

2025 NCECA Exhibitions at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City

March 7 – May 31, 2025







This year, the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art (UMOCA) hosts the NCECA Annual: True and Real, NCECA Multicultural Fellowship Exhibition, and the NCECA Juried Student Exhibition.

Featuring works by invited artists Syd Carpenter, Simone Leigh, Roberto Lugo, Tip Toland, and Steven Young Lee, alongside 35 juried artists, the 2025 NCECA Annual Exhibition: True and Real (curated by Judith S. Schwartz) examines ceramics as a chronicle of contemporary social change, using the medium's intimate and expressive qualities to navigate the evolving intersections of identity, technology, and the human experience.

The 2025 NCECA Multicultural Fellowship Exhibition includes select works by 14 past recipients of NCECA's Multicultural Fellowship, juried by multidisciplinary ceramic artist and Associate Professor at Arizona State University School of Art Jennifer Ling Datchuk.

Showcasing works by students from across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, the 2025 NCECA Juried Student Exhibition highlights emerging voices in ceramics, selected by jurors Adrienne Eliades and Nicole Seisler.

NCECA's 59th Annual Conference, Formation, took place between March 26 and 29, 2025, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

2025 NCECA Annual: True and Real *Curated by Judith S. Schwartz, PhD*

Life in these early years of the twenty-first century has witnessed enormous social change. While this may be the case for each generation, this moment, propelled by exponential technological advances, has been among the most destabilizing and disorienting.

The concurrent emergence of Artificial Intelligence, robotics, genetic engineering, environmental challenges, social media, and self-driving cars has contributed to emotional and physical upheavals on an unprecedented scale. New technologies have blurred distinctions between artifice and reality, making the artist's authentic and courageous self ever more meaningful to that which is True and Real.

For millennia, clay's steadiness has chronicled the human condition and its diverse expressions in largely unchanging ways. Seen in this light, ceramics holds a presence for expression in contemporary art that is intimately human, unassuming, and expressive.

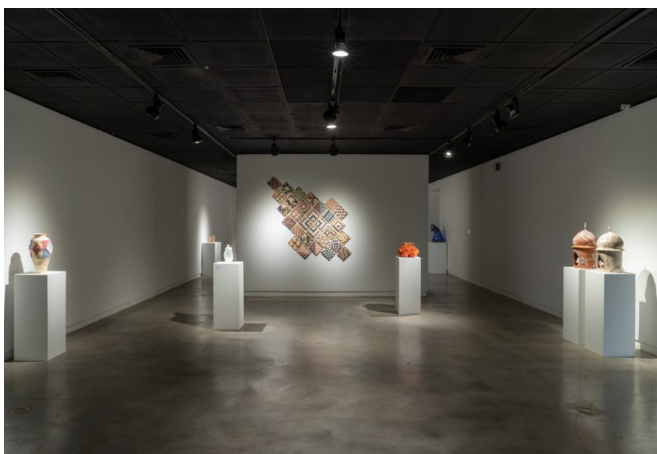
The objects in this exhibition demonstrate superb narrative content, representation, and figuration, expressing the power of ceramic art to raise questions about the human condition. Who am I? What is it that I value? How can I be seen ... heard ... and understood against this background of change? In the quest to reveal the authentic self, what does it mean to be True and Real?

The 2025 NCECA Annual, True and Real, is one of three cornerstone exhibitions produced by the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts concurrently with its 59th annual conference, Formation. The works of five invited artists act as catalysts to resonate with the empathic voices of an additional 35 artists selected through an open call.

– *Judith S. Schwartz, PhD, Curator*

Invited Artists: Syd Carpenter, Simone Leigh, Roberto Lugo, Tip Toland, Steven Young Lee.

Juried Artists: Eugene Ofori Agyei, Constant Albertson, Ivan Albrecht, Japheth Asiedu-Kwarteng, Ron Baron, Jason Briggs, Du Chau, Chris Gustin, Brian Harper, David Hollander, em irvin, Lauren Kalman, Margaret Keelan, Marina Kuchinski, Curt LaCross, Beverly Mayeri, Kelly McLaughlin, Sarah Merola, Steven Montgomery, Megumi Naitoh, Danielle O'Malley, Kyle and Kelly Phelps, Lindsay Pichaske, Paolo Porelli, Lisa Reinertson, Patricia Sannit, Jim Shrosbree, Kate Strachan, Linda Swanson, Lydia C. Thompson, Jacqueline Tse, Shalene Valenzuela, Judit Varga, Jason Walker, Kirstin Willders.





2025 NCECA Multicultural Fellowship Exhibition

Juried by Jennifer Ling Datchuk

Everyone's story matters, and to tell it through the material of clay leaves us, the viewer, with the imprint of the artist's vulnerability, power, and voice. It was an honor to sit with these stories and learn so much from every applicant who bravely created and shared. The fourteen artists in the Multicultural Fellowship Exhibition represent a small part of the worldly and culturally expansive clay cannon. The NCECA fellowship and exhibition that runs concurrently with its annual conference is a vital testament and continued necessity to clay and its communities.

The selected works unravel a range of personal narratives from silenced and forgotten histories, reclamation of the personhood of the historically suppressed, and the passing down of familial stories, and they examine the current state of politics with the layers of joy, absurdity, wit, and humor. I was deeply affected by how their narratives were explored through the variety of forms like overly adorned vessels, figurative works, and abstracted forms, and the investigations with materials and techniques explored through video and wall work. Their works become important reflections of representation, what stories we tell, and the world we want to see. I hope these artists and their works resonate with you and that you continue sharing their works with your communities.

Many thanks to the artists and their powerful works, the staff at NCECA for organizing this process, and the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art for hosting this exhibition.

– Jennifer Ling Datchuk, Juror

Participating Artists: Japheth Asiedu-Kwarteng, Astrid Guerrero, Tomo Ingalls, Sepideh Kalani, Varuni Kanagasundaram, Kim Le, Kimberly Orjuela, Ross Junior Owusu, Vanna Ramirez, Amber Pierce, Danyang Song, Mohamad Soudy, Garima Tripathi, Bianca Turner.





2025 NCECA Juried Student Exhibition *Juried by Adrienne Eliades and Nicole Seisler*

As jurors of the NCECA Juried Student Exhibition, we had the privilege of reviewing an inspiring and diverse collection of work from students across all higher education levels. This year's submissions overwhelmingly included work of a personal nature. Students are, by and large, making work about their lived experience. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised by this—as educators ourselves, we realize that many of our own classroom assignments tap into identity, personal narrative, and the resonance of the clay body with the human body.

While reviewing hundreds of submissions, we gravitated towards work that is not only personal but also expresses beliefs, opinions, or a critical perspective. Most chosen works use the lens of the personal to engage with larger social, cultural, or political issues. We feel strongly that more critical voices are needed in the ceramics field, and we were particularly inspired by works that embody those voices. Students today are using the traditions of ceramics to bolster new approaches and explorations of the language of clay.

With great thought and care, our goal in selecting a minimal number of pieces is to create physical and metaphorical space around each work. Designed to encourage reflection, we invite viewers to engage with the art in the exhibition in a way that connects their own lived experiences with those of the artists. By doing so, the exhibition hopes to demonstrate that what is personal to the artist often has universal relevance – suggesting that collective human circumstances can be explored, understood, and challenged through individual expression.

– *Adrienne Eliades and Nicole Seisler, Jurors*

Participating Artists: Ryan Anderson, Drew Anstine, Emmanuel Asamoah, Randi Bachman, Sasha Barrett, Zoila Carrasco, Caleb Considine, Alondra Cruz, Brianna Davis-Valmont, Daniel Dobrow, Seraphina Gillman, Michael Hong, Ivy Jewell, Janet Macias, Keleigh McMullen, Joy Okokon, Jinblossom Kim Plati, Katherine Pon-Cooper, Matthew Skelly, Lucas Varnum, Jennifer Schumacher Waller, Alyssa Zavocki, Robert Zumwalt.

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*Photos by Zachary Norman
 for the Utah Museum of
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