

# An·Other



Jackie Padich



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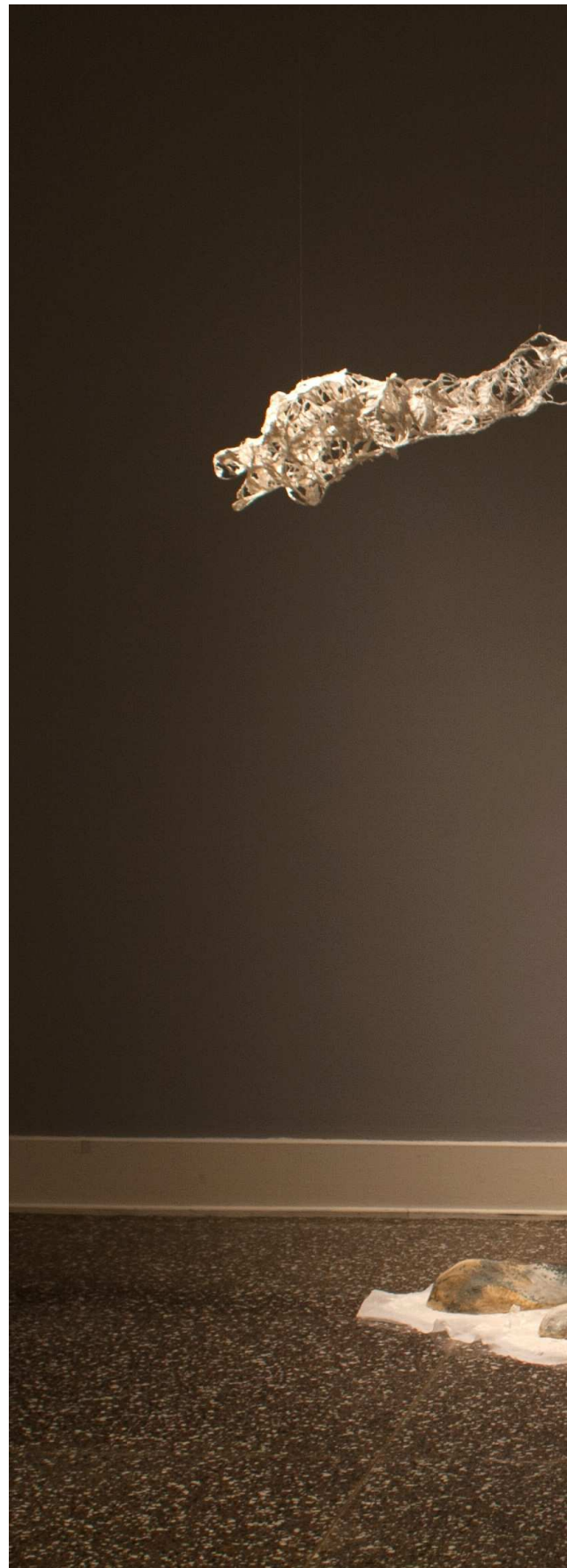








*An·Other,*  
Jackie Padich  
Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art  
2017



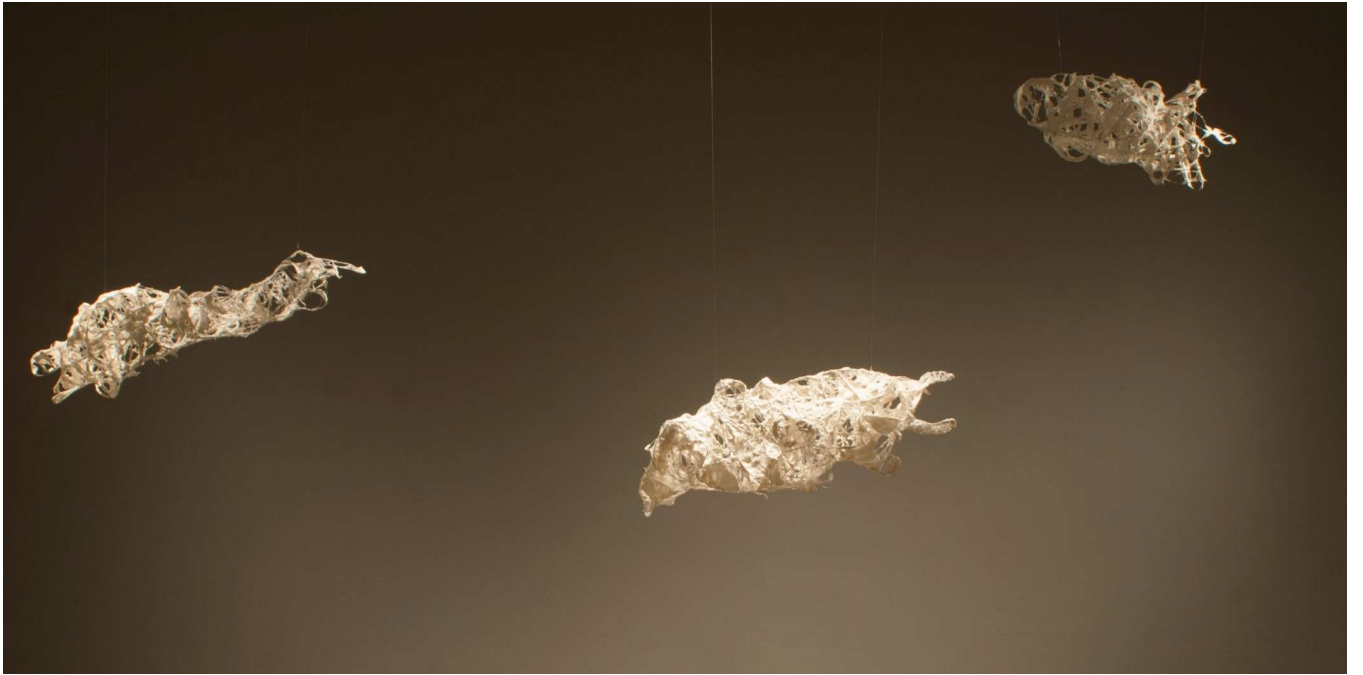






## *Artist Statement...*

The internal world of human beings is a convoluted, complex, intimate, and intricate place. The figurative sculptures I create seek to reveal these inner narratives, in order to evoke an empathetic understanding between people. I use forms and imagery from nature as a metaphor for I believe the observation of the natural world impacts us in covert and subliminal ways. Something as simple as witnessing a passing bird, or appreciating the push and pull of an ocean current, inspires reflection. These moments can forge meaningful reveries we can apply to our emotional and intellectual understanding, and thus our understanding of the world.



## *Thesis Abstract...*

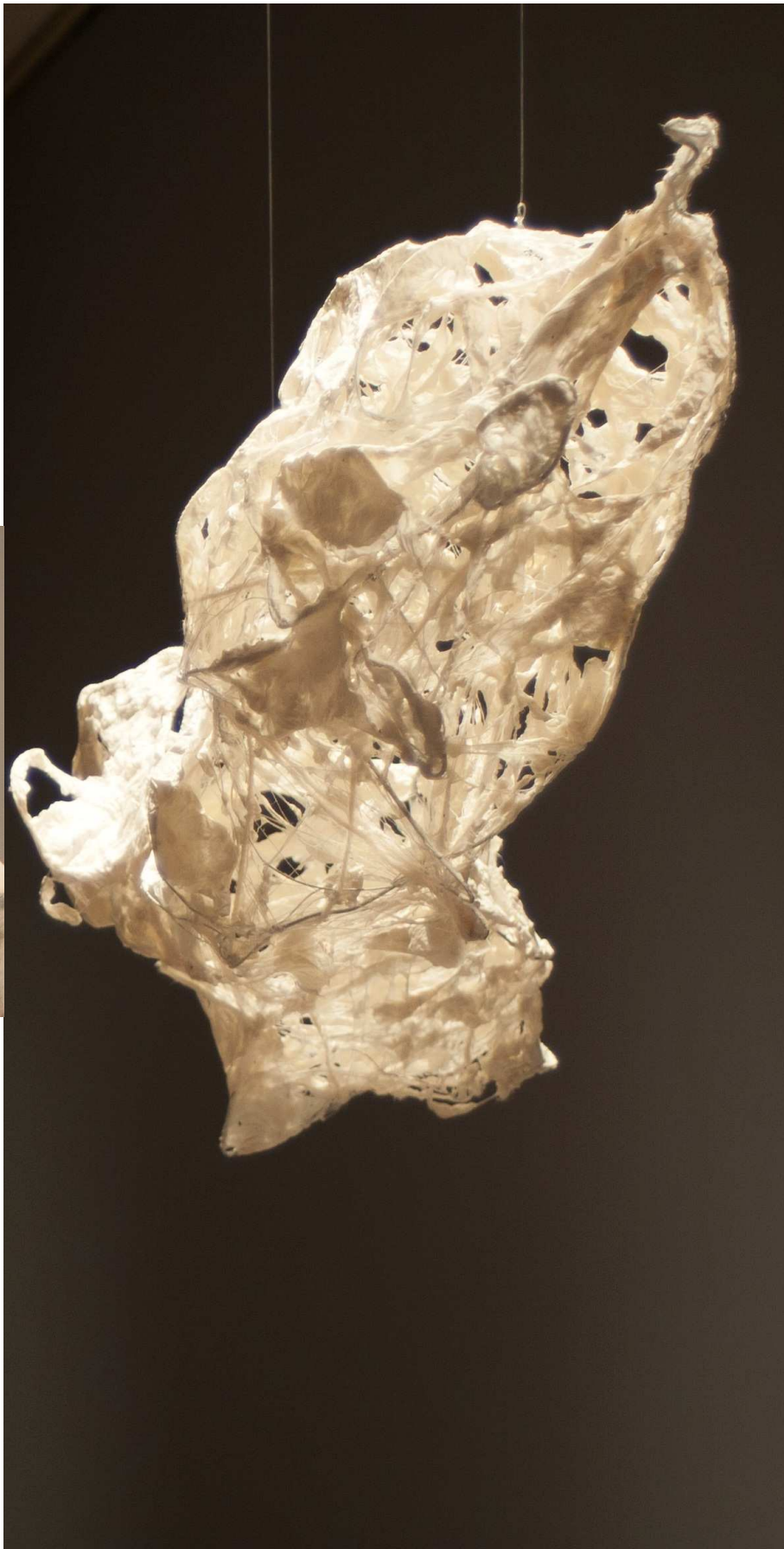
I am endlessly fascinated by the vulnerability of humanity, both in its fleeting physicality, and its ephemeral emotions, situations and experiences. I find myself in awe at life's capability to both produce and destroy beauty. How do we come to terms with the inherent difficulty of existence while still appreciating the undeniable beauty? I believe the foundation lies within the observation and engagement with the natural world, as well as engagement with stories of past and present human experience.

I find that we can connect more with an idea when we are forced to make that connection outside of our own way of being. My work has a surreal, dreamlike quality, which comes from forging connections in seemingly unnatural ways. By changing scale, fostering unlikely interactions and applying a painterly surface, a new narrative is created. I believe that this is the role of art of all forms- to make connections, and to reach new understandings about all of the facets of existence. This includes everything from humor and silliness, to beauty, to tragedy. A full life is made up of all of these things thus, it is the artist that offers a window of understanding.

## *Poeticism and Surrealism...*

People are constantly internalizing their worlds, both consciously and subconsciously. We take in everything from the color of our childhood bedroom, to the minute expression of the stranger walking by, the feeling you get as the seasons begin to turn, and the texture of our warmest sweater. We are influenced by our surroundings and the significance we give our surroundings. There is a projection of our own emotions, experiences, and personhood, onto the world around us. In this way we write our narratives.

Although it is different for each individual, the ways in which we process this narrative is the way in which we create ideas. I personally find that what I write is inherently connected to what I make. Somewhat sporadic, almost always taking me by surprise, I find that writing and reading poetry helps me sort through both my ideas and life happenings. I don't always understand what I am writing until after it is done, sometimes weeks or months later. However, I can always draw connections between the images I create with words and the images created on paper and in clay. Each endlessly feeds the other.



Robert Frost, *Acquainted with the Night*

I have been one acquainted with the night.  
I have walked out in rain - and back in rain.  
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.  
I have passed by the watchman on his beat  
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet  
When far away an interrupted cry  
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;  
And further still at an unearthly height,  
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.  
I have been one acquainted with the night.



Jackie Padich, *An Other*

I once thought I was a bird, hadn't you heard?  
All feathers and talons, could not speak a word.  
I thought I could hide, in the hills for disguise,  
But the wind blew me down, without a true sound.

From the pluck of my plume, like the end of a broom,  
I wished from it, that something would bloom,  
And out came the sun! Ablazed with light,  
But even it could not diminish the night.

I am happy it didn't, for I'd miss the moon,  
And the quiet hum, of the unbloomed.

In Robert Frost's poem, *Acquainted with the Night*, he looks at the world, both in its natural and man-made states, as a way to explain and understand his experience. He does not tell you forthright the exactitudes of his life and yet one can infer, and thus create a sense of empathy and internalization of the emotion behind the words. A simple statement of nighttime immediately evokes a sense of psychological darkness and the unknown. This is in the same way one so often associates rain with similar emotions and yet emotions are complex- one can also interpret walking back and forth through rain to mean a sense of renewal or a washing of the spirit. I use similar tactics within my own poetry, (see *An Other*), looking at nature and the emotions we project onto it, as a way to express an idea. For example the idea of the bird- it is so often seen as this creature of beauty and freedom. However, within the lens of humanity it can also be seen as a longing, a misunderstanding, for humans do not know what it is to have wings or a beak or live life atop of trees; they can be seen as an other.

Through my visual work this manifests in a gesture, the way a hand is placed on a knee or the intensity of a gaze. Meaning can be found in the choice and placement of color, the space between created beings and forms, and a shift in material. The presence of a cloud can be seen as floating or looming, the idea of the mountain-scape can be seen as a moment of peace or adversity and a shadow can be both an ominous place or a refuge. The beauty of poetry and art is one is given the opportunity to interpret, internalize and emotionally respond.

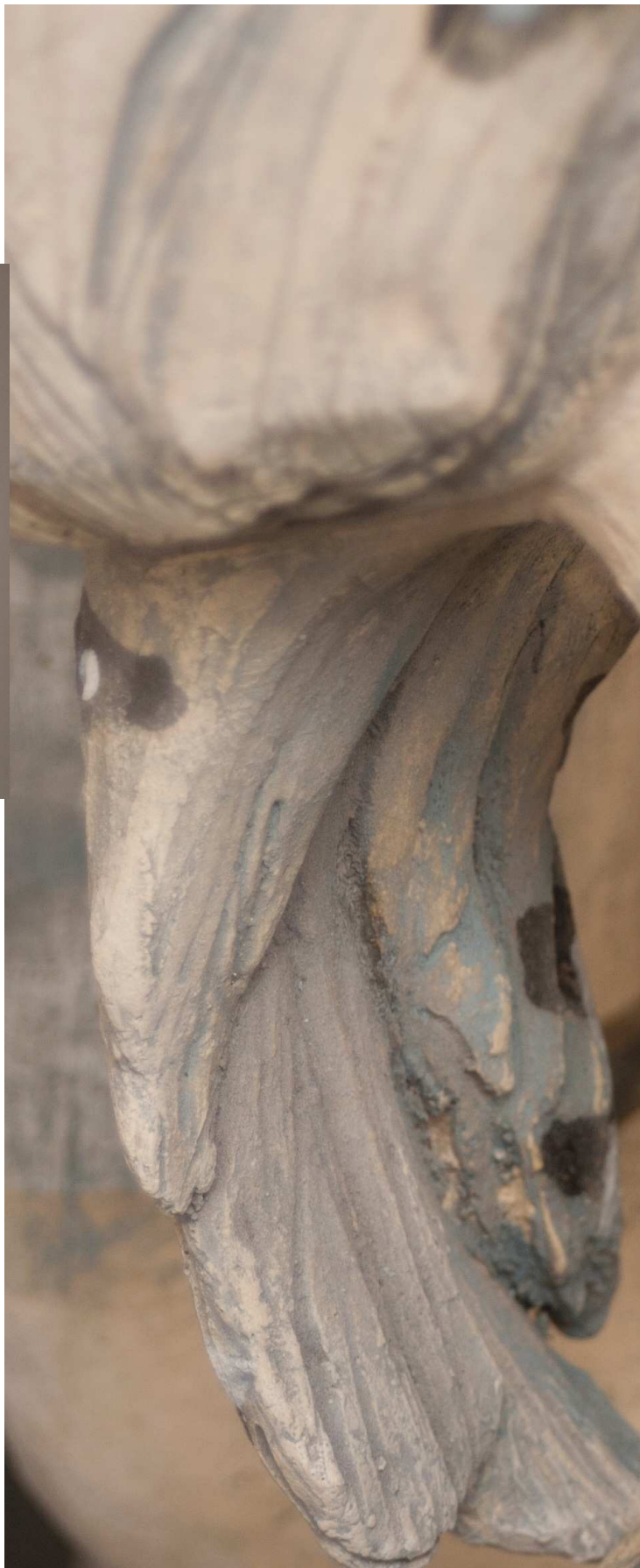
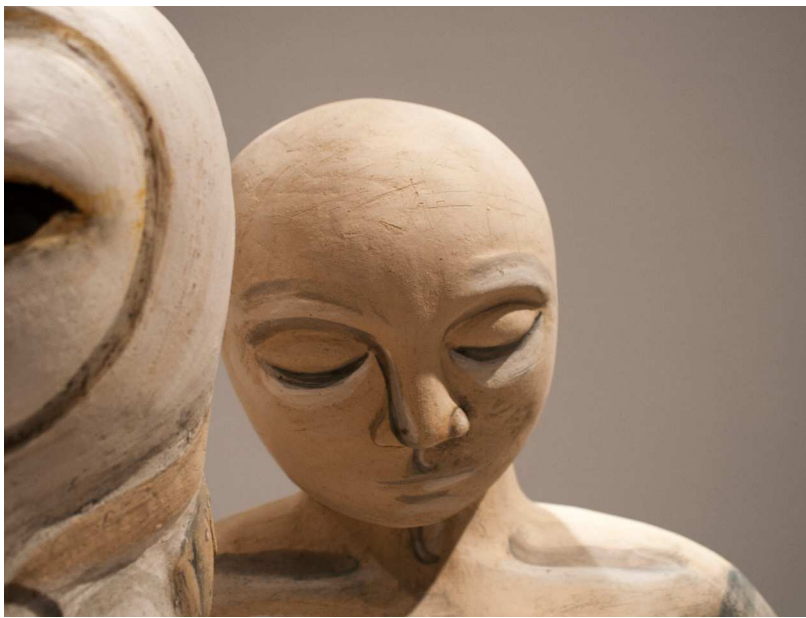
As with art, poetry has the power to engage the recipient in a dialog. It leads the reader to an abstract idea, a dance between the words of the writer and the interpretation of the reader. Through the use of imagery and metaphor a communication occurs. This idea is well represented within the realm of the Surrealist Movement. Andre Breton, the writer of *The Manifesto of Surrealism* in



1924 states, "the goal of poetry and art has always been to soar above the real and above common thought." There is a commonality in the idea that both surrealist art and poetry utilize ideas beyond a sense of reality in order to foster a philosophical connection. The combination of imagery present in the physically visual made up of color, space, being and object mirrors combinations in poetic language.

In both disciplines there is a shared expression of the internalized world of the creator - tapping into conscious and subconscious thought. In my experience, the writing of poetry and the ideation of art have a dream like quality. There are aspects that are connected with logic- i.e. a recent personal event, a profound moment in the past, the current state of the world and yet, there is inevitably a moment of discovery. There is something you may not be able to give an explanation for right away but if you look at it from a distance, or perhaps really up close, you come to a familiarity like a forgotten memory. All that you create is inherently a part of you, each act of creating a new discovery of a subconscious idea, a dream you were unaware of conceiving.

The Surrealists used the idea of the unconscious and the dream as inspiration for their work, and a way to understand existence itself. Although in modernity it is a socially accepted idea that there is such a thing as a subconscious, there was a point that this was a revolutionary idea, as well as, a somewhat frightening one. The idea that we are not fully in control of our thoughts and actions put forth by Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories in the late 1800's had an enormous impact on how we view the human brain and thought process. Building off of Freud's ideas, Carl Jung became highly interested in the idea of the dream as a vehicle for understanding subconscious thoughts.



According to Lawrence J. Weitz, Ph. D., Jung believed,

*"The dream gives a true picture of the "subjective state"- how we really feel about ourselves- which the conscious mind cannot or will not give. In the waking state the dreamer sees himself as he wants or should be. Dreaming he sees himself as he is. "* (Weitz, 289)

In Jung's eyes, the dream is one of the purest states of the mind. The inhibitions one encounters in their waking state are shed, and one is left with their truest self- their desires, fears, regrets and deepest wishes. There is something so beautiful about the rawness of the dream. It is the processing center of the brain that occasionally gives glimpses of what happens behind the curtain of consciousness, whether it is something we want to see or not.

Within my work I utilize the idea of the dream through fostering unrealistic interactions, scale and color shifts and the creation of imaginary spaces. Furthermore in the subdued mood of the figure evident in the seated position and the closed eyes evoke a sense of dreaminess or reflection. In this way the viewer is meant to interpret meaning, to make their own connections as if waking up from a dream and trying to make sense of all that occurred.









## *Artistic Influences...*

I think it is endlessly important to engage with work by artists in the modern day, as well as from the past- to examine the culture in which we live, cultures past and the lives led within those time frames. It is always a comforting experience to look at someone's work and reach some sort of understanding, to find a commonality with the way you view the world. You may never meet this person, but in some small way your life has been changed, a thought realized, and a connection made. I find myself influenced by work that meaningfully examines humanity, otherness, psychological workings, and nature.

## *Akio Takamori...*

The exposure to the life and work of Akio Takamori was a truly self altering experience. Although I'm appreciative of all of his series, I found *The Sleepers* to be the most touching and relevant to my own work. He beautifully confronts human vulnerability, highlighting the universalities of existence, as well as the otherness that comes with the combination of Eastern and Western cultures. The softened way in which he executes his figures, and the painterly treatment of his surfaces, was an inspiration to my own.

*Sleeping Woman in Blue and White Stripe Dress, 2013*  
*Sleeping Woman in Red dress, 2013*





Heesoo Lee, *Vessel*, 2017

## *Heesoo Lee...*

Heesoo beautifully captures elements of nature with the intent of using it to understand the human condition. Reading her artist statement helped to clarify and bring to light some of the ideas I was grappling within the conceptual context of my work.

*"Heesoo Lee's work explores the vulnerability of the human condition through the metaphor of the natural world...Lee is, fundamentally, illuminating a range of human emotions and the humbling reality of being a feeling person in a vast and changeable world."*

## *Adrien Arleo...*

Adrian Arleo's work has a strong narrative quality. She uses elements from nature and animal imagery in combination with the body to embody a human experience. There is a metamorphic, surreal quality in her work both staying true to nature and utilizing abstraction. As she states about her work,

*"We should recognize that the artist, unlike the anthropologist does better to support his/her perceptions with intuitions, rather than calipers."*



Adrien Arleo, *Heard I*, 2016

## *Beth Cavener...*

I was extraordinarily fortunate to attend a workshop with Beth Cavener at the Saratoga Clay Arts Center in December of 2016. I had always admired her work from afar, but hearing her talk about her work and experiencing her process left me awestruck. Beth's work is eerily beautiful, using animal imagery to capture intense human emotions. There is a level of ambition and willingness to go beyond the norm with her work that I found inspirational and validating, as I often have ideas beyond my skill level that I want to realize. Her psychoanalysis of humanity and characterization of animal imagery helped to inform my own ideas. In addition, Beth's method of hollowing and reattaching was utilized in the formation of the appendages on my own figure.

Beth Cavener, *The Sentimental Question*, 2012





Joy Brown  
*sitter with head in hands*



Kofun Period, Japan  
*Haniwa Figures*

### *Joy Brown...*

I was inspired by the level of abstraction in Joy Brown's work. There is a simplicity of form that allows the viewer to fill in the gaps. It is unclear the gender, race or social status of the figure, thus any human can relate. There is also a clear influence of Japanese sculpture, namely haniwa figures, that influences my work as well.

## *Historic Influences...*

Within the context of historical art and culture, I have found many connections between the way I view making and art objects and the artists and poets from Edo period Japan. There is an emphasis on emotional connection, narrative, environment and surface that really speaks to the kind of work I am attracted to and am inspired to make.

## *Sotatsu...*

In particular, I've been very inspired by the collaborative work between Sotatsu and Koetsu. Sotatsu was a painter and decorator, while Koetsu was a calligrapher who often wrote over Sotatsu's paintings. Sotatsu drew inspiration for his imagery from the likes of the Ise Monogatari, Genji Monogatari and the Hongen Heiji Monogatari, all of which are collections of poems and stories from Japanese history. (Leach, 61, 64) Stylistically, the limited color palette, brevity and washiness of his marks, and reflection of natural forms without a need for hyperrealism influenced my mark making.





Tawaraya Sotatsu and Honami Koetsu, *Deer scroll*, Early 17th century



Tawaraya Sotatsu, *Matsushima (Pine Islands) byōbu, right screen*, early 17th century

## *Ogata Kenzan...*

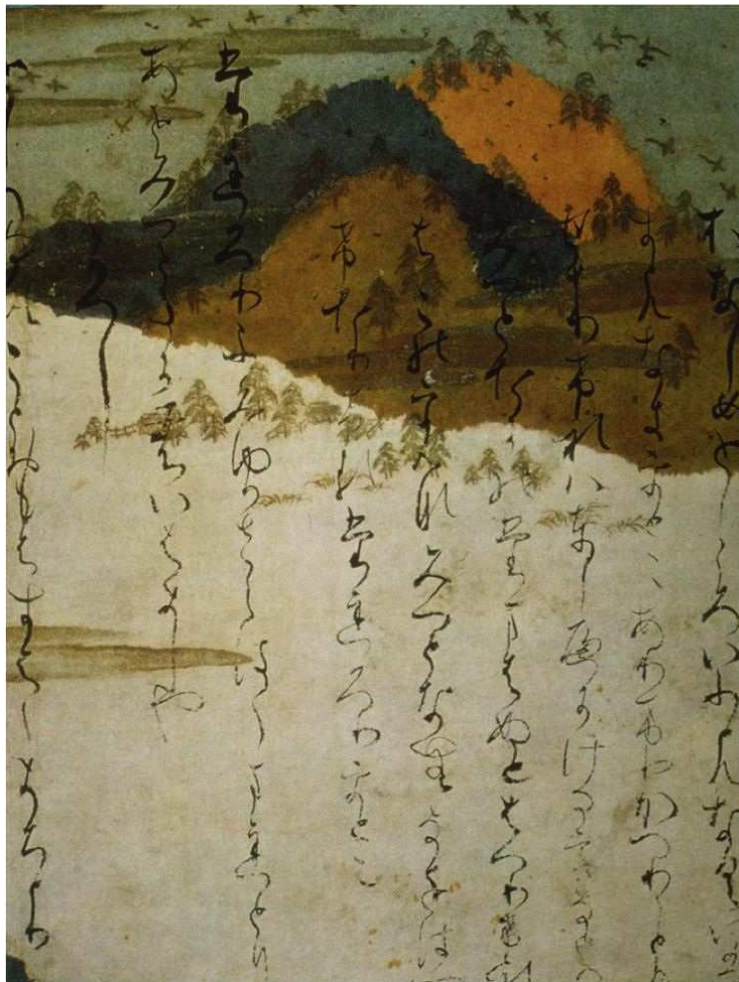
The ceramic wares produced outside of Kyoto during the Edo period, (1603-1868 A.D.) known as "Awata wares", serve as an example of an object informed by poetry and painterly surfaces. A well-known ceramicist from this time is Ogata Kenzan. According to Leach, poetry was in the air Kenzan breathed. Kenzan went back to Fujiwara no Teika, known as one of the four greatest Japanese poets, for inspiration and form. (Leach, 76) One is reminded of the early tradition of recording wakas on colored papers.

*"The Japanese are never tired of telling us that it was the soft dreamy atmosphere of Kyoto and its environs which engendered the soft delicate enamel of its wares."*  
(Jenyns, 197)



Ogata Kenzan, *tea bowl*, Edo Period Japan  
1603-1868 A.D.

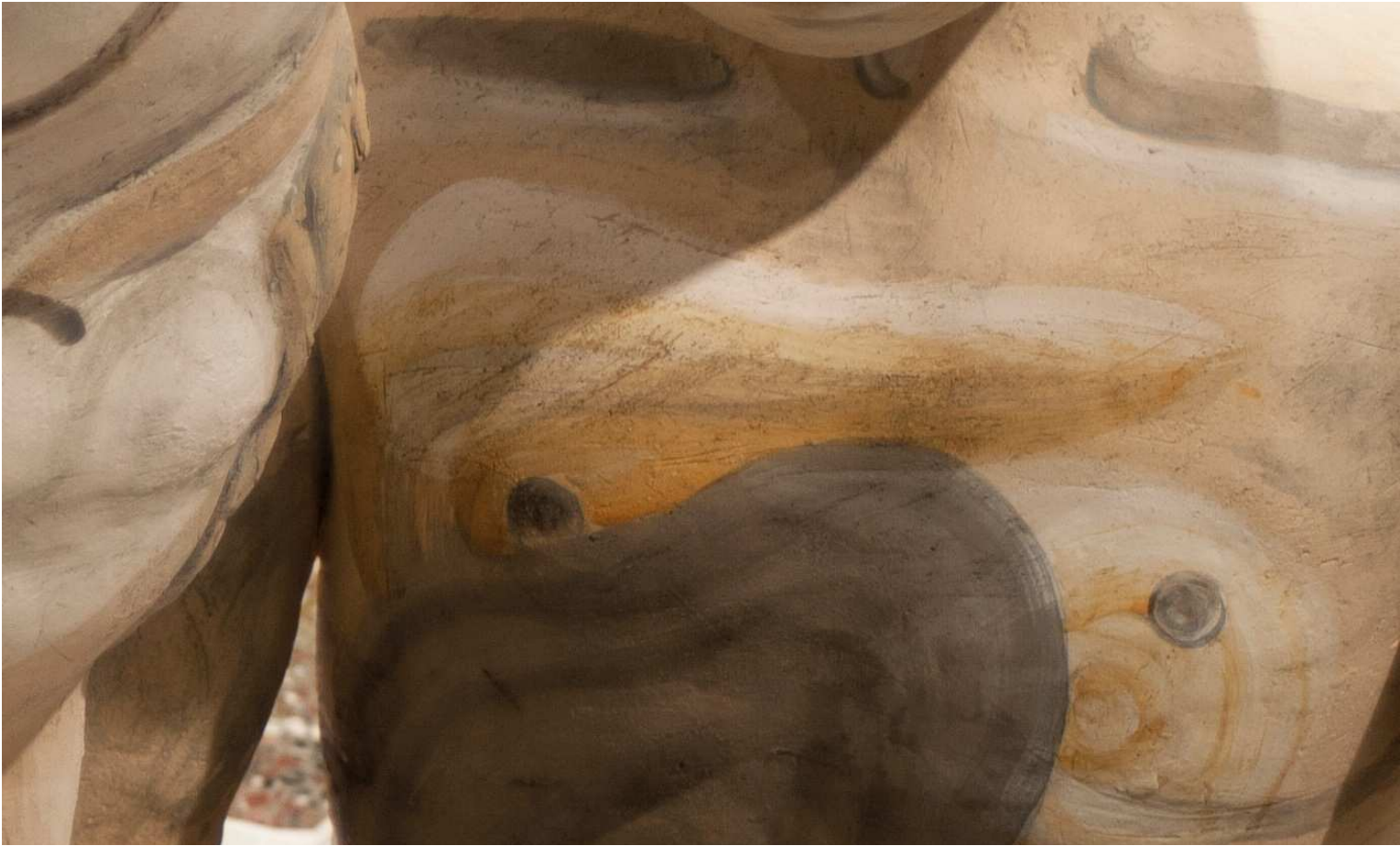
In addition to poetry, Kenzan was also inspired by his religious beliefs. He was a devout disciple of Zen Buddhism, making much of his work within Buddhist temples. Although I don't personally identify myself as a Buddhist, there is a certain reverence for nature and the internalization of the natural world to reach greater understandings about life that I find in my views of the world and artistic practice.



*Waka on Colored Paper, Heian Period Japan  
794-1195 A.D.*

*"Where water is quiet, one can see even a single hair in its reflection; where earth is quiet, anything may rest thereon. The man who does not quietly pursue the path of Zen has a troubled heart and confused mind; peace of spirit is unattainable. Dear Shinsho please understand this and strive for silence. Earnest striving, for however long it takes, leads naturally to an understanding of life. "* (Mizuo,113)

Studying the history of Japanese art from the Edo period had a profound influence on my way of thinking, processing and creating art. The combination of poetry, form, and color deepened the connections I made between these aspects of my own process. On a technical level, the gestural, watercolor effect present in Sotatsu's painting and on Kenzan's ceramic wares inspired the application of color on my piece. On a philosophical level, the emphasis on deep reflection, poeticism, and looking to nature as a source of understanding and wisdom is present in my work and philosophy.





## *Conclusion...*

My interest lies in depicting humanity, in all of its fragile, fleeting constructs. I'm interested in how we make meaning, and find both peace and purpose in our small existences, in the ways that we are all the same even though our stories may be different on the surface. I am interested in the frightening, powerful, awe-inspiring beauty in nature and how we can reflect upon it and connect with it as a part of our selves. I am interested in the strangeness and surreality of the human dream and how we can connect with parts of ourselves beneath our level of consciousness. I am interested in the poeticism of a gesture, a color, or a form. Through artistic practice and observation and the internalization of art objects we can begin to learn more about ourselves and, therefore, more about others.

## *Construction Process...*

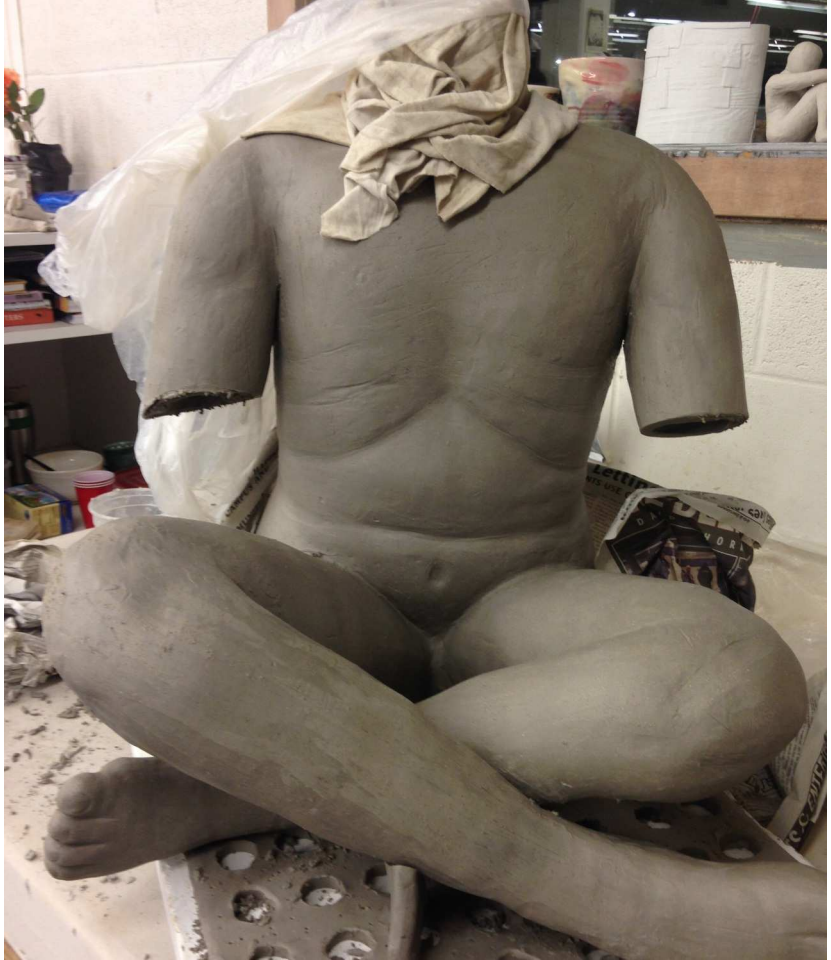
### *Form..*

The largest portion of my sculptures are made with the coiling technique. They start off with either a slab or a low pinch pot and coils are slowly added creating the form. Each coil of clay is layered on top of one another, and smoothed together, anticipating the next curve, bulge or joint. This process is slow, but enjoyable, allowing one to meditate on the idea at hand and continually make decisions about form.

Working at a scale close to human size for the figure had its inherent challenges. A lot of thought had to go into whether or not the piece would support itself, how to attach the different parts, transportation and firing of the piece, etc. I added many internal support structures including a wall dividing the space of the torso, periodic ribs of clay attached to the internal walls with a connecting coil to support the part vertically, and extra ribbing around the joints. The piece was also placed on a shrink slab with external support structures holding up vulnerable areas that were removed after the final firing.







For the smaller appendages on the body, I modeled them with solid pieces of clay and carefully cut them apart and hollowed them. Within this process I added small supports and continually checked that the pieces were aligned with one another before slipping and scoring to reattach along the seams of the cut.

The mountainous forms were created using a similar technique to the figure. They started off as a low, wide pinch pot and coils were added creating the external walls of the form as well as internal support structures.









For the creation of the owl, the body was coil built and the feet were modeled solid. I tapered the top of the solid-built feet, as well as, the inside of the legs so that they would meet at a certain point. From there, I tried to place the feet in the correct position on the leg and fired them together but not attached. At the bisqued stage I drilled holes into the bottom of the feet and the top of the leg. After firing to maturity I placed dowels through the holes and epoxied the feet into the legs of the owl so it would maintain its posture.



## *Surface and Firing...*

The application of color and texture on the surface of my pieces occurred at several stages in the process. I purposefully left the drag marks of a rib pulling grog and fibers in the clay during the formation of the pieces. It was important to me to leave evidence of the process, and I felt these marks on their own were so beautiful it would be a shame to cover them. It was also during this stage that I textured the feathers of the owl, cutting into the clay and pushing out from the inside.

When the pieces became hard leather to bone dry, I added the layers of white underglaze to serve as highlights, a bright background and another neutral tone upon which to lay color. At the bisqued stage I used ceramic stain mixed with flux as watercolors, layering them on top of the piece to delineate space, call attention to detail, and add further expression and dimensionality.









*Technical Information...*

*Clay Recipe...*

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| OM4          | 25% |
| Gold Art     | 30% |
| Hawthorne    | 30% |
| Talc         | 5%  |
| Neph Sye     | 10% |
| <hr/>        |     |
| Fine Grog    | 10% |
| Medium Grog  | 5%  |
| Nylon Fibers |     |

*Washes...*

About 50% stain and 50% Gerstley Borate Mixture:

Sage 6500

Marigold 6407

Wedgewood 6310

Hemlock 6207



*Thick/ Sculpture Bisque Firing Schedule in degrees F...*

| <i>Ramp</i> | <i>Rate</i> | <i>End Temp.</i> | <i>Hold</i> |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| Ra 1        | 60          | 150              | 12.00       |
| Ra 2        | 30          | 190              | 12.00       |
| Ra 3        | 30          | 350              | 1.00        |
| Ra 4        | 150         | 900              | 0.00        |
| Ra 5        | 100         | 1200             | 0.00        |
| Ra 6        | 150         | 900              | 0.00        |
| Ra 7        | 108         | 1823             | 0.00        |

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