

EARTHWORKS: EVOLUTION



Jenny Peace, *River Canyon II*

2026 CERAMICS BIENNIAL JURIED BY LISA ORR
APRIL 29 - JUNE 28 IN THE ALLIE KUSSIN GALLERY

EDUCATION PAMPHLET



THE UMBRELLA
ARTS CENTER



Mass
Cultural
Council

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LISA ORR

Lisa Orr has been a studio potter for over 40 years. Orr's ceramics lushly blend historical, functional roots with organic, fluid forms that embrace gentle asymmetry. Inspired by nature and intuition, her richly textured and colorfully glazed slip-cast surfaces evoke birds on the wing, coral reefs, and blooming flowers, resulting in work that is vibrant, emotional, and assured. Currently refining an accessible smokeless wood kiln, she also teaches, lectures, and shows nationally and internationally. Her work has been placed in many public and private collections.



Lisa Orr, *Salt and Pepper Centerpiece*



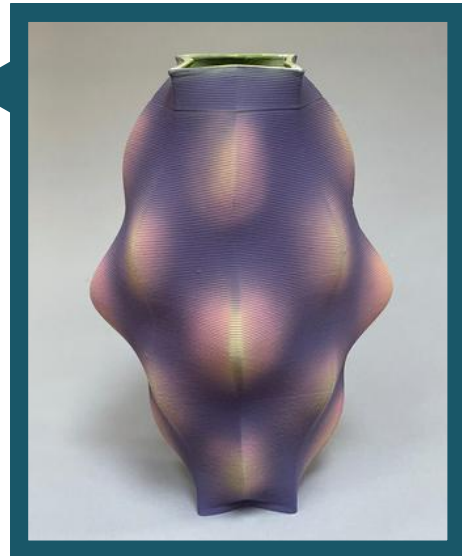
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ABOUT THE SHOW

Earthworks: Evolution grounds itself in the concept of progress and change within contemporary ceramics, with artists exploring themes of sustainability and ecology, imagination, the human experience, transformation, and community.

Methods like **3-D printed clay** slipcasting, wood-firing, and glaze painting highlight the exciting future of the discipline.

This collection showcases the many ways in which artists are innovating and reinterpreting traditional forms in the medium.



Ellen Schön, *Venus*

WHAT IS A BIENNIAL?

A biennial is large scale contemporary art exhibition held every two years, which acts as a platform for showcasing current art trends, themes, and dialogues within a specific medium. These exhibitions host multiple artists and are used to promote a diverse set of emerging artists internationally or within a specific region.

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CERAMICS HISTORY

The history of ceramics is rich and diverse, spanning thousands of years. The earliest known pottery vessels were discovered in China, dating back to 20,000 years ago.

The pieces in this show include a mix of traditional and modern ways of working with clay: handbuilding, **wheel throwing**, different firing methods, and added materials like wood, gems, and wire.

HOW IT WORKS

Clay is a natural material made up of tiny pieces of rock. Clay is soft when mixed with water and hardens as it dries. Then it can be fired in a **kiln** to make it strong.

Wheel Throwing: Using a pottery wheel (a round, flat surface that spins very fast) to shape clay.

Kiln: An oven used for heating or firing clay at temperatures as hot as 2,000°!

Glaze: Powdered glass that forms a special coating similar to paint. Used to add color and texture to ceramic pieces.

Jennifer McCandless, *Sweat*



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METHODS FOR FIRING

Raku: A specialized, fast-firing kiln that involves placing red-hot pots into combustible materials to create unique metallic or crackle glazes.

Soda: A process involving spraying sodium (soda ash or baking soda) into the kiln at high temperatures. This vaporized soda reacts with the clay, creating textured, glassy effects.

Wood: Wood burning is used to create unique, organic, and unpredictable results through ash deposit and flame patterns. This process requires careful, long firings to reach high temperatures, which can take several days.

Salt: At peak temperature, rock salt is introduced to the kiln, vaporizing and creating white fumes, which react with the clay surfaces to form a glaze.



Loring Cheney, *Party Owl* | Tom Hubbard, *Propagation No. 07* | Chris Archer, *Syllabic Vase* | Grace Kerr, *Path Way #5126*

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REFLECTION

Earthworks: Evolution shows how one material can be used in many different ways.

- What are some similarities and differences you notice across the works in the gallery?
- Are there any themes that stand out?

ACTIVITY

- Choose a piece and try to figure out how it was made.
- How many animals can you find in the gallery? How about faces or human forms?
- Experiment with air dry or polymer clay at home to make your own Earthworks!

Learn more about the artists in our digital [Exhibition Guide](#) ►



Alice Abrams, *Yellow Frog* | Holly Curcio, *In The Grey Area*

