

WESTWARD HO! A Look At Contemporary Craft in the Southwest

Curated by Gail M. Brown

A diverse exhibition of masterfully crafted work of mixed media, varied moods and unique points of view from artists/craftspeople currently residing in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Wyoming.

The works are in clay, fibers, glass, jewelry, metals, mixed media, repurposed materials and wood. Their forms and processes may echo and interpret craft history or celebrate current issues and technology; their narratives offer personal and pointedly social context; their threads of connection with the SW convey its aura and energy, the individuality of finely crafted objects and the makers' long familiar visual vocabularies and tactile personalities in unexpected juxtaposition.

Elegant, traditional woven basketry in natural materials; the celebration of landscape in boldly colored translucent glass; a long carved wood form jutting off the wall; a moody, subtle tapestry with geographic references; various jewelry groupings as shaped canvases; woven vessels alluding to major climatic issues; the repurposed palette as inspiration for a quirky fauna; a machine stitched, calligraphically powerful statement; animated seating forms; delicate depictions of iconic clothing; a ceramic presentation as a floral reference; a timeless composition of wood shards recalling specific memory; a figurative clay bust of folkloric proportions; a presentation of silver flatware; abstracted desert flora as a neck bib; a congregation of domestic ceramic ware; a tapestry of dramatic sky; body adornment of varied palettes, design and favored techniques; a handmade book of panoramic suggestions; a majestic, familiar portrait narrative adapted in fibers; et cetera.

An overview of a designed landscape; an animated, metallic insectopedia; a heavily stitched story purse; choreographed, ethereal teapots; a formal presentation for functional vessels; an enameled landscape pot; a bovine tribute in bronze and another in black and white clay; supple, sliced leather vessels to carry; the pairing of metal- neckpieces with vessel elements; an epergne addressing the destruction of the pollinator habitat; an array of polymer jewelry by a duo of makers; a collation of ceramic plates for the wall; a visual seduction by a designed gun format; a classically rhythmic neckpiece; a trio of woven threads and silks with exotic inks; an installation of old globes and historic stamps-as-event-markers; a homage with a glass flag; a playful wooden house with multiple interior views; a pair of graceful headpieces; a meandering translucent basket; a shadowy figure emerging from the wood; an exquisite porcelain nest; a unique vessel of mixed metal ephemera- found, altered and artist made parts; et al.

The exhibiting artists may have been born in the SW. Or they may have migrated to the region as short term visitors or extended travelers, as long or short time students, workshop instructors or attendees, or as teachers, and then stayed casually or returned purposely to settle here, some for an adult lifetime.

In the studio, they alter, anneal, anodize, assemble, bead, build, carve, cast, collect, combine, construct, craft, design, dye, enamel, fashion, fold, forge, form, fuse, gilt, glaze, inlay, knit, mold, oxidize, pot, print, raise, sculpt, set, snip, solder, stitch, throw, weave. They dream, invent and narrate, too.

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Corey Ackelmire	Rebecca Bluestone	Gina Voelker Bobrowski
Kim Brill	Elizabeth Buckley	Harlan W. Butt
Emily Chase	Jane Chavez	Sam Chung
Kat Cole	Michael Crowder	Jenn DePaolo
Carol Eckert	Tom Eckert	Diane Falkenhagen
Brian Fleetwood	Debra Fritts	Loritza Garcia
John G. Garrett	Robly Glover	Geoffrey Gorman
Leah Hardy	Margaret Haydon	Suzanne Hesh
Cynthia Hickok	Tsehai Johnson	April Jouse
Danny Kamerath	Heather Kaplan	Elliott Kayser
Kay Khan	Wendy Kowynia	Wayne Locke
Ana Lopez	Alleghany Meadows	Margy O'Brien
Harold O'Connor	OROPOPO	Lisa Orr
Emi Ozawa	Corey Pickett	Dean Pulver
Chris Ramsay	Jacque Rice +Uosis Juodvalkis	Chandler Romeo
Ema Tanigaki	Hirotsune Tashima	James Thurman
Ruby Troup	Doerte Weber	Sarita Westrup
Chesley Antoinette Williams	Kai Wolter	

They individually and collectively, visually and tactilely, appreciate the inspiring energy and spirit of the SW. In their diverse works, they reference the juxtaposed abundance and/or impending dearth of resources, subtly or overtly, of history and spirit, the multi-culturism of their current environments with individual backstories- residual influences from their origins. The works are imbued with appreciation, freedom and physicality, the texture of bold, natural settings, indications of the dramatic and robust-topography, climate, fresh clean air, extreme temperatures. And the sky—the amazing big SKY—at every hour of the day and night, with the singular purity of the light and the unmistakable aromas of the region. They celebrate themselves—individually and collectively, the geographic region in its varied physical aspects and the diversity of cultures—all applied to uniquely memorable contemporary craft objects.

The curator of Westward HO!, Gail M. Brown, a lifetime resident of Philadelphia, migrated to New Mexico six years ago. The quality of light drew her to the SW.