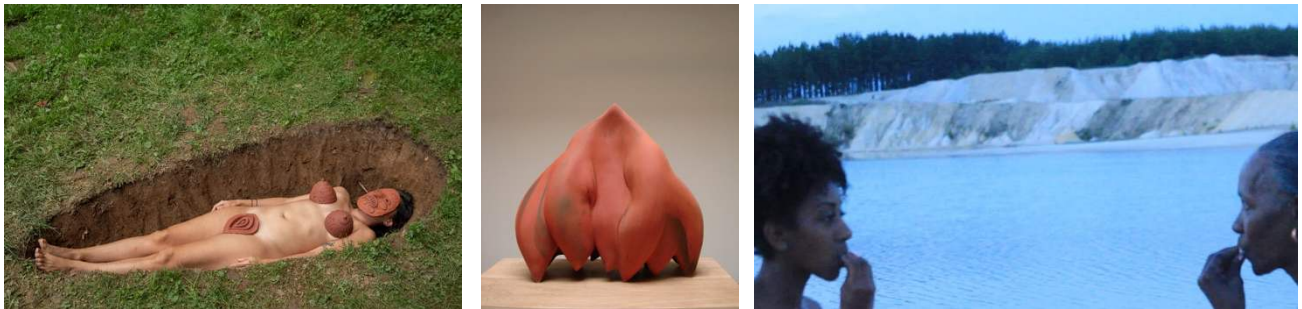


Craft Contemporary Announces *tierra*, the Fourth Edition of its Clay Biennial

On View May 31 – October 25, 2026, Foregrounds
Latinx, Indigenous, and Black Artists
Working with Land and Earth

tierra Coincides with Museum's Next Maker-in-Residence
Jackie Amézquita



(LOS ANGELES, CA—April 21, 2026) Craft Contemporary has announced *tierra*, the fourth installment of its Clay Biennial. On view May 31 – October 25, 2026, *tierra* reconsiders the biennial's scope by expanding its focus beyond ceramic and clay as a singular medium to encompass broader practices grounded in land and earth. The fourteen featured artists work with earth-based materials as something more than physical substances, treating them as carriers of history shaped by the people who have worked, lived on, and been displaced from the land. *tierra* asks what it means to truly know a place, and how that knowledge gets passed down through the things we make with our hands. *tierra* is organized by lead curator Andres Payan Estrada, with a curatorial committee formed by Frida Cano, Joel Garcia, Mercedes Dorame, and Cannupa Hanska Luger.

"There is a quiet weight to the word *tierra*. It settles slowly, like dust after movement, like clay in a riverbed," said Andres Payan Estrada, lead curator of *tierra*. "The exhibition not only recognizes earth as material, but also how knowledge itself is carried, formed, and shared."

"*tierra* is a natural expression of everything Craft Contemporary stands for," said Frida Cano, Senior Curator at Craft Contemporary. "Our curatorial values urge us to look to

the land, to ancestral knowledge, and to the people whose hands have shaped both. This exhibition brings all of that together in a way that feels especially pressing right now."

tierra is part of The [Untold] Story of Craft, Craft Contemporary's curatorial philosophy that prioritizes storytelling, accessibility, sustainability, and honors the natural world with a commitment to minimal waste. Rooted in lunar cycles and the Tongva calendar's cyclical rhythms, the museum's curatorial approach bridges past and present, linking ancestral wisdom with contemporary craft practices. The series is scheduled to feature two exhibitions annually, each dedicated to exploring a central theme tied to nature's elements: Air, Water, Earth and Fire.

Craft Contemporary launched its clay biennial in 2018 under the title *Melting Point*, establishing a dedicated platform to reflect on two decades of explosive growth in ceramic art and the radical departure from functional pottery traditions toward experimental, expressive, and often deliberately imperfect sculptural forms. The series was founded on the premise that contemporary ceramics had evolved into a medium uniquely capable of recording the body's physical gestures and the artist's psychological state, prioritizing the raw, visceral, and the "unknowable" over technical precision. Together, the biennial editions—*Melting Point* (2018), *The Body, The Object, The Other* (2020), *Wayfinding* (2023), and now *tierra* (2026)—have shaped the event into a continuous exploration that treats "craft" as a verb.

Exhibition Organization and Highlights

tierra engages the varied definitions of the Spanish word meaning earth, land, soil. Coinciding with the nation's Semiquincentennial, *tierra* activates earth-based mediums to demonstrate that emotional memory is inseparable from environmental impact, that ancestral knowledge challenges colonial histories, and that care emerges alongside critique. The exhibition foregrounds the work of Latinx, Indigenous, and Black artists, including Jackie Amézquita, Natalia Arbelaez, Syd Carpenter, Teresa Castro, Armando Guadalupe Cortés, Miguel Fernández de Castro, rafa esparza, Karla Garcia, Adebunmi Gbadebo, Joanna Keane Lopez, Ruben Olguin, Iman Person, Jeri Redcorn, and Christine Howard Sandoval. The artists use clay, adobe, masa, rock, sand, dirt, and soil to create artworks that range from large-scale sculpture installation to performance to film.

tierra is organized thematically across three interconnected frameworks: emotional, familial, and cultural connections to land; geologic agents, extraction, and colonial critique; and restoration and reparation. These themes trace a continuous arc from inherited belonging to systemic harm to collective healing. The exhibition unfolds across multiple floors. The first floor is anchored by the Maker-in-Residence program, featuring Jackie Amézquita; the second floor centers lineage, ancestry, and matriarchal knowledge systems; and the third floor brings into dialogue works addressing extraction and environmental impact alongside practices of care and restoration, insisting on the entanglement between wound and repair. Specially commissioned

textual contributions punctuate the galleries, operating as parallel forms of knowledge that expand *tierra's* narrative devices into language, text, and storytelling. The exhibition invites viewers to move through these layers, recognizing land not only as ground beneath our bodies, but as a living record of everyone who has ever worked it, loved it, encountered it, or lost it.

The publication for *tierra* is conceived as a multi-part volume composed of individually printed sections that together form a single, assembled work. It includes introductions from Craft Contemporary and the Rubin Center in El Paso, TX—co-organizers of the exhibition—an essay by lead curator Andres Payan Estrada, and contributions from the curatorial committee. Additional sections present artist and contributor biographies with selected images, as well as installation images of the exhibition, capturing newly commissioned works. At the publication's core are six commissioned text contributions, each produced as a discrete component and compiled within the larger volume. The publication's colored edges form visible strata, evoking layers of soil and underscoring the project's attention to accumulation, sedimentation, and the transmission of knowledge over time.

In conjunction with *tierra*, Craft Contemporary announces Elemental Scents, a limited-edition fragrance line developed in partnership with the Institute for Art and Olfaction (IAO) and created by artist Saskia Wilson-Brown. "Conceived as an extension of the museum's curatorial vision, the scents draw from the elemental forces of air, water, earth, and fire," said Rody N. Lopez, Executive Director. "The project reflects our shared commitment to multisensory engagement and storytelling," added Saskia Wilson-Brown, Executive Director of the IAO, inviting visitors to encounter *tierra* through scent as both medium and memory. Elemental Scents also marks the debut of The Egg & The Eye Shop, aligning the product line with the store's renewed brand identity as a space where craft, design, and everyday life meet. The Egg & The Eye Shop will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Saturday, August 1, 2026, when the first Elemental Scents will be available for purchase.

Maker-in-Residence

Craft Contemporary is pleased to announce its next Maker-in-Residence, Jackie Amézquita (b. 1985, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala), Los Angeles-based interdisciplinary artist whose work explores the relationship between land, memory, and identity across genealogies. Her practice is channeled through the fuse of biomaterials such as earth, masa, charcoal, and rain, treating them as active carriers of ancestral knowledge. She is also a featured artist in *tierra*.

Amézquita will invite museum visitors to participate in her latest project specifically developed for this residency program. *Between Root, Body, and Breath* is a participatory, site-responsive sculptural installation developed over the course of *tierra* at Craft Contemporary. The work unfolds through the accumulation of hand-cast earthen forms produced during live, public activations within the museum. Combining soil, masa (corn dough), and ocean water, the project establishes a material system that situates the body within ecological, agricultural, and hydrological cycles. Visitors are invited to cast the interior space of their hands, generating

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forms that record touch as a spatial and relational imprint. Each cast becomes an index of contact, a trace of pressure, warmth, and presence. As these forms gather, they construct a collective sculptural field—a shared body composed through many gestures, many materials, and many geographies. In addition to this, anyone from across the United States can participate, so long as they send a small batch of soil from their homes to Craft Contemporary for Jackie to use in the process. Soil will be accepted until October 25. Submission details are available [here](#).

Amézquita says, “Through this process, resistance is framed not as spectacle, but as accumulation. Sustained through listening, material labor, and shared authorship.”

She will be working onsite at Craft Contemporary the following Fridays:

June 5, 19, 26

July 24, 31

August 21, 28

September 11, 18

October 2, 23

The Maker-in-Residence program is designed to directly engage visitors with the process of making, offering an opportunity to witness and participate in contemporary craft.

Amézquita will be on-site weekly from May 30 through October 25, 2026. Please check craftcontemporary.org for updates.

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Images: (left to right) Natalia Arbelaez, *Illaq del Tiempo*, 2025, sublimation printed photo on fabric, documentation of performance with ceramic works, image courtesy of artist; Syd Carpenter, *Heart of the Yam*, 2006, earthenware, oxide, and slip, 26x26x14in, image courtesy of the artist; Iman Person, *Earth Medicine*, 2014, single-channel video, 6:06 min, image courtesy of the artist.

tierra is supported, in part, by the Henry Luce Foundation, The Pasadena Art Alliance, City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Department of Arts and Culture, Alan Zafran, First Citizens Bank, and The Julius Bernard Kester Trust.

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tierra is proud to participate in *Handwork: Celebrating American Craft 2026*, a nationwide Semiquincentennial collaboration showcasing the importance of the handmade and celebrating the diversity of craft that defines America.



ABOUT CRAFT CONTEMPORARY

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. We give a voice to local, emerging, and mid-career artists whose works are overlooked. 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:

- \$9 for adults; \$7 for students, teachers, seniors
- Free for Craft Contemporary members
- FREE admission every Sunday

HOURS:

- Monday – Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday – Sunday: 11 am to 5 pm
- First Thu every month: 12 – 8 pm