

# Ceramophile

Alfred Ceramic Art Museum





*Cover – William Underhill, Coffee Lord, 2002, bronze, 17 x 14 x 18 inches*

*Back Cover – Gyeongsangnam, Korea, Deep Footed Bowl, 16th century, stoneware with crackled creamy white glaze and gold lacquer repairs, 3 3/16 x 5 9/16 inches, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, Michigan, transfer from the College of Architecture and Design, 1972/2.75*

*Facing page – Exhibition installation, William Underhill: Casting a Legacy, April 21 – December 30, 2022*

*Above – Exhibition installation, William Underhill: Casting a Legacy, April 21 – December 30, 2022*

*All the photography for Ceramophile is by Brian Oglesbee, unless otherwise noted.*

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# Director's Remarks

Fortunate circumstances led to the timing of this Issue of *Ceramophile*, which comes a year later than expected. The fall of 2021 was extremely busy with the magnificent and very well received *Path of the Teabowl* exhibition curated by Meghan Jones, which opened September 28. While that exhibition was inspiring visitors and many student ceramic artists, an opportunity came up that was too good to be true. An impromptu visit late in 2021 to William Underhill's, Wellsville, NY, studio proved overwhelming. I became determined to mount an Underhill retrospective as soon as possible. With Bill's permission, I began numerous trips to his studio reviewing the work at length and finally curating the exhibition installed as *William Underhill: Casting a Legacy* which closed on December 30, 2022. While this exhibition was in development the Museum took the opportunity to extend the run of the popular *Path of the Teabowl* exhibition into the spring. It closed on March 27. The Underhill exhibition then opened on April 21, 2022.

Fall and spring 2021-22 were very busy indeed for the Museum. My most heartfelt thanks go out to all the Museum personnel who worked so hard and with great skill to make both exhibitions happen. Thanks to Meghan Jones, Associate Professor of Art History, School of Art and Design, NYSCC at Alfred University for her scholarship and connoisseurship of the Japanese teabowl. Thanks to Curator of Collections and Director of Research Susan Kowalczyk whose professionalism is always a guide to excellence. Thanks to Bill Giese the Museum's Operations Manager and Preparator whose commitment to the details is an endless source of positive energy and "can do." Additionally, the members of our admissions staff are trouper. They multi-task expertly.

A very special thank you goes to William Underhill for his enthusiasm, his refined intelligence and generous spirit. Unfortunately, he passed away in Wellsville, NY, February 16, 2022, at the age of 88 just weeks before his exhibition opened. He will be greatly missed. His life story as an impassioned artist is full of questioning, brilliant insight, and remarkable art brought forth from the depth of conviction. His exhibition at the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum celebrated his sensitive engagement with life and his extraordinary work as an artist.

As the exhibition was coming together a decision was made to publish a book on William Underhill's work. The funding and conceptualizing process began. The Museum is pleased to announce that a major book titled *William Underhill: Casting a Legacy* will be published in English by Arnoldsche Art Publishers, Stuttgart, Germany. It will be available early summer, 2023.

Underhill fits the imagined, romantic ideal of a quintessentially Alfred artist. As an artist myself, particularly interested in idealized landscape, I responded to Underhill's vivid verbal rendering of his early days in the rural environs of Alfred. Here is a brief excerpt from an interview Rebekah Underhill did with her grandfather in 2020:

In 1969 Bill arrived in Alfred to teach at Alfred University, as he put it:

*from a brownstone in Brooklyn to a falling down old farmhouse complete with 100 acres of hayfields, pastures, a stream, a pond, and a nice grove of hardwoods in remote Western New York State. It was a beautiful piece of property. It was the era of the first Earth Day, and of our awakening to the worldwide environmental crisis. The 1960's and 70's were the era of large-scale sculpture earthworks involving digging trenches, building mounds, tunneling, and of course, the Spiral Jetty. I had acquired a hundred-acre farm, and on it laid out an artwork, not of mounds, but of trees. I planned a series of groves to compliment and work with the landscape which was rolling meadows, stream bed and hayfields and pastures. I made a contour map by enlarging (by hand) a U.S. Geodesic map of the land. On my plan I laid out groves, woods, swales, meadows, and whatever seemed to fit the "lay of the land".*

More about William Underhill and his exhibition can be found in this issue of *Ceramophile* under Exhibition 2022.

As I write this, the main gallery is getting a face lift in preparation for two new exhibitions: *Knot Stories* an exhibition of ceramic sculpture by Paul S. Briggs and *Selections: The Archive*.

Each year my Director's Remarks include a salute to those who have moved on beyond the boundaries of this life and who had a special relationship to the Museum. I have mentioned William Underhill. Coincidentally, there is another William that has been very important to the Museum, William (Bill) Daley. The Museum mounted a Bill Daley solo exhibition titled *William Daley: 14 for 7*, February 5 – March 27, 2015. The day Bill Daley passed, January 16, 2022, I wrote the following to his son Tom.

*Bill's passing was expected – he lived a long and momentous life. Nevertheless, as I read your email, time stopped, and the realization came that we have lost one of the greatest ceramic artists of all time. I lived during his time. He was very important to me as an artist and as a friend. His work will always inspire. My memories of him will remain living and bright in my mental pictures of all the times I was in his presence and all the times we shared conversation, or I stopped to admire his work, which fortunately I had many opportunities to do. Impermanence is the nature of our being, but Bill Daley will live forever as one of the immortals of ceramic art. We have his great works to enjoy, discuss and share the stories of his life around, as we meditate on what is most important in our lives... I shall miss him.*

The Alfred Ceramic Art Museum wishes to acknowledge Doug Jeck, (who taught ceramic sculpture for the School of Art and Design, NYSCC at Alfred University 1994-1996), Chuck Hindes,



William Daley encouraging students to touch and ask questions at the opening of his Museum exhibition *William Daley: 14 for 7*, February 12, 2015. This exhibition featuring 14 works from 7 decades was a unique celebration of his achievements as an artist.

Michael Simon, Bunny McBride (Alfred MFA, 1970), and Arnie Zimmerman, (Alfred MFA 1979). When I read these names, I am astonished at how much artistry has been lost to the world. Fortunately, their contribution to the art of ceramics lives on. Their work will remain for us to admire and learn from for years to come.

# Exhibitions 2021



Nanette L. Laitman, photo with sculpture by Patti Warashina

## Nanette's Gifts

February 24 – July 29, 2021

This exhibition featured the gifts of ceramic art given to the Museum by the prominent collector and patron of the arts Nanette L. Laitman.

Nanette L. Laitman (1924-2020) was part of the vitality of the arts in New York City for most of her life. She was a highly respected collector, philanthropist, and visionary spokesperson for the Craft-Art ethos. She was one of America's undisputed leaders of an art community who helped to enrich our culture with support for the contemporary makers' spirit of belief and aspiration. Read more about Nanette L. Laitman and this beautiful exhibition in the 2021 issue of *Ceramophile*.



Path of the Teabowl, exhibition installation, Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, 2021



Meghen Jones, Guest Curator Path of the Teabowl exhibition, Associate Professor of Art History, NYSCC School of Art and Design at Alfred University, with her students 10/2021.

## Path of the Teabowl

Guest Curator Meghen Jones  
September 23, 2021 – March 27, 2022

*A good tea bowl is one that you never get tired of drinking from every day... [and] makes you want to pick up and hold in the palms of your hands forever.*  
—Kawase Shinobu - renown teabowl maker

Guest Curator Meghen Jones is Associate Professor of Art History in the School of Art and Design at Alfred University. She teaches introductory courses on material culture and Buddhist arts; upper-level undergraduate courses on ceramic history, design history, and East Asian visual and material culture; and the graduate seminar History of Ceramic Art, Craft, and Design: Global Flows. Her teaching emphasizes the direct study of objects. She has led student programs to museums and collections in the US, Canada, and Japan.

Jones graduated in 1993 with a dual major BA in Japanese Studies and Fine Arts from Earlham College in Indiana, followed by further language training at the Osaka University of Foreign Studies and completion of an MA in Ceramic Craft Design at Musashino Art University, Tokyo (1997). After a period of creating and teaching ceramics,

working for private collectors, directing a university art gallery, and instructing art history courses, she earned an MA and PhD in Art and Architectural History from Boston University (2014), conducting her dissertation research at the Crafts Gallery of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Prior to Alfred, she was Teaching Fellow in Japanese Studies at Earlham College (2011–2013), and a Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Fellow at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures in Norwich, U.K. (2013–2014).

Meghen Jones's research focuses on Japanese art and design 1868 to today; global flows of ceramic art and design; modernism; and craft theory. Two forthcoming publications are the article "Mingei," for *Oxford Bibliographies in Art History* and the exhibition catalogue *Path of the Teabowl*, edited by Jones and to be published by the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, with distribution by RIT Press. Recent publications include the article "Kitaoji Rosanjin in New York, 1954," in *Impressions*; the chapter "National Treasure Tea Bowls as Cultural Icons in Modern Japan," in *The Construction and Dynamics of Cultural Icons*; and the book *Ceramics and Modernity in Japan*, co-edited with Louise Allison Cort. Her lectures on Japanese ceramics and

related topics have been hosted by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Crocker Art Museum, and the University of Michigan, among others. Jones's translations from Japanese to English have appeared in projects such as the Google Cultural Institute's *Made in Japan*. Grant and fellowship support for her research has been provided by the Japan Foundation; the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts & Cultures; the Fulbright Foundation; the Korea Foundation; the Japanese Ministry of Education; and others.

In a wall text statement, Meghen asked our viewing audience to contemplate: What is a teabowl?

*What is a teabowl? How did it become an iconic ceramic art form? A millennium ago in China, Buddhist monks drank green tea from bowls with brown and black glazes. Later, in Korea and Japan, potters crafted teabowls of increasingly diverse designs, often intentionally asymmetrical. Treasured teabowls, if broken, were repaired with lacquer and gold. Ritual etiquette dictated the ways in which teabowls have been used to prepare and serve tea in East Asia. Today, around the world, people invent personal tea ceremonies. Contemporary artists create teabowls with a range of motivations, from channeling the*

classics to breaking new ground in forms and processes. *Tracing the teabowl's path in Asia and beyond, this exhibition features over one hundred teabowls and related objects from the tenth through the twenty-first century.*

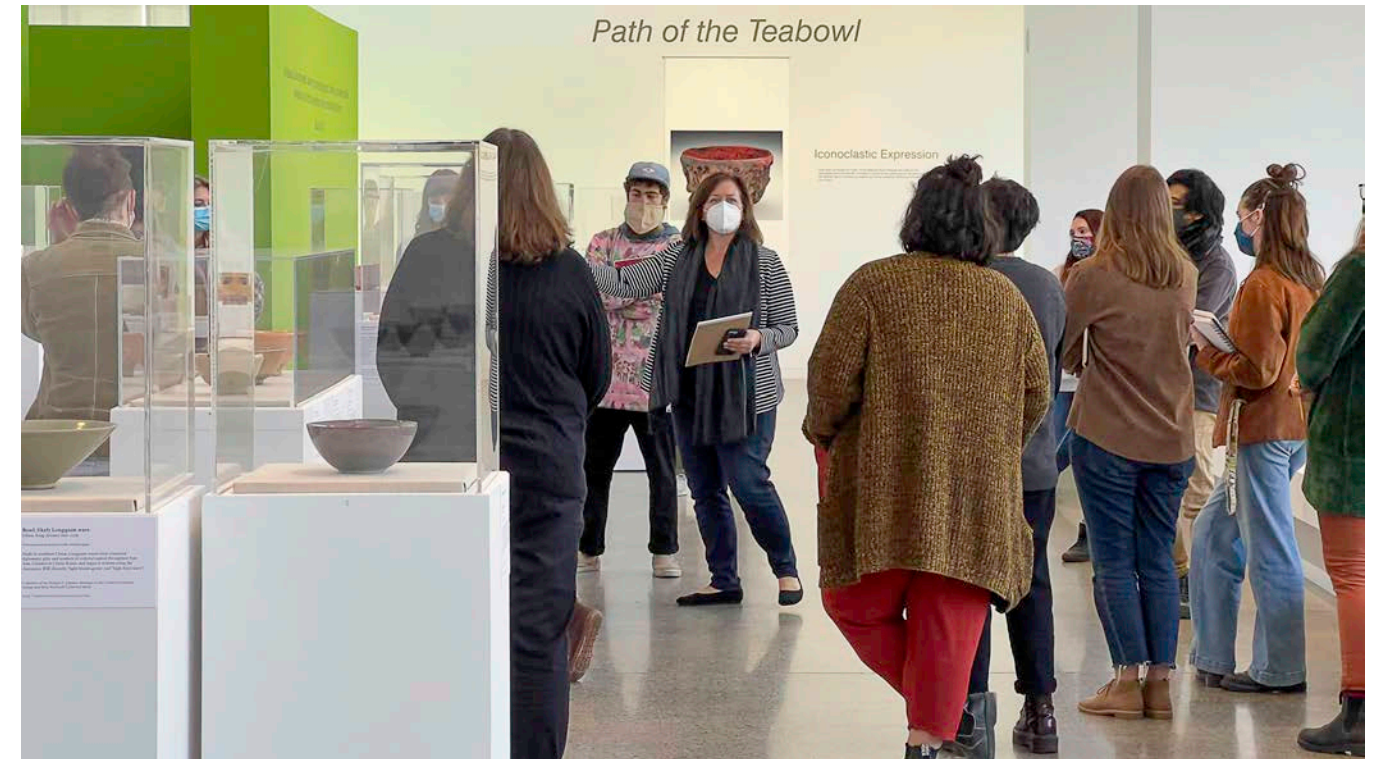
The *Path of the Teabowl* exhibition included works from the permanent collection of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum as well as important loans from the collections of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz, Marlin and Ginger Miller, Linda Sikora, the Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, Massachusetts, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, and the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The Museum acknowledges with gratitude the following sources of funding for the *Path of the Teabowl* exhibition. The funding included the exhibition, a forthcoming catalogue, and an online international conference. Support was provided by the Museum's Schein-Joseph Exhibition Fund and the Robert C. Turner Endowment Fund along with additional support from the Levine Endowment, created by Steve, AU' 61, and Michiko Levine to encourage and support the interaction of Alfred University and Asian cultures; the School of Art Design New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University; and a grant from the Northeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies, in conjunction with the Japan-U.S.

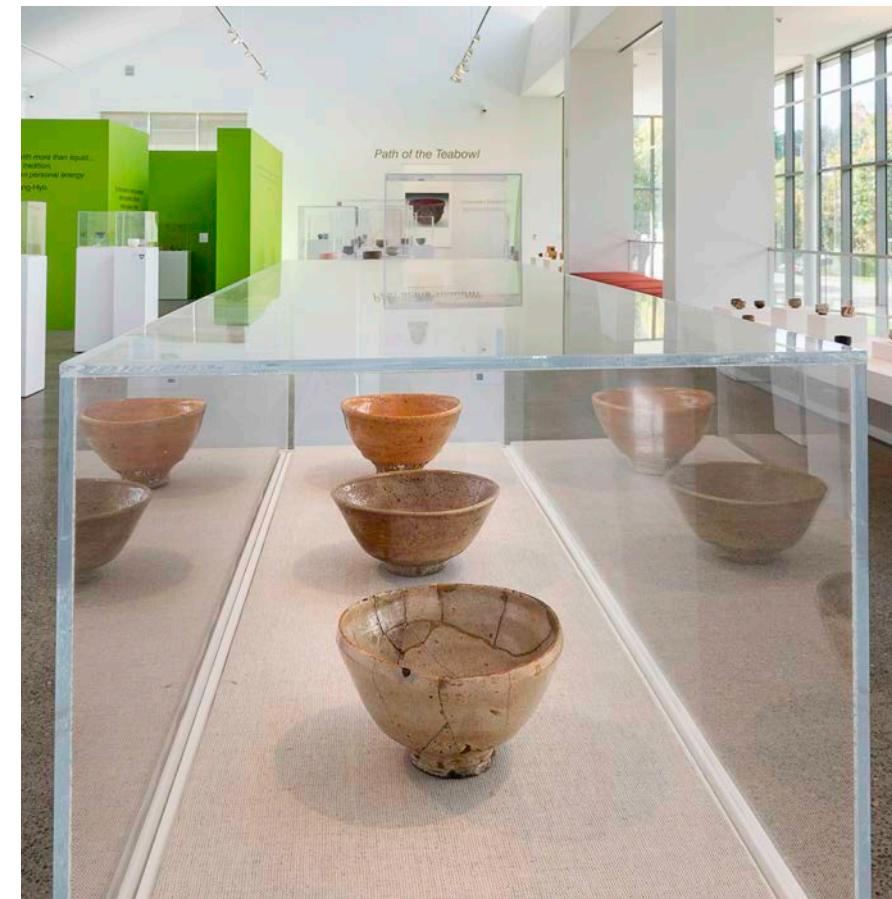
Friendship Commission.

*Fill the empty space with more than liquid....Fill it with tradition, history, and your own personal energy.*  
—Lee Kang-Hyo – renown teabowl maker

*Path of the Teabowl* - a fully illustrated book with scholarly text including essays by contributing editor Meghan Jones will be published by the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, fall 2023.



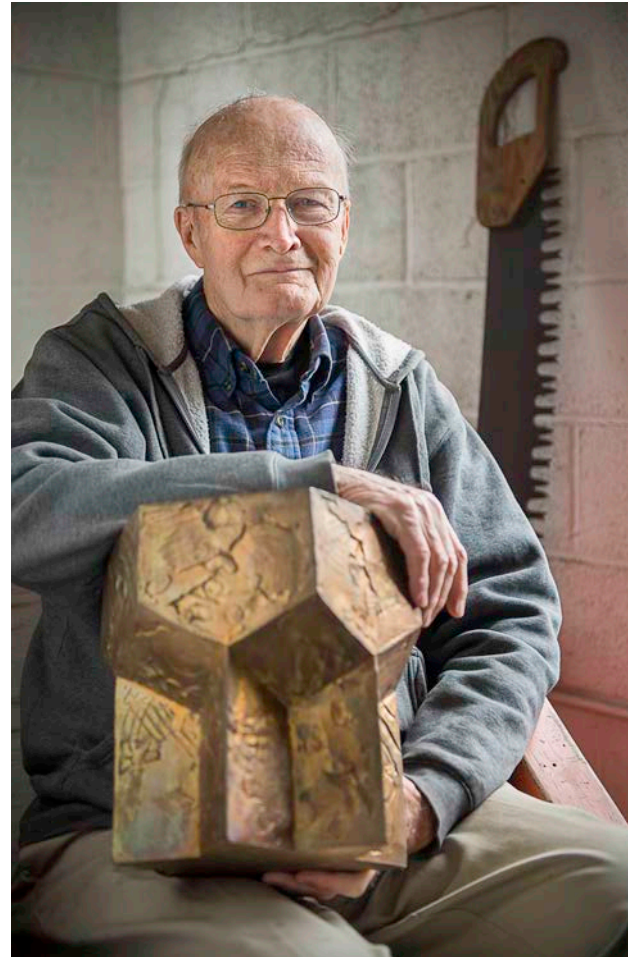
*Path of the Teabowl, exhibition installation, Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, 2021*



*Top: Meghan Jones, Guest Curator Path of the Teabowl exhibition, Associate Professor of Art History, NYSCC School of Art and Design at Alfred University, with her students 10/2021.*

*Left: Path of the Teabowl, exhibition installation, Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, 2021*

# Exhibition 2022



William Underhill with Hidden Star

The Alfred Ceramic Art Museum is honored to have this opportunity to celebrate the extraordinary work of William Underhill.

## William Underhill: Casting a Legacy

April 21 – December 30, 2022

From the Museum's mission statement:

Alfred University's well-known, multi-media art school is unique in its expansive growth from the ceramic art legacy of Charles Fergus Binns. Alfred Ceramic Art Museum acknowledges this fact by celebrating all the visual arts within various aspects of its exhibition cycle, while concentrating its collection policy on ceramic art.

With roots deep in the cultural soil of California of the 1950's, Underhill came east eventually to teach at Alfred University where he established the metal casting facility. Underhill taught in the NYSCC School of Art and Design, Division of Sculpture and Dimensional Studies from 1969 to his retirement in 1997 as emeritus professor. Underhill studied with the legendary ceramic artist Peter Voukos and developed a close, inspiring friendship with the renowned ceramic artist Stephen De Staebler. He worked with the celebrated architect Buckminster Fuller at the University of California at Berkeley, School of Architecture where he also studied with designer Charles Eames. As a student, Underhill began to turn clay work into bronze vessels eventually establishing a unique path for himself as an artist.



William Underhill, 7 Ceramic Heads, 1977



William Underhill, El Moko Grande, 1981, cast bronze, 10 x 17 1/2 inches

*I make metal bowls, bronze vessels cast by the lost wax process. The vessel is a primary form, irreducible and complete. To this he adds: Our subconscious speaks in poetry, in metaphors endlessly rich and varied. We are always making equivalents through all the senses, all media – movement, sound, light and color. Making metaphors, analogies – these are all poetry.*

—William Underhill. Interview with granddaughter Rebekah Underhill, December 7, 2020

Underhill on BOWL AESTHETICS from the same interview:

*Psychologists, biologists, as well as engineers know the importance of the surface. It is where sense data of all kinds are exchanged, where the cell,*

*the individual, or the nation interacts with the outside world, where forces are resolved or transmitted, where growth and learning occur. The interface for information of all kinds is the skin. And since a bowl presents the maximum surface, it can say the most. An open form transmits as much information as the same form inverted or enclosed. Much has been written about the aesthetics of the vessel. I can only summarize what I consider some main issues. 1. **Symbolism:** all objects and activities have both objective function and subconscious metaphor. The human mind works that way; that duality is the source of all poetry. Bowls are powerful symbols of holding, of the female principle of containment, of axial balance and the somatic response, of the circle completed. 2. **Virtuoso performance:** playing variations on traditional formal themes*

*where, because of the universality of the forms, the subtlest variation is read and understood. 3. **Form/decoration relationships:** what I call the "Third Realm", where 1+1=3, not entirely two-dimensional, not entirely three-dimensional, but a synergistic and holistic interplay of spatial sense with illusionistic perceptions. But to me, all these are only first derivatives of that basic equation of efficiency: maximum effect with minimum means, the generosity and completeness, the "grandeur", of the primary forms.*

The following is an edit from an email well known arts writer, scholar, lecturer Edward Lebow sent to Wayne Higby Director and Principal Curator Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, 3/7/2022.

*There's little doubting the value of this project and Bill's contribution to the*



William Underhill, *Cauldron*, 1983, cast bronze, 17 x 14 inches



William Underhill, *Dome Palindrome*, sand-cast iron, 5 x 10 x 10¼ inches

American studio movement. He was an extraordinary talent who -- for a variety of reasons -- flew beneath the radar of attention that comes with success. Yet, as Lee Nordness pointed out in his groundbreaking 1969 *Objects USA* survey of the modern studio movement, Bill was a master of the lost wax technique who explored the modern expressive potential of bronze vessels with unrivaled persistence. He "molded and scratched the wax until the final bronze surface embodied all of the mystical connotations of a ritualistic object." His description touched on what would become an enduring truth about Underhill's ambition and work: he embraced the power of forms and form-making to shape the spirit. In a broader sense, this was the new functionalism of modern "craft," which had supplanted utilitarianism in the cause of kitchenware with one, as Peter Voulkos put it, devoted to "the human soul."

This link between Voulkos and Underhill was more than tangential. In the early 1960s, Bill studied alongside Jim

Melchert, Stephen DeStaebler and others in the freewheeling studio that Voulkos taught at the University of California at Berkeley. It was a crucial time. Voulkos was in the process of briefly abandoning clay for bronze, to explore larger sculptural forms. "He was frustrated by the limitations of the material," Underhill recalled, "and he saw bronze as a way to get bigger scale and still be as free and sculptural as he was with clay."

Helping to establish the foundry with Voulkos and colleagues at Berkeley, Bill saw a different, more intimate potential in the ancient metal and craft. "I saw the pot in bronze and the wax and casting process as a complete statement in itself right from the start. It didn't need to be anything else."

For more than half a century, Bill pursued and filled this idea with a rich variety of poetic forms and voices. A book about Bill's work could cover that and more. In addition to his wide-ranging achievements in clay, bronze, and iron vessels, it would delve into his

transformative work with Buckminster Fuller, his exploration of figurative sculptures, and his pioneering work in large-scale fabricated metal sculpture. I would draw from the extensive interviews I and others did with Bill throughout his career to frame his work against the rich backdrop of the modern studio movement and Bill's deep involvement in the history of form making.

Ed Lebow is the principal author of the upcoming book *William Underhill: Casting a Legacy* to be published in English, 2023, by Arnoldsche Art Publishers, Stuttgart, Germany, contributing editor Wayne Higby. Other contributors include Mary Drach McInnes, Professor of Art History School of Art and Design, NYSCC at Alfred University; and photographer Brian Oglesbee.

# Upcoming Exhibitions

## Paul S. Briggs: Knot Stories and Selections: The Archive

February 23 – July 30, 2023

On Feb. 23, 2023, the Museum will open an exhibit of Paul S. Briggs's ceramic art, *Knot Stories: The Showcase Exhibition*. *Knot Stories* is an exhibition of ceramic sculpture inspired by Black Poetry transmuting stories of suffering into songs of perseverance. In his artist statement Briggs quotes American philosopher-activist Cornell West: "Justice is what love looks like in the public sphere."

Born in Beacon, NY, Briggs grew up in the Hudson Valley region. He has studied educational theory and policy, art education, theology, sculpture, and ceramics. Along the way he graduated from Alfred University with an M.S.ED degree in 1995 with a concentration in ceramic art. He holds an MFA and a PhD as well. Currently Briggs is on the faculty at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston.

ACAM will also open on Feb. 23 the exhibition *Selections: The Archive*, which is a view into the permanent collection of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum focused on recent acquisitions in context with other major works. The Alfred Ceramic Art Museum at Alfred University houses nearly 8,000 ceramic objects ranging from small pottery shards recovered from ancient civilizations to modern and contemporary ceramic art. This exhibition along with *Knot Stories* reveals art of the current moment with windows into the flow of history.

Showcase Exhibitions are sponsored by a generous funding gift provided by D. Philip Baker and David R. Bender. An opening reception at the Museum for both exhibitions will be held on Feb 23 from 5 to 7 pm. Everyone is welcome to join the celebration. Refreshment will be served. The Museum hours are Tuesday through Sunday 10 am to 5 pm.

Top: Paul S. Briggs, *Caged Birds* (Maya Angelou), 2021, glazed stoneware, 13¼ x 7¼ x 5½ inches. Museum Purchase, ACAM 2021.22

Bottom: Gertraud Möhwald, *Head with Colored Paper*, 1989, stoneware with impressed shards and paper, 15¼ x 11½ x 12¾ inches. Museum Purchase, ACAM 2022.24



# Recent Acquisitions



Pablo Picasso, Madoura Pottery edition, ceramic pitcher, designed circa 1954, glazed earthenware, 11¼ x 9¼ x 6⅝ inches, gift of Ann Moskowitz, ACAM 2021.69



Linda Cordell, Bar Mit Kugel, 2021, glazed porcelain, China paints, 17¼ x 15 x 11¼ inches, museum purchase, ACAM 2021.84



Judith Salomon, *Construction Bowl*, circa 1988, glazed white terra cotta, 11½ x 18 x 17 inches, gift of the artist, ACAM 2021.26



Lidya Buzio, *Vessel*, 1983, pigmented slip on earthenware, 10 x 13½ inches, Roger D. Corsaw Collection, museum purchase, ACAM 2022.19



Ogawa Hirotsugu (Japanese, b. 1978), Black Teabowl, 2015, black-glazed Raku ware, 3 x 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches, ACAM, gift of Rob Williams in memory of Warren Womble, ACAM 2021.36



Mihara Ken (Japanese, b. 1958), Bowl (wan), 2016, stoneware with slips, 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches, gift of Rob Williams in memory of Warren Womble, ACAM 2021.31



*Tsujimura Kai (Japanese, b. 1976), Hakeme Teabowl, 2008, stoneware with white slip and glaze, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches, ACAM, gift of Rob Williams in memory of Warren Womble, ACAM 2021.43*



*Nishihata Tadashi (Japanese, b. 1948), Ash-glazed Tamba Teabowl, ca. 2005–2006, stoneware with glaze, 3  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 5  $\frac{5}{8}$  inches, ACAM, gift of Rob Williams in memory of Warren Womble, ACAM 2021.40*



Patti Warashina, *After the Catch*, 1974, glazed earthenware, 5 x 21<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 13<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches, Roger D. Corsaw Collection, museum purchase, ACAM 2022.12



Nick Geankoplis, *Saccharin/Two Pounds for the Crop*, 2022, porcelain, glazed, decals, wood plastic, 28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches framed, museum purchase and gift of the artist, ACAM 2022.31

# Visitors



Cathy (Nanette Laitman's daughter) Seligman and Fred Seligman, July 15, 2021.



John Underhill admiring his brother's artwork, Museum main gallery, September 25, 2022.



Liet Heringa and Maarten van Kalsbeek otherwise known as Heringa/Van Kalsbek, the NYSOC School of Art and Design at Alfred University's International Randall Chairs in Ceramic Art for 2022, are a dynamic duo from the Netherlands who visited the Museum archives, February 9, 2022. Staff photo



The Honorable Nick Greiner, Australian Consul-General, Museum main gallery with Museum Director Wayne Higby, August 22, 2022. Staff photo



Jack Troy and friends visiting the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum. Jack Troy and director Wayne Higby wearing hats, Meghan Jones, Guest Curator of the Path of the Teabowl exhibition to Jack Troy's left. Susan Kowalczyk the Museum's Curator of Collections, far back right. December 17, 2021. Staff Photo



Jack Troy, paying his respect to work by Davis Shaner. Museum Archives, December 17, 2021. Staff photo



Left to right: Matthew Ehrlich, Bonnie Eletz (Nanette Laitman's daughter) Alfred University President Mark Zupan, Francine Caplan and Bob Caplan, July 22, 2021.

# Museum as Classroom



Art Students from Professor Linda Sikora's ceramic art class enjoying the opportunity to touch and talk about William Underhill's sand-cast iron casserole. Staff photo



Art students discuss the concept of the teabowl, Path of the Teabowl exhibition. Staff photo



Top: Art Students really looking and admiring teabowls they encountered in the Path of the Teabowl exhibition, Staff photo

Bottom: Art Students return numerous times to study the teabowls in the Path of the Teabowl exhibition. Staff photo



Meghen Jones, Guest Curator Path of the Teabowl exhibition, Associate Professor of Art History, NYSCC School of Art and Design at Alfred University, with her students 10/2021

# The Ackerman Internship, Fall 2022



Frank E. Pecoraro-Frayre

The first Ackerman Intern in the archives of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum holding the Jerome Ackerman piece Ibis, 1995, glazed stoneware, 9 x 6 5/8 inches. Gift of Laura Ackerman, ACAM 2000.8

## Alfred Ceramic Art Museum awards inaugural Jerome Ackerman Internship.

The Alfred Ceramic Art Museum awarded the inaugural Jerome Ackerman Internship to Frank E. Pecoraro-Frayre, a third-year student from Sacramento, CA, studying art and design with a focus on ceramic art and a minor in mathematics.

The Jerome Ackerman Internship is a paid internship that supports the Museum's mission as an educational resource for Alfred University students. The Ackerman Internship offers undergraduate students from the School of Art and Design in-depth exposure to museum professional practices as well as deep insight to creative processes across history. The Internship also is designed to further each intern's professional goals while helping the Museum address its multifaceted organizational needs.

"The Alfred Ceramic Art Museum acknowledges with much appreciation its newly established role in celebrating the extraordinary Ackerman legacy with the Jerome Ackerman Internship," Wayne Higby, Director of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, said in announcing Pecoraro-Frayre's Internship award.

Pecoraro-Frayre, also the recipient of an Alfred University Art Portfolio Scholarship, is a Cadet Staff Sergeant with an Army ROTC Scholarship in the University's ROTC program.

"Franky, as he is known on campus, is a remarkable, aspiring artist with an ambitious range of interests," Higby added. "His forthright, intense engagement of his studio practice and his curiosity concerning the history of art and Museum practice, as well as his commitment to the rigors of the ROTC program, has him fully immersed in his studies here at Alfred University. The Museum is very pleased to have this opportunity, thanks to Laura Ackerman Shaw, to have Franky working in our archives under the guidance of Susan Kowalczyk the Museum's Curator of Collections and Director of Research."

Laura Ackerman-Shaw established The Jerome Ackerman Internship at the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum in honor of her father Jerome "Jerry" Ackerman (MFA '52) a designer-craftsman whose artistic collaboration with his wife, Evelyn Ackerman, was at the heart of California's Midcentury Modernism movement.

According to Higby, Ackerman's career is emblematic of the potential of ceramic art to trigger creative adventure in all art and design disciplines. (He) Ackerman and his wife made a life-changing decision in 1949 to move west, where they saw the work of Los Angeles-based designers Charles and Ray Eames in "For Modern Living," an exhibition at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The couple subsequently opened Jenev Design Studio in West Los Angeles, and as highly visible artists participated in every edition of the influential California Design shows at the Pasadena Art Museum, from 1954 to 1976.

Applications for the Ackerman Internship are accepted in person at the Museum's front desk or by emailing [ceramicsmuseum@alfred.edu](mailto:ceramicsmuseum@alfred.edu) – applications must include a letter of interest, resume and two professional letters of recommendation. Applicants should have good organizational skills with strong attention to detail as well as good written and oral communication skills and a proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite and Adobe Photoshop. For additional information, call the Museum office at 607.871.2421.

# Staff Profiles



## Mackenzie McDonald

Mackenzie McDonald graduated from Alfred University in May 2022 with a BFA and a minor in Art History. She was an assistant at the 2022 and 2019 Women Working With Clay Symposiums in Roanoke, VA. In 2019 Mackenzie received the William Lee Scholarship from Trendspot Inc. and was awarded the Dr. Judith Temple Scholarship from Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts. That same year she worked as a Design intern at the Cohen Gallery at Alfred University. In 2020 she was a research intern at Ferrin Contemporary and a resident artist at Project Art in Cummington, MA. In 2021 Mackenzie was included in the NCECA Juried Student Exhibition and awarded Third Place Undergraduate Award of Excellence. In 2022 she showed her work at NCECA in Sacramento with the Virtual Clay Collective. Mackenzie presented her research paper on Bernard Palissy's grottoes at the 2022 SUNY New Paltz Undergraduate Art History Symposium. She was awarded Best in Show for her BFA Thesis Exhibition *Garden Variety*.

Mackenzie began working at the museum in 2019 and continued until graduating in 2022. Her work as the student assistant to the Curator of Collections, Susan Kowalczyk was indispensable. She assisted with permanent collection recordkeeping, researching objects and installation of exhibitions.

## Gabrielle Egnater

Gabrielle Egnater was born in Los Angeles, California to a family of printmakers and lighting designers. She transplanted to Chicago to pursue a BFA in Sculpture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. During her time as an undergraduate, Gabrielle interned for the Kohler Arts/Industry Program. After graduation, she remained in the midwest as a Metal Shop and Foundry Technician at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit. Gabrielle is currently an MFA Candidate in the Sculpture Dimensional Studies Program at Alfred University.

During the summer of 2022 she worked in the collections archive area with Susan Kowalczyk, Curator of Collections. Gabrielle focused on a number of projects. She brought to completion inventorying, organizing and re-housing the entire two-dimensional collection; mostly works on paper by ceramic artists.



# Backstory



Bowl from Hiroshima, Japan, c. 20th century, glazed porcelain. Collection of the Science Museum, London, England, Courtesy of the Museum archives.

## The Bowl from Hiroshima, Japan

by Corwyn Lund

### Article Preface

This text is an abridged version of the research paper, *Hiroshima Bowl: A Forensic Analysis of a Para-Photographic Artifact*, which was presented by Corwyn Lund on 18 February 2022 as part of the 110<sup>th</sup> College Art Association (CAA) Annual Conference. Lund's writing first took shape as a term paper for Meghan Jones's Fall 2020 *History of Ceramic Art, Craft and Design* course at Alfred University.

### Introduction

Like a photograph, the *Bowl from Hiroshima, Japan* is a visual and material record of one of the most important events of the 20th Century. Where ceramic art history falls short, the history and theory of photography prove to be valuable in explaining the power and meaning of this artifact. The *Bowl* was retrieved from the ruins of Hiroshima after the United States military detonated the first atomic bomb ever used in warfare above that Japanese city on 06 August 1945. Today this bowl is held in the collection of the Science Museum in London, UK, having originally been donated to the British Museum by the relative of a Navy serviceperson.<sup>1</sup> The exterior glaze of this small porcelain bowl was instantly melted by the flash of light and radiant heat the a-bomb produced, becoming embedded with earthen debris, "fragments of brick and other pottery."<sup>2</sup> In marked contrast to its scarred exterior, the bowl's interior is remarkably unscathed. Decorated with cobalt blue brushstrokes and the Chinese character for longevity (壽), its interior was likely shielded from the bomb's destructive heat by the shade its exterior walls provided. In effect a *three-dimensional* photogram, the bowl's heat sensitive surface is a snapshot capturing the sharp contrast between areas of light and shadow that "transformed Hiroshima and Nagasaki into photographic laboratories, leaving countless traces of photographic and skiagraphic imprints on the landscape, on organic and non-organic bodies alike."<sup>3</sup> Like all photographs, the *Bowl* bears a physical imprint of light – herein inseparable from a radiant heat – which "was sufficiently intense to cause third degree burns to exposed human skin up to a distance of a mile."<sup>4</sup> Just as the *Bowl* is an indexical trace of that momentary burst of intense heat, it may also be the last trace of a civilian caught unawares, holding this vessel on the morning the bomb dropped without warning.

### Nuclear Event

Understanding the materiality and meaning of the *Bowl from Hiroshima, Japan* proceeds from the science of the atomic blast, rather than an aesthetic analysis of this ceramic object. Much of the city's damage was sustained in the first seconds after the detonation of a uranium bomb 570-feet above Hiroshima's downtown core. Like a monumental kiln turned inside out upon the city and its inhabitants, a blinding burst of light heralded a surge of radiant heat that *instantly* raised the ground temperature to three times that of a ceramic art kiln across an unbounded expanse of several square miles. The force of the atomic blast leveled several square miles of Hiroshima, leaving only the skeletal remains of reinforced concrete buildings, like the Hiroshima Industrial Promotion Hall whose ruins are preserved as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial. The initial burst of heat ignited all flammable objects and materials, which quickly combined into an immense firestorm that "burned out almost everything that had not already been destroyed by the blast in a roughly circular area of 4.4 square miles around the point directly under the explosion."<sup>5</sup>

The Hiroshima Red Cross initially estimated that 70,000 people were immediately killed.<sup>6</sup> The bodies of victims near ground zero were carbonized, shattered by the blast, and blown away, never to be found.<sup>7</sup> Those at a greater distance suffered extreme burns. Within two months, 50,000 to 60,000 more people died of injuries and radiation sickness.<sup>8</sup> The bombing's immediate aftermath was captured in only five photographs taken on the ground that day by Hiroshima

photojournalist Yoshito Matsushige. Around 11am on Miyuki Bridge – 1.4 miles from the hypocenter – he fought through tears to take two photos showing victims huddled together and attending to their burns. Though the *Bowl's* distance from the bomb's hypocenter is not recorded – a metric often cited in archives and museum displays of such artifacts – it can be deduced through rudimentary ceramic material science and US Military reports that the *Bowl* was a similar distance from the hypocenter of the blast as Miyuki Bridge. As such, Matsushige's photographs of this location make explicit the bomb's far-reaching effects on the bodies of its victims, which remains implicit in the *Bowl's* damaged surface.

### Nuclear Artifact

The emotional impact of the *Bowl from Hiroshima* is as great as the difference in scale between this modest porcelain artifact and the enormous tragedy from which it was born. About three inches tall and five inches in diameter, of authorless design and mass produced, this porcelain vessel would have been "used for pickles and chutneys"<sup>9</sup> and passed amongst family members at mealtimes. It evokes human presence as the concretization of two hands cupped together to receive and hold sustenance. In its damaged state, the *Bowl* chronicles a catastrophic breach in the sanctuary of domestic space, familial relations, and daily ritual when the a-bomb was dropped without warning at 8:16 am as most citizens were home preparing for the day ahead. The *Bowl's* cobalt blue decorations are evidently common, as they closely match that of a teacup

lid held in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.<sup>10</sup> There are almost three thousand such atomic bomb ravaged ceramic objects catalogued in the Museum's Peace Database under categories like "pottery," "tile," and "melted/fixed lumps of pottery and glass."<sup>11</sup> Many were salvaged by survivors and held in safekeeping for years in memory of those deceased. For example, the text accompanying *Dish Fragments Stuck on Top of Each Other* reads:

*Toshio Honda picked this up from the burnt remains of [his] house. On the day of the bombing, he was safe at Hiroshima Station but of the eight family members who lived together, five, including his brother and sister, were killed. Toshio, the youngest of eight brothers, ran a shop dealing with Hiroshima's specialty products with his brothers before the war, but lost everything in the atomic bomb. Toshio tried to throw away [Dish Fragments...] many times, but he said he couldn't when he thought about the deceased, and so [he] kept it in a safe place.*<sup>12</sup>

For Toshio, this pathos-laden ceramic object held the same sentimental value that Susan Sontag identifies in the "reluctance to tear up or throw away the photograph of a loved one, especially of someone dead or far away. To do so is a ruthless gesture of rejection."<sup>13</sup> While objects like *Dish Fragment* and *Bowl from Hiroshima* resemble the mute shards of pottery found buried alongside the dead in archeological digs around the world, respectively housed within the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Science Museum in London, they are given a platform to voice their unique stories.

<sup>1</sup> Adrian Whicher, Assistant Curator, Science Group, London, UK, email to author, February 11, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Didactic label, *Bowl from Hiroshima, Japan*. Science Museum, London. July 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2005), 109.

<sup>4</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey. *Summary Report (Pacific War)*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1946). 22.

<sup>5</sup> Major General Leslie R. Groves, *The Atomic Bombings Of Hiroshima And Nagasaki*, (Washington: Manhattan Engineer District, June 1946), 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Atomic Bombs on Health and Medical Services in Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, (Washington: Medical Division, March 1947), 55.

<sup>7</sup> Toshiko Bajo, *Q & A about Hiroshima/The Atomic-Bomb*, (Hiroshima Peace Media Center, n.d.), [http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/exploration/index\\_20090309.html](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/exploration/index_20090309.html), 13 November 2020.



Cory Lund in his studio, NYSCC School of Art and Design at Alfred University, 2022.

## Conclusion

Belying its modest scale and use value, the *Hiroshima Bowl* is a powerful instantiation of a tragic event that exceeds the scope of human imagination. Growing up during the 1980s Cold War, the threat of nuclear annihilation loomed large, particularly within the punk subculture through which I formed my early identity and political worldview. However, I understood little about the material realities that songs like Crass' *Nagasaki Nightmare* (1980) referred to. As a mid-career artist, I undertook in-depth research on the *Hiroshima Bowl* in order that I might begin to comprehend this historic event through a ceramic art practice rooted in molecular chemistry and the cosmological force of fire. In this undertaking, the *Bowl* has served as an "interscalar vehicle," a concept developed by historian Gabrielle Hecht and succinctly explained by artist-researcher Susan Schuppli as a means to "manage[s] incommensurate realities through the deployment of a kind of material proxy" that serves to "dramatize events to which [artists] have no direct access."<sup>14</sup> As part of the exhibition, *Making the Modern World* at the Science Museum in London since July 2000, the *Bowl from Hiroshima, Japan* has served as historical record, memorial evocation, and vigilant warning against the existential threat nuclear weapons continue to pose to the Earth and humanity.

## Artist/Author's Bio

Graduating with his MFA in Ceramic Art from Alfred University in 2022, Corwyn Lund previously studied sculpture at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) with the support of a Canada-US Fulbright Fellowship. He began working with clay in 2012 as a resident at the European Ceramic Work Centre (EKWC) in The Netherlands. Fueled by successive ceramic residencies at Anderson Ranch in Colorado, Shenkar College in Israel, and The Pottery Workshop in China, Lund's artistic practice diversified from site-specific, architectural interventions to his present focus on sculptural and experimental ceramics. His ceramic work has been part of group exhibitions at the Benyamini Center in Tel Aviv and The Power Plant in Toronto, was the subject of a solo exhibition at Toronto's Zalucky Contemporary, and is held in the collections of the EKWC, the Boijmans Museum in Rotterdam, and the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum.

# Postscript

Corwyn Lund's excellent essay on the Hiroshima Bowl resonates with the tragedy and poignancy of loss. His essay expands our understanding of the bowl as object and of ceramic art as well. The enduring legacy of the bowl is as a reservoir of the human spirit. The Hiroshima Bowl is a container decidedly larger than its physical size. William Underhill reminded us of the bowl as it became for him a touch stone revealed in our Museum's compelling 2022 exhibition of his work. Underhill's bowls speak volumes. Volumes that are saturated in meaning beyond words. Lee Kang-Hyo, famous Japanese teabowl master, lent his words to the walls of the Museum's 2021 *Path of the Teabowl* exhibition: "Fill the empty space with more than liquid. Fill it with tradition, history and your own personal energy." *Ceramophile* is a record of the activity of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum and a celebration of the artists past, present and future that, in the heat of making and inevitable artistic doubt, never compromise distinctive vision.

Wayne Higby,  
Director and Principal Curator,  
Alfred Ceramic Art Museum at Alfred University

<sup>8</sup> USSBS, *Effects*, 55.

<sup>9</sup> Didactic label, *Bowl from Hiroshima, Japan*. Science Museum, London. July 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Japanese, *Teacup Lid*, 06 August 1945, Porcelain and glaze with earthen debris, 1945, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. <http://a-bombdb.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/pdbj/detail/154329> (accessed November 25, 2020)

<sup>11</sup> "A-bomb Material," (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, March 1, 2016), [http://a-bombdb.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/pdbj/search/col\\_bombed](http://a-bombdb.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/pdbj/search/col_bombed), 13 November 2020.

<sup>12</sup> "Peace Database," translated from Japanese by Google (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, March 1, 2016), <http://a-bombdb.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/pdbj/detail/154448>, 13 November 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1977), 161.

<sup>14</sup> Susan Schuppli, *Material Witness: Media, Forensics, Evidence* (The MIT Press, 2020). 165.

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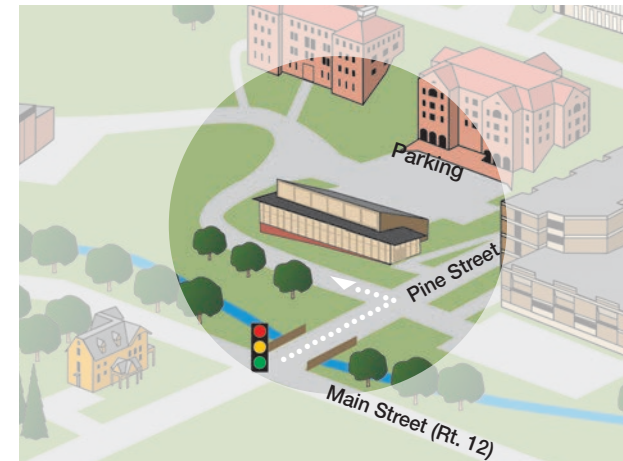
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## Hours

Wednesday	10am – 5pm
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Saturday	10am – 5pm

Temporarily closed Sunday, Monday, Tuesday. Closed major holidays. Please call for exhibition information and closing announcements.

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\$7	Adults (18-54)
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Admission is FREE for Museum members, ESMRP and NARM members year-round.

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