The Burdens of History
2020 NCECA Annual Exhibition Curated by Anna Walker

WHAT
International ceramics exhibition, organized in association with the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA). Installed within two venues, Visual Arts Center of Richmond and Glave Kocen Gallery, the 2020 NCECA Annual exhibition, The Burdens of History, curated by Anna Walker, blends attributes of invitational and open juried models of exhibition development. Walker’s vision initiated with six invited artists with works installed at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond. Themes, issues, and sensibilities of her thesis deepen and expand from the exhibition’s core with works selected through an open call for submissions installed at Glave Kocen Gallery. Exhibition-related events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted.

WHERE AND WHEN
Glave Kocen Gallery
1620 W Main Street
Richmond, VA
804-358-1990, glavekocengallery.com
Wheelchair access through the rear entrance.
Hours: Mon–Fri 11am–6pm (Wed open at 10am, Thu until 9pm), Sat–Sun 12–4pm.

Visual Arts Center of Richmond
1812 W Main Street
Richmond, VA
804-353-0094, www.visarts.org
Hours: Mon–Sun 9am–9pm.

DESCRIPTION
The Visual Arts Center of Richmond and Glave Kocen Gallery are partnering to present The Burdens of History, an international ceramics exhibition organized in association with the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA). Houston, Texas based curator Anna Walker has invited six artists working with clay to participate in the exhibition and has also chosen works by 27 artists who responded to a juried call. Walker’s curatorial premise guiding the exhibition has been an exploration of creative visions, voices, and cultural experiences of those who have been historically excluded from mainstream discourse of Post-World War II American studio ceramics movement. Of special prominence in researching the work of artists invited to participate in the exhibition, Walker considered the persistence physically, culturally, and metaphorically
of the brick as a signifier of humanity’s interrelationship ceramics. Concluding her catalogue essay for the exhibition, she writes, *Like bricks, these works are strong. And they demonstrate the collective strength of the ceramic field, a field that is expansive enough to hold multiple interpretations and mature enough to open the canon to reinterpretation, to build in new directions. To reorient its foundation. Individually and collectively, these works—and the artists who made them—offer new possibilities for the past and the future.*

*The Burdens of History* coincides with *MULTIVALENT: Clay, Mindfulness and Memory*, the 54th Annual NCECA Conference, which takes place March 25 – 28, 2020 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center.

**ARTISTS IN THE EXHIBITION AT GLAVE KOCEN**
Elissa Armstrong, Lisa Marie Barber, Emily Bayless, Jeremy Brooks, Larry Buller, Andréa Keys Connell, Kelcy Chase Folsom, Teri Frame, Alina Hayes, Dawn Holder, Akiko Jackson, Roxanne Jackson, Peter Christian Johnson, Qwist Joseph, Lauren Kalman, Varuni Kanagasundaram, Wansoo Kim, Nikki Lau, Steven Young Lee, Matthew Mitros, Nadia Myre, Adams Puryear, Joann Quiñones, Lauren Sandler, Mike Stumbras, Steven Thurston, and Mary Cale Wilson

**ARTISTS IN THE EXHIBITION AT VISUAL ARTS CENTER OF RICHMOND**
Jennifer Ling Datchuk, Woody De Othello, Nicki Green, Raven Halfmoon, Issac Logsdon, and Elizabeth M. Webb

**CURATOR’S STATEMENT**
The most well-known myths of American Studio Ceramics are often not the most inclusive, and by definition, do not represent every voice. *The Burdens of History* seeks to broaden the narrative, featuring artists and artworks that both celebrate and critique the history of the field. The exhibition is a platform for artists who approach ceramics as pluralistic, broaden representation in the field, and consider the many histories/herstories/theirstories of clay to make new touchstones for today. Their performances, videos, ephemera, and objects engage not only a material knowledge of clay but knowledge of its social history. Rooted in the past, but moving in new directions, these works and the artists who made them demonstrate the continued vitality of a multivalent field.

**ABOUT THE EXHIBITION’S CURATOR, ANNA WALKER**
Anna Walker is Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts, Craft, and Design at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) where she is responsible for exhibition, research and publication, the proposal of acquisitions, and development of long-term collections strategy. She has lectured widely and contributed essays for *Metalsmith Magazine*, *American Craft Inquiry*, and the 2016 Renwick Invitational: Visions and Revisions catalogue. Recent projects at the MFAH include In the *Studio: Craft in Postwar America, 1950-1970, In Conversation: 18th Century Influences on Contemporary Craft*, and *Materials and Meaning in Dutch Jewelry from the Museum’s Collection*. She presented “The Personal is Political: Exploring Constructions of Identity in the Work of Jennifer Ling-Datchuk” at the Textile Society of America’s 16th Biennial symposium. She is co-curating the forthcoming retrospective of Olga de Amaral with Cranbrook Art Museum opening in 2020.

**ABOUT THE EXHIBITION’S INVITED ARTISTS**
*Jennifer Ling Datchuk* is an artist born in Warren, Ohio and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Trained in ceramics, Datchuk works with porcelain and other materials often associated with traditional women’s work, such as textiles and hair, to discuss fragility, beauty, femininity, intersectionality, identity, and personal history. She holds an MFA in Artisanry from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and a BFA in Crafts from Kent State University. She has received grants from the Artist Foundation of San Antonio, travel grant from Artpace, and the Linda Lighton International Artist Exchange Program to research the global...
migrations of porcelain and blue and white pattern decoration. She was awarded a residency through the Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum to conduct her studio practice at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, Germany and has participated in residencies at the Pottery Workshop in Jingdezhen, China, Vermont Studio Center, European Ceramic Work Center in the Netherlands and Artpace in San Antonio, Texas. In 2017, she received the Emerging Voices award from the American Craft Council. She is Assistant Professor of Ceramics at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas and lives and maintains a studio practice in San Antonio, Texas.

*Sisters Are Doin’ It For Themselves, 2019
Photograph 18” x 24” and brick
Purses: 3.125” x 2.75” x 9.625” each
Photo credit: Lane Pittard

* Representative image provided by the artist; new work premieres in the exhibition.
About her work, Jennifer Ling Datchuk shares…

My work has always been an exploration of my layered identity – as a woman, a woman of color, as an “American,” as a third culture kid.

I live at the intersection of being neither fully Chinese or Caucasian, a sense of being in-between, seen as an imposter on either side. The constant question about my appearance – So, what are you? – has driven a series of different answers in my work over time. I explore this conflict specifically through porcelain, a nod to my Chinese heritage, but also a representation of “pure” white, a desire reflected in both cultures. Porcelain allows me to speak in dualities, especially of fragility and resilience and ultimately the struggle between diversity and the flawless white body.

I explore how Western beauty standards influenced the East, how the non-white body is commodified and sold, and how women’s – globally, girls’ – work is still a major economic driver whose workers still struggle for equality. Working with porcelain, blue and white patterns, stereotypically Asian motifs, textiles, video, and photography allows me to examine what we see as our “dominant” material culture. Bound by these conditions, I stitch together my individual nature, unravel the pressures of conformity, and forever experience pain in search of perfection.

Woody De Othello (b. 1991 Miami, FL) completed his MFA at the California College of Arts in San Francisco in 2017. He received his BFA from Florida Atlantic University with a concentration in Ceramics. Othello has exhibited widely in group exhibitions, including FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial (2018) and the 33rd Ljubljana Biennial in Slovenia (2019). Othello has worked on two large-scale installation projects. In 2018, his work was commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission to be on permanent view at the San Francisco International Terminal. In December 2019, he completed a large scale bronze, titled Cool Composition, for Art Basel Miami Beach. Also in 2019, he opened Living Room, his first solo museum show, at the San Jose Museum of Art. He is represented by KARMA in New York and Jessica Silverman Gallery in San Francisco. Othello lives and works in Oakland, CA.

About Woody De Othello’s Work…

Woody De Othello creates and mutates everyday recognizable objects as a way to address broad audiences. He depicts these objects in various psychological and emotional states to express ideas, often done so with a tone of humor. These objects, such as doorknobs, AC vents, lights and TV sets, are rendered in an uncanny fashion with a sense of play, emotional intuition, and surrealism that provokes viewers to reimagine themselves and the way they view the world around them. Othello uses a hand-
building technique called “slab construction.” Building the sculptures up about six to eight inches at a time, he pushes the forms to a point where they near collapse. Working the clay to a point of precariousness adds to their psychological weight and creates a sense of movement and individual emotion. Othello’s work interrogates the tension between animate and inanimate, energy and exhaustion, hospitality and hostility.

Nicki Green is a transdisciplinary artist working primarily in clay. Originally from New England, she completed her BFA in sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009 and her MFA in Art Practice from UC Berkeley in 2018. Her sculptures, ritual objects and various flat works explore topics of history preservation, conceptual ornamentation and aesthetics of otherness. Green has exhibited her work internationally, notably at the New Museum, New York; The Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco; Rockelmann & Partner Gallery, Berlin, Germany. She has contributed texts to numerous publications including Duke University Press’ Transgender Studies Quarterly and Fermenting Feminism, Copenhagen. In 2019, Green was a finalist for the SFMOMA SECA Award and awarded an Arts/Industry Residency from the John Michael Kohler Art Center, among other awards. Green lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area.

About Nicki Green’s Work  SOFT BRICK is a body of work developed while in grad school at UC Berkeley, 2016-2018. Invited to the program with the promise of updated facilities, I realized upon arriving that the renovations included replacing a kiln built by Peter Voulkos when he developed and taught in the ceramics department between 1959 and 1985. Intercepting a pallet of kiln bricks from the dumpster, I began working with them in my studio, negotiating conflicting feelings while I balanced learning more about his contributions to the field with stories from former students of the macho, exclusionary atmosphere of his classroom. These kiln bricks came to represent both the witnesses of history while also functioning as the tool that brought his work into the world. I developed a text and performance lecture for the College Art Association conference in 2018, paralleling these ideas to my own life. SOFT BRICK is a linguistic and conceptual reference to queer vernacular, “soft butch,” a gender presentation of complicated or soft masculinity, and “brick” used derogatorily within trans women’s communities to describe those who are “failing” to pass as cisgender. Through this work, I consider the labor and violence done to those who receive
marginalization in studios and out in the world as similar to the violence and alchemy occurring inside a kiln. I propose that the complicated nature of legacy is one that is rarely firm and entirely legible, and is worth engaging with as an open-ended practice.

Raven Halfmoon (Caddo Nation) is from Norman, Oklahoma. She attended the University of Arkansas where she earned a double Bachelor’s Degree in ceramics/painting and cultural anthropology. Her work has been featured in multiple exhibitions throughout the U.S. as well as internationally. Raven is currently based in Helena, MT where she is an artist in residence at the Archie Bray Foundation for Ceramic Arts. She is represented by Gallery FRITZ in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Raven Halfmoon shares about her work...
I produce work that is reflective of how I feel both as a woman and as an Native American living in the 21st Century. Each sculpture created is a reflection of my understanding and interpretation of Caddo culture and the fight to maintain a place for it in today’s world. With the election of our current U.S. President, climate change and social oppression around the world, it is more important than ever before to have a unique voice and vision, to express it, and to make those creations seen and heard. I explore themes of “the other,” cultural appropriation and history. I hope to create awareness and address issues that move people who share a similar story. Through my installations, I want to tell a story both of how one understands self and culture, but also what defines these ideals in America today. I feel it is my duty to continue this legacy of sharing information through craft and clay. It is necessary for me to continue a tradition of making, telling and sharing history.

Family Names to Last through the Generations, 2019
Stoneware and glaze
26” x 28” x 43”
On loan courtesy of Leslie and Michael Weissman
Issac Logsdon is a mestizo artist, writer, cook, and adobero living in Northern New Mexico. In addition to a studio practice, he restores historic adobe structures throughout the greater Southwest using traditional earthen building practices and gardens along the Santa Fe River, just a couple of blocks from where his great-grandmother’s garden once flourished.

Logsdon shares about his work…
My studio work and writing often look to historic events to better understand the value of cultural property, exchange, and material histories. I am also trying to get a better grasp on how we tell history. Through artificial museum display, selective archiving, and one-sided written accounts of yesterday, we’re often left with an incomplete understanding of the past. My work in *The Burdens of History* draws from learning the traditional adobe construction techniques my ancestors have practiced for centuries and my research on the colonization of the so-called American West.

Elizabeth M. Webb is an artist and filmmaker from Charlottesville, Virginia. Her work is invested in issues surrounding race and identity, often using the lens of her own family history of migration and racial passing to explore larger, systemic constructs. She has screened and exhibited in the U.S., United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Ecuador, Singapore, Switzerland, Mexico, Austria and Germany and was a recipient of the inaugural Allan Sekula Social Documentary Award in 2014. Elizabeth holds a dual MFA in Film/Video and Photography/Media from California Institute of the Arts and is an alumna of the Whitney Independent Study Program in Studio Art, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and the Core Program at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston.

Elizabeth M. Webb shares about her work…
My work is invested in the politics of representation; that is, the ways in which we position ourselves in relation to others, the ways we are positioned by others, and how these different positions are made visible (or invisible). To approach these themes, I am drawn to Stuart Hall’s analysis of how we might conceive of...
identity in terms of “routes” rather than “roots.” Where “roots” statically connect identity to origin, “routes” envision identity as the continuous processes of coming to be. The lens of my own family history of migration and racial passing serves as an entry point in my work for exploring larger, systemic constructs and the renegotiation of their borders.

*Cameo Ground (Children of Paradise)* is a series of 13 porcelain, text-based sculptures that engage the idea of legibility on multiple levels, including the social legibility of the passing subject. A guiding figure in my work has been that of my great grandmother, Paradise—a black woman who was known for her exquisite beauty, yet never allowed her picture to be taken. The text is borrowed from an interview with my great aunt Jane (the youngest daughter of Paradise); in it, she describes which of her 12 siblings could pass as white and categorizes everyone based on their shade in relation to her own skin tone. Because we are not given an image of Jane, her words become relative to an unknown. I think of these pieces as cartographies and portraits.

Support for the Exhibition

The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) received support exhibitions it is producing concurrently with the 2020 conference from the ArtWorks program of the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

PRESS IMAGES

High-resolution representative images and press release available at [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/k535s0qvple2fno/AACaXfdZpK2VNu2nNjEX5oC_a?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/k535s0qvple2fno/AACaXfdZpK2VNu2nNjEX5oC_a?dl=0)

ABOUT THE VISUAL ARTS CENTER OF RICHMOND

The Visual Arts Center of Richmond (VisArts) has helped adults and children explore their creativity and make art since 1963. Each year, the organization touches the lives of nearly 45,000 people through its classes, exhibitions, community programs, camps, workshops and special events.

Founded in Church Hill as the Hand Workshop, the organization moved to the historic Virginia Dairy building at 1812 West Main Street, where it leased space for 17 years before purchasing and later renovating the building.

Completed in 2007, the renovation transformed the facility into an inviting and inspiring 30,000-square-foot art center, which includes the 1,800-square-foot True F. Luck Gallery. The gallery's focus is on materials and processes of contemporary artists.
Each year, VisArts offers more than 1,000 visual and creative arts classes in clay, wood, fiber, painting, photography, printmaking, glass, metal, drawing, writing, decorative arts, and other visual media. More than 200 instructors teach for the organization. The Visual Arts Center of Richmond is generously supported by CultureWorks, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

ABOUT GLAVE KOCEN GALLERY
Glave Kocen Gallery is consistently named one of Richmond’s favorites according to Virginia Living, Style Weekly, Richmond Magazine, The Richmond Times Dispatch and also thanks to multiple appearances on WTVR’s “Virginia This Morning.” The gallery has a heavy concentration of Richmond and Virginia artists alongside a mix of artists from around the nation we exhibit all year long. GK has long established relationships with many of these artists but also remains curious about discovering new local and regional artists all the time.

In addition to representing 30+ artists through 15 exhibits a year, the gallery is very community minded. They host Health and Wellness events like Tuesday Morning Yoga with Kelly Trask and our Gallery Groove Concert Series has received great attendance for performers like Steve Bassett, Rosette, Erin McKeown, and Robbie Schaefer.

Glave Kocen also works with many of the city’s nonprofit organizations that need an inviting space for a gala or simply an employee appreciation event. Our community partner program garnered deeper support for the likes of Milk River Arts, ChildSavers, Connor’s Heroes, and FeastRVA. The heart and soul of the gallery is husband and wife team Jennifer Glave and BJ Kocen. Jennifer and BJ’s shared ability of spotting great talent is only equaled by their unassuming but knowledgeable manner as to which they connect with patrons. Glave Kocen’s passion for supporting artists’ careers, encouraging art buyers at all levels has only grown as now they are proud owners of the annual CURRENT Art Fair which relaunched in October of 2019 to rave reviews.

ABOUT NCECA
The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts advances creation, teaching and learning through clay in the contemporary world. Ceramic art connects us to physical and cognitive experiences that foster environments of cultural equity, diversity, access, and inclusion. A dynamic membership organization founded in 1966, NCECA fosters global education and appreciation for the ceramic arts. NCECA’s programs, exhibitions, fellowships, opportunities, resources, and public events promote and improve the ceramic arts through education, community building, research, and creative inspiration. Visit www.nceca.net to learn more.