How might a direct engagement with those in transition or with those in the throes of loss allow Aparicio’s tiles and the structures they encapsulate to transcend their commercialized objecthood? How might this shift them from “hieroglyphics of the flesh” into a space of intimacy and care that simultaneously critiques the systems of violence and exploited intimacy to which the scientific is tied? Might this

provide a way through which disorders a scientific handling that amortizes mothers and fathers and aunts and uncles and sisters and bothers and friends and lovers until they are “cadavers,” a handling that muffles the dead?

The Burke Prize afforded me the time and resources to delve full-force into the infra-structural paradigms that motivate my practice. My hope is that the prize affords Aparicio the opportunity to lean into the poetic impulses of care that characterize such works as *Ode to the Unclaimed Dead*.

Charisse Pearlina Weston
Artist and Writer
Burke Prize 2021 Winner

Based in Detroit, Michigan, **Camille Ann Brewer** is a cultural heritage consultant. Brewer studied textile design and construction at California College of Arts and the University of Michigan. Most recently, Brewer served as the director of the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, and as the inaugural curator of contemporary textile art at the Textile Museum in Washington, DC, as well as operating the Erik Van Wert Dye Works, LLC. Previously, she served as executive director of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, a membership organization of libraries, universities and archives dedicated to making accessible materials that document the African American and African diaspora. Brewer formerly served as an assistant curator at the Detroit Institute of Arts and as an art consultant and curator for her own company, CAB Fine Art, building collections and organizing exhibitions for public museums, corporations, and private collectors. She has been an active hand-weaver for over 35 years producing cloth for interiors.

Writer, curator, and educator **Garth Johnson** is the Paul Phillips and Sharon Sullivan Curator of Ceramics at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York. Johnson is known for his irreverent wit, which can be explored through his weblog, www.extremecraft.com. He has also exhibited his work and published his writing nationally and internationally, including contributions to the recent books *Repositioning Paolo Soleri: The City is Nature* and *Funk You Too: Humor and Irreverence in Ceramic Sculpture*.

Johnson is a self-described craft activist who explores craft’s influence and relevance in the 21st century. His research interests range from 1960s and 70s artist-led movements in the field of ceramics to the intersection of clay, video, and performance. His recent exhibitions at the Everson include *Renegades & Reformers: American Art Pottery*, *Earth Piece: Conceptual and Performative Works in Clay*, and *Key Figures: Representational Ceramics 1932–1972*.

Charisse Pearlina Weston (born in Houston, Texas; based in Brooklyn, New York) is a conceptual artist and writer whose work emerges from deep material investigations of the symbolic and literal curls, layerings, and collapses of space, poetics, and the autobiographical. She contends with the dynamic interplay of violence and intimacy through repetition, enfoldment, and concealment. She received her MFA from the University of California-Irvine. She is an alumna of the Whitney Museum of American Art’s Independent Study Program. Recently, her work has been shown at the Queens Museum (solo), the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College, Museum of Folkwang and MOMA PS1. Notable awards include the Museum of Arts and Design’s Burke Prize 2021, as well as grants from the Dallas Museum of Art, Artadia, the Graham Foundation, among others. She is a 2023 artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, a 2023 Jerome Hill Fellow (Jerome Foundation) and a 2024 Hodder Fellow at Princeton University.

Finalists

Alex Chitty



Alex Chitty (b. 1979, Miami, Florida) is a transdisciplinary artist based in Chicago. Chitty received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Smith College and a Master of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Recent exhibitions include: *Figs break open of themselves* (2022), PATRON, Chicago, IL; *Both And* (2021), Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Chicago, IL; *State of the Art II* (2020), Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AK; *Becoming the Breeze: Alex Chitty with Alexander Calder* (2019), Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; *In the Hot Seat* (2019), KMAC Museum, Louisville, KY; *pulling flavor from the dirt* (2018), PATRON, Chicago, IL; *After (the sun-drenched neutral that goes with everything)* (2018), The Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA; *Living Architecture* (2020), 6018 North, Chicago, IL; *They will bloom without you* (2017), Elmhurst Art Museum, Elmhurst IL; *Small Sculpture* (2017), Corbett Vs Dempsey, Chicago, IL; *Stranger Things* (2017), DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL; *Objectifying the Photograph* (2017), NIU Art Museum, DeKalb, IL; *slight pitch* (2016), LUCE Gallery, Turin, Italy; *the sun-drenched neutral that goes with everything* (2016), PATRON, Chicago, IL; *Turning Spoons into Forks* (2016), Hyde Park Art Center Chicago, IL; *Theory of Forms* (2015), PATRON, Chicago, IL; *Orchid* (2014), ADDS DONNA, Chicago, IL; *Almost Ergonomic* (2014), Studio 424, Chicago, IL; *Codification* (2014) LVL3, Chicago, IL; *Alex Chitty: Recent Work* (2013), Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago, IL; and *Ella Hatchet* (2013) at Roots and Culture, Chicago, IL. Recent Awards include: Writer-in-Residence, Writing Space, Chicago, IL; Illinois Arts Council Agency, Artist Fellowship Award in Visual Based Arts, Chicago, IL; DCASE, Individual Artist Program Grant, City of Chicago, IL; Artist Residency, Fundación Casa Wabi, Oaxaca, MX; The Nancy Graves Grant for Visual Artists; Artists-in-Residence, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha NE; and the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, Department of Education, Washington DC.

Ptng#12 (Swipe), 2016

Walnut, painted steel, nickel-plated steel, altered spoons, cotton, nylon, Lucite, Xerox print, teak hull plug, and cast brass

70x50x7 in. (178 x 127 x 18 cm)



Some crafts grow slowly, accumulating wisdom over generations; others advance quickly via global networks of production and exchange. Each craft requires an activator (human or non-human), who forges negotiations between their personal intentions and the limitations of material. These sensitive alliances are strengthened through consistent, careful attention, risk-taking, criticality, experimentation and sharing. Crafted objects become couriers of our personal and collective narratives because they hold legible traces of their own production. They absorb and reflect evidence of the lives, tools, technologies, and even the biases and emotions of their time. Analyzing what humans choose to make and the specifics of how we choreograph our engagement with those materials helps us to decode our past, reflect on who we presently are, and speculate about who we may become.

My heritage and upbringing have deeply impacted how I consider and assess objects and materials in my artistic practice. I am a first generation American, born and raised in Little Havana, Miami, by British immigrant parents. My grandmother was a studio potter, and my grandfather managed an industrial furniture factory in England. Initially, my mother worked independently as an interior designer and took me with her when scouting objects for her clients' homes. I saw firsthand how objects speak for us. Certain objects, in specific contexts, can broadcast otherwise hidden ideologies. I learned that looking closely at things can be a form of education and work. I witnessed how different materials and methods of production contribute to determinations of value. These entangled relationships between materials, methods, and histories became the foundational language I now use to build meaning in my work.

Traditional craft-based practices are cradled within specific mediums, such as stone, wood, or clay. My practice inverts this notion by transferring its primary focus to the interconnections between and within different fabrication processes. Craft and design become overarching methodologies for engaging with acts of making rather than as algorithms for affecting specific materials. My choice of medium, and my process, is always in service of an idea—so single works often engage multiple disciplines simultaneously. My practice includes woodworking (*joinery & carving*), metalworking (*welding, casting & small metalsmithing*), ceramics (*throwing & handbuilding*), fibers (*weaving, sewing, dyeing & embroidery*), moldmaking (*wax & plaster*), glass (*blowing & fusing*), and printmaking (*etching, relief & digital and analog photographic printing*). The academic standard of separating disciplines from one another never made sense to me. I learn through direct observation and experience, so it is common for me to use one discipline as a means of educating myself about another. In my prior work as a biologist, drawing and photography elevated the complexity and precision of my observations and scientific inquiries.

In my current practice, I arrive at meaning through the technical process of making. Every component of a piece is designed to work in tandem. I recontextualize familiar objects by shifting the environment, display, material, or function to create fresh experiences and interpretations. By combining objects and images that are both found and made, I further blur the distinction between a world encountered and one that is built. This intentional blending of things we know with moments of uncertainty creates visual speed bumps to slow us down and encourage deeper, more conscious ways of seeing and sensing. This way of encountering the world, when practiced repeatedly, challenges us to use what is directly visible as a method of identifying what systems or ideas may be hidden behind those things. I consider these gestures in my work as political acts, because paying close attention is the start of any sociopolitical, environmental, intellectual, or personal revolution.

Alex Chitty



Lifelong conversations between women, 2022
 Stoneware (Noah Singer), African mahogany,
 black-oxide plated steel, and soldered brass
 39 x 28 x 10 in. (99.1 x 71.1 x 25.4 cm)

***You will never be able to directly see
 the gap between your own eyes***, 2017
 Chrome-plated steel, walnut, and leather
 34 x 26 x 24 in. (91.4 x 60.1 x 60.1 cm)

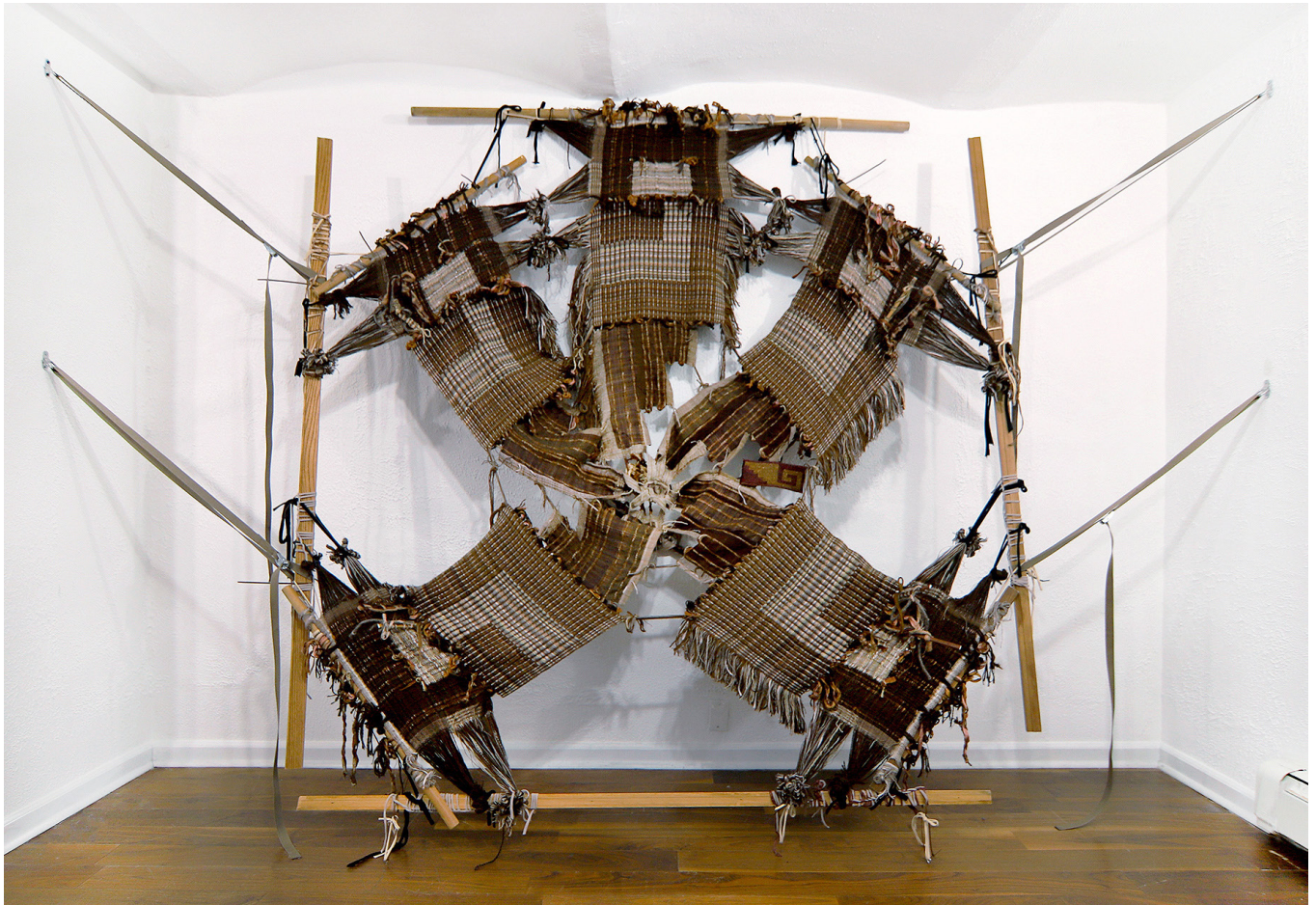
Kira Dominguez Hultgren



Kira Dominguez Hultgren (b. 1980, she/they) is a U.S.-based artist, weaver, and educator. She studied postcolonial theory and literature at Princeton University, and studio arts and visual and critical studies at California College of the Arts. Their research interests include material and embodied rhetorics, re-storying material culture, and weaving as a performative critique of the visual. Dominguez Hultgren weaves with the material afterlife of a so-called multiracial family: Chicana-Indigenous-Indian-Hollywood Hawaiian-Brown-Black. Instead of being passed down, weaving and textile processes are brought up, resurrected from family stories and fabrics. Dominguez Hultgren builds looms to weave into the frayed edges of lost language, culture, traditions, and lives that were deliberately cut-off in past generations. Her looms—whether digital jacquard, backstrap, floor, post—materialize this present absence often as largescale checkboxes and X-marks. Questions about cultural appropriation and codeswitching, exoticism, and performing cultural misrecognitions occupy their practice.

Dominguez Hultgren has exhibited her work broadly including shows at the de Young Museum, Lehmann Maupin Gallery, the San Jose Museum of Quilt and Textile, and Eleanor Harwood Gallery. Their work has received critical attention including reviews in the *New York Times* and *Architectural Digest*. Dominguez Hultgren is an assistant professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Colita de Rana (Frog Tails), 2022
Wool, acrylic, cotton, linen, silk, PVC,
wood loom bars, and nylon cable ties
100 x 96 x 29 in. (254 x 243.8 x 73.7cm)
(dimensions variable)



I make large-scale fiber sculptures. In a 2021 review of my work on Governors Island in New York, art critic Roberta Smith described my work as “riveting textiles ... monumental ... the heir to Sheila Hicks.”¹ I admire Hicks and the space that she and other fiber artists opened up in U.S. contemporary art. But craft necessarily enters the art world differently through diasporic and indigenous identities. My work challenges the field of craft to engage its relationship to these identities and the embodied and material knowledges that come with them. Consider the 2022 catalogue essay that scholar Glenn Adamson wrote for *Line by Line*, curated by Janice Lessman-Moss the year she retired as Head of Textiles from Kent State University. Adamson writes,

This critical faculty of textile is more explicit still in the work of Kira Dominguez Hultgren. For her, weaving is absolutely political: “I weave a fabric’s refusal to lie flat. I weave yarns that cross over, disappear, negotiate space, and claim a place.” Her works are strongly reminiscent of fiber art in its heyday, back in the 1960s. Horizon Lines even includes wooden sticks stuck sideways into the composition, a maneuver beloved of many a hippie.

Adamson too aligns my work with fiber art of the 1960s, and I openly and gratefully make work coming out of the feminist fiber space. However, this exclusive positioning of my work risks turning found-object craft and weaving into a monolithic expression that elides the experience of migrant and immigrant communities who have relied on rebuilding, reinventing their lives again and again from scratch, out of found and repurposed objects.

My use of wooden sticks is a *movida*, defined by Kelly Medina-Lopez as an “embodied epistemology of struggle, of *making do with what’s at hand*.”² In my work, the broom handle loom becomes political in the same way that strategies to live with racialized and gendered ethnic identity are political. It is, as Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga write, “a politic born out of necessity.”³

I craft cultural survival and legibility. My life in Jandiala, India exists only in the stories my grandma told me as I leaned over and traced the stiches of phulkari embroidery in her kitchen in Orem, Utah. Her stories reflected the practice of phulkari, of women across generations leaning over the cloth together, twining material and oral traditions, backing up and embellishing culture. It is a practice of what Amalia Mesa-Bains calls “cultural reclamation” for first- and second-generation Mexican immigrants. I enter craft through my grandma’s kitchen, through Punjabi phulkari cotton and silk, through Chicana borderland *movidas*, unwilling to find a distinction between art, craft, and diasporic storytelling.

But if my work challenges the field of craft to engage with indigenous and diasporic embodied knowledges, my work also points out Latinx art’s relationship to craft. Consider the show *Eyes of the Skin*, curated by Teresita Fernández at Lehmann Maupin Gallery to highlight the work of Latinx artists, including myself, invested in material practices. The exhibition focused on “the importance of indigenous, intuitive, and somatic knowledge.” Craft is not mentioned, which does not reflect on the exhibition so much as the divergent histories and spaces that Latinx art and craft typically occupy.

In the 2022 anthology *Consuelo Jimenez Underwood: Art, Weaving, Vision*, editors Laura Pérez and Ann Marie Leimer navigate these divergent spaces with language that slips between craft and embodied indigenous knowledge to position Jimenez Underwood’s work firmly in both. But how does the European floor loom in Jimenez Underwood’s rebozo (shawl) weaving work, and in my weaving work, complicate craft, Latinx art, and embodied expressions of indigeneity? The rebozo, read as a mestiza craft is a veritable collision of cultures in cloth—indigenous, Spanish, Mexican, U.S.—in weft-faced, warp-faced, and balanced double-weaves.



In the Silence Between Mother Tongues, 2022

Silk, wool, cotton, mohair, linen, acrylic, metallic thread, rope, nylon cord, found wood, plastic, metal loom bars, heddle rods, shed rods, and hardware
92 x 55 x 12 in. (233.7 x 139.7 x 30.5 cm)



To Carry Every Name but Your Own, 2022

Sisal, silk, Kevlar, wool, acrylic, cotton, linen, wood, and nylon cable ties
92 x 59 x 38 in. (233.7 x 149.9 x 96.5 cm)
(dimensions variable)

I seek to engage histories of indigenous embodied practices alongside craft to understand the impact that overlapping and intersecting identities and histories have on one another. My work as a figurative phulkari-rebozo contains diaspora, indigeneity, and craft. Its fringes turned into arms reaching, arms stretched and tied to loom bars that hold the legacy of both Sheila Hicks and Consuelo Jimenez Underwood, the craft of both European treadle floor looms and indigenous rasquache broom handle backstrap looms. My practice is the craft of weaving between the continents of my grandmothers' hands.

Kira Dominguez Hultgren

¹ Roberta Smith, "On Governors Island, Art Interventions Are Everywhere," *New York Times*. May 6, 2021.

² Kelly Medina-Lopez, "Rasquache Rhetorics: a Cultural Rhetorics Sensibility," *Constellations: a cultural rhetorics publishing space 1 (1)*, 2018, 11. Medina-López builds from a quote by Tomas Ybarra-Frausto in *Chicano Aesthetics: Rasquachismo*, edited by Rudy Guglielmo et al., MARS, 1989.

³ Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga, "Entering the Lives of Others: Theory in the Flesh," in *This Bridge Called My Back*, 3rd ed., (Berkeley: Women of Color Series/Third Woman Press, 2002), 23.

⁴ bell hooks and Amalia Mesa-Bains, *Homegrown: Engaged Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 113.

⁵ "Eyes of the Skin," Lehmann Maupin Gallery, <https://www.lehmannmaupin.com/art/eyes-of-the-skin>.

Julia Phillips



Inspired by tools and other functional objects, the sculptures of Julia Phillips are metaphors for social and psychological experiences. These metaphors are both mechanical and bodily, and the experiences they describe typically focus on power relations between individuals or between an individual and an institution. Her sculptures often feature ceramic elements cast from her own body. Their glazed finishes replicate a range of flesh tones in layered colors, which Phillips achieves by firing them multiple times. Many of the sculptures include recurring elements, such as handles or wing nuts, that encourage the viewer to envision direct physical engagement with the work. The human body is also a principal subject of her drawings, prints, and videos. “I think of the body as a symbol to make psychological, social, and emotional experiences and relations visually accessible,” she has said. “Sometimes the body can help us to identify with experiences that are not our own.”

Julia Phillips (b. 1985) was born in Hamburg and lives and works in Chicago and Berlin. She has had one-person exhibitions at MoMA PS1 in New York and the Kunstverein Braunschweig in Germany, and was featured in the Berlin Biennial and the New Museum Triennial. Her work has been shown at museums including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, and the Studio Museum in Harlem. Phillips was included in the 59th Venice Biennale’s central exhibition, “The Milk of Dreams,” curated by Cecilia Alemani.”

Above:

Julia Phillips & Keisha Scarville
Headshot, 2018

Digital photo

Exoticizer, Worn Out (Josephine Baker's Belt), 2017

Partially glazed ceramics, brass screws, and metal pedestal

2¾ x 13 x 15 in. (7 x 33 x 38 cm)



My works often start with the title—a word that describes a person, a role, a function all at once, like *Exoticizer*, *Intruder*, and *Observer*. I think about the mechanical and bodily metaphors implied in relations and relationships, particularly those intimate relations that translate from the personal and interpersonal to the structural and political. While my first language is German, I discovered the discourses that fuel my work—postcolonialism, Black Feminist Thought, psychoanalysis—in my second language, English. This distance toward the vocabulary liberates me to think in abstract visual terms.

In as much as clay, language and the body—my body—assert themselves as my primary mediums. I cast forms using slabs of clay and edit the shapes to create resting surfaces and elements that provoke physical engagement, such as wing nuts and handles. I use ceramics to represent the body in an immediate way, leaving a direct embossment in the material—impressions of skin, hairs, DNA.

In earlier works, like *Extruder* (2017) or *Drainer* (2018), I explored the mechanics of oppressive relationships, visualizing apparatuses and constructions—wrought by clay and by metal—for manipulation and control of the body. The fragility of the fired material, however, negates actual use, placing the works' functionality in the mired imaginary.

My glazing process further complicates the works, transitioning from minimal, clinical surfaces of industrial white to layered, varying flesh tones. In more recent works I have attempted to represent a body's subjectivity by using specific complexions of beiges and browns. I have also become increasingly interested in representing the body's interiority, employing the pinks and reds of lungs and other organs.

The tone of my recent work has changed, shifting focus from oppressive and exploitative relations to more symmetrical relationships that allow for horizontal power dynamics. These titles, such as *Mediator* and *Negotiator*, suggest a willingness that opposing parties bring to the table—positions that could lead to reconciliation. In my 2019 sound installation *Fake Truth (Witness I–III)*, I used microphones and sound filters to pose questions about subjective truth, interpretation, and the reliability of information sources in times of fake news. The microphone has since become a recurring symbol in my work, including *Mediator* (2020) in which the ceramic cast of a microphone mesh symbolizes both amplification and absorption of information—qualities needed in a successful mediation—and a metaphor for “hearing each other.”

Specifically in the last three years, I have taken a closer look at internal relationships, or relationships with the self—a move that has introduced new forms and materials to my practice. In the installation *Oppressor with Soul, In Treatment & Suppressor with Spirit, In Treatment* (2020), I attempt to give form to “imaginary organs.” *Veiled Purifier* (2021–22) continues my exploration of a spiritual dimension of the human psyche and incorporates silk as a figurative threshold between the interior space of introspection and the observed exterior. Another recent turning point in my work has been the experience of new motherhood. In the *Attachment* series (2022), I investigate relations of mutual dependency using springs and quick releases as symbols of flexibility, tension, and autonomy. In my most recent work, *Nourisher* (2022), I portray the body as a shared space, using PVC medical tubing to suggest a symbiotic exchange, extending my interest in our emotional, psychic, and physical planes.

Julia Phillips



Nourisher, 2022
 Ceramic, medical PVC tubes, stainless steel,
 and steel cable
 69 1/2 x 32 x 24 in. (176.5 x 81 x 61 cm)



Veiled Purifier, 2021–22
 Ceramic, silk, bronze, and marble
 96 1/2 x 68 1/2 x 36 3/4 in. (245 x 174 x 93.5 cm)

Brie Ruais



Brie Ruais lives and works in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She received her MFA from Columbia University's School of the Arts in 2011. Ruais' movement-based practice is legible through the scrapes, gouges, and gestures embedded in the surfaces and forms of the ceramic works. Her work has been exhibited at public institutions including the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; The Hayward Gallery, London, UK; Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA; The Everson, Syracuse, NY; Musée d'art de Joliette, Québec, Canada; the Katzen Center at American University, Washington, DC; and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Her first institutional solo exhibition, *Brie Ruais: Movement at the Edge of the Land* opened in June 2021 at The Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University in Houston, TX. Awards and residencies include The Virginia Groot Foundation Grant; The Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant; The Sharpe Walentas Studio Program; and the Socrates Sculpture Park Fellowship, among others. Ruais' work is in the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Pennsylvania Academy of Art, Philadelphia, PA; TD Bank, US; Matamoros Art In Embassies Collection, Mexico; the Pizzuti Collection, OH; and the Burger Collection, Hong Kong. She is featured in the publication *Vitamin C: New Perspectives in Contemporary Art, Clay and Ceramics* (Phaidon, 2017). Recent publications include *Strange Clay: Ceramics in Contemporary Art*, Hayward Gallery, published by Hatje Cantz (2023); Ashton Cooper, "Exhibition Reviews: Brie Ruais," *ArtForum* (September 2023); and *Clay Pop*, edited by Alia Dahl and Jeffrey Deitch and published by Rizzoli Electa (2023).



Left: *Intertwining Bodies, roots, Hair*
(130lbs times three), 2022

Glazed stoneware, pigmented clay, and hardware
156 x 63 x 8 in. (396.2 x 160 x 20.3 cm)

Right: *Scratching the Surface* 130lbs, 2022

Glazed stoneware, pigmented clay, and hardware
79 1/2 x 83 x 4 in. (201.9 x 210.8 x 10.1 cm)

*The things we build, the things we let fall
apart, the things we destroy*, 2020

Un-fired stoneware and rocks
432 x 144 in. (1097.3 x 365.8 cm)
(dimensions variable)

The human body and clay have a metaphorical relationship: both perform as vessels and receivers.

I make most of my work on the ground out of 130 pounds of clay. I have been working this way for 12 years.

Clay stands in for the body. We are two bodies when the work is being made, and then one body departs (mine) when the work is done. The work is shaped by a series of gestures that constitute a performance: “spreading out from center,” “pushing landscape west,” “making space from the inside.” The work then moves through a series of transformations: it is segmented, glazed, fired, then oriented vertically on a wall. The gestural impressions made by knuckles, hands, knees, and feet form the composition and surface of the sculpture. The sculptures are indexical, like the earliest handprints on the walls of caves, they point to me (the artist), and you (the viewer), and to the future when both our bodies will be absent and gone.

One of my first body weight pieces is called “The Big Push”; I made it while in graduate school in 2010. This piece was a feat of strength; it was endurance-based, made in a burst of effort to push 130 pounds of clay from the ground up the wall as high as I could reach. Evocative, perhaps, of the trials and challenges of grad school itself, and also addressing the invisibility of female labor (including childbirth and rearing), and the pressure of contemporary life to push oneself to one’s limits.

Over the years I’ve come to know well the physical and material abilities of clay, its breaking point, and along the way I’ve embraced its tendency to shrink away from itself, creating cracks and warping. These cracks and “flaws” find their way into the finished work. Perhaps here is where the difference lies between art and craft: the ability to give up control and let a material express itself.

The ritual movement that I keep returning to is “Spreading Out From Center.” I’ve been performing this score since 2011. I always begin in the center of a mound of clay and spread outward while I rotate in a circle. The center of the work holds my body and what radiates from there is the extent of my reach. The early pieces appear slightly restrained, not pushing the clay to its limits, with a very controlled or manageable perimeter. They were cut into a grid, referencing the way that white European colonizers parceled out the land, in order to own and control it. Within this work I have found openings, and am stretching the clay into explosive shapes, passageways, portals, wounds. The work is now divided by tearing it into sections or letting it crack and separate on its own, like mud does in the desert.

Clay stands in for the earth. It is horizontal and beneath me, supporting my movement, holding me gently in place so I don’t float off into the atmosphere. With more time spent in the desert in recent years, my conception of my work shifted from the story of body-meets-body to body-meets-earth. Since 2018 I’ve been making ephemeral clay sculptures in remote desert landscapes, documenting the making and aftermath with a drone camera, and leaving them to dissolve. These works have a relationship to the history of land use in the area. Newer works act as a remediation to disturbed lands by using clay embedded with native seeds.

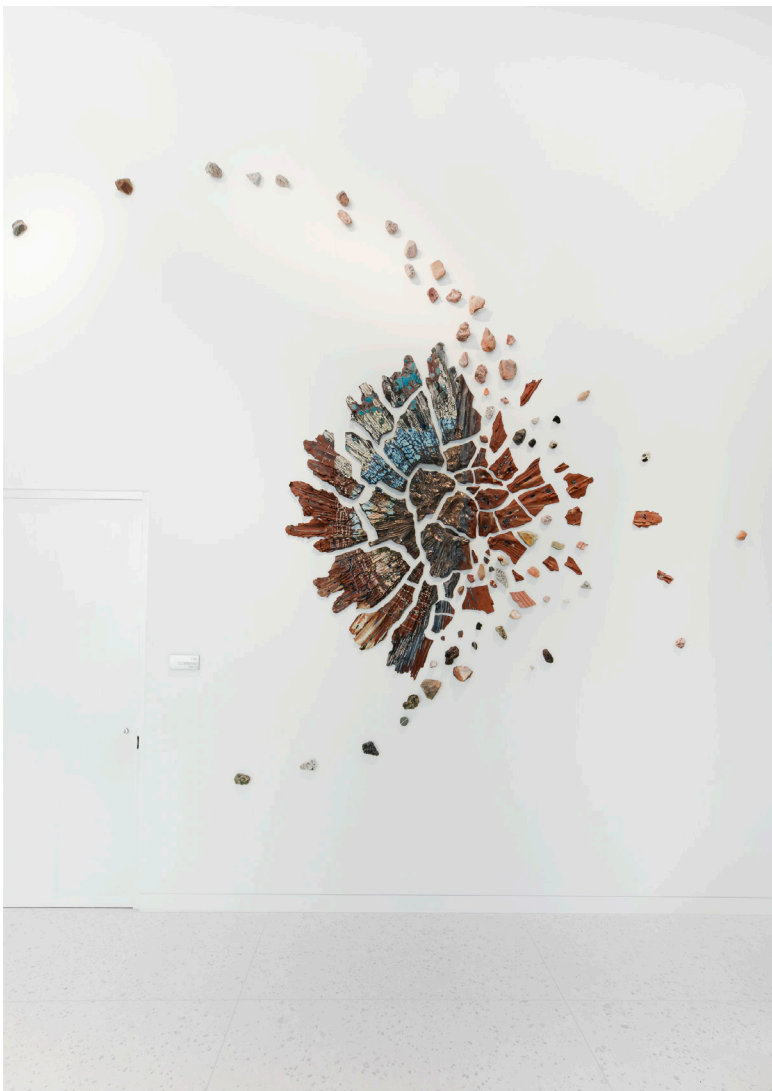
Throughout the evolution of my work and my relationship with clay, I’ve witnessed the earth come through it, and I see myself wrestling with a new kind of collaboration: one in which the acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of humanity and the land is crucial to our future on this planet. Through clay I’ve been exposed to new ways of thinking about our relationship to the earth. This is where the “Intertwining” pieces started: first thinking about my relatedness to other bodies, and now thinking about it as a body’s relatedness to the world surrounding it.

I always come back to the idea that the individual’s experience of the world is centered in the body, and it is from here that we navigate our relationship to the world around us. This experience is best expressed in the “Spreading Outward From Center” pieces. The gesture radiates out from the center extending to the outside environment, pointing outward and simultaneously pointing inward.

My work explores these dichotomies within existence: that there is both an inner world and a world outside your body (the mental world and the physical world), that humans live in an inherent state of relatedness, that we are parts of a whole.

My work captures the action of two things touching and separating. A third thing emerges from this relationship between the two: chance, change, transformation, magic. The favorite space of many ceramicists is the moment when the lid of the kiln opens, and the third thing emerges. It refers back to the two things that brought it into being, but they are rumors now.

Brie Ruais



*Holding the space Between Earth and Sky, 130lbs
Times Three, 2022*

Glazed ceramic, found rocks, construction debris, and hardware
180 x 160 x 2 in. (457.2 x 406.4 x 5.1 cm)

4–12 Selva Aparicio

Portrait: Photo by Kelsey Sucena, courtesy the artist

East of Eden: Photo by Daniel Delgado, courtesy the artist

Our Garden Remains: Photo by Robert Chase Heishman, courtesy the artist

Entre Nosotros (Among Us): Photo by Robert Chase Heishman, courtesy the artist

Childhood Memories: Courtesy the artist

Hysteria: Photo by Robert Chase Heishman, courtesy the artist

18–21 Alex Chitty

Portrait and artwork: Photo by Evan Jenkins, courtesy the artist

22–25 Kira Dominguez Hultgren

Portrait: Courtesy the artist

Colita de Rana (Frog Tails): Photo by Heroes Gallery, courtesy the artist

In the Silence Between Mother Tongues: Photo by Shaun Roberts Photography, courtesy the artist

To Carry Every Name but Your Own: Photo by Shaun Roberts Photography, courtesy the artist

26–29 Julia Phillips

Portrait and artwork: Courtesy the artist

30–33 Brie Ruais

Portrait: Photo by Brad Trone, courtesy the artist

Intertwining Bodies, roots, Hair (130lbs times three) and *Scratching the Surface 130lbs*: Photo by Jessann Reece, courtesy Cooper Cole gallery, Toronto, and the artist

The things we build, the things we let fall apart, the things we destroy: Photo by Nash Baker, courtesy The Moody Center for Arts, Houston, albertz benda, New York, and the artist

Holding the space Between Earth and Sky, 130lbs Times Three: Photo by Allyson Huntsman, courtesy Kinzelman Art Consulting, Seven Sisters, Houston, TX; albertz benda gallery, New York, NY

It was an honor and a pleasure to preside over the Burke Prize 2023, and much of that sentiment comes from working with others who were instrumental to its success. I am immensely grateful to Marian and Russell Burke, whose support makes the prize possible. Over the years, I've witnessed the positive impact of the Burke Prize on the visibility of the field of contemporary art and craft. The prize has also contributed to the core mission of the Museum of Arts and Design by bolstering its role in supporting young and emerging artists working in craft media. Thank you, Marian and Russell, for championing these objectives. To all of the artists who applied for consideration, and to this year's jurors, Camille Ann Brewer, Charisse Pearlina Weston, and Garth Johnson, thank you for your time, thoughtfulness, and enthusiasm.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the team that focused on the management, implementation, and promotion of the Burke Prize, including Jasmine Chavez Helm, Elizabeth Koehn, Willow Holdorf, Sasha Nixon, Wendi Parson, Alix Finkelstein, Iman Nelson, Anita Sheih, Stephanie Lang, Rebekka Grossman, Lydia Brawner, Jamillah Hinson, Ben Strauss, Helen Polycarpo, and Darci Spasojevich. Each of you played an essential role, from overseeing the application process and prize jury, to the production of the prize's publication, to the installation of the winner's work, to the promotion of the Burke Prize, to the associated programming and celebration of the winner and finalists' work. Additional thanks are extended to the visitor services representatives and security and facilities staff, who are essential to any project carried out at MAD. You all have my deepest thanks.

Elissa Auther, PhD
Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs
William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator

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