

The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of a ceramic sculpture. It features a complex, layered texture with various colors including white, yellow, green, black, and vibrant orange-red. The surface appears to be made of different materials or has been treated with various glazes, creating a rich, tactile quality. The lighting highlights the uneven edges and the depth of the colors.

nceca

2019

2019 NCECA ANNUAL  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

THE  
**FORM**  
WILL  
**FIND**  
ITS  
**WAY:**

CONTEMPORARY CERAMIC SCULPTURAL ABSTRACTION





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**EDITED BY ELIZABETH CARPENTER**

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Nicole Cherubini  
Alexandra Engelfriet  
Jessica Jackson Hutchins  
Brie Ruais  
Anders Ruhwald

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Nolan Baumgartner  
Dylan Beck  
Zimra Beiner  
Brian Boldon  
Jennifer Brandel  
Renata Cassiano  
Yang Chen  
Benjamin Cirgin  
Joshua R. Clark  
Naomi Cohn  
Chotsani Elaine Dean  
Louise Deroualle  
Yewen Dong  
Jessica Dupuis  
Trey Duvall  
Matthew Eames  
Jessika Edgar  
Cary Esser  
Sarah Gross  
Justin Groth  
Jeffrey Haddorff  
Sajeda Issa  
Wansoo Kim  
Adam Knoche  
Drew Liedtke  
Lauren Mayer  
Kate Metten  
Brian Molanphy  
Michiko Murakami  
Rebecca Murtaugh  
Kelsie Rudolph  
Karl Schwiesow  
Nicole Seisler  
Jim Shrosbree  
Jason Lee Starin

Photo left: Wansoo Kim detail of  
*Trace of Existent: lifted*



# CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Elizabeth Carpenter

"The form will find its way." This statement by influential ceramic artist Peter Voulkos alludes to the freedom and wonder of trusting clay to reveal the form of his work to him through the intervention of his skill and no holds barred experimentation, but without certainty of outcome. These qualities in addition to an authentic response to materiality no matter the media, are embodied in the spirit of the exhibition.

Beginning in the mid-1950s, Voulkos nearly single-handedly ushered in an interdisciplinary approach to the ceramic arts through his conviction that the fields of pottery, painting, and sculpture could coalesce in works of great power and significance. According to the artist in his 1957 Juror's Statement for the Annual Midwest Designer-Craftsmen show at the Art Institute of Chicago, creative "sustenance must be looked for in fields quite unrelated. Only then will it find its true relationship and validity. When it finds its true identity it also finds its very reason for existence." Both of these statements have served as catalysts for this survey exhibition of current practices in abstract ceramic sculpture by 11 invited, and 35 juried, national and international artists.

The works in the exhibition represent the maxim of "art for art's sake," setting utility aside, but not forgotten. Each is anchored along a continuum of two distinct but ever-converging historical practices, and traditions, those of the fields of ceramics and fine art sculpture. These currents have been crossing for more than a century and see no signs of waning. Legions of artists and potters today no longer see themselves as inextricably bound to a certain set of skills or traditions, but neither are they dismissive of them. Of all of the artists included in this exhibition, some employ clay as the exclusive material, a crucial tenet of their practices, while others work across media not only to move into formal ambiguity, entropy, and the uncanny, but also to challenge the plinth and the pedestal while embracing the possibilities of site-specificity, performance, and time-based media. What is heterogeneous in form and content, the works on view have a mutual set of affinities. What all of them share is a phenomenological, bodily presence and tactile quality, while also challenging the hallmarks of conceptualism and abstraction.

Having worked as a curator for over 25 years in the contemporary art world, it has been a privilege to have been invited to curate the 2019 National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) Annual Exhibition in my home city of Minneapolis. This exhibition is one in a long line of exhibitions organized by NCECA, and to have this show be the latest addition to its history and legacy is an honor. This complex exhibition and publication required the faith of many more people than I can properly thank here. But my deep gratitude requires naming a few. First to the entire NCECA Board of Directors for their flexibility and support, ensuring that my dream checklist for the exhibition could become a reality. It is truly an understatement to say that this exhibition and catalogue would not have been possible without the determination and commitment of the following NCECA staff members every step of the way: Josh Green, executive director; Brett Binford, exhibitions director; Leigh Tack Mickelson, former exhibitions director; Kate Vorhaus, projects manager; and Candice Finn, web and communications manager / graphic artist. Their dedication has been unwavering—I simply cannot thank them enough.

My curatorial entrée into the field of the ceramic arts was due to one individual, Tetsuya Yamada, professor of ceramics at the University of Minnesota, who put my name forward to NCECA to curate the 2019 Annual Exhibition. His wise counsel and guidance throughout my research and preparation



eter Voukos alludes to the show has been of paramount importance to me, as has the support of the following colleagues through the intervention of the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota: Monica Moses Haller, Tom Lane, and Lynn Lukkas, Clarence Morgan, and Tamsie Ringler.

interdisciplinary approach, and sculpture. I would especially like to thank Assistant Curator Teréz Iacovino for her generous and enthusiastic support of this project. Their expertise and creativity were invaluable to the success of this exhibition. I have also had the pleasure of working with an extraordinary installation staff, preparators Michael Benedetti, Jordan Bergants, Jim Hittinger, Adam Kirk, Prerna, and Emily Swanberg.

Recognition must also go to the Harlan Boss Foundation for the Arts for their financial support of the Artist-in-Residence of Alexandra Engelfriet, whose performative, site-specific work was created for the exhibition. My thanks are due to our local sponsor, Continental Clay Company, for their generous donation.

Among the individuals and galleries that were tremendously helpful in facilitating loans, providing images for the catalogue, and coordinating shipping for the five invited artists, my thanks go to Simon Lee and Elsa Delage, Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto; Marianne Boesky and Kelly Woods, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York; Alberto Morán and Mills Morán, Morán Morán Gallery, Los Angeles; Davida Wineroff and Nicoletta Pollara, Night Gallery, Los Angeles; and Kristen Dodge, September Gallery, Hudson, New York.

Finally, my deepest and most profound gratitude is due to Nicole Cherubini, Alexandra Engelfriet, Jessica Jackson Hutchins, Brie Ruais, and Anders Ruhwald for their extraordinary works, and to the invited artists in the show for answering the call and making their remarkable works available to the exhibition. A special note of thanks to those artists who travelled to Minneapolis to create pieces specifically for this show. Enjoyable and edifying conversations with many of them have shaped my thinking about the ceramic arts and art in general, for which I will be eternally grateful. Each and every one of them is an inspiration.

It has been a privilege to work with the National Council on Ceramic Arts (NCECA) on this long line of exhibitions. The story and legacy is a testament to more people than I can name. The entire NCECA Board of Directors for the exhibition could not be named. The catalogue would not have been possible without the NCECA staff members: director; Leigh Taylor; and Candice Finn, web and design—I simply cannot

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d to NCECA to curate  
arch and preparation



# VENUE STATEMENT

Howard Oransky

Welcome to the Katherine E. Nash Gallery. We are housed in the Regis Center for Art and operated by the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota. Our mission is to be a research laboratory for the practice and interpretation of the visual arts. We believe the visual arts have the capacity to interpret, critique, and expand on all of human experience. We aspire to become a center of discourse on the practice of visual art and its relationship to culture and community—a place where we examine our assumptions about the past and suggest possibilities for the future.

We are delighted to present the exhibition *The Form Will Find Its Way: Contemporary Ceramic Sculptural Abstraction*. The premise of the exhibition, as established by the curator Elizabeth Carpenter, is a perfect example of our research-based mission: “an exploration of experimental, cross-disciplinary and aesthetically diverse artistic practices, with the explicit intention to avoid preconceptions about established categories.” Betsy’s curatorial practice has embodied the same ethic of the experiment and the diverse that she has valued in the practices of the artists on view. The resulting exhibition is a thoughtful and surprising expression of the endless possibilities that clay offers as an artistic medium now and into the future.

It is also fitting that the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota is hosting this exhibition because of our historical commitment to the ceramic arts. In 1955 the University of Minnesota had Warren MacKenzie, who founded and led the ceramics program, and continued to teach here for 35 years. Other emeriti faculty includes Curt Hoard and Mark Pharis. Our current full-time faculty includes Tom Lane and Tetsuya Yamada. When the new Regis Center for Art was constructed in 2001, the commitment to ceramics was clear: the building includes over 9,000 square feet of studio space devoted to ceramics, with state of the art equipment, including 30 kickwheels and 10 electric wheels, 10 electric kilns, 13 gas kilns, and one wood kiln; and separate studios, kiln rooms, and glaze labs for graduate students. Furthermore, outside our university there is a vibrant and active community in Minnesota supporting the production and appreciation of the ceramic arts.

In recognition of *Claytopia*, the 53rd annual NCECA conference held in Minneapolis, the Department of Art has committed all three galleries and a project space in the Regis Center for Art to ceramics. We will present the aforementioned *The Form Will Find Its Way: Contemporary Ceramic Sculptural Abstraction* in the Katherine E. Nash Gallery and a site-specific installation by exhibiting artist Alexandra Engel in the project space, and we will present two ceramics exhibitions curated by Associate Professor Tom Lane and Professor Tetsuya Yamada: an exhibition of ceramic work by our faculty and graduate students in the Quarter Gallery and an exhibition of ceramic work by our adjunct faculty in the Regis West Gallery. In this way, the entire Regis Center for Art will be filled with ceramics and its many possibilities. As noted on the NCECA website, we will expand critical discourse on teaching, learning, aesthetics, social impacts, design thinking, and artistic production.

Special thanks to the NCECA organization and staff, the Department of Art and Gallery staff, the curator and exhibiting artists, and to the Harlan Boss Foundation for the Arts and Continental Clay Company for their support.



## NCECA ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

James Green, Executive Director | Brett Binford, Exhibitions Director

Center for Art and operated between our honor to work beside guest curator Elizabeth Carpenter and Katherine E. Nash Gallery be a research laboratory for Howard Oransky on behalf of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA). We have the capacity to interpret *What Will Find Its Way: Contemporary Ceramic Sculptural Abstraction*, an exhibition several years ago a center of discourse on the making, seeks to capture energies through which contemporary artists are exploring the a place where we examine the ceramic medium through experimental and risk-taking investigations of materiality. Art is sometimes differentiated from the realm of nature as an act involving human imagination, yet clay somehow brings us closer to nature as experience. Though experiences are intangible, somehow clay makes *Contemporary Ceramic Sculptural Abstraction* touchable. Artists may be drawn to abstraction because it engages us with expressions of spirit ator Elizabeth Carpenter. Imagination at a time when very little in our worlds can be taken for granted. Clay's receptivity to experimental, cross-disciplinary energies, its capacity to solidify effects of atmospheric change, heat, and time, encapsulate to avoid preconceptions about being moments and emulate events that unfold over millennia in the physical world. NCECA's me ethic of the experimental program revolves around collaborative relationships built through planning our annual v. The resulting exhibition experience. We are grateful to the artists whose work is included in the exhibition as well as those y offers as an artistic medium from the response to their submissions was not the one for which they had hoped. Some of our artists are being exhibited through the courtesy of their dealers, and we are grateful for this cooperation as well. Support from the ArtWorks program of the National Endowment for the Arts, ota is hosting this exhibition; the Harlan Boss Foundation for the Arts, faculty and staff of the Department of University of Minnesota have all been instrumental to this undertaking. The dedication of NCECA staff members Candice Finn and Kate Vorhaus and the Our current full-time faculty and the ongoing support of NCECA's Board of Directors have been invaluable guide stars throughout the Art was constructed in 2011. Planning and development of this exhibition.

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neapolis, the Department of Art to ceramics. We were joined by Associate Professor Alexandra Engelfre, our faculty and graduate adjunct faculty in the Regional Center for Ceramics and its master's course on teaching, learning

Art and Gallery staff, to our support from the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts and Continental Clay

# SARAH GROSS

Lawrence | Kansas

*Inviting and forbidding, my work addresses issues of power, desire, vulnerability, and visibility. Through it, I disrupt ideas about gender roles, sacred space, and what it means to be the object of another's gaze. I make art that unsettles the viewer's perspective. Physical walls and paths confront the viewer, creating spatial and visual relationships that shift and disorient. Scale, intimacy, and the body of the viewer are fundamental considerations. In the encounters I create, the viewer must question how they fit into the structure, making the act of looking more self-aware. Consumption uses repetition and abstraction to both attract and repulse its viewers. From across the room, Consumption's audience will spot a long, sumptuous, red carpet; approaching, they will discover it is not a textile at all. Upon close inspection, observers will be taken aback by casts of my fingertips, covered in blood-red glaze, which penetrate the hundreds of hexagonal tiles that comprise the installation. It seduces with its larger-than-life glamour and suddenly becomes uncomfortably familiar and human. A simultaneous celebration and criticism of celebrity-worshipping pop culture, this carpet is too fragile to walk on, and yet it compels viewers to touch it. Observers phenomenologically experience the alienation and intimacies forged between celebrities and their publics by imagining the act of stepping on—and crushing—the hands of those who elevate them.*



Consumption, 2018  
Ceramic body and red glaze  
Installation view at the  
Lawrence Art Museum, Lawrence, Kansas



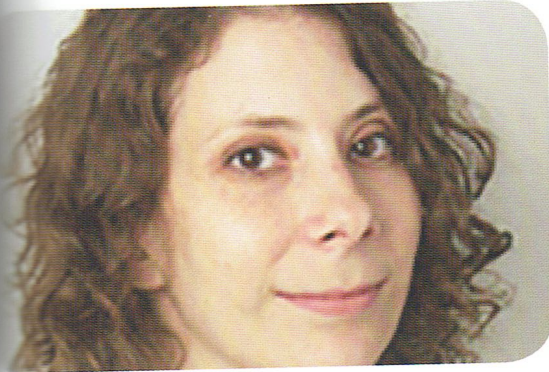
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Body and red glaze  
2018  
Aaron Paden

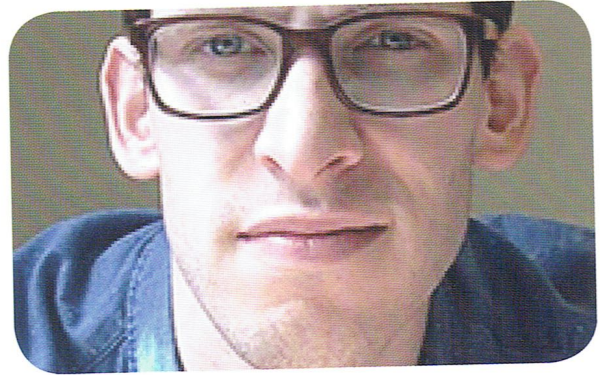


# ARTIST BIOS



SARAH GROSS  
sarahgrossceramics.com

and her MA (2009) in art history and her MFA in ceramic sculpture (2011). Jessika has exhibited in venues that include Aspen Center, Brickyard Gallery, and she has been an assistant professor at The Ohio State University. She is currently an assistant professor of ceramics at Wayne State University and raised in New York City, Sarah Gross makes work that investigates the contradiction of physical closeness and emotional distance. She is currently an assistant professor of visual art at the University of Kansas, having earned her MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and her BA from Carleton College. She has participated in artist residencies at Greenwich House Pottery, Green Valley State University, the Lawrence Arts Center, Green Olive Arts, and c.r.e.t.a Rome. She has work included in numerous collections including the US Department of State, the University of Costa Rica, and the Shiwan Ceramics Museum, Foshan, China.



JUSTIN GROTH  
justingroth.com/

I have always been a maker...since a young child building with blocks and construction sets to completing a graduate degree in ceramics at Cranbrook Academy of Art. Exploration at Cranbrook led to an increase of my interests in ceramic sculpture as a means to interpret and relay a complex overlap of design and experience while exploring the necessity of making and designing objects for people to interact with...kindling the same excitement I had when I was young. Currently, I live with my family in the heartland of America, Lincoln, Nebraska. I teach ceramics and sculpture classes at Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska, a town of 7,000 people. Being in Nebraska deeply connects me with the slowness of life. Every day I see fields and am reminded of mystery and process. Mystery as a seed is laid in the ground that will become a 12-foot plant. Process in preparing, tending to, and reaping the land at the right time.



JEFFREY HADDORFF  
jeffreyhaddorff.com

Crane Yard Studios and his position for the Ceramic Arts International Ceramics Studio. City Art Institute student, son Two of the PBS "Crafted a Lighton International McKnight Residency, and he has lived and maintained an active studio life in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He does not like winter.

Jeffrey Haddorff earned his BA degree in psychology from St. Olaf College and his MFA from the University of Minnesota. He also spent a year at the University of Copenhagen, where he studied film, design, and art, and fell in love with each. He is the father of two fine young men and works part-time as a structural designer at the BKV Group Architects and Engineers. For the past 30 years he has lived and maintained an active studio life in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He does not like winter.



JESSICA JACKSON HUTCHINS  
artsy.net/artist/jessica-jackson-hutchins

Jessica Jackson Hutchins lives and works in Portland, Oregon. Hutchins' expressive and intuitive studio practice produces dynamic sculptural installations, collages, paintings, and large-scale ceramics, all hybrid juxtapositions of the handmade. As evidence of the artist's dialogue with items in her studio, these works are a means by which the artist explores the intimacy of the mutual existence between art and life. Her transformations of everyday household objects, from furniture to clothing, are infused with human emotion and rawness, and also show a playfulness of material and language that is both subtle and ambitious. Based upon a willingly unmediated discourse between artist, artwork, and viewer, Hutchins' works ultimately serve to refigure an intimate engagement with materiality and form.