

THE HEWITT GALLERY OF ART

CHANGING LANES: Painters Explore Dimension in Clay

Sarah Bedford

Seth Michael Forman

Margaret Lanzetta

Judy Mannarino

Michelle Weinberg

Curated by Judy Mannarino with Hallie Cohen

I have noticed more and more painters exploring clay. You can think you're alone, working in your studio, but there is a collective energy out there that somehow connects us. I made note of it and wanted to examine the Changing Lanes of artists who were painting, yet had the desire to work with clay.

— *Judy Mannarino*



Marymount
Manhattan
College

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SARAH BEDFORD

Back as a kid in the 1970s I was given one of those “PotteryCraft” battery operated pottery wheels. I envisioned making full sets of china, tea cups, and pots for my mother’s captive plants. What sadly emerged from my basement “studio” was a lumpen pile of one inch vases and ashen grey plates, which finally cracked when I applied the lime green and purple “glaze” provided in thimble sized chambers. No E-Z bake oven for those beauties. I would have had better luck throwing pots on my parents record player. The allure of clay faded quickly.

Jump forward a few years, while in a class at MSU Bozeman where I discovered the mind-blowingly large, potbelly shaped, clay forms made by another Montana native, Peter Voulkos. Considered to be the godfather of sculptural abstract ceramics, his work was big, strangely ugly and intuitively I understood it. I remember one in particular looked like a 6 ft. wasp nest attacked by grizzlies, thrown into a ditch and lit on fire. His sculptures were bizarre for Montana standards but they sparked my love and interest in ceramic artists like George Ohr, Beatrice Wood, John Maltby, and many others. His work also made me realize I could make free form sculptures — no wheel needed!

While primarily a painter, I’ve been making ceramics off and on for a decade that connect themes of nature, domesticity, mythology and aspects of everyday life. About five years ago my college friend (and master ceramicist) Andrew Kennedy along with Magda DeJose opened Sculpture Space NYC. It’s a beautiful space close to my painting studio, so I took time to make new work and learned about the endless variety of glazes, techniques and firing. It was there that I finally realized I was more interested in the process of conjuring something strange and new out of clay - the transformation, and less interested in the final piece or object. Consequently, I’ve always considered paint and paintings, clay and ceramics as unique mediums for exploration. In the best of art making circumstances I’m able to capture my brief existence on this terra firma: it’s joys, it’s failures and perhaps some mysteries in-between.



Thumbs

Glazed Stoneware • 3" x 5" • 2018



Cry

Glazed Stoneware • 12"H x 8"W x 2"D • 2018



Dreamer

Glazed Stoneware • 7" x 4" • 2018



February Window

Acrylic and oil on panel • 12" x 16" • 2019



Blue Ribbon

Acrylic on panel • 12" x 18" • 2019



Installation

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SETH MICHAEL FORMAN

All of my work generally comes from intuition and imagination, rather than a desire to communicate anything conceptual or narratively specific. However, my experience sculpting with ceramic clay is very different from painting on panels. My painting process is labor intensive with a lot of attention paid to carefully layered surfaces and an accumulation of details. The stoneware pieces are made quickly and without refinement, like three-dimensional sketches. Although I appreciate highly skilled and meticulously crafted ceramics, I am drawn more to rough textures and crudely executed, simplified forms. Sculpting with clay allows me to play in a way that I do not find as satisfying with oil paint, and I do so without any self-imposed pressure. Regardless of which materials I use I have a closer affinity to “folk” and “primitive” art (both inadequate terms), than to classical painting and sculpture.

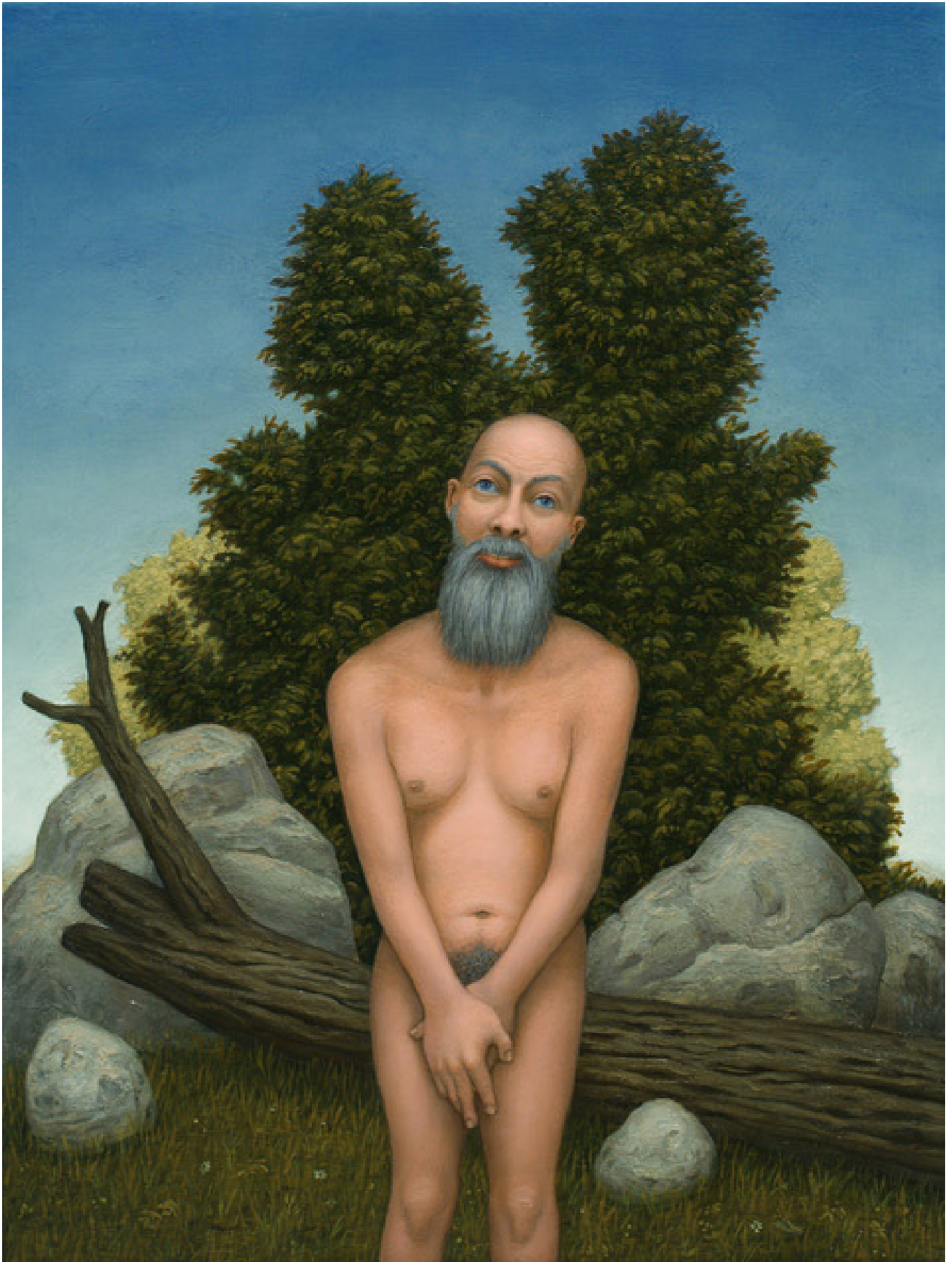


Figures

Stoneware • 14" x 11" • 2020

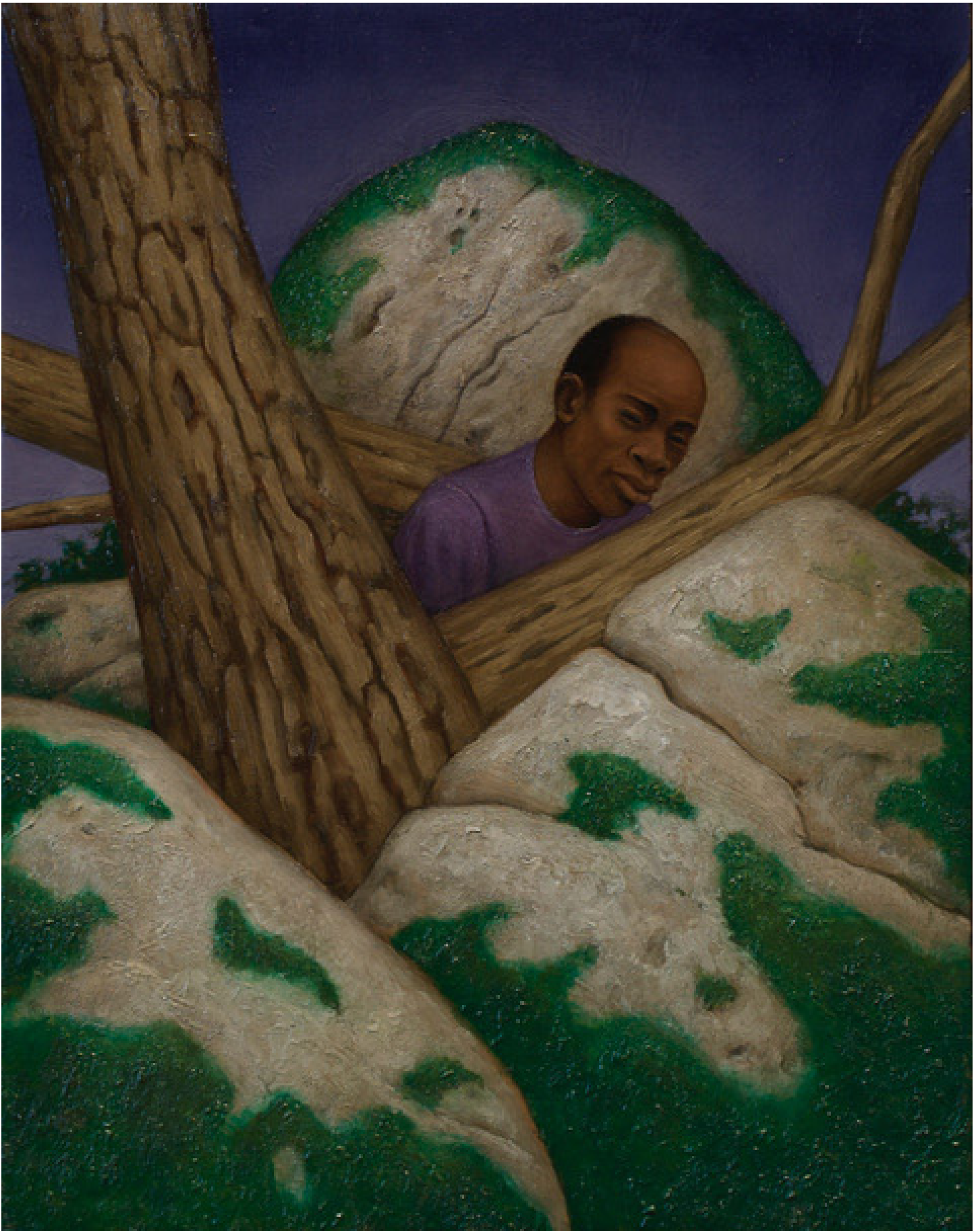


Two Nude Men, Snow, and Boulder
Oil on panel • 14" x 11" • 2020



Mountain Man II

Oil on panel • 16" x 12" • 2020



Man, Boulders and Trees

Oil on panel • 14" x 11" • 2020



Winter Walk

Oil on panel • 14" x 11" • 2020



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MARGARET LANZETTA

My paintings and ceramic sculpture use abstract, culturally significant pattern to explore conditions of fragmentation, migration, political power and cultural hybridity. Patterns are persistently re-examined for their complex, sometimes nefarious narratives and associations, such as when designers cross-culturally “borrow” motifs from the digital arena, and usurped, decorative motifs from conquered lands adorn victors’ crowns. My work is deeply influenced by extensive experiences living and working across the globe: India, Japan and countries in Southeast Asia, North Africa, and Europe. I focus on inherent conflicting points: positing the allure of the grand and the decorative against the reality of cultural/religious cacophony, economic migration, and environmental fragility.

I work in specific, titled series. The paintings in this exhibit, from two different series, display the depth and breadth of my pattern and material explorations. In *Blue Cheer*, (*Augustus Owsley Stanley III*), 2012, from the series *Reign Marks*, completed in Fes, Morocco, fragmented, then re-combined motifs of Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic heritage are re-interpreted into stamps of imperial identity and distinction.

To advance various global concerns, I have begun to incorporate textiles in my work. In this recent series, *Another Global City*, motifs drawn from a personal canon of syncretic patterns are silkscreened or stamped on top of already-patterned textiles: saris, bed sheets, reclaimed fabrics, etc. These textile-based works have been developed in tandem with a recent Fulbright Fellowship to research historic and contemporary art and textile methodologies in India, Singapore and Thailand.

In my ceramic crown series, *Royal Flush*, patterns’ role in culture is further explored. Historical research of several cultures and dynasties, from 1377 – 1969, played a significant role in this project. As repositories of immense dichotomy, visually delicate, yet fiercely constructed, crowns invoke fairy tales while emanating unparalleled supremacy. The series explores the pattern iconography of crowns: how decorative and organic motifs pillaged from conquered lands elevate victors’ crowns to the realm of palpable power; how poetic, lyrical terms for royal designs, *fleur de lys* or *arabesque*, sugarcoat the omnipotent authority of crowns. For this series, black porcelain clay was selected for its own palimpsest of regal symbolism. To move beyond literal renditions of opulent jewels and precious metals, and to underscore the authoritative, sometimes negative narratives, the crowns are rendered solid black, in larger-than-life scale.



Virgin Mary, Crown of the Andes Popayán, Columbia, 1593 -1770

Porcelain and Enamel • 14" diameter x 24" high • 2016

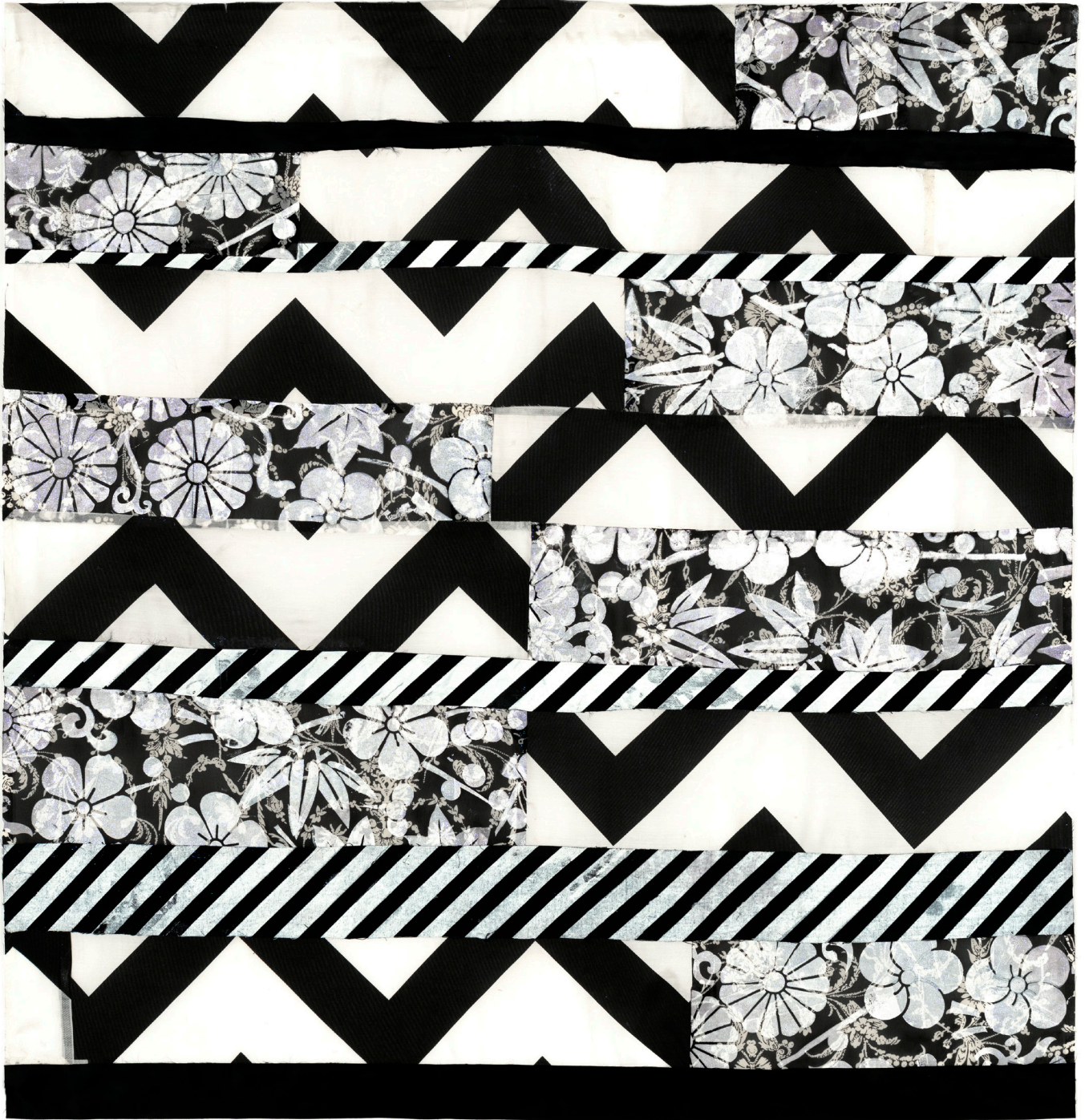


St. Edward's Crown, UK, ca. 1661

Black Porcelain • 14" diameter x 20" high • 2016



Blue Cheer (Augustus Owsley Stanley III)
Oil and Acrylic on Panel • 23" x 18" • 2012



Light in Wartime

Acrylic and Crystal Mica on Rayon, Satin, and Sari Fabric • 34" x 34" • 2019



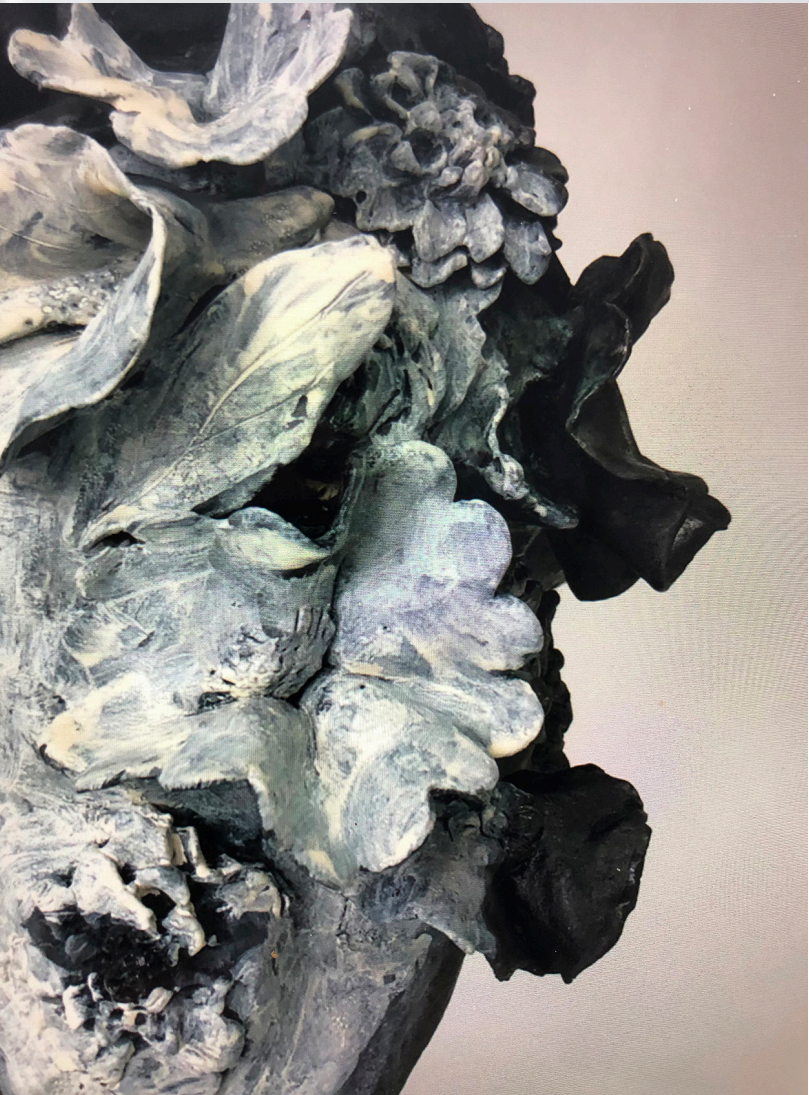
Future Ready

Acrylic on Rayon and Sari Fabric • 34" x 34" • 2019



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JUDY MANNARINO

My studio practice is centered around routine. I get into a rhythm based on the construction, drawing, and painting of an image on a 2-D surface. As the saying goes...rinse and repeat. I'm fraught with daily challenges trying to realize an image that begins months before the painting is completed.

Working with clay felt like having an affair. It began with the desire to make something without a plan and to proceed without any expectations of the outcome, for me quite the opposite of making my paintings. It was hugely freeing and fun! I had no training in any aspects of the material and not even the basic understanding of the use of the kiln or glazes. It was like learning a new language where whatever I was attempting to say only had to make sense to me.

I'm years into working with clay now and up until several months ago I didn't take the pieces I made very seriously. That is until I was awarded a grant by the Joseph Robert Foundation to realize a portrait project - making 50 ceramic heads of women. To bring my project to fruition I needed a construction plan, drawings, a better understanding of the materials and the routine and rhythm of my usual studio practice. To date I have completed about 25 of the heads. I still try to maintain a loose and unencumbered way of working; there remains a sense of freedom and It still feels like play, but in a more serious game.



Pucker

Glazed ceramic • 11.5" H x 4.5" W x 4" D • 2020



Runner

Glazed ceramic • 9"H x 3.5"W x 3.5"D • 2020



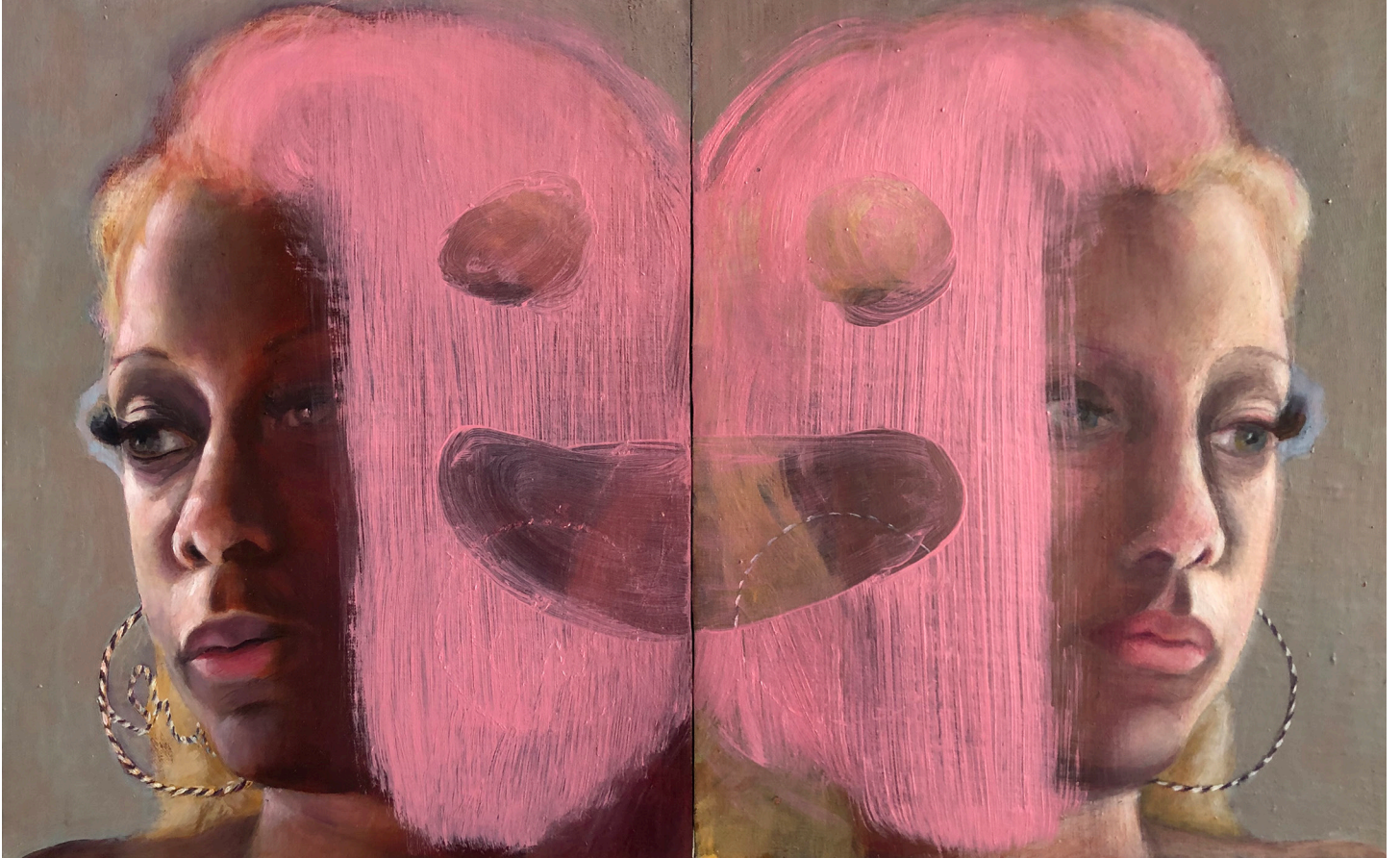
Whisper

Glazed ceramic • 11.5" H x 3.5" W x 4" D • 2020



Secrets

Pencil on raku fired porcelain • 10" x 8" • 2019



Pink Do

Oil on canvas on panel • 10" x 16" • 2020



Installation

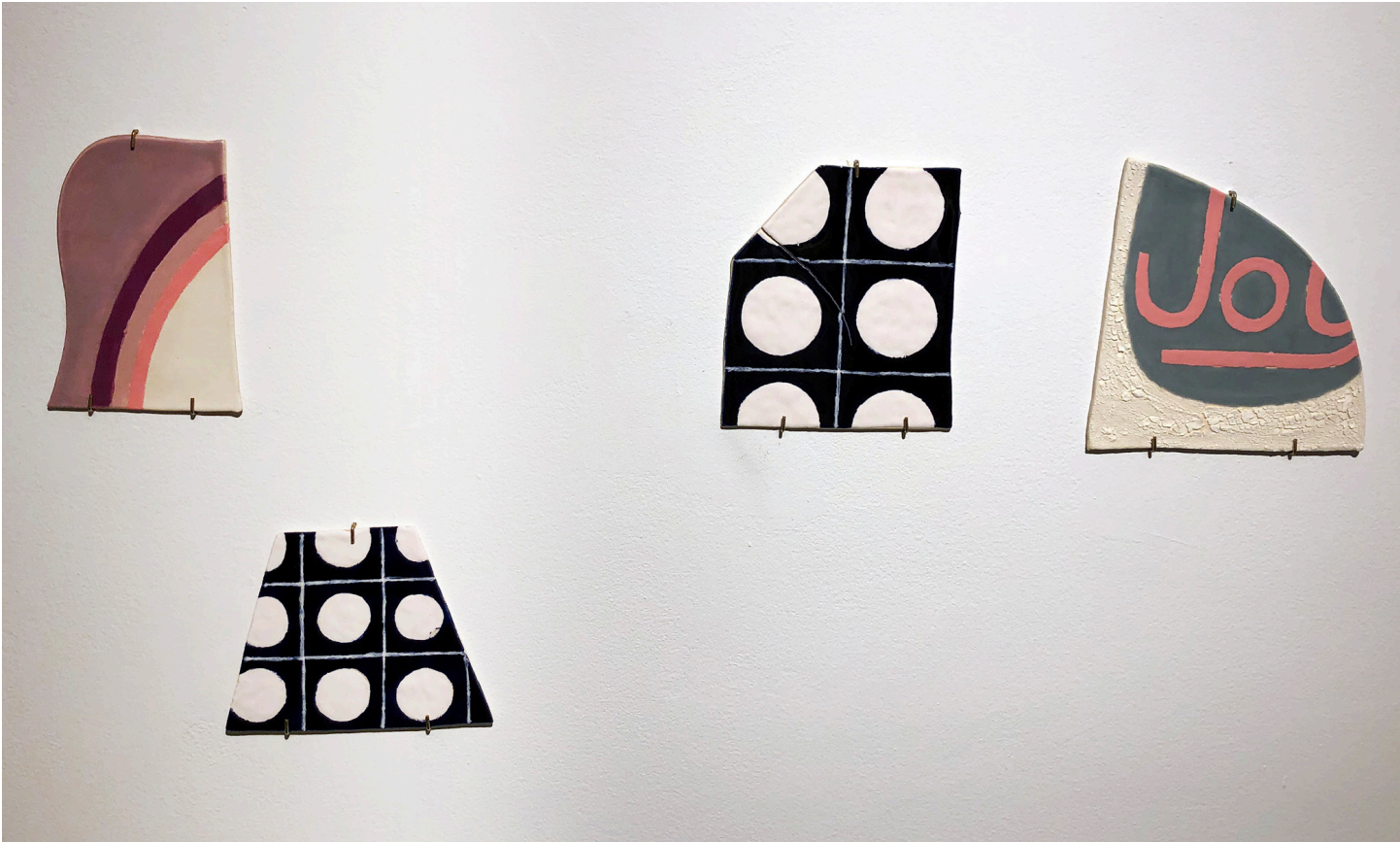
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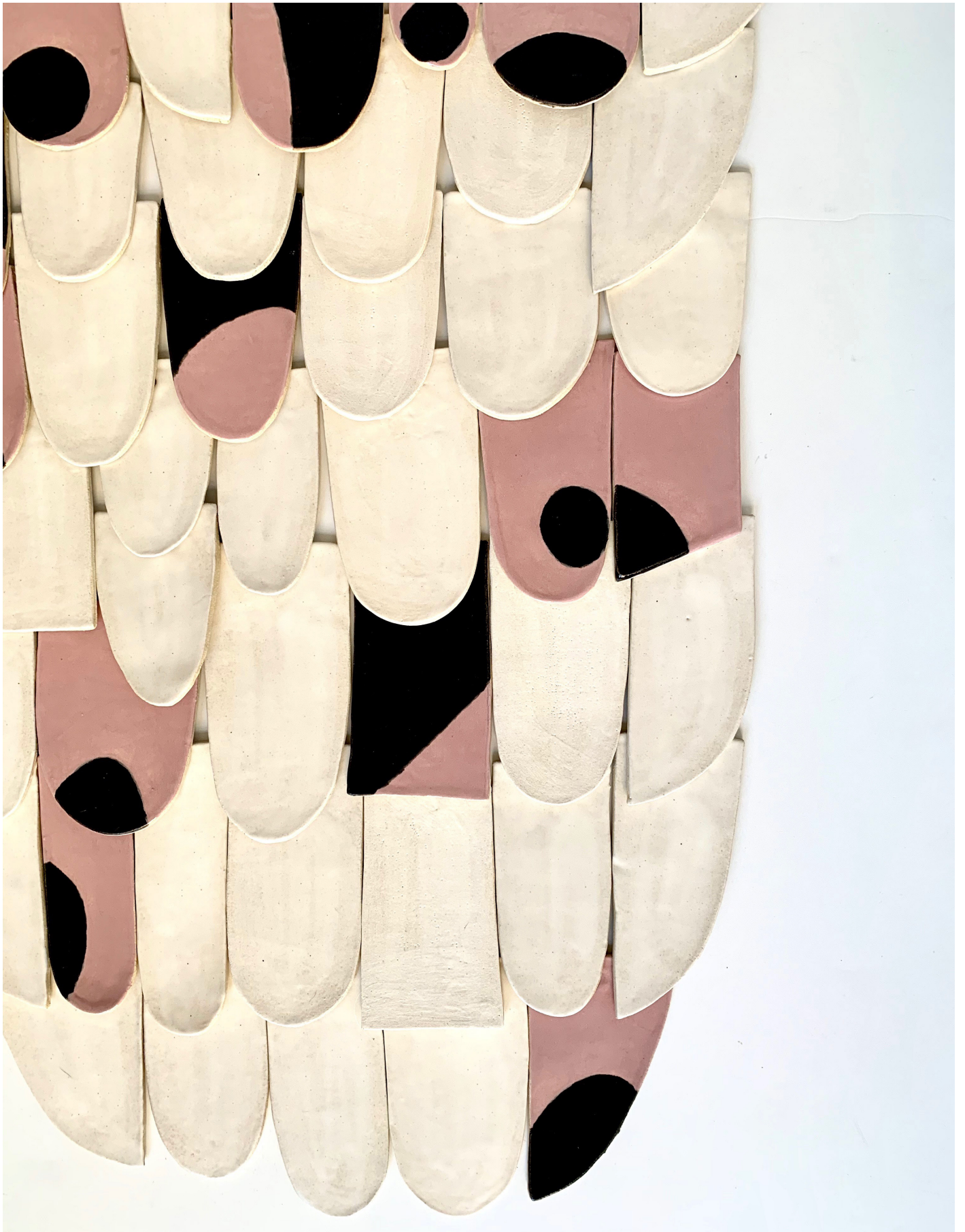
MICHELLE WEINBERG

Although the virtual space of painting and drawing is where all my projects begin, I frequently find myself in the realms of architecture, decor and public spaces. I paint and draw vivid backdrops for human activity - arenas within which all possibilities may occur. Pastel and hothouse color, flickering patterns, personalized geometry, artifacts from everyday life, and words that express ambivalent feelings about contemporary life all conspire to create new spaces for making thoughts visible, and for the free exercise of imagination.

The virtual reality I conjure in painting and drawing is in constant exchange with actual fabrication and installation of works in real life. Depictions of floors, walls, doors and tiles are everywhere in my work, representing space as a rippling, flickering array. The architectural repeat imagery in my paintings led me naturally to surface design, and specifically, the design of tiles. My first tiles were hydraulic cement tiles created using a process originally introduced in Europe in the 1800s and still handmade today in various parts of the world. These tiles were featured on the cover of *Tile Envy*, a book by Deborah Osburn. At that point, I had characterized my design work as either Soft Research (rugs, textiles, needlework) or Hard Research (concrete, terrazzo), but I find that ceramic work resides somewhere between these two poles, a near-magical transformation from soft to hard. A more recent project re-kindled my love for working with clay and provided me an opportunity. I produced 1,500 tiles by hand in my studios in NYC and Miami for installation on a wall in a synagogue in Miami. The layered arrays of these tiles suggest a kind of fragile armor of scales or shingles. The evidence of the hand and the unique formation of each tile is akin to painting and drawing, in that it is responsive to my touch. This experience made me enthusiastic about the possibilities of tiles and slabs becoming more integrated with my studio practice, and this is an ongoing project.



Installation



Petalos

Glazed Ceramic Tiles • Sizes Vary • 2020



Petalos

Glazed Ceramic Tiles • Sizes Vary • 2020



Summer Studio 1 & 2 (top)
Oil on Canvas • 62" x 42" each • 2020

Studio Table (bottom)
2020



M. Weinberg

Studio Change-Ups

Graphite and Colored Pencil on Paper • 22" x 16" • 2020



Installation



Studio view

THE HEWITT GALLERY OF ART

The Hewitt Gallery of Art, located in the main esplanade and adjacent Black and White galleries at Marymount Manhattan College, is a laboratory for and an extension of the pedagogy of the Art and Art History Department.

The Gallery is known in the New York art community as an alternative exhibition space showcasing contemporary art of emerging and mid-career artists. Innovative and challenging works of art reflecting a wide range of concerns and styles are presented in changing thematic exhibitions.

