

Craft Contemporary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wayfinding

May 28 — September 10, 2023

Image: Courtney Mattison, *Our Changing Seas IV*, 2016-2019. Glazed stoneware, porcelain, 132 x 204 x 22 inches. Private Collection. Image courtesy of the artist, © Courtney Mattison.

Los Angeles - Craft Contemporary presents its third clay biennial, *Wayfinding* from May 28 — September 10, 2023. The exhibition includes fourteen contemporary artists who harness clay's powerful physical and metaphorical properties to embody their ties to land and water, the two elements which together form clay. Exploring a range of themes including environmental degradation,

plant cultivation, migration, and the artist's emotional bond to place, these artists' manipulation of clay becomes a personal system to comprehend and mark the complex interdependencies of humans, land, and water. Artists in the exhibition range from emerging to established and all live in California. They include Christina Margarita Erives, Ryan Flores, Paz G, Rowan Harrison, Lizette Hernández, David Hicks, Lourdes Jiménez-Pulido, Courtney Mattison, Marianne McGrath, Sam Shoemaker, Charles Snowden, Joan Takayama-Ogawa, Connie Martin Trevino, and Amia Yokoyama.

Wayfinding represents a continuation of Craft Contemporary's clay biennial exhibition series examining the histories and complexities of clay, as a technical material and metaphorical vehicle. While *Melting Point: Movements in Contemporary Clay* (2018) represented the expansiveness of contemporary approaches to working with the material, *The Body, The Object, The Other* (2020) highlighted the human figure as the basis for material and conceptual experimentation. *Wayfinding* dissects clay into its two essential components, earth and water, to illustrate the nuanced and complicated relationships human beings have with these two elements. *Wayfinding* underscores that the power of clay lies in its commonness. It is all around us, under our feet, both a witness and a material for building new worlds and helping us to interpret the world where we live.

Our oceans are an urgent concern for Joan Takayama-Ogawa and Courtney Mattison who alert audiences to environmental degradation that results from climate change. Takayama-Ogawa's bleached totems serve as eerie monuments to death while Mattison visualizes climate change through the fragile beauty of marine life. The ocean comes into play as well for Connie Martin Trevino, who uses clay to reimagine the lives of the African captives who were thrown or jumped from slave ships to escape slavery during the middle passage. In Trevino's telling she recalls the myth that the ocean transformed these doomed individuals into water creatures which can live eternally.

Plant cultivation, land, and migration form another tenet to this exhibition. Ryan Flores's ceramic reproductions of cultivated fruit recall the art historical tradition of still life paintings. Fruit serves as both subject matter and metaphor referencing waste, decay, beauty, and life. In contrast, Christina Margarita

Erives's market stand, lush with produce from her parents' home regions in Mexico, the fruits and vegetables represent land, family connections and multi-generational memories beyond borders. David Hicks creates bodies of work that are closely connected to the landscape surrounding his studio and home in the San Joaquin Valley, a largely agricultural area in California. His interpretations of crops and other plant life reflect his own interpretations of growth and irregularity. For Hicks, the cycles of the agricultural world feel like allegorical references to human struggle, beginning with fertilization, moving through growth, and finally ending in decay.

Finally, immigration and cultural memories are a key component of the work of Lourdes Jiménez-Pulido who will create a site-specific installation to represent the compounded landscapes of their life in Los Angeles and the landscape of parents' village in Southern Jalisco, outside of Colima, Mexico. In the last several years, Jiménez-Pulido has made a concerted effort to be environmentally responsible and has used only recycled materials and fires clay only when necessary to realize their work. For this reason, their installation in *Wayfinding* will consist of unfired clay. Testifying to human relationships to land and water, over time and across cultures, the diverse practices represented by this year's exhibiting artists call to attention the increasing scarcity and care necessary to maintain this fragile ecosystem many of us call home.

In conjunction with the *Wayfinding* exhibition, Craft Contemporary is thrilled to be presenting a full schedule of public programs that includes several opportunities to meet and learn art-making techniques from exhibiting artists Christina Erives, Sam Shoemaker, and Connie

Martin Trevino. Additionally, the museum will offer a weekly Friday afternoon open clay studio to increase access to creative opportunities for experimenting with clay.

(left) Charles Snowden, *To Ward Speech*, 2021. Ceramic, 18 x 11 x 7 in. Collection of Seth Curcio and Julie Henson.

(right) Amia Yokoyama. *My Weathertorn Aura*, 2023. Porcelain, stoneware, glaze, igneous rock, video monitor, computer, 23 x 17 x 5.5 inches. Courtesy of Sebastian Gladstone.

RELATED PROGRAMS:

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

Opening Reception

Saturday, May 27 | 6:00 – 9:00 pm | in-person, courtyard, and galleries

\$12 general admission | free for members

Join us to celebrate the opening of two very special exhibitions: our third clay biennial, *Wayfinding*, and *Black – Still*, the second courtyard installation in our ongoing collaboration with Materials & Applications.

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Open Clay Time

Fridays, June 2 – September 8 | 3:00 – 5:00 pm | indoors

Museum admission + \$5 materials fee

Join us weekly on Fridays throughout the summer for this air-dry clay workshop in conjunction with the clay biennial exhibition, *Wayfinding*. Try your hand at a selection of clay projects using simple sculpting and joining techniques. All ages welcome!

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Maker Night: Ceramic Bud Vases

with Christina Margarita Erives

Thursday, July 6 | 6:00 – 8:00 pm

\$12 / members free | includes materials and drinks

Artist Christina Margarita Erives leads a clay workshop inspired by her work on display as part of our current exhibition *Wayfinding!* Participants will learn basic hand building techniques and create their very own flora inspired bud base. Pieces will be glazed fired and available for pick-up at a later date.

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Craft Lab Family Workshop:

Clay Critters with Alyson Iwamoto

Sunday, July 9 | 1:30 – 3:30 pm | outdoors
\$10 Adults / \$7 Children / Free for Members

Join ceramicist Alyson Iwamoto to create ceramic artworks inspired by animals large and small! Participants will use sculpting techniques to create simple animal forms and add detail using underglaze. Pieces will be fired and available for pick-up at a later date.

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**Wayfinding: Gallery Walkthrough
With Exhibition Curator Holly Jerger**

Sunday, July 23 | 11:30 am – 1:00 pm | indoors | *free*

Join us for a public walkthrough with Holly Jerger, curator of Wayfinding, and learn about the various clay practices and ceramic works that make up our third clay biennial exhibition.

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**Maker Night: Sgraffito
Ceramic Planters with SampleHAUS**

Thursday, August 3 | 6:00 – 8:00 pm | in-person, outdoors
\$12 / free for members / includes materials and drinks

Join us for a special clay workshop led by artist Diana Adams from SampleHAUS. Participants will learn basic clay hand-building, underglazing, and sgraffito carving or scratching techniques to create colorful ceramic planters. Pieces will be fired and available for pick-up at a later date.

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**Craft Lab Family Workshop:
Organic Ceramics with Connie Martin Trevino**

Sunday, August 13 | 1:30 – 3:30 pm | In-person, museum courtyard
\$10 Adults / \$7 Children / Free for Members

Join exhibiting artist Connie Martin Trevino to create ceramic vessels inspired by mythological creatures and organic shapes. Attendees will add three-dimensional surface decorations to their vessels and finish with carved and stamped patterns and textures.

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**Fabricating with Fungi: Neighborhood walk
and Mushroom Cloning with Sam Shoemaker**

Saturday, August 26 | 12:00 – 4:00 pm

\$75/\$65 members | includes materials

Wayfinding artist Sam Shoemaker leads an outdoor walk and demonstration surveying methods for producing practical materials, sculpture, and furniture from living mushroom mycelium collected off the street in Los Angeles. Participants will collect wild mushroom samples and clone wild samples.

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CREDITS:

Wayfinding has been organized by Craft Contemporary's former Senior Exhibitions Curator, Holly Jerger, with curatorial support from Prima Jalichandra-Sakuntabhai, Exhibitions Manager. This exhibition is supported in part by the Pasadena Art Alliance, 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.

Craft Contemporary is an art museum whose purpose is to reveal the potential of craft to educate, captivate, provoke, and empower. Craft Contemporary achieves its mission by exhibiting the artists of our time who favor craft materials and processes. Giving voice to local artists, emerging artists, and often under-recognized mid-career artists is a museum priority that works to ensure the recognition of various voices not always heard in larger institutions. The museum strives to achieve equitable access through free and low-cost programs, and the inclusion of multiple teaching artists from communities throughout Los Angeles who offer unique art making workshops, K-12 school programs, senior adult workshops, and art talks. 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