

## The Hood Museum of Art Brings Contemporary Native Ceramics to Dartmouth's Campus



*Form and Relation: Contemporary Native Ceramics* examines the work of six artists whose practices are grounded in our relations to the land and to one another. All were chosen because of the complexity of their themes—such as community, identity, gender, land, extraction, language, and responsibility—and techniques. Anita Fields, Courtney M. Leonard, Cannupa Hanska Luger, Ruben Olguin, Rose B. Simpson, and Roxanne Swentzell are leading conversations not only within the field of Native

American ceramics but also within contemporary ceramics and art more broadly. *Form and Relation* runs from March 14 to August 9, 2020, with selected commissions on view until December 6, and it is accompanied by a fully illustrated 104-page catalogue published by the Hood Museum of Art and distributed by the University of Washington Press. It is made possible, in part, through the Diversifying Art Museum Leadership Initiative, funded by the Walton Family Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

John Stomberg, the Virginia Rice Kelsey 1961s Director of the Hood Museum of Art, says, "This vital exhibition upends expectations and delights in the lush, varied, and complicated world of contemporary Native ceramics."

Exhibition curator Jami Powell, Hood Museum associate curator of Native American art, says, "Clay embodies the indivisibility of our existence to the land. Nearly all of us have experienced what it feels like to create forms with clay, to manipulate the flesh of the earth. Through this practice, this action, we are subliminally reminded of our inherent connection to place and our relationships to one another. This is the power of clay."

The works created by these artists disrupt our understandings of what constitutes Native American ceramics and insist upon our active engagement. In today's world, many of us have grown accustomed to forming immediate, passive reactions to things—to reflexively clicking "like" or simply scrolling past images on our social media accounts. The works created by these artists, however, interfere with our ability to instantly like or dislike them. The questions these artists grapple with are

relevant to both North American Indigenous communities and communities across the globe. How can we shift our understanding of the land from one of ownership and extraction to one of relationality? How do we move toward a recognition of our shared humanity? How do we create a world in which future generations can thrive?

Using the land or clay as a central organizing medium, the artists in *Form and Relation* draw not only on the materiality of the clay but also on the knowledge embedded within it. Here, the six artists in this exhibition bring us into a dialogue—a dialogue in which Indigenous voices and ways of knowing are privileged.

Complementing the spring and summer presentation of *Form and Relation* is the companion exhibition *Unbroken: Native American Ceramics, Sculpture, and Design*, on view April 4 to December 6, 2020. Curated by Diversifying Art Museum Leadership Initiative interns in Native American art Dillen Peace '19 (Diné) and Hailee Brown '20 (Diné), this exhibition draws from the Hood Museum's permanent collections and creates a dialogue between historical, modern, and contemporary works. *Unbroken* explores themes of continuity, innovation, and Indigenous knowledges across time, and calls attention to the stylistic decisions made by artists and makers. This exhibition is organized by the Hood Museum of Art and generously supported by Hugh J. Freund, Dartmouth Class of 1967.

John Stomberg notes, "The Hood Museum's ceramics exhibitions this spring honor both the long history and the vital present of Native American art. These exhibitions open new doors to historical enquiry and contemporary practice in an ancient medium enjoying renewed vitality."

The spring exhibition opening reception at the Hood Museum, which features both Native ceramics shows, is on April 25, and other related programming includes "Something to Hold Onto," the second project in Cannupa Hanska Luger's *Counting Coup* series, which aims to utilize social collaboration to rehumanize large and abstract data through the process of creating handmade objects. For details on this opportunity and all of the spring programs and events at the Hood Museum, visit our website.

### **About the Hood Museum of Art**

The Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth enables and cultivates transformative encounters with works of artistic and cultural significance to advance critical thinking and enrich people's lives. With its renewed focus on serving Dartmouth's faculty and academic mission, the renovated and expanded facility broadens the

museum's reach to students, faculty, and departments across campus, while deepening its engagement with its longtime stakeholders. It also makes a bolder statement about the significance of the arts within the life of Dartmouth and provides the arts district with an arresting new front door to the Green.

### **About Dartmouth College**

Dartmouth College educates the most promising students and prepares them for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership, through a faculty dedicated to teaching and the creation of knowledge. The Dartmouth model is unique in higher education: the fusion of a renowned liberal arts college and robust research university where students and faculty partner to take on the world's great challenges. Since its founding in 1769, Dartmouth has provided an intimate and inspirational setting where talented faculty, students, and staff—diverse in background but united in purpose—contribute to the strength of an exciting academic community that cuts easily across disciplines.

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Image: Roxanne Swentzell (Santa Clara Pueblo), *Tattooed Woman* (detail), 1989, original clay. Purchased through the Virginia and Preston T. Kelsey 1958 Fund and the Robert J. Strassenburgh II 1942 Fund; 2019.4. © Roxanne Swentzell. Photo by Brian Wagner.