

# State of Clay

## STATE OF CLAY

May 5 - June 3, 2018

Lexington Arts & Crafts Society

Parsons Gallery

130 Waltham St., Lexington MA

AN EXHIBIT FEATURING  
CLAY ARTISTS  
CONNECTED  
TO THE  
STATE OF  
MA.

JUROR:  
EMILY  
ZILBER,  
CURATOR OF  
CONTEMPORARY  
DECORATIVE ARTS  
BOSTON  
MUSEUM OF  
FINE ARTS,  
BOSTON

Twenty-two years later, their vision has morphed into one of the preeminent showcases of ceramic art, with positive reviews appearing regularly in major ceramic journals.

Known as *The State of Clay*, it is a juried show, showcasing original and innovative ceramic work produced by current and former

*Iron Tea*  
Delanie Wise  
COURTESY PHOTO



When you think of “clay,” what comes to mind? Maybe you are reminded of your high school art class, or of something that your child brought home from elementary school. Or perhaps rows of identical white vases at your local housewares store come to mind. If that is what “clay” means to you, then, you ain’t seen nothing yet!

Several years ago, two local potters, Joan Carcia and Alice Abrams were frustrated because there weren’t many opportunities for clay artists to exhibit their work. They envisioned a regular, juried showcase for Massachusetts ceramic artists. With the support of the Ceramic Guild of the Lexington Arts & Crafts Society they pushed this dream forward.

residents of  
Massachusetts.

The show aims to broaden public awareness of contemporary ceramic art and to provide a venue for Massachusetts’ clay artists. The pieces juried into the show reveal a wide array of ceramics, which highlight a variety of building styles, firing techniques, and clay types. The artists are educators, studio potters, established professionals, and emerging artists who have found clay to be a malleable medium that has inspired them to seek the best of themselves in their presentations.

*The State of Clay* is hosted by the Ceramic Guild of the Lexington Arts & Crafts Society. Emily Zilber, the current curator of Contemporary Decorative Arts with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, juried this year’s show. Emily will

select awards in person, and speak at the Artists’ Reception on Sunday, May 6 at 3 pm.

In her Juror’s Statement, Zilber elaborated on her choices for inclusion in the show. She stated that she sought pieces that displayed “creative composition and design alongside, and in dialog with, a skilled and self-assured approach to” construction. Zilber sought quality in each piece that draws the viewer in, begging for “additional time and consideration.” The 2018 *State of Clay* is a reflection of her vision. It is a compelling display, showcasing the current state of clay artistry in Massachusetts.

Joan Carcia, one of the co-founders of this show, shared some thoughts on the *State of Clay* - “each year, I ask myself if the show could be as good as the previous show. Will we have new potters?. And each year, my fears have been met with new excitement about the pieces submitted” for the jury process. Joan feels that “each new show seems to exceed the previous one” in both excellence and creativity while pushing the medium to higher limits.

One of the beautiful aspects of the *State of Clay* is the ability to expose the general public to the world of ceramic art. Joan and Alice had hoped to expand the notion of art - to demonstrate to the general public that “art” wasn’t only defined by paintings or marble sculpture. When you think about it, ceramic art is one of the most approachable forms of art. If you have ever held a favorite handmade ceramic mug or bowl, then you have held a piece of art in your hands.

Some of the pieces submitted for inclusion in this year’s show are functional ceramic works - bowls, cups, and pitchers. There is a quiet elegance in these familiar pieces. Caitlin Marsh, whose entry *One, Two, Three*, falls into this category. Her three cups are textured but have a soft quality to them that invites the viewer to hold and cherish them. Conversely, Erik Wilson’s entry of a set of cups has a linear texture that evokes a masculine quality. The glazing breaks over the surface of the cups, providing a visual depth that complements the surface

design. A pitcher, submitted by Katie Fee, is angular in its presentation. The soda fired glaze on this piece elevates it above an ordinary pitcher, worthy of display, but meant to be used.

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*Hazy Dawn Basket* Angelica Marion  
COURTESY PHOTO



*Closed Oval*, Iris Minc  
COURTESY PHOTO



*King & Queen*, Arthur Halvorsen  
COURTESY PHOTO





One,Two,Three Caitlin Marsh COURTESY PHOTO

And of course, some pieces might fit into the more traditional art label - sculptural works designed to inspire, provoke or amaze. The work of Arthur Halvorsen is typically a reflection of sheer joy - you can't help but smile when you see his work. His submission to the 2018 **State of Clay, King & Queen**, is all that, and more. Jeffrey Michael, in *Push: Pull*, takes the familiar, a push broom, renders it in something unfamiliar, clay, turning it into a commentary on daily life. In *This Land is My Land*, Irina Okula created a totem pole of sorts, built in separate firings and assembled as a unified piece. When scrutinized, it is a powerful piece, with many smaller images

tucked here and there. Visitors can come to the Parsons Gallery at the Lexington Arts & Crafts Society, located at 130 Waltham St. in Lexington. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday, 12-4, or what visitors will see when they visit. The 2018 State of Clay will demonstrate the best that Massachusetts ceramic artists have to offer.



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