

UNDERNEATH EVERYTHING  
HUMILITY AND GRANDEUR IN CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS



more), but instead they were destroyed by the building boom in contemporary China. With its poetic title, Ai's sculpture serves as a meditation on the finality of all things, a modern memento mori.

The durability yet fragility of ceramics makes it a ready medium for reflections on mortality and memorials. In Cannupa Hanska Luger's *Every One* (fig. 1.11), for example, the artist created a haunting memorial to missing or murdered Indigenous women, girls, queer, and trans community members (MMIWQT). The monumental veil is comprised of thousands of clay beads created by communities across the United States and Canada. As he fired each bead, the artist recited a prayer in honor of one of those missing or murdered: "This is too many. This is enough. This has to stop."<sup>9</sup> This work then, is made of equal parts social collaboration, prayer, and clay. Ingrid Lilligren further explores this tension in ceramics — its durability and fragility — to create poetic meditations on the earth's changing climate. In *Red Ice Dream* (cat. 19), a large, perforated vessel full of ice sits atop a wooden base in a metal basin filled with a landscape of unfired clay. The slow drip of melting ice acts as a beating drum, the slow disintegration of the unfired clay an ominous echo of our environment that has already begun to change.

While Lilligren's art effects a drumbeat of time running out, Edmund de Waal's work radiates with a pulse. He has explained that his ceramic installations "share a kinship with the shape of music" and that he aims to inspire "an attentiveness that [he finds] in listening."<sup>10</sup> Inspired by the minimalist music of Terry Riley, in *to begin again* de Waal places his small porcelain vessels in a vitrine using the vocabulary of music — silence, rhythm, repetition — to create poetry in the form of ceramic installation (cat. 10).

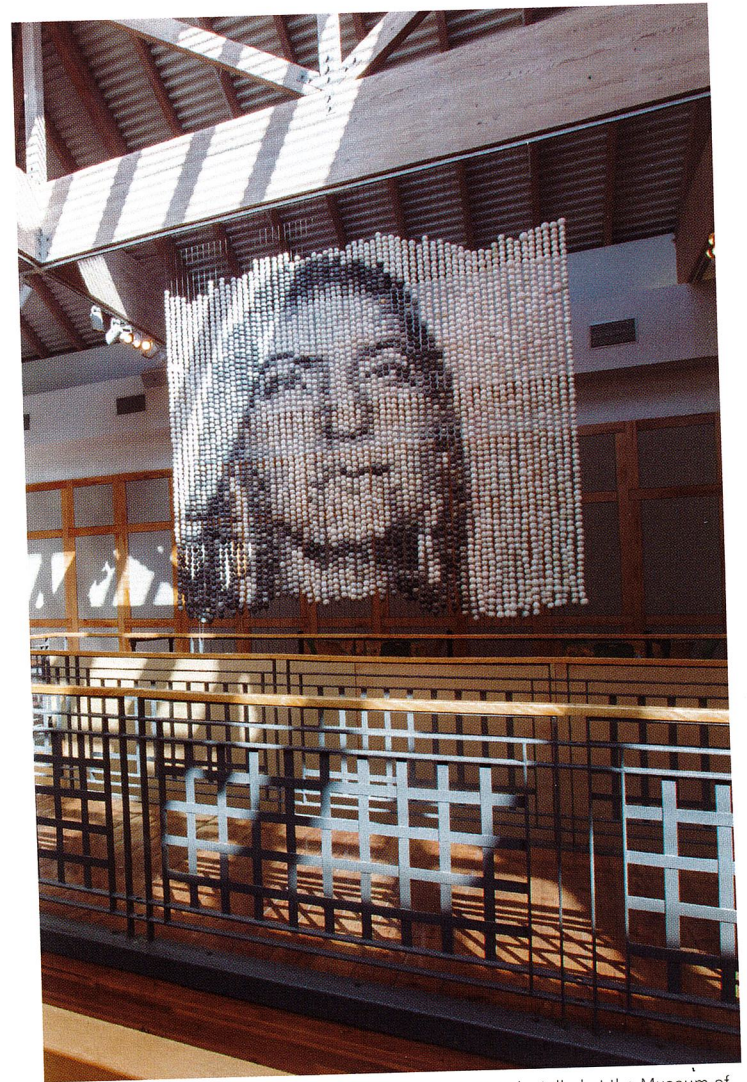


Fig. 1.11 | Cannupa Hanska Luger, *Every One / Cada Uno*, installed at the Museum of International Folk Art / instalado en el Museo de Arte Popular Internacional, 2018



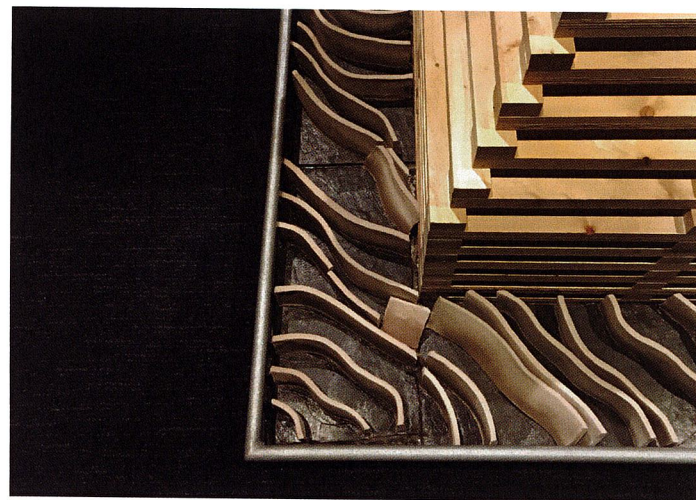


19. Ingrid Lilligren, *Red Ice Dream / Sueño De Hielo Rojo*, 2020



# INGRID LILLIGREN\*

In her recent work, Ingrid Lilligren explores the symbolic resonance of Braille; specifically, its ability to evoke social, cultural, or political blindness around the topic of climate change. Quoting actor and climate activist Emma Thompson, a series of punctured holes in the body of her sculpture *Red Ice Dream* reads "Without the ice, the earth will fall." The vessel bearing this ominous message sits above wood scaffolding inside a metal basin filled with unfired clay forms. The vessel is periodically filled with ice; as it melts, a haunting drip, drip, drip echoes through the gallery. Water drips down the sculpture — whose form resembles an hourglass — pooling in the basin below and slowly degrading the unfired clay landscape within it. A startling evocation of the melting of the polar ice caps and the calamity that will inevitably ensue, *Red Ice Dream* was in part inspired by the catastrophic floods in western Iowa in spring 2020.



19. Ingrid Lilligren, *Red Ice Dream / Sueño De Hielo Rojo*, 2020 (detail / detalle)

En su obra reciente, Ingrid Lilligren explora la resonancia simbólica del Braille; específicamente, su capacidad para evocar la ceguera social, cultural o política en torno al tema del cambio climático. Citando a la actriz y activista del medio ambiente Emma Thompson, una serie de agujeros perforados en el cuerpo de su escultura *Sueño de Hielo Rojo* dice "Sin el hielo, la tierra decaerá". El recipiente que lleva este ominoso mensaje se encuentra sobre un andamio de madera dentro de un recipiente de metal lleno de formas de arcilla sin cocer. El recipiente se llena periódicamente con hielo; a medida que se derrite, un inquietante goteo, gotea, goteo que resuena a través de la galería. El agua gotea por la escultura, cuya forma se asemeja a un reloj de arena, se acumula en la cuenca de abajo y lentamente degrada el paisaje de arcilla sin cocer que se encuentra dentro de ella. Una evocación sorprendente al derretimiento de los polos y la calamidad que inevitablemente les seguirá, *Sueño de Hielo Rojo* fue inspirada en parte por las inundaciones catastróficas del oeste de Iowa en la primavera del 2020.

\*Only in Des Moines presentation / Solo en la presentación de Des Moines.