

# CERAMICS NOW

M A G A Z I N E



January 2026



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[office@ceramicsnow.org](mailto:office@ceramicsnow.org)

*Front cover: Xanthe Somers, The Weary Weaver, 2024, Glazed stoneware, 39.4 x 28.4 x 28.4 in. | 100 x 72 x 72 cm. Image credit: Southern Guild and Hayden Phipps.*

*Back cover: Xanthe Somers, Tales Untold, 2024, Glazed stoneware, nylon cord, 39.8 x 25.3 x 25.3 in. | 101 x 64 x 64 cm. Image credit: Southern Guild and Hayden Phipps.*

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# Laura Dirksen

Laura Dirksen is an artist born and raised in Maria Stein, Ohio. Laura has always led a life in the dirt, playing in the mud and with the clay she harvested in the fields behind the farm she grew up on. She received her BFA in Studio Arts in 2019 from Bowling Green State University specializing in ceramics and painting, where she began her journey building predominantly large-scale sculpture. Afterward, she went on to complete a two-year Post Baccalaureate Program at Kent State University in 2021. Two years later, Laura would obtain an MFA from Penn State University in 2023. She has exhibited her work in both group and solo exhibitions across Ohio, as well as in California, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Washington.

Dirksen's work is currently exhibited in the Archie Bray Galleries, and her work is in several private collections around the west coast, among others. She is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including a CURS Research

Grant, the Graham Endowed Fellowship, as well the Bray and Speyer Fellowships. Laura's works were recently featured in Ceramics monthly. She is a Long Term Artist-in-Residence at the renowned Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts, in Helena, Montana. Laura leads a practice in which she continually strives to develop her work, through material exploration and her mixing of media is crucial to the longevity of her practice. Laura has made works that range from the large scale sculptural and fabric installation to intimate functional wares found within the home.

Laura is an instructor, and has given lectures and workshops. Throughout the years, Laura's work has begun to evolve around her feeling of longing for home, and her affinity for the farmland where she was raised. After years of moving and academia, Laura plans to build a studio there in the foreseeable future.

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Visit **Laura Dirksen's** Instagram page.

*@laurjanedirk\_studio*



**Trio of Sculptural Vessels, 2024.** Photo by Austin Coudriet.



**Baby Jabber**, Ceramic, livestock bandaging, markers and mixed media. 24x 20x 13in. 2023. Photo by Alexis Oltmer.

# Xanthe Somers

Xanthe Somers is a contemporary ceramicist whose large-scale, vibrant works carry barbed social and political critiques. Born in 1992 in Harare, Zimbabwe, Somers studied Fine Art (Hons) at the University of Cape Town and received her MA in Postcolonial Culture and Global Policy from Goldsmiths, University of London in 2020.

The bodies of Somers' intricate pieces are hand-coiled in the traditional way and then disrupted – their surfaces punctured, woven or adorned with meticulously shaped and painted details. Her creations evoke a sense of play, combining political commentary and hyperornamentation to draw attention to overconsumption, cheap labour and the impact of environmental-racist practices on the Global South.

Somers incorporates a broad range of visual elements into her work, including traditional Zimbabwean crafts such as weaving and soap stone sculpture, found objects, gold lustre glaze, sculpted flowers and identifiable brand emblems. Upon closer examination of the inscriptions on the pieces and their thought-provoking titles – such as *Like Stale Bread After a Hard Day's Work* – the viewer is prompted into analytic contemplation.

Presented collectively, Somers' vessel-sculptures engage in a dialogue that explores "the colonial ghosts and

systematic repressions still apparent in society," she explains. She is interested in challenging prevailing heteronormative ideas associated with beauty and refinement found in everyday, functional objects. "We create utilitarian objects to serve us, but ultimately these objects tend to outlive us," she says. "These objects are not neutral, they carry within them the ideology in which they were created, and this legacy is not silent. These objects have an active and persuasive influence in shaping our visual reality."

Somers has held four solo exhibitions: *Rancid* at Galerie Revel in Bordeaux, France (2022); *A Vocabulary for Ghosts* at First Floor Gallery Harare, Zimbabwe (2021); *Hole Not Whole* at Fusion Art Gallery, Turin, Italy (2016); and *The Intimacy of Objects* at The Corridor, Harare (2016). Most recently, Southern Guild presented her work at *Untitled Art fair* in Miami in 2022 and 2023. She has also shown at AKA A Paris, Collectable Art Fair in Brussels and Collect Art Fair in London, where she is currently based. In 2023 Somers' work was acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum (London). She was named the winner of the annual ANNA Award presented by Latitudes in 2024.

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Visit **Xante Somers's** website and Instagram page.

<https://www.xanthesomers.com/>  
[@xanthesomers](#)





**The Weary Weaver**, 2024, Glazed stoneware. 39.4 x 28.4 x 28.4 in. | 100 x 72 x 72 cm, Image credit: Southern Guild and Hayden Phipps. Solo exhibition at Southern Guild, Cape Town, 2024.

# Javaria Ahmad

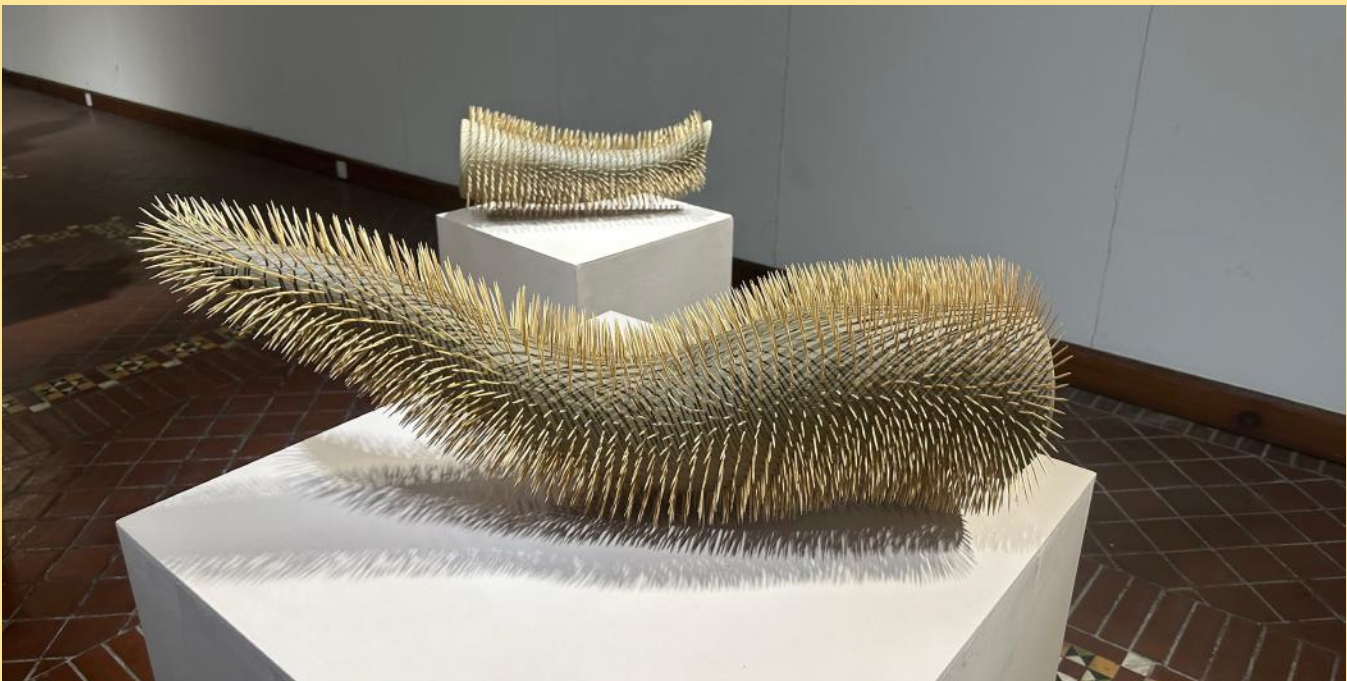
Javaria Ahmad is a Pakistani ceramic artist and educator at the National College of Arts, where she has been teaching since 2018. She holds an MFA in Ceramic Arts from Alfred University, New York (2023), and an MA from Beaconhouse National University (2016). Her practice explores the lives, labor, and resilience of South Asian women through a cross-cultural lens shaped by her experiences in Pakistan and abroad. Using ceramics as a language of storytelling, she reinterprets everyday objects as metaphors for devotion, endurance, and identity. Ahmad's work has been exhibited internationally, including at NCECA (USA), the Lahore Museum, Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park (Japan), the Taiwan Ceramic Biennale, and Budapest. In 2021, she was a Visiting Artist Fellow at Harvard University and was recently inducted as one of two members from Pakistan into the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) in Geneva.

*"The discourse surrounding women's everyday lives, cultural stereotypes, and traditions has deeply shaped both*

*my life and my work. Growing up in Pakistan and briefly living abroad for educational and professional purposes, I bring a cross-cultural perspective that enables me to ethnographically examine gender roles and domestic spaces from multiple angles. My work explores stereotypical gendered domesticity and traditions in the lives of South Asian women, focusing on the layered meanings of middle-class women as conventional homemakers. Storytelling through everyday, mundane objects, architectural elements, and specific colors is a recurring aspect of my practice. By weaving together my sense of place and identity, my work conveys cultural meanings that may seem surreal in one context but resonate deeply in another."*

Visit **Javaria Ahmad** 's Instagram page.

@javaria.ahmadd



**Strange How We Decorate Pain**, 2024, Unfired Earthenware and Tooth Picks, 21 x 7.5" and 15 x 6"





**Fragments of Home #2**, 2022, Earthenware Reduced Fire to Cone 10, 22 x 16.5 x 11"

# Katie Strachan

Rooted in the Pennsylvania German Fraktur tradition, Katie Strachan's practice merges sculpture, ceramics, and installation to create layered forms that hold traces of memory, ritual, and decay. With a background in fiber and ceramics, Strachan merges material sensitivity with conceptual intent, often blurring the boundary between object and text, relic and record. Strachan holds a BFA in Fiber from the Fashion Institute of Technology (F.I.T.) in New York. She began her ceramic training as an apprentice in Kanazawa, Japan,

before completing her MFA at Tainan National University of the Arts (TNNUA) in Taiwan. She is the recipient of the 2023 NCECA Emerging Artist Award and Third Prize in the 2021 Blanc de Chine International Ceramic Art Award. She has participated in residencies at EKWC (Netherlands) and Shigaraki (Japan).

Visit **Katie Strachan's** website and Instagram page.

<https://www.katestrachan.com/>  
@kd.strachan



**Black swan**, 2024, black clay and wax, 40x36x17H cm





**Envelop #1**, 2024, *terra cotta*, 44x20x5.5H cm





# Little hard clouds becoming vessels: the sculptural poetry of Gordon Baldwin

By Alessandra Lami

At the core of Gordon Baldwin's practice lies a tireless curiosity: among the most original voices in modern British ceramics, the artist was able to transform a traditional language into a territory of formal and poetic experimentation. After his demise in May 2025, Baldwin leaves behind a vast body of work. His practice is nourished by a continuous dialogue with art history, especially that of the later twentieth century. In a life spent between teaching – at Eton College as well as Goldsmiths College and the Royal College of Art – and artistic research, Baldwin began experimenting by directing his practice toward works with a functional character, until shaping the traits of a fully autonomous sculptural investigation that reveals him as a multifaceted artist, capable of weaving sculpture, drawing, poetry and music into a single coherent vision.

The exhibition *Little Hard Clouds Becoming Vessels*, held at Fondazione Officine Saffi and organised in collaboration with Kunstverein in Hamburg and Corvi-Mora, London, presents itself as a retrospective dedicated to Baldwin's rich practice. Since its founding in 2011, the Milan-based foundation represents a key institution for ceramic research, fostering dialogues between historical perspectives and future-oriented experimentation, so it is no coincidence that Baldwin's first exhibition takes place here in particular. The project investigates the wide range of visual and conceptual styles the artist developed over many decades, moving between abstraction, reflection, and a deep attention to how materials behave. Word, form and silence are in constant dialogue, creating compositions where inner experience and outside reality come together.

The display presents a large selection of ceramic sculptures arranged without chronological order across three central platforms, each composed of steel plates supported by bricks. This simple arrangement gives the works an almost floating quality, letting their shapes and shadows seem suspended, like small clouds or pieces of a hanging landscape. Alongside the sculptures, a concise group of drawings from 2016–2017 introduces a second register of Baldwin's late production, revealing how drawing eventually became his primary form of expression.



Varying in shape and size, the structure of the ceramic works recalls the typical shape of the vase or container, with surfaces marked by holes, gaps, and narrow openings, giving the impression of an interior that is partly exposed and partly concealed. This repeating morphology represents a basic key element, to the point of becoming a key theme of the artist's research: the so-called vessel, which appears in many titles of his works, and corresponds with a hollow structure embodying the idea of inner and inhabited space. Often glazed in black, the heart of the sculptures becomes a fragile space where thoughts and emotions gather, forming the protected and complex center of the human experience.



Among the works on display, *Tall Standing Form*, signed and dated 1985, exemplifies these influences with particular efficiency: with its vertical tension and deep blue glaze, the work assumes an anthropomorphic presence, almost recalling a totem. The work *Developed Bottle* (1989), part of a series begun in the 1960s, engages explicitly with Umberto Boccioni's *Sviluppo di una bottiglia nello spazio* (1912). While Boccioni's Futurist object dissolves into the surrounding environment through its dynamism, Baldwin's interpretation keeps a clarity of outline, maintaining the vessel as a self-contained yet expressive form. Several works belong to the series *Painting in a Form of a Bowl*, began in the 1980s, where Baldwin further explores the boundary between ceramics and painting. Here, the vessel becomes a support for marks, colours and gestures, blurring distinctions between the two media and reinforcing the harmony between surface and structure.

In *Little Hard Clouds Becoming Vessels*, the sculptures engage in dialogue with a group of charcoal drawings on paper. The graphic production, although often preparatory, always joined his creative path, eventually becoming his main expressive language in later years as his eyesight deteriorated, leading him to abandon ceramics and continue creating by drawing. The drawings are distinguished by abstract creations composed of pencil lines, material gestures

and shades made with fingertips. Brief verbal notes accompany most drawings like marginal annotations to the visual composition.

The charcoal drawings reveal a close connection between the artist and contemporary music: word, action and musical rhythm enter perfect harmony; the rhythmic graphite gesture creates a visual musicality made of signs and words that follow each other like improvised scores. His final phase of research echoes the silent melodies of John Cage (as in the celebrated piece *4'33"*), and the minimalism of Philip Glass and Terry Riley was a major source of inspiration.

*Not a Sound* (2017) shows this contrast: the silence suggested by the words coexists with a rhythmic and almost musical gestuality. Again, in *Counting One Two Three* (2016), the act of counting introduces a temporal sequence similar to rhythm, and the fingerprints, though they may seem casual, reveal a musical structure.

With the loss of one of the most important senses for an artist, sound and gesture became in his final years the privileged expressive channels, allowing suspension and silence to become active spaces of emotional and conceptual resonance, places in which meaning settles and amplifies.

*Alessandra Lami is an independent art historian based in Milan, Italy, with a specialisation in contemporary art. Holding a degree in History and Criticism of Art from Università degli Studi di Milano (2024), her research centres on current artistic practices and the critical frameworks that inform today's visual culture.*

*Gordon Baldwin: Little hard clouds becoming vessels was on view at Officine Saffi, Milan, between October 3 and December 3, 2025.*

#### Captions

- Gordon Baldwin. *Little hard clouds becoming vessels*, installation view at Fondazione Officine Saffi. Courtesy Fondazione Officine Saffi. Photo: Alessandra Vinci

#### Footnotes

1. Undated and unaddressed letter in archives of York Art Gallery.





# Ceramic Highlights from London's Frieze Week

By Unu Sohn

It has been a busy mid-October week in London with Frieze coinciding with neighbouring PAD, located a short 20-minute walk away from Regent's Park in Berkeley Square, and newer programming like Minor Attractions. You may be unfamiliar with this younger London-specific art fair, "Minor Attractions," now in its third year, that aims to connect contemporary art and nightlife. Its current and previous editions took place at The Mandrake, with both local and international galleries exhibiting artworks in rooms on several moody levels of this eccentric luxury hotel. I visited all four of the other fairs (four rather than three, as I will be differentiating between Frieze London and Frieze Masters) and found the ceramic works at Frieze London 2025 the most exciting.



One of the booths there, as part of the 'Focus' selection that forefronts young galleries, was Stockholm-based Coulisse, which made a statement with mint-green walls accompanying a solo presentation of punchy works by artist Rafał Zajko. I had previously visited two of Zajko's solo exhibitions in London: *Clocking Off* at Queercircle and *Song to the Siren* at Cooke Latham Gallery. While Zajko would definitely not be identified as a potter or ceramicist, his practice chiefly features ceramic components in recent years. He employs many types of sculptural materials and this background comes through in the works at Frieze. *Blue Origin* (2025) and the *Kosmos* series (2025) move beyond a simple tile-based format. Metal fittings and brass components thread through the ceramic forms and there are several layers that create an overall depth to the composition.



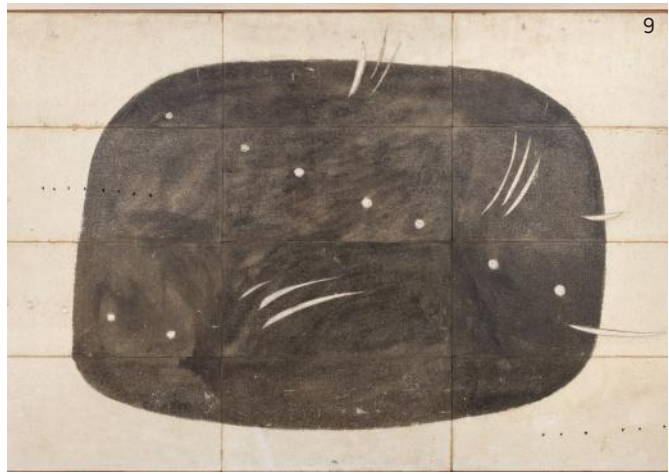
*Coulisse Gallery, Frieze London 2025*

His work speaks a clear mechanical and architectural language that feels simultaneously retro and futuristic. Each of Zajko's works is like an alien weapon begging you to press a button that will trigger the launch of a missile, or maybe just launch into song. It is therefore fitting that one of his large sculptures, *Amber Chamber III* (2025), that features a terracotta-tile interior, was activated throughout the fair's duration by the artist himself and fellow artist Agnieszka Szczotk.

Another strong solo presentation of ceramic works was made by the gallery Modern Art and artist Sanya Kantarovsky. The booth was occupied by a Goliath plinth to bolster and guard the freestanding vessel-sculptures with slab paintings hung on the surrounding walls. Kantarovsky's practice centers on painting while working across various materials, but his works here were exclusively in clay. He masterfully demonstrates how to best make use of the innate characteristics of simple oxides. His painted figures are such a perfect balance of eerie and tender that I can imagine Tim Burton on a waitlist for these works except that, according to curator and journalist Judith Benhamou, they all sold on the opening day.



*Robilant+Voena, Frieze Masters 2025*



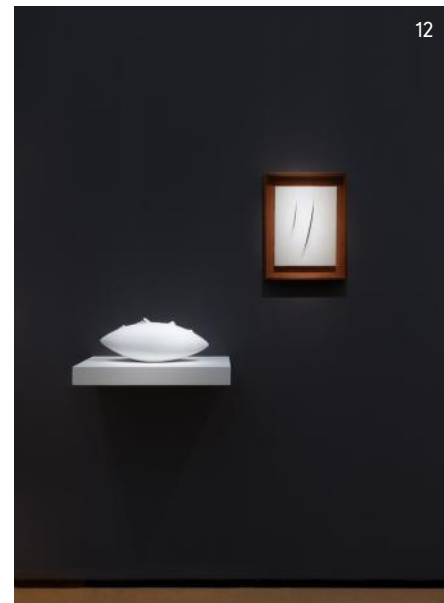
*Lucio Fontana, Soffitto: Concetto Spaziale, 1957*



*Robilant+Voena, Frieze Masters 2025*



*Fukami Sueharu, Kaze (1990s)*



*Robilant+Voena, Frieze Masters 2025*

This is akin to how Lucio Fontana's works were exhibited at Frieze Masters this year and the year before (as well as possibly in prior years, but I cannot vouch for these renditions). There was a strong connection made between his ceramic plates and his famous slashed paintings. I personally enjoy seeing how an artist's voice develops across decades and mediums. On the topic of Fontana, Robilant+Voena presented some lovely examples of his work across painting and sculpture at Frieze Masters. I think this was also the gallery that had a breathtaking Fontana made of polystyrene, a 3 x 4 panel of twelve tiles accompanied by a photograph that depicted how the work had once been installed on a ceiling.

Other treats at Frieze Masters included several works by Lucie Rie presented by both Offer Waterman and Erskine Hall & Coe, and a vase titled *Kaze* (Wind) (1990s) by Fukami Sueharu shown with Thomsen Gallery. *Kaze* features a flawless application of a seihakuji glaze that pools on a rectangular ledge, the only horizontal face on an otherwise cylindrical form, while crisp porcelain edges peek out from beneath the glaze like icy mountain ridges.

Similarly, skillful craftsmanship was found at PAD London, a fair occurring here and in Paris that showcases art and design. Some galleries at PAD will showcase more art pieces but visitors would likely agree that PAD is generally geared towards selling designed objects. There is a lot of furniture, mirrors, and lighting, so it's easy to just find yourself dreaming of an alternate universe in which your home is free of Ikea and Dunelm.

Perhaps this is the reason I find myself disassociating more at PAD than at Frieze. The art world tends towards a more spare display, allowing the viewer to appreciate a singular work for its aesthetic, process, and meaning. Most of the booths at PAD are showrooms and they are selling you a package: this patinated silver-leaf table would pair exquisitely with a stained oak cabinet with blown-glass details. I think the objects and my nervous system need more room to breathe. This silver leaf table also contains multiplicities of aesthetic, process, and meaning!

The quality of work at PAD is undeniably impeccable. You will not see ceramic glued to anything here, which I did see at Frieze London... And when speaking about quality ceramic art objects, we must make sure to mention Adrian Sassoon, who was representing leading contemporary ceramicists such as Felicity Aylieff, Pippin Drysdale, and Kate Malone in their booth. I visited Adrian Sassoon's space in Belgravia ahead of PAD with a friend visiting from out of town to see their relatively new space. We learned that Sassoon has long-standing connections with Australia, which helps explain his strong ties to the ceramics and glass scene there, despite operating primarily in the UK and his specialized background in French Vincennes and Sèvres porcelain.



Adrian Sassoon, PAD London 2025

PIK'D, PAD London 2025





# Examining Material Intelligence as part of Australian Design Centre's Sydney Craft Week Festival

By Laura Curcio

If you walk down William Street in inner-city Sydney before November 19, you will see a majestic ceramic work in the window of Australian Design Centre. Standing nearly one metre tall and aptly titled *Apparition*, it has a whimsical and dream-like quality, with coloured glass bubbles emerging from a white ceramic structure perched on four legs. It represents

the first experiments combining glass and clay by acclaimed Australian ceramic artist Lynda Draper, who is one of 36 finalists in the 2025 MAKE Award: Biennial Prize for Innovation in Australian Craft and Design (10 October – 19 November 2025).

The award is also part of Australian Design Centre's annual Sydney Craft Week Festival, 10 days of exhibitions, markets, talks and hands-on workshops all over Sydney and surrounds. For the popular event's ninth year in 2025, the theme was Material Intelligence. This also resonated through the MAKE Award, ADC's major exhibition during the craft and design festival.

MAKE is Australia's richest non-acquisitive craft and design award, with a first prize of \$35,000 and second prize \$10,000. It was established in 2023 by ADC CEO and Artistic Director Lisa Cahill, assisted by a generous private supporter donation. Cahill was one of four judges who shortlisted 36 finalists from 197 entries from around Australia, including Draper's *Apparition*. According to the Award criteria, works must demonstrate the makers' particular skill and innovation, and represent a new evolution in their practice.

MAKE Award and Sydney Craft Week both emphasise the materiality of creative practice in the craft and design fields, and how local makers use, manipulate and interrogate materials in innovative ways. In the face of artificial intelligence rapidly transforming our world, this dialogue between maker and material celebrates the qualities of hand-built, spun, blown and forged pieces as integral to an understanding of a maker's practice.

At the combined opening night event for the MAKE Award and Sydney Craft Week on October 10, attended by a large and enthusiastic crowd in ADC's Darlinghurst gallery space, the prize winners were announced. NSW contemporary jewellery artist Cinnamon Lee took home the \$35,000 first prize for her ingenious and beautiful work *NOCTUA*, melding lighting, jewellery, sculpture and the endangered Bogong moth. Jake Rollins received second prize for his *SOFA1* made out of 3477 used golf balls (yes you can sit on it) and Highly Commended was *A Poetry of Rings: The Mulga Alphabet*, Victorian artist-jeweller Roseanne Bartley's alphabet of 26 rings made from found Mulga wood.



Lynda Draper, *Apparition*, 2025. Photo: Jacquie Manning



Lynda Draper. Photo: Docqment





# Johan Creten's Tremore Essenziale at Alfonso Artiaco

By Lori-Ann Touchette

"Tremore Essenziale" at the Alfonso Artiaco Gallery in Naples represents the Belgian artist's return to Italy after his masterful exhibition at the Villa Medici in Rome in 2020-21. A more intimate and personal vision is created at the Neapolitan gallery as opposed to the Villa Medici show that provided a retrospective of Creten's sculptural production from the 1980s onwards. Whereas Villa Medici's "Peccati" was conceived by the artist as a gift to the eternal city, this show is a homage to Naples, the city of tremors par excellence.

A poem written by the artist serves as a billet-doux to Naples, overshadowed by the silhouette of Vesuvius, whose historic eruptions are so often paired with earthquakes, starting with the tremors that preceded the most famous eruption of the volcano in 79 AD. Creten relates these tremors to the fragility of clay and the creative process, but also to the fear that comes from confronting taboos.

Known as the 'gypsy ceramicist' for his itinerant practice spanning almost 40 years, Creten recently settled in Paris at "La Solfatara", the studio he shares with the visual artist Jean-Michel Othoniel. The choice of the name is telling. One of more than 40 volcanoes in the Campi Flegrei to the north of Naples, the Solfatara was identified by Strabo in the Roman early imperial age as the entrance into the underworld and home to the god Vulcan, the master craftsman. Creten explains: "The Solfatara was a place where people undertaking the Grand Tour went to write their poems, and it was an environment where one could see the future, through a connection with the underworld and the unknown." (source). If the Solfatara was an obligatory site on the 18th-century Grand Tour, the designation also suggests the personal Grand Tour of the artists, residents at the French Academy in Rome in 1996. Moreover, Vulcan is evoked by the previous life of the building as a metalworks.



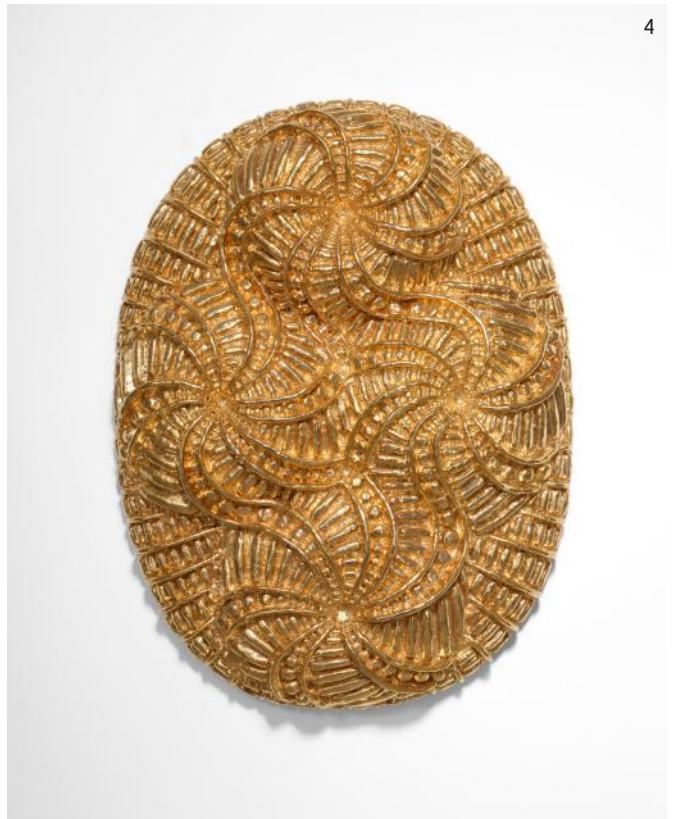
Exhibition view



Exhibition view



Specchio dorato #3 #4



La Gloria Subliminale





# Lindsey Mendick – Growing Pains: You Couldn't Pay Me to Go Back

By Beth Williamson

Jupiter+ is an ambitious off-site programme run by Jupiter Artland in Scotland. The brainchild of Jupiter's co-founder, the sculptor Nicky Wilson, it aims to bring world class art out of the gallery and into high streets across Scotland. Now in its fourth year, the programme has previously run in Perth (2022), Ayr (2023) and Paisley (2024). In the 2025 offering, housed in a disused estate agent in Reform Street at the heart of Dundee, Lindsey Mendick's new installation *Growing Pains: You Couldn't Pay Me to Go Back* catches the eye and interest of passersby young and old. In this former retail unit, reimagined as an immersive multi-sensory artwork, the creative use of public space enables the opening of dialogue and issues an invitation, to young people in particular,

to imagine themselves as artists. Crucially, Jupiter+ runs a bespoke learning programme in the high street too, providing opportunities to develop critical thinking, collaboration, creative activism and self-development. Jupiter's Youth Collective ORBIT runs in conjunction with Jupiter+, bringing together young people for a year-long, youth-led programme that has the potential to transform lives.

Growing Pains, an idea and installation that Mendick has called “the estate agents from hell”, draws in new audiences and inspires the next generation of creative practitioners. Mendick's autobiographical work offers a form of working through, asking the viewer to explore their own personal histories, however difficult that may be. In a previous commission for Jupiter Art Land, Mendick installed *Sh\*tfaced* (2023) in Jupiter's Steadings Gallery where her ceramic tableaux captured the indulgence and aftereffects of binge drinking culture. Other installations on the site at that time – *Shame Spiral* and *I Tried So Hard to Be Good*, also dealt with restraint and abandon and the theme of self-destructive tendencies at play. Now in *Growing Pains*, Mendick revisits her teenage years through ceramics and film. In so doing, she creates a space for today's teenagers to talk about what is important to them, about their fears and emotions, hopes and dreams.



Photo by Neil Hanna





Mendick has been open about her own battles with mental health and I wondered how difficult it might be to work things though in clay and then reveal them to the world, particularly in Growing Pains which deals with such a vulnerable and difficult stage of life. Mendick shares that she has grown up unable to shake off much of that teenage pain.

“I’ve been waiting probably 10 years to make this show and thinking there’ll be a right time when it doesn’t prick my eyes, talking about some of the things that happen. But then I realised that it was more important to talk about a subject that still feels so raw”. The unresolved nature of Mendick’s teenage troubles prompts us to discuss how some things never leave us. It is with her typical generosity that Mendick explains how, for her, the work connects to these difficult emotions. “One of the reasons it’s so great with Jupiter+ is that this isn’t just a show, it’s a springboard and that’s what I believe art should be. I want the works to be conversational, conversation pieces about difficult things that we have to say to each other. I make like no one’s watching, but I needed something like Jupiter+ to be able to take on the complexity of it as a story”.

The technical challenges of working with clay in this way are considerable. Making the houses in Growing Pains was most challenging of all. A team of people had to carry them to the kiln. Mendick always liked the idea of them cracking, playing with the idea of bursting out the scene, if you like. “I was thinking about how teenagers punctuate everything. You create a life, and then you cannot control them. I think that was what was what was happening with my parents. I think quite often, we go through all of that and we think, but if I had kids, I could do it better. But you can’t, you can’t control it”. There is a sense of that lack of control with ceramics and with Mendick too as she points out “I do think you have to collaborate with your kiln”. That said, there is nothing organic or intuitive about Mendick’s process. Ceramic may be the protagonist with the show built around it, as Mendick puts it, but she is always thinking and planning what is next in the process. She has created an enormously raw, honest and generous artwork here. What is next for Growing Pains depends upon the young people of Dundee.

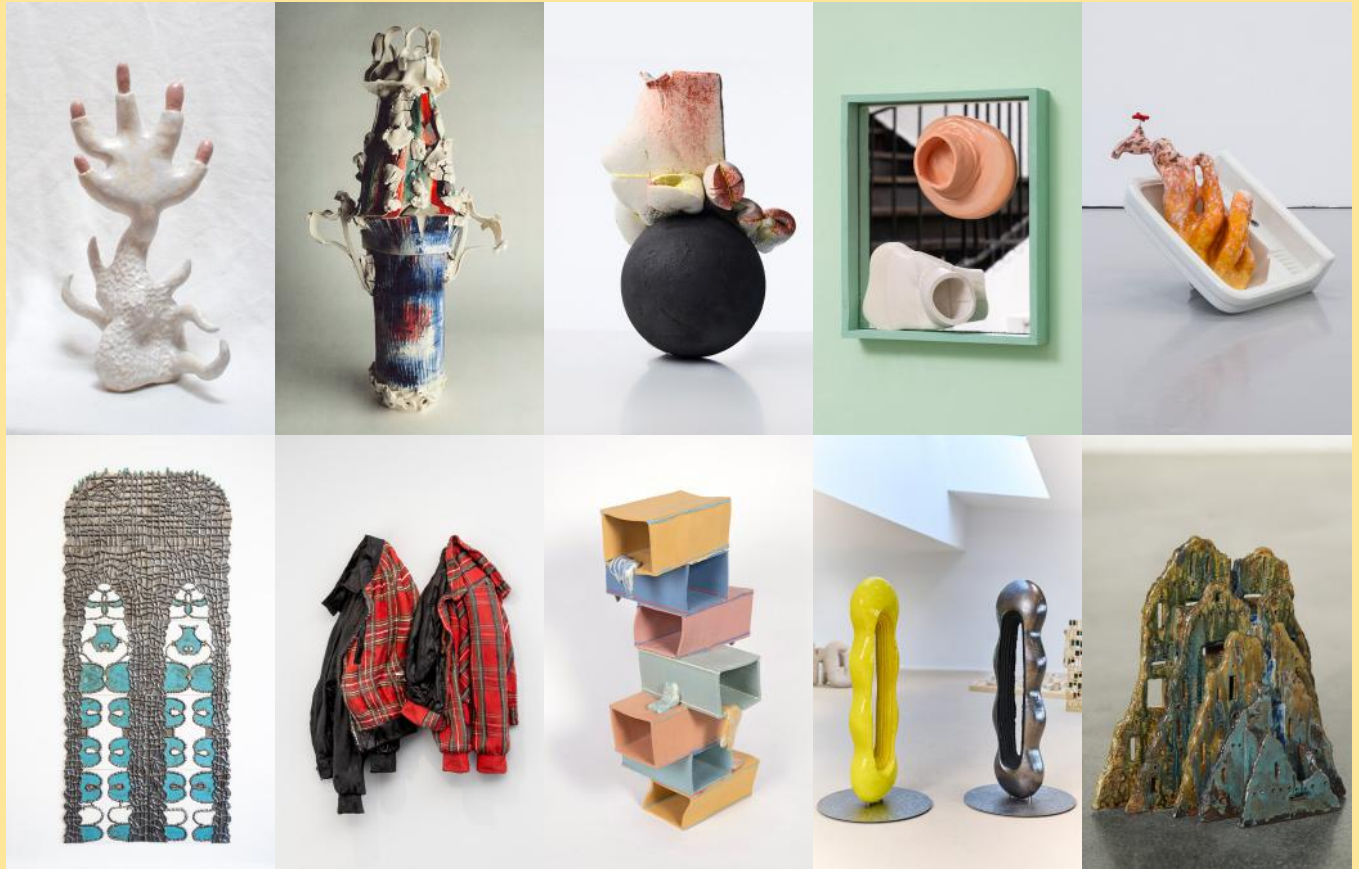
*Beth Williamson is an art historian and writer specialising in modern and contemporary art in Britain, with a particular interest in art education, craft, and ceramics. A former Research Fellow at Tate, she co-curated the exhibition Basic Design at Tate Britain in 2013 and has written widely on British art and pedagogy. Her essays and reviews on art, craft and ceramics have appeared in publications such as The Art Newspaper, Sculpture magazine, Studio International, and Ceramic Review.*

*Lindsey Mendick – Growing Pains: You Couldn’t Pay Me to Go Back is on view at Jupiter+ (Part of Jupiter Artland), Dundee, between September 12 and December 21, 2025.*

### Captions

- Lindsey Mendick, Growing Pains, 2025. Courtesy of the artist and JUPITER+, Dundee. Photography by Ruth Clark, except otherwise noted





# The ten laureates of the 2026 ceramic brussels Art Prize

Organized annually by the ceramic brussels fair, the Art Prize aims to highlight young contemporary creators and support emerging practices in ceramics.

Launched each year in April, the open call is addressed to art students and young artists living in Europe, supporting accessibility and inclusion for those who are not represented by a gallery. With no age limit, the prize is open to artists with fewer than ten years of practice and research in ceramics.

Designed to promote contemporary artistic expression, the Art Prize encourages the exploration of ceramics as a medium while fostering connections between artists, institutions, galleries, and the fair's audience.

The ten laureates of the ceramic brussels Art Prize will present their work in a group exhibition during ceramic brussels 2026. Additional awards will be presented at the opening, including a solo exhibition at ceramic brussels 2027, an international residency, and/or an acquisition.

This year's laureates are: Angelika Stefaniak (PL), Danny Cremers (NL), Faye Papargyropoulou (GR), Kira Fröse (DE), Lorie Ballage (FR), Marie Pic (FR), Ninon Hivert (FR), Santiago Insignares-Martínez (US), Uriel Caspi (IL), and Walter Yu (CN).

The jury selecting this year's artists consists of: Jean-Marc Dimanche (FR), Wendy Gers (FR/ZA), Jean-Charles Hameau (FR), Lionel Jadot (BE), and Maral Kekejian (ES).

# Angelika Stefaniak

Angelika Stefaniak is a visual artist born in 1997 in Jawor, Poland. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław (Master's degree in sculpture, 2024). Her practice combines ceramics and textiles, rooted in an intuitive process, a childlike perception and dreamlike distortion.

Inspired by psychology, anthropology and biomorphism, she seeks beauty in the grotesque, creating sensitive and

tactile forms that oscillate between sculpture and object. Winner of the OP\_YOUNG 2024 programme and recipient of a grant from the Polish Ministry of Culture, she has exhibited her work at OP ENHEIM, Galeria Miejska in Wrocław, Apteka Sztuki in Warsaw, as well as at international events in Łódź and Olomouc.

*@angelikastefaniak*







# Faye Papargyropoulou

Faye Papargyropoulou is a ceramic artist and designer based in Athens. In 1992, she began studying art and design, thanks to a scholarship in industrial design. After twenty years as creative director at major advertising agencies, she founded her own agency, ABOUT: CREATIVE AGENCY.

In 2020, she took a new step in her creative journey by opening her own ceramics studio, CERAMIC 47. Based in

Athens, this personal space for artistic expression allows her to create unique pieces that highlight the beauty of imperfection and challenge traditional notions of form and functionality. Through her work, she combines the past and the present, reflecting a deep appreciation for art, nature and contemporary design.

*@fayepapargyropoulou*





# Martin Woll Godal: Sequence at Bomuldsfabriken Kunsthall, Arendal

October 11 – December 30, 2025

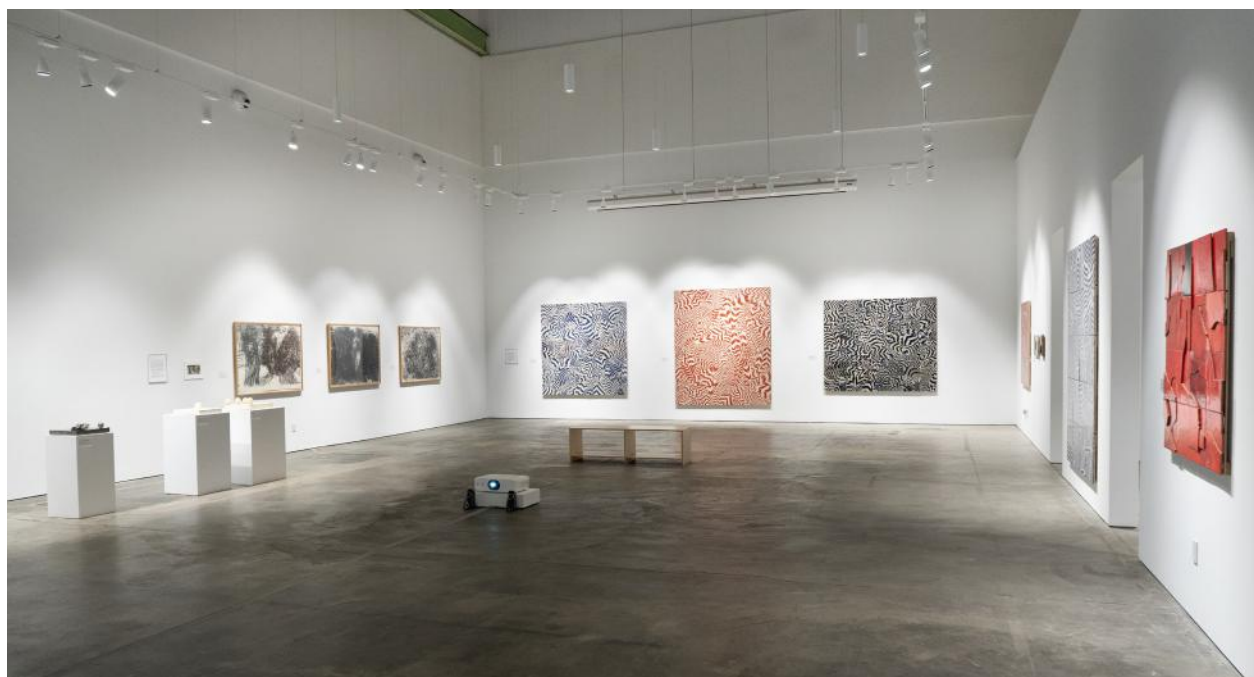


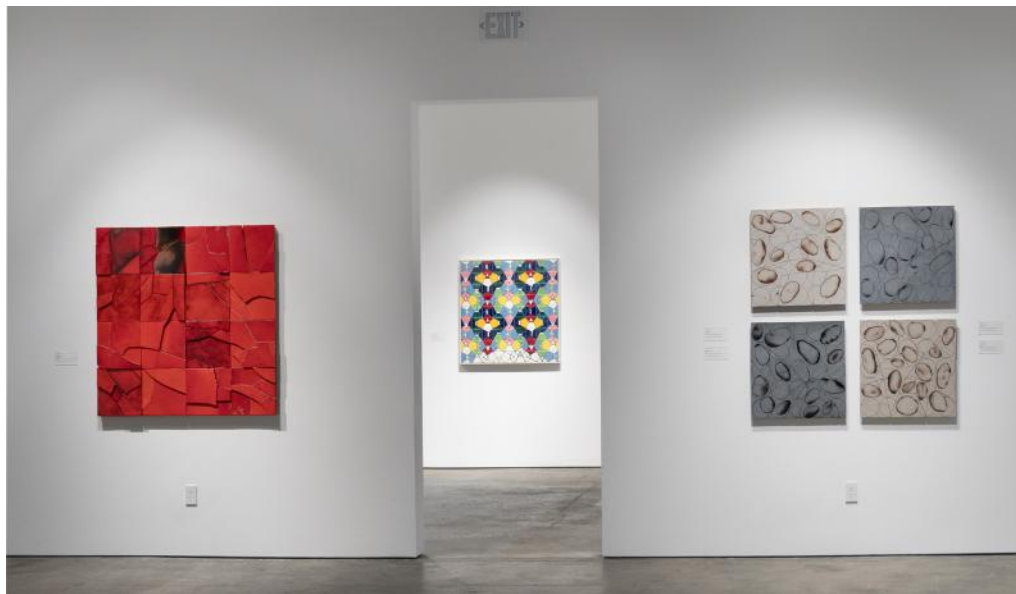




# Jim Melchert: Where the Boundaries Are at di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, San Francisco

October 18, 2025 – January 3, 2026









Fiat Ignis III: Let There Be Fire is a group exhibition shaped as much by process as by outcome.

Hosted by Gallery 60 NYC in collaboration with the New England Wood Firing Conference, the show brings together twelve ceramic artists whose works emerge from the shared intensity of wood firing—an approach defined by time, presence, and unpredictability.

Wood firing is a slow and demanding practice. Over many days and nights, a kiln is fed continuously with wood, allowing flame, ash, and heat to move freely across the surfaces of the work. No two pieces come out the same. Each carries marks that cannot be fully planned or reproduced, recording both intention and chance, control and surrender. The results are varied: subtle shifts in surface, bold ash deposits, moments of roughness, quiet softness, or unexpected beauty.

Entering the gallery, the first impression is one of quiet attention. The works do not rush toward the viewer; instead, they invite a slower pace to move around, pause, and look closely. Many of the pieces carry a strong sense of touch. Surfaces hold marks of the hand, traces of pressure and repetition. Some forms feel dense and grounded, while others appear lighter, almost tentative. As the viewer moves through the space, these contrasts become more noticeable and the differences are felt immediately.

Rather than presenting a single narrative, the exhibition offers a series of encounters. Some works lean toward functional forms while others move more freely into sculptural expressions. Rather than opposing one another, function and aesthetics exist side by side, each informing the other. A cup, a jar, or a sculptural form all hold the same evidence of fire, material, touch, and attention. From a distance, there is a sense of rhythm and balance; up close, surfaces reveal layers of decision, accident, and response. Weight and fragility sit next to one another; natural, organic effects sit alongside deliberate gestures of the human hand; pieces are given space. Each work seems to carry its own mood and pace, yet together they create a gentle cohesion.

Time is present everywhere in the work—not only in the long firing process, but in the accumulated knowledge, patience, and dedication behind each piece. The surfaces feel lived-in rather than finished, as if they continue to hold memory and dream. For some artists, this aligns closely with ideas found in traditions such as wabi-sabi, where imperfection, impermanence, and even brokenness are understood as part of continuity rather than flaws to be corrected. What remains visible is not perfection, but honesty.

Although each artist brings a distinct energy and approach, the exhibition resists hierarchy. Fiat Ignis III is not about individual achievement so much as shared experience. Wood firing depends on cooperation—people working in shifts, tending the fire, responding together to what the kiln asks for. That sense of working alongside one another carries into the exhibition. The works feel connected, not because they look alike, but because they come from a common effort.

The participating artists—Pascal Chmelar, Gabriel Cordero, Dan Christoffel, Claire Engelhardt, Yuri Gershtein, Mandy Henson, Shinobu Habauchi, Frank Olt, Brendan Shanahan, Kiichi Takeuchi, Riley Walzer, and Trevor Youngberg—form a diverse group, each contributing a personal voice while remaining part of a larger whole. Differences are not smoothed over; they are celebrated. The exhibition holds a wide range of tempos, textures, and intentions, allowing individuality to exist comfortably within a shared ground.

Fiat Ignis III: Let There Be Fire feels less like a statement and more like a gathering, moving through a communal landscape shaped by fire, labor, and trust. Working closely with Kiichi Takeuchi, Director of Gallery 60 NYC, we were ourselves fascinated by how these ceramics inhabit the space: how they occupy the room, how they ask to be viewed from multiple angles, how they change as the viewer moves... At its heart, the exhibition encourages slowing down, observing relationships, allowing impressions to form naturally, and remembering the quiet generosity of work made together.

# The Month's News In The Ceramic Art World

## 01

Yingge Ceramics Museum (Taiwan) invites artists, curators, and collectives to submit exhibition proposals for its 2027 exhibition program. Seeking solo, group, and curatorial projects, the Museum offers a professional platform for contemporary ceramic practice and international exchange, with exhibitions taking place in two of its galleries. The open call runs until January 31, 2026, with selected projects announced in March 2026.

## 02

The Hunterdon Art Museum (Clinton, NJ) is inviting US-based artists to apply to Claybash, its second Triennial Juried Exhibition of Ceramics. The exhibition welcomes diverse approaches that explore clay as both material and idea, from functional and sculptural work to experimental practices. Claybash 2026 will be juried by curator and writer Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy, with awards including a \$1,000 First Prize. Applications are due February 9, 2026.

## 03

Artists based in the United States are invited to apply to Small Favors 2026, The Clay Studio's long-running exhibition celebrating small-scale works with big impact. Open to artists working in clay and other media, the exhibition challenges makers to create works that fit within a four-inch cube. Selected pieces will be presented and offered for sale both in the gallery and online. Small Favors 2026 runs October 8 – December 31, 2026, with applications due June 1, 2026.

## 04

Artists based in the United States are invited to apply for the Spector Craft Prize for Emerging Artists, a national juried award supporting makers with seven years or less of studio practice. Open to disciplines including ceramics, textiles, woodworking, glass, metalwork, basketry, and paper arts, the prize offers a \$10,000 award, mentorship opportunities, and a growing professional network. Created by the Spector Family Foundation to champion excellence in American craft, the prize launches at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in 2026. Applications are due March 1, 2026.

## 05

Artists based in Canada are invited to apply for the 2026 Winifred Shantz Award for Ceramics, a national award supporting emerging ceramic artists. Presented by the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery in partnership with the Keith and Winifred Shantz Fund for the Arts, the award is open to artists with 5-10 years of professional practice. The winner receives \$10,000, with additional prizes for a runner-up and finalists, and inclusion in a 2026 group exhibition at the gallery. Applications are due January 25, 2026.



## 06

A-B Projects is offering New Wave Scholarships for students and recent graduates that cover enrollment in their monthly Studio Sessions for 2026. Studio Sessions are an online platform where an intimate group of artists gather weekly for 4 weeks under the guidance of a lead artist to discuss specific ideas and experiment with how those ideas can take form in clay. Upcoming sessions: Kelly Devitt in January, Berenice Hernández in February, and Nathan Lynch in March.

## 07

The Gardiner Museum in Toronto has reopened its fully transformed ground floor, marking its most significant renewal in two decades. The renovation introduces the Museum's first-ever Gallery of Indigenous Ceramics, a new Makerspace, a Community Learning Centre, and reimagined Collection Galleries, all guided by principles of access, connectivity, and Indigeneity. The reopening also debuts a major new commission by artist Nadia Myre, whose ceramic installation greets visitors at the entrance. Additionally, they present a solo show by Linda Rotua Sormin titled "Uncertain Ground."

## 08

Artists working in craft-based media are invited to apply for Houston Center for Contemporary Craft's Artist Residency Program, offering three- to twelve-month residencies beginning in September 2026. Open to artists working in wood, glass, metal, fiber, and clay, the program provides 24/7 studio access, a \$1,000 monthly stipend, and professional development opportunities. Residents maintain open studio hours and participate in talks and exhibitions. Applications are due February 1, 2026.

## 09

**Book recommendation: Shaping Global Masterpieces.** Published by the International Academy of Ceramics, the book brings together reflections and works by 35 artists from 21 countries, offering insight into contemporary ceramic practices worldwide. Through reflections, creative processes, and technical information, the book celebrates artistic excellence while reflecting the Academy's mission to foster dialogue, exchange, and international collaboration in ceramics.

## 10

**Book recommendation: Irene Nordli: My Hands Just Keep Getting Bigger (2025).** This publication showcases the oeuvre of Irene Nordli, one of the Nordic ceramics scene's most renowned artists, and examines how her works have evolved over the past three decades. Known for her figurines and porcelain, and the interplay between body and material, her art is presented in a way that interweaves the personal, the artistic, and the historical. Buy the book from arnoldsche Art Publishers.

