

Craft Contemporary

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CONTACT

Emma Jacobson-Sive
emma@ejs-media.com

Suzanne Isken
suzanne@craftcontemporary.org
323-937-4230 x 27

Alicia Piller: Within

January 29 — May 7, 2023



Left: Alicia Piller, *Maternal DNA Strain 5* (detail), 2022. Mixed media, 75 x 65 x 45 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Right: Alicia Piller, *Psychological seeds overgrown. Wildflowers blaze a path.* (detail), 2022. Mixed media, 75 x 85 x 11 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Los Angeles –Alicia Piller: *Within*, the artist’s first solo museum exhibition, is a new, site-specific installation of multimedia works that investigates the relationship between the macro and micro perspectives within systems of knowledge, meaning, and bodily form. Within every community there are multiple identities and histories collectively holding space. Within every person there are universes that together work to ensure heart beats, breath . . . life.

Exhibition curator jill moniz conceived of *Within* “to develop a project with Alicia Piller that would amplify her practice of both rooting and elevating the connective matter of art and identity. Her work takes us inside cultural ideas and narratives, then she gives us the expansive 36,000-foot view of our relationship to the earth – again as matter, as elemental – shaped and shaping our existence toward something profound and inspiring. *Within*, as a sensorial installation, makes primary these fundamental aspects of Piller's work that form language, engagement, and understanding.”

Within is Piller’s invitation, or rather demand, for viewers to visually connect abstracted form with the complexities of human experience. In the installation, the artist disrupts horizon lines – engaging the ceiling, walls, and floor – in an immersive discovery of proportion and perception. She uses resin, latex, xeroxed imagery, dried plants, stones, and found objects to create cosmic and biological landscapes that challenge the positionality of the object and the viewer. There is no reductionism, only cross-sections of memories and ideas the artist constructs by ritualistically zooming-in and out to intersect geography, time, and space. Piller works to deconstruct and recode imagery and material ciphers that normalize, categorize, stagnate, and mute. She pulls apart mundane materials to create the richness and depth of visual storytelling that bridges time and place, reminding us that, internally and externally, we are part of fantastical worlds shaped by necessity, emotion, and wisdom.

As an ethnographic pursuit, *Within* visually composes elided and erased stories that Black women carry inside themselves as chroniclers. Disappeared peoples, scorched ground, and canonical abuse are explored in relation to astral phenomena, earth, wind, and water, illuminating Piller's calculus of secular epochs measured against spiritual reckoning that excavate truth while building artifacts of lived experience and material realities. In the artist’s own words: "Being understood is something that we all hope for; working with a curator like jill moniz is one of those special moments where the complexities of my art practice are fully seen, what an honor. So excited to have the opportunity to not only watch my work come to life through the eyes of someone who has the ability to step into the depths of my intricate world of materiality and abstraction, but to have the chance to show my work in an institution like Craft Contemporary that respects and appreciates craft practices within a contemporary context."

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Los Angeles-based artist Alicia Piller (b. 1982, Chicago, IL) envisions historical traumas, both political and environmental, through the lens of a microscope. Her sculptures and installations conceive of past atrocities, suffering, and accomplishments as biological forms – broken down to a cellular level. Piller received her MFA in sculpture and installation from California Institute of the Arts in 2019 and received a BA in both Fine Arts (Painting) and Anthropology from

Rutgers University in 2004. Her work is included in numerous public and private collections including the Hammer Museum and The Contemporary Collection at Glendale Community College. Recent solo exhibitions include *Atmospheric Pressures*, Track 16 Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2022); *2020 Visions*, College of the Canyons, Santa Clarita, CA (2021); *Unearthed: Time Keeping Mound City*, Craft Alliance, St. Louis, MO (2021); and *Spirit of the Times*, Lowell Ryan Projects, Los Angeles, CA (2019). Piller is represented by Track 16 Gallery, Los Angeles.

PROGRAMS in conjunction with *Alicia Piller: Within*

For a full list of exhibition programs, visit <https://www.craftcontemporary.org/programs/>

Exhibition Opening Reception

Sat, January 28 | 6:00–9:00 pm | in-person, courtyard, and galleries

\$12 | members free

Join us as we celebrate the opening of our new exhibitions, *Strings of Desire* and *Alicia Piller: Within*. Guests enjoy first access to the galleries, complimentary beverages, and live DJ music.

CREDITS:

Alicia Piller: Within has been organized by Jill Moniz, Craft Contemporary guest curator and founder of Transformative Arts. The exhibition is supported in part by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, and the Bernard Kester Trust in Memory of Edith Wyle.

Located on Los Angeles' historic Miracle Mile since 1965, Craft Contemporary reveals the potential of craft to educate, captivate, provoke, and empower. With a focus on contemporary art made from craft media and processes, Craft Contemporary presents dynamic exhibitions by established and emerging artists and designers who are often underrepresented in larger art institutions. Through a robust roster of regular programs and events, Craft Contemporary offers creative opportunities for the public to participate in hands-on workshops led by professional artists. Craft Contemporary cultivates an environment for people in Los Angeles to deepen their relationship to art, creativity, and one another. For more information, visit www.craftcontemporary.org.

LOCATION: 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

ADMISSION: FREE every Sunday

REGULARLY: \$9 for adults; \$7 for students, teachers, seniors; free for Craft Contemporary members

HOURS: Tuesday - Sunday, 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM