

# ARTIST JOURNAL

## Skuja Braden

Latvia + USA

Skuja Braden is an artist duo formed by Inguna Skuja (from Latvia) and Melissa Braden (from USA) in 1999. Working on ceramics, they apply various ornamental styles, and draw on themes from literature, art, and current political issues. They are not only an art group, but also life partners.

The most recent highlight of Inguna Skuja's creation is "Selling Water by the River", the exhibition at the Latvia Pavilion in the 2022 Venice Biennale, which showcased more than 300 ceramic works with cartoon realist sketches presented as installations. 'Water' is the main idea of the exhibition. To the artists, flowing springs are closely associated with life and spirit. Skuja Braden incorporated Zen proverbs into their works, reminding the audience of the things or truths that they have known but forgotten. They guided the audience through different sections resembling those in a house, such as a bedroom, a restaurant, a kitchen, a dressing room, a toilet, and flash furniture.

"We often use 'body of knowledge' to refer to the concepts, actions and values necessary for collective practice and experience. We also know that it is important to further develop what we have understood and create new definitions to expand the realm of thought. Twenty-four years of collaboration have made this prospect our priority: to fight against the established social hierarchies with sympathy, and unite forces with people disempowered by these structures. Our collective 'body of knowledge' is a 'database' that contains shared and different individual experiences which manifest our intellectual, physical and cultural diversity."



TING-JU SHAO is a ceramist, curator and author based in Taiwan. <http://www.tingjushao.com>



Porcelain, Ceramics, Objects, Painting, Mixed media

photo credit: Skuja Braden

left - **Compassion bowl**, 20 x 48 x 30cm, 2022

below left - Latvian Pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale,  
**We made our Bed**  
300 x 300 x 170 cm, 2022

below - Latvian Pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale,  
**Hose-Monster Fountain**  
188 x 140 x 140 cm, 2022

